

ATLAS STORES DESTROYED.

Eight Men Injured, \$200,000 in Property Lost—Much of It Wool.

Famous Old Minnesota With 30 Tons of Powder on Board Caught Fire and Had Narrow Escape—Four of Her Men Among Injured—Work of Fire Department Prevented More Disastrous Conflagration.



VIEW OF THE FIRE FROM THE CONGRESS ST BRIDGE.

Three alarms from box 118 rung in rapid succession about 9:15 last evening brought nearly the entire fire department to the big wooden wool storage warehouse of the Atlas stores, just over the Congress st bridge in South Boston, which, together with the contents, about 1700 bales of wool, were practically totally destroyed.

The famous old U. S. S. Minnesota, which lies moored along the waterside of the store shed, was badly scorched and was on fire in a dozen places at a dozen different times and, came very near ending her days by being burned up at a wharf, after having been through a couple of score of terrific naval engagements and escaping destruction at the hands of the terrible Merrimac at Hampton roads in the day, naval methods of warfare and construction was revolutionized.

Four firemen and some seven blue-jackets of the Minnesota's crew, mainly men of the Connecticut naval reserve, who, to the number of nearly 200, are now quartered aboard, were injured during the fierce battle with the flames. None of them are very seriously hurt.

The Atlas stores contained wool, cotton, baled rags and general merchandise to the value of \$200,000, which is fully insured, and on which there will be a salvage of probably 50 percent.

The building was a one-story wooden and iron-sheathed structure, 308 Congress st, having a frontage on that street of 85 feet and extending down the wharf some 625 feet; it is damaged to the extent, probably, of \$15,000.

The Minnesota was badly damaged on the starboard side next the wharf. It will cost a couple of thousand dollars to restore her to her former condition.

Four Firemen Injured.

The injured firemen are: Lieut Caulfield of engine company 28-38, hoseman Eaton and Hart of the same double company and ladderman Fottler of ladder 5, all of whom were at work in the warehouse about half way down when a hanging floor piled with goods fell upon them.

The men are injured principally about the back, hips and side.

Lieut Caulfield is at the emergency hospital. The others were sent to their homes after being treated.

Four Men from Minnesota Injured.

Although quite a number were overcome by the heat and smoke on the Minnesota only four were sent to the hospitals, they being more seriously overcome. Winthrop Benton and George Bailey are at the city hospital, and seamen Dunley and Hamilton are at the Massachusetts general hospital.

Several of the others were treated at the emergency hospital and were returned to the vessel.

The Minnesota men were first treated aboard the ship by Dr E. J. Grow, U. S. N., after which they were carried ashore in the ship's cutters to the drawbridge wharf of the Congress st bridge, and transferred to the ambulances.

Night watchman Patrick Halpin, who discovered the fire and gave the first alarm, said that he completed his hourly round at 9 o'clock, and was about to begin another tour of the building. As he opened the door of the office he saw a sheet of flame burst out in the passageway on the right hand side of the building, about half way down.

He at once gave the alarm, and on his return to the building found the flames extending rapidly in both directions in

less than half an hour after his discovery the flames were bursting through the ends of the building at the congress st front.

There were five standpipes with automatic sprinklers in the building, and assistant watchman Toomey got a line of hose at work about the center of the building, but was driven out by the flames which spread with lightninglike rapidity.

Minnesota in Danger.

The first the men of the Minnesota, which lies on the other side of the wharf, knew of the blaze was the arrival of the fire apparatus. Many of the men were sitting along the wharf of the pier.

So rapid was the spread of the flames that some of them had considerable difficulty in getting aboard the ship a moment or two later, as the blaze had burst through the windows on that side and swept across the ship's gangway and licked her sides.

In an instant "fire quarters" were sounded aboard the old ship and her well-trained crew had the ship's fire hose run out in a dozen different places, and the pumps started, steam being kept up on the ship at all times as a precaution against fire.

Considerable anxiety was felt for the safety of the ship, as she had on board over 30 tons of powder and quite a quantity of small arms and fixed ammunition, a great portion of which was taken aboard from lighters only yesterday afternoon.

Capt Weeks was aboard and personally directed the work of the men. The streams, some half a dozen in number, were at first directed on the burning shed in an effort to assist in saving them, but soon all attention had to be paid to the saving of their own craft, for the flames burst forth from the building and struck the ship along her entire length, mounting high in the air and igniting the sides and roof covering in a dozen different places. Her magazines were carefully guarded by an experienced detail, and every preparation to instantly flood it was made.

This proved unnecessary, however, as she was swung off from the wharf and preparations made to tow her out of harm's way, and finally, when the fire boat, which responded on the first alarm, got to work, her powerful streams were directed on the blaze directly in front of the ship, and occasionally upon her sides.

This soon had the effect of preventing any great fear of the ship's destruction, and gave the crew time to attend to the work of seeing that no fire started from the intense heat in the interior of the ship, and also in directing their own efforts to prevent her sides or roof covering from igniting.

Two More Alarms Rung In.

Immediately upon the arrival of District Chief Mullen he ordered a second alarm and a third alarm was ordered by Chief Webber. The three alarms brought 15 engine companies, including the two horseless engines, four ladder companies, two chemical companies and water towers 1 and 2. The latter were not used, however, although they remained at the fire for some time, as it was at one time feared that the flames would extend to the immense six-story brick warehouse of exactly the same dimensions of the burning one, and separated from it only by a narrow driveway.

It is less than two weeks, by the way, since, by order of the fire underwriters, this building has been fully equipped

with close-fitting iron shutters, which, in a great measure, prevented the extending of last night's fire to it.

Great work was done by the fireboat and also the two horseless engines, which put many powerful streams into service.

R. A. Barnet's Operas and Scenery.

R. A. Barnet, the playwright, so well known in connection with the cadet theatricals, and one of the owners of the Atlas stores, was early on the scene, and displayed much concern as to the safety of manuscripts and scores of his various operettas, which were all in the safe of the office, where the flames were then raging furiously. He mournfully remarked that he could then smell them burning. He also had scenery stored in the building.

The police arrangements of the fire were in charge of Lieut. Enright of division 6, although Capt Donovan appeared later. There was a detail of about 25 men under Sergt. Harriman from division 6, five men under Sergt. Denton of division 2 and five men under Sergt. O'Neil from division 4, and the crowd, which at first bade fair to interfere seriously in the work of the firemen, were driven back to safe bounds.

At midnight the firemen were busily engaged in overhauling the bales of wool, cotton and rags in the ruined shed and in extinguishing the fire which had got into many of the bales. Several engine companies will probably be kept on the scene all day today.

Engine 28-39 seems to be quite unfortunate in having men injured, as Lieut. Caulfield, who was previously injured at the Castle at milk shed fire, was transferred to this company to take the place of Lieut. Gettald, who was killed at the Merrimac st fire of last February.

LOSS ABOUT \$200,000.

Great Quantity of Wool, Cotton, Rags and Waste Stored in Building.

The building is a one-story frame structure, with corrugated iron covering on the sides and tar and gravel roof. It is 625 feet long by 80 feet wide, and is divided into three stores. It is owned by the Boston wharf company, and is occupied for storage purposes by Bates & Barnet of 27 Broad st. The buildings were worth about \$16,000.

There was in the buildings property belonging to the following firms: W. E. Wall, 4000 bales of wool, valued at about \$220 a bale; John Finnigan, Texas, represented here by E. H. Palmer, wool valued at about \$20,000; Remick & Co., cotton waste, \$5000; Barry, Thayer & Co., 20,000 bales of cotton, valued at about \$30,000; Abram French & Co., imported crockery in crates and casks, \$10,000; Horace Gutten & Co., imported rags, \$5000; R. S. Stratton, wool and rags, \$5000.

Besides these there were stored there a lot of scenery and theatrical properties and costumes belonging to R. A. Barnet, valued at \$5000; a lot of scenery belonging to the estate of the late Margaret Mather, and the scenery used by the Cadets in their theatricals. These were entirely consumed. All the property was fully covered by insurance.

Bates & Barnet had engaged two special watchmen to look out for the property until after the Fourth, and they were in the building when the fire caught. The cause of the fire is not known and the fire marshal will make an investigation. The total loss will be about \$200,000.