

MINERS BLOWN TO DEATH.

Seventy Men Entombed in a
Pennsylvania Colliery.

TWENTY ARE STILL MISSING.

Explosion in a Coal Shaft Near Browns-
ville—Forty Men Make an Almost
Miraculous Escape Through an Aban-
doned Shaft—The Dead.

Brownsville, Pa., Sept. 24.—The most disastrous explosion in the history of the upper Monongahela mining district occurred at the Umpire mine of Snowden, Simpson & Co., near here, Friday morning. Eight miners were blown to pieces, the mangled remains not being recovered till hours after the event. Many others were taken out of the mine alive, but with their bodies charred and mutilated. About forty men who were working in other parts of the mine were entombed, but escaped by an old passage. They reached the surface over two miles from the main entrance and returned home hours after their families had given them up as dead or perishing in the suffocating fumes of the deadly mine.

Twenty men are still missing and are believed to be entombed. The known dead are:

ROBERT DAVIDSON, leaves a widow and one son.

JOHN BENNETT, JR., unmarried.

JOHN HEISTINGS, leaves a widow and two children.

SILAS HEISTINGS, unmarried.

JOHN W. CARTWRIGHT, married.

WILLIAM PRITCHARD, unmarried.

HARRY HAGER, unmarried.

The explosion took place between the main entrance and the headings in which over forty miners were working. As soon as the location of the explosion was discovered the mine officials and others familiar with the headings realized that the miners were cut off from the main entrance. Despair was in all hearts. To add to the dismay the relatives of the entombed miners rushed down to the works as soon as the shock of the explosion was felt. They heard the story of the disaster from the officials, who told them of the hopelessness of any attempt to rescue the men within.

Mothers, wives and children of the entombed men surged about the mine entrance hoping against hope. Gradually they dispersed and went to their homes, thoroughly broken in spirits, resigned to their fate and the still more terrible fate of their loved ones. Hours passed and still no tidings came. Then all their sorrow was turned into ecstasy by the report sent them by the mine officials that the men had escaped and were safe. The report was confirmed soon after, when the men, whom they supposed dead or dying, returned home with their picks and buckets, as they had so often done before.

The old entrance by which the men crawled to freedom was opened many years ago, and is on the other side of Brownsville from the present entrance. It is so long since it was used that but few knew of its existence. Many of the miners, however, were aware of it, and when the explosion passed and the men discovered they were shut off from communication with the outside world by the main heading they made a rush for this old abandoned entrance. It was closed, however, by numerous cave-ins. Nothing daunted, the men worked vigorously to reopen the old channel, for they were working to save their own lives. After several hours of incessant labor they at last saw the light of day.

The explosion occurred at 8 o'clock in the morning, one and one-half miles in from the entrance. Seventy men had gone into the mines four hours previous. Before this the fire boss had made his customary rounds and had pronounced the mine safe. The explosion started in entry No. 9, followed instantly by a second shock in the adjoining entrance. Here the dead men were found. Here were also picked up a dozen men who had been burned or otherwise seriously injured. Some of them were scorched beyond recognition and more deaths are expected.

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Immediately following the explosion a resuing party was organized and an attempt made to get into the mine. The rescuers were driven out by the deadly fire damp and the intense heat generated by the explosion. Several unsuccessful attempts were made before the party succeeded.

The scorched and mangled remains of the unfortunate men were loaded on four pit cars and hauled to the entrance. The work of identifying the bodies was difficult, as most of them were burned or lacerated beyond recognition. The men could be recognized only by special marks, such as their time checks or clothes.

A second rescuing party has been sent into the mine to make an extended search. Other parties will join them and every section of the mine will be scoured for those who it is feared are still shut up.

The Umpire mine is one of the oldest in the district, and there are scores of old headings that will have to be searched for the men who are still entombed.