

1959 March 18 The Ada Fire Department answered 29 calls the year before, it was announced at their annual meeting held that week. James Fredrikson was elected chief; Harold Habeck, assistant chief; Emmett Schwartz, secretary; and Orris Holland, treasurer.

1959 May 13 A fire that week destroyed three farm buildings and hundreds of chickens on the Julius Granfor farm near Perley.

1959 August 30 “The Ada Fire Department answered a call about supper time last Sunday about six miles east of Ada where a car was burning. The station wagon, a new 1960 Mercury, had something which caught fire after a tire had blown out. The department tried to smother the fire with fire extinguishers, water and dirt and just about the time they thought the fire was under control, it broke through into the interior. Damage was considerable to the rear end of the wagon and to the interior. The cause of the fire is not known. The wagon belonged to Art Bodding of Ada.” (Norman County Index, September 2, 1959)

1959 September 17 “A bale pile burned at the Grant Lee farm 5 miles west and 5 miles south of Ada last Thursday, September 17th. The blaze completely destroyed the hay bales but was limited to the pile by the fast action of the Ada fire department. Mr. Lee stated that the fire might have spread to other buildings had it not been controlled by the department. Mr. Lee thought it possible that children playing with matches might have started the fire.” (Norman County Index, September 23, 1959)

1959 November 11 A spectacular Saturday morning fire destroyed three business places in Halstad including the Smith Locker Plant, Halstad Liquor Store and Arne’s Café.



1960

1960 January 6 A furnace explosion at the Lockhart School caused no serious damage, although the school was closed for two days for repair.

“Explosion at Lockhart School Tuesday Caused Little Damage to Plant —

No one was injured in a furnace explosion at 9:45 a.m. Tuesday, January 5th in the Lockhart school and the explosion caused no serious damage. Four windows were blown out and two doors were badly battered. Some damage was caused to the furnace itself. The sheet metal jacket covering the furnace was bulged out and in places were torn from the jacket.

The fury of the blast was shown by two steel doors at the front of the furnace. Both had been blown off their hinges and one required considerable welding and straightening. There was no apparent damage to the boiler itself.

According to Earl Cross of the Climate Control Co. of Fargo, everything on the heating unit checked out. The blast was attributed to a “puff-back” caused by pressure building up within the unit.

Portable heaters were brought from Fargo for use in the building thereby avoiding freezing damage to the building. By late afternoon the school furnace unit was repaired and functioning normally.

The Lockhart school was closed following the blast for the remainder of the day. According to H. G. Jacobson, it was decided to close the school today (Wednesday) to see if the furnace would continue to function normally. School will resume Thursday, Jan. 7th if no further trouble occurs.” (Norman County Index, January 6, 1960)

1960 January 20 Fire destroyed the Clarence Kappes farm home near Twin Valley that week, eleven-year-old Karen Kappes led her six younger brothers and sisters safely out of the burning house.

“Fire Destroys Farm Home of Ada Worker; Clothing, Furnishings are Needed –

Fire last night destroyed the farm house occupied by the Clarence Kappes family located 1 mile south and ½ mile east of Twin Valley. Kappes has been employed in Ada by the Ada Co-op Oil Association.

The family lost all its belongings in this disastrous fire Tuesday night. The family has seven children.

The Ada VFW post and its auxiliary have started a drive for clothing and furnishings to help the family get a new start. The auxiliary will receive used clothing, bedding, etc. at their club rooms this afternoon and any time during the balance of the week.

There are three girls ages 13, 11 and 1 ½ and four boys 9, 7, 5 and 4. Mrs. Kappes wears a size 12. Any items of useable clothing would be appreciated by the family and the auxiliary which is conducting the drive for clothing.” (Norman County Index, January 20, 1960)

1960 January 27 “Leads Children Out of Burning Home, by John Pfund –

‘I woke up with a start and smelled smoke,’ said 11-year-old Karen Kappes. And right then began a harrowing experience for a mighty brave young girl.

The oldest of seven children in the Clarence Kappes family, she was the babysitter last Tuesday evening while her parents were in town for a short visit. She had just gotten all the youngsters to bed in their snug farm house 1½ miles south and ½ mile east of Twin Valley and she had gone to sleep herself on the downstairs davenport. She and her sister, Barbara, 10, were both to sleep there until the folks got home from their visit.

Shortly after dropping off to sleep – at about 10:30 – Karen woke up and saw the downstairs full of smoke. With a coolness that belied her age, she woke Barbara, went into her parents’ bedroom and picked up Carolyn, aged 10 months.

Giving the baby to her sister, she sent the two upstairs where she thought there would be no smoke and also to waken Keith, 8, Maurice, 7, Wayne, 5, and Craig 4 years old.

‘Then I went to the kitchen to see where the smoke was coming from,’ she stated hesitantly, as who tried to re-live her acts of that fateful night. Karen saw ugly flames and billowing smoke coming from the area behind the refrigerator in the kitchen and she hurriedly tried to douse them with buckets of water.

When she saw that she was not getting the blaze out, she left her fire-fighting and went to round up the children and shepherd them to safety. She got them all downstairs and out to the cool and smokeless back porch where she tried to get them into parkas and overshoes for it was 13 degrees below zero outside.

Then she hesitantly led her little band to the safety of a truck cab about a half block from the house. Some had made the trip to the truck with bare feet and all had only light pajamas. The boys had no pajama tops on either. Concerned over their shivering in the old truck – without a window on one side too – she made another trip back into the burning home.

The reason for this she said was to get a heavy quilt and a blanket from the davenport to cover up the youngsters in the cold truck cab. Also, she was certain that the baby would be afraid of the dark and start crying, so she brought back a battery-powered lantern to light up their new found home in the winter-time abandoned truck. When she got back and got all the children as comfortable and warm as they could be she found a corner on the floorboards and huddled there herself waiting for her parents to return.

Just moments later, her folks pulled into the driveway and saw the flames in the kitchen. Karen's father, Clarence, who is employed at the Ada Co-op Oil Association, dashed into the house to get the youngsters and when he found the beds empty, he came out of the smoke-filled house to find them safe in the truck and mighty happy to see mom and dad.

Believing he could save the home, Kappes drove to the Jerry Habeck farm to the west and called the Twin Valley Fire Department. Then he went into town for fire extinguishers. By the time he got back the fire had gained such headway that the home couldn't be saved.

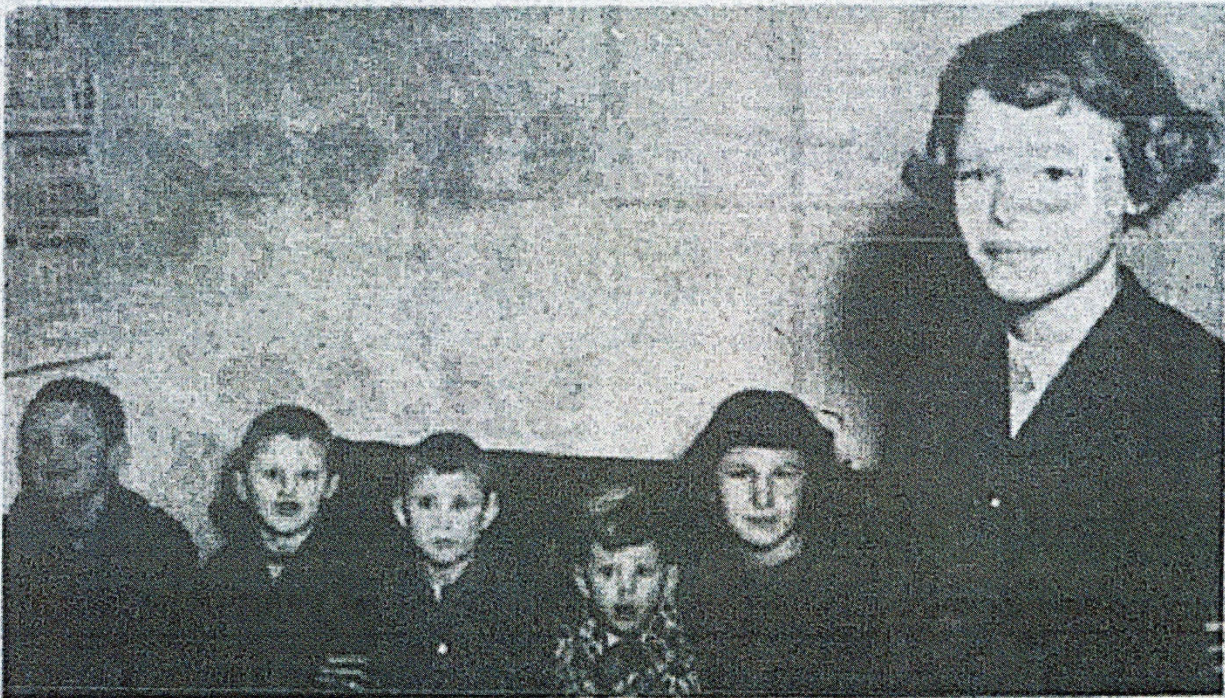
The family lost everything. The only thing saved was an old deep freeze on the porch and a rifle that hung on the wall above the door.

What has happened since the disastrous fire has overwhelmed the Kappes family. Relatives and friends have flocked to their aid. In Twin Valley, the Lions Club and the St. Williams Church have found them a home, helped furnish it and have handled donations of clothing, food and furnishings.

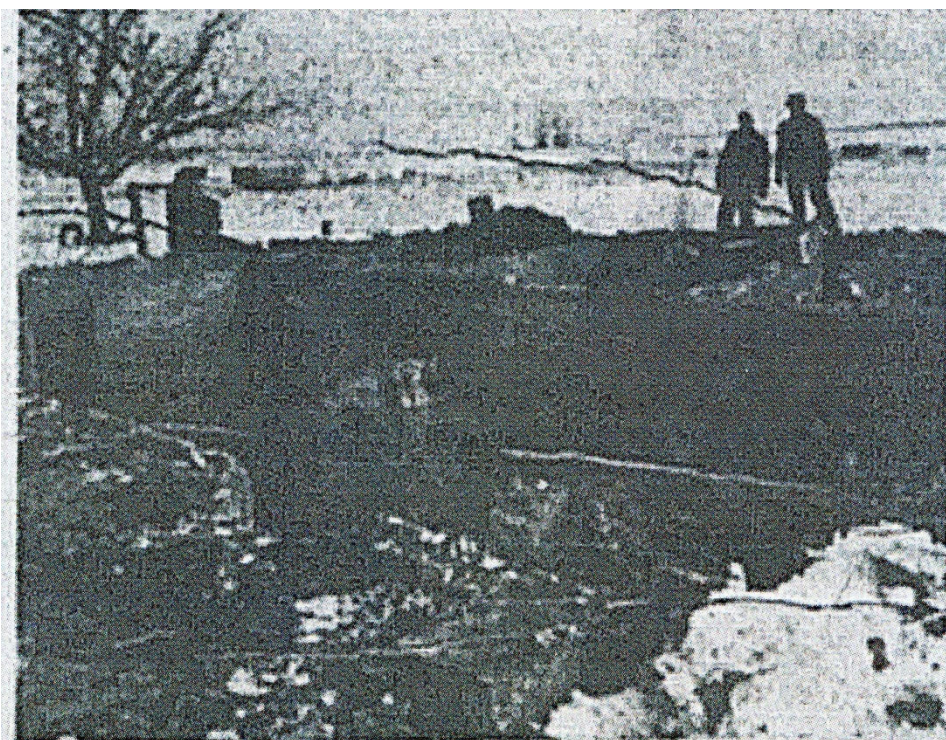
The Ada VFW post and auxiliary and St. Joseph's Church of Ada helped out with many items from Ada residents. The Red Cross helped with funds for new clothes for the school youngsters. Enough items have been received to fully outfit their new Twin Valley home.

With admiration in their eyes, the Kappes' praised their daughter, for her heroic deeds in leading the children to safety and with thanks in their hearts, they said, 'It's wonderful to have so many fine friends. Their help and generosity at this time will long be remembered.'" (Norman County Index, January 27, 1960)

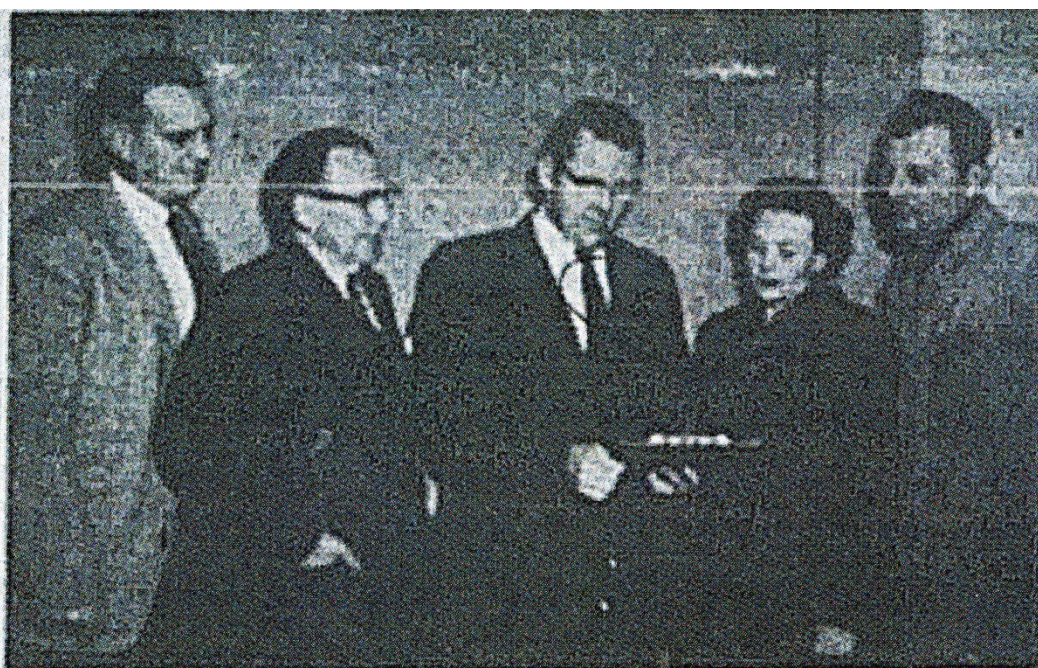
Leads Children Out Of Burning Home



Eleven-year-old Karen Kappes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kappes of rural Twin Valley, is shown on the extreme right with five of her brothers and sisters. Karen led them all safely out of their burning home last Tuesday. On the picture, left to right: Keith, Maurice, Wayne, Craig, Barbara and Karen. Not pictured is the baby, Carolyn, 17 months.



All that remained of the Kappes home the morning after the fire is shown in the above picture. The farm home and all the contents were destroyed in a fire a week ago Tuesday evening.



Officers of the Twin Valley Lions club are pictured above with Mr. and Mrs. Kappes going over a list of items which friends and relatives had given them to use in furnishing their new home. Pictured, left to right, are C. C. Arvig, Dr. Geo. Day, Dr. C. J. Stadem and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kappes.—Staff photos by Pfund.

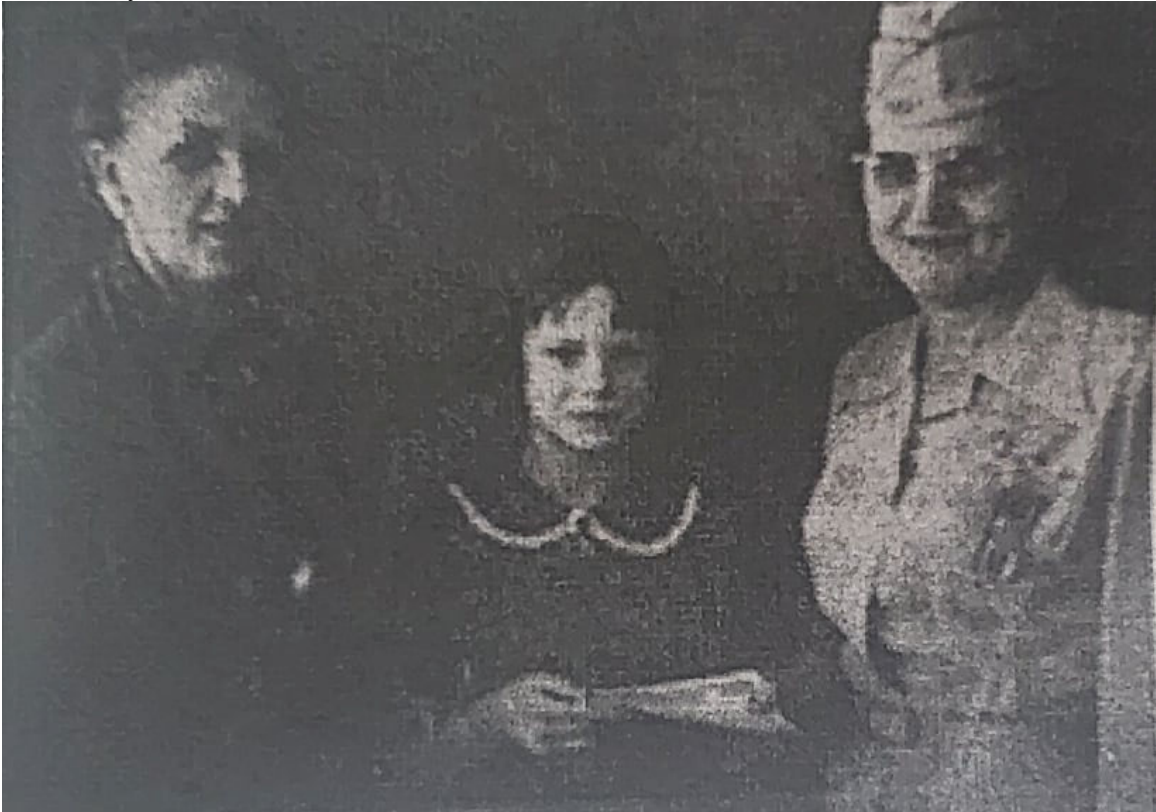
1960 February 3

“Fire Run –

The Ada Fire Department last week answered a call to the Louis Arel home south of Ada. No damage was done.” (Norman County Index, February 3, 1960)

1960 February 24

“Given Heroism Award –



Karen Kappes, center, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kappes of Twin Valley last week was presented a \$25 U.S. Savings Bond by the Ada VFW Auxiliary for her display of heroism during the recent fire which burned their farm house. The presentation was made in Karen’s sixth grade class room at the Twin Valley school last Friday. Making the award were Mrs. Bertha Johnson, left, Auxiliary president and Mrs. Ada Werpy, Auxiliary treasurer.” (Norman County Index, February 24, 1960)

1960 March 16

“Harold Habeck was named Ada Fire Chief –

Harold Habeck was named Chief of the Ada Fire Department at the annual meeting held on Monday night at the Ada Fire Hall.

Other officers elected were Leslie Vilmo, assistant chief; Emmett Schwartz, secretary; Orris Holland, treasurer; physicians, Dr. T. Loken and Dr. B. R. Kinkaid.

In 1959, the department answered a total of 24 fire calls according to Chief Habeck. A total of 15 of these were city calls, 8 were in the country and the department answered a call at Halstad.” (Norman County Index, March 16, 1960)

1960 April 27

“Ada News –

Harold Narum, who is employed on a farm at Halstad for Art and Bobby Olson had the misfortune to lose his car by fire. The garage in which it was stored and a silo filler was also burned. Fire of unknown origin started between 10 and 11 a.m. Tuesday, April 19. The fire department of Halstad was called along with the R.E.A.” (Norman County Index, April 27, 1960)

1960 April 27

“Farm Fire –

Nothing but ruins was all that remained of the garage, car, gas tank, a brand ne silo filler at the Albert (Bobby) Olson farm after the April 19th fire. Halstad firemen are shown above pouring water on the remains. The Olson farm is located ½ mile north of the Anthony Store in Halstad township.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, April 27, 1960)



1960 April 27

“Good Attendance Reported at Firemen’s Banquet Here –

A meeting of the Northern Region Firemen’s Association held Thursday night in Halstad brought 124 firemen together from as far north as the Canadian border to Halstad on the south, Bemidji on the east and west to the North Dakota border. The Halstad firemen were hosts and among the guests were State Fire Marshal and the Commissioner of Insurance, Cyrus E. Magnusson and Deputy E. L. Weber, both of St. Paul; also, Deputy Fire Marshal, C. A. Cherry, Detroit Lakes and Fire Chief Bill Herbert of Crookston, who is president of the region.

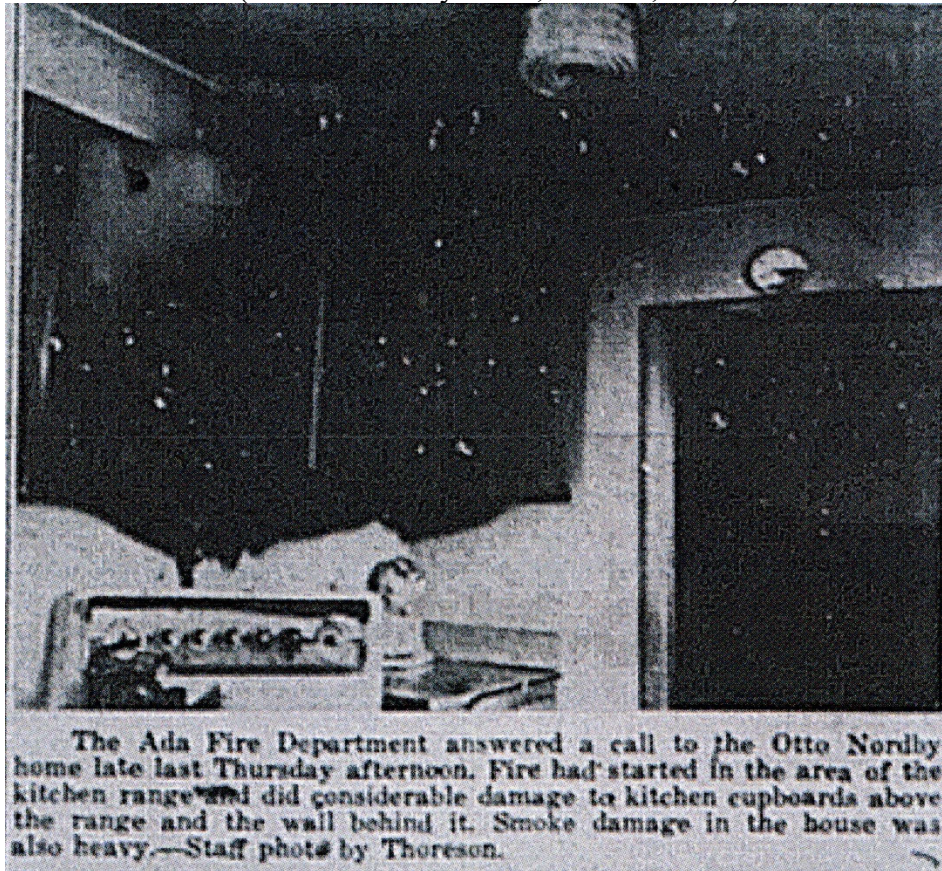
The men registered at the fire hall and looked over the building and equipment after which they were taken to the Juel Furuseth farm to view the old fire engines and many other antiques on display.

Next on the program was a chicken dinner served at the L. R. C. by the American Legion Auxiliary of Carlson-Hellerud Post 402. Mr. Herbert presided over the business meeting at the end of the dinner. All officials spoke and a picture was shown on the fire in the Catholic where large number of children died.



1960 June 15

(Norman County Index, June 15, 1960)



1960 July 20

A fire in a farm home at Hendrum resulted in the death of eight-month-old Robert Bietzel, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bietzel of Bemidji, who were visiting in the area.

1960 July 20

“Ada Fire Department Answers Three Calls —

The Ada Fire Department made two fire runs last Sunday and one on Tuesday. Sunday about 5 p.m., the department was called to the Joe Stennes farm east of Hendrum to put out a fire in the upstairs of the house.

Just after the truck had returned to Ada, they were called to put out a car blaze about 2 ½ miles east of Ada on the highway.

Tuesday about 12:45, during the noon hour, the department answered a call at the Norman County Fairgrounds where a truck belonging to the pipeline contractor was on fire. It is thought that the truck backfired and ignited gas, causing some damage to wiring, paint and the interior of the cab. The truck belonged to Bechtel Co., which has warehouse space in the fair livestock pavilion.” (Norman County Index, July 20, 1960)

1960 July 20

“Tragedy Strikes at Hendrum Family Reunion —

A family reunion at the Joseph Stennes farm northeast of Hendrum Sunday, which had been looked forward to with much joy, turned into deepest sorrow with the tragedy death of Robert Beitzel, 8-month-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Beitzel of Bemidji as a result of a fire.

Robert was asleep in an upstairs bedroom in a closet of the room and was not discovered until it had made such headway that the stairway was blocked by smoke and flames. Entrance to the bedroom was reached by a ladder at the window and the child was taken from the burning crib and brought to the ground by an uncle of the boy, the Rev. Leslie Stennes. Robert was rushed to the Ada hospital but was dead on arrival at 5:30 p.m.

James Fredrikson, Norman County Coroner, ruled death accidental and said there would be no inquest. He said death may have been due to suffocation although the child suffered third degree burns.

The Ada Fire Department extinguished the blaze. Leslie Vilmo, assistant fire chief, said considerable fire damage was done, damage mostly to the upstairs. He said there was also considerable water damage.

About 50 descendants of the Johannes Stennes family, early settlers in the Hendrum community, were gathered at the home honoring the Rev. Leslie Stennes and his family who were home on furlough from West Africa where he is a missionary. Rev. Stennes was showing color slides of their travels taken on the mission fields and on their travels when someone noticed smoke coming from a window. Rev. and Mrs. Stennes and two children were staying with his parents and lost many of their personal belongings in the fire.

The funeral for Robert is being held in Bemidji where the father is on the faculty of Bemidji State College. Mrs. Beitzel is the former Josephine Stennes. There are two other children, Earl, 5, and Katherine, 3. Robert was born at Bemidji, Nov. 8, 1959.

The community is stunned by Robert's tragic death and grieves with the family and other relatives. (Halstad's Valley Journal, November 2, 1960)

1960 November 2 "Fire Dept. Called –

The Halstad Fire Department answered a country call Friday afternoon when a brush fire north of town went out of control. Trees, brush and grass were burned on land under control before any extensive damage was done.

Earlier in the day, Henry Reltan and Fletcher Gift brought the fire truck to the Carl Opgrand farm to stand by while a wrecked barn was burned. The barn was blown down during a storm late in August. (Halstad's Valley Journal, November 2, 1960)

1960 November 9 The barn, housing 53 head of dairy cattle, on the Ralph Clark farm south of Borup, burned to the ground that week destroying the cattle and new milking equipment.

1960 November 30 "Fire at Warner House –

The Halstad Fire Dept. answered a call to the Mrs. Rose Warner home late Saturday afternoon when a gas heater in the upstairs apartment caused a fire. There is some damage to the wall at the head of the stairs where the heater was located and some water and smoke damage." (Halstad's Valley Journal, November 30, 1960)

1960 December 14 "Firemen to Doll Up –

From now on, the Halstad Volunteer Firemen will doll up when the occasion arises as the 20 members have recently been outfitted with white dress shirts, personalized in bright red with Halstad Fire Dept. on the back and the members own name on the pocket. They also have red bow ties. C. M. Gilbertson, fire chief, said that they were purchased by the village and that the men plan to initiate them at a special event.

The shirts and ties also will be worn when the firemen attend out-of-town meetings.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, December 14, 1960)

1961

1961 January 8 Fire destroyed the garage at the Wilbur Johnson home at Lockhart.

1961 February 15 Fire destroyed three Twin Valley firms: Twin Valley Equipment Co., Lerud Seed Co., and Dick’s Radio and TV. Damage was estimated at \$65,000.

“Fire Again Strikes Twin Valley, Three Firms Burn to the Ground-

A fire fanned by a strong wind destroyed the Twin Valley Equipment Co. building and threatened other nearby structures at Twin Valley in February of 1961.

Damage was estimated at \$65,000 by firm owners.

The Ada Fire Department aided the Twin Valley Fire Department in preventing the flames in spreading to other nearby buildings.

The fire was discovered about 4:30 a.m. but the one story, wood and stucco structure, was beyond saving when firemen arrived.

F. N. Moen, owner of the equipment company, said he estimated loss at \$30,00 in equipment, \$12,000 in parts and other equipment, and \$11,000 for the building. He said he was fully insured. Moen was the J. I. Case dealer for the area.

Two other companies renting quarters in the building sustained complete losses.

The Lerud Seed Co., owned by Emil A. Lerud, sustained a loss of about \$7,000 in seed and fertilizer. He was insured.

Dick’s Radio and TV, owned by R. D. Boelter, lost parts and sets in the fire but no loss was estimated. He was not insured.

Sparks blown by the winds started small roof fires on the Great Plains Supply Co. and on the Twin Valley Co-op Creamery Association, but firemen doused them before any serious damage was caused.

The building that was destroyed was located on Main Street next to the creamery and it formerly housed the Bertram Lumber Co.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1961 March 15 Leslie Vilmo was named Ada Fire Department chief at the group’s annual meeting.

1961 April 4 “Officer changes (in the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) throughout the years as taken from the minutes were as follows: Harry Johnson elected Treasurer replacing Irving Storsved.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1961 April 5 The Village of Gary had purchased \$3,725 worth of new firefighting equipment.

1961 May 10 Fire leveled the farm home of Mrs. Anton Orvik.

1961 June 7 A fire on Memorial Day destroyed the barn on the farm of Sheriff Herman Lovas.

1961 June 28 A large quonset at the Keith Todd farm near Hendrum caught fire and burned.

1962

1962 March 14 A large quonset at the Keith Todd farm near Hendrum caught fire and burned.

1962 June 27 Fire completely gutted the interior of Engelhardt Drug.

1962 August 1 Fire destroyed the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Gunderson.

1962 August 1 Ken Engelhardt, owner of Engelhardt Drug, announced plans for the opening of an all-new drugstore. His store was completely gutted by fire. He purchased the C. R. Andrews and Co. building and was making plans to remodel the building.

1962 August 8 The Waukon Store was destroyed by fire.

1962 August 29 Fire destroyed the barn on the John Stehr farm. The barn was apparently struck by lightning.

1962 September 12 Fire destroyed the barn at the Glencarnock Stock Farm south of Ada. Two head of cattle and a quantity of hay and straw were destroyed.

1963

1963 February 6 The L. B. Hartz Store at Perley, owned and operated by Ralph Johnston, was destroyed by fire.

1963 March 13 Tenny Vigen was named chief of the Ada Fire Department. Richard Simonson was the retiring chief.

1963 April, date unknown “Officer changes (in the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) throughout the years as taken from the minutes were as follows: Allen Christopherson as Secretary replacing John Johnson.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1963 September 18 The GTA Line Elevator of Lockhart burned to the ground. The fire apparently started in the office area. There were about 27,000 bushels stored in the elevator at the time. The elevator had a 45,000-bushel capacity. The loss was estimated at about \$60,000.

1964

1964 January 22 A fire at the Willie Germolus farm destroyed a small barn. About 210 bales of straw and 25 bales of hay were destroyed, along with four 4-H calves purchased at a Crookston sale.

1964 March 11 Fire destroyed the Raymond Riepe home northwest of Ada.

1964 March 11 Cliff Volkerding was named chief of the Ada Fire Department.

1964 March 18 The Ada Fire Department answered four rural calls the past week. They were: a barn was destroyed at the Art Aanenson farm; soil bank field near the railroad tracks eight miles north of Ada; the Elvin Babler farm home, smoke and water damage; a car fire north of Ada.

1964 May 19 “Twin Valley Elevator Destroyed by Fire –

The Twin Valley Co-op Elevator was completely Sunday by fire which broke out at about 10 p.m. and burned as rapidly that in about an hour's time the structure was completely leveled. The cause was probably spontaneous combustion as residents of the neighborhood heard a muffled explosion shortly before the building was completely enveloped in flames.

The local fire department responded promptly and succeeded in confining the fire to the main building. A unit of the Ada Fire Department also responded to an emergency call and helped keep the flames from spreading. Fortunately, there was only a gentle breeze from the northwest; under other conditions the fire would most certainly have gotten out of control.

The building was built in the fall of 1886, the year the railroad came through Twin Valley and for some years was operated by the Andrews Grain Company. Henry Vehle purchased the elevator in 1921 and operated it until he retired from the business and sold the property to a local group which has since operated it under the name Twin Valley Co-op. Harold Natwick was manager until a few years ago when he purchased an elevator at Gary. Since then, Clarence Tollefson has managed it.

The board of directors informs us that this fire involves a total loss of approximately \$80,000, with insurance in the amount of \$30,000 carried on the building. The elevator was almost full of grain and this carried separate insurance. The other elevators the north, used mainly for grain storage, and the more recently constructed building in the south were undamaged.

No statement as to future plans has been issued by the board of directors, pending settlement with the insurance companies. A new building will without a doubt be erected as soon as arrangements can be made.

The fire was one of the most spectacular this area has ever experienced and the flames could be seen from distances up to 30 miles away.” (Twin Valley Times, May 19, 1964)

1964 July 29 The big barn on the Olin farm southeast of Ada burned to the ground. Lightning struck the barn on the Palmer Hoff farm and destroyed the barn, 700 bales of hay, and their show flock of sheep.

1964 July 29 Timothy Dyrdaahl, five years old, lost his life when fire destroyed a station wagon parked in the farm yard. He was found in the back seat of the station wagon near the tailgate.

1964 September 9 The City Council set the tax levy for 1964, collectible in 1965 at \$30,000, the same figure set since 1962. The total budget for the year was set at \$10,245. Bids were let for a new fire truck for the city.

1964 October 21

Sixteen members of the Halstad Fire Department, Halstad Telephone Co., Halstad Municipal Utilities, and the Halstad School are receiving training in radiation monitoring.

Mr. Ray Kerrigan, local instructor, is leading the training school in the use and operation of radiological monitoring instruments.

For some time now, Halstad has been designated as a monitoring center for western Norman County and has had instruments for that purpose. The classes being held will improve the operation of this center.

The classes are 16 hours in length and tests are given at the conclusion of the course to qualify personnel in the operation of the center.

Last Wednesday evening, Mr. Buckmaster, area commander of Civil Defense, brought a supply of radioactive material for the training under actual operating conditions. Lee Helgerson, local Civil Defense Director, stated that we here in Halstad are very fortunate to be one of the very first in the state to receive this important class for public and semi-public employees.

Another class is being planning for neighboring towns in the near future. (Halstad's Valley Journal, October 21, 1964)

1964 September 16 "Two Halstad Youths Narrowly Escape Injury –

Two Halstad boys had a close escape with death Monday afternoon.

The boys had been playing near a large pile of flax bales.

They had been playing with matches when the flax became ignited.

One of the boys had his hair singed slightly. Neither boy was seriously hurt. The Fire Department was called to the scene to control the blaze but the flax was lost.

A few anxious moments were experienced by the parents when the boys could not be located. Both boys had returned home and were found by their parents.

Lee W. Helgerson, Fire Chief, stated that parents should acquaint their children with the danger of playing in areas similar to that where the flax was stored at the south end of the town. (Halstad's Valley Journal, September 16, 1964)

1964 November 25 The Halstad Fire Department sponsored a fund drive for the annual Muscular Dystrophy Association of America campaign. "Chief Helgerson urged all the citizens of the city to give generously to this very worthy cause." (Halstad's Valley Journal, November 25, 1964)

1964 December 30

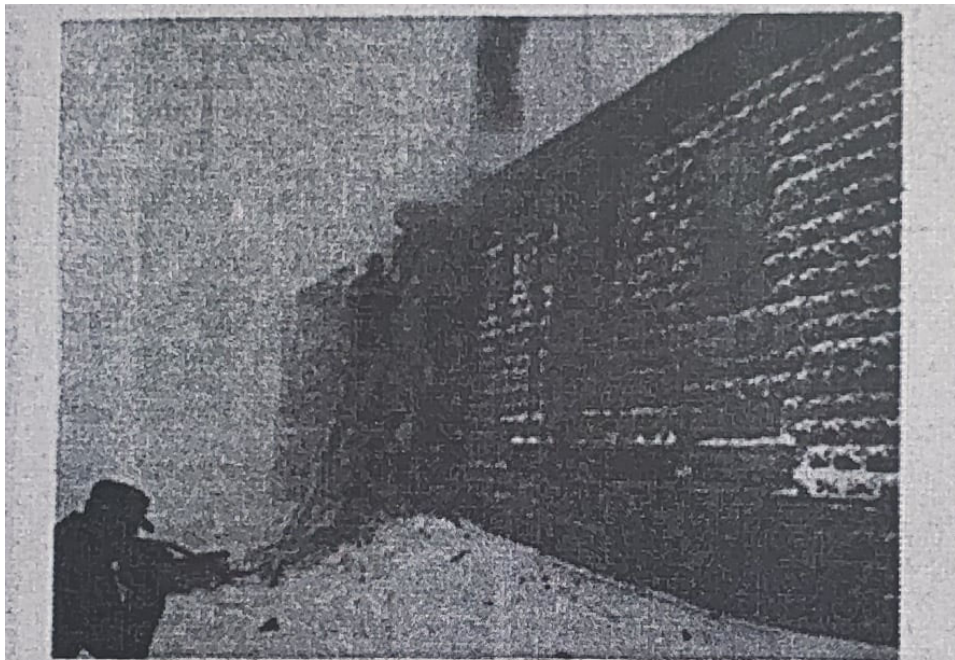
“Fire Damages Bitker Warehouse Monday –

The Halstad Volunteer Firemen were called Monday afternoon to the Ray Bitker Potato Warehouse, where a fire was burning in the hay filled loft. The fire had evidently started near the heating plant and had gotten into the loft.

The department battled the blaze for several hours before the fire was extinguished. Highway 75, running along the warehouse was detoured around the several blocks, to facilitate the firefighting.

Considerable damage was suffered by the building, as firemen were forced to chop holes in the roof in order to get at the fire. The potatoes stored in the basement were saved.

Firemen were again called to the building Monday evening, to put out a small fire which had started up in the loft once again.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, December 30, 1964)



Smoke poured from the back side of the Bitker potato warehouse, as Halstad firemen battled to extinguish the fire in the hay filled loft.



1964, date unknown Perley

“Fire burned the barn on the Nils, Palmen and Glenn Hof farm. This was the third (of four) time that a barn was destroyed on this farm; the first two (1911 & 1916) by tornados, and the fourth collapsed under the load of snow.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1965

1965 January 13 The barn on the Lofgren-Jensen Stock Farm near Lockhart burned to the ground. Clarence Bitker, about two miles east of Lockhart, also lost his barn to fire.

1965 February 24 An early morning fire destroyed the village hall at Twin Valley, and all the village’s firefighting equipment. East Side Motors also suffered some damage.

“Fire Destroys Village Hall at Twin Valley –

An early Monday morning fire destroyed the village hall at Twin Valley, all the village’s firefighting equipment, and heavily damaged the East Side Motor, just east of the village hall.

Also destroyed was a pickup truck used by Lyle Airhart in his duties as street commissioner and water works superintendent, the village’s Christmas decorations, and all the village records.

Village Clerk, C. O. Albertson, is now in the process of purchasing all new record books, various forms, and other printed forms to supplement the loss. Sheldon Johnson, treasurer, had records of account for his office at his residence.

The fire, which broke out about 1:15 a.m., leveled the village hall which was a brick building measuring approximately 35x100 feet and located east of railroad tracks. A nearby building, housing the East Side Motor, also heavily damaged when burning embers ignited it.

The fire was discovered by police officer Selmer Bentley who saw the flames in the front of the building as he was parked in his patrol car in front of the creamery.

Bentley called firemen by telephone and then drove up and down the streets using the siren on his police car to arouse residents, since the fire whistle was located in the burning village hall.

Twin Valley firemen were unable to do anything about the fire because all of their firefighting equipment was stored in the building.

Fire departments from nearby communities were called for help with the Gary, Ulen and Ada units answering the call.

When firemen from these communities arrived at the scene, another problem arose. The hydrants used by Twin Valley have a different type thread on them than the ones used by our neighboring towns. Only the Ulen Fire Department had the particular adapter needed, so only one hydrant could be used to fight the fire. The Ada Department had one adapter with them but lacked the wrench to make the connection.

Our fire department had six such adapters, but they were in the burning hall.

Special recognition was given to Chief Art Knutson and members of the Twin Valley Fire Department, and members of Gary Fire Department, and also the members of the Ulen Fire Department, for their untiring efforts in fighting the fire at the East Side Motor. The Gary unit, using their fire truck, hauled many tank loads of water from the south pump house to the scene of the blaze. Mayor Lester M. Hoien and other members of the Twin Valley Fire Department were heard to have made many comments on that "hard working crew" from Gary, and they were especially pleased that the Ulen Department had an adapter to fit our water hydrants.

The mercury here was hovering around the 20 below mark at the time of the blaze, with a slight northwest wind. Many of the firemen froze fingers and parts of their faces.

Embers from the village hall also threatened buildings to the south but snow on the roofs apparently saved them from damage.

Most of the equipment and records were carried out of the East Side Motor before the fire got too far along. Bud Sylvester, owner of the garage, estimates damage to his building at about \$60,000.

Loss to the village, including the hall and other equipment, was estimated at between \$40,00 and \$50,000.

Orville Flaaten of Gary was here with the crane belonging to Gunnufson & Bjorge about noon on Monday to knock down the standing brick walls of the hall.

According to Oris Bentley, who assisted the firemen on Monday, the village hall was built in 1915. Both the hall and East Side Motor were covered by insurance.

Fire Chief Arnt Nysetvold expressed thanks to all firemen and others who assisted with the fires here Monday, and also to the Fire Department of Fertile who loaned us a fire truck until we are able to obtain a new one." (Twin Valley Times, February 24, 1965)



Only the shell of the village hall at Twin Valley, Minn., remained standing Monday after a fire destroyed the hall and the village's fire fighting equipment stored inside. Also damaged was the East Side Motor building, at right. Part of the east wall of the village hall fell during the fire and the remaining walls were knocked down by a wrecking crew later.

(Twin Valley Times Photo)



Orville Flaaten and Elmer Bjorge of Gary arrived with the crane of Gunnufson & Bjorge shortly before noon on Monday and knocked down the remaining wall structures of the hall. As the above picture was being taken, a little after 1 p. m., only the north wall remained standing. The building housing the East Side Motor, which was heavily damaged, may be seen to the right in the above photo.

1965 August 4
The combined bids totaled \$15,613.00. Construction was to start in 20 days on the site just north of the City Hall.

The Ada City Council let bids for the construction of a new firehall.

1965 June 9 There was to be an open house picnic at the Ada Park for Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Skalsky and family whose home had recently burned.



1965 Ada's New Fire Hall

1966

1966 March 30 The Loren Davidson family, living near Gary, lost their farm home and all its contents in a fire.

1966 August 17 The Ada Fire Department answered two calls that week: one to the Harold Goltz residence, and the other to the Arnold Benesh farm.

1966 October 26 A fire, which started in the girls' dressing room off the stage in the old auditorium of the Borup High School, did considerable damage.

1966 December 5 "The 1934 truck (Ford chassis) was kept until December 5, 1966, as a back-up to the 1955 truck. At this time an Oshkosh truck with a Continental engine was acquired from the City of Warroad." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1966 December 14 Fire destroyed the farmhouse belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Hans Sorenson located west of Ada.

1967

1967 December 13 The new city hall and fire station at Twin Valley was nearing completion.

1968

1968 May 6 “Officer changes (in the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) throughout the years as taken from the minutes were as follows: Retained Paul Hviding as Chief, Arnold Anderson as Assistant Chief and elected Irving Storsved as Secretary and Wayne Hetland as Treasurer.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1968 October 16 Arson was suspected in three fires near Perley. Two wooden rural schoolhouses in northern Cass County were burned to the ground, and an abandoned farm home near Perley was destroyed.

1969

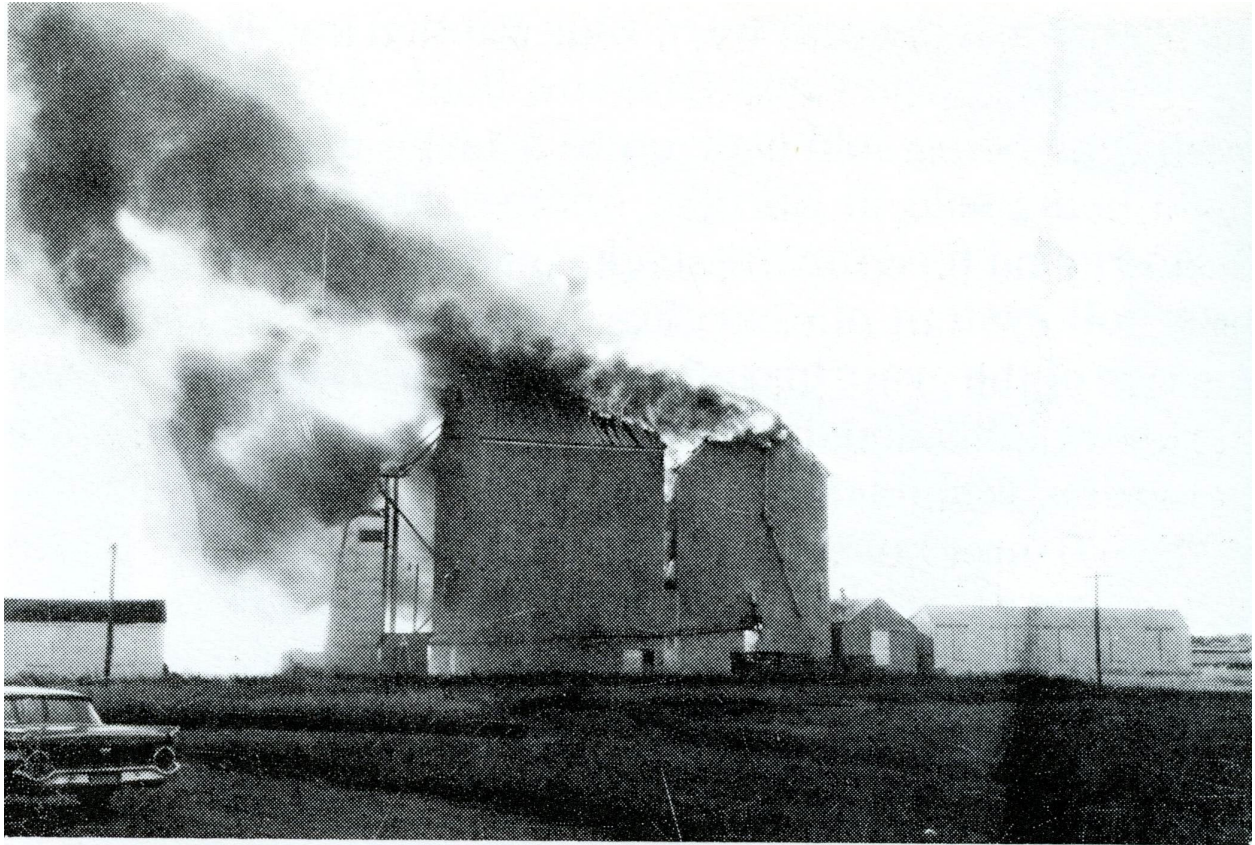
1969 August 5 “Fire Run –
The Ada fire department answered a call at 11:15 a.m. Tuesday to the Harris Stennes farm located southwest of Ada. A fire had got started in a barley field.” (Norman County Index, August 5, 1969)

1969 November 12 The Ada Fire Department answered fire calls to the Russell Slininger, Ray Erickson and Bud Geddes farms. The fires were in grain dryers.

1969, date unknown (fall) “(A) White 1947 Model Ford was acquired from the Wishek (North Dakota) Volunteer Fire Department for \$2.000 in the fall of 1969. This truck carries 500 gallons and is equipped with a Hale pump which has a capacity of 500 gpm.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1970

1970 July 22 Fire partially destroyed the Farmers Co-op Elevator at Perley. About 85,000 bushels of barley, wheat and soybeans were destroyed in the fire.



Perley Farmer's Elevator burning in July, 1970.



Farmers Coop Elevator fire, July 21, 1970.

1971

1971 January 20 The new Perley Farmers Co-op Elevator was under construction and to be completed by March. The old structure was destroyed by fire. The new elevator's capacity was to be 60,000 bushels, was to be 113 feet tall, and to cost about \$175,000.

1971 September 9 "Officer changes (in the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) throughout the years as taken from the minutes were as follows: Paul Hviding resigned as Chief and Perry Kolnes was elected to replace him." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1971 December 2 "On December 2, 1971, the (Hendrum Fire) Department was outfitted in regulation gear, fire helmets, boots, coats and gloves." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1971 December 9 On December 9, 1971, almost 26 years to the day, the Shelly Meat Market again burned down. It has been determined that the fire was set by the same people who robbed the bank the following evening. Merlin Dale, the owner, is in the process of rebuilding at the present time (July 1972)." ("Shelly's Diamond 75 Jubilee, Shelly, Minnesota, July 14 – 16, 1972")

1972

1972 February 9 The Ada City Council offered a \$200 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who opened three fire hydrants, let them run, completely draining the water supply, and reducing the water pressure to zero.

1972 April 12 "Halstad to Host Fireman's Meeting –
The Halstad Fire Department will host the Northern Region Fireman's Association meeting to be held in Halstad Thursday.
Over 130 firemen from the Halstad are north to the Canadian border will mee for supper at 6:30 p.m. at the LRC." (Halstad's Valley Journal, April 12, 1972)

1972 April 26 "Hendrum Firemen Complete Course in Firemanship –
The Hendrum Fire Department under the direction of Chief Perry Kolnes has just completed the fifth course in Firemanship Training as provided by the Field Services Unit of the Vocational Technical Division, State Department of Education.
This course consists of a minimum of six hours of instruction and is presented with the cooperation of the local officials.
Instructor in the training was Al Albright and those enrolled from the local fire department were" Perry Kolnes, Wayne Hetland, Lyle Peterson, Noral Nelson, Arlan Lang, Arthur Johnson, Arnold Anderson, Odin Aune, Roger Meline, Leslie Ford and Billy Tommerdahl." (Halstad's Valley Journal, April 26, 1972)

- 1972 July 19 “Fire Destroys Farm Home –
 A fire of undetermined origin burned the country home where Orlin Viker maintained his home last Wednesday afternoon.
 A pickup and camper standing close to the house also burned. Halstad Fire Department was called too late to save the property.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal. July 19, 1972)
- 1972 December 13 “Fire Damages Potato Warehouse –
 Extensive damage was caused by fire last Thursday afternoon to the Old Dutch Potato Warehouse, located north of Halstad.
 The Halstad Fire Department was called to the scene about 3 o’clock. The alarm was called in by railroad crewmen who noticed more smoke than usual coming from the vents at the warehouse.
 Assistant Fire Chief Roger Stole called for assistance from other local fire departments to minimize the danger of the fire spreading, called were tankers from Shelly, Climax, Hendrum, Hillsboro and Ada.
 Roald McDonald, manager, said the cause of the fire is not known at this time and an investigation is underway. Mr. McDonald also said that the amount of damage is not known.
 Approximately 100,000 hundred weight of potatoes was stored in the warehouse.
 The fire department was praised by Mr. McDonald for the tremendous job they did curtailing the fire.
 The warehouse is owned by Old Dutch Foods, Inc., St. Paul.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, December 13, 1972)

1973

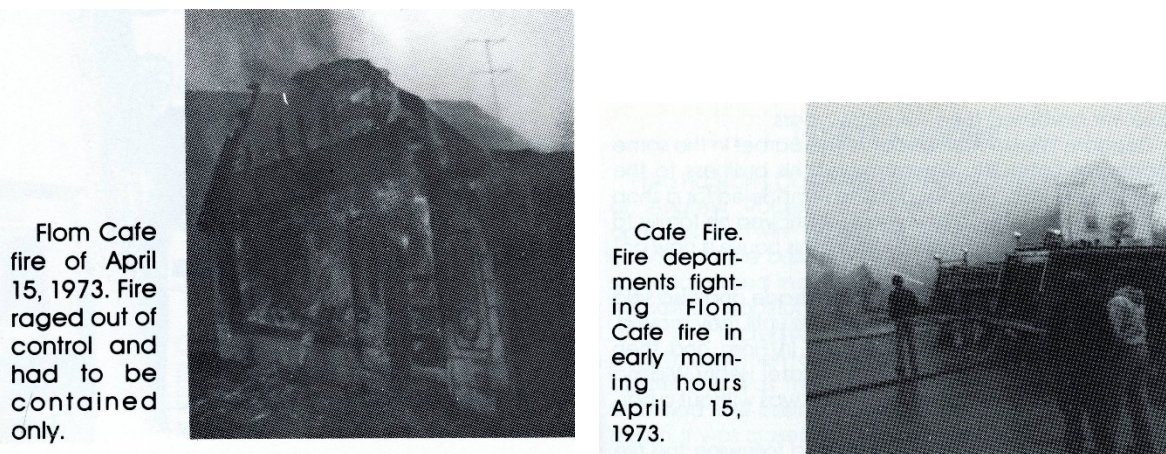
- 1973 January 3 “Fire destroyed the Felton Elevator –
 Fire broke out about 7:30 last Thursday night in the Farmer’s Cooperative Elevator at Felton and in about two hours it destroyed the complex which consisted of four separate buildings. Men and 15 trucks from fire departments at Moorhead, Detroit Lakes, Lake Park, Hawley, **Borup, Ada, Ulen, Perley, Twin Valley**, and Glydon aided the Felton department.” (Norman County Index, January 3, 1973)
- 1973 April 11 Myron Sanders was appointed chief of the Ada Fire Department at the regular meeting of the Ada City Council.
- 1973 April 15 “Palm Sunday Fire
 Palm Sunday, April 15, 1973, dawned a cold and cloudy day. A skift of snow had fallen during the night, leaving a thin layer of the white stuff on the ground. A cold, nut gentle breeze was blowing of the northwest. The temperature had fallen during the night into the twenties, quite a contrast from the previous day when it had been in the upper seventies.
 People were hurrying to early morning church services little did they know that soon they would be fighting one of the most disastrous fires ever to strike them.

On that morning, a fire of undetermined origin destroyed three major business places. The M&M Café, where the fire began, spread to two adjoining places, the Post Office and the Long Branch. They were all entirely destroyed, together with much of their contents.

The fire departments responded to our call quickly and efficiently, but with a shortage of water the fire was uncontrollable. Fire departments from Twin Valley, Mahnomen, Ulen, Gary and Waubun answered our call, and to these we owe much gratitude and thanks. Water was hauled from a lake south of the town to help fight the fire. Temporary pipes that were laid from the creamery to the fire helped some, but were too late to save the buildings.

Now half the business district was destroyed. This could have easily been the end of Flom. Instead, a meeting was called by the Community Club and about 100 people attended. Many of these were from farms of a 10 to 15 miles radius from town. They decided to rebuild. Flom was not about to stand by idly and take such a loss. By late afternoon, clean-up crews were organized. Early Monday morning tractors with loaders, dump trucks, dozers, and volunteer labor moved in and by Tuesday afternoon all fire related debris had been hauled away and buried. The old creamery lagoon was used for this. Then fill was hauled in and dumped on the old building site, leveled and smoothed over. It was now ready for building.” (See page 273 of “The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986” for the rest of the story.)

See also, the “Flom Centennial, July 2 – 3, 1977.”



Photos from “The Twin Valley Community Saga, Twin Valley Centennial, 1886 – 1986”

1973 April 18

“Fire department answered four calls last week –

The Ada fire department has answered four fire calls the past week according to Chief Myron Sanders.

Extensive damage was done to the farm home of Donald Dauner northeast of Ada.

Two calls were answered to the Gerald Olson farm south of Ada when bale piles were on fire.

Monday night the department was called to the Gerald Kirchmeier farm northeast of Ada to fight another bale fire. The bale fire was near a machinery quonset and some damage was done to this building.” (Norman County Index, April 18, 1973)

1973 September 12 “Hendrum Firemen Complete Course –

The Hendrum Fire Department, under the direction of Chief Perry Kolnes, has just completed the sixth course in Firemanship Training as provided by the Adult Programs Unit of the Vocational Technical division, State Department of Education.

This course consists of a minimum of twelve hours of instruction and is presented with the cooperation of the local school officials.

Instructor in the training was Emmett Phifer and those enrolled from the local fire department were Perry Kolnes, Odin Aune, Lyle Peterson, John Storsved, Nordal Nelson, Wayne Hetland, William Tommerdahl, Irving Storsved, Harry Johnson and Roger Meline.” (Halstad’s Valley Journal, September 12, 1973)

1974

1974 March 13 The Ada City Council was to call for bids later in the month for a new fire truck for the Ada Fire Department. The last new fire truck was purchased by the city in 1965.

1974 April 4 “One April 4, 1974, the (Hendrum Fire) Department obtained its first MSA air mask of which they now (1982) have two.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1974 April 24 The Hendrum Fire Department was called to the Colin Krogstad farm, near Perley, where fire destroyed a barn, tractor and truck loaded with seed grain. The house received smoke damage.

1974 May 1 A spectacular early morning fire completely destroyed the main building of the Ada Feed & Seed. Loss of the building and inventory was set in excess of half a million dollars. The bins and adjoining warehouse full of seed corn were saved.

“On April 30th and May 1st, 1974. A spectacular early morning fire completely destroyed the main building of Ada Feed and Seed. Loss of the building and inventory at that time was estimated at over a half a million dollars.

The fire was discovered at about 3:30 a.m. and the Ada Fire Department quickly responded to the call. They were later joined by fire departments from Halstad, Twin Valley, Gary and Borup.

The main structure of the plant was completely destroyed by fire. Two adjacent warehouses were saved. The main building that was destroyed in the fire housed the firm’s general offices, a sunflower hulling and processing plant, seed cleaning plant, a feed mill, pelleting plant and two big warehouse areas filled with feed and seed.

[illegible]

The fire was discovered and the alarm turned in shortly after 3:30 a.m. by Police Officer Bob Miller, who noticed the fire as he was making his rounds.

The fire was thought to have started in the boiler room area in the mill section and spread from there. The middle or elevator section of the complex soon caught fire and completely burned and toppled to the ground about 5:00 a.m. From there, the fire moved both ways, towards the offices and the warehouse.

All of the firm's trucks and sprayed were saved from the blaze. All business records were removed before the office started to burn.

It was fortunate for the City of Ada that there was little, if any, wind at the time the fire was raging. Other buildings – including the Cargill and Ada Grain Co. elevators to the north were never threatened.

177

Five Departments Battle Fire At Ada



The above photo, taken at the height of the fire at about 4:30 a. m., silhouettes volunteer firemen against the blazing structure. At this time at least five trucks were pumping water into the blazing structure. The two steel bins partially visible on the right held seed wheat and corn. The bins and adjoining warehouse full of seed corn were saved. Norman Co. Index, Ada, Minn., photo by Ross Pfund



1974 - Ada Feed & Seed Fire.



1974 - Ada Feed & Seed fire.

1974 June 26 Mrs. Steve Larson of Hendrum was burned over 80% of her body in a car that she was driving caught fire during the demolition derby in Shelly.

1974 December 4 Four commercial buildings were in various stages in the City of Ada: a new building was being built for Berg Implement, local John Deere farm machinery dealer; a new building for Ada Implement Co., local International Harvester dealer; **new office and warehouse for Ada Feed & Seed to replace what had been destroyed in a fire**; and an office building for Norman County.

1975

1975 March 19 An early morning fire destroyed a hog barn, along with a large number of hogs, on the Arnold Jossund farm east of Perley.

1975 April 16 Ada Feed & Seed moved into their new offices and warehouse. This replaces the old buildings and mill, which were destroyed by fire April 30, 1974.

1975 June 8 Arthur Aanenson died as a result of injuries he received in a gas explosion which occurred May 24th.

1975 August 20 The Ada Fire Department received its new fire truck, which had been ordered 15-18 months before. With the addition of this new truck, the Ada Fire Department had four pumper units.



1975 August, date unknown “The Oshkosh truck was replaced in August of 1975 when a 1953 GMC 6x6 surplus army truck was obtained from Civil Defense for \$100.00. (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1976

1976 June 3 “This (Hendrum’s 1953 GMC surplus truck) was converted to a tanker with a spare tank furnished by Richard Canning on June 3, 1976.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1976 September 1 Fire destroyed the barn, about 30 head of milk cows and a large amount of baled hay stored in the barn loft at the Dale Rinerson farm southwest of Ada.

1976 December 29 Fire destroyed a large warehouse and storage shop on the Leland Hage farm southwest of Halstad.

1977

1977 January 12 The Borup, Perley, Hendrum and Halstad fire departments were called to fight a fire at the Jerry Stordahl home in Perley.

1977 March 16 Newly-elected officers of the Ada Fire Department were: Don Visser, fire chief; Keith Rector, assistant chief; Roger Eversvik, secretary; and Don Hausten treasurer.

1977 June 15 The 50th Anniversary observance of the building of St. John's Lutheran Church was held June 12th. The original church building was struck by lightning and burned to the ground September 1st, 1926. A new church was built at a cost of \$12,000, with Oscar Haaland and Emil Zimmerman hired as carpenters.

1977 August 24 Dee's Hartz Store and Interior Lumber at Perley reported burglaries. Interior Lumber suffered extensive interior damage as the thieves turned on the company's fire extinguishers.

1977 September 21 The Norman County Sheriff's office was alerted by the Polk County Sheriff's office that they had received information that a bomb would go off in a school in Red Lake, Polk or Norman County at 10:30 (neither a.m. or p.m. was specified). All schools in the county were notified. At Ada, a fire drill evacuated both schools during the 10:30 a.m. period. It was evidently a hoax as no reports of a bombing had been reported in the three-county area.

1977, date unknown "It (Hendrum's 1953 GMC surplus truck) was converted with a custom-built tank in 1977 built by Hendrum Manufacturing Company for \$2,953.54." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1978

1978 January, date unknown "In January of 1978, a fold-a-tank was purchased for \$760.00 to use with a tanker, permitting the truck to be quickly unloaded to return for additional loads of water." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1978 January, date unknown "In January 1978, the (Hendrum Fire) Department conducted a public service program, selling Honeywell smoke detectors at cost to promote early warning of fires in the individual homes." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

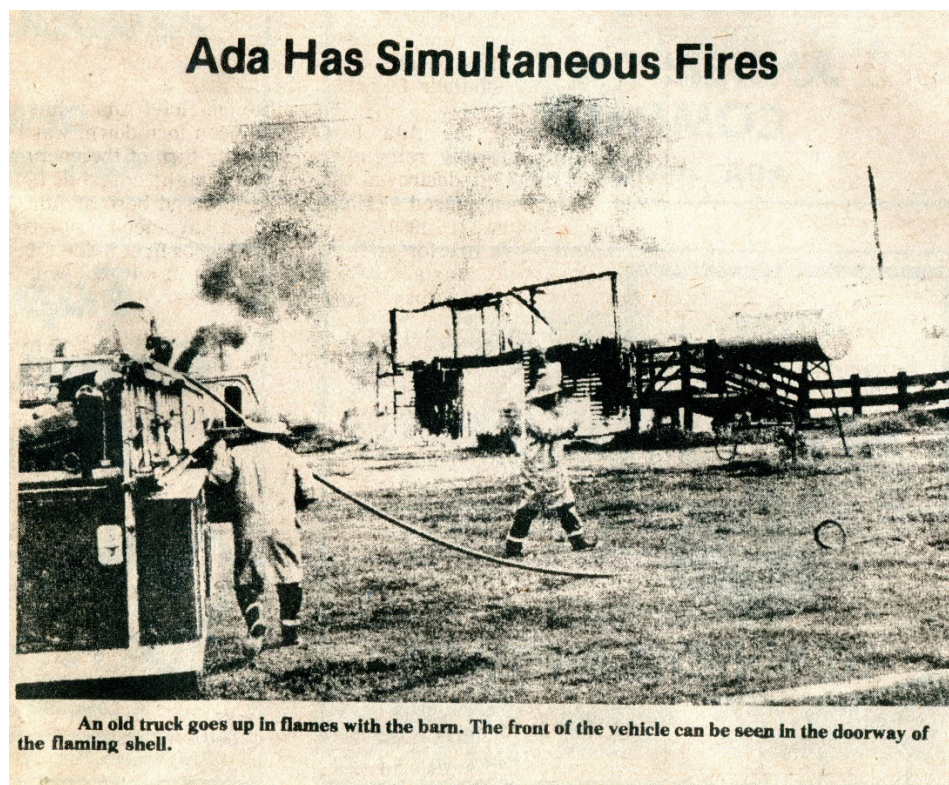
1978 June 7 The Ada Fire Department answered two calls at one time: a barn fire at the Richard Jamison farm on the southwestern corner of Ada, and an airplane crash, when a spray plane owned by Rex Hammarback made a forced landing. The plane burned after the impact.

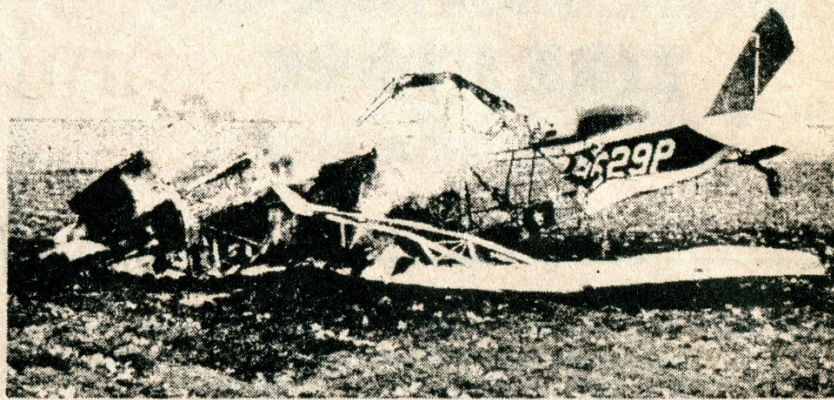
“Friday evening the Ada Volunteer Fire Department found the old adage ‘when it rains it pours’ particularly relevant. The department answered two calls at the same time.

The first run came at approximately 8:00 p.m. when law enforcement called in a fire at the Richard Jamison farm located at the southwest edge of the city. Moments later a second call came through about an airplane crash, and trucks enroute to the first fire were diverted to the second.

The second fire occurred after an airplane crash. Sources at the scene said a spray-plane owned by Rex Hammerback, rural Ada, made a forced landing trying to avoid a second airplane. The plane burned after the impact but no one was injured.

The fire on the Jamison farm destroyed a large barn, a truck, and some hay stored in the building. The building burned to the ground but fire-fighters were able to contain the blaze. Investigations of both fires are continuing.” (Originally published in the “Minnesota Smoke-Eater”, August Issue, 1978; republished in the Special Supplement to the Norman County Index, October 10, 1984)





Still smoldering . . . there is little left of the plane.

—Ada Norman County Index Photos

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MINNESOTA

Smoke-Eater

AUGUST ISSUE, 1978

1978 December 5 "The Red 1955 truck was replaced on December 5, 1978, when a new fully equipped 1978 C-65 Chevrolet fire truck with a 750-gallon tank and a 750-gpm pump was purchased. The purchase price was \$33,385 with the City's adding on several items since its purchase." ("Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1979

1979 March date unknown Fire at Tom and Amy Habeck's place, rural Twin Valley. The couple lost their house and everything inside. (Kim Habeck)

1979 June 13 Fire destroyed the residence of Craig VanderLinden in Lockhart. The residence was completely gutted.

1979 December 5 A burned out wire was the culprit in a near four-hour power outage in northeast Ada. High winds and snowfall made the location of the problem difficult.

1980

1980 January 30

(Norman County Index, January 30, 1980)



1980 February 11

“Weekend fires claim extensive property damage –

Two fires raged in Norman County this weekend, resulting in extensive property damage, but no loss of lives.

The Edward Hess farm four miles north of Lockhart had a propane-fed fire that took five hours to put out. The Shelly Fire Department answered the call, and units from Ada and Galstad sent trucks up there, too. The garage and back part of the house were destroyed, and the rest of the house suffered extensive smoke and water damage. Ada Fire Chief, Don Visser, estimating that it took 30 people and countless trips into Shelly to put the fire out. ‘We just couldn’t get enough water on it.’ A Co-op truck from Ada and a milk truck, two tank trucks and the three fire departments, ran several trips into Shelly.

By the time that the Ada Fire Department arrived on the scene of the fire, all they could see was an orange ball of fire. They tried to get the blaze down, but ‘apparently the propane tank had popped its relief valve, and kept re-igniting the fire. We had to tow the tank out into the field to get the fire out,’ said Visser.

The other fire was on the property of Steve Crompton’s farm south of Borup. ‘We didn’t have to put much water on that one,’ said Visser, ‘because when we got there, the

hog barn was already totally destroyed.’ About 200 pigs burned in the blaze, but some of them were saved. Bot Ada and Borup Fire Departments answered the call. A propane tank was caught in the blaze, but it was not feeding the fire. The straw and dry wood were.

Both fires were reported by neighbors, or passers-by. The owners did not know about the fires until they were well underway.” (Norman County Index, February 11, 1980)

1980 April 2 A fire ravaged the Red River Supper Club located one mile west of Ada. Fire officials estimated its worth between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

1980 April, date unknown “Fire Ravages the Red River Supper Club –

In April of 1980, a fire ravaged the Red River Supper Club located one mile west of Ada on Hwy. 200. Crews from the Ada Volunteer Fire Department battled the blaze unsuccessfully for three hours.

The incident reported to authorities approximately 4:45 a.m. when passing motorist telephoned in a report that he had seen smoke and flames coming from the night club building. Crews were on scene shortly thereafter.

Ada Fire Chief Don Visser said at the time that, ‘the back wall of the building had fallen in when we got there.’

Firemen continued to battle the blaze through the early morning hours using one pumper and two tank trucks. State Fire Marshall C. C. “Rusty” Tallman was called to the scene that morning but was unable to start his investigation until later in the day because of the heat.

Tallman said the fire was ‘very fast and very hot’ and ‘everything that could burn is gone.’ Nothing was salvageable. The roof of the structure collapsed within an hour after firefighters had arrived on scene. The sidewalls burned to the ground within two hours.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1980 May, date unknown “Fire Destroys Two Buildings in Shelly –

It was only a matter of half an hour before the building housing the Shelly Bar and the adjoining building were a raging inferno in May of 1980. The fire broke out about 10:45 p.m. Those in the bar at the time tried to put out the fire. They could not find the fire extinguisher, so they ran across the street to the fire hall, but they were not familiar with the fire equipment.

Within a few minutes the volunteer firemen were on the job attempting to contain the flames. More than 90,000 gallons of water were pumped onto the fire. After midnight, the Shelly water tower was drained and farmers from the Shelly area brought their water trucks to town. A 2,000-gallon holding tank was set up between the fire hall and the burning building and the farmers emptied their water into it.

Fortunately, the wind was moderate and in the right direction, or the fire story could have been different. Firemen were able to keep enough water on nearby buildings to prevent the inferno from spreading.

Lila Peterson, owner of the business resided in an apartment on the second floor. She had remodeled the interior of the business and held a grand reopening only about a month before the fire. In addition to serving refreshments, she served coffee and light lunches, including her famous “Beer Rocks,”

The buildings destroyed were among the originals in Shelly, and the structure housing the Shelly Bar had been used for a variety of businesses during its time.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1980 August 27 Fire gutted the Hotel Ada. Fire apparently started on the third floor of the old hotel. A driving rain helped the firefighters contain the fire to the upper floor and roof.

“Members of the Ada Fire Department vividly remember the big fire that destroyed the old – and then unused – Hotel Ada on August 21, 1980. They remember this fire for at least two reasons – it was a stubborn fire and the weather, even though mid-August, was terrible.

This fire call came at 1:45 a.m. High winds and rain made it extremely difficult to fight this blaze. Fire apparently started in the third story in the northwest corner of the building. The heavy rain aided firemen in keeping the blaze contained to the top floor.

It was estimated that nearly 350,000 gallons of water were poured on this blaze. No neighboring buildings were hurt by this fire although several were threatened.

The old Hotel Ada, which has been since torn down, was built about the turn of the century in 1898 of light-colored bricks manufactured here in Ada.” (Special Supplement to the Norman County Index, October 10, 1984)

1980 September 3 The Ada City Council voted to hire an appraiser to assess the value of the buildings affected by the fire that destroyed the Hotel Ada.

1980 December 3 The Ada Fire Department had answered two fire calls that week: one to Ada Feed & Seed where welding sparks apparently ignited sunflower seed, and the other to the Merry Lane Trailer Court where Myron and Susan Moteberg lost all their possessions in a trailer fire.

1980 December 3 “Ada Fire Department answered two fire calls –
Ada Volunteer Fire Department was called to two fires last week. Tuesday evening smoke poured out of the Ada Feed and Seed elevator as firemen worked to put out a fire in the cleaning unit. According to Richard Wagner, a welding crew was installing a new sunflower bin, and sparks from the welders apparently rolled down into the mill, setting some of the seeds on fire. Wagner said the cleaning mill was a total loss, although there was no structural damage to the elevator itself. Wagner estimated the damage at about \$25,000.

Ada Feed and Seed will continue to receive seeds but will not be able to process them until a new cleaning mill can be installed. This could take as long as a month, Wagner said.

The second fire was in the Merry Lane Trailer Court on the east side of town Friday afternoon. Myron and Susan Moteberg lost all of their possessions in the trailer fire.

A fund drive has been started to help the Motebergs. Contributions including money, clothing, furniture can be left at Grace Lutheran, Faith United and Zion Lutheran

Churches, and at Bob's Café. Clothing sizes for the Motebergs are: Myron: 32 waist, 33 length, 14 ½ - 15 shirt; Susan: 10 - 11 pants, small sweaters, blouses, 8 - 10." (Norman County Index, December 3, 1980)

1980 December 10

"Wood Burning Presents Added Fire Hazard -

There is so many people right now, today, that have never lit a wood stove before, and they're going out and putting them in without reading the instructions about how to install them properly. They're probably cutting green wood and firing it right away, and they're going to end up with problems," said Ada Fire Chief Don Visser. In the days when wood was the primary heating source for everyone, people were more aware of the hazards and the proper techniques for using a woodburning stove. Now, the transition from turning up the thermostat and calling the serviceman, is cutting, hauling and stacking wood, cleaning the chimney and hauling away the ashes requires education in woodburning that grandma and grandpa had as a part of their lifestyle.

Six wood fires this fall in the surrounding Ada area point out the need for all people burning wood to learn as much as they can about it.

Many of the potential dangers associated with woodburning can be avoided by the proper installation of the stove. Checking with the local insurance companies about what kind of installations they cover will help establish guidelines for the safety of the installation. The coverage varies from company to company, but one of the objectives insurance companies have to covering the stove is to those that are venting two heating sources up the same chimney. Some object to wood and natural gas or propane. Some object to wood and oil.

Installation instructions should come with the stove, and these "suggested" guidelines should be followed. The stove must be far enough from combustible walls so they don't dry out over a period of time, and burst into flame unexpectedly. The type of stove determines the specifications for distance. Other factors such as the installation of asbestos millboard with proper spacers separating it from the combustible wall, will vary the clearance specifications. A floor protection pad under the stove is essential. All stoves should have dampers, and none of them should have heat savers, which lower the temperature in the chimney and increase creosote formation in the stack.

The reason that people may be having chimney fires now that did not occur in grandma and grandpa's time, is that with better installation and bigger stoves that can be stoked overnight, people don't burn the fire hot enough to clean out the chimney. "If people would burn the fire hot once a week, they wouldn't have thee problems," said Visser. If the damper is opened all the way, the fire will have a chance to burn out the soot and creosote buildup in the chimney. Otherwise, it is necessary to clean out the chimney from the top. A person can check his chimney during daylight hours with a mirror and a flashlight through the clean-out door. The frequency of chimney cleaning varies with the weather, and the type of wood that a person is burning. One chimney fire occurred in a chimney that had been cleaned three weeks prior to the fire.

Another cause of creosote buildup in the chimney is burning wood that has not been cured for a long enough time period. "People should be cutting wood now for next year," said Visser. Proper curing time for wood is one year.

County extension agent, Ken Pazdernik, has material on proper installation and woodburning. He would like to see more people burning popple for a hot fire, and would

like to see more people burning popple for a hot fire, and would like to remind woodburners that if they are burning elm, they should cure it outside of city limits or debark it before they bring it in, in order to prevent the spread of Dutch Elm disease.

Besides meeting building specifications, the chimney itself must be able to withstand temperatures that a chimney designed for natural gas furnaces wouldn't. One of the big risks taken by homeowners is venting more than one heating device into one flue. According to the extension bulletin, "Heating the Home with Wood," either or both of the heaters could vent improperly. Flue gases could then back up into the second device and explode, or the poisonous fumes could seep into the house. A venting problem is particularly dangerous when dealing with a natural draft device such as a gas furnace. A back draft could blow sparks out of the furnace and around the room.

A fire should not be left unattended in high winds, because the breeze going over the top of the chimney can suck up the oxygen in the fireplace backing the smoke up into the house. Visser also cautions that people should not seal up their house so tightly that they suffocate from a lack of oxygen, no matter what their heat source is, "Fires and people need air to breathe."

Even taking all precautionary measures, accidents still happen. All people burning wood should have a smoke detector in their house, located so they can hear it in time to escape if they hear it from their bedroom. Allowances should be made for possible escape ahead of time. A chimney fire makes warning sounds too – a sucking sound, a loud roar, and shaking pipes. If a window must be smashed to escape, fold a blanket over it to avoid being cut. If it is possible to cut off the air supply to the fire, close the damper and the vents to the firebox. Call the fire department as soon as possible.

The best preventative measure is to be educated about woodburning. Bill Sliney, Extension Area Forester, Bemidji, will address the topic, "Wood Buring Information and Safety" at the VFW in Ada on December 13th, as part of Energy Information Day. His speech is scheduled for 2 p.m.

1980, date unknown Perley

"During 1980, it was decided to obtain a smaller and faster unit to respond to fire calls, and a 1981 GMC one-ton, dual wheel, four-wheeled-drive pickup with a 300-gallon water tank, pumping unit, and utility boxes was purchased. More up-to-date equipment, better clothing, and more air packs have also been added recently. The cost of these items has been paid for equally by the township and the city." (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1980, date unknown "Officer changes (in the Hendrum Volunteer Fire Department) throughout the years as taken from the minutes were as follows: Dwight Vargason served as Fire Chief." "(Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982")

1981

1981 February 11 Two fires were reported that week: The garage and back part of the house on the Ed Hess farm four miles northwest of Lockhart were destroyed and the rest of the

house suffered smoke and water damage. About 200 pigs were lost in a fire in the hog barn on the Steve Crompton farm south of Borup.

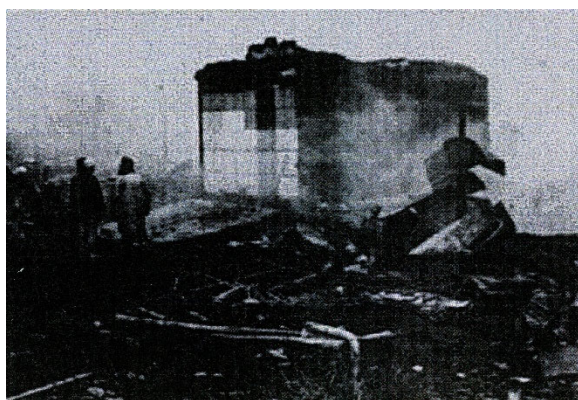
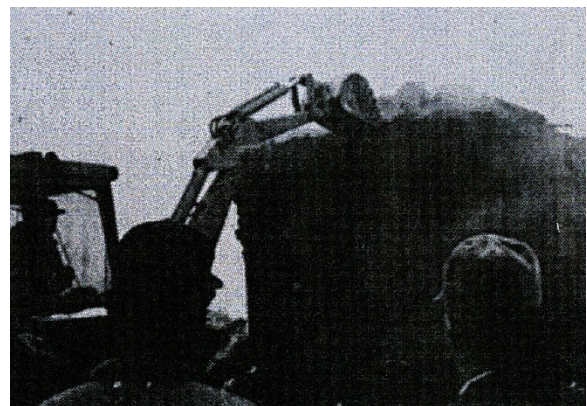
1981 February 18 Fire totally destroyed the barn on the David Merkins farm northwest of Ada. No livestock was lost in the fire.

1981 February 25 “On February 25, 1981, a Demard Inhalator was purchased with funding received as a gift from the Ada VFW Post. This is an oxygen unit used for aid to persons overcome by smoke or heart attack victims.” (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1981 March 10 Considerable fire damage was sustained at the home of Pauline Ask in Ada. No damage estimate was available.

1981 July 7 Perley:
“New fire truck purchased jointly by City of Perley and the Township of Lee. Bid on the fire truck was awarded to Anderson Pontiac of Moorhead, Minnesota. \$10,474.48 was the cost of the 1-ton GMC truck. Ordinance No. 17: Establishing a Fire Department agreement with the Township of Lee.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1981 October 20 Johnson Food and Locker in Flom was destroyed by fire (on October 25, 1981). The grocery store and meat locker were owned by Dorothy and Donald Johnson. The cause of the fire was attributed to a short in the electrical system.



1981, date unknown Perley

“The department was once again reorganized in 1981. It was renamed the Perley-Lee Fire Department, and officers are to be three from the city and three from the township.

Our fire department is strictly a volunteer one, and we have a good group that puts in many hours of donated labor. Monthly training meetings are held to keep the firemen familiar with the equipment, so they are ready to respond to emergency calls.

We have had several large fires throughout the years and help from neighboring communities has been needed at times. We are grateful for this cooperation between department.” (Perley, Minnesota, Centennial, 1883 – 1983)

1981, date unknown The flat roof of the Hendrum Fire Hall was replaced by a gabled roof to cure leakage problems. (“Hendrum, 100 Years, 1882 – 1982”)

1982

1982 January 6 Fire destroyed the house on the Walter Thiel farm near Borup which was occupied by the Darlene Bartz family, and also the house on the Harold Boe farm north of Twin Valley. A chimney fire at the Wayne Roquet home caused smoke damage to the house.

1982 April 28 The barn on the Ken Aldrich farm burned to the ground. Faulty wiring was suspected.

1982 December 15 The home owned by Larry Synder west of Ada was destroyed by fire. A barking dog woke up the family, and they escaped.

1983

1983 January 12 A fire destroyed the trailer home of Florence Wichern at the Merry Lane Trailer Court in Ada.

1983 February 23 Firemen answered a call to Ada Feed & Seed grain elevator. A conveyor belt hauling grain to the top of the elevator caught fire after rubbing against a part of the legging which encased the belt. The fire was put out in short order.

1983 April 6 Fire caused an estimated \$250,000 damage to the Aarestad Farm Shop in Halstad. It was thought that the stove in the machine shop blew up, causing an instant fire.

1983 November 9 The 911 emergency number was now in service for telephone subscribers in Ada, 784; Borup, 582; Hendrum-Perley, 861, to call for emergency assistance from police, **fire**, sheriff or medical agencies.

1983 December 28 Fire departments from Ada and Twin Valley were called to battle a blaze at the Erlien Funeral Home in Twin Valley. There was between 50-100% damage, according to funeral director Tim Anderson.



1983 Ada Fire Department Fighting Fire at Don Eckhoff's Tri Excavation Shop

1984

1984 February 8 It was decided at the County Board meeting to form a committee to set the wheel of a fire number system in motion.

1984 March 21 Fire destroyed Craig's Repair in Ada, located next to the telephone company storage shed.

1984 April 18 – 24 “The Twin Valley Fire Department, along with other local fire departments are experiencing another busy Spring. Since Wednesday, April 18, the department has responded to five fires consisting of three brush fires, a small workshop and storage building fire and a house fire which was a total loss.” (Twin Valley Times, April 25, 1984)

“The first fire was called on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 18 and was located at the John LaPort Jr. farm, rural Twin Valley.”

“Thursday (April 19) at 12:20 p.m., the department responded to a mutual aid fire with the Ulen Fire Department at the Duane Erickson farm, south of Flom. A small workshop and a stack of large round bales were lost. Cause of the fire was believed to be a battery which blew up when hooked to a battery charger.”

“On Monday (April 25), the department extinguished two grass fires. The first was at the Alvin Crane farm, the second, at Johnnytown, both rural Twin Valley.”

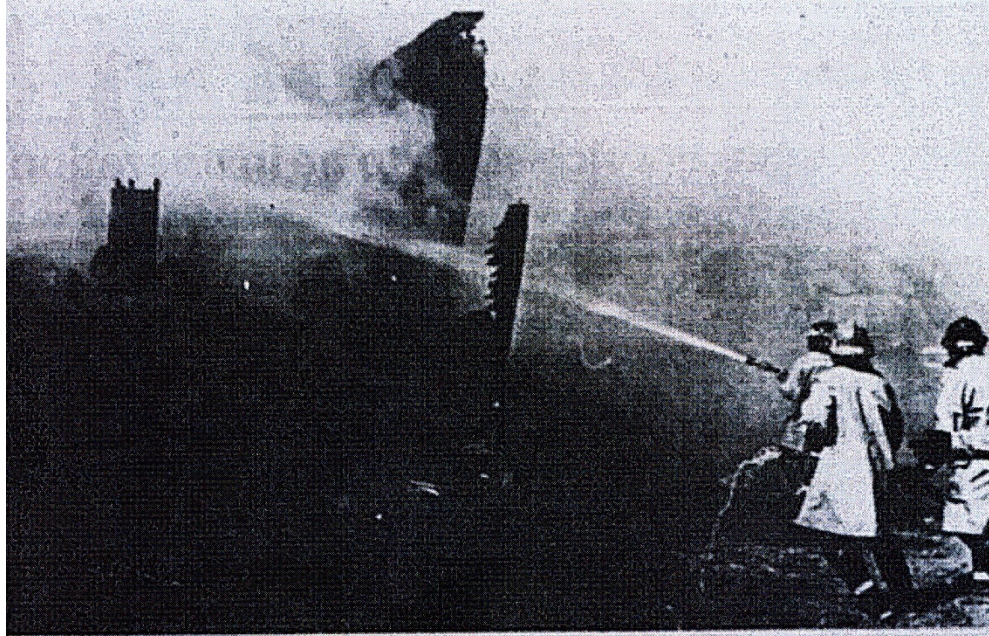
“The largest fire was a house fire at the Francis Fenlason residence, 504 Eidem Avenue, SE, Twin Valley. The fire whistle blew shortly after 2 p.m. Tuesday, April 24. Twin Valley, Gary and Ada Fire Departments were present at the fire which apparently started when the furnace blew up. The firemen battled the blaze for nearly two hours but the house was a complete loss.”



Volunteer firemen in action. Twin Valley, Ulen and Ada firemen battle the serious fire of Francis Fenlason in

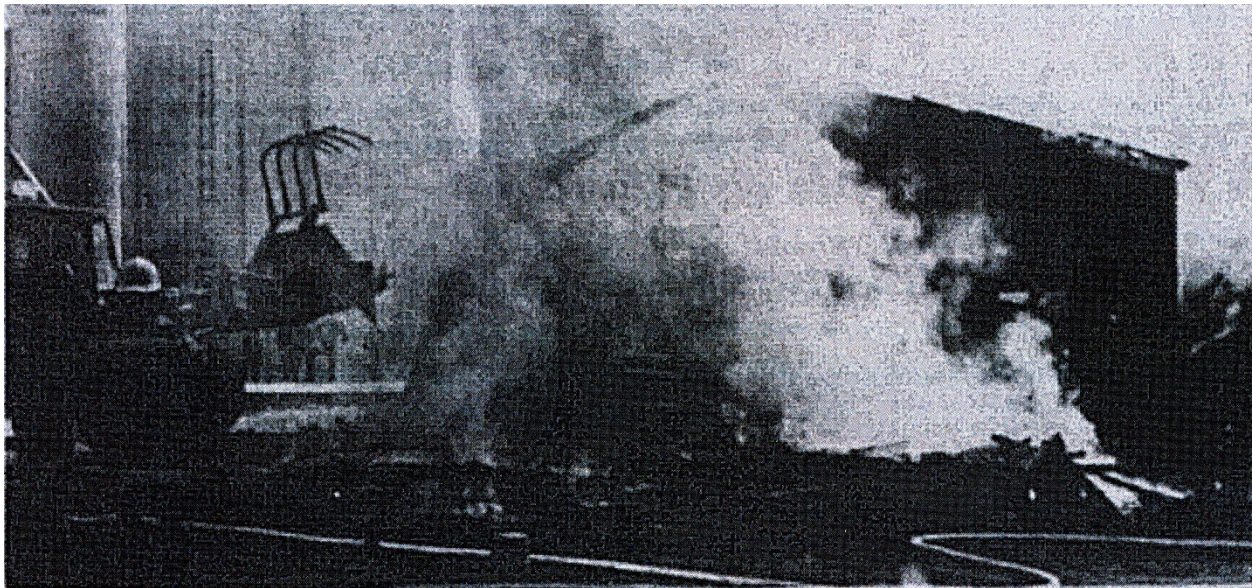
Twin Valley. April 24, 1984.

April 24, 1984



FENLASON FIRE

Firemen shoot streams of water into the burning Fenlason home Tuesday, April 24.
[Photo by Dave Jensen]



ERICKSON FIRE

The Twin Valley and Ulen Fire Departments were called to the Duane Erickson farm south of Fism on Thursday afternoon to extinguish a shop fire.



LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS
 Local fire fighters, Mark Okeson [left] and Greg Awender [right] spray down the woods surrounding the John LaPort Jr. home rural Twin Valley, after extinguishing a brush fire there Wednesday afternoon.



1984 Ada Fire Truck



1984 Ada Fire Truck



1984 Ada Rural Tanker Truck



1984 Ada Fire Department Fire Equipment Storage Area



1984 Keith Rector Captain, Don Visser, Roger Stene, Jerry Bennet and Les Olek



1984 David Brownlee Lt, Rod Syverson and Floyd Holm



1984 Ada Firemen of Company 3



Vernon Holland Captain of Co 2 Ada Fire Department



1984 Vernon Holland Captain of Co 2
Ada Fire Department



1984 Don Husten Lieutenant of Co 3 Ada
Fire Department at Base Station Equipment



1984 Ada Fire Department Fights House Fire

1985

1985 April 23
false alarm all in one day.

The Ada Fire Department responded to a grass fire, van fire and a

1986

1986 January 28 The Ada Fire Department responded to a shop fire at the Kevin Lee farm southwest of Ada.

1986 April 1 Go Far Gun and Shoe Repair of Ada sustained major fire damage in the front and middle section of the structure, with heavy smoke damage to the back room.

1986 April 8 The Ada Fire Department responded to a garage fire near Strand's Market. A fuel heater in the garage apparently ignited the structure after being left on.

1987

1987 March 17 The Norman County Ambulance was involved in a one-vehicle accident near Georgetown when it swerved on icy roads, rolled on its side in the ditch, and caught fire, completely destroying the vehicle. There were no injuries, and faulty wiring was suspected as a cause of the fire.

1988

1988 April 12 A wooden granary southeast of Ada owned by Chuck Hopwood was destroyed by fire. The granary contained about 6,000 bushels of beans.

1988 June 14 A propane-fueled truck hauling herbicide was destroyed by fire west of Ada.

1988 June 28 The Ada Fire Department was called out on two fires that week. A storage shed at the Lynn Johnson farm near Hadler suffered severe damage to one end. The other fire was at the Wagner Sawmill. Spontaneous combustion started a pile of scrap wood on fire.

1988 July 26 Area fire departments answered several calls: fire in a stubble field threatening a Quonset at the farmstead of Mrs. Bud Germolus; a shop fire at the Ron Koskela farm east of Borup; and a propane powered car being refitted caught fire at rural Twin Valley.

1988 July 26 Fire destroyed a large old barn and storage building at the Richard Wagner property about two miles west of Ada.

1988 September 20 A fire destroyed 45 head of cattle and the dairy barn of Raynard Trochmann of rural Borup. Loss estimate was about \$150,000.

1988 December 6 A garage owned by Chuck Larson, Ada, was destroyed by fire. Damage to the garage and contents was likely to total over \$10,000.

1989

1989 January 10 Fire destroyed the Long Branch Bar in Borup. It was believed to be an electrical fire. Duane Zabinski was the owner.

“Borup Bar Guttled by Fire –

An early morning fire gutted the Long Branch Bar in Borup in January of 1989. Fire departments from Borup and Ada were called to the scene at approximately 4:00 a.m. The Borup Fire Department had the fire knocked down when the Ada Department arrived on scene.

It is believed that the cause of the fire was electrical.

It was rebuilt by new owners later that year. (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1989 August, date unknown

“Fire Destroys Faith Historic State Site – Lightning Suspected

Cause of Flour Mill Fire:

Faith Flour Mill, a historical landmark about eight miles east of Twin Valley, was destroyed by fire on an early Sunday morning in August of 1989 after a lightning storm passed through the area.

Officials at the time said that the fire may have been caused by lightning or an electrical short, but that lightning was the most probable cause.

Twin Valley firefighters received the call at 6:50 a.m., and were joined by firefighters from Mahnomen, Waubesa, and Gary.

The fire quickly spread out of control through the 50-foot-tall building.

Before the fire, the mill had been in full production.

The historic building was estimated to be a total loss, and was never rebuilt.” (The Last One Hundred Years in Norman County, Minnesota, 1900 – 2000, A Century of Change”, Heritage Publications, © 2000)

1990

1990 January 22 “A number of guilty pleas were heard in District Court –

A number of guilty pleas related to offenses committed in Norman County were heard in District Court in Crookston on Monday, January 22.

Bradley Wayne Werpy, age 19, of Gary, pleaded guilty to second degree arson. Charges against Werpy stemmed from the attempted arson of the Spring Creek Township Hall on November 18, 1989. The Court set sentencing for Monday, February 12, in Crookston.” (Norman County Index, January 30, 1990)

1990 January 30 “Norman County issued 154 burning permits in 1989 –

The program for issuing Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) burning permits went well in Norman County in 1989.

Beginning last year, the permits for open burning were available in Norman County at the auditor/ treasurer's office, and Jack Dietz, county auditor/ treasurer, said he is pleased with the way the system is working. 'I've felt really good about it, nobody seems to have abused the program,' Dietz observed.

In 1898, a total of 154 permits were issued for open burning in Norman County, according to Deitz.

Deitz said he recently sent a letter to the MPCA to report how the system is working and to thank the agency for allowing the permitting agency to be operated on a local basis. His letter notes, 'The permits I have issued are very much appreciated. The privilege has been accepted along with the rules, and as far as I know, no one has used tires or shingles, etc., to start a fire. We have no reports of rule requirements being broken,' he notes.

Beginning in 1990, Deitz said the sheriff's department will also be notified each time a permit is issued. He noted that people often contact the sheriff's department when they see a fire in the country, and department personnel will know what fires have been scheduled. Conditions of the permit also include that the applicant contact local fire departments on the time and location of any fire authorized.

Deitz said the process for applying for a permit is pretty simple. Applicants fill out a form noting what they plan to burn and why. The approved permit allows 30 days to do the open burning, under the conditions allowed by the MPCA, which are found on the back of each permit application." (Norman County Index, January 30, 1990)

1990 March 12

"Syverson elected Ada Fire Chief –

Rod Syverson was elected fire chief of the Ada Fire Department at the department's annual meeting on Monday, March 12.

Syverson replaces Al Leiran as head of the department. Other officers include: Earl Visser, assistant chief; Lowell Thompson, secretary; Ralph Kotrba, treasurer; and Roger Stene, training officer.

Other business at the annual meeting included a discussion of applications for a new fire truck for the department. A committee has been looking at other new trucks in the area in preparation of ordering a new pumper truck for the City. The City has budgeted for the truck the past few years, and a new truck will likely be ordered in 1990 with delivery in 1991.

Rod reports that recent changes at the department include a big turnover in manpower. 'Right now, we have a very good group of young firemen that are interested and eager to train and serve on the department,' Rob observed.

Rod also wanted to remind people that with spring just around the corner and milder temperatures, there is an increase in the chance of chimney fires due to slow burning woodstoves, coupled with creosote build-up over the winter. He urged residents with wood burning stoves to remember to follow proper wood burning procedures and check their chimneys for creosote build-up." (Norman County Index, March 30, 1990)



Ada Volunteer Fire Department officers for 1990 will include: left to right — Earl Visser, assistant chief; Rod Syverson, chief; Lowell Thompson, treasurer;

Roger Stene, training officer; Ralph Kotrba (not pictured), treasurer.

1990 May 22
frequency —

“County will share in cost to create new fire department radio

After a good deal of discussion, Norman County Commissioners decided to contribute to the project to create a new radio frequency for county fire departments, however the departments will have to find the money to pay for the balance of the project.

Commissioners moved to contribute a total of \$2,000 to the estimated \$4,500 project to purchase the equipment to give the departments their own radio frequency. Currently, the fire department radios communication on the same frequency as the sheriff's frequency.

While the system works all right now, the Board was informed that most fire departments in the county are purchasing pagers for their volunteer members. The cost of replacing the crystals in the pagers in the future will be considerable if the new equipment isn't purchased, according to local fire officials.

Earl Visser, assistant Ada fire chief, told commissioners that the Ada Fire Department has pagers at this time, and it will cost about \$900 to purchase the crystals for a new frequency. However, the local department supports getting changing the frequency at this time.

Facing state aid cuts, the Board is very hesitant about spending in the coming year, but it was decided that the County would contribute to the project. The money would come from the Sheriff's training fund. (Remainder of the article omitted as it dealt with non-fire department issues.) (Norman County Index, May 22, 1990)