

# GAS EXPLOSION KILLS SEVEN MEN IN MINE AT PLYMOUTH

## Lance Colliery Scene of Luzerne Region's Worst Coal Disaster in Years— Only Two of Nine Workmen Escape Death

[Daily Record, Feb. 9.]

Seven men were instantly killed and two were seriously injured in an explosion of gas in the Ross vein of the Lance No. 11 colliery of the Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal Co. at Plymouth yesterday afternoon at 1 o'clock. Of the nine men at work in the chamber where the explosion occurred, only two escaped death and of these, one is in a critical condition in Mercy Hospital. Officials of the coal company were still investigating last night and said that they had not determined the cause of the explosion. Work of rescue was quickly gotten under way after news of the explosion had reached colliery officials, but wreckage in the gangways and chambers made the task difficult.

In point of fatalities, the accident at the Lance colliery yesterday is among the worst that has marred the history of mining operations in the Luzerne district of the anthracite field. It was the second to occur in the Lance colliery, five men having lost their lives in a similar explosion on May 5, 1904. Last night was the first in more than five years for residents of Plymouth to hear the rumble of ambulance wheels or to exchange reports on incidents of a mine accident of serious proportions. It is the eighth serious accident to occur in collieries of the Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Co. in a little more than a decade.

### The Dead

Stanley Shusta, miner, 38, married, 183 Nottingham street, Plymouth, survived by a wife and six small children.

John Lasaski, miner, 26, married, 312 River street, Plymouth, survived by a wife.

George Gorki, miner, 22, married, 525 State street, Plymouth, survived by a wife.

Michael Mikalonis, miner, 49, married, 373 Carver street, Plymouth, survived by a wife and nine children.

Stanley Staniszewski, miner, age unknown, married, Shunk street, Plymouth, survived by a wife.

Vitold Niewodonski, driver, 19, single, 187 Commercial alley, Plymouth.

Walter Balesta, miner, 26, single, Carver street, Plymouth.

### The Injured

Anthony Lavonski, miner, 19, Vine street, Plymouth, severely shocked and

bruised, committed to Mercy Hospital. Peter Jamkeski, door boy, 17, single, address unknown, slightly burned.

Pitiful scenes were witnessed when the names of the victims were announced. Stanley Staniszewski had been married only a week and was brought home to his bride and placed in the parlor of his new little home. Michael Mikalonis was the father of nine children with only one old enough to work and help support the rest. All Plymouth seemed stricken dumb at the horror, the first bad accident in many years.

Throughout the afternoon and evening the mine officials maintained silence and it was difficult to obtain information of the accident. What information was obtainable leaked out through the miners who had heard of the accident below ground and spread the news when they came to the surface. It was 9:30 p. m. before the officials gave out the names of the dead and injured. Difficulty was experienced in reaching the bodies, first from the long distance to be traversed, as the gallery where the accident occurred was the farthest one from the mouth of the shaft, and then because of the obstacles offered by the rock and coal dislodged by the explosion. There was heroic work by the first aid crew but there was little for them to do.

### Officials Investigating

At 10 p. m. Edward J. Newbaker, district superintendent, said: "The cause of the accident is unknown. We are going to continue our investigation tomorrow." He had visited the mine, accompanied by Daniel B. Lewis, mine foreman; John H. Davis, section foreman; William Davis, fire boss; James Corrigan, assistant foreman; Douglas Bunting, chief engineer, and two representatives of the Bureau of Mines.

There were nine men working in the section where the accident occurred and only two of these escaped. It is possible that another death may be added to the list, as Subanski was reported in a serious condition at Mercy Hospital this morning.

### News Comes From Mine Slowly

Soon after 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon the first news of the explosion reached the surface. An attempt was made to suppress early reports, but the news leaked out and many women and children were soon at the gates of the yard. It was nearly 3 p. m. before it was learned where the accident occurred, the sixth east gallery on No. 5

slope. At this hour the first survivor reach the upper air, Peter Jameski, a 17 year old door boy. He had heard the roar of the explosion and ran for his life. He lost most of his hair, and was burned about the face and hands. He was too horrified to say much and immediately ran to his home. The next man to reach the mouth of the mine was John Subanski, a miner, who was severely bruised and suffering badly from the shock. He was sent at once to Mercy Hospital, South Wilkes-Barre.

Then came the varying reports of the number of dead, only increasing the anxiety of those who waited at the closed gate. It was 7 o'clock before the parade of ambulances began. One, two, three, up to seven. As each ambulance came through the gate anxious cries for a name were heard from the watching throng, but the officials gave no information. At 8 o'clock the last body was out and it was known that seven men had met death and that two were injured.

### WILLARD AND MORAN TO MEET ON MARCH 8

### Madison Square Garden Secured for Heavyweight Battle

New York, Feb. 8.—Jess Willard, world's heavyweight champion, and Frank Moran will meet in a ten round bout at Madison Square Garden here on March 8 for a purse of \$70,000, it was announced to-night by Tex Rickard, promoter of the match.

The date originally agreed upon was March 17, but it was changed because Madison Square Garden, the only available place for holding the match here, had been previously engaged for that date. Rickard said to-night that the board of directors of the garden had agreed to accept \$7,500 for its use, with no percentages.

While a tentative agreement already had been signed for the bout between Tom Jones, manager for Willard, and Ike Dorgan, representing Moran, Rickard announced that Jones and Dorgan would meet again to-morrow to sign the final articles.

### Funeral of Coasting Victim

The funeral of Michael Lehman, who met death while coasting several days ago when his sled collided with a jitney was held yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joan Lehman at Sugar Notch. Services were conducted in St. Charles Church at 2:30 by Rev. Father Walsh. It was one of the largest funerals held in Sugar Notch in recent years being attended by hundreds of friends and relatives and playmates. There was a profusion of floral tributes which were carried by John Riley, James Rooney, John Conway, Charles Tracy and Joseph Conway. The pall bearers were Patrick Conway, Joseph Kilcoyne, Erick Loughney, John McGuire. Interment was in the family plot in St. Charles Cemetery, Sugar Notch.