

\$20,000 Fire At Monfort Home, Suspect Vandals

The Port Washington Fire Department, under the direction of Fire Chief John A. Duncan, responded to a general alarm called in by an employee of the Port Washington Post Office on Monday, February 3rd at 6:24 p. m., for a fire at the Monfort Home, 10 East Main Street, one of the Port Washington oldest landmarks.

The fire, apparently started in a dumbwaiter shaft in the east wing basement of the two-story frame Monfort Homestead, was confined to one of the living rooms and a stairway, Chief Duncan said. The quick response of the volunteer firemen is believed to have prevented the fire from spreading throughout the building. It was fully under control within 40 minutes, despite the hazard of temperatures in the 20's with resultant freeze of the water.

\$20,000 Fire

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Cause of the fire was attributed to possible arson with a suspicion of vandalism. The home, in the estate of the late Burtis H. Monfort Sr., had been unoccupied since July, 1956, when Mr. and Mrs. Monfort died within one week of each other.

Port Washington Police Lt. Adrien Neusel and Ptl. Robert Bilyeu were assigned. Further investigation is being conducted by Port Washington's Fire Marshal Michael Caruso and County Fire Marshal George Clough.

Damage to the 20-room home and furnishings were estimated at \$20,000.

Noteworthy at the scene was "Mac" Merewitz of the Alcove, who brought down two urns of hot coffee to serve to the vamps.

Fire Chief Duncan revealed that during the inspection after the fire, a record album was open at a recording of "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes."

The Monfort's daughter, C.

Eileen Monfort of 15 Ridge Drive, said that the house was built "about 180 years ago by Joseph O. Hegeman and left to my grandfather, James Clifton Monfort, then passed to my father, who died in 1956." She said that Hegeman and her grandfather were "big apple exporters and owned thousands of acres of land." Part of the land is Beeson Hill and Monfort Hill homesites and the shopping center on Port Washington Boulevard. Slave quarters once on the site had been razed several years ago.

