

## **January 21, 1935; Gilberton Colliery, Gilberton, Pa.; 13 Killed**

*(From Bureau of Mines report, by R. D. Currie and W. D. Walker)*

The mining in the Mammoth vein, 6th left, in which the explosion occurred, is by breasts and chutes from rock holes driven from rock gangways through the Skidmore vein. Rock tunnels are driven in the Skidmore vein, which is 4 feet thick, and chutes are driven through this vein to the Mammoth vein, which is 48 feet thick with 26 feet of rock between the veins. Development is in the Skidmore vein, with rock holes at 50-foot intervals to the Mammoth vein, which runs readily. The return air from the 6th left bypassed the 5th left and ventilated the 4th left.

The mine was gassy; and closed lights were used, with permissible flame safety lamps for testing for gas. Miners were not trained in using the flame safety lamps. The day shift had been at work 2 hours when the explosion occurred about 9 a.m., killing 11 of the 69 men working on the 4th and 6th lifts. About 30 others were sent to hospitals after being seriously affected by carbon monoxide; 1 of them died.

Rescue work was started immediately by those not affected by the explosion and from other sections of the mine. One of these rescuers succumbed to afterdamp after saving several of those unable to escape by themselves.

All survivors were removed before outside assistance was called. The explosion originated in No.1 breast, where the bodies of two men were found nude, badly burned and broken. A flame safety lamp was broken apart, and parts were scattered along the breast.

Gas had accumulated because of inadequate ventilation and neglect to make thorough tests or inspections. The cause of ignition may have been open chute blasting with nonpermissible explosives and blasting units, a defective flame safety lamp, or one unsafely used. Smoking was possible but not indicated. Several official investigations were made of the circumstances of this disaster because of the violations of State mining laws revealed. The mine officials were held responsible, and court action was taken against them.