

CHARLESTON EVENING POST

70TH YEAR - 80

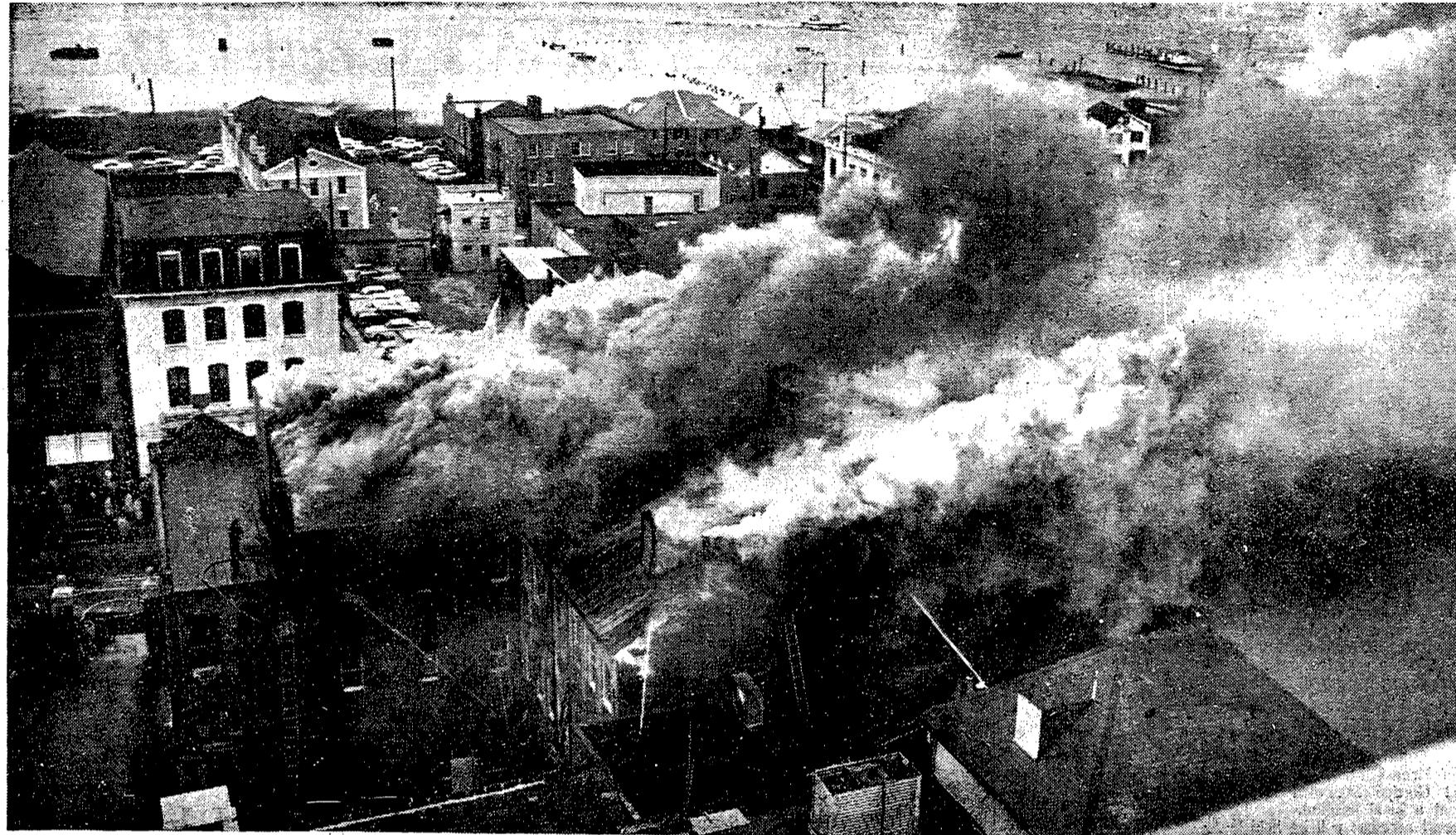
TWO SECTIONS

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

18 PAGES

DAILY 10c — WEEKLY 30c

GREATER CHARLESTON FINAL

South Carolina's
LARGEST
Afternoon NewspaperWind-Whipped Flames Ravage
Broad Street Office Building

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

(Staff Photo)

Military, Civilian Firemen

Neighbors Answered The Call

On The Inside
CHARLESTON ready to welcome New Year. 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.

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

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.

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, Pearce, 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

Street and tongues of flame could be observed in the building.

Firemen were expected to remain on the scene at least throughout the day.

John D. Marcus, owner of the building and drug store, estimated that his investment alone was \$300,000, all of which was covered by insurance.

The fire, which began about 8:10 a.m. was substantially under control by 10:15 a.m. after threatening nearby buildings, including the main office of the South Carolina National Bank in the same block.

Fire Chief Fred Shokes, who arrived on the scene shortly after the alarms were sounded, said a complete estimate of damages has not yet been made.

Mrs. Marcus, who was in the drug store with seven employees and a few customers, said that they first noticed smoke and immediately telephoned an alarm.

The smoke was then noticed by policemen outside the building and two other alarms were received. Firemen found the building filled with smoke and it was not until about 45 minutes later that flames broke through the roof.

The men fought the fire in 33-degree weather and in rain. A number were forced to change to dry clothes because of the rain and water from the fire hoses.

They received some relief from hot coffee dispensed from canteens set up by the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross.

As smoke poured into adjacent buildings, employees made preparations to remove records and equipment.

The South Carolina National Bank moved eight filing cabinets containing records from one section of the building to another.

At no time was currency removed.

George W. Stout, former fire chief and a member of the Board of Fire Commissioners for almost 40 years, termed it the "second worse blaze" in the city proper in his career.

He said the fire was second only to the Charleston Tidewater Terminal blaze which ravaged the huge terminals on the waterfront June, 1955, taking two lives and doing \$3 million damage.

Every available piece of fire-fighting equipment was thrown into the battle against the blaze.

A strong northeasterly wind, for which small craft warnings were flying, and which reached gusts to 28 miles an hour, blew

Continued Page 4-A, Column 8

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 Burbridge, Robert Nettles, Jessie O'Connell and Ronnie Brinson shot the photos.

Staff writer Belvin Horres was the rewrite man 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 2027 Carver Avenue will follow the same schedule.

Publication schedules of the two newspapers will not be interrupted.

'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 going up a chimney. Flames leaped 40 feet out of the office building on the northwest corner of East Bay and Broad streets threatening the entire block.

FIRE HOSES snaked along East Bay and Broad streets like long lengths of spaghetti. Hundreds watched every available fireman fight a losing battle with the worst blaze on this city's main business street since 1778.

It was cold—near freezing, and rain sprinkled down.

"My office (Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Inc.) is a wreck," the firm's account executive said. "I was able to get only a handful of papers out."

"By the time it appeared bad enough to try to save anything, it was too late," Mr. Dodds said.

"Probably everything was lost," he said, but duplicate records are already being compiled in New York.

INSIDE Marcus Drug Store on the first floor of the ill-fated office building, approximately 20 business men and secretaries ate breakfast as the fire gained its foothold undetected.

One of those was Gordon B. Brown, assistant vice president of Carolina Bank and Trust Co., located directly across Broad Street from the Marcus Building.

"Smoke started coming down through the ventilating system," Mr. Brown said. "Then it started coming down through the ceiling. It got progressively worse. Someone ran in and said he had tried to go upstairs, but the building was filled with smoke."

"We got out!"

"It must have been 30 to 45 minutes before the first flames could be seen in the building, but it was filled with smoke which was so bad it kept firemen from entering the front of the building."

"WHEN THE flames did break through the roof, they leaped 30 to 40 feet in the air."

Mr. Brown said he rushed inside his bank, helped lock valuables in a fireproof vault and posted a lookout on the roof of the building, as the fire threatened.

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.

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, Pearce, 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 adjustor.

Fred L. Laing, mortgage broker.

Department of Commerce Field Office.

Southwestern Life Insurance Co.

Manhattan Life Insurance Co. R. B. Conner, 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 to day.

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



Seven streams of water hit Marcus Building as firemen battle flames. (Staff Photo)

Dates Back To 1778

Burned Building's Career Varied

By CHARLE HUNTER
Evening Post Staff Writer

ago cost an estimated \$130,000. Most of the buildings involved in the combination and renovation were more than 100 years old, according to the owner, John B. Marcus.

The buildings had been used as a bank, headquarters for the old horse-drawn cars, restaurant, drug store, book store, liquor store, office building and the plant of an early local newspaper.

As early as 1778, there was a building on the corner property. It was owned by Alexander Inglis and in Sept. 11, 1778, was sold to Isaac Mott.

MR. MOTTO sold the property in Oct. 3, 1778, to Samuel Prioleau for 10 shillings. On Aug. 19, 1795, it was ac-

quired 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.

On 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 3 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.

"The crackling 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."

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."

'No Panic, But People Moved Fast'

By CHARLES WARING JR.
Evening Post Staff Writer

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.

Fire Destroys Numerous Records, Files

By JACK ROACH

Evening Post Staff Writer

It took only a few hours to day 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.

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.

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.

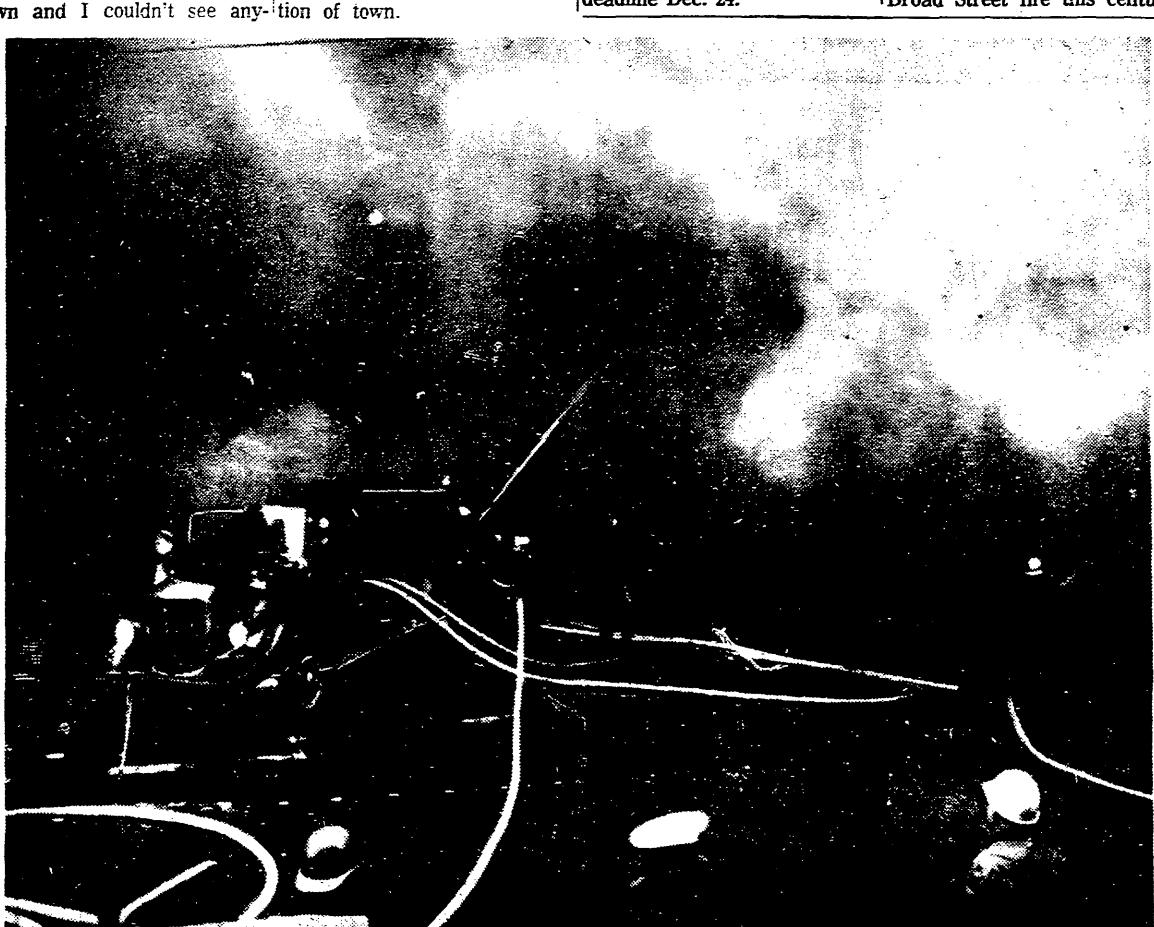
The setting, his hilltop home overlooking the city, and the audience of state GOP leaders Goldwater chose seemed to hint he might plan to talk about an Arizona race for re-election to his Senate seat.

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.



Broad Street was obscured by smoke from the Marcus Building fire. (Staff Photo)



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 tops last year and he is tops with yo-yos this year.

He recently won first honors in the North Carolina and 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 spin-

ning tops and was awarded a trophy and a trip for two to DisneyLand, Calif., to compete in the national finals.

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 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.