Disasters

Scofield Mine Disaster

May 1, 1900

-No. 4 shaft exploded!

-The explosion was heard in town but many thought it was fireworks

(they were celebrating Scofield’s birthday)

-The explosion released carbon monoxide (CO, the silent killer – can’t be seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched)

-It took about 20 minutes to clear away the debris

(this is fast when it comes to explosions)

-Sadly, some were still alive but were suffocating from the CO

the CO also went to shaft no. 1 and workers there began to suffocate

Killed 230 men and 20 boys (12 and under)

-The company paid for burial clothes, coffin and $500 per family

This seems good, but it was barely enough to support a family for 6

months let alone a lifetime.

-The miners did not have life insurance

Castle Gate Mine Disaster

March 8, 1924

There were 2 violent explosions in mine no. 2

Coal mines:

1. watered down the mine between shifts to prevent sparks and get the coal dust out of the air
2. They used lanterns and headlamps for light. The headlights used a candle in front of a mirror (no batteries yet)

One of the shifts did not water down the mine well and a large piece of coal dust hit the candle, ignited causing 2 explosions and the mine to collapse.

NO SURVIVORS

172 men died

Many of the workers were Greek (brought over by padrones)

Strikes

Strike: when workers refuse to work until their demands are met

Ex: Click Clack Moo (book), Sponge Bob (strike against the Crab Shack), Newsies, Duck Dynasty (refuse to wear uniforms), Good Luck Charlie, NBA lockout, NFL refs, Hostess, etc.

Reasons miners went on strike:

-**dangerous working conditions** (number 1 reason, most common)

-not enough pay

-schedule (bad hours)

-unfair treatment (padrones)

Historic Utah Example”

1. Americans worked in Castle Gate Mine
2. Americans went on strike (bad working conditions)
3. Mining company fired the Americans and hired the Italians
4. Italians went on strike
5. Mining company fired the Italians and hired the Greeks
6. The Italians and Greeks *hated* each other!
   1. The Greeks stole Italian jobs and the Greeks felt that the Italians shouldn’t hate them and had made the choice to strike in the first place.

Company Store

Company store: a store owned by the mining company that sold everything that the miners would need. (similar to Wal-mart or Costco)

-the company store paid the miners in “special” money (like monopoly money or rattle cards: can only be used in one place)

-the miners were paid very little

-the prices were ridiculously high because the miners couldn’t go anywhere else

-the miners fell deeper and deeper into debt because they had no other choice

*“16 tons and what do you get?*

*Another day older and deeper in debt*

*St. Peter don’t you call my ‘cause I can’t go*

*I owe my soul to the company store!”*

~16 Tons by Tennessee Ernie Ford