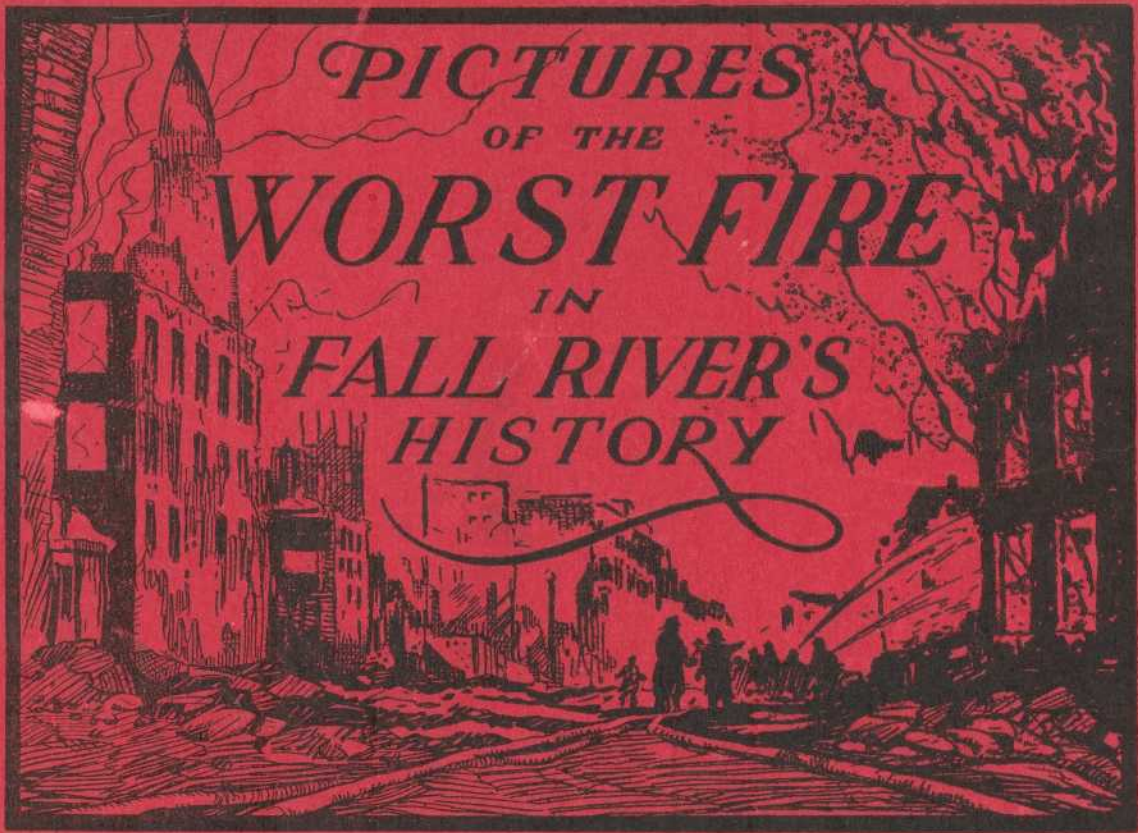


*PICTURES*  
*OF THE*  
*WORST FIRE*  
*IN*  
*FALL RIVER'S*  
*HISTORY*





# BRIEF STORY OF THE WORST FIRE IN FALL RIVER'S HISTORY

IT was 5.45 P. M. on February 2, 1928 when a newspaper employee saw a lively blaze in the rear of the Pocasset Mill where workmen a short time before had started dismantling the plant. Even as the first piece of apparatus arrived it was seen by Chief Sullivan that a serious situation faced his department.

Almost before the first lines of hose had been placed, a second and then a general alarm was sounded. The fire seethed through the interior of the large stone mill with weird rapidity. Floors and beams that had seeped up the oils of generations offered ready food for the hungry flames.

Tons of water poured into the building by firemen, whose lives were in constant danger from falling walls, seemed to whet rather than check the fierce tongues of fire. Within an hour the historic Granite Block, sheltering in its offices, precious legal records, was seen to be doomed. There was a rush on the part of store owners and professional men to save what was possible.

Even while this work was in progress the terrific heat from the burning mill to the west enveloped the large stone structure in a withering grasp. Almost as though the flames had planned a mass attack, large plate glass windows were blasted, preparing simultaneously, paths through the entire building that instantly became veritable gorges of fire.

Soon after 7 o'clock fire apparatus from surrounding cities and towns was arriving and taking up posts within the threatened zone. A brisk southwest wind was not to be denied, however, and even while departments from as far away as Boston were rushing help to the scene, flames crossed Central street and swept on to the Mohican Hotel and Rialto Theater.

Then, as though to flaunt in the face of man his inability to cope with nature, the wind veered to the west, driving the devastating fire across North Main street and quickly enveloping the Wilbur House and structures to the north as far as the fire wall of the Globe Building.

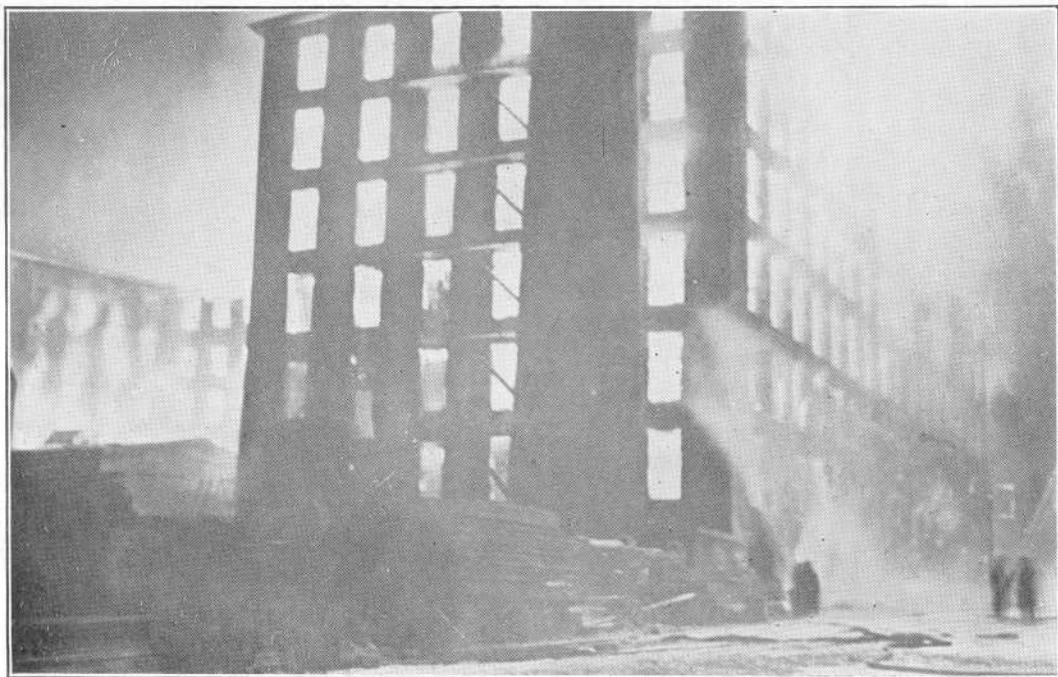
The buildings on the north side of Bedford street, across Purchase street and to the very eaves of the Central Police Station, were in flames almost in less time than the facts can be related.

Then once again the fickle wind lent its aid on the side of the demon fire. Swinging into the northwest, it swept back across Bedford street, this time east of North Main, carrying with it a front of solid flame that soon left the Union Savings Bank and Citizens' Savings Bank buildings mere blackened shells.

All this time the mercury had been dropping to a record low mark for the season. Firemen faced a blistering heat in their faces even as their shoulders were burdened by a constantly increasing ice mantle. Bulky lines of hose became so frozen that they were almost as difficult to handle as the steel beams that were buckling before the infernos raging within the buildings.

Crumbled piles of jagged masonry that littered the streets where the firemen fought on with their apparently hopeless battle, were traversed only with constant menace to life and limb, their ice coating making any sort of progress slow and difficult.

Of the heroism displayed by the Fall River firemen and host of co-workers from other cities and towns, who for hours literally fought with their backs to the wall, volumes could be written. The same can be said of the police, National Guardsmen and Naval Reservists, who took up positions under tottering walls and in a deluge of



Pocasset Mill where the Fire started, about 5:30 P.M. Feb. 2, 1928



icy water, that the lives of the constantly increasing crowd of spectators might not be endangered.

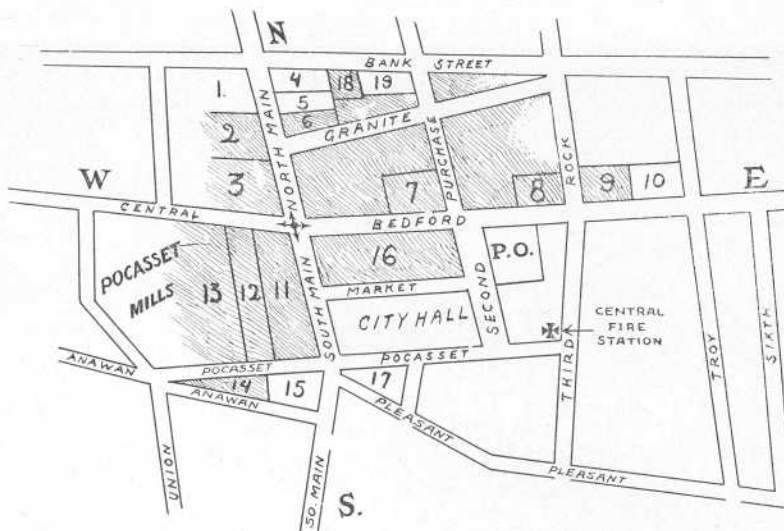
With the very heart of the city a seething furnace, large fire brands were hurtled high into the air to be carried miles away by the near zero winds. While the main fire fighting force was grouped in the center of the city, reserve units outside of the lines dashed here and there as fiery embers dropped on unprotected roofs and added to the danger of a general conflagration.

Just at a time when the situation seemed hopeless, man apparently gained a brief respite over the elements. The handsome stone building of the Massasoit-Pocasset National Bank had thus far been spared. If it could be saved there was hope for the City Hall and easterly section of the city. Suddenly it blazed up like a kerosene torch. This was shortly before 2 o'clock. City Hall and the wooden buildings to the east seemed doomed.

As the Allied troops fought shoulder to shoulder to save Paris, so the fire fighters attacked the flames that spread through the bank building. Gradually man and water began to conquer fire and wind. By 3 o'clock on the morning of February 3rd, nine hours after the start of the fire, it was apparent that it had been "stopped." There was still no rest for the exhausted firemen, however. Various buildings in scattered sections of the area were still blazing furiously and it was not until Saturday noon, nearly two days after its start, that the fire was officially declared out.

At the time of going to press estimates of the damage ranged from \$4,000,000 to \$35,000,000, with the middle ground being approximately \$15,000,000, a figure which many Fall River business men seemed to place as a conservative estimate.

No account of the disastrous fire would be complete without tribute to the never-say-die attitude of the business and professional men of Fall River. Even as hose lines were still being played on the blazing wreckage and before insurance adjustments would even be considered, they were meeting in the fire-scarred City Hall and laying plans for the erection of a bigger and better center on the ashes of the old.



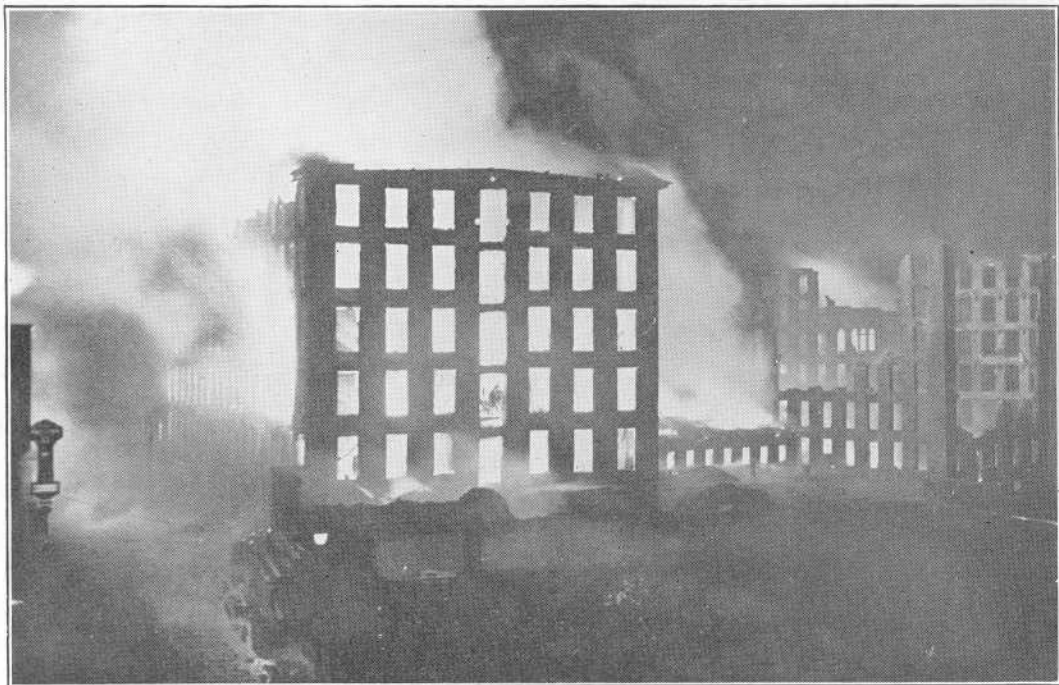
**PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS DESTROYED.**  
Shaded areas represent buildings destroyed.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Bennett Building                                   | 11. Granite Block  |
| 2. Rialto Theater                                     | 12. Bus Terminal   |
| 3. Mohican Hotel                                      | 13. Pocasset Mill  |
| 4. Bank Building                                      | 14. Old Herald-News Building                                     |
| 5. Fall River Globe                                   | 15. Kresge Corner  |
| 6. Wilbur Hotel                                       | 16. Citizens Savings, Union Savings and Massasoit-Pocasset Banks |
| 7. Buffington Building                                | 17. Talbots Clothing Store                                       |
| 8. Metacomet National Bank                            | 18. Beth-El Synagogue  |
| 9. Bay State Boarding House and O'Neil Hardware Store | 19. Telephone Co. Building                                       |
| 10. Police Station                                    |  |

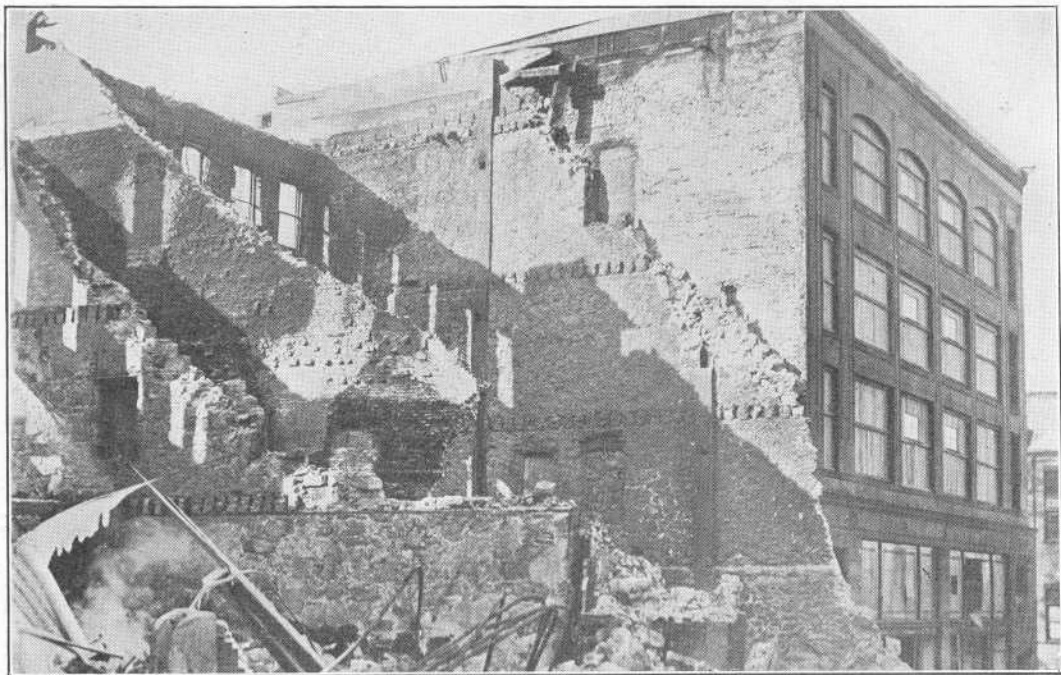


Bedford Street looking east.





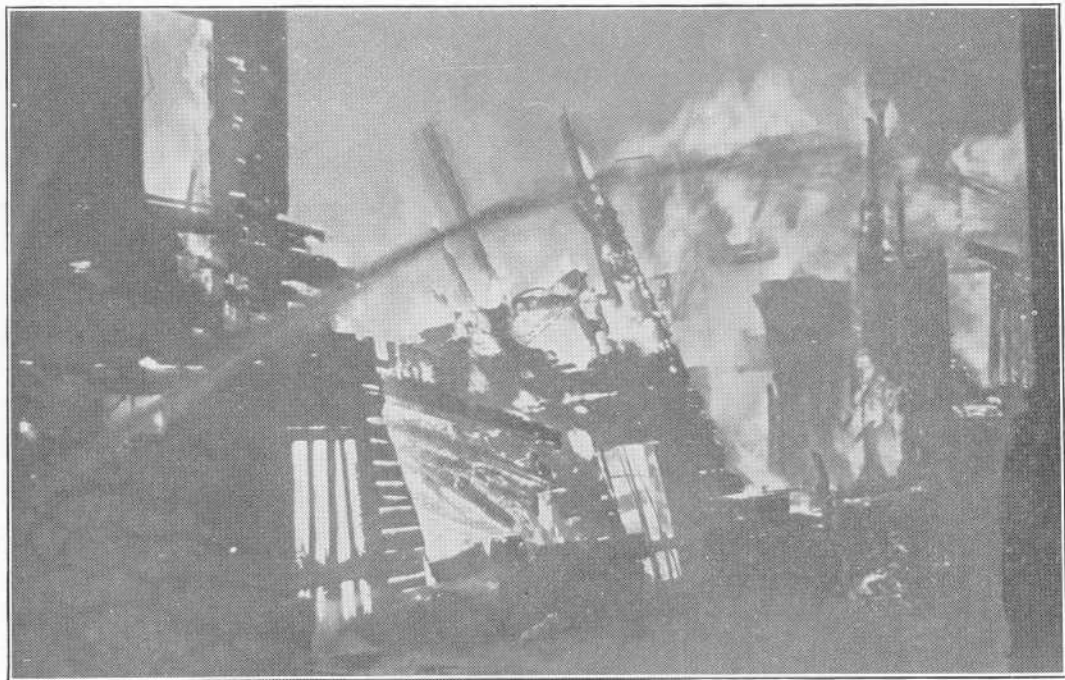
Pocasset Mill about 9 P.M.



Ruins old Herald Bldg., L'Independent, Miller Bldg. (New Herald-News Bldg. in background.)



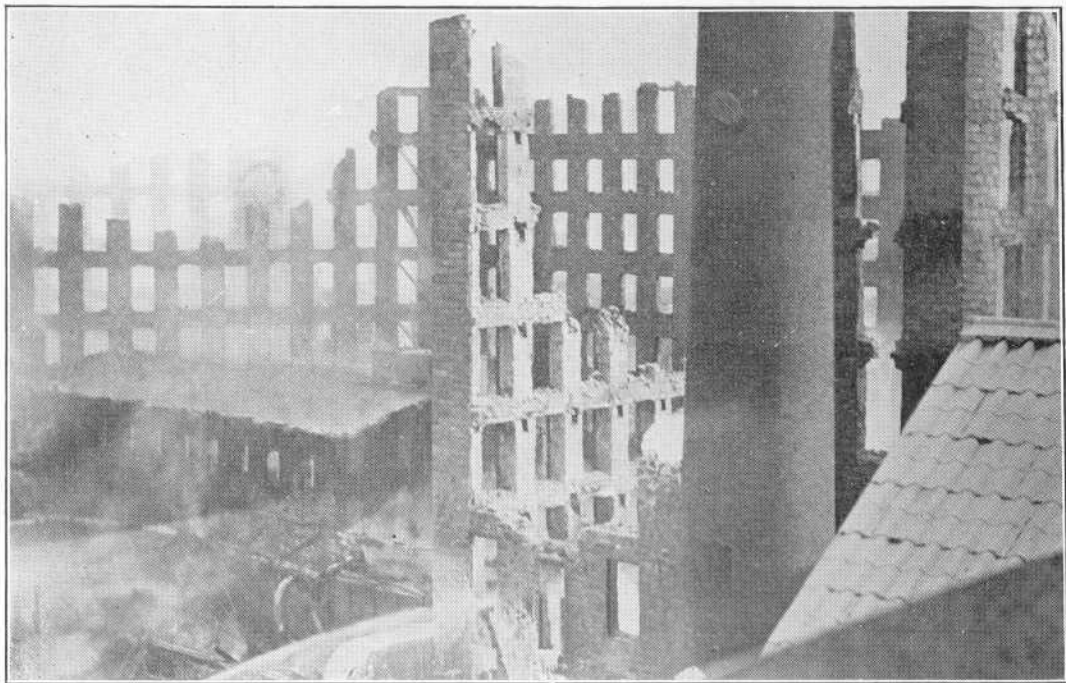
Premier Theatre ruins looking west from Rock St.



Snapshot about midnight.

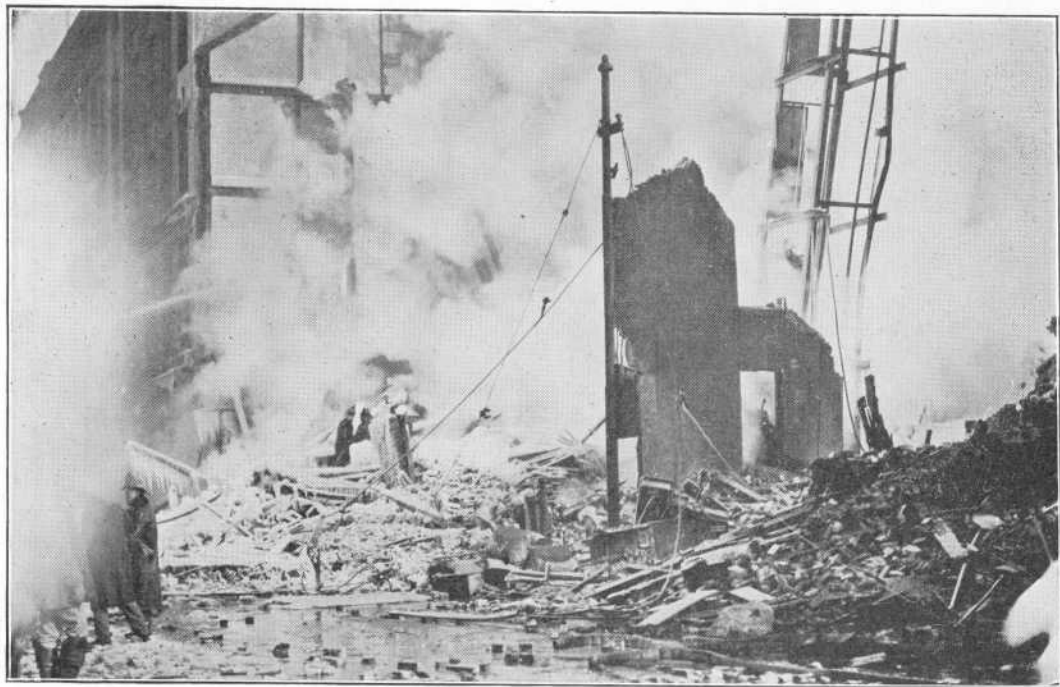


North Main St. looking south from Bank St.

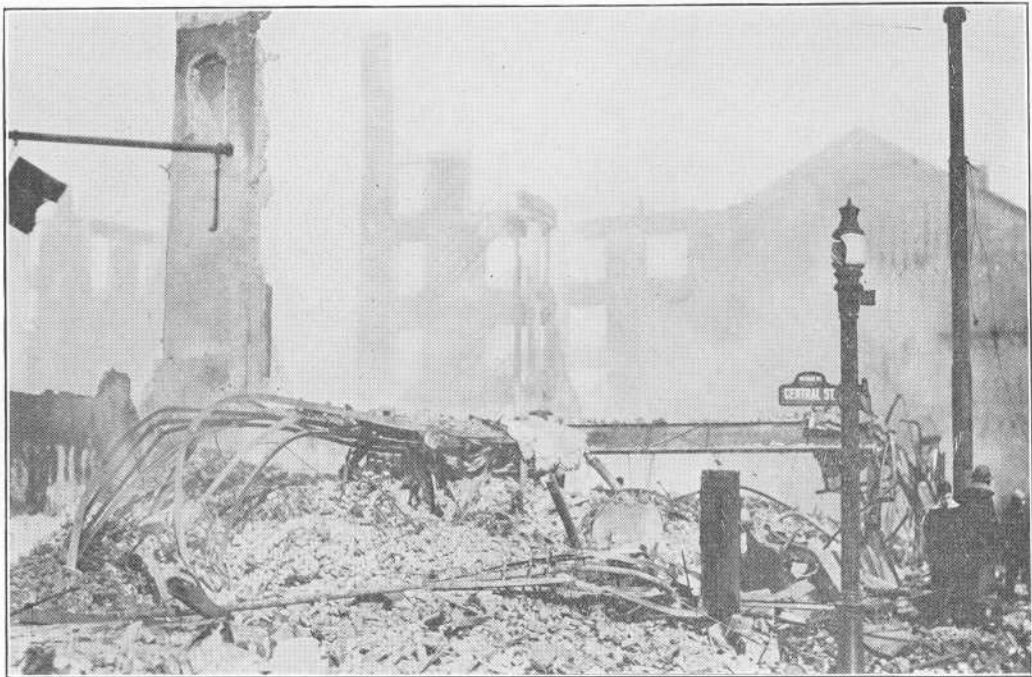


Pocasset Mill. The day after.





Ruins of Wilbur House. (Globe Building on left.)



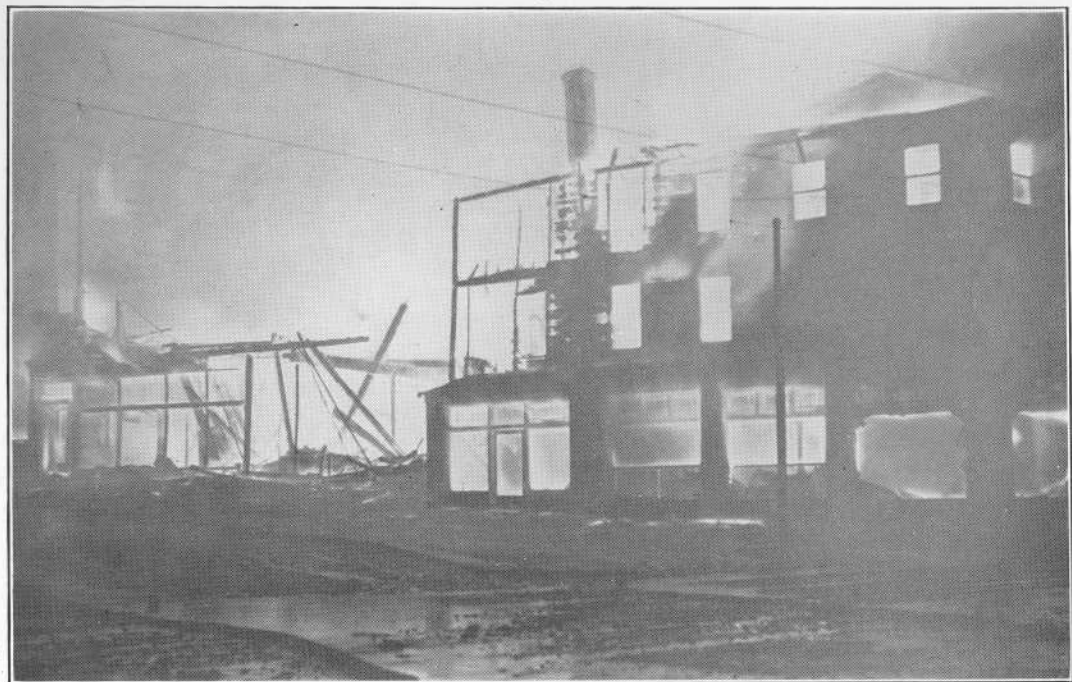
Ruins of Granite Block at Central St.



Pocasset Mill at the height of the fire.



Pocasset Mill Ruins. Next morning—looking north. Armory in background at left.



N. E. Corner Bedford and Purchase Sts.

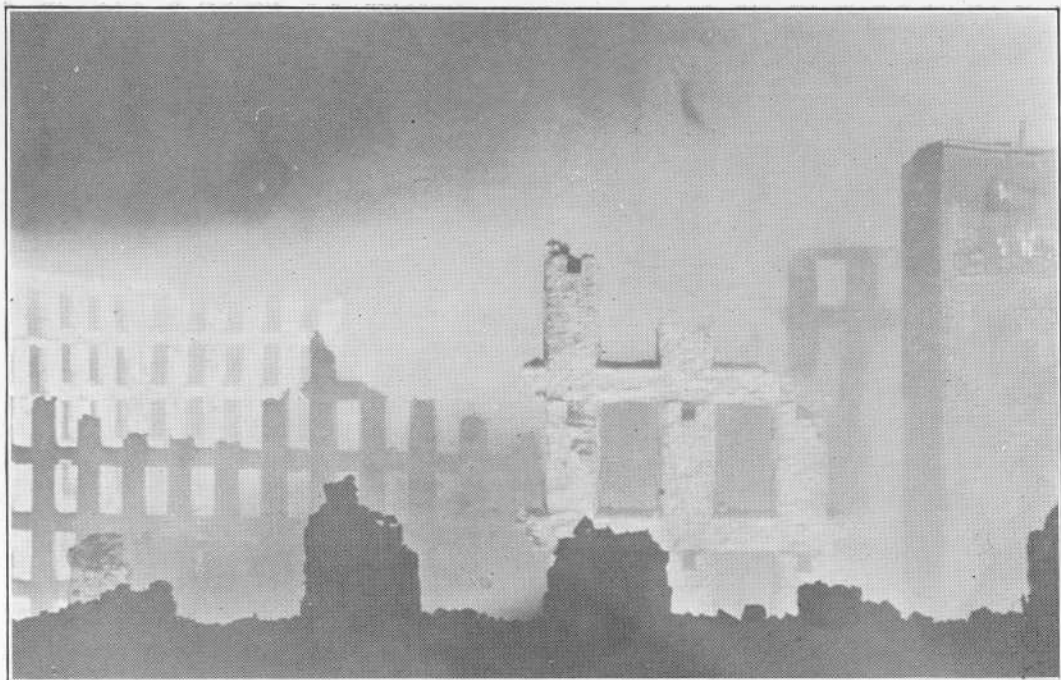


Ruins of Wilbur House.





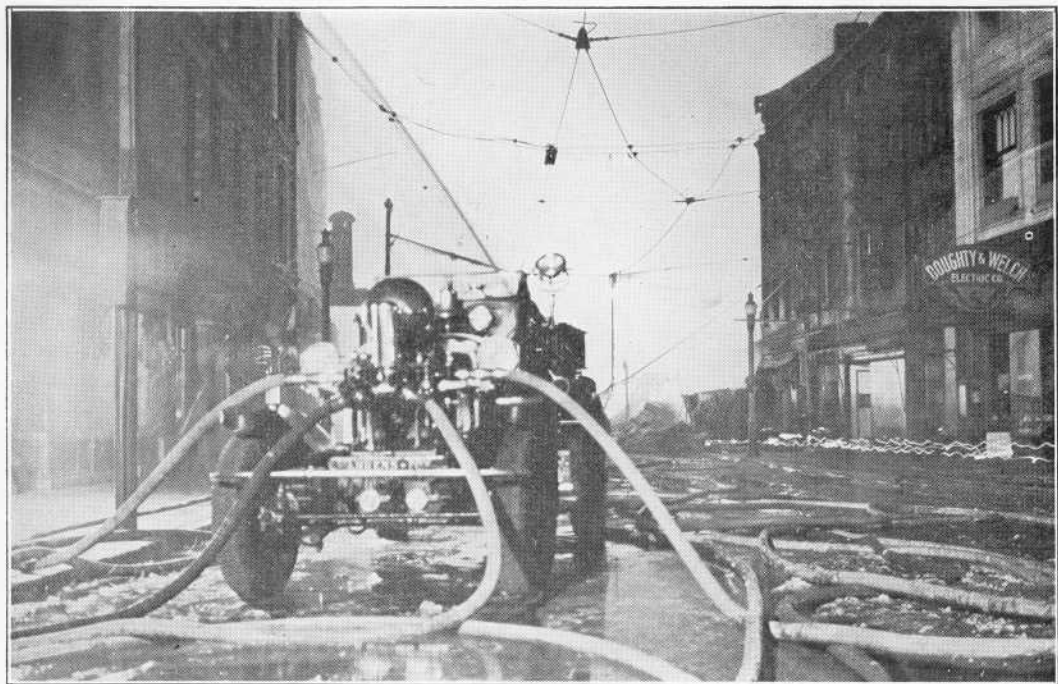
City Hall at night. Ruins of Granite Block at left.



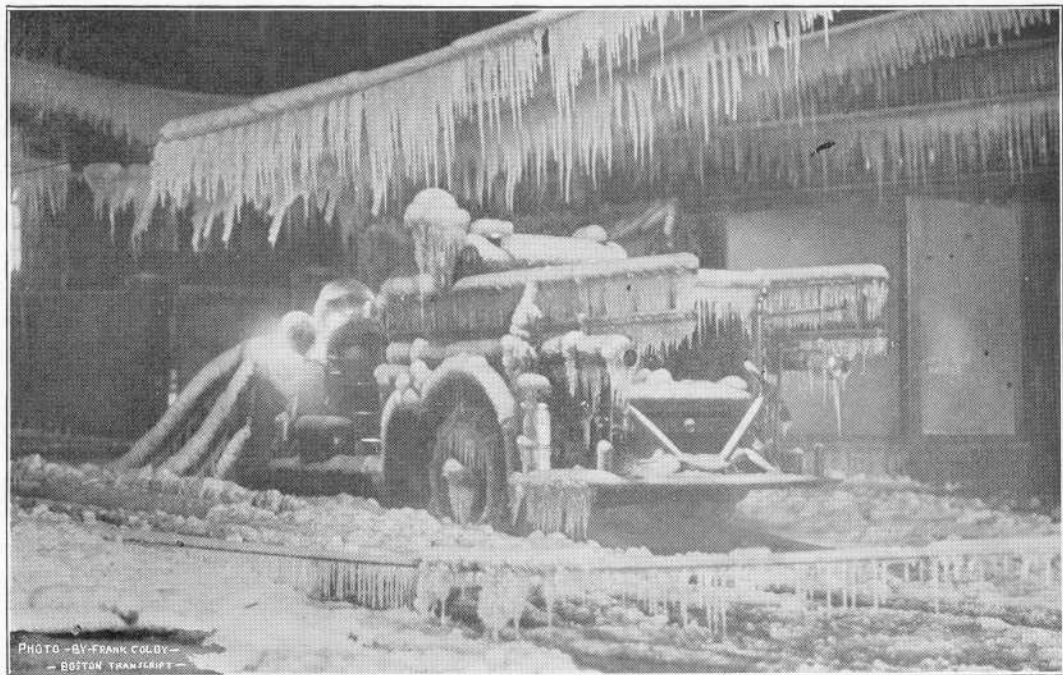
Another Pocasset Mill view. Early the morning after.



Union and Citizens Banks taken about midnight, 2 hours before destruction.



North Main St. looking south from Bank St. about midnight.



Engine 3 of New Bedford about 1 A. M., Feb. 3.



PHOTO BY  
JIMMY JONES —  
BOSTON HERALD







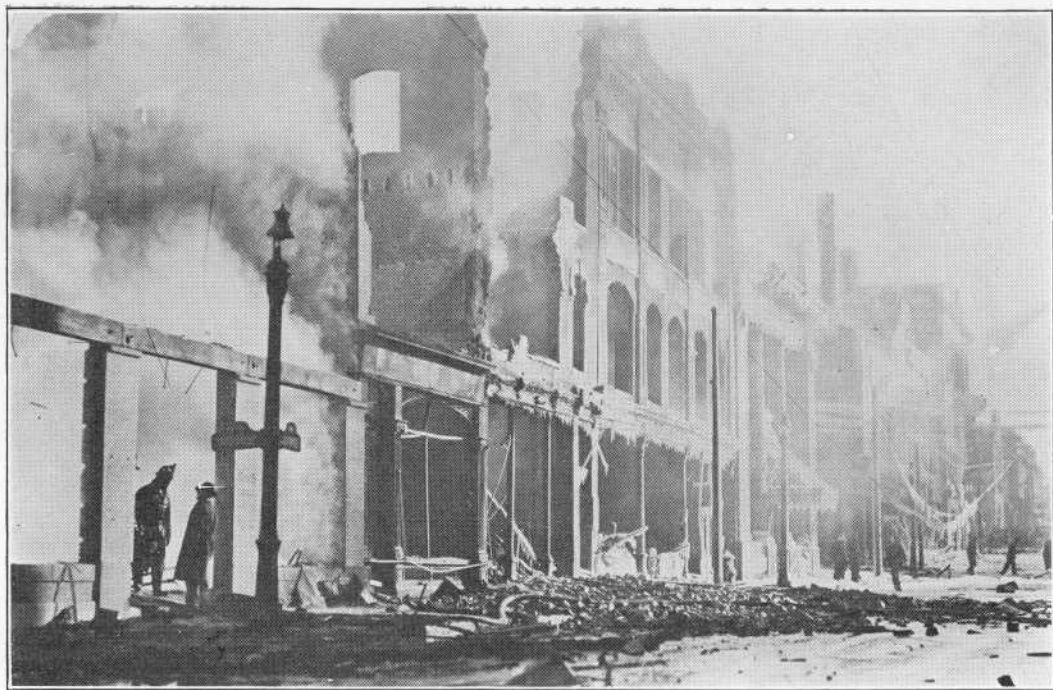
Metacomet National Bank next day.



Main Street, Granite Block ruins on left. (Brady's corner.)



Pocasset Mill. South entrance of Bus terminal.



Bedford St. opposite Post Office.

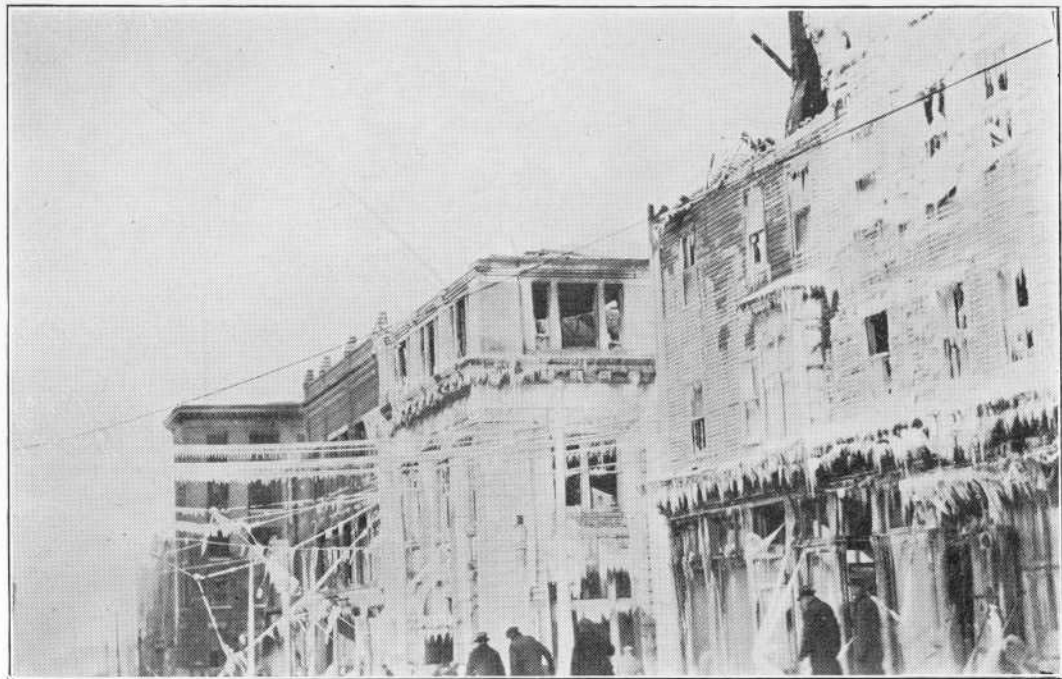


Pocasset Mill office on left. City Hall tower in background.



South end of Granite Block looking down Pocasset St.





Bedford St. at Rock St. Metacomet Bank in center.



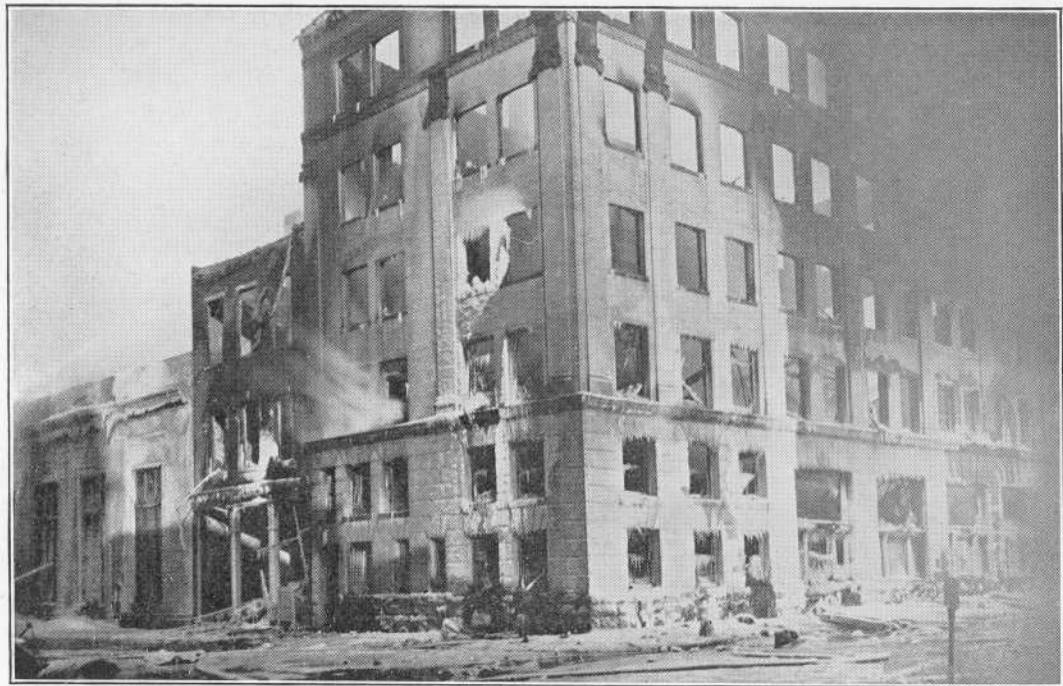
Ruins of Fall River Co-operative Bank and Remington Building, showing one of the freaks of the fire—the wooden building, in left background, remained intact amidst gutted brick buildings.



Icy ruins which handicapped Firemen.



Pocasset Mill ruins in street looking west on Central.



Massasoit-Pocasset National Bank.



View from corner of Granite and Purchase Sts.

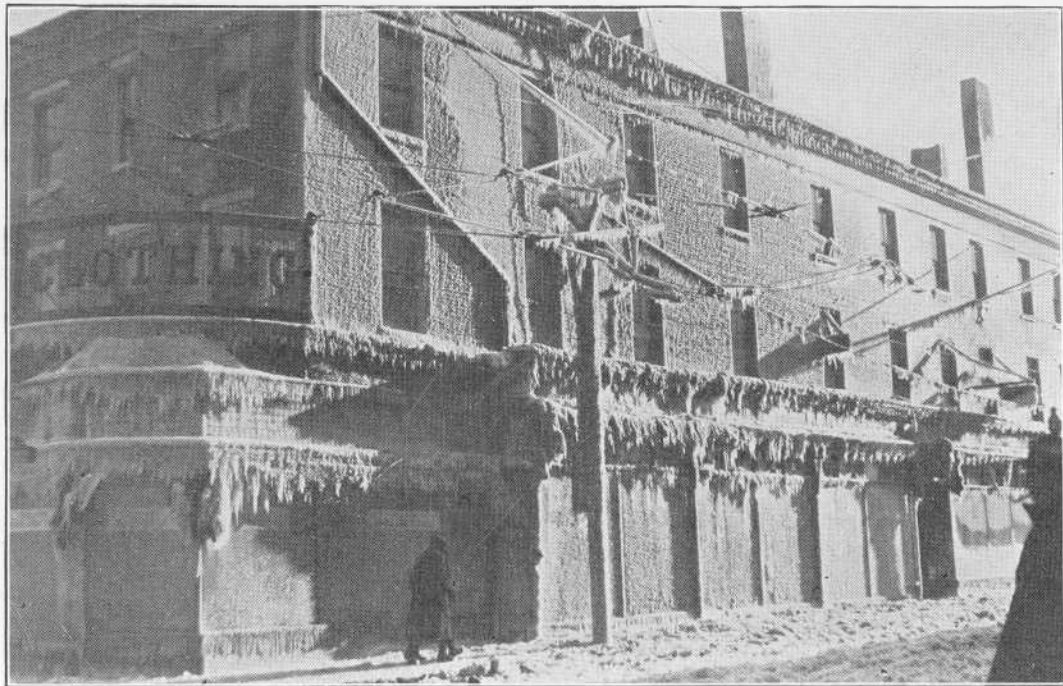


Metacomet National Bank, Bedford St.





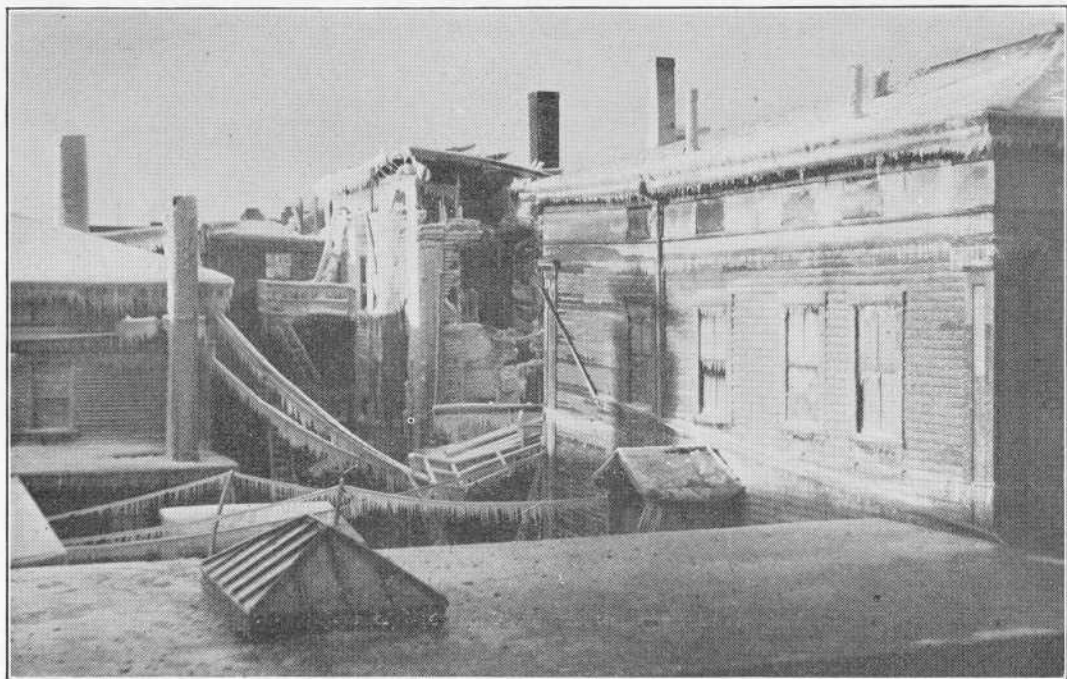
Fall River Globe Building. Fire Wall and Water Curtain saved this building.



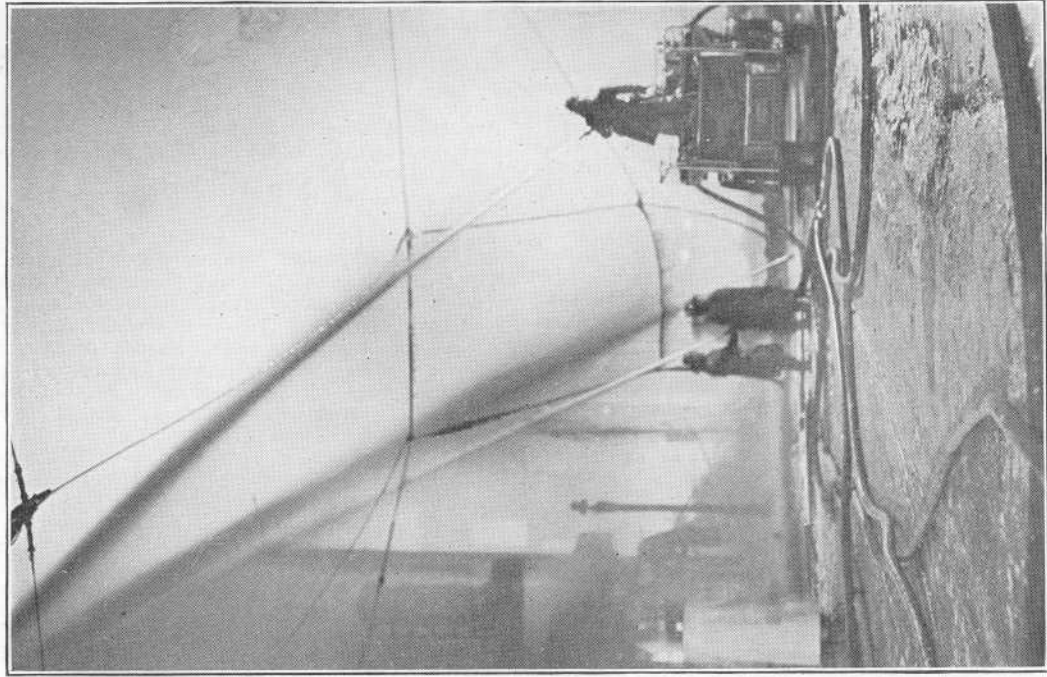
Talbot Store. Damaged by water.



Ruins of Hotel Mohican and Rialto Theatre on left.



Rear of Bedford St. where the fire was checked.



Bedford St. about midnight.

## BUSINESS FIRMS THAT SUFFERED

*A list of the buildings either wholly or partially destroyed by the sweep of the flames and the business houses quartered in them, follows:*

### SOUTH MAIN

No. 1—George A. Lake, jeweler; Foxhall G. Lake, optometrist.

No. 3—James Glanakos company, bootblacks.

No. 5—United Cigar Store.

No. 6—Citizens Savings Bank

No. 8—Citizens Savings Bank Building, Swift, Grime, Buffington and Crossley, lawyers; William L. Harrison, real estate and insurance; D. W. Riley and Son, real estate; William F. Thomas Jr.; David Shapiro, architect; Pen and Palette, commercial artists; Service Printing Company.

No. 13—Joseph A. Bowen, and company, coal.

No. 15—Thomas G. Barious company, restaurant.

No. 19—Conos Brothers, confectionery.

No. 20—Union Savings Bank.

No. 21—Samuel H. Allen.

No. 23—Granite block, Edwin J. Mills, deputy sheriff; Arthur J. Doucet, real estate and insurance; Oliva St. Denis, real estate and insurance; Charles P. Ryan, lawyer; James E. Cunneen and company, insurance; O. T. I. Castellano, tailor; Nicholas Hatheway, lawyer; Fall River Real Estate association; Severin M. Lamarre, lawyer; Albert A. Belanger, publisher; Eugene S. Sullivan, deputy sheriff;

Armel L. Audet, real estate; John W. Cain, insurance; Frank A. Pease, lawyer; Thomas F. Higgins, lawyer; Frank Amber, barber; William A. Tophy, lawyer; Herman J. Legare, auctioneer; Hubert Legare, insurance; Mariano Monz, real estate; Joseph Roderick, lawyer; Herbert B. Winchester, watch maker; Joseph Menard, lawyer; Raymond T. Menard, insurance; Amable Chouinard, real estate; William J. and J. H. Hickey, real estate and insurance; Margaret I. Howarth, lawyer; Anthony Alves, real estate; W. Harry Monks, real estate; Charles S. Graham, auctioneer; Graham Loan company; Lake Mailing company, office supplies; The Exchange, real estate; Nathan Sternsher, lawyer; Fernald E. Hanson, lawyer; Thomas D. Sullivan, lawyer; Roumuid J. Crispo, lawyer; William E. Fuller, lawyer; Brayton Morton, lawyer; George L. Sisson, lawyer; L. Elmer Wood, lawyer; Harold E. Clarkin, lawyer; Walker Tyewriter company; Benjamin Cook, Jr., lawyer; Cook-Taylor company, Inc., mill supplies; Napoleon Jasmin, real estate; Joseph H. Levesque, real estate; William Lambert, real estate; Frank L. Piper, lawyer; Fred O. Dwelly, John T. Farrell, lawyer; Frank A. Sullivan, real estate; Harry, Greenwood, James F. Mooney, contractor; Cash Brothers, Inc., roofers; Luxor Cab company, Frank A. Sullivan, real estate and insurance; Bernard A. Doherty Jr., lawyer; Lorenzo E. Savard, real estate and insurance; Mrs.

E. V. Cloutier, chiropodist; Cobb, Bates and Yerxa company, grocers; Baldwin's Credit Exchange; Alice Botway, dressmaker; C. Cockraft and company, contractors; Bergeron and Bergeron, lawyers; Frank X. Perron, real estate; Thomas F. Powers.

No. 27—Herbert A. Borden, stationer.

No. 29—P. S. Brown company, druggists.

No. 33—Michael A. Clorite, fruit.

No. 35—Waiting room, News company; George Collias, bootblack; Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway company information bureau.

No. 41—Central News and Delicatessen company.

No. 47—James C. Brady, druggist.

#### NORTH MAIN

No. 2-28—Durfee block.

No. 2—Mohican Drug Company, Inc.

No. 6—Mohican hotel; William Durfee; Mohican Theater Company, Inc.; Pacific Oil company; Durfee and Canning company; Matthew J. Mansour, cigars.

No. 7—Stavros and company, fruit.

No. 9—Eagle restaurant.

No. 11—Burke and Davis, men's furnishings.

No. 12—Dennis N. Sullivan, men's furnishings.

No. 16—City News company, news-dealers.

No. 17—Majestic restaurant.

No. 20—C. Warburton and Sons, florists.

No. 28—Arthur H. Rodgers, men's furnishings.

No. 24—Crystal restaurant.

No. 25-33—Wilbur hotel.

No. 28—Rialto theater.

No. 32—E. J. Sokoll company, confectioners and caterers.

No. 33—The Norfolk Hosiery company.

No. 34—Merchants Block—Lucio Parise, tailor; Patrick J. Keating, barber; Joseph M. Madowsky, news agent; American Optical company; John W. Beattie, real estate; Edwin N. Blinn, lawyer; Edward P. Fitzgerald, typewriters; Alexander Lockhart, real estate; Irving L. Mayo, painter; Anthony Brothers, music publishers; Jacob Kalevich, tailor; Dana C. Everett, cotton broker; McCarty's band and orchestra; John J. McCarty, piano tuner; Fall River Publicity Bureau, publishers; Victor S. D'Unger, publisher; C. E. Gifford and company, jewelers; Astor Lunch.

#### PURCHASE STREET

No. 7—Direct Sales & Finance Co., cotton.

No. 10—Buffington building; James Buffington, cotton cloth; Aldrich & Hawkins, cotton; Baldwin-Lesser Co., cotton; Tonkonogey & Adler, real estate and insurance; Fall River Granite & Quarry Co.; Myer Markell, real estate; Maurice Gomberg, insurance; Lester Bakst, lawyer; Arthur S. Phillips, lawyer; Edward J. Lajoie, lawyer; James N. Buffington & Co.; Harry L. French, accountant; Edward T. Roberston & Son, cotton controllers; Daniel J. Harrington, lawyer; William O. Manion, insurance; Universal Thrift Stamp Co.; Coughlin & Harrington, lawyers; Frank J. Andrade, con-



stable; Massachusetts Income tax office; Income Tax Assessors; Henry M. Fenner, insurance; Fall River Historical Society; Aetna Life Insurance Co., claim department; Swift and Apperson, accountants; Ralph E. Loper and Co., industrial engineers and accountants; Taxpayers Association; Fall River Board of Underwriters; New England Insurance Exchange.

No. 11—Troy Co-operative bank.

No. 17—Granfield and Mycock, cloth brokers; George E. Brow, cotton merchant.

No. 18—James N. Buffington and company, insurance; Aetna Life Insurance company.

No. 21—E. H. Brow and company, cotton; C. D. Davol and company, cloth brokers.

No. 25—A. G. and W. J. Howland, real estate and insurance; Capital Service company, Inc., brokers; Hathaway and company, cotton; Bryant Chapin, artist; R. M. Deane and company, cotton brokers; Gagnon Printing company; Le petit Courier.

No. 27—Ann's Kitchen, restaurant.

#### BEDFORD STREET

Checker Taxi company.

No. 2—William C. Atwater and Company, Inc. coal; Fall River Navigation Company, Inc.

No. 12—Smith Office Equipment company.

No. 14—Western Union Telegraph company.

No. 16—Stephen M. Weld and company, cotton dealers; The Reilly Press, printers.

No. 20—Staples Coal Company of Fall River.

No. 22—Greene and Son, real estate and insurance, Foster R. Greene, lawyer; Francis T. Borden, civil engineer.

No. 24—Birch building; Sanford and Kelley, brokers; Brayton and Osborn, Inc., cotton; Roland G. Adam, tailor; Franklin Gray and company, cotton; Katherine L. Ney, teacher of dancing.

No. 27—Textile Trucking company; Fred J. McLane, real estate; U. S. Naval Reserves; Clifford M. Gardner and company, cotton brokers; Burns club.

No. 28—The Munroe Press, printers .

No. 29—Massasoit-Pocasset Bank building—Lincoln and Hood, lawyers; Harold G. Hood, lawyer; Preston A. Hood, lawyer; A. H. Hood and company, general insurance; Ernest A. Lincoln, civil engineer; Fall River Co-operative bank; Baker Seagrave and Terry, lawyers; Dr. Harold L. Stover, dentist; Orient Laplante, lawyer; Booth and Chase Company, Inc., contractors; Patrick J. Hurley, office; Burroughs Adding Machine Company; George R. Lawton, accountant; John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance company; Cotton Manufacturers association.

No. 32—John F. Stafford and company, real estate and insurance.

No. 33—Massasoit-Pocasset National Bank.

No. 58—George N. Durfee, cotton broker; Edgar G. Durfee, cotton broker; Mrs. Anita Dionne, hairdresser; Edmond A. R. Grenier, barber; New York Life Insurance Company; Frank A. Flynn, insurance.

No. 60—George N. Durfee and Sons, insurance; People's Co-operative bank; William L. Cooper.

No. 64—G. M. Haffards and company, brokers; C. V. S. Remington, cotton clot hand yarn.

No. 68—George H. Waring and Son, cotton brokers; George H. Waring and company, yarn department.

No. 70—Waring Building; Frederick J. Beckett, real estate; Edward M. Corbett civil engineer; Fall River Blue Print company; Highland View Land company; New Boston Road Land company; William O. Van Blarcom; N. R. Earl and Son, book binders.

No. 74-76—E. A. Shaw Company, Inc., cotton dealers.

No. 78—Metacomet Bank building; Stephen Apps and company, cotton cloth; Dr. William J. Speers, dentist; Dr. Cornelius Weeks, dentist; Frank N. Davis, mill supplies; King Philip Mill office; J. H. Franklin and company, printers; Clan McAlpin hall.

No. 86—Metacomet National Bank.

No. 102—Francis P. Sarmiento, restaurant.

No. 106—Bay State Rooming house, Charles F. Curtis.

No. 108—William F. McCoy, cotton.

No. 110—Euclide J. Duquette, barber.

No. 116—Robert O. Wilcox and company, insurance.

No. 118—Sophia St. John, boarding house.

#### GRANITE STREET

No. 6—Etienne Gagne, barber.

No. 16—Flossie's Kitchen, restaurant.

No. 21—Printers' Hall, Fall River Poster Advertising company; J. W. Bunnell and company, cotton brokers; Arthur J. Sullivan, sign painter.

No. 22—Boston American; Boston Advertiser; Providence Journal.

No. 25—McDermott Lunch company.

No. 28—City building department, garage.

No. 30—Smith Oil company, Inc., filling station.

No. 77—Norman G. Hicks, electrical contractor; Standard Vulcanizing company.

No. 82—Abel H. Wordell, plumber.

#### BANK STREET

Congregation Beth El.

#### POCASSET STREET

Pocasset Mill.

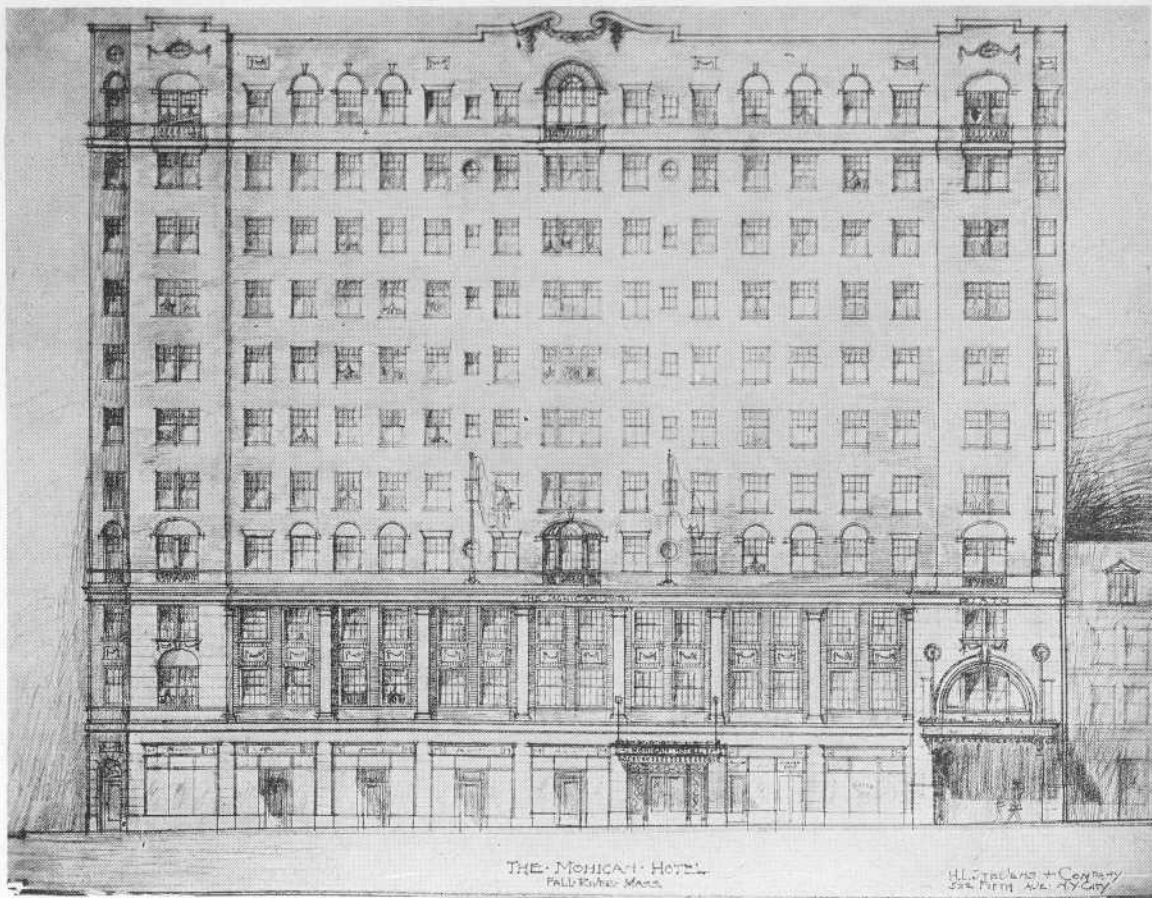
No. 203—Herald News building, (partially damaged).

No. 211-213—Nathan Miller and Sons, Ltd., plumbers; old Herald News building.

No. 219-221—L'Independant Publishing company, Jean B. Paradis and company, real estate.

#### ROCK STREET

No. 18—Premier Theater.



THE MOHICAN HOTEL  
FALL RIVER, MASS.

H.L. TRUMBULL & COMPANY  
322 FIFTH AVE. N.Y. CITY

Proposed new Mohican Hotel announced in Fall River Globe, February 8, 1928

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE SECOND EDITION OF 10,000 IS ON THE PRESS. THE FIRST EDITION OF 10,000 WAS PRACTICALLY SOLD IN 24 HOURS.

THANKS FOR THE REAL EVIDENCE OF APPRECIATION. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING NIGHT AND DAY FOR A WEEK AND THERE WILL BE NO LET-UP IN OUR EFFORTS TO GIVE THE PUBLIC EVEN BETTER SERVICE ON THE SECOND EDITION.

IT IS SURPRISING TO NOTE THE GREAT INTEREST AND DEMAND FOR THESE PICTURE BOOKS FROM PLACES WHERE IT HAS NOT BEEN ADVERTISED EXCEPT POSSIBLY BY THE THOUSANDS OF VISITORS WHO MUST HAVE READ THE ADVERTISING CARDS WHILE IN FALL RIVER AND WANTED THE EVIDENCE OF WHAT THEY SAW.

THE PUBLISHER GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE COURTESIES EXTENDED TO HIM BY THE PHOTOGRAPHERS AND PUBLISHERS OF THE FOLLOWING NEWSPAPERS:

FALL RIVER HERALD NEWS.  
FALL RIVER GLOBE.  
NEW BEDFORD EVENING STANDARD.  
NEW BEDFORD MORNING MERCURY.  
NEW BEDFORD TIMES.  
ALBERT COOK CHURCH.

BY THE GENEROUS PERMISSION OF THESE NEWSPAPERS TO ALLOW THE PUBLISHER TO REPRODUCE THE BEST OF THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE FALL RIVER CONFLAGRATION, THIS BOOK HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE.

GEO. H. REYNOLDS  
REYNOLDS PRINTING  
NEW BEDFORD, MASS.

