



1892 York Farm Colliery Explosion

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Wed, Feb 3, 2021

The cause of the explosion is not definitely settled, but the only plausible explanation given by experienced men who are acquainted with the work, is that a "booker" which had become filled with gas was struck while tunneling and thus released, it became ignited from the safety-lamps. The workings on the first lift are in a sad condition. The tunnels and gangways in different directions are filled up with debris, and it will take many days to clear it away. Loaded mine wagons are wrenched crosswise in the gangways, and rocks, timbers and debris are so piled up on them that the rescuers have hard work making their way to the front. Workmen in distant parts of the mine say the noise and force of the explosion was terrible. Men 500 yards away were thrown to the ground. As soon as entrance could be made to the mine, subscription volunteers offered their services, but none but the most tried were selected, and they at once set to work. The first brought to the surface were the injured. Preparations had previously been made, and the requisite materials were on hand for the speedy relief of the burned men. Physicians at once took them in charge, and all that medical skill can accomplish was done. The body of Thomas Jones of Minersville was recovered in the tunnel and brought to the surface at 4.30, and it is expected that his companions, Harrison and Hartzell, are near by, and will be reached in a few hours. Henry Madara, one of the injured, died last night.

Later—The list of victims of Saturday's explosion of gas at York-farm colliery has been increased to 15 dead and one momentarily expected to breathe his last. Thus not one of the men working in the vicinity of where the explosion occurred will be able to tell the tale of the disaster, excepting Lohrers, the man who first noticed the presence of gas and the unusual running of coal, and who by strictly complying with colliery rules had gone to inferna the fire boss of these unusual indications, and was thus absent from the vicinity of the explosion.

His story is that he and his "putty," Christian Hornicker, whose body still lies buried in the mine, had fired a shot with a battery in breast No. 1 on the second lift, and immediately there was a strong rush of gas and run of coal. This gas rushed up the airway connecting the first and second lifts, and was ignited, it is supposed, by one of the safety-lamps that either was upset and broken or faulty, and that the terrible explosion followed, and the gangways filled with fallen rock and timber, covering up the bodies of some of the men. All the bodies have been recovered excepting Harrison and Hornicker, and it is expected they will be brought to the surface before morning.

The complete list of the victims follow, all of whom are now dead but one:

George Keiss of Middle Creek, 21 years old, single, laborer.

William Jones, Minersville, 17 years, single, laborer.

William M. Wegman, Minersville, 31, wife and several children, miner.

Anthony Potavitch, Pottsville, 30, wife and one child, laborer.

Herman Werner, St. Clair, 45 years, wife and large family, miner.

Thomas Jones, Minersville, 35 years, wife and four children, miner.

Anthony Stock, Yorkville, 15, single, laborer.

Henry Madara, Pottsville, 31 years, wife and five children, miner.

Edward Curran, Mt. Leflow, 35 years, wife and two children, miner.

Thomas F. Landers, Pottsville, 27 years, wife and one child, laborer.

Robert W. Allott, Pottsville, 42 years, wife and eight children, miner.

O. D. Allott, Pottsville, 17 years, single, laborer.

James Hartzell, Lewistown, 37 years, wife and one child, mine cooper.

John Harrison, Wadesville, 39 years, wife and three children, miner.

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