

Port News 3/16/51

**Estimate Loss
To Buildings
At \$200,000**

**Vamps Battle Blaze
For Five Hours; Red**

Manhattan Food Store
Main Street
Port News 3/16/1951

WORLDSTREET

MAIN STREET FIRE DESTROYS

As huge clouds of black smoke, whipped by March winds, billowed down Main Street, flames burst through the seams of the walls and completely destroyed the Manhattan Market here late Tuesday afternoon.

The fire, the origin of which is still undetermined, broke out at 3:45 p.m. and blazed for more than five hours in the worst Main Street disaster in twenty years. It is reported that the damage to the Manhattan and nearby stores will total more than \$200,000.

Police say the fire may have started in the boiler room and smoldered for some time before it was noticed. An explosion rocked the structure only moments after shoppers had been cleared from the building.

More than 3000 persons, held back from the burning building by police lines, lined the street and watched the Port Washington Fire Department under the direction of Chief John Whaley pour thousands of gallons of water on the uncontrollable flames. The Manhasset-Lakeville and the Roslyn Department were called at five-thirty.

The smoke and water which penetrated surrounding stores caused considerable damage to Marsh's new store, Klix Cleaners and Berning's Drug Store. Marsh's basement was flooded with more than eight feet of water and the dividing wall between the Manhattan and Berning's was weakened by pressure is still in danger of collapsing, a spokesman said last night.

Manhattan's co owners John Keane and Peter Mathews said the fire started so suddenly that they didn't even have time to take the money from the cash registers, much less save any of the stock. The market was declared a total loss by the Nassau County Fire Marshall, Peter Lynch.

Commuters returning home from New York could hardly see the station platform as the thick smoke spread over town.

The Red Cross Chapter set up a canteen in the Port Decorators and served the vamps more than 1000 cups of coffee, sandwiches and cigarettes under the direction of Earl Hooper, disaster chairman. Mrs. James Johnson was in charge of the canteen and Henry

on, county chairman was
d. The food was made by
acon Diner and the Alcove
rant. The Modern Bakery
d cake and breakfast rolls
reenfields Pharmacy con-
d cigarettes.