

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1847

South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register (Adelaide, SA : 1845 - 1847), Saturday 30 January 1847, page 2

DISASTROUS FIRE AT PORT ADELAIDE.

Yesterday afternoon, about three o'clock, intelligence reached Adelaide that a fire threatening destruction to the extensive stores and shipping at the Port had suddenly broken out and was then raging. On this information being conveyed to the Governor, the most prompt measures were taken. Post-horses were obtained, and the fire engine belonging to the Government was sent off in a few minutes. His Excellency himself instantly rode off to the Port, and Captain Webster, accompanied by Lieutenant Roe and a strong party of the soldiers of the 11th Regiment, for whose conveyance carriages were immediately procured, proceeded as promptly as possible to the spot. Previous to their arrival, however, the fire was considerably subdued, although the assistance rendered was most opportune, and effectually prevented all chance of a further extension of its ravages. The particulars of this very disastrous occurrence, as far as we could gather them in the course of the evening, are as follow:—The fire broke out about two o'clock, in the sail-loft of Mr Baily, the well-known sail-maker of the Port, and is supposed to have originated from sparks dropped from the pipe or cigar of one of the persons in Mr Baily's employment. When the alarm was given, a general rush of the inhabitants, the custom-house and police officers, and the crews of all the vessels in the harbour, took place. Every effort in their power was made, but the wind was blowing fresh from the south-east, and Mr Baily's store and residence, and the extensive hotel of Mr Wakeling, the stores of Mr Teakle— an old and most deserving colonist, the office of Mr Newman and the residence of his clerk, Mr Turton, were in an incredibly short space in a terrific blaze. With the exception of a few casks of spirits, Mr Newman's books and papers, we believe the whole property in the premises mentioned fell a prey to the flames, and the loss, we need scarcely add, has been great—in all, not less than £4000. Mr Henry Mildred, to whom the greater part of the buildings belonged, had only completed the purchase, from the South Australian Company, during the week; and has of course lost all except the value of the ground, which is considerable. Two fine horses were burnt to death, and a third—got out with great difficulty, was dreadfully scorched. The Adam Smith, loading with wheat and flour for the Cape, at the Government Wharf, was promptly hauled into the stream, and happily escaped, although the heat was such that the pitch from her ropes was dropping upon the decks. The Government warehouses, occupied by Mr Bennett, and filled with valuable merchandise, were three times on fire; but by the active exertions of those on the spot it was got under. Had the fire obtained the mastery here, all the ships at the Maclaren Wharf would inevitably have been destroyed. Providentially, this was avoided ; and the extent of the damage, though great and most severe upon private property, has been much less than could have been anticipated. A strong party of the 11th regiment and mounted and foot police were stationed on guard all last night; and we are glad to report that at five o'clock this morning the fire was completely extinguished, and no further damage apprehended.