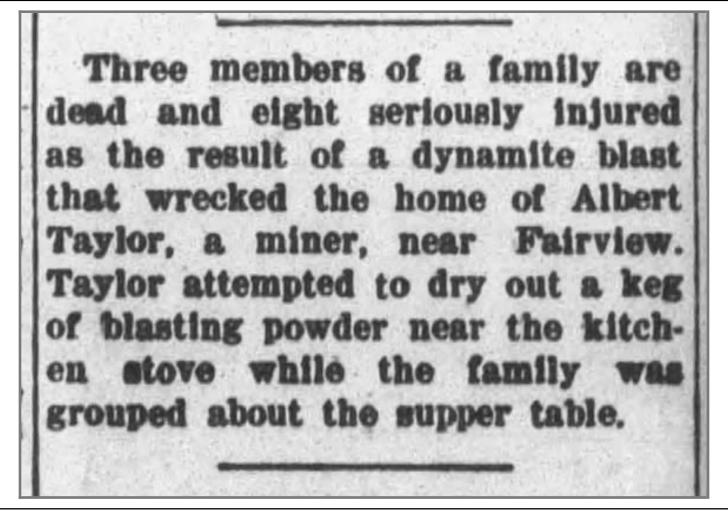


1937 home of Albert Taylor NEWS

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COAL FATAL

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
BY S. P. HOWELL

SUBJECT: Explosion of keg of black blasting powder in home in Illinois injuries eleven, at least seven of them fatally, January 22, 1937.

About 7:45 p.m., Friday, January 22, 1937, a keg of black blasting powder exploded in the home of Albert Taylor, R. No. 1, Fairview Fulton County, Illinois, resulting in the death of Mr. Taylor, his wife, and five children, and seriously injuring four other members of the family, two of whom may or may not recover.

Mr. Taylor and his two oldest sons operated a small slope mine on his farm, producing fifteen or twenty tons of coal per day.

This keg of powder with others had been stored in a chicken coop about 75 feet from the house, but the powder in this keg became damp and Mr. Taylor set it in the house about five or six feet from a hot stove. Some of the family were eating supper, others had completed the meal, and the two oldest boys were preparing to go outside and do the chores, and for illumination they had carbide lamps on their caps; and in some manner the keg of powder exploded, set the house on fire, and seriously burned all of the family. After considerable delay and confusion, the eleven members of the family were taken to the Graham Hospital at Canton, Illinois, where of the seven known to have died the first one died at 4:20 a.m., Saturday, January 23, and the last one at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, January 24.

A neighbor of the Taylors was also mining coal and they had both been notified sometime previously by the State mine inspector to build a suitable powder magazine a safe distance from the mine and dwelling houses, but Mr. Taylor had failed to comply with the order.

A. U. Miller, who investigated this accident, does not know whether or not the keg was open and a spark fell into it, since his information was of necessity largely second-hand. He does know, however, that electricity was not used in the home and electricity is not under suspicion. He states that it may have been that the black keg absorbed enough radiant heat from the hot stove to have caused the temperature on the inside of the keg to reach the ignition point. This is believed to be quite possible, although a glowing coal from the stove or a carbide lamp may have been the cause of the ignition. Smoking was not mentioned.

This is but one of a number of accidents which have resulted

from the reprehensible practice of storing explosives in and about homes, usually of coal miners. Definite State laws should be enacted to require the storage of explosives in magazines, and should specify the <u>class</u> of magazine for different quantities of explosives for all use including mining and quarrying and small operations as well as large ones. The location of such magazines should be in accordance with the American Table of Distance, 1919 revision.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
WASHINGTON

see

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM
(Not for Publication)

March 25, 1937

TO MEMBERS OF THE SAFETY DIVISION:

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