

DO YOU REMEMBER?

By HELEN T. HOLLINGSHEAD

MOUNT UNION'S FIRST FIRE FIGHTERS

Fire! Fire! Fire! Do you remember how that cry sounded in the middle of the night years ago when men or boys ran up one street and down the other to try to awaken the people of the little town to the danger of a fire that was destroying a property somewhere. It struck cold terror to your heart for there was little help in those days except what strong men could do with buckets and water from pumps or draw wells. Mothers and fathers never left their children in bed for no one knew what might happen. Everyone was dressed and out as quickly as possible and an effort was made to locate the fire. Men fought fire and mothers with their children around them stood in excited little groups, looking on.

A bucket brigade was usually formed and the pump nearest the fire was put into action. Pumpers worked frantically in relays until—as often was the case—the well was dry. Fire has always been a dread thing but when there was no fire company there seemed to be little protection.

Do you remember the barrel pumper that R. J. Faust, then owner of the tannery, had for use in time of fires? It could be filled with a hose and always stood

ready with a pump attached to it. Always given to help in an emergency, it was kept as a protection against fire at the tannery. The time of that fire equipment was about 1898, according to one of our firemen who remembers using it.

About 1903 a group of far-sighted men in Mount Union realized that the town needed an organized fire company to save life and property, for the town was growing with the coming of the Harbison-Walker Brick plant and soon afterwards the other brick-making plants.

Following the cries of the Minute Men in awaking the town to the danger of fire, the whistle at the old silica brick plant blew for the fire alarm. It was not quite so shrill and terrifying as the siren now on the top of the fire house at the Municipal Building is but it scared one plenty when it blew in the middle of the night.

On July 28, 1903, the first Mount Union Fire Department was organized. Since that time, although many good firemen have served their community and passed on to their reward, Mount Union has always had wonderful protection and service from a volunteer fire company.

When we think of the fire company we cannot help but think of Samuel S. Mosser, a man among men, who was president of the company and a fire chief for many years. He gave his life in service, for his earthly career ended at the fire house as he took off his fire-fighting clothing and hung them up. He dropped dead with a heart attack after doing his duty at a fire.

We think of Charles Wenzel who also served as fire chief, but Mr. Mosser was chief for many years and, following his death H. G. Cromer served in that capacity and only recently John Weirich was made the chief.

According to the history written in 1908 and 1910 by Charles H. Welch, the officers at that time were as follows: president, Samuel Mosser; vice president, Robert O. Johnson; secretary, Stewart A. Kynor; assistant secretary, Arthur Johnson; financial secretary, Frank B. Davis; treasurer, G. B. M. Kenler; chief, Charles Wenzel; assistant chief, Frank Moore.

One of the first pieces of equipment purchased by the fire company was a two-wheel hose carrier. It was drawn by men and it gave one a thrill to see from four to six persons pulling that apparatus down the street in case of a fire. From time to time other pieces of fire fighting equipment were added until today the company has the best.

One of our older firemen asked me this morning if I remember the night the first bad fire occurred in the Beers Hotel. It must have been about 1912 for it was the opening night of the Luna Theatre which was built by the late T. C. Peduzzi, on Jefferson Street, later the property of A. Diamond Price and Butler stock company, was playing an engagement and the Mount Union Concert Band under Peter Buys

was playing as a special attraction in the new playhouse. The fire alarm sounded and the theatre was emptied in a shorter time than it takes to write about it.

That was a terrible night for Mount Union, for the hotel stood in the center of many frame buildings and had the firemen not fought desperately to save it, much of the town could have been wiped out.

Another terrible fire that most folks can remember only too vividly was the one that destroyed the Crum block with many stores and apartments and which damaged several fine homes on Pennsylvania Avenue. Our firemen have always stood the test and Mount Union citizens are proud of them.

Last Labor Day, 1947, the Mount Union firemen entertained all companies of the Huntingdon County Firemen's Association. A feature of the day was a colorful parade with firemen in fine uniforms and bright, blazing fire fighting equipment of every description that was witnessed by thousands of citizens of this town and visiting towns lining the streets.

Our company which started with a two-wheel hose carriage made just as fine an appearance as any, and older Mount Union folks must have recalled former days remembered as they saw those two handsome Mack and Stutz pumpers, two fine ambulances which are for the service of the vicinity, and a group of firemen, immaculate in their dress uniforms, step with dignity down the street.

Finer equipment, you may say, but the little barrel pumper and the two wheel hose cart served their purpose in their day!

Remember?

New Regulations Made In Marine Re-enlistments

Former Marine officers and non-commissioned officers now have up to two years to re-enlist in a non-commissioned officer's rank.

Regulations governing the lapse of time between discharge and re-enlistment of Marine commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers have recently been modified to benefit many veterans who are re-entering the peace-time corps.

Former officers and first pay grade non-commissioned officers may now re-enlist as technical sergeants within one year after discharge and as staff sergeants within two years after discharge. A technical sergeant may re-enlist as a staff sergeant within one year after discharge and as a sergeant within two years; a staff sergeant has two years to re-enlist as a sergeant and a sergeant has two years in which to return as a corporal. A veteran corpora retains his rank if he rejoins within one year.

Previously all former Marines including officers, were reappointed as privates first class unless they rejoined within ninety days after discharge, except the first pay grade non-commissioned officers who were given only thirty days to re-enlist. Practically all ex-Marines who consider re-enlist

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racks is an all-wool worsted. orsted fast, because they etter press! (Worsteds are wool fibres—twisted extra-der finish). Town-clads are at collar, shoulders, cuffs moother, easier fit! Single yles in new-for-Fall chaiken plaids, coverts! Get in ion of Town-clad worsteds!

