

DETAILS OF EXPLOSION AT ELY

The El Expositor in its account of the explosion at Copper Flat in which ten men were blown to atoms on Sunday, says:

The men were engaged in loading two churn drill holes, on level or bench No. 6 on the west side of the big Copper Flat pit. These holes were drilled within six feet of the outer edge of the bank. One of them had been loaded and everything about it gotten in readiness for firing. The crew then moved to the second hole, the loading of which they were engaged in when the explosion of the Hercules powder, several cases of which were piled near the edge of the hole so as to be handy for loading, took place. So sudden and so unexpected did it occur, and with such a terrific force that the ten men in the immediate neighborhood were hurled through the air and portions of their anatomies scattered broadcast for hundreds of feet in all directions.

Only those whose tongues are now silenced could possibly assign the cause of the accident. There are two causes to which might be attributed the explosion of the powder. One to the effect that a live spark from the steam shovel on the level above might have ignited the powder. This reason seems to be very plausible and probable, since there is evidence on the northeast side of the drill hole of something having been burned. In fact, it is stated by Phey, the driller, that he saw a pile of waste packing ablaze just before the explosion took place. The other cause could be attributed to the careless handling of the powder, which had it been long exposed to the heat of the sun, would cause more or less of the glycerine to seep out and render it easily susceptible to explosion by a sudden jar. In breaking open the cases containing the powder had there been force used or had one of them dropped violently to the ground the jar caused thereby would have been sufficient to have caused the explosion. However, these are merely vague presumptions. No living person knows now, nor will they ever know what actually caused the explosion of yesterday.

A large mass of arms, legs, flesh and portions of the trunks of the human body was all that could be gathered up to represent seven men whose lives were lost.