

# Famous May Mining Incidents

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## May

May has produced **73 mine disasters** with 5 or more fatalities.

See more at <http://bit.ly/38YrsGj> 🔍👁

The **top 3 deadliest disasters** were:

Winter Quarters No. 1, 2 (UT)

Mather No. 1 (PA)

Fraterville (TN)

## May Mine Disaster Calendar 📅

Be sure to visit our May calendar page. There you’ll find scores of successful rescues and incidents of rescuer death that we’ve uncovered from news archives and accident reports. To date we’ve collected information on more than **1,350 rescues** and over **475 rescuer deaths** dating back to 1846. See more at <http://bit.ly/2Ou8zDu>. 🔍👁

## May 1

On May 1<sup>st</sup> we honor those that died in the **5<sup>th</sup> deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States. 🛑

### **Pleasant Valley Company Winter Quarters Nos. 1 & 4 Mine Explosion Scofield, Carbon County, Utah**

May 1, 1900

No. Killed – 200

See more at <http://bit.ly/2EyMu3D> 🔍 👁

At 10:25 in the morning, an explosion originating in No. 4 mine cost 200 men their lives and injured 7. Two men came out of No. 4 mine uninjured, and 103 came out of the connecting No. 1 mine uninjured.

## May 2

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> we commemorate the anniversary of the **second deadliest Metal and Nonmetal mine disaster** in U. S. history. 🛑

### **Sunshine Mining Company Sunshine Mine Fire Kellogg, Shoshone County, Idaho**

May 2, 1972

No. Killed – 91

See more at <http://bit.ly/2EA2FO1> 🔍 👁

### **Successful Rescue** 🍺 🙌 👍

Two men, Tom Wilkinson, and Ronald Flory were rescued and found to be in good condition after being trapped for — **8 days** — following the Sunshine silver mine fire in Kellogg, Shoshone County, Idaho. 91 miners were killed in the disaster. The four men responsible for the rescue were Wayne D. Kanack, Frank J. Delimba, Don Morris from the U. S. Bureau of Mines, and Sonny Becker, a Sunshine miner.

Song: Tragedy at the Sunshine Mine - <http://bit.ly/2EB33vV> 🔊

## May 3

**Rescuer Deaths** on May 3, 1920 🧑‍🚒

**Submarine Mine Explosion, Clinton, Indiana** — Following an explosion in the Submarine mine at Clinton, Indiana, **James Smith, Art Thompson, and Frank Hughes** were victims of afterdamp while attempting to recover the body of John Howe. Jimmie Needham, also a member of the rescue party, was injured. See more at <https://bit.ly/3bX36yt> 🔍 👁

## May 4

**Gilberton Coal Company  
No. 5 Colliery Fire  
Girardville, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania**

May 4, 1949

No. Killed – 4

See more at <http://bit.ly/351uU1t> 🔍 👁

**Rescuer Deaths** 🧑‍🚒

**Raymond J. Ey**, 38, mine laborer, **Joseph P. Wowak**, and **William J. Kelly, Sr.**, 48, died attempting to save William T. O'Brien, 52, mine fireboss, from suffocation, Girardville, Pennsylvania, May 4, 1949. *All three men were posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery.* 🏆

## May 4

**Successful Rescue** on May 4, 1894 🍺 🤝 👍

**Highland No. 2 Mine Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania** — Rescuers needed to dig through a wall of rock 6-feet thick to free Theobald Wackley from the brutal conditions of his imprisonment. Mr. Wackley was released after being trapped for — **18 hours** — following a cave-in in the Highland No. 2 mine near Hazleton. Overwhelmed by a mass of fallen coal, Wackley spent the entire time waiting to be rescued in a kneeling position. Despite his helpless condition, Wackley cheered the rescuers on in their work. See more at <http://bit.ly/3oISryh> 🔍 👁

**May 5**

**Etna Coal and Coke Company  
NuRex Mine Explosion  
LaFollette, Campbell County, Tennessee**

May 5, 1943

No. Killed - 10

See more at <http://bit.ly/36d3q8Z> 🔍 👁

**Successful Rescue** 🍺 🤝 👍

Eighteen coal miners, huddling behind a hastily erected canvas barrier nearly 2,000 feet underground, survived an explosion that rocked the Etna Coal and Coke Company mine and suffocated ten of their companions. The miners, fighting against the deadly fumes of "black damp" for more than eight hours, stumbled and crawled from their barricaded cell as rescue parties freed them.

**May 5**

On May 5<sup>th</sup> we commemorate the anniversary of the Palos No. 3 mine explosion at Palos, Alabama.

**Palos Coal and Coke Company  
Palos No. 3 Mine Explosion  
Palos, Jefferson County, Alabama**

May 5, 1910

No. Killed - 84

See more at <http://bit.ly/2CzvYdE> 🔍 👁

The explosion resulted in the loss of 83 men inside and 1 man on the outside of the mine and did much damage to the underground equipment. The explosion originated in the 6<sup>th</sup> right entry through the ignition of a body of gas by an open-flame lamp and dry coal dust propagated the explosion throughout the mine and out the mouth of the slope.

## May 6

### Gauley Coal and Coke Company Saxsewell No. 8 Mine Inundation Hominy Falls, Nicholas County, West Virginia

May 6, 1968

No. Killed – 4

See more at <http://bit.ly/2HqaSlO> 🔍 👁

### Successful Rescue 🍺 🍷 US

**Saxsewell No. 8 Mine Inundation, Hominy Falls, Nicholas County, WV** — An inundation of part of the active workings of the Saxsewell No. 8 mine occurred at 9:40 a.m., Monday, May 6, 1968. There were 26 men in the mine at the time of the occurrence. One man escaped from the mine unassisted, but the others were entrapped in the mine by the inrushing water. Fifteen men were rescued — **5 days later** — and six others were rescued — **10 days after the inundation** — occurred. Four men were fatally injured or were drowned by the in-rush of water. The victims were brought to the surface on the morning of May 16, 1968.

Video - <http://bit.ly/2Hqah3j> 🎥

Audio - <http://bit.ly/2HpQbX9> 🎤

See more at <http://bit.ly/2HqaSlO> 🔍 👁

## May 6

### Successful Rescue on May 6, 1983 🍺 🙌 👍

**Black Queen Mine Roof Fall, near Sylvester, West Virginia** — John Varney was rescued after being buried under debris for — **two hours** — at Elk Run Coal Company's Black Queen mine following a massive roof fall. He was unhurt. In the same incident, Kenneth Wayne Scarbrough, 36, of Arnett in Boone County, was killed when the mine roof collapsed. Scarbrough was an assistant mine foreman with 14 years' experience.

See more at <https://bit.ly/3w8JUIU> 🔍 👁

## May 7

### Successful Rescue on May 7, 1909 🍺 🙌 👍

**Pennsylvania Coal No. 6 Mine Explosion & Fire, Inkerman, Pennsylvania** — James M. Flanigan, 20, mine car tender, rescued William Derrig, 19, and John W. Mullery, 21, in the Pennsylvania Coal No. 6 Mine at Inkerman, Pennsylvania after an explosion. Flanigan went into an abandoned drift, immediately following an explosion

of gas, and brought out Derrig. He returned, others refusing to go with him, and got Mullery. Both Derrig and Mullery were severely injured and Derrig died one week later. Flanigan's hands were burned from beating out fire in the men's clothing, and he was disabled 18 days. *In April 1916, James Flanigan was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award along with \$1,000 cash for his bravery.* See more at <https://bit.ly/31SuYUI>



## May 8

**Successful Rescue** on May 8, 1917 🍺 🙌 👍

**Abandoned Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pittston, Pennsylvania** — Two boys, Sylvester W. McKeon, age 12 and Robert E. Fear, age 13, were rescued after they descended the slope of a hole that had caved in. They were caught by a fall of earth overhanging the entrance to the chamber. Sylvester was buried to his hips, and Robert was buried to his chest. Cracks at the top of the hole and the dropping of clay earth overhanging the chamber indicated another cave-in was imminent. Their rescuers were Michael J. Franklin, Edward F. Norton, and Patrick J. Gallagher, both track layers. After an **undisclosed period**, the men first extracted Sylvester followed by Robert. *The three men were awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery.* 🏆

See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc> 🔍 👁

## May 9

**Alliance Coal Company  
Kaska William Colliery Hoisting Disaster  
Middleport, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania**

May 9, 1889

No. Killed - 10

See more at <http://bit.ly/2P1j5CU> 🔍 👁

The cage containing 10 miners was ascending the shaft when an empty car was pushed over the top of the shaft by two laborers. The car struck the cage with terrible force, shattering it to pieces and instantly killing every one of its occupants, whose mangled bodies were afterward found in the water at the bottom of the shaft.

**May 10**

**Magma Copper Company**

**Magma Mine Cave-in**

**Superior, Pinal County, Arizona**

May 10, 1982

No. Killed - 3

See more at <http://bit.ly/2YxwaXt> 🔍 👁

**Successful Rescue** 🍺 🙌 and **Rescuer Deaths** 🧑‍🚒

Three miners died between 5:30 and 6 p.m., on May 10, 1982, in three separate incidents that involved a cave-in and fall-of-ground in the Magma Copper Mine in Superior, Arizona. During a daring rescue and recovery which lasted through May 12<sup>th</sup>, one of the victims was recovered from the dangerous area, however, he died shortly thereafter from his injuries. Joseph Granillo was also entrapped in the same manner, and while his rescue was being attempted, both he and his would-be rescuer, Joseph Cassaro, were killed when additional material fell. *For their brave efforts, the Carnegie Hero Award was bestowed upon Frank Aldecoa, Andy J. Arroyos, Jr., Billy Ray Evans, Henry Lopez Rodriguez, George Anthony Gomez, G. Michael Martinez (posthumously), and Joseph Cassaro (posthumously).* 🏆

**May 10**

**Northern Pacific Coal Company**

**Roslyn Mine Explosion**

**Roslyn, Kittitas County, Washington**

May 10, 1892

No. Killed – 45

See more at <http://bit.ly/2sS6yc1> 🔍 👁

At 1:45 p.m. a terrible explosion occurred in the slope of mine No. 2, of the Northern Pacific Coal Company at this point, in which the loss of life exceeded in number that of any other disaster that has ever been chronicled in the northwest or on the Pacific slope.

## May 10

**Successful Rescue** on May 10, 1856 🍺 🙌 👍

**Owens & Guthrie Coal Bank Cave-in, Blue Rock, Ohio** — On April 25, 1856, about 12 o'clock p.m., the Coal Bank of Owens & Guthrie at Blue Rock, on the Muskingum River, was heard to give way. A large portion of the great hill came down with a tremendous crash. Four men were confined for — **14½ days** — in a Coal Bank at Blue Rock, including James Pearson, 32; James Getwood, 22; William Edgell, Jr., 20; and Edward Savage, 16. Thirteen miners succeeded in making their escape without receiving any injuries. Three others, Timothy Lyons, George Ross, and William T. Gheen, who were further in, came out after the rocks had commenced tumbling down, receiving slight injuries. Timothy Lyons, who was farther in than the others was caught by a rock falling upon his arm. He made several attempts to rescue himself and had nearly given up in despair of getting loose, when making one more desperate effort, he extricated himself and made his escape. Rescue came for the four trapped miners on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 a.m. None of those trapped was seriously harmed from their experience and all were expected to recover. See more at <https://bit.ly/3GIV5D8>



## May 11

**Successful Rescue** on May 11, 1939 🍺 🙌 👍

Rescuers worked for — **15 hours** — to free 60-year-old Joseph Babatsky after a fall of clay in a "**bootleg**" **anthracite coal mine near Shenandoah in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania**. Thirty rescuers began the work shortly after the fall and as they neared him, he instructed them how to proceed. See more at <http://bit.ly/2vC0jKS>



## May 12

Commemorating the anniversary of the Christopher No. 3 mine explosion at Osage, West Virginia.

**Christopher Coal Company**  
**Christopher No. 3 Mine Explosion**  
**Osage, Monongalia County, West Virginia**

May 12, 1942

No. Killed - 56

See more at <http://bit.ly/2EE1U6Q> 🔍 👁



On May 12, 1942, a worker in the Christopher No. 3 mine at Osage left a ventilation door open, and methane accumulated in a dusty area of the mine. At 2:25 in the afternoon, an electric arc from machinery set off an explosion that coursed through three sections of the mine, killing 53 men, destroying ventilation equipment, and causing roof falls. Three others later suffocated in the noxious afterdamp gases. Several miners managed to reach safety through a return airway.

Audio - <http://bit.ly/2oaHMyG> 🎧

## May 12

**Successful Rescue** on May 12, 1932 🍺 🙌 👍

Mrs. Naomi Jarvis was killed when a cave-in occurred in an **unnamed gold mine in the San Gabriel Canyon near Covina, California**. Mrs. Jarvis and another miner, David Workman, were caught in the collapse. Mr. Workman was freed from the material by rescuers after an **undisclosed period**. See more at <https://bit.ly/3bFoOHk>



## May 13

**Successful Rescue** on May 13, 1957 🍺 🙌 👍

William C. Richmond was rescued after being trapped for — **74 hours** — in the **mine operated by the Donegan Coal & Coke Company** about 18 miles from Richwood, West Virginia. This was Mr. Richmond's eighth shift as a coal miner. Richmond was without food, water, or light until rescuers found him. It occurred on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month, but it wasn't a Friday. 🐱 See more at <https://bit.ly/2zMAzhz> 🔍 👁

## May 13

**Successful Rescue** on May 13, 1924

**Black Iron Mine Cave-in, Gilman, Colorado** — Five miners entombed for — **3 days** — in the Black Iron Mine of the Empire Zinc Mining Company were rescued when a drift was driven through virgin granite to the slope in which the men were confined. It occurred on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month, but it wasn't a Friday. 🐱 See more at

<https://bit.ly/3Ao6azl> 🔍 👁

**May 14**

**Red Jacket Copper Mine Hoisting Accident  
Calumet, Houghton County, Michigan**

May 14, 1893

No. Killed – 10

See more at <http://bit.ly/3cymNNP> 🔍 👁

Ten men were killed when the cage in which they were riding struck the head sheave, severed the coupling, and fell — **3,000 feet** — to the bottom of the shaft. +

**May 14**

**Anaconda Copper Mining Company  
Anaconda Mine Cave-in**

**Butte, Silver Bow County, Montana**

May 14, 1892

No. Killed – 9

See more at <http://bit.ly/3jlcCIQ> 🔍 👁

**Successful Rescue** 🍺 🙌 👍

Following a cave-in in the Anaconda mine, Frank Agassin was rescued after **55 hours**. He was the sole survivor of a disaster which took the lives of 9 other miners.

Amazingly, he spent the entire time imprisoned in a space which measured 1½ ft. x 2.0 ft. x 4 ft. 🧐

See more at <https://bit.ly/3kUhRaJ> 🔍 👁

**May 14**

**Successful Rescue** on May 14, 2003 🍺 🙌 👍

**H. B. Coal Mine Cave-in, Williamsburg, Kentucky** — Trapped — **nine hours** — by a fallen rock, Charlie Jones was freed by rescue workers and fellow miners who carved his escape path by digging out rock and cutting through a metal vehicle with a torch. He said he survived the ordeal without a single scratch. He was released from the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, where he had been taken for observation. Jones was working on his stomach inside a small, motorized vehicle that hauls coal out of the mine when a 17-foot-thick rock collapsed. The weight of the rock blew out the tires and pinned him inside. Miners who work with Jones helped free their trapped comrade. See more at <https://bit.ly/3pQLiPr> 🔍 👁

## May 15

### Successful Rescue 🍺 🙌 👍

Following their — **60-hour entrapment** — from an inundation of water, Edward Heck and Peter Gorton were rescued from a **bootleg Anthracite mine near Shamokin, Pennsylvania**. The men said they believed their companion, Charles Bashore, was trapped in the lowest part of the mine and had no chance to escape.

See more at <http://bit.ly/2HuMT61> 🔍 👁

## May 15

### Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company Jersey No. 8 Cave-in and Explosion Ashley, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

May 15, 1890

No. Killed - 26

See more at <http://bit.ly/2s8KcCl> 🔍 👁

### Successful Rescue 🍺 🙌 👍

Three severely injured miners: Anthony Froyne; fire boss John Allen; and Robert W. Roberts were rescued from the Jersey No. 8 mine of the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company following a cave-in and explosion. Their entrapment ranged from **9 to 14 hours**. Sadly, all three men died from their extensive injuries after their rescue. Ironically, it was asserted that John Allen's lamp caused the explosion. Had he not done so, all could have been rescued alive, as there was a current of air going through the chamber where the men had taken refuge, after the cave-in had taken place.

## May 16

### Bootleg Anthracite Mine Rescuer Fatality

Ashland, Pennsylvania

May 16, 1940

See more at <http://bit.ly/2P22SwZ> 🔍 👁

### Rescuer Death 🚒

**Andrew Wolfgang**, a foreman of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Co., and captain of a mine rescue team, lost his life while wearing a McCaa 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus, in an attempt to rescue a miner at the bottom of a 50-foot, almost

vertical, shaft at a "bootleg" mining operation. Additional source document -

<https://bit.ly/3tfJSxV> 🔍 👁

For more information regarding fatalities related to self-contained breathing apparatus, visit <https://bit.ly/3ERlWrg> 🔍 👁

## May 17

**Successful Rescue** on May 17, 1936 🍺 🤝 👍

**Abandoned Mine Rescue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** — Two would-be copper thieves were rescued and arrested — **15 hours** — after they became lost in an abandoned coal mine near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Police arrested Arthur Tonner, 35, and Robert Dyer, 36, after they were rescued from 15 miles of tunnels by a crew from the U. S. Bureau of Mines. The officers said Tonner and Dyer went into the mine to hunt copper wire while another man, Edwin Miller, 35, stayed above ground, on guard. Miller was also arrested. See more at <https://bit.ly/3L65hBY> 🔍 👁

## May 17

**Successful Rescue** on May 17, 1974 🍺 🤝 👍

**Trona Mine Shaft Cave-in, Green River, Wyoming** — Joe Beaucamp, 28, was rescued after being trapped for — **23½ hours** — in a new trona mine shaft being dug at the Allied Chemical Company plant west of Green River, Wyoming. He was trapped Tuesday evening when he fell 80 feet from a scaffold during a cave-in, 1500 feet underground. Beaucamp, whose leg was pinned by a large piece of timber, almost was freed 10 hours after he was trapped, but another cave-in covered him again up to his nostrils. Doctors said Beaucamp suffered from exposure and was dehydrated, but otherwise was in good condition. See more at <https://bit.ly/3rmI72o> 🔍 👁

**May 17**

**O'Gara Mining Company**

**Imperial Mine Explosion**

Belle Valley, Noble County, Ohio

May 17, 1913

No. Killed – 15

**Rescuer Death** 🧑‍🚒

**Henry Fairhurst**, a member of the first rescue party to enter the Imperial mine following the explosion, was overcome by gas and died soon after being brought to the surface.

**Successful Rescue** 🍺 🤝 👍

After an undisclosed period, rescuers found **Roy Yeager** about 300 feet from the scene of the explosion. Yeager, who was alive, was unable to rise on account of a broken leg, and he probably owes his life to the broken leg. Lying on the floor, he did not inhale the fumes of the afterdamp. The rescue party carried him to a mine car and started toward the entrance.

**May 18**

**Successful Rescue** on May 18, 1967 🍺 🤝 👍

**Abandoned Mine Fall of Person, Salt Lake City, Utah** — Melaine Beck, 17, was rescued from the bottom of a 150-foot mine shaft where **she had fallen not once but twice**. She was lifted from the near-vertical shaft by deputy sheriffs using ropes and a basket stretcher. It took nearly — **2½ hours** — to bring her out. Melanie suffered a broken arm, head lacerations and a possible concussion in the fall. See more at <https://bit.ly/3IVArDg> 🔍 👁

**May 18**

**Successful Rescue** on May 18, 1907 🍺 🤝 👍

**Royal Mine Powered Haulage Accident, Madisonville, Kentucky** — Seventy-one men were rescued from the Royal Mine near Madisonville, after having been underground for **36 hours**. The rope attached to the big cage used in hoisting the cars from the mine broke and both cages fell into the bottom of the shaft, bursting into small bits and blocking the entrance so that it was impossible for the workmen to get out. A rope was lowered into the air shaft and the men were pulled out one by one.

The men reached were hurt. About 200 men were employed in the mines, which was one of the largest in western Kentucky. See more at <https://bit.ly/34denMs> 🔍👁

## May 19

On May 19<sup>th</sup> we commemorate the anniversary of the **6<sup>th</sup> deadliest coal mine disaster** in U. S. history.

### Pickands-Mather and Company

#### Mather No. 1 Mine Explosion

#### Mather, Greene County, Pennsylvania

May 19, 1928

No. Killed - 195

See more at <http://bit.ly/2tnMxdd> 🔍👁

### Successful Rescue 🍺👏👍

Frank Bucsha was found alive and said to be in good condition after he was found — **55 hours** — following the Mather Mine explosion in Mather, Pennsylvania on May 19, 1928. 195 miners were killed in the blast of the mine owned by Pickands-Mather and Company.

Another miner, John Wade, was rescued from the same mine after **147 hours**. Mine officials said he must have been wandering around in the mine and was missed by the rescuers. See more at archived news - <http://bit.ly/2tpMde6> 🔍👁

## May 19

Remembering the fallen miners in this, the **7<sup>th</sup> deadliest coal mine disaster** in U. S. history.

### Coal Creek Coal Company

#### Fraterville Mine Explosion

#### Coal Creek, Anderson County, Tennessee

May 19, 1902

No. Killed - 184

See more at <http://bit.ly/2EJZuDm> 🔍👁

The miners had not been in the mine more than an hour when at 7:20 a.m. thick smoke and dust was seen coming from the ventilating shaft and from the mouth of the mine.

A barricade had been placed across 15 Right entry near the heading to protect miners there from the deadly afterdamp. The 26 miners found there must have lived for several hours, as notes were written as late as 2 p.m.

## May 19

**Successful Rescue** on May 19, 1926 🍺 🙌 👍 🐕

**Animal Attack Rescue, Tacoma, Washington** — If hero medals were given to animals, Henry B. Spencer of Tacoma would have applied for one for "Rex," his nine months old bird dog. He credited his life to the dog which proved his bravery in a hand-to-hand fight with a mother cougar and her three cubs. Mr. Spencer, who was mining in the Olympic mountains was suddenly confronted with the animals. He was unarmed and the beasts showed fight. Spencer threw rocks at the mother cougar, but in doing so he lost his balance and fell. Before the enraged cougar could spring, "Rex" appeared and attacked one of the cubs. This distracted the mother who turned on the dog. Spencer was able to retreat. The dog came through with only minor injuries. See more at <https://bit.ly/3xImTfU> 🔍 👁

## May 20

Remembering the Darby No. 1 mine explosion of 2006. This disaster, along with the Sago mine explosion and the Alma No. 1 mine fire, prompted passage of the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act of 2006.

**Kentucky Darby, LLC**

**Darby No. 1 Mine Explosion**

**Holmes Mill, Harlan County, Kentucky**

May 20, 2006

No. Killed - 5

See more at <http://bit.ly/2IzsZp6> 🔍 👁

**Successful Rescue** 🍺 🙌 👍

Paul Ledford, roof bolter, was rescued after **more than 2 hours** following the explosion. Ledford had traveled approximately 1,050 feet in the No. 5 Entry where he collapsed and lost consciousness. He regained consciousness at approximately 3:05 a.m. and crawled into the No. 6 Entry, where he was discovered by rescuers. He was then taken out of the mine on a battery-powered personnel carrier and transported to Lonesome Pine Hospital in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, where he was treated.



For more about the MINER Act, visit <http://bit.ly/2GEVu4c> 🔍 👁

## May 21

**Successful Rescue** on May 21, 1975 🍺 🙌 👍

**Robena Mine Roof Fall, Carmichaels, Pennsylvania** — A Fairbank man was rescued after being trapped when a mine car derailment triggered a roof fall at the Robena Mine's Colvin Shaft. Billy Grant, a main line brakeman was safely removed from the mine and transported to the West Virginia University Hospital in Morgantown where he was undergoing examination and treatment. A company spokesman said a main-line empty trip derailed causing the fall. Mine employees installed temporary roof supports and removed Mr. Grant from the area after an **undisclosed period**. A physician at the scene underground reported Grant in good condition. See more at

<https://bit.ly/3Gk7VjS> 🔍 👁

## May 22

**Successful Rescue** on May 22, 2018 🍺 🙌 👍

Robbie Gunderson was rescued at the **Hi-Crush sand mine near Whitehall, Wisconsin** when the bulldozer he was operating went into the holding pond and became submerged under several feet of water. As the rescue efforts began, some 10 million gallons of water were released from the pond to lower its level the company statement said. Officials at Hi-Crush said Gunderson was — **underwater for 2½**

**hours** — before he was rescued. See more at <http://bit.ly/2PoWnUc> 🔍 👁

## May 23

**Successful Rescue** on May 23, 1938 🍺 🙌 👍

**Oliver Jones Mine Hoisting Accident, Commerce, Oklahoma** — While being hoisted out of the old Oliver Jones Mine in a bucket, the cable snapped, and Bill Sholtz and Dick Kelton plummeted to the 200-foot level causing an avalanche. Mr. Sholtz and his fellow passenger were hemmed in and crushed by rocks. Both Mr. Kelton's legs were broken. Writhing in agony, the men did not give up hope. They prayed for a swift rescue. It came — **2½ hours** — later. Men summoned by the hoist operator dug them out and carried them to the surface. Mr. Sholtz died in a Miami, Oklahoma hospital two hours after his rescue. Mr. Kelton was in serious condition. The rescuers' work did not end when the two men were taken out. Trapped with them at the 200-foot level were four other men. With the hoist shattered and the shaft entrance blocked, their one avenue of escape was blocked. They huddled together in the darkness while men from nearby mines flocked with picks and shovels to aid in the rescue work. The rescuers



finally dug through an abandoned slope connecting with the Oliver Jones mine and carried out the trapped men. The mine, abandoned years before as "played out," had been rented by the seven men who manned it. Through makeshift operations, they sought to eke a living out of the abandoned property. The practice was known as "gouging" and was common in the tri-state zone. The bucket and the initial avalanche struck and killed Fred R. Rosson. See more at <https://bit.ly/3AW5SS0> 🔍 👁

## May 24

### Rescuer Death 🚒

On May 24, 1915, **Gomer Phillips**, an instructor in charge of first aid and mine rescue for the Cambria Steel Company, lost his life 400 feet beyond the fresh-air base while on an exploration trip after an explosion in the No. 1 mine of the Smokeless Coal Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in which eight persons were killed. A crew consisting of Phillips and three other mine rescue men of the same company, wearing Fleuss oxygen breathing apparatus, left the fresh-air base to make a contemplated exploration trip of about 1,400 feet.

### Smokeless Coal Company

### Smokeless Valley No. 1 Mine Explosion

### Johnstown, Cambria County, Pennsylvania

May 24, 1915

No. Killed - 9

See more at <http://bit.ly/2E5ksdq> 🔍 👁

For more information regarding fatalities related to self-contained breathing apparatus, visit <https://bit.ly/3ERlWrg> 🔍 👁

## May 25

**Successful Rescue 🍺** and **Rescuer Death 🚒** on May 25, 1906

### Abandoned Mine Asphyxiations, Greensburg, Pennsylvania — Wasall Kircera

gave up his life while trying to save three boys from death in an abandoned mine, where blackdamp was known to escape from the old workings. The boys were playing and soon became senseless under the influence of the deadly gas. **Kircera saw the boys' peril, plunged down into the hole and hurled two of them to the outside.** Then Kircera fell, overcome by the gas fumes. A friend went down after him and, after throwing the remaining boy out, dragged Kircera up the bank. The gas was too much

for Kircera, however, and he died in a few minutes, while his friend was in a serious condition and not expected to live. See more at <https://bit.ly/3gZuK3e> 🔍 👁

## May 25

**Rescuer Deaths** on May 25, 1904 🧑‍🚒

**Williamstown Colliery Asphyxiations, Williamstown, Pennsylvania** — Nine of the ten men killed and all of the forty overcome by the sulphurous fumes in a tunnel of the Williamstown Colliery of the Summit Branch Mining Company at Williamstown were members of a relief party. Enoch Morgan was the first man killed. The rest of the victims were members of the rescuing party, which at one time was made up of more than 100 men. Intimation of the presence of extraordinary amounts of sulphurous gas in the mine was first gotten by miners who were walking through the tunnel.

Shortly afterward a train came through and picked up some of these men who were overcome and hurried them to the Williams Valley side. A relief train, loaded with reserves and members of the night shift, was hurriedly made up and sent into the mine to rescue the others. Before the train had gotten any great distance the rescuers started to explore the mine, and in a short while these men were tottering and fell to the ground either fatally stricken or seriously overcome.

Investigators concluded that the victims were suffocated by coal gas from the locomotive, the accumulation of which at that time was due to high temperature on the surface, the effect of which caused the air to reverse, nullifying the action of the fan. See more at <https://bit.ly/3eobXMe> and <http://bit.ly/2Yvb8Zr> 🔍 👁

## May 26

*You may want to read this one more than once.*

*Truly remarkable.* 🏆 !! 😲

**Successful Rescue** on May 26, 1914 🍺 🙌 👍

**Unnamed Mine Fall of Person, Irwin, Pennsylvania** — Tim McDonough, according to tale, dove headfirst into a mine shaft after a falling child and grabbed the tot while speeding by — he hit the cage at the bottom of the shaft and was badly hurt but would recover.

**Diving down a 400-foot mine shaft to the successful rescue of a falling child and only sustaining several broken ribs, a broken ankle and contusions about**

**the entire body was the unusual and startling experience of Tim McDonough, mine guard.**

McDonough had promised several children he would take them into the mine and about twenty were gathered at the mouth of the shaft waiting for the cage to ascend. Tony Andy, age 2, got too close and toppled into the hole.

McDonough saw the child lose his balance and without hesitation dove into the shaft after him. He dropped faster than the child, and in the descent, he caught the little fellow in one arm. His shoulder struck a timber and he bounded to the center of the shaft. There his free arm encountered the wire cable on which the cage was suspended, but the rapidity with which he was descending caused the cable to burn his hand and he let go. He was bounded from side to side and finally thrown against the cable a second time. This time he wrapped his legs about the cable and threw his free arm around it, still holding the child. He slid down the oily cable with lightning-like rapidity and then struck the cage at the bottom. He was partly stunned but scrambled off the cage with his burden.

Once off the cage, he crawled about twenty feet, where he collapsed. He was taken out of the shaft and carried to his home. The child escaped without a scratch. The physician said McDonough would recover. See more at <https://bit.ly/3puRVoE> 🔍 👁

## **May 27**

The **deadliest mine disaster in North Carolina's history** occurred on May 27, 1925 at Coal Glen.

**Carolina Coal Company  
Farmville Mine Explosions and Fire  
Coal Glen, Chatham County, North Carolina**

May 27, 1925

No. Killed – 53

See more at <http://bit.ly/2tqpi29> 🔍 👁

Records of the mine showed that 59 men comprised the crew which went into the mine. According to mine officials, the first explosion took place at about 9:30 a.m. followed by a second at 10 o'clock and a third at 10:30. Fire had then broken out in the mine hampering the efforts of rescue parties.

Mining in the Deep River coal fields ceased in 1952. See all North Carolina mine disasters at <http://bit.ly/2tmar8U>. 🔍👁

## May 27

Commemorating the anniversary of the West Pittston Colliery Fire and loss of 20 miners. 🪦

### Lehigh Valley Railroad Company West Pittston Colliery Fire West Pittston, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

May 27, 1871

No. Killed - 20

See more at <https://bit.ly/38oRrsu> 🔍👁

### Successful Rescue 🍺👏👍

The anticipation was palpable as rescuers worked through the night and into the next day. At 12:30 a.m. — (**10 hours later**) — they brought Andrew Morgan to the surface in an unconscious state. Learning that more miners had barricaded, they sent out for more men and tools. Up to — **22 hours** — after the fire was first discovered, around twenty more miners, not more than alive were brought out. Only one or two recovered enough to give an account of themselves. It is not known how many of those rescued survived.

## May 27

### Successful Rescue on May 27, 1893 🍺👏🐭🧑

**Unnamed Anthracite Mine Lost Person, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania** — James Hogan, a driver boy, became lost in a big mine at Nanticoke. He walked four miles through the long galleries. **Several times he fell to the ground** from exhaustion, **and was immediately attacked by rats**, which congregated in large numbers in the mines. With great difficulty he fought them off. He was rescued early in the morning after an **undisclosed period**. See more at <https://bit.ly/3hO9L3F> 🔍👁

Related news from the period at <https://bit.ly/3wSpEdo> 🔍👁🐭🧑

## May 27

**Successful Rescue** on May 27, 1957 🍺👏👍

**Lost Persons Cave Rescue, Easton, Pennsylvania** — Three boys and a science writer were rescued from a cave after having been lost underground for **twenty-one hours**. Two state troopers and a resident of the area trailed a length of rope from the cave entrance to the four. Then they followed the rope back to the surface. The four spent a wet and shivering night in a forty-foot-square chamber 100 feet from the entrance and about twenty feet below the surface. They were in good physical condition after the rescue, although they were wearing light clothing and had had only candy bars to eat. When Mr. Pfeiffer failed to return home, Mrs. Pfeiffer notified the state police. Troopers searched several commercial and noncommercial caves. The lost foursome included John E. Pfeiffer, 42; his son, Tony, 12; Charles Ingham, 11; and Norman Ganter, 11. Mr. Pfeiffer said they had become lost in many twisting passages. They decided to sit down and await rescue. See more at <https://bit.ly/3vdYpLN> 🔍👁

## May 28

**Successful Rescue** on May 28, 1957 🍺👏👍

In 1957, 50-year-old Cantrell Owens was rescued from an **abandoned Kentucky coal mine near Harlan** after spending — **more than 2 days** — lost in the mine. Rescuers had to give up the search once because of the foul air they encountered. See more at <http://bit.ly/2EXfION> 🔍👁

## May 28

**Successful Rescue** on May 28, 1934 🍺👏👍

**Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Scranton, Pennsylvania** — Trapped more than — **three hours** — by a slide of earth and shale while he was cutting coal in a mine opening, Charles Mickel, 38, owed his life to a rescue squad which worked to free him despite the constant danger of another slide. Immediately upon his exit from death, Mickel was greeted by law enforcement and taken into custody on charges of forcible entry, assault and battery, and malicious mischief made by Mrs. Helen Smith. See more at <https://bit.ly/3cPKJgy> 🔍👁

## May 29

**Successful Rescue** on May 29, 1939 🍺 🙌 👍

Robert Galligan was rescued from a "**bootleg**" **anthracite mine near Shenandoah, Pennsylvania** after a cave-in trapped him in the mine for **65 hours**. During the rescue, he was heard joking and singing. See more at <http://bit.ly/2HuEsrn> 🔍 👁

## May 29

**Successful Rescue** on May 29, 1901 🍺 🙌 👍

Patrick Connelly was rescued from a burning mine at Salinesville, Ohio where he had been confined since the night before. Connelly had been in the mine tending to some pumps near the bottom of the shaft when all escape was cut off. When rescuers were able to reach him, he was alive but almost exhausted. See more at <https://bit.ly/2z37Ync> 🔍 👁

## May 29

**Successful Rescue** on May 29, 1959 🍺 🙌 👍

**Unnamed Mine Cave-in, Talache, Idaho** — Three miners were rescued unhurt after an **undisclosed period** by a shovel-wielding miner's wife after the trio had been trapped by a cave-in 75 feet from the mouth of a side-hill claim near this old mining community on Lake Pend Oreille, Bonner County sheriff's officers reported.

They said Mrs. Floyd Watts grabbed a shovel and headed into the tunnel for the eight-foot-wide cave-in while her husband hurried to a phone at a lake resort to call for help. They said John Solomon, Frank Hubbard and a man identified as Swanson were trapped when recent heavy rains loosened dirt and debris and sent it crashing down across the 2,100-foot-long tunnel, some 75 feet from the mouth as they installed roof timbers.

By the time help arrived, Mrs. Watts, covered with mud from her one-woman rescue mission, was nearing the trapped men, officers said. A short time later, with some male help, rescuers broke through the cave-in and the trapped men crawled out shaken but unhurt. See more at <https://bit.ly/3raqiC2> 🔍 👁

## May 30

**Successful Rescue** on May 30, 1960 🍺👉👍

**Abandoned Iron Mine Fall of Person, Peekskill, New York** — A state trooper trudged a thousand feet through an abandoned mine tunnel to reach an injured youth trapped in a 200-foot-deep shaft, then piggy backed the victim to safety. The youth, Gerald Kulich, 18, of nearby Peekskill, fell into the shaft while exploring the old iron mine with four other teenagers. Kulich already was half-buried in falling debris as his companions ran to a nearby home, where police were called. See more at

<https://bit.ly/3sEPyRX> 🔍👁️

## May 31

**Successful Rescue** on May 31, 1942 🍺👉👍

**Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Tremont, Pennsylvania** — Theodore Bonawitz of Tremont risked death by carbon monoxide gas to save the life of a young man who was overcome in a bootleg coal hole. The rescued youth was Harold Nelson of Reinerton. Bonawitz and his wife were driving in their truck on Route 209 west of Tremont, going toward Joliett, when they saw a man staggering along the highway. Recognizing him as Raymond Wise of Reinerton and knowing him to be a sober man and a devout church worker, Bonawitz knew something must have happened to him. Ted stopped his truck and Mr. Wise cried, "Get my buddy out of the coal hole."

Without stopping to consider the risk to himself, Bonawitz rushed to the opening and descended 135 feet into the gas filled coal hole without the protection of a mask or the aid of a light. When he stumbled over the body of the victim of the carbon monoxide fumes, he managed to hoist him over his shoulder and began staggering his way up the slope. Weakened himself by the inhalation of the fumes, Ted soon collapsed under the weight of Nelson's body, but he struggled on, dragging the inert form after him until he came to a point within 25 feet of the surface. Unable to pull Nelson any further he groped his way to the surface where he lost consciousness. Water revived him in a short time. While Ted was engaged in his heroic efforts to save Nelson, his wife stood on the highway flagging cars to get help for her husband.

After Bonawitz regained his consciousness, he was aided by some of the passersby in bringing Nelson up the last 25 feet to the surface. In the meantime, a highway patrolman had been stopped and told of the accident, and he rushed to Tremont for a doctor. He and Dr. Simonis arrived at the scene just as the victim was brought out of the coal hole, still alive but badly affected by the carbon monoxide. The doctor



administered an injection and Nelson began to revive. Mr. Wise, who was able to get out of the coal hole before he was completely overcome, had completely recovered from the effects of the gas and was back at work, but Nelson was still ill from the fumes he inhaled. He was expected to recover.

Nelson and Wise were pumping water from the coal hole, water that flooded the workings following the heavy rains of the previous week. They had a gasoline engine installed in the hole to pump out the water and a leak in the exhaust pipe caused the carbon monoxide fumes which almost cost the two men their lives. *Mr. Bonawitz was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Medal for his bravery.* 🏆 See more at <https://bit.ly/3opm9d3> 🔍 👁

## May 31

**Successful Rescue** on May 31, 1959 🍺 🙌 👍

**Ken Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Beaver Dam, Kentucky** — The main thing when you're trapped underground is to "keep together, keep level-headed and wait." This is the way **Jake Lewis, 39**, put it after he and two other exhausted miners crawled to safety after — **41 hours** — of imprisonment in a western Kentucky coal shaft. "I'm thankful we got out, we felt real good," said Lewis. "We're just thankful to the Lord and to the men that done it." A machine that cuts and loads coal in the same operation dug rescuers a path to reach Lewis, **Earl Bennett, 50; and Don McClernon, 53**. A roof cave-in caught the three miners 90 feet underground and 500 feet from the shaft entrance at the Ken Coal Company mine. "We slept 30 or 40 minutes at a time, then we'd get cold. We'd have to move around to get warmed back up," said Lewis. The men had a watch to tell time, small lights, and plenty of fresh air. They drank water and milk piped through a tube used as a sprinkler system. A telephone cable kept them in touch with the outside. Earl Bennett survived a 1928 explosion at West Frankfort, Illinois, that killed 21 miners. See more at <https://bit.ly/3BkWYxJ> 🔍 👁

See more about the 1928 Peabody No. 18 explosion at <https://bit.ly/3z61Jd7> 🔍 👁