

FATAL ACCIDENTS IN VANCOUVER ISLAND COAL MINES (1940-1959)

YEAR	COLLIERY	DATE	NAME	OCCUPATION	DETAILS
1940					
	Beban, Nanaimo	Feb 27	Thomas Chapman	Fireboss	Due to deceased being crushed between a trip of empty cars that was being run into a level parting. Chapman had ordered the rope-rider to lower the cars, but meantime a loaded car in the parting had become derailed and while rerailing this car he was struck by the empty trip; he died 10 hours later.
	S. Wellington #10 (C.C.)		Oscar Numella	Tracklayer	Due to deceased being struck and crushed by a single car which was being hoisted on a slope. The car was travelling at a low speed and the slope at this point is 11 feet wide at the floor level. Numella died one hour after the accident. There were no witnesses of this accident, although the miners at the face of the slope were only some 60 feet away
	S Wellington #10 (C.C.)	Dec 22	Christopher Mills	Fireboss	Killed due to gas explosion in #4 Heading.
	"	"	James Waring	Miner	"
	"	"	Eugino Gava	Miner	"
1941					
	Nanaimo #10 (C.C.)	Sept 17	John Kirkpatrick	Rope-rider	Due to deceased being struck by a runaway car on an incline close to a working-face. The mine-car as hauled to the face by a small hoist situated at the side of the incline, with the rope from the hoist led to a sheave-wheel attached to a wheel-post set at the face and then to the car. On this occasion deceased gave the signal that a car was loaded, and when the hoistman started to lower the car the wheel-post pulled out of its position and allowed the car to go uncontrolled. The car

					struck deceased and inflicted injuries from which he died the same day.
1942					
	Comox #5	Jan 16	Andrew Frew	Rock-picker	Due to deceased falling through a hole on the preparation floor on the tippie while engaged in oiling the tippie machinery. The hole, 22 by 30 inches, was used for dropping waste rock into railroad-cars below and had been left unfenced at the time of the accident. Deceased died the following day.
	Wellington mine (C.C.)	Feb 28	Alfred Calvin	Rope-rider	Due to a fall of roof in a timber-road about 35 feet back from an advancing long-wall face. Deceased was instantly killed.
	Comox #5	May 15	William Waugh	Machine-helper	Due to being struck on the nose by a machine haulage post which broke under strain. Deceased died on May 18 from an embolism in the left lung caused by a blood clot from his nose-injuries.
	S Wellington #10 (C.C.)	June 10	Adam Watson	Rope-rider	Due to deceased being squeezed between a derailed car and a post. When lowering a trip of empty cars from a main slope into a siding the trip became derailed and he signaled the trip to be pulled up, and on the second attempt to land the trip one of the cars again became derailed and caught deceased. He died in hospital six hours later. It was found that the outer curve rail was broken at the point of derailment.
	Comox #5	Sept 4	James Thoburn	Loader	Due to deceased being struck by a descending trip of empty cars on the main slope of the mine. Deceased had obtained permission from the mine manager to leave work before the end of the shift and was on his way out at the time of the accident. In addition to his own electric safety-lamp this part of the slope was lighted by a number of 100-watt electric lights, so that visibility was good, but an air-driven hoist, which was in

					operation at this point, made a considerable noise and may have prevented deceased from hearing the approach of the trip. He died in the local hospital a few hours later.
1943					
	S Wellington #10	May 18	Alvar Kotilla	Miner	Due to a small fall of roof material which fell from between the timbers and struck him while he was loading a car. The seam was 12 feet thick at this point and deceased was bent over his shovel when struck. He died from this injuries the following day.
1944					
	S Wellington #10 (C.C.)	Feb 23	William J Moore	Miner	Resulted from deceased falling about 8 feet from a plank scaffold from which he was loading a shot-hole. Some coal fell from the face and broke the planks on which he was standing. He suffered injuries to the bladder from which he died two days later.
1945					
	S Wellington #10	Jan 26	Walter J Smith	Railroad switcher	Resulted from deceased being crushed by the bumper of a narrow-gauge locomotive from which he stepped or fell. The locomotive was moving slowly and deceased was preparing to couple on to a trip of mine-cars at the time of the accident. He died in Nanaimo hospital a few hours after being injured.
	Lewis #3	Feb 12	Thomas Lewis	Miner	Resulted from deceased being struck on the head by a timber which was displaced by some coal which slid from the working-face. Deceased knew that the coal was moving and stepped back to a place of presumed safety, but apparently overlooked the possibility of the coal displacing the prop.

1946					
	Comox #5	July 9	John I Warren	Winch-boy	Due to deceased being struck by a runaway trip of loaded cars on #1 West slope due to the haulage-rope breaking. The rope was 5/8 inch in diameter and had a breaking strain of 17 tons when installed during the previous November, since which time it had done comparatively light duty, and the total load on the rope at the time it broke was approximately 15 tons. Deceased had apparently signaled for this trip to be hauled up the slope and was struck by the runaway trip at about the point from which he signaled. There was no information available to indicate that this rope had been subjected to an undue strain at any time.
	Comox #5	Nov 19	John W Watson	Miner	Due to deceased being struck by a runaway car at the face of #1 West slope. A loaded car had been blocked on the slope some 60 feet from the face where deceased and his partner were drilling the floor with a jack-hammer, when the blocking holding the car failed and allowed the car to run down to the face. The noise of the drill prevented the men from hearing the car, which injured deceased so severely that he died two hours later.
1947					
	S Wellington #10	May 16	James Merner	Miner	Caused by a fall of coal and rock that came away from a slip which extended from the top of the coal into the roof. James Merner and his son were working at the face of a crosscut off #2 Right, #1 Diagonal counter-slope. Merner was preparing to put up a set of timber after two shots had been fired, when about 3 tons of coal and cap-rock came away from a hidden slip and buried him.
1948					

	Cumberland #8	Jan 1	Mike Broderick	Miner	Died as a result of injuries received on December 2, 1947, in #1 Right level. Broderick was clearing away loose coal to make room to set a post when a slab of rock fell, without warning, from the roof, pinning him against the high side cog. He received injuries in the region of his liver and kidneys, which caused his death.
	White Rapids	Aug 23	Uros Gregovich	Miner	Instantly killed by a fall of ground in the Incline section of the White Rapids mine, Extension district. Gregovich was loading coal at the face of a crosscut when a piece of rock from the face of the top brushing fell, striking him on the head and shoulders. When the rock fell, a slip parallel to the lip of the brushing became apparent.
1949					
	No fatal accidents in Vancouver Island Coal Mines this year.				
1950					
	White Rapids	July 4	Thomas Easterbrook	Machine operator	While operating a coal-cutter was struck on the back by the haulage pin that pulled out. He died on July 6, 1950.
	Comox #8	Aug 2	Frederick Simister	Pipe-fitter	Was struck and fatally injured by a trip of cars while walking along a level. He died after admission to the hospital the same day.
1951					
	Tsable River	Nov 20	Robert Robertson	Rope-rider	Fatally injured when he was crushed between a car and a temporary post. He died early the following morning.
1952					
	S Wellington #10	Jan 28	Adolph Jack Delmas	Electrician	Fatally injured when the power-line pole on which he was working broke off at ground-level and fell. Delmas was engaged in stripping material from the pole when the accident occurred. The pole was 28 feet high and had been in use about ten years. Delmas had neglected

					to test the pole at or below ground-level prior to climbing it. He died from his injuries three days after the accident.
1953					
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	Tsable River (C.C.)	July 6	Henry L Ellison	Miner	<p>Fatally injured when he was struck by a fall of face coal in the Tsable River mine. Ellison and his partner were engaged in putting up a set of timber at the face of a crosscut. The left-hand leg had been put and and secured and Ellison had just taken a measurement for the right-hand leg. He turned away from the face when a large piece of coal sloughed off the face and struck him on the lower back. He was removed to the Cumberland General Hospital immediately and, on the advice of the doctor, was taken to the Vancouver General Hospital the following morning. He died on July 14, 1956 at about 1:15 am</p> <p>Ellilson and his partner had tested the face prior to commencing to erect the set of timber and had found it, in their judgment to be sound. The crosscut was partly surrounded by gob area, and it is thought probable that the ever-present squeeze accompanying pillar extraction had induced a slip in the coal parallel and ahead of the face. This would account for the coal sloughing off.</p>

	Tsable River (C.C.)	Dec 31	Frank E Dixon	Fireboss	<p>Fatally injured when he was struck by a fall of ground. The accident occurred at the face of the crosscut off #2 Right level, #1 slope section, where preparations were being made to drive a counter level to the right and left off the crosscut simultaneously. The last three sets of timber had been under-lined by two bridge-sticks, the legs of which were 3 ½ feet apart at the face of the crosscut and 10 ½ feet apart at the outer end. This tapering of the bridge-sticks was made in order to allow room for the Joy loader to operate efficiently to the right and left from the crosscut in starting off these places. On the day prior to the accident the right legs of the three supported sets were removed and a round of shots drilled and blasted to form the opening cut of the level to the right. On the day of the accident the three left legs of these sets were removed and a round drilled in the left side. As far as could be determined, the collar bracing was not replaced when any of the legs were removed.</p> <p>Dixon, the fireboss, with the assistance of three miners was at the face loading the round, when suddenly, and without warning, the three last sets of timber together with their supporting bridge-sticks collapsed. Dixon was buried and fatally injured.</p>
1957	No fatal accidents in Vancouver Island Coal Mines this year.				
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1959	Tsable River	Oct 14	Albert Brown	Miner	<p>Killed by a fall of top coal. Brown was removing a triangular pillar of coal lying</p>

					<p>between a shaker-conveyor working place and an old roadway. This pillar had been blasted on a previous shift and was more or less shattered. A bottom bench remained but there was only a narrow pillar or stump 18 inches wide extending from this b&h to the roof. The roof consisted of about 18 inches of top coal, which was being left. However, in the old roadway this top coal had been removed so that its support on that side was the narrow stump of coal left after blasting. This stump suddenly collapsed, allowing the top coal to fall as Brown was loading coal onto the conveyor. Brown received fatal injuries consisting of a broken back and crushed chest. His partner was near by and aid was quickly obtained, but it is considered that he died very soon after the accident occurred.</p> <p>The stump or pillar of coal, only 18 inches wide, should not have been depended upon to act as a support to the load of 18 inches of top coal. Temporary posts should have been erected from the lower bench.</p>
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