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EXCLUSIVE Associated Press Report Sunday in Pueblo . . . . .

FEBRUARY 10, 1903. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

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MOLTEN MASS DEALS DEATH

Fifteen Tons of White-Hot Metal Toppled in the Midst of Workmen.

THREE MEN DIE FROM BURNS

Horrible Accident at Steel Works Is Worst in Many Years.

DEAD.

John Cruppelak, died in ambulance before reaching hospital.
Steve Lapich, died at hospital at 4:30 o'clock.
Lee Artman, died at 5:45 o'clock.

INJURED.

Virgil Trine, probably fatally.
John Boitz, serious, but will recover.
James Ellis, severely burned hands and face.
John Shugobich, face and ear badly burned.
Ceryl Meyrl, slightly burned.
Ed Sanders, burned about hands and arms.
Adam Deitz, face burned.
Thomas Crowe, face and hands burned.

As a result of an accident at the steel works yesterday morning at 10:20 o'clock three men are dead, another is hovering between life and death, and seven others are suffering with more or less serious injuries caused by burns on their faces, hands and bodies.

The accident, which was the most horrible that has occurred at the steel works in years, was in the new converter. A ladle containing about fifteen tons of hot metal, which was being transferred by means of a crane from the furnace to the mixer, where it was to be dumped, toppled over and the contents were precipitated to the ground fifty feet below, where the molten mess poured into a puddle of oil which had seeped from the machinery of the mixer. The oil ignited and the fierce flames enveloped Trine, Artman, Lapich and Cruppelak, who were on top of the mixer. They were directly in the path of the blaze and could not possibly have escaped.

From the time of the tipping over of the big ladle until the men on top of the mixer had received the burns and inhaled the flames and fumes which caused their deaths, only one minute and a half elapsed. To the others who saved themselves by falling face downward on the platform which runs alongside of the mixer the brief period seemed like hours. On the platform were Thomas Crowe, superintendent of the converter; Adam Deitz and James Davidson. The latter escaped without injury in any way. Mr. Crowe received severe burns on the hands and face, and Deitz was slightly burned on the face.

The new converter, which has only recently been started, has not yet reached the stage of perfection in every department, and yesterday morning for the first time the system of dumping the ladles of metal from the furnaces into the mixer was tried. Four ladles of metal had been transferred successfully and it was just at the moment the fifth was about to be tipped into the mixer when an accident to the machinery of the crane caused the ladle to turn and deposit its contents on the ground below. Realizing the danger they were thus suddenly confronted with a great cry of alarm went up from the men but before there was a chance to save themselves some of the unfortunates were in the midst of the flames.

With their clothing burned from their bodies shrieking with agony and in a state of panic the burned men ran to and fro on the platforms until they fell exhausted. It was the most horrible and pitiful scene that has ever been witnessed at the Minnequa plant. To his cool-headedness Superintendent Thomas Crowe owes his life. When he saw the ladle tip he knew what the result would be, and yelling to the men who stood beside him to fall on their stomachs he did so himself, throwing both hands over his mouth to guard against inhaling the flames.

"It was a fearful period, that minute and a half, said the superintendent when seen last night. "and it seemed an awfully long time to me. Lying face downward with my face covered with my hand and arms I felt that I was reasonably safe, but it was an uncomfortable feeling when the hot blast fanned my face."

Adam Deitz, who stood near Superintendent Crowe, said: 'I had no business on the platform, but like some of the others was there to watch the operation of the new converter. I saw the ladle tip and, not knowing what the consequences would be, would have been among those fatally burned if it had not been for the advice given me by Mr. Crowe. I satisfied I owe my life to him, for his advice to drop on my face is all that saved me. When the dangerous flames had died out I stood up, and the scene before me was pitiful. One man, I do not know who he was, with his clothing in flames, ran and threw his arms around me. Everybody was in a state of panic. Somebody turned a hose on one man that was burning."

As fast as possible the injured were conveyed to the dispensary, and never before has the small emergency hospital been the scene of such excitment. All but one of the injured were in the dispensary at one time and the doctors were hampered in their efforts to relieve the injured by a crowd of curious on-lookers. As soon as possible the more seriously injured were taken to the Minnequa hospital. John Cruppelak, an Austrian, was the first to succumb, he having died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. Steve Lapich, also an Austrian, was the next to die, his death having occurred about six hours after the accident. Lee Artman, better known as "Hartman," died at the hospital at 5:45 o'clock. At that hour Dr. Baker said that Virgil Trine, who is assistant superintendent of the converter, was in a very bad condition, but some hopes were entertained of his recovery. Trine is a large man with great physical strength and if he survives it will be on account of his powers of endurance. William Boitz, who was seriously burned on the hands, face and legs, was one of the five men taken to the Minnequa hospital of whom there were fears of death resulting from their burns, but he is now considered out of danger and will recover in a few weeks.

But little could be learned of the family connections of the two Austrians who died, as Accident Clerk Guy Humphrey had so many cases on his hands that he could not find the time to locate their relatives. Lee Artman was a familiar figure at the steel works. He was an old man and had been employed at the works for about ten years. At the time he received the burns which resulted in his death he was a foreman of the cupola. His duties did not require his presence in the converter when the accident happened, but he thought he could be of some service and volunteered to assist in some work which was being done on top of the mixer. Artman resided with his family in Minnequa Heights and as one of the old-time steel workers enjoyed the respect of a large circle of friends.

Near the converter at the time the fatal accident occurred were General Manager J. B. McKennan of the Minnequa works, Auditor Fred Darroch and Harry Raven, chief timekeeper. They had just been watching the workings of the crane and mixer from a point on the ground below, and as if by premonition all suddenly left the dangerous grounds just in time to save themselves from fearful injury, if not death.

Coroner Fugard will have a jury empaneled and hold an inquest today. The investigation will probably not be commenced until this afternoon.

organize this sphere of conflict so that proper methods of settlement could be

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stake was $1,500, and a crowd of 3,000 witnessed the contest.