

SCORES KILLED IN A MINE.

PERHAPS 100 DEAD AND AS MANY
WOUNDED BY AN EXPLOSION.

An Indian Territory Disaster which Came Just as the Day and Night Gauge were Whittling—There were 400 Men in the Mine, and About One-third Escaped Through the Air Shaft—Wounded Men Dragged Themselves Up the Long Ladders—It is Supposed that a Blast was Fired Without Authority—The Rescue.

McALLISTER, I. T., Jan. 8.—The town of Krebs, five miles from this place, was the scene yesterday evening of an appalling mining disaster. At four minutes after 6 o'clock, just as the miners employed in shaft No. 11, operated by the Osage Coal and Mining Company, were preparing to come to the surface, an explosion occurred, spreading death among the men in the mine. There were 400 persons in the mine, but it is impossible at present to obtain accurate information as to the number of lives lost or persons injured. It is known that at least 100 men are entombed in the mine. A canvass from house to house is being made by a committee to find out who is missing.

It is generally believed that the dead will number 100, and the injured as many more. Physicians from neighboring towns and cities have arrived here, and are worked to their utmost in caring for the injured who escaped. Miners from neighboring coal fields flocked in by every train during the night and day, tendering their assistance and volunteering to enter the shaft where the explosion occurred.

The McAllister mines dot the prairie at intervals from a quarter to half a mile, and each is surrounded by the usual cluster of miners' huts. It is probable that at least a week will elapse before all the dead and injured can be reached. The exact cause of the catastrophe is unknown, but it is supposed that, contrary to the custom and rules of mines, some miner fired a blast without warning or authority, and that the blast ignited the accumulated gas or coal dust. One of the hoisting cages had just come to the surface with six men aboard. As the last man stepped from the platform the cage, propelled by the explosion, shot up through the roof of the tower 50 or 60 feet. Flames leaped skyward 100 feet, followed by a report which was heard for miles. Nearly half the men employed in the mine escaped by climbing the air shaft. One man, whose leg was broken by the explosion, climbed the entire 450 feet to the top of the shaft. Some of the others who climbed to the top were so badly burned that the flesh fell from their hands as they clasped the ladders. A father started his son to the top on the last cage, landing him safely, while he himself perished by remaining behind. At daylight this morning ten bodies had been recovered by use of a temporary cage, but it was impossible to identify the bodies. All were blackened beyond recognition. Most of the miners were Navagians or Italians, and some have been identified by means of their clothing or contents of their pockets.

The injured are so numerous and scattered so widely that their number can hardly be estimated. The only record that has been kept was of the recognized dead. Out of the 400 men at work, as near as can be ascertained only about 150 of them escaped injury, while the others are either imprisoned or have been brought up injured. Each trip of the cage brings up several dead bodies. These are taken to the mine's blacksmith shop, which had been made a temporary morgue, and through which the anxious crowd of miners' wives and children surge in search of their dead, injured, or missing.

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 8.—W. Farnham, Vice-President of the Osage Mining Company, in whose mine at Krebs, I. T., the explosion occurred last night, received a telegram this morning from the superintendent of the mine. The despatch was dated at 9 o'clock, and said that at that hour 143 miners had been rescued.

The men were greatly exhausted, and some of them were unconscious, but revived after reaching the fresh air. The telegram did not say how many men were killed, nor how many were still entombed. Mr. Farnham says the miners were all white men, and many had large families.

Up to 3 o'clock 48 men had been taken out dead, and 100 seriously injured men have been found, most of whom cannot recover, being badly burned and mutilated on account of the shock being in on west side of shaft. The rescuing parties are being badly delayed in reaching the men.

William Williams was the first to reach the surface by climbing from bracket of to bracket up the shaft, a distance of 550 feet. He was at the foot of the shaft when the explosion occurred, and was not killed, being the only one out of the twenty-five men who were waiting for the cage that was not killed outright.

Enoch and William Church, brothers, were working in run 15 on the west side, and had a narrow escape.

They heard the explosion and were knocked insensible by the shock. Enoch recovered and thought his brother was dead, and left him to escape.

This morning William was taken out and is still alive, but is not expected to live. The scene as reported by those of the rescuers who entered the shaft was horrible.

Lacerations and headless bodies were in piles, and only five persons out of twenty-four could be identified.

Six small boys who attended the fans were mutilated so badly that their own parents could not recognize them, and they will be buried side by side.

The father carried his little son, aged 10, about 1,500 feet, and then left him in order to save himself, thinking the boy was dead.

This morning at 10 o'clock the lad was taken out, and was found to be alive.

The explosion is supposed to have taken place in a cell being worked by George Lowry and caused by firing what is known as a "cinder shot."