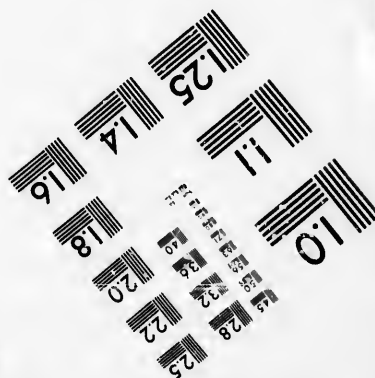
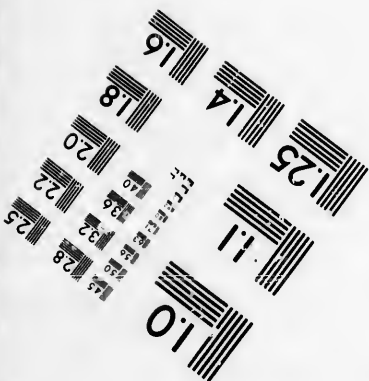
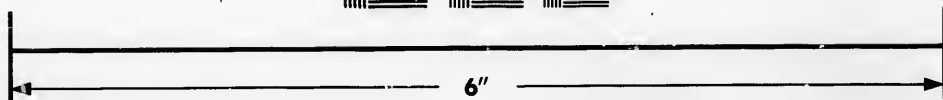
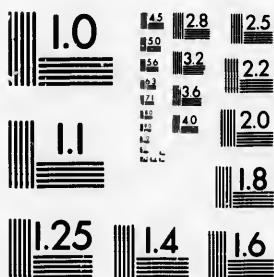


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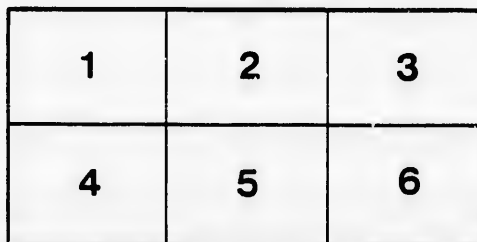
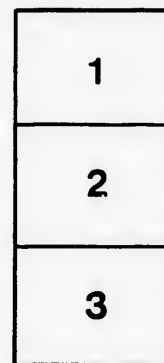
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REPORT

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THE DESTRUCTION BY FIRE

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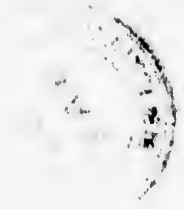


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LIBRARY, ETC., ETC.,

AT CHATHAM, MIRAMICHI, N. B., FEB. 14, 1878.

With a Diagram of the Buildings Destroyed.

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REPORT

OF THE DESTRUCTION BY FIRE OF THE R. C. CATHEDRAL,
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE, CHRISTIAN
BROTHERS' RESIDENCE, BISHOP'S LIBRARY, ETC., ETC., AT
CHATHAM, MIRAMICHI, N. B., FEB. 14, 1878, WITH A
DIAGRAM OF THE BUILDINGS DESTROYED.

(From the "Miramichi Advance" of Feb.
21st, 1878.)

Disastrous Fire.

The following account of one of the heaviest fires that has taken place on the Miramichi was issued in the form of an Extra from this office on Thursday afternoon last, the matter having, however, received a little revision in reference to minor points:--

About half-past two o'clock on last Thursday morning His Lordship Bishop Rogers detected a slight smoke in his sleeping apartment adjoining the Pro-Cathedral on the second storey of the well known pile of buildings of which that structure formed the centre. He at once looked down into the Church and not seeing the Sanctuary lamp burning as usual, thought it had accidentally gone out.

Hoping that all was right he was about to compose himself for sleep when he was made sensible of the fact that there was cause for alarm, the presence of smoke being unmistakable. Hastening to ascertain whence the smoke came, he descended the hall stairs and opening the door of the private Chapel, was met by a volume of smoke which accounted for the Sanctuary lamp appearing to have gone out and proved the startling fact that the building had been seriously on fire for perhaps half an hour. On returning to his bedroom, he perceived, through his window, the light in the second storey windows of the tower, the fire being, as was afterwards evident, in the lower part of the tower, just inside and around the centre floor.

His Lordship, assisted by Thomas Fitzgerald, a student of the College, gave the alarm which was soon communicated to the town and, as the people began to hasten to the scene of the fire, the flames, climbing up through the tower and reaching their lurid arms out against the clear sky, gave the startling assurance that the whole block was doomed to destruction.

As many of our readers know, the building, or rather combination of buildings, was very large. The main part was composed of the old Chapel, which was moved to its late site, enlarged and afterwards gradually flanked by the additions which latterly gave the Block its imposing appearance.

The Block was of wood, two and a half storeys high and having a basement of dressed sandstone under its principal parts. The diagram will assist the reader in understanding a description of the pile of buildings.

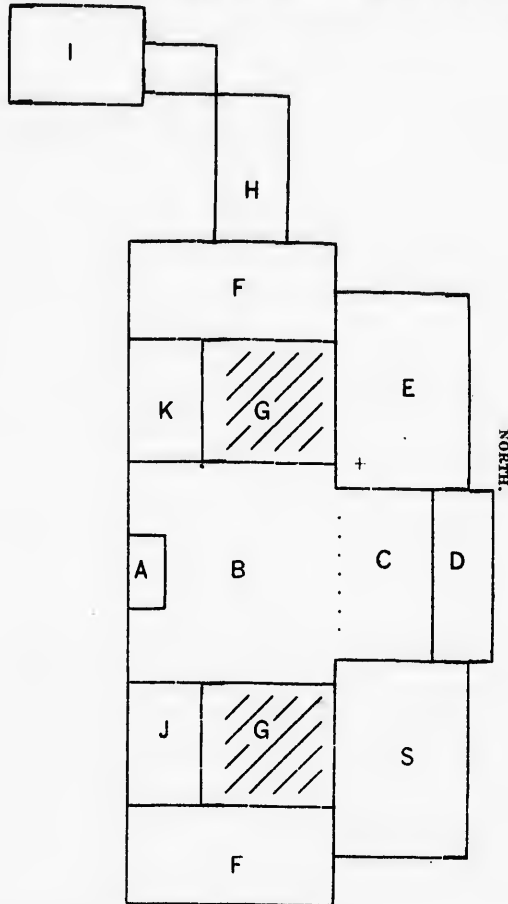
B represents what was the larger part of the original Chapel and formed the nave of the Cathedral. It had additions made to it at different times. These were included, finally, in what was known as "the Cathedral" the whole being—the Vestibule portion, fronting south and marked **A**, the body of the Church, **B**, the Sanctuary, **C** and the Vestry, **D**. The length of these from Vestibule to Vestry was 126 feet and the breadth forty feet. To the west of the Sanctuary on the first floor was a private Chapel and to the east the Organ Room and Chapel of the Christian Brothers.

The Residence of the Bishop and Clergy was in the west portion of the building marked, **E** and, St. Michael's College and

REPORT OF FIRE.

the residence of the Christian Brothers and their Pupils, was in the east portion of the building which is marked **S**. The Bishop's Library was in the second storey of the centre building, immediately over the Vestry, which is marked, **D**. The residence of the Bishop and Clergy, and the

Cathedral. That on the east, running parallel with and overlooking the "Chapel Hill" was occupied, in the upper storey by the Pupils of the College as dormitories, while the lower storey was the pupils' play and exercise room. A shed, marked **J**, connected the southern end of the east



division of the building occupied by the College were each 57x36 feet. Two wings, marked **F**, extended, one from the east and the other from the west end of the main structure in a southerly direction 74 feet, or to the line of the front of the

wing with the Cathedral front and the old Vestry, marked **E**, similarly occupied the space between the south end of the west wing and the Cathedral front on that side. Bounded by the Cathedral, the wings, the sheds and the College and

Bishop's Residence, were areas or yards on either side of the former and which are marked, G. G., in the diagram.

The exterior of the whole structure presented the appearance of an almost square building of irregular height, the ground covered being about 20,000 square feet,

The point marked, +, was about the location of the Bishop's sleeping apartment and when His Lordship looked outside for the fire, through the window of his room and across the yard, he saw the reflection of the flames in the windows of the second storey of the tower, which was over the Vestibule. Other persons who saw the fire blaze up so as to show from the outside agree that it was in the Vestibule or Tower.

The wood composing the Cathedral was of course, very dry and, therefore, very inflammable. The structure seemed to go down before the fire like dried leaves. In a very short time the Organ Room and private Chapel were reached and the flames passed quickly to the College and Christian Brothers' living rooms and the dormitories. The Students got their trunks out and then turned their attention to their books.

They also endeavored to save the Christian Brothers' stock of School Books and Stationery, but all of that and much of the other personal property had to be abandoned.

While a large number of persons worked hard in the lower part of the building and in the Bishop's Residence and offices as well as in the Clergymen's rooms, moving furniture, etc., out, a few directed their efforts towards saving His Lordship's valuable Library. Not one half of his excellent collection of books were saved however, for the smoke found its way through the walls and became unbearable, driving the salvors from their work.

It was now apparent that the larger portion of the Bishop's Residence was no longer tenable, while the other end of the building was already in ruins, so doors were closed and much that could not be saved was left to perish.

The Rev. Messrs. Richard, Joyce and others managed to save most of the Vestments in the Vestry Room, but those in the Sanctuary, as well as the sacred vessels left there, were destroyed, it being impossible to enter the Cathedral from the first.

The Rev. Mr. Bannon had a narrow escape from suffocation, having fallen down at the altar after an unsuccessful attempt to take the sacred vessels from the tabernacle.

While a large number of those present were engaged in the work of removing everything possible from the burning buildings, the Firewards and Firemen were doing their part of the work. It was known that owing to there being too little hose to reach the river, the Foundry Lane Reservoir must be depended upon, supplemented by the wells connected with the Bishop's establishments. The best judgment and experience, in view of this fact, favored the husbanding of the water supply rather than using it upon the main building which could not be saved in any case.

The Cottage marked H in the diagram formed a means of feeding the fire in its progress westward, and the wing used as a warehouse of the other large building in which the Convent, the Hotel Dieu Hospital, with its male and female wards, the Sisters' Schools, their Chapel, a District School, Music School, etc., were located, being only some twenty feet distant, the importance of checking and subduing the flames at the Cottage was realized by all. Extending south from the west end of the Cottage were outhouses and a large barn, marked I, and they also, if they took fire, would seriously endanger the Convent building. *

While one band of workers proceeded to cut down and up and across so as to remove the eastern portion of the Cottage in contact with the burning building, another engaged in shovelling snow into the upstairs portion of the western end, so that in the event of the fire taking hold of the structure the melting snow would run down through it and, at least, render the burning less fierce and, consequently less

dangerous to the Convent building.

The water from the Steam Fire Engine had been turned on at first, but for the reasons indicated above it was stopped, and a line of bucket-men passed well-water to these on the top of the Cottage and the latter threw it where it would do most good until the proper moment had arrived, when the stream from the Steamer was put on and, ably assisted still by the buckets, gradually checked the fire's further advance.

A little water was probably wasted at first, but the distance between the fire and the Engine was too great for the necessary promptness of communication between those at the nozzle and the Engineer. Amid all the confusion of so great a disaster, in a situation partially removed from our ordinary facilities for successfully coping with large fires, it will be generally admitted that all that could reasonably be expected was done, and that seeming mistakes may very properly be lost sight of in view of the hard and successful fight in which all the forces engaged against the destructive element achieved a signal success. The saving of the Convent building is due to hard and intelligent work, a fact of which His Lordship expressed his grateful recognition, promptly and very thoughtfully, even with the weight of his great misfortune fresh upon him, the Religious under his protection joining their expressions of gratitude to his.

A sad accident took place during the progress of the fire, by the falling of the Vestry chimney outwards, some of the bricks from which struck a young man named Alex. Henderson, son of the late A. P. Henderson. He received severe bruises about the head and his left arm was broken. He was placed upon a door and carried to the Hotel Dieu Hospital where he received treatment from Drs. Benson.

What wind there was carried the smoke and detached embers to the eastward over the southern portion of the residence of Mrs. Johnston, widow of the late John M. Johnston. This threatened the destruction of that building and a large portion

of the furniture was removed from it. Fortunately, however, the fire was fought off and the threatened danger averted.

Solemn and interesting services were to have been held in the Cathedral, the next day, Friday, in connection with the death of the Pope. The Bishop had called the Clergy of his Diocese together for the occasion, and while some had arrived before the fire and taken up their quarters in the Episcopal Residence, others reached Chatham during its progress to find, not only the hospitable roof which was to cover them during their stay burned from over their heads, but the Sanctuary in which they were to chant the solemn services for the dead Pontiff laid in ashes.

It is hard to place a money value on the property destroyed, which, however, cannot be less than \$50,000. The buildings were worth perhaps, \$25,000, but with those are gone over one half of the Library, vestments, sacred vessels, furniture, the property of the Christian Brothers and a thousand things that would naturally accumulate in such institutions in nearly a score of years. The stock of Books lost by the Christian Brothers was valued at about \$1,200. Of the insurance we cannot write positively just now. For more than ten years Bishop Rogers and his people have bent their energies and devoted their means to the perfecting of the system of religious, benevolent and educational Institutions, which are so heavily stricken by the disaster of this morning. Those upon whom the blow has fallen have the deep sympathy of this community, as they will, most assuredly, have of others who are to learn of their misfortune. The Institutions which His Lordship's self-denying zeal had grouped around the Cathedral will, we hope be seen again in the completeness to which they had almost attained at the time of the conflagration, while a better Cathedral will rise from the ashes of that yesterday. They were a credit to the Diocese, and the Christian enterprise which reared them will, no doubt, under Providence, restore them again.

ON SUNDAY LAST

the R.C. Congregation of Chatham were made to realize the magnitude of their loss, in viewing the remains of their fine Church, Episcopal Residence, and College, and in experiencing difficulty in crowding into the large School Room of St. Patrick's Hall, in which Mass was celebrated three different times—at 8, 9, and 11 a.m., for three different congregations.

His Lordship, Bishop Rogers, after the last Mass, most feelingly addressed the congregation, exhorting them to bow in humble resignation to the heavy visitation which God had sent them, and which might have been still more severe, but for the Divine protection and the heroic exertions of the Fire Department and other kind neighbors to arrest the flames from extending to the *Hotel Dieu*.

Heavy as was the loss, it was light when compared with afflictions and calamities which had visited many others, both individuals and communities. "Alas," said his Lordship, "what havoc is now being inflicted on thousands where war is raging! How many communities, like the Commercial Capital of our Province, St. John, have suffered from the same dread scourge of fire! Therefore, let us not repine, but heroically bear our cross and confide in the goodness of Him who created all things out of nothing: that he may repair our loss, by restoring to us again what He originally gave us, and what now, in turn, He had taken away, when and as it pleased Him! He will raise up friends and aid us in this hour of trial."

His Lordship expressed his deep gratitude for the kind sympathy so generally expressed, both in the Press and by individuals of all ranks, and of different denominations, and prayed that God would generously reward them all for their charity and generous sympathy. He had not yet come to any conclusion as to what should be done, but requested a general meeting of the men of the congregation that afternoon.

THE MEETING.

The meeting called as above by the Bishop

of the congregation of the burnt Cathedral was held in St. Patrick's Hall on Sunday afternoon, to consider the steps to be taken in order to meet the pressing necessity of the moment, and to repair, as far as possible, the loss caused by the late conflagration. The meeting was largely attended. Shortly after 3 p.m., the hour announced, the Bishop, accompanied by Father Bannon, entered the room. After prayer by his Lordship, Win. Lawlor, Esq., Warden of the Municipality of Northumberland, was elected Chairman, and Mr. Thos. Crimmen, Secretary.

His Lordship then briefly explained to the meeting the reasons why it was called. He referred to the recent great conflagration and the loss it entailed. He spoke of the kind sympathy manifested by the Press and the public generally throughout the Province, of the heroic and noble manner in which members of all denominations worked at the fire to arrest its progress, to save the furniture, etc., and of the many expressions of sympathy he had received from prominent members of other denominations, who kindly visited him. He read telegrams expressing sympathy, etc., from the Hon. Peter Mitchell, M.P., K. F. Burns, M.P.P., Hon. T. W. Anglin, Speaker of the Commons, His Grace, the Archbishop and Clergy of Halifax, and letters from his Lordship, Bishop Sweeney, R. F. Quigley, Esq., L.L.B., St. John, and others. He concluded by moving the following Resolution, which was seconded by the Rev. Father Bannon, and passed with acclamation:—

Resolved—"That our grateful thanks be recorded and are hereby tendered to the Fire Department and to the other citizens who assisted in helping to arrest the progress of the fire, and also to those, both in the town and at a distance, who since have tendered sympathy and aid to us in our affliction."

Mr. Michael Hickey, seconded by Mr. Michel Martin and others, moved the next Resolution.

Resolved—"That a General Committee be appointed by this meeting, with power to add to their number, to solicit and receive contributions towards repairing our heavy loss caused by the late conflagration, and for providing immediate temporary church accommodation for our people, as well as future permanent Cathedral and Residence for the Bishop and Clergy."

This was carried, and a numerous committee appointed, the time for the meetings of which being fixed, prayer was offered by His Lordship, followed by adjournment.

