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CRUSHED IN A COAL MINE

FIVE MEN BURIED BY CAVING-IN OF A COLLIERY ROOF

POTTSVILLE, PENN., May 13 - The people of Schuylkill anthracite region had scarcely recovered from the shock of the entombment of 10 miners in Cuyler Colliery, when they were horrified again to-day by the sudden burial of five persons in North Ashland Colliery, the adjoining mine, and half a mile to the north of Cuyler. The accident of to-day was caused by the water accumulated in the abandoned upper level of the mine working through and washing out the pillar in the lower level. The upper level had been worked out and robbed and abandoned for some years. A large body of water from the surface found its way there, and no effort was made to draw it off. That which percolated through the seam into the lower level was pumped out, but as this level was also nearly worked out and the pillars were being robbed, it was not considered dangerous. The colliery is owned and worked by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company.

The breaker and the slopes are in the lower corner of Columbia County. The east gangway runs into Schuylkill County and breast No. 45 which was the face of the gangway and east of the last pillar which was washed out, 14, 500 yards inside the Schuylkill County line. The cave-in occurred at 10 o'clock. Just at that hour, John Head, one of the inside bosses, heard a rumbling noise. A car drawn by two mules which his son, Martin Head, was driving had just started from the face of the gangway for the foot of the slope. The elder Head leaped on the foremost mule, and urging the animals forward, had nearly escaped the facing area, when he was buried in the falling debris and badly crushed, the two mules being killed and the car broken to splinters. The boy was behind the car and must have been instantly killed.

In No. 45 breast, there were working James Ennis, Martin McKernan, and Charles Dougherty. There can be no doubt of their death. Had not the pillar of coal and the roof come down, there was sufficient water to have drowned them. The noise of the cave-in was heard at the foot of the slope 400 yards away. An investigation was made, and in two hours, Superintendent Schum had men at work endeavoring to reach the victims. The water, rock and dirt which fell made it difficult to reach them.

At noon, John Head was reached. He was alone, but in a dying condition. Both of his legs and ankles were broken, several ribs fractured, his right shoulder was crushed and he was bruised on the head and body. He was taken

out at once. The two mules were then reached, but up to 6 o'clock tonight none of the other men had been reached, and Mr. Schum gave it as his opinion that the rescuers could not reach them for four days at least, so great was the fall.

The news spread rapidly to the collieries in all directions and to Ashland and Centralia, the nearest towns, and the whole mountain was crowded with men, women and children. Relief and rescuing parties were at once organized and lots drawn for the shifts. Only five men can work in the gangway at a time. Mr. Schum led the first party and remained with the second. Robert Heaton, Superintendent of the Cuyler mines went in with the second party. The three dead miners are related to each other, Ennis and Dougherty being married to sisters of McKernan. Their families are at the colliery office and are wild with grief.