

[Nunda, Livingston Co.]

Former Universalist Church Building
Gutted by Fire of Undetermined Origin

Fire of undetermined origin early last Thursday evening destroyed the interior of the garage and paint and body shop of Tunningley Motors in East street and was brought under control after a two-hour battle by firemen from six communities. The cause of the fire and the loss were not determined. Four nearly new used cars were lost in the blaze.

The building, formerly the Universalist church, was acquired about 10 years ago by Norman Tunningley, who converted it into a used car and paint and body shop and garage. He also has another new car salesroom a half-block away.

The blaze was believed to have started in the basement of the former church building, the equivalent of a two-story structure, about 40 by 80 feet. The former church portion has brick walls, while a story and a half addition to the front is of concrete blocks.

Four persons were employed in the structure and the workmen lost their tools in the blaze. The workmen had left the structure at 5:20 p.m. and the fire was discovered by a passerby at 6:15 p.m. He ran to the Tunningley salesroom and notified the owner. Tunningley said all lights had been turned off when the workmen left the premises, and that no torches had been used that day by the workers.

Firemen from Nunda, Castile, Mt. Morris, Canaseraga, Leicester and Portageville fought the flames. Fire Chief Melvin Downs of Nunda led the firemen, under general direction of Gilbert Jenkins of Caledonia, Livingston County Mutual Aid System coordinator.

Firemen prevented the flames from spreading to the Bell Memorial library, directly to the west, and the First Presbyterian church, nearby to the east. Firemen used water from village hydrants and from a 1,500-foot line to Keshequa creek.

Tunningley, who was unable to estimate his loss immediately, said he had some insurance on the building, but none on its contents.

The nearby Methodist church was opened, where ladies of the neighborhood served coffee and sandwiches to the firemen.

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