

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Deputy's Investigation Report

File No.

Lakewood

227

- 1. Submitted To: R.K. Heymel 2. By: Heymel
- 3. Investigation Request Received From: Chief Schwenka PCFD #16
- 4. Request Received By: phone letter person 5. Date Wed 2-4-70 Time 5³⁰ AM.
- 6. Date & Time Investigation Started: Wednesday 2-4-70, 10¹⁰ a.m.; _____ p.m.
- 7. Date of Incident: Wed -2-4-70 Time: 3²⁵ AM 8. County: Pierce.
- 9. Nature of Incident: Mercantile Occupancies totally destroyed
- 10. Property Involved: Dominic's Foods & Liquor Store; Visells Hardware & Lumber Co.
- 11. Address: Key Center
- 12. Owners: Dominic Marieta; K. Brones 13. Address: Key Center
- 14. Type of Occupancy: Mercantile - 1 story Frame & Mill construction
- 15. Occupant at Time of Incident: _____
- 16. Address: _____
- 17. Responding Fire Department(s): PCFD #16
- 18. Agencies/Individuals assisting in investigation: J. Ferguson GAB. Tacoma office adjuster
J Hinds Safeco Ins Bremerton

19. Persons Interviewed:
(Occupants; nearest neighbors; business associates; passersby; person discovering fire)

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NO.	DATE
Dominic Marieta Mr&Mrs	Key Center		2-4-70
Kenneth Broness	"		2-4-70
Don Olson fireman	"		2-4-70
M.C. Schwenka Chief	"		2-4-70

20. Pertinent Witness Information: See reports
Dominic's Foods & Visells Hardware & Lumber Co.

21. First area extinguished: _____
22. Last area extinguished: _____

23. Premises securely locked prior to alarm: Yes No
24. Forcible entry prior to alarm: Yes No
25. Number of persons having keys or access to premises: _____
26. Factors influencing fire spread: _____
27. Activities of last person on premises: _____
28. Abnormal or unusual conditions _____
(business operations—last activities of occupants—weather conditions—heating or operational equipment)
29. Timing devices: _____
(type—location—time stopped)
30. Fusing or arcing of electric conductors: _____
(location—degree of fusing)
31. Direction of heat travel: _____
(from area to area—under furniture, shelves)
32. Fuel consumption: _____
(location of greatest fuel consumption—type of fuel)
33. Char pattern: _____
(type of pattern—lowest point of deep char)
34. First material at floor level: _____
35. Condition of flooring and covering: _____
36. General burn patterns: _____
(heat stains—window glass at point of origin—light bulbs—fused metal—plastics—etc.)
37. Estimated time fire burned before discovery _____, after discovery _____
38. Condition of electric appliances: _____
(irons—toasters)
39. Condition of electric equipment: _____
(fuses—switches—motors—bearings—compressors)
40. Fire cause evidence removed: _____
 Tagged by: _____
41. Disposition of evidence: _____
42. Photos by: _____ Date: _____
43. Probable point of origin: _____
44. Probable initial material ignited: _____
45. Probable source of ignition: _____
46. Probable burning time and temperature: _____
47. Probable act or omission causing fire: _____

Signed by _____

Date _____

(To be attached to S. F. No. 133 report with any additional comments, photographs, narrative reports, or information corroborating fire cause factors, etc.)

FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

File No.: 227 (Pierce County)

Title: Dominic's Foods & Liquor Store
Visells Hardware & Lumber Company

REMARKS:

I was advised of this fire by Chief Schwenka, Pierce County Fire District #16 on Wednesday, February 4, 1970, at 5:30 a.m. via the telephone call. Chief Schwenka advised that there was a possibility that the fire may have been the result of a fire bombing; also that there had been an earlier fire 10 miles further on Long Branch direction which involved the destruction of an old lighthouse. Both fires are in Pierce County Fire District #16. Deputy Scott and this deputy arrived at the fire scene at 10:10 a.m. and found the total building complex completely leveled. No water was available in the district vicinity. Delayed discovery and exposure hazards together with limited water available is the cause for the complete loss. We talked with Chief Schwenka regarding the fire department operations and also of the fire earlier in the evening regarding the lighthouse incident.

This fire involved the Visell Hardware & Lumber Company, Dominic's Foods and the State Liquor Store in conjunction and an office building occupied by a lawyer in the area. An all frame one story structure; no fire separations; open to a large degree under the building; the basement grade generally being 15' to 18' below the main floor levels or street level. There were apartments and the freezer locker storage facility under the store building. An open area under the liquor store. An office and some enclosure under the hardware merchandising section. Beyond the hardware store area to the West the storage of hardware goods was located and beyond this was a two story section used as a lumber and finished stock storage and sales. Hardware and lumber and all this space

was located in the building owned by Kenneth Brones, who has a residence $\frac{1}{2}$ mile West of the building site. The store building was owned Dominic Marieta, who resides in Key Center.

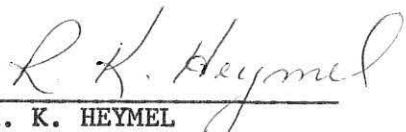
The initial fire alert was made by Mr. Brones' daughter who heard a muffled explosion and on looking out of her window down the hill towards the community center saw a mass of fire coming from the direction of the store buildings. She alerted her Dad who ran through the light timbered woods to the fire and it was she who called the fire department.

Don Olson, a volunteer fireman who lives across the road at approximately a 20° West angle from the burning building was called routinely and as he emerged from his dwelling he noted the fire to be generally in the center of the hardware store. As he made his way to the fire station he was compelled to use the road past the store building to get to the station which is Southeast of the fire scene and approximately 1000 feet away. While he passed the fire he noted the complete involvement of the hardware store with the hardware storage area and the lumber shed not yet involved. The store building was not involved in flames at this time also. By the time the equipment and men were assembled the entire complex was involved and what water which was available was used on exposed structures in the vicinity of the fire. Any water would have been wasted on the heat mass developed. Window panes on store buildings 200' to the North were cracked from the heat and paint was blistered on some other structures closer to the fire. No wind was evident.

Mr. Brones described the fire as Mr. Olson related his description of conditions to us.

There were two juveniles reportedly to have been seen in the area prior to the fire and during the fire. The two youths were advised to leave the coin operated laundry when a resident found them inside late in the evening of the fire date. The two juveniles were seen walking up the road away from the fire towards Long Branch when a Phil Radcliff, a resident from the area drove out of his drive onto the highway going in an Eastward direction. No description of the juveniles nor the time seen have been successfully pinpointed.

The origin and cause cannot be determined at this time other than in summing the evidence given to date. The mass of fire on first discovery was in the vicinity of a pipeless furnace in the hardware store. The furnace was turned on for heat but off. Glass from windows in the occupancy housing the hardware store was found to be blown across the road fronting the building. The loss of this complex may be a result of vandalism or arson. There is no evidence at this time to indicate this however. Cause and origin must remain as unknown until further evidence is found pending the investigation.


R. K. HEYMEL
Deputy State Fire Marshal

Continental Insurance Company
Northwest Insurance Brokers, Seattle
Amount - \$15,000.00
Coverage - 10/4/69 to 1972

Northwest National Insurance Company
Northwest Insurance Brokers, Seattle
Policy No. - SF139160
Amount - \$12,500.00
Coverage - 10/4/69 to 1972

Title of Case: Old Lighthouse

Date: Tuesday, February 3, 1970

Time: 11:50 p.m.

Location: Long Branch, 10 miles beyond Key Center Area, located on the point on the beach at the end of Cliff Road, on the old Hazeltine place

REMARKS:

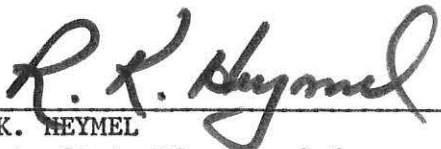
This is an abandoned structure; total damage. There may be a connection between this fire and the mercantile occupancy 10 miles East of this location. It may have been a diversionary attempt on the part of persons who may have set the fire at the Key Center location. Investigation of this fire was made in conjunction with the Key Center fire reported 3 hours later and which was also a total loss. See Visell Hardware & Lumber Company and Dominic Marieta Food Store fire report. This fire location is in an area 10 miles West of the Key Center Community. The structure and wall was an old frame building 30' high resembling a lighthouse. In fact, it was built by the then owner of the point to place a lantern in it to guide friends who were visiting by boat to his beach residence. He wanted to use the light on certain times only and it is because of this spasmodic use proposed the light was never allowed by the Coast Guard. Consequently, the structure became a small beach house and survived in various states of disrepair until destroyed this night. It is known to boaters and fishermen and beach party goers and was used by everyone. Recently the structure became so dilapidated concerned neighbors boarded it up against persons

climbing into the skeletonized remains. It was a landmark for years. The property is being considered for subdivision and some grading has been performed for improving access to the point from the Cliff Road itself.

On investigation it appears that whoever caused ignition of this structure came by water. Scott and this deputy investigated this incident with Pierce County Sheriff's Deputy Anderson. On interviewing a Mr. Lawrence Curl, Box 424, Long Branch, telephone 884-2324, he stated that he is the caretaker for the DeFores house which is located directly across the bay approximately 3/4 of a mile from the lighthouse. He states that as he was preparing to retire and in pulling off his shirt, he looked directly at the lighthouse through the uncurtained windows of the house and saw a flash of fire at about 9:45 p.m. Seeing no more and being occupied in other things he forgot about it. At around 12:15 a.m. the fire department called him to get a verification of a reported fire which was presumed to be on Anderson Island which is in the vicinity approximately 2 miles to the South. These reports came from a Mrs. Pilson, a Mr. Peterson and a Mrs. Knapp, all in the beach area near the DeFores place but out of line of sight of the Anderson Island itself. Mr. Curl on investigation reported that there indeed was a fire and that it apparently had burned the lighthouse. It toppled it over and it was almost consumed when he was alerted. On investigation later it is indicated the structure did fall in a Northeast direction which would give him a broadside view of the burning, diminishing flames. There were no leads to the cause of this fire. It is possible that some person had a beach fire and ignition was from this source. The flash fire seen by Curl would tend to indicate some inflammable was used for ignition, however. The possibility of a fire in this location being caused as a diversionary method of employing the fire department in this fire to draw fire protection from the Key Center location before setting a fire to the complex destroyed later cannot be discounted. The District

Sheriff's Office reports no uncommon disturbances or vandalism in this area.

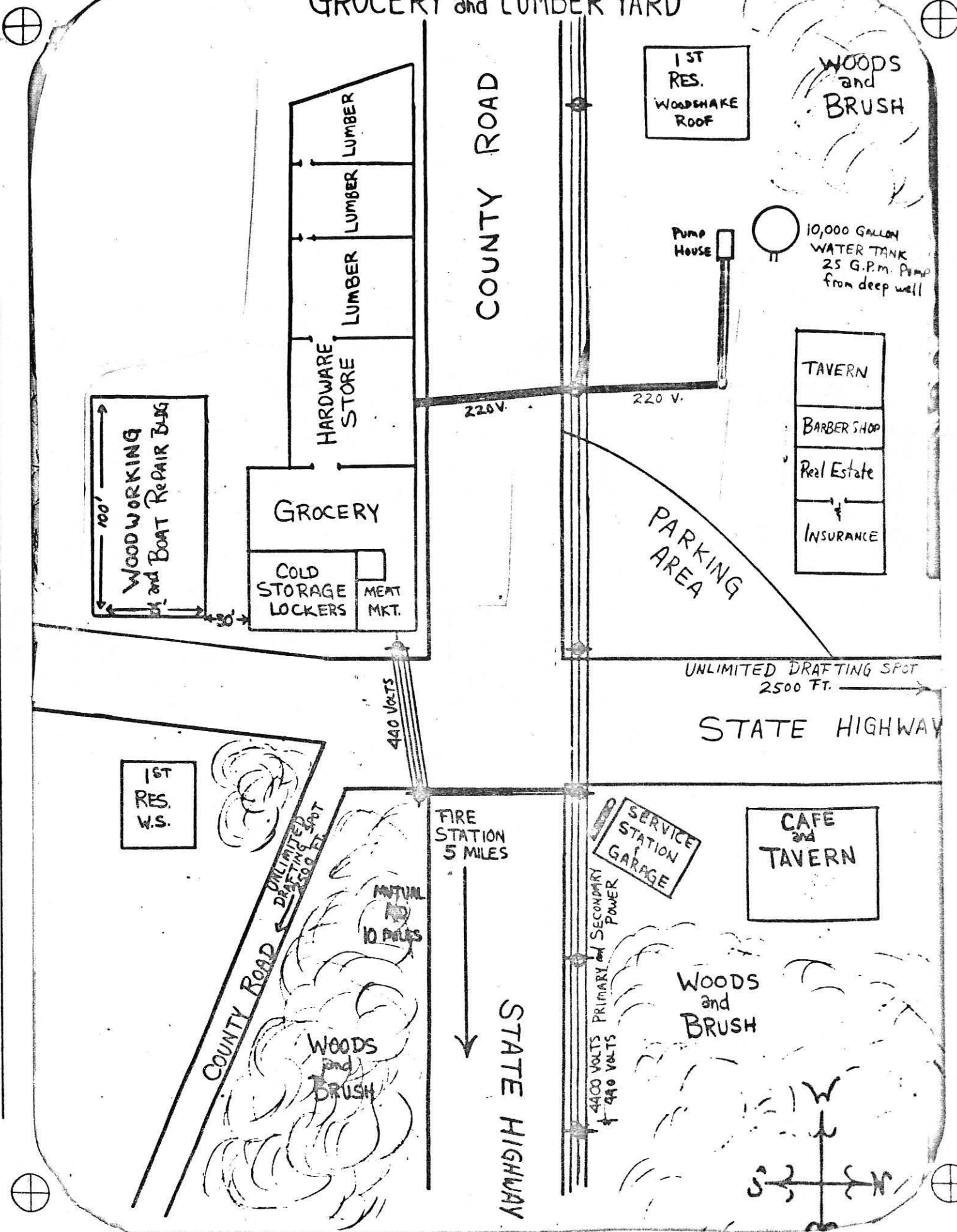
There is no evidence of a lead to pursue the investigation of this fire at this time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R. K. Neymel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

R. K. NEYMEL
Deputy State Fire Marshal

2/25/70

GROCERY and LUMBER YARD



WOOD WORKING
and BOAT REPAIR Bldg
100'
30'

LUMBER
LUMBER
LUMBER
HARDWARE STORE

GROCERY
COLD STORAGE LOCKERS
MEAT MKT.

1ST RES.
WOODSHAKE ROOF

WOODS and BRUSH

10,000 GALLON WATER TANK
25 G.P.M. PUMP from deep well

TAVERN
BARBER SHOP
Real Estate
INSURANCE

PARKING AREA

UNLIMITED DRAFTING SPOT
2500 FT.

STATE HIGHWAY

1ST RES.
W.S.

COUNTY ROAD
UNLIMITED DRAFTING SPOT
2500 FT.

MATERIAL
10 PILES

WOODS and BRUSH

FIRE STATION
5 MILES

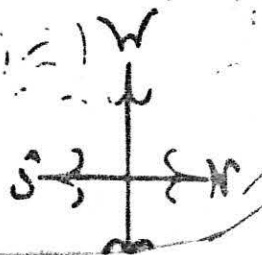
STATE HIGHWAY

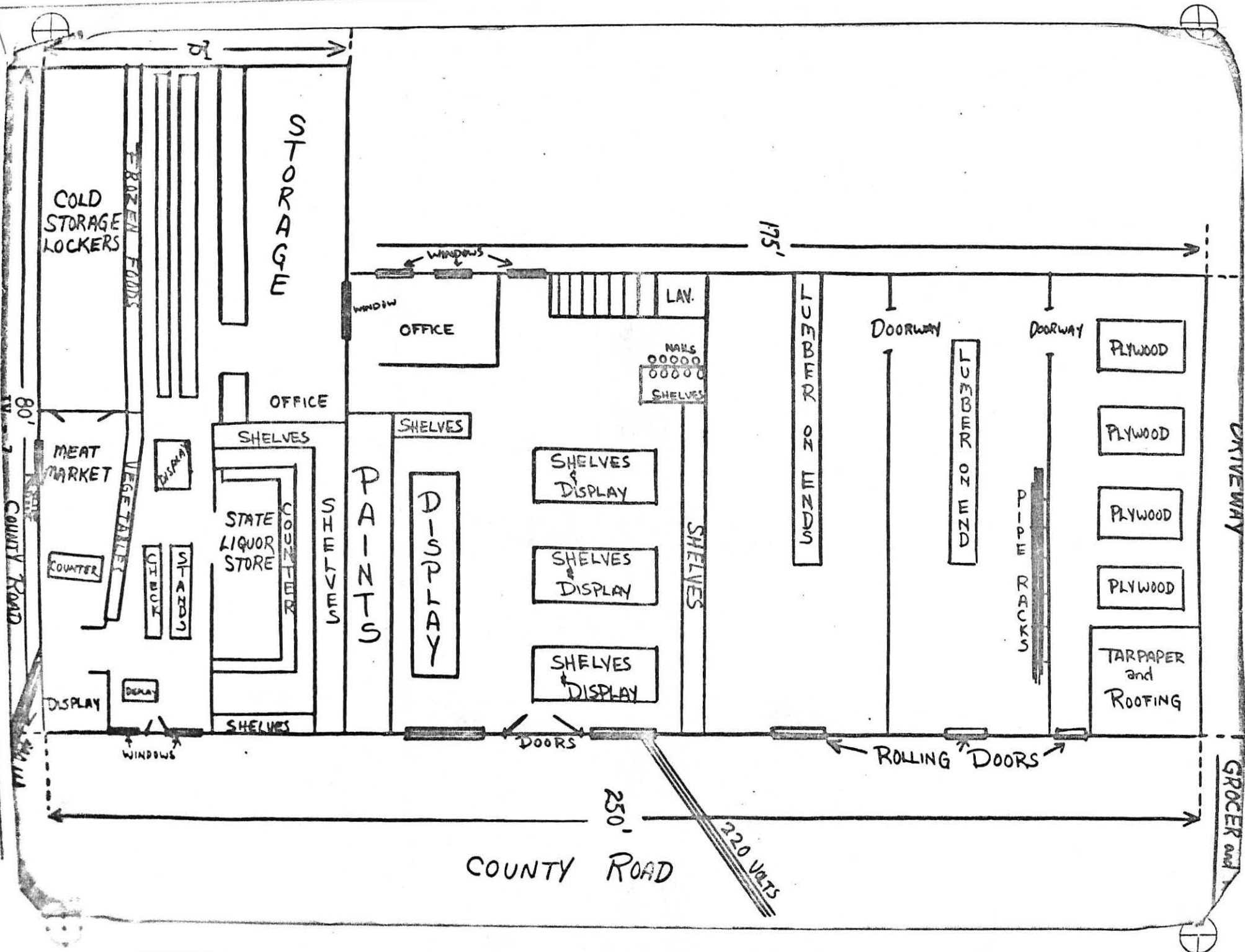
SERVICE STATION
GARAGE

CAFE and TAVERN

WOODS and BRUSH

4400 VOLTS PRIMARY and SECONDARY POWER
440 VOLTS





#202

202

GROCERY and LUMBER YARD



OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Deputy's Investigation Report

File No.

227 ~~178~~

- 1. Submitted To: L.G. Scott 2. By: _____
- 3. Investigation Request Received From: FIRE CHIEF MERRIC SCHWENKA
- 4. Request Received By: phone letter person 5. Date 2/4/70 Time 5:30 AM
- 6. Date & Time Investigation Started: 2/4/70 10:30 a.m.; _____ p.m.
- 7. Date of Incident: 2/4/70 Time: 3:05 AM 8. County: PIERCE
- 9. Nature of Incident: 1 BLDG - 3 BUSINESS OCCUPANCIES
- 10. Property Involved: 1 STORY FRAME BLDG - WITH BASEMENT
- 11. Address: RTE. 4 BOX #639 GIG HARBOR (KEY CENTER)
- 12. Owner: KEN BRONES - DOMINIC MARRIETTA 13. Address: SAME ADDRESS
- 14. Type of Occupancy: COMMERCIAL
- 15. Occupant at Time of Incident: NONE
- 16. Address: _____
- 17. Responding Fire Department(s): PCFD #16
- 18. Agencies/Individuals assisting in investigation: P.C. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

19. Persons Interviewed:
(Occupants; nearest neighbors; business associates; passersby; person discovering fire)

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NO.	DATE
<u>CHIEF SCHWENKA</u>	<u>RT. 1 BOX 231 LAKEBAY</u>	<u>884-2221</u>	<u>2/4/70</u>
	<u>BUSINESS -</u>	<u>884-3431</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>DEP. SHERIFF J.P. PATERSON</u>	<u>P.C. SHERIFF'S OFFICE</u>		<u>"</u>

20. Pertinent Witness Information: 2 UNIDENTIFIED BOYS SEEN RUNNING AWAY FROM GENERAL AREA.

21. First area extinguished: NOT EXTINGUISHED - TOTAL DESTRUCTION
22. Last area extinguished: -

23. Premises securely locked prior to alarm: Yes No
24. Forcible entry prior to alarm: Yes No DONT KNOW
25. Number of persons having keys or access to premises: _____
26. Factors influencing fire spread: LARGE AMOUNTS OF COMB. STOCK
27. Activities of last person on premises: LOCKED BLDG.
28. Abnormal or unusual conditions _____
(business operations—last activities of occupants—weather conditions—heating or operational equipment)
29. Timing devices: NONE LEFT _____
(type—location—time stopped)
30. Fusing or arcing of electric conductors: MELTED _____
(location—degree of fusing)
31. Direction of heat travel: FROM CENTER TOWARDS EACH END _____
(from area to area—under furniture, shelves)
32. Fuel consumption: _____
(location of greatest fuel consumption—type of fuel)
33. Char pattern: NO WOOD LEFT _____
(type of pattern—lowest point of deep char)
34. First material at floor level: WOOD
35. Condition of flooring and covering: GONE
36. General burn patterns: TOTALLY DESTROYED
(heat stains—window glass at point of origin—light bulbs—fused metal—plastics—etc.)
37. Estimated time fire burned before discovery 1:30 TO 2:00, after discovery 10 HRS.
38. Condition of electric appliances: DESTROYED _____
(irons—toasters)
39. Condition of electric equipment: " _____
(fuses—switches—motors—bearings—compressors)
40. Fire cause evidence removed: NONE
41. Disposition of evidence: _____
42. Photos by: L.G. Scott Date: 2/4/70
43. Probable point of origin: CENTER OF BLDG.
44. Probable initial material ignited: _____
45. Probable source of ignition: _____
46. Probable burning time and temperature: 10-12 HRS. 1800°
47. Probable act or omission causing fire: _____

Signed by L.G. Scott
Date 2/5/70

(To be attached to S. F. No. 133 report with any additional comments, photographs, narrative reports, or information corroborating fire cause factors, etc.)

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Deputy's Investigation Report

Lakewood

File No.

~~228~~

227

- 1. Submitted To: R. K. Heymel 2. By: Heymel
- 3. Investigation Request Received From: Chief Schwenka PCFD #16
- 4. Request Received By: phone letter person 5. Date Wed -2-4-70 Time 5³⁰ AM
- 6. Date & Time Investigation Started: Wednesday 2-4-70, 10¹⁰ a.m.; _____ p.m.
- 7. Date of Incident: Wed-2-4-70 Time: 3⁰⁵ AM 8. County: Pierce
- 9. Nature of Incident: Total involvement of structure.
- 10. Property Involved: Old lighthouse
- 11. Address: Point in bay at end of Cliff Rd. out of Longbranch
- 12. Owner: Old Hazeltine property. 13. Address: _____
- 14. Type of Occupancy: 30' ft high simulated light house
- 15. Occupant at Time of Incident: Abandoned occupancy
- 16. Address: _____
- 17. Responding Fire Department(s): PCFD #16
- 18. Agencies/Individuals assisting in investigation: _____

19. Persons Interviewed:
 (Occupants; nearest neighbors; business associates; passersby; person discovering fire)

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NO.	DATE
<u>Pierce Co Sheriff deputy</u> <u>Anderson</u>			<u>2-4-70</u>
<u>Lawrence Curb</u>	<u>Box 424 Longbranch</u>	<u>884-2324</u>	<u>2-4-70</u>

20. Pertinent Witness Information: See Dominic's Foods & Visell Hardware
& Lumber Co

Fire Reports.

- 21. First area extinguished: _____
- 22. Last area extinguished: _____

23. Premises securely locked prior to alarm: Yes No

24. Forcible entry prior to alarm: Yes No

25. Number of persons having keys or access to premises: _____

26. Factors influencing fire spread: _____

27. Activities of last person on premises: _____

28. Abnormal or unusual conditions _____
(business operations—last activities of occupants—weather conditions—heating or operational equipment)

29. Timing devices: _____
(type—location—time stopped)

30. Fusing or arcing of electric conductors: _____
(location—degree of fusing)

31. Direction of heat travel: _____
(from area to area—under furniture, shelves)

32. Fuel consumption: _____
(location of greatest fuel consumption—type of fuel)

33. Char pattern: _____
(type of pattern—lowest point of deep char)

34. First material at floor level: _____

35. Condition of flooring and covering: _____

36. General burn patterns: _____
(heat stains—window glass at point of origin—light bulbs—fused metal—plastics—etc.)

37. Estimated time fire burned before discovery _____, after discovery _____

38. Condition of electric appliances: _____
(irons—toasters)

39. Condition of electric equipment: _____
(fuses—switches—motors—bearings—compressors)

40. Fire cause evidence removed: _____

Tagged by: _____

41. Disposition of evidence: _____

42. Photos by: _____ Date: _____

43. Probable point of origin: _____

44. Probable initial material ignited: _____

45. Probable source of ignition: _____

46. Probable burning time and temperature: _____

47. Probable act or omission causing fire: _____

Signed by _____

Date _____

(To be attached to S. F. No. 133 report with any additional comments, photographs, narrative reports, or information corroborating fire cause factors, etc.)