

JANUARY 31, 1914

## MANHATTAN BURNED IN SHIPYARD BLAZE

Valuable Speed Boats and Other  
Craft Destroyed at Most Destructive  
Fire in "Port's" History

LOSS OVER \$150,000

The most destructive fire that has occurred here in years destroyed the big workhouse and machine shop of the Stationary and Marine Motor and Supply Company last Sunday morning. Besides the building over thirty boats, from a dingy to a high-powered speed boat, were totally destroyed. Ralph Palitzer's "Mystery," valued at \$30,000, Thomas B. Taylor's "Bullet," which cost \$50,000, and F. L. Kraemer's "Target," valued at \$2,000 were among the boats lost.

The shipyard is situated on the shore of the bay between the headquarters of the Manhasset Bay and the Port Washington Yacht Clubs. It is within 200 feet of the latter, and at one time it was feared the flames would reach the clubhouse. Some of the firemen guarded the buildings of the club while the majority fought the flames in the shipyard. The firemen were handicapped by there being no water, except from the bay, within nearly two thousand feet of the fire. A hand engine of Protection Engine Company was used to a good advantage, however.

The fire broke out around eight o'clock and is supposed to have started on the first floor of the building. The watchman had gone to his home about thirty minutes before the alarm was given, but Mr. Taylor, owner of the speed boat "Bullet," was in the office working on some plans. He heard a roaring sound and when he opened the office door to see what it was he faced a blazing furnace. In the meantime Harry Stephenson and George Ray, from the Knickerbocker Yacht Club Station, who had seen a cloud of smoke coming from the building, advised the steward, Capt. Bill Willis, to telephone the alarm to fire headquarters. Chief Bird, who was at the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club, also sent in an alarm. He was one of the first to reach the scene of the fire.

Mr. Taylor, who is president of the company, used a hand fire extinguisher to try to put out the blaze, but the wind fanned it, and soon the entire side of the building was ablaze. He returned to the building and sent in a fire alarm over the telephone. Mr. Taylor found himself obliged to crawl along the floor before he could work his way out of the building, not being able to reach the office again to get his overcoat. He was almost overcome by the smoke.

The wind was blowing a gale from the west directly toward the building, and when the firemen arrived, on account of lack of water, the best they could do was to keep the fire from spreading by the use of a hand engine and by forming a bucket line from the bay.

Most of the burned boats had been stored in the big shed for the winter season. The engines had been taken out of some and were being overhauled. Several owners of pleasure boats had their engines in the shop for repairs. All is now a mass of junk and scrap iron.

The yard at the north of the burned building is stored full of craft of every description, among the large boats being Ex-Commodore W. F. Blahdell's Flora Del Mar, insured for \$14,000, and Henry Hrig, Jr.'s passenger boat Port Washington, not covered by insurance. Just before going south last fall Captain Hrig called upon insurance agent Charles E. Hyde to see about taking out some insurance on his boat. He found that the shipyard rate was pretty high and concluded to take no insurance and not have his boat insured. The Port Washington was ashore several times, and it is due to the excellent work of the firemen that she was not burned. What Captain Hrig would have paid for insurance he can well afford to give to the Port Washington Fire Department.

The Wampage, a passenger launch belonging to the Wampage Barges Company, was one of the outside boats closest to the fire. This boat was badly burned on the starboard side. It would have been almost destroyed were it not for the thoughtfulness of Albert Smith, who called for volunteers to face the intense heat and pull the boat some thirty or forty feet away from the fire, and the effective bucket work of George Wachter and another member of the News staff.

Among the boats burned were the launches *Hetsy*, Commodore H. C. Gould, of the Port Washington Yacht Club; the *Pandora*, Arthur T. Vance; the *Wee Blair*, C. L. Thompson; the *Flyaway*, T. B. Taylor; the *La'Mandla*, Thomas Ellis, and craft of various designs belonging to Stephen H. Mason, John W. Mitchell, Dr. P. B. Lewis, James F. Dinn, William Titus, Russell Howland, Jack Floherty, Clifford Harboe, John Sheather, E. N. Nemitt, W. E. Blaisdell, and several others.

Ex-Commodore Blaisdell and Dr. Lewis lost a boat each, the *Gay* and the *Dolphin*, respectively, of the Port Washington Yacht Club one-design class. These boats were not insured, but the other boats of the same class, which are stored elsewhere, are insured.

Mr. Pannier's *Argosy* was insured for \$15,000, about half its value. Mr.

Vance's *Pandora* \$2,000 and F. L. Kraemer's *Target* \$1,000. Owners of some of the other boats destroyed carried insurance on their property. Commodore Gould's launch *Hetsy* was not insured, nor was Mr. Taylor's *Bullet*, the most costly boat of all.

The *Bullet* was built as an experiment boat and contained two six-cylinder engines valued at \$24,000. The boat was built to make thirty-six miles an hour and was brought to the Port Washington plant from Grassy Point, up on the Hudson, for an overhauling. A friend of Mr. Taylor's let him have his launch to tow the *Bullet* to Port Washington, with the request that the boat be returned to Harlem River for the winter, but Mr. Taylor told his friend he would take care of her and not to bother about it. This boat was partly destroyed by fire.

The loss of the "Target" is greatly regretted by its owner, F. L. Kraemer, and other members of the Knickerbocker Yacht Club. The boat was one of the driest and speediest launches in the bay. It was built by John Coughtry, a noted boat-builder, and cannot be replaced.

The shipyard building was owned by J. H. Connell, who puts no value upon it, but the loss of the plant was estimated by Thomas Lillis, the manager, at \$100,000. It was partly insured. The total loss is estimated at \$150,000. It is believed that the company will erect another building on the site.

The firemen, who deserve great credit for their work, were served an abundance of hot coffee at the Port Washington Yacht Club. And they certainly appreciated the favor.