

The Boston Daily Globe

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 13, 1886

FIRE AND ICE.

A Terrible Day for the Fire Laddies.

Big Blazes in This City and Cambridge, and the Losses Very Heavy.

Over \$350,000 Goes Up in Smoke in New York and Chicago.

A little after 9 o'clock yesterday morning fire was discovered in the building on the corner of Clinton street and Quincy row. The structure is a five-story granite building, and belongs to J. and E. Quincy, the heirs of the late Josiah Quincy, the elder.

The alarm was sounded from Box 15, and soon after engines were on the spot, but owing to the severe weather the water was frozen, and it was impossible to secure the needed supply.

During this delay the flames steadily increased, and it was found that unless some prompt action was taken no portion of the building could be saved. Accordingly a second alarm was pulled in.

The clanging of bells now began to attract the attention of pedestrians upon the snowy streets, and the clouds of smoke and flames that rose into the clear morning air attracted large crowds from all parts of the lower sections of the city.

At last, after considerable of the customary shouting, pulling and hauling at hose, ladders and hydrants, water was obtained in abundance, and forthwith the engines began their work in earnest.

By this time the fire had broken through the roof, and sheets of flame issued from the interior as from a furnace. The water tower had been unable to do any work up to this time, but finally her volumes of icy Cochituate were turned on with telling results. Later

A Third Alarm was Pulled In.

At this time the surrounding streets presented a most animated appearance. They were filled with ice and snow, and the water, as it fell upon the sidewalks and buildings, froze with great rapidity. The firemen were encased in ice, and the sharp, penetrating atmosphere played eagerly with their toes and fingers. Many were frost-bitten and not a few severely frozen. A wall of glistening ice, with a background of dull gray granite, smoked and blackened by flames, with here and there tongues of fire that shoot out as if in defiance of the clouds of white sparkling spray that was hurled by the engines from beneath—such was the appearance of the block. The walls in the rear of the building, on Ford Run, have cracked in several places, and are bulging outward as if ready to fall. This locality is being closely watched by Engineer Cheswell. Clinton street was filled with slush and snow. The water tower, which was constantly pouring in volumes of water upon the ruins, was literally one large icicle. It was covered on every part with thick coatings of ice that was as clear as crystal.

Far beneath on the street the firemen, ran here and there, with coats sparkling in the sun as if they were clad in jewels. Their beards and hair were masses of frozen moisture, and their caps were as smooth and shiny as if made of glass.

The policemen looked like snow men. Only the new brass buttons on their obscure overcoats prevented the boys from snow-balling them. The neighboring business houses did all in their power to allay the sufferings of the firemen, and opened their offices for the use of the men. Cigars, coffee and hot drinks were passed around among the men by the well-known grocery house of Silas Peirce & Co. Howard W. Spurr & Co. were also on the field with hot coffee, and all through the morning their employes were to be found in the smoke and water distributing their Revere Standard Java, steaming hot, to the benumbed firemen and police.

By 10.15 o'clock the fire was thought to be under control, though it was burning fiercely and required the united efforts of the force.

The structure was built on what was formerly City wharf, in 1857. It is joined on the end nearest Quincy row by a small two-story building belonging to

The Same Persons.

After the flames had partially abated an examination of the buildings was made. That portion of the structure numbered 73 and 75 Clinton street is occupied on the lower floor by W. O. Rogers & Co., fruit dealers. The next two numbers, 77 and 79, are occupied by S. T. Fletcher, dealer in butter, cheese and eggs, and Hayden, Hinds & Co., general produce dealers. The lofts over these stores are used for storage purposes by J. C. Melvin, agent of the Quincy estate.

At the time of the fire they contained some 10,000 barrels of flour, and between 3000 and 4000 cases of canned goods.

As the fire spread to the adjoining two-story brick building, it was found to contain a considerable amount of fruit. The dealers located on the ground floor are Hanson & Ricker, Gibbs & Soule and Braden & Fuller. The loft is used as an engine-room.

As nearly as can be learned the total damage amounts to fully \$75,000.

The insurance on the building is distributed as follows: Nos. 77 to 79 Clinton street, Royal Fire Insurance Company, \$3750; Boylston, \$3125; Firemen's, \$3125 and Neptune \$2500; Nos. 73 to 75, Royal, \$1250; Neptune, \$1250; Boylston, \$1875; Firemen's, \$1875; Pennsylvania, \$2500, and North American, \$3750.

How the fire originated is unknown. Unfortunately it was not discovered until it had made good headway. Owing to the delay caused in ringing in an alarm, followed by the lack of water, the firemen were obliged to exert themselves to their utmost to keep the fire confined within its original limits. The various business firms located in the building will be heavy losers, though their amount of damage cannot as yet be ascertained. At noon the fire was burning brightly, but was under full control.

Among those who had goods stored in the upper stories were Page, Kidder & Co., 2500 barrels of flour; Dorr, Ellison & Co., 2500 barrels of flour; F. M. Holmes, 2000 barrels of flour; Martin L. Hall, 1000 cases of canned goods; Moses Dorr & Co., 700 barrels of flour; J. F. Hosmer, 1000 barrels of flour, and others. In all there were about 10,000 or 11,000 barrels of flour in the building, worth in the aggregate \$55,000, and about 4000 cases of canned goods, worth perhaps \$2000 more.

Most of which was Insured.

Among those who, despite the cold and difficulties attendant thereto, so unflinchingly fought the devouring element, none deserve more credit or did more service than the half-dozen pipemen, whose names are unknown, but who took their position on the roof of the building on the north adjoining the burning building. This building was occupied by C. H. Thompson & Co., agricultural implements. The pipemen in question dragged a line of hose through the interior and on to the roof through the scuttle. The roof, which inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees, was covered by a mass of drifted snow some three feet deep, which made its slate sides as slippery as glass. By means of a rope thrown over the ridge and secured on the other side, the men drew themselves along until the edge was reached, and then, lying almost buried in the snow and exposed to the icy winds which caused them soon to become coated with ice, they held on in their perilous position and directed on the flames one of the most effective streams brought into play.

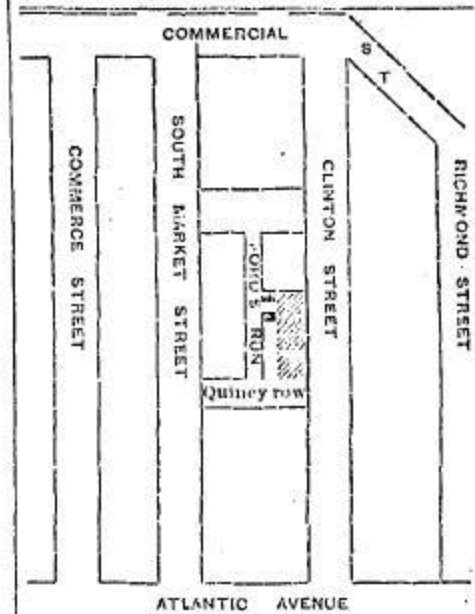
William Gallagher denies the statement that he caused the fire by overturning a candle while lighting eggs, and lays it to the steam pipes. The first seen of the fire by outsiders was when persons in the store of S. T. Fletcher ran out into the street with a boxful of burning straw. The place was stored full of egg crates that burned like so much tinder, and an elevator shaft in the rear aided in spreading the flames.

The working force at the fire consisted of Engines 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 22, 25 and 31 (fire boat), ladders 1, 8 and 14, the water tower and two protective companies. Good work was done by the fire boat, which poured a powerful stream upon the blaze from T wharf. The water tower was an object of admiration for thousands of eyes as it stood on Clinton street, tall, gaunt and white with snow and ice, while its finger-like nozzle pointed here and there, sending hundreds of gallons of water into the flames. Wherever that stream of water struck, the windows were torn out, sashes and all.

The aerial ladder was on hand, but repeated attempts to use it were unsuccessful. As fast as the ice which obstructed the

working was removed the spray from the flying water froze it up again.

A fireman named Elmer Steinert slipped and fell on the sidewalk, injuring his back severely. He was removed in great agony to the office of G. F. Swift & Co., and from there was sent home.



The building destroyed extends from Clinton street through to Ford's Run, a small alley running parallel to Clinton and South Market streets, and forms the block at the southwest corner of Clinton street and Quincy row. The block destroyed is represented in the diagram by a square in black.

Chief Wobber of the fire department suffered the freezing of both ears.

The fire was burning briskly at the time of going to press this morning. Five engines, Nos. 1, 6, 8, 21 and 26 were in attendance, and a lively play was kept up on the flames. Up to midnight Sergeant Coleman and a detail of a dozen patrolmen from Station 1 prevented outsiders from coming within the lines. The ice in the streets on all sides of the building was several inches thick. Several large mounds of ice formed directly under the windows of the burning building, and made the sidewalks and streets so slippery as to render all progress decidedly uncertain.