

IT IS HOPED THAT MINE MAY BE COMPLETELY PENETRATED BY TODAY

(Continued from Page One.)

held under piles of debris which would take several days to locate and that the water in the main shaft might have covered some bodies.

Twenty-six white men and 21 negroes are on the death list, according to an official list issued here tonight. While a majority of these are from North Carolina, there are a number from other states. Except for the local death list, Ragland, Ala., is the heaviest casualty city, 10 white men of that city having lost their lives.

Official Death List.

Following is the official death list:

White: C. V. Johnson, Joe Hudson, A. L. Holland, Elmer Hayes, W. E. Byerly, Hollis Richardson, Tom Cotton, Dan Hudson and N. R. Johnson, all of Coal Glen; George Anderson, Claud Wood, J. B. Curd, C. B. Davis, F. S. Andersen, Rubin Chambliss, N. E. Dillingham, W. D. Dillingham, H. W. Sullivan and C. L. Woods, all of Ragland, Ala.; D. J. Wilson, Seagrove; Self Riner, Charlotte; J. E. Laubscher, Vass; A. L. Stokes, Mount Savage, Md.; H. C. Hall, Troy; Lee Buchanan, Cool Springs; and A. F. Martin, of Raleigh.

Negroes: Charles Watson, June Cotton, Jim Spruill, Henry Alston, Wesley Howard, Robert Williams and Wilson Chesney, all of Coal Glen; James Wright, Elkin; T. D. Wright, R. Wright and T. N. Wright, all of Council; James Williams, New Hope; John Burgess, Bethune, S. C.; John Shay, Bishopville, S. C.; Lige Hill, Cumbock; Albert Holland, Anniston, Ala.; Will Moore, Mt. Groghan, S. C.; Manly Lambert, Gulf; and Jim Nabers, Greensboro. Wade Wilson, negro, has also been identified, but his home address is undetermined.

HARD TO IDENTIFY BODIES REMOVED FROM THE MINE

(By Staff Correspondent)

Coal Glen, May 29.—The cars come up from the depths of the Coal Glen mine. Bodies almost unrecognizable, are removed. The rescuers, sometimes relieved, sometimes not, continue the work. On the surface the crowd counts.

Worn until they are barely able, it would seem, to keep moving, members of a rescue party are relieved. The members of the new party are called into the tent erected by the medical detachment from Fort Bragg and each is given a small drink of whisky. They mount the cars which disappear down the shaft. A few minutes, or maybe it is almost an hour later, they come back slowly. And additional bodies have been removed from the cavern. So it goes, hour after hour.

At 5:30 o'clock this morning two men were brought to the surface, making a total of 28 bodies recovered. At 8:30 four bodies reached the surface. At 9:45 o'clock the cars again came to the top, bearing the bodies of two men. At 10:55 o'clock one body was brought to the surface.

Back and forth the cars go, sometimes carrying men into the mine who have to work for a considerable length of time before they are able to move timbers and clear debris in order to reach more bodies, sometimes bringing these workers out for a few minutes of respite, sometimes bringing bodies from the underground shambles. Late in the afternoon the count was 47. It was a day of heroic work on the part of the men who groped their way through a wrecked mine, knowing that the slightest mis-step might add to the total of fatalities and that their own names might be added to the casualty list.

The scene around Coal Glen seems absolutely foreign to North Carolina. Miners, their lamps fastened to their caps, lie and rest when not on shift or walk about more or less aimlessly about. They are coated with coal dust. They talk but little. As a matter of fact, there is little talking done by anybody. The horror of the disaster has apparently stricken the crowd lined against the ropes, which keep them from the mine shaft, as it has touched the miners. Words would fail, if used, and they are not used.

Every once in awhile something happens which sends through the workers and the witnesses an intangible sort of thrill, or maybe a nervous chill would be a better terminology. Such occurred about 9 o'clock. Gas, the rumor spread, was causing trouble to the rescue party in the mine. Preparations were made to move the army field kitchen,

which was located near the pump, which roars along constantly, drawing foul air out of the mine. So much gas was being drawn out by this fan that it was almost impossible to work in the kitchen.

A crew which had been in the mine for a long time came to the surface. There was no trace of cowardice but worry was written on the faces of many of the miners. They hesitated a bit, although almost imperceptibly.

Billie Hill, superintendent of the Cumnock mine, a man who went through both of the disasters at the Cumnock, one in 1896, when 12 lives were lost, and one in 1898, when 25 men died, called several miners to his side.

He spoke quietly, but earnestly. There were, he told the miners, many of them his own men, government inspectors in the mine who were taking every precaution. And when Billie Hill told them the mine was reasonably safe and that he was going down himself, the hesitation was gone. The rescue party headed for the lower depths.

Mr. Hill, who reached the mine within 40 minutes after the explosion and who has been on the job almost continuously since that time, says there have been many hazards in the rescue work. Slate has fallen through the roof. Timbers have been torn apart and had clogged the main way, which now has practically been cleared, so that men have had to make their way carefully to avoid disaster to themselves.

The task of identification is hard. The bodies recovered this morning are in such condition that absolute identification is very difficult, even for close relatives. But little effort is made to identify the men at the mine. They are taken to Sanford in an army ambulance, where they are prepared as well as possible so that features of the dead resemble those of the living.

In one or two instances this morning efforts were made to identify bodies by the number of the lamp worn by each man, the number of each man's lamp being on file at the office. But it was found that a number allotted to a white man was found to be that of a lamp on a negro's body. The men had a habit of exchanging lamps, it was explained. This increases the trouble of identification.

E. A. H.

1925 Farmville Mine explosion NEWS1

Clipped By:
usmra_rob
May 28, 2025