

GATE CITY SEED COMPANY BUILDING IS DESTROYED

\$30,000 Fire Visits Structure Last Night and Destroys Elevator, Machinery and Stock.

INSURANCE COVERS PART

Plant Will be Rebuilt, President of Company States—Origin of Blaze is Unknown.

Keokuk was visited last night by its most destructive blaze since the Dodge theatre fire in the winter of 1912. The office, elevator and warehouse of the Gate City Seed company at 119 South Third street were totally destroyed last night between the hours of 10 and 12 o'clock, with all machinery and stored grains and seeds, the total loss being estimated at \$30,000 by Alex M. Davidson, president of the company.

The insurance on the machinery, buildings and contents totaled \$21,000 and Mr. Davidson figures that the loss above insurance will be at least \$15,000.

The fire broke out in the elevator apparently in the cupola at the top, for the first witnesses saw flames shooting out of this section, but soon spread to all parts of the building and by the time the department arrived, the whole elevator was a mass of flames.

Six lines of hose were used in fighting the flames and in pouring water on houses and buildings in the neighborhood that were threatened by the heat, sparks and flames. The Royal hotel, the Independent Baking company and a dozen houses in the neighborhood were threatened at times.

A high wind was blowing and sparks were carried as far as Seventh and Palean streets. A fire was started on the roof of the American Centennial Machine company building at Fourth and Bank streets, but was extinguished before the building was endangered.

It was an all night job for the firemen, for although the flames were under control by 12 o'clock, it was necessary to throw water until 6 o'clock this morning and then go back at 9 o'clock and complete the job.

Mr. Davidson believes that a defective wire was the cause of the fire. It was a bitter night for the firemen. The zero mark was almost reached and the clothes on the firemen froze on tight and it was necessary to thaw out the overcoats before they could be taken off.

"It was the worst fire since the Dodge theatre fire," Fire Chief Anderson said today. John Baldwin of 219 Exchange street, was one of the first to discover the fire and the one to turn in the alarm to the central station. Mr. Baldwin's home is but a few feet from the warehouse of the Gate City Seed company. He said that he smelled smoke for some time, but could not locate the fire. Finally he saw flames shooting out of the windows of the cupola of the elevator.

He sent in the alarm at 9:45 o'clock and all three stations responded. When the department arrived, flames were shooting out of all the windows of the elevator and spreading to the

front office and display building. Shut in a galvanized iron structure, the flames soon devoured the interior and there was no way of getting in to combat them.

How Hose was Laid. Two lines of hose from the truck were attached to the hydrant at Second and Johnson streets and water was shot from the one and one-half inch and one and three-quarters inch nozzles, the most powerful streams that can be had. Another line was stretched from Third and Johnson streets, two from Fourth and Exchange streets and one from Fourth and Bank streets. One of the lines was used in throwing water on Exchange street from Third to Fourth streets, for sparks were being carried merrily by the high wind all over that territory and there was great danger of the whole block catching fire. As it was, there were a number of roof fires, but all were put out before they spread. Sparks even went as far as the American Cement Machine plant at Fourth and Bank and started a fire on the roof of that building.

Some of the houses threatened were those of E. T. King, 302 Exchange street; Charles Haubert, 304 Exchange street; Mrs. M. A. Essig, 306 Exchange street; Mrs. Catherine Costello, 312 Exchange street; R. A. Blake, 314 Exchange, and John Baldwin, 219 Exchange.

The building of the Independent Baking company directly across the alley from the doomed structure was fairly sizzling with the heat, and the Royal hotel, next door, was threatened from sparks and flames. The Hotel Keokuk, almost directly across the street, luckily escaped. The wind carried the sparks away from this large structure and the firemen did not have the danger of a fire in this quarter to contend with. If the fire had gotten a start in any of the big buildings surrounding the Gate City Seed company structure, with the wind that was blowing, there might have been serious consequences.

Large Crowd Gathers. A crowd of several thousand gathered last night and the flames could be seen all over the city. The elevator was seventy-five feet high and when in full flame, was a beacon of light that filled the whole sky with a red glow.

The flames soon consumed the elevator and spread to the front office and display room on Third street and to the warehouse to the rear.

About 11 o'clock two heavy explosions were heard in the rear of the building. These are thought to have been caused by the explosion of fire extinguishers. By 12 o'clock the fire was under control, but all that remained was the blackened skeleton of the front office. Much valuable machinery was destroyed, along with many bushels of corn, wheat, seeds and other commodities. Mr. Davidson was unable to say today just how many bushels of material were in the building at the time of the fire.

Everything was a total wreck this morning. The safe, in which was all the valuable papers of the concern, was found intact, although damaged. In the elevator was the corn, wheat, alfalfa seed, grit, shorts, and a large quantity of seed cases. In the brick structure was the office equipment, seed cases, safe and scales. There were two automatic scales in the building, one in the front office and one in the cupola of the elevator. There was a large quantity of heavy machinery in the cupola, also. Three motors, two in the cupola and one below, were destroyed.

Built Two Years Ago. The elevator was built two years ago, and with the rest of the building, was valued at \$12,000. The fixtures and stock is valued at \$13,700. The trial balance of the company for December 1 put the total value of machinery, goods and buildings at \$26,700. The insurance totals \$21,000.

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Cause of the Fire. Mr. Davidson thinks that when the cribbing in the elevator settled, it tore the insulation off sections of the electric light wires in the building and that the fire started through this cause. Some time ago when the cribbing was raised it was found that some insulation had been torn off. This was repaired, but Mr. Davidson feels sure that the fire resulted from this. As practically everything is destroyed, there is no way of telling for sure the cause of the blaze.

A small fire occurred in the building three years ago when lightning struck wires running into the building and burned out the motor. Alex Davidson, president of the company, said today that the elevator will be rebuilt as soon as possible. In sixty days the chicken feed business will be at its height and although store room can be secured, the machinery necessary to prepare the chicken feed cannot, and the company will either have to give up this arm of its business for the season or have the work done at other mills.

Shipment was Late. By a queer twist of fate, a possible loss of \$1,200 was not sustained. The company was expecting a large shipment of flour from Kansas. This flour should have been received last week and should it have been, it would have been destroyed in the elevator. It was late in arriving, however, and the order has been cancelled.

There was one accident last night, but it did not occur at the fire. Harry Watson, from the West Keokuk station, while unwinding some hose in the Sixth street station about 3 o'clock in the morning, got his left hand caught in some machinery and it was severely cut and bruised. Dr. Dorsey was called to treat the injury.

When one of the fire extinguishers in the building exploded, a large piece of a fly wheel was expelled from the building and fell between two firemen, Harry Teeters and Walter Garrison, who were on the roof of the Royal hotel, missing both by but a few inches. Twenty-five firemen and volunteers fought the flames and after the danger was over they were served with hot coffee and sandwiches by Mrs. Bateman in the Hotel Keokuk.

Burlington's Slogan. Burlington Journal: "The Heart of the Middle West." Where might the lungs of the Lincoln west be said to be located—at Lincoln?

THE NAUVOO GATE CITY

(Continued from page 6.)

Schoell, of this city, has been with her for some time. The lady is recovering now. The many Nauvoo friends of Rudy Leppert were looking for one of the most important events in his life to occur before the holidays, but were disappointed for his handsome new residence will not be finished until the coming spring and at Easter time they may not be disappointed again. Nauvoo's banks and nearly all of our business houses will have closed down on New Year's day and the barber shops will close at noon. Our two rural route carriers will enjoy a holiday, not being compelled to make a delivery of mail.

The stockholders of the Nauvoo Canning company will hold their annual election meeting next Tuesday, January 4, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and select directors and transact other business. Mr. Geo. Smith of east of Nauvoo, and well known here, received a stroke of paralysis a few days ago and is in a precarious condition at this time. Harold Haas recently cut his foot very bad while cutting wood, the ax making a gash which required a half dozen stitches.

Nauvoo's Grand Army members met and selected officers. Two of the veterans treated the crowd to a birthday lunch in the lodge room, which was greatly enjoyed by the small number of Nauvoo's old soldiers that answers the roll call here. There are two places in a newspaper where a man is superstitious about having his name appear, and they are in the obituary and police court columns.

Miss May Weissinger who lives in the east of Nauvoo country, had her right arm broke just below the elbow last Sunday evening, while riding in a buggy with a girl companion and two gentlemen friends. In turning the corner south of E. J. Baxter's corner, the buggy upset, throwing the occupants out, but none was injured but the above young lady.

Next Monday evening about twenty of Nauvoo's and Sonora's young ladies will give a leap year dance in the Nauvoo opera house and Agnes's Keokuk orchestra will play. A great time is anticipated and the festivities may close just before dawn.

Miss Esther Richtman of Billings, Mont., daughter of Capt. Jacob Richtman, who resided for several years in Nauvoo, was united in marriage recently to George Wood, a business man in Gifford, Ill. The lady has many friends in Nauvoo who wish her all kinds of happiness.

Nauvoo's K. C. members will give their "squealer" banquet in their rooms next Saturday. Ed Delmer's birthday occurred last Sunday and in the evening a small crowd of friends called on him and enjoyed a scrumptious time. The missus served fine eats and the game of "500" was played. All expressed the wish that Ed would see to it that all present were there again next year.

There are numerous watch parties organized for next Friday evening in Nauvoo, prominent of which are those of the young people of the Lutheran and M. E. churches. A social program has been arranged and refreshments will be enjoyed until the old year departs and the new year is ushered in. Cecil Baxter of Ft. Madison, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Baxter of Nauvoo, was recently presented with a fine girl baby by his dear wife and the grandparents here will have more Christmas presents to make next year.

Next Sunday night the Nauvoo management of a picture show will present a "special feature" in three reels, showing "The Money Kings." It is expected that this will be one of the best movie shows ever shown in our opera house and it is hoped our citizens will attend and give our management encouragement in a financial way to continue the movies.

If one of Nauvoo's young ladies and gentlemen should accidentally leave this town at the same time and same day the gossip would immediately get to work talking of an elopement.

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The crossing was uncomfortable and inconvenient on Lake Cooper in the past week or ten days. It is perfectly good crossing at this time. On Tuesday night of last week, Nauvoo's basket ball team was going to Elvaston to meet the team of that place. They got as far as Powellton, seven miles east of Nauvoo, when their auto became unmanageable and the members were compelled to take the foot path on their return trip to Nauvoo and got home before dawn. Let us all meet 1916 with a smile and good cheer. Let all past differences retire with 1915.

Two Sonora township young ladies engaged in a sorap a few days ago over a young man. They went at it in regular pugilistic style and points were about equally divided. Another bout may be pulled off later. No one will "receive" in Nauvoo on New Year's afternoon as was a beautiful custom in former years. The young ladies in nearly all cities have dropped the habit of receiving their gentlemen friends on this day. It is hoped that Nauvoo's boys will enjoy a safe and sane New Year's eve celebration next Friday night.

The other day a man in Nauvoo's vicinity received a bill saying that he owed several dollars for a newspaper. He said it sure was the limit that a paper he never subscribed for, but was sent to him by some one who was in a contest. The publisher had lots of nerve to keep the paper going after the time expired and which also indicates that his belfry is short a few cog wheels. Don't forget to write it 1916 after next Friday.

A large number of Nauvoo lads and lassies who are engaged in business in other cities and those who are attending the seats of learning in and out of the state, were here at home Christmas time and during the holiday week. They will leave next Sunday to resume the activities of life after an enjoyable vacation with their folks in Nauvoo. We are sorry we cannot give them all personal mention in this column, but space forbids. The Nauvoo merchants and business men have settled down to their normal state after the holiday rush. All seem to be satisfied with the business done and are glad to take a rest. Our mails will soon be burdened with a flood of almanacs and calendars for 1916. Most of them will be from the usual patent medicine houses. After next Saturday tax-paying and ground hog day will be the next two important events on the calendar.

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