

# "Blown Blast" Turns the Rich- land Mine, Near Dayton, Tenn., Into a Morgue.

## TWENTY-ONE ARE KILLED AND NINE TERRIBLY HURT.

Explosion Caused Masses of Coal to  
Fall and Many of the Victims  
Were Buried—Scenes at  
Mine Were Heart-  
rending.

Dayton, Tenn., May 27.—At the Richland mine, of the Dayton Coal and Iron Company, two miles from Dayton, at 4:30 o'clock this afternoon, a terrific explosion of gas formed by the collection of coal dust resulted in the death of twenty-one men, all white, and most of them married and with families.

### List of Dead and Injured.

#### The dead:

Tom Wright.  
Dock Smith.  
Will Matthews.  
Sam Smith.  
Bailey Smith.  
Tom Walker.  
George Holmes.  
J. F. Gothard.  
Terry Smith.  
Abe Gothard.  
Sam Burwick.  
Jim Pickle.  
Lewis G. Rodgers.  
Wash Trasley.  
Oscar Rodgers.  
Lowry Hawkins.  
J. F. Walker.  
Perry Pope.  
Lige Poole.  
Andy Medley.  
Will Rose.

#### The Injured.

WILLIAM BURCHENE, SR.  
WILLIAM BURCHENE, JR.  
BOB WALKER.  
REV. F. M. COOK.  
REV. WILLIAM HALE.  
BART HALE.  
ARTHUR DECKER.  
ED CRAIG.  
J. T. BURWICK.

### Caused by Blown Blast.

The explosion was caused by what is known among miners as a "blown blast." It is the custom of the miners to place blasts and fire them off at quitting time each afternoon, leaving the coal thus thrown down to be loaded and hauled from the mine the next morning. The Richland mine is destitute of water and hence great volumes of fine particles of coal dust, invisible to the naked eye, accumulate at the roof of the mine, forming a highly inflammable gas, subject to explosion if exposed to flames.

This afternoon at exactly 4:30 o'clock a dynamite cartridge was placed in position in one of the rooms for a blast. The miners had just started for the mouth of the mine. The blast did not explode as intended, but instead a long flame shot out of the blast hole and ignited this accumulation of dust. Instantly a terrific explosion occurred and a seething mass of flames shot to the mouth of the mine and extended 300 feet into the open air, scorching the leaves from the nearby trees. There were thirty-four men in the mine at the time. Four of these escaped with slight injury. Twenty-one were killed and nine were terribly burned, most of them fatally. The force of the explosion caused great masses of coal and slate to cave in from the roof of the mine and many of the ill-fated miners were completely buried.

### Rescue Parties Formed.

Word quickly reached Dayton and rescue forces were at once organized and proceeded to the mine. One by one the blackened and horribly disfigured bodies were taken from the debris and carried to the mouth of the mine, where they were loaded into a locomotive and carried to Dayton. Scores of relatives and friends gathered at the mouth of the mine and the shrieks of anguish as the forms of loved ones were removed were heart-rending in the extreme.

The two undertaking establishments at Dayton were turned into improvised morgues, where the mangled bodies were dressed and prepared for delivery to their families. All of the men employed in this mine were residents of Dayton.

The Richland mine is the property of the Dayton Coal and Iron Company, composed of Glasgow capitalists. The company operates an iron furnace at Dayton and operates coal mines in connection therewith.

December 23, 1895, a similar explosion occurred in the Nelson mine, situated a few hundred feet from where today's explosion occurred, in which twenty-eight miners were instantly killed.