

Accident at Kanawha & Hocking Coal & Coke Co.'s Mine No. 101.

On March 7th, 1905, at 4:20 o'clock P. M., while a trip of three loaded cars, on which 13 mine employes were riding, was descending the long and steep incline at the Kanawha & Hocking Coal & Coke Company's Mine No. 101 at Shrewsbury, Kanawha County, and before the trip had reached the half-way point on the incline, the chain attached to the socket of the rope broke and permitted the three loaded cars to run wild to the bottom of the incline, where they destroyed a part of the tipple structure and wrecked the cars. Nine of the employes succeeded in getting off the cars with a few scratches and bruises, but the other four remained on the cars and rode to the bottom of the incline where they each met instant death.

The killed were:

John McSurley	aged	13
William McSurley	"	17
Andrew Hunt	"	35
Edward McLaughlin	"	17

On the two following days the Coroner of Kanawha County, Mr. F. L. Beardsley, the District Mine Inspector, Mr. E. A. Henry, and the Chief Mine Inspector conducted an inquest and made full inquiry into the cause of the accident.

From the evidence secured from the several witnesses it was found that the ropes, draw bars and hitchings were practically new and of sufficient dimension and material to have a good factor of safety for the strains to which they were subjected.

It was shown that notices had been posted forbidding persons to ride on the cars on the incline, and the father of two of the boys killed stated that he had cautioned his boys about the danger incident to riding on the incline.

The coroner's jury gave the following verdict:

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,

Kanawha County, to-wit:

An inquisition taken at Kanawha & Hocking Co.'s Mine 101 at Shrewsbury in said County of Kanawha, on the 8th and 9th days of March, 1905, before F. L. Beardsley, coroner of said County of Kanawha, upon the view of the bodies of John McSurley, Will McSurley, Andrew Hunt and Edward McLaughlin, there lying dead.

The jurors sworn to inquire when, how and by what means the said four men came to their death, upon their oath do say: that said John McSurley, Will McSurley, Andrew Hunt and Edward McLaughlin came to their deaths at the incline of Kanawha & Hocking Mine 101, at Shrewsbury in Kanawha County, West Virginia, on the 7th day of March, 1905, about 4:20 P. M. of that day; that said men were riding down said incline of said mine, in company with nine other employes of said Kanawha & Hocking Company on three mine coal cars loaded with coal, and that the chain which connected the rear car with the wire rope or cable broke and said three cars, thus detached, ran down the incline of said mine and killed the four men aforesaid. And the jury further finds from the evidence that the breaking of said chain was partly caused by the additional weight of the thirteen men riding down said incline on said loaded cars, and that said men had been warned against said riding on said incline by notices duly posted by said company on the tipple and drum house thereof, and that said men so killed and so riding on said cars were guilty of contributory negligence, and that said company, in permitting said men to ride up and down incline, notwithstanding the posting of said notices, was also guilty of negligence, but that said negligence of said company was not sufficient to make said company liable for damages for killing said four men.

In testimony whereof, the said coroner and jurors hereto set their hands on this 9th day of March, 1905.

(Signed) F. L. BEARDSLEY, *Coroner.*

J. W. KNIGHT,

J. J. NEYLAN,

R. F. WATSON,

J. W. WAID,

GEO. W. MURRY,

R. G. WATSON,

Jurors.