

No, it wasn't the Natives —

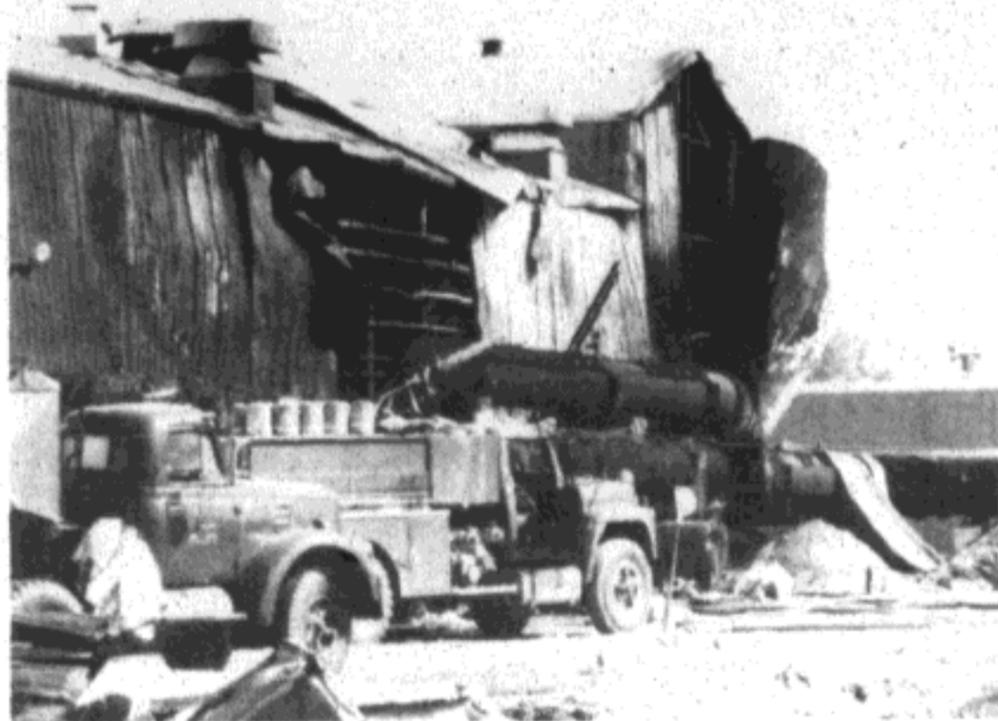
Explosion at Pump Station 8 Kills One, Stops Oil Flow in the Pipeline

By WILLIAM ARES

Fire and an explosion totally destroyed the pump building facility at Pump Station 8 on the trans-Alaska pipeline. The explosion occurred Friday afternoon at the pump station located approximately 35 miles south of Fairbanks.

The fire and subsequent explosion caused the death of one Fairbanks man and injured five others. Killed in the fire was Charles Garrett Lindsay. The 39 year old retired airman was working at the pump station as a pipeline technician. Lindsay, who worked in the control room was in the pump building when oil leaked into the room from a flange that was being opened to remove a filter. The highly volatile hydro-carbon vapors ignited and in a matter of minutes the huge building was a mess of melted steel. Alyeska investigators are trying to determine exactly how the gas ignited.

According to eye-witnesses,



MANIFOLD BUILDING — this building, 200 feet from the main pump building, illustrates the intensity of the July 8 explosion. Tundra Times photos by WILLIAM ARES

there was burning oil squirting everywhere and it ran out of the north side of the pump building into the woods and across the access road that passes by there going to the main gate. David



DEVASTATION AT PUMP STATION 8 — Flame retardant is sprayed on the still hot, smoldering debris of the totally destroyed main pump building.

Nilner, a pipeliner for 29 years from Louisiana, said, "tin flew everywhere and the oil just started squirting out of there," as he pointed to the area on the north side of the pump building where a parked bus and several other pieces of heavy equipment were totally destroyed. The path of the oil included several thousand square feet of woods on both sides of the access road.

Firefighters from Eielson A.F.B., Fairbanks and Alyeska's own crews had the fire under control in an hour and a half. Also Ft. Wainwright's emergency evacuation team was at the scene immediately with a large helicopter to transport the injured workers. Of the five men hurt, only one was air lifted

in the helicopter and two of the men were released Saturday.

When asked if the oil would resume flowing in the immediate future Alyeska public relations manager, Jonh Ratterman said, "the pipeline itself is intact and if we bypass the pump station it could resume flowing soon." He also said that it will take several months to replace the pumps and building.

The pumps at Pump Station 8 are used mainly for regulating the flow and pressure of the oil and are not essential for main line flow. There was damage also to the side of the manifold building facing the explosion. The main line pipe carries oil

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Pump 8 . . .

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through the manifold building where it is metered and then sent into the pump building. The extent of the damage to the manifold building was not immediately known.

Clean up of the spill and damaged portions of the pump station were in progress before the twisted steel building had cooled. And crews will begin the difficult task of removing the burned pumps and melted mass of heavy pipe inside the building. One source said that it will pose a special problem as there is so much steel, both in the building itself and in the equipment inside all fused together.