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This image depicts part of a mural at the Peshtigo Fire Museum in Peshtigo, Wisconsin. It reflects an artist's conception of the frightening time which the town's residents endured as they tried to survive the disaster at Peshtigo during its Great Fire of 1871.

When the Peshtigo fire was over, survivors had the gruesome task of burying their dead. The "Fire Cemetery" was used for bodies that could be identified.

At least 350 were burned beyond recognition. They were buried in a mass grave at the church. (The Church is now the Peshtigo Fire Museum).

Remarkably, the month before the town burned, a "Bird's Eye View of Peshtigo" had been completed. Now maintained at the Library of Congress, the colored plat map beautifully depicts the way Peshtigo appeared just before it was destroyed.

Undaunted by the staggering disaster, people in Peshtigo rebuilt their lives and their town. Within ten years it was once again a flourishing place on the river. As the town's logo demonstrates, it is a "city reborn from the ashes."

People did not forget the tragedy, even if most folks in the nation never knew (or soon forgot) about it. Survivors, like Amelia Desrochers, helped to keep the story of the horror alive.

Meanwhile, the country's attention was focused on the southern shore of Lake Michigan - to the place, known at the time, as America's "second city."

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PESHTIGO-SURVIVORS-Great-Fire-of-1871>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PESHTIGO-SURVIVORS-Great-Fire-of-1871>

## Questions 2 Ponder

### Does It Take Perseverance to Rebuild after a Tragedy?

Birds who keep building nests in the same place, even after those nests have blown away, demonstrate undaunted perseverance in the face of tragedy. Peshtigo survivors, who endured the Great Fire of 1871 were like those nest-builders.

Soon after the Great Fire of 1871 demolished their town and damaged their lives, survivors of the Peshtigo tragedy rebuilt their town and repaired their lives. For the most part, they had to do this on their own since most of the national aid went to help Chicagoans rebuild their city.

Do you think the Peshtigo survivors thought about the unfair distribution of aid as they recovered from their fiery disaster? Explain your answer.

What motivated the people of Peshtigo to move forward, even though they did not receive the kind of help they really needed?

## Media Stream



### Peshtigo - The Fire Victims' Mass Grave

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Peshtigo-The-Fire-Victims-Mass-Grave>



### Bird's Eye View of Peshtigo - September, 1871

"Bird's Eye View of Peshtigo," September 1871, maintained at the U.S. Library of Congress. Online, courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Bird-s-Eye-View-of-Peshtigo-September-1871>



### Photo - Peshtigo Rebuilt After the Fire

Image online, courtesy Peshtigo Historical Society.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Photo-Peshtigo-Rebuilt-After-the-Fire>



### Amelia Desrochers - Peshtigo Fire Survivor

Photo of Amelia Desrochers, online courtesy *Peshtigo Times*.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Amelia-Desrochers-Peshtigo-Fire-Survivor>



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