



Reports

Action Mine #2

November 18, 1913

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES



PRELIMINARY REPORTS ON MINE DISASTERS.

In preliminary reports on mine disasters a statement as to the activity of employees of the Bureau and as to rescue or recovery operations is desired.

Some of the important points on which information is desired are as follows:

1. Name of mine Acton #2
 2. Operator Alabama Fuel & Iron Co.
 3. Location Acton, Ala.
 4. Date of accident Nov. 18, '13 Hour 3.21 pm.
 5. Kind of accident Explosion
 6. Killed 24 Injured 0
 7. B. of M. representatives present E. Sutton and H. H. Hamilton (volunteers)
 8. B. of M. car present Auto-truck
 9. Date and time of arrival—Men _____ Car 8:27 pm.
- Mr. Hamilton accompanied car, writer reached mine at 9:20 pm.
10. Names of persons composing rescue parties See reverse side.
-
11. Names of mine officials present Chas. F. DeBordeleben, Genl. Mgr., H. S. DeBordeleben, 2nd Vice Pres., J. G. Stule, Supt., Chas. Landgraf, Foreman.
 12. Names of State inspectors present C. H. Hebbitt.
 13. Rescue accomplishments Several headings were explored named both Right, 8th left and right and 4th right. Nobody rescued.
 14. Investigations conducted and by whom Commenced Nov. 24, 1913. C. H. Hebbitt, J. F. Mitt, David Kelso, and Frank Hillman represented the State. Geo. S. Rice, R. Y. Williams and E. Sutton, represented Bureau of Mines.
 15. Probable cause of the accident (if unknown or uncertain, so state) Windy or Blown-out Shot.
 16. If breathing apparatus was used, or is being used, in the rescue or recovery work, use attached sheet "Report on Mine Rescue or Recovery Work."

REPORT ON MINE RESCUE OR RECOVERY WORK

1. Name of mine Acton #2 Fire or explosion Explosion Date Nov. 18, 1913
 2. Name of operator Alabama Fuel & Iron Co. Location of mine Acton, Ala.
 3. Number of men in mine at time of disaster 29
 4. Number of men killed by violence }
 5. Number of men killed by burns } 13
 6. Number of men killed by suffocation 11
 7. Total number of men killed 24
 8. Total survivors 5
 9. Number of men injured nonfatally by burns
 10. Number of men injured nonfatally by violence
 11. Number of men injured nonfatally by gases
 12. Number of men escaped unassisted 4
 13. Number of men rescued by B. of M. men wearing apparatus 0
 14. Number of men rescued by others wearing apparatus 0
 15. Number of men rescued jointly by men wearing apparatus 0
 16. Number of rescuers overcome not wearing apparatus 0
 17. Number of rescuers losing life not wearing apparatus 0
 18. Number of rescuers overcome wearing apparatus one made partly overcome
 19. Number of rescuers losing life wearing apparatus 0
 20. Number of persons revived by reviving apparatus 1
 21. Number of persons revived by artificial resuscitation 0
 22. Number of B. of M. rescuers engaged 2 (Mr. Hamilton so considered)
 23. Number of others engaged 5 of J. L. S. & Co.
 24. Number of B. of M. breathing apparatus used 5
 25. Number of breathing apparatus used, owned by others 10
 26. Maximum distance traveled in noxious gases, wearing apparatus probably 4000 ft.
 27. Number of stoppings or bulkheads constructed, wearing apparatus 0
 28. Number of doors erected or opened, wearing apparatus 0
 29. Feet of pipe or hose laid, wearing apparatus 0
 30. Total hours engaged, using apparatus indeterminate
 31. Was the fire located, controlled, extinguished, or inclosed through the efforts of men wearing apparatus? —
 32. Was the fire area opened and explored by use of apparatus? —

STATE AND COMPANY OFFICIALS PRESENT.

- Name Chas. F. DeBardeleben Title Vice Pres. & Gen. Mgr.
 Name Henry J. DeBardeleben Title 2nd Vice Pres.
 Name J. G. Steele Title Superintendent
 Name E. H. Hewitt Title Chief Mine Inspector.

REMARKS.—Give items of special interest, including names and addresses of persons wearing apparatus.

Messrs. A. R. Brown, J. W. Groves, J. F. Meagher, J. M. McHugh, Jas. Brown, Hugh Lynch, J. A. Rigney, Mike Dugan, Eurig Brandt, John Smith Alex Gore, Francis Brawley, Ewel Brown, Thomas Williamson, and Thos. Wayne wore apparatus of the Tenn. Coal, Iron & Ry. Co. Messrs. H. H. Hamilton, I. W. Newby, and E. B. Sutton represented the bureau. Mr. Jno. F. Meagher inhaled sufficient afterdamp to cause him to lose the use of his limbs and Thos. Williamson was rendered unconscious.

Signed E. B. Sutton

Date Dec. 11, 1913

REVISED REPORT
of
RESCUE and FIRST-AID WORK
in
connection with
EXPLOSION
at
ACTON MINE #2
of
ALABAMA FUEL & IRON COMPANY
ACTON, SHELBY COUNTY, ALABAMA.
NOV. 18, 1913.
by
E. E. Sutton.

Dec. 15, 1913.
Birmingham, Ala.

40R

Introduction.

On November 18, 1913, at about 3.21 p. m. (the recovery of a watch which had stopped at this hour, establishes this as the probably hour) an explosion occurred at Acton Mine #2 of the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company at Acton, Shelby County, Alabama. At the time of the explosion twenty-nine (29) men were in the mine, of which number twenty-four (24) were lost (thirteen of this number sustained injury or were burned sufficiently to cause death, and eleven (11) met death by suffocation). Five (5) men effected their escape, one of this number needing assistance which was rendered by the early rescue party, unequipped with breathing apparatus.

On the day of this explosion, the writer had gone to the Wegra Mine of the Pratt Consolidated Coal Co. to make investigation of conditions and to make notes on this mine. Mr. H. H. Hamilton, of the Dupont Powder Company, knowing my whereabouts got in touch with me at about 5.30 p. m. To the best of Mr. Hamilton's recollection, he received the information concerning the explosion at about 5.15 p. m. He engaged a taxicab and left Birmingham for the ^{Bureau rescue station at} West End at about 5.50 p. m. ^{to get the auto truck} and had returned ^{with it} to the Brown-Marx Bldg. Birmingham, where he picked up Mr. I. W. Newby at about 6.27 p. m., immediately ^{leaving for} arriving at Acton, where he arrived at 8.22 p. m. The officials of the

Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company were advised of the occurrence of the explosion at about the same time as Mr. Hamilton. The writer was informed by Mr. Crane of this company that they had hoped to start for Astor by 6.00 p. m., but were delayed by assembling their ^{rescue corps} men until about 7.00 p. m. The ^{rescue and} hospital car of this company arrived at Astor at about 8.50 p. m.

At about 9.10 p. m. Mr. Hamilton responded to a call from within the mine that a man (Jerry Williams) had been found alive and hastened to the fourth 4th Right with a Bureau of Mines pulmotor. This man was located by Mr. Ed. Husband, of Eureka, Ala. (without apparatus) at a point about two hundred feet from the slope. It was judged best by those in charge of the rescue work at this time to remove this man to the surface before giving him medical attention, his condition being that he was conscious but was unable to walk, and he was placed in the trip that brought Mr. Hamilton into the mine. Mr. Williams was taken to the car of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company where he was cared for until such time as he was able to go to his home. Mr. Hamilton returned in the same trip, being notified that he was wanted on top. Mr. A. R. Brown desired the use of one of the Bureau of Mines apparatus and was fitted out in apparatus #6046. Mr. J. W. Groves desired the use of one of the apparatus of the bureau and was given #6042. Mr. John Brown also worn bureau apparatus.

The writer arrived at the mine at about 9.20 p. m. being carried from Birmingham in Mr. Sam'l. Rand's car. The apparatus crew of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company entered the mine at about 9.30 p. m. and Mr. Hamilton and the writer entered a few minutes later, not until, however, after some delay caused by Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben's order that no one enter the mine until he and the rescue party had returned. After getting in touch with Mr. Henry T. DeBardleben this order was waived and Mr. Hamilton wore Draeger apparatus and the writer Fleuss.

By this time five men (5) had escaped from the mine, one of the number, Jerry Williams, needing assistance. Williams had worked on the 4th left and from his statement he and three (3) others, Luke Patterson, Ed Bragg, and Jho. Langston, had started to the surface when at the inbye end of the side-track hw, Williams, realized he could go no farther. The other men left him and were found dead on the slope at the entrance of the 4th Right. Three men, Charlie Bushkarina, Gus Keolera, and Frank Keolera, who had worked on the 6th ^{Left} Right did not know an explosion had occurred and some time later as they were leaving the mine after their day's work encountered smoke at a point inbye the manway. They returned to their working places and succeeded in effecting their escape some two or more hours later.

Nick Dafias, who worked in the 7th Left, stated that he left his working place and proceeded toward the manway some distance before meeting the afterdamp. He became sleepy and stated that he laid down and sleep for several hours. Later he regained consciousness and proceeded up the manway to the 5th Left where he was recognized by rescue party and assisted to the top by being placed in a trip. This man stated that he had passed two ^{bodies} men in the manway at the 6th Left, who were afterwards identified as Albert Clepton and Eugene Hewitt who worked in the 8th Right. All of the men that escaped from the mine did so before the arrival of apparatus men and none of them were given first-aid treatment before they could be removed from the mine. Nine (9) bodies had been removed, or were being removed at the time the writer entered mine, the first body met was that of Jesse Taylor which lay at the mouth of the 7th Left.

Before entering the mine the rescue party knew that no exploration need be made of entries 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Right and Left as these entries were not working. It was also known that four men had worked on the 4th Left, one of whom had been found, (it is my understanding not unconscious) by the early rescue party and the other three were found on the slope, at the entrance to this entry, dead. These men and one other, Henry Childers, pumper, had been removed from the mine. Four (4) men, Burns Kittrell, Will McClellen, Jesse Pate, and Ben Thomas, it was known were engaged ^{on slope} at the 5th Left repairing track and their

bodies were found near this point and removed from the mine. One man was unaccounted for on the 4th Right, but this entry was passed as it was thought that men may still be alive in the deeper workings, this being supported by the fact that Nick Dafias had escaped from the 7th Left ~~mine~~ having made his way up the manway to the 5th Left where he was met by early rescuers. This man was not in need of first-aid treatment as he was effecting his escape, he being recognized by a lighted lamp ^{on} of his head. His rescue was effected by men not wearing rescue apparatus. Entries 5th Left and 5th Right were idle. ~~All men on the 6th Left were accounted for, having left the mine before the explosion.~~ All men on the 7th Right and 7th Left were accounted for, the last man having effected his escape to a point of the 5th Left where the manway crosses and here was met by the early rescue party. Nick Dafias, who had escaped from the 7th Left reported that he had passed two bodies in the manway just outbye the 6th Left. These ~~men~~ ^{bodies} were identified as those of Albert Clopton and Eugene Hewitt who had worked in the 8th Right. All men were accounted for in the 6th Left, they having effected their escape unassisted some time after the explosion. Five (5) men were known to have worked in the 6th Right and two (2) in the 9th Right.

The rescue work, therefore, narrowed itself down to entries 4th Right, 6th Right, 8th Left, 8th Right, and 9th Right.

The crew of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company explored the 6th Right first to a point where the bodies of Cephus Cook, John Perkins, K. L. Perkins, John Horton, and Jas. Horton were found, a distance of about three (3) hundred feet from the slope. On the slope at the mouth of 7th Left the body of Jesse Taylor was found, badly mangled. Taylor had worked on the 8th Left and from information received was engaged at the time of the explosion in loading coal from the side track of the 8th Left.

~~Eight~~. The 8th Left entry was ^{next} explored to a distance of about three (3) hundred feet from the slope where the bodies of Joe Bushkarino, G. Malonas, Charlie Wallentine, and Wilton Walker were found badly mangled. Exploration was next made of the 8th Right entry to a point near the face where the body of C. H. Rodgers was found, burned. It was in this entry that the rescue party of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company met with some difficulty, Mr. Williamson being overcome and Mr. John F. Meagher was sufficiently effected as to cause him ^{to lose} the use of his legs. It appears that on the return trip Mr. Thos. Williamson realized that he was becoming weak and signaled to Mr. Meagher that he desired to retreat. The party started for the slope, but Williamson soon became helpless and the remainder of the party became engaged in assisting him. The party was composed of five men. Mr. Meagher stated that during the advance movement of the party, it was necessary for him to inflate