

## The Toy Pistol Factory

The Lloyd, Adams & Simpson Toy Pistol factory was located at 2nd and Jefferson Streets and opened in Feb. 1903. The product became quickly popular as a large Cincinnati novelty firm contracted with the factory.

On December 16, 1904, there was an explosion that caused the death of a young female worker and injured several others. The newspaper showed an artist's rendition of the building after the explosion tore through the factory that was located on the second and third floors.

Four young women jumped from the third floor and one from the second floor. The rest of the women rushed the staircases. One stairway was blocked, so everyone rushed the other and one girl was injured as she was trampled. The death of the young female was due to her jumping from the third floor and hitting her head on the ground. It took several months for all the seriously injured to recover.

The commotion started when a worker was cutting a sheet of caps. One caught fire and soon the whole work table was aflame. Quickly the sound of over 5,000 caps burning carried through the morning air. As the firemen arrived, they were hesitant about entering the building filled with different combustibles. The company denied that there had been an explosion. The explanation of the fallen wall was due to the heat of the fire weakening the wall and roof.

However, the state inspector determined that an explosion had occurred from gas generated by the chemicals used in manufacturing the caps. It was also determined that their type of business should not occupy upper floors of a building.

In 1905, along with their toy pistol factory, the company added slippers to their manufacturing line and joined the shoe competition. The factories employed 100 people. In 1906, the Portsmouth Cap Company was opened by Lloyd- Adams and located in South Portsmouth (KY) along the Ohio River.

In 1908, the toy pistol company changed the name to Buster Novelty. The toy pistols were shipped around the world. The factory also made fireworks that Portsmouth used in July 4th displays.

In March, 1913, the shoe factory was closed.

On May 1, 1917, Adams received word that there had been an explosion at the South Portsmouth plant. Adams and the employees denied any explosion, but instead a devastating fire that killed a 12 year old girl. It was not known how the fire started, but one theory was a cap was ignited by a cutting machine.

Earl T. Adams died of pneumonia in 1919 at the age of 43. His companies, Adams Manufacturing (a.k.a. Lloyd-Adams) and the Portsmouth Cap Company were dissolved in 1922.