

# Back When

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## Dec. 21, 1955

The main topic of discussion in Gallup today seems to center around a fire at Fort Wingate that totally destroyed the home of the late Ambrose Ashley, leaving his widow and eight children with no place to live.

Fire officials later credited 12-year-old Eugene Ashley for showing bravery and quick thinking in getting his brothers and sisters out of the building in time.

Three days after the fire, officials for the Fort Wingate Ordinance Depot stepped up and said they had taken steps to take care of the family since Ambrose Ashley had worked at the boiler plant for many years before his death in 1953.

Not only have the employees at the plant agreed to buy clothing for each of the children, but a drive is underway to collect furniture and other items that the family will need since all of their possessions were destroyed in the fire.

It also appears that the Christmas spirit is alive and well in Gallup with the Independent reporting that donations "are pouring in" from all over the area.

The Navajo Children's Home has taken in the five oldest children to give the mother and relatives a chance to find a new home.

Larry Moore, head of the Gallup Community Center, said his group will act as coordinator for the effort to get donations. "Anything you can give will be appreciated," he said.

He said anyone with clothing or furniture to donate can call 775 and someone from the community center will be by later to pick it up.

The center is attempting to find a kitchen stove and Moore urged anyone with extra pots and pans to step up and help the family out. A refrigerator and table and chairs is also needed, he said.

Although they were requested, the center began receiving hundreds of donations of toys in the days before Christmas.

— *Bill Donovan, correspondent*