

SCHOOL BURNING! FEAR 75 DEAD

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TUESDAY—DECEMBER 2—1958

DAILY 7 CENTS

ANdover 3-1234

74 Hurt, Blast Traps Scores

The death toll of the fire at Our Lady of The Angels parochial grammar school was fixed at 75 by Msgr. William McManus, superintendent of Catholic schools, He rushed to the scene from his office in the Loop.

Twenty-five children and one nun were reported killed in a flash fire that swept Our Lady of the Angels grammar school at 3808 Iowa st.

At least 74 children were burned, or injured. The fire followed a mysterious explosion. Firemen said the blast shook the school and other buildings in the block.

The blast and fire occurred at 2:42 p. m., a short time before school closing time. The school has two stories and a basement—all used for classes.

The principal, Sister Mary St. Florence, was unaccounted for.

First of the dead to be identified were Sister Mary Clare Therese, teacher of the fifth grade in Room 212, and Margaret Kucan, 8, a pupil. The child is believed to live in the 3800 block of Chicago avenue.

The fire broke out on the second floor of the school. Ambulances sped the burned and injured to hospitals all around the area.

Four children reportedly died after being taken to St. Ann's Hospital. In all 40 children were admitted there.

The flash fire trapped many of the children. "The first bell rang. We all stood up for a fire drill. The sisters took us outside the building and then took us into the church and told us to pray."

"We prayed and one of the altar boys said the fire had started in the boiler."

RACE TO BUILDING Theresa fingered a rosary as she talked in the grocery store of Mrs. Barbara Glowacki, 919 Avers av., where the girl was sheltered temporarily.

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SAW FLAMES He related: "I saw flames leaping from the second floor. I ran home and I thought my kids were in there. I have two of them."

"I ran into the building and up to the second floor. It was full of smoke. I could hardly breathe. I was yelling for my kids. I grabbed some other kids and led them down the stairs."

"Then I ran out in the street and around the other side. They were jumping out the windows. I ran up to the second floor. I leaped out and my body broke her fall. She hit me with so much force it knocked off my glasses."

HELPED AT WINDOW He continued: "I saw that some other kids out of the window and down the ladder. Then I ran around into the church. When Grimaldi reached the church, he said he was told his two children, Frank, 11, and Mary Ann, 8, were safe.

apparatus to the scene from all sections of the city. The neighborhood of the Catholic parochial school is heavily populated. The fire sent up clouds of black smoke which blanketed the neighborhood. Smoke could be seen a mile away. Gary Wassinger, 7, a pupil, said he saw smoke seeping under his classroom door on the second floor at 2:30 p. m. This was shortly before classes were to be dismissed.

EYEWITNESS STORY Gary said: "About 10 seconds later the fire got rag. We all heard the bell and we knew this was our real. One nun opened the door and everybody ran out. I think they broke their legs. My buddy, Michael Giacomino— he's 13—was in the class room with me. He said he heard a lot of kids screaming and crying and yelling for their brothers and sisters."

DALEY AT SCENE Father Gorman said the children hurried out on the disaster. Mayor Daley sped to the school. He joined Commissioner Quinn at the scene. Some residents of the neighborhood, as well as children who got out unharmed, said they saw boys and girls leaping from the windows of the second floor. A witness said: "I saw a mass of their clothing was burning. It was a horrible thing. They screamed as they jumped."

Today's Weather Report U. S. Official Weather Forecast CHICAGO AND VICINITY—Partly cloudy, high in 20s. Variable southeasterly winds.

ABANDON SHIP! Turn to Page 9

Pick Stock Champ Today

Widow Named in Slay Plot Collapses

A fall from a chair and a cry that she had "broken my leg" did not save Mrs. Mary Saisi, 33, from appearing yesterday at a preliminary murder hearing. Mrs. Saisi, of 530 N. St. Louis av., is accused of conspiring with her boy friend, Richard Lansing, 23, in Lansing's confessed slaying of her husband, Peter, 30. Mrs. Saisi, mother of three, fell from the chair inexplicably in an anteroom of Felony Court. When she complained she had been injured, a doctor was called.

APPEARS SEPARATELY

He found nothing wrong. But because of the incident, she did not appear at the same time as Lansing on the police murder charge. Judge Daly continued the case to Dec. 11 and denied bail.

Neither Lansing, of 1309 Barry av., nor Mrs. Saisi spoke during the brief court appearances.

Previously Lansing, who confessed and named Mrs. Saisi as the instigator of the double indemnity insurance slaying, said:

"I feel better now it's over. I expect to go to the electric chair."

Mrs. Saisi clung to her story that she knew Lansing intended to rob her husband in a holdup but that she never suggested the killing.

At the time of the slaying, at 9:30 p. m. Oct. 27, in the basement of the Saisi home Mrs. Saisi's appearance in the role of a grief-stricken widow brought sympathy from policemen and neighbors.

FREQUENT SALOONS

But police ordered an intensive investigation, including a thorough check of her background, in spite of the fact that 5,000 circulars with composite drawings of the slayers she had described were distributed by the police department.

The inquiry disclosed that Mrs. Saisi had spent much time in taverns, frequently with a wavy-haired man about

Sen. Humphrey Sees Khrushchev

MOSCOW, Dec. 1 (AP)—Sen. Humphrey (D-Minn.) had a long meeting today with Soviet Premier Khrushchev.

Iowa Boy's 'Holy Cow' Advances

Nine sleek, handsome steers are competing today for beefdom's loftiest distinctions at the 1958 International Live Stock Exposition.

The distinctions: "Best of breed" and "grand champion" titles.

The entry of a 17-year-old Iowa farmboy with a broken ankle is a leading contender for one of the three "best of breed" awards and, possibly, the grand championship.

IOWA YOUNGSTER The animal is Holy Cow, a shiny black Aberdeen Angus senior calf that won the junior grand championship last year under the name of Charles (Chuck) Wood Jr. of Spencer, Ia., Saturday.

Holy Cow, a 950-pounder, beat out all competition in the junior livestock feeding contest, a contest limited to animals raised by youngsters under 21.

Yesterday Holy Cow continued his victory spurge by being named best of all senior call Angus steers in the show—including those raised by veteran cattlemen. "Senior calves are those born between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 1957."

2 OTHER WINNERS Today Holy Cow still has to compete against two slightly older Angus steers—winners of their respective age categories in the open division—for best of breed honors before reaching the "grand champion" competition.

There he will compete against the "best of breed" winners in the Hereford and Shorthorn competitions. Actually, all nine first place winners (the best of each of the three age groups in each of the three breeds) will compete for "grand champion," but since the same judges run both the "best of breed" and "grand champion" contests, it is considered unlikely that any animal but a breed champion will be chosen grand champ.

Joseph's father, Anthony, said his son suffered no burns, but was in such a state of shock that he was taken to St. Elizabeth's Hospital for treatment.

Saw Boiler Explode, 6th Grader Reports

A story of the outbreak of the tragic fire in Our Lady of The Angels Church, was told by a 6th grade pupil, Joseph Brocato, 11, of 751 N. Springfield av.

He said he and a schoolmate were going down to the boiler-room to empty some waste-baskets. As they were partway down, the boy said, they heard an explosion and saw "a lot of flames." The boy related:

"We ran back upstairs, and the sisters told us to go into the church. We did. There were lots of other kids there. Finally we were told to go home."

Joseph's father, Anthony, said his son suffered no burns, but was in such a state of shock that he was taken to St. Elizabeth's Hospital for treatment.



A GREAT thrill for Charles Wood, 17, of Spencer, Ia., second only to winning a blue ribbon at International Live Stock Show with his 950-pound Angus, Holy Cross, was having the cast on his broken leg photographed by U. S. Agriculture Secretary Ezra Benson. Charles brought his entry to show despite his injured leg.

Everyone Jumping, Boy, Girl Say

The girl continued: "I was carried down a ladder by a fireman. I ran home and I thought my brothers, Gerald, 9, who is in the fourth grade, and Dennis, 7, who is in the second grade, were still in the building."

Unknown to Mary, the boys were among those who had escaped unharmed and ran home.

The girl was taken to St. Ann's Hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation.

Another fourth-grader, Carlos Lozano, 10, of 1043 N. Christiana av., who suffered a leg injury when he jumped from the second floor, said: "I ran to the window when someone yelled 'smoke,' and I jumped."

Everyone Jumping, Boy, Girl Say

Mary Brock, 10, of 906 N. Avers av., a fifth grade student who suffered smoke inhalation, related this story of today's tragic school fire:

"I heard someone say: 'I smell smoke, I smell smoke.'"

"Just then Sister Mary Clara Theresa told us: 'Go to the windows. Stand on the sills and wait for the firemen.'"

"Someone opened the door and smoke just filled the room. Many of the pupils in my second-floor room began jumping out the window."

"Some people on the ground were trying to catch some of the children. I believe some of those on the ground were older boys in our school."

Frantic Dad Tells Fire Rescue Role

BY HAL BRUNO

Theresa Gorski, 10, of 935 N. Avers av., a survivor of today's tragic fire in Our Lady of the Angels school, 3308 W. Iowa st., said:

"The first bell rang. We all stood up for a fire drill. The sisters took us outside the building and then took us into the church and told us to pray."

"We prayed and one of the altar boys said the fire had started in the boiler."

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20 SHOPPING DAYS TO CHRISTMAS

Fear-Numbered Parents Await Awful News

BY HAL BRUNO

A loudspeaker announced that parents seeking missing children should report to the Austin District Police Station.

The only other sounds were the pumping of engines and scraping of shovels as firemen dug into the ruins of Our Lady of the Angels school.

Thousands stood in silence while the firemen carried tiny bodies to a line of ambulances and police squadrons on Avers avenue.

This was the grim scene around the burned school last night.

Mothers and fathers gazed at the floodlit scene—a red brick, U-shaped building, with fire ladders leaning against windows of the blackened second floor.

MANY BURIED

Many knew that their own boys and girls were buried under the charred wreckage.

There was no hysteria, only quiet sobbing and anxious questions. Friends, neighbors and relatives attempted to comfort parents who were dumb with fear.

Some walked around the corner to Our Lady of the Angels Rectory, where Red Cross volunteers were compiling a list of children who were in hospitals.

SENT TO STATION

Other parents were told to go to the police station. A father said:

"I've already been there, and they don't know about my kid. I'd better drive to the morgue."

Hundreds filed into the smoke-filled church, coughing as they knelt to pray.

SEEK BODIES

Inside the north wing of the school firemen poked shovels and pike poles into the debris, seeking bodies.

Small coats and jackets hung on racks in a first floor cloakroom. The first floor was untouched by flames, but the second floor was destroyed except for one room in the northwest corner.

The desks in that room were scorched. Thirty geography books were opened on desks to the lesson of the day. Christmas decorations were on the wall.

Hopeless Battle Told by Writer

A CHICAGO AMERICAN reporter, Hal Bruno, was the first newspaperman to reach the scene of the Our Lady of the Angels fire. He arrived with fire companies responding to the alarm.

Bruno climbed to the roof of the school's south wing as firemen sought to chop their way in. He said:

"The entire second floor of the north wing was involved, with smoke and flames rolling from every window and through the roof."

"Mothers ran up and down the street, crying and shouting for their children as the firemen pulled hoses through the crowd. Sirens were sounding in all directions."

"Firemen on ladders were attempting to fight their way into the building. One straddled a window sill and tried to get into a room where the children were trapped, but he was driven back by flames shooting over his head."

"I saw another fireman wrestling with a charged hose line at the top of a ladder. He was trying to put up a curtain of water so he could climb in the window. He disappeared in the smoke."

"A company actually was in one corner of the second floor. They were taking a terrible beating, but they wouldn't come out. The men took turns hanging from the window to gulp fresh air, then they would throw themselves back into the smoke and flames."

"But it was no use. The building was an inferno when the firemen arrived and no one could live in there."

"Those firemen knew the children were trapped, and they couldn't bear to look at the people running in the streets."

Friendly Meeting

TOKYO, Dec. 2 (AP)—Emperor Hirohito of Japan called on visiting President Garcia of the Philippines today. Their third meeting in less than 24 hours underscored Japan's desire to build a firm friendship with the island republic.



STEVEN FRIEDICK, 11, IS COMFORTED BY MOTHER, STEPFATHER

Boy Who Jumped Tells of Tragedy

A boy who jumped out of a second floor window lived to tell about it.

He is Frank Gallo, Jr., 10, of 3147 Augusta Blvd., a fifth grade pupil in Our Lady of the Angels School.

From his bed in St. Anne's Hospital, Frank told how his class was studying geography. He and the other 45 or so pupils were reading about the Middle Atlantic states, Frank recalled. He said:

"A kid in my room jumped up out of his seat and hollered, 'smoke.' And smoke started coming through the cracks in the door."

"Our nun was writing on the blackboard. She told us to open the windows and start praying."

"Then everybody started runnin' toward the windows 'cause they couldn't breathe. She (the nun) just stood there, cool as a cucumber."

5 BOYS JUMPED

Frank said five boys jumped out the window, then he hoisted himself onto the sill, sat down and slid off, just as if he were easing himself into a swimming pool.

When he hit the ground ("hard dirt with stones on top") he said:

"I felt like my back was broken. I crawled along a while and then got up. A lot of them couldn't get up."

"I walked into a store—a little one across the alley from school."

"I wanted to call my mother and tell her to come and help us and bring a car."

NO ONE THERE

The proprietor of the store, however, wasn't there, having been attracted by the commotion across the street.

Frank went back outside. He said:

"Fire trucks were coming and everything."

Frank, who incurred possible internal injuries and possible fractures, doesn't know it, but the nun of whom he spoke, Sister Mary Clare Therese, is dead.

Cerebral Palsy Manufacturers Parley Thursday

United Cerebral Palsy of Chicago will sponsor a meeting at 8 p. m. Thursday in the Crystal Room of the Palmer House.

All professional workers interested in cerebral palsy and related problems are invited. The subject will be the "Psychological Aspects of Cerebral Palsy."

Neumode

Vanity Nylons

\$1.15

With or without seams...

GIFT WRAPPED FREE!

- "Vanity" dress sheer nylon, with seams, 28 shades \$1.15
- "Illusion" dress sheer, no seams, nude heel \$1.15

Men's S-T-R-E-T-C-H SOX 59¢ 2 for \$1.15

Plan rfb or fancy patterns

Neumode Hosiery Shops

2541 W. Diverse Ave. 2148 W. Grand Ave. 1841 Broadway St. 1737 Lincoln Ave. 11 E. Randolph St.

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2632 E. 71st St. 814 W. 82nd St. 29 W. Jackson Blvd. 12 W. Washington St. 308 N. Washington St.

Get the stories behind the news. Read Nate Gross, "The Town Tattler," every day in The Chicago American.

Arson Squad to Probe Fire in School Last Year

Sgt. Drew Brown, who is in charge of Fire Attorney Downes' arson squad, is expected to start questioning officials of Our Lady of the Angels school about a mysterious fire in the school a year ago.

The story about last year's fire was told to Sgt. Brown by Theresa Gorski, 10, a fifth grade pupil who lives at 935 N. Avers av.

TEACHERS LEAD 1,000 SAFELY FROM SCHOOL

NEW YORK, Dec. 2 (UPI)—Seventy-five teachers quietly led 1,000 students to safety when fire was discovered in the basement of a Manhattan high school.

Firemen had the fire under control within 30 minutes.

She said in October, 1957, when she was in fourth grade, there was a mysterious fire on the first floor in the boys' wash room on the north side of the school.

An investigation by school officials at the time disclosed burned paper and matches in the boys' wash room.

Sgt. Brown said the nuns are too distraught over the loss of life in yesterday's fire for questioning now in the earlier fire.



THERESA GORSKI Tells of horror.

Carson's Christmas World Fair

\$11

\$10⁹⁰

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pure silk blouson

Beautiful prints, richly colored by a nationally advertised famous maker. Perfect for holiday festivities, wearable year-round! Finely tailored, exquisite fabrics, fresh styling... a really exceptional value at this very special price. In assorted colors. Sizes 10 to 18. Usually 19.95... **\$10.90**

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on the wall.

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