

M/NM FATAL

1883-0003

Report of Subsidence at the
Keel Ridge Mine, Iron Mountain, Michigan
April 10, 1883 - 8 Killed

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8 Killed

(From files of the Daily Mining Journal, Marquette, Michigan)

The orebody was exhausted and most of the equipment had been removed from the underground workings when a cave-in to the surface occurred at approximately 1 p.m. Thirteen men were working on the surface between the shaft and the boilerhouse dismantling pipe when they heard a rumble and felt the ground moving. Thinking the shaft was about to cave, the men ran to a place of supposed safety. Four of the men, believing the caving might extend to the surface, ran further than the others.

Nine men, the boilerhouse with its three boilers, and approximately 15 cords of wood were caught in the subsidence. The caved area was almost circular, approximately 50 feet in diameter, and was about 40 feet deep. Debris from the boilerhouse and part of one boiler was visible at the bottom of the hole.

Rescue efforts were made through an adit in a hillside. One man was found alive, suffering from a broken thigh and other injuries, approximately 150 feet below the surface. Miraculously, the caving material had carried him to one side to an underground opening.

An extremely heavy rain mixed with hail on the night after the accident hindered the rescue efforts. Although these efforts continued for some time, the bodies of the eight men were never recovered.

The most probable cause of this subsidence was failure of the inadequate pillars left in the mine after stoping operation were completed. Reportedly, the ground had been settling and surface cracks had occurred for some time before the accident.