

A POCKET

Of Gas Liberated by a Shot of Dynamite.

THIS IS WHAT EXPLODED

And Killed Six Negroes in Slope No. 2 at Pratt Mines Last Saturday Morning.

REPORT OF THE MINE INSPECTOR

State Mine Inspector James D. Hillhouse, after a careful investigation with the two assistant inspectors, Messrs. Duncan and Culverhouse, has rendered a report on the explosion which took place in Slope No. 2 at Pratt Mines last Saturday morning, and which resulted in the death of six convicts, whose names are Alexander Shelton, Eli Lawhorn, George Jones, Henry Johnson, Will Scott and Tom Oliver.

The News gave a full account of the explosion. According to the report given out this morning by the inspectors, there was fire damp generated in the mine from a pocket of gas freed by a shot of dynamite, and an explosion followed. It seems from the investigation that a pocket or feeder of gas was liberated by a "shot" in the coal. This gas accumulated and was ignited when the men returned to gather the coal which had been shot down.

The report in full from the chief inspector is as follows:

OFFICIAL REPORT.

Investigation made by myself and Assistant Mine Inspectors Culverhouse and Duncan shows the explosion to have been of fire damp and not of powder or dynamite, as was first supposed. A careful examination of that portion of the mine where the explosion occurred did not show the presence of any gas on Monday afternoon, a period of sixty hours after the explosion, and in spite of the fact that the ventilation had not been fully restored to its normal condition in that part of the mine. Two small blowers were found in the slope air course, where two of the men worked, but the ventilation in the then impaired condition was sufficient to keep the place free from gas. In the same place it was found that a shot of dynamite, in the coal, had been put off, evidently just prior to the explosion of gas, from the fact that no coal had been removed or disturbed after the shot was fired.

From these conditions we are forced to the conclusions that the shot in the coal liberated a feeder or pocket of gas, which had time to accumulate while the men waited for the dynamite smoke to disappear, to such an extent or in such quantity to cause the explosion when the men returned to their working place. None of the six men were bruised or burned except slightly, and it would appear that they were asphyxiated by the after damp.

From the best information obtained I find during the twenty years this mine has been operated, and of my own knowledge during my term of office, no such pocket or accumulation of gas has been encountered, and the ventilation of the mine is not surpassed in this State at the present time. The accident was very unexpected, and could not have been foreseen or prevented. I have always regarded this as being one of the best, if not the best, operated mines in this State. Neither myself nor my assistant inspectors have found gas at any time during any of our visits of inspection to this mine.

It could not be ascertained what quantity of powder or dynamite the men had in their working place at the time of the explosion. The mine is examined regularly every twenty-four hours by a "fire boss" employed for that purpose. This "fire boss" was within 1,200 feet of the scene of the explosion at the time it occurred and found the return air currents all along in their usual good condition. The explosion occurred 12,000 feet, or over two miles, from the mouth of the slope, and near this point also the men were

found by the relief corps working under the direction of the inspectors. Respectfully submitted,

J. D. Hillhouse,
Chief Mine Inspector.

BIGGEST HOSIERY FACTORY

In the World Finds Itself Financially Embarrassed.

Muskegon, Mich., March 25.—The Amazon Hosiery Company has announced itself financially embarrassed and applied for the appointment of a receiver. Manager George W. Powell and Thomas Hume have been appointed receivers. C. H. Hackley and Thomas Hume are sureties for the company's secured indebtedness, amounting to \$180,000. The concern has \$225,000 capital and employs 800 people. It is the largest of its kind in the world.

THE PARK QUESTION

Is a Live One at Bessemer. An Effort to Raise Funds.

Special to the Birmingham News.

Bessemer, Ala., March 25.—The matter of beautifying the parks of Bessemer is taking definite shape, and the prospect of having them shaped up at an early date is very good.

It is the purpose of the movers in the plan to have Berner Park exclusively for whites and Natural Park for the colored people.

The old fence will be removed from around Berner Park and a new and substantial one erected in its place. The trees are to be trimmed and made shapely, the handsome fountain and drinking fount are to be repaired and the ground laid off in beautiful lawn plots, flower beds and handsome gravel walks. A nice tennis court will be provided, also croquet grounds and seats and swings.

At Natural Park a fence of substantial character will be erected and the grounds laid off in walks, lawns and flower beds, while seats and grounds for amusements will not be overlooked.

Dr. Frank A. Adams, the genial manager of Nabers, Morrow & Son's Bessemer store, about a week ago secured from the owners of the land such concessions as warranted him in undertaking to raise funds to beautify them.

Mr. Adams has sent out several hundred letters to the citizens, simply stating what it is proposed to do, and leaving the rest to the liberality of the people.

Much interest is being developed, and even persons outside the city are offering aid in the enterprise. Mr. Adams has received some very liberal and substantial pledges.

Monday morning Judge J. J. Banks will open the Bessemer Division of the Circuit Court. There is a large docket to dispose of this term.

The regular meeting of the Bessemer Bimaculic Club will be held on Monday night, instead of Tuesday, as announced in yesterday's News. At this meeting the report of the committee to nominate delegates to the county convention will be ratified.

CORRECTION MADE

Explanation of Words in a News' Editorial Which Might Have Been Misconstrued by Some.

The following correspondence shows that Mr. G. R. Harsh was subpoenaed to go before the Commissioner in the Crowe-Underwood contest case, and that he was not a volunteer, as might have been deduced from the following words in a recent News' editorial: "Mr. Harsh was lending himself to the use of Dr. Crowe," etc., etc.

Hon. John C. Carmichael, City:

Dear Sir—You have doubtless noticed the charge made by the Daily News, in its editorial column, on March 24, in which it says: "Mr. Harsh was lending himself to the cause of Dr. Crowe in as frivolous a contest as was possibly ever entered into."

I am sure that you, as attorney for Mr. Underwood in that contest, are fully aware of all the facts, and know the injustice of the charge. I request you to state Mr. Harsh's connection with that case, so that the public may fully understand the facts.

Truly yours,

R. H. Kerr,
Chairman of G. R. Harsh Campaign Committee.

Birmingham, Ala., March 25, 1898.

MR. CARMICHAEL'S ANSWER.

R. H. Kerr, Esq., Chairman of G. R. Harsh Campaign Committee, City:

Dear Sir: Your note of this date has just been received.

1898 Pratt Slope No. 2 Explosion NEWS1

Clipped By:
usmra rob
Apr 30, 2025