

MINERS' LAMP IS BLAMED FOR FATAL BLAST

**Hartnedy Continues Probe of
St. Clair Explosion; Triple
Funeral Sunday**

A gas explosion in the St. Clair Coal Company's Herbein Mine, fatal to eight men, was blamed today on the flame of a miner's lamp.

Secretary of Mines Michael J. Hartnedy, after an investigation at the scene of Wednesday's explosion, said he was convinced that the flame of one miner's lamp ignited gas which seeped into the workings after a fall of earth in a nearby slope.

Hartnedy said the open light was not a violation of safety rules because the workings were in a non-gaseous area. An inquest into the explosion fatalities will be held after 10 injured men have recovered sufficiently to testify.

Funerals for the victims will be held tomorrow and Sunday.

The whole town was in mourning, and some 600-odd miners who worked in the St. Clair just stood around in groups, talking about the disaster in the "safest mine in Schuylkill county."

The U. S. Bureau of Mines will begin its investigation tomorrow, Chief Engineer J. J. Forbes, said.

Triple Funeral

The funerals of three of the victims of the explosion in St. Clair Colliery will take place at the same time in St. Nicholas Greek Catholic Church, St. Clair, at two o'clock Sunday afternoon. They will be those of John and Michael Tarris and Andrew Potts, the last named, fire boss at the colliery whose death took place at the Pottsville Hospital at 3:30 o'clock yesterday morning.

Mr. Potts, who had been a prominent resident of St. Clair for many years, had been employed at the colliery for a number of years and was the owner of the recently remodeled Hollywood Theater in St. Clair.

The deceased is survived by his wife, the former Miss Anna Stratzevsky of Gilberton; his mother, Mrs. Samuel Bender, of St. Clair; four children, Andrew, 5; Michael, 4; Jean Marie, 3; Robert Joseph, 18 months; three sisters, Mrs. Stephen Shawsky and Mrs. Michael Krollek, of St. Clair and Miss Eva, at home; three brothers, Nicholas and Michael, of St. Clair; John, of Mount Carmel, owners of a large wholesale confectioners establishments in St. Clair and Mount Carmel. One step brother, Andrew Bender, of Frackville, also survives.

Mrs. Potts is a cousin of John and Michael Tarris who were both killed in the explosion.

Mr. Potts was a member of St. Nicholas Greek Church at St. Clair and its various societies. Services will be held at his home on south Third street, at 1:30 o'clock followed by further services in the church at two o'clock. Burial will be made in the parish cemetery.

The funeral services in the church will include those for John and Michael Tarris after brief services at their homes, whose burial will also take place in the parish cemetery.

The St. Clair Coal Company carries a form of "catastrophe" insurance which will cover the extensive damage and compensation claims growing out of the tragedy at the mine in which eight miners lost their lives and 10 others were injured.

The policy, issued by the General
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Reinsurance Corporation, covers anything from ten thousand to a million dollars for such a disaster as occurred Wednesday.

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Reports were current that the company carried its own insurance and that it would have to bear the cost of the blast—estimated in the neighborhood of several hundred thousand dollars. The company bears its ordinary insurance costs but in addition has the “catastrophe” policy with the General Reinsurance Corporation.

The St. Clair Coal Company's operations will not be affected by the accident. It is not known yet just how extensively the mine itself has been damaged.

1938 St Clair No 1 Slope explosion
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