

Successful Pennsylvania Anthracite Mine Rescues

1846 - 2014

The entire collection of more than 1,160 incidents collected can be downloaded here:

[https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/DETAIL-Successful Mine Rescues in the United States.pdf](https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/DETAIL-Successful_Mine_Rescues_in_the_United_States.pdf)

As more are uncovered, they will be added. Other locations where these can be found include:

- <https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/successstories.htm>
- https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/Calendar/
- [https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/DETAIL-Successful Mine Rescues in the United States.docx](https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/DETAIL-Successful_Mine_Rescues_in_the_United_States.docx)

This document containing Anthracite rescues can be found here:

[https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/Successful Anthracite Rescues.pdf](https://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/Mine_Disasters/Successful_Anthracite_Rescues.pdf)

Please Note: The **Carnegie Hero Fund** website has been redesigned. Because of this, all links pertaining to awardee accomplishments are now directed to the [hero search page at that site](#). Once there, simply enter the name of the person awarded for more information about the rescue incident.

— 2014 —

- Mar D & E Mine Roof Fall, Minersville, Pennsylvania
Two miners were rescued following an **undisclosed period** after a mine roof collapse at a slope operated by the D & E Deep Mine Coal Co. at its Buck Mountain Drift Mine in Cass Township. Officials had not released their names. One of the men possibly had a shoulder injury and the other a possible back injury. Workers at the scene helped the two men to the ambulance. No blood was visible on the two men. [Source document](#).

— 2001 —

- Mar Harmony Mine Cave-in, Columbia-Northumberland County Line, Pennsylvania
Ivan Sweinhart was listed in satisfactory condition at Geisinger Medical Center after being buried by a patch of loose coal two miles below the surface in a mine. Crews spent **an hour** removing Sweinhart from Harmony Mine, near the Columbia-Northumberland County line. He was taken out in one of the mine buggies used to transport men and tools. The mine was owned by UAE CoalCorp Associates and operated by West Point Mining Company of Mount Carmel. [Source document](#).
- Dec Abandoned Anthracite Mine Fall of Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Arnie Campbell, 28, survived a fall of nearly 200 feet into a mine shaft. Rescue crews pulled Campbell from the shaft after more than **two hours** of work, Coal Township Fire Chief Robert Wariki said. Campbell sustained cuts, bruises, and abrasions. Campbell and an unidentified friend were out driving a four-wheel-drive pickup truck on coal lands northeast of Shamokin about 2 a.m. when they stopped to inspect an old fan house on Big Mountain. As Campbell walked to the rear of the building, he fell down the mine shaft.

From what officials could determine, Campbell initially fell 40 to 50 feet, landed on a less inclined area, and then rolled about 30 feet along the "bench" before tumbling and falling another 120 feet. Campbell's friend drove down the mountain to Shamokin to get help. [Source document.](#)

— 1997 —

Apr Lehigh Coal & Navigation Strip Mine Rescue, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Heroic overnight efforts by about 70 people saved two Lansford teen-agers stuck in a 500-foot stripping pit for up to 11 hours Wednesday and Thursday. John Urso, 18, and a 13-year-old boy escaped with minor injuries. The two, along with Howard McLaughlin, 20, of Lansford and another boy apparently entered the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company property in Coaldale. All four were walking around and climbing the walls of the Springdale mining pits. Trouble started when Urso and the 13-year-old became stranded around 4:30 p.m. The pit is about a quarter-mile wide and 500 feet deep and consists of a number of narrow, descending ledges spaced 50 to 60 feet apart. McLaughlin and the unidentified boy climbed out of the pit, while Urso was stranded on a ledge about 200 feet from the top and 300 feet from the bottom. The 13-year-old was 300 yards away, on a ledge 400 feet down. "Urso was holding onto a tree so he wouldn't fall farther down." Rescuers with spotlights stationed on one side of the wide pit illuminated the opposite side, where others worked their way down ledges to the 13-year-old and placed him in a basket. He was raised to safety at 1:49 a.m. The boy was treated for minor scrapes and ankle injuries at Miners Memorial Medical Center, Coaldale. Urso refused medical treatment. [Source document.](#)

— 1994 —

Dec Abandoned Mine Fall of Person, Lavelle, Pennsylvania
A rescue crew of nearly 50 worked for **five hours** to save a teen-age boy who fell into a mine shaft while hunting. William L. Hubler, Jr., 16, of RD1 Ashland, sustained injuries during the 30-foot fall. He was listed in satisfactory condition at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, where he was flown by medical helicopter. "It's a very treacherous area very steep and rocky," said state Trooper H. Thadd Dillon, explaining why the rescue took so long. Also, rescue workers were unsure whether the teen had a neck or back injury and needed to be cautious, he said. Emergency workers from Lavelle, Washington and Yorkville fire companies used ropes, chains, and a Stokes rescue basket to haul Hubler from the abandoned hole, Dillon said. Yorkville Fire Company was called in because of its mine rescue equipment. Two or three workers went down into the shaft to secure the boy in the Stokes basket. He was then hoisted up, according to Dillon. The shaft is about 80 feet long, 30 feet wide and 60 feet deep. Hubler landed on a rocky ledge about 30 feet from the top. "Because of the area being so steep, rescue workers had to use chainsaws to cut a path to the road so they could carry him out quickly and safely," Dillon explained. "That was time consuming." According to the trooper, Hubler was hunting with his father, William Sr., and several other people when he fell. [Source document.](#)

— 1982 —

- May Abandoned Strip Mine Fall of Person, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
A MedEvac rescue helicopter was used to evacuate a seriously injured Tamaqua youth to the Allentown and Sacred Heart Hospital Center (ASH) after he had fallen 100 feet into an abandoned strip mine. Mark Rudenko, 15, was in serious condition in the ASH Shock Trauma Unit with head injuries, a collapsed left lung, a broken clavicle and possible internal injuries, a hospital spokesman said. Rudenko was found at the bottom of the strip mine by Jack Brode, a neighbor, who had been walking his dog along the mountainous ridge that overlooks Tamaqua Area High School. The 50-year-old Tamaqua man ran about a quarter mile to his home and called the Tamaqua police, who later arrived with the Tamaqua Rescue Squad. Michael Lincovich, a rescue squad official, said it took about a half hour to retrieve the youth from the rocky pit. It was not known how long the boy had been there. Source document.

— 1981 —

- Feb Centralia Mine Fire Fall of Ground, Centralia, Pennsylvania
12-year-old Todd Domboski narrowly escaped serious injury when he fell through an opening created by a smoldering underground mine fire at Centralia. Residents were shocked when they learned that he fell through the opening while playing in his grandmother's yard but was rescued by his teen-age nephew. The boy told authorities he noticed smoke rising from the ground in the yard. When he went to look at it, his foot broke through the surface, the ground opened and he slipped through, dropping about 6 feet before he was able to grab some tree roots. "If he didn't have a red hunting cap on, I wouldn't have found him," said Eric Wolfgang, who pulled the stunned boy to safety. Todd was taken to Ashland Hospital where he was tested for inhalation of carbon monoxide fumes and released. The fire, which started in an underground vein of coal, has been burning below this Columbia County community of 1,000 since 1962. Todd was the first person known to have fallen through an opening, although smoke is often seen rising from holes in the ground. Officials of the state Department of Environmental Resources took a temperature reading of 350 degrees in the hole. Neighbors, looking at the 2-foot hole after the rescue, tossed a brick down the shaft to see how deep it was. It was quite a few seconds before they heard the brick hit bottom. Source document.

— 1979 —

- Nov Abandoned Mine Shaft Fall of Person, Glen Lyon, Pennsylvania
Following a systematic ground search conducted by the Civil Air Patrol, a Glen Lyon hunter who had fallen into a mine ventilator shaft was rescued. The hunter, Andrew Sweeney, had been **missing for more than two days** when he was located. Sweeney, who had fallen into the shaft and was on a ledge 80 feet below ground. Rescue efforts were begun immediately, and a medic was lowered into the shaft to make sure Sweeney

was alright. Two men were then lowered into the shaft to help put Sweeney in a harness and pull him out of the shaft. Approximately 150 Civil Air Patrol members from Hazleton, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Reading and Allentown, assisted with the successful search and rescue effort. [Source document.](#)

— 1977 —

Mar [Porter Tunnel Mine Inundation](#), Tower City, Pennsylvania
Ronald Adley survived after being trapped for nearly **6 days** following an inundation of water at the [Porter Tunnel Mine](#) owned by the Kocher Coal Company in Tower City, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. Nine miners were killed in the accident.

— 1973 —

Feb Abandoned Old Forge Colliery Fall of Person, Old Forge, Pennsylvania
A 10-year-old Old Forge boy narrowly escaped death when he fell 40 feet down an abandoned mine shaft at the Old Forge Colliery. Old Forge police said Michael Scarnato's fall was broken at the 40-foot level by some old roofing material jammed in the open shaft. He could have fallen a lot further down the shaft they said. As it was, the youth suffered cuts and bruises and had to be taken to Community Medical Center after his rescue. Police said Michael and several of his friends were playing near the shaft when he got too close and fell in. Despite his 40-foot fall, Scarnato remained conscious during the entire time he spent in the shaft. The Moosic Hose Company provided personnel and equipment and supervised the rescue operation. [Source document.](#)

— 1972 —

Jun Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Hegins, Pennsylvania
A 34-year-old Hegins miner, James Smith, was killed Tuesday when buried under a mass of coal some 11,000 feet below ground at a Good Spring area deep mine. A second miner, Kermit E. Binkley, was rescued after a **nine-hour** digging operation. Smith's body was recovered about an hour later. Binkley was listed in satisfactory condition at Pottsville's Good Samaritan Hospital. James Laird, inspector for the U.S. Bureau of Mines, said the two miners were found in the battery of the mine, which is a retaining wall used with a chute to control the flow of coal. Mine inspectors believe the chute was empty and the two miners had gone inside when the coal stopped flowing. Laird said coal flowed in on the pair while they were in the chute, covering them to their necks. A rescue crew of five men from the neighboring Stahl Coal Company descended into the mine shaft about 3 p.m. and worked until 10 last night in the effort to dig out the entombed miners. A second crew relieved them at 10 and succeeded in digging out Binkley by 11:40. It was well past midnight when Smith's body, was brought to the surface. There was no official report on the extent of injuries to 35-year-old Binkley late this morning

though hospital spokesmen said he appeared to have no serious injuries. Source document.

— 1966 —

Jul Glen Nan Mine Fire, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania
Fire in an air shaft trapped 150 miners for more than **an hour** in a Glen Nan Coal Company mine. All were rescued. Stanley Ftorkowski, Nanticoke fire chief, said at least 10 miners were taken unconscious to Nanticoke State hospital suffering from smoke inhalation. A spokesman at the mine said 160 men were working in the mine when the fire broke out. Ambulances from all nearby hospitals were dispatched to the scene. Source document.

— 1964 —

Dec Franklin Colliery Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
William Paul Holena helped to rescue Peter A. Byczkowski from a cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, December 21, 1964. When a cave-in occurred in a coal mine, Byczkowski, 54, was pinned face down under eight feet of coal and debris. After another cave-in, the mine was cleared of all rescue workers, who by then had dug a tunnel six feet into the debris to find that Byczkowski was alive. Although further slides were anticipated, Holena, 36, coal miner, and Clair S. Sigworth, a mine inspector made their way to the debris pile where Byczkowski lay partially in the tunnel, trapped by his legs. The inspector crawled into the tunnel, which was so small that he had to lie on top of Byczkowski. Working as rapidly as possible, the inspector removed coal from atop Byczkowski's legs and passed it back to Holena. Additional coal fell as the inspector worked, but he soon uncovered Byczkowski's legs. While the inspector rested outside the tunnel, Holena made repeated trips to obtain rescue tools. A mine foreman joined them. He and the inspector took turns working to free Byczkowski's feet; when either was in the tunnel, all his body except his feet was beneath the debris. The foreman cut Byczkowski's boots and freed one foot, the other remaining pinned by a heavy timber against the metal conveyor on the floor of the mine. The inspector positioned a jack to move the timber, but it broke on use, and the foreman likewise broke a second jack. They and Holena then worked to bend the conveyor, after which the inspector pulled Byczkowski's foot free, and he was removed from the debris then carried to safety. He recovered. The rescue had taken **2½ hours**. Several hours later another cave-in occurred in the area, and it required six days to uncover the body of a man who had been buried with Byczkowski. Messrs. Di Andriole, Sigworth, and Holena were given the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. Source document. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

— 1963 —

- Aug Oneida No. 2 Slope Cave-in, Oneida, Pennsylvania
David Fellin and Henry Throne were trapped for **14 days** in the Sheppton Mine in the Pennsylvania anthracite coal region following a cave-in. In the early hours of Tuesday, Aug. 27, 1963, first Throne, then Fellin were pulled from a depth of 330 feet to the surface wearing parachute harnesses and football helmets. A third miner in the mine at the time, Lou Bova, was never recovered.

— 1962 —

- Jul Independent Anthracite Mine Asphyxiations, Lavelle, Pennsylvania
Richard Cappell, 20, of Lavelle, who miraculously escaped death after being trapped in an accumulation of black damp in an independent mine operation, near Lavelle, was reported in "good" condition at Ashland Hospital. Three other co-workers were killed by the gas. They are William Metzinger and Frank Schaffer, 30, and Clayton Maurer, 62. Donald Metzinger, 32, owner of the mining operation, was stricken during the rescue operations and rushed to the Ashland State Hospital and his condition was also described as "good" by hospital authorities. The victims were trapped in the mine shortly after 8:30 a.m. and the last of the four was removed about 12:30 p.m. They were rushed to the Ashland Hospital where the three victims were pronounced dead. Source document.
- Sep Williamson Coal Mine Fall of Person, Valley View, Pennsylvania
William Klinger, 36, was listed in guarded condition in Geisinger Medical Center where he was admitted with a fractured skull, leg, ribs, and possible internal injuries. Klinger suffered the injuries in a 40-foot fall down a mine shaft at the Williamson Coal Company in Valley View, Pennsylvania. Source document.

— 1961 —

- Sep Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Aristes, Pennsylvania
Robert Hampton, Jr., 35, was rescued by fellow workers after being buried more than **3 hours** under a fall of rock and coal in an independent mine on Aristes Mountain. Hampton was trapped under the fall while dressing down the top. Within several minutes of the fall, they uncovered Hampton's face enabling him to breathe. Hampton was first taken to his home and then a brother, Wilham, drove him to Ashland Hospital. Hospital attaches said he sustained multiple contusions and abrasions of the body. His condition was described as good. Source document.

— 1960 —

- Feb No. 13 Slope Cave-in, Moosic, Pennsylvania
Isaac Stark, a 35-year-old mine laborer was killed instantly, and a 38-year-old Scranton resident was injured seriously when a rock fall trapped three men for — **more than an hour** — in No. 13 Slope of the Lombardi Coal Company near Moosic. John Brunesheski, 38, was in fair condition at Taylor Hospital. He suffered a fractured knee and leg as well as extensive brush burns of the face. Eight sutures were required to close a laceration of the chin; 20 to close a cut over the right eye, and four to close a wound on the left ear. He was also suffering from shock. Joseph Symuleski, 55, the third man trapped in the cave-in was unhurt and aided in the rescue operations for Mr. Brunesheski and the extrication of Mr. Stark's buried body. [Source document](#).

— 1959 —

- Jan [River Slope Mine Inundation](#), Port Griffith, Pennsylvania
One miner, Amadeo Pancotti, age 50, was awarded the Carnegie Medal for Heroism for leading 32 miners to safety. As the flood waters rose, Pancotti scaled a 50-foot sandstone wall which rose generally at an angle of 75 degrees making his way to the surface. Once there, he summoned others, who raised Louis Randazza, John Elko, and Joseph Soltis from the shaft. A rescue team entered the mine through the shaft and found James LaFratte, Jerome Stuccio, and Pacifico Stella. Twenty-six other men later were located and removed. Twelve miners perished and their bodies were never recovered. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

— 1957 —

- Apr Buttonwood Colliery Explosion and Fire, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Two miners, trapped while working 1,500 feet underground at the Buttonwood Colliery of the Glen Alden Corp., were rescued after a perilous **12-hour** wait. Walter Olshefski, 41, and Earl Hill, 33, were examined by a company physician and reported in good condition. The miners were working at the bottom of an anthracite vein when an explosion and fire broke out. A rescue party penetrated an auxiliary shaft to the 200-foot level and heard the trapped men about 800 feet further down in the mine. The rescuers then dropped bucket seats down, and the two miners were hauled to safety. [Source document](#).

— 1955 —

- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Thomas Margelavage, 44, was buried in a bootleg mine up to his neck in a pile of coal for **six hours** before rescuers could set him free. The Mine Inspector said a wall of coal

collapsed and buried Margelavage. He was set free only 20 hours after the body of another miner had been recovered from a nearby mine. Margelavage was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital, where he was treated for cuts, bruises, and shock. [Source document](#).

Dec Glen Burn Mine Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Two miners were trapped for almost — **eight hours** — in the Glen Burn mine at Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania when rock and coal in an old breast "ran away." Both men were trapped behind the loose rock and coal because the slide prevented them from reaching the gangway. They both walked from the workings uninjured. [Source document](#).

— 1954 —

Apr Abandoned Anthracite Mine Fall of Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
An 8-year-old boy was rescued from an abandoned coal hole at Shamokin through the combined efforts of a police officer and volunteers. Little Denny May fell 75 feet into the hole and had to spend **an hour** there before he was brought to the surface. Denny was playing in the vicinity of his home with some other children when he fell into the mine located on North Mountain, just north of Shamokin. [Source document](#).

Jun Blue Mountain Mine Cave-in, Cumbola, Pennsylvania
Charles Kopinetz, 31, was rescued after being trapped for **three hours** in the mine operated by the Blue Mountain Coal Company near Cumbola, Pennsylvania. He was taken to the Pottsville Hospital where his condition was described as good as he received treatment for injuries to his back and legs. [Source document](#).

Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Raven Run, Pennsylvania
Two entombed miners were rescue after being trapped for **more than 15 hours** in a cave-in at an independent Anthracite mine at Raven Run. The plight of the two men was not discovered until Friday night, when the 16-year-old son of one of the victims went to the mine to learn why his father did not return home. The youth climbed down the slope of the mine and discovered the walls had collapsed. He returned to the surface and spread the alarm. Both men were taken to Locust Mountain Hospital in Shenandoah and treated for shock and exposure. [Source document](#).

Jul Coal Creek Slope Cave-in, Donaldson, Pennsylvania
William Warner, 44-year-old coal miner, was in Pottsville Hospital today after fellow workers rescued him from a cave-in trap in a coal mine. Warner was trapped 600 feet underground for — **seven hours** — but suffered no apparent injury. He was admitted to the hospital for observation. The miner was cut off from other workers when a cave-in occurred in a vein of the Coal Creek Slope of Indian Head Coal Company, in nearby Donaldson. Fellow workers drove a pipe through the wall of coal separating Warner from the rest of the crew and pumped compressed air to the trapped man. [Source document](#).

- Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Branchdale, Pennsylvania
Nearly freed from fallen timber and rock in an Anthracite mine in Branchdale, Pennsylvania, Carl Herman became trapped again when a second cave-in occurred. 35 friends worked for an **undisclosed period** to free Herman who managed to get out with only a broken leg.
- Dec Abandoned Anthracite Coal Mine Fall of Person, Shaft, Pennsylvania
Alden A. Hartz, Jr., 27, construction worker, rescued Catherine M. Murphy, 72, from a cave-in, Shaft, Pennsylvania, November 23, 1954. Mrs. Murphy was crossing a field near her home when a cave-in occurred above an abandoned coal mine underlying that area. Ground gave way beneath her; and she fell into a hole 70 feet deep caused by the cave-in, landing on a mound of fallen earth which rose 20 feet above the bottom of the hole. She sustained severe injuries and partially was buried by earth. The hole was four feet wide at the surface and thence downward to the bottom widened irregularly to 40 feet, the sides having numerous overhanging protuberances. Attracted by the screams of Mrs. Murphy, Hartz and others gathered at the hole. A 20-foot ladder was placed on the ground across the hole. Although he could observe that the sides of the hole were unstable, Hartz, who observed others already there were reluctant to enter the hole, volunteered at once to descend to Mrs. Murphy and tied the end of 150-foot rope to himself. He was lowered into the opening carrying a hand lamp. Three men played out the rope, and another man lay prone on the ladder to guide the rope as Hartz was lowered 50 feet to the mound. Descending 12 feet on the mound, he found Mrs. Murphy and freed her from the fallen earth. She became unconscious. He had difficulty obtaining footing on the muddy slope and called to the men above to pull slowly on the rope. Hartz drew Mrs. Murphy to the top of the mound. He saw small stones and dirt falling from the sides of the hole and realized another cave-in might be imminent but removed the rope from himself and fastened it securely to Mrs. Murphy, deciding because of her injuries to have her taken up separately while he waited on the mound. At Hartz's call the men lifted Mrs. Murphy to the surface. The rope was returned to Hartz, and he was drawn rapidly from the hole after being in it seven minutes. Mrs. Murphy was rushed to a hospital but died of her injuries two days later. Hartz was nervous but recovered. Mr. Hartz was given the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🌟

— 1953 —

- Jan Gilberton Coal Company Drill Hole Entrapment, Gilberton, Pennsylvania
Five-year-old Laura Mae Helser was freed from her **90-minute** confinement after falling 10 feet into an 11-inch test hole at the strip mine owned by the Gilberton Coal Company. Rescuers ingeniously fashioned a make-shift vertical stretcher to free the child from her entrapment. [Source document](#).

Apr Lehigh Coal & Navigation Mine Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Steve Oblas, 26, was set free after a **9-hour** entrapment in the mine at Coaldale, Pennsylvania operated by the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company. Thirty miners participated in the rescue. [Source document.](#)

Dec LNC Mines Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
John Teno, 42, was caught and partly covered by a rush of material in the LNC mines in Coaldale. He was rescued after an **undisclosed period** by his buddies and was transferred to the Coaldale State Hospital. [Source document.](#)

— 1952 —

Mar Replier Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Caught under many tons of coal while working in the Replier colliery, Steve Matusiak, 59, of New Philadelphia, near Pottsville, was dug out by fellow workmen after an **undisclosed period**. He was rushed to a Pottsville hospital where he was treated for chest injuries. [Source document.](#)

Dec Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
50-year-old Sylvester Prosper was rescued after an **undisclosed period** after being trapped by a coal fall and buried up to the neck. It was some hours before anybody even knew there was anything wrong. One of the first rescuers to arrive was a priest, the Rev. John Shellum of a church in Pottsville. The priest crawled all the way to where Sylvester was trapped and gave him the last rites of the Roman Catholic church. Then the priest stripped off his robes, got a shovel, and went to work helping the others get the miner out. Hospital authorities said Sylvester had contusions and bruises and was suffering from shock. [Source document.](#)

— 1951 —

Feb East Mammoth Mine Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Entombed by a mine cave-in for **five hours**, Peter Gusick, contract miner, was rescued by fellow workers. Gusick was caught underground when a chute collapsed on the second level of the East Mammoth gangway at the Coaldale Colliery. The miner said he went for tools to repair his chute when he heard the tumbling earth and jumped aside to avoid being hit by falling coal and timbering. The only means of communication Gusick had with digging crews was an air pipe driven down through the debris. [Source document.](#)

Apr Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Shaft, Pennsylvania
Henry W. Eckley, Sr., 61, coal miner, died as the result of attempting to rescue Anthony Woznicki, 46, coal miner, from a cave-in. During the rescue, a large quantity of debris fell from near the ceiling and partially buried Eckley, who sustained severe internal

injuries and a broken leg. Eckley and Woznicki were removed from the entry by other miners and were taken to the surface. Woznicki was disabled six months. Eckley succumbed to injuries three days later. Posthumously, Mr. Eckley was awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

— 1950 —

- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Joseph Burda was rescued after being trapped for **40 hours** in a "bootleg" anthracite mine near Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. He and his brother, Edward, became trapped following a cave-in. Rescue attempts carried on for Edward, however, it is unknown if they were successful.
- Jan Lohb Coal Company Mine Asphyxiation, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Two miners were rescued from the end of a 100-foot, almost perpendicular, slope at Pottsville after they had been overcome by "after damp." Albert Galesky, 50, was rescued shortly after the pair were discovered unconscious by another miner. But it was nearly — **four hours** — before Joseph Flannery, 48, was revived enough to be moved down the slope and the 2½ miles to the mine entrance. Nine tanks of oxygen were used before the rescuers decided it was safe to lower Flannery down the slope to a coal car. Flannery was taken to Warren Hospital in Pottsville and placed in an oxygen tent. Al Clarkson, superintendent of the mine operation of the Lohb Coal Company on Sharp Mountain, said Flannery and Galesky apparently went into the area too soon after setting off a shot of dynamite. Source document.
- Feb Reliance Colliery Mine Asphyxiation, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
A 59-year-old Shamokin miner was killed, and another man narrowly escaped the same fate after an **undisclosed period** when a "pocket" of gas erupted while the two were working at the face of a pillar hole in the Reliance Colliery mine. In Shamokin Hospital following his rescue was Nicholas Amato, 26. Amato's condition was reported by hospital attaches to be satisfactory. Amato was the first of the two mine workers to be brought to the surface. A colliery first aid team used artificial respiration to partially revive the young man. Efforts of the first aid men to fully revive Amato continued while he was being taken in an ambulance to the hospital. In August 1950, during the annual first aid contest of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company, Michael Dobson was awarded the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association medal of honor for knowingly risking his life by entering a pitching pillar hole filled with gas to successfully rescue one worker and after several attempts. Source document. 🏆
- Mar Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Following a cave-in at an independent Anthracite mine near Pottsville, Pennsylvania, Robert Schoffstall, 42, was reached by rescue workers after remaining entombed **seven hours**. He suffered a possible fractured skull, abrasions of the right temple and a

fractured left leg. Frank Bosack, Jr., 23, the other trapped miner, crawled out of the mine on Sharp Mountain, after diggers drove through sixty tons of rock, crushed timber, and debris in **ten hours**. Also trapped with the two men and rescued from the mine was "Pete" the mule. The mule assisted greatly in his rescue. He kicked and pawed his way through fallen rock and coal while rescue workers drove from the outside toward the entombed animal. After the opening was made the mule squeezed through and crawled out of the underground operation on his own power, about 1,000 feet. [Source document](#).

Mar Auchincloss No. 2 Mine Cave-in, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania
Walter Legins, 39, coal mine shaftman, helped to rescue Stephen C. Grozio, 49, coal mine shaftman, from a cave-in in a mine, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, November 20, 1950. At night while Grozio and two other men were at work on a platform in a mineshaft 1,160 feet below ground-level, a cave-in occurred above them. Grozio jumped quickly onto a cage partly protected by a metal canopy in an adjoining section of the shaft, as a huge mass of debris struck the platform and demolished it. The other two men fell with the debris from 250 feet above the bottom of the shaft. The cage was wrenched from its guides but remained suspended 150 feet below a landing. The rumble of falling debris was heard at the surface, but the extent of the cave-in could not be determined. A group comprising two foremen, Legins, and three other men entered the mine at another shaft and reached the landing. Visibility into the damaged shaft was negligible, but all noted that a section of the shaft opposite the landing had fallen away. Grozio's headlamp was dimly sighted. In response to calls, Grozio apprised the others of conditions and told them his hands were numbed. Only Legins volunteered to descend to Grozio. Although aware that another cave-in might be imminent, Legins with a rope tied to him entered the shaft and was lowered to the cage, where he removed the rope. Using a metal bar, he broke away an obstruction in the shaft above the cage. Calling repeatedly to the landing with directions for the raising and lowering of the cage, Legins and Grozio after 20 minutes engaged the guide and were drawn to the landing. Legins and Grozio were taken to the surface. After extensive digging operations, the bodies of the other two men were recovered; and the shaft was closed permanently. Grozio was chilled, and he and Legins were nervous. Both recovered. Walter Legins was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. [Source document](#). See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

May Biscontini Mine Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Edmund F. Gorka, 28, was rescued after spending **15 hours** trapped by a fall of coal and dirt in a mine operated by the Biscontini Coal Company near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Prior to him being set free, rescuers hammered a steel tube through tons of debris to get fresh air to him. His co-worker, Thomas Dembski, 21, had narrowly missed being trapped with him and managed to get free and sound the alarm. [Source document](#).

Jul Abandoned Anthracite Strip Mine Entrapment, Glen Carbon, Pennsylvania
A 13-year-old Philadelphia boy was rescued from the bottom of a 60-foot abandoned stripping pit at Glen Carbon, near Minersville, after being trapped for **more than two hours**. John Murphy, who was visiting relatives in the Schuylkill County area, was playing baseball with a group of companions. The ball rolled into the pit and Murphy entered the hole to retrieve the ball. At the bottom, he sank waist-deep into heavy mud, but kept from slipping beneath the surface of the mud by clinging to a rock ledge. Rescue workers erected a platform over the muddy section and then released the uninjured boy. [Source document](#).

— 1949 —

Feb Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Sagon, Pennsylvania
A 62-year-old miner entombed in a standing position for **9½ hours** after a cave-in of coal and earth was smoking a cigarette as weary rescue workers hoisted him from the 30-foot hole. Alexander Pachekailo was trapped with his son, Joseph, 22, in an anthracite shaft at Sagon, near Shamokin. The son had dug himself out after an hour. At Shamokin Hospital, Pachekailo was treated for shock and exposure. He had no other injuries. Rescuers were forced to work singly in the four-foot square shaft of the independent mine. The debris had to be removed a bucket at a time before the trapped miner could be raised to the surface. [Source document](#).

Nov Maple Hill Colliery Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Rescuers brought out 15 weary coal miners early today who had spent **eight hours** trapped behind a rock fall 900 feet underground. The trapped men dug continuously during their captivity to help rescue crews working from the other side clear away the tons of rock, coal and dirt which blocked their path to freedom. Physicians who examined each of the men as they came to the surface said that they suffered no ill effects. They were sent home to rest. The men had been trapped in the No. 6 slope of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company's Maple Hill colliery when a runaway mine car jumped the track and knocked out timbers supporting the sides and roof of the tunnel. The crashing timbers and a warning rumble alerted the men, but the sides and roof of the tunnel collapsed with a roar before they could flee. The rock fall occurred only two hours after the men started working yesterday afternoon. All 15 had enough food in their lunch boxes. [Source document](#).

— 1948 —

May [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Inundation](#), Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Edward Heck and Peter Gorton were rescued from a "bootleg" Anthracite mine near Shamokin, Pennsylvania following their **60-hour** entrapment from an inundation of water from an adjoining abandoned mine. The men said they believed their companion,

Charles Bashore, was trapped in the lowest part of the mine and had no chance to escape.

— 1947 —

- Apr Schooley Mine Explosion, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
The Schooley mine explosion killed nine anthracite diggers and injured nine others as they worked 350 feet underground. The explosion, so terrific that it splintered supporting timbers and crumpled mine chamber walls, came soon after the day work crew reported at the shaft of the Knox Coal company. Dust and smoke rose from the pithead, as rescue forces rushed into the operation near Wilkes-Barre. Two bodies were removed immediately. Injured were speeded to nearby Pittston hospital where doctors said some had been burned, others overcome by fumes. Source document.
- May Abandoned Anthracite Mine Fall of Person, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Andrew Cooper, 16, of Pottsville, had a narrow escape from death when he rode his bicycle into a caved-in mine. He landed on a ledge 50 feet from the top, but the bike plunged another 200 feet to the bottom of the mine, believed to be filled with water. He managed to scale halfway up a wall only to lose his grip and plunge once again to the ledge. Searchers heard his shouts — **five hours** — later and hoisted him to the top with a rope. Source document.
- Jun Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
George Sleva, 26, was rescued after being entombed **14 hours** by a rock fall in a small independent coal mine. Sleva was taken to the Pottsville Hospital, where he was taken and treated for shock and minor bruises. His condition was described as good. Source document.
- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Primrose, Pennsylvania
Marlin Beury, 24-year-old independent miner, knew all about the dangers of deadly, suffocating black damp. The day before, he wisely waited until brother Guy, 26, came home from work and could stand guard on top before he ventured into his poorly ventilated bootleg mine to drive a new air opening. That bit of foresight, plus his brother's courage, was credited with saving the life of Marlin, an ex-Seabee, when he was overcome shortly after he entered his 90-foot slope. Recent heavy rains had closed one of the two ventilating openings in the workings, and Marlin knew it wouldn't be safe or healthy to work in that kind air. When he first felt the dizziness caused by black damp and his lungs began choking for air, Marlin called to his brother on top for help. Guy dashed down the slope, and as he struggled to help Marlin up, he began to feel the effects of the bad air himself. Realizing he wouldn't be able to affect the rescue singlehanded, Guy dashed back up the slope and summoned a neighbor, Frank Zurat, and the two together went down the mine, tied Marlin securely with a rope and brought him to the top. Andrew Bauchak and Ray Conville responded to a call for help with the

Minersville Goodwill ambulance and both Beury brothers were taken to the Pottsville Hospital for oxygen treatments. Guy, least affected of the two was released later that night. Marlin fully recovered the next morning and was expected to be discharged from the hospital. [Source document.](#)

— 1946 —

- Feb Abandoned Anthracite Mine Lost Persons, East Scranton, Pennsylvania
After spending a night, lost in an underground gangway in an abandoned Anthracite mine, three Scranton youths were rescued. Rescued were Joseph Buydos, 16; George E. Lowe, 17; and Edward Liptock, 16. The boys entered the workings of the abandoned East Scranton mine shortly after school closed Monday. Exploring the passages, they became lost in the many tunnels and decided to wait until rescue came. When found the next day, after an **undisclosed period**, despite their long imprisonment in the damp and cold tunnels, the boys were unaffected physically, but were tired and hungry. [Source document.](#)
- Feb Tamaqua Colliery Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
"I was hoping you guys would get here soon" was the greeting that Rolland Matalcavage gave to his rescuers when they reached him. Matalcavage was trapped for an **undisclosed period** by a rush of coal in a chute on the third level workings of the Tamaqua Colliery of the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company. Workers heard the rush and rescue work proceeded. After a time, rescuers came upon several overhanging sections of rock, beneath which Matalcavage had crawled for protection. The workman was unharmed. [Source document.](#)
- Oct Abandoned Pennsylvania Coal Co. Mine Rescue, Pittston, Pennsylvania
A Pittston coal miner was rescued from an abandoned mine shaft after being entombed for **several hours**. Benjamin Desko, 58, was locked in the shaft when the exit was filled in by a bulldozer operator, who was unaware that he was in the shaft. Desko was reported missing by his wife when he failed to return home. She went to the shaft where her husband said he would be working and discovered the entrance blocked. The alarm was sounded, and workers of the Pennsylvania Coal Company made the rescue. When examined at the Pittston Hospital, Desko was found to be none the worse for his experience. [Source document.](#)

— 1944 —

- Mar Anthracite Mine Hole Fall of Ground, West Scranton, Pennsylvania
Edward Pall, age 7, from West Scranton, appeared little the worse at his home following his rescue from a mine cave hole which held him prisoner for nearly two hours. The boy was on his way to school and walking along a path through a field near his home when the earth gave way and swallowed him to his shoulders. Nearly **two hours** later, his

father, Charles Pall, on his way to work heard the boy's cries and saw his head sticking out of the ground. After digging frantically, Pall rescued his son and carried him home. Examination of the youngster showed he was unhurt but suffering somewhat from shock. Police said the cave was four feet deep. [Source document.](#)

- Mar Mine Subsidence Fall of Ground, Pittston, Pennsylvania
Seven-year-old Robert Adrian was swallowed up by the earth in a mine subsidence, only 300 feet from the spot where Jule Ann Fulmer, age 2, was killed in a similar cave-in a month earlier. But Robert lived to tell about it. Walking home from a barber shop, Robert plunged 10 feet into the earth when the paving opened beneath him, but he was buried only to his waist. The terror-stricken youngster scrambled to safety before passersby reached him. Almost simultaneously, another cave-in occurred nearby, but no one was near the spot. [Source document.](#)
- Jul Mutual Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Excelsior, Pennsylvania
Michael Podovinski, 42, one of the owners of the Mutual Coal Company, a cooperative mine near Excelsior, was buried **one hour** under a rush of coal before rescued alive but uninjured. He was a patient at Shamokin State Hospital suffering from a fractured right leg, internal and chest injuries and lacerations of the head and face. His stepson, Edward Leszheskie, with whom he was working, left to get carbide for lighting purposes and Podovinski stepped into his working place. A moment later Leszheskie said he heard a rush and found his stepfather covered with the exception of his left leg. They were the only two at work in the area and Leszheskie in rushing to summon aid fell several times and injured himself but continued on. He returned with Anthony Kozinski, brother-in-law of Podovinski, and the four co-partners in the mining enterprise. They first drilled an opening so the victim could get air and an hour later had him liberated, alive and conscious. The mine was one of the largest cooperatively owned operations between Excelsior and Brady. [Source document.](#)
- Nov Abandoned Mine Shaft Fall of Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
John Stebila, 16, was a patient in serious condition at Shamokin Hospital, the result of an accident which befell him as he was assisting in fighting a forest fire. The youth was a member of a fire-fighting group which was summoned to battle a blaze near the mining community. According to companions who took him to Shamokin Hospital, he fell more than 250 feet to the bottom of an abandoned mine shaft. Rescue workers worked for some time before they were able to bring the injured boy to the surface, and he was then taken to Shamokin Hospital. Doctors at the hospital said the accident victim sustained compound fractures of the hip, lacerations of the scalp, pelvic injuries, and a possible skull fracture. [Source document.](#)

— 1943 —

- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Byrnesville, Pennsylvania
Edward Stutscavage, 22, owed his life to the unceasing efforts of a rescue crew and, particularly to two men who played heroic parts in rescuing him from a coal hole at Byrnesville after he had been covered for several hours. Rescued from beneath a mass of earth, coal, and rock in a workings 150 and 175 feet underground, Stutscavage was taken to Ashland State Hospital where his condition was reported good and where X-rays were taken to determine the extent of an injury to his right shoulder. Stutscavage and a brother-in-law, Manuel Androde, 38, were putting up a set of timbers in their independent mine when a rush which they later said came without warning and "like a load of sand" and trapped them. Androde was covered only up to his knees, but Stutscavage was knocked down and almost completely covered. Hastening to the surface, Androde dispatched the hoister for help. Soon, miners came, and the rescue work was started. They had to proceed cautiously and slowly, however, because of the ever-present danger of a recurrent rush and the opening through which Androde had escaped permitted only one man to enter at a time. The story was told how one of the rescuers, Tony Bish, a Centralia man about 35 or 36, reached Stutscavage and, at the risk of his own life, arched his back over the young man to save him from being covered by a second rush. He remained in that position, holding up the weight of the new slide until other miners came. It was Androde, working tirelessly through the afternoon and evening despite his own weakened condition from the ordeal he had experienced, finally succeeded in uncovering Stutscavage. So tightly was he wedged beneath the debris, rescuers considered it a miracle that he escaped with his life. [Source document.](#)
- Mar Jermyn-Green Coal Co. No. 6 Colliery Cave-in, Inkerman, Pennsylvania
Henry R. Skibitski, 32, coal miner; and John Kuchinsky, 37, coal mine, helped to rescue Frank Chas, 44, mine laborer, from a cave-in in a mine, Inkerman, Pennsylvania, March 30, 1943. Two runaway mine cars were derailed in an air-course of a coal mine, causing the roof to collapse for 17 feet in the air-course and in a crosscut that extended six feet off the air-course at one end of the cave-in. Chas, who was in the crosscut, was pinned by a timber on which rock rested. While the debris moved and settled somewhat and a few rocks fell, Skibitski, followed by John Kuchinsky, from the end of the cave-in crawled 12 feet in a narrow passageway at one side of the cave-in under debris and reached Chas. They placed blocks under the timber; and with bars Kuchinsky and then Skibitski dug at rocks under Chas, freeing him. They dragged Chas into the air-course, lifted him across one of the cars, and lowered him to the floor beyond the inner end of the cave-in. Chas had sustained a cut on his head, and his legs were numb. Twenty minutes later, the debris having fairly well settled, Kuchinsky aided Chas over the car; and all crawled through the passageway into a safe section of the mine. Chas recovered. Skibitski and Kuchinsky were bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. [Source document.](#)
See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🌟

- Sep Primrose Colliery Explosion, Primrose, Pennsylvania
 After an **undisclosed period** following the explosion, nine injured men were removed from the mine and taken to a hospital in nearby Pottsville. Most of them were suffering from burns, bruises, and shock. Only one of these, James Connelly, was believed to be in serious condition.
- Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Lost Persons, Kulpmont, Pennsylvania
 Two men imprisoned by darkness deep in a bootleg coal hole were rescued near Kulpmont, **12 hours** after their lanterns went out and they were helpless to move in fear that they might plunge to their death. The miners, Adam Psanko, 34, and Charles McNevech, 33, were under treatment at Shamokin State Hospital for exposure. While enroute to the location of their work one of them dropped his lamp and it rolled into a yawning pit. With only one lamp remaining, they decided to return to the surface. Suddenly a gust of air blew the flame of it out and left them in pitch darkness. It was midnight before members of their families became alarmed because they did not return home, and a searching party was formed. When found, the pair hadn't moved a foot from the spot where the lantern went out. Physicians at the hospital said both men were in satisfactory condition and would be discharged after a thorough check. Source document.
- Nov Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
 Three bootleg miners were recuperating at their homes after a nerve-shattering experience, in which they were entombed **34 hours** in a coal hole before being rescued. They received bruises and lacerations when trapped in a collapsed bootleg mine shaft but suffered mostly from exposure. When the rescuers broke through the barrier, they formed rope slings to haul the entombed men from the mine. They were wrapped in heated blankets and taken to Shamokin Hospital where they were treated and kept under observation for 24 hours, before being allowed to return home. The three miners rescued were Nicholas Logush, Theodore Horoschak and Jacob Merena. Source document.
- Dec Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
 Anthony Onushak, 35, was rescued from a bootleg mine operation near Mahanoy City, after he was entombed more than **five hours**. Onushak was working alone at the bottom of a 400-foot slope when the workings closed as the result of a heavy fall on the slope. Fellow independent miners organized a rescue force and found the miner buried to his hips, but not badly injured. He refused medical attention after his rescue, and at his request was taken to his home. Source document.
- Dec Glen Alden No. 9 Mine Cave-in, Sugar Notch, Pennsylvania
 Trapped by a cave at the No. 9 Tunnel of the Glen Alden Coal Company at Sugar Notch, a miner and laborer were rescued by a crew which had dug persistently for more than **10 hours** to reach them. The men trapped were Frank Adamovitch, and his laborer,

Benjamin Miller. Adamovitch's other laborer, Frank Verostek, away at the time of the cave, spread the alarm which brought mine executives and rescue crews to the scene. Adamovitch and Miller were taken to Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, where it was found Miller escaped almost uninjured, but that Adamovitch's injuries were more serious. Source document.

— 1942 —

- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Forestville, Pennsylvania
Joseph and John Hudock were recovering in the Pottsville Hospital after they barely escaped asphyxiation from black damp while working in a bootleg coal hole near Forestville. They were rescued after an **undisclosed period** and revived by their father and other miners. Source document.
- Jan Coal Brook Colliery Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Four mine workers were rescued from entombment today after being imprisoned — **six hours** — behind hundreds of tons of rock at the No. 1 tunnel, Coal Brook Colliery, Carbondale. The men were loading coal on a shaker chute belt when a long section of the roof in the main gangway, the only passageway to the slope, collapsed. The gangway was blocked with debris. A crew of rescue workers with picks and shovels carved an opening through the blocked gangway. Two hours later communications were established with the men by tap drills. The tunnel was operated by the Hudson Coal Company. Source document.
- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Charles King, 48, one of two miners rescued from a bootleg mine after being trapped **12 hours** following a cave-in, died from injuries at the Coaldale Hospital. His death resulted from internal injuries, a broken arm and shock. His partner, Raymond Herring, 40, sustained only minor injuries. Both had been pinned from the waist down by coal and debris 125 feet below the surface and had watched helplessly as rescuers dug toward them. Three other men were working in the tunnel of the old Dunkelberger colliery working when a set of supporting timbers collapsed, causing the cave-in. They escaped and spread an alarm. The working was abandoned about 50 years ago. Ten miners from the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company and an equal number of volunteers worked throughout most of the night to save the men. Source document.
- May 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. Source document. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Louis Bogetti, 32, was rescued from a 350-foot bootleg coal mine in which he lay trapped and partially buried for **38 hours**. Bogetti said that when the fall occurred, he dove beneath a chute for protection, but was unable to pull in his legs before they were pinned. He said he lay face down until rescued, unable to move. Bogetti was transported to the State hospital where doctors said he suffered nothing worse than bruises of the legs and a shoulder. Source document.

Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Raven Run, Pennsylvania
John Mischishin, 47, Frackville, was trapped and entombed in a bootleg mine slope at Raven Run for **23 hours**. The miner was working at the bottom of a 53-foot slope when the timbers collapsed. When the break came the timbers formed a partial canopy over the worker to protect him from crumbling rock, coal and earth. When the collapse occurred, the trapped miner was buried to the hips, while a piece of rock knocked off his miner's cap and lamp. He hugged the side of the canopy formed by collapsed timbers until the rescuers removed tons of debris before they were able to extricate the entombed man. Upon his release, physicians at Ashland State Hospital said Mischishin

suffered hip and back injuries and was in a severe state of shock, but they anticipated his recovery. [Source document.](#)

Sep Edy Creek Colliery Cave-in, Olyphant, Pennsylvania
Peter Partonova, 24, was rescued from behind a 50-foot wall of rock 700 feet below the earth's surface. He was confined there for **15 hours**. Partonova was working in a chamber a mile and a half from the base of the Edy Creek Colliery shaft when the rock roof collapsed. Partonova shouted directions to a rescue squad of 25 men all through the night. He was without food, but had water and lights, which were dimming as he was released. He was transported to the Mid-Valley Hospital where he was being treated for shock. [Source document.](#)

— 1941 —

Jan Pitha Mine Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Pinned by a rock fall, Peter Kobat, 55, was rescued by diggers who had worked in relays for **five hours**. Doctors, who had administered stimulants to Kobat as he lay imprisoned up to his waist in fallen rock, said the miner would recover. [Source document.](#)

Jan Atkins Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Frackville, Pennsylvania
Michael Yuskoski, 43, was rushed to Ashland State Hospital after fellow workmen rescued him from under a fall of coal at the Atkins Coal Company. Hospital attaches said Yuskoski, who was almost suffocated, had no pain and there appeared to be no fractures, although a complete diagnosis had not been made. [Source document.](#)

Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Heckscherville, Pennsylvania
John Ryan, 28-year-old free-lance miner, was the anthracite area's latest bootleg mining fatality despite a dramatic rescue after being trapped for nearly **48 hours** in a coal hole at nearby Heckscherville. Ryan was brought to the surface alive late yesterday but died a short time after as he was being placed in an ambulance to be taken to Pottsville hospital. Rescue crews worked in relays of 20 men when Ryan was trapped by a cave-in 80 feet below the surface. Joseph Slane, 30, who was trapped with Ryan, was brought out alive. He was discharged from Pottsville hospital after receiving treatment for minor injuries. Vincent Burns, 35, a third man working in the hole, climbed to safety, and spread the alarm as the mine roof gave way. Weary rescue workers reached Ryan after a second cave-in had dimmed hopes of finding him alive. Spurred by his tappings, they sent a priest and a doctor into the mine after he told them weakly that he was "all right, but cold." Last rites were administered before diggers were able to remove Ryan. Ryan was found pinned between a coal car and the side of the mine by the physician and clergymen who risked another cave-in to reach him. Despite first aid at the scene, Ryan died of exposure and internal injuries, physicians said. [Source document.](#)

- Feb Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Pinned by the legs in a small chute off a gangway of a bootleg mine hole, William Kellet, 20, was released by fellow workers after an **undisclosed period** and removed to the Coaldale State Hospital. He was reported in "fair" condition. [Source document.](#)
- Mar Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Kulpmont, Pennsylvania
William Fisher, 37, was in Shamokin State Hospital with a probable fracture of the pelvis, sustained when covered by a fall of coal and rock in a bootleg mine north of Kulpmont. According to the hospital report, Fisher was in shock when admitted but his condition was not believed to be critical. Fisher was saved from suffocation when his brother, Arthur, with whom he was working, immediately summoned John Dulis and Robert Mummaw, and all three dug him out in **less than a half hour**. Firemen from both companies at Kulpmont were on hand with pulmotors when Fisher was brought to the surface, but the pulmotors were not needed. The bootleg mine where Fisher was covered was about 50 feet deep. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Kehoe-Berge Coal Mine Cave-in, Duryea, Pennsylvania
Shock was believed to have contributed to the death of Stephen Olenik, 45-year-old Duryea miner. Olenik died at Pittston Hospital from injuries suffered April 30 when he was trapped for **twelve hours** in a cave-in at the Kehoe-Berge Coal Company mine. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Lehigh Navigation Coaldale Colliery Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Work was resumed at the Coaldale Colliery of the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company after a general suspension as employees unsuccessfully attempted to rescue a miner trapped at the bottom of shaft Number Nine. The body of Joseph Bennis, 51, finally was recovered by rescue workers. Bennis and Alex Petroskey, 61, were trapped by a chute cave-in. Petroskey was rescued **an hour later** and taken to Coaldale Hospital, where he reportedly was recovering from a pelvis fracture. Although they worked in continuous relays, the rescue squad was unable to reach Bennis in time to save him. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Trapped — **52 hours** — in a coal hole 60 feet below the surface, 18-year-old Joseph Loftus dug his way out with his hands after rescue workers had given up hope of saving him and a priest stood by to administer last rites. The youth, who had been unconscious for a time after a slide blocked the shaft opening and filled the 40-foot horizontal gangway in which he was working, pushed his head through an opening made by astonished rescuers and was dragged to the surface. He had several bruises, and his fingers were scratched open to the bone. Rescue workers estimated he had dug 20 feet in darkness. Lawrence Burns, 45, trapped with Loftus in the gangway of their makeshift anthracite mine, was rescued earlier. The cave-in occurred on Friday, April 4th. Rescue crews started a new hole Saturday, behind where they expected to find the younger miner. Late Sunday, two of the workers returned to the original hole. After a few minutes of digging, the ground moved

beneath them, and Loftus stuck his head out. He thought it was still Friday. [Source document](#).

- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Branchdale, Pennsylvania
Albert Gudinas, 26, was rescued alive after an **undisclosed period** from a gas-filled coal hole at Branchdale by the heroic effort of his brother, Joseph. The brothers were engaged in pumping water from their slope when Albert entered the mine to replenish the supply of gasoline in the engine operating the pump. When the brother failed to reappear, Joseph entered the mine to find him unconscious, victim of carbon monoxide. Summoning other miners, it was with difficulty they made their way into the gas-filled operation and conveyed the unconscious Albert Gudinas to the surface and eventually to the Pottsville Hospital. Surgeons at the hospital administered oxygen and stimulation and after a time revived Gudinas. [Source document](#).
- May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Primrose, Pennsylvania
The bootleg mine industry claimed its twenty-second victim since the first of the year on the morning of May 23rd, when the body of Thomas Oplansky, 44, of Minersville, was recovered from a coal hole near Primrose. Oplansky's companion, Stephen Keysock was freed from a mine a short time after a first fall which occurred when the two men were at work in a gangway, Keysock was taken to the Pottsville Hospital suffering from injuries of the right ankle and body bruises. Shortly after Keysock was rescued from the mine, several other falls occurred, and it is believed these caused the death of his companion. Rescuers had little hope of rescuing Oplansky alive after the second fall. [Source document](#).
- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Onedia, Pennsylvania
James Houser, 26, of Onedia, was taken to the Hazleton State Hospital and treated for shock, exposure and contusions of the left leg suffered during a **10-hour entombment** in a coal hole. Caught when a cable broke, causing the buggy to pull out timber which closed a slope, Houser was rescued before 11 o'clock on June 13. He was working with his brother Henry, and Oscar Logan and was just winding up his coal hole job when the accident occurred. He was to begin a job at Audenried on the following Monday. [Source document](#).
- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Dominick Cardosa, 29, was rescued from a bootleg coal hole after he had been overcome by black damp. Unconscious when admitted to the Ashland State Hospital, Cardosa, was reported greatly improved. [Source document](#).
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Trapped for — **eight hours** — in his coal hole near the highway between Mahanoy City and Delano, Peter Gerasinovich, 43, was rescued, but died five hours later at the Locust Mountain Hospital. He suffered internal injuries when struck by part of the fall. [Source document](#).

Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Peter Benson, 47, was rescued alive after he was entombed for **several hours** in a bootleg mine operation near Mahanoy City. The miner was at work at the face of the gangway when the workings closed behind him. Fellow miners formed a rescue party, and it was first believed Benson was crushed to death under the fall. After a time, workmen heard him tapping and still later engaged with them in conversation. He hid himself behind a ledge while rescuers continued the removal of coal, rock, and earth. The man was not injured. [Source document.](#)

Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Brady, Pennsylvania
A crew of independent miners labored **four hours** before freeing Charles Madden, who was trapped in a bootleg coal mine near Brady, Pennsylvania. The accident victim at first was thought to be seriously injured, but after being examined at Shamokin Hospital was allowed to return to his home. He sustained bruises of the legs. Fellow workmen said Madden was trapped by a fall of rock and that he was covered to the waist. Working carefully, a rescue crew succeeding in extricating Madden without causing further falls. [Source document.](#)

— 1940 —

Feb Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Frank Ostroski, 37, was rescued after being trapped for **49½ hours** in a cave-in on the property of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company. Frank's brother Boley, 26, was rescued **14½ hours** earlier and suffered a broken left leg, a fracture of the left arm, and suffered from shock. The independent mine where the brothers were trapped, located on Lehigh Valley Coal Company ground, is in the old Morris Ridge section of the abandoned Sayre Colliery workings. The Ostroski brothers and Thomas Reiner, 21, Mt. Carmel, were in a heading about thirty-five feet from the slope when the accident occurred. The men were engaged in shifting coal with scoop shovels in relays, when the sides of the heading caved in. The falling material knocked the shovel from Reiner's hands, completely covered Boley and entombed Frank Ostroski. Reiner, who barely escaped being caught by the falling material and unable to rescue his buddies single-handed, raced back to town for help. [Source document.](#)

Feb Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Germantown, Pennsylvania
Leo Shuder, 21, was entombed by a collapse of a bootleg mine operation and was rescued alive — **5 hours** — later. Shuder was working with Charles Raulinaitis, 21, and Edward Davis, 21, both of Mount Carmel. According to the two buddies, Shuder was working at the face of a gangway at the bottom of a combination shaft and slope when the top broke. He was caught with a heavy piece of mine timber across his neck and back. His cries for help attracted his companions' attention. During the removal of debris, the imprisoned man talked with his companions and said he was not badly hurt. [Source document.](#)

- Mar Northwest Colliery Cave-in, Simpson, Pennsylvania
Two anthracite miners were recovering in a hospital from effects of — **17-hour imprisonment** — 30 feet underground because of a cave-in. Steve Daynock, 58, and Michael Hurchick, 36, were brought to the surface in a dramatic rescue from a cave-in in a sub-leased Northwest Colliery mine. John Palish, 42, working in the mine with Daynock and Hurchick, heard the warning rumble of the cave-in in time to scramble to safety. His alarm brought scores of miners from nearby communities and set them to digging frantically at the 30-foot earth wall that entombed the pair in a subterranean pocket. At 3:28 p.m., the life-and-death battle ended triumphantly at the brink of the 32-foot hole dug by a power shovel and hand labor. Rescuers reached the trapped miners and lifted them up ladders to a wildly cheering reception from the throng of spectators. They were taken to St. Joseph's hospital, Carbondale, and treated for exposure. [Source document.](#)
- Mar Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Branchdale, Pennsylvania
John Petroski, 50, was rescued alive and resuscitated by a physician after he had been overcome the day before by carbon monoxide while at work in a bootleg mine near his home. Petroski and other workmen had installed a gasoline powered pump for use in freeing their independent mine of water. After the pump had been installed all the workers except Petroski went to the surface to check on other installations, and during their absence Petroski primed and started the pump. He failed to notice the accumulation of rancid fumes and carbon monoxide and collapsed. Petroski was unconscious when found by Anthony Bernoski who entered the mine to check on the operation of the pump. He carried the limp form of the victim to the bottom of the slope, and with the assistance of others conveyed the gas victim to the surface, where a physician was successful in restoring him to consciousness. Petroski was expected to recover. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Powered Haulage Accident, Joliett, Pennsylvania
Paul Lengel, 34, was transported to the Pottsville Hospital suffering with internal injuries received in an accident in a bootleg coal hole at Joliett. Lengel was squeezed between the frame and a dump cart, and a section of props fell on him. He was rescued by fellow workers after an **undisclosed period** and removed to the hospital, where his condition was critical. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Edward Forbes, 29, suffered multiple injuries after having been buried by a rock fall for more than **two hours** in a bootleg coal mine. Forbes, who was buried about 50 feet from the mine entrance, was treated for shock, body contusions, possible rib fractures, and lacerations of the hands and feet. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Anthony Dziezyk, 24, was rescued alive from a perilous position in a collapsed bootleg mine working 300 feet below the surface of the Turkey Run Mountain, south of Shenandoah. The youthful miner was working 300 feet down the slope when the rib

pushed out, trapping him under debris and covering him to the waist. Dziezyk was alone in the slope, engaged in loading a wagon when the rush occurred. Yanking hard on the signal wire to apprise fellow workers on the surface that all was not well, the signal was misunderstood, and Joseph Michalkewicz, in charge of the engine ... an improvised automobile motor ... tried to hoist the wagon. When he was unable to do so he realized something was wrong and descended half-way down the slope to learn from Dziezyk that he was trapped and threatened with death. For nearly **five hours** rescuers worked cautiously as they held back the rock with timber until they were able to release the young miner, who was in constant pain and suffering greatly from shock. After the timbers had been installed and rock lifted out of the slope to release young Dziezyk, he was placed in a wagon and hoisted to the surface. An ambulance and physicians from Locust Mountain Hospital were in waiting, gave first aid and hurried the accident victim to the hospital, where examination revealed severe abdominal injuries, extensive contusions of both legs and the patient in severe state of shock. The hospital indicated the youth was expected to recover. Source document.

- May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Fall of Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Webster Yoder, 36, of Shamokin suffered injuries of the head, back and left hand when he fell into a bootleg coal hole in the Bunker Hill section, near Shamokin. Yoder was walking through the hills when he stepped into the breach. His cries attracted the attention of nearby residents, and he was rescued with difficulty and removed to the Shamokin State Hospital, where his condition was listed as semi-serious. Source document.
- May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Joseph Nolan, 47, was in a serious condition in Ashland Hospital with head, back and internal injuries suffered under a fall in a bootleg mine operation near his home. Nolan was engaged in dressing down shattered coal in the working place when the top broke, almost completely burying the miner. He was rescued by fellow workers after an **undisclosed period** and taken at once to the hospital. Source document.
- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, New Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Clement Petrovich, 22, was admitted to the Pottsville Hospital with injuries of the head and a possible fracture of the skull, received when he was caught under a fall of top coal in a bootleg coal hole near New Philadelphia. Fellow miners rescued him after an **undisclosed period** and removed him to the hospital, where he is being treated for shock and the injuries. Source document.
- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Enoch Janaskie, 32, was transported to the Shamokin State Hospital suffering from back and pelvis injuries when struck by a rock while at work in a bootleg coal hole. Fellow workers rescued him after an **undisclosed period** and removed him to the hospital. Source document.

- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Greenbury, Pennsylvania
Joseph Terway, 45, an independent miner injured when he was entombed for an **undisclosed period** in a coal hole near Greenbury was taken to the Good Samaritan Hospital for treatment. He died two days later in the hospital of internal injuries and multiple fractures. [Source document](#).
- Jul Primrose Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Minersville, Pennsylvania
Anthony Epscavage was rescued after an **undisclosed period** from a fall of rock and coal which struck him at the Primrose Coal Company. He was released by fellow workers and removed to the Warne Hospital in the Community Ambulance. He underwent an operation at the hospital for a dislocated right shoulder and left ankle, and his condition was reported as being good. [Source document](#).
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Heckscherville, Pennsylvania
Aloysius A. Brennan, 19, was rescued alive from a collapsed bootleg mine hole, and when he arrived at the surface following the rescue it was found he had escaped with a minor hip injury. Brennan and a brother, Leo, 16, drove a 20-foot shaft into a vein on an abandoned stripping operation at Pine Knot Colliery. The elder brother was working alone at the bottom of the shaft when the place collapsed. Rescuers were summoned from other independent mines and after **two hours** the workers removed sufficient debris to release the young miner. [Source document](#).
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Kulpmont, Pennsylvania
Charles Griscavage, 27, Kulpmont, was a patient at Shamokin State Hospital, suffering a probable fracture of the skull and other injuries sustained when caught under a fall of top rock in a bootleg mine hole. He was partly buried, but fellow miners quickly rescued him. [Source document](#).
- Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Branchdale, Pennsylvania
Two Pine Grove miners were rescued alive yesterday after being trapped **15 hours** in a bootleg mine operation near Branchdale. James Kimmerling, 50, and Rep Batz, 32, were found uninjured but suffering greatly from cold and shock after they had been trapped in cramped quarters following the fall of many tons of coal. The two miners were working in a gangway 20 feet in from the bottom of a shaft when the bottom fell out of their working place when it was driven into old workings. As the bottom dropped, the mine collapsed. Kimmerling and Batz stepped to a narrow ledge and clung there while rescuers worked 15 long hours to remove debris, place timber and reopen the workings to reach the trapped who aided by directing activities of the rescuers. Miners who assisted in timbering the old workings and driving a new tunnel to reach the men marveled they escaped with their lives. [Source document](#).
- Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Two hard-coal miners, rescued after being trapped **65 hours** in a mountain coal hole, related from hospital beds how they calmly wound their watches and waited minute by

minute for death they thought was certain. The plight of William Goodman, 60, and William Burke, 28, finally became so desperate that a priest administered last rites through a one-inch pipe rescue workers had driven down to the imprisoned men, 90 feet below the earth's surface. What amounted to a miracle for the miners came when the rescue squad tunneled through to a cramped gallery where they had been trapped by a fall of debris that choked the mine entrance. "I'm all right," was all Burke could say as he stumbled to a waiting ambulance. Goodman was carried out on a stretcher. Both were near collapse from cold, hunger and foul air. [Source document.](#)

- Oct Fall of Ground Incident and Rescue, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Eleven-year-old Joseph Steindel rested comfortably at his home, seemingly none the worse from his brief entombment when the walls of an eighteen-foot crater near Cornell Park collapsed while he was digging coal. The little victim was jerked from the brink of eternity by four South Scranton men who extricated the victim with their bare hands. When Edward Nowrocki arrived after being attracted by the boy's screams, he saw only a blackened hand extending above the rock and debris. Nowrocki and the others joined in the rescue and digging with their hands, the skin of their fingers torn with each thrust, they piled rock, coal, and dirt to one side and in less than a minute little Joseph's head was unearthed. The youngster was unconscious but started to breathe freely by the time the rescuers had loosed his wedged body from the landslide. The lad was rushed to State Hospital in a police radio car, where he was found to have incurred only minor body bruises and shock. [Source document.](#)
- Nov Penn-Anthracite Collieries Company Cave-in, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Julius Yankowski was rescued after spending **49 hours** trapped by a cave-in in a mine operated by the Penn-Anthracite Collieries Company near Scranton, Pennsylvania. His companion, James Long, was found dead when reached by rescuers. [Source document.](#)

— 1939 —

- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Frank Mischurski, 34, was rescued from a makeshift coal hole in which he had been trapped for **fourteen hours**. At Pottsville hospital, physicians said he suffered bruises and nervous breakdown. Mischurski and a companion were in the coal hole when debris caved in upon them. The companion leaped to safety, but Mischurski was pinned so he could not work his way out. Other miners dug through to reach him. [Source document.](#)
- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Newkirk, Pennsylvania
Joseph Franks was rescued from a bootleg coal hole after being trapped for approximately **10 hours**. He was taken to the Coaldale Hospital where he was treated for exposure. Franks was entombed together with two companions, Edward, and George Weidel, who were rescued a short time following the accident. Rescue workers

were impeded in their work by a heavy fall of snow but maintained a constant working crew despite the weather. [Source document](#).

- Jan Hazleton Shaft Colliery Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Two miners trapped for nearly — **19 hours** — were rescued from the Hazleton Shaft Colliery of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. To free the miners, rescuers cut a new 4x4 hole driven parallel to the rock hole. Both miners were able to walk out of the place where they had been imprisoned and were taken to the State Hospital where they were reported to be in good condition. [Source document](#).
- Feb Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Three miners escaped unharmed but a fourth was critically injured as black damp swept their coal hole, east of Shamokin. Howard E. Bingham, 48, was rescued from the mine after an **undisclosed period** by the three others after they had made good their escape. He was removed to the Shamokin State Hospital where it was announced he was suffering from severe shock, and head injuries. His condition was considered serious. The four men were working at the bottom of the 300-foot shaft when the dreaded black damp swept in, overcoming Bingham immediately. Alert to the imminent danger, the others hurriedly began ascending the shaft, John Lotys grabbed the fallen Bingham by the belt and dragged him along. Risking his own life in a heroic attempt to save Bingham, Lotys managed to get the stricken miner about 60 feet up the shaft when, presumably affected by the black damp to a certain extent himself and exhausted from Bingham's weight he lost his hold on the belt and Bingham tumbled down the shaft. It was discovered afterward that Bingham fell to within ten feet of the bottom or about 50 feet and that he was saved from a further fall by some timber at that point of the shaft. Had he fallen the entire distance, he would have drowned. [Source document](#).
- Mar Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Manuel Alves, 28, was overcome by gas or blackdamp while working in a bootleg mine was in a critical condition when rescued by fellow miners. Alves was taken to Ashland State Hospital, where surgeons administered oxygen and stimulation. The miner was revived, and while his condition was critical, he was expected to recover. [Source document](#).
- Apr Lehigh Valley Coal Company Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
One man was killed, and another seriously injured in a bootleg mine cave-in at Franklin stripping of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company in Wilkes-Barre. Jacob Wasnaias was buried in the cave-in and killed. A volunteer crew of 20 men worked — **eight hours** — to free Wasnaias and his companion, Paul Zianas, who was taken to a Wilkes-Barre hospital. [Source document](#).
- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation, Kulpmont, Pennsylvania
Dominick Pabulis, 21, of Kulpmont narrowly escaped death and was taken to the Shamokin State Hospital suffering from the effects of gas fumes as the result of having

been overcome while at work in a bootleg mine near Kulpmont. Pabulis was felled when he inhaled carbon monoxide fumes generated by an old automobile engine used to operate a pump in the mine. He was found in an unconscious condition by fellow workers and although his condition was for a time serious, he later showed improvement. [Source document.](#)

- May [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in](#), Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania
Rescuers worked for — **15 hours** — to free sixty-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.
- May [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in](#), Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
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.
- Jun [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in](#), Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Andrew Engle, 52, was reported in fair condition at Locust Mountain Hospital after he and his 19-year-old son were rescued from a fall of rock and coal 100 feet below the surface in a bootleg coal hole near Shenandoah. The elder Engle, rescued after **five hours'** entombment, was covered to the neck by the fall. His son, rescued after **two hours**, was unhurt. [Source document.](#)
- Jun [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in](#), Shamokin, Pennsylvania
A young, free-lance miner, freed from a makeshift coal hole after having been trapped for **eleven hours**, died in the hospital of shock and injuries. Leonard Reidinger, 21, was in serious condition from the exposure when he was rescued from his underground prison. Reidinger was trapped the day before by a fall of earth and timbers in the "slope mine" at nearby Klondike Mountain. Rescuers were able to free his head almost at once, but they worked gingerly throughout the day to extricate the remainder of his body. The youth was working at the slope mine when the fall occurred. His father and two brothers were busy at the coal hole with him and directed the rescue work. Reidinger was pinned about fifty feet from the opening of the hole. As rescue work progressed, he was given hypodermic injections and retained consciousness, directing the activities of his rescuers. [Source document.](#)
- Jun [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiation](#), Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Oscar Peek, 28, former Coal Township High School football player, was suffocated at the bottom of a 150-foot shaft near Shamokin. Twelve workers were overcome with Peek when a gasoline pump blew out a gasket in the coal hole and filled the shaft with carbon monoxide gas. Two members of the rescue squad from the Susquehanna Collieries descended into the hole with gas masks and brought out the victims. Jeff Peek, the dead man's brother, Joseph Pincoski and Edward Slatcoski, who were working with Oscar

Peek, were detained at Shamokin Hospital. Edward Caleskie, Lewis Borgetti, and George Paczkowski were treated and released. First aid was administered to six others at the scene to Lawrence Lukaski, Joseph Osiwalla, Arthur Roth, Peter Kramlich, Paul Cheslock and John Yadloski. At that time Peek's death was the third bootleg coal disaster in the Shamokin area within the previous week and the 25th bootleg coal hole fatality in the anthracite region since January 1, 1939 (six-month period). [Source document](#).

- Jul Oak Hill Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Minersville, Pennsylvania
One miner was rescued after an **undisclosed period** today from beneath a rockfall in the Oak Hill Coal Company mine, but all hope was abandoned for a companion trapped at the same time. Frank Grippe, 29, was carried from the shaft suffering principally from shock. He was taken to a hospital. A company official said, however, the rush of coal and rock buried Steve Hulock, 27, and there was- no possibility he could remain alive. The men were legitimately employed as "pillar robbers" — the term applied by miners to those removing supporting pillars of coal when a level has been worked out and is to be abandoned. Grippe was pinned by debris that covered all except his shoulder and head. Hulock was working in a pillar hole below. Diggers proceeded slowly because of the danger of another fall and did not expect to reach Hulock's body soon. [Source document](#).
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Greenbury, Pennsylvania
Raymond Levashausky, 21, was rescued tonight from a "bootleg" coal hole **six hours** after it collapsed on him. The trapped miner sustained life and avoided injury by clinging to a pocket in the side of the shaft. A companion, working at the surface, brought aid. The accident occurred at Greenbury, Pennsylvania, five miles from Pottsville. [Source document](#).
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Good Springs, Pennsylvania
John Carl, 30, was rescued from the bottom of a 400-foot coal hole where he was trapped the night before by a rock fall. He was not injured and went to his home after being hoisted to the surface by friends who worked throughout the night. They found him huddled in the safety of a passageway that branched off from the bottom of the slope at a forty-five-degree angle. The mishap occurred in an abandoned colliery a mile from Carl's hometown of Good Springs. A companion, Homer Smith, 45, scrambled to safety and summoned aid. [Source document](#).
- Sep Unnamed Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Rescue crews freed six miners **two hours** after they were trapped behind a rock fall deep in an anthracite mine. None was seriously injured. [Source document](#).
- Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Sheppton, Pennsylvania
Faust Bertie, 37, of Sheppton, was caught by a fall of coal and rock in an independent coal hole about 4 miles west of Sheppton and was rescued a **half hour** later. He was given first aid treatment and then directed to enter the State Hospital for observation.

His injuries were not regarded as serious. Bertie's plight was discovered by Adolph Ferrari, of Sheppton, who was walking by and heard the victim's moans. Help was immediately summoned, and the rescue was affected by 4 more miners. [Source document](#).

- Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Leon Landau, 38, was rescued alive after being entombed **10 hours** in a narrow rock hole of the small mine he operated with Clarence Haertter. Following his rescue. Landau was taken to Shamokin Hospital, where surgeons said his right side was partially paralyzed. He was also suffering from shock. Surgeons said the injured man's condition was "fair," and that barring the unexpected, he had a good chance for recovery. [Source document](#).
- Sep Wanamie Colliery Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Five mine workers caught behind a fall of roof yesterday in the Wanamie colliery, of the Glen Alden Coal Company, tapped an alarm by way of pipes and were rescued uninjured. The fall cut off the gangway of a slope and the five men were trapped back of the fall. The alarm signals given on water pipes were heard on the surface and within a short time a rescuing force started the work of clearing away the fall. While the rescuers worked, they kept up conversation with the trapped men, who were rescued after having been imprisoned about **four hours**. The trapped men were Edward Makowski, assistant mine foreman; Stanley Symolzak, miner; his son, Edward, laborer; Edward McCloskev, miner; and Edward Wozniak, laborer. [Source document](#).
- Nov Alaska Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Joseph Wydra, 34, and Robert Morgan, who were rescued after having been closed in several hours in the mines at the Alaska colliery were still feeling the effects of the dampness of their confine but otherwise were alright following their experience. The fall which trapped them was a heavy fall and enclosed the two men in the pillar hole until they were finally rescued nearly **5 hours** later. The night foreman discovered the plight of the miners and immediately summoned other bosses and workmen to begin the work of breaking through the barrier of rock and debris. [Source document](#).
- Nov Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Rescue workers found Edison Schlauch, 34, dead under tons of debris in a coal hole two miles northeast of Mahanoy City. Two companions, Anthony Nackoviski, 21, and Peter Bogdanovicz, 31, both of Shenandoah, were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. Both suffered shock and exposure but otherwise were uninjured. The Deputy Coroner said the cave-in buried Schlauch but that the two other men were caught near the roof of the hole in such a way that they were able to breathe. [Source document](#).
- Dec Leggett's Creek Colliery Fall of Person, North Scranton, Pennsylvania
Albert Owens, 17, was recovering from injuries and exposure after a fall down a deep shaft at the Leggett's Creek Colliery of the Penn Anthracite Company near his North Scranton home. He finally was rescued and brought to the surface after he had clung to

bracing timbers that had broken his fall. If he had lost his hold, police said, he would have plunged 700 feet to certain death. Young Owens and his brother, Frank, 15, were playing near the mine entrance, when Albert dropped down the chasm. The brother ran to a house a half-mile away and State Motor Police were notified. Patrolman John Owens first attempted to rescue the youth, but the rope was too short. A ladder then was placed across the shaft and with a longer rope Nicholas Williams descended and was pulled up with young Owens. Officials were informed there were no guard rails at the shaft. The victim was removed to Scranton State Hospital with a broken right leg, possible internal injuries. He suffered from exposure in the bitter cold in the mine shaft before his rescue. [Source document](#).

Dec Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pine Hill, Pennsylvania
"I'll be all right now," William Koons, 44, told bootleg miners as they rescued him from the bootleg coal hole on the Pine Hill Mountain in which he and his brother-in-law, Roy Kramer, 38, had been imprisoned. Kramer had been recovered dead 4½ hours earlier. But Koons' injuries and the shock of being buried alive — **more than 24 hours** — in a coal hole were too great and he died about 7 hours later in the Pottsville Hospital. [Source document](#).

— 1938 —

Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Minersville, Pennsylvania
George Todack was rescued from a bootleg coal hole he was entombed in a for **several hours**. He was transported to the Pottsville Hospital, suffering with a possible fracture of the left leg, shock, and exposure. His condition was listed as fair. [Source document](#).

Jan South Wilkes-Barre Colliery Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Michael Samhoski, 22, was rescued quickly after an **undisclosed period** after he was buried under a fall of rock in the South Wilkes-Barre Colliery of the Glen Alden Coal Company. He was taken to General Hospital, where he was treated for lacerations of his scalp, neck, face, left eyebrow and nose. [Source document](#).

Feb Lehigh Valley Mine Inundation, Jeanesville, Pennsylvania
Seven out of eight miners were rescued after being trapped for **18 hours** in the flooded Lehigh Valley Coal Company mine at Jeanesville. The eighth man, Paul Kuritz was found dead. The rescued men were Michael Olexa, Joseph Fidishin, Stephen Stefranko, John Lavaraski, Andrew Havrilla, William Davis, and Paul Molnar. [Source document](#).

Jun [Butler Slope Explosion](#), Pittston, Pennsylvania
Rescuers were successful in bringing six miners to the surface after an **undisclosed period**. Seriously injured were John Waskiewicz and Peter Morgantini. They were treated at the Pittston Hospital for skull fractures and severe burns. Others hurt were Warner Posdich, Peter Wasluk, Patrick Nardone, and Joseph Lusto. Lusto was the only

one who reached the surface unaided. Clutching an injured wrist, he staggered out of the mouth. His wife, screaming, darted from the crowd and into his arms.

- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Ashland, Pennsylvania
A father and son, trapped for **two days** in a makeshift Anthracite mine were freed by rescuers. A physician said both Peter Shinskowsky, 48, and Peter, Jr., 17, appeared to be in good condition. [Source document](#).
- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Michael Shurpenski, 45, recuperated in the Shamokin State Hospital after being saved from death in a mountain coal hole where he was entombed for nearly **an hour**. He was rescued by WPA workers employed on a nearby road project. [Source document](#).
- Aug Shawnee Mine No. 4 Cave-in, Peckville, Pennsylvania
Four miners were trapped for almost **nine hours** after a cave-in occurred in the No. 4 slope of the Shawnee Coal Company at Peckville, Pennsylvania. The cave-in occurred when a runaway loaded coal car demolished mine props at the mine entrance. The four miners were treated for shock at the Mid-Valley Hospital. [Source document](#).
- Aug Unnamed Anthracite Mine Powered Haulage Accident, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Five miners became trapped when deep in an Anthracite mine when a coal car they were riding hurtled out of control down a steep slope and crashed through timbers supporting the tunnel roof were rescued alive and unharmed after an **undisclosed period**. [Source document](#).
- Sep Oneida No. 1 Colliery Cave-in, Oneida, Pennsylvania
Andrew Kakley, 66, was rescued uninjured **three hours** after he was trapped behind a fall of coal and rock in the No. 13 east slope of No. 1 Colliery at Oneida, operated by the Maurie F. Coal Company. He was working with John Polegra and Steve Roble, both of whom were able to crawl to safety through an air hole. Their exit, however, which was on a steep pitch, was too much for the older member of the trio to navigate. Kakley was rescued by Andrew Mehalick. [Source document](#).
- Nov Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Two miners, William Bokuniewicz, 52, and Joseph Comisky, 18, were rescued **40 hours** after they were trapped in a bootleg Anthracite mine cave-in at Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. Hospital attaches said both were in fine shape but were being guarded against pneumonia. [Source document](#).
- Nov Lehigh Navigation Mine No. 6 Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Two men were rescued alive from beneath a rush of coal in a chute on the fourth level of the No. 6 mine of the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company. The accident victims, Michael Rock and Frank Byer, were engaged in placing plank in the chute when the rush occurred. Rock was completely covered, and Byer was covered to the shoulders.

Rescuers worked from 11:00 in the morning until 2:00 in the afternoon (**3 hours**) when they freed Rock, and an hour later (**4 hours**) succeeded in freeing Byer. Both men were able to walk from the workings and physicians said they had escaped serious injuries. Rock, who had been covered, told rescuers his head was protected between two large lumps of coal, permitting him to breathe. Byer's head was always free. Both men refused to go to Coaldale Hospital for physical checkups, declaring they had escaped injuries and did not suffer any material evidence of shock. Source document.

Dec Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Maryd, Pennsylvania
Frank Morzarko was rescued by nearby miners after being entombed 40 feet beneath the surface for **two hours**. The 50-year-old miner had been working in a bootleg coal hole operated by John Blonis at Maryd, near Tuscarora, when he was caught in a fall of coal and dirt. Other miners nearby rushed to liberate the entombed man. They were assisted in this work by investigating officers of the Tamaqua detail, State Motor Police. Rescue workers dug through from another bootleg hole to reach him and bring him to the surface two hours later. The man suffered only from shock. Source document.

Dec Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Trevorton, Pennsylvania
Anthony Makoski, 21, escaped serious injury and possible death when he was trapped in a bootleg coal hole by a slide while mining on Cameron Mountain, near Trevorton. Makoski, working with Theron Cressinger, and Ralph Holdren, Sunbury, R. D. 1, was in the hole when the slide started to cave in. Fortunately, he was not totally covered, the debris going to his shoulder line, and his two companions were able to extricate him. He was taken to Mary M. Packer hospital and given treatment. An x-ray picture showed that he was suffering with a fracture of the right leg in addition to minor bruises and cuts. He was reported in good condition. The fact that the hole had not been worked long and was not deep prevented the accident from being more serious. Source document.

— 1937 —

Jan Beaver Brook Colliery Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
A rescue crew worked for nearly **two hours** to dig William Letcher out from under a fall of rock in the Beaver Brook Colliery, where he was employed. His right side was paralyzed. Source document.

Mar Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After more than **12 hours**, six-foot, 330-pound Willie Politis was rescued from tons of earth and rock in a mountain coal hole. This was the second rescue needed for "Big Willie" within a few weeks. Source document.

One news article found spells his name William Tavolitis and states he was trapped for **15 hours** in the abandoned Burnside mine of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company. [Source document.](#)

- Mar Coaldale Colliery Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Joseph Filowic, a miner at the Coaldale colliery of the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company was rescued after being confined for **3 hours** by a fall of top rock. Rescue crews were at once rushed to the scene and worked feverishly to free the man. After being freed, Filowic was able to walk home evidently none the worse for his experience. [Source document.](#)
- Mar Miner Victim of Mysterious Ailment, Locust Gap, Pennsylvania
Bernard Cannon, 33, an employee at Locust Gap Colliery, was found lying unconscious on a mine gangway where he had been working alone. He was taken to the Fountain Springs Hospital, conscious and reported recuperating. The plight of Cannon was mysterious. The man didn't know what happened, whether he collapsed through illness, was overcome by gas, or was injured. Surgeons at the hospital, after restoring Cannon to consciousness, began a diagnosis of his condition, but had not determined the cause of his ailment. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Unnamed Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Anthony Vinscavage, 48, entombed for — **27 hours** — by a cave-in in a "bootleg" coal hole on Pitch Mountain was rescued and taken to Coaldale Hospital where physicians said he was uninjured but suffered from shock. Vinscavage was engaged with his son, John, 19, in placing timbers in the coal hole when the cave-in occurred. The son escaped and summoned help. Contact with Vinscavage was established by rescue squads who were able to give him a coat, food, and stimulants. When brought home from the coal hole, Vinscavage wanted to walk home to Tamaqua but yielded to the advice of his rescuers that he go to the hospital for examination. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Unnamed Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Eagle Hill, Pennsylvania
Independent miners, Stanley Pushka, 45, and Anthony Gristitus, 50, became entombed by a cave-in in their mining operation at Eagle Hill. Working on opposite sides of their shaft, 60 feet from the surface, the two men had plunged into openings on either side when they heard the roar of the fall. Gristitus, it is believed, fell into water-filled workings of an old mine vein below the surface of his own shaft. While rescue workers, laboring in cramped positions, dug and timbered their way ever nearer the spot where Gristitus' body was believed to be, those who were directing their efforts expressed the opinion that the dead miner would not be reached for some time. Meanwhile, Stanley Pushka, 45, had been removed alive by rescue workers at 6 a.m., after being trapped for nearly — **24 hours** — suffering only from shock and bruises. Pulled to the surface, Pushka walked away from the hole and said he didn't want to go to a hospital. Friends persuaded him to enter the Pottsville Hospital ambulance which had been on the scene since early the day before. [Source document.](#)

- May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
William Hosler, 26, was rescued after a **20-hour** entombment in a bootleg Anthracite coal hole. Hosler suffered possible fractures of his left arm and right leg. Twelve fellow miners helped to remove the tons of earth that trapped him. [Source document.](#)
- Jun Reliance Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
John Zankoskie, 50, was trapped for **four hours** in a rush of coal in the Primrose vein of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company's Reliance Colliery, near Mount Carmel. Throughout the greater part of the miners' period of imprisonment, Dr. A. B. Buczko, company compensation surgeon in the Mount Carmel district, was at the unfortunate man's side, administering surgical and medical treatment and aiding in maintaining his morale. Zankoskie was taken to the Shamokin Hospital, where he was under treatment for a mangled right leg and shock. He was expected to recover. [Source document.](#)
- Jun Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Dorne Starkey, 15, was rescued alive after being buried for an **undisclosed period** under a slide of rock in a coal hole just north of the Reading Company depot at Mahanoy City. His companion, Walter McClaren, 17, narrowly escaped the rush. McClaren rushed into Mahanoy City to summon aid, and within a short time a force of men arrived at the scene to find Starkey trapped with heavy rocks pressing against his right ankle. With considerable difficulty the youth was freed and found to have escaped with a crushed ankle and suffering from shock. [Source document.](#)
- Jul Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Llewellyn, Pennsylvania
Four miners trapped 400 feet underground by a fall of coal in a shaft near Llewellyn walked to the surface tonight, grinning over their escape and scorning medical attention. A crew of 50 workers dug through a 40-ton cave-in to get the men out. The rescue followed — **four hours** — of digging by works progress administration workers and miners in the shaft 3½ miles from Pottsville on the property of the Delaware and Hudson Coal Company. The four miners were Arthur Artz, 26; Al Acaley, 40; Albert Wise, 24; and Ralph Neidlinger, 45. Only Wise went to a hospital for examination after coming to the surface. He was found to have suffered no ill effects and went home. The others insisted they were "all right." [Source document.](#)
- Aug Unnamed Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Two miners are rescued, and 1 miner was killed when a cave-in occurred at an Independent Anthracite mine at Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. John Micomanico, 56, was rescued and hospitalized after being buried up to his neck for **8 hours**. Benedicto Riccoletti, 36, and buried up to his knees was freed after **2 hours**. A third miner, Angelo Lorendi, 48, was suffocated and died in the incident. [Source document.](#)
- Sep Jermyn Mine Cave-in, Scranton, Pennsylvania
John Wannish, 28, was rescued after being entombed in the Jermyn Mine of the Hudson Coal Company for an **undisclosed period**. Four other workers who were trapped with

Wannish were brought to the surface the night before around midnight. Suffering from head injuries, Wannish was taken to Carbondale Hospital. [Source document](#).

- Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Grier City, Pennsylvania
Gus Sincavage was rescued after an **undisclosed period** after being caught under a fall of coal and rock while working in a bootleg mine in Grier City. He was taken to the Locust Mountain Hospital for treatment. [Source document](#).
- Sep Gowen Colliery Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Michael Kowalsky, a miner at the Gowen colliery of the Buck Mountain Coal Company, was rescued alive yesterday after being buried under a fall of coal for **two hours**. Hospital attaches said that he walked from an automobile into the Hazleton Hospital. He escaped with abrasions of the face, nose, and legs. [Source document](#).
- Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Two miners entombed overnight in a mine air hole on the mountainside four miles south of Tamaqua, were rescued. William Lucas, 24, and Kenneth Lutz, 23, protesting that they were "all right," were rushed to a hospital for observation immediately after a rescue squad dug through the last of tons of rock to reach them. Lutz and Lucas, accompanied by a third miner whose name was not learned went out to the mountain hoping to find a vein of coal. Lutz and Lucas entered an air hole on the mountain, the third man, who remained on the surface, gave the alarm after a cave-in closed the entrance to the hole. [Source document](#).
- Sep Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Entombed **7½ hours** his first day in a bootleg coal hole operated by his three sons, Steven Koperna, 57, was rescued alive from his underground prison near Pine Knot Colliery in the Heckscherville Valley. Koperna was walled in when the workings collapsed. He was reported slightly injured, taken immediately to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Pottsville, to be treated for shock and exposure. Koperna said: "From the time I was trapped until I was rescued, I prayed to God to save me, and I promised Him I would never work another day in a bootleg coal hole. Now that I'm rescued alive, I thank God for my rescue and I'm going to keep my promise." [Source document](#).
- Nov Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania
Rescue workers freed the second of three bootleg miners trapped Friday by a cave-in in a makeshift mine slope near the Potts colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company. After an **undisclosed period**, Charles Ruganis, 34, was taken to a hospital in a serious condition with a fractured arm and a possible fracture of the pelvis. He was also suffering from shock. John Plichesski, 29, died soon after he was brought to the top of the slope the night before. Charles Bolinski, 55, remained in the mine. He had not been heard from since the cave-in occurred. [Source document](#).

Nov Lytle Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Two miners were saved from death in the Lytle Colliery where they had been imprisoned for more than **twenty-four hours**. Rescue crews, working in relays, rescued Harry Hunter, 44, and Albert Muraski, 34, after tunneling through many tons of rock and coal on the fourth level. They were taken to a Pottsville hospital for observation. Physicians said their condition was not serious but that they would be detained until all danger of pneumonia was past. [Source document](#).

— 1936 —

Jan Racketbrook Culm Bank Slide, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Rescue crews succeeded in extricating Joseph Zukowski, 16, from the Racketbrook culm bank where he had been trapped for **two hours** while digging coal. Zukowski and three neighborhood companions went to the Racketbrook dump to pick coal. Heavy frosts of recent weeks had cemented the surface, consisting mostly of slate and rock, into a hard mass and the four assumed they were working in comparative safety. In the midst of their labors, they sensed the danger of collapse and scrambled for safety. All but Zukowski escaped. He was at first buried up to his chest, then up to his neck from a further slide of material. Once freed, Zukowski was taken to St. Joseph's Hospital, where he was held for observation, suffering from shock and probable internal injuries. [Source document](#).

Feb Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Kulpmont, Pennsylvania
John Butcher, 42, had a miraculous escape from death when he was trapped for **three hours** beneath a fall of top coal in a bootleg coal hole. A nearby miner heard the fall and investigated and found the roof and side had fallen in. The rescue workers were amazed when they found Butcher alive when they uncovered his head. He was treated at the Shamokin hospital for shock and contusions of the back and right arm. [Source document](#).

Feb F. W. Jennings Coal Chute Asphyxiations, Pittston, Pennsylvania
Buried under 40 tons of coal for 15 minutes, Dominick Cardone, was suffocated and died at the retail coal chutes of F. W. Jennings in Pittston. A fellow worker, Nicholas Mancini, 24, was rescued before he smothered and was recovering from the shock of his experience in Pittston Hospital. Cardone was pronounced dead by Dr. B. S. Androsky and Dr. C. W. Prevost after rescuers had worked steadily for 45 minutes with a pulmotor to resuscitate him. The accident happened while Cardone and Mancini were in the pit attempting to open the frost-choked chute for a retail coal driver. Above them a hopper car was emptying coal into the bin. It was believed that the fuel loosened the frozen coal in the chute to send a deluge down upon the two men. Members of Eagle Hose Company and other men in the near vicinity hurried to the rescue. They reached Mancini within a few minutes but labored for a quarter hour before getting to Cardone. While the rescue work was in progress. Fred Donofrio, 48, who was in charge of

Cardone and Mancini, returned from a business errand to the central part of the city. He was overcome at the tragedy that occurred during his absence and was so affected by shock that he was taken to Pittston hospital for treatment. His condition was listed as good. [Source document.](#)

- Apr Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Anthony Treskoloski was rescued after **48 hours** from a cave-in near Shenandoah by fellow-workers who tunneled through the hillside beneath him. His condition was not serious. [Source document 1.](#) [Source document 2.](#)
- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Enock Kuklinski, 35, was rescued **22 hours** after being trapped in a 30-foot make-shift mine near Shamokin, Pennsylvania. He was hospitalized in serious condition. [Source document.](#)
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Simon Kapaczewski, an unhired miner, was rescued from his makeshift mine after he was entombed for **11 hours**. Kapaczewski was caught by a fall of rock far down the jagged hole yesterday afternoon. Other unhired miners heard his screams and for hours shoveled at the several tons of rock. He was removed to a hospital. [Source document.](#)
- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Edward Hartley, 23, was rescued **several hours** after he became a cave-in victim in a bootleg coal hole near Pottsville. Hartley was conscious when he was removed, however, he was unable to walk since he was engulfed in rock and dirt up to his neck. He was transported to the Pottsville Hospital where he was listed in fair condition. [Source document.](#)
- Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Williamstown, Pennsylvania
Peter Rono, 41, was seriously injured and his two companions escaped injury when a rush of coal caught them in a bootleg coal hole north of Williamstown. Rono was caught under the rush and had a vertebra in his back broken, several ribs fractured and a possible fracture of the left foot. He was rescued after an **undisclosed period** by his two companions, Archie Shuttlesworth and Paul Garber, who dodged the fall, and was taken to the hospital after receiving first aid treatment from Dr. William Connelly. He was conscious when admitted to the hospital and his condition regarded as fair. [Source document.](#)
- Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Green Ridge, Pennsylvania
Joseph Lashendock, 28, and his brother, Andrew, 23, of Marion Heights, were rescued after being covered by a rush of coal for nearly **2 hours**. Joseph had a probable fracture of the leg and minor bruises, while Andrew escaped with a few scratches. Rescuers went down immediately, and several times had the men almost free, only to see them covered again as the soft coal continued to rush in from the soft, two-foot coal vein from

above. A discharge of dynamite, fired at quitting time last night, is believed to have loosened the coal above, but the top did not break through until today. Following the heroic rescue, Joe was taken to the office of a local physician, while Andrew, suffering only from slight shock, was taken to his home. [Source document.](#)

Nov Abandoned Anthracite Mine Rescue, Morris Ridge, Pennsylvania
Rescuers found Andrew Chuba, 19, and Michael Bolick, 18, alive yesterday after — **7 hours** — entombment in a coal hole at nearby Morris Ridge. The youths were taken to an Ashland hospital suffering from shock. They were trapped after they entered an abandoned hole. [Source document.](#)

Nov Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Trevorton, Pennsylvania
Trapped in a rush of coal in an independent mine near Trevorton, Jacob Smeltz, Sr., 65, suffered severe internal injuries and his son, Jacob, Jr., escaped with minor contusions. The aged independent miner was in the Mary Packer Hospital, where his condition was reported as fair. Father and son were at work at the bottom of a 60-foot shaft when the fall occurred, burying both men. Jacob Smeltz, Jr., was buried to the shoulders but was able to shout to his brother-in-law, Kenneth Williams, who was at the head of the shaft. Descending to the foot of the shaft, Williams was successful in extricating Jacob, Jr., and the two then rescued the completely covered aged miner. It was with difficulty they managed to hoist the injured man to the surface, where a truck hurried him to the hospital at Sunbury. [Source document.](#)

Dec Alden Coal Company Hoisting Rescue, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Ten workers in the Alden Coal Company colliery were rescued after an **undisclosed period** from a cage hanging precariously in a 1,200-foot vertical shaft. The cage was jammed against the walls of the shaft by ice. The miners were brought to the surface one at a time with a block and tackle arrangement. [Source document.](#)

Dec Neighborhood Coal Hole Rescue, Scranton, Pennsylvania
The drive for legislation to prevent mine caves was given impetus with the rescue of four persons from a 35-foot pit in their own back yard and announcement of a program by the Scranton Surface Protective Association. Guido Ciaucci, 12, walked into his backyard and plunged headlong into the pit, caused by a mine cave-in. His sister, 19, answered his cries for help and also was trapped. She was followed by Mrs. Mary Zibi, 40, and her daughter, Esther, 5. Firemen rescued them with ladders. The protective association, pioneer in the fight to prevent caves, adopted a legislative program calling for creation of a State Anthracite Commission to have powers over the principal problems of the industry. The commission would deal with cave problems, mining and marketing, control of bootleg mining, and would study means to halt unemployment. [Source document.](#)

— 1935 —

- Jan Hammond Mine Elevator Entrapment, Girardville, Pennsylvania
Ten miners were imprisoned in a mine cage 350 feet underground for **four hours** when safety catches on a cage jammed as the men were being lowered into the Hammond mine at Girardville. Repairmen descended into the 750-foot-deep shaft and freed the trapped workers. [Source document](#).
- Jan Stanton Colliery Landslide, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
John Roberts, 56, was almost completely buried beneath a dirt bank slide at the Stanton Colliery at 6 p.m. the evening before, while he was picking coal. Unable to extricate himself, he endured a nightmare until employees on their way to work in the morning, **more than 12 hours** later, found him unconscious. Though suffering from shock as well as injuries to both legs, hips and abdomen, Roberts' condition was regarded as not serious. The slide that buried him also kept much of the cold away from his body, or he would have frozen to death, it was stated at the hospital. [Source document](#).
- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Marlin Lauer was seriously injured when he was covered by a fall of coal in a bootleg mine near Shamokin. He was rushed to the Shamokin State Hospital where an examination disclosed that he had a fracture of the left leg, chest injuries, lacerations of the scalp and face, and possible internal injuries. The accident occurred shortly after Lauer and several companions started work in their operation. Lauer was at the bottom of the hole when the fall occurred. He was rendered unconscious when a piece of coal struck him on the head. He was revived by rescuers after being carried to the surface after an **undisclosed period**. [Source document](#).
- Feb St. Clair Coal Co. Mine Cave-in, St. Clair, Pennsylvania
Trapped by a fall of rock for an **undisclosed period** at the St. Clair Coal Company, Franklin Zondorhin, 49, was admitted to the Pottsville Hospital late last night for treatment of his injuries. His face and head were lacerated severely in the mishap and numerous sutures were necessary to close the wounds. [Source document](#).
- Feb Trapped Dog Rescue, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Seven coal miners pitched in and helped their comrade, George Erbe, rescue his fox terrier dog, trapped 30 feet below solid rock. The pup called "Bum" was caught beneath the ridge of rock when he and three other dogs were chasing a fox. The other dogs came out at the call of their masters, but "Bum" did not appear. Erbe summoned his miner friends who brought picks, shovels, and dynamite. Though the weather was near zero, the men blasted away at the rock and chipped at the boulders for **four days**. After four days of digging, one of the men crawled down into the hole and heard the faint harking of "Bum." The rescuers reached him within a few minutes. They found "Bum"

whimpering from hunger and cold, but otherwise the pup was uninjured. [Source document.](#)

- Apr Abandoned Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Newtown Hill, Pennsylvania
Roy Gauntlett, 32, was rescued from an abandoned mine working at nearby Newtown Hill, where he was held trapped by a fall of coal for **eight hours**. Gauntlett was taken to a hospital to be treated for exposure and exhaustion. A score of men tunneled through the fall to the spot where he was buried, while he directed the rescue. [Source document.](#)
- May Simpson Mine Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
George Gill, 40, has his foreman John Yancheck to thank for being rescued alive after being trapped under a fall of rock in a slope of the Simpson Coal Company when Yancheck imperiled his own life to return to his fellow workman. With only his hands and a stick, the only instrument available, Yancheck removed a huge pile of loose culm and dirt from his head, saving him from being smothered while others were coming to his rescue. He was left with all except his head buried under a mass of rock and dirt, and it was nearly **five hours** that his body was entirely uncovered, permitting his removal. Gill was transferred by ambulance to St. Joseph's Hospital where he was found to be not dangerously hurt, suffering from bruises of the body and shock. [Source document.](#)
- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Trevorton, Pennsylvania
Charles Hauser, 48, sustained a compound fracture of the right leg, lacerations and other injuries of the head, face, and body yesterday while robbing pillars in a coal hole near Trevorton. Working on a pitch, he lost his balance when a rock fell out of the top and struck him on the head. Hauser, plunging down the hole, caused a slide which buried him for **fifteen minutes**. Unconscious when rescued, he was taken to the Shamokin State Hospital for treatment. [Source document.](#)
- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiations, Bunker Hill, Pennsylvania
The presence of mind and courage of Bert Hoffa, 15, was responsible for the rescue of the boy's grandfather, John Bainbridge, from a damp-filled mine hole on the mountain north of Bunker Hill. Bainbridge, a former borough fire chief, was at work in the mine hole with his grandson when he was overcome by black damp. The boy, weakened himself and barely conscious, managed to drag his grandfather 100 feet underground to a point where the air was clearer. There, almost exhausted but realizing that both might die if help was not secured, he climbed to the surface. The boy's sudden emergence into pure air caused him to collapse unconscious at the top of the miniature mine, where he was found by a party of miners working nearby. He was taken to his home, where he was revived by a physician. Both damp victims would recover, physicians said. Miners who found Hoffa and participated in the rescue of Bainbridge declared that the boy's feat of dragging his grandfather to safety was almost unbelievable in view of the youth's slight physique and the fact that he was severely affected by the damp himself. [Source document.](#)

- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, West Glendower, Pennsylvania
Trapped in an independent mine operation at West Glendower, Edward Kimmel, 30, was rescued alive **four hours** later and escaped with comparatively minor injuries. Kimmel and two fellow workers were driving an independent mine hole when the workings collapsed, trapping Kimmel behind the fall. His companions summoned aid from nearby holes, and within a short, time a large force of men was engaged in removing debris. After four hours, the mass of rock and coal was penetrated, and Kimmel was found alive. A physician gave Kimmel medical and surgical attention at the scene, and he was conveyed to his home where he was expected to recover. Source document.
- Jul Bootleg Anthracite Mine Asphyxiations, Wiggans, Pennsylvania
Three miners were overcome by black damp after being trapped in a bootleg coal hole near Wiggans and transported to the Locust Mountain Hospital for treatment. Whether or not the afterdamp followed a discharge of dynamite, or an explosion of gas had not been determined. Those removed from the hole and rushed to the hospital in a truck were: Joseph Costa, Emanuel Garcia, and James Gonzales. Their condition was reported as good. Source document.
- Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania
Mine workers who worked all night, rescued one of two men entombed in a "bootleg" coal mine, 2 miles south of Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania.
- Oct Independent Mine Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Peter Baxter, 38, was released from his underground prison **22 hours** after he and another miner were caught in a coal slide producing a cave-in. The incident occurred at the independent mine owned by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company. The doctor at the Ashland Hospital reported Baxter's condition as good, saying he only appeared to be suffering from shock and exposure. The other miner, John Stankowski, was believed to be dead. Source document.
- Dec Lehigh Navigation No. 9 Colliery Cave-in, Panther Creek Valley, Pennsylvania
Steve Serina was rescued alive after he had been trapped **several hours** back of a heavy rush of rock and coal at the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company's No. 9 colliery in the Panther Creek valley. Serina was at work alone on the gangway at the time of the accident. Other workmen had gone from the working place to obtain required material. When they returned it was to discover the fall and the entombment of their fellow workman. Rescue forces worked heroically several hours to find Serina safely hidden on a ledge. He was uninjured. Source document.

— 1934 —

- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Taylor, Pennsylvania
Trapped for **more than two hours** in a cave-in which occurred in a bootleg mining operation in Taylor, Dominick Coppola, 22, was found suffering from internal injuries and shock when rescued by Scranton and Taylor police. He was taken to the State Hospital. Coppola and Samuel Karus were digging coal, police said, when the cave occurred, burying Coppola to his waist. Karus escaped unhurt and gave the alarm. [Source document](#).
- Feb Jermyn Mine Roof Fall, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Three miners, trapped by a roof fall in the Jermyn mine of the Hudson Coal Company were rescued unharmed. They were entrapped for — **three hours** — before rescuers succeeded in digging to them through tons of debris. The victims were Tony Roman, his son, Joseph, and Michael Loftus. [Source document](#).
- Mar Indian Head Colliery Cave-in, Tremont, Pennsylvania
Earl Beard, 30, had a narrow escape from death or serious injury when he was entombed for **three hours** at the Indian Head Colliery near Tremont. Following his removal from the debris Beard was taken to the Pottsville Hospital where it was found he was only suffering from shock and lacerations. Beard was employed by the Bazley Construction Company, in a stripping operation at the Indian Head Colliery. He was drilling coal at the time of the accident. A fall of dirt and coal occurred, completely burying him. Fellow workers immediately started rescue work to uncover the buried man. Dr. J. W. Schultz, of Tremont, gave first aid treatment and removed him to the hospital, where his condition was reported as good. [Source document](#).
- May 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, today 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. [Source document](#).
- May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tremont, Pennsylvania
Frank Houser, 44, of Tremont, had a miraculous escape from death by suffocation when he was buried yesterday under a rush of coal near his home while engaged with other workmen in screening culm from an abandoned bank. He was caught in a hole when the sides collapsed and was held prisoner **15 minutes** before fellow toilers effected his rescue. Houser, victim of internal injuries and shock, was removed to the Pottsville hospital. [Source document](#).

- May **Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pine Grove, Pennsylvania**
Entombed for **seven hours** James Farrell, 22, of Lorberry Junction, near Pine Grove, was rescued from a mine hole in which he was digging coal. Rushed to a hospital, he was treated for shock and held for observation of possible internal injuries. Farrell was digging with another man on a private mining property when the timbers gave way and buried him under a rush of earth. His companion escaped. [Source document.](#)
- Jun **Dorrance Colliery Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania**
Buried beneath a fall of coal, Joseph Swelgoskie suffered possible fractures of the small bones of his left foot at the Dorrance Colliery of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company. He was rescued by fellow workmen within a few minutes after the fall occurred. Admitted to General Hospital, Swelgoskie was reported in good condition. [Source document.](#)
- Jun **Unnamed Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Aristes, Pennsylvania**
Entombed for nearly — **eight hours** — in a coal hole sixty feet deep near Aristes, Stephen Popilchock, aged seventeen, summoned enough strength to escape from ambulance attendants and make off to his home in a friend's automobile, following his rescue. While being carried from the mine hole on a stretcher to the ambulance, Popilchock startled his rescuers by suddenly leaping from the stretcher and running to the automobile of a friend, he was driven home and apparently was none the worse for his experience. [Source document.](#)
- Jun **Abandoned Diamond Colliery Rescue, Scranton, Pennsylvania**
The wanderings of two North Scranton boys in the darkness of the abandoned Diamond Colliery of the Glen Alden Coal Company, ended after — **75 hours** — of torturous travel through pockets of blackdamp and perilous cave squeeze areas. Their underground journey was terminated in a thrilling rescue by Fuhrman Ballus, who on his second attempt in two days to locate the boys, found them without lights, huddled against the gob. The youths, Walter Gilasavage, 13, and John Stasko, Jr., were sadly the worse for their experience when brought to the surface. Both boys were exceedingly nervous and exhausted almost to the point of emaciation. The youngsters each lost nine or ten pounds in the adventure and had been without food for three days. The only water available was the subterranean drippings of sulphur water. Gilasavage was taken to the state hospital and was examined. His physical condition was reported as good considering shock and his long vacation from the dinner table. Stasko was treated by a physician and was removed to his home. Both boys had bruises on the leg from tearing along the road and vaulting over fall of roof. The boys were so weakened as to be scarcely able to follow Ballus over the gangway as he piloted them to the surface. [Source document.](#)
- Aug [Bootleg Anthracite Mine Rockslide](#), Coal Castle, Pennsylvania
William Jones, 35, from Minersville, Pennsylvania was rescued from a rockslide in a Bootleg anthracite mine at Coal Castle, Pennsylvania, where he was trapped for more than **24 hours**.

- Aug Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Upper Donaldson, Pennsylvania
Harold Dinger was entombed in a bootleg mine hole when a rush of coal and debris covered him as he and a group of men including his father and brothers were working the hole. He was rescued practically uninjured after an **undisclosed period**. The group, including his father, H. Dinger, a brother, Lester, Herman, and Harry Myers were working the coal hole with Harold in the hole digging. He dislodged a large rock which precipitated the slide. Aside from shock and bruises he was uninjured. Source document.
- Sep Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Turkey Run, Pennsylvania
John Birchess, 22, was rescued after being trapped for **four hours** in a coal hole near Turkey Run. He was covered almost to the neck, suffering injuries of the left chest, left hip, both knees and legs. He was removed to the Locust Mountain Hospital, where his condition was said to be serious. Birchess was working an "independent" mine hole with his partner when he was caught by a fall of dirt and rock. Source document.
- Sep Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Wiggans, Pennsylvania
Michael Mensick, 32, of Shenandoah, was at work in an independent mine operation near Wiggans when he was buried under a rush of rock and debris. Fellow workmen quickly effected rescue of the unfortunate miner, but not before he had suffered severe head and chest injuries. He was taken to the Locust Mountain state hospital, at Shenandoah, for treatment. Source document.
- Oct Bootleg Mine Cave-in, New Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
John Coyle, age 63, was rescued after **20 hours** from a bootleg mine hole near New Philadelphia. Coyle owed his life-saving rescue to a group of volunteers that drove a 90-foot parallel shaft to reach the trapped miner. Physicians at the Pottsville Hospital reported that Coyle was suffering from severe shock and exposure. Source document.
- Oct West End Mine Cave-in, Mocanaqua, Pennsylvania
Silver Miczalski, 28, was rescued after being trapped in a slide of coal for an **hour and 20 minutes** at the West End Coal Company in Mocanaqua, Pennsylvania. He was completely covered, but loose debris around his head allowed him to breathe until rescued. Source document.

— 1933 —

- Jan Bootleg Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Buried to his neck when a slide caught him at the bottom of a bootleg mine hole, Charles Zawacki, 38, had a miraculous escape from agonizing death, 40 feet below the surface. Volunteer workers rescued Zawacki alive after **15 hours'** laborious shoveling and timbering. The man was taken to the Shamokin State Hospital, where an X-ray examination revealed no broken bones. He was sent to the men's ward, however, to be

treated for shock and exposure. Zawacki was digging coal at the bottom of the narrow pit when one side caved in, burying him to his neck. Following the cave-in, a companion went down into the hole and raked the loose dirt and rock away from the entombed man's neck so he could breathe easier. The task of uncovering the man was then begun. [Source document.](#)

- Jan Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Imprisoned by a fall of earth and silt for more than **six hours**. Joseph Symborski, 21, was released from a mine hole in the vicinity of the old Lehigh Valley railroad cut west of the Elmwood slope. Reports from the Locust Mountain hospital said that his condition was improving. His injuries were announced as contusions of the body. [Source document.](#)
- Feb Anthracite Bootleg Mine Cave-in, North Scranton, Pennsylvania
Three North Scranton youths were rescued after they had been trapped behind a cave in a bootleg mine operation not far from their homes, suffered no injuries, but were badly scared when taken out of the mine by rescuers. The trio, James Walsh, 17; John Hopkins, 20; and a youth known only as "Chicago" had entered the mine opening the previous night at 11 o'clock. They had been digging coal 16 minutes, police said, when a cave occurred and blocked the opening. Other young men outside gave the alarm, but it required **more than two hours** to dig through the cave to reach the young men held prisoners by the fall of coal and rock. [Source document.](#)
- Mar Abandoned Sayre Colliery, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Bootleg anthracite miner, John Cheslock, was rescued from the abandoned Sayre colliery near Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania. In a state of collapse, but conscious, Cheslock was rescued following a **4-day** entrapment.
- Jun Madeira Hill Mine Cave-in, Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania
Joseph Terescavage, a 51-year-old miner, from Shamokin, PA was rescued after having been entombed for **two days** in the collapsed Madeira Hill mine near Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania.
- Jul Locust Gap Mine Roof Fall, Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania
Twelve miners were rescued after having been trapped for **three hours** by a fall of coal in the Locust Gap mine operated by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company at Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania.
- Sep Truesdale Colliery Inundation, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
After a **14-hour** entrapment, four miners dug through cave-ins and waded through neck-deep water to reach rescue from the flooded Truesdale Colliery. [Source document.](#)

Oct Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Michael Lukash, 45, was rescued after being trapped for **17 hours** in a makeshift mine near Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. The walls collapsed as he was carrying out one of the few remaining sacks of coal. [Source document](#).

Nov [South Scranton Mine Cave-in](#), Scranton, Pennsylvania
Five men were rescued from a mine after an **undisclosed period** in South Scranton, Pennsylvania following a cave-in. Two of the men, Paul Mariello and Carmel Comparta, were seriously hurt, suffering from internal injuries. The other three men left the scene before they could be identified.

— 1932 —

Feb Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Port Carbon, Pennsylvania
Joy of the wife and three children of Joseph Datorick, 28, of Port Carbon, was turned to sorrow, with announcement by surgeons at the Pottsville hospital that the entombed miner rescued after having been held prisoner **24 hours** 40 feet below the surface in a bootleg mine shaft is dying. Datorick was apparently unhurt when rescued last night, and his family rejoiced after a night and a day of terrible uncertainty. No bones were broken, but this afternoon it was discovered he was not only suffering from serious internal injuries, but also from excessive loss of blood. Surgeons said there was a great pressure constantly on the miner's body from the tons of earth under which he was buried. The pressure forced blood out of the lacerations and scratches he suffered about his entire body from the jagged rocks which closed him in. [Source document](#).

Apr Lehigh Navigation Co. No. 8 Colliery Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Buried up to his neck in coal and debris since up for an **undisclosed period**, John Slavy, a miner, was rescued. Slavy was trapped in the No. 8 Colliery of the Lehigh Navigation Co. when a rib in a gangway collapsed. Taken to the Coaldale State hospital, his condition was reported as good. [Source document](#).

May Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Milton Frantz, 20, Tamaqua, buried in a sitting posture for **22 hours** and rescued apparently unhurt died suddenly at the Coaldale State Hospital, a victim of "shock" according to the hospital records. Frantz was removed from a mine breach in which he had been trapped at the bottom of a narrow hole by a collapse of earth while he was digging for coal in a "homemade mine." The hole was so narrow that only one rescuer at a time could dig his way toward the trapped youth. Most of the time there was no room to swing a shovel and the dirt had to be scooped away by the handful. Meantime Frantz sat in a cramped position unable to move. A heavy iron plate, used to support the sides of the excavation, lodged in the opening just above Frantz's head and kept him from being completely buried and suffocated. Acetylene torches cut the plate away. The plate was so near Frantz's head that he suffered burns from the flame. After the

removal of the plate, Frantz was fed and given restoratives. He was conscious and conversed with the rescue party, all expert miners. When he was finally freed and taken to the hospital, doctors report he was not seriously injured. But shock and exposure contributed to a relapse which caused his death unexpectedly. [Source document.](#)

- Jul Yatesville Mine Cave-in, Pittston, Pennsylvania
Two unemployed miners were killed when they were trapped in a mine tunnel at the Yatesville mine. The roof of the mine opening collapsed. **A third unnamed man was rescued alive after an undisclosed period.** The dead were Salvatore Mantagna, 39, and Sam Duminuco, 30. The three became trapped when the roof collapsed, and a slide of earth blocked the opening of the tunnel. One of the men managed to escape when he heard the rush of earth but too late to signal his fellow workmen. According to officials at the workings, the men were illegally bootlegging coal. Police had begun a campaign of arrests to break up the practice because of the numerous fatalities. [Source document.](#)
- Oct Unnamed Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pittston, Pennsylvania
Trapped by a cave-in 1,000 feet underground in Pittston, Pennsylvania, Park Tucker, 21, was rescued after an **undisclosed period.** His resulting injuries included a severed arm and his legs broken in 13 places. His two work companions were killed in the disaster. While trapped Mr. Tucker prayed. "Deliver my body and soul, Lord." he said he prayed," and I'll promise to preach the Gospel the rest of my life." Mr. Tucker stated that he spent 13 months in a hospital and resumed his schooling in the seventh grade at the age of 23. He later attended Wheaton Academy in Illinois and Houghton College in New York in preparation for ministerial studies. Mr. Tucker graduated from the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and on October 1, 1943, he was ordained before a congregation that packed the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Chillicothe, Ohio, fulfilling the vow he made years before. [Source document.](#)
- Nov Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine Cave-in, Avoca, Pennsylvania
Robert Hughes and Joseph P. Tigue helped to rescue Thomas A. Coleman and Louis J. Doran from a mine cave-in, Avoca, Pennsylvania, November 8, 1932. While Coleman, 37, miner, and Doran, 45, mine laborer, were digging coal in an abandoned entry that connected with a narrow shaft, a collapse occurred. Coleman was buried under shale at the bottom of the shaft. Doran was knocked to the floor of the entry and lay under shale four feet deep 18 feet from the shaft. Using their hands, Hughes, 50, miner, and Tigue removed the shale from Coleman. Occasionally shale sloughed off the sides and dropped from overhead. In three hours, they removed enough shale to free Coleman, who was pulled out. Hughes and Tigue worked all afternoon and far into the night to make a trench to Doran. They erected posts, piled the shale behind boards resting against the posts, and finally reached Doran. While they were removing debris from over him, the sides of the entry caved in. Hughes and the other man ran to the shaft and were hoisted out. During the remainder of the night and the next morning all the shale and other debris were removed by men under safe conditions, adequate braces having been placed, and Doran was taken out. He suffered injuries from which he died seven

hours later. Both men were given the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

- Nov Brookside Colliery Inundation, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Four miners were rescued after an **undisclosed period** from the flooded Brookside Colliery near Pottsville, Pennsylvania. A shot fired by workers released an underground pocket of water. The four trapped men waited for hours for the aid they knew was coming toward them. Charles Deichert, 23; and Simon Bohr, 36; drowned in the incident. [Source document](#).
- Nov Pennsylvania Colliery Cave-in, Green Ridge, Pennsylvania
Albert Dellabrida, 28, narrowly escaped death when a rock estimated at a ton rolled upon him at the Pennsylvania Colliery at Green Ridge. Dellabrida and his three buddies, Sylvester Getrick, Mike Kulick, Ralph Bridy were working in No. 1 slope, east No. 5 vein at the time of the mishap. All the miners but Dellabrida escaped from a large piece of top rock which fell near where the group was working. The unfortunate miner failed to escape from the scene in time to avoid the rock which rolled upon him and held him prisoner for a **half hour**. The three buddies, with the aid of another succeeded in extricating the injured man from beneath the rock. Dellabrida was rushed to the Shamokin state hospital where his condition was reported to be not serious. His injuries were confined to the body. [Source document](#).

— 1931 —

- Feb Powderly Colliery Roof Fall, South Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Two of the five Carbondale men, Frank Cretelli and Alex Docalavich, who were entombed in the Powderly colliery of the Hudson Coal Company, South Carbondale, at 10:30 o'clock yesterday morning, were rescued alive by fellow workmen. Neither was seriously injured but both suffered greatly from shock following their removal from their hazardous positions in which they were forced to remain for more than **seven hours**. The body of John Caruso, one of five men entombed was recovered and no trace has been found of John Rogish, 62, and Thomas Chadwick, 59, both of Carbondale. [Source document](#).
- Feb Enterprise Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Bidding one another goodbye when they were trapped beneath a fall of coal and rock at the Enterprise colliery, Ralph Kerstetter, 38, and Clement Poliniak, 37, awaited an anticipated second fall which they knew would completely cover and smother them, when the former suddenly detected a small aperture, leading from the prison-like cell in the mines and through which he made exit and subsequently rescued his companion, the latter having suffered numerous injuries when crushed under rock and coal. Kerstetter escaped with minor injuries.

Kerstetter and Poliniak were employed as buddies in a breast at Enterprise slope. The former was engaged in drilling a hole in rock while Poliniak was close by shoveling down coal and rock when without the slightest warning the liners supporting great quantities of rock and debris broke out directly over the two workmen, pinioning them beneath.

Poliniak was buried to a point above his waist, while Kerstetter was in a more secure position. Imprisoned in the darkened underground cell, as their carbide lights had been extinguished by the unexpected rush, the two men were horrified to hear the top over them rumbling and cracking and evidencing a second sudden rush. It was while thus imprisoned and certain of the coming of death, that the men exchanged their farewell blessings upon each other and then awaited the coming of the expected fall.

Cautiously moving one hand and arm, Kerstetter was successful in reaching to his pocket despite the tight quarters, obtained a match and lighted his carbide lamp. Slowly moving it about in search of a possible means of exit from behind the fall, the workman warned his buddy not to struggle and after a time Kerstetter was successful in making a small aperture. Gradually he widened the opening until it was of sufficient size to permit him to crawl thru.

Once free of the debris and disregarding the threatened break at any moment of the top, Kerstetter quickly set about to effect the rescue of Poliniak, who was tightly held behind the shattered liners and beneath rock and coal. After considerable work, Kerstetter rejoiced in being able to extricate his painfully injured buddy, whom he dragged to a place of safety while he went to summon aid.

Both men were removed to the emergency hospital at the colliery, where their injuries were dressed, after which they were taken to their respective homes. Kerstetter suffered but slight bruises and lacerations, while Poliniak was less fortunate, having been badly injured about the legs, hips and back and it will be several weeks before he will be able to resume work. It was estimated that the men were held prisoners in the fall for **more than two hours** before Kerstetter was successful in effecting an opening to make his escape and then effect the rescue of his buddy. Source document.

Apr Tunnel Ridge Colliery Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
After being entombed in a gangway at the Tunnel Ridge colliery for about **eight hours**, rescue crews found Charles Walaconis uninjured. Twenty feet of debris separated Walaconis from freedom. When the entombed man responded to tapping signals on a pipeline that ran through the debris, the rescue party worked faster in the hope of reaching the man before serious injury or death could occur. He was guided by instructions carried over the pipeline and was finally taken to his home without a scratch. Source document.

- Aug Richards Colliery Coal Rush, Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania
Joseph Yusinski, a miner employed at the Richards Colliery of the Susquehanna Collieries Company, had a miraculous escape from sometime later by a force of rescuers. Yusinski was employed as a miner in a breast in the west No. 10½ vein, first lift, south dip workings. He was taking a skip off the rib of the breast to prepare a manway when he started a serious rush of coal. Realizing the danger, Yusinski flattened himself against the rib at a heading, thus leaving a small air pocket about him when he became buried in the coal. Rescuers were rushed to the scene and a **half-hour** later succeeded in rescuing the miner alive. He had escaped with a few minor bruises. [Source document.](#)
- Oct [Mocanaqua Mine Explosion](#), Mocanaqua, Pennsylvania
Two miners who never gave up hope after 4 comrades were killed in an explosion in the Mocanaqua Mine of the West End Coal Company were rescued after **133 hours** of entrapment. The survivors were John Thomashunis, 40, and John Metz, 22.
- Oct Kehley Run Colliery Coal Rush, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
John Burgness, who was picking coal on the rock bank of the Kehley Run Colliery, was caught in a rush, and was buried to his hips for about **one-half hour** before rescue workers could remove him from a very dangerous position. The men who formed the rescue party had to work very carefully due to the condition of the mine breach in which Burgness was held prisoner. They finally succeeded in getting the man out of the hole and to safety. It was said at the Kehley Run colliery office that the man was not injured. The accident occurred about 1,000 feet east of the breaker. [Source document.](#)

— 1930 —

- Jan Jermyn Mine Cave-in, Jermyn, Pennsylvania
Patrick McAndrew was rescued **2 hours** after being trapped by a large cave-in at the Hudson Coal Company's Jermyn mine. He sustained a broken hip and was recovering at the State Hospital in Scranton. Three others died in the same incident. They were Harold Vansickle, James Charles, and William McAndrew, Patrick's brother. [Source document.](#)
- Feb Ellangowan Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Felix Zegunis was rescued after an **8-hour** entrapment in the Ellangowan Colliery at Pottsville, PA. A fall of coal occurred in the pillar hole, middle split, knocking out timber and shutting off his escape. The rock hole was closed above the fall. The miner's buddy was coming up the manway when the fall occurred. He gave the alarm, and, in a few minutes, officials had a big force of rescuers at work. [Source document.](#)
- Feb Wildcat Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy Plane, Pennsylvania
George Schadel was painfully injured when entombed as the result of a fall of coal at the "Wildcat," formerly the Lawrence Colliery, located near Mahanoy Plane. Schadel, a

loader boss, and Elmer Evans, a motor runner, entered the mine early in the morning to reset some timbers at the bottom of the slope. They were engaged in the work when a terrific fall of top occurred, burying Evans beneath it and entombing Schadel back of it. Other workmen heard the fall and rushed to the scene. From behind the fall, they heard the moans of Schadel and later learned from him that Evans had been caught under the rush of coal. Hurried rescue work was started but it was not until 1:00 p.m. that the rescue party succeeded in reaching Evans' body. He had met instantaneous death; his body having been frightfully crushed. An hour later Schadle was released from back of the fall, suffering from severe bruises. He declared that when the fall occurred, he had stepped back to get some tools, thus miraculously escaping the fate of his fellow workman. [Source document.](#)

- Aug Scranton Mine Subsidence, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Ralph Massankiel, age 25, and William Williams, age 52 were caught in a residential fall of ground in Scranton, Pennsylvania which trapped them for **9 hours**. Williams body was free above his hips and no more than Massankiel's head was free during their ordeal. This was the second of 2 subsidence events that took place. The first occurred at 2 a.m. and the one which caught these two men occurred while workmen were repairing damages from the first. [Source document.](#)
- Aug Hudson Coal Mine No. 3 Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Edward DeLaney and Nicholas Muschamto, miners at the No. 3 shaft, Hudson Coal company, were entombed for more than **six hours** by a rock fall on Saturday afternoon and made their way to safety only after rescue workers drove a tunnel through the debris. Presence of mind of the men, who are said to have run behind the fall as they heard the roof cracking over them, saved the two from being crushed under the rock and coal. Neither of the men was injured. The rescue squad brought the entombed men to safety without any great difficulty. [Source document.](#)
- Oct West End Mine Cave-in, Mocanaqua, Pennsylvania
August Carucci, 30, was resting at home after being trapped in a cave-in for — **14 hours** — in the mine of the West End Coal Company at Mocanaqua, Pennsylvania. [Source document.](#)
- Nov Lehigh Navigation No. 1 Colliery Cave-in, Cranberry, Pennsylvania
Florian Pucchule, 45, a miner employed by the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company, was instantly killed at 9 o'clock yesterday morning when he was caught under a rush of coal in the No. 1 slope of the Cranberry operations. He was completely buried, and it required six hours to extricate the body. Pucchule's laborer had a narrow escape from also being buried alive. He escaped the main rush of coal was quickly rescued unhurt after an **undisclosed period**. [Source document.](#)

— 1929 —

- Jan Shenandoah Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Anthony Benasheski was rescued after being entombed for **one hour** behind a fall of rock at the West Shenandoah colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company. He suffered a fractured ankle. [Source document.](#)
- Feb No. 8 Mine Cave-in, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Imprisoned — **eight hours** — beneath slides of coal and earth that buried him twice when rescue was in sight, Robert Parfitt, 25, was liberated alive from a shaft in the Number 8 mine at Coaldale. He had been kept alive during the day by means of oxygen lines brought to him when the debris was first removed from about his head, shortly after the accident happened. The debris was cleared, and an oxygen line placed at the nose of Parfitt as the workers began clearing the remainder of his body. They had nearly liberated him when another fall buried Parfitt again. The work was resumed once more and was near completion during the afternoon when another fall imprisoned Parfitt. The work was resumed a fourth time and the workers were able to bring Parfitt from under the debris. Parfitt was taken to the Coaldale hospital where he was reported as resting comfortably and was expected to recover. [Source document.](#)
- May Nesquehoning Colliery Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
John Prelana, 40, was rescued after being buried alive for **fourteen hours** from a fall of rock in the No. 2 shaft of the Nesquehoning colliery, near Tamaqua. Andrew Sweetick, 38, died in the accident. [Source document.](#)
- Aug Sherman Mine Explosion, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
After an explosion struck the Sherman Coal Company mine near Pottsville, Pennsylvania, forty trapped miners were rescued after **1½ hours** of absolute horror and hopelessness. A second explosion rocked the colliery, sending another sheet of flame roaring through the corridor. This flame seared the rescuers "like a breath of hell," as one of them described it. The rescue squad made its painful way back to the surface and the four injured were rushed to a hospital. The third blast occurred, literally blowing the imprisoned men through the chute to safety. All the men who were in the mine made it safely to the open. [Source document.](#)

— 1928 —

- Feb Buck Run Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
After being shut in by a rush of coal in the Buck Run Colliery for **24 hours**, John Drenosky was rescued and removed from the mine uninjured. [Source document.](#)

- Feb Potts Colliery Cave-in, Ashland, Pennsylvania
Henry Knock, 51, was entombed for **three hours** in the Potts Colliery at Ashland, Pennsylvania. He became trapped when falling timber caused the top to give way and close in on him. [Source document.](#)
- Jul [Locust Springs Colliery Inundation](#), Locust Gap, Pennsylvania
A dam burst without warning and flooded the shaft in the [Locust Gap Colliery](#). Hearing the rush of the water, forty-nine men barely had time to reach a travelway, crawl into safety holes and make their way to the No. 1 level where they were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. Only one of the men, James Carey, of Girardville, required medical attention. He suffered from shock.
- Nov Anthracite Mine Hole Fall of Person, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Anthony Ravenis, age 5, was playing with companions when he slid under a guard rail about a deep mine hole and dropped into the water far below. He managed to hang on to some bushes until companions got ropes and help and succeeded in getting him from the hole. [Source document.](#)

— 1927 —

- Feb [Henry Clay Colliery](#), Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Joseph Schultz, a miner at the Henry Clay Colliery near Shamokin, Pennsylvania was entombed **4½ hours** in a blind heading after a pillar crumbled when disturbed by a shot. He was penned behind hundreds of tons of coal and rock in a space about 3 feet wide and 6 feet long. Rescuers found him exhausted.
- Feb Highland Mine No. 5 Cave-in, Highland, Pennsylvania
Andrew Zippi, and his laborer, Andrew Danko were both caught under a fall of coal in the Highland No. 5 mines of the Jeddo-Highland Coal Company and held prisoners for **three hours**. The men were found by members of the night shift who were reporting for duty. A call for help was immediately sent and thirty men responding to the call. The thirty men loaded 30 cars of coal and rock, and they succeeded in freeing the two men. At the hospital, Zippi was found to be suffering from injuries of the back and contusions of the body, and Danko, his laborer, was found to be suffering from injuries of the head and contusions of the body. [Source document.](#)
- Feb Archbald Mine Cave-in, Taylor, Pennsylvania
Three mine workers crawled to safety after being held prisoners by a massive fall of roof in the Archbald mine of the Glen Alden Coal Company at Taylor for **27 hours**. The men seemed to show no ill effects for their experience. After being examined by physicians at the mines they were taken to their homes and today seemed to have recovered completely from their nerve-racking incarceration. The trapped men were Michael Kleback, aged 27; Peter Saynuk, aged 22; and Stanley Glinko, aged 19. [Source document.](#)

- Feb Raven Run Colliery Cave-in, Girardville, Pennsylvania
Two men were missing because of a fall in the Raven Run Colliery of the Hazlebrook Coal Company near Girardville when nine men were trapped. Six were rescued alive shortly after the fall and one man was killed when crushed in the main gangway. The six miners who were rescued were not so deeply entombed as the two missing men and were kept alive by pumping oxygen into their underground prison until rescuers could remove the debris. When the six miners started to make their escape, they found the body of Frank Jacobs, 35, held by rock which kept him prisoner. After several attempts rescuers freed him of the rock, however, he died fifteen minutes after being rescued. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Gimlet Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Joseph Dragon and Steve Kieski were rescued from their **20-hour** entrapment in the Gimlet Colliery of the Shipman Coal Company. The two miners became trapped when a squeeze closed the manway. After a span of 25 feet of heading was opened, rescuers worked night and day to drive a pillar hole 50 feet up the pitch. [Source document.](#)
- Jul Rahn Colliery Inundation, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Two miners were rescued after being confined for **two hours** in the flooded Rahn Colliery near Tamaqua. The rescued miners were Peter McHugh and John Smith. Palmer Jones, 19, drowned in the incident. [Source document.](#)
- Sep Turkey Run Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Rescuers worked more than **ten hours** to release Julian Jecken, a miner who was imprisoned in the Turkey Run colliery after being caught under a fall of rock and coal. He was removed at once to the Locust Mountain State hospital, where it was said he was suffering from contusions, a possible fracture of the pelvis, and lacerations on the forehead. He was treated by the company surgeon of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company immediately after being released from his precarious position. The injured man's condition was reported as serious. [Source document.](#)
- Oct Peck Mine Powered Haulage Accident, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Between forty and fifty miners, trapped in the Peck Mine of the Glendale Coal Company were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. All were in good condition and apparently suffered but slightly from their imprisonment. The men were shut off from the outside world when a wheel in the tower of the colliery collapsed, dropping the heavy steel cable bolding a mine cage filled with rock. The cage ran wild down the shaft and became wedged just above the Hudak vein, which was the upper level of the mine and 200 feet below the surface. More than 200 workers in two lower veins got out through an opening so small, that some of the stouter miners had their clothing torn off as they were pulled through the tiny holes in the earth. The men in the Hudak vein, however, had no other way out except through the main shaft and were forced to wait until the obstruction could be cleared. [Source document.](#)

Dec Luke Fidler Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Twenty-one hours after they had been entombed in the Hickory Swamp slope of the Luke Fidler colliery, two men were rescued alive, without a scratch to show for their experience. The men, John Kowloski, and Wasil Rapunski became entombed when a shot of dynamite they had fired brought down tons of coal and earth, blocking the slope in which they were working. Mine officials began an investigation when wives of the two men told them the men did not return home after work. It was the first day of work for both men as miners in this mine. Source document.

Dec Lehigh Coal and Navigation No. 9 Colliery Inundation, Lansford, Pennsylvania
Valenski, a contract miner was overcome by a rush of water and coal at the third level of the No. 9 Colliery of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. Joseph Shirla, 35, was badly injured by the same rush, but was rescued before he was engulfed. Four other men working in the same compartment escaped when the rush of coal and water swept in another direction. It was at first feared that four men had been trapped, but when the rush subsided, it was found Valenski had been forced into an air gangway but that the others had reached another shute higher than the source of the slush. When the cry was raised that the water had broken through, Earl Cuning, a bottom man at the fourth level, deserted his post and ran through the galley warning the men. This act saved several lives, as the employees in the lower level made their escape through a mule-way, as the water came pouring down the shaft and overflowed the sump. Source document.

— 1926 —

- May Mount Lookout Mine Fire, Wyoming, Pennsylvania
Between 60 and 70 miners trapped behind a fire in the Mount Lookout mine were all safely rescued and accounted for after an **undisclosed period**. The hero of the rescue was the mine foreman, Thomas Heslop, who led the miners back through the gangway where they erected lattice work lifting themselves to an airshaft where they remained until the flames were extinguished. Source document.
- Jul Peach Orchard Mine Roof Fall, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
Seven miners were killed, and eight others injured, some seriously, in a roof fall at the Peach Orchard mine of the Glen Alden Coal Company. Four bodies had been recovered. After an **undisclosed period**, eight others were rescued and taken to hospitals. Source document.
- Nov Tomhicken Mine Inundation, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Six miners were trapped by water in the Tomhicken Mine of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company in Pennsylvania on November 16, 1926. One man died, but five men were rescued — **8 days** — later. The five rescued were Henry Kirchdoerfer, August Yensick, Michael Lorincz, John Gondera, and Mike Lawrence.

Nov Morea Colliery Mudslide, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Two men entombed when a mud swamp gave way blocking the entrance to the Morea Colliery were brought to the surface uninjured. The men who were trapped were rescued after — **13 hours** — of feverish work by squad of 50 men assembled by officials of the Madeira, Hill and Company, owners of the mine. [Source document.](#)

Dec Locust Run Mine Cave-in, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Caught underneath a fall of top at the Locust Run mine, William Shemanski suffered fractures to both legs, several broken ribs, and possible internal injuries. Following an **undisclosed period**, he was taken to the Fountain Springs Hospital where he was listed in very critical condition. [Source document.](#)

— 1925 —

Jan Sterling Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Caught under a rush of coal and debris while driving a hole, preparatory to firing a shot in the Sterling Colliery of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company at Shamokin, Paul Erdman was in a critical condition at his home. Engaged in the precarious occupation of robbing pillars, Erdman was just finishing the hole when a large piece of rock became dislodged from the rib, causing about two tons of coal and debris to completely cover him. Fellow workmen, hearing the rush were quick to the side of the man and within a short time had him free. He was removed to his home and found to be suffering from lacerations about the entire body, a fracture of the foot and internal injuries. [Source document.](#)

Apr Eagle Hill colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
After being buried **several hours**, Norman Lavenberg, a miner at Eagle Hill colliery, was rescued alive. Lavenberg was imprisoned when a big mass of coal blocked him off from his fellow miners. Miners worked frantically to rescue him before he became a victim of mine gas and when rescued he was taken to the Pottsville Hospital without any apparent serious injuries. He was suffering severely from shock. [Source document.](#)

— 1924 —

Jan Potts Colliery Cave-in, Ashland, Pennsylvania
Elias Lovell was rescued after — **four hours** — when he became trapped behind a fall of top in the Potts Colliery at Ashland. Mr. Lovell was employed as a miner and was closed in while at work in the West Primrose. He was found uninjured and practically none the worse for his experience. [Source document.](#)

Jan Park Place Colliery Cave-in, Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania
Frank Kasian was released from his prison **30 hours** after becoming trapped in Slope No. 7, Park Place Colliery of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company. But the story doesn't end

there. A second miner, John Koszeinik, was still unaccounted for. Rescuers continued their vigil for seventeen days. Koszeinik's body was found five feet from reaching a chute that would have protected him from death. [Source document](#).

- Mar Buck Mountain Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Stephen Roca, 22, and his two mules were rescued after their **15-hour** entombment in the Buck Mountain mine of the Lehigh Valley mining company. [Source document](#).
- Mar Alden Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Daniel Wallace was rescued after enduring an entombment of **eleven hours** by a fall of rock in the Glen Alden Coal Company mine where three men were killed on March 11. Rescue squads, working in relays, took out hundreds of cars of rock and coal to reach Wallace. While his injuries were minor, he was suffering greatly from shock. [Source document](#).
- Apr Anthracite Mine Fall of Person Rescue, Centralia, Pennsylvania
John Lavelle had a narrow escape from death while returning to his home from the Germantown colliery shop where he was employed as a laborer, when he fell into a treacherous mine breach and was rendered unconscious for a considerable length of time. The unfortunate miner was homeward bound before daybreak after working on the night shift and was walking along the path from Germantown to Centralia when he veered from the path and walked into the mine hole. He was found several hours later by miners who had occasion to pass that way. He was found to be badly bruised and lacerated and suffered greatly from shock due to his frightful experience. [Source document](#).
- Aug Rekley Colliery Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Adolph Minnick and Lester Miller, miners in the Buck Mountain section of the Rekley Colliery of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, were closed in by a fall of roof. They were rescued unharmed **two hours** later by fellow workers. [Source document](#).
- Aug Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine Cave-in, Sugar Notch, Pennsylvania
Joseph P. Riley, 34, mine trackman, rescued Chester Stavinski, 12, from a mine cave-in, Sugar Notch, Pennsylvania, August 4, 1924. While Chester and several other boys were gathering berries on a hillside, Chester fell into a narrow hole at the top of an old chamber of a mine. The chamber had been abandoned for five years, and the top had caved in. Nothing was known of its depth or condition. Riley, having a rope tied around him, was lowered 200 feet to Chester, who lay at the bottom of the chamber. He held Chester as men at the surface pulled them to the surface. Chester died in a few hours as a result of injuries received when he fell. Mr. Riley was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

Sep William Penn Colliery Rescue, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Anthony Stervis, 41, was found nearly frozen in an abandoned breast of the William Penn mine after he went missing for **nearly a day**. From what could be learned, Stervis, who was a night shift employee at the mine, had attended a funeral the day before where he was said to have taken several drinks of hootch. When found, he was completely naked and suffering from exposure. An examining physician said he was suffering from the cold, had several minor cuts, and appeared to be in a semi-demented condition. Source document.

Dec Thomaston Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Although he was rescued alive after being entombed under a fall of coal, Edward Haughney died half an hour after he had been released by fellow-miners. It was believed the reaction after the terrible strain caused Haughney's death as much as any injuries. All precautions failed to save Haughney. Richard Pippsett, a miner entombed with Haughney, was rescued after an **undisclosed period** with slight injuries. The accident occurred at Thomaston colliery. Source document.

— 1923 —

Jan Oakdale No. 4 Mine Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Rescuers worked for — **seven hours** — to reach the body of George Polinski, aged 26, a miner at Oakdale No. 4 shaft of Jeddo-Highland Coal Company. When found, Polinski still alive. Polinski's chest was crushed, however, and he died twenty minutes later. Source document.

Jan Scotch Valley Mine Fall of Person, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Andrew Witko, 41, was employed at the inside working of the Scotch Valley mine and in some manner fell 50 feet down the shaft. His fellow workers hurried to the bottom of the shaft expecting to find his mangled body, but he was on his feet and refused aid. He returned to work the next day but in a few days' time, he developed pneumonia and passed away at his home. Source document.

Jan Silver Creek Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
After — **eight hours** — spent in a living grave, John Sharp and Michael Dugan, miners, were rescued uninjured. They were entombed by a fall of top rock at the Silver Creek mine, with many yards of debris forming a solid barrier between them and liberty. The men were engaged in tearing down pillars when the entire top fell in front of them. At first, they were thankful for their escape from death, and did not realize the predicament they were in. Source document.

Mar Stanton Mine Rescue, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
On March 21, lost miner James Kowolski was found in the Stanton Mine at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Despite being located by a bloodhound that was lowered into the mine,

Kowolski's — **4 days** — of wandering came to an end when he was located by rescuers led by mine superintendent J. B. Pamblyn. He was found 2,000 feet from his working place half naked and semi-conscious. Kowolski's troubles began on March 17 when he started to leave the mine early, complaining to his helper of not feeling well. [Source document](#).

Mar Lehigh Coal and Navigation No. 1 Mine Cave-in, Nesquehoning, Pennsylvania
Thirteen miners, entombed behind a fall of rock and earth in the No. 1 drift of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. They were entombed there the day before when sixty feet of the gangway workings caved in. [Source document](#).

Apr Maple Hill Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Charles McCloskey was trapped for **5 hours** after a fall of rock occurred at the Maple Hill Colliery at Pottsville, Pennsylvania. He was uninjured with the exception of slight bruises of the legs. [Source document](#).

May Coleraine Mine Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Imprisoned for — **11 hours** — by a cave-in at the mouth of the No. 7 slope at the Coleraine Mine of the A. S. Van Winkle Estate, John Harris, 65-year-old pump runner on duty at the bottom of the shaft, was rescued alive and unhurt, and taken home in the automobile of his son, Gordon Harris, of Hazleton. A crowd cheered as Harris came forth with the rescuing party, which started operations as soon as the accident was reported and dug through piles of debris to reach him. Harris said he had felt no fears for his safety. [Source document](#).

May Susquehanna Collieries Roof Fall, Lykens, Pennsylvania
Trapped by a fall of rock in one of the shafts of the Susquehanna Collieries, two men were killed and another injured. The dead: M. J. Keady and George Welker. The injured man, **Lewis Enders, 47**, was taken to the Harrisburg Hospital. The mine shaft was blocked by a fall of rock. Keady, Welker, and Enders were sent into the mine to inspect the fall and to devise means of clearing the debris away. They had been down only a short time when the roof of the shaft caved in, and they were caught under the fall of rock and coal. When they failed to return to the surface after several hours had passed, mine officials began to fear for the safety of the inspectors and a searching party was sent after them. It then was discovered that the inspectors had been trapped and work or rescue was started. The injured man was reached after the rescue party had been working **eight hours**. An automobile was placed at the disposal of the mines, and Enders was hurried to the hospital. It was said that he would recover. Enders suffered bruises about the head and body. Because he was bringing up the rear of the inspection party, he was not caught under the heaviest part of the rockslide. [Source document](#).

- Sep Turkey Run Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Joseph Bartinsavage, a contract miner at Turkey Run Colliery, had a narrow escape from being buried alive when he was closed in behind a heavy fall of coal and rock for almost **six hours**. Fellow workmen, at the risk of their lives, owing to the top continually caving in, finally rescued him, only slightly injured. [Source document](#).
- Oct Glendower Colliery Inundation, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Two mules were trapped in the Buck Mountain Slope, South Dip, at the Glendower Colliery, but were rescued by the daring efforts of one of the employees who struggled for **two hours** in water up to his waist before he could bring the animals out to safety. A huge volume of water had broken through and the old workings in various parts of the mines were flooded up to the timber. [Source document](#).
- Oct Number Eight Colliery Coal Slide, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
At 12:30 a.m. Harry Demcheck and Stiney Ambrose were rescued from the Number Eight Colliery where they had been entombed since the previous morning by a rush of coal. The rescue force removed the men to their homes. They suffered no ill effects from their experiences. [Source document](#).

— 1922 —

- Jan National Colliery Cave-in, Scranton, Pennsylvania
A cave-in in the Dunmore No. 2 vein, National Colliery of the Glen Alden Coal Company came without a moment's notice. While most people were in bed, there came a hissing, and then a trembling. People were tossed about in their beds, some thrown to the floor, the buildings creaked and swayed. The populace ran to the streets, many clad in night clothes, there to face greater terror as they saw the street veritably bobbing up and down, the surface opening and steam hissing through. For a time, no one knew what it meant. Cool heads realized that it was but another evidence of the mine menace to which Scranton had been long subject. Word came that nineteen miners were entombed. Investigation proved that a fall occurred trapping 16 miners. Three others were injured. These men were found, brought to the surface, and rushed to the hospital. The three men rescued were James Daugherty, John Kearney, and Anthony Collett. [Source document](#).
- Nov Anthracite Mine Cave, Branchdale, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania
Mrs. Loretta Kehler, 71, was found alive in a mine cave near the Otto Colliery after being missing for **a week**. A party of men who had given chase to a rabbit heard her cries for help and rescued her. [Source document](#).

Dec Vulcan Colliery Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
After having been closed in for **several hours** at the Vulcan colliery, Michael Grando was rescued alive. He said he had sufficient mental torture to last the rest of his days. [Source document.](#)

— 1921 —

Jan Kohinoor Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Pinned in behind a heavy fall of coal and rock, two contract miners at the Kohinoor colliery were rescued after **three hours** by swift action of fellow workers. Both escaped with slight bruises but were near death from fright and shock when taken out. [Source document.](#)

Feb Racketbrook Colliery Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
A searching party of six men was assembled after they learned from his family that Joseph Spatz, 32, did not return at his usual hour the evening before. Spatz was employed at the Racketbrook colliery where he had been working alone in his section of the mine in the afternoon. After being located at 2:30 a.m., he was hurried to the Emergency Hospital. He was unconscious and his condition was serious. His injuries were about the head and shoulders where a fall of roof struck him. [Source document.](#)

May Kaska-William Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
After being entombed alive for — **36 hours** — at the Kaska-William Colliery, Irving Reed, aged 22, a miner was rescued uninjured. Rescuers were working frantically to uncover Anthony Vermoek, Reed's companion who has also been entombed. [Source document.](#)

Jun Packer No. 3 Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Entombed behind a heavy fall of coal and culm in Packer No. 3 mine for an **undisclosed period**, Jacob Romansky was rescued without a scratch. Romansky's partner heard the coal working and ran to safety just as the fall occurred. [Source document.](#)

Aug Gibbons Mine Cave-in, South Scranton, Pennsylvania
Mathew Schrader was held prisoner for over **six hours** after a cave-in occurred in the mine workings of the Gibbons Coal Company in South Scranton. Schrader directed the work of rescue telling his comrades where to dig. He was removed to a hospital where it was said he was not seriously injured. [Source document.](#)

Aug Unnamed Anthracite Mine Fall of Person, Pittston, Pennsylvania
The two-and-a-half years old son of Joseph Bigsigani was engulfed by a mine cave while playing in the yard at his home. The child was imprisoned **four hours** before being rescued and was unconscious when found. Soon after the child was found, the enraged father led a mob of about two hundred foreigners against the home of John Gibbons, owner of the mine in which the cave occurred, threatening violence. A riot call was sent

in, and the mob was dispersed by the police. It was not known whether the child would recover. [Source document](#).

Sep Coalbrook Mine Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Peter Suffjack and Stanley Falosky, two of the four miners entombed for **twenty-four hours** in the Coalbrook mine of the Hudson Coal Company at Carbondale were rescued alive at noon today. William Morcum and Dominick Alving, the other two miners were rescued alive earlier in the day. [Source document](#).

Oct Sioux No. 3 Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
After being entombed for **5 hours**, five miners were rescued at the Sioux No. 3 Colliery. They were working in the west seven-foot gangway when it caved in for 150 feet. The men suffered only from shock. [Source document](#).

— 1920 —

Jan Jeanesville Mine Cave-in, Jeanesville, Pennsylvania
Edward Moore and Jere Donovan were rescued from the Jeanesville mines of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, where they were entombed for **several hours** by a fall of coal. Moore was taken to the State Hospital suffering from injuries to his back, but Donovan escaped unhurt. [Source document](#).

Feb Draper Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Peter Burfosky was entombed by a sudden rush of coal at the Draper Colliery for **several hours**. An alarm was sounded when it was found Burfosky was a prisoner in his chamber behind tons of rock and coal. He was taken from his perilous position in an exhausted condition due to his efforts to release himself. [Source document](#).

Mar Eastbrook Colliery Asphyxiation, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Overcome by gas, Jacob Slonine, a miner, fell 135 feet down a manway at the Eastbrook Colliery and may survive his injuries, although he was in serious condition. Slonine had fired a blast and not waiting long enough for the smoke and fumes to clear away he was overcome and staggered into the manway. [Source document](#).

Jun National Mine Cave-in, South Scranton, Pennsylvania
Louis Buffalino was freed from a cave-in after an **undisclosed period** that occurred in the National mine at South Scranton, Pennsylvania. All the time the rescue party was at work, Buffalino kept uttering comforting words to his wife, who stood at the edge of the cave-in watching the rescuers work. Buffalino's companion, Pasquale Ballino, was crushed to death in the incident. [Source document](#).

- Jul Brookside Colliery Cave-in, Tower City, Pennsylvania
Glen Jones, employed at robbing pillars in No. 4 slope, Brookside colliery, was caught by a fall of coal and for a time it was thought he had been killed. It required several hours of hard and careful work to release him. For almost **two hours** he had been doubled up with his knees against his breast and the heavy weight of the coal resting on him. He was badly sprained and bruised and it will be some time before he would be able to be about. No bones were broken. Source document.
- Sep William Penn Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Martin Becker was rescued from his entrapment after an **undisclosed period** from a cave-in at the William Penn Colliery in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. Felix Mack, a co-worker of Becker, was probably responsible for saving the life of a driver who was bringing a trip of cars into the gangway. Mack saw the fall was coming and flagged off the driver. Source document.
- Oct Plymouth Red Ash Mine Cave-in, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Two miners employed by the Plymouth Red Ash Coal Company, owed their lives to the clear-headed calculation of a mine foreman and the faithful and heroic work of fellow-miners who rescued the miners from an entombment of more than twelve hours. William Young, 35, and Joseph Hillard, 48, were erecting timber in a gangway when a sudden and unexpected crash brought tons of coal and rock down within fifteen feet of them. The cave-in blocked the slope and imprisoned Hillard and Young. When word reached the surface, the mine foreman, John D. Maxwell, directed that a hole be bored from the top of the tomb and, by a mathematical deduction, he was able to reach exactly the spot where the miners were imprisoned. With picks, axes, and other tools, nearly two score miners set to burrowing a passageway for their helpless fellow-workers. The digging and cutting of the mountain of coal which separated the pair from freedom started at 1 o'clock p.m. and ended with the rescue of the men at about 1:45 a.m. the next morning. The two miners walked home, unhurt. Source document.
- Dec George F. Lee Mine Cave-in, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
Ten mine workers caught behind a fall in the gangway of the George F. Lee Mine were rescued after **nine hours** imprisonment. Rescue forces worked throughout the night to reach the men. Source document.

— 1919 —

- Mar Indian Ridge Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Stiney Narbut, a 36-year-old contract miner was buried alive for **several hours** at Indian Ridge Colliery. Although seriously injured, he directed the rescue work, but lost consciousness as he was being taken from beneath several tons of coal. An examination at the State Hospital showed that he had sustained internal injuries. Source document.

- May Nottingham Mine Asphyxiations, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Forty men were overcome by blackdamp in the Nottingham Mine of the Lehigh & Wilkesbarre Coal Company at Plymouth. All were brought to the surface. There were no fatalities, but the condition of most of the men was serious. Source document.
- May George F. Lee Coal Mine Asphyxiations, Avondale, Pennsylvania
Blackdamp overcame five employees of the George F. Lee Coal Company in the Avondale section of Plymouth township and six or eight others were affected by inhaling the dangerous fumes. Prompt and heroic action on the part of fellow employees who risked their own lives, saved the lives of the five men who were overcome. The men who were overcome were carried out of the mine and given first aid treatment at the company emergency hospital. Source document.
- Jun Henry Clay No. 1 Colliery Inundation, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Rescuers worked for **60 hours** endeavoring to locate Vistor Aughustine, one of the two men caught in a breast at the Henry Clay No. 1 colliery of the Reading Coal and Iron Company, when a body of water mysteriously broke into the workings. Bart Mirolli, the other man entombed, was rescued alive. He was swept into a heading and was in a semi-conscious condition when reached. He was in the Shamokin hospital with several ribs broken, one of which penetrated the lungs, causing an injury likely to result fatally. Source document.

— 1918 —

- Jan Barnum Mine Cave-in, Duryea, Pennsylvania
Two cave-ins caused by pillar robbing, covering approximately 5 acres, occurred at the Erie Mining / Pennsylvania Coal Company's Barnum Mine near Duryea, Pennsylvania trapped more than 100 men underground for a period. Two men were killed and 15 injured. Five of the men were rescued 10 hours after the accident. Thomas Huntley, who won the Carnegie Hero Medal for a mine rescue at the PCC No. 14 mine in 1907, lead one of the rescue parties that brought the missing men to the surface. Source: Anthracite Heritage Foundation. Source document.
- Mar Alden Coal Mine Cave-in, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania
Adam Krezinski was rescued from his **three-day-entombment** in the mines of the Alden Coal Company following a cave-in that trapped both he and his laborer, Andrew Bartek. Bartek was rescued at about 11 o'clock a.m. the previous day, ending his **two-day-entrapment**. Company doctors who attended Krezinski said that he would recover. Source document.
- Jun Short Mountain Colliery Cave-in, Lykens, Pennsylvania
Five men were standing timber, when without warning the ground caved, catching all five. One man was able shortly to free himself and went for assistance. Soon a rescue

party arrived. In a short time, the party got a man out; with medical assistance his life was saved. The next three men were alive when removed but died soon after; the last man was dead when taken from under the fall.

- Jun North Mahanoy Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
John Wasnoski, 50, was taken out of an old chamber in the North Mahanoy mine after being entombed for **ten hours**. He was only slightly injured. Wasnoski spent most of the hours of his underground imprisonment in prayer. He embraced his rescuers and walked home, refusing to ride in the colliery ambulance. [Source document](#).
- Aug Sayre Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
After being closed in a blind heading for — **five hours** — at the Sayre colliery Saturday afternoon and evening, Frank Leski was rescued alive and well, without a scratch. The entombment was discovered immediately, and the officials quickly had a force of men on the scene to rescue the man. Rapid headway was made and by working carefully, Leski was taken out of his underground tomb safe and without any injury. [Source document](#).
- Nov Consolidated Mine Cave-in, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Vinve Frizonti, a young Italian miner, was rescued after being trapped for — **14 hours** — by a cave-in at the Consolidated mine near Plymouth, Pennsylvania. Frizonti was caught at the 1000-foot level when the crash came. He was standing by a drilling machine, and this prevented the falling rock crushing him to death. He was unhurt except for bruises. [Source document](#).

— 1917 —

- Jan No. 14 Pennsylvania Colliery Explosives Detonation, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Abandoned by his miner following an accident several days earlier, Andrew Marashak, a laborer at No. 14 Pennsylvania colliery, lay in the mine unattended and undiscovered for **eleven hours**. Mine and State authorities investigated and found that the miner, John Kuroski, evidently believed that his laborer had been killed by a tardily fired shot, and thereupon was so frightened that he fled, not only the mine, but the region. He had just returned home. It is understood that Kuroski had warned his laborer not to go back into the mine chamber after a shot had failed to explode. But the laborer went, the charge exploded, and the laborer was partly buried under debris. Kuroski found him prostrate and apparently lifeless. He wrapped a sweater about Marashak's head and then left the mine without notifying anybody. The accident occurred at 3:30 p.m. It was 2:30 a.m. before a fireboss, making his regular rounds, found the injured man. He was taken home. He had a fractured collar bone and barring the possibility of pneumonia developing because of his long exposure on the damp ground, it was believed he would probably recover. [Source document](#).

- Jan Primrose Mine Fire, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
While fighting the fire in the Glendon section of the Primrose mines, eleven miners were overcome by the fumes of white damp and dropped unconscious in the mine. After an **undisclosed period**, a searching party brought them to the surface, where they were treated in the mine rescue car. It was thought all would recover. The men were sent out from the supply base properly equipped with helmets and when they failed to return, rescuers were sent over the same route. It was believed their breathing apparatus failed to work properly. Source document.
- Mar Unnamed Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Wiconisco, Pennsylvania
Samuel Snyder became trapped when the top fell, and a rush of coal covered him completely. When help arrived, it took **four hours** to get him uncovered. The only thing that kept Snyder from smothering was the fact that the coal that covered him was in large lumps, which allowed some ventilation. Snyder was unconscious when uncovered, but soon became responsive. Source document.
- May 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 the ground and entered the chamber of an old mine to gather coal. 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>. 🏆
- Aug Short Mountain Colliery Coal Slide, Lykens, Pennsylvania
Eight miners were entombed in a shaft of the Short Mountain Colliery, owned by the Susquehanna Coal Company. Six were rescued. Two others were missing. The men were caught by a slide of coal. The rescued men were William Kiener, Harry A. Miller, John Pasco, Peter Roman, Paul Budwork, and Davis David. The missing included Lewis Shadler, and John Charney. Source document.
- Oct Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Thomas Kilroy, 50, was rescued after being trapped for — **twenty-four hours** — in an unnamed Anthracite mine. He was held as a prisoner in the depths of the mine 1,000 feet below the surface by a fall of rock and coal. As the rescue men progressed with their work, the fall of the top continued, endangering their own lives. Suffering severely from exposure, shock and hunger, Kilroy's condition was critical, however, it was believed that he would recover. Source document.

Nov Henry Clay Mine Coal Slide, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Michael Jacobs, covered by five wagon loads of coal in a chute at the Heading Company's Henry Clay shaft was smothered for an **undisclosed period** when Frank Smith, fireboss, appeared. Amid great peril, he caused the coal to flow into a gangway and rescued Jacobs, who was in a critical condition. Source document.

— 1916 —

Jan Pennsylvania Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
A miner employed at the Pennsylvania colliery was entombed **four or five hours**. Officials acted promptly and soon had the man removed alive from his tomb. Source document.

Jun Hickory Swamp Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Caught under a fall at the Hickory Swamp colliery, Frank Ringcavich, 41, was instantly killed while his "butty" Michael Droblefski, 29, was imprisoned behind a second fall and was rescued after **20 hours** work on the part of rescue gangs. The men were working as miners in No. 4 vein. Mr. Ringcavich was completely buried under the first fall, and his "butty," who was dressing off a shot, when the fall occurred, went to his assistance to try and rescue him. As he was trying to free Ringcavich, a second fall occurred, making him a prisoner. Droblefski was only slightly bruised and walked out of his tomb. Source document.

Jul Continental Colliery Cave-in, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Caught behind a rush of coal at the Valley Coal Company's Continental colliery, John Mulligan, 50 years old, was a prisoner for **eight hours**, while rescuing forces took turns in working frantically to release him. Mulligan was engaged in the hazardous task of removing pillars. A safety Inspector making the rounds discovered the miner's predicament and volunteers were quickly secured. Mulligan failed to respond to rappings, and the men thought that he had been crushed to death. Mulligan said he felt exceedingly uncomfortable and that it was not until the last hour that he heard them working to dig him out. The mine is the same in which Joseph (or John) Tomachefesky was imprisoned for eight days. Source document.

Jul Lehigh No. 12 Colliery Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
Joseph Kellert was rescued after a — **32-hour** — entrapment in the No. 12 Colliery of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. He was caught by a fall of top rock and rescued uninjured after rescuers dug a 60-foot rock chute to reach him. Source document.

Aug Woodward No. 3 Colliery Explosion, Westmoor, Pennsylvania
Six men were dead because of a gas explosion in the Woodward No. 3 slope of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Coal Company at Westmoor. Three were killed

instantly and the remaining three died within a few hours at Nesbitt West Side Hospital where they were taken as fast as modern methods could convey them. The injured were taken from No. 3 shaft at Westmoor. Those injured received first aid in the mines and their wounds were re-dressed when they reached the surface, and then they were immediately rushed to Nesbitt West Side Hospital. They were all horribly burned, and they died one after another within a few hours after they reached the hospital. Those instantly killed were burned almost beyond recognition. [Source document](#).

Sep [Good Spring Colliery Cave-in](#), Tremont, Pennsylvania
Jacob Dixon and William Gammell became enclosed by a rush of coal in the Good Spring Colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company near Tremont, Pennsylvania. After **five hours**, Dixon succeeded in getting into a blind heading where he was rescued. They were engaged in the hazardous work of "robbing pillars." No further news could be found regarding the rescue of William Gammell. His survival was unlikely.

Oct Lytle Colliery Explosion and Fire, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
The sixteenth miner closed in by an explosion of gas at the Lytle colliery was rescued after an **undisclosed period**, the other fifteen having been taken out safely earlier, all will recover. The fire, which was started by an explosion, is well under control and the officials say it will be speedily extinguished. [Source document](#).

Oct No. 14 Colliery Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
John Kellet, 32, was rescued uninjured after having been entombed for — **24 hours** — behind a fall of coal at the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company's No. 14 colliery. [Source document](#).

— 1915 —

Jan [Black Diamond Mine Cave-in](#), Luzerne, Pennsylvania
Four miners were rescued after — **seven hours** — by parties led by company officials. [Source document 1](#). [Source document 2](#).

May Wanamie Colliery Cave-in, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Buried beneath tons of coal and other fallen debris for nearly **one hour**, Jacob Dombrow was rescued alive from the mines of the Wanamie Colliery of the Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal Company. [Source document](#).

Jul Johnson Colliery Lost Person, Dickson City, Pennsylvania
Lawrence Brady, 60, was found in an abandoned working of the Johnson mine at Dickson City, near Scranton. He had been wandering aimlessly for nearly — **3 days** — in the darkness of an underground prison which seemed to offer no means of escape. Brady was employed for a number of years at the Johnson colliery. About three months earlier he quit his job, but instead of removing all his tools, he hid some of them in an

abandoned part of the workings. Recently he became re-employed and decided to gather his hidden tools. Knowing that he would be gone for some hours he carried a lunch with him in a dinner pail. According to Brady's story, he had only proceeded a short distance through an old chamber when the light of his lamp played out, and he was left in the darkness, not having any matches with him. Rescuers found his dinner pail at the top of the heading and following the course indicated by its position, found the missing man. [Source document](#).

- Jul William Penn Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Julius Kramitzski was rescued without a scratch after being trapped at the William Penn colliery for **5 hours**. Kramitzski was employed in the West Mammoth vein, No. 1 level. He was engaged in chopping down an old prop when the top gave way closing him in. When the entombed man was taken out, he said he did not feel any ill effects from his experience. [Source document](#).
- Jul No. 14 Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
After spending — **a day and part of a night** — entombed behind a rush of rock and coal at the No. 14 mine of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, Frank Clausius, 28, was rescued. He was suffering greatly from shock, but only slightly from bruises which he sustained. [Source document](#).
- Sep Archbald Colliery Roof Fall, Archbald, Pennsylvania
Twenty-seven hours of imprisonment behind hundreds of tons of rock ended for four miners in the Archbald Coal Company's colliery who had been trapped by an extensive fall of roof. One-half slice of bread was all the food the four men had in more than thirty hours. They divided that before their matches gave out. A little cold coffee in their dinner buckets was all they had to drink, and that, too, they divided. But they are hardy men and strong and used to exposure. And when they were hauled to the surface over a 3,000-foot slope that tops the vein they were penned in, they leaped from the mine cars and half ran to the company's office. [Source document](#).
- Oct [Continental Colliery Cave-in](#), Centralia, Pennsylvania
On October 4, John Tomaschefski was rescued after — **187 hours** —, imprisoned by a cave-in at the colliery which occurred on September 26. A 2-inch diamond drill hole was drilled 50 feet to provide food, water, and dry clothing. It took 85 hours to drill this hole. Following this, the rescuers drove, by pick mining, a 4-foot by 4-foot passageway to reach and rescue the trapped miner. It required 4 days to accomplish this.
- Oct Foster Tunnel of No. 11 Mine Inundation, Coaldale, Pennsylvania
Six men and three boys were rescued after nearly — **seven days** — following the group's entrapment in the Foster Tunnel of the No. 11 mine when a blast released water from an abandoned working. Eleven were initially confined, but two of them, William Watkins, and George Hollywood, escaped a day after the accident happened. The other nine miners trapped sustained themselves on the remaining food in their dinner pails, lamp

oil, and chicken bones. The Coaldale mining operation was the property of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. The nine trapped miners included:

- John McAndrews (boy)
- Joseph Murphy (boy)
- John Boner (boy)
- Elmer Herron
- Peter Lemmock
- Charles Matokis
- Dominic Holchek
- Joe Lagonis
- Dominic Dodori

[Source document 1.](#) [Source document 2.](#) [Source document 3.](#)

Dec Richards Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After being entombed by a rush of coal at the Richards colliery for a period of **96 hours**, Joseph Renock, a miner, was taken out alive. A force of 120 men had been working for four days at the risk of their lives in an effort to rescue the imprisoned man. The rescue work was exceedingly dangerous owing to the many hundreds of tons of loose rock and coal which separated the workers from the miner. The men encountered a large steel car in the gangway, and it was necessary to chisel the car away before the rescue work could be continued. When released, Renock was able to talk, but was in such a weakened condition from exhaustion and lack of food that he was immediately rushed to a hospital. He would recover. [Source document.](#)

— 1914 —

Feb No. 4 Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
John Washaloski was closed in for **several hours** in No. 4 Colliery. When rescued he was pulled down a shute along with about fifteen tons of coal. Strange as it may appear, when he struck the bottom, he shook the coal off the top of himself and started away as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened to him. [Source document.](#)

Mar Hickory Ridge Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Rescuers penetrated a breast at the Hickory Ridge Mine and recovered the body of John Mrowka, a miner, who had been entombed since the day before with Paul Poplaski, his partner. Poplaski was brought to the surface earlier in the day in a dying condition following an **undisclosed period**. The men had been imprisoned in a gangway by the roof collapsing. [Source document.](#)

May [Mary D Colliery Hoisting Disaster](#), Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania
An over hoist accident occurred in the tower of the south hoist way, main shaft of the Mary D Colliery, when the self-dumping cage containing 8 men was hoisted above the

dumping chute in the shaft tower. Six men were instantly killed, 5 falling into the opening over the shaft. Five men fell to the bottom of the shaft, a distance of 600 feet. One man fell to the surface, landing 20 feet below the dumping chute and was also killed. The seventh man was thrown into the dump chute, sustaining a fractured leg and lacerations about the head. The eighth man clung to the crosshead of the cage and when rescued after an **undisclosed period** was found to be suffering from shock and a few scratches.

- Aug William Penn Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
After firing a blast at the William Penn colliery, Michael Wasso was caught in a rush of coal and buried up to his chin and was being gradually carried to a terrible death, down a chute, when his cries for help brought rescuers. It took 12 miners **seven hours** to extricate the victim from his perilous position, owing to the continuous falls of top coal. Wasso collapsed five times, but a doctor on the scene revived him. He was lacerated from head to foot. Source document.
- Aug Cameron Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After being entombed for — **48 hours** — in a low breast at the Cameron colliery, Leo Bulcosky was rescued alive. Bulcosky was working in the breast when the face broke. He put up props to hold it, but the push was too strong and forced the timber and carried props and man down the breast. The battery broke and the miner was entombed. He was taken to the State Hospital where he was listed in good condition but would remain until he regained his strength and to guard from the danger of him collapsing. Source document.
- Nov West Brookside Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Two men were imprisoned for **four days**, when they were rescued by a party led by company officials. Source document.
- Nov Diamond Colliery Hoist Rescue, Scranton, Pennsylvania
On December 9, 1914, about 6:20 a.m. the north cage failed in the north hoistway of the Tripp Shaft, Diamond Colliery of the D.L. & W.R.R. Coal Mining Department. During the act of lowering the third cage load of men from the surface to the Dunmore Seam, 13 men were dropped in the cage to the bottom of the shaft. The floor of wooden cage gave way dropping men to the bottom of the shaft, a distance of 200 feet. After an **undisclosed period**, one man was rescued from the wrecked cage at the Clark seam, 15 feet below the point of failure, or 330 feet from the surface. John Bolinski, the man who escaped, had an instinctive fear of the mine cage, and had made it a practice for several years to cling to the side bars every time he rode up or down. Aside from the severe shock Bolinski was uninjured, but on account of the severe shock he has not returned to work in the mines. This text taken from MSHA's fatality database. Source document.

— 1913 —

- Jan Burnside Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After working most of the day, a rescuing party at Burnside Colliery penetrated a big coal barrier caused by a fall of top coal, which entombed Frank Sandrick. He was pinned to the ground by a big lump of coal and lay helpless and **unable to move for hours** before his brave rescuers reached him. He was found almost dead from his injuries and for want of fresh air. [Source document](#).
- Feb Draper Colliery Inundation, Gilberton, Pennsylvania
Three miners were imprisoned for — **3 days and 3 nights** — when the Mahanoy River flooded the Draper Colliery near Gilberton, Pennsylvania. The face of an old breast collapsed allowing the river to flow in upon them. The rescued miners were Joseph Drobos, William Kokas, and John Servillas. [Source document](#).
- Apr Stanton Colliery Cave-in, Mahanoy Plane, Pennsylvania
Frank Oronosky, employed at the Stanton Colliery at Mahanoy Plane, was buried in his breast early on April 16th by a rush of coal. He was rescued **twelve hours** later. He was badly scared but uninjured. [Source document](#).
- Jun Scott Mine Explosion, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
The results of the gas explosion in the Scott mine were fortunately not as serious as was feared. Two men were killed, four others were severely burned, one badly squeezed, and seven overcome by bad air. All except one would probably recover. Twenty-four men had a very narrow escape with their lives. There were exciting scenes at the head of the shaft until late in the afternoon. Stanny Silkus, one of the first men sent to his home after he was removed from the mines, returned to the colliery to help in the work of rescue. He said he was seated on a supply box along the gangway, and he added: "Something came just like a storm and a big spark, a big roar followed, and I was knocked with my two buddies about fifteen feet. They were burned. I ran out yelling for help. First aid fellows took charge of me, and when I came up, I jumped into an ambulance and went home." It was generally believed that the explosion was caused by a miner either opening his safety lamp to light a shot, or by a pipe. In all probability the gas had gathered in a vast quantity at the face of one of the breasts. [Source document](#).
- Oct Shenandoah Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
John Render, a well-known miner, had a narrow escape from death at the Shenandoah colliery, where a heavy fall of coal and rock took place, making him a prisoner. Rescuers, after **six hours** of hazardous work, finally took Render from his living prison, painfully but not seriously injured. [Source document](#).

- Oct Continental Mine Cave-in, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Trapped in an abandoned chamber of the Continental Mine operated by the Lehigh Valley Coal Company in Centralia, Pennsylvania, Thomas Toshesky was finally freed by rescuers after **8 days**. He was in good condition and spirits, refusing a stretcher and making it out of the mine under his own power.
- Nov Richards Colliery No. 1 Slope Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Joseph Stankoskie and Charles Wycotski, of Mount Carmel, were working in the Richards Colliery No. 1 slope, east 9¾ vein, No. 11 breast. The breast was 60 feet long, and 12 feet from the face there, was a blind heading. The men fired a shot and the top ran away. Before firing the shot the men had gone into the blind heading for protection and when the top ran, they were closed in. The accident occurred at quitting time. The miners failed to report off after quitting time. Safety Inspector Michael Mannion made an investigation and discovered the accident. In a short time, there was a force of workmen engaged in removing the coal that blocked the manway and in **fifteen minutes** the two miners were released. They were not injured in any manner. Source document.

— 1912 —

- Jan Corbin Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After being entombed in the Corbin mine at Shamokin, Pennsylvania, Benjamin Smith, a miner, was rescued from under a fall of rock by fellow workmen after **twelve hours** work. Source document.
- Feb Eddy Creek Mine Rescue, Dickson City, Pennsylvania
Michael Hudy was rescued by a searching party after being lost for — **3 days** — in the Eddy Creek mine of the D & H Coal Company. Hudy was found in an abandoned working, exhausted, starving, and lying in a ditch. He could not explain how he lost his way. He was expected to recover. Source document.
- Mar Richards Colliery Fall of Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After Mary Doyle, a 17-year-old schoolgirl, had fallen 100 feet down a mine breach near the Richards colliery, she found herself in total darkness, almost frightened to death, and covered with bruises. She had been walking along a mountain path, talking to several girlfriends, when the path caved in. She was in the lead, and as she sank from sight, her companions barely escaped. Close behind the girls was John Rack, a miner, on his way home from work. Hearing Miss Doyle's friends call for help, he ran to the scene, called to the missing girl, and was overjoyed to hear her faintly answer. She told him she had fallen a long distance but did not think any of her limbs had been broken. Rack told her to remain as quiet as possible, whereupon he ran to a house and procured a clothesline. Again, reaching the cave-in, he lowered one end of the rope to Miss Doyle, who faintly told him she was too weak to tie it about her. Several miners appeared, tied the rope about Rack and lowered him fully 100 feet, until he found the girl, who had become

unconscious. He tied the rope about her and had the men pull her up, after which he also was drawn to the surface. Miss Doyle was resuscitated and taken home, where doctors found, she was badly bruised. [Source document.](#)

- Mar Bast Colliery Cave-in, Ashland, Pennsylvania
Two miners, Peter Orbitsky and Stephen Muskah, were rescued after an — **8-hour** — entrapment following a cave-in in the Bast Colliery at Ashland, PA. Both men were in a state of utter collapse with just enough strength to fall upon the necks of their deliverers in a hysteria of joy when reached. [Source document.](#)
- Apr No. 8 Colliery Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
After having been imprisoned for — **36 hours** — by a fall of coal at the No. 8 colliery, John Rubicar, a laborer, was rescued practically uninjured. Evan Tonkin, imprisoned at the same time, but rescued shortly after, was fatally injured. [Source document.](#)
- Sep Mocanaqua Colliery Explosion, Wilks-Barre, Pennsylvania
Five employees were seriously burned by an explosion of gas at the Mocanaqua Colliery. Details of the accident were meagre, and repeated telephone calls to the company's office failed to elicit the character or identity of the man's injuries. The men were removed from the colliery in ambulances, and it was said two of them were on their way to the Nanticoke Hospital. Two victims reached the City Hospital, Walter Doeoznski, 27, and William Blakeslee. The company did not announce the names of the others. [Source document.](#)
- Sep Boston Colliery Water Rescue, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
While repairing a sluiceway at the Boston colliery of the Delaware and Hudson Company, James Lawson was nearly drowned when the pumps of the mines began to work, sending great quantities of water into the sluiceway. As he attempted to make his escape, Lawson became fastened in the woodwork and water was creeping gradually up about him. The force of the pump was terrific, and as it reached its highest speed, Lawson was hurled from his fastening and carried away in the overflow water. He was almost dead when rescued, but first-aid work restored him to consciousness. [Source document.](#)
- Oct East Lehigh Colliery Animal Rescue, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
After being entombed for exactly — **eleven days** — without anything to eat and only mine water to drink, a mule at the East Lehigh Colliery was rescued none the worse for its experience. A fall of top suddenly occurred and two miners, George Walter, and William Berry, both narrowly escaped death, but the mule was imprisoned back of the mass of rock and coal. A force of men was put to work clearing up the debris but no thought of reaching the mule was entertained as it was presumed it had been smothered to death by the foul air. When the last inch of wall was penetrated yesterday morning workmen were dumbfounded to find the mule living and evidently none the worse for its confinement. It had stood during the eleven days up to its body in water,

had no fresh air, drank only mine water, and ate nothing but the bark off the mine timber. [Source document](#).

Nov Delaware and Hudson Mine Fall of Person, Scranton, Pennsylvania
To fall 68 feet and escape uninjured, except for slight lacerations of the scalp and face, was the unusual experience of Sank Mimce, 31, of Olyphant. While standing at the opening of the Delaware and Hudson mine shaft, Mimce suddenly became dizzy and tumbled down the shaft pit. That he was not killed was due to the fact that there was three feet of water at the bottom of the shaft, and this broke his fall. [Source document](#).

Dec Alaska Colliery Asphyxiation, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
After rescuing his buddy from a gangway after he had been rendered unconscious by bad air at the Alaska Colliery, George Lindy returned to the gangway for his friend's tools, ignited a pocket of gas with his naked lamp and was badly burned about the face and hands. George Lindy and Bartello (Ino), both of Mount Carmel, were driving a gangway to meet another gangway. Bartello fired a shot which broke the partition between the two workings and then went to see the effect of his shot. As he approached the opening, he was nearly suffocated by some bad air but before he dropped unconscious, he gave a shout to Lindy. Lindy quickly went to his assistance, carried him to safety, revived him and then returned to the gangway to get Bartello's tools. As he was walking up the gangway, he ignited a pocket of gas and was badly burned. [Source document](#).

Dec East Lehigh Coal Colliery Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
After being imprisoned nearly — **40 hours** — behind a fall of coal and rock, eight of the nine men entombed in the East Lehigh Coal Company colliery were rescued. The other man, Joseph Walters, was believed to have been killed. [Source document](#).

Dec Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Stiney Bellsky was caught under a rush of coal while dressing down coal and rock after a shot had been fired. When rescued from underneath the coal his head touched his feet. He was taken to the Shamokin hospital where he was suffering from contusion of the head and abdomen and internal injuries. [Source document](#).

— 1911 —

Jan Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine, Sebastopol, Pennsylvania
John T. Brown, 46, mine foreman, helped to save Joseph Lucas, 33; James E. Dougher, 27, and Anthony Gowrey, 43, miners, and saved Frank Kleisch, 21, laborer, from suffocation, Sebastopol, Pennsylvania, January 10, 1911. Brown led four other men into a heading of a coal mine, one-half mile from the shaft, immediately following an explosion that had deflected the air current and filled that and other headings with after damp. They found Lucas, unconscious, and carried him into fresh air. Returning, Brown

and four others found Dougher, whom they also carried out. All had been somewhat affected by the after damp. Brown and three of the men went through another heading into the gangway where the explosion had occurred, where they found Gowrey. A second explosion seemed imminent, but Brown stayed alone with Gowrey until the others brought a stretcher. While the men carried Gowrey out, Brown continued through the gangway until he found Kleisch, delirious, and carried him out. Brown was completely exhausted, but after going to the surface he soon recovered. Lucas and Dougher were revived, Gowrey was badly burned, and Kleisch died from his burns. From the same incident Andrew J. Devers, Michael J. Madden, Martin F. Mangan and Andrew J. Horan along with John Brown were given the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

- Jan Hoyt Mine Explosion, Port Griffith, Pennsylvania
Martin F. Mangan, 26, mine footman, helped to save Joseph Lucas, 33; James E. Dougher, 27; and Anthony Gowrey, 43, from suffocation at the Hoyt shaft of the Pennsylvania Coal Company on January 10, 1911. Mangan went with four other men into a heading of a coal mine, one-half mile from the shaft, immediately following an explosion that had deflected the air current and filled that and other headings with after damp. They found Lucas, unconscious, and carried him into fresh air. Returning, Mangan and four others found Dougher, whom they also carried out. All had been somewhat affected by the after damp. Mangan and three of the men went through another heading into the gangway where the explosion had occurred, where they found Gowrey. A second explosion seemed imminent, and Mangan went with two of the men to obtain a stretcher. They returned and carried Gowrey out while the fourth man in their party continued, to save another man. Lucas and Dougher were revived. Gowrey was badly burned. Those that participated in rescuing miners affected in the incident on January 10th and were awarded the Carnegie medal for their bravery included those listed below. Numbers in parentheses are assigned by the Carnegie Hero Award site.
- Michael J. Madden, 37, assistant mine foreman (6419)
 - Martin F. Mangan, 26, mine footman (6416)
 - Jacob Modlo, 22, mine driver (6879)
 - Andrew J. Horan, 44, miner (6418)
 - Thomas F. Gallagher, 25, car-runner (6420)
 - Andrew Devers, 54, miner (6417)
 - James L. Conlon, aged 36, assistant mine foreman (6415)
 - John T. Brown, 46, mine foreman (6414)

Source document. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

- May Boston Mine Fire, Larksville, Pennsylvania
Five lives were lost in the Boston mine of the Delaware & Hudson Company at Larksville by suffocation. Several rescue parties at the risk of their own lives entered the workings and succeeded in taking out John Morrissey, Patrick Lloyd, and John Benditus after an **undisclosed period**. When brought to the surface they were quickly revived. Several of the rescuers were overcome by the smoke and one of them was prostrated, he was

rescued by a fourth rescuing party. Regarding the investigation as to the cause of the fire, it was said that a workman left a naked light in the shaft, which fired the timbers. The blaze worked its way down the shaft timbers, sending the smoke into the various chambers. The men were trapped in one of the inner gangways. The flames and smoke drove them forward, and all avenues of escape were cut off. [Source document](#).

Aug Bast Colliery Cave-in, Big Mine Run, Pennsylvania
After working without cessation for **48 hours**, two or the three men imprisoned in the East Holmes Gangway of the Bast Colliery at Big Mine Run, near Ashland, were rescued alive. The rescued miners are John Dolan and Anthony Tamashitos. The third man, Peter Zemonskie was buried beneath the fallen rock which had imprisoned the three men at the face of the gangway. He was dead. Dolan and Tamashitos were uninjured. The men said they could hear the muffled sounds of the work of the rescuers which grew more distinct as they approached nearer to the small place where they were imprisoned. They knew nothing of their missing companion, Peter Zemonskie, who was probably killed outright by the first fall of top coal. The men had been in the mine 50 hours. [Source document](#).

Dec Packer Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Joseph Reed and Thomas Levan, two miners who were entombed in the Packer Colliery of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company were rescued and would spend Christmas at home with their families. The men were working on the night shift when there was a rush of coal and refuse, preventing escape. So immense was the wall that mine officials feared it would take several days to dig through and that the men might be asphyxiated if not crushed to death by a further movement of the cave-in. All available men, working in short relays at high speed, made rapid progress and the men soon were reached. [Source document](#).

— 1910 —

Jan Dunkleberger Colliery Cave-in, Trevorton, Pennsylvania
While James Latsha, a coal starter at the Dunkleberger colliery, was at work a sudden rush of coal piled many feet in the chamber containing the workingmen, and when the rush started, he managed to protect himself from being crushed by pressing tight against two big lumps of Anthracite. Coal piled around him, wholly concealing Latsha from view. He remained a prisoner **six hours**, when a rescuing party drew near him and began drilling a hole to blow the coal away with dynamite. The explosive was inserted in a niche and the fuse was about to be ignited when somebody saw Latsha's foot sticking out between coal which had parted. They got him loose shortly afterward, badly injured. [Source document](#).

- Feb No. 4 Mine Cave-in, Tamaqua, Pennsylvania
After 150 men had worked continuously for **fifteen hours**, they succeeded in rescuing alive John Yonke, Peter Dube and Alex Franke, three Lansford miners. The men were imprisoned by a fall of rock and coal in No. 4 mine. [Source document.](#)
- Mar McTurks Colliery Cave-in, Girardville, Pennsylvania
John Meducas was rescued from behind hundreds of tons of coal in a breast at McTurks Colliery, where he had been imprisoned for **36 hours**. Meducas spent the entire time in the dark since he lost his lamp when the rush of coal first occurred. Except that he suffered slightly from hunger and thirst, he experienced no ill effects from his thrilling experience. [Source document.](#)
- Apr Packer Mine No. 5 Cave-in, Girardville, Pennsylvania
After being imprisoned for **18 hours** by a fall of coal at the Packer No. 5 mine of the Lehigh Valley colliery, near Girardville, Robert Metukas was rescued uninjured, but died an hour later from an excess of joy on being taken from the tomb. [Source document.](#)

— 1909 —

- Feb Black Diamond Colliery Fire, Luzerne, Pennsylvania
Five men were entombed by fire in the Black Diamond Colliery of the Plymouth Coal Company. Three of them were rescued **4 hours** after the fire started. They were found a short distance from the foot of the shaft. Overcome by the thick smoke, the men had fallen to the ground in a state of unconsciousness. A doctor worked over them for an hour before they recovered sufficiently. [Source document.](#)
- Mar Erie Coal Explosion and Fire, Port Blanchard, Pennsylvania
An explosion of gas occurred in the colliery of the Erie Coal Company at Port Blanchard. A fire followed the explosion, and sixty miners were entombed back of the fire. After **several hours** they were all gotten out alive. [Source document.](#)
- May Pennsylvania Coal No. 6 Mine Explosion & Fire, Inkerman, Pennsylvania
James M. Flanigan, 20, mine car tender, rescued William Derrig, 19, laborer, and John W. Mullery, 21, mine car tender, in a mine after an explosion, Inkerman, Pennsylvania, May 7, 1909. 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, the former dying one week later. Flanigan's hands were burned from beating out fire in the men's clothing, and he was disabled 18 days. Mr. Flanigan was awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. [Source document.](#) See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆

- Jul Pennsylvania Railroad No. 14 Colliery Rescue, Plainsville, Pennsylvania
Caught fast in a pump in the No. 14 colliery of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company at Plainsville, Pennsylvania, Robert Taylor, the night engineer, was held while the water slowly rose about him. It had reached his chin, as he stood on his toes, when rescuers reached him. In a few minutes he would have been drowned. He went into the working early in the morning to repair the pump and his hand was caught in the machinery. As the pump stopped, the water began to rise. His cries for help were not heard until **four hours** later. Source document.
- Nov Greenwood Colliery Fall of Person, Scranton, Pennsylvania
John Duff, a Greenwood colliery miner who walked into a shaft and fell a distance of 124 feet was not only alive, but, as far as could be ascertained by the doctors, was not seriously injured. There was a foot of water in the place where he landed. Source document.
- Dec Hammond Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Buried to the neck in the rush of hundreds of tons of coal that swept into the gangway in the West Holmes vein at Hammond Colliery, Anthony Connell, 21 years old, was rescued alive and practically unhurt. He had been hemmed in **twenty-four hours** and at one point given up for dead. Miners acquainted with conditions said he could not survive the entombment. A rescuing force working in relays of eleven men removed over three hundred tons of coal and rock before reaching him. Source document.

— 1908 —

- Jan Packer Colliery No. 5 Cave-in, Girardville, Pennsylvania
For **ten hours** Alexander Donaldson was trapped by a cave-in at the Packer Colliery No. 5 at Girardville, Pennsylvania. Earlier, Donaldson fired a shot at the face of a breast, but as he sought to get away, he fell and was swept down the chute by the rush of coal and dirt freed by the shot. Rescuers found him lying upon his face, with his head pillowed on his arms, conscious but unable to move hand or foot. He was unhurt except for a few bruises. Source document.
- Feb Mid-Valley Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
All but one of the miners who were entombed in the Mid-Valley colliery were rescued alive. One of the miners was killed following the accident which entombed the men and two were injured. When the rescuing party penetrated to the entombed men it was found that the men had dug for a great distance through fallen coal. Source document.
- Apr Hammond Mines Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Richard Brown rescued alive after being entombed in Hammond Mines at Mahanoy City for more than **thirty-six hours**. Brown was unhurt and except for his enforced

abstinence from eating, which had weakened him, he was in good condition. Source document.

- Jul Willamstown Colliery Explosion, Williamstown, Pennsylvania
Ten miners were removed from the mine after an **undisclosed period** badly burned and torn by the force of the explosion. It was feared that several of them would die. One of the injured men was taken to the morgue and it was not until an identification of the bodies was made that it was found that he was living. The exact number of miners rescued is not known. Seven miners perished in the disaster.
- Aug Knickerbocker Colliery Explosion, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
A fall of top rock occurred following an explosion in the Knickerbocker Colliery near Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. Two miners died, but John Kuza, William Suso and Charles Cowley were rescued. The three men were seriously injured.
- Sep Chauncey Colliery Cave-in, Avondale, Pennsylvania
After being entombed in a mine working for over **ten hours**, Andrew Harris, a miner, was rescued from under the debris in the Chauncey colliery, at Avondale. Harris was shut in by a fall of roof, and the miners had little hope of his being alive. Soon however, faint tappings from behind the debris told of his existence, and gangs of men were called to work on the fall. They worked without interruption till they could hear the voice of Harris directing them the way nearest to him. He was considerably exhausted when the last shovel of rock and coal was cleared off, but in a short time he felt as well as usual. Source document.
- Oct Wilson Creek Mine Lost Person, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Patrick Hart, 70, was rescued in the Wilson Creek mine after he stood in water up to his waist for **twenty-four hours**. Knowing that his one chance of being found lay in standing in a channel which his rescuers would follow. His fellow workmen originally missed him, and when a systematic search finally led them to the spot where the old man stood. He was on the verge of collapse. Source document.

— 1907 —

- Apr Otto Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Although buried alive under tons of coal dirt for over **half an hour**, James Maley of Branchdale was rescued alive at the Otto colliery. He was unconscious for several hours after being dug out, but it was believed his life would be saved. Maley was shoveling at the base of a high culm bank when the top collapsed and fell upon him, completely burying him. Source document.

- Jul Shenandoah City Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
In the Shenandoah City mine, Michael Wilcoski, a miner, was rescued from almost certain death by a rescue party. Wilcoski was loading a car in a gangway when a fall of coal occurred, extending for over forty feet. Large lumps of coal fell in such a position that Wilcoski was pinned fast, but the lumps served as support and the full weight of coal did not rest on him. Rescuers worked for **five hours** before a tunnel was made, and the walls braced so he could be released. [Source document](#).
- Jul North Franklin Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After being entombed **thirteen hours** by a rush of coal in the North Franklin Colliery, the rescuing party reached William Crawford alive, but badly injured. His brother, Emanuel, was found dead. [Source document](#).
- Aug Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine Cave-in, Inkerman, Pennsylvania
Thomas Huntley, 40; John Merrick, 50; George R. Jopling, 55; and Patrick F. Walsh, 29 helped to rescue John R. Eustice, 52, timberman, from a mine cave-in, Inkerman, Pennsylvania, August 22, 1907. Eustice and four others had been caught by the caving of the roof. While the roof was working, the walls squeezing, and small stuff falling at intervals, Huntley, with the assistance of the others, dug Eustice from under the coal and debris where he lay injured and carried him to safety. Eustice recovered. All four rescuers were given the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆
- Aug Butler Colliery Rescue, Pittston, Pennsylvania
Lost miner Paul Swanbeck was found on August 19th, just in time to avoid the postponement of his daughter's wedding. Swanbeck had been missing for **48 hours** in the Butler Colliery at Pittston, Pennsylvania. He had wandered into some remote workings, lost his light, and been sickened by foul air. He was semi-conscious when found. Safe and sound after his ordeal and lying on the sofa at home, he was able to witness the wedding. [Source document](#).
- Nov [Draper Mine Inundation](#), Gilberton, Pennsylvania
A cave-in deep inside the Draper Mine at Gilberton, Pennsylvania, followed by an inrush of culm and water from the surface trapped Michael McCabe for **87 hours** before rescuers managed to free him. He was released from his prison barely alive.

— 1906 —

- Oct Anthracite Mine Fall of Person, Middleport, Pennsylvania
Falling 400 feet down an abandoned mine shaft, Joseph Schroeder of Pottsville was rescued alive, after he had been virtually **buried all day** and all hope of his rescue abandoned. When examined it was found Schroeder had not even a broken bone. At the time, it was the most extraordinary escape known in the history of anthracite

mining. Young Schroeder left town in the morning in company with William Kalbach, to shoot pheasants. While pushing their way through the brush toward the mountain top Schroeder took the lead. He walked into a drift, lighted a match, and called to Kalbach to follow. Suddenly he gave a cry of surprise and attempted to step back, but the ground at the edge of a hole gave way with him, and he plunged feet first down into an abyss.

Kalbach hurried forward and he, too, almost plunged down the hole after his companion. Had he done so the mystery of their disappearance probably never would have been solved. Seeing he could be of no aid to his unfortunate companion, Kalbach started down the mountain for Middleport on the run and in a short time a dozen men accompanied him back with long length of rope. They went as close as they possibly could in safety and called down the shaft. Nothing but the echo of their voices greeted them. Then they tied a weight to the end of a rope and lowered it carefully into the black pit. It struck several times along the side of the jagged opening, but finally it was lowered to its full length, but the bottom had not been reached.

Men were sent back to town for more rope and when they came back the attempt was again made, but again the end of the rope failed to reach bottom. Messengers were dispatched to the collieries at Kaska and Silver Creek, whence experienced mining men were sent by officials with a long coil of stout rope. This was lowered, and, although 200 feet of it was used, the bottom of the shaft could not be touched. Not a sound came from the black hole, except the rattling of the weighted rope.

Again, messengers were dispatched for more rope. The boy's father also arrived, accompanied by several employees of the shops. One of them, John Calloway, was lowered into the opening, and after going down 200 feet he heard cries for help. Calloway was then hoisted to the surface, where he related his discovery to the great joy of the boy's father. Calloway again went into the shaft, this time at the end of a rope more than 400 feet long. He found young Schroeder at the bottom of the pit and was drawn to the surface with him. Schroeder was terribly bruised and shaken, but no bones were broken, and he would recover. Source document.

— 1905 —

- Jan Hartzel and Gottschalk Mine Cave-in, Ironton, Pennsylvania
Pinned to the ground by a piece of heavy timber and covered over by a mass of earth, William Brown was rescued after being buried alive for **11 hours** in a mine at Ironton, Pennsylvania. Source document.
- Jul Pond Creek Mine Rescue, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
John Dusheck saved the life of Miss Emma Martin while conducting a sight-seeing party of the Pond Creek mine near Hazleton. While in the mine, a gust of wind blew out the lights and Miss Martin went ahead in the darkness. Just as she came upon the brink of a

100-foot shaft, Dusheck seized her, saving her from an awful death. The end of the article states "the incident broke up the trip." Indeed! [Source document](#).

- Jul Jeddo Mine Cave-in, Upper Lehigh, Pennsylvania
For nearly **seven hours** Andrew Wisda, a miner, was entombed in the Jeddo mines, and was rescued alive. Wisda was working in a breast fifty feet up from the gangway, when a heavy fall took place below him. He was unconscious when taken out, but soon revived in the air. [Source document](#).
- Oct North End Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Joe Oinesky was trapped under a fall of coal for **14 hours** in the North End Coal Company's mine near Scranton, Pennsylvania. He was finally released after forty carloads of coal and rock were dug from around him. Remarkably he was saved from injury by the fact that two big slabs of rock formed a sort of tent over him. [Source document](#).
- Oct Tunnel Ridge Mine Cave-in, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania
Charles Rineawage was rescued — **8 hours** — following a cave-in at the Tunnel Ridge Mine at Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. His work companion, Joseph Skernolis, died in the accident. [Source document](#).
- Dec Coxey Shaft Mine Rescue, Pittston, Pennsylvania
Joseph Davies, a miner, was found in the Coxey Shaft of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company almost starved to death having gone without food for **eight days**. When found, he was slightly demented and could not account for his wanderings. While lost, he had nothing to eat and drank the sulfur water of the mine. [Source document](#).

— 1904 —

- Jan Gap Mine Fire & Asphyxiations, Locust Gap, Pennsylvania
Ten men were overcome by gas fighting a fire of unknown origin in the top west gangway of the Gap mine. The fire bosses discovered the fire and hurried for assistance. In the work of extinguishing, several of the men were seen to stagger and fall and others who hurried to their assistance fell under the influence of the powerful blackdamp, and before the men were rescued ten had gone down. All the men will entirely recover from the effects of the gas, but for some the call was a close one. [Source document](#).
- Feb No. 1 Mine Cave-in, Scranton, Pennsylvania
While at work in the No. 1 mines, John Chalice was buried almost to his neck, requiring many minutes' work of a force of men to rescue him. He had been working alone in a chamber, being engaged in knocking down overhead coal, using a pick and bar for the purpose. Without any warning large chunks of the coal and rock fell and paved the way for an avalanche that threatened to smother the miner. He shrieked for help, and men

in other sections of the mines were not slow in answering his appeals. After considerable work Chalice was released. The injured man was taken to the Emergency hospital in the mine ambulance, and his injuries attended to. He had suffered two fractures of the leg and was also badly bruised about the body. Source document.

- Aug Lykens Valley Coal Mine Cave-in, Wiconisco, Pennsylvania
Frank Paul was completely buried in a mass of coal which fell upon him while he was working in what is known as the Little Vein of the Lykens Valley Coal Company and was so terribly bruised that he was unable to move. Morris Woest and William Plark were working with Paul, when suddenly coal from only a few feet above him came down and covered every portion of his body. His two companions were uninjured by the cave-in and were able to render him immediate assistance and succeeded in extricating his body after an **undisclosed period** before he was suffocated. Source document.
- Sep Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine Cave-in, Kingston, Pennsylvania
William Watkins, 24, coal miner, rescued Brinley R. Davis, 22, mine car tender; Rees J. Williams, 19, driver, and Joseph Winchent, 45, coal miner, in a mine, Kingston, Pennsylvania, September 3, 1904. Watkins successively took the men from the place of an explosion, where there was imminent danger of the roof falling, to a position of safety. Mr. Watkins was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his efforts. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Intvpc>. 🏆
- Oct Sioux Colliery Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
Caught by a fall of coal at the Sioux Colliery, Michael Kennedy lay buried with his face exposed for **fifteen hours**. No one witnessed the accident, and when he did not return home in the evening searching parties entered his place of work and found him nearly dead from exhaustion, but he was expected to live. Source document.
- Oct Abandoned Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Frank Borjerko, an old miner, was digging coal for his family's winter supply in an abandoned drift at the Furnace colliery when the roof caved in, completely covering him. Fellow coal pickers, at the risk of their own lives, set to work and soon uncovered the victim's head, so that he could breathe. For **twelve hours** they feverishly worked to free him, despite another threatened fall, and finally got him out alive. He was seriously injured about the body and limbs. Source document.

— 1903 —

- Mar Scott Shaft Fire, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania
An overheated journal at the Scott shaft set fire to the tower, and for a time a dangerous conflagration was feared. Ten men were at work in the bottom of the shaft, 800 feet below, and their only means of egress was through the fire. Al Sheets, foreman of the shift, jumped on the cage and was lowered to the bottom, where the men were notified

and hastily hoisted to the surface, the flames scorching them as they landed. Source document.

- Jul Big Mountain Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Eighteen miners were rescued from a cave-in after an **undisclosed period** in the Big Mountain Colliery at Shamokin, Pennsylvania. All the miners were found alive and uninjured. Source document.

— 1902 —

- Nov Luke Fidler Mine Explosion, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Several miners working near the scene of the accident made a rush for the foot of the shaft and were overcome by the after damp following the explosion. They were rescued after an **undisclosed period** by the relief party and sent at once to the gangway.

— 1901 —

- Jan Lost Miner Found at O. S. Johnson Mine, Dunmore, Pennsylvania
Joseph Fhinol, 17, was located after being lost without food or water for — **six days** — in the O. S. Johnson mine at Dunmore, Pennsylvania. Fhinol was a greenhorn to this mine, having previously worked there for only a day. As many as 200 men and even dogs participated in the search for Fhinol and all types of noise making devices were used in the effort. His examining physician found him to be in good condition and was confident he would improve if he followed his prescribed diet. Source document.
- Jun Baltimore No. 2 Breaker Fire, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Six hundred men were at work in the mines when the fire started at the Baltimore No. 2 breaker of the Delaware & Hudson Coal Company, and Samuel Smith, outside foreman, and John Matthews, inside foreman, set about to rescue them. Matthews was sent down the shaft, while Smith communicated with them by telephone. Hurriedly they ran to the foot of the shaft and were hoisted to the surface. Matthews coolly mastered the situation and prevented a panic among the men in their eagerness to get out. He, with seven others, the last in the mine, who had run from the distant workings, reached the hoist as the engineer was forced to leave his station by the heat. Seven men were reported missing when the hoisting engine stopped, and it was thought they had perished, but **an hour later** they appeared on the surface. The men had a thrilling experience. Finding the mine filling with smoke, they made their way through some abandoned workings to an opening. They had to crawl on their hands and knees and were well exhausted when they reached the surface. Source document.
- Oct Buttonwood Colliery Explosion, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Directly after the explosion occurred several brave rescuers, at the risk of their lives, entered the mine and brought out the bodies of the dead and nine injured miners. The

injured men were taken to the hospital as fast as they were brought to the surface. Except for Inspector Daniel Davis, it was thought that all would recover.

Nov Abandoned Anthracite Mine Rescue, Pittston, Pennsylvania
John Zuranki was rescued in a pitiable condition after spending **4 days** lost without food and light in an abandoned Anthracite mine near Pittston, Pennsylvania. He was discovered accidentally by a watchman who had entered the mine. Zuranki was not missed from his boarding house since he told his family he was going away. [Source document.](#)

Nov Packer No. 5 Colliery Cave-in, Girardville, Pennsylvania
Stephen Casper was rescued after being trapped for **more than 12 hours** in the Packer No. 5 Colliery at Girardville, Pennsylvania. He was uninjured but badly frightened. This was the second time Casper experienced such an ordeal, having been entombed in a similar manner in a mine near Wilkes-Barre several years earlier. No further information on the latter incident involving Mr. Casper has been found. [Source document.](#)

— 1900 —

Jul Lehigh Coal Company Colliery Cave-in, Centralia, Pennsylvania
Rescuers successfully removed two miners that were trapped nearly **12 hours** in the Lehigh Coal Company Colliery near Centralia, Pennsylvania. John Shutt from Bucks Patch suffered no injury, however, the second miner rescued, George Bulla, was found with a huge piece of coal on his chest and died as soon as he was brought to the surface. [Source document.](#)

— 1899 —

Jun Gaylord Mine Cave-in, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Ignatz Cosmoro was entombed in the Gaylord mine of the Kingston Coal Company for **76 hours** following the inrush of an unusually large amount of coal after a blast made by Cosmoro and another unnamed miner. With no serious injury, Cosmoro was able to walk home after his release. [Source document.](#)

Sep Anthracite Mine Breech Rescue, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Michael Oroko was rescued from a mine breech near Shenandoah, Pennsylvania after an **undisclosed period**. The breech was sixty feet deep with perpendicular sides thwarting his ability to climb out. His plight was discovered by a miner returning home from work. Oroko was almost dead when taken out suffering from hunger, thirst, and exposure. He was forced to stand in knee-deep water the entire time he was confined. [Source document.](#)

Oct Shenandoah City Colliery Explosion, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
All the men trapped in the Shenandoah City colliery were rescued. Several were injured but none was seriously hurt. Twenty-two men were entombed by an explosion, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the imperiled men were safely rescued. [Source document](#).

Dec Unnamed Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Wadesville, Pennsylvania
While John Wagner and a party of miners were filling an air hole at Wadesville, the earth gave way and Wagner, falling into the hole, was buried alive. Leaping after Wagner, one of the miners shoveled him out of the earth just in time to save his life. [Source document](#).

— 1898 —

Jul Richmond No. 3 Mine Fire, Scranton, Pennsylvania
After an **undisclosed period**, 40 men were saved from a fire in the Richmond No. 3 mine of the Elk Hill Coal & Iron Company near Scranton, Pa. The miners owe their rescue to the bravery of Foreman Hugh McCutcheon. Fire broke out in the engine and fan houses at the head of the shaft. McCutcheon was lowered to the bottom vein and gave the men warning. As he stepped away from the carriage, the fan house collapsed and fell down the shaft. Within five minutes smoke and gases filled the workings, but the men were able to reach the surface via a slope to the 2nd and 1st veins. [Source document](#).

Oct Midvale Mine Fire, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
The last bodies were recovered from the Midvale mine and soon after the fire was extinguished. The bravery of Tommy Hantz, a 15-year-old boy employed as a nipper, resulted in saving 20 lives. While making his way through the smoke to a place of safety, he remembered that 20 men were in a distant working, where they would probably be quite surrounded by smoke before they realized their danger. Turning back, he managed, with great effort, to reach and warn them. He was Just In time. Young Hantz, on the way, unhitched a pair of mules, and while trying to drive the frightened animals out was overcome. Fortunately, a miner chanced to stumble over his prostrate form and carried him out. [Source document](#).

— 1897 —

Feb Reliance Mine Lost Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
After wandering around the dark underground chambers of the Reliance mine for — **four days** —, Willie Majorisik, age 11 years, was rescued in an exhausted condition by a party of miners. The boy had been without food, drink, or light. Majorisik entered the mine with two companions by way of an old drift, but he got separated from them while stopping to light his lamp. He failed to get a light and wandered about seeking an exit until he dropped in exhaustion. [Source document](#).

Mar Mount Lookout Mine Cave-in Animal Rescue, Wyoming, Pennsylvania
Following a cave-in at the Mount Lookout mine, all but three of 96 mules were rescued, and unless drowned or smothered those three will starve to death as there was no way in which they could be reached. A gang of miners went into the mine and made an investigation. They found quicksand to be forty feet thick in the shaft and where the cave-in occurred it was said to be fully eighty feet or more in thickness and filling the gangways up for more than half a mile in length. It could not be removed as it was almost certain that more will follow. The mine inspectors from the various mining districts in this region met at Wyoming. Late in the day they went into the Mount Lookout mine and proceeded within 100 feet of the pothole. On returning they reported that the gangways are filled with sand and water. They claimed that the mine was safer than it was before the cave-in took place. Source document.

Oct Von Storch Mine Fire, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Joseph Yomaski, one of the men entombed in the Von Storch Mine of the Delaware and Hudson Company, was rescued at 10 o'clock Saturday night. The bodies of the other men were afterwards found and brought to the surface. In an interview, the Pole explained that when his companions began to suffer their death agonies, he at once urged them to follow him, but they refused. He escaped to an old airway where he knew of a hand fan, over which he placed a box, and in that inserted his head. He then kept the fan going for **ten hours** and kept himself alive until rescued.

— 1896 —

Aug Coleraine Colliery Cave-in, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Peter Liko was trapped for **14 hours** following a cave-in at the Coleraine Colliery near Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Rescuers had to dig a trench fourteen feet through rock to get beneath him and not disturb overhanging boulders. Although no bones were broken, he was taken to the hospital, being unable to move a muscle of his body. Source document.

Dec Baltimore No. 2 Mine Explosion, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
A terrific explosion of gas occurred in Baltimore shaft No. 2 of the Delaware and Hudson Coal company. Over twenty miners were imprisoned, but at a late hour fourteen had been rescued alive following an **undisclosed period**. One of the rescuers who was first to discover the bodies says the men were huddled closely together. They had apparently abandoned all hope of rescue and were resolved to die together. The supposition is that the men, when they realized their danger, made their way to the highest point on the plane. The smoke found its way to them, however, and they were all but suffocated when found. Source document.

— 1895 —

- Jan Richardson Colliery Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Charles Dietzel was rescued after being trapped for **40 hours** in the Richardson Colliery near Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Another miner, August Brenner, who was trapped with Dietzel was evidently crushed to death by the fall of coal. [Source document.](#)
- Sep Hillside Company Mine Lost Person, Avoca, Pennsylvania
William Sanderson, aged 14 years, had been working three days in the Slope of the Hillside Company's mine at Avoca, when he was sent in the mine to notify the men that there would be no more work for the day. In trying to make his way to where the men were, he entered one of the former workings and lost his way. He traveled all night and was found the next morning by a searching party after an **undisclosed period**. His clothes were all torn in his attempt to climb out. The searching party was headed by superintendent Thomas H. Evans, who worked energetically all night and prevented work in the mine until the boy was found. [Source document.](#)
- Dec [Dorrance Mine Explosion](#), Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Five men, all severely burned, were brought to the surface at 8:00 p.m. following an explosion which occurred sometime in the late afternoon in the Dorrance mine. Among the men rescued were Robert Blanchard, William Miller, George Lafly, Joseph Murphy, and Michael Moss who later died. When Blanchard was found he was being slowly roasted to death. His partner, Miller, whose arms were broken, could render him no assistance. These two men were not expected to live.

— 1894 —

- Feb Boston Run Colliery Inundation, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Five miners were rescued — **14 hours** — after an inundation trapped them in the Brooks Run Colliery at Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. The accident was caused by the breaking through of a huge body of water that had accumulated in a mine breach on the surface. The gangway was engulfed, but the men succeeded in getting to a place of safety where they sat perched in the darkness while the rescuing party cut an opening through 50 feet of solid coal through which they finally crawled to liberty. [Source document.](#)
- May Highland No. 2 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, Pennsylvania. 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. [Source document.](#)

- Aug Gilberton Colliery Explosion, Ashland, Pennsylvania
 Eleven miners, plus another number whose names could not be learned, were brought to the surface following a methane explosion in the Gilberton Colliery at Ashland. A roof fall occurred where pillar robbing was being performed which pushed the gas more than 1,000 yards to the gangway where it was ignited by naked lamps. One miner was killed outright, and another died while being carried to his home.
- Sep Northwest Colliery Cave-in, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
 The four miners who were entombed in the Northwest Colliery of Simpson & Watkins, near Carbondale, were rescued — **57 hours** — after having been buried alive. The rescued men were Thomas Mitchell, John J. Fanning, Andrew Clopposky and George Barney. Their experience was one of the most remarkable in the history of the coal regions. As the rescuer's pick made a hole through the wall the men inside cried, "Give us some water, for the love of God! We are dying!" The rescuers had everything ready to aid the men and passed in a little weak tea and whisky, cautioning them to drink moderately, fearing ill effects after their long abstinence. After wetting their parched throats with the liquid, for they could not swallow at first, the men begged for food, but this was refused them, and the rescuers continued to break through until the hole had been sufficiently enlarged to enable one of them to crawl through and into the little chamber where the entombed men were lying. Considering that they had been without food or water and with impure air for nearly sixty hours, the men were in good condition and, after being fed and resting at the bottom of the shaft for some time, they regained considerate strength and were able to talk. Source document.
- Dec Olyphant Mine Fire, Scranton, Pennsylvania
 Fourteen miners were rescued after spending the entire night in the Olyphant mine of the Lackawanna Coal Company. The rescued miners included William Evans, foreman; Frank Benni, engineer; Patrick Brennan, Charles Williams, Frank McCable, and nine Hungarian laborers. Source document.

— 1893 —

- May Unnamed Anthracite Mine Lost Person, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania
 James Hogan, a driver boy, got 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 congregate in large numbers in the mines. With great difficulty he fought them off. He was rescued early in the morning after an **undisclosed period.**

Note: Sad to see that not much has changed in more than 125 years reporting the activities of underground mining. There's no mention of this incident in Pennsylvania's 1893 Annual Report. Could the reason be because this was such a common occurrence? They did see fit to include the narrative of a miner injured when he was kicked by a mule

after poking the beast in the ribs with a small stick. **Oh, the humanity!** [Source document](#). [Related news from the period](#).

— 1892 —

- Mar Unnamed Anthracite Mine Roof Fall Fatality, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania
On March 10, when John Traynor, a fire boss in an unnamed Schuylkill County, failed to return from the mine, his wife pleaded with miners to go in and search for him. A party was organized, and 12 miners made a thorough search without finding any trace of him. When the news was broken to the wife, she became strangely calm and after a few days she disappeared. Search throughout the village failed to locate her and it was thought that her mind became unbalanced and that she wandered off into the mountains. Her fate remained a mystery until March 14 when a party of surveyors were in the mine. Off in the distance they heard a soft voice singing. When they approached, they realized it was the missing Mrs. Traynor, sitting there in the dark with her dead husband's head in her lap, swaying and singing a love song to him. They gently lifted her up and she screamed a cry and fainted. Both she and her husband were taken to their home. [Source document](#).
- Jul Lost Miner Found at Gaylor Shaft, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Terence O'Brien, age 70, was rescued from the Gaylor shaft at Plymouth, Pennsylvania. O'Brien, a foreman, had been lost in the mine and without food for **52 hours**. His light had gone out and he wandered off in an old heading. It was speculated that he might become insane from his experience. [Source document](#).
- Oct Indian Ridge Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
After being imprisoned for — **26 hours** — by a fall of coal at Indian Ridge Colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Company, Stiney Klemovich was released from his perilous position. The man was confined, as it were, in a living tomb. He was forced by the falling coal into an almost recumbent position in a cavity 3 feet high by 5 feet long. On reaching the main part of the mine he was so delirious with joy at his escape that he kissed and hugged his deliverers. He was given stimulants and in half an hour was able to walk to his home. During his imprisonment he directed the movements of his rescuers with his voice. [Source document](#).

— 1891 —

- Feb [Spring Mountain No. 1 Inundation](#), Jeanesville, Pennsylvania
13 miners died in Jeanesville, Pennsylvania after they were trapped by water in the Spring Mountain No. 1 Mine operated by J. C. Hayden and Company on February 4, 1891. Four others were rescued **19 days** later. They were John Tomaskusky, Joe Mautchwitch, Bosso Franko, and John Berno.

Feb Susquehanna Colliery Inundation, Grand Tunnel, Pennsylvania
Following the firing of a blast, water rushed into the Susquehanna Colliery at Grand Tunnel, Pennsylvania trapping Michael Schilling, William Cragel, and John Riner. Freedom from the flooded mine came for the trio when rescuers found them after **115 hours**. They had to wait out the 4¾ days perched on a piece of timber 3 inches wide. When found, the men were almost completely exhausted and would require care to bring them through.

— 1890 —

Jan Nottingham Mine Explosion and Fire, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Following a terrible explosion in the Nottingham mine in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, five miners were caught between an ensuing fire and cave-in and trapped for an **undisclosed period**. About a half hour after the fire broke out two brave rescuers were lowered into the mine to ascertain the circumstances. When they reached the fire, they heard the cries of the trapped miners. Now with a sense of urgency, the rescuers put their hands in front of their faces and rushed through the fire and began dragging the imprisoned men out one by one uninjured. Source document.

Feb Nottingham Colliery Explosion, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Fire Boss George Dunstan was the only man who could tell anything about the accident. According to Dunstan, he was going from the sixth lift to the fifth. When he got out in the passageway between the two lifts, he struck a body of gas. His light ignited and he was thrown violently to the ground. He managed to crawl to the gangway where he was rescued after an **undisclosed period**.

May Jersey No. 8 Cave-in and Explosion, Ashley, Pennsylvania
Three badly 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.

Aug Hollenback Colliery Rescue and Recovery, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
There was great damage caused by a record-breaking cyclone that descended upon Wilkesbarre and vicinity. Included in the devastation was the lengthy entrapment of 27 miners working in the Hillman vein. The mammoth Hollenback breaker was a complete wreck, the roof being blown off and the windows all blown in. The structure was completely disjointed and would have to be entirely rebuilt. The front of the engine house was also blown in. The fans were stopped while twenty-seven men were at work in the Hillman vein, but, luckily, they were able to start them right away, and although

the hoisting machinery was damaged the work of conveying the men to the top was accomplished without accident. It was a very narrow escape. Four men standing on beams were able to guide the rope of the drum, and it took — **several hours** — to hoist them from the Hillman to the Baltimore vein. They were then able to walk up to the surface in safety. Source document.

— 1889 —

Mar Black Diamond Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
At one point given up for dead, five of the six miners trapped for an **undisclosed period** by a cave-in at the Black Diamond colliery at Shamokin, Pennsylvania were rescued alive and well and the sixth would be recovered and brought to the surface. Earlier on the day of the rescue, the trapped men heard a voice shouting: "Are all safe?" The imprisoned miners answered back: "Five are here; one is covered." Source document.

— 1886 —

Aug Fair Lawn Colliery Explosion, Scranton, Pennsylvania
After an **undisclosed period**, a rescue party led by Columbus Shay of the Mahoning works, and James Henderson of the Calvin mine managed to get past the flames and smoke to the injured miners. They were lying in every direction buried under masses of debris. Several of them were horribly burned. Their sufferings were terrible. Twelve of them were found almost in a dying condition and two others were dead -- mangled almost into an unrecognizable mass. The names of those killed are John Williams and Joseph Cope.

— 1885 —

Oct Plymouth No. 2 Mine Explosion, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
As soon as possible after the explosion, a rescuing party was organized and the injured men were brought out of the mine, all terribly burned but, with one exception, still living. The first man brought out by the relief party was Thomas Howard. He was cut in the back and terribly burned about the head and face. The others were brought up in the following order: Joseph Thomas; David Grimes; John Woods; Frank Spinnett; Edward T. Jones; John Lavinsky; Thomas Collins; Anthony Spinneta; John Zalinsky; Thomas McDermott; Frank Sanfraux; John Kerst; Sandy Lova; John Copley. All these were found lying near the foot of the shaft in the main gangway. None of them was able to stand up, and one or two were unconscious.

Dec Nanticoke No. 1 Mine Inundation, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania
Of the dead, many were fathers and sons of families throughout Nanticoke. One family lost three sons in the disaster, with the fourth being rescued "with difficulty," according to the Wilkes-Barre Record.

Twenty-nine men and boys were rescued through the air shaft by means of ropes, which were lowered and fastened about their bodies, and one at a time they were drawn to the surface. The disaster is now believed to have been caused by the caving in of a large swamp covering several acres, upon which culm was being dumped, the accumulating weight of which is supposed to have forced the bottom out. Source document.

— 1882 —

Oct Lehigh Valley No. 3 Colliery Cave-in, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
After **15 hours** of confinement due to a cave-in, four miners were rescued from the Lehigh Valley Coal Company's No. 3 colliery. The men rescued were Robert Hanna, Peter James, Henry Schuetze, and Timothy Reynolds. All were expected to recover. Source document.

— 1879 —

Apr Sugar Notch No. 10 Colliery Cave-in, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
Seven miners were rescued after being trapped by a cave-in for **5 days and 15 hours** in the Sugar Notch No. 10 Colliery near Wilkesbarre. The men sustained themselves on mine water and the cooked flesh of a mule they killed that was trapped with them. They cooked the meat in the lids of their cans held over three lamps. The men were in good shape when they reached the surface and except for 2 that lived 2 miles away, the other five men walked to their homes. The mine was operated by the Lehigh & Wilkesbarre Coal Company. Source document.

— 1877 —

May Wadesville Colliery Mine Fire, Wadesville, Pennsylvania
Men working in other parts of the mine knew that something terrible had happened and rushed to learn the fate of their comrades. They found seven miners so terribly burned and bruised that one of them died in a short time. James Libby was brought out alive but died in a few hours. He was fearfully burned.

— 1875 —

Apr Cayuga Mine Roof Fall, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Frederick Woosnam, a laborer, was crushed to the ground by the fall of roof at Cayuga shaft, and nothing but the timely assistance of the miners saved him from death. He was badly jammed about the head and body, besides sustaining a compound fracture of his left leg. The injured man was placed under the charge of a doctor. Source document.

Nov Chauncey and Grand Tunnel Mines Cave-in, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Excellent mining knowledge or just lucky. You be the judge. A letter received on November 29, 1875, from Wilkesbarre, Pa., stated that the most extensive and serious mining casualty ever known in the Wyoming Valley, occurred at the Chauncey and Grand Tunnel mines, about two and a half miles south of Plymouth. About two weeks prior, Mr. Roberts, one of the proprietors of the Chauncey mine, noticed that the roof of the opening was working in a most extraordinary manner and was convinced that the mine was doomed to certain calamity. Upon seeing this, he gave orders for the men to leave the mine as soon as possible and remove as much of the company's property as could be taken out on the spur of the moment. The miners, totaling 125 remaining, taking with them the implements of their calling, and two hours later the mine caved in. The effects were truly terrific. Hugh boulders were thrown out of the mouth of the tunnel by compressed air, as if they had been pebbles, and the shock of the crash was like an earthquake. Source document.

— 1871 —

Mar E. Bast and Company Breaker Boiler Explosion, Ashland, Pennsylvania
Following the boiler explosion at the E. Bast and Company Breaker, Mark Daniels was buried in the scalding, burning debris. Through the almost superhuman efforts of six men, he was rescued from the terrible position in which he was suffering the most excruciating torture and slowly burning to death. Sadly, he died a few hours later, after suffering such agonies as beggar description.

May West Pittston Colliery Fire, West Pittston, Pennsylvania
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.

— 1870 —

Oct Van Stork Coal Shaft Fire, Scranton, Pennsylvania
The "Van Stork Coal Shaft," the property of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, near Scranton, was destroyed by fire. Originating in the boiler house, the fire soon engulfed the main building. There were fourteen men at work in the mine below the shaft where the fire broke out. Eight of these escaped safely through the slope at the river, half a mile away. The six others were cut off and suffered considerably before water got down the shaft. They were finally rescued after an **undisclosed period**, however, nearly exhausted. Source document.

— 1869 —

- Aug Pine Ridge Mine Explosion and Fire, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania
30 miners were rescued from the burning Pine Ridge mine near Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania after an **undisclosed period**. An ignition of firedamp caused the fire. Source document.
- Dec East Sugar Loaf Colliery Cave-in, Stockton, Pennsylvania
The East Sugar Loaf Colliery cave-in in Stockton, Pennsylvania claimed 10 lives on Dec. 18, 1869; only three bodies were ever recovered. The cave-in occurred at 5 a.m. when two houses were swallowed into the ground. A third home went into the subsidence and all, but one person got out. It was a young girl who was later rescued from a rooftop. One outcome of the Stockton Mine cave-in was that houses were not built so close to mines after the incident.

— 1846 —

- Jan Delaware-Hudson Mine Roof Fall, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
Following a massive roof fall in the Delaware-Hudson Mine, John Hosey clambered his way through the damaged mine and managed to get out after being confined in the mine for **48 hours**. He was not seriously injured, except that his hands were lacerated from working his way through the rocks and slate.