

40 NEARLY TRAPPED IN FIRE

OLD ST. JAMES BUILDING WAS DESTROYED

Cerny & Louis Book Store, Fink's Cigar Store, Iowa Union, Miss Wieneke's Book Store, Coasts, Dental Supply Co. Losers--The Building was Owned by the Dey Estate -- Also Big Losses to Neighbors

LOSS OF AT LEAST \$150,000.00 IS RESULT OF DISASTROUS FIRE WHEN IOWA UNION BURNED THIS MORNING

STUDENTS SAVED BARELY IN TIME

DE VILLO BANNISTER, OF WATERTOWN, S. D., CARRIES CRIPPLE DOWN STAIRS

Forty lives were almost miraculously saved last night when fire destroyed the Iowa Union building, formerly the St. James hotel, in a blaze the biggest in the history of the city. Damage is expected to reach the neighborhood of \$250,000.

Twenty-seven of those in the building were students in the university.

Tales of one narrow escape after another became known during the progress of the fire. Probably half of the men in the building were compelled to use the fire escapes, and Mrs. James Leaning, the wife of the cook, trapped at the rear of the third floor on the north side, was unable to get out of the building except by using the fire escape ladder.

Girls Awakened First.

Meta Baucht and Emma B. Johnson, two girls who work at the Union as chambermaids, were the first awakened by the fire. Their rooms were on the second floor almost directly over the blaze, and they were saved only in the nick of time.

"Help! Fire! For God's sake somebody save us!" they shouted aloud when they saw that they were cut off from all escape.

Short Hears Cries.

Hal Short, of the Whittaker barber shop staff, heard their cries as he was sleeping in the back of the shop with his window open for air. He jumped out of bed and found that the building was already blazing up fiercely at the back where it could not be seen from the street. Night Watchman Frank Sook, who was in that vicinity, was also attracted and these two men raised a ladder which they found behind Coasts' to the roof of the clothing store and then worked over to a point where they could carry the frantic women to the ground and to safety.

Alarm is Turned In.

Hearing the cries of women, Short thought first of Mrs. Elita L. Byers and Mrs. Cora B. Parsons, who live upstairs over the Taylor confectionery store, but upon glancing out saw that the fire was in the Union building. Short was the man who turned in the alarm, which did not get to

the fire department until he and Sook had rescued the two chambermaids from their perilous positions.

Students Flee in Pajamas.

Charles Kinney, of Iowa City, was spending the night with Lou Terman at his room on the top floor. Terman was asleep, but Kinney still lay awake when he smelled the smoke. Rising and rushing into the hall he found clouds of smoke rolling up the stairway. Stopping only to arouse his companion he went into the hall and beat upon as many doors as were close by, this being limited because he was unfamiliar with the building. He and Terman were able to escape down the stairs.

Foster and Powers Slow.

Wayne Foster, of Wellman, and C. O. Powers, of Cedar Rapids, were the last in the building to wake up after the fire had been burning probably for fifteen minutes and had spread to almost the entire structure. Their rooms were on the fourth adjoining, and they slept until the flames cracked almost at their very door. Escape in any way but down the fire ladder was impossible. Both men came down only in their pajamas. Foster first and Powers following. While they climbed down the ladder, window panes behind and above them broke from the heat and flames shot out all around them. Foster dropped to the sidewalk in front of the Union unharmed, but Powers has blistered feet from his experience. The men had not been on the ground a minute before the flames roared up through the entire building from the second floor up in one grand rush.

Close Call for Canada.

Maurice Canada, of Elkader, a freshman in the college of liberal arts, saved his own life by a series of dare-devil leaps from the fourth story.

Canada's room was on the south side of the wing which extends along Iowa Avenue. When awakened by the thick smoke which filled his room, he rushed toward the stairs, only to find the flames bursting up toward him. Entrance to the nearest fire escape was on the north side of the building through the room of Robert Fosdick. Here he was again.

(Continued on Page Eight)

THE WEATHER

Fair in the west, with frost. Unsettled in the east portion tonight. Saturday fair with rising temperature.

BODY EXHUMED IS NOT THAT OF VILLA

Chihuahua, Mex., April 21 The body supposedly Villa's, proved not to be his although it was the body of a bandit. The report that the bandit leader's body had been exhumed was positively stamped as false today by General Luis Gutierrez, military commander here.

This and official American reports that Villa is in Durango state unwounded were disclosed together with a Carranza order of April 13 prohibiting the United States aviators from flying over Mexican cities and preventing the American forces

from using the Mexican telegraph and telephone lines.

Scores of shots were fired at the Americans who made the flight over this city Wednesday. Resentment among the Mexican soldiers and populists against the continued presence of the American troops is becoming so general that the Carranza military authorities declare they will be unable to control the people unless the expedition is soon withdrawn.

Consul Letcher reported to Washington that the Parral incident was not an isolated case. Other attacks on the American troops by the Mexicans are believed to have occurred.

ELEVATOR SHAFT SPREADS FLAMES

BLAZE WENT QUICKLY FROM FLOOR TO FLOOR WHEN ONCE IT GOT WELL STARTED

The fire was first discovered by Meta Baucht and Emma B. Johnson, two chambermaids at the Union, who were trapped on the second floor and called for help as related in another column. Hal Short turned in the alarm to the fire station.

The blaze was hidden from the street at first because of the high walls which surrounded it on all sides. Herman Amish, driver of the fire truck, was confused as to the location of the fire when he drove the truck up Washington street, and he went past Clinton street before he discovered his mistake. He was required to reverse and go back to Clinton street before turning north, losing a few seconds of valuable time. From Clinton street the blaze was not discernable as yet, and the truck was stopped in front of the Whittaker barber shop in which a light was burning, having been lit by short when he awoke. It was necessary to start the truck again and drive around the corner onto Iowa avenue before the blaze was discovered.

Pressure is Very Low.

Lines of hose were run in to the blaze through the entry way to the building off Iowa avenue, and the fire was discovered on the interior of the building in the vicinity of the back stairs which led up to the kitchen. With the first dash of water the flames, although already burning fiercely, seemed to recede a little, but after a moment the water pressure failed and water was not thrown from the nozzles for a distance any greater than sixteen or twenty feet.

Flames Gain Headway.

The fire, it seemed, had started almost directly above the boilers in the basement, and in the vicinity of the elevator shaft. Using the shaft for a draft the blaze spread upward and outward quickly and within fifteen or twenty minutes at the most it was apparent that the building was doomed. It was at this time that Foster and Powers, the last men out of the building, escaped down the front fire escape.

Smoke Clouds are Dense.

Dense clouds of smoke were rolled eastward and north over the city by a southwest wind which blew moderately, and showers of sparks and burning embers were thrown over buildings which stood in the path of the wind.

Fire Reaches Height.

About 1:15 or 1:30 o'clock the fire was at its height and had spread to the entire building with the exception of some of the business houses on the lower floor. Flames shot into the air to a great height, and the heat was so intense that the crowd of thousands of people which had gathered to watch the sight was kept back at a safe distance without the work of fire police.

Store Fronts Blown Opt.

As the heat increased the store fronts on the ground floor were blown out one by one. Wieneke's was the first to explode with a crash, and if the several canaries inside had not already been suffocated to death they perished in the burst of flames that shot out momentarily

half way across the street. The entire interior of the room burst into flames. Next to go was the Fink Cigar store front and finally the University Bookstore front on the corner. Later the glass in front of the Dental supply company's rooms on Iowa avenue was blown out.

Fire Spreads to Coasts

For some time it had been evident that the Coast Clothing store must suffer from the fire and scores of willing helpers had been carrying out goods for twenty minutes or half an hour. The flames now began to eat their way through into the clothing store from the rear end, and the menace here became more serious as the blaze began to die down in the Union building on the corner. In the end the entire rear end of the Coast store was destroyed by fire, the damage extending a little farther forward than the office. Upstairs the tailoring shop was gutted and sample room space was entirely destroyed together with some clothing which happened to be there.

Walls Fall With Crash

With the interior of the building burned out for the most part, huge sections of the brick walls began to fall in. First to go was a large piece of the north wall which came out in the middle and doubled back into the interior of the building. Previous to this there had been pieces of wall and whole floors or remnants of floors which had fallen in the interior of the building, raising a shower of sparks. A section at the southeast corner of the building at the rear was the next to go, and pieces of the cornice and the wood and steel upper floor fell back into the burning mass little by little.

Fire Under Control

When the walls fell in the greatest strength of the fire seemed to have been spent, and in spite of the fact that there was still a lively battle to head off the flames in the Coast building, the fire was under control by 2:30 o'clock. The west wind threatened at this time to carry the blaze eastward to the Sutton Barber shop, the McGinnis motorcycle shop, Guy Lee's laundry, and adjacent structures and business houses immediately to the east on Iowa avenue, but the heavy fire wall at the east end of the Union building prevented the spread of the flames in this direction.

Coasts' Blazes Up Strong.

The rear end of the Coast store was then burning fiercest, but with three streams playing on the blaze this was soon definitely under control and, while there remained a great funeral pyre of twisted and burning debris in the shell of the wall where once the Iowa Union stood, the fire had almost entirely spent itself.

Push Part of Wall Over.

The section of the south wall of the building which extended up beyond the roof of the Coast building then threatened to topple over to the south, so the firemen climbed to the roof and pushed this part over north into the ruins of the building. As daylight approached the remaining parts of the wall fell piece by piece, either pulled over by the firemen or of their own weight. Large sections fell first to the north, only the great chimney remaining standing, and finally the northwest corner fell out. Then, in three sections at short intervals, the west wall of the building collapsed.

By this time it was 6 o'clock. Streams of water which were still being poured into the ruins were quenching the last flickering flames. A small part of the west wall at the south remained standing, as did the east portion of the north wall. The cellars were filled with brick, plaster, and mortar. Only a few people who had come down town early were watching the firemen at work, the crowd having gone home for the most part about 3 o'clock or shortly after. Sickly smelling smoke which rose from the wet smouldering plaster still floated out to the east over the city, but the fire was all but out.

LOSS BY FIRE	
Dey estate on building	\$50,000
Iowa Union on contents	3,500
Coasts	30,000
Dental Supply Co.	13,000
University Book Store	11,000
O. H. Fink	8,000
Wieneke's Arcade	8,000
Dr. L. W. Dean	400
William Sutton	300
Students Rooming at Union	10,000
\$137,200	

COVERED BY INSURANCE	
Dey estate on building	\$20,000
Iowa Union on contents	covered
Coasts	covered
Dental Supply Co.	6,500
University Book Store	6,500
O. H. Fink	2,000
Wieneke's Arcade	6,000
Dr. L. W. Dean	covered
William Sutton	covered
Students rooming at Union	covered

DROPPED MATCH CAUSE OF BLAZE?

While the origin of the fire is a mystery, the two chambermaids, Emma B. Johnson and Meta Baucht, both of Des Moines, have an interesting story in connection with their discovery of the fire. In an interview with the Citizen this morning they told the following story:

"About 12:30 we heard a noise in the kitchen, but at first guessed this to be only rats running about. Later, however, we heard someone tiptoeing toward the door and knew right away that some one was in the kitchen, supposedly some of the fellows raiding the ice box in search of pies or something else to eat."

Said Miss Johnson: "I didn't think anything more about it and tried to go to sleep, but it wasn't long before I smelled smoke. I thought this only to be some 'mut' standing outside my door and deviling around."

Shortly afterward Miss Baucht awoke and, smelling smoke, got up to see what was the matter. She rushed back to Emma and aroused her by crying, "For God's sake, Emma, the whole building's on fire."

"I lost my head then," said Meta, "and grabbed a few clothes, a skirt, and my coat; I didn't even stop for anything else. I thought of my new Easter dress, but I didn't have time to get it. We ran for the fire escape, but couldn't make it. Emma fell about a story off one place and hurt her hip and leg and bruised her nose. We got up on the roof and hollered like fools. I was almost hysterical. Gee, I wish I had been in D. M. last night."

"Some of them think that the fire started in the basement, but I know better," said Emma. "It was some of them guys getting pie out of the ice-box and using a match. The coal and kindling box stand right next to the range and they just carelessly threw a match into it. I heard footsteps plainly as they tiptoed out of the room and it wasn't a long time after that that I heard the crackling in the kitchen that I thought was rats. They can't tell me that it started in the basement."

"The doctor that was there afterwards just said I was scared, but I know better. My nose hurts pretty bad for just being scared, and my hip and ankle are fierce. There's one good thing about it, though—I didn't get that silk petticoat from the dressmaker that I was going to get last night. And we can be thankful that we're here instead of being burned up."

German Officer Says Break With U. S. Would be Insanity

By CARL W. ACKERMAN
(United Press Staff Correspondent)
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Berlin, by wireless to Tuckerton, N. J., April 21.—Germany can go no further in her submarine concessions to the United States, Admiral von Hoetzendorff, chief of the German admiralty staff, stated today in an interview to the United Press. The German naval head during the course of the interview said: "We have no desire for a break with the United States. That would be insanity. We shall not bring this about despite our desire to push vigorously our submarine warfare. We did not sink the Sussex. The admiralty is convinced of this. If you could read the definite instructions, the exact orders each submarine is given, you would understand that the torpedoing of the Sussex was a mistake. Many of our submarines have returned from rounding up British vessels. They sighted scores of passenger ships going from America to England and not one of these were attacked, although we know every one of them was carrying war munitions to the allies."

"We have decided to warn the crews and passengers on passenger liners, but we cannot be asked to regard freight ships in the same manner. This is beyond the border for any belligerent nation. We could have destroyed hundreds of thousands of tons of enemy ships since the beginning of the submarine war except for the promise we have given the United States, but the ring around the British Isles will grow tighter and tighter and we will then see whether England will still maintain that she cannot make peace until Germany is destroyed. The allies

DEYS LOSERS ON UNION BUILDING

WILL HAVE HEAVIEST LOSS FOLLOWING DISASTROUS FIRE OF LAST NIGHT

Loss on last night's disastrous fire which destroyed the Iowa Union and adjacent business houses is expected to reach or exceed the \$150,000 mark. This is in accordance with the latest figures available this afternoon.

The Peter A. Dey estate, owner of the building which was destroyed, will be the heaviest losers. A minimum valuation of \$50,000 was placed upon the structure by the Deys, and insurance which they carried totalled only to \$26,000.

Detailed statistics of the loss, together with the names of the firms hit by the fire, are given in the tabulation above. Next to the Dey estate, Coasts' will lose heavily, for although much was saved by willing helpers who carried to places of safety the contents of the front part of the store.

Coasts' was the only business house successful in removing anything from the path of the flames. The Wieneke book store did not save a single thing, while the money in the cash drawer was all that could be taken from Fink's before the flames grew too obstreperous. The University Book Store and the O'Brien Worthen Dental Supply company likewise did not salvage anything before the flames encroached on their property.

All of the stock in the basement of the Coast clothing store, everything in the tailoring room on the second floor, and much of the office at the back of the main salesroom were destroyed by fire. Large portions of underwear and pajama stock, athletic goods, and suit cases, erty in ruins.

lies could have had peace long ago but they still cling to the idea of starving Germany into submission and the longer they cling to the idea that they can starve Germany into submission, the greater will be their bill.

"We are not to torpedo without warning neutral ships bound for England. Our submarines have respected every one of these so far. They have met scores of them in the North Sea, the channel and the Atlantic. If diplomatic relations with America are broken off, our submarines can attack any enemy ship without warning, but remember, we have no desire for a break with the United States. That would be insanity. We shall not bring this about despite our desire to push vigorously the submarine warfare."

"I do not think the American people want to declare war against Germany for the way she is continuing her submarine war. I do not think America wants to protect England. I do not think the American people want to do anything they can to help England win even by protecting the English freight ships with American lives."

Ad copyright story —
"Germany is at war with England. Germany must stop English shipping. England is the one responsible for the American lives on her freight ships. We cannot warn the Americans on board any more than we could send word to neutrals who may be in the enemy trenches before we attack. It is the same situation on the seas. Still we know that all the passenger ships that are going to England are carrying war munitions and articles which are helping England prolong the war."

caps, and traveling bags also went by the boards.

Dr. L. W. Dean's office over the clothing store was damaged somewhat by water and by flames which crept through the windows in one corner at the back of the suite. Leo Whittaker stripped his barber shop clean of fixtures when the fire was at its height in anticipation of its spreading to his place of business. He carried no insurance on his equipment.

Smoke, fire, and water invaded the Sutton barber shop immediately to the east of the Union building on Iowa avenue, but the damage was nominal.

Explosion of a door check which was overheated from the flames occurred on the sidewalk in front of the burning building. Fragments flew in all directions. An unidentified woman was cut on the chin, but not seriously.

DEY LEARNS FIRE FROM C. RAPIDS

All night Curtis Dey slept soundly without knowing that his property at the corner of Clinton street and Iowa avenue and the property of the other heirs to the Peter A. Dey estate was being destroyed by fire. About 6:40 o'clock this morning he was awakened by the long distance operator and asked to talk to Cedar Rapids.

M. M. Hall, Cedar Rapids insurance adjuster, was on the wire. He informed Mr. Dey that he wished to aid in settling the loss on his destroyed building. Mr. Dey was shocked beyond measure and informed Mr. Hall that he was misinformed—that he had no fire loss that required settlement. He was convinced in a moment, however, and after inviting the Cedar Rapids adjuster to Iowa City at once hurried as fast as he could to the site of the old St. James hotel to find his property in ruins.