

# Six in 'Christmas Family of '54' Die As Fire Sweeps Home

Duluth, Minn. — (AP) — The mother and five daughters of Duluth's 1954 "Christmas Family of the Year" were killed today in a fire when an oil burner exploded.

Dead were Mrs. William Clark, 33, and five of her six daughters, ranging from 6 to 14 in age. The only survivors were Clark, the sixth daughter, Gloria, 10, and Clark's mother, Mrs. Bessie Kadunce.

**Gifts Wrapped**  
Mr. and Mrs. Clark had been up until 3 a.m. wrapping dolls and other Christmas gifts for 10 children. The explosion and flash fire occurred shortly before 6 a.m.

Mrs. Clark had been working temporarily until Thursday as a dishwasher in a downtown cafe to augment the family's Christmas money. Her husband is a railroad section worker.

Major May of the Salvation Army said the Clark family had been chosen as the "most deserving" in the city two years ago, among beneficiaries of the agency's holiday program.

**Care for Survivors**  
The Salvation Army, which spent \$75 to give the family a merry Christmas in 1954, today was making plans to care for

Florida's Everglade kite is considered to be the third rarest bird in America. It eats only water snails and when the snails are destroyed by drying up of their marsh homes, the kites must move elsewhere.

the survivors with shelter and clothing.

Clark and the oldest daughter both said they didn't know how they escaped the blazing home. Gloria, dressed only in her underclothing, ran to a neighbor's home and called the fire department. She escaped injury.

Clark said he thought he was "blown out" of the house, but wasn't sure. He said he would have re-entered the building had he been able to find anything with which to protect his face from the severe heat.

**Father Suffers Cut**  
Clark suffered a superficial head cut while trying to re-enter the building through a bedroom window.

The children killed in the fire were Shirley, 14; Mary, 12; Lorraine, 10; Claudia, 9; and Ruth, 6.

Mrs. Kadunce suffered burns, but was reported in "fair condition" at a local hospital.

Mrs. Clark also fled the burning house, but returned to try to save her daughters and died in the smoke and flames.

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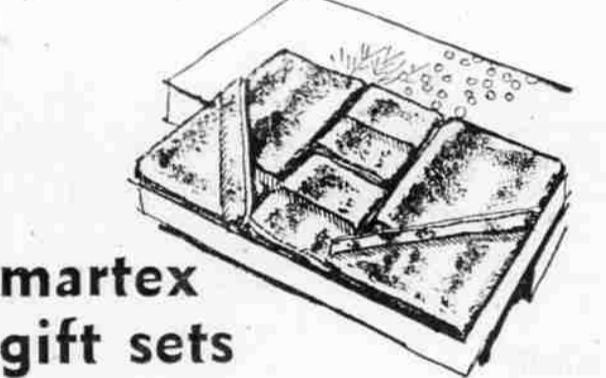
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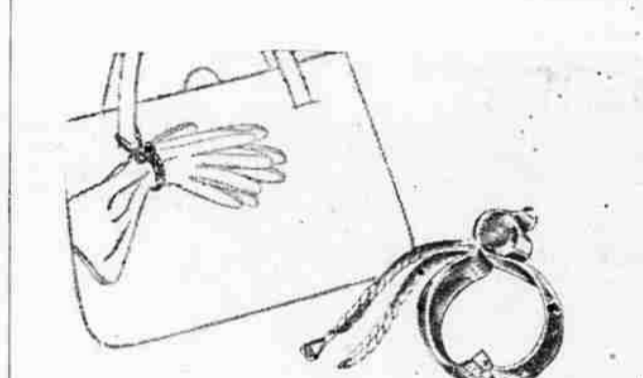
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