

July 20, 1978

2125 Hours, 5 Alarm Fire, Box 1233, 179-181 Salem Street, North End.

The fire threatened the adjacent historic Old North Church at 193 Salem Street.

Photos courtesy of Fred DellaPorta, who lived in the 179-181 Salem Street building.



Heavy fire through the roof.

The North End of Boston is a very densely populated section of the city. Very narrow streets and 4/5/6 story building heights make firefighting very difficult.

The Boston Globe reported the fire started in a rear second floor apartment at 179-181 Salem Street, at the corner of Tileston Street. Two firefighters and five residents were injured. Firefighters worked extensively to protect the exposure of the adjacent historic Old North Church, built in 1723, a National Landmark.

The Church is the location from which two lanterns were hung on the night of April 18, 1775, to signal and alert Paul Revere and William Dawes that British troops were to use boats to cross the Charles River and then march on to Lexington and Concord in search of John Hancock, Samuel Adams and other patriots. The Battle of Lexington and the Battle of Concord occurred the next day, April 19, 1775, starting the American Revolution.



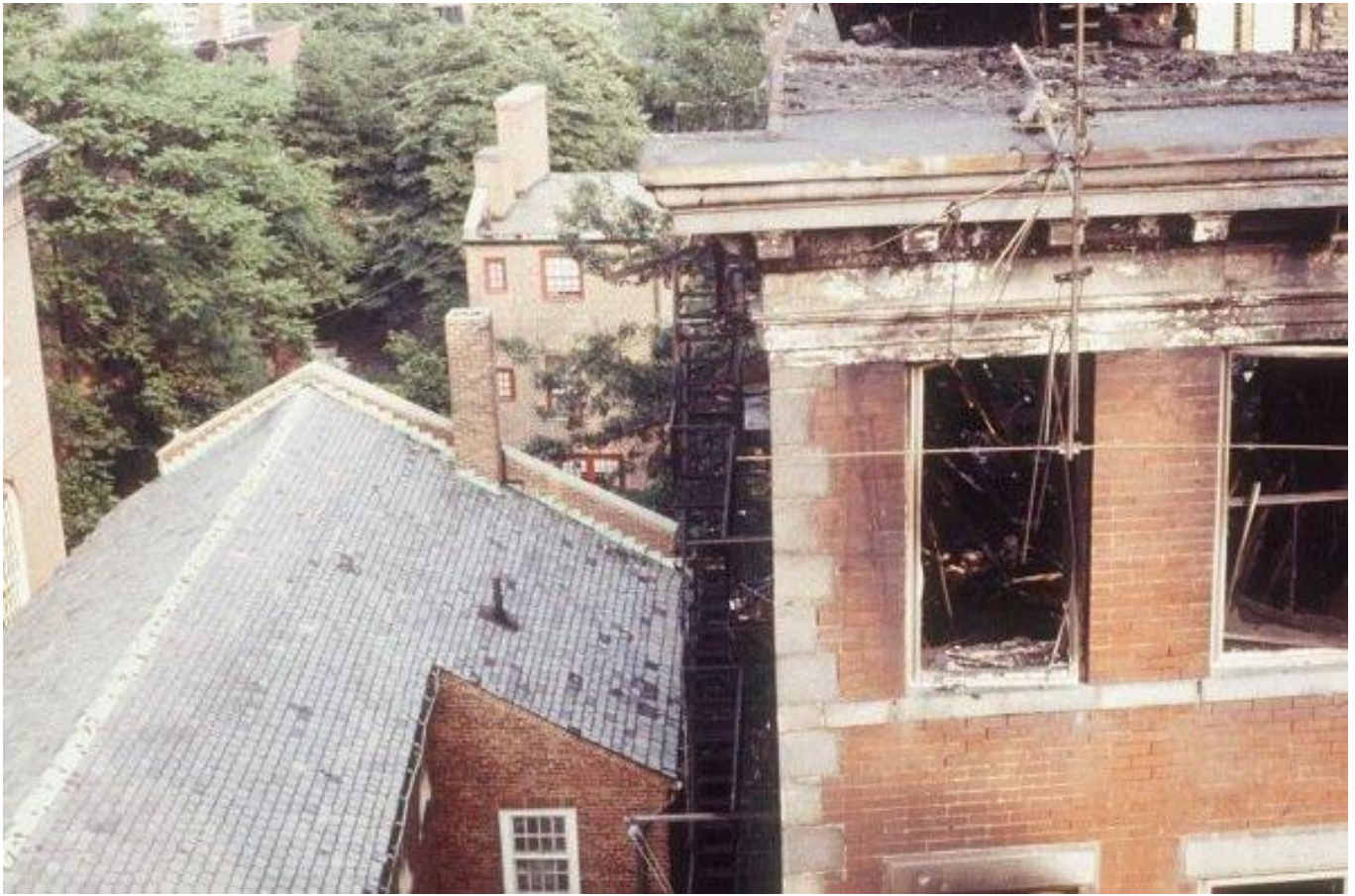
Fire on 4th and 5th floors, and through the roof.



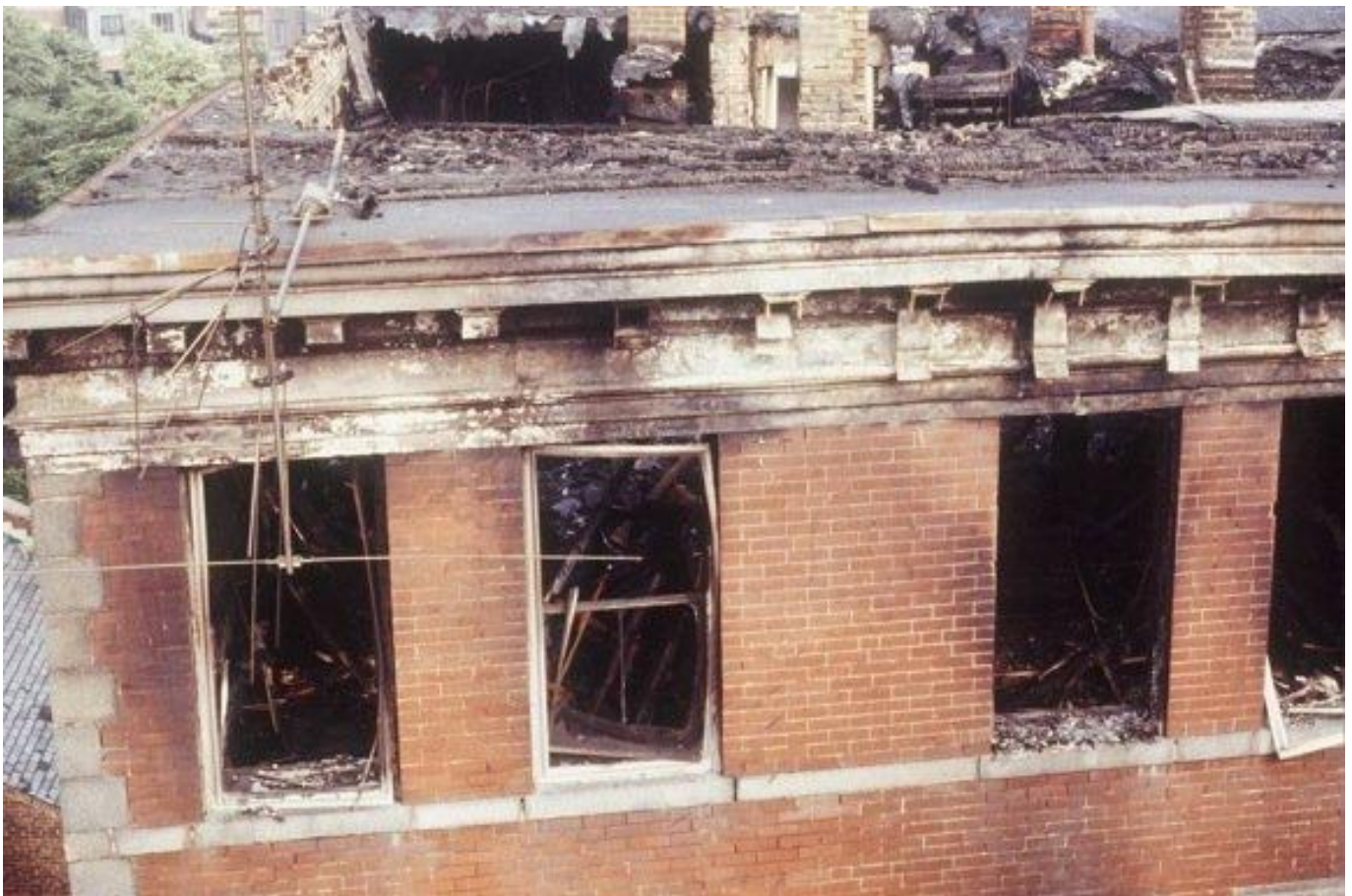
Heavy fire conditions on the 5th floor. A ground ladder in the foreground.



Heavy fire conditions on 4th and 5th floors. Evacuations in progress, 2 lines operating.



Church Gift Shop beside fire building. The main Church building at far left, Paul Revere Park at rear of Church.



Extensive damage to the 5th floor and roof.