

shaft and when within about 10 feet of the surface landing he in some way fell over and was caught and dragged through between the cage bottom and the buntins, crushing him about the head and chest, permitting him to fall to the bottom of the shaft, a distance of about 90 feet, injuring him so badly that he died 7 days later. He leaves a wife and 2 children. There were no eye witnesses to this accident and it is not known what caused him to fall. It is reported, however, that he stated to some persons a short time after the accident that his mule had reared up while he was holding it, causing him to lose his footing. This statement is, in all probability, true and will explain the cause of his fall.

On March 9th Harlin Lee, American, loader, aged 19 years, single, was killed by a premature blast in the Island Valley No. 2 Mine, Greene County. Decedent and his father were working together as loaders, their duties being to shoot down and load out the coal after it had been under cut with an electric chain machine. Also to timber their working place. On the evening of the above date they had prepared their shots in one of their rooms, which had been under cut 6 feet deep. One of the shots known as the breaking down shot was located in the center of the room, the other two were located one on each rib of the room, the two latter being tamped on fuse, while the center or breaking down shot was tamped on a needle to be fired with a squib. When firing time came the center shot was lighted and both men ran to a place of safety, where they waited until they heard it explode. When they returned to light the 2 shots remaining, the father taking the one on the left and the son the one on the right rib, the father succeeded in lighting his shot, but just as the son was attempting to light the one on the right he discovered that the powder in the fuse was burning, having been lighted from the flame made by the center shot. He called to his father warning him of the danger and they both started to run, the son in the lead, and when he had reached a point some 20 feet from the face of the room, the shot exploded, a piece of the flying coal striking him on the head, killing him instantly. Had common squibs been used to fire these shots, one more victim sacrificed to the practice of using fuse in shot firing would have been spared.

On March 22d occurred in the Oswald Mine, Gibson County, one of the most appalling mine accidents in the history of the

State. Nine lives were sacrificed on that date, 5 of whom were taken from the mine dead and 4 fatally injured, as a result of an explosion of powder smoke, blasting powder and a small amount of coal dust, caused by a windy or blown out shot. This shot had been prepared by a miner named Roscoe Hedrick, and his utter disregard of the statute governing the use of powder and the manner of placing and preparing shots in coal mines, as well as the general methods of mining followed by miners, amounted to nothing more nor less than criminal negligence. An examination of the scene of the accident was made on the day following the explosion by Assistant Inspectors Dodds and Thomas, 2 practical mine superintendents, viz.: Michael King and John Eddy, and myself, which, together with the investigation made by the coroner of Gibson County, and myself, disclosed the following facts: That during the forenoon of the above date, Roscoe Hedrick had prepared a shot in the face of room 10 (his working place) on the fourth south cross entry, on the west side of the mine, by drilling a hole 6 feet 4 inches deep in an almost straight line of face, there being no loose end or chance whatever, other than an offset of probably 18 inches in depth at a point $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet distant, measured at right angles from the drill hole. This hole, probably 4 inches in diameter, was drilled perfectly straight with no lift whatever, and according to testimony given by Hedrick, was charged with 3 feet of powder. It is evident to persons conversant with mining that there could be no other result from a shot so arranged than that which occurred, viz.: a windy or blown out shot. After having prepared the shot Hedrick, wishing to leave the mine for the balance of the day (it then being 11 o'clock a. m.), requested his father, whose working place was on the same entry, to fire it for him at firing time. The father refused to do so and requested him to ask some one else to fire it. He then asked Harry Tagett, whose working place was room 11, adjoining that of Hedrick, to fire it for him, which he agreed to do. Hedrick then left the mine and did not return during the day. The hour as above stated being 11 o'clock a. m. would have given him until 3:30 o'clock p. m. (firing time) $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours in which to have made a shearing, or chance for his shot to do the work intended. It was customary, when firing shots on this entry, to begin at the first rooms and fire toward the face of the entry,

the miners leaving the mine in that direction, traveling against the air, thus avoiding the powder smoke. This same rule was followed on the evening of the accident and some 6' or 8 very heavy shots had been fired one after the other in turn in quick succession. Immediately before Tagett fired that of Hedrick, these shots were all shot off the solid. In addition to the dense body of heated powder smoke made by them, was a certain amount of coal dust brought into suspension by the extra heavy concussion. When Hedrick's shot exploded, the point of least resistance being along the drill hole, it merely seamed the coal from roof to floor, resulting in a windy or blown out shot, the flame of which entering the body of powder smoke and coal dust mentioned, was followed by a smoke explosion which in turn exploded a number of kegs of powder located along the entry in different working places. This, combined with the other two elements, i. e., smoke and dust, added greatly to the intensity of heat, as well as the force of the explosion, which covered the entire area from the face to the mouth of both the third and fourth south entries, also extending down the main entry to within a short distance of the hoisting shaft, tearing out doors and brattices, overturning mine cars, knocking out cross bars, props, etc., wrecking that part of the mine generally. Immediately after the explosion the mine boss, fire boss and others began the work of rescue at great peril to their own lives. No serious results followed, however, and within about 2 hours after the explosion all of the dead bodies and all of the injured, as well as the uninjured, had been rescued. The following is a list of the names of the dead:

Alfred Geiser (German), miner, age 20, single.

Edmun Geiser (German), miner (brother of above), age 22, also single.

William Biggs (American), miner, age 38.

Harry Tagett (English), miner, age 48.

Hudson Weatherly (American), miner, age 30.

Those fatally injured were:

John Dill (American), miner, age 21.

George Dill (American), miner, age 47.

Joseph Ward (American), miner, age 52.

William Jones (English), miner, age 65.

After the investigation had been completed and having secured ample evidence, which in my opinion would justify the prosecution of Hedrick, I placed all of the facts and circumstances relative to the case before the deputy prosecutor of Gibson County, and requested that prosecution be filed against Hedrick in 2 counts, also requesting that he be arrested and placed under bond so that he might not escape punishment, but for some reason the affidavits were not made for several days and when arrested Hedrick was placed under a bond of \$150. Later I was informed that Hedrick had plead guilty in the Circuit Court to the charges preferred against him. Up to the present time, however, I have been unable to learn what decision the court has rendered, but am informed that the judge still has the case under advisement, and that Hedrick has been released on his own recognizance, and it is supposed that he had left the place.

APRIL.

Two fatal accidents occurred during this month, the first of which occurred in the yards of the Oak Hill Mine, Vermillion County, when on the 14th inst. James Haga, American, a flat trimmer, was instantly killed by railroad cars at about 1:30 o'clock p. m. Decedent was chalking a car on the scales, and after he had chalked the car and stopped it, he stepped backward out onto the passing or main railroad track just as a coal train was approaching. The brakeman was on the front end of the train and shouted at him, but owing to the noise made by the hoisting and screening machinery, dumping of coal, etc., he could not make him hear. There was a train of 18 cars ahead of the engine and he was struck by the first car, the entire train passing over him before it could be stopped, severing his head and legs from the body.

On April 19th J. W. Spraggins, American, driver, aged 19 years, was fatally injured by being crushed between a loaded mine car and the roof in the Ayrshire No. 8 Mine, Pike County. On the morning of above date, at about 10 o'clock, decedent was coming out of the mine with a trip of 10 loaded cars, riding on the front end of the first car. At the time of the accident he was coming down a steep grade and was fixing his lamp so that it