

# 37 Die in Virginia Coal Mine Blast

BISHOP, Va. (AP)—Thirty-seven miners perished yesterday in a rumbling gas explosion deep in the giant Bishop Coal Mine that burrows under the mountains of the Virginia-West Virginia line.

There was no immediate official word or what touched off the blast that sent acrid, dust-laden fumes whistling through the mine 337-feet below the surface. A fire boss had reported the area free of hazard prior to the time the midnight shift went to work. Time of the explosion was set at 1:55 a.m.

At a distance downslope from the disaster site the explosion seemed almost gentle. Charles Vaughan of Bluefield, Va., a survivor, said he heard it "but it wasn't loud at all."

## BIG PUFF OF WIND

One of Vaughan's companions said it was more like "a big puff of wind."

It appeared to many of the rescue workers that the lives of the 37 were snuffed out by the resulting lack of oxygen rather than the force of the blast.

About 180 men were underground at the time but the 37 victims apparently were the only ones in the immediate blast area. First intimation something was

## Other Mine Disasters

NEW YORK, (AP) — The biggest mine disaster in 85 years of record keeping occurred Dec. 6, 1907 at Monogah, W.Va., where 361 persons were killed.

Thirteen days later 239 min-



(AP Wirephoto Map)

## MINE BLAST SITE

... shown on map.

the cars, miners lamps on their hats casting a weird glow in the dusk. Flashbulbs from photographers' cameras flared from all sides.

The bodies were unloaded from the cars and 20 minutes later all were laid in a mine company building where physicians began the grim task of establishing positive identification and making preliminary examinations.

Among the rescue workers were some men who had worked on the shift and had escaped.

The last word officials of the company received from below came by phone from Raymond Owensby. He said his section was all right if the smoke and fumes would abate. But Owensby was among the trapped men and perished in a spot described as "a five minute walk" from the foot of the 337-elevator shaft.