

SCORCHING HEAT!

The Willmar Firemen Successfully Control A Hot Fire Against Big Odds.

O. B. Glarum's Large Feed Barn Again in Ashes. His Hotel Narrowly Escapes.

The Buildings on Third Street Were in Imminent Danger. Several small Buildings Burned.

At about 4 o'clock p. m. yesterday the fire alarm aroused our people from their avocations, and started most everybody out to see where the fire was located. In a moment huge volumes of black smoke was seen to issue from O. B. Glarum's big barn just back of the Glarum Hotel on 3rd street. In less than three minutes and while the firemen were rushing to the scene from every direction the flame shot out of the roof of the barn and up through the ventilator. The barn was a large structure 42x102 feet and partially filled with hay. It made an intensely hot fire. Fifteen rods off you could feel the heat so as to make you feel uncomfortable.

By this time it looked as though there was going to be a general conflagration of all the buildings in the block. Water was not plentiful at first as it was at the time of day when the tank was nearly empty. But soon the engine at the water works got steam on and powerful streams began now to fight the fire on every side.

It was seen that not only the big barn and W. A. Sperry's barn, but also the ice house between the barn and Litchfield avenue, and A. F. Hanscom's barn were doomed. Hence the main effort was directed to save the surrounding buildings. The building in greatest danger next those actually burning was Glarum's Hotel. There was really no hope of saving it at the time, and all the furniture of the Hotel was being removed as fast as it could be done. Nevertheless our firemen heroically held their ground in the Hotel yard between the blazing barn and the Hotel. How living beings could stand there without roasting alive no ordinary people can comprehend. Yet by raising up boards that were literally burning on the side towards the fire to shield them from the intense heat, and by throwing wet sacks and carpets over their heads the firemen stood their ground and kept the stream playing constantly on the ever igniting Hotel kitchen. It undoubtedly caught fire over a dozen times, and but for the almost superhuman endurance of the firemen it could not have

been saved.

Among others who did heroic duty there we noticed especially Chas. Jorgenson, Wm. See, Ole Lundquist, Charley Robinson, Henry Johnson

Gov. Rice, M. D. Manning, A. O. Sather and others pitched right in. Our two marshals, Jake Hanscom and Martin Sorenson, did good service. All the members of the fire company present did excellent work.

The blacksmith and wagon shops south of Glarum's Hotel were on fire in many places at times, but by incessant work by the fire company and bucket brigades it was finally put out without serious damage. The burning cinders were flying thick and fast in a south easterly direction, and small fires were started by them in several barnyards over 40 rods from the fire. Had there been a strong wind it is hard to say how destructive the fire might have been to the blocks south and east of it.

The loss to O. B. Glarum is somewhere about \$3000. No insurance. He had a barn on the same place destroyed by fire about four years ago, and this loss a second time is severe on him.

The loss to W. A. Sperry is

was a tremendous fire upstairs inside of the Glarum barn before the Sperry barn was seriously burning. If the fire had originated in the Sperry barn which was only a small shell it ought to have burned down first, which was not the case. The smoke and flame was seen to issue from the top and ventilators of the Glarum barn. We may say that the origin of the fire is unknown.

All citizens feel thankful after the excitement is over that it is no worse than it is. And all feel thankful that we have such an excellent system of water-works. And everybody speaks in praise of our fire brigade. It is certain that but for this protection the whole block, if not more, would have been wiped out. And if a high wind had prevailed there is no telling what might have happened. The best reason for feeling thankful is, however, that no human being was injured, and that all the animals were rescued from the barn in safety. The blow falls heavy on the sufferers and they have the sympathy of our people. But accidents of that nature are liable to happen in spite of the best of precautions.

M. and Mrs. Glarum were out on their farm when the fire started and when they reached home were of course greatly dismayed by the fearful loss and the almost certain prospect of loss of the hotel as well. They have the profound sympathy of the community.

Will Sperry was out in the country about 8 miles. He saw the fire at that distance and on nearing town concluded that it must be in the vicinity of his dwelling. He drove home as fast as his ponies could carry him. He must have made good time as the water was running off the blankets of his horses when he drove up. He was overjoyed to find his dwelling house and its inmates safe, although his barn, shop and tools had gone up in smoke.

Mr. A. F. Hanscom and family were not at home. His fine barn though not entirely collapsed is totally ruined. As he had no insurance, it is a total loss.

Most of the brave firemen secured a regular shower-bath. Few took time to put on rubber coats, but jumped in as they stood and got a good soaking.

Hundreds of people lined the streets around the block where the fire was raging, many of them ladies, from every part of the city.

The ladies that served refreshing drinks to the firemen should receive due credit for their work.

All the horses were rescued from the barn, owing to that the fire was at first entirely confined to the upper part of the structure.

Several windows in the front of the hotel building were smashed in order to facilitate the removal of house furnishings.



ROUGH SKETCH OF HOTEL SHOWING LOCATION OF THE BURNED BARN BEHIND. THE SCENE OF THE HOTTEST WORK.

Lars Halvorson, Hans Peterson, G. E. Qvale, and Herman Brim.

The clothes of some of them caught fire at times, but a small stream from a lawn hose was kept playing on them to relieve them from the heat.

On the other side of the barn a battle almost equally desperate was waged for the salvation of the dwelling house of W. A. Sperry. The wall of the kitchen part smoked, sizzled, cracked and turned black, and yet by well directed efforts the house was saved.

Aug. Hoglund stood on his own premises and with his own inch hose did valiant services to fight the fire on its march towards his store. He suffered no loss to speak of; even his wood pile was saved.

Chief Ekander was everywhere attending to duty, and citizens generally assisted with a will, and such men as Mayor Williams,

about \$500. There was a small insurance on the barn, but his principal loss is in tools and materials of various kinds incidental to his business.

The loss of A. F. Hanscom although we have been unable to learn definitely must be from \$500 upward.

As to the origin of the fire there are various rumors afloat. It was reported that two or three small boys had been playing with matches either in the barn of W. A. Sperry or between the Sperry and Glarum barns. We have investigated these rumors but cannot verify them. On the other hand it is claimed by some of the firemen that were first on the scene that the headway of the fire was upstairs in Glarum's barn. That in fact the east wall upstairs of the barn was burned through before there was much fire on the west side adjacent to Sperry's property. In fact it is pretty well settled that there

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