

Fire Destroys Village Tavern, Port Landmark

1969



HAPPIER DAYS...Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Leoolou and their son, Stephen with whom they are making a temporary home in Manorhaven, are seen above in front of the Village Tavern which was destroyed by fire on Saturday morning, February 1st. The senior Mr. Leoolou, who established the Village Tavern in 1947 and operated it with his wife and son's assistance until he sold it in 1961, is now affiliated with the Town DOCK.

A fire, believed to have been caused by faulty wiring, completely destroyed The Village Tavern, the store next door called the Gift Finder, and the apartments upstairs, at 161 Main Street, on Saturday, February 1st. (See photo below).

Port's volunteer firemen, under the direction of Fire CHIEF Nicholas Marra, are credited with the rescue of tenants in the six apartments, as well as preventing the fire from spreading to the attached buildings.

One fireman, Louis Ligeri of 49 Fairview Avenue, was reported to have stepped on a nail that punctured his left foot and was taken to Dr. Eugene Calvelli's office where he was treated and sent home. There were also

reports that other firemen suffered from smoke inhalation and over-exertion.

Port Police Lt. Carl DeMeo was on desk duty early Saturday morning when George McGowan of 85 Morewood Oaks came into Port Police Headquarters at 7:40 a.m., to report he noticed smoke in the Village Tavern.

Lt. DeMeo sounded a general fire alarm, broadcast the location over the fire radio and notified the platoon and the Long Island Lighting Company, after Chief

Marra requested BICO at the scene. The owner of the building, Gus Saravanos of Flushing was also notified.

Port Police Patrolman Ronald Pinckney, assigned, reported the fire occurred in the Village Tavern Bar and Restaurant in the two-story concrete apartment house. It was theorized that an electrical short apparently smoldered along faulty wiring, causing intense heat that completely charred the contents and buckled the plate glass window. After the window was broken, flames were seen through the smoke. It was not learned who broke the window.

The Village Tavern, operated by Robert S. Walsh of 5 Belleview Avenue was reported as totally damaged and the six upstairs apartments were listed as considerably damaged.

There is one street entrance to the upstairs apartments over 161 and 165 Main Street.

The apartment occupants included Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Leoolou, Patrick Henry, Mrs. Richard Scott, Liena Gildo, Ronald Dye and Charles and Christina Barre. It was noted that Mrs. Scott is the operator of the Gift Finder store and resides at 40 Litchfield Road. Damage to the Gift FINDER STORE WAS REPORTED AS "slight."

All food in the Village Tavern was condemned by Joseph Fugallo of the NASSAU County Board of Health.

The stores and upstairs apartments, prior to 1929, were once owned by the Bird family. Once occupied by The Rose Shop.

The stores and upstairs apartments, prior to 1929, were once owned by the Bird family. Once occupied by The Rose Shop, the Village Tavern was established and operated by Stephen Leoolou from 1947 until 1961 when he sold the building.

Fire Guts Village Tavern, Residents Above Evacuated

A fire, believed of electrical origin, gutted the Village Tavern, 159 Main Street, Saturday morning and drove residents of four apartments on the floor above to the street.

One, Liens Gildo, was brought down a fire ladder from an adjacent apartment when the stairway became impassable to the second story. Fire fighters used breathing apparatus in the excavation.

Chief Nicholas Marra said the fire started in a beam in the ceiling of the Tavern near an electrical fixture. The beam was severely charred. Chief Marra said the Tavern was a total loss and damage to the apartments above extensive.

Discovered shortly before 8 a. m., the blaze brought a general alarm to which all Port Washington companies responded. The entire Tavern was in flames when the first unit arrived and fireman

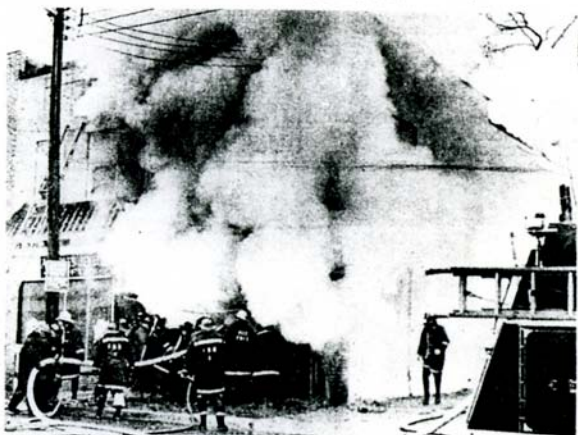
were hampered by the intense heat.

A tin ceiling in the Tavern apparently contained the original blaze until it had built up to flash down into the bar and restaurant, the Chief said. The fire then spread upward to the apartments on the second floor, occupied by Stephen Lellow, Patrick Henry, Liens Gildo, and Charles and Christina Barre.

Only casualty was Fireman Louis Ligeri, 49 Fairview Avenue, who stepped on nail in a piece of debris from the ceiling. He was treated by Dr. Eugene V. Calvelli Jr.

Damage to an adjacent store, the Gift Finder, 161 Main Street, was "slight." The store is operated by Richard Scott, 40 Litchfield Road.

The Tavern is operated by Robert S. Walsh, 5 Belleview Avenue. The building is owned by Gus Saravanas of Flushing





AT 11:30 A.M.: Firemen contemplate debris from fire on main street. Damage to second floor apartments was "extensive." (VMI Photo by Leo Sticker.)