

# TEN MEN SUFFOCATED.

## A Terrible Mine Disaster Near Shamokin.

### A RESULT OF GROSS CARELESSNESS.

**The Explosion of a Lamp Sets Fire to the Lower Vein of the Neilson Shaft. Ten Miners Suffocated by Smoke—The Mine Still on Fire.**

SHAMOKIN, Pa., April 3.—By the explosion of a lamp in the hands of a Hungarian miner ten men lost their lives at the Nelson shaft, near this place, on Saturday. The dead are: Joseph Bortrax, single; John Gray, married; John Burt, married; Frederick Ginter, single; Frank Shupis, single; Nicholas Dutah, married; John Ryan, single; James Brennan, single; John Robel, married; Michael Brennan, single. The ill fated miners were residents of Shamokin and Springfield, a small village adjoining the borough.

The burning oil set fire to the roof of the mine, and the efforts of the miners to extinguish the flames were unavailing owing to the inadequate supply of water. An airway shaft connects the No. 10 vein with the red ash vein, which is situated directly over the former one.

Hurriedly notifying the miners on this lift the engineer was signaled and the flight to the surface commenced. Once out some of the men thought of the air passage leading to the red ash vein, and knew that were the occupants not notified some would surely die. A gallant band of rescuers was lowered, and when the cage stopped at the red ash vein, 500 feet from the surface, the men found the tunnel filled with smoke which had come up from the lower level. A couple of rescuers jumped off the cage and tried to walk through the smoke, which grew denser every minute. A few dead mules were stumbled over, and the men reluctantly retreated and returned to the surface, aware that if anyone was in the tunnel he could not escape, as there were no exits at this particular side of the lift.

The cage was again lowered and a force of men started in to explore the tunnel. It was risky work, as a sulphur explosion was imminent. With cheery words to each other they pressed forward and finally reached two corpses wrapped in each other's arms. They were the bodies of the Brennan brothers. One dozen yards further on lay John Ryan. He was dead. Three feet away were the remains of Shupis and Ginter. The grewsome search continued until every part of the vein had been explored, ten dead men being the total find.

The fire in the meantime continued to spread, and finally shot up to the red ash vein and got beyond control. So intense was the heat that no one could enter the mine. A consultation was held with the view of fighting the conflagration, and it was decided to flood the vein. The Elmira owners of the mine arrived and the work of flooding was stopped in order to first try smothering the flames. Everything has been boarded up where air entered and there is danger of a gas explosion. No person is allowed within a hundred yards of the workings.

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