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# *Reilly No. 1 Mine Disaster, Nov. 6, 1922, Spangler, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.*

*A Memorial to the Coal Miners that mined the Bituminous Coal  
seams of the Reilly No. 1 Mine, Cambria County, Pennsylvania,  
U.S.A.*

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Updated April 13, 2010

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## **Reilly No. 1 Mine** (ca.1917- ? ),

Located on the Pennsylvania Railroad, near Spangler, Cambria Co., PA

Owners: (ca.1917- ? ), Joseph H. Reilly Coal Company, Philadelphia, PA  
(ca.1922- ? ), ?

(From the U.S. Bureau of Mines Report:)

# **Nov. 6, 1922, Reilly No. 1 Mine, Spangler, PA; 79 Miners Killed.**

At 7:20 a.m. on Monday 112 men had begun work when the explosion occurred, blowing out some stoppings and overcasts and also the side and end walls of the fan housing. Help was called from other mines and from the Bureau of Mines at Pittsburgh.

The fan housing was patched and the fan started, making the concrete-lined, 112 foot shaft an intake. Recovery workers without apparatus encountered a live man making his way out to fresh air and brought him and four others out. All were badly affected by afterdamp, as were 18 of the rescuers. Apparatus crews were then admitted, and 22 other survivors were rescued. Five other men made their way out unassisted.

Seventy-six bodies were found, and 3 of the rescued men died. Gas that had accumulated in one or more rooms through open doors and deficient ventilation was ignited by the miners' open lights. Fireboss examinations were neglected and incomplete.

The mine had been rated gaseous in 1918, but at the instance of the new operators it was rated as non-gaseous although a fireboss was employed and men burned by gas on at least 4 occasions. The low-volatile dust of this coal helped to spread the explosion but without great force or flame. Conditions found by the investigators are shown.

(Courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Mines Report:)

Spangler, PA Reilly Shaft No. 1 Mine Explosion, Nov 1922

#### **75 LOSE THEIR LIVES IN SPANGLER MINE BLAST.**

#### **GAS FUMES AND DEADLY "BLACK DAMP" SPREAD DEATH THROUGH WORKINGS AFTER THE EXPLOSION.**

#### **THIRTY-THREE MEN RESCUED ALIVE FROM UNDERGROUND INFERNO SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THE EXPLOSION, BUT THREE OF THEM DIE FOLLOWING REMOVAL FROM THE MINE.**

#### **MAJORITY WERE KILLED BY EXPLOSION.**

Spangler, Pa., November 7, 1922.

Reilly Shaft No. 1, the scene of the greatest mine disaster in the annals of Central Pennsylvania's mining history, has at last given up its death toll due to yesterday morning's terrific gas explosion. Rescuers at noon today had explored almost the entire mine workings, extending for two and one-half to three miles under the Cambria County hills.

According to their records they have discovered and removed from the mine 107 unfortunate miners. Of this number 32 were taken out alive, but three succumbed to their injuries which makes the total of dead 75. Of the remaining 30 rescued all are at the Spangler Hospital and the attending physicians who are doing everything in their power for them, say all will recover.

The explosion which wrecked the shaft was responsible for the major portion of the deaths, as was demonstrated by the condition of the bodies when found. Many of the men had their eyes blown out, while all were bleeding from the mouth and ears. Those closest to the scene of the blast had their faces badly mashed or broken.

The rescuers have explored all but one small section of the mine which is filled with water. The water is being rapidly pumped out and, while it is feared there may be more bodies found, it is hoped that none were working in this shaft, as it had always been wet.

Of the 78 dead all have been recognized but six, whose features were torn and scared by the exploding gas that identification was simply out of the question, and they will be buried in a common grave.

Fire Boss Flanigan, who inspected the mine one hour before the explosion and reported it safe, is among the dead. The temporary morgue where the bodies were located was visited this morning by the sorrowing relatives of the dead men, who hope as they would recognize the loved one they would take up and remove the body to their home.

The dead are nearly all young men between the ages of 18 and 25 years, and are largely Americans or English speaking.

President John Brophy of District No. 2 went to Spangler from District headquarters in Clearfield last evening and spent several hours at the scene. He knew many of the men personally and hauled coal in his early youth from Fire Boss Pat Flanigan, who was literally blown to pieces by the explosion. Mr. Brophy says this is the worst affair of its kind in District No. 2 proper in its history, although the Rolling Mill mine disaster at Johnstown several years ago took the lives of more than one hundred miners. The treasury of District No. 2 will be hit by the awful disaster to the extent of approximately \$15,000, as membership in the U.M.W. of A. carries with it a death benefit of \$200.

Spangler, Pa., Nov. 7, 1922.

The bodies of 59 miners who lost their lives in the explosion that wrecked Reilly Shaft No. 1 here yesterday, have been brought to the surface at noon today. The rescuers have penetrated at least two and one-half miles from the bottom of the shaft. Forty-three of the bodies, which were placed in an improvised morgue in the United Mine Workers hall here, have been identified.

Thirty miners who had been rescued and rushed to the Spangler hospital suffering from gas poisoning, will probably recover.

#### LISTING OF THE DEAD MINERS.

PAT FLANAGAN, fire boss.  
 BERNARD TANZY.  
 STANTON GRAY.  
 WARREN GRAY.  
 VINCENT MILLER.  
 MIKE DUNCHAK.  
 STEVE SINCZAK.  
 FRANK WYSCONSKI.  
 OLLIE BEARER.  
 ARTHUR McKIVIGAN.  
 STEVE MANAC.  
 TONY CANTELOUP.  
 MIKE WASHKO.  
 JAMES CLAWSON.  
 MIKE PLUTKO.  
 FELIX PALLONE.  
 GUY LESLIE.  
 MIKE GURINKO.  
 MARTIN McAVEY.  
 JOHN PELLO.  
 MIKE ZURANKO.  
 JOE FRITZ.  
 JACOB HUREY.  
 HUGH BEARER.  
 A. E. VAUGHN.  
 WM. LESLIE.

MERRIL BERKEY.  
 JOHN SHOPA.  
 JAMES ELLIOTT.  
 TONY POLVIS.  
 JOHN GRECCA.  
 GEORGE KUCHMER, JR.  
 GEORGE KUCHMER, SR.  
 TONY VILLELLA.  
 JOE SALTSGIVER.  
 CHARLIE SMOLKO.  
 VALLIE SMOLKO.  
 JOHN GRIFFIN.  
 MIKE GRIFFIN.  
 ROY WETHERSON.  
 CHARLES AIELLA.  
 JOHN YCOVACK.  
 BART YCOVACK.  
 GEORGE BAKER.  
 PETER VOYTKO.  
 THOMAS BROOKS.  
 MICHAEL SINCZAK.  
 AFTAN SINCZAK.  
 RALPH CANTELOUP.  
 GENTILE CARIBARDI.  
 AMBROSE SHOPA.  
 SAM DERRICOTT.  
 JOE DOLAN.

EDWARD OSTRANDER.  
 RUDY SHOPA.  
 JOHN ANDERSON.  
 WM. RODGERS.  
 HAYDEN KELLY.  
 JOHN LOGUE.  
 JAMES DECKER.  
 JOE ABRAMS.  
 CLYDE McGAUGHEY.  
 JOHN McGAUGHEY.  
 JOHN MANAC.  
 JOHN JONES.  
 ALEX KUZMISHIN.

HARRY HUTCHKO.  
 GEORGE KELLY.  
 RICHARD LEEK.  
 JOE POTONIC.  
 JOHN POTONIC.  
 FRANK MENDOCHINO.  
 JOHN POPOVICH.  
 JOHN NOVORKA.  
 JOHN PONONIK.  
 PAUL OWENS.  
 JOE PLUTKO.  
 ANDY PLUTKO.  
 OSCAR PETERSON.

(from "The Clearfield Progress," Clearfield, PA, Nov. 7, 1922.)  
 (Newspaper article courtesy of Stu Beitler.)

**LAYS SPANGLER DEATHS TO MINE MANAGEMENT;**

Coroner's Jury Finds Explosion Due to Use of Open Lights When Presence of Gas Was Known.

November 23, 1922, Thursday

BARNESBORO, Pa., Nov. 22.--The management of the Reilly Collieries Company Mine No. 1, at Spangler, was held responsible for the gas explosion in the underground workings on Nov. 6. when seventy-seven men met death. In the Coroner's jury verdict returned here today.

(from the "New York Times," New York, NY, Nov. 22, 1922.)

**Coal Miners Memorial Reilly No. 1 Mine,  
 Spangler, Cambria Co., PA**

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If you have additional information or pictures on the Coal Mines of Cambria County, PA  
Contact: [Ray Washlaski, Editor](#)

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