

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Surface
(Crushed and Broken Granite)

Fatal Drowning Accident
April 25, 2022

Columbus Quarry LLC
Columbus Quarry LLC
Fortson, Muscogee County, Georgia
ID No. 09-01135

Accident Investigator

Robert Johnson
Mine Safety and Health Inspector

Robert Ashley
Mine Safety and Health Supervisor

Originating Office
Mine Safety and Health Administration
Birmingham District
1030 London Drive, Suite 400
Birmingham, AL 35211
Brian Thompson, District Manager

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	1
GENERAL INFORMATION	1
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT	2
INVESTIGATION OF THE ACCIDENT	2
DISCUSSION	3
Location of the Accident	3
Weather	3
Equipment Involved	3
Training and Experience	3
Examinations	3
Chargeability Determination Process	3
CONCLUSION	4
ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS	5
APPENDIX A – Persons Participating in the Investigation	6
APPENDIX B – Transfer Conveyor #10	7
APPENDIX C – Red Hose	8



OVERVIEW

On April 25, 2022, at approximately 4:00 p.m., Anthonwan Smith, a 41 year-old maintenance laborer with approximately 25 weeks of mining experience, was fatally injured when he collapsed and fell face-first into a puddle of water approximately two inches deep.

The autopsy evidence indicates that Mr. Smith died due to drowning, complicating seizure disorder.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Columbus Quarry LLC owns and operates Columbus Quarry LLC. This mine is an open pit mine. Columbus Quarry LLC mines crushed and broken granite and is located in Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia. The mine employs 27 miners and operates two ten-hour shifts, five days per week. The mine extracts material from an open pit and uses haul trucks to haul material to a crusher. The finished product is sold and used in various industries.

Columbus Quarry LLC contracts with Industrial Cleaning Environmental, Inc. (P082) to perform clean-up in belt conveyor tunnels using a vacuum truck.

The principal management officials at Columbus Quarry LLC at the time of the accident were:

Daryll Niblett
Lester Richardson

Plant Manager
Assistant Plant Manager

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) completed the last regular safety and health inspection at this mine prior to the accident on March 13, 2022. The 2021 non-fatal days lost incident rate for the Columbus Quarry LLC mine was 3.34, compared to the national average of 1.26 for mines of this type.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

At 8:00 a.m. on April 25, 2022, Smith began his shift, and Arthur Miles, Leadman, instructed him to go to the Graded Aggerate Base tower to fix a hole in a rock slide. At approximately 10:30 a.m., Smith asked Miles to get him a banding tool for a water hose. Miles brought him the banding tool and then Miles took Smith to the finishing plant for Smith to perform clean-up duties. At approximately 11:30 a.m., Miles took Smith to the loadout tower to warm up Smith's lunch. Miles then took Smith back to the finishing plant and dropped him off to eat lunch. Miles stated Smith seemed normal at this time. Miles last saw Smith using a water hose to wash out fine material in the finishing plant.

From interviews, at approximately 4:00 p.m., Shane Thompson, Site Supervisor for Industrial Cleaning Environmental, Inc., and Clifford Platt, Equipment Operator for Columbus Quarry LLC, were pulling material from the graded aggregate pile when they discovered Smith lying face down on top of a water hose nozzle and a puddle of water. The puddle of water was approximately two inches deep. Smith was approximately six to seven feet behind the secondary plant's #10 belt conveyor tail pulley.

Thompson assessed the situation and did not notice any visible signs of an accident or injury to Smith. The water was still on when Thompson discovered Smith, and the nozzle on the end of the hose was in his hands underneath his body. Thompson rolled Smith over and began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Platt notified Lester Richardson, Assistant Plant Manager, and Richardson arrived shortly after and called 911 at 4:13 p.m. Richardson and Thompson rotated, taking turns performing CPR on Smith until emergency personnel arrived. Columbus Fire and Emergency Medical Services arrived at 4:22 p.m. Smith was pronounced dead at 5:09 p.m. by Deputy Coroner Elizabeth Allison.

INVESTIGATION OF THE ACCIDENT

On April 25, 2022, at 4:49 p.m., Tammie Hammonds, Human Resources Director, called the Department of Labor National Contact Center (DOLNCC). The DOLNCC contacted Brian Thompson, Assistant District Manager. Thompson notified Robert Ashley, Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Inspector. Ashley sent Robert Johnson, Mine Safety and Health Inspector, to the mine. At 6:30 p.m., Johnson arrived at the accident site and issued an order under the provisions of Section 103(k) of the Mine Act to ensure the safety of the miners and the

preservation of evidence. Johnson gathered initial statements and took photos of the accident scene.

On April 26, 2022, at 10:30 a.m., Johnson and Ashley arrived at the mine to continue the investigation. Johnson and Ashley conducted an examination of the accident scene, interviewed miners and mine management, and reviewed conditions and work practices relevant to the accident. See Appendix A for a list of persons who participated in the investigation.

DISCUSSION

Location of the Accident

The accident occurred at the tail of the #10 transfer conveyor belt (see Appendix B).

Weather

The weather at the time of the accident was 84 degrees Fahrenheit, with sunny skies. Investigators determined that the weather did not contribute to the accident.

Equipment Involved

The equipment involved was a one-inch red water hose (see Appendix C).

Training and Experience

Smith had approximately 25 weeks of mining experience, all as a maintenance laborer at Columbus Quarry LLC. The mine operator gave Smith new miner training on November 4, 2021. Smith also received eight hours of annual refresher training on March 31, 2022. Smith's training was in accordance with MSHA Part 46 training regulations.

Examinations

Lester Richardson performed a workplace examination in the area and did not identify any conditions that contributed to the accident.

Chargeability Determination Process

When a miner's death is not conclusively determined to be chargeable to the mine operator, MSHA submits the case, including facts and supporting information, to the MSHA Chargeability Review Committee (Committee). The Committee reviewed MSHA's investigative report and associated supplementary materials.

The autopsy evidence indicates that Mr. Smith died due to drowning, complicating seizure disorder. Mr. Smith had a history of seizures. While it cannot be proven that Mr. Smith experienced a seizure that caused him to fall and drown, this scenario seems most likely. The medical report indicated recent tongue contusions, which also is consistent with a seizure. MSHA's investigation did not reveal any other environmental or physical conditions (apart from his history of seizure disorder and the drowning) that contributed to the death of Mr. Smith. Accordingly, the Committee determined Smith's death to be chargeable to the mine operator.

CONCLUSION

On April 25, 2022, at approximately 4:00 p.m., Anthowan Smith, a 41 year-old maintenance laborer with over 25 weeks of mining experience, was fatally injured when he collapsed and fell face-first into a puddle of water approximately two inches deep. He died from his injuries on April 25, 2022.

The autopsy evidence indicates that Mr. Smith died due to drowning, complicating seizure disorder.

Approved By:

Brian Thompson
District Manager

Date

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

1. A 103(k) order was issued to Columbus Quarry LLC.

A fatal accident occurred on April 25, 2022, at approximately 4:00 p.m. This order is being issued under the authority of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, under Section 103(k) to insure the safety of all persons at the mine and requires the operator to obtain the approval of an authorized representative of MSHA of any plan to recover any person in the mine or to recover the mine or affected area. This order prohibits any activity in the affected area. The operator is reminded of the obligation to preserve all evidence that would aid in investigating the cause or causes of the accident in accordance with 30 CFR 50.12.

APPENDIX A – Persons Participating in the Investigation

Columbus Quarry LLC

Daryll Niblett
Lester Richardson
Shane Thompson
Arthur Miles

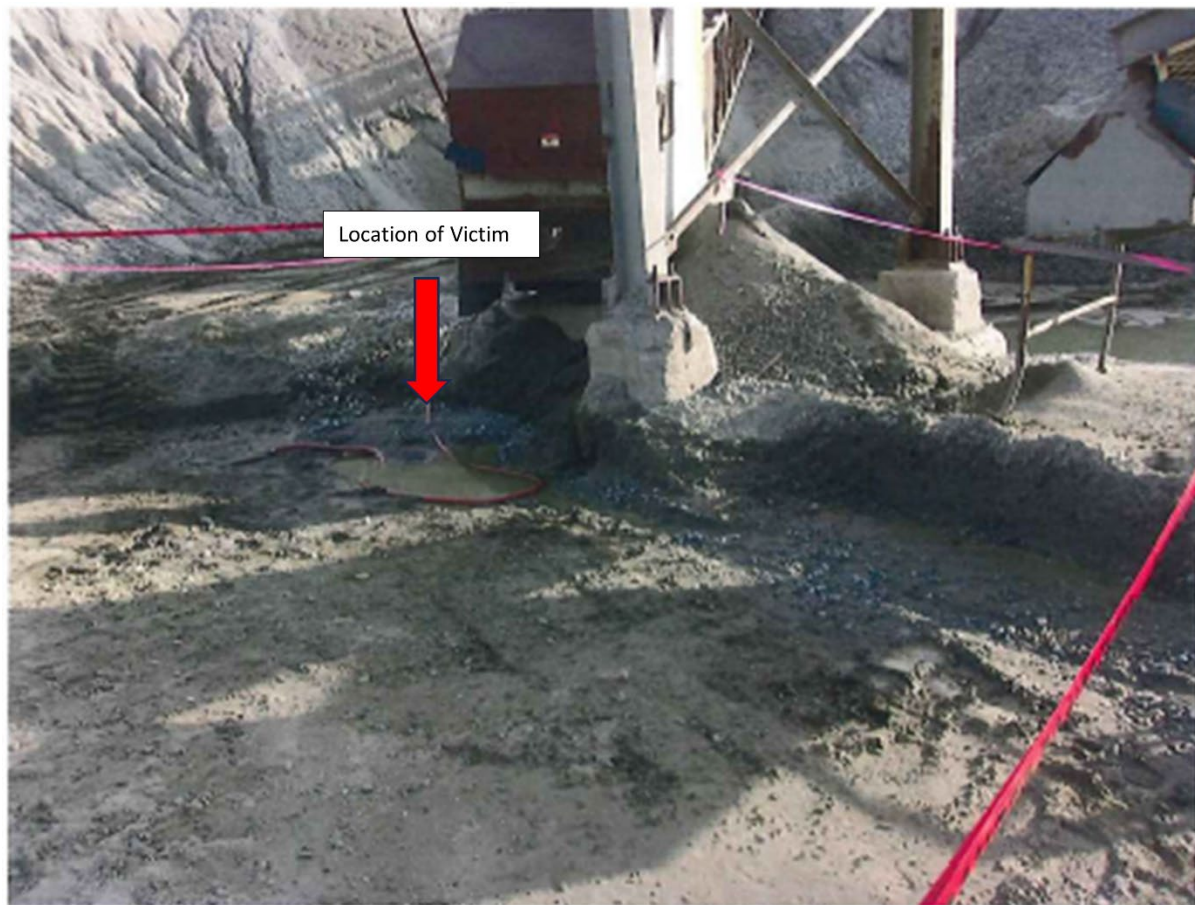
Plant Manager
Assistant Plant Manager
Site Supervisor
Leadman

Mine Safety and Health Administration

Robert Ashley
Robert Johnson

Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Inspector
Mine Safety and Health Inspector

APPENDIX B – Transfer Conveyor #10



APPENDIX C – Red Hose

