

## MILLION DOLLAR FIRE HITS NORTH WILKESBORO

### THREE INDUSTRIES, TRUCKING COMPANY, LUMBER YARD AND RESIDENCE HERE DESTROYED

**Brown's Lumber Plant, Ice And Fuel Plant, Wilkes Milling Company And Billings Trucking Firm Buildings Burned**

North Wilkesboro's worst fire Saturday afternoon destroyed three industries, one trucking firm and one residence, with a total estimated damage of one million dollars.

Totally destroyed were: Former Sheriff Presley E. Brown's lumber plant, North Wilkesboro Ice and Fuel company, Wilkes Milling company, Billings Trucking company terminal, and a residence owned by Mr. Brown and occupied by Marshall Harris and family.

The fire originated shortly after two p. m. in the Brown lumber plant. Workmen were repairing a re-saw machine with welding equipment when fire flashed from some oil and grease and flames immediately enveloped that part of the plant.

Sheriff Brown was in the office when one of the workmen ran in to put in a call to the fire department. The fire, which spread with almost the speed of an explosion, was then so great they could not go back into the plant.

In a period of minutes flames enveloped the interior and were pouring from the windows and roof of the plant.

Adjacent to the lumber plant was the lumber yard, containing between three and four million feet of lumber. Fire from the plant rapidly spread into the dry lumber and the entire yard covering about three acres totally burned.

Firemen fought valiantly to save the Wilkes Milling company building but intense heat from the vast lumber yard made it impossible to save the milling plant, which was owned by the S. V. Tomlinson estate and had been in operation for more than 40 years. Recently large shipments of grain and feed had been placed in the building. Workmen were able to remove only small quantities.

A brisk southeast wind lapped the flames and heat across the street and railroad into the side of Turner-White Casket company plant, where firemen won the fight to save that property and perhaps the entire eastern part of the city from burning. Sprinkler system on the inside of the Turner-White plant was opened and the building was soaked from the inside while firemen kept it continually wet on top and braved the intense heat from the lumber plant fire to keep the south side wet. Two freight cars on the railroad were valuable to break the heat and allowed firemen a place to work.

From the lumber plant the fire spread to the North Wilkesboro Ice and Fuel company plant, which was also a total loss. It appeared that the ice and fuel plant would be the eastern end of the fire until a fuel oil tank containing thousands of gallons of diesel oil burst and a river of fire flowed down Cherry street to the intersection of Fifth street. There the flaming oil poured into a ditch and ran off into the farm lands.

### Seniors Leave For Washington, D. C.

Thirty-eight members of the senior class of North Wilkesboro high school left today for a week's stay in Washington, D. C.

While there they will visit places of interest in and around the city of Washington.

Students making the trip are: Margaret Foster, Joan Blevins, Evelyn Minton, Mellon Wood, Clate Duncan, Richard Wyatt, Tommy Ray Johnson, Jim Moore, Doris Wiles, Gladys Sebastian, Betty Lou Kenerly, Frances Harris, Deanie Gaddy, Doris Ann Godbey, Jean Summers, Agnes Reynolds, Anna Lee Luffman, Martha Stone, Jeanette Brown, Faye Bumgarner, Nancy Prevette, Betty Elledge, Adeline Shatley, Tony Marlow, Velma Church, Paul Foster, Buddy Tugman, Bobby Poteat, Claudius Absher, Jack Gaddy, Hiram Cox, Grady Kilby, Carroll Yates, Mary Evelyn Adams, Coleen Falchold, Marcelene Barnette, Nancy Hall and Veda Hall.

Mrs. J. Floyd Woodward, senior class advisor, is acting as chaperone and guide for the group.

This annual trip to Washington, which is becoming a custom with the senior classes, has proved educational and most worthwhile.

fire fighting forces.

During the fire the Wilkes Red Cross chapter served coffee and sandwiches to the hard fighting firemen and Duke Power linemen, Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Davis provided cool water for the men. Volunteer Red Cross workers and Scouts carried refreshing drinks and food around to the different stations where the men were fighting. To provide refreshments for the fire crews on duty during the night the Red Cross operated an all night canteen located under the shed at Turner-White boiler room.

At times during the fire flames shot up to a height of 200 feet. The wind carried sparks, and people in the eastern part of the city were alert to put out many small fires. Some of the fires were on roofs, in lumber stacks, garages and in grass.

Wilkesboro and Statesville fire departments lost several hundred feet of hose in the blaze. When the oil tank burst and fire flowed down the street firemen were lucky to be able to get out of the way and had no opportunity to retrieve the hose from the burning area.

Five trucks of the Brown lumber industry were destroyed on the yard but five others were saved and taken from the fire zone. A 1946 Ford parked between the lumber plant and the railroad withstood the heat for a long time but caught fire and burned when the door glasses melted and ran down the side.

At the time the fire broke out North Wilkesboro streets were filled with Saturday shoppers, making up one of the largest crowds here in months. The news of the fire attracted many more, including numerous cars from visiting towns, and traffic was kept moving with great difficulty. The smoldering ruins were viewed by thousands Saturday night and the stream of sightseers continued through Sunday.

Firemen in relays kept an all-night vigil Saturday night to keep fire from spreading from the burned area.

Workmen who were repairing the machinery where the fire started in the lumber plant said they had thoroughly cleaned shavings from around the machine and had taken known precautions to prevent a fire. But the heat from the welding torch is believed to have ignited oil-soaked materials under the machine, causing a flash fire which spread instantly.

Ice remained today in the storage room of the ice plant. Many blocks of ice had melted to about one-third size and endured the intense heat of the building burning. The ice storage rooms had brick walls and a wood floor.

### Presbyterian Men's Supper Wednesday

The men of the Presbyterian church of the North Wilkesboro district will have a supper meeting here, Wednesday night 8:30. This is the regular meeting of the men of the church with the added privilege of having visitors from other churches in this district. The guest speaker for the evening will be the Rev. W. R. Smith, Jr., executive secretary of Home Missions of Winston-Salem Presbytery. All men of this church are urged to be present. An election will be held for both district and local officers.

### Dinner Tuesday At Community House

Ladies of the Wilkesboro Methodist church will serve dinner Tuesday evening, seven o'clock, at Wilkesboro community house.

An excellent dinner will be served for \$1 for adults and 50 cents for children. Everybody invited.

### Fairplains Baptist Conducting Revival

Revival services began Sunday night at Fairplains Baptist church and will continue through this week with services at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. The public has a cordial invitation to all services.

Rev. Clate Brown, pastor, is being assisted by Rev. David W. Day, of Elkin. There will be special singing for each service.

### Scout Leaders Training In Wilkes County

The Leadership Training committee of the Wilkes district, Old Hickory council, Boy Scouts of America will act as hosts to Scout leaders from Wilkes, Elkin, Ashe and Watauga districts on Tuesday night, May 2.

A "Training for Trainers" meeting will be held at the American Legion hut in North Wilkesboro, beginning at 7:30 p. m. At least six Scoutmasters from each of four districts will gather to receive instruction in the new Scoutmasters basic training course.

Stanley Mate, of the national training staff, will conduct the meeting. Mr. Mate will also conduct a week-end camping trip for Scout leaders at Camp Butler near Roaring Gap. The training material to be presented by Mr. Mate will be of much interest to Scoutmasters and commissioners and will be of such a nature that it can be used in troop meetings at once. For further information please contact Joseph D. Edwards, field scout executive, or Robert Gibbs, Wilkes District commissioner.

### EFFORTS MADE TO INCLUDE EVERYBODY HERE IN CENSUS

Census enumerators have practically completed their work in North Wilkesboro, but inevitably there have been some who have been missed.

Efforts are being made to include every resident of the Wilkesboros, because census figures will be of value in obtaining cer-

### Membership Drive For Concerts Will Be May 8th-13th

**Dr. John T. Wayland Gives Endorsement To Concert Association**

In a statement made today in connection with the Wilkes Community Concert Association's third annual membership drive Dr. John T. Wayland, pastor of First Baptist church said that the role of music in the history of mankind has always been one of inspiration.

Dr. Wayland said: "Man, in his unending struggle toward the biding of his spiritual life, has always found in music an invaluable support to his higher inclinations. Whether it be the integrated beauty of a great choir, the massed splendor of a symphony orchestra, or a simple moving rendition of a song, music has traditionally served to inspire in mankind those sentiments which are in lofty accord with its ultimate destiny and those human attitudes which strike deepest in the heart. I feel that in bringing series of concerts of the high order which have been given in the past, the Wilkes Community Concert Association is doing a service of the first rank for its fellow-citizens."

May 8th through 13th will be Community Concert Week in the Wilkesboros and surrounding area. A large group of volunteer workers will make a general canvass to obtain renewals from past members and enroll enough new members for a capacity audience for 1950-51 season.

Admission to this series of concerts of great music by great artists is free.

### CHARTER IS PRESENTED TO MILLERS CREEK KEY CLUB

Friday afternoon (April 21) at 2 o'clock the Kiwanis club of North Wilkesboro presented the charter certificate to the charter members of the Millers Creek Key club, with the high school student body in attendance.

P. W. Greer, principal, welcomed the Kiwanians and presented Robert Morehouse, chairman of the Key Club committee of the Kiwanis club, who introduced W. H. McElwee, president of the Kiwanis club last year. Mr. McElwee spoke of the accomplishments of the Kiwanis club in this county, mentioning particularly the work for underprivileged children through the Crippled Children's clinic, by which some ten thousand children have been helped in the twenty-seven years history of the local Kiwanis club—children who were crippled and who now can walk because of this work; similar work also done for those with hairlips and children who needed removal of tonsils.

### Deane Will Visit Friends In Wilkes

Representative C. B. Deane, who is a candidate for re-nomination, will spend some time this week in Wilkes at a number of appointments. While in the county Representative Deane will hear any constituents who wish to use his services.

On Wednesday at three p. m. he will be at the home of J. B. Church at Roaring River and at five p. m. on the same date will be at Pleasant Hill school in Edwards township. On Thursday night, 7:30, he will address a rally of Democrats at Reddies River School. He will spend Friday morning at the North Wilkesboro town hall.

### Rummage Sale On Saturday May 6th

Wilkes chapter no. 42, O. E. S. will hold a rummage sale Saturday, May 6, in the building where the Wilkes Hatchery was formerly located on Tenth Street.

### Fred C. Smith In Neon Sign School

Fred C. Smith, owner and operator of Smith Signs business here, today enrolled in Neon Sign school in New York City, where he will study fabrication and manufacture of neon signs.

Mr. Smith upon his return here after 27 weeks training will add a complete neon sign shop to his business and will serve customers in this part of the state in neon business.

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Leysahon were in Oak Ridge, Tenn., from Friday until Sunday visiting with their son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. William Leysahon.

### REBUILDING PLANS OF 3 BURNED INDUSTRIES INDEFINITE AT PRESENT

Owners of a million dollars worth of property destroyed in the fire here Saturday today had not formulated definite building plans.

Without time to inventory losses or give time to planning, they were not in position to make definite announcements.

Largest individual loss was Former Sheriff P. E. Brown's lumber plant and yard, which was one of the state's largest lumber industrial units. The plant and yard of three or four million feet of lumber were a complete loss and no insurance was carried. However, this industry has several million feet of lumber on a yard on the Flint Hill road near this city.

Mr. Brown said today that he was not in position to make any definite statement relative to rebuilding or future plans. His plant and yard normally employed from 75 to 90 men.

No plans have been made for rebuilding the Wilkes Milling company plant.

Frank Blair, owner of North Wilkesboro Ice and Fuel company, stated that his ice business will continue without interruption.

tion. Ice is being transported here from neighboring towns and is being stored in the Freezer Locker plant on the Oakwoods road.

Office of the firm will be located temporarily in the basement of the Quality Food store building on the corner of Fifth and B street. Ice will also be kept there for those who call for it and the company's telephone will be located there with the same number as formerly. Mr. Blair, who was out of town Saturday and Sunday, said as soon as he completes temporary arrangements for supplying customers that he will give attention to rebuilding plans.

Mr. Billings plans to continue his trucking business from a temporary location.

At Mr. Brown's lumber plant much new machinery had recently been installed and some was in transit here at the time of the fire. Recently a wing was added to the plant for storage and was filled with valuable finished lumber and building materials. Recent improvements in plant facilities and equipment cost approximately \$40,000.

### N. C. Autos To Sport Gayer 1951 License

Raleigh — North Carolina motor vehicles will wear gayer-hued license tags next year.

The Prison Department reported yesterday it plans to begin manufacturing the new plates—which will have red numbers on a white background—within the next few weeks.

The new colors will replace the orange and black which the State has used for several years.

### William R. Handy Claimed By Death

Funeral service was held Saturday, 11 a. m., at Round Mountain church for William Rowan Handy, 82-year-old citizen of the Hays community who died Thursday. Rev. Jimmie Bryant, Rev. L. E. Sparks and Rev. R. W. Franklin conducted the service.

Born October 7, 1868, Mr. Handy was a son of the late Marcus and Elizabeth Handy, of Wilkes county. Only surviving member of his immediate family is one son, W. M. Handy, of Hays.

### Card Party, Bazaar Here On Tuesday

North Carolina Catholic Laymen's Association will sponsor a card party and bazaar on Tuesday, May 2, 8:30 p. m., at the North Wilkesboro Woman's club. The public is cordially invited to attend. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

### Kiwanians Have Meeting Friday, Hear Readings

North Wilkesboro Kiwanis club held an interesting meeting here Friday noon.

Robert Morehouse, substituting for W. A. Stroud, who was absent because of illness, read two stories which were enjoyed by the club. The stories were "Train Robbery," by Channing Pollock, and "The Face From Beyond," by Aubrey Abbott.

The President appointed A. F. Kilby, J. H. Whicker and L. M. Nelson to go before the county commissioners and ask for an increase of appropriation for the public library fund.

J. B. Williams called attention to the beauty of the Brushies at this time on account of the very copious apple blooms. He urged everyone who can to go and see them.

Joe McCoy for the Kiwanis education committee asked the members to read the article in the May issue of the Magazine, "Our Over Grown Democracy." Guests Friday were: W. T. Sullivan, of Statesville, with Paul Osborne; Howard Colvard, Walter Keller and George Smith with Paul Choplin.

### Legion To Meet

Wilkes post of the American Legion will meet Thursday, eight p. m., at the Legion clubhouse. All members are asked to attend.

### FLASHERS OPEN TONIGHT AT ELKIN; PLAY HERE THURSDAY

North Wilkesboro Flashers, desperate need in early exhibitions.

developed during the past week into a very promising team with ample power, will open the Blue Ridge season in Elkin tonight at eight o'clock.

Tuesday night's game will also be in Elkin and on Wednesday night the Flashers will go to Mt. Airy.

The first home game will be here Thursday night and a gala opening is planned. For this special opening night admission will be \$1 for adults and 30 cents for children. Season tickets will not be good for this special event, which is designed to give the club a very necessary financial boost and give fans an opportunity to show their support of professional baseball here. To avoid lines at the gate fans may purchase tickets from Robert Gambill, business manager, or from Brame's Drug store.

Galax will play here Friday night and North Wilkesboro will go to Galax Saturday night. North Wilkesboro will go to Radford Sunday.

Manager Bernie Loman has assembled the best prospects for season opening in the history of pro ball here. Arrivals during the past week have assured a hard hitting outfield, which was the

HAVE YOU BEEN COUNTED?  
IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN COUNTED BY A GOVERNMENT ENUMERATOR MAIL THIS COUPON TO  
Census, 1950, North Wilkesboro

I HAVE NOT BEEN COUNTED.

MY NAME IS \_\_\_\_\_

MY ADDRESS IS \_\_\_\_\_

I AM USUALLY AT HOME AT \_\_\_\_\_ A.M. \_\_\_\_\_ P.M.

Mail this to Census, 1950, North Wilkesboro, N. C.