EXTRA!

STARTS IN KITCHEN

Jamaica Plain Hall on Fire.

Contains Branch of Public Library.

Blaze Discovered After Dancers Leave.

Building and Contents Valued at $100,000.

Fire started this morning about 3 o'clock in the caterer's kitchen in the top story of Curtis hall, a three-story brick building on South st, near Center, Jamaica Plain. A first alarm and a third alarm were rung, the first at 2:55, the third at 3:09, the second being omitted.

At 4 o'clock the two upper stories had been practically destroyed and the fire was burning toward the branch of the public library on the ground floor.

The building is occupied on the first floor by a branch of the Boston public library and by the rooms of the Jamaica Plain friendly society. On the second floor is a large hall and several smaller rooms. The third floor contained a large banquet hall.

The hall was occupied last evening by the Oakdale athletic association, which gave a dance. It was shortly after the last of the dancers had left that the fire was discovered.

The building is valued with its contents at about $100,000. It was city property, having been presented to the city many years ago by the man for whom it was named.

CURTIS HALL FIRE-WRECKED

Loss From $25,000 to $30,000.

Library Books Damaged, but Not Destroyed.

Origin of Blaze is Being Investigated.

Fire which withstood all the water the apparatus responding to a third alarm could pour into it for three and a half hours yesterday morning badly wrecked the building known as Curtis hall at Jamaica Plain.

It was a three-story brick structure with a mansard roof. On the first floor was a branch of the Boston public library, containing about 15,000 volumes, mostly fiction and school books, which were covered by the protective department, and will not be a total loss, though considerably damaged. On this floor also was the room of the Jamaica Plain Friendly society, a janitor's office and another large room.

On the second floor was a large hall, used for public occasions and dances, this hall would seat 1200 people, and had attached to it dressing rooms, a stage and a balcony. Above it was a banquet hall and kitchen, and above all a blind attic running the entire length of the building.

Monday night the Oakdale athletic association held a dance in the hall, which was attended by nearly 600 persons. It is not believed, however, that carelessness by smokers caused the fire. Sergt Good of division 13 and John J. Van Tassel were in the hall as late as 2 a m, and there were no signs of fire then. Within 45 minutes after Van Tassel left the hall, however, Dr Orville R. Chadwell saw flames coming from the top of the building, and notified headquarters by telephone. While the apparatus was on the way to the fire, starter John Bagley, at the South-st barns, also saw the fire, and an alarm from box 527 was rung at 2:58 a m. As soon as Dist Chief Mulligan arrived he ordered a third alarm rung in, skipping the second, 10 minutes after the first. An attempt to fight the fire from the inside of the building was hastily abandoned, and barely in time, the roof crashing in shortly after the men got out of the building.

The fire attracted a huge crowd, and two sergeants and 80 patrolmen were needed to handle it.

The fire seemed to start in the upper part of the building, at a place where the electric cables entered. But the wiring is declared to be of the most modern conduit system, and is not suspected of causing the fire.

The damage to the building will be from $25,000 to $30,000. The building was erected by the old town of West Roxbury as a town hall in 1868. It became city property when the town became part of the city. It was named for Nelson Curtis, the old-time contractor. He gave the land on which the building stands to the town, of which he was a selectman; he also built the hall and furnished the granite trimmings free. The original building is said to have cost $70,000. Nelson Curtis was an uncle of Ex-Mayor Curtis.

The cause of the fire is being investigated