

Student Handout 5-The Steel Pourer's Platform

The open-hearth department is equally dangerous. I talked with a man who had been burned when the fluid steel broke out sooner than he had expected as he was knocking out the tapping hole. The steel came with a rush and his face and body were badly seared. This man had been a first helper, the man in charge of a furnace, but he gave up the job because, as he said, he lost his nerve over another accident in which a man under him was killed. A furnace had just been tapped. The crane lifted the huge ladle of molten steel out of the pit and was about to swing it around, when something gave way and the whole load dropped eight or ten feet, with an explosion as it struck the ground. Some of the metal flew completely over the furnace and striking the ground on the opposite side, rebounded and splashed over a workman standing some distance away. This man was horribly burned and died almost instantly. He had been standing where anyone would have thought him safe on the far side of the furnace. Men standing near were severely burned, but recovered from their injuries.

Source: *The Pittsburgh Survey, Chapter VII: Health and Accidents in Steel Making, p.66.*



The Steel Pourer's Platform

Credit: Fitch, John A. *The Steel Workers: The Pittsburgh Survey findings in six volumes*, ed. P.U. Kellogg
New York: Charities Publications Committee, 1910.

Photography by Lewis Hine