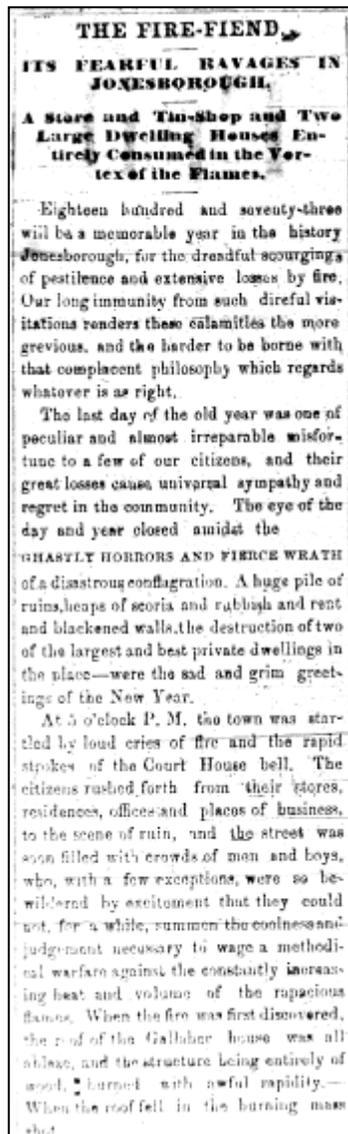


New Year's Eve Fire, Dec. 31, 1873.

Jonesboro Herald and Tribune, Jan. 8, 1874

"The Fire-Fiend." *The Jonesborough Herald and Tribune*, Jan. 8, 1874, page 2.



THE FIRE-FIEND

ITS FEARFUL RAVAGES IN JONESBOROUGH

A Store and Tin-Shop and Two Large Dwelling Houses Entirely Consumed in the Vortex of the Flames.

Eighteen hundred and seventy-three will be a memorable year in the history of Jonesborough, for the dreadful scourgings of pestilence and extensive losses by fire. Our long immunity from such direful visitations renders these calamities the more grievous, and the harder to be borne with that complacent philosophy which regards whatever is right.

The last day of the old year was one of peculiar and almost irreparable misfortune to a few of our citizens, and their great losses cause universal sympathy and regret in the community. The eye of the day and year closed amidst the

GHASTLY HORRORS AND FIERCE WRATH

Of a disastrous conflagration. A huge pile of ruins, heaps of scoria and rubbish and rent and blackened walls the destruction of two of the largest and best private dwellings in the place – were the sad and grim greetings of the New Year.

At 5 o'clock P.M. the town was startled by loud cries of fire and the rapid strokes of the Court House bell. The citizens rushed forth from their stores, residences, offices and places of business, to the scene of ruin, and the street was soon filled with crowds of men and boys, who, with a few exceptions, were so bewildered by excitement that they could but, for a short while, summon the coolness and judgment necessary to wage a methodical warfare against the constantly increasing heat and volume of

the rapacious flames. When the fire was first discovered, the roof of the Gallaher house was all ablaze, and the structure being entirely of wood, burned with awful rapidity. – When the roof fell in the burning mass shot

A SOLID COLUMN OF FIRE

At least fifty feet high, and then all idea of saving the adjoining property was abandoned, though the brave and noble men who were battling against all odds with the devouring elements did not cease their heroic but hopeless exertions. Before this time the west gable of the Blair residence had been attacked by

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the fire, and the intense heat caused the wall to warp and crack and a portion of it as large as a common window fell out. Through this aperture the flames swept with demon fury, igniting the roof and filling the garret with such an intense heat and suffocating smoke as to drive below the brave workers from this post. Some one had the foresight and precaution to close the blinds of the windows, which were of solid wood, and for some time the fire was confined in the closed building. As soon as the blinds were destroyed, the flames shot forth their burning tongues through the doors and windows and the splendid mansion was melting like a structure of wax, in the

GLARING COILS OF THE DESTROYING FIEND

During this time, the fire had reached the heavy cornice and was eating its way into the roof of Dr. Bovell's residence. A large hole was out into the roof, but no water could be procured at the time. As soon as a bucket line could be formed, water was thrown on the burning timbers, but a quantity sufficient to arrest the progress of the fire could not be obtained. Through all was done that human power was capable of, it was soon conceded that the building could not be saved. The roof fell in with a tremendous crash, and the entire upper story, in an instant, was

A FURNACE OF HEAT AND FLAME

It was but the work of a moment for the fire to work its way to the lower story, by the stairway, and the blazing sheets crackled, writhed and danced in defiance and derision of the helpless crowds.

WHO WITNESSED THEIR RIOT AND REVELRY

When the main building was abandoned, the fire-fighters directed their efforts to the dining-room and a kitchen which stand in the rear, a separate brick building, and by tearing off the roof and throwing water succeeded in saving it, though somewhat damaged. The little frame office west of the house, was torn down to save the M.E. Church.

During the burning of the buildings, columns of the densest, blackest smoke, pinnacled

UPON THE TOPS OF FLAMING PILLARS,

Rose high into the mourning heavens, and the flying sparks formed a meteor-like arch over Dr. Chester's house and Cox's Row, reaching to Rev. Mr. Morrison's residence and to the large stable beyond. During the intensest heat of the burning, there was considerable danger of these building taking fire, a light wind blowing in that direction. The roof of the Chester building (a large frame) was covered with wet blankets, and water was constantly thrown upon the walls. At Cox's Row, Messrs. Cox had a man posted at each of the 30 windows and doors and kept a constant stream playing upon the building. Notwithstanding the provision, the paint is considerably blistered.

The main part of the battle was in the rear of the Blair residence. The roof of the kitchen was torn off, and from this place water was thrown on the fire in the main building. A large force, at the same time was operating on top of Blair's stores to prevent the flames from spreading in that direction. By keeping the roof constantly wet, the fearful triumphs of the destroyer were here stayed. Had this large building,

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being entirely built of wood, taken fire, the town would have been utterly impossible to have extinguished it with the meager and slow facilities at command.

The Gallagher house was entirely destroyed. Mr. W.T. Hawkins saved most of his material and ware, and his loss is about \$200.

The walls of the dwellings are greatly damaged and will have to be taken down almost entirely when they are rebuilt.

Dr. Bovell will rebuild in the spring, and has repaired his kitchen and dining-room for occupation until the house is completed. Most all of his household furniture was saved but badly damaged. The Blair property was unoccupied, except one room, the office of Drs. Sevier and Deaderick.

Fifteen thousand dollars will not replace the property destroyed.

At the commencement, no method of system could be evolved out of the excitement, confusion and terror of the citizens. Each one had a plan of his own, and for sometime there was no one around whom the crowd would rally as the leader, but as soon as buckets could be procured and a line formed to the water, noble and untiring services was performed.

THE HEROIC WORKERS

The colored men of the town, with a few worthless exceptions, responded to the call for assistance and worked from beginning to end with the vim, will and earnestness as if they were the owners of the burning houses. Johnson City sent us a large delegation, and they rendered all the assistance in their power. The people of Jonesboro' will hold them in grateful remembrance, and will come to their aid in the hour of need.

Too much praise and honor cannot be awarded Capt. Jack Howren, Town Marshal, for his gallant behavior. He was everywhere encouraging and aiding the soldiery in the battle with the flames, and worked with the tireless energy of desperation from the beginning of the fire till the last bucket was emptied – Whilst a large majority of our citizens worked until they were utterly exhausted, we noticed a line along the pavement, who stood with hands in their pockets, unmoved spectators of the awful scene, apparently enjoying the drama of ruin and exchanging the vulgar jests and ribaldry of the low and degraded. They were the loafers, loungers, *dead beats*, thieves and *fine-haired* gentry of the town.

ORIGIN OF THE FIRE

There is some conflict of opinion as regards the origin of the fire, but the predominant one is that it originated in Tom Deer's whisky-shop. The stovepipe went up through a floor, and it has caught fire two or three times before. – The stove pipe in Hawkin's store passed into Blair's house, and did not come in contact with wood. However this may be, it is certain that the two oldest landmarks of the town are grim and blackened ruins, and their burning will mark one of the most disastrous days that ever befell Jonesboro'.

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| Herald and Tribune. THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 1874.  | |
| <p>Jonesboro Dist.--Second Round. Jonesboro Station, Jan. 21. Carter's Station Circuit, Carter's Station, Jan. 31. Taylorville Circuit, at Taylorville, Feb. 11. Elizabethton Station, Feb. 14. Jonesboro Circuit, Oak Grove, Feb. 21. Elizabethton Circuit, Patton's Chapel, Feb. 25. Fall Branch Circuit, Pleasant Grove, March 7. Rheastown Circuit, Cedar Grove, March 14. Greenville Station, March 21. Greenville Circuit, Hanshaw's, March 28.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J. L. MANN, P. E.</p> <p>MISSISSIPPIANS: Please announce in your next issue, the commencement next Sabbath evening of a series of Historical Lectures on Bible subjects. To be continued indefinitely, in the Methodist Episcopal Church. WM. LUCAS Pastor.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">REMEMBER.</p> <p>The office of the HERALD AND TRIBUNE has been removed from Cox's Row to our Building just east of Dosser's Store.</p> <p>The walls of the fire-wreck stand, like sheeted ghosts, sentineling the ruins of their former stateliness.</p> <p>Rev. C. Waterbury, formerly pastor of the Presbyterian Church, in this place, died in great peace, at Kingsport on the 3d inst.</p> <p>Our article on Johnson City is regretfully laid over until next week on account of its length and the present press on our columns.</p> | <p>Fine Photos. The next morning after the fire, our unexcelled and widely known Artist, L. W. Keen Esq. photographed the scene of the ruins from the commanding points on the street. The views represent the appearance of the fire-wreck to the utmost point of perfection and accuracy, and are executed in the most superb style of artistic taste and skill and mounted on large cards. The delineation is so bold and perfect that almost every person in the street can be recognized. Mr. Keen has these views for sale and those wishing to preserve a souvenir of the Great Fire should call and purchase. These pictures are put up so that they can be sent by mail.</p> <p>Blest be the Tie that Binds. December, as expressive of age when all is wister and gloom, is a grave metaphorical error. It is the gayest, happiest, merriest month of the whole twelve. It is the universal holiday of social life, mirth and jollity. More parties and given in it than any other month, and more marriages are celebrated. Behold what an array have bowed at the shrine of united Love; and these are not all the licenses issued for December:</p> <p>J. L. Price and E. A. Feathers. Geo. R. Grubbs and Sarah Cooper. A. F. Mauk and Florence S. Clark. F. K. Croyl and Sarah F. Ball. Decator Phillips and Mary Bowman. John Murry and W. E. Hampton. M. H. Elaca and Maggie C. Gibson. W. T. Davis and Sophrona C. Seaton. R. B. Brown and Parthena E. Willett. James F. Helton and Maria B. Wallace. S. A. Ball and Tennessee Keplinger. Wm. Helton and Sarah A. Seaton. Thomas C. Garst and Mollie J. Crouch. E. A. Shipley and Jennie R. Shipley. Wm. Hammons and Samantha Pierce. W. A. Sehorn and Maggie A. Horton. E. B. Brown and Parthena E. Willett. Jas. T. Parker and Catharine Eutsler. D. F. Summit and Virginia E. Wagner.</p> |

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