

~~Fire Organizations.~~

Chapter XIX

Town Affairs

Fire Organizations  
Dunmore Hose Company  
Water Supply

Fire 5. #2

That the necessity of forming a fire company was recognized at an early date is shown in an act incorporating certain persons named therein by the name of the Brandon Fire Company, and dated Tuesday, Nov. 3rd in the A.M., 1818. On January 4, 1856, a newspaper account of a destructive fire at the Brandon Iron and Car Wheel Company ends with a question: Who will become a pioneer in the long talked-of project of establishing an efficient fire company in this place? The following month a published letter of thanks from A. A. Meacham gives credit to the people of Brandon for their timely aid and assistance in saving his property from fire, and also expresses appreciation for the favors shown his family by the Ladies, so that the lack of an efficient fire company was met by the aid and exertions of friends and neighbors. But steps in the right direction are indicated by a notice in September, 1861 notifying the Neshobe Fire Company Number One to meet at the Engine House Saturday, the 21st next at 3 o'clock P.M.

About the year 1872 a fire engine was acquired by the town called the Neshobe. This was a heavy, somewhat cumbersome machine, and like all early machines, was worked by man power. It had two kinds of hose, one which pumped the water, and the

leading hose, which delivered it at the fire. There were two long handle bars, one on each side, which were grasped by as many men as could get hold, and moved up and down, pumping the water. By this arrangement ordinary fires, not too far away or at too great a height, could be extinguished. But where height or distance from water prevented the engine from coping with the fire, the "bucket brigade" came into operation. This consisted of two long lines of men and boys, one of which passed pails of water from the source to the fire, and the other returned the pails. Very effective work was done in this way if the fire had not gathered too much headway.

In 1872 the Neshobe Engine Co. Number one was organized. The by-laws of this company, dated 1872, are in a small pamphlet showing on its cover a picture of the engine with the motto, "We strive to save." This company was well supplied with foremen, including a foreman, first assistant foreman, second assistant foreman, foreman of the leading hose and foreman of the suction hose. The duties of these and all the other officers are set forth in much detail. The engine was kept in a small building near the center of the town where the meetings were held, and it was the duty of the steward to ring the bell of the house thirty minutes prior to meetings, and again at the time of meeting. The only compensation provided was one dollar to the first arrival at the fire house on a fire alarm, and fifty cents to the second arrival. Fines ranged from fifteen cents to a dollar, the former for absence from roll-call at a meeting, the latter for leaving the company without permission while on duty.

At a later date John A. Conant purchased a smaller and lighter engine, primarily for the protection of himself and relatives then residing on Conant Square, but it was also at

service of the village when needed. It was named after the owner, and the building ~~++~~ housing it was on his premises. A reservoir built nearby and another on the present premises of Frank Bunting were kept filled with water to be used if needed.

After the installation of the water system the Neshobe Engine was no longer needed, and the Engine Company dissolved. A new organization known as the Volunteer Hose Company took its place, which served until the present Dunmore Hose Company was organized about the year 1894. It has continued to take charge of the firefighting apparatus of the District and to use it when called by alarms, and many can testify to their efficient work in averting or reducing the destruction by fires, aided by the powerful pressure of the water which flows from the street hydrants when wanted.

The Fire District <sup>no. 1</sup> was formed and organized in 1856, since which date it has had charge of all matters pertaining to fires and means of fighting them. It has installed our water system, laying the first pipes for the aqueduct system to Fern Lake in 1878, and later when this proved inadequate reinforcing this line with another line divided into two branches, with reservoirs fed by springs and a mountain brook. The Fire District carried on this work, and issued its bonds in payment therefor, primarily as a matter of fire protection, but it also became the owner and operator of a municipal water supply system, furnishing water for domestic use. The Fire District is a corporation entirely distinct from the town, and holds its own meetings and transacts its own business.

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