

Boyer Opera House, Burned October 18, 1913

The clang of the fire bell, that most unwelcome sound, at 2:35 last Saturday morning, awoke most of the citizens of Interlaken, brot a large crowd to the Boyer opera house on Cayuga Street. When discovered, the dressing rooms on the south end of the building were a roaring furnace, and a few minutes later the flames burst from the roof of the main building, while a pillar of smoke was rolling from the tower on the north end. The firemen soon had the engine at work at Dr. Hill's pond, with two lines of hose pouring water to save the blacksmith shop of Charles Reiley, less than 30 feet east of the opera house, and his barn, about the same distance from both shop and hall. It was a terribly hot and quick fire—all down within an hour. Mr. Reiley's barn was burned, but his horse and wagons were saved. The barn contained about four tons of hay. All the contents of the blacksmith shop and a good share of the furniture in his house, about 20 feet east of the shop were removed.

At one time the roof of the shop was all ablaze but the firemen got a stream and conquered the flames, but it was a terribly hot job to stick to the hose between these buildings, but the fire fighters won the battle, and saved the shop and house. Mr. Reiley had no insurance on either barn or shop, letting it lapse over a year ago. The opera house was insured for \$2,500-about one half its value. While the firemen were fighting these fires, a hard fight had to be put to save L.W. Seaman's storage building, not far to the southwest. The roof was on fire several times. Residents on the north side of the street were in very warm quarters for an hour, heat blistering paint on the houses owned by A. V. Minor. The sparks came like a snow storm on the houses on North Main Street, keeping watchers there on a jump, until the opera house building fell in.

While working on the roof of his father's house, George Stout fell backward and landed in the cellarway, spraining his ankle and being severely bruised.

Warren Miller was the first to discover the fire, when he got up to let the cat out. Without waiting for shoes or other clothing, he ran and pulled the fire alarm. His, quick action no doubt saved other property, by getting people quickly to the fire.

The firemen are entitled to much credit for the work performed on Saturday morning. A number of young men took hold of the fire engine and stuck to it, until their services were no longer needed. As is usual at such times, a number of able-bodied men stood around, with hands in pockets, and refused to work on the brakes. It demonstrated most clearly the urgent need of a water works system right here-in Interlaken, and we will all be wise when we get it—instead of talk about it.

The Boyer opera house building was erected in 1853, by John Stout, as a machine shop. He sold it to John Kennedy who, for several years, used it as a place to fit horses for the eastern markets, with indifferent, success. Next a subscription paper was started, and the building purchased for a town hall. Later the company, known as the Farmer Village Town Hall Association, was, formed with the late John B. Avery at its head. After a number of years it came into possession of D.C. Wheeler, who sold it to the late W. W. Boyer, March 1, 1894, who remodeled the building into a commodious opera house, and it was owned by his estate. The building and equipment could not be replaced for \$5,000. There was \$2,500 insurance on it. As the place will not be rebuilt, it is a decided loss to the whole community.

“The Girl of the Streets” Company played there Friday evening. All their outfit, in seven large trunks, went up in flames. The management said \$1,000 would not replace the wardrobe of his company. They went from here to Willard, and the manager to New York, to buy a new outfit. He said he would be ready again in a week.

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