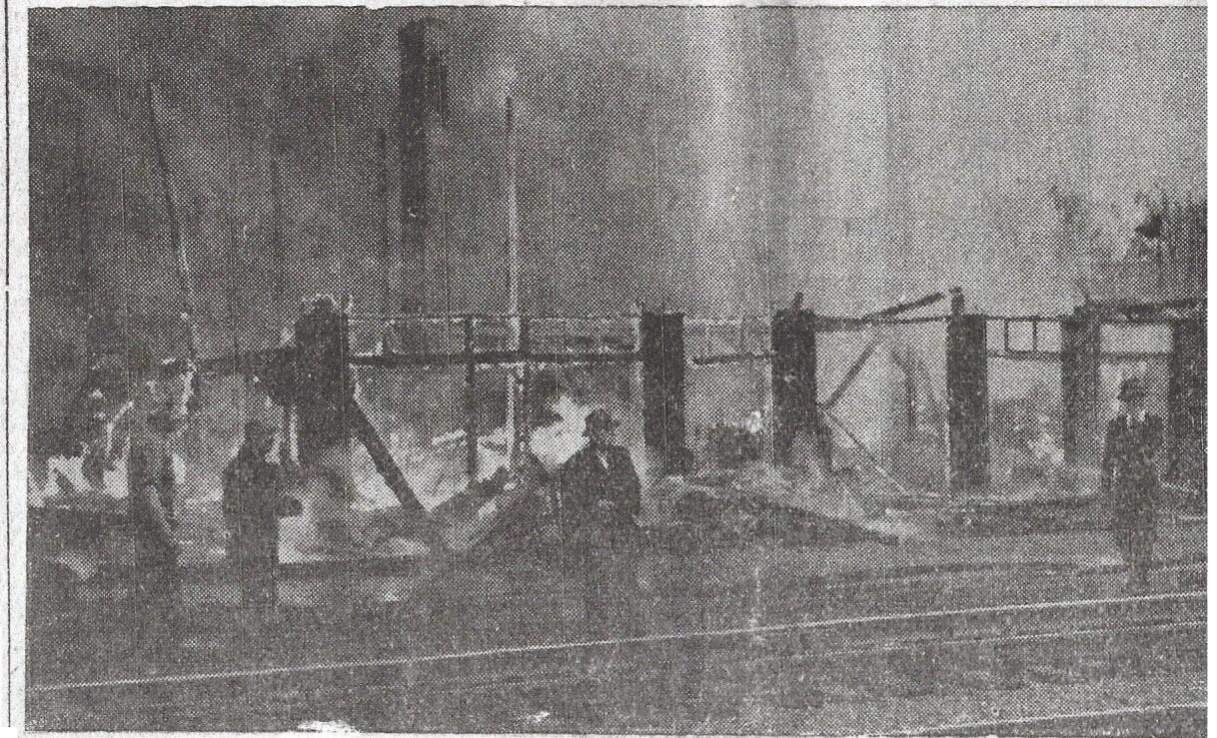


Putnam County Sentinel

Ottawa, Ohio, Friday, April 5, 1946

New Industrial Plant And Bowling Alleys Leveled

Telephone Service Disrupted; Firemen' Keep Flames
From Spreading



Bowling Alleys Leveled

What is considered Ottawa's worst fire in more than twenty years caused a loss estimated near \$120,000 Tuesday morning when the large 100x160 foot building used as temporary quarters for the Utility Automotive Equipment company, and also occupied by the Ottawa Recreation bowling alleys was destroyed. The building, located on Taft avenue in Ottawa's business section, was owned by the Mrs. Emma Stuber estate. The origin of the fire is unknown.

The flames also caused damage to the home and 'service station owned by Martin Walker and located in the adjoining lot, to the Kohls Food Locker building, and to other buildings located at the rear of business rooms on the north side of Main street. The shingle roof on the Presbyterian church, on Oak and Third streets, was also ignited by flying embers twice during the fire, and window glass in buildings near the scene were cracked by the intense heat.

The Ottawa Telephone company also suffered a severe loss when two cables serving between 350 and 400 Ottawa subscribers were melted. Services to those patrons was disrupted until the cables could be restrung and replaced. A. A. Unverferth, manager of the telephone company, stated Wednesday afternoon that all of the service would be back to normal by Wednesday evening. He was unable to make an estimate of the damages at that time.

Mr. Walker, who was seriously ill at his home with mumps and a high fever at the time, was removed to the home of neighbors when it was thought that the residence would be consumed by the roaring flames. He was returned to his home Wednesday night, when his condition was reported as good.

Contents Lost

The fire was discovered shortly before six o'clock by Jack Siefer, Janitor at the bowling alleys. He stated that he had completed his work in the alleys at five o'clock and had left the building for a short time, only to find that flames were scaling the southwest walls of the bowling alley on his return. He went to the street and notified Wm. Ruch, Jr. of the fire, who placed the alarm at 5:55am

The Ottawa firemen responded to the scene within a few minutes, but just as quickly, the flames spread over the vast area of the building. As a result only a steel filing cabinet containing a part of the office records, and near one of the doors, was removed from the company office

Glandorf Gives Aid

Glandorf firemen were called to help the Ottawa firemen and volunteers to bring the flames under control. The boys performed heroically and it was only through their efforts that the flames did not spread into the residential and business sections. Within less than a half after the alarm was sounded the roof and frame work of building had caved in and it was almost an hour before the fire was brought completely control.

Loss at the Utility Equipment company to machinery, supplies and equipment, was estimated by M. F. Sherlock, between \$75,000 and \$85,000. Included in this loss were electric drills, punches, steel rollers and other new machinery which was to be used in manufacturing bodies for utility trucks. The company, which was, employing approximately twenty people at the; time, of the fire had intended call in more mechanics within the next week in order to start production. A large 22-ton steel press was moved into the building on Monday and was to have been placed on its concrete base on Tuesday. It is not known if this large press can be repaired and placed in' condition for, future use.

Three Trucks Burn

Victor Unterbrink, manager of the Ottawa Recreation, which was equipped with four bowling alleys, several pool and tables, as well as a lunch stand and equipment, estimated his loss near \$20,000, while the loss of the building is estimated to be between \$8,000 and \$10,000.

Losses suffered by other property owners in that vicinity, including the Ottawa Telephone company, were numerous and of various amounts which will total well into the hundreds of dollars. Three trucks, one a new Dodge chassis, on which a body was to be built, and two trucks owned by the Young Moving company of Lima, were also destroyed by the flames.

