

Two separate articles from the Salt Lake Daily Tribune dated 5 March 1881:

Evanston, Wyoming, 4 March.....The gas in the Rocky Mountain Coal & Iron Co Mine No. 2, at Almy exploded at 8:45 last night, throwing flames many hundreds of feet high out of the main slope carrying away the buildings around the mouth of the shaft and setting the buildings and machinery on fire.

About 15 minutes before the explosion, from 10 to 50 white men and 50 Chinese went down to work. At the present time, 2 p.m., 17 more or less injured Chinamen have been brought to the surface, many with limbs broken and badly scalded. No white men have been found. Not any hopes that any are alive. The jar of the explosion plainly felt here.

UPDATE..4 March...The cause is definitely not known, but it is supposed to be by gas generated by fire in abandoned Mine No. 1., which has been burning for six years, and separated from Mine No. 2 by wide walls only. William Gillespe, John Barton and Josiah Crosby were dead. Charles Beveridge alive, but very dangerously burned. Twenty-five Chinamen died. The balance are probably dead. The fire is now out and everything possible is being done for the recovery of the balance of the bodies injured.

Another dispatch reading:

"On 4 March 1881, at Mine No. 2, the property of the Central Pacific Railroad, an explosion occurred killing three white men and badly wounding one. Also 24 Chinamen killed and 26 was wounded, several later died.

Owing to the excitement at Almy it is impossible to obtain full particulars of the disaster. The scene at the mouth of the shaft is described as pitiful. The two families of the white men who are still in the mine are frantic while the Chinamen throng about weeping piteously for their lost friends and relatives. Most business for 20 miles around is entirely suspended. Camp fires scattered about to give light to the workers lends a weird effect to the scene. Miners from surrounding pits are working hard at the rescue work."

After an investigation the official report read:

"The fire had burned around the stoppings from Mine No. 1, and had ignited the black damp causing the explosion."

After the 1881 explosion, Wyoming coal-mine inspector, David G. Thomas, reports:

"The most dangerous mines in the state are the ones at Hanna, Red Canon and Almy. These mines evolve fire-damp (methane gas) in large quantities. This gas is constantly oozing from the fissures in the coal and rock and the current of pure air required to dilute and carry it off is enormous."