

SWALLOWED UP IN A TUNNEL

SEVENTY-ONE LIVES LOST.

AN APPALLING CALAMITY IN THE HUDSON RIVER TUNNEL—A PART OF THE TEMPORARY ENTRANCE CAVES IN WHILE TWENTY-EIGHT MEN ARE AT WORK—SEVEN OF THEM RUSH INTO THE AIR LOCK AND ESCAPE—THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT.

By the caving in of a portion of the temporary entrance of the Hudson River Tunnel, early yesterday morning, twenty-one persons lost their lives. There were twenty-eight men in the tunnel when the accident occurred, and of these seven rushed into the air-lock and escaped. The others were instantly killed. When the roof gave way a large volume of water rushed in, filling the tunnel and working shaft.

A large force of men was immediately set to work to dig down to the shaft in order to recover the bodies. It is thought that the bodies cannot be reached before Saturday. The news of the disaster spread rapidly and many persons were attracted to the scene. Arrangements were made last evening for pumping out the water, but through mismanagement the pump fell into the shaft. This accident will probably delay the work of removing the bodies. Talks with the rescued men and with the officers of the company are given herewith.

HOW THE DISASTER OCCURRED.

A LITTLE AIR HOLE THAT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN STOPPED—REPORTS OF THE WORKMEN TO ESCAPE—SCENES AROUND THE TUNNEL—PATHETIC INCIDENTS.

A terrible disaster, by which twenty-one lives were lost, occurred at the Hudson River Tunnel, at the foot of Fifteenth-st., Jersey City, yesterday morning at half-past 4 o'clock. Twenty-eight men had gone into the tunnel for an eight-hour shift, and they were at work, little thinking of danger, when a number of the men who were working in the temporary entrance—between the working shaft and the tunnel proper—heard the air escaping from the portion of the shaft in which they were, with a noise like the blowing off of steam from a boiler. They hastened to the place whence the noise came, and found that a break was forming in the roof, where the iron plates of the shaft in which they were came up to the brick-work of the outside of the wall of the working shaft. For a few moments they hoped that they might be able to close the rapidly widening opening, through which the air was rushing, and they struggled hard with it, but in vain. They were too late. The little air-hole, which might have been stopped with a handful of clay at first had extended so rapidly that they could not keep pace with it. As the air rushed out the seam grew wider, and earth and water began to come in. The bolts in the iron-work snapped and the braces began to quiver. No time was to be lost if the men were to save themselves. With a shout to those who were working further back in the tunnel, the men in front sprang for the air-lock, hoping through it to make their escape.

THE TUNNEL AND THE AIR-LOCK.

The earth through which the tunnel is being constructed is a soft, overlying a loose filling of gravel and sand. The roof of the tunnel is thirty feet below the upper surface of the ground, and in order to keep this immense weight of earth from falling into the excavation the shaft of the tunnel has been kept pumped full of compressed air, with a pressure of twenty pounds to the square inch. There are plenty of braces and other supports, but the main dependence is placed on the compressed air, and men have been kept watching constantly to detect the least break in the surface of the shaft, through which air might escape, in order to prevent the occurrence of any such accident as that which has occurred. It is supposed that the man whose duty it was to attend to this portion of the shaft had left his work a few moments before, and either had not noticed or had disregarded the small air-hole which soon afterward did such terrible damage.

STRUGGLES TO ESCAPE.

Seven of the panic-stricken men succeeded in getting into the air-lock. The eighth man was in the doorway when a mass of earth and iron plates crashed in and closed the door upon him, killing him instantly. At the same time water began pouring through the great break in the roof. The men in the air-lock tried to close the door, to prevent the water from rushing into it and drowning them, but the body of their companion was so wedged into the doorway that it was impossible to do this. Then they stripped off their clothes to fill up the crevice. They shouted for assistance, and tried to force open the outside door of the air-lock, but it resisted their efforts. There was still a terrible pressure of air against it. One of the men sought to another near the end of the lock to "break out the bulwies," meaning the large cylindrical pieces of glass through which light was admitted to the air-lock. After considerable effort these were broken, and the air rushing through enabled the men, who were outside, to open the door and make their escape.

When the earth caved in it took with it part of the shaft bulwies. One of the workmen outside saw this and called to Michael Hurley, outside superintendent on the surface, and the two, realizing to some extent the nature of the calamity, hastened down the ladder of the working shaft. The bulwies had just been shattered, and a dozen voices cried, "Help us open the door, for God's sake!" The two men outside worked with a will, and the door was forced open a few inches, but it was hard work, as the air-lock was more than half full of water, and the door opened inward. When, however, a partial opening was made the water rushed through into the working shaft, and when it had lowered somewhat, the united exertions of the men were successful; the door was swung back, and the seven men were free. The water rose so rapidly in the shaft that it was up to the armpits of some of the men before they could get up the ladder, and before many minutes had elapsed the water had risen to the level of the surface of the Hudson River, thus cutting off all hope of saving the twenty-one still below.

HOW THE NEWS SPREAD.

At the time that the seven men who were saved succeeded in getting into the air-lock, every other man in the tunnel undoubtedly knew of the danger. The warning had been given sufficiently early for the furthest workmen to have been apprised of the impending calamity. Those who were in the air-lock could hear the cries of those coming after. It is known that a large number of the men was close behind the one who was crushed in the doorway.

those who had perished were known, and the list was rapidly completed. Men, women and children were on the ground, looking for brothers, sons, husbands or fathers. There were many sad scenes; mournful news had to be broken, and the grief of some of those so suddenly bereaved was terrible to witness. Many of the women refused to abandon all hope, and the question was asked again and again if the men might not have been able to retreat into some part of the tunnel, where they might still be alive and be reached by digging. One woman gazed upon the sunken earth, and refused to leave the place. She would wait until the men had dug down and released her husband. When she was told, however, that the tunnel was completely filled with water, she fell into violent hysterics and had to be taken from the place. An aged mother was there looking for her son. She shuddered when she saw the great working-shaft almost filled to the top with muddy water. She trembled with emotion as she blindly turned her steps from the awful glare in which her hopes were buried, and agonizing sobs came from her. There was no sadder picture than that presented by the children who had been orphaned. Some of them had seen death and could appreciate it. In a short time the news reached New-York. A great many persons went over to the scene of the disaster at an early hour.

SURROUNDINGS OF THE TUNNEL.

The tunnel entrance is near the foot of Fifteenth-st., a short distance from the old Erie canal boat dock. There is a long, low, wooden building over the working shaft and machinery belonging to the tunnel works, and outside of this there is a field filled with heavy cast-iron plates to be used in sheathing the interior of the tunnel, and with huge piles of bricks, iron pipe and machinery used for the works. At a short distance outside the building and around it a rope was stretched to keep the people from crowding in and hindering the work. A number of policemen walked around within the lines and restrained the crowd from breaking through.

Inside the building the first thing one sees is the working shaft, which resembles a great well. It is thirty feet in diameter and its walls are five feet in thickness, painted white in the inside. This shaft is sixty feet deep and yesterday it contained about fifty feet of water. In the rear of the shaft along one side of the building are the powerful engines by which the air is forced into the tunnel, the hot air reservoir, constructed of iron, and the small magneto-electric machines which supply the light for workmen in the tunnel. Back of these are the steam boilers. The office of the works is in the end of the building, and back from the river, sections on the walls inside are working drawings of parts of the tunnel, illustrations of the work, etc.

All day long a force of over fifty men was engaged in digging and hauling away earth from over the shaft where the men are buried, and work was advancing in the direction of building a cofferdam and rigging pumps to remove the water.

THE LIST OF THE DEAD.

It was thought for some time that of the twenty-eight men who were in the tunnel at the time of the disaster eight had been fortunate enough to make their escape, but it was finally learned that one man reported as saved had been lost, and that the number of the lost was twenty-one. The unfortunate men were Swedes, Danes and Irishmen in great part. The sombre character of the accident is somewhat relieved by the fact that only a few of the dead men were married.

The following is a correct list of the lost: ANDERSON, OTTO, age twenty-three. He was a single man and came to this country from Sweden about five months ago. He was without any relative in America. Previous to his coming to this country Anderson had been a sailor. He boarded at No. 234 Thirteenth-st., Jersey City.

BAGLEY, WILLIAM F., age thirty. He was married and leaves a wife and two sons, ages eight and seven years respectively. He had been working on the tunnel for about two months. His place of residence was at No. 41 Greenw. Brooklyn. Bagley's home was at No. 563 Henderson-st., Jersey City.

BESLEN, OTTO, a Swede, age twenty-eight. He was unmarried and without relatives in this country. He was married at No. 290 Fourteenth-st., Jersey City.

BROEDRICK, MICHAEL, age twenty-five. He was unmarried. He began work in the tunnel on Tuesday at midnight. He had worked on the tunnel for two months. He had been here for two months. He has a sister living in Philadelphia. He lived in Henderson-st., Jersey City.

BROEDRICK, PATRICK, a brother of Michael, age twenty. He was unmarried. He had been in this country about three months. He lived at No. 567 Henderson-st., Jersey City.

BURKE, FRANCIS, age not known. He was a married man, and had a family. He had been on the tunnel for a few months. He was stated at the office of the Tunnel Company that he lived in Hoboken, but nothing more definite than this could be learned.

BURNS, THOMAS, age twenty-one. He was an Irishman and came to this country about three years ago. He was unmarried. He lived at No. 567 Henderson-st., Jersey City. He left a mother and four brothers and four sisters. He held the position of foreman in charge of men.

COLLINS, PATRICK. He was a single young man, and had only lately arrived from Ireland. His brother, James Collins, lives at No. 214 East Fifty-sixth-st., this city. Patrick boarded with Francis Burke in Holozon. Burke was also Irish.

CREEVEY, JOHN, age thirty-five. He leaves a wife and two children, both girls, ages four and two and one-half years. Mrs. Creevey said yesterday: "My brother-in-law, Patrick Creevey, brought me the first news of his death this morning. He left home at 11 o'clock last night to go on the 12 o'clock shift, and he was to be back by 8 o'clock this morning. He has been in this country three years, and worked on the tunnel ever since it was begun, unfortunately. Creevey was a native of County Kildare, Parish of St. Stephen, Ireland. For several years he was a single man and of fine family." A neighbor, who had come in to console with the widow; and Mrs. Creevey burst into sobs.

CHAMBERS, THOMAS, age twenty-five. He was born in Sweden, and had not been in America more than a few months. He was not married. His boarding place was in Fourteenth-st., Jersey City, between Henderson and Grove-sts.

ERICKSON, ANDREW, a Swede, age fifty. He was a single man, and had no relatives in America. He boarded at No. 290 Fourteenth-st., Jersey City.

FEISHER, PETER, age twenty-one. He was a Swede, was unmarried, and had been in America only about six months. For several years he was a sailor. He boarded at No. 234 Thirteenth-st., Jersey City.

JACOBSON, ANDREW, age twenty-nine. He was a Russian Finn, was unmarried and was alone in America. He boarded at No. 290 Fourteenth-st., Jersey City.

JENSEN, JOHN, age twenty-two. He was a Dane, was single, and had no relatives in this country. He formerly lived at No. 290 Fourteenth-st., New-York, but had moved to No. 200 Fourteenth-st., Jersey City.

KIRWIN, PATRICK, age forty. He was born in Kilkenny, Ireland, and was married, but had no children. His wife keeps a boarding-house at No. 234 Thirteenth-st., Jersey City. Fisher and Anderson, who were lost, boarded with Kirwin.

MCCARTY, MATTHEW, age twenty-four. He was unmarried, and had been at work on the tunnel only one month. He lived in Eleventh-st., Jersey City.

NELSON, CHARLES, age twenty-three. He was a Swede, was single, and had been in this country several years. He boarded at No. 200 Fourteenth-st., Jersey City.

OLSON, FRANCIS, age twenty-five. He was a Swede, was single, and it is not known that he had a relative in America. He was a foreman over the workmen, and boarded at No. 200 Fourteenth-st., Jersey City.

Dane, and with no relatives in America. He was married, and was the father of one child, about three years of age. He came to America some years ago and had worked at the tunnel since the work was begun upon it, as an assistant superintendent. He lived at No. 184 Pavonia-ave., Jersey City.

THOSE WHO ESCAPED.

The following is a list of the seven men who were in the air-lock, and who escaped: BRADY, THOMAS, age twenty-two. He has worked in the tunnel six months. He is married and has a family. He has worked on the tunnel for about three months. His home is in Brook-lyn.

DOYLE, JOHN, age twenty-one. He is unmarried, and has been at work in the tunnel a month or five weeks. He lives in Jersey City.

HANSON, CHRISTOPHER, age thirty. He is a native of Denmark, but he has been in this country sixteen or seventeen years. He is married and has a family. He has worked on the tunnel for about three months. His home is in Brook-lyn.

HAYES, JAMES, age thirty-two. He has worked in the tunnel six months. He is married, and has a family. He lives at No. 213 Newark-ave., Jersey City.

MCGOVERN, BARNETT, age twenty-two. He has been employed in the tunnel about five months. He lives in Jersey City.

MOLIN, ALFRED, age seventeen. He is unmarried, and has been in the tunnel two months. He lives in Hoboken.

VAN NOSTRAND, THEODORE, age thirty-six. He is married and has a family. He has worked in the tunnel about five months. He lives in Wil-lyow-st., Hoboken.

STATEMENTS OF THE RESCUED MEN.

THE LEAK IN THE TUNNEL—LAST WORDS OF ONE OF THOSE WHO PERISHED—RUSHING INTO THE AIR-LOCK—HOW THE WATER WAS EX-CLUDED.

The following statement was made by Theodore Van Nstrand, a workman, who was in the tunnel at the time of the disaster: "I went down the shaft at 12 o'clock last night expecting to come out at 8 this morning. I stayed at work till 4:30 a. m., and was then coming out for lunch. The first thing I saw was the leak in the south side of the tunnel. It was within ten feet of the shaft. The night superintendent, Mr. Woodland, called to me to get foot blocks to cover up the hole. When I got to the leak he cried out for all hands to run for the air-lock. Then we all started for the air-lock. It was dark. The compressed air escaping blew out our candles. As we got to the lock we all tried to get in. The iron plates began to fall on us, and partly closed the door of the lock, so that we could neither open nor shut it. We stripped ourselves naked and stuffed our clothes in the crack, which was six inches wide, so that we could open the valves and let the water out in the lock. But the air got cut off, and we had to break the bulwies to let the water out of the lock. Then the air-lock door into the shaft opened and we were safe.

"The water gained on us and we were swept about the shaft. We were in the air-lock twenty minutes fully. When I got out I noticed it was 5:10 a. m. We did not have much talking in the tunnel. Assistant Superintendent Woodland asked a man named Berney to try and open the door. But it was impossible to do it. Then he told us to stuff the crack up as well as we could. 'If you get out,' he said, 'try and do what you can for us.' Those were the last words he uttered. We could hear him talk through the crack, and could see some of the men covered with blood from the falling plates. When we were in the lock we put the best men at the valves and the bulwies to keep them from being broken before the right time came."

"What caused the break?" "I cannot say; we have had leaks frequently." "Were the men at their proper posts when the break occurred?" "Yes, sir; when the leak first occurred there were several men near it, Jacobson and others."

THE LAST MAN IN THE AIR-LOCK.

Christian Thomasson made a statement as follows: "I went down at midnight, and was engaged in connecting the plates. I left the tunnel at 4:30 a. m. for lunch. I was the last man in the air-lock. The man behind me was caught half inside and half outside the lock. His name was Otto Anderson, a Swede. We saw the water rushing in, and heard the plates cracking. It is more than I know—what caused the accident. It seemed to be safer than ever last night, no air escaping at all. We had not a minute's warning. God knows how we escaped."

THOMAS BRADY'S EXPERIENCE.

Thomas Brady, one of the men rescued from the tunnel, gave the following description of the accident: "I live at No. 163 Henderson-st., Jersey City, and was one of the twenty-eight men in the tunnel at the time the plates gave way. It all took place so quickly that I cannot exactly state what did hap-pen. A good many of the men working down the shaft had gone out and up to lunch, and during their absence the remainder, including myself, remained below putting on plates. On their return we were below putting on plates. There came a strange noise from some quarter just as we had completed our task. We hurried into the air-lock when the leak started. The superintendent gave orders that all hands should come out and stop the leak. I was among the men who obeyed the order. The leak at that time was pretty large. It could not be stopped. The superintendent evidently realized that fact, as he cried at the top of his voice: 'Get in the lock as quick as you can, all of you.' Anderson, who came behind me, was caught in the door of the lock. His head and shoulders were within, remainder of his body without. I caught hold of his hands and endeavored to pull him in, but he was wedged so firmly that I couldn't stir him. I asked him if he could assist himself at all, and he not answering, I looked down and discovered that he was dead. The life had been crushed out of him.

"The water by this time had filled up so that it was coming into the lock through the hole at the door. Something had to be done to stop it, and we began taking off our clothes and putting them in the hole. The water kept pouring in, though, until it came to my armpits before we burst in the glass bulwies and effected our escape. On reaching a point of safety we did not know what course to pursue in order to save the remainder. Some went out, while Superintendent Anderson, Michael Hurley and myself started to see if we could find one. The water was then coming up in torrents, and I got up to my waist in the water without being able to render any assistance to the imprisoned men."

A SCENE OF CONFUSION.

Alfred Molin, of No. 84 Greenw. st., New-York, was one of the number in the tunnel when the plates gave way, and was rescued in the air-lock. He related his escape to a TRIBUNE reporter at the mouth of the air-shaft last evening.

"I know less as to how it all came about," he said, "than any of my companions. I was busily engaged assisting in fastening the plates when some one gave an order which I failed to understand. Everybody made a rush for the air-lock, and I did the same. I got in just in advance of Thomas Brady, and saw Anderson caught in the doorway. I assisted in breaking the bulwies of the opposite door, and took off my clothing to assist in stopping the leak, but was so confused that I can give no definite account of the occurrence. I am not one of the men at the bottom of the shaft, and that is about all that I do know and am thankful for."

James Hayes, of No. 213 Newark-ave., Jersey City, was in the air-lock in charge of the air-valves, and when Anderson shouted that there was a leak which must be checked, the men were out of the air-lock at that time, and shortly afterward rushed in. The water came through and into the lock so

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A pronouncement is reported in the Sierras of Puebla, arising from election squabbles. If the report is true, the situation there is very serious. It is also reported that General Negrete, who is a professional disturber, has taken the field in Puebla at the head of a small force. Government troops have been sent to repress these disorders.

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MEXICO, July 16.—General Gonzales has been elected President by a large majority. An abortive attempt was made on the 13th inst. in Guanajuato, to shoot him while he was on a