

FIRE ROUTS OUT HUNDREDS.

Starts in Hester Street Sweatshop Building—Police Clear Tenements.

The tenants of several five and six-story houses in the densely populated district at Hester and Forsyth Streets, were routed out of their beds shortly after 2 o'clock this morning when fire was discovered in the five-story "sweat shop" building at 129 and 131 Hester Street.

The fire started in the lower part of the building, and before the police were hardly more than aware of its presence the two upper floors were blazing. Two alarms, then three, and finally, as the firemen first to arrive saw the dangerous possibilities, four alarms were turned in.

The blaze was most spectacular. The flames illuminated the streets for blocks and thousands of people, fearing a conflagration, rushed as near to the scene as the strongly drawn police lines would permit.

Adjoining the rear of the burning building at 63 and 65 Forsyth Street were two six-story tenements with four families to a floor. The brands from the fire ignited the window casings of these tenements and the police, taking no chances, routed out the tenants, most of them foreigners. They were wildly agitated and in many cases were driven out with much difficulty.

The buildings 112, 114, 116 and 118 Hester Street, all five and six-story tenements, on the south side of the street and directly opposite the building on fire, caught repeatedly, and the inmates were ordered out.

Public School No. 7, at Chrystie and Hester Streets, diagonally across from the sweatshop building caught fire and the firemen kept it drenched. It escaped with a scorching and some broken windows.

The building in which the fire started was destroyed. Floor after floor fell in with a crash, and each collapse caused an apparent renewal of the fire and sent showers of sparks high into the air. When the firemen finally declared that they had the blaze under control there was nothing left of the building but portions of the front walls.

Charles Winowsky, said to be a watchman in the burned building, was slightly burned. There was a rumor that a second man, employed in like capacity, had not escaped.

Policeman Charles H. Rogers and Policeman William T. Hone told of having rescued more than 150 persons from the burning building, but it turned out that they had been taking tenants out of the building at Forsyth and Hester Streets adjoining the sweatshop building.

That building has two numbers, 63 Forsyth Street and 121 Hester Street. The two top floors were pretty well burned out in this building.

Capt. Murtha had a very difficult task keeping out the excited spectators, all of whom said they had relatives in the endangered district. After he got his lines strong enough to resist this invasion he undertook the equally difficult work of expelling from the danger area all who lived there.