

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Fire

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WALTON, KENTUCKY — THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1971

\$250,000 Fire Hits Walton Last Friday

One of the most destructive fires in the history of Walton struck the central section of the old business district last Friday afternoon. At about 3:50 p. m. a call came in to the firehouse that there was a grass fire in the rear of Boone County Drugs. Arriving at the scene the Walton Volunteer Firemen found that the little fire that had been started by burning trash had spread to the roof of the adjoining garage building. Encouraged by strong westerly winds the entire building was engulfed in flames in just minutes. At one time it appeared that many nearby buildings would be lost as the flames roared into an uncontrollable inferno.

Fifteen autos, a wrecker, and two trucks were parked in the garage and were awaiting repair. The garage was recently opened for auto repairing and painting by Delbert Messmer, Philip Lipscomb, Bill Luttrell and Jim Miller. All vehicles were completely destroyed as well as the equipment.

The building was formerly operated

the store were cracked.

Supplies stored in the basement of the garage were owned by Buff Company. They received some water damage but were saved from burning by the concrete floor overhead.

James Spencer, Vice President and Cashier of Dixie State Bank, was still



In this photo we see action taking place on Main Street, just removing some of his barber chairs. Chief Charles Worthington Carlisle waits with the nozzle.

building, owned by Wilfred Rice and operated by Preston Art was extensively damaged by smoke and water. It was open for business Saturday morning after a lot of cleaning up.

Pieces of burning tar paper were blown several hundred feet across U. S. Highway 25, the Southern Railroad and down High Street in to the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Garmel Glacken causing a fire which destroyed the dwelling. Most all their furniture and clothing was saved by many of the people who were attracted to the scene. The Glackens had lived here only a few months, having purchased the property from Mr. and Mrs. James Ramsey.

Volunteer firemen came from all over Northern Kentucky to aid in bringing the stubborn blaze under control. Units came from Independence, Verona, Florence, Piner-Fiskburg and Willimastown.

Many local men who had previously served as a volunteer fireman donned hats and coats in an effort to bring the fire under control.

Kentucky State Police and Boone County Police assisted local officials in directing traffic and controlling the large number of spectators who came to downtown Walton.

Street traffic was rerouted onto Alta Vista then on to Park Avenue and School Road until 10:45 p. m. At this time most of the fire hoses and apparatus was moved to allow traffic to flow along Main Street. Auto traffic was extremely heavy on this particular Good Friday afternoon as shoppers and vacationers were preparing for a big Easter weekend. Traffic Saturday morning was bumper-to-bumper along Main Street as sight-seers came to see the results of the big fire.

The Bykota Class of Walton Christian Church lost many of their potted plants which were being brought in and stored in a front room of the garage building for Saturday sales. A fresh supply arrived early Saturday and the ladies were selling from the back of pickup trucks.

Some of the business people nearby moved their contents to safer locations. Many of the residents left their homes empty handed, others grabbed a few precious possessions and sought refuge elsewhere.

The Ryan Hardware, directly across the street was in great danger from the flames which rolled through the blackened sky. Mr. Ryan and some helpers braved the dense smoke and heat and kept the roof of the store-apartment dwelling from catching on fire by the burning embers. Two of the large plate glasses in the front of

smoke but were treated at the scene.

The Ladies Auxiliary was busy aiding in communications and setting up temporary headquarters at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sleet when electric power and phone service was interrupted at the fire house. They were helped by Mrs. Ann Simpson, Miss Joella Sleet, Mrs. Mable Maddox, Cliff Ryan, Les Trinkle, Charles Praither and many others who chipped in to help through the night.

Phone service to the southern part of town became "out of order" when the two large cables carrying 1200 wires were severed by the flames. Repair crews from Cincinnati Bell were on the job until about 6 a.m. Saturday splicing in new lines. Individual services were then restored.

An unofficial estimate was set at somewhere near \$250,000.00.

It could have been worse.

By Jim Lawrence