

LOSS OF \$70,000 AT BEACON GARAGE

Fire Attended With a Lot of Sensational Features.

Girl Saves Two Lives--Men Go Down With Floor--Autos Burn Up.

It is not often that a fire is attended by so many thrilling features as that which occurred yesterday morning in the Beacon garage, which is situated at Brimmer, Chestnut and Byron sts.

Some \$50,000 or \$60,000 worth of automobiles were destroyed and the damage to the building will reach \$10,000.

In fighting the fire a dozen firemen went down with the second floor when it fell and were extricated, some badly injured, only after heroic work on the part of their comrades.

The injured firemen are District Chief

Perkins, laddermen D. W. Baker and William Bonnings, hosemen W. I. Johnson, William Hart and Leclair. These were treated by physicians and sent to the hospital.

Thelma McNee's Brave Act.

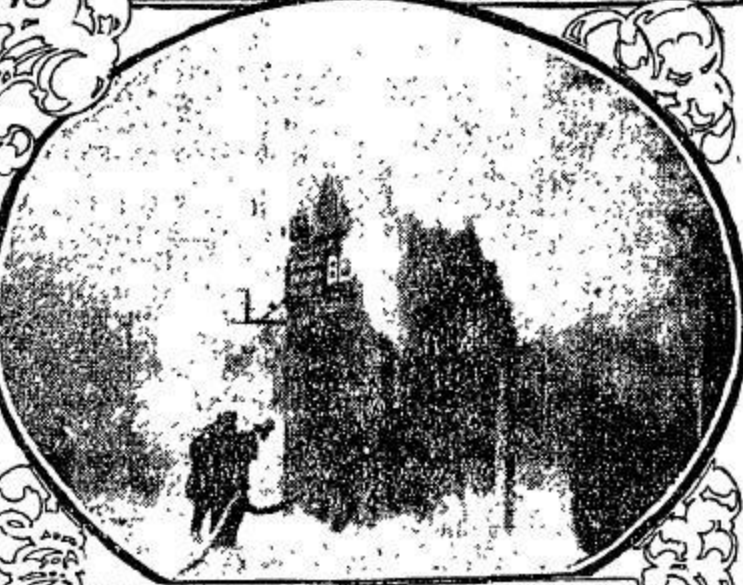
Miss Thelma McNee proved herself a heroine during the fire. She saved from death two little children of a neighboring family, James and Alice Cooney. The boy is 7 years old and the little

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RUINS OF THE BEACON GARAGE— HEROINE AND TOTS SHE SAVED



MISS THELMA MCNEE WITH MASTER JAMES AND LITTLE MISS COONEY



AUTO GARAGE FIRE ON BYRON STREET

LOSS OF \$70,000 AT BEACON GARAGE

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girl 3. They were alone in their house, which is on the Byron-st side of the automobile building, on the top floor. The mother had been obliged to go on an errand just before the fire broke out, their father being employed in the automobile place.

The moment the fire broke out, and the shouts of the people all around the block indicated that it was gaining rapid headway, Miss McNee, who is about 19 years old, rushed across from her own house, over the adjoining roof, and took out the Cooney children from their rooms, beneath which the fire was then burning fiercely, the flames shooting out through the windows.

Taking the little girl under one arm and pushing the little boy before her, Miss McNee made her way with the little ones back over the roof the same way she had come, and took them to the street and safety. Her mother, in the meantime, was being forced to rush from her own house, and half blinded and almost suffocated by the smoke, and almost wrapped in the flames which by this time were shooting out of every window and doorway in the building, managed to make her way to the street.

The poor woman was almost dazed by her experience, and when she had found her way to safety in the office of a stable across Chestnut at from her home she gave way to her tears and almost collapsed. Her face was swollen from crying, and she was so excited that she could give scarcely any connected account of her experience.

She expressed her gratitude that the little children of her neighbors had been saved, and seemed more interested in seeing to the comfort of the little children than in looking after her own.

Had the Cooney children been allowed to remain in their home a very few moments longer they would never have left it alive, as the burning mass beneath them would undoubtedly have suffocated them even if the flames had not reached them before the firemen came. It was when the floor of their home fell, half an hour later, that the four firemen were seriously injured.

The neighbors with great thoughtfulness, as soon as they learned of the absence of the mother of the Cooney children, sent her sister to break the news of the children's safety to her, as they feared the effect when she should learn that her home had been burned unless she was assured at the same time that her little ones were safe.

The Start of the Fire.

The Beacon garage occupies the lower floor of three buildings. One of these is a three-story structure on Chestnut st, which is occupied above by James Hewitt, a carriage builder. Next to this building, at Chestnut and Brimmer sts, is a three-story structure formerly occupied as a dwelling house. Now only the upper story is used by tenants, they being the McNee and Cooney families. The second floor is vacant. At the corner of Brimmer and Byron sts was a two-story structure of brick where most of the more expensive automobiles were kept.

On the first floor all these three buildings were connected. The main entrance to the garage was on Brimmer at and it led to what was known as the "floor." In contradistinction to the repair shop which is on the Chestnut-st side.

A. R. Bangs, the proprietor, said to

a Globe reporter that he hoped it would be understood that the fire did not originate in the workshop. The races at Readville yesterday were the means of drawing away from the garage a great many of the automobiles which are kept there. Otherwise there might have been 70 to 80 machines in the place when the fire broke out.

It was while getting one of the machines ready to go to Readville that the fire started. An employee was at work heating the apparatus with a torch, which is a preliminary to setting the engine in motion. Suddenly there was a blaze on the floor just under the torch which spread with the greatest rapidity, enveloping the whole floor. Every man in the place had to jump for his safety.

Burned Under His Eyes.

It is Joyce, an employee, was standing near the doorway when the fire broke out. He ran to the fire alarm box as fast as his legs could carry him. As he came running out a man who kept his automobile in the garage came riding in and saw the fire. He jumped out of his machine to aid in calling help to put out the flames. So rapid was the progress of the fire, however, that he could not even return to his automobile, and it was destroyed in his very sight.

Soon after the alarm for this fire had been sent in there was an alarm from another box in the North End, followed by two alarms from box 92 at Huntington and Irvington st.

For a moment there was some excitement while it was being arranged by Chief Cheswell which pieces of apparatus should be sent to the other fire. The chief gave his directions, but did not go to the other fire. He preferred to remain while things looked so threatening.

The alarms from other boxes prevented a second alarm from box 31, but a third was immediately sounded when the wires were clear. This brought practically all the apparatus in this city to the two fires.

A torrent of water was soon being played upon the garage. But it was a difficult task to get control of the fire.

Dist Chief Grady took three lines of hose up the Chestnut-st side of the building and forced them through to the second floor. The fire was burning furiously, near the Byron and Brimmer st corner. The men who handled these lines came from engines 3, 16 and 23, and some of ladder 3's men were with them. At this time the fire was burning its fiercest. The building was weakening. It could be seen, but the intrepid men under their chiefs' orders forced their way step by step toward the hottest part of the fire with their three lines playing directly into the blaze.

Floor Fell With Firemen

Without warning the second floor sank with a loud roar. All of the men of the four companies who were directly on the floor went down with the exception of a couple, who managed to leap to the windows and secure holds upon the casings. Capt Peter Walsh of ladder 3 was one of these, and hoseman John Hogan of engine 10 also saved himself in that way. But the rest went down in the wreck.

Instantly the order was given to rescue the men buried in the ruins. There were plenty of men on hand ready to go into the building regardless of the crumbling walls, to bring out their comrades.

In five minutes of cutting at burning timbers and throwing aside of burning boards, half a dozen of the buried firemen were carried to Brimmer at and laid out on the sidewalk. Some were bleeding from wounds on the head and body. Others limped with injured limbs. The ambulances were hastily summoned and the men were taken to the hospital.

After the fall of the second floor the firemen were ordered to be more cautious. The floor fell at 10.30 and for half an hour the fire burned furiously. Then the roof caved in and also a part of the Byron-st wall.

By noon the fire had been so far controlled that the menacing walls were attacked with ropes by the firemen and pulled down.

As to the loss Mr Bangs, proprietor

of the garage, said he had \$25,000 or \$30,000 worth of automobiles of his own on hand. He is agent for the H. H. Franklin manufacturing company of Syracuse. He had perhaps 20 of these machines on hand, which he had purchased outright to sell in Boston, but these, he said, were fully covered by insurance.

Besides these there were perhaps 70 others belonging to persons who kept their machines in the garage. A conservative estimate of the value of these machines, all of which are probably destroyed, is \$25,000 more. To the building the loss cannot be less than \$10,000.

James Hewitt's loss was considerable, as several carriages undergoing repairs were ruined.

The loss to the furniture in the apartments occupied by the Cooney and McNee families is mostly from smoke.

The total loss will approximate \$60,000. During the fire the terror of the firemen was the big gasoline tank containing 165 gallons. On account of the explosive nature of its contents the tank had been sunk under the sidewalk. Although the fire started just above the tank the flames did not reach it.

H. N. Dunbar of the Franklin manufacturing company happened to be in Boston yesterday, in company with Mr Bangs, when the fire occurred. He told a Globe reporter that the company will ship Mr Bangs at once all the machines he will need to fill present orders. Two carloads are in Boston now awaiting removal to the garage. Mr Bangs expects last evening to secure quarters for those machines which were away at the time of the fire.

MODEST AS SHE IS BRAVE.

Thelma McNee, Who Saved the Little Cooney Children, Can't See Anything Remarkable in It.

Miss Thelma McNee, who saved the two Cooney children from death, was very modest in regard to the feat which she had performed. She did not evince the slightest disposition to feel that she had done anything remarkable.

"I was in my own house when the fire started," said Miss McNee. "I knew that James and little Alice Cooney were locked in their own house across the way, and that their mother had gone out."

"As soon as the fire started I rushed across the roof to the Cooney house, and the two little children were at the window, looking out, but without realizing their danger, and unable to help themselves."

"I burst in the door, and caught hold of one in each hand, and started to run back with them. I scarcely knew what I was doing, as the people on the streets were shouting, and rushing back and forth, while the flames were bursting out from the windows and the smoke coming from the chimneys."

"As I got about half way across the roof on my return, having the two children with me, I heard the explosion, and my mother was shouting to me. I was so confused after that that I have no exact recollection of just what happened, except that I managed to get the children out safely, and here they are, as you see them."

"It was an awful experience, but I sincerely accepted the congratulations of her friends on her daring rescue of the children."

LONG, HARD RUNS.

Experience of Companies Outside the City Proper, as a Result of Rapid Alarms from Three Boxes.

Fire apparatus located outside of the city proper had to make runs to town fires yesterday forenoon owing to the alarms from three boxes which came in within a few minutes. A third alarm from box 31, at the corner of Beacon and Beaver sts, a second from box 32, at the corner of Huntington and Irvington st, and an alarm from box 16 at the corner of Prince and Salem sts made things lively.

The first alarm from box 31 was sent at 9:50 a. m. and box 46 was sounded

at 9:52 between the first and third of box 31. Box 46 was easily covered by engine 8 on Salem st.

Before some of the apparatus that answer a third alarm from box 41 reached the fire on Chestnut and Brimmer sts a first and second were sounded from box 32 for the Huntington-av fire. As it happened, every fire engine which responds to a first alarm from box 92 was at the Chestnut-st fire, called by the third alarm.

Engines which were on the way to cover the districts of the companies responding to box 31 on the third alarm hastened to answer to the alarm from box 92.

At the Chestnut-st fire, when box 92 was sounded, there were engines 10 from the corner of Mt Vernon and River sts, 22 from Warren av, 26 from Mason st, 32 from Boylston st, 3 from the corner of Harrison av and Bristol st, 4 from Bulfinch st, 6 from Leverett st, 36 from Mason st, 23 from Northampton st, 15 from Broadway and Dorchester av, South Boston, 27 from Elm st, Charlestown, and 37 from Longwood av.

Several of these companies are on the running card for a response to a second from box 92, but by the time this box came in at 10:09 apparatus was being hurried to town to cover the districts of the companies fighting the flames on Chestnut-st. As it happened, at the Huntington-av fire, although there was sufficient apparatus, nearly every company that otherwise would have been on hand was at work on the previous blaze.

At the Huntington-av fire therefore were engine companies 12 from Dudley st, which was covering for 3; 33 from Congress st, in place of 26; 36 from Monmouth st, Charlestown, in place of 6; 25 from Beethoven Square, which responded from the house of 13 on Cabot st, Roxbury; 13 from Cabot st, which left the house of 23 on Warren av; 41 from Harvard av, Brighton, which was covering 33 on Boylston st; 14 from Center st, Roxbury, which also came from the house of 23 on Warren av; 1 from Meeting House Hill, and 1 from Dorchester st, South Boston, which was taking the place of engine 3, busy at the Chestnut-st fire.

Some of the companies had long, hard drives to cover other companies, only to be ordered to the Huntington-av blaze before they reached their first destination.

Commissioner Wells and Chief Cheswell had to hustle also. The commissioner was at the Beacon garage when the alarm from 31 came in. He and the chief visited that fire. Chief Cheswell remained until he saw his men had the flames under control, then he and Commissioner Wells drove to the Huntington-av fire, returning later to Chestnut st.

FIREMEN IN DANGER.

They Had to Work Under Unusually Hazardous Conditions--Fall of the Second Floor.

The firemen were in constant danger from the moment of the arrival of the first pieces of apparatus. Those who were sent into the garage found the building cut up with numerous partitions, while the floors, saturated with oil and paints, burned under their feet like tinder. The fire burned the up-right and the struts, weakening the roof and upper floors so much that there was a constant danger that the men inside would be crushed under a falling roof or thrown down into the street by the giving way of the floor.

The tangle of hose in the streets made footing insecure, and the pools of water that grew into small lakes on the Byron and Brimmer-st sides of the burning garage covered numerous obstacles over which the firemen stumbled and fell in their hurry to obey orders.

Among those who received injuries in this manner that were serious enough to send them to the hospital were laddermen Daniel W. Baker and William Bonning of ladder 8. Baker stepped on a piece of timber hidden in the water from which a sharp nail protruded. The nail was driven through the sole of his rubber boot and into his foot. Bonning got a bad fall that injured his shoulder and put him out of service for a time. After their injuries were dressed they were sent home. Baker's foot was so badly hurt that he was given a pair of crutches to walk with.

When the fire in the Byron-st end of the garage was partly under control Capt Walsh of engine 23 and Lieut Mul-

ligan of engine 15, with a number of hosemen from engines 15 and 10 went into the rosin on the second floor to get a better chance at the fire that was still burning there. It was a risky job and the firemen were cautioned to look out for accidents badly injured were Lieut Martin F. Mulligan of engine 15, hoseman William I. Johnson of the same engine, hoseman Leclair, also of 15, and hoseman William Hart of engine 33-39.

Below the supports of the floor had been badly burned, and two powerful streams from slanted hose were being played into the windows from Brimmer st. The force of the streams striking the uprights worked them away and without a second of warning the further side of the floor fell, carrying with it several of the firemen.

Capt Walsh and hoseman John Hogan of engine 19 made a desperate jump toward the window and landed on the sill in safety. They alone of the men on the floor escaped without some injury. Among those who were carried down in the wreck and badly injured were Lieut Martin F. Mulligan of engine 15, hoseman William I. Johnson of the same engine, hoseman Leclair, also of 15, and hoseman William Hart of engine 33-39.

When the floor fell with a crash the firemen ran from all directions to give help to those who had been carried down with the floor. They were tenderly lifted from the wreckage and carried to the sidewalk. While waiting for the police ambulance Dr. Wheeler gave quick aid to the injured men, who were taken to the Massachusetts general hospital. Johnson was injured most and suffered from a blow on the head from falling timbers. After resting for several hours the firemen were permitted to go to their homes.

Lieut Mulligan was badly shaken up by the fall and had a bad looking cut on his left arm, but he refused to go to the hospital. After Dr. Wheeler had fixed up his wounded arm he went back to the fire, where he worked as hard as the uninjured, although his pale face showed plainly that he was suffering intensely.

The walls, loosened from the supporting timber of the floor and roof, came down shortly after the floor, menaced the firemen in the streets and the crowds on the sidewalks and Chief Cheswell ordered them torn down. While assisting at this work hoseman James J. Jones of engine 26 received a blow on the side of the fore finger of the right hand which Dr. Wheeler attended, and Dist Chief Wheeler, while climbing over the debris, stepped on a sharp nail and his hand was driven to the bone into his left foot. He was assisted to the office of a nearby stable, where Dr. Wheeler attended him.

SAID TO NUMBER 42.

Automobiles in the Building When the Fire Broke Out--Chief Cheswell Lost His New One.

George Preston, foreman of the Beacon garage, said last night that as nearly as he could compute it, there were 42 automobiles in the building at the time of the fire. One of these, a \$10,000 machine, belonged to A. R. Bangs, the proprietor. It was seriously damaged, but Mr Preston thought it could be repaired at a cost of some hundreds of dollars. The same was true, he said, of some other machines in parts of the garage.

While Chief Cheswell was directing the fight against the fire his own new automobile was being consumed inside the building. He only recently acquired it and in fact had been taking lessons in the art of operating it. He sent it to the Beacon garage the better day to have lamps and songs put on. It was totally destroyed.

Other well-known men kept their machines in the building. Dr. John Dane of Marlboro st had an auto that cost \$2000 there. It was destroyed. Frederick Sears had two machines there. One is a total loss; the other may be repaired at considerable cost. Frederick Ayers' auto was ruined.

Dr. C. P. Wilson of Brookline was in the building after his machine to go to the Readville races at the time the fire broke out. He had to escape through a window, so rapidly did the flames spread. He cut his hand slightly in getting out. His auto was lost.

George Crittenden of Lynn had put up his machine at the place to go to the races. Mr Crittenden used to be associated with Mr Bangs but recently took the Lynn agency for the Franklin manufacturing company. His machine was a new one and cost \$1500. It was destroyed.

A machine that belonged to Dr George