

8/25/09

LITTLE BOY BURNED TO DEATH BY KEROSENE OIL EXPLOSION

Earle Kirchen, the eight-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Kirchen, suffered a terrible death at Rhyolite Thursday afternoon.

Presumably playing with matches, the young lad caused the explosion of a five-gallon can of kerosene which was out-of-doors, in the rear of the house occupied by the Kirchen family.

No one witnessed the explosion, save the boy, who failed to disclose the details.

The explosion threw the can of oil upon the Rhyolite foundry, close by, setting fire to the building. Dick Aylward and others at the foundry rushed out and extinguished the fire, but they did not notice the boy, who, with his light clothing saturated with the oil and burning like a torch, was running around the house.

Being enveloped in flames, the body of the little fellow was terribly burned from head to foot. C. H. Shirts saw the boy running and rushed over from the T. & T. depot to render such aid as he could. He summoned Miss Chapman who was taking care of Mrs. Kirchen, and she smothered the flames with a blanket.

Dr. Grigsby was upon the scene in a few minutes and Dr. Bowen came soon after. They did all that they could for the boy, but he was so badly burned that they gave out no hope at all of saving him. The accident occurred at three o'clock and the lad was dead before six that evening.

The little fellow displayed great nerve and patience, and was cheerful to the last.

The tragic death of the boy was a severe shock to Mrs. Kirchen, who gave birth to a daughter last week and who is still quite ill.

The sympathy of the entire community goes out to the bereaved family. Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Kirchen and Mr. Charles Kirchen came early yesterday morning from Tonopah by auto, having been summoned on account of the accident.

The funeral services were held yesterday from the Rhyolite undertaking parlors and interment took place in the local cemetery. Rev. J. M. Swander conducted the services.