

FOUR WHITE MEN AND FIVE NEGROES DIE IN EXPLOSION

**Spark From Steam Shovel Sets
Off Premature Blast at
Pounding Mill Crusher**

**SIX BODIES ARE STILL
BURIED BENEATH DEBRIS**

**Crusher Was Being Operated
By Hunter and Boxley, Con-
tractors—Many Visit Scene**

(Special to The Times.)

Tazewell, Aug 13.—A spark from a steam shovel flying into a hole, charged with gunpowder, early today caused a premature explosion at the Pounding Mill rock crusher, on the Norfolk and Western Railway in this county, which cost the lives of nine men. Two other men were seriously injured, one of them having been blown into the air thirty feet. The blasts were to have been set off Monday.

The dead: R. T. and C. G. McGhee, brothers, Max Meadows, Va.; and F. Myers and J. L. Smith, all white; John Byrd, Allen Byrd, and Edward Byrd, brothers, and Jasper Jackson and Wash Lovern, all colored.

The injured: George Brewster and Taylor Willis, both colored.

Details of the Explosion (Special to The Times)

Pounding Mill, Va., Aug. 13.—In a premature explosion at the rock crushing plant of the Pounding Mill quarry here nine men were instantly killed this morning, four of whom were white men. The bodies of seven of the men are buried under several hundred tons of Limestone Rock, and it is believed that several days will be required to recover them.

The bodies of F. E. Myers and John Byrd were recovered this morning shortly after the explosion.

N. and W. wrecking crews are at work tonight clearing away the huge limestone boulders.

The explosion was caused by a spark from a steam shovel, igniting the powder in one of the drill holes on the mountain side. The shovel was located about 30 feet below and directly under a drill hole that had been filled with 2,200 pounds of powder and dynamite together.

Caused by a Spark

A spark from the engine was lifted by the breeze and carried high in the air and descended directly in the hole containing the explosive and set it off.

The concussion set off another shot adjacent, and several hundred tons of rock were piled down on the men and helpers operating the shovel a short distance below.

The men received no warning at all of the impending disaster and were consequently caught in a trap and crushed to death.

The Pounding Mill quarry, which furnished crushed limestone for ballast for the Norfolk and Western and for road building in the State is one of the largest concerns of its kind in the State. Thousands and thousands of pounds of high explosives have been used in the past few years without injury to a single person, it is said.

It is the custom of the concern to blast out rock about every six months, using approximately 15 to 20 tons of dynamite and powder combined. Preparations had been made for the semi-annual blast for the latter part of this week and 15 holes about eight inches square and many feet deep had been filled with the explosives. Thirteen of the holes remained and will likely be held in abeyance for several days. The tragedy has cast a pall over the little village here, where the four white men killed lived with their families and were highly respected and honored by the citizens.

Six Bodies Not Recovered.

Six of the bodies are still buried beneath a small mountain of rock which also hides a large steam shovel. It is expected it will be noon tomorrow before the bodies can be recovered by a railroad wrecking crew which went to the scene late today.

The rock crusher is owned and operated by Hunter and Boxley, contractors, and was under the supervision of C. M. Hunter, superintendent. Mr. Hunter tonight declared he sounded a warning immediately when he saw a spark leave the stem shovel, but it was too late for the men to leave their places. Rocks were hurled at a considerable distance and in every direction. Mayor W. W. Boxley, of Roanoke, Va., a member of the contracting firm, and City Manager W. P. Hunter, of Roanoke, brother of Superintendent Hunter, went to the scene today.

Large crowds have gone to the crusher to watch section hands and wrecking crews clear the debris away. All the dead men left large families.