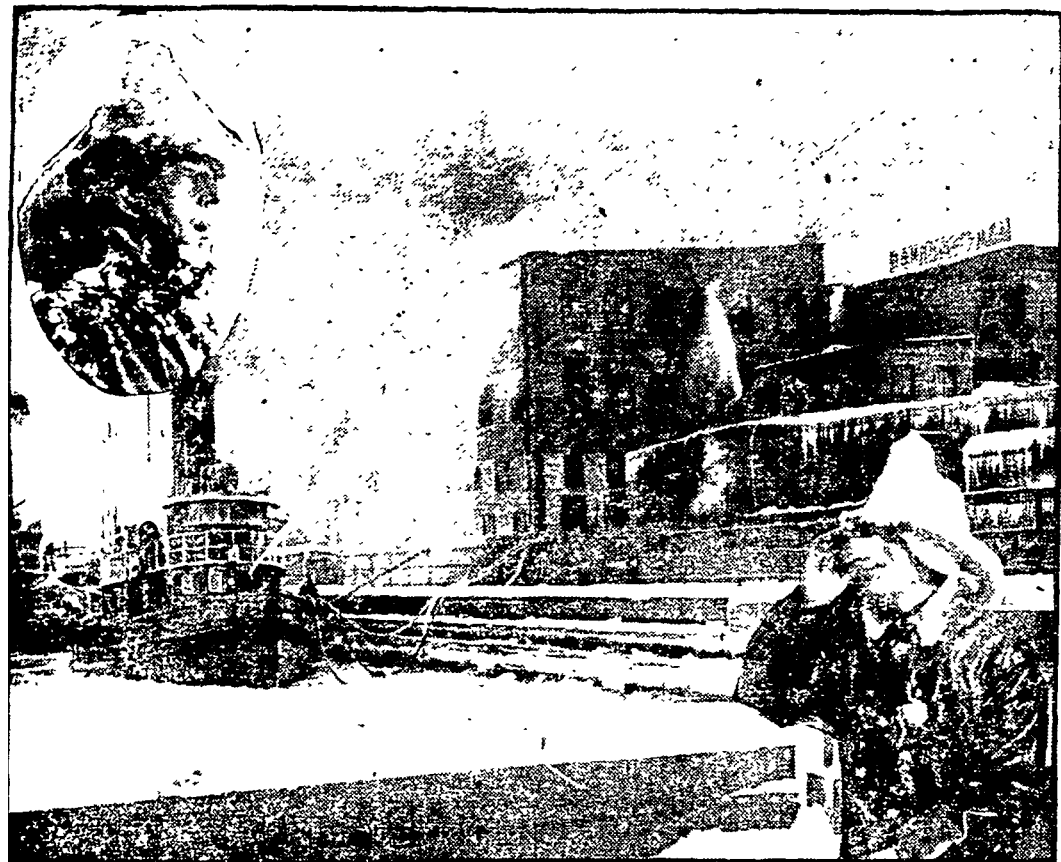


RAILROAD Y. M. C. A. BUILDING AND FREIGHT HOUSE BURNED

B. & M. Employes Driven From Beds Into Bitter Cold---Fireman Injured---Loss About \$80,000



Main Picture—Fighting fire in Railroad Y. M. C. A. Building. Insert Upper Left—Ice coated fireman. In-
sert Lower Right—Edward Finnerty of Engine 7 drinking hot coffee.

SCENES AT BLAZE WHICH GUTTED B. & M. RAILROAD Y. M. C. A AND FREIGHT HOUSE

One fireman was seriously injured. 10 Boston & Maine road workers were compelled to flee their beds in scant raiment and two buildings in the freight-house group behind the old Fitchburg Railroad Station were gutted, with a loss of about \$80,000, in a fire of undetermined origin yesterday forenoon.

The buildings burned were the Railroad Y. M. C. A. Building and a freight-house. The loss is practically covered by insurance. Three alarms brought the best fighting strength of the in-town force to the scene and the battle waged for three hours.

This relatively small loss is attributed to the persistency of the wind on its northwest course and the unflagging efforts of the fire-fighters.

That wind penetrated the stoutest garments and caused a continuous shower of drifting snow, which mixed itself with great gusts of spray from the hose, whose force the wind broke. Firemen, engines, ladders and fire escapes on the building were ice-glazed quickly.

Hoseman Thomas J. Kilduff of Engine 26 fell from a fire escape, but landed on the shoulders of Lieut. Thomas F. Lynch of Tower 1. He was taken to the Relief Hospital, where several ribs on the right side were found to be fractured. This is his third such misfortune in the past year.

Fireman's Thumb Injured

Nicholas F. Aylward of Chemical 1 fell and sustained a painful contusion to the right thumb, but after it had been

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RAILROAD Y. M. C. A. BUILDING BURNED

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dressed at the hospital he rejoined his fellows at the fire, "handaged mit and all," as he said. Charles Greeley of Ladder 8 was treated for a frozen right ear, several others suffered nipped ears and fingers, and some may find today that they were caught in this respect.

The railroad workers—freightmen, conductors, brakemen, railway mail clerks—all asleep in the Y. M. C. A. Building, had been awakened by janitor Arthur Gamble, who discovered the fire. Hustling into whatever clothes or wraps lay nearest, the men dashed down the burning stairways and over the knee-deep snow in Beverly st to the Fitchburg station.

These men had come in on late night or early morning trains and were in the middle of their sleep-periods. So far as could be ascertained, none was injured. All were fitted out with clothing by their brother workers and departed soon for home.

Nobody could tell just where the fire started. Sec A. P. Gillette of the Y. M. C. A. branch, summoned by attaches from his Melrose Highlands home when the flames broke out, said he was told the fire started in room 19 of that building.

Freight House Wrecked

Other railroad workers said the fire started in a freight house fronting on Beverly st near the old Warren Bridge. After the flames had done their worst, the freight house was the sorrier looking mess of the two buildings. Both were of the 3½-story frame type, sheathed with tin.

Mr Gillette said the Y. M. C. A. furnishings are insured at \$10,000 and that the railroad has a \$20,000 policy on the buildings. Freight records and those of the B. & M. police stored on the second floor of the road's building were lost.

Both structures, like adjoining ones, stand on piles and of course there was danger of a collapse into the icy waters. Mr Gillette said he had conducted the Y. M. C. A. quarters for 20 years and wondered they hadn't "gone up in smoke" long before this.

Pine planks, reinforced with a half-inch layer of dried pitch, to minimize the dampness, constituted the flooring in both structures, and this combination made "a regular boiled dinner," as one fireman put it, for the hungry flames. The Y. M. C. A.'s 63 bunks were partitioned off separately, and this arrangement, with helpful air spaces, was favorable to the progress of the flames.

The Y. M. C. A.'s first floor was given over to reception and reading rooms, barber shop, executive offices, check and bathrooms, and four bowling alleys. Two pool tables were also destroyed. The upper floors were dormitories.

At box 1314, handy in Beverly st, the first alarm was sounded at 9:53 a. m. The second at 10:09 brought Chief Peter F. Walsh to the scene and he ordered a third when things began to look worse at 10:31.

Explosions Drive Men Back

Engine Companies 4, 6, 8 and 50 thrice were driven back by violent hot-air explosions during the first half-hour of the fire, when they tried to penetrate the building. Lieut Edward McDonough and hoseman William Nolan of Engine 8 were all but surrounded by flames on the third trial, but finally escaped through windows.

Lieut Lynch and Louis B. Nolan and J. J. Doherty of Tower 1 all had close calls, assisting with lines on slippery ladders. Chemical 1 and Engines 6 and 8 crews had to abandon their hose to the flames after the first vain onslaughts.

Fire boats 47 and 31 were early on the job, both pulling through the draw to advantageous positions. Engines 8 and 36 crews fought the fire at close range, both machines edging right up and getting thoroughly ice-coated. Engines 50, 6 and 4, each with a distinctive punch of its own, got in powerful work from Beverly-st hydrants.

Chief Walsh's assistants on the job were District Chiefs Caulfield, Sweeney and Riley. Asst Supt James Ryan, the apparatus overseer, often had to perform an operation on some engine that was threatened with pneumonia or worse.

The Floating Hospital's Winter quarters are directly across the street from the buildings burned. A friend who saw the flames from an Elevated train telephoned the home of Treas G. Loring Briggs. The message reached Mr Briggs in the middle of an address he was making to a Sunday school class at the Church of Our Redeemer, Newton. Mr Briggs started in town hotfoot, eventually to be picked up and hustled in by automobile. Ex-Representative George S. Baldwin, his opponent in the contest for Selectman in Brookline, performing the service.

Mr Briggs found the hospital ship doing as well as it always does, but he quickly summoned chief engineer Jesse B. Upton from his suburban home—safety first is always the hospital watchword, he said.

Considering the bitter weather, the commissary workers were on the job with commendable speed, and the steaming coffee and sandwiches they doled out always hit the right spot. Box 52 Associates and B. & M. superintendent's office agents did this merciful work, and a lunchroom in Causeway st fed and warmed many an exhausted fireman.