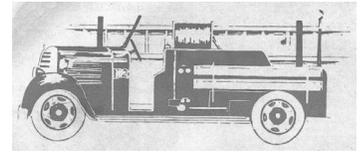


HISTORY OF FIRES IN NORMAN COUNTY



Norman County was a part of Polk County until it became a separate county on February 17, 1881.

Until November 6, 1906, what is now Mahanomen County was a part of Norman County.



NORMAN COUNTY FIRES

This list of Norman County fires is by no means complete.

- Some fires were never reported to local fire departments.
- Some fires were never reported to local newspapers.
- While researching newspapers, the “Good Old Days in Norman County” was used as the preliminary source. Some fires were not reported in this section of the newspaper. It was then filled-out using local newspapers and community history books.
- The Ada library had microfilm of many of the Norman County Index, Norman County Herald, Twin Valley Times newspapers. Unfortunately, there was limited issues of other newspapers such as the Halstad Journal and Gary Graphic. There were no issues from other newspapers: Shelly Signal, Halstad Reporter, Hendrum Review, Norman County Post, Twin Valley Courier, Twin Valley News, Ada Alert, and Puhler’s Sentinel.
- There are no microfilm issues of the Norman County Index beyond 2007.
- Some issues of newspapers were missing.

Community histories were used.

- “The History of Ada, Minnesota, 1876 – 1952” by Lenora I. Johnson, 1952
- “History of Norman County, Minnesota, 1858 – 1958”
- “The Twin Valley Community Story, Diamond 75th Jubilee, 1886 – 1961”
- “Shelly’s Diamond 75 Jubilee, Shelly, Minnesota, July 14 – 16, 1972”
- “In The Heart of the Red River Valley, A History of the People of Norman County, 1976”
- “Under Prairie Skies, A Centennial History of Ada, Minnesota”, by Lenora I. Johnson, 1976
- “Flom Centennial, July 2 -3, 1977”
- “Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”
- “Halstad, A Century of Memories, Halstad Centennial, 1883 – 1983”
- “Perley, Minnesota Centennial, 1883 – 1983”
- “The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”
- “This Is Our Story, Shelly, Minnesota, 1897 – 1997”
- “Halstad... Another Quarter Century – The Memories Continue, 1983 – 2008”

The following are fires that occurred in Norman County as reported in the Norman County Index. The dates shown are the publication dates of the newspaper rather than the actual date of the incidents.

Dedicated to the men and women of the various fire departments who risk their lives to protect our lives and property.

Compiled by the Norman County Historical Society, 2021.

FIRES OF NORMAN COUNTY

“Up to 1884, there seems to have been no organized fire department. When a fire started, all available men were supposed to aid in putting it out, but apparently, they did not meet with much success. Two fire companies were organized in 1884 with C. H. Brown as chief and C. F. Gaetke and Fritz Andrist as captains. They tried out the new pumps and decided that their recently acquired was very satisfactory. In December, the organization of the fire department was perfected. A constitution and by-laws were adopted and Peter Ramstad was chosen as secretary with Charles Meyers as president.” (“The History of Ada, Minnesota, 1876 – 1952” by Lenora I. Johnson, 1952)

1884

1884 April 25 The Sterrett elevator in Ada was discovered to be on fire at 2:00 o’clock Sunday morning of that week and had made such headway that it was impossible to save the structure. About 5,000 bushels of wheat were also destroyed.

“The Sterrett elevator fire spurred the village council to supply more adequate protection by installing a 300-barrel water tank and giving Andrews Brothers and Hampton a contract to build an engine house for the village at a cost of \$550. Two hand pumps, a quantity of hose, and other apparatus costing in all \$1,140 were ordered.” “The History of Ada, Minnesota, 1876 – 1952” by Lenora I. Johnson, 1952

1884 May 9 Fire protection was receiving some consideration here and the village council were planning to purchase some apparatus for that purpose.

1884 August 29 The Index was advocating the purchase of fire equipment for the village and the organization of a fire department.

1884 August 29 A fire on Monday morning of that week in the building used by Petre Bros., as a lumber office, caused \$200 damage to the roof and building before it was brought under control.

1884 September 5 Henry Kappel lost about seventy-five shocks of wheat by fire that week.

1884 September 5 The village council had ordered two pumps for fire protection, one for each side of town, together with 1,000 feet of hose.

1884 October 3 Henry Bremer lost two stacks of wheat that week by fire while threshing.

1884 October 3 The village council had ordered two fire carts and 1,000 feed of hose and all necessary appliances for \$1140.

1884 October 24 The village council let a contract to Andrews Bros. & Hampson for \$555 to build a fire hall at the water tank 20x30 feet, two stories high, the second story to be used by the council as well a by the fire companies.

1884 October 31 The new fire engines were received here that week and were given a tryout.

1884 October 31 A. H. Baker had the misfortune that week to lose a barn and twelve tons of hay by fire. A fire also burned the barn on the Fred Hampson farm below town with a stack of hay, a mower and a hay rake.

1884 October 31 Prairie fires that week burned a short railroad bridge about six miles south of Ada. The passenger train Saturday night, running at 45 miles an hour, approached the bridge and the engineer did not discover the burned bridge until too late. Due to the high speed the engine went across the bridge but the passenger coaches jumped the track and went into the ditch. No one was injured but it took twelve hours to clear the track.

1884 November 7 The Ada House had a narrow escape from a fire that week. Fire started from the stove in the barbershop, spread to some towels and then to the barber chair. The fire was not discovered until the chair was about burned.

1884 Nov ember 14 A meeting was called that week to organize two fire companies, one for the east side and the other for the west side.

1884 November 21 At a meeting held that week for the purpose of organizing a fire company for Ada, C. H. Brown was chosen temporary chief and C. F. Gaetke and F. Andrist temporary captains of the East and West side teams. A committee consisting of C. F. Gaetke, A. H. Baker and A. J. Wright, was appointed to draw up a constitution for the department.

1884 November 28 The fire bell for the engine house had arrived.

1884 December 7 The village fire department organization was completed at a meeting held that week, the following officers being elected: chief, Chas. Brown; first asst., Chas. Meyers; second asst., Peter Ramstad; foreman, West Side, Chas. Gaetke; foreman, East Side, Fred Andrist; hose foremen, Frank Gaetke and John Shely.

1885

1885 January 2 Monday of that week the residence of S. W. Fisk, Sr., was burned to the ground by a fire which is believed to have originated from the chimney.

1885 May 1 A fire on Sunday evening of that week destroyed the Pillsbury and Hulbert elevator in Ada together with 60,000 bushels of wheat. The fire was discovered by Night Watchman Charles Snyder and the whole town soon became busy extinguishing small blazes from flying sparks. The elevator was first started here in 1876 by Wm. Shields.

“In April 1885, fire destroyed the elevator and warehouse, which contained 60,000 bushels of wheat at the time. This was insured, and the farmers were paid 75¢ a bushel (the market price). There was little sleep in Ada the night of the fire for sparks from the burning elevator threatened to ignite the depot and other buildings on the west side. Men were kept busy pouring water on the roofs and extinguishing the sparks as they fell, while the fire engines were in use all night subduing the flames of the elevator fire. (“The History of Ada, Minnesota, 1876 – 1952”)

1885 May 8 Forty-one carloads of damaged wheat were saved from the elevator that was destroyed by fire in Ada the previous week.

1885 May 8 A fire discovered in the rear of Thompson Brothers’ saloon early one morning by Night Watchman Chas. Snyder, was put out with but little damage to the building although it appeared for a time as though the entire block might be destroyed.

“One Saturday evening of May, 1885, they had a chance to test their new equipment, when a fire broke out in the Thompson Brothers’ saloon, threatening other business places in the block. C. R. Snyder, night watchman, discovered the blaze and rang the church bell to call out the citizens to help save the saloon and other buildings. The new fire department did a good job of putting out the fire. The next morning was Sunday, and the church bell rang again, this time summoning the people to services.” (Special Supplement to the Norman County Index, October 10, 1984)

1885 May 8 Nearly a hundred citizens attended a meeting that week to organize a fire department for Ada. Officers elected were: C. H. Brown, chief; W. B. Sheffield, first assistant; John Shely, second assistant; S. A. Farnsworth, secretary; C. H. Meyer, assistant secretary and Sylvester Peterson, treasurer. Of the sixty-two members who joined at that time only one remains in Ada today, Hans Holden.

“In that same month a reorganization meeting of the fire department was held with a hundred citizens present. There were sixty-two members who signed the rolls of the two fire companies. Charles Snyder was elected captain of Company I; A. O. Rolfe, foreman of the engine; E. J. Kloety, hose foreman. C. S. Putnam was selected as captain of Company II, with Charles Gaetke as foreman of the engine, and F. H. Flatau as hose foreman. Other officials chosen were: Charles Brown, fire chief; W. B. Sheffield and John Shely, assistant fire chiefs; S. A. Farnsworth, secretary; C. H. Meyers, assistant secretary; and Sylvester Peterson, treasurer. A new constitution and by-laws were adopted.”

“It was at this time that the village council ordered a three-hundred-pound fire alarm bell for the engine house, four hundred feet of rubber hose, and a sixteen-inch speaking trumpet for the fire department. They also voted to dig a well near Harvey’s store to insure

a more adequate supply of water for fighting fires.” (Special Supplement to the Norman County Index, October 10, 1984)

1885 May 15 The bridge across the ravine at the head of Long Lake was consumed by fire Tuesday night, which started from a prairie fire someone had set. The bridge was a good one costing \$400.

1885 August 7 At a meeting of the Ada fire department Jesse Barnes was elected second assistant chief to succeed John Shely, who moved to Duluth.

1885 August 14 A barn belonging to Frank Mitchell, who resided in Lee township, was burned that week, together with eight horses, the fire starting from a smudge which had been made to drive off mosquitoes.

1885 August 21 Lightning set fire to the Chas. Lamb barn five miles northeast of Ada Monday night, and it burned so rapidly that it was impossible to get his four head of mules out.

1885 September 11 A separator belonging to Frank Gaetke and three wagons were destroyed by fire on evening that week on the Frank Mitchel place southwest of town.

1885 September 18 The Northwestern Hotel had a narrow escape from burning down by a fire, which started in one of the rooms.

1885 October 2 L. L. Jacobson lost four stacks of grain that week by fire, which started from a steam engine.

1885 October 16 Jacob Snyder was appointed fire warden by the village council.

1885 October 16 High winds that week spread prairie fires rapidly, and Mr. Meyers residing just south of the Marsh River, near town, had a narrow escape from losing his hay and barn, the fire coming within five feet of the barn before it was put out.

1885 October 23 The dwelling house on the Jacob Pederson farm in Wild Rice was totally destroyed by fire.

1885 December 4 A meeting of the Ada Fire department was held that week to consider the incorporation of the department.

1886

1886 January 8 The Annual meeting of the Ada fire department was held that week and all the old officers were re-elected.

1886 March 26 The fire department was called out twice that week to extinguish fires at the Union Hotel and at the J. V. Campbell residence.

1886 May 14 Carl Huebner, who lived several miles north of Ada, lost his house by fire that week.

1886 September 10 C. Jacobson of Perley lost four settings of wheat by fire that week, with an estimated loss of 2,000 bushels of No. 1 hard wheat.

1886 October 8 Fire from a threshing engine burned 300 bushels of wheat for J. J. Mjolsness of Hendrum.

1886 October 8 Nelson Mott's house on his farm near Borup was burned that week together with its contents, the blaze starting from a prairie fire.

1886 October 15 Prairie fires near Beltrami did considerable damage when several barns, together with some livestock, hay and wheat stacks were burned.

1886 November 5 Ten stacks of hay were burned and several farm buildings threatened by a prairie fire a mile east of Fossum that week.

1887

1887 January 7 At a meeting of the Ada Fire department, the following officers were elected: Chief, C. H. Brown; first assistant, W. B. Sheffield; second assistant, Jesse Barnes; Capt. No.1, E. J. Kloety; Capt. No.2, J. N. Galloway; treasurer, S. Peterson and secretary, J. N. Galloway.

1887 January 28 The residence on the G. L. Thorpe farm, just north of Ada, occupied by Ole Melberg, burned to the ground that week. Most of the household goods were saved.

1887 May 9 A prairie fire near Twin Valley destroyed Oscar Trandum's stable.

1887 May 23 There was a bad fire that week in the woods along the Red River near Halstad and all the farmers turned out to protect houses and property.

1887 May 23 Five hundred people participated in the Home Lake celebration of May 17. At the exercises Rev. Johnson presided, there was music by the Fossum choir led by Prof. Scarvie and speeches by Scarvie, Ole Aalgaard and n. H. Fletcher. While firing salutes at the celebration with an anvil a three-year-old son of Nels Ingebretson was killed by an explosion.

1887 July 1 The granary on the A. K. Strand farm was struck by lightning and burned with buggies and other articles.

1887 November 4 A prairie fire near the South Branch, believed to have started from a spark from a passing engine, destroyed hay stacks belonging to E. C. Hawkins, Nils Bjerke and L. Lewis.

1887 November 11 Hans Paulson and E. C. Hawkins lost hay stacks in a second prairie fire in Rockwell.

1887 December 30 The Northwestern elevator in Ada burned that week, together with 30,000 bushels of wheat.

1888

1888 March 24 A. A. Rinerson's residence in Lake Ida was destroyed by fire that week together with all his furniture.

1888 April 6 Peter Schmits house in Shelly was burned down the preceding week.

1888 May 12 Robt. Percival's residence, eight miles southwest of Ada, burned that week.

1888 June 23 Lightning on Sunday of that week caused considerable damage southwest of Ada. A machine shed was burned together with a binder and a plow, two horses and a colt were killed, and a chimney was demolished.

1888 July 21 Fred Keppler's house east of Ada burned that week.

1888 November 30 Henry Beck, the McDonaldsville farmer, lost his barn, 14 cattle, 3 horses, 4 hogs and 600 bushels of oats by fire that week. He had no insurance and it was a heavy loss, as he had no stock left.

1888 November 30 A house and barn belonging to G. Heier, near Twin Valley, was burned that week.

1889

1889 March 1 The G. N. (Great Northern) section house near the Wild Rice River burned that week.

1889 March 17 The house of John Roe of Sundal burned that week, leaving the family destitute.

1889 April 28 Fire Chief Brown urged the village council to purchase a steam fire engine.

1889 June 14 The L. Mauritsen residence at Shelly had been destroyed by fire recently.

1889 June 28 The residence of Thomas Davidson six miles north of Ada, burned to the ground that week, together with some household goods.

1889 July 19 A big tank holding 215 barrels of water had been erected by the council near the Northwestern Hotel for fire protection.

1889 October 4 The livery barn belonging to J. E. Campbell burned Monday night that week and several horses were lost. Gary Motz and Charles Nei were heroes in saving horses and got most of them out. Three small buildings adjoining were also burned. Two were barns belonging to Jake Volland and Gary Thorpe and the other a building owned by W. W. Campbell.

1889 October 11 The dwelling house of Wm. Patterson in Winchester burned that week, the fire being caused by a lamp explosion. Mrs. Patterson was at home and barely had time to get her child out of a bedroom window. The loss was \$1,000.

“Another Fire –

Last Tuesday morning about half past eight o’clock, the house of W. C. Patterson, in Winchester, about 8 miles from Ada, burned to the ground with all its contents.

The cause was an explosion of a lamp. Mrs. Patterson rushed out to give alarm and, on her return, found the room she had just left, all on fire. She succeeded in getting through the flames and rescuing her sleeping child in the farther room. She escaped through a window after putting the little girl out the same way. Mr. Patterson was in Ada at the time. There was \$100 insurance and \$200 on the contents, which will cover about half the actual costs, while of course many things were burned that money could not replace.” (October 11, 1889)

1889 October 18 Insurance agents adjusted the Campbell livery stable fire loss, allowing \$1,750. Mr. Campbell thereupon bought the old village hall for a new barn.

1889 November 18 E. W. Livermore, a farmer near Borup lost his house, barn, machinery and hay by fire that week.

1890

1890 February 7 Sunday night about 9:30 fire discovered in the residence owned by G. L. Thorpe, just south of the building occupied by Nelson Mott. The fire was in the attic and was caused by a defective stove pipe. An alarm was rung and the engine was quickly at work, but the fire was extinguished without its help. The loss was small.

1890 March 14 William Bennefeld's house burned down last Saturday together with all its contents, nothing whatever was saved. This is a heavy loss to Mr. Bennefeld, as he is not in the best of circumstances. There was a \$600 insurance on the house, but as there is a mortgage on the house, the insurance company controls the insurance.

1890 August 1 The barn and machine shed on the Frank Seign farm southeast of Ada were burned to the ground together with nine head of horses and some of the farm machinery.

1890 August 8 F. S. Flowers lost his machine shed by fire that week, supposed to have been set by tramps.

1890 August 15 A colonist sleeper on the passenger train caught fire through some bedding just before reaching Ada and spread rapidly. It was run up to the water tank in Ada and the fire put out, but not before it had burned most of the car.

1890 October 3 George Johnson of Lee lost his separator by fire.

1890 October 3 Wm. Bennefeld lost several stacks of wheat and a number of sacks of wheat by fire Wednesday, which caught from the threshing machine. The threshing machine was saved almost by miracle, the men being able to get the separator out with the tractor engine with only slight damage. This is quite a loss for Mr. Bennefeld as he has suffered greatly from fire and otherwise lately.

1890 October 3 Lars Ferwick of Twin Valley lost his separator, a wagon and a lot of wheat and oats by fire that week.

1890 December 19 Julius Heier and others lost a lot of hay in a Rockwell prairie fire.

1891

1891 March 13 The farmhouse belonging to Herman Natwick, ten miles east of Ada, was burned to the ground together with all the furniture.

1891 May 22 The village council decided not to buy a steam fire engine, but ordered hose for the old engines.

1891 July 31 Tuesday evening of that week lightning struck Wesley Jenkins' granary and burned it to the ground. Some of his machinery was stored in the building and that also was burned.

1891 August 28 The engine house at the Great Northern tank was destroyed by fire that week, but the tank was saved.

1891 October 23 A separator belonging to Messrs. Leirnes and Remark burned up that week on the Julius Bloom farm, together with two stacks of wheat.

1891 November 20 Arne Hagen's house in section 32 Hegne, burned that week, together with some wheat and \$150 in money.

1892

1892 January 15 Sheriff Gunderson arrested a man in the eastern part of the County who was charged with setting fire and burning up a setting of wheat on a neighbor's farm.

1892 April 22 Michael Wolf lost his new barn in a prairie fire. He started a prairie fire and it got beyond his control, burnt all his hay, feed, harness, and barely gave him time to get his horses out. The barn had just been completed on his new farm and we understand he carried no insurance.

1892 April 29 Five thousand trees on the J. J. Mahla farm in Home Lake were destroyed by a prairie fire.

1892 April 29 H. Halvorson of Rockwell lost a barn, two horses, five calves twenty sheep, a hog, harnesses, hay and seed oats in a fire, which started while he was burning off a pasture. There was no insurance. Julius Halvorson was badly burned while taking out the horses.

1892 October 7 The little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. Stehr suffered burns that week which resulted in her death, when she got too close to a burning straw pile.

1892 October 14 Sylvester Peterson's house on his farm in Shelly Township was burned to the ground that week. Starting upstairs the fire gained too big a start to put it out.

1893

1893 January 6 Ed Nims narrowly escaped serious injury, when a stove at the opera house exploded. He was starting a fire and used gasoline, thinking it was kerosene.

1893 January 20 During the year 1892, Ada had but one fire, a barn north of town, probably worth \$150, being entirely consumed. The Index commented that it was remarkable when it was considered that our business section was composed of frame buildings three blocks long on each side of the track.

“During the year 1892, Ada had but one fire, the barn north of town, probably worth \$150.00, being entirely consumed. It is remarkable when you consider that the business portion is composed of a chain of wooden buildings three blocks long on each side of the track, giving fire a chance to make either side a mass of ruins in very short order. We have escaped while the towns Warren, Argyle, Hallock and other places with about the same population as Ada have been visited by fires destroying in some incidents the main portions of town. Ada has been very fortunate and in the mean time the insurance companies have

been reaping a bountiful harvest and undoubtedly have some cases received more than the amount of the risk taken, in premiums, but our little city has suffered no set back as is generally the case where you have a fire. What will 1893 do for us?" (Norman County Index, January 20, 1893)

1893 March 10 Thorpe Bros. and Co. have begun suit against various insurance companies for the face of their policies on their elevator burned last fall at Buffington. The companies refused to pay the full amount, claiming the grain in the elevator was not worth the face of the policies, but they offered to compromise, which offer was refused. Phelps & Martin are attorneys for Thorpe Bros.

1893 April 7 Halstad was to have a special election on April 11 to vote on bonding the village for the purchase of a fire engine and expenditures for waterworks.

1893 May 19 Sam Fulton's house on his farm nine miles southwest of Ada, was burned to the ground that week. Most of the household goods were saved.

1893 May 19 The fire department was re-organized that week with Louis Hintze as chief; Fred Andrist, first assistant; Chas. Gaetke, second; and E. B. Larson, secretary. Joe Kloety and Martin Bang were foremen, Frank Gaetke axman, Joe Norby and Theo. Lystad, ladder men.

1893 June 16 Just as Tuesday evening's passenger train was pulling into Ada, a telegram was received from Felton stating that a culvert between Borup and Felton had been burned by a prairie fire and to notify the engineer. It took until three o'clock in the morning to get it into shape for use.

1893 July 28 The only dwelling house in Borup was destroyed by fire Sunday morning. A flat warehouse was all that remained at the site they call Borup.

1893 September 15 A fire on the east side threatened to wipe out the business block Friday night but good work by the local fire fighters saved the block. The fire started in the Knut Sandvig barn which was within forty feet of three frame buildings, the J. L. Mjølness furniture store, Rostad's barn and Dr. Stuart's barn. The furniture store caught fire but the flames were extinguished, and only one barn was destroyed.

1893 September 22 J. C. Norby was elected secretary of the Ada fire department at a meeting held that week.

1893 September 29 The Davidson boys had a narrow escape from burning their threshing rig while threshing for John Merkins. One stack of wheat was burned.

1893 October 13 Another disastrous fire on the East side was averted when the boarders at the Northwestern Hotel succeeded in putting out a blaze that had started in a barn back of the hotel.

1893 October 27 Two boxcars were burned up on the freight train when within a mile and a half of Ada on Saturday of that week. Hoboes in a car had lit a match to recover a half-dollar one of them had lost in the hay, and the hay caught fire. The hoboes jumped out of the car while the train was traveling at 15 miles an hour, one of them being quite badly injured. Before the railroad men discovered the fire it had spread to a carload of shingles. They brought the two cars to Ada but were unable to save them. Passenger traffic was tied up a few hours until the track was cleared.

1893 November 3 A prairie fire burned up several stacks of hay belonging to Mr. Kennedy of Spring Creek a few days before.

1893 November 17 The residence of W. Larson, together with the household furniture, burned to the ground that week.

1893 December 8 The well-known Faith flour mill in the eastern part of the county was burned to the ground Tuesday morning of that week, caused presumably from a defective stove pipe, and entailing a heavy loss.

“That winter (1892), the mill burned to the ground, with a total loss of the building, machinery, 500 bushels of wheat, and 200 sacks of flour. There was no insurance on the building or its contents, with an estimate of loss to be over \$7,000. In the summer of 1894, the mill was rebuilt.” (“The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”)

1894

1894 January 12 Andrew Berg, living four miles west of Twin Valley, lost his house and furniture by a fire the previous week.

1894 June 1 A bridge near Jake Hadler’s farm was burned down by a prairie fire that week.

1894 June 15 Lauritz Berland of Strand township lost his barn and windmill by fire one afternoon that week.

1894 August 31 Nick Legros lost his threshing separator by fire that week.

1894 October 26 A barn belonging to Thos. Lee of Green Meadow was burned that week together with some livestock, hay and machinery.

1894 November 16 Wesley Jenkins lost his house by fire Tuesday noon of the week, the fire starting from the kitchen stove

1894 December 21 While Deputy Auditor Herringer was at work in the court house on evening that week a large lamp exploded, scattering burning oil in all directions. However, with

the aid of other parties, the flames were put out without damage except to the deputy auditor's overcoat, which was burned beyond use.

1895

1895 February 8 The cold weather had been severe on the supply of water held in reserve for firefighting purposes. It required two men daily to keep the tanks open and free from ice.

1895 February 22 The government school buildings on White Earth reservation were burned that week, by fire from an exploding lamp. There were 300 pupils in attendance, and several were injured.

1895 February 22 “The fire engines and hose received a thorough overhauling and the engine room was cleaned out Wednesday.” (Norman County Index, February 22, 1895)

1895 April 19 “The Village Council decided to place a water tank opposite the St. Anthony elevator, for fire protection. The elevator well is one of the best in the village and the waste water will more than supply the tank. A call for bids is published in another column.” (Norman County Index, April 19, 1895)

1895 April 19 The residents of the west side were startled by the cry of fire Sunday afternoon, the alarm coming from the residence occupied by Chancey Jenkins. The fire was discovered in the bedroom occupied by Jerry Boggs, by Mrs. Jenkins, who located the fire by the smell of the burning cloth. Upon entering the room, she found the bed clothes and mattress in flames, the fire having worked its way through the quilts and mattress and dropping on the floor. Realizing that it required immediate action, Mrs. Jenkins rushed to the door and gave alarm, but before help arrived, she had the burning clothes out in the streets, and it was with difficulty the flames were extinguished by those who arrived to help. It was very fortunate that Mrs. Jenkins was at home for if the fire had been given fifteen minutes more time it would have been checked with great difficulty, if at all. As it was, the residents and owners of the business blocks consider it a narrow escape as the wind was blowing from the south at a forty-mile gale. It is thought the fire originated from a cigar.

1895 April 26 At a meeting of the firemen that week Louis Hintze was elected chief, H. W. Thune, first assistant and Chauncey Jenkins, second assistant.

1895 May 17 The Ada Fire department was re-organized that week with Mayor Hintze as chief. The companies were as follows: Co. No. 1 – Asst. chief and captain, H. W. Thune; nozzleman, Fred Andrist, Sever Gang; linemen, Fred Ward, Frank Weygant, John Roesch; engine foreman, Ed Bosworth; laddermen, Pat Dullard, Hans Holden; secretary, Joe Kloety; pumpmen, Theo. Lystad, G. Gilbertson, Chas. Brown, W. C. Patterson, S. McDonald, Nels Johnson, Jake Volland Fred Lanctot, Geo. Weatherhead, Z. J. Farley, C. B. Marsden, Ed Farley and Frank Jaros; Co. No. 2 – Captain, Chauncey Jenkins; nozzleman, J. O. Boggs; hosecart foreman, E. J. Herringer; linemen, S. Peterson, Martin Bang, Wm. Hintze; engine foreman, Peter Lierness; laddermen, T.

H. Enges, Lambert Roesch; secretary, J. C. Norby, pumpmen, Sam Olson. L. L. Gjerald, A. C. Gerber, Chas. Gaetke, A. Stuckey, Chas. Ward, A. J. Vangsnes, A. G. Gerber, D. C. Jones, B. T. Mjolsness, B. Kloety, J. A. Olson.

1895 May 31 L. Chick, residing on the old Chas. Snyder farm northeast of Ada, lost his barn, some harnesses and other items by fire that week.

1895 July 26 The barn on the Wm. Neukom farm east of town burned to the ground Tuesday afternoon of that week, although some of the effects in the building were saved.

1895 August 23 A special election at Twin Valley to bond for a sufficient sum to provide fire protection resulted in a majority of 21 votes for the bonds.

1895 October 25 The citizens of Twin Valley were talking of purchasing an \$1,800 fire engine and also erecting a village jail.

1895 November 1 Bell Bros. lost their separator by fire that week, when a spark from the engine caused the fire during the noon hour.

1896

1896 February 7 The Ada fire department was not called out once during 1895 to fight fire.

1896 April 3 Fire that week destroyed the Nelson Mott residence, together with some household furniture belonging to Wm. Bosworth.

1896 April 21 “In a report sent by Chief Hintze to the state fire association for last year appeared the following questions and answers under the head of fire losses: Whole amount of loss? None. Amount of insurance involved? None. Insurance paid? None. This must be said to be a phenomenal record for a town like Ada, built up as it is with combustible materials. We have been in luck. The fire companies were not called out once in 1895, on account of a fire. The present year has seen a blaze already but we hope it is not an indication that our luck is at an end.”

1896 May 15 A fire that started in a wood pile near the Thune Photo gallery and for a time threatened the buildings in that vicinity, was put out without much damage.

1896 June 26 The Ada Village Council had let a contract for the digging of a flowing well at the fire hall.

1896 July 31 A representative of an Engine Works company was in Ada that week trying to interest the village council in purchasing a fire engine, two hose carts and 1,000 feet of hose for \$2,050. The council decided to consider the matter further at a later meeting.

1896 September 4 The following special item was sent to the Index that week from Twin Valley:

“Twin Valley, Sept. 1 – This morning we had for the first time a chance to try out our new fire engine. Fire started in Stangland’s woodshed and the alarm was turned in. We all rushed over to where the engine is kept and after pulling out Hanson’s buggy, a self-binder and a couple of drags we got to the engine. It was raining hard and the road was muddy but we made good time down to the reservoir where the water is kept. Several of us were then sent around to look for some kindling. This did not take long but it was wet and would not burn, but by pouring considerable lubricating oil on it was decided that it would be all right. At this moment it was discovered that none of us had a match. Several suggestions were made but the thing was settled by someone waking up Agent Fink, who lives nearby and borrowing one. Just as we were about to apply it to the kindling a messenger rushed up and announced that some fiend had run down to the fire the first thing and used on of those little chemical cans and put it out. Feeling is very high over the matter and if the guilty party is discovered it will go hard on him.”

1896 October 2 A fire in the Charles Day residence caused considerable damage to the house before it was extinguished.

1896 October 30 A fire in Wm. Bosworth’s new residence caused damaged estimated at \$50.

1896 December 11 A fire in the Andrews & Hampson hardware store did considerable damage to the office room before the blaze was extinguished.

1896 December 25 A fire in the Ada House called out the fire department one evening that week. A couch and curtain in the sitting room caught fire but was extinguished before much damage had been done.

1897

1897 March 26 Ada people paid a total of \$6,730 in fire insurance premiums during the year 1896, while fire losses were only \$675.

1897 April 8 The village of Halstad paid \$776.90 to the State Bank of Halstad for fire apparatus. (Halstad Reporter newspaper)

1897 April 13 The village of Halstad paid the fire company \$130.75 for one year service. (Halstad Reporter newspaper)

1897 April 21 “Last Saturday, a fire started in some hay by I. Aamothe’s stable. The fire company was called out and the blaze was extinguished before any damage was done.” (Twin Valley Times, April 21, 1897)

- 1897 May 5 “Council Proceedings - ... On motion, Frank Magnusson was appointed fire warden for the village for the ensuing year.” (Twin Valley Times, May 5, 1897)
- 1897 June 11 The August Stilger house at Borup was badly damaged by a fire that week.
- 1897 June 18 The Ada Fire department elected the following officers: chief, Louis Hintze; 1st asst. chief, Fred Andrist; 2nd asst. chief, H. W. Thune; secretary, E. J. Herringer; treasurer, Wm. Hintze.
- 1897 September 3 The barn on the Wm. Neukom farm east of town burned to the ground Tuesday afternoon of that week, although some of the effects in the building were saved.
- 1897 September 15 “Five stacks of wheat were destroyed by fire on John Belfuoil’s farm, on the reservation, last Sunday night. It is supposed to be the work of some evil disposed persons.” (Twin Valley Times, September 15, 1897)
- 1897 September 29 “Some Jews living a few miles north from here had their house destroyed by fire last Monday and all of their household articles and about \$240 was also consumed by the flames. It is supposed that two children had been playing with matches and thus started the fire.” (Twin Valley Times, September 29, 1897)
- 1897 October 1 The Joe Wholpers barn in Ada was burned one evening that week, when a lantern overturned in the hay loft.
- 1897 October 22 The farm home of Gust Ellenson in Hegne was burned to the ground that week, and Mrs. Ellenson suffered severe burns when she entered the burning house to save some money.
- 1897 October 29 The Village Council was petitioning to build a tank in the eastern part of the city for fire protection.
- 1897 October 29 A barn belonging to S. S. Lura, six miles west of Ada, burned to the ground Saturday and seven horses perished in the flames.
- 1897 October 29 Mrs. Gustav Ellefson of Hegne, who was badly burned the preceding week when a fire destroyed the family home, died at the home of her mother, Mrs. Shields in Ada.

“Last Thursday afternoon, the house of Gustav Ellefson on his homestead in section 28, Hegne, burned to the ground and the loss of property was not the most serious result of the fire. Mrs. Ellefson is now lying in a critical condition from injuries received trying to save some money kept in the house and her chances for recovery are doubtful.

Mrs. Ellefson was alone in the house and the fire started while she was in the barn attending to some stock. It was supposed it started from sparks from the stove setting fire to carpet and straw underneath. She rushed into the house to get the money – about \$300

– kept in the sewing machine, but did not succeed in saving it. Her clothes caught fire and though she put out the flames by rolling on the grass, her face, hands and chest were burned in a horrible manner. The unfortunate woman was moved to town and is at present at her mother’s house under medical treatment.” (Originally published in the Norman County Herald, republished in the Twin Valley Times, October 27, 1897)

1897 November 27

A horrible accident occurred last week Thursday, whereby a year-old daughter of John Germolus, a farmed living southwest of Ada, lost her life. Mrs. Germolus was at work in the barn and the little one had evidently been playing with fire in the house. Upon returning to the house, the mother found her little one dead, burned to a crisp, in the path leading to the barn which place the child had evidently tried to reach.” (Originally published in the Norman County Index, republished in the Twin Valley Times, November 27, 1897)

1898

1898 January 19

“The residence of Rev. Strauss, about two miles north of this village, was totally destroyed by fire last Friday afternoon. It seems that the fire started in the ceiling over the kitchen from the stove pipe. Rev. Strauss was not at home at the time, his wife and sister being alone. Alarm was given and the neighbors and passersby quickly responded but as there was but little water to be had on the premises the fire could not be extinguished. Fortunately, enough help arrived to remove everything of value from the house. The loss was fully covered by insurance.” (Twin Valley Times, January 19, 1898)

1898 January 19

“Report of the Flom Insurance Company –

“A claim of Hans H. Kanahagar for loss of some hay by fire originating from smudge built to keep mosquitos from horses while he was stacking the hay was on ground of carelessness rejected.” (Twin Valley Times, January 19, 1898)

“On motion and carried, the company is hereafter to insure school houses, maps, furniture and apparatus. Policies already made on school houses was on motion made good. ...” (Twin Valley Times, January 19, 1898)

1898 April 13

“A very sad accident occurred yesterday afternoon in town of Rockwell, by which J. G. Johnson was fatally burned. It seems that he had undertaken to burn some straw near his buildings and the wind had carried the fire to his stable and hay stacks. In trying to get out his horses he was badly suffocated and burned, succeeded in getting a short distance from the burning stable where was found by neighbors, but death had already relieved him of his agony. Deceased was 60 years of age and unmarried. He had resided in Rockwell the past 5 years and was a highly respected citizen. Coroner Meighan went out this morning to hold inquest.” (Twin Valley Times, April 13, 1898)

1898 April 13

“Fire Warden Magnusson was around inspecting chimneys Monday. He expressed the opinion that on account of everything being so dry there is a great danger of fire and the utmost caution should be observed. He remonstrated against the practice of dumping ashes in the streets, as being both dangerous and dirty.” (Twin Valley Times, April 13, 1898)

1898 April 13

“Do you believe in fire protection? If so then you will protect your property against loss by fire. I have reduced rates for this village now, and all property owners can afford to insure.

The old ‘North America can pay your loss.’ Farm property insured. – E.M. Niles, Agent” (Twin Valley Times, April 13, 1898)

1898 April 22

A prairie fire in Rockwell on Sunday did no great damage, but some farmers had a hard fight to save their buildings.

1898 July 29

The residence of Wm. Hoss in Faith was struck by lightning the previous Thursday and was totally destroyed in the fire that followed.

1898 September 9

A farmhouse owned by N. Kjeldson, located in Section 10, Hegne burned to the ground on Saturday during a high wind.

1898 September 9

“Brokke & Dalen, of Perley lost a threshing machine by fire the recently and incendiarism was suspected. Last year they also lost a machine by fire. Both fires occurred at night.”

1898 September 16

A setting of wheat belonging to Edward Estenson was burned Sunday. The fire run in the stubble to the stacks from a neighboring farm where a lot of straw had been burned.

1898 September 23

Gerber & Johnson had a narrow escape from a fire that week. A pile of cotton batting caught fire but was put out without much damage.

1898 September 30

Ole Gunderson lost four stacks of wheat on his place west of the fair grounds that week by a fire, which started in the stubble.

1898 October 7

The Northern Pacific depot at Twin Valley was struck by lightning the previous Friday and burned. The residence of Hans Burges was also struck the same night.

1898 October 21

Several stacks of hay belonging to Co. Treasurer Mitthun, were burned in Flom the previous Friday.

1898 October 21 Ole Bakken's farmhouse burned the previous week, together with the furniture.

1898 November 18 A five-months-old child of Christian Johnson, blacksmith at Syre, died of suffocation and burns that week, when its clothes caught fire when to near the stove.

1898 November 25 Ole Larson of Hendrum lost a barn by fire the previous week. The post office and hardware store were set on fire by sparks, but were saved.

1898 December 2 "O. D. Larson has erected a substantial barn in place of the one burned down two weeks ago." (Hendrum News, December 2, 1898)

1898 December 16 "Cremated, The Residence of Carl Wold Burns, and in it His Two Children. A. H. Gordon's residence is Saved by Hard Work –

One of the saddest accidents that it has been our duty to chronicle was the burning to death of Carl J. Wold's two little children – both boys – one eighteen months, and the other three years old, yesterday noon when his residence burned. As near as can be learned, the facts are as follows:

As Mrs. Wold had finished washing, and was going to hang out the clothes, she went to borrow some clothes pins from Mrs. Gordon, who said you have quite a fire over there, noticing the smoke. Mrs. Wold replied that it was the steam from the boiler, and went on and hung out the washing, and even then got a pail of water, and on going to enter the house found the room full of flame. She screamed fire, which was responded to by Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Hetland, and also by John Froiland, who made two unsuccessful attempts, and was forced back by the flames. He finally succeeded, and used the water in the tubs, and nearly extinguished the fire, but an open door made a draft, and the stairs were burned away near the center, and could not be ascended.

Mrs. Wold tried to get to the children, which were upstairs, but could not, and in her endeavor was badly burned on her head, face and arms. John Froiland was also severely burned on the face, and some on his hands.

The citizens turned out, and done their utmost toward saving the house and its effects, but the fire had such headway that practically everything was destroyed, and it was with the greatest of difficulties that A. H. Gordon's residence was saved. The furniture was badly damaged in being removed.

Search was made in all the rooms for the children during the fire, but entrance to the one they were in over the kitchen, could not be gained on account of the flames. Their bodies were found about ten feet apart where they had fallen; on the kitchen, the other on the pantry floor, after the building was burned down.

The remains were taken to Bang's undertaking rooms, prepared for burial, and taken to the church.

Mrs. Wold is nearly frantic with grief, and is inconsolable.

The distressed people have the sympathy of the community, and are receiving all the aid that kind friends can be render in their kind affliction.

The funeral took place this afternoon at 1 o'clock, and was very largely attended." (Hendrum News, December 16, 1898)

1898 December 23 Two little sons of Carl J. Wold of Hendrum were burned to death that week when the house caught fire and rescue of the children, who were in the upstairs room, was impossible.

1898 December 30 “Carl Wold was agreeably surprised Christmas evening by receiving a check of \$138 from Ole Larson, which was contributed by the friends of Carl. It is needless to say that he values the substantial token of friendship, and is at a loss for words to express his gratitude.” (Hendrum News, December 30, 1898)

1899

1899 January 6 The people of Hendrum made Carl Wold, who recently lost his home and two children by fire a present of \$138.

1899 January 6 “Explosion at Climax – Wednesday while steaming up the fire engine which had been frozen up, and which was connected with the stove by pipes to keep the water warm, the engine exploded wrecking the stove and building, tearing off the arm below the elbow of Wm. Larson of Halstad, and blowing John Lochen who was standing in front of the stove, through the building, and tearing off his clothes and filling his hair, which was standing on end, full of ashes. John went home to bed, and when he found he was all right, came out again, but is thankful he escaped with his life.

Mr. Larson suffered much pain before the physician arrived to amputate his hand, and dress the wound.” (Hendrum News, January 6, 1899)

(Not a Norman County fire, but included since the injured man was from Halstad.)

1899 February 3 The annual report of the Halstad Insurance Co. showed that there were 385 policies in force compared to 335 the year before. Fire loses the previous year totaled \$1,043.97.

1899 March 3 The Jens Sethney residence at Twin Valley was destroyed by fire that week although some household goods were saved.

1899 March 10 The residence of Halvor Hemmestvedt in section 13, McDonaldsville burned to the ground that week. It was occupied by the Torgus Hemmestvedt family, who lost all their furniture.

1899 March 17 The farm residence of Mr. Smith, south of the Wild Rice River, burned down the previous Friday, the fire starting from the stove pipe.

1899 April 14 Lats Sunday week, Arthur Marsden’s hog house in some manner caught fire and burned down, including a lot of feed. The young pigs and lambs were saved.” (Hendrum News, April 14, 1899)

1899 May 26 The home of Syvert O. Hoff of Hegne, together with all the family's wearing apparel and household goods, burned that week.

1899 July 14 “Fire Protection –
The meeting called Monday evening in the bank to discuss the matter of buying a fire engine was not very largely attended, but a plan was formulated. It was estimated the engine and freight would be \$530; a hook and ladder wagon, \$100; 100 canvas pails, \$15; two 200-barrel tanks, \$200.

The plan is to get property owners to contribute individually to the amount of 1 ½ per cent of their assessed valuation personal and real estate. A petition been prepared, and has been pretty well signed.” (Hendrum New, July 14, 1899)

1899 October 13 Elias Aalgord, a farmer residing three miles east of Shelly, lost his barn, seven horses and some grain by fire.

1899 November 10 There was a disastrous prairie fire southeast of Borup that week and farmers fought the fire for two days. The fire burned an area four miles square in Winchester and a smaller area in Rockwell and south of the county lien. Ole Halvorson lost 20 tons of hay, John Dahl, 10 tons; Lewis Dahl, 10 tons; Matt Dahlen, 30 tons; Leroy McDonald, 20 tons; A. and J. Anderson 60 tons.

1900

1900 January 31 “Ada Has a Destructive Fire! Fire Destroys Nine Buildings
Wednesday Night. Total Loss is Over \$50,000 –

It is twenty-one years since the business men who came to locate at Ada began to erecting their frame buildings side by side in unbroken rows along our main avenues. And during that time not one building fronting Atlantic and Pacific avenues on either side burned down. A few times a blaze would start only to be promptly put out. It has been a general comment that we played long in luck everything considered. But the reverse came at last and it was severe. Out of ten buildings in block one fronting Pacific Avenue, only one remains to emphasize by contrast the tale of destruction. Thorpe's store building on the south-east corner of the block is all that is left of the row, saved by a gap of 30 feet to the north and hard work of the bucket brigade and wet blankets.

About fifteen minutes after eight o'clock, Wednesday evening, Mrs. Weygant, living above Weygant's, detecting smoke from the rear part of the Bang's store adjoining. She gave the alarm. The clerks had gone home and the store was closed. J. H. Harmon and Frank Waterman forced open the front doors but were unable to locate the fire. Fred Andrist and L. W. Bloom were searching from the upper story with like results. It was until Olaf Ramstad came that the exact location was discovered. He knew the construction of the building. Behind the rooms on the second floor there was a garret used as a store room. A door led to the front but this was barred. At the back end there was a trap door which could be reached from the clothing department located on an elevated floor in the rear of the store. When Mr. Ramstad opened this trap door he discovered a small blaze on

the north side – the opposite side from where the chimney passing up through the attic, was located. Meanwhile the fire apparatus was brought out and Chas Brown holding the nozzle waiting for the stream but none came. The pumps did not work and if there had been no water in the big tank at the fire hall. An attempt was made to establish a bucket brigade and some water poured in the attempt from the roof. Had water been carried through the store and poured upon the fire from the trap door in the rear we might have had a more pleasant story to tell. The hole in the roof gave draft and soon the flames were beyond control. The prompt and willing workers that on many occasions before have arrested a starting fire stood discouraged and helpless. The work of rescue of household goods and merchandise began as soon as it was seen the fire was beyond control. Over Bang's building lived J. A. Shanks and family. In the next building to the north F. O. Weygant and family and J. G. Herringer over the saloon on the corner. It was almost calm and the flames spread slowly. Weygant saved his piano and part of his household goods. Herringer likewise got his piano down and saved his best furniture and even a coal stove with a good fire in it. The vortex of the fire was to the north and east until these three buildings had been consumed and after that the back fire southward gained more force. Successively Andrist's restaurant, deGuinon's building, Ahler's building, Johnson's drug store, Beithon's store and Mark Woodbury's saloon went down. The fire made no leaps, simply consumed its way. When Herringer's building burned, the plate windows in the Hotel Ada, and the bank windows to the south cracked from the heat cracked from the heat and it was roasting hot at Volland's office and Shirley's when Herringer's beer house went, but a little water prevented ignition. The fire hall across the street from Ahler's store the boys saved and it was good and hot work. A considerable quantity of goods were carried out, mainly from Ahler's store, burned up the street. The losses have not yet all been adjusted but they were approximately as follows:

	Loss.	Insurance
Bangs & Co. stock.....	\$12,000	\$7,000
Bangs & Co. building.....	2,000	1,000
Ahlers, stock.....	6,000	2,000
Dr Kjelland.....	400	200
Ahlers, building.....	1,500	400
Dr Stuart.....	400	no ins
Johnson, stock.....	1,500	1,400
Johnson, household goods.....	400	no ins.
Mrs. Bloom, building.....	1,000	600
Will Shauks. household goods..	100	no ins.
Herringer, bldg and furniture...	3,000	1,500
Herringer & Jenkins.....	1,000	no ins.
DeGuinon & Thorpe, building..	1,000	400
DeGuinon, goods.....	500	200
Andrist, goods.....	600	300
Thorpe, building.....	1,000	450
Woodbury building and stock..	2,500	no ins
Weygant stock and household goods.....	1,000	no ins
Bethon building.....	1,000	600
Bethon stock.....	4,000	1,100
Thorpe, damage to stock.....	800	800
Hostad, damage to stock.....	500	500
Dewey D Day, stock.....	200	no ins
Mrs. Jacobs, Weygant bld.....	1,500	700

Fire notes –

P. O. Onstad was at Fisher when the fire broke out. He heard of it at Beltrami on his return.

The amusing incidents generally seen at a fire were not lacking. Mirrors came crashing to the sidewalk while mattresses were carefully carried down the stairs. One man carried an empty milk jar down a flight of stairs and into the street when he tossed it down on the frozen ground breaking it into pieces.

Much of Bang's goods were loaded into an empty car which was pushed to the depot. County Treasurer Helland discovered smoke coming out of the car and investigated. Some goods had been put into the car and it was by accident it was saved.

Sparks and burning wood flew all over town to the east and for miles into the country but there was frost on the roofs and everything so no fires were started.

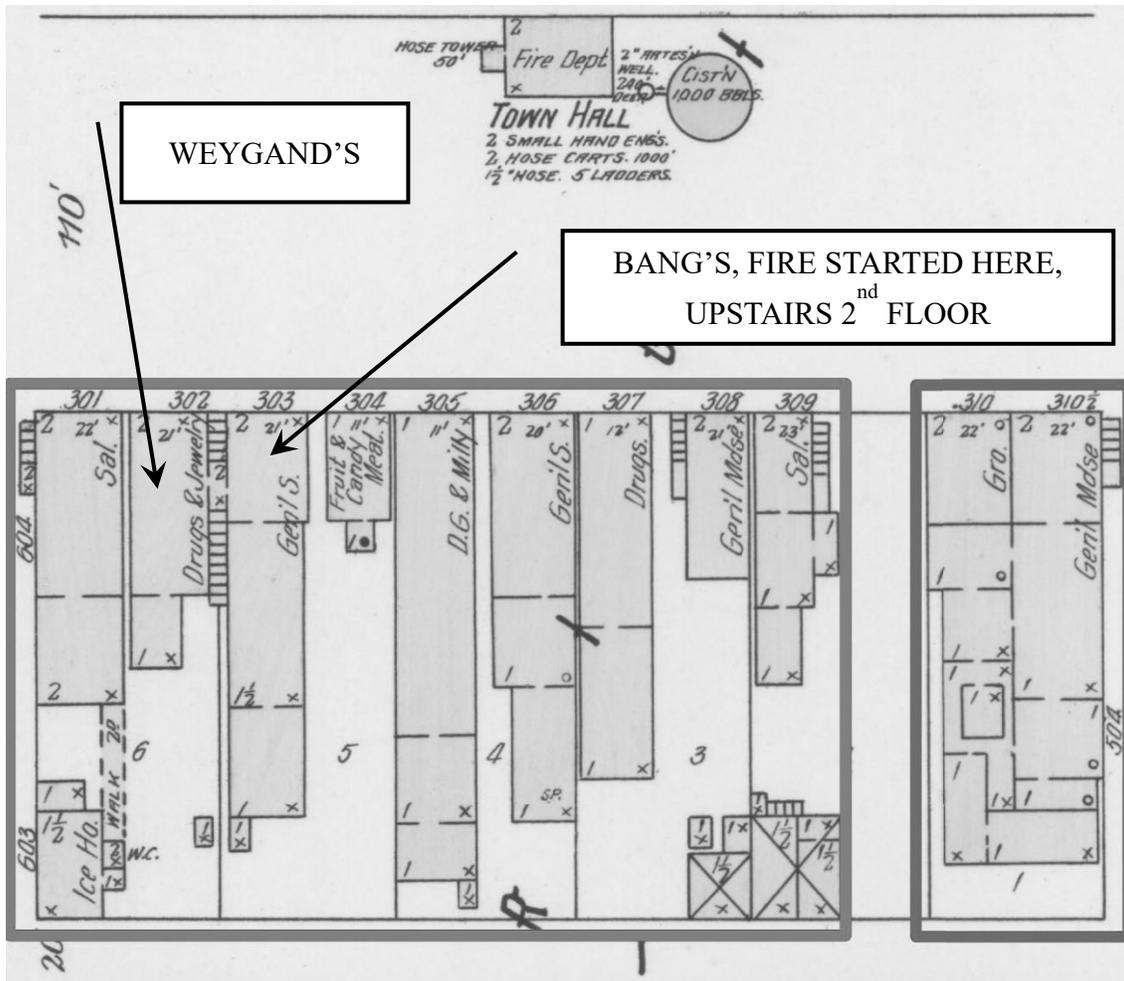
It has been said that there was some pilfering done among the piles of goods carried out. And there was much carousing after the fire – that we know.

Weygant shares room with Roragen in the Gjerald building with his drug store and A. J. Johnson has the Boppre building in the same block. M. A. Woodbury continues in business west of the Herald office and Herringer and Jenkins occupy the front of Kloety's stop. He has the salvage of his stock stored there now and so has G. G. Beithon.

The origin of the fire is unknown but there are only two reasonable conjectures: Either there were parlor matches in the attic ignited by mice or it came from the chimney flue and burned across the floor slowly in the rubbish usually accumulated in such places till it reached more combustible material.

No one can be blamed much for the condition of the pumps as they had been repaired twice within the last few months but there was no water in the big reservoir at the fire hall which was built for fire purposes was a neglect for which there is no excuse or palliation. There was not a foot of water in the tank and that was frozen over with heavy ice. To allow such condition for a day after it was known was nothing short of criminal negligence and we think it was someone's business to know it.

The Mayor of Barnesville is not a good neighbor whatever else he is. We don't know him from the man in the moon, nor his name, and nobody here cares to know him. Our mayor telegraphed Barnesville for assistance and division Superintendent Jenks placed a train at the disposal of the fire department but the mayor refused to let them go. That's about as mean and unneighborly an act as we have ever heard of. We did not think anybody as unfeeling as that could be found on these broad prairies but we acknowledge our mistake." (Norman County Index, February 1, 1900)



Buildings left to right:

- Herringer's Saloon, downstairs; J. G. Herringer residence upstairs.
- Weygand's Drug Store, downstairs; Mr. & Mrs. Weygand family residence, upstairs.
- Bang's General Store, downstairs; Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Shanks family, upstairs.
- Andrist's Restaurant.
- deGuinon Building, Dry Goods and Millinery.
- Ahler's Building, General store.
- Johnson Drug Store.
- Beithon's Store, General Merchandise.
- Mark Woodbury's Saloon.

THE GREAT ADA FIRE OF 1900

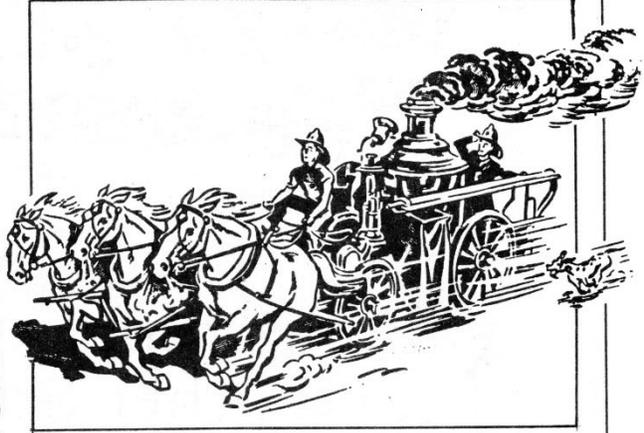
NEARLY 100 YEARS AGO CATASTROPHE STRUCK THE COUNTY SEAT!

There had been no serious fires in Ada for some years. In 1892 not a single fire was reported; in 1895, only one. In the latter year the volunteer fire department numbered thirty-four men. They were divided into two companies with W.H. Thune as one captain, Chauncy Jenkins as the other. Positions were assigned to each man, as lineman, nozzleman, pumpman, and the like. A water tank to catch waste water from the St. Anthony and Dakota elevator was installed to serve as an additional supply for the east side in case of fire. The village felt well prepared.

But the year 1900 had barely begun before a great catastrophe befell Ada. A fire which started in Bangs and Company's general merchandise store on West Main street wiped out almost the entire block. Nine buildings burned to the ground, including besides Bangs' store, those of Weygant, Thompson, Johnson, Beithon, Woodbury, DeGuinon, Ahlers, and Kulander. There was a fifty-thousand-dollar loss, only twenty thousand of it covered by insurance. The big Thorpe building on the southeast corner of the block was the only one left. The firemen were hampered on their efforts to control the fires because the hand engines failed to work properly, one of the pumps froze up, and one of the water tanks was also frozen over. There were no waterworks at this time.

A spectator at this fire tells of several amusing incidents. Fred Ward, who lived in an apartment over one of the burning buildings, grabbed up a feather bed and pillows and carried them carefully down the stairs, laying them on the ground some distance from the blaze. He then dashed back upstairs and threw a clothesbasket full of dishes out of the upstairs window. Shortly after the fire died down, three of the fire-fighters were seen carrying a keg of beer and a seventy-five pound cheese to the bachelor apartments of one of them to recuperate after their exertions.

This destructive fire hastened the movement for better protection and the installation of waterworks in the village. The council lost no time after the fire, but immediately took steps to hasten the construction of a waterworks system for which six thousand dollars in bonds had been voted the year before. A special election held March 13, 1900, bonded the village to pay for an electric light plant. Contracts were let for



both projects, which were completed and accepted by the council before the end of the year.

The waterworks equipment included an eighty-foot tower and tank, pump, engine, a hundred-thousand-gallon reservoir, and two thousand eight hundred feet of piping, with accompanying hydrants. Water was obtained from wells about two hundred and forty feet deep. The underground reservoir could put water into the mains at the rate of two hundred and fifty gallons a minute. C.H. Brown was appointed chief of the fire department. It was voted to give the chief a hundred dollars a year, and the firemen a dollar for the first hour at a fire and fifty cents for each succeeding hour, also fifty cents for each practice. Fire alarms were to be given by the central at the Norman County Telephone exchange. Fire-hose and hook-and-ladder trucks were bought.

After the big fire, those burned out were allowed to re-open temporary business places in the street while the debris was being cleared away and new buildings erected. It was understood they were to make their stay there as short as possible, but in March, 1901, there were still three business men doing business in their temporary quarters, so the council voted to charge them forty dollars a month rent apiece so long as they remained in the street. This did not please the rest of the citizens who presented a petition containing sixty names asking for the immediate removal of such places. The council then ordered them torn down within sixty days from April 15, 1901.

1900 February 2

A fire on the old Nuttle place southwest of Ada completely destroyed the dwelling house.

1900 February 16 Onstad & Jacobson, who succeeded the Bangs & Co. firm, had started work on their temporary new store building, where the city hall now stands. The Bangs firm decided to discontinue business when their building burned in the big fire.

1900 February 16 Another fire in the same block as the big fire of two weeks before, threatened the rest of the buildings in that block. The fire was in the Windsor House, and the flames were finally extinguished, but not before Matt Hoch, Julius Aske and Godfrey Andrist had lost most of their clothes.

1900 March 9 F. O. Weygant, whose store was burned in the big fire a few weeks previous, made a deal for the purchase of the East Side drug store.

1900 March 23 Johnson's drug store was located the second door south of the Lystad block, a new location made necessary by the big fire.

1900 April 26 Mr. Barlow of Albert Lea had brought G. G. Beithon's lot in the burned district in Ada for \$1,000. The latter intended to move to North Dakota.

1900 May 10 The farmhouse on the Jens Johnson place near Borup was burned the week before.

1900 May 17 Excavating had started for the new brick store of Julius Ahlers, to be erected on the site of the one that had burned down.

1900 May 31 C. H. Brown was appointed chief of the fire department and was busy re-organizing it and selecting members.

1900 May 31 Mark Woodbury erected another temporary building to replace the one burned down in the fire. It took 12 hours to put up the building.

1900 May 31 The Onstad & Jacobson store, located between the Ada House and the depot, where the City Hall now stands, and the Mark Woodbury place adjoining, were burned down on the preceding Saturday, when fire was discovered in the rear of the Onstad & Jacobson building about four o'clock in the afternoon. Both firms suffered heavy losses.

“Another Blaze in Ada –

Last Saturday afternoon another fire occurred in Ada. It started in the rear of Onstad & Johnson's store, and that structure and Mark Woodbury's saloon building next door, were in ashes in less than an hour. Onstad & Jacobson's loss is fully covered by insurance, but Woodbury's bazar is uninsured. The origin of the fire is unknown.” (Norman County Index, June 2, 1900)

1900 June 14 A fire was discovered in the lumber yard at the sawmill one day that week, but was extinguished by the fire department without any loss.

1900 June 14 The Ada Fire department was re-organized that week with Chas. Brown as chief and Chancey Jenkins assistant chief. The hose company members were: Sam Olson, G. Kittilson, George Stumpf, Emil Kloety, Will Lee, Albert Myran, P. S. Larson, I. R. Severson, Joe Kloety, Max Mathewson, Rollin Moffatt and Mike Roesch. The engine company members were Herb Herringer, Will Herringer, Fred Andrist, John Davy, Will Holt, Ed Wolfe, Jake Miller, Lambert and Isidore Roesch, George Lee, Sever Bang, F. O. Weygant, Paul Menge, Louis Bowman, Matt Hoch, Fred Lanctot, H. W. Thune and Ed Brawand.

1900 June 28 The Village Council was busy looking over samples and prices of new fire hose, expecting to buy 2,000 feet for the local fire department.

1900 June 28 A gasoline-heating tank in Farley's barbershop exploded one night during a high wind and was the cause of considerable excitement until the fire was extinguished.

1900 July 5 The Village Council placed an order for 1,500 feet of fire hose, a model hook and ladder truck with two chemical fire extinguishers.

1900 July 19 Wm. Neukom's large barn in Ada burned Tuesday morning of that week, with a loss of over \$1,600. He barely had time to get out his two horses, his buggy and veterinary tools. Mrs. Miller's small residence near the barn was also consumed by the flames.

1900 July 26 The Lake Ida Bridge on the town lines between McDonaldsville and Lake Ida was burned Sunday morning. There was a fire in the grass on Saturday, which had been put out, but it was supposed that fire got into the approach of the bridge which was composed of willows covered with dirt and smoldered there until the bridge caught fire. It was a new bridge.

1900 August 9 A prairie fire wiped out about 25 stacks of hay in Good Hope, leaving some farmers in hard circumstances as they had previously lost their crops by hail.

1900 August 16 The loss on Theo. Holland's barn in Shelly Township, which was struck by lightning a short time before, was \$1,400. One horse, a hog and a sheep, several sets of harness and 25 tons of hay were also burned.

1900 September 20 O. L. Rindahl of Bear Park lost two stacks of wheat, when they were struck by lightning and burned.

1900 November 1 Iver Sterten of Hendrum lost a separator by fire.

1900 December 13 Borup had a disastrous fire Tuesday night of that week when Melberg's general store was found to be ablaze, the fire spreading rapidly to the Anderson & Peppel store and Olson & Mattison hardware store. There was almost a total loss on all these places.

 "Fire at Borup – Large Business Portion of that Village Totally Destroyed:"

Ada, Minn., Dec. 12 – Fire destroyed the general stores of P. L. Melberg and Anderson & Peppel at Borup, eight miles south from here, this morning, also the hardware stores of the latter firm and Peder Olson. The loss is about \$15,000; insurance is only about one-half that amount.”

1900 December 20 The owners of the store buildings, which were burned at Borup the week before, were planning to rebuild as soon as possible.

1901

1901 March 21 The village fire hall was being wired for electric lights.

1901 March 21 “H. J. Vangen was appointed Inspector of Chimneys and his duties and authority shall be as follows: He shall inspect all chimneys within the corporate limits once every 60 days from April 1st to October 1st and once every 30 days from October 1st to April 1st. Whenever a chimney is found to need cleaning, the inspector shall notify the owner of said chimney to have it properly cleaned within 24 hours and, unless such notice is complied with, the inspector shall have the chimney cleaned and shall receive for such work no less than 25 cents nor more than 50 cents, this to be paid to him by the owner of house. If he refuses to pay such sum, it shall be taxed against his property. It was ordered that all chimneys be cleaned on or before March 27th. The council further ordered those owners of buildings shall also provide substantial roof ladders to allow easy access to chimneys, these also in position on or before the above-named date.” (Gary Graphic, March 1901)

1901 April 4 The Minneapolis & Northern Elevator at Perley was burned to the ground on Sunday of that week, from an unknown cause, and 18,000 bushels of wheat were destroyed.

1901 April 4 A table showing the fire losses and insurance premiums paid in Ada for the eight preceding years showed that \$54,695.08 in premiums were paid, while fire losses were \$30,302.16, of which \$28,670.04 was for the preceding year when the business block burned down.

1901 April 7 **“Horrible Holocaust!** Visits Our Village and Casts a Gloom Of Sorrow Over the Community. Instead of Glad Easter Tidings the Message of Death is Received. Maggie Riggers Answered the Call of the Angel of Death and Meets Her Savior:

Margaret Riggers, Born at Hamberg, Germany, Nov., 13th, 1868. Came to America at the age of eight and moved to Norman County two years later.

Died: At Ada, Easter morning, April 7th, 1901, at the age of 33 years.

Shortly before breakfast on Sunday morning, the residents of our village were startled by the alarm of fire sounded by the fire bell. Hastening out and ready to exert every effort to save the property threatened, they were confronted with the hardest task of

mankind; that of trying to save the life of another – and baffling against the will of Him who calls us home so suddenly and at the least expected time.

In recording the fire of Sunday morning, we are called upon to chronicle the greatest calamity that has ever existed in our village and in doing so we almost doubt the wisdom of Him who does all things for the best. Thus, it was on Sunday the glad tidings of Easter were replaced by the summons of the Angel of Death. Miss Maggie Riggers gave up her life and met her death before the very eyes of her friends who were exerting every human effort to rescue her, but whose efforts were as naught against those of Him who had called her home. Death – which is sorrowful to contemplate in its most beautiful form – has visited us and taken away one who was the friend of all and whose memory will always be cherished by those she loved and helped.

Origin of the fire.

It will always be a mystery how the fire started. When first discovered, smoke was pouring out of the front of the building and by the time help arrived the interior of the building – which was a small one-story frame structure – was a mass of flames, leaping madly in their destruction of human life and property. The alarm was promptly given and in a few minutes the street crowded with willing hands who came to help and stay the terrible onslaught of the devastating flames – which seemed content to succumb as soon as they had accomplished their awful mission of taking a human life. Attempts were made to break in the door, which was locked, but before anything could be done Miss Riggers had given heed to death's sudden call and when the door was broken in, she was found lying – unrecognizable – at the feet of those who had done all in their power to save her from the clutches of death.

The progress of flames was confined to the interior of the building and the walls and roof were hardly scorched on the exterior. Several theories are advanced as to the origin of the fire but the most plausible one is that she was starting a fire in the kitchen stove with kerosene, and that an explosion took place, setting fire to the stock of millinery that was kept in the adjoining room. Forgetting the danger to herself, she must have attempted to save her goods – which were stored within the rooms that were the scene of such a pitiful death – dying within the very arms of her friends; none of whom were able to reach out a rescuing hand.

It is also thought that she might have been using a curling iron in preparing herself for the Easter morning and that in some manner the lamp tipped over, first setting fire to her hair and then spreading to the millinery goods.

The alarm was given at half past eight and in less than half an hour the blaze had been extinguished and the easter morning which broke so beautifully was darkened by a cloud of sorrow which spread over the entire village and community.

The building is owned by Rudolph Brawand and it is not known at this writing whether he will rebuild or not. The firemen deserve credit for their prompt and efficient work. (Norman County Herald, April 10, 1901)

Miss Maggie Riggers

Was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Riggers, of Pleasant View, and has made her home in Ada for several years where she has conducted a millinery and dressmaking establishment. She was a member of the Ada Lodge of Rebekahs, and Young Ladies Reading club. She will be missed by her circle of friends for whom she always had a pleasant word and a kind feeling. In the family her loss is one that can never be repaired and her demise will always be mourned by her parents, brother and sisters. She was a kind daughter and loving sister, always doing good for those about her. Her sisters, living out of town, were informed at once of her death and Mrs. Nygaard, accompanied by her husband, arrived from Farris, Sunday night. Mrs. Nims, residing at Red Wing, was unable to reach here in time for the funeral.

The funeral occurred yesterday afternoon from the Methodist church, services being conducted by Rev. Park and Rev. Schliesser. The church was not large enough to accommodate those who came to take their last farewell of their departed friend who was gently laid to rest by her grief stricken relatives and sorrowing friends.

The sadness of her death gives way to its beautifulness when we realize that while preparing to attend divine services here on this earth she was suddenly called home to worship at the throne of Him who sits on high.

Resolutions of Respect and Condolence.

Resolved by Ada Rebekah Lodge, No. 20, Ada, Minn. assembled, this 8th day of April, A. D. 1901:—

That in the death of our beloved sister Margaret E. Riggers, this Lodge suffers the loss of one of its most earnest and devoted members and one that will be sorely missed in our fraternal circle:

That while we mourn the loss of our departed sister, we would tender to her relatives and friends our sincere sympathy in this hour of their affliction.

Be it further resolved: That these resolutions be spread on the records of this Lodge and copy furnished the local papers and the National Rebekah for publication and that our lodge room be draped in mourning for the period of thirty days.

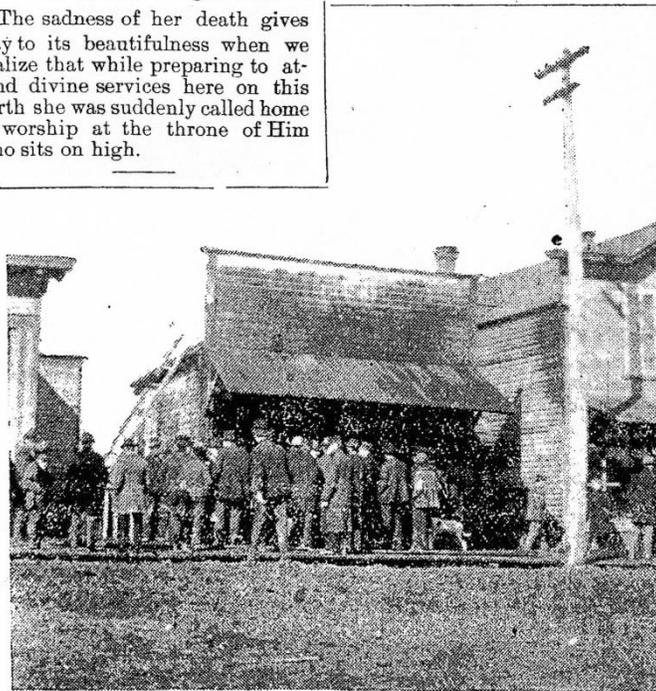
By order of Committee.

VALBORG NORBY,
Secretary.

Card Of Thanks.

To the many friends, especially to the Ladies of Rebecca Lodge "The young Ladies Reading Club" and the honorable order of I. O. O. F, who so kindly lent a helping hand in the hour of sorrow to us, we hereby extend our sincere thanks.

Respectfully
JOHN RIGGERS
AND FAMILY.



Snap shot taken immediately after the fire for THE HERALD by Frank Gerber. Developed by Walter Moffatt.

1901 April 27 “Mass Meeting! Of the Citizens of Gary, Saturday, April 27, 1901. 7:30, p.m., At Pladsen and Milsten’s Store.

This meeting is called for the purpose of hearing the general sentiment of the taxpayers as to the purchase of fire apparatus and making various other public improvements. Every voter is requested to be present and voice his opinion. Come out and make your criticisms at this meeting, if you have any. Village Council.” (Gary Graphic, April 1901)

1901 May 23 The barn on the A. C. Tvedt farm west of Ada was struck by lightning and burned to the ground one evening that week.

1901 June 27 The “P.V.” elevator at Halstad was destroyed by fire of an unknown origin. About 3,000 bushels of wheat and two box cars on the track near the elevator were also destroyed.

1901 August 15 The Ada fire department received their new hook and ladder truck and hose carts that week. The outfit cost \$750 and the village felt that it had the best of fire protection.

1901 October 25 Work on the city hall was started that week. It was the intention of the council to have the building enlarged to provide more room for the fire department.

1901 December 19 Fire was discovered in the W. M. Lang & Co. warehouse at Felton, but it was extinguished without much loss.

1901 December 19 Halstad sustained quite a loss Tuesday of that week when the town hall together with its firefighting apparatus burned up. One hook and ladder truck was all that was saved. Loss was estimated at \$4,000.

“Goes Up in Smoke. Town Hall and Nearly the Entire Fire Apparatus destroyed by Fire at Halstad Tuesday Morning:

The village of Halstad sustained quite a loss Tuesday afternoon by the burning of their town hall and all the fire apparatus with the exception of the hook and ladder truck, and that was saved with great difficulty. The fire was first seen by Christ Nelson, who noticed a cloud of smoke breaking out of the front of the building. He made a rush for the place and with the assistance of one of the Nygaard boys, succeeded in pulling out the hook and ladder truck. The fire had gained such headway when noticed that this was all that could possibly be saved. The fire broke out around one o’clock and the fire department having nothing to fight the fire with, were powerless and could only direct their efforts to saving the adjoining buildings. Had the wind been in almost any other direction than northwest the chances are that a good portion of the town would have shared the fate of the hall. As it was, the depot caught fire several times.

No one knows just how the fire started. A fire had been kept going in the engine room downstairs since cold weather set in, and many think this is where it started. It had certainly been burning for some time when noticed. The pump, chemical engine, all the

hose and other truck used by the department were lost as well as the scenery belonging to the hall. Terry's Tom Cabin Co., had all their trunks in the building, but fortunately for the company, two or three of the troupe were in the hall when the fire broke out and about all their baggage was saved, though somewhat damaged by the drop from the second story of the building to the ground. The company pulled stakes after the fire and started for the next town.

The loss was estimated at about \$4,000 with \$1,500 insurance. A. B. Larson and J. C. Sulerud immediately left for Minneapolis to purchase a new outfit. Halstad doesn't propose to be caught again without a fire fighter's outfit. The public will miss the hall till a new one is erected, which will probably not be for some time."

1901, date unknown "Fire at Perley, Minneapolis and Northern at Perley Burned Sunday:
A rather meager account reaches Ada this morning of the burning of the elevator belonging to the Minneapolis and Northern line of elevators at Perley Sunday night. The elevator contained about 18,000 bushels of stored wheat and was probably covered by insurance. The cause of the fire is shrouded in mystery and is thought to be the work of an incendiary."

1902

1902 January 23 The general store of James Nelson at Twin Valley was destroyed by fire, resulting in a complete loss of the stock.

"Yesterday morning, about one o'clock, fire was discovered in the store building of James Nelson, a general merchant of Twin Valley. The fire department responded promptly and very little damage was done on the building, but the stock was almost totally destroyed by the fire and water. The origin of the fire is unknown. It seems to have started somewhere inside the building and spread with wonderful rapidity. Several barrels of kerosene and gasoline were stored in the building and had these been reached by the flames the work of the department would have been futile. The railroads company's water tank was tapped and furnished a good supply of water. The village has practically no water supply for fire protection outside of the water tank and it is very fortunate that the tank was located where the water could be utilized. The loss will amount to \$5,000, covered by \$3,500 insurance." (Twin Valley Times, January 23, 1902)

1902 March 8 "The members of the local fire department met Monday evening in the fire hall and drafted a constitution and by-laws. The department will hold regular meetings hereafter the first Monday of each month." (Gary Graphic, March 8, 1902)

1902 April 10 A fire was discovered at the rear of the Clemons & Young restaurant at midnight on Tuesday of that week, but the quick response of the fire department saved the building, although most of the stock was damaged.

1902 April 10 Halvor Anderson's large barn in Town of Mary that had been a landmark in the neighborhood for many years, burned to the ground the week before. Twenty-

four head of horses, most of the harnesses and 600 bushels of oats were saved, although 60 tons of hay burned.

1902 April 19 “Halvor Kroshus’ barn, with 30 tons of hay and some feed, burned down last Thursday evening. The boys managed, by hard work, to save the horses. The cause of the fire is unknown.” (This article was originally published in the Hendrum Review, reprinted in the Gary Graphic, April 19, 1902)

1902 April 26 “A prairie fire north of town, evidently set from a passing train, made things look quite threatening for a while. A strong east wind hurried the flames on with alarming rapidity, but we have not heard of any losses in consequence thereof.” (Gary Graphic, April 26, 1902)

1902 June 5 “The fire department took a practice run last evening for the purpose of finding out just how far the amount of hose would reach in case it was needed in certain localities. The hook and ladder truck was also put into action and the ladders used.” (Norman County Index, Jun 5, 1902)

1902 June 5 Lightning struck the top of the old hose tower and ripped up the siding. The current then followed a telephone wire attached to the tower and leading to Weygant’s drug store, where fire started immediately in the garret. The flames were put out by the fire department although the top of the building was burned and the stock of goods damaged by water.

1902 June 19 The barn on the John Walker farm nine miles west of Ada was destroyed by fire, together with eight horses. The barn on the A. A. Brattland place, three miles south, was also destroyed by fire the same week.

1902 June 26 The fire department was called out by a blaze, which started in the yard at the sawmill, but the fire was put out by the mill crew before the department arrived.

1902 July 4 “Reports come from Faith that Nels Aamoth’s dwelling house was burned to the ground Monday evening.” (Gary Graphic, July 4, 1902)

1902 July 11 “N. H. Aamoth will soon erect a fine dwelling house in place of the one that burned.” (Gary Graphic, July 11, 1902)

1902 July 26 “Hendrum will build a new village hall, purchase a Waterous fire engine and organize a volunteer fire department.” (Gary Graphic, July 26, 1902)

1902 July 31 During a shower one night that week a bolt of lightning struck the P. O. Onstad barn and burned it to the ground. Three horses were gotten out safely.

1902 August 1 “M. A. Lee, of Waukon, was in town yesterday and reported the accidental burning down of John Thompson’s house in Waukon. The place was temporarily abandoned and Mr. Lee was staying there cutting hay on the reservation. Fire originated from the kitchen stove pipe and when discovered was beyond control. Everything of value in the house

was saved, but the building was totally consumed by the flames. The house is quite old and not of very much value.” (Gary Graphic, August 1, 1902)

1902 August 7 A barn and a stack of hay on the John Wilkens farm in Pleasant View was burned that week.

1902 August 14 The new annex to Hotel Ada was discovered to be on fire Monday evening of that week, and considerable damage was done before the fire could be extinguished.

“Ada was again visited by a fire Monday evening, whereby the annex to the Ada House was entirely gutted by the flames before the fire department could subdue the flames. Fire and smoke was first noticed by parties on the street about supper time and an alarm was promptly turned in. When the department arrived, the whole interior of the building was in flames and nothing could be saved. As the building is brick, the structure itself was saved, but everything within was consumed by the flames. There were a dozen sleeping rooms in the building and the loss will be considerable, although covered by insurance.” (Gary Graphic, August 15, 1902)

1902 August 21 Monday afternoon Mr. Suttle’s farm residence in Lockhart, occupied by the Monts family, was destroyed by fire. The furniture in the downstairs room was saved but that upstairs was lost.

1902 September 18 George Johnson’s separator was burned that week while threshing on the old Crawford farm.

“While threshing on the Crawford farm last Saturday the Geo. Johnson threshing machine took fire and owing to the heavy wind blowing at the time it was impossible to save the separator. Fire was caused from cinders under the engine which ignited the dry straw and the flames being caught by the wind soon reached the separator and all attempts to stifle the fire were futile. Ada Herald” (Gary Graphic, September 19, 1902)

1902 October 7 “Council Proceedings –

- Upon motion, the present chimney inspector for the village was discharged from his duties as such and Henry Vangen appointed his successor for a term of 1 year.”
- “The following bills were audited and allowed: J. C. Johnson, for inspecting the fire engine, \$3.00. ...” (Gary Graphic, October 10, 1902)

1902 October 9 Fire late Sunday night destroyed the \$2,200 grocery stock of J. E. Kullander and gutted the building. Families living upstairs were forced to leave in a hurry.

1902 October 9 Tom Stevens, residing west of Ada, lost three stacks of barley and two of wheat by fire while threshing Saturday.

1902 October 10 “Waukon – The creamery had a fire last week and the building was saved only by the hard work of those present, as the fire had a good start when discovered by the butter-maker.” (Gary Graphic, October 10, 1902)

1902 October 10 “Ada was visited by another fire Sunday evening. J. E. Kulander’s grocery store on the east side was completely destroyed with contents. Mr. Kulander carried \$700 insurance on building and \$1,200 on stock, but he places his loss in excess of that by about \$1,500. Prompt work by the fire department confined the flames to this building alone.” (Gary Graphic, October 10, 1902)

1902 October 24 “Prairie fires are becoming quite common and those having hay stacked on the prairies should take proper precautions by either breaking around the stacks or burning a circle around them during still weather. Two different fires near Gary, evidently set by freight trains, did considerable damage Sunday evening.” (Gary Graphic, October 24, 1902)

1902 November 13 The fire department elected the following officers: chief, C. H. Brown; asst. chief, H. W. Thune; secretary, G. Kittilson; treasurer, Sam Olson; captain No. 1, S. E. Olson; captain No. 2, Fred Andrist; foreman, John Bennefield; trustees: I. R. Severson, H. W. Thune, Isidore Roesch; hook and ladder, F. O. Weygant. Eight fire alarms were answered that year with a loss to property of \$2,275.

1902 December 12 “A fire alarm was turned in Monday evening and for a time excitement ran high. Every inhabitant in town, with the exception of children, aged and infirm, rushed out to see the hungry flames consume a pyramid of empty boxes and barrels on a vacant lot back of the creamery. The fake fire was fixed up on the quiet in order to test the efficiency of the fire department. The boys responded promptly, although somewhat reluctantly, as the sham was discovered even before the hose cart was run out.” (Gary Graphic, December 12, 1902)

1902 December 12 “Since the railroad company has removed the old water tank, the village is practically without water for fire protection. All the water we have for that purpose is a few barrels in the cistern under the engine house, and how afar will that go incase of fire? (Originally printed in the Twin Valley Times, republished in the Gary Graphic, December 12, 1902)

1903

1903 January 15 Nearly half the village of Shelly was wiped out by a fire which was discovered at 4:30 o’clock Tuesday morning of that week, entailing a loss of more than \$30,000. The buildings destroyed were Swen Moen’s grocery store and post office, Aarestad Bros. furniture store, Hanson Bros. hardware, O. S. Oberson’s meat market and the Efteland Hotel, practically one block of business places.

1903 February 11 The fire department was called out Sunday afternoon of that week by a blaze, which started in the bakery building, near the Fred Andrist residence.

1903 November 19 “Ada has had two fires this past week, one Sunday evening and one Monday evening, both about 6:30 p.m. The fire Sunday was in Dr. Bione’s office in the Herringer Building, and the fire department got it under control without much trouble. The principal damage was by water, which leaked through the roof of Olson & Roesch’s clothing store and wet a portion of their stock. Bot Dr. Bione’s and Olson & Roesch’s losses are covered by insurance. The fire in the Busse saloon, Monday evening, was caused by the explosion of the gasoline stove, and the building and fixtures were damaged considerably. The saloon stock was insured for \$500 and the building, which is owned by Chas. Gaetke, was insured for \$600. The household goods of the Collins family, who lived in the rooms over the saloon were damaged by water. The adjuster for the Home Ins. Co. arrived Wednesday and paid \$296 damages on the stock and fixtures – the entire amount claimed by Mr. Busse. He is preparing to reopen for business in the Skalet Building, south of the Smedsrud’s saloon.” (Norman County Index, November 19, 1903)

1904

1904 January 27 “A serious fire was narrowly averted at the Northwestern Hotel yesterday afternoon. In some manner the fire started in between one of the floors and in the annex and was discovered just in the nick of time.” (Norman County Herald, January 27, 1904)

1904 August 18 A \$20,000 fire occurred in Ada on Monday morning of that week when the Wild Rice Lumber Co. sawmill burned to the ground, the fire starting in the engine room between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning.

“Wild Rice Lumber Company Destroyed by Fire:

The Wild Rice Lumber Company, which was Ada’s most substantial business in the early days burned to the ground on Monday, August 16, 1904.

Hans Wigeland was the night watchman and fireman at the mill’s boiler room. Wigeland had just finished firing the boilers and had up to 100 lbs. of pressure of steam when he took his lunch break. As he was opening his lunch bucket, he noticed the woodwork above the boilers ablaze. He picked up a bucket of water kept in the boiler room and threw it on the fire. One more pail of water would have saved the mill but it wasn’t available and the pumps didn’t work. Wigeland said that, “in less time than it takes to tell about it the whole engine room was on fire.

The blaze seemed to spread over all the plant at once and after the alarm was sounded, workmen who came were even unable to recover their tools. Had there been any wind at all, the fire could have destroyed the entire east side of the town. Everything was dry as a tinder the 1904 account in the Index said.

Everything was lost in the fire but the boilers and it was believed they were workable. All the costly machinery was a total loss. Mr. Hamilton, one of the owners figured the loss of the big sawmill would run from \$18,000 to \$20,000.

The fire put over 60 Ada men out of work.

The company had on their grounds between fourteen and fifteen million feet of logs and enough more on the reservation to the east to last for at least two season’s work. A temporary planing mill was set up using a threshing engine for power and a small mill was

set up to cut the logs on hand, but the mill was never rebuilt and Ada's days as a sawmill town were over... by one big fire." (Norman County Index)

1904 August 25 No definite plans had been made concerning the rebuilding of the Ada sawmill which burned down the previous week, but it was thought that a larger and better mill would be decided on.

1904 August 25 The storm on the preceding Friday was a disastrous one, John Danielson of Lake Ida lost seven cows which were struck by lightning, and Lars S. Haugan's barn in town of Rockwell was also struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

1904 September 8 The Wild Rice Lumber Co. had their planer running again after the big fire.

1904 November 3 Work on rebuilding the sawmill started that week and it was planned to rush it to completion. The new machinery for the planer arrived that week.

1904 November 3 Thomas Newby lost his livery barn and some of its contents by fire caused by an explosion of a lantern left hanging in the barn.

1904 November 17 At a regular meeting of the Ada Fire department that week the following officers were elected: Chief, H. W. Thune; Sam Olson, assistant chief; Emil Farley, secretary; Same Olson treasurer; Isidore Roesch, C. D. Simpson and A. G. Gerber, executive committee.

1904 December 8 The village of Twin Valley suffered its most disastrous fire the previous Friday, when the barn belonging to I. H. Aamoth, the hardware store of O. S. Hanson, the general store of Nels P. Johnson, the S. O. Norman drug store and the Matt Sorby building were burned. The fire started in the Aamoth livery where 30 horses were burned.

The Fire Fiend Visits Twin Valley – Six Business Places Wiped Out of Existence – The Greatest Fire Known in the History of the Village:

The fire shriek of locomotive fire whistle and the harsh clang, clang of the fire bell aroused Twin Valley people from their peaceful slumbers early on Friday morning to battle with the most terrific fire that she has yet experienced.

Dr. Meighen of Ulen arrived on the morning passenger, and as he stepped off the train discovered that fire was issuing from the northeast corner of Aamoth's livery barn. He immediately turned in the alarm, and in the twinkling of an eye – so to speak – the screaming whistle, clanging bell and exciting shouts of men were calling out the fire department. It responded promptly and soon had a stream of water playing on the burning barn. But that immense structure, filled with hay and other light combustibles, sent the flames leaping higher and higher until it was one great blazing sheet, from which issued thee agonizing shrieks and death groans of 33 roasting, writhing horses. Rapidly spreading eastward, the flames soon enveloped the large Hanson building, containing a double store below and a large hall above. The fire company's single stream of water had no more

effect on the flames here than on the barn and soon the boom, boom, of exploding gunpowder and the rapid play of gun cartridges was adding to the consternation and general excitement. On went the flames, and it looked as if our little city was doomed. Normann's Drug Store was now a blazing mass and our citizens realized that a struggle for existence was upon them. They faced it bravely and scores of resolute men were soon busy tearing away the small building between the burning drug store and Sorby's restaurant. Here the final struggle was fought and the flames materially subdued. At this juncture, the village water supply gave out. Despair was only momentary, however, for hundreds of willing hands lent aid in dashing water upon the exposed walls of the restaurant until the fire engine could make connection with the N.P. (Northern Pacific) water tank, after which the fire died out for lack of fresh fuel and our citizens breathed more freely again and silently rendered thanks that the destruction was not greater.

The heaviest losers estimate their losses as follows: I.H. Aamo, livery barn and contents, \$5,000, no insurance; N.P. Johnson, east division of opera house, \$5,000, insurance \$2,000; S.O. Hanson, hardware and opera house, \$5,000, insurance \$2,000; S.O. Normann, People's drug store, stock, household goods and personal effects, \$5,000, insurance \$2,500; A.H. Froshaug, building occupied by the People's drug store, \$1,500, insurance \$500, Math Sorby, building occupied by Sigel Isadore, \$1,100, insurance \$300; Sigel Isadore, clothing, etc., \$3,500, insurance \$1,000.

Mr. Isadore saved most of his stock and Dr. Normann some, while other losses were practically total.

Besides the above, there were many minor losses. Windows were cracked by the fire or shattered by explosions. Hotel Murphy, Citizens State Bank, Stangeland's building occupied by Jas. Nelson, and Chas. Hanson's building were the main sufferers in this respect.

In the absence of Chief Ramsey, A.H. Froshaug, foreman, assumed the duties of chief, and was ever in the thickest of the conflict. Under his cool judgement and wise commands, the company worked heroically and effectively. Everything that was possible to do, was done, and the company deserves the heartiest thanks and highest praise of the community. The bravery and endurance of Ole Groslie and Gudolph Olson as nozzle men was particularly noticeable, while Ole Holter, Emil Lien and C.R. Cudy and others were no less determined.

The fire started in some mysterious manner not yet determined about five o'clock in the morning, and by seven it was well under control. At 8:30, teams and men were at work clearing the streets of debris and the stocks of goods piled therein. By noon, nearly all evidence of the fire had disappeared with the exception of the great gap in the business center of town and the smoldering and blackened timbers and the roasted and charred remains of the unfortunate animals which perished in the flames." (Twin Valley Times, issue of December 7, 1904)

The Stock Rescued From

The Peoples Drug Store

Is now located in the first building

East of Dahl's Feed Barn,

And all Holiday Goods will be sold at figures regardless of cost. These goods consist in part of

**Watches, Clocks, Jewelry, Silverware,
ALBUMS, TOYS OF VARIOUS KINDS,**

And other articles too numerous to enumerate here, many of which you may need. Come in and take advantage of this sale, as we want to close out all toys and Christmas goods to make room for the Drug line. Don't forget, this is

NO FAKE FIRE SALE.

The goods must go at some price, and that quickly.

All Patent Medicine soiled or scorched will be sold at a discount of 15 per cent.

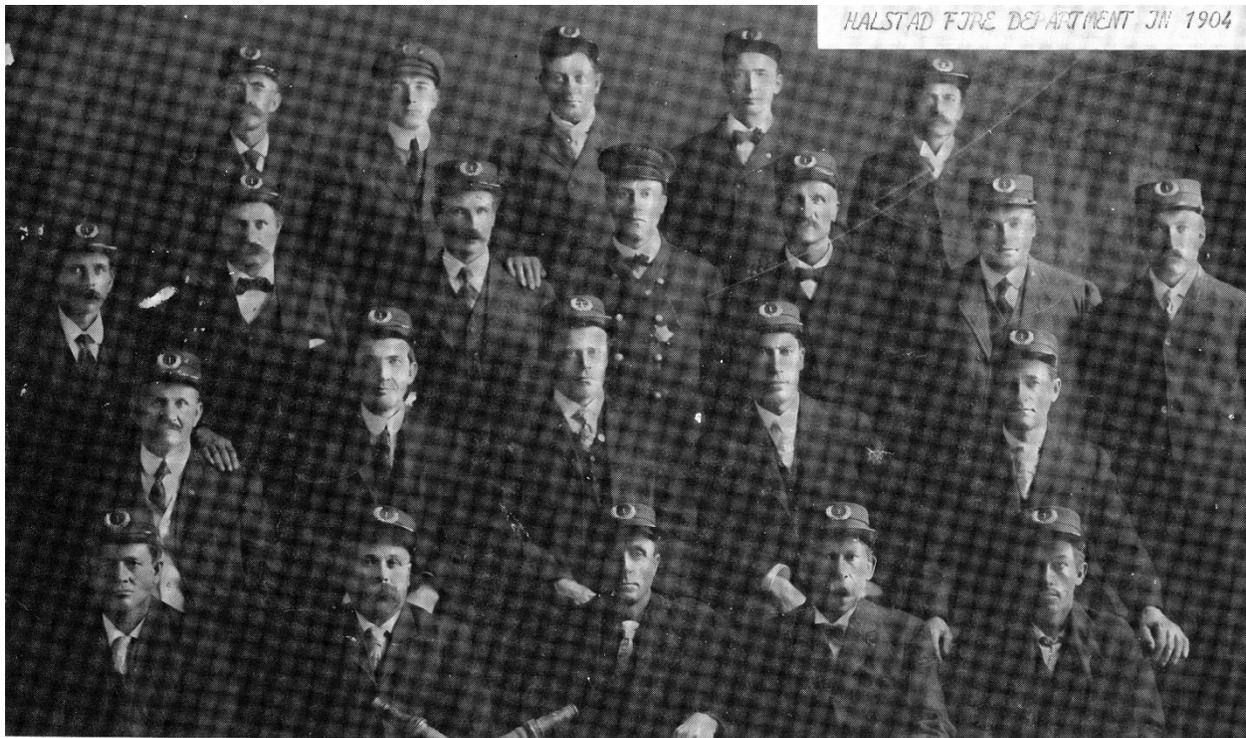
Prescriptions filled as usual by Druggist Olson.

Mr. Holmes is still with us and will repair your watches, clocks and jewelry the same as before.

Respectfully, S. O. NORMANN, V. S.

1904 December 15

The Ada Fire department elected the following officers: chief, H. W. Thune; asst. chief, Sam Olson; secretary, Emil Farley; treasurer Sam Olson; Executive committee, I. Roesch, C. D. Simpson and A. G. Gerber.



HALSTAD FIRE DEPARTMENT IN 1904

First Row: Albert Flesjer, John Hage, Nels Baggerud, Gerhard Kvanvig, George Rognlie. Second Row: Sam Dowry, Richard Richardson, John Nygaard, Nels Strommen, G. O. Genson. Third Row: Andrew Nygaard, A. O. Ueland, Jacob Nygaard, Martin Baggerud, Mikkel Ranum, E. E. Dahl, Christ Nelson. Fourth Row: John Sulerud, John Lyngstad, Pete Houske, Robert Lee, Anton Engen.

1905

1905 January 12 The new school building at Gary burned down that week, only a few articles of furniture and books being saved. The value of the schoolhouse was \$6,000 with \$4,500 insurance.

“At one o’clock this afternoon the fire bell sounded and the citizens of Gary rushed out of their homes to see the new beautiful school house, the pride of the village, in flames. The building was just outside the village, beyond the reach of the fire hose. Not even a simple well was within two hundred yards. All the citizens could do was to save some of the furniture and a few of the books and watch \$6,000 worth of property go up in smoke. Had there been a well on the grounds, the fire department could have stopped the blaze in a few minutes. The fire started from the furnace and was where it could not be reached by simple means. The brick walls were still standing and may be usable in a new building. The value of the school house was \$6,000 with \$4,500 insurance.” (Originally published in the Gary Graphic, January 12, 1905)

1905 January 26 The new barn on the former Farnsworth place one mile northeast of Ada, was burned to the ground that week, the cause of the fire being undetermined.

1905 March 16 Fire at Borup on Sunday morning of that week, starting in the August Stilger store, burned that place and two adjoining buildings owned by J. R. Miller & Sons.

1905 April 13 Bids were let at Twin Valley that week for a brick block to replace the buildings destroyed the year before by fire.

1905 August 17 The new brick block at Twin Valley was about completed.

1905 August 17 The fire department was called out by a small blaze in the engine room at the sawmill, no damage being done. It was the first call for the department in just a year, their last previous call being to the big sawmill fire on Aug. 15, 1904.

1905 September 14 The Gary schoolhouse was nearing completion, replacing the one previously destroyed by fire.

1905 October 5 Olaus Gardner of Waukon was seriously burned that week when he attempted to put out a fire that had started in his grain stacks.

1905 November 16 A prairie fire northwest of Ada in Hegne and Pleasant View burned considerable hay, Ben Holte being the heaviest loser.

1905 November 16 At the annual election of the Ada Fire Department, H. W. Thune was named chief, Sam Olson, treasurer and Emil Farley, secretary.

1905 November 23 A disastrous prairie fire on the reservation the previous week, which started from a campfire or a spark from an engine, burned nearly \$5,000 worth of grain and haystacks.

1905 December 7 The annual meeting of the Ada Fire Department was held that week. H. W. Thune was re-elected chief; Sam Olson, assistant-chief and treasurer; Emil Farley, secretary; and Sever Ban, H. Houghlum and K. T. Hovey, executive committee. In addition to the above members the roster included: Amos Watson, Mike Roesch, A. G. Gerber, V. Wagner, F. O. Weygant, Sam Strand, Christ Balke, Lars Larson, W. C. Moffatt, Louis Simpson, Henry Storslee, A. P. Dyrud, Julius Melberg, John Mattson, E. J. Kloety, G. Kittilson, M. C. Hoch, L. Roesch, E. J. Kulander, J. H. Gordon, Theo. Gaetke, Andrew Ramness, Wm. Bosworth, Mike Hamp, Albert Strand, Emil Zimmerman, and C. D. Simpson.

1906

1906 April 26 A barn on the Mikkil Elmstad farm ten miles east of Ada, was struck by lightning that week and burned to the ground, together with one horse.

1906 May 10 H. W. Thune had been re-appointed fire chief by the village council.

1906 July 17 The old reservoir near the Ahlers residence, used for fire purposes, was filled up that week.

1906 September 13 The farmhouse of Jacob Stola in Shelly was burned that week.

1906 September 27 A fire, which broke out in the George Topper barn near Lockhart, destroyed the barn, eight horses, harnesses and a lot of hay.

1906 September 27 Lightning that week struck the barn on the Joe Hethrington farm, the old Leo Rolle place in Town of Mary, and burned it to the ground together with ten head of horses and a lot of hay.

1906 October 11 The three-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Nick Reinhardt of Pleasant View was burned to death that week while playing with matches.

1906 November 15 Fire department officers elected that week were: Sever Bang, chief; E. J. Kulander, assistant chief; C. D. Simpson, secretary; Isidore Roesch, treasurer; W. B. Bosworth, G. Kittilson and Mike Roesch, executive committee.

1907

1907 January 18 “Blaze in Twin Valley –

But for the prompt services of the fire department, the village of Twin Valley might have experienced another costly fire Monday night. The alarm was turned in shortly after ten o'clock. It was then found that the whole interior of the southeast portion of the old Hotel Murphy, situated just north of the Citizens State Bank, was all ablaze. The fire department responded promptly to the call and soon had two streams of water pouring on the burning building. The fire was difficult to get at but by breaking in the windows of the upper story it was at last brought under control. It was while engaged at this work that nozzleman Henry Lysaker severely cut his wrist on a piece of glass, severing the muscles and an artery and leaving a painful wound. Chief Groslie bore himself as becomes the head of a fire fighting organization and gave a good account of himself in this g=his first test as leader. Considerable damage was done by both fire and water. Mr. Murphy estimates his loss at \$2,500, insurance \$1,500.” (Originally printed in the Twin Valley Times, reprinted by the Norman County Herald, January 18, 1907)

1907 January 23 “The fire department was called out about eight o'clock Monday morning on an alarm turned in from Louis Hanson's residence, but the blaze was extinguished before the stalwart firemen got into action. Mrs. Hanson went into the basement and started a fire in a cook stove to boil water for the weekly washing and the stove pipe running into the chimney became overheated, setting fire to the joist overhead. Three pails of water, promptly applied, turned the trick of putting out the blaze and it was not necessary for the department to connect the hose to the hydrants.” (Norman County Herald, January 23, 1907)

1907 February 6 “If convinced of the justice of the cause Twin Valley people seldom turn a deaf ear to appeals for aid. Last week about \$30 in cash was raised by subscription for Henry Lysaker who injured his hand during the hotel fire and has since been laid up with a helpless right arm and hand. During the preceding week a like amount was raised in the same way for the needy of the village while the Ladies Aid of United church has for some time past been doing yeomanry service in relieving the wants of families more or less destitute.”

1907 February 7 The Thorpe building in Ada, occupied by a furniture store and a bowling alley, burned to the ground about 3 o'clock the previous Saturday morning. Cold weather, a blizzard and frozen hydrants handicapped the firemen. The building, located just south of the present Index office, was the only one left standing in that block by the big fire exactly seven years before.

1907 February 6 “Ada Has Big Blaze –

The fire has erased another of the old land marks of this village. Early last Saturday morning, the Thorpe building was discovered to be on fire and the alarm turned in by the Night Marshal Ramness. Owing to the terrific blizzard that was in progress at the time, very few heard the alarm and there were not over seventy-five citizens out to the fire. That the fire was confined to this one building is nothing short of a miracle and reflects great credit on the firemen who were out that night. The fire is thought to have originated in the bowling alley from the stub of a cigar that was carelessly thrown down during the evening. The Woodbury building twenty-five feet north of the burned structure, escaped with a slight scorching of the doors and windows on the south side and the Index building across the street was not even scorched. The wind was blowing at a high rate of speed and was accompanied by a heavy fall of snow as well as a low temperature. Two of the hydrants on Pacific Avenue were frozen and the first water connection was made at the Wesley Jenkins corner, a block south of the fire. Ada seemed to be playing in its usual good luck and buildings that looked to be doomed to destruction still stand and in many the occupants slept through the night not knowing until the next day how near they came to being burned out of house and home.

The Thorpe building was one of the oldest in the village and will be long remembered by the old timers when the Thorpe Brothers & Co. conducted its general store, which was at the time one of the largest general stores in northwest. The building had a frontage of 50 feet and ran back a distance of about 125 feet. A part of the building was constructed from what was at one time the first school house in the village.

The building has been only partially occupied of late years and the only tenants in the building at the time of the fire were Frohwerk & Strand who conducted the bowling alley. G. L. Thorpe had a suite of rooms in the second story but had not occupied them as living quarters for some time, although he had stored there many articles that a special value for their antiquity and family ties.

The insurance carried on the building was \$2,000 and had been rewritten the day of the fire. Mr. Thorpe carried \$400 insurance on his personal effects and the owners of the bowling alley carried a similar amount on their property.” (Norman County Herald, February 6, 1907)

1907 February 13 “Since the Thorpe fire, Ada people have had opportunity to hear the fire whistle at the power house. The whistle has been given daily tests and seems to be affected with a slight cold.” (Norman County Herald, February 13, 1907)

1907 March 7 O. M. Lloyd’s store building at Betcher burned that week together with a large portion of the stock and household goods.

1907 March 7 “Fire at Betcher –
O. M. Loyd’s general store at Betcher was totally destroyed by fire last night at about 6:30. The fire was first discovered in the rear rooms which were used as living rooms by Mr. Loyd and family and when first noticed the fire had gained such headway that it was impossible to make an entrance in to that part of the building and all the household goods were burned. The building was burned to the ground but a good quantity of the merchandise was saved. The building and merchandise were insured but there was no insurance on the household goods. Mr. Loyd and family were visiting a neighbor at the time and knew nothing of the fire until their return.” (Norman County Herald, March 6, 1907)



(Norman County Herald, March 13, 1907)

1907 May 9 The Halstad Fire Department elected the following officers that week: chief, John P. Nygaard; assistant, N. O. Strommen; secretary, A. O. Ueland; treasurer, G. O. Benson.

1907 May 22 “Death in the Flames – Lockhart, Minn., May 14.
Last Thursday while Mr. and Mrs. Aurner, who live two miles north of Lockhart, were both absent from the house for a few minutes the clothes in the baby’s crib caught fire and when Mrs. Aurner came in, she was met by a black cloud of smoke which obscured everything in the room. Hurrying to the cradle, she found not only the clothes burning but the baby’s tender flesh as well. Mr. Aurner hurried to Lockhart and telephoned for a physician, but medical aid was of no avail and the soul of the child returned to its maker. The large attendance at the funeral Sunday showed that the sympathy of the entire community is with Mr. and Mrs. Aurner in their affliction.” (Twin Valley Times, May 22, 1907)

1907 August 1 Some temporary sheds used by Bosworth Bros. while ditching in Hegne, caught fire and burned so rapidly that it was impossible to get out one of the horses. The sheds were near the Olson & Roesch farm buildings, but they were saved.

1907 September 5 The creamery at Rindal on the county line between Norman and Polk Counties was burned to the ground the previous week together with the equipment, when fire started on the roof from the smoke stack.

1907 October 24 Mrs. Bernt Quamme, residing near Gary, lost two settings of grain stacks by fire that week.

1907 October 24 Work on the new creamery at Rindal to replace the one destroyed by fire, was progressing rapidly.

1907 October 31 The barn on the Meyer farm in Mary Township was burned in a prairie fire that week, and two stacks of grain on the Simonet farm were also destroyed in another fire.

1907 November 14 The Ada fire department elected the following officers that week: chief, Sever Bang; assistant chief, Mike Roesch; treasurer, Isidore Roesch; secretary, Claude Simpson; executive committee, Carl Simonson, Mike Roesch and K. T. Hovey.

1907 December 12 A disastrous fire at Twin Valley starting in the Ballard Trimble lumberyard, destroyed the lumberyard, the Twin Valley Implement Co. and the C. I. Dahl warehouse, with a total loss of over \$17,000.

1907 December 12 Alice, four-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. K. A. Knutson of Hendrum, died that week from burns when her clothes caught fire while playing with matches.

1908

1908 March 26 A refrigerator car caught on fire on the southbound freight before it reached Ada, through the explosion of a lamp. It was the second car of the train and it was uncoupled and rushed to the Ada water tank where the fire was put out without a great deal of loss.

1908 April 2 The farm home of Abel Anderson at Lockhart was destroyed by fire that week.

1908 April 16 The Sundal creamery was destroyed by fire early one morning that week and was burned to the ground, entailing a loss of more than \$5000.

1908 May 8 Last Friday we had one of the worst forest fires in the history of our town, as far as I know. The fire was set out, it is thot (“sic”), on section 5, and sections 5, 8, 17,

18 and 20 are burned over more or less. The principal losers are John Jenson, A. P. Grande, Ole Quit, the Orphan's Home and many more. Freddie"

1908 May 14 The barn on the George Davidson farm was burned the previous week.

1908 May 14 An extensive prairie fire raged north of Ada a few days before and destroyed, among other things, the buildings on the old Mackel place.

1908 July 2 The fire department early Saturday morning extinguished a fire in the desk at the Gilbertson store, which presumably started from an electric wire.

1908 July 16 The M. Fremstad house and household goods in Town of Hendrum were burned to the ground on Tuesday evening of that week.

1908 July 23 Fire in the Chas. Gaetke building occupied by the Sam Strand millinery stock, damaged the stock and building to some extent on Friday evening.

“Famous Millinery Store Burns –

Last Friday evening, about 7:30 p.m. Matt Hoch discovered smoke coming from the Chas. Gaetke building which is occupied by the millinery stock owned by Sam Strand, and immediately turned in the alarm. The fire department promptly responded and in a very few minutes had the fire under control, but not until the entire the entire stock had been damaged to a great extent. The fire apparently started in the rear of the building, and its origin is a mystery. By the time the fire was discovered, it had gained considerable headway and the building was filled with smoke. The stock was covered by insurance, but there was no insurance on the building.” (Norman County Index, July 23, 1908)

1908 August 6 “Hadler: There was a busy time for the fire department on the Hadler farm Wednesday afternoon. While extinguishing a prairie fire which was second to none but the recent Canada fire, a spark found its way into their buggy which had served as a fire engine during the heroic fight; soon after having successfully fought those flames they were called out to put out the rapid oxidation of their buggy. The call was answered momentarily but the flames had already consumed the larger part of the buggy and nothing but the repetition of the former bravery prevented the flames from playing the same havoc with plows, hay rakes, binders and possibly some adjoining grounds. The buggy carried no insurance.” (Norman County Index)

1908 August 20 The members of the Ada Fire department decided to buy a set of new blue uniforms.

1908 September 5 “Excitement on the Hadler Farm:

Saturday evening at 5 o'clock an incident occurred which might have ended more dangerously than it did. While threshing through the high wind, the bundle wagon of Mr. Thomas Norby caught fire while unloading at the separator. The flames were first noticed when they had made considerable progress, and had it not been for the presence of mind

shown by Norby and the remarkable lung power of Nels Gunnerson, who kept calling ‘Get out of the way’ the Reeves separator belonging to Gunnerson Bros. would be no more.

But Norby bravely turned his team around and galloped against the wind in a vain effort to leave the fire behind. To make matters worse, Norby, while calling forth the latent energy of his trusty steeds made such a noise that it frightened the fire from his burning wagon which set the stubble afire along its course. The team was finally stopped with the aid of the strong arm of Nels Gunnerson, and Norby lives to tell how he saved his horses from a fiery grave.

In the meantime, the fire was working its way toward twenty-seven bundles that surrounded the separator. While some of the other boys were fighting those flames, Fred Grieve, the boy engineer, in the absence of Lars Gunnerson deliberately pulled open the throttle of and with Charles Gunnerson at the helm, the engine moved towards the scene of the action and calmly pulled the separator out of the way. It was a difficult task as the separator was embedded in unthreshed grain; but Fred gave the engine the full throttle and soon the separator was on its way toward plowed ground and continued prosperity.

The wagon as such is a total loss, but the remains as estimated by chunk dealer, Nels Gunnerson, is worth more than the original outfit. The king bolt has been sold to Fred Grieve and one wheel and axle was instantly turned into a velocipede by Nels Gunnerson. This being a novelty he immediately began practicing after the smoke cleared away. While riding a full speed he met several chunks but Nels didn’t care, he didn’t stop for chunks.

The origin of the fire is unknown but all the blame is put onto Albert Gunnerson the water monkey for not putting out the fire. In speaking of the destruction of the wagon, Bruno Zimmerman said, ‘Dat vas awful bad.’ Hadler Bros.” (Norman County Index)

1908 October 22 A stack of barley and part of a stack of oats on the Phillip Alrick farm in Green Meadow was destroyed by fire caused by a spark from an engine.

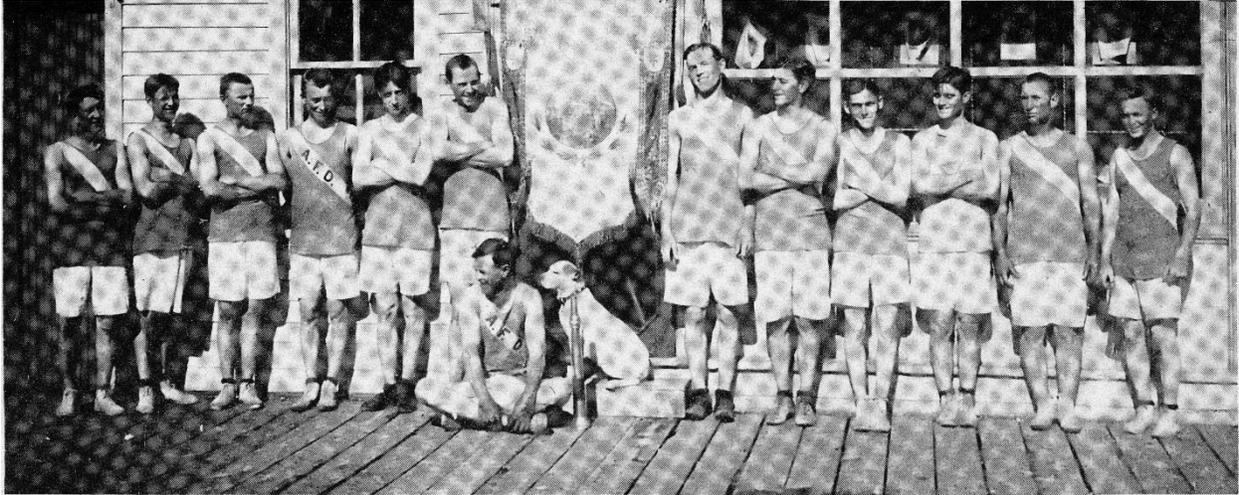
1908 October 22 There was a hot prairie fire in Lockhart the previous Wednesday, when six stacks of hay belonging to George Mayer, John Jackson, Jay Aurner and James Keltie were burned. Twenty men fought the fire all night. The fire is said to have started in section 20 from a spark from a freight engine.

1908 November 12 The Ada Fire department elected the following officers that week: chief, H. W. Thune; assistant chief, Mike Roesch; secretary, C. D. Simpson; treasurer, Isidore Roesch, and physician, Dr. Biorn.

1908 November 26 A destructive prairie fire raged in Sundal, south of Flaming that week and destroyed many haystacks.

1908 December 17 School in district 25 at Perley, was being held at the Alrick home since the schoolhouse burned recently.

1908 December 24 The residence on the Wm. Bennefield farm southwest of Ada burned that week, when a stovepipe, which fell, caused the blaze.



The above photo shows members of the 1908 Ada Fire Department running team. They competed in and won races with department members from other area towns. The faster the runners, the faster the department got their equipment to early-day fires. This department even had a dog mascot.

1909

1909 February 18 The farm residence of John Widme in Fossum was burned that week, although most of the furniture on the first floor was saved.

1909 March 4 The J. K. Weium general store at Twin Valley burned to the ground the previous Wednesday evening with a loss of \$10,000, partly covered by insurance.

1909 March 16 A fire, which was discovered in the Forseth Meat Market Tuesday night of that week, did some damage to the building and stock.

1909 March 25 The general store of Erstad & Ness at Sundal was destroyed by fire on March 13. The cause of the fire was unknown and nothing was saved.

1909 April 1 The new city council that week made the following appointments for city positions: clerk, E. J. Herringer; auditor, Ben Dahlquist; assessor, Frank Gaetke; city attorney, John M. Hetland; **fire warden, H. W. Thune**; marshal, Andrew Ramnes; street commissioner, Amund Rasmussen; board of health, Dr. Biron, Frank Gaetke and C. R. Andrews.

1909 April 30 “Andrew Danielson lost all his hay in the prairie fire Monday night, and Tuesday at noon he was minus any hay to feed to his animals.” (Gary Graphic, April 30, 1909)

1909 April 30 “Russel Lee of Spring Creek was badly burnt about the face and hands Monday while fighting fire. He had become tangled in a wire fence and was so wrapped in smoke that he could not see his way out.” (Gary Graphic, April 30, 1909)

1909 March 24 The Ada Fire department held a meeting that week and decided to enter a racing team in the Firemen’s tournament to be held at Crookston that summer.

1909 July 8 The Ada Fire department attended the firemen's tournament at Crookston that week and carried off first prize for the most firemen in line, second prize in appearance and third prize in running.

1909 September 16 The fire department was called out by a small blaze in Editor Weatherhead's house, where a kerosene stove had set fire to the wall.

1909 October 7 Fire that week destroyed the Hellerud livery stable, which was owned by Wm. Bosworth. The fire was discovered at 11:30 p.m. and had gained such headway that five horses, all harnesses, stoves and other articles could not be saved.

1909 October 14 John Lahey's barn near Borup burned the week before, together with seven horses, one cow, hay, oats and harnesses.

1909 November 18 The Ada Fire department, elected the following officers: Chief, H. W. Thune; Secretary, C. D. Simpson; Treasurer, Isidore Roesch; Capt. No. 1, Matt Hoch; Capt. No. 2, G. Kittilson; Captain Hook and Ladder, Ben Simonson. Several alarms were answered by the department that year, the loss to the buildings and contents amounting to \$3,406, the insurance companies paying \$2,781 of this amount.

1909 December 16 Halstad had a bad fire that week when the R. A. Olson building, in which the Bargain store was located, the old Onsgaard building and G. J. Gilbert's drug store were burned.

“Bad Fire in Halstad Destroys Three Business Places – Thousands of Dollars' Worth of Property Destroyed:

One of the worst fires in the history of Halstad occurred in 1909, when the R. A. Olson building in which the Bargain store was located, the old Onsgaard building, and the G. J. Gilbert's drug store burned. The fire was discovered at 2:45 a.m. in the rear of the Bargain Store. The fire department was called out but nothing could be saved and the fire company directed its engines toward saving adjoining buildings. The drug store, which adjoined the Bargain Store on the east, soon caught fire, and the roof and ceiling as well as a part of the west wall were burned practically ruining the building. A very large part of the stock was also destroyed. Mr. Gilbert had his property well insured but stated that insurance did not cover the whole loss. The C. K. Onsgaard building adjoined the Bargain Store on the west, was burned to the ground. The building was unoccupied at the time.

The heaviest losers on account of the fire were Gust Lee and C. E. Natwick, proprietors of the Bargain Store. They had just received their supply of Christmas goods as well as a large supply of winter goods. They estimated the value of stock on hand at between ten and twelve thousand dollars and were carrying \$6,500 insurance, making the total loss quite heavy. They were unable to reopen their store after the disaster.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)



Natwick Store Fire

December 11, 1909

1909 December 19

“Child Burned to Death:

Last Saturday a very sad accident occurred in Hendrum, in which Alice Knutson, lost her life. It appears that Mrs. Knutson had gone out to hang clothes and while she was doing that the little girl had gotten hold of matches and in some way, fire had caught in her clothes. When the mother came in, she found Alice all in a blaze. The wash tub was near, in which she placed the child, extinguishing the flames. Dr. Hanson was called immediately and all possible was done to save her life, but she was so badly burned that she died at 4 o'clock the next morning. The funeral was held last Monday at Immanuel church. The members of the bereaved family have the sympathy of all in their sad loss.”

- 1910 July 14 Ada was selected as the city in which to hold the 1911 Firemen's convention.
- 1910 August 18 The fire department was called out Tuesday afternoon by a small blaze at the barn on the premises formerly occupied by Matt Olson.
- 1910 October 6 A prairie fire near Gary did considerable damage that week, several hay stacks being burned.
- 1910 October 13 A prairie fire was started south of Syre by a spark from an N. P. engine, and burned fifty tons of hay belonging jointly to O. W. Olson and John Grettum and a stack belonging to H. O. Gilbertson.
- 1910 October 13 "A prairie fire here (Gary) recently caused by the cinders from a freight train destroyed quite a bit of hay stacks in the vicinity. The heaviest losers were Nils Warstad and Gust Saker."
- 1910 October 21 "(Received too late for last week.) A large stack of hay belonging to Thor Martineson was enveloped in flames last Saturday. There were several men trying to put out the flames but all in vain."
- 1910 November 10 H.W. Thune was elected chief and Mike Roesch assistant chief of the Ada Fire Department.

Annual Report Fire Department.	
Members in good standing	31
Meetings held during the year	14
Alarms answered during the year	2
Practices held during year	6
Number buildings sustained during year	3
Estimate value of buildings	\$1575 00
Estimate value of contents	250 00
Loss on buildings	225 00
Loss on contents	200 00
Amount paid by Ins. Co's	25 00
Balance in Treas. hands, Nov. 1, 1909	141 72
Received in fines and dues	51 60
Received from city for fires and practices	110 50
Cost of men at fires	70 50
Cost of men at practices . .	45 00
Received for prizes won at tournaments	17 50
Miscellaneous receipts	10 00
Bal. in treas. Nov. 9, 1910	50 41

1911

1911 April 27 The W. B. Bosworth barn in the south part of town burned down on the preceding Saturday evening, together with four calves and adjoining barn, some stock sheds and considerable tools and equipment.

1911 May 11 The barn on a farm rented by Henry Mulder of Spring Creek was struck by lightning and was burned to the ground together with five horses and 13 head of cattle.

1911 May 25 Recent fires in the woods east and northeast of Heiberg burned off timber in several sections.

1911 May 25 The Northern Minnesota Firemen's tournament was to be held in Ada July 4th to 7th that year.

1911 June 8 Local committees were busy preparing for the firemen's tournament, which was to be held in Ada on July 4th, 5th and 6th.

1911 June 15

ADA, NORMAN COUNTY, MINNESOTA, JUNE 15, 1911.

PROGRAMME FOR FIREMEN'S TOURNAMENT.

TUESDAY, JULY 4

Morning

9:00 a. m.—Meeting of Executive Committee at City Hall.
 10:00 a. m.—Grand Parade of Firemen, Floats and Automobiles.
 Fire Department having most uniformed men in line—
 First prize \$25.00
 Second prize 10.00
 Ada Barred.
 Best appearing company—
 First prize \$25.00
 Second prize 10.00
 Comic costumes—
 First prize \$10.00
 Second prize 5.00
 Address of welcome—Mayor J. M. Hetland and H. W. Thune, President of the Association.
 Response—
 Oration—(Speaker not named)

Afternoon

1:30 p. m.—Free for all foot race—
 First prize \$5 00
 Second prize 3 00
 2:30 p. m.—Championship hook and ladder race—
 First prize, Banner worth \$65 and \$35.00 in cash \$100 00
 Second prize \$25 00
 Third prize \$15 00
 3:30 p. m.—Base ball game at fair grounds \$60 00

Evening

8:30 p. m.—Band Concert—
 9:00 p. m.—Grand Ball and Grand Display of Fireworks.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

Morning

10:00 a. m.—100 yard dash, firemen only, 1 from each team—
 First prize Gold Medal
 10:30 a. m.—Ladder climbing contest—
 First prize \$15 00
 Second prize \$10 00
 Third prize \$5 00

Afternoon

1:30 p. m.—Coupling contest—
 First prize \$15 00
 Second prize \$10 00
 Third prize \$5 00
 2:00 p. m.—Flag race—
 First prize \$15 00
 Second prize \$10 00
 3:00—Assn. Championship hose race—
 First prize, Banner valued at \$75 and \$35 cash \$110 00
 Second prize 25 00
 Third prize 15 00
 4:00 p. m.—Base ball fair grounds \$60 00

Evening

8:00 p. m.—Annual Meeting of the Association and Smoker.
 Dance free to Firemen.

THURSDAY, JULY 6

Morning

10:00 a. m.—Service wet test—
 First prize \$65 00
 Second prize 30 00
 Third prize 15 00

Afternoon

1:30 p. m.—Combination Hook Ladder and Hose race—
 First prize \$50 00
 Second prize 35 00
 Third prize 15 00
 3:00 p. m.—Hub and Hub race—
 First prize \$45 00
 Second prize 30 00

1911 June 22

Firemen's Tournament

Ada, Minn., July 4, 5, 6.

PROGRAM.

TUESDAY, JULY 4

Grand Fourth of July Celebration

Morning

- 9:00 a. m.—Meeting of Executive Committee at City Hall.
- 10:00 a. m.—Grand Parade of Firemen, Floats and Automobiles.
- Fire Department having most uniformed men in line—
 - First prize..... \$25.00
 - Second prize..... 10.00
 - Ada Barred.
- Best appearing company—
 - First prize..... \$25.00
 - Second prize..... 10.00
- Comic costumes—
 - First prize..... \$10.00
 - Second prize..... 5.00
- Address of welcome—Mayor J. M. Hetland and H. W. Thune, President of the Association.
- Response—
- Oration—(Speaker not named)

Afternoon

- 1:30 p. m.—Free for all foot race—
 - First prize..... \$5 00
 - Second prize..... 3 00
- 2:30 p. m.—Championship hook and ladder race—
 - First prize, Banner worth \$65 and \$35.00 in cash..... \$100 00
 - Second prize..... \$25 00
 - Third prize..... \$15 00
- 3:30 p. m.—Base ball game at fair grounds..... \$60 00

Evening

- 8:30 p. m.—Band Concert—
- 9:00 p. m.—Grand Ball and Grand Display of Fireworks.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

Morning

- 10:00 a. m.—100 yard dash, firemen only, 1 from each team—
 - First prize..... Gold Medal
- 10:30 a. m.—Ladder climbing contest—
 - First prize..... \$15 00
 - Second prize..... \$10 00
 - Third prize..... \$5 00

Afternoon

- 1:30 p. m.—Coupling contest—
 - First prize..... \$15 00
 - Second prize..... \$10 00
 - Third prize..... \$5 00
- 2:00 p. m.—Flag race—
 - First prize..... \$15 00
 - Second prize..... \$10 00
- 3:00—Assn. Championship hose race—
 - First prize, Banner valued at \$75 and \$35 cash..... \$110 00
 - Second prize..... 25 00
 - Third prize..... 15 00
- 4:00 p. m.—Base ball fair grounds..... \$60 00

Evening

- 8:00 p. m.—Annual Meeting of the Association and Smoker. Dance free to Firemen.

THURSDAY, JULY 6

Morning

- 10:00 a. m.—Service wet test—
 - First prize..... \$65 00
 - Second prize..... 30 00
 - Third prize..... 15 00

Afternoon

- 1:30 p. m.—Combination Hook Ladder and Hose race—
 - First prize..... \$50 00
 - Second prize..... 35 00
 - Third prize..... 15 00
- 3:00 p. m.—Hub and Hub race—
 - First prize..... \$45 00
 - Second prize..... 30 00
 - Third prize..... 15 00
- 3:30 p. m.—Base ball game at fair grounds.

1911 June 22

Several committees were busy making final arrangements for the Northern Minnesota Fireman's tournament to be held in Ada on July 4th, 5th and 6th.

Firemen's Tournament.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETING IN ADA ABOUT COMPLETE.

The various committees in charge of the arrangements for the Firemen's Tournament in Ada July 4, 5 and 6 have practically completed their work and a fine program of sports has been prepared. In this issue we publish the full program of the various races, contests, etc., and it will be worth going miles to witness. The best fire departments in this part of the state will send racing teams, including Bemidji, Crookston, Warren, Red Lake Falls, and other towns.

Music will be furnished by the Halstad and Ada bands. The former is now one of the best in this part of the State.

The ball games will be played between teams from Halstad, Hendrum, Twin Valley and Ada. Just what days each team will play will be announced next week. A small admission fee will be charged for the ball games, but all the contests, etc., can be witnessed free.

A merry-go-round will be on hand to please the children and others.

THE COMMITTEES.

The full list of committees to have charge of the arrangements for the fire tournament of the Northern Minnesota Firemen's Association which will be held in Ada for three days commencing July 4th, has been announced. The committees are as follows:

General Committee—Chief Thune, Sam Olson, Isidore Roesch, Dave Fulton and E. J. Herringer.

Advertising Committee—Claude D. Simpson, Chief Thune, D. C. Lightbourn, Jason Weatherhead.

Parade Committee—Sam Olson, Paul Onstad, John Prigge, Matt Hoch.

Speakers Committee—A. L. Hanson, Chief Thune, I. J. Boraas, Lambert Prigge.

Music Committee—Isidore Roesch, Louis Hintze, Joe Dullard, Sever Bang.

Sports Committee—Dave Fulton, Edgar Volland, C. E. Ward, Elmore Jenkins, Alfred Remark.

Decorations Committee—Sam Olson, Matt Hoch, F. H. Leonard, Herman Thune.

Reception Committee—E. J. Herringer, C. K. Semling, Fred Bro, D. C. Lightbourn, Jason Weatherhead, Dr. Holmes, Dr. Biorn, J. G. Herringer, J. F. Prigge, W. H. Currier, Lambert Roesch.

Privileges Committee—E. J. Herringer and members of city council.

Accommodation Committee—C. R. Snyder, G. Gilbertson, J. F. Prigge,

(Norman County Index, June 22, 1911)

1911 June 29

For the second time in three years Lars Hougen in Rockwell lost his barn by fire caused by lightning.

1911 July 6

Largest Crowd in History of Ada

The City Opens Doors to Northern Minnesota Firemen— Ada Wins Several Big Events

The seventeenth annual tournament of the Northern Minnesota Firemen's association, opened in Ada Tuesday with a big Fourth of July celebration. The Crookston and Bemidji companies arrived Monday night, Twin Valley driving over the next morning and Warren coming down in the evening.

The estimated number of people taking in the celebration on the opening day was about 4,000, the at-

The parade started from the fire hall at ten o'clock headed by Chief Thune and made a tour of the principle streets of the village. The parade was made up of the Twin Valley, Crookston, Bemidji and Ada fire departments; Halstad and Ada bands; Matt Hoeb and his donkey; automobiles, and a large number of very attractive and neatly gotten up floats.

The judges on parade awarded the following prizes: Fire department having the most uniformed men in line, Crookston first, Bemidji and Twin Valley tying for second place. Best appearing company, Twin Valley first, Crookston second. Comic costume, Matt Hoeb, Ada, first and a Bemidji man second.

After the parade Mayor Helland made his speech of welcome from the balcony of the fire hall in which he turned the city over to the visitors. Chief Thune followed with a few well chosen words, this being followed by an address from Hon. A. G. Rutledge, of Bemidji, who responded in behalf of the visiting firemen.

There were eleven entries in the free for all hundred yard dash which was pulled off at 1:30 p. m., and resulted in Boyd, of Crookston, taking first money and Stewart, of Bemidji, second. Time, 11 seconds.

The big event of the day was the championship hook and ladder race. This was won by the Ada team, with Bemidji second and Crookston third. Time, Ada 25 2-5, Bemidji 27 4-5, Crookston's time not given. The Ada team made the hundred yard run and Ernest Helgeson climbed the ladder without a slip, while the other participants lost time in climbing. This event gave Ada the championship banner worth \$65 and \$35 in cash.

The ball game at the fair grounds between Ada and Twin Valley for a purse of \$60 was a ragged affair and was won by the former team by a score of 13 to 9. Summers and Brattland did the offering and receiving for the locals, and Hellerud and Bakken acted in that capacity for the visitors.

The grand display of fire works in the evening was very good and was witnessed by a large crowd.

WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAM.

In the 100 yard dash Boyd, of Crookston, first; Staska, Warren, second.

In the 100 yard dash Boyd, of Crookston, first; Staska, Warren, second. Time, 10 1-5 seconds.

Ladder climbing contest: Schmidt, Crookston, 7 2-5; Gould, Bemidji, 8; Dullard, Ada, and Larson, Warren, 8 1-5. In running off the tie Larson won in 9 seconds.

Coupling contest: Dennis, Bemidji, 4; Hanson, Bemidji, 4 3-5; Larson, Warren, 5.

Flag race: Bemidji, 25 3-5; Warren, 26 1-5; Crookston, 26 2-5.

The ball game between Ada and Hendrum was won by the former team by a score of 4 to 2. Batteries: Ada, Summers and Guy Brattland; Hendrum, Ruckles and Ed Brattland.

The bowery dances have drawn big crowds both nights and everybody is having a good time.



Chief Thune, of Ada,
Who Deserves Much Credit in Making the Tournament a Success.

tendance on the two following days was not so large.

TUESDAY'S PROGRAM.

A meeting of the executive committee was held in the fire hall at 9 o'clock a. m., and appointed the following judges:

Parade—L. B. Larson, Halstad; W. C. Lee, Twin Valley; E. J. Herringer, Ada.

Races—Dr. Jaehning, Twin Valley; D. E. Fulton, Ada; Berquist, Crookston.

Timers—Rutledge, Bemidji; Barrett, Crookston; Ward, Ada.

(Norman County Index, July 6, 1911)

1911 July 6

<h1>To-Day's Program</h1>	
<hr/> <hr/>	
<h2>Morning</h2>	
10:00 a. m.—Service wet test—	
First prize	\$65 00
Second prize	30 00
Third prize	15 00
<h2>Afternoon</h2>	
1:30 p. m.—Combination Hook Ladder and Hose race—	
First prize	\$50 00
Second prize	35 00
Third prize	15 00
3:00 p. m.—Hub and Hub race—	
First prize	\$45 00
Second prize	30 00
Third prize	15 00
3:30 p. m.—Base ball game at fair grounds.	

(Norman County Index, July 6, 1911)

1911 July 13

In the firemen's tournament held here, Ada won the first place in the association hook and ladder race and the wet test; second in the hub and hub race; fourth in ladder climbing, flag race and combination hook and ladder race, and fifth in coupling.

Firemen's Tournament

**CLOSED THURSDAY WITH CONSIDERABLE EXCITEMENT.
PRIZES AWARDED.**

The seventeenth annual tournament of the Northern Minnesota Firemen's association which was held in Ada Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of last week has now gone into history. Thursday evening the firemen pulled off some stunts that caused no end of excitement, even going so far as to lay a line of hose, attached it to the hydrant and gave the crowd a bath—no doubt the cold water helped to revive some.

The executive committee will meet at Crookston in December and designate the next place for holding the association tournament. President Thune and Secretary Herringer will hold their offices until the meeting in December. Thomas R. Johnstone, formerly of Crookston but now of St. Paul, tendered his resignation as treasurer, and Carl Simenson, of Ada, was chosen to fill the unexpired term.

THURSDAY'S PROGRAM

Association Hook and Ladder and Hose Race—Crookston 25 3 5, Warren 27 2-5, Bemidji 27 4-5, Ada 31 3-5.

Hub and Hub race—Bemidji 18, Ada 18 1-5, Warren 18 4-5, Crookston 19.

Wet Test—Ada 30, Bemidji 31, Warren 31 2-5, Crookston 40.

The ball game between Ada and Halstad proved to be the best game of the three days, going eleven innings and resulting in a victory for Ada by a score of 7 to 6. Krageland did the twirling for the visitors and pitched a good game, while Ruckles and Volland acted in that capacity for Ada, both doing splendid work. Ruckles was hit in the face by a thrown ball in the sixth inning and had to be taken out of the game. Edgar Volland then mounted the mound and pitched the remainder of the game. No hits made off his delivery, and he was given perfect support by his team-mates.

The following is a summary of the races in which the teams contested:

Bemidji—Won the association banner hose race, recognized for seventeen years as the championship event of the association; won the hub-and-hub and flag races; first and second in coupling; second in the wet test and hook and ladder race; second in ladder climbing; third in combination hook and ladder and hose race.

Crookston—Won combination hook and ladder and hose race; first in ladder climbing and foot race; third in coupling and hook and ladder race; fourth in the hub-and-hub race and the wet test.

Ada—Won the association hook and ladder race and wet test; second in the hub-and-hub race; fourth in ladder climbing, flag race and combination hook and ladder hose race; fifth in coupling.

Warren—Second in the combination hook and ladder and hose race; second in the foot race; third in the wet test, coupling, hub-and-hub race and ladder climbing.

(Norman County Index, July 13, 1911)

1911 July 20

All receipts for the firemen's tournament held the first of July totaled \$1,752 and the expenditures were \$1,452, with a few items to pay.

Cost of The Tournament

Detailed Report Of The Receipts
And Disbursements Of The
Firemens Tournament

RECEIPTS.	
H. G. Herringer.....	\$75 00
T. T. Lee.....	75 00
Ole Smedstud.....	75 00
Nels L. Nelson.....	25 00
C. R. Snyder.....	25 00
J. F. Prigge & Sons.....	20 00
Olson & Roesch.....	20 00
A. O. Peterson.....	20 00
H. W. Thune.....	20 00
J. A. Roesch & Co.....	20 00
Bang & Bloom.....	20 00
Holte & Bodding.....	20 00
Ada Auto Garage Co.....	20 00
Western Canada Col. Co.....	20 00
Ada Cigar Factory.....	20 00
Wild Rice Lumber Co.....	25 00
C. R. Andrews & Co.....	15 00
A. L. Hanson.....	25 00
First National Bank.....	10 00
Ada Milling Co.....	15 00
Jason Weatherhead.....	15 00
D. C. Lightbourn.....	15 00
Geo. Olson.....	20 00
W. B. Holmes.....	10 00
Fred Bro.....	10 00
P. O. Onstad.....	10 00
F. O. Weygant.....	10 00
Theo. Lystad.....	10 00
W. B. Bosworth.....	10 00
H. Harvey.....	10 00
J. R. Miller.....	10 00
Ole Larson.....	5 00
G. Gilbertson.....	5 00
E. C. Betcher.....	5 00
Geo. L. Rochat.....	5 00
Helland Land Co.....	5 00
Lambert Prigge.....	5 00
W. H. Corson.....	5 00
C. E. Ward.....	5 00
C. F. Gaetke.....	5 00
Darrow Bros.....	5 00
A. J. Johuson.....	5 00
J. Ahlers.....	5 00
F. M. Watson.....	5 00
C. J. Lofgren.....	5 00
Ingmar Boraas.....	5 00
Fred Tennyson.....	5 00
John M. Hetland.....	5 00
D. E. Fulton.....	5 00
A. C. Tvedt.....	5 00
E. J. Herringer.....	5 00
C. K. Semling.....	5 00
C. K. Lee.....	5 00
Marie Lovsnes.....	5 00
B. F. Tenny.....	15 00
P. A. Peterson.....	5 00
J. E. C. Volland.....	5 00
Elmore Jenkins.....	5 00

B. F. Tenny.....	15 00
P. A. Peterson.....	5 00
J. E. C. Volland.....	5 00
Elmore Jenkins.....	5 00
John Pfund.....	5 00
J. T. Shelland.....	5 00
F. H. Leonard.....	5 00
Gust Lystrom.....	5 00
C. C. Allen.....	5 00
J. G. Herringer.....	5 00
Theo. Salverson.....	5 00
Ole O. Sjoldal.....	5 00
Wm. Neukom.....	5 00
Thorpe Bros.....	5 00
O. P. Storberg.....	5 00
Hathaway & Ginsburg.....	5 00
L. Pfund.....	3 00
Ed. Lindberg.....	2 00
Louis Hintze.....	2 00
Patt Dullard.....	2 00
A. L. Laib.....	1 00
Total paid.....	\$867 00
Total Unpaid.....	58 00
Total on list.....	\$925 00
From Ball game July 4.....	\$181 05
July 5.....	35 25
July 6.....	48 00
Total.....	\$264 30
From Bowery Dance July 4.....	\$78 25
July 5th and 6th.....	81 05
Total.....	\$159 30
From fire department.....	300 00
Received from Privileges—	
Shooting Gallery.....	8 00
Novelty Rack.....	10 00
Knife Rack.....	2 00
Candy Kitchen.....	5 00
Fish Stand.....	5 00
Cane Rack.....	3 75
Remark & Prigge Hamberg	
Stand.....	10 00
From bowery stand.....	10 00
Total.....	\$53 75
From Ada Fire Dept.....	\$50 00
Total paid in.....	\$1634 35
Total outstanding.....	118 00
Grand Total.....	\$1752 35
DISBURSEMENTS.	
T. V. ball team, 2nd prize... \$30 00	
A. C. Smith, 2d prize hose race 5 00	
Gust Rockstad, 1st hose race 10 00	
Hendrum ball team, 2d prize 25 00	
Crookston fire department, 1st	
uniformed men in line..... 25 00	
Bemidji fire dept, one half	
2d prize men in line..... 5 00	
Twin Valley fire dept, one half	
2d prize men in line..... 5 00	
Twin Valley fire dept, first	
prize best appearing co.... 25 00	
Crookston fire dept, second	
prize, best appearing co.... 10 00	

Matt Hoeh, first comic prize. 10 00	
Frank Ripple, 2nd comic prize 5 00	
Van Boyd, 1st prize foot race 5 00	
Scot Stewart, 2nd foot race.. 3 00	
Ada fire dept, 1st hk and lad. 35 00	
Bemidji dept, 2d hk and lad. 25 00	
Crookston, third hk and lad.. 15 00	
Harry Smith, 1st lad climb.. 15 00	
Gould, 2d ladder climbing... 10 00	
Larson, 3d ladder climbing.. 5 00	
Ray Dennis, 1st coupling con 15 00	
Geo Hanson, 2d coupling con 10 00	
Larson, 3d ladder climbing.. 5 00	
Ray Dennis, 1st coupling con 15 00	
Geo Hanson, 2d coupling con 10 00	
Larson, 3d coupling contest.. 5 00	
Bemidji dept 1st flag race.... 15 00	
Crookston, 2d flag race..... 10 00	
Bemidji, 1st champ hose race 35 00	
Warren, 2d champ hose race. 25 00	
Crookston, 3d hose race..... 15 00	
Crookston, 1st combination	
hook, ladder and hose..... 50 00	
Warren 2d, hk, lad and hose. 35 00	
Bemidji 3d, hk lad and hose. 15 00	
Bemidji dpt 1st, hub and hub 45 00	
Ada dept, 2d hub and hub... 30 00	
Warren, 3rd hub and hub... 15 00	
Ada dept, 1st service wet test 65 00	
Bemidji, 2nd service wet test. 30 00	
Warren, 3d, service wet test.. 15 00	
Halstad ball team, 2d prize.. 25 00	
Gust Rockstad, 1st horse race 8 00	
Halstad band, one day..... 100 00	
C. C. Allen & Co, lime..... 50	
Luther Ford Co, fireworks... 74 45	
Geo Johnson, posting bills... 1 00	
Olson & Roesch, frgt firewks. 4 04	
Herald, printing and adv..... 28 05	
Index, printing and adv..... 32 06	
Index, dance tickets..... 1 75	
Wm Griewe, help fireworks.. 1 00	
E S Lindberg, drayage..... 50	
Theo Lystad, mdee..... 5 00	
E Potretzke, cigars..... 12 00	
Dr. Holmes, injured ball plyr	
Hans Kirkewold, board for	
injured ball player..... 4 00	
H W Thune, exp adv trip.... 6 37	
E. J. Volland, balls..... 10 75	
E. J. Volland, phone ball tms 1 50	
Henry Kappel, work on ball	
grounds..... 4 00	
Ada Auto Garage Co, livery	
for advertising trips..... 15 10	
E J Volland, fixing run shoes 30	
Chas Benner, building and	
taking down bowery..... 30 00	
P J Lillivig, hauling lumber	
and brush for bowery..... 3 00	
Geo L Rochat, gold medal... 11 00	
Ada ball team, three firsts in	
ball games..... 100 00	
Ada band, playing three days 175 00	
Ada orchestra, dance music.. 65 00	
A. J. Johuson, use of piano.. 4 00	
Olson & Roesch, bunting and	
flags..... 5 30	
John Homeland, brush for	
bowery..... 5 00	
Isidore Roesch, cash paid for	
fixing and tuning piano... 5 00	
Thorpe Bros, use of lots..... 5 00	
E J Herringer, Sec, books,	
stationery, etc..... 5 00	
Total.....	1452 27
There are a number of bills out-	
standing which will nearly wipe out	
the surplus.	

(Norman County Index, July 20, 1911)

1911 August 31 A new steel tubular fire escape was erected at the Ada High School that week for additional fire protection.

1911 August 31

“A steel tubular fire escape is being erected at the Ada High School this week. It is about eight feet in circumference and has a winding slide inside. All you have to do in case of fire is to jump in at one of the upper floors and wind around at a fair rate of speed and slide to the bottom. It should do away with practically all danger to students from fire after a little practice in its use.” (Norman County Index, August 31, 1911)

1911 November 9 H. W. Thune was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department and Art Mueller was elected secretary.

1911 November 30 The Milligan building and pool hall at Hendrum burned that week. It was the biggest fire in the history of Hendrum.

1912

1912 January 25 The Hendrum fire hall and all firefighting apparatus went up in smoke the previous Thursday.

1912 March 14 Mike Roesch was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department that week.

1912 June 6 An E.M.F. (Everett-Metzger-Flanders) automobile belonging to the Ada Auto Co. and driven by Alfred Remark, was totally destroyed by catching on fire on the road nine miles east of Ada.

1912 June 6 The Farmers elevator at Gary burned that week with 2,500 bushels of grain of which 1,000 bushels were flax.

1912 June 13 Ropes to be used in case of fire were placed in the Ada House that week.

1912 September 26 The previous Thursday night about 11 o'clock, a blaze started in the shavings used for fuel in the engine room at the sawmill, and the room was soon a mass of flames. The fire department succeeded in getting the fire under control before it spread to the mill.

1913

1913 February 13 The farm dwelling and contents on the John Bailey farm six miles north of Ada was destroyed by fire the proceeding Thursday afternoon. The place was occupied by Claus Hagenah and no one was at home at the time of the fire.

1913 March 13 At the annual election of the Ada Fire Department that week Mike Roesch was elected chief; E. J. Volland, secretary and Ole Moe, treasurer.

1913 April 3 Appointments made by the city council the previous week included Isidore Roesch, clerk; G. Kittilson, auditor; Frank Gaetke, marshal; John Olson, street commissioner; Louis Pfund, assessor; Lambert Prigge, city attorney; **F. O. Weygant, fire warden.**

1913 April 10 A disastrous fire occurred at Twin Valley the preceding Friday when the Weium and Hellerud stores burned down with losses of nearly \$30,000. Adjoining stores were also damaged some.

“Disastrous Fire Strikes Twin Valley Business District –

Twin Valley had the most disastrous fire in its history early one Friday morning in April 1913. At 5:30 a.m. the blaze was discovered in Weium’s Store where it apparently caught in the basement. At the time the fire had gained such headway that Weium’s stock, valued at \$20,000 was totally destroyed. The flames spread to J. J. Hellerud’s clothing store next door and this was also completely burned although a large part of the stock was saved. During the process of the fire there was an explosion and a number of the men on the roof of Hellerud’s store had an exceedingly narrow escape. They were thrown high in the air but fortunately were thrown away from Weium’s store which was all ablaze. As it was, two men were hurt, one seriously. A man named Schroeder, a brick mason, had his hip broken and Mr. Rogers, an N. P. engineer, had a leg injured.

The flames were confined to Weium’s and Hellerud’s stocks, but the stock in the next store, Hellerud and Vangsnes restaurant was injured by water. J. K. Weium’s loss was nearly \$20,000; insurance being \$10,000. H. J. Hellerud had \$8,500 insurance, which was estimated to cover his loss. The building occupied by Hellerud was owned by Lars Aamoth, who had no insurance. His loss was about \$4,000. The larger building, occupied by Weium, was owned by J. H. Aamoth and was insured for \$3,000. Its value was about \$6,000.

Both buildings burned were of brick and one story high. It was only by hard work that the adjoining buildings were saved.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1913 April 24 The Ada Auto Co. lost two R.C.H. (R. C. Hupp) autos by fire that week both being destroyed by fire on the road.

1913 June 12 A ten-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Olson of Mary Township was burned to death that week when his clothes caught fire from a fire in the yard.

1913 July 10 The cattle sheds at the fair grounds were destroyed by fire the previous Thursday from an unknown cause. Fast work by the firemen prevented the fire from spreading.

1913 August 8 ST. PETRI CHURCH, GARY – August 8, 1913: “A spark from the smokestack of a steam threshing rig, that was passing by, lit on the roof of the church and burned it to the ground in a short while, much to the sorrow of the members.” (100th Anniversary St. Petri Lutheran Church, 1878 – 1978, Gary, Minnesota)

1913 August 14 The cattle sheds at the fair grounds were destroyed by fire the previous Thursday from an unknown cause. Fast work by the firemen prevented the fire from spreading.

1913 August 28 S. A. Garness lost all his horses, five calves, harnesses, oats and hay when his barn burned to the ground Saturday night of that week.

1913 October 16 A prairie fire in section 28, Lockhart, that week, made the farmers hustle to save their haystacks.

1914

1914 January 14 “Incendiarism Suspected –

Monday the woodwork at the sluiceway three miles east of Ada was discovered to be on fire by a farmer. Every indication points to incendiarism and an effort will be made to ascertain the truth. The Wild Rice Boom Co. is offering \$25 reward for the apprehension of the guilty party. If the sluiceway is burned out at this time it might result in serious disaster to people along the Marsh River, should we have a spring flood. The soil around the sluiceway is light almost like ashes and if the Wild Rice breaks thru there nothing could prevent all the water from coming down the Marsh River. It was very fortunate that the fire was discovered in time to prevent the destruction of the timber work. The damage done can be repaired for \$15 or \$20. If it was set on fire, as seems likely, it is no doubt done to spite the Wild Rice Lumber Co., but the public in general will condemn any work of this kind. The company is entitled to fair treatment.

Mr. L. V. Howe, manager of the company, also reports another case where someone sought to injure his company. He says that on Jan. 2 someone drove off the watchman at the Rice Lake dam and let water out of the lakes, flooding the low lands in that vicinity. There was about thirty inches of water at the dam gates when the water was let out and now there is but twelve. All the surplus water in the lakes was accumulated during the wet spell last fall and its accumulation injured no one. Nov. 10, the company let out ten inches of water, as the stage of water was low.

The coming year will probably be the last in which the lumber company will saw logs in Ada if it is able to float its logs down. They are now round Beaulieu or this side of that place.” (Norman County Index, January 22, 1914)

For Information

Leading to the arrest and conviction of party or parties who instigated or took part in setting fire to the sluice-way three miles east of Ada on January 19 we will pay the sum of \$25.00.

WILD RICE BOOM COMPANY

L. V. Howe, Gen'l. Manager.

1914 February 19 A big Chalmers auto belonging to the Ada Auto Co. was burned up near the sluiceway that week, the fire being started from a torch used to thaw out some pipes.

1914 March 12 At the annual meeting of the Fire department that week the following officers were elected: chief, Mike Roesch; assistant chief, Matt Hoch; secretary, E. J. Volland and treasurer, Ole Moe.

1914 September 1914
"Last week Monday fire destroyed a setting of wheat stacks on K. K. Trom's farm and destroyed Bob Crommie's separator. Trom was protected by insurance and Crommie's loss is \$1,000." (Norman County Index, September 24, 1914)

1914 October 1
"While threshing at C. Smith's place Saturday, the separator owned by Emil Petri caught fire. It was a steel frame separator and only the inside burned which was replaced Monday and threshing was in full blast Tuesday." (Norman County Index, October 1, 1914)

1914 October 8 "Spring Creek:
While threshing on the C. Smith farm last Saturday, the separator operated by Emil Petri was damaged slightly by fire. It was repaired Monday. The origin of the fire is unknown." (Norman County Index, October 8, 1914)

- 1914 October 8 “Lockhart Locals:
The barn on the farm formerly owned by F. Nelson was destroyed by fire.”
(Norman County Index, October 8, 1914)
- 1914 October 8
“Governor Eberhart has designated Friday, November 9, as ‘fire protection day.’
Fifty percent of the fires can easily be prevented, if the people can clean up rubbish and
look to the safety of chimneys and stovepipes.” (Norman County Index, October 8, 1914)
- 1914 October 15 “Spring Creek:
A barn on the Fred Nelson farm was destroyed by fire last week.” (Norman County
Index, October 15, 1914)
- 1914 October 22 “Borup News:
Had there been a strong south wind Tuesday we would have had a destructive fire
here. A fire of unknown origin started at the south end of Steenerson Bros. machinery
warehouse. A bucket brigade put it out.” (Norman County Index, October 22, 1914)
- 1914 November 12 About 150 tons of hay in Spring Creek Township were burned by a
prairie fire the week before.
- 1914 December 17 Fire was discovered one evening that week in the old Ada school
building, used as an industrial building. The flames were extinguished by the fire department with
but little damage.
- “Small Fire at School:
The old Ada school house, now used as the industrial building, came near being
destroyed by fire last Thursday afternoon about six o’clock. At that hour, fire was
discovered in the ceiling of the basement and along the first floor. The alarm was turned
in and in a few minutes two streams were playing on the fire, which had not gained very
much headway. The flames were soon extinguished and the damage was not large. The
origin of the fire is not known but it is considered to have been accidental.” (Norman
County Index, December 17, 1914)
- 1914 December 17 The Ada Fire Department Relief association held its annual meeting
that week and elected the following officers: President, E. J. Herringer; Vice President, G.
Kittilson; Secretary, E. J. Volland; Treasurer, A. P. Heinen; Finance committee, Art Mueller,
Isidore Roesch and H. S. Thune; Board of Directors; John Roesch, E. Potretzke and Chas. Benner.
- 1914, date unknown J.K. Weium Mercantile Store, Twin Valley, burned down. (This
date was given in “The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986.
This may be the same fire as reported as occurring on April 10, 1913, as per the Norman County
Index. [see above])

1915

1915 March 11 The firemen elected the following officers that week: Chief, Mike Roesch; Secretary, E.J. Volland; Treasurer, O. N. Moe. Matt Hoch was appointed assistant chief.

1915 March 25 The newly elected council that week made the following appointments: City Clerk, Wallace Andrews; Assessor, C. K. Lee; Marshall, Chris Bell; Auditor, A. M. Mueller; Board of Health, Dr. Holmes, Chas. Strong, Martin Rasmussen; **Fire Warden, A. Arnestad**; Member Park board, C. K. Lee.

1915 July 15 The large residence of E. T. Holland, north of Hendrum, was burned to the ground that week a kerosene stove explosion causing the fire.

1915 August 12 The barn on the John Bailey farm near Hadler burned down one night that week about 11:30 o'clock, together with ten horses and other items belonging to Claus Hagenah, who was farming the place.

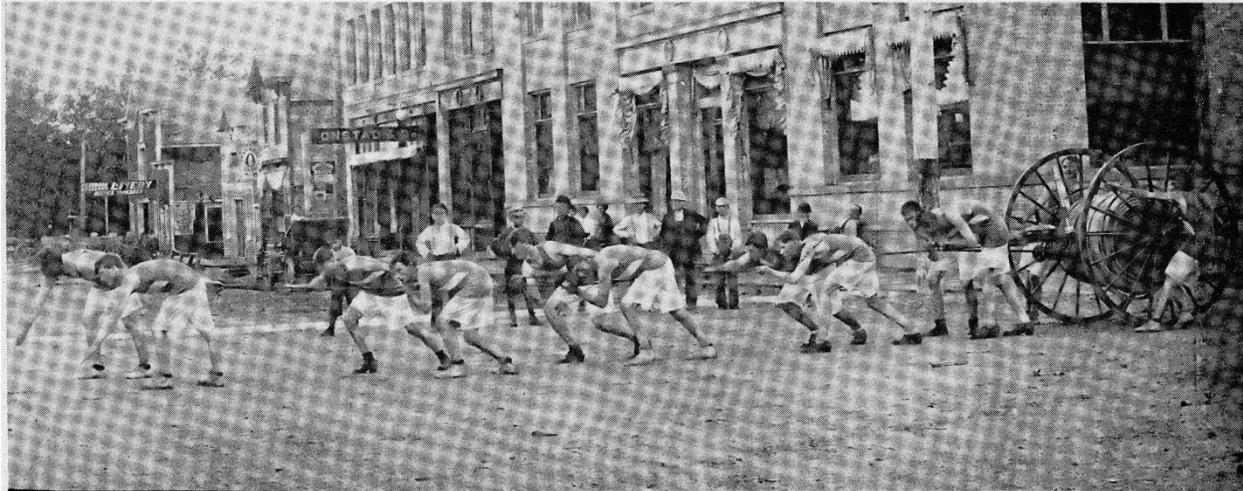
1915 September 2 Halstad suffered a great loss that week when the old State Bank building, the Opera House and a garage were destroyed by fire, which apparently started in the opera house.



Bank and Woodman Hall Fire — 1915

Scobet's Drug Store, First State Bank and Woodmen Hall (also known as Opera House) Fire

1915 November 4 Three horses perished in a fire that week which destroyed the barn at the Will Lalk residence on Thorpe Avenue, the horses belonging to Ole Haaland.



This early-day photo shows members of the 1915 Ada Fire Department running team which was named the Northwest champions. The former Ada Hotel is shown in the background and this building was destroyed by fire in 1980. The job of the running team was to get the hose cart to the fire scene as quickly as possible, get it hooked up and get water on the fire.

1916

1916 February 10 Fire in the Herb Herringer drug store Monday morning of that week caused a loss of \$1,500 to the stock and \$750 to the building before it was put out.

1916 March 23 At the annual meeting of the Ada Fire Department, Mike Roesch was named chief, Matt Hoch, assistant chief, E. J. Volland, secretary and O. N. Moe, treasurer.

1916 March 30 The Gunder Hanson residence near Shelly was destroyed by fire that week, together with all the household goods.

1916 April 20 The Ada Fire Department was called out by a blaze which started in the chemical laboratory at the high school, caused by some phosphorus getting dry. No damage was done.

1916 May 18 The flour mill and warehouse at Faith, owned by Juhl and Milsten, burned to the ground that week with a loss of \$10,000.

“In May, 1916, the mill again burned (see 1893).” The mill was rebuilt again in 1916. (“The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”)

1916 July 1 Perley: “Motion to purchase Lots 19 & 20 in Block 6 from Ole Guttormson for a fire hall site at a cost not to exceed \$75.00 per lot.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1916 September 7 The large modern barn on the C. J. Lofgren place south of town on the Wild Rice River was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

1916 October 12 Andrew Rude's separator was burned that week while threshing near Twin Valley.

1916 November 30 A fire in the Lien Grocery store did considerable damage to the stock before it was extinguished by the fire department.

1917

1917 January 25 A report by the State Fire Marshall showed that there were seven fire losses in Norman County the previous year with a total loss of \$11,653.

1917 January 31 "Fire Losses in Norman County:
During the year ended December 31, 1916, the fire loss in Norman County was greater than during the corresponding period in 1915.

Reports issued by Robert H. Hargadine, Minnesota State Fire Marshall, show that during the year (1916) there were seven fires with an aggregate loss of \$11,653.

During the previous twelve months (1915) the loss was \$9,175 from nine fires in Norman County.

An increase of \$2,478 in losses.

Beyond doubt the people of Norman County are willing to have the fire loss materially reduced. The only manner in which this can be done is by co-operation and an effort on the part of the people toward fire prevention.

In many counties the comparative loss from fire during the last year has been considerably reduced, and the state department is ready at any time to lend its assistance in eliminating any dangerous condition which tends to a reduction of the annual loss in Norman County."

1917 February 15 A fire at the Bogenschutz millinery that week did considerable damage to the stock of millinery and ladies' ready-to-wear goods.

"Fire on the East Side –

A fire in the Bogenschutz Sisters place of business on the East Side was discovered last Thursday night about 12 o'clock. The blaze was not great but the stock of millinery, as well as the stock of ladies' wear in the place belonging to J. A. Bryant Co. was practically a total loss from water, smoke and fire. There was \$400 insurance on the millinery stock and \$750 on the Bryant stock. There is a heavy loss on both stocks above the insurance. The origin of the fire is a mystery." (Norman County Index, February 15, 1917)

- 1917 March 15 “Firemen Elect Officers –
 The Ada Fire Department held their annual election last night at the fire hall and elected Alfred Remark, chief of the department, to succeed Mike Roesch who declined to be reelected. The chief then appointed John Prigge as his assistant. Ray R. Betcher was reelected secretary and Olaf C. Ogard treasurer. Company election resulted as follows: H. W. Thune as Capt. No 1; Edgar Volland, Capt. No. 2; A. M. Mueller, Capt. Hook and Ladder Company.” (Norman County Index, March 15, 1917)
- 1917 April 4 “New Restaurant Stock Burned – Fire Does Considerable Damage to Two Places of Business:
 Fire broke out in the New Restaurant Monday night of this week and before it was checked destroyed practically all of the stock and fixtures. The blaze was discovered by a couple of trainmen at about one o’clock and they at once rang the fire bell and aroused the fire department and many others who appeared upon the scene in short order.
 Orwald Weium, the owner of the place, and a couple of friends had been at the restaurant until about half an hour before the fire was discovered and had just reached their homes when they heard the bell.
 Bakke & Sons meat market, next door, was also badly damaged, the heat and smoke making the stock of meats, which fortunately was not large, unfit for use.
 The fire, of which the origin is unknown, started in the rear part of the restaurant and before it could be checked had succeeded in doing much damage to both that building and the meat market that it is not thought probable that they will be repaired. Both buildings were wooden structures owned by A. J. Klemetsrud, who is now located in Devils Lake. Mr. Klemetsrud expected to do some repair work on them this summer but will now no doubt put up brick buildings in their place.
 The loss, which is estimated at between four and five thousand dollars, is pretty well covered by insurance.” (Twin Valley Times, April 4, 1917)
- 1917 May 2 “Mrs. Ernest Halvorson was seriously burned in a small fire that started in their rooms in the Albert Busse residence Saturday afternoon. A kerosene stove blazed up and started the fire in a curtain nearby. Mrs. Halvorson went into the room to attempt to put out the fire and the door became fastened so that she could not open it. She jumped through a window and received painful bruises from the fall as well as serious burns. The fire department was called out, but the blaze was extinguished before the water was turned on.”
- 1917 May 14 “Burned a Bridge: Ben Holte started a fire half a mile north of town Monday noon to burn some weeds in the ditch. While he was at dinner a small bridge in the road caught fire and burned. He fixed it up the next day.”
- 1917 May 16 “‘The Ada fire department has received a number of hand fire extinguishers which have been distributed among different residences in the city, where they may be readily obtained in event of fire in the near vicinity. Extinguishers are now placed at the G. Gilbertson, J. F. Prigge, H. W. Thune, Art Mueller, Olaf Ogard, P. A.

Peterson, Mickle Bang and A. Lindow residences. Whenever fire starts in the neighborhood of these residences extinguishers should be promptly secured that serious damage may be prevented.” (Norman County Index, May 16, 1917)

1917 May 23 “Fire at Gary Last Evening Wiped Out Village’s Business Section: Huge Conflagration Necessitated Help Being Called from All Surrounding Towns, Total Loss Will Amount to Many Thousands of Dollars –

The biggest fire in any town in this section of the state has ever had occurred at Gary last evening. The fire started in a barn near the old Dewey Hotel in the northern part of town shortly after five o’clock and the flames spread so rapidly that practically the entire business section of the village, covering a frontage of about three blocks, had been destroyed.

Gary’s only means of fire protection was an old fire engine which refused to work until the flames has gotten such a start that for a while the whole town seemed doomed. When it was seen that it was impossible to check the flames calls for help were sent to all the surrounding towns, who responded nobly --- every available automobile in Twin Valley being rushed to the scene at once. A large number of people also came down from Crookston and Fertile and everyone went to work enthusiastically in what at first seemed a vain effort to put out the fire.

It was only through hard work and plenty of buttermilk that the creamery and several of the nearby residences were finally saved. When the flames had gone down only two or three small business places were left standing, among them the store owned by H. W. Thompson of Twin Valley.

It was said that many of the business men who lost all they had carried no insurance and that others were insured for only small amounts.” (Twin Valley Times, May 23rd, 1917)



May 22, 1917 Gary Fire Start of Fire



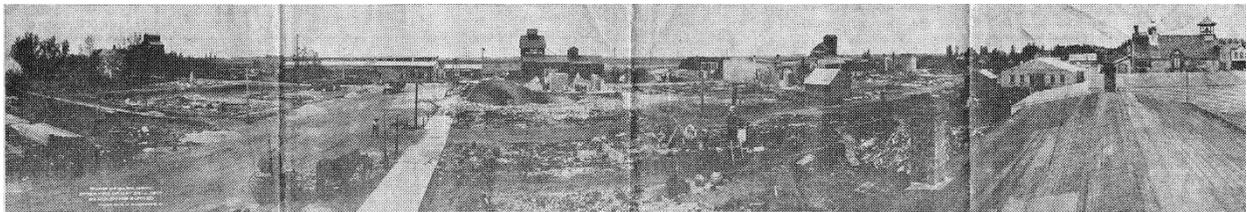
May 22, 1917 Gary Fire Moving South



going - gone
May 22, 1917 Gary Fire



AFTER
May 22, 1917 Gary Fire After the fire



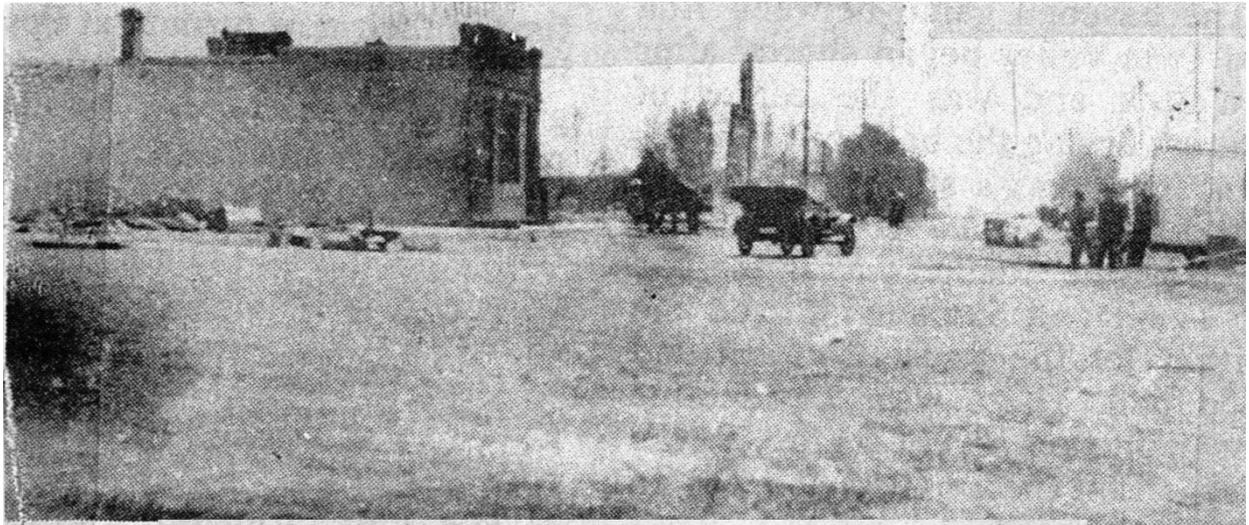
Looking northwest from the present church.



Looking east toward creamery and Graphic building.



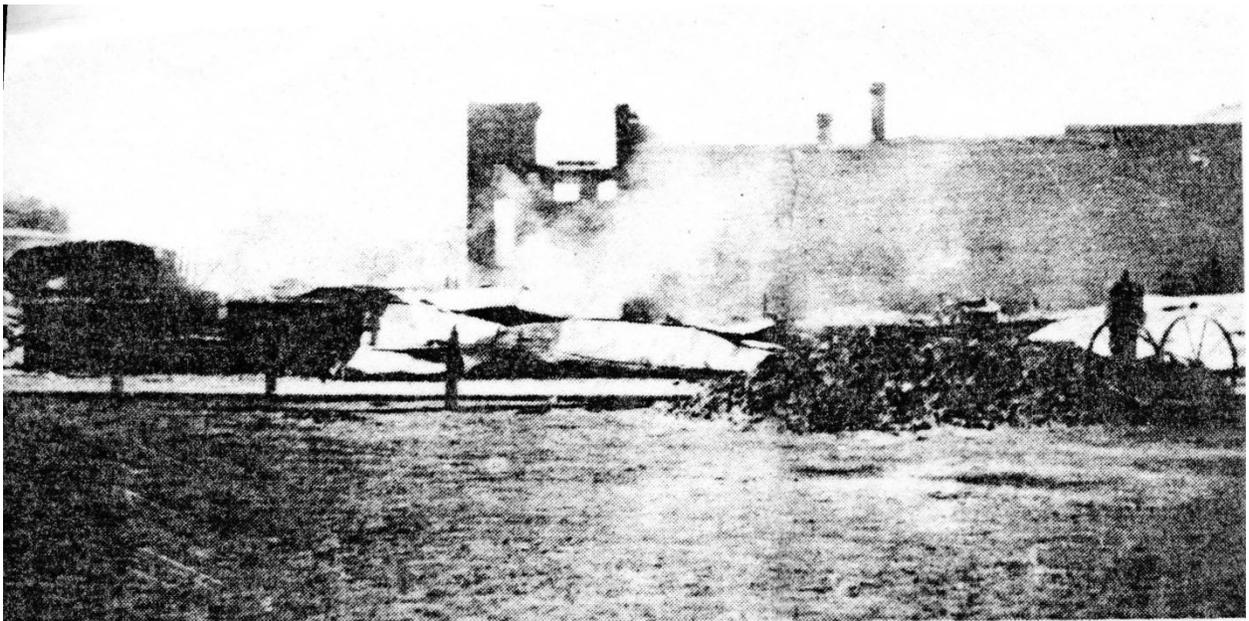
May 22, 1917 Gary Fire First Bank of Gary



Looking south on Main Street after the fire of 1917.



After the fire; Livery barn and Fire Hall at the right.



1917 Gary, after the fire





May 22, 1917 Gary Fire, Remains of Eid Restaurant and Mercantile

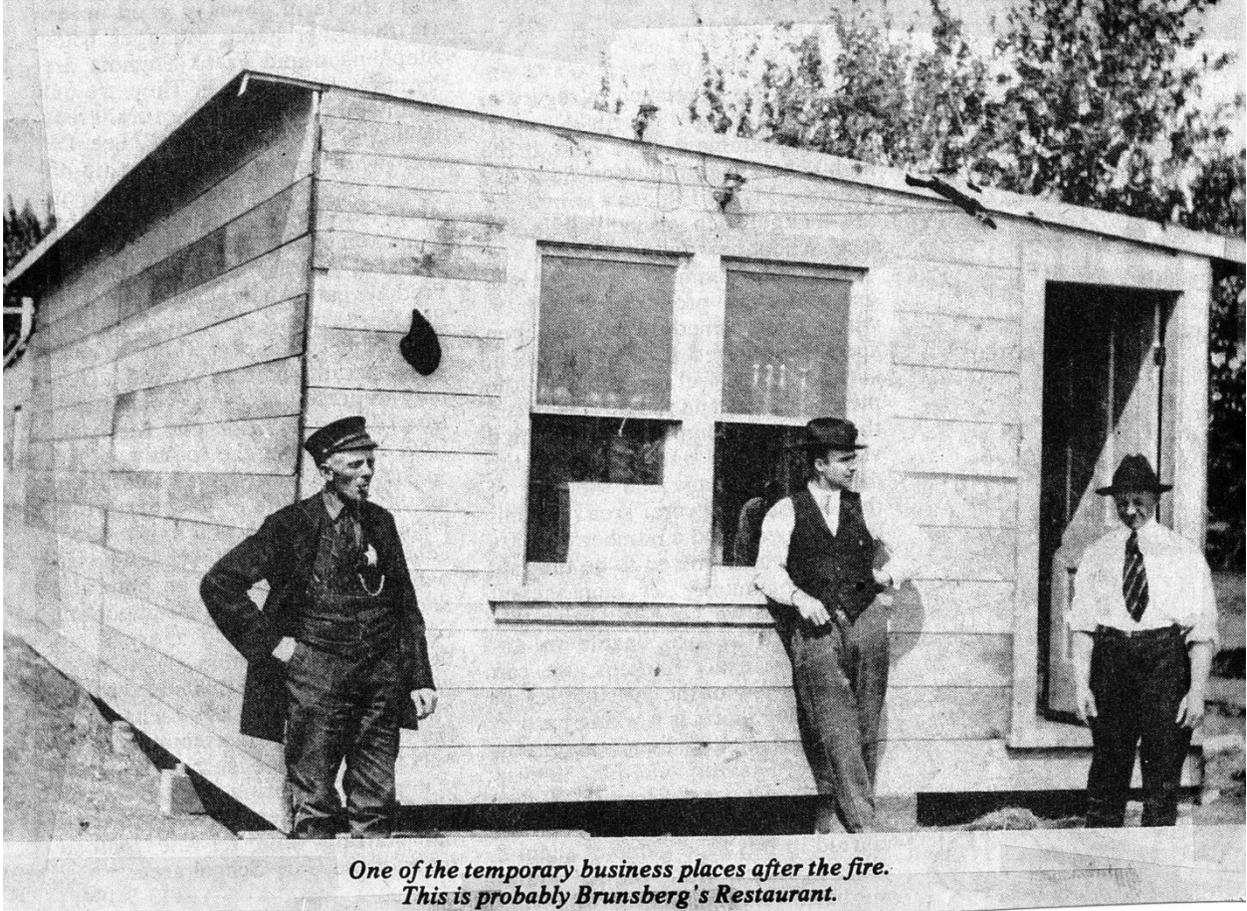


May 22, 1917 Gary Fire, Merchandise Saved



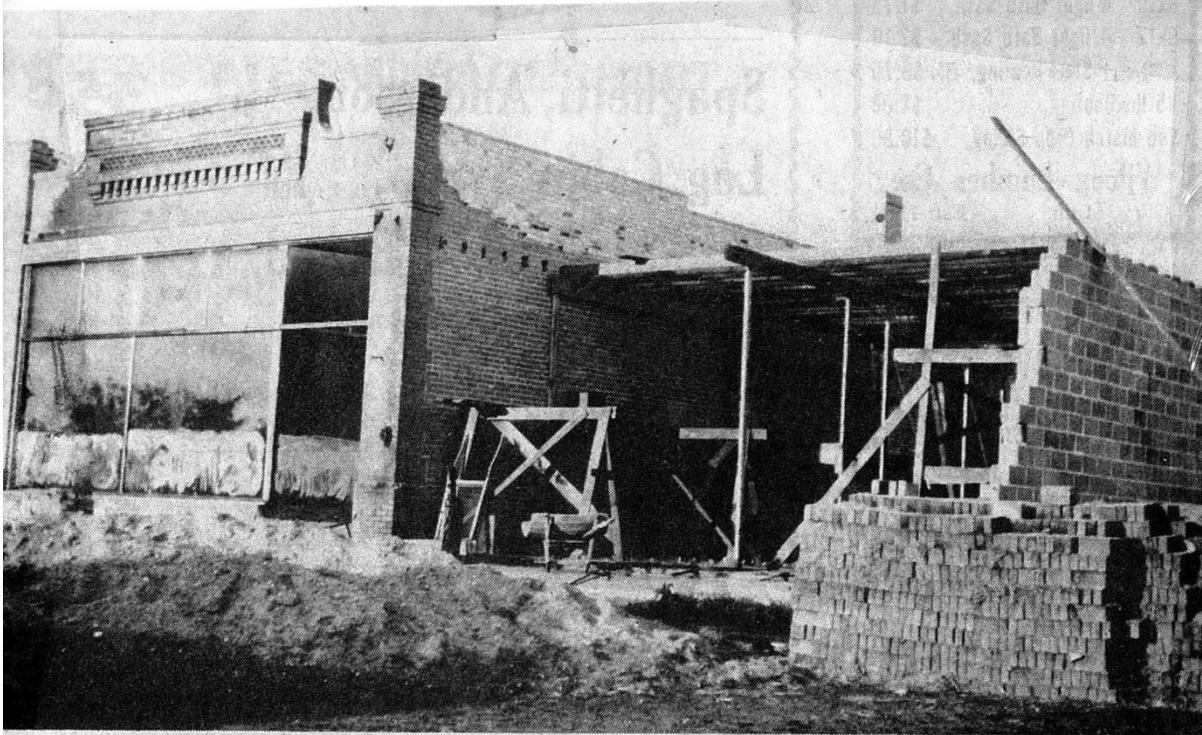
First business to open after the fire was the sale of Milwaukee water. Who needs a roof anyway?

May 22, 1917 Gary Fire, Open for Business



*One of the temporary business places after the fire.
This is probably Brunsberg's Restaurant.*

May 22, 1917 Gary Fire, Open for Business



Reconstruction after the fire.

May 22, 1917 Gary Fire, Rebuilding Farmers State Bank and Starkey's Eat Shop

1917 May 24 One of the most disastrous fires in the history of the county occurred at Gary that week when 18 business firms and residences were burned with a total loss of more than \$150,000.

1917 May 28 “A Resolution of Thanks –
The citizens of the Village of Gary, at a mass meeting assembled on the 28th of May, 1917, express to their sincere appreciate in the following resolution:

Whereas, on the 22nd of May, 1917, our prosperous village was threatened to be entirely destroyed by the ravages of a disastrous fire, and a general call for help was communicated to our neighbors, Be it resolved that We, the citizens of Gary, Minnesota, hereby express our thanks and heartfelt gratitude to those people of our community and the citizens of Twin Valley, Fertile, Crookston and Ada, who promptly responded to the call and put forth such efforts in assisting to save our village from complete destruction. Be it further resolved, that this resolution be published in the Gary Graphic, Twin Valley Times, Twin Valley Post, Fertile Journal, Crookston Times, Norman County Herald and the Ada Index. Signed, Community on Resolutions” (Gary Graphic, May 28, 1917)

1917 May 31 Hundreds of people were at Gary Sunday of that week to view the ruins of a fire, which destroyed a number of the business places.

1917 July 21 “Lightning Sets Barn on Fire - Barn on the Martin Visser farm Total Loss from Fire Saturday Night:

Fire, caused by lightning, totally destroyed the barn on the Martin Visser farm – the old John Bailey place – a half mile north of town Saturday night. The bolt which started the fire struck the barn at about ten o'clock in the evening shortly after Mr. Visser and family had returned home from town. Mr. Visser carried some water to the barn and extinguished the fire – as he thought. To make sure he made a second trip to the barn could not discover any further evidence of fire. Within a few minutes after the family had retired it was discovered that the barn was on fire and the hay loft was then a mass of flames. Mr. Visser rushed to the barn and was able to save all the harnesses. The stock and the horses were in the pasture and only the personal property that was in the barn was a small quantity of hay and a few bushels of oats. The adjoining buildings were saved by a heavy rain which had fallen during the evening, preventing the flying sparks from setting fire to the other buildings, all of which were in close proximity to the barn. Mr. Visser carried \$500 insurance on the building, but this will not cover his loss. He expects to rebuild as soon as possible. Mr. Visser and family moved here from Bussey, Iowa, last March.”

1917 August 2 A disastrous fire at Twin Valley on Sunday evening of that week, starting in the livery barn owned by H. W. Thompson, destroyed the barn, the Bertram Lumber Co. yard, L. A. Lysaker barber shop, C. D. Lysaker blacksmith shop, John Schow barn, Ed Linde residence and N. O. Kragero barn.

1917 August 8 “Gary Rebuilding After the Fire –
The Gary Graphic reports that active building operations are now underway and the village will soon be rebuilt and present a more substantial appearance than before the fire. One of the new buildings will be occupied by the Farmers State Bank, Groth & Hanson, and the Post Office. This is to be a one-story building with an addition on the east end for Stenson and Kinn dealers in farm implements. The People’s Supply Co. will erect a building 30’ by 100’ with a large basement. A new building is under way for a restaurant to be occupied by A. P. Brunsberg. Carl Eid is making preparations to start work on his new restaurant building and Olson & Martinson have commenced the erection of a building on the corner which the recently purchased from H. O. Klemetsrud. The First State Bank Building has been completely reconstructed and will be ready for occupancy as soon as the new fixtures arrive. The building formerly occupied by the Farmers State Bank is nearly ready for use. The Wilcox Lumber Co. has just completed the erection of large lumber sheds and the Gary Telephone Co. has erected a new central office on the site of its old building. The telephone co. has made a number of improvements in its equipment. A number of new residences are also under construction in Gary and those who have homes under way at the present time are M. E. Bjorge, Mrs. Lena Amundson, Selmer M. Lee, Postmaster Halvor Lee, Albert Hanson and H. L. Vangess. The fire is a serious blow to Gary and its citizens are displaying a brand of pluck and progressiveness that has been characteristic of them in the past and which made Gary one of the best business towns in the county.” (Twin Valley Times, August 8, 1917)

1917 August 17 WILD RICE CHURCH, FLOM TOWNSHIP – 1917. “The Wild Rice Church east of Twin Valley was struck by lightning and burned to the ground on August 17th.”

1917 August 23 “Fire at Sjordal Store:

The fire department was called out at 11 p.m. last Friday to extinguish a blaze in the rear of Sjordal’s store. The blaze was soon under control but considerable damage was done to the building. The origin of the fire is a mystery, but it may have started in the packing that had been taken out of the boxes containing enamel that day.”

1917 August 29 “Church Struck by Lightning –

An electrical storm accompanied by quite a heavy rain hit this section of county last Friday evening shortly after six o’clock and a number of people felt the effects of it.

Lightning struck a tree near the B. J. Moe here and the members of the family at home were stunned by the shock. Mr. Bennig Knutson, who lives a few miles west of town, had gone to the barn and commenced milking when lightning struck a shock of oats near the barn setting it afire and stunning Mrs. Knutson so that she was unconscious for some little time and did not fully recover from the shock until the next morning. Fortunately, a heavy shower of rain came along and extinguished the fire before any great damage was done.

Lightning struck the Wild Rice church six miles east of town and burned the building and all of its contents to the ground. People intown saw the and quite a number of auto loads immediately went out to see if anything could be done to put out the fire. By the time they got out there, however, practically nothing remained but a heap of ruins. The erection of the church was commenced in 1887 but was not completed until 1889, when it was dedicated. New equipment had been added from time to time until the church at the present time represented a cost of \$5,000. Last year quite a little money was spent in putting in a basement under the building and otherwise improved it. The loss was partially covered by \$3,000 insurance.

It is thought that the church will be rebuilt, as it is quite a large congregation. Nothing will be done this fall but plans will probably be made for the erection of a new building this summer.” (Originally published in the Twin Valley Times, republished in the Norman County Herald, August 29, 1917)

1917 October 10 “Fire which broke out about ten o’clock Sunday forenoon destroyed the small barn of Olaus Benson south of the flour mill. The barn was practically a total loss, and some hay was burned. The origin of the fire is unknown. Morale: Insure with Herringer.” (Norman County Herald)

1917 October 11 A barn belonging to Olaus Benson in the south part of town burned to the ground that week together with considerable hay and other items.

1917 November 13 “Orphanage Threatened: Last week Tuesday night about 10:30 the Wild Rice Orphanage, east of Twin Valley was discovered to be on fire in the kitchen. The 105 children were hustled to the hospital building in night attire and a bucket brigade managed to extinguish the blaze. It was a close escape from a tragedy.” (Norman County Index)

1917 November 20 “Fire: The fire department was called out Monday at 6 p.m. by a fire in the Storberg bakery, which was caused by a gasoline stove. The damage was slight.” (Norman County Index)

1917, date unknown In 1917, the Wild Rice River was being “deepened by a great floating steam shovel. They carried them (the floating steam shovels) with the load of explosives to help break through. One night the steam shovel with the load of explosives blew up, causing debris to be scattered over a wide area.” (Story and photo taken from “The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”.)



Dredger after explosion on Wild Rice River by Folkeh-dahl Bridge.

1918

1918 February 7 The dwelling on the C. R. Hunt farm in Hegne, occupied by Chas. Dunne, was burned to the ground that week together with most of the household goods.

1918 March 14 The Ada Fire Department elected the following officers that week: chief, John Prigge; assistance chief, Oscar Bang; secretary, Ray Betcher; treasurer, Olaf Ogard; surgeon, Dr. Shelland.

1918 April 4 Appointments made by the city council included: city clerk, A. M. Mueller; auditor, H. S. Thune; assessor, C. K. Lee; fire warden, Alert Arnestad; city marshal, C. M. Bell; health officer, Dr. W. B. Holmes; members Board of Health: J. O. Rindahl and M. T. Rasmusson; park commissioners, S. E. Olson, C. K. Lee and P. O. Onstad; **fire chief, John Prigge**; member of Water and Light Board, D. C. Lightbourn.

1918 May 8 “Twin Valley Had Fire –
The explosion of a gasoline stove in Fred Johnson’s tailor at Twin Valley a week ago came near resulting in a serious fire. About \$300 damage was caused to the tailor shop

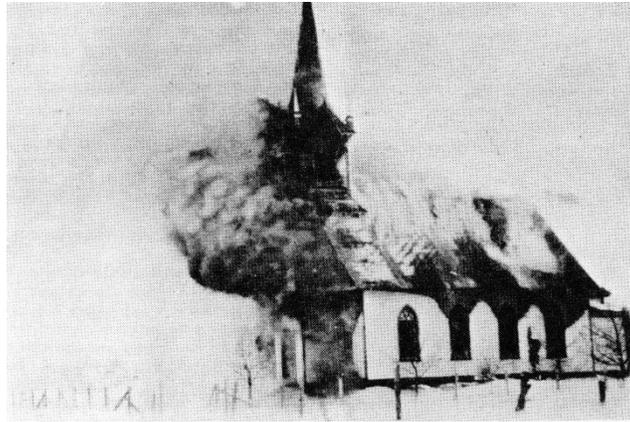
and the proprietor was severely burned. The fire department responded promptly and prevented the fire from spreading to adjoining buildings. The Globe Land Co. which had offices in same building moved everything to a place of safety. Mr. Johnson expects to be called into the service this month and was planning to close his shop soon.

Moral: Insure with Herringer.” Norman County Index, May 8, 1918)

1918 October 17 A tractor belonging to Orlando Lee southwest of Ada burned that week when a straw pile became ignited.

1919

1919 March 1 EAST MARSH RIVER CHURCH, ANTHONY TOWNSHIP –
March 1, 1919: On March 1, 1919, the members were gathering for morning services for a three-day Mission Festival, driving teams and sleighs through a thick misty fog. They could smell smoke and nearing the church they saw it burning. Only a few pieces of furniture were saved including the organ taken out through the sacristy door by some of the menfolk. As the church was burning, the bronze bell fell straight down and cracked. The tower in flames fell directly on the road.



1919 April 3 George Bowen was appointed City Marshall that week by the Council. Other appointments included Isidore Roesch, clerk; E. J. Volland, auditor; C. K. Lee, assessor; Ole Melberg, fire warden; Dr. Holmes, health officer; J. O. Rindahl and M. T. Rasmussen, members of the board of health, and John Olson, street commissioner.

1919 April 17 At the annual meeting of the Ada Fire Department that week the following were elected: chief, John Prigge; Assistant chief, Oscar Bang; secretary, R. R. Betcher; treasurer, Olaf Ogard.

1919 April 24 The barn of Thom Charlson in Hampson’s Addition burned to the ground that week, together with two pigs and some chickens.

1919 May 8 The barn on the Thorpe farm in Section 24, Anthony, burned that week. Walter Quinn, the tenant, lost some calves and other property.

1919 June 28

“On June 28, 1919, fire destroyed the creamery. Salvaged from the fire was a new churn, some tubs of butter and a cash register.” (“Flom Centennial, July 2 – 3, 1977”)

“On June 28, 1919, fire destroyed the (Flom) creamery. Salvaged from the fire was a new churn, some tubs of butter and a cash register.” The creamery was “completed by the fall of 1919.” (“The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”)

1919 July 31

A fire at the Nichols residence at Borup did considerable damage to the house and most of its contents.

1919 August 7

The barn on the John Roesch farm in Town of Mary was destroyed by fire that week, together with eight horses belonging to Harm Cirks, when it was struck by lightning.

1919 September 4

The barn on the George Nei farm near Borup was struck by lightning and burned to the ground and some livestock was lost.

1920

1920 March 18

The Ada Fire Department named the following officers: Chief, John Prigge; assistant-chief, Oscar Bang; secretary, R. R. Betcher; treasurer, Olaf Ogard.

1920 April 1

The City Council that week made the following appointments: clerk, A. O. Guren; auditor, E. J. Volland; marshal, George Bowen; street commissioner, John Olson; fire chief, John Prigge.

1920 May 6

Fire losses in Norman County for the year 1919 was \$20,695, according to the state fire marshal. This was partly covered by insurance of \$14,465.

“Fire Losses in Norman County: The annual report of Geo. H. Nettleton, State Fire Marshal, for 1919 shows that there were ten fires in this county during the past year, which caused a damage to the buildings and contents amounting to \$20,695. This was partly offset by insurance in the amount of \$14,465. Only two counties in the state were immune from fire last year, being Clearwater and Cook, while Mahnommen County had but one.”

1920 May 13

Jule Prigge and James Aasland were elected delegates to the state firemen’s convention to be held in Moorhead in June.

1920 May 27 The barn on the old Busse farm four miles northeast of Ada was burned that week when struck by lightning.

“Large barn burned:

A sharp electrical storm passed over this vicinity Tuesday night between 11 and 12 o’clock, which was accompanied by the heaviest rain fall of the year. About 11 o’clock, the large barn on the Busse farm, four miles north of Ada, was struck by lightning and destroyed. One horse, two binders, and a lot of hay and oats, owned by John Wagner, who is on the farm, was also burned.”

1920 May 27 “Yesterday morning one of the ornaments on the steeple at the courthouse was found to be leaning over and it is believed it was caused by lightning.”

1920 August 5 Fire from an unknown cause burned the barn on the Marion Walters farm five miles northwest of Ada, together with three small granaries, hay and harnesses.

1920 August 19 A fire was discovered in the basement of the Borup Mercantile Co. one morning that week when John Jacobson opened the store. Quick work on the part of volunteer firemen prevented a disastrous blaze.

1920 August 26 A new fire hose wagon was received by the Ada fire department that week.

1921

1921 March 10 The Ada Fire Department named the following officers that week: chief, W. W. Betcher; asst. chief, Alfred Remark; secretary, Ed Roesch; treasurer, John Nash.

1921 June 16 A. O. Guren, S. J. Skaurud and John Nash were attending the State Firemen’s Convention at International Falls as representatives of the Ada department.

1921 November 10 The Elwood Benbo family near Lockhart lost their household goods and clothing that week when fire destroyed their home.

1921 December 1 The barn on the Asser Hoie farm in Shelly was destroyed by fire the previous week.

1922

1922 March 9 At the annual meeting of the Ada Fire Department that week the following officers were named: Chief, Alfred Remark; assistant chief, Dr. W. H. Corson; secretary, Ed Roesch; treasurer, John Nash.

- 1922 June 9 The barn on the Ole Rogness farm near Hendrum burned down that week, the fire being caused by children playing with matches.
- 1922 June 15 Alvin Roesch and Louis Hintze were attending the state firemen's convention at Rochester that week as delegates from the Ada department.
- 1922 July 6 The farm home of Albert Wautchke two miles north of Borup, was destroyed by fire the previous Saturday.
- 1922 August 17 The barn on the Herman Tiede place in Pleasant View was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Three houses, some barley and a large amount of feed were also burned.
- 1922 August 24 The farmhouse on the G. Gilbertson farm northwest of Ada was burned to the ground that week together with the household goods belonging to the Carl Eggen family who were living there.
- 1922 October 5 A barn and two sheds were destroyed by fire on the West Side in Ada that week in a high wind.
- 1922 October 5 Mrs. George Chisholm of Gary died that week from burns received when her clothing caught fire from a stove.

1923

- 1923 February 15 The Boraas Hardware Store was wiped out by fire that week, causing a loss of more than \$20,000.

“Boraas Hardware Store Destroyed – Is Total Loss:

The store, buildings and stock of goods, of the Boraas Hardware Co. in this city were entirely wiped out by fire last Friday night. Not a single thing was saved. The fire was discovered shortly before 9 p.m. by Leonard Sjordal, who could smell the smoke in the Sjordal building next door. He looked around thinking the fire was in his building, but could find no sign of fire. Then he found the fire was in the Boraas building. He sent in an alarm. By this time the Boraas building was so filled with smoke that no one could enter without suffocating. A little later, flames broke out in all parts of the building, showing that the fire had been smoldering for a long time. Soon the roof fell in and all the firemen could do was to attempt to check the fire from cleaning out all the frame buildings in the block north of the hardware store. It was mighty hot work, but the firemen were equal to the occasion. Thune's photo gallery, the adjoining frame building, was damaged somewhat, but saved. All agreed that the firemen did wonderful work. They were aided by a cement fire wall, which fell however, when the fire was hottest. The fire burned all night and the firemen had an all-night's job of it.

This is the biggest fire loss there has been in Ada for many years, Mr. Boraas' loss being estimated at about \$21,000. Besides the two-story building, fifty-foot front, and a

1923 August 9 The St. Anthony & Dakota Elevator at Borup was struck by lightning that week and a large hole was torn in the roof. It caught fire, but the rain put the fire out.

1923 October 11 D. L. Ambuehl of Borup was severely burned that week when a steam-threshing engine exploded.

1923 December 13 The new Rindal creamery, replacing the one destroyed by fire, was completed and had started taking in cream.

1923 December 20 Fire in the basement of the teacherage at Lockhart discovered about midnight threatened to burn the structure to the ground. However, good work with fire extinguishers soon brought the flames under control.

1924

1924 March 14 The Ada Fire department elected H. S. Thune, chief; July Prigge, assistant chief; Oscar Ban, secretary and John Nash as treasurer.

1924 May 29 The farm home on the Ben Holte farm in Hegne was destroyed by fire that week.

1924 June 19 H. S. Thune and L. L. Melberg had returned from Mankato where they attended the state firemen's convention.

1924 August 28 The barn on the Andrew Borgen farm in southwest Strand Township was struck by lightning and burned to the ground that week.

1924 September 4 A fire which broke out in the pool hall on the East Side in Ada was checked on Sunday afternoon before it did much damage.

1924 November 6 The barn on the Frank Malakowski farm near Lockhart burned to the ground that week.

1924 December 11 The house on the John Visser farm north of Ada was saved from destruction by fire one night that week when a number of townspeople helped extinguish the blaze.

1924 December 11 The Ada Fire Department and City Council that week placed an order for a new fire truck to replace the hand-drawn apparatus.

1925

1925 January 22 The new fire truck for the city arrived that week and was given a thorough test by the fire department.

1925 February 5
week.

The O. B. Rindahl home at Rindal was destroyed by fire the previous

1925 February 26

Opal McKinnon, age ten, and her five-year-old sister, Blanche, were burned to death and a brother, Clyde, was seriously burned when kerosene exploded in a wood stove on their farm four miles west of Hendrum early one morning. Seven brothers and sisters all escaped through the only window.

1925 March 12

The Ada Fire Department elected the following officers: chief, Jule Prigge; assistant-chief, Matt Hoch; secretary, Oscar Bang and treasurer, John Nash.

1925 June 11

Jule Prigge, Alfred Remark and Oscar Bang attended the State Firemen's Convention at Crosby that week.

1925 August 10

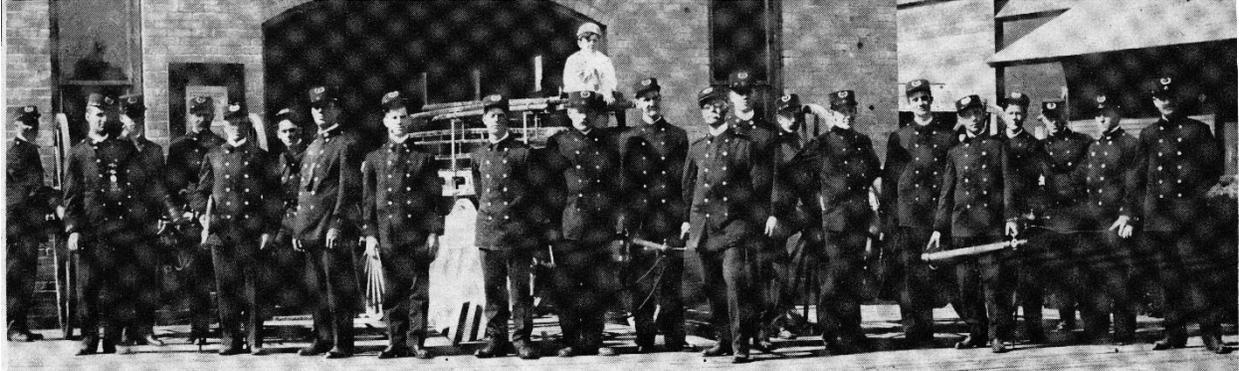


Firemen from left to right: Eddie Jensveen, John Ryding, Raymond Bakke, Maurice Dyrdaahl, Herbert Mickelson, August Hayes, Hartvig Gullingsrud, Steve Albertson, Gust Lysaker, Willie Waller, Ole Skauge, Elling

Ramsey, Lewis Wangen, Lawrence Ramsey, Carl Hanson, Julius Widme, Ole Nysetvold, Eli Kaushagen, Joe Widme, August Durling, and Ben Syverson - Driver.

1925 November 19

The granary on the James McAndrew farm near Hendrum was destroyed by fire the previous week.



The above picture shows the Ada Fire Department in 1925. Herman Thune was chief at this time. The equipment consisted of two big-wheeled hose carts and a hook and ladder cart. The uniformed members (they didn't wear the uniform when they fought the fire) furnished the manpower to get the carts to the scene of the fire.



1925 Ada Fire Department, Chief Herman Thune

1926

1926 March 3
and burned that week.

A barn on the G. L. Thorpe farm near Borup was struck by lightning

1926 May 26

Chief M. C. Hoch, P. C. Berberich and Theodore Gronvold were named delegates to the State Firemen's convention at New Ulm in June.

1926 June 17

M. C. Hoch, P. C. Berberich and Joe Ullman attended the State Firemen's Convention at New Ulm that week.

1926 August 5 The Del Monte restaurant at Syre, owned by E. F. Kammemier was destroyed by fire Sunday of that week.

1926 September 2 St. John's Lutheran Church in Green Meadow was struck by lightning that week and burned to the ground.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, GREEN MEADOW TOWNSHIP – September 1926: Suddenly in September of 1926 the imposing Green Meadow Church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

1926 September 2 The large new barn on the J. B. Luchau farm in Green Meadow burned to the ground the previous week together with 50 tons of hay.

1926 October 7 The interior of the threshing separator of Halvor and Even Lee was destroyed by fire when wind blew sparks from the engine into the separator.

1926 November 4 The residence on the Robert Olson farm west of Ada was burned to the ground that week.

1926 December 2 The Ada flour mill burned to the ground the preceding week together with 6,000 bushels of grain, entailing a loss of over \$40,000.

1926 December 9 The house on the farm in Anthony, occupied by the C. E. Lambertson family, burned to the ground that week, together with all its contents.

1926 December 30 The Ada Milling Co. had installed a new feed grinding mill in the former Equity elevator. Ada had been without a mill since destruction of the flourmill by fire a month before.

1927

1927 March 10 The Ada Fire Department elected John Roesch, chief; Ed Roesch, assistant chief; Oscar Bang, secretary and John Nash, treasurer.

1927 March 24 The house on the farm in Anthony, occupied by the C. E. Lambertson family, burned to the ground that week, together with all its contents.

1927 May 12 Ole Larson, R. R. Betcher and John Roesch were elected delegates to the state firemen's convention to be held in Duluth in June.

1927 June 16 Ole Larson and H. W. Thune were attending the Firemen's convention at Duluth.

1927 July 21 The John Adkins farmhouse eight miles northeast of Hendrum was destroyed by fire one morning that week.

1928

1928 January 26 Ernest Graves, who lived southwest of Borup, lost his house and household goods that week by fire.

1928 March 15 Ada firemen named the following officers: chief, Ed Roesch; assistant chief, Isadore Roesch; secretary, Jule Prigge; treasurer, John Nash.

1928 April 5 Appointments made by the city council that week included: John Prigge, clerk; M. A. Brattland, attorney; H. S. Thune, auditor; E. J. Herringer, assessor; Harry Benson, marshal; Ernest Olson, street commissioner; **Ed Roesch, fire chief.**

1928 April 5 The Fossum Store owned by G. E. Gunnarson burned to the ground the previous Thursday.

1928 April 12 The barn on the farm occupied by Wm. Kappes just west of Wheatville burned to the ground that week, together with eight horses, calves, harnesses, etc.

1928 April 12 The house on the Uri Johnson farm east of Wheatville burned down that week, but most of the furniture and other items were removed.

1928 May 10 Six horses belonging to Peter Brommenschenkel were burned to death in a fire that destroyed the shed barn in which they were stabled during the noon hour.

1928 May 31 A fire the previous week destroyed the Gabriel Line residence and most of the household goods at Perley.

1928 June 14 Ed Roesch, John Prigge and R. R. Betcher were delegates to the fireman's convention held at Fergus Falls that week.

1928 August 9 The Service Motor Garage at Twin Valley was destroyed by fire that week with a loss of over \$10,000.

1928 October 11 The barn and two adjoining sheds on the James Kiltie farm southeast of Beltrami burned to the ground one morning that week during a heavy wind storm.

1928 November 15 The house on the J. B. Hennen farm three miles west of Borup burned to the ground that week.

1929

1929 February 21 The Syre depot burned to the ground that week.

1929 March 14 The Ada Fire department named the following officers: Chief, Isidore Roesch; assistant chief, R. R. Betcher; secretary, Jule Prigge; treasurer, John Nash.

1929 May 16 The John L. Wold residence in Twin Valley was destroyed by fire one night that week.

1929 July 4 A big Chrysler car, occupied by three Winnipeg men, ran off the road near Lockhart, caught fire and burned up.

1929 July 11 The Lockhart hotel and barbershop was destroyed by fire the previous Friday evening.

1929 August 15 “Farm House Burned: The house on the old Bloom farm in Hegne township was destroyed by fire Sunday night. The fire which started on the second floor of the house is of unknown origin. The place is owned by Jones & Roesch was occupied by the Frank Johnson family. There was some insurance on the building but Johnson carried none on his furniture and household goods.”

1929 October 31 Ben Storo of Perley had the misfortune of having his car catch fire and burn up while returning from a trip to Moorhead.

1930

1930 March 13 “New Fire Chief –
The Ada fire department held their annual meeting last night at the council rooms and elected the following officers: Chief – R. R. Betcher, Asst. Chief – Oscar Bang, Secretary – Jule Prigge, Treasurer – John Nash.

The fireman’s relief association also held their annual meeting the same evening and elected the following: President – H. S. Thune, Vice Pres. – Louis Hintze Jr., Secretary – R. R. Betcher, and Treasurer – Ed Roesch.” (Norman County Index, March 13, 1930)

1930 May 15 The residence on the Mrs. Bennie Brekke farm four miles southwest of Twin Valley was burned down early one morning that week.

1930 June 12 Robert Stafney, five-year-old boy of Hendrum, was fatally burned that week when he started a grass fire.

1930 June 12 R. R. Betcher, Jule Prigge, and Oscar Bang were attending a firemen’s convention at Excelsior.

1930 September 4 A shed on the Hanson Bros. farm southwest of Lockhart, and some farm machinery were burned that week when gasoline caught fire.

1930 December 25 Fire that week destroyed the house on the farm a half-mile north of Hadler, owned by Fred Bremer, and occupied by the Riggers family.

1930, date unknown “Request by (Hendrum) Fire Dept. for a used automobile on which to mount firefighting equipment and to make necessary alterations inside fire hall to house equipment.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1931

1931 February 5 Fire that week destroyed the Hanson Mercantile Co. store at Twin Valley.

1931 February 12 The house occupied by the Robert Olson family three miles west of Ada, burned to the ground that week.

1931 March 12 Ada fire department officials elected that week were: chief, Oscar Bang; assistant chief, Ole Larson; secretary, Jule Prigge; treasurer, John Nash.

1931 March 19 The main building of the Wild Rice Children’s Home east of Twin Valley burned to the ground one night that week, after 60 children and 20 adults who were in the building marched to safety.

“In the April issue (of “Wild Rice Children’s Home News”) that year (1931) we read: ‘The night of March 18, 1931 will always be remembered by all the children and employees of the Wild Rice Children’s Home. At eleven o’clock p.m. the dreadful shriek of the fire siren aroused everyone in the dormitories, and all arose quickly and marched out of the building clad only in their night clothes. Everyone was calm, thinking it was only a fire drill, but when Supt. Orvedahl gave the order that all children must be taken to the superintendent’s residence, they knew that it was serious. The attic near the ventilation shaft was roaring with flames. In a few minutes we realized that the Home would soon be in ashes; yet we are all so thankful that every child passed out safely without even being excited. So completely did the fire do its work that there is nothing left except part of the foundation. We are very thankful that all lives were saved.’ ...

Every precaution had been taken to safeguard the children in case of fire but the credit must be given to the Matrons and teachers who, upon hearing the alarm, immediately saw that all the children were accounted for, and marched them out of the building. Twenty-one of the children were sent to the Lake Park Children’s Home in Lake Park and sixteen to Beloit Children’s Home in Iowa. ... Other children were placed with parents of relatives; people in Twin Valley cared for many until the school term was out.” (The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley, MN, Centennial 1886 – 1986)

1931 June 18 A. A. Busse, Oscar Bang and John Nash attended the State Firemen’s convention at Owatonna.

1932

1932 February 18 The large farm home of B. H. Paul, six miles northeast of Lockhart, burned to the ground one morning that week.

1932 March 17 Ada Fire Department officials elected that week were Ole Larson, chief; O. C. Ogard, ass't chief; Jule Prigge, secretary and John Nash, treasurer.

1932 April 10 The Wild Rice Church in Flom Township was destroyed by fire that week. A previous church also burned in 1917.

WILD RICE CHURCH, FLOM TOWNSHIP – week of April 21, 1932. “The Wild Rice Church in Flom Township was destroyed by fire that week. A previous church also burned in 1917.”

1932 May 19 Theo. Gronvold and Carl Nirschl were elected delegates with Chief Ole Larson to the State Firemen’s Convention at Thief River Falls.

1932 July 28 Fire at the Aqua Pharmacy in Ada caused some smoke and water damage.

1932 August 25 The Dave Newberg building located where the Herman Grocery now is was burned to the ground that week, destroying on of the early city landmarks.

1932 October 13 The barn and some of the contents on the Lars Melbostad farm near Perley were destroyed by fire that week.

1932 November 10 Art McCune of Hegne Township suffered severe burns that week in an explosion while starting a fire in a stove with kerosene.

1933

1933 March 9 The farmhouse occupied by A. C. Smith and family six miles east and two miles north of Ada burned down that week.

1933 March 16 Ada Fire Department officers elected that week were: O. C. Ogard, chief; S. J. Skaurud, assistant chief; Jule Prigge, secretary, and John Nash, treasurer.

1933 March 23 A farmhouse near Shelly to which the Alvin Floberg family had just moved was burned to the ground that week together with all the furniture.

1933 April 6 The farm dwelling of Orlando Herbranson, a mile and one-half northwest of Perley, burned to the ground that week.

1933 May 18 Carl Nirschl and Theo. Gronvold, together with Chief O. C. Ogard, had been named delegates to the State Firemen’s meeting.

1933 June 15 A granary and machine shed on the Plate farm two miles east of Ada burned down one night that week.

1933 June 22 The house on the Robert Boles farm, a mile north of Ada, was burned to the ground one night that week.

1933 August 3 “Hay, Barn and Other Buildings Destroyed by Fire on Monday (July 31, 1933) – Farm Buildings Burned on Pinske Farm Monday, Young Man Was Hurt:

A large barn and chicken house were destroyed by fire on the Theo. Pinske farm in Strand township late Monday afternoon. The barn contained twenty loads of hay, which is believed started the fire by becoming overheated. The Gary fire department was called, but by the time the place was reached nothing could be done to save the structures. The roof of the granary nearby also caught on fire, but this blaze was extinguished. In doing so, William Zug, who was assisting the fire department, had the misfortune of falling and breaking a leg and receiving other injuries. He was rushed to the Memorial Hospital in Ada, where he is receiving treatment.”

1933 August 24 The barn on the Charles Smart farm west of Hendrum was struck by lightning and burned to the ground the preceding week.

1933 September 28 The Mrs. Teletta Gunderson residence in Shelly was burned to the ground one afternoon that week.

1933 October 12 Fire that week destroyed a granary, some grain and two cars on the Herman Tiede farm in Pleasant View.

1933 October 19 Fire destroyed the depot at Perley that week, only a little furniture and office records being saved.

1933 November 23 The schoolhouse at Faith was burned to the ground the previous week, the fire evidently starting in the attic.

School District 46, Faith:

“In 1933, a fire destroyed the two-room school and a one-room school was built in its place.” (“The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”)

1933 December 14 The Lester Sulerud residence of Halstad was destroyed by fire that week.

1934

1934 February 22 The farm home of Henry Regstad near Hendrum was quite badly damaged that week by a chimney fire.

1934 March 15 The Ada Fire Department elected S. J. Skaurud, chief; Louis Hintze, assistant chief; Jule Prigge, secretary and John Nash, treasurer.

1934 May 2 The Bert Veale barn and an adjoining barn at Borup were destroyed by fire that week, together with two cars.

1934 December 13 A residence at Hendrum occupied by Dan Kirkness burned down that week.

1935

1935 January 12 Fire that week in the Ada Recreation Parlors, adjoining the Index building caused damages estimated at \$15,000.

1935 March 7 The St. Anthony and Dakota Elevator at Lockhart caught fire under the unloading platform, but the blaze was extinguished before much damage was done.

1935 March 21 The Ada Fire Department elected the following officers that week: Louis Hintze, chief; John Nash, assistant chief; Jule Prigge, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; and Dr. M. Hansen, physician.

1935 April 4 The J. Jossund farm residence near Perley was destroyed by fire on Sunday of that week.

1935 August 1 The barn on the Dobson-Morgan farm near Twin Valley was struck by lightning and burned to the ground, together with much equipment.

1935 August 8 A lone crash of lightning set fire to the George Aamodt barn northwest of Halstad and burned it to the ground.

1935 September 5 A new depot was being erected at Perley to replace the one that burned down two years before.

1935 September 19 The Cargill elevator in Ada was destroyed by fire that week, together with several thousand bushels of grain.

1935 September 26 Fire the week before destroyed the barn on the Halvor Degerness place at Gary.

1935 October 3 The Cargill Elevator Co., whose elevator in Ada burned to the ground the previous week, planned to start work at once on a new elevator here.

1935 October 31 The private garage at the Herman Maltrud home in Ada was burned to the ground one night that week.

1935 October 31 A peat fire southeast of Borup that week destroyed some stacks of hay and caused a heavy pall of smoke.

1935 December 5 Work was under way on the new Cargill elevator in Ada, replacing one destroyed by fire earlier in the fall.

1935 December 12 The Ada Fire department had purchased a new fire truck with a 500-gallon per minute pumper.

1935 December 26 The farmhouse occupied by the Gale Ooley family in Green Meadow burned to the ground one afternoon that week.

1935 December 26 The Ed Thorstad store at Lockhart caught fire from an overheated stove but was extinguished before much damage was done.

1936

1936 January 9 A new modern fire truck mounted on a Ford chassis was received by the city that week.

1936 February 20 The house on the Max Treichel farm in Lake Ida was destroyed that week by fire, together with nearly all the furniture and clothing.

1936 March 12 The Ada Fire Department Relief Association named the following officers; H. S. Thune, president; J. R. Ullman, vice-president; R. R. Betcher, secretary; Ed Roesch, treasurer; and Dr. W. H. Corson, trustee.

1936 March 12 John Nash was elected chief of the Ada Fire Department and Theo. Gronvold, assistant chief.

1936 April 23 The store at Rindal in northeastern Norman County was burned to the ground that week together with all its contents.

1936 June 11 John A. Nash, A. A. Busse and Oscar Bang were attending the State Firemen's Convention that week at Caledonia, Minnesota.

1936 July 2 A fire from a rubbish pile burned the barn on the Helmer Eastvold farm in Rockwell.

1936 July 16 A barn on the Emil Meyer farm in Flom was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Four calves were also lost.

1936 July 30 The Ness Lutheran Church in Waukon Township was struck by lightning the week before and burned to the ground.

1936 August 13 A fire at the George Gerjets home in Ada that week on Sunday did considerable damage to both the house and its contents.

1936 October 15 Six horses and a cow, together with a large quantity of hay and some harnesses, were destroyed one morning that week when fire burned down the barn on the Sidney Viker farm near Halstad.

1936 November 19 Two farm homes in the county burned down that week, the George Anderson home in Anthony, and the Louis Wilkens home near Lockhart.

1937

1937 February 4 The hotel and store owned by Mr. and Mrs. E. Miller at Twin Lakes was destroyed by fire the previous week.

1937 March 4 Salaries of city employees were set that week by the City Council as follows: Clerk \$20 per month, police \$100 per month, auditor \$50 per year and **fire chief \$100 per year.**

1937 March 11 The Ada Fire Department named the following officers: chief, Theo. Gronvold; assistant chief, Leonard Olson; secretary, Jule Prigge and treasurer, E. Roesch.

1937 April 8 Fire in the chemistry room of the Borup School one night that week did several hundred dollars damage.

1937 May 27 The barn on the Hals Halvorson farm southeast of Twin Valley was destroyed by fire during an electrical storm.

1937 June 17 Ada was well represented at the State Firemen's convention held at Crookston that week with the Ada bank and a local fire truck taking part in the parade.

1937 June 24 Nels and Bernard Nelson, residing south of Rindal, lost their farm home the previous week by fire.

1937 August 19 Fire that week destroyed the garage on the Ben Bremer farm north of Ada.

1937 August 26 The Borup creamery burned to the ground one morning that week, the fire starting in the boiler room.

1937 September 16 The St. Paul Church, two miles north of Hendrum, was struck by lightning the previous week and burned to the ground.