

## Defective Space Heater Blamed

# Worst Fire in Troy History

Troy — (UPD) — Napoleon and Lillian Sousie came from big French-Canadian families. They had 18 children themselves.

Until fire, caused by a defective space heater, ravaged their three-story frame home in a warehouse and residential section of the city, a block from the Hudson River. Eight Sousie children and a granddaughter were killed.

City officials said it was the worst fire in this Upstate New York city's history. Mayor Lawrence Meyer was horrified. Police Surgeon Dr. James V. Barrett and County Coroner Anthony E. Matera said they had never seen anything like it.

It was one of the worst fires in the state in recent years. Eleven persons, 10 of them children, were killed two years ago in a Niagara Falls fire. Nineteen months ago, a propane gas tanker explosion in the nearby hamlet of Berlin, killed 10.

"Napoleon Sousie worked hard to take care of his family," relatives and friends said.

The Sousies had planned a pleasant family weekend. One of their children had gone to stay with a married sister, Mrs. Peter Stone. Judy Stone, 2, had come to stay with her grandparents.

Friday night, the Sousies and six children went to sleep in downstairs bedrooms. Little Judy and her uncles and aunts, ranging in age from 4 to 18 years, slept on the second floor.

Shortly after midnight, Sousie, 43, and a son, Robert, 16, awoke in a smoke filled house. They rushed upstairs but were helpless to fight the flames. Robert, seriously burned, finally rushed to a neighbor's house to summon help.

"The house is on fire," he



—UPI TELEPHOTO.

**TELLS OF TRAGEDY** — Napoleon Sousie, left, father of nine children that perished in a fire in their Troy home yesterday, tries to explain how he, even though he was badly burned about the arms, face and hands, tried to save his children. Mrs. Sousie looks at her husband's burned face and holds one of her children that survived the fire, Dean, 3-months.

cried. "Call the fire department."

Robert was in fair condition in St. Mary's Hospital with burns on his face, hands, arms, back and neck.

The Sousie children—Boyd, 4; Donald, 7; Linda, 9; Edward, 10; Joseph, 11; Steven, 12; Gloria, 13; and Napoleon, 18—and Judy were found huddled on and around the beds in two upstairs rooms.

"It was real hot when we ar-

rived," said Battalion Chief Edmund Moore. "The father was at the top of the stairs. He kept telling us that the children were still inside. There was little we could do. The father said something about a stove exploding. It was apparently the space heater."

Fire Chief William J. Smith, emotionally disturbed, said his men found the space heater overturned between the two bedrooms.

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