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Gilmanton's historic Bosiak Farm burns during storm

Jan 27, 2015

GILMANTON — One of the town's historic farm houses, the Bosiak Farm at 125 Upper City Road, was destroyed yesterday in a 3-alarm fire that began at 11:06 a.m.

Fire Chief Joe Hempel said the first call resulted in his on-duty lieutenant immediately calling for a first alarm because of the weather and distance to the property.

He said when the first firefighters arrived they found the 2 1/2 story house engulfed in flames and right away called for a third alarm that brought firefighters from as far away as Meredith, Tilton, and Chichester to the property.



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Hempel said all four people in the home were able to get out of the house including two people who had to jump out of a window. All were uninjured.

"They got out with the clothes on their back," he said. "I'm glad this was a day time fire because otherwise it could have been a fatal one."

Hempel said the biggest challenges yesterday was the snowy roads that slowed arrivals and the biting cold and wind that inhibited the flow of water through the hoses.

"Our biggest issue was to keep the water moving," Hempel said, saying the Bosiak Farm is on a narrow road near a Rollins Pond, which they used as a water source.

Hempel said hoses and fittings can freeze in an instant in conditions like yesterday and the trick is not to shut off any of them.

George Roberts knew Frank Bosiak well before he died in 2012. He said Bosiak was a dairy farmer who served on the town's Budget Committee and the Historic District Commission.



Following Frank Bosiak's death, Roberts said the two boys in the family gave up dairy farming and are employed as woodworkers and carpenters.

Roberts estimated the farm house was built in the Federal Period of American architecture, or between the late 1700s to the mid 1800s and that it had double chimneys. He said his father was a friend of Bosiak who remembered when he came to Gilmanton and began dairy farmer.

"It's a sad thing to have at a time when people would call it a show piece," Roberts said.

Roberts said before the Bosiaks purchased the farm, he believes that a different family from eastern Massachusetts ran it as a Cleveland Bay horse farm.

"I heard they had 40 or 50 horses there," Roberts said. He described the Cleveland Bay as a horse with a unusually smooth gate much like a trotter. The Cleveland Bay was the preferred horse of English royalty and wealthy Americans and was used primarily for pulling carriages because of its smooth gate.

Online articles said the breed was nearly extinct in modern-day America but in the 1970s there was a resurgence in its popularity.

Roberts said he is grateful all of the people in the home were able to escape without injury.

Hempel said the Red Cross is temporarily helping the family. He said the home is insured and from information he gathered from the family he believes the fire started in a wood stove that was hooked up to one of the chimneys.

