

80 BODIES FOUND IN WRECKED MINE

Rescue Parties Clearing the
Monongah Shafts.

HAMPERED BY FOUL GASES

Only Sixteen Dead Brought to the
Surface.

FATALITIES WILL BE OVER 400

Record of Some Other Bad Accidents
in the History of Coal Mining.
Scenes at the Pit.

West Virginia Mine Disasters of 1907.

January 26—Explosion of fire-damp in Lorentz mine; 12 killed.

January 28—Explosion in Stewart mine, near Thurmont; 30 killed.

February 4—Explosion in mine No. 25, at Thomas; 30 killed.

May 1 — Explosion in Whipple mines, Leap creek district; 3 killed.

December 6—Explosion in mines Nos. 6 and 8, of the Consolidation Coal Company at Monongah, W. Va., nearly 500 men entombed; all probably dead.

Rescue parties are hard at work clearing the wreckage from the scene of the awful Monongah mine explosion. It is now known that the death list will be over 400 and may push 500. There is no hope of finding any of the imprisoned miners alive. Eighty dead bodies have already been found, and the rescue parties are within 1,500 feet of the end of one pit. Working conditions are terrible, owing to gas, and the wrecking shifts can work less than an hour at a time. The scenes at the mouth of the mines are pitiful. The company has done everything possible to expedite the relief work.

MONONGAH, W. Va., December 7.—Up to 1 o'clock today but sixteen bodies have been brought to the surface of mines Nos. 6 and 8 of the Fairmont Coal Company at Monongah. Four were Americans. The number of dead will not fall below 400 and will probably reach close to 500. About 40 per cent. of the entombed men are Americans. All hope is gone that any of the men are still alive. Nearly 400 coffins reached Monongah today from Pittsburg and from West Virginia cities.

While only sixteen bodies have been recovered or brought out of the mine, members of the rescuing parties stated that eighty bodies have been located.

There was a slight fire inside of the slope of No. 8 mine this morning, due to the starting of the fan. It was extinguished after an hour and the fan worked successfully, greatly facilitating the efforts of the rescuers to get into the mines.

Five Rescue Parties.

With unabated energy five rescuing parties, working from every possible point to enter and explore mines Nos. 6 and 8 of the Fairmont Coal Company, a subsidiary of the Consolidation Coal Company of Baltimore, where a terrific explosion of black damp occurred yesterday, are this morning putting forth every effort to reach the men who are still in the mine, dead or alive, although there is scarcely a hope entertained that a single one of them has survived the terrific explosion and the poisonous gas with which the mines filled immediately after the death-dealing crash.

With the dawn of day there began a heartrending march up and down the aisles along which these bodies have been laid by sobbing wives and mothers and sweethearts, orphaned children and strong men, each seeking a near relative or beloved friend.

There are between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants in the mining town of Monongah, and it is doubtful if in this entire population there are a score of persons who have not either a near relative or a close friend numbered among the victims of the disaster.

The people of the town are stunned by the catastrophe. They had long regarded these mines as practically immune from the dangers so common to the coal-mining industry. The plant of the company was provided with every device for the protection of life and the equipment was considered the most modern and complete outfit used in the production of bituminous coal. A mine disaster here was considered next to impossible, and the fact that these mines should be the scene of the most frightful disaster that has ever occurred in the bituminous coal mines of America comes as such a shock to the residents of the town that they are stupefied by it.

At the Pit Mouth.

All of last night hundreds of men have stood about the entrance of the two mines. They said nothing, but when approached and asked a question they would give way to their emotions and often give way to tears. During the night few women were to be seen, but all day yesterday the women were the chief actors in most pathetic and heartrending scenes.

They crowded the sides of the hills overlooking the ill-fated mines and cried aloud. As the day advanced they became almost crazed through grief and suspense. One woman pulled out her hair, handfuls at a time. Another tore all of the skin from both of her cheeks with her finger nails. Some lay down on the frozen ground and cried themselves to sleep. In this condition many were carried to their homes nearby without awakening.

It is thought that by tonight the full extent of the horror will be known, and it is feared the knowledge of this will

precipitate even more pitiful scenes than those of today, with hysteria in all of its devious forms rampant among the populace. Precautions have already been taken to prevent these harrowing manifestations of grief, but there is little hope that they will avail.

The rescuing parties penetrated mine No. 6 about 3,500 feet before they came upon the first of the dead. A majority of the corpses will, it is believed, be found about a mile further back.

Effects of Explosion.

It is hardly possible that all the bodies will be recovered for several days. The 400 men were working in a territory one mile square. It will be days before a thorough search of all of this area can be made. As the rescuing parties advance they must clear away the debris. The explosion wrecked over 600 mine cars and these choke the entries on all sides. Many heavy brattices were also demolished. A peculiar and remarkable feature is that notwithstanding the force of the explosion, very little of the mine roof was wrecked. By those who witnessed it the explosion was likened to the discharge of a cannon. Every movable object shot with terrific force through the mine. At the entrance of mine No. 8 a concrete power house was completely demolished.

A piece of concrete weighing fully 1,000 pounds was blown clear across the West Fork river, landing on the side of a hill. In a radius of half a mile not another piece of concrete can be found. Great holes were torn in the hill on either side of the entrance of No. 8. Mine cars were crushed as though made of paper, and the huge steel tippie was blown apart. On all sides electric light wires were thrown to the ground, and many persons narrowly escaped death from these in the rush for the mine, following the explosion.

The Fairmont and Clarksburg Traction Company's cars pass within ten yards of the mine entrance, and a large car crowded with passengers miraculously escaped being blown into the West Fork river. All the passengers were stunned by the terrific concussion.

Fifty Physicians.

The mine officials state that 40 per cent of the victims are Americans.

Fifty physicians are at or near the mines attending members of the rescuing party, many of whom have been overcome and needed medical attention, and ready to succor any who may be brought from the depths of the mine alive.

The company has sent rush orders for coffins to Pittsburg, Zanesville and other towns, the total number ordered being 400 up to this time.

Gov. Dawson of West Virginia notified the company's officers that he had wired Chief Mine Inspector Paul of Charlestown to the scene, and that he would arrive at Monongah this morning. The governor also said that if he could be of any assistance in any capacity he would be glad to do anything within his power.

Accident Due to Gas.

It is stated that eighty bodies have been located. It was the intention to bring these bodies to the surface early today, but inadequate facilities, owing to the force of the explosion, prevented this.

C. W. Watson, president of the Consolidation Coal Company, dictated the following statement to the Associated Press:

"The accident is deplorable from any standpoint. It was entirely unexpected. As yet we do not know the exact cause of the explosion.

"It might have resulted from a blow-out shot igniting a pocket of gas. About 90 per cent of the mine accidents of the country are caused in this manner. It is probable the present one resulted from the same cause. We will conduct a rigid investigation. Investigations, however, will not benefit the dead miners. Their families will be looked after. The company will bury all the dead. Every facility within the power of the company is being extended to all newspapermen in order that the general public may be accurately informed as to the disaster. We have nothing to conceal and are pleased to give whatever information we can."

Saloons All Closed.

All saloons in Monongah have been closed since the explosion, and the 6,000 miners employed in other mines in the vicinity have suspended work and tendered their assistance to the rescuing parties.

Shortly after midnight fire broke out in the main entry of No. 6 mine, and delayed rescue work several hours. It was due to starting a fan, and did little damage. It is expected free access will have been gained to all sections on both mines by 6 o'clock this evening.

The property loss is estimated at \$50,000, exclusive of the cost of rescue work.

1,000 Men Employed.

The mines are located on opposite sides of the West Fork river, at this place, but merged in their underground workings by a heading and on the surface by a great steel tippie and bridge.

The two mines regularly employ 1,000 men, working in two shifts, 300 during the day and 500 during the night, and the best information obtainable is that the entire day force had gone to work this morning and that all were caught. Within an hour after the explosion relief parties, composed of brave, experienced men, were at work. Superintendent John Brannon of the shaft mine at No. 8 headed the first relief party. He had ten men with him. Charles Price, one of the men in that corps, was overcome by fire damp and had to be brought out. He narrowly escaped with his life.

Cause of Explosion.

There is much speculation as to the cause of the explosion, but the most generally accepted theory is that it resulted from black damp, scientifically known as methane. It is believed that a miner attempted to set off a blast, which blew out and ignited an accumulation of this deadly gas, and that this, in turn, ignited the coal dust, a highly inflammable substance found in greater or less quantity in all West Virginia mines. However, all explanations of the cause up to this time are necessarily speculative. Only a thorough investigation after the mine is reopened will disclose the cause, if it is ever ascertained.

The explosion affected both mines, and so far as now known appears to have done about as much damage in one as in the other. It has not been established in which mine it originated. Evidencing the terrific force of the concussion, props in the entry of No. 6 mine supporting the roof were not only shattered and torn from their position, but were blown out of the entry and to the opposite side of the river. Other evidence of the awful force is shown in every section of the mines that has been reached by the rescuers. Huge quantities of coal and rock have been loosened and hurled into every opening, and all of the underground structure is wrecked beyond semblance of its original shape.

Headings Cut Off.

The entry of No. 6 mine, 300 feet from the mountain, is piled high with wreckage of two strings of cars and two electric motors. Some of the rescuers have climbed over this and found dead bodies beyond, but have made no attempt to remove these to the surface, partly because it would be almost impossible to carry the bodies over the debris, but more particularly because they do not want to lose any time in reaching other sections of the mine where it is possible men still living may be imprisoned. The cars are being righted as fast as possible and removed from the entry, together with all other obstructions.

All of the headings leading off from the main entry are being cut off by canvas and barricaded as fast as they are reached by the relief workers, so that the innermost workings of the mine may be given the benefit of the ventilating system to sustain any that may be yet living and make possible an early exploration of these workings.

The American miners of the town have been placed in charge of the relief work, but the Italians and other foreigners are working under them most faithfully. It is impossible for a man to remain long in the depths of the mine, and the rescue forces are divided to work in relays, with frequent reliefs. Many in the relief party have already become exhausted and been sent to the surface.

The Town of Monongah.

Monongah is a mining town in Marion county, W. Va., about six miles northwest of Fairmont. It has a population of about 6,000, most of whom are foreigners, although there is a larger proportion of American miners in this district than in most of the other bituminous fields.

Until about ten years ago the mines

TOLL OF THE PIT.

In the number of lives lost in mining operations the year 1907 has been the most disastrous on record. Up to December 5 the list of deaths by mine accidents stood at 1,499. With the Monongah figures added the total for the year will approach 2,000. Deaths in mine disasters in 1906, when 1,219 were killed in one act at Courrieres, France, totaled only 1,600.

Since 1856 the average number of deaths by accidents in mines has been 1,000 a year. The years in which the average has been exceeded by over 1,000 have been 1878, when 1,413 miners were killed; 1889, with a death list of 1,110, and 1901, with 1,131 deaths.

Safety appliances have kept pace with the increase in the number of miners employed, which has raised the liability of large death lists in single disasters.

Following is a list of mining accidents and the lives each cost since January, 1907:

Date.	Place.	Number of Deaths.
January 14,	Clinton, Ind.	8
January 23,	Primer, Col.	20
January 24,	Florentz, W. Va.	11
January 28,	Starbrucken, Germany	148
January 29,	Stuart, W. Va.	91
February 4,	Elkins, W. Va.	38
February 8,	Wanamie, Pa.	7
February 12,	Bakhmuth, Russia	40
February 18,	La Esperanza, Mex.	123
March 16,	Kleinroschen, Germany	75
March 17,	Saar Louis, Germany	22
March 29,	Diesfontein, S. A.	54
April 14,	Elore, Mexico	14
May 2,	Charleston, W. Va.	11
May 3,	Black Diamond, Wash.	6
May 6,	Liege, Belgium	18
May 12,	Valadene, Mexico	90
May 13,	Marion, N. C.	14
May 19,	Johannesburg, South Africa	18
May 19,	Engleville, Col.	7
June 18,	Princeburg, Pa.	7
July 11,	Hazleton, Pa.	7
July 22,	Toyeka, Japan	470
August 3,	Boxboch, Prussia	16
August 20,	Tsing Tau, China	112
September 7,	Coahuila, Mexico	7
September 20,	Negaunee, Mich.	17
October 4,	Bolton, England	9
November 11,	Raubaud, France	7
December 1,	Fayette City, Pa.	30

Only two mining disasters have occurred in which more men were killed than at Monongah. These are at Courrieres, France, last year, with a death list of 1,219, and at Toyeka, Japan, July 22 of this year, when 470 miners met death.

were operated almost exclusively by Americans, but during a general strike of miners in the Pennsylvania and Ohio fields many of these West Virginia miners went out in sympathy to prevent the filling of contracts at lake ports and elsewhere with West Virginia coal by the companies in Ohio and West Virginia against which the strike was directed.

At that time the mine owners brought a large number of foreigners into the field to take the places of the strikers, and ever since the foreigners have been displacing Americans until they are now in the majority.