

STOWE REPORTER
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Photo by Emily

FIRE GUTS DEN

At about 1:30 Saturday afternoon, one of Stowe's oldest apres' ski lounges, "The Smuggler's Den" suffered near total destruction from a fire that began in one of the hotel staff rooms on the second floor of the two story wooden frame building.

The Den is located next to the Lodge at Smugglers' Notch, about a mile from the base of Mt. Mansfield on the Mountain Road. The main building that accommodates early 100 guests known as "The Lodge" was not damaged by Saturday's fire. None of the 20 hotel staff members of The Lodge were injured and most in most cases were able to rescue most of their personal possessions.

The "Chalet" was constructed during the 1920s as the first guest accommodations of The Lodge at Smugglers' Notch. In 1950, the Mt. Mansfield Company purchased the hotel and presently operates the world famous ski lodge.

Quick work by the Stowe, Waterbury and Morrisville Fire Departments and the availability

of water from a hydrant of the Mt. Mansfield Company's water system at The Lodge prevented the fire from gaining much headway before fire department personnel arrived.

Saturday's blaze was of undetermined origin and is under investigation by Stowe Fire Chief Clifton Thompson and the State Fire

Marshal's office. Damages were estimated at \$50,000.00 by Mt. Mansfield Company President Sepp Ruschp.

The building will be torn down after the ski season is over. Plans presently call for all lifts to continue daily operation until April 13th, and limited operation of the lifts as long as conditions and skier attendance at

the Mountain warrants.