

**Bureau of Mines Bulletin 586:  
Historical Summary of Mine  
Disasters in the United States  
Volume - 1 - Coal Mines  
1810-1958**

**April 4, 1887; Old Savanna No. 2 Mine,  
Savanna, Okla.; 18 Killed**

*(From Adventures in the Mines, by T. T. O'Malley,  
1891, pp. 251-253)*

The explosion killed 6 miners, and 12 of their comrades lost their lives in attempting to rescue the bodies through chokedamp. The torrent of flames forced from the mouth of the slope was over 100 feet in length. \* \* \* It was followed by a fearful concussion. The engine house, over a 100 feet long and 2 stories high, was blown into splinters and in a few minutes it was enveloped in flames . . .

*(From other records and accounts gathered by R. D. Bradford, Bureau of Mines, McAlester, Okla.)*

The Xo. 2 mine, Savanna Coal Mining & Trading Company, Savanna, Indian Territory, was a slope mine producing an average of 200 tons of coal per day, with 80 men employed. The dust explosion, caused by a blown-out shot of black jowder, damaged the mine to the extent that it never operated again. Four shot flers and two sprinklers were in the mine and were killed by the explosion about 10 o'clock at night. Twelve rescuers suffocated trying to get through from No. 1 mine into Xo. 2. Three parties of rescuers went in before ventilation was restored, and all who approached the connecting door between the mines lost their lives.

MEMORANDUM

TO: J. J. FORBES, CHIEF, HEALTH AND SAFETY DIVISION,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FROM: R. D. BRADFORD, CHIEF, COAL-MINE INSPECTION BRANCH,  
REGION VI, MCALESTER, OKLAHOMA

SUBJECT: MINE EXPLOSION - OLD SAVANNA NO. 2 MINE, APRIL 4, 1887

Reference is made to your memorandum of November 27, in which you requested information on the above explosion.

The information I have collected and verified is as follows: No. 2 mine, Savanna Coal Mining and Trading Company. Savanna, I. T. Base of explosion April 4, 1887. This was a slope mine producing an average of 200 tons of coal per day with an average employment of 80 men. It was a dust explosion caused by a blown-out shot of black powder, and the mine was damaged to the extent that it never operated again. There were 6 men in the mine at the time of the explosion. Four of these were shot firers and 2 were sprinklers. The coal was blasted from the solid and the 6 men were killed by the explosion. Twelve rescuers suffocated trying to get through from No. 1 mine into No. 2 mine. The total number of men killed was 18.

The above information was obtained through data in our office, in the office of the Geological Survey which is in our building, and verified through the cooperation of Mr. William Ogilvie, a retired coal mine official and State mine inspector, John Malloy, Chief State mine Inspector, whose father aided in recovering the 18 bodies, and by Mr. George Church, who was a trap boy at the mine and worked on the day shift proceeding the night of the explosion. Although Mr. Church is nearly 80 years of age, he vividly recalled the disaster and was able to call the names of the men who were killed. I was able to check this through a copy of a poem which I am enclosing. This poem written by a lady by the name of M. Snodgrass, who was a school teacher living near Krebs, Oklahoma, and who wrote a number of poems regarding early day explosions in this area. I am also enclosing a copy of another poem she wrote on the Krebs No. 11 explosion which occurred on January 7, 1892. In your memorandum you show the date of the explosion as April 5, 1887, but the actual date is April 4, 1887, and is verified by date on tombstones erected for the victims in the old Savanna cemetery. In the poem the data given for the funerals of 12 victims is given as April 6, 1887.