

May 1911, Weston Leader, photo added

FIRE FIEND RAGES

And the Town of Weston Barely Escapes Destruction

The Hotel Royal and the row of frame buildings adjoining on the south side of Main street were totally destroyed Sunday morning by fire, leaving a gap between the postoffice and the corner brick, occupied by A. M. NorDean.



Eph Williams, an Oregon pioneer about 80 years old, lost his life by reason of the fire. He occupied an upstairs room in the hotel, and could only escape by jumping through the window. He landed in the creek bed, and sustained injuries from which he died Sunday night in a Pendleton hospital. Williams had lived

in this neighborhood for more than 30 years. He was an old-time miner, familiar with the historical stampedes of early Oregon camps. So far as known, he left no relatives.

Subar Klein, the 16 year old son of the landlord, J. N. Klein, and a popular student of Weston High school, had a narrow escape. He tied some sheets together and started to descend, but his improvised rope broke, precipitating him to the ground. His hands and face were blistered before he could get out, so quickly had the fire progressed. Landing on his feet, he ran to the fire bell and rang it, after Mrs. I. M. Kemp had performed the same service. Only then did he realize that he was hurt, and it later transpired that his side had been punctured. He was taken to a Pendleton hospital and a piece of splintered rib removed from his wound. He is now rapidly recovering.

HOTEL ROYAL
J. N. KLEIN, Proprietor

Do not go hungry when you can get a good meal at
regular meal hours for 25c.

Breakfast, 6:30 to 8 a. m.; Dinner, 11:30 a. m. to 1
p. m.; Supper, 5:30 to 7 p. m.

Extra Charges Between Meal Hours
Rooms newly refitted and renovated

SUNDAY DINNERS A SPECIALTY
Party Meals to Order

Mr. Klein, his wife and their younger son, who were sleeping on the first floor, barely escaped in their night clothes. The fire is supposed to have started on the lower floor, but the building was so quickly wrapped in flames that nothing is known of its origin. Knotted ropes were available on the upper floor, but these were overlooked by the lodgers in their

excitement. Had a breath of wind been stirring, the business center of town and a good share of the residence district could not have escaped. The fire started about two o'clock and a half hour later it seemed inevitable that the flames would spread to the opposite side of the street, where window fronts were smoking and burning. Effective work was done, however, and the fire did the minimum damage. Some defective hydrants delayed the fighters, but after they made connection with the mains they kept two streams going and had ample water supply. The row of wooden buildings destroyed could not have been saved in any event and the fire was finally confined to these. It was under control by three o'clock. An impromptu bucket brigade of lodge men was instrumental in saving the lodge hall above the bank, whose west windows were all ablaze. Flying embers set fire to several barns and these smaller fires were watched and quickly put out.

The total loss will not exceed \$10,000 and is about half covered by insurance. The principal damage to the town results from the unsightly gap left on Main street. However, Weston's escape from practical annihilation is regarded so fortunate that this condition is quite endurable. Men and teams are clearing away the debris, and the vacant space above the creek bed will be made as presentable as possible in time for the pioneer reunion. In 1883, fire started in the St John's hotel at identically the same spot and wiped out a good share of town.

Fire Losses Adjusted

The following losses have already been adjusted:

J. N. Klein -- \$1500 in the Fireman's Fund on furniture, S. A. Barnes agent; \$1000 in the Royal on building, Frank Price agent; \$1000 in the Queen on building, I. M. Kemp agent.

M. A. Thrasher -- \$500 in the Home on stock, S. A. Barnes agent.

A. M. NorDean -- \$159 in the Home on stock, S. A. Barnes agent

I.O.O.F., K. of P., W.O.W. lodges, \$259 on the building, in different companies.

Other small losses on charred store fronts, broken windows, etc., remain to be adjusted.. All the above losers are well satisfied with the treatment accorded them by the several companies, whose adjusters were prepared to do "the square thing" in every instance.
