

BLUE JACKETS FIGHT FLAMES IN LUMBER YARD

Fully Equipped They Push
Off From Cruiser Etruria
to the Jersey Shore

BATTELED WITH BLAZE
IN THEIR BARE FEET

Mayor Sends Letter to Commander
David—Baird's Big Plant Scene
of Disastrous Conflagration

One hundred sailors from the Italian cruiser Etruria, now lying in the Delaware river, off Race street, materially assisted the Camden firemen yesterday afternoon in preventing a fire from destroying the plant of David Baird & Co., foot of Pearl street. While the flames did damage to the extent of \$50,000, there would have been a much heavier loss but for the excellent work of the bluejackets.

It was shortly after 1 o'clock when the flames were discovered in the engine room by Howard Mulford. His efforts to extinguish the tiny blaze proved futile. In a few minutes the fire had eaten its way through the inflammable wooden structure and the long, red tongues had communicated with the spar shed. From this they leaped about twenty feet into the saw and planing mill. All these structures were blazing fiercely when the Camden firemen responded to a general alarm.

Italian Jackies Busy

It was at this juncture that a hundred white-capped sailors in command of Lieutenant Alfigina Guardsumarsina made their landing at the Pearl street wharf in Camden. They were assembled by a bugler and with hand axes, hose and other apparatus they sallied forth to combat the flames which were fast eating their way through the extensive yard of the plant.

Many of the bluejackets were barefooted, but none of these stopped when burning timbers were encountered. They rushed through flame and smoke with all the vim and ardor that characterize the sailor when in action.

Attacked Blazing Planks

There was a huge lumber pile that stood near a shed that contained several hundred thousand feet of valuable timber. When the flames communicated with this the sailors, summoned by the bugler, made an attack on the great long blazing planks. Like veritable trojans they worked, running up to the flames with their axes and knocking the timbers in all directions.

The smoke was dense enough to make even the professional fire fighters seek cover, but the men from the Etruria stood their ground and managed to save much of the timber.

Hands and Feet Scorched

For over two hours they continued in service. Surgeon De Silvestor, with an assistant, had a busy time attending the burned feet and hands and scorched faces of his compatriots. They had a typical Red Cross outfit with them and when they had ended their work there was little left of the tape and liniments.

It was only after the fire was practically extinguished that Lieutenant Guardsumarsina gathered his men about him and returned to the Etruria. There were several thousand persons on the surrounding wharves and buildings and these gave three lusty cheers when the valiant sons of Italy left for the cruiser.

Fire a Scorcher

The fire was an extremely fierce one, fed as it was by thousands of feet of

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choice timber. Firemen Harry Green and Rollo Jones, of No. 1 Truck-Company, were overcome by the intense heat, but they were quickly revived, the former by the Italian surgeon. Fireman John Lutz and Policeman George Kappel had severely burned hands treated by Surgeon De Silvestor also.

David Baird, Jr., a member of the firm, said he approximated the damage done at about \$50,000. All the buildings and machinery were insured. The structures burned included a spar shed, 60 by 100 feet; planing mill, 40x100 feet, and a large lumber shed. About 4,000,000 feet of timber was in the yard, but much of this was saved through the good work of the sailors and the Camden firemen.

The Philadelphia tugboat Stokley also rendered excellent service when the fire was at its height.

It is not definitely known how the fire originated, but it is believed to have been caused by a spark generated by the engine.

Mayor Charles H. Ellis and many city and county officials were interested witnesses of the fire and the manner in which the Italian sailors and the firemen fought the flames. Mayor Ellis said the bluejackets were deserving of much praise for their aid, which came unsolicited but nevertheless at an opportune moment.

Mayor Thanks Sailors

Directly after the fire Mayor Ellis sent the following letter of appreciation to Captain Pericoli, of the Etruria:

Mayor's Office,

Camden, N. J., June 17, 1907.

Captain Riccardo Pericoli,

Commander Italian Cruiser Etruria,

Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Sir: On behalf of the people of Camden I express to you my hearty and sincere thanks for the efficient and heroic service rendered today by members of your crew at the disastrous fire on the river front of Camden.

I was on the scene within a few minutes after the alarm was sounded and personally observed the splendid work performed by your men. Although from a faraway country and total strangers to the city their show of bravery and zeal was equally as commendatory as that exhibited by those whose duty it is to protect life and property, and I was thrilled by their fearlessness and daring.

The thousands of people attracted to the scene of the fire was a unit in their praise for the assistance rendered by your crew, and I request that you convey to the brave boys of the Etruria my sincere appreciation and thanks for their magnificent work. Very respectfully,

CHARLES H. ELLIS, Mayor.

"That's My Place"

While the fire was at its height a ferryboat was making its way to Philadelphia. Both the forward and stern rails were crowded with passengers watching the flames, which made a brilliant picture, mirrored as they were in the water.

"I wonder whose place is burning?" remarked a man in the crowd, addressing the man standing by his side.

"That's my place" was the quiet rejoinder of the person asked, as he walked away. That man was David Baird, the owner of the saw mill in which the fire started. --