



The Indianapolis Times

FORECAST—Snow flurries, windy and much colder tonight and tomorrow. Low tonight near 10, high tomorrow 18.

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FINAL HOME

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BLAST RIPS HANOVER SHOE STORE FOLLOWING 2-ALARM BLOCK'S FIRE

By HEZE CLARK

A second downtown store broke into exploding flame shortly before noon today as firemen fought through blinding smoke to subdue the raging blaze in Block's Washington St. Store.

With a fiery blast that rocked the area, new flames burst out of Hanover's Shoe Store, one door east at 12 E. Washington.

Solid flames poured out of the second and third floors of Hanover's and Block's as firemen poured thousands of gallons of water into them.

Couldn't Get Close to Hanover's

Flames were so hot and smoke so thick firemen couldn't get close to Hanover's.

At least five firemen were injured by smoke or flying glass.

Nine persons narrowly escaped through smoke in Block's, 10 E. Washington. Seven of them, including six

Just Store Dummies, Heze Learns

"I thought we had two dead when I got to the fire at Block's," Times reporter Heze Clark told the city desk.

"There were two bodies on the sidewalk in front of the broken window. They weren't moving.

"But when I got closer I saw what it was. They were store dummies dressed in men's clothes."

women, were rescued after being trapped on the fourth floor.

The blast at Hanover's came two hours after firemen rushed to Block's.

It was the second explosion of the dramatic, bitter battle against the biggest downtown fire in many years. A short time before the Hanover blast, an explosion of smoke and flame at Block's hurled 10 firemen to the ground. Three of them were overcome.

Early estimates of \$500,000 damage soared. Firemen indicated the loss was getting close to \$1 million as the blaze kept spreading.

Solid Wall of Flames at Store

At noon, two and a half hours after the first call, a solid wall of flames filled the second and third floors of both Block's and Hanover's.

Firemen braved intense smoke earlier to probe every floor of Block's, Hanover's and three other buildings imperiled. They said no persons were left in any of the buildings.

While thousands watched despite rain, snow and cold, firemen tried to buck their way into the smoke-choked buildings. But they were driven back as new flames burst out.

Unable to bring hand hoses close to the holocausts, firemen raised four pressure nozzles up hose and ladder trucks and bombarded the flaming buildings with water. Several times, it looked like firemen were winning the battle. But each time, new blazes burst forth—two of them by explosions—and smoke billowed high, gray and dirty out of the buildings.

Smoke spread to four other downtown stores in the vicinity and firemen from all downtown stations battled to keep the blaze under control. A second alarm was sounded when fire burst out in greater fury.

The blast at Hanover's "hit us like a cannonball," said one fireman. He and two others were fighting to get into the rear of the store when the blast hit.

Building Shakes to Its Rafters

The explosion knocked one fireman's helmet clear around. Windows splintered and the four-story building shook to its rafters as smoke and flame slammed out of the front and back of Hanover's.

One heroic fireman clambered up a ladder, hose in hand, in front of Hanover's. But blast after blast of smoke stopped him midway, and fire officials ordered him down.

Shooting flames and smoke forced firemen back into the middle of Washington St.

Three firemen were overcome when an explosion knocked them into the alley as they tried to fight their way into the rear of Block's. A fourth was cut on his left hand.

Seven other firemen, chopping their way into the front of the store, were blown several feet by the same blast. Plate glass was shattered and the firemen were thrown sprawling to the sidewalk, but none of them were hurt.

Police held back traffic and crowds as thousands of shoppers and office workers watched the dramatic struggle.

Four employees trapped on the fourth floor were rescued by firemen who hoisted ladders and helped them down. Three other employees fled by a rear fire escape from the fourth floor.

Only a few customers were in Block's, and they all walked out before smoke choked off most of the exits.

Scores of firemen and 13 pieces of major equipment were rushed to the scene. Fire Chief Joseph Hancock took personal charge when the second alarm was sounded.

Three Firemen Overcome

Three firemen were overcome by smoke and taken to General Hospital after first aid at the scene. They were: Ed Schenck, 39, of 1530 N. Alton St., Station 13. Al Sheets, 35, 1617 Lexington Ave., Pumper 7.

Vernis Brunson, 37, whose hand was cut by flying glass. The fifth fireman injured was Capt. John Blazic, 42, of 1822 Medford Ave., of Station 13. His left wrist was gashed by flying glass.

Indianapolis Railways shut off electric power from transit lines on Washington between Meridian and Pennsylvania. Transit officials said they were afraid falling wires, if alive with voltage, could kill or injure spectators and firemen.



NEAR SAFETY—A woman helped by a fireman comes down ladder from Block's fourth floor.



DRAMATIC FIGHT—Thousands watched firemen battle smoke and flame, rescue people from Block's fire.

A fourth fireman, assistant Battalion Chief Frank Walker was cut on his left hand by glass but was not overcome.

It was the second fire in two days at a downtown Block's store. Fire Prevention Chief Ralph Fender's office said an investigation for arson will be made.

Manager of Block's Washington St. Store, Louis Abrams, 42, said damage to the stock probably would run near \$300,000. Firemen at the scene said smoke, flame and water damage to the building probably would add a loss of \$200,000 or more.

Mr. Abrams and a porter, Nathan Strong, 55, narrowly escaped being trapped by the smoke and flames.

"I saw smoke seeping out of the west wall on the first floor," the manager said. "I went downstairs and saw smoke and fire blazing out of the west wall."

"I called Nathan, and together we each grabbed a fire extinguisher and started pumping away at the flaming wall."

"I grabbed another extinguisher and poured it on."

"I thought for a minute we had it beat. Then it puffed out again and we couldn't see a thing. Smoke poured in my eyes."

"I heard the fire department coming and we started out—but we were as if blind."

"I thought we were going to die right there."

"We groped through that smoke, feeling our way along the wall until we found the stairway and walked up."

"We came outside, and I still couldn't see for a while." In all, about 30 employees and customers fled from Block's as flames shot out of the basement and smoke poured through the store.

Trapped on the fourth floor—their exit cut off by billows of smoke—were eight employees of the Block's store. Firemen raised ladders to the fourth floor and helped them to safety:

Mrs. Lela Crosby, 44, Acton.
Mrs. Jesse Pulliam, 43, 3712 N. Keystone Ave.
Mrs. Anna Lowells, 62, of 2709 N. Dearborn St.
Mrs. Nina Majors, 48, Danville.
All are sewing women.

Flee Down Fire Escape

Three others working on the fourth floor fled by the rear fire escape. They were:

Miss Mary Bartholomew, 25, assistant bookkeeper.
Mrs. Jesse Pulliam, about 45, bookkeeper.
Michael Carderelli, about 55, a tailor.
None of the employees were hurt.

Also damaged by flames and smoke were these stores: Goldstein Bros., 16 E. Washington; Hanover Shoe Store, 12 E. Washington; Flagg Bros. Shoe Store, 8 E. Washington, and Craig's Candy Store, 6 E. Washington.



LADDERS TO RESCUE—Firemen and rescued employees of Block's clamber to safety as smoke fills store.

Thrill to Ring Matches Friday

Big thrills are coming Friday night . . . at the third session of the Times-Legion Golden Gloves boxing tournament in the N. Pennsylvania St. Armory.

Get a choice seat in advance at these downtown sporting goods stores: Bush-Callahan, 136 E. Washington St.; Em-Roe, 209 W. Washington St.; Sportsman's Store, 126 N. Pennsylvania St.

Prices, including tax: Ring-side and first row balcony, \$2; downstairs reserved, \$1.50. General admission—\$1 for adults and 50 cents for children 12 years and under—will be on sale only at the Armory Friday night.

Mercury Plunge To Follow Fog

An extensive blanket of fog covering the country from the East Coast to the Mississippi River stopped flight operations at Weir Cook Municipal Airport early today. The fog lifted shortly before noon.

LOCAL TEMPERATURES			
6 a. m.	40	10 a. m.	41
7 a. m.	40	11 a. m.	35
8 a. m.	41	12 (noon)	35
9 a. m.	41	1 p. m.	35

Times Index

Amusements	8
Bridge	4
Comics	21
Crossword	6
Editorials	12
Radio, Television	7
Ed Sovola	11
Sports	14-16
Earl Wilson	11
Women's	4, 5
What Goes on Here	9

This Time He Gets Help—

Driver Again Forces Beaten Pupil Off Bus

Pictures on Page 11
By DONNA MIKELS

A switch-wielding bus driver who faces possible state and court action in the "brutal whipping" of a Martinsville schoolboy today again forcibly ejected the boy and an older brother from his bus.

Driver Arnold Long, with the aid of a teen-age girl, pushed from the bus 12-year-old David and 13-year-old James Upton, whose angered father is seeking court action against the driver for the well-raising Jan. 9 whipping.

The father's revelation of the incident to The Times yesterday set off an investigation by Wilbur Young, state superintendent of public instruction, of the use of switches both by Mr. Long and other bus drivers employed by Jefferson Township Trustee Roscoe Bothwell.

This morning at 7:20 a. m. James and David attempted to board the township bus as it stopped to pick up three other Upton children in front of their farm home at Paragon in Morgan County.

Pushed Them Off

But as the two boys stepped aboard, the driver and his teen-age assistant roughly pushed the boys back out again with the driver yelling, the boys said:

"Here, here, you can't get on here, the state police will get you for this."

As soon as the boys hit ground, the driver snapped the door shut and swung off down the road, leaving them in the driving rain. The entire incident was witnessed by an Indianapolis Times Photographer Dean Timmerman who was concealed a few feet away shooting pictures.

Mr. Upton then was forced to drive his boys on to Martinsville High School as he has done since Jan. 9. On several days when he could not take them he has been forced to pay \$3 daily cash fare, even though he pays taxes for township transportation.

The father says the driver also pushes the boys out in the evening if they try to board the bus at Martinsville High School.

Township Trustee Bothwell and County Schools Supt. James Bourn, who said they authorize use of corporal punishment by drivers, both supported Mr. Long's contention the boys are "incorrigible."

However, this claim was not supported by officials of the Martinsville school where the boys are pupils. Here other teachers said they had numerous complaints of "unreasonable discipline" by driver Long. Other state school authorities called use of whips by drivers "deplorable." Two other parents called The Times long distance today to make complaints.

Omar Bolin, near Martinsville, said that several years ago driver Long put his 7-year-old son off the bus in a rain and forced him to walk a half-mile home. Mrs. Ross O'Neal, another township resident, said the driver treated her children roughly and once passed up an older girl who was waiting for the bus, because she had remonstrated against treatment of her younger brother a few days before.

State Supt. of Public Instruction Young today issued a statement that he is "still investigating all phases of the situation." He added that as yet he had "not found any law that gives me any authority whatsoever to intervene in a case where a bus driver has disciplined a pupil on a school bus."

No Authority Found
However, neither has a check of state school laws produced any law giving drivers such authority, as claimed by Mr. Bothwell and Mr. Bourn.

Mr. Young declined to reveal when and if he will summon the school officials in for a conference.

The father said he will go again today to the office of Morgan County Prosecutor Sam Blue to demand that he be allowed to file criminal charges in the beating.

Double-Take By BOB BARNES

