

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT IS TOPS

The first fire fighting equipment was purchased in 1898 from the Waterous Company of St. Paul. It was a coal burning steam engine and so constructed that the engineer, Fritz Johnson could get up steam pressure in as little as four and one half minutes.

The water supply for the main part of town, a cement lined tank, was constructed on the southwest corner of the city hall and was filled by pumping from the river. The suction hose was put into the tanks and it could be used continuously for two and a half hours. After each fire the tank was refilled before the engine was put away.

For fires in other parts of town the engine was placed on a dock and the water pumped from the river or lake. These docks were located at the end of Third Avenue and at the highway bridge. Another was located on the West end of town.

After city water was installed in 1913 and another type of equipment was necessary, the old engine remained in the fire hall and later placed in the care of the Waterous Company who kept it in repair and insured, although it remained city property.

Always a volunteer Fire Department, they were quick to answer calls and acted ~~as~~ heroically in all situations.

On March 4, 1937, a fire at the Milgram ~~store~~ store nearly destroyed the building.

It was discovered by Henri St. Hilaire while he was out on his usual early morning walk.

The contents of the clothing store were ruined. When the

Walter Blanchard, a member of the Fire Department was badly burned on both hands, his nose and left side of his face, by a sudden blast of flames from the burning building.

A new city garage was built in 1980 to house equipment including the Fire engines. John Skluzacek serves as fire chief as well as heading the city maintenance crew. Other fire department officers in Pine City are Eldon Johnson, assistant chief, Harvey Lindstrom, captain, Royce Johnson, first lieutenant, Jack Miller, second lieutenant, Cary Rootkie, Secy. treasurer and Kurtis Rike, caretaker.

In 1931 the Fire Chief was paid an annual salary of \$25. plus calls and the 30 volunteers were paid only for calls.

There was no fire resistant roof ordinance at that time and the alarm was activated by telephone and the men responded to the whistle. Today they wear "beepers" and are alerted no matter where they are.

In 1899 the department consisted of the Chief and 39 volunteers, one waterous steam engine, 2 hose carts, 2000⁺ of 2½ inch hose, and the alarm was signaled by bell and steam whistles.

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