

Last Home on Ward Hill Burned to the Ground

An old landmark in Duxbury was destroyed late Friday afternoon when fire razed the buildings on the farm occupied by Leo Smith on Ward Hill about one mile from South Duxbury.

The fire started in the barn, quickly spreading through a connecting shed to the house. Though the Waterbury Fire Department promptly responded to a call for help they reached the scene too late to save any of the building, having to cover a distance of some eight miles.

Mr. Smith was in Moretown where he is employed by the Ward Lumber Company. Mrs. Smith and her oldest son Homer, a boy in his middle teens who was at home helping in sugaring, succeeded in saving 12 head of cattle, two horses and some pigs while eight head of young stock were lost. The firemen salvaged a large part of the canned goods from the cellar, two smoked hams and a quantity of salt pork. The milk cooler was also saved. Other contents of the barn and house were lost.

The animals which were saved are being housed in the Sheldon Murray barn in South Duxbury.

The place was owned by the Ward Lumber Company of Moretown.

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FIRE

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There was a small insurance.

The Smiths had lived on the place about two years. Besides the son, Homer, there are two children attending school in Moretown and three of pre-school age.

Years ago, when the place was occupied by Charlie Allen, a large barn was struck by lightning and burned. This was replaced by a smaller barn which burned when Frank Lamson lived on the place.

The farm, consisting of some 200 acres, had been in the Ward family a great many years. The house, about 100 years old, well-built and kept in good repair. It was occupied many years ago by Deacon Earl Ward. His son, Hiram Ward was born there and Hiram's son, Burton, a member of the Ward Lumber Company, was also born there. In earlier years there was a large sugar place where maple products were made in great quantities.

Earlier generations of Wards, of which Hezekiah was one, also settled on the hill which bore their name.

At one time there were large and prosperous farms on Ward Hill, a school, discontinued many years ago, and a neighborhood teeming with activity. Though there still is a few houses left standing, they have been unoccupied for years and the sole occupants of Ward Hill were the Smiths.

Thus another neighborhood in Duxbury is completely abandoned.

On the other side of Ward Hill is Dowsville, which also was once largely populated with a large school, now is only inhabited by summer residents who have purchased the farms of old timers.