



Photo by Charles Hopson
18 Hours After Blaze Consumed Buildings, Smoke And Flames Continue With Occasional Explosions

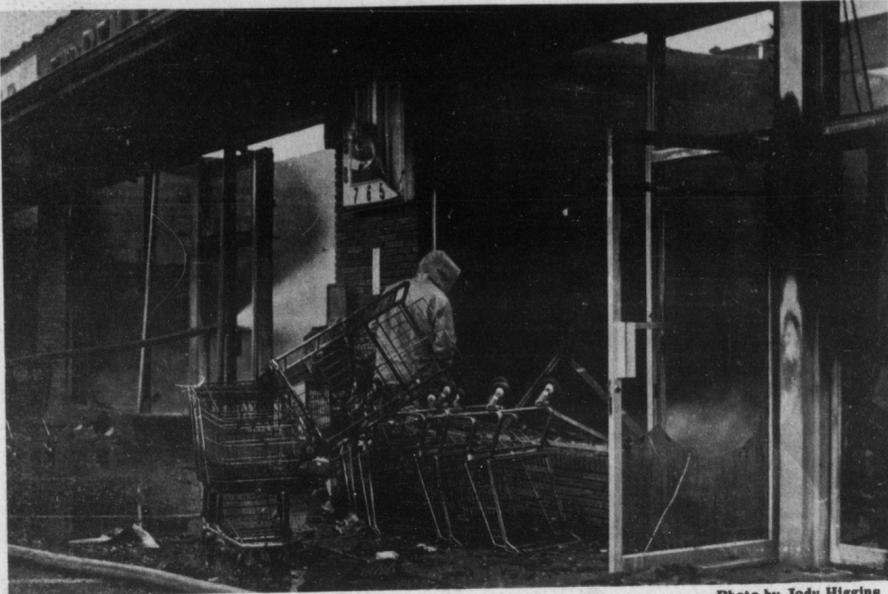


Photo by Jody Higgins
Shopping Carts Are All That Remain After Flames Destroyed Ray Brothers Grocery

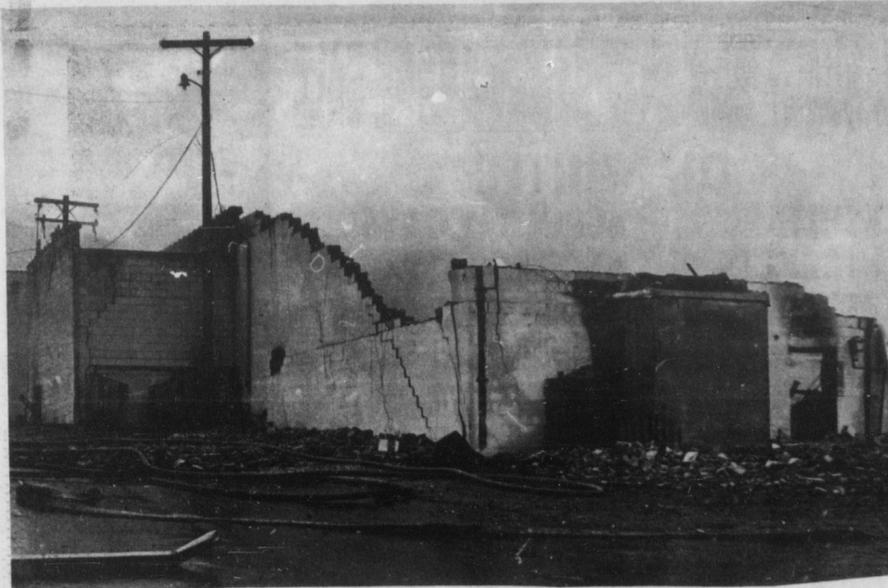


Photo by Jody Higgins
View Of Store Backs Show Total Destruction Of Ray Bros, Ben Franklin, Carolina Tire



Photo by Jody Higgins
Firemen Battle Raging Fire Which Lit Up The Night For Miles Around Burnsville.

THE YANCEY RECORD

BURNSVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

VOL. 36, NO. 1

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1972

10¢

Fire Hits Downtown Burnsville Stores; Damages Estimated At \$1 Million

By Carolyn Yuziuk
Monday night at approximately 10:00 p.m. a fire started—apparently in the basement of either Ray Brothers Food Center or Ben Franklin Store—and quickly became a holocaust which burned out of control until early Tuesday morning and caused an estimated \$1 million in damages. The fire completely destroyed three of the larger businesses in downtown Burnsville: Ray Brothers Food Center, Ramsey's Ben Franklin Store and Carolina Tire Company.

Styles and Company, adjacent to the shopping complex, was also damaged by fire, but the damage was believed minor and confined to the garage building itself.

Intense heat from flames caused steel beams in the ceiling of the shopping center to buckle, and walls on both sides and rear of the brick and frame structure collapsed.

Firemen and fire fighting equipment and trucks from Newdale, Spruce Pine, Bakersville, Mars Hill and Marshall came to the assistance of the Burnsville Volunteer Fire Department, and only through determined and heroic effort was the fire contained in the immediate area involved. At times, the flames shot up over 100 feet high over the burning stores.

Close by the raging fire were the old Northwestern Bank Building and the Post Office, which the fire miraculously left untouched. The frame residence and antique store of Rush Wray, owner of Nu-Wray Inn, was perhaps closest to the fire and the most severely endangered, but energetic efforts of firemen kept the flames from gaining a foothold there. Observers speculated that had the wind blown just the right way, the Nu Wray Inn itself could have gone up in flames.

Monday night's fire was stated to have been the worst in Burnsville's history.

One observer who was on the scene almost from the beginning of the fire, told how the Burnsville firemen seemed to have the situation under control right from the start, as only smoke was seen

Erwin Bank Assets Up

John M. Logan, executive vice president of First Federal Savings of Erwin, said that total assets of the local financial institution had increased over 25 per cent to \$21 million. Logan said that 1971 was the greatest year in the firm's history.

During the year the association paid \$920,000 in interest to its depositors.

Looking ahead to 1972, Logan said, "We feel it is going to be another excellent year for the association. The outlook for savings remains good and we expect the home loan market to be more active in 1972."

issuing from the buildings for quite a while. Then there was an explosion, he said, and flames shot up sky high, burning through an electric wire above the stores and plunging parts of the city into darkness. Volunteer firemen tentatively set the blame for the fire on a leaking propane gas line.

The fire departments fought the blaze until 6:00 a.m. Tuesday and Burnsville firemen were still at the scene of the fire, dousing as they, through most of Tuesday afternoon and evening. Small explosions were frequent at the scene as cans

of hair spray and other cans and bottles became heated to the point of exploding.

Around 6:00 p.m. Tuesday evening the fire alarm sounded again for the exhausted Burnsville firemen when the blaze flamed up despite an all-day rainfall and complete dousing earlier. The

smouldering of over 1,000 tires which had been stored in the basement of Carolina Tire Company could be responsible for much of the continuing action. The blaze, however, has exacted its toll, and downtown Burnsville will never really be the same.

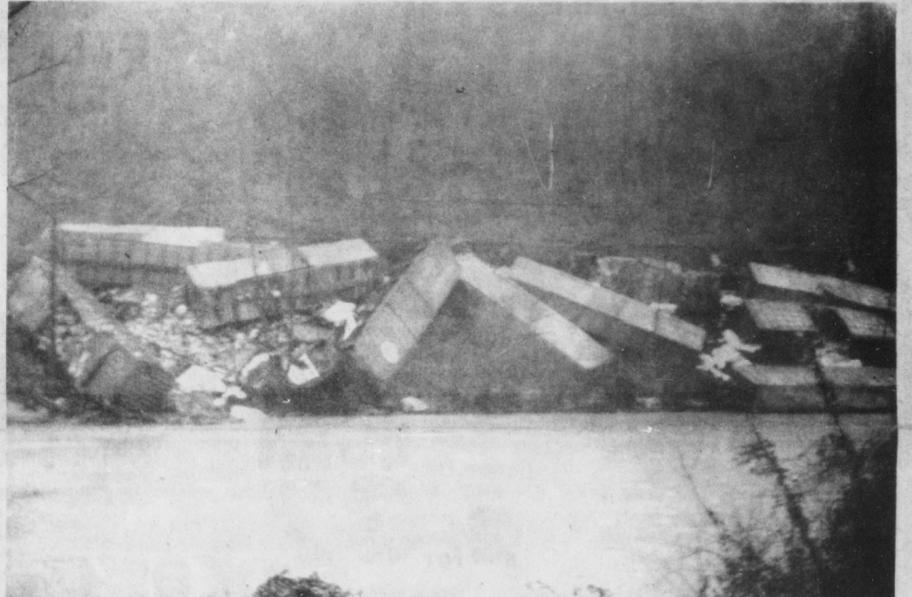


Photo by Charles Hopson
TRAIN WRECK NEAR GREEN MOUNTAIN—Thirty-seven cars were derailed last Friday night near Green Mountain. The Clinchfield line was traveling through a short tunnel when reportedly a brake shoe came loose and caught under a wheel causing the derailment. Boxcars were derailed on both ends of the tunnel. Many of the cars, loaded with paper, rolled down an embankment to the Toe River. Crews moved in immediately and had the track cleared by 4 p.m. Sunday. No injuries were reported.

Roberson Named Director Of Student Personnel For MAY Tech.; Makes Survey

Mrs. Flora B. Roberson of the Newdale Community in Yancey County has been named Director of Student Personnel in the newly established Mayland Technical Institute. Mrs. Roberson has been making frequent visits to the Yancey County schools recently, working with Mr. John Schortinghouse, Counselor, in making a survey of student interests.

Mrs. Roberson formerly served as Guidance Counselor in the Mitchell County Schools, and for the past several years has been fulltime Counselor at Harris High School, Spruce Pine.

A graduate of Mcaville High School, she received her BA degree at Tusculum College and her Masters degree at Appalachian State University. She also attended North Carolina State

University. She is a past president of the North Carolina Education Association, Mitchell County Unit. She serves also in Yancey County as lay speaker for the Methodist Church.

Mrs. Roberson has always been a great believer in the programs offered in the Technical Institutes and Community Colleges, and says that only the opportunity to work with students in this type of school would have induced her to leave her work in the

public schools.

Mrs. Roberson expressed her appreciation for the cooperation of the principals, the teachers, the counselors, and students in Yancey County in making the student-interest survey. The information gained from the survey will be used to help determine the curriculum to be offered in the new Technical Institute. Without such cooperation, she says, the institution could not offer an effective program.

Results of the survey, which has also been made in the Mitchell and Avery County schools, will be made available to the guidance counselors and principals of the high schools.

Mrs. Roberson looks forward to working closely with the guidance department in the local schools in informing students of opportunities in North Carolina's Technical Schools and Community Colleges.



Mrs. Flora B. Roberson

Jaycees Sponsor Benefit Gospel Sing Sunday, At Cane River High School

There will be a Gospel Singing at Cane River High School on Sunday, January 9th at 2:00 p.m.

The singing is a benefit for the Rev. James Beaver, a well-known minister who has been sick for some time and is in desperate need of financial aid. There will be no admission charge, but there will be a free will offering taken for Rev. Beaver. Groups taking part in the Gospel Singing are the Joyfulaires of Alexander, N.C.; Bee Log Quartet of Burnsville; Maple Ridge Trio of Candler, N.C.; Happy Echoes, Swannanoa; Good News Quartet, Candler; Peek Family; Rebels Creek Quartet of Bakers-

ville, N.C.; Prayerway Quartet of Mars Hill; Trailway Quartet of Boone, N.C.; the Gethsemane Quartet, Spruce Pine; Thomas Brothers, WYK, Burnsville; Rainbow Quartet, WBMS, Black Moun-

tain; Glory Bound Quartet, Mars Hill.

The Singing is sponsored by the Yancey County Jaycees. Ed Ball is Master of Ceremonies.

All singers and the public are invited to take part.

Masons Install Officers

On Thursday night, December 23, 1971 Burnsville Lodge #717 AF & AM installed its officers for 1972.

Newly elected and installed officers were as follows: Lawrence C. Wilson, Master; Paul Branton, Senior Warden; Terrell Wilson, Junior Warden; Homer Price,

Treasurer; Herschel Holcombe, Secretary; Dennis Carroway, Senior Deacon; Richard Wilson, Junior Deacon; Bruce Smith and Lee Thompson, Stewards; Ralph Towse, Chaplain; Larry Wilson, Tyler.

Herschel Holcombe was the installing officer and Howard Nelson was the Marshall.