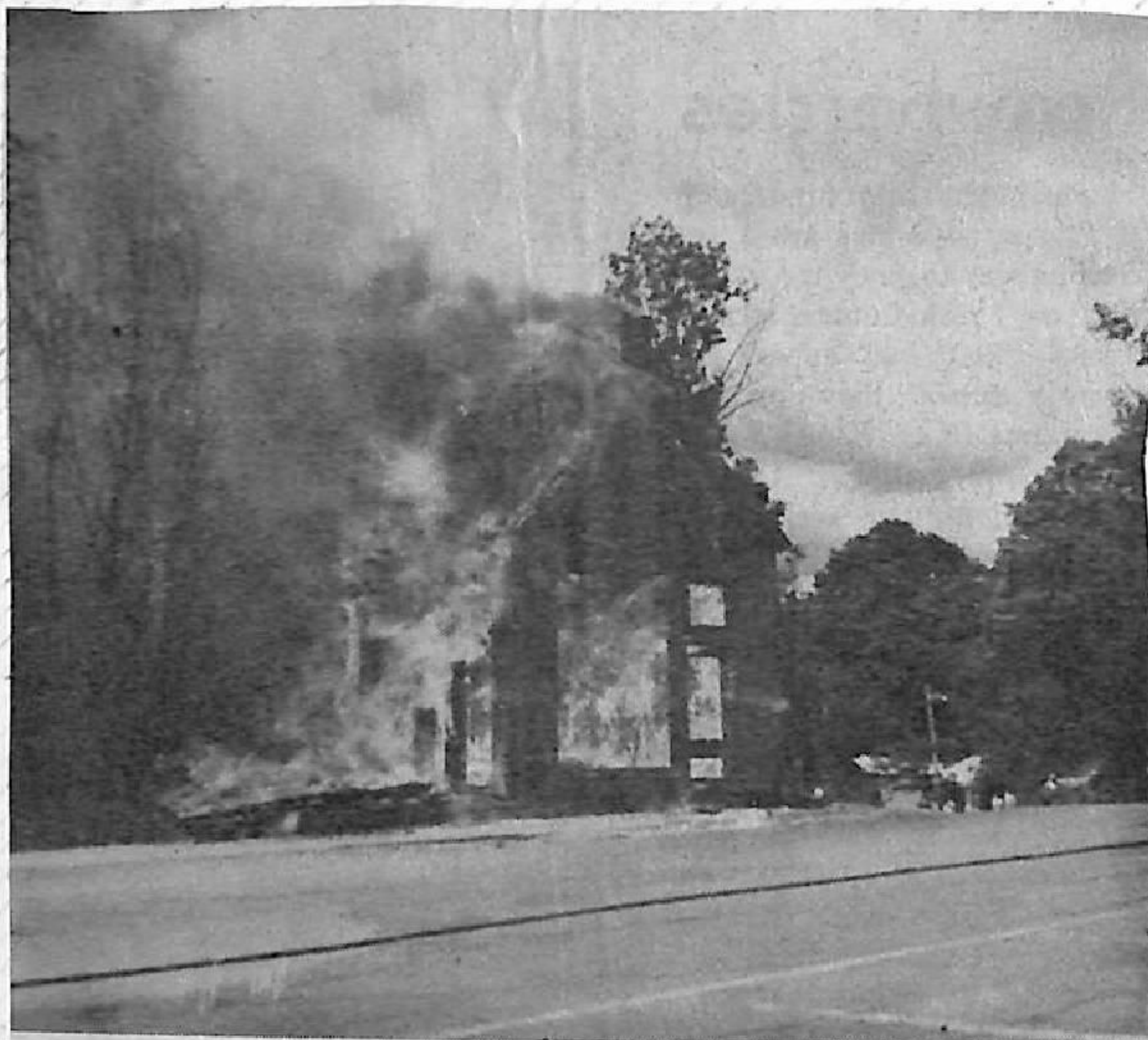




THE HARVEY DONALD property as it was Tuesday morning before the fire which razed the building to the ground.
-courtesy of Aud.Duke



AT THE HEIGHT of the blaze the building that survived the disastrous fire of 1931 is destroyed.

-photo by Bill Macintosh

By **BILL COLE** Port Carling reporter

Tuesday afternoon flames destroyed the last remaining original building on the main street of Port Carling.

The structure, which survived the disastrous fire of 1931, was under demolition at the time of the fire.

Eyewitnesses said they believed the fire started when wind fanned the flames of a bonfire workmen on the job had set earlier in the day.

The most recent owner Harvey Donald of Port Carling had recently vacated the premises to move his plumbing business further up the street. The building was being demolished to accommodate improvements to highway #118.

Firemen promptly responded to the alarm but were unable to control the blaze before the building was totally destroyed. Their efforts to

confine the blaze were successful however as they prevented the flames from igniting the adjacent Bank of Nova Scotia.

The heat was so intense from the wind whipped flames as they were driven in to the street that shop windows across the street were cracked and signs buckled.

The building was originally built in 1880 by Mr. Joseph Wallis of Port Hope. Mr. Wallis came to Port Carling in 1874 in the interest of the government. In her book *The History of the Village of Port Carling* Leila M. Cope records that Mr. Wallis was a justice of the peace who took an active part in Muskoka affairs and that he was a lay reader in the Baptist church at Foots Bay.

Mr. Wallis established the first lumber and shingle mill on the site where Miss Marie Seager's home now stands. In 1879 he married Charlotte Vandeburg of Thorndale, Ontario.

The couple lived in a house behind the United Church for a year while Mr. Wallis built the house that this week was destroyed. The structure served as a combined store and dwelling.

In June 1887 a Toronto paper said of Mr. Wallis "Now here is a man who can furnish an amateur with lumber and nails to build a cabin, furniture to garnish it, cooking utensils and food to cook, even butter for frying fish."

Wallis converted the building into apartments. Later his daughter Miss Charlotte Wallis operated it as a boarding house with an ice house behind the building. Following that Clark and Brown conducted their electric shop in the building before Harvey Donald purchased the property from the estate to conduct his plumbing business.

Last original main street building burns to the ground

JUNE 1979