

June 14, 1905

SPARTANSBURG SWEEP BY DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.

WHOLE SOUTH SIDE OF MAIN
STREET FROM THE

RAILROAD TO MECHANIC STREET

Doomed—The Loss Will Reach \$40,000—Titusville Firemen Are on the Ground—List of Losses.

A fire which broke out at Spartansburg at a few minutes after 1 o'clock this morning, was still raging at 4 o'clock, with prospects that the entire south side of Main street from the Pennsylvania railroad tracks up Main street, a distance of 300 feet, is apparently doomed to total destruction. The Titusville fire department is now on the scene and if the supply of water is convenient and ample the fire will not spread beyond its present limits. The loss will probably reach \$40,000.

The fire started in a store building belonging to Crawford Thurston. The tenants were Mrs. Arline Eastman, a milliner; Dr. J. B. Mailand, who had an extensive library and equipment, and Miss Frances King, who occupied the upstairs rooms as a dwelling. The fire was discovered in Mrs. Eastman's millinery department, where it is believed to have originated. Before the alarm was fairly sounded the building was in flames.

A light west wind fanned the fire and the dry, wooden structure was soon a sheet of flame from cellar to roof. A small quantity of hose was brought into service but the distance from the fire plugs to the burning building was so great that it proved almost worthless. Hundreds of men formed a bucket brigade and worked bravely. It was of little use. The fire communicated in a few minutes to the shoe store of Augustus Smeltzer, which was totally destroyed.

The next in line on the west was the brick grocery store of E. A. Blakeslee, formerly occupied as a general store by Mr. Binney. It is completely gutted and the greater part of the stock is a loss.

An effort was then made to stop the progress of the fire to the eastward. The residences of Mrs. A. L. Cowles and Mrs. Maria Jones were located close together, and the nearest was within a few feet of the Smeltzer store. They were soon in flames, and the amateur firemen were beaten back by the terrific heat. Every effort was then made to save the Central hotel and the barns in connection with it. The residence of Mrs. Jones is within twenty feet of the hotel and at 3:15 o'clock this morning was burning fiercely. Wet blankets had been placed on the roof and over the west side of the hotel.

A telephone message, received here at 3:10 o'clock, stated that if help came within half an hour the property might be saved.

At 2 o'clock Burgess Webb of Spartansburg telegraphed Mayor Daniel E. Reeling, asking for assistance. The firemen were called out, and one of the city steamers was prepared for shipment. It was loaded on a flatcar at the Pennsylvania freight depot and a caboose was attached for the men. It was necessary to get up steam in the switch engine in the yards. At about 4 o'clock Fire Chief William McKenzie, eight firemen and twelve or fifteen volunteers started for Spartansburg. The run would require at least forty minutes. It is improbable that they arrived there before 4:45 o'clock.

At 3:40 o'clock this morning the Central hotel was burning. The bucket brigade was using every means to confine the fire to the west wing of the building. There is little hope of this, and once the upright part catches the barns and other buildings will be lost.

The total loss will probably approximate \$45,000 or \$50,000.

Six years ago Spartansburg suffered another terrible loss by fire, when the entire north side of the street from the railroad tracks to Mechanic street, was destroyed. That section has been rebuilt of brick and is nearly fire-proof. There is little danger of the present fire communicating to buildings on that side of the street.