

3 Other Men Are Overcome

Accident Occurs At Kimberly Mine

Two coal miners were killed and three others were overcome by "black damp" this morning at Kimberly mine, six miles southeast of Nelsonville.

The accident took place at a strip mine which had been converted into an "auger" mine—one in which a hole is bored into the side of a hill by a giant brace and steel bit to bring out "low" coal which otherwise cannot be mined.

The mine is operated by the Wharton Auger Co. and is known as the Kimberly mine. It is near Glen Ebon in Athens County, on Ohio 691, four miles south of U. S. 33 and about 8 miles northwest of Athens.

Officials at the scene reported two men went into the 30-inch hole to check tools. They were hit by "black damp" or "choke damp," a non-explosive but suffocating gas found in mines and consisting mostly of carbon dioxide.

Paul Chroniak, 39, of Buchtel, and Lawrence Newsom, 32, of Murray City, were the miners killed.

ELDRIDGE HANNING, 30, of Buchtel, was taken to Mount St. Mary Hospital for emergency treatment. He was unconscious when pulled from the hole. Also overcome, but revived at the scene were Thomas Riley, 33, of Nelsonville, and Bill Stephenson, 45, of Glouster, both of whom entered the hole to rescue the other three men.

"I ran to the hole," Riley said, "tied a line about my waist and started into the hole. I just stuck my head in there and the next thing I knew I was out."

Riley was pulled out with the rope about his waist. Stephenson, right behind Riley, was knocked out by the "black damp" when he approached the hole.

Miners reported that Chroniak apparently crawled into the hole in the first place to unfoul some boring equipment. They believed that when Chroniak was overcome, Newsom climbed in to rescue him and was also overcome.

Hanning then followed the two men into the hole and was overcome, but it was his cry for help that brought Riley and Stephenson and other miners running to the scene. Both Chroniak and Newsom were dead when pulled from the hole.

Joshua Matheny of Logan, District 4 mine safety inspector, is at the scene making an investigation. He told the Daily News that apparently the auger broke through into an abandoned underground mine.

He said Nelsonville firemen and other rescuers were able to bring the five mine victims out by using oxygen respirators. A mine safety rescue unit stationed at Athens was also summoned to the scene.

Newsom is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Newsom; his wife Betty; three daughters, Yvonne, Christy and Sandra, all of the home; and several brothers and sisters.

Funeral arrangements by the Johnson Funeral Home, Nelsonville, are incomplete.

Chroniak is survived by his wife Lucille; three step-children; a brother John and a sister Mrs. Anna Chrisbaum, both of Columbus.

Funeral arrangements by the Warren-North Funeral Home, Nelsonville, are incomplete.