

Ben C. Canine Fire

Waveland Independent

Waveland, Montgomery County, Indiana

Dec. 6, 1929

Canine - Fire

The most spectacular fire in Waveland since the Airdeme burned started about half past seven on Sunday evening when a gasoline torch exploded and started a blaze that totally wiped out the old brick livery barn building on Green Street, together with all of Ben C. Canine garage equipment, ten cars and fifteen radios. Canine was using the torch in the parts room in the rear of his office to solder some wires in a small motor when it exploded. One of his arms and hands was severely burned, but the main force of the explosion went up and ignited some tires. It happened that there were several in the office listening to Harry Lauder sing. A fire extinguisher checked the flames so that Canine was gotten out, but the fire was hopeless from the start. A number of cars stored in the garage were removed, but 8 used cars belonging to the garage and cars belonging to Will Moore and Bert Decker were burned. The fire engine was attached to the cistern across the street and did fine service in protecting the adjoining buildings until the water gave out. It was then moved over on cross street. Pumpers came from New Ross and Russellville and gave badly needed assistance. A barrel of alcohol and two barrels of lubricating oil exploded. It is said that there was only 6" of alcohol in the barrel. Judging by what that did that end of town would have been wrecked if it had been full. It is estimated that the ball of flame, which looked like a small balloon, went up a 150 feet. It sounded like the time the powder mills went up at Fontanet. The two barrels of oil didn't make so much noise but made a display like a thousand sky rockets. By 10 o'clock danger to the adjoining buildings was over, but the fire was still burning fiercely and the brick walls were a menace. There was 1000 gals. of gasoline stored in the underground tanks in front and to the side of the building, but this did not ignite. By 8 o'clock practically the entire country side was in Waveland. The danger seemed so imminent that the furniture was carried out of Garrie Dillman's and George Sherfey's residences. The fire siren was a frost as people living within 3 squares didn't hear. Services were in progress at the Christian Church, but the minister in charge assured the congregation and most of them stayed until the close of the services. The building was erected by John C. Canine and Charles A. Canine in 1889 and was known far and wide as the "Brick livery barn." The brick was made locally and labor was not \$1.25 per hour. Messer Dillman estimated the direct loss at about \$5,000, exclusive of the damage to the building on the E. which will have to have a new roof, and possibly a new W. wall as it was built against the side of the brick and the wall will probably have to come down. They have \$3,000 insurance. it is

hard to estimate Mr. Canine's loss, but it probably will reach \$8000 with \$4600 insurance. A policy for \$2000 had been renewed only a few days before the fire. He of course loses his garage business entire. His new cars were stored in the ware room on Cross St and so escaped. He will continue the business as Chevrolet dealer and Crossley radio and will have a service department in the rear of his wareroom. Harry Gardner will do the work and tell the funny stories. Ben hasn't cheered up enough to whistle yet, but he says it is lots better to be burned out than burned up. Parke Lough had his hands severely burned helping Ben out.

"Still in business" - I desire to express my appreciation to the firemen and neighbors for their efforts in my behalf in the fire on Sunday night and of the many expressions of sympathy at my loss. I will continue in business, both automobiles, radios and battery charging, at my ware room on Cross St. and will have my repair department in operation in a few days. Ben C. Canine.