

GIRLS FLEE FROM FIRE IN BRIARCLIFF SCHOOL

Ten Teachers Marshal 25 Charges and Lead Them From Burning Building.

60 MILES IN BITTER COLD

Auto Take Them From Mrs. Knox's Dormitory—New York Young Woman Gives Alarm.

The main building of Miss Knox's school, which is perched atop of a big hill, the Briarcliff Lodge at Briarcliff, was destroyed last night by flames from a local fire that rendered the work of the local fire department practically useless.

There were about twenty-five girls and ten teachers at dinner on the main floor when one of the girls ran downstairs to tell the house mother that she had found smoke coming from the infirmary wall. The girls and teachers all got out safely, but had to leave most of their belongings to the flames. They rode in being cold two miles over to Miss Dow's school, where they spent last night.

The school has been in charge of Miss Russell Houghton since the death of Miss Alice Knox last winter. Miss Houghton had been at the head of a girls' school in this city and when she assumed charge at Briarcliff Manor she took with her many valuable paintings which she had collected. She found she had about twenty-five girls under her, with a staff of ten teachers. The school building was a three-story frame structure with two wings running back of the main building.

It was built originally on the Knox estate and intended for a school. Standing as it is on top of a high hill it was a familiar landmark to motorists and Briarcliff Manor.

When Miss Knox went there five years ago she had a dormitory called the cottage erected near the main building. The flames didn't get to this.

The girls had gone in to dinner last night in charge of Mrs. Hopkins, the house mother. Miss Mildred Vigoroux of New York had gone up to the third floor, and while she was washing her hands she saw a puff of smoke shoot out from a crack in the wall of the infirmary room. No one was in the infirmary at the time. The girl watched alone there for a moment, and following the puff came another and a larger one, with just a hint of red behind it.

That was enough for Miss Vigoroux. She didn't lose any time getting downstairs, but when she reached the dining room door she opened it softly and walked demurely up to Mrs. Hopkins as though she hadn't seen a thing upstairs.

None of the girls noticed anything out of the usual when she leaned over and looked in the dining room's ear. The girl told of her suspicion, and Mrs. Hopkins slipped out of the door and upstairs. When she got to the third floor she found the fire had spread amazingly and that the whole upper floor was filling with smoke. It is supposed that detection of the fire in the walls was the cause.

Mrs. Hopkins came back to the dining room to clap her hands for attention.

"Girls," she said, "there's a little fire in the cellar. Those of you who have a key to the second floor will have time to get your things and get out. Don't let any one scream."

There wasn't a peep from the group of girls that broke to flutter upstairs and watch what they could pick up living about their rooms. But the smoke was getting thicker and the teachers saw that the time could be wasted on belongings. They stood at the head of the stairs and marshaled the girls. The procession marched proudly from the dining room where the air was beginning to get a bit hazy, across the foyer and out into the night.

When the girls turned to look back at their school they saw a scarlet column of smoke rising from the roof and knew that there was no end of their building.

On the Pleasantville road men were getting out the chemical engine that had been around Briarcliff Manor, but at the time the clumsy little machine started up the steep hill there was red fire coming from the school, and it was too late to the huddled little crowd of girls that the engine could do anything to save the flames.

In this time motor cars were beginning to come to the hill, for the flames could be seen for miles around. From Briarcliff and Pleasantville and even distant Poughkeepsie, where the blaze plainly could be seen, the roads were beginning to fill with speeding automobiles that clipped along like wheels and farm wagons. Every one had turned out to see the big fire.

The first thought of the men who climbed the hill of their machines was to find a shelter for the girls who were shivering in the wind, some of them protected by their coats over their house dresses. They didn't have time to get coats and hats.

The automobilists did some hasty things and they came back to another place where the girls and teachers could get away. Miss Knox's school at Briarcliff has always maintained a list of the schools in the vicinity. The three nearest ones are the schools of the Knox family and Helen Smith and Miss Russell Houghton of Savannah, Ga., decided to take the girls to their homes. They got into the cars and for a few minutes the teachers and little Russell Houghton, the son of the principal, were in the cars, with the blankets and coats piled up around cold chins and feet. The roads two miles to the school were crowded with automobiles.

At the time the girls were being taken to their homes, the fire was still burning. It is not known whether the school was destroyed by the fire or by the explosion. She had lived in the academy for eight years and is 19 years old.

SHIVERING CITY NOW FRINGED WITH ICE

Polar Scenery at Bay Ridge and Staten Island and Ash Cans Can't Be Dumped.

GREAT SOUTH BAY FROZEN

Two Autos at Bellport Make Five Mile Trip Across—Another Comes to Grief.

The Gulf bred storm that the national prophets expected to swing into this latitude today, creating a fringe of snow on its westerly rim in passing, was shunted far into the Atlantic by the breezy and frigid high pressure that holds in bonds of ice the coast from Virginia to Maine. Washington awoke to the change after receiving reports from the coast weather stations shortly after 8 o'clock yesterday morning and signals telling of the approach of a northeasterly gale were ordered down.

There was nothing on the chart that the experts made out from the 8 o'clock reports last night to indicate unusual changes. A low pressure of minor intensity was central over Illinois, and from this it is expected that we may get snow to-day. The wind at 11 o'clock last night was from the north and blowing fifteen miles, and the temperature was 14.

Washington predicted.

Increasing cloudiness, with probable snow on Monday. Tuesday, cloudy, moderately cold, with moderate variable winds.

The local forecasters were right in saying that the official mercury would hit zero. It went there one better, dropping 1 degree below and staying at that point from 2 A. M. to a few minutes after 6 A. M. Thereafter it began going up the tube rapidly, reaching under the influence of a bright sun that shone most of the day from a cloudless sky 21 in the shade at 3:15 P. M.

The storm's influence was felt, although it was far from the coast. The neighborhood in the afternoon, when the thermometer dropped to 29.

Removal of garbage and ashes came to a stop yesterday as a result of ice in the river which packed so hard against the docks and in the ships that it was impossible to bring up the snows used to carry the matter out to sea. When the first loads of ashes and garbage reached the docks no barges were on hand to receive the loads and the wagons went back to the stables. It was found impossible to move the garbage down the river.

From Rikers Island to any of the twenty-four docks, and the contractors, the Harbor Dredging Company and Daily A. Evans, reported that they could not move any of their harbor craft under the conditions. Collection of ashes and garbage was stopped for the day and the chances are that no collections can be made to-day either.

In Brooklyn conditions were nearly as bad, but a few docks in the canals were accessible and some of the loads of ashes were taken away as usual by the Borough Development Company, to be used for filling in land.

Commissioner Edwards said that the river and harbor conditions were the worst his department has had to contend with for many years and that nothing could be done until a change of the weather comes or some other force moves the ice away.

"It is a serious condition that is sure to cause more or less inconvenience," he said, "but it is no fault of the department and I hope the city will accept it as an unfortunate state of affairs that cannot be helped. The collection of ashes and garbage was entirely tied up to-day and will probably be so to-morrow."

Two mornings of temperature below the goose egg visualized themselves along the shores of the bay and twin rivers of the town in polar scenes that would have made a fine background for moving picture arctic stunts. A lake party might have been depicted discovering the Pole down off Bay Ridge.

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FEDERAL EXPRESS OFF TRACK.

Fast Boston Train Derailed Near New Haven.

NEW HAVEN, Feb. 11.—The Federal Express, from Washington to Boston, was wrecked near Loates Island station on the Shore Line division at 3:30 this morning because of a broken rail. No one was injured.

Where the accident happened is about twelve miles east of this city. The train consisted of six cars and a locomotive. The engine and the four forward coaches went over the broken rail all right. The two following Pullman sleepers were derailed, one of them swung around and blocked the westbound track.

The express was going fast at the time. The occupants of the sleepers got a shaking, but that was all. Nearly every berth was occupied. After the jolting they received the passengers jumped up to inquire what was the matter. The train had come to a stop then. It was bitterly cold. It took five hours to clear the tracks.

The passengers on the sleepers were transferred to the three coaches that kept the rails and proceeded to New London, and at that point additional coaches were attached to the train.

The Federal Express train, all Pullman cars and bound for Boston, was behind the Federal Express, but was stopped at Branford, five miles east of the wreck. That and other trains for Boston returned to this city and were sent over the Air Line division to Middletown and down the Connecticut Valley road to Saybrook Junction and thence to Boston. The three Pullmans were little damaged.

Several sleepers overcome by gas—The Police Drive Smoke Away.

Two 36 inch water mains burst at Ninety-seventh street and West End avenue early yesterday morning, cutting down the water supply on the West Side between Ninety-seventh and Fifth streets one-third, drowning twenty-four horses in a stable on Ninety-sixth street and bursting a gas main, the fumes from which overcame several persons in apartments and private houses nearby. It is the worst break in two years, according to Deputy Water Commissioner John L. Jordan.

The water from the mains shattered custom by not appearing once above the surface save in twos and cracks that showed where the soil beneath had been washed away. It leaked into the cellar used as a stable beneath the Bedford Garage at 315 West Ninety-sixth street, a block away, to reach which it had to burrow under private houses and an eleven story apartment house in course of construction.

The horses belonged to the Bedford Garage and the garage above owned in the neighborhood. The negro was the man, John Henry, who went into the cellar about 10 o'clock, feeding the horses and found water welling up under the foundation wall. He ran upstairs and told the manager, Albert De Fosse, that there was a leak in the cellar, and by the time the men had gone back the leak had become a flood.

It tore through the foundations and backing up against the stable wall burst in three windows and deluged the place. Fosse and Henry had only time to rescue a few horses nearest the door when the icy water drove them to the street. Henry called Policemen Fitzpatrick and Prosser and the two got soaking wet trying to untie some of the struggling animals and get them to the street. Michael Graney, a stableman, dove again and again into the water until he was exhausted and Fosse had to bundle him into a cab and send him to the J. Hood Wright Hospital, where he spent the night. Fitzpatrick ran up Broadway and turned in an alarm to get firemen to help, but they could do nothing when they arrived there. Twenty-four horses were drowned.

At Ninety-seventh street and West End avenue the tremendous force of the water seeking an outlet under the frozen crust forced it up and seamed it with cracks. The underground current snatched a gas main and the gas seeped through the earth into the cellars of houses and apartments.

On the southeast corner is the Holvick seven story apartment house. Thomas Simkins, the elevator boy, smelled the gas and was about to look for it when he heard faint cries coming from the cellar. He ran his car down and found Mrs. Timothy Clancy, wife of the janitor, lying at the elevator shaft in the basement, overcome. Simkins carried her up to the street and went down for her husband, whom he found almost helpless.

An ambulance was called to care for Clancy and his wife, and Simkins went up to arouse the tenants. The gas had filled the apartments by this time and Simkins had to ring a long time at some doors to arouse the heavy sleepers. He took about twelve families, who stood around in the street in scanty costume for some time until their apartments had been aired and it was safe for them to go back.

On the northeast corner is the home of John C. Freund, publisher of *Musical America*. Walter Coyne, a butler, smelled the gas and went up to the room occupied by a nurse, Julia McCluskey, and Julia Curtin, a maid. He found them very sick from gas poisoning, but they managed to get to the room occupied by Mrs. Freund and awake her. Mr. Freund's two daughters, Annette, 17, and Marjorie, 29, were partly overcome, and Dr. Edward Miller, 259 West Ninety-seventh street, was called to attend them.

At 762 West End avenue Mrs. R. B. Wilbur reports trouble. Her son-in-law, Monroe Redick, went down to fix the furnace about 5 o'clock and the fumes of gas were so strong in the cellar that he was overcome. He managed to get to the steps in front of the house, where he dropped and a physician in the neighborhood was called to revive him.

In a bathroom on the second floor of Mrs. Wilbur's home Policemen Seaton and Lewin found the Rev. P. Elwood Erickson, assistant pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church at Ninety-first street and West End avenue, lying unconscious on the floor.

They carried him to the street, but could not revive him. He was taken to the house of Dr. Henry E. Hale at 720 West End avenue, and was able in a few hours to start for the home of relatives in New Jersey.

When the Water Department was notified, Deputy Commissioner Jordan and a force of twenty-five men got on the job. The water was turned off above Ninety-seventh street, and then the cellar walls where the horses were drowned, drained itself as dry as if there had never been a flood. The gas company men turned off the gas and went hunting for the leak. The smell of gas was so strong in the neighborhood that the police were called out to keep people away from the neighborhood of the break, and to see that no one who was smoking got within the gas zone.

Canavan Bros. began to excavate for the break in the mains and they had a tremendous task, breaking through the frozen asphalt and earth which was like granite. They swung thirty-two pound sledges on it all the afternoon under Jordan's direction with almost no effect and all night continued their work under a string of electric lights.

When they got down to the break they found that the water had washed away a hole about thirty feet square. Where the water and dirt went to is a puzzle, but the entire neighborhood is as dry as it ever was. No cellars were flooded except the stable half a block away. Mr. Jordan thinks that the earth under the mains settled and broke the pipe. The land there is mostly made land.

MAINS BURST, GAS LEAKS, HORSES DROWN

Upper West Side Houses Put on Short Water Supply and Too Much Gas.

IN DANGER IN DWELLINGS

Several Sleepers Overcome by Gas—The Police Drive Smoke Away.

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