

## FIREBOAT ENGINE 47 PLAYING HER WHOLE BATTERY OF SIX BIG STREAMS, FOR FIRST TIME, ON VOLCANO OF FLAME IN SOUTH BOSTON COAL YARDS



## GREAT COAL PLANT BURNS

ENGINES IN DORCHESTER AV FIGHTING COAL POCKET FIRE AND PART OF THE CROWD OF SPECTATORS ON COVE ST BRIDGE

Flames Fed by 50,000 Tons Of Fuel in South Boston.

Loss of \$125,000 to Warren And Batchelder Concerns.

High Pockets and Runways Send Fiery Billows 100 Feet in Air.



The towering coal pockets and runways and 50,000 tons of coal of Batchelder Bros' coal company and the F. C. Warren coal company at 2 to 30 Dorchester av, South Boston, took fire at 3:25 o'clock yesterday afternoon and gave the firemen a hard battle that lasted well into the night. The damage is estimated at \$125,000.

The main fire was under control in an hour and a half, but flames kept breaking out in the great piles of coal for hours afterward.

It was the biggest and most spectacular fire in South Boston in a dozen years. Crossing of electric wires in the upper part of the pocket was the cause, it is thought.

In less than half a minute the fire had spread throughout the upper part of the structure, 200 by 150 feet, driven by a strong northwest wind, and a great mass of flames rose fully 100 feet high.

Because of the structure's height, far above the immense piles of coal, it proved a difficult fire to fight. There was only one adjacent high building from which streams could be directed. As the fire was on the water's edge the fire boats had a good opportunity to work.

**Firemen Work Long Without Effect**  
John Shea, employed at the Dorchester-av bridge, was one of the earliest to see the flames, as they started from the eastern corner of the coal pocket. He and Albert Rogers, a salesman for the Batchelder Bros company, ran and gave the first alarm from box 116. In a few seconds engine 16, with headquarters only a block away, was on the scene, and then second and third alarms were quickly sent. Chief Mullen and Fire Commissioner Daly soon arrived and a fourth alarm was ordered. For an hour and a half 15 engines, two fire boats, seven ladder companies, two chemicals and two water towers at work were driven to their utmost efforts to overcome the flames. It was not until nearly 5 o'clock that the effect of their work began to appear.

Engine 16 worked on Dorchester av directly in front of the coal company's offices, and engines 3 and 29 were near by. Engine 43, in Green alley at the rear of Batchelder's wharf, under the direction of Capt Caulfield, did good work in keeping back the flames which threatened to jump across Fort Point channel to the big establishment of the American sugar refining company. The fireboat, engine 47, was moored at the long pier close to the bridge, under the direction of Chief Ritchie.

Fronting on Dorchester av were several two-story wooden structures used by the coal companies for offices and storage. At the bridge is the house of the draftsmen and next to that the

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25-foot building of the Warren company which extended further over a driveway and connected with a 60-foot building used for storage of wood and sawing machinery. Then beyond another driveway, and numbered 39 on Dorchester av, is the 25-foot building of Batchelder Bros, and beyond another driveway is the six-story brick building occupied by the George Q. Hill company, brass manufacturers. The entire property is owned by the Winslow Warren and A. C. Reggio trustees, et al.

The great coal pocket was equipped with runs all round, fitted out with the latest electric machinery for hoisting and distributing coal and the structure was divided into many compartments for the various grades of coal. The upper part contained a great quantity of machinery and many wires.

In the rear of the George Q. Hill building and near the channel is the stable of the coal companies. When the fire started dozens of men rushed to see free the 30 or more horses there. It was necessary to break an opening through the fence and the animals dropped down 10 feet into the vacant land and were then led away to neighboring stables.

Within half an hour from the start, it is estimated, 10,000 people viewed the spectacle, great numbers getting a view from the Dover-st, Broadway and Cove-st bridges. Sergt Haxlett with 25 policemen from division 8 kept the streets clear from the bridge to West 3d st. Later additional police were sent from various stations under command of Lieut James E. Sanford of division 6.

For more than an hour after the fire started, in addition to the big coal pocket, each of the wooden structures facing on Dorchester av was burning. At one time 15 streams were playing on the flames from the Dorchester-av side and twice that number were pouring volumes of water into the burning coal. The water towers did effective work.

**Sparks Set Several Fires.**  
Sparks alighted on the roof of unoccupied houses owned by the Mortimer Downing estate, but they were soon put out. Sparks also alighted on the four-story building at 66 West Broadway, occupied on the lower floor by J. M. Kenney, and they were soon extinguished. When the fire was at its height an alarm was sent from box 134 for a fire on the roof of the two-story dwelling at 112 Bowen st, a mile away, and it is supposed it was caused by sparks. It is owned by James Young and occupied by John Murphy. The damage was slight.

Two members of Mayor Fitzgerald's new fire hazard commission were interested spectators throughout the conflagration and were accompanied by an official photographer. They were Francis M. Carroll and John H. Decrow, the latter representing the improvement association.

Although the fire was under control at 5:30 there was no letup for the fire fighters for an hour afterward. Throughout the evening small fires broke out in various sections of the big pocket, burning fiercely in places. Much of the 50,000 tons of coal was burned and it was all so wetted down that it formed almost a solid mass. Early in the evening the various slides in the small pockets were opened and coal was taken out and piled up. Late last night there was still considerable fire in the great mass of coal and it is expected it will be smoldering for many days to come.