

FORTY MEN GOT OUT BY SKYLIGHT

Stubborn Fire on Friend St Caused \$35,000 Loss— Firemen Suffer.

For three hours yesterday afternoon the firemen of the downtown districts battled with a stubborn and threatening fire in the six-story brick building at 134 Friend st, occupied by A. W. Hastings & Co, manufacturers of sashes, blinds and windows. When the fire burst forth, from the fourth floor, about 40 men who were at work on the two floors above had to crawl through the skylight to the roof, and thus find a safe spot by coming down through the other end of the building, which was free of fire, being separated from the burning portion by a firewall.

The fire started about 1 o'clock. Two hours later Chief Mullen was obliged to withdraw his men from within and about the building and bring two of the immense water towers into play. After a two hours' fight, during which seven firemen had to go to the hospital, and many more were partially overcome, flames began to burst for the first time from the windows. During those two hours only smoke had issued, and issued in immense volumes, filling the neighborhood, but at 3 o'clock, after tons of water had been thrown into the burning mass, the flames began to show from the windows.

Water Towers Used.

Up to that time Chief Mullen had thought to kill the fire without putting in so much water as the water towers pour in, and thus try to save water damage, but when he saw that no progress was being made under this policy he had two of the big towers stationed in front of the building and ordered not only the two tower streams, but also the two auxiliary streams on each to be directed into the building. These powerful streams were reinforced by several hose streams, and yet it was an hour and a half before the chief dared to take off even one stream.

A. W. Hastings & Co occupy the entire building north of the firewall and the O. D. Baker company, manufacturers of bedding and mattresses, have the southerly portion. A substantial firewall separates the two portions and the Baker company was at no time in serious danger. They suffered some smoke damage, however.

The fourth floor of the Hastings building is used as a storeroom for lumber, all of which is in a finished state. The floors below are taken up as salesrooms and the office. The fifth and sixth floors are used as workrooms.

Not all of the wood in the building was burned, but what wasn't burned was soaked with water and thus damaged to a greater or less extent. The fourth floor was pretty well cleaned out and part of the fifth was eaten away. The fire burned its way through the stairway of the sixth floor and through the skylight to the roof. The loss to the building and contents is estimated at about \$35,000 and is covered by insurance.

An interested spectator who said he was in his sixties told a Globe reporter that the burned building stands on the site of the Gerrish market, which was burned in '68, at which the first fire engine Boston ever had was put to work. The name of the engine was the Myles Standish and its efforts on that

day were of far more interest to the spectators than was the fire.

Warning Saved Them.

Four or five months ago there was a fire in Hastings' establishment, and the cause of it has not yet been ascertained. The cause of yesterday's blaze is also unknown. On the floor where it started there was no fire burning and no men working. When it was discovered by Charles Schram, an employe, who sounded an alarm from box 11, it had begun to sweep the entire floor. When Schram started for the box, he stopped long enough to spread the alarm to the men working on the two floors above the fire, and many of them doubtless owe their lives to this fact.

When these twoscore men learned that a fire was burning just beneath them they started for the stairs. They were met by a wall of flame and dense smoke and had to turn to the fire escapes. Smoke was pouring so thickly from the windows that they dared not go that way; and so all 40 of them crawled, one by one, through the narrow aperture of a skylight to the roof. As the last one clambered onto the roof curls of smoke followed him out. The men then went down through that part of the building occupied by the Baker company.

A second alarm was promptly rung in by Chief Mullen after he reached the fire. A large detail of police began to immediately rope off the streets, but the smoke poured in such volumes from the building that there wasn't much crowding of the curious against the ropes. Lumber smoke is one of the worst of the many varieties that firemen encounter, and while the majority of them stood it wonderfully well yesterday, it got the best of the crowds to such an extent that they stood at a very respectable distance from it and didn't give the police much trouble.

All the offices and stores within a radius of a quarter of a mile were filled with smoke all the afternoon, and many clerks and salesmen went home with red eyes last night. But while the smoke was distasteful to the crowds who were driven back by it, and a source of annoyance to employes in buildings nearby, the firemen who had to spend hours in the thickest of it were nearly all used up.

Eight Firemen Injured.

Eight went to the City hospital relief station. Lieut Michael J. Teehan of engine 6 was burned about the face and hands; Dist Chief Henry A. Fox was twice overcome; He was taken to the hospital about the middle of the fight, but insisted upon returning; after much good work he had to be taken away again into ladder 1's quarters. Frank Boutiller of engine 26 was cut about the hands; Thomas Andreoli received cuts about the face and hands from flying glass; Capt Frank J. Sheehan of engine 6, James F. Sheehan of engine 26 and James F. Hill of the protective department were overcome by smoke. None of them are in serious condition. Capt Swallow of ladder 1 was cut about the hands, but kept on working. Many others received minor bruises and cuts, but minded them not.

Many times, before the water towers were put to work, the men inside the building had to leave their posts and seek fresh air to save themselves from falling senseless, but as soon as they revived they disappeared in the smoke again. It was considered remarkable that none of the men suffered more than they did. The all-out signal was sounded at 5:45.