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Deep-Freeze Cold Grips Dixie; Fire Destroys Three Buildings

Five Hurt In Blaze

By RUDOLPH A. PYATT JR.
Staff Reporter

One of the worst fires in the history of Charleston destroyed three brick buildings on King Street yesterday.

Firemen braved 11 degree temperatures in a successful and heroic effort to prevent flames from spreading through an entire block in the midtown business area.

The three buildings, forming a triangle at the southeast corner of King and John Streets, were heavily damaged in the blaze reported to firemen about 8:25 a.m.

Destroyed along with several apartments, some of which were occupied, were the Capital Credit and Loan Co., Larry's Beauty Salon, the VIP's Lounge, a warehouse owned by Goldberg's Furniture Co., Crosby's Barber Shop and an empty store.

All except the barber shop fronted on King Street.

NEAR CHURCH

The buildings in the block bounded also by Meeting and Hutson Streets are about 150 yards from the St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, destroyed by fire Jan. 13, 1965.

Charleston Fire Chief Fred J. Shokes, terming the blaze one of the worst in the city's history, said he was unable to make an immediate estimate of damage but predicted it would run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Despite extremely hazardous conditions under which the fire was fought, only five firemen required treatment for injuries. They were released after receiving treatment at the Charleston County Emergency Room.

CAUSE OF INJURIES

Bitter cold and icy pavement were direct causes of three of the injuries and a fourth resulted when one of the firemen suffered minor face burns from a flash flame.

Treated for overexposure and exhaustion was James Fryer, a sprained ankle, Herbert Hollins; strained elbow, Daniel Ennis; burns, Roy Evans; and pierced buttock, Calvin Cook.

Immediate cause of the blaze which threatened to wipe out an entire city block had not been determined last night.

Charleston City Police and fire inspectors continue to comb the immediate area of the fire in search of persons who might shed some light on the origin of the blaze.

Much of their investigation is (See FIRE, Page 2-A)



RED-MASKED FIREMAN HENRY RICHARD PAUSES FOR COFFEE DURING KING STREET BLAZE

(Staff Photo by Brinson)

State Weather Claims 2 Lives

From Wire and Staff Reports

Record-low temperatures in the Lowcountry coupled with snow and ice in the Piedmont and Pee Dee shocked South Carolinians for the second time within a week yesterday.

At least two deaths were attributed to the freezing temperatures.

Robert Thames, 43, was found dead outside his home at Manning. Sheriff T. J. Jackson said Thames apparently froze to death. Manley Miles, 28, of Calhoun County, was found frozen to death near his home outside St. Matthews.

There was no let up in sight, according to the U. S. Weather Bureau.

Although the threat of snow and rain has subsided, the state experienced temperatures below zero in the Piedmont and below the teens in the lower regions yesterday. Temperatures started their skid downward again shortly after dark last night.

A Weather Bureau spokesman said low temperatures today would range from zero or below in the Piedmont and Pee Dee to 5 to 10 degrees along the coastal areas.

Brilliant sunshine and stiff winds were prevalent yesterday as the state remained locked in the grip of bitter cold temperatures that didn't get above freezing all day.

As a result, driving on most roads in the upper third of the state was hazardous without chains. The Highway Patrol reported late yesterday that all major routes were open to traffic.

Roads from Charleston to Columbia were splattered with ice most of the day making driving dangerous. The highway patrol reported that from Columbia west and north, roads were solid ice in the earlier part of the day.

From one to two inches of snow fell after midnight in the

Pee Dee area around Florence, Dillon, Bennettsville and Darlington.

Part of this area was still crippled from Tuesday's ice storm. Dillon was still without power at schools as well as in rural areas as was parts of Marlboro County.

The general snow area, while

concentrated in the northwest part of the state, spread eastward to the coast in the upper portion bordering North Carolina. Eastern areas got only a light coating, but this caused many back country roads to become hazardous.

Schools in Darlington County will be closed today. School officials said the holiday was called because of the condition of school bus roads. Some schools in Chesterfield and Marlboro will also be closed. Other schools were expected to follow suit but did not plan any announcements until this morning.

It was extremely doubtful if schools would be open in the Dillon area. It was reported that some buildings still were without power.

Many upstate schools were ordered to remain closed today until road travel is less hazardous.

The Weather Bureau forecast temperatures in the upper 30s for Monday in a large part of the state, and the highway patrol said this should enable the sun to thaw out most of the roads.

The patrol said it had reports of only a few minor road mishaps due to weather, with an occasional slide into a ditch by a skidding auto. Patrolmen said big trucks were moving all day Sunday and keeping the surface of major highways fairly passable.

Temperatures hit lows of minus six at Greenville and the

magic mark of zero at Anderson—all-time records for any day in January. Sunday night's readings were expected to go a few degrees lower, ranging from 10 to 20 degrees along the coast to minus 12 in the Greenville area.

Highs today are expected to range from 28 above the fall

(See 2 DEATHS, Page 12-A)

Gradual warming is forecast for today and tomorrow, with afternoon highs of 32-36 degrees predicted for the Charleston area and other coastal counties.

The arctic-like winds surprised meteorologists and laymen alike.

As W. R. Hall of the Charleston County Emergency Room

(See WEATHER, Page 3-A)

Tempo Picks Up In U.S. Offensive

SAIGON. South Viet Nam (AP) — U.S. 1st Cavalry Airborne Division troops locked horns with North Vietnamese regulars at Bong Son on the central coast Sunday and B52 bombers from Guam hammered Communist positions 25 miles to the north where U.S. Marines were in the third day of a massive amphibious assault.

The tempo of an Allied lunar new year offensive quickened elsewhere. U.S. 1st Infantry Division troops opened Operation Mallet 20 miles southeast of Saigon and South Vietnamese government forces launched nine new search and destroy operations in a variety of places.

In the coastal action, the 1st Cavalry troops established that the enemy blocking forces there were a combination of main force Viet Cong and the 18th Regiment of the 325th North

Vietnamese division, a U.S. Army spokesman in Saigon reported. This is the same division that ended the 1st Cavalry in the bloody fighting at Ia Drang Valley in November. The division has three regiments.

A 1st Cavalry spokesman said troops counted 282 Communist dead after three days of sharp fighting. He added, however, that as many as 475 Communists may have been killed in combined land, air and artillery attacks. The Americans captured 77 Viet Cong, the spokesman said.

The 18th Regiment, the spokesman said, has between 900 and 1,000 men.

In Ia Drang Valley, about 110 miles west of Bong Son, the North Vietnamese lost about 1,300 dead, U.S. official say. The 1st Cavalry losses were 270 killed and 600 wounded.

For Fireman White 'It Was The Worst'

By F. W. BARNES JR.
Staff Reporter

Amid the bitter cold and raw wind, fireman Charles E. ("Buddy") White III climbed 65 feet up a truck-based ladder to shoot water down on yesterday's King Street fire.

He was the first to ascend the ladder. It was less than an hour since he had reported for duty at the Coming Street hook and ladder station.

Attached to the ladder by a safety belt, White manually operated the up and down motion of the hose. On the truck, another fireman mechanically moved him back and forth across the fire.

After a few minutes, White had to ask to be relieved. "It was so cold, you couldn't stay up there more than 10 minutes at a time," he said.

"My hands were so numb and cold, I couldn't operate the hose anymore."

On the ladder, White could feel the heat of the blaze. But, it did not keep his hands from losing all feeling.

Ordinarily, White would need no relief at all during a fire. However, "this was the most difficult fire I've ever fought," he said. "The most difficult thing was keeping your hands warm."

White, who has been with the fire department nearly three years, went back up the ladder four more times. In between, other firemen took his place.

After his third stint above the fire, White had to have someone tear his gloves off his

(See WHITE, Page 11-A)

Shokes Calls Fire Worst Since 1925

By LAURENS H. IRBY
Staff Reporter

A fire that damaged at least five businesses, two empty buildings and several private apartments here yesterday was the most destructive blaze for the King Street shopping district since 1925, City Fire Chief Fred C. Shokes declares.

Yesterday's blaze will long live in memories of Charleston firemen.

"I've been in the fire department for 41 years," Chief Shokes declared, "and this was the coldest and most hazardous battle I've ever waged against a fire, due to the high velocity wind (hitting 30 miles an hour) and 11-degree temperatures."

At least one fire hydrant had its water freeze. Firemen thawed it out by piling light wood around the hydrant, pouring

ing kerosene over the wood and lighting a little bonfire. On April 19, 1925, six buildings on King Street, beginning at the Line Street corner and running south on the east side of the street to 610 King St., were involved in a spectacular blaze.

Also destroyed were 16 houses on Line Street between King Street and the railroad tracks, 20 houses on what was then known as Shumaker Alley and a house on Line across the railroad tracks.

This fire in 1925 raged for five hours before being brought under control.

Yesterday's blaze, only a couple of blocks south, from the scene of the 1925 blaze, was re-

(See SHOKES, Page 11-A)

Shokes

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ported to the Fire Department by Mrs. Rachel M. Orvig of 45-B John St., who lives in an apartment which overlooks the scene of the blaze and later was itself involved as the fire spread.

Chief Shokes said 11 pumper trucks, two ladder trucks, and the full force of 120 city firemen had the flames under control within one and a half hours.

But sub-freezing temperatures made it difficult to raise ladders to walls of burning structures — and the ladders quickly became ice coated.

The North Charleston Fire Department sent trucks to the city to "stand by" at municipal fire stations while the King Street blaze was being combated. The stand-bys were ready to answer other calls for help — if they had come in.

And the U. S. Navy also sent one of its trucks down to perform stand-by duty.

Businesses and other structures damaged by the Sunday blaze, their owners and the damage estimates, were available:

A second-floor private apartment at 41-B John St., water damage.

Tom's Steak House and Restaurant, 43-45 John St., operated by Thomas S. Haley and located in a building owned by Leonard Karesh. Haley estimated water and smoke damage to his equipment at \$12,000 to \$14,000. He had no insurance on the furnishings, had been at the location for eight years. The restaurant employed five to six people. No estimates available on damage to the structure.

Crosby's Barber Shop, 49 John St., operated by J. Curtis Crosby. The interior of the shop was blackened and charred by smoke and fire.

Upstairs apartment at 45-B John St., occupied by Mrs. Rachel M. Orvig.

A group of apartments at 51 John St., occupied by Mrs. Mabel Crawford and son and Mrs. Annie Liberman.

Capitol Credit Plan Inc. at 426 King St. (around the corner from the John Street establishments involved in the fire). Walls were charred, front window panes smashed out, the floor deep in water. Leonard Karesh owns the three-story building, but he was not avail-

able for comment or a damage estimate.

Larry's Beauty Salon at 424½ King St. operated by Landon G. Shelton, with the building rented from Leonard Karesh. Shelton said that although "everything else was completely destroyed around me" he might get by on as little as \$20 in damages on his furnishings and equipment. He will wait for a ruling from Fire Chief Shokes on the safety of the building before deciding whether to re-open at his present location or move.

A three-story building at 424 King St., of which the first two floors were used as a furniture warehouse by the J. L. Goldberg concern and the top floor was rented to an elderly man as living quarters. The roof collapsed to the rear of this building, which is where the blaze started, according to firemen. Moses D. Goldberg, part-owner, said the building appears to be a "total loss" but declined to place a dollar value on the loss until he can check the inventory of goods stored inside the building. The structure and contents were "partially" covered by insurance, Goldberg said. The J. L. Goldberg concern has owned the building for about a year and a half and before that it was used by B. Slotchiver & Son Furniture Co. At the top of the Goldberg building is a stone relief reading "Mechanics Union . . . Founded 1869."

A three-story building at 422 King St., owned by Washington Realty Co. and which has been vacant for a couple of years. It formerly housed Metropolitan Credit Co. Robert L. Kaiser vice president of Washington Realty, said there was a "little insurance" on the structure, which was heavily damaged.

A smaller structure at 420½ King St., also vacant and owned by Washington Realty Co. The building had been empty for eight to ten months, and was formerly occupied by Yip's Lunch.

The blaze stopped at the John J. Furlong and Sons Printing concern at 420 King St. and no damage was done to this establishment. An employee of the printing firm recalled grimly that the printing establishment had been gutted by a fire Dec. 31, 1944.

White

Continued From Page 1-A

hands. They were frozen to his skin.

It did not hurt much, he said. "By that time, I couldn't feel anything but a stinging in my hands, like they were on fire." His thick leather gloves were ruined.

Besides the cold, there was the wind. "The wind kept blowing the water away from the fire," he said. And, the quick gusts had the ladder rocking a little.

Once, a sudden gust caught the ladder and tilted it to the left. "I was practically on my side," White said, "horizontal to the ground. That shook me some."

Luckily, Robert White, (not related) operating the ladder on the truck, saw White's precarious position and immediately pulled the ladder in. After a few seconds, it straightened up.

White, 30, had reported for his 24-hour period of duty at 8 a.m. A few minutes later, the alarm came.

"I figured it was something big," he said, "and we'd really catch the devil. But I didn't know it would be that cold."

"I thought the Marcus fire on New Year's Eve '63 was bad, but it was a toy compared to this one."

White was cleaning up around the station when the order came to go to the fire. He put on his fire togs over his regular clothes: three-layer overcoat of canvas, rubber and wool; similar three-layer pants held up by red suspenders; and rubber boots with wool lining. The heavy clothes "don't hamper your movements," White said.

He also wore a white face mask with four holes for eyes, nose and mouth. "It really did protect my face," he said.

White jumped on the ladder truck at his usual position on the right side, behind the cab section. The truck raced the few blocks to the fire, parking on John Street.

A ladderman by trade, White's first job was to cut a hole through a roof. He climbed up a step ladder to get on the second story roof above an abandoned barber shop.

There, he could do nothing. The roof was covered with ice. "To swing an ax, you would almost lose your balance."

From King Street, firemen were hosing the roof. "As soon as the water hit, it froze. I slid around but I never did fall," White said.

After about 10 minutes of this profitless work, White was called to go up the ladder. By that time, he was covered with ice. "On the roof, I got sprayed quite a few times and it froze right away."

White was glad to get off the roof. "It was safer on the ladder. At least there I didn't have to worry about slipping," he said.

So, with hands already chilled, White ascended the ladder which stretched precariously over the fire and rocked under buffets of wind. "The fire was burning heavily," he said.

During rest intervals, he was given coffee and sandwiches by American Red Cross volunteers. "They also rubbed my hands to bring circulation back," White said.

Then, it was back to the ladder. Operating the hose, White could hear the ice crack and fall as he bent his arm. Except for his hands, the water never penetrated his equipment.

White remained at the fire for about five hours. When his company returned to the station, the fire was under control.

After the ladder and ax work, White said: "I wasn't tired. I was just cold. That's about all."

Born and raised in Charleston, the three-year fireman termed his duty "just part of the job."

"Ever since I was a child," he went on, "I always wanted to be a fireman. My highest ambition was to be a fireman."

Yesterday's cold and hazardous conditions did not sway his ambition. "Not at all," he said.

White lives at 19 N. Tracy St. He is the father of one child.

Margolin Discusses Role Of Educators

Educators are grossly underestimating children's ability to learn, attorney Sam Margolin of Memphis, Tenn., said yesterday.

"We don't have sufficient confidence in our children. They're able to take on much more additional learning," he told the Birth Shalom Beth Israel congregation at the officer installation in the Synagogue social hall last night.

Margolin speaks from experience as a leader in the Day School Movement of the Hebrew education endeavor. He is chairman of the board of the Memphis Hebrew Academy.

"We want to create good healthy American boys and girls who will be a core of leadership to bring back the next generation to basic values. Good Jews make better Americans."

"Young people have the attitude that anything old is bad and anything new is better as they show in their strikes at universities for the right to use four-lettered words. This indicates a moral breakdown."

Intensive training in more subjects, longer class hours and a combination of secular and religious training have had phenomenal results with the children throughout the country. The pupils learn Hebrew and religious doctrine as well as regular academic subjects.

The Hebrew education philosophy has been to combine religious principles and ethical standards with academic subjects in separate class periods for elementary school children.

Charleston Hebrew Institute is one of the more than 300 such

with 50,000 children on the elementary school level.

"I don't believe we will produce very many juvenile delinquents in our schools because we keep the pupils quite busy in the intensive effort to teach them proper ethics."

On national standardized intelligence tests, some 200 children in the Memphis school averaged 95 per cent, with some perfect scores.

Parents helping children with homework is one of the biggest education problems, especially in the advanced Jewish schools. Children are usually four or five years ahead of their parents, Margolin said.

Supervised study is held in the school for the religious subjects. Secular courses are left for overnight homework.

Graduates of the school have entered divinity schools or professional training. But sole intention of the secular-sacred education has not been to train rabbis, Margolin said.

Margolin became involved in education as a young boy who had lost his father and had to work hard to graduate valedictorian of his high school class at the age of 15. Working during the day, he studied law at night and passed the bar examination when he was 18.

At 22 he founded Southern Law University in Memphis from which thousands of leading Tennessee lawyers have been graduated.

He has been president of the largest orthodox Jewish Synagogue in the country and headed numerous other organizations, along with heading a