

COAL FATAL

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
BY C. W. OWINGS

SUBJECT: Explosion, Bates mine, Bates Mining Company, Bates, Arkansas, November 19, 1936.

An explosion occurred in the Bates mine of the Bates Mining Company, Bates, Arkansas, about 5:45 a.m., November 19, 1936, resulting in the death of five men, four whom were killed almost instantly, while the fifth, who was on the slope at the mouth of one of the working places, received burns and other injuries from which he died the day following.

The explosion was believed to have been due almost entirely to gas. Dust entered into the explosion to a very limited extent if at all. The ignition of the gas was believed to have been due to an arc in the controller of an alternating-current coal mining machine.

In the section in which the explosion originated the machine helper had only had two days' experience in mines. He had gone to a neighboring entry to get a piece of machine cable and in so doing had to pass through a door between the main intake and return in this section of the mine. The door did not close readily and when about half closed rubbed upon the rails to such an extent that it was difficult to shut it. Following the explosion this door was found partly open and, inasmuch as there was little or no force at this point, it is believed that this trap door was open. The night boss and shot firer telephoned the hoisting engineer to speed up the fan, indicating that probably ventilation was deficient in the area where the explosion later occurred. Shortly after having received this telephone message the engineer received a signal to hoist the trip up the slope, evidently from the night boss, who was badly burned. Before dying this man stated that he had been at the mouth of the room where the machine was cutting and had taken his safety lamp apart but had not yet struck a match. About this time the mining machine in the room was heard to stop and immediately the explosion occurred.

It is believed that a gas feeder had been cut into near the top of the wall and that gas had accumulated at this point due to lack of ventilation because the trap door had been left open between the intake and return. It is also believed that the ignition of the gas was dust to an arc in the controller of the mining machine the instant the power was shut off.

WAS DUE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
WASHINGTON

C.M. 1353

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM
(Not for Publication)

February 26, 1937

TO MEMBERS OF THE SAFETY DIVISION:

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Company, Bates, Arkansas.

5 Killed
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This memorandum, based upon report by C. A. Herbert, is confidential and must not be published.

C. W. OWINGS

Approved:

D. HARRINGTON