

NOTEWORTHY NELSON FIRES

April 7, 1892: The first fire; Carney and Barrett's store. Destroyed. Estimated at \$7,000 to \$8,000.

Jan. 19, 1894: International Hotel. Destroyed. This fire resulted in public pressure that led to improvements to the city's volunteer fire department, the purchase of new equipment, and ultimately construction of the first dedicated fire hall.

1898: Nelson Brewery & Ice Co. Ltd. Brewery at Mill and Ward streets destroyed.

April 15, 1903: Kootenay River Lumber Co. Sash and Door factory. \$6,000 loss. Possibly the first fire photographed in Nelson and also described as the "firecrest" to that point.

May 1, 1903: Lapointe's boarding house, Vernon Street. Three-storey building, destroyed. Bourgeois, 5, and Adrian Bourgeois, 1.

FIRE BUGS OF 1911-12

Aug. 17: Yale Columbia lumber yard

Aug. 18: Between houses, Chinatown

Aug. 19: Between houses, 318 Lake Street

Aug. 20: Under sidewalk, 318 Lake Street

Aug. 21: Between two Chinese houses, corner of Lake and Hall streets

Aug. 22: Chinese ranch buildings in Fairview, \$5,000 in damage

Aug. 23: City food shed adjoining fire hall, \$750 damage

Aug. 24: Between houses, Chinatown

Aug. 30: Attempt to burn Lambert lumber yard

Sept. 1: Brewery on Latimer Street. \$50,000 loss

Sept. 2: Hall Mines smelter. \$200,000 loss

Sept. 3: Between houses, Chinatown

Mar. 12: Bell Trading Co. warehouse, McDonald's Jam Factory

Mar. 18: Allan block, Ward Street

Mar. 19: Griffin block

Mar. 20: Brindman-Ker warehouse, Yale-Columbia mill buildings

April 11: Between houses, Chinatown

April 12: Josephine St., \$6,000 damage. Rectory building, Thompson building.

June 11: Sheik, Nocks' ranch

May 1, 1913: McDonald's Jam Factory, Vernon St. Last fire before the new fire hall opened.

Jan. 24, 1915: Trinity Methodist Church. Rebuilt.

ca. 1918: Grand Central Hotel, Vernon Street

May 23, 1922: Nelson House Hotel, Baker Street destroyed along with several other buildings and a total of ten businesses including Julien's cafe and rooming house, Wilson's grocery store, Wilson's butchereria, Wsake's shoe repair, Croll's tailor shop, Scotch bakery, Bodega hotel, Holland's harness shop, Choyce's bicycle shop, Hamilton's milliner, and Nichols' barber shop. Total loss close to \$30,000.

Early 1920s: Original Nelson Transfer block

Early 1920s: Grove Hotel, Fairview

Early 1920s: Western Box and Shingle Mill

Late 1920s: Nelson Lumber and Manufacturing Co.

Late 1920s: Lakeside Hotel, Vernon Street

Jan. 25, 1928: St. Saviour's Church. Rebuilt.

July 31, 1929: Fair building, Vernon Street where CHC Centre now stands. Destroyed. Dawn Pemikiet said it "went up like paper."

July 6, 1932: Griffin Block, Baker and Ward streets. Destroyed. Where the Fink Block (Wall's News and other businesses) now stands.

April 18, 1935: Nelson Opera House, Victoria Street. Destroyed in a spectacular final performance. As early as 1908, the building was declared a "fire trap."

July 22, 1935: Columbia Booting Works, Ward Street. Destroyed, taking the life of Arnie Linebaugh, 80. This building, formerly the Nelson Cab Co. miraculously survived the Opera House fire next door two months earlier.

April 1937: Former Bodega saloon, last frame building on north side of 500 block Baker St. burns, including Hoogenwerf's electric store, Standard Electric, Berensford's store, Van de Kamp Bakery, and Cummin's taxi.

ca. 1938: Shell Oil, Government Road. Dawn Pemikiet recalled: "We were up in Rosemont above the CPR hill and had a dandy view of oil drums blowing skywards and exploding in flames."

July 28, 1940: Nelson Sash and Door factory, Front Street. Pemikiet remembered: "We watched from the ball grounds bank across the street as the building went up in flames. It was a thousand ftcs. There was a big up on the Wood Wallace warehouse roof hoing it down and the fire blazing in the building behind his back."

1942: Klondyke Hotel, Vernon Street

1942: Kootenay Steam Laundry, Baker Street

ca. 1942: W.W. Powell Co. mill and match block factory

May 16, 1944: W.H. Powell Co. lumber yard

Nov. 23, 1949: Johnstone block, corner Baker and Josephine streets. \$250,000 damage to two apartments and seven businesses, including Nelson Electric, Greenwood's Furs, Safeway, Gray's candy store, Alice's Wonderland, Glenbow's barbers shop, and Johnson's shoe repair. Chief Gordon McDonald, taken to hospital for smoke inhalation called it the "toughest" of the more than 7,000 fires he had fought.

June 6, 1952: Nelson Farmer's Supply office and warehouse, Palm Dairies warehouse, and coal bunker of Towler Fuel and Transfer, Railway St. Damage \$100,000 and loss of 80 tons of grain, flour, cereal, and dairy.

Sept. 2, 1952: Nelson Sash and Door Works, 907 Front Street.

Nov. 30, 1952: Simpson's construction and R.A. Paterson Millwork Co., waterfront. \$50,000 damage

May 27, 1955: Strathecona Hotel, corner Stanley and Victoria. Nelson's deadliest fire. Six fatalities: Harum Shimoda, 20; Gertrude Ellen Edey, 68; Quentin McDonald, 44; John Thomas Price, 89; Margaret Helen Sinclair, 75; Rodolphe (Rody) Lawrence Emerson Symington, 10.

June 21, 1958: Peebles Motors, Baker Street. \$200,000 loss.

Sept. 20, 1959: South Nelson school (former Nelson High School). \$300,000 loss. Lit by a "mixed up" nine year old boy.

Jan. 1963: Nelson Machinery Co. Ltd., corner Hall and Lake streets. Damage estimated at \$50,000 but Burgess Tire Co. and Kootenay Industrial Supply saved.

April 17, 1967: St. Paul's Trinity United Church. The church's organist, a Trafalgar teacher, was charged with arson. Damage over \$250,000. Rebuilt.

June 15, 1967: Palm Dairy, Baker Street. The building was vacant, having recently been sold to Macleods, and was being demolished.

April 17, 1968: Floating bandshell, Lakeside Park. Built for the 1965 International Water Pageant, the bandshell was under an order to be destroyed and had been the victim of previous arson attempts.

Nov. 17, 1969: Queens Hotel, Baker Street. Destroyed. \$500,000 damage, including smoke damage to adjacent buildings. 20 guests evacuated.

April 28, 1970: House at 121 High Street. Claimed the lives of Winifred and Lillian Houck.

June 1972: Kootenay Forest Products

Nov. 19, 1972: Overwaitea, 503 Vernon Street. Damage of \$125,000. Six onlookers either volunteered or were conscripted to help fight the fire.

Nov. 24, 1973: Savoy Hotel, Falls Street. Beer parlor gutted. Arson. Repaired.

Aug. 2, 1974: Chinese Nationalist Society, 524 Lake St. Claimed the life of Wah (Shorty) Der, 69.

1975: Royal Hotel and Pink Maid Laundry, Baker St. Arson. Damage minimal.

April 26, 1975: City bus garage, Josephine St. \$100,000 damage. Arson not suspected. Restored.

May 31, 1975: Blakeman's Store warehouse, 446 Baker St. Arson. Damage \$35,000 plus \$5,000 to Fields next door.

June 13, 1975: Simpson Sears, Baker Street, and Trafalgar School auditorium, the latter a \$275,000 loss. Both arson.

May 26, 1976: Nelson Home Furnishing, 600 block Baker Street. Upper story gutted.

Dec. 1, 1976: Johnstone block, Baker Street. Seven stores, including Mann's Meat Market, Wink's Grocery, and Dick's Ladies Apparel destroyed, along with seven apartments. Suffered two previous fires: one in 1938 destroyed the top floor, another in 1949 destroyed seven businesses as well. Now the site of BCAA.

Nov. 2, 1977: Campus Billiards, Hall Street.

Feb. 28, 1979: Hume School. \$300,000 to \$400,000 damage. Arson. A 15-year-old was arrested. Goober the hamster was rescued. Although gutted, the rebuilt school incorporated the original brick facade.

July 10, 1981: Biaylock Manor. City council gave the fire department to respond to this fire, even though it was outside city limits.

Feb. 1982: Aberdeen block, Baker Street. \$54,500 damage.

Sept. 28, 1982: Heritage Lanes bowling alley and Big Daddy's Tonite night club. 500 block Vernon Street. \$750,000 damage. Arson suspected. Big Daddy's had been closed for some time before the fire.

Dec. 24, 1982: Mountain Billiards, 533A Baker Street. \$100,000 damage. Arson suspected.

Mar. 1, 1983: Modern Walls and Carpets, Modern Sew, Kootenay Business Services, 400 block Josephine St. Damage \$75,000 to \$100,000. Arson.

1984: Kootenay Forest Products sawmill

July 28, 1987: Kootenay Forest Products plywood plant. Largest fire in the city's history.

April 2, 1992: Trailer fire at Klein's Trailer Park. Claims the lives of Aimee Beaulieu and her twin infants Samantha and David. Arson. Nelson's worst unsolved crime.

Dec. 22, 1993: Kootenay Forest Products planer mill

1994: City of Nelson power plant

Jan. 1, 1998: Granite Pointe golf course restaurant and pro shop. Destroyed.

Mar. 27, 1999: Morning Mountain ski lodge. Blowett. Destroyed.

1998 -> 2001: CP Rail maintenance building

July 28, 2001: House at 915 Carbonate St. Claims the lives of Vern Hodgkinson, Sarah Heitman, 35, and Andy Johnson, 35.

Oct. 8, 2001: House at 215 Stibbs St. Claims the life of Lynne Elizabeth Roberts, 54.

May 4, 2003: Nelson Museum. The *WV* *Armbilis* is destroyed and other artifacts are smoke damaged. Arson.

July 3, 2003: Rod and Gun Club. Destroyed. Arson.

Jan. 18, 2006: Green block, Ward Street. \$35,000 damage.

Nov. 10, 2007: Savoy Hotel, Falls Street. Mazatlan restaurant, Back Country Hotel, and Club 198 destroyed. Same building burned in 1973.

Dec. 18, 2008: Trailer fire, 700 block Lakeview Crescent, claims life of Maurice John Eggle, 59.

Dec. 31, 2009: Kootenay Skeds and Wheels. Across the orange bridge. Former AEW.

July 29, 2010: Redfish Grill, Baker Street. Former LD Cafe.

Jan. 6, 2011: Kerr Apartments, Victoria Street. Eighty people evacuated without injury but the building was gutted and later demolished. Nelson Home Furniture was also smoke damaged.