

Terrible Mine Disaster.

GREAT CONFLAGRATION AND EXPLOSION
AT GOLD HILL.

SAN FRANCISCO, September 20.—At Gold Hill, Nevada, at three o'clock this morning, while the workmen were eating lunch, a fire broke out in the blacksmith shop belonging to the Belcher Company, situated on the thirteen hundred foot level in the Yellow mine, a short distance north of the Jacket shaft. The timbers being very dry the fire spread rapidly, and soon filled the Yellow Jacket, Crown Point and Belcher mines with smoke and gas. About a quarter past three an explosion occurred, which put out the lights in all the mines. The men were hurrying from the Crown Point and Belcher shafts very rapidly. All escaped but six, whose bodies have since been recovered. Communication between the Imperial on the north and the Crown Point on the south has been cut off. There is no danger of the fire spreading. The firemen can do nothing towards extinguishing the fire, but it is in a place where there is not much timber, and consequently it will soon die out. Work will be probably commenced in the Belcher and Crown Point to-morrow. None of the mines have sustained much damage. The following were killed and the bodies recovered: Louis Louiselle, James B. Waters, W. S. Broadwater, James T. Niles, Thomas Cusick, and George B. Mudd. A number of others are very sick from inhaling gas and being burned, but none are considered dangerously injured. The people are greatly excited, and the cry now is: "No more blacksmith's shops in the mines."

Fuller particulars of the mining disaster at Gold Hill have been received. Shortly before three o'clock fire was discovered burning in the 300 foot level of the Yellow Jacket mine, north of the shaft. Directly an explosion of gas occurred, which nearly knocked the men down, who were standing at the mouth of the shaft, and caused the cages, which were raised to the point, to jump up several inches. Smoke came rushing up the shaft at the same time. Knowing that there must be a fire or something wrong below, an alarm was given and the engine sounded the whistle of the works, which was quickly communicated to the fire department. In a short time the firemen were at the scene, and had a stream of water pouring down the shaft. Captain Cosgrove of the Sarsfield Guard, Charles Kohler, chief engineer of the Yellow Jacket, Jack Donohue and others, were busy putting in pumps to send water from the 1,500 foot level of the Yellow Jacket mine through the Imperial shaft, by the drift which connects the mines at the 300 foot level of the Yellow Jacket, and in a few minutes more would have completed the job. The three men whose names are mentioned, were at the 1,500 foot level when the explosion occurred at the 1,300 foot level. Those above warned them of the danger and they saw a heavy volume of smoke pouring from the drift into the shaft. They succeeded in escaping through the Crown Point mine. The force of the explosion was felt strongly both in the Crown Point and Belcher mines. The alarm was communicated with panic quickness. The miners hurried to the shafts as speedily as possible, and effective hoisting works, with double cages, brought them to the surface. The force of the explosion blew out the lights in the hundred foot level and the contiguous parts of the two mines, and the men were thrown violently off their feet. Several miners were missing. It was known that some must be killed or so injured that they could not escape.

As soon as the great rush was over, parties went in search of the killed and wounded, and succeeded in finding six. The two Niles and Cussick were sent up first, and they were soon followed by four others. Five were found on the 1,100 foot level of the Crown Point mine, where they were working. They were evidently killed—fatally asphyxiated—by the deadly gas forced in by the explosion. The sixth and last was from the 130 foot level of the Yellow Jacket. It was the body of Louselle, a blacksmith. Niles lived about an hour after reaching the surface. Mudd lived four hours. Waters also lived a short time, but neither of them were conscious for a moment. Cussick died in the cage while being brought up. Broadwater and Louiselle were dead when found. George B. Mudd, the partner of James Waters in the Crown Point, was another victim of the disaster. He was suffocated by the gas passing into the 1100 drift. James Niles was engaged in repairing the drift of the 1100 foot level of the Crown Point mine when the gas overtook him. He was eating supper. He was brought to the surface alive and survived about an hour. Louiselle, the underground blacksmith at the Belcher, lost his life while battling heroically with the destroying element. When the body was recovered the face and hands were found to be badly scorched. Captain Cosgrove urged him repeatedly to abandon his attempt as his efforts were futile, but he would not leave his post. His body was found about two hundred feet from the locality where the fire was raging. W. S. Broadwater was found lying on his face alongside of the car track, about forty feet on the east drift from the Jacket switch. He was employed as a carman and was on the Jacket switch with James Langham when the first explosion occurred. Thomas Cussick, a miner, working in the Crown Point, while attempting to escape from the mine, was suffocated. James Waters, another victim of the conflagration, was suffocated by smoke and gas while attempting to escape. Albert Burt, another underground foreman at the Belcher mine, worked heroically, reaching his men. On going down into the mine a second time, to see that the men were safe and the lights out, he was overcome by the gas, and was brought up in the cage insensible. He was grasping the cross bar of the cage with a death grip. The services of the men were required to loosen his grasp. Albert Lackey, an underground foreman at the Belcher mine, while endeavoring to save the lives of his men, was badly burned about the face and arms.

It is reported to-night that the fire in the Yellow Jacket is gaining and has reached the 1,000 foot level. Lackey was one of the last men who left the Belcher mine. Chief Jones, of the Gold Hill Fire Department, had the middle finger of his right hand cut off at the first joint while going into the Crown Point mine. Wm. Jones, foreman of Liberty Engine Company, No. 2, while fighting the fire, was prostrated with asphyxia. He is in a fair way to recover. The last accounts state that the fire is effectually hemmed in. Two hundred men are at work fighting the fire in the Yellow Jacket mine.

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