

SIGNS OF LIFE ENCOURAGE TENNESSEE MINE RESCUERS

CHALK MARKS ON WALLS POINT WAY TO ENTOMBED MEN

Rescue Squads Press On, With Hope
of Finding More Victims Alive.
Five Men Brought Out Alive
Last Night.

Priceville, Tenn., Dec. 12.—Spurred on by last night's discovery of survivors of Saturday's dust blast in the Cross Mountain mine, fresh rescue squads went into the cross entries this morning, hacking and digging with considerable energy.

At 11 o'clock additional signs of life were discovered. On the walls of the main shaft were found inscribed these words:

"We have gone to 23."

Immediately the rescue squads redoubled their efforts to reach cross section No. 23 of the mine. It is believed several of the blast victims will be found there.

At first the inscription was believed to be the grim humor of one of the trapped miners, but a crudely drawn "index hand," aimed at entry No. 23, pointed out the way.

The rescue party penetrated into cross entry No. 23. No miners were found there, but additional directions for their rescue were found scrawled in chalk on the walls. They evidently were compelled to change their vantage points on account of the altering air conditions. The rescue squad pressed on in the direction indicated by the chalk marks.

At 11 o'clock a total of thirty bodies had been removed.

A Federal official took charge of the case this afternoon, but up to one o'clock the crazed survivors of the dust blast eluded pursuit. Once a squad traced the men to a chamber, but before they could be penned in they crept into a dark corner in the main shaft, and when the party passed them in they scurried screaming back into the inner workings.

Five men were brought out alive last night.

"Bill" Henderson, the oldest of the rescued men, came out of the mines smoking his pipe and resisted efforts to carry him home.

"Oh! Let me walk," he protested, but without avail.

Henderson made the following statement of his experience:

"We bratticed up the entrance to the mine room. With our coats we fought back the after-damp that came through the cracks in the brattice and then stuck our coats and other articles of wearing apparel in the hole of the brattice. We had lights, our dinner, and each of us had from a-half to three-quarters of a gallon of coffee and water in our dinner pails. We remained in this room quietly for several hours burning one light and taking turns at eating. Late Saturday evening Arthur Scott and Dore Irish left the room and attempted to make their way back and reach the entrance of the mine through the over pass. That was the last we saw of them. The next morning we made our way, the air having been purified by the fan, into the entry and passed over into No. 18, endeavoring to find the way out. We ran into gas and were forced to go back to room 2 in No. 19, where the air is pure. We remained there until discovered. We ate the last of our food about the middle of Sunday afternoon, but still had some water left and plenty of light. We were endeavoring to reach the main entrance again when we were found."

Stricken mad, probably from fear inspired by their plight, two miners, who had been with the party rescued last night, are now dashing wildly in and out of channels in the far recesses of the mine. All night long men of the rescue squad have been chasing the maniacs, but just as soon as would-be rescuers get close on their trail, the mad men would dash away, screaming wildly. First they scurry like rats down the main entry, then scamper away into black recesses of the mine at the approach of men from the outside. The maddened miners are believed to be John Duff and John Smith. News of their plight is being kept from their families, who have given them up for dead.

The Knoxville Iron Company, owner of the ill-fated mine, has provided every attention for the five survivors taken from the mine last night. The president of the company, T. L. Stephenson, has slept scarcely a wink since the disaster.

A big squad of doctors came to the fore late last night, outranking undertakers' assistants, who had almost taken possession of the mine's outer chambers before the five men were brought out alive. The doctors will lessen the tension under which the entombed miners have strained before they will be taken into the open air. Near the mine opening plaster masks will be placed over the faces of survivors, and they will be wrapped in warm blankets.

Not the most unique feature of the rescue work is aversion of the miners to digging graves. They will take their lives in their hands at rescue work, going far into the chambers of the ill-fated mine, but they hesitate at digging holes for bodies of their fellow workmen. Director Chandler, of the rescue work, was compelled to go among the miners and plead with them before a sufficient number volunteered for grave digging. Most of the victims are buried as soon as their bodies are recovered.

Additional squads of men have been sent into the mine. They will attempt to run down the two maddened miners before they penetrate a chamber filled with lethal gas flames.