

Western British American  
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## **FOUR DEAD IN SCOTS HOME FIRE**

Riverside Structure is Guttled  
in Tragic Blaze Sunday Morning

## **NEW HOME FUND SOARS**

Friends Donate Rapidly From  
Far and Near for Rebuilding

The beautiful Scottish Old People's Home at Riverside, since its completion in 1910 an object of special pride to local Scots, is today a mass of ruins as a result of a fire early Sunday morning. Four of the 38 inmates met death in the blaze which was discovered by Superintendent Cora J. Cummings at ten minutes past two o'clock and which reduced the handsome 2-story red brick structure to a smoldering heap with appalling rapidity.

The dead are:

Mrs. Jeanette Greenock, aged 75.

George McPherson, aged 92.

William Robertson, aged 80.

Thomas Louttit, aged 76.

Geo. McPherson Old Time Druggist.

Geo. McPherson, was a pioneer druggist of Chicago, who, forty years ago, was a leader in his line of business. He was a genial, optimistic soul and had many friends. Mrs. Greenock was the wife of Joseph Greenock, also an inmate. Mr. Robertson and Mr. Louttit were both kindly disabled veterans, prime favorites of the Home family circle.

### Dogs Give the Alarm.

The cause of the tragedy is attributed to crossed electric wires in the basement near where the servants' sleeping quarters were located. Shortly after two o'clock Supt. Cummings was awakened by the barking and scratching at her bedside of the two dogs of the Home - "Topsy" a collie, and "McDougal," a Scotch terrier. There is not the slightest doubt that the intelligence of these animals saved many if not all of the sleepers from a horrible death. "Topsy" went through the ordeal unscathed, but little "McDougal" lost his life in the flames.

### Old Folks Happy Night Before.

"On Saturday evening," said Mrs. Cummings, "We were entertained by the Fuller Sisters, the charming and gifted English artists who sing Scots and English folk songs. They came out to divert the old people, and their program was the very finest we had ever listened to. The old folks were enthusiastic in their applause and praise, and, as the sisters kindly responded to their pressing appeals for encores, we were kept up later than usual. Mrs. Peterson and I retired last of all - about 11:30. It was nearly three hours after this that McDougal and Topsy came to my bedside and told me, as distinctly as they could, that the house was on fire."

Mrs. Cummings aroused her sister, Mrs. Peterson, assistant superintendent, and they gave the alarm to the inmates and summoned the local fire department. The old folks, preserving amazing calmness, left their beds when awakened. In their night clothes some of them awaited the ladders set up by the firemen under Chief J. C. Smith of the Riverside department, which was speedily joined by the departments from Cicero and Berwyn.

### Get Water From a Distance.

Water to quench the flames roaring sky-high on all sides of the building, was not to be secured near at hand. It had to be brought a considerable distance from the McCormick Addition. But the firemen worked like beavers under immense disadvantages. Fortunately the weather was not very cold. Temporary shelter was found for the old people in the Home Hospital nearby, which luckily escaped destruction. There were no loud outcries nor shrieks

of terror as the work of rescue went on. The discipline of the Home was wonderfully maintained and the aged men and women kept their heads like veterans in battle.

While the firemen were removing the inmates and fighting the flames, Supt. Cummings, who had phoned in various directions for help, found herself quickly surrounded by friends.

The first to rush to the scene in her auto was Miss Marian Evans, who at once proceeded to organize a relief corps of willing workers. Her father, C. E. Evans, offered his home to Mrs. Cummings as a shelter for the unfortunates, as did others who arrived in quick succession, including Mrs. Avery Coonley, Mrs. F. Babson, Mrs. Charles D. Pierce, Mrs. McFarland, Mrs. James Miles, Mrs. Carl B. Duvall, Mrs. Jordan, Charles Haas, Mrs. Leonard, Mrs. Merritt, Mrs. E. MacDougall, Mrs. Philkins, Mrs. F. Reed, Mr. Borden, Mr. Silverthorn, J. Hobbs, and Mrs. Summerville.

Martin Radky, a neighbor, prepared steaming hot coffee for the sufferers and proved himself a man of boundless generosity as well as of presence of mind. He is now taking care of the Home's pigs and chickens.

#### Building a Total Loss.

The building valued at \$40,000 and contents valued at \$9,000 were total losses and the inmates saved nothing of their effects. They were very glad to save their lives. The insurance carried on the building is \$25,000 and on the contents \$4,600.

The old folks, among their minor regrets, are mourning the loss of false teeth and spectacles. There is a splendid opportunity here for deserving benevolence on the part of dentists and opticians who desire to lend their aid in the attempt to recoup the aged inmates' losses.

Mrs. Cummings and Mrs. Peterson lost all their clothes and valuables. On Monday afternoon when they told of their experience to a representative of the Western British American they were dressed in garments kindly loaned by some of the ladies mentioned above. Mrs. Cummings' purse, which went up in smoke, contained \$50.00 in currency.

### Leading Scots on the Scene.

The first Chicagoans to reach the scene in response to Mrs. Cummings' message, were John Williamson, former president of the Illinois St. Andrew Society, which erected the Home, and Thomas Innes, chairman of the Board of Almoners. Later came Dr. William F. Dickson, the 1st vice-president. A meeting was held at once in Williamson's office, and further meetings will be called at frequent intervals. Pending the completion of the new structure, temporary quarters have been rented. Supt. Cummings was authorized to furnish the necessary apartments without delay.

Henry Faurot of Riverside requested Mrs. Cummings to call upon him for any reasonable amount for immediate expenses. In a few hours the Riverside Town Hall was filled with clothing of all kinds and sizes collected for the old people by the Riverside Relief and Aid Society. The Board of Governors at its meeting passed a resolution of thanks to the host of friends who had been so prompt with sympathy and assistance.

### Burial of Three Friday.

Funeral services for three of the victims - Mrs. Greenock, Mr. Louttit and Mr. McPherson, were held at the Scotch Presbyterian Church, Friday afternoon, and were in charge of the Rev. James MacLagan, Chaplain of the Society. Mrs. Greenock and Mr. Louttit were laid at rest at Rosehill, and Mr. McPherson at Forest Home. Diligent search failed to recover the body of William Robertson from the ruins. The official inquiry into the tragedy has been indefinitely postponed.

### Old Folks' Pets Victims.

"McDougal," the Scotch terrier, who succumbed after his noble life-saving feat, was a gift to the Home of Treasurer Alex. Robertson. Two other pets of the old folks - a cat and a canary - were among the victims of the fire.

## Home Was Built in 1910.

In March, 1910, John Williamson, President of the Illinois St. Andrew Society, turned the first sod for the foundation of the Home, and the corner stone was laid with impressive ceremony, May 21, in the presence of a distinguished gathering, by Mr. Williamson's little grandson, Henry Williamson Brisley. The Home was completed and occupied in the fall of the same year.

New Home Fund \$10,666.00.

## Friends Hasten to Head the List of Subscribers

Long before the ruins of the Old People's Home were cold, subscriptions to the re-building fund began to reach officers of the Illinois St. Andrew Society. With characteristic munificence, Walter Scott, of New York city, wired to John Williamson his deep sympathy and a donation of \$3,000. A notable giver was E. G. Elcock, who, though not a Scotsman, was stirred with sympathy for the old folks. From a sick bed he wrote a feeling note to Mr. Williamson enclosing his check for \$1,000. Former presidents John Williamson, Dr. John A. McGill, and James B. Forgan sent \$1,000 each. President Joseph Cormack gave \$500, as did Treasurer, Alex. Robertson and Charles M. MacFarlane. From New York city came a telegram of condolence and draft for \$500 from William B. Walker, the erstwhile Home benefactor.

Herman Zitzewitz, 4722 Beacon st., an old time friend of the Home, who gave generously to the first Building Fund, sent \$500. His check was made out in St. Joseph's Hospital where he has been undergoing a slight operation.

Following are the new Home donations to date, and further donations will be gladly received and acknowledged by Treasurer Alex. Robertson, vice-president Continental and Commercial National Bank, Chicago:

<b>Walter Scott.....</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>
<b>E. G. Elcock.....</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>John Williamson.....</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Dr. John A. McGill.....</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>James B. Forgan.....</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Joseph Cormack.....</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Herman Zitzewitz.....</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>William B. Walker.....</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Alex. Robertson.....</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>C. M. Macfarlane.....</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Thomas Innes.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>George Sutherland.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Clan McDuff.....</b>	<b>200</b>