

Adelaide Fire Brigade 1880

Extract from the 1880 Boothby Almanac and Directory for South Australia 1880.

<p>THE ADELAIDE FIRE INSURERS' ASSOCIATION (LIMITED).</p> <p>FIRE BRIGADES, S.A. Superintendent, Arthur John Baker, Hutt street, Adelaide.</p> <p>ADELAIDE FIRE BRIGADE.</p> <p>No. 1. Horse Cart Reel. J. R. Powditch, foreman, and three firemen, opposite the <i>National Hotel</i>, Pirie street east.</p> <p>No. 2. Horse Cart Reel, with hose and all necessary implements, Hindley street west. James Wedlock, foreman, and three firemen.</p> <p>No. 3. Hand Reel, hose, &c., complete, King William street south. A. Holland, foreman, and two firemen.</p> <p>No. 4. Horse Cart Reel, hose, &c., complete, Archerstreet, North Adelaide. William Smith, foreman, and three firemen.</p> <p>No. 5. Government Hand Reel, hose, &c., complete, at the rear of Post-Office, King William street.</p> <p>No. 7. Hand Reel. D. G. Harrison, foreman, and two firemen, Eber street, off Rundle street, rear of <i>Plough and Harrow Hotel</i>.</p> <p>Government Hand Reel, hose, &c., complete, at Government House, North terrace, for private use in case of fire.</p> <p>A Government Hand Reel, hose, &c., complete, at the Railway Station, North terrace.</p> <p>GLENELG FIRE BRIGADE.</p> <p>No. 8. Hand Reel, 250 feet delivery hose, standpipe, keys, &c., complete, Miller's Corner. James Liddle, foreman, and two firemen.</p>	<p>GAWLER TOWN FIRE BRIGADE.</p> <p>Deputy Superintendent, Mr. May.</p> <p>No. 9. Horse Reel, with suction and delivery hose-pipes, ladders, and all necessary implements for working a small fire-engine, also two water carts with a hand pump in each. J. Chigwidden, foreman, Corporation Acre, Lyndoch road.</p> <p>PORTLAND ESTATE FIRE BRIGADE.</p> <p>No. 10. Hand Reel, delivery hose, standpipe, keys, &c., complete. J. C. Walker, foreman.</p> <p>GLANVILLE.</p> <p>No. 11. Hand Reel, delivery hose, standpipe, keys, &c., complete, Carlisle street. H. Knowles, foreman.</p> <p>PORT ADELAIDE FIRE BRIGADE.</p> <p>Deputy Superintendent, Thos. Sanders, Waterworks Yard, Nile street.</p> <p>No. 12. Hand Reel, complete, at the Waterworks Yard. W. Laphorn, foreman.</p> <p>No. 13. Hand Reel, complete, St. Anthony street. F. Appleby, foreman.</p> <p>No. 14. Hand Reel, complete, Port Railway Station. Railway Porters.</p> <p>No. 15. Hand Reel, complete, Mr. A. Hall's store, Levi's Wharf.</p> <p>N.B.—The Street Lamps nearest the Fire Reel Stations have red glass and are lettered, and the lamp-posts are painted vermilion colour, to indicate where the Fire Reels and Firemen are stationed in Adelaide.</p>
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The Number 1 Horse Cart Reel is located on the North side of Pirie Street, opposite the National Hotel, which is on the South side of Pirie Street, between and Moger lane and Devonshire Place.

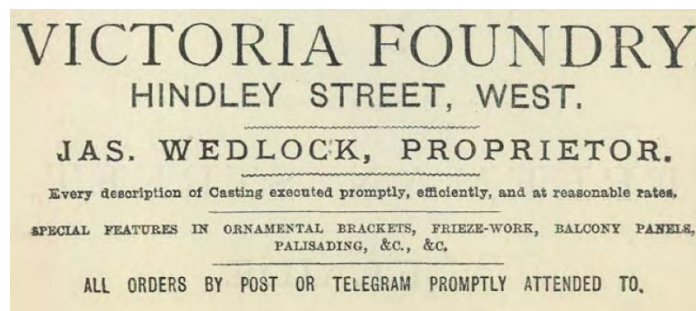
Mr J.R. Powditch is shown as the Foreman, listed in subsequent directories as living in Moger Lane, next to the Golden Rule Hotel, which is on the North East corner of Pirie Street and Moger Lane. His occupation is listed as a Storeman, and a Stonemason, and was assisted with the Reel by three other unknown firemen.

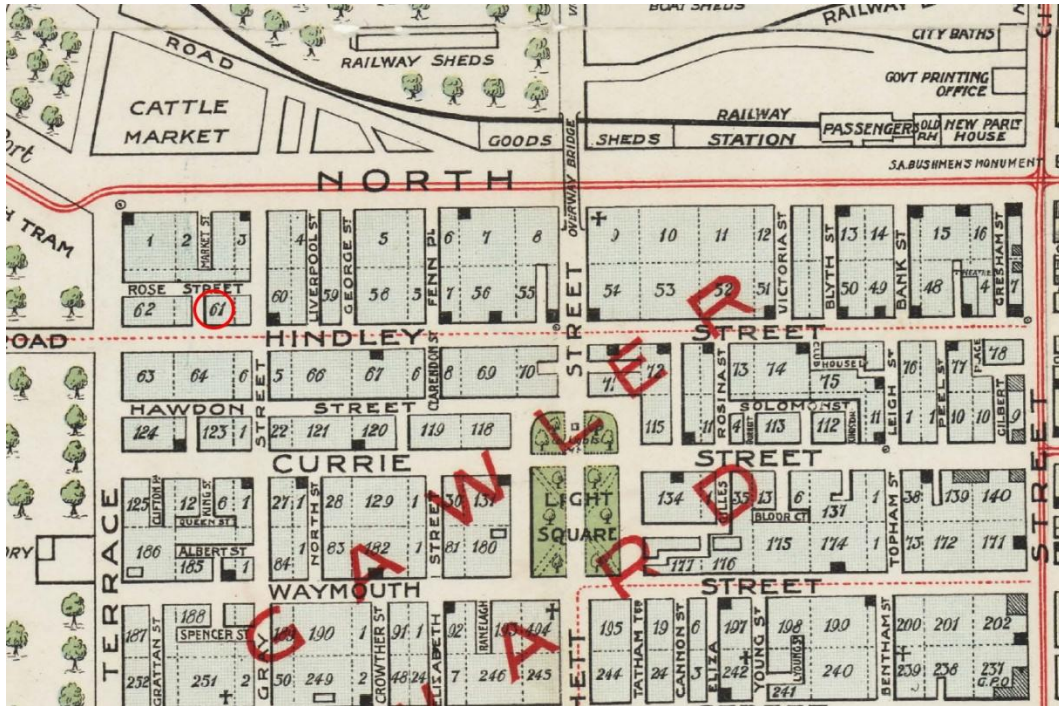
A Woodyard is directly opposite the National Hotel run by C. and W. Pratt and may be the location of the Reel.



Number 1 Hose Reel location. Frearsons Map of Adelaide 1905.

The Number 2 Horse Cart Reel is located with Foreman James (Jas.) Wedlock, Moulder at Hindley Street West, North side. He has assistance of three unknown firemen. Mr Wedlock is listed at 14 Hindley Street in the Directory. This foundry was located in Town Acre 61, between Grey Street and West Terrace. The Foundry Hotel on the opposite corner of Grey Street.





Number 2 Hose Reel location. Frearsons Map of Adelaide 1905.

Number 3. Hand Reel, hose, &c., complete, King William street south. A. Holland, foreman, and two firemen. The reel was kept at Morris, W. L., blacksmiths premises, the corner of King William Street and Halifax Street.



Number 3 Hose Reel location. Frearsons Map of Adelaide 1905.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Saturday 3 January 1880, page 2

NOTICE.— FIRE BRIGADE NOTICE.— The Street Lamps nearest to where the Fire Reels are kept have Red Glass with "Fire Reel" thereon, and the Posts are also painted Red. to indicate where the Firemen and Fire Reels are stationed in Adelaide, ARTHUR JNO. BAKER, 338owe:3 Superintendent.

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Thursday 8 January 1880, page 2

Latest News.

FIRE IN PEACOCK'S BUILDINGS. — About 10 o'clock last evening a chimney in one of the houses in Peacock's Buildings, between Grenfell and Rundle streets, caught fire, and for a time some serious danger was apprehended in consequence of the contiguity of the premises to Messrs. Baker & Humbley's timber-yard. The information was given to the Superintendent of Fire Brigades (Mr. A. J. Baker) by a private individual. Mr. Baker immediately telegraphed to the valve-house to increase the force of the water, but could get no reply. He then telegraphed to the Police Station, and was answered, but the telephone which has been fitted-up on his premises for communication with the station would not work. On arriving at the scene of the fire Mr. Baker found No. 1 Reel present. The sparks were shooting out and the flames blazing away from the chimney so fiercely that some fear was felt for the safety of the adjoining premises, and the firemen had to play the water up the chimney to quench the fire. Great difficulty was experienced in preventing the fire communicating with Baker & Humbley's timber yard, but the heavy rain which was coming down at the time fortunately assisted the efforts of the firemen, and before very long the fire was completely extinguished. The Superintendent was put to considerable inconvenience in consequence of getting no reply from the valve-house, and also in consequence of the failure of the telephone connected with his house.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Thursday 8 January 1880, page 4

FIRES IN COUNTRY AND TOWN.

The advent this year of what we may term the hot weather proper is being signaled by a number of bush fires, one of which, according to the reports which now reach us, bids fair to be more disastrous than any that have occurred in recent years. Although the summer has not come upon us until late, it has at last set in with almost exceptional intensity, and although the variable nature of the climate of South Australia renders it more than ordinarily unsafe to indulge in weather prognostications, there is every reason to believe that a very hot season is still in store for us. Under these circumstances the prevalence of bush fires at this early period in the hot weather is an unpleasant omen. Last year there were fewer fires of this description than usual. This year there is an increased risk of conflagrations, owing to the luxuriant vegetation which has been promoted by the abundant and late rains that have fallen. There is thus special danger of the spread of fires, as the difficulty of extinguishing them will be more than ordinarily great. It is a fortunate circumstance that the intensely hot weather has not presented itself until harvesting operations have been well advanced ; but several weeks of this weather may be expected before the last of the crops are garnered, and in the meantime immense loss may be occasioned by conflagrations. As yet comparatively few details have reached us of the devastating fire which was raging yesterday in the Port Lincoln district. Its extent may be gleaned from the fact that it has spread over half of the Hundred of Col-ton, while parts of the adjacent Hundreds of Ward and Way are in flames. There is a considerable acreage of land under crop in this district, and hence there is reason to fear that much damage will be done and great suffering inflicted upon struggling settlers. The heavy loss already occasioned by fires and the risk of still greater conflagrations should act as a warning to all farmers and to travellers in the country to observe the strictest precautions against accidents. It is not too much to say that the greater part of the bush fires which occur every year are attributable to negligence. Some are no doubt the result of uncontrollable circumstances, but in far too many cases bush fires are traceable to this cause. Every year the agricultural population increases, and few new arrivals are aware of the inflammable nature of the scrub, or the immense mischief that may

result from using matches or fire in a careless manner. Moreover, there are many who are too reckless and too selfish to observe the necessary pre-cautions. If report be true, some of the men employed in the country under the Government are far too lax in these matters. A fire occurred the day before yesterday at Hoyleton which is attributed solely to the carelessness of a party of men connected with the railway. This is a matter which should receive immediate attention. If Government employes do not set an example the Government can scarcely expect private individuals to be more careful. It is a noteworthy circumstance that the Government have taken no very special steps this year to give publicity to the provisions of the Bush Fires Act. From one extreme they are running into another. Last year the country was put to needlessly heavy expense, owing to the extravagant manner in which the Government advertised the leading features of the Act ; but this season they have done nothing. While a lavish expenditure of this kind is strongly to be deprecated, it must be borne in mind that much good is done by giving publicity to the penalties to which persons who infringe the laws render them-selves liable. Owing to the manner in which they were advertised last year there are doubtless few old settlers who are now unacquainted with them, but it must not be forgotten that land is constantly being taken up by settlers new to the colony. For their benefit we may explain that there are six offences under the law as it exists. Farmers are prohibited from burning stubble between November 4 and April 15, except between the hours of 4 and 10 in the afternoon, or within hours specially fixed by the local municipal authorities, or unless they take care to have at least four persons to prevent the spread of fire, or clear a space of three feet in width around their holdings and within their fences before applying the fire-stick. Those who infringe these provisions are liable to a penalty of from £2 to £5. The second offence is that of using ignitable wadding between September 1 and April 30, for which breach of the laws a penalty of £5 may be inflicted. The third is the offering any opposition to the examination of guns, refusing to give up names, or giving false ones. Next, persons who light or use fires for cooking in the open air without clearing a space of the radius of ten feet, and without extinguishing the fires when done with, are upon conviction to be fined from £2 to £5, while those who smoke in the open air within twenty yards of stables or ricks of hay or corn, unless in a town, from November 1 to April 30 will render themselves liable to a penalty of not less than 10s. or more than £2. Any persons blasting trees during this period without having at least four persons present to prevent fires from occurring will be fined £5. Of all the practices here condemned the fourth and the fifth are the most pregnant of mischief, and there is another more dangerous still. It is the practice indulged in by so many smokers of throwing away lighted lucifers without taking care to extinguish the flame. Some there are who attribute many of the bush fires to the use of tandstichor matches, but herein it seems to us they do injustice to a very valuable little article. Certainly the tandstichor is infinitely more safe than many of the so-called safety matches, or even than the wax vestas. It seems to us that if the Bush Fires Acts are rigorously enforced, and an example made of some of those who violate their provisions, there will be few fires occasioned through wilful negligence. While on this subject there is another point that demands attention. The fire which occurred last night in Peacock's Buildings, in Adelaide, although by no means a serious one, illustrates the necessity, to which we have often drawn attention, of improving the appliances available in the city for dealing with cases of this kind. Had the conflagration secured more headway it is evident that very great loss would have been occasioned. The Superintendent of the Fire Brigade communicated with the officials at the valve-house to increase the water pressure, but could obtain no reply to his signals, and was also cut off

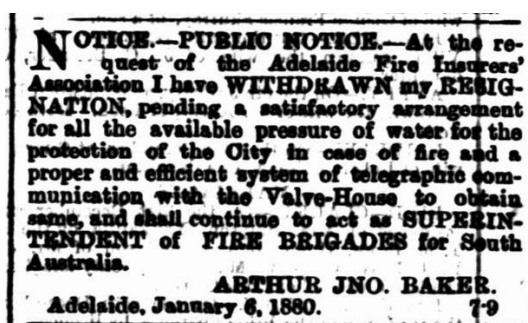
from communication with the police by a defect in the telephone between his house and the station. This discloses a most unsatisfactory and dis-creditable state of things. It is palpably of the utmost importance in cases of fire that the Superintendent of the Brigades should be able to communicate at the earliest moment with the proper authorities, and if such simple arrangements as these cannot be relied on it is obvious that improvements in the present system are urgently needed. The difficulties referred to seem to afford justification even for the somewhat erratic proceedings of Mr. Baker in reference to his tenure of office, and we trust that the Fire Insurers' Association as well as the Government will see that no such causes of complaint as those which have been given will arise for the future.

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Friday 9 January 1880, page 1

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE.—PUBLIC NOTICE.—At the request of the Adelaide Fire Insurers' Association I have WITHDRAWN my RESIGNATION, pending a satisfactory arrangement for all the available pressure of water for the protection of the City in case of fire and a proper and efficient system of telegraphic communication with the Valve-House to obtain same, and shall continue to act as SUPERINTENDENT of FIRE BRIGADES for South Australia.

ARTHUR JNO. BAKER. Adelaide, January 6, 1880.



South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Saturday 10 January 1880, page 5

The Late Fire at Peacock's Buildings. — The Superintendent of Fire Brigades having stated that on Wednesday evening he telegraphed to the valve house to increase the force of the water but could get no reply, the Hydraulic Engineer next morning made enquiries into the matter and found that no message was received. He requested the Superintendent of Telegraphs to have the telegraphic apparatus thoroughly overhauled, and on investigation it proved to be out of order.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 10 January 1880, page 30

FIRE BRIGADE PRACTICE.

A large number of gentlemen assembled at the house of Mr. Baker, Superintendent of Fire Brigades, on Monday evening, January 5, to witness the Fire Brigades perform their various exercises. The five reels belonging to the Adelaide brigades were in use, and Mr. Baker had also had placed at his disposal the reel from Government House. The hose attached to this reel was found to be so defective that a length from one of the Brigade's reels had to be supplied to this particular reel. Additional interest was centred in the proceedings, owing to the fact that some men belonging to the brigades from Gawler, Glenelg, and the Port were present, this being the first time they have been enabled to practise with the members of

the city brigades. The first part of the proceedings consisted in the ordinary drill—the overhaul of the implements, the laying-out of the hose in sweeps, the recoiling and reeling-up of hose, and the exercise of placing ladders against a wall and scaling them whilst armed with hose and buckets. Then came the full trial for time—three horse-reels and three hand reels competing. Stations were chosen, and at a given signal the reels had to make for the various plugs stationed in the surrounding streets. Each reel had to unloose five lengths of hose, fix the hydrant, and raise the water. The shortest time in which this was done was 1 min. 30 sec., the other reels not being many seconds behind. The distance that had to be travelled was about 100 yards. There was only a moderate pressure of water on. Mr. Baker afterwards entertained a number of his friends at an alfresco tea on his lawn, after which he exhibited his newly invented hydrant valve. This is a screw-valve, which can be fixed to stop at any pressure, and which is placed behind the hydrant. In case of a kink or other stoppage occurring in the hose, or in case the pressure of water is stronger than necessary, the surplus force of water is carried back and escapes by the valve. No water, how ever, can escape unless there is a surplus pressure. Mr. Baker also exhibited a model of a newly invented fire escape he is perfecting, but which is as yet incomplete. Upon a three wheeled carriage frame, a movable or folding frame is erected. When closed, this presents the appearance of a number of horizontal bars piled one above the other. These bars work on hinges. The centre wheel acts as a winch and unfolds the top frame, which opens somewhat like a concertina, the fore and hind wheels on each side being brought close together by a ratchet working in a cogged pinion. Thus this novel frame is reared by winch work from the ground. It is estimated that the machine can be erected to a height of fifty feet for as many pounds sterling. There is an apparatus at the top for lowering persons desiring to escape by this machine in a basket. As a model it looks pretty enough, but of course its workableness or otherwise has yet to be ascertained.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 20 March 1880, page 29

FIRE IN RUNDLE-STREET.

An alarm of fire was raised at the east end of Rundle-street on Saturday evening, March 13, about 6 o'clock. Smoke and flames were seen coming out of the garret window of a boarding-house occupied by Mr. O'Leary, Tavistock Buildings. The boarders were just assembled for their tea when the alarm of fire was given, so fortunately plenty of assistance was at hand, and Mr. O'Leary having plenty of spare buckets they were soon filled and passed up the stairs, and the fire was extinguished before the reels arrived. Mr. Richard Spencer, ex-foreman of No. 1 Reel, was also present, and rendered valuable assistance. No. 1 Reel was very quick in arriving, but could not get the fire plug cap off, and had to break it; but when the water was turned on for a few seconds it was found sufficiently strong to throw a full stream far above the roof of the house. Mr. Superintendent Baker and his assistant, Mr. Lighton, as well as No. 7 and No. 3 Reels, were soon at the scene of the disaster. On examining the garret ceiling the Superintendent found it very hot, and by cutting through found the flames had got up between the ceiling and the slate roof, and fire was still smouldering there. Mr. Richard Spencer crawled in and extinguished it. This was after the No. 7 and No. 3 Reels had been sent away. Great praise is due to Mr. O'Leary, the lodgers, and other persons who assisted him to extinguish the fire. A large amount of damage is done to the ceilings of the building on all of the floors, and the furniture is also much damaged by water; but the surprise is how the fire was put out after having got such a start. A dressing-table that stood in front of the garret window, with a looking-glass on it,

was burnt, and the embers from it fell on the floor and burnt about five feet of the flooring, and about three or four feet of the lath-and-plaster partition under the window. These buildings are very old, and the accumulation of dust on the ceiling and rafters must have prevented the flames from igniting the woodwork. This with the quick discovery, prompt action, and large quantity of water thrown by the helpers, saved the building from destruction and the city from a serious conflagration. Mr. O'Leary's furniture is insured in the Liverpool, London, and Globe Office, and the building in the Imperial Insurance Company. An inquest held on Monday morning resulted in a verdict to the effect that there was no evidence to show how the fire originated.

Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), Saturday 10 April 1880, page 28

FIRE AT FALK & CO'S.

At about half-past 11 o'clock on April 1 a fire was discovered by Police constable Miller in the rear of Messrs. P. Falk & Co.'s extensive warehouse in Gawler place. The constable who was on duty in Rundle-street smelt burning, it seems, a quarter of an hour previously, and communicated his suspicion to others. A careful search was made in the neighbourhood, but it was not till half-past 11 that any signs of the fire manifested themselves, when sparks were noticed to be issuing from the factory belonging to, and at the rear of, Messrs. Falk's premises. In the meantime the fire stations had been sent to, and two minutes afterwards Harrison's (No. 7) reel was on the spot, and the hose was speedily affixed to a plug in Rundle-street. From unavoidable circumstances, however, five minutes had elapsed before the firemen could get to play on the fire, and it was feared that it would gain headway. Such, fortunately, proved not to be the case, as there was a heavy pressure of water on, and the fire was speedily subdued; in fact all danger was at an end by 12 o'clock. Mr. A. J. Baker, the Superintendent of Fire Brigades, was present, as were also Messrs. Holland's and Wedlock's reels. The fire was confined almost exclusively to the manufacturing portion of the building on the first floor. The floor was in one part completely destroyed, but beyond the destruction of a bench and a few workmen's tools no further damage was done, and consequently the loss is comparatively slight. On Saturday after-noon, April 3, the City Coroner held an enquiry at the Commercial Hotel into the circumstances attending the fire which broke out on the premises of Messrs. Falk & Co., jewellers, Gawler-place. The inquest lasted all the afternoon, and it appeared from the evidence that the fire began at a bench used for heating sawdust and diluted sulphuric acid. The Jury returned a verdict to the effect that there was no evidence to show how the fire originated. They added a rider condemning the dangerous practice of smoking in the factory, and commended Constable Miller and the keeper of No. 7 Reel for their promptitude.

South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1868 - 1881), Saturday 24 July 1880, page 10

CORONERS' INQUESTS.

The city coroner and a jury were occupied for eight and a half hours on Thurs-day in investigating the circumstances attending four fires which occurred in the Earl of Aberdeen Hotel on the previous afternoon. Some very suspicious circumstances regarding the landlady of the hotel were brought to light, and the following verdict was returned: — "It is our undivided opinion that the fire at the Earl of Aberdeen Hotel was the wilful act of some person, and that the evidence strongly points to Mrs. Walker, the landlady of the hotel." The

coroner intimated to the jury that he thought they might have given him a verdict upon which he could have acted. The window curtains in three rooms of the hotel had been fired at different periods in the afternoon, but fortunately the fires were discovered before any mischief was due.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 21 September 1880, page 1

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.

ADELAIDE, Monday, September 20.

Lamps at Fire-reel Stations.— Committee had had under their consideration the numerous complaints of citizens in respect to the non-utility of the street-lamps erected near the fire-reel stations, the glass of which had been painted red, thus destroying the effect of the light for street-lighting purposes. They, therefore, re-commended that the permission to paint the glass be withdrawn, and the lamps be restored to their original condition.

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Monday 1 November 1880, page 2

Latest News.

FIRE— A small fire occurred in the stable attached to Messrs. Miller & Son's store, Waymouth-street early on Monday morning. It was put out by a constable and another man with two or three buckets of water. The Coroner has been communicated with, and does not consider an inquest necessary.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 23 December 1880, page 3

FIRE IN HINDLEY-STREET.

It is some time since we have had a fire of any consequence in the city, and the report which was circulated late on Wednesday evening that a large fire was raging in Hindley-street naturally caused a great deal of excitement. As citizens so seldom experience a rude awakening from the sense of security into which they are lulled, it is not surprising that a conflagration causes more stir amongst them than perhaps would be the case in a larger city, where the destruction of property by the fiery element is of more frequent occurrence. Before the locale of the fire became generally known to be the premises of Mr. S. Owen, the confectioner, 56, Hindley-street, numbers of people were to be observed making their way in anything but a deliberate manner towards that street. Hindley-street and Leigh-street soon became thronged with people. It was slightly before half-past 10 o'clock that the alarm of fire was first given by two or three young men who, while passing along Hindley-street observed the reflection of flames down the lane alongside the Royal Hotel, and on going down the right-of-way saw flames and smoke issuing from a building used as a manufactory and store by Mr. S. Owen, the confectioner. They immediately acquainted Constable Pearson, who was on duty in the locality, with what they had seen, and the matter was speedily reported to the police station, from whence a telephonic message was sent to the superintendent of fire brigades, Mr. A. J. Baker, at his residence, in Hutt-street. Meanwhile the alarm was communicated to the firereel stations, and within about twenty minutes fire-reel No. 7 (Harrison's) was on the spot and set to work. No. 2 reel (Wedlock's), Superintendent Baker, No. 1 reel, (Powditch's), No. 5 (Government), and No. 3 (Holland's) quickly followed, and with the aid of strong detachments of foot and mounted police every effort was put forth to subdue the flames, which were raging furiously. The fire had spread

very quickly during the time which had elapsed between its discovery and the arrival of the reels, and had obtained a thorough hold upon the building before any organised operations were commenced against it. Some difficulty was experienced in gaining access to the body of the flames, but this was surmounted as soon as possible, and a steady stream of water from four hoses was brought to bear on it with sensible effect. The fire, however, had gone too far to allow of its progress being effectually resisted, so far as Mr. Owen's premises were concerned, and attention was turned to preventing its spread to the immediately adjoining factory, in the occupation of Messrs. Birmingham Bros. The efforts which were made in this direction were ultimately successful, although it was at one time looked upon as almost a certainty that the factory would not escape unscathed, The flames were thoroughly subdued after an hour's hard work by the brigade and a number of assistants, who evinced a praiseworthy amount of zeal in their labor, which was somewhat hindered by the bursting of one or two of the pipes, and sundry other occurrences of an un-foreseen character. The premises, which are situated at the rear of, and are detached from Mr. Owen's shop and residence, are the northern part of a large three-storey brick block, the larger portion of which is occupied by Messrs. Birmingham Bros, as a boot factory, and as the fire ascended to the third floor and burst through the roof it may be imagined that the flames could be seen some distance off. Mr. Owen used the portion now burnt as a manufactory in connection with his confectionery business, and he also had a large quantity of valuable stock, in the place. The ground floor was occupied by machinery, the next floor by about three tons of sugar, miscellaneous stock, and a heavy piece of machinery, and on the top floor were about £100 worth of confectionery of Mr. Owen's manufacture, and some imported stock. The whole of the contents was destroyed or damaged so as to be rendered useless, and Mr. Owen estimates his loss at between £550 and £600. Unfortunately for him he is not insured at all, and this was owing to his being doubtful as to the renewal of his lease of the building. He had a policy for £500 on the stock about six months ago, but he did not renew it for the reason previously stated, and thus the fire has resulted in a considerable loss to him. One circumstance in connection with the affair, however, is a matter for congratulation, and that is that the loss might have been much greater, but that owing to some delay Mr. Owen had not had de-livered to him a considerable quantity of sugar which he had purchased, and which, had it been delivered would have been stored on the premises destroyed. The flames raged with such fury that Mr. Owen was dubious as to the safety of the property, occupied by him as a dwelling-house, and he had his family and some of his goods removed, but this of course proved to be an unnecessary precaution. The fiery element did its work so effectually that all the floors and the roof were entirely consumed, and nothing but a heap of soaked rubbish and several streams of burnt sugar and water were left to show what the building had contained. No one seems to have any definite idea as to the origin of this conflagration. Mr. Owen had his boiler fire alight for the purpose of brewing ginger beer, and left the store and went into the dwelling-house for a short time. He had not been inside more than about a quarter of an hour when the alarm was given, which first notified to him, as well as the constable on duty, the fact that a fire had broken out. The flames originated on the ground floor, where the boiler was situated, and the inference is that they were caused by the boiler fire. The operations of the Fire Brigade were conducted in admirable manner by Superintendent Baker, and to this and the fact that a splendid pressure of water was obtained may be attributed the success which attended the efforts to subdue the flames. The crowd on the whole was not of a refractory character, but one or two people made themselves so troublesome that they had to be removed by the police.

Traffic on the tram line was interrupted for a long time, and the 11 o'clock car for Hindmarsh did not leave town till after 12 o'clock. An inquest will no doubt be held in the course of a day or two.

South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), Thursday 23 December 1880, page 6

FIRE IN HINDLEY-STREET.

It is come time since we have had a fire of any consequence in the city, and the report which was circulated late on Wednesday evening that a large fire was raging in Hindley-street naturally caused a great deal of excitement. As citizens so seldom experience a rude awakening from the sense of security into which they are lulled, it is not surprising that a conflagration causes more stir amongst them than perhaps would be the case in a larger city, where the destruction of property by the fiery element is of more frequent occurrence. Before the locale of the fire became generally known to be the premises of Mr. S. Owen, the confectioner, 56, Hindley-street, numbers of people were to be observed making their way in anything but a deliberate manner towards that street. Hindley-street and Leigh-street soon became thronged with people. It was slightly before half-past 10 o'clock that the alarm of fire was first given by two or three young men who, while passing along Hindley-street observed the reflection of flames down the lane alongside the Royal Hotel, and on going down the right-of-way saw flames and smoke issuing from a building used as a manufactory and store by Mr. S. Owen, the confectioner. They immediately acquainted Constable Pearson, who was on duty in the locality, with what they had seen, and the matter was speedily reported to the police station, from whence a telephonic message was sent to the superintendent of fire brigades, Mr. A. J. Baker, at his residence, in Hutt-street. Meanwhile the alarm was communicated to the firereel stations, and within about twenty minutes fire-reel No. 7 (Harrison's) was on the spot and set to work. No. 2 reel (Wedlock's), Superintendent Baker, No. 1 reel, (Powditch's), No. 5 (Government), and No. 3 (Holland's) quickly followed, and with the aid of strong detachments of foot and mounted police every effort was put forth to subdue the flames, which were raging furiously. The fire had spread very quickly during the time which had elapsed between its discovery and the arrival of the reels, and had obtained a thorough hold upon the building before any organised operations were commenced against it. Some difficulty was experienced in gaining access to the body of the flames, but this was surmounted as soon as possible, and a steady stream of water from four hoses was brought to bear on it with sensible effect. The fire, however, had gone too far to allow of its progress being effectually resisted, so far as Mr. Owen's premises were concerned, and attention was turned to preventing its spread to the immediately adjoining factory, in the occupation of Messrs. Birmingham Bros. The efforts which were made in this direction were ultimately successful, although it was at one time looked upon as almost a certainty that the factory would not escape unscathed, The flames were thoroughly subdued after an hour's hard work by the brigade and a number of assistants, who evinced a praiseworthy amount of zeal in their labor, which was somewhat hindered by the bursting of one or two of the pipes, and sundry other occurrences of an un-unforeseen character. The premises, which are situated at the rear of, and are de-tached from Mr. Owen's shop and residence, are the northern part of a large three-storey brick block, the larger portion of which is occupied by Messrs. Birmingham Bros. as a boot factory, and as the fire ascended to the third floor and burst through the roof it maybe imagined that the flames could be seen some distance off. Mr. Owen used the portion now burnt as a manufactory in connection with his confectionery business, and he also had a large quantity of valuable

stock in the place. The ground floor was occupied by machinery, the next floor by about three tons of sugar, miscellaneous stock, and a heavy piece of machinery, and on the top floor were about £100 worth of confectionery of Mr. Owen's manufacture, and some imported stock. The whole of the contents was destroyed or damaged so as to be rendered useless, and Mr. Owen estimates his loss at between £550 and £600. Unfortunately for him he is not insured at all, and this was owing to his being doubtful as to the renewal of his lease of the building. He had a policy for £500 on the stock about six months ago, but he did not renew it for the reason previously stated, and thus the fire has resulted in a considerable loss to him. One circumstance in connection with the affair, however, is a matter for congratulation, and that is that the loss might have been much greater, but that owing to some delay Mr. Owen had not had de-livered to him a considerable quantity of sugar which he had purchased, and which, had it been delivered would have been stored on the premises destroyed. The flames raged with such fury that Mr. Owen was dubious as to the safety of the property occupied by him as a dwelling-house, and he had his family and some of his goods removed, but this of course proved to be an unnecessary precaution. The fiery element did its work so effectually that all the floors and the roof were entirely consumed, and nothing but a heap of soaked rubbish and several streams of burnt sugar and water were left to show what the building had contained. No one seems to have any definite idea as to the origin of this conflagration. Mr. Owen had his boiler fire alight for the purpose of brewing ginger beer, and left the store and went into the dwelling-house for a short time. He had not been inside more than about a quarter of an hour when the alarm was given, which first notified to him, as well as the constable on duty, the fact that a fire had broken out. The flames originated on the ground floor, where the boiler was situated, and the inference is that they were caused by the boiler fire. The operations of the Fire Brigade were conducted in admirable manner by Superintendent Baker, and to this and the fact that a splendid pressure of water was obtained may be attributed the success which attended the efforts to subdue the flames. The crowd on the whole was not of a refractory character, but one or two people made themselves go troublesome that they had to be removed by the police. Traffic on the tram line was interrupted for a long time, and the 11 o'clock car for Hindmarsh did not leave town till after 12 o'clock. An inquest will no doubt be held in the course of a day or two.

Evening Journal (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), Thursday 23 December 1880, page 2

EXTENSIVE FIRE OFF HINDLEY-STREET.

On Wednesday evening, Dec. 22, about 10.30 an alarm of "fire" was raised in Hindley-street, and as dense smoke with a strong glare appeared behind the Bank of Australasia it was at first feared that the Bank was on fire at the rear, but it was speedily discovered that some buildings farther westward were burning. An immense crowd collected, and the Superintendent of Fire Brigades, Mr. A. J. Baker, was apprised of the fact that a fire had broken out. The fire was located in the confectionery and gingerbeer factory of Mr. S. Owen, of Hindley-street, but was confined to the building in which the goods were manufactured, and not in the shop, which is in Hindley-street, and partly divided from the factory by a right-of-way, something like 15 feet wide. The building where the fire started is a three-story brick structure, slate-roofed, and is known as one of Peacock's buildings. Adjoining it at the rear is Mr. W. Bermingham's boot factory, which has a strong party wall. At the rear of Mr. Bermingham's is Mr. Hooper's furniture warehouse so that had the fire not been confined to Mr. Owen's portion of it there was ample scope and material for a terrible and destructive

conflagration. On the east of the burnt building stands Mr. Ellis's cabinet warehouse, and almost adjoining is Mr. J. G. Nash's engine-fitting shop. A right-of-way leads eastward to Leigh-street, coming out a little north of the Church Office. On the western side of Mr. Owen's shop is the Royal Hotel, at the rear of which are stables. A narrow right-of-way leads up between the hotel and Mr. Owen's shop, joining the narrow lane at the back communicating with Leigh-street. There are various accounts as to who first discovered the fire. It was stated that three young men passing down Hindley-street about 10.30 p.m. noticed the smell of smoke, and saw the gleam of a fire up the lane, and gave the alarm. A constable is also said to have detected the fire at the outset. The accounts agree, however, pretty well as to the time the blaze broke out. The fire is believed to have started in the bottom story of the factory, where Mr. Owen kept his confectionery material, including about £50 worth of jujubes and sweetmeats for Christmas consumption, also about two tons of sugar, besides mixed material and stock of various kinds. Mr. Owen himself, it is stated, was in the factory only a short time before the fire broke out, and left everything, as he believed, all secure. The alarm of fire created great consternation amongst Mr. Owen's family, as there were five children sleeping in the house connected with the shop, and some were ill with measles. They were immediately removed to a place of safety. Several horses and a dog were rescued from the stables of the Royal Hotel. Very shortly after the flames appeared several reels arrived on the spot, and began to play under the direction of the Superintendent. No. 7 Reel (Harrison's) was said to have been first on the spot, and played on to the building from Leigh-street. No. 2 Reel (Wedlock's) was next, followed by No. 3 (Holland's) and No. 1 (Powditch's). The last three put on a strong stream from Hindley-street. The united efforts of the reels were successful in getting the fire under in the lower story, but it broke out afresh in the upper floor. After some heavy exertion the upper story was saved, but the building was left almost a shell, the floors having given way, and the roof greatly damaged. The stock was all destroyed. It was valued at about £600. Unfortunately for Mr. Owen he let the policy of insurance on the stock lapse some months ago. The shop, which has not suffered, is insured. Mr. Bermingham's factory is insured for £1,000 in the Equitable Insurance Company. The police, who were in strong force, kept very good order, but had some difficulty, as the crowd was dense. [FURTHER PARTICULARS.] A visit to the scene of the recent fire off Hindley-street paid at noon on December Thursday, 22, shows that the damage done on the previous evening was more serious than had been at first supposed, and that had there been any wind stirring at the time of the conflagration an immense amount of property must have been destroyed. This is owing to the peculiar position of the buildings where the fire occurred, and to close proximity of other warehouses where inflammable materials are stored. The building where the fire broke out—the most northerly one of a block of four known as Peacock's buildings, situated off Leigh and Hindley streets was completely gutted only the blackened walls and charred rafters of the three floors being left standing, while there are to be seen ominous cracks in the walls which must soon have given way had the fire not been subdued when it was. An inspection by daylight shows that the doors and windows of Messrs Ellis's furniture warehouse had been scorched, and that the flames had actually entered Messrs. W. Bermingham and Co.'s boot factory, where, however, they were subdued with little effort. The only damage done there does not amount to more than a few pounds, and most of this is due to the water being allowed to flow through the second story to the ground floor, where boots and slippers were stored. Messrs. Bermingham are insured in the Equitable Society. Mr. Owen, unfortunately is not insured, so far as his manufactory is concerned, he

having lately allowed his policy to run out, As he did not expect to get a renewal of the lease. His loss is likely to be between £400 and £500, and includes £100 worth of small packets of lollies which he had stored in the top story, three tons of sugar, a ton and a half of manufactured goods, a lot of gelatine, which he had just imported. Besides these things the machinery he used in his business as a confectioner and a maker of aerated waters, has either been destroyed or seriously damaged. The heaviest loss will fall on the South Australian Insurance Company. As Mr. Peacock, M.P., the owner, had insured the four stores of which Mr. Peacock's buildings consist for £500 each. As nothing but the shell of this portion of the building is left standing, claim will no doubt be for the full amount of the policy. Looking at the scene of the fire on Thursday it is seen how fortunate it was that there was no wind stirring at the time, as the furniture warehouses of Ellis & Co. and of Mr. Hooper would have caused the flames to spread very rapidly indeed if they had once gained the slightest hold of either of these places. Instead of that the fire has practically been confined to the one portion of the three-storey building in which it started, and which it has completely destroyed. The origin of the fire is not known, Mr. Owen and a boy having left the place apparently safe not above half an hour before the alarm was given.

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 28 December 1880, page 1

THE FIRE AT MESSRS. HALL & MCLEAN'S.

At the Exchange Hotel, on Monday morning, December 27, Mr. J. P. Stow, J.P., held an inquest in to the circumstances attending the fire which took place on Christmas Eve on the Hindley-street. Mr. J. G. Roberts was chosen Foreman of the Jury. Mr. J. F. Yuille appeared on behalf of the Fire Insurers Association ; and Mr. J. C. Bray for Hall & McLean and Hanton & Dalton. James Jones, labourer, said he was looking into Hall & McLean's window between 10 and a quarter past 10 o'clock on Friday night. On going into the shop he saw one of the assistants getting some small article which was hanging in the west window. He saw a small light material fall on a gas jet, and a fire at once broke out. People rushed to get some of the goods out of the shop, but nothing was done to get the fire out till the fire brigade arrived. By Jurors— Did not think the assistant saw the fire break out, but it occurred directly after he got down from the window. John Trail McLean, draper, of Hindley-street, said he was in the desk at the back of the shop nearly the whole of Friday evening. About twenty-five minute to 11 o'clock he told the lads to begin bringing the things in from the front. At that time the shop was so full of customers that all hands were serving. One of the boys had taken two loads of clothes in, but on going for a third he rushed back and said there was a fire in the window. Left the desk and ran to the window. Found the fire had extended for about four feet in the north-west corner of the window. The senior-assistant, Mr. Gilbert, jumped into the window, and witness gave him a blanket and rag and told him to cover the fire with them. He, however, tried to beat it out with the blanket. The window was dressed with millinery and light summer lace goods. The fire filled the window in a minute. There was a rod running the whole length of the shop close to the ceiling and covered with lace, which had been there since stocktaking in August last. The flames got such a hold that witness saw there was no chance of saving the shop, so he ran to the desk to secure the cash, but before he could get all the money into the cashbox customers and assistants were screaming in the showrooms behind him, and on looking up he saw that the fire had burnt along the rod and was above him. The whole shop was in a blaze in less than three minutes. He got the cheques and notes, but had to leave the gold and silver behind him. He could not well estimate the value of the stock which had been destroyed as he had two shops and the

stock was taken from one to the other. He considered, however, that the insurance would not cover the loss. The insurance on the building and stock was £4,500. The firm had been reducing their stock lately, and on December 16 the insurance had been reduced by £500. By Jurors — Thought the first reel did not arrive before a quarter of an hour. By Mr. Yuille—The stock-sheets were saved. The handle of the meter was just under the window where the fire broke out. By Jurors—Did not think Mr. Gilbert could have done any better with the rug than he did, because the fire had risen four feet above the gas jet. Henry Dennis, mason, said he was standing outside the shop on Friday night. He saw a gas jet in the window flare up high above its globe, and set fire to some article that was hanging above it. There was no one near the gas-jet at the time ; but when the fire broke out a young man tried to put it out with a rug. He was unsuccessful, and the flames spread so quickly that he had to clear out. Cornelius Edward Hall, a member of the firm of Hall & McLean, said that stock and fixtures were insured for £3,450, and the building for £1.050. Charles James Gilbert, assistant at Hall and McLeans, said when the alarm of fire was given he jumped into the window, and having pulled a few things down, tried to extinguish the flames with a rag Mr. McLean handed him. They were, however, too strong, and he had to beat a retreat. The goods in the window were arranged in the usual way, and the gas had been burning all night. The Jury, without retiring, returned the following verdict:—"The fire was purely accidental, and we consider that there was no blame attached to anyone."

South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Tuesday 28 December 1880, page 4

FIRES IN THE CITY.

The advent of genuine summer weather has already been signaled by two destructive fires in the city. The verdict of the Coroner's Jury has in one instance actually, and in the other substantially, pronounced the origin of these conflagrations to be purely accidental, and we see no particular reason to challenge the conclusion thus arrived at. It is easy to say that had the gaslight in Messrs. Hall and McLean's shop-window been better protected, or had the assistant been more scrupulously careful when removing goods from the window, that the fire on Christmas Eve might have been avoided, but there is certainly no proof of culpable negligence in the matter. Similarly, it is possible that had Mr. Owen taken precautions which he omitted to do the fire which consumed his stock a few evenings ago would not have happened, but here also there was nothing adduced in evidence to take the event out of the category of simple accident. The proprietors and their employe's in both instances may fairly claim to be exonerated from all active blame in connection with the disasters by which so much valuable property has been destroyed. But while this is the case the occurrence of these conflagrations in such quick succession renders it important to enquire whether the present arrangements for extinguishing fires in the city are satisfactory, and it seems to us that the very reverse is the fact. No doubt Adelaide is placed at a great advantage in having a copious supply of water at high pressure available at a moment's notice, and in being so limited in area that every point in it is readily accessible. The state of things now is strangely different from what it was in the earlier years of the metropolis, when the citizens had sometimes no alternative but to allow a fire to burn itself out, and when it was extremely fortunate if the building attacked happened to be an isolated one. But the facilities for checking the devouring element are not now utilized to anything like the extent they should be. In the first place there are no systematic arrangements made by citizens themselves for putting out fires on their premises. In how many establishments in Adelaide, we should like to know, is there a proper service of fire buckets and hoses kept? The expense and trouble

of having buckets of water always at hand at convenient spots and hoses which can be used on an emergency are comparatively trifling, and yet this simple precaution is, we venture to say, rarely resorted to. In the case of the fire on Christmas Eve a very small supply of water would, when it was first discovered, have served to put it out, and some hundreds of pounds worth of goods might have been saved. We are not aware whether the Insurance Companies have considered the question of holding out special inducements to their customers to make provisions for protecting themselves; but if they have not it seems to us that it would be well worth their while to do so. But, after all, the great safeguard against damage by fire in the city is the Fire Brigade, and this, we regret to hear, is at present in an exceedingly unsatisfactory condition. Whether it is that there is a lack of public spirit in the community, or that reasonable incentives are not held out to men of active habits and adventurous dispositions to enlist as firemen, certain it is that the brigade here is neither so strong in point of numbers nor so efficient in point of knowledge and discipline as it should be. We believe the fact to be that no adequate encouragement is given to firemen. None of the immunities which they may justly claim are accorded them, the wages allowed them are very moderate, and there is an inclination shown to begrudge them payment at practice time. Some there are who, in spite of all discouragements, maintain their position in the brigade. To them the citizens in general, and the insurance offices in particular, owe a heavy debt of gratitude; but it cannot be expected that their example will be generally followed. It is unreasonable to suppose that men will continue to discharge quasi-public duties if they receive neither substantial remuneration, special privileges, or even public gratitude. In their own interests it is incumbent upon those who are most interested — the Insurance Companies — to set seriously to work to place matters upon a better footing. They can fairly look for the co-operation of the Government and of the Corporation, but after all the chief responsibility lies with them. In Adelaide for years past the number of fires has been exceptionally small, but there is no guarantee that this immunity will be enjoyed in the future. Indeed as the city increases in population, and as buildings are crowded more and more upon one another, the risk of fires, and of destructive fires too, becomes increasingly great. Moreover, the fact that in the past they have been called upon to sustain very few losses places the Companies in a better position to bear the burden of establishing a thoroughly efficient brigade, and making all necessary arrangements for minimizing the danger from fire. It has been suggested to us — and the idea is a good one — that the time has arrived when a permanent fire station or office should be established in some central part of the city. The cost of maintaining this would be comparatively trifling, as the only expenses would be rent and the wages of say a couple of men, one of whom should be always on the watch. This station should be in communication with the Superintendent of Fire Brigades, and with the keepers of fire-reels, and every needful provision should be made for giving the alarm in case of fire. At present the arrangements are of much too promiscuous a character. To the credit of the firemen be it said that some of the reels now reach the scene of conflagrations with surprising speed, but the time might be materially shortened, and much property be thus saved from destruction. Adelaide has become far too important a metropolis to be left at the mercy of the inadequate and comparatively haphazard provision now available for preventing loss by fire, and we trust that prompt and effective steps will be taken for bringing about a thorough reform.

Burra Record (SA : 1878 - 1954), Friday 31 December 1880, page 2

The Old Year.

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit

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12 April 2026

FIRES.— The Christmas season in Adelaide was signalled by two fires one consuming stock, &c., belonging to Mr. Owen, Confectioner, of Hindley-street, and the other burning the whole of the drapery goods in Messrs. Hall & McLean's premises in the same street. Fortunately the fires were both prevented from spreading to adjoining buildings.