

LIST OF BARN FIRES & OTHER MAJOR FIRES

fought by the Wheatland Fire Dept.
compiled by Harold Richter, former Fire Chief – July 30, 1999

Barn Fires -

Owners:

1. Slade Farm - Henry Kaddatz
2. Roy Karow
3. Herman Redmer (when barn was rebuilt, the Fire Dept. had a barn dance in the new barn to raise funds for the fire dept.)
4. Norm & Mary Kerkman (Fire Dept. also had a barn dance after barn was rebuilt)
5. Felix Robers
6. Ron Denko
7. Hugo Rosenhauer
8. Will Kretschmer (Charlie Warrer, now Mike Fenske farm)
9. August Neumann
10. Hugo Vos
11. Albert Vos
12. Mark Weis
13. Hap Runkel (northwest corner of "W" and "JI")
14. Russ Olson, "JI" (Town of Randall)
15. Ed Lichter ("W" north of "50")
16. Robert Busch (Town of Burlington)
17. Honning Farm (Barbian) - (Town of Brighton)
18. Ed May
19. Otto Schenning ("FR", south of "W")
20. Reynolds Farm (Town of Randall)
21. Walter Uebele Farm, Schaal Rd. (Town of Burlington)
22. Bradley Farm (Town of Randall)
23. Frank Summerfeldt, later Frank Hunsbusher (now Kerkhoff), 52nd St.

Other Major Fires -

1. Butler's Tavern & Restaurant in Slades Corners
2. A.H. Lois Feed Company in Bassett (Town of Randall)
3. Bob Sheahan residence (Town of Salem)
4. Joerndt's Tavern (Town of Salem)
5. Fred Genens Tavern, Powers Lake
6. Red Onion Tavern & Dance Hall, Powers Lake

July 30, 1999

1972 Fire Truck Picture taken at the old ball park in New Munster directly south of the Town Hall

front row, left to right: Harold Richter, Bob Lenz, Tom Grady, Rodell Schenning, Earl Floeter, Roy (Windy) Smith, George Schlitz, Erv Seno, Francis Kerkman, Bert Richter, Harold Kessler, Joe A. Kerkman, Phillip Neumann, Ray Lois, Len Lois, Sr., Albertus Schuerman.

middle row, left to right: Homer Steffen, Leroy Smitz, Charles Elverman, Herschel Vos, Roger Runkel, Angelo Seno, Ron Gascoigne, Ron Runkel, Charles Schuerman, Robert Hofner, Alvin (Tubby) Weis, Harold Rossmiller, Dennis Lois, Ken Kerkman, Richard Kerkman, Leroy Vos, Norman Robers, Mark Weis, Jerome Kerkman, Dean Luke, Glen Kerkman, Jerry Luke, Alan Weis, Tony Zwirgzdas, Michael Smith, Hank Kretschmer, Don Vos, Bob Quast, Jon Ludtke, Bob Herda, Dick Elverman, Fred Koehnke, Stanley Lois.

back row, left to right: Ray Cates, Richard Spiegelhoff, Bill Uhen, Larry Smith, Ed Kretschmer, Jerry Lois, Dan Chlebos, Charles Warren, Ron Vos, Wayne Chapman.

1972 Fire Truck

left to right: Homer Steffen (Town Board Supervisor & Fire Dept. Secretary-Treasurer), Bob Lenz (Town Board Supervisor), Tom Grady (Town Clerk), Harold Richter (Fire Chief), Erv Seno (first Fire Chief), and George Schlitz (Town Chairman).

Town of Wheatland Volunteer Fire Dept.

~~ History ~~

(from Harold Richter, long-time fire chief – July 30, 1999)

1941 -

The City of Burlington, which had been serving the Town of Wheatland, sent notice they would not provide any fire protection to the Town of Wheatland after December of 1941.

Peter Epping, Town Chairman, called a Town Meeting of Electors. They met in the St. Alphonsus School Hall because there was not enough space in the Town Hall. The electors voted at this meeting to begin the Town of Wheatland Volunteer Fire Dept.

Because this was during World War II, they had to apply to the federal government for approval to purchase a new fire truck. A 1941 Chevrolet truck was supplied by the Peter Pirsch Fire Truck Company, Kenosha.

The Fire Dept. was officially organized in 1943 and Erwin Seno was appointed as the first fire chief. There were approximately 40 members at this time.

With a new truck and firefighters unfamiliar with new equipment, there were sometimes "surprises." At one of the first fires, the water pressure was up so high, it blew all the shingles off the roof of the building that was on fire.

When the fire siren blew, farmers would fill their milk cans with water and haul them to the fire. The truck only held 500 gal. Water was precious and they were careful not to waste it at the fire scene.

Most barn fires resulted in total destruction. When firemen arrived, their main emphasis was on saving other buildings near the barn.

1958 -

A building was constructed in 1958 in the middle of New Munster for the fire station and town hall.

1978 -

The present firehouse was built on the east end of New Munster in 1978.

The fire department was very much involved in the building of the area where the New Munster Ball Diamond and Pavilion are now located. Carl Karow and his construction company did most of the moving of dirt and general shaping of the area. But there were hours of hand work supplied by fire department members.

In the early years, the fire department raised most of their funds thru an annual dance and ticket sales at the Fox River Winter Gardens located at the intersection of Hwy "50" and Hwy "W." Now the annual, July Fire Department Festival which includes fire department water fights, a ball tournament, volleyball

tournament and dance provides funds for the department.