

TERRIBLE DYNAMITE EXPLOSION 1885.

From the Peterborough Paper of Sept.4th,1885 given by Alec Rose 1965.

On Friday forenoon (Sept.4th) there was a sound heard in our village resembling distant but severe thunder, and the houses shook and windows rattled so audibly that many thought an earthquake had occurred. After many inquiries it was learned that a load of dynamite which had passed through here the night before had exploded within two miles of Lakefield. The shock was distinctly felt in Tweed, 50 miles distant from the scene of the disaster. We clip the following particulars from the Peterborough Daily Evening Review:--

Lakefield, Sept.4-- About 9.45 a terrible explosion occurred close to the residence of Mr. Nolan, about a mile and a half from the village. There was a pit dug in the road over sixty feet wide and about eight feet deep. For fifty or seventy-five yards the trees were level with the ground. There were two men on the wagon, and nothing can be found of them but a finger and a few pieces of skull. Half of the trunk of a horse is on each side of the road. The harness was blown off and the shoes were blown from the hoofs. Fragments of clothing and pieces of flesh were hanging to the trees for scores of yards around. As the explosion took place in a swamp there is very little chance of recovering any of the remains. This village was much shaken. Glass was broken and things were thrown from the walls.

The names of the men who had charge of the dynamite are George Morton and James Simmons.

A dynamite explosion is one of the kinds of catastrophes which none survive to tell the tale of what caused it. It seems that the wagon was being driven over a piece of corduroy road, which is very rough in this kind of weather especially. The jar, it is likely, was too great, and the sad and terrible death of the two drivers was instantly the result.

The explosion was distinctly heard for miles around, all through the adjoining townships. The report was heard at Warsaw, and Samuel McCabe, who was standing on the Court House Hill here this morning, actually saw the cloud of dust and trees thrown up. He describes the sight as being similar in appearance to a cyclone. The cloud was quite black and perfectly visible for a few moments, when it again subsided.

A later despatch says:- The accounts of the effects of the terrible dynamite explosion continue to come in. At Hastings the shock was felt quite plainly. Indeed so much did it shake one building that Mr. Wallace harness maker, the occupant, ran out, thinking that the chimney had fallen down. One old lady who was alone in her house, was much surprised to see the door slamming to, and the idea that at once flashed upon her mind was that there was an earthquake. She was in a state of trepidity until she found out that no such thing had happened. Near the school several lights of glass were broken in private residences.

From a despatch sent from Campbellford it would appear that the shock was very severe. It is as follows:--

Campbellford, Sept.4 --An earthquake was felt in this section at 9.40 this morning. The shock was plainly felt in Hastings, Madoc, Blairton, Marmora and Frankford. In Campbellford a plate glass window was broken and buildings were shaken. Women at work in the houses heard the dishes in the buttery rattle. In Frankford the shock upset a pile of freight in the station.

In other villages the shock was also felt. In Norwood the effects