

## MINE DISASTER HERE KILLED TWO COAL MINERS IN 1906

**Charles Fultz and Charles Cox Were Victims of Mishap**

(Friday, Sept. 14, 1906)

The most shocking and tragic accident that ever happened in Mt. Pulaski occurred last Monday morning about 7:00 o'clock at the Mt. Pulaski coal mine, when two men were killed by falling in the shaft a distance of 360 feet. The local mine had just been purchased by Lincoln parties, Wm. Connors, J. F. Murphy and George Lehman. They were just starting that morning with full control, and the engineer, J. F. Murphy, in attempting to let the second cage down in the mine, grew faint and sent the cage upwards completely wrecking the top works. Charles Fultz and Charles Cox were killed by falling, but the other men on the cage escaped with bruises.

Immediately news of the disaster spread over the city and a large crowd of sorrowing people assembled at the scene to give what assistance they could. Rescuing parties were formed and set about to recover the bodies of Mr. Fultz and Mr. Cox. Everybody expressed deepest sympathy for the bereaved ones. The sad accident was a great shock to the whole county. In the long existence of the mine, only one other man, a Mr. Miller, was killed by falling down the shaft, and that was when the mine was being sunk. Joseph Englehardt died several years ago of injuries received in the mine.

The new coal company had just assumed complete control of the local mine that morning and the engineer had lowered one cage of men to the bottom in safety, they being John Waters, Jr., Will Connolly, Allen & Will McVey, Geo. Johnson and John Miller. These men were waiting for the next cage-load of men to come down before they started out to their different rooms to commence work, and while thus waiting for their comrades, they heard a terrible crash at the top of the shaft and to their horror, heavy timbers and other debris began falling to the bottom. With this came the bodies of Charles Cox and Charles Fultz.

The men in their bewilderment as to what had happened, immediately came to the top thru the escape shaft. A rescuing party was at once formed and returned into the mine by way of the escape, which was then the only means of reaching the bottom, to recover the bodies of the two unfortunate men.

At the bottom of the main shaft there is a sump containing about 40 feet of water and covered was a platform of heavy 3-inch timbers. When the bodies struck the bottom, Cox went through this platform into the water beneath, from where the body was not recovered until 5:30 p.m. The body of Fultz was found lying on the edge of the platform where it landed, and was soon found by the rescuing party, but as Cox could not be located after several hours search, Fultz was gotten ready and drawn up out of the mine at 10 o'clock by means of a block and tackle. The men below continued the search for their other comrade and much difficulty was encountered in getting the body after it was located. The body had fallen with such force that it was under 30 feet of water and pumps were used to remove this obstacle before it could be recovered.

### Men On Second Cage

On the second cage, the one that was jerked through the top of the tower or tippie and wrecked it, were Charles Fultz, Charles Cox, Ferdinand Bobell, Charles Schultz, Walter Bertrang and Ray. One of the men stated that they were on the second cage, and Gus Drobisch signaled the engineer to lower them to the bottom. They got on the cage in the tower, and when it stopped about 25 feet down, or at mouth

of the shaft they wondered what it meant. Mr. Fultz was heard to remark: "What is the matter with the engineer, he must have been used to letting miners get on the cage at the landing." Mr. Drobisch gave the second signal, when suddenly the cage like a shot started upwards to the large pulleys and wrecked the whole thing, drawing the substructure several feet to the east. Four of the men were holding to the iron rods at the top of the cage and held on, but the men that were killed tried to jump to safety.

John Ray received two gashes on the head and one on his leg, and was given medical attention immediately. Walter Bertrang was considerably bruised, and is barely able to be around. Ferdinand Bobell and Chas. Schultz escaped without injury. The men hardly know how they did escape from being killed so quickly did things take place. No one can realize what an awful experience they went through in those few short seconds.

### Statement of Engineer Murphy

James F. Murphy, the engineer in charge of the engine, fainted away and remained unconscious until late in the afternoon. His father came here from Springfield as did also his brother from Lincoln, and that evening they took him to Decatur, and over the interurban to Springfield to the father's home where he might rest away from the scene of the awful accident, and recover from the prostration. In Springfield he made the following statement:

"There were six men in the cage and I commenced to lower it, to let them down to go to work. After they were about 25 feet down, I fainted and fell forward with the throttle, and had already let down the first six men safely. When I fell forward and set the reverse, the engine brought the cage to the surface again. About that time I recovered consciousness and stopped my engine. Then I left the building, going to the open air but again fainted.

"Two of the men, Charles Cox and Charles Fultz, jumped from the cage when the machine had been reversed. That was the cause of their death. Had they stayed with the cage instead of jumping, they would not have been hurt. This is shown by the fact that the other four men were uninjured. The body of Charles Fultz was not recovered until 5:30 Monday afternoon. The mine had not been used for some time and the fact that the sump was 40 feet accounts for the inability of the rescuers to find the body."

### Will Repair

The management of the New Coal Company will in a few days begin to repair the wrecked upper works, and in the meantime will ship in coal for the trade.

### Charles Orpheus Fultz

Charles Orpheus Fultz, one of the unfortunate miners, who met such a tragic death in the mine disaster on Monday morning, September 10, 1906, was born in Indianapolis, Ind., April 9, 1867. He was therefore aged 39 years, 5 months and 1 day.

Mr. Fultz was married to Miss Lillie Shively in 1896, but she preceded her husband in death in 1899. One daughter, Maudie, was born to them; the little girl died last May.

Deceased is survived by three sisters, Mrs. John Kuntzi, Chestnut, Ill.; Mrs. Wm. Scroggin, of Beason, Ill.; Mrs. John Jackson, of Abilene, Kansas.

The remains were taken to Chestnut Tuesday morning, and in the afternoon funeral services were conducted by the pastor, Rev. M. B. McFadden. Interment was made in Yankeetown cemetery just west of Chestnut. The pall bearers were Messrs. James and John Miller, Joseph Helf, Walter Bobell, Will McVey and Geo. Johnson, all members of Local Union No. 27, United Mine Workers of America, of Mt. Pulaski,

the deceased also being a member.

About 40 sorrowing miners, the wives of several, and friends, went to Chestnut to attend the funeral of their departed friend, whose sudden and untimely death will always remain vividly in their memory.

### Charles H. Cox

Charles H. Cox, the other victim of the coal mine accident, Monday morning, September 10, 1906, was born near Shelbyville, Illinois, July 7, 1865, and at the time of his death was aged 41 years, 3 months and 3 days.

He came to Mt. Pulaski in 1883, and began working in the tile factory which was located at the terminus of West Cook street, and owned by David Vanhise. He commenced working in the coal mine in 1887, and was said to be the best, most careful and thorough miner that ever worked in the mine.

Charles H. Cox on February 10, 1886, married Miss Maria Warren, and to this union four children were born, namely: Bessie, aged 17; Hazel, aged 14; Mary, aged 10; Steven, aged 7, who survive him, as does also the wife. Deceased also leaves to mourn his untimely death, his mother, Mrs. Mahalah Cox, of Tower Hill, Ill.; one sister, Mrs. Prescott Goforth, of East St. Louis, Ill.; one brother, Steven Cox, of Mt. Pulaski, Ill.; and a half-brother, Thomas Cox of Joplin, Mo.

The funeral services were conducted in the M. E. church Wednesday afternoon, September 12th by Rev. A. Good, pastor of the German Evangelical church, and were largely attended. A choir composed of Mrs. Gus Drobisch, Mrs. Christian Wagner, Messrs. G. J. Lobberecht and Will Lachenmyer, with Miss Mary Obermiller as organist, sang several beautiful and appropriate hymns. The remains were laid to rest in Mt. Pulaski cemetery. The pall bearers were Messrs. John and James Miller, Will McVey, Joseph Helf, Will Klotz and Allen McVey, all members of Local Union No. 27, United Mine Workers of America, of which the deceased was a member. The miners attended the funeral in a body.

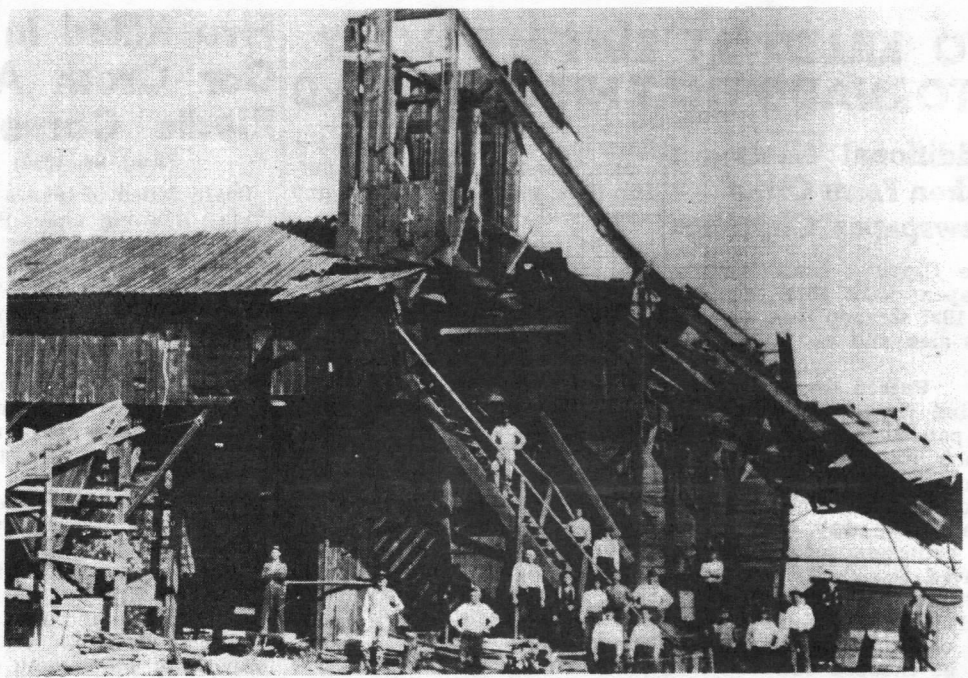
## TRUCK LOAD OF RELIEF SUPPLIES SENT FROM HERE

(Jan. 28, 1937)

A big truck carrying the spontaneous and volunteer contributions of scores of residents of this community, pulled away from in front of the Times-News office late yesterday afternoon, loaded with 36 big boxes containing, 1500 pieces of bedding and clothing of all kinds to be delivered at Marion for the flood sufferers.

In response to a call sent here Tuesday morning for clothing, and bedding by the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission at the request of Governor Horner, immediate action was taken to inform the community of the urgent need. The business and residential district was flooded with handbills telling of the call and asking for immediate action.

## PICTURE OF COAL SHAFT AFTER DISASTER



## POLITICIANS OF OLDEN DAYS WERE BETTER "SPORTS" THAN PRESENT

**"Bury the Hatchet" Day" Followed All National Elections.**

Listed among bits of information of days more than 60 years ago was found a "Bury the Party Hatchet" invitation, (1876-1896) to attend a turkey dinner in the old Scroggin Opera House in which the participants were both Republicans and Democrats, the date being Tuesday evening, Dec. 1, 1896. Readers today will find the information of 1896 very interesting as it tells how members of opposite political parties reacted to the results of November elections of national scope. Following is what was on the invitations:

### 1876 Bury the Party Hatchet 1896

By Virtue of having established with Mr. Isom Birks the custom of giving Aftermath Political Campaign Friendship Turkey Dinners, commencing with the election of President Hayes in 1876, continuing with that of Garfield in 1880, Cleveland in 1884, Harrison in 1888, Cleveland in 1892, and McKinley in 1896, and for the sake of "auld lang syne" and a better political friendship, I hereby desire and propose to commemorate and renew said mark of good-will so auspiciously inaugurated and happily enjoyed, by again tendering a similar post-election feast, to the end that party heat and campaign excitement may be lost in the "buried hatchet", love of country, joyous patriotism and the better amenities of good citizenship.

The wagger consideration (that is) that the vanquished party supply the turkeys, while the victors proceed to arrange and set up the square meal, will hold good. Further, each member of the winning side names some one of the opposite party as a political guest at such dinner, and said Republican inviting friend will be discovered later by being seated opposite his guest at the banquet table. Representing the different political parties, three hundred plates will be laid.

Accordingly, yourself and wife are very courteously invited to be present and participate in this, the Sixth Presidential Campaign (sans partisanship) Turkey Feast, to occur in Scroggin Opera House, Mount Pulaski, Ill., at 7 o'clock Tuesday evening, Dec. 1, 1896. This token of respect to the memory of my worthy compeer and deceased friend, Mr. Isom Birks, and the other dear old associates of those joyous and happy occasions.

Sincerely and Truly,  
S. Linn Beidler, Host.  
Mrs. Beidler, Hostess.

### THE PROGRAM

Guests will arrive, commencing at 6 p.m.

Supper at 7:30 o'clock.

Followed by a joyous season of speeches, toasts and responses.

Adjournment and good-bye for the Campaign of 1900.

Cloaks and wraps for ladies will be checked in the law office of Attorney A. G. Jones, at the head of the hall stairway on the left.

Hats and overcoats for gentlemen will be checked in S. B. Fryer's saddlery room, at the head of the hall stairway on the right.

Social intercourse and music occurs in the hall, upon the stage, and in the second floor parlors of the Scroggin Hotel until the supper hour.

Singing, music by the Band, and Prayer by Elder L. M. Robinson.

## Cigar Maker Trained Pulaski Firemen's Team

March 2, 1939

W. Y. Saunders, a former well-known resident of Mount Pulaski, died two weeks ago at his home in Wilmette, Ill., where he was employed in the postal service a number of years.

The passing of Mr. Saunders brings back many recollections to the older residents of the city, concerning the years 1891-92-93, when he, a sprinter of note, trained the old Mount Pulaski fire department hose team in those early days of the 90's, when Mount Pulaski was three times winner of the state championship hose team, at the tournaments given by the Illinois State Firemen's Association, winning these honors in Lincoln in 1891, in Ottawa in 1892 and Canton in 1893. They established a mark of 35 2/5 seconds at Canton which stands as a record to this day, in 1939.

The conditions on the championship race were to run a distance of 600 feet to a fire hydrant, lay 200 feet of hose, break coupling and attach pipe two full turns.

While Mr. Saunders lived in the city he operated a cigar factory with the late X. F. Beidler.

Four surviving members of this championship hose team of almost 50 years ago that are alive today (1939) are Louis Weidenbacher and Gus Drobisch of Mt. Pulaski; Stephen Weckel, of Magazine, Ark., and Louis Daner, of Springfield.

### SILENT ROLE

"Dad, I've got my first part in a play," announced a prospective actor. "I act the part of a man who's been married for 20 years." "That's not bad, son," replied the father. "If you're any good they might give you a speaking part in the next production."

Adam and Eve were naming the animals. "I think I'll call that one a hippopotamus," Eve said.

"Why?" Adam asked. "I don't know. I suppose it just looks more like a hippopotamus than any of the others."

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