

OLIVE BRANCH HIGH SCHOOL IS DESTROYED

Teachers and 110 Pupils Escape
Safely From the Burning
Building.

FIRE STARTS OVER BOILER IN BASEMENT

Bucket Brigades Are Formed,
But Efforts Are of No
Avail.

Olive Branch High school, erected at a cost of \$18,000, and located at Forgy, 11 miles west of the city in the National pike, is a mass of ruins, the result of a fire, which was discovered about 9:15 o'clock Monday morning.

One hundred and ten pupils and the teachers escaped from the burning building safely. Most of the pupils saved their school books and school supplies through the coolness and generalship of those in charge of them.

As soon as the building was emptied the men teachers and other older high school boys formed a bucket brigade and battled with the flames but they were unable to reach the fire, which had gained considerable headway, the smoke driving them back.

Neighborhood Responds.

An alarm was sounded and the telephone was brought into service and people, living for miles around, came rushing to the scene and went to work in an effort to check the spread of the fire but their efforts were futile.

Fearing that the flames would spread to the adjoining residences and barns Chief Hunter was hailed upon for assistance and he ordered the auto fire steamer at the Centrals in charge of Captain Rankin and the auto hose wagon at the North Wittenberg avenue house in charge of Captain Moffitt to the fire.

It was claimed that there was a creek about a half mile from the school where the auto steamer could get water but when the fire ladders arrived on the scene the walls of the building were tumbling in. They could not reach it with water and joined forces with the bucket brigades in saving the adjoining property. The flames were confined to the school building.

Principal Edgar G. Weller of the school was the first to discover the fire. He noticed sparks issuing from one of the registers in the auditorium and notified Superintendent David Neer. The fire drill taps were sounded and the children formed in line and marched in perfect order from the building.

Before the teachers and children were safely on the outside they real-

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ized that the fire drill was a reality but the pupils bravely faced the smoke and did not break ranks until they reached the yard. The older boys formed a bucket brigade and with Superintendent Neer and Principal Weller tried to extinguish the blaze but it had gained too much of a start. James Irwin, the janitor was not at the building at the time the fire was discovered. He had left but a short time before and everything was in good shape then.

Superintendent Neer stated that the fire seemed to start over one of the boilers. When he attempted to enter the basement the smoke drove him back. Men came flocking to the school, after the alarm was given, but the fire swept on and did not stop until its work of destruction was completed. The scene was a most spectacular one. The flames shot heavenward and threatened the home of Superintendent Neer on the west and Frank Ashenfelder on the east, besides several large barns.

The call was received by the local fire department at 10:30 o'clock and when the two companies reached the school it was practically ruined then, showing the rapidity with which the red demon did its work.

The building was a one story brick structure, consisting of an auditorium and four recitation rooms. It was dedicated about five years ago. Superintendent Neer, Principal Weller and Miss Jean Black, teacher, were in charge of the high school and Miss Edith Broadbeck and Miss Grace Zed-

kle were the primary and grade teachers. Sixty pupils are enrolled in the high school and about fifty in the district grades.

The school possessed a fine library, which was totally destroyed. This loss will be about \$600, while the loss on the building and other contents will reach \$18,000, only partially insured. The school directors will meet Monday, night to take steps towards rebuilding. They will also probably make arrangements to have the pupils cared for in other schools in the vicinity.

The city firemen remained on the scene until all danger of the flames reaching the adjoining property was gone and then returned to their houses.