

## Adelaide Fire Brigade 1844

The Bank of South Australia Fire Engine, mentioned attending the fire at Mr James Frew on the Monday morning, 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1844. No further details to date on this equipment.

***South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Wednesday 24 January 1844, page 2***

### ALARMING AND DESTRUCTIVE FIRE AT FULLARTON.

It has seldom fallen to our lot to record a catastrophe more generally deplored, than that of the alarming and destructive fire on Monday last, at the residence of Mr James Frew, merchant, Fullarton, about a mile and a-half to the east of Adelaide. At an early hour on the morning of that day, say, from half-past ten to eleven o'clock, a report reached town that Mr Frew's house, barnyard, and stacks of barley, hay, and wheat, were all enveloped in flames, and, on turning our eyes in that direction, a dense cloud of smoke, was observed to be rising, but too truly indicative of the fearful reality. A large number of persons from Adelaide, and the more immediate neighbourhood, at once hastened to the spot, with the view of rendering any assistance in their power, but, before they could arrive, the stacks of hay and barley were totally consumed, and the barn, stable, pig-house, sheds, and nursery, together with a large portion of the farming implements, were smouldering in ruins, nothing being left standing but the house itself, and a slab hut in which the labouring men were accustomed to take their meals. The fire appears to have arisen from Mr Frew's having employed some men in the morning to burn the stubble around the stack-yard, with a view to the prevention of danger, the wind at that time blowing from the east, but the wind suddenly chopping round, and the fire not having, as the men thought, been completely extinguished, a spark was observed to be carried across the ploughed land to one of the stacks, which was at once ignited, and, from the combustible nature of the materials around it, soon spread throughout the yard, consuming everything before it, the windlass of the well being one of the first things destroyed, and thus rendering it impossible to procure water, except from the neighbouring sections, and that too after great delay, with a view to arresting the progress of the flames. Among the things consumed, were a new thrashing machine, lately imported into the Colony, and valued at £120, four stacks of hay, four stacks of barley, supposed to have contained about 2000 bushels, an excellent dray, the greater portion of the farming implements, the whole of the outhouses, and one or two pigs. Fortunately, the house and household furniture escaped, as did also the wheat, amounting to about 6000 bushels, the wind driving the flames away from the former, and the latter being placed on another section at the distance of nearly a mile from the barn-yard. The value of the property destroyed must be very considerable. At the time we write, a large mass of manure, the accumulation of two years and upwards, is in a state of ignition, and is likely to continue burning for some days. At the time of the fire, the horses and working bullocks were out in the fields, and, consequently, escaped. After driving out the pigs from the piggery, one fine sow, highly prized on account of her breed, rushed back, and perished in the flames. The poultry and other small live stock are, we believe, all safe. In putting upon record these facts, we must not omit to mention the prompt assistance rendered by parties to whose zeal and humanity it does great credit. Captain Butler, the commanding officer of the 96th Regiment stationed here, no sooner heard of the calamity, than a detachment was sent to the spot to assist in saving the property. The police were also prompt in their attendance, and, with the commissioner at their head, have, we understand, been unceasing in their exertions to prevent the fire spreading to the house, or doing other mischief. In like manner the Bank engine was despatched, but not in sufficient time to play upon the fire, further than to prevent its contact with the house, the destruction of the property having been effected with such fearful rapidity. One circumstance very creditable to Mr Frew, and strongly indicative of his true nobleness of mind, is, that as soon as the work of devastation, as far as it respected his own property, was, in some degree stayed, he at once proposed, that the party assembled should have some regard to the future safety of his neighbours, and the work of burning the surrounding stubbles was commenced, and carried on with so much safety and vigour, particularly by the police, as to prevent all apprehension

on the score of a further spread of the devouring element. But the most displeasing part of our story remains to be told, and that is, that the property destroyed is uninsured. Up to the present year, Mr Frew has uniformly insured his farm stock, but the present circumstances of the South Australian Assurance Company leading them to decline effecting any further Insurances of this kind, and no time being allowed for effecting an Insurance at home, the present calamity has come upon him at a moment in which he was quite unprepared. The constant liability to fires of this nature will, we sincerely hope, either lead to the establishment of an Insurance Company on the spot, or to the introduction of a Branch of some respectable Company from home. Such an arrangement would, we are persuaded, be productive of great mutual benefit, inasmuch as it would lead to greater carefulness, and scarcely any of the holders of property in the Province would hesitate to effect insurances at fair rates of premium. At the time the fire broke out, Mr Frew himself had just ridden into Adelaide, and Mrs Frew, and three of the children, were from home, Mrs Frew being in a delicate state of health, and being mercifully spared the shock of seeing the devouring element performing its work of destruction. By previous arrangement, however, she arrived at home with Mr Robert Frew about eight o'clock on the same evening, just in time to witness, free from further alarm, the work of devastation that had been wrought. From the high and universal respect in which Mr Frew is held as a Colonist, we need hardly say, that the sympathy with himself and family is very deep and general.

***Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 27 January 1844, page 5***

#### LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENCE.

Early on Monday morning the ascent of a dense volume of smoke between the south-east quarter of the city and the Mount Lofty Ranges, drew the attention of a number of persons in different quarters towards Fullerton, the country residence and farming establishment of James Frew, Esq., which was soon observed to be on fire; and the first reports gave reason to apprehend that none of the valuable property could be rescued from the devouring element. Besides the townsfolk and neighbours, the Military and Police were promptly upon the ground, headed by their respective officers; and every effort was made by them to arrest the progress of the flames. The fire-engine from the Bank of South Australia was also dispatched to Fullerton with great promptitude, but only arrived in time enough to be used preventively against the residence, which narrowly escaped destruction. When the fire had been sufficiently subdued to admit of a cursory review of the actual damage, it was found that two stacks of hay, and five large stacks of barley had been destroyed, besides a valuable imported threshing machine, dray, and a number of agricultural implements, as well as several outhouses, and some fine pigs. The wheat stacks, containing 6,000 bushels, were to windward of the fire, and happily escaped. Mr Frew's property has been uninsured since the South Australian Assurance Company declined the issue of Fire Policies. His loss is estimated at £1000. Singularly enough, the fire appears to have originated from measures of precaution, persons having been employed to burn the stubble surrounding the stack yard, with a view to its isolation and safety; when by a sudden change of wind, the fire was communicated to the nearest stack, and its spread was so rapid and vehement that the windlass at the well was amongst the first articles consumed. An immense pile of manure, the accumulation of nearly two years' straw, was also ignited. On the same day the house of a person at Klemzig was burnt to the ground. So rapidly did the flames do their work that the man who was in bed had barely time to escape. The fire was caused by ashes being thrown on some straw.

