



Reports

Dated
12/31/1907

Bernal Mine

TONY BOLA, being first sworn, testified as follows:-

Q. What is your name ?

A. Tony Bola.

Q. And your occupation ?

A. Miner in the Bernal Mine at Carthage.

Q. You were working in this mine on Tuesday 31st. December ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. In this pillar ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Who drilled this hole that we are looking at now?

A. I did.

Q. To what depth was it drilled ?

A. Four feet or more; yes, more than four feet.

Q. How much powder did you put in that hole ?

A. Two and a half sticks.

Q. What powder did you use ?

A. Giant powder.

Q. Was any black powder put in that hole ?

A. No, sir.

Q. What condition was the giant powder in that you used, was it thawed or frozen ?

A. It was frozen.

Q. What shape was this ground in here before you fired that shot; the same as now ?

A. The same as now.

Q. Then this hole has not broken any coal ?

A. No, none at all.

Q. How much ^{tamping} powder did you have on your powder ?

A. Six or seven inches.

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Q. Your partner who was working in here; what is his name ?

A. Joe Andriole.

Q. Did you light that fuse before you left ?

A. I lit that one in the upper place, but not that one.

Q. Did your partner come down when you came down ?

A. No, I left him there.

Q. What time did you leave the mine ?

A. Ten minutes to twelve.

Q. Did you hear the explosion when it occurred ?

A. No, sir, I was at home. I loaded it but my partner fired the shot. My partner and I were working together and helping each

other. We had fired shots along that rib the day before.

Q. What depth were the holes fired the day before ?

A. About the same; about four feet .

Q. Was the powder you used the day before thawed or frozen?

A. Thawed.

Tony Bole
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Personally appeared before me the foregoing subscribed deponent, Tony Bole, who, being first duly sworn, made the above statements in response to questions asked by Jo E. Sheridan, U.S. Mine Inspector for New Mexico. The said statements were taken in shorthand by me and thereafter transcribed by me upon a typewriter, and the typewritten copy of the said notes was read by me to the said deponent, and he declared same to be correct before signing same.

E. Douglas Gordon
.....
Justice of the Peace, Precinct No. 29
Socorro County, New Mexico.

JAMES RICHARDSON, being first sworn, testified as follows:-

Q. What is your name ?

A. James Richardson.

Q. How long since you first worked in the Carthage field?

A. At least eighteen years, off and on.

Q. Did you ever work in the old mines in this field; the old mines belonging to the Santa Fe Railroad ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long did you work in the mines then?

A. About six or seven years.

Q. What did you do at that time ?

A. I was driving what they called the main slope.

Q. Then you would be one of the men to enter the new ground first?

A. Yes.

Q. If there was any gas in the field, opening the new ground, you would be more likely to know it and find it first than anybody else ?

A. You bet you.

Q. Did you ever find any gas in any of the mines in the Carthage field ?

A. None was ever heard of.

Q. You have been through the Bernal Mine to-day?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You are familiar with all the different parts of the Bernal ?

A. Pretty near all.

- Q. What do you consider the cause of the explosion which occurred at noon on the 31st. of December ?
- A. I think it was caused by the shot blowing out the other way.
- Q. The same shot we examined this morning ?
- A. Yes, sir. It caught hold of the dust at the other end, that is the flames did, and then as they travelled they grew. That is all I know that could cause it. There could have been no gas at all. It was a real dust explosion and nothing but dust.
- Q. Do you consider the mine was dangerously dusty under normal conditions ?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. Do you consider that that was an extraordinarily strong shot?
- A. No, it was not.

James Richardson.....

Personally appeared before me the foregoing subscribed deponent, James Richardson, who, being first duly sworn, made the above statements in response to questions asked by Jo E. Sheridan, U.S. Mine Inspector for New Mexico. The said statements were taken by me in shorthand and thereafter transcribed by me upon a typewriter, and the typewritten copy of the said notes was read by me to the said deponent, and he declared same to be correct before signing same.

E. Douglas Gordon.....
Justice of the Peace, Precinct No. 29,
Socorro County, New Mexico.

S. W. ELWOOD, being first sworn, testified as follows:-

- Q. What is your name ?
- A. S. W. Elwood.
- Q. Your occupation ?
- A. Mine foreman.
- Q. Are you a practical coal-miner ?
- A. Yes, sir, and have been for twenty years.
- Q. Did you ever work in this field before this time ?
- A. Not in this district; have been in this field twelve months to-day.
- Q. During the time you have worked in this field, have you ever found any gas in any portion of the mine in which you were working ?
- A. No trace of gas whatever.
- Q. State what mine you are foreman of?
- A. The Hilton Mine.
- Q. The Hilton is on the same coal seams as the Bernal mine ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you ever known, or had any reason to believe that there was gas in the Bernal Mine, or in any other of the mines in this district ?

A. No, sir, I have never had any reason to think so.

Q. Were you with the Mine Inspector and party who inspected the Bernal mine this morning ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you see the shot which was picked out this morning ?

A. Yes, sir, I was present.

Q. What is your opinion as to the cause of the explosion which occurred in the Bernal Mine at noon of December 31st.?

A. Well, it is my opinion that the shot that we located as the cause of the explosion originated from the condition of the dynamite, and the flames, spewed out through the coal, ignited the dust on the outside.

Q. Did you see on the interior end of the shot a chamber made by the powder ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was the coal around the walls of that chamber crushed to powder?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What effect do you believe that powdered coal around that chamber would have on being blown out through the crevices you saw in that coal seam ?

A. That crushed or powdered coal in the chamber would contribute to the outside combustion attributed to the powdered coal being blown out.

Q. Then you believe it would help to initiate a dust explosion ?

A. Sure.

Q. Do you believe that that was the manner in which the explosion originated in the Bernal Mine on December 31st.?

A. Yes, sir, that is my honest conviction from what I saw.

Q. Do you consider the Bernal Mine, from what you saw of it, to be in a dangerously dusty condition under normal conditions ?

A. No, sir, not from what I saw of it under normal conditions.

Q. From what you saw of dust in the roads and entries and other places, would you call it more than ordinarily dusty for a well kept mine ?

A. No, sir, nothing out of the ~~extra~~ ordinary.

S. W. Elwood
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Personally appeared before me the foregoing subscribed deponent, S. W. Elwood, who, being first duly sworn, made the above statements in response to questions asked by Jo E. Sheridan, U.S. Mine Inspector

for New Mexico. The said statements were taken in shorthand by me and thereafter transcribed by me upon a typewriter, and the type-written copy of the said notes was read by me to the said deponent, and he declared same to be correct before signing same.

E. Douglas Gordon

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Justice of the Peace, Precinct No. 29,
Socorro County, New Mexico.

FRANK WILLIAMS, being first sworn, testified as follows:-

- Q. What is your name ?
A. Frank Williams.
- Q. What is your business ?
A. Mine Foreman.
- Q. How long have you worked in coal mines ?
A. Ever since I was a boy I guess; about 25 to 27 years off and on.
- Q. How long since you first worked in the Carthage field ?
A. I worked here four years ago for the Victor Fuel Company.
- Q. What mine are you now employed in ?
A. The Government Mine, as Mine Foreman.
- Q. Is the coal seam operated in the Government Mine the same as that worked in the Bernal Mine ?
A. Practically the same, to the best of my belief.
- Q. Have you ever found any gas in the Government Mine ? When I say "gas" I mean Firedamp ?
A. No, sir.
- Q. From what you have learned in this field in regard to the coal and the mines, do you believe, or have you any reason to think, that there is any gas present in the Bernal or in any other of the Carthage Mines ?
A. No, sir, I do not believe there is any gas; I never found any.
- Q. Are you familiar with the workings of the Bernal Mine ?
A. No, I have never had any experience in the Bernal. I have been through it but have never worked in it.
- Q. Did you go into the Bernal Mine on the day of the explosion ?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you go through many of the workings ?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Through what proportion of the workings did you go ?
A. Practically through all of them before the next morning. At twelve o'clock that night I was at the bottom of the back slope.

- Q. You assisted then in opening up the Mine and freeing it from After-damp ?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. You went through all the portions of it which were practically in operation before the explosion took place ?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Were you with the Mine Inspector and party who went through the Bernal Mine this morning ?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you see the hole at the point where it was thought the explosion originated ?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Now, speaking solely for yourself and giving your own opinion solely, as fully and plainly as possible and without any desire to coincide with anyone, do you really think the explosion did originate at that hole ?
A. Yes, sir, I do.
- Q. Now, will you please state your opinion as to gas and how the explosion originated at that hole ?
A. I believe the explosion originated, from what I have seen of it, from frozen giant powder that crushed. It probably burned a little and partly exploded, blowing the dust through the crevices and igniting it on the outside. That, to the best of my belief, was the cause of the explosion.
- Q. Do you consider that the mine was dangerously dusty under normal conditions from what you saw of the openings, roads and entries ?
A. No, sir, I do not. I do not think a powder explosion would have caused any trouble.
- Q. Do you consider that that shot was in itself too strong or dangerous as a shot? Would you have condemned such a shot ?
A. I would not.

.....*Frank Williams*.....

Personally appeared before me the foregoing subscribed deponent, Frank Williams, who, being first duly sworn, made the above statements in response to questions asked by Jo E. Sheridan, U. S. Mine Inspector for New Mexico. The said statements were taken in shorthand by me and thereafter transcribed by me upon a typewriter, and the typewritten copy of the said notes was read by me to the said deponent, and he declared same to be correct before signing same.

.....*E. Douglas Gordon*.....
Justice of the Peace, Precinct No. 29,
Socorro County, New Mexico.

Statement of PABLO ESPINOZA and JOSE GUTIERRES,
two men employed in the Bernal Mine at Carthage
on the day of the explosion - December 31st. '07.

In reply to questions put to them through the medium of an
Interpreter these men made a statement to the following effect :-

They were starting out from the mine for their dinner when the
explosion occurred. They were at once knocked down and their lights
were blown out. They lay where they had fallen for about, to the best
of their ability to judge, five minutes, when, recovering themselves,
they started off again in the darkness to go home. The gas was very
strong. Asked how far they were from their room when the explosion
occurred, the men replied that they were somewhere near that place,
but could not say just exactly what distance away from it. Coming
out they felt or met the gas and decided to go in again, staying in
about five minutes when they, on their way out, met the rescue party
coming in.

These men were not put under oath, doubts existing as to their ability
to understand the nature of an oath.

Personally appeared before me the foregoing Pablo Espinoza and Jose
Gutierrez, who, being asked questions by Jo E. Sheridan, U. S. Mine
Inspector for New Mexico, through the medium of an interpreter, made
through the same interpreter a statement from which the above notes
were taken by me in shorthand and afterwards transcribed by me upon a
typewriter, and I declare these notes to be the sum and substance of
the statements made by the two men in question.

E. Douglas Gordon

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Justice of the Peace, Precinct No. 29,
Socorro County, New Mexico.

WALTER C. BOLLES, being first sworn, testified as follows :-

- Q. What is your name ?
- A. Walter C. Bolles.
- Q. What is your occupation ?
- A. Assistant clerk in the office of the Carthage Fuel Company at Carthage, New Mexico.
- Q. Have you ever mined any ?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In a coal mine ?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Then you are familiar with coal mines ?
- A. Yes, to some extent.
- Q. What did you do ?
- A. Worked with a tamper gang; machine gang; and other gangs.

