

and echoed that cry. The frightful news flew abroad on the night wind. Hundreds of citizens seated comfortably around their firesides were appalled by that dread, unusual sound, "The University is on fire!"

In a few minutes, men, women and children—almost the entire population of Columbia—were hurrying breathlessly along in a dark stream, by every street, in the direction of the campus. A lurid light was reflected against the sky. The night was bitterly cold. The janitor, the fireman\* and a student† ran up into the library. They could see nothing but smoke along the floor, and the whole space between the floor and the ceiling appeared to be on fire. After cutting a hole with an axe in the floor about twenty feet south of the library desk, the fireman carried in the hose, from the rack in the hall on the third floor, and turned on a stream which was of pretty good size as long as the water held out. There was a cistern in the basement into which water from the pond south of the main building was pumped by means of a Worthington pump with a capacity of 15,000 gallons an hour when running at full speed. The water used in the hose on the second and third floors came from the cistern, but the supply was soon exhausted.

"I struck two blows with the axe," said the fireman, "and made an opening in the floor about a foot square. Black smoke was all I saw; the handle broke, and the axe went through the floor. When we left the library; a small stream of water was still flowing from the hose and flooding the floor. The smoke was so suffocating when I went in that I could not possibly walk straight; but on the second floor it was not so dense."

Mr. J. G. Babb, proctor of the University, said, "I reached the chapel about half past seven. When I looked in, I could see no fire, but the smoke was so dense that I could not see across the room, although the gas jets were burning. I then went up to the library. It was very dark and smoke was pouring in considerable volume out of the door. It was impossible to save any property, as it was then very dangerous to go into the room."

When President Jesse reached the scene there was great confusion on the stairways and landings. "I think," said he, "there were a number of others in the library but the smoke was so thick I could not see my hand before me. I went to get a lamp, and went up again with James Guitar‡. When quite near the library, the light went down on account of the dense fumes and finally went out. I went

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\*Boulton Clark. †J. N. Fellows, an engineering student.

‡Mayor of Columbia.