

**DESTRUCTIVE FIRES.****OVER \$25,000 WORTH OF PROPERTY BURNED.**

**Origin of One a Mystery—The Other Looks Like the Work of a Fire Bug—Brave, Successful Fight Made By the Fire Department—Inexhaustible Supply of Water—Insurance In Detail.**

Shortly before 12 o'clock Friday night fire was discovered in the Bellevue lodging house, over the Hobson Mercantile company's store. It was well under way when the alarm was sounded. The fire department responded promptly, but this building and the one on either side, J. W. Cox & Co's. saloon on the west, corner Center and Granite, and the Potter building on the east, occupied by Addler's book and stationery store in the ground floor and offices above, were entirely destroyed. The First Bank of Sumpter building, across Center street, was badly damaged by heat, several plate glass windows being cracked, the metal cornice melted and destroyed and the paint blistered and discolored.

The stocks in all three burned buildings are almost an entire loss. J. H. Murphey's insurance agency carried very much the larger portion of the risks, having \$13,500 of the \$17,200, the aggregate, besides \$4,000 on the bank building. The rate in this block is 9 1/2 cents, and of course, nothing was insured to its full value. The entire loss will amount to more than \$25,000.

The Hobson Mercantile company carried \$10,000 insurance, \$3,000 with a La-Grande agency, taken out by W. C. Calder when he owned the stock, and not yet expired; \$1,000 with the Atlas, \$1,000 in the German American, \$1,000 in the Royal and \$500 in the Sun, all represented by Mr. Murphey. They saved about \$2,000 worth of dry goods and in the cellar is about \$1,000 worth of canned goods that it is thought is not seriously damaged. On the furniture and fixtures of the lodging house, where the fire originated, owned by Mrs. E. McInness, there was \$1,000 in this Sun. This building is owned by J. H. Robbins, president of the First Bank of Sumpter, and J. W. Scriber, president of a bank at La-Grande. It was insured for \$2,500, with Murphey; \$500 in the German American, \$1,000 in the National, \$500 in the Royal and \$500 in the Sun.

The corner building and stock were owned by J. W. Cox & Co. Each was insured for \$1,000, the building for \$500 in the Scottish Union, represented by A. Mohr, \$500 in the Sun and the furniture and fixtures for \$1,000 in the Sun—Murphy again. Some of this stuff was saved from the flames, but all is damaged.

The Potter building was not insured. Carl Adler carried \$1,000 in the Royal and \$200 in another company, the latter represented by Manning Bros. His stock was worth several thousand dollars, and is now valued at about thirty cents. Hammond & Chance, lawyers, had their offices up stairs and lost considerable.

As stated above, The First Bank of Sumpter building is considerably damaged by heat. It is fully covered by insurance. The furniture and household goods in the Potter residence, only a few feet from the burned buildings, and in the Austin block, next to the residence, were all removed and, of course, damaged to a certain extent. At this writing (Monday forenoon) none of the losses have been adjusted, and no accurate estimates can be given.

The origin of the fire is not known. Several days previous one started in the same place, but was extinguished. The

landlady was not in town at the time. It is said that much of the coal oil sold here for some time past is not of the best. Too much can not be said of the work done by the fire department, under the intelligent direction of Chief Thornton. A braver, more persistent fight was never made—nor rarely a more successful one. The fact that the Potter residence was saved, which is only six or eight feet from the burned building, speaks for itself. It is a comparatively old frame building, the lumber in which is as dry as tinder. The boys stood at this strategic point and poured in three streams of water continuously for nearly an hour.

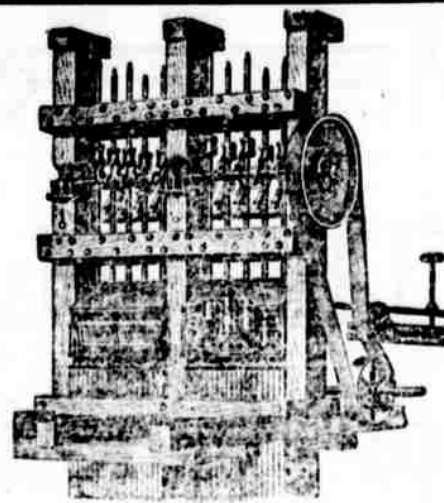
Apparently nearly every body in town was on Granite street at the time, and intense excitement prevailed. When the fire was at its fiercest, it was rumored among the crowd that the water in the reservoir was about exhausted, and then it was feared that much of the town would be destroyed, for a stiff breeze was blowing from the west and live coals were flying in heavy showers. But the flow of water never decreased nor the pressure slackened for a moment. Some one went up to the reservoir and turned on the full head from the aqueduct and the fire fighters had all the ammunition they could use. When the waste pipe was closed the water rose three feet in the reservoir with four streams playing wide open. Many and repeated were the thanks which W. L. Vinson received for his enterprise in constructing such an excellent water system.

Perhaps an hour and a half elapsed from the time the alarm was turned in until the fire was under control, and the town was again in gloomy darkness. The streets for blocks around were strewn with dry goods, groceries, books, stationery, wines, liquors and cigars, fancy articles, furniture, wearing apparel and what not. One pile of rescued treasures, dumped in a safe place at the corner of Mill and Granite, especially attracted the attention of curious bachelors. It was evidently from the boudoir of some aesthetic lady. The articles belonged to her wardrobe, were of dainty shades, adorned with lace and ruffles and pleats and such frivolities, but of shapes and patterns and designs that were mysterious to the uninitiated and no single man Jack in the camp could figure out what their specific uses in this world could possibly be, though there was a spirited guessing contest on the subject in the early hours of the morning among a lot of the boys who hadn't gone home, and on account of the excitement saw everything double.

As is always the case, there are a number of amusing incidents related in connection with the general excitement caused by the fire. One which is furnishing the women folks no end of amusement, the secret details of which THE MINER can't get hold of, pertains to the rescuing of a live pet belonging to some lady, by her especial favorite. One lady, living in a house a hundred yards away, is said to have packed all of her effects after the fire was extinguished, fearing the fire bug. Another, when the alarm was sounded, carefully dressed herself from top to bottom, powdered her face, found her chewing gum, packed her new summer suit and hat and sent them four blocks away; all done with judicial calmness, and then became excited and tore up everything in the house, which was not in the slightest danger.

**Th's One Looks Suspicious.**

Saturday morning about nine o'clock the young man who opens Gagen & Sloan's Kentucky Liquor house discovered that building to be on fire. The fire company was again called out and soon subdued the flames. This looks as if it were of incendiary origin. The fire started fully thirty feet away from any stove or lamp, and where no one would have gone under ordinary circumstances. It was also very near where gasoline was stored, showing that the intention was to make a quick job. Oil saturated rags partly burned are said to have been discovered in the locality afterwards. Suspicion points in no particular direction, but there is scarcely a doubt but that this fire was the work of a bug. In this block the insurance rate is practically prohibitive and but a small amount is carried. There was some loss, principally from water, which is covered by the small policy.



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