Peshtigo, Wisconsin, 1871

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- Including the outlying areas 1150 people died.
In 1871 Peshtigo was a booming lumber town. It stood on both sides of the Peshtigo river which flowed southeast to enter Lake Michigan's Green Bay 6 miles away.

The town had close to 2000 inhabitants working in sawmills and factories making timber buckets, broom handles, shingles and other wood based products.
The fire occurred on 8 October after a period when the ground and vegetation was very dry. Survivors of the fire recall hearing a distant roar before the fire reached them. Very soon, under the action of the southwest wind, the timber sidewalks of Peshtigo started to blaze.

Inhabitants sought refuge in the river - the safest place - as the forest flames leapt across the river, but some were swept away and drowned or were carried by the current onto the burning bridge.

40 people tried to get protection by entering the sawmill workers boarding house but they were burnt to a cinder.

Between 9 and 10 o’clock the entire town of Peshtigo was burnt out.

Some people outside the town committed suicide rather than face the fire. More than 600 died in Peshtigo, but including the outlying areas it is estimated that 1150 people died.

The area swept by fire was estimated to be 1,280,000 acres.

These figures suggest that this forest fire was the largest, in terms of life loss, in North America and possibly in the world.