

Floyd R. Mansberger

July 26, 2005

Harold Hassen
Office of Realty and Environmental Planning
Cultural Resource Coordinator
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271

Re: Radium Mine Research

Dear Hal:

Enclosed is the research we conducted on the Belleville newspaper index for the Radium mine. As per your request, our objective was to determine whether a major accident had occurred at this mine. As the synopsis indicates, in December 1923, a major accident occurred. Apparently, water from a nearby abandoned mine (the Chester Mine) broke into the Radium mine trapping 180 men. Fortunately, most were rescued with only three deaths. Poor engineering was blamed for the disaster.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to give us a call.

Sincerely,

Floyd Mansberger

Enclosures (Radium Mine information)

Newspaper index listings for Radium Mine (and previous names)
on file at Belleville Public Library.

(6/15/2005)

(All references are to the Belleville Daily Advocate.)

Murphy Coal Company

- 12/8/1906 Incorporated by James, Henry Murphy and Mary Farthing. Capital \$6,100.
- 2/7/1919 Peter Reeb purchases mine located on Belleville and Carondelet Railway.
- 12/7/1923 Water drains into abandoned mine 100' south of Radium Mine.

Reeb Coal Company

- 6/22/1917 Reeb Bros. Coal Company changes name to Radium Coal Company

Radium Coal Company

- 6/22/1917 Formerly Reed Coal Company.
- 8/17/1917 Discovers 7' vein, installed electrical equipment and new steel upperworks.
- 6/13/1918 Receives special Liberty Bond flag.
- 4/26/1919 Placed on Victory Liberty Loan Honor Roll.
- 6/21/1919 Secures contract with Chicago and Great Western Railroad for 600 tons of coal daily.
- 4/14/1920 W. C. Wolf, official of company purchases coal rights to land in vicinity of mine. Cost \$18,000.
- 5/15/1920 Sold to Aluminum Ore Company for \$135,000.
- 10/31/1923 Repairs completed; operations resumed.
- 12/7/1923 180 men trapped in mine. 3 killed.
- 12/7/1923 Water drains into abandoned Murphy Mine 100' south of Radium Mine.
- 12/7/1923 Flooded by water from Chester Mine, located 500' north of Radium, which had been abandoned for 35 years.
- 12/14/1923 Poor engineering blamed for flood, 250' off line.

- 1/3/1924 Resumes work after mine disaster.
- 7/3/1924 Resumes operations after being idle for several months.
- 2/15/1930 Transfers property of Aluminum Ore Company of America in this district to Alcoa Ore Company, name ALCOA.
- 9/10/1931 320 property owners present claims for damage done to homes emanating from refuse fire. Mine owned by Alcoa Ore Co.