

1969-0460

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
Health and Safety Activities, District C
Barbourville, Kentucky 40906

February 13, 1969

COAL FATAL

Memorandum

To: T. R. Mark, Subdistrict Manager, Barbourville, Ky. Subdistrict
From: James Rhea, Federal Coal Mine Inspector
Subject: Fatal roof-fall accident in an abandoned mine opening
about 60 feet underground, Gordon, Letcher County, Kentucky,
February 10, 1969

This report is based on an investigation made in accordance with provisions of the Federal Coal Mine Safety Act (66 Stat. 692; 30 U.S.C. Secs. 451-483) as amended.

Ronald Dale Halcomb, who was assisting his father in getting coal from an opening of an abandoned mine for family use, was killed instantly by a fall of roof about 5:00 p.m., February 10, 1969. Halcomb, age 14, had no mining experience. He is survived by his parents.

The writer learned of the accident from an article in the local newspaper about 3:00 p.m., February 11, 1969, and an investigation was made the next day.

The mine in which the accident occurred is on Defeated Creek, near Gordon, Kentucky, and it was opened in May 1966, and abandoned in September 1966, by the L. Partin Coal Company. The mine was opened by drifts in the Leatherwood coalbed, which averaged 60 inches in thickness locally. A pair of entries, 20 to 24 feet wide, had been driven from the surface to a depth of about 150 feet to interconnect with an abandoned section of No. 2 Mine, Blue Diamond Coal Company. The accident occurred about 60 feet from the surface. The immediate roof was fragile shale, and the main roof was sandstone. There were no timbers set in the area. Coal was blasted off the solid with permissible explosives, fired with fuse and blasting caps, and the coal was carried to the surface in metal tubs.

Information for the report was obtained from Rema Halcomb, father of the victim, and from a visit to the scene of the accident.

On the day of the accident, Rema Halcomb, father of the victim, left his home about 8:30 a.m., to get coal from the mine for his own use; the mine was approximately 1 mile from his home. He stated he worked most of the day in obtaining about 2 tons of coal. Ronald Dale Halcomb, victim, and his brother, Roger Lee Halcomb, age 8 years, had returned from school

cc:
Assoc. Director--Health & Safety (3)
J. S. Malesky
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about 4:00 p.m. Bob Hooker came by the Halcomb home with his autotruck, and they traveled to the mine to assist in getting the remainder of the coal into the autotruck. Rema Halcomb further stated that Ronald Dale Halcomb, victim, had been at the mine about 10 minutes. He (victim) walked underground to the accident area and said, "here is some loose coal," and at the same time struck the rib of the coal with a pick, when the rock fell without warning, killing him instantly. Others in the area escaped without injury. The body was removed from under the rock with the aid of a lifting jack by the father and Bob Hooker and transported to the surface shortly thereafter. The rock that fell was 20 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 6 to 8 inches thick; the rock broke into several pieces as it fell.

The accident was the result of unauthorized entrance into an abandoned mine.

/s/ James Rhea

James Rhea
Federal Coal Mine Inspector