

Two Men Killed In Mine Blast

**W. Virginia Gas Explosion
Also Traps Eight Others—Hopes Slim**

Logan, W. Va., Sept. 2 (AP) — A gas explosion roared through parts of the Macbeth mine of the Hutchinson Coal company today, killing two men, and trapping eight others.

Rescue crews, working speedily in efforts to dig through tangled heaps of coal and slate torn from the mine roof, expressed doubt that any of the trapped men are alive.

Their only chance, rescue workers said, was to have been able to quickly throw up barricades against deadly "black damp" which filled the mine after the blast.

Two men were overcome by the gas as they aided in rescue work. They are Ab Lambert, 31-year-old miner, and O. F. Fehwont, company engineer. Both were carried to safety.

Mine officials expressed the opinion to a spark from an electric motor used to haul coal cars, ignited a pocket of gas causing the explosion two miles from the shaft mouth. They said the blast was confined to a small area, permitting 110 other miners to flee to safety.

Members of one rescue crew, grimed with coal dust and weary after battling the jagged piles of debris while wearing gas masks, said:

"Even with luck, it will take until morning to reach the men. The roof has fallen in badly and will have to be cleared away."

The crew had recovered the bodies of two men — Elisa Watts, 32, and Andy Gazdik, both killed by the poisonous "black damp" gas.

Other men trained to work under pressure in gas-filled mines, hurried from all parts of this rich bituminous coal field in Southern West Virginia to offer aid.

Among their first tasks were efforts to force the poison gas from the section in which the eight men are trapped, by erecting brattices or barricades, and changing the course of air currents.

They reported for work under direction of N. P. Rhinehart, chief of the West Virginia department of mines and P. D. McMurrer, safety director who came from Charleston, 70 miles away. Two engineers of the U. S. bureau of mines, working 30 miles away at Madison on plans for a "Safety Day" celebration, also hurried to the Macbeth mine.

While the rescue work went on, hundreds of men, women and children gathered on the mountainside near the mine entrance, lighted by occasional bulbs strung on poles, and the glare of lights worn on the caps of rescue workers.

Many spectators were the wives or children of the trapped men, stunned by the word of the rescue crews that little chance exists for the miners.

Many, too, were old-timers who remembered the two other explosions in the Macbeth mine, neither as serious as today's. In the first, more than 13 years ago, none was injured, although the mine was wrecked. The second took lives of three miners ten years ago.