

## Update: Toronto 7 Alarm Fire Ends 100 Year Family Paint Business

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Toronto, Canada (AHN) - A tearful Michael Berman stood across the street from the remains of his family business, Ontario Paint and Wallpaper Ltd., 275 Queen Street East, in downtown Toronto. The business, which had been founded by his great grandfather, Max Ackerman in 1913, was totally gutted by a 7-alarm fire that started about 2:30 a.m. Friday morning.

No one was injured in the blazing inferno of colorful flames caused by the many, many gallons of paint going up in the fire.

The words "established in 1913" could still be seen peeling off the remains of the storefront Saturday morning, but there was nothing left of the building or its contents to salvage.

A spokesman for the company said they are going to reopen. They plan to set up shop in a temporary location, 449 Logan Avenue, within a week. As soon as possible they plan to open a new permanent store.

"It's a complete loss," a company spokesman told the Toronto Star. "It's going to take new equipment, new displays, new fixtures, all new supplies, everything. If you could imagine the business we had: hundreds and hundreds of hard to find and special items; thousands of rolls of vintage wallpaper in that store which will never be replaced; wallpaper from the 1920's and 30's."

Also lost was a database of thousands of unique colors that customers and the store had developed over the years.

Berman, a former manager of the store, said it was a "tough day" for the family. He said his great grandparents, Max and Mary Ackerman used to live in an apartment above the store.

His grandfather, Morris Berman, was "the guru of Benjamin Moore Paint. He was almost the king of Canadian paint."

The fire represents a loss to Toronto's history as well. The building dates back to the 1880's.

"The loss of any old building in this city is so unfortunate because we have so few left," said Mike Filey, a local historian.

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