

12/2/05

6. December 2, 1905 - Diamond Coal and Coke Company's No. 1 mine, Diamondville, Wyoming.

The following is a copy veratrum of a supplemental edition of the Kemmerer Camera, a weekly publication at Kemmerer in 1905:

"Kemmerer Camera  
 Saturday, December 2, 1905  
 Disastrous Explosion at Diamondville  
 Seventeen men known to be killed  
 Not one escaped to tell the tale

"A disastrous explosion occurred in the Diamond Coal and Coke Company's No. 1 Mine at Diamondville, Wyoming at 11:25 last night. The real cause of the explosion cannot be ascertained, but statements made by the employees of the company are to the effect that a blown-out shot was the remote cause of the explosion. But few men were in the mine at the time of the explosion and there is absolutely no hope for those entombed. Up to two o'clock p.m. but one body had been recovered and he was so badly mangled that he could not be identified and his identity was only ascertained by the place he occupied in the mine as pump man on the eight level.

"It was stated that there were twenty men in the mine, two of whom, the rope runner and the shift boss, left the mine five minutes before the explosion. The names of the entombed men cannot be learned at this time owing to the confusion that prevails. The following, however, are known to be in the mine: Robert Marshall, married, family; Fernando Gabardi, married, family; Antonio Martignoi, married; John G. Grinishaw; William Wilson; Henry Ringwood; Gust Johnson; John Kasari; Henry Usitalo; and John Johnson.

"Robert Marshall, one of the dead, was found at the pumping station on the eight level about nine o'clock this morning.

The main force of the explosion was at the twelfth level,

4,000 feet underground, the force of which made matchwood of eight by eight timbers and the stone and cement stoppings of from eighteen to twenty-four inches thick, no trace of which could be found. The door at the first level about 1,000-foot down is filled in with a mass of debris and coal. The work or rescue is proceeding as rapidly as is consistent with safety. Canvas brattices are replacing the stone stoppings that were blown out as fast as the rescue party can make their way into the mine by reason of the deadly afterdamp. The rescue party have proceeded as far as the 10th level, having two hundred feet yet to go the scene of the explosion. There is no question but that mine is in flames at the point of the disaster and great caution must be exercised in the work of rescue.

"Superintendent Sneddon and Foreman Bird have already been taken from the mine in a state of collapse from the deadly effects of the afterdamp. Superintendent Needam and Blake of the Union Pacific Coal Mines at Cumberland and all of the physicians in the neighborhood were promptly on the grounds rendering all the assistance possible. Indications at this time point to the recovery of the bodies of the entombed miners by tomorrow morning at the latest. Individual feats of heroism are the rule instead of the explosion. Had the accident occurred on the day shift the loss of life would have been appalling as fully 250 men would have been at work in the mine and when the fact is taken into consideration that not one of the night shift escaped, some idea of the magnitude of the disaster had the shifts been reversed is made clear."

Reportedly all the officials referred to expect possibly Mr. Needam are deceased. Mr. Needam may be living in Utah, address not known. Mr. Jesse Y. Peterson, Diamondville, Wyoming, was employed at Oakley, Wyoming, two miles from Diamondville, at the time of the Diamondville explosion. Mr. Peterson stated that all the bodies were recovered (18) and that the mine was not sealed. Operations of the mine was resumed about four months following the December 2, 1905 explosion, and final abandonment of the mine was in 1942.

# COAL FATAL

REPORT OF AN  
EXPLOSION AT THE NO. 1 SHAFT MINE  
CENTURY, WEST VIRGINIA MARCH 22, 1906  
23 KILLED

March 22, 1906: Mine, Century, W. Va.; 23 Killed  
(From State Inspector's Report, 1906, p. 296)

At 4:30 p.m. an explosion in the No. 1 Shaft mine resulted in the death of 23 persons. The workings and ventilation have been carefully planned for . . . . Some parts of the mine were . . . . sprinkling car was used to dampen the entry and rooms. The explosion was caused . . . . out shot, which produced a typical dust . . . . The hole had been drilled 6 feet 2 inches deep . . . . on the solid in robbing out a . . . . Eleven men were killed by the force of the explosion, 12 others by after gases.

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