

# HUNDREDS WALK TO SURFACE AS SAFETY DEVICE CONFINES SHOCK

**Premature Explosion  
Of Dynamite Ignites  
Coal Dust.**

**MOST VICTIMS  
WERE NEGROES**

By **ROBERT E. WOOD**,  
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COKEBURG, Pa., April 2.—A system of coal mine rock-dusting today saved 400 men at work in the Cokeburg mine of the Ellsworth Collieries Company when a premature explosion of dynamite ignited coal dust in No. 11 entry, causing the death of six miners, five of them Negroes, and injury to five other persons, one of them the nephew of the mine superintendent.

When the explosion occurred, less than two hours after the day shift of 411 men went to work in the huge mine, which is operated on an open shop basis, the boxes of powdered rock fell in the entry and localized the effects of the blast. The explosion was three-quarters of a mile from the shaft and only 40 of the men were working in the entry. Many of the men who were ordered out of the mine immediately did not know that there had been any trouble.

#### THE DEAD.

Frank Smith, married; Scenery Hill.  
Henry Kelly, single; Beallsville.  
William Gibson, single; Cokeburg.  
Eastman White, married; Cokeburg.  
Tony Sabotte, single; Cokeburg.  
Joseph Jordan, married; Marianna.

All of the victims except Sabotte were Negroes.

#### THE INJURED.

C. W. Douglass, shot fireman; married.  
Homer Nichols, motorman; married.  
Andy Demeter, roadman; married.  
William Collins, Negro miner; married.  
Thomas Roth, wireman; single;  
nephew of Superintendent Albert A. Roth.

The dead were taken to the McDonough morgue at Beallsville. The injured were treated at the mine hospital and removed to their homes. None of the injuries are serious.

#### TO RESUME TOMORROW.

The night shift of 10 maintenance men were working in the mine tonight after others had been working today clearing up the effects of the explosion, and J. P. McCune, general superintendent of the Ellsworth collieries, announced that the mine would be in

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shape to resume operations on Monday morning.

McCune said that no labor difficulties had been experienced at the Cokeburg mine and branded as false the rumor that the explosion had been caused by union sympathizers as a result of the strike in the central competitive field that was called on Friday.

According to McCune, Douglass and a squad of men were fixing a "cap shot" of dynamite on a large rock in room 11 of entry 11 when a rock fell and exploded it prematurely.

The 11 victims were knocked unconscious by the subsequent explosion of coal dust and six of them died before they could be rescued by squads quickly organized when news of the tragedy reached the surface. All of the men in the mine at the time of the explosion were on the surface two hours after it happened.

Officials of the mine telephoned State Mine Inspector Alexander McCanch, who made an inspection.

### **MANY ESCAPE BLASTS.**

This is the second mine explosion within a week in which great numbers of miners at work escaped unscathed from what first reports indicated were catastrophes unprecedented in Pennsylvania coal fields.

An accident in the Ehrenfield mine of the Pennsylvania Coal and Coke Corporation is credited with having saved the lives of 300 miners at work when a score of runaway loaded coal cars were wrecked at the foot of the 2,000 foot slope in the mine. An electric feed wire was broken, causing a short circuit which ignited the coal dust, causing a terrific explosion in which four miners were killed and 15 slightly injured. The wreckage of the runaway train blocked the tunnels leading to other parts of the mine and diverted the force of the explosion, which wrecked buildings on the surface.

It was at first believed that 300 men had perished, but all but four escaped, climbing out of the mine through airshafts and another exit five miles from the mouth of the mine.