

December 9, 1926; Francisco No. 2 Mine, Francisco, Ind.; 37 Killed

(From Bureau of Mines report, by C. A. Herbert)

Six cage loads, totaling 71 of the normal day shift of 325, had been lowered into the mine, when the explosion occurred at 6: 30 a.m. An accumulation of gas in the southwest section, where five rooms had been caving, was found by a fireboss, who did not report it but stayed in the mine to try to clear it out.

Open lights of incoming men caused an ignition that picked up dust and traveled to the shaft, damaging it so that the cages could not be used. Crews were sent in by the stairway in the escape shaft. A bucket was rigged in the air compartment of this shaft, and the seriously injured and dead were hoisted out. Men who were outside the explosion zone or not badly hurt went up the stairway. The explosion doors were blown open, but the fan was undamaged. Oxygen breathing apparatus was not used; but gas masks were, to good advantage. After 24 hours all but 3 of the 26 bodies had been found and the 45 survivors removed. Eleven of the injured died from burns.

Smoke had been found coming from main west entries, too dense to penetrate to the fire. Because of the danger of an explosion of methane in 2 sealed panels in that section, all men were withdrawn, leaving 5 bodies inside.

A slight explosion occurred shortly afterward. The shafts were sealed. On January 27, 1927, these seals were removed, and the main west section was sealed off. The five bodies were removed.