

From the Richmond *Whig*, 4/4/1865

THE EVACUATION OF RICHMOND BY THE CONFEDERATE ARMY - ITS OCCUPATION BY THE FEDERAL FORCES - GREAT FIRE - THE ENTIRE BUSINESS PORTION OF THE CITY DESTROYED - LIVES LOST, ETC., ETC.

The evacuation of Richmond commenced in earnest Sunday night, closed at daylight on Monday morning with a terrific conflagration, which was kindled by the Confederate authorities, wantonly and recklessly applying the torch to Shockoe warehouse and other buildings in which was stored a large quantity of tobacco. The fire spread rapidly, and it was some time before the Fire Brigade could be gotten to work. A fresh breeze was blowing from the South, and the fire swept over great space in an incredible short space of time. By noon the flames had transformed into a desert waste that portion of the city bounded between 7th and 15th streets, from Main street to the river, comprising the main business portion. We can form no estimate at this moment of the number of houses destroyed, but public and private they will certainly number 600 to 800.

At present we cannot do more than enumerate some of the most prominent buildings destroyed. - These include the Bank of Richmond; Traders Bank; Bank of the Commonwealth; Bank of Virginia; Farmers' Bank, all the banking houses, the American Hotel, the Columbian Hotel, the *Enquirer* Building on 12th street, the *Dispatch* office and job rooms, corner of 13th and Main streets; all that block of buildings known as Belvin's Block, the *Examiner* office, engine and machinery rooms; the Confederate Post Office department building, the State Court House, a fine old building situated on Capitol Square, at its Franklin street entrance; the Mechanic's Institute, vacated by the Confederate States War Department, and all the buildings on that Square up to 8th street, and back to Main street; the Confederate Arsenal and Laboratory, 7th streets.

At sunrise on Monday morning, Richmond presented a spectacle that we hope never to witness again. The last of the Confederate officials had gone; the air was lurid with the smoke and flame of hundreds of houses sweltering in a sea of fire.

The streets were crowded with furniture, and every description of wares, dashed down to be trampled in the mud or burned up, where it lay. - All the government store houses were thrown open, and what could not be gotten off by the government, was left to the people, who everywhere ahead of the flames, rushed in, and secured immense amounts of bacon, clothing, boots, &c.

Next to the river, the destruction of property has been fearfully complete. The Danville and Petersburg Railroad depots, and the buildings and shedding attached thereto. For the distance of half a mile from the north side of Main street to the river, and between 8th and 15th streets, embracing upwards of twenty blocks, presents one waste of smoking ruins, blackened walls and broken chimnies.

After the surrender of the city, and its occupation by Gen. Weitzel about 10 o'clock, vigorous efforts were set on foot to stop the progress of the flames. The soldiers

reinforced the fire brigade, and labored nobly, and with great success. The flames east on Main street, were checked by the blowing up of the Traders' Bank about noon.

The flames gradually died out at various points as material failed for it to feed upon; but in particular localities the work of destruction went on until towards 3 or 4 o'clock, when the mastery of the flames was obtained, and Richmond was saved from utter desolation.

LOSS OF LIFE

We regret to learn that a serious loss of life resulted from the blowing up of the powder magazine on the suburbs early on Monday morning. The shock was tremendous, jarring every house in the city, extinguishing the gas, and breaking a great quantity of glass in dwellings. It is said that thirty or forty persons, residents of the immediate neighborhood of the magazine, were either killed or wounded, but at this writing we have been unable to obtain particulars or names.

Mr. Isaac Davenport, an old citizen, was instantly killed by the falling of a portion of the wall of the American Hotel. The body was recovered. Mr. William Royster was seriously wounded by the explosion of a shell in one of the burning buildings.

It is believed that at least several other persons were buried under falling ruins, who are as yet unknown.

THE SALOONS.

The fire made sad havoc with the saloons, and none of any account remained. We enumerate Henry Smith's, Cary and Virginia street; Charles Hunt's, "Our House," Tom Griffin's, "Congress Hall," "The Place," "The Chickamauga," and a score of others. The burning of the saloons is very distressing, as hundreds of people rendered homeless by the fire will be unable to obtain food.

THE LOSS.

Of course, we cannot be expected at this time to enter into an estimate of the losses, but they are immense, and will amount to hundreds of millions of dollars.

DESTROYING THE LIQUOR.

When it was made known on Sunday morning that the evacuation of Richmond was a foregone conclusion, the City Council held a meeting, and in secret session passed an order for the destruction of all the liquor in the city. Accordingly, about the hour of midnight the work commenced under the direction of committees of citizens in all the Wards. Hundreds of barrels of liquor were rolled into the street, and the heads knocked in. - The gutters ran with a liquor freshet, and the fumes filled and impregnated the air. Fine cases of bottled liquors were tossed into the street from third story windows, and wrecked into a thousand pieces. As the work progressed, some straggling Confederate

soldiers, retreating through the city, managed to get hold of a quantity of liquor. From that moment law and order ceased to exist; chaos came, and a Pandemonium reigned.

PLUNDER AND PILLAGE.

Drunk with vile liquor, the soldiers - said to belong to Garey's cavalry - roamed, from store to store on Main street, followed by a reckless crowd, drunk as they. With the butts of their muskets they dashed in the plate glass of the store doors, and entering, made a wreck of everything with the celerity of magic. Jewelry stores, clothing stores, boot and hat stores, and confectionary stores were objects of special attraction to these pillagers, who, be it remembered, were not Federal soldiers, but Confederate stragglers.

The following are some of the stores thus robbed: Jennet's jewelry store, Mitchell & Tyler's jewelry store, Semons' trimming store, Antoni's confectionary store, Pizzini's confectionary store, and numbers of others - all on Main street.

ANOTHER FIRE.

While the conflagration that originated in Shockoe warehouse was raging, the Dibrell warehouse, located on Cary street, between 21st and 22d, and stored with tobacco, was set on fire by Confederate order, and the fire swept over several squares. The Henrico county Court House was destroyed; the clerk's office and jail were saved. Smith's tobacco factory, on 21st, and Crew's factory, on Cary and 21st streets, were also burned, beside many dwellings.

BLOWING UP OF THE GUNBOATS - BURNING OF THE NAVY YARD AND BRIDGES.

About daylight on Monday morning the city was shaken to its foundations by the explosions proceeding from the blowing up of the Confederate ironclads in the river. The Patrick Henry was in flames at Rocketts, and the Navy Yard and all the public buildings therein situated were in process of destruction. Several of the smaller vessels were burned at the city wharves.

At 6 o'clock, the evacuation having been completed as far as the Confederate army was concerned, fire was set to Mayo's bridge and the Danville Railroad bridge, and these structures were soon in flames and fell into the river.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MILLS

The most wanton and unnecessary part of the general burning was the destruction of the immense flouring mills of Messrs. Haxall & Crenshaw, on the basin bank. The Haxall Mills were the largest and most extensive of any on this continent.

THE ORDER OF THE CITY.

has been excellent since the occupation by the Federal forces. We have not heard a single complaint on the part of citizens against the soldiers, and we are glad to record that the

soldiers have found no reason to complain of the conduct of the citizens. We trust this gratifying state of affairs will continue.

NORTHERN MAIL.

We understand that mail communication with New York and other points North has been established from Richmond, and that a mail will be made up twice a day - morning and evening.

LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS.

Major General Godfrey Weitzel, commanding the United States forces occupying Richmond, has taken the mansion of Jeff. Davis, corner of 12th and Marshall streets, for his residence and headquarters.

Brigadier General G. F. Shepley, Military Governor of Richmond, has his headquarters at the capitol.

Lieutenant Colonel Manning, Provost Marshal of the Army of the James, is acting Provost Marshal of Richmond, and has his headquarters in the City Hall.

Brigadier General Devens occupies the Governor's house.

BURNING OF A CHURCH.

Rev. Dr. Read's Presbyterian church, corner of Franklin and 8th streets, was set on fire by a shell exploding in Cook's foundry, and was burned to the ground. We believe some of the church furniture was saved. We will continue an account of the fire, with names of sufferers, and losses, from day to day, until we furnish something like a connected history of the great calamity.