

# MAINE FIRE DISASTER

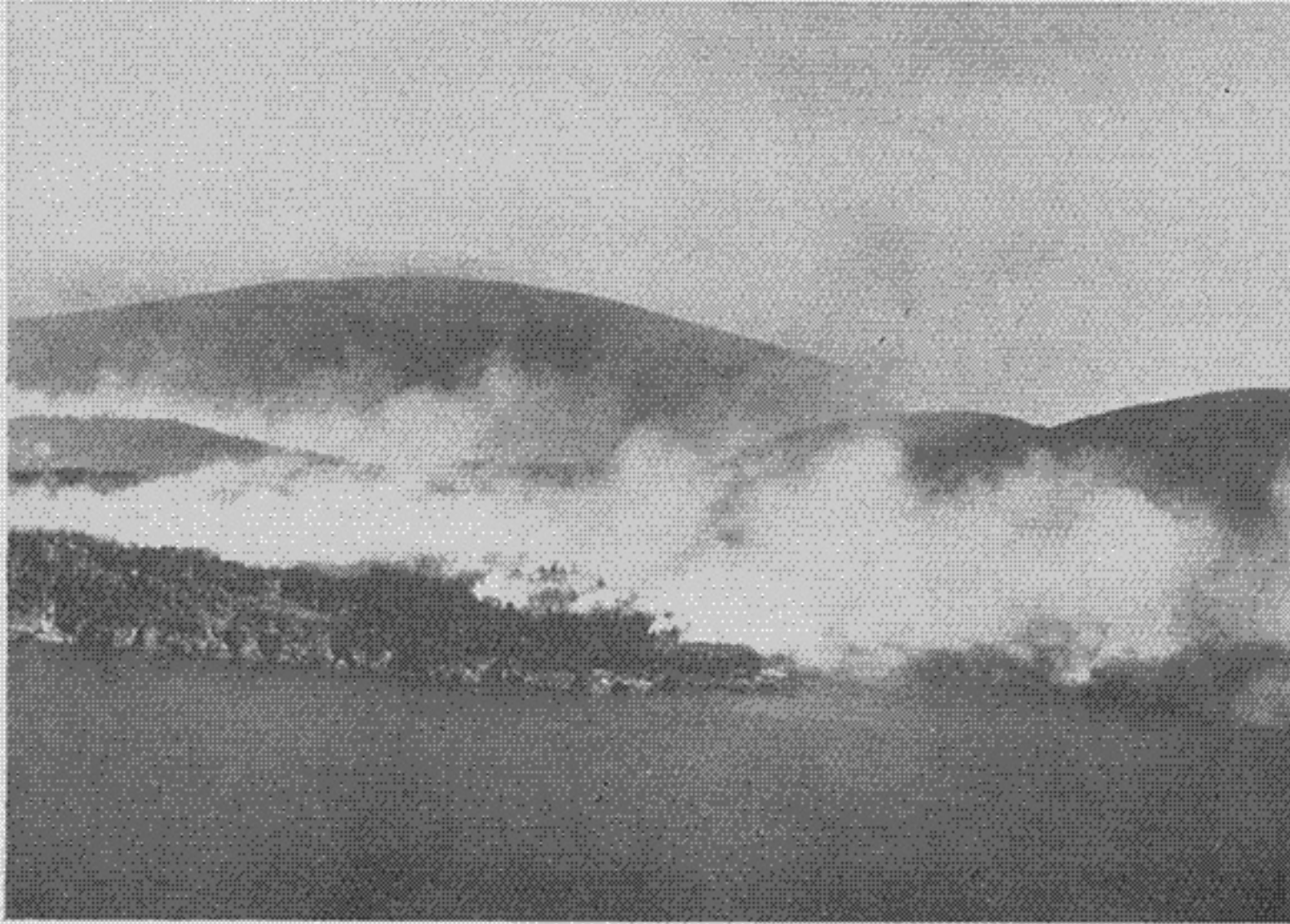
Jesup Memorial Library  
34 Mount Desert Street  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609  
Phone: 207-288-4245

OF OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 1947

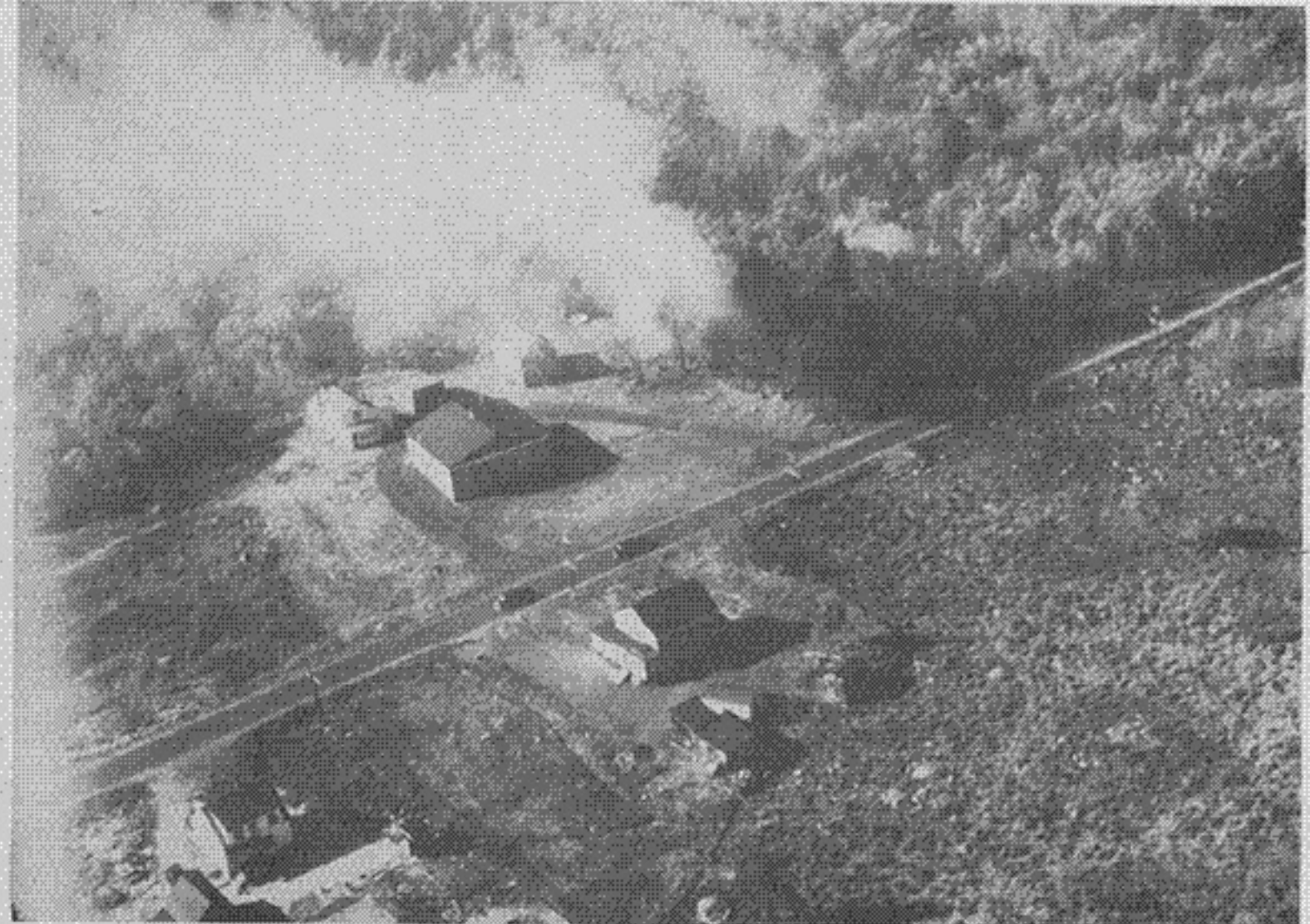
W

PUBLISHED BY GUY P. GANNETT, PUBLISHER

PRICE 50c



This air photo shows the fire as it swept across wooded Mt. Desert toward Bar Harbor.



A brave stand was made near these farm buildings in the outskirts of Biddeford at the peak of the fires that ravaged the coastal area between that city and Kennebunkport.



Firemen play a line on the smoking ruins of a cottage across the street from the Belmont Hotel, Bar Harbor, after a night of red terror.

## Picture Record Of The Fires

The illustrations in this issue offer a picture record of the devastating forest fires which swept the State in October after one of the most prolonged droughts in history.

York County bore the brunt of the disaster, a number of its communities, including summer resort colonies, being virtually wiped out by the flames that fed on tinder-dry undergrowth. Bar Harbor provided what was possibly the most spectacular drama, the fire there trapping thousands of citizens along the waterfront where Dunkerque-like scenes of evacuation were re-enacted.

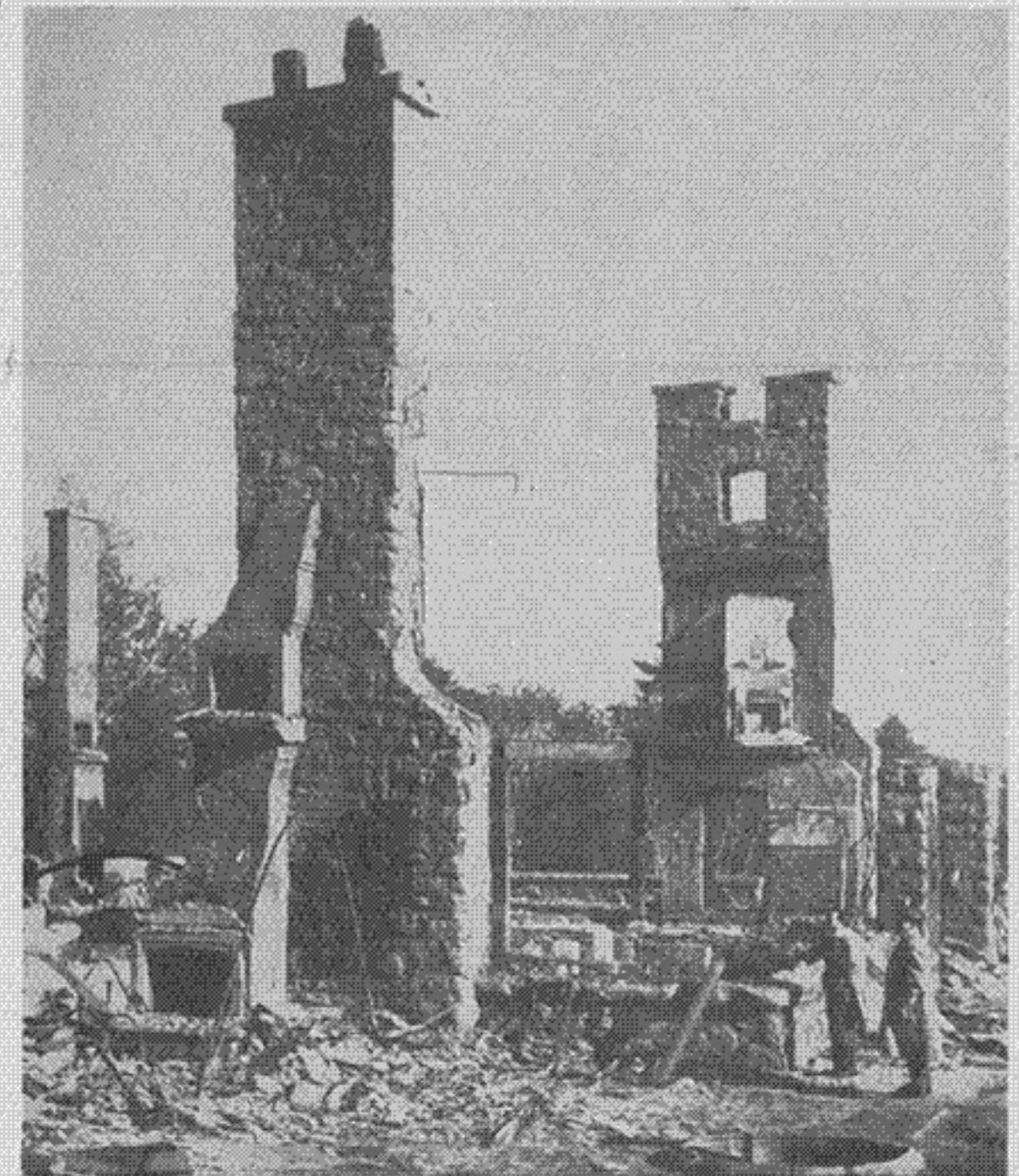
In other communities—Brownfield, Newfield, Waterboro, Fortune Rock, Lyman, Dayton — hardly a home was left standing after the flames had swept past. There remained only chimneys, foundations and ashes—and the long, arduous task of reconstruction.

All photographs including air pictures in this publication were taken by staff camera men of the Portland Press Herald, Evening Express and Sunday Telegram and of the Daily Kennebec Journal and Waterville Morning Sentinel.

This Pictorial Review was edited by staff members of the Guy P. Gannett Newspapers in Maine and was printed by the Kennebec Journal, Augusta, Maine.

## The Cost --- In Dollars and Heartache

16 dead  
2,500 homeless  
1,068 homes destroyed  
9 communities leveled or practically wiped out.  
4 other communities which suffered extensive damage  
200,000 acres of timberland ravaged



Publisher Joseph Pulitzer (right) and his pilot view the ruins of the estate of Mrs. William S. Moore, Pulitzer's sister, at Bar Harbor.



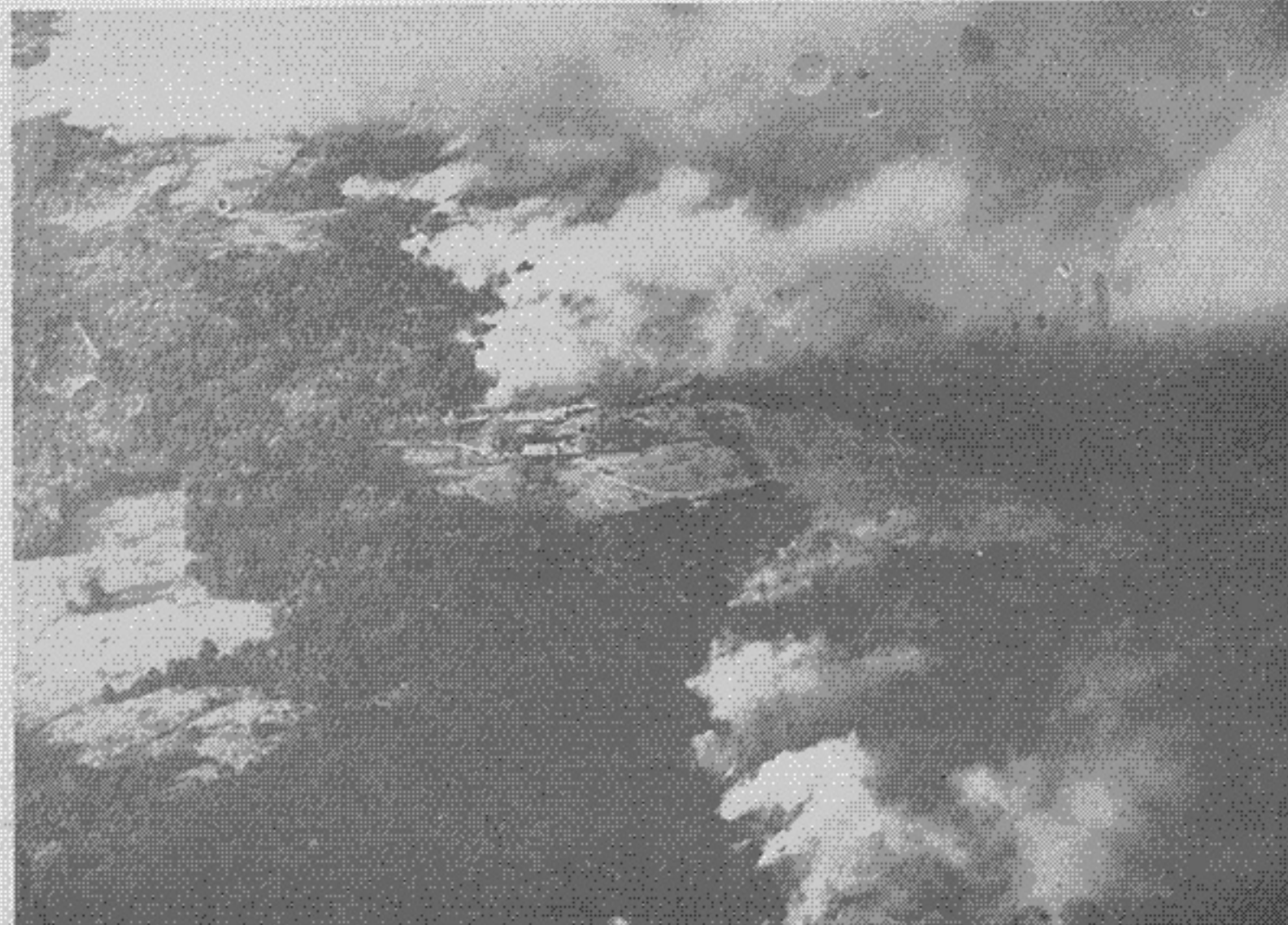
This scene shows some of the ugly remains of what had been the pretty shore resort community of Fortune Rock, Biddeford, after the forest fires had swept across country to the sea.



# Flames Jumped Route One, Raced for Kennebunk; Wide Blaze Took Waterboro



This was one of the first pictures taken of the fire in the Kennebunkport-Biddeford region. It shows flames leaping across Route one at North Kennebunkport on the way to the Fortune Rock resort, Biddeford, later destroyed.



Airview of the flames as they raced through the Waterboro area.

## Whole Towns Levelled, 200,000 Acres Swept

Wind and Flame Held Full Sway on Oct. 23rd, Day of Horror for Maine

The year that was to bring the worst forest fires in the 300-odd years since the white man came to Maine started wet. In the Spring so much rain fell gardeners had trouble getting crops planted. But by mid-Summer the daily drizzle had disappeared, and in its place came one of the most stubborn dry spells in memory.

On July 22 and 23, two and a half inches of rain fell, but from then on—drought. Portland had .27 inches of rain in August, when 3.14 inches is normal. September was better, with a good rain Sept. 2 and drizzles and showers five other

days. The total for the month was 1.73 inches, compared to a normal 3.10 inches.

Then Maine got really dry. In the first 28 days of October, not enough moisture came out of the sky in Portland to be measured, and heat records fell.

### WELLS DRY

By the first week of October, wells were dry all over the state. Here and there a set of farm buildings burned down for lack of water to fight the fire.

In the woods, the danger doubled, doubled again, and then doubled again with every passing day of drought. Woods that usually were ablaze with color in the Fall changed in one quick jump from Summer's green to a toasted brown. Fallen leaves were not just dry. They were powdery.

Woods veterans crossed their fingers and held their breath. Two weeks passed with no great trouble. Then in the middle of October reports of small woods fires began coming in from around the state.

They weren't too serious. They were widely separated, small, and they didn't do much damage to homes and buildings. Some of them were put out over the week end of Oct. 18 and 19.

### ALARMS SPREAD

But others still burned, and on Monday, Oct. 20, alarm spread through Biddeford as a fire south of that city suddenly began to move, leaping across U. S. Route One and heading for the coast with a will of its own.

Tuesday the fire there became ominous. With the wind blowing strong at its back, it raced across the pine woods of Kennebunkport Township and swept down upon house after house. Before nightfall it had reached the coast, and it galloped through the summer colonies of Goose Rocks Beach and Cape Porpoise despite all that hundreds, even thousands, of hastily-gathered volunteers could do to halt it.

When they finally stopped it on the fringes of Kennebunkport Village, they found that the same wind had lashed a small fire in northern York County into a rampaging monster, and frantic appeals came to Maine's large cities for men to help save the threatened settlements in Waterboro Township.

Wednesday was a calmer day in the skies, with the wind dying down, but on the ground the fever rose. The Kennebunkport fire was far from dead; the Waterboro fire was completely unchecked; Brownfield, south of Fryeburg, was

in grave peril; and the beautiful forests of Acadia National Park around the proud town of Bar Harbor were ablaze.

### DAY OF TERROR

Thursday, Oct. 23, was a day of terror all over Southern Maine. The wind rose to 25 miles an hour in the West, and nothing puny man could do would hold Maine's forest fires in check. Smoke turned the sun itself to a blood-red spot in the murky sky. The major fire fronts stretched for miles, with flames leaping through the treetops at frightening speed. With bulldozers, tank trucks converted to water wagons, back pumps, spades, and even wet brooms, men fell back to the very edge of towns and farmyards in the hope of saving their buildings. Usually they failed.

At Bar Harbor, thousands stood on the docks waiting rescue by sea as a circle of fire closed in on their town. Finally, heroic crews rode bulldozers into the face of the fire to open a land path to safety for them.

Brownfield, Newfield, Waterboro, Lyman, Fortune Rock, and a big part of Bar Harbor burned on that wild Thursday.

It was the fire's big day. The whole state stood in horror

(Continued on Page Four)

## Brave Men Fought A Losing Battle



Firefighters vainly try to check flames as they sweep in to a North Waterboro lumberyard and then spread to nearby homes, after roaring through 100,000 board feet of stacked lumber.



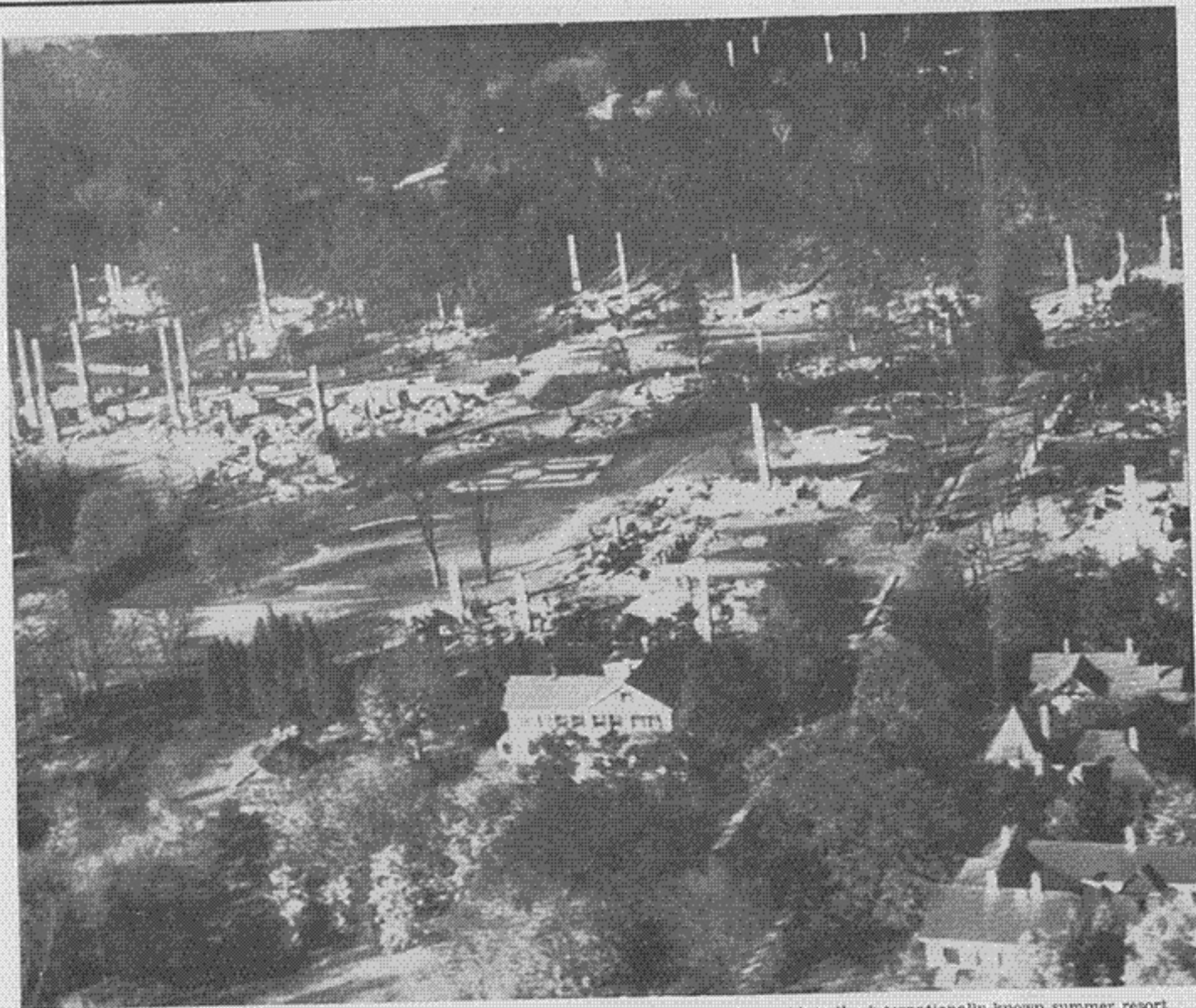
A North Waterboro home is swept by the wind-lashed flames which roared out of the surrounding woodland and meadows on that terrible Thursday, Oct. 23.



Left, one of the scores of summer homes destroyed in the Cape Porpoise fire, burns fiercely on wind-whipped flames. Center, Pvt. James Gorman, national guardsman, guards the ruins of summer homes at Goose Rocks, Kennebunkport. Right, one of the first families to move back into the burned-over area on Goose Rock Road. Clifton Campbell, Robert Campbell, Jr., and Herbert Strickland, a neighbor, carry furniture into the Campbell home.



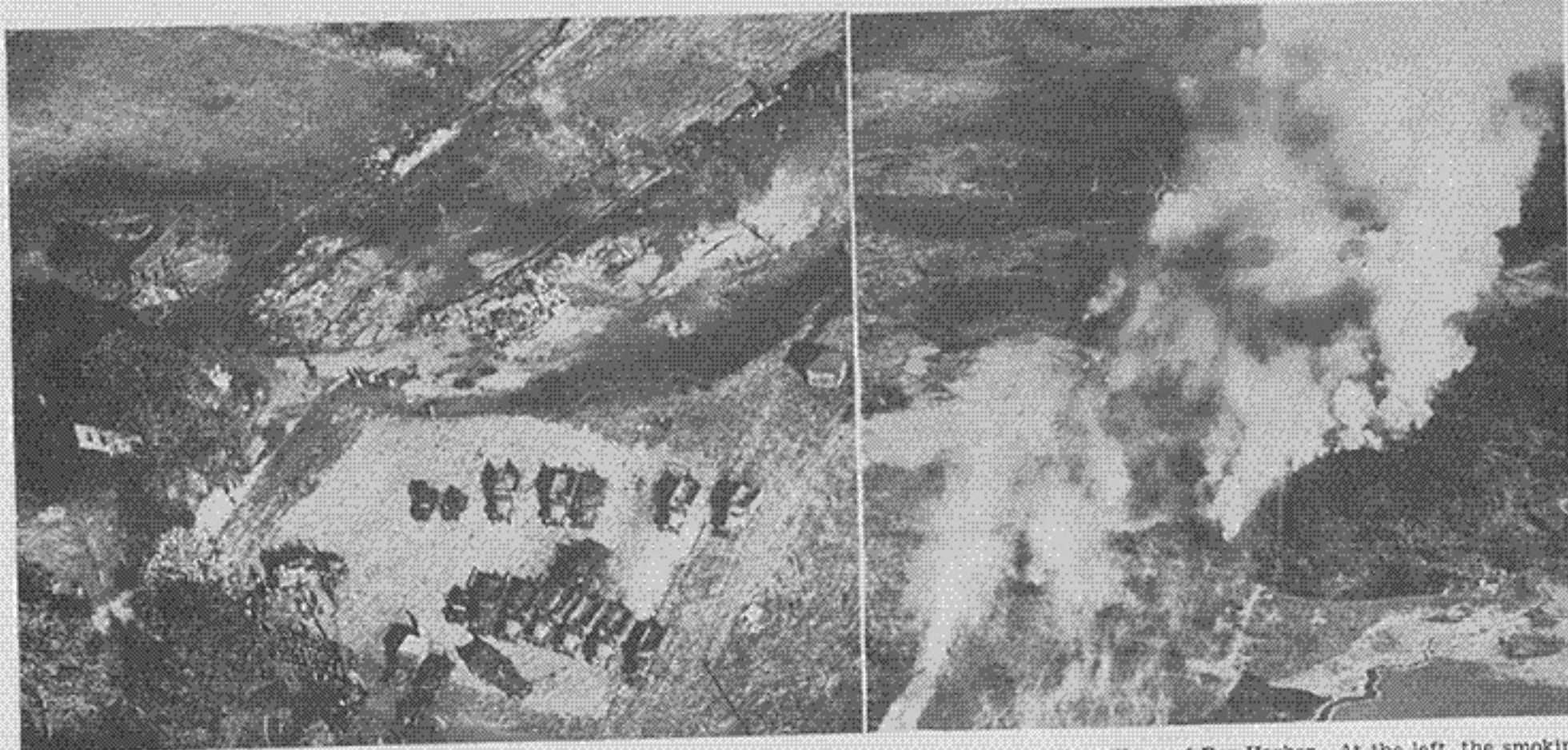
# Woods Fire Devastated Bar Harbor, Playground of the Nation's Wealthy



General scene after the fierce woods fire pushed Bar Harbor defendants back and swept into the internationally known summer resort.



Destruction of the Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory building at Bar Harbor was a minor loss compared to the destruction of valuable research records, product of many years of work, and of 90,000 mice inbred for generations to produce various types of cancer for study.



Two air views of the Mt. Desert forest fire as it swept Cadillac Mountain and raced towards the village of Bar Harbor. At the left, the smoking ruins of the Hugh Kelly dairy. At the right, the flames move through the balsam growth toward the mountain.



Many Maine people were not so fortunate as Dolores Daigle of Bar Harbor, shown here returning with her personal possessions to her home, which the fire spared.



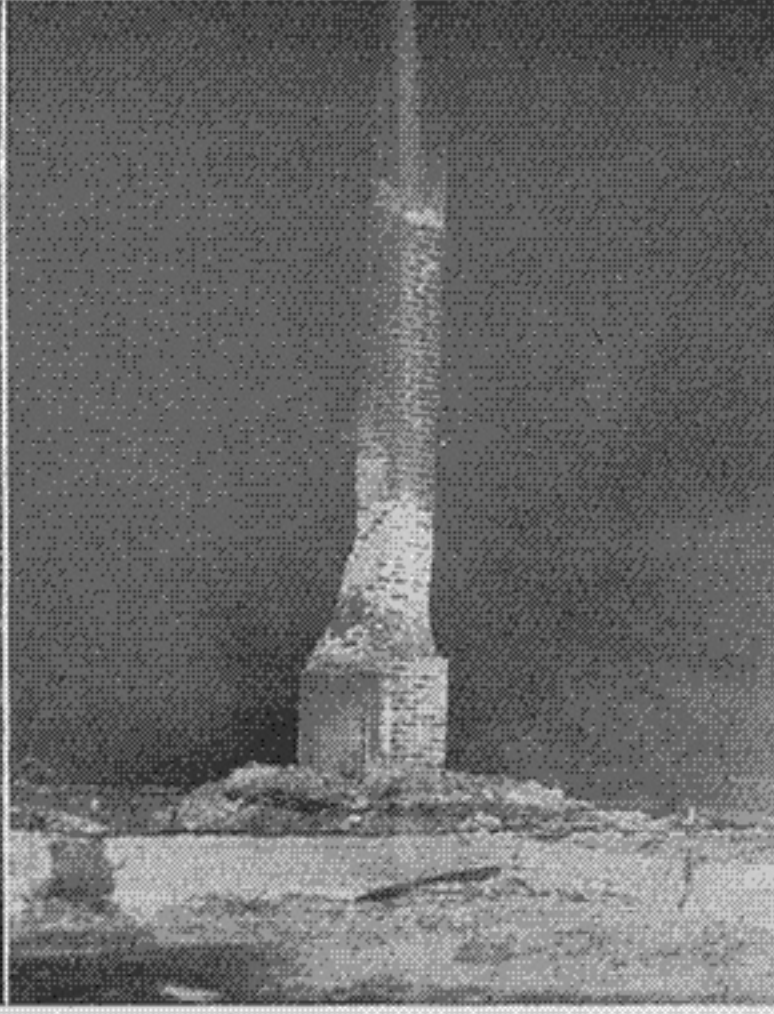
Very little of the Belmont Hotel at Bar Harbor was left, as this picture shows, after the fire swept through the resort community.



One of the buildings destroyed at Bar Harbor was the Malvern Hotel. Only chimneys and rubble remain.



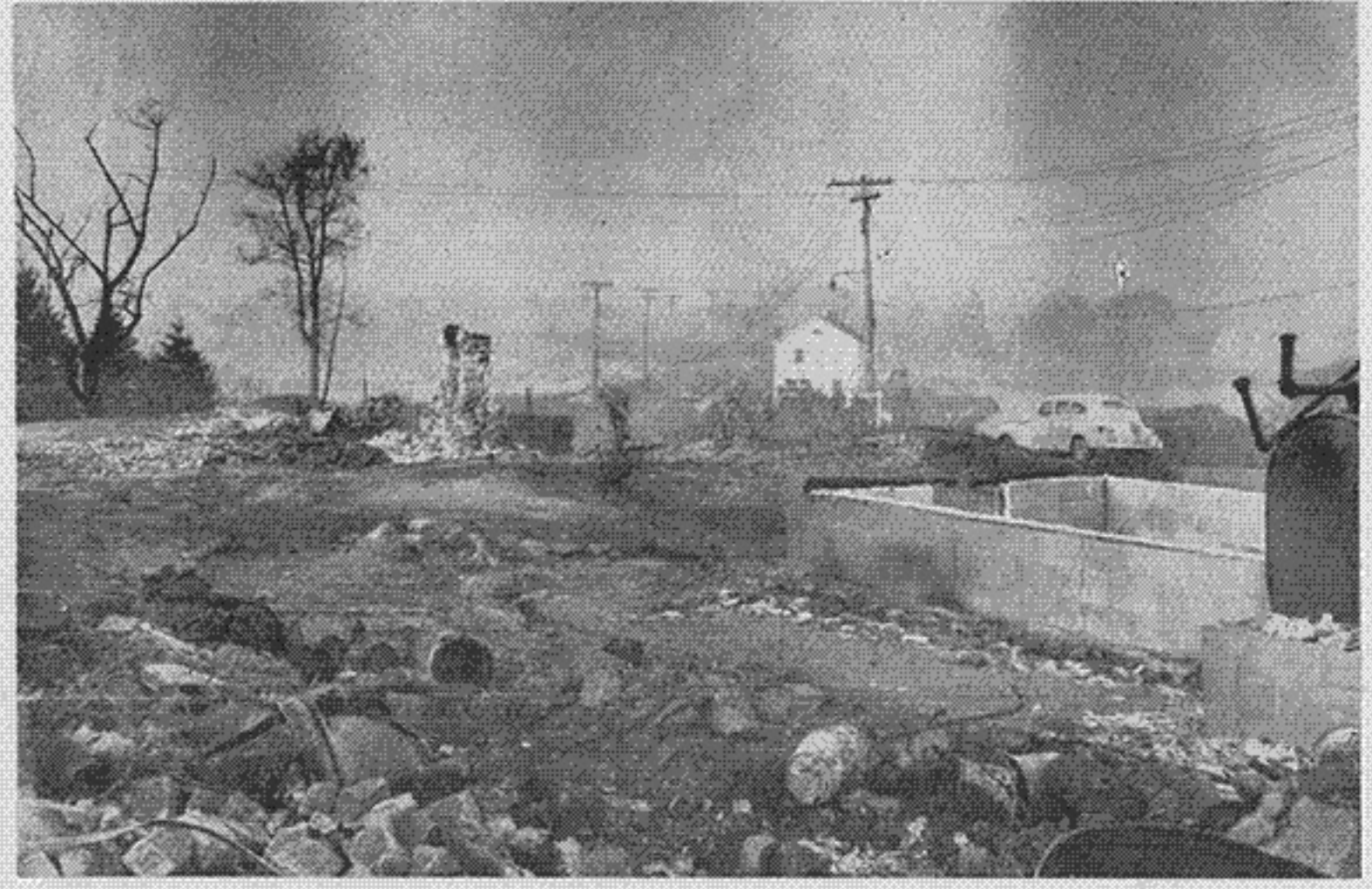
# Biddeford Area Was First Seared By Forest Flames Racing Toward The Sea



Left, burning ruins between Biddeford and Kennebunk. Center, all that remained of The Hermitage, an antique shop. Right, general scene of destruction in the wake of the fire that ravaged the area between Kennebunkport and Biddeford Pool.



Thousands of refugees from York County towns taxed the facilities of relief agencies. These Waterboro people are sheltered in the Pepperell Club, Biddeford, which opened its doors to those driven from their homes by fire.



Amid the ruins of what once was Fortune Rock, Biddeford, stands a memorial to a man who wouldn't give up. It is the summer home of John Kerr, Marblehead, Mass., who fought his battle almost single-handed with a garden hose—and won. His wife last saw him on that terrible Thursday "enveloped in an inferno of fire" as she fled to safety. But Kerr came through his inferno and so did his cottage, one of the few places left standing at the summer colony, where only the sea stopped the roaring flames.



Members of Company A, Maine National Guard, from Biddeford, take time out from duties fighting the fire near their home city to gulp hot coffee.

## Furniture Hunt Followed Evacuation

In the midst of smoke and flame-filled nights as fire threatened their homes, many families sent their household furniture off on volunteer trucks without knowing its final destination.

One Richmond man, who tipped the plumbing from his fire-threatened home, later found it stored in a nearby barn. Another man found his refrigerator, beds and mattresses in Richmond when he searched for it after the threat to his home had passed.

Many families were looking for furniture and other valuables weeks after the crisis had passed.

## Whole Towns Levelled, 200,000 Acres Swept

(Continued from Page Two)

As Friday revealed the rows of gaping cellar holes and lone chimneys where once happy homes had stood.

### HELP RUSHED TO STATE

Thousands of men now lined the fire fronts, and Federal agencies rushed new help to the State. Better organized, the men got to each threatening spot quicker and for the first time the end of the tragedy seemed in sight.

But the fire wasn't really licked yet. In a last spurge of power, it roared through sparsely settled Dayton Township Saturday, carrying more than 30 homes to the skies in raging flames and smoke.

Maine finally triumphed over its plague of fire, and it turned in earnest then to counting the fires' cost. Sixteen persons had died. The loss in terms of money was put at \$30,000,000. It included 200,000 acres of woodland, 1,068 homes and cottages and most of the things that were in them, 241 farm buildings, livestock, antiques that can never be replaced, a famed cancer study center, factories, stores and businesses, telephone and telegraph lines, automobiles, farm machinery, public buildings, and even the ground itself—burned so deeply in many places that it will be many years before its fertility is restored.

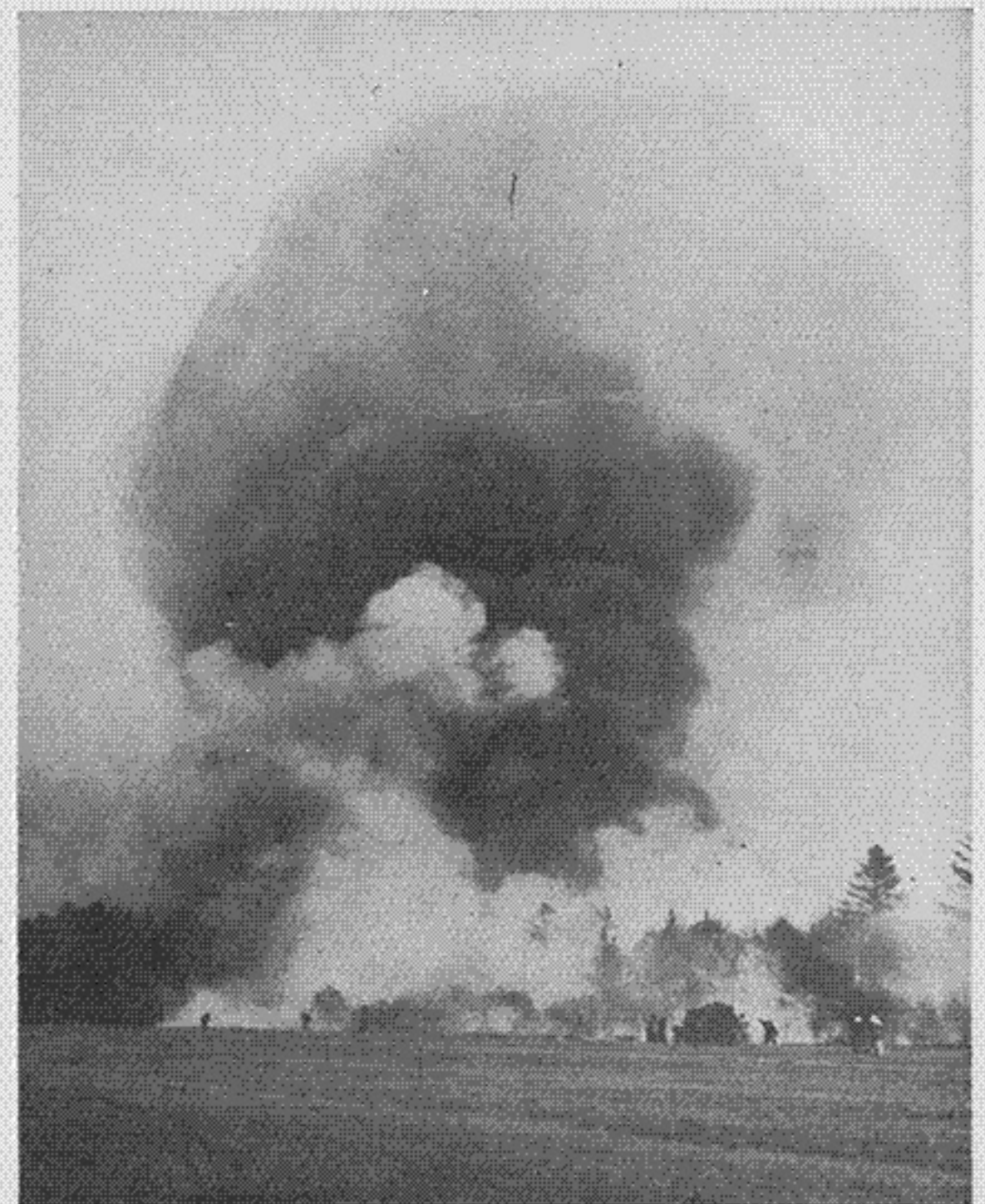
### 6,000 DRIVEN OUT

At the peak of the fires about 6,000 persons had been driven from their homes as refugees, and when the ashes cooled 2,500 of them found they had nothing to go back to but those cold ashes.

In these pages are pictured the terror, the heartbreak, the shock of the fire as they were caught on film by the lenses of Press Herald-Evening Express-Sunday Telegram cameramen. Pictured here too by those same cameramen are the heroism, the unselfishness, and the quick helpfulness with which the men and women of Maine whose homes were spared, and the rest of the Nation through its Government and the American Red Cross, came to the aid of those who suffered.



Firemen battle to keep the flames from the home of O. A. Goldthwaite, Pool Road, Biddeford.



Scenes like this, near the Biddeford Pool road, scenes of tragic "beauty", were common throughout Maine's fire-ravaged areas.



# Suffering And Misery Followed The Fire's Trail Through Waterboro



Ruins of about 20 dwellings in the South Waterboro area are shown in this air photo taken several weeks after the fire. One new home, well underway, can be seen at right center.

## Farmer Describes Fire's Fury

Suffering of people in York County and other fire areas was almost beyond description. It was told simply and eloquently by one victim, Roy Meserve, Dayton farmer who lost the work of a lifetime. Here are excerpts of his story, reprinted from an article appearing in the *Gazette* newspaper.

"I was born in this house just 64 years ago next Thursday," he began. "It has always been my home. My brother and I farmed it together. I guess between us we have some \$50 acres here. Now it's all gone—all gone."

He paused for a moment and his fingers wiped at tired eyes. "We were watching of course all day yesterday (Saturday). At noon-time the fire was about six miles away across Route 9. Then it began to get dark. Some men came with bulldozers and cut wide swaths all around the buildings. Those swaths would have stopped an ordinary fire. They didn't mean a thing to those flames."

"About 4 o'clock red began to show over the hill a half mile away. We had a truck here already loaded with some things and I ran to the stable for a tool kit I wanted to save. From there I ran to the barn. In that barn were those two horses and 32 head of cattle. I started to turn out the cattle, freeing my brother's first. I had turned out 28 of them when someone boomed:

"I can back to the door and had to drop to my hands and knees and crawl through the doorway. It was just like a thunder shower only it was raining sparks. They came down just like hail. Just 20 minutes after I first saw flames a half mile away the barn roof fell down," Meserve said.

"The flames went down across those fields like race horses. I never believed I would see anything like it. I wish I hadn't. It still seems like a dream. I keep thinking I'll wake up any minute and find my buildings as I have known them all my life and hear the cattle again."

"I could not replace this farm today for \$25,000. I had just put in that new tie-up—right there where the 12 cows are. That cost \$1,500 this summer. Two of those cows I purchased last

week for \$300. In the barn and stable I had 90 tons of hay," he continued.

"It has been a hard year for me. Last May my wife became ill and died and I—"

His voice broke. He walked a little way from us. Then his shoulders straightened and he turned.

"I'm sorry," he said apologetically, "but I guess our nervous system can stand only so much. But I'm not as bad off as thousands of people in this state. I have no little children. My family is all grown up. I'm still able to earn my own living. But I'm not going to do anything this fall perhaps not next Spring."

"I think I'll move my stock to my nephew's place. They're paying good money at Union Falls. If my son and nephew want to work there, I'll be chore boy and take care of the farm. I can't afford to rebuild. And if I could afford it and materials were available, how could I possibly replace it. The house was at least 150 years old, but it was in good repair. Those two elm trees there made the place in the summer. Now they're both gone—everything's gone. It's just a barren hill now," Meserve said.

"But look there, across the street where you found me. That's my nephew's farm and he saved it with a barrel of cider. I never had much respect for cider before. He had used two or three cans of water and the porch ignited for the third or fourth time. Nothing was left but the barrel of cider. He dumped it on the fire and saved his farm."

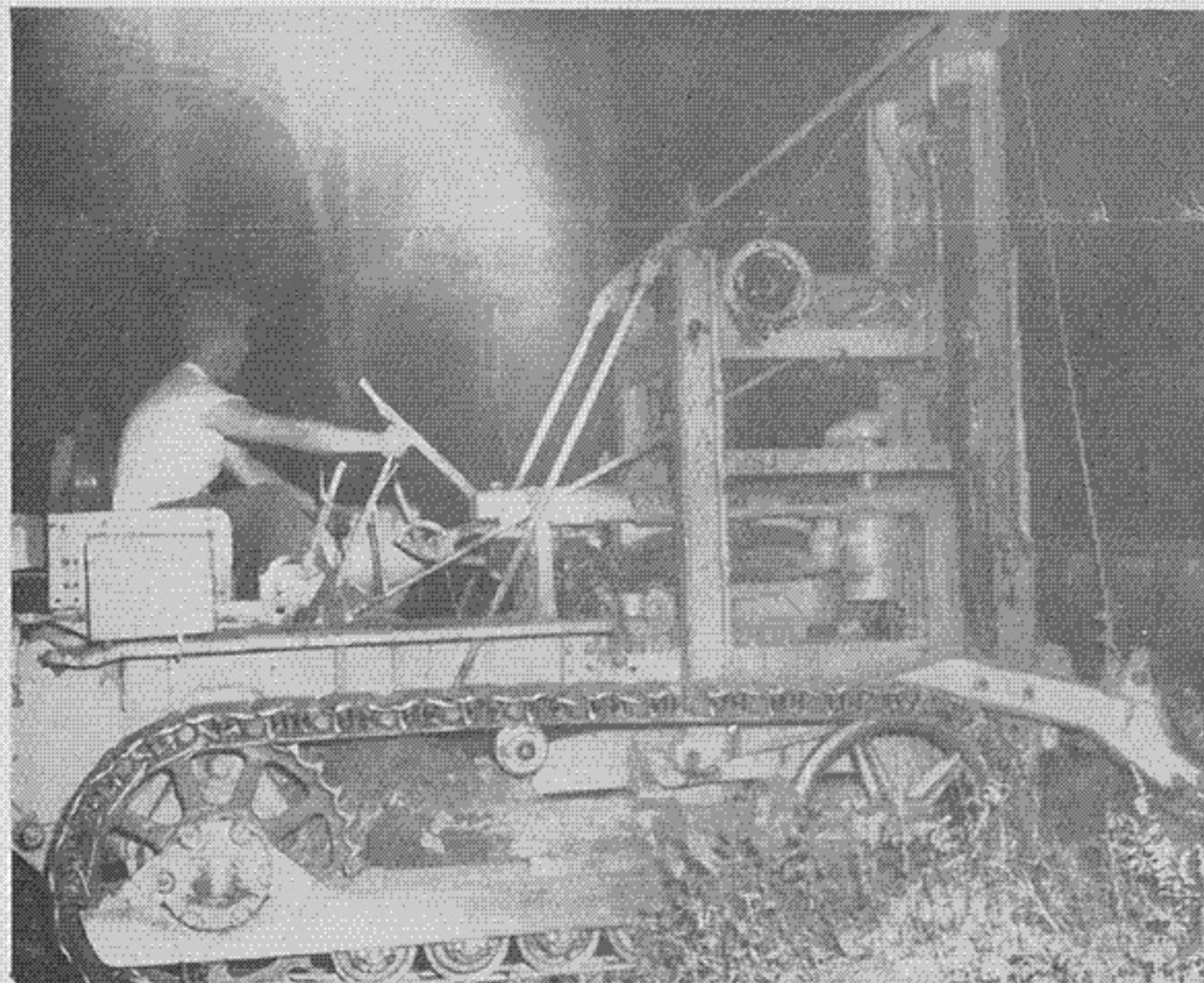
"It burned about half of our town. There must be 40 farms destroyed. It burned all the biggest and best farms too," he said.

As we walked down the little hill to the road, Meserve turned and looked again at the devastation.

"Those poor horses," he said and his throat filled again. "Those poor horses. Tied by the neck and I couldn't get them out. If they had been free and had been caught by the fire it wouldn't have been as bad. But tied by the neck, unable to go anywhere. If only I could have helped them."



The family of George Drown. Wells takes refuge in Portland, after they had left him at Waterboro fighting the forest fire and found that flames had cut off their return to their home. They were housed and fed by the Red Cross overnight. Left to right are George, 12; Mrs. Drown, holding Rose, 15 months; Everett, 14; and Ruth, 4.



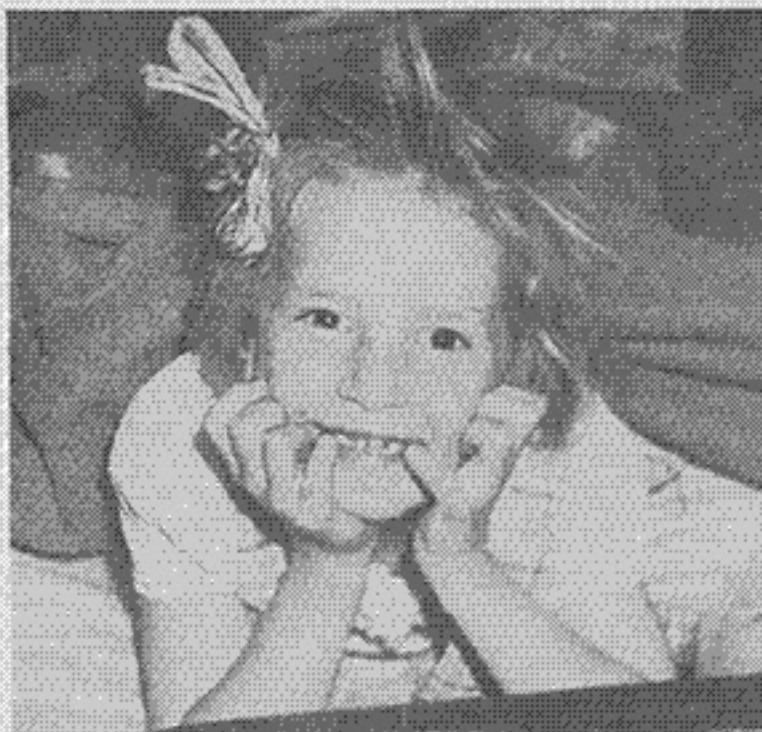
Fernand J. Allaire swings a bulldozer off the narrow Waterboro-Thyng's Mill road to plow a fire check. Bulldozers, particularly the 25-toners which the Army rushed to the fire fronts, played a major part in checking the flames. With indomitable and terrifying might, the great machines crashed through the forest, toppling great trees and gouging great swaths in the forest floor to check the fire.



Eight Maplewood children, driven from their homes in the Waterboro fire, found haven in single bed. Mrs. Vincent Langlois puts the last of the children to bed at Sokosis Inn, to which the family was evacuated.



Norman Taylor, left, and Carl Thornton prepare to rebuild the former's home at Waterboro.



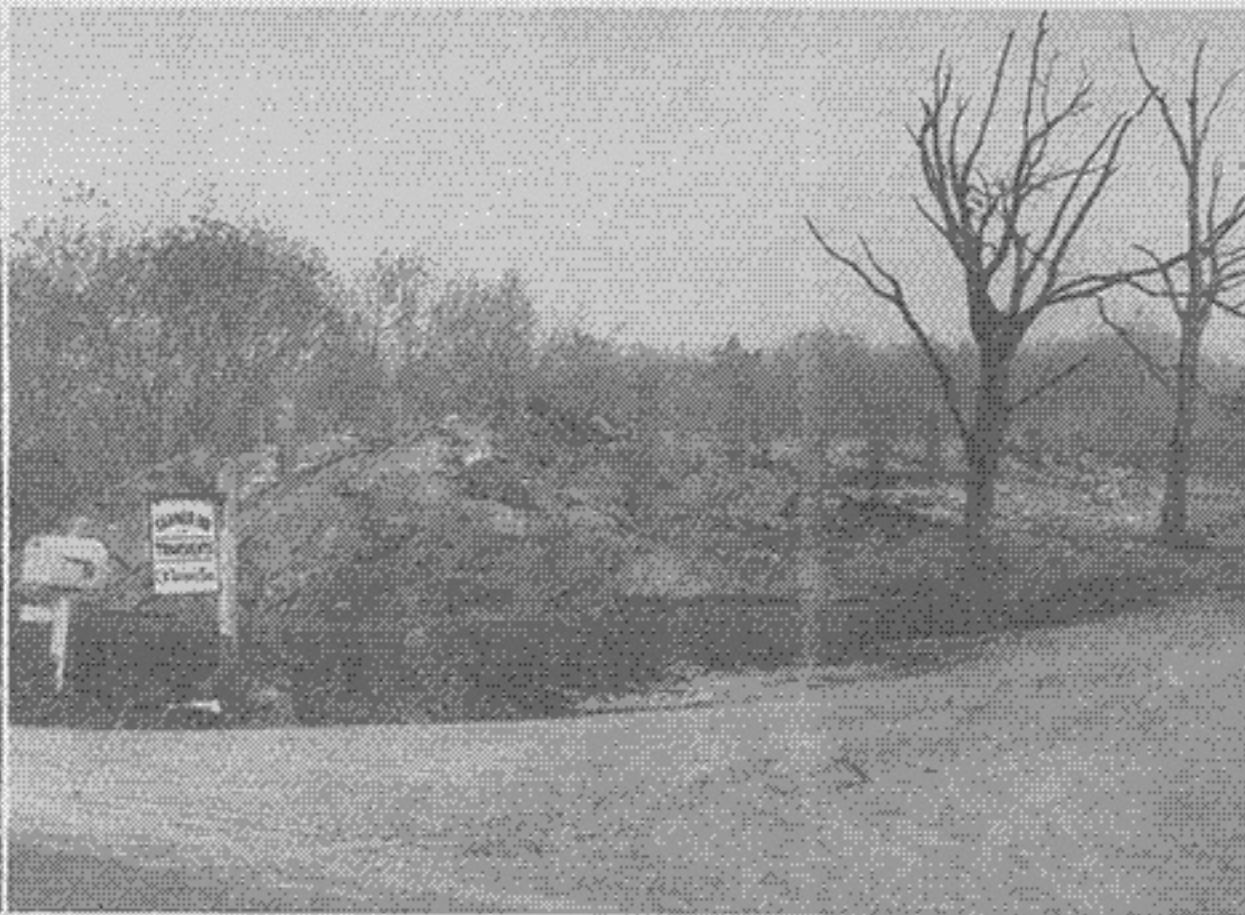
Norma Graffam, one of a family of six children who lost their East Waterboro home in the fire, rests, not quite comprehending the tragedy, on a cot in the Pepperell Club, Biddeford, to which she and her five brothers and sisters and mother, Mrs. Eva Graffam, were evacuated. Their father fought on at Waterboro beside his neighbors.



Standish firemen grab a few minutes rest in a field after battling the forest fire at Clark's Mills, Hollis. The little community was saved after a long, smoky battle.



# Biddeford and Kennebunkport Will Never Forget the Long Siege by Fire



Right, this was the home of Mrs. Jean Urban. Center, only the sign remains of what had once been attractive Tanner Inn. Left, Paul Genthner examines the car his father, Thomas Genthner, was forced to abandon when the fast-moving fire trapped him in the colony.



Ruins of one home destroyed when fire swept over five acres of the Little Sanford settlement at Goose Rocks, Kennebunkport.



Water scarcity was one of the serious handicaps during the fires. This scene, near Biddeford, shows a typical improvisation of the bucket brigade as firefighters transfer to a pumper water brought to the scene in barrels by truck.



Here are the ruins of ten cottages at Goose Neck Beach, Kennebunkport.



Volunteer work during sweep of flames across Kennebunkport township played an important part in halting the woods fire before it reached the village proper. Lt. Ruth Nelson of the Salvation Army at Saco pours a hot cup of coffee for fire fighter Joseph Buette of the Yarmouth Fire Department.

## Up to 6,000 Homeless

Red Cross reports estimated that between 5,000 and 6,000 people were homeless at the height of the fire danger when more than 60 forest fires were ravaging the state.

In Bar Harbor alone, where the estimated damage was as high as \$10,000,000, about 3,500 people were evacuated on the first night of the fire. More than 475 homes were destroyed in the state.



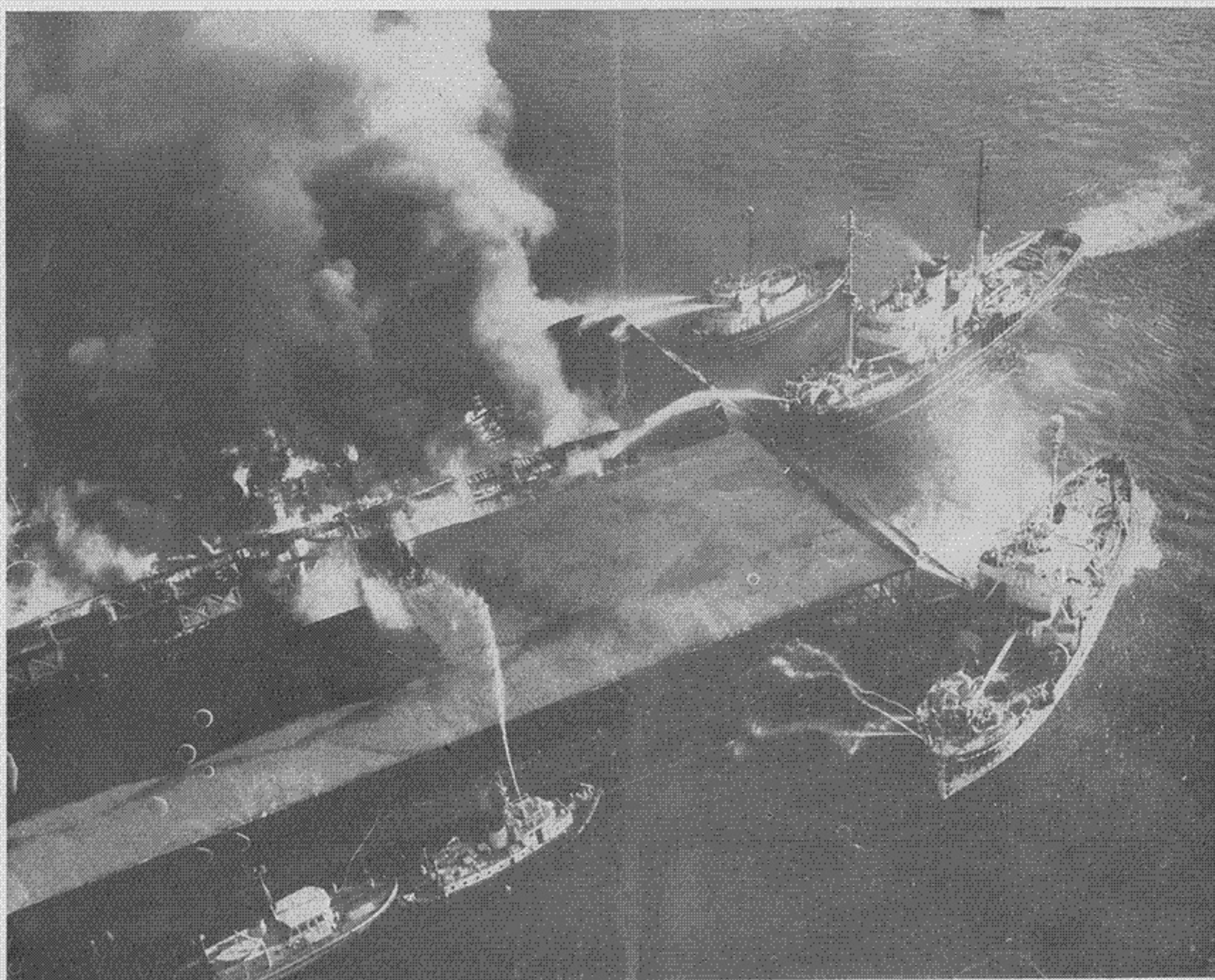
Graphic evidence of the intensity of the fires which raged through Goose Rocks and Goose Neck Beach, Kennebunkport. Close-up view of the shell of what once was a summer cottage. The heat of the flames was so intense here that the porcelain enamel on the bathtub is charred.



A truck-load of volunteer fire fighters who battled destructive fire sweeping through a large section of the Kennebunkport area.



# \$800,000 State Pier Fire Almost Last Straw On Red Thursday



At the height of the forest fire disaster the Maine State Pier burst into flame and it required the combined forces of Portland firemen, the Coast Guard, Army and Harbor craft to quell the three-alarm blaze. Pouring water onto the flames above are the Army Harbor boat L-112, the Coast Guard tug 64361, Coast Guard cutters Cowslip and Acushnet and the Portland fireboats.



Heavy clouds of smoke roll out of the Maine State Pier South Shed as the fire which threatened to ignite the adjacent Grand Trunk Pier, fed on large consignments of paper towels, book print paper and general cargo of sardines and wood products destined for shipment to the West Coast by the Isthmian Lines.



The smoke-shrouded Portland fireboat trains all hoses on the eastern side of the Maine State Pier as 15 pieces of Portland fire apparatus, Army tugs and Coast Guard cutters brought the \$800,000 fire under control within an hour.



The Chimneys of Bar Harbor, symbols of an era that ended the terrible night of Oct. 23, 1947. These ruins are not of the most pretentious estates; they are of comfortable summer homes along Forest Avenue, left and Eden Road, right. The year-round residents, and those who loved Bar Harbor enough to make it their summer residence insist that its beauty has not been permanently destroyed. They declare it will be rebuilt, but on a more modest scale.





# Hollis And Dayton Folk Lost Their Homes, But Overcame Despair



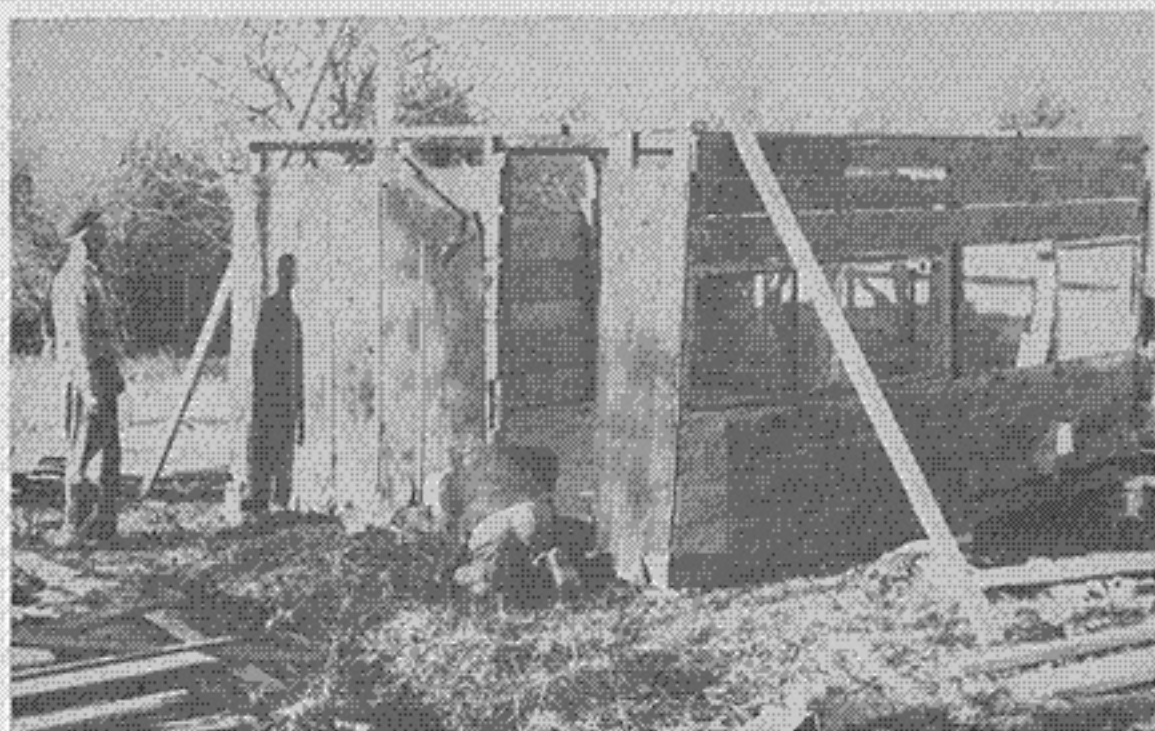
And then there was the problem of direction of the thousands of volunteers, of feeding them, of taking care of those hurt or suffering from exhaustion. The Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the American Legion and other organizations rallied their members and volunteers for service at the front and behind the lines. The Maine national guard, army, navy and coast guard units were mobilized. At the top left, a mobile canteen does out the famous Salvation Army "coffee and—" to firefighters. Top center, a fire warden uses a walkie-talkie to direct firefighters at Hollis. Top right, volunteer firefighters take a breather, leaning on their brooms, rakes and shovels. Bottom left, crewmen of a 68-foot coast guard tug couple hose to help fight the fire as it swept toward tidewater in York County. Bottom center, a national guard medical corpsman removes a cinder from the eye of a buddy. Bottom right, the fire roars through the woods near Hollis toward volunteers in the foreground who are willing but lacking proper equipment. Firemen in the background attempt to check the flames with a single line.



A homeless farmer returned to his fire-ravaged hillside at Dayton to raise Old Glory above the ashes of his buildings. What prompted the action no one knew, but the red, white and blue, fluttering in a smoke-laden breeze was all that moved on that remote farm-site.



Mrs. Willis Harmon, Hollis Center, (top) makes sure her family is nearby as she draws two milk cans of water to take with her before evacuating her home. Below, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Carter don't forget their pet dog as they flee their home on the Waterboro Road outside Hollis Center.



Fires were still smoking in the nearby woodlands when the indomitable victims began the work of reconstruction. With cold weather in the offing, Mr. and Mrs. Zeba Jenkins, victims of the fire which wiped out many Dayton dwellings, hurry to erect temporary shelter.

## Fire Emergency Committee Helps

A nine-member Fire Emergency and Information Committee was set up by Governor Horace A. Hildreth to cope with the needs of fire-stricken areas with Col. Francis H. Farnum and Edward A. Whitney, both of Augusta, as co-chairmen.

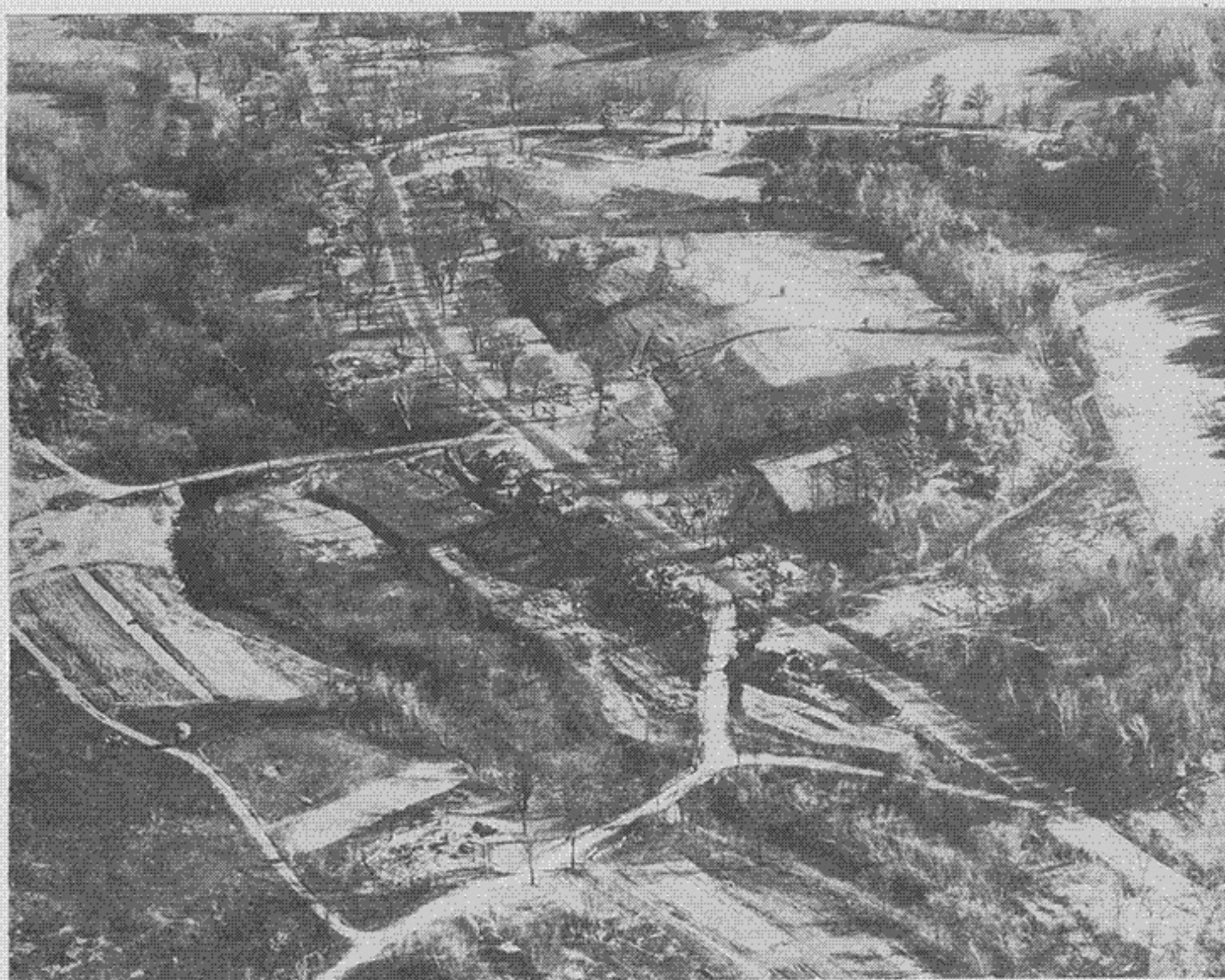
One of the first activities of the committee was to assist town groups in securing temporary homes for families which had been burned out.



And then, Wednesday, Oct. 29, rain, just a quarter of an inch, but enough to bring respite to the thousands of regular and volunteer firemen, fell on most of Maine. Here Albert E. White, veteran regular Windham fireman, expresses the joy with which the weary thousands greeted the rain that morning. Through ten long days and nights he had been battling a stubborn woods blaze which threatened cottages on the West Shore of Duck Pond, Windham, and homes along the Roosevelt Trail, or fighting the far more serious blaze at Waterboro.



# At Newfield, as in Other York County Villages, Red Terror Left Only Ashes



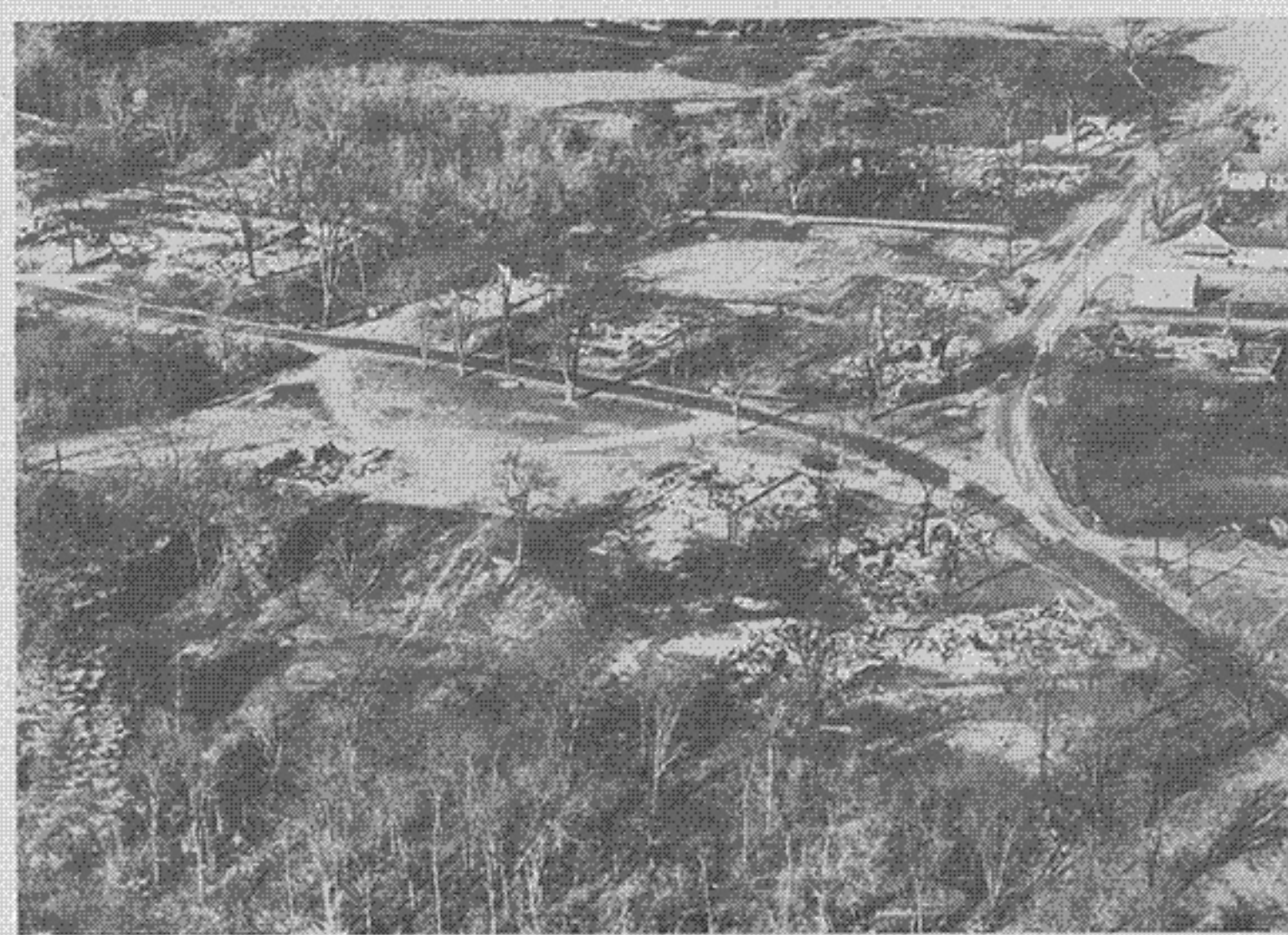
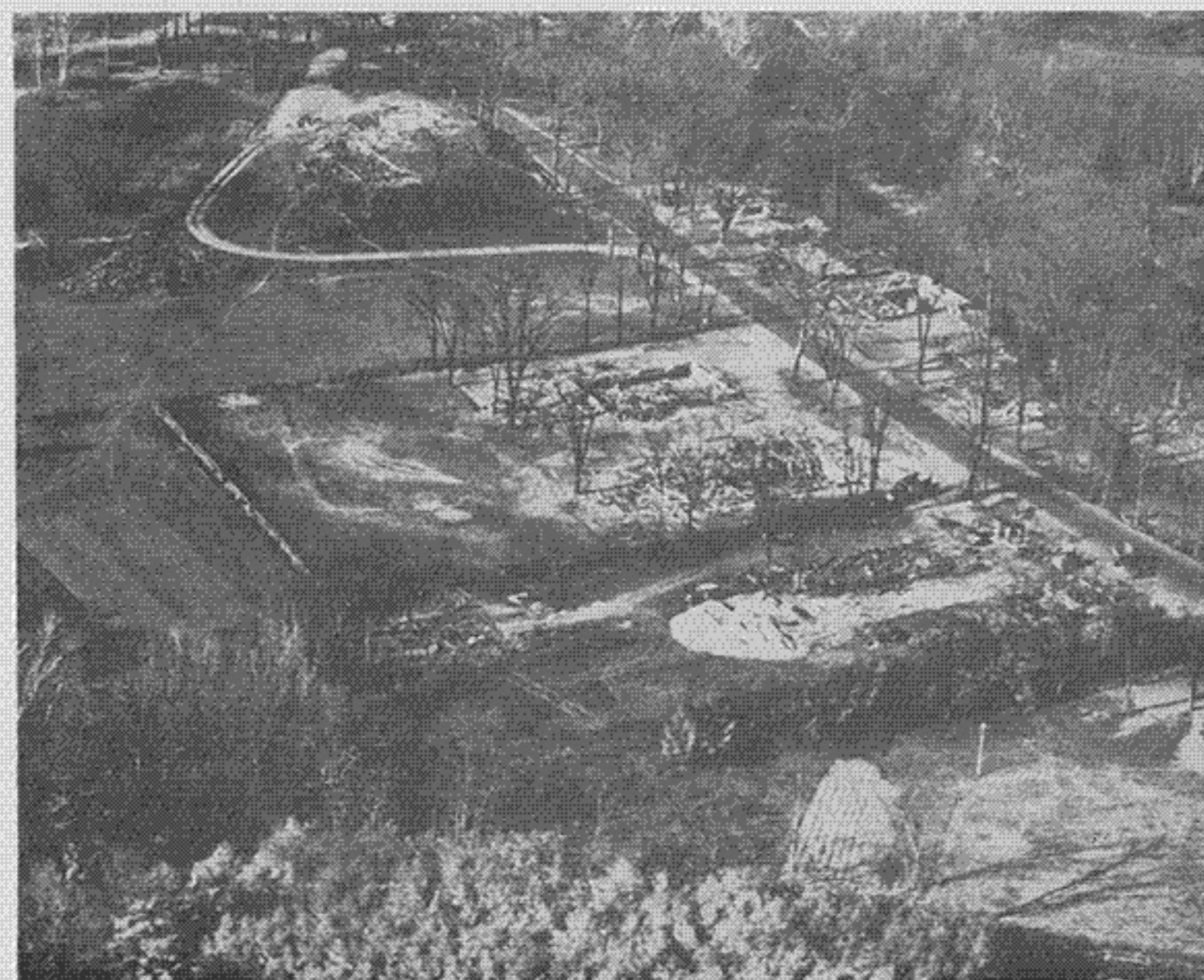
Silhouetted against their blazing fields and woodlands, Newfield residents fight through the long, smoky night in a vain attempt to save their homes and livestock.



Weary volunteer firefighters grab a nap on the floor and shelves in the North Newfield general store.



Newfield was left a ghost town, populated only by stunned people who had no homes left, after the flaming torrent had swept through the picturesque village. Air view above shows where fire raced down both sides of highway, wiping out practically every structure. At right, only chimneys and ashes mark the center of town, site of the town bandstand and World War Two honor roll. Lower left is another section of the town where eight homes were levelled, cleaning off both sides of the road. Lower right, the same stark ruins mark West Newfield where a dozen or so houses were destroyed, with only a few structures at right escaping the fiery fate. Typical of the thousands who fought against hopeless odds was Alvin Grover, left, of Rumford, who served on the Newfield front. Lack of proper equipment for the thousands of volunteers was one of the factors which contributed to the holocaust. Water and more water, in the right place at the right time, was the only answer when the wind whipped up the flames. Wells and streams were dry from the long drought; long lines of hose had to be laid from available sources of water to the fires—and in many places there wasn't hose enough.





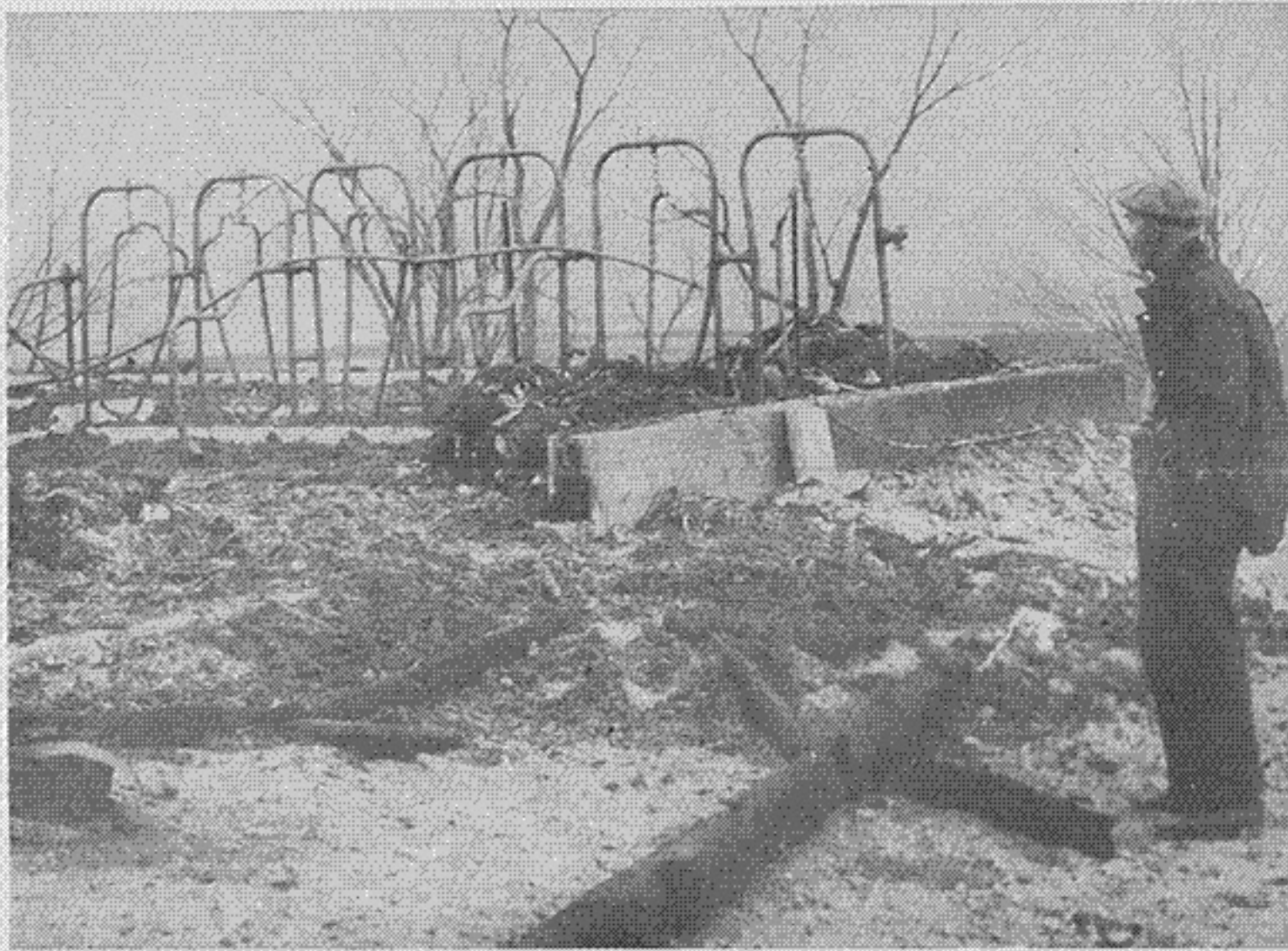
# Pathetic Human Problems and Tragedy Followed the Path of Flame



Evacuees from Bar Harbor are shown above registering at auditorium of Ellsworth City Hall which was clearing station Thursday night and Friday for those fleeing from the Bar Harbor fire which destroyed 200 homes as well as resort hotels. Thousands of evacuees poured into Ellsworth and were provided food and shelter either there or in Bangor and Brewer.



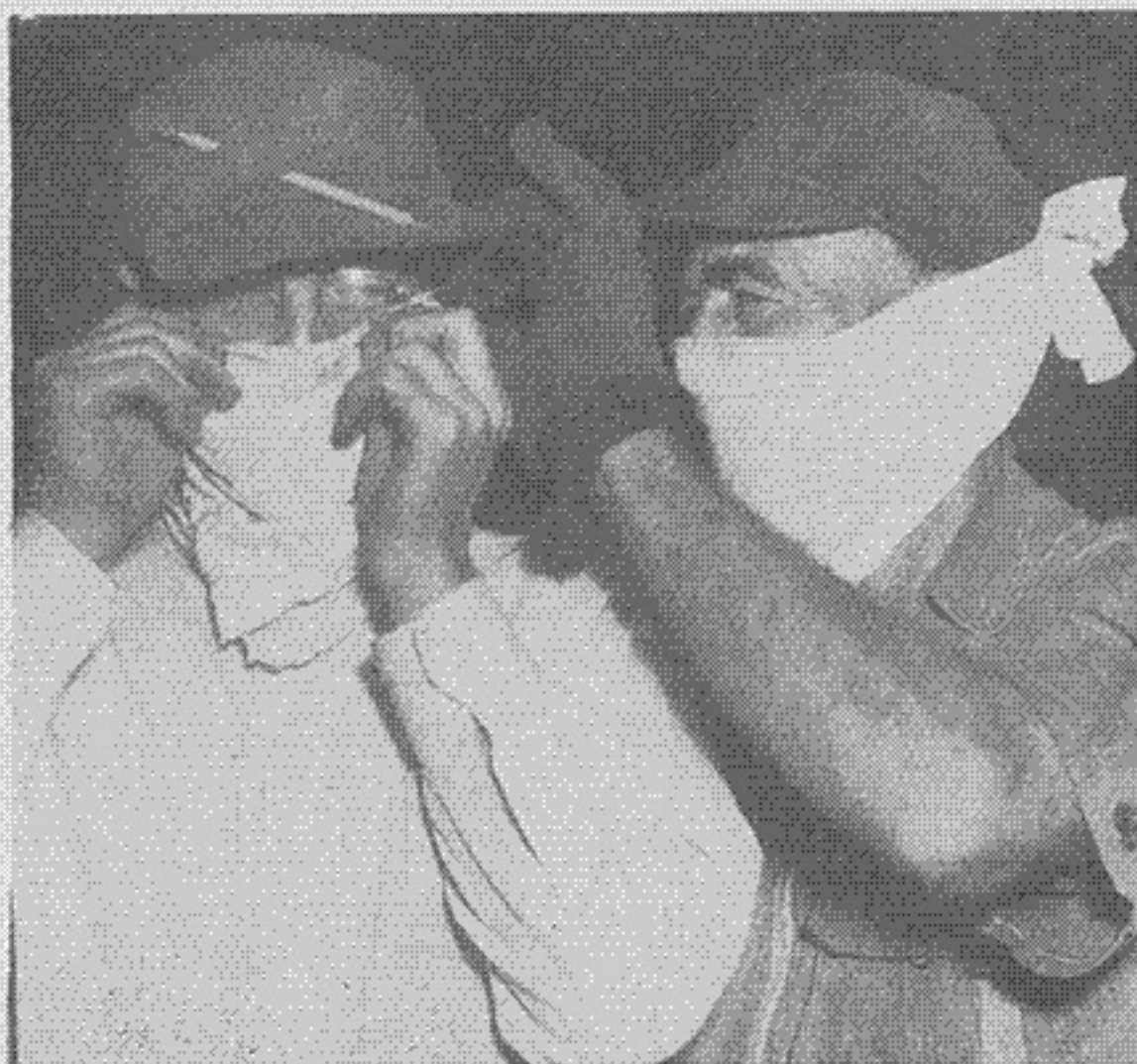
A man (arrow left) and his faithful horse (arrow right) died here when flames roared across the highway. The man was Albert Smith, 60-year-old Newfield recluse. Friends had urged him to flee his home on a mountainside, but he had refused to leave his horse. He stopped long enough to harness up—and then it was too late. His charred body was found beside the stonewall at the right by a Press Herald-Express reporter and photographer. Scorched leaves of a Bible, which he always carried, were scattered about him. Game Warden George Townsend holds up a burned wheel.



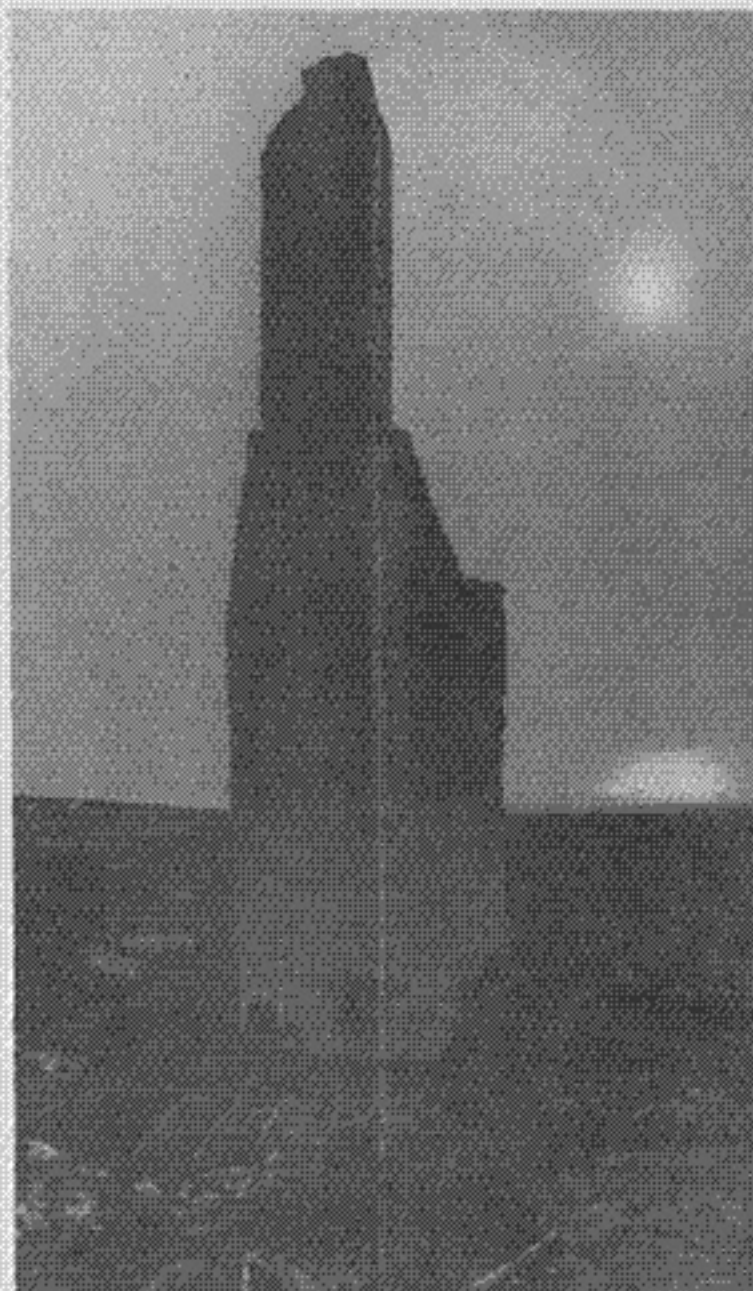
Roy Meserve, one of many Dayton farmers who saw their buildings disappear in flames, stands morosely beside the ruins of his barn and the bodies of 12 cows and two horses he could not rescue.



Volunteers pile lumber onto a truck to save it as flames sweep down on a lumberyard at Deer Pond, Hollis.



Typical of make-shift masks adopted by volunteer fire fighters against acrid smoke palls throughout the state, Arnold Moulton, right, assists Sydney Poulter with his handkerchief mask, as the pair fought a vicious woods fire which threatened Poulter's home on Maple Avenue, Scarborough.



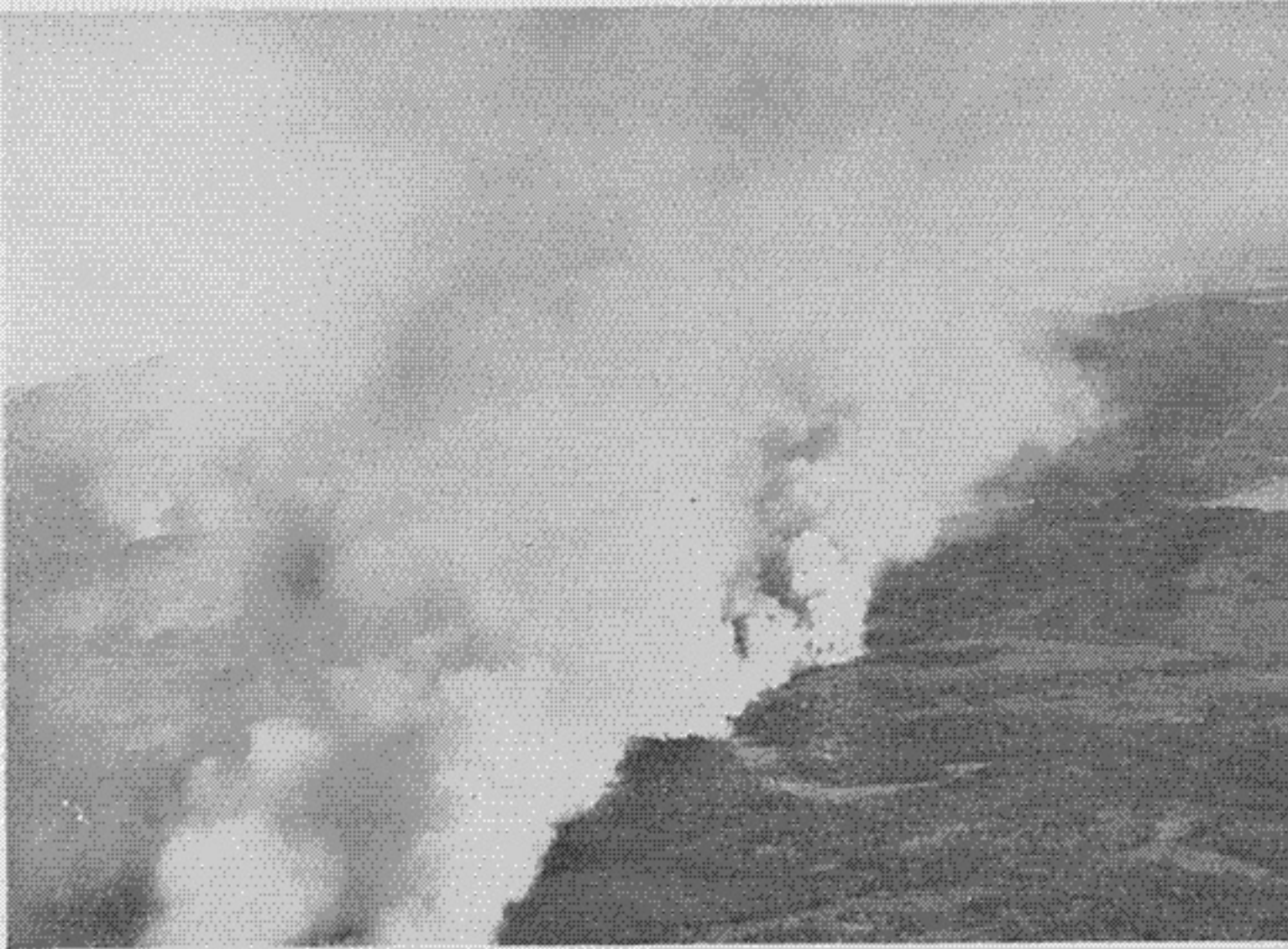
This chimney is all that remains of the home of Robert Dunton at the Peak of Crow Hill on the Goose Neck Road.



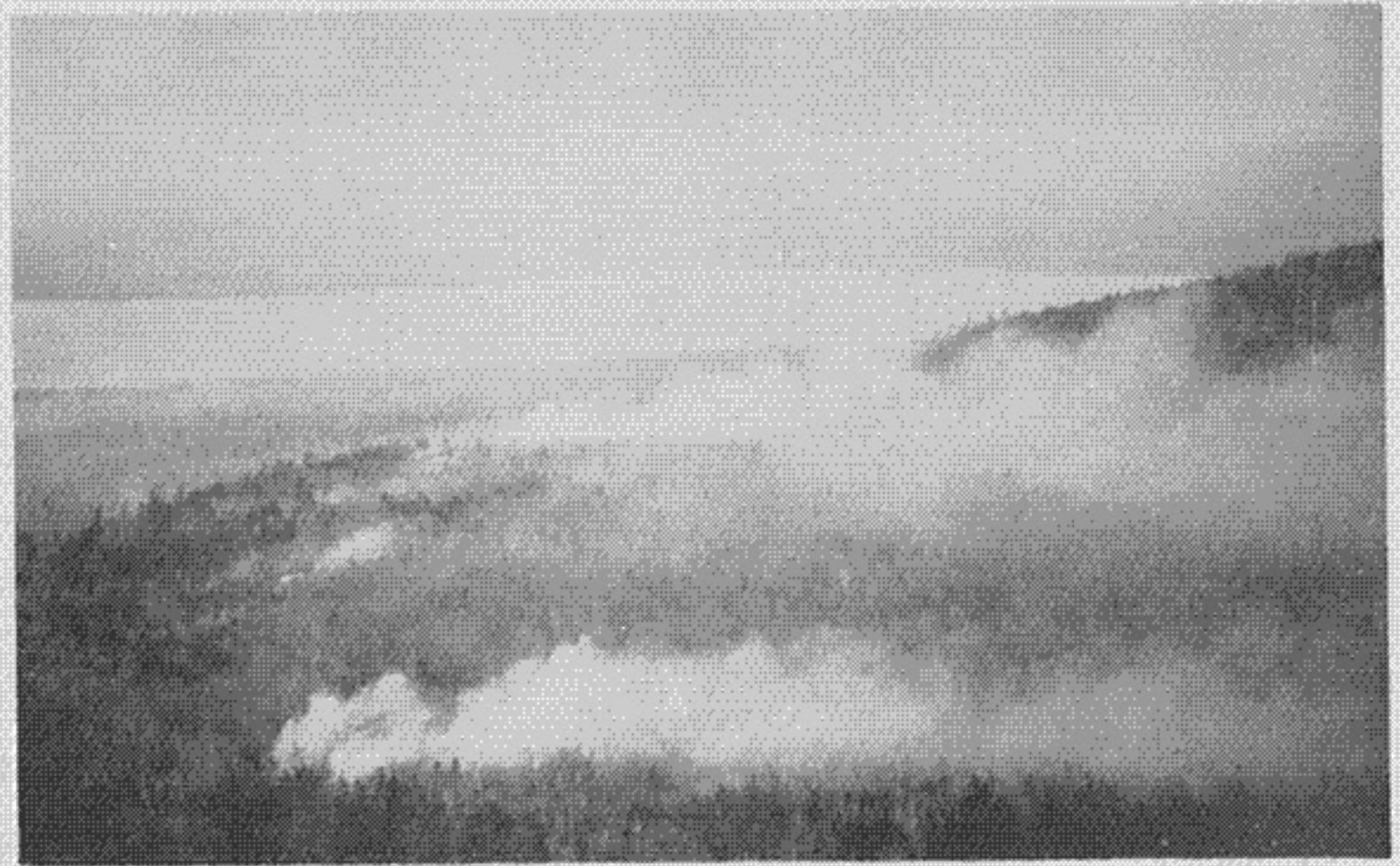
Some of those who evacuated in the path of the flames had homes to move back into. Here Mr. and Mrs. Carl Davis who fled their home on Goose Rock Road, Kennebunkport, taking what furniture they could with them, move back into their home, the danger passed. Neighbors were less fortunate; more than a dozen homes on Goose Rock Road were burned flat as the flames raced to the sea.



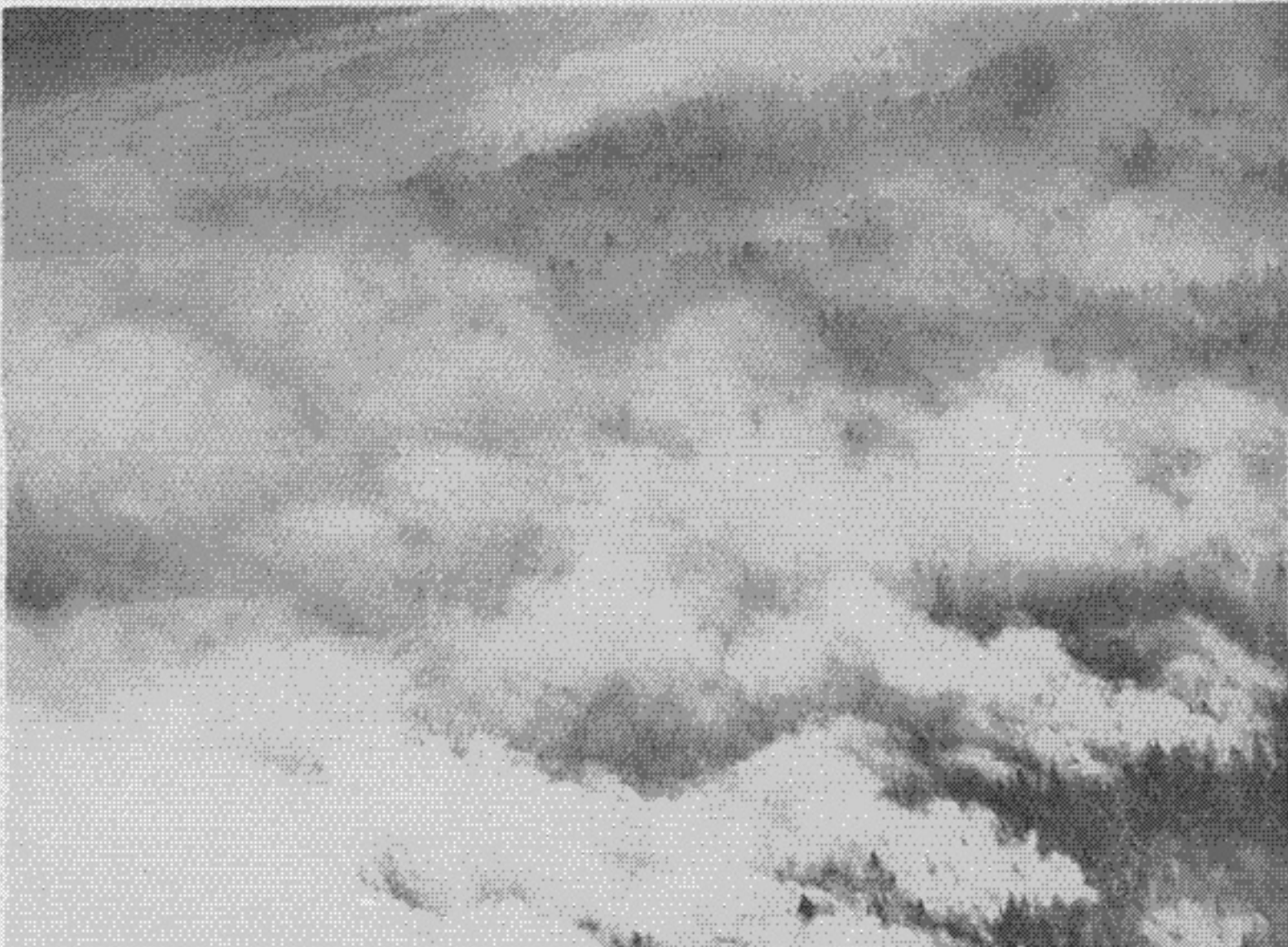
## 200,000 Acres Laid Waste With Terrific Toll Of Timber Resources



Smoke billowed six thousand feet into the air over Cadillac Mountain at Mt. Desert Island with heavy concentrations of fire in the Somesville area pictured in air view above.



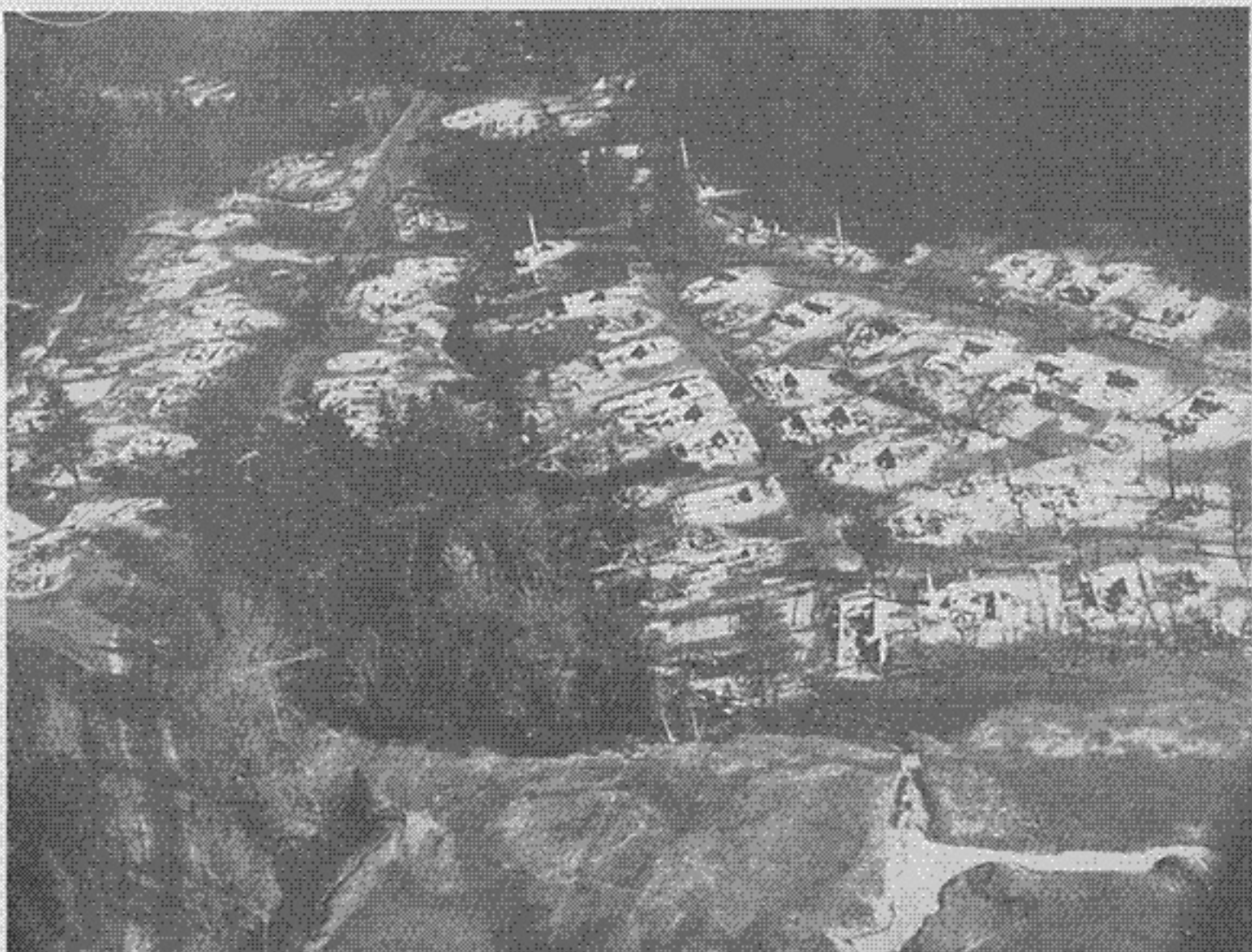
Scene of Moosehead Fires—Aerial photographer obtained this picture of the fires on Norcross ridge, four miles from Northeast Carry on Moosehead Lake. Picture was taken with camera pointing west, showing the arm of Moosehead Lake which extends to Northeast Carry.



Though the fire which ran through 2,500 acres at Madison and Norridgewock was under control a heavy pall of smoke hung over the areas still burning and smoldering seen in air photo above.



Charred tree trunks litter ash-covered ground between Madison and Norridgewock. Top photo, taken from airplane, shows badly burned section. Below is closeup from across Maine Central Railroad tracks of burned section with only a few gaunt tree trunks standing.



Gaunt chimneys and rubble was all that remained of a large section of Bar Harbor after fire wiped out some 200 buildings.



Volunteers frantically clear brush and slash from the path of the flames as they roar toward Waterboro.



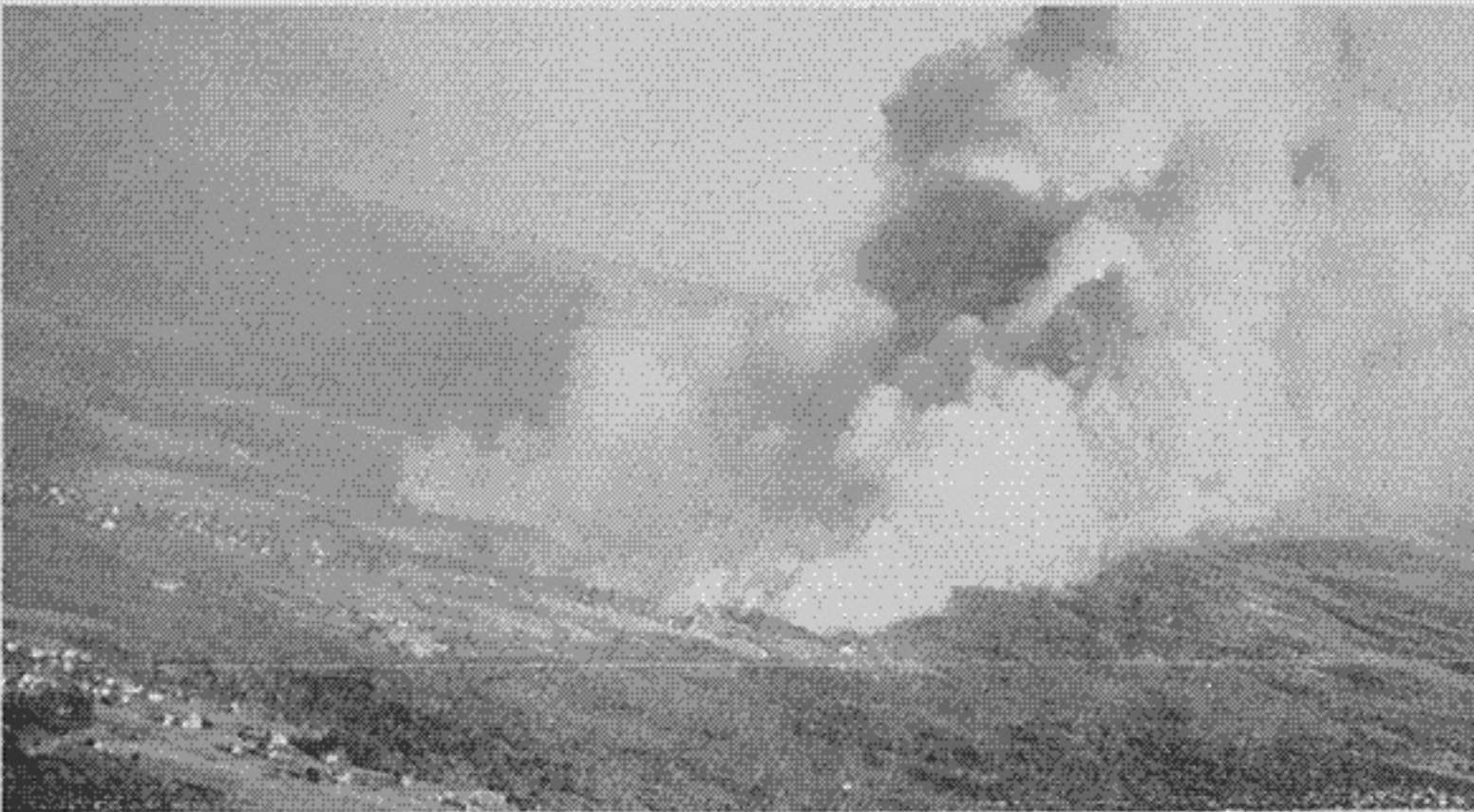
# To the North Spectacular Fires Swept the Madison-Norridgewock Area



Sweeping over miles of wooded areas and fields, fire raged from Madison toward Norridgewock. Flames can be seen leaping into branches and devouring slash.



Aerial Photographer took this picture showing northern section of forest fire which swept from Madison to within two miles of Norridgewock. In foreground is main route 201 which fire eventually jumped in its ravaging course. Buildings in photo were saved.



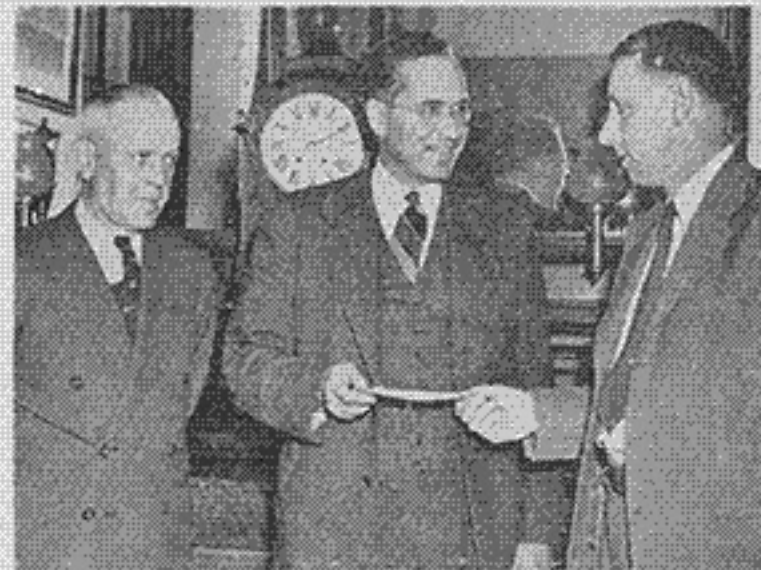
Rising hundreds of feet into the air is this huge column of smoke coming from burning woodlands in the Anson Valley, where several woodlots were destroyed. At left is the town of North Anson, and at lower left can be seen some of the homes that were temporarily threatened by the fire.



Picture above shows dramatically how fire swept through tinder-dry forest litter such as residue of old cuttings and blowdowns in big area in Madison and Norridgewock to cover nearly 2,500 acres before it was finally brought under control.



Due to the fire hazard, discontinued and infrequently used roads in the town of Madison were officially blocked and a conspicuous notice posted. Shown above is the so-called Patterson Bridge Road leading from The Twelve Corners.



In a state-wide contribution among 1,200 employees of the Veterans Administration for Maine, \$1,000 was secured for the general relief of fire victims in the state's forest fires. A check for that amount is being presented Governor Horace Hildreth to be used at his discretion by Col. Percy E. Graves, State Personnel Veterans Administration Officer. Left to right, Col. Malcolm L. Stoddard, manager of the State Veterans Administration, Governor Hildreth, and Col. Graves.



Firemen play water on what remains of Forster Mfg. Co. woodworking plant at North Anson after early morning fire destroyed most of plant with loss of \$35,000. Company makes dowels and candy sticks and employs 65.



It was man versus fire in the devastating woods fires which laid much of Maine waste. Only the valiant efforts of thousands of volunteers, like those above, prevented the fires from accomplishing even more extensive damage.

## Try Man-Made Rain

Man-made rain was attempted as Weather Bureau reports still continued to forecast clear and sunny days during the height of the forest fire danger.

A Portland airport manager attempted to bring rain to the Kennebunkport area with dry ice dumped into clouds. Later Air Corps planes conducted a similar experiment, but results were not definitely determined.

## Brownfield Mail from Bed

Mail in Brownfield, practically leveled by fire, was delivered for a while from a bed in one of the few homes which still remained standing in the little village.

Lyman Wells, Brownfield postmaster, was one of the first people to put in a bid for one of the prefabricated houses sent to Brownfield for temporary shelter. Mr. Wells thought it would make a good post office, as well as school and church.

## Find Some Humor in Ruins

Residents of Brownfield, which was virtually wiped out by fire, were able to laugh as they surveyed the ruins of their town.

One woman, seeking advice on how to find furniture which had been taken to safety during the fire, said at a town meeting that "I'm not asking for myself; I haven't anything left but a cellar hole."



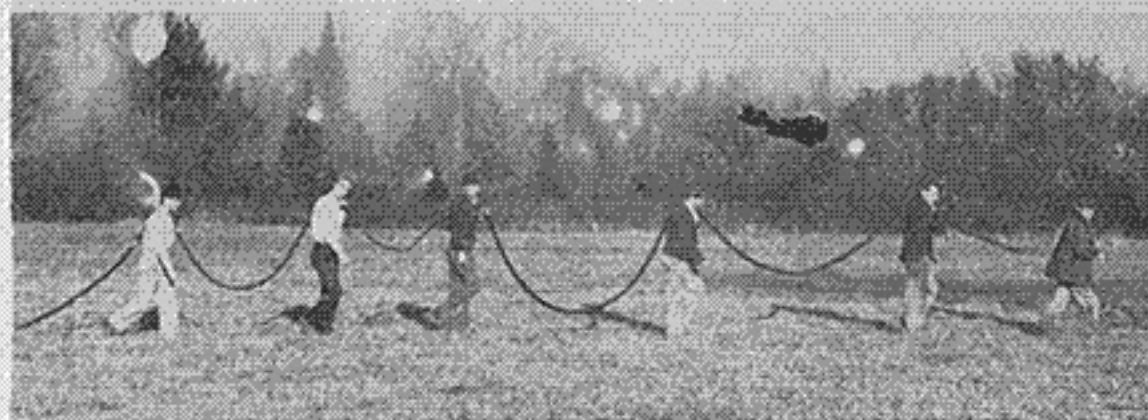
The public utilities, telephone and power companies, responded quickly to the fire emergencies. Crews were sent into action promptly to restore service in ravaged communities.



# Everybody Pitched In, Help Came From All, Here And Outside Maine



Women rallied as quickly as their men-folk when fire disaster struck at Maine. Not the least of their contribution was preparation of the huge quantities needed by the many thousands of men fighting the fires. Here members of the Fire Disaster Food Relief Committee, Portland Central Labor Union, do their bit.



Above, a line of Livermore High School students carry hose to bring water closer to the blaze.



## A Word of Thanks

Gratitude to the thousands who helped fight the fires and relieve the suffering is sincerely expressed both by the victims themselves and public officials who worked to coordinate efforts. A warm word of "Thanks" to:

Those who risked life and limb through long hours of volunteer fire fighting;

Women who worked with Red Cross units to bring food and clothing to victims and fire fighters, who found homes for those burned out, who brought separated families together, obtained information for anxious people, and otherwise devoted long hours to the cause;

To American Legion posts which quickly organized fire patrols, and to those who covered virtually every road in the state day and night on lonely fire-spotting tours—their efforts were responsible for checking many later fires after the first big conflagration;

To the many other service organizations, the Salvation Army, the VFW, the Boy and Girl Scouts, church groups, and others, which gave up normal pursuits and devoted themselves to relief work;

To school and college students who answered the call for volunteers, and gave some of the best service on the fire fronts despite lack of experience;

To National Guardsmen, who answered the call to duty, sacrificing normal pursuits and income in many cases;

To business concerns which turned over trucks, oil tankers, bulldozers and many other items of equipment for use on the fire fronts—the tankers alone were responsible for saving thousands of acres where brooks had gone dry;

To the Army, the Navy, the Air Corps.

The people of the state responded to disaster with heroism and unselfishness.

## Starts to Rebuild Next Day

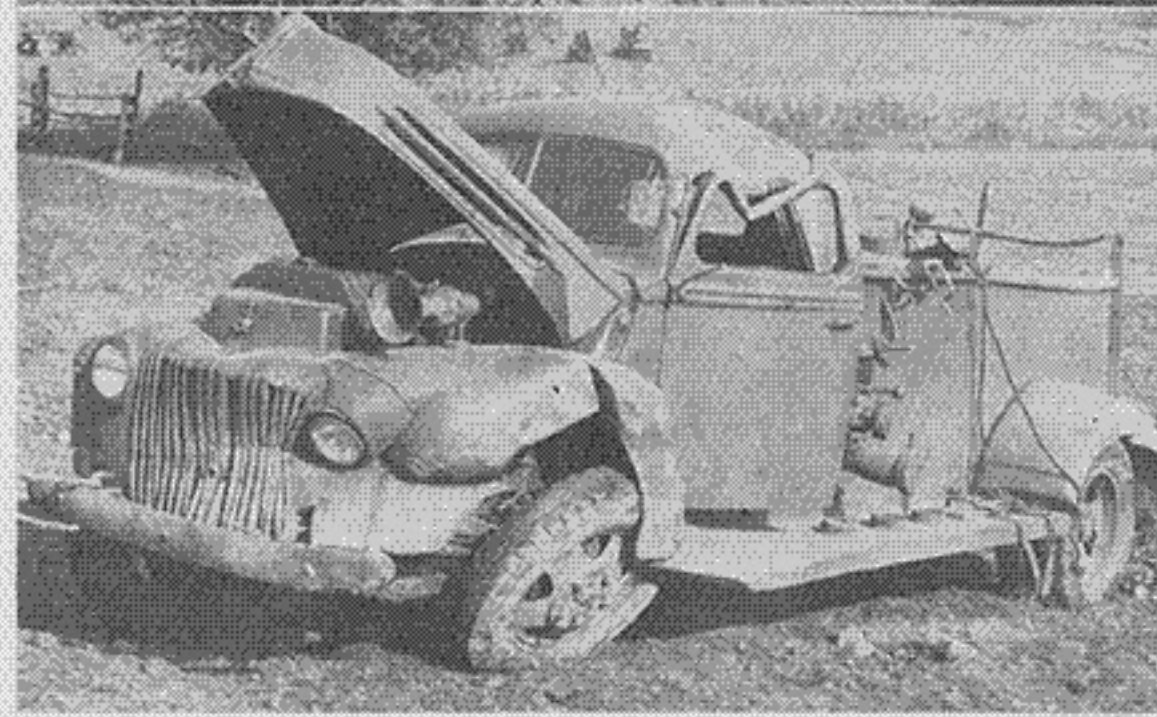
Another undaunted fire victim rebuilt his home within a week.

Roy N. Paul, 33, whose farm home and 1,000 chickens were destroyed on a Thursday evening in Lyman, started rebuilding the next morning with the promise that it would be completed the following Friday.

"I'm not going to get out, either," he said. "I own this land, and I'm not going to buy someplace else."



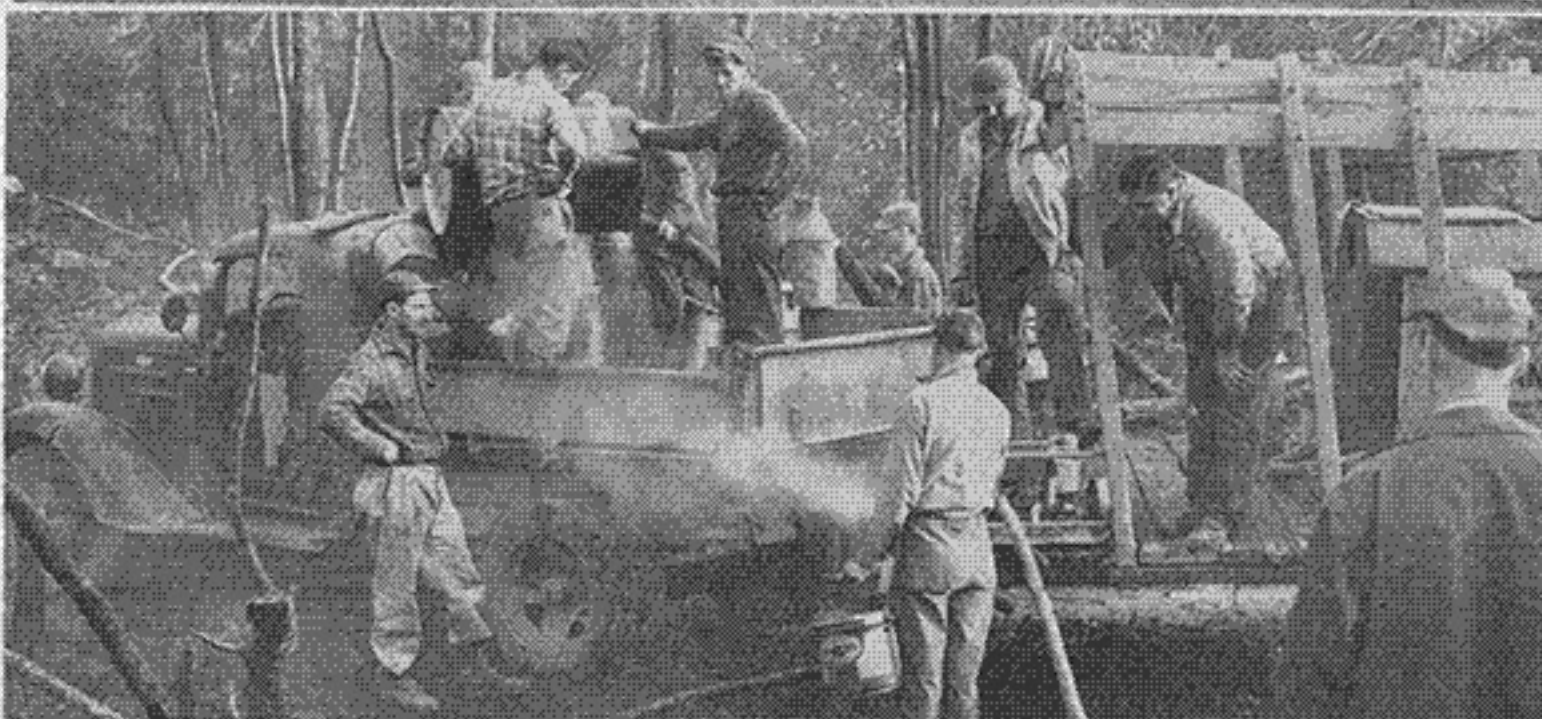
In the grim, smoky hours of the day, in the wee red hours of the night, women went up to the fire front carrying sandwiches, doughnuts and coffee. Here members of the Tighe-Bowdoin-Farley Post Auxiliary, American Legion, Biddeford, hand out refreshments to weary firefighters at Kennebunkport.



An airforce plane, top, carrying batteries for fire fighters perched on the south end of the Augusta State Airport after overshooting the runway. The C-47 was raised by a pneumatic bag and hauled back on the runway by winches. In the lower picture is a war surplus fire truck which crashed out of control on the Beedie Road, Richmond, when the brakes failed. Injured in the accident was Pvt. Amil Dumont of the 3620th Ordnance Company, National Guard, who was discharged from the hospital after treatment.



101st Fighter Group Headquarters, Maine National Guard, Radio for Emergency, was used between Augusta as the "Queen" center and Dow Field, Bangor, South Portland and Saco. There were also three other ground units on mobile command trucks which were sent to any disaster center. This equipment was borrowed from the 240th A. A. Battalion at Portland. In the picture above are left to right: Sgt. William G. Bunting, Augusta, S/S Ladwic J. Smith, Jonesboro and T/S Forest W. Woodman, Augusta.



Above, C-32 cargo plane, huge "Flying Boxcar," believed to be largest aircraft ever to land on the relatively short runways of the Augusta State Airport shortly after its arrival from Westover Field, Mass., was a cargo of fire pumps. Crash crews held their breath as the big ship maneuvered in safely. Below at Weeks Mills fire, which State Police said was undoubtedly set. One of the 12 trucks used to haul water to the scene is pictured. Augusta, South China and Palermo fire departments brought the blaze under control after it had burned over 12 acres.



Men like this one, armed with Indian pumps, thousands of them fought the forest fires, face to face to a standstill. The Indian pump was a major weapon against the flames throughout the state and hundreds of them were rushed into Maine by air as the days of terror wore on. They were of great value in holding operations against fires traveling through the dry leaves and brush. But hours of toting and pumping them brought back into vogue the slang phrase, "On, my aching back!"



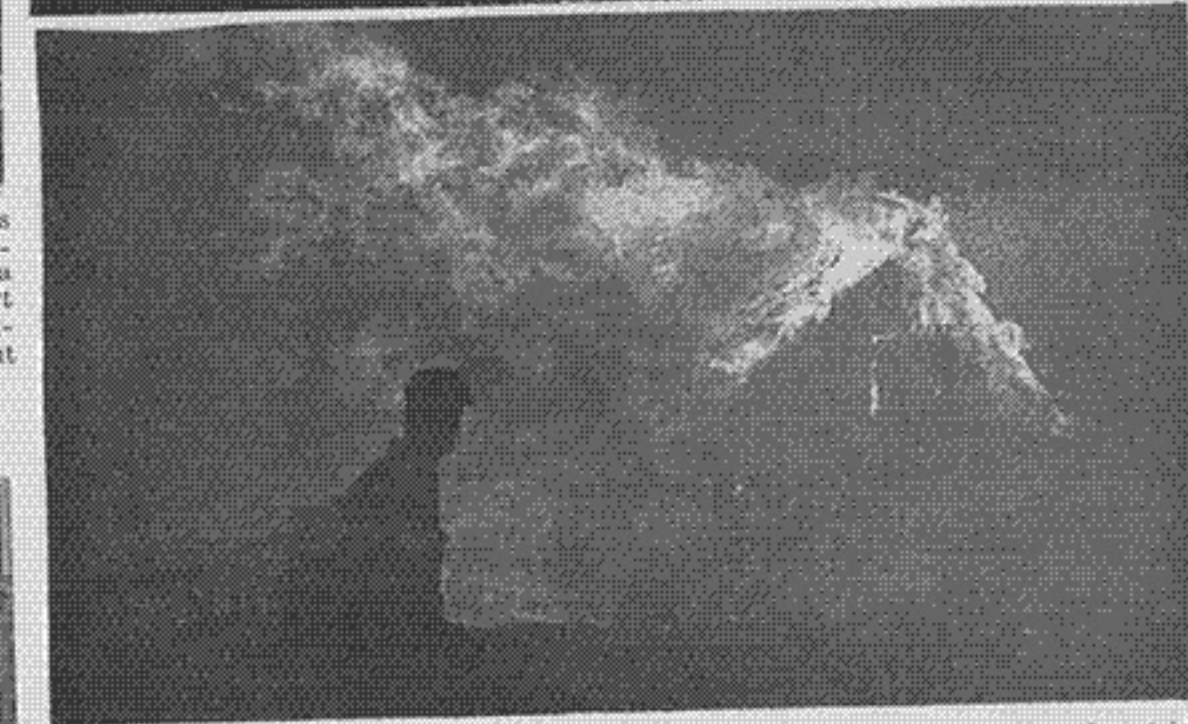
# Richmond Fire Which Threatened Entire Town After Burning Several Homes



**FIRE'S TRAIL**—Chimneys on both sides of the River Road above Richmond, such as these, were all that was left to greet burned out families.



**A LITTLE "DOZIN" DOES THE TRICK**—Here Francis Dumas of Augusta, driver and Eugene Smith, Portland, members of the 3620th Ordnance-Maintenance Co., maneuver a huge bulldozer along the edge of a country road in an effort to widen the barrier against advancing Richmond fire. Dog-tired fire fighters watched approvingly, and took time out to let a "little dozen" take over for them.



**AS FIRE RACED TOWARDS RICHMOND**—Above photo shows volunteers as they tried futilely to halt fire which destroyed several homes. Lower photo shows dim outline of one of the buildings in flames, the camera's eye barely penetrating the dense smoke to catch the flames on the building and the outline of a fire fighter.



**WINTER'S COAL SUPPLY BURNS**—Only the chimney stood at this ruin on the River Road, Richmond, after the fire swept past, but the Winter's supply of coal burned on brightly through the night.



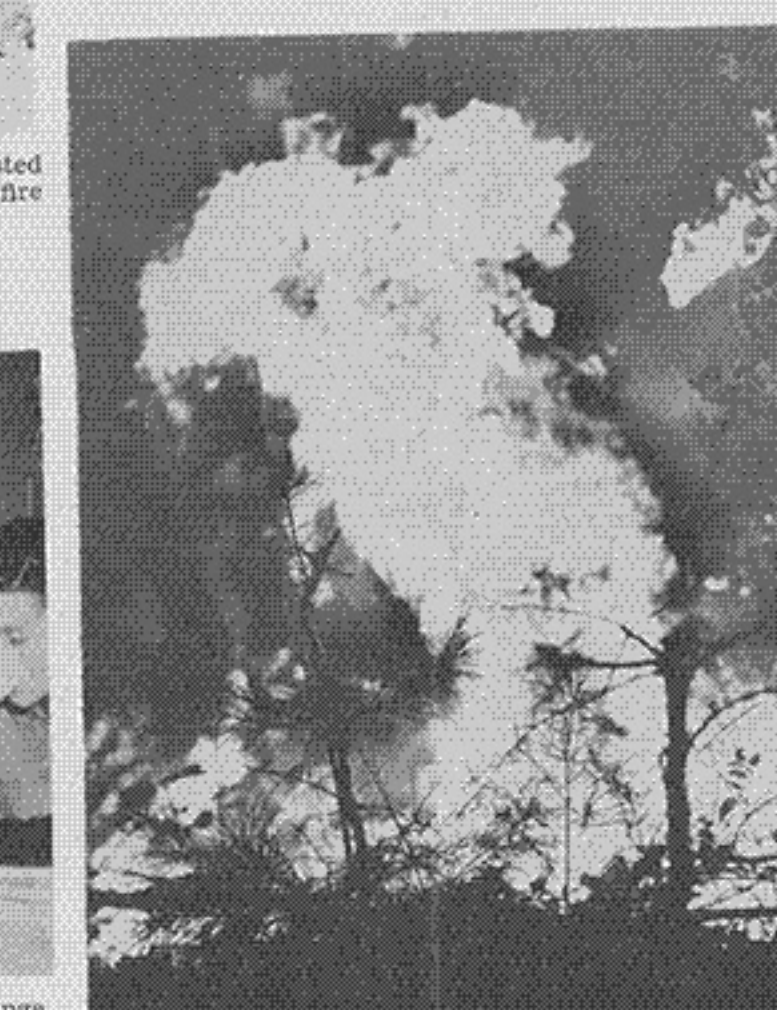
**AS RICHMOND FOLK FLED FLAMES**—Top, Lieut. Joseph D. Koen of the Augusta Army recruiting station, like hundreds of other service men, National Guardsmen and civilians, pitches in to help a family save its furnishings. Below, heart-broken members of a family take a few valued possessions before joining the stream of traffic that fled down the River Road just ahead of the flames.



**ANXIOUS VIGIL**—Mrs. Isabel Johnson with one of her five children watch for the second day of the fire with their belongings stacked in front of their New Road, Richmond, home ready to move out if the fire heads their way. The inferno missed their home narrowly, but all the next day new outbreaks threatened to come their way.



**THIS WAS A BARN**—Here the farm equipment of George Clark of Richmond lies twisted and useless in the ruins of his barn, but his home and henhouses were saved by brave fire fighters.



**EXIT CHRISTMAS TREE**—Here the advancing flames take a fir in one burst of flame on the Richmond front.



**MULTIPLY THIS BY SIXTEEN**—And you have the sad story of Richmond people who evacuated their homes in the path of an onrushing forest inferno which reared five miles, levelling a stretch of homes along the River Road between South Gardner and Richmond. Only a last minute miraculous shift of the wind which turned the fire towards the banks of the Kennebec River saved the town.



**FIRE FIGHTING INTERLUDE**—Weary fire fighters at the canteen in Richmond Grange Hall, left to right, Frank Pushard, Gardiner, Bob Lovering, Gardiner, David Rollins, Gardiner, Carroll Beauchage, Coopers Mills, Jim Mattina, Boston and Charles Howard, Gardiner.



# In Central Maine-Wayne-Livermore Area, And Down East In Machias Region



Maine National Guardsmen fought fires, did police and traffic duty and performed other tasks during the state-wide fires. Top, a detachment rests at Machias and below their comrades indicate their reaction to the first drops of rain that finally brought a measure of relief to that area.

In Washington County, the forest fires swept thousands of acres of timberland, destroyed some homes when it swept into the Kennebec District of Machias, menaced Whitneyville, Jonesboro and other towns through long, anxious days and nights. At the upper left, the fire which started at Centerville sweeps down on Whitneyville. At upper right, the highway between Whitneyville and Jonesboro after flames had swept across it. Lower left, ruins of the Marston farmstead at Kennebec. At lower right, devastation in the timberlands between Machias and Jonesboro. Fire fighters in Washington County had a long arduous battle. The rains which gave much of Maine respite after Oct. 29, didn't reach Washington County and the fires there, although contained, were a constant menace until the drenching rains of Nov. 12.



Woods blaze advances at top speed in Wayne, Fayette, Livermore area. A few minutes later the advance of this wall of fire was checked by a back fire.

Left, two volunteers combatting blaze racing through woods near Wayne, one equipped with a back pump, the other doing his best with a piece of brush. At right, weary volunteer school pupils lunching on sandwiches prepared by Livermore Falls High School domestic science pupils and supplied by a dairy concern in Livermore.



A back fire started by crews battling the Wayne-Fayette fire, sweeps high in tinder dry woods.



Pictured here are several men at the Wayne-Livermore fire just after they had set a back fire halting the spread of flames toward Wayne village.



Ernest Dube, left and Russell Louaas, right, fill their extinguishers from a hose line to renew their battle with the flames at the Wayne-Fayette fire.



# At Sanford, Shapleigh, Lyman, Brownfield, the Same Grim Story Everywhere



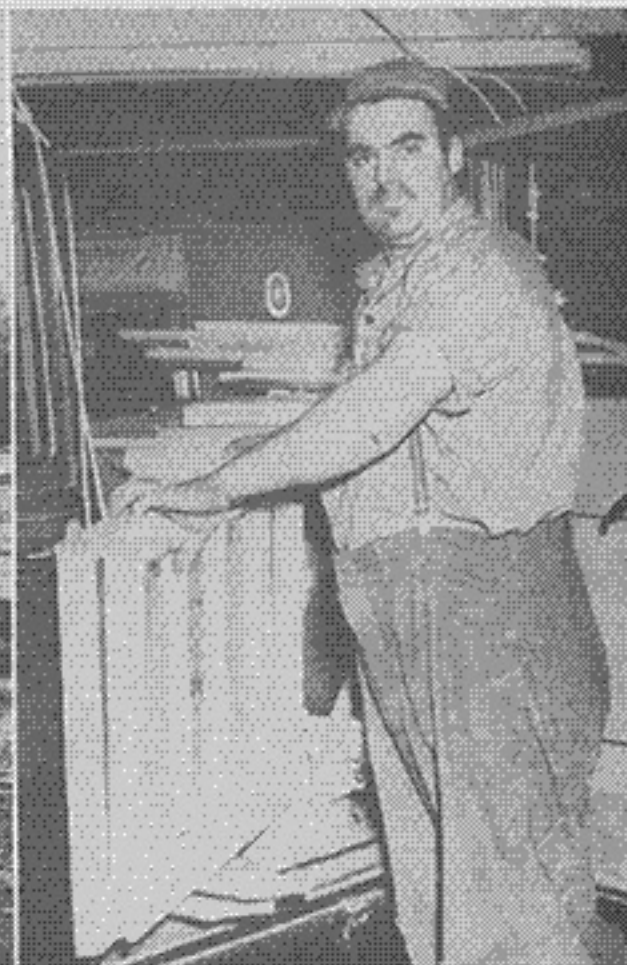
In Sanford Legion Hall, left, five evacuated children from Lyman relax with comic books on cots set up for their comfort. Left to right are Maurice and Jean Valcourt, Ronnie Phillips, Alphonse and Floresa Valcourt. Center, the Huntress family from Shapleigh, faces lined with fatigue and worry, rest in the Legion Hall. Right, two youngsters lead cows down a road away from flames at Shapleigh Corner.



Horace Alexander, 94, of Shapleigh, lies in bed in Sanford Legion Hall after being evacuated from his home when the advancing forest fire threatened the dwelling. Seated by the fire is Farnsworth Jellison, 70, of Ross Corner.



Undismayed Roy N. Paul, whose home at Lyman was destroyed by fire, scarcely waited until its ashes were cold before starting to build a new home for his wife and eight children.



Stone sentinels are lone remains of the once pretentious estate of the Packard sisters, known to the townspeople as the Dr. Packard Place, on Crow Hill, Cape Porpoise. All the buildings on the estate were destroyed.



A fire that was spotted from the Jefferson Look-out tower burned over ten acres of forest land in Weeks Mills. The fire was soon brought under control by the Augusta, South China and Palermo Fire Departments. Men are shown wetting down the land around the edge of the fire to keep it from spreading.



After fire destroyed Brownfield, the town fathers, with the aid of the Maine Central Railroad, set up for business as usual, by converting this combination baggage and smoking car into a town hall.



Dr. Verne L. Harper, center, director of the U. S. Forestry Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Philadelphia, outlines plans for Federal forest survey to determine salvable timber standing in Maine's fire-burned areas. Joining him in discussion are State Forestry Commissioner Raymond E. Rendall, left, and Governor Horace A. Hildreth.



Story-and-a-half dwelling owned by Mrs. Charles Thompson, near Gov. Horace A. Hildreth's summer home at Northport enveloped in flames. Loss was estimated at \$6,000.