

Press Release

Book Details America's Worst Gold Mine Disaster

On the night of August 27, 1922, 4650 feet below the surface of the earth in one of America's deepest and richest gold mines, 47 miners were trapped when a fire broke out in the mine's main shaft. For 22 days, friends, family, and co-workers waited anxiously as rescuers attempted to tunnel across from a neighboring mine. The story soon became spellbinding front page news, as reporters and film crews from across the nation descended on the little California mining town that was home to the Argonaut and Kennedy gold mines. It was the worst gold mine disaster in the history of the United States, yet the story was relatively unheard of before the recent publication of the book *47 Down: The 1922 Argonaut Gold Mine Disaster*, by author-historian O. Henry Mace.

Drawing on primary sources to re-create the event with nail-biting accuracy, *47 Down* provides a chilling narrative of the miners' terrifying ordeal, the friends and family who kept hopeful vigil at the mine's entrance, and the experts and rescue specialists who came from across the nation to help free the trapped men. Author O. Henry Mace researched the Argonaut disaster for seven years, sifting through stockpiles of newspaper articles, diaries, government reports, including the complete minutes and correspondence of the Governor's Committee on the Argonaut Mine Disaster, and other resources that were scattered throughout repositories across the United States to create this dramatic and riveting account.

Through these rich primary sources, Mace paints a vivid portrait of the personalities and machinations involved in the Argonaut mine fire and rescue mission, including: Virgilio Garbarini, the seasoned, no-nonsense superintendent of the mine who fought doggedly against reversing the fans that would have drawn fresh air to the trapped miners; quick-thinking jigger-boss Ernie Miller, who had survived the Granite Copper Mine fire of 1917 and used his experience to try and shield his crew from the poisonous carbon monoxide that was quickly pouring down the shaft; and sharp-tongued Sacramento Star city editor Ruth Finney, who scored the scoop of the century and launched her career with her heartfelt coverage of the tragedy.

O. Henry Mace has written several books related to California history, and has compiled collector's guides for 19th century photographs and Victorian antiques. He is a recognized expert on early photographic processes and California gold mining from the Gold Rush to World War II. A resident of California for more than twenty years, Mace and his wife reside in Hermosa Beach, near Los Angeles.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, *47 Down* is now in worldwide release and is available through all major booksellers.

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