

1911-0010

M/NM FATAL

REPORT OF A FIRE AT HARTFORD MINE
REPUBLIC IRON & STEEL CO.
NEGAUNEO, MICHIGAN
MAY 15, 1911 - 7 KILLED

A fire was discovered in shaft No. 2 by the electrician and pumpman, who saw a burning brand drop down the shaft. It had originated in that shaft at or near the 4th level. Seventy-four men were in the mine at the time; 50 escaped unassisted by climbing to the Cambria mine; 18 were hoisted out through shaft No. 1, and 6 were trapped in the mine.

Within 1 hour after the discovery of the fire, an attempt was made to begin rescue operations without the aid of a breathing apparatus. Three bodies were recovered. However, because of the reversal of the air current while erecting a stopping, the smoke became so dense that the shift boss ordered the men to return to the surface. One man attempted to remain and finish the stopping but was overcome. It was several hours before rescuers reached him, but he was dead. Three of the others attempted to go out to the Cambria shaft but were overcome and were revived with great difficulty. After several hours, the remaining three bodies were recovered in apparently good air by men without respiratory protection; they were accompanied by others wearing oxygen breathing apparatus. After removal of all the bodies, water was turned into the No. 2 shaft and the fire was extinguished quickly. It was definitely determined that the reversal of the air had caused the loss of several lives, if not all. The cause or origin of the fire was not determined, but three possibilities were considered - electric wires, candle snuff, or incendiasm.