

CHARLIE M. MEADOWS
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Stone Henge Road
Fayetteville, W. Va. 25340

EXPLOSIONS WITHIN THE MINES.

Was Explosion at the Mine of the Algoma Coal & Coke Company on September 15, 1902, in which 17 Lives were Lost.

This is a drift mine developed in the Pocahontas coal and is called the number seven mine of the above named company.

Previous to and up to September, 1902, no gas of an explosive nature had been found in this mine.

The first and second cross entries are turned at right angles from the main heading at 4800 feet from the drift opening, and it was in these cross headings where the explosion occurred.

The accompanying map presents a plan of the section of the mine in which the explosion occurred.

At room No. 6 had been stationed an electric fan and an air conduit had been extended up the entry for the purpose of removing the gas which was known to generate on these two entries.

This electric fan had remained idle over Sunday and until Monday morning. The men entered this section of the mine and were at their places of work when the electric fan was started.

The gas was driven out onto the first cross entry and caused to explode by coming into contact with the open or naked lamps used by the workmen.

The force of the explosion was such as to destroy the doors and brattices over a large portion of the mine, and destroy the ventilating current.

The employes, besides those receiving burns, were rendered helpless through the effects of the after damp.

This explosion occurred about 7:30 on the morning of Monday, September 15th, 1902, and the last of the bodies was recovered on the following morning about 4 o'clock.

The location of the bodies as found are represented on the map by a small disc.

The following persons were killed by this explosion: Clem Jones, Henry Warren, Henry Woody, Ennis Stoball, Alex. Crider, Sam Waller, John Rolke, Phil Jones, Henry Clark, Edward Gravely, Edward Callovey, Payton Crider, James Lester, Charles Mullens, Faunt Saunders, James H. Turner and Jesse Wade.

OFFICE OF THE FOURTH DISTRICT MINE INSPECTOR;

KEYSTONE, McDowell Co., W. Va., Sept. 30, 1902.

MA JAMES W. PAUL,

Chief Mine Inspector,

Charleston, W. Va.

DEAR SIR:

In pursuance with the regulations I hereby respectfully submit to you my report of an explosion which occurred on Sept. 15, 1902, at 7:30

A. M. at the Algoma Mine located at Algoma in the fourth mining district, McDowell County, West Virginia, resulting in the death of Clem Jones, Phil Jones, Henry Clark, Henry Woody, James Turner, Faunt Saunders, Chas. Mullins, Henry Warren, John Roike, James Lester, Ennis Stoball, Edward Calloway, Edward Gravely, Sam Waller, Alex Crider, Payton Crider, and Jesse Wade, in the Big Four Drift belonging to the Algoma Coal and Coke Co.

In order to enable myself to explain to you more readily and to have you understand the existing conditions at the time and place I forward, under separate cover, a blue print of the workings and on which I have endeavored to mark course of air current, location of bodies when found.

I was informed of this disaster on the morning of the 15th and reached the scene about 8:30 A. M. They had just brought Mr. Frankenfield, Mine Foreman, out who had been overcome by damp of explosion of gas.

I immediately took charge and organized a rescue party. It had been reported that there were fifteen men on first cross entry where the explosion had occurred and thought perhaps we might be able to rescue some of them alive, but found upon examination the air course rendered useless, that brattices were blown out and damaged for at least a half mile.

In order to reach first cross entry we had to repair the brattices from main inlet to first cross. We also encountered a great deal of water that had accumulated in air course owing to the electric pump not being running and the wires being blown down. On approaching the immediate scene of explosion we encountered a great deal of damp. We got to the bodies on first cross at 7.15 in the evening. There were 17 men that had been killed and smothered by the explosion. It was the morning of Sept. 16th when the last body was taken out. These men beyond doubt suffered greatly from fright and concussion and some had struggled for life until overcome in a helpless condition and died before help arrived.

Having endeavored by observing the condition, with what knowledge my past experience has taught me; the evidence produced at Coroner's inquest, together with what other information obtained that could be considered reliable, I respectfully beg leave to state that to the best of my knowledge that it was the explosion of fire damp caused by accumulation of gas and use of naked lights.

I am of the firm opinion that the system as already worked as shown on map can be improved upon. This working as I see it is but a slight improvement on the single entry system having as a result safer ventilation, purer and with much less expense.

I also submit to you the evidence of P. K. Perdue, John Blinky and Mine Foreman Frankenfield, also questions and answers of Mine Foreman Frankenfield.

Trusting I have not tired you and hoping that you may be able to understand what I have tried to explain.

CHARLIE M. MEADOWS

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Stone Henge Road

Fayetteville, W. Va. 25840

I remain,

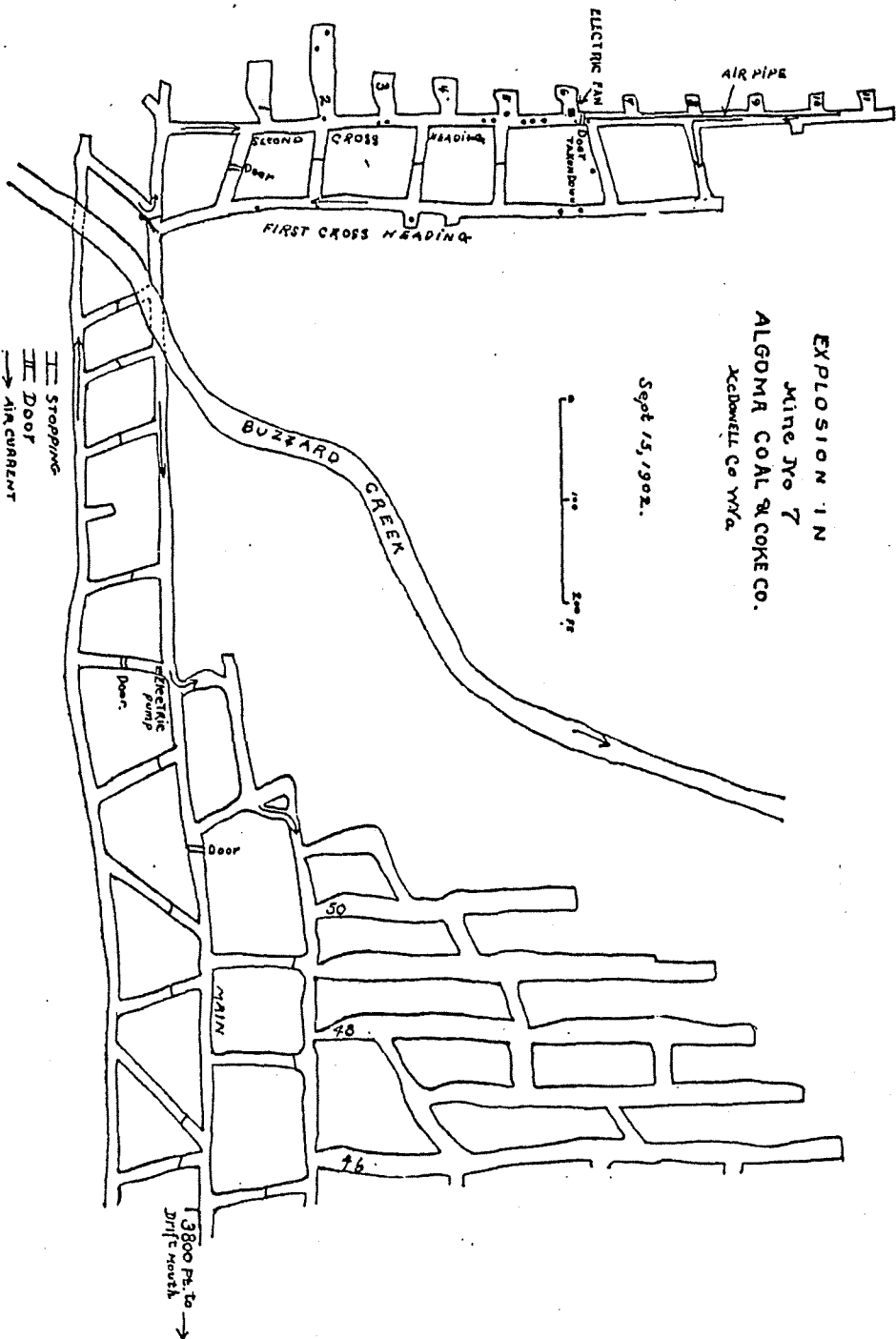
S. S. COOPER,

Mine Inspector Fourth District.

EXPLOSION IN
MINE No 7
ALGDMA COAL & COKE CO.
McDonnell Co Mfg.

Sept 15, 1902.

100 200 ft



1903]

CHIEF MINE INSPECTOR.

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The Following Testimonials were Sworn to and Subscribed Before F. G. Roberts, J. P., on the 16th Day of September, 1902:

Evidence of Wm. Pannell regarding the death of Clem Jones, Phil Jones, Henry Clark, Henry Warren, J. H. Turner, Faunt Saunders, Chas. Mullins, Henry Woody, John Roike, Jas. Lester, Ennis Stoball, Ed. Gravely, Sam Waller, Alex. Crider, Payton Crider, Ed. Calloway and Jesse Wade in the mines of the Algoma C. & C. Co., Sept. 15th, 1902. at Algoma, W. Va.

I saw Clem Jones, Henry Warren, J. H. Turner, Henry Clark, Chas. Mullins, Faunt Sanders, Ennis Stoball, Phil Jones and Henry Woody going toward their places about 7:30 o'clock yesterday morning. Jim Lester had gone in about twenty or twenty-five minutes ahead of them.

All of them had naked lamps. All the other boys mentioned must have been at least twenty minutes later arriving at the cross of straight entry than Lester. I don't know whether Lester went straight on to the fan or not. Jones, Warren and the others left me on No. 3 entry about thirty minutes before the explosion occurred and had just about time to get up to the cross heading. I was about one half (1-2) mile from where the explosion occurred and so do not know who entered the gaseous region first. I cannot state positively what the cause of death was.

(Signed) WM. PANNELL.

Witness, S. T. McLAUGHLIN.

Evidence of John Blinky, a miner, regarding the death of Clem Jones, Phil Jones, Henry Warren, Henry Woody, J. H. Turner, Faunt Saunders, Chas. Mullins, Henry Clark, John Roike, Jas. Lester, Ennis Stoball, Ed. Gravely, Sam Waller, Alex. Crider, Payton Crider, Ed. Calloway, and Jesse Wade in the mines of the Algoma C. & C. Co. at Algoma W. Va., Sept. 15th, 1902.

I worked the place Saturday night that these men were killed in Monday. There were no signs of gas then, the air was perfectly good at that time as the fan was running (I mean the electric fan) that had been put in after the discovery of gas a few days before.

I think that if these men had waited until the fan had been running a short time the air would have been all right.

(Signed) JOHN BLINKY.

Witness, D. H. THOMAS.

The above affiant further deposes and says:

I have talked with Mr. Frankenfield, the Mine Boss, about the air in those places and understood that it was necessary to be very careful. I have also heard Mr. Frankenfield talk with Ed. Gravely and Henry Warren on the same subject and they said they understood it. Gravely left the safety lamp in his place Saturday evening and when I went in that night to go to work I could not find it. After the fan ran about ten minutes everything was all right and I did not need the lamp. I told Jones and Warren where the lamp was and Warren said he thought he could get it, that was on Monday morning.

(Signed) JOHN BLINKY.

Witness, D. H. THOMAS.

Evidence of P. K. Perdue, tracklayer, regarding the death of Clem Jones, Phil Jones, Henry Clark, Henry Woody, J. H. Turner, Faunt Saunders, Chas. Mullins, Henry Warren, John Roike, Jas. Lester, Ennis Stoball, Ed. Gravely, Sam Waller, Alex. Crider, Payton Crider, Ed. Calloway and Jesse Wade in the mines of the Algoma C. & C. Co., at Algoma, W. Va., Sept. 15th, 1902.

I saw all these men going toward the place where the explosion occurred about 7:30 A. M. except Jim Lester who went in about a half hour before the others. All of them carried naked lamps. Nobody seemed to expect any danger.

(Signed) P. K. PERDUE.

Statement of Dan Sloniker Regarding the Above Matter.

Mr. P. K. Perdue and myself were together on the morning of the explosion and the above statement by him is true and correct.

(Signed) DAN SLONIKER.

Evidence of H. A. Frankenfield, Mine Foreman, regarding the death of Clem Jones, Phil Jones, Henry Clark, Henry Woody, Jas. H. Turner, Faunt Saunders, Chas. Mullins, Henry Warren, John Roike, Jas. Lester, Ennis Stoball, Ed. Gravely, Ed. Calloway, Sam Waller, Alex. Crider, Payton Crider, and Jesse Wade in the mines of the Algoma Coal & Coke Co., at Algoma, W. Va., Sept. 15th, 1902.

Ed. Gravely, Clem Jones and John Blinky had a contract to mine first cross heading and an airway. Some days ago signs of gas appeared in these places.

I examined the place carefully and warned the men of the dangers surrounding them, at the same time instructing them as to the method of discovering the presence of gases. We installed an electric fan one week ago yesterday and had a man to run it day and night. We also gave these contractors a safety lamp and instructed them to examine the air before taking their men in.

Saturday night the fan (electric) stopped until Monday morning as is customary, there being no work Sunday or Sunday night. On Saturday night I talked with Clem Jones and Henry Warren, a driver, about the dangers of the place in which they worked. Sunday I saw John Blinky and talked with him about it. I also talked with Gravely. They all said they understood the necessity of caution.

They went past the fan on the morning of the accident and evidently went into the gas with naked lamps.

(Signed) H. A. FRANKENFIELD.

Evidence of H. A. Frankenfield, Mine Boss.

1. Occupation? Mine Foreman for Algoma C. & C. Co.
2. How long employed by Algoma C. & C. Co.? Since July 21st, 1902.
3. When was gas first found in Algoma Mines? On September 1st, 1902.
4. At what point was it found? In the face of first cross entry.
5. Have you worked in gaseous mines elsewhere and where? Yes, in the Anthracite Coal field of Pennsylvania.

1903]

CHIEF MINE INSPECTOR.

6. Was the first cross entry examined each morning before the men were allowed to go to work? It was examined every morning by me prior to that of the explosion.

7. By whom was the mine examined for gas and how? By me, with a safety lamp.

8. What instructions were given to the men who worked in the mine relative to presence of gas? They were instructed by me in the use of safety lamp and one was given them for their own use with instructions never to go into that section of the mine with a naked lamp before trying for gas with a safety lamp.

9. Previous to the explosion do you know of these instructions having been violated and by whom? They were violated by Ed. Gravely and Henry Warren on September 13th, 1902, for this Henry Warren was discharged on that day, but upon promise never to violate rules again was reinstated as driver on that entry.

10. Was the mine examined for gas on the morning of the explosion previous to the men going into the mine, and what was the report of the person who made examination? It was not examined by me on that morning, but was supposed to be by the contractors or leaders, the safety lamp being given them for that purpose.

11. Who made this examination? Cannot say.

12. At what hour did explosion occur? Between seven a. m. and eight a. m.

13. Where were you when explosion occurred? Helping to put loaded car on track at No. 4 side track on my way to first cross.

14. At what hour did the men generally go into the mines to work? On first trip into mines, usually about seven thirty or later.

15. What time did they go into the mine on the morning of explosion? At seven a. m.

16. Did the men ride or walk into mines at all times? Rode always until that morning, when they walked, not waiting for trip as usual.

17. How did they enter on morning of explosion, ride or walk? Walked to No. 4 side track, rode from there in car driven by Henry Warren.

18. Give name of fire boss, if any, previous to explosion? Arthur Gallimore was fire boss, but was taken sick and while waiting to obtain another or have him return the contractors were instructed so as to examine for gas themselves before taking their men to work.

19. Prior to Monday, September 15th, was there a bulletin board at the entrance to this mine? No. Is there now? Yes.

20. At time of explosion was the main ventilating fan running? Yes. What is the size and capacity? It is a 16-foot fan with a capacity of 36,000 cubic feet.

21. When was the electric fan first put into operation on the first cross entry? September 8th, 1902.

22. Was it running when explosion occurred? Yes.

23. Who generally started this fan? Either I or Henry Warren.

24. Who started it on the morning of explosion? Jim Lester, who was sent in to look after the fan.

25. Give its location in the mine? In the neck of No. 6 room.
26. How many kegs of powder were in the mine at time of explosion?
Two and a piece.
27. How many exploded? Two.

28. What knowledge have you of the miners having lighted the gas on purpose to burn it? On September 1st Clem Jones lighted gas for the purpose of burning it, though they were heard to say by H. A. Lipscomb on September 14th, after having been warned of the danger in so doing by me, that all they had to do was to light it and drop down.

(Signed)

H. A. FRANKENFIELD.

State of West Virginia,

McDowell County, to-wit:

An inquest taken at Algoma in the County of McDowell on the 23rd day of September, 1902, before F. G. Roberts, a justice of the peace of the said County, upon the view of the bodies of Clem Jones, Phil Jones, Henry Warren, Henry Clark, Henry Woody, Ed. Gravely, Ennis Stoball, Ed. Calloway, Alex. Crider, Payton Crider Sam Waller, James Lester, John Roike, Chas. Mullins, Faunt Saunders, J. H. Turner and Jesse Wade there lying dead.

The jurors sworn to inquire when, how and by what means the said persons came to their death, upon their oath do say:

That the above named persons came to their death as the result of an explosion of gas in the mines of the Algoma C. & C. Co. on the 15th day of September, 1902, caused by one, Ed. Gravely, disobeying the orders and rules of the mine foreman by entering a part of the mine where gas was known to be with a naked lamp instead of using the safety lamp provided him.

CHARLIE M. MEADOWS
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A. MORRISSEY, Foreman,
S. A. CLARK,
WM. ROBERTSON,
O. BOHNE,
W. E. MORRIS,
C. S. ANGEL,
F. G. ROBERTS, J. P.

Instructions Offered by the Chief Mine Inspector for the Future Plan of Ventilating the Mine, to S. S. Cooper, District Inspector.

"I have the tracing of the map of the mine before me and it indicates that the air from the first cross entry upon its return to the fan passes through the other part of the mine, which appears to be the principal working places. I would recommend that you offer a suggestion to the Algoma C. & C. Co. that they put in an over-cast leading from the main intake air-way to the first cross heading just beyond the point where Buzzard Creek crosses the main intake air-way; that the doors on the main heading be taken off; that an over-cast be put over the main heading on the cross cuts between rooms 18 and 19. A regulator should then be put in on the return air-way in the vicinity of No. 50 room. An arrangement of this kind will give two splits for the venilation of this mine and the air from the first cross entry will not be obliged to pass through the other portion of the mine."

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Ennis

Stoball

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Jessie

Wade

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

James

Turner

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Fount

Saunders

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma McDowell WV
Algoma Coal and Coke
Algoma Mine 46-00000
9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Charles Mullins

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

John

Roike

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

James

Lester

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Sam

Waller

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Payton

Crider

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Edward

Calloway

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Edward

Gravely

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Henry

Woody

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Henry

Clark

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Henry

Warren

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Phil

Jones

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Clem

Jones

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.

Coal Fatality

Algoma

McDowell

WV

Algoma Coal and Coke

Algoma Mine

46-00000

9 /15/1902

Victim Name

Alex

Crider

Seventeen men were killed by an explosion of gas in this mine.