

Old Forge Boy, 10, Falls 40 Feet Into Mine Shaft

By BOB CAMPBELL

A 10-year-old Old Forge boy narrowly escaped death Thursday when he fell 40 feet down an abandoned mine shaft at Old Forge Colliery.

Old Forge Police said Michael Scarnato's fall was broken at the 40-foot level by some old roofing material jammed in the open shaft. He could have fallen a lot further down the hole, they said.



BATTERED BUT SAFE—Michael Scarnato, 10, center, shows bruises and cuts from his 40-foot fall down an abandoned mine shaft at Old Forge Colliery Thursday. The boy escaped death when his fall was broken by roofing materials thrown into the open shaft. Sitting with Michael are his grandmother, Mrs. Dominick Scarnato, and a friend, Eddie Ellaro. (Tribune Photo by Smith)

As it was, the youth suffered cuts and bruises and had to be taken to Community Medical Center after his rescue. He was treated and discharged, but family members said doctors told them to "keep a close eye on him for the next few days."

His grandmother, Mrs. Dominick Scarnato, described the boy's fall as "a shattering experience that has us all shook up."

"He's all right but has some cuts and we have to watch him closely," she said.

Michael is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Scarnato, 229 Orchard St. He is in the fifth grade at Old Forge Elementary School but had the day off because of a teachers' seminar.

Police said Michael and several of his friends were playing in the area of the colliery near Howard Street at about 2 p.m. when he apparently got too close to the shaft and fell in as a small portion of its edge collapsed under his feet.

The other boys immediately ran across to the Lawrence Hose Co. and told members of young Scarnato's plight.

The Lawrence personnel called the Moonic Rescue Co. which sent a basket truck to the scene. As Moonic Hose Co. president William Edwards supervised the operation, a basket hoist was lowered to the boy who then was pulled from the shaft.

Despite the 40-foot fall, Scarnato remained conscious during the approximately 40 minutes spent in the shaft. He probably wouldn't have if his fall had not been stopped by the tin-like material apparently thrown in the open hole, police said.

They did not know how deep it went but described it as going straight down "a lot further than 40 feet." Police also were not sure who is responsible for the apparently deserted mine shaft.

"It's dangerous over there," the boy's grandmother said.

Trailer Controversy Decision in Making

Transportation Secretary Jacob Kasab is reconsidering his decision to permit 14-foot-wide mobile homes on Pennsylvania highways, the AP reports from Harrisburg.

Without explanation, the Department of Transportation announced Thursday that Kasab will hold a news conference next week on the 14-foot controversy.

Although Kasab refused to tip his hand, other informed sources said it is "virtually 100 per cent certain" he will announce that 14-foot trailers are

Whenever anyone wants to transport something wider than eight feet, it needs authorization from the permits bureau. Although the bureau has cleared heavy equipment wider than 14 feet, it had drawn the limit for mobile homes at 12 feet.

Before Kasab's decision last month, the change had been urged on him by the mobile home industry and two other state departments, Commerce and Community Affairs. Each pointed out that all of Pennsylvania's neighboring states per-

1973 Ten year old boy rescued after 40 foot fall into mine shaft

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Tue, Jul 20, 2021