

March 28, 1937; Kramer Mine, DuBois, Pa.; 9 Killed

(From Bureau of Mines report, by J. J. Forbes, M. J. Ankeny, and F. E. Griffith)

Because of a power interruption, the mine was idle, and the fan shut down from 7:05 a.m. to 4:21 p.m. At 4:40 p.m. a group of eight mine officials went underground to do several tasks in different parts of the mine. They did not carry flame safety lamps, and no examination was made for gas before they went down. The mine was rated as gassy and was operated as such.

The officials, in groups of 2 or 3, started toward their assignments with trolley locomotives and a rock dusting machine. When one of the locomotives reached 14 west off 11 northwest entry (where it was in return air from a large section of the mine) at 5:41 p.m. an explosion occurred, killing the two men with the motor trip.

The power was knocked out, and the hoistman found that the circuit breaker would not stay in and called the superintendent and foreman.

The other six men gathered at main west and 11 northwest and were joined by the superintendent and mine foreman, who found stoppings and overcasts destroyed and prepared to restore temporary ventilation to reach the 2 missing men.

The superintendent went to the surface to secure additional help and supplies, and as he boarded the cage with other men and the district mine inspector at 8:14 p.m. a vibration was felt followed by a heavy muffled sound. This explosion killed the seven men in the mine.

After investigation more assistance was called, and recovery work proceeded slowly as fires were encountered and extinguished with rock dust and extinguishers. Exploration was by apparatus crews in some places, as was recovery of the last two bodies.

The second explosion was ignited by a fire set by the first explosion, and both were propagated by coal dust. Rock dust applied to the haulage roads helped to check and stop the spread.