Legeros Fire Blog Archives 2006-2015 - Fire at Watauga « Help Wanted - Are You... » Chapel Hill's New Blu... Hall - January 24, 1920

Fire at Watauga Hall - January 24, 1920

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Heard the new <u>digital archives of the Technician</u>, the student newspaper of North Carolina State University? The first seventy years of the newspaper are now available online, from the 1920s to the 1990s. And every issue is text searchable! Search for "fire department" and you'll find such gems as this, describing a fire at Watagua Hall on January 24, 1920. The issue date was February 1.

Watauga Afire

A blaze on the third floor of Watauga Hall caused considerable excitement among the students and about \$1,000 damage to the building on last Saturday, January 24. The fire when discovered had gained considerable headway, while great clouds of black, stifling smoke poured from the windows, the top floor being a choking inferno of strangling fumes. A few heroic souls who were on the scene at the time made a wild dash for the nearest hose house and in a few minutes the nozzle of the hose had reached the top floor. The water pressure proved to be lacking, the hose refusing to hold what little water there was.

This state of affairs was demoralizing, to say the least, for to attempt to reach the scene of action was to brave a series of squirts and sprays from the laboring hose. In the meanwhile some thoughtful person had sent in a call to the Raleigh Fire Department, and as the situation was becoming real serious they arrived to save the day. While the firemen were busily chopping up the floor and gradually lessening the small chance of any return of our breakage fee, the occupants of the domicile (who were absolutely against running any risk) began to throw out personal belongings. In less time than it takes to tell it, a great portion of the immediate campus was cluttered up with boxes, trunks, baskets, breeches, caps, and various other pieces of personal property.

The announcement at this point that the fire was out caused an immediate movement of personal effects back into the smoke-begrimed and water-logged dormitory. The fire was out, thanks to the prompt response of the Raleigh

Fire Department.

The origin of the fire isn't known, but many explanations as to the cause are in circulation. Some think that a lighted cigarette was to blame, while others believe in the spontaneous combustion of a greasy rag thrown behind the radiator.