

BRINGING UP THE BODIES OF THE DEAD

Two Hundred Thirty-five Lost in the Explosion in the Union Pacific Coal Company's Mine at Hanna, Wyo.

Over Forty of the Men Taken Out Alive—Searching Parties Are Held Back by the Accumulations of Smoke and Gas, But Several Blackened and Mangled Bodies Have Been Recovered—Order Placed for 150 Coffins at Omaha—Scenes About the Mouth of the Shaft.

Hanna, Wyo., July 1.—Of 232 men who went into the Union Pacific Coal company's No. 1 mine yesterday, 234 were killed by the explosion of black damp that occurred at 10:30 a. m. Most of the dead are Finlanders and negroes.

Omaha, Neb., July 1.—Reports were received at Union Pacific headquarters this morning from Hanna, Wyo., of the process of the rescue party in the Hanna mines up to 4 o'clock this morning. They stated that the rescuers had penetrated a distance into the mine, but had recovered no more bodies.

The difficulty of entering the mine was increased by smoke and gas, and it is now thought that the matter of getting air into the mine is the only hope of rescuing any of the entombed men alive.

An order was received in Omaha for 150 coffins, which are being shipped to Hanna. It was stated, however, that this large number of caskets was being shipped to be used in case of necessity, and that no demand has yet arisen for so large an order.

FIRST REPORTS CONFIRMED

Story of the Explosion and Fearful Loss of Life.

Hanna, Wyo., July 1.—Hanna was the scene of a terrible holocaust yesterday when an explosion of firedamp in Mine No. 1 of the Union Pacific Coal company snuffed out the lives of 234 men, injured scores of others and caused the destruction of a vast amount of property.

The mine was not fired, as was stated in the earlier reports, but the explosion was terrific, and completely shattered the timbers of the main shaft and numerous entrances. The workings were filled with debris, and those of the miners who were not killed outright by the explosion were buried alive.

The explosion was heard for many miles around, and attracted people from the adjoining settlements. Huge timbers and railroad iron were hurled from the mouth of the shaft, a distance of two and three hundred feet.

Superintendent E. S. Brooks and a large force of men went to work with a will to remove the debris from the shaft and reach the entombed miners. Their progress into the mine was blocked by foul gases, and several times they were forced to return. All day the rescuing party worked. The force was increased from time to time by the arrival of ranchmen and others from nearby settlements, and by those of a relief train sent out from Rawlins.

Some Taken Out.

Forty-six men were taken out alive though many were unconscious, and had to be carried from the workings. Some were injured, but none fatally.

The rescuers were unable to get further into the mine until additional openings had been made to permit fresh air to reach the lower levels and clear away the foul gases. Horses and scrapers were put at work hauling debris away from the shaft and cars were pushed down the incline, loaded and hauled back up the tipple and dumped.

Late last night a party of rescuers

reached four miles that were alive, and this caused hopes to arise in the breasts of the tired workers and the anxious women and children gathered about the shaft. It is faint hope, however, for experienced mine bosses and miners say that when the imprisoned men are reached all will be found dead.

Crazed by the Explosion.

Some of the miners who escaped said they saw twenty dead bodies in Entry No. 17. They reported that many of the men were crazed by the explosion and ran hither and thither in the mine. Many of these could have escaped, but they laid down and buried their faces in their hands and gave up the fight.

Of the 234 dead about 175 were married and leave large families. About 100 were Finlanders, 50 were colored and the remainder were Americans.

Late last night twenty-eight bodies, all horribly mangled, were brought to the surface.

Fought Their Rescuers.

Members of the rescuing parties tell of pitiful scenes about the seventeenth level. Some of the survivors were driven insane and fought like fiends against the rescuers. Dazed, listless survivors were found sitting on cars or lying on the floor, careless of whether they lived or died.

Near the seventeenth level twenty bodies were found strewn over a pile of debris which the men had striven to surmount before overcome by the deadly fumes. Some were seared and blackened by flames, but all had died crawling toward fresh air. The eleven rescuers who had gone this far, were too weak to bring out a body.

Scenes on the Surface.

For hours the scene at the mouth of the level was heart-moving. With clothes and hair awry, mothers, wives, sweethearts and children huddled together, weeping and wringing their hands. Many sat on shattered timbers blown from the mine's mouth, insensible to their surroundings. The most frantic pushed to the edge of the gap and tried to force a way into the slope.

May Take a Month.

An expert who went almost to the seventeenth level, says the mine cannot possibly be cleared for a month. It is feared that men in the lower levels were torn to pieces by the explosion, which hurled great timbers high over the town and 1,700 feet beyond the mouth of the slope.

Among the dead is Alfred Hapgood, who turned the first shovel of dirt in starting the slope. The fire bosses, who had reported all safe before working time yesterday, met death while making a second inspection.

Opened in 1878.

The Hanna mines are among the best on the Union Pacific system, being established in 1878. The town was named for Senator Mark Hanna, when he was a member of the Union Pacific Coal company. Mine No. 1 is practically a new property. It has twenty-six entries, fifteen miles of workings and a main incline shaft of one and one-half miles in length. The mine has been recognized as a dangerous property for some time on account of the large amount of gas, but the system of ventilation has been so good that an accident was not expected.