

State and FBI Seek Cause of DuPont Blast

Post 1-18/40
Two Dead, Five Hurt
In N. J. Explosion;
Sabotage Is Denied

(Picture on Page 6.)
By International News Service

Gibbstown, N. J., Jan. 17.—A tremendous explosion of 6,000 pounds of nitro-glycerin in the Repauno plant of the E. I. duPont de Nemours Co. here today killed at least two workmen, injured five others and rocked a 60-mile tri-State area. Investigation to ascertain whether sabotage was responsible was ordered by Col. Mark O. Kimberling, superintendent of State police. Federal Bureau of Investigation agents also were investigating, although company spokesmen said they doubted the possibility of sabotage in the heavily guarded plant. The blast broke windows in a wide area and rattled them as far away as Philadelphia, but it was more than 30 minutes before even the chief of police of Gibbstown could locate the scene of the explosion.

Wild rumors spread that the Philadelphia Navy Yard had been bombed. Philadelphia and Camden sent fire apparatus and ambulances speeding there. Finally, the duPont company announced.

"An explosion wrecked one of the units in the manufacture of nitro-glycerin at the Repauno plant of the duPont company at Gibbstown."

The two men in the building, dead, were: Edward M. Bunden, jr., 31, of Paulsboro, N. J., and Earl L. Harbison, 30, of Clayton, N. J.

A grade school near the plant trembled and shook, and its windows
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Sabotage Hinted In duPont Blast

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dows crashed in. The frightened pupils were sent home for the day. Several store fronts in the general neighborhood were blown in.

Of the building where the explosion occurred—a one-story, 40-foot square affair—Paul C. Kaiser, plant manager, said:

"There's nothing left but a hole in the ground."

The only trace found of the men in the plant was a rubber heel. The damage would have been considerably more widespread, explosive experts explained, except for the practice of piling earth barricades high around each individual building, which "cushioned" the concussion.

The buildings are widely separated specifically to prevent any widespread damage in case of accidents, and only a very few are employed at the same time in any single building.

Had Previous Explosions

The building in which the explosion took place was known as neutralizing building No. 4 in which it was explained, raw nitro-glycerin is mixed with a neutralizing chemical and wood pulp which makes it into blasting powder, far less dangerous to handle than the raw nitro-glycerin itself.

More than 20 persons have been killed in previous blasts at the plants at Gibbstown, where explosives, acids and dyes are manufactured. The most serious occurred in January, May and October of 1918, when in three explosions a total of 18 were killed.