

MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 26, 1899

FOUR ALARMS.

Big Blaze at Purchase and Pearl Sts.

Six-Story Structure in Ruins.

Loss May Amount to \$200,000.

Conflagration Was Threatened.

Three-Quarters of City's Fire Apparatus Was Out.

Thrilling Escape of a Fireman.

Rumors of Loss of Life Added to the General Excitement.

The extensive six-story brick building, corner of Pearl and Purchase sts., and the half dozen or more printing, bookbinding and kindred concerns that occupied it, were practically ruined by fire last night.

The total damage is variously estimated at from \$175,000 to \$200,000, of which about one-half represents the loss on the building.

Four alarms in rapid succession from box 61 summoned over three-quarters of the Boston fire apparatus, including the fireboat and both horseless engines and water towers. Although the blaze was most threatening when at its height and from the surrounding of wool warehouses and oil establishments a conflagration was a possibility, the amount of apparatus gathered on the scene, together with the efforts of the firemen, simply deluged the structure, drowning the blaze out by simple quantity of water. It took over three hours to do it, however, even before the fire was considered under control, and it was daylight before the entire force of firemen left the scene.

Three firemen received injuries of a severe but not serious nature, and considerable excitement was occasioned for a time by rumors that one or two parties who slept in the building had been cut off from escape and were burned to death. These rumors proved groundless, however, the firemen and police being satisfied after a careful search that nobody was in the building.

The principal losses are: Building 119 to 162 Purchase and 116 to 151 Pearl st., owned by the Stone estate, leased by Ginn & Co., publishers, and former part occupants, from \$70,000 to \$100,000, both figures being estimates of insurance men familiar with the property; probably the entire structure above the third floor and second floor in parts is entirely gutted.

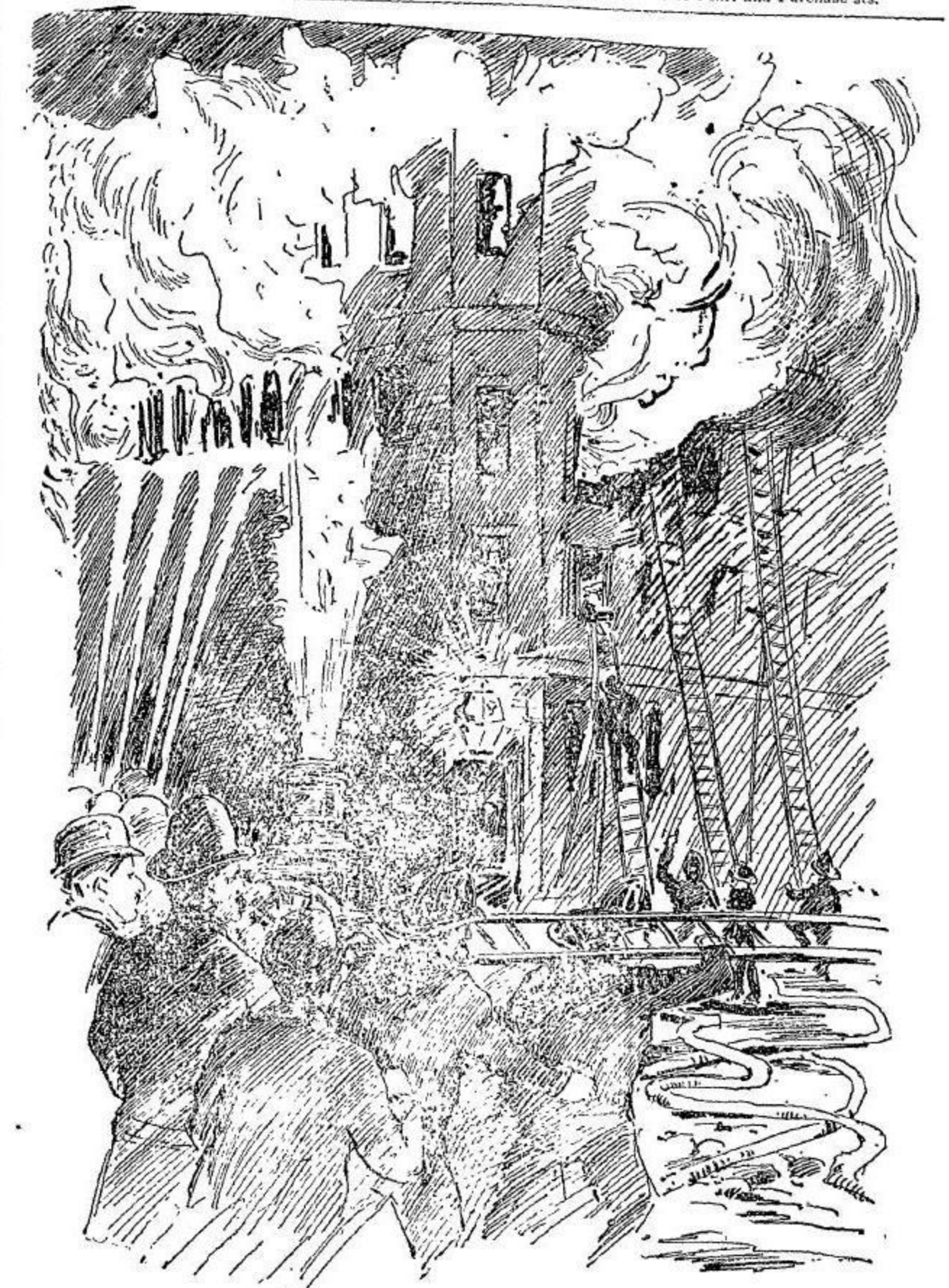
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FOUR ALARMS.

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Boston bookbinding company, Norman H. White, occupants of fourth, fifth and parts of the third, and also the top floors, \$15,000.
Thomas J. M. Smith & Co., printers, occupants of basement and a portion of the first floor, \$25,000.
Lounsbury, Nichols & Worth com-

pany printers, occupants of third floor, \$20,000.
Jerome H. Hennessy & Co., manufacturers of printers' rollers, occupants of part of the sixth floor, with office on ground floor, \$500.
American Wool and Cotton Reporter, Frank P. Bennett publisher, occupants of the second floor, \$500.
Pratt & Whitney company, machinery, occupants of the corner street floor store, \$12,000.
Boston fireproof covering company, occupants of the store at 118 Purchase st. and Hugh White, commission merchant, who has a small office on the second floor, are the other occupants. Their losses are slight compared with the others, possibly \$100 damage to the fireproofing company's stock and \$50 to Mr. White.



FIREMEN BATTLING WITH THE FIRE AT PURCHASE AND PEARL STS.

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In addition to the American Wool and Cotton Reporter, which has its own plant, the Lounsbury, Nichols & Worth company and Thomas J. M. Smith & Co. the presswork for half a hundred or more weekly and suburban publications, among the number being The Gilder, The Golden Rule, and others.
Luce & Mannings, wool merchants, occupants of the adjacent building, corner Pearl st and Atlantic av, and which was packed with wool in storage, suffer quite a water loss.

The firemen injured are:
J. J. Hurley, engine 6, hand cut by glass.
Victor Richer of engine 25, hand burned while inside of building at start.
Francis McArdle of engine 3, badly lacerated wound of the hand.

The latter's escape was quite thrilling. He was ascending a ladder on the Purchase st side. When about 50 feet above the street the ladder slipped and he fell. In his hand he held a "dogging" spike and with this he succeeded in catching the ladder lower down and saved himself from probably instant death on the pavement. The hand with which he secured the hold with the tool was badly lacerated however.

All three men were treated at the emergency hospital.

The fire, it would appear from the statement of patrolman Robinson of station 2, who gave the alarm, and the first fireman to arrive, must have been smoldering for some time before it was discovered. The policeman had his attention called by falling glass, which had cracked and fallen from the heat within. When the Fort Hill sq apparatus arrived the flames already had burst forth from the windows of the second floor on Purchase st, and almost at the end opposite Hartford st. A few moments later they had swept through the windows of the fifth and sixth floors on the corner of Pearl st, fully 100 feet below, and also on the second floor on the other side of where it first appeared.

The firemen think the blaze started on the fourth floor in the bookbinding, while watchman Frost of an adjacent building believes it started in the basement and rushed up the elevator shaft.

The fire showed such proportions even at the start that district chief Garrity immediately ordered a second alarm, while a third and subsequently a fourth call for additional apparatus were later sent out.

The alarms and the time of their ringing were box 61 at 9:33, second 9:50, third 10, and fourth 10:45, when it was feared that the blaze was spreading, by communicating to the wool warehouse of Luce & Mannings adjacent.

With the arrival of the first apparatus the firemen went directly into the building to fight the flames. Several hot air explosions in succession on the Purchase st side soon drove them back to the street, and also marcially aided in throwing the flame and fire in every direction.

By this time the entire upper portion of the building was ablaze, and a battle for supremacy began that has been seldom equaled in Boston.

Ladders were practically of no avail, but both water towers were stationed in the street, one on Pearl and the other on Purchase st, and their heavy streams were directed at close quarters with telling effect. At the same time the powerful streams from both horseless engines, four from the fire boats which took position at a neighboring wharf, and numerous slamese connections were worked from opposite curbstones directly upon the most threatening portions, and all with good effect.

thought, in this particular instance than would have been the salt water streams.

FIREMEN'S GREAT WORK.

How They Succeeded in Getting the Flames Under Control - Unusual Scenes in the Streets.

Shortly after the second alarm had been sounded, three minutes after the first alarm had been sent in, thousands of spectators flocked to the scene. The scenes about the streets were interesting. Never before, or seldom indeed, have so many of the department's horses been on the street at one time. On Purchase and Pearl sts, Atlantic av and all the side streets, scores of well trained horses stood lazily awaiting the return of their drivers and the sounding of the "all out" signal. On Atlantic av, from the corner of Congress st, nearly 100 yards to the north, were stretched over 100 head of horses, almost knee deep in the running water. Each horse was attended by a willing youth who was only too eager to act as a groom.

The horseless engines, one of which was situated on Purchase st, near the corner of Pearl, and the other farther up Pearl st, came in for their share of attention, and all night long crowds stared in astonishment at the wonderful mechanism of these powerful fire fighters.

The constant tooting of the engine whistles sending out their shrill call for fuel, was hurriedly responded to by the employees of the supply department. Bags of coal by the ton were dumped near the engines, and especially in the vicinity of the horseless machines. The perfect volcano of sparks emitted from the smokestacks of these engines soon ignited the coal bags, which had been hurriedly thrown aside, and the bystanders took a hand in extinguishing the small blazes by throwing the bags into the streams flowing through the streets.

After weary hours of fire fighting and in the most congested section, several fire ladders took advantage of a foot deep smoke on Purchase st and comfortably seated themselves on the rear end of a ladder truck, and from that perch threw tons and tons of water into the fire.

Most of the fighting was done from the Pearl st side of the building and consequently, here the greater crowd collected. The work of the men on the Purchase st side, however, was by far the severest, they having to contend with a blinding smoke, which at times nearly suffocated some of them. The work of the aerial ladders on Pearl st and Atlantic av was highly praised by the spectators, where by the bright light of the engines and fire the work of the men could be distinctly viewed.

About half an hour after the first alarm an aerial ladder was put to the roof on the Atlantic av side, and several men were sent up. The fire very soon after reached the roof of the building on Purchase st and was highly praised by the spectators, where by the bright light of the engines and fire the work of the men could be distinctly viewed.

More apparatus was hurried round to that point, including a water tower, and in a short while the flames were driven from the front walls.

At 10:45 the flames burst out of the fourth story windows on the Pearl st side. Several ladders were on the roof, close to the Pearl st side, and two were at work on a ladder, above where the blaze was belching forth. They made haste to get down below the burning

window, and soon all those on the ladder were rescued.

At 10:45 there were evidences that the fire was again beginning to come through the roof. Streams were sent from the sidewalk of Pearl st into the fifth story windows and to the roof with apparent good effect.

The flames were next seen to come from windows of the sixth story. There were firemen on the roof just overhead, and others at work on ladders close to these windows. The roof seemed actually burning under the firemen's feet while one of them shouted out orders from the roof down to the six stories to the pavement. The fire then appeared for a few minutes on the Atlantic av side, on the fifth and sixth stories, but soon was conquered there.

Three or four firemen stayed on the roof until it seemed doubtful if they would be able to come down the long ladder beside them past the fiery windows; but down they came, surrounded by clouds of flame, smoke and spray.

As soon as it got a little cooler about the roof and the upper windows at that point the plucky fire fighters went right back up to the roof and continued to work there.

Firemen were sent up into the building across Pearl st and after 15 or 20 minutes' work they got a couple more streams on this side of the fire from third-story windows there.

This mode of attack was slowly but surely becoming effective, and afforded the tired firemen a chance to gain a little rest and secure fresh air. After the fire had been subdued there was some work for the wall and roof at the corner of Purchase and Pearl sts falling in, and spectators were warned not to approach too near.

After the smoke had cleared away on the Purchase st side of the building and it had been put out on Pearl st, several of the pieces of apparatus and lines of hose were frequently around to Purchase st, where the firemen at work experienced the greatest difficulty. The combined forces were finally successful in mastering the situation, and at the hour of going to press the fire was practically out.

THEIR WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN.

Possibility That Two Men May Have Been in the Building when the Fire Started.

The story of the discovery of the fire is best told by Emory F. Frost, the venerable watchman for T. Remick & Co's building, 483 to 489 Atlantic av, and running back to Purchase st.

Mr Frost told The Globe reporter that about 9:30 he began his rounds of the Remick building. He reached the Purchase st end about 9:40, and while gazing out of the large windows of his own building he was aroused to his senses by the glow in the windows of the building directly opposite. At first he saw a tiny flame shoot up and immediately after a large burst of flame lightened up the street.

Looking up from the sidewalk he saw columns of smoke issuing from the second story. He immediately started for the corner of the building, where the firemen at work experienced the greatest difficulty. The combined forces were finally successful in mastering the situation, and at the hour of going to press the fire was practically out.

When he reached the box he was met by patrolman William H. Robinson of division 2, who pulled in the alarm. Then Mr Frost rushed back to his station. In passing failed to see the watchman sitting where he had left him. Instead he saw the man running with all possible speed toward Fort Hill sq. That was the last he saw of the watchman last night.

It is said that with the young fellow who, it is supposed, acted in the capacity of night watchman for the Fireproof covering company, there was also another man who slept in the little back room of the establishment. The second man was supposed to be his father, a man about 60 years of age. Whether or not the older man got out of the building in safety is not absolutely certain in Mr Frost's mind.

It was also rumored about the scene of the fire that there was another man who frequently slept in the building, "Billy" King, about 40 years old, who had been in the habit of sleeping in the basement of 159 Purchase st. Generally, it is stated, he slept in the boiler room of the building, but whether or not he slept there last night is unknown.

Mr Frost, who was formerly an employe of the Ginn plant, before that concern removed to Cambridge, and who is quite intimate with the surroundings of the entire building, is quite positive in his assertion that the fire started in the basement, probably the boiler room or 72 J. M. Smith's press room. He also says that when he was employed there a room about 30 feet square was used for the storage of paper. This room is in the front of the building, facing on Purchase st and close to the elevator well where the flames crawled up to the floors above.