

EXPLOSION AT THE TIDEWATER MINE.

Vivian, McDowell County, July 5, 1905.

KEYSTONE, W. VA., July 7, 1905.

In pursuance with the regulations I hereby respectfully submit to you my report of an explosion which occurred July 5th, at fifteen minutes to eight A. M., at the Tidewater Mine, belonging to the Tidewater Coal and Coke Company, at Vivian, in which nine Italians were burned by an explosion of gas and powder. Three of them have since died at the Miners' hospital at Welch.

In order to enable myself to explain to you and have you understand the condition and the time and place, I forward to you a blue print of the workings, in which I have marked the course of air current and location of explosion of that part of mine.

These men were working on pillars, 27, 28 and 29 Jarrett entry. As soon as I received word, I went to the mine and found that the men were all out and were sent to the hospital on the 9:30 train.

Upon examination for the cause of explosion I found at the face of the break-through of pillar 27, which was being driven through to 28, there were two holes drilled and charged with too much powder. These two shots blew into 28. One of the man ran back to see the result of shot and lit the smoke. This fire ignited a can of powder and set off the gas, which had accumulated twenty-five feet from the face of break-through.

These pillars were not examined the morning of the 5th by the fire boss, and the foreman (Mr. Campbell) said that there had been no gas found in these places since last December. I am of the opinion that there was gas there that morning, for on my examination I found that there had been a large fall of slate and the air current, not being strong, gas had accumulated at that point. I also examined this place on the morning of the 6th, but found no gas, nor found any gas in any part of Jarrett entry. There is one thing certain, that there was not enough powder or dust without gas to cause this explosion, as I had found a keg of powder and a box of squibs about 150 feet from the haulway on 28 pillar that had not exploded, also about two gallons of powder on 29 pillar that had not exploded. But Mr. Campbell found a two-gallon powder can that had exploded at the break-through of No. 27 pillar.

Having observed the conditions of those places with the assistance of Mr. Campbell, we believe that these nine men were together near the break-through at No. 27 pillar. This was not a very severe explosion, as it has done but very little damage in the mine. Eight of those men that were caught in the explosion were able to walk out of the mine.

This mine is ventilated by two fans, one 18 feet and one 6 feet.

Trusting you may be able to understand what I have tried to explain, I am very truly yours,

S. S. COOPER, Mine Inspector 7th District.

To J. W. PAUL, Chief Mine Inspector, Charleston, W. Va.