

M/NM FATAL

1922-0001

REPORT OF A FIRE AT ARGONAUT MINE
ARGONAUT MINING CO., JACKSON, AMADOR COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AUGUST 27, 1922 - 47 KILLED

A fire discovered at midnight in the main shaft caused the death of 47 miners. Rescue workers recovered 46 of the bodies; the forty-seventh was found a year later under fallen rock. The definite cause of the fire is unknown. Two causes are possible - a short circuit in the 2,300-volt power line in the shaft and incendiarism. Public investigators strongly contended that electricity was the probably cause, but the officials of the Argonaut mine strongly maintained that the origin was incendiary. The Governor's investigating committee confined its investigation to interviewing witnesses. The committee stated that it believed the fire started in the manway; it was unable to arrive at a definite conclusion as to origin but believed the origin to be either incendiarism or defective wiring. Another possible cause of the fire was that a cigarette or match might have been thrown in the hanging-wall sets as the miners were being lowered.