

In 1875, the Lincoln Mine was the site of one of the worst mine disasters to strike the Mother Lode. The following account was reported by the *Independent* (a local Sutter Creek newspaper).

**On Friday morning, at seven o'clock, the day shift were let down, consisting of fifteen men, part of whom went on the three-hundred-foot, and part on the five-hundred-foot level. Those on the first were working in the stope, and three running the tunnel toward the old south shaft, which had been deserted for upwards of eight years, and was filled with stagnant water and foul air. Hardly had the drifters worked an hour when they broke through, and at first, a small volume of water rushed in and drove them out. The alarm was immediately given, and foreman Horn, with another man, went down. They found William Wadge and Antonio Robles almost dead from suffocation, and took them to the top. Wadge soon recovered and was taken home, while Robles suffered terribly for some hours, when he was removed, but died during the night. The most intense excitement now prevailed, and Superintendent Stewart, Foreman Horn, and others, commenced the work of getting to the remaining men below. The foul air had become so strong that no light would burn within thirty feet of the three-hundred-foot level. The workmen exerted every nerve to extricate the now supposed dead men. Finding that all chances were lost to pass the first level, the water buckets were put to use, and at night they had cleared the water out to within a few feet of the five-hundred-foot level, yet they could not descend. All night the work went on, and by morning four of the unfortunate men were found. Saturday after noon the shaft was so cleared of the bad air, by the aid of the air pumps, that Mr. Horn managed to reach the top of the lower level.**

**"About eight o'clock, while the water bucket was down, the signal rope was pulled and the bell rung, which caused great excitement above. When the bucket arrived at the top, there sat upon it Joseph Bath, and alive. He sang out to the astonished crowd, 'I am all right, there are three more alive in the lower level.' Reader, imagine the scene. We cannot give it in words. The bucket was lowered, and up came the three other men. It is impossible for us to give a description of the feelings of the people at this time. Mr. Bath has given us a full account of the whole affair — at least what happened, underground —**

and in all history nothing has ever come to our notice that can in the slightest compare with this. None of the men about the mine have a word of fault to find with the management from first to last. We hear nothing but praise to Superintendent Stewart and Foreman Horn for their untiring perseverance. For over two days and nights Mr. Horn never left his post, and not till the last man was found and taken out did the brave man have any rest.

"We here give the names of the dead and living in full. Dead — Patrick Frazier, leaves a wife and four children, Ireland; John Collier, wife and five children, Ireland; Dennis Lynch, Ireland, wife and two children; William Coombs, England, wife and two children; W. H. Rule, England, single; Gr. B. Bobbino and Bartolomeo Gazzolo, single, Italy; Antonio Robles, Mexico, single; Nicolas Balulich, Austria, wife and four children. Saved — Jos. Bath, wife and four children, England; Bart. Curotto, wife and four children, Italy; Stefano Poclepovich, wife and six children. Italy; AVilliam Wadge, wife and several children, England; John O'Neil, Ireland. Mr. Frazier had an insurance of one thousand dollars, and Mr. Collier a policy of two thousand dollars in the Phoenix Mutual of Hartford.

"Seven were buried on Sunday, and two on Monday. Never before has so much sadness and sorrow been mixed with so much joy and happiness as has been the case within the past three days."

The accident was evidently owing to a faulty survey, which failed to indicate the proximity of the old works. It is said that some of the victims had presentiments of the danger, and bid their families good-bye on leaving home the morning of the accident. The feelings of the parties inclosed in the drift must have been terrible. It was expected that all were dead, but the drift being ascending, the chamber of air prevented the water from filling it. Those who attempted to swim out through the submerged end of the level were lost. Can imagination conceive a more terrible situation?