

Davenport Gazette
Davenport, Iowa
Friday Morning, February 11, 1881

Fire Damp—A Terrible Explosion in a Coal Mine—Great Loss of Life.

CLEVELAND, Feb. 10.—A frightful explosion took place to-day at A. C. Mann & Co.'s coal mine at Robins, on the Niles & New Lisbon railway, with an appalling loss of life. A man, named Smith, was going into the mine and the superintendent cautioned him about going to a certain room as it contained fire damp, but as that was dry, while around the track was filled with water, Smith disobeyed orders, and attempted to pass through the forbidden room with a lighted lamp in his hat. Immediately a terrific explosion occurred, which blew a hole through fifteen feet of earth, composing the roof and carrying death and destruction all around. About twenty men were at work in the mine, six of whom were killed outright, and a number dangerously wounded. A mule and a train of eight cars was shot out of the main entrance as if from a cannon. Another mule, drawing a cart in which a man was seated, was blown on top of the cart killing the driver. Men not disabled or killed escaped through the shaft to the open air.

Fort Wayne Daily Gazette
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Friday Morning, February 11, 1881

MINE HORROR.

Six Men Killed and a Number Wounded by an Explosion.

CLEVELAND, Ohio, February 10.—There was a frightful explosion to-day at P. C. Mazer & Co.'s coal mine, at Robbins, on the Niles & New Lisbon railroad, with an appalling loss of life.

A Leader special from the scene of the explosion a few miles south of Salem, says: "A man named Smith was going into the mine. The superintendent cautioned him about going to a certain room, as it contained fire-damp, but as that way was dry, while around the track was filled with water, Smith disobeyed orders and attempted to pass through the forbidden room with a lighted lamp in his hat. Immediately a terrific explosion occurred, in which a hole was blown through fifteen feet of earth composing the roof, and carrying death and destruction all around. About twenty men were at work in the mine, six of whom were killed outright and a number dangerously wounded. A mule and a train of eight cars were shot out of the main entrance as if from a cannon. Another mule, drawing a car in which a man was seated, was blown on top of the car, killing the driver. A dog was also blown out of the mine. One man, Jackson Leek, who was just entering, was blown back and over a high railroad embankment into a creek below, and was badly hurt. The men not disabled or killed escaped through a shaft to the open air. The killed are James Logan and son, James Mehan, William Hanley, George Henshilwood and Ed Smith, the man who caused the explosion, was badly mutilated, and his body burned to a crisp. The wounded are James Crouch, Robert Haley, Ed. Creighan, John Aiken, Peter Wilson and two brothers. Nearly all are badly hurt and some will die. Mrs. Griffith had gone to the door of the mine to call her son when the explosion occurred. She saw the mule shoot out of the mine and found her son injured. George Henshilwood died in his wife's arms. The scenes were heartrending in the extreme. A corps of physicians were summoned and rendered assistance to the wounded.