



Correspondence

Dated

10/1905 - 06/1961

Clyde Mine

Pgh Press pg 14 19.10/05
Fredericktown October 15
Six Miners Entombed

Genl mgr James Dwigan of 1st
mine fire

The Pittsburg
~~Post~~ Gazette Oct 14, 1905
pg 1 col. 2 column

SIX MINERS ARE IMPRISONED
IN COAL MINE.

Plyde Coal Company
also v seriously burned in
fan house by exp following fire

June 22, 1961

Memorandum

To: H. F. Weaver, Acting Assistant Director--Health and Safety

From: W. Dan Walker, Jr., District Supervisor
Health and Safety District B

Subject: Information on major disasters in Pennsylvania bituminous-coal mines

With reference to your memorandum of June 14:

We are attaching excerpts taken from the Annual Reports of the Pennsylvania Department of Mines for 1905 and 1907 and also photostatic copies of newspaper clippings on the Clyde mine and Sorman mine disasters.

W. Dan Walker, Jr.

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Attachments

FBegg:vr

We received three photostatic copies of the newspaper clippings from the Carnegie Library in Oakland, which cost \$1.55. Two were on the Clyde mine taken from the Pittsburgh Gazette dated 10/14/05 and Pittsburgh Press dated 10/15/05, and one was on Sorman mine taken from Pittsburgh Press dated 8/18/07.

Copy to: C. M. Keenan
District B Files
✓



1903,
October 13, about 1:15 p. m. a fire was discovered, by an electrician, in the pump-house situated in a breakthrough between No. 1 and No. 2 right main, about 1,800 feet from the entrance of the mine. All the employes (with the exception of six men who were missing) had safely made their exit from the mine when warned of the danger. About 4 p. m., while making an official visit in No. 5 mine of Vesta Coal Company, Washington county, I received a message that the Clyde mine was on fire. I at once proceeded to the mine, arriving there at 10:50 p. m. The mine foreman, with a rescuing party, returned from the mine at 10:50 p. m., and reported that they had made two attempts to reach the place where the fire was first discovered and had been driven back by dense volumes of smoke. They said it was impossible to proceed further in that direction.

I learned that since the fire had been discovered the engineer in charge of fan, and a miner, had entered the fan-house during the afternoon, to examine the fan, and that an explosion had taken place at that point, seriously burning both men.

I held a consultation with the mine official and after examining the map of the mine produced and carefully considering the pump-house location, in which the fire was supposed to have originated, and the report of the mine foreman and rescuing party, I decided to confine myself to the information received, together with report of the explosion in the fan-house. The latter impressed me with the belief that if an explosive mixture was being carried on the return to the fan-house in such quantities as had been so recently demonstrated, there was a possibility, at any moment, of a repetition of the explosion by the mixture coming in contact with the fire that was raging in Nos. 1, 2 and 3 mines.

This led me to study carefully the safest method of retreating from the mine if any trouble should arise during further visits for the purpose of recovering the bodies.

I was fully aware that wooden stoppings had been the prevailing method of conducting the air along the main entries prior to this date, and that being the case it would give the fire additional power to spread from one main to another.

With the above in view and the evidence given by the rescuing party—that there was not a possibility of a living person inside of the mine—we decided to postpone another inside exploration until morning. I gave strict orders that no open lights should be al-

lowed at or near the fan-house or main entrance to the mine, that the fan should be kept running at the same speed and a strict watch kept over its behavior, and should any disturbance be noticed to notify me at once. Early in the morning I found that nothing unusual had taken place, I then decided to make another examination of the mine and ascertain what course to pursue, with a view of recovering the bodies, and to prevent the fire from spreading into other parts of the mine. With a rescuing party I proceeded to the point that had been reached by previous rescuing parties, and then decided that, owing to the dense volume of smoke at that point, it was impossible to proceed any farther in that direction of the main. We returned and I met Inspectors I. G. Roby, A. McCauch and Henry Louttit, who had come to my assistance by request.

We examined the mine map, inspected the fan, air ways and entrance and then ordered more stoppings to be built with slide door attachment. After the stoppings had been completed we entered the mine by opening the slide door, closing it when through. We then opened the next one on the inside, and upon examination by Inspectors Louttit, McCauch, Roby and myself we found large quantities of smoke and gas, sufficient, if ignited, to cause serious results. We waited some time to see if the atmosphere was persistent as to its mixture. Noticing no perceivable difference, we returned to the outside and held a consultation with the mine officials. We suggested that every precaution should be exercised and outlined a method for fighting the fire by forcing water into the mine, thus leaving it in the hands of the mine officials. I continued to make frequent visits to the mine, keeping everything under close observation. November 29, I. G. Roby Inspector of the Fifth District, accompanied me, and we again entered the mine, proceeded along the main, and upon the examination of No. 11 butt we discovered the six miners, lying side by side, apparently asleep. I would say, that owing to the position of the bodies and the peaceful countenances of the men they had lain down to rest, and the products of combustion had done their deadly work while the victims peacefully awaiting relief from the rescuing party that had made three attempts to reach them. Enclosed find report of the Coroner's inquest which followed a few days after the recovery of the bodies.