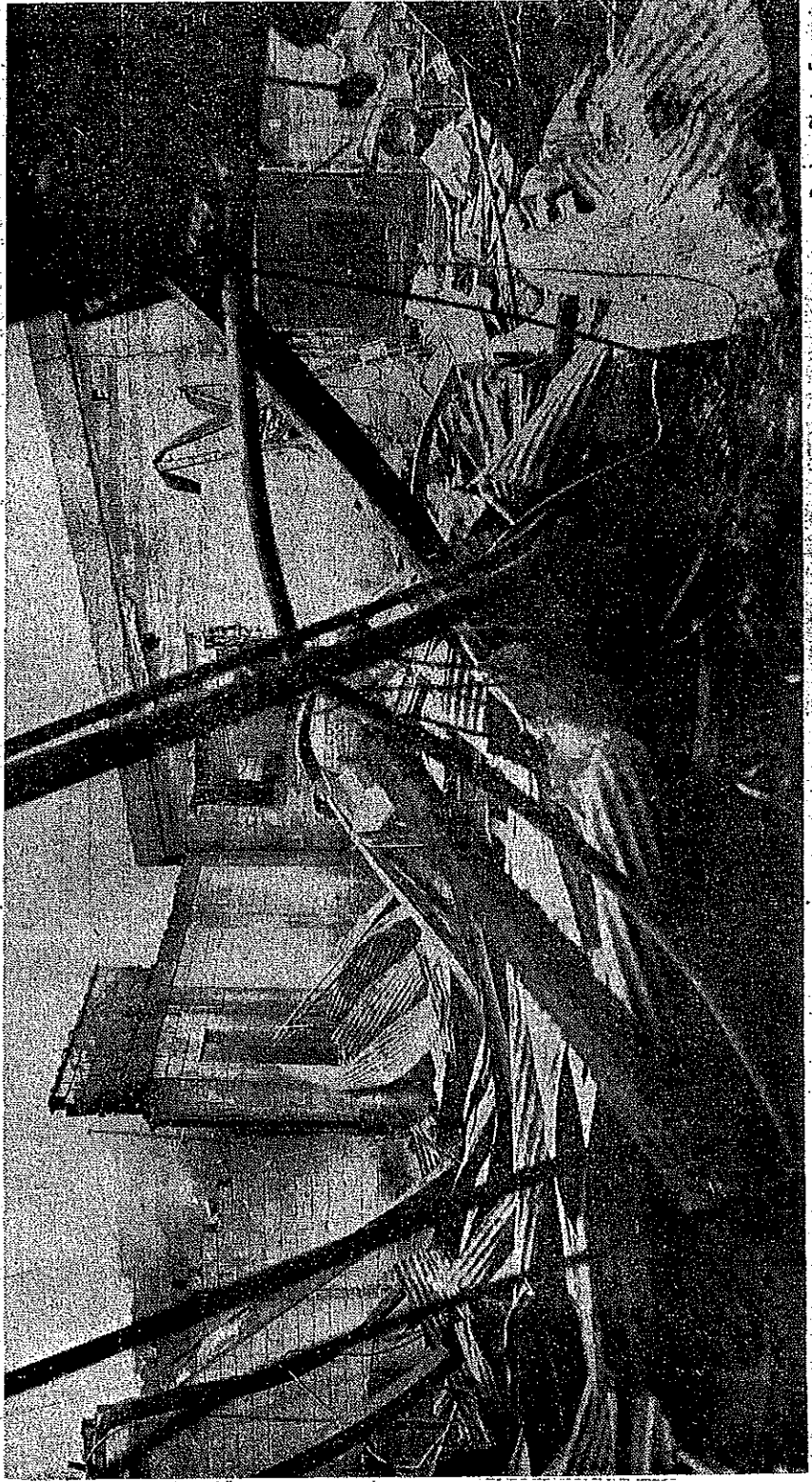


***BARNUM BROTHERS FIBER COMPANY  
AND  
PIONEER BAIT & TACKLE COMPANY***

***103 Sheridan Street  
Petoskey, Emmet County, Michigan***

Northern Michigan Review  
November 20, 1952

# FIRE WRECKS BARNUM BROS.

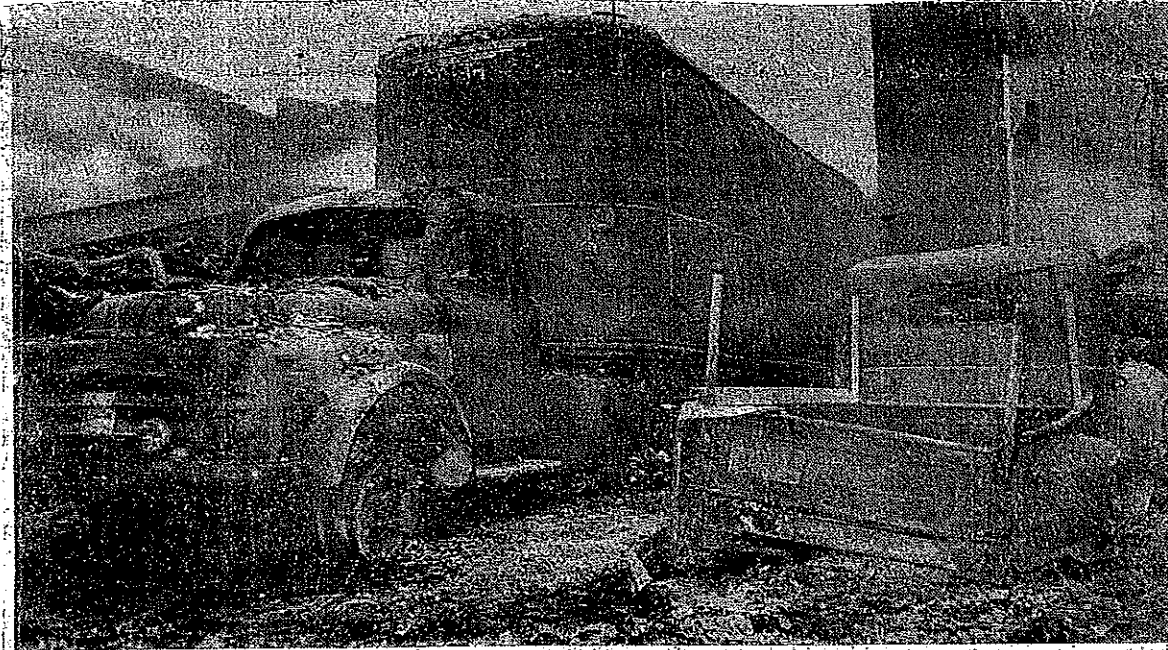


DAYLIGHT FOUND this disastrous scene Saturday morning. The roof had collapsed and heat had twisted steel in the BARNUM Brothers Fiber Co. and Pioneer Bait & Tackle grotesque shapes and buckled the west wall.

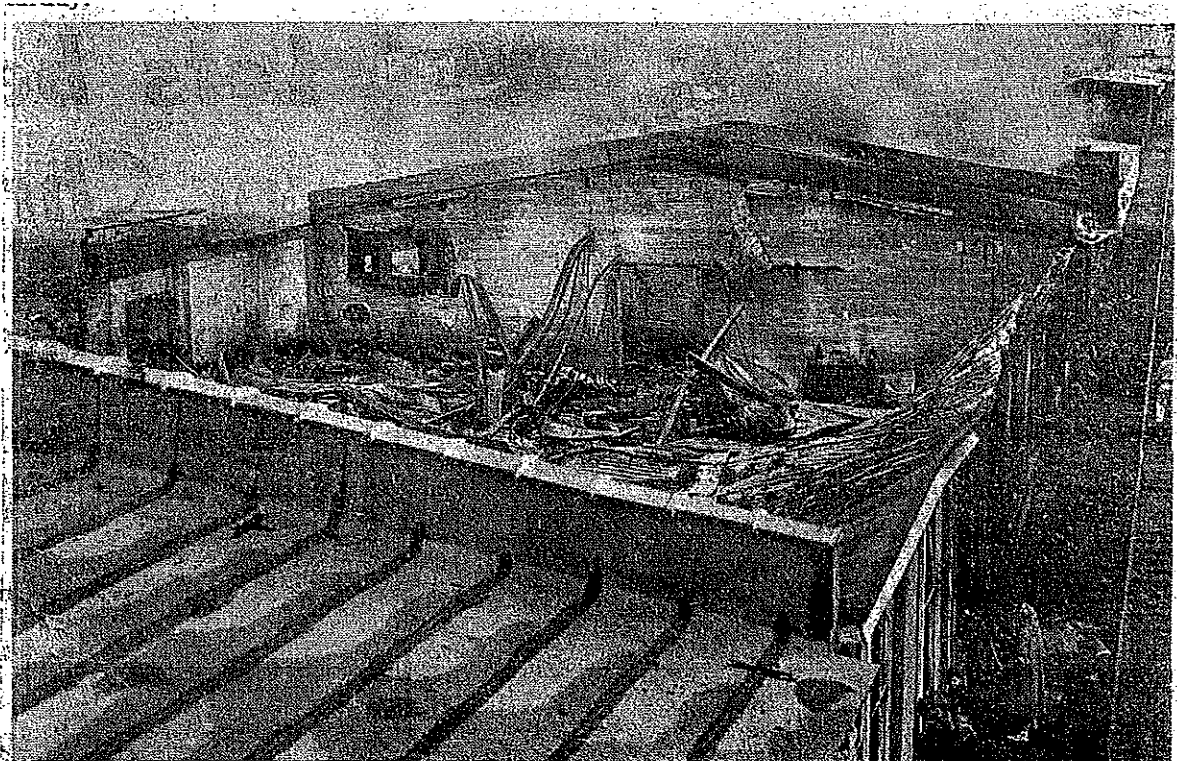
— Review Photo Engraving

**FIRE 1952**  
**BARNUM BROTHERS FIBER COMPANY**  
**AND**  
**PIONEER BAIT & TACKLE COMPANY**

**Northern Michigan Review**  
**November 20, 1952**



— Review Photo-Engraving  
**NEW SEMI-TRAILER** and pick up truck destroyed in the Barnum Brothers Fire here Saturday.



— Review Photo-Engraving  
**OVERALL VIEW OF** the disaster from above.

Barnum Brothers Fiber Co.  
 And  
 Pioneer Bait & Tackle Co.  
 Fire

Northern Michigan  
 Review  
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 1952

# Rush to Get Going Again

Fire swept the Barnum Brothers Fiber Co. and Pioneer Bait and Tackle Co. Saturday causing damage which may reach several hundred thousand dollars.

Barnum Brothers is working on a war contract.

The two companies were housed in the same building which was 660 feet long. Over 230 feet in the center was gutted with damage at either end.

Cause was unknown. Night Watchman Wayne Shafer checked in at 8:30 p.m. made his rounds and saw nothing out of the way until 2 a.m. when a pedestrian going by turned in the alarm.

Future of Pioneer Tackle Co. was in doubt. President Maynard Barnum said Wednesday. He believed the company would be continued, but might produce some product other than reels and rods. Work was being rushed to clean the debris and resume full production at the Barnum Brothers end.

Fire Chief John Conklin who received a broken bone in his foot fighting the fire when a hose dropped and a heavy cupling struck the top of his shoe.

Firemen believed the blaze started in the machine shop, spread to the roof and then caught the asphalt board in the stock room.

Maynard Barnum, president of both companies, said he knew of no paint, oil or other inflammable materials which could have started the fire.

He said he believed \$100,000 worth of machinery was lost. This included dye cutting tools,

punch presses, drill presses, lathes, motors and a complete tool room.

The building was appraised at \$280,000 five years ago, he said, and prices have gone up since. He plans to rebuild as soon as possible.

PIONEER WAS wiped out. With it went 5,000 completed casting reels and parts for 50,000 more. Barnum said that the company was bidding on "a much larger contract" so must get back in production as soon as possible.

A NEW SEMI and trailer, loaded with steel and asphalt fibre board arrived Friday night and was completely destroyed. A pick-up truck was also lost, and an unestimated amount of stock which filled the stock room.

The company's diesel plant was partially destroyed. Power stopped automatically at 2:25 a.m.

Automatic sprinklers aided firemen from Petoskey and the Resort-Bear Creek departments. The portion of the building which included the office and Barnum's assembly line was saved. Firemen fought the fire six and a half hours to get it under control, then left one truck to keep the fire in check.

Pioneer records were completely covered by debris. It is not known how many were lost.

BARNUM BROTHERS came to Petoskey about five years ago. The firm with Pioneer averaged 80 employees with an annual payroll in the neighborhood of \$140,000. Pioneer was only partially covered by insurance.

Pioneer was moved from Harbor Springs to Petoskey this year. The company made steel and glass fishing poles, fishing kits for youngsters and casting reels.

Barnum said firemen prevented a total loss, but were hampered by low water pressure. A nearby coal yard and a warehouse could have gone, too, he said, because heat could be felt several blocks away.

# Maynard Barnum Rites Tuesday

Maynard Barnum, 74, president of Barnum Brothers Fibre Co. on Sheridan-ave. died unexpectedly at his home in Harbor Springs yesterday afternoon. He was a former president of the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Services will be at the McKinley Funeral Home in Grant at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday with burial following in Ashland Cemetery.

Mr. Barnum came here in 1946 and opened his plant in the former Milkweed Floss Plant and started making paper twine in the fall of that year. Later the firm went into making heater-defroster and other fibre units for autos. In November of 1953 fire destroyed a large part of the building and he rebuilt. The company also made thousands of gromets used by the Army on cannon shells in the Korean Conflict.

Early in 1956, during a slump in the auto industry, the firm considered moving to Detroit because of a lack of contracts but in 1957 its Detroit engineering department developed a plastic to coat raw pulp and went into production of special fibre defrosters, arm rests and crash panels (with foam rubber).

The payroll at the plant reached a peak of 172 with contracts for Ford, Mercury and the now defunct Edsel autos. Barnum invested \$100,000 to tool up for 1958 production. But that summer the plant was forced to close and it remained idle until early in 1960 when it developed compression plastic mouldings for electric fuse blocks, electric meter bases and special

planters for flowers. Mr. Barnum continued to develop other products and went into fiberglass materials.

In 1965 the firm's Holiday Line fiberglass chair seat was winner of the Emmet County and Regional "Product of the Year" award in the Michigan Week celebration. The plant was producing 150,000 of them each year along with fiberglass auto accessories such as shrouds for auto heaters, radiators, serving-trays, planters and miscellaneous items.

Mr. Barnum was born May 12, 1893, in Bailey.

He was married to Theresa Richter, July 4, 1933 at Ottawa Hills, Ohio and they made their home in Detroit until coming here 21 years ago.

Mr. Barnum was president of the Barnum Brothers Fiber Co.

He was a member of the Trent Oddfellows, Also the Masonic Blue Lodge, Harbor Springs; Buelah Chapter No. 69 of the O.E.S.; Queen Esther Shrine No. 15, of the White Shrine of Jerusalem; Ivanhoe Commandery No. 36 of the Knights Templar; Emmet Chapter No. 104, R.A.M.; Petoskey Lodge No. 628, BPOE; Saladin Temple, Grand Rapids; Northern Michigan Shrine Club; former director and president of the Petoskey Chamber of Commerce and has been an active member of the Petoskey Kiwanis Club.

Besides his wife, he is survived by five brothers, Stanley, of Yakima, Washington, Leslie, of Detroit, William Lyle, of Vista, Calif., Lowell, of Casanovia and Royal of Bailey and one sister, Mrs. Kittle Johnson, of Casanovia.

The body is at the Stone Funeral Home where friends may call Sunday afternoon and evening.



Maynard Barnum