

# COAL FATAL

Report of a Roof Fall December 8, 1923; Mount Jessup No. 1 Mine;  
Jessup, Pennsylvania; 5 Killed

(Taken from the "Scranton Times," edition of Dec. 10, 1923,  
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While rescue gangs continued today to proceed cautiously toward that section of the No. 1 mine at Jessup, where five men are imprisoned behind a mammoth fall of roof, company officials and mining men held but little hope that the missing men would be found alive.

Rescue gangs who entered the mine Saturday after waiting several hours for the rumblings of the caving workings to cease began the actual digging through mass of rock, coal and debris last night at 9 o'clock, it was announced today by the company officials.

Owing to the danger of the roof under which they were toiling the rescuers were directed by State mine inspectors to erect substantial timbers one hundred feet this side of the cave in order to protect the rescue gangs.

At 4 o'clock this afternoon the rescuers had not heard any sounds from the far side of the squeeze and the belief grows that all five men are dead.

The cave occurred about 1:30 Saturday afternoon in what is known as the Grassy vein of No. 1 mine where there were thirty men robbing pillars. At the first rumblings of a slide Foreman Jones ran through different chambers sounding the alarm and got twenty-five men on their way up the plane to the surface. Jones then discovered that there were still four men in another part of the vein and he turned around.

"I'm going back for them," he said to the other miners. The rumblings of the squeeze were now loud and the other men warned Foreman Jones of the danger. He ignored their advice and heroically made another dash to give the alarm to the others. Jones was never seen after that. Whether he reached the other four and was on his way out with them or whether he was caught before he got that far will not be known until the men are reached. It was thought for a time that Jones and the other four might have started out through the Sterrick Creek but they failed to appear and it was then certain they had been trapped.

There is a burning culm dump over the mine where the cave occurred and it was expressed by mining men today that the weight of this dump and the drying up of the clay on the roof of the mine caved it in. Company officials, however, would not admit this. With mine inspectors they asserted it would be impossible to tell just what caused the disturbance until more progress is made through the debris.

Because of the dangerous condition the rescue men were unable to start promptly Saturday afternoon. They had to wait several hours until they felt certain the squeeze had stopped "working." Then the company pressed every available man into service and rushed carloads of timber underground to make the room safe for the rescuers. While more than 100 men are engaged in the task of

trying to reach their fellow workers only thirty can do the actual timbering at a time because of the amount of space they have to work in. Six-hour shifts are in effect and when one gang finishes a second gang swings in.

When the news of the tragedy reached the surface Saturday it spread throughout Jessup and several thousand people, many of them relatives of the missing men, gathered. Hundreds of them remained throughout the night. During the heavy rain yesterday the crowd outside the shaft swelled to more than 2,000. This morning another crowd appeared. Everyone was talking about the heroism of Evan Jones, who tried to save the four other men. The name of Jones is on all lips around the shaft and many a prayer went up that he and the others might be found alive. Jones is married and is the father of two children.

The latest word from the scene was that it may be days before the missing men are found.