

Fire Today Destroyed Ward Lumber Co. Mill At Moretown

Waterbury And Montpelier
Fire Departments Called To
Protect Town And Mill Yard

Unknown Origin

Less Than Ten Thousand Feet
Of Lumber Lost Out Of Two
Million In Yard.

Fire created one of the greatest losses to be suffered in the Mad River Valley in recent years, early Thursday morning of this week, when the "lower mill" of the Ward Lumber Company in Moretown was completely destroyed.

Fire broke out from an undetermined source between 2:00 and 2:30 and was not discovered by residents living close by until the flames had made great headway through the mill.

Two Departments Called

Fire departments were summoned from Montpelier and Waterbury and with one at either end of the blaze which covered a wide area the flames were confined for the most part to the mill proper and the greater part of the mill yard, which contained some two million feet of stacked lumber, was not damaged. While the mill itself was a complete loss, estimates placed the amount of damaged lumber at between 5,000 and 10,000 feet.

The Ward mill was one of the finest in this section of Vermont, much new machinery having been installed there, of which the latest was a new and expensive planing machine.

The Montpelier Fire Department sent a pumper and five men, who responded promptly and set up at the lower side of the blaze on the downstream side of the mill between the fire and a large part of the well filled lumber yard. Two streams were put on the blaze from this end doing very effective work.

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Made Quick Run

Twenty-five minutes after the call in Waterbury and about two minutes after the Montpelier outfit moved in, the Waterbury pumper arrived and went into action with six men at the upper end of the mill property between the fire and the town. Two more lines were laid which were used to extinguish the fire at the mill itself, protecting the penstock from the dam, and to put out fire which had crept into the log piles nearby.

Both departments put in nearly four hours at the fire before picking up.

Third Great Loss

The fire this morning at the Ward Lumber Company is the third major disaster which has befallen the company since it has served Vermont builders from one of the greatest lumbering sections of the state. Another great fire loss was sustained in 1895, and in 1927 the Vermont flood wrecked both of the company's mills and carried hundreds of thousands of feet of lumber down the Mad River and left it strewn the entire length of the Windoski valley.

Moretown Pump Smashed

A small pump owned by the town of Moretown and carried on a truck, was smashed beyond use when it parted company with the truck at the bridge in the streets of Moretown, while being rushed to the fire. The town was left without an effective water supply for fire until the Montpelier and Waterbury departments arrived.