

Nineteen Men Killed in East Brookside Coal Mine Saturday.

DYNAMITE LIKELY CAUSE OF ACCIDENT

Explosion Came Twice, Thirteen Men Perished First and Six Later — Bodies Scattered in all Directions.

Tower City, Pa., August 3.—Nineteen men were killed and two seriously injured yesterday in a double explosion in the East Brookside mine of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company near here. Thirteen men died in the first explosion, and five went to their deaths in the second blast, after an heroic attempt to rescue the first victims. One of the rescuers escaped alive, but died a few hours later.

The Dead.

John Lorenz, 60, mine superintendent.

Daniel McGinley, 48, fire boss, Tower City, leaves wife and seven children.

Henry Murphy, 50, fire boss, Tower City, leaves wife and three children.

John Farrell, 49, foreman, Tower City, wife and ten children.

Howard Hand, 21, Muir, single.

Harry Hand, 24, miner, Muir, wife and three children.

Jacob Kopenhaver, 26, shaftman, Reinerton, wife and two children.

Thomas Behny, 30, miner, Reinerton wife and two children.

Daniel Farley, 42, fire boss, Tower City, wife and six children.

John Fessler, 46, miner, Tower City, wife and two children.

Nine Italian workmen.

Dynamite Probable Cause.

It is not known exactly what was the cause of the explosion, but the miners at the colliery are inclined to the belief that the first explosion was that of dynamite and the second was caused by gas which had been liberated by the dynamite explosion. The dead were scattered about for a distance of about a quarter of a mile. Only three men were taken out of the mine alive, and one of these died on the way to the hospital.

Superintendent John Lorenz, 60 years old, was in the mine when the explosion occurred. He was rescued several hours later. Harry Schoffstall was another taken out alive. Both were burnt and bruised, and Lorenz died later. It is possible that the real story of the explosion may never be known, as all who were in a position to know were killed.

How Men Were Killed.

While the impression is that the first explosion was that of dynamite it is also possible that it might have been due to gas. The men were killed in three different ways. Some of them were violently hurled against the side of the tunnel in which they were working and crushed. Some were burned to death by the explosion of gas and others were suffocated by the after-damp which always follows an explosion in the mines.

All but five of the men killed were identified, and it is believed that the other five might easily be identified also if any of their relatives had lived in the vicinity. With a few exceptions all of the foreign workmen were brought here from a distance.

Employed 500 Hands.

The East Brookside Colliery employs about five hundred hands. It is situated on top of the mountain, within about two miles of Tower City, and within the same distance of half a dozen other little towns in the Williams' Valley. The colliery closed down Thursday evening for the week, but Charles Portland, a mining contractor, who has a contract with the Reading Company to drive a tunnel, kept some of his men at work. There were a half dozen muckers at work whose duty it is to load the debris blown down by the blasts which are fired at night.

There was also a mucker boss and a blacksmith and his helper. All were at work in the tunnel, which is a quarter of a mile from the slope entrance to the mines. Supt. Lorenz and Mine Boss Farrell were in the mine making an inspection of some new work which was to be done and were about six hundred feet from the tunnel in which the Italian workmen were engaged.

Rumble and Dust Clouds.

It was shortly before noon when the men on the surface heard a rumbling noise and from the mouth of the slope, and from the air passageway at the fan house there came clouds of dust. The outside men knew in an instant that there had been a bad explosion and a rescue party was quickly organized. The party was composed of McGinley, Murphy, Schoffstall, Benny Kopenhaver, and Howard Hand. Frank Unger also was in the party, but he was recalled to the lamp house to get the lamps ready for other rescuers who were to follow.

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AWFUL EXPLOSION IN A PENNSYLVANIA MINE

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The six rescuers were lowered in the slope, a depth of 1,200 feet down to the fifth lift, next to the bottom of the mine. It is judged that the second explosion occurred about twenty minutes after the first. The rescuers had time to walk about six hundred feet from the mouth of the slope, where they were found dead.

Five Dead Together.

Five of the foreign workmen were found dead in one pile in the tunnel. A number of men were at work on the lift above the one where the tunnel was being driven and the concussion blew out the lights on their caps.

At the colliery were two oxygen helmets and others were quickly obtained from collieries in this vicinity and when the mine rescue car arrived there was plenty of them to carry on the rescue work.

Fortunately the mine was not set afire, but the rescuers were retarded for a while by the blocked passages, due to the timbers being torn down and the roof and sides caving in. They made their way with the greatest difficulty. The first rescued were the members of the rescuing force who had gone to the relief of the victims of the first explosion. Doctors from all parts of the region were summoned and two of them descended into the mine to give relief at the bottom of the slope.

Searched Eight Hours.

After a futile search of about eight hours for the bodies of Fessler and Farley, some of the officials were still hopeful that they might have escaped by making their way through an old working. There was a rumor to this effect, but it was not given much credit.

Superintendent Lorenz and foreman Farrell were together when the explosions occurred and Farrell was instantly killed, dropping dead at the side of Lorenze.

At nine o'clock rescuing parties came out after a futile search and gave it as their opinion that both Farley and Fessler were dead. They encountered a wall of rock which they believed to be about fifty feet long and they think that the two men were caught and buried underneath this. A report came to the surface that rapping had been heard inside, but the officials gave no credence to this, as they do not believe the men can be alive.

H. Zimmerman was the only man in the affected mine at the time who escaped with practically no injury. He was standing near the slope when the explosion occurred, and he was hurled a distance of ten feet by its force, but was not rendered unconscious.

Mine Mules Uninjured.

When the rescuing force came upon Supt. Lorenz, after a walk in a circuitous route of about a mile, they found him barely able to crawl. Asked how he was, he replied:

"Oh, I am pretty sore and tired but never mind me, go and help Jack Farrell. He needs your help. Leave me alone and take care of those who need help more than I do."

When the rescuing force explored the affected section of the mine, they found most of the mules alive, although they were in close proximity to the explosion. They did not appear to be injured in the least, beyond a singeing of the hair.

One theory of the explosion is that when the muckers were cleaning up the debris their shovels struck a piece of unexploded dynamite and set off the 175 pounds which the men had taken in with them.