

Plan Probe of Fire At School Building



SEARED CLASSROOM—A portion of the interior of a classroom at the Lincoln elementary school is pictured shortly after the fire which struck the building early Monday. Two empty fuel cans were found inside this room. They can be seen in the foreground. The lock on the door at which the firemen are standing had been pried loose. Bookcases can be seen at the left and part of the pupil desks at the right. Firemen pictured, left to right, include Dave Higham, Ledger McConnaughey, Orva Harshbarger and Roger Faris, Sr. (Staff Photo)

Inspectors from the state fire marshal's office were being summoned here today to investigate a fire which gutted one classroom and damaged other portions of the Lincoln elementary school here early Monday.

The fire broke out during a severe rain and electrical storm which struck the area about 4 A. M. Firemen received a call that the building was on fire at 4:58 A. M.

A nearby resident, Felix Fields, and his wife, reportedly called the department after they heard crackling noises and saw flames in the building.

The possible arson theory developed after firemen found two empty cans, ordinarily used to carry fuel, in the classroom.

FIREMEN also reported that the

padlock on the door to the room had been torn loose and thrown on the floor. The outside door, leading into a hall, was locked when they arrived, firemen said.

Desks and the floor in the area of the cans were burned. The entire interior of the room was gutted. Books and shelving were burned.

Wiring in the building was apparently intact in some places, since lights were working, thus ruling out to some extent the possibility that lightning may have struck the building.

Dick Goins, janitor at the building, told school authorities and firemen that he had been at the building Sunday morning and everything was in proper shape at that time. He said he did not see any cans there at the time.

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Paul L. Upp, superintendent of schools, said that the board carries insurance on all its schools but could supply no breakdown on coverage at the elementary school. Damage was expected to run at least \$5,000.

The fire marshal's office was notified of the case Monday and inspectors were expected to come here Tuesday.