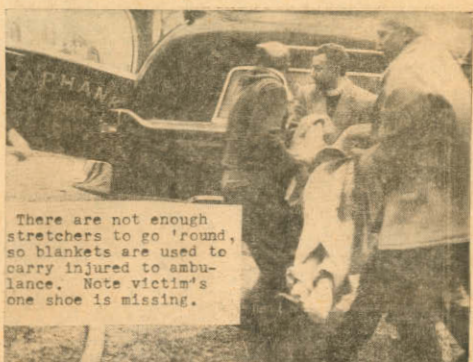


The Day Everyone Worked & Prayed in Bellport



Brookhaven volunteer firemen battle blaze from the east.



There are not enough stretchers to go 'round, so blankets are used to carry injured to ambulance. Note victim's one shoe is missing.



Students help man the hoses in fighting blaze from the west.



N.Y. Telephone Co. crew sets up emergency lines at the scene.

... 10 MINUTES TO GO



Westhampton Beach F.D. snorkel came in mighty handy.

At 1:50 P.M. last Friday, ten minutes before the close of classes, a flash fire believed caused by old electrical wiring, broke out in the ceiling of the old auditorium of the Bellport Jr. High School, on Station Road.

With jet-like speed, the flames traveled through the central hall, filling the 40-year-old structure with heavy smoke and cutting off escape for many of the students on the second floor of the two-story structure. The casualty list of injured totaled over 40, most of them students, and including one teacher and a few volunteer firemen. The list, however, did not include the score or more who required inhalator treatment at the scene, but not hospitalization. A few of the injured were students who jumped from the second floor windows.

The prompt reporting of the fire by two girl students, who discovered the blaze, and the immediate turning in of the fire alarm by Thomas Fenney, principal plus the fast reverse work by volunteer firemen, Suffolk County Police and many ordinary citizens helped prevent a disaster.

The alarm set into action the mutual aid systems developed in recent years by Suffolk's volunteer fire departments and ambulance companies and brought help from what seemed like every section of the county. Ambulances, private station wagons and other vehicles were used to cart the injured to Brookhaven Memorial Hospital, which was jammed with the emergency cases.

When the day was over, the fire loss was estimated at over \$500,000. The Bellport School was closed until Wednesday, when double-sessions were initiated, and a move was started to require fire escapes on all such buildings.



Nurse checks pulse of student receiving oxygen at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital.



County Executive H. Lee Dennison (L) and County Police Commissioner John Barry at scene.



One of the victims in Brookhaven Memorial Hospital



A young girl student receives oxygen at the scene.