

**EPSILON VILLAGE FIRE**

**June 11, 1913**

# FIRE THREATENS EPSILON VILLAGE

## BLAZE IN WOODS BE- COMES SERIOUS

Started on Frank Blanchard's Forest  
and Spread—Entire Com-  
munity Fighting.

A forest fire which has raged since eleven o'clock this morning threatens the town of Epsilon with destruction, despite the efforts of the entire community combined into a volunteer fire fighting brigade.

The blaze started on the porch of the Frank Blanchard residence, catching from an engine used in sawing wood. Instead of consuming the house, the flames were fanned by the wind to the woods, and soon the Blanchard forest was blazing. Fully three-quarters of a mile had the blaze spread at three o'clock this afternoon, and the fire fighters were working earnestly to save the Grimes mill. In case this plant catches fire, the store is threatened, and likely the entire village will go up in smoke. Bucket brigades have been formed and are using water in as great abundance as possible.

Reports from the threatened district are to the effect that this is the most disastrous fire in the history of the region.

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The Petoskey Record  
Thursday, June 12, 1913

## MEN AND WOMEN FIGHT ALL NIGHT TO SAVE EPSILON

### BACKFIRING AS LAST RE- SORT CHANGES COURSE OF FLAMES, PREVENTING LOSS OF HOMES.

Fire Continued Thursday, but Village  
Appears to Be Safe—Brisk Wind  
of Wednesday Failed to Subside—  
Intense Heat Affects Many of the  
Volunteers.

Working side by side, men and women to the number of about two hundred, comprising the entire population of the village and vicinity, fought all Wednesday night in an effort to turn the flames that surrounded Epsilon and threatened it with destruction.

The heat was intense, and a number of the volunteers were obliged to desist from their efforts on account of becoming nearly suffocated. No serious injury was reported.

Early Thursday morning their efforts were partially crowned with success, for as the result of back-firing half a mile of timber, the flames were turned from their path and ate their way into the forest away from Epsilon. All Wednesday afternoon, the fighters concentrated their efforts on keeping the blaze from the Lyons mill and the general store, for had these caught fire the entire village would have been doomed.

While the danger appeared for a time to be obviated, watchers were alert all Thursday, for the fire continued to burn in the Blanchard and Lyons woods, repeatedly threatening to escape from its bounds.

About a mile and a half of forest was burned, including that which was backfired, but no homes were destroyed and no loss of life is reported. It is considered marvellous that Epsilon escaped the flames which had appeared to inclose it, and the credit is entirely due to the volunteers who fought for their very lives.

The blaze originated Wednesday morning on the porch of the Frank Blanchard residence, catching from a spark thrown from a wood cutting engine. The brisk wind was then blowing toward the woods, and the Blanchard house was saved. However, a change in conditions caused the flames to be blown with great fury toward the village, and it appeared at any time Wednesday afternoon that the settlement might go up in smoke. Contrary to expectations, the brisk wind did not subside Wednesday night.

Epsilon is situated about eight miles east of Petoskey in Littlefield township.

Petoskey Evening News  
and Daily Resorter  
Friday, June 13, 1913

## EPSILON'S FATE DEPENDS ON WHIMS OF THE WIND

### FIRE INCREASES IN FURY AND LIGHTS UP THE SKY OF EMMET CO. WITH RED GLARE.

Fire Warden Pearson in Charge of  
Flame Fighters—Blaze Leaps Fire  
Line, but Heroic Efforts Save  
Homes.

At three o'clock the report from Epsilon is to the effect that a west wind is fanning the flames eastward. Epsilon is in no particular danger at present, and it is hoped the fire will run itself out when the brush which is now burning is consumed.

The fate of Epsilon depends on the wind.

The town was fairly safe all day Thursday up to five o'clock, when the wind began blowing from the southwest, carrying the flames toward the village. Several homes were in danger repeatedly, and only the best of fire fighting prevented their destruction. Later, the wind veered so it came directly from the south and gave Epsilon another respite, fanning the flames away instead of toward it.

In an interview Thursday night with a representative of the Evening News who was at the scene of the fire, H. D. Tallady, the storekeeper at Epsilon, gave a graphic description of the heroic efforts put forth by the inhabitants to save their homes.

The flames at one time had appeared to concentrate all their efforts on the William Blanchard home north of the town, and forty men fought desperately, at last changing the course of the blaze and saving the buildings, despite the fact that the fire was at one time burning within four rods of the place.

"We have fought fires here for the last twenty-six years," declared Mr. Tallady, "but this is the worst one yet."

He declared Petoskey to be in no danger, as nothing but an east wind could bring the flames this way, and such a wind has never been known there.

"If the fire keeps going north," said Mr. Tallady, "it will eventually run itself out two miles from here, where it will encounter a chain of lakes. If, however, the wind begins to blow directly from the north, nothing can save Epsilon."

Deputy Fire Warden Pearson, of Boyce Falls, arrived Thursday afternoon to assume charge of the fire fighting. When he learned what had been done by the residents of the village and vicinity, he was warm in his praise of them.

Early Thursday evening, the flames jumped the firing line, and then Epsilon was at the mercy of the wind, which appears to be very changeable. By eight o'clock Thursday night, the "swamp road," running north of Epsilon, was blocked by the fire, and a number of farmers were obliged to go a round-about way to reach their homes. The blaze lit up the sky in a beautiful yet awesome manner, and could be seen for miles around. If it were not for the high hills intervening, the red glow could easily be distinguished from Petoskey.

Reports Friday morning were to the effect that the efforts to check the flames had continued all night, considerable backfiring having been done. The flames appear to have increased in volume, but Mr. Pearson is hopeful of soon checking them. If the wind continues to blow from the south, the fire will soon reach the lakes, though in so doing they probably will destroy several homes in the path. A good rain would help a lot. The other fire at Conway is now under control.

No injury or loss of life has yet been reported.

# EPSILON IS SAFE AT LAST

## WIND GOES DOWN AND QUELLS FLAMES

Fire Lines Enclose Smouldering  
Embers and Danger Now Is  
Very Slight.

After three days of fire fighting the residents of Epsilon are resting on their oars, with little danger to the village or any of the farms nearby.

Things looked serious Friday, but in the evening the wind subsided, and the fire appeared to have burnt itself out. It is now surrounded by fire lines, and is rapidly becoming nothing but smouldering embers.

The danger to Epsilon was real, and a strong south wind would have sealed the fate of the village. Some good fighting was done by the farmers, and this helped a great deal in individual cases, but it was the subsiding of the wind that did the work.

Deputy Fire Warden Pearson went home to Boyne Falls Friday night, and all that is necessary now is to watch and see that no sparks are carried into dry timber.

Epsilon is safe.

## Epsilon Fire Worst This Year in North Michigan

"The fire which threatened Epsilon last week was the worst forest fire in northern Michigan this year," was the statement made Wednesday morning by Chief Deputy Fire Warden D. R. Jones, who returned to Lausling after investigating conditions here and spending a few days with his family in Petoskey.

Mr. Jones went on to say that conditions were much improved this year, and danger lessened by a more systematic effort by the fire wardens,

with great assistance from the Harwood Lumbermen's association.

"The danger at Epsilon is now over unless something unforeseen occurs," declared Mr. Jones. "At present the worst fire is in the Alpena district, but it is practically under control. Lack of rain has made conditions bad, and it is easy for a forest fire to start, while fierce winds rapidly augment the danger. However, it is believed, careful watching will prevent anything serious occurring."

# FIGHT ALL NIGHT TO SAVE EPSILON

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