



Reports

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Avondale Colliery

THE
GREAT DISASTER
AT
AVONDALE COLLIERY,
SEPTEMBER 6, 1869.

Subject: Mine disaster, Avondale Colliery, Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad Company, Plymouth, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, September 6, 1869, 179 killed.

A wooden breaker constricted over the shaft opening to the underground workings caught on fire. The shaft was the sole means of exit from the mine; consequently, the men working underground were trapped and died of suffocation.

Although gas hazards were due mainly to poor ventilation, many of the mines in [the] early days had but one shaft to the surface. One morning in September, 1869, in an Avondale, Pa., mine, the wooden beams and planking lining the shaft were set afire by sparks from the ventilating furnace. Flames quickly made the shaft a roaring inferno which no man could approach. For hours water was pumped into the shaft, and along toward evening rescue parties were able to descend.

Catastrophes of the nature aroused tremendous public indignation. One result was the formation of a group known as the Molly Maguires, who raised havoc in the anthracite fields, being charged with the deaths of a large number of mine bosses. Although it is doubtful if the Mollys had much effect on improving hazardous conditions, they kept the subject of safety and demonstrated how poor accident experience could be made an excuse for mob violence.

AVONDALE CONTRADICTIONS
BY JAMES J. CORRIGARY

The author of the accompanying article on the Avondale disaster, in research on that historic and tragical event, was amazed at the mis-statements he found in frequently accepted versions of the Plymouth catastrophe.

To show how far some of numerous historical references to the Avondale disaster have strayed from the truth, Corrigan cites these "authorities":----

The U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Mines, in publications on "Coal Mine Fatalities," and "Coal Mine Disasters in the United States," issued in 1916 and 1946 gave the Avondale total fatality figure as 179.

Even the generally historically reliable volume on the anthracite mining industry prepared at the instance of the Hudson Coal Co. and published in 1932, titled "The Story of Anthracite," asserted erroneously (on page 168): "The greatest mine fire disaster in the anthracite industry occurred at the Avondale Colliery at Plymouth, Penn., on September 6, 1869, when 179 men lost their lives."

In 1942 was published a book, "History of Legislation for the Protection of Coal Miners in Pennsylvania." The author; Alexander Trachtenberg, stated: "The death of 179 men employed in the Avondale shaft might have been prevented."

Anthracite Historian Corrigan, thus far, has been unable to trace the source of the widely-publicized figure of 179 Avondale fatalities, instead of the true total victims, 110. But comparatively recently, 1932, a local year book, under "Mine Disasters," published:

"September 6, 1869-Avondale, Plymouth; mine fire; 179 dead."

Yet, the same year annual published in 1901, under a listing of "Mine Disasters-1846 to 1900," gave the correct version of Avondale fatalities 110 lives lost.

THE AVONDALE DISASTER

STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT

Monday morning, September 6th, 1869, the entire coal mining region of Pennsylvania, and in fact, the whole country, was startled by the telegraphic announcement that the coal breaker, head house, and other buildings over the shaft of the Avondale mine (formerly known as Steuben), situated in the Wyoming Valley, one mile below Plymouth, were on fire, and that "two hundred and two" human beings were thereby confined in the recesses of the mine, with little prospect of ever again seeing the light of day.

THE MINE PROPERTY

The Avondale mine property was leased by Mr. J. C. Phelps, of Wilkes-Barre, June 13, 1863, of William C. Reynolds, Henderson Gaylord, and others. In January, 1866, Mr. Phelps assigned it to the Steuben Coal Company, which was subsequently merged with the Nanticoke Coal & Iron Company, who built the destroyed works.

The mine is driven into what are known as the Shawnee Hills, which overlook the valley on the north. These hills rise abruptly to a great height behind the ruins of the breaker, etc., and are thickly covered with primeval forest trees. Standing on the made ground on which the breaker was situated, and looking southerly, a

most beautiful view presents itself. Immediately below and on either hand are streets of miner's houses, all neatly whitewashed. Still lower down is the Bloomsburg Railroad track. Lower still, looking over the Shawnee Flats, and nearly half a mile distant, silently flows the placid Susquehanna river, while luxuriant meadows, broad in extent, make from either side. The Dundee Shaft and other coal works and numerous hamlets dot the landscape, and in the distance the Wilkes-Barre mountains loom up, completing a picture which for variety and beauty can hardly be surpassed.

The works were built for Moses Taylor, of New York, and were finished in September, 1867, being considered the finest in the valley. The size of the shaft was 10 x 22 feet 4 inches, with hoisting ways 7 feet wide for coal, and an air way 7 feet wide. The top of the breaker was 60 feet above the mouth of the shaft. Four hundred and fifty thousand feet of lumber was required for the buildings, and the brattice work of the shaft. The plans and specifications for the breaker were made at the Dickson Manufacturing Works, Sevantoe, where the machinery was also built, under the supervision of the late Mr. John A. Dickson, it being the last work pleased by him. The machinery was as follows: One 40 - horse power engine for driving breakers, screens, and side planes; one pair of 40 - horse power engine each, for hoisting coal from the pit, and one 80 - horse power engine carrying 18 - inch plunger pumps, 9 feet stroke. All the above machinery was supplied with steam from six boilers, 34 inches in diameter and 40 feet long. The breakers consisted of one pair, 16 x 36 inches, for breaking down the large coal as it comes from the mine, and one pair, 18 x 30 inches, for rebreaking the grate coal. There was one 6 foot, two 5 foot, and two 4 foot screens for separating the various kinds of coal. The breaker and buildings burned several above half an acre of ground. The capacity of the breaker was between 800 and 400, one of lump, and between 800 and 900 tons of prepared coal.

On the proceeding page will be found a plan of the interior of the mine which represents the later exactly as it was the morning of the disaster. The drawing for it was made by Mining Engineer John F. Sayder, of the Delaware, Lachawanna & Western Railroad Company, from the original working plan of the mine, to which has been added, by Mr. Henry J. Phillips, also a mining engineer of the Company, the latest workings in the mine. Letters [on bottom of map] refer to foot notes, indicating the position of the shaft, [furnaces] ventilation fans, stable, all the gangways, airways, cross-cuts, doors, planes, etc., together with the parties of the east gangway in which were found huddled together sixty-seven unfortunate miners. The black portions represent the coal left for pillars, and the white chambers which are worked. The drawing is made to scale, 990 feet to the inch.

DISCOVERY AND PROGRESS OF FIRE

The fire was first discovered by people outside, issuing from

the top of the head house, but before that time, Mr. Alexander Weir, the engineer, had been startled by its rushing up the shaft with great fury and with a sound not unlike that of an explosion or pouff. So rapidly did its carry on it work that he was merely enabled to blow out the whistle and arrange matters to prevent a boiler explosion, being obliged finally to make his exit without [securing] his hat. In an almost incredibly short space of time everything combustible about the entire works was in flames--a line of fire extending from the Bloomsburg Railroad track below, to the head house above, a distance of not less than three hundred feet. When [seen] in full progress, the night was grand beyond description. Imagine a plane of fire running up at an angle of about thirty-three degrees toward the hill above, and after it has accomplished that distance, see it shoot up in one immense column into the air, while dense clouds of smoke envelope all surrounding objects, and the reader can have a faint idea of the spectacle.

But there was another phase of the scene at this time which harrowed up the very soul. Surrounding the fire on every side were hundreds of men, women, and children, the female portion of whom were making the air resound with their terrible cries of distress. Wives were wringing their hands and wailing "Oh! my goodness," "God have mercy," "Who'll take care of my children?" and using . . . of endearment and woe. Mothers were crying out for their [children crying as only] mothers can cry, and feeling only as mothers can feel. Fathers were mourning the lost of their first born or the sons of their later years. Brothers were mourning the loss of brothers, and sweethearts were frantic over their lost fond lovers, who only the evening previous, perhaps, had . . . bosoms and whose kisses were yet burning on their lips . . . advice, or consolation served to quiet them. This state of . . . when most of the bereaved relatives became more calm . . . effort making to extinguish the fire. During the . . . were much less frequent, although individual . . . might have been frequently seen in the neighborhood . . . from the cabins of the miners.

. . . great fears were entertained that all the . . . side hill, both ways from the fire, would . . . household goods were removed to a place of . . . providentially the wind blew up the hill . . . burning only the forest trees, which blazed and . . . scorching heat like heat like very . . .

. . . to be visible to the surrounding country and to the neighboring collieries, men began to flock toward the burning breaker, and [when] a large crowd assembled, which . . . By noon . . . thousands every . . . place thronging with . . . The first thought of the mine, was to remove the blasting power from the magazines to the . . . He then . . . to . . . Wilkes-Barre for fire engines. Mssrs . . . immediately set themselves about organizing a bucket brigade from a large water tank on the hill to the fire, throwing water upon it until the arrival of the first fire apparatus - head engine . . . from Kingston. This engine was

accompanied by Master Mechanic Graham, of the I & . . and a large force of shop men, and was placed on the hill near the head of the shaft. It was supplied from the buckets until a trough was laid from the bank on the hill above, through which it was thenceforth furnished with a constant supply of water. Good Will engine No. I, of Wilkes-Barres accompanied by Chief Engineer Woodward and a large company of men, arrived next. [Nay Aug] steam fire engine of Scranton, (S. B. Bullwell, Foreman), reached the ground about one 30'clock. This was accompanied by about four hundred foot of hose and by a company of men. Supt. Starre, Mining Engineer Sayder, and others, were on the main which carried Nay Aug down. A line of hose was stretched up the hill, and drawn above a wall of stone thirty-five feet high, at the top of which was loaded the upper portion of the breaker and the head hoses of the works. After being supplied for a time by Good Will engine, the steamer took suction in a stream below the railroad, and sent o powerful volume of water into the mouth of the shaft, which was covered with a seething mass of burning timbers. About the middle of the afternoon the two streams from the Kingston and Scranton engines had subdued the fire in a great measure, and Nay Aug's was than removed to a distant tunnel, the mouth of which is situated at the foot of the high wall mentioned. When the rubbish which encumbered the shaft was cleared away, the stream of water was carried into the tunnel to an opening in the side of the shaft, down which the flood was poured until all fire was extinguished. This opening is about thirty feet below the head of the shaft and about fifty feet from the mouth of the tunnel. Good Will engine all this time had a constant stream water upon a huge mass of burning coal which was in the chutes between the railroad and the head house above when the fire broke out.

PREPARATIONS TO DESCEND THE SHAFT

As soon as the fire was so far extinguished above that men could work about the mouth of the shaft, the rubbish was cleared away and preparations made to right put up a derrick . . . over it by which to descend the shaft. The derrick was finished shortly after half pass five pm., and also the hoisting apparatus, worked by horse power. This was supplied with about six hundred feet of strong rope. In order to prevent any unnessary risk to human life, it was decided prudent to send an animal and a light (in a closed lantern) [down] the shaft first. Accordingly, at the . . six, a small dog, enclosed in a bag with a . . top, also a lighted lantern, was lowered as far as possible into the shaft to see if the air was foul feet enough to kill the dog or to extinguish the light - if not it was thought a man could descend. . . At six o'clock the bed was raised to the surface - the dog was living, but the light in the lantern was out (probably because it was a closed light), yet it was evident to all that the lamp of human life would burn at the bottom of the fearfull shaft. A sentiment of relief was experienced for the first time since morning, and strong, hopes were entertained that the imprisoned men would soon be found

living, breathing beings instead of [incarcerated] corpses as had been feared all day. Before the dog was drawn up, quiet was requested, and a number of men who were at the mouth of the tunnel [bellowed] down the shaft in the hope that an answering sound would be heard from the imprisoned men. Many in the tunnel and above ground, thought that they heard answer, "All right," and immediately, cheer after cheer went up from the assembled multitude but the most experienced miners present were not of the same mind. They could hear no answer.

After the dog was hauled up efforts were again made to call to those below, but there was so much confusion around the mouth of the shaft, so many people being gathered there, and all being so anxious to see what was going on, that it was impossible. A policeman, and others made every effort to get the people back, but all to no purpose. It was finally, thought advisable to turn a stream of water upon the crowd to drive them away, which was accordingly done.

DESCENT OF MR. VARTUE

When quiet was by this means restored, another loud call was made. Breathless silence was observed by the vast concourse, numbering thousands, but no answering voice was heard, and hope died away. Now piercing shrieks proceeding from heart-broken women were heard, as the horrid truth began to dawn upon their minds that they were in fact bereaved. But unheeding all this, efforts were going on to ascertain beyond peradventure the actual condition of the men. To this end a volunteer was called for to descend the shaft. Here was an opportunity to display moral and physical courage such as is seldom required of mortal man. Notwithstanding the assurance which the living dog conveyed to those above - who knew whether or not the air below was not getting fowler every moment? Who knew if on the bottom of the shaft, providing it could be reached, there was not sufficient "black damp" to asphyxiate the strongest man? While these queries passed through many minds, causing them to shrink from the venture, one noble man stood by, ready to peril his earthy existence, if need be, for the benefit of his fellow-miners. All honor to the great-hearted Charles Vartue, of the Grand Tunnel colliery. In the prime of his life (85 years old), with a glowing future before him, he stepped forth (perhaps to his earthy doom), hooked on his lamp, and prepared to descend. A bucket was securely fastened to the rope, and, provided with a lantern, a canteen of coffee, a wet towel around his neck, and a signal rope, at half - past six he commenced his descent. Slowly the rope unwound from the great drum, and after occasional stops he gave the signal to ascend.

HIS RETURN AND REPORT

In fourteen minutes after he disappeared he again reached the

surface, and was immediately plied with questions. Mr. Vartue reported that about halfway down the shaft he found obstructions which prevented his further descent. A pump was lodged there, upon which rested a stick of timber and other obstructions, and although there was an opening large enough to go through, he feared to enter, thinking that if he did the debris might fall upon him. He reported the brattice in the shaft not much burned, and the air perfectly good and not much heated; also that two men would have to go down, as they could work together to good advantage. It being thought best to send fresh men, volunteers were again called for.

TWO MEN DESCEND

Several responded, and Charles Jones, of Plymouth, and Stephen Evans, of Nottingham shaft, were selected. At seven minutes to seven o'clock, being supplied with a hatchet, hook, and other appliances, they descended. They gave signals several times to stop, during which time they were engaged in removing obstructions. At five minutes past seven they stepped from the bucket upon the bottom of the shaft and disappeared. Darkness for a time held sway and every heart . . . Six minutes later [sounds] were heard, as of heavy pounding some distance from the bottom of the shaft and it was supported above that it was upon brattice work . . . by the bucket mass to shut up the gangway, and thus prevent the entrance of fire and smoke.

DISCOURAGING REPORT

Nine minutes later the men emerged from the shaft, gasping for fresh air. They reported that they went seventy or eighty yards into a gangway, finding two dead mules as they progressed. They finally came to a closed door, upon which they pounded, waiting breathlessly for an answering sound from the unfortunate men. But alas! alas!! no sound came, and they felt compelled to return, noticing that clouds of sulphur were pouring out through the crevice in the woodwork of the door. They did not attempt to break down the door, fearing that the sulphur would overpower them in their partially exhausted condition. They also discovered another gangway running in another direction, into which the fresh air appeared to be rushing. This Mr. Jones desired to penetrate, but his companion, either from exhaustion or some other reason, declined, and Mr. Jones did not deem it prudent to attempt to explore it alone.

TWO VOLUNTEERS SACRIFICE THEMSELVES

When this news went abroad among the crowd, its significance was understood in a moment. Most people saw in it indications that those who were imprisoned below would never again behold the light of day, and the shrieks of women and the cries of children rent the

evening air. No words can describe the scene. It continued far into the silent watches of the night. But during this time the efforts to ascertain positively the fate of the imprisoned men were not intermitted. Two more volunteers were called upon, and two more men were found ready to risk their lives for those of their comrades in the mine. Thomas W. Williams, of Plymouth, and David Jones, of Grand Tunnel, entered what subsequently proved to them the pit of death. After reaching the bottom of the shaft they made signals for pick and shovel to be sent to them. Accordingly the bucket was hoisted and the tools were put in and sent to them. After waiting some time, and hearing nothing from the men, the bucket again raised and two fresh men went down to search for them. Both Williams and Jones were lying insensible. The body of Williams was immediately sent up with the men who went down, only Jones remaining. After long continued efforts to resuscitate Williams, the melancholy truth had to be accepted that his life had been given a sacrifice for the dead, and that another victim was added to the fearful disaster. Another party now descended, for Jones, one of whom had been down previously. They had not gone far before this man prostrated, and his companion, as hurriedly as possible, carried him back to the bucket and both were quickly drawn up. It was a work of some to resuscitate him, but it was finally accomplished. Thomas L. Williams now went down, found the body of Jones, and drew it to the bottom of the shaft, but was too much overcome to remain longer. He was drawn up, and John W. and Isaac Thomas went down for a final effort to recover the body of the unfortunate Jones. This they accomplished with difficulty, finding the air fouler every moment. Two brave men had now perished, willing martyrs in their efforts to gain some tidings of their buried brothers. Mr. Williams left a loving wife and four children to mourn his loss, and Mr. Jones, friends who will look vainly for his coming to them again. By the time these fruitless efforts had been finished it was past midnight, and prudence dictated that until fresh air could be forced into the mine it would be nothing short of suicide for men again to attempt an entrance. It was accordingly determined that nothing more should be done until a fan and donkey engine (which was expected from . . .) should be rigged at the mouth of the shaft, by which to force air through a canvas hose into the mine. The following telegram was at this time flashed over the wires:

"The only hope for the men in the mine is their having shut themselves out entirely from the draft."

AIR TO BE FORCED INTO THE MINE

At seven o'clock Tuesday morning the fan and engine arrived on the ground. At 9:15 a.m. they commenced working, and every pulse was quickened at the busy hum and at the prospect of a speedy renewal of the mine explorations. At the same time a meeting of miners was convened in the woods near by, at which Mr. James George, an old and experienced miner and President of the Plymouth

Branch of the Miner's Union, presided. He stated in a spirited speech, the object of the gathering to be the organization of a force of fifty experienced men from among the representatives of the several districts of the county present, to hold themselves in readiness to volunteer to descend the shaft. He said that seventeen miners from Hyde Park were ready, and called for nominations from other locations. Thomas J. Phillips, Superintendent of the Jersey mines, waited upon the meeting to say that when preparations were ready the carpenters, machinists, and others would give place to the miners, who should co-operate with the officers of the Company in exploring the mine.

By half past nine people began to arrive on the ground in great numbers from all the surrounding country, and it was not long before they numbered thousands. Among them came a reinforcement of three hundred miners from Coalville, headed by Mr. J. C. Walls. After working the fan a few minutes on trial, the canvas air conductor, or hose (about two feet in diameter), was connected and lowered to the bottom of the mine, and the fan set to work. By this time forty-six miners had enrolled their names and had chosen as Superintendents, James George, of Plymouth, and Henry W. Evans, of . . . , George Morgue, of the Nanicoke mines, was appointed foreman on the part of the miners, and Thomas M. Davies, of Nanicoke, and John H. Powell, of Tayorville, as advisors, who were to have the direction of operations in the mine after the descent was made.

THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE

These men and the various relief-gangs repaired to the tunnel and placed themselves at its opening into the shaft, from which point all efforts were thereafter conducted. Here men stepped upon the platform carriage when about to descend, and here it stopped as it was drawn up from the bottom of the shaft. This tunnel is about one thousand feet long. It was driven into the side hill many years ago, in the hope of striking coal, but it was a failure, and had never been used. It was directly past the shaft and had an opening into the hill about fifty feet from the point where it enters the hill. It was through this tunnel that all the bodies were subsequently carried to the outer air.

THE MINE . . .

At 10:30 am., Thomas . . . Superintendent of Hampton mines, and John F. Davies, carpenter at Avondale, made the first descent of the shaft. They proceeded only one hundred feet when they lowered three lamps which were found to burn freely. Obstructions, however, prevented the lamps from reaching the bottom within fifteen feet. They remained in their position . . . the shaft for fifteen minutes, the lamps continuing to burn. At eleven o'clock they returned and reported that tools were needed to clear the passage, and fifteen minutes later, George T. Morgan, of Nanticoke, John Powell, of Tayorville, Thomas Davies, of Bellevue, and Thomas E. Davies, of Nanticoke, a Committee of Miners, descended the

shaft, proceeding slowly and with care. After a few minutes they ascended to the head of the shaft and reported that after leaving the platform on which they went down they proceeded about thirty feet into the gangway, and finding a great deal of carbonic acid gas (black damp) retreated, after carrying the end of the large canvas air conveyor as far into the mine as they went. The damp was between two and three feet deep on the bottom of the mine. Five minutes to twelve o'clock Ross Evans, Thomas Carace, Charles Jones, and Isaac Thomas, another Miner's Committee, descended the shaft. They returned safely as had the first. They penetrated the gangway seventy five feet further in one of the tributary gangways, and found that the cage door was wide open. They then went 100 feet further to one of the tributary gangways, and found a small door closed. Had this small door been found open it was thought that there might have been a shadow of hope, as the gases, smoke, and fire would have had free passage around the circuit and out again. This not being the case, fears were entertained that the smoke had penetrated the inner mine and suffocated all the men. The main doorway leading to the mine had not up to this time been reached. At half-past twelve o'clock a third set of men, four in number, went down, but returned in fifteen minutes. Two of the men were so much overcome with the efforts of the gas that all . . . before they continued efforts of three physicians were successful in reviving them. In the meantime the wildest excitement provided among the . . . assembled, who were with great difficulty kept back from the immediate vicinity of the mine. A telegram at this time gives a succinct account of the situation as follows:

"The two miners are . . . no peril . . by any further attempts to go down as . . as the gas is . . . The attempt to reach the main . . the mines . . . the outer gangway . . . ascertain how long it takes. There is really no [present] hope that a single life remains of those . . . in the mine Monday morning. Everybody gives them up and naught probably remains to do but unearth the dead. What horror and suffering was yesterday witnessed beneath this spot, and . . . it was of long or short . . , some will probably [n]ever know."

MORE MEN OVERCOME BY DAMP

For two hours nothing was done but force air into the shaft, after which time, lighted lamps were lowered to the bottom. Finding that they burned freely, four men descended, who returned in good condition and reported the atmosphere much purer. At half past three o'clock another relay of four men went down the shaft. They proceeded along the gangway, through the first door and about seventy - five feet further, when they opened a door leading to the furnace. It was found to be full of burning coal, and the fire had communicated with a heap of coal in front, which was also a blazing mass. One of the party becoming overcome with the gas, the rest retired quickly with him and were drawn up. On arriving at the mouth of the shaft the exhausted man was carried out bodily by four

men, and the others [carried] out to open air, where they were resuscitated with great difficulty. A consultation was now held and sad and serious were the deliberations. All efforts, so far, to retrieve the men or get at them had been worse than fruitless. The air had been forced into the mine all day through the gangway in which stands the furnace. It had been understood since the previous night that the coal in this furnace had been drawn out and extinguished upon the first alarm of fire. Such was the report of those who first entered the mine Monday night. It now seemed not, and that the volume of air . . . late the raise had . . . even the burning furnace and carried all the gases and . . . This alone, continued as it had been all day, would have been enough to have . . . the death of . . . of the mine, even if they had been fortunate enough to have been alive Tuesday morning. At five o'clock, . . . was let down the shaft through which to force water upon the furnace to extinguish the fire. At half past six o'clock, four men John Tindale, Col. Harketas, John Batterlas, and Ross B. Jones, went down to carry the end of the hose to the furnace. They returned fifteen minutes later, saying that the hose was tangled in the shaft so that they could only partly arrange it, and they could not find the opening by which they expected to enter. They were not seriously affected by the foul air. At ten minutes past seven o'clock another relay of four men William Henry, Evan Morris, Evan J. Evans, and William Gregory went down. They returned in about twenty minutes, reporting that they had been at the furnace and found everything all right except the fire, which was still burning. They could not arrange the hose until it was hoisted up a little. They also weren't much affected by the bad air. At ten minutes to eight o'clock, John Price, Evan Morris, William M. Thomas, and Elijah Thomas went down (making Morris's second trip), for the purpose of arranging the hose. They were down twenty minutes, and Evan Morris was brought out insensible -- falling before he reached the carriage -- this second trip proving more than he could stand. He was resuscitated in a short time. The others were all right. They succeeded in getting the hose ready to haul up. Twenty - five minutes past o'clock, John Williams, John Hupkins, H. W. Evans, and D. W. Evans went down, and staid twenty five minutes, causing considerable anxiety among those above. The hose was carried forward to the furnace, thirty feet. They reported that there was no fire except that in the grate, which seemed to be dying out. At five minutes past nine, William S. Price, Lewis Davies, G. D. Davies, and William Mcgregar went down, but after remaining twenty minutes returned, reporting no new developments. At twenty minutes of ten, Thomas M. Price, Mark Brane, William Gray, and D. W. . . went down, and after a lapse of fifteen minutes returned, and reported the hose placed in position for the water, the idea being throw the water against the roof, at a pressure of two hundred feet, and let it fall on the furnace. While these men were down, those who anxiously awaited the result of their descent were considerably alarmed by the cracking of the roof of the tunnel and the falling of part of it, caused by the cooling off of the surface rock. Fortunately, no one was hurt. At

ten o'clock the water was turned into the hose. At a quarter past eleven o'clock, D. W. Morgan, R. H. Williams, A. Phillips, and William J. Price, went down the shaft, remaining fifteen minutes. They found muck fed air and did not advance further than the furnace. At midnight Tuesday, David Jones, Henry Atherall, Samuel Morgan, and John Williams went down, and after remaining twenty five minutes, came up, in a very bad condition, the black damp that now . . rising making them quite sick, but not . . were the others. They poured water upon the furnace and reported that the fire was out.

At about the time this gang asked to be hoisted. George Morgan, who was watching at the opening of the shaft, had to be removed and all except four or five were driven from the tunnel, the black damp that was coming up the shaft making Morgan sick, and placing all who might be in the tunnel in a very perilous situation. No further attempt was made to go down for an hour. Water was all the time going down freely.

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT BODIES RECOVERED

Wednesday, at two o'clock a.m., matters were at stand still, except as regards to the water going in upon the furnace and the rising of the black damp. No one had been down since the gang last reported, although an effort was made to get another gang to go. Three who had not been down were ready, but those in authority were afraid to have them run the risk, unless some one who had been down, would go along. Observations convinced all present that the men in the mine were beyond all hope of recovery alive. The volunteers at this time were about worked out, and the prospect of the air being pure enough to allow of any more men entering for a long time was not good. Just before three o'clock, however, a party went down and penetrated as far as the stable of the mine, where two dead bodies were found in a horrible condition (bloated and with blood oozing from their mouths). At first they were not recognized, but being brought up they were found to be those of Palmer Steele, stable boss, and a young man aged about eighteen years, named Deasison Slocum. The latter was a male driver. Mr. Steele leaves a wife and a family of five girls, the oldest not over ten years of age.

At half past six o'clock, R. Williams, D. W. Evans, John Williams, and William Thomas went down and made the most extended exploration hitherto attempted. They were gone half an hour, when they returned and reported that they ascended the self - seting plane leading to the east gangway, and traversed it until they reached a closed brattice which the men had built to shut themselves if possible from the foul air. This they broke through, and their gaze was not by a view which appalled the stoutest heart among them. Grouped together, in every possible position, laid the dead bodies of sixty - seven men and boys, some appearing as if they had quietly dropped asleep, while others seemed to have

struggled with their impending fate. Some of them, latter laid with their faces buried in coal dust in the floor, in the vain attempt to find a current of fresh air. Other's hands were [clasped] to their throats, while not a few had their faces wrapped in their shirts. One father, Mr. William P. Evans, was stretched out, with a son closely clasped by each arm, while a third was lying between his legs, with his head resting on his father's breast. Another father, Mr. Hutton, lovingly embraced a young son, and all appeared as of sweetly sleeping. Mr. Evan Hughes, the Inside Boss, was sitting down with his head bent forward upon his breast, and with his hands clasped infront of him, while another body was reclining a few feet distant with face turned to Mr. Hughes, as though he had been engaged in conversation with him, but a moment previous to drawing his last breath. What had been the conversation of these two men will only be revealed at the last great day. Had they been considering the chances of success, or was each leaving with the other a parting message to dear ones at home, to be delivered in case either survived?

This party secured the watch of Mr. Hughes, and also that of Mr. Evans. That of the former was stopped at fifteen minutes past five o'clock, and that of the latter at eight minutes to six.

Preparations were now made to send down the relief of miners, which had been organized to carry to the surface the dead men. These reliefs were than composed:

- 1st, Evan Perry, T. L. Jones, William Neviss, Edward German, and William Thomas.
- 2nd, William Richards, William H. Morgan, Thomas Benguch, and J. L. Harris
- 3rd, Reese W. Rosen and Henry Atherall.
- 4th, Timothy Thomas, Lewis Davies, Thomas Williams, and Griffith Abraham.
- 5th, Ira O. Thomas, Thomas O'Keefe, Mark Evans, and Thomas Bones.
- 6th, William F. Halliday, John Tisel, Reese T. Evans, and Thomas Davies.

A JURY IMPANELED AND BODIES VIEWED

In the meantime in the [presence] of a Coroner, B. O. Wadhams and J. W. . . . of Plymouth, Justice of the Peace, had been summoned to act as . . . They impaneled the following jury to view the remains as they were brought out of the mine, vis: W. J. Harvey, Foreman; Samuel Van Loon, Martha McDonald, James George, Charles Hutchinson, and Thomas Patton.

The first relief corps which went down brought back with it the body of Mr. John Bowen, of Plymouth, formerly of Providence. He was thirty one years of age, and left a wife and one child. One

eye was open, but otherwise his countenance seemed at rest and as though he had died without a struggle. The body was brought out of the tunnel on a bier, which was deposited on the ground before the jury, who then and there viewed the remains - those who brought them out being sworn as to the fact of bringing them from the mine, and as to their identity. When the latter was ascertained, his name and residence were announced to the assembled thousands by Mr. James George, of Plymouth, President of the Miner's Union, and the body was conveyed to the dead-house to be cleansed and claimed by the relatives or friends this name course was pursued with each body as recovered. The jury now repaired to the residence of Palmer Steele and Dennison Slocum (who were brought out during the night), and viewed the remains.

The rest of the bodies were brought out in the order and condition printed below:

William Powell, of Plymouth (Turkey Hill), Eyes both open, and head turned to one side, wife and several children in the old country. One daughter lives in Plymouth, and one son is dead in the mine.

David Jones, who sacrificed his own life in an effort to rescue his fellow miners on Monday night, was buried at this time, ten o'clock a.m. the fact being announced to the crowd. It was at the same [date] stated that the funeral of the late Thomas Williams, the other martyr to his efforts to ascertain the fate of his friends in the mine, would be buried at three o'clock p.m., from his late residence in Plymouth.

At this time Mr. William Halliday, of Pine Ridge, was brought from the mine greatly overcome by the foul air, and required the attendance of several physicians some time before he was restored.

The next body brought out was George Williams, of Hyde Park, a boy about fourteen years of age who went to work in Avondale for first time on Monday.

Willie Phillips, a promising boy of ten summers, and Methusalem Evans (one of three boys found in his father's arms), were brought out on one bier. Both of these boys had their hands tightly clenched, and their faces were much distorted. The former was a son of Mr. William Phillips, who resides near Nottingham Shaft, below Plymouth. His brother Thomas also in the mine.

Operations were now suspended for a time, for the purpose of securing better ventilation, and when resumed, the body of Edward Humphrey was brought to view. He left a wife to mourn his loss.

The next body was not at first recognized, but was subsequently ascertained to be that of Jacob Mosier, of Plymouth, who left a wife and four children. He was found side by side with

a companion, in a breast in the western portion of the mine, and a long way from his other companions. He was lying on his face, which had apparently been forced into the ground, and was much disfigured.

Peter Conlan's remains next appeared. They were found lying by those of Mosier. His wife and four children are in England.

John Clark, of Plymouth, (Turkey Hill). He had no shirt on. His right arm was raised and bent, his hands clenched; his left arm bent toward the right breast. He evidently died hard. He was found apart from the rest. Wife and six children.

William J. Evans, of Turkey Hill. Face at rest; he lay among the sixty-seven. Wife and two children.

George Stackhouse, of Avondale, driver, aged seventeen. Head on one side; right hand raised as though affirming, left arm doubled and fist clenched. Single.

Edwin D. Jones, of Hanover. Head thrown back, and tea-can slung around his neck. Found among the sixty seven. Wife.

Morgan Watkins, of Plymouth. Unmarried.

Andrew Frothingham, of Avondale. Head was on one side; eyes and mouth staring wide open. Wife.

William K. Allen, of Hanover, face covered with fresh blood; wife who soon expects to be a mother.

Thomas D. Jones, formerly of Providence, now of Avondale. Left a wife and widowed mother.

One o'clock Wednesday morning the body of Peter Johnson, of Plymouth, was viewed. A powerful man; face at rest; left arm and side much swollen. Single.

The twentieth body brought out was that of Mr. Evan Hughes, Inside Boss, who lived at Plymouth, his mouth and eyes were open, brother of Benjamin Hughes, of Scranton. Wife and three children.

William Bowen, of Avondale, no shirt on, body very red, head on one side. Wife and two children.

James Feare, no shift on, body and head very red, nose bloody and head on one side. Single.

Thomas Hughes, Walsh Hill, Plymouth; face very red; arms limp; fists clenched.

William Reese, Coal street, Plymouth. His stepfather and brother were both in the mine, arms raised as though boxing; hands clenched; evidently died in agony. Wife in old country.

William Pharfit, Coal Street, Plymouth; body and face purple; head on one side; shirt off. Wife and two children.

William N. Williams, Plymouth (Turkey Hill); face bloody. Wife and three children.

William Lewis, Plymouth (Turkey Hill); head thrown entirely back and very red; arms crossed above the body, as though fending. Wife.

John Hughes, Plymouth (Turkey Hill); his head was thrown back, and his eyes were staring wide open. Wife and one child.

Thomas Morris, Plymouth; face at rest. Wife and four children.

Elijah S. Bryant, Avondale; Inside Carpenter; arms crossed on breast. Wife and two children.

Thomas Roberts, son of John Roberts, Plymouth (Turkey Hill); face on one side; arms across breast. Single.

At this time, half-past three p.m., it was found necessary to call on Sheriff Rhoades to appoint a posse of Deputy Sheriffs to preserve order, the crowd having become so great that it was found very difficult to control them. A force of special policeman was also ordered from Scranton.

William Sink, Avondale; face on one side and pale; arms crossed on breast; lived in Plymouth. Single.

Daniel Jones; shirt around his neck; Plymouth (Turkey Hill); face distorted; body very red. His brother had previously been brought out. Family in England.

David Thomas, cousin to two who have been brought out; Plymouth; parents in old country; boarded with Evan Hughes; face and body pale. Single.

Daniel Givens, boy. Face pale; foam oozing from mouth; age 17; car runner; parents at Kingston (East Boston); boarded with William Phillips, Plymouth.

Evan Ross. Body discolored; face turned to one side; blood and foam issuing from mouth; Plymouth (Turkey Hill); boarded with Samuel Morgan. Wife and child in Wales.

Edward W. Edwards. Plymouth (Coal street); head horribly

bloated; discolored and bloody; thirty years old. Wife and one child.

Henry Morris, boarded with Samuel Morgan, Plymouth; face bloody; and arms limp and stiff.

William T. Williams, Hyde Park, age 39; boarded with William Evans, Plymouth; son brought out this morning. Wife and one child.

David S. Reese, Plymouth, (Coal Street), Wife and three children; one son brought out dead; another in the mine; face discolored and bruised; arms stiff and raised before him.

Richard Woolley; boards with John E. Jones, Plymouth (Turkey Hill). Face and body very red; shirt off. Single.

John R. Davis, Plymouth, formerly of Pittston. No shirt; body red; arms stiff and raised; father-in-law of William Williams.

David James; body and face pale; eyes open; no shirt on; of Kingston; boarded with aunt, Mrs. Phillips, Plymouth, worked four days. Wife and child.

Lewis Evans, whose two brothers and father, William R. Evans, were in the mine. Mother and sister all that are left in the family.

William Williams (known as the shoemaker) Plymouth, Main street; age about 40. Face on one side and with peaceful appearance. Wife.

Richard Owen, Avondale, Wife.

Willie Hatton, about ten years old. His father is down in the mine dead; Plymouth (Turkey Hill); Face pale, looks as though sleeping. It is said that this little fellow did not work in the mine, but that his father took him in with him the fatal morning; according to a promise made by him some time previously.

William Evans, Avondale, uncle of William D. Davies, age fifty-one; Driver boss. Face at rest. Wife.

James Powell, Plymouth (Turkey Hill); single; father brought out dead previously.

Thomas Hatton, father of boy, Willie. Plymouth (Turkey Hill). Wife and two children. Face red, bloated, and turned to one side.

Edward Owen, Baltimore, MD.; boarded with Mrs. William Morgan, Plymouth; face pale and at rest.

John Burch and his twelve - year old son, John jr., were brought out together, and exactly as found in the chamber of death. The father's left arm was clasped around his boy, and both looked as if they had slept their lives away. They lived at Nottingham shaft, near Plymouth, though formerly from Providence. Mr. Burch left a wife and four children.

John Jenkins; boarded with Evan Hughes, Inside Boss, at Plymouth.

William Evans, second son of William R. Evans, another of the Evans family. He was quite young.

Daniel Woods; wife and two children. Lived at Plymouth.

William H. Nauss, aged about fourteen. Lived at Plymouth (Coal Street).

David Resse, jr., Plymouth (Coal Street). Father and brother brought out dead. Mouth all bloody; tongue between teeth. Single.

Griffith Roberts, Plymouth (Turkey Hill); boy; lived with parents; brother Thomas in the mine.

C. F. Ruth, of Hanover; face pale; head turned back as though gasping for last breath.

Joseph Morris, Gaylord . . . , Plymouth. Face pale; foam issuing from mouth. Wife.

Patrick McGutck; wife and three children; wife pregnant; face of the corpse pale and peaceful; belonged at Avondale.

Henry Smith; of Avondale. Wife and four children. Hands clenched as though guarding against a blow; shirt up around his neck; face quiet.

Shern Howell; name in inelligible ink on arm; two fingers off. Lived at Walsh Hill, Plymouth. Wife and four children. Eyes closed, mouth open.

Thomas Davies, uncle of Thomas Morris, Plymouth, Family in Wales.

William Dowdle, of Avondale; single; boarded with Patrick Knowles, hands tightly clasped; commenced working Monday; formerly of Poke Hollow; brother in New Jersey.

John Roberty; single; recognized by one stiff finger on the left hand; body bloated.

Thomas Ryan, who boarded with Mr. Walton, of Avondale;

recognized by his two brothers, who were fearfully affected; went to Avondale from Harvey's; right hand above the head; left hand raised and clenched.

Hugh Gilroy, son of Patrick Gilroy, (who recognized him, as also did a brother); wife and one child.

John Maher, of Avondale; age forty; recognized by his brother; face at rest; eyes closed. Wife and one child.

Patrick Burke, of Plymouth; single man; had a sister living in Scranton; face very red; tongue between teeth; left arm raised; hand clenched; one of six found in chamber together.

William T. Morgan, of Plymouth; face much distorted; mouth open; right hand raised and clenched; recognized by a nephew.

James Murray, of Avondale; wife and three children; face pale; both hands raised and clenched, came Tuesday from Harvey's.

Michael Daly, brother-in-law of James Keating, who recognized him; of Avondale; wife and five children; he was found alone, on the mine truck, about one hundred feet from the mouth of the shaft.

When coming up the shaft with Mr. Daly's body, Mr. Edward Connell, fell back exhausted upon it, and was with difficulty prevented from falling down the pit. It was five hours before he was fully restored. Another member of the relief was also slightly overcome.

D. P. Pryor. Marked on arm with cross and D. P. P.; of Avondale; wife and two children; face on one side; foam issuing from mouth; he was brought up at half past nine o'clock; and was the last of those discovered up to that time.

From ten o'clock, until shortly after midnight, no more bodies were recovered. The increasing foulness of the air, and the necessity which [persisted] for another exploration of the mine, created the delay which was much increased from the fact that the reliefs refused to explore further until a physician could be summoned. That night there was hideously dark-thunder, lightning and rain prevailing, and most of the crowd had returned to their homes, though some remained, waiting anxiously for further developments. The burning coal, sending up blue curling flames, the scores of miners, with lamps in their hats; as many men with lanterns flying about; the group of men about the tunnel with lights; the reliefs bringing out the biers with their fearful loads of dead humanity; the thick darkness; all [combined] to make a scene seldom witnessed in the mining [community]. Add to all this the shrieks of women and the crying of men [as] victims were brought up [the relief crew carrying] the men from the pit of death; the puffing of the donkey engine as it forces air to the

shaft, and some idea of the terrible [carnage] can be gained.

An exploring party shortly; before eleven o'clock, which reported seven found. Shortly afterward, another party reported the finding of two men, also two mules, on the west side.

Thursday morning; 11th before one o'clock, James Phillips, of Plymouth (Turkey Hill) was brought up; boarded with Samuel Morgan; face bloody and discolored, came to America about two weeks before companion; neck smoked and chin burned, apparently from his lamp, which had evidently fallen from his head. Wife in Wales.

At half-past twelve o'clock thirteen more bodies were reported found in groups, the largest numbering six.

James Williams, of Plymouth, brought out. Wife and one child. Face bloated and covered with blood; eyes closed; mouth partly open; body very red; boarded with brother-in-law, Thomas Morgan, came from Schuylhill.

John D. Evans, brother-in-law of John E. Williams; lived at foot of Jersey Plane, Plymouth; a morbid spectacle; head thrown back, mouth open, and face covered with white froth; left arm drawn up and hand clenched. Wife and five children.

More men reported to be at the bottom of the plane, on the west side, where were evidence that a brattice was commenced but not finished, the men perishing no doubt before it was done.

William Harding, Plymouth; uncle of Isaac Williams; came from Hyde Park. Wife.

Samuel R. Morgan, Plymouth (Turkey Hill), Head turned to one side, and arms folded as if resigned to his terrible fate. Left a wife and two children.

William R. Evans, Avondale, father of the three dead boys; wife and little daughter left.

William L. Wildrich, of Hanover; left wife and five children; his mouth was partly open.

Rouse Lunley, of Turkey Hill, head thrown back, and arms stiff above his head. Wife and three children.

Thomas Llewellyn, of Plymouth; single; one brother dead in mine.

Rouse Llewellyn, brother to proceeding. Single.

William Davies, Plymouth, boarded with Thomas Phillips. Wife and children in old country.

John Thomas, Plymouth, wife and one child; horrible sight; head thrown back and mouth open; nostrils discolored; identified by scar on his body.

John Davies, Plymouth; formerly of Pittson; son of John R. Davies, previously brought out; mouth and face bloody and glossy; [began] to work at Avondale on Monday.

William T. Williams, Plymouth; wife and one child; brother-in-law of last men brought up; mouth and face a [little] bloody; left arm drawn up.

William D, Johns, Welsh Hill; boarded with Michael Howell, Mouth open; hand closed. Wife and four children in Aberdene, South Wales.

Another exploring party having been down, about forty-five minutes, found nine more bodies in one place-not far from the last found.

Dennis Guyton, of Avondale; horrid object; face bloody and frightful; held a tobacco pipe in his left hand; both arms stiff above his head; and all black with smoke and dirt. He laid in the mine, with his face downward. Wife and seven children.

William H. Ryes, boarded with Kirk Owens, Avondale, very bloody about the nose; hands clenched. Wife and children in Mouth, South Wales.

William Spright, of Plymouth; arms raised. Wife and five children.

John Harris, of Avondale. Wife and four children.

Thomas I. Jones, of Plymouth. Bloody about the nose and neck. Wife and two children.

Thomas Phillips, of Plymouth. Brother of Willie, brought out previously, aged nineteen. Head swollen and face flushed, mouth open and blood about it. Single.

Lewis Davies. Boarded with Evan Hughes. Face bloody and bloated; breast also. Single.

Charles Fears, Head and face flushed. Boarded with William Phillips, of Plymouth.

John Thomas, Plymouth. Boarded with his brother Isaac. Mouth open. Aged seventeen.

David Johnson, Plymouth. Wife and one child.

Mr. J. was the last man found at that time, six o'clock a.m., Thursday. Half an hour afterward, a party of six men reported no more men on the east side. Half an hour later eight men were found on the west side of the mine.

James Mallon, Plymouth, brought up. Boarded with James Derwin -- his brother-in-law. Single.

James Harkins, Avondale. Mouth open and eyes partly closed. Wife and three children.

William D. Jones. Face bloated, and arms extended over his head. Wife in Merthyr Tydul, South Wales.

Edward Taylor, Avondale. Face and neck very red in blotches. Wife and one child.

Another crowd of people began to arrive about eight o'clock. At this time a new rope was placed upon the hoisting apparatus, the old one having become worn.

At half past nine o'clock, Benjamin Hughes, Thomas Carpon, Thomas D. Davies, George Morgan, and Juo II. Williams went down to the east gangway, to endeavor to discover what caused a defect which had become apparent in the cirulation. Mr. Davies returned forty minutes afterwards and reported that a canvas brattice was to be placed across the east gangway to make a shorter draft.

At ten minutes to six o'clock, the names of Daniel Edwards, Madison Alabough, John Powell, of Avondale, and Rowland Jones, of Plymouth, were reported as those men whose bodies had not been recovered.

At noon a committee headed by Mr, Benjamin Hughes, General Inside Foreman, of the D. L. & W. RR. Co's mines, returned from an extensive exploration of the entire western portion of the mine, and reported no more bodies found.

A train of twenty cars loaded with people from Scranton and along the line arrived on the ground at quarter past twelve o'clock.

At half past one o'clock, the body of Rowland Jones, of Plymouth (Turkey Hill), was brought up the shaft. It was found in a car. His mouth was wide open, and his eyes closed. Wife and two children.

Madison Alabough, Avondale, came next. Mouth open; blood coming from his nose. Wife and three children - oldest seven years of age. It was said that this man had told his wife that if an accident ever occurred to the mine, he would be found living, as he knew just where to go for safety. His wife clung to the hope which

this promise gave her, to the last, insisting all the time that Madison was all right. Poor woman, how sadly was she mistaken.

Daniel Edwards, of Avondale. Countenance composed. During the war Mr. Edwards was a member of the Seventh Pennsylvania Reserve. Wife and one child.

Mr. John Powell, of Avondale, was the one hundred and eighth man brought from the mine, and was the last one found therein. He was a son-in-law of Mr. Alabough, and left a wife and one child.

The foregoing list of names is compiled from a report taken as the bodies were one by one brought from the shared homes at Avondale, and recognized by relatives or friends. It is probably as accurate as it can be made without much more labor and time than the writer has [available]. In many names there was great difficulty finding persons who were able to recognize those brought out, and it is possible that in [situations] one or two may have been given wrong names. A Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Relief Fund report finding one Edward Bowen (whose name also appears among the list of burials in Hyde Park), His name not in the foregoing list, but the names of Edward Owen and Edward Bowen may have been switched by the Committee. The Committee found a James Jones, which name does not appear. In this case, James Jones and James Jasion may stand for the same individual. In any event, there should be but one hundred and eight bodies recorded as brought from the mine, which is the number given in the proceeding pages.

MORE EXPLORATIONS AND THE REPORTS

At twenty minutes past two o'clock, p.m., Messrs. Thom Carson, of the Hampton mine, and George Morgan, of Nanticoke, with twenty men, returned from the mine, and reported that they had explored every part of the workings, and were satisfied that all the bodies had been recovered.

At fifteen minutes past three o'clock, p.m., Mr. Lewis S. Jones, foreman of the "reliefs" in the tunnel, made the following statement to the jury:

Have been foreman at the head of the shaft from half past five p.m., Wednesday, until the present time. Have had three gangs of men, each of whom thoroughly, explored the mine, the last gang numbered twenty men. I am satisfied that there is not a breast cross-cut airway, or car in the [mine] that has not been thoroughly examined, and I believe not a man remains in the mine.

Shortly afterward, Mr. Benjamin Hughes made a report to the jury: "He had just returned with four men from an exploration of

the entire eastern portion of the mine. His particular errand was to find the coat which his brother, the Inside Foreman, hoping that a diary would be found, which would give some information as to the operations of the men after they were shut in the mine. The coat, containing two time books, a compass, and two pocket rules, was found some five hundred or six hundred feet distant from the locality to which the body was sitting when discovered in the fatal gangway, showing that he had laid it down while engaged with the men in building the barricades behind which they eventually retreated."

From this fact it's possible that when Mr. Evan Hughes gave up all hope, he had no means of making a record from which the outside world could ascertain the length of time the miners lived, and what were their thoughts and occupations before they succumbed to the enemy which stole away their breathe. From the appearance of the mine, it's evident that every minute of time was spent in devising methods of shutting themselves out from the heat, smoke, and foul air generated by the mine and fire.

When these various reports were made, there was no longer room for doubt of the fact that every man who went into the mine on the morning of the fatal 6th day of September had been recovered. The jury, as well as the experienced miners predict, were fully satisfied that such was the case, and when the announcement was made to the assembled thousands they departed to their homes. The jury also adjourned to meet on Saturday morning at Plymouth, there to take evidence in relation to the disaster, and to agree upon their verdict.

THE FUNERALS OF THE DEAD

The bodies of the dead had all been delivered to the family and friends, who had them prepared for burial, and during the day a number of them had been taken by . . . train to Plymouth and Scranton. At four p.m., the bodies . . . with 4,000 people, went . . . toward Scranton, the last train carrying eleven coffins, containing the remains of none of those to be buried in that place.

A large proportion of the unfortunate victims were buried at three different hours, in Scranton, Sept. 9th, in the Washburn cemetery, in the presence of a large concourse of people. The exercises were exceeding solemn and impressive. Rev. William Robert, D. D., of Bellevue, delivered the following touching address:

This is a sad calamity! A dreadful catastrophe! The most suffering and pain I ever witnessed in the whole course of my life. [Caused] by the most terrible [event]! Death, lurking in fire, marking our neighbors, suffocating and extinguishing the spark of life. . . . Death like a destroying angel, passing through the . . . Death, plunging

beloved wives into the [state] of widowhood, crushing [the] tender and affectionate children into the gulf of parental [bereavement] -- Death, [unemotionally] snatching children from warm braces and [the concern] of their tenderly beloved parents. Death, forcibly separating, with [its] grasp, brothers and sisters from the sweet and delightful [bond] of the family. Death, like a clap of rolling thunder, extending its [horrible] voice over this valley and entertaining with the fearful authority of the Eternal to every one of its [victims], "Prepare to meet thy God." Death, [taking] and hurling hundreds of our fellow men [since the beginning] of time into the dark [vestiges] of eternity. . . . Thou art lurking everywhere and in everything. . . . Death is terrible. It is the king of violence. We see its effects [through our beloved loved ones]. The lungs no longer heave, [breathing] stops, the eye [closes] in darkness the heart becomes silent, the whole [body] becomes motionless, and ghostly, and the [angels] takes its flight-like escort; like the wings of a goose. But here we see death in one of its greatest and most dreadful forms, [taking] men of sound health . . . in the midst of their [lives] and crushing them under its free foot without allowing them [time] to reflect, pray, or escape. Think not within yourselves that these were greater [men] than all the men in this valley; but, less ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. There were some good men of vital piety, of pure and mindful religion, [to whom I say] "To live was Christ, and to die was [sin]." I understand that one Christian Church in the neighborhood has been depopulated of its male members by this sad calamity, with very few exceptions.

Now let us all acknowledge the hand of Divine Providence in permitting such an awful event -- and let us take warning from it to be ready, for in such an hour as we think, and the beast of Man cometh. Let us seek the forgiveness of sin, it is sin which has brought death into our world and all of our woe. Let us seek a personal interest in Christ who is the Lord of Life, and of eternity. If melded by faith to him, [we will be comforted] and may be happy even under the cold grasp of death, and will be withered by it, and the messenger of Christ [will deliver us] into everlasting life. I hope and pray that the Great [Spirit] will sedate and comfort the bereaved relatives of the deceased. May the Lord, in their case, prove himself to be the [Provider] for the widow and the Father of the fatherless. Amen.

In addition to those buried at Scranton on the 9th and 10th, a number were buried at Shupp's cemetery, Plymouth, and in the Catholic cemetery, Wilkes-Barre. Several were buried at Pittston, two at Forty Port, one at Harvey's and one at Pottsville. In each of these cases, there was a large attendance, and exhibitions of strong feeling on the part of the immediate friends and of those witnessing the ceremonies.

THE WIDOWS AND ORPHAN CHILDREN

The following is a list of the names of the widows of the deceased miners, with the ages of part of them, and the number if children left to their care, as compiled from the report of the Census Committee of the Relief Fund Trustees:

<u>Name</u>			<u>Age</u>	<u>Children</u>
Allen,	wife of	William - - - - -	26	2
Alabaugh,	"	Madison - - - - -	21	6
Bowen,	"	John - - - - -		1
Bowen,	"	William B. - - - - -	20	2
Burch,	"	John - - - - -	35	4
Bryant,	"	Elijah S. - - - - -	22	2
Clark,	"	John - - - - -	36	6
Coulen,	"	Peter - - - - -		4
Davies,	"	Thomas - - - - -		10
Davis,	"	William - - - - -		
Daly,	"	Michael - - - - -		5
Evans,	"	Wm. J - - - - -	52	2
Evans,	"	Wm. R - - - - -	45	1
Evans,	"	William - - - - -	58	
Evans,	"	William (Wales) - - - - -		
Evans,	"	John D. - - - - -	27	6
Edwards,	"	Edward - - - - -	25	1
Edwards,	"	Daniel - - - - -	28	1
Frothingham,	"	Andrew - - - - -	19	
Gilroy,	"	Hugh - - - - -		
Guyten,	"	Dennis - - - - -	30	
Harris,	"	John - - - - -	26	4
Harkins,	"	James - - - - -	28	2
Hatton,	"	Thomas - - - - -	40	9
Hardon,	"	William - - - - -		
Howell,	"	Shem - - - - -	37	4
Hughes,	"	Evan - - - - -		2
Hughes,	"	John - - - - -	26	1
Humphrey,	"	Edward - - - - -		
James,	"	David - - - - -		1
James,	"	James(?) - - - - -		
Jones,	"	Thomas D. - - - - -	26	
Jones,	"	Thomas L. - - - - -	33	2
Jones,	"	K. D. - - - - -	26	

Jones,	"	David - - - - -	1
Jones,	"	William (Wales) - - - -	
Jones,	"	Rowland - - - - - 55	2
<u>Name</u>		<u>Age</u>	<u>Children</u>
Johnson,	wife of	David - - - - -	4
Johnson,	"	Peter J. - - - - -	
Johns,	"	Wm. D. (Wales) - - - -	4
Lewis,	"	William - - - - - 19	
Lumley,	"	Reese - - - - - 26	8
Morris,	"	Joseph - - - - - 22	
Morris,	"	Thomas - - - - - 45	4
Maher,	"	John - - - - -	1
McGursh,	"	Patrick - - - - -	8
Murray,	"	James - - - - - 29	8
Morgan,	"	W. S. - - - - - 46	4
Morgen,	"	Samuel - - - - - 46	2
Matler,	"	Jacob - - - - - 36	4
Orum,	"	Richard - - - - - 49	
Pharfit,	"	William - - - - - 34	2
Phillips,	"	James - - - - -	
Pryor,	"	Daniel P. - - - - - 24	2
Powell,	"	John - - - - - 22	1
Rease,	"	Evan (Wales) - - - - -	
Rease,	"	William (Wales) - - - -	4
Rease,	"	David R. - - - - - 45	2
Ruth,	"	O. F. - - - - -	1
Speigul,	"	William - - - - - 28	2
Sleur,	"	Palmer - - - - - 81	5
Smith,	"	Harry - - - - - 29	4
Taylor,	"	Edward - - - - -	1
Thomas,	"	John - - - - - 80	1
Wood,	"	Daniel - - - - - 29	2
Williams,	"	Wm. N. - - - - - 88	8
Williams,	"	W. L. - - - - - 28	
Williams,	"	James - - - - - 45	
Williams,	"	Wm. S. - - - - - 30	4
Williams,	"	T. D. - - - - - 55	5
Williams,	"	Wm. T. - - - - - 35	1
Wildrich,	"	Wm. L. - - - - - 35	2

Recapitulation -- Widows, 72; Orphan children, 158.

The complete census of Avondale orphans in the old countries will, when received, add considerably to the above number.

THE CORONER'S INQUEST

On Saturday, September 11th, the Coroner's inquest into the cause of the death of the victims of the disaster began at Shupp's Hall, Plymouth, at 11 o'clock a.m. Present, Acting Coroners R. C. Wadhams and J. W. Rav, of the Jurors who had previously viewed the bodies at Avondale, as follows: W. J. Harvey, Foreman; Samuel Van Loon, Martin McDonald, James George, Charles Hutchinson, Thomas Patton. Quite a number of miners were present. E. L. Merriman, and H. B. Payns, of Wilkes-Barre, assisted by several miners headed by Mr. Henry W. Evans, conducted the examination on the part of the Miners' Union, and A. T. McClintuel, on the part of the Company, and questions, especially as to the ventilation and conduct of mines, were also frequently asked by Mr. Henry J. Phillips and Mr. Benjamin Hughes. Mr. George and Mr. McDonald, of the jury, Mr. George Morgan, of Nanticoke, Mr. Jenkins Jones, of Mill Creek, and other mining experts, questioned many of the witnesses.

The first witness sworn was Dr. G. H. Wilson, of Plymouth, who testified that the cause of the death of the men at Avondale was the inhalation of carbonic acid gas, producing asphyxia.

Christopher Savage sworn. Was fourteen not at work on the morning of the disaster; worked at Avondale Saturday; fire in the furnace then; the mine started on 3rd September; fire sixty or seventy yards from bottom of shaft; always good air in the mine; fire let go out Saturday nights and lit by wood Monday mornings; no lumber between furnace and bottom of shaft; all brickwork; shaft partly wet; new man tending furnace; began September 2nd; no feeling among men that there was any likelihood of shaft taking fire; did not expect it to take fire from bottom at all; furnace was far enough from bottom shaft; Steele (stable boss) carried hay down in car; did not know if he had lamp lighted; been employed at Avondale since the mine started; Union mines are next below Avondale; don't know distance between the two; but am told sound of drills can be heard from one another; thought not to much difficulty driving the gangway connectng the two mines; no other means of ingress or egress of ventilation at Avondale except main shaft; shaft supposed to be 230 feet deep, shaft was through solid rock; brattice, must of course be of wood; stable about sixty or seventy feet may be a little over, from bottom of shaft; was a tool house in mine, did not know where fire originated; strong draft through flue from furnace, upper end of fire terminated above stack; knew Mr. Weir, the old mine boss; thought to was over three years mine had been run; Mr. Weir, and also Mr. Evan Hughes, careful and experienced men; did not know the man who tended

furnace; never heard any talk of another opening being made; if had another means of escape, men would of course been alive; couldn't tell how long it would take to drive another gangway to next mine; thought Mr. Evan Hughes had full control of works inside; he was constantly improving the works and putting in brick work where he thought there was danger; couldn't say whether it was possible for sparks to fly from the furnace to the brattice in the shaft; it was a long way for a spark to go; not been down since the fire.

Conrad Lee, Outside Foreman at Avondale, called and sworn. Lyman Miswick, was headman; it was his first day; he was assisted by Philip Alabough and J. M. Wilcox; witness is Outside Foreman at Avondale; not there when fire was discovered; had no definite idea as to how fire originated; there was no fire about the top of the shaft, never knew man who took hay down to have lamp [attached to] his head at time, but might have some time; very seldom went down shaft; went down to observe arrangements; very good draft; brick work began at bottom of shaft; might have been a wooden door between furnace and bottom of shaft; was door at top of flue; had often looked in; never saw any sparks; draft would have carried fire up from bottom of shaft instantly; fire broke out at a quarter of ten; never looked in flue door when fire was being ignited; have heard Inside Foreman speak of driving gangway to heat mine, but he preferred using the Chauncey tunnel, and was driving his works toward it; there was at time of fire, no other ventilation but main shaft, know Mr. Weir was considered best inside boss in Hazelton section; heard Weir speak of driving gangway to a tunnel; that was original plan of work; Mr. Evan Hughes told witness that if it had not been for suspension the tunnel would now have been nearly reached; men and mules would have been taken in by that means; Thomas Roney told me he was ordered to drive that way and work as fast as he could; never knew Mr. Hughes to neglect anything; [underwater resevoir] held 900 tons; not full at time of suspension; no offer made to his knowledge by men to drive to the tunnel during time of suspension; thought it could not have been done without raising coal; heard it said that if gangway was driven to Union mines water would have come in and drowned them out; heard talk about driving heading from Union mine while the dead men were lying in Avondale; a Union miner told him there was no place where heading could be driven through without striking water Mr. Hughes told him he and Mr. Alabough of Union mines had talked of drilling through; Mr. Hughes discouraged it for fear of water and for fear of [inadequate] ventilation; witness did not understand how it would injure the ventilation; object in driving to the tunnel was both convenience and safety, thought every mine should have two openings; but did not see how it would be always possible; did not know that it was possible to drive to Union mines safely; supposed if there had been another shaft ready, with hoisting apparatus, men could have been saved, thoughts if fire started on surface the tunnel through which the dead men were brought out would have afforded ventilation sufficient to save the men; Anson Dunn came up about five minutes before the fire; he (Dunn) had passed the

furnace twice that morning.

Charles Wilcox and Philip Alabough called. Did not appear.

John Roberts called and sworn. Saw Palmer Steele at the top of the shaft, with hay, about to go down; this was 15 minutes before the fire. At this point, Mr. Henry J. Phillips drew a plan of the shaft; so that witness could point out the spot where he first saw the fire. He pointed out the upcast.

Dr. Wilson recalled. Men could have lived only a few minutes after the gas reached them.

Charles Wilcox sworn. Was acting as ticket boss at Avondale at the time of the fire; rang the bell for Palmer Steele to go down, a number of cars were hoisted after Steele went down; discovered the fire not more than half an hour after Steele went down; saw first fire at head of flue; for an hour before it came up, there was more smoke coming up the flue than there should have been; witness's position required him to be at head of shaft; been at Avondale for a year; made first cry of fire himself; ran to get the boys out of the breaker, knew of no particular facilities for extinguishing fire, buckets, were [not available] and he did not believe engines would have been; first saw fire a foot or two above the head of the shaft; his impression was that it came from below; the flame came through the flue, and was nearly the width of the flue; didn't notice any smell of hay in the smoke; thought that if fire had burned through the brattice below, the carriage would have brought up fire, there were two large tanks of water in the breaker; pipes running from tanks to the boilers; tanks a couple of hundred feet from head of shaft; was no hose that he knew of; thought smoke was coming up before stable boss went down.

Anson Dunn sworn. Live in Ilanover; was in the shaft on the day of the fire, looking for work; went down about nine o'clock; staid three - quarters of an hour; saw Edward Jones and several others; said men called it best place they had worked in; agreed to go to work next morning; then went up; passed furnace; saw nothing unusual; no wood on the fire; saw nothing unusual on the way up; when came up saw Palmer Steele, with bundle of hay, ready to go down, not more than twenty minutes after that witness saw the fire at the top of the breaker; came up at a quarter of ten o'clock, saw the fire from his home across the river.

Thomas Roney sworn. Furnace located about ninety feet from bottom shaft; had assisted in building fires in the furnace; never heard any fear expressed of danger from the furnace; brattice was on fire at one previous time; saw the fire; Elijah Bryant and Thomas Davis were there; never knew of its being on fire but once; that brattice had no connection with the shaft; caught from a stove and not from the furnace; brick wall had been put in place of the

brattice that caught fire; been there since March, 1868, knew of no means provided for putting out the fire; there were two large water tanks; Miner's Union never passed resolution that witness should not work to his knowledge; he applied to inside foreman for work, and was told to come on, but did not do so because miners held a meeting against it; they objected because he worked in the Washington mine during suspension; never told any men that "No other damned bugger should work there"; worked in Avondale driving an airway toward a borehole, where Mr. Hughes intended to put in a manway and maleway would have worked at same airway if he had gone back; there were barrels of water on the lower end of the breaker to extinguish fire; the tunnel, witness understood, didn't reach the coal until, about twenty feet, but there was a borehole, and when that was struck it was intended to put in a slope; did not know how near Union mine works at Avondale extended; had heard sound of men drilling at a distance of twenty-four yards through solid rock and coal; warning working double shift on the airway up to the time suspension began; Mr. Hughes thought the shaft unsafe in its present condition, and wanted the airway pushed.

Edward Flynn sworn. Been at Avondale two years; good air in the mine; worked there last Saturday; seventy or eighty feet from Union works to Avondale; never knew of a fire occurring from a ventilating furnace; was not afraid to work in the mine, but thought that this would come [take] some time [to evacuate] if there was no way for the men to come out; never heard of any accident of this kind before; Mr. Weir and Mr. Hughes both careful men; did not know of any neglect on their part; were barrels of water on the roof outside to be used in case of fire; worked on east side; miners on west side told him they were nearly through to the Union mine; did not believe they were within fifty to sixty feet; eighty feet would drive it through; it could be done in a week; could make a yard each shift in it; the sound of a drill can be heard eighty feet through solid coal.

Isaac Thomas sworn. Worked at Avondale; not worked there since suspension; but was in the mine last Saturday; went there when the shaft was sinking; never heard that the furnace was too near the shaft or that there was any danger from the furnace; thought there was no way to save the men if the cracker took fire; thought that the men in Avondale lived long enough to have saved themselves if there had been any other outlet for them to walk to, helped to take down brattice; thought another air shaft would have saved them, Nottingham shaft is worked same as Avondale; Lance's also the same, and he believed Boston too, never heard of an accident like this; did not believe at all that the fire took from the furnace; it was sixty yards from the shaft; can't say how it did take fire; fire was always let out on Saturday night and started again Monday morning; don't believe the air current could possibly have carried fire so far; shaft was pretty dry altogether; never heard of any fire in the shaft brattice; a little place between the airway and gangway took fire from a stove; it was

replaced with a brick brattice, which both prevented fire and made better ventilation; brattice was double-boarded; I put it in.

Thomas E. Davies sworn. Worked ten months in Avondale; know the shaft well; furnace one hundred and fifty feet from the shaft; never heard of danger from furnace; talked with Evan Hughes about driving a gangway through; it was being driven with two shifts to make another outlet; had examined the brattice, all the way up and down; saw no evidence of heat from the furnace; other mines are worked in the same way as Avondale; did not believe fire took from furnace; had seen men work in flue while furnace was burning, which showed it was not hot; thought fire took somewhere about the mouth of the tunnel; thought it must have been set on fire; another air shaft would have saved the men; heat would not have prevented a man standing between the furnace and the shaft while fire was being blended with wood, but the smoke would; thought current strong enough to carry sparks back to shaft; thought boards too wet to take fire from sparks; furnace burned three cars of coal every forty-eight hours; good deal of water comes down when the pump is going; was not there when shaft was sinking; it was considered a dry shaft; brattice and guides were burned twenty to thirty feet from bottom of shaft.

William Thomas sworn. Worked for months in shaft before suspension; not after; been four years in mines in this country; have seen another mode of ventilation; was in the shaft after the fire; saw the men dead; men could be saved if another way to the mine; don't know as the men did any work before they died; saw brattice built of stone and coal; men had time to escape another way; men could not live two or three days if only airway; never heard they could on England; never heard of such occurrence in this country; heard of some shafts on fire, and men only escaped with their lives; is dangerous to go down only one shaft, if explosive gas men could not be saved without another outlet; didn't notice brattice in shaft; piece of brattice saved in the middle of the shaft; . . . man found upon the top of the plane; was acquainted with men killed in the mine; I was not in the car, but saw the inside wall; the fire was from the furnace, men belonging in this gangway found in the west gangway, I know many of the people working at the time of the disaster; did find James Williams, who worked in the east gangway, in west gangway; think he went on account of disaster to save his life some way.

Alexander Weir sworn. Engineer at Avondale; told boss there was danger of the flue catching fire in packing and waste about pumps at bottom of the shaft; first saw smoke raising the canvas over the pump rod; tried to get signal from below, and to send a man down to investigate; in a minute or two the fire burst out like an explosion of powder through the corner of the engine house where the pump rod comes up; thought it was dangerous because found it so hot in pump shaft that he could not pack the pumps unless door opened; my father built the furnace; he considered it safe; I do

not remember him ever telling him that it was unsafe; never saw any sparks from the flue; it might have been sulphur more than coal that prevented my staying in the pump shaft; don't know what the Inside Boss said when I told him I considered flue unsafe; think I could have stood greater heat at bottom of shaft if air had been pure.

George Morgan sworn. Been connected with mining since ten years old; believe two openings to a mine better than one; there could have been another opening at Avondale or at any other works; upper part of brattice burned most, say seventy-five feet, and twenty-five feet at bottom; middle is pretty good; don't think fire began at bottom; if so, it would have burned all the way up; did not think it started at top, but best part of the way up; went down hoisting shaft, guides show no signs of fire except three or four lengths at top and one length at bottom; thought fire originated at the mouth of the tunnel or a little lower; good many mines like Avodale - too many; Buttonwood burned up like Avondale, but without loss of life; fire did not come from the furnace, I firmly believe.

In answer to a question from Mr. H. W. Evans, witness said, "That seems intended to bring out a condemnation of the system of mining with but one outlet; I fully agree in condemning that system."

Mr. Evans said, "That is exactly the intention. We miners intend to prove here who is responsible for that system. We intend to prove that it is wrong -- WRONG -- to send men to work in such mines, and that we have known it for long years; but we must work or starve; that is where the miners stand on this question, and we mean to use this occasion to prove it."

Mr. Evans spoke with intense excitement and feeling, and his words drew a burst of applause from the miners in the audience.

Coroner Wadhame reminded the audience that this was a court room; and that the order and decorum must be preserved. The repetition of such remarks or demonstrations would make it necessary to clear the court room at once and to exclude all spectators thereafter.

Thomas L. Thomas sworn. Been miner thirty-five years, and in this country six years; had spoken with Evan Hughes about Avodale being dangerous; a couple of days after beginning work there; Hughes asked him if he had seen the furnace; Hughes showed it to him; never saw better ventilation than there was there; Hughes never answered much about danger; Mr. Hughes allowed, and everybody must allow, [that] there is danger in mines with one shaft - especially with [a] wooden building above; thought no danger from furnace, but he believed; and other old hands believed, that if the breaker burned not a man would come out alive; can't believe that fire came from furnace; timber inside and away from the outside air

does not take fire readily; with another airhole good management would probably have saved the men's lives; had heard talk about its being easy to drive a gangway through to Union mines; can hear a drill for fifty feet at least through a wall of coal.

Benjamin Jenkins was called, but not answering, at 4:30 p.m., the inquest was adjourned until Tuesday morning, September 14th, at 9 o'clock.

SECOND DAY

The Coroner's Jury re-assembled at Shupp's Hall, Plymouth, Tuesday morning. Present, the jury and Acting Coroners Wadhams and Eno. About fifty persons were in the hall. After the usual preliminaries of calling the jury, the evidence was resumed.

Acting for the miner's, E. L. Morrison, and for the defense, A. T. Metillineck.

G. W. Mc Kee, sworn. Men in mine died from inhalation of carbonic acid gas; can form no positive opinion as to how long they lived after fire began, probably not more than four hours.

Daniel W. Evans, sworn. Am a miner and familiar with mines; been in Avodale shaft since fire; believe fire originated from flue; caused by spark coming from furnace; another opening would have saved the men.

Cross-examination. Never worked in Avodale; believe fire was from furnace; boards not far enough from furnace; more than one hundred and thirty-nine feet by measurement; think fire originated near bottom of shaft; within fifty feet or less; not a piece of brattice unburned; but it is burned in part, all the way from bottom to top; reason that more burned at bottom, because falling debris made greater fire there; some buntings not burned at all, all through brattice the thickness (inside one) burned completely out; examined shaft particularly on Saturday, in company with T. M. Williams and others; never saw shaft before; never was in Avondale mine before the fire.

Dr. Chas F. Ingham, sworn. Have been an engineer thirty-five years; been connected with mining engineering some years; have put up several breakers in this valley; know of one case (Buttonwood mine) where there was fire originating from furnace and not at bottom of shaft, fire so originating would not necessarily ignite brattice at bottom; would be likely to ignite at top; but would consider it rather matter of chance; no theory can be established on the point; in case of Avondale mine there was sufficient oxygen to feed fire at bottom; water in a small stream conveys air to the fire and feeds it; in case of separate air shaft entering mine, men could escape, even if the main shaft was choked by fire, ventilation in parts of the mine would probably be better than

ordinary; mining with one shaft not safe or justified.

Cross-examined. Never examined Buttonwood shaft after fire; all I know of it is conjecture and hearsay: planned a shaft designing continuous brick [within] with fifty feet of surface; other [materials] put in wood; don't know of more than half a dozen ventilated by fans in Wyoming and Susquehanna valleys; except for Andouried, Pine Ridge, Sugar, Nesen, Empire; there are twenty-two or twenty-three shafts in this region; all but those mentioned are ventilated by furnaces so far as I know; always heard of Avondale as a first-class work; know of many mines like that, with breaker over the mouth of the shaft and but one opening; if in Avondale mine there had been separate air shaft there would have probably been a furnace of some kind at bottom, or small apparatus called "lightning bug," fire would be so small as not to interfere with escape of men, but if there had been a regular furnace there would still have been danger with two openings that the men would not escape in case of an accident.

Thomas Broderick sworn. Carry on coal works; interested in Union mine; Mr. Robert's partner; it adjoins Avondale; never talked with Avondale proprietors about driving through to Avondale; talked with my partner, and Hughes, Inside Boss, was to be seen about it; at Buttonwood, fire originated from furnace; was about fifty feet from bottom of shaft; shaft five hundred and fourteen feet deep; fifty or sixty feet brick; two hundred feet of wooden brattice with water introduced inside and out it to keep wet and make secure; rest of way wooden brattice; did not burn down from top; brattice would burn same if burned from bottom, as by fire from above; another opening would save men; operated Union about year; [capping] the old McFarlane would drawn out Avondale; would endanger lives of men; if Avondale lower increase danger; thought powder-smoke from Union would not go to Avondale if an opening; think distance too great; never been in Avondale; first class work; all new works, put up in four or five years, are using fans; fan at Nottingham and Fuller's; not sure about Lance's; Nottingham about two years old; until lately, mines have been ventilated by furnaces generally; was fan at Buttonwood; have worked furnaces closer than one at Avondale without accident; Empire had one within fifty feet; if nothing but coal on fire would not be apt to burn bottom of brattice; thought it did not follow that brattice would burn all way up the same; thought the great draft would make fire jump, or skip past parts of brattice; he only guessed at it; would depend on condition of brattice; if the Avondale works were driven up to old tunnel, it would make a good opening for escape of men and for ventilation; if in charge of that mine would have been more apt to make second opening through tunnel than to open into another mine.

Cross-examined. Think it possible for brattice to ignite from a furnace one hundred and fifty feet from the bottom.

Direct resumed. Don't know of any first-class work in

operation two years where a second opening has been made, think Avondale the first shaft ever burned in any coal region in this country.

D. W. Evans recalled. Williams, Smith, and I went down shaft Saturday to furnace; measured all about; found several big pieces of wood in furnace (presented a specimen of charred oak); no fire in furnace.

John Mitchell, sworn. Been a miner; an operator; Buttonwood was burst by furnace firing brattice; consider no mine secure with but one opening; with wood burning in furnace one hundred and twenty-five feet or less, know brattice could be fired from it; more apt to fire at top then bottom; chimney also fired; sparks would do it.

Cross-examined. Don't think furnace safe with brattice anywhere within its draft; think sparks could be carried five-hundred feet; most shafts in Wyoming valley ventilated from furnace like Avondale; twin shafts like Bowker's at Pittston, are perfectly safe, if one burned the men could easlly get out of the other, know Martin Weir, who laid out Avondale; was one of the most experienced men in these parts.

Question by B. Hughes. Fire and sulphur would go down the burning shaft and up the other; but think men could be gotten out; it would take time for this air to pass all around; men might be gotten out before it got around.

By Mr. Phelps. Three-fourths of all brattice in valley built over shaft:

By Mr. Merriman. Don't think [that] mine with one opening is safe.

Lewis Merrifield, sworn. Miner; been four times in Avodale since fire; fire originated from furnace, in brattice.

Cross-examination. Caught . . . burned fifteen to twenty feet; burned up from bottom eighteen feet; don't think burned up from . . . pipe and examined brattice thouroughly; . . . pipe don't leak enough to keep brattice wet, if leaked, boards would be wet; furnace one hundred and twenty-nine feet, two inches from brick work to edge of rock in shaft, extension of furnace thirteen feet six inches; never was in mine before fire.

Direct resumed. No mine safe without two openings.

Benjamin Jones, sworn. Miner; been in Avondale since fire, think fire took from furnace; think no mine with one opening safe.

Cross-examined. Mr. Weir was a careful experienced miner,

never was in Avondale before fire; work in Jersey slope, for D. L. & W.; think fire caught in air shaft; sixteen buntings burned, from there up all burned; think originated fifty or sixty feet from bottom; think men could be going up and down half an hour and not see the fire; it might have caught inside; Mr. Hughes was regarded an experienced miner; think men could have been saved if another opening; believe if hole out from Union, men could have been saved.

Mr. Merriman here announced, the evidence on his side probably finished, although he said a few more witness might be called.

Jury adjourned until two p.m.

Two p.m. - Dr. Ingham recalled by Prosecution, and examined as to practicability of removing the fire in the furnace in case of accident; thought it was practicable.

John Albrighton, sworn. Am one of the owners of Union mine; talked with Mr. Hughes about driving through from Union mine, Mr. Roberts told him how important to have hole driven; witness said to Mr. Hughes, every soul must perish in that mine in case of fire; witness made no reply; was probably two months ago; we could hear the blasts in Avondale; think that men's lives would have been saved if gangway had been driven to Union.

Cross-examined. Conversation took place during suspension; would not have driven into Mc Farland according to survey we made; we thought they were lighter, though not higher than the old workings, if Avondale lower than Mc Farland, would be to flood Avondale; as I understand how the coal is left below us, we have five.... of coal between us and Avondale; never mentioned it to anybody but Hughes, and to him only once, judged it with great distance; three hundred feet, presume would have taken a month with all hands could put there; do not know if they were driving for an additional opening into tunnel; never in Avondale; understood Avondale was a well arranged mine to work in; men left us to work in Avondale who had worked there before suspension.

Cross-examined resumed. Can hear drill through solid coal from four hundred to six hundred feet; there is difference in viens; think men could not have come out through that tunnel when shaft on fire; we were not particularly interested in tunnelling from Union, but it would have made ours better; would have taken some of our smoke; believe no mine operated [in as safe a] way as Avondale; miners went back to Avondale, because we had no homes; one man (now dead) lamented this; one man had taken out bottom coal; at Avondale; and had privilege of taking out top coal - that was another reason for him leaving; Lewis Davis, Edward Quinn, and one who worked with Quinn went back; those certain; would have driven east from our mine to reach Avondale, starting at lowest chamber next water for fuse they are not high enough.

Cross-examination resumed. Consider no mine safe with one opening.

Jenkins B. Jones was the first witness for the Company. Am inside foreman at Mill Creek; I have been engaged in mining all my lifetime; in Avondale after fire; but three bodies were found in east gangway, near the face; two of them in cars and one....near the face; the two were lying on their tools, the other's tools by him; smoke and sulphur must have gone through mine rapidly, as they tried to build ganglegs; did not finish them, but were driven, examined middle brattice going down, and up-cast coming up; noticed the guides were burned more in middle way than in up-cast; brattice between up-cast and other burned; thirty or forty feet down, and then sixty or seventy feet not burned; from bottom ten to twenty feet were burned out; think fire originated up above, because from all appearance the current of air continued some time; last bodies caught by smoke and sulphur; falling by their tools, showed that they were caught suddenly; don't believe fire originated between shaft and furnace; if it had, men would have had more time to shut themselves in; knew Mr. Hughes eight years; competent and careful as foreman of mine; think if gangway driven to tunnel, men would have been saved.

Cross-examined. Not positive fire did not take from furnace, think it must have come from tunnel above; could have been set on fire, do not say was set on fire; believe some could have been saved if there had been another opening (if they conducted the ventilation right); don't think one opening is sufficient.

Direct examination resumed. Takes (in opening new colliery) long time to make two openings; considerable mining must be done first; Avondale was equally well built, better than many mines I have seen; I think it could not have been better with same kind of ventilation; first breaker known to have been burned; with better connections between tunnel and shaft the former is better than any shaft. No. 10, Pa. Coal Co., has air shaft down to top vein.

Benjamin Hughes, sworn. Am General Inside Foreman D. L. & W. R.R.; placed my brother Evan Hughes at Avondale; he was competent and careful, he consulted with me; saw mine supplied with everything necessary; consider Avodale as safe as a mine could be with one opening; ventilation as good as any in this vicinity; (described by map how he was driving towards the tunnel to make another opening, which is now within twenty feet of the coal); length of gangway is longer in that direction than in any other; if no suspension, would have taken eight months from now; think that then it would be a mine perfectly safe; brother never spoke to me about driving to Union; nearest distance to Union is six hundred feet; pretty hard coal at Avondale; in some veins above, about two hundred feet per month could be driven; we are one hundred and twenty-six feet lower in Avondale than where they (Union) are working now; if driven to Mc Farlane's would be drowned out at

Avondale; it is filled with water; not used since 1864; two hundred and thirty-two feet to line of Mc Farlane; afraid to drive nearer for fear they might have driven over our line; being full of water, can't make a survey; always been my purpose to drive to old tunnel to make another opening; Mr. Weir was a good practical miner.

Cross-examined. Could not have driven to tunnel faster; had two shifts driving towards tunnel ever since mine commenced working; think men could have been saved through that tunnel had the shaft been on fire; am positive the fresh air would rush through the tunnel and up the shaft; consulted with Mr. Storre about this tunnel more than once; depends on circumstances whether a mine is safe with one opening; he considered there was ordinary care in mining even with on opening; would rather have two; had run mines here eleven years without an accident from burning of breaker.

James Archibold, sworn. Am Civil Engineer; have been a consulting engineer in relation to D. L. & W. mines; was consulted about Avondale; Mr. Phelps then in charge; afterward Mr. Weir, because well recommended, I thought him a good practical miner; discussed with him the two modes of ventilation; "fan" and "furnace;" he objected to fan, as it was liable to get out of order; he preferred furnace; we thought [his suggestion] good; coal made in furnace; it is now the prevailing mode; never knew a shaft burned from the mode of ventilation before Avondale; coal was being mined when he came into the valley forty years ago; and there were more furnaces than fans, and still a variety of opinion as to [which is better]; Mr. Phelps and I talked about the tunnel; not as much for safety (as that was not then called in question); no one thought of danger; more for convenience and to save time.

Cross-examined. Am Chief Engineer of D. L. & W. RR.; am a stockholder.

Question. Do you consider it safe to have a mine with only one opening?

Answer. Consider it relative no more danger getting on a railway train and riding one hundred miles than working in that mine.

Thomas Mc Farlane, sworn. Worked Mc Farlane shaft adjoining Union; it was last worked in 1864; seventy five feet higher than Avondale; would not be safe to drive to Avondale unless latter high enough up the hill to be above water.

Cross-examined. No mine with one opening safe; believe if double opening men would have been saved.

Direct resumed. Had tunnel been driven through, men would have been safe.

Henry J. Phillips, sworn. Mining engineer for D. L. & W. R.R.; been in Avondale; made a survey of it two or three weeks before suspension; also of Union yesterday; distance between mines six hundred and ten feet to third chamber of Avondale; to point spoken of by Mr. Albrighton seven hundred feet; Avondale one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty feet lower than Union; not safe to drive into Mc farlane, because eight or ten acres of coal are out and space full of water; talked with Evan Hughes two weeks ago; he sent for me to come down here on the 16th of the month (day of fire) to make a survey in regard to the tunnel; something prevented me, or I would probably have been with the unfortunate men; if the tunnel were opened it would be safe to run past the mouth of the shaft to the mouth of the tunnel, which is forty or forty-five feet; tunnel runs along side of the shaft, and if a fire there occurred, the draft would have gone in and up shaft; men could go that forty-five feet with perfect safety, and would have done it; have known men to run through black damp and sulphur, sixty, seventy, and even one hundred and fifty feet; same force would have driven them to the tunnel as soon as to the Union; to No. 10, Pennsylvania Company's mine, there is a second shaft to first vein only, to the best of my recollection; I would rather have two rather than one opening; no company in the country has taken more pains than the D. L. & W. RR. Co. When engaged on an essay on ventilation of mines examined all mines in Valley and found D. L. & W. better than all others; conclusion arrived at in essay was that two openings better than one.

Question. Should not any Company be held responsible for sending men into mines with only one opening?

Answer. Not a question for me to answer; that is for the Courts; I am here for no Company; I am here for myself; I think if there was a tunnel opened the men would have been safe.

Question. Have you any idea where the fire originated?

Answer. I thought first from the furnace; afterward that it was set on fire; from the furnace, because one turns at right angle into the shaft, and there would be the greatest amount heat; other opinion made from the evidence and appearance above; I think it was set on fire.

Robert Anderson, called by prosecution. Am a miner, sunk No. 10 shaft, Penn. Coal Co.; sank winding shaft and air to; both extend to bottom of mine; sank winding shaft first, about five months doing it; drove also slope; five months driving big shaft; two hundred and sixty-four feet between the two; ventilated by the furnace; breaker ever winding shaft; case of fire men could go up the air shaft; believe one could be made in an hour; their workings are old, and they have an advantage of opening from one to another; been in the country five years; this is the first breaker burned to my knowledge.

Here both parties rested and the answer went to the jury without argument. About four and a half o'clock p.m., the hall was cleared had the jury commenced their deliberation. About six o'clock they adjourned for supper, after which they re-assembled, and after several hours of deliberation agreed to the following verdict:

THE VERDICT OF THE JURY
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AT LUZERNE COUNTY.

An inquisition at Plymouth, in the County of Luzerne, the eighth, ninth, eleventh, and fourteenth days of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, before us, K. C. Wadhams and Josiah W. Kno, Justices of the Peace, acting as coroners of the County aforesaid, upon the view of the bodies of Palmer Steele, Denulson Slocum, John Broker, William Powell, George Willaims, jr. Willie Phillips, Mathuesalem Evans, Edward Humphrey, Jacob Monier, Peter Conlan, John Clark, Willaim J. Evans, George Stackhouse, Edwin D. Jones, Morgan Watkins, Andrew Frothingham, William X. Allen, Thomas D. Jones, Peter Johnson, Evan Hughes, Willaim Bowen, James Feare, Thomas Hughes, Willam Reese, William Pharfit, William N. Williams, William Lewis; John Hughes, Thomas Morris, Elijah S. Bryant, Thomas Roberts, William Sink, Daniel Jones, Daniel Givens, Evan Rees, Edward W. Edwards, Henry Morris, Willaim S. Williams, David S. Reese, Richard Woolley, John R. Davis, David James, Lewis Evans, William Willaims, Richard Owen, Willaim Hatton, William Evans, James Powell, Thomas Hatton, Edward Owen, John Burch, John Burch, jr., John Jenkins, Williams Evans, Daniel Woods, William H. Nauss, David Reese, jr., Griffith Roberts, Charles F. Ruth, Joseph Morris, Patrick Mc Gurck, Harry Smith, Sham Howell, Thomas Davies, William Dowdle, John Roberty or Greorty, Thomas Ryan, Hugh Gilroy, John Maher, Patrick Burke, William T. Morgan, James Murray, Michael Daly, David P. Pryer, James Phillips, James Williams, John D. Evans, William Harding, Samuel R. Morgan, William R. Evans, William L. Wildrich, Reese Lumley, Thomas Llewellyn, Reese Llewellyn, William Davies, John Thomas, John Davies, William T. Williams, William D. Johns, Dennis Guyton, William R. Reese, William Speight, John Harris, Thomas L. Jones, Thomas Phillips, Lewis Davies, Charles Feare, John Thomas, David Johnson, James Mallon, James Harkfish, William D. Jones, Edward Taylor, Rowland Jones, Madison Alabaugh, Daniel Edwards and John Powell, . . . and there lying dead, upon the oaths of William J. Harvey, [Chip] Hutchinson, Samuel Vanloda, James George, Martia McDonald, and Thomas Patton of the County . . . who being sworn to inquire on the role of the Commonworth when, where, how and after what manner the old-Palmer Stools and other people came to their deaths, do say upon their oaths that the old-Palmer Stools and other people came to their deaths in the Avondale mine in Plymoth.... County and State afterwards, between the eighth days of September last year. That the cause of the death of Palmer Stools and other people sustained was the exhaustion of atmospheric air,

and the presence of the abundance of carbonic acid gases in the said Avondale mines, caused by the burning of the Head House and Breaker at said mine, on the sixth day of September 1869, destroying the air courses leading from the mine through the shaft.

That the fire originated from the furnace in the mine, taking effect on the wood brattice to the up-cast air course leading from the bottom of the shaft to the Head House.

The jury regards the present system of mining in a large number of cases now working by shaft as insecure and unsafe to the miner, and would strongly recommend, in all cases where practicable, two places for ingress and egress and [a more practical means of] ventilation, thereby rendering greater security to the life of the miner under any similar accident.

In witness whereof, as well the [appointed] Justice of the Peace, noting as Coroners as the Jurors aforesaid, have to their inquisition put their hands and souls on this fourteenth (14th) day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine at Plymouth.

(signed)	E. C. WADHAMS	{ L. S. }
	Justice of the Peace, noting as Coroner	
	JOSIAH W. ENO	{ L. S. }
	Justice of the Peace, noting as Coroner	
	WM. J. HARVEY,	{ L. S. }
	CHAS. HUTCHINSON,	{ L. S. }
	SAM'L VANLOON,	{ D. S. }
	JAMES GEORGE,	{ G. S. }
	MARTIN McDONALD,	{ G. S. }
	THOS. PATTON,	{ G. S. }

INCEPTION AND PROGRESS OF THE RELIEF FUND

On Tuesday, Sept 7th. Rev. T. P. Hunt, of Wilkes-Barre, appeared at Avondale and made a few remarks to those assembled in relation to the propriety of raising money to be applied to the relief of the facilities of those men who were in the mine, closing with proposing that E. C. Wadhams, James McAlarney, J. Faller Reynolds, George Evans, Doctor Richards, Jacob Roberts, J. W. Eno, H. J. Yapple, Harry Hakes, Sam Shafer, B. J. Woodward, Robert Boston, John F. Wren, Nathan Vanhorn, Frank Tarser, H. H. Harvey, Richard Sulwell, and John B. Smith be appointed a Committee to receive subscribers. Buall books previously prepared were handed to all the Committeemen present, and a [commotion] of the immense multitude commenced. The amount which was then raised was the nucleus for the large sum which was subsequently contributed by the benevolent all over the country.

On Thursday, Sept. 9th, Rev. Mr. Hunt again visited Avondale, and after consultation with Esq. Esc, one of the acting coroners, and others, the following Committee was appointed to take charge of the funds raised and to be raised W. L. William, Cashier of the First National Bank of Plymouth; Strong, President of the First National Bank of; W. W. Wiaton, President of the ... National Bank of, Rev. T. P. Hunt and Col. H. B. Wright, of Wilkes-Harre, and Geo. Coray, esq., of

The Committee, headed by W. L. Wilson, esq., Cashier of the First National Bank of Plymouth, met at that place on the 10th of September, and organized permanently by electing E. C. Wadhams, esq., President; Henderson Gaylord (President of the First National Bank of Plmouth); Tresurer, and W. L. Wilson. Secretary. A committee of was appointed to look after ... supply the immediate ... of the to at least on week; to take a ... of the families of the unfortunate report their action at a meeting to be held on the 18th ...; and the..... system for the equitable contribution of funds and other

On the 11th of September a meeting of the Relief Fund was held at Plymouth, when the following persons were elected Board of Managera or :

The Fund in the meantime had been rapidly accumulating. Each day's subscriptions as they were reported in the various newspapers throughout the country and by telegraph, were daily in the Morning Republican, and from that source the list herewith printed has been compiled. For the sake of convenience and brevity, each day's contributions from the different have been grouped together, the grand total up to the time of issuing this pamphlet being given at the close. The amount raised at Avondale by the original committee reached about \$700.



Correspondence

Dated
09/1922

D-699

September 25, 1922. JWP:HSD

Mr. W. J. Updyke,
R. 7,
Marshall, Texas.

SUBJECT: Avondale Mine Fire -
Sept. 6, 1869.
179 men killed

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of September 23, concerning
the mine fire at the Avondale Mine:

The records show that the Avondale fire at Plymouth,
Penna., occurred September 6, 1869. I have been unable to find
a complete record of this disaster, but it appears that there
was but one shaft opening to this mine and the men were unable
to escape. Whether the fire originated in the mine or in the
head frame or breaker on the surface, I do not know.

I understand that this disaster was the reason for
enacting the first anthracite mine law in Pennsylvania.

Very truly yours,



J. W. PAUL,
Chief of Coal Mining
Investigations.

**Bureau of Mines Bulletin 616:
Historical Documentation of
Major Coal Mine Disasters in
The United States
Not Classified As
Explosions of Gas or Dust,
1846-1962**

September 6, 1869; Avondale Mine, Plymouth,
Pa.; 110 Killed

*(From "90 Years Ago Today," by James J. Corrigan,
Anthracite Industry Historical Researcher, pub-
lished in "The Sunday Independent," Wilkes-Barre,
Pa., Sept. 6, 1959)*

One hundred and eight tragically-trapped men and boys inside the mine perished through asphyxiation when an uncontrollable fire, originating in a furnace at the bottom of the Avondale shaft, over which the breaker and works stood, flashed upward and destroyed the surface structures. It was the only means of entrance and exit. Two other men succumbed in a heroic rescue descent into the mine and numerous other men nearly met the same fate in rescue attempts. Avondale mine fire fatalities totalled 110.

The Avondale works were completed in September 1867, being considered "the finest in the valley." But the tragic neglect or abysmal lack of foresight was responsible for the construction of what proved a disastrous "one way ticket" into the mine.

On the morning of Sept. 6, 1869, (a blue Monday of tragedy) a hoisting engineer at Avondale was the first workman to discover the flames, mid-way between 11 a.m. and noon, shooting up the shaft to the breaker atop.

He told a newspaperman a short time later, he was "startled" by flames rushing up the shaft with great fury. So rapidly did the fire progress that he merely was able to blow the colliery whistle and arrange matters to prevent a boiler explosion. In an almost incredible short time everything combustible about the entire works was in flames—a line of fire extending from the Bloomsburg Railroad track below, along the bank of the Susquehanna, to the mine shaft high above a distance of not less than 800 feet.

A two-day coroner's inquest at Plymouth decided that "the fire originated from the furnace in the mine, taking effect on the wood brattice to the up-cast course leading from the bottom of the shaft to the head house."

The coroner's jury noted that it regarded the current "system of mining as insecure and unsafe to the miners," and strongly recommended "where practicable, two places for ingress and egress, and more perfect ventilation, thereby rendering greater security to the lives of the miners under any similar accident."

The Avondale jury's recommendation was fulfilled when, the following year, 1870, the Pennsylvania State Legislature enacted a law demanding that each coal mine must provide for two openings to the surface, "for the ingress and egress of the men employed therein."

The Coshorton Age
Friday, October 1, 1869

Verdict in Avondale Mine Case.

The jury has returned the following verdict: That the said Palmer, Steele, and others came to their deaths in the Avondale mine; that the cause of their death was the exhaustion of atmospheric air or a prevalence of sulphuric and carbonic acid gases in the said Avondale mine, caused by the burning of the head house and breaker at said mine, on the ninth day of September, thereby destroying the air courses leading from the mine through the shaft, that the fire originated from the furnace from the mine, taking effect on the wooden bracket in the up cast air course leading from the bottom of the shaft to the head house. The jury regard the present system of mining, in a large number of mines now working by shafts, as insecure and unsafe to the miners; and would strongly recommend in all cases, when practicable, two places for ingress and egress and a more perfect ventilation, thereby rendering greater security to the lives of the miners under any similar accident.

Indiana Messenger

September 18, 1869

THE AVONDALE HORROR.

Full Particulars of the Calamity.

The story of the Pennsylvania disaster grows more and more horrible as the details are gradually brought to light. There is a part of it—the closing moments of the awful agony of those two hundred men—which can never be described. Even the manner in which the catastrophe originated is mainly a matter of conjecture. In all human probability, not one of that wretched company survives to tell the secrets of their prison house, and so to the actual horrors of suffering and death is added the gloom of an impenetrable mystery.

The colliery in which this terrible accident occurred is entered by a perpendicular shaft, 327 feet deep, on the side of a mountain. From the bottom of it, 40 feet below the surface of the valley, run two main galleries, sloping upward, one 800 and the other 1,200 feet long. Smaller passages and chambers, 50 in number, branch off from these. There is no access to the open air except by this single shaft, which had to serve all the purposes of a hoist-way for the workmen and the coal, and a channel for the ventilating current which in all mines must be constantly forced by machinery through the various galleries and drifts. The sides of the shaft were built up with wooden supports, and a wooden partition ran perpendicularly through its whole length, dividing it into two passages, one for the upward, the other for the downward current. Right over its mouth stood a great wooden building, containing the machinery for hoisting and for breaking, sorting and cleaning the coal. To assist in creating a current of air a fire was always kept burning in a furnace at the foot of the shaft, and from this it is supposed the wood work must have caught. On Monday morning two hundred men went down that shaft to resume work after a long strike. They were followed, about 9 o'clock, by one of the mule tenders, with hay for his beasts,

As he reached the bottom he was heard to cry Fire! but what he saw we never shall know, for in an instant a fierce column of flame rushed up the shaft, caught the breaker as if that had been a house of paper, and wrapped the whole structure in sheets of fire. The mouth of the pit belched forth destruction. Hundreds of tons of coal in the shutes and bins were soon in a white glow, and dropped with the falling beams into the shaft. It was seven or eight hours before the engines which were hurried to the scene of disaster from all the neighboring towns succeeded in extinguish-

ing the fire. The mouth of the pit belched forth destruction. Hundreds of tons of coal in the shutes and bins were soon in a white glow, and dropped with the falling beams into the shaft. It was seven or eight hours before the engines which were hurried to the scene of disaster from all the neighboring towns succeeded in extinguishing the burning mass. Workmen had flocked to the spot from the entire mining region, for it was known that two hundred of their brethren were imprisoned among the deadly vapors of that awful pit. The rubbish was cleared away from the mouth, and fifty experienced miners volunteered to attempt the descent. It was now about 6 in the evening. To test the purity of the air a dog and a lighted lamp were first lowered into the shaft as far as they would go. At the end of five minutes they were drawn up; the dog was alive, the lamp still burning. A miner named Charles Vartue then went down to reconnoitre, but about half way from the bottom he found the shaft blockaded with fallen timbers. Two fresh volunteers were then lowered with hatchets. After 20 minutes they were drawn up again, faint and breathless. They had penetrated 70 or 80 yards into a gangway, finding three dead mules, and coming at last to a closed door. They hammered at it and waited for an answering sound, but no answer came, and through the crevices poured clouds of sulphurous vapor—the fatal "black damp." Several other parties, in the course of the evening and night, made attempts to penetrate into the gangways, but with little more success. Few could remain more than five or six minutes

and when drawn up they were all speechless and exhausted. Several were brought back by their companions entirely insensible. Two brave fellows, Daniel Jones and Thomas Williams, were brought back dead. There was no hope now that any of the miners remained alive, unless possibly they had succeeded in walling themselves in at some remote part of the mine so effectually as to prevent the entrance of the foul gases from the shaft. It was only the shadow of a hope, still the work went on, while women sat wringing their hands and weeping for their husbands and children, and miners from distant regions came in hundreds to offer their assistance. By 9 o'clock on Tuesday morning an engine and fan had been placed in position to force fresh air into the mine. All day long parties went down at intervals, but the black damp drove them back, and the fans did not seem to gain upon it.

About four in the afternoon it was discovered that the fire at the foot of the shaft, which was supposed to be entirely extinguished, had been revived by the fresh current, and communicated with a mass of coal lying near. Thus the workmen had actually been accelerating the generation of gas, and destroying what little vestige of hope might remain for their imprisoned comrades. A stream of water was with some difficulty brought to play upon the flames, and the greater part of the night was devoted to the suppression of the fire, the clouds of gas that came up the shaft being meanwhile so awful that workmen at the mouth were removed insensible. Between 2 and 3 o'clock on Wednesday morning two bodies were found, both fearfully disfigured and unrecognizable. About 6:30 a party of four succeeded in penetrating some distance into one of the principal galleries, and came upon the bodies of over sixty more where they had met their fate together. They had constructed two barriers of ears and refuse coal, and stripped off their clothes to stuff the crevices. One poor fellow, whose duty it seems to have been to close the last aperture after all had passed beyond it, had fallen dead on the outside, his work not yet completed. Fathers and sons were found in each other's arms. Some lay with their hands clenched as if in agony, some with their faces buried in the ground, some in the attitude of prayer.

LATER.—A careful estimate has been made which reduces the total number of persons in the mine at the time of the disaster to 110. A dispatch from Avondale, dated September 9, says that 108 have been taken out of the mine. Two experienced and competent miners, who have been down in the shaft, and thoroughly explored the mine, say they are confident that all the bodies have been recovered. Outside parties say that two bodies are yet missing.

THE AVONDALE CATASTROPHE.

Scene of the Disaster.

[Correspondence N. Y. Tribune.]

AVONDALE, LUZERNE Co., Pa., Sept. 8.

About 108 miles west of New York city is the town of Wilkesbarre, situated in the Wyoming Valley, on the eastern bank of the Susquehanna river. Four miles below, on the western side of the river, is Avondale, and the Avondale coal mine. The Susquehanna is about a mile distant, across the flats. The Lackawanna & Bloomsburg railroad runs along a high hill, near the mouth of the mine, which is 200 feet up the side of the mountain. Over the entrance to this mine stood a large building, called a "breaker." Here were the hoisting apparatus, the pumping engine and the machines for breaking and screening the coal as it was taken from the mine. Above, the ground rises at an angle of about 45 degrees. The town of Plymouth lies about a mile and a half to the north. The view of the Valley of the Wyoming, is charming. On both sides of the river are groups of mountains stretching away to the north and south, while meadows and gardens slope gently to the water's edge.

On the morning of the 6th of September, about 8 o'clock, some boys at work in a field near the breaker, saw a bluish vapor rising above the roof, but they thought little of it at the time. An hour afterwards the keeper of the stables in the mine took down some hay for his mules. When near the bottom of the shaft he was heard to call "fire," and at the same time, almost, a column of flame shot up through the ventilator into the engine room. The engineer was driven from his post before he could reverse or stop the engine. In a moment the vast wooden structure, 100 feet in height, and as large as a hotel, was burning in every part. The terrible heat created such a current from the shaft below that nothing could withstand it. The shaft is 10 by 16 feet square, and about 350 feet in depth. A partition extended from the top to the bottom leaving a flue for the air to pass up and down. It was up this wooden box or chimney that the fire first came, and, it being separated from the main shaft, the hostler was thus kept from discovering the fire when he went down.

In order to purify the air in a mine, it is necessary to force the foul vapor out, and in addition to the steam fans used, it is customary to build a fire at the bottom of the shaft for the purpose of getting rid of the "damp." When mines are constantly worked, these fires are not allowed to go out, and no danger is feared, as there is seldom any flame except when the fire is first kindled. The miners in the Wilkesbarre region, having been on a strike for a long time, commenced work on Monday, the 6th instant. The wood fire at the bottom of the shaft being recently kindled, sent up a blaze before the coal was put on. It is supposed that the wood lining of the shaft caught from the flame below, though there was many feet of brick-work at the bottom.

So soon as the breaker was discovered to be on fire the fire engines at Wilkesbarre, Kingston, and Scranton were telegraphed for, and the officers of the road informed of the disaster. The alarm spread far and wide, and soon large crowds of people congregated in the vicinity of the burning. The excitement was intense, but when it was rumored that nearly two hundred men and boys were beneath the mass of flame the air was filled with shouts and cries. The engines soon arrived, and they commenced playing on the fire. It was like attempting to quench a volcano. No sooner had the fire got fairly under way than the sulphur vapors and gases began to add to the intensity of the heat. Such an awful scene was never before witnessed on this continent. Fresh steamers were constantly arriving from the neighboring towns, and at last there was a perceptible change. And when the heroes of the pumps were victorious of the flames, women embraced one another for joy, and strong men rushed up and bore away the heated timbers as though they were straws. No camp meeting ever sent up as many prayers to God in so short a time before. When the rubbish was cleared away from the shaft, shout after shout resounded through the valley, and a dozen of men came forward to attempt a descent into the mine, but even in their haste they were cautious. A dog and lamp were lowered into the black abyss, and the air was found to be good. Again the air was rent with cheers, and again the mothers uttered their prayers. In five minutes preparations were made for a descent. It was about 6 o'clock in the evening when a man was lowered in a bucket. He returned in a few minutes, and reported that he found no difficulty in breathing. A thrill of joy ran through the multitude on hearing this, and immediately two men were sent down with tools. They removed the obstructions, and reached the surface at 7 o'clock, nine hours after the first alarm was given. They reported that they had penetrated a gangway sixty or seventy yards, finding three dead mules. They also discovered a gangway door, which they battered so as to be heard above ground. No response was made, and clouds of sulphurous gases came pouring through the apertures. On reaching the top of the shaft, the men fainted, but they soon recovered. When the people

heard of the gas pouring in from the other parts of the mine, they lost all hope. Railroad and mining officials had been arriving all day from up and down the line, and merchants and bankers sent word that no money should be lacking.

Later in the evening two men attempted to descend, but the foul air overcame them, and one of them, Mr. Williams, expired. A piteous wail went round, and the operations were suspended until a fan could be geared to drive out the gases. A stationary engine was erected, and even the powerful fan was forcing great volumes of air into the shaft.

On Monday evening the road to Plymouth and Wilkesbarre was filled with people and vehicles. It was impossible to get near the ruins. Young men, old men, and women of all ages climbed up the sides of the mountain back of the breaker and looked down from above.

It had been reported that there was no fire in the shaft or in the gangways, but it was discovered that the interior was burning with fearful intensity. It seems that the action of the fan revived the dying embers. A stream of water was then turned on and the fire extinguished after it had been burning for a long time.

At dark the scene was a strange one. For many miles up and down this beautiful valley the glare of a thousand lights were seen. The vast quantities of burning coal at the breakers were covered with sheets of colored flame. Great hazy men worked silently and constantly, and often in tears. At intervals a mother's wail came in on the night air, as it did years ago when death once reigned in the Valley of the Wyoming. Long lines of men guarded the hoisting rope on either side, while those at their posts attended to the duties assigned them. The volunteers were lowered by means of a machine worked by horse power. The hoisting apparatus is located on the elevated plane at the upper side of the breaker, and on the plane below is the mouth of the shaft. Here are lines of miners extending back some distance. When a descent is to be made, word is given to the men above, and the brakes are loosed. The word "Silence!" is given, and a thousand men stand motionless. At last the rope slackens, and then there is a loud jerk, while the foreman looks at his watch. One, two, three minutes are passed, and still the silence continues. Nine minutes "Up! Up! boys!"—and away goes the hoise with a man at his heels on the run. The rope runs slow, and the call for more speed is heard again and again. At last heads appear. "All right!" is heard, a rush is made, and in a minute the new comers fall fainting into the arms of their comrades. The prostrate forms are borne away to the open air, where they are laid and rubbed until life is restored. It is a sickening sight, but the brave men who have spent their life beneath the ground offer not a complaint. The row of things below is given in a whisper and in shouts to the men above.

All day and all night weary hours passed by, but the workers did not stop a moment. You see a grim creature sitting

on a log. His eyes are scarcely visible, and his long, coarse boots, and his canvas suit, close buttoned, make him look as though he had been on a spree for a week. He is an English miner, and one of the most experienced in the State. He has come many miles to rescue his brothers, and well does he do his work. I saw him, and wondered when I learned that he had been down the fatal shaft several times, and staid down longer than almost any other person.

BRINGING UP THE DEAD.

A correspondent of the New York Times, who visited Avondale on the 8th, telegraphs:

When the train reached Avondale an assemblage of about 10,000 already occupied the hillside in long lines, rising one above the other, and every eye gazing intently down upon the road leading to the mouth of the tunnel, out of which every fifteen minutes issued a dead body on a stretcher. Just before each body was raised from the black and awful depths below, a couple of miners invariably preceded it, faint and weary, leaning upon each other, and, with lantern still lighted in front of their hats, were forwarded to the base of a big tree, where they lay down to rest and had restoratives given them to bring them back to strength and fuller consciousness.

Every available space in the neighborhood of the tunnel entrance was thronged by men and women, the latter sitting like daughters of Jephtha, with features expressive of a deep and abiding sorrow.

The miners who went down in the pit in pairs were all volunteers—strong, resolute men, with frames of great endurance—and, though well used to the atmosphere of mines, and accustomed for years to work below the surface of the earth, braving and bearing well the noxious gases generated in coal mines, each one, nevertheless, on reappearing at the surface after an absence of twenty or twenty-five minutes, showed all the symptoms of the utmost physical prostration. In almost every instance it was necessary to apply restoratives, so great was the exhalation. The bodies all, as a general thing, present a horrible appearance, caused no doubt by black coal dust, with which every face was thickly smeared; yet they did not seem to give much expression of pain in the faces of some, but rather a look of resignation to an inevitable fate, which gave to some features a calm and undisturbed appearance.

A force of extemporized police preserved order on the ground, and the formality of a coroner's inquest was quickly gone through by a jury under the instructions of acting Coroner Wadhams. Mr. Phillips, the outside superintendent of the mine, acted as official recognizer, as he was acquainted with nearly all of the miners. Where his knowledge failed the comrades of the dead man were appealed to, and not much delay was undergone in any case before the result was obtained and the corpse handed over to friends, who prepared it for interment. No one seemed to be utterly friendless or left to charity for becoming burial. If he had no blood relations—and almost every one seemed to have—some comrade stepped forward and took charge of his remains.

The inefficiency of the police in excluding from the vicinity of the pier all those who had business there, as well as in admitting all those who had no immediate business there, was very conspicuous.

Most of the bodies were clothed in a heavy woolen shirt and trousers. Some were naked from the waist upward. The exhumation went on as rapidly as could be managed considering the necessary imperfection of the temporary apparatus used, but still the delay was wearisome, even to mere spectators, and must have been doubly so to the watchers on the outside, who were so agonized with dread and expectation lest the next disinterment might be of that one of the dead for whom they were especially and immediately interested.

A fine looking, deep-chested Welshman, named James George, President of the Miner's Union at Plymouth, performed the duty of calling out the name of each dead miner as he was brought out, three times in succession, in deep, sonorous tones that reached the limits of the immense crowd, and was heard with a painful and profound stillness.

The work of bringing up dead bodies proceeded uninterruptedly through the day, and is being continued through to-night, the general expectation being that all the bodies will be brought out by to-morrow afternoon.

Of course there is a deep seated feeling among the mining people that in consulting their own pecuniary interests the owners of the mine showed an utter indifference to the lives of those in their employment. The sum of \$5,000 would have been sufficient to have to have sunk another shaft which would have permitted a means of escape to the men, and saved perhaps all of them and spared widespread grief and misery among hundreds of women and children. Every house in the vicinity of the Avondale mines and for miles is widowed to-night, and none but the Almighty knows the anguish of this state of bereavement.

How the fire originated can never be truly told, for no one lives to tell. It is fair, however, to assume that a spark from the furnace in the bottom of the pit set fire to dry woodwork which, when fanned by the strong current of ventilating air gradually grew into a flame and burned fiercely up the shaft in quick time, igniting the breaker over head and destroying the engine house.

Interior of the Avondale Mine.

The Avondale mine has been worked for two years. Three months ago the miners struck. They resumed work on Thursday last. The mine is entered by a shaft on the hillside. This is the only entrance. Wooden buildings, 100 feet high and 200 feet long, covered the mouth of the shaft. The mine was filled with narrow passages, from four to ten feet high, which occasionally opened into immense pockets or caves. A railroad track was laid on the bottom of each of these passages. The cars were filled with coal, three-quarters of a mile from the shaft, by the miners at work. The coal cars were then run through the various wooden-supported passages to the shaft. They were then run upon a platform, which was raised to the top of the shaft, the same as a common elevator or a vertical railway. When the cars reached the earth's surface they were run out over a trestle railway through the wooden buildings and dumped. The coal would fall in huge screens, where, in some cases, it was properly assorted, and then dumped into the cars of the Bloomsburg & Lackawanna Railroad, by which means it was taken to market.

A person wishing to enter the mine would get into an empty coal car, which was then run upon the elevator at the top of the shaft. At a given signal the empty car would drop, and at the same time a loaded car would ascend the double shaft. As the bottom was struck, the empty car would glide off into a dark passage, and a loaded car would take its place. In an instant a mule would be hitched to the empty car, which would be drawn at a rapid rate to the foot of an inclined plane. Here a train of light cars would be formed, which were then drawn up the plane by the simultaneous descent of a train of loaded cars.

The various veins of coal in the Avondale mine are some nine feet thick, and have a gentle upward slope. A passage way is cut along each vein. The tunnels are fearfully dark. Their only light is that from the miners' lamps. These safety lamps are worn on the miners' hats.

The "breasts" in which the mining is carried on sometimes resemble huge halls and rooms. One vein in the Avondale mine is thirty feet thick, and the gallery along this vein is correspondingly large. The mine is simply a vast network of black labyrinths, expanding occasionally into immense pockets or "breasts," where larger blasts than usual are made. The coal is cracked by these blasts, and loosened by the pick and shovel, after which the cars are filled. The miners work in these dark galleries in groups of from five to a dozen men. The cars hold about two tons apiece. In brisk times the mines will turn out 500 tons per day. The miners proper work by the car-load, and easily make \$5 per day. The mule boys generally get \$5 per week. The men who handle the cars and attend to the hoisting are also paid by the week.

As there was but one main shaft to the Avondale mine its ventilation was difficult. It had not been worked for some time, and much foul air had collected in the damp

places. Besides the bad air generated by the men and horses, and by the burning of lamps and gunpowder, inflammable gasses issue from crevices in the coal. These gasses mingle with the foul air of the mine, and will explode on the approach of a lighted candle. This gas is the fire-damp so much dreaded by the miners. To breathe it thirty seconds is sure death.

The fire-damp is composed of carburetted hydrogen, and the choke-damp of carbonic. When blasting for coal it will frequently issue in jets called blowers. At times, when the cavities are broken into the coal by picks or crowbars, these blowers will burst out, creating a singing noise by the force current. The great danger is from opening pent-up reservoirs holding, under great pressure, immense bodies of gas disseminated through large areas of coal, or collected in abandoned workings.

When such bodies are inflamed, the whole atmosphere of that portion of the mine explodes, and the coal dust floating through the passages is ignited. The mine is like the interior of a fiery furnace. The flames rush through the long corridors, causing repeated explosions. In some cases they spring up the shafts as if issuing from the crater of the volcano. The subterranean walls are frequently shaken as if by an earthquake. The miners in the workings, their lights blown out by the force of the explosion, hasten through the dark passages, stumbling over heaps of rubbish.

It is possible that the accident at the Avondale mine was caused by one of these explosions. Persons entering the mine complain of the sulphurous fumes choking up the corridors. The mine was ventilated by a furnace at the bottom of the shaft. By this furnace the air was made to circulate through the complicated passages of the mine. The air for feeding the furnace was of course drawn from the lower part of the mine.

Avondale mine has but one shaft. That was divided by an air-tight partition into an upcast and a downcast. Partitions across the passages below caused the air to pass to any and all desired points before it reached the passage leading to the furnace. Ingenious expedients were adopted to regulate the currents of air and to cause only the air which had passed through the purer portions of the mine to feed the fire, lest the more impure cur-

rents should become inflamed, and the explosions follow back into the most remote workings. The partitions across the great gangways along which the coal was run to the shaft was furnished with doors, which were opened and shut as the coal cars passed through. The furnace was the sole means of ventilation.

The cause of the disaster will never be known. At early morn a stream of fire shot up the shaft with frightful rapidity, and the buildings above were wrapped in flames so quickly that the engineers and others barely had time to escape. The wood of the shaft either caught fire from the furnace or the rushing blaze came from the lighting of a fire damp within the mine. The dryness of the mine favors the former supposition, but the sulphurous gasses choking the explorers, and the fleetness of the fire, would indicate an ignition of a fire damp. In either case every soul in the mine has perished.—*New York Sun.*

The Ohio Democrat.

"THE UNION—IT MUST BE PRESERVED."—JACKSON.

NEW PHILADELPHIA, OHIO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1869.

THE AVONDALE HORROR.

THE MINE AT LAST ENTERED

The Scene Baffles Description.

The Great Hecatomb of the Dead

More than 200 Have Perished.

[From the Pittsburgh Post.]

WILKESBARRE, PA., Sept. 8

A gentleman who has returned from the Avondale mine reports that early this morning a successful descent was made, and some of the chambers of the mine entered. A large number of dead bodies were found. There were no signs of life anywhere around in the fearful sepulchre. The bodies were being brought to the surface as fast as possible, and the shrieks of the heart-broken relatives on beholding the lifeless forms of their husbands, fathers and brothers, is harrowing indeed.

Avondale, Sept. 8.—3 A. M.—An entrance to the mine was effected about half an hour ago. The chambers were reached without serious difficulty. The first body discovered was that of Mr. Steele. Further on and in the most remote chamber an appalling spectacle presented itself to the exploring. There, in a heap, and in all sorts of positions, in which their last agonies had placed them, lay the bodies of two hundred and three dead men, not a vestige of life being visible in the countenance or form of any of the unfortunate men who had met so untimely and horrible a death.

Pittsburgh, Sept. 8.—There have been one hundred and twenty bodies brought up out of the mine, and they are still being piled into the basket below. Their features are not contorted; they look natural and are easy of recognition by friends and relatives. The bodies are being placed in ice. Some of them are being removed to their former homes and privately cared for, while the majority are allowed to remain until preparations are made for their funerals. Many of them will be buried together.

The wildest excitement prevailed at the entrance to the shaft, and the shrieks of the friends of the dead as the bodies were brought up were deafening. Nothing can approximate to a description of the scene; no pen can portray it. The pent up grief of those who still hoped against fate, went forth in wails of heartrending agony. The endearing or tender words of the mother or wife, as she grasped the lifeless form of her son or husband and tried to bring him again to life, refusing to believe it could be dead, and defending it against all attempts at removal were touching indeed.

The Avondale Horror.

It is utterly impossible adequately to describe the terrible scenes of bitter anguish among the women and children outside the lines during the time of the hoisting and bringing out the dead. Such terrific and heartrending cries of agony and distress, such weeping and wailing, it falls to the lot of but few to witness. All night long the cries of women and children were heard upon the extensive walls of the colliery, and up and down the road that skirts the hillside. It is impossible to convey any correct idea of the dreariness of this night scene, broken by the sobbings and moanings of these distressed widows and orphans; the whole sufficient to appal the senses and chill the blood. Many of the distressed women, acknowledging and realizing to its full extent the awful situation of their husbands and sons, were sitting and walking in front of their houses all night long, uttering low, plaintive, and pitiful sounds. It was almost impossible to get their attention even for a moment in order to express a hope for better things to come out of the uncertainty. They realized the worst. Hope was gone—the last ray extinguished. "Pity my poor little ones" was a constant expression, which will be appreciated with double and triple force when we consider the destitute condition occasioned by the strike which has but just ended. All these homes are in a most miserable condition. These people need immediate help. During the day, while the bodies were being taken out, the expressions of countenance of these poor creatures in waiting along the line were awful. As one body after another was taken out and uncovered for recognition the pent up agony would seem to burst forth anew in the most distressing manner. When it was announced that the body of Mr. Evans was found, with a son embraced in each arm, the anguish of the wife and mother was most afflicting, as she ran up the road distracted with grief. Other anxious faces are here—there are wives looking for husbands and sons, mothers looking for their dead boys, and sisters looking for fathers and brothers. In passing one house, one poor frantic woman was groaning under the burden of a lost husband and sons, and uttering the pitiful cry of "Who will care for my poor children now?" That beseeching, heartrending petition is often heard upon every hand, "Oh God, be merciful!" "Have pity!" It is sufficient to chill the blood in the veins to behold such scenes and hear such cries. One woman was seen standing with a little one in her arms and three or four tugging away at her skirts, lisping "papa," "papa;" she, in the depths of her despair, seemed intently gazing with upturned countenance upon some bright object of a cherished faith. There were no tears at Avondale yesterday—the depths of agony were too great for such an expression, for the wild and impassioned grief seems as if it would rend the very soul and distract the mind. It cannot run away in tears. The hardest heart must be moved to offer substantial pity to these poor unfortunates. Come forward quickly. A good work is yet before us. The wires will soon complete the list of sufferers.—*Scranton Republican, September 9.*

COLLIERY DISASTER,

Burning of the Avondale Mine Coal Breaker.

OVER 200 MEN AND BOYS IN THE MINE.

SCRANTON, Sept. 6.—There is great excitement here in consequence of the burning of the coal breaker at Avondale mine, in Plymouth, about twenty miles south of this city. There are two hundred and one men and boys in the mine, and the shaft, which is their only means for escape, is choked by forty feet of burning coal and rubbish. Ventilation is totally stopped, and there are great fears that some, if not all, will be suffocated.

LATER.

PLYMOUTH, Sept. 6.—A fire broke out this morning, in a flue in the bottom of the Steuben shaft, owned by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company, in this place, and in a short time the whole breaker and out-buildings were in flames, and the hoisting apparatus, the only avenue of escape for the miners, destroyed. All efforts to stay the flames were in vain, and the whole structure fell, partly filling up the shaft. Over two hundred men are in the shaft, and have no communication out, with no chance for aid, as the only way for getting air into the shaft was through the main opening, and that was filled with burning timbers and the debris. It is feared that the whole number have been suffocated by smoke or perished for want of air.

The fire departments of Scranton, Wilkesbarre and Kingston are on hand, and are playing streams down the shaft for the purpose of quenching the fire there, so the rubbish can be cleared out and the condition of the men ascertained. It will probably take till to-morrow morning before any tidings can be received from them.

The scene at the shaft is heart-rending. The families of the miners are congregated there in great numbers. Miners from all parts of the country are there at work, and merchants, and, in fact, the whole population of the town, have turned out to assist.

The loss by fire will amount to about \$100,000, which is partially covered by insurance. All the physicians in the vicinity have been summoned to attend when the condition of the men is ascertained. The affair has cast a gloom upon the whole community, and business is almost entirely suspended. The mines only resumed work to-day, after a suspension of about three months. Among the men in the mines is Mr. Hughes, superintendent.

ENTRANCE TO THE MINE EFFECTED.

SCRANTON, Sept. 6.—10 P. M.—The latest information from the Avondale mine states that the shaft was cleared, and two men went down and penetrated sixty or seventy yards, to a closed gangway door, which they could not force open. They found three dead mules outside of the door, and sulphurous fumes were pouring through the doors. No signs of life were discovered, and it is feared all are dead.

LATER—TWO MEN SUFFOCATED WHILE ATTEMPTING A RESCUE.

PLYMOUTH, Sept. 6.—After the rubbish from the bottom of the shaft was cleared away, two miners descended in a bucket and sent word up to send down a pick and shovel to clear the doors with. The bucket was brought up, and two men started down with tools. As they started the men at the bottom requested them to hurry, and on their reaching the bottom both were found dead.

SCRANTON, Sept. 6.—Midnight.—The fire began at ten o'clock this morning.—All experts agreed that it must have communicated from the ventilating furnace to the wood work at the bottom of the shaft, which is 327 feet below the surface. The flames rushed with great violence up the shaft and broke out in the engine room at the top.

The engineer barely escaped with his life. The buildings covering the mouth of the shaft were 100 feet high, and 200 feet long, all wood, as dry as tinder.—They were almost instantly enveloped in flames, and it was impossible to reach the mouth of the shaft to help the men below.

At half-past eleven in the morning a relief train started from this city, with Superintendent Storrs in charge, and a steam fire engine on board. When the train arrived, the buildings were burned to the ground, and the mouth of the shaft choked forty feet deep with burning timbers and coal, fallen from the pockets, &c.

At fifty minutes past five o'clock a dog and lamp were sent down in a bucket to test the air, and when brought back the dog was alive and the lamp burning.—Immediate preparations were made to descend the shaft, and at twenty-five minutes of seven o'clock a man went down in a bucket, and in seven minutes returned and reported no difficulty in breathing but obstructions half-way down so that he could not pass.

At 6-50 two men were sent down with tools. They removed the obstructions, and reached the bottom of the shaft, and returned at 7.15. They reported that

they had penetrated the gangway sixty or seventy yards, finding three dead mules, and reaching a closed door, at which they battered so lustily that their blows were heard above ground, but they got no response, and discovered no signs of life.

Clouds of sulphurous gases were pouring out through the door, yet they could breathe without much difficulty. The clouds of sulphurous gases mentioned as pouring through the gangway door to which the rest of the men down had penetrated, must have filled that part of the mine around the foot of the shaft, if not all of it.

LATER—TWO BODIES FOUND.

Two bodies have been brought up by a gang that went down since the last telegram. The excitement is very great.—The bodies are in a bad condition, and not recognizable.

2-55 A. M.—The air is getting better in the mine. The two bodies are badly bloated. They were found in a stable.—One is that of a young man, probably 18 years of age, and the other middle-aged. They are not recognizable at present.—Blood in clots is about their mouths, and they are terrible objects to look upon. A gang of strangers, supposed to be from Hyde Park, came down thirty minutes before the discovery of the bodies.

FIRE.

Heaps of coal left in the chute and screens are blazing to-night. A line of fire extends from the railroad track to 150 feet up the hill.

72 BODIES RECOVERED.

9-20 P. M.—Six more bodies have been found together in a chamber, making 72 in all.

FUNERALS OF THE DEAD.

SCRANTON, Sept. 8.—7:15 P. M.—The work of bringing dead bodies to the surface has proceeded steadily. Sixty have now been raised. The funerals will be held to-morrow from Avondale. A despatch has been received from President Sam. Sloan, of the D. and W. Railroad Company, ordering all shops and works of the Company closed, and free trains run to and from Avondale and all prominent points on the road.

RELIEF.

Stores in Pittston were closed to-day and a meeting held to raise funds for the relief of the sufferers. Mayor Hill of this city will in the morning issue a proclamation ordering all places of business closed on the 9th and 10th instants. A relief subscription of \$5,000 has been received from the New York Board of Brokers, \$2,500 from Asa Packer, and \$500 from Gov. Geary.

INVESTIGATION IN THE CAUSE OF THE DISASTER.

SCRANTON, Sept. 8.—At 8 o'clock 66 bodies had been raised. The Coroner will take testimony as to the cause of the disaster at 2 P. M. on Saturday, at Plymouth.

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A doctor has been called for to attend the men to go into the mines to search for other bodies in parts yet unexplored, but there is no response from the doctors.

GRIEF.

There is a terrible outbreak of grief at this time from women in the nearest mine houses.

RELIEF OF THE FAMILIES OF THE DEAD.

NEW YORK, Sept. 8.—The Stock Exchange of this city to-day appropriated \$5,000 for the relief of the families of the sufferers by the disaster at Avondale, Pa.

Thurlow Weed to-day sent his check for \$100 for the relief of the Avondale sufferers.

ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER.

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ENTERING THE MINE.

A person wishing to enter the mine would get into an empty coal car, which was then run upon the elevator at the top of the shaft. At a given signal the empty car would drop, and at the same time a loaded car would ascend the double shaft. As the bottom was struck, the empty car would glide off into a dark passage, and a loaded car would take its place. In an instant a mule would be hitched to the empty car, which would be drawn at a rapid rate to the foot of an inclined plane. Here a train of light cars would be formed which were then drawn up the plane by the simultaneous descent of a train of loaded cars.

THE LAMP AND DARK TUNNELS.

The various veins of coal in the Avondale mine are some 9 feet thick, and have a gentle upward slope. A passage way is cut along each vein. These tunnels are fearfully dark. Their only light is that from the miners' lamps. These safety lamps are worn on the miners' hats.

THE BREASTS AND THE POCKETS.

The "breasts" in which the mining is carried on sometimes resemble huge halls and rooms. One vein in the Avondale mine is 30 feet thick, and the gallery along this vein is correspondingly large. The mine is simply a vast network of black labyrinths, expanding occasionally into immense pockets or breasts, where larger blasts than usual are made. The coal is cracked by these blasts, and loosened by the pick and shovel, after which the cars are filled. The miners work in these dark galleries in groups of from five to a dozen men. The cars hold about two tons apiece. In brisk times the mines will turn out 500 tons per day. The miners proper work by the carload, and easily make \$5 per day. The mule boys generally get \$5 per week. The men who handle the cars and attend to the hoisting are also paid by the week.

THE DEADLY FIRE AND CHOKED DAMP.

As there was but one main shaft to the Avondale mine, its ventilation was difficult. It had not been worked for some time, and much foul air had collected in the damp places. Besides the bad air generated by the men and horses, and by the burning of lamps and gunpowder, inflammable gases issue from crevices in the coal. These gases mingle with the foul air of the mine, and will explode on the approach of a lighted candle. This gas is the fire-damp so much dreaded by the miners. To breathe it thirty seconds is sure death.

The fire-damp is composed of carburetted hydrogen, and the choke-damp of carbonic. When blasting for coal it will frequently issue in jets called blowers.—At times, when the cavities are broken into the coal by picks or crowbars, these blowers will burst out, creating a singing noise by the force of the current. The great danger is from opening pent-up reservoirs holding under great pressure immense bodies of gas disseminated through large areas of coal, or collected in abandoned workings.

The whole number of lives lost was one hundred and nine, the bodies of which have all been recovered and buried. Every family in the little mining town of Avondale has lost its head, and it is said that the terrible catastrophe has made between five and six hundred widows and orphans, nearly all whom are in a destitute condition. Subscriptions for their relief have been taken up, headed by Geary and Packer, the two candidates for Governor of Pennsylvania, which already amount to some thirty odd thousand dollars.