

FIRE CAUSES A LOSS OF \$75,000

Four Alarms For Blaze in Hecht Building Last Evening.

Firemen Risk Lives to Keep Flames From Barrels of Liquor.

The Hecht Building in Dewey sq, the scene of previous disastrous fires, was again visited by fire early last evening and a loss estimated at about \$75,000 resulted. The blaze was one of the most spectacular in this city for sometime, spreading rapidly from the third floor, through the fourth to the top floor and breaking out of the roof in flames that rose high in the air, endangering adjoining buildings.

An automatic alarm from the third floor of the building gave the first warning of the fire. Engine Company 7 on East st was the first to respond and rushed up to the third floor, which was found to be a roaring furnace. An alarm was then sent in from box 1412 in Dewey sq.

Chief McDonough responded, and a few minutes later ordered a second alarm, this being followed by two other alarms as the fire assumed menacing proportions. There was less than 20 minutes between the first and fourth alarms.

Barrels of Liquor a Menace.

But for the vallant work of the firemen the fire would have taken on greater magnitude, as there was stored on the third floor more than 100 barrels of liquor, the property of Cobb, Hersey & Co, and had the fire reached these, additional work would have been cut out for the firemen. To fight against this danger men of engine companies 4 and 6 carried lines in through Linwood pl, off South st, and up a fire escape on the rear of the building.

At the same time lines were sent in through the basement on the Dewey sq front and up on the fire escape. These men who vallantly held the hose lines were in great danger, as the fire was raging all about them, but they stuck to their task of keeping the fire from reaching the liquor on the third floor.

When the fire broke through the roof and it had fallen in a great wave of flames burst out all through the upper part of the building and the men on the fire escape were in danger of being cut off, as the space in which they were working was not more than 10 feet wide.

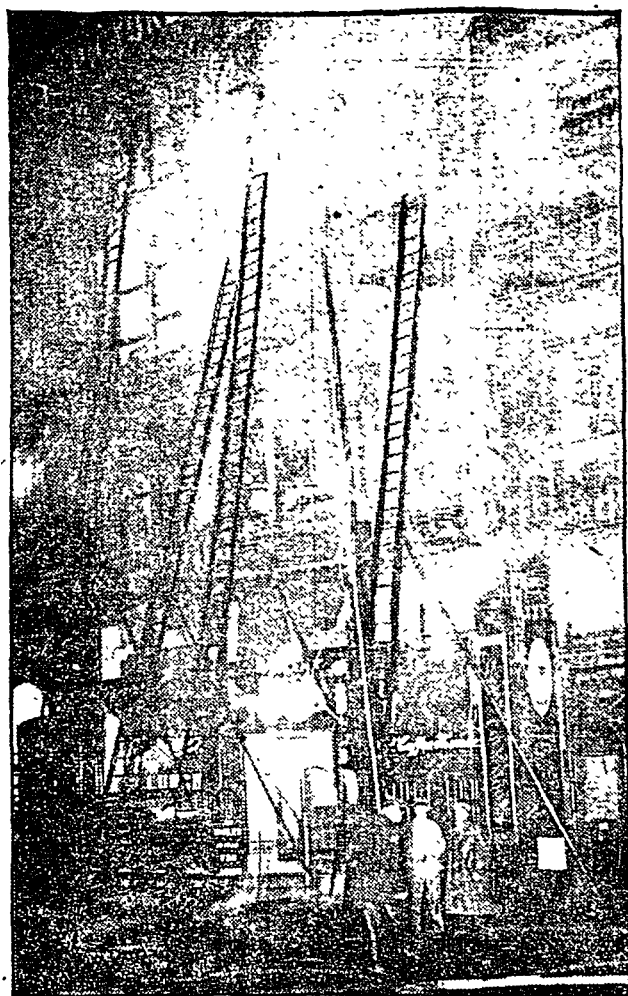
The firemen, however, proved themselves worthy of their task and held the flames in the rear, while Water Tower Company 3 deluged the upper floors from the Dewey-sq side.

Confined to One Section.

The Hecht Building is numbered 641 to 657 Atlantic av. When rebuilt after the previous fires it was provided with fire-walls and fire-doors from one section to another. The fire was confined to a single section, 641-643 Atlantic av, the northerly wing of the building. Water got into the next section on the south, causing damage, and a water damage

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SCENE WHEN HECHT BUILDING FIRE WAS AT ITS HIGHT



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was also sustained by occupants of the Gahm Building, 171 Summer st.

The first floor of the burned section is occupied by Wyman's restaurant, the second and third floors by Cobb, Hersey & Co as storerooms for groceries and liquors, the fourth floor by George A. Schieren, maker of leather belts, and the Boston Fastener Company, and the top floor by three firms dealing in picture frame goods, the Borma Mist Company, Jordan, Harberg Company and the Wizard Company. The fire started in the rear of the third floor.

The next section of the building on the south was severely damaged by water. The street floor is occupied by Rosenthal Bros, sheepskin tanners; Ackerman & Brumell, dealers in cut soles, and S. T. Balsana, who occupies the basement as a barber shop.

Other losers by water were occupants of the Gahm Building, 171 Summer st; Stern Bros on the street floor; the Wagner Clothing Company on the second; B. Hochberg, dealer in furs, on the third, and the Hub Engraving Company on the top floor.

Driven Out by Firemen.

Bruder Hartman, a member of the firm of Hartman Bros, dealers in leather and hides, which has recently moved into the building, said that he and employes were at work when they were driven out by the firemen. He knew nothing of the fire until they rushed into the building.

The firemen had the flames under control about half an hour after the first alarm.

Thousands of persons were attracted to the scene by the flames and the rush of apparatus, and for a time this was a handicap to the firemen, but they were soon pushed back by the police. Power was shut off from both Elevated and street car lines for a time, but when it was seen that the firemen would not need the elevated structure as a vantage point to direct lines the power was again turned on and trains were operated. Street car lines passing through Dewey sq were diverted.

The Hecht Building has had more fires than almost any other building in the city and has been the scene of some of the hardest fights the Boston firemen ever have been called upon. In January of 1893 there was a fierce fire in the building, practically destroying the structure and causing the death of Joseph Barker, a newspaper reporter. In 1903 there was another bad fire in the building and the year following fire again visited the place. A few years ago there was a fire in the rear of a saloon occupying a street floor location, but it was not serious.