

# 147. The Avondale Mine Disaster

(Sung by John J. Quinn, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 1946:  
recorded by George Korson for the Library of Congress  
Archive of Folk Song)

$\text{♩} = 72$



1. Good Chris-tians all, both great and small,  
I pray you, lend an ear,  
And lis-ten with at-ten-tion while  
The truth I will de-clare;  
When you hear this la-men-ta-tion  
'Twill- cause you to weep and wail,  
A-bout the suf-fo-ca-tion in  
The mines of A-von-dale.

2. On the sixth day of September,  
Eighteen sixty-nine,  
Those miners all then got a call  
To go work in the mine;  
But little did they think that day  
That death would soon prevail  
Before they would return again from  
The mines of Avondale.

3. The women and their children,  
Their hearts were filled with joy  
To see their men go to their work  
Likewise every boy;  
But a dismal sight in broad daylight,  
Soon made them turn pale.  
When they saw the breaker burning  
O'er the mines of Avondale.

4. From here and there and everywhere,  
They gathered in a crowd,  
Some tearing off their clothes and  
hair,  
And crying out aloud—  
“Get out our husbands and our sons,  
Death he’s going to steal  
Their lives away without delay  
In the mines of Avondale.”
5. But all in vain, there was no hope  
One single soul to save.  
For there is no second outlet  
From the subterranean cave.  
No pen can write the awful fright  
And horror that prevailed,  
Among those dying victims,  
In the mines of Avondale.
6. A consultation then was held,  
'Twas asked who'd volunteer  
For to go down this dismal shaft  
To seek their comrades dear;  
Two Welshmen brave, without dismay,  
And courage without fail,  
Went down the shaft, without delay,  
In the mines of Avondale.
7. When at the bottom they arrived,  
And thought to make their way,  
One of them died for want of air,  
While the other in great dismay,  
He gave a sign to hoist him up,  
To tell the dreadful tale,  
That all were lost forever  
In the mines of Avondale.
8. Every effort then took place  
To send down some fresh air;  
The men that next went down again  
They took of the good care;  
And traversed through the chambers  
And this time did not fail  
In finding those dead bodies  
In the mines of Avondale.
9. Sixty-seven was the number  
That in a heap was found,  
It seemed that they were bewailing  
Their fate underneath the ground;  
They found the father with his son  
Clasped in his arms so pale.  
It was a heart-rending scene  
In the mines of Avondale.
10. Now to conclude, and make an end,  
Their number I'll pen down—  
A hundred and ten of brave, strong  
men  
Were smothered underground;  
They're in their graves till the last  
day  
Their widows may bewail.  
And orphans cries they rend the  
skies  
All around through Avondale.