

Dear Ones in Orrington,

It is hard to believe that today is Sunday, except that the religious programs are on the radio. We are not having any church service today because the men folks still are working on patrol work, and the rest of us have no transportation.

Ruth, guess who helped Gordon save your house--it was Charlie Buck. From what I hear, they certainly had a tussle to keep the fire up a ways on the mountain. Gordon took all your canned goods out in the swamp, and the gas tanks which he simply tore off. He disconnected the stove (the stove pipe is in pieces under the tree in the front yard and the tree felled). The refrigerator is disconnected in readiness to move it out. He had the beds down and mattresses and bedding on the lawn for a time. So---it really is just as well that you did not return. He plans to get the wood part of the stove fixed up today.

India and I brought your dirty dishes down in Nana's cart and have them clean. So far, I haven't been up to do any work, but expect to within a day or so now.

Last night was the first since Monday that I have really slept. Arthur was home Thursday night, but we could not sleep for the density of the smoke which settled in the valley. One truck took two hours to get from Maplewood to West Newfield that night. I wore a moistened mask part of the night and kept all windows and doors closed.

The day we left the main part of the fire destroyed the town house and school, but left other buildings on that side due to bulldozing from 203 to below parsonage. They did not have time to go further. The Sanborn place went and flames jumped the road just below Elmer Reeds, swept on to the pond across the meadows. Somehow it ate its way back up in the woods between Winns' farm and Frank's new place, but both were saved and it did not come down further our way on this side of the pond. Everything --and I mean just that---is gone from where the flames crossed the road near West Newfield to the grass near Boothby's house in Maplewood, with one exception Walter Symmes new little house. Someone stuck by and saved that. After the fire crossed the Maplewood road from below Elmer Reeds to the little first road leading from Maplewood to Newfield (at least it is burned that far,) it swept across the woods, around and across our lake (it jumped the narrows to "Point"), and then on to Newfield and around as far as Dad Moulton's where another stand held it back near the house. Both boardyards are now perfectly clean, but the dry sheds, and all buildings are intact. As it swept down over Towles' Mountain in Newfield, Kurt Gerry and his family prepared to protect their place instead of moving out. Theirs is the only place standing between Dad Moulton's and Boozer's store. Arthur thinks that if others had fought, more houses might have been saved down there, but they were too panicky.

Well all is gone or burned over from Dad's to North Shapleigh which was saved intact. On the other side of the road they saved the John Wood place, Gladys Bonds and Nelson Peter's by grim effort and backfires. The fire went on thru Ross Corner where Irving and his folks saved their place and Swinerton's. Some places in Shapleigh Corner want The fire finally was controlled up in back of the Springvale-Sanford railroad station, and in Alfred where a few houses were lost.

I have put in all of the end, but left out some of the beginning. Late in the afternoon the fire came down behind Breeds, etc. along the South side of 203 to engulf the houses on that side. It took Phil Tarbox's, Uncle Charles old camp, Kay and Adaline Tarbox's place, Gibsons', the old Shepard place and Dunnell's new garage in which a snow plow (nearly fixed), Billy Mee's model A, and two other cars were, the Morrison house.

Waldo Manuel's new place and the Weymouth places, plus those already protected at Mees' Corner were saved. A big stand had to be made at Scott Libby's behind the house, and at Chutes, Wentworths, and Dr. Campbells. It did not get back across the road toward Hidden Lake or Balch Pond.

They backfired in back of Meserves, Hammonds', the White House, Joyce's, etc., and Kitty Fisher's and Bosworth's was lost, as were both May places, Ma Arthur's, and some others.

You can see that little of the township of Newfield has not been burned over. A small area including the camping area by Balch Lake and the area from Ray Davis' to North Shapleigh. The other area is down at the Newfield end and includes the Newfield area beyond the road from Newfield to Maplewood, the area from the black road on which Howard Moore lives to Limerick and the corner where Boozer's store is located. All buildings on the Limerick road are O.K. The Towle place (where the Lawton's lived is gone and Elwood's, Gerry's, and Polcaros O.K., I believe. They did not save Harly Sprague's house nor anything beyond that. They say that only one shack remains in "Sprague City".

I have tried to give you as complete a picture as possible of the extent of our fire

As you know, Arthur set up a headquarters at the Town House on Thursday morning. He had maps, two-way radio communications with Mr. Baker's plane (Maplewood) and a regular radio and telephone communications. They moved out so fast, nothing was saved. He set up again in a vacant room in back of Boozer's store with merely lists and an extension phone (emergency). It was only because he was in charge and on an emergency phone that he could call us in Westbrook the other day.

Both Gordon and Arthur have been home the last two nights so are in fairly good condition. I finally got them shaved this morning, so they look fairly respectable. Arthur met with an accident Wednesday night when a truck on which he was riding the running board suddenly stopped and he was thrown onto the tarvia. He has a bad bruise on the right temple with black eye and a skun knee.

Today 50 Bates men arrived for patrol duty and 30 others, so the area is well-covered. By tonight Arthur and Gordon feel that patrol work can be done by 2 or 3 trucks carrying a small tank of water in case of small outbreaks and one man at headquarters.

Gordon says the Ford Ferguson has certainly paid for itself- if not to them, to the community, for by its plowed furrows, many places have been saved with few men.

We have some refugees here. A pigeon arrived Tuesday afternoon and is still here. Today a dam brought a pup to us. We fed both, and the dam has left. We are wondering if she had other pups to bring! The pup is cute--about 2½ to 3 months old, black with white diamond on chest and white toes. The mother dog is a little on the brindle side for color and looks like a small police dog.

I guess I'll take time out to get us some lunch. It is now 1 P.M. We are going to have dinner tonight with the boys.

It is now 3:30; we have had lunch. I have made an apple pie and applesauce for dinner tonight; and I have given Gordon a good lunch just now. He has just been chasing and talking with a questionable character (???firebug.) He thinks he may be out tonight working on the one remaining danger point--a swamp over off the back road to Maplewood where it continues to smoulder in spite of much water applied.

Mr. Carpenter has been around with the milk. He looks very tired, too, having worked days on milk and nights on fire. He said he was the last to go from West Newfield to Newfield, barely getting through the flats and arriving at Ralph Dunnell's just in time to help him decrate and set up a new pump which they then failed to be able to start. He left when Ralph did, so was one of the last down the hill. Every day he has left a number of cases of milk at headquarters for those coming and going.

Now for a bit regarding canteen service and food distribution. I guess the set-up at Mother's did not last long. A large unit set up in Limerick and has cared for fire-fighters, evacuees, etc. They send cars around with food and coffee as we did. They have provided shelter and food for evacuees until arrangements could be made for their care elsewhere.

Today a food and clothing center has been established in Newfield for those who need them.

Arthur says the Limerick unit has done a fine job.

It simply makes your heart sick, though to come upon ruins as we did on our way back. Lester and Mabel Dunnells were just back looking at the ruins of their place--like something read of or seen in movies--but never as stark or real as reality. The ride around the devastated area with Aunt Calla and Uncle Burton yesterday afternoon gave me that same feeling of emptiness, and almost a feeling of guilt for having so many of life's blessings myself.

We all send much love to each one.

Marion.

Tuesday Morning.

This is her story. Helen you already know that Dad was called there by Marion to help set up the Red Cross Relief but I will add this so that Lucy will also know. Marion telephoned Yesterday morning early and he left on the 8:15 A.M. train for Portland where Uncle Burton was to meet him and take him to West Newfield.