

# **FATAL ACCIDENTS**

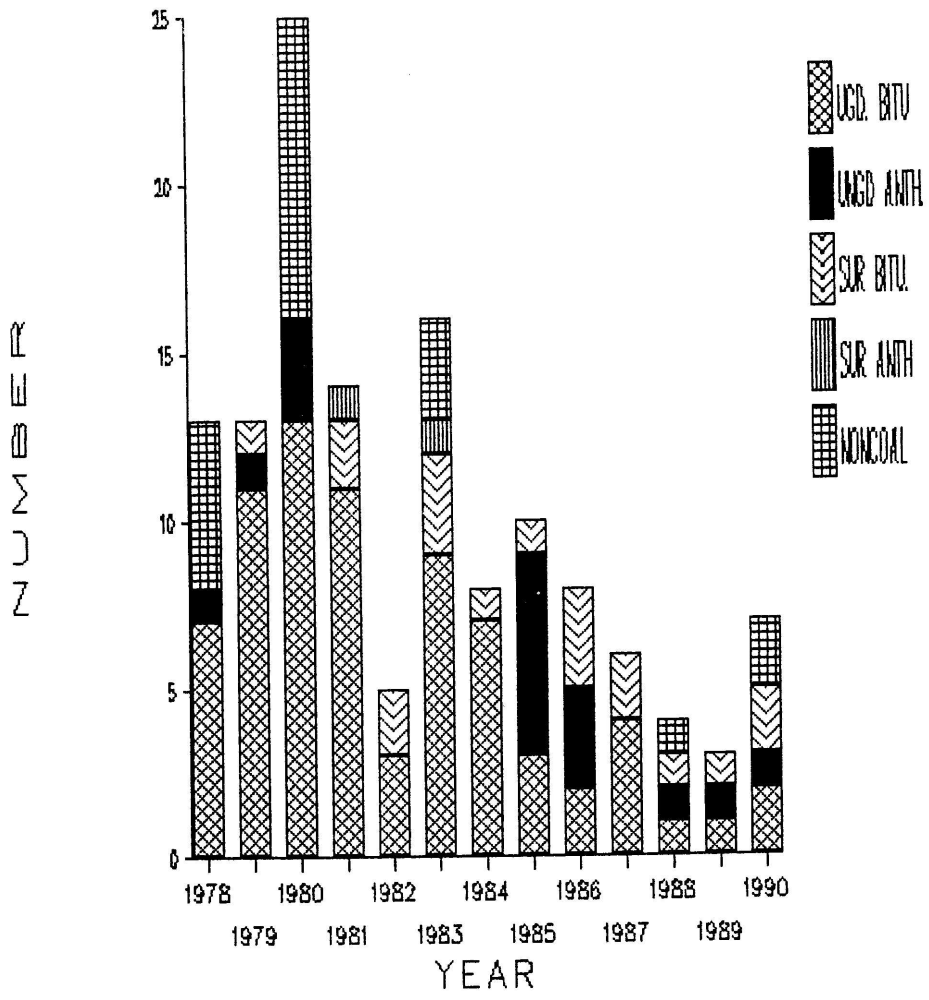
MINING FATALITIES

1978 TO 1990

CALENDAR YEAR	DEEP BITUM	DEEP ANIH	DEEP TOTAL	SURFACE BITU	SURFACE ANIH	SURFACE TOTAL	D & S TOTAL	NONCOAL SURFACE	TOTAL FATALS
1978	7	1	8	0	0	0	8	5	13
1979	11	1	12	1	0	1	13	0	13
1980	13	3	16	0	0	0	16	9	25
1981	11	0	11	2	1	3	14	0	14
1982	3	0	3	2	0	2	5	0	5
1983	9	0	9	3	1	4	13	3	16
1984	7	0	7	1	0	1	8	0	8
1985	3	6	9	1	0	1	10	0	10
1986	2	3	5	3	0	3	8	0	8
1987	4	0	4	2	0	2	6	0	6
1988	1	1	2	1	0	1	3	1	4
1989	1	1	2	1	0	1	3	0	3
1990	2	1	3	2	0	2	5	2	7
TOTALS	74	17	91	19	2	21	112	20	132

# MINING FATALITIES

1978 TO 1990



REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT

Name of Victim: Harry Rutter  
Address: Unavailable  
Name of Mine: Surface Mine Permit No. 17850118  
Name of Company: L. T. Contracting  
Date of Accident: 4/13/90 Clearfield County

Eugene F. Lynch  
Conservation Mine Inspector  
Bituminous Region  
Clearfield County - West Decatur

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On April 13, 1990, at approximately 3:00 p.m. an accident occurred at the L. T. Contracting Co., Surface Mine Permit No. 17850118 in West Decatur Township, Clearfield County resulting in the death of Harold Rutter. The victim, age 53, had a total of 30 years mining experience, 3 years as a Loader Operator.

The accident occurred with no one in the same pit working with the deceased at the time of injury and no one witnessing the injury. There were four other employees on the job. Deceased may have been found 5 to 20 minutes after the accident.

It appears the loader operator tried to investigate a hydraulic leak or something happening with the loader and while the loader was running, the bucket on the ground, put the bucket in a raised position, got out of loader and put his head in or part way in access portal and was pinned and suffocated by large hydraulic cylinder as it raised the loader bucket.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

It appears the loader operator put loader bucket in the raised position, got out of loader and put head in open hole - access to loader - to inspect some mechanical part. Hydraulic cylinder to raise loader bucket caught and pinned operator.

MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT

Instruct crew to not work on equipment while it is operating.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS ACCIDENT

Apparently loader operator. It was stated that no one was with him nor witnessed the accident.

## REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT

Name of Victim: Donald J. Smith  
Address: 620 Church Street  
Gallitzin, PA  
Name of Mine: Cambria Slope No. 33B  
Name of Company: BethEnergy Mines, Inc.  
Date of Accident: 6/10/90 - Cambria County

Frank Pohopin, Mine Inspector 14th Bituminous District

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On Sunday, June 10, 1990, at approximately 11:25 p.m., a powered haulage accident occurred at BethEnergy Mines, Inc., Cambria Slope No. 33B Mine resulting in the death of Donald J. Smith, longwall mechanic, and the transportation of eight other employees to area hospitals. The victim Donald J. Smith, age 46, had a total of 16 1/2 years mining experience, 11 years, 10 months as a mechanic. The victim and the other employees were being transported in an FMC Galis portal bus from the C East No. 1 longwall section to the main shaft. The portal bus was traveling along the No. 4 track when the vehicle derailed at the No. 6 chute North manual track switch. The victim was thrown out of the portal bus and pinned between the portal bus and a cement block wall, causing fatal crushing injuries from the pelvis to the chest.

### CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

The accident occurred because the suspension system on the vehicle had deteriorated which would have provided considerably less stability than originally designed. The speed of the portal bus when approaching the No. 6 track switch contributed to the accident. The guards (safety chains) which were provided at the time of the accident were not adequate for their intended purpose.

### MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT

1. Adequate restraining devices designed to contain passengers within the passenger compartments in the event of a wreck or derailment must be installed on all mantrip motors.
2. Mantrip motors must be operated at a safe rate of speed.
3. Locomotives, mine cars, supply cars, shuttle cars, and all other haulage equipment shall be maintained in a safe operating condition.
4. The speed of mantrips shall be governed by the mine foreman and mantrips shall be operated at safe speeds consistent with the condition of roads and type of equipment used.

REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT

Name of Victim: Robert J. Weathers  
Address: 1134 Penna. Ave., White Oak, PA  
Name of Mine: Surface Melcroft Mine  
Name of Company: Melcroft Coal Co.  
Date of Accident: 9/12/90-Davistown-Fayette County

C. R. Greene  
Conservation Mine Inspector  
Bituminous Region - Surface  
Greensburg District Office

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On September 12, 1990, Mr. Robert J. Weathers, age 50, was fatally injured at the Melcroft Coal Company in Fayette County at the Melcroft Mine. The victim was a Pipe Cleaner and had 20 years experience at this occupation.

Nature of injury was asphyxiation by drowning.

Robison Pipe Cleaning Company was cleaning the "Flume". (A mine water pipe to carry A.M.D. to a point below the Mill Run Reservoir.) Mr. Weathers fell backwards into the Excavation. The victim was found by the General Superintendent with his back down and his head under 18 inches of water.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Injuries sustained from a fall into a drainage ditch filled with water at approximately 10:15 a.m., 9/12/90.

MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT

Two workers at each pipe cleaning location.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS ACCIDENT

Fayette County Corner during an Inquest on January 14, 1991, that the "manner of death was accidental".

## REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT

Name of Victim: Pete Ozegovich  
Address: R.D. 2, Ruffsedale, PA  
Name of Mine: Pitt Gas  
Name of Company: Dynamic Recovery, Inc.  
Date of Accident: 9/25/90-Clarksville-Greene Co.

Jerome Grashion, Mine Inspector 4th Bituminous District

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On Tuesday, September 25, 1990, at approximately 9:45 a.m., an intentional roof fall occurred on the river mains section, Pitt Gas Coal Mine, Dynamic Recovery, Inc., Greene County, city of Clarksville. The victim Pete Ozegovich, Roof Bolter Operator, age 57, had a total of 10 years and 9 months mining experience, with 2 years and 11 months experience at the job he was performing when the accident occurred. Nature of injury was crushing injuries.

The type of coal extraction in river mains is pillaring or commonly called rib line. During this type of mining intentional roof falls occur after the coal has been removed. A block of coal was divided into three pillar fenders, one of which had been removed prior to the start of day shift. The second fender was intact and mining was started with the first lift. After the first or second lift was taken, the pushout or final lift of the fender was started. As the mining machine was moving out from the splits, the victim started to set the required breaker post across the opening leading to the pillared area. A crib block was needed to be placed at the base of the post for additional height. There were a few crib blocks located approximately 15 feet in by the rib line, in an area just abandoned, where further mining was not intended. The supervisor in charge of the operation heard the pillared area working (making noise), turned and saw the area starting to fall, the victim was standing at the crib block. Directly above the victim's body three to five feet of sandstone had fallen, overall height of all from normal mine roof varied from six feet to three feet in thickness.

### CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Not following the operator's approved Roof Control Plan in regard to mining sequence, installation of sufficient roof support and size of pillar fenders.

Sufficient roof support material was not available, i.e. post and cribs.

Inadequate evaluation of the mine roof.

Victim traveled inby his work area.

Lack of proper direct supervision of workers.

Lack of frequent and effective safety training.

A poor attitude towards safe work and mining procedures by management.

**MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT**

1. Individual workers must better accept their responsibility to comply with the law and to follow safe work practice.
2. Certified officials must be more prepared to accept their responsibilities and perform their duties as prescribed by law.
3. More safety awareness training.
4. Instruction given before any work is resumed at the mine, where and how roof supports shall be placed.
5. An adequate supply of roof support material must be kept as near as practicable to each working place.
6. The approved Roof Control Plan must be compiled with at all times.
7. Revise the current approved Roof Control Plan.



REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT

Name of Victim: Nicholas Lesniak  
Address: 1001 West Montgomery Street  
Shamokin, Pa.  
Name of Mine: Split Vein Breaker  
Name of Company: R & N Coal Co., Inc.  
Date of Accident: 12/27/90 - Northumberland County

Richard Lesser  
Mine Inspector District 3 - Anthracite

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On Thursday, December 27, 1990, at approximately 9:10 p.m. an accident occurred at R & N Coal Company, Split Vein Breaker in Northumberland County resulting in the death of Nicholas Lesniak. The victim Nicholas Lesniak, age 60, had a total of 15 years mining experience, 8 years experience as a Loader Operator. At approximately 9:10 p.m. the vibrator operator noticed the feed hopper was empty, and the truck box on truck was in a dumping position. The operator went to the dump hopper and noticed the hopper was full of material. He returned to the feed hopper and then noticed the victim's feet in the drawhole of the hopper. The victim was pulled out through the opening in the hopper. Started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to no avail. Victim pronounced dead at 10:06 p.m. at the Shamokin State General Hospital. Corner's report revealed victim died from asphyxiation.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Inclement weather. Material may have been frozen in hopper or frozen in the truck box.

MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT

Under investigation.

RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACCIDENT

Under investigation.

REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT  
NON-COAL

Name of Victim: Lawrence Ritz  
Address: 98 New Cranberry St.  
Hazleton, PA 18201  
Name of Mine: Honeyhole Sand & Stone  
Name of Company: A. Barletta & Sons  
Date of Accident: 1/31/90 - Luzerne County

Joseph Seaman, Surface Mine  
Conservation Inspector Pottsville - Anthracite

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On January 31, 1990, Mr. Lawrence Ritz, age 54, was killed when he was crushed between two trucks. The accident occurred at approximately 8:00 a.m. and Mr. Ritz died later that same evening at approximately 10:00 p.m.. The accident occurred in Nescopeck Township, Luzerne County. Mr. Ritz had 35 years experience at this occupation as a truck driver. 20 years service at the mine Honeyhole Sand & Stone.

Nature of injury was crushed chest and trauma.

The victims truck was stuck in front of the stockpile area and he asked another employee to pull him out. While the victim was hooking up the chain to the front of his truck, the second truck started coming towards him down a small incline. The second truck driver tried to stop but his brakes didn't work. The second truck crushed the victim up against his truck.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Apparently the second truck's brakes were frozen due to high humidity, mud, and then freezing temperatures at night.

MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT

A. Barletta and Sons should begin more safety training courses for their employees.

Individuals should: Never stand in front of a moving piece of equipment.

Never drive a vehicle towards someone standing in front of you.

RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACCIDENT

Ultimately, the victim was responsible for his own demise. Also, the second truck driver should have checked his brakes for mud before using his truck.

REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT  
NON-COAL

Name of Victim: Paul S. Meitzler  
Address: R. D. No. 4  
Bechtelsville, PA  
Name of Mine: Mine Drainage Permit #7776SM1  
Name of Company: Martin Stone Quarries, Inc.  
Date of Accident: 5/18/90 - Berks County

Thomas J. Roof, Surface Mine  
Conservation Inspector Pottsville - Anthracite

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On May 18, 1990, Paul S. Metzler, age 57, truck driver with 14 months experience at this occupation was fatally injured at the Bechtelsville Quarry in Berks County, at the operation MDP No. 7776SM1 owned by Martin Stone Quarries, Inc.

Nature of injury was multiple head injuries and hip injuries.

The victim was backing his dump truck back to the edge of the pit and apparently got too close. The truck began to teeter, and the victim started to abandon the vehicle.

The victim apparently was outside the vehicle when it tumbled into the hole. The vehicle landed on top of him at the bottom of the pit.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Under investigation.

MEANS OF PREVENTING A SIMILAR ACCIDENT

Under investigation.

RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACCIDENT

Under investigation.