

**Bureau of Mines Bulletin 586:
Historical Summary of Mine
Disasters in the United States
Volume - 1 - Coal Mines
1810-1958**

January 12, 1886; Almy No. 4 Mine, Almy, Wyo.;
13 Killed

*(From the Deseret Evening News, Salt Lake City,
Utah, Jan. 14, 15, 19, 1886)*

The night of January 12 about 25 minutes to 12, the people of the vicinity were startled by a loud report as of thunder, and for a few seconds the sky was illuminated for miles like a bright-yellow sunset. The noise and light, proceeding from the No. 4 mine, was caused by an explosion of gas, the force of which was so terrific as to blow all of the buildings above-ground into kindling wood, sending great timbers and rocks three-quarters of a mile. Miners' houses were struck and pierced, but the people in them were not seriously injured. Two miners riding down the slope in a trip of empty cars had got down to the 3d level, when the explosion broke the cars into fragments and shot them out as from a cannon. The two bodies were blown to pieces and were found a considerable distance from the portal. Eleven men and two boys were said to have been in the mine, and all were killed. Rescue crews forced their way into the mine and placed temporary brattices to permit recovery of the bodies. The last was brought out January 15. The explosion was thought to have originated in the 13th level on the south side of the mine, when gas was ignited by a miner's open light. Although the mine had been troubled with gas the fireboss had reported it clear at 6 a. m. on the day of the explosion.

New York Times
January 16th, 1886

SIX BODIES RECOVERED

OGDEN NASH, Jan. 15 - The bodies of six of the thirteen victims of the coal mine explosion at Almy, Wyoming, which occurred Tuesday night, have been recovered from the mine. They were found on the seventh level. The men were killed by suffocation.

January 14, 1886
Salt Lake Tribune
Salt Lake City, Utah

THE ALMY MINE EXPLOSION

From the Ogden Herald of last evening we clip the following regarding the mine explosion at Almy, Wyoming, of which we published a short special yesterday:

“A report reached us about 1 o’clock p.m. that a fearful explosion had occurred at the coal mines at Almy, Wyoming, and that Mr. J. W. Hunter of Riverdale had received a dispatch to come to Almy at once, as his son, John Hunter, was seriously injured. It is impossible to obtain anything but very meager particulars of the affair but we hear that eleven men were in the explosion, and that it is impossible to get them out a once. John and Joseph Emmett of North Ogden were taken out of the debris, dead. Mr. J. W. Hunter will leave for the scene of the fatality tomorrow morning.”

We learn from a gentleman down from Evanston that besides the two persons reported above as dead, twelve were imprisoned in the mine and are believed to be dead.

Logansport Daily Pharos
January 16, 1886

FURY OF THE FIRE-DAMP

IT FLASHES DEATH AND HAVOC THROUGH WYOMING MINE.

Thirteen Souls Sent Into Eternity in a Twinkling - Tremendous Effect of the Explosion in the Entries and Shafts - Names of the Victims

EVANSTOWN, W. T. - Jan. 16 - A fire-damp explosion in the Mine No. 4, at Almy, three miles northwest of this place, was one of the most serious in the history of Rocky Mountain coal mines. Occurring as it did at night, when only a light force of miners were at work, the death-roll was limited to thirteen souls but had it taken place during the day the loss of life must have run up into hundreds, for every person in the mines at the time met with instant death. The whole face of the country and that portion of the settlement fronting the slope give evidence of the terrible force of the explosion. The weigh and fan houses were entirely demolished and the engine house wrecked, while residences and business houses lost fronts, windows, doors and chimneys. The mouth of the slope has the appearance of a huge funnel, from which fully a thousand cubic yards of rock had been torn and distributed over the adjacent country. A train of thirteen cars going down in the mine at the time of the explosion was broken into fragments and shot out as though from the mouth of a cannon. William and Joseph Evens, passengers thereon, were most terribly mutilated, the former being blown over the engine house and a portion of the town. The body was found 700 feet from the mouth of the slope minus the head and arm and the contents of the stomach. It had bounded and rolled fully thirty yards after striking the ground. Timbers and track for seventy feet inside the slope were tore up and scattered over the surrounding country, and the ground for fully half a mile from the mouth of the mine, was covered with pieces of cars, times, timbers and other debris. Every air shaft was blown away, leaving huge pits. Many people living near the mine narrowly escaped death. Huge timbers crashed through the roof of Superintendent Faulk's residence, 250 yards from the slope, and fell between two beds occupied at the time by himself and family. John Smith lives in a house in front of the air-shaft in the mouth of the mine. Here the force of the explosion tore a great hole in the earth twenty feet in diameter, and a rock weighing over a ton fell through the roof into the kitchen demolishing the stove. The store of Beckwith, Quinn & Co. 200 feet away, lost its front, and some goods were damaged. The wheel from the pit-car passed through an out house near by as if thrown from a catapult. The mines are worked by Beckwith, Quinn & Co. under

contract with Union Pacific, who made very effort to recover the bodies in the mine.

Those at work therein at the time of the explosion were: Enoch Thomas, Fran Mason, John Peake, Ellis Gridgerman, John Hunter, Joseph and William Evans, John Peterson, John Hood, Henry Nommuck, William Hasseley, Alexander Jones, and Henry Milliken.

The bodies of the last two were found Friday morning * * *. Only one, that of John Peake, was burned seriously. The remainder were evidently killed instantly by the force of the concussion. John Hunter, who was driving a mule attached to a train of cars in the sixth level, was found between the first and second cars, and the mule had been blown backward and wedged into the fifth car with its legs in the air.

All the victims save two were Mormons, married, and leave large families. The most acceptable theory as to the cause of the explosion is this. Two foremen are employed to examine the mine every night for fire-damp to see that it is clear before the day shift goes on. These men carry both open and safety lamps, and it is believed one of them ventured into some room with the former where an unusual quantity of gas had accumulated. An explosion occurred here in the mine No. 3 in March, 1883, by which thirty-two Chinamen and six white men lost their lives.

Daily Republican
Decatur, IL
January 16, 1886

THE AWFUL FIRE DAMP

Thirteen Miners Instantly Killed ***-Fortunate Escape from a Greater Calamity-***

Evanstown, W. T., January 16 – The recent fire-damp explosion in Mine No. 4, at Almy, three miles northwest of this place, proves to have been one of the most serious in the history of Rocky Mountain coal mines. Occurring, as it did, at night, when only a light force of miners were at work, the death-roll was limited to thirteen souls, but had it taken place during the day, the loss of life must have run up into the hundreds, for every person in the mine at the time met with instant death.

Indiana Sunday Critic
Sunday, January 17, 1886

EXPLOSION OF FIRE-DAMP

***CAUSES THE DEATH OF THIRTEEN MEN
-SERIOUS PROPERTY LOSS-***

**Terrible Calamity at a Wyoming Coal Mine
– One Man Blown Almost Across the Town –
Bursting of a Twenty Ton Fly Wheel at Newport, Ky.**

Evanston, Wy., - January 16 - The whole face of the country about mine No. 4 at Almy shows the effect of the fearful explosion of fire-damp which occurred Friday night. The weigh and fan houses have completely disappeared. The engine house is a wretched ruin of fragments, and every residence and business house fronting the slope is more or less injured. The explosion was the most serious accident which has yet occurred in the Rocky Mount coal mines. Every person in the mine was killed. Fortunately the explosion happened in the night but had it occurred during the day hundreds of men and boys would have been killed. A train of thirteen cars, going down the slope when the explosion occurred were blown out of the mouth of the tunnel as through shot from a cannon. Two men named William and Joseph, passengers on the train, were blown 700 feet. One of them was found nearly the other side of town. His head, arms, and bowels had been torn away. The body of the other bounded and rolled fully thirty yards after it struck the ground. The ground for fully half a mile around the mouth of the mine is covered with all kinds of debris, which has blown from the tunnel. Dead bodies have been found in every level down to the eleventh one. Those at work therein at the time of the explosion were: Enoch Thomas, Frank Mason, John Peake, Ellis Gridgerman, John Hunter, Joseph and William Evans, John Peterson, John Hood, Henry Nommuck, William Hasseley, Alex Jones, Henry Miliken. A number of narrow escapes are reported. A huge timber crushed through the roof of Superintendent Faulk's house, 250 yards from the mine. The timber cut the house as though it was cardboard, but no one was killed. A rock weighing over a ton fell through the house occupied by John Smith. The entire front was torn out of the store of Beckwith, Quinn & Co. The mine is operated by Beckwith, Quinn & Co., under a contract with Union Pacific. Nearly all of those killed were Mormons, and leave large families. The explosion was doubtless caused by the men employed to look for fire damp. It is supposed one of these men entered a chamber with an open lamp. An explosion occurred here in mine No. 3 in March, 1883, by which thirty-two Chinamen and six white men lost their lives. Mine No. 4, however, was considered the model of the camp, and extreme carelessness is the only reasonable explanation of the trouble.

Indiana Progress
January 21, 1886

Thirteen men were killed in a coal mine explosion which occurred at Almy, Wy. on Tuesday evening of last week. Six bodies have been recovered, and from appearances, made terrible struggles for life before they died of suffocation.

New Era
Humston, Iowa
January 21, 1886

Thirteen men were instantly killed on the 1th by an explosion of fire damp in the mine at Almy, Wy. A train of thirteen cars going into the mine was broken into fragments and the corpse of a passenger was blown seven hundred feet.