

BIG INDUSTRY DESTROYED

Canning Factory of the Van Camp Packing Company Left in Ashes.

About \$200,000 Loss and 500 People Thrown Out of Employment—Destructive Work of an Early Morning Fire.

The big establishment of the VanCamp Packing Company, one of the largest and most prosperous industries in Indianapolis, is in ruins. Fire, which seems to have started in the boiler-room about 2 o'clock this morning, left the factory on the bank of White river at Kentucky avenue nothing but a blackened mass of ashes and debris.

The blaze and as the wind was from the west, the fire ate its way through the building with wonderful rapidity. It was discovered by the night watchman after it had gotten good headway, and he started to ring an alarm. At about the same time the watchman in the court-house tower saw the blaze and turned in the alarm. It was a long run for most of the engines, and down the worst street in the city, Kentucky avenue.

When the chemical struck the tracks at West street all the men on it were thrown off in the dust and the crew of the ladder truck met the same fate.

The department arrived within the whole factory was mass of flames, and a magnificent fire did it make. The flames were leaping savagely from all the windows of the top story and from a dozen places in the roof, while a shower of sparks and burning bits of shingles was wafted to the north and east.

Some of them falling as far north as Washington street. The scene for squares about as light as day, and thousands of upturned faces in the lurid glare watched the seething mass of flames leap skyward.

The department could make no headway against the fire. The pressure was weak and the engines, as usual, did not work well. All the firemen could do was to help carry the books and papers out of the office and let the building burn. Fortunately, there was nothing to the northwest of it but Greenlawn cemetery, and it could not catch fire. Thus \$200,000 went up in smoke.

The origin of the fire is enshrouded in mystery. Work was suspended at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, after that until the fire was discovered. No one was in or about the building except the watchman, Mitchell. The latter says he made the rounds twenty-five minutes before the fire and found nothing out of the ordinary.

The fire spread with marvelous rapidity, and within thirty minutes after it was discovered in the boiler-room it had burst through the roof and the trusses had fallen. The firemen were able to make but little headway against the blistering heat, and the building and contents were a total loss.

Freight Cars Burned. Three freight cars that stood on the switch on the north side of the factory were reduced to ashes. A switch-engine was backed down in the hope of saving them, but the hose had already been laid across the track, and the switch-engine crew retired.

Loss and Insurance. The insurance on the building was \$200,000; on stock, \$100,000, and on machinery, \$150,000. The companies represented at Chas. F. Stanley, Mr. Frank VanCamp, the manager of the company, stated to a Journal reporter that the loss would reach \$300,000. The firm had an immensely heavy stock of canned goods on hand.

The Plant and Employers. The plant was established in 1874 by Barnes, McMurtry & Co., at a cost of \$110,000. It was brick for the most part, but several frame additions had been added. The source of the fire was in the frame building on the west, but the flames spread with such rapidity that the main building was also soon a furnace of flame.

A frame structure on the south was consumed with marvelous rapidity. The main building of brick was about three hundred feet square, three stories high. Each floor was stocked to its fullest capacity. The busiest season of the year was on, and five hundred employees were required to do the work. The tomato season was just over, and the corn canning was in progress. The millions of the works was not less than a capacity of goods.

The fence and lawn of the grave-yard caught fire, but were extinguished with the chemical. A phenomenon which attracted much attention among the spectators was the cyclonic action of the wind in the smoke. A shower of frame houses in the vicinity. The neighborhood received a shower of very large and dangerous embers.

Fireman Injured. Orville Duncan, a member of the headquarters chemical company, was thrown from the engine as it lurched in crossing the railroad tracks, and was severely injured.

Commercial Club Building. The financial committee of the Commercial Club, together with a few of its directors and officers and the architect of the new building, will go to Park county next Wednesday for the purpose of examining the brown stone produced by those quarries, with a view to using it in the new building. The club will be conveyed by special train from Carbon to Mansfield, where the quarries are located, and will return in the evening, reaching here about 5 o'clock. The club is endeavoring to make arrangements with the railroad for a half-rate for the excursion, and also to have the cars run on a regular basis. The forists this year will give all the flowers remaining over from the show to the charitable institutions of the city instead of auctioning them off as has been their yearly custom.

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The public is familiar with the "horse" ball playing put up by the Giants at Boston last week, it being an apparent game-way of five straight games to the Beaneaters in three days. The disposition of the team to have Boston win was patent, that is, to the Bostonians. Mr. Day was called on for an explanation. If there had been any doubt of actual game-throwing previous to that, Mr. Day left little room for it when he declared that fair (7) ball had been played by his team, he admitted that he would rather see the Boston win the pennant than the Bostonians.

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