

The jurors sworn to inquire when, how and by what means the said four men came to their death, upon their oath do say: that said John McSurley, Will McSurley, Andrew Hunt and Edward McLaughlin came to their deaths at the incline of Kanawha & Hocking Mine 101, at Shrewsbury in Kanawha County, West Virginia, on the 7th day of March, 1905, about 4:20 P. M. of that day; that said men were riding down said incline of said mine, in company with nine other employes of said Kanawha & Hocking Company on three mine coal cars loaded with coal, and that the chain which connected the rear car with the wire rope or cable broke and said three cars, thus detached, ran down the incline of said mine and killed the four men aforesaid. And the jury further finds from the evidence that the breaking of said chain was partly caused by the additional weight of the thirteen men riding down said incline on said loaded cars, and that said men had been warned against said riding on said incline by notices duly posted by said company on the tippie and drum house thereof, and that said men so killed and so riding on said cars were guilty of contributory negligence, and that said company, in permitting said men to ride up and down incline, notwithstanding the posting of said notices, was also guilty of negligence, but that said negligence of said company was not sufficient to make said company liable for damages for killing said four men.

In testimony whereof, the said coroner and jurors hereto set their hands on this 9th day of March, 1905.

(Signed) F. L. BEARDSLEY, *Coroner.*

J. W. KNIGHT,

J. J. NEYLAN,

R. F. WATSON,

J. W. WAID,

GEO. W. MURBY,

R. G. WATSON,

*Jurors.*

#### *Rush Run-Red Ash Mine Explosion.*

On March 18-19, 1905, explosions occurred in the Rush Run and Red Ash Mines, in Fayette County, in which explosions 24 lives were lost.

Details of this disaster may be obtained from the special report made by the Chief Mine Inspector under date of May 27, 1905, copies of which have been printed in pamphlet form.

Comments upon this disaster are made in the report of the District Mine Inspector for the 3rd District, found elsewhere in this report.

#### ***Kayford Mine Explosion.***

The Cabin Creek Mine at Kayford, Kanawha County, belonging to the Cabin Creek Mining Company, exploded on April 20th, 1905, at 5:20 o'clock P. M., and caused the loss of the lives of six men, two by being badly burned and four by suffocation, in addition to burning two other persons, one of whom was the mine boss, who was on the outside of the mine and about 40 feet from the mouth of the mine at the time of the explosion.

The Kayford No. 1 Mine is a drift into the No. 2 gas coal and at the time of this disaster the main heading had advanced about 1865 feet from the drift mouth.

At the time of the explosion there were eight men inside of the mine,—five of these men were near the face of the main entries where they were doing contract mining in the main entry and its air course, two right hand entries and two left hand entries which had been turned off but a short distance from the face of the main entries and were driven in not over 150 feet from the main entry.

Two other men were on the main entry going to the outside and were within 100 to 200 feet of the drift mouth, and another, a driver, was on the air course in charge of a mule and inside of the mine about 450 feet.

The two men on the main entry near the outside escaped, one receiving painful burns and the other only slight burns as he felt the rush of air and threw himself prostrate on the floor of the mine.

The other six men were lost, the driver on the air course and one miner near the face of the main entry being the only two burned, the other four being suffocated.

From the evidence taken and facts learned by an examination of the mine it was conclusive that the explosion was caused by powder and coal dust.

The men working in the faces of the entries named above had been taking full kegs of powder into the mine and on the day of the disaster had taken in a full keg at noon and they had another keg partly full within the mine.

A number of holes were found in the different entries, some of which had been charged and tamped and in one entry was found an electric drill placed in position for drilling the face of an air course which had been undercut by a chain machine.

It appears that Wm. Allen was engaged, in the last but one crosscut, in filling cartridges with black blasting powder and upon an examination it was found that two kegs had exploded in this crosscut. These two kegs had holes made into them by means of a miner's pick, and near by, in the same crosscut, were found 52 empty powder cans, each of which had a similar square opening made by a pick.

The conclusion of those who examined this part of the mine was that Allen had accidentally ignited the powder either by striking it with a pick or by dropping fire into it from his open lamp. Allen was severely burned, especially on his lower limbs, and was nude except having on shoes.

The other four miners were working in the cross entries beyond the crosscut in which Allen was and the flame of the explosion did not enter the parts of the mine where they were.

The result of the powder exploding caused the dust within the mine to become inflamed and extended to the outside of the mine, going against the fresh air current, and in its expansion blew out all the wooden brattices between the main headings.

The flame on its way to the outside badly burned Oscar Crump from

his head to his waist and killed him and the mule he had in charge. Crump was blown into a room about 40 feet, but the mule lived long enough to walk about 300 feet over to and up the middle main entry.

The five men at the advance workings had made an effort to get out of the mine as they were all found on the main entry about 100 to 250 feet from the crosscut where the kegs of powder had exploded, and with the exception of Allen had been overcome with the after gases of the explosion.

The mine had been well ventilated and the fan was stopped only 10 minutes by reason of the explosion.

Charred coal dust was in evidence at a number of places along the main heading and in the crosscut where Allen was making cartridges one rib of the coal was charred and blistered.

On the following day, April 21st, the Chief Mine Inspector, and District Inspectors, Henry and Pinkney, made a careful examination of the mine and finally came to the conclusion contained in the following notice, which was issued for the benefit of the men employed within this mine:

NOTICE.

Kayford, W. Va., April 21, 1905.

We have this day made an examination of the inside workings of the Cabin Creek Mine No. 1, belonging to the Cabin Creek Mining Company, at Kayford, Kanawha County, West Virginia, and find that the cause of the explosion which occurred on the 20th of April, 1905, in which the lives of five men were lost, to have been the explosion of two kegs of powder, caused by improper handling or by making an opening into a keg by the use of a miner's pick, which explosion of powder caused the dust of the mine to be inflamed.

Upon a close inspection we were unable to detect the presence of any explosive gas within the mine.

When the dust in the mine has been made and kept damp by proper sprinkling we consider it safe to again be operated, but consider it dangerous, and know it to be a violation of law, to take into the mine powder in the original keg of 24 pounds, and recommend that powder be taken into the mine in cans of a capacity not to exceed five (5) pounds.

(Signed) J. W. PAUL, *Chief Mine Inspector of W. Va.*

E. A. HENRY, *District Mine Inspector, 2nd District.*

EDWARD PINKNEY, *District Mine Inspector, 3rd District.*

An inquisition was held at Kayford by Mr. F. L. Beardsley, coroner of Kanawha County, on the 21st and 22nd of April, which resulted in the following verdict:

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,

Kanawha County, to-wit:

An inquisition taken at the store room of the Cabin Creek Mining Company's store, at Kayford, in said County of Kanawha, on the 21st and 22nd days of April, 1905, before F. L. Beardsley, coroner of said County of Kanawha, upon the view of the bodies of W. M. Allen, Bert Green, Charles Nichols, Ira Nichols and Oscar Crump, there lying dead.

The jury sworn to inquire when, how and by what means the said men came to their deaths, upon their oaths do say: That they came to their deaths on the evening of the 20th day of April, 1905, while in Mine No. 1, Entry No. 2, of Cabin Creek Mining Company's mine, at Kayford, in said County of Kanawha, as the result of the explosion of two cans containing powder, which explosion was caused by the careless handling of said powder cans by some of the dead men, which careless handling was against and contrary to printed rule No. 17, of the said company, which was duly posted. But whether one or more than one of said dead men were guilty of said careless handling the jury is unable, from the evidence, to determine.

It appears from the evidence that said rule No. 17 is often violated by the miners, and it is our opinion that the mining company should use the most stringent measures to enforce this rule, by discharge of the offending miners, or otherwise.

In testimony whereof, the undersigned coroner and his jury have hereto set their hands this 22nd day of April, 1905.

F. L. BEARDSLEY, *Coroner.*

W. P. EDWARDS,

C. C. ADAMS,

S. F. ARMSTRONG,

J. S. WILLS,

J. W. NUCKOLLS,

J. HUNTER EAST,

*Jury.*

The frequency of mine explosions attending accidental explosions of powder in mines where conditions have been unchanged for years leads to the belief that the quality of the powder may be largely at fault. The presence of the very fine particles of dust made by machine mining is the medium by which the explosion may be carried to many parts of a mine.

#### FATAL ACCIDENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30th, 1905.

##### *Brooke County.*

March 5, 1905, died March 6, 1905. Andrew Serniski, Locust Grove Mine, was killed by a fall of coal and slate while undercutting a butt shot which had been shattered previously by a shot located near it.

##### *Harrison County.*

July 21, 1904. John C. Wagner, Lynch Mine, was helping blacksmith shoe a vicious mule in a pair of stocks; mule kicked scantling loose from end of stocks, which struck Wagner above the left temple, crushing his skull. He died the same day.

July 30, 1904. Mike Lulitz, Gypsy Mine, had loaded his car and was waiting for the driver to take it out when the slate began to fall on the left side of the room. He began backing out from the face to get away and fell and was caught by the falling slate. The place was well timbered, and roof apparently in good condition.