

MINER DETAILS

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

As the year ends and the new year approaches, we will be enjoying the holidays with family and friends. Our thoughts should also be with our miners and their safety.

Concerns about the coal economy and the rush of the season may make some workers less aware of their working environment. More than ever, now is the time to remind miners to work safely.

Let's strive to finish the year with no further fatalities and commit ourselves to a fatality-free year 2000.

Happy holidays from the entire Charleston staff.

Gary Ball, Deputy Director

From the Past

State Mine Inspector Dies of Injuries

Enoch Carver was born in 1855 in Blaina, Wales. He and his family came to America in 1864 and settled in Plymouth, Pa. Enoch and two brothers, John and James, came to Fayette Co., West Virginia in 1877, and formed a coal company at Morris Creek. The Carvers also obtained coal holdings in Putnam Co. at Plymouth, a town they named for the Pennsylvania town where they once lived. The brothers ran into financial problems around 1911 and with the death of John in 1912, their companies were dissolved. Enoch was appointed as mine inspector for this agency in September 1913 in what was known as the 6th district, which included the mines of the Big and Little Coal rivers and the Guyan valley. He served in that capacity until the state was re-districted July 1, 1915 into fifteen districts. He was then assigned to the 7th district that had mines on the Kanawha and Michigan Railroad from Cedar Grove to Gauley Bridge, and mines on the Big and Little Coal rivers. Mr. Carver was inspecting the Longacre No. 14 mine of the Sunday Creek Colliery Company in Fayette

Co. on October 13, 1915 when he was caught between the rib and a trip of empty mine cars that derailed at the mouth of the 4th East entry. His injuries resulted in his death on October 16th. Chief Mine Inspector of the State, Earl Henry, paid Enoch a high tribute that was published in the Charleston Gazette on October 17, 1915. "He was of a very kindly disposition, willing at all times to advise and assist persons engaged in the mining work, and in his death this department loses one of its most valuable assistants", said the Chief.

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For Your Information

Listed is some helpful or interesting Web sites: For news or current events, try usatoday.com or cnn.com or usaweekend.com or washingtonpost.com. For technology and computers, try cnet.com. A good source of general information can be found at britannic.com. This site contains more information than the printed version and also has links to at least 71 magazines. You can also access ask.com or askjeeves.com for general information on a wide range of topics.

Virtual museums can be found at si.edu (Smithsonian Institution), nasm.edu (National Air and Space Museum), nmaa.si.edu (National Museum of American Art) and si.edu/nat zoo (National Zoo). Other virtual sites available include mdw.army.mil/cemetery.htm (Arlington National Cemetery) and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial accessed at thevirtualwall.org.

For the kids, noradsanta.org has interesting facts about Santa. On Dec. 24, it will have a virtual Santa and sleigh dropping off gifts around the world.

Did You Know?

1999 International Mine Rescue Conference/Competition

In addition to the National Mine Rescue Contest, First Aid, EMT, and Bench Contests were held at Louisville, Kentucky on September 23, 1999. Teams from Ukraine, Russia, Canada, Poland, and the United States worked mine rescue problems. The visiting teams had never participated in competition, but worked the rescue problem very well. They had difficulty understanding some of the mining terminology and the rules used to judge the competition. Unfortunately, overseas teams experience more hands-on training than US teams because fires and explosions occur more frequently in other countries. The US team placed first followed by Ukraine, Russia, Canada, and Poland. Seven teams completed the national mine rescue contest problems with no discounts and their working times separated the teams' standings. 1st Peabody Coal, Marissa Mine, Marissa, IL., 2nd Eastern Associated Coal Corp., Federal No.2, Fairview, WV, 3rd Eastern Associated Coal Corp., Southern Appalachia Operations, Wharton, WV, 4th Webster County Coal Corp., Dotiki Mine, Providence, KY, 5th Peabody Coal Co., Camp Complex, Morganfield, KY, 6th Consolidation Coal Co., Buchanan #1, Mavisdale, VA, 7th Jim Walter Resources, Inc., No.7 Mine, Brookwood, AL. Winner of the Bench Competition: Energy West Mining, Silver Team, Huntington, UT. First Aid Contest: Eastern Associated Coal Corp., Southern Appalachia Operations, Wharton, WV. EMT Contest: Lodestar Energy, Inc., B Team, Clay, KY.

The Century in Review A Timeline of the 20th Century

1905 West Virginia Department of Mines created. Six disasters occur, the greatest number in any year.

1907 Mine explosion at Monongah claims 361 miners (worst ever US mine disaster). Mine explosion at the Stuart mine in Fayette County kills 85. Mining laws are printed in the native languages of the miners.

1908 The position of "Chief of the West Virginia Department of Mines" created. Explosion at Lick Branch Colliery in McDowell County kills 50.

1909 Explosion at the Lick Branch Colliery in McDowell County kills 67.

1910 First mine foreman certification. Coke tonnage peaks - 4,217,381 tons.

1914 Eccles mine explosion kills 183.

1915 Explosion at Layland, Fayette County kills 112.

1917 Mine rescue training begins.

1919 First investigations of individual mine fatalities by Dept. of Mines.

1920 "Battle of the Tug" between union miners and mine guards.

1924 Explosion at Benwood mines kills 119.

1925 Highest number of mine fatalities for any year-686.

1931 WV overtakes PA as the leading producer of bituminous coal.

1932 The Norris-La Guardia Act was signed, limiting federal involvement in labor disputes.

1935 Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act.

1937 Highest number of lost time accidents reported - 14,862.

1939 Miner certifications first issued.

1940 Peak employment in West Virginia mines - 130,457.

1942 Explosion at Christopher No. 3 mine kills 56.

1944 Explosion at the Katherine Coal Co. No. 4 mine kills 16.

1951 Explosion at Bunker Mine kills 10.

1953 Federal Mine Safety Code for Bituminous and Lignite Coal Mines published.

1957 Pocahontas Fuel Co., No. 31 mine explosion kills 37.

1960 Coal seam fire kills 18 at the Holden No. 22 mine.

1961 Definition of mine disaster changed from accident involving five fatalities to three.

1968 Mine flood at Hominy Falls-four miners die, eight miners rescued after 11 days. Farmington No. 9 mine explosion kills 78.

1969 Black Lung March held by miners in Charleston. Farmington

disaster causes major revisions to both State and Federal Mining laws. Mine Map Archives is established as a result of the Hominy Falls flood.

1975 Department of Mines records (mine permit files) computerized.

1980 Gas explosion at Ferrell No. 17 mine kills 5.

1981 Automated Temporary Roof Control Regulations (ATRS) begin.

1982 Comprehensive Mine Safety Programs required for all mines.

1997 Greatest total coal production in WV, 181,914,000 tons, least fatal mine accidents - 6.

1998 Single digit fatal mine accident trend continues with six killed.

2000 Fatality-free year envisioned.

Inspector's Poem Mine Inspector Sounds Off

An Inspector's life isn't one of ease, he does his work on hands and knees. His knees get sore clear down to the bone, how to keep them from swelling is not yet known. The whistles wake him at half past four, and he gets ready for his daily chore. He gets to the portal still half asleep, where all the bosses he's got to meet. The bank boss tells him the mine's ok, that he'd never run it any other way. To keep it safe, he will not shirk, he'd do a lot better but his men won't work. The Super comes and he hates like sin, that he's so busy he can't go in. But the mine's all right the Super knows, 'cause all his bosses are on their toes. The Inspector goes in and he starts to sweat, the roof isn't brushed, and the roadway's wet. Posts in the clearance, dirt in the track, and the lead he's carrying 'bout breaks his back. He finds loose slate and unsupported brow, he begins to use his notebook-and how! The bonds are off, the trolley wire loose, and it's no wonder they have no juice. The doors are leaky, the air not locked, no throws on the switches, and all half-cocked. No fuse for the pump, no guard for the gears, and it's been that way for years and years. He tries to measure air, but the thing won't turn, and a cable down the entry begins to burn. The boss says, "Hell, it's not quite clear, why such things happen when the Inspector's here". He goes up to the working face, he tests for gas and he finds a trace. They're 200 feet ahead of air, no dates by Fire Bosses marked in there. The top is drummy, the posts not set, he wonders why the miners ain't dead yet. Dust on the ribs, and on the floor, too, two hundred feet to the last break-

through. The wire's not guarded and it's too darn low, the trap door's dragging on the rails below. Mine cars are blocked with chips of wood, and a welder working without a hood. A shot goes off and it's loud and clear, a cable is short and the miner's too near. The Inspector didn't hear the miner shout "Fire!," he was vainly searching for a grounding wire. Now the mantrip is ready at 3:00 p.m., with five cars to haul about fifty men. He gets in a car and he grabs his hat, as he rides four miles in six minutes flat. His hands are shaking, as he gets on top, his knees are weak, and his nerves are shot. His feet are wet, and his back is weak, and the things he's thinking, he can't repeat. The Super meets them with a great big grin, and he calls the score, though he's never been in. He seemed surprised when the Bank Boss said, "The Inspector's book is marked all red". Then the Super raves and the Bank Boss lies, and they can't get together on alibis. Then they both calm down and each one agrees, to straighten things out 'fore the Inspector leaves. They'll get busy the Inspector knows, they'll make a big noise before he goes. Though the Bank Boss lied and the Super raved, some posts were set, maybe lives were saved. The Inspector's friends are far apart, everyone says that he has no heart. But still when he goes to bed at night, he dreams he'll find a mine that's right. Where the track is clean and the rock dust's on, where the props are set and the gobs all gone. And the mines of his dreams will meet his test, if the roof's high enough to give his knees a rest. Hubert Wall, a district mine inspector in the 1950's, gave this poem to Ralph Dado, an executive of Pittston Coal Co. The author is unknown, perhaps our readers will tell us who wrote it.



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