

FIRE IN VON STORCH MINE

Safety of Men Working
on the Night Shift
Threatened.

ALMOST ASPHYXIATED

Firemen Overcome While
Fighting Fire in the Slope.

Fire Was Discovered About 1 O'Clock
This Morning by a Pump Runner
Who Made an Effort to Get Up the
Slope Where the Fire Started--He
Was Unsuccessful and Started Back
Through the Mine and Gave the
Alarm -- Grave Danger from the
Smoke Which Is Drawn Through the
Workings by the Fans--At 2.30 a.
m. Fire Was Pouring Out of the
Mouth of the Slope.

At 1.20 o'clock this morning fire broke out in the River slope of the Von Storch mine in Providence, owned by the Delaware & Hudson Canal Co. A number of men were in the mine at the time. At 3.30 the fire was raging fiercely in the slope, and promises to be very destructive.

An immense throng of Von Storch miners and men employed in other mines in that vicinity were summoned by an alarm from the breaker whistle several times repeated, and finally the city firemen were called by an alarm from the box on Providence square. The flames were burning fiercely in the slope when The Tribune went to press.

The head of the River slope is on the western side of the river and is connected by a trestle with the breaker on the opposite bank. The opening is about 300 feet from North Main avenue and nearly opposite the Von Storch homestead. The slope proper is 1,500 feet long and runs down to the fourteen-foot vein. The fire is at a point 300 feet from the surface.

THE FIRE DISCOVERED.

At the foot of the slope Pump Runner Edward Simpkins was in charge of the pumping engine last night. Soon after 1 o'clock he detected smoke coming down the slope. He walked up it for a short distance to investigate but found the smoke so dense that he beat a hasty retreat.

Meanwhile the whistles had summoned to the scene many of the men who had been on the night shift but had quit work. Several of them volunteered to go down the air shaft and help make sure that none of their fellows were left inside.

Chief Hickey, of the fire department, and a party of firemen had a thrilling experience and narrowly escaped suffocation. As it was, Common Councilman P. F. Gordon, who is foreman of Excelsior Hose company, was brought out of the slope unconscious.

There were nine in the party. They entered the slope with a line of hose and forced the smoke before them by the use of a spray nozzle of great capacity.

For 275 feet the men descended.

Suddenly the air current changed, the smoke was forced toward the mouth of the slope, and the powerful spray was useless in checking the smoke, which enveloped the firemen. There was nothing to do but drop the hose and run for their lives up the slope.

They burst into the fresh air in a state of collapse. Councilman Gordon was missing. He had given a cry of despair when within fifteen feet of the opening and sank exhausted.

The cry was heard and several volunteered to rescue him. He was found lying unconscious and it took some time to revive him.

The other members of the party were David Birtley, George Archbald, P. J. Lynett, Will Eldridge, James H. Reilly, Henry Williams and Evan Simms.

At 2.45 o'clock the light shed by the flames could be seen from the opening of the slope. A few moments later the flames burst up into the open air. The flames, in the form of an immense pillar, shot out through the opening with an angry roar and set fire to the trestle. A sufficient city fire-fighting force was present, however, to save the main part of that structure.

Charles Zeigler, the mine superintendent, directed the operations. He attributed the change in the air current which so nearly cost the firemen their lives, to a cave-in on the slope between the Diamond and the Fourteen-foot veins, due to the burning of the timbers where the roof was weak.

There were twenty-eight men, besides Pump Runner Simpkins, in the mine before the fire started. Ten of them walked out through the slope at 12.50 o'clock and saw no signs of a fire.

Two Polanders were hoisted up through the air shaft near the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western tracks.

3.45 a. m.—John Farrell, Tom Fadden, miners, three pump runners and driver boy are still in the mine and the officials when asked if there is a possibility that they are in danger make the ominous answer "We can't tell." The others have been taken out.