

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY MARCH 30



On March 30, 1930, ground was broken at Gauley Junction to begin construction of the Hawks Nest tunnel and dam.

CSO: SS.8.24, ELA.8.1, VA.6-8.5

Investigate the Document: (Gregory B. Johnson Collection, Ms2008-092)

Document 1

1. Study each person and object in the picture. What can you tell based on these observations? What are the people doing?
2. Describe the environment. What would it be like to work there?
3. What can you learn from examining this image?

Document 2

4. At the time of this Joint Resolution, how many tunnel workers had succumbed to silicosis while working for the Rinehart and Dennis Company?
5. Describe the effects of silicosis.
6. Did the Joint Resolution affect only the Rinehart and Dennis Company, or was Congress addressing an industry-wide inquiry into the health conditions of workers? Cite the text that confirms your answer.
7. According to the Joint Resolution, to whom does the board of inquiry report its findings in the event of an investigation?

Document 3

8. Do you see any inconsistencies with the number of deaths being reported by the company compared to the number of deaths via silicosis stated in the Joint Resolution? If so, what?
9. Does this inconsistency force you to hesitate in trusting the company's reported numbers regarding other deaths?

Think Critically: What is the difference in covering up a disaster where the negative impact is immediate (like the Buffalo Creek flood) versus a tragedy where the full effects are not known for years? Why do you think workers were willing to risk their lives for employment in the tunnel? Was there anything in the reading that suggested how the number of deaths may have been covered up?

their only gravestones and with no other means of identification; and

Whereas silicosis is a lung disease caused by breathing in silicate dust, this dust causing the growth of fibrous tissues in the lung gradually choking the air cells in the lung and bringing about certain death; and

Whereas this condition has existed for years and all efforts to expose it have been thwarted; and

Whereas there are other similar conditions existing in the United States in said industry: Therefore be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*

2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 That (1) the Secretary of Labor shall immediately appoint

4 a board of inquiry to make a prompt and thorough investi-

5 gation of all facts relating to health conditions of workers

6 employed in the construction and maintenance of public

7 utilities.

8 (2) The board, or its duly authorized agents or

9 agencies, shall at all reasonable times have access to, for

10 the purpose of examination and the right to copy, any evi-

11 dence of any person being investigated or proceeded against

12 that relates to any matter under investigation or in question.

13 Any member of the board shall have power to issue subpoenas

14 requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the

15 production of any evidence that relates to any matter under

16 investigation or in question before the board, its member,

1 agent, or agency conducting the hearing or investigation.
2 Any member of the board, or any agent or agency desig-
3 nated by the board for such purposes, may administer oaths
4 and affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence.
5 Such attendance of witnesses and the production of such
6 evidence may be required from any place in the United
7 States or any Territory or possession thereof at any desig-
8 nated place of hearing.

9 (3) In case of contumacy or refusal to obey a sub-
10 pena issued to any person, any District Court of the United
11 States or the United States courts of any Territory or pos-
12 session, or the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia,
13 within the jurisdiction of which the inquiry is carried on or
14 within the jurisdiction of which said person guilty of con-
15 tumacy or refusal to obey is found or resides or transacts
16 business, upon application by the board, shall have jurisdic-
17 tion to issue to such person an order requiring such person
18 to appear before the board, its member, agent, or agency,
19 there to produce evidence if so ordered, or there to give
20 testimony touching the matter under investigation or in
21 question; and any failure to obey such order of the court
22 may be punished by said court as contempt thereof.

23 (4) No person shall be excused from attending and
24 testifying or from producing books, records, correspondence,
25 documents, or other evidence in obedience to the subpoena

1 of the board on the ground that the testimony or evidence
2 required of him may tend to incriminate him or subject him
3 to a penalty of forfeiture; but no individual shall be prose-
4 cuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on
5 account of any transaction, matter, or thing concerning which
6 he is compelled, after having claimed his privilege against
7 self-incrimination, to testify or produce evidence, except that
8 such individual so testifying shall not be exempt from prose-
9 cution and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.

10 (5) Complaints, orders, and other process and papers
11 of the board, its member, agent, or agency may be served
12 either personally or by registered mail or by telegraph or
13 by leaving a copy thereof at the principal office or place of
14 business of the person required to be served. The verified
15 return by the individual so serving the same setting forth
16 the manner of such service shall be proof of the same, and
17 the return post-office receipt or telegraph receipt therefor
18 when registered and mailed or telegraphed as aforesaid shall
19 be proof of service of the same. Witnesses summoned before
20 the board, its member, agent, or agency shall be paid the
21 same fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in the courts
22 of the United States, and witnesses whose depositions are
23 taken and the persons taking the same shall severally be
24 entitled to the same fees as are paid for like services in the
25 courts of the United States.

1 (6) All process of any court to which application may
2 be made under this Act may be served in the judicial district
3 wherein the defendant or other person required to be served
4 resides or may be found.

5 (7) The several departments and agencies of the Gov-
6 ernment, when directed by the President, shall furnish the
7 board, upon its request, all records, papers, and information
8 in their possession relating to any matter before the board.

9 (8) Any person who shall willfully resist, prevent, im-
10 pede, or interfere with any member of the board or any
11 of its agents or agencies in the performance of duties pursuant
12 to this Act shall be punished by a fine of not more than
13 \$5,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or
14 both.

15 (9) That said board of inquiry shall report to the Sec-
16 retary of Labor its findings of fact and its recommendations,
17 and the Secretary of Labor shall, with such summary or
18 other report as she sees fit, transmit the same to the
19 Congress.



HAWKS NEST-GAULEY JUNCTION DEVELOPMENT

NO. 250

TUNNEL

View of heading No. 2 showing drilling crew.

June 18, 1931.

Appendix 1.

MORTALITY SUMMARY FOR RINEHART AND DENNIS CO. EMPLOYEES OR FORMER EMPLOYEES - APRIL 1, 1930 TO DEC. 31, 1935

(Figures in Parenthesis Show Number Who Died 30 Days or More After Last Employment)

CAUSE OF DEATH as given on Death Certificate	1930		1931		1932		1933		1934		1935		Total	
	White	Col.	White	Col.	White	Col.	White	Col.	White	Col.	White	Col.	White	Col.
A - Diseases:														
1. Typhoid					1 (1)								1 (1)	-
2. Pneumonia	2 (1)	1	1	27 (10)	4 (2)								3 (1)	32 (12)
3. Tuberculosis				1 (1)	3 (3)	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (2)		1 (1)		5 (3)	8 (8)
4. Tuberculosis with Silicosis as Contributory Cause					1 (1)				1 (1)				-	2 (2)
5. Silicosis " Tuberculosis " " "							2 (2)						-	2 (2)
6. Silicosis " Pleurisy " " "									1 (1)				-	1 (1)
7. Silicosis " Heart Diseases " " "									1 (1)				1 (1)	-
8. Silicosis					3 (3)	4 (4)	1 (1)	4 (4)	1 (1)				4 (4)	9 (9)
9. Influenza			1										1	-
10. Venereal Diseases												1 (1)	1 (1)	-
11. Heart Diseases				4 (1)			1						-	5 (1)
12. All Other Diseases				2 (2)			1		1 (1)	1 (1)			1 (1)	4 (3)
Total Silicosis					3 (3)	4 (4)	1 (1)	4 (4)	1 (1)				4 (4)	9 (9)
Total Silicosis with Tuberculosis, Pleurisy and Heart Diseases as Contributory Causes						1 (1)		2 (2)	1 (1)	2 (2)			1 (1)	5 (5)
Total of All Other Diseases	2 (1)	1	2	34 (14)	1 (1)	7 (5)	2 (2)	3 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	1 (1)	1 (1)	10 (7)	45 (24)
Total of All Diseases	2 (1)	1	2	34 (14)	4 (4)	12 (10)	3 (3)	9 (7)	3 (3)	6 (6)	1 (1)	1 (1)	15 (12)	63 (32)
B - Rinehart & Dennis Co. Construction Accidents														
a. In Tunnel														
1. Rock Falls		1	2	5									2	6
2. Crushing by Construction Equipment		1	1	1		1							1	3
b. Outside														
1. Drowning				1									-	1
2. Crushing by Construction Equipment				1			1						-	2
3. Falls									1				1	-
4. Electrocution				1									-	1
Total Fatal Accidents in Tunnel		2	3	6		1							3	9
Total Fatal Accidents outside				3				1	1				1	4
C - Accidents and Violent Deaths Not Connected with R.&D.														
1. Automobile Accidents										1 (1)			-	1 (1)
2. Railroad Accidents					1 (1)	1 (1)							1 (1)	1 (1)
3. Homicides				1		2				1 (1)			-	4 (1)
4. Other Construction Accidents									2 (2)				2 (2)	-
5. Drowning				1									-	1
Total Accidents and Violent Deaths Not Connected with Rinehart & Dennis Work				2	1 (1)	3 (1)			2 (2)	2 (2)			3 (3)	7 (3)
D - Deaths from Unknown Causes:								2 (2)	1 (1)				-	4 (3)
Total Deaths	2 (1)	3	5	46 (14)	5 (5)	16 (11)	3 (3)	12 (9)	6 (5)	9 (9)	1 (1)	1 (1)	22 (15)	87 (44)
Grand Totals	5(1)		51(14)		21(16)		15(12)		15(14)		2(2)		102(59)	