

Last Wednesday Morning, this Town was exceedingly surprized, by a most terrible Fire which broke out at the Court House, whereby that spacious and beautiful Building, except the bare Walls, was entirely destroyed: The Rise and Progress of which, according to the best Information we can get, is as follows, *viz.* The Day before being very cold, and the General Court sitting, there had been two fierce Fires in the Chimnies of the Chambers both of the Council and Representatives; and from those Chimnies between them, the Fire seems to have been kindled, and to have been lurking all Night in one of the Beams beneath them, 'till it first brake out in the Deal or Cedar Wainscot Passage between the Doors of those Chambers, which were of Deal or Cedar Wainscot also.

For at six in the Morning, the Watch at the East End of the Town House broke up; and between five and ten Minutes after, the Rays of the Fire first discovered itself in the said Passage, thro' the great Window against it, by glancing into the Chambers of the Houses on the North Side of the Town House, where two or three People were awake; and running to the Window, first saw it there; but it quickly brake into the Council Chamber, and run up the Deal Wainscot Stairs, into the Loft and Lanthorn above, and set them all in a Blaze, before the People came either to manage the Engines or save the Province Records, Books, Papers, Plans, Pictures, or any Thing else in the Chambers or Apartments, to the inestimable Loss of the Province. But thro' the Mercy of GOD, the County Records under the Western Stair-Case below, and Part of the Province Records under the Eastern Stair-Case below, as also Copies of the Minutes of Council from the Beginning to 1737, being at the Secretary's Dwelling-House, were happily saved. In the Cellars which were hired by several Persons, a great Quantity of Wines and other Liquors were lost, to the amount of several Thousand Pounds. The Vehemence of the Flames occasioned such a great Heat, as to set the Roofs of some of the opposite Houses on Fire, notwithstanding they had been covered with Snow, and were extinguished with much Difficulty.