

BROOME COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK



Photo provided- Fire conditions just prior to arrival of the first fire apparatus.

Smokey Blaze Destroys Former Binghamton Factory (By Nicholas Griswold)

At 07:42 on the morning of June 9, 2011, the City of Binghamton Fire Department was dispatched for alarm number 2011-03792 to 301 Water Street for a report of a building fire. Smoke could be seen from blocks away by responding units and the second alarm was immediately struck. Upon arrival crews were faced with heavy fire and smoke conditions on multiple floors with fire showing from many side A, third and fourth floor windows. Due to the conditions Command made the decision that fire attack would be strictly exterior.

The building at 301 Water Street was formerly known as Derby Fashion Outlet and Knitting Company but has been vacant for as much as a decade. The building was built in 1900 and spanned nearly 40,000 square feet. The building was bordered to the east by Water Street, to the south by a parking lot, to the west by the Chenango River, and to the north by an elevated railroad trestle.



Throughout the fire as many as a dozen aerial and ground master streams including two tower ladders and two quints were used to try and extinguish the blaze. In all, hundreds of thousands of gallons of water flowed onto the fire. Still, heavy fire conditions continued to destroy the structural stability of the building for hours, eventually leading to a full collapse of the roof and a partial collapse of the south and west walls of the building at about noon. Due to smart apparatus placement no one was hurt and no equipment was damaged in the collapse.

Firefighters remained on scene for nearly ten hours performing suppression operations and then rotated in shifts remaining on scene until after midnight while construction crews leveled the building. Throughout the day temperatures reached into the 90's with high humidity. Rehab was set up and firefighters did their best to try and stay cool. The American Red Cross was also on scene assisting Superior Ambulance with rehab providing water, food, and towels soaked in ice water to the firefighters.

G. Kilpatrick photo- Crews begin to get water on the fire.

Smoke from the fire lingered in the area causing the Broome County Health Department to issue an air quality alert to local residents. Several nearby businesses also closed their doors due to the smoke



conditions, road closures, and power outages. The BC Transit buses also had to relocate their hub several blocks away due to the smoke conditions.

In all, over fifty firefighters operated at the scene of this fire. Shift change, which would have occurred at 8am, made it possible for two whole shifts to be on duty at or shortly after the initial alarm.

G. Kilpatrick photo: Smoke thickens as firefighters continue to battle the blaze.



This allowed command to rotate crews out of the heat. Thankfully no injuries were reported on scene. Several surrounding fire departments were utilized for standby coverage for the city while crews were battling the fire.

The Binghamton Fire Marshals Office is currently investigating the cause of the fire.

G. Kilpatrick photo- The south wall of the building in mid-collapse



G. Killpatrick photo - Firefighters try and stay cool while using ground master streams.



Photo provided- Quint 3 operates over an elevated railroad trestle on the north side of the fire.



Photo provided- Tower 1 (right) and spare tower9 (center) operate along with other master streams later after the collapse.