

Sidelights on Explosion

(Continued from Page One)

The whole thing was horrible. I was never so frightened in my life.

Heroin came into the picture, too. Charles H. Schultze, 312 E. Brown, and Charles A. Dean, 287 E. Brown, heard a woman's screams at the rear of the building. They found Mrs. Arthur Wilson, dazed and calling for help. The men remarked on the marvelous composure of Mrs. Wilson, who asked that she be taken to a certain Detroit hospital, and gave the name and telephone number of her Dearborn physician. "I'm dazed," she explained. "My doctor must be told."

While they removed her, the men said she pleaded over and over for them to leave her and get her husband, who was still in the building. "I heard Arthur scream," she said. "Don't mind me, get him out, don't let him burn. Help Arthur Wilson die in the fire."

The third man undoubtedly was Alvin Alkema, 112 E. Hill Martin, 959 Oakland. There, he had finished rehearsing a certain Village Play and had heard the explosion. "We ran out," Alkema told reporters, "but I was so awed while the fire lit up, I started for the fire. There was a woman over by the building, and we heard her scream. A couple of other fellows were trying to get her away from there and an ambulance, and Alkema helped."

Across the ravine from the antique shop, several homes were badly from the force of the explosion. At the Paul Baker home, the Brookside, windows and paper were blown in a large, circular pattern. A beam in the attic was pulled loose.

Comedy entered the scene at

the Robert Plew home on Brookside. Mr. and Mrs. Plew had been a party of eight young trying to persuade eight-year-old John that he should go to bed. He said he would go if daddy and mother were eternally grateful that he did. After the blast they found the boy's bed under a bed blanket of shattered window pane.

All the flames in the neighborhood all flew hastily downed clothes and went outside. It was some time following that the fire started blowing around in the mud in night clothing and no shoes. In the night, it was so hot that people could not go to bed, he laid out on a jacket and went out to get back to Birmingham. Mrs. Baker said, "We were really traveling. It's funny, though, the way that door was smashed, and not even a scratch on my car which was parked in the garage."

Several residents, disregarding the fact that they were not members of the city's regular or volunteer fire departments, worked through the night doing what they could. Whoever they saw a fireman working alone, struggling with heavy hose and equipment, they went to his assistance. Several reported clothing burned and soaked.

The W. E. Melnes home, 680 Brookside, suffered the greatest damage. The glass was blown out of several rooms. Practically every piece of furniture was shattered, and several items were shattered, while an antique lamp went unscathed. At one window, the living room was tossed all over the room as the force of the blast shattered the window shelves on which a part of it stood.

Miss Patricia Melnes, sitting next the window writing Christmas cards, escaped without injury. An other member of the family, reading in an upstairs bedroom, received a severe shock and was as the blast flipped through the wall, shattering plaster and paper around. A beam in the attic was pulled loose.

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Wilson

(Continued from Page One)

day night by City Manager Donald C. Egbert, at 8:46 o'clock Sunday morning. Wilson received a telephone call from Mrs. Jones, requesting that a man investigate a suspected natural gas leak at her property.

Carroll, accompanied by Patrolmen Holmquist and Gilchrist, received the call.

At 8:54 Carroll telephoned Captain Pepperback about the fire hazard. At that time an extremely hazardous condition existed, and the Consumers Power Co. notified a man at the address of Royal Oak to shut off the main controlling the flow of gas in that area.

"Within a minute from the time that Carroll made his report, concluding that 'I'll make one more check in the basement', the explosion occurred."

Siren Brings Volunteers

The Fire Department's regular crew, already alerted, was on its way within a minute after the explosion. At that time the fire siren was sounded, resulting in the appearance of a large number of regular and volunteer firemen to the scene.

Wilson, who was in the Antique Shop when the explosion took place, she was hurriedly building, landing about 50 feet from the burning building. Police officers were on hand to identify the firemen who were getting her into a waiting ambulance, which she was rushed to the hospital.

Morrison was on his way to Bloomfield Center shortly before the explosion. He saw a number of fire cars in front of the Jones' house, and stopped. He got out of his car and was talking with the officers when the blast occurred.

Recall Explosion

"I actually don't remember hearing the explosion," he told The Eccentric later. "But I do remember seeing a huge burst of flames, and as I started running away I was struck with flying debris. I was talking with the officers when the blast occurred."

Mayor Don Bell, when he saw that all of the Birmingham fire equipment was going to be needed at a few minutes at the scene, sent down a stand-by pump—just in case it might be needed in a few minutes at the scene. The Pontiac equipment stood by here from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Fire Chief Vern Griffith worked hard all night. He stopped only for a few minutes at the scene when first aid was given him for pain in his left foot, caused by stepping on a nail. Three other firemen, working in the debris, also ran miles into their feet. He finally went home at 5 p.m. Monday, 19 hours later.

This & That

(Continued from Page One)

a great crusade to turn back the clock on the city's fire duties now assumed by government. He would argue that "the safety of our people are the least governed."

He would sum it all up by saying: "Unless a man like John P. Espie, who is willing to fight for personal freedom by exercising the right of free speech, and to attend freedom, you shall be swallowed up in the belly of bureaucracy. You shall become the modern Jonah."

John P. Espie: Good Citizen!

In the recent passing of State Representative John P. Espie of Clinton County, Michigan, let us remember a legislator who typified an American generation of hard work, self-discipline, self-reliance, and downright decency.

Espie, 64 years, fully represented his area in State government, and rose to become chairman of the all-powerful Ways and Means Committee of the House.

While in Lansing as Kim Sibley, he was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1914. He was injured while playing ball and had been partially paralyzed since then. Since his father's death he had assisted his mother and two children in the home.

The only survivor is Nelson Jones, 72, of Clinton County, Ohio, and two grandchildren.

Burial was in White Chapel cemetery.

Lee C. Carroll

Fire Marshal Lee Clinton Carroll, of 1612 Henrietta, was born in Detroit, Oct. 10, 1887, and had spent the greater part of his life in Birmingham.

Those attending the services at the Bell Funeral Home included not only scores of the deceased relatives and local friends, but policemen and firemen from the Birmingham, Royal Oak and Pontiac departments, the latter groups serving as honor guard.

Rev. Arnold Runke, pastor of the Birmingham Methodist Church, outlined the life of Lee C. Carroll, in his conducting of the services.

"I should like to select as my theme here the thoughts symbolized in the fireman's hat, which we respect and honor today," said Rev. Runke.

He typified that portion of public service where men sacrifice their lives in the protection of the community they serve.

Lee C. Carroll, as we do to others who still perform their respective duties for the safety of our community, many local people have talked to me about the faithfulness of this man, who died so young, and his life. Let us, however, not consider this man as a martyr to God; God does not visit disaster and tragedy upon his children."

Funeral services were held at the regular fire department on June 1, 1942. He had served with the volunteer department from Oct. 29, 1937. He was promoted to fire inspector in the fire department on June 1, 1944, and was working in that capacity at the time he was killed.

He had worked at the McKee

Investigation

(Continued from Page One)

Following is a statement issued by the fire department to the Mich. Vice-President and General Manager of the Consumers Power Co. in relation to the explosion Sunday night that cost five lives in Birmingham:

"We regret very much that such a tragedy occurred and are doing everything practical to prevent similar accidents."

"Our Company supplies gas service in a large section of Michigan, including many of the largest cities outside of Detroit, and in some of these cities we and our predecessor companies have been in business for 80 or 90 years."

"Accident prevention has always been a matter of primary concern to us. We follow safety practices that have proved their value in other cities and that are followed by gas companies throughout the country. Our safety record compares well with the records of other companies."

"Unfortunately, in any activity involving human beings, it is impossible to eliminate all possibility of danger. There always is a chance that something unforeseen may occur. The break in the Birmingham main Sunday night is an example. A few seconds before it broke that main was about

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H. Paul Templeton Heads Shrine Club

H. Paul Templeton was named president of the North Woodward Shrine club at their annual election, held at the Shrine building, 1712 Woodward, Monday night.

Other officers for the coming year are C. Richard Ashton, first vice-president; G. Harold Spink, second vice-president; George E. Edmonds, secretary; and Eugene E. Land, treasurer.

D. J. MacCracken and B. S. Trace were re-elected to serve on the board of trustees.

New members recently received in the club are F. H. Gehardt, 190 Willetta; George Martin, 1601 Willetta; and George H. H. Ridgeway; William Hambley, 1418 Pierce; James Karck, 1760 Northwood; and Carl Nepper, 172 Pleasant.

Exchange Club Names Coming Year's Slate

W. Carleton Scott was elected president at the annual meeting of the Birmingham Exchange club Tuesday night. The meeting was held at the Community House.

Others named to serve during the coming year are Frank Jones, Jr., vice-president and Henry Sellers, secretary-treasurer.

The slate of officers also included Ralph Wilson, Draper Allen, Vern Wendorff, James Fitzmaurice, Robert C. Lee, and Walter Morgan, immediate past president.

service station before joining the fire department.

He was a member of the Metropolitan club of Birmingham.

Mrs. Carroll married Dr. Jennie Elizabeth Jewell Carroll, who lives with one daughter, Sharon Lee. A brother, John N. Carroll lives in Detroit with his wife, George Marie of Mayville and Mrs. Harry Grega of Birmingham. She has a son, Lee Carroll, of Birmingham also survives.

Members of the fire department attended the services Wednesday afternoon at the Bell funeral home which was in White Chapel cemetery.

Mrs. Ruth G. Bramson

The services for Mrs. Ruth G. Bramson, 47, Lone Pine road, were held from the Manley Bay funeral home, with Lay Leader Truman Campbell officiating.

Mrs. Bramson was born in St. Louis, Mo., on Dec. 3, 1902. She was a graduate of the University of Detroit. She was a member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Birmingham.

She is survived by her husband, Roy T. Bramson; a son, Thomas R., who is a student at the University of Michigan; a daughter, Mrs. and Mrs. Al. Gillespie of Belleville, Ill.; two brothers, Thomas H. Gillespie of Kenilworth, Ill.; and three sisters, Mrs. John Campbell of San Francisco, Calif.; Mrs. Frank Thomas of Chicago and Miss Edith Gillespie of Detroit.

The body was taken to White Chapel cemetery for cremation.

Arthur Wilson

The body of Arthur Wilson, 22828 E. Karlov, Dearborn, Mich., was taken from the Manley Bay funeral home after it was identified Monday evening by the officers when the blast occurred.

Services will be held there at 10 o'clock Monday at the funeral in Anceia Park cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, Florence G., who was severely injured in the blast and one daughter, Mrs. Margaret Cowan. A grandson, Arthur William, and one brother, John W. Wilson, also survive.

Thanks Pontiac Fire Chief

"I wish to thank the many people and different organizations that can be thanked personally. I wish to thank the Pontiac fire department, which was the first to arrive at the scene of the explosion. I also wish to thank the men and one officer to stand by in our fire department for the next alarm which was about 100 trucks and personnel were at the scene of this disaster, fighting fire and attempting rescue."

"To the Pontiac and Royal Oak fire departments, which sent in a company of men each yesterday afternoon so that 400 of our men could attend Lee's funeral, I also extend my thanks."

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