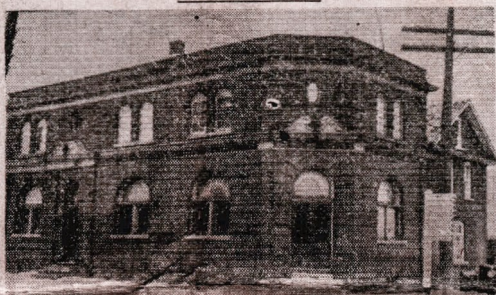


STORES, APARTMENTS ALL GONE IN SUNDERLAND FIRE



BANK OF COMMERCE BUILDING

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eggs and hundreds of chickens into waiting trucks as smoke and flames shot across the main street.

Firemen battled desperately to save the bank and an egg-grading station. Shortly after 11 a.m. the front walls and roof caved in.

"A plume of smoke and embers like an atomic bomb shot high into the air," said George Shier, proprietor of the Brock House. "Only part of one wall of one store is left standing."

The local fire truck was scarcely in action before it broke down, leaving only chemical extinguishers with which to battle the blaze that raced through the 60-year-old row of brick buildings. Fire departments from Cannington, eight miles away, and Lindsay, 20 miles away, rushed to the rescue, but arrived to find all wells dry and no water available.

Port Perry fire brigade also responded.

Chop Hole in River Ice

At 11 a.m. a second fire reel from

for a few minutes then froze up. It should be in a museum."

Four Families Forced Out

Four families, including four children, were forced out of apartments above the stores. They escaped without difficulty, but the fire gained such rapid headway they were unable to save any household effects.

By 10 o'clock, half an hour after the alarm was raised by Clay, only the walls were standing; flames were shooting across the street and high into the air, while a strong northwest wind was blowing embers across the residential section of the town, consisting mostly of frame buildings.

The Bank of Commerce, cornerways across No. 7 highway from the doomed block, sent its entire staff to the roof with buckets to extinguish embers as they fell. Heat of the flames was so intense they could work for only a few minutes at a time before being driven to shelter.

Similar crews worked on the roofs of other business blocks.

The egg-grading station was separated from the block by a narrow way only three feet wide, and it seemed doubtful at 11 o'clock whether it could be saved. A grocery store, separated from the rear of the destroyed block by only the width of a lane, is similarly endangered.

Only Time to Grab Baby

"My wife didn't have a chance to save a thing, the fire swept into our apartment so fast," said William Sheldon, 27, whose apartment is over the town post-office. "She had only time to grab our daughter, Jean, six months old, and rush from the building. The whole block erupted in flame and most of us didn't have a chance to save any belongings. I was working a few blocks away and by the time I got to my place it was impossible to enter."

Clayton Henderson, the town barber, managed to get his wife and one child out of his apartment



GEORGE SHIER

Lindsay arrived and firemen began chopping ice in the river. A hose line to the river was helping to keep flames from William Doyle's egg grading station and a large house in the danger area.

From the roof of his hotel, which he was battling to save with a bucket brigade, Shier described the scene as a "wall of flame and heat, with tongues of fire leaping across the street."

Other merchants in the district were on the roofs of their buildings ready to douse embers descending all over town.

Among the places destroyed are the post-office, with the morning mail, Neil D. McPhaden's grocery and general store, Henderson's barber shop and pool room, George Clay's restaurant, in which the fire started, and a vacant store.

Shier said the fire departments were running "a shuttle service" between the few wells in which there was water, and the fire.

"They would fill up their water tanks on each reel truck and rush it back to the fire in a pitiful attempt to stem the flames," he said. "They might as well have saved their time. It was just a question of the fire burning out, for there was no way to stop it."

The town's chemical truck, Shier said, "choked along asthmatically



but was unable to save any furniture or clothing.

Mrs. Douglas Jerome and her two children got out safely from her apartment over the vacant store. They managed to get a little furniture into the street, which by this time was littered with foodstuffs and furniture from other buildings.