



# FROM OUR FILES: 1897 Fire



On April 28, 1897 a fire destroyed everything on Block 19 in Pine City.

Pine County Pioneer  
April 30, 1897

**FURIOUS  
FLAMES**

Devastated the Principal Business  
Block of Our City.

**\$50,000 GONE UP.**

The Court House and the Post-  
Office Would Have Gone Too,

But For the Heroic Efforts of Un-  
organized Citizens.

At about 11:45 on Wednesday evening, fire was discovered in a warehouse at the rear of W. F. Glasow's store on the northeast corner of the block. It was apparent from the start that nothing could be done to save the whole block from destruction, and those assembled began to move the goods from the stores and dwelling houses, and nearly all the goods in the different buildings were saved.

The following is a complete list of the loss to each individual, and their insurance:

W. F. Glasow, loss \$9,500; insurance \$4,500.  
 J. Y. Breckenridge, loss, \$7,500; insurance, \$3,000.  
 Miss. Georgia Buttrick, loss \$400; insurance \$175.  
 William Tierney, loss \$12,000; insurance \$5,000.  
 Herman Borchers, \$3,500; insurance \$1,500.  
 James Hurley, loss \$1,500; insurance \$800.  
 Pat Connor, loss \$3,750; insurance \$1,000.  
 Mrs. M. Connor, loss \$3,000; insurance \$1,000.

Dr. E. E. Barnum, household goods and surgical instruments, \$500, with no insurance.

Besides the above, there is the loss of those who justly thought their places in danger, and moved out, breaking their furniture and mutilating their houses.

Had it not been for the almost superhuman efforts of those fighting the fire, and the people on the roofs of buildings two blocks away or more, throwing wet blankets on the roofs, there is no telling where the conflagration would have ended its work.

Large pieces of burning shingles and other light material were carried for blocks, some of them going as far as the school house. A pile of wood by the Presbyterian church was twice in flames, and fire was discovered and put out in several buildings in the track of the fire. Dr. Barnum's new house in the rear of the Presbyterian church caught fire, but a few pails of water in the right place and at the right time saved the property.

Henry Brandes place was completely stripped of its furniture, much of which was broken in the hurried removal. Peter Stroinski, who occupies Mrs. Moody's house, opposite the German Lutheran church, had his goods all out, but saved the building by the use of wet blankets.

A crew of men and women as well, kept Theo. Buselmajer's new building soaked with water, and saved it. Had this building succumbed, the court house, village hall and much other valuable property was undoubtedly doomed.

P. W. McAllen, with a crew of men, blanketed and wet down the front of the bank, and saved the large plate glass window.

This was the worst fire that Pine City has ever known, and it is a great misfortune in one way, but a blessing in another. It is now in order for the city council to pass an ordinance prohibiting the building of any but fire-proof structures in the business portion of the village. If this is done, the calamity will prove a blessing to the town. Those old frame buildings formed a regular fire trap, and endangered the whole residence portion of the village.

The fire started in a warehouse behind Glasow's General Store. The cause was unknown.



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Pine City Area History Association



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1894 Sanborn Map

## CINDERS.

The origin of the fire is a mystery. Blistered hands and faces annoy several.

Several of the boys lost coats and hats.

All of the windows in Hurley's hall were cracked by the intense heat.

W. F. Glasow is quartered with J. Y. Breckenridge, in the Berg & Ihle store.

The tramp dog with the abnormally developed ear, perished in the flames.

It is a cause for congratulation that the fire extended no further than it did.

The members of the Owl Club were out in full force, and rendered efficient service.

The ubiquitous small boy finds lots of pleasure in poking around amongst the ruins.

Miss Georgia Buttrick has moved what was left of her millinery stock into Pennington's store.

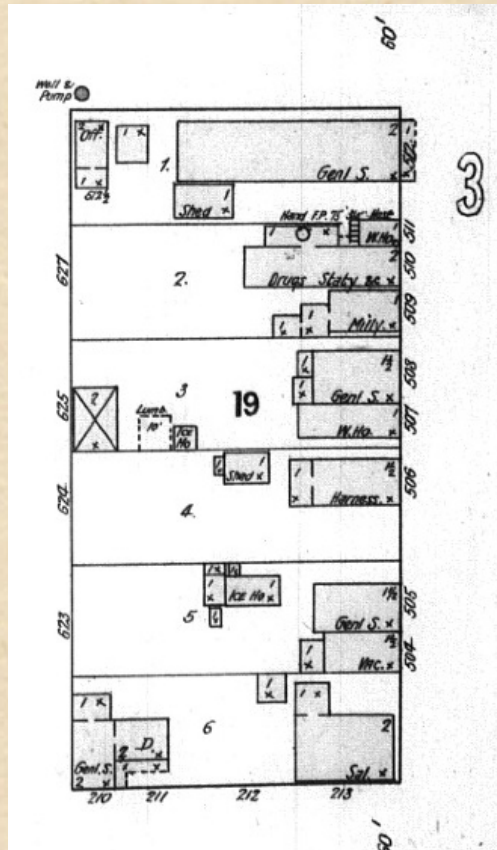
A few attempted to swipe unprotected merchandise, but all such attempts were promptly checked by vigilant watchmen.

The park was the depository of the property saved from the flames, which was guarded by an efficient corps of faithful officers.

About the only thing that withstood the flames was Pat Connor's big stack of ice. By 4 o'clock yesterday he had it surrounded by a nice new house.

Although the work done was excellent, still there was lack of management. We should have a fire marshal, whose duty it should be to take complete control in such emergencies.

Herman Borchers has moved his stock of footwear into the annex of Welch's hardware store, and his family is staying for the present at the C. Voss residence. Wm. Tierney has taken the Eldred house, and P. Connor and mother will occupy Wm. Connor's residence.



The only thing left standing was the stack of ice behind Pat Connor's Saloon. By the next day he had built a new house around it.



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# FROM OUR FILES: 1898 Fire

On May 9, 1898 an even bigger fire destroyed the rest of the business portion of Pine City.

Pine County Pioneer  
May 13, 1898

## IN ASHES.

**Pine City is Visited by  
Another Disastrous  
Conflagration.**

**Entire Business Section  
Left over From '97,  
is Wiped Out.**

**Pine Co. Pioneer Suffers  
with the Rest, but is  
Still on Deck.**

Again Pine City has suffered from a disastrous conflagration, and all the business section of the city that was spared from the big fire of April 28, 1897, is in ruins, as well as a number of fine residences, the loss on property being far greater than that of last year.

Some time between half-past 10 and 11 o'clock on Monday night, the foreman of the PIONEER office, just as he was retiring for the night, observed faint glimmers of light shining through the glass front of Louis Petricka's hardware store. The light grew steadily brighter, and by the time he had reached the street and sounded an alarm, the entire rear portion of the hardware store, as well as Jos. Franta's harness shop, adjoining on the south, was a mass of flame.

Almost the entire population was quickly gathered, and many went to work in an endeavor to check the flames, while others lent their aid in removing goods from the adjacent buildings. Within half an hour after the first alarm the flames had gained such headway that it became evident to all that the strenuous, but unorganized efforts of the fire fighters were all in vain, and that the destruction of the entire village was imminent, and President Breckenridge telegraphed for aid to the Hinckley fire department.

In the meantime, despite the efforts of the fire brigade, the flames rapidly spread in three directions from the point of origin. To the east, directly across the street stood Petricka's warehouse and the K. of P. building, the lower portion of which was occupied by Jos. Veverka's Bakery and restaurant. These were soon laid low, and the large Burger building followed next. This was occupied on the ground floor by H. N. Welch, hardware and furniture; Abe Swanson, jewelry store, and the Pine Poker print shop and editorial rooms; on the upper floor were located the Pine County PIONEER and John Stocall's cigar factory, while the rooms in the rear were occupied by H. B. Mitchell as a residence.

The Berg & Ihle store, occupied by F. T. Wilcox, general merchandise, with residence in the rear, was next consumed, and here the eastward career of the fire was checked through lack of material, the flames expending their expiring energy in the destruction of the huge piles of ties that lined the railroad track.

To the north of the K. of P. hall the flames quickly spread, destroying M. L. Babcock's photograph gallery, C. A. Levine's shoe shop, Miss Rebecca Hay's residence, and the Eldred building, occupied as a residence by Chas. Lang. Here also was located Mrs. Dr. Trowbridge's dental establishment.

In concert with the march of the flames eastward, Ryback's general

store and residence immediately adjoining Petricka's on the north, was soon in ruins, and the flames, leaping the intervening space, soon had the large general store of A. Pennington in their fatal embrace.

From the store to the Pennington residence, one of the largest and handsomest in town, the flame quickly sprang, and then hurled themselves with resistless fury against Douglas Greeley's fine new Lake View hotel, and the Riverside cottage, quickly destroying them.

The flames also spread to the westward, destroying J. D. Vaughan's handsome residence, and barns and other buildings, but the further spread in this direction was here checked, though Otto Kowalke's buildings to the west, and W. F. Glasow's two new store rooms to the south, were severely scorched, being saved only by the mighty efforts of the fire brigade.



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# FROM OUR FILES: 1898 Fire

Pine County Pioneer  
May 13, 1898

The large brick Hurley building on the corner, a short distance south of Franta's shop, and between the K. of P. Hall and Mr. Vaughan's residence, withstood the test of fire nobly. Assailed on the east, west and north by walls of flame, it lost most of its window glass, as did the south side during the big fire of 1897. The window-casings on the north side were burned out, and the front of the building was seriously damaged, but it still stands, the sole survivor of two great fires, an eloquent testimonial of the proper way to put up a business block.

A little after midnight the Hinckley fire department arrived with their engine, and were soon doing good work saving adjacent property and quenching the flames in the burning district.

The good work the Hinckley fire laddies performed with their engine plainly demonstrated to those of our citizens who were thoughtful enough to observe its effects, that had Pine City possessed a similar machine and an organized company on Monday night, the flames could have easily been confined to the buildings in which they originated, and the greater portion of Pine City would not be a smouldering mass of ruins today.

The Hinckley boys are entitled to the greatest of credit for their prompt response to our call for aid and the efficient service rendered after their arrival, and in behalf of the citizens of Pine City the PIONEER extends the thanks of the community to the Hinckley fire department for their valuable assistance.

## LITTLE BLAZES.

It evidently wasn't anybody's furnace that started the fire this time.

The trees bordering the north side of the park received a severe scorching.

The Hinckley fire department is a dandy, and rendered efficient service.

—Yes—come to think of it—there was a hot time in the old town on Monday night.

A. E. Webber's house was the only building left standing in the burnt district.

The irrepressible small boy began poking around in the ruins before the ashes had time to cool off.

Bert Brackett and his big team of grays were very much in evidence, and did valuable work, and lots of it, too.

Several stacks of ice still remain unprotected in the burnt district, and they are beginning to look rather homesick.

The vacating of the railroad right of way was pretty effectually accomplished, and in somewhat quick order, too.

The telegraph lines were in great danger of being downed, but the Hinckley fire brigade arrived in time to save them.

Considerable petty thieving was indulged in—some by people whose raising should have taught them better manners.

"Clem," the official cat of the Pine Poker, lost a valuable fur coat and two pair of shoes in the fire, and nearly lost his life in his efforts to save them.

The establishment of fire limits, within whose borders the erection of frame fire-traps is prohibited, is now in order. The public welfare demands it.

The parties guilty of appropriating to their own use the rescued property of others, whenever detected and convicted, will receive the full benefit of the law.

—The river was not appreciably damaged by the fire, but it was lowered somewhat in the estimation of many after the Hinckley fire engine had finished pumping.

Following we give the valuation of property destroyed or damaged and insurance thereon, as far as can be ascertained.

D.-Greeley, hotel, loss \$6,000; insurance, \$2,000.

O. Kowalke, damage to building, \$300.

Pine Poker printing office, \$70; insurance, \$600.

H. N. Welch, hardware, loss \$4,000; insurance \$2,400.

Wilcox mercantile Co., general merchandise, \$3,000; insurance \$1,200.

Chas. Lang, household goods, etc. \$500.

J. Veverka, restaurant and bakery, \$1,000; insurance, \$500.

B. Berg, store room, \$1,200; insurance \$500.

Jos. Franta, harness shop, \$1,100; insurance, \$1,200.

J. D. Vaughn, residence, barn and other buildings, \$2,500; insurance, \$1,200.

C. A. Levine, loss on shoe shop about \$50; uninsured.

A. Pennington, loss on store, contents, residence and household furniture, \$14,000; insurance, \$7,000.

Jas. Hurley, loss \$500, fully insured.

Dr. Trowbridge, household and dental goods, \$300; no insurance.

John Stoehl, cigar factory, \$1200; insurance, \$500.

M. L. Babcock, photograph gallery, \$150; no insurance.

Rebecca Hay, residence and furniture, \$1,000; insurance, \$500.

J. C. Miller, store room, \$1,200; insurance, \$600.

Pine County Pioneer, \$1,800; insurance, \$600.

A. E. Webber, \$150.

F. J. Rybak, \$6,000; insured for \$3,500.

Dr. Wiseman, damage to household goods, \$10.

St. Paul & Duluth Railway, railroad ties, \$300.

Mrs. Eldred, loss on dwelling, (estimated) \$1500; insurance unknown.

Louis Petricka, hardware and agricultural implements, \$4,200; insurance, \$2,650.

K. of P. Lodge, loss on paraphernalia, furniture and building, \$1200; insurance, \$1,000.



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# FROM OUR FILES: 1897 & 98 Fires



The public demanded a ban on wood frame buildings in the business district and fire protection in the form of a fire engine.

The entire business section of Pine City has been swept away by fires within the past 13 months. Is it not about time that our citizens demanded that we be provided with adequate fire protection?

Let us have a steam fire engine, or some other adequate protection from the destroying element, before the residence portion of our village follows in the wake of the late lamented business district.

The origin of the fire is as yet undiscovered. The indications, as far as our reporter could learn, are that the fire originated on the outside, in the rear of either Petricka's store or Franta's harness shop.

Yes, the PIONEER is very much alive, thank you, in spite of having lost its home, and will continue to be issued regularly in the future as in the past. The gentleman who presides over the mechanical department of the PIONEER says he has been fired so many times that a blaze like that of Monday night out no figure whatever with him.

Pine County Pioneer  
May 13, 1898

—On Monday evening, in response to a call, a large number of citizens attended the special meeting of the council, to talk over fire protection. A representative of the Watrous Engine company was present, and showed them samples of hose and cuts of engines and hose carts, and made an offer to furnish the village with an engine, hose cart and one thousand feet of hose, for \$2,300. Some of our residents are in favor of putting in an engine, while others want to see water works. The expense of putting in water works would no doubt be greater than that of putting in an engine, but in the long run would it not be cheaper? as the expense in water works comes all at once, and the maintenance of an engine is a steady drain on the village resources from the time it is put in. It is pretty hard to get an engineer to run an engine and be on hand at all times, without paying him a good salary, and that we cannot afford to do at the present rate of expense our village is put to each year. Nothing definite was decided on at this meeting, but a full attendance of the citizens should be at the council meeting on Monday evening next, and then and there decide with the council what kind of fire protection we want, and after the apparatus has been purchased do not go around finding fault about what has been done, but come out and have your say with the rest.

Pine County Pioneer  
June 3, 1898

By June 1898 a representative of the Watrous Engine company was making a proposal to the citizens and by the end of July the new fire engine had arrived.

—Our new fire engine arrived last Saturday, and in the afternoon was taken to the river, where it was fired up by Mr. Gibson, the company's agent. It was just six minutes from the time the torch was applied until they were throwing water. But just at this time one of the flues blew out, and the engine stopped. The flues are made of copper, and in putting them in some of them were reamed too much, thereby weakening them. The company at once sent up a boiler maker, who replaced the defective flues with new ones. On Wednesday another trial was given the engine, which proved satisfactory.

Pine County Pioneer  
July 29, 1898

The next month was spent constructing a building to house the new fire engine.

—The new fire engine is now safely housed in its new home. The cistern was pumped full on Saturday last, it taking two hours and five minutes to do it. This will serve as a protection to the southern part of our village, and the other parts can be reached from the river or lake.

Pine County Pioneer  
August 26, 1898



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FROM OUR FILES: 1897 & 98 Fires



The volunteer fire department in front of the first engine July 1900.

Today the fire engine is in a specially constructed building by the Pine City Public Library.

