

FOURTEEN DEAD FIVE INJURED

Bodies in Whipple Mine
All Recovered.

SHOT IN THE SOLID

Now Definitely Ascertained to Have
Been the Cause of the Accident—
Ventilation of the Mine Better Than
The Average—Mine a Model of
Safety and Modern Equipment.

Charleston, May 4.—An explosion in the Whipple mine, Fayette county, at 3:30 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, caused the death of 14 men and one more may be added to the list. First reports of the explosion were greatly exaggerated and there was a general feeling of relief when the accurate facts were secured.

At the time of the explosion there were 64 men in the mine, 53 of whom made their way to the surface through the air shaft, which is about 150 feet from the hoisting shaft. The air shaft is equipped with a ladder up which the men climbed, a distance of 450 feet.

The explosion occurred in the main return heading about 1200 feet from the shaft and scarcely damaged the interior of the mine. Its force was spent at the mouth of the shaft, the cages being blown out and the tipple house partially wrecked. Six men were at work on the outside and all escaped injury.

The bodies of the men killed were not disfigured and it is thought they suffocated with after damp. Had the relief party been able to get into the workings ten minutes sooner some of these men could have been rescued.

Some of those at work in the mine knew nothing of the explosion until 20 minutes after it occurred and they kept on at their work. The fan which has a capacity of 125,000 cubic feet per minute, did not stop.

Four of the men who escaped through the air shaft were painfully burned and one of them, an unknown Syrian, may die. The others will recover.

The Whipple mine is four miles northeast of Glen Jean on the White Oak railroad, a private line that connects with the Loup Creek branch of the C. & O. The shaft is four miles from Stuart and about the same distance from Parral, scenes of other explosions.

Chief Mine Inspector James Paul left for Whipple on No. 2 at 6:30 o'clock Wednesday evening and will make an examination of the mine. The coroner's jury had not been impanelled at noon but such action will be taken as soon as possible.

The Whipple shaft is the oldest in that field and was started by Mr. Justus Collins, who sold out to Samuel Dixon. The mine is now owned by the White Oak Company, which is a part of the New River Company.

The cause of the explosion has been definitely fixed, an examination of the interior of the mine showing beyond the possibility of doubt that it was the direct result of the firing of a shot in the solid, a practice absolutely against the rules of the management of the mines, and the explosion is therefore due solely to the carelessness or recklessness of the men at work in that portion of the mine. The evidence adduced shows that the ventilation of the mine was much better than the average and that every possible precaution had been taken by the owners to guard against accident. That they had been successful in this effort is proven by the fact that the mine was regarded as the model one in that territory in point of safety and modern equipment.