

BIG FIRE HAPPENS AT BUFFALO VALLEY MONDAY

Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN: 21 February 1924

Early Monday morning Buffalo Valley was visited by a disastrous blaze, the store of Walter Shanks, and residence and grist mill of G. C. Burch being consumed. The fire started in the kitchen of Mr. Burch's home after a fire had been kindled in the cook stove, and soon the house was a mass of flames, which soon spread to his grist mill and Mr. Shanks' store. It was thought that Mr. Burch's store would also burn and most of the contents were removed but the direction of the wind saved the building. Practically nothing was saved from the home of Mr. Burch and Mr. Shanks suffered almost a complete loss. We understand that Mr. Shanks will reopen with a new stock of goods in a nearby building right away.

Town of Buffalo Valley -- all of it -- on fire

Bob McMillan
Herald-Citizen Staff

Looking back in history, here were some of the happenings in the Cookeville area for the week of Feb.1-7 as recorded in the pages of the Herald-Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN:

73 YEARS AGO this week:

* At presstime for this week's edition, Buffalo Valley - Putnam's "lower county town," - was on fire. The whole town.

A fire that started last night in Walter Jared's home spread to just about every structure in Buffalo Valley. In flames at presstime were Z.A. Medley's store, his home, the home of his son, Luke, the large stock barn of the Jared brothers, R.L. Maxwell's home, the store operated by Luke Medley in the town's old bank building, and the old Maxwell House.

Flames missed the Tennessee Central railroad depot there. They did not spare the town's Shell service station. It's gone. So are the US Post Office and all its mail. The Post office was in the Medley store. Witnesses say the townspeople had no means to fight the flames except to try to beat them out with rags.

As the newspaper went to press this week, even crossties on the railroad tracks through town were burning. The situation for Buffalo Valley looks hopeless. (Feb. 5, 1931)

Fire has broken out in Buffalo Valley and, at press time, the news paper reports that residents there "are frantically fighting with nothing but bare hands, beating out flames with rags, facing a hopeless battle against bitter odds."

It seems that all of the village of Buffalo Valley is in flames.

Destroyed already are the Z. A. Medley general store and the US Post Office inside it; the Home of Luke Medley and the feed store he operated; the home of R. L. Maxwell; a large stock barn owned by the Jared Brothers, the Shell service station, and the Maddux family's store. It started in the Walter Jared home. As the newspaper went to press, the fire was still spreading. (Feb. 6, 1931).

24 YEARS AGO: Baxter, Putnam Co., TN

* It's been cold here these past few weeks. Real cold. In Baxter, alderman K.D. Crawford warned the Mayor and Board of Aldermen that teenagers have been sneaking through the fence at the Baxter pool late at night and have been using the frozen pool as a skating rink. Someone's going to drown, Crawford warned. Mayor John Martin said the pool is the responsibility of Putnam Parks and Recreation. He said he'll talk to P&R officials about the problem. (Feb. 7, 1980)

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(Feb. 16, 1931) Nearly all of Buffalo Valley, Putnam's 'lower county town,' burns as a fire that started in Walter Jared's home spreads to nearly every structure in town. In flames were Z.A. Medley's store and home, Luke Medley's store and home, the Jared Brother's stock barn, R.L. Maxwell's home, the old Maxwell house, the Shell service station and the Post Office.)

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