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Depository Fire 230

DALLAS, Tex. AP -The Texas School Book Depository, Lee Harvey Oswald's perch in the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, was damaged by fire today and authorities labeled it arson. Investigators said gasoline cans were found on three floors of the seven-story building and gasoline had been poured throughout the brick and wood structure.

Damage was confined to the upper three floors. The effect on the sixth floor room from which the the shots that killed Kennedy were fired was not known at once. The blaze was discovered shortly before 10 a.m. by a workman who entered the building. It was extinguished about 30 minutes later.

The building has been under controversy lately. The School Book Depository company moved some time after the 1963 shooting of Kennedy and then-Texas Gov. John Connally and the building was sold.

The purchaser was Aubrey Mayhew of Nashville, Tenn., who opened the lobby to visitors. He did not open the upper part of the building from where the Warren Commission said the fatal shots were fired.

The sale was by D. Harold Byrd, wealthy Dallas businessman and majority owner in the Dallas Trust Corp. which owned the building. The structure sold for \$650,000.

Byrd said two weeks ago that Mayhew was six months behind in mortgage payments.

City and state leaders have urged that some governmental unit purchase the building because of its history.

Scores of persons from throughout the United States visit the building daily.

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JUL 21 1972

**Dallas Book Depository Site Fire**  
SFChronicle  
Dallas

Arsonists broke into the Texas School Book Depository yesterday, spread gasoline across five floors and set fire to the 68-year-old structure where Lee Harvey Oswald waited to assassinate President Kennedy.

Firemen extinguished the blaze within 30 minutes.

"There was quite a bit of fire, but the sprinkler system put most of it out," said L. R. McCowan, assistant fire chief.

Fire damage was limited to \$5000 but thousands of gallons of water poured from the upper to lower floors and out the front doors as curiosity seekers crowded downtown sidewalks.

Win Anderson, assistant to Nashville businessman Aubrey Mayhew, who owns the building, said he reported the fire after he unlocked the building yesterday morning. Anderson hands out pamphlets about the 1963 assassination to visitors in the foyer. He said the building is unguarded at night.

The vacant building is supposed to be in the process of becoming a Kennedy memorial center. Mayhew purchased it in 1971 for \$650,000, but is behind on the \$6000 - a - month payments and has been threatened with foreclosure by a Dallas bank.

United Press

**Fire Damages Texas Building Used in Kennedy Shooting**  
NYTimes JUL 21 1972

DALLAS, July 20 (UPI)—Arsonists broke into the Texas School Book Depository building today, spread gasoline across five floors and set fire to the 68-year-old structure where Lee Harvey Oswald aided to assassinate President Kennedy.

Firemen, aided by the vacant building's sprinkler system, extinguished the blaze within 24 minutes.

"It was definitely arson, L. R. McCowan, assistant fire chief, said. "We found gasoline cans on five floors and the smell of gasoline was all through the building."