

SIGHT TO SEE.

Gallant Firemen Had an All-Day Fight.

Stubborn Blaze in Lumber Yards.

Two Hosemen Met With Injuries.

Fire Boat Was for a Time in Danger.

Dover St Bridge Threatened by Floating Section of Shed.

Crowds Watched Battle from Vantage Points.

Property Loss Will Probably Not Exceed \$50,000.

Four alarms were sounded yesterday morning for the fiercest fire in the lumber district that the firemen have been called upon to battle with this year. It raged from 8 until noon before it was gotten under control, and it was night before it had been extinguished. The Sabbath quiet was broken by the clanging of fire gongs and the rushing of fire apparatus through the streets, while it was anything but a day of rest for the firemen.

Three lumber firms suffer a loss of about \$50,000, and two hosemen were injured.

Edward H. Murtagh, hoseman on fire-boat 44, living at 27 Walden st, was severely burned about the ankles, and was taken to the city hospital.

Thomas F. Fitzgerald, hoseman of engine company 7, was knocked from a

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SIGHT TO SEE.

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pile of lumber by a stream of water and badly bruised and rendered unconscious. He was taken to his home.

The firms which suffer by the fire are Andrew F. Leatherbee, 376-388 Albany st. \$10,000; Blacker & Shepard, 330-374 Albany st. \$7000, and the John W. Leatherbee estate \$3000. The entire loss is covered by insurance.

The fire was in the center of Boston's big lumber district, which lies between Albany st and the great south bay. It could be likened unto a huge bonfire.

The lower floor was used by Mr. Leatherbee as an office. Mrs. Oram was the only member of the family who had arisen at the time of the discovery of the fire. Mr. Oram had time to partly dress himself, but the six children, the youngest 2 and the oldest 13, fled from the burning building in their night-clothes.

"I did not go to bed until after midnight," Mr. Oram said. "I was out in the yard looking after things and keeping tramps away from the yard. I locked the gates and went into the house a few minutes after 12. Sunday mornings I sleep as long as I can. I was aroused by one of my boys, who came into the room and said that the yard was on fire. Before I could dress, the flames had burst out in a pile of lumber in the rear of the yard, and in

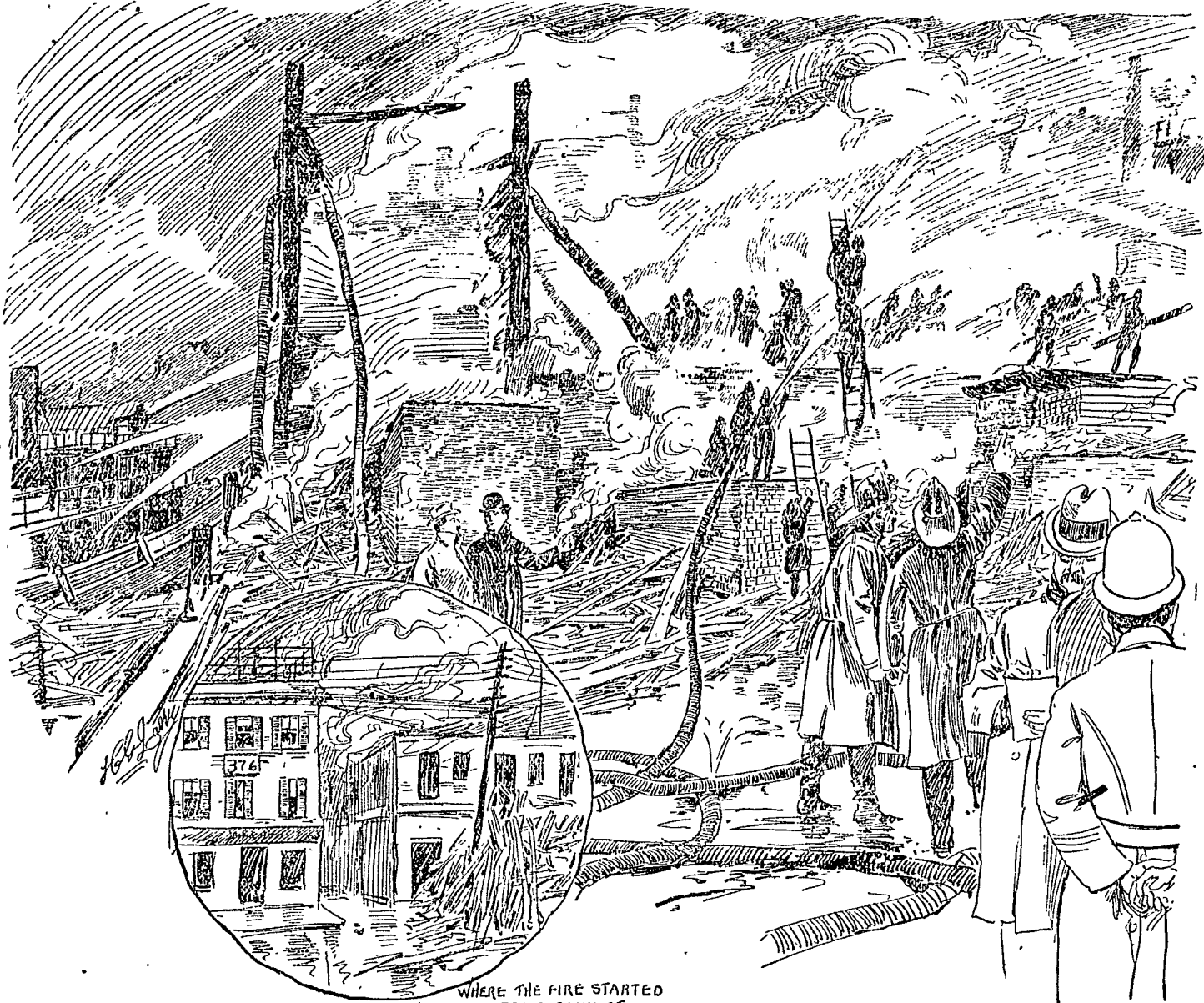
directing the flames from the water front firemen were directing streams from the other end of the building. Several streams directed at the same part of the building at the same time caused the water front end of the building to fall. That whole section was at the time in flames. It fell onto the fireboat, and the boat, being stuck in the mud, there was no way to get it out of its perilous position.

It was at this time that hoseman Murtagh was injured. He was standing on the deck directing one of the streams. One piece of the burning building struck him and pinned him to the deck, and he could be removed he had been badly burned.

Fortunately the burning end of the building did not rest long on the fireboat. Had it, the boat would probably

direct a hose on the burning building, when he was struck by one of the streams from the fireboat and swept off the pile. In falling his head struck against some lumber, and he was stunned. He was taken to an office across the street and attended by a physician, and was afterward sent to his home.

Others were more fortunate than Fitzgerald, especially one man who was pulling the burning lumber out of the building on the south side. He was hanging by one hand to the building and working with the other hand, when a stream struck him full in the breast, nearly throwing him to the wharf below, a distance of 20 feet. By a powerful effort he swung himself against the side of the building, and held on until one of his companions called to the hoseman on



WHERE THE FIRE STARTED IN REAR OF 376 ALBANY ST

FIGHTING THE FIRE IN THE LUMBER PILES OF THE ALBANY ST YARDS.

There was everything there to feed the flames, from big sticks of hard pine down to cedar laths. Persistence, plenty of water and the good judgment of the firemen saved a far greater loss.

Theories as to Cause.

There are two theories as to the cause. One is that the fire was set by some discharged employe of one of the firms who fancied he had a grievance; the other that it was accidentally caused by a tramp who had spent the night in a lumber pile.

Thousands of people watched the fire during the day outside the inclosure roped off by the police, which extended from Dover st to Randolph st. The Dover st bridge afforded an excellent place for the fire watchers. It was within a stone's throw of the fire, but beyond the danger line. The bridge was crowded with men, women and children all day long.

Not for years have so many people had the opportunity of witnessing the work of Boston's fire fighters. The greater part of the city's fire apparatus was there, and miles of hose was strewn along the streets. In all there were 32 pieces of apparatus, including one of the horseless engines and a fireboat.

It was a fire such as people like to watch, too! One minute there would be a roaring furnace, the next nothing but a big bank of smoke. Those watching could see the firemen on roofs of buildings directing streams of water when the smoke cloud came up, and they would hold their breath until a gust of wind pushed the smoke away showing the firemen safe at their post of duty, but in a dangerous position.

Alarms for a fire never followed one another in more rapid succession. For 20 minutes it seemed that the bells kept continually ringing. The alarms were all sounded from box 116, at the corner of Albany and Dover sts. The first was sounded at 8:19, followed by a second at 8:23, a third at 8:28 and a fourth at 8:30. In the interim between the first stroke of the alarm and the last every fireman in the city was called to duty. As fast as one company of firemen moved apparatus from an intown station to the scene of the conflagration, firemen in suburban stations moved in town. Every fireman in the city dressed and stood ready for a call, and every horse in the department was harnessed.

Escape of Children.

The fire was attended by many sensational scenes. One occurred at the very beginning of the fire. William Oram, watchman in the employ of Andrew F. Leatherbee, his wife and their six children, figured in it. Mr. Oram and his family occupied two floors of a 2 1/2-story frame building numbered 376 Albany st.

An instant the whole rear part of the house was ablaze. My wife and I got the little ones out of the house. We had no time to save anything.

"The fire started in a pile of lumber in the yard of Blacker & Shepard, which adjoins the Leatherbee yard. It was a furnace when I looked out. The flames had spread into the Leatherbee yard and had set fire to the buildings. The fire must have been burning underneath the pile some time before it was discovered."

The three lumber yards run from 350 to 400 Albany st, fronting on the street and backing on the water front. The yard of Blacker & Shepard is nearest Dover st. The yard of John Leatherbee is at the other end, and that of Andrew Leatherbee is between the two.

The yard of Blacker & Shepard has a frontage of 250 feet and is 140 feet deep. There is a two-story frame office and tenement fronting on Albany st. The tenement is occupied by Levi Field. In the rear of this there is a two-story frame shed 110 feet wide and 140 feet deep.

The yard of Andrew Leatherbee is 80 feet by 140. In the front was the building which was used as an office on the first floor and a tenement for watchman Oram above.

The rear of the yard of the John Leatherbee estate are two three-story wooden tenements numbered 390 and 400. The lower floor of the former was an office, and the upper floors are occupied by William Fortharbee. The other building is occupied by John Sinnott and James Maginnis. Mr. Fortharbee suffered quite a serious loss from water and smoke. He had no insurance. The other families suffered a slight water loss.

Andrew Leatherbee suffered the greatest loss. Running from the rear of the office and tenement building to the water front was a storage shed and dry house. This building was filled with finished lumber, and it was in this that the fire raged the fiercest. It quickly spread over the entire building and when the firemen arrived on the scene there was a flame of more than 140 feet in length and 40 feet in width to battle with. The shed sat on a pile wharf, and as the fire progressed it burned through the flooring and made the work of the firemen hazardous in the extreme.

Fireboat's Close Call.

The fireboat came through the bridges in response to the second alarm and ran close up to the burning shed. The water was low and the boat grounded. Four streams of water were poured from the boat onto the burning building.

It was about 10 minutes after the boat reached the scene that the second sensational incident of the day occurred. While firemen on the boat were fight-

ing the flames from the water front firemen were directing streams from the other end of the building. Several streams directed at the same part of the building at the same time caused the water front end of the building to fall. That whole section was at the time in flames. It fell onto the fireboat, and the boat, being stuck in the mud, there was no way to get it out of its perilous position.

It was at this time that hoseman Murtagh was injured. He was standing on the deck directing one of the streams. One piece of the burning building struck him and pinned him to the deck, and he could be removed he had been badly burned.

Fortunately the burning end of the building did not rest long on the fireboat. Had it, the boat would probably have been destroyed. Resting as it did in a half-canted manner on the side of the boat, it was easily pushed into the water.

The section was about 25 feet square. One part of it continued to burn after being pushed into the water. The tide was running out and carried the burning timbers toward Dover st bridge. It lodged against a pier, near the bridge, and threatened to burn that structure. Firemen were hastened to the bridge, the raft was moored a short distance away and the blaze extinguished.

After the end of the building fell the men on the fireboat did much effective work, and in a large measure they prevented the spread of the fire.

As the tide went out the fireboat could be seen to be resting in several feet of soft mud. The entire side of the boat nearest the fire was blistered from bow to stern, showing the heat must have been intense, and that the firemen on the boat when the end of the building fell out were in a dangerous position.

Hoseman Knocked Down.

During the time the fire was eating its way down toward the end of the shed nearest the water, where the fireboat was throwing three powerful streams on to the burning building, the firemen on the wharf, with lines from the engines on the streets, were directing streams into the building, finding the best foothold they could on the slippery piles of lumber. They were alternately drenched by the cross streams from the other side of the wharf and from the fireboat, and nearly frozen by the cold wind that swept down the wharf.

So much did they work in under the flying water that after a time the men would leave their places at the nozzles and pull off their rubber boots to pour the chilly water out of them. Nearly every man was drenched to the skin, even those who had on oilskin coats getting the water down their necks. But cold and uncomfortable as it was the firemen worked on without stop, keeping themselves as warm as they could.

After a couple of hours it occurred to some one that a little hot coffee would be appreciated, and it was brought, together with sandwiches, and distributed among the policemen, who looked on at the drenched firemen from sheltered corners. The firemen looked with envy at the policemen while they ate and drank, but they worked on until some kind-hearted person sent a couple of lads among them with cans and jugs of hot coffee.

While the firemen were working on the lumber piles there were many narrow escapes from falls that would have proved serious. Hoseman Fitzgerald was standing near the edge of a pile, helping to

Woman Wore Fire Badge.

One of the curious incidents was the presence of a well-dressed woman, wearing a sealskin sack, to the front of which was fastened one of the red and black fire badges. No one seemed to know her, and she went about unconcernedly, not paying the least attention to the wondering glances of the firemen, police and reporters, who for the first time saw a woman wearing a fire badge.

Ten lumber wagons in the yard of Andrew Leatherbee were destroyed. The fire was so fierce on the arrival of the firemen that no attempt was made to remove them.

The horseless engine was stationed on the practice grounds of the Bristol st fire headquarters, which is only a short distance away from the scene of the fire. The firemen had plenty of space in which to work, a fact which had much to do with the preventing of a conflagration. Albany st has no car tracks or trolley wires to block the way of firemen, and it is quite wide. Engines were drawn up on the street from Dover st to Randolph st, and the police kept the crowd away by roping the area off.

Andrew F. Leatherbee said to a Globe reporter. "My stock burned was worth between \$40,000 and \$50,000. It looks as if everything in the building would be a total loss. The building was worth perhaps \$15,000, but I guess between \$40,000 and \$50,000 will cover it all. I am covered by insurance."

Mr. Blacker had a force of men engaged in examining his lumber as soon as the firemen had gotten the fire under control. He told a Globe reporter after an examination of the stock in the yard that \$7000 to \$8000 would cover his loss. The police detail was under Capt. Wescott of the East Deaneham station. Twenty extra officers from down town stations were sent there to assist the regular force of the fifth division. Police Commissioner Curtis was on the scene when the fire was the fiercest.

To protect the property of the three firms Chief Watts detailed inspectors Howard, Kelley, McGarr, Lynch and Mahoney. They remained on the scene until the firemen left. Attempts to pick pockets in the crowds were anticipated, and the detectives were on the lookout. There were no reports of thefts, however, and no arrests made.