

SIX ALARMS RUNG IN FOR EAST BOSTON FIRE

Blazes Among Flimsy Structures of Chelsea St Cause Big Fright

Firemen, Aided by Residents, Confine It to Stable With \$25,000 Loss

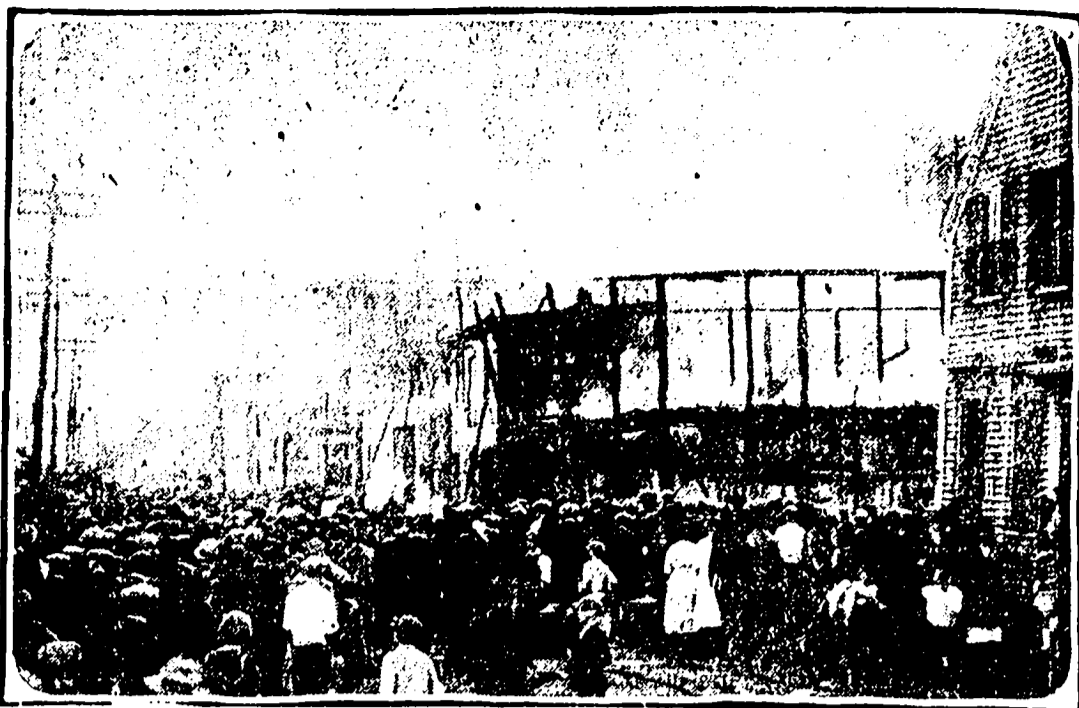
A menacing fire, which for nearly an hour gave every indication of spreading through the heart of the wooden tenement house district of East Boston, broke out shortly after 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon in an old unoccupied wooden stable, popularly known as Miller's Barn, at 821-239 Chelsea st, East Boston, causing such widespread alarm that no less than five alarms were rung in, while a sixth was sounded a short time later from a box a short distance away.

It is believed that the fire started through the carelessness of some boys, who had been playing with matches.

But for the prompt help of the neighbors who live in the solidly packed wooden tenements adjoining

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FIGHTING THE FLAMES IN EAST BOSTON FROM THE REAR



FIRE IN CHELSEA-ST STABLE.

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and opposite the blazing stable, it is probable that the fire would have spread to many of the surrounding structures. As it was, however, the efforts of the firemen and the citizens succeeded in confining it to the wooden stable where it started, six sheds in the rear and the warehouse of the Samuel Fine Column & Iron Company at 300 Bremen st, in the rear of Millers' Barn.

Damage \$25,000

Both the barn and the Fine warehouse are total losses, the damage caused by the entire fire being estimated at about \$25,000. Adjoining dwellings were somewhat damaged by smoke and water, but, considering the magnitude of the conflagration, it is considered little less than miraculous that several of the adjacent wooden buildings did not go also.

The fire was discovered by Joseph Fay of 541 Sumner st, East Boston; John Gleason, a United States customs official, and Edward Bagley, a fireman on the Boston Fireboat, who happened to be passing along Bremen st, in the rear of the barn, by automobile, when they saw the flames shooting out. An alarm was immediately rung in from box 651, followed by three more in rapid succession, and when it was decided to sound a fifth alarm, it was found that the local boxes had been burned out, so the fifth alarm was telephoned in.

This is the first fifth alarm fire in Boston for a long time, but the extremely dangerous location of the blazing structure made this precaution seem advisable.

Flames Leap High

The old wooden building, the property of Sarah Cohen, which for years has been a veritable eyesore in the neighborhood, made the best possible material for the flames, which rose to a great height, leaping more than half way across the street, and were soon followed by dense clouds of blinding smoke.

When the first apparatus arrived on the scene, Engine 5 and Chemical 7, there were so few firemen that a number of men living in the immediate neighborhood pitched right in and helped to man the hose. Low water pressure added to the difficulties experienced by the fire fighters and it was some minutes after the arrival of the first apparatus before a satisfactory stream could be played upon the flames.

Firemen in Clashes

Early in the fire, there were clashes between firemen and civilians, who, either to help or to see, seemed to press too close. One or two minor assaults were reported and were called to the Fire Commissioner's attention. These, Commissioner Flynn said, were regrettable, and promised to take steps to discover whether any fireman was responsible.

The five alarms brought apparatus from all parts of the city proper, as well as Chiefs Taber, Sennett and Shallow. Great credit is due to District Chief Henry J. Power, who, upon his arrival, immediately ordered firemen on the roofs of the adjoining houses to wet them down and prevent the spread of the conflagration by means of falling embers. Engine 40 was placed in the rear of the burning building, while Engines 5 and 9, together with Chemical 7 and Ladders 21 and 29, took the front of the fire.

Work on Day Off

Special credit for the brave assistance which they rendered to the firemen is due to L. T. McDonnell, William L. Sullivan, "Nixey" Searles and John Keohone. Capt Thomas J. Flynn of Engine 9, on his day off, responded to the alarm, while William Marshall of Ladder 21, also on a day off, heard of the fire and stepped directly into the breach.

An elderly couple and a group of children were assisted from the houses at 311 and 313 Chelsea st by patrolmen Albert Magaletta and John T. Henneberry when the flying sparks threatened to ignite the roofs of these structures and some time after the height of the fire was over, the roof of the house at 315 Chelsea st showed signs of igniting, which were promptly stopped by the efforts of the firemen.

The house at 317 Chelsea st, directly next door to the burning barn, suffered most severely from smoke and water damage. This house is occupied by Dennis P. Donovan, veteran driver of the East Boston Courthouse van, who had just finished hanging some new curtains when the fire broke out.

"The curtains were too green to burn," said Mr Donovan, while surveying the smoke and water damage done to other things in his home.

Tremendous excitement was aroused throughout the whole East Boston district by the fire, which sent forth such blinding clouds of smoke as to be visible from all parts of Greater Boston. Big crowds stood on the roofs of freight cars along the tracks of the Boston & Albany Railroad, to the rear of the fire.

As the hose wagon of Engine 9 was starting for the fire, it broke down outside headquarters on Paris st, skidding

across the tracks and coming to a stop just in front of Station 9.

Many Unusual Incidents

There were many incidents in connection with the fire. Scout Commissioner Ferris, charged with the reorganization of the Winthrop troop, did more than one good deed yesterday. Driving from his home in Quincy, he saw the fire, stopped, and not only assisted the firemen on the main blaze, but played a big part in putting out a small fire that blazed on a hay barn across the street. G. Cleffa, who runs a bakery shop next door to the fire, was all the time open for business, and fire did not cross the six-foot partition to his building, thanks to the efficiency of the firemen. He gave his thanks for this efficiency by sending the firemen doughnuts.

What makes the putting out of the blaze most remarkable, according to the Fire Commissioner, is that wooden buildings adjoined the fire on three sides. Chief Glynn was very enthusiastic at the methods of District Chief Power and at the results achieved. In many cases, the occupants of the tenements near by refused to leave until they received orders to do so from policemen.

Capt James P. Hickey of the Police Department, who was also on his day off, put on his uniform, came down and took charge of the police end of the situation.

In Samuel Fine's warehouse, his automobile, valued at \$2000, was destroyed. Mr Fine puts his losses at \$10,000 and says he has no insurance.

Hoseman William P. Hogan tripped over a hose, sprained his ankle and went to the East Boston Relief Hospital for treatment.