Fires rip Hampstead firm, Hampton landmark

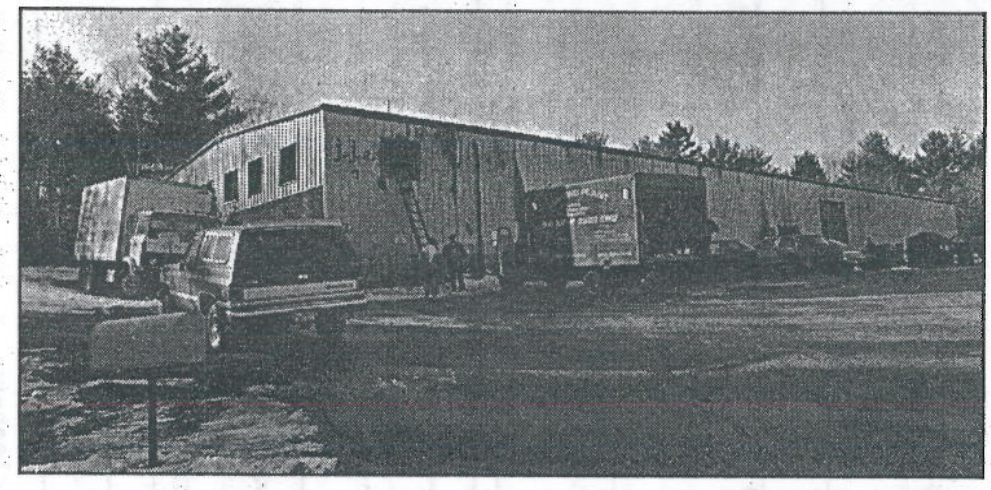
HAMPSTEAD N.H. — Investigators from the state Fire Marshal's office are probing the source of a fire which caused extensive damage to a circuit board company early yesterday morning.

And over on the coast, the Oddfellows building, a town landmark in downtown Hampton was destroyed by fire about the same time.

Both buildings were unoccupied when the fires broke out.

Firefighters from eight communities battled the two-alarm fire at Johnson and Johnson on Route 111 in Hampstead.

Hampstead firefighters arrived on the scene at 2:01 a.m. and the second alarm was struck moments later, bringing men and equipment from Atkinson, Plaistow, Derry, East Derry, Danville, Sandown, Kingston and Salem.



Eagle-Tribune photo by Jim Patten

Plant fire: Johnson and Johnson Company, Route 111, Hampstead, N.H., was heavily damaged by fire early yesterday morning.

Air trucks from Auburn and Stratham responded to refill the breathing equipment used by firefighters at the scene.

The New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Team and the Derry Hazardous Materials Team were sent to the scene.

Inspector Leland Kimball of the New Hampshire Emergency Management Agency and Steven Hanley of the New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Team supervised the cleanup of the chemical trichloroethane, which was involved in the fire.

The chemical is used as a cleaning agent for computer boards.

Deputy Fire Chief Paul Wentworth

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said about 50 percent of the 25,000 square-foot corrugated metal building was destroyed.

The fire was brought under control about 3:45 a.m.

Three firefighters were brought to Hale Hospital in Havcerhill. Two were treated for smoke inhalation and a third for a knee injury. All were released after treatment.

In Hampton, the Oddfellows Hall was a 100-year-old wood frame building, and one of the tallest buildings in the town. It housed a clock tower.

Firefighters from 12 communities fought the fire for almost four hours before getting it under control shortly after 5 a.m.

Two blocks of Route 1 in the downtown area were closed all morning and into the afternoon while crews using a crane removed debris.

Authorities are investigating the cause of the fire.