

# Titcomb's Mill Boiler Explosion

**Aroostook Times, Friday March 9 1906**

Shortly after eight o'clock Monday morning of this week the citizens of the town who chanced to be out of doors realized that something serious had happened in the direction of the B & A as the town was shaken by a mighty explosion. Many who heard the report thought that a boiler had blown up at the B & A yards or that there must have been a head on collision but these ideas were quickly dispelled as shortly after the report the fire was pulled in from the box<sup>34</sup> and word came that Titcomb's Mill was on fire.



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The fire Co. and many of the citizens hastened to the scene where it was found that one of the large boilers connected with the mill had blown up and completely demolished the brick boiler-house and engine room. The large smoke stack which has stood through the burning of the two mills on this site could not withstand the terrific force of the explosion and was hurled to the ground. The boiler room contained three boilers of high power, one of which had been in use for many years and this one did the damage.

It is not known now and probably never will be known now and probably never will be known just what caused the boiler to burst, but as the damage is done it is unnecessary to look for the immediate cause; suffice to say that it exploded, was carried by the force of the explosion from its position in the boiler room, which is outside the mill, through the south wall of the mill taking in its course all obstructions such as beams, steam pipes, iron rods, etc., into the part of the mill devoted to the manufacture of long lumber; here it was switched off in another direction and finally landed at the eastern side of the mill having traveled fully 75 feet from its starting point and at the highest point in its flight having an elevation of about 25 feet.

Ordinarily such a catastrophe could not occur without considerable loss of life but in this instance no lives were lost and only three men were injured but it was miraculous that these three escaped with so little injury as they sustained. William Thompson the engineer received the most severe injuries being badly battered about the head and shoulders by flying brick and other debris. When found he was nearly buried in the mass of wreckage and it was thought that he was dead; his face and head were covered with blood and he was lying motionless, but after being raised to a sitting posture he regained consciousness. He will probably lose the sight of right eye but otherwise he will be all right. Frank McFarland, the fireman was badly scalded and it was said that he was blown, bodily, 240 feet, but we think that until the facts are known, this statement should be taken with a grain of salt, or perhaps two. At anyrate

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the young man had no bones broken. He was first found 240 feet from the mill but how he got there is not definitely known. Nevers Dow was slightly injured and was taken to his home. Thompson and McFarland were taken to the new hospital where they are recovering rapidly although public gas had the dead many times.

