

THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRE.

A Bucket of Water at a Time
When it Was Not Needed.

Clairmont's Glue Pot Deserves Equal Time With Mrs. O'Leary's Kicking Cow.

Several statements having been made as to the origin of the fire, a POST-INTELLIGENCER representative yesterday called on several of those who belonged in the shop at 922 Front Street where it started. The first interviewed was James McGough, a painter whose workshop was just overhead, above the one where the fire started. He stated as follows:

"My shop was in the flat just over where the fire occurred. At that time I was at work at a building at the corner of Fourth and Terrace streets, and hearing the alarm and being a fireman of Company No. 1, I quit work and hastened to join my company, not knowing the locality of the fire. From my best information the fire broke out in the shop of Clairmont and Co., cabinet makers, who occupied the ground floor basement, just beneath me. I am told several men were working there at that time. The one who caused the conflagration is a Swede named Berg. He threw a bucket of water over a burning glue pot on the stove, which spread the flames at once. A heavy draft swept through the room from the two wide doors at its rear and front."

Calling upon Mr. Clairmont, who owned the place and employed the men where the fire started, he at once brought the reporter into the presence of two of them. They were Charley Stoll and a young man named

Kittermaster. The former one stated as follows:

"When I went into the basement, I saw the glue on fire in the pot upon the stove. There were four others in the room, and I told them to pack up and get out. Kittermaster went after something to put over the flames and just then, a Swede named Berg, picked up a pail of water and dashed it over the glue kettle and stove. That sent the fire all through the shop. It was a sheet-iron stove with a hole in its top for this glue pot, and the water seemed to explode it and scatter the glue and fire together. The place was at once full of fire and smoke, and I got out as best I could."

Mr. Kittermaster being called on said:

"There were five of us in the room. Mr. Kirchener, Charley Stoll, an old Swede named Berg, a young Swede from New York and myself. At the first alarm I was about forty feet away with my back toward the stove. As I turned to look back, it was blazing right up, and I saw Berg seize a pail of water to throw upon it. I shouted for him not to do it, but the ignorant Swede seemed excited and danced about with the pail before he dashed the water. I rushed to a corner to get my coat, intending to throw it over the burning glue and keep the air out; but the instant water touched the material everything in the shop was in a blaze and the smoke was so dense that I had difficulty to get out."

Berg, the unconscious incendiary, is yet in this city, looking about for work, but his former employers do not want one who caused their misfortune and that of so many others.