

COAL FATAL

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

Coal Mine Health and Safety District A

REPORT OF FATAL COAL MINE ROOF-FALL ACCIDENT
NEWFIELD MINE
REPUBLIC STEEL CORPORATION
NORTHERN COAL MINES DISTRICT
NEWFIELD, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
(Post Office - Verona, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania)

July 24, 1970

by

Everett Turner
Federal Coal Mine Inspection Supervisor

Willard A. Stiltner
Federal Coal Mine Inspector

Originating Office - Bureau of Mines
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Coal Mine Health and Safety District A

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INTRODUCTION

This report is based on an investigation made in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 (83 Stat. 742).

A roof-fall accident occurred about 8:40 p.m., Friday, July 24, 1970, near the face of No. 8 entry, 23 north section off 1 southeast 18 north in the Newfield mine, resulting in the death of George Moore, continuous-mining-machine operator's helper. Moore, age 47, had 21 years mining experience with this company, 5 years as a continuous-miner helper. Moore is survived by his widow and two dependent children.

The Bureau of Mines was notified of the accident by A. M. Shaffer, Superintendent of Industrial Relations, at 10 p.m., July 24, 1970, and an investigation was started at 12:30 a.m., Saturday, July 25, 1970.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Newfield mine is along the Milltown Road at Newfield, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Mine openings consist of two shafts and a slope into the Upper (Double) Freeport coalbed, which averages 90 inches in thickness in this area.

Employment was provided for 217 persons, of whom 197 worked underground and 20 on the surface. The mine was operated 3 shifts a day, 5 and 6 days a week, and a daily production of 2,500 tons of coal was loaded with continuous-mining machines.

Minimum standards for roof support had been adopted. The roof-bolting plan required that where bolts are to be installed with equipment mounted on continuous-mining machines, the bolts shall be installed in staggered rows of 2 with the rows not more than 3 feet apart. Bolts installed with other types of equipment are to be installed on 3- and 4-foot centers crosswise and 4-foot centers lengthwise to within 4 feet of the face before starting a continuous-miner run. Safety jacks or other roof supports were required during drilling and bolting operations, and persons are prohibited from going inby roof supports except to install roof supports.

The adopted timbering plan required crossbars to be installed on 4-foot centers to within 18 feet of the face with at least one crossbar ahead of the continuous-mining-machine operator at all times. The standards also require additional roof supports to be installed where necessary, and prohibits persons from going inby roof supports except for the purpose of installing roof supports.

Information for this report was obtained from an investigation at the scene of the accident and from statements by Paul Frayer and Junior Floyd, coworkers of Moore; George Cingle, assistant foreman; and other company officials and employees.

The investigating committee consisted of the following:

Republic Steel Corporation
Northern Coal Mines District

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| A. M. Shaffer | Superintendent of Industrial Relations |
| J. P. Gaines | Mine Superintendent |
| C. H. Cole | Mine Foreman |
| John Freeman | Safety Supervisor |
| George Cingle | Assistant Foreman |
| Rodney Rodavich | Engineer |
| Steve Rodavich | Engineer |
| Bob Black | Engineer |

United Mine Workers of America

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Peter Bernardo | Safety Coordinator |
| John Pollack | Chairman, Safety Committee, Local Union No. 6132 |
| Mike Timko | Member, Safety Committee, Local Union No. 6132 |
| Ronald H. DesLauriers | Member, Safety Committee, Local Union No. 6132 |

Pennsylvania Department of Mines and Mineral Industries

George P. Resick

State Mine Inspector,
5th Bituminous District

United States Bureau of Mines

Everett Turner

Federal Coal Mine Inspection Supervisor

Willard A. Stiltner

Federal Coal Mine Inspector

Theodore Bioni

Federal Coal Mine Inspector

A Federal inspection was underway at the time of the accident.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The 23 north section crew, of which Moore was a member, entered the mine at 4 p.m. and proceeded to 23 north. Work had progressed as normal until about 8 p.m. when Cingle entered the working place. Floyd, continuous-mining-machine operator, and Frayer and Moore, his helpers, were mining coal in No. 8 entry. They had completed a crosscut from No. 7 entry to No. 8 entry and were in the process of mining in No. 8 entry from the crosscut.

The continuous-mining machine was stopped and the roof near the inby roof bolts was examined by the workmen and the foreman. Just inby the last roof bolt some loose roof coal which had separated on the outby edge from the roof rock was detected.

Cingle instructed Floyd to move the continuous-mining machine outby the face into the crosscut, and he told the crew to take their lunch period at this time. When the machine was moved back, Cingle using a slate bar proceeded to pull down some of the loose roof coal. He again examined the roof and noted that more of the roof coal was separated from the roof rock, but he was unable to pull it down.

Cingle then joined the crew for lunch and discussed the abnormal roof in the No. 8 entry working place. He gave instructions to the workmen to obtain several crossbars and to install additional supports in the place before taking the machine back to the face.

After lunch Floyd, Frayer, and Moore went back to No. 8 entry working place while the other workmen were bringing in the crossbars and posts. Floyd entered the place, went up the left side, and examined the working place. Moore had picked up the slate bar and was standing under the inby roof bolt near the center of the place. He cautioned Floyd of the unsafe roof condition and Floyd left the face region and returned to where the roof was supported (see attached sketch).

In the meantime Frayer had come up on the left side and stopped under the last crossbar. After Floyd walked by Moore and continued outby, Moore apparently proceeded to bar down the loose roof coal. When Floyd had gone

about 10 feet outby Moore, he heard the roof material falling, turned around and saw the falling roof material striking Moore, Frayer was not looking at Moore when the roof fall occurred; however, it was apparent that Moore had stepped inby the roof bolt. Moore's legs were pinned under the fall. Floyd and Frayer were unable to lift the material off Moore and Frayer ran for help while Floyd installed a safety jack.

Frayer and the other crew members returned promptly and Moore was removed from under the fall, placed on a stretcher, and transported to the surface. At 9:15 p.m. on the surface of the mine, Dr. Merenstein pronounced him dead as a result of a compound fracture of the skull.

The roof rock that fell and struck Moore was 6 feet long, 5 feet wide, and varied from 5 inches to 14-1/2 inches in thickness. The height of the coal in the place where the accident occurred was 90 inches. The accident occurred about 8 feet from the face.

CAUSE OF ACCIDENT

Management's failure to properly evaluate a dangerous condition and/or take necessary safety precautions, such as having temporary supports installed, and the employees working under unsupported roof, were the causes of this accident. A contributing factor could have been management's failure to provide a suitable tool to take down the roof in high places.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Compliance with the following recommendations may prevent accidents of a similar nature:

1. Where abnormal roof conditions are known to exist management shall assure that necessary safety precautions are taken, such as the installation of safety jacks or posts, to protect workmen before attempts are made to take down loose roof materials.
2. More thorough examinations and better evaluation should be made, especially of doubtful roof conditions.
3. Tools used to take down loose roof material shall be of a design that will enable workmen to perform their duties from a safe position without exposure to falling material.
4. The roof-control plans shall be complied with at all times.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The cooperation of company officials and employees and the United Mine Workers of America is gratefully acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,




/s/ Everett Turner

Everett Turner

/s/ Willard A. Stiltner

Willard A. Stiltner

Sketch of Scene of Fatal Coal Mine Roof-Fall Accident
 Newfield Mine
 Republic Steel Corporation
 Northern Coal Mines District
 Newfield, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania
 July 24, 1970

-  10'' X 18'' X 2' header blocks
-  Roof bolt 8' long
-  Wooden posts

