

## Fire Hits Hemlock Village Hard

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The burned Knapp store on Main street in Hemlock NY 1908.  
The fire that destroyed the Woodruff Block on 1 February 1908.  
The building was built in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall.

We wish to say right on the start that the people of Livonia are very sorry indeed for the hard luck that their sister village has sustained. The same thing is liable to come to Livonia any day or night, but we hope the evil day will not draw nigh for a long time.

The building known as the Woodruff block, on the west side of Main street, was entirely destroyed last Saturday night by one of the worst fires in the history of the place. The flames were noticed first in the rear room of Humphrey's meat market, and were discovered about half-past 10 by Frank Bromley, who lost no time in giving the alarm. A blizzard was raging, and with the high wind the

flames soon spread throughout the structure and the whole building was soon a mass of flames. Only a short time elapsed before nearly every resident of the village was on the scene, but the fire had made such rapid progress that nothing could be saved from the building except a few papers belonging to the post-office and Mr. Knapp's insurance policy.

Things looked rather dubious for the buildings on the opposite side of the street, as the wind was blowing from the west and myriads of glowing embers were carried against them. But for the faithful work of the citizens in throwing water and snow, all of the buildings on that side of the street might have been swept out of existence.

Owing to the iron roof on the burning block the fire was confined for a time and this served, too, as a great protection to the other buildings. So intense was the heat that some of the large glass windows in Wilson's market opposite were broken and blankets had to be put up and kept wet. The water from the melted snow ran down the street like a freshet in the spring. By half-past twelve the building was in ruins.

The block was occupied by George E. Knapp's department store, Humphrey's meat market, Frank Naracong's barber shop and pool room, the Odd Fellows and Maccabees lodge rooms and the Wood-Coy hall.



The original Knapp store on Main street in Hemlock NY circa 1900 which burnt on 1 February 1908. The building was built in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall.

There was an insurance of \$4,500 on the building, which was valued at \$7,000. L. E. Humphrey's loss was about \$400, with no insurance. Frank Naracong was insured for \$300 and lost \$350. The Odd Fellows sustained a loss of at least \$600 and were insured for \$300. The Maccabees sustained a loss of about \$100. The voting machine of the district was in the building but this was fully covered by insurance.

The building was a wooden structure and was erected in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall. It is stated on good authority that it is very probable that another building will soon be erected on the site.



The original Knapp store on Main street in Hemlock NY circa 1907 just before the fire that destroyed it on 1 February 1908. The building was built in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall.

Mr. Woodruff, the postmaster, also sustained the loss of the post office case valued at \$60, which burned with all the mail which had been left in it and a great many stamped envelopes. The books and the stamps, amounting to nearly \$1,000, were found to be all right in the safe, although the stamps were glued together from the heat. The old post office which has been stored away in William McLeod's barn, has been brought into commission again, and placed temporarily in a room in D. J. Kavanaugh's house, under the supervision of Grove Stephenson, deputy postmaster.

business again. We have not learned what the others who were burned out will be able to do, but doubtless will make more or less satisfactory arrangements.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Knapp has rented rooms in the Haggerty building and will soon be in

The fire was noticed by many in Livonia and when they learned by telephone that it was the Woodruff block they thought the whole business part of the village would burn. That it did not was due in great measure to the hard work of the citizens.

*Editor's Note: After the fire of 1 February 1908 the commercial section of Main street in Hemlock NY known as the Woodruff Block was rebuilt. Here are some photos of the new building.*



The Knapp store on Main street in Hemlock NY during reconstruction in 1908. A fire destroyed the building known as the Woodruff Block on 1 February 1908. The building was built in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall.





The Knapp store on Main street in Hemlock NY after reconstruction in 1908. A fire destroyed the building known as the Woodruff Block on 1 February 1908. The building was built in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall.



Woodruff Block on Main street in Hemlock NY after reconstruction in 1908, the Knapp Store is on the left. A fire destroyed the building known as the Woodruff Block on 1 February 1908. The building was built in 1898 by E. B. Woodruff and J. P. Coykendall.

**The Livonia Gazette**

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