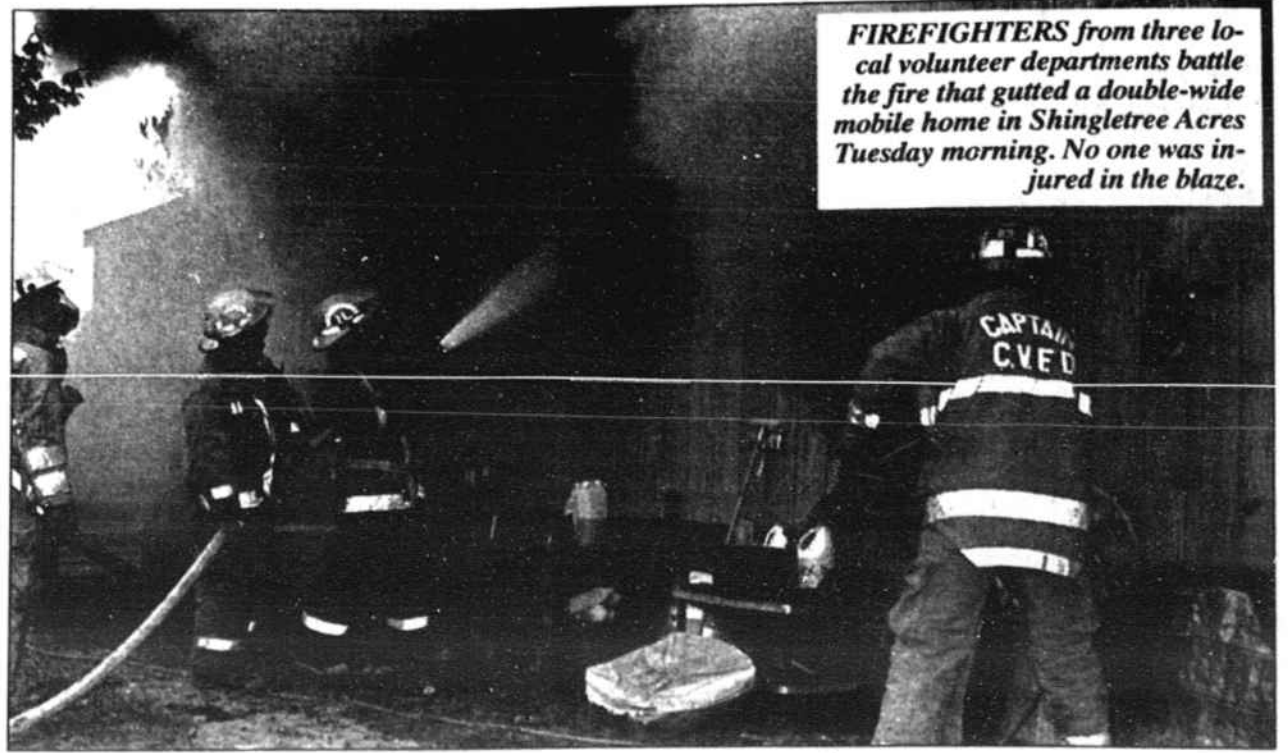


CALABASH volunteer firefighter Willie Stanley consoles his sister Myrtle Bellamy and her husband Willie Bellamy in the back yard of their Shingletree Acres home after it was destroyed by an electrical fire Tuesday morning.



FIREFIGHTERS from three local volunteer departments battle the fire that gutted a double-wide mobile home in Shingletree Acres Tuesday morning. No one was injured in the blaze.

Family Loses Shingletree Home To Tuesday Morning Electrical Fire

BY ERIC CARLSON
Willie and Myrtle Bellamy could not understand why, for the past three months, their 5-year-old daughter Whitney refused to sleep in the back bedroom of their double-wide mobile home on Maple Street in Shingletree Acres.

She had outgrown her old crib, but for some reason Whitney had gone back to sleeping there instead.

Tuesday morning, as the Bellamy's watched their home consumed by a fire that started in a wall of that unused bedroom, they wondered if Whitney's reluctance was mere coincidence.

"Thank God she wasn't asleep in there. Thank God no one was hurt," Bellamy said as firefighters from three local departments fought to control the blaze.

Although the fire was largely contained to the structure's interior, it gutted the inside of the Bellamy home and destroyed its contents, Brunswick County Fire Marshall Cecil Logan said.

Willie was at work that morning. Whitney was at Union Primary School. Myrtle and their oldest son Lee Stanley were inside when she thought she smelled smoke.

The night before Myrtle had been puzzled by the smell of what seemed like melted wiring. But they were unable to determine the source, Logan said.

Then at about 8:45 a.m., Myrtle noticed smoke coming from the ceiling where it joined the wall of Whitney's unused bedroom. She said she asked her son to hang up the phone and dialed 911.

Firefighters from Calabash VFD arrived a short time later. Finding the structure "fully involved" in flames, first responders immediately called for back-up manpower and

equipment from the Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach volunteer fire departments. In all, about 20 firefighters responded, Logan said.

"They all did a real good job of containing it," said Logan. "When I first got there, I was afraid it might get away, but they got it under control."

While some kept hoses raining water through the home's rear door and windows, other firefighters with axes knocked holes in the side of the structure to gain access to other hot spots. The blaze briefly threatened to break through the roof as smoke began pouring from beneath its eaves. But volunteers were able to

contain the fire long enough to knock down the flames.

Neighbors and firefighters did their best to comfort family members as they watched helplessly from the back yard.

Willie Bellamy said it was the second time he has watched a family home burn. Both fires were in

December, he said. His mother and father lost their house in Supply shortly after Bellamy returned from the military for Christmas in 1977.

"I don't understand. But God knows best," Bellamy said. "He only lets us borrow these things."

Logan said the home was a total loss, valued at between \$50,000 and

\$60,000. The fire appeared to have been caused by faulty wiring in the wall between a clothes dryer and Whitney Bellamy's bedroom, he said.

The Bellamys were insured and have relatives living nearby. Myrtle said the family planned to stay with her sister Tuesday night.



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