

**"Another Great Fire!  
Seventeen Buildings Burned.  
\$40,000 Worth of Property Destroyed.  
Hotels, Stores, and Newspaper Office in Ashes.  
A Whole Square Burnt Over.  
County Buildings and Private Residences in Imminent  
Danger!"**

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Full Particulars

"On Thursday morning, April 1st, between the hours of one and two o'clock, our citizens were aroused from their slumbers by the cry of fire ringing of the alarm bell by the night watch. The fire originated in the workshop attached to the rear of Saml. A. Gray's tinware and stove store, probably in the attic among rags, and seems to have been discovered from the presence of great quantities of smoke about the premises.



The night being dark, rendered movements difficult; no ladders were immediately available, pails were scarce, water in quantity inaccessible, and the fire company had disbanded; otherwise the fire might have been extinguished before any serious damage was done. The Little Giant chemical engine was quickly on hand and at work, but the fire

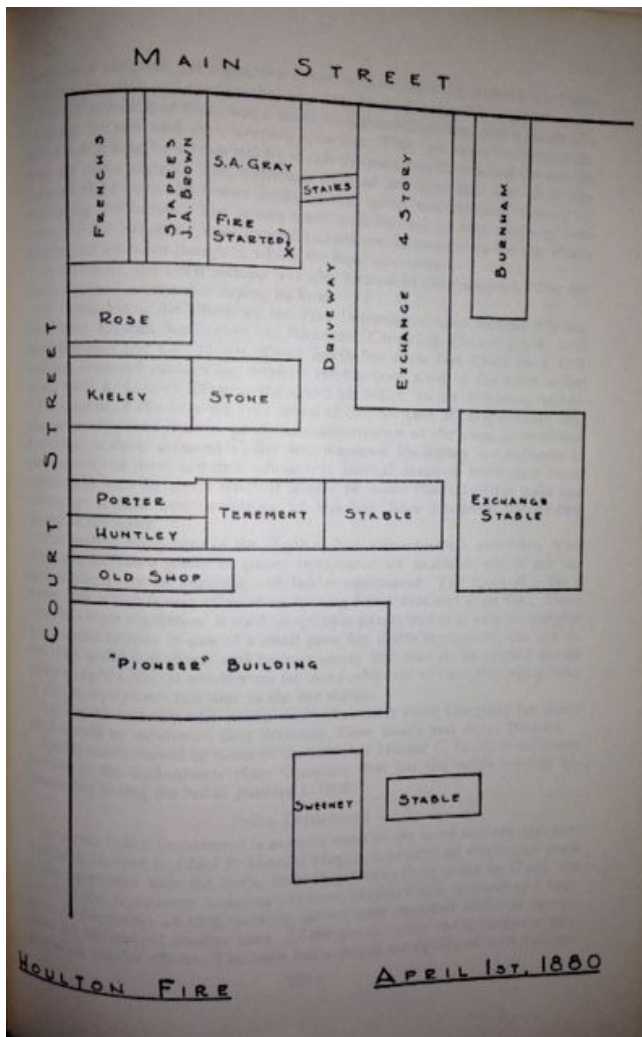
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was too fully under way, to yield to this, unsupported as it

was for sometime, by any other means. It was a half hour or more before the new engine was in position to do effective work, chiefly for the reason that the cover to the reservoir in Market Square was sealed with ice several inches in thickness. This occasioned the loss of valuable time in getting the water on the fire.

In the meantime, Gray's building became enveloped in flames and the fire spread rapidly up and down Main Street, burning the Houlton Exchange, a large four-story hotel, on the east, and

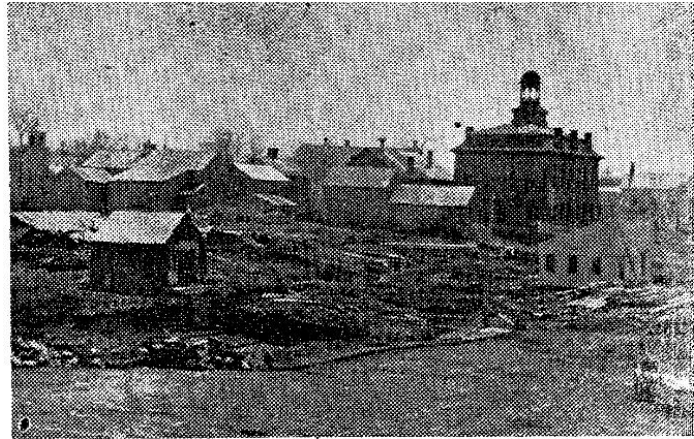
Burnham's saloon, a two story building adjoining. Here was an open space, where Madigan & Donworth's office formerly stood, and which was demolished during the fire last August, marking the westerly limit of that fire. The fire could go no further in this direction, having nothing to feed upon, Kennedy's new building being the only one since erected on this side of Main Street, for some distance.



On the west of Gray's the fire extended to the Staples' building, thence to O.F. French's drug store, on the corner of Main and Court Streets. John Rose's harness shop, a story and a half building on the east side of Court Street, next followed; then the small dye house, the blacksmith and carriage shops, and stables owned by W.D. Buzzell; the James P. Kinney two story building; the Pioneer office, a three-story building, and Dominick Sweeney's residence. Here its destructive progress was stopped.

### Owners and Occupants

Gray's building was occupied on the first floor, by the proprietor as a stove and tinware store, and by E.B. Cornelison as a barber shop; in the second story by Powers & Powers, lawyers, and by Dr. T.J. Fitzmaurice, Physician; the third story was finished into chambers and connected with the Houlton Exchange.



This is a view southward from the corner of Main and Court streets after the fire of 1880 had run its course. In the distance appears the Court House, which escaped the flames. A new Exchange hotel was built on the site of the burned buildings in the foreground and stood there until it was destroyed by fire May 3, 1942.

Burnham's building was occupied by the owner as a saloon on the first floor, and dwelling in the second story.

Staples' building was occupied on the first floor by J.A. Browne & Co., dry goods dealers, and in the second story by E.B. Cornelison as a dwelling and by the Misses Davidson for dress making rooms.

French's building was occupied by the proprietor, as a drug store on the first floor, and on the second floor were Wm. M. Robinson and C.M. Powers' law offices, and Dr. F.F. Innis' dental rooms.

John Rose owned the building occupied by him as a harness shop.

Buzzell's buildings on Court Street were occupied, the blacksmith shop by M.J. Kiely, and the carriage and paint shop by W.W. Sweeney, and cabinet shop by S.D. Stone.

Jas. P. Kinney's building was occupied, on the first floor by A.H. Porter as a shoe shop, and by A.D. Huntley & Co., as watch repairing and jewelry store; on the second floor by M.J. Kiely as a dwelling, also by A.D. Huntley and other tenants in the rear.

The Pioneer building was occupied by W.S. Gillman, as a newspaper and printing office, and by A. Sponholz, as a tailoring establishment on the first floor, and on the second and third stories by several tenants, as dwellings.

### Fighting the Fire

The new Button fire engine did effective service in staying the spread of the fire and protecting exposed buildings, especially along the west side of Court Street, where the building in which the Times office is located presented a prominent point of danger. As an investment it may be considered paid for in this one fire.

The fire was prevented from extending across Main Street by throwing water on the buildings from the Little Giant engine and the force pump in Merritt's store, on the corner of Main and Water Streets, which did good service in keeping the store fronts well wet down.

The progress of the fire on the south was stayed by throwing water on the roofs of the jail and jailer's house and out-buildings, the Court House and A.G. Hunt's house and stables. Here again the Little Giant did valuable service in defending the jailer's house and county woodshed, which were on fire in several places. The furniture and other household goods in Mr. Hunt's

house were however removed. Goods were also partially removed or packed in many other stores and dwellings on Court Street and vicinity.



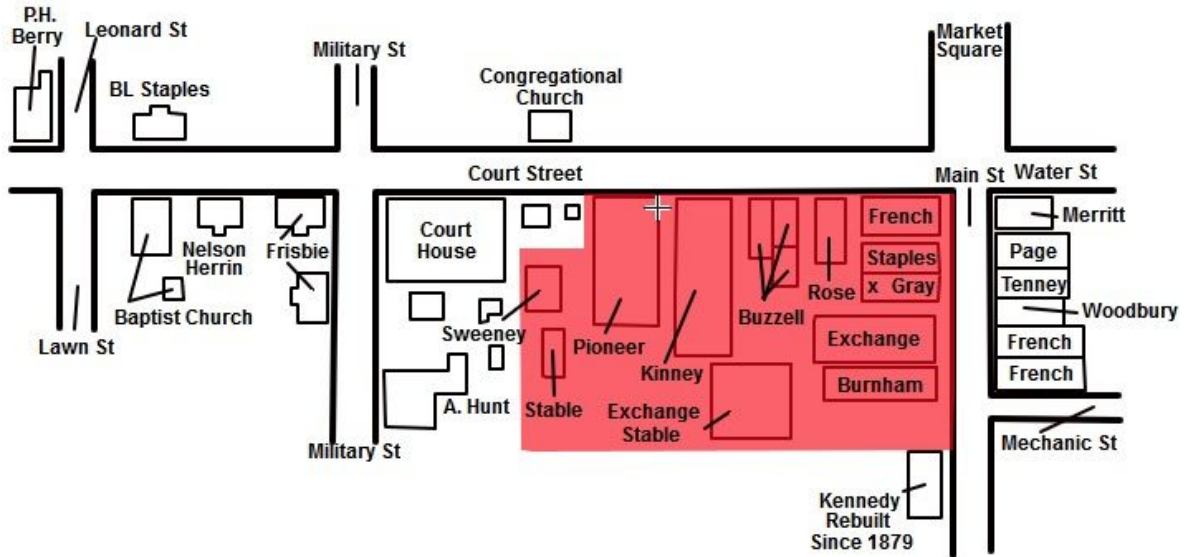
Then the fire was at its height large fragments of burning wood and shingles, were carried in showers in a southerly direction, along Court Street, endangering the dwelling houses on both sides of the street for a considerable distance, several of which took fire many times on the roofs.

These were H.T. Frisbie's, Mrs. Nelson Herrin's, B.L. Staples', the buildings occupied by Wm. Lawrence, the residence of P.H. Berry and several others. The cinders were carried by the wind in the distance of a mile or more, and nearly all the residents on this street packed up their household goods preparatory to removal. But the watchfulness and precautionary efforts of the owners saved their dwellings.

The Congregational Church on Court Street, caught fire near the belfry, but was extinguished by the pastor, Rev. Z. Crowell, who was watching it. Also the Baptist Church, on the same street, was in like manner protected by its pastor, Rev. I. Record.

The glass in the front of Page's building, and Tenney's and E. Woodbury's blocks on the north side of Main Street was nearly all broken out by the intense heat and the sudden cooling by water being thrown on. The glass in the front of Hatheway's drug store, in Page's building which was French plate and cost \$400, was all broken and completely ruined. No insurance.

Fire of April 1, 1880  
Fire started in rear of Gray's tin and stove shop



The total loss of property is estimated at about forty-thousand dollars, on which there was an insurance of about twenty thousand dollars." -- *Aroostook Times*, April 8, 1880.

Sources: *Aroostook Times*, April 8, 1880, "The Story of Houlton" by Cora Putnam, 1877 *Roe and Colby Houlton Village map*, first photo of fire damage is part of the William Cummings collection.