

Seven Men Crushed in the Sheldon Quarry.

[Condensed from the Rutland Herald.]

A cave-in occurred Saturday afternoon in the Sheldon "covered quarry" at West Rutland, owned by the Vermont Marble company, instantly killing seven men and wounding nine others.

The killed were, William Lukas, a Pole; Frank Sulig, a Pole; Edward Powers; Axel Blumquest, a Swede; three unrecognized men.

The injured, James Dooley, Irish, leg broken; John Dunn, Irish, slightly injured; Charles Anderson, Swede, slightly injured; Fred Marchand, French, arm broken; Anton Rattie, Pole, slightly injured; John C. Anderson, Swede, slightly injured; Peter Grenier, French, slightly injured; John Meehan, slightly injured about the head; Mike Cupps, Irish, slightly injured.

As soon as the accident happened the electric danger signal was rung in at the company's office and the mills and work everywhere stopped at once. All the doctors in this town and West Rutland were called by the telephone and responded quickly.

Scores of men were also sent down into the quarry. Soon the news spread to the streets and hundreds of men, women and children hurried to the quarry. People from Rutland and Pittsford began to arrive, and by 5 o'clock the vicinity of the quarry was crowded. In the crowd were many of the relatives of the killed or injured men, and they were frantic with grief, the scene being heart-rending. Many of the women tried to rush down into the quarry, but were prevented from doing so by the more cool-headed people, who took extra precautions to prevent accident.

The quarry is just north of a big sawing mill of the Vermont Marble company and is known as the Sheldon "covered quarry" or No. 3. Depth and surface considered, it is the largest quarry in the world. Its perpendicular depth is over 250 feet, and from this the quarry runs eastward and downward under the hill 300 feet or more. The accident was near the extreme end of the quarry, far under the hill.

The killed and some of the injured were buried under tons of rock, and the work of rescue was necessarily difficult, but scores of men in charge of competent bosses went at it with a will. The loose pieces of stone were removed, and blasts put in to remove the large pieces, some of which weighed many tons.

Some one's dead body was found and taken from under the shelf into the open part of the quarry. The "box" which is used for letting down coal, etc., was then lowered by steam and the body put in it. An awful stillness fell over the crowd as the signal boy signaled the engineer "Up," and slowly the box and body were raised to the top of the quarry. The body, which could not then be recognized, was horribly mutilated, the head and chest being crushed to a jelly and the legs and arms broken in several places.

In a short time the second body, which could be seen from under the mass, was extricated and taken up in the box. It, too, was so horribly mutilated that it could not be recognized. The chest was crushed terribly, the back of the head cut open so that the brains were visible, and the legs jammed.

Before any more dead could be found a large mass of rock had to be blasted away, which took some time. Under the middle of a piece of rock large enough to fill two freight cars were found the bodies of two men, so closely jammed together that they looked like one. Neither body could be recognized, both being horribly mutilated.

The fifth body removed was that of Axel Blumquest, a Swede. The body was horribly mutilated. It lay under a mass of marble at least 20 feet thick. The stone around, which was more than 300 feet below the surface of the earth, was covered with blood in all directions.

The sight to all who had the courage to go down the ladders was a most dismal one.

Perhaps two score of miners were at work removing the debris from the bodies of the dead and wounded, and half a hundred men were standing around looking on.

The cause of the caving in of the quarry is not positively known. Two causes are suggested. The heavy storm of Thursday night and Friday morning may have been the first cause, or a blast which was made just before the walls fell in may have had something to do with it.

The mass of stone which covered the men who were at work close by was, as near as can be estimated, 60 feet in length and 20 feet wide. It fell without the least warning, and all who were at work there were at once covered.

E. R. Morse, treasurer of the Vermont Marble company, says that the cause of the accident is not certain, though the "scale," or part of the roof that fell, was probably loosened by freezing. He said that the company has always left a large number of supports to prevent accidents of this kind, and that this part of the quarry was well protected in this respect. So far as is known no one is to blame.

All the victims carried accident insurance with the Vermont Marble company. The families of the dead will receive \$500 each in all cases, with one-half their yearly wages, if the wages were over \$1000 a year. The injured men will receive one half their weekly wages and all doctor's bills. Three of the dead, however, and some of the injured had no families.

T. A. McGuire, Herald mailing clerk, went to the scene of the disaster, undertook to go into the quarry and fell from the ladder forty feet and was injured very seriously. The ladder was very stiff and slippery, with no protection except a dilapidated railing on one side, extending a part of the way.

He was rendered unconscious by the fall, and those who first went to his assistance thought he was dead. He was raised to the surface and put in the workmen's car and brought home. His forehead is badly bruised. He had not recovered consciousness at last accounts, and the worst is feared.