

PORT ROYAL MINE HORROR.

A Dozen Men Lose Their Lives Through An Explosion.

Frightful Catastrophe Occurs In Shaft No. 2 of the Pittsburg Coal and Coke Company's Colliery Last Evening.

By Associated Press.

Port Royal, Pa., June 11.—By the explosion of gas in shaft No. 2 of the Pittsburg coal and coke company's mine about 6 o'clock last night, seven men are supposed to have been killed and thirty miners entombed. Smoke rose from the mouth of the shaft in volumes during the night. The entire population of the town remained all night at the mine eagerly awaiting some news from those thought to be either buried under tons of slate or slowly awaiting either death from flames or relief from the outside, with small chance favoring the former. The full list of those supposed to have lost their life is not available at this hour.

From what could be ascertained here last night about 6 o'clock there was a low, rumbling sound, followed by a roar which sounded like a cyclone, then three sharp and short reports. While awaiting the arrival of appliances necessary to enter a burning mine a temporary rescue party composed of men who had knocked off work earlier in the day was formed. Fearlessly these men entered the shaft and started toward the spot where it was thought the entombed men may be found. Lying at the bottom of the shaft were Lawrence Rietler and John Stokley. Thompson and covered with dirt, the men were quickly taken to the top of the mine. They could give no information as to what had caused the fire, and told the rescue party that four other men were entombed.

About 7 o'clock Frank McCune, of West Newton, general superintendent of the district; Deans Wardley, pit boss of the mine; Michael Roy, foreman, and several other bosses, with about twenty men, went down shaft No. 1, which is just opposite on the Baltimore and Ohio side of the river, and they are probably lost.

About three hours after the rescue party had been in the mine, two more explosions were heard. At 11 o'clock four men volunteered to go down shafts Nos. 2 and 3, and one man down No. 1, but up to this time it is not known whether they have succeeded in making any rescue.

The explosion occurred at the time when the shifts were changing from day to night turn and it is impossible to tell how many were in the mine at the time, but certainly no less than thirty are entombed.

Port Royal, Pa., June 11.—All the rescuing parties have come out of the mine. They say that the black damp makes work impossible and they give up hope of finding any of the missing alive. Twelve men are known to be missing and are supposed to be dead. They are:

Frank Davenport, aged 38 years, married, one child.

Antonio Stickle, aged 38, married, one child.

John Peebles, aged 40, married, two children.

Jeremiah Daily, aged 40, single.

Frank McCune, superintendent of the six mines of the Pittsburg coal company between West Newton and Eureka.

William Allison, superintendent of several mines below West Newton.

Dennis Wardley, pit boss of Port Royal mines.

Michael Roy, pit boss of the Euclid mines.

John Keck, pit boss at Darr mines.

Peter McCune, boss driver at Port Royal mine No. 1.

Bernard Ball, leader at Port Royal No. 2.

An unknown.

The injured brought out are:

Arthur Smith, pit boss at Smithton mines; both eyes destroyed and fatally burned.

Fritz Kruster, miner, both eyes destroyed and fatally burned.

Harry Beveridge, machinist, both arms broken and fatally burned.

Seven years ago there was another disastrous explosion at Port Royal and the mine caught fire. It was necessary to fill it with water to quench the flames. To do this a hole was drilled from the bed of the river. This is now closed only with a plug, which was arranged for such emergency as the present, and to drown out the fire all that is necessary is to take out the plug and the water of the Youghiogheny will rush in. This, of course, cannot be resorted to until all the men in the mine have been recovered or known to be beyond rescue.

Pittsburg, June 11.—At 10 o'clock this morning a telegram was received at the headquarters of the Pittsburg coal company, owners of the Port Royal mine, in which it was stated that there were from fourteen to sixteen men entombed in the burning mine. Among the number are William McCune, superintendent of the

mine, and W. S. Allison, foreman. Another relief force was sent into the mine at 9 o'clock this morning.

West Newton, Pa., June 11.—Not a practical miner in this district believes that one of the seventeen men entombed in the Port Royal mine by the explosion last night is still alive. There is no fire in the mine to judge from appearances at the pit mouth, but the force of the explosion was so great that none of the men, so the miners say, could have survived the shock and the complete list of the dead is:

William McCune, superintendent, married, four children.

John Keck, mine boss, married, three children.

William Allison, superintendent, West Newton, married, four children.

Daniel Alsop, mine boss.

Thomas Lakin, miner, married.

Michael Roy, fire boss, married.

Thomas Gilson, fire boss, married.

Chris Howells, fire boss, married, one child.

Anthony Stickle, married.

Frank Davenport, miner, married.

Taylor Gunnsales, sr., married.

John Stokley, miner.

Peter McCandless, married.

John Burke.

George Daily.

Bernard Ball, miner.

William McCune was superintendent of the Port Royal district, comprising five mines. He was a large stockholder in the Pittsburg coal company and his family lives in a handsome residence on Vine street, West Newton. William Allison was a second cousin of President William McKinley.

Early this morning Harry Beveridge and two miners, three of a recruiting party that went into the mine to bring out their mates who were entombed, were sent to the McKeesport hospital. Beveridge had both hands broken and the other two were badly burned.

At 10 a. m. this morning an inspecting party went down into the mine through the shaft on the Baltimore and Ohio side of the Youghiogheny river. It is their purpose to penetrate as far as possible to locate the dead bodies with hardly any hope of finding any one alive. The firm in both shafts No. 1 being on the north side of the river, were started up to clear the mine of smoke. Fire-damp and this after-damp remaining from the explosion last night. The explosion are supposed to have occurred between shafts 20 and 25, three thousand feet back from the shaft. The disaster occurred about 6 o'clock last evening. An explosion was heard by men at shaft No. 2 and within a few minutes of smoke burst from the mouth of the shaft. It was known that Anthony Stickle, John Peebles, George Daily, Frank Davenport and James Setler were in the mine. A searching party, composed of Superintendent William McCune and nine others went down shaft No. 2. Just before they were lowered the bell was rung from the foot of the shaft. The cage was already down and it was brought up with Setler on it.

The rescuing party then went down. Nothing was heard of them and in an hour another rescuing force led by James Bailey and William Williams, fire bosses, were in down the shaft. They had ascended their way about 200 feet, when two explosions were heard in rapid succession. The men were blown fifty feet away and they themselves were blown violently to the ground. They arose to their feet and called to their comrades, but there was no answer. Both men hurried back to the shaft and were drawn up the cage. From that moment until 2:04 a. m. not another word went down the shaft, as it would have meant certain death from the after-damp. The party that went up this morning was composed of Mine Inspector Herward Callahan, General Superintendent John Reese, Fire Boss William McFee, Fire Boss Daniel McCandless, Fire Boss Peter McCandless and Fire Boss Robert McKenney. All but Callahan were brought from the various mines of the Pittsburg coal company.

At 10 a. m. the body of Taylor Gunnsales, sr., was brought to the surface by the party headed by Inspector Callahan. A big crowd surrounded the mouth of the shaft when the corpse was brought out and the scene was pitiful in the extreme. Many women were there looking for their husbands, fathers and brothers, and they wildly appealed for the rescuers to save their loved ones.

The Port Royal mine has always been considered dangerous. There was a similar explosion in the mine seven years ago by which one man was killed.

The use of safety lamps has been made especially imperative in these mines by the great danger that was known to exist, but careless miners sometimes use open lights because their own use better to mine by them and this helps to make a bigger day's wages. This is what probably caused yesterday's explosion, but the inquiry which will follow may develop a different cause.

ANOTHER EXPLOSION.

By Associated Press.

West Newton, Pa., June 11.—Another explosion occurred at the Port Royal mine of the Pittsburg coal company shortly before noon and several of the rescuers were dangerously injured. Fire Inspector Callahan and Fire Boss McFee were the most dangerously hurt and may die. This last explosion in many minds settles the fate of the entombed men and all hope of getting them out alive has been abandoned. So far two dead and three living men have been taken out. The dead are:

J. Komitz, Smithton.

Taylor Gunnsales, sr., Port Royal.

The living are H. Beveridge, F. Gratz and A. Smith.

Calls have been sent out to all of the mines of the Pittsburg coal company for volunteers to aid in the work.

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