

1937 October 7 The house on the John Viker farm in Anthony burned to the ground that week. The fire started from a chimney fire.

1937 October 7 Fire destroyed the barn, 16 horses, five cows, hay and other items at the Charles Brantner farm near Georgetown that week.

1937 October 21 Fire that week damaged the schoolhouse in District 36 in the Town of Mary. The schoolhouse was not being used as a school but was being readied for a meeting that evening.

1937 November 11 Mrs. Ethlene Denenny of Borup was severely burned that week when starting a fire using gasoline instead of kerosene.

1937 November 18 Athlene Denenny of Felton, who was seriously burned the previous week in a gasoline explosion, died at the Ada Hospital three days after the accident.

1937, date unknown “(Hendrum) purchased new fire hose and siren.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1938

1938 January 6 The Salve Ike farm home near Shelly was burned to the ground that week.

1938 January 24 The house on the H. H. Gunderson farm, just northwest of Gary, burned to the ground that week.

1938 March 17 The Ada Fire Department elected the following officials that week: P. C. Berberich, chief; Leonard Olson, assistant chief; Jule Prigge, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer.

1938 April 14 A defective chimney caused a fire that destroyed the farm home of Frank Carlson six miles east of Halstad.

1938 April 14 The slaughterhouse a half mile north of Ada was burned down that week when a grass fire spread to the building.

1938 July 28 Lightning struck twice at the Renshaw farm south of Borup, one bolt hitting a granary some distance from the farm buildings and another a few minutes later struck the house. The granary burned, but the house did not catch fire.

1938 August 4 Three young men from Minneapolis were injured, and their auto burned up, when a rear tire blew out on the road eight miles north of Ada.

1938 August 18 The Spring Creek Chapel was struck by lightning that week, but fortunately did not catch fire.

1938 December 29
of the year.

The Ada Fire Department answered ten fire alarms during the course

1939

1939 January 26 The Harold Habeck house in the eastern part of the city was burned to the ground that week together with all the contents.

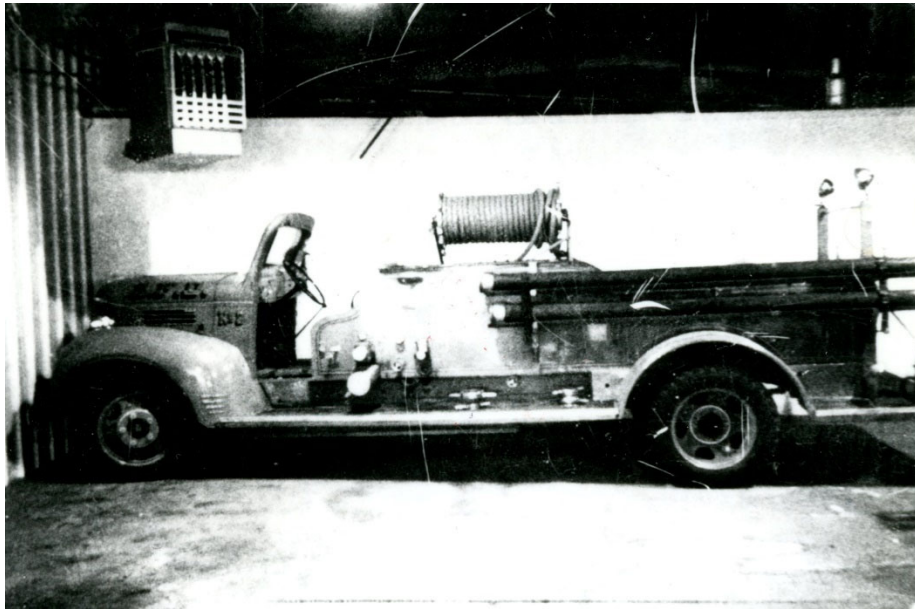
1939 February 10 Perley
 “Richard, one-fourth mile north of here, lost house, shop, and elevated water tank by fire. (Ed Tracy journal) (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1939 February 16 The Ada Fire Department purchased a new Dodge truck that week to replace a former truck, which was taken over by the street department.

1939 March 30 An empty railroad car caught fire at Hadler one day that week, but the fire was extinguished by the Ada Fire Department with a minimum of damage.

1939 May 18 The barn on the Jimmy Anderson farm, three miles south of Ada, was totally destroyed by fire, as was the barn on the Walter Kerr farm. In the first fire four pigs perished, while in the other fire five calves and a bull perished.

1939 November 2 Six horses perished when the barn on the Albert Dittmer farm burned.



1939 Ada Fire Department's Dodge Pumper Truck

1940

1940 March 7 The house on the Carl Mass farm at Lockhart burned to the ground. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Miller, who resided on the farm, lost much of their household goods.

1940 March 7 The fire department was summoned to the Bang and Co. store. A fire caused by an overheated pipe caused considerable damage to the floor, and there was smoke and water damage to the grocery and meat stock.

1940 May 14 Walter Vilmo was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department.

1940 August 15 Fire of undetermined origin completely destroyed the large well house and granary on the James Natwick farm in Wild Rice nine miles east of Ada.

1940 Date unknown “Anton Schultz Dies in Fire at Grossman Farm:

Anton Schultz, 72, Ida Lake township farmer, was burned to death last Wednesday when fire destroyed the Norman Grossman farm home. The rest of the family was away at the time and no definite cause of the fire has been determined. It is believed that Mr. Schultz had either been taking nap and did not notice the fire until too late or had gone back into the house in an attempt to save furnishings.

The deceased had resided in the neighborhood since 1921, prior to that time having farmed in Reynolds, N. D. territory for many years.”

1941

1941 January 2 The Silver Inn Café was heavily damaged by fire of unknown origin Monday of that week. Fred Thompson, owner, reported the loss was partly covered by insurance.

1941 March 13 Leonard Olson was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department for the year, succeeding Walter Vilmo. Others elected were: A. A. Busse, assistant chief; John Nash, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; Dr. G. W. Bohl, physician. Officers re-elected for the Ada Fire Department Relief Association were: H. S. Thune, president; J. R. Ullman, vice-president; R. R. Betcher, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; Jule Prigge, Alfred Remark and L. D. Olson, finance committee; Mike Roesch, director, three years.

1941 April 17 The R. W. Wilkens home at Lockhart was badly damaged by fire.

1941 May 8 Lightning struck the barn on the Mrs. Edna Goudy farm eight miles north of Ada and it burned to the ground.

1941 May 22 The old Jacobson flour mill six miles northeast of Perley burned. It was one of the old landmarks in that vicinity.

1941 May 22 The St. Anthony and Dakota Elevator at Lockhart burned with a loss estimated at \$45,000.

1941 July 24 A large barn on the Jacob Tamke farm, seven miles north of Ada, was struck by lightning and burned to the ground, together with about 50 loads of hay and some oats.

1941 September 4 Kienitz Bros., proprietors of the Auto Supply Co., had started erection of a new fireproof building.

1942

1942 March 5 At a meeting of the City Council the salaries for the various city offices were set. They were: city clerk, \$35 per month; chief of police, \$110 per month; street commissioner, \$15 per month; city attorney, \$50 per year; assessor, \$250 a year; **fire chief, \$100 a year**; city treasurer, \$100 a year; members of water and light board, \$25 a year.

1942 March 12 A. A. Busse was elected fire chief for the coming year. Other department officers elected were: Harry Benson, ass't chief; John Nash, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; Dr. Theo. Loken, physician.

1942 April 9 "Mr. and Mrs. George Wallace of Gary had the misfortune of losing their house burned down Tuesday, March 31st. Little could be saved as help came too late."

1942 April 16 The John K. Stordahl family was feted by friends at a kitchen shower after they had lost their home by fire.

"The farm home of John K. Stordahl was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1942."
(“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1943

1943 January 25 “Local Variety Store damaged by Fire on Monday.
Blaze Started in Basement Results in Complete Loss of Merchandise Stock

The Ben Franklin Variety store in Ada, owned by A. H. Schackle, is temporarily out of business for a few weeks, as a result of a fire which swept through the basement Monday morning and before being brought under control six hours later, has resulted in practically a total loss of stock, mostly from water and smoke damage.

The fire apparently started somewhere near the furnace in the rear of the basement shortly before 9:00 a.m. and was not noticed until smoke began pouring into the main store above. By that time the entire basement was filled with dense smoke and there was a good blaze in the rear of the basement. The firemen soon had four lines of hose pouring water

into the basement and onto the main floor, and in spite of the 25-below weather, succeeded in confining the blaze to the basement. However, the fire burned the floor joists in the basement allowing parts of the main floor to main floor drop.

Fire did not come above the main floor, but the stocks of goods on that floor was ruined by smoke and water, and the furniture in the upstairs living quarters was also damaged by smoke.

The J. C. Penney store adjoining on the north and the Bluebird Café on the south were smoked up some but no great loss was suffered by either.

Mr. Schakle had purchased the building a year ago from C. R. Ahlers and had spent considerable money remodeling the store and building living quarters on the second floor. There was a fairly large amount stock of goods in the store, but fortunately a large shipment scheduled to be received last Saturday did not come. Some of the goods damaged may be salvaged.

Mr. Schakle plans to start immediately repairing the damage, and will reopen the store as soon as possible. The loss will probably total about \$9,000, the stock and household goods being a total loss besides a considerable damage to the building. The loss was partly covered by insurance." ("Norman County Index, January 25, 1943")







Photos from Norman County Index, January 25, 1943

1943 January 28 The Ben Franklin Variety Store, owned by A. H. Schackle, was damaged by fire which swept through the basement and before being brought under control six hours later, had resulted in practically a total loss to the stock, mostly from water and smoke damage. The J. C. Penney Store, adjoining on the north, and the Bluebird Café on the south, were smoked up but no great loss was suffered by either.

FIRE!
SALE

The stock damaged by the recent fire will be sold out in the old Postoffice building in Ada starting at 10 A. M. on

FRIDAY, FEB. 5

All stock must be disposed of before the opening of our re-modeled store.

Bring your old tubes when buying toothpaste - shaving cream

BEN FRANKLIN STORE
A. H. Schackie, Prop., Ada, Minn.

1943 February 4

FIRE
Sale Continues

WE STILL HAVE SOME OF THE MERCHANDISE DAMAGED BY SMOKE AND WATER IN OUR RECENT FIRE ON SALE AT PRICES STILL FURTHER REDUCED. THIS STOCK MUST BE SOLD THIS WEEK TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW MERCHANDISE NOW ARRIVING. IT WILL PAY YOU WELL TO COME TO OUR STORE THIS WEEK-END AS YOU MAY NEVER AGAIN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUY QUALITY MERCHANDISE AT SUCH LOW PRICES.

In the former, Postoffice Building across the Street from the City Hall

Ben Franklin Store
ADA, MINNESOTA

1943 February 11

FIRE!
Sale Still On

WE STILL HAVE SEVERAL GOOD BUYS IN MERCHANDISE SALVAGED FROM OUR RECENT FIRE.

WE ARE NOW RECEIVING NEW MERCHANDISE NEARLY EVERY DAY AND AS FAST AS IT ARRIVES IT IS DISPLAYED FOR SALE. STOP IN EVERY TIME YOU ARE IN TOWN AND SEE WHAT IS NEW.

Temporary Location—In the Old Postoffice Building Across the Street from the City Hall

Ben Franklin Store
ADA, MINNESOTA

1943 February 18

BIG FIRE SALE!
Still Continues

IN OUR TEMPORARY LOCATION IN THE OLD POSTOFFICE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE CITY HALL

NEW GOODS ARE ARRIVING DAILY

Ben Franklin Store
ADA, MINNESOTA

1943 February 24

1943 March 11 Harry Benson was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department. Other officers elected were: Carl Nirschl, assistant chief; Jule Prigge, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; and Dr. Bohl and Dr. Loken, physicians.

1943 April 8 The chicken house on the Oliver Sorenson farm was destroyed by fire, together with 200 chickens and 300 baby chicks. The building had been erected the previous year.

1943 June 24 The residence on the County Farm located seven miles southeast of Ada burned that week. The county had established the farm some years ago to care for aged people but for the past few years the place had been rented to Mr. and Mrs. Ole Orvick, who continued to care for several old people there.

1944

1944 January 13 Fire, starting from an oil burner in the basement of the George Balzum residence, caused some damage before being brought under control by the fire department.

1944 March 16 Carl Nirschl was named chief of the Ada Fire Department; E. J. Volland was elected assistant chief; Wm. Kloety, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; and Dr. Loken, physician.

1944 August day unknown “Otto Olson, 60, Dies as a Result of Severe Burns – Rites Held for Well-Known Perley Farmer Who Died August 15 at Ada Hospital:

Burns suffered when he attempted to enter his burning home to save some valuables proved fatal for Otto Olson, well-known resident of the Perley community, who died in the Ada Hospital last week Tuesday.

A week ago, Friday Mr. Olson, with his brother, John, with whom he farmed near Perley, were working near their home, when they noticed the house was on fire. Otto hurried into the house in an effort to save some valuables and personal belongings, but was overcome by the smoke and fire. His brother followed him into the house and succeeded in bringing Otto out, suffering some burns as he did so. Otto had been burned quite severely and was brought to the Ada hospital, where he passed away on Tuesday, August 15 at the age of 60 years, 8 months and 19 days.”

1945

1945 April 5 The Lutheran Church at Syre was completely destroyed by fire but most of the contents were saved.

1945 May 10 A fire, starting in the engine room of the Farmers Co-op Elevator at Hadler, badly burned the office but was extinguished before it could spread to the main elevator.

1945 August 9 The Oscar Tommerdahl farm home was destroyed by fire that week. The Otto Habedank farm home southwest of Twin Valley was also destroyed by fire that week.

1945 November 1 A fire at Borup destroyed the garage owned by Myron Hennen.

1945 December 13
of a gasoline explosion.

Mrs. Gertrude Moteberg, 73, of Sundal died that week as the result

“Burning Accident Proves Fatal for Bear Park Lady:

A very sad accident at Bear Park last Thursday afternoon when Mrs. Gertrude Motteberg accidentally sustained burns to her body which proved fatal to her life. The exact nature of the accident may never be known but it is believed she mistook a small can of gasoline for water and thru some manner it was spilled near a hot stove which immediately caught fire to her clothing and causing severe burns over her body. She was immediately taken to a Crookston hospital but passed away the following morning.

Mrs. Gertrude Thorson Motteberg, was born September 18, 1872, of the parents Gjert and Martha Thorson in Iowa. She died at 8:00 a.m. December 7 from second degree burns received accidentally on the afternoon of December 6. She was taken immediately to Bethesda hospital in Crookston. She was at the time of her death 73 years, 2 months and 19 days old.”

1945 December 13

Fire destroyed the Ed Albertson farm home near Twin Valley.

1945 December, date unknown “A fire with an estimated total loss of \$35,000 occurred in 1945. Destroyed in this fire were the Reno Hotel, operated by Duane McDonald, the Dybing-Folstad Meat Market, the Hartz Store, operated by Quentin Flikke and located in the hotel, and the Abraham Reno Residence. The fire was believed to have been caused by short circuit wiring between two chimneys in the attic of the hotel building which stood where the State Bank of Shelly now stands (1972).” (“Shelly’s Diamond 75 Jubilee, Shelly, Minnesota, July 14 – 16, 1972)

1946

1946 January 3

Fire destroyed the Reno Hotel, Hartz Store, Shelly Meat Market, and the Abraham Reno residence, with a loss estimated at \$35,000.

1946 January 4

“\$35,000 Fire in Shelly Wednesday Morning –

Fire of undetermined origin that broke out about 3:00 a.m. Wednesday in the Reno Hotel in Shelly, destroyed the hotel, Hartz Store, the Shelly meat market and the Abraham Reno residence and endangered other buildings nearby. Eight persons were driven from their homes with complete loss of their personal effects.

Volunteer fire departments from Shelly and Halstad battled the blaze more than three hours before it was brought under control. Absence of wind averted a fire of much more disastrous proportions residents said.

Driven from their homes were Mr. and Mrs. A. Reno whose residence was destroyed; Mr. and Mrs. Duane McDonald, who operated the hotel and their daughter, Judith Ann 3; Emil Drovdaahl, resident in the hotel, and Mrs. Imogene Sorenson and daughter Diane 6, who occupied an apartment above the meat market. Mrs. Sorenson’s William, is in service in the ETO.

Enoch Dybing and Manfred Fulstad, co-owners of the meat market, estimated their loss at about \$10,000 only partly covered by insurance, with that including the market, the hotel, the Hartz store and the Reno residence, total loss would be about \$25,000.

The fire believed to have been started by a short circuit between two chimneys in the attic, was discovered by Drov Dahl, who was awakened when his room, nearest the outbreak of fire, became filled with smoke. He roused the McDonald family and helped spread the alarm and summon assistance. The blaze had made too much progress to be checked by the time fire fighters arrived. Firemen from Moorhead, Crookston and Halstad were notified but unable to be of any assistance because of the speed with which the buildings burned.

Mrs. W. W. Dyer, whose directly south of the of the burned area, said that when she awakened smoke was pouring from the hotel and that the roof soon burst into flames. Her own home was blistered by the heat of the fire, she said, and but for the fact that what wind there was came from south her home probably would have been consumed by the flames.

Quentin Flikke is manager of the Hartz Store. The hotel was owned by Abraham Reno. Mrs. Sorenson is a sister of McDonald, - Fargo Forum" ("Halstad/ Hendrum Journal Review, January 4, 1946")

1946 August 8 The creamery at Rindal, complete with its contents and locker plant, burned to the ground.

1946 August 15 The barn on the Henry Klask farm northeast of Ada burned to the ground after having been struck by lightning.

1947

1947 January 16 "Fire at Borup Monday Burned Arnberg Store, Store and Locker Plant Were Destroyed in Early Morning Blaze –

An early morning fire at Borup on Monday of this week completely destroyed the Arnberg Store and Locker plant, entailing a loss of several thousand dollars, in what was one of the most destructive fires ever to occur in the Borup community. The building burned to the ground and none of the goods in the store or the household effects in the living room were saved.

Mr. and Mrs. Arnberg were visiting in South Dakota at the time and Mr. and Mrs. Mike Rasmus and Eugene Arnberg, son of the owner were in the living quarters of the store when the fire started about 3 o'clock Monday morning presumably from defective wiring in the attic in the front of the building. The fire was discovered by Mrs. Rasmus was awakened by the smell of smoke coming from the interior of the store.

The Rasmus family made their escape from the building through the front of the living quarters and turned in the alarm. Fire extinguishers were brought into play and the Ada fire department was called; the fire being held down some until the arrival of the Ada fire department truck which had been summoned. Unfortunately, in the cold drive to Borup, the water in the pipe leading from the tank to the truck pump froze and before this could be thawed out the blaze had gained such headway that the building could be saved.

In addition to the stock of merchandise and the household effects, the building contained 176 lockers, most of them in use by farmers and others in the community. Whether any of the locker contents will be salvaged is undetermined at this time.

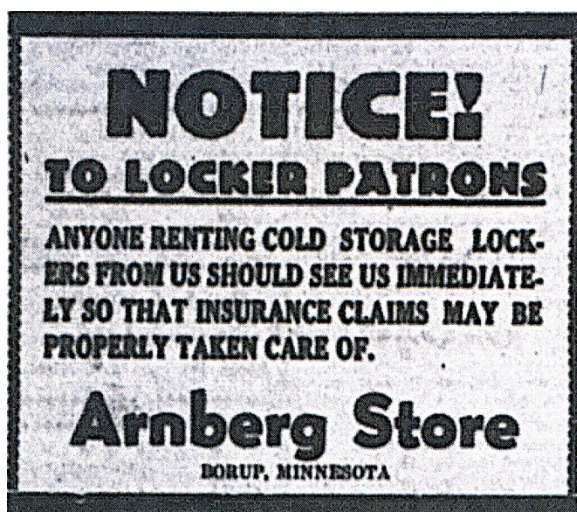
Mr. Arnberg carried insurance on the building and contents, but the loss will probably exceed the amount of the insurance. Mr. Arnberg stated yesterday that he plans to rebuild at once if materials can be secured.

A picture of the smoldering ruins which we hoped is have for this issue failed to arrive in time, and will appear next week.” (“Norman County Index, January 16, 1947”)

1947 January 16

“Borup News Item –

One of the most disastrous fires that ever struck the Borup community happened Monday morning about 3 o’clock when the Arnberg store and locker burned to the ground. Mr. and Mrs. Mike Rasmus were staying in the living quarters in the building in the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Arnberg. The fire is believed to have started in the attic and was discovered by Mrs. Rasmus who was awakened by the smell of smoke coming from the interior of the store. The Rasmus family made their escape through the front of the living quarters but were unable to save any of their personal effects.” (“Norman County Index, January 16, 1947”)



Ad in Norman County Index
January 16, 1947



Ad in Norman County Index
January 23, 1947

1947 January 25

The Simonson-Betcher Post American Legion and its Auxiliary were sponsoring a shower for the Ed Arnbergs, who lost everything in the fire that consumed their store and locker plant the previous week.

1947 February 8

Following the big fire that recently had consumed the Arnberg Store at Borup, a volunteer fire department was formed at that place. Plans were made to purchase a fire truck with pump and booster truck.

1947 March 27

A disastrous fire occurred at Perley Tuesday when the grain elevator, owned and operated by the Lee Elevator Co., a farmer-owned organization, burned to the

ground, together with a vast amount of grain stored in it. A. C. Lundby was the manager. The loss was estimated at \$90,000.

“Lee Elevator, 150 feet northeast of our (Ed Tracy) house, caught fire at 8 a.m. and burned to the ground with 40,000 bushels of grain. Halstad fire truck here, but could not help much because of the 35-mph wind and lack of water.” (Ed Tracy journal) (Perley, Minnesota Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1947 March 27 “Perley Elevator Destroyed by Fire; Loss \$90,000 –

“A disastrous fire at Perley Tuesday morning of this week, when the grain elevator owned and operated by the Lee Elevator Co., a farmer-owned organization, burned to the ground together with a vast amount of grain stored in it.

A. G. Lundby, manager of the elevator, turned on an elevator motor on the compressor shortly after 8 o’clock in the morning, several minutes later he discovered flames near the compressor and along the conduit leading to it, and is believed the blaze started in some manner from the electrical wiring or a spark.

The fire spread quickly throughout the elevator, a frame construction and was soon out of control as fire fighters were without water supply. The Halstad fire truck was called to aid Perley residents in fighting the blaze, but without water there was but little that could be done, except to see that sparks did not set fire to other buildings.

A strong northwest wind was blowing and below intermittent snow flurries and below freezing weather also handicapped efforts of the fireman. The elevator office across the driveway from the main building was also destroyed. The other elevators on the right-of-way were not threatened due to wind direction.

Mr. Lundby estimated the loss would be in excess of \$90,000. The elevator had storage capacity of about 40,000 bushels of grain and this was nearly filled with wheat and oats. The grain loss was estimated at \$75,000. However, insurance was carried on the building and its contents and will cover most of the loss it is said.

The elevator had been built about thirty years ago, replacing a similar one that had been burned. It has not been determined as yet whether the elevator will be rebuilt.” (Norman County Index, March 27, 1947)

1947 March 28

“Strong northwest wind in evening caused grain at elevator to flare up bad. Thirty men carried water for an hour till Halstad fire truck came.” (Ed Tracy journal) (Perley, Minnesota Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1947 March 28 “Fire Destroys Perley Elevator –

“Fire which roared through the Lee elevator at Perley virtually destroyed the structure and was still smoldering on Wednesday.

The loss was estimated at \$91,500 by Anton Lundby, manager. He said \$75,000 was ingrain, mostly wheat and oats. The elevator was filled to its 40,000-bushel capacity.

Lundby said the loss was nearly covered by insurance. A. B. Erickson, treasurer of the firm, said he felt certain directors would vote to rebuild the elevator as soon as possible.

The fire apparently started in an electric motor on a compressor or in the conduit leading to it. Lundby said he saw flames near the compressor and along electrical conduit rising from it a few moments on about 8 a.m.

The blaze quickly spread through the frame structure, which had been built to replace to replace a previous elevator burned about 20 years ago.

The lower portions of the north and south walls of the elevator were left standing. East and west walls were entirely gone. A chimney was all that was left of the office building across the driveway from the main building.

Perley volunteer firemen were aided by the Halstad fire truck, but lack of water prevented any effective action. Perley, which had no municipal supply, had planned to install a water system this summer.

A strong northwest wind and subfreezing weather also handicapped fire fighters. The wind, however, blew sparks and flame away from other buildings. (Originally published in the Fargo Forum, republished in the Halstad – Hendrum Journal review, March 28, 1947)

1947 April 3

“Pictures Show Progress of Elevator Fire at Perley –

A series of pictures taken by Hannah L. Strand of Perley, shows the progress of the fire last week Tuesday morning that destroyed the Lee Elevator at Perley, together with some 40,000 bushels of grain that was stored in the building. Miss Strand, who is postmistress at Perley, snapped pictures at regular intervals as the fire progressed and the series shows the building at various stages of the destruction.

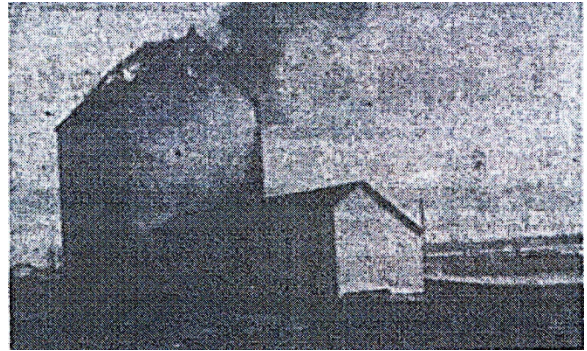
The top picture shows the cupola of the elevator ablaze, as the flames shot upward through the shafts to the top, shortly after 8:00 a.m. when the fire was first discovered. A few minutes later the entire cupola was gone, as shown by the second picture and the blaze was spreading throughout the top of the building. The third picture shows the roof entirely gone and the grain starting to burn. The fourth picture, taken 20 minutes later, shows the fire burning away the structure around the grain, while the bottom two pictures show the grain spilling through the smoking ruins.

Lack of water prevented any effective firefighting, and the loss was estimated at some \$90,000, although a small part of the grain may be salvaged.

The pictures were made available to us through the courtesy of the Fargo Forum.” (Norman County Index, April 3, 1947)



Picture 1



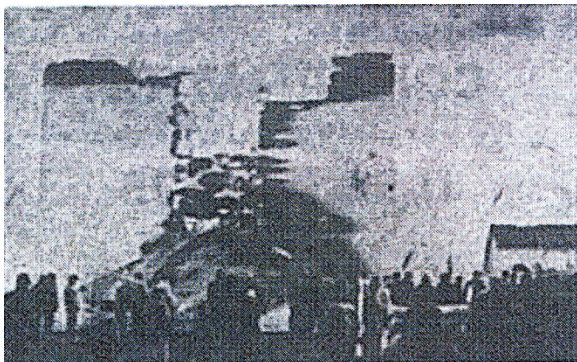
Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6

1947 August 7

“Local Firemen Attended Regional Fire School –

Fire Chief J. D. Shelland, accompanied by Asst. Chief Ralph Visser, Wm. Kloety and Henry Helweg autoed to Fergus Falls Sunday where they attended the 15th annual Fire

School and Northwest Regional Fireman's association. About 150 firemen from the area attended the school and it was pronounced one of the best fire schools ever held in the state.

Several talks were given on fire prevention and other subjects dealing with fire departments. In the afternoon, demonstrations were given concerning the use of ladders and firefighting equipment, and a special demonstration was given showing how a roaring gas or oil fire could be put out in a few seconds with a fog nozzle attached to the one-inch booster hose." (Norman County Index, August 7, 1947)

1947 December 11 "Perley Hotel destroyed by Fire Tuesday: Tenants Forced to Flee in Sub-zero Weather When Building Burns to Ground –

The Perley Hotel and Café was completely destroyed by fire of unknown origin early Tuesday of this week. The two-story wooden structure is a complete loss and nothing within the building was saved. This loss to the owner, Charles Morrissey was estimated at \$10,000 and was only in a small part covered by insurance.

Besides the loss by Mr. and Mrs. Morrissey, all furniture and personal belongings were lost by Mr. and Mrs. Erick Erickson and Mr. and Mrs. Art Malen and infant daughter Linda, who had apartments in the hotel. There were also other permanent roomers there who were left homeless and lost all their personal belongings.

The fire was discovered shortly after midnight by hotel residents and it gained headway so rapidly that the people in the hotel who were aroused from sleep had to rush out in the sub-zero temperature only partially clothed and some in bare feet. The ten people left homeless are staying with village residents and relatives.

Village citizens and nearby farmers responded to the call for help and futilely fought the blaze which threatened the whole block which contains other business establishments and some homes. The Ada fire department responded to the call for help but arrived after the fire was under control.

The nearby vacant building which was also razed by the fire, formerly housed a restaurant and later a cream station.

The village is working on a water works project which is not completed at present." (Norman County Index, December 11, 1947)

1947 December 11 The Perley Hotel and Café was destroyed by fire that week. Charles Morrissey was the owner.



Hotel fire, December 8, 1947.

1948

1948 January 1 Elaine Johnson, thirteen, died Christmas Day of burns suffered when starting a fire in a heating stove. She was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Johnson.

1948 January 1 “Tragic Accident Takes the Life of Young Girl: Elaine Johnson, 13, Died Christmas Day of Burns Sustained That Morning –

The community was shocked when it was learned that on Christmas Day, Elaine Johnson, age 13, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Johnson, who reside six miles northeast of Ada, had met a tragic death as the result of burns received when starting a fire.

Elaine arose early Christmas morning before the rest of the family, and was starting a fire in the heating stove using kerosene to start the fire. Some live coals in the stove caused the kerosene to explode and set fire to her clothing and causing severe burns. The family was aroused and brought her to the hospital in Ada. She was able to walk from the house to the car, but the burns and the shock were too severe and she passed away at 6:30 p.m. about twelve hours after the accident.

Elaine Grace Johnson was born December 18, 1934 on the home farm in Pleasant View. She attended school in the home district and her friendly nature and bright spirits won her many friends.

In addition to her parents, she is survived by four brothers, Charles, Leon, Ronald, and Lowell, all at home, and by her grandmother, Mrs. Eva Johnson, who makes her home with the family.

Funeral services were held in Ada Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the First Lutheran Church. Rev. E. G. Larson officiated at the rites, and John Swanson, as soloist,

sang "Children of the Heavenly Father" and "I Need Thee Every Hour." Miss Esther Strand was organist. Pall bearers were Milford Nordby, Erwin Griewe, Ralph Krsnak, Kenneth Berray, Frank Krsnak and Herbet Griewe. Internment was made in the Ada cemetery.

The deepest sympathy of everyone is extended the grief-stricken parents and brothers in their bereavement," (Norman County Index, January 1, 1948)

1948 March 25 Fire of undetermined origin burned the large barn and wood silo on the Jubal Logan farm a mile and a half west of Ada. Also burned were four calves, one sow and twenty-four, week-old pigs.

1948 June 24 Mrs. Tennis Oftedahl, 84, Twin Valley was fatally burned when their farm home caught fire.

1948 August 27 A tractor, machine shed, and a hog barn on the Harold Lohmeier farm east of Ada were destroyed by fire.

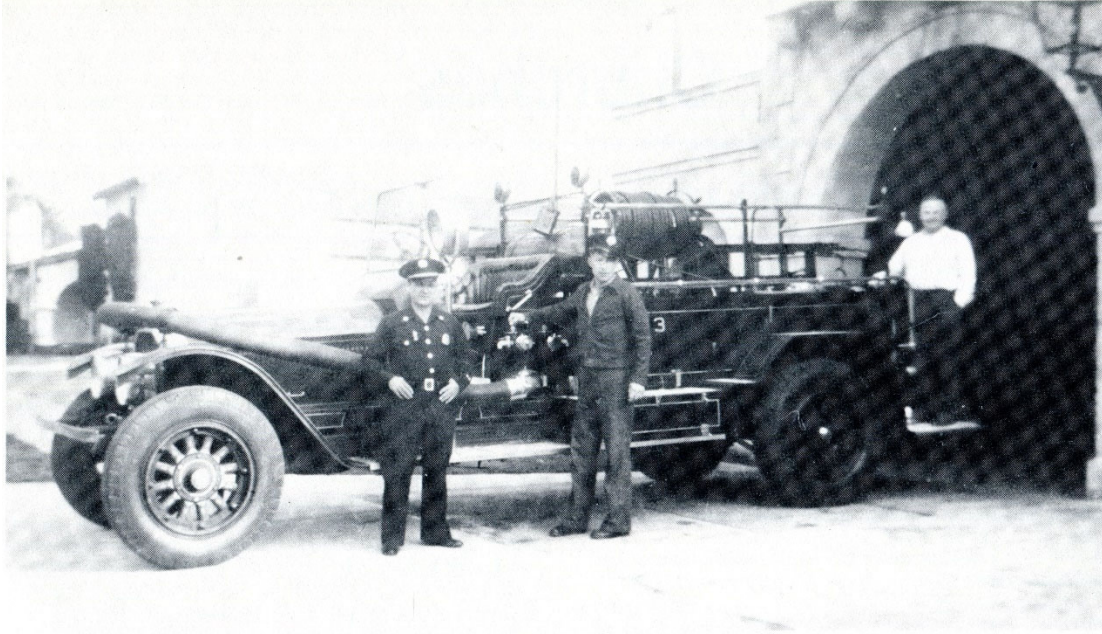
1948 October 7 A caboose on the local freight train caught fire and burned completely at the southern edge of Ada.

1949

1949 March 3 Fire destroyed the elevator and machine shed on the Kenneth Visser farm, together with 10,000 bushels of oats, and some pigs.

1949 May 5 The barn on the Louis Arel place south of Ada burned together with four calves and a quantity of hay and feed.

1949 June 2 Borup had purchased a new fire truck and plans were being made to organize a volunteer Fire Department.



Borup's first fire truck leaves California.

1949 July 21
lightning.

The grain elevator at Gary was destroyed by fire caused by

1950

1950 January 5 Fire at Halstad that week caused a loss of \$10,000. The Sulerud Bros. potato warehouse, estimated at \$4,00, burned along with 4,800 bushels of certified potatoes belonging to Wm. C. Olson, valued at \$6,000, which were stored in the warehouse.

1950 February 16 Fire caused damages to the Underdahl and Adkins Oil Co. plant near the fairgrounds that week.

1950 July 27 The Northwest Regional Firemen's Ass'n was to hold their quarterly meeting and fire school at Ada that week.

1950 November 23 Hendrum Viking School Auditorium burned.



Auditorium destroyed by fire, 11-23-50
As photographed by Irving Storsved

1950 November 30
 23rd.

The Hendrum Community Hall was destroyed by fire November

“Hall at Hendrum Destroyed by Fire:

Fire Thursday, November 23 destroyed the Community Hall owned by the Hendrum School District and also used as the school gym.

The Halstad Fire Department helped the Hendrum Volunteers save two nearby buildings, the Land O’Lakes Creamery food warehouse and the Hendrum Garage, owned by Julius Ysteboe. The garage is less than four feet from the hall.

First theories blame defective wiring. The janitor was at the hall at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday night and noticed wrong. At 9:30 a.m. Thursday the alarm was sent in by Leroy Lee when smoke was seen coming out of the roof.

Supt. G. I. Shely said the building was insured for \$2,000.”

1950, date unknown

Perley:

“In 1950, a Ford car, remodeled into a pickup, became the fire truck and a portable pump and reel to carry the hose, were added to the truck. This equipment was housed in the Smedrud Brothers Garage, as Perley didn’t have a fire hall at this time. This truck was sold in 1964.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1951

1951 March 15

Richard Nielsen was named chief of the Ada Fire Department; Otto Habeck was named assistant chief; Emmett Schwartz, secretary; and H. S. Thune, treasurer.

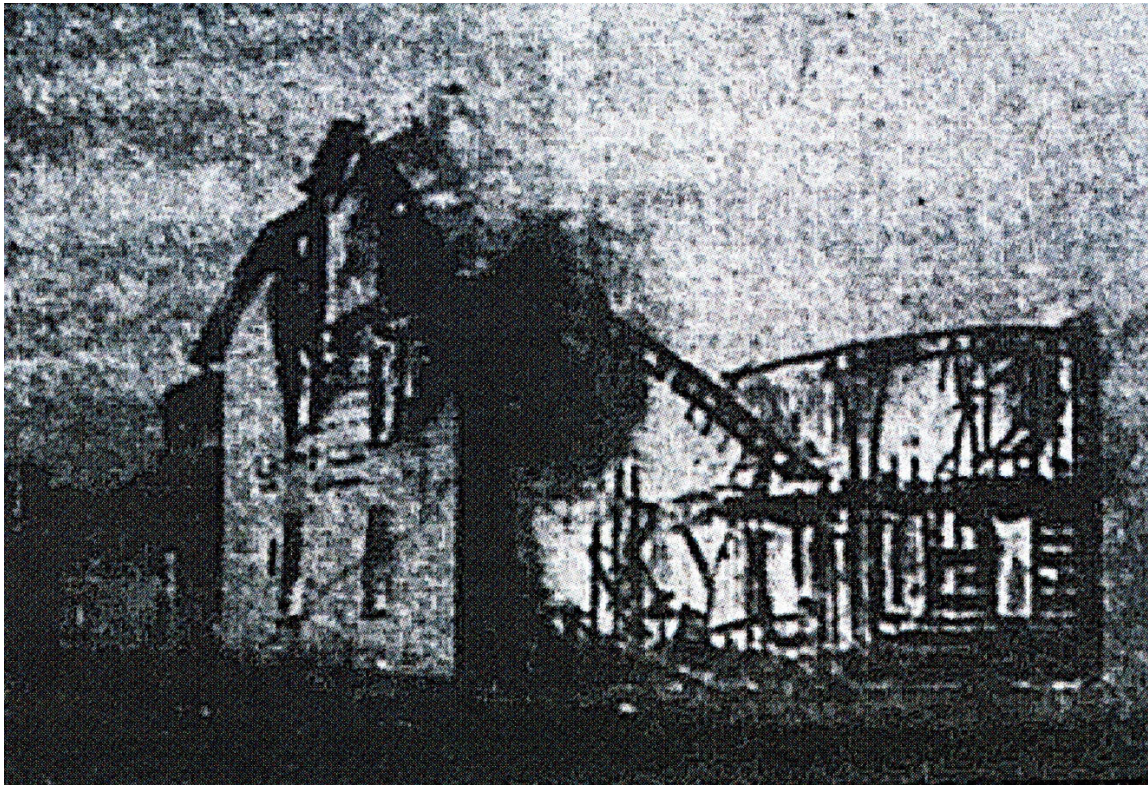
1951 July 13

“Fire Destroys Old Halstad Landmark –

“One of the oldest landmarks of the community was destroyed Monday when the bunkhouse at the Grandin Farm burned to the ground. The building was being used as a dormitory by 34 Mexican laborers employed by neighboring farmers. In the days when old Grandin No. 1 was headquarters for the world’s largest wheat farm in the world, the three-story building housed a hundred men who came into the territory for harvesting and threshing. The exact date of its building is in doubt but old timers agree that it is about 1875. In later years, many stories have been current, among them one to the effect that the old bunkhouse was haunted by the ghost of a transient who was said to have hanged himself in one of the upper rooms.

The fire is thought to have been started when one of the Mexicans, who was ill, dropped a lighted cigarette and set fire to bedding.

The Halstad fire truck and many townspeople went out to help fight the flames but all efforts to save the structure were unavailing. It was consumed in about an hour.” (Halstad Journal, July 13, 1951)



1951 August 30

Fire did considerable damage to the Nirschl Blacksmith Shop.

1951 October 18

Carl Nirschl was going to erect a new blacksmith shop in the Bosworth Addition adjacent to the Arnold Gunnerson garage. The shop had been damaged by fire a few weeks previous.

1952

1952 February 14 The West Marsh River Lutheran Church, located five miles north of Halstad, burned to the ground the previous week.



1952 March 6 The Morris Stephenson farm home northeast of Twin Valley was destroyed by fire.

1952 March 13 Otto Habeck, Jr., was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department.

1952 June 12 Fire did extensive damage to the Parker Jewelry Store in Ada.

1952 November 6 The Ray Drake farm home located six miles north of Ada was completely destroyed by fire that week.

1953

1953 February 5 Fire damaged the building, stock, and equipment of Nygaard and Halstad Pioneer Market at Halstad.

1953 February 12 Emmett Schwartz was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department.

1953 June 3 “Christiansen Home Destroyed by Fire -

The farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Christiansen was completely destroyed by fire last Wednesday. The fire originated in the basement and with the help of neighbors some of the household furnishings were saved. All present the Christiansen family is staying at the John Christiansen home.” (Twin Valley Times, June 3, 1953)

1953 November 5 Fire did considerable damage to the Julius Skuza farm home south-east of Ada.

1953 December 10 The farm home of the Hans Rockstad family was destroyed by fire.

1954

1954 February 24 The Climax school was destroyed by fire on February 24,
1954. Shelly and Halstad fire departments assisted in fighting the fire.

“Our Climax Correspondent writes: The people of Climax are still awe-struck over the loss of their school building. I think we all felt as tho (sic) we had lost everything we owned. But with offers of help from every direction, it gives us courage to carry on. Not until tragedy strikes, do we realize how willing people are to help in any way they can. The people here have been busy cleaning and repairing the Community Hall and Town Hall so school can be resumed this week. Neighboring schools have offered help of all kinds. We are very grateful to all. Our school is now past history and we will have to start all over again. Are you willing to help?

... Fighting the fire was hindered by a lack of water. Reports the (Twin Valley) Times: ‘Climax has no water pressure system and water was pumped several hundred feet from the fire to the school. The Crookston units brot (sic) and additional 1,500 gallons to the scene. Shelly and Halstad firemen also assisted in fighting the blaze. The fire’s origin still has not been determined.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, March 3, 1954)

Climax School Fire at Its Worst on February 24th



1954 April 21 “Fire Dept. to Buy More Equipment, Will Give Fire Protection Service to Rural Areas Around Halstad –

The Halstad rural area is insured of obtaining additional firefighting equipment, including a new rural fire truck. It was announced at a special meeting of the department held Wednesday evening, April 15th. A committee has been named consisting of C. M. Gilbertson, Geo. T. Anderson, Vernon Kragness and J. A. Sipe, who will be known as the fire truck purchasing committee. A new truck will be purchased on which will be mounted a thousand-gallon tank and a 200-gallon per minute pumping unit. There will also be a 100-gallon per minute auxiliary pump mounted on the rear of the truck which will be removeable and will be used for pumping water from cisterns, tanks, creeks or other sources to the fire truck and which can also be left at the scene of the fire to insure against flare ups after the truck has left.

The Halstad Fire Department, all volunteer volunteers, has done a commendable job over the years. The present company was organized in the year 1904 and has been active since that time. They have one member who has been a member since its organization, Joe Schou, and Mr. Schou is still a very active member.

The Halstad Fire Department is a participating member of the Minnesota Volunteer Firemen's Association, and also takes part in the activities of the Northern Region Fireman's Association. Henry Reitan, a member since 1914, has held different officers in the company including chief and is at the present time instructor for the company and will be in attendance at the Minnesota State Fire School which will be held at the University Farm Campus of St. Paul, commencing April 26th through the 30th. There will be much valuable information concerning the techniques of fire fighting which the Halstad Fire Department will thus obtain.

C. M. Gilbertson, presently Fire Chief, has been a long-time member of the department and is also on the purchasing committee for the equipment now being bought. He also was instrumental in obtaining the equipment Halstad now has and which has served so well, in this area since 1937. Mr. Gilbertson deserves a great deal of credit for the many hours he has spent with the objective of providing sufficient fire protection for Halstad and rural Halstad.

A new member of the Halstad Fire Department, Mr. Gerald Lehner, who is band instructor at the school, has been for some time a member of an emergency rescue squad in Minneapolis and is well acquainted with the many phases of this type of work. Comment members of the Department: 'We therefore think we are fortunate to have a man with the experience on our department, for now in case of a smoke, burn or other accident victim we have a member who will know how to handle the problem efficiently. We recently purchased a Pocolater from the Mine Safety Appliance Company at a cost of some \$400.00.'

This is an instrument which will provide efficient, uniform lung ventilation, bringing rapid recovery in cases of respiratory failure. This instrument automatically breathes for the patient in cases of asphyxia, which operation is maintained by the use of oxygen. This instrument is accepted by the American Medical Association.

The Women's Club of Halstad very thoughtfully donated \$150.00 to the department towards the purchase of this unit which should be greatly appreciated by the people of the area.

Henry Rice and Thomas Gabby were recently named as a Fund Collecting Committee and it is hoped that all funds will be in by the first of May. Letters were recently mailed out by this committee and all remittances should be turned over, or mailed in promptly to Eldor Aalgaard, treasurer. This will enable us to have the rural fire truck delivered at an early date.

Reports the fire chief, 'At the time of delivery of the new firefighting unit, a firefighting zone for this department will be established which will include all areas which were instrumental in helping us financially obtain the equipment. This area to date includes all of Halstad Township and approximately the west two miles of Anthony Township in Minnesota, also Herberg Township and the northeast corner of Elm River Township in North Dakota. These areas have cooperated 100 percent and we will make every effort to provide them with the very best in fire protection.

The annual meeting of the Halstad Fire Department will be held on the 4th of May at which time officers for the coming year will be named. The present officers at the company are: C. M. Gilbertson, Chief; Vernon Kragness, 1st Asst. Chief; Fritz Herberg, 2nd Asst. Chief; Eldor Aalgaard, Treasurer; and Robert Jorve, Secretary." (Halstad's Valley Journal, April 21, 1954)

1954 May 19
estimated at \$80,000.

Fire destroyed the Twin Valley Cooperative Elevator with a loss

1954 May 26
- a café owned by John Baum and an implement company storage shed owned by Donald and Raymond Sanders. Loss was estimated at \$3,000 on the café and \$5,000 on the implement firm building.

1954 May 26 "Fire Destroys Two Perley Business Buildings Early Saturday Morning –

The residents of Perley were aroused at 5:00 on Saturday morning by a fire which destroyed the John Baum Café and the building just north of it which belonged to Mrs. Benora Tendeland of Racine, Wis. The fire was first discovered by James Wells who lives in a trailer behind the buildings. Both buildings burned to the ground and nothing was salvaged. The Sanders Implement Co. lost all their farm equipment which they had stored in the vacant building but it was covered by insurance. Baum's loss of the café, fixtures and personal belongings was partly covered by insurance.

Perley fireman wish to thank the Ada, Halstad, Hendrum and Moorhead fire departments for coming to Perley to help fight the blaze. The Village of Perley wishes to publicly thank the firemen who came also." (Halstad's Valley Journal, May 26, 1954)

1954 May 26 The Ed Bauer farm home at Felton was destroyed by fire that week.

1954 June 2 "Halstad Votes to Build New Fire and Village Building –

The Halstad Village Council met Monday afternoon in the office of councilman Walter Schubert to canvas the votes made in the special election held Thursday. With only 84 votes cast out of a possible 300 plus, the results showed 54 in favor and 28 opposed to the building of a new village hall to house fire trucks, other fire fighting equipment, and council rooms.

C. J. Hastad was retained as consulting engineer and Harley H. Johnson associated architect.

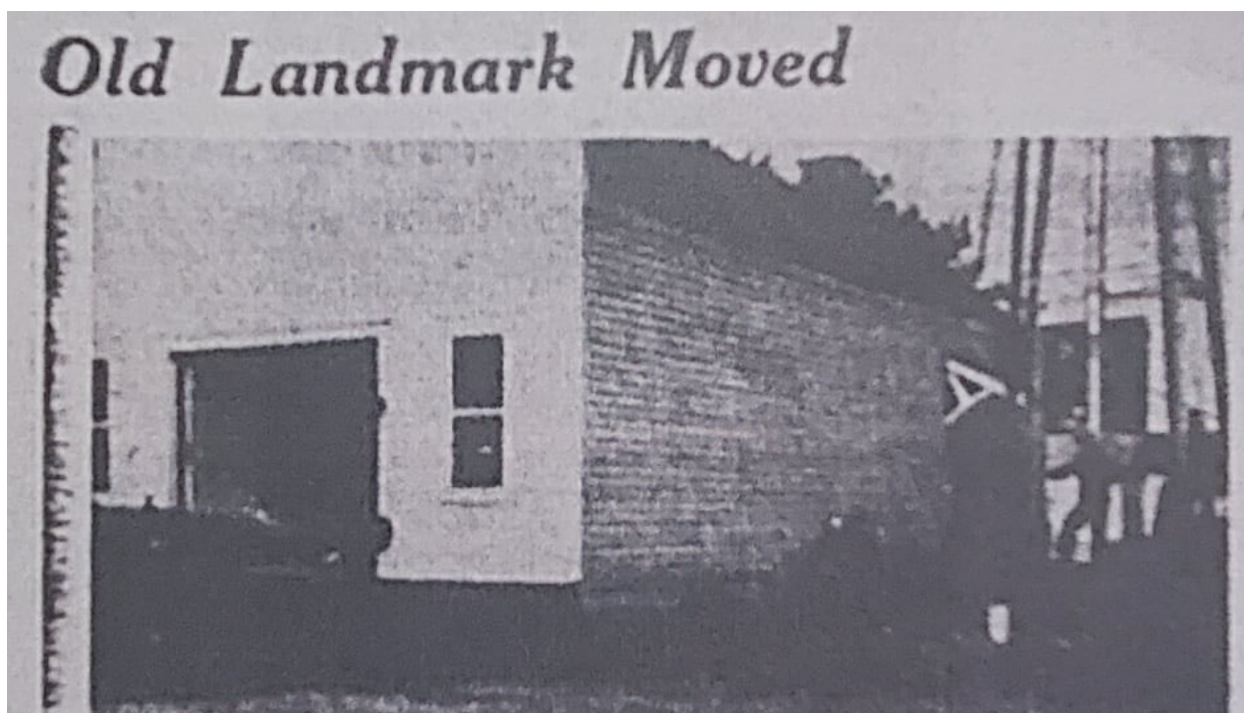
The same (unreadable) Mayor Milton Carlson and L. H. Oftedahl, clerk, met with C. M. Gilbertson, Fritz Herberg and Vernon Kragness, representatives of the Halstad Fire Department, and Mr. Hastad, in the office of the latter for discussion and plan making of the project." (Halstad's Valley Journal, June 2, 1954)

1954 June 14 "Fire Meeting Called Thursday at Hendrum –

The Hendrum Community Fire Department has arranged for a meeting to be held at the Hendrum School Auditorium on June 17th, 1954 at 8:00 p.m. Mr. Cherry, the State Deputy Fire Marshal, will be present at this meeting to answer any questions which may come up as to the organization of a Community Fire Department. Everyone interested is invited to attend. It is understood that an enlarged Volunteer Fire Department, capable of servicing Hendrum Village as well as the surrounding Townships and communities will be discussed at this meeting." (Halstad's Valley Journal, June 14, 1954)

1954 June 22 "Old Landmark Moved –

One of Halstad's oldest buildings was moved to a new location last week. The old village hall and council rooms were moved to village-owned property near the Legion Recreation Center, where it will be used as a warehouse. A new concrete village building will be constructed on the lots to house two fire trucks and equipment and provide council and meeting rooms. The new building will be another fine improvement to a growing and progressive community." (Halstad's Valley Journal, June 22, 1954)



1954 July 14 “Fire Fighting Demonstration Staged Sunday, demonstration Staged Following Old Settlers Picnic, by Volunteer Fire Dept. –

The firefighting demonstration, which the Halstad Fire Department put on at the old ball park south of town Sunday afternoon at five, attracted a large audience and created much interesting and understanding in the various phases of firefighting and handling of equipment. For the past month, Chief Clarence M. Gilbertson and his volunteer assistants have been drilled by Henry Reitan, the training officer, who also in charge of the exhibition. In the line-up with Mr. Gilbertson were Fritz Herberg, 1st Assistant; Vernon Kragness, 2nd Assistant; George Anderson, driver; Robert Jorve, in charge of the booster line; Dale Carlson, hose man; Tony Gardan, Archie Kardor and Edgar Aalgaard, ladder men; Alfred Stole, hydrant; Oscar Bretland, nozzle; and Lee Helgeson, mask. C. J. Hastad did a splendid job in explaining each evolution as it came out. A large brush fire was put out by the use of a hose while a small fire was checked by a CO2 extinguisher. Mr. Helgeson demonstrated the use of the mask in putting out an oil fire with a fog nozzle and Mr. Breiland demonstrated going up the ladder with a hose line. There wasn't a hitch in any of the assignments carried out by the firemen.

A bit of history closed the program when Gilbertson and Herberg on one side and Reitan and Kragness, the opposing side, put on a water fight. Joe Schou served as referee. Though no decision was announced publicly, it was the general opinion that the Training Officer and the Second Assistant were the victors.

This demonstration was the Halstad Fire Department's contribution to the Old Settlers' Day program.” (Halstad's Valley Journal, July 14, 1954)

1954 August 11 “More Fire Protection –

As proud and happy as a boy with a new toy, that is how the Halstad Firemen felt Friday night as they tried running the new fire truck and displayed it to the public. The

prized truck was brought to Halstad earlier that day by four volunteer firemen, Henry Reitan, Fritz Herberg, Oscar Breiland and Elder Aalgaard, who drove to Luverne, Minnesota, Thursday afternoon to get it. It is fully equipped with ladders, hose, tanks and all the requisites for firefighting.

The public was invited to inspect the truck between the hours of 7 and 9 on Friday night, but interested people continued to view it until about 11 p.m. Free coffee and doughnuts were served to about 200 adults and popsicles were given the children as treats from the Halstad Fire Department. Wives of the firemen served the coffee while the men were on hand to explain the truck, its equipment, and also the resuscitator, all of which was shown at the Halstad Light and Power Plant.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, August 11, 1954)

1954 September 15 “Shelly Lady Reveals History of Burned-Out Community Named ‘Polk City’, by Mrs. John Busse, Shelly, Minn. –

I wonder if there are any pioneers living today who remember an old trading post northwest of Shelly named Polk City? It was located near the Edwin Tronnes farm. His dad, Theodore Tronnes lived near there at the time.

In 1881, Polk County was divided into two and the southern half became Norman County. The population of Polk City was estimated at about 200 or less. This was before the Great Northern Railroad was built.

There was no school or church, but there was a flour mill, an elevator, blacksmith shop, post office, grocery store and hardware store, barber shop, restaurant, dance hall and ONLY three saloons.

There were four steam boats going up and down the Red River between Moorhead and Fort Garry, which is now Winnipeg, Canada, carrying grain and freight. It was lots of fun for the youngsters of Polk City to watch the steam boats come in, we can imagine. They also enjoyed going across the Red River on a ferry into North Dakota.

I don’t know if I’d feel safe with horses on a ferry. They might get scared and run into the river. I have never heard of this happening though.

A fire broke out in the flour mill and most of the buildings burned to the ground. So, there was no more Polk City after that. I do not know the exact year of the fire, but it was in the eighties.

The post office was moved to Colenso, located on the Stanley Holte farm near Shelly, and after a few years it was moved to the John Ueland farm where Martin Sandvik now lived. They named the post office Kalmer. Here it remained until Shelly was built. ...”

(The remainder of the story is not printed as it does not concern the fire.) (Halstad’s Valley Journal, September 15, 1954)

1954 October 26 “New Village Building –

Halstad will soon have a new municipal building to house its fire department, and quarters for the ‘City Dads.’ The walls are well on their way up, and before long work will be started on the roof which will be a steel beam, 20-year bonded roof with 2 ½-inch Cemex, an insulation. The tile is being laid by Ludvig Norem and M. Gaasland, with Oscar Brown assisting. The glazed tile walls are 12 inches wide. The council rooms will be 20 x 44 ft. and will be available to the public as quarters for small meetings. The volunteer fire department will have 26 x 44 ft. quarters for their two city and country trucks, and other

equipment. The new building is another forward step for Halstad.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, October 20, 1954)

1954 October, date unknown

“In October of 1954, Kenneth Ellefson of Ada, purchased the telephone office in Perley, and a ninety-nine-year lease was obtained from him for a site on which construct a fire hall. The cost of this lease was \$50.00. In 1955, the present fire hall was built. Nick Nelson was the contractor.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1954 November 9 Perley: “Motion: Committee to make plans for Fire Hall. Committee: Nick Nelson, John Skarsvaag and Oliver Lee.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1954 November 10 A fire at the Bob Skalsky farm northeast of Ada destroyed an old unused potato house.

1954, date unknown “The fire hall was constructed in 1954 with Alfred Enger’s crew doing the work. It was originally constructed with a flat roof, but in 1981 a gable roof was constructed to cure leakage problems.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)



Hendrum Firehall, built in 1954.

1954 date unknown

1954, date unknown “Bonds issued for new fire hall. A. C. Enger was awarded the principal contract.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1955

1955 January 5 Fire at Halstad destroyed the interior of the Manley Furuseth Café.

1955 January, date unknown The Hagen Building, on East Main Street in Halstad, burned to the ground. (The) “building is the Hagen building, the family lived upstairs and the lower level was used for storage of feed and bran sacks until it was remodeled and converted into a restaurant by Bennie Hagen. Bennie was an accomplished piano player and he had his own orchestra, called the ‘Toe Ticklers’, famed Peggy Lee once visited and sang at Bennie’s Restaurant. Mrs. Orvin Ohnstad was operating the café business at the time the restaurant and the adjoining building burned in 1955.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1955 January 26 “Furuseths Given Pleasant Surprise Monday Evening –

Mr. and Mrs. Manley Furuseth were greatly surprised on two occasions within a few days. One Friday night, Mr. Furuseth was expecting Floyd Gift to call on a matter of business, but instead six men representing friends of the Furuseths in this area appeared. Mr. Gift, John Sulerud, Henry Reitan, Gilmer Dokken, Carroll Snustad and Elmer Foss presented the Furuseths with a gift of money and extended the best wishes of the community. The men enjoyed a visit and coffee before bidding them good night.

On Monday, Mrs. Furuseth’s brother, Ingman Stenerson of Moorhead, invited them to drive to Gonvick with him. While they were gone, their brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews had a TV set installed in their apartment to replace the new set they lost in the fire. Completely overwhelmed were the Furuseths when they discovered it that evening upon returning home.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, January 26, 1955)

1955 February 9 “Burned Business Buildings May Be Replaced in Hendrum; Hendrum Man Reportedly Considering Building New Fireproof Structure -

Hendrum’s \$30,000.00 fire loss may have a brighter side after all.

Informed sources have reported to the Valley Journal that one of Hendrum’s prominent residents is seriously considering the erection of a fireproof structure to replace the two buildings destroyed by fire early last Thursday morning.

The fire was a very serious blow to Hendrum, in as much as meant the loss of two buildings and three business places.

Destroyed were the Coffee Shop, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Kolness, the Hendrum Recreation, operated by Robert Brooks, and the Hendrum Café, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kurowski, who lived on the second floor with their four children.

Owner of the building housing the Coffee Shop and the Recreation Parlor was Mrs. James Brooks of San Bernadino, California, and the owner of the Hendrum Café building was “Tubby” Ohnstad. Of Moorhead.

The Coffee Shop building formerly housed the Hendrum Drug Store. The Hendrum Café was formerly the J. J. Hagen residence.

Heat from the big fire was terrific, causing several cracked windows across the street. The tile wall of the Johnson Fairway Store was damaged and will have to be replaced, it has been reported.

Fortunately, a light southeast wind was blowing at the time of the fire. A stronger wind from any other direction could have resulted in in disaster to the Ostenson, post office, and Smith buildings too.

Firemen from Grandin, N. D., Halstad and Ada, were called to help the Hendrum firemen and their early arrival was credited with saving the remaining six buildings in the block.

Hendrum fire chief, David Dyrendahl, said of the fire, of undetermined origin, started in the Coffee Shop.

It was discovered by two men driving by on U.S. Highway 75 about 1:30 a.m., and was brought under control about 4 ½ hours later.

The motorists, who were unidentified, aroused residents of the Ernest Johnson home who turned in the alarm.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, February 9, 1955)

1955 February 9

“Fire Destroys Three Hendrum Business Places in 1955 –

A disastrous fire at Hendrum destroyed three business places and damaged adjoining buildings. Destroyed were the Coffee Shop, operated by Lawrence Kolness; the Brooks Pool Hall, operated by Robert Brooks; and the Hendrum Café, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kurowski, who with his family resided on the second floor of the building.

The fire also damaged the east wall of the Johnson Fairway Store, and it was thought the wall would have to be replaced. The heat from the fire also cracked a few window lights on the buildings across the street, but no heavy damage resulted to these places. Fortunately, there was but a light wind that morning, or considerably more damage could have resulted to the Main Street business buildings.

Damage was estimated from \$25,000 to \$30,000, plus un-estimated smoke, water and heat damage to adjoining buildings.

Firemen from Grandin, Halstad and Ada were called to help the Hendrum firemen and their early arrival was credited with saving the remaining six buildings in the business block.

The fire apparently started in the rear of the Kolnes Café and Recreation Parlor. The two businesses were located in a single building, a partition separating them.

The fire was discovered by two unidentified motorists driving on Highway 75 through Hendrum about 1:30 a.m. They aroused residents at the Ernest Johnson home who turned in the alarm.

First arrivals on the scene checked the building for occupants and found the Kurowskis, their four children and an employee, Peter Olson, still sleeping.

They were aroused, wrapped in blankets and helped to safety. The family was temporarily housed at the Orvis Lura residence.

The buildings were fully insured and the Kurowskis also had some insurance on their personal belongings.

In the early days one of the buildings housed the Hendrum Drug Store and the Douglas Veterinary office and the other building was the former J. J. Hagen residence and business place.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1955 February 16



1955 March 2 “New Buildings Will Be Built at Hendrum – New Restaurant and New Barber Shop Will Be Constructed in Near Future:

Work will start on two new buildings in Hendrum as soon as weather permits.

Sherman Kolness will have a 22 x 26-foot fireproof restaurant building constructed on the lot next to the Fairway Store.

A. Lasbo, Hendrum barber, will have a new barber shop building constructed on next to the restaurant.

Contract for construction of both buildings is held by Cletus Boeddecker of Halstad.

Both buildings will be constructed from pumice (light weight) blocks. Each will have a rock-faced front, which will greatly enhance the looks of main street of this progressive Hendrum community.

The roof will be a twenty-year bonded one, states Mr. Boeddecker. The floor will be cement with asphalt tile covering it.

The two buildings will replace the structure destroyed by fire this winter.

Construction of the building is hailed as good news everywhere. Apparently 1955 will be a big year in Hendrum with be a big year with the paving crew stationed there, a new \$10,000 fire hall set to be constructed, and a new Standard Oil Station set to be built.”

(Halstad’s Valley Journal, March 2, 1955)

- 1955 March 9 “Remodeling of Furuseth Building Begins Here –
Mr. and Mrs. Manley Furuseth are in the process of rebuilding their structure which was razed by an early fire January 1.
Cletus Boeddecker and his staff of workers are on the job at the present time replacing rafters and roofing. The building will be restored much the same as the original plans and it is estimated the cost of repairing will run into the neighborhood of \$10,000. Unestimable at this time is the cost of replacing equipment in the café.
Mr. and Mrs. Furuseth hope to resume business in the future but the extensive work to be once will delay the opening for some time.”
(Halstad’s Valley Journal, March 9, 1955)
- 1955 March 23 Hans Sethre was named Chief of the Ada Fire Department.
- 1955 May 25 “Large Crowd Out for Shelly Carnival Friday –
Power Mower Won by Karl Diehl of Hillsboro; Fire Dept. Gets Receipts:
A good crowd attended the annual carnival of the Shelly Fire Department Friday evening in the VFW Hall.
Karl Diehl of Hillsboro was the lucky winner of the power mower; Orrin Eidsmoe of Nielsville won the Mixmaster and Anton Holm of Halstad won the rod and reel.
Bingo was the chief interest at the Friday evening event.
In expressing appreciation on behalf of the Shelly Department, Chief Orris Halvorson stated: ‘We are very satisfied with the turnout and we appreciate the splendid cooperation we received in selling tickets.’” (Valley Journal, May 25, 1955)
- 1955 July 6 The new fire hall at Perley was nearing completion.
- 1955 July 26 Perley fire hall completed.
- 1955 August 3 “Lightning Bolt Starts Fire –
A bolt of lightning struck and destroyed the house on the Kenneth Sandem farm during an electrical storm Monday night. The fire was noticed by Mr. and Mrs. Elmore Bowhall who were returning to their home, near the Sandem farm from Averill where they had visited. The fire was raging out of control when the Perley fire department arrived on the scene. Sandem was not there at the time. The structure was partially covered by insurance.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, August 3, 1955)
- 1955 September 14 “Perley Plans Fire Equipment Demonstration –
The Perley Fire Department will hold a demonstration of its new truck and equipment on Saturday evening, Sept. 11th. The new truck is owned jointly by the Village of Perley and Lee Township.
The Perley Civic and Commerce Association will serve lunch. Proceeds will be used for painting the new fire hall.
The public is invited and urged to attend.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, September 14, 1955)

1955 October 12 “Fire Threatened at McNamee Farm Friday, Three Fire Departments Called Out to Prevent Spread of Fire in Hay –

A fire that could have been serious broke out in hay bales on the Douglas McNamee farm southwest of Halstad Friday afternoon.

Three fire departments (Halstad, Hillsboro and Grandin) were called out to prevent the fire from spreading to buildings on the farm.

The hay bales were in the feed lot alongside of buildings.

The fire was a persistent one, and was put out only after a bulldozer was secured to push the bales away.

Loss was confined to 1,200 bales of hay.

But had the fire broken out at night, it could have been a different story you are reading.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, October 12, 1955)

1955 October 26 “Shelly Rejected Fire Insurance Reclassification, Lack of Facilities for Fire Fighting Equipment First Reason for Rejection –

The Village of Shelly has been rejected in its application to have the insurance rates reclassified from Class 10 to 8, according to information received by Mayor Lester Larson and Clerk H. J. Olson.

The rejection was received from the Fire Underwriters Inspection Bureau, the bureau which investigated the situation in Shelly the first part of October.

Had the reclassification passed, it would (have) meant a considerable saving in insurance premiums for Shelly residents.

The letter stated: ‘We shall list for you the improvements which must be completed to attain a Class 8 classification.’

‘The present fire station is inadequate in size and construction. All fire department apparatus and equipment should be housed in a separate building of good construction, provided with hose drying facilities, heat, light and telephone.’

Several other minor complications were mentioned too, included a fire limits area and a building code.

Last summer, Shelly residents turned down a proposition to build a new fire hall. In lieu of the circumstances, it is possible the matter will be re-submitted to the voters next winter for their consideration. (Halstad’s Valley Journal, October 26, 1955)

1955 December 7 The Kirkebo Lutheran Church at Perley burned to the ground. It was a total loss, estimated at \$30,000. It was built in 1891.

1955 December 3 “Kirkebo Lutheran Church of Perley Burned to the Ground in 1955:

The Kirkebo Lutheran Church at Perley burned to the ground in December of 1955 with the building and all the furnishings being a total loss estimated at about \$30,000. The church was built in 1891 and its towering steeple was a landmark in Perley.

The fire is believed to have started from a furnace explosion which was caused by low voltage and a power cutoff in the village just previous to the fire which in turn was caused by a transformer burning out on a pole near the church. An REA lineman, who was installing a new transformer on the pole, first noticed the flames in the church and spread the alarm shortly after 9 p.m.

Volunteers of the Perley Fire Department headed by Nick Nelson, and volunteers from Hendrum and Ada Fire Departments fought the blaze and kept the pump house from burning which is located near the church.

During the previous five years, the congregation had spent \$12,000 in renovating and remodeling the church, including new wiring, a new furnace, new modern facilities, and a rebuilt front; adding a new mother's room and coat room. There was \$12,500 insurance on the building and furnishings.

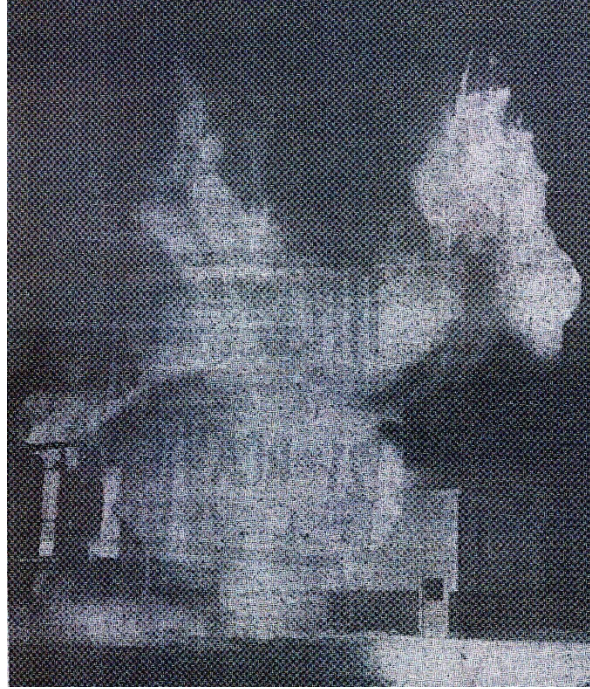
The church was repainted just before the cold weather set in. The congregation was planning to celebrate its 75th anniversary the following spring in 1956.

Courageous and not to be disheartened congregation members, while sadly watching their church burn, immediately planned a meeting of the church council for the next morning under the leadership of Pastor Raymond L. Larson, where plans were made for the future. Also present at the meeting was Pastor A. E. Hanson, president of the Northern Minnesota District. It was decided that the entire congregation would meet at 2 p.m. on Friday afternoon, Dec., 9th, at the village auditorium to select a building committee and begin plans to build a new church. It was also decided that all church activities would carry on as usual and would be held in the village auditorium and with some small groups to meet in the school and in the homes." (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change", Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1955 December 7

"Fire Levels Perley Church Thursday Night –

Thursday evening, Dec. 1, fire alarms called Perley residents from their homes and moments later word spread that Kirkebo Lutheran Church, its towering steeple and landmark here since 1891, was burning beyond control. Older than the village itself, its history began at a wedding reception on November 20, 1880, when the heads of nine families discussed the formation of a church. Two months later, January 21, 1881, the church was organized by Peer Stromme, pastor and world traveler, whose travel articles in the Norwegian language would make farmers stop their plows to read them. The church was originally constructed four miles southeast of Perley, but was moved later in town. The only tangible remains of that structure is the large weathervane indicating the year of its erection, 1891. Over \$12,000 has been spent on the structure in recent years in renovation and remodeling. (Halstad's Valley Journal, December 7, 1955)



1955 December 7 Edward Shaide was elected mayor at the Borup Village election. A proposed bond issue of \$10,000 for the erection of a community building and a fire hall was voted down 40 to 23.

1955 December 28 Fire completely destroyed the Ed Manning farm home northeast of Ada.

1955, date unknown Perley

“The first fire committee of Nick Nelson, John Sarsvaag, and Oliver Lee. During 1955, a meeting was held to organize a community fire department, and an organizational meeting consisting of the City Council and the Lee Township Board was held. They decided to advertise for bids for a new fire unit, resulting in the purchase of a 1955 Model R-166 International truck, with Luverne tanker equipment. This unit was purchased for a net delivered price of \$5,200.00, from the Sanders Implement and Hardware Company of Perley. The monies to pay for this fire unit came from the City of Perley, Lee Township, Halstad Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and donations of interested individuals outside the Village and township area.

The men that have served as Fire Chief through the years have been: Nick Nelson, Robert O. Nelson, Hubert (Mac) Johnson, and John (Jack) Tracy.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1956

1956 January 11 Rebuilding plans for Kirkebo Lutheran Church in Perley, which was destroyed in a December 3rd fire, were being made. The congregation was to celebrate its 75th Anniversary in the fall.

1956 January 25

“Fire Strips Smiths of Home and Belongings –

Fire Sunday night, which started from an oil burner explosion in the Don Smith apartment above the Smith Locker Plant, left the family stripped of home, furnishings and clothing. Damage has been estimated at \$7,000. Mr. Smith credits ‘Halstad’s good fire department’ with saving the building and keeping damage in the locker plant at a minimum.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith and son were visiting Galesburg, N.D. Sunday. About 7 o’clock in the evening, Mrs. Smith’s brother Merlin Peterson, went to the apartment to watch TV. He had scarcely sat down on the davenport near the oil burner when it exploded and flames shot up along the wall. He managed to shut off the oil and then called the fire department. Not one thing was salvaged from the apartment. The Smiths arrived home to find their place in flames. They had missed a call placed to them at Galesburg by about five minutes. Insurance covered damage to the building only.

It is hard to realize that the Halstad Municipal Liquor Store. Which is housed in the front part of the building, was not damaged at all and the locker plant only slightly damaged by smoke and water when the room to the east of it on the ground floor and the apartment are charred shells.

Though the temperature was below zero, there was no wind to hamper the firemen in fighting this blaze.

Mr. Smith is keeping the locker plant closed this week until the smell of smoke leaves before resuming business. In time he hopes to either rebuild or buy lots and build a locker plant somewhere else in town.

For the present time the Don Smiths are staying with the Palmer Smiths. Friends and relatives are offering aid in every way possible to ease the tragic situation. Fortunately, Merlin suffered only a slight burn on one hand in his narrow escape from the flame enveloped room. Fighting firemen were served coffee by the Halstad Bakery.

* * * *

Two other fires were narrowly averted over the weekend. Saturday morning an oil burner blew up in the office of Stenerson Brothers Lumber Co. Luckily, Stener Stenerson and his helper were both in the office at the time. Only damage was soot and odor. The odor still lingers in the office.

* * * *

The Dale Carlson family returned home from Argyle Sunday evening about 7:30 to find their home filled with fumes from an oil burner. They arrived home just in the nick of time for the fire pot had burned out in their heater and the fire was starting up in the chimney. John Sulerud had to install a new heater that very night.

With the prolonged cold spell, oil burners have been going at top speed. These recent happenings will no doubt make everyone heater conscious.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, January 25, 1956)

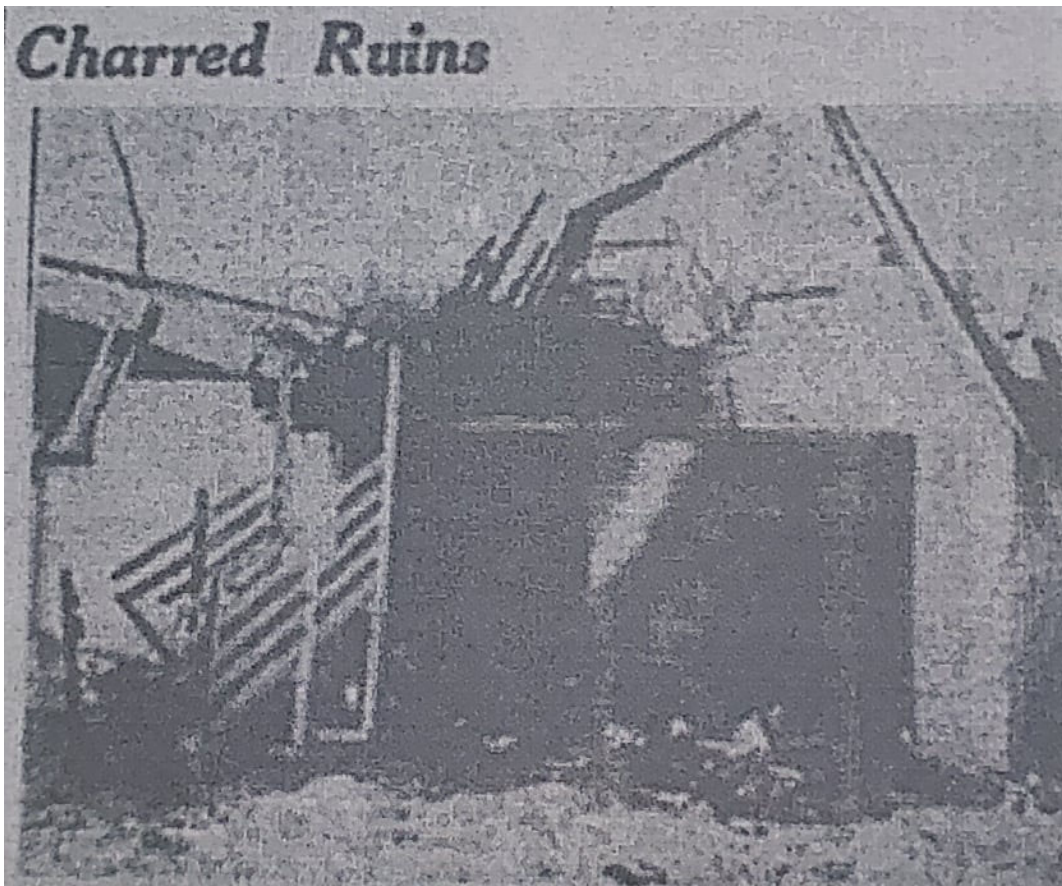
1956 February 8

“Charred Ruins –

A fire Saturday morning caused about 50 per cent damage to a barn on the Juel Furuseth farm Saturday morning, the loss being partially covered by insurance. The blaze was discovered by insurance. The blaze was discovered about 6:45 by George Sulerud

who lives across the road from the farm. The Halstad Fire Department extinguished the fire.

A lot of hay was lost in the fire but fortunately a valuable collection of antique vehicles, of which Mr. Furuseth is a collector, was moved to safety. The wind carried cinders from the barn to the roof of the house but snow protected it from damage. Smoke, 'so thick you could walk on it,' lingered for a time after the blaze was out. Origin of the fire is not known. (Halstad's Valley Journal, February 8, 1956)



1956 February 22 Fire that week destroyed two store buildings in Twin Valley as three fire departments fought the blaze in six below zero weather. Destroyed were the Coast-to-Coast Store owned by Walter Walz, and Odin's Market, owned by Odin Hovdeness.

"Sunday Fire Destroys Three Business Buildings –

Fire of major proportions wiped out three of Twin Valley's oldest business buildings Sunday evening – the Coast-to-Coast Store with its adjoining furniture annex, owned by Walter Walz, and the building occupied by Odin's Market owned by C. E. Bjerke. Both were located on the south side of Main Street and were erected nearly seventy years ago.

The fire was discovered and the alarm turned in by Mrs. Ida Thorpe, on duty in the kitchen of the South Side Café, at shortly after 8:00 p.m. She discovered smoke seeping into the café and investigation determined the source at the furnace room of the Coast-to-

Coast Store next door. The fire had apparently gained considerable headway when first noticed as the building was completely filled with dense smoke which shortly afterwards began pouring out in billowing clouds with intermittent flashes of flames.

The local Fire Department responded promptly to the alarm but it soon became apparent that the flames were getting out of control and aid was summoned from Ada and Ulen. Fire Chief Arnold Otterson reports that between forty and fifty firemen were engaged in battling the fire but in spite of all efforts and an adequate water supply with five hoses operating full force the fire was not brought under control until near midnight. Fortunately, there was little or not wind, although the temperature was near 10 below zero, and the Red Owl Store on the east and the South Side Café on the west sustained only minor damage. The smoke damage to the South Side Café has necessitated redecorating and it will be closed for another day or two while this work is being completed.

Volunteer help from a large number of local people moved groceries and fixtures from Odin's Market into Saker's Produce, Margie's Café and Twin Valley State Bank before the fire got to that building. Monday, the stock was moved into the C. L. Peterson building adjoining the Gamble Store and Mr. and Mrs. Odin Hovdeness are in business again, although they have had quite a time in sorting and displaying the merchandise.

The financial loss is estimated at approximately \$35,000, partially covered by insurance.

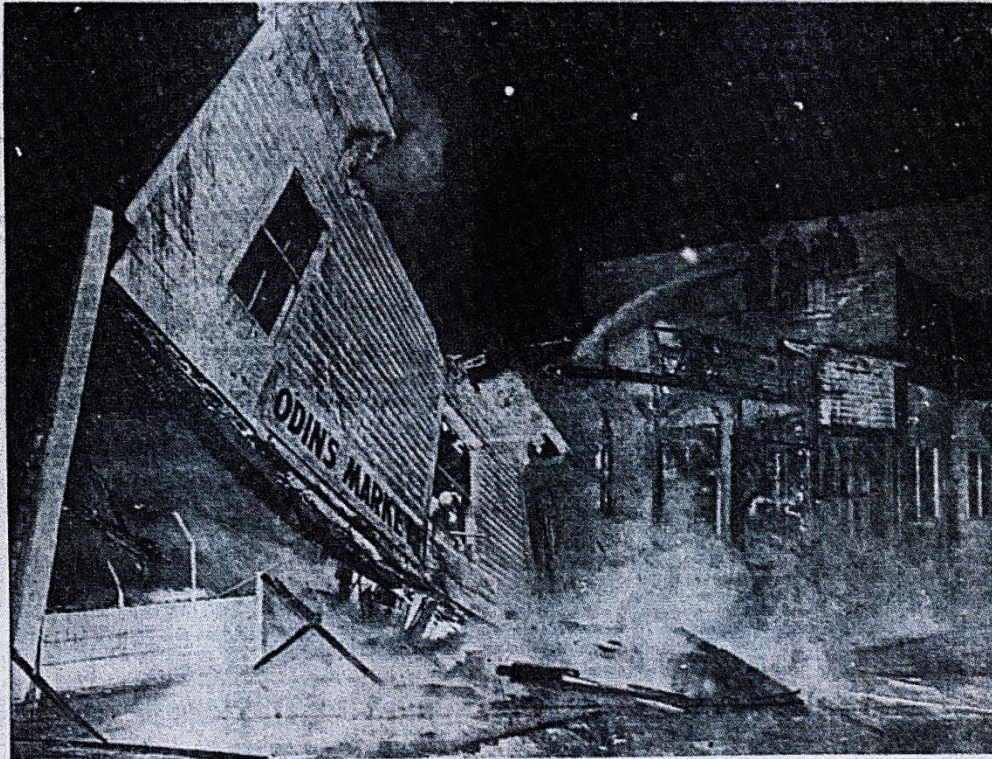
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Walz have been in business here only since December 1, when they purchased the Coast-to-Coast Store from M. L. England. They came to Twin Valley from New Rockford N. D. The stock was valued at between \$12,000 and \$14,000, fully insured, while the main building and its annex were valued at \$3,000 with \$5,000 insurance.

The two-story frame building owned by C. E. Bjerke was valued at between \$8,000 and \$10,000, with insurance to the amount of \$5,000 and Mr. Hovdeness carried \$2,000 insurance on his \$4,000 stock of merchandise.

The fire was the most spectacular conflagration this area has witnessed for some time. Cans of exploding oil, raging flames and dense clouds of smoke all added to the excitement and attracted people from over a wide area. News of the fire went out over the radio and television and spectators were here from as far away as Battle Lake.

Credit should be given to the local Fire Department and their assistants from Ada and Ulen for keeping the flames within bounds and preventing their spreading to other vulnerable areas." (Twin Valley Times, February 22, 1956)

Scene of Twin Valley's Recent Fire



John Pfund, Norman County Index) He picked a psychological moment to snap the above photo just as the front of Odin's Market was collapsing following the complete destruction of the Coast-to-Coast Store and its furniture annex. All three buildings were completely leveled by the flames which raged for four hours before being brought under control.

(Photograph by John Pfund, Norman County Index; published in the Twin Valley Times, February 29, 1956)

1956 March 21 "Oyster Stew to Feature Open House at Halstad's New Village-Fire Hall, Firemen, Village Fathers Plan Special Observance Next Wednesday –

Halstad's city hall, a project which was started two years ago, is now completed and the Halstad Firemen and Village Fathers will celebrate the event with an oyster stew Wednesday night, March 25th, at seven. A distinguished speaker at the supper will be State Fire Marshal G. A. Cherry. Fire chiefs of Moorhead and Crookston, Remley and Herbert, respectively, have also accepted invitations to the supper.

Countless hours of volunteer labor, given by the men of the entire community, made possible the erection of this much needed building at a great saving to the village, a building which truly is a credit to the community.

The city hall provides room for the Halstad Fire Department and houses two fully-equipped trucks, a meeting place and a modern kitchen where coffee can be made at any time. Most any evening you can find fellows polishing the fire equipment or doing other thing work to keep things ship-shape. The coffee pot is always on. A collection was taken among the firemen to stock the kitchen with dishes. Constructed of tile, the building is heated electronically.

Members of the Halstad Fire Department are as follows: C. M. Gilbertson, chief; Fritz Herberg, 1st assistant chief; Eldor Aalgaard, 2nd assistant chief; Henry Reitan, instructor; George Anderson, Oscar Breiland, Dale Calrson, Lee Helgerson, Bucky Wang,

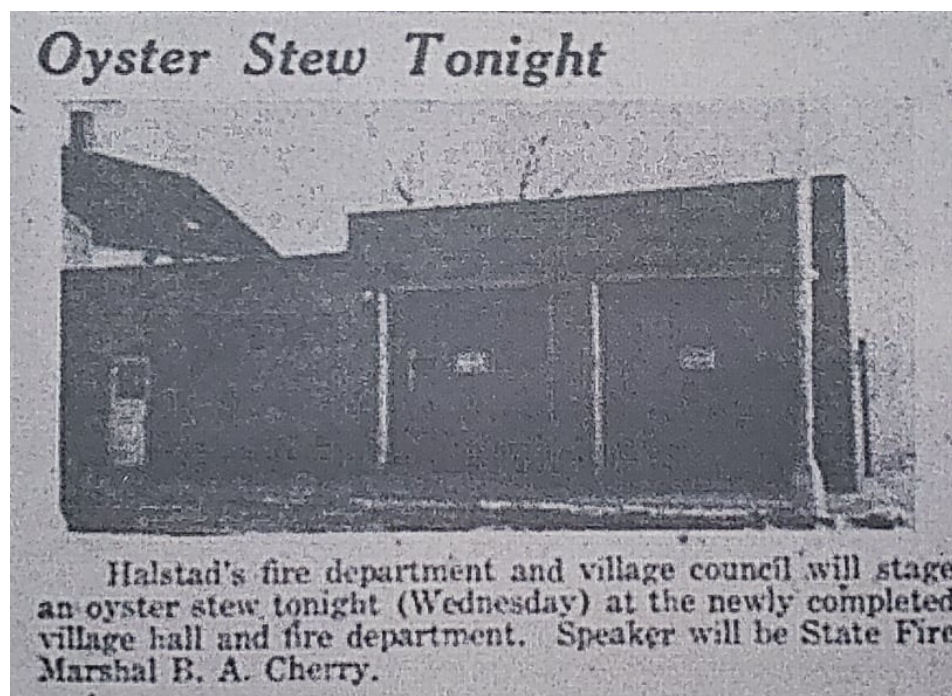
Clair Dittberner, Leonard Johnson, Roy Sather, Robert Jurve, Gunder Stenerson, Joe Schou, Alfred Stole, Everett Knowles, Ebert Sheppard, Larry Foley, and Virgil Anderson.

These twenty, fully trained firemen are divided into three squads for answering alternate night calls to the rural areas.

Businessmen, Halstad High School and local elevators aided the townships in securing a truck for rural service. Halstad and Herberg townships and parts of Anthony and Elm River Townships are served. George Henderson, secretary of the Halstad Mutual Fire Insurance Co., was a big spark plug in promoting this rural service and spent many hours driving around the country. Other donations to the fire department included a specially built ladder bought by the Halstad High School making it possible to scale the top of the school building; a resuscitator and fireproof raincoats from the Halstad Women's Club. Gerald Lehner, former Halstad music teacher, taught the firemen how to use the resuscitator. Having been a member of a rescue squad in Minneapolis, Mr. Lerner was very efficient in using it. The firemen provided three ladders for the rural truck and their own smoke masks.

Farmers who donated gravel hauling for the building were: Oscar Viker Jr., James Paulsrud, Charles Harrington, Gunder Steenerson, Art Anderson, Just Furuseth, Lafe Viker, Johnnie Holland, Carl Opgrand, Sam Aarestad, Bennitt Aarestad, Raymond Arneson, Lynn Steen, Erwin Warner, C. L. Olson, Henry Paulsrud and D. E. Viker.

The following men donated labor on the building: Jacob Kulstad, Bennie Gilbertson, Vernon Kragness, Jarl Sundseth, Julius Ramstad, Lionel Gilbertson, Reuben Gilbertson, Roger Stole, Ordean Anderson, Ludvig Norem, Joe Skavdahl, Nels Snustad, Carlton Opgrand, Stener Stenerson, Kenneth Johnson, Wallace C. Olson, Wendell Oien, Tony Gardas, Freeman Brown, Warren Ehrichs, McKinley Nygaard, Franklyn Forseth, Paul Jorgenson, Fletcher Gift, Jack Sipe, Ole Sundseth, Torkel Nygaard, Gene Thompson, Carroll Snustad, Adolph Stene, Clayton Drake, Oscar Reitan, Archie Kaldor and Ted Olson." (Halstad's Valley Journal, March 21, 1956)



1956 March 28 At the annual meeting of the Ada Fire Department, the following officers were elected: Harry Storslee, chief; Art Marsten, assistant chief; H. S. Thune, treasurer; Dick Simonson, secretary; Dr. Loken and Dr. Kinkade, department physicians. Seventeen fire calls had been answered by the department during the year.

1956 August 29 An explosion hospitalized two Borup boys and their grandfather; Carlen, 18, and Alan, 14, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Carlea Mattison, and Carlot Mattison. The burns were suffered in an explosion in a granary on their farm on the east edge of Borup when they were attempting to drive out some bees from a hive.

1956 September 5 The Ada fire Department had purchased a new fire truck, fully equipped, at a cost of \$8,300.

1956 December 5 & 12 “The first organizational meetings (of the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) were December 5 and 12, 1956. On December 5th the meeting was held at 9:30 p.m. with the Executive Board composed of Village Council, Town Board and Fire Department personnel. Prior to this meeting, the Fire Department’s position of Chief had been filled by David Dyrendahl, but at the Dec. 12th meeting, he requested that Paul Hviding be elevated to Chief, which was done. Don Busse was made First Assistant Chief and David Dyrendahl became Second Assistant Chief. Howard Rustad was elected Secretary and Irving Storsved was elected Treasurer. Other members at this time were: Louis Ohnstad, Harry Johnson, Ronnie Chapman, Duane Johnson, Arnold Anderson, Alvin Qualley, Arthur Johnson, Harry McLaughlin, Alfred Enger, Sherman Kolness, Einar Kolnes, Earl Ingberg, Louie Ostenson, Lowell Thorson, Rueben Jacobson, Albert Lang, George Abbott, Willie Schreiner, Dave Evert, John Johnson and Nile Johnson.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1956 December 26 The Louis Kappes family lost all their personal belongings and furniture in a fire.

1957

1957 January 23 “Fire Destroys 7-Room House on Granfor Farm, Perley –
Fire of undetermined origin completely destroyed a seven-room house and garage on the Julius Granfor farm on Monday afternoon. Due to disrupted telephone service apparently caused by the storm, family members were not able to call the fire department. The house had been undergoing extensive remodeling since last October and was to be occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Andy Granfor whose marriage took place recently. A number of articles in the house were destroyed as well as a car and trailer parked nearby. There are two other homes on the farm, one occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Julius Granfor and the other by Mr. and Mrs. Palmer Nymark. The loss is partially covered by insurance and plans are to rebuild in the spring.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, January 23, 1957)

1957 January 30 “Fire Tuesday Leaves Family of Seven Homeless Here –

Tragedy in the form of a fire left the Russell Steenerson family homeless in below-zero weather Tuesday afternoon. Believed to have been started by an oil burner, the fire was discovered by Mrs. Steenerson about four o'clock.

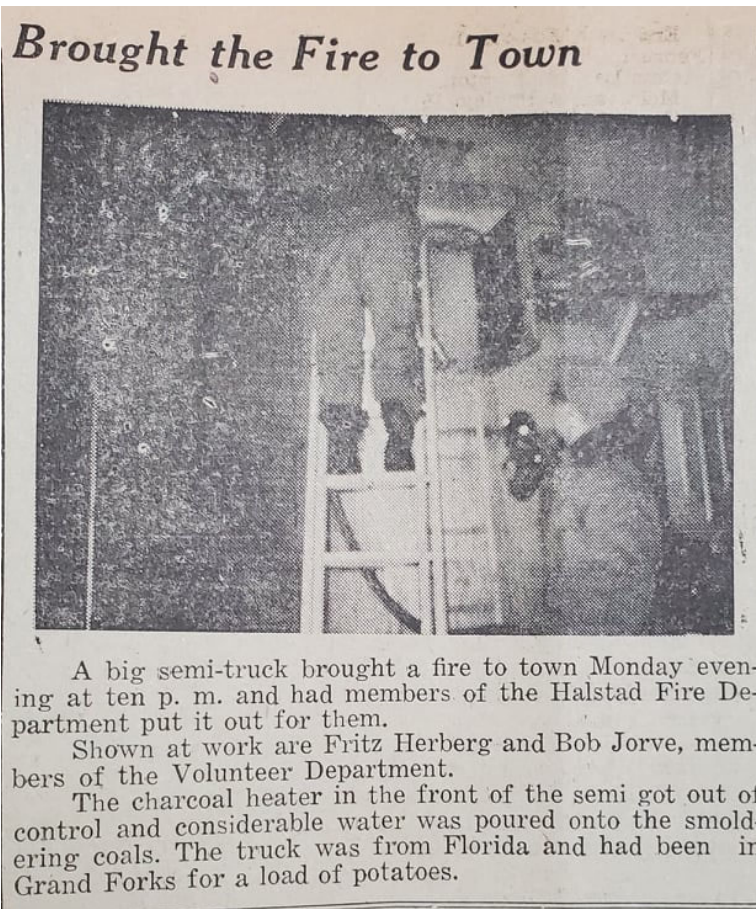
Mrs. Ernest Renfrew happened by with the school bus just as the two youngest girls were being rushed outdoors by their mother and she took the children to the Carl Oien home and Mrs. Steenerson to the Anton Orvik home where she telephoned for help. The Halstad Fire Department arrived but the four-room structure was all in flames and nothing was saved. The loss is only partly covered by insurance. The Steenersons lived 1 ½ miles north of Halstad and had no telephone.

Mr. Steenerson was notified of the fire at the Aarestad Potato Co. where he is employed. The two oldest children attend school so they were not at home. The entire family was housed at the Carl Oien home overnight.

The children range in age from 8 to 2. Earl being 8, Sandra 6, Marcia 5 and Bonita 2." (Halstad's Valley Journal, January 30, 1957)

1957 February 6 Members of the Kirkebo Lutheran congregation and friends, and their pastor, R. L. Larson, were anticipating the use of their new church building that week. Their old church was destroyed by fire December 1, 1955.

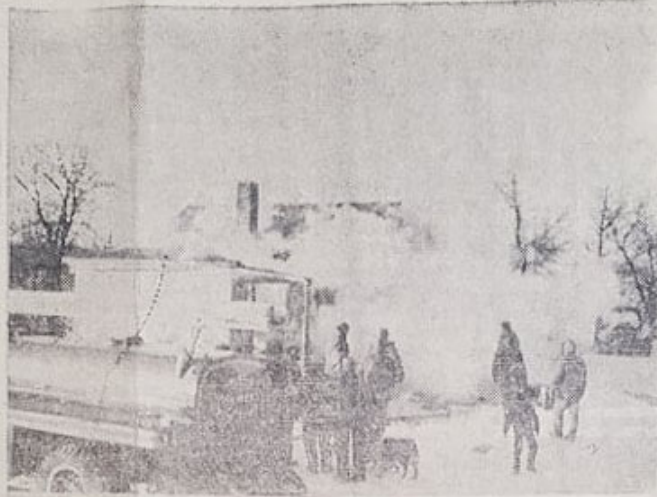
1957 February 6 (Halstad's Valley Journal, February 6, 1957)



1957 February 6

(Halstad's Valley Journal, February 6, 1957)

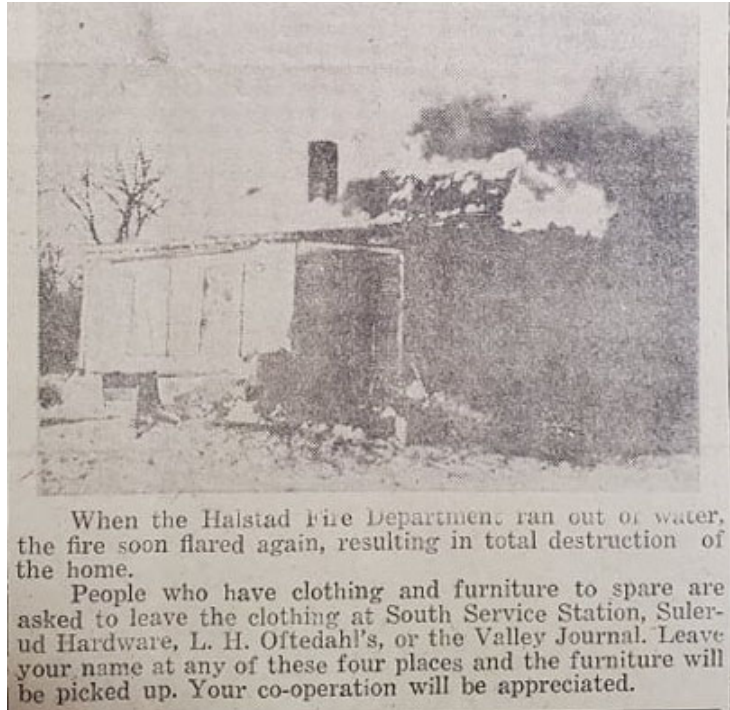
Fire Destroys Home!



A fire can ruin in a few minutes what a man has worked years to attain. On Tuesday of last week at 4:30 p. m. this is how the fire at the Russell Steenerson home looked.



Joe Schou tears away a few burned boards near the entry where the oil burner stood.



1957 March 13 Art Marsten was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department; Al Johnson was assistant chief; Herman Thune, treasurer, and Dick Simonson, secretary.

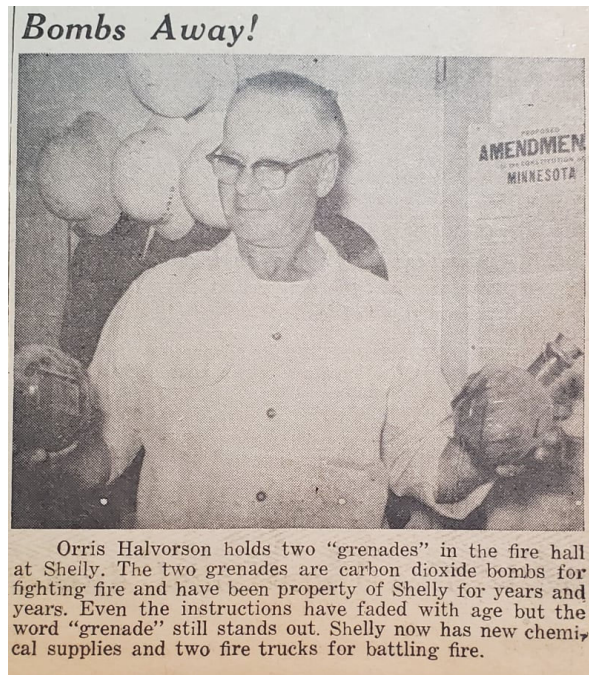
1957 March 20 Nineteen head of cattle perished when a fire destroyed a barn on the Ordean K. Olson farm northeast of Halstad.

1957 March 20 “Fire Destroyed Barn and Livestock Thursday –
Fire completely destroyed the barn, nineteen head of cattle, a fully-equipped milk house adjoining the barn and a tractor at the Ordean K. Olson farm last Thursday afternoon. Mr. Olson was in Halstad and was notified of the fire after a motorist had noticed the blaze and called the Halstad Fire Department.
Whipped by strong winds, the fire was out of control when the firemen arrived at the farm which is located nine miles northeast of Halstad and they could only keep it from spreading to other buildings. The loss was partly covered by insurance.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, March 20, 1957)

1957 March 27 “Fire Department to Meet at Hendrum Monday Evening –
One long blast of the fire siren will herald the monthly meeting of the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department on Monday evening, April 1, at 8 p.m.
So, when you hear the siren at Hendrum Monday, remember it’s fire meeting time!
The fire department meetings will be held the first Monday evening of each month from now on, at which time the siren will blow.” (Norman County Index, March 27, 1957)

1957 June 19 The new Kirkebo Lutheran Church in Perley was dedicated. It replaced the old church, which burned to the ground December 1, 1955.

1957 July 17



1957 July 17
Center –

"New Municipal Building at Shelly Fills Need as Community

In a community like Shelly, a lot can be accomplished when people work together. That was demonstrated when Shelly residents began working for a new community center.

After a \$12,500.00 bond issue had been approved, work was started in July, 1956, building a new 40x60 ft. community structure on a contract basis.

The new municipal building stands on the site of the old Egeness building which was bought by the city from the Egeness heirs.

The new building represents a fine improvement to Shelly. Not only does it represent a 'fire break' on Main Street but the new building is going to mean an insurance re-inspection and a better rate.

Part of the re-inspection is due to the volunteer fire department which now serves Shelly and the rural area.

One-half of the new municipal building houses two fire trucks. One truck is owned by the village of Shelly, and the other by Shelly village, Shelly township and Good Hope township.

One of the fire trucks is fully equipped, while the other is on the process of being equipped. A 500-gallon tank with front mounted direct drive pump is being installed.

In addition, the volunteer fire department has chemical equipment, CO2 guns and dry ice in liquid form.

Heading the 24-man volunteer department at Shelly is Orvis Halvorson, chief. Other officers include: Deo Munter, assistant chief; Lester Tonder, vice president; Bobby Anderson, treasurer.

* * * * *

The new municipal building has resulted in the active volunteer fire department in Shelly. Last month ordinances were published authorizing the volunteer set-up, and rules and regulations governing its operation.

The base contract for the new municipal building was \$12,500.00. The furnace was extra, one-half of which was paid for by the fire department.

The electric and plumbing contracts were also extra.

In addition, plasterers and carpenters provided volunteer labor for completing the interior of the building.

* * * * *

Conservatively speaking, Shelly has a building worth between \$17,500 and \$20,000.00.

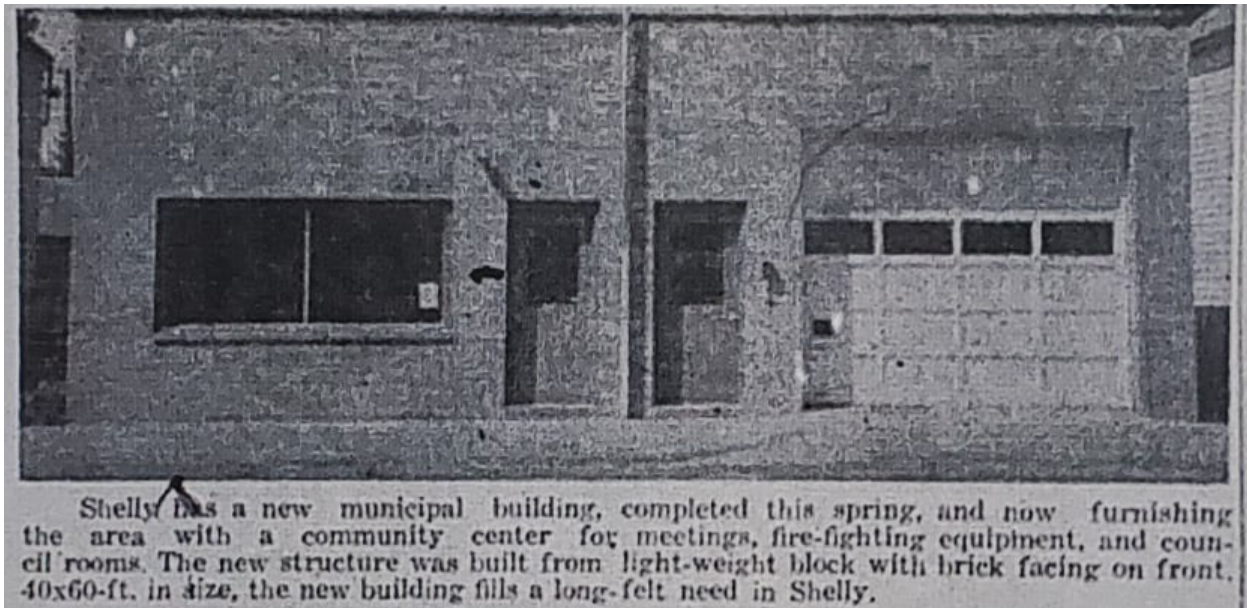
The fire trucks and equipment occupy one-half of the structure: 20x60 ft.

The other half is council rooms, 20x30: the other 20x20 ft quarters are used for community activities.

Shelly's councilmen are: Mayor – Lester Larson, Clerk – H. J. Oien, Trustees – Harry Hemming, Royal Hanson, and John Nelson.

* * * * *

We salute Shelly on their new building. (Halstad's Valley Journal, July 17, 1957)





1957 August 28

“Chicken Coop Damaged by Fire Tuesday –

A chicken coop on the Arneson Brothers farm south of Shelly was damaged by fire Tuesday afternoon. The Shelly and Halstad fire departments were called and the blaze was extinguished. Damage to the building, estimated at about one third, was covered by insurance with the Halstad Mutual Fire Insurance Co. The Arneson brothers were in the process of cleaning the building to make ready for the chickens when the fire was discovered.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, August 28, 1957)

1957, date unknown

Cozy Theater, Twin Valley:

“Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire in 1957.” (“The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”)

1958

1958 January 1

Ida Melaas, 79, resident of Twin Valley, died of severe burns that week after attempting to start a fire in a stove.

1958 March 19

The Ada Fire Department held their election of officers. Elected were: Alvin Johnson, chief; James Fredrikson, assistant chief; Richard Simonson, secretary; H. S. Thune, treasurer; Dr. Loken and Dr. Kinkade, physicians. The annual report showed the department had answered 21 fire calls during the year.

1958 June 11

“Valley Theater Destroyed by Fire Sunday Evening:

Fire broke out in the Valley theatre here Sunday at about 5:30 p.m., and before the blaze could be brought under control, the building and its contents was practically a total loss.

The local fire department had the assistance of the Ada fire department in keeping the conflagration under control. The building, a frame structure with sheet metal exterior covering walls and a stucco front, is still standing but the interior is almost completely burned out.

Brent Vieths, owner and operator of the theatre, informs us that the loss was approximately \$20,000, partly covered by insurance. He has no immediate plans as yet but is considering the possibility of continuing in the show business here either with an outdoor theatre or arranging for temporary indoor quarters.

The fire, of undetermined origin, cast forth billowing columns of smoke which could be seen from miles away. Fortunately, there was practically no wind, just a light breeze from the south, which helped considerably in saving the adjoining buildings. Odin's Market, next door, suffered some smoke damage and cracked plaster.” (Twin Valley Times, June 11, 1958)

1958 October 8

The barn at the Bob Skalsky farm northeast of Ada burned to the ground one morning that week.

1958 December 3

The U.S. Post office at Shelly had moved into their new quarters at the village fire hall.

1959

1959 January 21

Fire destroyed the mill at the Ada Grain Co. the previous Friday (January 17, 1959) in 15-degree below zero weather. The ruins smoldered for several days, and early Tuesday morning firemen were called out again to put out a flaming section that started burning.

“On January 17, 1959, fire completely destroyed the mill and a big warehouse of Ada Grain Co. which was located right in the heart of the downtown business district. Fire was discovered about 8:30 in the evening and firemen battled that blaze until 5:00 a.m. the next day. It was a stubborn fire, made even more difficult because the temperature was hovering at 15 degrees below zero.

Fire started on the top floor of the mill which was connected to the main elevator. The issue of the Index reporting this fire said... ‘The main elevator complex was saved from the fire and this was some type of miracle as everything was against that being saved.’

Fire departments from Twin Valley and Halstad responded to a call for help and came to Ada to assist the Ada Fire Department.

The mill and warehouse destroyed in this fire was 40 feet by 80 feet and was built by the late Oscar Bodding in 1845 while he owned and operated the Ada Elevator Co. The inventory of seed, wheat, flax and oats and a good stock of feeds all were lost in the fire. Cliff Natwig, who still resided in the city, was manager at the time.

Three big fire truck pumpers fought the blaze with over 300,000 gallons of water. Many windows in downtown Ada stores were broken and most businessmen were at their places of business watching for fires that could be started by flying burning embers.

At the height of the fire, the glow from it could be seen in all other county towns.

‘This was one of the worst fires in Ada in recent years,’ the Index article concluded.” (Special Supplement to the Norman Count Index, October 10, 1984)



1959 March 2 “Officer changes (in the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) throughout the years as taken from the minutes were as follows: March 2, 1959, Arnold Andersosn elected First Assistant Chief replacing Don Busse and John Johnson, Secretary, replacing Howard Rustad.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1959 March 11 A new 155,000-bushel annex to the Ada Grain Co. elevator had been started; replacing a mill and warehouse section destroyed by fire in late January.