

COAL FATAL

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REPORT OF A HOISTING ACCIDENT AT WASHINGTON NO. 5 MINE
FRANKLIN, MARYLAND
JANUARY 25, 1909 - 5 KILLED

(From the "Annual Report" of the Mine Inspector for Allegany and Garrett Counties, Md., May 1, 1908 to May 1, 1909)

The most distressing mine accident of the year, or I may say, in the history of mining in the George's Creek Valley, occurred at the Washington Mine No. 5, near Franklin. Here on Monday morning, January 25, five men were killed; two outright, two dying within ten hours after the accident, and another on the day following the accident. Nine others were more or less seriously injured. A laborer, aged 18 years, single, and a blacksmith, aged 46, married, were killed outright. A carpenter aged 22 years, single, and a mine laborer, aged 26 years, single, sustained injuries from which they died shortly after the accident. A weigh-master, 22 years old, married, died from injuries received two days later.

The accident occurred on the plane, early in the morning. It was the first trip run. The men were riding up the plane to their work, as had been the custom for them to do. The incline-plane is very steep and about 2,200 feet long, which no doubt caused many to ignore the danger and ride up.

In the middle of the incline-plane there is a double track, where the loaded car descending passes the empty car going up. At this point an automatic switch is used, so constructed that the loaded car, going down, passes through and leaves the latches in proper position for the empty car, ascending on the following trip, to pass on the opposite side. The accident happened on the first trip on Monday morning, which accounts for so many men being on the car. No cars had been run on the plane since Saturday evening. For some reason not clear, the first trip on Monday, with fifteen men, some on the inside of the car, and others standing on the front and rear bumpers, ran in on the wrong track and collided with the loaded car descending, killing five and injuring nine, as stated before. Of the fifteen on the car only one escaped being injured, and strange to say, this man was riding on the front of the car going up the incline.

On being notified I went to the scene of the accident and made a thorough investigation. I examined the switch carefully and found it in good working condition, in fact, not the least impaired. The only logical conclusion as to the cause of this frightful accident is that the latches were changed some time between the time of the last run on Saturday and the ill-fated one on Monday morning, which dealt death and injury to so many

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