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40 KILLED IN DETROIT

BOILERS IN THE JOURNAL OFFICE EXPLODE.

Five-Story Building Completely Wrecked and About 50 Souls Carried Down in the Debris—At Least 40 Were Killed and a Score Injured.

Horrible Holocaust at Detroit.

The five-story brick building occupied by the Evening Journal, on the corner of Larned and Shelby streets, Detroit, was the scene of the most harrowing disaster that has ever been experienced in this city. The building is divided into three sections by two fire walls which run from the foundation to the roof. The section to the west were occupied by the Journal, principally while the eastern section contained the Journal business office in the basement and the Journal stereotyping rooms on the fifth floor. The intermediate floors were occupied by Hiller & Hubbard; John Clark & Co., manufacturing chemists; Wm. Dunlap & Co., machinists; the Journal binding department; Hiller & Hubbard, engravers; F. E. Collier, Detroit branch of the New York publishing house of McNair & Co.; Hiller, Davis & Co. and Hiller employed quite a number of persons and the employes of the other firms would bring the total number of people in that section of the building up to about 50.

It was about 5 o'clock in the morning when without the least warning there was a sudden explosion of the most terrific character. The walls fell outward and an instant later the entire five stories collapsed and crushed down, one floor after another, burying in between 40 and 50 precious souls in the awful wreck and ruin.

All that could be seen was a frightful mass of broken and twisted and tangled timbers, iron work, bricks, stone and plaster and in the midst of this conglomeration were the dead, dying and wounded. It seems miraculous that the walls of the buildings did not come down. If it had been the case the loss of life would have been more than doubled. As it was all the windows were badly crushed, the windows all smashed and other damage done. Surrounding buildings also suffered but their windows were broken by the concussion and a great many people were injured by broken glass.

Before the people in the vicinity of the disaster had recovered from the shock cries of distress were heard from the pile of debris and a few of the firemen were seen staggering out of the edges of the mass. They were badly dazed, cut and bleeding. They were taken care of by the crowd which at once began to swarm upon the street. The fire department and the ambulances were called out and in a few moments scores of rescuers were tearing at the ruins with hands and implements to rescue those imprisoned in the wreck. The terror of the situation was increased by the fire which broke out and the smoke became so dense that the workers were threatened with suffocation. Several streams of water were turned on, but the steam only added to the difficulty of the rescuers and progress in the work of getting the poor victims who might yet have a spark of life. However, four dead bodies were recovered and the three hours, three persons having been previously rescued alive. It then became apparent that there was no possibility of saving any more alive, but the force of men was increased until over 300 were at work and 50 teams were hauling away the rubbish.

The work continued throughout the day and by 6 o'clock the number of bodies recovered had increased to 17. Electric lights were provided and the labor was carried on during the night. While on many hours 16 bodies had been taken from the ruins and still there were 25 persons missing, all undoubtedly having been crushed to death. Many mothers, brothers and sisters awaited with pitiful grief for the remains of their loved ones which were in the ruins. The work was very difficult and as the bodies were discovered one by one the weary workers would call a halt while about them and in most cases the bodies were horribly mutilated, burned and charred. Every effort was made by means of identification was by small portions of the clothing which remained. While on many hours 16 bodies had been taken from the ruins and still there were 25 persons missing, all undoubtedly having been crushed to death by the falling walls