

## New Armory Hall Food for Fire

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Flames Discovered Around 4 a.m., After Great Headway Had Been Gained.

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Origin of the fire problematical--Company F's equipment badly damaged-- A heavy loss sustained by the Skating Rink Management -- The structure, which was the property of the Bank of Yolo, insured sufficiently by recoup owner-- Rebuilding not apt to be delayed long-- Heroic work by the fire department, which encounter difficulty in locating the conflagration-- Wrong number sounded-- Loud but harmless explosions.

Another of the many mysterious fires that have caused by so much speculation among the people of Woodland, and the origin of which will probably never be positively determined, occurred this morning. There are circumstances which taken by themselves, are calculated to throw some doubt on the theory that it was an accident. On the other hand, there seems to be no evidence upon which to base incendiary theory.

No matter how much the difference of opinion there may be as to the cause, all agree that to the gravity of the effect. The interior of the new armory hall is a sickening spectacle of black ruins. So thoroughly was it gutted by the flames that it is probably that all the woodwork which was not totally destroyed will have to be removed, so that eventually there may be nothing left standing but the walls.

It is a disaster that will be deplored and keenly felt by every resident of Woodland, first, because it leaves Company F without a home, and second, because it is it is a popular resort for public meetings, parties, balls, socials and other functions and lastly because it was the only place that was thoroughly equipped for a rating skink.

It was just 20 minutes to 4 o'clock in the morning when the alarm was sound. The bell rang 10 times and after a brief intermission, 10 times after more. There seems to be some confusion about this alarm. There is no box number 10. That is the house alarm and is notice for the members of the fire department to go to the engine house. This is the alarm usually turned in when the information of a fire is taken directly to the engine house.

Robert Martin, who is S. H. Goodin's helper in street sweeping, is the man who carried the news to the engine house. He and Mr. Goodin's were at work at the corner of Main and first Street. Mr. Martin first scented smoke rising in the direction of the new armory hall, and looking up he saw a volume of smoke rising in the direction of the

armory, and reflection of the fire against the skies. About the same time Stephen Dole employed in the bakery, came along on a bicycle in he too, noticed the fire and smoke. Some ladies who live near were awakened by the roar of the flames, but before they had determined what it was the alarm sounded. They saw the flames breaking through the last window south on the west wall, second floor, in a few minutes they seemed confined to that room. A gentleman who has a room at the Byrns confirm this theory. He looked at his watch and out of his window as soon as the alarm was sound, and he could see fire at but one window. However, before he could put his clothes on the smoke was pouring out of the two windows to the north.

A man at the College livery stable saw a light on the second floor of the west wing sometime after midnight, but he thought someone was there and paid no particular attention to it. The bakers at work in the Woodland bakery also noticed a light after midnight, and when they went back to the Alley a little later while the light had disappeared. At 3 o'clock this morning, the hour when they quit work, they saw no indication of a fire. Twenty minutes before the alarm was turned in Night Watchman Clary traveled the full length of the alley which runs by the north end of the building and saw no light.

Workmen were in the main hall Wednesday preparing the floor for skating, but as the fire did not start in that part of the building it is necessary to look somewhere else for a probable cause. Captain Lee and Quartermaster Sergeant Lewis were in the office Wednesday evening until 9:30 o'clock. They were engaged in addressing cards to members of the company, notifying them that the last target practice of the season would be held next Sunday. But the only light they used was the incandescent. They burned no matches. While they were at work Captain Lee expressed a desire to smoke, but neither he nor Sergeant Lewis had a match, and they made a fruitless search in the pockets of the uniforms in the room for one. Captain Lee did not light his pipe until he reached main street after their work was over. Before leaving the building they inspected the work done on the floor in the main hall, dusted the piano and closed the top and visited the various rooms in the west wing to see if everything was all right. They cut out the electric circuit at the front of the building, closed and locked the door, and the doors were still locked and the firefighters arrived.

There was some delay on the part of the fire engine in reaching the fire. H. J. Dinzler drove direct with the hose wagon and he says he told Stoker Young where it was, but Mr. Young says he misunderstood him and he drove down Court Street nearly to Fourth before he discovered his mistake. A coupling was made at the hydrant, corner of Lincoln Avenue and First Street, and the company soon had two streams of water playing on the flames.

In the meantime, the flames had enveloped the whole upper story of the west wing, burn through the floor and dropped into the rooms on the first floor. It had also run through the entrance of the gallery from the second floor, spread over the gallery all the way around the hall and climbed the truss work that supports the corrugated roof.

The plan of the building is two wings. The walls are brick and a story and a half in height. The east, or main wing was the public hall capable of sitting 2000 people on the main floor and in the gallery. The music stand was suspended in the center of the hall and on it was stationed the piano.

The front entrance was broken open and a line of hose carried in. The fire was soon driven out of the main hall, but not until the galleries were particularly destroyed, the truss work was charred, the corrugated roof badly damaged and all the south end of the maple floor charred so that it would be useless.

Nearly all the seats in the main hall, and there were enough of them to go entirely around the hall were either burned or so badly damaged that they were useless. The new maple floor put down last winter by the company in order to fit the hall for a skating rink was so badly damaged it will probably be necessary to take it all up. It cost \$700 and was uninsured.

The West Wing had two floors on the second floor there was an office, the meeting room and to store rooms. The office was equipped with desks, tables, chairs, carpets, etc. The first floor was divided into the armory, ladies dressing room, gentleman's dressing room and a utility room. Everything on the second floor was destroyed, including the surplus of 20 dress uniforms, 160 blankets, 65 overcoats, 13 tents, 60 each of canteens, haversacks and blanket bags, and 11 new Krag-Jorgensen rifles that had never been used.

In the armory on the first floor the rifles in use were all in the rack and they were saved. The uniforms in use were also in lockers and they were saved but so badly drenched that some of them will be practically useless. About 5000 rounds of ammunition which was securely cased, were also saved but in some instances the cases were badly charred. Shortly after the fire company arrived the big crowds that had gathered were almost stampeded by a volley of explosions which continued for several seconds. These were loose blank cartridges and a lot of riot shells which, of course, were harmless. The field glasses used by Captain Lee at Sengirt, New Jersey and his elegant revolver which he prizes very highly, were also saved. In the rear room there were 200 skates in a rack, that belong to the company, and these were saved.

In making the attack on the fire in the west wing the firemen first threw a ladder up to the second floor windows and broke them in. They then carried the line of hose to one of these windows and two of the firemen stood in the fierce heat until the flames were driven out of the south rooms. A second line of hose, after it was taken out of the main hall was carried to the north window on the west side and the two waged a fierce contest until the flames were so far subdued that one line of hose could be carried up the stairway. That marked the passing of the danger point, and by 6 o'clock the flames were entirely extinguished. Fortunately, there was no wind, otherwise it would have been next to impossible to have prevented the spread of the fire and we might have been called upon to chronicle one of the greatest disasters in the history of Woodland.

The work of the Fireman was heroic and effective. From Chief Snively all along the line every man performed his whole duty without thought of consequence to himself or the personal loss that might result. No man hesitated to obey an order, no matter what the risk incurred. The thought came to us as we saw some of the brave fellows scaling ladders and caring the hose into the face of the blistering heat jeopardizing limb and even life to save the property of others. How many people are there in Woodland who appreciate the services of the Fire ladies, especially those who receive no pay?

The building belonged to the bank of Yolo. It was constructed in 1895 by D. McPhee, and occupied the site of the old Hesperian College. It cost approximately \$9000 and it was built especially to accommodate Company F. It was insured for \$5000 in

companies is represented by Charles Richmond. While the work was not totally destroyed was so badly damaged that most of it probably all will have to be replaced, the walls are in good condition and the insurance will probably cover the loss.

The bank directors have not yet considered the matter collectively. Those with whom we talked about the matter were not prepared to speak for the board, but individually they were of the opinion that the work of reconstructing the building will be commenced with as little delay as possible. President Porter and Director Gable so express themselves.