

THREE RESCUED, BUT SIX KILLED

Last Praco Mine Victim
Dies Just After He Is
Freed

BIRMINGHAM, July 2 (AP)—Safety for three, and death for six, was the score today in the rock fall 3,000 feet underground in Praco mine, which entombed nine men and gave rescue crews 18 hours of desperate, dangerous work.

The sixth victim, J. D. Painter, died of shock today a few minutes after sweating fellow workers pulled him from the rocks which pinned him to the mine floor.

Painter had talked with the workers as they neared him, but gradually weakened and was incoherent when he was finally freed. Still mumbling, he was placed in a car and started for the surface, after a physician administered a drug.

Other dead were J. I. Wingard, assistant superintendent of the mine; Lloyd Painter, brother of the final victim; Howard Morgan, Leonard Dockings and William Pepper. All were white.

Saved by heroic rescue workers were Carl Shackelford, Willard Elmore and Gurlis Hyche.

Elmore, when the rescue crew reached him, refused to leave the mine until he had shown the workers where J. D. Painter was pinned by the rocks.

Hyche said he "stripped to the skin" to get through a small passage way left open, and escape, but not until he had "worked with Howard Morgan until he was dead."

W. B. Hillhouse, state mine inspector, said the accident was unprecedented in Alabama mining history. Previous mine tragedies in this section have been from explosions, such as the one which claimed 34 lives at Mulga, about 25 miles from Praco, last October.

A white banner, awarded Praco for the mine's safety record, was taken down today shortly after the last body was removed.

Bivens Allender, working under Wingard in the section of the mine affected by the rock fall, owed his life today to the need for his services in another portion of the mine. He was ordered to report to another crew, and was only 25 feet from the wall when it collapsed, but ran to safety and gave the alarm.

Hillhouse directed rescue crews and praised those working through the thousands of tons of rock and dust as "the gamest I've ever seen."

He said no immediate cause for the accident was apparent, as Praco was known as a modern, safe mine.

Approximately 200 men are employed at Praco, 20 miles northwest of Birmingham. It is operated by the Alabama By-Products Co.