

GAS EXPLOSION IN MINE ENDS LIFE OF TEN MEN

WORST ACCIDENT OF THE KIND THAT EVER HAPPENED IN EXTREME WESTERN COAL FIELDS OF ARKANSAS.

Fort Smith, Ark., Nov. 24—Ten dead bodies have been recovered from mine No. 20 at Bonanza, eleven miles from here, at a late hour tonight, as the result of an explosion of gas this morning at 11:45 o'clock. A number of other miners are in a dangerous condition and the injuries of several may terminate fatally. The explosion was caused by the ignition of blasting powder which set fire to gas in a vein, whose large output seems to have been unknown.

The explosion occurred in entry K in which 14 men were employed. Ten of these are dead and the remainder may die. Several other miners were injured.

The dead are:

Mike Walkie.

Bob Drysdale.

—Brown.

Ira Stickland.

Wm. Kehoe.

Will Moore.

Fred Arnold.

Paul Witten.

J. W. Pettit.

Unknown Italian.

Most of the men were married and several had large families. The little mining town of Bonanza, built and controlled by the Central Coal and Coke Company, large operators, is in a state of excitement bordering on a panic tonight. Cries of grief, according to advices, rend the air in every direction.

A crowd of hundreds from many miles has collected and the town is filled to overflowing. Around the mine itself the numbers were such at times as to impede the hurried work of rescue which proved of no avail for every man in the back of the entry was dead when the choke damp had abated sufficiently to permit the rescuers

to approach the fatal tunnel.

S. F. Brackney, secretary of mine district No. 21, left here hurriedly with medical aid. The physician at the mine had secured all in reach, however, when Mr. Brackney arrived upon the scene in his buggy.

The explosion occurred just before the men left the mine preparatory to changing shift for dinner hour.

From otherwise meagre details it is known that one of the miners carelessly dropped a lamp near some powder at the entrance to entry K.

His action was seen and some miner shouted a warning to his comrades. There were between 150 and 175 men employed in the shaft at the time, all of whom succeeded in making their escape. All back of entry K, however, were killed, that having evidently been the point at which the gas fissure was broken.

Many of the others narrowly escaped death and some of them received injuries more or less serious; some from the flames and some in the rush to escape. The explosion shivered the supporting timbers of a portion of the shaft and it was only after hours of hard work that the first of the badly burned and mutilated bodies was recovered. After the disappearance of the choke damp every man who could be used was put into the mine to dig away the debris, and at the time telephone and telegraphic communication closed tonight they were still digging for other bodies, a number still remaining unaccounted for.

This is the worst accident of its kind that ever occurred in the extreme western coal fields of Arkansas and public interest here is at fever heat. An outbound train from here tonight carried many people to the scene of the disaster.