

CHARLESTON EVENING POST

South Carolina's
LARGEST
Afternoon Newspaper

70TH YEAR—80

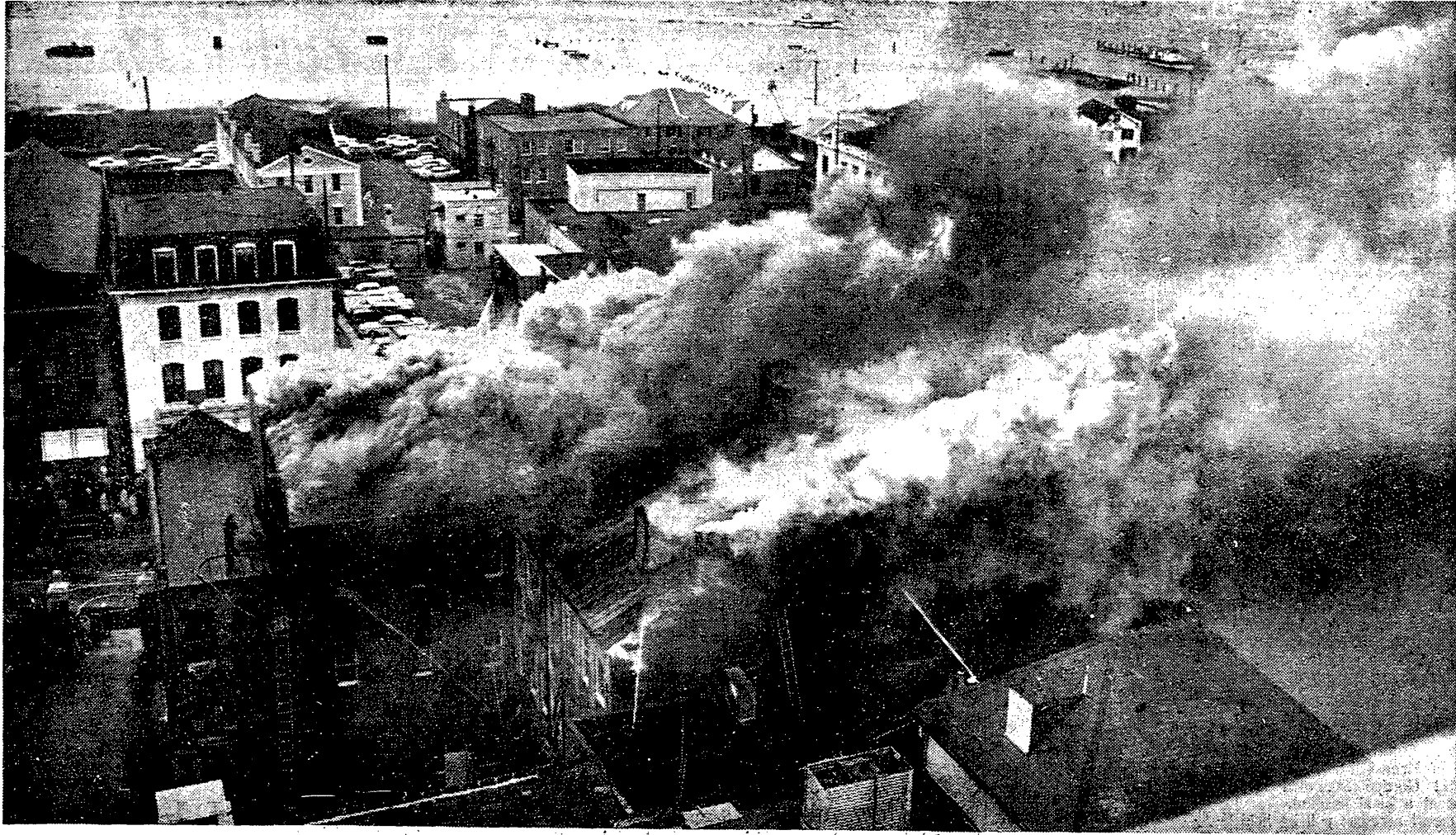
TWO SECTIONS

CHARLESTON, S. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1963

18 PAGES

DAILY 10c—WEEKLY 30c

Wind-Whipped Flames Ravage Broad Street Office Building



Fanned by brisk wind, thick smoke billows from atop Marcus Building at Broad and East Bay Streets.

Fire Fighters Gain Control In Two Hours

By STAFF WRITERS

Flames fanned by 25-mile-an-hour winds gutted the three-story Marcus Building at the northwest corner of Broad and East Bay Street today.

The fire, believed to have started in the equipment room of the Marcus Drug Store, ruined or severely damaged about 20 offices, financial firms and the South Carolina office of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

The fire also destroyed the drug store and its contents. Among the ruined offices was that of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith.

Six firemen were taken to the Charleston County Emergency Room. One suffered an injured leg, another a burned hand and four others were treated for smoke inhalation and exposure. An employee of the drug store was treated for shock. All were released.

A total of 11 pieces of fire-fighting apparatus were on the scene during the height of the fire.

Others, brought in from outside the city, stood by in city fire stations.

Early this afternoon smoke, hugging the ground under muggy skies, continued to fill Broad

Post Team Covered Big Blaze

As black smoke billowed from the Marcus Building in Broad Street today a team of Evening Post reporters and photographers moved in to cover the story.

On the scene were staff writers John All, Jack Roach, Gordon Payne, Charles Waring and Tom Peck. Charles Hunter covered the arrival of the injured at the County Emergency Room.

Photographers Richard Burbage, Robert Nettles, Jessie O'Connell and Ronnie Brinson shot the photos.

Staff writer Belvin Horres was the rewriter and handled the main fire story, taking phone calls from the reporters at the scene.

Washington Bank Robbed Of \$66,587

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two masked men carrying shotguns held up the Brookland branch of the National Bank of Washington and escaped with \$66,587 minutes after the bank opened today.

Bank employees told police both robbers wore rubber masks and rubber gloves. They were reported to have fled the branch in the northeast section of the city in a car driven by an accomplice.

Before fleeing, the gunmen tied a bank employee's hands and feet with a rope, police said.

Newspapers Will Observe Half-Holiday

The business and advertising offices of the Charleston Evening Post and The News and Courier will close at noon tomorrow in observance of New Year's Day.

Classified advertisements for Thursday's editions of the newspapers may be submitted up to that time.

The newspapers' North Area office at 207 Carver Avenue will follow the same schedule.

Publication schedules of the two newspapers will not be interrupted.

Military, Civilian Firemen

Neighbors Answered The Call

Scores of military and civilian firemen rallied to the side of Charleston firemen in miserable cold and rain this morning in a futile fight to save the Marcus Building.

Although the Marcus Building was gutted, firemen managed to contain the fire that threatened an entire block of Broad Street—in the heart of the business district.

From Charleston Air Force Base, 16 firemen were sent to help battle the blaze.

The Navy's Minecraft Support Unit dispatched 50 firemen to the city's aid. A doctor from the Mine Force and 11 men from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit 2 also joined in an effort to contain the worst Broad Street fire of this century.

The Charleston Naval Base sent a truck and a company of five firemen.

St. Andrew's Parish, James Island and North Charleston fire departments each sent a truck and crew which were used for standby, while every available city fireman and 11 city trucks fought the early morning fire.

Fifteen men from the Navy's Fleet Training Group Fire Fighting School also rallied to the fire scene.

The Coast Guard sent smoke masks.

The Red Cross and Salvation Army set up canteens and provided hot coffee and sandwiches for the cold, wet firemen.

Others offered assistance and stood by.

Working together, the army of firemen and fire specialists brought the fire under control by 10:15 a.m., just a little more than two hours after the first whisp of smoke was detected.

8 Are Killed In Plane Crash

BAR LE DUC, France (UPI) — Two women, two children and three Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) officers were killed when a twin-engine Bristol aircraft crashed while landing at Maryville Air Base near here Monday night.

An eighth person died in the crash, but it was not immediately known whether the victim was a serviceman or a dependent.



High above East Bay Street, fireman pours stream onto Marcus Building roof.

On The Inside

CHARLESTON ready to welcome New Year. Page 1-B.

CITY TO START year without levy bill. Page 1-B.

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Cold, Wet Weather Hits Local Areas

A fast-moving, low pressure system, which generated in the Gulf and swept up the South Atlantic Coast, today delivered cold, cloudy, wet weather to most of the Palmetto State.

Forecasters at the U. S. Weather Bureau office here said the precipitation ranged from light to moderate rain along the coast to snow, sleet and freezing rain in the central and western part of the state.

They added that sleet had been reported as far south as Summerville, but little, if any is expected here.

Bridges in this area are not expected to freeze tonight, the weathermen said.

The low created strong northeasterly winds here today, gusting to 35 miles an hour. Small craft warnings were displayed. Winds are expected to become more northerly tomorrow.

Tides along the coast are running about a foot above normal and shallow flooding on morning tides was reported here today in low-lying areas. The tide was expected to peak at 7.3 feet.

Rain will end tonight, and partial clearing is anticipated by tomorrow.

Weathermen predicted a high of 40 degrees today and a low of 35 degrees tonight. Tomorrow will be a little warmer, with a high of 45 degrees in prospect.

The outlook for Thursday is for partly cloudy and slightly warmer weather.

Yesterday, a high of 50 degrees was recorded at the Weather Bureau at Charleston Municipal Airport. The low this morning was 35 degrees. There was no precipitation there during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

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'Little Smoke' First Hint Of Today's Fire

By GORDON PAYNE
Evening Post Staff Writer

"There was just a little smoke at first," William G. Dodds, investment firm executive said, as he stared at a raging fire consuming his firm in the west end of the Marcus Building.

"I called it to the attention of Mrs. Marcus, and she tried to call the Fire Department. Her phone was out of order, though, and I went into my office and called in the alarm."

That was about 8 a.m. About an hour and a half later an impenetrable cloud of smoke rushed down Broad Street like it was leaping up a chimney. Flames, going 40 feet out of the office building on the northwest corner of East Bay and Broad streets threatening the entire block.

20 Tenants Listed In Building

Following is a list of tenants in the Marcus Building, furnished by owner John B. Marcus this morning.

Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.

Crawford & Co., insurance adjusters.

Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith.

Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Co.

Pinckney Adjusting Co.

J. Preston Warren, Lawyer.

C. D. Hopkins, Lawyer.

Harvey Smith, bookkeeper.

James C. Gary, insurance adjuster.

Fred L. Laing, mortgage broker.

Department of Commerce Field Office.

Southwestern Life Insurance Co.

Manhattan Life Insurance Co.

R. B. Comar, freight forwarder.

American Heritage Life Insurance Co.

Master Mates and Pilots Assn.

Gray Autograph, dictating equipment.

Nationwide Mortgage Co.

D. C. Andrews & Co., Inc., freight forwarders.

Logan & Parker, accountants.

Biting Misfortune Sustained In Fire

One civilian fireman of the Charleston Naval Base Force had a very personal loss in the Marcus Building fire today.

The fireman, who understandably prefers to remain anonymous, reported that in the excitement he dropped his teeth.

Lost was his entire lower bridge work.

Falls Distribution

NIAGARA FALLS — About 90 percent of the water of Niagara Falls is on the side of the Canadian falls.

An easterly wind fanned the

fire at more than 25 miles an hour.

Among the hundreds of office workers and executives who would have been on the job in the area was C. D. Hopkins, one of two attorneys quartered in the Marcus Building.

He, too, watched as fire consumed everything in his office on the second story of the three-story masonry building. He expected to recover nothing from his office, he said.

Many other occupants of the building were in the same predicament. Fortunately, however, the fire began before most would have come to work.



Seven streams of water hit Marcus Building as firemen battle flames.

Dates Back To 1778

Burned Building's Career Varied

By CHARLE HUNTER
Evening Post Staff Writer

The Marcus Building at the northwest corner of Broad and East Bay streets dates back as far as 1778 and has had a long and useful career.

The present three-story building was renovated in 1960, when six separate structures at 2, 4, 6 and 8 Broad St. and 123 and 125 East Bay St. were combined to form one facility. The adjacent buildings were connected by corridors on each floor.

Marcus Drug Store and the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Co. occupied the first floor, and approximately 50 offices were constructed on the second and third floors.

MR. MOTT sold the property in Oct. 3, 1778, to Samuel Prioleau for 10 shillings.

On Aug. 19, 1795, it was acquired by Dr. Joseph Chouler, described as a "practitioner of physic." At Dr. Chouler's death, it was sold Sept. 26, 1804, to Dr. William Burgoyne.

The property was sold Aug. 3, 1833, to the Bank of South Carolina for \$15,000.

The property was sold by the Sheriff Jan. 4, 1870, to John S. Riggs and was known as the Riggs Building. Sidney S. Riggs later owned the building.

Louis D. Simonds acquired the property by foreclosure of a mortgage given him by Sidney S. Riggs. The deed was dated Oct. 16, 1928. Louis D. Simonds Jr. acquired it by a deed dated Nov. 12, 1919, and Peter Demos bought it from him for \$21,000 Jan. 18, 1944, and operated it as a restaurant.

MR. MARCUS purchased the first of the six buildings he eventually was to buy in 1950. He established Marcus Rexall Drug Store at 8 Broad St.

In June, 1952, he bought 10 Broad St. A portion of the building was converted into a storehouse, and 8 Broad St. extended into it.

By 1953, four of the six buildings on the north side of Broad Street adjacent to East Bay Street had been greatly changed.

First altered was the front of the old Plenge Building at 8 Broad St. Then Mr. Marcus remodeled the front of the old Hammond Book Store at 10 Broad St., converting the lower floor into additional space for the drug store and the upper floors into offices.

BY JULY 14, 1960, Mr. Marcus had obtained title to the six stores on the corner of Broad Street and East Bay Street and began an extensive construction and renovation project.

In addition to renovating the buildings inside and out, new heating and air conditioning units, an elevator, lighting fixtures, acoustical tile ceilings and composition flooring were installed in the Marcus Building.

The outside finish was stucco in keeping with the architecture in the immediate vicinity of Charleston's financial and business district.

Rough For Sightseers

Fire Spectators Brave Cold, Smoke

By TOM PECK
Evening Post Staff Writer

The Marcus Building fire was the center of attraction on Broad Street this morning but spectators had a rough time combating the elements and the smoke.

The prevailing winds blew gusts of thick, acrid smoke westward on Broad and at times clouds of smoke obscured Tradd Street, and of course Elliott, between Church and East Bay. The wind also distributed bits of cinder and charred debris over the lower section of the city.

There were plenty of sightseers but they were for the most part well-scattered. The largest crowd was gathered around the Old Exchange Building at East Bay and Broad. There were a good 300 people in this area, spreading back into Exchange Street and the neighboring gasoline station.

THEY STOOD around in little knots, stamping their feet and huddled into overcoats and windbreakers. The weather was near freezing. It was sleeting and such spectators as wore glasses were either constantly mopping them or doing without.

Another small crowd of bystanders spread up the Bay and overflowed for a time into the drive-in parking lot of the South Carolina National Bank where firemen and policemen eventually started weeding them out when the rear wall of the Marcus Building gave signs of imminent collapse.

The spectators along East Bay Street were a hardy lot. They were directly across the street from the burning building and there was no doubt they commanded a fine view. The price they paid for this view was a fairly steady shower of cinders and in the frequently changing gusts of wind they were as likely as not to get a bucket or two of hose water blown at them.

SPECTATORS ALONG Broad Street were plentiful but they were more difficult to locate. Clouds of smoke, sleet and surplus spray from hoses blew west on Broad and obscured all but hardy and ingenious onlookers.

Those with office jobs peered from windows and leaned out for periodic inspections while trying not to cool off their rooms too much. Others shivered in little groups along the street between Church

and State streets, mostly in doorways and alleyways, looking out from time to time and comparing recollections of other fires along the waterfront.

Traffic on Broad was diverted at Church Street and spectators darted back and forth across the street from one vantage point to another but few stayed out in the open for long. It was too uncomfortable.

I walked from State Street to East Bay on the south side of the street across from the burning building because I wanted to get to East Bay, not because of anything I could see.

AS A MATTER of fact I couldn't really see anything. Thick, black smoke billowed down over me and there was a steady stream of flaming debris pouring down on the sidewalk. The smoke would lift for an instant and I could see the spectators on East Bay Street which were my goal, then another black cloud would blow down and I couldn't see anything but the iron grating at my feet and the front of Walker, Evans and Cogswell and the Carolina Bank and Trust Co. It didn't take but a couple of minutes to walk that short block but it seemed much longer.

Business in the area was at a standstill. The power had been cut off in many buildings as circuits were switched off for the benefit of firemen. East Bay Street was a tangle of fire equipment, police cars, hoses and just plain spectators' cars which had become caught in the jam and could not be moved.

TELEPHONES WERE at a premium and in one filling station the rest-rooms were occupied by a fairly steady stream of firemen changing their water-soaked clothing for dry garb.

All in all it was a day that will be long remembered on Broad Street and the lower section of town.

'No Panic, But People Moved Fast'

By CHARLES WARING JR.
Evening Post Staff Writer

There was no panic among the small group of early morning coffee drinkers at Marcus Rexall Drug Store when fire broke out at approximately 8 a.m. today.

Two eyewitnesses gave their accounts as the fire was being brought under control about 11:30 a.m.

Mrs. Abbie Long, a secretary for Charleston Overseas Forwarders in the Peoples Building, was drinking coffee with several companions.

"We smelled a little smoke at first," she said, "but then it really started pouring in and we decided to get out of there."

"You couldn't tell how severe it was and the smoke seemed to be coming from above us, not from in the drug store."

"THERE WAS no panic, but some people seemed to move faster than others. I stopped to pay my bill, but the cash register wasn't working and they weren't able to give me change. So I reached in my purse and found ten pennies and dropped them on the counter. I guess they're pretty well melted by now. At least my conscience is clear."

Rep. Arthur C. Baker, an attorney with offices in the Peoples Building, had finished his breakfast and was having his second cup of coffee.

"THE SMOKE seemed to just form over a period of two or three minutes. It was hard to breathe, but you could see pretty well."

"I left and went across the street to see where the fire was, but it was about a half hour before you could see any flames."

"I would estimate there were about 15 persons in the shop at the time and we all left rather hurriedly. In fact, I still haven't paid my bill."

FLAMES

Continued From Page 1-A

the acrid smoke down Broad Street and filling neighboring buildings.

By 9 a.m., outlying fire departments and the military were moving in to aid in fighting the blaze or to stand by in city fire stations.

The fire broke out under leaden skies and in a cold rain but in spite of the overcast, the boiling smoke and flames were visible over most of the city.

The fire attracted hundreds of spectators who were held by police and fire lines. Business along the entire street, the financial hub of the city, was suspended or interrupted.

The smoke blackened the air in the area below Broad and East Bay streets. East Bay Street was jammed with stalled traffic.

Groups of spectators in the S.C. National Bank parking lot were chased away by police at 9:45 when it appeared that the back wall of the Marcus Building would collapse.

Broad Street Hard Hit By Fire-Of 1778

The fire of 1778—one of this city's worst—also had a devastating effect on the east end of Broad Street.

According to the "Year Book of Charleston", published in 1880, that conflagration "entirely destroyed all Union Street, the South side of Queen Street, from Mrs. Poyley's house to Bay; greater part of Chalmers' Alley; all the Bay, excepting fifteen houses from Queen Street to Granville's Bastion; the north side of Broad Street, from Mrs. Thomas Smith's house to Bay; the south side of the same, from Mrs. Sawgen's to Mr. Guerard's; All Gadsden's Alley; Elliott Street, excepting two houses; Bedon's Alley; the east side of Church Street, from Broad Street to Stoll's Alley, excepting five tenements, and the whole of Tradd Street to the eastward of Church Street."

"The cracking of the flames; the dreadful columns of smoke bearing with them myriads of fiery flakes, which fell in all parts of the town lying in the direction of the wind; the roar of explosions; the crash of falling houses, the shrieks of the unhappy sufferers; the horror painted in every countenance; the confusion apparent everywhere, and detecting the infamous wretches (and they were not a few) who availed themselves of the opportunity to pilfer, altogether formed one of the most dismal scenes of woe and distress than can possibly be conceived."

The fire this morning was contained primarily in one building, the Marcus Building. However, the look of distress was not absent in faces in the crowd who took more than just a passing interest in the worst Broad Street fire this century.

Fire Destroys Numerous Records, Files

By JACK ROACH
Evening Post Staff Writer

It took only a few hours today to destroy the Marcus Building.

But for many of its tenants, the disastrous blaze will mean many, many hours of work duplicating records, file documents and other important papers which were lost in the various insurance and law offices.

Many of the tenants and their clerical help, when arriving for work, quickened their pace as they saw smoke pouring from the building.

They could only stand by helplessly in the cold rain and watch.

C. D. Hopkins, whose law office is in the building, arrived in time to see the flames engulf his second-floor office as firemen poured water into it.

"It'll take a long time and hard work to duplicate some of those records in there," he remarked, shaking his head.

His thoughts were echoed by J. Arthur Tuten, whose insurance office is also in the building, as he discussed the loss of his files and papers.

A secretary who works in the building took a look at the blaze and remarked, "Well, I guess it's a holiday today for me—and several more days, too."

Odds Favor Goldwater Candidacy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Barry Goldwater's Republican Senate colleagues got their bets down today — and the smart money was on a bid for the White House by the Arizona conservative.

Goldwater gives his yes or no Friday at a meeting of Arizona Republican leaders in his native Phoenix.

The setting, his hilltop home overlooking the city, and the audience of state GOP leaders Goldwater chose seemed to hint he might plan to talk about an Arizona race for re-election to his Senate seat.

But Goldwater spread word of his plans in a telegram Monday to his supporters across the country.

As senators scattered from Washington for the New Year's holiday, they put the odds on a Goldwater plunge into the race for the GOP presidential nomination.

Two of Goldwater's top supporters—talking like insiders — said they are confident he will declare himself a candidate.

New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller is the only announced contender for top spot on the GOP ticket.



Mike Gambrell, his yo-yo and his trophy.

Moncks Corner Boy Wins Regional Yo-Yo Contest

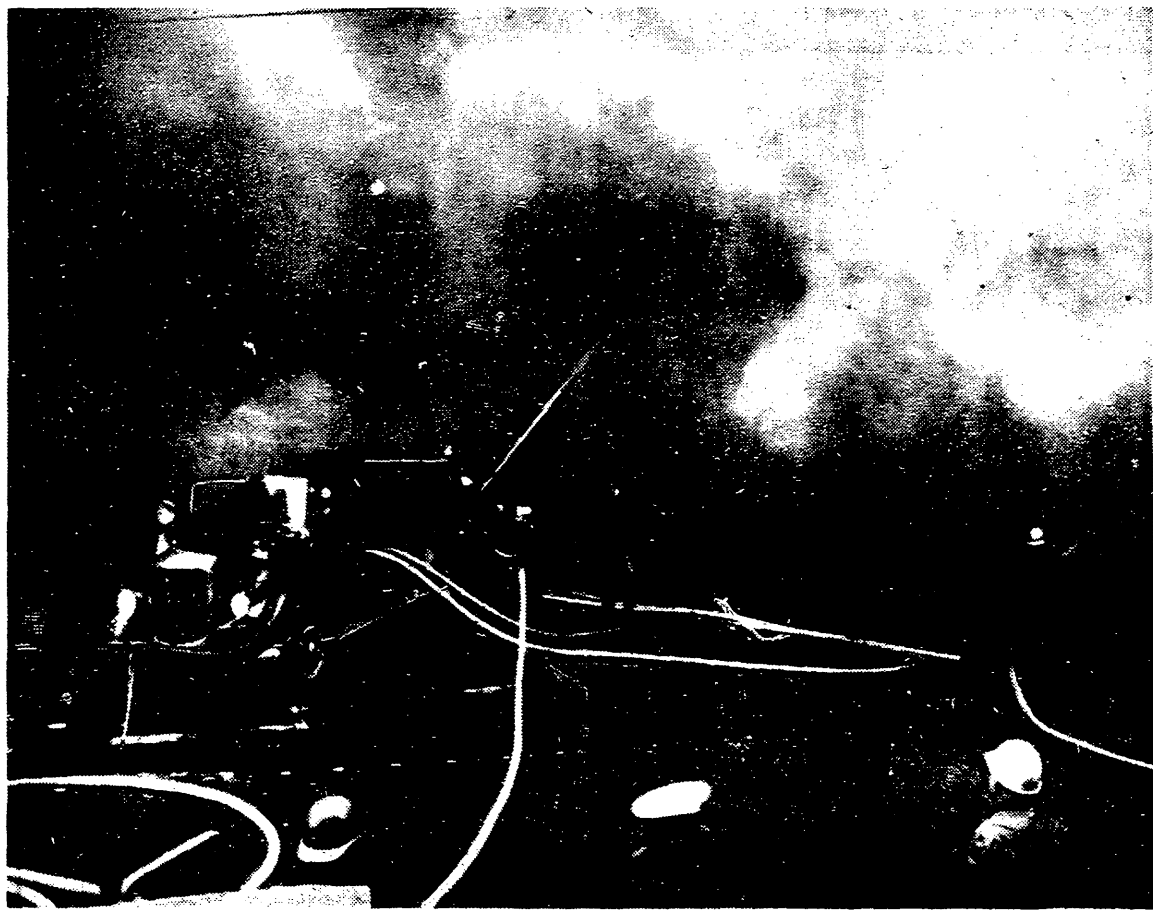
Mike Gambrell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gambrell of Moncks Corner, was tops with this year and he is on top with yo-yos this year.

He recently won first honors in the North Carolina regional contest in the South Carolina regional contest in Charlotte after being named winner in Charleston district competition earlier this month.

Last December he won the North Carolina - South Carolina regional contest for spinning tops and was awarded a trophy and a trip for two to Disneyland, Calif., to compete in top last year and he is on top with yo-yos this year.

This time he also gets a trophy and a chance to return to Disneyland to try for the national yo-yo title. Winner of that title also collects a \$5,000 scholarship and trophies.

Last year his mother accompanied the 14-year-old boy, but this time he will be accompanied by his father.



Broad Street was obscured by smoke from the Marcus Building fire.