

Erra Clevenger of Taylor Township Blown to Pieces

Ralphon, Somerset county was the scene of a horrible mine accident on Saturday morning, March 17, 1923 when Erra Clevenger of Hustontown, Fulton county was instantly killed and his "Buddy" Sherman Gipson, whose home was in West Virginia was thought to be fatally injured. Some of the men at this mine have recently been using a small (pocket size) dry-cell battery as a detonator to explode the cartridges, of "Rack-Q-Rack" or as it is more commonly known, Dynamite. On this morning, according to the Mine Foreman, Clevenger and Gipson, who had not been using a battery to detonate their explosives procured at the supply store, eight sticks of dynamite and one of these batteries and went in the mine with a number of other miners to prepare some coal, there being no work owing to having no cars. Soon after going in their place there was a tremendous explosion and a cry for help. Frank Chilcoate and Gerald Fix, two other young men from Hustontown, who were working near by, hurried to them as soon as they could get there and found Clevenger dead and terribly mangled and Gipson with one leg shot off, one eye shot out, several ribs broken and a large gash in his head, he was conscious but unable to give any information as to how it had happened. They immediately took him to Johnstown to a hospital. It is thought that the men were preparing a charge of dynamite when they accidentally got the wires leading to the battery, in a position to form a circuit, thus generating a spark that detonated the explosive.

Clevenger, Erra

Pleasant Grove

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