

FIREMEN EARN HARD VICTORY

Confine Flames to the Studio Building.

Theatre, a Church and Other Property is Saved.

Loss in Tremont St May Reach \$250,000.

More than a million dollars' worth of property was in imminent danger of destruction by a fire which broke out at 7.30 yesterday morning in the rear of 114 and 115 Tremont st, and which burned for three hours with great fury.

A theatre, a church, the buildings occupied by several business firms and the studios of a number of artists seemed for a time to be doomed, but a long hard fight by the firemen in which they took more punishment than in any other fire of recent months, kept the flames well confined, so that barely \$250,000 was lost.

The entire building, which was formerly the old Tremont theatre, occupied as a storehouse by Eldredge & Peabody, furniture, was burned to the ground, the salesroom of the firm at 116 Tremont st was gutted and the southern portion of the Studio building was damaged badly from bottom to top.

There were no fatalities, but several firemen were overcome by the smoke, though only one of these, Capt Joy of engines 38 and 39, was taken to a hospital.

It was one of the most spectacular fires for months, and thousands of persons, some on business bent, others in on Christmas shopping trips, watched, fascinated, the dense billows of smoke roll up from the burning building.

All passage along Tremont st in front of the Studio building was cut off for four hours, and at each end of the police line were crowded hundreds watching the engines at work and listening to the meager reports that reached them from within the fire lines.

The fire was confined to that portion

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SCENES AT STUDIO BUILDING FIRE.



PLAYING ON THE LAST REMNANTS OF THE FIRE FROM ONE OF THE CORRIDORS



THE ICE AND SMOKE WHICH THE FIREMEN HAD TO CONTENT WITH

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of the building back from Tremont st. and little could be seen from the front.

The building where the fire started was really a separate structure from that which fronts on Tremont st., although many passageways made them practically one building.

The rear building was the Tremont theatre of years ago, and in the basement of this the blaze started. The building is shut in by the Wesleyan building and Bromfield-st M. E. church on one side and the Orpheum theatre on another, and no one saw the fire until it had been burning some time.

Hard Task Confronts Firemen.

Being surrounded by other buildings, it was next to impossible for the firemen to get at the fire to advantage. They had to fight it from narrow Wesleyan pl. at the rear, and from the roofs and windows of buildings close by.

The blaze was discovered at 7:35 by Supt Nutting of the Studio building, who gave the alarm. When the firemen arrived they saw the flames already eating their way swiftly from the rear into the salesroom of the furniture firm in front.

When the fire was out it could be seen how the fire burned its way up through the rear portion and through the roof, the whole frame work then collapsing, and how in the front portion, the Studio building, the fire had eaten its way from bottom to top in the walls.

Desperate work by the firemen under Chief Grady kept the flames in this section from spreading into the rooms as they went up the walls.

The ground floor of the Studio building was completely burned out. Only a few pieces of furniture in the show windows escaped the flames and these were ruined by water.

The studios and business places on the floors above were damaged heavily by water. Some of the artists lost very heavily, although Asst Chief Grady saved \$10,000 worth of paintings belonging to Darius Cobb.

The whole of the rear section was filled with goods belonging to Eldredge & Peabody and their loss is close to \$100,000.

It was plain to the firemen when they arrived that nothing could save any part of the rear of the building. They have always dreaded the time when this structure should burst into flame, as its construction dates back many years, and they centered their attention upon saving the adjoining property, including the front section of the structure, the Studio building. In this they were quite successful.

The Wesleyan building was not touched, nor was the Bromfield-st church.

The cupola of the Orpheum theatre caught from sparks, but its safety was soon assured, and thus the fire was confined to the double building where it started.

Hydrants Found Frozen.

The firemen had all sorts of difficulties to contend with.

The severe cold had frozen hydrants, one of them being that at the end of Wesleyan pl. the one most needed at the outset of the fire. It was 10 minutes before water could be got from it.

Commissioner Wells said afterward that it was one of those unfortunate incidents that happen at every big fire in severe weather. It is impossible to keep every hydrant open every minute of the winter, although both the water and fire departments try to do so.

The rear portion of the building was like a raging furnace when the first stream went into it. Chief Mullen directed the fight from the outside and Asst Chief Grady was inside all the time.

From the narrow alley at the rear a desperate fight was made, although at first the firemen on the ladders could feel the flames creeping nearer and nearer to them until they leaped through the windows and almost licked their faces.

Slippery as the ladders were from their thick coatings of ice and intense as was the heat, the men held on, while the few who saw them wondered how long they could stick it out.

Frequently a line of hose burst and the severe cold which numbed the hands and muscles of the firemen hindered them in their work. They finally won, however, and when their work was looked over in the afternoon it was wondered how they kept the fire where they did.

As the firemen fought on, occasionally one of them, either inside or outside the building, collapsed from inhaling the thick smoke, and he was carried to a place where he could get some fresh air. Invariably they returned again, and when the all-out was sounded they were all, with the exception of Capt Joy, on duty.

Many of them had to creep over slippery roofs and were in danger all the time of falling to the ground. The men inside were in constant danger in the first stages of the fire, from hot-air explosions, which were frequent.

While the most spectacular part of the fire was in the rear, where the thousands of curious couldn't see it, the fire in the front portion concerned most persons.

There are close to 100 occupants of the front section, and several of them were heavy losers. Among them were August Bahler, Edmund H. Garrett, Melbourne Hardwick, C. H. Bunting and Darius Cobb, artists. Others who lost heavily were G. A. Loring and H. H. Kent on the top floor, J. B. Thomas, M. Berenson and Mr. Reynolds on the fourth floor, J. J. Frazer, George W. Seavey, G. W. Fenety and Miss Hamilton on the third floor, George W. Frost, C. T. DeBlols, W. H. Arnold and C. W. Shepard on the second floor.

Mr Garrett's Experience.

Mr Kelt, on the top floor, occupied luxuriously furnished bachelor apartments. He is a stock broker of artistic inclinations and had in his suite some very costly paintings, which doubtless were greatly damaged. Edmund H. Garrett on the floor below lost extensively in English sketches and paintings.

Early yesterday morning while asleep at his home, he awoke, thinking he smelled smoke. He rose with a start and felt relieved at finding himself in no danger, but he was so oppressed by the choking sensation which had awakened him that he had to open his window. He finished his sleep, and then went down to his studio, to find it all afire.

Darius Cobb is probably the most fortunate of the tenants in the building on the side where the fire burned the hottest. When Asst Chief Grady and

his men were chopping away the walls, trying to get at the fire that was eating its way to the top, they broke into Mr Cobb's studio. The flames were just beginning to creep through the walls over two large framed paintings that stood there.

Before he would allow the firemen to touch the walls Grady had them lower the frames, take out the paintings and carry them to a room in another part of the building, not touched by the fire. Six pictures, all valuable, were thus saved from the flames, smoke and water and none suffered appreciable damage. The paintings are worth at least \$10,000.

There were several other smaller artists and photographers in the building who suffered more or less water damage; those who lost most heavily are those already mentioned. Many of the artists lost sketches that were worth a great deal to them, a loss that can't be measured in money.

It is the second time in three years that the tenants of the Studio building have been driven out by fire. A little less than three years ago a fire broke out early in the morning and did considerable damage.

The fire of yesterday will necessitate a thorough rebuilding of the southern portion of the interior of the building while the other half was untouched by fire or water.

The loss to the Studio building, which is assessed for about \$75,000, was perhaps \$20,000. The building at the rear of it was a total loss.

Merchants Lose Trade.

The fire caused much loss to the merchants near enough to be shut in by the fire lines. It was about 11 o'clock when these lines were removed and up to that time no one was allowed through without special privilege. The merchants, therefore, lost half a day's business, which at this season means much to them.

People on their way to work were unable to get through the lines and had to take a circuitous route over Beacon hill. The makers who stand by the score along Tremont st from School to Park sts this week selling mechanical toys and such were out of work most of the day.

The heaviest loser of all, however, was the firm of Eldredge & Peabody. Some of their goods were insured, but they had just received a large consignment of Christmas stock which had not been insured, and the fire hit them hard.

As far as possible after the fire was under control Mayor Fitzgerald had a gang of men from the street department on hand to sand the streets, which were covered with a coating of ice.

Before Chief Mullen had the fire where he wanted it the mayor asked him if he couldn't clear Tremont st so that business might be resumed, and when the chief said that he couldn't just then the mayor reminded him that it meant the street was shut off by the fire lines. The chief went on fighting the fire, and it wasn't long before he was able to get the street clear.

All the afternoon throngs of people passed the building, having heard of the fire, and it took a large squad of extra policemen to keep the crowd moving. During the fire fully 200 policemen were on duty under Capt Gaskin and Lieut Smith, and many of them had to stay on duty about the place the remainder of the day.

Insurance Companies Hit.

The fire insurance fraternity on receiving the news of the fire had the biggest scare they have experienced for many a day. There was not an agency in the city who did not have one or more representatives at the scene anxiously awaiting developments.

When it became known that the fire was kept within the confines of one building, insurance men were loud in their praise of Chief Mullen and his men. It was handled to perfection, they say. Had the fire extended to the Orpheum theatre it is the opinion of most insurance men nothing could have saved the entire block.

The Studio building is insured for \$150,000. In the event of the building commissioners declaring that it can't be rebuilt, the companies involved will be liable for the whole amount.

The principal sufferers among the tenants are Eldredge & Peabody, whose insurance of about \$32,000 is regarded as a total loss. The firm, however, in preparation of its Christmas trade, had had in extra stocks of furniture and carpets, and it is understood that these were not covered by insurance.

The insurance on the Studio building is placed by O'Brien & Russell of Water st. and while well distributed, some of the bigger companies are hit quite smartly. The list is as follows:

Royal Insurance company, England	\$7,500
Philadelphia underwriters	5,000
Etna, Hartford	2,500
Springfield fire and marine	15,000
Continental New York	10,000
Aachen and Munich, Germany	10,000
Fire association, Philadelphia	7,500
Northern, England	7,500
American, New Jersey	5,000
Security, Connecticut	5,000
German American, New York	5,000
London Assurance, England	2,500
Aachen and Munich, Germany	2,500
Germania, New York	5,000
Law Union and Crown, England	2,500
Hartford, Connecticut	5,000
Western, Toronto	5,000
North British and Mercantile, N Y.	5,000
Delaware, Penn	2,500
City of New York, N Y.	5,000
Atlas, England	5,000
Commercial Union	2,500
Jefferson, D C	2,500
Liverpool, London & Globe, England	2,500
Connecticut	10,000
Westchester	2,500
Firemen's insurance company, N J.	2,500
Total	\$150,000

The insurance on the tenants' property is distributed as follows:

North British & Mercantile, England	\$5,000
Scottish Union & National, Scotland	5,000
Palatine, England	5,000
Royal, England	4,000
Etna, Conn	2,500
Phoenix, Conn	2,500
Commercial Union, London	10,000
Phoenix, London	5,000
Insurance company state of Penn	5,000
Rochester-German, N Y	2,500
Total	\$40,000

The insurance on the stock of Eldredge & Peabody was placed by John C. Paige & Co. following being a partial list of the \$32,000 involved:

Germania fire insurance company, N Y	\$2,500
Fire Conn	6,000
New Hampshire	2,500
Palatine fire insurance company, Eng.	500
Total	\$11,500

ARTISTS LOSE HEAVILY.

Fire and Water Ruin or Damage Fine Paintings and Furnishings, and Sketches Are Destroyed.

Not since the fire in the Harcourt studios a few years ago has there been a blaze which has caused such a loss in pictures to the artistic fraternity as that in the Studio building yesterday.

It might have been a good deal worse if the fire had occurred 10 or 15 years ago, for then the building was largely occupied by artists, as was the inten-

tion when the structure was erected. Of late years the artists have been moving more and more into the Back Bay district and most of the studios of other days in the Studio building have been used for commercial purposes.

There were, however, about a half-dozen artists of note who had studios in the building yesterday and several of these lost largely.

Mr Garrett, who had a studio in the front of the building, lost all the valuable sketches which he made in his recent trip to England. He did not have any valuable pictures in the room, but these sketches were in a sense invaluable in the work which he had mugged out for the winter.

The venerable Darius Cobb, who had a studio next door to Garrett, lost heavily. Assistant Chief Grady was so impressed by some of the larger canvases in Mr Cobb's studio that he gave instructions to have them removed to a place of safety. Mr Cobb himself arrived on the scene about that time and he superintended the removal of some of the large canvases which he painted years ago. Nearly all of his later work was damaged, to the extent of several thousand dollars probably.

Augustus Buhler, the famous marine painter, had some very choice pictures and sketches in his studio, the fruit of last summer's work in Gloucester, and nearly everything was ruined. His loss will probably be \$5000 or \$6000.

Melbourne Hardwick lost heavily. His studio was just beyond Buhler's on the left of the rear hallway. Mr Hardwick got to the fire about 8 o'clock and he dashed his way to his studio in time to receive a shower of glass from the skylight, a fragment of which cut his right hand slightly. He had a \$700 picture on one easel and another equally as valuable, which he had just finished. He left the pictures and seizing his portfolio of sketches took them to a place of safety.

An abutting brick wall saved his studio from fire and the protective department saved much of the property in the room. He will lose much, however, from the effects of the flood of water which was poured into the studio.

It is understood that both Buhler and Hardwick carried insurance.

S E. Perkins, pastel and miniature painter, was able to save considerable of his property before the fire and smoke reached his studio. He arrived on the scene about 8 a m and was able to make several trips with armfuls of pictures and bric-a-brac to a nearby drug store before he was compelled to flee. His loss will be principally from smoke and water.

Charles Copeland's studio was damaged some by smoke and water. He is in the south and is expected back by Christmas. He had much valuable stuff in his studio.

Messrs. Empee and Gendrot suffered slightly by smoke and water.

Harry Kelt, a broker, who had bachelor apartments on the upper floor, in which were many fine pictures and valuable furnishings, lost about everything.