



Collinwood School Fire

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

On March 4, 1908, Lake View Elementary in Collinwood, Ohio, caught on fire and killed 172 students, 2 teachers, and a rescuer. The cause of the fire was determined to be a steam pipe that had overheated a wooden support beam. The entire building, constructed mostly of wood, quickly went up in flames. Students panicked, doors jammed, and teachers, desperate to save lives, helped students try to escape from 2nd and 3rd story windows. The fire led to wide-sweeping changes to school building codes and fire safety. Fire drills, fire escapes, concrete building material, and new door latches are just a few of the changes that were quickly instituted in schools across the country. The city of Collinwood never recovered from this disaster and was annexed by Cleveland a few years later.

Important Dates

- March 4, 1908: Lake View Elementary catches on fire.
- April 28, 1908: House Bill 1166 passes, making fire drills in schools mandatory.
- 1910: Collinwood Memorial School is constructed adjacent to the original school.
- 1910: Memorial Garden built on the site of the original Lakeview Elementary.
- 1910: The village of Collinwood is annexed by the city of Cleveland.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases: Collinwood, fire, school, children, tragedy, funeral, fire drill.
- Use specific date ranges when looking for articles about this event in order to narrow your results.
- Search newspapers in all states, not just Ohio. The school fire made national news. If searching all states, be sure to use "Ohio" as a search term.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[170 Cleveland School Children Perish in Flames](#)" *Marion Daily Mirror* (Marion, OH), March 4, 1908, Image 1, col. 5-7.
- "[Sorrowing Citizens of Collinwood Follow Fire Victims to Cemetery](#)" *Washington Times* (Washington, DC), March 6, 1908, Image 1, col. 2.
- "[Over 167 Children Burned to Death; Awful Holocaust](#)" *News-Herald* (Hillsboro, OH), March 12, 1908, Image 2, col. 4-5.
- "[The Story of the Girl Who Saved Her Life at the Collinwood Fire by Playing Truant from School](#)" *Washington Herald* (Washington, DC), April 12, 1908, Image 15, col. 1-5.
- "[Flowers Bloom Where School Tots Died](#)" *Day Book* (Chicago, IL), July 14, 1913, Image 13.