

Edgerton firemen fought to save the Albion General Store but the flames had gone too far.Reporter Photo

The Albion General Store, a landmark of the Edgerton area, burned to the ground Wednesday night despite heroic efforts by the Edgerton fire department.

The 100 year-old store had faithfully served the Albion community in a number of ways throughout the years.

The general store's present Walton Olson of rural Madison. The Olson's had farmed in the Albion area for 25 years before buying the store on Feb. 1, 1974.

Beth Olson, daughter of the Olson's, said the fire marshall was not certain what had started used for holding mail. the fire but thought it had started in the basement. She said the only thing saved was the store sign and a cash register. She added that the real loss will be the cultural loss of the landmark.

Mrs. Olson said that although the building had insurance, the stock wasn't completely covered. That hasn't stopped them from thinking about a new store though. "We're talking to build-

ers and just trying to decide what it entails and if we can manage it," Mrs. Olson said.

The general store has a history made colorful by a variety of owners and services. Clinton Green, Albion, said the first store owner he remembers is Tom Collins. "He had it from the time I can remember and I was born in 1903," he said. Tom Collins married Clinton Green's aunt.

Green said that "very few people know that the old general store used to be the Albion Post Office, too." He later got the pigeon holes that the Post Office

The next owner that Green recalls was Moses Croseley. He said Moses Croseley had it for "years and years" before he sold it to Hugh Stewart.

"Hugh Stewart changed the name and called it 'Stewart's Store'," Green said, "he later sold it and moved to Milton."

Hugh Stewart sold the Albion General Store to a man named Spalding. Clinton Green said

competition against Sears and Roebuck. He had one of their catalogues in the store and sold things cheaper than they did. He didn't last

After Spalding came Howard Emerson and Sid Green. They had the general store for a time and sold it to Henry Kipp and Bob Gaines.

Green remembers that when Henry Kipp owned it, the store had the first radio in the area. "The store was always the place

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Albion Store...

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where people used to gather for news," Green said.

Ollie Clark bought the place from Kipp and Gaines in the early 1930's. Green mentioned that "Clark put in the furnace that was still in the store." Clark had a furnace franchise which Green later ran for 30 years.

Clark had worked in the store for a time before he bought it.

The next owner was Glen Heth who bought it in the late 1940's and had it for around 25 years. Heth didn't manage the store, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Boyem did.

Donald Harrington had the store for one and a half years and was owner and preceded the Olson's. Harrington closed the store down before he sold it to the Olson's and that was the first time it was closed in anyone's memory. Harrington had also remodeled and changed the store from the original stock that it carried since it opened.

The Olson's became the next owners. The tragedy that befell them last Wednesday was felt by everyone in the surrounding area. raditions like the Albion General Store don't go without taking something from those that knew



Firemen were on the roof at the general store that was reported shortly after the store closed for the day.

By Leanne Jacobson

Where were you when the fire whistles blew? Were you in Albion when the general store burned to the ground? Small town social outlet burned peacefully to the ground.

Wednesday night, unforgetable, smokey and unwarmed. People from miles around attended the great loss. Many showing much pity, enjoying the nighttime outing.

I've talked to some people that have lived in Albion for years, young and old. Everybody believes it was a great loss. Many people bought groceries there;

....Photo by Steve Burdick

whether the week's list or just a few odds and ends forgotten downtown. It was a handy little place, old and cute.

Most everybody hopes the store will be rebuilt. It may not be the same store but it's only what we make it. A few pieces of glass and some plaster chips were all that was saved.

My mother, Jerry Jacobson, worked at the store. She said it was like a second home; and it's all so sad.

We are all going to miss the general store, warm and inviting, and hope Mr. and Mrs. Olson can get it back on the road to