

# SPECTRE OF DEATH BROODS SILENTLY OVER CHICAGO

## Nearly 600 Corpses Recovered From the Iroquois Opera House Ruins--More Believed to be in the Debris-- Fire Escapes Were not in Position--Asbestos Fire Curtain Would Not Work

CHICAGO, Dec. 31.—Still confronted by chaos that will take days to straighten, police and coroner's officials at noon today, after 20 hours' continuous toil, admitted their inability to compile a correct list of the dead, injured and missing in the Iroquois theater horror.

A revised statement has been issued placing the number of dead at 531. The number missing is now 200. Some are undoubtedly among the unidentified dead.

Of the 300 injured the physicians report that probably 100 will die.

Newspaper reports compiled at the various morgues and hospitals up to noon vary. The lowest list of dead is 564 and the highest 576.

Coroner Traeger has impaneled a jury and this morning the jurors were conducted through the numerous morgues, where each body was viewed separately. Several times men were compelled to cease their labor when overcome by emotion at the spectacles. The bodies of burned children affected them most.

Two jurors were unable to go farther than the first morgue. They were excused and other men were substituted. The jury's unpleasant task will probably take until midnight, by which time the last victims will probably have been seen.

As soon as this is done the hearing of evidence will be begun. Investigation will be complete.

Witnesses will be required to say why the doors in the children's galleries were not left open so that every means of exit could be used; also why the asbestos curtain failed to work, why the fire escapes were not completed, and whether or not several building laws were complied with.

All information now shows that had the asbestos curtain worked the loss of life would have been very small.

A profound air of gloom has settled over the city. The death list is so great that hundreds of thousands number either relatives, friends or acquaintances among the victims. Business is practically suspended.

The board of trade closed at noon out of respect for the dead, after the morning's apathetic trading.

From morgue to morgue weeping ones hurry in quest of missing, or emerge from the charnel houses bearing evidences that their search has ended and the worst fears realized.

The mayor's office is buried in telegrams of inquiry. From many cities of America and Europe messages of condolence have been received.

Equal almost to the heart-rending scenes at the morgues is that at the police custodian's rooms, where anxious ones are going over heaps of garments and trinkets left behind in the mad rush to escape from the burning theater. Little children's clothing, soiled and torn; sealskins of rich value; slippers and skirts torn from struggling women, and portions of waists complete the tragic evidence of that last terrible rush. Five bushel baskets filled with purses, gloves, handkerchiefs and jewelry have been collected. Two barrels were required to hold the overshoes and shoes alone.

All night long and yet today crowds filled the streets around the scene of the catastrophe, giving way to traffic and

pedestrians only through the active efforts of the police. The Iroquois stands to outward gaze intact, with all the glamor of new construction. Its marble columns and sculptured figures of tragedy and comedy are not even blackened with the death-dealing smoke. The grand entrance, with its marble staircases and terraces, is still beautiful and intact, but inside not a vestige of anything inflammable is left.

It was during the second act of "Mr. Bluebeard" that the fire started. It was the first dramatic production in the house, which had been recently completed. In fact, the house had not been fully completed. The iron balconies for the fire escapes were up, but the ladders had not yet been constructed. This proved to be far worse than if there had been no part of the fire escapes up. Frantic men and women climbed out on these platforms, hoping to make their escape down the ladders. Crowds rushed behind the first that sought this means of escape. When they reached the balconies they found that the ladders had not been put in place and they were helpless. A struggling mob was behind them and thin air in front. Many were thrown off the balconies and were either killed or maimed by falling into the alleys and streets below.

The fire is thought to have been started by a grounded electric wire. The flames first ignited the gas tanks used in the calcium light apparatus on the stage and explosion resulted. The fire started then a loud explosion was heard. A sheet of flame shot out over the heads of the auditors on the first floor and struck those in the balcony full in the faces. It was there that the dead were found in their seats as they had sat during the play a few minutes before.

After the fire started, Eddie Foy, the chief comedian with the company, shouted to lower the asbestos curtain. The stage hands started to do this, but when it was half-way down it stuck and before it could be started again the flames had driven them from the stage.

Will J. Davis, manager of the theater, has made the statement that had the curtain been dropped soon enough no one would have been killed. While it is believed that the fact that the curtain was up had considerable to do with the loss of life, it was not the only responsibility.

One of the first to discover that the blaze had started was a man whose first thought was to cry "Fire" as loud as his lungs would permit.

The people on the lower floor where he rose as one and started for the exit. It was after they had reached their feet that the fire started and they were thrown off their heads and died as they were hurled over each other and many were left dead underfoot in the rush.

After the alarm reached the outside the first to enter the building was a newspaper man and a fireman. It was but ten minutes after the fire started that they made their entrance into the building, but during those brief minutes nearly 600 people had lost their lives.

The fireman and the newspaper man crawled up a stairway leading to a balcony. They held wet handkerchiefs over their faces to prevent suffocation. As they reached the door of the balcony the fireman gasped for breath and in horror remarked to his companion, "For God's sake, man, don't walk on their faces."

The thick smoke had blinded them and without knowing it they were walking on the faces of the dead. Thousands of frenzied men and women had walked over the bodies before and some of them were trampled into bloody heaps of shapeless matter.

The door they wanted to enter, leading from the stairway to the balcony, was blocked so that they could not force it. They returned and reported to Chief Musham of the fire department, the awful find they had made. The chief at once stopped work on the lower floor and sent all available men to the second floor. The door that had resisted the efforts of the fireman and the newspaper man to enter was blocked on the inner side by stacks of dead bodies packed as high as the top of the door. A stream of men carried the dead out of the building and to the Thomson restaurant, which is next door. The manager of the cafe put all available space at the service of the firemen and police. The restaurant was transformed into a morgue in less than ten minutes.

All of the city ambulances, patrol wagons and other conveyances were inadequate to carry off the injured and take the dead to the morgues. The big merchants in the neighborhood of the theater sent wagon-loads of linen, cotton and blankets for the injured and lent every assistance possible.

Physicians stood at the entrance of the theater and when a body that appeared to have the least sign of life was taken out it was examined by them. If dead it was placed in a pile at the side of the entrance, and if alive it was whirled away to a hospital or a physicians' office in the neighborhood.

Every manner of conveyance carried away the dead from the scene of horror. One large truck was so heavily loaded with dead bodies that the horses could not start until the police had helped start the wheels.

"There was no need of any loss of life," said Will J. Davis, manager of the theater. "There were 40 exits and the building was fireproof. Some one in the audience yelled fire and in the wild stampede occurred the great loss of life. Had order been kept those who suffocated would have been taken out before they could have perished. There were about 1,300 people in the theater."

It was through the quick work and cool-

headed judgment of W. A. C. Sellers, the house fireman, that the actors and actresses in the company escaped with their lives. Sellers prevented any of them from taking their street clothes, but forced all to get out on the street clothed in their tulle and silk stage clothing.

The manager of the theater does not believe that the fire started from defective wires grounding, but from the explosion of a gas tank on the stage. His theory is sustained by the statements of those who were in the theater. They say that they saw flames and heard the cry of fire before the explosion came.

The scene was one that words are inadequate to describe. Hard-hearted men who had seen the worst side of life all their lives were moved to tears when they saw the shapeless masses of what had once been human bodies carried from the building. Bodies of little children and strong men were trampled under foot.

Some few women reared within a few feet of the outer door when they lost their strength and fainted, only to be trampled to death by those who were just a little stronger.

The citizens of Chicago are dazed by the awful catastrophe. The speed with which it came and went staggered belief. The news spread with great rapidity and before the fire was out the streets for blocks in either direction were jammed with people. Some were looking for wives, sweethearts or children. Others were there from idle curiosity. All were struggling to get near the theater and it required every policeman who could be spared to be on the spot.

The building stands on Rudolph street between State and Dearborn streets. No one was allowed to enter the street on which the theater is located for a quarter of a mile on either side of the theater.

The fire itself was put out by the firemen in a short time.

Eddie Foy, the comedian, says that the sticking of the curtain saved the lives of the members of the company, although their salvation was paid for with the lives of those in the audience.

"After I called for the fire curtain," said Foy, "I roused the members of the company, some of whom were almost suffocated by the smoke. They all got out into the alley. The asbestos curtain refused to come down and that is what saved us all. If those tanks had exploded when the curtain was down not one of us would have lived. There would have been no escape from the fire, smoke and gas, and all would have been doomed. As it was the gas was not escaped, under the curtain and did its terrible work in the audience."

At 9 o'clock this morning the police compiled a list of the bodies recovered from the Iroquois holocaust and found 591, with a prospect of discovering others in the debris. It is almost certain that the total number will exceed 600.

The coroner still believes that the total will reach 700, as the basement and upper dressing rooms of the stage and part of the upper galleries have not been thoroughly searched.

At the city hall lists of the victims and descriptions of the unidentified dead were being compiled. Sobbing men, women and children throng the corridors. The death list is being added to by reports from the hospitals where the injured were taken.

The police found that at least 250 persons were injured. Pumps are working in the basement, which is flooded. At every step in the building the police find diamonds, jewels and furs. No one is permitted to enter the building without a special permit from the chief of police and accompanied by a special guard. Thousands of dollars' worth of wraps and jewels have been hauled to police headquarters.

The rear and side walls of the stage are in danger of falling. Architects today warned the firemen that the rear of the building might collapse at any moment and crush to death all persons working in that portion of it.

William Dee, a wealthy contractor, whose two children, Edward, aged 6, and Louise, aged 3, and their nurse, were missing today, found the nurse and Louise. The latter was picked up crying in the street in front of the theater. The nurse, badly injured, was found in a hospital. The boy is missing.

Mayor Harrison this morning received the following telegram from President Roosevelt:

"In common with all our people throughout the land, I extend through you to the people of Chicago my deepest sympathy in the catastrophe which has befallen them."

LONDON, Dec. 31.—The lord mayor today sent to Ambassador Choate the following telegram:

"The citizens of London offer their deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to the American people for the awful loss of life through the fire in Chicago."

SEATTLE FIRE ESCAPES.

SEATTLE, Dec. 31.—"Mr. C. H. Hanford.—Escaped from theater safely. Am all right, so don't worry. AIMEE."

This telegram was received last night by Clarence Hanford, of the Lowman & Hanford company of this city, from his daughter, who succeeded in escaping from the Iroquois theater, which burned yesterday. She was attending a box party and from the box at the side of the theater all the members of the party reached the street in safety.

The following list of known dead has been compiled. It is only partial, as many bodies have not yet been identified and many persons are reported missing whose remains may yet be in the opera house ruins:

- BLISS, H. E., Racine, Wis.
- BRADWELL, MISS MYRA.
- BOLEN, PAUL.
- BARKER, ETHEL.
- BARTLETT, MRS. C. D., Bartlett, Ill.
- BARTHELEMY, CHARLES R.
- BUTTEL, WILLIAM C.
- BUTLER, MRS. S. B., Evanston, Ill.
- BOYCE, MRS. W. F.
- BYERSLOTH, HELEN.
- BISSINGER, WALTER B.
- BIRNDSLEY, MRS. H. C.
- BOIDGE, N. W.
- BRINCKLEY, MRS. EMMA.
- BEUHMANN, MARGARET.
- BUTLER, MRS. L., Rosehill.
- BUTLER, ROSE.
- BUMFURTH, RUTH.
- BOYER, ALEX.
- BREWSTER, JULIA.
- BRENNAN, PAUL.
- BROWN, MISS Evanston, Ill.
- BOYCE, W. W.
- BARRY, MISS WILLMA.
- BECKFORD, GLENN.
- CUMMINGS, MISS IRENE.
- CHRISTOPHER, MISS L.
- COOPER, WILLIS W., Kenosha, Wis.
- CHAMBERLAIN, Kenosha, Wis.
- CURDELLMAN, SOFIA.
- CHAPIN, AGNES.
- CLARK, F. D.
- CORCORAN, MISS.
- COOPER, C. L.
- COOPER, W. W.
- CANTY, THOMAS.
- COOPER, HELEN.
- COULTER, R. H.
- CROCKER, MRS. MILLIE J.
- CURRAN, MAY.
- CLAYTON, VINTON.
- COHEN, MRS. JACOB.
- CANTWELL, MRS. T. A.
- CALDWELL, ROY A.
- COPLER, DOLA.
- DIFFENDORF, LEANDER S., Lincoln, Ill.
- DICKHOUT, MRS. MAY.
- DONALDSON, MRS. CLARA.
- DOUST, MRS. C., Evanston, Ill.
- DRYENFORTH, HELEN, Evanston, Ill.
- DOUNEGAL, MISS MARY.
- DALLEY, MRS. J. L.
- DOLAN, MARGARET.
- DUVALL, SARAH, Zanesville, O.
- LILLIAN PHILLIPSON, 6 years old.
- BOY, 17 years old, of Lafayette, Ind.
- MRS. FORMAN.
- WILLIAM RATLEY.
- WILLIAM M. REED, Waukegan, Ill.
- HOYT FOX.
- MRS. L. H. BUTLER.
- S. WARDMAN.
- EDMUND W. MORTON.
- MRS. HEVLEY.
- J. A. COOKERS.
- MRS. A. J. STEARNS.
- J. H. DONALDS.
- REV. GEORGE DUDLEY.
- MRS. J. H. DODD of Delaware, Ohio.
- MRS. V. DELEE.
- WILSON, HOOPER of Kenosha, Wis.
- FIVE CHILDREN OF H. S. VANINGEN of Kenosha, Wis. (probably.)
- MRS. JOHN M'MENEGAN.
- MILDRED MEREDITH, 3 years old.
- BEATRICE BAILEY.
- A. A. MALDEN.
- WILSON, OWEN, Three Rivers, Minn.
- DONALD WELLS.
- BURR SCOTT.
- FORNETTA PETERSON.
- HARVEY KIELLY, St. Louis.
- THOMAS COUTELL.
- EMERY HALL.
- THOMAS FLANAGAN, Indianapolis.
- MRS. H. HENRY.
- ROSE K. ROGERS.
- H. P. MOORE.
- C. L. COOPER.
- HORTENSE LANG, aged 16.
- IRENE LANG, aged 11.
- E. A. WILSON.
- ANN FITZGIBBON.
- MRS. W. T. MARSH.
- LOUISE BUSHNELL.
- MRS. A. LAKE.
- MRS. A. DONALDSON.
- MRS. PATRICK P. O'DONNELL.
- K. MISS HOWARD.
- FLORENCE AXNAM.
- ROSEMOND SCHMIDT.
- ELVIRA OLSEN.
- HELEN MCGLOTHAN.
- HELEN HOWARD.
- LILLIE POWELL.
- RIHA MAKER.
- MRS. F. A. MORRILL.
- MRS. A. SUMIN.
- MRS. EDITH NORTON of Ontonagon, Mich.
- MISS HARABAUGH.
- C. W. FORBUSH and family.
- ANNA STERLING.
- THREE MEN employed in the flies on the stage, names unknown.
- FLORENTINE, a German performer.
- ETHEL BLACKMAN, 13 years old.
- MRS. CAVANAUGH, of Indiana avenue.
- UNKNOWN BOY, 8 years old.
- EIGHT UNKNOWN WOMEN, met death by jumping from rear fire escape.
- LOUIS E. BUCHRAY.
- MARIE WALSH, aged 15 years.
- MRS. JAMES D. MALONEY.
- MISS SPENCER.
- ETHEL JONES.
- MRS. JOHN C. KING.
- MAY CURRAN.
- MARTIN, a boy of 15.
- H. W. WILLIAMS.
- B. REGENSBURG.
- ELLA LINDEN.
- HENNING, a boy.
- WALTER B. EISLER.
- MRS. EMMA BRINCKLEY.
- RICHARD AND ALLEN HOLST.
- HAROLD MARTIN, Pullman, Ill.
- JOHN HOLLAND.
- LULU SHABBAID.
- W. N. SPRANG.
- CHARLES H. KOLL.
- MRS. DAWSON.
- WILLIAM BUTLER.
- ROBERT MARTIN.
- JOHN VANINGEN, Kenosha, Wis.
- WALTER BESSINGER.
- MARGARET BUERMAN.
- MRS. LEO WOLFF, Hammond, Ind.
- ALICE KAUSMAN.
- HELEN HOWARD.
- HELEN COOPER.
- B. E. GOULD.
- WALTER B. ZEISLER.
- MORTIMER ELDRIDGE.
- BEYER SLOTH, Evanston.

- REV. HENRY L. RICHARDSON.
- LOUIS KISNEY and WIFE.
- LESTER DOTY.
- MRS. A. N. MENDEL.
- WALTER D. AUTRIAN, aged 14.
- G. SIDNEY FOX.
- MRS. C. D. BARTLETT, Bartlett, Ill.
- B. E. GOULD, Elgin, Ill.
- GERTRUDE FALKENSTEIN, Bartlett, Ill.
- MRS. W. T. BOICE.
- MRS. WILLIAM DAWSON, Barrington, Ill.
- WILLIAM BUERTEL.
- MARY D. GARTZ.
- LOUISE BUSHWAH.
- LEIGH HOLLAND.
- WARNER S. EDILL.
- HERMAN ESENSTADT.
- UNIDENTIFIED GIRL.
- CARRIE J. SAYORE.
- HARRY HUDSON.
- B. E. GOULD, Elgin, Ill.
- MRS. W. A. SPRINGS.
- FRED W. LEATIN.
- BEANE BOISE.
- C. M. BICKFORD.
- MRS. J. H. STINGER, Lowell, Ind.
- UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN.
- C. R. BARKER.
- ESTHER BARKER.
- EDWARD L. VANINGEN, Kenosha, Wis.
- MRS. SARAH KRANZ, Racine, Wis.
- WINTHROP SPRING.
- HULDA HOLMES.
- ELIZABETH HART and MATTIE MARTIN, Evanston, Ill.
- SAVILLO, 14 years old.
- HERMAN VEIN.
- HARRIETT WOLFF.
- DELMING, W. G.
- DELEE, MISS N.
- WILSON, HOOPER.
- DODD, MRS. J. D., Delaware, Ohio.
- DONALDSON, H.
- DONALDSON, MISS A.
- DRYDEN, TAYLOR.
- DRYDEN, MRS. JOHN.

## THREE DEAD

GENEVA, O., Dec. 31.—A Lake Shore limited double-header struck an open switch while running six miles an hour west of the city this morning. Engineers Spring and McIntosh and Fireman Kelpin were killed outright. A number of passengers were injured, three seriously. The wreck caught fire.

## ON JAN. 13

PARIS, Dec. 31.—A dispatch from St. Petersburg says Russia's reply to Japan will be delivered Jan. 13. It is intimated that it will be conciliatory in terms.

## CAPTURED

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 31.—A dispatch from Minister Powell, dated yesterday, says that two sailing vessels from Curacao, bound for Azusa and loaded with arms and ammunition for the insurgents, were captured by the provisional Dominican government. The latter is assuming the offensive, having been successful at Guerin. The prisoners are being sent to San Domingo City.

## STRUCK RIVAL WITH HATCHET

R. S. Heale was arrested by Patrolmen Smith and Gordon at 3 o'clock this morning on a charge of assaulting John Wickstrom with a deadly weapon. Heale is boarding with Mrs. Kate Lindiger, the divorced wife of dentist now practicing in Everett. John Wickstrom formerly lived at the same place, but he and the woman were constantly having trouble, so he has remained away for some time. Wickstrom claims that the household furniture really belongs to him, and several times the police have arrested him for stirring up trouble in the Lindiger family and breaking up the furniture. He says that the woman welcomed him to her home while his money lasted, but ran him away when it was gone.

Early this morning, according to the story Wickstrom tells, he received a telephone call from Mrs. Lindiger and went to the residence, 1205 South Thirteenth street, at her request. He rang the doorbell and the trouble began.

Heale says that he opened the door to prevent its being battered down and Wickstrom began striking at him. He says there was a man with Wickstrom and that he was getting worsted when he stepped back to where a hammer and shingle hatchet lay. He threw the hammer first and missed, but hit his antagonist with the hatchet. A deep wound was cut in his head.

Both men engaged in the fight are known to the police.

NEW YORK, Dec. 31.—Otto Ahlmann, a reputed millionaire and for 18 years cashier of the Bank of Staten Island at Stapleton, committed suicide today by shooting himself. He was practically the sole owner of the bank. The cause is a mystery. The bank closed its doors pending an investigation.