

M/NM FATAL

8/24/65

May 12, 1905: Cora(Copper); Butte, Montana, 7 Killed

(From the Anaconda Standard--May 13, 1905)

About 3 p.m. seven men were killed instantly and one was injured by a powder explosion on the 1,500 foot level. Three of the bodies were badly fragmented, and those on other levels who felt and heard the blast hurried to the scene, but poisonous fumes prevented them from affecting immediate rescue or determining the extent of the damage incurred.

Although the cause could not be definitely established, it was known that a driller had secured 30 or more pounds of powder together with caps and fuses, and was proceeding up the manway to the 1,600 level where holes were to be charged. It was theorized that his lighted candle could have made contact with the caps or, he could have dropped some of the powder down the ladder which struck more explosives at the base of the manway. The lone survivor was not close enough to the scene to see what had happened.

Originally the mine had been developed to a depth of 400 feet for the extraction of silver-gold ore. Later, a second shaft was sunk 1,600 feet and the first extended to 1,000 feet with connections between the two at various levels. At the time of the occurrence, the mine was considered to be a heavy producer of concentrating ore.

Sixty men were ordered to work removing debris and loose materials, but poisonous gases forced them to work very short shifts in groups of four. Four of the bodies were soon recovered, but several hours elapsed before the shattered remains of the other three could be brought to the surface.

The night shift went to work as scheduled, however, 15 assigned to the 1,400 foot level and 16, at the 1,600 level left the mine about 6 p.m. due to unsafe working conditions from the explosion.

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