

MILLS, ROBERT  
?-November 12, 1933

Small boys playing with matches was again the cause of a gruesome tragedy which took place on the Jacob Mills farm about 5 miles south of Wheatland Saturday morning at 10 o'clock. Robert Mills and Donald Kiehn, each about 3 ½ years old, were burned to death in a corn crib that was transformed into a flaming inferno from a bonfire started by the lads.

The little boys had been dressed by Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Kiehn, their mothers, and allowed to go out in the farm yard to play. The boys wandered to the corn crib, which was about 100 yards from the house, shortly after they left the house.

Jacob Mills, who was working in the field, noticed the smoke from the burning crib, and hastened to the scene. The wind which was blowing strongly from the west had fanned the flames until the east side of the crib, which contained the door, had been destroyed. Help arrived, and they carried water from a nearby water tank and kept the blaze from burning down the west wall. Mills pulled the wall down, and in each corner, on top of a pile of snap corn, he located the charred remains of the little boys with their faces turned down, and lifted them out of the smoldering crib.

Coroner Jesse Payne and Sheriff Joe Wickam were notified of the tragedy and they hastened to the scene.

From their investigations and observations, it is thought the boys were trapped behind the flames and had crawled to the top of a four foot pile of snap corn which sloped back from the door of the crib. A quantity of corn husks, which were dry as tinder, evidently caused the fire to get underway too fast for the lads to escape through the door. Their little bodies were burned beyond recognition.

The Mills boy is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Mills and several brothers and sisters. The little Kiehn boy is survived by his mother, Mrs. Erika Kiehn, and grandparents. Mrs. Kiehn, who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mills, has lived with them since the death of her husband which occurred about two years ago.

Funeral services were held from the Bethlehem Evangelical church Sunday afternoon with Rev. G.T. Zucker preaching the funeral services. Interment took place in the Wheatland cemetery with the Lyla Watson Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.