

1911-0012

M/NM FATAL

REPORT OF AN INUNDATION AT WHARTON MINE
WHARTON STEEL CO.
HIBERNIA, NEW JERSEY
OCT. 19, 1911 - 12 KILLED

In October 1911, the New Langdon shaft was being sunk and had reached a depth of about 1,500 feet on the variable dip of the ore. At the same time a drift, several levels above the shaft bottom, was being driven to tap some old workings supposed to be about 250 feet from the shaft. These workings had been abandoned and filled with water, so that their exact extent could not be determined. On October 19, the drift was thought to be over 100 feet from the old workings, but blasting of a round in the face broke through, allowing water to enter and flood the drift and the shaft below its level. Miners working in the drift and adjacent levels escaped, but 12 men in and near the bottom of the shaft were drowned.

No accurate maps of the area were available, and estimates of the distances involved underground were obtained by measurements between surface openings. No test holes were drilled ahead of the drift face, and men were allowed to remain on the lower levels while the drift round was blasted, because it was estimated that the drift still had more than 100 feet to go to the water-filled old workings. After the mine was unwatered, a drift was driven safely on a lower level to tap the flooded workings. Test holes were kept ahead, and the unwatering was done through boreholes.