



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 } 13
 5. Number of men killed by burns }
 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 15 of J. L. S. Ry. 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. & Genl. 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.

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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. R. 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

the facial cushion of his apparatus frequently and while assisting in the removal of Mr. Williamson, he was unable to keep the cushion tight about his face, his hands being engaged with lamps and in carrying Mr. Williamson. Mr. Meagher realizing his condition hastened to hailing distance of the slope to give the alarm and there became helpless. Mr. A. R. Brown, Mr. J. W. Groves, and Mr. John Brown, all wearing bureau apparatus, proceeded slowly and succeeded in bringing Mr. Williamson to fresh air. The writer made no examination of the apparatus worn by Mr. Williamson, but when Mr. Williamson was returned to the slope his helmet had every appearance of being very insecurely attached to his face and Mr. Williamson afterward stated that he was compelled to keep the facial cushion continually inflated. At the instance of Mr. Meagher's first alarm, the impression was that three (3) of the party were down. This caused much confusion but a relief party was soon assembled and started into the entry. They met the party carrying Mr. Williamson at a short distance from the slope and assisted in bringing both Mr. Williamson and Mr. Meagher to the slope. Mr. H. H. Hamilton assembled a crew and became engaged in erecting a brattice across the slope and the writer went to the 6th Right for a pulmotor left there at the time of the exploration of that entry. Mr. Williamson was revived within a short time Mr. A. R. Brown and Mr. J. W. Groves

applying the pulmotor. Mr. Meagher, who was conscious was fed oxygen from a partly used cylinder. All apparatus used by the crew of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company, except those of the Bureau of Mines, is Draeger of the 1907 type.

At this junction, the crews of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company decided to go to the top. The writer, in company with Mr. Chas. Landgraf, mine foreman, and Mr. Akers went into the 9th Right and located two (2) bodies. There then remained one man unaccounted for and a crew from the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company reentered the mine to explore the 4th Right, not, however, until after Mr. Ed Husband and one other had located the body, without apparatus, at a point near the face of the entry turned to the left of the 4th Right. Mr. Husband's report that this body was still warm warranted a crew's going to him, but it was found that he was undoubtedly dead as he lay in a body of water, his face almost completely buried. The writer joined the party to within several hundred feet of the face without apparatus.

As a matter of precaution, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Newby, and the writer joined a party the next day in the recovery of two (2) bodies, one in the 8th Right and one in the 4th Right. Apparatus was used in this work to remove the body in the 8th Right to a point where ventilation had been restored.

Special mention should be made of the valuable work

of Mr. Ed Husband of Eureka, Ala. as the rescue of Jerry Williams was accomplished by him unassisted.

The men composing the crews of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company were Messrs. A. R. Brown, J. W. Groves, John F. Meagher, J. M. McHugh, J. R. Brown, James Brown, Hugh Lynch, J. A. Rigney, Mike Dugan, Eurig Brandt, John Smith, Alex Gore, Francis Brawley, Ewel Brown, Thomas Williamson, and Thos. Wayne. In addition Drs. C. M. Carraway and W. S. Roundtree were on hand and rendered medical assistance where needed. There other men attached to the party of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Co. who assisted in the transportation of apparatus and supplies.

The rescue and recovery work was under the direct supervision of Mr. C. H. Nesbitt, Chief Mine Inspector and the men of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company reported to Mr. J. W. Groves and A. R. Brown. On the whole the work was very systematically carried on.

So far as the writer knows Mr. Ed Husband has not received any training from the Bureau of Mines in rescue or first-aid work and all his work at Acton was performed without apparatus. It was, however, stated by Mr. A. R. Brown that Mr. Husband had had instruction in first-aid work in England and was a member of either St. Andrews or St. Johns corps.

Report of Rescue and First-aid Work in Connection
with Explosion at Acton Mine #2..

Mr. H. H. Hamilton of the Dupont Powder Company, in absence of the writer, drove Mine Rescue auto-truck from Birmingham to Acton on the night of November 18, 1913, arriving ^{at the} latter point at 8.27 p. m., and having with him Mr. I. W. Newby of the Jefferson Powder Company. Both these men are trained rescue men, having taken the training under Dr. J. J. Rutledge and having served in such capacity in Banner and Briceville explosions. Mr. Henry DeBartleben, in his car and carrying Mr. C. H. Nesbitt, Chief Mine Inspector, acted as pilot for Mr. Hamilton.

At 8.50 p. m. the Hospital car of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company arrived.

At 9.10 p. m. Mr. Hamilton responded to a call from within the mine that a man had been found alive and hastened to the 5th Left with a Bureau of Mines pulmotor. However, it was judged best by those in charge of the rescue work at this time to remove the man to the surface before giving him any artificial respiration and he was placed in the trip which had taken Mr. Hamilton into the mine. Mr. Hamilton returned with the trip, being notified that the car of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company had arrived and that he was wanted on top. Mr. A. R. Brown desired the use of one of the Bureau of Mines apparatus and he was fitted up with apparatus #6046.

Mr. J. W. Groves also desired the use of one of the Bureau's apparatus and was given #6042. Mr. John Brown also wore apparatus of this bureau.

The writer arrived at the mine at 9.20 p. m., being carried from Birmingham in Mr. Sam'l. Rand's car. The Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company's crews entered the mine at about 9.30 p. m. and Mr. Hamilton and the writer entered the mine a few minutes afterwards, not until, however, after some delay caused by Mr. Charles DeBartleben's order that no one be allowed to enter until he and the rescue party had returned. After getting in touch with Mr. Henry DeBartleben, this order was waived, Mr. Hamilton taking Graeger and the writer Blouse apparatus.

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 (4) men worked on the 4th left, one of these made his ^{escape} _{rescue} and the others were found dead on the slope at its entrance, therefore no exploration need be made of this entry. One man was missing on the 4th right and this entry was passed as it was thought that live men may still be in some of the lower entries, this being supported by the fact that a man had made his escape from the seventh left and was rescued by the volunteer miners at the 5th left. Entries 5th left and 5th right were idle. All men on the 6th left were accounted for,

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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 and was rescued at the 5th left. It was known that four (4) men worked on the 8th left and three (3) ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ the 8th right. The man who had effected his escape from the 7th left reported that he had passed two men ⁱⁿ in the roadway at the 6th left and these were identified as two (2) of the men working in the 8th right. Two (2) ^{were} men known to have worked in the 9th right. 2

The rescue work, therefore, narrowed itself down to entries 4th left, ^{7th Right} 6th ~~left~~, ^{4th 6 R} 8th left, 8th right, and 9th right. 4th?

The crew of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company explored the 6th right first to the point where the men were found, a distance of about three (3) hundred feet from the slope. 5
 They next went to the ^{7th left?} 8th left and here found four men at a distance of about three (3) hundred feet from the slope. 4
 Next 8th right was explored to the face and one man was found nearly to the face. 1
 It was in this entry that the rescue party met with trouble and one of its number became overcome. An alarm was given and the writer hastened to the 6th right for a pulmator which had been left there at the time of the exploration of this entry. Mr. Thomas Williams was resuscitated within a short time, Mr. A. R. Brown and Mr. J. W. Groves applying the pulmator. Mr. John Maegher, who had also inhaled some afterdamp due to a defective helmet, was fed free oxygen from a partly used cylinder

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and soon was alright. Other members of the party were engaged in erecting a brattice across the slope inbye the 8th right to direct the full current into this entry.

At this junction, the crew of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company decided to go on top. The writer in company with Mr. Chas. Landgraf, mine foreman and Mr. Akers went into the 9th right and located two (2) ^{Gods} men. There then remained one man unaccounted for and a crew from the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company entered the mine to explore the 4th right, not, however, ^{until} Mr. Ed. Husband and one other man had located the man in this entry. His report that ~~he~~ this man was still warm warranted a ~~party~~ ^{crew} going to him. The writer joined the party to within several hundred feet of the face without apparatus. *More efforts made to revive man?*

As a matter of precaution, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Newby, and the writer joined a crew of men the next day in getting the bodies of two (2) men, one in the 8th right and one in the 4th ~~st~~ right. Apparatus was used in this work by representatives of the bureau.

Special mention should be made of the valuable work of Mr. Ed. Husband of Eureka, Ala., as the rescue of the one man, who was unable to leave the mine without assistance is directly due to Mr. Husband's work. *Order found before*

The men composing the crews of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company were Messrs A. R. Brown, J. W. Groves,

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John F. Meagher, J. M. McHugh, J. R. Brown, James Brown, Hugh Lynch, J. A. Rigney, Mike Dugan, Eurig Brandt, John Smith, Alex Gore, Francis Brawley, Ewel Brown, Thomas Williamson, and Thos. Wayne. In addition Drs. G. M. Carraway and W. S. Roundtree were on hand and rendered medical assistance where needed. There were other men attached to the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company's party who assisted in the transportation of apparatus and supplies.

The rescue and recovery work was under the direct supervision of Chief Mine Inspector, Mr. C. H. Nesbitt and the men of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Company were working under the orders of Mr. J. M. Groves and Mr. A. R. Brown. However, at the time Mr. Thomas Williamson became overcome Mr. Groves and Mr. Brown were in the 8th entry with Mr. Williamson and when the alarm was given the reserve corps was thrown, more or less, into a state of confusion. The writer and Mr. Hamilton immediately became engaged in assembling a relief crew and they proceeded to the assistance of the men engaged in recovering Mr. Williamson. Mr. Hamilton collected a force of men in the immediate vicinity and erected a canvass brattice across the slope to direct the air into the 8th Left and the writer hastened to the 6th Left for a pulmotor. On a whole the work was very systematically carried on.

J. H. Sullivan

1 body removed 3 R
4 bodies near 46



Correspondence

November 19, 1913

to

September 24, 1914

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
WASHINGTON

November 19, 1913.

Engineer in Charge:

The following telegrams have been received by this office in the order given:

At 10:43 P.M.-

"Explosion Acton No. 2 mine near Helena; Pittsburgh notified, will advise. Sutton."

At 10:55 P.M.-

"Explosion Alabama Fuel Company Acton Alabama 40 men entombed; car has gone in charge of Hamilton Webb and Sutton notified. Wilson."

Please advise this office from whom you received the information regarding this explosion. It appears from your telegram that information was obtained from other sources than from Sutton. You state in your telegram that the car has gone to the scene of the disaster. Please inform me if this was not the automobile truck; also advise me who Hamilton Webb is. I assume that he is probably one of the men trained by Sutton or J. M. Webb at Birmingham.

Full detailed report should be received from Sutton as to the "time and source from which he received information regarding the explosion, the time consumed in going to the disaster, and the time ~~consumed~~ ^{saved} in using the truck instead of the car, and in fact any information that would be of interest to the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Underwood or Dr. Holmes regarding the use of the truck at the Birmingham station."/

Very truly yours,

Y. W. Manning

REFER TO

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES
WASHINGTON



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

November 19, 1913.

Chief Mining Engineer:

I am enclosing a clipping from the front page of this morning's Washington Post giving an account of the Alabama mine disaster of last night. You will notice the third news heading "Rescue Parties at Work"; also that there is no mention of the Bureau of Mines.

I am not finding fault with anybody because there is no mention of the Bureau of Mines; my thought in reading the news column was that I would like to know how many, if any, of the men comprising these rescue parties were men who had received training from the Bureau of Mines.

Do you not think that the reports of the engineers of the Bureau should contain a record which would show the names and addresses of all persons engaged in rescue and first aid work at each disaster, distinguishing the helmet men who went down into the mine from those who served above-ground, and stating in the case of each person where and under whose direction he received his mine rescue or first aid training.

It seems to me that this information would be of value in various ways. It would afford a more accurate index in many cases of the real value of the Bureau's work at a particular disaster; and with this information with regard to a particular disaster in hand a better statement could be made, say, to the Secretary, in answer to any query from him regarding the work we had accomplished at such disaster.

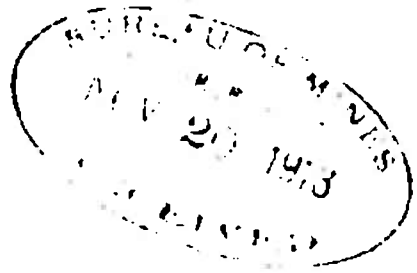
At the end of a year a tabulation of this data would be quite likely, I should think, to make a very creditable showing for the Bureau of Mines, and if so, could be used to good advantage.

Very truly yours,

Yank Manning

Mr. Rice

"The Glamorgan"



Jellico, Tenn. Nov. 19 1913

Bureau of Mines

Pittsburg, Penna

Replying to your telegram received at 10:30 P. M. yesterday.

Long distance telephone message received from Mr. Sutton, through Mr. Taylor of the Alabama Fuel Co. at Acton, Ala. stating that I would not be needed at Acton. Hence my reasons for not complying with the instructions in your telegram.

J. M. Webb.

Copy to Mr. Sutton

Birmingham, Ala.

November 20, 1913.

SUBJECT:- Mine disaster, Acton, Alabama,
November 18.

The Director:

Re the above:

I received by telephone at my residence at about 9.15 P.M., November 18, the following telegram from the Bureau watchman:

Birmingham, Ala., Nov. 18, 1913.

Bureau of Mines, Pittsburgh.

Explosion in mines Alabama Fuel and Iron Company, Acton, Alabama. Am on my way with rescue car. Will advise later.

H.H.Hamilton.

I have no further information regarding the rescue car referred to. The Bureau has no rescue car there other than an auto truck. I have not heard that the auto truck was used as it had just reached Birmingham and I doubt whether it was in service. I believe the above refers to the rescue car of the Tennessee Coal Iron & Railway Company, which car is always available for disasters for other operators and by the Bureau.

H. H. Hamilton is a miner and a sales agent of explosives, has been trained by the Bureau as a rescue man, and is carried on our records as a relief rescue man at Birmingham in absence of our forman.

I immediately called the Associated Press, Pittsburgh, and they had the following only: viz., Explosion in mine Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, Acton, Alabama, near Helena, 40 men entombed.

Within a few minutes, about 9.41 P.M., I received the following:

Birmingham, Ala., Nov.18, 1913.

Bureau of Mines, Pittsburgh.

Explosion Acton No.2 near Helena, 40 men in mine at time of explosion. Will advise later. Washington notified.

Sutton.

I believe that Mr. Sutton's telegram must have been filed nearly as quickly as the others and must have followed them immediately, the little delay being due to my having the telephone in service after receipt of the first message from Hamilton.

11-20-13.

Immediately on receipt of the Hamilton and Associated Press messages and before giving up my wire to the Bureau for the Sutton message I sent the following at 9.30 or 9.40 P.M.:

Webb, Bureau of Mines, Jellico, Tenn.

Explosion Alabama Fuel Co., Acton, Alabama. Proceed immediately. Notify Sutton. Report movements.

Wilson.

Bureau of Mines,

Washington, D.C.

Explosion Alabama Fuel Co., Acton, Alabama, 40 men entombed. Car gone in charge Hamilton. Sutton and Webb notified.

Wilson.

After conferring by telephone with Mr. Rice I notified the Foreman at the Bureau, Mr. Haudenbush, to be prepared and get in touch by 'phone with Messrs. Delke and others in case of necessity. Further action seemed unnecessary in the judgment of Mr. Rice and myself, pending further information from Sutton. This was especially true in view of our knowledge of the well organized force of rescue men available in Birmingham, through training of this Bureau, including especially the regular rescue force of the T.C.I. & R. Co., under J. W. Groves, an ex-employee of the Bureau, and the further fact that we considered our District Engineer, E. B. Sutton, fully competent to handle rescue operations of the proportions indicated.

Next morning, November 19, at 3.00 A.M., the following received:

Birmingham, Alabama.

Bureau of Mines, Pittsburgh.

Six live men, twenty-three dead located. About forty in mine. Exploration about complete. No assistance needed. Sutton.

On the evening of the 19th G. S. Rice, Chief Mining Engineer, proceeded to Birmingham to participate in the investigation.

Very truly yours,



cc G. S. Rice
cc E. B. Sutton
→ Files.

Postal

H. M. Wilson

Engineer in Charge

Pittsburgh Pa. November 20, 1913.

Bureau Mines, Washington, D. C.

Sutton wires All bodies twenty-four recovered
yesterday indications point to windy shot considerable
violence.

WILSON.

J. K. [unclear]

November 24, 1913.

SUBJECT: Acton, Alabama, Mine Disaster.

The Director:

Re the above, and supplementing my previous report on the subject of how advice of this disaster was received and acted upon:


I have the following today from Foreman J. M. Webb, Jellico, Tenn., who very properly did not proceed to Acton per my telegraphic instructions:

"Long distance telephone message received from Mr. Sutton, through Mr. Taylor of the Alabama Fuel Co., at Acton, Ala., stating that I would not be needed at Acton. Hence my reasons for not complying with the instructions in your telegram."

Very truly yours,



cc J. M. Webb
cc File



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

WASHINGTON November 24, 1913.

Mr. George S. Rice,
Hillman Hotel,
Birmingham, Alabama.

My dear Mr. Rice:

Inclosed herewith please find copy
of letter addressed to Mr. Paul, which is
selfexplanatory.

As I stated in a former letter the
Director desires you to return to Pittsburgh
via Washington. Upon the completion of the
investigation by Mr. Williams, he will return
to Urbana, via Washington. The Director
desires to see both of you.

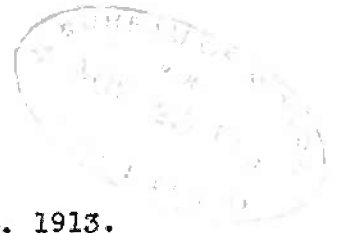
Very truly yours,

Vance Manning

Incl.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

WASHINGTON November 24, 1913.



Mr. J. W. Paul,
Bureau of Mines,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

My dear Mr. Paul:

The Director requests me to inform you that it is his desire that you should proceed immediately upon your return to Pittsburgh, to Birmingham, Alabama, and relieve Mr. Rice in the investigation of the recent disaster at the Acton No. 2 mine near Birmingham. Mr. Williams will remain at Birmingham to aid you in this investigation.

Very truly yours,

David H. Manning

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF MINES

WASHINGTON

November 24, 1913.



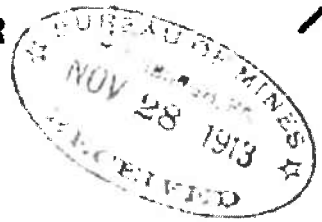
Engineer in Charge:

Please see that Mr. Paul gets the attached letter immediately upon his return to Pittsburgh, and inform this office by wire when he returns and when he leaves for Birmingham.

Very truly yours,

Yarck Manning

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES



IN ANSWERING REFER TO

No.

Jellico, Tenn. Nov. 26, 1913.
Mr. H. M. Wilson, Eng. in Charge
W. S. Bureau of Mines
Pittsburg, Penna.

My Dear Mr. Wilson:

Copy of your letter to the Director relative to Acton mine explosion, has been received.

I did not wish to disobey or disregard your instructions in your telegram of Nov. 18, I could not have reached Birmingham, Ala. till 10:20 P. M. Wednesday 19.

There were ten men here in training work and a number yet to be trained near here, and I did not want to suspend training, and make the trip to Acton, Ala. unless I could have reached the scene of the explosion in time to have assisted in the recovery work.

Very Truly,

J. M. Webb

Birmingham, Ala. Nov. 27, 1913.

Director, Bureau of Mines, Washington, D. C.

In accordance with request of Mr. H. M. Wilson of Nov. 20, 1913.

On Nov. 18, 1913, I went to Wegra, Ala. to make investigation of the Pratt Consolidated mine at this place.

Mr. DeBardleben, Vice Pres. and Gen'l. Mgr. of the Alabama Fuel & Iron Co. placed himself in touch with Mr. H. H. Hamilton of the DuPont Powder Company as soon as he heard of the explosion at his mines and Mr. Hamilton, who knew that I had gone to Wegra, phoned me at this point.

Mr. DeBardleben also asked the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company for assistance and it is safe to say that the hospital car of this company got under way before the truck of the Bureau of Mines.

The auto truck of this bureau was stocked and Mr. Hamilton, who received the news and had communicated with me, left Birmingham at 5.30 P. M. for the West End. He left for Acton, Ala. at 6.27 p. m. and arrived at Acton at 8.22 p. m. in advance of the car of the Tennessee Company. The trip was made over very bad road the greater part of the way and the delay of nearly five hours in getting to the scene of the explosion occurred in transmitting the news from the mine to Birmingham. I regret that I was out of the city but returned as soon as it was possible to do so, there being a wreck on the Frisco which delay the regular train several hours. I, however, arranged for having the Illinois Central fast train stop at Dora, Ala. and arrived at Birmingham at 8.00 p. m. Mr. Sam'l. Rand of the Jefferson Powder Company met me at the station and carried me to Acton in his machine, arriving at 9.15 p. m.

There is no doubt that, had the mine notified Birmingham of the explosion as soon as it occurred, ~~the~~ the auto-truck of this bureau could have reached the mine by six o'clock.

I asked Mr. Hamilton to notify Pittsburgh of the occurrence of the explosion which he did and I upon reaching the city supplimented his wire with wires to both Pittsburgh and Washington. I can not explain the delay in transmitting these telegrams as it appears from Mr. Wilson letter that both Mr. Hamilton's and my wire reached Mr. Wilson at the same time,, and an hour had elapsed from the time I placed the wire until it was received at Pittsburgh.

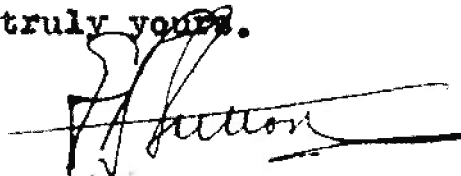
Upon arrival at the mine apparatus was in readiness and two pieces of apparatus was already in service by members of the Tennessee Company crew. Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Newby, and myself immediately entered the mine and became engaged in the work and also assisted in bringing to fresh air and reviving two men of the Tennessee Company that had been overcome while wearing apparatus of this company.

All bodies were located by midnight and I notified Mr. J. K. Webb, who had placed a long distance telephone call, that his assistance would not be needed.

The facts in this case have established the fact that the auto-truck, particularly in the Birmingham district, will serve the mining interests to a far better advantage than a car of the railroad type. The road over which the car traveled is one of the worse out of Birmingham and is located twenty-five (25) miles from the city.

So far as the truck being in condition to make the trip, I made it my business to place it in condition for immediate service immediately upon its arrival in Birmingham and the only thing that prevented it from reaching the mine sooner is the fact that the news did not reach Mr. Hamilton sooner. Mr. Hamilton is a valuable friend of the bureau and some recognition should be made of his valuable assistance. Mr. Hamilton is a competent driver and is always at the disposal of this bureau in time of emergency, as well as one of the best apparatus men in this district. However, he finds that driving the car at speed necessary and the nervous tension of the experience, rendered him unfit to wear apparatus for a period of possibly half an hour. In the future, I shall engage a driver for emergency service so that both Mr. Hamilton and myself will be in a condition to become engaged immediately in rescue service.

Very truly yours.



> cc Mr. H. M. Wilson.

442
Acton

November 28, 1918.

My dear Mr. Sutton,

As you will note from attached copy of letter ^{to} ~~from~~ Mr. Hanning, it is desired that in the case of the Acton disaster, as well as other disasters in your district, that you give the names of the men who use *d* breathing apparatus, and who gave first aid; also the chief leaders in the general work of recovery. In this you had better consult with Mr. Groves.

In view of the delay there will be in making up the final report on the Acton disaster through waiting for analysis reports of dust and air; and also to enable a compilation of the notes gathered by you, Mr. Williams and me, to be made, please make up a separate report of the rescue and recovery work, as soon as possible. This can subsequently be incorporated in the final report.

Yours very truly,



c.c. Mr. Paul,
Mr. Wilson. ✓



442
Acton

November 28, 1913.

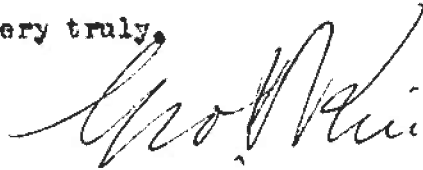
ACTON, ALABAMA DISASTER.

Director:

I received your letter of November 19, with clipping regarding the explosion at Acton, Alabama. The local papers did full justice to the investigations of the bureau, as you will note from the attached clippings. Naturally, as the T. C. & I. furnished two complete rescue corps of 5 men each, their work was important. Some of their men were originally trained by the bureau; Messrs. Groves and Engus Brown, (now Assistant Superintendent of the T.C. & I.) were former employees of the bureau. Mr. Groves has been instructing T. C. & I. men since that time. I think there were several other men in the various parties who had been trained by the bureau. I am writing to Mr. Sutton asking that he obtain the information that you suggest getting, and which I think is a very wise precaution, at least so far as it relates to the helmet men. I think it would be almost impossible to obtain a list of all engaged in the rescue work, such as bratticing, because sometimes there were as many as 40 or 50 or even 100 men engaged in such work, some of whom were in for a day or so, and are gone the next day. On the other hand, there should be no particular difficulty in getting a list of the men who used breathing apparatus, or who gave first aid to the injured.

With Mr. Paul's assistance I shall prepare a circular letter to send to the cars and stations on this subject.

Yours very truly,



c.c. Mr. Paul,
Mr. Wilson, ✓
Mr. Sutton.

P.S. Mr. Paul brings to my attention that he has already prepared a printed form to be used in rescue work at disasters, which would cover the points raised by you.



447
Acton

December 3, 1913.

Mr. H. H. Hamilton,
DuPont Powder Co.,
Birmingham, Ala.

Dear Sir:

My attention has been called by Mr. E. B. Sutton to the splendid cooperation and assistance you rendered on the occasion of the mine disaster at Acton, November 18. I have also been informed previously of your assistance and cooperation on other occasions, and have been aware of the same from personal information, and take, therefore, this opportunity to express to you, on behalf of the Bureau and for myself in particular, our hearty appreciation of the splendid assistance you have rendered. It is a rare thing that a man engaged in another pursuit, as you are, trains himself for emergency work with breathing apparatus at mine disasters and voluntarily runs the risks involved in such work, as you have done on several occasions during the past few years.

With best regards, I am,

Very truly yours,

Handwritten signature

Director.

J
c.c. E.B. Sutton
c.c. files.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF MINES

Birmingham, Ala. Dec. 6, 1913.

My dear Mr. Rice:

Yesterday afternoon, Dec. 5, I called at the office of Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben to secure of him a copy of the last report made by the Mine Inspector concerning the condition of Acton #2 mine. He was indeed very courteous to me and stated that he was going that evening to attend a meeting of his superintendents, mine foremen, and firebosses at Margaret, Ala. He extended me an invitation to join him which I did. The trip which was made in his machine over thirty miles of excellent roads and on a fine afternoon, seemed to relieve him of many of the worries of the past few weeks and he talked very liberally of most everything. He was elated over the fact that he has settled all his claims except two and I think he is to be congratulated upon his liberality. He gave all negro widows 50.00, the parents of all single whites \$1500.00, all white widows with one or no children \$2000.00 and all other widows \$2500.00.

X
In the course of the conversation, Mr. DeBardleben volunteered the information that he was greatly surprised to find the other day among other checks, your check, leaving the impression that he thought you were not prepared the afternoon you left Acton to write a check and that he thought the plan of charging Mr. Fies with this amount would be the most convenient to you. Later when you were again settled you could reimburse Mr. Fies. This seems to be a logical argument in explanation of the way this matter was handled, for if he had given these instructions to his office man, this man would not have dared to do otherwise. This is what I learn of Mr. DeBardleben. I thought this information may interest you.

Ten men sat down at an elegant dinner served in the home of Mr. I. C. DeLoney which was followed by discussion of policies for greater safety in the mines of the company. Mr. DeBardleben devoted most of his talking to matter he proposed to carry out in the future, chief among which were no more cracker shots, no more solid shooting, and no further use of black powder. He further expressed the desire that all his men take the training given by the Bureau of

Mines and that he proposed to place at Margaret six pieces of some approved type apparatus, so that, as he expressed it he could be of assistance to himself and neighbors.

I promised him that I would come to Margaret the first two weeks after the first of the year and also spend one week at Aomax later. I believe that, if a friend can be made of Mr. DeBardleben, ~~it~~ he will be a valuable friend to the bureau and I would ask that you arrange that sufficient money be set aside, if the appropriation is running low, to fill this promise.

I am addressing this letter personal as I think there are some matters in it that are of a purely personal nature.

Very truly yours.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. H. Sullivan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed closing "Very truly yours."

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF MINES

EXPERIMENT STATION, PITTSBURGH, PA. December 6, 1913.

ACTON MINE REPORT.

Mr. R. Y. Williams,

I received your notes on the Acton mine, for which I thank you.

I presume that you sent a copy to Mr. Sutton. If not, please advise.

Do not forget to visit Gillespie on December 9.

Yours very truly,

Geo. P. Rice

Copy sent to E. B. Sutton

I am attending Gillespie Dec 9.

R.Y.W.

Mr. Rice

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF MINES

Birmingham, Ala. Dec. 7, 1913.



Mr. Geo. S. Rice:

On Monday Dec. 1, 1913, I went to Acton and gathered samples of road dirt, rib dust, and caked coke as suggested by you . Due to the fact that the supply of report cards of this office had been completely exhausted or else there never had been any sent here, I could not make report of these samples until cards could be sent from Pittsburgh. However, these cards went forward on Dec. 5, 1913.

On Nov. 28, 1913, I collected samples of mine air in the rooms at the face of 8th Left and in the rooms mining verticle coal in 9th right. These were mailed and cards to correspond Nov. 29, 1913. These air samples were stationary samples as you suggested.

Normal ventilation had not been restored at the mine on Friday Dec. 5 in the lower entries, but I propose to go to Acton Monday Dec. 8 to collect return samples from 8th Left, 9th Right, and the main return.

Very truly yours.

Mr. Rice

December 10, 1913.

Director:

I am transmitting, herewith, report of rescue and first-aid work in connection with explosion at Acton Mine No. 2 by Mr. E. B. Sutton.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "GSR", written in dark ink.

December 10, 1913.

ACTON MINE REPORTS.

Mr. Sutton,

I transmit herewith laboratory reports 4509 and 4510 covering analysis of mine air samples taken by you at the Acton mine.

They are evidently duplicates. I cannot account for your not having more than $\frac{1}{2}$ " cap, as apparently the mixture was explosive. It would seem that you must have obtained the sample higher than the point at which you tested with your lamp. Always remember that the Wolf lamp draws its air from the bottom. When was the sample taken?

It would be very desirable hereafter to always state the time of sampling, although there is no place for it on the form.

I am sending these reports in duplicate so that you may transmit copies to the operator with proper caution. Generally we send them direct where there are dangerous conditions, but in this case this may have been only a temporary condition.

I would like to know whether there was a considerable body of this gas or only a little. You do not give any clue. Always state how far from the roof the sample was taken; whether there was any air moving, and whether there was any considerable body of gas which you were sampling. In such cases give the general dimensions, like, for example, 'Sample gathered 1 foot from roof; a large body extending up the raise full width of room, 20 feet wide extending back 20 feet from face; or even more detail.

c.o. Burrell.

Yours very truly,

December 10, 1913.

ACTON MINE DISASTER.

Director; -

I think I made a verbal request that you thank Mr. H. H. Hamilton of Birmingham, for his kindness in taking charge of the auto truck, and in doing valuable service at the Acton mine on behalf of the bureau.

This is merely a reminder.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the initials 'GSR', written in dark ink.

December 10, 1913.

ACTON MINE DISASTER SETTLEMENTS.

Director,

I inclose herewith copy of a letter received from Mr. Sutton, with the exception of one paragraph which refers to some personal cash transactions.

You will note the terms of settlement which have been made with the relatives of the victims. I am free to say that I am astonished at the liberality of the company.

Further referring to the subject of compensation, about which you asked me when here a short time ago, I overlooked telling you that in former days the companies with which I was connected used to expect to pay about \$500 to a widow, and to assist her as far as possible until she might re-marry. Usually the assistance took the form, if she opened a boarding house, of sending her boarders, and seeing that the boarders paid her their bills, etc. These companies never had the misfortune of having a very large disaster, so that, as far as I know there were no real cases of want, the company exercising a paternal supervision. Later on the settlements were generally made on a somewhat higher basis, or about \$1000. This was up to 1908.

I hope you will be able to get some good information from Mr. E.T. Bent. If you do not have anyone to inquire from in Colorado, we can easily get the information, I think, through Mr. Welborn and Mr. F.C. Osgood.

Yours very truly,

incl.

Mr. Paul

December 12, 1913.

amp

ACTON MINE DISASTER REPORT.

Mr. E. B. Sutton,

Referring to your report of rescue and first aid work in connection with the explosion at Acton mine No. 2, this report is of great interest, and is generally well written, but I want to point out a few things which may make it desirable to revise, or enlarge the report:

(1) It is advisable to put in a short statement giving the date of the explosion, and the hour of the day, the number of men who were in the mine, the number of men who were lost, and the number of men who were recovered by the rescue parties (a) unequipped; (b) equipped with breathing apparatus.

(2) State when the notice reached you, where you were at the time, and the purpose of your being there, which in this case was at ~~some~~ one of the mines of the Pratt Consolidated Coal Co. for investigative purposes. I do not recall the name of this new mine.

(3) When Mr. Hamilton received word about the disaster, and the time of leaving the station. You might state when the Tennessee Coal, Iron & R.R.Co. car left its station at Pratt City (?)

In the third paragraph of page 1 of your report it would be well to give the name of the man who was found alive, and state what happened to this man after Mr. Hamilton left him to return into the mine.

On page 2, after the second paragraph, it might be well to make a statement about the number of men who had come out of the mine alive at that time, the number and names of the men who had been brought out by the rescue parties and revived (if you can get the names); and the number of bodies brought out.

In the third paragraph of page 2, you state: "It was also known that 4 men worked on the 4th left; one of these made his escape, and the others were found dead on the slope at its entrance." If I understand the conditions rightly on this enter, this should read about as follows:

"It was also known that 4 men were on the 4th left, one of whom was found "unconscious by one of the early (?) rescue parties, and brought to the "surface where he recovered. The other 3 had been found dead near the "mouth of the entry. Their bodies had (or had not) been brought out."

In this same paragraph you say: "One man was missing on the 4th right, and this entry was peaced as it was thought that live men might still be in some of the lower entries." Do I understand by this that it was thought that there was a chance of recovering a larger number of men by pushing

the work further down into the mine?

Again in this same paragraph you state that "a man had made his escape from the 7th left and was rescued by the volunteer miners at the 5th left." If I understand where he was found, it was in the manway near the junction of the 5th left. It might be well to speak of this. I think that he did not need first aid treatment. It would also be wise to state that he had been found and brought out into the mine by one of the first rescue parties prior to the arrival of the crews with breathing apparatus.

In the 1st paragraph of the 3rd page you state "The man who had effected his escape from the 7th left reported that he had passed two men in the manway at the 6th left." Were these men down at the time he passed them? If they were it might be well to state that he passed "2 bodies" or "2 men overcome."

In the 2nd paragraph there are several omissions and errors I think. You state: "The rescue work, therefore, narrowed itself down to entries 4th left, 6th left, 8th left, 8th right and 9th right." "6th left" is evidently in error. Should you not also add "4th right and 6th right?"

In the next sentence you speak of the crew of the T.C. & I.R.R.Co. exploring the 6th right first to a point where the men were found (it might be well to state, 'where 5 bodies were found.') You then go on to say "They next went to the 8th left" It would appear that you must have overlooked the 7th left, where according to my notes a body was found near the entrance.

I think you had better enlarge a little on the ~~straggling~~ overcoming of the rescue party in the 8th right, and by the way, where a man was found cold in death it might be well to state "a body was found" rather than a man, as that gives a more definite meaning, and saves explanation as to why first aid was not used. Mr. Groves told Mr. Williams and myself that the party had been in to where the body was found, and was coming out when Mr. Williams was overcome. In that connection it might be well to explain that the T.C. & I Co. tried to use 5 in each party. They carried Mr. Williams for a distance of a couple of hundred feet or so, and then while resting Mr. Keager stated that he would have to hurry out. When he had entered with the party he had found that the facial cushion would not stay pumped up, so that he had to keep pumping it up with the left hand. Perhaps he may have forgotten to do this, and the cushion may have become deflated. Mr. Keager told the others in the party that he was going out for assistance, evidently thinking that the others were somewhat overcome, which Mr. Groves stated was not the case. Then Mr. Groves and the two others carried Mr. Williams by taking hold of his legs, and each side of his body, carrying him out to a point a couple of hundred feet from the entrance, where they were met by men who had been notified by Mr. Keager. Mr. Keager had come out in quite bad condition, and had lost the use of his limbs. I understand that he had given the impression to the others that the party was all in bad condition, whereas Mr. Groves stated that this was not the case, and that they were simply working along slowly from point to point with Mr. Williams, who was helpless. Mr. Groves did not seem to give any very good reason for Mr. Williams being overcome, except that he was

E.B.Sutton, 12/12/13

perhaps not in good condition, as he thought his apparatus was in good shape. If you have any further facts in this matter I think it would be desirable from the standpoint of the bureau, to report them.

Mr. Groves informed me that all of the T. C. & I. apparatus was of the Draeger 1907 helmet type. It appears also that the T.C. & I. Men do not train regularly with breathing apparatus, which he, Mr. Groves does not ~~appear~~ appear to consider important, or else is simply defending a situation which he cannot remedy.

In the 2nd paragraph of page 4 you state "A (second?) crew of the T.C.& I. entered the mine to explore the 4th right, not, however, until Mr. Ed Husband and one other man had located the man in this entry." Was this exploration made with the bureau breathing apparatus. His report that this man was still warm warranted a crew going ~~to~~ ^{to} him. The writer joined the party to within several hundred feet of the face without apparatus."

It would be advisable to explain further. The body was found half way in, was it not? It might be well to state what efforts were made to revive the man by first aid, as in the previous sentence it leaves it uncertain.

In the next to the last paragraph on page 4 you state: "Special mention should be made of the ~~was~~ valuable work of Mr. Ed Husband of Eureka, Ala. as the rescue of the one man who was unable to leave the mine without assistance is directly due to Mr. Husband's work." Which man was this; mention his name and state how he was taken out, either at this point, or by referring to him by name perhaps in the first part of the report. Has Ed Husband any experience with breathing apparatus, and did he use it at any time?

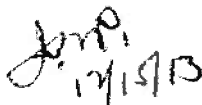
In concluding my remarks, I might mention that it would be well to specify about the 5 bodies, making up the 24; one was recovered in the main slope near the 3rd right, and the other 4 near the 4th left. It might be well to mention these when you are speaking of the work that had been done by the exploratory party.

Yours very truly,



P.S. As soon as you can I wish you would send me a copy of the map of Acton mine so that I can properly work up my notes.

c.c. Director
Mr. Paul



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF MINES

EXPERIMENT STATION, PITTSBURGH, PA.

IN ANSWERING REFER TO

No.

December 12, 1913.

Mine samples from Acton No. 2 mine,
Alabama Fuel & Iron Co., near
Helena, Ala.

File
JMP
12/15/13

Chief Chemist:

The following is a report of an examination of mine samples 21739 and 21599 taken by Mr. E. B. Sutton on November 28, 1913 at Acton No. 3 mine of the Alabama Fuel and Iron Company, located 6 miles northeast of Helena, Shelby county, Alabama.

Sample 21739 was designated: "Residue resulting from explosion of keg of powder in box at room 15, 8th left; sampled by scraping residue from sides of box; to determine ingredients of residue."

This sample appeared to consist largely of coal and contained splinters of wood, etc., which were picked out before the sample was ground. The sample was air-dried, ground to pass an 80-mesh sieve, and 15 grams extracted with cold water, then with ether, then with dilute hydrochloric acid, and finally burned to determine ash.

Results:	Water-soluble material	13.18 percent
	Acid- " "	3.79 "
	Ash	11.79 "

Analysis of the water extract showed the presence of the following:

Sodium carbonate	76.49 percent
" sulphate	9.31 "
" nitrate	0.48 "

Small amount of sodium thiosulphate and organic material.

The ether extract was small and was found to contain free sulphur.

The acid extract was chiefly iron sulphide and oxide.

These results are what would be expected from the residue collected after the explosion of a keg of black blasting powder. The water-soluble portion apparently consists almost entirely of the soluble products of combustion of black blasting powder. The coal in the sample probably fell into the box from the roof or walls of the room at the time of the explosion.

The presence of a small amount of sodium nitrate and free sulphur indicates a small amount of unburned powder.

Sample 21599 was designated: "Dust taken from shot hole No. 2, room 17, 8th left; scrapings from blown-out shot hole; to determine presence of burned powder."

This sample appeared to consist of clean coal in particles ranging from about 1/2-inch size to fine dust. There was no visible evidence of foreign material. A water extract of the air-dried and powdered sample was made and tested with the following results:

Total water-soluble material in sample 0.48 percent

Analysis of water-soluble material:

	<u>Percentage of</u> <u>water-soluble portion.</u>	<u>Percentage of</u> <u>total sample.</u>
Sodium carbonate	49.16	0.24
" sulphate	19.90	0.10

These results are sufficient to justify the conclusion that the sample contains products of combustion of black powder, and that therefore a blown-out shot had been fired from the shot hole from which the sample was taken. Sodium carbonate and sulphate in even these small quantities do not occur normally in coal, and are characteristic products of combustion of black blasting powder.

To confirm these results, however, a sample of coal taken from the same mine,--laboratory No. 18224, marked "finest coal shot from face of 8th left, Act/on No. 2",--was obtained from Mr. Fieldner and tested in the same manner as the above sample.

Results: Total water-soluble material 0.10 percent
Sodium carbonate (total alkalinity) 0.02 "
Sodium sulphate less than 0.01 "

Conclusions:

Sample 21739 contains large amounts of residue from the combustion or explosion of black powder, and a small amount of unburned black powder.

Sample 21599 contains small amounts of products of combustion of black powder.

I suggest that in the future when samples of scrapings are taken from drill-holes to be submitted to test for the presence of products of combustion of explosives, an additional sample of scrapings should also be taken from a freshly drilled hole not far from the hole in question, in order that we may have for comparison a sample known to contain no products of explosion.

cc Mr. Rice Mr. Paul ~~W~~ Yours very truly,
Mr. Sutton CGB

W. H. Storm *Yak*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

WASHINGTON

December 12, 1913.



CHIEF MINING ENGINEER:

Replying to your note calling attention to the verbal promise of Dr. Helms to write to Mr. H. H. Hamilton.

You are referred to his letter of December 3rd, prepared by Mr. Wilson, addressed to Mr. Hamilton, thanking him for the assistance which he rendered at the Acton mine disaster.

Very truly yours,

Task Manning
when action of the head is
desired forward him the
"finished product."

Mr Rice

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

Birmingham, Ala. Dec. 15, 1913.



Mr. Geo. S. Rice:

In reply to your letter of Dec.12:

I have rewritten the report of rescue and first-aid work performed at Acton, Ala. and have tried to correct the errors and include the omissions pointed out by you. In other words, I know more now how it is expected these reports should be made out and the next time, I am sure, I will render a more creditable report.

I have not been able to secure a map of the entire mine, with recent surveys. However, I expect to receive a map of this character soon and will send you one. I enclose you herewith a map of the exploded area which I hope will meet your immediate needs.

A doubt arises in my mind from your post script to your letter. I understood you to state when I left you on the evening of Nov. 25 that you expected me to make a full report of this explosion.

Mr. Rice, I am exceedingly proud of myself to be ranked as a district engineer in the bureau, more particularly so since the other engineers are whom they are. I want every bit of assistance from Pittsburgh that will enable me to make good, for I am so anxious to make good, and to conduct the affairs of this district in a way that will compare favorably with others.

Very truly yours.

Mr Paul J. ...
Mr Wilson ✓

Mr. Rice

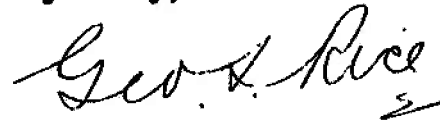
8-228

December 17, 1913.

REVISED PRELIMINARY REPORT: ACTON MINE DISASTER.**Director:-**

I am transmitting herewith a revised report of the rescue and first aid work at the Acton mine, submitted by Mr. E.B.Sutton. This revision is the result of my comments on the first report submitted by Mr. Sutton, and I think is now in much better shape.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Geo. V. Rice". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Yours very truly,".

c.c. Mr. Paul, ✓
Mr. Wilson.

Pittsburgh, December 17, 1913.

Mr. Paul,

Referring to Mr. Sutton's report, I have made a few minor corrections, but in general I think the report is very good. If, however, you have any further inquiries to make, please let me know.

G.S.Rice,

December 17, 1913.

Mr. E. B. Sutton,

I received your revised report of the Acton explosion, and have forwarded copy to Washington. There has also come to this office a preliminary report on the new form (6-809) I presume you have also sent a copy to the Washington office. If not please advise.

Yours very truly,

On page 1 of revised report I have made the following insertions:

Near bottom of page it now reads: "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."

On page 2, 4th and 5th line:

"but were delayed by assembling their rescue corps men until about 7:00 p.m. The rescue and hospital car,"etc.

4472
Auto
BUREAU OF MINES
DEC 22 1913
RECEIVED

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF MINES

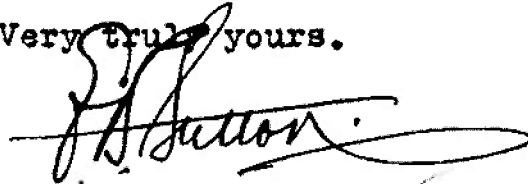
Birmingham, Ala. Dec. 18, 1913.

Mr. H. M. Wilson:

Replying to your circular letter 54.3-26:

In the in-stance of the Acton explosion, it was my understanding that Mr. Rice would make preliminary report to the Director in person. This no doubt was done and Mr. Rice subsequently asked for a preliminary report concerning rescue and first-aid work to be prepared. This I did and forwarded four copies to Mr. Rice.

Very truly yours.



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

Birmingham, Ala. Dec. 30, 1913.

Subject: Aston Mine Report.

Mr. Geo. S. Rice:

In reply to your letter of Dec. 10 just received:

I received 4 letters today which were marked by post office employee "Not in Directory". This, no doubt explains the delay in receipt of this letter and also the one with reference to translation of Miners' Circulars into foreign languages.

Unless I am mistaken, altho I am not sure, I placed on report cards in the upper right hand corner the date on which the samples were taken. These samples were taken, as you suggested, in the high verticle coal and in the last cross cut between rooms on the left side of the 9th Right entry. It has been my understanding that no comparison between the length of cap and the ultimate analysis were made, but that the length of cap was simply information for the analyst so that he would know the probable content of the sample. I stated an observation of a half inch cap so that some idea of the content may be expected. My lamp certainly showed a much larger cap for it was at times completely filled with flame, not, however, receiving a knock-out. Van J 3

These samples were taken on Dec. 1, 1913.

You will recall, at the instance of your examination of that portion of the mine working the verticle coal in the rooms to the left of the 9th Right entry, that but little gas was encountered. At the time of taking these samples, a considerable quantity had accumulated, I would say fully ten feet above my head and of considerable area of cross section. Ventilation was just being ^{fully} restored, men being thus engaged while samples were being taken.

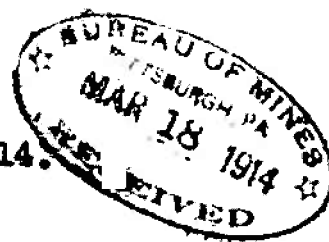
~~Mr. Rice~~



P. S. It will be well to have your typist address communi-
cations to West End. Birmingham, Ala.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

Birmingham, Ala. Mar. 16, 1914.



Mr. Geo. S. Rice:

In reply to your letter of Mar. 14:

I am handing you herewith that portion of the Acton report that I have typewritten, having prepared four copies. This is matters of a general character and I thought that you could criticize it and return same before any more be written. In the mean time I can be preparing the balance for your inspection.

There is a great deal of drawing to go with this report and I would rather make these than send rough sketches as possibly I could perform this better than try to explain to a draftsman. Moreover it will make a better looking report when finished.

Very truly yours.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. S. Rice".

ANSWERED

MAR 19 1914

G. S. RICE

March 19, 1914.

ACTON MINE EXPLOSION REPORT.

Mr. R. B. Sutton:

I received your letter of March 16 with enclosed portion of the Acton report, which I am returning herewith with a few comments.

In general, I think it is quite good. As I wrote to you the other day, I find that I can not do much with the Acton report and, therefore, relying on you, I am sending to you by registered mail my field notes of the Acton explosion, and direct your attention to some tentative conclusions on page 40. I also sent a summary of the mine air samples which I think make much more satisfactory presentation than the analytical reports which are rather awkward to compare one with another. I also am sending a set of copies of the inflammability reports by Doctor Clement and a summary which I have made of the results of the tests. I am sending you five or six copies of these, so as to save you the trouble of having them rewritten. The interpretation is as follows:

The fresh coal dust from the face shows inflammability practically equal to that of the standard Pittsburgh coal dust. The samples gathered near a part of the 8th Left entry all show high inflammability. The samples in the 6th and 7th Lefts show either no inflammability or very slight inflammability, probably not enough to propagate an explosion.

I have found in studying the inflammability results that the nearest relation that can be established to the analytical results is the ratio with the B.t.u. of coal or coal mixture as received. Generally, when the B.t.u. falls below 10,000 it has little inflammability. At the same time, I do not mean to indicate that this is the lowest limit where a dust mixture is exposed to a strong preliminary explosion, since I found at the Experimental mine that when we have started a very long explosion giving 50 pounds and upwards, we can obtain a propagation through a mixture containing 55 per cent ash. This was a matter of great surprise to us and I call these dust mixtures to render coal dust inert, we have had to change our ideas; nevertheless, a mixture with 50 per cent ash appears almost impossible to ignite, as far as we have shown, direct from the blast but if the mine is gaseous and there is likely to be a strong igniting explosion such as might be given by 300 feet of fine dry coal dust or by gas, the propagation might ensue throughout the mixture up to one containing 70 per cent of ash.

