

1911-0008

# M/NM FATAL

REPORT OF A FIRE AT GIROUX MINE  
CONSOLIDATED MINES CO.  
ELY, NEVADA  
AUG. 23, 1911 - 7 KILLED

A fire in the Giroux shaft was disastrous in the loss of life which it caused and unusual in that the seven deaths occurred at widely separated points and at considerable intervals. As is often the case, the cause of the fire remains unknown. It was at first thought that a dynamite explosion set fire to the timbering, but the fire originated in the station of the 1,000-foot level, where no work was supposed to be in progress. It is believed that two men passing from the 770-foot level to 1,400-foot level had stopped at the 1,000-foot level and must have left a lighted candle snuff there, and that the flame from it ignited the timbering. The greatest damage occurred at the 1,000-foot level, where the station and most of the ore pocket were destroyed. It extended, however, to the 770-foot levels. The mine was flooded, and the water was not finally removed until February 1912, more than 6 months later.

One of the victims was the cage tender, who attempted to come up the shaft on the cage but fell off 15 feet below the collar. One man on a cage loaded with men from the 1,400-foot level was pulled off the cage during hoisting presumably by a manila bell cord. The cord probably had been burned where the fire was hottest and broke when pulled for the hoisting signal, so that it fell down the shaft and entangled the man who was killed. Two men were killed from inhaling gas or flame as they were being pulled through the fire zone on the cage. Finally, three men attempted to climb out on the ladders of the other shaft, the Alpha, and were overcome by gas. It was thought that turning on the sprinkling system may have reversed the air currents and thus driven the products of combustion out through the Alpha shaft. Three other men were burned but recovered.

Fire doors might have proved a means of safety in this case, also. Although the reversal of the air current was not proved, it is possible that the sprinkling water may have caused reversal of air flow.