

## FOUR LOSE LIVES IN MINE ACCIDENT AT BRANDY CITY

**Eleven-Ton Blast of Dynamite Back-fired Through Drain Tunnel and Overcame Eight Men.**

As a result of the setting off of a big powder blast in the Brandy City gravel mines at Brandy City, near La Porte, last Thursday afternoon, four miners were killed by asphyxiation, while four more were in a dangerous condition for some time afterward.

The four who lost their lives by being asphyxiated were: John (Jack) Hayes, Ernest Godfrey, Joseph Piona and Thomas Saddler. The four overcame were: George F. Taylor, manager of the property; Warren Godfrey, foreman; John Addison and William Grant.

The Brandy City Mining company was preparing to set off a powder blast containing 11 tons or 22,000 pounds of powder, one such blast being fired every year to loosen the gravel banks, preparatory to piping.

A long drift was run under the bank and in this was stored the 11 tons of five per cent giant powder, which comes in paper sacks, 25 pounds to the sack. The powder was tamped in with dirt and the end of the drift bulkheaded, after which the long fuses were lit.

## 1915 Brandy City Mine Explosives Detonation



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**Blast Is Fatal.**

The big blast was set off at 3:30 o'clock Thursday afternoon and eight of the men retired to the blacksmith shop, a distance of 200 yards from the drift, to await the great explosion. The blacksmithship is in the hydraulic pit, surrounded by high banks.

As near as can be learned the frightful accident occurred through the powder fumes coming out through the long drain tunnel in what is known as Canyon creek, and not directly through the powder drift. It seems that in running the powder drift under the bank the old drain tunnel was intercepted and blocked up or bulkheaded. When the 11 tons of five per cent powder was set off a portion of it exploded, while the rest caught fire and shot backwards, blowing out the bulkhead in the drain tunnel and allowing the great volume of smoke and poisonous fumes to emanate through the mouth. The blacksmith shop near where the eight men were stationed is only about 100 feet from the mouth of this tunnel, but quite a distance from the mouth of the powder drift, so the men thought they were at a perfectly safe distance. They never for an instant dreamed that such a horrible calamity would occur and last of all that any fumes would ever come through the drain tunnel, which is two thousand feet in length.

It is believed that possibly some of the tamping was not tight enough, or else there was crevices in the earth, caused by former blasts, that allowed air to get into the powderdrift and for this reason the charge did not entirely explode as planned. Last year two powder drifts were fired.

The inhaling of the deadly gases from the powder caused the men to suffer from hemorrhages and all of them went through agonizing and excruciating pain, frothing at the mouth and moaning. Before the arrival of the physicians first aid was given the stricken miners by kind hands of Brandy City. Later the physicians administered oxygen. Hopes are held out for the complete recovery of Manager George F. Taylor, Foreman Walter Godfrey, William Grant and John Addison, who were also overcome, have recovered.

The condition of Mr. Taylor is the most serious of all.

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## Fumes Detected For Miles.

To give an idea of the terrible effect of the powder gases the fumes could be smelled at Camptonville, seven miles away, while at Brandy City, over half a mile from the scene of the terrible accident, women and children were almost overcome. One lad, the four-year-old son of Mrs. Star, teacher of the school at Brandy City, was so badly overcome that he lapsed into unconsciousness, but was revived in a short time.

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