

195 TRAPPED IN PIT BLAST

**Explosion in Coal Mine at Palos,
Ala., Believed Fatal to Men
Entombed.**

**BLOWUP SO TERRIFIC THAT
MAN ON SURFACE IS KILLED**

**Disaster Follows Close on Heels
of Mulga Tragedy in the
Same Region.**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., May 5.—Forty-five white men and between 130 and 150 negroes are entombed in No. 3 coal mine at Palos tonight as the result of a terrific explosion occurring this afternoon at 1:30 o'clock, and it is believed all are dead.

Palos is fifty miles west of Birmingham and the mines are owned by the Palos Coal and Coke Company of this city.

Two bodies were found early tonight, but it is expected that few of the men can be recovered before morning.

All hope that any of the miners may be rescued alive, has been abandoned. It is thought if any of the men escaped death from the explosion they were later suffocated by black damp.

Estimates of the number of men actually in the mine at the time vary. Those in position to know estimate the number at forty-five white and about 100 negroes, while others say the number is much larger.

Officials of the mine say that according to their records but 110 men are in the mine, but as a number of miners were employed under the contract system the list of names on their payrolls does not include all in the mine.

The flames resulting from the explosion shot into the air from the mouth of the slope for a distance of 200 feet and the shock was felt for miles. Timbers from the slope were hurled several hundred feet from its mouth and rocks from the roof of the slope caved in and made access to the mouth very difficult.

The fan machinery was badly damaged, but air is being pumped into the mine tonight in hopes that some of the men are still alive.

Rescue Apparatus Near at Hand.

Local rescuers at Palos began at once to do what they could, but relief work was not started in earnest until the special train from Birmingham arrived in Palos shortly after 4 o'clock.

This special train carried State Mine Inspector James Hillhouse, J. J. Rutledge, government expert in charge of the geological station at Knoxville, Tenn., who happened to be in the district investigating the recent disaster at Mulga, eight physicians and surgeons, four undertakers and a number of special helpers.

The hospital relief car of the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company was also taken. The car contained helmets and all other necessary paraphernalia for entering gaseous mines.

The explosion was heard for miles and soon crowds of weeping women and children surrounded the entrance waiting for news from husbands and fathers below, while many men begged the officials to let them go below in an attempt to rescue the entombed men.

The explosion is believed to have been caused by one of the miners going into a gas pocket with a lighted lamp.

Searchers Overcome by Gas.

The first rescuers who went into the mine after the explosion were overcome by fire damp and had to be carried out. Mr. Rutledge was among the first to enter and after working his way 1,400 feet down the slope found the second right entry caved in. The two bodies recovered were in the main slope.

Later a rescue party under the direction of Assistant State Fire Inspector Neal was equipped with oxygen helmets and sent into the mine. The party succeeded in going several hundred feet, where they found three bodies and a dead mule. No attempt was made to recover the bodies on account of the fire damp, which soon drove the rescuers out. Later tonight another attempt will be made to explore the workings.

James Gousby, a mail carrier, was killed thirty feet from the mouth of the slope and his body was hurled thirty feet into the Warrior River. He was walking along the railroad track and was directly in front of the slope when the explosion occurred.

It was judged from this that the force of the explosion was such that none of the men on the interior could possibly be alive.

There are a number of mining camps within two or three miles of the Palos mine and within a short time after the explosion a great crowd gathered. Hundreds of women and children were around the mine, wringing their hands and crying piteously tonight.

The Palos mines have been worked for a number of years and the entries were extensive. The only hope that some of the men have escaped and are still alive is the possibility that they were far enough away from the explosion to have missed its force. It is thought that the explosion was caused by the accumulation of gas in some of the abandoned entries.

Compounds Mulga Disaster.

Today's disaster, coming so soon after the Mulga explosion Thursday, April 21, in which forty-one men lost their lives, has plunged the mining settlement into great grief.

The Red Cross and other relief work for the widows and orphans at Mulga has not yet been completed. E. P. Bicknell, general director of the National Red Cross, made a special trip from Washington to investigate relief needs at Mulga, and today's explosion bids fair to cost more than four times as many lives as did Mulga.

Two government experts, J. J. Rutledge and George F. Rice, have been in the district since the Mulga explosion investigating its cause, and both of them hurried out to Palos this afternoon. H. A. Drenner, treasurer of the Palos Coal and Coke Company, said tonight that the company was fully insured against losses from explosions.

The mine was the first in this section that employed union miners only.

Says Flames Shot 300 Feet.

Milton Drennen, superintendent, gave out the following story of the explosion:

"I was standing in the engine room across the river from the mine when the explosion occurred. It was exactly 1:25 o'clock. I could not see the top of the flames. They shot up above the window of the engine room and must have gone 300 feet in the air.

"I think it was a gas explosion. There was only one report, for I listened for a second one and it never came. The explosion was not caused by a blast. We allow blasts to be made only at 12 o'clock, noon, 1 o'clock and 4 o'clock in the afternoon."

Find Other Bodies In Mine.

Late tonight searching parties again entered the mine and Inspector Neal said that they had come across five bodies 1,500 feet down in the mines.

Air pipes into the mines have to be rearranged and brattices are being constructed, as air is being forced into the mines to assist the rescuing parties. Dave Williams and Dave Gwillim, reported dead, have been heard from alive.

The mines here have been short of men until Wednesday, when a number of men moved to Palos from Mulga mines, where on April 20 forty men were killed. Five

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2, COLUMN 4.

195 Trapped in Pit Blast

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE ONE.

of these men are among the victims of the explosion here.

The bodies of the dead men already seen by the rescuing parties show that death in most instances was instantaneous.

The fact that the bodies are not to be brought out of the mine until tomorrow is being kept from the anxious relatives of the entombed men, who are still congregated near the mouth of the slope.

Edward Flynn, former president of the Alabama United Mine Workers of America, now mine inspector for the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, arrived here this evening and is heading the rescue parties and directing the work of repairing brattices for the mines.