

DEATH AND

Destruction!

AWFUL CALAMITY.

MILL EXPLOSIONS

AT MINNEAPOLIS.

15 TO 20 KILLED.

9 MILLS BURNED.

Theories as to Cause.

Nitro Glycerine?

Or Purifiers Gas?

Full Graphic Details

By "Globe" Reporters

The only names attainable at this hour are M. P. Sier and his younger brother, and Fred Merrill.

All accounts agree that the first explosion took place at the Washburn A mill, or the big mill, as it is called.

The watchman of the Galaxy mill, which is among the destroyed, escaped unhurt, and gives the most connected account of the explosion.

The explosion from the "A" mill was so tremendous that it raised the entire roof of the gigantic structure into the air as a zephyr would waft an autumn leaf.

The fire has now, 8:30 p. m., extended from Sixth ave. south down the bank of the river, taking almost everything in its path, to near the Minneapolis and St. Louis railway shops—lumber yards, blacksmiths and machine shops, and miscellaneous manufactures.

Mr. Case, assistant superintendent of the Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad, thinks it probable that the freight depot and machine shops of their road will be saved.

The glass in the Cataract House, eastward, and the City Hall, northward, were broken by the explosion.

Up to nine o'clock the list of killed and injured so far as ascertained, are as follows: Big Mill—Grinders, Chas. Henning—Fred Merrill, Clark Wilbur.

Miller—Wm. Leslie, Cyrus Ewing. Machinists—Ole Shio, Walter Savage, Patrick Judd, Ed. Merrill.

Watchmen—Harry Hicks, E. W. Burbank one unknown. Aug. Smith was blown out of the window, hurt, but not killed.

Diamond mill—John Boyer killed. David Ward, gone out after a pail of water, and escaped unhurt.

Galaxy Mill—Joe Mann; in the third story, after the wall was blown out, jumped down into the canal and escaped unhurt.

Zenith Mill—Two men, Widstrom and Fred George. In Pettit, Robinson & Co.'s mill—Dean Day was thrown out of the window and injured but not fatally.

Mr. Day was the only man in the Pettit mill at the time. THE INSURANCE On the Washburn "A" mill is \$40,000 on stock, and \$170,000 on the building.

Pettit, Robinson & Co.'s mill is insured for \$45,000. Up to nine o'clock, the number of mills burned aggregated one hundred and three runs of stone.

The Washburn "A" mill to-day ground 1,505 barrels of flour, and was preparing for the night run when the explosion took place. In the "A" mills at the time of the explosion there were fifty thousand bushels of wheat, all of which was burned.

The opinion of J. A. Christian, head of the firm of Christian & Co., who run the mill, does not agree with the theory that the explosion was occasioned by gas generated by the middlings purifier.

His theory is borrowed from a similar incident in Glasgow, Scotland, that the mills took fire on the lower floors, by the friction of the stones; that the elevators, of which there were a large number, served as so many chimneys, and gas was generated by the combustion, and finally exploded, throwing the roof a hundred feet in the air.

This theory is not credited by such scientific men as are at hand, but on the contrary, the opinion is very general that the first theory is the correct one, that the gas generated by the patent process took fire and exploded like a powder magazine.

The last report of the board of trade in this city shows sixteen flouring mills and 181 runs of stones. The following mills have been burned, or are badly damaged: Washburn "A" mill.

Washburn "B" mill. Pettit, Robinson & Co.'s mill. Zenith mill. Galaxy mill. Humbolt and Diamond mill.

On latest reports, there seems to have been only 97 run of stones destroyed, so it seems that only just one-half of the flouring interests of the city is rubbed out. When, however, it is considered that the interest is the most important in the city, the full force of the disaster will be understood.

The full amount of insurance cannot be ascertained at this writing, but those best informed among insurance men state that the probable amount of insurance is not less than 50 per cent. of the loss, and generally in the best of companies.

Residue of the Disaster. Visiting the scene of the fire at 11:30, I found the firemen working at the debris, yet two hot flames, and able to move, but wedged in by the flames, where he perished in the sight of those unable to help him.

Unfortunately at this point the hydrant was clogged, so that several minutes elapsed before water came through freely, otherwise it is fairly possible that this man could have been rescued alive, but it was not possible that he could have survived his injuries apparent when first seen.

THE FEARFUL EXPLOSIONS. No description can convey a full idea of the force of the explosion, two of which were distinctly heard all over the city.

Millers uniformly attribute the explosion to the flour dust which was distributed through the atmosphere of the closed rooms, and the milling apparatus caught from contact with the flame, or from friction.

The principal force of the explosion appears to have been from the Washburn mill towards the Diamond and Zenith mills. The second explosion probably occurred in one of these.

The Milwaukee & St. Paul round house in front of these was half demolished by the concussion, while the railroad shops look as if they had been bombed.

The Centennial block, on Washington avenue, had all its heavy plate windows broken except one store, which was open. The glass was broken into fine pieces, as if run through a stamp mill.

A miller standing near the window of the old Washburn mill, was started by the first explosion, and had one glance, in which he saw the walls of the big mill spreading outward, roofs falling, and flames flashing up. The next moment he was on the floor blown half way across the mill by the concussion.

Fred George, of the Zenith mill, was not killed, but escaped by jumping from the window into the canal. He was not hurt, but the rumor was incorrect. He escaped with severe but not fatal injuries.

For hours the excitement here was naturally great, and the wildest rumors prevailed. Even at this hour it is difficult to learn the truth regarding any detail.

Besides the explosion was immediately followed by hot flames enveloping all the ruins and shutting in the air. This millers regard as proof positive that the explosion was of flour dust.

Eye witnesses of the explosion, state that the great roof of the big mill was lifted high into the air, when fragments flew out in every direction, and one roof seemed to melt in the air surrounded by flames.

One body was seen in the blazing ruins of the Diamond mill, apparently on the roof. It lay on the back arms extended, hands burned, a skull bare, and trunk incandescent. When the flames subsided, the body had disappeared, perhaps entirely consumed.

The losses of the insurance companies represented by Gale & Co. are as follows: C. C. Washburn, Washburn "A" mill, Hartford—\$1,000; machinery, \$1,600. Atlantic, N. Y.—\$1,000; machinery, \$1,700. Home, Ohio—\$1,000; machinery, \$1,000.

A. A. Christian, Co., warehouse "A" mill, North American, \$4,000. Pettit, Robinson & Co.'s mill—North British & Mercantile, \$3,000; machinery, \$3,000; Hartford, \$3,000; Phoenix, \$3,000; Phenix, N. Y., \$3,000; machinery, \$3,000; Lancashire, Eng., machinery, \$3,000; Atlantic, N. Y., machinery, \$3,000.

Ochill, Ankeny & Co., stock in Galaxy flour mill—North British & Mercantile, \$2,500; Hartford, \$2,500. Bull, Newton & Co., Humboldt Mill, North British & Mercantile, machinery, \$1,000; stock, \$2,500. Phenix, N. Y., \$2,500; Hartford, \$2,500; machinery, \$1,500. Atlantic, machinery, \$1,000.

Minneapolis Mill Co., elevator building—North British & Mercantile, \$3,000; Hartford, \$3,000; Phenix, \$3,000; on wheat in Minneapolis elevator. Crocker, Fiske & Co.—North British and Mercantile, \$3,000; Hartford, \$3,000; C. A. Pillsbury & Co.—Hartford, \$2,500; North American, \$2,500.

D. R. Barber & Son—North American, \$3,500. Pettit, Robinson & Co., on lumber—Hartford, \$2,500; North American, \$2,000. Losses in companies represented by E. E. Ames: Humboldt mill—Shawmut, \$1,500; Traders, \$2,000. Total, \$3,500.

Elevator—German American, \$2,500; Fire Assurance, \$2,500; American, \$2,500; Farmers' Fund, \$2,500; Royal, \$2,500; Liverpool, London and Globe, \$2,500. Total, \$15,000.

Washburn "A" mill—Manhattan, \$2,000; Commercial Union, \$2,000; Royal, \$3,000; Scottish Commercial, \$2,000. Total, \$10,000.

Pettit, Robinson & Co.'s mill—Franklin \$3,000; German American, \$3,000. Manhattan, \$3,000. Traders, \$1,000. Commercial Union, \$3,000. Royal, \$3,000. Liverpool, London & Globe, \$2,000. Scottish Commercial, \$3,000. Total, \$21,000.

Another Description. MINNEAPOLIS, May 3, 1 a. m.—The Globe special, which left St. Paul by private conveyance, was forty minutes later crossing the iron bridge that spans the Mississippi in the immediate vicinity of the great fire. Here met his gaze a sight which in its appalling grandeur has never been equaled, and probably will never be surpassed again in the history of this great mill city of the Northwest.

Walls of mills, a great stone structure, four stories high, stood out in a sea of fire, notwithstanding the attempt of the angry flames to further encroach upon its rocky sides. All else for two squares to the east and west, had been burned over, and black smoke and living embers, crowded with active firemen and hundreds of spectators with eighteen solid streams of water playing on the dying embers while the raging current dashed through the wide canal, bearing timber that fell through into the waters below.

The first impression was that Vesuvius had burst forth, and these were the last evidences of her dying energies. Thousands of exhausted people were passing to and fro and nothing was left but to walk over the ruins. Here were great piles of stone under which lay the bodies of the dead. These attracted most the attention. A perfect network of hose led from all contiguous hydrants. Just in front was the round house of the Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad, which contained seven locomotives with a quarter of its roof crushed in, and one-half of its wall smashed down.

Heavy timbers which covered the big canal lay in every conceivable shape, while upon the elevated railway track, in the rear of the old Washburn mill cars, partly filled, had pitched down the incline, and were half consumed.

The fire swept everything, leaving a blank space from Washington avenue to the river. Various objects were scattered over the street for four squares had boarded up their front doors and windows, and either stood guard or had moved their property to other buildings. There was scarcely a whole pane of glass left in any building fronting on this scene of desolation.

The terrific power of this explosion can be properly appreciated by the shock felt in St. Paul, but the smallness of the particles of glass which seemed not larger than a pea gave the appearance of the pavement being strewn with white sand. We counted eighteen large French plate glass windows in Centennial block which had been destroyed. Only one store front in the building stood the test, and that was owing to the fact that the doors stood open. A citizen stood in his store door, directly opposite Harwood's former toy store, and saw the second explosion, and estimates that the flames actually shot up into the heavens not less than seven hundred feet, as it appeared to him to be many hundred feet above the roof of the building.

An old gentleman, who lived in a shanty, in close proximity to the fire, says that the elevator, which stood adjoining the big mill, was on fire and in ruins in a very few minutes. Pieces of burning embers were showered down all over the eastern portion of the city. Four at this hour but little information can be picked up, as none but watchful firemen are on duty, whilst gangs of men are clearing the railroad tracks.

A large stack of timber fourteen inches square and thirty feet long stands perpendicular, protruding the large bluff, on the top of the old Washburn mill. Where it came from or how it got there is a mystery.

A set of heavy car wheels which lay in a slightly imbedded in the ground in front of the explosion, were lifted from their resting place by the force of the explosion.

Another Insurance Statement. The insurance as far as it could be ascertained as to individuals, was as follows: Bull, Newton & Co., \$3,500. Minnesota Mill Company, \$3,000. C. A. Pillsbury & Co., wheat, \$3,000. D. R. Barber & Son, wheat, \$3,500. Pettit, Robinson & Co., lumber, \$4,500. C. C. Washburn, \$2,500. J. A. Christian & Co., \$4,000. Pettit, Robinson & Co., \$2,000. W. Cabell, Ankeny & Co., \$3,500.

The scene is deserted by all except the firemen. Having exhausted itself from sheer stupidity to the point of leaving the scene, the elevator between him and the Washburn mill appeared to part bodily from top to bottom, and instantly broke into flames, as if contact with the outer air had at once fired the whole.

The full extent cannot be realized until morning. From the remains I should judge about fifty railroad cars are destroyed. The round house is split clear through the middle from the force of the explosion.

It is impossible to give further details of loss of life, as all dead bodies are in the ruins and families are not to be found. Minneapolis feels deeply grateful to St. Paul physicians for coming early to render assistance if needed. The city is extremely quiet. It is acknowledged that Minneapolis never experienced so deep an affliction.

IN ST. PAUL. The shock, and in some portions the detonation of the explosion was distinctly heard and felt in this city, and a few persons who chanced to be looking in the direction of Minneapolis, saw the cloud of smoke which shot up into the air immediately following.

Occupants of the custom house distinctly felt the shock, several stepping to the doors to learn the cause. General in the city hall, not a very substantial building, say that structure rocked back and forth very perceptibly. On St. Anthony Hill the concussion was sufficiently pronounced to break several windows. At first the general impression was that the shock was caused by an explosion of some kind, another somewhere within the city limits. This supposition was rapidly dispelled by the dense cloud of smoke that followed the explosion, darkening the heavens in the direction of Minneapolis, and locating the calamity in that city.

As the smoke became thickened with red, gradually spreading until the sky in that direction was a lurid hue, the excitement in the city increased and people began to besiege the telegraph and newspaper offices to learn the nature of the calamity. In a short time a telegram was received calling for aid, as mentioned elsewhere, but giving no particulars to the letter.

Another telegram stated the character of the calamity, but it was not until the Globe extra was issued that anything approaching a full conception of the terrible catastrophe that had befallen our sister city, took possession of the minds of our people. Though then after 10 o'clock, the extra issue of the Globe was caught up from the press, and as the brief but startling details were read, and their full import understood, universal sympathy and sorrow was expressed for the stricken city, and especially for the personal sufferers.

An incident showing the terrific force of the explosion is told by the young man who drives the cab from the residence of Mr. St. Paul and Minneapolis, who reports the fact near the residence of Mr. David Ramaley, fully four miles from the scene of the explosion, of a piece of charred and shattered scantling, some eight feet in length. Still more remarkable was the fall on St. Anthony hill, yet further from the explosion than Mr. Ramaley's residence, of a half window ash, with one of the lights of glass unbroken, blown from one of the mill hills which the explosion occurred. At the same time parties who were up on St. Anthony hill, thinking the fire was in that vicinity, had their attention attracted by the almost continuous falling of pieces of tarred roofing, Mr. Upham, of the First National bank, picking up such a piece fully a half-yard square, which he and the gentlemen with him divided up as a memento of the terrible visitation.

Going to the Rescue. The official news of the conflagration reached St. Paul in the form of a call to this city's fire department for all help in men and apparatus that could be spared. Accordingly, No. 2 and No. 8 engines, with their engineers and firemen, were ordered for duty by telegraph from the chief's office. Four horse carts and two men from each horse company were also ordered out. The engines, carts and men proceeded in all haste to the passenger depot of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul at the foot of Jackson.

The railroad authorities informed the firemen that the track could not be cleared at that point so as to load the apparatus. The apparatus was at the passenger depot about 8:35 p. m., when it was ordered to the upper freight depot.

Then a scene of confusion and delay occurred which makes one's every nerve tingle with tension to write about. The track was surrounded by an enormous and excited, but orderly crowd, amid which the apparatus and the firemen stood in a state of enforced inaction, and fully half an hour of precious time was wasted before the flat cars, upon which the engines, etc., were to be transported, made their appearance. At length, the train of two flat cars and one baggage car came to the crossing. The latter was immediately occupied and packed to suffocation by a crowd that had no business whatever in the car. Meanwhile the tedious task of running the engines on the flats up the steep skids by hand was accomplished with a will by the department, and a few willing help citizens. In fact, every body seemed to be ready to give a helping hand except the railroad men and the bumper crowd that filled the baggage car, intended exclusively for the firemen, reporters, Doctor Murphy and Ald. Grace, the chairman of the fire department. When the train was ready to start, an attempt was made to clear the cut of the boys and outsiders wedged in, but only with a very partial success. The hose, to the length of about 2,500 feet, was unreeled from the carts and placed upon the flats, and the carts were then dispatched to be reloaded at their respective houses to be ready for home emergencies. All this had taken time, and it was not until 9:42, or least of two good hours since the engines were first ready to embark, that the train moved out.

When the train arrived at the Mendota junction, it was met by a telegram at about 10:10 p. m., telling it to await orders, and in ten minutes the word came from Minneapolis that the fire was under control, and the train was ordered back to St. Paul.

At this writing, it is difficult to account for the delay in getting away, but it certainly cannot be placed at the door of the St. Paul fire department. The Globe reporter was assured that when a portion of the St. Paul department was sent to Anoka, the train departed with the department as away within the hour after receiving the call for assistance. If the engines had been taken to the St. Paul & Pacific depot, they could have been run upon the flats in ten minutes, and that was the point the engines first went to, but ordered away to be banged about from pillar to post, and from post to pillar, until they were ready to depart for their own depot to suit, apparently, the caprice of the railroad company, while not very far from the hour being wasted before the cars were presented for loading. Some one bungled, and kept up the bungling long enough to have afforded time to utterly consume the whole of Minneapolis.

The "Globe" Extra. The Globe, as usual, furnished the people with the first news of the great disaster at Minneapolis. Immediately after the explosion the Globe's Minneapolis reporters were busily at work on the scene, and numerous assistants were sent forward by train and carriage to St. Paul, to aid in the task of writing up the great calamity.

At 10 p. m. an extra was issued from the Globe office, and until after midnight newsboys were shouting and finding ready sale for the Globe extra. As usual, when the details of a great event occur the Globe's counting room was thronged with seekers after news, the public naturally knowing where to look for the first intelligence.

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL. The nomination of Smith for Collector at New Orleans. The Committee on the Organization of the Clerical Force in the Land Office. Everything Ready for the Florida Investigation. Other Items of Interest.

WASHINGTON, May 2.—In accordance with a law recently passed for the employment of temporary clerks, between 60 and 75 persons were yesterday appointed to clerical positions in the treasury department. The appointments were determined by the completeness of the quotas of different States. A large number of clerks have also been restored to the interior department, and under instructions of the Minister Seward telegraphs the department of state that the families in the northern provinces of China will continue six months longer in the United States.

The Senate committee on commerce has decided to report the nominations of Jno. A. Howard and Wm. Kent, as assistant appraisers of merchandise at New York favorably, and the nomination of Geo. L. Smith as collector of customs at New Orleans and unanimously agreed to recommend its confirmation. The department pays the 4 per cent. loan to-day.

The House committee on agriculture to-day, unanimously agreed to report favorably on Representative Culler's bill, declaring the department of agriculture one of the executive departments.

The Senate in executive session, confirmed the nomination of Geo. L. Smith, as collector of customs at New Orleans.

The Senate committee on commerce to-day, continued consideration of the steamboat bill, and struck out the clause limiting personal liability of owners of steamboats, and making the certificate of a steamboat inspector prima facie evidence in courts of law, was also struck out, and the bill was then referred to a sub-committee, to report what further amendments, if any should be made, before reporting it to the Senate.

United States Treasurer Gillilan says parties who apply for silver dollars in exchange for United States notes will be required to pay the freight charges on the same. The department pays freight on subsidiary coin, but cannot do so on silver dollars.

The House approved the act prohibiting the coinage of twenty cent silver pieces. The river and harbor appropriation bill will be taken up for consideration to-morrow.

The House committee on foreign affairs agreed to the bill in relation to the Venezuelan mixed commission, and Representative Hamilton was authorized to report the bill to the House with favorable recommendation. The bill provides that the act of Feb. 25, 1873, to enforce the stipulations of the convention with Venezuela, and the payment of all adjudicated claims, is hereby repealed; also that if the President shall believe, upon satisfactory evidence, that Venezuela is entitled to a hearing of any or all claims, or to any relief, he is empowered to enter into further convention with that country to afford such relief, provided the convention shall have the sanction of the Senate of the United States. The committee also adopted the report of Representative Hamilton, which recommends the examination of all claims passed upon by the Venezuelan mixed commission.

The House of Representatives have cut the force in the land office down to 160 clerks. In 1855 there were 180 clerks, and the work is much greater than it was at that time, comprising 300 land grants to railroads, canals and states bounty land. The grants to soldiers of the late war, and grants for agricultural colleges, besides business pertaining to settlers on public lands. The clerical force being too small, the office is now months behind in correspondence and four years in patenting of public lands.

It is not yet decided by the gentlemen having in charge the Florida Presidential frauds, whether they will propose an investigation by the House committee on judiciary, or by joint committee of Congress, to consist of six members of the House and five members of the Senate. They say they have the original affidavits of McLean and other documents embracing all material facts from all parties interested in the alleged frauds. A resolution for investigation may be introduced next Monday or on some other day, as a question of privilege.

What Caused the Explosion. Chief Engineer Becket stated that as yet he had been unable, from lack of time, to come to any definite conclusions as to the cause of the explosion. One theory, however, that had presented itself to him was, that the explosion was caused by other agencies than middlings' dust and gas generated therefrom. This theory, he thought, was the more plausible, from the fact that all the buildings on the west side of the Washburn mill were damaged to a greater extent than those on the east side, while the Zenith mill, and those in the same tow, were but very little damaged by the shock.

The mills on the other side were completely destroyed. During the afternoon freight train came in from the East and stood on the railroad track, in close proximity to the mill. It has been positively ascertained that one box-car was loaded with nitro-glycerine. If that should prove the case it will account for the severe shock.

Mr. Brackett stated further that so far as he had an opportunity to observe and read upon the subject of middlings flour dust explosions, no such extensive explosion had ever before occurred from that cause. In middlings dust explosions, as a general thing, a flash followed by no great damage to the building is the result. He did not think that that class of explosions would injure the walls of a stone structure of the dimensions of the Washburn mill. Such might be the case but he had never heard of any. On the other hand, nitro-glycerine in conjunction with the naturally generated in a mill run at such a high pressure, would not fail to produce the results above indicated.

At this hour the fire is still blazing among the mills, and no more bodies have been recovered. A man residing several blocks below the scene of the main fire, was standing outside his house when the explosion occurred, and saw a flaming ball descend upon the neighboring houses and spread over it instantly, as if the ball had been a mass of burning oil. This ball, he says was "just fire, nothing else," or nothing substantial about it. The man assured one of the gentlemen stopping at the hotel, that a number of persons that he was at work on that day, for the shaft being sunk close by the destroyed mills, where nitro-glycerine cartridges were used for blasting, and among other things helped to carry nitro-glycerine from cars to the shaft. The dust explosion theory, however, is stoutly maintained by those who were in the immediate vicinity.

One of those gentlemen stopping at the Nicollet, said he was looking at the Washburn mill and saw flames shoot from the third and fourth story windows an instant before the first explosion. This man heard two explosions. Another man, standing at the time about four squares away on higher ground, saw a cloud of smoke rise from the mill. The elevator between him and the Washburn mill appeared to part bodily from top to bottom, and instantly broke into flames, as if contact with the outer air had at once fired the whole.

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At this hour the fire is still blazing among the mills, and no more bodies have been recovered. A man residing several blocks below the scene of the main fire, was standing outside his house when the explosion occurred, and saw a flaming ball descend upon the neighboring houses and spread over it instantly, as if the ball had been a mass of burning oil. This ball, he says was "just fire, nothing else," or nothing substantial about it. The man assured one of the gentlemen stopping at the Nicollet, said he was looking at the Washburn mill and saw flames shoot from the third and fourth story windows an instant before the first explosion. This man heard two explosions. Another man, standing at the time about four squares away on higher ground, saw a cloud of smoke rise from the mill. The elevator between him and the Washburn mill appeared to part bodily from top to bottom, and instantly broke into flames, as if contact with the outer air had at once fired the whole.

The full extent cannot be realized until morning. From the remains I should judge about fifty railroad cars are destroyed. The round house is split clear through the middle from the force of the explosion.

It is impossible to give further details of loss of life, as all dead bodies are in the ruins and families are not to be found. Minneapolis feels deeply grateful to St. Paul physicians for coming early to render assistance if needed. The city is extremely quiet. It is acknowledged that Minneapolis never experienced so deep an affliction.

IN ST. PAUL. The shock, and in some portions the detonation of the explosion was distinctly heard and felt in this city, and a few persons who chanced to be looking in the direction of Minneapolis, saw the cloud of smoke which shot up into the air immediately following.

Occupants of the custom house distinctly felt the shock, several stepping to the doors to learn the cause. General in the city hall, not a very substantial building, say that structure rocked back and forth very perceptibly. On St. Anthony Hill the