

Stone # 6

July 6th 1954.

Mr Dan Sheahan.
Las Vegas, Nevada.

Reference is made to the fire investigation on June 30th 1954 concerning the ore mill property located at Green, Nevada. The results of the investigation combined with thirty-seven years of fire experience complete the following report.

The ore mill was a one story structure 45' X 45', wood frame of 6" X 6" timbers, uprights spaced every four feet with 2" X 6" spreaders. Frame was covered with corrugated sheet metal, on a concrete floor.

On one end of the building was the engine room 22' X 34' which housed one Diesel power unit and one gasoline powered air compressor. The conveyor extended 50' up the slope to the ore bin and was constructed of 4" X 6" timbers.

The contents consisted mostly of mining machinery and equipment which was non-combustible in nature, except for the fuel in tanks of the power unit and air compressor engine.

Evidence that a violent explosion preceded the fire was quite clear, heavy mining equipment, secured to its base with large bolts were torn loose and overturned. Metal sheeting was ripped from the building frame and scattered over the area.

Within a very few minutes the entire building and conveyor section was enveloped in flames. A structure which is termed in the fire service as a slow-burner had suddenly become a raging inferno. Heat in excess of 1600 degrees was evident.

The fact that the mill was completely shut down makes it more difficult to determine the source of ignition. Fuel tanks on the Diesel power unit and air compressor engine were intact, showing no sign of rupture or explosion at that point.

Common hazards around ore mill properties were given consideration such as, oil soaked timbers, oily rags, high explosives, possibility of dust explosion and electric wiring.

Extreme heat generated at the time of the fire left mining machinery and equipment a distorted mass, very little if anything is salvageable and must be considered a total loss.

Considering all facts and evidence uncovered during my investigation I conclude with the following summary;

The cause of the fire remains unsolved at this writing, however, it is my opinion that some foreign object or device may have been instrumental in the rapid destruction of the building by fire.

Building of the type as described above are generally known as slow-burners due to the combustible materials being sparsely distributed throughout, however, in this case there seemed to be a substance present which accelerated the fire to a great degree.

Much debris and twisted metal sheets now cover the concrete floor, when the floor is cleared of debris it is possible that some evidence may be revealed that would help determine the source of ignition.


PAUL E. ZINK.