

Imagine waking up on May 18th 1902 in our little hometown of Houlton that had been totally changed by the fire from the day before.

From 12:40 p.m. on May 17th 1902 until 7:00 p.m. that evening a fire raged out of control, changing the town forever and from that day on being known as the Great Fire of 1902.

That afternoon and late into the evening our local firefighters along with crews and equipment from, Woodstock N.B., Fort Fairfield, Presque Isle, and Caribou fought a great fire that raged through our town like no other had done before. It was fanned by extremely high winds and dry conditions. Crews from Bangor had been held on a special train produced by the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad readied in Old Town but did not come after it was learned that the fire was under control.

It started in Dyer's Market which was in the Fogg Block on Main Street. Before our own Fire Department could get water on this fire the Fogg and Fogg blocks were roaring. It rapidly spread to both sides of the street burning all the business. The fire was then out of control and it swept up all the tenement buildings located in the rear of these buildings.

It raced across Military street destroying the Unitarian Church, the Methodist Church, and the Free Baptist Church along with several residences.

The very first house that was lost was on Spring Street $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the fire, sparks and embers flew through the air and landed on Mr. Walter Yeaton's home, one of only three houses on Spring Street at that time.. Soon the house was in flames and quickly became a total loss.

Luckily the Exchange Hotel Court Street was saved as was the County buildings.

The fire raced up Main Street burning the Dewey Hotel, Riley's Fish Market, Dennis Sheehan's Harness Shop, Wong Sings Laundry, the Collins's Marble Works, and on the north side of Main Street the furniture building of Keaton & Betts and it's rear three story storehouse.

Sparks were carried to Silas Plumbers house and John C MacIntyre home, and then Lewis B Johnson's home on Military Street. It then jumped to High Street, missing Ricker Classical Institute but destroying all of Heywood Street.

It was considered to be under control by 7:00 p.m. but the firefighters worked all night extinguishing small fires that cropped up during the night.

All in all, 75 dwellings and 25 places of business with a total of 111 buildings were destroyed that afternoon.

However horrible this was, lets us remember that because of this we have the beautiful Monument Park, (referenced as Public Park before 1909), the Fogg block was rebuilt, the Churches were all rebuilt, the space across the Street from the park gave way to the beautiful

Elks Lodge built in 1906-1907. Many businesses with the outstanding brickwork and architecture that we all admire today are because of a fire.

Aroostook Times 1907

The Story of Houlton by Cora Putnam