

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on an investigation made pursuant to clause (1) of Section 4 of the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act (80 Stat. 772).

Reference numbers preceding recommendations identify mine safety standards published in the Federal Register, Vol. 34, No. 145, Thursday, July 31, 1969, and Federal Register, Vol. 35, No. 38, Wednesday, February 25, 1970. Mandatory standards are identified by (M) after the reference number.

Roy H. Lummus, Louis E. Doyle, and Richard Sinnett of the Texavada Corporation suffocated June 23 or 24, 1970 when the sides of a prospect trench collapsed and entrapped them at Pine Grove, an abandoned mining camp 18 miles south of Yerington, Lyon County, Nevada.

Lummus, age 52, Social Security Number 1298, president, is survived by his wife. He reportedly had about 15 years experience in underground and open-pit mining in New Mexico.

Doyle, age 49, Social Security Number 6198, vice-president, is survived by his wife and one minor child. He reportedly had some experience in placer mining in Honduras, however, most was as a professor of engineering at a large university.

Sinnett, age 37, Social Security Number 2776, was employed as a helper. He had recently worked at an open-pit copper mine for a year as a laborer, but no other information on his mining background or family was available.

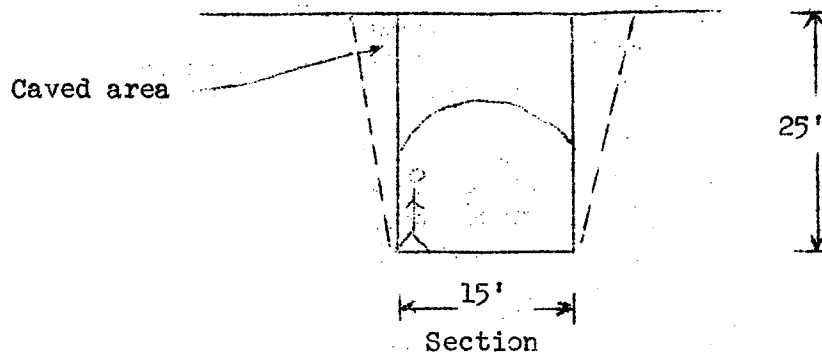
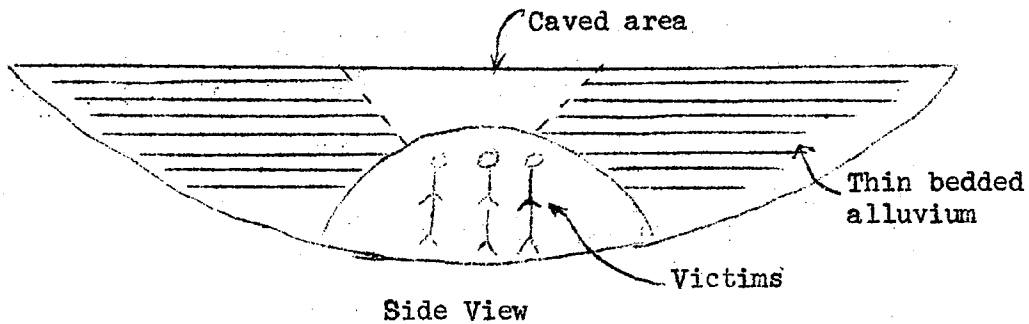
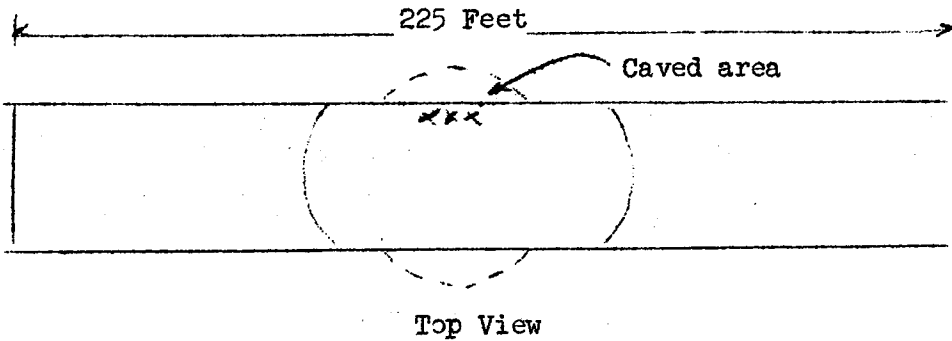
The Reno office of the Bureau of Mines learned of the accident on July 1, 1970 from a report in a Reno, Nevada newspaper, and an investigation was started the same day.

Information in this report was obtained by interviewing George W. Allen, sheriff, Lyon County, Lynn Tracy, undersheriff, James Goldsworthy, owner of the property, and D. H. Tibbals, Valley Ready Mix Company, and by observations made at the site of the accident. The Dallas office of the Bureau of Mines interviewed Darrel E. Lummus, secretary-treasurer, Texavada Corporation,

GENERAL INFORMATION

The unnamed group of placer claims at Pine Grove is owned by James Goldsworthy and Associates, Yerington, Nevada. The claims were leased in 1969 to the Texavada Corporation, Richardson, Texas. The corporation sporadically prospected the property as a possible placer gold mining operation.

Three men worked on the property on an irregular schedule.



No Scale

Sketch of Fall-of-Ground Accident
 Placer Claims
 Texavada Corporation
 Pine Grove, Lyon County, Nevada
 June 23 or 24, 1970

Workings consisted of several trenches which ranged from 15 to 30 feet wide and 250 to 300 feet long, dug into valley fill alluvium. The alluvium was of unconsolidated sand and small gravel. Water was encountered in the trenches at a depth of 25 feet when excavation was stopped. Operations were started in July, 1969 and stopped in November 1969. It was during this period that the trenches were dug. Activity was renewed about May 15, 1970.

The trench in which the accident occurred was 15 feet wide, 225 feet long, and ranged in depth from 0 feet at each end to 25 feet at the point where the bodies were found. The walls were nearly vertical.

The investigating committee consisted of the writers.

A health and safety inspection by the Bureau of Mines had not been made at the property.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

James Goldsworthy visited the property Friday June 19, 1970 and discussed operations with Messrs. Lummus, Doyle, and Sinnett. It was customary for Goldsworthy to visit the property about twice a week to deliver mail and messages.

A bulldozer owned and operated by Valley Ready Mix Company, Yerington, Nevada, was used on a contract basis. Two of the men reportedly could operate the bulldozer and did so at times when the contract operator was not present.

The regular operator visited the property June 23 to check the condition of the bulldozer. He found that the tilt cylinder was malfunctioning, but did not see the Texavada personnel. He reported the condition of the bulldozer to Don Tibbals, owner, Valley Ready Mix Company. The operator was instructed June 24 to return the bulldozer to Yerington. Upon arriving at the property he reportedly found the bulldozer engine in operation. He saw no one, but reported to Tibbals that he noticed a fall of ground in one of the trenches. The bulldozer operator was not available for interview, because he was out of town on another assignment.

Goldsworthy visited the property June 25 with mail and a cake and placed them on the seat of the victim's truck parked near the trench. He did not see the men and assumed they were prospecting in the vicinity. Goldsworthy again visited the property June 29, and found the mail, cake, and truck exactly as he had left them. He also noticed that dirty dishes were in the sink of the men's house trailer about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the excavation. He became suspicious and notified George Allen, Lyon County Sheriff. Goldsworthy and Lynn Tracy, undersheriff, returned to the property and they discovered the fall of ground.

They reasoned that the men might be buried. Arrangements were made with Don Tibbals to transport a front-end loader to the property.

Recovery operations began the morning of June 30, Sinnett's body was found about 11:45 a.m. The bodies of Lummus and Doyle were uncovered soon afterward. The men were found in a standing position and were uncovered from the knees down by hand.

Walls from both sides of the trench had caved in, but it is not known if the walls fell simultaneously. The fallen muck pile was estimated to be 15 feet wide, 25 feet long, and up to 8 feet deep, and was estimated to contain about 100 tons.

A shovel and bucket were found with the bodies. It was presumed the men were probably taking a sample from the trench bottom or walls. It was evident that the trench bottom was at or slightly below the water table, because the fallen material left after the bodies were recovered was damp. It was presumed that the men had used the bulldozer before sampling, and had left it parked with the engine running in the position found by the regular operator.

All available evidence indicated that the fall of ground occurred the afternoon of June 23 or the morning of June 24.

CAUSE OF ACCIDENT

The cause of this accident was the failure of management to have the trench walls sloped to the angle of repose. A contributing cause was the failure of the victims to recognize the hazards of working under dangerous banks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to prevent recurrence of this type accident are:

Management should have the trench walls sloped to the angle of repose, consistent with prudent engineering design, the nature of the ground and the kind of material being mined.

55.3-1 (M) Standards for the safe control of pit walls, including the overall slope of the pit wall, should be established and followed by the operator. Such standards should be consistent with prudent engineering design, the nature of the ground and the kind of material and mineral mined, and the ensuring of safe working conditions according to the degree of slope.

55.3-5 (M) Men should not work near or under dangerous banks.

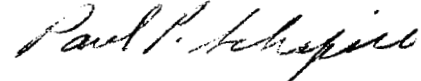
The following recommendation has no bearing on the accident, but should be complied with.

Accidents in mines subject to the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act which cause death should be reported immediately by the quickest possible means to the nearest Bureau of Mines Metal and Nonmetal Mine Health and Safety District or Subdistrict office.

Reno Subdistrict, Paul P. Schapiro, Subdistrict Manager, 1605 Evans Avenue, Reno, Nevada 89505. Telephone (702) 784-5346.

/s/ R. V. Wilson, Jr.

R. V. Wilson, Jr.
Mining Engineer



Paul P. Schapiro
Subdistrict Manager

*Chargeable - make 3 slips
Hold for formal report*

*AR
Ray
Mason*

July 30, 1970

Memorandum

To : A. D. Leek, District Manager, Western District, Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety, Alameda, California

From : Acting Deputy Director--Health and Safety

Subject: Triple fatal fall-of-ground accident, Texavada Corporation, Pine Grove, Lyon County, Nevada--Your memorandum of July 13, 1970

From the information in the memorandum report of July 13, 1970, on the subject accident, it has been determined that the resulting fatalities are chargeable to the mining industry. This decision is in view of the fact that the men were engaged in mine development work and such work is considered to be a part of the mining industry, according to the Standard Industrial Classification. A formal report should be prepared and distributed.

(Sgd) Henry P. Wheeler, Jr.

Acting Deputy Director--
Health and Safety

cc:

H. P. Wheeler, Jr.
(1) S. M. Jarrett (2) R. G. Stott
Paul Schapiro, Reno, Nevada
→ D. Redman, Denver, Colo.
P. T. Moyer
Files
MM:MMcNair:gsf--7/30/31

RECEIVED

AUG 6 1970

DEPT. OF LABOR AND EMP. STAT.
Denver, Colorado 80215

(This is chargeable - AR)
(gold)

AR

Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety
Western District

July 13, 1970

Memorandum

To: S. M. Jarrett, Assistant Director--Metal and Nonmetal Mine
Health and Safety

From: Acting District Manager

Subject: Triple fatal fall-of-ground accident, Texavada Corporation,
Pine Grove, Lyon County, Nevada, June 23 or 24, 1970

Please advise if the subject accident as described in the attached
memorandum is chargeable to the mining industry.

Howard E. Poland
Howard E. Poland

cc:

F. T. Moyer
D. E. Redmon
P. P. Schapiro
Files

RECEIVED
JUL 16 1970
BR. OF MINES AND ENCL. STAT.
Denver, Colorado 80215

1605 Evans Avenue
Reno, Nevada 89505

Subdistrict Office

July 13, 1970


Memorandum

To: A. D. Look, District Manager

From: Subdistrict Manager and Mining Engineer, Reno

Subject: Triple fatal fall-of-ground accident, Texavada Corporation,
Pine Grove, Lyon County, Nevada, June 23 or 24, 1970

Based on the following information, we request that a determination be made as to whether these fatalities are chargeable to the mining industry.


Paul P. Schapiro

cc:

S. M. Jarrett
F. T. Moyer
D. E. Redmon
Files

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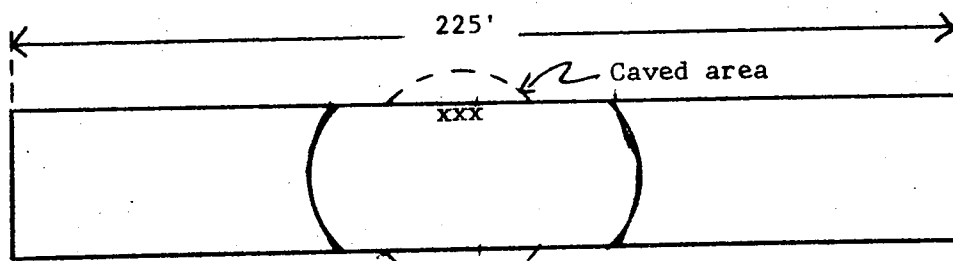
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/s/ Paul P. Schapiro

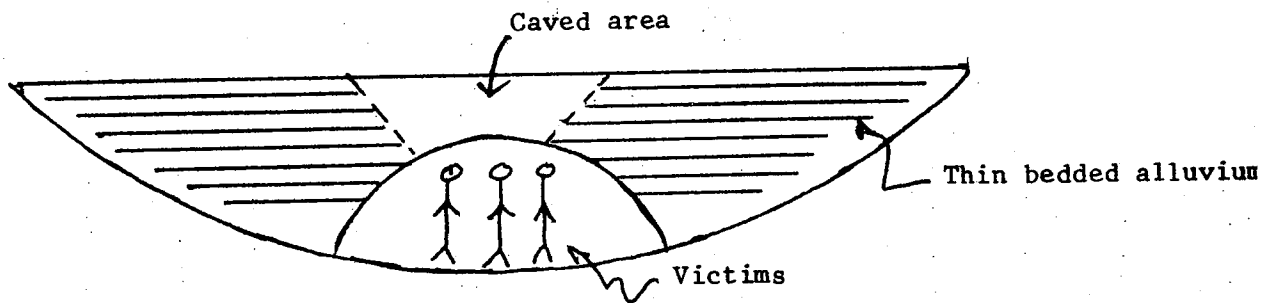
Paul P. Schapiro
Subdistrict Manager

/s/ R. V. Wilson, Jr.

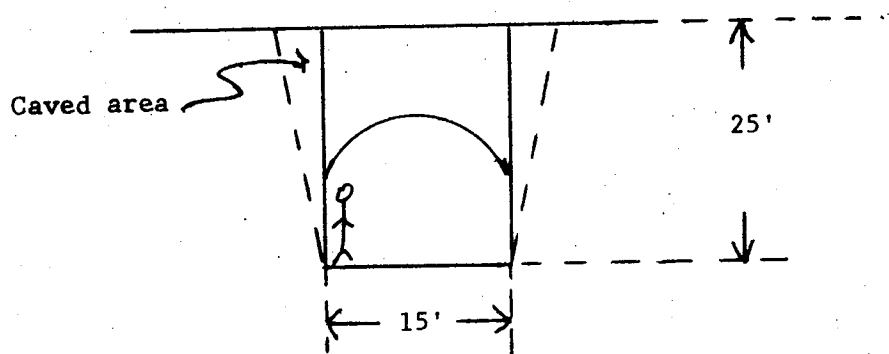
R. V. Wilson, Jr.
Mining Engineer



Top View



Side View



Section

No Scale

Sketch of Fall-of-Ground Accident
 Placer Claims
 Texavada Corporation
 Pine Grove, Lyon County, Nevada
 June 23 or 24, 1970

RECEIVED

JUL 16 1970

BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

BR. CH. INFLUENCE STATE
Denver, Colorado 80215