

NINE LIVES LOST IN FLEET-ST FIRE

Tenement House the Scene --Occupied by Italians.

MANY JUMP FROM WINDOWS

Most of Victims Died by Suffocation--- Many Seriously Injured.

Blaze Discovered Shortly After 1 O'Clock This Morning---Four Persons Leap Into the Arms of Patrolman Nickerson and Unknown Italian---Escape by the Single Stairway Cut Off---Windows All Ablaze When the Firemen Arrived---Patrolman Bickford Saves Four Lives.

THE DEAD.

LOUIS PILATO, aged 54.
MADALINA PILATO, his wife, aged 48.
JOSEPH SALANTO, father of Mrs. Pilato.
RAFFAELE DESCO, aged 80.
MADALINE DESCO, his wife, aged 27.
JENNIE DONETTA.
SABBATELLI DANDI, aged 9.
MAN, unknown.
BABY, unknown.

Nine persons lost their lives in a fire this morning in the three-story and an attic brick tenement house at 12 Fleet st.

North End. A number of other persons, tragically it was almost impossible to get who lived in the house, were dangerously burned and sent to the Massachusetts general hospital. Several were injured by jumping or dropping from the second and third floor windows into Fleet st.

The fire was discovered at 1:10 o'clock, and before 2 it was practically out, but the bodies of three women, four men and two children were lying dead side by side in the barber shop at 10 Fleet st, and the firemen were then searching the ruins of the half-burned rooms for the bodies of others, although they thought then that probably all the dead had been taken out.

All of the dead were Italians, and in the confusion incident to the frightful

their full names correctly. The dead, removed from the building and laid out in the barber shop were as given above. The bodies of most of the dead had been burned more or less, but from their

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appearance the doctors, who were shortly on the scene, and the police and firemen judged that death in nearly every case had been caused by suffocation.

Nearly all of the bodies were conformed as though death had come with great agony. The building in which the tragedy occurred is a three-story brick with an attic, at 12 Fleet st, and in the midst of a densely crowded tenement district, where the greater part of the population is Italian.

One Family Escapes.

Michael O'Neill ran, a hand laundry on the ground floor, and had living rooms in the rear, where he kept house with his family. Up stairs the rooms on the second floor, the third floor and even in the attic, were filled with Italian families who, after the manner of the Italians of the North End, where economy of space is a great consideration, crowded in together about as thick as people possibly could live, so that when the fire, came their chances for escape down the one narrow stairway was an impossibility.

Not one of the few people who did get out of the building alive went out by the doorway which opened on the stairs that led up to the rooms above the ground floors.

O'Neill and his family being on the ground floor, and having sufficient warning of the blaze managed to get out into the street, but they were in their night clothes.

From the second floor a man, who wore no clothing other than an undershirt, saved his life by hanging by his hands from the window sill and dropping to the pavement.

About half an hour after the fire was put out firemen searching on the top floor found the body of a child about a year old in one of the rear rooms.

One of the women who had been brought out alive died shortly after, making nine victims. Another woman taken to the hospital is not expected to recover.

Two women and a man, all of whom slept near the front of the building, jumped from the third-story windows into the arms of patrolman Nickerson of division 1 and an unknown but heroic Italian who happened along at the time the fire was discovered and helped Nickerson catch them as they leaped from the windows.

Nickerson did not see what became of the women and the man he and the Italian saved, but he thought at the time he was talking with the Globe reporter that all of them had been hurt considerably, as some of them were heavy and came down with such force that they fell through the arms of their would-be rescuers and struck the walk pretty hard.

Discovered by Nickerson.

The people who jumped or dropped from the windows were all in such clothing as they had been sleeping in, and neighbors took them in and cared for them as well as they could.

Patrolman Nickerson was going up Hanover st shortly after 1 o'clock when he was startled by a cry of fire that was more like a wail than a shout. He ran into Fleet st, and saw that the building No. 13 was belching smoke and fire from the front entrance to the hallway. He dashed against the hallway door and swung it open, only to be driven back by a burst of flame which seemed to reach halfway across the street.

Inside the stairs were in a blaze, and he realized that all hope of escape for the people imprisoned in the house was out off.

He looked up toward the front of the building, from which there were issuing the shrieks of the inmates, who had awakened to the great peril, and on the third floor saw two women and a man preparing to jump into the street.

Nickerson yelled to them to hold on, but the smoke was rolling in suffocating clouds about their heads, and through the dark clouds of it there was already beginning to shine the lurid light of the flames, which were spreading toward the front of the building on every floor from the stairway which had carried the fire upward.

The patrolman, as well as the shrieking people caught in the death trap, realized that it was a case of jumping, and taking the risk of sudden death, or at least great personal injury by striking the sidewalk, or of staying where they were to meet a certain and more awful fate.

of her body fell, she tumbled to the side of the first woman on the sidewalk. Nickerson and the unknown Italian hero, who had been there, for a man had appeared at the window, from which the stout woman had jumped, and begged the men below to catch him.

Four Jump.

Nickerson and the Italian were bruised and sore, and their arms had been nearly wrenched out of their sockets by this time, but they did not flinch. Together they clutched hands, and the Italian, who could not speak English but who was a game man all the way through, indicated that he was ready to stay to the end to help the people in the burning house.

The policeman and Nickerson had scarcely got their hands together again when the man threw himself headlong out of the window and came crashing down on them. He was down as he fell, his weight tore apart the grip of the saving hands, and he landed on the stone sidewalk with a thud.

He was rendered senseless, but there was no time to give him further attention, for another man had appeared at a front window, this time on the second floor, and he, too, yelled to the policeman and his Italian helper to catch him.

He let himself down as far as he could with his hands and at a word from Nickerson let go. He didn't have so far to fall and wasn't hurt much, apparently.

None of the four who jumped had on anything but their night clothes, and most of them few at that. The night was very cold, and they suffered much even in the short time that elapsed before the neighbors could get out and take them in, which they promptly did. As soon as the ambulances arrived they were taken to the Massachusetts general hospital.

With the exception of the O'Neill's, who lived on the ground floor, and the two women and two men who were saved by jumping from the second and third floors, not one of the inmates of the house, so far as could be learned this morning, escaped from the building through their own efforts.

As soon as Nickerson and the Italian had succeeded in helping effect the escapes which have been told about, Nickerson ran to box 10 and sent an alarm.

The rapidity with which all these thrilling scenes had happened may be realized by considering that it was 1:10 when Nickerson first knew of the fire, and that after the rescues had been made he sent the alarm in at 1:15 o'clock.

Windows All Aflame.

The response of the firemen was prompt, and when they arrived their first work was to run ladders up to all the floors in the front of the building, for it was absolutely impossible to get into the house by what had been the stairway, as that was a mass of flames and mostly burned away between the ground floor and the second.

In the rear of the building, to which detachments of the firemen were sent, flames were bursting from every window on every floor, and it was evident that there was no possible chance for getting in there.

The first of the firemen to reach the blaze heard indescribable cries of agony from the people imprisoned in the building, but not one of them came near enough to any of the windows to be seen. A minute after the first of the firemen to arrive had got there the shrieks died away, and it was realized that the building was a funeral pyre.

Quickly as possible—and firemen never worked faster—ladders were raised to the front windows, and almost before the tops landed against the side of the building firemen were running up them and trying to force their way into the rooms on the upper floors. It was an impossibility even in that short time to get into the third floor windows, for the flames were bursting from them with great fury; but on the second floor, although the heat and smoke had forced the glass out with a crash, the determined firemen crawled in through the wrecked sash and groped blindly in the deadly smoke to see if there yet remained within the reach of man one person from whom life had not yet fled.

Henry Connell, of engine 4, and Henry Kelly, of ladder 1, holding each other's hands, groped about until one of them got hold of the body of a man who was lying on the floor.

Together, themselves gasping with the killing smoke, they dragged him toward the window by which they had entered, and although they had to lay down once, while they got to the window and got a breath of air, they returned to the man and succeeded in getting him to the window and onto a ladder, down which he was passed to the street.

This man was sent to the Massachusetts general hospital, and will probably live.

Woman Carried Out Dead.

Immediately after this man was brought out other firemen succeeded in getting hold of a stout woman who had been overcome by smoke on the second floor and was lying inert and senseless within three feet of the front window. She was so heavy that she could not be taken down a ladder, but by this time the fire, which of itself did not do such a tremendous amount of damage to the building itself, was well enough under control, as the result of many streams of water, to allow the firemen and policemen to carry the woman down on a stretcher, which was lowered with a rope.

She was laid out on the sidewalk across the street and a doctor and a fireman worked over her trying to induce respiration by artificial means, but after they had been working at her for 15 minutes a physician came along and examined her and said she was dead. The body was then carried into the barber shop and laid with the others there on the floor.

There were eight bodies there altogether when Dr. Dunn arrived, and he examined them as rapidly as possible, pronouncing all dead until he came to the last one, in which he detected a flickering spark of life, and directed that the man be hurried to the hospital, which was done.

As soon as the fire had been gotten under control the firemen began bringing out the bodies of the dead and laying them on the floor of the barber shop.

The bodies of all of them were black from the smoke which had suffocated them, and some of them had been terribly burned by the flames which had reached them. None of the dead were

BRINGING OUT THE DEAD.

People Awestruck as Enormity of the Tragedy Dawned Upon Them.

It was a most weird scene after the fire was put out. The news spread with lightning rapidity, and the residents about Fleet st came out hurriedly to see what had happened.

The enormity of the tragedy had not dawned upon them at first, for the bodies had not been taken from the ruins.

In a few moments after the firemen began their search and located the bodies and brought them down there was an awful hush as each one was taken into the little barber shop next door.

One, two, three, the count went on until seven had been counted, and still there was an air of expectancy among those who were acquainted with the premises and knew how many people lodged there.

At first a throng gathered about the door and crowded into the little shop until it was impossible to step around without touching the bodies.

Two bodies, those of a man and a woman, were lying with their heads toward the door. Across from them, against the wall, all doubled up, was the body of a young boy. Between him and the other two, stretched diagonally across the shop, were the other four.

There was a scarcity of coverings, and the body of the man and woman were the only ones which had anything about them. An old blanket served to cover their bodies, but not the faces, and the others simply had their underclothing on.

The expression on the faces of the

bodies was that of untold agony. In a short while the police cleared the room and allowed no one to go in except the newspaper men and people, who, it was thought, could identify the bodies.

The faces were not burned, so identification was comparatively easy for those who were acquainted with the dead. The relatives or others who might be able to tell who the dead were apparently so overcome that they could not bear to attempt identification.

When the tragedy had been fully comprehended several of the Italian residents went into the shop and in a short while five of the persons had been identified.

Before the names of the others could be learned another fireman made his appearance, bearing the body of a child in his arms, which was covered with a shawl. He laid it tenderly down beside the man and woman.

Outside several women had congregated and for a short time there were heartrending moans as they learned that among the dead were some relatives. While this was going on physicians had been working over several others in a building across the way and the hospital ambulance had arrived.

"Ready, quick," came the order, and in less than a minute a woman was in the ambulance and was being hurried off to the hospital. The opinion was expressed by the doctor that her chances for recovery were small.

The morbidly curious still continued to hover about trying to get a glimpse of the dead bodies through the windows until driven away by the police.

DISCOVERY OF THE FIRE.

Michael O'Neil the First to Wake—He Got His Wife and Assistants Out Safely.

Michael O'Neill, with his wife, Annie, and Miss Grace O'Grady, occupied the front and side room at 12 Fleet st, up one flight. Mr. O'Neill runs a laundry underneath, on the ground floor.

He appears to have been the first person in the house to discover the fire, having been awakened by a sense of suffocation caused by the smoke pouring into the room.

He ran to the door, looked out into the hall, and through the thick volume of smoke that poured in upon him he saw flames shooting up the back stairway.

He shouted through the halls to awaken the other occupants of the house, and when the women with him began to scream he told them not to get excited, as he would get them out safely.

Then he threw open the window, climbed out and, hanging by his hands, dropped to the sidewalk below, some 12 or 15 feet. By his instructions Mrs. O'Neill and Miss O'Grady did the same, and Mr. O'Neill caught them in his arms as they dropped.

A few moments later Miss Annie Palto hung out of a front window, on the third floor, and dropped to the sidewalk, breaking one of her legs, though escaping with her life, to the astonishment of those who saw her.

She was cared for by Mr. O'Neill and policeman Nickerson, who, though off duty, happened to be in the vicinity, and had been attracted by the screams of the women in the house.

They were all cared for by kindly disposed people across the street, and there they were later seen by a Globe reporter, to whom they said that they

Neighbors Frenzied.

The shrieks of the other Italians in the neighborhood, who came out into the streets to lament over the deaths of their countrymen, were heartrending. Many of the men appeared to have become frenzied with excitement and grief, and they ran wildly up and down the streets waving their arms and shouting in the Italian tongue, while the women tore at their hair, and sobbing aloud, ran back and forth, praying and calling on the saints for relief.

The Italians were so excited that they got in the way of the detail of policemen sent on the first alarm, and finally, to allow the firemen a chance to work at the fire and in rescuing the bodies, it became necessary for the police to drive the crowds back with their clubs and bats.

The burned house was owned by Mrs. Josephine Scannell of Peter Parley road, Jamaica Plain.

All the bodies were taken to the North Grove-st morgue.

An unknown man was found in an alleyway at 3:30 with both legs broken, and chilled through. He was taken to the Massachusetts general hospital.

WORK OF THE HEROES.

Frank C. Redhead of Lowell and James W. Keegan Saved Number of Lives.

The fire made a clean sweep up the rear stairway, and when it was first discovered it was all through the three floors at the rear.

O'Neill put his head out a front window and was yelling fire when two men who were walking down Fleet st, but were at some distance, heard him. These men were Frank C. Redhead of Lowell and James W. Keegan, who lived not far from the doomed house.

Redhead, being the younger man, ran to the box, and pulled the alarm, while Keegan hurried toward the house. Not

stopping to direct engines or anything, Redhead ran back to the house.

Keegan was at the door, and with Redhead's aid pulled two girls from the blazing front staircase. They were trying to make their way down, but the sweep of the flames which came from under the stairway and rolled up over the banisters had caused them to lose their wits, and had it not been for a quick dash on the part of the two men, they would not have been able to get out.

The rush of the flames was so fierce that it was impossible for Redhead and Keegan to do more, and they took a stand on the sidewalk and caught some of those who were leaping from the windows. One of the women who was thus saved in her fall was sent to the hospital.

Another citizen who proved a hero was Jonas Hoff, who was aided by a young man whose name could not be ascertained. Hoff and his companion got to the scene about the time Redhead and Keegan were getting the two young women from the stairway, and they caught a woman who leaped from the third story.

One of the men who leaped from a window and who was sent to the hospital was said to be Joe Locante, and it was thought that he had fractured his ankle.

After the fire had been gotten out, while the firemen were exploring the third floor, at about 2:10, they found the body of a child, apparently about a year old. This was taken into the barber shop along with the other bodies.

While looking over the rear of the building the firemen detected a strong odor of kerosene in the vicinity of the water closet, which opened from the hall in the rear of the first floor, and from the door of which a flight of stairs ran up through the house.

The closet was so completely burned out that thorough investigation failed to reveal more than that penetrating odor of oil.

The flames had run up through the rear hall, charring the stairs and rails and thus making a clean sweep through the rear rooms. Everything was practically burned beyond any recognizable shape in the rear rooms throughout, except on the second floor.

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