

Exponent, Vol 9, 1882--July 20

A Bleach explosion occurred Saturday July 15 in the Adams and Companies Paper Mill killing Albert Schwartzentroupe and injuring Will St John. The Bleach house was demolished--Five tons of iron hurled 185 feet.

A loud explosion soon followed by the report that one of the steam rotary bleaches in Adams & Co paper mill had exploded, tearing down the bleach house and burning several men in the ruins, threw this place into a fever of excitement at 2:30 pm last Saturday P.M.

The telephone exchange was kept busy for a few minutes and soon the whole place was appraised of the calamity and crowds were seen going in the direction of the mill. The place presented a wild appearance. The bleach house two stories high was flattened to the ground, a great hole was stove in the east side of the sack factory, on the ground which lay over half the exploded bleach which had brought all this destruction.

Active inquiry revealed the fact all of the employees were out of the ruins and comparatively unharmed except Albert Schwartzentroupe, who was engaged at work in the bleach house and he could not be found. Hundreds of willing hands began the work of removing the debris. Ropes were procured and fastened to the timbers, and with as many as could work to advantage they were dragged out, but while this work was going on the cry of "here he is" arose and then work ceased for a time. The unfortunate man was found jammed into a half empty chloride of lime cask, terribly mangled and scalded. Death must have been instantaneous for the back of his head was crushed, his back broken, one leg broken in two places and the bones driven out through the flesh, besides being literally cooked all over by escaping steam. After some labor the remains were removed from the ruins, taken to an adjoining building, stripped and washed, and removed to AJ Coles undertaking establishment where they were prepared, as well as possible for being viewed by the grief stricken wife who had been informed of the calamity and was hurrying to town from her home down the river. Her grief was pitiable to behold.

He had left her well and happy in the morning and now was a lifeless mangled corpse. Will St John, who was cutting rope in the second story went down in the ruins and had a miraculous escape from death. He was severely scalded on both arms and received a wound on the calf of his right leg from a sharp piece of iron or wood. Dr. Walters dressed his wounds and he is now in Newberry and will not be able to work for some time.

Several other employees were knocked down by the concussion and had narrow escapes, but no other serious casualties occurred. The rotary bleach which did the damage was 20 feet long and 6 ft in diameter and weighed 7 1/2 tons. It held when charged, 3800 pounds of cut rope, 70 barrels of water and 2 barrels of lime. After the

charge is put in, the opening is closed with a man-head, when steam is admitted through the shaft at the end and the whole set rolling on its bearings for eight hours. The bleach was charged and set in motion about 9 am and had, therefore, been running about six hours when the explosion occurred, which must contradict the theory of the generation of gasses causing the accident.

The bleach was torn in two about 6 feet from the east end, and the larger portion, 14 ft. long was hurled 50 feet into the air and 185 feet away, across the street, striking the sack factory some 20 feet from the ground. A large post broke its force and dented in one of its sides nearly two feet. It struck on one end in the ground and fell over parallel with the building. The other end was torn off at the head, and the intervening piece, was torn open on the side and straightened out. Both these pieces were thrown through a stone wall into the boiler room adjoining.

This bleach was put into the mill 21 years ago, and has been in use almost continuously ever since. The company claims that it was inspected on the inside a few months ago and pronounced safe, but as its outside was covered with a wooden jacket, this part was not examined. The iron is about three-eighths of an inch thick, but in places is a sixteenth thinner, some sheets being corroded much worse.

The immediate cause of the explosion may never be known. At the inquest held before AB Gardner, Esq. acting coroner, John Larkworthy foreman of the mill swore he had always considered the bleach safe. He also swore that he examined the valve which regulates the pressing of steam on the bleach only two or three days before and found them all right. He said also that he went home to some work about 1 o'clock and that, when he left the weights were all right and were set at 45 lbs. or what they call the light weights.

WC Davis the engineer substantiated testimony of Mr. Larkworthy and the testimony showed that Mr. Adams had very frequently cautioned all the employees to be careful. Mr. Gardner brought in a verdict Monday to the effect that Albert Schwartzentroup came to his death by accidental explosion of a rotary bleach in Adams & Co's paper mill. Mr Gardner conducted the inquest very fairly and impartially.

The company places its loss at \$5000.00 The bleach house which occupied an angle in the main building was entirely demolished. The north wall of the boiler room torn down and a portion of its roof demolished besides the loss to the sack factory which is not very great.

Rebuilding will begin at once and with a large force of men. Adams & Co. expect to be rebuilt in about six weeks. The mill will start however in 2 or 3 weeks using remaining bleach and running light until everything is again in perfect shape.



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The Exponent thinks that AB Gardner Esq. acting coroner erred in not summoning expert testimony to examine into the cause of the explosion at Adams & Co. Mill last Saturday. The fact that the rotary bleach which exploded killing Albert Schwartzentroupe had been in continual use 21 years, and that there is a diversity of opinion as to the cause, should of itself call for searching investigation. Again, the explosion of these bleaches in paper mills is not of uncommon occurrence and a thorough examination of all the facts attainable by experts might have led to discoveries which would prevent like occurrences in the future, here and elsewhere. Public opinion is prone to criticism in a time like this, and a thorough investigation would tend to exonerate the company if guiltless of criminal negligence or to condemn them if guilty.