

7 Stratford GTR dynamite explosion

Stratford, Ont.

DESTROYED BY DYNAMITE.

MAY 5 1879 - The explosion moved the steeple on Knox Church 3 feet off its centre. The company shipping the dynamite never accepted blame for the accident.

AN EXPLOSION IN CANADA WRECKING FREIGHT CARS AND KILLING TWO MEN.

Stratford, Ont., May 5. -- A few minutes before 10 o'clock this morning the whole town was shaken as if by the shock of an earthquake. Windows were blown in and even sidewalks were shaken so as to cause pedestrians to fall.

The cause was soon made apparent. A car laden with dynamite had exploded at the Grand Trunk freight-yard. The wreck beggars description. Underneath the dynamite car a hole several feet deep had been scooped out. The end of the brick freight shed and a portion of the roof were blown down; several frame buildings were levelled and a long string of freight cars lying in the yard were utterly wrecked. In the business part of the town, nearly a mile from the scene of the explosion, valuable plate-glass windows were broken and many others were blown in, frames and all. The damage done to property is estimated at many thousand dollars. Two railway employees working in the yard, FRANK LEMAINÉ, of Montreal, and THOMAS DOLAN, of Stratford, were blown into fragments, the foot of one of them being found 200 yards off. Others were injured, but the whole extent of the disaster cannot be known for some time to come.

A more careful examination shows the damage done to be much greater than was expected. The houses around the freight shed were nearly all wooden buildings and several were blown into splinters and as many more were damaged.

MR. FLYNN, the checker, who has an office at the entrance of the yard, is among the badly injured. Two of the clerks, MESSRS. DRYSDALE and PORTER, were in the office at the time and had a narrow escape. The building was shattered and how they escaped unhurt is a miracle. One man, who was walking towards the freight-house, was blown over the fence and sustained only a few scratches. A fragment of iron weighing over a pound was driven through a window of the Crown Hotel, half a mile from the explosion. The shock was felt in all the surrounding towns and it was supposed to be an earthquake. The car upon which the explosion occurred was freighted at Montreal for Amherstburg and contained thirty packages which were entered as blasting powder. They were to have been used in blasting at the Vanderbilt Detroit tunnel. When the explosion occurred the cars were being switched in the yard. The damage will exceed \$250,000.

GEORGE HAWKINS, a car-dealer, had both his eyes put out by a splinter and is not expected to live.

JOSEPH HUMPHREY is badly cut about the head and face but may recover. ALFRED LAMB was badly injured.

The World New York City 1879-05-06



THE DYNAMITE EXPLOSION
At Stratford, Ontario, Canada,
ON THE MORNING OF THE 5th OF MAY, 1879
Taken a few minutes after the Catastrophe by A. M. CAMPBELL, Photographer.
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