

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
(UNDERGROUND COAL MINE)

MULTIPLE FATAL ROOF FALL ACCIDENT

No. 3 Mine (ID No. 15-12735)  
Phelps Mining, Incorporated  
Phelps, Pike County, Kentucky

January 22, 1982

by

James D. Carter  
Mining Engineer

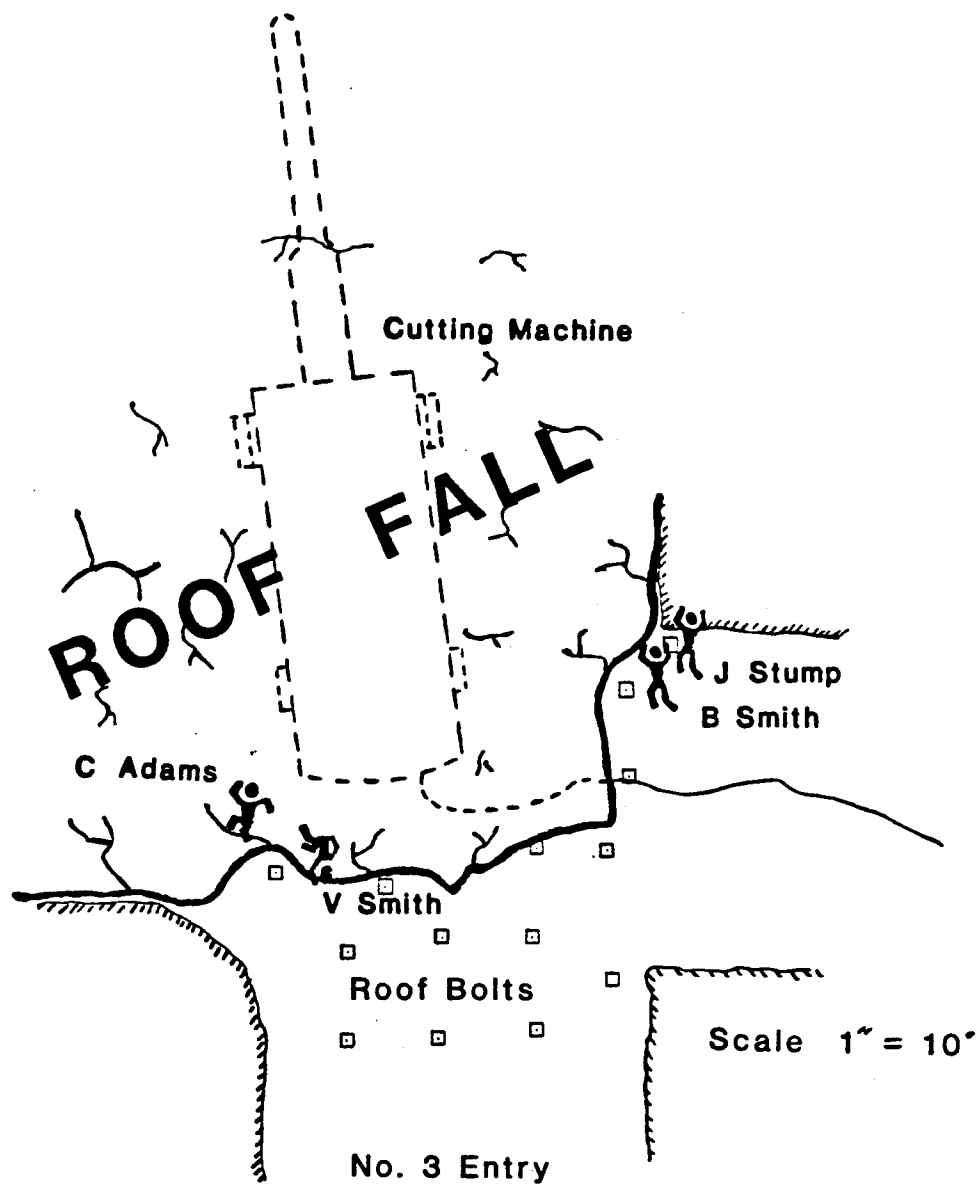
Originating Office - Mine Safety and Health Administration  
4015 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22203  
Joseph A. Lamonica, Administrator for Coal Mine Safety and Health

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**SKETCH OF MULTIPLE FATAL  
ROOF FALL ACCIDENT**

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Phelps, Pike County, Kentucky**

**January 22, 1982**

ABSTRACT OF INVESTIGATION

<p><b>Title of Investigation:</b> Multiple Fatal Roof Fall Accident</p> <p><b>Report Release Date:</b> APR 28 1982</p> <p><b>Mine:</b> No. 3 Mine</p> <p><b>Mine ID Number:</b> 15-12735</p> <p><b>Company:</b> Phelps Mining, Incorporated</p> <p><b>Town, County, State:</b> Phelps, Pike County, Kentucky</p> <p><b>Author(s):</b> James D. Carter</p>	<p align="center"><b>Mine Information</b></p> <p>Daily Production 350 tons .....</p> <p>Surface Employment 2 .....</p> <p>Underground Employment 11 .....</p> <p>Name of Coalbed Warfield .....</p> <p>Thickness of Coalbed 60 inches .....</p> <hr/> <p>Last Quarter Injury Incident Rate (HSAC) for:</p> <p>Industry 10.78 .....</p> <p>This Operation No. injuries reported .....</p> <p>Training Program Approved A/16/80 .....</p> <p>Mine Profile Rating NONE .....</p>
<p><b>Originating Office - Mine Safety and Health, Administration, Coal Mine Safety and Health, Office of the Administrator</b> Address: 4015 Wilson Boulevard Arlington, Virginia 22203</p>	<p><b>Authority - This report is based on an investigation made pursuant to the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Public Law 91-173, as amended by Public Law 95-164)</b></p>

Abstract

On Friday, January 22, 1982, at approximately 9 a.m., a roof fall occurred at the face of the No. 3 entry of the No. 3 mine, Phelps Mining, Incorporated, resulting in the death of Vernon Smith, cutting-machine operator, and Curtis Adams, general laborer. Smith had about 15 years mining experience, the last 6 months as a cutting-machine operator. Adams had over 13 years mining experience, the last 4 months as a general laborer. The accident occurred during second mining when Smith and Adams were cutting the final stump of a pillar. At that time, a portion of the roof, about 60 feet long by 40 feet wide and 54 inches to a feathered edge in thickness, fell and struck the victims, resulting in their deaths. The accident occurred due to management's failure to properly evaluate the condition of the roof.

Information for this report was compiled through a MSHA investigation that was started ...

Company Officials:	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
President	Kenny L. Smith	PO. Box 199, Phelps, Kentucky
Superintendent	Dallas R. Smith	PO. Box 199, Phelps, Kentucky
Safety Director	Bruce Justice	PO. Box 199, Phelps, Kentucky
Principle Officer - H&S	Dallas R. Smith	
Labor Organization	United Mine Workers of America, Local #1528, District 30	
Chairman - H&S Committee	Ronnie Coleman	PO. Box 678, Phelps, Kentucky

### Commentary

On Friday, January 22, 1982, at 7 a.m., the section crew under the supervision of Dallas Smith entered the mine by way of battery-powered scoops and traveled to the active section, arriving there at 7:20 a.m. Vernon Smith (victim), cutting machine operator, Jerry Smith, scoop operator, and Dallas Smith, section foreman, were already at the section when the crew arrived. Vernon Smith had entered early (5 a.m.) to pump water from the section and Jerry Smith entered at 6 a.m. to make the pre-shift examinations. Dallas Smith entered the mine at 6:40 a.m. and checked the working faces.

At 7:30 a.m., Dallas Smith and Jerry Smith held a short safety meeting explaining recent explosive accidents and proper shooting methods. Dallas Smith then walked to the No. 3 entry and helped Vernon Smith, Ronnie Coleman, drilling-machine operator, Bobby Ray Smith, shot firer, Curtis Adams (victim), general laborer, Jerry Stump, electrician, and Tommy Smith, roof-bolter helper, set breaker and roadway posts in preparation for cutting the final stump of a pillar on the left side of the No. 3 entry.

When the posts were set, Vernon Smith trammed the cutting machine into position while Ronnie Coleman and Tommy Smith left to start their drilling and roof-bolting duties. Dallas Smith also left the accident scene at this time with a scoop to obtain additional timbers for another cut. Within a few minutes after the cutting machine entered the place, a massive section of roof fell without warning, instantly killing Vernon Smith and Curtis Adams.

### Discussion and Evaluation

The investigation revealed the following factors relevant to the occurrence of the accident:

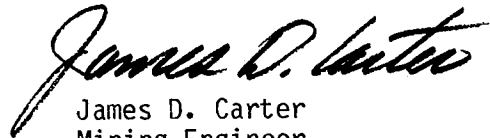
1. The fall extended diagonally across the intersection into the No. 3 entry and into the left crosscut at least 40 feet, completely covering the cutting machine. The exact dimensions of the fall could not be obtained due to hazardous roof conditions in the area.
2. The fall occurred without warning about 3 minutes after cutting operations began.
3. The exact number and placement of posts and the dimensions of the final stump could not be determined because the operator did not clean up or reopen the area.
4. The cutting machine was equipped with a canopy and the cutting machine operator apparently got out of the operator's compartment and tried to outrun the fall.
5. A major portion of the fall separated above the anchorage point of the 30-inch roof bolts.
6. The approved roof control plan was revised on January 15, 1982, to allow total pillar recovery. The original plan required leaving the four corner 8-foot square stumps.

Findings of Fact

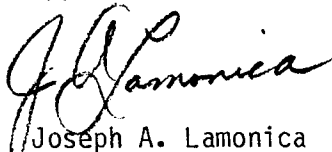
The investigation did not reveal any violations of Title 30, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 75, which caused or contributed to the accident.

Conclusion

The accident and resultant fatalities occurred due to management's failure to properly evaluate the condition of the roof.

  
James D. Carter  
Mining Engineer

Approved by:

  
Joseph A. Lamonica  
Administrator

for Coal Mine Safety and Health

APPENDIX

List of persons furnishing information and/or present during the investigation.

Phelps Mining, Incorporated, Company Officials

Kenny L. Smith	President
Dallas R. Smith	Superintendent
Phyllis Smith	Secretary - Treasurer

Phelps Mining, Incorporated, Employees

Jerry Smith	Scoop Operator
Jerry Stump	Electrician
Tommy Smith	Roof-Bolting Machine Operator Helper
Ronnie Coleman	Drilling-Machine Operator
James M. Mitchell	Scoop Operator
Bobby Ray Smith	Shot Fireman

Family Member of Victim

Johnny Smith	Brother of Vernon Smith
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Popular Creek Development Company

Ralph Fannin	Superintendent and Chief Engineer
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Old Republic Insurance Company

Lowell Akers	Compensation Inspector
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United Mine Workers of America

Leonard Fleming	Safety Inspector
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Kentucky Department of Mines and Minerals

Phil Burke	Analyst
Walter Coleman	Inspector

Mine Safety and Health Administration

Clyde V. Turner  
Michael G. Finnie  
Aaron Hall, Jr.  
Hugh V. Smith

James D. Carter  
Cloyd Blankenship

Subdistrict Manager  
Special Investigator  
Coal Mine Inspector  
Coal Mine Specialist  
(Roof Control)  
Mining Engineer  
Mining Engineer



### Data Sheet



#### SECTION A—VICTIM DATA

1. Name: Vernon Smith 2. Sex:  M  F 3. SSN: 401-62-8203  
4. Age: 37 5. Job classification: Cutting Machine Operator  
6. Experience at this classification: 3 years 11 months 7. Total mining experience: 14 years 4 months  
8. What activity was being performed at time of accident? Operating cutting machine  
9. Victim's experience at this activity: 6 months  
10. Was victim trained in this task? Yes  
11. Health and Safety courses/Training received (related to accident) \_\_\_\_\_ Date received  
Annual Refresher Training - 06/19/81  
Newly Employed Experienced Miner Training - 07/08/81

#### SECTION B—SUPERVISOR DATA (supervisor of victim)

12. Name: Dallas Ray Smith 13. Certified:  Yes  No  
14. Experience as supervisor: 10 years 15. Total mining experience: 15 years  
16. Health and Safety courses/Training received (related to accident) \_\_\_\_\_ Date received  
Annual Refresher Training - 06/19/81  
17. When was the supervisor last present at accident scene prior to the accident? About 3 minutes prior to accident  
18. What did he do when he was there? Assisted other miners in setting posts  
19. When was he last in contact with the victim? 8:55 a.m.  
20. Did he issue instructions relative to the accident? Unknown  
21. Was he aware of or did he express an awareness of any unsafe practice or condition? No

# Data Sheet



## SECTION A—VICTIM DATA

1. Name: Curtis Adams 2. Sex:  M  F 3. SSN: 236-62-2844

4. Age: 61 5. Job classification: General Laborer

6. Experience at this classification: 4 months 7. Total mining experience: 13 years 4 months

8. What activity was being performed at time of accident? Setting timbers

9. Victim's experience at this activity: 4 months

10. Was victim trained in this task? Yes

11. Health and Safety courses/Training received (related to accident) \_\_\_\_\_ Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Newly Employed Experienced Miner Training - 09/03/81

Annual Refresher Training - 12/17/82

## SECTION B—SUPERVISOR DATA (supervisor of victim)

12. Name: Dallas Ray Smith 13. Certified:  Yes  No

14. Experience as supervisor: 10 years 15. Total mining experience: 15 years

16. Health and Safety courses/Training received (related to accident) \_\_\_\_\_ Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Refresher Training - 06/19/81

17. When was the supervisor last present at accident scene prior to the accident? About 3 minutes prior to accident

18. What did he do when he was there? Assisted other miners in setting posts

19. When was he last in contact with the victim? 8:55 a.m.

20. Did he issue instructions relative to the accident? Unknown

21. Was he aware of or did he express an awareness of any unsafe practice or condition? No

Section I (Coal Only)

MSHA and/or State Certification and/or Qualification

Mine ID 15-12735

Date Training Plan Approved _____	Date Training Received _____	Date Training Received _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Person (Underground)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dust (Sampling) _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Person (Surface)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dust (Calibration) _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Methane & Oxygen Deficiency Testing	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical	_____	* <input type="checkbox"/> Impoundments _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Energized Surface High Voltage	_____	* <input type="checkbox"/> Hoisting Engineer _____
* Annual Retraining Required		

Section II (Metal-Non-metal and Coal)  
MSHA Training Programs Completed

Date of Hire _____	Date Training Plan Approved <u>04/16/80</u>		
Required Training (Victim)	Date Training Received	<input type="checkbox"/> Required Training (Victim)	Date Training Received
<input type="checkbox"/> New Miner (U.B.)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Training (U.G.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Miner (Sur.)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Training (Sur.)	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly Employed Experienced (U.G.)	<u>07/08/81</u>	Task Training Specify Type: _____ _____ _____ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newly Employed Experienced (Sur.)	_____		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Refresher (U.G.)	<u>06/19/81</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Refresher (Sur.)	_____		

Section III

Company Training Program Completed:

Training	OJT/Formal	Instructor	Date Completed
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Section IV

DID VICTIM HAVE TRAINING SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE TASK BEING PERFORMED  
AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT?

YES     NO    WHEN? 06/19/81

BY WHOM? Bruce Justice    HOW WAS TRAINING GIVEN? On the job

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Section V

RECOMMEND TRAINING PLAN EVALUATION BY EDUCATION & TRAINING OFFICE

YES     NO

Section I (Coal Only)

MSHA and/or State Certification and/or Qualification

Mine ID 15-12735

Date Training Plan Approved _____	Date Training Received _____	Date Training Received _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Person (Underground)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dust (Sampling) _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Person (Surface)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Dust (Calibration) _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Methane & Oxygen Deficiency Testing	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical	_____	* <input type="checkbox"/> Impoundments _____
* <input type="checkbox"/> Energized Surface High Voltage	_____	* <input type="checkbox"/> Hoisting Engineer _____
* Annual Retraining Required		

Section II (Metal-Non-metal and Coal)  
MSHA Training Programs Completed

Date of Hire _____	Date Training Plan Approved <u>04/16/80</u>		
Required Training (Victim)	Date Training Received	<input type="checkbox"/> Required Training (Victim)	Date Training Received
<input type="checkbox"/> New Miner (U.B.)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Training (U.G.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Miner (Sur.)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Training (Sur.)	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly Employed Experienced (U.G.)	<u>09/23/81</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Newly Employed Experienced (Sur.)	_____	Task Training Specify Type:	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Refresher (U.G.)	<u>12/17/81</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Refresher (Sur.)	_____	_____	_____

Section III

Company Training Program Completed:

Training	OJT/Formal	Instructor	Date Completed
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Section IV

DID VICTIM HAVE TRAINING SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE TASK BEING PERFORMED  
AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT?

YES       NO      WHEN? 12/17/81

BY WHOM? Bruce Justice      HOW WAS TRAINING GIVEN? On the job

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Section V

RECOMMEND TRAINING PLAN EVALUATION BY EDUCATION & TRAINING OFFICE

YES       NO