

# FIRE LOSS OF \$60,000 IN SOUTH END LUMBER DISTRICT

## Firemen Had to Contend With Screens in Windows And Mud Fleas on a Wharf.



SCENE AT THE FIRE ON ALBANY ST.

Fire in the lumber district on Albany st early last evening entailed a loss of about \$60,000, distributed among a number of business men and property owners.

About 6.35 a man passing along Albany st saw flames in the rear of the three-story wooden building, 470 to 484 Albany st, and ran to the corner of Dover and Albany sts, and sounded an alarm from box 116. Before the first piece of apparatus reached the scene the whole building was burning briskly, and the flames, fanned by a strong southwesterly wind, were forging their way toward the building of the Windsor cement company.

In a short time the flames had spread in a southerly direction, and leaping over the partly brick wall were soon licking up the large three-story wooden building of the William C. Norcross company, at 463 Albany st, wherein was stored \$15,000 worth of lime and cement and other mason's materials.

Second and third alarms followed, and in less than 20 minutes a strong fighting force of firemen was on the ground. The flames were eating up everything in sight, leaping high into the air, and making a spectacular blaze, which was seen for miles.

The building in which the fire started is owned by Mrs Mary M. Gately. It is of wood, with about 150 feet frontage on Albany st and about 30 feet depth. In the rear was a one-story shed filled with lumber. This property was occupied by the South End storage company, and was used for the storing of lumber and other materials.

Among those who had lumber or bricks stored in the shed and on the wharf in the rear were Charles Holyoke, W. M. Weston & Co, William E. Roche, C. J. Larrabee, the Cambridge lumber company and the Parry-brick company.

The top floor of this building was vacant. On the second floor there was only some household furniture, the property of Mrs Gately. The street floor was formerly used for stores, but at pres-

ent the northerly one was used as an office by the storage company, the next as a storage room for harnesses, etc, the next as a stable, while the last was empty.

In the stable were six horses, owned by the storage company, and they were gotten out before the flames spread to that part of the building. In the stable of the Windsor cement company, adjoining the burning building on the north, were 14 horses, and all these were taken out. Although the flames seriously threatened these buildings for some time, the work of the firemen prevented their spread in that direction.

The building occupied by the William C. Norcross company was a three-story affair on the front, and in the rear was a one-story addition, about 75 feet deep and running down to the dock. The main building was heavily stocked with about 3000 barrels of lime and cement, and also a quantity of hair used in plastering. In the shed and on the dock were a large number of water struck brick, and so far as could be learned last night these were not damaged.

Water tower 2 was stationed early in the fire directly in front of the storage building and poured a strong and steady stream directly to the heart of the fire. In the rear the fireboat had a number of streams at work and lines of hose were taken down on either side, with the result that the tremendous amount of water poured into the flames soon had its effect, and in less than an hour the fire was under control.

District Chief Grady was early on the scene, and upon his advice Chief Cheswell issued an order that no firemen should go into the Norcross building, as he considered it unsafe. That his judgment was wise was shown by later results, when the second and third floors fell with a crash.

It was with difficulty that the fire could be reached in this building, as all the windows on the front were covered with wire screens. After attempting to force streams of water through the screens for a time, the firemen put up

ladders and chopped the wire away. Then they turned several streames on with telling effect.

What started the fire no one knows. F. C. Gillespie, manager for the storage company, said he had paid his men off and left the office only a short time before it was discovered. The only man he knew of around the place was one of the teamsters, who was putting up his horses when he left.

The only man hurt was District Chief Hiram Smith of Roxbury. He was directing his men from the street when a piece of glass fell and cut a gash nearly an inch long on his right thumb. He was attended by the department surgeon and as soon as the wound was dressed returned to work.

The firemen suffered much from the heat, but every man stuck to his post. Undoubtedly those firemen holding streams down on the docks in the rear of the fire were the worst off, for they not only had the heat from the flames, but the smoke as well, and then in addition a terrible pest in the form of mud fleas that filled the air and caused no end of annoyance to everybody.

After the fire was under control the firemen were put to work overhauling the piles of lumber on the wharf in the rear of the storage company. All the lumber had suffered, and while it may not be a total loss, the damage will be heavy. A large quantity of burning laths were thrown into the dock as the easiest method of getting rid of them.

William C. Norcross, president of the William C. Norcross company, stated last evening that the buildings occupied by the firm were owned by Horatio Glover, the firm having sold them to him last October. They are valued at \$15,000, and Mr Norcross stated the firm's loss would be about \$15,000.

F. C. Gillespie, manager of the storage company, estimated the loss to his company and to dealers who had property stored there at \$25,000. The building in which the fire started was an old ramshackle structure, and the loss on that will probably bring the total damage up to \$60,000.