

# Stinesville fire was a chance for fire brigade to show its stuff

Generally speaking, intelligent people know what to do about frozen pipes. On the other hand, there are those who know better, but don't pay any attention to the common sense they have been allotted.

There is the story about the time the Bloomington firefighters made a run to the home of Harry Stevens, who lived at 318 E. Third St. in 1925. Frozen pipes had been a challenge to Stevens. His solution was to use a blow torch to thaw them. The firefighters who came to douse the fire no doubt suggested some other ways to deal with that particular problem.

The Henry McMillan family of 417 S. Lincoln St. had a very unusual kitchen. In December of 1925 (the same week the firefighter went to the Stevens home) there was a fire in the McMillan kitchen.

According to the newspaper, a stove pipe had ignited the wall of the kitchen, the wall being canvas. The kitchen was in a tent at the back of the house. Though the firefighters managed to save the house, they probably left



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

some stern instructions behind with the McMillan family.

Meanwhile, two firefighters were recovering in Bloomington Hospital after a frightening confrontation between their truck and a train on West Kirkwood Avenue. Jacob Tidd and Raymond Trisler found out the hard way that things mechanical like a train can cause great damage to the human body. The recovery of Tidd and Trisler was reported in the *Bloomington Evening World* of Dec. 28, 1925.

One of the county's more spectacular fires happened in Stinesville. Bloomington personnel went to their rescue on Dec. 13, 1926. The *World* of that date credited the Bloomington Fire Department with saving Stinesville.

How did it start? There was some serious

speculation that the fire started in a pool room belonging to Marshall Hacker on the north side of Main Street.

The *World* described the fire. "The fire became so hot, plate glass windows in Millard Easton's three business rooms on the opposite side of the street were melted."

Certainly the fire was beyond the capacity of the people in Stinesville, and a call was put out for help. Bloomington and Ellettsville responded. The distance from Bloomington was 12 miles, but the driver from the county seat made good time.

Among the fire personnel who made the trip to Stinesville were Chief William Eaton, City Councilman Ernest Myers and several others willing to pull on their clothes at 2:30 on a Sunday morning. When the Bloomington firefighters and their truck reached Ellettsville, the men from that department were just pulling away on their way to Stinesville, too.

How does one fight a fire in a town without a water system? No problem, according to

the *World*. "The local truck was at the fire in short order and pumped water from the little creek that passes through the town. Over 800 feet of hose were laid."

Stinesville residents were not immune to the sight of a big fire. The newspaper reported that everyone in town turned out to watch. One very grateful citizen was John Easton, whose house was close to the fire, but was spared.

Perhaps the fire was well attended because it was on top of the hill and could be seen for miles around. That may have attracted many from Mount Tabor and Ellettsville.

Bloomington firefighters probably derived a lot of satisfaction from their efforts. Concluded the *World*, "Bloomington firemen remained on the job three hours and by their heroic work saved the business section from going up in smoke."

"Stinesville people were very appreciative of the services of the department and prepared a lunch for Chief Hazel's men at the home of Perry Easton."

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