

# THE BURNING OF HANCOCK, MICH.

## One Hundred and Fifty Buildings Destroyed—Loss \$280,000.

*From the Portage Lake Mining Gazette, April 15.*

About 7:30 o'clock Sunday morning, the blowing of the Quiney stamp whistle, and the rising of a high column of thick black smoke, announced to the people of this place that a serious fire had broken out in our sister village of Hancock. The fire originated in a little French saloon, adjoining the Catholic Church and schools. There had been a dance in the house all the night, and at the wind-up the stove, it appears, was overturned, and its contents scattered over the room. Without attempting to extinguish the flames which at once sprung up, the party decamped and left the building to its fate. The building was situated in the northwest quarter of the town, and the wind, unfortunately, was blowing from that quarter. The fire quickly enveloped that building, and communicated from it to those contiguous on the east, and in less than half an hour there were half a dozen buildings in flames on that side of the street, and soon those on the other side caught from the intense heat, and burst out with unexampled fierceness.

About this time the water supply gave out, without any particular benefit having been derived from it or the paltry fire apparatus belonging to the town. The flames spread from house to house, on both sides of the street, and back in each direction among the outhouses, barns, etc., increasing in extent and fierceness, until, at the end of an hour more, not less than thirty-five buildings were simultaneously in flames and in course of destruction. The scenes which ensued beggar description. It was the most awful spectacle we ever witnessed. The flames roared like an approaching tornado, and crackled like the discharge of straggling volleys of small arms. The air was hot, suffocating, and thick with blinding smoke—now settling down like a pall over the whole town and now lifting by the wind, revealed broad sheets of flame from fifty to five hundred feet in length, and reaching, at times, almost the clouds. After the first half hour all hope of saving any of the buildings comprising the business portions of the town was abandoned, as the length of the fire was now fully one-eighth of a mile, and the flames were licking up building after building like stubble. Merchants and small dealers tumbled their stocks pell-mell into the streets, and hundreds of willing hands conveyed them speedily, if not very tenderly, beyond the apparent danger. Some of them were moved three or four times before a place of safety was found.

In six hours nearly all that remained of the once thrifty village of Hancock was an immense heap of embers, covered with a stifling cloud of smoke. A small fringe of diminutive buildings on the north and west, among which the Catholic and Methodist churches, St. Patrick's and Masonic Halls, loom up like monuments marking the graves of their neighbors, are all that is left of Hancock. The ground burned over is estimated at twelve acres, on which were situated 150 buildings, of which 130 were used as dwellings in whole or in part. Every store in the town was consumed, but, with two or three exceptions, were fully insured, and no detriment experienced beyond that of temporary inconvenience. The people seem to have accepted the situation, and have gone to work with a will. Nearly thirty temporary structures have been or are in course of construction, and others will go up as soon as men and lumber can be obtained.

The following is a list of companies and the sums insured therein:

Home, New-Haven.....	\$24,000
Enterprise, Cincinnati.....	9,300
Home, New-York.....	9,200
Ins. Co. of N. America, Phil'a.....	8,150
Liverpool, London and Globe.....	7,500
Manhattan, New-York.....	6,000
Aetna, Hartford.....	4,000
Phoenix, Brooklyn.....	4,000
Irving, New-York.....	3,800
Underwriters' Agency, New-York.....	3,300
National, St. Louis.....	3,300
North American, New-York.....	2,000
Stock and Mutual, Chicago.....	1,000

A Cleveland company is said to have lost \$10,000; the Phoenix, Hartford, \$6,000; Rock River, Wisconsin, \$3,000, and a Milwaukee company several thousands, but we have no returns.

From the full list of losses it is estimated that the total loss is \$281,500, on which there is insurance to the amount of \$126,500.