On October 26, 1923, an explosion at the Pure Oil Company plant at Cabin Creek caused damage estimated at more than $100,000.

**CSO: SS.8.9, SS.8.24, ELA.8.1**

**Investigate the Document:** *(Charleston Gazette October 27, 1923)*

1. How large was the blast radius?

2. Although an official investigation had not been completed, the article states that *what* was likely the cause of the explosion?

**Think Critically:** Describe the change in industry that occurred during the 1920s. What was the state of labor unions and work safety? The rise of *this* industry necessitated the need of oil plants, such as the one that was in Cabin Creek. Why was the 1920s referred to as the “Roaring 20s?”
SCENES IN CABIN CREEK GASOLINE PLANT BLAST

Close-up of the State plant of the Page Oil company at Cabin Creek, which was destroyed by an explosion yesterday. The two photographs at the upper right show the extent of the damage, while those below show the remains of the plant, near distance from the wrecked building were covered with debris that was carried in its wake. In the lower picture is a glowing view of the explosion, indicating the area affected by the explosion.
$100,000 LOSS IN OIL PLANT BLAST AT CABIN CREEK

Two Men Seriously Injured When Filter Plant is Razed by Explosion and Subsequent Fires

ROCKS COUNTRYSIDE FOR MILES AROUND

Officials Announce Plans to Rebuild Wrecked Structure at Once; One Man Thrown Through Building

Work will be started immediately on the Cabin Creek refinery division of the Pure Oil company to repair the $100,000 damage caused yesterday morning by an explosion and a subsequent fire in the oil filter building. It was stated last night by J. J. Rhiel, general manager of the division.

One man was seriously injured and four others slightly hurt when the explosion made a complete wreck of the filter plant and damaged adjoining buildings within a radius of a half mile.

J. J. McConney, 47 years old, was badly hurt. He was inside the building when the explosion occurred and was blown through the structure. At the Mountain State hospital, this city, where he was brought by a special train, it was stated he had a fair chance to recover.

The explosion, which wrecked the countryside, occurred between 10 and 11 o'clock yesterday morning. It was stated it was caused by excess of pressure in the oil filters. This pressure was too great for the safety valves and the explosion was the result.

Cause Not Determined

General Manager Rhiel said no official investigation of the explosion had been made and he could not say definitely what was the cause.

Debris covers the territory surrounding the refinery for a distance of several hundred feet.

The explosion was terrific. Windows were blown from houses in the vicinity of Dry Branch and the force of the blast was felt at Cabin Creek, Chalyn and other places.

M. C. Pennell, 65, employee of the plant, suffered a broken arm and a broken leg as a result of the explosion. He was walking along the railroad track a short distance from the filter building when the explosion occurred. He was buried beneath two feet of brick and shattered timber.

McConney, the most seriously injured, suffered several broken ribs and numerous surface lacerations. Physicians attending him had not ascertained last night whether he received other internal injuries. Workmen at the plant took four feet of debris from the unconscious body of McConney and he was rushed to the local hospital as soon as the special train could be secured.

Ras Narrow Escape

General Manager Rhiel had walked past the filter building only a minute before the explosion occurred. He was standing at the general office of the division and was knocked to the ground by the force of the blast. An instant later he recovered consciousness and crawled to a safe distance.

Brick and timber were falling all around him.

The company's emergency fire apparatus was brought into use, and the fire was confined to the filter house. Burning oil and gasoline hampered the volunteer fire workers, but they succeeded in bringing the blaze under control by noon.

Mr. Rhiel estimated the damage at approximately $100,000. He said the house was covered by insurance and that the filter plant, which makes possible the manufacture of certain grades of oils, will be rebuilt. He said a temporary arrangement will be made at once and that oil will be filtered again within the next few days.

Three men are employed in the large filter building. One of them did not report for work yesterday morning, and a second workman was not in the building at the time of the explosion. Mr. McConney was the only occupant. It was said to have been remarkably fortunate that several persons did not lose their lives.

Calls Are Sent

Immediately following the explosion calls were sent to adjoining towns for medical aid and several physicians responded. First reports to Charleston said several men had been killed.

Physicians who went to the scene gave first aid to the injured men, and then ordered the special train. They were Drs. A. R. Nelson, of East Bank, Dr. R. R. Black, of Cabin Creek Junction, and Dr. Hayes, of Chalyn.

According to the Rev. W. M. Tisdale, pastor of the M.E. church at Chalyn, who gave a graphic description of the accident, the force of the explosion was so great that roofs of dwellings on the company's