

FLAMES SWEEP CONEY ISLAND

**Blaze Starts in Dreamland,
Spreads Rapidly, and Park Is
Soon Wholly Wiped Out.**

TOWER FALLS IN CRASH

**Was a Mighty Bonfire Before
Tumbling—Other Buildings
Catch and Are Destroyed.**

INCUBATOR BABIES KILLED

**Manager Gumpertz Orders Animals
Shot—Flames Spread and
Reach to Feltman's.**

Like the fire of four years ago which, starting at the west end of the Bowery at Coney Island, burned out Steeplechase Park and all the surrounding amusement enterprises, a blaze started in Dreamland Park at Coney Island some time after midnight last night and, feeding on the flimsy woodwork and paper mache structures which enclose the park, it gained good headway before it was discovered at 2:10 o'clock.

The fire caused the death of six babies which have been on exhibition in the Infant Incubator Show, near the West Eighth Street entrance. Sergt. Klinck of the Coney Island Station thought of the babies as soon as he learned of the fire, and made a dash for the incubator show. He got in and managed to get three of the tiny children out, only to find that all three had been suffocated to death.

The flames spread with such rapidity that Klinck could not get into the building again after having left it with the last of the three infants, and it is known that at least three other infants were left within the structure.

The fire was seen then near the West Eighth Street entrance to the park, which is less than 100 yards from the Coney Island engine house. It was seen first in Hell Gate. Apparatus and men were on the scene in an instant, and streams of water were got on the flames without the loss of a moment. But the few streams which Coney Island's engine could throw made no impression on the steadily mounting fire.

The animals in the show of Capt. Joseph Ferrari seemed to be aware that the park was on fire as soon as any of their keepers. They began to howl at the top of their lungs, and Capt. Ferrari at first tried to get them into traveling cages and out of the park. He was engaged in this work with all of his trainers and keepers when the police warned him of the danger of taking the animals out. He decided then to leave them to their fate rather than risk trying to get them out where there was danger that they would get loose in the crowd.

It is a long way to the island from any other engine house, and before other apparatus arrived the whole end of the park opposite West Eighth Street was in flames. A second alarm and then a third and a fourth were turned in in rapid succession, the last bringing Acting Chief Kenlon in his automobile.

Although Coney Island only opened for the season last Saturday, many showmen were already there for the summer, and these hurried from their beds as the flames lit up the sky. Soon a crowd of several thousand persons gathered in Surf Avenue opposite the West Eighth Street entrance and opposite the big entrance where Creation is shown, for through the entrances good views could be obtained of the leaping flames inside.

The reserves of the Coney Island station were routed out of bed and hurriedly formed fire lines, cutting off Surf Avenue from the beginning of the Parkway to the other side of Dreamland. The crowd were herded outside this area.

More apparatus arrived momentarily until the full complement of engines, tenders and trucks which respond to four alarms, were gathered outside the park. Fire boats were reported on their way to the Dreamland pier from their station in the waters nearer Manhattan.

The blaze of the paint-covered wood threw a glow into the sky, and the rumbling and clanging of engines on their way to the blaze awoke residents of all the adjoining sections of outer Brooklyn. Soon automobile parties, most of the folk in heavy coats thrown over night clothes, began to appear on Ocean Parkway. They were stopped from approaching any nearer to the fire, but from this vantage point the view was like one of the old-time Pain firework spectacles at Manhattan Beach.

The flames, fanned by a good breeze, spread out to the tower, which rises high above all else in Dreamland, and began to climb up this structure of lathing and light wood. They licked around the white paint with which the structure was covered, and each moment mounted higher up its sides, until presently the tower glowed out against the black of the night sky like some huge bonfire.

At 3:15 o'clock the fire had spread as far west as Feltman's, and streams were being turned on this, keeping it constantly wet down in the hope of saving it. The Giant Roller Coaster next to Dreamland, which was to have opened to-day, caught fire three times, but the firemen managed to put out the blaze.

Deputy Chief Lally declared then that the fire threatened to become the worst that the island had ever experienced. The flames were spreading rapidly north, south, and west. To the south the ocean presented a bar. It was traveling westward at good speed, however, and momentarily was creeping nearer to Surf Avenue, across which is the Brighton Beach terminal.

Samuel W. Gumpertz, manager of Dreamland, finally gave the order to shoot all the animals in the animal show,

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and scarcely had men started on this work than the huge tower fell with a crash of sparks, directly toward Surf Avenue. Some of the embers fell on the animal show, but the men within continued their work.

The Fire of 1907.

Coney Island has been swept more or less by fires. Perhaps the most disastrous was one which started in the Cave of the Winds in Steeplechase Park on the morning of July 28, 1907. This fire swept some thirty-five acres clean and caused a loss of \$1,500,000. It swept along two blocks of Surf Avenue, skirted two blocks of the Bowery, ate up everything from the Bowery back to the ocean front for two blocks, and injured a dozen persons.

The shifting of the wind to the southward cut off any danger to Dreamland on the east and Henderson's and Luna Park to the north. The brick walls and iron shutters of Stauch's helped to check the fire. A strong wind seaward kept blowing until Coney Island was entirely out of danger.

The last big fire at Coney Island was on July 8, 1908. This fire destroyed Pabst's Loop Hotel and the Vanderveer Hotel, in Surf Avenue and Fifth Street. Four alarms were turned in for this fire, calling engines from many parts of Brooklyn. The blaze was the first one which ever attacked Coney Island at its eastern end, that portion having escaped the fires which have twice before destroyed the other parts of it. The loss was estimated at about \$200,000. Pabst's Hotel was one of the landmarks of Coney Island, as was also the Vanderveer.

TEST OF FIRE APPARATUS.

New Automobile Engine Proves Disappointing, but Will Be Tried Again.

A new model hose nozzle holder for high pressure, invented by the Bureau of Repairs and Supplies of the Fire Department, was tested yesterday at Fifty-eighth Street and Eleventh Avenue. The holder, which was named the "Waldo," in honor of the retiring Fire Commissioner, satisfied Acting Chief Kenlon, Battalion Chief Howe, and Capt. Demarest, the Testing Committee. It will cost \$7 to manufacture. The department has been paying \$92 for patented holders previously used. In making the test the new automobile Engine 58, known as the "Big Bear," was employed.

There was also tested at the same time an automobile engine differing from "Big Bear" in that its pumps are operated by a six cylinder ninety horse power gasoline engine instead of by steam, as in the older type of horse-propelled engines and in the "Big Bear." The new engine was expected to pump 700 gallons of water a minute, but succeeded in pumping only 600. The test was brought to an end when the packings of the engine were ignited by back-firing of the motor. The Board of Examiners decided to allow the new engine another test before finally deciding upon its merits.

Several out-of-town fire Chiefs were present. Among them were J. E. Sloan of Newark, B. P. Bowker of Passaic, John Stagg of Paterson, Andrew Jennings of Plainfield, H. J. Groom of Irvington, F. C. Decker of Westfield, William Hines of South Orange, H. L. Stanton of Norwich, and E. T. Stanton of Nutley.

OPPOSE B. W. B. BROWN.

Disgruntled Republicans Want to Oust Him from District Leadership.

About half a score of the disgruntled Republican members of the General Committee of the Twenty-seventh Assembly District met last night at the Hotel Cadillac and drew up plans for a primary fight this Fall against B. W. B. Brown, the present Republican leader of the district. Herbert Parsons's old Congressional district includes the Twenty-seventh Assembly District, and the greater part of the talk last night was against him. The various speakers declared that he should be ousted from the control of the local organization for the reason that he has brought about more defeats than victories.

It was decided to open up headquarters at Forty-ninth Street and Seventh Avenue, from which the campaign against Brown will be made. The men present said that this movement is the first of many which will be started in the next few weeks in other Assembly districts against the Parsons leaders.