

copy to H. Weisberg

Texas Theatre Struck by fire

By Kevin O'Hanlon
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — A fire on Saturday destroyed the stage and screen of the historic Texas Theatre where Lee Harvey Oswald was captured after the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The roof over the stage collapsed but the walls of the two-story movie theater which doubles as a museum remained standing. The flames did not reach the 1,080-seat auditorium, although about two feet of water pooled on the floor of the pit area in front of the screen.

The damage, however, was "not irreparable," said Battalion Fire Chief Mike Jones.

The five-alarm fire was believed to have started in a furnace shortly before 3 a.m. It was brought under control about daybreak.

General Manager Ron DuBois was asleep upstairs when the fire began but was not injured. "I ran out of here in my underwear," he said.

Oswald was arrested inside the theater in suburban Oak Cliff just hours after Kennedy was shot on Nov. 22, 1963. Nightclub owner Jack Ruby

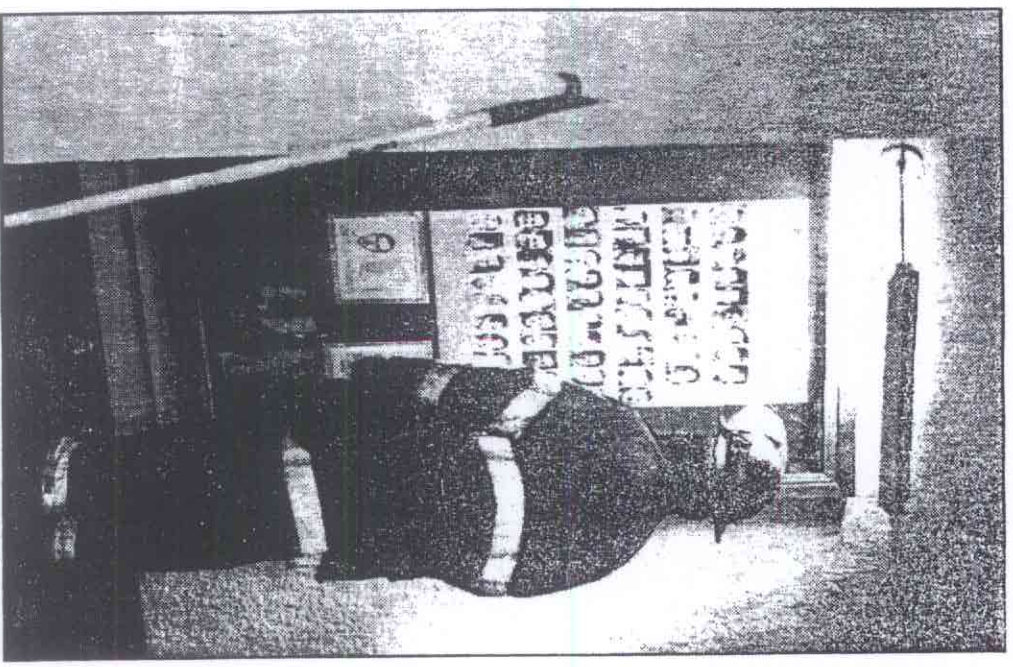
Oswald was arrested inside the theater in suburban Oak Cliff just hours after Kennedy was shot on Nov. 22, 1963.

shot and killed Oswald two days later in the Dallas police garage while Oswald was being transferred to the county jail.

Ruby was convicted of Oswald's murder and sentenced to death. He died of lung cancer on Jan. 3, 1967.

The Texas Theatre, built in 1931 by the late billionaire Howard Hughes, has been hamstrung by financial problems and went into foreclosure in June 1992. A family-owned corporation, Texas-Rosewin-Midway Inc., bought the building from United Artists Theatres Inc. in July 1993 and saved it from being razed.

The Italian renaissance-style theater, located three miles from where Kennedy was gunned down, reopened Jan. 20.



Eric Gay ■ Associated Press

▲ A firefighter glances at historical information at the Texas Theatre after helping put out the flames that damaged it Saturday morning.