

Two men burned to death in depot hotel fire

By Evelyn Ward

Sherman County Historical Society

Jan. 14, 1904: Two Men Burned To Death — Depot Hotel Employees, Fatally Burned with Gasoline — After Cleaning Their Clothes, a Match was Struck to Light a Cigarette When Their Clothing Ignited — Before They Could Be Rescued, They Had Received Death Burns — Both were young men and had recently come to Goodland and before they died told where their homes were, the names of their parents and requested that their folks be notified by telegraph of their dying condition.

The victims died in agony six hours after the accident happened. The fire was first discovered by a hotel guest in one of the rear rooms of the hotel on the second floor. Attracted by a blaze, he looked out and saw a human form afire in the backyard.

Yelling "fire" and saying that a man was burning, he ran down the stairs. For a moment, the crowds around the hotel office were momentarily paralyzed with disbelief but quickly followed outside. Using their own coats, they began beating

today in history

the fire out on James Welch, telling him to "get down on the ground" where the fire was smothered.

Someone now cried that there was fire in the laundry, which was given added horror by Welch saying that his partner was in there and to save him.

John Dempsey, a brakeman, was the first in there and found Robert Fleet taking refuge in the bed trying to smother the fire on his person by wrapping bed comforts around him.

When he was carried outside his underclothes, the only covering on him when the fire started, were partially burned from his body.

Dr. Smith was telephoned early in the excitement and arrived not more than 15 minutes after the call, followed by Dr. Gulick.

The men had been carried into the hotel and placed on cots. Their bodies disfigured with red burns and forming blisters, their faces had suffered badly, and the hair on the heads and brows were singed.

The injured were in awful agony.

The covering of lard and the injections of morphine abated the pain little, and until the end they never ceased to moan and utter piteous cries. They were conscious for about two hours after the accident and spoke familiarly to those they knew.

Welch burdened his mind with the thought that he was to blame. He kept saying, "It's all my fault, Bob is not to blame at all. We were cleaning our clothes with gasoline, and I lit a match to smoke a cigarette and our clothes took fire."

Welch and Fleet were kept apart at first and kept inquiring about the welfare of the other, but later both were taken into the parlor of the hotel, where Welch died at 2:25 and Fleet at 2:47 a.m.

Dr. Gulick, coroner, made a statement of the accident from the testimony of the men, corroborated by witnesses of the scene. No blame is attached to the management of the hotel. According to the statement of Welch, the fire was the result of a heedless and fatal moment.

Jan. 15, 1904: Raid Made On a Poker Room — The Green Cloth Men Given An Unpleasant Surprise — While the Sheriff and County Attorney Were Working an Entrance to the Resort, the Gamblers Hurriedly Left the Place by a Rear Exit — A gambling room in the rear of the Cullins billiard hall was raided Tuesday afternoon by Sheriff Bradley and County Attorney Murphy.

The door to the resort was locked, and before access could be gained, the occupants skipped out, leaving the authorities in possession of the room with its four poker tables, plenty of empty whiskey bottles in a corner by the door and a floor discolored with very recent blotches of spit.

The sheriff had warrants for Phil Volke and Fred Cole for keeping a gambling place and also warrants for the seizure of all gambling furniture and devices. The poker tables were taken, but as all the fellows around the green cloth skeddaddled in time to make their escape, no arrests could be made.

County Attorney Murphy had recently received information which

led him to the belief that gambling was going on in the Cullins building. And this, augmented by the fact that Fred Cole on Tuesday came out of the Coffin restaurant with trays of luncheon for half a dozen men who were too busy to go to their meals, quite confirmed his suspicion. And consequently a plan was quietly laid to see what was doing.

As the county attorney and sheriff were entering the billiard hall, they saw a man's heels disappear through the door leading to a back room. But when they reached that particular entrance the door was fast with a spring lock, and the man who owned the pair of heels had given the alarm.

The gamblers, like rats before the pied piper, could not get away fast enough, although the back doors and the windows were made ways of exit. And they didn't stop at that, leaving, according to report, such a cloud of dust and dirt behind them as to obscure the vision of the pursuers.

Not gaining an entrance in front, the men with the law went around to the rear and found the north room

used only as a sleeping apartment, but the room just back of this contained the gambling tables and ap-purtenances.

As the men entered, the room had not yet lost its breath of life. The air smelled warm and bore the flavor of fresh tobacco smoke. The chairs were arranged with a careless degree of order. A dozen empty whiskey bottles breathed out from their un-stopped necks their characteristic odor, while the floor, bespattered with spit, cast a course grimace at the intrusion.

The four tables seized were turned over to Police Judge Floyd, and a hearing is set for Monday summoning the owners to show cause why they should not be burned. As Volke and Cole were not found, no time is set for a hearing in their cases.

Jan. 16, 1904: The Coursing Contest — The greyhounds of Charles Posson of Norton and those of T.A. Stevenson of this city competed in a coursing contest east of Goodland Sunday, the races ending three for Norton and two for Goodland. Stevenson's dog, Blue King, was faster than any of the others, winning in all his entries.

From weekly issues of The Goodland News, provided by the Sherman County Historical Society. Since the paper was published weekly, some items were arbitrarily assigned a date.

Quilts showing at Hansen museum

Two quilt exhibits are on display at the Dane G. Hansen Memorial Museum in Logan until Sunday, Feb. 22.

Approximately 100 doll quilts and 50 doll beds, mostly antiques, from Mary Campbell Ghormley's private collection are on display at the same time as 40 quilts interpreting oxymorons are being shown.

The Ghormley exhibit is titled "Pieces of the Past," and the other exhibit is called "Oxymorons: Absurdly Logical Quilts."

Ghormley of Lincoln, Neb., is one of the founding members of the Lincoln Quilter's Guild, a charter member of the Nebraska State Quilt Guild and a member of the Nebraska State Quilt Guild Hall of Fame.

Her collection of over 20 years dates back to the mid-1800s and is represented in its entirety by over 200 standard quilts, 200 doll quilts

and 50 doll beds. Mostly antiques, Ghormley's collection also includes a library of nearly 500 quilting books.

Over the past 10 years, Ghormley's collection has been shown in numerous places within Nebraska, including the Quilt Restoration Society in Omaha and the Stur Museum of the Pioneer in Grand Island. Her doll quilts have also been featured in an article in "Country Home" magazine.

Each of the 40 quilts in "Oxymorons: Absurdly Logical Quilts" is based upon and interprets an oxymoron — a two-word phrase of seemingly contradictory words.

With names like Accidentally on Purpose, Pretty Ugly, Bitter Sweet, Dry Lake, Extinct Life and Strangely Familiar. The exhibit offers views of a non-traditional quilt experience and has been described as

the "Coolest Hottest" collection to come around in a long while.

The quilts are by Renegade Quilts LLC, a group of five contemporary quilt artists from Maine who invited leading American quilt artists to convey abstract words into fabric.

Joining Renegades Judi H. Bastion, Sally K. Field, Dianne S. Hire, Ellie Pancoe and Nancy F. Wheelwright are 35 quilt artists from states across the country.

The quilts give an insightful interpretation of dilemmas, tragedies, joys and choices the artists have faced.

The museum is open from 8-11 a.m. and noon-3 p.m. Mountain Time Monday-Friday, 8-11 a.m. Saturday and noon-4 p.m. Sundays and holidays. The museum is handicapped accessible, and there is no admission fee.

Cardiac Arrest to lock up Goodland residents

The American Heart Association is putting Goodland residents under lock and key. Thursday, the association along with the Volunteer Cardiac Arrest Parole Board will be holding the annual Cardiac Arrest from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

The association's regional director, Randall Braden, said the event combines fund-raising with fun.

"A group of very important citizens will be charged at the Cardiac Arrest for 'crimes of the heart,'" Braden said. "In order to be released, the 'arrestees' must post bail."

Donations in the form of bail will assist the association in its

fight to reduce deaths and disabilities due to cardiovascular disease and stroke, America's number one killer.

The Cardiac Arrest committee has a goal of \$7,000 for the Goodland arrests. The money will pay for research, education and community service programs to fight cardiovascular disease.

Since 1949, the association has paid more than \$2 billion for cardiovascular research leading to such advances as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, bypass surgery, the heart-lung machine, artificial heart valves, life-saving drugs and surgeries to repair heart defects.

public notice

Legal Notice

In the matter of Deep Rock Exploration for the authority to flare or vent niobrara gas produced from 2 gas wells in Sherman County. An exemption to certain other applications to niobrara gas wells for wells located SW Quarter Section 2 - 9 South - Range 41W. The hearing date is January 15, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. at the Corporation Commission, Wichita, Kan.

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City of Goodland expenditures

For the period from October 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003

FUNDS	PREVIOUS BALANCE	RECEIPT	DISBURSEMENT	CURRENT BALANCE
Special Highway	\$39,187.02	\$32,540.48	0.00	\$71,727.50
Self Insurance	\$883,805.93	\$73,919.64	\$96,663.67	\$861,061.90
Airport Fund	\$338,626.90	\$5,976.85	\$43,313.75	\$301,290.00
General Operating	\$1,778,536.36	\$397,787.53	\$432,980.65	\$1,743,343.24
Bond & Interest	\$141,670.05	\$4,951.96	0.00	\$146,622.01
Library	\$2,501.34	\$3,040.10	0.00	\$5,541.44
Sales Tax	\$1,814.19	\$33,887.84	\$32,456.21	\$3,245.82
Electric Utility	\$1,961,816.54	\$1,197,235.20	\$1,056,446.24	\$2,102,605.50
Municipal Court Diversion Fees	\$10,008.49	\$580.69	\$1,781.71	\$8,807.47
Law Enforcement	\$21,013.93	\$311.14	0.00	\$21,325.07
Electric Meter Deposit	\$111,594.00	\$6,700.00	\$7,000.00	\$111,294.00
Water Utility	\$384,780.17	\$235,190.34	\$237,806.29	\$382,164.22
Water Service Deposit	\$50,188.00	\$4,550.00	\$4,350.00	\$50,388.00
Sewer Utility	\$63,602.64	\$64,387.19	\$61,414.78	\$66,575.05
Special Park & Rec.	\$44,048.75	\$1,473.60	0.00	\$45,522.35
Vehicle Inspections(VIN)	\$12,295.40	\$1,864.21	\$3,930.44	\$10,229.17
Grant Imp Reserve Fund	\$82,397.55	\$29,838.39	0.00	\$112,235.94
Steever Park Project	\$2,382.70	\$2,414.34	0.00	\$4,797.04
Solid Waste	\$232,504.52	\$86,606.35	\$89,971.17	\$229,139.70
Fire Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Airport Improvement	\$-5,239.20	\$172,356.71	\$182,508.40	\$-15,390.89
Water Imp. (CDBG)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Imp. Reserve	\$2,916,532.06	\$152,300.69	\$547,605.60	\$2,521,227.15
Insurance Proceeds	\$8,098.50	0.00	\$8,098.50	0.00
Employee Benefit	\$348,970.02	\$12,092.21	\$152,872.78	\$208,189.45
Library Emp. Benefit	\$206.76	\$256.82	0.00	\$463.58
State Water Fund	\$7,038.08	\$4,691.64	\$5,745.60	\$5,984.12
Cemetery-Perp. Care	\$82,500.00	0.00	0.00	\$82,500.00
Cemetery Endowment	\$52,650.79	\$1,800.00	0.00	\$54,450.79
Cemetery Improvement	\$86,796.75	\$1,682.76	\$800.00	\$87,679.51
Replacement Tree	\$1,914.45	\$4.54	0.00	\$1,918.99
Electric Reserve	\$1,234,415.43	\$46,629.76	0.00	\$1,281,045.19
Water Reserve	\$769,044.06	\$1,771.70	\$2,260.50	\$768,555.26
Water System Improvement Proj.	\$-30,248.60	\$38,588.15	\$8,339.55	0.00
CDBG Housing Grant	\$3,986.64	0.00	0.00	\$3,986.64
Sewer Reserve	\$404,355.47	\$864.88	0.00	\$405,220.35
M.E.R.F.	\$1,823,888.69	\$26,244.83	\$26,305.08	\$1,823,828.44
Total	\$13,867,684.38	\$2,642,540.54	\$3,002,650.92	\$13,507,574.00

AVAILABLE CASH	PREVIOUS BALANCE	CURRENT BALANCE
Cashier's Change	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Checking Accounts:		
BANKWEST	\$595,369.38	\$794,357.00
Investments	\$13,270,315.00	\$12,711,217.00
Total Available Cash	\$13,867,684.38	\$13,507,574.00

LIABILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS	
ST OF KS PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY LOAN	\$2,141,179.92
STEEVER PARK PROJECT LEASE PURCHASE	\$1,634,467.72
OLD IGA BLDG LEASE PURCHASE	0.00
GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 1996-1	\$395,000.00
GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 1996-2	\$325,000.00
TOTAL	\$4,495,647.64

I, Janeil Dilling, do hereby certify that the above statement is correct.
 City Treasurer
 Signature Title
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