

# RESCUERS PENETRATE MINE MORE THAN MILE BUT FIND NO SIGN OF ENTOMBED MEN

**THIRTY-FOUR WORKERS ARE  
CAUGHT UNDER GROUND BY  
GIGANTIC EXPLOSION.**

**SMALL HOPES ARE HELD**

**Terrific Blast Rocks the Country  
For Twenty Miles Around,  
Breaks Windows In Homes and  
Destroys Nearby Structures.**

Fairmont, W. Va., March 18.—Ten hours after last night's explosion in Bethlehem mine No. 41, at Barrackville, near here, rescue workers had penetrated one mile in the workings without finding any trace of the thirty-four men entombed.

Fairmont, W. Va., March 18.—Hundreds of rescue workers struggled today to reach thirty-four miners entombed in Barrackville Mine No. 41 of the Bethlehem Mining corporation, three miles from here, who were cut off by a terrific explosion at 9:30 p. m. yesterday.

Belief that all the miners entombed were dead was expressed early today by Benton Mitchell, superintendent of the mine.

"The mine is a total wreck as a result of the explosion," he said, adding it was probably on fire. The blast last night, believed to have been caused by a gas explosion, rocked the vicinity for twenty miles around, destroying structures near the mine and causing the lights of Fairmont to go out temporarily.

Hope that the men might be alive was raised, however, by R. M. Lambie, chief of the West Virginia department of mines, who at 8 a. m. expressed a belief the men might be safe.

Rescue workers reached the bottom of the wrecked shaft early today and found thirty-six horses dead from the blast. Study of the

horses, Lambie said, showed the explosion "ran" toward the entrance of the mine and did not sweep inward.

The men who were trapped were one and one-half miles inside the workings, Lambie said. This gave hope that the miners escaped death in the blast. Gas, however, filled the mine immediately after the explosion and some fear was expressed that the men may have been asphyxiated.

It is believed the roofs of the underground passageways collapsed, sealing the men as in a tomb.

Thousands of persons gathered at the mouth of the pit following the explosion and rescue squads were organized, with the state department of mines in charge.

After more than six hours' work, members of the rescue parties had not been able to reach any of the men—dead or alive.

Rumors of a bomb explosion were linked up with the fact the mine started work on an open shop basis on Oct. 1, 1924, but they were stoutly denied by officials of the Bethlehem corporation.

The prevailing theory is the explosion was caused by ignited gas, since it is known the mine is practically always filled with gas. In 1916 ten miners lost their lives in an explosion in the same mine.

The victims of last night's explosion were members of the mine's night shift, who were cutting coal to be loaded and carried away in the morning. They had been at work only a short while when a rumble was heard and then a terrific blast broke loose. Flames shot through the mine.

The company's storehouse, nearby, was wrecked and window panes in hundreds of homes were broken. The country resounded with the echoes of the blast and the crash of the falling mine structures.

Barrackville Mine No. 41, now owned by the Bethlehem Mine corporation, was formerly a mine of the Jameson Coal company.