

DEAD MAY NOT BE REMOVED FROM SHAFT

Investigation To Be Made
Of Explosion At
Sullivan, Ind.

FATHERS AND SONS KILLED

Four Instances of Two in
Family Losing Lives—Wo-
men Wait At Top of Shaft

SULLIVAN, Ind., Feb. 21.—In-
creasing difficulties confronting
rescue teams in the City Coal com-
pany shaft where 33 bodies were
believed entombed as a result of an
explosion yesterday, may make re-
covery of the bodies impossible
necessitating leaving them in their
natural tomb forever, officials an-
nounced today.

With the recovery at noon today
of the body of Frank Mason, the
total known dead in the City Coal
company's mine explosion yester-
day reached 18. Fifty-one miners
are believed to have perished.

[Associated Press Leased Wire]

SULLIVAN, Ind., Feb. 21.—A
handful of weary, grief-worn wo-
men waited at the top of the City
Coal Co. mine today for their
"boys" while a score of men toiled
under ground to recover the black-
ened and bruised bodies of 35 of the
51 miners entombed in an explosion
yesterday. A cave-in, early today,
halted the work of rescue for sev-
eral hours, after 16 bodies had been
taken.

After-damp, the dread poison gas
of the mines, made first attempts
to recover the bodies precarious
and part of the night was spent in
repairing the mine's ventilating
system.

The seventeenth body was re-
moved from the mine this morning.
It was believed to be that of Rus-
sel Dowdy.

The blast trapped the men work-
ing in little rooms off the third and
fourth and seventh and eighth
entries of the mine. A flash of
flame quickly consumed all the life
sustaining oxygen and the concus-
sion of the explosion brought loose
coal and a shower of mine timbers
down on the ill-fated workers.

Student in Heroic Effort

Outstanding among the heroic rescue efforts made following the explosion in the City Coal Co. mine here yesterday was the work of Earl Carty, who, disregarding dangers of after-damp, entered the shaft without a mask in a vain attempt to save his brother, Cecil Carty. He had to be carried from the mine by other rescue workers. Cecil's body was one of the first recovered.

Cecil was a former Purdue university student. He had engaged in mining with the intention of getting married.

Throughout the night rescue squads worked in two hour shifts timbering up the crumbling roofs of the mine. It appeared impossible to bring out the bodies until late in the day.

Air was forced into the shaft this morning to clear it of after-damp. The high pressure used, however, was said by rescue men to have cut into the slate, causing falls which almost blocked the entries.

Machine Released Flood of Gas

Mine experts said a cutting machine, working close to the wall of an abandoned mine, had cut through a partition, releasing a flood of gas that had accumulated in the old working. A flame from a miner's lamp ignited the gas and caused the explosion.

The local chapter of the Business and Professional Women's clubs undertook the ministering to the group of women at the mine. The Red Cross gave attention to the immediate needs of stricken families.

In four instances fathers and sons were victims. These were Earl and Lex Robertson, Philip and Wayne Walters, Florence and Emil Leicocq and Pearl and Frank Hawhee. The sole survivor of the fifty-odd men working near the entries was Elmer Davidson. He was coupling cars in the main entry just outside the third and fourth entries.

At the Sullivan hospital Davidson was recovering today from numerous cuts and bruises. He was taken from the mine by Clarence Ford and Harry Lewis, who found him buried beneath a pile of slate.

Cobb Lamb, member of the rescue team, after an exploration of

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GET BODIES OF 17 WHO LOST LIVES IN EXPLOSION IN MINE

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the workings early today, said there was a possibility that some of the bodies never would be recovered.

Many of the women waiting at the mine mouth were loathe to believe their relatives had perished. The wife and four daughters of Dave Smith were insistent that he had escaped. As the rescue work progressed various theories regarding the origin of the explosion were advanced. That a gas pocket was opened up was generally agreed, but whether it was ignited by miners' lamps, or by a spark from some unknown source, was uncertain.

Davidson, the survivor, told of seeing Harry Anderson, mine boss and one of the missing, hurrying into three and four entry a few seconds before the explosion. Davidson added that he had heard some of the workers talking of a "squeeze" in the entry and presumed that Anderson had gone to investigate the condition of the workings.

Norval Harris, Sullivan county prosecutor, said today that a grand jury investigation would be held as soon as possible as to the cause of the explosion.

Crowds Gather at Scene

Miners from all parts of southern Indiana began arriving today to get a glimpse of the City Coal company's mine in which the explosion took place.

The crowds discussed, in the queer jargon peculiar to the miners' occupation, the various theories regarding the cause. One was that a "machine man's rod," a steel instrument used to open a small aperture to open the way for use of a coal cutting machine, had penetrated a gas pocket, thus releasing a rush of gas which was ignited by a miner's lamp. Another theory was that "a squeeze" occurred shattering timbers which supported the walls, and releasing a gas pocket behind one of these walls.

The mine was one of the most steadily operated in this community. It has had few shutdowns in recent years, officers said.

The mine pay roll carried 147 names, but at the time of the explosion only 122 were underground. Seventy-one were working in parts of the mine at some distance from the entries in which the explosion occurred and reached the surface in safety.