

Simpson Mines.

Rebuilt breaker destroyed by fire in December, 1885. Erected a fan, 16 feet diameter, 5 feet face; sunk air shaft 108 feet deep. One set of three boilers put in place.

Forest City Colliery.

The Hillside Coal and Iron Company own and operate this colliery. A new wing was built to the breaker, almost doubling its capacity. A new slope has been sunk from the surface to the top vein, 1300 feet long; angle of pitch, 6 degrees; sectional area, 96 square feet. A slope has been sunk in the mines 500 feet long; angle of pitch, 6°; sectional area, 72 square feet. One plane has been graded; angle of pitch, 7°; and 400 feet long. A new shaft has been sunk 160 feet deep, to bottom of coal; size of shaft, 12×30 feet. This is called No. 2 shaft. Another shaft, called the Clifford shaft, is being sunk to the lower vein of coal. It was down 22 feet on December 31, 1886; size of shaft, 12×30 feet. A breaker is to be erected in connection with this shaft, to be located along the Jefferson branch of the New York, Lake Erie and Western railroad. When all these improvements are finished it will double the capacity of this colliery, which is located in Clifford township, Susquehanna county.

Fair Lawn Disaster.

PATRICK BLEWITT, ESQ., *Mine Inspector.*

DEAR SIR: I submit the following facts in regard to the explosion of fire damp, in Fair Lawn mine, August 30, 1886: Our quota of the allotment of coal for the month had been filled Wednesday, August 26. On Thursday, August 27, there came a fall of rock on the slope, when orders were given that there would be no more mining until the rock was cleared on the slope. Monday, August 30, six men came for work, going in and passing the station, where they should wait for word as to the safety of their going to their places of work. They disregarded the established rule and passed in to a point marked on tracing, where one of them ignited the gas that killed all but one. Names of the killed and survivor: Michael Pryle, miner, killed; John Kerrigan, miner, killed; Edward Gaughan, miner, killed; Edward Pierce, fire boss, killed; Hugh Connors, laborer, killed; Patrick Comers, laborer, died; John Navan, badly burned.

Yours,

J. H. HOSIE,

Superintendent Fair Lawn Colliery.

From my investigations and the testimony given before the coroner's jury, it was shown that a fall of rock came down on the main slope, on Thursday, 27th day of August. The company's men were

working at and clearing it away on Frida , Saturday, and Monday. When the explosion took place, Martin Gallagher, the mine foreman, and Patrick Malia, a laborer, were working at it, and preparing to close up an entrance that was destroyed by a fall, which caused a leakage of over 6,000 cubic feet of air. On Sunday, the 29th, the fan was stopped for repairs for about an hour and a half, in the forenoon, but as soon as the repairs were finished the fan was started again at its usual speed, and run regularly at that speed until the explosion took place, on Monday morning. On Monday morning, six miners and laborers got to the mouth of the slope about 7.30 o'clock, and waited there for some time, until Edward Pierce, the fire boss, was ready to go into the mines with them. They were going to their chambers to take up some bottom rock, so as to have their working places in good condition for work on September the 1st, when mining was to begin again. In going down the slope two of the party went into the Clark vein for something they needed, and the other five went to the bottom of the slope in No. 3 vein, and waited there until the other two men came to them. Then the fire boss and party went in together, all carrying naked lights. They went but a short distance, when some one of the party ignited the gas, causing an explosion, killing Edward Pierce, fire boss; Michael Pryle, miner; John Kerri-gan, miner; Edward Gaughan, miner, and Hugh Connors, laborer. Patrick Comers and John Navan were seriously injured. Comers died in the hospital two weeks after the explosion. and John Navan recovered.

In my opinion, the cause of the explosion was the stoppage of the fan for repairs on Sunday morning, which allowed the gas to accumulate in No. 3 vein. Although the fan was run at its usual speed after the repairs were finished, it could not circulate the amount of air necessary to remove the gas in No. 3 vein, as there was a loss of over 6,000 cubic feet of pure air, which leaked through at the fall, on the main slope, into the Clark vein, which ought to go into No. 3 vein.

Hereto attached, you will find the verdict of the coroner's jury, tracing showing location of fall in slope, station where men wait for orders in morning before going to work, and where men were found after the explosion.

From a careful examination of the mine and from the evidence before us, we deduce the following verdict: The deceased persons herein named came to their deaths on Monday, the 30th day of August, A. D., 1886, from an explosion of gas (fire damp) at about the middle of the third or lower vein of the Fair Lawn Coal Company's mine. It was an idle day at the mine, but half a dozen men wished to go in for the purpose of taking up bottom rock. They were allowed by the mine foreman to go in, accompanied by his assistant, the fire boss,

although the latter had not inspected the mine for about thirty-six hours. Arriving at the foot of the slope, where the waiting station is located, the fire boss (or mine foreman's assistant), instead of leaving the men there while he made a tour of inspection, as required by law, said, "Well, we will go in," or words to that effect, and led the way, the men in accompanying him likewise violated the mine law, which plainly directs that "a workman shall not pass beyond any such station until the mine or part of the mine beyond the same has been inspected and reported to be safe." Each member of the party, boss as well as men, had an unprotected light. The fact that the fire boss probably also had a safety lamp at the time of the explosion is immaterial. When they reached a point where doors opened to the right and left, the fire boss said: "Let us go this way," and most of the party followed him to the left-hand door; but we believe from the circumstances, that one of the party entered the right-hand door, and that his lamp ignited the gas, which evidently had collected there. The accumulation of explosive gas was, at least in part, doubtless due to the stoppage of the fan for repairs, for about an hour and a half, on the day previous (Sunday), but the action of the fan during Sunday night would readily have removed the gas had it not been for the fall of coal and rock under and upon the slope, which allowed a portion of the air that should have been conducted down to and around the third vein (as usual) to be diverted from its proper course and pass more or less directly to the air shaft, through the upper or Clark vein—thus reducing the air supply in the lower vein so that it was insufficient for removing the dangerous gas.

The testimony shows that the mine officers had full knowledge of the fall at the slope from the time it occurred, on Thursday, August 26, and they should have understood (or determined by testing) the consequent loss of air to the lower vein.

We believe they should not have allowed any person, except such as were required for repairing, to enter the mine for the purpose of working therein, until the mine had been put in a safe and proper working condition.

REESE G. BROOKS,
GEORGE E. STEVENSON,
J. J. HOWLEY,
GRIFFITH THOMAS,
JOHN GORDON,
WILLIAM A. PARNELL.