

BURLINGTON NEWS.

VOL. XIII.

BURLINGTON, N. C., WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 1900.

NO. 40

EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

The Cumnock Disaster.

ONE of the most appalling disasters that ever occurred in our State occurred at Cumnock mine, in Chatham county, last Tuesday evening, the 22nd inst. An explosion occurred in the mines, killing 21 men. Eight white and thirteen negroes. A negro who was brought out of the mine in an exhausted condition, stated that he was in the east heading and heard a report which he took to be the explosion of a dynamite cartridge which was fired in driving through rock and next instant the fire-damp exploded. He remembers nothing from that time until today.

The superintendent of the mine, John Connolly, was among the killed and his body was badly bruised. Connolly came to Cumnock in February, 1898, from the Pennsylvania coal fields, where he had worked his way up from the position of a mule driver to mine foreman. After working in the mines all day, he took a course in mine engineering at night, and was considered an expert in his vocation. He was supposed to have been making a survey in the east heading for new openings when death overtook him. He leaves a wife and three small children. His remains will be taken with those of McCarthy to Taylor, Pa., for interment.

FIRST TO THE RESCUE.

The first man to go down the shaft to rescue the bodies of the victims was Victor Rudd, a white miner from Pennsylvania. Owing to the panic that ensued the work of looking for the bodies did not begin until about an hour and a half after the explosion.

The case of young William Tysor is particularly pathetic. He was a bright, manly fellow, of very good education, and stated to his father only last week, that he was fearful of gas in the mine, and that he would

give up the work Saturday next, the pay day of the mines company. He is the only son of Mr. Jordan Tysor, of Chatham county.

In a small wash-house near the mines gate were laid out the dead bodies of twelve negro miners, and the eight whites were placed in the slope engine house. A gruesome spectacle—one of the horrors of which has never been equaled in this State, except during the explosion of 1896, when forty-one men were killed.

CAUSE OF EXPLOSION UNKNOWN.

As to the cause there are many theories, but the real cause can never be known. Some hold to the opinion that the fire damp was ignited by a safety lamp, the gauze of which had been broken; others claim that the explosion of dynamite in opening the new works caused the trouble.

A HEART-RENDERING SCENE.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the men who went into the mine to rescue the bodies. The scene at the mouth of the shaft was heart-rending. Wives, mothers and children of the dead miners were waiting all the evening, and it was not until nearly midnight when all save one had been carried to the top. There were a number of men working in the west heading at the time, but all escaped unhurt.

Great crowds from the surrounding country and towns flocked to the scene of the accident, as soon as the news spread. The Raleigh News-Observer says:

The mines are situated at Cumnock, in Chatham county, about six miles from Sanford. The mine has been long used in a desultory fashion, but in 1888, Samuel A. Henzy, of Philadelphia, organized a company and put in modern machinery. There are two shafts, one a small affair for ventilation, and the other the main work shaft is 8x12 feet, and is a considerably more than five hundred feet in depth.

On the morning of December 19th,

1895, an explosion took place at this same mine in which forty-three lives were lost. This explosion was caused by a "fire-damp," though many of those killed on this occasion lost their lives from the resulting explosion of almost two hundred and fifty pounds of dynamite that was stored in the mine. A great many of the bodies had been burned, and the scenes around the mouth of the shaft were heart-rending.

It is said that an explosion of this same sort occurred just before the Civil War, and many lives were lost.

The disaster that occurred yesterday is the fourth that has occurred at this mine, and in the four disasters that have occurred about 85 men have lost their lives, and many others have been injured.

The State Ticket by Districts.

The Fifth and Third are the only districts not represented on the State ticket. The first has Mr. Grimes; the Second, Mr. Aycock; the Fourth, Mr. Lacy; the Sixth, Mr. McNeill and Mr. Toon; the Seventh Mr. Turner and Mr. Varner; the Eighth Mr. Patterson and Mr. Dixon; the Ninth, Mr. Gilmer and Mr. Rogers. The third got an elector-at-large in the person of Mr. McLan and a delegate-at-large in the person of Mr. Hale, and the Fifth a delegate-at-large in the person of Mr. Carr. The Ninth district fared best of all, getting two delegates-at-large, Mr. Jones and Mr. Moore, and to two places on the State ticket. It would have been possible to have given every district a place on the State ticket and an extra place for the Eighth and Ninth.

There is no ground for criticism on geographical lines, and the only districts that have no candidates—the Fifth and Third—will not be heard to complain. Their candidates received large support and failed by slender margins.—News and Observer.

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