

LOSS OF \$100,000 AT EAST BOSTON FIRE

Suffolk Coal Company Plant Wiped Out by Most Spectacular Blaze.



FIGHTING THE FIRE IN McWEENY'S STORE FROM ELBOW ST.

Flames Break Out in Nearby Store, Greatly Hindering Work of Fire Fighters.

East Boston was visited last night by two of the most serious and destructive fires in the history of the district, the second fire breaking out while the first was at its height.

The first and most serious blaze was in the coal and wood plant of the Suffolk coal company, 178 and 180 Border st, in the heart of the lumber district. Here the entire plant was wiped out, 17 horses alone being saved under the most trying circumstances by citizens and policemen. The total damage to

the Suffolk coal company is about \$90,000, and is covered by insurance.

There were four alarms for this fire, and while the firemen were in the midst of their work a second fire was discovered in the dry goods establishment of John McWeeny, 17 and 19 Meridian st, about an eighth of a mile away, which necessitated two alarms.

While the fire in the Suffolk coal company is believed to have been caused by spontaneous combustion in one of the coal sheds, there is a strong suspicion

that the fire in McWeeny's store was set and the fire marshal's office began an investigation last night.

The blaze in the store of Mr McWeeny was attended by the most thrilling and heroic incidents. It was discovered by John McCarthy, who keeps a cigar and tobacco store close by, and Mr and Mrs John Ford and their five children, who live overhead, were rescued by William Alexander, the lone occupant of the third floor, Alderman Michael J. Leary and other citizens.

Leary rang in the alarm and in the

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work of rescue, he and his associates were badly affected by the smoke, but stuck to their task till all had been safely brought from the burning house. Here there is a damage of at least \$10,000.

Firemen Work to Limit.

The fires were the means of causing more excitement than has been witnessed in East Boston for many years, and theatre people and others who were on the way to their homes in East Boston, Winthrop and Chelsea were delayed for two or more hours.

The fire department was taxed to its utmost and every piece of apparatus in the entire city was on the run, either coming to the East Boston fires or shifting about to cover.

Both horseless engines from the city proper performed effective service, and the policemen of East Boston, the entire day force working in conjunction with the night, rendered every assistance possible to the firemen so that the latter were bothered in no way by the enormous crowds present. In addition to the thousands of East Bostonians that were aroused, hundreds of people seeing the reflections in the sky came to East Boston and staid until the small hours of the morning.

While patrolmen Burke and Frazier were standing in Central sq at 11:25 they detected a strong smell of smoke. Fraser rushed in the direction of the Suffolk coal company's wharf and looking down toward the coal sheds saw the place ablaze. He shouted to Burke who pulled in an alarm from box 634. This summoned every piece of apparatus in East Boston and as soon as acting chief John W. Godbold arrived he ordered a second alarm, which was quickly followed by third and fourth alarms.

Horses Rescued.

The Suffolk coal company plant consisted of an office, stable with 17 horses, harnesses, hay, grain, etc, large shed used for the storing of wagons, sleighs and carriages, a large wharf devoted to lumber storing and two large coal sheds.

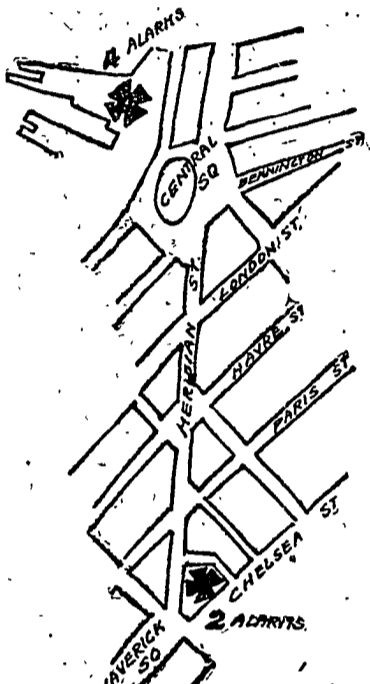


DIAGRAM SHOWING LOCATION OF EAST BOSTON FIRES.

As soon as the firemen arrived, watchman Richard W. Faucet met them and several policemen and gave the information as to where the horses were. The animals could be heard kicking in their fright, and Sergt Daniel J. Sweeney broke open the door to the stable. With policemen Burke, Frazier, Conway, Driscoll, McKenna, Thomas J. Gblin and the firemen of ladder 2, he directed his efforts to saving the animals.

The stable was filled with smoke, but the men entered and brought the animals safely to the street. McKenna was one of the last to leave and he was overcome by the smoke and had to be carried out by several of his fellow policemen. After being in the open air a few minutes he recovered and remained on duty.

While this work was going on the other firemen were working to stop the spread of the flames which had attained such a headway that it was readily seen that the entire plant was doomed.

Spectacular Sight.

In reaching East Boston it is necessary for the fire apparatus to use the ferryboats, and it appeared to be a long time before the first detachment of city apparatus arrived. By that time the whole plant was a mass of flames.

The coal sheds on the outward end of the wharf were constructed very high, and as they gradually began to burn huge tongues of flame shot into the air, throwing forth a glow that was seen for miles. It was in the coal shed nearest the street that the fire started, and Faucet, the watchman, claims that two minutes before the alarm started he had seen no signs of fire, but there is not the slightest doubt that it had been burning for a long time.

From this shed the blaze spread to the further coal shed and then ate its way to the wagon shed, stable and pile of lumber. On the north side of the plant is the lumber wharf of P. S. Huckins & Co, and on the south side a lumber wharf owned by the George McQuesten company, both of which were immensely stocked, and at 12:30 it looked as if both of these places were doomed.

Extra efforts were made by firemen to save these yards. While they were in the midst of their endeavors the firemen learned of the fire that had broken out down street.

Chief Mullen quickly ordered a part of the apparatus to the McWeeny fire.

However, as quickly as the additional apparatus came from the city and outlying district engines coming even from Dorchester, reinforcements were sent to the Suffolk coal fire and the blaze was finally hemmed in on all sides, the firemen being able to tackle the flames from four points, with the fireboat working at the extreme end of the wharf.

Much Fuel Burned.

In the two coal sheds there were stored about 10,000 tons of hard coal, 4000 tons of soft coal and on the top of the rear coal shed was a railway which is used for the transportation of the coal from steamers, schooners, etc. Directly in front of the coal sheds was stored about 300 cords of wood and in the storage building were 30 double and single wagons and 20 sleighs and in the stable was a large amount of hay, grain, feed and harnesses and every particle of this property with the buildings themselves were destroyed.

The loss on the coal is estimated at \$50,000, and there was a loss of \$2000 on wood, \$25,000 on the property, \$10,000 on wagons, sleighs, etc, and \$3000 on feed, harnesses and other utensils, making a total of \$98,000.

The Suffolk coal company was started four years ago last April, and is a corporation composed entirely of East Boston men, Lewis Burnham being the president. He was at the fire last night, and was at a loss to understand how it could possibly have attained such a headway before being discovered.

At 2 o'clock this morning, after the excitement at both fires had subsided considerably, the story gained circulation that there was a firebug at work. All the stories were carefully listened to by the police and attaches of the fire marshal, and this morning a determined investigation will be made.

Second Blaze.

Recently there have been several very extraordinary fires in East Boston, and while many of them are believed to have been set, the police or firemen discovered by the police or firemen.

The blaze in the dry goods store of John McWeeny, 15 to 19 Meridian st, near Maverick sq, was discovered about 12:20 by James McCarthy, who keeps a store at 11 Meridian st. He saw flames in the rear of the store, and shouting to some friends who were

nearby, ran into the building to arouse the occupants. At the same moment Alderman Michael J. Leary, who was talking with some of his friends in Maverick sq, ran to box 627 and gave the alarm.

Alderman Leary hurried back to aid Mr McCarthy, in arousing the people in the house. The second and third floor of the McWeeny building is occupied by Mr and Mrs John Ford and their three children, whose ages range from 2 to 10 years, while William Alexander lives on the floor above.

The members of the Ford family started for the street in their night clothing. In the confusion, two of the children ran upstairs to Mr Alexander's apartments. He had been aroused by the cries of the persons on the street and was on his way out of the place when he met the children. Alexander picked them up and carried them to safety through the dense smoke which filled the halls and stairways, while Alderman Leary and Mrs McCarthy assisted Mr and Mrs Ford out of the building.

Second Alarm Ordered.

James R. Faucey, with his father, Henry L. Faucey; his mother, Mrs Lillian Faucey; his brother, Gaspar, and his nephew, Gaspar, live at 17 Meridian st. They were obliged to leave in their nightclothing and they were cared for in McCarthy's store.

Mrs Kitty Evans kept a lodging house at 17 Meridian st, over the Faucey apartments, and she with her two sons, Ralph and Liston, aged 11 and 9 years, together with Miss Sadie Cohen and Miss Jennie Gracey and nine other lodgers, got out safely.

While he was going through the house Mr McCarthy recived a cut of the wrist in an effort to open a door. James L. Faucey, when he was awakened, ran upstairs intending to go over the roof. He broke a skylight and in doing so recived a cut on the wrist, which was dressed by a physician.

Theodore Gallipeau, 26 years of age a member of engine company 33-39, fell from a ladder on the Elbow-st side of the building and was badly cut on the face. He was taken to station 7, where Dr Granger attended him.

The fire was blazing fiercely when Chief Mullen, who was at the other blaze, arrived, and he instantly ordered a second alarm. It originated from some unknown cause in the L at the rear of the store. There is an alley on the easterly side of the four-story brick building, which is owned by Mr McWeeny, and the alley runs back of the building.

Just at the rear of the McWeeny block are a number of wooden tenements, and the blaze, which mounted upward rapidly, lighted up the neighborhood, and it looked as if some of the adjoining houses would take fire. A number of the families made ready to leave, but the firemen succeeded in confining the blaze to the building in which it started. The loss will amount to about \$10,000.

WEST AND NORTH END FIRES

Four of Them Kept Firemen on Jump Yesterday Afternoon, and Entire Loss Was About \$155.

Between noon and 6 o'clock last evening the downtown fire companies, particularly the apparatus in Bulfinch st, had a busy time, being called out by several bell and still alarms. The damage in every case was trifling and in some instances there was not enough fire to warrant a bell alarm.

At 12:08 box 704 was sounded for a fire in the first floor of the four-story brick building 95 Brighton st, West End, owned and occupied by William Aronson. Children playing with matches caused the fire and the damage was slight.

At 1:30 chemical engine 1 of Bulfinch st was called to the four-story building 66 Bowdoin st, owned by Edward Gleason and occupied by Adbertha Roble as a lodging house. Gas escaping from a stove on the third floor caused a damage of \$30.

Box 10 was sounded at 4:10, and the firemen went to the five-story brick building 373 Hanover st. The building is owned by Nicholas Simoni and occupied by Catherine Catalda. The origin of the fire is unknown. Damage \$100.

The apparatus had no sooner returned to quarters before an alarm was received from box 9. This fire was in the 2½-story building 519 Hanover st, owned by the Grueby estate and occupied by Lena Carlson. A lighted match coming in contact with a lace curtain caused the fire, and the damage was \$25.

ONE MAY BE DEAD.

Fire in Salvation Army Lodging House in Worcester. This Morning Drives Out Many.

WORCESTER, Jan. 7.—Two alarms at 2:20 this morning were for a fire in the Salvation Army lodging house, Washington sq.

There were 110 people sleeping in the building at the time.

One man has been found in the rear of the building on the second floor, apparently dead, and search is being made for others in the same room.