

FEB 1. 1948.

10 NORTH MARYLAND AVE.

Woman, 3 Children Dead in Port Blaze

Port Washington—Four persons were killed and three injured in a pre-dawn blaze which swept through a two-story frame house here yesterday.

Dead are Margaret Larsen, 32, and her six-year-old son, Dennis; Peter Hansen, and his sister, Susan, two.

In Nassau Hospital, still on the critical list is Mary Hansen, twin sister of the dead woman and mother of Peter and Susan; her husband, August, 31, and third child, Joan Hansen, six months old.

A cab driver, Arnold McCourt of 32 Main St., passing the 10 North Maryland St. house shortly before 4 A.M., saw flames darting from the roof and smoke billowing from the eaves. He turned in an alarm and within minutes some 150 volunteer firemen from four companies were at the scene.

Aroused by Sirens

Noise of the sirens awakened the Hansens in their bedroom at the front of the house. Smoke and flames filled the room. Mrs. Hansen screamed to her husband to awaken their children and her sister. She ran to the bassinette and snatched up the sleeping baby, Joan, then ran toward the door of the bedroom.

A wall of flames stopped her. The frantic mother rushed back into the room, to the windows and looked down.

A high snow bank stood directly below her. With but a moment's hesitation, and giving a warning cry to the firemen trying desperately to gain entry to the house, she tossed out the blanket wrapped infant. The woman watched till firemen rushed to the spot, picked up the child and shouted, "We have the baby," then turned back to find her other children.

Again the flames beat her back and this time she too jumped from the window.

In the meantime her husband groped his way through the blinding smoke and flames toward the other bedrooms. He heard the firemen shout "We have the baby." Thinking all the children were safe and in a near unconscious condition himself, he staggered to a window and jumped.

Dr. Maurice Baim, called to the scene, treated the infant for exposure, the mother for shock and multiple cuts of the face, hands and neck and the father for second degree burns of the face, hands and body and cuts and sent them to Nassau Hospital.

The three were unaware at the time that their other loved ones were dead.

Within 10 minutes of their arrival at the fire, vamps entered the home. They found the two Hansen youngsters dead from suffocation and in the adjacent bedroom the badly burned body of Mrs. Larsen and her son.

The two Hansen children, taken to the home of a neighbor, were worked on by doctors and the fire emergency crew for two hours to no avail.

William McCarthy, fire chief, said the blaze was a flash fire. The origin was traced to a coal heating stove in a kitchen extension off the house. Because all doors were open to facilitate the circulation of the heat, McCarthy believed the air current fanned the blaze.

Police, up until late last night, had been unable to contact the husband of Margaret Larsen. According to police, the pair had been living apart and it was believed that he is a patient in a veterans hospital.

August Hansen, a painting contractor, and his family had lived in the Maryland St. house for nearly eight years. Margaret Larsen and her son came to live with her sister two years ago. Mr. and Mrs. William Sullivan, parents of the twins, have been notified of the tragedy in their Massachusetts home.

Mabel Taylor, 49 South Baylis Ave., an intimate friend of Mary Hansen, will handle details of the funerals.

Dr. Dolores Amar, deputy medical examiner, at the scene, ordered the bodies removed to Meadowbrook Hospital.

Det. Arthur Haile, Sixth Squad, is handling the investigation.



ere rescued when fire engulfed this home at 10 North Mary-
gton. Here, Ptl. Robert Reese of Port Washington Police ex-

Newsday

HYDRANTS BLOCKED, FIRE TAKES 4 LIVES

10 North Maryland Avenue

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1948.

Ends Snow-Removal Squabble at Port Washington—Blaze in Paterson Kills 4 Children

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PORT WASHINGTON, L. I. Feb. 1.—A woman and three children were killed when their home burned here early this morning. During the blaze a 6-month-old infant was saved when thrown by its father from a second-story window into a snowbank.

The four deaths brought to an end the month-old squabble among town officials as to who should clear snow from hydrants. In this fire, the firemen wasted time trying to find the hydrant in the snow. Tonight, policemen asked residents to shovel snow away from hydrants and said they would do it themselves tomorrow if home owners were unable to do so.

The parents of two of the dead children escaped by leaping into the snowbank. The dead woman was an aunt of two of the dead children and her own son died in the fire. The man, woman and child who escaped were taken to the hospital with painful, but not serious burns.

Within the same twenty-four-hour period, the twenty-five-room home of Clarence Budington Kelland, the writer, was razed while firemen wasted thirty minutes digging in the snow for a hydrant. They found a hydrant a block and a half away, though there was one buried on the same block as the burning building.

The fire that brought the hydrant dispute to a gruesome climax was in a two-and-a-half-story house at 1010 North Maryland Avenue. It

HYDRANTS BLOCKED, FIRE TAKES 4 LIVES

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was owned by August Hansen and his wife, Mary. They lived there with their three children and Mrs. Hansen's twin sister, Mrs. Margaret Larsen, and her son.

Because of the almost complete destruction of the building, it was not possible today to say exactly what happened. It was thought, however, pending completion of an investigation by Fire Marshal Peter Lynch, that the fire was caused by a defective coal stove on the first floor.

The stove was on during the night and the doors were open to the three bedrooms on the upper floor. In one of the rooms were Mr. Hansen, his wife and their infant daughter, Joan. Their two other children, Peter, 18 months, and Susan, 2½ years old, were in the second bedroom. Mrs. Larsen and her 6-year-old son, Dennis, were in the third room.

Cab Driver Discovers Fire

Shortly before 4 A. M. a cab driver, Arnold McCourt of 322 Main Street, here, noticed the house was burning. He telephoned the police. The fire was believed to have been spreading for half an hour before the occupants were aroused. A neighbor said the upper rooms were already aglow when she heard the first screams from the building.

After Mr. Hansen had dropped the infant into the snowbank and forced his 32-year-old wife to jump, he shouted he would try to get the others out of the house. As he moved back from the window he thought he heard people in the street say the others were already there, so he jumped into the snow.

When he learned that the others had been left behind, the 31-year-old Mr. Hansen tried to re-enter

the building, but was prevented by firemen.

The firemen, sprayed with water that became an ice-sheath almost immediately in the zero weather, ran into the flaming structure. Upstairs they found the two other Hansen children and brought them to the street. The children could not be revived. Mrs. Hansen and her son were so badly burned the firemen did not try to revive them.

The residents of this town already had become aroused over the earlier fire at the Kelland home. In that fire, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wendors and their five children, who were living at the Kelland home while the author was away, escaped unhurt. A cottage on the property, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. William Sisserson, and a child, also was ruined, without harm to the occupants.

This afternoon the authorities held a closed meeting at police headquarters here. At the gathering were officials of the police and fire departments and a member of the water commission. Until this meeting the town officials had said the hydrants were the responsibility of the water commission and the water commission had retorted the matter should be cared for by the town.

4 Children Perish in Fire

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PATERSON, N. J., Feb. 1 — A fire caused by the explosion of an oil heater, took the lives of four children here today. Ruth, 14 years old; Harold, 11, and David, 9, children of Ansel Payne, a widower of 236 River Street, were burned to death in their bedroom shortly after midnight. Another child, John, 12, died of burns this afternoon at the Paterson General Hospital.

The father was out and an older sister, Irene, 17, was in another room when the fire started. Unable to rescue her brothers and sisters, she ran from the building and gave the alarm. Three other families made their way out of the building safely.

The three-story frame structure is owned by Max Fabian of 411 Fourteenth Avenue, this city.

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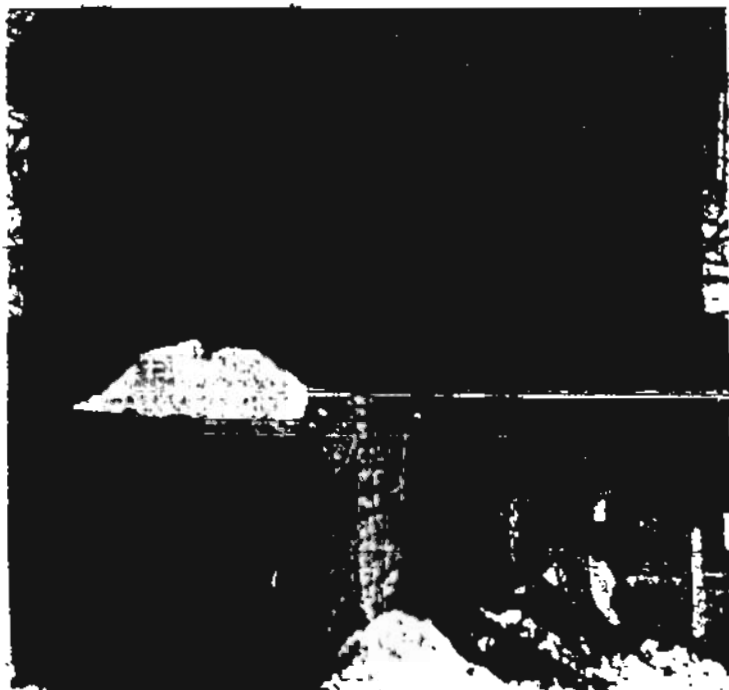
PORT WASHINGTON N. Y., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1948

2/6/1948

PRICE SIX CENTS—\$2.00 Per Year

Four Die in Early Morning Fire, Worst Tragedy in History of Pt. Washington

Where Four Perished In Fire



Dwelling on North Maryland Avenue which was gutted by fire early Sunday morning. Photo is from rear of building and shows the small addition where over heated stove flue is said to have started fire.

Photo by Everett J. Behu

Maryland Ave. Home Is Scene Of Catastrophe

WOMAN AND THREE CHILDREN PERISH

Taxi Driver, Passing
At 4 A.M. Sunday, Turns
In Alarm; House Gulled

Port Washington suffered its worst tragedy in history early Sunday morning when four persons, a mother and son and two children of the mother's sister lost their lives in a fire at 10 North Maryland Avenue.

Mrs. Margaret Larsen, 32, and her son, Dennis, 6, and her sister Mary's two children, Susan two and-a-half-years-old and Peter 18 months, perished in the fire.

The fire was discovered around 4 A.M. by a passing taxi driver who turned in the alarm. Asleep on the first floor were Mr. and Mrs. August Hansen and all months old Joan Hansen. Asleep on the second floor were Mrs. Larsen, who was separated from her husband, John; her son Dennis, and Susan and Peter Hansen. Mrs. Larsen was looking after the two Hansen children because her sister had been ill.

Cries of "Fire" from outside the dwelling awakened Mr. Hansen, who found the room filled with smoke. He woke his wife and handed the baby to her and she escaped with the child through a window.

In endeavoring to go upstairs to look after the occupants on the second floor, Hansen was forced back by heavy smoke. Hearing someone outside the house shout "They are alright" he believed reference was made to those on the second floor. Running from the house Hansen was badly burned. The three who escaped were taken to the Nathan Hospital.

After the fire was brought under control, the firemen found the three children dead on the floor and Mrs. Larsen dead in bed. The house was completely gutted.

It was said the heating furnace was not operating and that heat was provided through a coal stove in a one story addition in the rear of the house. Before going to bed Hansen had fired the stove to its capacity as the weather was near the zero mark. The fire evidently originated in the flue of the small stove burning its way to the roof of the small building and then setting fire to the main house.

The Hansen children were buried from the Rollins Funeral Home Wednesday with the Rev. Henry J. von Schlichten of the Lutheran Church officiating. The Larsen funerals will be held later. It was said yesterday Mr. and Mrs. Hansen are staying at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Karl Erikson on Ashwood Drive.

This fire tragedy is even worse than that in January 1922 when two small children lost their lives in the big fire across from the Railroad Station.

All Port Washington is shocked over this sad affair, as the grieving families have many friends throughout the community.

