

REPORTS ON THE EXPLOSION AT NO. 3 MINE OF THE IMPERIAL MINING CO., BELLE VALLEY, NOBLE COUNTY, MAY 17, 1913.

STATE MINING DEPARTMENT.
STATE OF OHIO.

HON. JAMES M. COX, *Governor of Ohio.*

HON. SIR:—On the evening of May 17th, 1913, at 11 p. m. the State Mining Department was notified that an explosion had occurred in the Imperial Mining Company's Imperial No. 3 mine at Belle Valley, and that a number of men were entombed as a result of the explosion, the news of the explosion having been brought to the surface by four of the men who were employed in the mine at the time, and having escaped the force of the explosion.

In order to arrive at the scene of the explosion at the earliest train service possible, it was impossible for me to attend to the shipping of the Mine Rescue Equipment which is stored in the basement of the State House, and I immediately got into communication with the clerks of the department who volunteered to see that the equipment was shipped on the 6:35 a. m. train.

However, upon arriving at the mine, I ascertained that the bodies of the entombed men had already been reached, and the order for the State's Equipment was countermanded.

Immediately following the explosion, District Mine Inspector Abel Ellwood of the Fifth District, in conjunction with General Superintendent Thos. Matthews of the Imperial Mining Company, made arrangements with the Pennsylvania R. R. Co., to run a special train from Cambridge to Belle Valley, carrying rescue equipment and medical aid.

District Inspectors Hill, Grogan, Morrison, Devore, Werker and Wheatley, were also notified of the explosion, and with myself went to the mine to render such assistance as was possible.

Upon the arrival of the special train rescue parties were organized to enter the mine. The ventilating appliances were not deranged, and this led us to hope that at least some of the entombed were still alive.

Previous to the arrival of the rescue equipment, Henry Fairhurst of Belle Valley and several others entered the mine to attempt to rescue the injured. They succeeded in rescuing J. R. Yeager, who was badly injured, but Fairhurst died from the effects of breathing the afterdamp.

Superintendent J. B. Morris, of the Caldwell mine, John Smolley of the Laura mine, and others, formed a rescue party and penetrated the mine to the seat of the explosion, where they encountered the bodies of several of the victims.

Upon the arrival of myself and the other Inspectors, we found the work of the recovery of the bodies well under way, several of them having been brought to the surface. We entered the mine, made our way to the vicinity of the trouble, and rendered what assistance we could, and continued to work until the last body was recovered, which was about 11:30 Sunday morning.

As nothing further could be done, we left the mine for the hotel, agreeing to return the following morning to make an investigation and endeavor to determine the cause and origin of the explosion.

Upon our arrival at the mine Monday morning, we found that Mr. James W.

Paul, engineer in charge of the Federal Station at Pittsburgh, and two of his assistants had arrived for the purpose of making an investigation for the Federal Government, and to render all assistance.

In company with the above named gentlemen and Mr. John Moore, State President of the U. M. W. of A., Mr. Lee Hall and Wm. Thompson, Vice Presidents, we entered the mine and proceeded to obtain evidence that would enable us to determine as near as possible where and what caused the explosion, returning Tuesday and completed same. A report of this investigating party is herewith attached to this report.

Very respectfully,
J. C. DAVIES,
Chief Inspector of Mines.

Columbus, Ohio, May 22, 1913.

CAMBRIDGE, OHIO, May 20, 1913.

HON. J. C. DAVIES, *Chief Inspector of Mines, Columbus, Ohio.*

DEAR SIR:—We have today completed an examination of the O'Gara Coal Company's Imperial No. 3 mine, located in Noble County, with a view of determining the cause of the explosion in that mine on the evening of May 17, 1913.

This explosion occurred between six and seven o'clock p. m., at which time twenty men were in the mine. Of this number fourteen were killed, and several of the others injured. The number of fatalities was later increased to fifteen by the death of Henry Fairhurst, who was overcome while attempting to rescue one of the injured men.

As a result of our investigation it is our opinion that the explosion originated in the vicinity of No. 5 room, off No. 7 south entry, and that it was produced by the ignition of a body of firedamp in or near this room. The force of the explosion seems to have radiated from this point.

The direction of greatest force was from the vicinity of No. 5 room in No. 7 entry outward through No. 7 entry and through the breakthroughs into No. 8 entry. In No. 8 entry opposite No. 4 and No. 5 rooms, a number of men were engaged in laying a side track, and two machine men were cutting a skip from the east rib of No. 8 south entry. Ten of the victims were found along No. 8 entry, one in No. 1 east entry, just west of No. 8 south; one in No. 1 room in No. 1 east entry; one in No. 7 south entry between Nos. 4 and 5 rooms; and one in No. 1 room in No. 4 east entry. None of them were mutilated to any considerable extent, but all except the one in No. 1 room in No. 4 east entry were severely burned.

Considerable marsh gas is generated in this section of the mine, and an examination of the workings in the vicinity of the scene of the explosion of May 19 and 20 showed traces of fire damp in most of them.

This examination showed no dates marked in the working places later than May 16, indicating that these places had not been examined by the fire boss on the date of the explosion. Evidently, the ventilation had been cut off of this section of the mine for a considerable time, thus permitting a body of fire damp to

accumulate, and some of the workmen, presumably the one found between Nos. 4 and 5 rooms, in No. 7 entry had entered No. 5 room with a naked light, igniting it.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS MORRISON,
Inspector Ninth District.
L. D. DEVORE,
Inspector Tenth District.
THOMAS F. GROGAN,
Inspector Eleventh District.
ROBERT S. WHEATLEY,
Inspector Twelfth District.
W. H. WERKER,
Inspector Eighth District.

Approved:

J. C. DAVIES,
Chief Inspector of Mines.

After completing the examination the following orders were given:

CAMBRIDGE, OHIO, May 20, 1913.

THOMAS MATTHEWS, *General Superintendent Imperial Mining Co., Cambridge, Ohio.*

DEAR SIR:—The ventilation throughout your Imperial No. 3 Mine is inadequate to properly dilute and remove the explosive and noxious gases generated in the mine. This deficiency in the ventilation is the result of various causes, chief among them being a choked or contracted condition of the inlet air course and leaky stoppings.

In order to overcome this condition it will be necessary to thoroughly clean and put in good condition the inlet air course from the bottom of the shaft to the interior of the mine. This is necessary not only in order to provide sufficient ventilation, but in order that there may be two separate and distinct traveling ways from the interior of the mine to the surface, as required by law.

I wish to notify you in addition to the above, to construct all stoppings between the permanent inlet and outlet air courses of non-perishable material, and to have them air-tight.

The law requires this and I have no authority to suspend the operation of the law.

Upon receiving notification that this work is completed I will make an examination of the mine; if found satisfactory, permission will be given to resume operation. And until such permission is given, the mine must not be operated.

Until the work is completed, and permission given to resume operation, nothing but locked safety lamps must be used in the mine, and the laws governing the examination of the mine by the fire boss strictly observed.

Respectfully submitted,

ABEL ELLWOOD,
Inspector Fifth District.
THOMAS MORRISON,
Inspector Ninth District.
L. D. DEVORE,
Inspector Tenth District.
R. S. WHEATLEY,
Inspector Twelfth District.
WM. H. WERKER,
Inspector Eighth District.
THOMAS F. GROGAN,
Inspector Eleventh District.

Approved:

J. C. DAVIES,
Chief Inspector of Mines.

ABSTRACT OF NOTES

taken by J. W. Paul, H. D. Mason
and G. W. Salisbury at the

NOBLE MINE.

Imperial Mining Company,
Belle Valley, Ohio,
May 19, 1913.

EXPLOSION AT NOBLE MINE

of the
Imperial Mining Company,
located at
Belle Valley, Ohio,
May 17, 1913.

14 killed in the explosion
1 rescue man killed
6 men out alive

Killed	Name	Age	Nationality
1	Henry Fairhurst	29	American
2	Mike Derkis	50	English
3	Clem Martinsky	23	Austrian
4	Mike Yaco	25	Austrian
5	Henry Brant	49	American
6	Harry Dudley	41	American
7	Pete Yuliky	44	Russian
8	John Ziszie	31	Austrian
9	Clyde Hawkins	24	American
10	Pete Dooley	21	Austrian
11	Mike Mezey	33	Austrian
12	Robt. Alton	—	American
13	Pete Yuga	18	Austrian
14	Clarence Brown	—	American
15	John Yuicko	—	Austrian

CONDITION OF BODIES.

Henry Fairhurst:—Overcome by gas. Could not be revived. Entered mine with first rescue party. Went in to Yeager on the mule and placed him in car. Probably went further, in. On return to car was weak. Started to push car out but couldn't make it. Was placed in car with Yeager by next party and brought to shaft. Overcome about 9:30; out at 10:30.

As told by Dr. Dew:—Fairhurst and McCune separated from rest of party. Went ahead and found Yeager near car. Had mule with them. Loaded Yeager

in car and started out, McCune driving and Fairhurst cleaning track. Went from 6th to 3rd W. entries, where Fairhurst was overcome. Fairhurst was overcome. McCune was unable to place him in car so came out for help.

Mike Derkis:—Face and hands burned.

Clem Martinsky:—Face and hands burned, but not badly.

Mike Yaco:—Face and hands burned.

Henry Brant:—Burned badly on face, hands and breast. Badly cut.

Harry Dudley:—Badly burned and bruised.

Pete Yuliky:—Face, hands and breast burned. Pipe still clenched in hand.

John Zissie:—Face and hands burned.

Clyde Hawkins:—Face, hands and breast burned.

Mike Mezey:—Face, hands and breast burned.

Robert Alton:—Slight burns on face and hands; nose bruised; neck appears to have been broken.

Pete Yuga:—Face and hands burned.

Clarence Brown:—Badly burned over great area; clothes burned; burned deeper than others; jaw broken; skull fractured; lying on face when found.

John Yuiko:—Deep burns on face, hands and breast.

The above is the order in which the men were brought out of the mine.

A. J. Thompson and Earl Davis were posting on new motor road about 100 feet from 6th W. Neither was burned. Davis was holding post and kept out. Blew Thompson's cap off and turned him around. Put lights out. Started crawling out and lit matches when they thought air was good. Finally lit lamps and made to the shaft. J. S. Horne and Roy Yeager were working at loading slate 100 feet in by Thompson and Davis, were blown by explosion. For Yeager's story, see clipping in *Quinze Times*, 5-19. Horne was burned on face and hands and his leg bruised. Both started to crawl out. Made it to 6th W. and was forced to leave Yeager. Met Thompson and Davis returning. All made it to shaft.

Names given by Dr. Dew of men in rescue parties:

Dr. F. R. Dew, Dr. O. W. Keenen, Dr. F. W. Murrey, Dr. L. F. Cain, Dr. Ross, Dr. Robbins; J. B. Morris, Superintendent, Caldwell Mine; A. M. Mathaney, Cambridge Colliery; Geo. Colley, Laura Mine; M. S. Moore, Laura Mine; John Smalley, Laura Mine; Wm. Cooper, Elwood Barthelo, Thos. Jones, Orvall McCune, Mike Sanivaistha, Imperial Mine.

None of the mules were killed; were in a stable near shaft; shaft 185 feet deep; intake and return at shaft.

First body brought out about 5:30 Sunday morning; last 12:30 Sunday afternoon.

Notes taken Monday the 19th.

Party consisted of inspectors:

J. C. Davies, Chief, Columbus.

L. D. Devore, Bellaire.

W. H. Werker, Rayland.

R. S. Wheatley, Salineville.

Thos. Morrison, Bridgeport.

Thos. Grogan, Hemlock.

Abel Ellwood, Cambridge. Ellwood left party at bottom of shaft and returned to top.)

John Moore, Prest. O. U. M. W. A.

Lee Hall, V. P., O. U. M. W. A.

Of the Imperial Mining Co.:

G. A. Matthews, Div. Supt.

W. A. Oliver.

F. V. ...

J. F. ...

Hor. ...

U. S. ... of Mines:

J. W. ...

H. D. ...

G. W. Salisbury.

Entered mine about 9:45 a. m., returned at 2:30 p. m.

Devore, Werker, Matthews and Salisbury went in ahead of party and to look for gas; advance party followed; haulage road to new motor road to 7th and 8th east entries; found dust on new motor road about 150 feet from 6th W; several rock falls found as they approached 7th E. Reel was unwound at about 50 feet from 7th E. on motor road. Truck blown just out by 7th E. One body found under and one on truck. Body found at fall on 7 E. Body of Brown found on fall on 8 E. toward 9 S. partially covered with timbers.

Machine on corner 8th E., door between 7 and 8 E. blown out by but still standing.

8 S. Entry.

Car broken against right rib at second x-cut into room.

Body in by first x-cut to room on right track at parting, 2 bodies out by same x-cut.

Timbers throughout covered with dust on all exposures.

Board stoppings in 5-t to 7 S. blown out and over track. Slight coking on in by side of loaded car; little moisture on road; bucket by track, left side, undisturbed; keg of powder 2-3 full by track; paper plug slightly charred.

Dudley's body found by right rib at third h-6 to 7-S.

Coke on in by side of timbers. Loaded car check 116 in by 3rd 5-t. No coke on car. Carbon filaments on exposed edges both in by and out by. No coke and four filaments at face. Small feeder but no indication of gas in lamp. Fan clean.

7 S. Entry.

No gas at face. Carbon filaments heavy and easily detached. Little coke on in by side of props and collars. Full can of powder on top of lock box at 6th b-t. Coke increased on in by side of props near 5th b-t. Coke coverings in by side of door frame near 3rd b-t. Door gone; frame intact.

No. 5 Room.

Coke in by on collar and posts. Powder can struck on in by side of post at neck. Carbon filaments on projections. Coking appears to have divided, part going on in by side of collars and props to the room neck and through x-cut into room No. 4. Coked in by.

No. 4 Room 7th S.

Break through into No. 3, 8 feet from face. Shows gas cap at 5-b. Coke on rail near face.

Post at second b-t from face singed. Posts coked facing room No. 2; ditto in rib projections in b-t.

No. 2 Room 7th S.

Coke on rib projections inby; $\frac{1}{4}$ inch gas cap 6 feet from face; undercut 24 feet wide at face; dust in corner of left rib; carbon filaments throughout room. Slight movements of air toward No. 1.

No. 1 Room 7th S.

$\frac{1}{4}$ inch cap 10 feet from face; carbon filaments throughout room; coal shot partially loaded cut in center; two sets of tools in room; coke on prop on side facing butt rooms off 8 E. entry; coke on props heaviest on outby sides toward butt rooms. Changes to outby of room nearer neck about last 10 props; last prop in room 1 neck coked, both sides.

Loaded can of powder at switch near b-t and on entry 40 feet from No. 1; door gone 7 E. off 9 S.

Entry No. 8 E. No. 1 room from 7 S. Collar No. 1 room coked inby. Post at x-cut coked inby; dust tentacles throughout; door in x-cut between 3-4 rooms blown out toward 7th E; door still on hinges but blown through frame; dust and coal blown into corner of door frame right side collar on 8 entry coked inby; ditto ribs. Wooden brattice in x-cut opposite room No. 4 intact.

No. 4 Room.

Grease can in room neck spilled; oil on inby rib and top; can thrown and bursted; collar across neck coked inby; door directly in front and across room; coked inby on collar and props between 4 and 5; ditto cap outby room 5; collar directly opposite room 5 coked both sides; collar at neck of room 5 coked outby. Coking disappears in room 5 at 1st b-t; props at face clean; trace of gas at face through 1st b-t; roof and ribs moist; trace of gas; not holed through; no coking. Between rooms 5-6 collars coked on both sides; more pronounced inby room 6 in 40 feet. Collar in room neck coked outby; between rooms 6-7 collars coked inby.

Room No. 7.

No. b-t for 82 feet ribs at neck moist; coked inby on collars; $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cap 12 feet from face and 10 inches from roof; no signs of heat; clay vein in room; face undercut but not shot down.

Room No. 8.

Collar in front of room neck heavily coked inby; wood scorched; first collar inside of mouth coked outby only; $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cap 25 feet from face.

Between rooms 8-9 collars slightly coked outby.

1 tool box containing 2 full kegs.

1 tool box containing 1 full keg.

1 tool box containing 1 full keg.

1 empty keg ends bulged outward; oil can with top off; coke on collar inby; little coke on rib facing room 9.

Room No. 10.

Shows $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cap 20 feet from face. Room neck burned.

$\frac{1}{4}$ inch cap in entry 70 feet from face no coking near face.

Room No. 9.

No signs of fire; gas cap $\frac{1}{2}$ inch 25 feet from face 10 inches from roof; props and collars clean; fine dust on rail; kit of tools in box; $\frac{1}{4}$ inch gas cap found 50 feet from face of entry; $\frac{1}{4}$ inch gas cap found 1 foot from bottom, 20 feet from face; fall at this point 1st and 2nd b-t to 7 E. blown N.

5/20/13.

Anometer No. 6955.

Reading 75 feet outby of new motor road.

Area, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, vel. $121\frac{1}{2}$, air 6500.

2 boxes at inby side of motor parting; both locked. Salters and salts were at this point when explosion occurred. One box 50 feet inby of parting road of 9 S was damp and plastic.

Stopping at 7 E. intact.

Stopping at 1st b-b in 7 E. intact.

Stopping at 2nd b-t blown against left ribs.

Stopping at 3rd b-t intact.

Stopping at 4th b-t blown out and against left ribs.

Ditto 5 and 6 b-t stoppings.

Truck at 7th E. and 8 S. strap blown back; man found under and one on truck.

8 E. and 7 S.

Machine at second cutting on corner blown to switch.

No. 2 Room 8th S.

Carbon filaments on x-bar at mouth; no coke; few filaments in room 3rd b-b from face; slate car off track.

3 W. off 8 S.

No signs of heat except at mouth; slight coking at mouth; several barrels of water in 4 W; stopping in b-t blown against right rib; last 2 b-t open; one at face.

7 S. Entry.

Feeder at face; trace of cap.

Gas sample taken at face.

4 E. off 7 S.

Coke on both sides of 1st and 2nd collars; 3rd collar coked outby; ditto props; props and collar at room No. 1 coked outby; ditto car of props; collar across neck of room No. 1 coked outby, none inby. Second cap coked inby; ditto props; machine on truck in room 30 feet from neck; body of Alton found left side of truck; coke on outby of cap over truck; fine dust on machine; no indications of gas; carbon filaments on collar 6 feet from face; face undercut; bug dust in corner not shot; no holes; locked box at room neck; collar on entry 10 feet inby of No. 1 room coked outby; small granules.

Stopping in b-t to 3 F. and between Nos. 1 and 2 blown mouth.

No. 2 Room.

On 18 feet cleaned up; no signs of heat; collars on entry from No. 2 room to face coked outby, clean inby; collars b-t coked both sides; locked box with drivers' lamp on it at b-t.

No. 3 Room.

Necked in 10 feet; rail across neck has little coke on top.

No. 3 to face. Carbon filaments on collars going inby; empty can at face; car on track; coal shot down; slight cap at face; collars and props in last b-t coked on N. side; ditto tool box.

No. 3 Entry off 7 S.

Collar and props facing b-t coked toward b-t. Coal at face shot; slight trace of gas; small feeder at face; fine dust blown against inby side of cap and prop 9 feet from face; outby side clean; ditto second and third caps at props; 4th clean; 1st b-t from face coked inby and carbon filaments on inby side; ditto 2nd b-t to face; no stoppings in b-t; tool box unlocked and empty; can inside; next collar coked inby; ditto at mouth; fall at switch; hole in corner of b-t to 8th S. opposite room No. 5.



