

CANOE PLACE INN BURNS; TWO KILLED

Picturesque Landmark of Colonial History on Long Island Completely Destroyed.

GUESTS ESCAPE BY LEAPING

Maid and Cashier Burned to Death—

A Favorite Meeting Place for Tammany Leaders.

Special to The New York Times.

GOOD GROUND, L. I., July 5.—Canoe Place Inn, one of the most historic structures on Long Island and almost the last of the real prerevolutionary inns, is gone. Fire destroyed the rambling, picturesque place in the heart of the Shinnecock Indians' country early this morning with the loss of the lives of two employes. Three guests and a maid escaped death by leaping from windows.

It was late this afternoon when the last of the ancient timbers had been reduced to ashes and there remained on the spot, rich in the legends of Eastern Long Island, only a few scattered outbuildings and the colossal bust of Hercules carved from a single block of wood which stood in front of the inn, staring out at the old post road to Sag Harbor, on which the building faced.

Destruction of Canoe Place Inn removes an irreplaceable landmark of Colonial history. The place also played the same part in Tammany politics in the Spring and early Summer as Delmonico's in the Winter. The Summer home of Charles F. Murphy, Tammany chieftain, is only four miles from the inn, which stood midway between Good Ground and Shinnecock Hills stations. For many years the inner ring of Tammany had held their privy councils either before the generous log fires within or on the comfortable rambling porches outside the inn. Judges, United States Senators, Governors and many of the lesser powers behind the throne had consorted there. Cheered by old-fashioned hospitality of the chieftain they reached some of the most momentous decisions in the annals of the organization.

Where John L. Sullivan Trained.

One other claim to fame had the inn. It was in its big barn that John L. Sullivan trained for his fistic battle in New Orleans with James J. Corbett. The barn was not damaged.

To a lesser degree the inn filled an important function as the gathering place of the colonies of the wealthy at Southampton and other near-by places where there are many great estates. Its Japanese ballroom, a modern creation, and others of its cavacious chambers were often filled with the gayeties of that smart set, many hostesses taking advantage of its resources when week-end gatherings overtaxed the entertainment facilities of their own domains.

Socially this part of Long Island is to suffer no permanent deprivation by the fire. Julius Keller, proprietor of the inn and of Maxim's in New York, has announced his intention of replacing it as soon as the embers are cold. His future aim is a big, fireproof structure, but meantime he hopes to erect a temporary dance hall and restaurant which may be ready in a few weeks if a large enough force of workmen can be recruited. It is probable that when the usual migration of sportsmen sets in next Fall, the duck hunters who have made the inn their rendezvous for generations, will find available a shelter of some sort.

Those who died in the fire were Florence Whittington of Jamesport, L. I., and Richard Herneman of Manhattan, who was in the real estate business and acted as cashier at the inn in Summer as a sort of vacation. Miss Whittington usually slept over the kitchen, but because of the intense heat had used a bedroom on the third floor Sunday night. Herneman also slept on that floor.

It was almost 4 o'clock this morning when passing automobilists discovered flames shooting from the roof of the three-story building. Their shouts roused Miss Whittington, who came to the window in her night dress. They called to her to jump, for by then flames were leaping about the whole building and it was obvious that it would be a great torch in another minute or two. The girl fled back into the room, possibly to get her clothing. She must have encountered a burst of flame that ate its way through from the hallway, for she was not seen alive again. Herneman's charred remains were found in his room.

Mrs. Ella Raynor, another maid, was asleep on the second floor. The crackle of the flames roused her before anyone outside had discovered the fire and the first persons to arrive found her on the roof of a portico. They could find no ladder and she leaped. She was unhurt, but was almost prostrated from shock.

The inn had been crowded with revelers over the week-end, and there had been a children's party and a big dance on Saturday, but fortunately by Sunday night all but three of the guests had departed. They were a Mr. and Mrs. Palmer of New York and Justice of the Peace Clifford Jackson of Good Ground. All three jumped from windows in their night clothes and were unhurt. They found asylum in cottages not far away.

Other employes of the inn slept in a cottage adjoining it. They were roused in time to join with motorists and neighbors drawn by the glare that reddened the sky for miles in forming a bucket brigade. This was re-enforced by a chemical engine from Southampton. A hard struggle kept the flames from spreading to the outbuildings. Two automobiles parked in the rear were ruined.

It was after 4 o'clock this afternoon when the fire had burned itself out. How it started was not learned. Keller estimated his loss at \$125,000, partly covered by insurance. He said there had been \$10,000 in the safe in the office of the inn, which was covered with debris. He believed the money would be found intact when it became possible to enter. Keller recently had shipped silverware and linens worth several thousand dollars to the inn. These had not been unpacked, but are believed to have been destroyed.

Keller took over the inn several years ago, after the death of Ernest Buchmiller, who was its proprietor for many years. Buchmiller acquired a modest fortune because of the patronage which came to him when the favor of the Tammany chieftain was added to the natural attractiveness of the roadhouse as a drawing card. He was an ardent admirer of Murphy, and would tolerate no guest whose presence he thought might be unwelcome to the ruling spirit of the place.

Host in a Quandary.

Once he was taken unawares when he learned too late that the host at a dinner party in payment of a bet on the outcome of the election for Sheriff of Suffolk County was to be John A. Hennessy. That was in the Fall of 1913, when Hennessy, outraged at the impeachment of Governor William Sulzer, whose confidential man he had been, was warring on the Tammany organization. Sulzer was one of the mainstays of the Fusion movement which elected John Purroy Mitchel Mayor. He had been going about with his "little black book" in which he asserted he had set down evidence proving Tammany graft, and he had become a thorn in the side of the Fourteenth Street organization.

Murphy was giving a select little dinner party in the inn that same night, and Buchmiller was in sore distress. Both tables were laid. He would not for worlds have offended Murphy, and he did not dare to cancel arrangements for the other gathering, which was to include many prominent residents of the county. He was in despair when an inspiration came to him. The Hennessy table was carried to an ell of the dining room, Hennessy and his guests were introduced by a side door at its end, and the two parties dined blissfully, each ignorant of the presence of the other.

The inn was built originally between 1635 and 1640, and was reconstructed more than a hundred years ago. It was a stage way station at one time, and had been used as a headquarters by British army officers in the Revolution. It got its name because it marked an Indian canoe portage between Peconic and Shinnecock Bays.