

Fire destroys Brookhaven's historic 'Red Barn'

January 19, 2010 by SOPHIA CHANG. AND PATRICK WHITTLE. / sophia.chang@newsday.com., patrick.whittle@newsday.com



The fire that destroyed a much-loved century-old barn in Brookhaven hamlet started in a faulty chimney that was installed in the 1970s, according to fire officials.

The barn at 311 Beaver Dam Rd., known as the "Red Barn" by its owners and community groups that used it, was reported to be on fire at about 9:10 Monday night, according to Suffolk County fire officials. Town fire officials investigated and found the fire was "not suspicious," a

Brookhaven spokeswoman said.

The barn was built around 1900 by the Burnett family, local farmers who grew corn, wheat, rye and hay, according to Marty Vanlith, historian for the Brookhaven Village Association.

Known for its bold red color, the barn was distinctive, Vanlith said.

"The redness you could see from the road in a really idyllic setting. You looked past the barn and you'd see farmland and woodland, a very rare sight on [Long Island today](#)," Vanlith said.

The current owners, the Clement family, said the community has used the barn for about 30 years for various activities, including a harvest festival, a pingpong tournament and barbecues. The building also served as a base for an agriculture collective, the Clement family said.

"It was really an iconic thing for the whole community," said Jennifer Clement, 66, of Brookhaven. "It's a real loss."

Clement said the building has been in her family since the 1930s. The building hosted a party for a community-supported agriculture group as recently as Monday, she said.

About 20 pieces of equipment from the Brookhaven, [Bellport](#), Hagerman and [Mastic](#) fire departments responded to the blaze, as well as a South Country ambulance.

One firefighter reported shoulder pain, another reported feeling dizzy, and both were taken to a hospital, fire officials said. Their conditions were not available.

The building began smoldering again at about 1 p.m. Tuesday, fire officials said. The barn was reduced to a pile of wet tiles and insulation by 1:30 p.m.

"It was a real community center," Clement said, stroking a toy monkey she salvaged from the building. "Everyone used it."

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