

5 DIE IN BLAZING APARTMENT

Herald and News

PRICE FIVE CENTS

KLAMATH FALLS, O.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1947

(Telephone 8111)

Number 10880

WEATHER

(Feb. 16)
Max. 49 Min. 31
Precipitation last 24 hours .02
Stream year to date .53
Normal 7.15 Last year .9.55
Forecast: Warmer Tuesday.

In The Day's News

By FRANK JENKINS
(Travel Correspondence)

PEOPLE are people. They are interested in whatever they are interested in — no matter what their surroundings may be. For example:

In the beautiful little sacred garden of San Capistrano mission, where a century and three-quarters ago the padres gathered reverently when the bells (now old, then new) rang out their messages, a clump of tourists is gathered. It is broken into two groups—one composed of men, the other of women.

One of the men is smoking a frayed cigar. In his hand, he holds a road map. "We came out by Route 80," he says, "but we're not going back that way. About half the way it was so cold it would freeze the whiskers off a stone statue. We're going back by Route 80. They say it's nice and warm all the way."

His hearers cluck their tongues with sympathy. "It's sure nippy over some of the high spots," one of the men confirms.

ONE of the women carries a baby on her arm—apparently about a two-year-old.

"I don't know what to make of him," she says in a tone of considerable exasperation. "He does fine during the day, but at night!" She shrugs her shoulders and twists up her face. "You should see his diapers the next morning. They're a mess! I'm doing everything I know to train him, but I don't seem to be getting anywhere."

The others do what they can to console her—it is the way of women in such experience meetings. "Oh, he'll be all right," one assures her warmly. "My Elbert was the same way. I'd practically break out crying every morning when I went in to take him up. But just all of a sudden he quit."

THESE tourists of our gasoline-gadget age are nearly two centuries in time from the early inhabitants of this ancient and lovely mission, but they speak of immemorial things—of routes of travel and of children.

We may be reasonably positive that when the people of that earlier day—Indians, priests and Spanish laymen alike—gathered within the mission walls and the sexes split apart into groups, as men and women will, the males spoke of the trails through the hills by which they had come and the females chattered like sparrows about their young, and their habits, good and bad, and what it is best to do about such things. And possibly, again as women will, they tossed in a few pearls of wisdom on the timeless general subject of handling husbands.

THE material aspects of the thing we call civilization change from age to age, but people themselves, in their inner and fundamental interests and instincts, change very little indeed. And what change there may be is more a matter of externals than of that which lies deep down under the skin in all of us.

AND so it with another fundamental—that law of nature which decrees that what man HAS must vary according to the diligence and intelligence with which he works and produces.

Before the coming of the mission fathers, these California Indians worked very little, if at all. They HAD very little. The padres taught them habits of industry and of thrift, and for half a century, while the missions flourished, they HAD MORE. Then the mission civilization decayed and the Indians took to the hills again and went hungry again.

There is now this amazing land of modern Southern California, where there is apparently everything for everybody, enough for all who come.

BUT mark this, and mark it well:

If the time should come when men and women NO LONGER WORK AND PRODUCE this Southern California miracle land will slip back into the dust and the nothingness that was here when the mission padres came.

What isn't produced, can't be divided. There can be no production without work.

Portland Wreck Injures Five

PORTLAND, Feb. 17 (AP)—Five persons were injured in a two-car collision yesterday and police reported one driver, Alfred W. Hensell, 22, Seia, was cited for reckless driving.

The injured in Hensell's car included Joseph D. Justin, 20, Salem, and Robert W. Hensell, 26, a brother of the driver.



This picture, taken only a few minutes after fire was discovered at Evans apartments, shows the smoke pouring from third-story windows as firemen look through for more survivors. The top story burned before the second floor. Notice the bed sheet rope in the window where Mr. and Mrs. Carl Arthur and daughter descended to a balcony, and the ladders used to bring other occupants to safety.

Apartment 27 Years Old

By HALE SCARBROUGH

The three-story brick and tile building housing the Evans apartments, Sunset grocery, Roberts Hardware and the California Pacific Utilities company office was about 27 years old and one of the first really good buildings erected on the upper end of Main street during the growth of Klamath Falls right after World War I.

It was built by Al Graham in 1920 for Sidney and M. P. Evans, containing 24 apartments and rooms for three stores.

There was no apartment No. 13. Reluctance of renters to take the number caused the decision to number the apartments from 1 to 12 and 14 to 25.

The layout and floor plan of the building had undergone very little change in 27 years and was much the same when the fire struck yesterday morning as when the first tenants moved in in 1920.

The Sunset grocery on the ground floor had been in the building since it was erected, first operated by Percy Evans and later by Walter Wiesendanger. When the building was new and business space and housing not so short as today, the other store rooms were relatively hard to rent for a few years. That end of Main street had not yet come into its own as a business district.

Other firms

Roberts hardware, formerly the firm of Roberts and Harvey, has used the location next to the grocery for about 15 years. Before that there was a boarding house, known as the Marshall House, there for a time and some of the space was used for storage purposes.

The California-Pacific Utilities

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Apartment Fire Worst Since Houston Blaze

Klamath county history will record the Evans apartment hotel fire of early Sunday, as second in disaster only to the Houston hotel fire of September 1, 1920.

Early on that day flames swept through the hotel which was filled with guests who had come to Klamath Falls for a big Labor Day celebration. Fourteen persons lost their lives in the Houston hotel fire. Five were killed in the Evans apartment fire yesterday.

Another fire which has lived long in the memory of Klamath residents was the disastrous White Pelican hotel blaze of October 16, 1926. The fire leveled the building but did not cause any loss of life. Balaiger Motor company now stands at the corner of Main and Esplanade where the Pelican hotel was located.

Unidentified Woman First To Report Disastrous Fire

By HALE SCARBROUGH

An unidentified woman put in the first telephone alarm on the Evans apartment house fire, and Roy Rowe, fire marshal, jotted down the time—8:09 a. m. The woman said: "There's a big fire at the Evans apartments."

To check the location, Rowe asked:

"At 10th and Main?"

There was a moment's pause as the woman, apparently relaying the message, checked for the address with someone in the room, then she said, "Yes."

Within 10 to 15 seconds the first truck had left the Broad street fire house for the blaze five blocks away. It was a big LaFrance truck carrying five men, a 1000-gal. pumper and 1400 feet of two and a half inch hose.

Immediately after the big LaFrance roared out of the station it was followed by a hook-and-ladder truck with two firemen aboard.

There are just nine men on a shift at the fire house. One man stayed to answer the phone, which by this time was ringing constantly with calls about the fire, and the other man stayed with another truck.

The man at the phone got a call through to the police department at 8:07, then called Copco and started routing the off-duty firemen out of bed for the big fight.

Fire trucks were at the scene of the fire within half a minute after the call was received, and at least 10 volunteers were

pressed into service to get ladders to the windows. Fire Chief Keith Ambrose said.

When the off-shift firemen got to the station a third rig, a Stutz with a 1000-gal. pumper and 1250 feet of two and one-half inch hose, was dispatched to the fire scene.

Ten lines of hose were playing water on the blaze most of the morning and the LaFrance truck pump worked steadily for seven and a half hours.

There was some fire-fighting equipment in the building at the rear of stores and in the apartment hallways, but the blaze was so sudden there was no chance for it to be used by the occupants. Ernest Mullis, manager of The California-Pacific Gas company, did manage to get a small hose from the rear of his office into action.

Insurance adjusters are working today to determine the extent of the damage, but the apartment section of the building is almost a total loss and all three business firms on the Main street floor received considerable fire and water damage.

Several insurance companies, including Northwestern Mutual, Hardware Mutual and Hartford Insurance company hold policies on the building and its contents.

Underwriters had classed it at a class C building, considered a very good insurance risk and eligible for low insurance rates. The underwriters also consider Klamath Falls a good fire-risk town, with adequate fire fighting equipment and capable firemen. That all goes into figuring insurance rates, and the Klamath Falls fire department was known by the insurance people as one of the best in a small town on the Pacific coast.

Much of the salvageable goods of the grocery and hardware will be shipped to a salvage company in San Francisco, and the damaged stoves, meters, heaters and other equipment of the gas company is being moved to a warehouse while the company looks for another office.

Woman Breaks Leg In Wreck

Edyth Leslie, 106 Martin, was taken to Hillside hospital Saturday evening suffering from a broken leg as the result of an automobile accident on S. 6th near Arthur.

State police report that John Bert Smith, 848 Prescott, who was driving her car at the time of the accident, rammed into the rear of an Anderson motor freight truck which was parked next to the curb on S. 6th.

Smith was charged by police with operating a vehicle with inadequate emergency brakes.

A second accident occurred at 7:55 p. m. Saturday near Klamath agency when a car driven by Howard L. Prohaska of Turner, Ore., struck the rear of a machine operated by Ray Carful as the latter's car was turning off the highway, state police said. In the Prohaska vehicle were his wife and child. No one was injured.

GOP Tax Slash To Be Delayed

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 (AP)—Postponement of any consideration of tax cuts until congress determines how much to slash the 1947 spending budget was announced today by Chairman Knutson (R-Minn.) of the house ways and means committee.

Hearings previously had been set to begin Wednesday on Knutson's house bill No. 1 calling for a 20 per cent "across the board" cut in individual income levies.

Knutson announced that the controversy over how much to trim President Truman's \$37,500,000,000 budget also will cause delay in hearings on reciprocal tariff operations. These hearings had been set tentatively to begin February 24.

No new definite dates for tax or trade hearings were set immediately.

Lots Of Water Poured On Fire

There is no very accurate way to compute the amount of water pumped onto the Evans apartment blaze yesterday, but Sam Ritchey, manager of The California Oregon Power company, said that computing six streams from the hydrants for a period of five and a half hours would have been used.

A computation is difficult because there were 10 lines of hose working on the fire for varying lengths of time.

But, by some circumstance, there was less water used in Klamath Falls yesterday than on two previous Sundays. Copco figures show that 60,750 gallons less was used yesterday than the average for Feb. 2 and 9.

Flames Destroy Evans Building

By MALCOLM EPLEY

A charred shell today occupied the Tenth and Main streets site of the Evans apartment building, swept Sunday morning by a fire that snuffed out five lives and inflicted damage of more than \$200,000.

The blaze, evidently originating in the basement, shot up an elevator shaft at the rear of the three-story building, mushroomed with explosive speed through the upper floor, and then burned downward through the 24 apartment units and into the ground floor.

Twenty-six of 31 apartment occupants in the structure at the time escaped through windows or down a back stairs. The five who died in one of the worst fires in southern Oregon history were:

Mrs. William Lorenzen, 26, the former Dorothy Gustafson, Klamath Union high school teacher.

Sidney Evans, 72, Klamath pioneer and owner of the building.

Mrs. Golda Harney, 56, an employe of Whyte's store.

Mr. and Mrs. George Feaster, both about 50, owners and operators of the Klamath Variety store.

Of these, the only person rescued alive was Mrs. Lorenzen, a bride of three weeks, who was dead when an ambulance reached the hospital. The others died in the flaming interior of the building, and their bodies were found as firemen sifted through the smoldering ruins after the blaze had been quelled.

The fire, already well under way, was discovered at approximately 6 a. m.

Several persons turned in alarms almost simultaneously. Among these were Mrs. W. E. Sawchuck, 325 N. 10th, who was passing in a taxi, and Mrs. Curtis Rogers, 10th and Pine, who heard screams from Evans apartment occupants. The fire department record shows Fire Marshal Roy Rowe received the call at 6:05 and within 10 to 15 seconds trucks had responded.

Those who saw the first first agreed it was burning at the rear of the building, near the 10th street corner, but within a few moments the roof and upper story were ablaze. The fire immediately cut off the main entrance, which is at the 18th street rear, and no one escaped by that route.

Shouts and screams sounded alarms through the building, and occupants not already awake were soon scrambling for safety. A majority went out through windows, and a number of balconies outside double windows on the second floor proved invaluable in the escapes and rescues.

Mr. and Mrs. William Lorenzen occupied an interior apartment on the third floor. They staggered from their apartment into the smoke-filled hall, and crawled toward the Main street side of the building. When he reached the outside, Lorenzen realized his wife was not with him, and cried out for help. He was unable to re-enter the building, and Delbert Crumpecker, an ex-soldier and taxi driver, and J. W. Holtzapfel, a contractor, volunteered to attempt a rescue.

With a fireman's aid they went up ladders to a third floor Main street window. They called for a rope, which was tied around Crumpecker's waist. Wearing a mask, Crumpecker then went into the building, with Holtzapfel holding the rope at the window, ready to respond to agreed upon signals from Crumpecker.

Crumpecker went through two rooms and into a kitchenette, where he found Mrs. Lorenzen lying on the floor. He attempted to lift her, but her feet seemed to be caught on something, possibly a doorway. He finally pulled her loose, and half-carrying her, worked toward the window. The gas mask caught on something and was pulled off. Nearly overcome by heat and smoke, he was forced to drop the girl at the foot of the stairway near the window, and called for help.

Holtzapfel immediately went in and pulled Mrs. Lorenzen through the window. Holtzapfel put her on his shoulder and went down the first ladder to the balcony, and shifted to the second ladder. Her distraught husband was at the foot of the ladder as Holtzapfel placed her on a stretcher. A Klamath Ambulance Service ambulance rushed her to the hospital, but she was apparently dead upon arrival. An hour's work with a pump

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