

\$500,000 Fire Destroys 2 Downtown Buildings

Seven Business Places Hit By Midnight Blaze

Falling Walls Peril
Firemen on Duty At
Jackson, Summit Sts.

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Other stores or firms damaged today, in the most spectacular downtown blaze in many years, were:

Hirsch Laboratories, 226 Jackson St.

Ohio Fruit Co., 436 Summit St.

Fain's Credit Clothing, 434 Summit St.

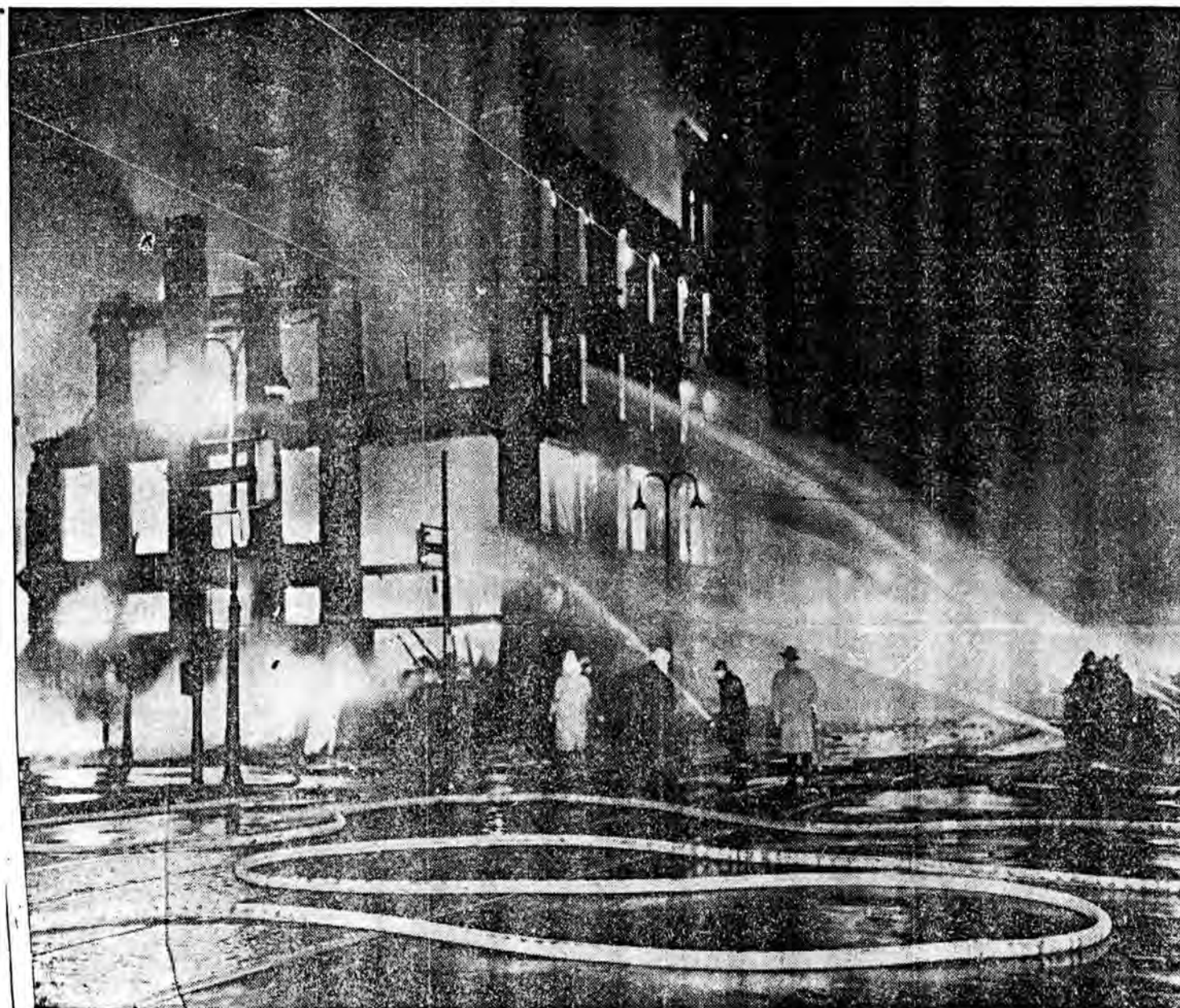
Great Atlantic and Pacific Supermarket, 502 Summit St.

Surlin & Co., 226 Jackson St.

More than 160 guests in the Hotel Navarre, Jackson and St. Clair Sts., were ordered out of the establishment when the flames shot across Summit St. and cracked windows on the east side of the hotel.

Cause Not Determined

Fire Chief Fred T. Schlorf estimated damage to the buildings occupied by Harry's Auto Stores and the Boston Men's Store at \$200,000



—Blade Photo

THIS PICTURE was taken only 30 minutes after fire broke out in the five-story building at the southeast corner of Jackson and Summit Sts., early today. This building housed Harry's Auto Store. Additional pictures on Page 3.

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Fire Chief Fred T. Schlorf estimated damage to the buildings occupied by Harry's Auto Stores and the Boston Men's Store at \$200,000 and \$250,000 to the contents. The cause of the blaze has not been determined.

The fire was discovered at 12:24 a. m. by Police Sergt. Carl Wiener, who was crossing the Cherry St. Bridge. He notified the bridge tender, Robert LaPlante, 157 Champion St., and Robert Hyer, 2350 Monroe St., also reported the blaze.

LaPlante and Hyer, seated in their car, parked opposite the buildings, saw a flash that they thought was a window display. A moment later the heat cracked the window of the automobile and, realizing they were seeing a fire, not a demonstration, they turned in an alarm.

Flames Spread Rapidly

Fire apparatus arrived two minutes later but in that brief interval the flames had spread with lightning speed throughout the building occupied by Harry's Auto Stores at the southeast corner of Summit and Jackson Sts.

Fed by drums of oil, the flames were pouring out of every window when firemen arrived.

A second alarm was turned in at 12:28 a. m. and a third alarm a minute later. The fourth alarm was sounded at 12:41 followed by a special call 15 minutes later. At 1:08 a. m., a second special call was turned in, leaving only two companies to combat fires that might break out anywhere else in the city. However, only one alarm was received while firemen were battling the downtown blaze.

Chief Schlorf also summoned auxiliary firemen and policemen to the scene.

Flaming Arc Canopies Street, Endanger



A CANOPY OF fire formed over Jackson St. as flames from the Harry's Auto Stores met those from the burning Hirsch Laboratories on the opposite side of the street, driving firemen back to Water St.

Toll Greatest On Home-Front

37,600 War Workers Killed in Accidents

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20 (INS)—The Office of War Information disclosed today that more men are losing their lives in home-front war production than on the battlefields overseas.

In a survey of government agencies, private industry and labor unions, OWI revealed 37,600 war workers were killed up to Jan. 1 in industrial accidents since Pearl Harbor—7,500 more than service men killed on the battlefronts during the same period.

Thousands Disabled
OWI said it found 210,000 workers were permanently disabled and 4,500,000 temporarily disabled during the same period—60 times more than the military wounded and missing as of Jan. 1, 1944.

OWI labeled accidents in war plants as "a major production and manpower problem" and pointed out that injuries account for four times as many lost man-hours as strikes.

The nation's industrial concerns, OWI continued, have 50,000 workers absent every day because of accidents, while deaths and injuries on the job are occurring now at the rate of 270 million lost man-days a year. This is equivalent to withdrawal of 900,000 workers for a full year from the production lines, OWI said.

Facts Appear Favorable

"In two respects, these facts appear favorable, according to safety authorities," OWI declared, however.

Deaths are only two-thirds as frequent per 100,000 workers in this war as in the last and the loss of life and limb would be incalculably worse if management, government, labor, insurance companies and safety agencies had not been able to effect the most accelerated adoption of safety practices in industrial history.

Carolines Bombed First Time In War

Shore Installations Battered by Yanks

Two Downtown Buildings Destroyed By Flames With Loss Of \$500,000

Continued from First Page

The fire began in the first floor rear of Harry's. But so rapidly did it spread and so devastating was its force that part of a side wall on Jackson St. collapsed at 12:40, only 16 minutes after the first alarm had been sounded.

The flames shot north across Jackson St., igniting the Hirsch Laboratories, and then leaped to the A. and P. Store at the northeast corner of Summit and Jackson Sts. Firemen broke into the grocery and quickly extinguished the fire there but the laboratories blaze was fought for several hours. At 12:57 a. m., there was a terrible explosion of the north wall of Harry's Auto Stores lopped to the street in an avalanche of brick and mortar.

Firemen of No. 6 company were directly in the path of the falling wall. Some of the men dropped to the ground to escape injury, some were knocked to the pavement. The hose line they had been handling slipped from their grasp and, twisting like a huge snake, showered police and spectators with water.

Flames Endanger Hotel

The blast of flame hit the Navarre Hotel, diagonally across the street, and the buildings on the west side of Summit St.

Fire Chief Schlorf said later that he was so sure at that moment the hotel would burn, that he had considered summoning fire apparatus from Detroit and Monroe. Nine lines of hose kept a steady barrage of water pouring into the shattered windows on the west side of Summit St.

The flames from the burning auto stores building and those sweeping from the upper windows of the Hirsch Laboratories formed a fiery canopy over Jackson St., driving firemen back to Water St. From that point, step by step, they fought their way back.

Ball of Fire Seen

At 1:12 a. m., a ball of fire in the Boston Men's Store, separated from the auto store by a brick wall, shot out of the front doorway as heavy streams of water, played by firemen of No. 1 company, broke the glass.

In a second, flames and smoke poured from windows and doorway

Ohio Fruit Co. and also Fain's Credit Clothing Store.

The falling wreckage sent a huge shower of sparks and bits of burning debris hundreds of feet into the air.

Within a short time all of the

2,400,000 Gallons Of Water Used On Fire Sets Record

A total of 2,400,000 gallons of water was pumped through high pressure mains in a six-hour period in battling today's fire at Jackson and Summit Sts., shattering all previous records, Harry Grace, myer, chief operating engineer, reported.

During that period the pumpage was at the rate of 7,800 gallons a minute. The previous record of 5,100 gallons a minutes was set June 28, 1932, during the Western Auto Supply Co. fire.

Today's fire caused the greatest drain on the high pressure pumping station in its history, Mr. Grace, myer said. All four units were in operation during a two hour period.

At 9:30 a. m., the fire department still was using water at the rate of 3,800 gallons a minute.

Between 1 and 3:30 a. m., 225 pounds pressure, an unusual figure, was called for by the fire department.

Month's Fire Loss Exceeds '43 Total

Repairs at Colony Block Arranged

With this morning's \$500,000 blaze and the Colony fire Jan. 12, the first three weeks of 1944 saw more than double the fire damage recorded in Toledo than throughout the entire year 1943. Earl R. Walterscheid, chief of the fire prevention bureau, reported today.

Fire damage last year totaled approximately \$485,000, records of the bureau revealed, while in 20 days of this year fires have caused damage estimated at \$1,100,000.

The fire official pointed out that fire losses now are more serious than the amount of money lost since replacement of buildings and

floors of the two buildings had fallen leaving tottering walls to endanger everyone in the immediate vicinity.

Police and firemen kept a special eye on a corner of the men's clothing store where, five stories above the street, a heavy cornice seemed momentarily about to crash.

A searchlight was trained on the wall on orders of Edward DeAngelo, Safety Director, so watchers could ascertain if it was about to collapse.

The fire in the Hirsch Laboratories was fought from Water St. When conditions permitted, a ladder was raised to the top of the three-story brick building from Jackson St. A fireman crawled inside but Deputy Chief Park Daly and Walter Ringer, deputy fire chief, sent other men up the ladder to order him out.

The heat from the fire cracked windows in the Summit Bargain Store, 443 Summit St. and Rubin's Sandwich Shop, 439 Summit St. Awnings on the front of St. Vincent de Paul Society headquarters, 501 Summit St., were burned.

Fireman Is Injured

Fireman Edward Bads, 929 Avondale Ave., received internal injuries when a hose line slipped from his grasp and he was knocked against the curbing by the powerful stream of water. He was taken to Mercy Hospital in Worth Clegg's ambulance.

Others injured included Philip Murphy, 2206 Tremainsville Rd., auxiliary fireman, who was treated in St. Vincent's Hospital after a nail entered his foot, and Charles Hoff, fireman of No. 5 company, who suffered an injury to his instep.

Auxiliary policemen assisted Toledo police in roping off the fire area, bounded by Adams St., Summit St., St. Clair St., Jackson St. and Orange St. They kept the crowd back a block from the scene.

Fireman Win Praise

Director DeAngelo praised firemen for their work in keeping the flames from spreading. He said he intends asking Council to prohibit storing of large quantities of oil in the downtown area.

Chief Schlorf, who directed that hose lines be played on the ruins all day, said the loss might run higher than the \$500,000 preliminary estimate.

G. H. Himelsoch, Jr., son of the president of Harry's Auto Stores,