

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 Oakdale No. 2. 2. Operator The Oakdale Coal Company
3. Location Oakview, Colorado. P.O., 7 miles from La Yeta, Colo. 4. Date of accident 8/18/19 Hour 11:45 A.M.
5. Kind of accident Explosion 6. Killed 18 Injured None
7. B. of M. representatives present J. J. Forbes, Car 2.  
J.J. Forbes arrived 8/19/19, 2:00 P.M.
8. B. of M. car present Yes, Car 2. 9. Date and time of arrival—Men 8/20/19 Car 7:00 A.M.
10. Names of persons composing rescue parties Three local rescue men from Oakdale Mine and nine rescue men from C.F.&I. properties, in charge of Jas. Dalrymple, Jr.
11. Names of mine officials present Wm. Lewis, President, H. Nash, Vice-Pres., T.C. Britton, Supt., J.E. Boardman, Pit Boss, E.H. Mc Cleary, Safety Engr. Victor-American Fuel Co. Joseph Watson, Compensation Insurance Inspector, Mutual Insurance Co.
12. Names of State inspectors present James Dalrymple, State Inspector of Mines, Al Thompson, deputy Inspector. Wm. Laurie, Deputy Inspector.
13. Rescue accomplishments 5 Partially overcome with afterdamp and resuscitated by Schaefer method of artificial respiration and afterwards oxygen administered.
14. Investigations conducted and by whom James Dalrymple, State Coal Mine Inspector, A.E. Thompson, Deputy Inspector, E.H. McCleary, Safety Engr. Victor-Amer. Fuel Co., Joseph Watson, Compensation Ins. Inspector., T.C. Britton, Mine Supt., Wm. Lewis, President, Oakdale Coal Co., J. J. Forbes, J.S. Cunningham, Bureau of Mines.
15. Probable cause of the accident (if unknown or uncertain, so state) Gas ignition probably caused by improperly assembled Wolf Safety Lamp, belonging to Fire Boss Wm. Christopher.
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 Oakdale No. 2. Fire or explosion Explosion Date 8/18/19
2. Name of operator The Oakdale Coal Co. Location of mine Oakview, Colorado
3. Number of men in mine at time of disaster 47 in No. 2 Mine and 53 in No. 1 Mine.
4. Number of men killed by violence 1
5. Number of men killed by burns 18 Men killed by burning, suffocation from after
6. Number of men killed by suffocation 1 damp and violence
7. Total number of men killed 18
8. Total survivors 29 No. 2, 53 No. 1 Mine escaped uninjured 82
9. Number of men injured nonfatally by burns None
10. Number of men injured nonfatally by violence None
11. Number of men injured nonfatally by gases None
12. Number of men escaped unassisted 29 No. 2 Mine and 53 No. 1 Mine
13. Number of men rescued by B. of M. men wearing apparatus None
14. Number of men rescued by others wearing apparatus None \*
15. Number of men rescued jointly by men wearing apparatus None
16. Number of rescuers overcome not wearing apparatus Four
17. Number of rescuers losing life not wearing apparatus None
18. Number of rescuers overcome wearing apparatus Two (as near as can be determined
19. Number of rescuers losing life wearing apparatus None
20. Number of persons revived by reviving apparatus None
21. Number of persons revived by artificial resuscitation AS near as can be ascertained, artificial respira- tion was administered to five.
22. Number of B. of M. rescuers engaged 2
23. Number of others engaged 12
24. Number of B. of M. breathing apparatus used None, Company has 3 sets and C.F.&I. had 5 sets.
25. Number of breathing apparatus used, owned by others 5 Belonging to Company, 5 belonging to C.F.&I.
26. Maximum distance traveled in noxious gases, wearing apparatus About 1500'
27. Number of stoppings or bulkheads constructed, wearing apparatus None, but number of curtains were hung to deflect air current.
28. Number of doors erected or opened, wearing apparatus None
29. Feet of pipe or hose laid, wearing apparatus None
30. Total hours engaged, using apparatus About 14
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?

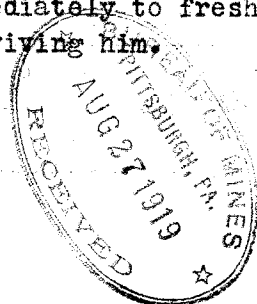
STATE AND COMPANY OFFICIALS PRESENT.

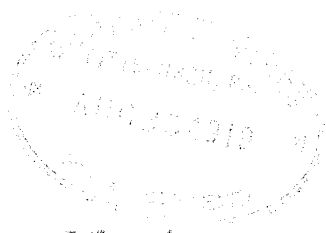
|      |                        |       |   |
|------|------------------------|-------|---|
| Name | <u>Wm. Lewis</u>       | Title | <u>President, Oakdale Coal Co.</u>        |
| Name | <u>H. Nash</u>         | Title | <u>Vice-Pres. " " "</u>                   |
| Name | <u>T.C. Britton.</u>   | Title | <u>Mine. Supt. " " "</u>                  |
| Name | <u>E.H. McCleary</u>   | Title | <u>Safety Engr. Victor-Amer. Fuel Co.</u> |
| Name | <u>James Dairymple</u> | Title | <u>State Coal Mine Inspector.</u>         |
| Name | <u>A.E. Thompson</u>   | Title | <u>Deputy Mine Inspector.</u>             |
| Name | <u>Wm. Laurie</u>      | Title | <u>Deputy Mine Inspector.</u>             |
| Name | <u>Joe Watson</u>      | Title | <u>Compensation Insurance Inspector.</u>  |

REMARKS.—Give items of special interest, including names and addresses of persons wearing apparatus.

\* One member of crew shortly after explosion occurred was partially overcome, due possibly to excitement and inexperience in wearing breathing apparatus. This was the first crew that entered the mine; they did not reach the explosion area. One member of C.F.&I. team accidently slipped in going over fall, thereby falling on his breathing bag and forcing air out. This man was partially overcome and was removed immediately to fresh air by other members of the crew. 15 minutes was spent in reviving him.

Signed J. J. Forbes  
Date August 21, 1919.





8-771

Oakview, Colorado.  
August 21, 1919.

Mr. D. Harrington,  
Bureau of Mines,  
Golden, Colorado.

Dear Mr. Harrington:-

We have just returned from underground. We located one body under a fall and am fairly well convinced that we have located the two remaining bodies which are under a fall near the face of No. 2 room, off 4th cross, off 6th south main entry. A crew is now underground, and if everything turns out as I anticipate, these three bodies will be removed sometime tonight, making a total of eighteen dead and recovered. Considerable time had been dissipated in an endeavor to restore the ventilation sufficiently to clear the effected district. It was decided last evening to reverse the fan with hopes of getting sufficient air to the faces of 6th South and 3rd and 4th cross entries, and rooms off 3rd and 4th cross entries, to clear the explosion area of damps. I am pleased to say that we were successful in concentrating sufficient air to accomplish this purpose, thereby enabling us to make exploration trips into all places in the effected district. The district effected by the explosion is the 6th South entries, the first and second dips off the 6th South, and the 3rd and 4th cross entries off 6th South entry. The explosion was entirely localized in these entries.

There has been very little regard paid to a definite system of mining. Rooms and entries in the explosion area had been driven, I might say, at random. Of course, this condition, to a certain extent, could not be helped for the seam, in the explosion area particularly, was cut up by dykes and other irregularities and the coal in proximity to the dykes is coked, hence the reason for the poor system of mining.

A greater part of the time since Tuesday noon has been spent in an endeavor to restore the ventilation. As far as can be determined at the present writing, the explosion apparently was

caused by gas ignition. Several miners, including fire boss Montgomery, were found with matches in their pockets. The management of the mine apparently has paid very little regard to searching of miners before entering the mine. I might add that electric cap lamps are used entirely throughout the mine, but the purpose of the cap lamps has evidently been defeated by the company not carrying forward a systematic searching of the miners before entering the mine.

The consensus of opinion (and this includes that of Mr. Dalrymple, State Inspector of Mines, and Mr. Thompson, Deputy Mine Inspector) that the explosion was caused by fire boss Montgomery. It has been learned that Montgomery was in the habit of firing missed shots during working hours. Another thing that has been determined is that black powder had been used in the 6th South entry. During the course of recovery work several canteens of black powder were observed in this district.

These entries give off a considerable quantity of gas. Up until last evening the faces of the 6th South entries and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th rooms off 6th south, were completely filled with gas. The entries to the raise, known as the 3rd and 4th, also had an explosive mixture up until this morning. The condition is somewhat identical to Hastings--of which you are thoroughly familiar.

In the event all the bodies are removed tonight, I believe that Mr. Dalrymple will commence the investigation tomorrow sometime (Friday). I understand that the inquest will be held in Walsenburg, Colorado at 2:00 P.M. Saturday August 26. Of course, this is only tentative for the inquest. If bodies are removed tonight I plan moving the Car to Trinidad, by Friday if possible, to be present and assist Mr. James Dalrymple, Jr. with arrangements for Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. First-Aid Contest Saturday afternoon August 26. I will remain here at the mine and collect all the data I possibly can in connection with the explosion.

Very truly yours,



cc-Mr. Rice.  
Mr. Parker. ✓  
Mr. Paul.