

Block Threatened

DECEMBER 28, 1964

5

\$75,000 FIRE RAZES BREA STORE

Flames Draw Large Crowd

Fullerton, La Habra Units Rushed To Battle Blaze in Pre-Dawn Hours

BREA — Brea Market, this city's oldest food store, is no more. Flames completely destroyed the small business place at 143 S. Brea Blvd. early Sunday in spite of efforts by Brea, Fullerton and La Habra fire departments. Firemen prevented damage to other stores to

CAUSE UNKNOWN

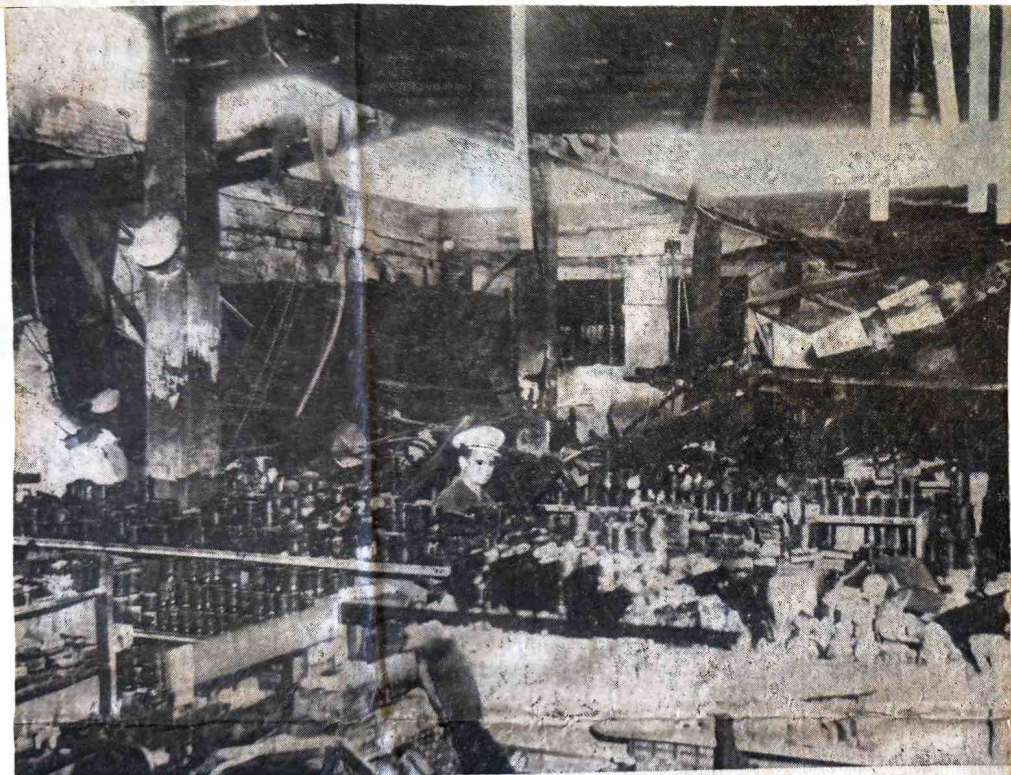
Brea Fire Chief Kenneth Staggs said the fire started in the back of the store from causes unknown.

Fullerton and La Habra departments responded to a mutual aid call and assisted in the fight, which was considered successful because damage was confined to one store.

A huge plate glass window in the rear of the market joined a toy store next door, and firemen fought constantly to keep the blaze confined. A sleeping bag in the toy store caught fire, but it was the only damage noted.

stop what could have involved an entire block of the downtown section. The destroyed building had an attic in common with buildings to the north along a long line of stores.

When firemen arrived at 5:36 a.m., fire had involved the entire store. A policeman on patrol spotted smoke and flames gushing from the front of the market and made the first report, according to the log.



Brea Fire Chief Kenneth Staggs is shown searching debris for clues to determine how a fire started at the Brea Market that destroyed the building Sunday morning with an estimated \$75,000 loss. Chief Staggs said everything was completely destroyed in the blaze, which was still smoldering 10 hours after it was reported at 5:30 a.m. (News Tribune Photo)



FIRE CONFERENCE — Fire chiefs from Brea, Fullerton and La Habra confer on best methods of containing a fire at Brea Market early Sunday. The building, at 143 S. Brea Blvd. has an attic in common with other stores to the north, which were threatened for more than an hour while the three departments battled the blaze that completely destroyed the building. (News Tribune Photo)

CANS EXPLODE

Bottles and cans in the market exploded, leading onlookers to believe the building was filled with explosives.

At one time, nearly 150 persons were watching the fire, but, according to fire fighters, the crowd was in control and caused no problems.

Chief Staggs said the building and all contents were totally destroyed with an estimated loss exceeding \$75,000.

Racks of eggs were cooked on the shelves by the heat.

Soon after fire companies arrived, the building's roof collapsed, making efforts to save contents futile.

ONCE FIRE STATION

Ironically, the market location was once the site of the Brea Fire Department more than 40 years ago. Brea's first general store was also located at the site before being torn down in the early 1920s. The old tin fire station was later moved to the city hall, then to the city yard on east Elm St., where it still stands.

According to fire department records, owners of the brick building that housed the market and several other stores are Dayton and Viva Alexander of Brea.

Formerly known as the Colima Market, the business was operated by Wayne Pitteman of Brea and John Amarheim of 902 Ampling St., Placentia.

Both building and contents were reported insured.



'62 BREA GRADUATE — A foreign relations student at Mount Sac College, Tom White works his way through school in a Brea market. This is his second year at the market and he works 20 to 30 hours per week

during the school term as well as full-time during the summer. He works along with several other Brea-Olinda graduates at the market.

(News Tribune Photo)



COLLEGE PROGRAM — Chiksan Co. in Brea has a summer program designed to help students working their way through college and hired 21 youths this summer. Shown during a break at the plant are (left to right), Kenneth Tessier, California State at Fullerton education student; David Fernan-

dez, University of Santa Clara pre-medical student; Gary Westad, Los Angeles Chiropractic School student; and Ernest Pizzo, Fullerton Junior College surveying student. Chiksan has had the student program in force for more than 20 years.

(News Tribune Photo)

Blaze guts 50-year-old building

Firefighter salvages hard drive from flames

By Danielle Benson
Brea Progress

Bob Gorham darted amid the rubble, hoping to save his company's future.

The general manager and part owner of ESCO Rubber Products Inc. salvaged the "S" from the building's sign — nearly all that remained undamaged after the 10,000-square-foot manufacturing facility burned down April 23. During the fire, he also talked a firefighter into saving the company's computer.

"This is the only letter that was left from the original owner's name," Gorham said, noting that resident and part-owner Ed Sullivan started the company in Brea more than

50 years ago. "So we're going to take it home and frame it."

About 5 p.m., ESCO, at 130 Brea Blvd., burst into flames, destroying both the plumbing parts manufacturing plant and the Four-square Gospel Church preschool and sanctuary buildings next door.

ESCO employees apparently were grinding a rough surface to repair a hydraulic-fluid tank when sparks started flying. The flare-ups ignited the wood walls of the half-century-old building, engulfing it in flames, Gorham said.

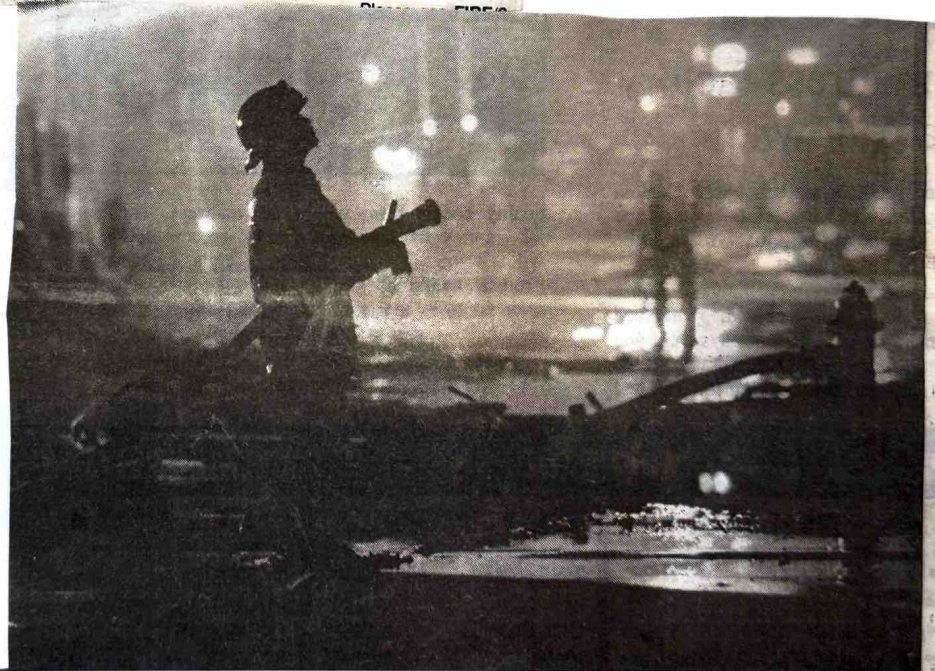
The building, except for the computer mainframe that firefighters saved, was a total loss. Officials estimated the damage at \$500,000.

"The owner, Mr. Sullivan, indicated that it would be helpful if he could get his computer with all of his business info on it. He pointed out the burned out window of the office and told us approximately where the computer would be," Fire Marshal Lon Cahill said. "I told (Capt. Dana Kemper) not to put himself in any danger, but if it was possible, it would be helpful if we could get it."

Kemper came through with flying colors.

■ FIRE: Photos and stories/3, 4, 11

"All of a sudden, there he is with the computer in his arms with all the wires trailing behind him," Gorham said, "poking his head out of the window with the fire raging behind him and asking if this was what I wanted."



A firefighter views the carnage April 23, as a blast of water reaches the fire that leveled ESCO Rubber Products Inc.

Cahill said Kemper picked through the charred remains of the fallen ceiling to get the warped computer case. After opening it up, ESCO officials retrieved their hard drive.

Gorham said the information will allow ESCO to keep client data and continue operations with its 65 employees.

Anna Cave, director of emergency preparedness for Brea, said the sooner the company is back up and running the better. "Business recovery after a natural disaster can be very severe," she said. "If a business is closed more than five days due to disaster, they stand a big chance of not making it through that first year of business."

That time frame shouldn't be a problem. ESCO was set to move to a new structure a block away in about three weeks. The Brea Redevelopment Agency bought the Brea Boulevard lot from ESCO as part of the continuing downtown project. In return, the manufacturer received land in a nearby industrial park.

Gorham said equipment for the new facility is on order. Until ESCO can move into the new building, the company will use donated office space on Tamarack Avenue, he said.

"The old building was really old," Gorham said. "If we were in the new building this never would have happened."

A. Trafford Templeton/Brea Progress

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Summer and smoke



CLEARING THE WAY — Orange County firefighters await further direction as a bulldozer clears brush in Carbon Canyon.

Crews still battling Carbon Canyon blaze

Man questioned over cause of fires

By Mark Berg
DSP Staff Writer

BREA — Arson is suspected in a wildfire that swept through Carbon Canyon Wednesday and continues to burn today. Fire crews from four counties have been battling the blaze that has ripped through dry mountainous terrain into the Chino Hills.

More than 7,000 acres have been charred into a blackened wasteland by the intense fire that destroyed or damaged at least 12 homes, officials said. Most of the structural damage centered in the small remote community of Sleepy Hollow, just across the San Bernardino County line in Carbon Canyon.

Six firefighters were treated for minor injuries such as smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion, officials reported. One firefighter was treated for a back sprain. None required hospitalization.

Meanwhile, Peter Diaz Rayes, a 29-year-old transient, is being held in the Orange County Jail on two felony charges of wild-land arson, authorities said. Witnesses noticed the man in the area shortly after the brush fire flared up, causing Brea police and Orange County sheriff deputies to hold the man for questioning. Conflicting reports say the man intentionally set the fires or lost control of two separate cooking fires.

After the second fire began just east of the first, additional

crews were summoned. At least one Fullerton unit was canceled when Brea fire officials assumed the fires were under control, according to a Fullerton firefighter. But by noon, the brittle brush and dry vegetation fueled the separate fires out of control.

By mid-afternoon, fire crews from Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties were brought in to battle the raging fire on many fronts.

Olinda Village, about midway through the canyon, became the focus of attention early on as hot winds swept the fire up and down hillsides toward the remote cluster of homes.

What began as a spectator event, slowly evolved into a personal threat as residents put down cameras and picked up garden hoses to wet down shake roofs. Several homeowners scurried to load cars with clothes and valuables as firefighters laid a tangled weave of fire hose through the streets.

Firefighters allowed the flames to burn right up to property lines rather than venture in to the hilly terrain where swirling winds could easily enclose the fire around them.

The wind that pushed the fire past the Olinda Village homes funneled the fire down the canyon to Sleepy Hollow where fire crews had difficulty beating back the persistent flames. Capt. Bruce Brown of the California

Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention said a buildup of dry brush around the tightly clustered homes made it virtually impossible to defend them.

An evacuation order was delivered for Sleepy Hollow and the Chino Hills area by late afternoon. Residents stood by with cars packed as one house would catch fire and another would be spared.

Fire officials were dismayed by the number of shake roofs that cover the canyon homes, allowing embers to easily spark into full-fledged fires.

Capt. Jack Lehman of the Brea Fire Department said four hand crews will be working in the canyon "for days and days" to put out any hot spots that will smolder in roots and tree trunks. Shovels will be used to clear a perimeter around Olinda Village to completely remove the threat, he said.

While the fire remains uncontained, Lehman said, it is under control. The hot winds swirling in the canyon could easily spark up new fires, he said.

At least 17 strike teams, each consisting of five engines and a battalion chief, were working throughout the afternoon and night. Three strike teams are maintaining the Orange County area while remaining crews work at the fire's front in San Bernardino County, Lehman said.



(Star-Progress photo by Jack Hancock)

CARBON CANYON FIRE OUT OF CONTROL — Brea firefighters check hoses and wind direction as a brush fire begins to burn uncontrollably in Carbon Canyon. The fire has claimed more than 7,000 acres in three counties, drawing hundreds of Southland firefighters to the area.

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Uncertainty plagues people fleeing flames



Hal Stoelzle/The Orange County Register

A house burns Wednesday afternoon in the mountain town of Sleepy Hollow. Residents were evacuated to Townsend Junior High School in Chino Hills.

Mood swings like a pendulum in Carbon Canyon

By Kevin Davis and Steve Eddy
The Orange County Register

BREA — It was 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, and near Carbon Canyon Regional Park, things were surprisingly calm.

Although a brush fire had raged uncontrolled for 2½ hours, firefighters and their bosses appeared confident that the flow of the fire soon would be checked.

But as the day wore on, those veneers cracked.

The mercury spiraled and torrid winds began to blow, and crews became visibly worried.

"We've got a real situation here," grumbled one firefighter as he watched fire equipment from all over Southern California converge on the scene.

In 20 minutes, a blaze estimated at 500 acres ballooned to 1,000. Soon, the business end, or "header" of the fire was scooting east like a hungry snake, ravaging communities and changing lives in its path.

As the blaze followed winding

FROM 1

Carbon Canyon Road — Highway 142 — firefighters in sweltering, bright yellow suits, eyes burning and skin covered with sweaty dirt, fought it face to face.

"It's hot," was the weary phrase of the day.

The snake first nearly kissed the homes of Olinda Village, coming within 50 yards. It hungrily ate up brush, then moved on and on, spreading, literally, like wildfire.

About two miles from Olinda, the snake encountered the little mountain town of Sleepy Hollow, population 3,000. There, it ravaged at least a half-dozen homes.

At the town liquor store, bewildered residents gathered. They worried about wild animals and horses. Then they worried about their homes. And then themselves.

Richard Hafner, 39, a construction worker, had been taking the day off because of the heat. He has lived in the area since 1971.

"This is a wonderful, close-knit, real friendly place," he said. "It has a Western air to it. It's one of the last places with a real community feel."

At one point, a police car rolled by and told residents they were trapped, and were not to leave. Later, another voice said the road was clear, and they could evacuate to Townsend Junior High School in Chino Hills.

And some did, along with residents of homes and a mobile-home park near Western Hills Country Club, farther up Highway 142. There were no official confirmations of damage there, but residents said some structures burned.

At 7 p.m. at Townsend school, Linda Zerbe, service center manager for the American Red Cross, was trying to order 200 cheeseburgers from a nearby Jack-In-The-Box.

To go.

More than 100 evacuees chose the school, but some preferred to swill beer and talk over the day at a tavern down the street.

MOOD: Residents cheer helicopters while worrying about the safety of homes, animals

"The biggest problem is the uncertainty," Zerbe said. "They don't know what is going to happen, and they can't go back to their homes. Nobody has the answer as to what homes have been damaged."

Ed Jeffrey rushed into the evacuation center to tell neighbors that most of the homes had been spared. But Jeffrey, who approached as the wind was picking up about 7:45, said he had seen one home that was reduced to a chimney.

In a bush was a dead squirrel still clutching a branch. "The fire just fried him," he said.

He had seen two other homes on fire in the development at Valley Spring Road.

He said neighbors were trying to put out flames with garden hoses. One of the most disturbing things was a house with ammunition being set off by the flames.

"It sounded like the Fourth of July, and I was more than a half-mile from it," he said.

The fire spread so quickly that some people left animals behind. People spoke of leaving horses in stables and dogs in garages. Other people were able to save their pets.

Laurie Tisot, 31, of the 1600 block of Chernus Lane in Sleepy Hollow, cuddled her cat, Gretchen.

She recalled being at home when her husband was running errands. He called to say, "Get the cat and

get out!"

"I just took a bag, a wallet, keys, money, a watch and a jacket, along with the cat," she said.

Tisot said she moved into her three-story home two weeks ago from Brea. She and her husband, Al, still had boxes to unpack.

"I'm hoping it'll all be there when I'm allowed back," she said.

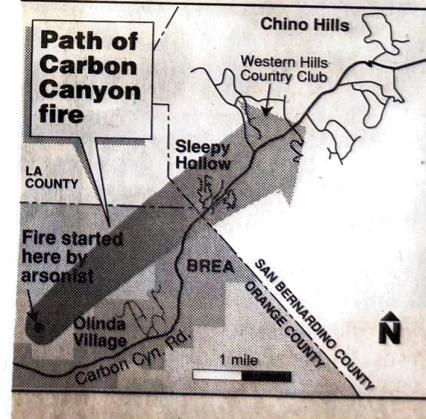
Throughout the evening, evacuees watched the strangely majestic flames. They cheered when helicopters dumped water on the inferno. The helicopters were picking water out of nearby Los Serranos Lakes Mobile Home Park and Los Serranos Golf Course.

The smoke, thick and brown, filtered through the air and permeated clothes.

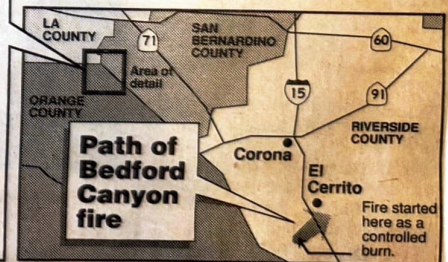
Joanne McCormack of Sleepy Hollow raced out of her home with six youngsters age 6 months to 7 years. Four children were hers, two belonged to a friend.

"It sure was scary. There was smoke all around. We were on the top of the hill. We didn't want to get trapped," she said.

She grabbed the kids and some blankets and left. Her husband, she said, is on a business trip in Hawaii.



Louise Stern/For The Orange County Register
Thick, rolling smoke from the Carbon Canyon fire shrouded the Chino Hills and was visible throughout Orange County. This view is from a Corona neighborhood off the Riverside (91) Freeway.



The Orange County Register

By Mark Berg
DSP Staff Writer

Sleepy Hollow residents, who watched their Carbon Canyon homes imperiled by a devastating brush fire Wednesday, returned to the scorched community Thursday to view the aftermath, even as firefighters continued to douse hot spots around their homes.

Olinda Village residents in the city of Brea are breathing easier today as hand crews have established a firebreak perimeter around the 150 homes that, at one point, were dangerously close to the wind-driven flames.

More than 500 firefighters contained the blaze that consumed 6,250 acres, a revised figure from earlier estimates

that put the burned area at 7,000 acres. Strike teams from fire departments across the Southland continue to enclose the fire lines and extinguish flare-ups within the perimeter. Orange County Fire Capt. Dan Young said the fire was expected to be brought under control by noon today.

From Carbon Canyon Road to the south, Tonner Canyon to the north, the Olinda landfill on the west and the Chino Hills commu-

nity of Los Serranos on the east, the ravaging fire has left behind an ugly, smoking wasteland described by one resident as an "army zone."

Originating at about 11 a.m. Wednesday, the arson-caused fire was whipped out of control by a combination of high canyon winds, extreme temperatures and brittle vegetation sapped dry by drought conditions.

Though most of the damage

Olinda residents breathing easier as blazes subside

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(Continued from Page 1)

occurred when the fire freely crossed the undeveloped hilly terrain, 12 structures were completely destroyed and two others damaged when the hungry flames blew down in to the Sleepy Hollow area and beyond.

Officials reported eight injuries, all to firefighters who suffered from smoke inhalation, heat exhaustion, burns or chest pains. One was treated for a reaction from a bee sting. All were treated and released.

Peter Diaz Reyes, the 29-year-old transient suspected of starting two fires that worked together into the one blaze, is being held at the Orange County jail on two felony counts of arson. Reportedly, the man lost control of separate cooking fires in the 300-acre Santa Fe Energy Resource Co. oil field. Authorities have described his account of the fire start as "confused."

Meanwhile, the shelter set up at Brea Olinda High School by the Orange County chapter of the American Red Cross was closed down Thursday after it became apparent no Brea communities were still threatened by the fire. Authorities had warned Olinda Village residents that an evacuation may be necessary, but never issued a formal evacuation notice. Sleepy Hollow and Chino Hills residents were evacuated to shelters in San Bernardino County as the fire entered their communities.

Red Cross volunteers fed more than 2,000 meals to weary firefighters returning to the staging area established at Carbon Canyon Regional Park.

Don and Joanne Himes, owners of the La Vida Restaurant that stood below threatening hillside flames for most of the day and evening Wednesday, fed 60 firefighters posted there a ribs dinner. The restaurant serves the \$5.95 special every Wednesday, but that night it was free.

Phone crews are working to restore service to about 900 lines in Carbon Canyon. The fire burned at least seven telephone poles and four miles of cable, according to Ron Kroeze, Pacific Bell construction manager. A switching center located in the canyon escaped damage in the fire.



IN THE WAKE OF DISASTER — Charred columns stand amid the rubble of an 8,000-square-foot mansion ravaged by Wednesday's Carbon Canyon fire that claimed many homes in Sleepy Hollow.

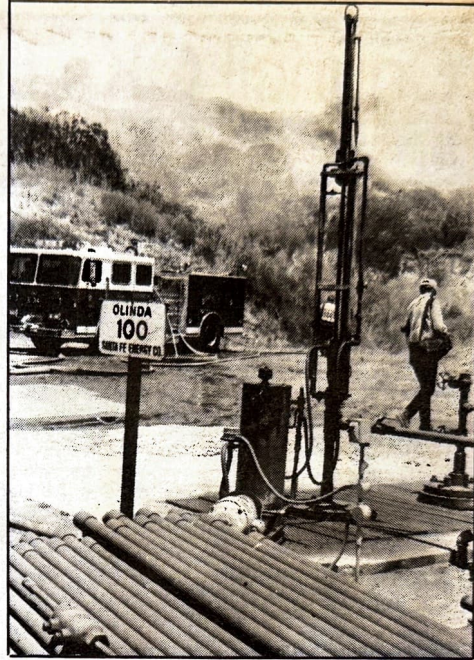
(Star-Progress photo by Stan Bird)



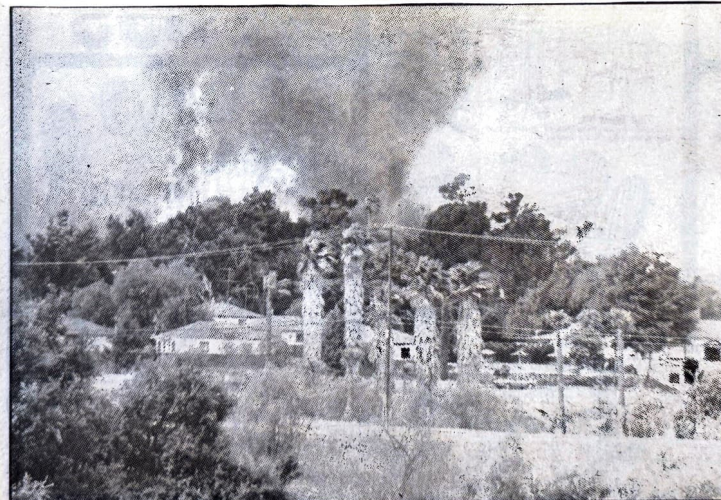
SLEEPY HOLLOW HOUSES



Evacuees watch tearfully as fire approaches homes.



By Wednesday evening, more than 700 firefighters combine efforts to curtail blaze.



The arson fire began as two separate blazes, allegedly set by a 29-year-old transient, and then feeding on brush combined to become a major conflagration.



Firefighters' efforts on the ground get an aerial assist.

2

Fire!

4 homes gutted; Brea police arrest suspect

By Steve Creech
Staff Writer

An arson fire consuming more than 3,000 acres, extending from unincorporated areas northeast of downtown Brea, was burning out of control at the intersection of Orange, Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties as of press time.

Brea police arrested Peter Reyes, a 29-year-old transient, who confessed at 11:30 a.m. to setting two fires which became one. He was booked at Orange County jail on two felony counts of arson.

Orange County fire officials said four firefighters reported injuries because of the fire — three for smoke inhalation and one for minor injuries. Two victims were taken to Placentia Linda Hospital in Yorba Linda for observation.



Carbon Canyon horses run free, standing better odds of survival than if penned.

Staff photos by Tim Jones

At 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, fire officials could give no estimated time of containment and said if the fire continued to burn in a northeastern direction, the prestigious Western Hills Country Club area of Chino Hills could be threatened.

Areas immediately affected by the blaze included the Sleepy Hollow area at the Tri-County intersection and portions of Chino Hills, which were evacuated at about 2:30 p.m. to Townsend Junior High.

Four Sleepy Hollow homes reportedly were gutted and officials couldn't estimate the value of property damage.

Olinda Village, a populated segment of Brea, was one of the first residential areas threatened by the fire when it raged through nearby Carbon Canyon, but changes in wind direction saved the area. However, it was reported residents were dousing their homes with water, hoping to avert disaster.

The fire was reported at 11 a.m. and officials said more than 700 firefighters, from departments in all three counties, including Brea, were on the scene. Fire fighting efforts were assisted by fly-by water drops.

Erratic shifts in winds hampered the firefighters in combating the blaze on a day when temperatures soared over 100 degrees.

Staff writers Tim Jones and Kurt Holtzclaw, and Managing Editor Stan Wauer contributed to this story.



(Photo courtesy of Jeff Jones)

HISTORY UP IN SMOKE — Firefighters work to control a blaze that consumed the historic Wall Building at 107 and 109 E. Ash St. early Sunday morning. No injuries were reported in the fire of the vacant two-story structure that was the first commercial building in Brea. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Landmark in Brea destroyed

By Mark Berg

DSP Staff Writer

BREA — An early morning fire consumed the historic Wall Building on Ash Street Sunday, a landmark structure that had been embraced by the Brea Historical Committee as suitable for preservation.

Fire units from neighboring cities joined the Brea Fire Department in battling the 4:21 a.m. blaze, a two-hour task that proved futile in saving the vacant building at 107 and 109 E. Ash St., fire officials said. The cause of the fire is under investigation, but is thought to be of a suspicious nature. The damage was estimated at \$300,000.

Brea Fire Capt. Paul Bartley said firefighters were powerless to save the two-story structure as it was entirely engulfed by flames by the time fire units arrived on the scene. A second alarm was issued at 4:36 a.m., Bartley said, calling for assistance from Buena Park, Fullerton and La Habra fire departments to beat down the flames.

Bartley said firefighters concentrated efforts on protecting the neighboring buildings, a seniors apartment complex immediately to the east and the Brea Hotel, which was evacuated during the fire. No injuries were reported in connection with the fire.

The Historical Committee had
(Continued on Page 2)

... of Brea's oil industry.

The building was also featured in the 1970s comedy-adventure film "Silver Streak," starring Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder, as the sheriff's office in a remote Midwestern town.

The building was moved so that it faced Ash Street instead of the boulevard in the 1950s, according to Inez Fanning, president of the Brea Historical Society. Its owner, T. Kirk Hill, founder of Kirkhill Rubber Company in Brea, purchased the property and converted it into four apartments, the bottom two eventually becoming office spaces.

Curt Larsen Realty was located in the building for a time, as well as Industrial Design Concepts, as recently as last January.

The gray with red trim building was then purchased by the city, boarded up and vacated while awaiting its fate with downtown redevelopment plans.

MAY 09 1990

Arson ruled in 790 Wall fire

BREA — Fire officials have determined that the April 15 fire that gutted the historic Wall Building at 109 E. Ash St. was intentionally set.

Fire Marshal Bill Simpkins said that the patterns and characteristics of the fire have caused officials to list the blaze as incendiary; however, he could not be specific about the evidence found in the charred two-story structure.

Meanwhile, police have taken over the investigation in an effort to locate those responsible for the early morning blaze that threatened nearby structures. No injuries were reported in connection with the 4:21 a.m. fire. Detective Mike Owens said he has spoken with 30 to 40 witnesses but has not been able to identify a suspect. He said buildings that have been vacated, as the Wall Building was, tend to attract a transient population looking for temporary shelter. He did not rule out that a transient may have started the fire.

Owens said the fire appeared to have started in the front of the building by the stairway, but no sign of accelerants were found. Samples from the scorched remains have been sent to the Orange County Crime Lab to be tested, Owens said, although he does not expect any evidence to return with the test results that would help identify a suspect.

Built in 1911, the downtown landmark endured several conversions, housing a barber shop, drug store, apartments and offices throughout its history. The city purchased the building in 1989, allowing it to stand empty pending downtown redevelopment plans.

The city's Historical Committee had picked the building for preservation and possible relocation to a historic park. The possibility of duplicating the building for the park has been discussed.

— Mark Berg

Suspected arson leads to 50-acre brush blaze

Carbon Canyon trees threatened

By Tony Saavedra and Don Rosen
The Orange County Register

A wild-land blaze that firefighters said was deliberately set burned 50 acres Wednesday night and came close to two neighborhoods near Carbon Canyon Regional Park in Brea.

It also burned to within 20 feet of a stand of 130 redwood trees, which

were planted in 1975 and are about 40 feet tall.

Fire investigators found an incendiary device at the point where the fire started, about an eighth-mile from the park entrance on Carbon Canyon Road.

Mike McCann, chief arson investigator for the Orange County Fire Department, declined to describe the device. He asked that anyone who saw others on an equestrian trail along the east side of the park about 5 p.m. call the department at 744-0455.

BLAZE: Brush consumed in canyon; arson suspected

FROM 1

McCann said footprints of one or two people were discovered leading from the device.

The fire was reported at 5:22 p.m. to the Brea Fire Department. Whipped by wind gusts of up to 25 mph, it moved southwest, coming within a quarter-mile of two residential areas.

"I saw that fire, and I thought, 'Oh my god, that's our house,'" said Virginia King, 42, a resident of the 3700 block of Rose Drive, adjacent to the park. Homeowners wet down their roofs along Rose Drive, but firefighters were able to turn the blaze, containing it in the nearly empty basin of a flood-control reservoir at the south end of the park.

By 11 p.m. the fire was fully contained. Firefighters expected to have it extinguished by 6 a.m. today.

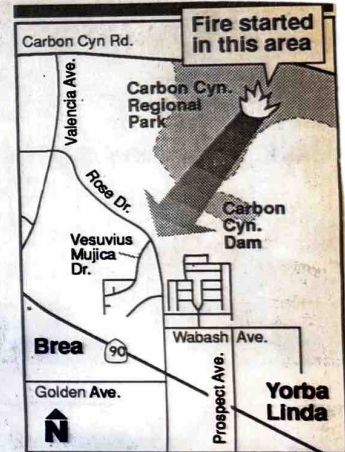
More than 100 firefighters and nearly 30 engines from the Orange County, Los Angeles County and Brea departments battled the blaze. Temperatures in the area

dipped into the 40s Wednesday evening. Winds of 15 mph to 20 mph whipped through the park.

"This cold weather just makes it miserable for firefighters," said Orange County Fire Capt. Dan Young. He also cautioned residents of semirural areas against using their fireplaces. "Stoking a big fire in that fireplace because it's cold in the house is an excellent way to start a brush fire. Fire season is not over. Historically we've had our worst fires in November."

Senior Park Ranger Jeff Bukshpam said the fire came within 20 feet of the redwood stand. When Carbon Canyon Regional Park was being designed and constructed in the early 1970s, an anonymous donor, afraid of seeing the trees becoming extinct, donated more than 200 redwood seedlings to the park. The grove covers five acres of the park near Carbon Canyon Dam. A fire killed some of the trees several years ago.

In June a brush fire that also



The Orange County Register

started in the area of Carbon Canyon Regional Park spread northward and consumed 6,250 acres in San Bernardino County and northeastern Orange County.

Wednesday's flames came within a quarter-mile of a mobile-home park at one point.

Register staff writers Donald E. Skinner and Gina Shaffer contributed to this report.

NOV. 29, 1990



FIRE LINE — A hill south of Carbon Canyon Regional Park glows with fire and embers as small trees and brush erupt in flame. The

fire tossed up soot and ashes that carried over the city during the night. There were no reports of injuries or structural damage.

Firefighters douse Carbon Canyon...

(Continued from Page 1)

off Rose Drive and a Yorba Linda mobile home park.

Structural Protection Task Forces were positioned in the nearby residential areas to defend the threatened homes, particularly those with shake roofs. Some residents turned up collars to the cold night air and wet down roofs to be safe.

"This is the closest we've been to a fire," said Jeanette Patburg,

a homeowner near Rose Drive, who watched the glow of the fire with daughter Cachet as it burned in an adjacent canyon.

Mary Eason and Sandy Kramer are residents familiar with the threat of fire in the canyon. As they watched the fire line creep within a quarter mile of the homes, they recalled a 1979 fire that burned down the face of the dam, giving them a real scare.

Kramer said she smelled smoke Wednesday evening when leaving her Cal State Fullerton class, and immediately knew she had to get home. "It's a sixth sense," she said. "When Carbon Canyon is on fire, you can sense it."

Orange County fire Capt. Dan Young warned that fire season is not over. "Until we get a good substantial rain, we're still going

to have problems," he said. "All this cold weather does is make it miserable for firefighters."

The Orange County Fire Department is continuing to seek assistance in locating the arsonist. "We've had quite a few calls and have a couple of good leads, but we need more calls," Young said. Anyone with information about the fire is asked to call (714) 744-0455.

“Once those fires get into the canyons with those swirling winds, it’s unbelievable how quickly it takes over.”

Joe Lademan



fought to save parents’ home



1990

ON THE FRONT LINES: Firefighters battle the 1990 fire in the hills of Carbon Canyon. About 6,600 acres were blackened.

O.C.'S SEARING MEMORIES



1990

LONE SURVIVOR: A pool is about all that remains of a residence destroyed by the Carbon Canyon fire in 1990. The blaze, fanned by 20 mph winds and nourished by tinder-dry brush, began in the middle of a record-breaking heat wave and was deliberately started by a transient in the hills above Carbon Canyon Road. Fourteen cabins were damaged or destroyed.

The Orange County Register

A POLICY ON FIRE

The owner of Esco Products counts his insurance blessings

By Danielle Benson
Brea Progress

Pat Sullivan's life went up in flames April 23.

"My dad built Esco (Rubber Products Inc.) from the ground up. I was practically raised in that building," he said. The acronym, Esco, stands for Ed Sullivan Company. Ed was Pat's father. "It was weird to see my whole life burn down."

Sullivan, 51, recently talked to the Brea Rotary Club about the difficulties of rebuilding the 50-year-old manufacturing business from scratch.

Esco Rubber Products Inc. was in the process of moving to its new home behind the railroad tracks on Orange Avenue when an accidental fire destroyed the 1930s building on Brea Boulevard. The flames gutted the plumbing-parts plant, charred neighboring Foursquare International Church and damaged the Orange Villa Apartments behind the building.

"We had done that procedure a hundred times before and never had a problem," Sullivan said. "But we didn't have a sprinkler system and our hand extinguishers were totally ineffective in fighting a fire of this magnitude."

Sullivan explained the insur-

ance claim process. He suggested business owners inventory every piece of property, including paper goods and supplies, estimate the highest value of their business and always prepare for emergencies.

Diane Tarantelli, vice president of Boston RGU Insurance who handled the \$2 million Esco loss, said the plant was well insured. The policy covered all the contents. An additional \$1 million liability policy will cover damages to neighbors. She said being well-insured is tricky, because business owners often underestimate their value.

"Consider what you really do have as far as value. What is important and what goes on daily. Assess the actual prices and note it," Tarantelli said. "If you have things that you can't replace easily, have a plan for it."

The burden of proof lies with the business owner, Tarantelli noted. Owners need to show adequate inventory lists, detailing what property they have. Sullivan was lucky because the city's redevelopment agency photographed every piece of equipment when negotiating to buy the building, she added.

Sullivan said finding adequate new equipment became a challenge. Many of his machines were outdated and discontinued,

handedly supported Staples' 1996 profit margin.

Sullivan said he and his family are plugging along. He is confident that Esco Rubber Products



Stan Bird/Brea Progress
Bob Gorham, one of three owners of Esco Rubber Products Inc., holds a piece of the company sign that he salvaged after a fire gutted the manufacturing facility April 23.

so he used creative engineering, he said.

"We're going off on a new track and finding new ways of doing things we need to do with newer equipment," Sullivan said, adding that he combines new and old equipment together to achieve the desired product. "We're doing things that we never knew we could."

Esco lost the sympathy factor from its clients, Sullivan said. Many are not as understanding about manufacturing and ship-

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ping delays.
But the business is up and running at 80 percent efficiency 100 days after the fire. Sullivan paid about \$12,000 a year in insurance premiums before the fire. The cost of coverage did not increase as a result of the fire. Tarantelli said business owners get what they pay for in terms of coverage.
"If you think you're saving five cents somewhere, you probably are," she said. "But you'll pay for it in the long run."

amount of smoke and water damage to each apartment. The total cost of damages is still being calculated. Orange Villas owner, William Kimball, was un-

Be prepared, fire analyst advises

Many Brea business owners are wondering how to prevent a fire such as the one that gutted Esco Rubber Products Inc.

Karen Vaudreuil, a Brea fire-protection analyst, has offered solutions.

"You can avoid this by being prepared and being receptive to fire-prevention elements," she told business owners at a recent Brea Rotary lunch. "Most people think it will never happen to them."

Vaudreuil works with new and expanding businesses in town to ensure buildings meet fire codes. Her job differs from annual fire inspections because she gets involved in building planning, engineering, fire-safety systems and construction.

Vaudreuil said the Esco rubber-manufacturing plant was up to code. Pat Sullivan, Esco's owner, said he added on to the original 1930s building in the 1970s, so the building conformed to that 20-year-old code.

"It conformed to fire code for the year it was built and had annual fire inspections," Vaudreuil said. "We don't go retroactive. Some buildings are not made to go to modern code."

New and growing businesses get help from Brea's fire and planning departments before they begin construction, Vaudreuil said. Owners meet with city officials about all construction matters. Building blueprints and schematics are approved or changed by a Brea planner.

Esco fire

FROM 1

a wall or flats of rubber on the