



Reports

Lawson Mine

-LAWSON MINE EXPLOSION -
PACIFIC COAST COAL COMPANY.

Paul's files ✓

BLACK DIAMOND,

WASHINGTON.

November 6, 1910.

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At 6:40 A. M. on November 6, 1910, a very violent explosion occurred in the Lawson mine resulting in the death of 16 persons, all that were within the mine.

The explosion occurred at the time of changing shifts. Eleven men were descending the main slope in a trip of cars and were only 200 feet from daylight when the explosion occurred. There were five men on the night shift who were due to come out of the mine about the same time, but their whereabouts at the time of the explosion is not known as their bodies were not found.

Many heavy timbers were blown from the two slopes, much damage done to outside structures and the slopes were badly caved, and in places completely closed.

The trip of cars containing the day shift of workmen was wrecked and buried by material that fell from the roof of the slope. So bad was the obstructions in the slope that two drifts had to be made in the solid coal to reach the bodies of the 11 men that were entrapped in the cars.

The Lawson is an old mine and was nearing abandonment. There was only one entry or level from which coal was being mined, - the 6th North, and it was in this level where the night shift of

five men had been working and it was also the objective destination of the 11 men who were being lowered in the main slope.

The coal in this mine is highly inclined and near the outcrop is 62 degrees and gradually becomes less steep until at the 6th level it is 42 degrees. The main and auxiliary slopes ^{are} 2175 feet long. Six pairs of levels are turned at right angles, both the right and left. All but the 6th level had been worked out and abandoned. The 6th level on the right side had been mostly worked out, but on the left the level extended about 5000 feet from the slope, and the nearest working place was the 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ breast, about 2400 feet from the slope.

Explosive gas was reported by the fire boss as having been found in the 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ breast on ^{November} ~~November~~ 3, 4, 5 and 6, his last report having been made on his observation at 6:00 A. M., on November 6, or 40 minutes prior to the explosion.

Haulage in the mine was performed by animals and electric trolley locomotive. As the mining work was on the retreat, the trolley wire was coiled and hung on ^amine timber or prop.

On the night of November 5, the night fire boss reported the miners working at chutes 43 and 44 had stated that there was gas in breasts 43 and 44, but when examined by him the places were clear. It must therefore be admitted that gas was one of the hazards in this mine.

Explosives: No explosive was used in the mining operations at the time of the explosion. Explosives had been dispensed with owing to an explosion that occurred in this mine on October 1, 1902.

Lights: Safety lamps of the Wolf pattern were used exclusively by the miners but an open flame torch was used by the rollerman. The rollerman is a person who gives attention to the rollers on the slope and in this mine the main haulage slope is on the intake air.

The body of the rollerman was not recovered, so it is not known where he may have been with his open torch at the time of the explosion.

Conclusion: The explosion was caused by the ignition of gas, probably by an electric arc or spark from the electric wires in the 6th left levels, and the explosion was propagated and made more violent by dry coal dust.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Trolley locomotives should not be used in gaseous sections of a mine. Use permissible storage battery locomotives or rope haulage.

No open flame lamp is a necessity for examination and repair of rollers on slope haulage when electric cap or hand lamps are available.

Explosion at The Lawsen Mine.

The Pacific Coast Coal Co.

Seattle, Wash. Nov. 14, 10.

At.

Black Diamond, Washington.

Occured-

On Sunday, November 6th about 6:40 a. m. while the car was going down about 175 feet from the entrance of the slope.

This car was loaded with 11 work-men, the names are as follows:

Dave Lundun,	Fire Boss,	Single.
C. Biagi,	Timber Packer,	Married.
Julis Cappati,	" "	Married.
Frank Vergin,	" "	Single
Dominick Grigarias	" "	Single.
Joe Crinangery	Laborer	Single
Isador Grigarias	"	Single
Albert Fontino	"	Single
Martelli Fonsteanna	"	Married Wife & one child
Black Diamond.		
Matt Galop	"	Single.

According to the statement given by superintendent William Hann, the men on the bottan should be coming up as the other men were coming down. This slope has a double track and two ropes.

The last of the men are as follows:

Julis Pearson,	Timberman	Married.	Black Diamond
Fred Satti	"	"	" "
Ceciel Beal	Laborer	"	
Oscar Beal	"	Single	
Serelice Maes.	Roller Repairer	"	

The total depth of the slope is 2, 175 feet and pitches at the top of the slope at the angle of 62 degrees. At the first level 61 degrees. At the 2nd level 60 degrees. At the 3rd level 56 degrees. At the 4th level 53 degrees. At the 5th level 50 degrees and at the 6th level 42 degrees.

The only operating workings were six level North side This level is in 5000 feet. The haulage on this entry was done by five ton Motor, Jeffries Type and four mules in order to take the coal to the parting on the inside end. The explosion 1st coming out in the main slope in which the men were going down, blowing a large part of the Shed down on the top of the main opening. Timbers ranging from 16 to 18 inches in diameter and measuring 14 feet long were blown about 75 feet out of the slope. There were three men slightly hurt by the flying pieces of timber. The 2nd report coming out of the auxiliary slope used as the return airway, the difference being but very little between both reports, timbers 18 inches in diameter and 12 feet long blowing out of this slope below. This also blew the sheds partly down, from the top of the slope. Timbers 22 inches in diameter 10 and 12 feet long also blew 100 feet from the opening and taking 12 feet from the top of the boiler house stack at a distance of 150 feet.

One piece of this timber went through the top of the power house at a distance of 60 feet. causing the windows to all blow out from power house at this point. Timbers 16 inches in diameter and 12 feet long had been blown 300 feet from the top of this return airway.

The fan had not been damaged but disconnected from the mines one hour and 45 minutes, while repairing the airway to get the ventilation started in the proper course.

This mine is ventilated by 8 feet capell fan. The track being crossed over the top of the auxiliary slope was also blown to one side by the force of the explosion.

Word was received at the mine rescue station on the morning of the 7th. Station Foreman, John J. Corey with full equipment of life saving apparatus hurried to the scene, but owing to the train service it was impossible to reach the mine before, 5:30 p. m. At 6:15 p. m. a rescuing party consisting of Superintendent Wm. Hann, Dillis Marks, J. J. Jones and Rasmus Christinsen and John Corey entered the mine at the top of the main slope, then went down to the old Water level and in to the main slope. Slope blocked at this point, but could see up at this point of the slope for some distance. Rock and timber falling from above continuously, then went over to the old airway on the South side of Main slope whereby the ladders and ropes that were secured, succeeded in reaching the ^{old} two level and found that conditions were favorable. We then went down until the 3rd level was reached where we found that the slope was blocked and that rock and timber were dropping down slope at this point and that the explosion did great damage, here blowing out from the main slope., and into the return airway. We were compelled to stop at this point. The entrance that we had going down to this point ending here. Then the only way was the slope which was blocked or the other slope of the return airway and was not safe to trust the lives of men to climb beneath the falling pieces of rock and timber.

Returning to the out side a other party on the morning of the 8th. consisting of Superintendent, Wm. Hann, L. D. Jones, Lawrence Harris, J. J. Jones Wm. Harrington, Rasmus Christianson and J. J. Corey entered the old Lawsen Water

level proceeded until they came to Main slope at the 1st. level. found slope had caved at this point about 50 feet by about 20 feet high. Everything north at this point had been caved tight. Found concrete stopping South of this point in good shape. The cave on slope on 1st level had gone down blocking the slope up to the edge of this level. Party then proceeded down the old South air way to 2nd level. Could not get into the slope from South side. All caved tight. Then went through an under cast and down an old chute between the main slope and auxilliary slope. Found auxilliary slope partly caved. Found stopping between Main slope and auxilliary slope all blown towards auxillairy slope. Got to main slope from North side. Main slope caved about 40 feet and 10 or 15 feet high. Went then to the stopping on the North Side and found intack on the north side. On the South side also was found intack. Party then proceeded down the old South airway to 3rd level. Found main slope had caved for about 40 or 50 feet and 10 or 15 feet high stuff had run down the slope blocking slope up to about 10 feet from the level. Found stopping between main slope and auxialliary slope all torn out and blown north showing an indication of a great force auxialliary slope found intack, found stopping on the north side of auxialary slope in good shape. Could not get into the stopping on the South side owing to a cave on the level. Did not find any gas on top of cave, did not find any indications whatever of any explosion irriginating in old workings above

3rd level. Party again returned to the surface. Inspector of mines, D. C. Botting, who had been very ill at the Clellum Hospital, after undergoing an operation of appendicitis, insisted in going to the scene of the disaster and arrived at the mines in time to meet the exploring party upon their return to the surface and received all particulars.

State Inspector, D. C. Botting, of mines however was again compelled to return to his home in Seattle and put in care of a physician.

This was a very gasie mine and also very dry. Nothing but safety lamps of Wolf type were used in this mine, with the exception of the rollerman who used open light and no powder whatever has been used for some time. A very careful inspection has been made in regard to indications of fire. Papers, sacks, canvass etc. that were found throughout the mine had shown no indications of fire whatever, as far as the mine has been explored.

Steps were then taken to locate the bodies on the upper end of the main slope.

The first cross-cut was started November the 8th. 181 feet from first level South of Main slope. Another cross-cut was also started 251 feet from the top of Main slope. The lower cross-cut being driven to make sure of nobody going down the slope to where caved. The upper one driven to strike the car where bodies were supposed to be located at a distance of 30 feet from the South air-way. When this cross-cut had

been driven through, ten bodies were found at this point so far, and all appeared to have been killed instantly. The writer , J. J. Corey, then returned to Seattle on the evening of the 12th. after all possible assistance had been given, and had no occasion to use the helmets.

Seattle, Wash.

November 6, 1910.

A copy of the fire Bosses report is as follows:

Lawsen Mine, November 6th. I hereby certify that I have examined this mine before the commencement of work this morning. I find it free from gas and falls and every place in good working order except as herein below enumerated and I have also posted a copy of this report on the bulletin board near the mouth of the slope. Places where gas was found 6 level north, gas $38\frac{1}{2}$ breast. All other places clear. 6: a. m. 6 level south all clear 6 a. m. First, second and third all clear

Signed

Jack Zan.

Gas Testor.

In looking up the reports there has been gas found in $38\frac{1}{2}$ breast on November 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th. Statement from the gas testor that canvass had been prepared to clear out the gas from this point. It was customary, however, in rolling up the trolley wire and hanging it on the post along the road while retreating on this entry. Sometime ago a fire had been cealed off outside of $38\frac{1}{2}$ breast. This is the only level working at all in this mine. Everything else has been caved and cealed up tight.

This is the 2nd explosion that has taken place at this mine. The one previous to this had taken place Oct. 1st. 8:30 p. m. 1902 which was supposed to have been caused by windy shot.

Statement given by fire Boss, Fred Ring. Left the inside at 12-15 a. m. At that time miners loading coal in chute 43 &

44 canvass opened and miners told him that there was gas in
43 & 44, so he went **up** and found it all clear. Also examined
breast 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ and found it all clear and that he had sprinkled
the 6 level at 10:30 p/ m. on that shift.

Yours truly,

John J. Carey
Foreman Mine Rescue Station.

List of men killed in Lawson Mine disaster November 6th 1910.

Name	Occupation	Age	Nationality	Married	W	O	Family at	Body Recov'd
Julius Persyn	Timberman	30	Belgian	Yes	1	1	Old Lawson	No.
Fred Satti	" Helper	29	Italian	Yes	1	1	Blk.Diamond	No.
Cezar Bael	Trk.Cl'ner	?	Belgian	Yes	1	1	Lawson	No.
Jos.Kronenberg	Tbr.Packer	30	Polish	Yes	1	1	Old Country	Yes.
Maetili Fanstins	" "	33	Italian	Yes	1	3	Blk.Diamond	Yes.
C. Biagi	" "	26	"	Yes	1	7	Old Country	Yes.
Julius Cappiati	" "	30	"	Yes	1	7	" "	Yes.
Frank Gardini	" "	24	"	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Isadore "	" "	22	"	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Dom. Gregois	" "	24	"	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Albert Fontana	" "	25	"	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Frank Vergan	" "	23	"	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Nat. Galope	" "	19	Austrian	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Dave Lunden	Fire Boss	34	Finn	No	-	-	-----	Yes.
Oscar Bael	Trk.Cl'ner	?	Belgian	No	-	-	-----	No.
Cirili Maes	Rollerman	33	"	No	-	-	-----	No.

Recapitulation.

16 men killed. 11 Bodies recovered 5 Bodies still in mine.

9

9 single men. 4 Widows and 6 Children at Black Diamond and Lawson.

3 Widows and at least one Child supposed to be in their

Native Country.

Italians. Belgians. Finn. Polish. Austrian. Adults. Minors. ?

9

4

1

1

1

13

1

2