

2 DIE IN BLAST AT IOWA MINE

(The Register's Iowa News Service.)

LOVILIA, IA.—Two miners were killed Monday in an explosion at the O'Brien Coal Co., mine 4 miles west of here.

They were identified as Harold Barnes, 33, mine foreman; and Ben Nichols, 47, both of Lovilia.

2 Alone in Mine.

The explosion occurred about 4 p. m., but a rescue squad was unable to get to the men until about two hours later. They were dead when brought out.

The mine employs about 14 miners, but all but the two victims had left the mine for the day when the explosion occurred.

Mine Inspector Clarence Chapman of Albia said the two men, both shot firers, had been setting off black powder blasts to loosen coal in the mine.

It was not known whether the explosion was caused by mine gas or coal dust.

The first rescue squad was able to reach the bodies by crawling through a 2-foot space over debris piled 5 feet high.

Pulmotor Team.

A pulmotor team from the Albia fire department went into the shaft a short time later when it was reported one of the men might still be alive.

The bodies were close together when found. Both men apparently had died of asphyxiation caused by smoke from the blast.

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★ ★ ★ Fought Ban on Black Powder Use

O'Brien Coal Co. was one of several owner-operators who had sought unsuccessfully to enjoin federal inspectors from enforcing a safety regulation banning use of black powder explosives in mines.

Inspectors were enjoined in Monroe county district court in January but they brought the case into federal district court here in Des Moines, asking dismissal of the restraining order.

Judge William F. Riley Friday, on motion of Clold I. Level, assistant U. S. district attorney, dissolved the injunction. He ruled that mine owners must first take their case to the federal mine regulatory commission before going into court.

Mine owners had contended that black powder could be safely used in Iowa mines because they were "non-gaseous" and claimed further that federally-approved types of explosives were uneconomical for them to use.