

brave fire fighters for the first time gave up the unequal battle, and, already too late in many instances, turned their attention to their personal safety. The Eastern Minnesota train from the south had just come in, and the people of the panic-stricken city flocked to it for safety. A number of box cars were coupled on and filled and covered with men, women and children. Some were bareheaded, some were coatless, some few clutched a pitiful bundle of the more precious of their portable possessions. Families were separated, and in all this was a motley crowd of about 400 or more people. The train pulled out just ahead of the fire, and succeeded in ultimately reaching Duluth.

About the same hour the accommodation train on the Hinckley and St. Cloud branch left for the latter place with about twenty-five passengers. Its path lay directly across the path of the fire and their situation speedily became desperate. The ties were burning, the rails were warping and the trestles were sagging under the train.

Suddenly the track gave way and the train toppled off to one side. No one was injured and they pressed on to Pokegama station, a few rods ahead.

The people who were left in the city were in what seemed to be an almost helpless condition. Egress by the only means of transportation that could hope to distance the swiftly advancing flames was out of the question. The men had been fighting the fire for hours and the women and children were in a panic-stricken condition. Horses were harnessed to buggies and wagons. Women and children were hurriedly loaded. Probably 200 of them left town on foot or in vehicles, plunging into the woods north, across the Grindstone river, which skirts the town on the north. They were literally fleeing before the pursuing demon.

Over the hill that rises beyond the Grindstone is a swamp, and to this most of the people with teams headed, but it proved no protection. Some abandoned their teams and ran into the lower portions of the swamp, but the fire caught them out. Not one was left to tell the tale, and this morning, in a space of a little more than five acres, were counted over 130 corpses.

Nearly all the bodies were nude, the fire having burned every vestige of their clothing and blackened and charred the corpses, rendering many of them unrecognizable.

From the stories of passengers on the limited train which was burned near Hinckley, the entire train crew deserve to be placed on the roll of honor for personal heroism. Engineer James Root, of White Bear, heads the list. He was badly burned and almost blinded, and fell from his seat unconscious immediately on getting out of the fires.

When about two miles north of Hinckley, Root first discovered the fires, which had been raging on both sides of the track, were racing him for his life and the lives of his passengers. Cinders were flying in every direction, and the smoke was so dense that it was well nigh impossible to see beyond the cab windows, even with the aid of the powerful headlight, which were coming after and bearing down upon him at a sixty-

mile gait. When about a mile and a half from Hinckley he discovered the fire was too fast for him and overtook the train, and overleaped it so that it was literally surrounded with flames. The air was stifling, and the clothes of both engineer and fireman caught fire. Fireman McGowan leaped into the water tank, and, seizing a bucket, dashed the water several times over the burning engineer. Root steadily kept at his post, although scarcely able to sit upright.

In the meantime the passengers could see nothing, but heard the roaring of the on-coming tornado of flame, and soon the glare outside was too much for the reason of a number of them. The rear car caught fire, and, as the flames overtook it, the passengers rushed headlong into the forward cars. The shrieks of the women and children, as well as the terrified shouts of the men, increased, and the terrible feelings aroused by the uproar of the flames on every hand. Several of the male passengers, too terrified for further self-control, leaped headlong through broken windows and were swallowed up in the flames outside. Others, seeing this act, quickly followed, and altogether in the next ten minutes a dozen men leaped to death in the flames in a like manner. The women, whose terror had been pitiful a few minutes before, now came heroically to the help of the trainmen in endeavoring to soothe the frightened children.

Engineer Root saw there was no outlet apparently for his train ahead, and concluded to turn back through the distance already burned over rather than encounter possibly greater perils before them. He backed at a fast speed to Skunk lake, five miles from Hinckley. The passengers deserted the train there and took refuge in a swamp, where they spent the night. This morning a relief train from the north brought them to this city. The relief train carried a supply of handcars, which were used in picking up the bodies of the dead along the track.

ST. PAUL, Minn., Sept. 4. — A *Pioneer Press* special from Pine City says: Buried at Hinckley and vicinity, 225; Sandstone, 67; Pokegama, 25; Miller, 12; estimate of dead not found, 50. Total, 379.

The Hinckley horror is dawning in its awful magnitude. There are now lying in the desolate cemeteries under a shallow covering of sand, or in the rude rough boxes which take the places of caskets, 216 bodies. F. J. Weber, of Pine City, who has had entire charge of the interment, has had his work well in hand and has kept most accurate accounts of the bodies. These figures are his and include those buried by their friends.

The foreman of the Duluth construction train reported to Coroner Cowan this afternoon that on the hill at the north end of the bridge across the Grindstone were nine bodies so completely incinerated that the sex could not be distinguished.

There were undoubtedly settlers and men in the lumber camps who have not yet been discovered. A search for them will be prosecuted with vigor and they will be buried where they lie. There is an unknown number of dead in the mill pond. It is as yet approximated. The bank was covered with sawdust and edgings and not far

away was the Brennan mill and lumberyard. A number of persons were seen to go to the pond, but no one came out alive; and so hot is the fire still burning there, it may be a day or two before this pool of death can be examined.

PINE CITY, Minn., Sept. 6. — The worst has been told at Hinckley. There has been but one party of dead discovered since last night's report. They were in a cellar west of Hinckley, and it cannot be told whether there are three or four bodies, so badly are they burned.

The work of draining the millpond is progressing slowly, but the opinion is that little will be revealed. A huge building for offices and shelter is almost enclosed.

ST. PAUL, Sept. 9. — A Hinckley, Minn., special to the *Pioneer Press* says: This has been a quiet and gloomy Sabbath. The searchers after the bodies of the victims of the great forest fires are resting, but will resume their work in the morning.

Coroner Cowan and party went to Sandstone today, where they buried eighty bodies. There were no religious services here today, no clergyman being present, and a number of the people went to Pine City to attend the memorial services in that city.

Five bodies were found last night in a cellar on a hill by the Kettle river and were buried where found. It is believed here the death list in Pine county will exceed 500, as something like 100 are still unaccounted for.

#### FIRE AT AMERICAN FORK.

AMERICAN FORK, Sept. 11, 1894. — Our town sustained a very severe loss by fire this morning about four o'clock. One of our largest and best business blocks was completely demolished and all that remains of W. W. Jackson's fine two-story adobe building and its contents are the charred and blackened walls. The cause of the fire is a mystery, but it originated in the upper story, which was partly occupied by a photograph gallery. The inside of the building was completely cleaned out. The stock of Mr. Jackson's store was saved, being removed by friends during the progress of the fire. The total loss will reach \$2,750. The photograph gallery was insured for \$300. Mr. Jackson's loss is about \$1,500 on the building; Dr. Christiansen, dentist, \$250; T. J. Pearl, the photographer, \$500. Other losses about \$500. There is no fire department in American Fork. The bucket brigade did excellent work in saving a frame building adjoining. The patent fire extinguishers were of no use more than so much water.

There are at present several very severe cases of typhoid fever in our community, otherwise the people are enjoying good health.

Louis Wertze, one of Wertze Bros., circus men and specialty tumblers, whose home is in Lincoln, Neb., fell about fifteen feet while practicing a trapeze act at Lincoln park on Sunday and struck head downwards upon the net below, and dislocated the third vertebra. It was quickly replaced, but he will probably not recover, as his limbs are all paralyzed.