

Arson Ruled In Blaze at Historic Site

Depository Damage
Estimated at \$250,000

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DALLAS, Aug. 23—City fire officials said today that arson was involved in a fire early today that caused \$250,000 in damage to the Texas School Book Depository, the red-brick building from which Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

The fire broke out in the basement at 2:52 a.m. and was extinguished about two hours later, Fire Department spokesman J.J. Howe said.

He said that investigators had

found that the fire was set in several places and was the work of an arsonist but that it would take several days to determine how the fire was started.

The building, purchased by Dallas County from the state in 1979, is now the Dallas County Administration Building and is about a mile north of the Dallas Convention Center where the Republican National Convention is taking place.

The fire caused no structural damage, but smoke damaged first- and second-floor offices and chambers, authorities said.

The Associated Press reported that the basement where the fire broke out contained documents, photographs and other artifacts dealing with the Kennedy assassination and that there are duplicates of the memorabilia.

Dallas officials also reported that 97 persons arrested during a downtown protest Wednesday were arraigned today.

All pleaded not guilty to charges of disorderly conduct, according to Howe.

Seven others were charged with an additional misdemeanor for spray-painting buildings, and one was charged with a felony for causing damage estimated at \$12,000 to a \$100,000 sculpture at the Diamond-Shamrock building, he said.