

JANUARY 2, 1921

TWO FIREMEN HURT IN \$200,000 BLAZE

Flames Sweep Five-Story Block At Albany and Harvard Sts

Nearby Houses Vacated

Lieut Hurley's Squad Has Close Call

Theory Robbers Were to Blame Wrong

Patrolman Hit by Door After Blast

Two firemen were slightly injured, the lives of 12 others were placed in jeopardy, more than 30 families were driven from their homes and loss, estimated by Chief Walsh at \$200,000, was caused early last night by fire that swept through the five-story brick business block at Albany and Harvard sts, in the Cove District.

Continued on the Sixth Page.

TWO FIREMEN HURT IN \$200,000 BLAZE

Continued From the First Page.

Patrick Murphy of Engine 26 and C. J. Sullivan of Engine 8 were cut by falling glass, Murphy on the face and Sullivan on one hand. Both were treated at the fire and later were sent to quarters.

Lieut Daniel Hurley of Rescue Company 1, while leading men of his own company and Fireboat Company 43 was hurled down a flight of stairs by a hot air explosion. The men were thrown into a heap at the foot of the stairs, while their hose, torn by the force of the explosion, wriggled dangerously above their heads. All escaped injury.

The building was occupied exclusively by firms engaged in the soda water and extract trade. The first floor was occupied by S. G. Parker & Co, and the Standard Bottling and Extract Company had a part of the street floor on the Harvard-st side, where its office was located. Its manufacturing plant was upstairs.

One Firm's Loss \$75,000

Other occupants of the building were the Dr Sweet Root Beer Company and the Spring Water Carbonating Company. All these firms lost heavily. P. J. Flynn, manager of S G Parker & Co, said that the firm had machinery valued at \$75,000 in the building and the other firms also had valuable machinery. As the fire swept through all the floors this machinery is believed to be almost a total loss.

For a time it was believed that the fire was the result of a safe blowing in

one of the street offices, but later, after the firemen were able to enter on the first floor, the two safes in the office of S G Parker & Co were found to be intact and so was the safe in the office of the Standard Bottling and Extract Company. The firemen are unable to account for the origin of the fire.

Patrolman Clarence Lewis of the Lagrange-st Station had an experience that recalled days in the trenches "over there" Lewis was standing directly opposite the Albany-st entrance to the building when an explosion took place and he was struck by a part of the front door that was hurled across the street with sufficient force to knock him down.

He sent in the first alarm and later Chief Walsh ordered three more from box 1492 and still later another alarm from box 1491, making five alarms. It is quite a few years since five alarms or a general have been sent in from any one box in Boston.

The fire spread with alarming rapidity and there were frequent small explosions. The fire, starting on the street floor, swept up through the structure and burst through windows of the second and third floors on both the Albany and Harvard-st sides.

Families Vacate Homes

As the building is in what is considered a dangerous area Chief Walsh massed his forces to prevent the spread of the flames and soon had two deck guns working on Albany st and another in Harvard st, throwing great volumes of water into the heart of the blaze.

Owing to the weather conditions the smoke hung low about the building, making the work of the firemen decidedly hazardous. Uncertain of the outcome, Chief Walsh instructed Capt Dalley of the Lagrange-st station to order the families in the houses on Harvard st and Hudson st to leave their homes. In fact, the order was hardly necessary, for the smoke was pouring from the burning building in such volume that the dwelling houses close by were soon made uninhabitable and persons were seen lugging off their prop-

erty to a safer zone. Mothers with little children threw shawls over the heads of their little ones and tried to protect them in every way possible from the suffocating smoke. Kind-hearted neighbors were generous in their treatment of the evicted ones and a couple of hours later all were able to return to their homes.

A possibility that the explosion and fire were due to the work of robbers caused quite a sensation among the firemen and police. Capt Matthew Dalley of the Lagrange-st Station called out his reserves and men in plain clothes scoured the district for possible suspects. It was thought for a time that the robbers might still be in the building, possibly hiding in the upper part or even on the roof, and plans were made to capture them if events should prove that they were the cause of the fire.

Robbery Theory Shattered

It was not until more than three hours after the start of the fire that the police

and firemen were positive that robbers were not to blame. Chief Walsh, Capt Thompson of the Boston Protective Department and Capt Dalley made their way into the building and examined the safes. All three were found to be intact, although seared by the flames.

The fire was an inauspicious beginning of the New Year for the fire men, it being an exceptionally hard one to combat, owing to the density of the smoke and the weather conditions. Men on ladders and fire escapes clung to lines of hose manfully, although crouded in thick smoke for half an hour at a time.

Lines were laid through the Greek Orthodox Church from Harvard st and carried to a point of vantage in the rear. Every available place was covered by Chief Walsh in his fight against a menacing fire that for more than two hours threatened to sweep through the district and down to the Boston & Albany freight sheds.

The burned building was the scene several months ago of an encounter between the police and two alleged robbers who were caught in the office of the Standard Bottling & Extract Company. Shots were fired by the police, killing one of the intruders instantly. The second man died shortly afterward from his wounds.