

GOLD, SILVER, COPPER, COAL, IRON AND MARBLE.

THE OLD ABE EAGLE.

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WHITE OAKS, LINCOLN CO., NEW MEXICO, THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1895.

WHOLE No. 505.

Death's Harvest!

THE OLD ABE HOIST HOUSE AND SHAFT BURNED.

Twelve Men Were In The Mine, Eight Of Whom Perished.

THE DEAD LAID TO REST.

The town was startled at 3 o'clock on Saturday morning by the blowing of whistles and firing of guns. People who were awakened by the alarm saw from their windows the red glare of fire reflected on the sky and on Baxter mountain. It was at once known that the Old Abe mine or mill was the scene of the conflagration.

Soon an excited crowd was rushing up the hill to the mine, a mile away. Before they reached the scene, however, the shaft house, a large and substantial structure, together with the wood and smith shops, were a mass of cinders and the flames were shooting skyward from the shaft.

EIGHT MEN ENTOMBED.

It was ascertained twelve men were in the mine at the time the fire broke out, of whom four, George Wilkerson, Coke Keith, Mike Gallagher and Anton Hegwal escaped through the air shaft by prompt and vigorous action, the alarm being received with not a moment to spare. But Frank Wilson, W. J. Williams, Charles Sherrick, John Davis, George Baxter, Frank White, Gerry Conover and W. B. Mitchell were left below and their fate was unknown. There were those who hoped that the men below had found safety in some chamber where they had walled themselves in against the smoke and gases, and were alive if the air was not all exhausted. The presence of a current down the air shaft strengthened this hope somewhat; and it was further supported by the knowledge that both Sherrick and Williams were old in mining experiences, had passed through many of the dangers of their vocation, and were well acquainted with the mine. The opinion of miners generally, however, was from the fact that there was no ground for hope.

THE FIRE SUDDEN.

As soon as possible after the building was reduced to ruins water was turned into the shaft and the fire was promptly gotten under control. During the day the fire was completely extinguished, but it was impossible to get below the second level to either shaft on account of the smoke and vapors that hung in the workings. The men worked heroically under disadvantages and it was near daylight Sunday morning before a pipe was connected from the surface to the 13th level. Both the Lady Godiva and North Homestead air-compressors were coupled on to this and worked at high pressure, and by 10 o'clock the third level was reached.

THE VICTIMS FOUND.

Here the first ghastly discovery was made. At the landing of the man way lay the blackened bodies of Gerry Conover and Frank Wilson. The former had apparently been in advance and had fallen back from the ladder leading to the level above; while Wilson's strength failed when he had dragged himself partially over Conover's body and he sank down to die.

At the foot of the first ladder below lay the body of W. J. Williams who had dropped from it while nearing the landing on the third.

All these were most probably overcome by smoke while making a brave struggle for life. The first body, that of Wilson, was raised at 10:15, and the two soon after. The next hour was spent in the search for other bodies.

The next found were those of Charles Sherrick, George Baxter and John Davis, who had endeavored to pass up through the stope worked out between the fourth and third levels. Sherrick had evidently been overcome at the foot of the stope, on the fourth level where all were found, while the others had climbed up part way and fallen, as their positions and cuts and bruises on their faces indicated.

By noon the six bodies had been taken out and conveyed to Slack's undertaking rooms.

The levels below were explored as far as the men could go in search of the bodies of Mitchell and White; but after searching the seventh the conclusion was reached that they had not received the alarm and would be found where they were at work on the twelfth, or that they had been driven down to the thirteenth or fourteenth. The search was then abandoned until 8 o'clock Monday morning, when the thirteenth was reached.

The first surmise proved to be correct. Mitchell was found lying on the tramway a few paces from the stope in which he had been at work, face downward and his head toward the shaft 350 feet away. He had his candle in one hand and his hat in the other, as if he had been fanning himself when he fell. He had probably noticed the exhaustion of oxygen through the fierce draft of the flames above and had started for the shaft to learn the cause when overcome. White was sitting on a timber in the stope with his hammer in his lap.

The last body, that of White, was brought up at 9 o'clock Monday.

THE LAST SAD RITES.

The bodies were all neatly and tastefully prepared for burial by J. B. Slack and M. B. Koch, who embalmed them. Bouquets of natural flowers adorned each quiet breast, and all were enclosed in handsome caskets of uniform style.

It was a scene such as the peaceful mountains encircling the town had never looked down upon before when at two o'clock Tuesday afternoon White Oaks en masse assembled at the Congregational church to pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of them who so few days before were with and of the living, filled with the same hopes, aspirations, or oppressed with the same sorrows and cares, as they who survive now all past.

The strongest man might not look unmoved on those eight caskets before the altar, each holding what had been a strong man. The sorrow depicted on every countenance in the silent throng was of the melted heart.

After the impressive services at the church the march to the K. of P. cemetery began, the column led by Baxter lodge, Knights of Pythias, of which order Sherrick was a member, and visiting brothers.

Seven of the graves were side by side. That of Sherrick was separate. While at the grave a telegram was received from the latter's relatives at Golden, Colorado, directing that his body be shipped to that place, which has since been done.

WHAT WAS THE CAUSE?

The origin of the fire is a mystery, and will no doubt remain so. It appeared to burst out of the change room, but most probably originated in the store room adjoining, which was perfectly closed and was kept securely locked, and where the fire may have smoldered for hours till the room was filled with inflammable gas which exploded with the suddenness of powder, though it is claimed that there was nothing in itself explosive in the room. George Wilkerson had come from the change room a minute before the discovery of the fire and was going down on the bucket when it was made. He had reached the ninth level when Jas. Weaver was driven from the hoist by the heat and Wilkerson went down 200 feet to thirteen where the bucket struck, turned over and sent him into the drift. Almost miraculously, he was not hurt. Looking up the shaft he saw the fire and at once started up the ladder, giving the alarm as he ascended. He was among the first of the four to escape, having climbed to the second level.

This is the first serious accident the Old Abe has ever had. The mine has been carefully and conservatively operated and no blame can be attached to the management so far as can be inferred from what is known. All the resident members of the company were tireless in their efforts until the order was over and the dead laid away. It was simply one of those deplorable calamities whose prevention is beyond human foresight.

THE DEAD.

John Davis had been in the camp about two years, coming here from another part of the Territory, in which he has worked for many years. He leaves a wife and one son. Mrs. Davis was completely prostrated by the shock and for a time it was feared that her strength

would not be equal to the terrible ordeal.

George Baxter leaves a wife but no children. She broke down at the first news and during the season of suspense and realization of the worst her anguish was most touching, and for a time it was thought her life was in danger as with every exertion she fainted away. They had come here but a short time ago from Kingston. He was formerly a railroad man.

Frank Wilson leaves a grief-stricken wife and one daughter. He has lived in the camp for ten years, and had no connection with the Wells-Fargo driver the Las Vegas Optic refers to as being suspected of a \$5,000 express robbery years ago. That journal's imputation was nullified for in this connection and as unjust to his memory. The man referred to was in this camp once, it is said years ago.

Charles Sherrick had been in the employ of the Old Abe for three years, and at the time of his death was in charge of the night force in the mine. He was man universally respected and a good and reliable miner. He leaves sisters and other relatives in Colorado, where he had lived since boyhood before coming here.

W. J. Williams was a native of Cornwall, England and had worked in the mines of his native Isle many years before coming to Colorado some twenty years ago. He had been here five years. "Cully" was a most genial and companionable man and generally well known and well liked. He lived with his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Howard.

W. B. Mitchell was a native of Virginia but had been in the west for several years, and came to the Territory from the northwest. He had been in White Oaks about two years. He was a clever, whole-souled young man and popular with all who knew him well. A brother-in-law now en route to this city from his home in Missouri to take charge of his effects.

Jerry Conover was a new man in the camp, having come here a short time since from Roswell. He was soon to have been married. His fiancée had come but a few days previous to his death. He had the appearance of a straight-forward and honest boy.

Frank White was a stranger in the camp, scarcely anything is known of him. He was working his second shift on another man's time.

Mrs. John Davis and Mrs. George Baxter, whose conditions, resulting from nervous prostration, were considered serious for a time, have become more calm and now are able to rest some.

Alfred James came near being added to the list of victims of the mine horror. He worked with the other men until near noon Sunday when he descended with a party into the mine and was taken out completely exhausted. He was afterward attacked with spasmodic congestion of the brain. He was a very sick man for a time, but Dr. Shodloski, who attends him, hopes to bring him safely through.

Repairs on the Old Abe mine will be pushed as rapidly as possible, and work will probably be resumed within the month unless the hoist should prove to be entirely ruined, in which case more time will be required. The new shaft house will be of iron, except the frame work, which will be of wood covered with the iron of the roof of the former structure. The timbers of the shaft are burned badly in the lower three hundred feet and near the top. In these sections much work will have to be replaced. None of the timbers in the drifts or other working parts of the mine were injured.

Col. Yaloo has returned to Denver. Apples, four pounds for 25c at Taliaferro Bros.

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Garden Seeds for garden "mass". Full line of Landreth's seeds, onion sets, etc. Also everything in flower seeds at TALIAFERRO BROS.

The public meeting of the W. C. T. U. will occur this month on the last Friday night of the month. Hereafter such meetings will occur regularly on the fourth Friday night of each month. Superintendent Ashmun is expected to address the meeting this month, which will be on the evening of the 29th.

Has he Deceived you?

We mean the merchant whose representations do not pan. He may be honest in what he told you, but he was mistaken. In that event, he should either exchange the purchase or refund the money. That is what Taliaferro Bros. do when the customer is not satisfied. That is fair; that is just.

Try a package of Schillings Spices, Teas, Extracts and Baking Powder. First class goods that we recommend. That means they're ALL RIGHT!

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Fresh lot of White House Coffee and Fancy Groceries from St. Louis, arrived last Tuesday. Everything in California Dried Fruits and Canned Goods.

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It hurts, to virtually give away goods, but we need room and money and we won't be out-done by anybody, and from now on propose to knock competition clean off the perch.

We have no space to mention prices, but we will guarantee our customers that our prices on all goods will be below any of our competitors or we will refund you your money.

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We will close out all Winter Goods at prices

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