

EXPLOSION AT COPPER FLAT KILLS TEN MEN AND INJURES TWO

SIXTH LEVEL AT BIG PIT SCENE OF FEARFUL ACCIDENT SUNDAY AFTERNOON, WHEN 150 POUNDS OF POWDER ACCIDENTALLY IGNITED, MANGLES MEN BEYOND RECOGNITION—ONE BODY BEING HURLED ONE THOUSAND FEET—TWO LIVE TO TELL OF EXPERIENCE.

The Dead.

Haley Cooke, native of Virginia, aged 27 years, single.
Stipan Cankovic, Austrian, 42 years of age, married.
Toma Gasparic, Austrian, 39 years of age, married.
Ivan Novacic, Austrian, 50 years of age, married.
Juro Cvitkovic, Austrian, 40 years of age, married.
Stjepan Rubic, Austrian, 45 years of age, married.
Nikola Mesic, Austrian, 26 years of age, married.
Martin Mesic, Austrian, 23 years of age, married.
Anton Rajkovic, Austrian, 25 years of age, married.
George Bougois, Greek, 38 years of age, single.

By the explosion of 150 pounds of powder in the Nevada Consolidated steam shovel pit, at Copper Flat, Sunday afternoon, ten men were instantly killed. The accident was one of the most horrible that ever occurred in the state, the bodies of the men being mutilated beyond recognition, and portions of human remains scattered about the shovel pit. The victims of the explosion were Haley Cooke, American and powder boy for the Nevada Consolidated company, eight Austrians and one Greek. Just previous to the accident, the men, members of the loading crew, were charging churn drill holes, preparatory to a blast. One hole, on bench No. 6 on the west side of the pit, had been loaded with powder, and a portion of the charge had been placed in the second hole, when the explosion took place. The powder which caused the fatal results, was on the surface of the bench, and it is supposed to have been in three boxes or about 150 pounds, brought there for convenience in loading the drill holes.

Eye witnesses of the disaster, saw a great cloud of smoke and debris thrown skyward, in which were the forms of the men who had been at work on the bench. The body of Cooke was thrown fully one thousand feet, landing in the bottom of the pit, about 450 feet below where he had been at work.

Identification of his remains was by shreds of cloth, and a card found in a pocket of his jumper. The remains of the other men, were so torn and mutilated that identification was practically impossible, and the full list of killed was not ascertained until the timekeeper's books were checked, to disclose who were missing.

The force of the explosion had little effect on the surface of the bench and neither the loaded hole nor the one partially charged was ignited. On the bench immediately below 20 or 40 men were at work, and while some were knocked down by the concussion, and more or less bruised, none were seriously injured.

At work on the fatal bench at the time of the accident, and very near the powder that exploded, were C. R. Phay, employed on a churn drill, and an Austrian laborer by the name of Juro Davis. Both received hurts that necessitated their removal to the hospital, and how they escaped death is a miracle. Davis had been sent to the bench on an errand, and passed close to Cooke, who was tamping the hole with a stick, attached to a rope, while two other men were placing the dynamite in the hole. Davis spoke to them as he passed, and had proceeded but a few steps when the explosion took place. His first realization afterward, was when he found himself crawling on his hands and knees across the railroad track, partially stunned and deafened, and bleeding from cuts received by the pieces of flying rock.

Phay's escape is no less remarkable. He was seated on the ground near his drill, and but 20 feet

away from where the loading crew were at work. But a few minutes before, he had been at the hole and asked Cooke if it would not be a good idea to move the drill before the blast was fired.

Cooke had replied that it would be, and made the remarkable statement, that a few nights previous, he had dreamed of seeing a drill knocked over and blown into the bank, by an explosion. Phay had scarcely returned to his drill, when the explosion took place. He was considerably cut about the face, and undoubtedly would have been worse injured, but for the protection of a four-inch pipe column. It is probable that permanent deafness of his left ear has resulted.

Fred Starr of Ely, and his son-in-law, were eye witnesses of the explosion, as at the time they were sitting opposite the pit, on the company office porch. They saw the cloud of smoke and debris and the forms of men hurtling through the air, and were among the first to carry word of the accident to the office force.

Following the accident, all operations at the shovel pit were suspended, and the ghastly work commenced of gathering up the scattered remains. The bodies, or as much of them as could be found, were placed in boxes, and removed to the undertaking rooms of Nevin & Graham, in Ely.

The cause of the accident will probably never be known, although there are various conjectures. A spark from one of the steam shovels might have ignited the powder, or careless handling could have brought about the explosion. In hot weather, such as prevailed, Sunday, the dynamite, if long exposed to the sun becomes easily susceptible to any sudden jar. However, this is mere surmise, as all the men who could shed light upon the disaster, were killed.

The holes upon which Cooke and his men were at work, Sunday, contained comparatively small charges, as it is not unusual to prepare blasts of one hundred boxes, or two and one-half tons. The powder ordinarily employed, is a compound containing about 40 per cent nitroglycerine. Sunday's accident is the first involving any loss of life since the fire at the Grouse, last August, when seven men were killed.

Haley Cooke, the powder foreman and the only American killed by the explosion, was unmarried and a native of Buckners, Virginia. He had been employed at the Flat for about two years, and was planning to give up his work here and return to Virginia. He was a member of Murry Lodge No. 175, A. F. and A. M., and Monday night, the Ely lodge of Masons conducted a memorial service in his honor, in Schallenbarger hall. Following a short secret session, the meeting was opened to the public when more than one hundred of the personal friends of the deceased were admitted. An impressive service followed, and Rev. Joseph W. Gunn, a brother Mason, made a short address which appealed to the sympathies of those present, and brought out the thought that even though the young man had met death far from his home and family, there were those bound by the ties of fraternal brotherhood to administer to his memory and tender him the honor due. During the service there was a presentation of a sum of money, voluntarily contributed, for the purchase of flowers and other purposes desired. The presentation was feelingly responded to by James Holland, an employee at the Flat, and who was to accompany the remains of Mr. Cooke to Virginia, for burial.

The body was sent east, Tuesday morning, and a number of friends

and Masons were at the station, to witness the departure of the funeral party on the long, sad journey.

The funeral of the eight Austrians killed at Copper Flat Sunday was held in Ely, Monday afternoon, and was an occasion to be long remembered by those who witnessed the unusual spectacle. Several hundred fellow countrymen of the deceased, were present from the mines, Ely and McGill, and attended the service which was conducted by Rev. Father Sheehan of the Sacred Heart church. The Austrian Benevolent society turned out in full uniform, and headed by the Ely band, acted as escort from the Nevin & Graham undertaking parlors, to the cemetery where eight graves awaited the victims of the fearful accident. The hearse, an ambulance, and an auto truck were used to carry the eight caskets to the cemetery. The service at the cemetery was concluded by Father Sheehan, after which the cortege marched to Murry street, where the column dispersed.

For the accommodation of those attending the funeral services of Haley Cooke and the eight Austrians Superintendent Vanderhoof of the Nevada Consolidated Co. arranged for a special train to return to the mines Monday night. It was an accommodation appreciated by the large number who came to Ely from the Flat and vicinity to pay last respects to the dead.

The concluding funeral service as the result of the explosion at Copper Flat, Sunday afternoon, whereby ten lives were lost, was held Tuesday morning, of George Bougois, the Greek powder boy, who was handling the explosive at the time of the accident. Bougois had been employed at the Flat for about five years, and was looked upon as a thoroughly reliable and competent man. He was well known and popular with his associates, and there was a large turn-out of compatriots and other friends, at the funeral which was conducted by Rev. Germanos, of the Greek church.

Interment was in Ely cemetery and the band escorted the remains to the grave.

The wife and three children of one of the victims of the explosion, are enroute to the district from the old country, and their arrival here will be a heart-breaking awakening for those deprived of husband and father.

Mrs. Rajkovic, daughter of Ivan Novacic, loses both her husband and her father, by the untimely accident.

NEVADA NORTHERN RATE CASE IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION

General Manager Cannon, Auditor Burke and Traffic Clerk Fleming returned Friday evening from Carson City, where a hearing was had before the Railroad Commission as to the Nevada Northern's commodity freight rates and passenger fares.

The officials of the road put in their data and this with the complaints will be gone over and results announced at a later date. It will probably be some little time before the question is definitely determined, as there are many factors to consider.

During 1910, at the instigation of the Commission, the railroad company agreed to reduce its class freight rates, and the recent action brought against the company is for the purpose of investigating its other rates.

Full text of the complaint from the Commission, with which the public is thoroughly familiar, was published some little time ago.

LOUKAS AND LEFTY AWAIT ACTION OF FEDERAL OFFICER

Subsequent proceedings in the case of Harry Loukas of McGill, arrested last week Saturday, charged with bringing Madrid Elwood from Salt Lake to the "Rag Dumpy" at McGill, for immoral purposes, was the arrest, Monday, of Cyclone Lefty also of McGill. Lefty came in from Salt Lake with Loukas and the Elwood girl, and Florence Greenhalgh, and with Loukas is in jail, pending an investigation of the case by J. F. Lamereaux, a federal officer who arrived from Salt Lake Thursday night. Loukas and Lefty are under bonds for \$2000 each, and the girls are detained as witnesses.