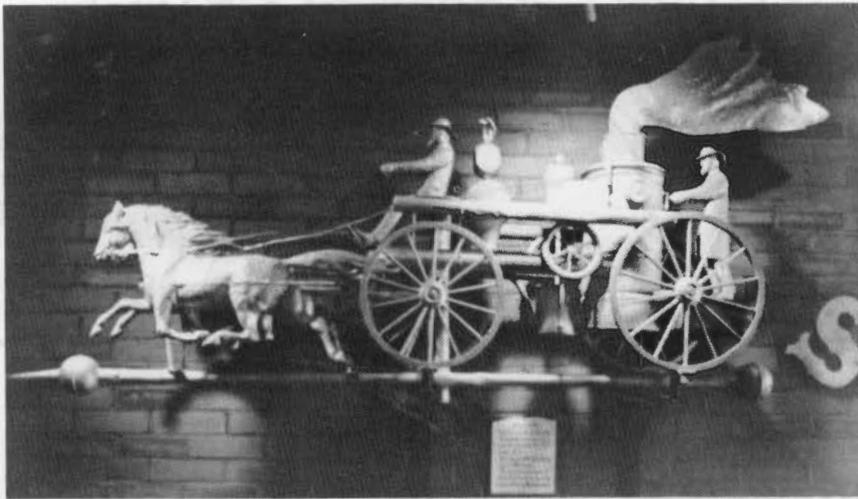


HISTORIC LEWISTON

Its Fire Department

HISTORIC LEWISTON

Its Fire Department



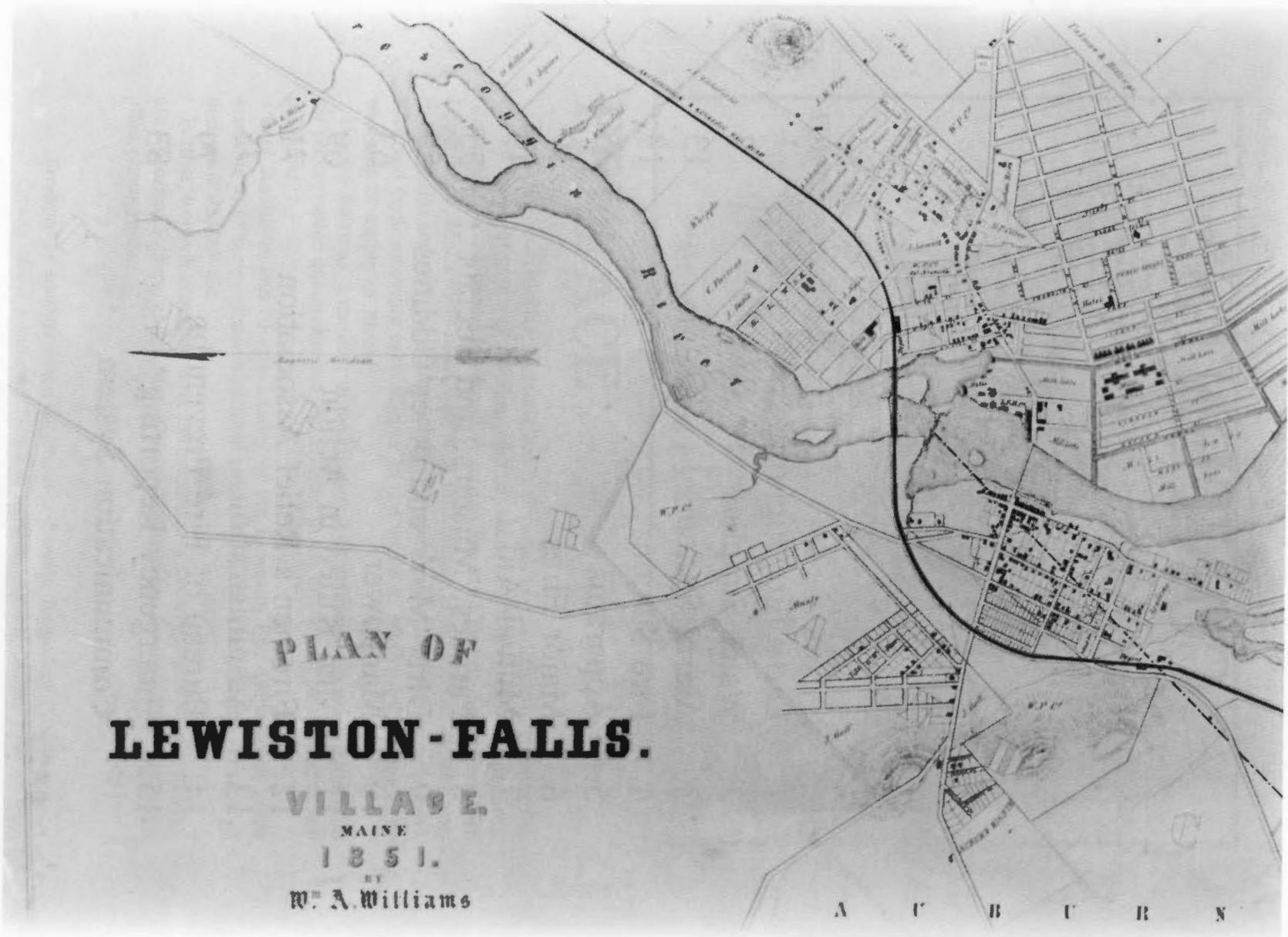
*1874 Weather Vane now in Central Station
Bates and College Streets*

by
**Clarence Penley, Geneva Kirk
& Gridley Barrows**

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Minot, Danville and Auburn

EARLY FIRE FIGHTING



*Leather Bucket
now in Androscoggin Historical Museum*

Copy of Exhibit #1, received in 1988

Chapter 1

EARLY FIRE FIGHTING

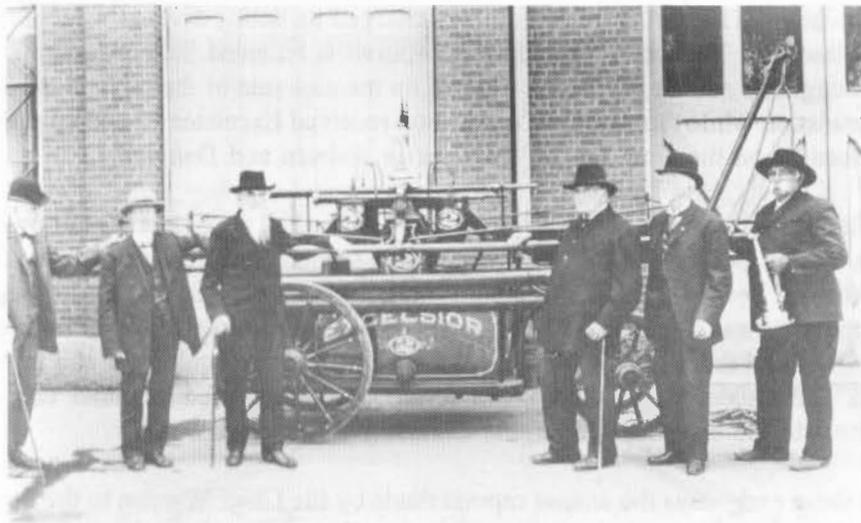
Records before 1849 show that there were "fire wards" in the village that was growing up around Lewiston Falls. However, there is no description of apparatus and methods of fire fighting. It is assumed that, as is known in other communities, attempts to fight fire were haphazard and disorganized in this era of "buckets, bags and bedwrenches". Shouts of 'fire' and ringing of church bells called all the available able-bodied men to the site of a blaze. Each volunteer provided his own leather bucket to be filled with water and passed as part of a bucket brigade. Each grabbed a bag to gather a family's personal items and a bedwrench with which to disassemble the most important pieces of furniture in order that they might be speedily removed from the burning building as well as adjoining ones. Even if the house burned, the family would have the basic furniture and apparel to begin again.

There are many descriptions of unfortunate injuries to bystanders from the throwing of furniture out windows. Even in much later years there might be as much damage caused by unwarranted and reckless removal of furniture as from fire or water damage.

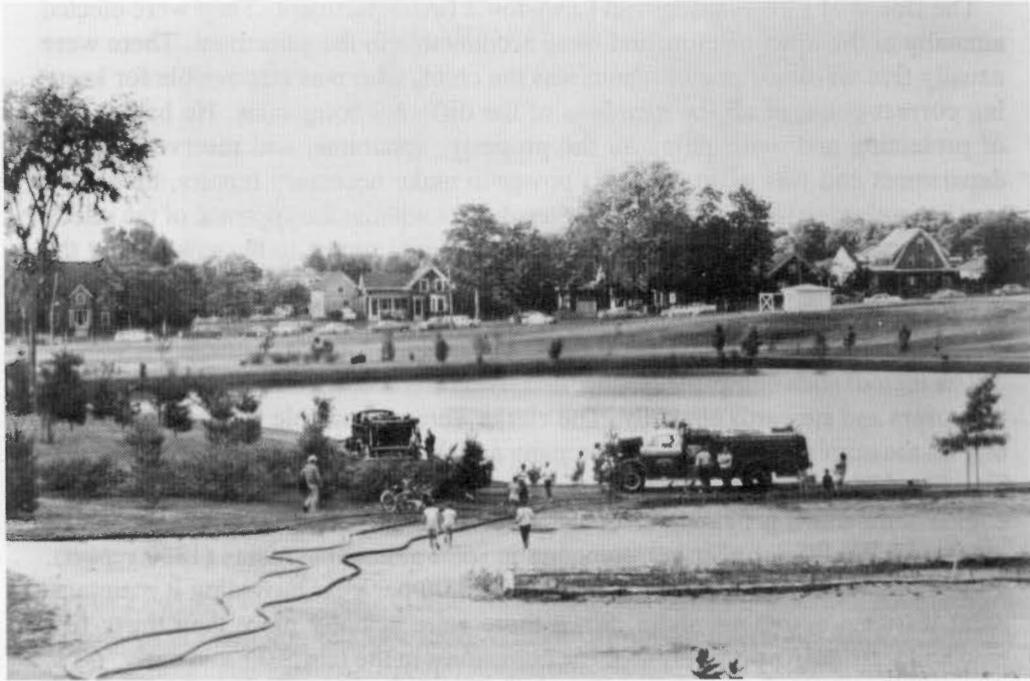
These early methods of fire-fighting may have sufficed for the early days of the settlement, but by 1849 such volunteer efforts were too unreliable and inefficient to provide protection for the growing community. On July 30, 1849 the Lewiston Falls Village Corporation was formed. It was organized to maintain a good and efficient fire department within the limits of the corporation. The area included a portion of the town of Lewiston (then in Lincoln county) on the east bank of the Androscoggin River and portions of the original towns of Auburn and of Danville (then in Cumberland county) on the west bank. These three towns' common boundaries met at the highest rock in the falls.

The Lewiston Falls Village Corporation was authorized by the state legislature to raise money for the purchase and maintenance of fire equipment, to erect and maintain engine houses and to construct reservoirs and aqueducts to supply water for the engines. Six officers were designated to run the corporation. Three assessors were to levy poll taxes upon the residents and taxes upon the estates of residents and non-residents after consideration of the value and location of the properties. A collector was to collect these taxes, the treasurer was to receive and keep accurate records of the monies collected, and a clerk was to keep records of all meetings and business transactions of the corporation.

On October 30, 1849 the Engine Company Androscoggin #1 with fifty-seven members was formed and stationed on Chapel Street in the town of Lewiston. At the same time the Excelsior Engine Company was formed in Auburn and stationed on River Street (now Great Falls Plaza). It had fifty-seven members, the foreman being Jesse Lyford, later mayor of Lewiston. Shortly thereafter, on November 26, two 5½" bore hand tubs known as Androscoggin #1 and Excelsior #2 were delivered to the Lewiston Falls Village Corporation by the Hunneman Company of Roxbury, Massachusetts. Hunneman was a leading manufacturer of hand fire engines between 1792 and 1883, when steam engines forced the hand engines off the market. William C. Hunneman, founder of the company which continued to 1883, was a coppersmith who learned his trade in the shop of Paul Revere.



Crew of Excelsior #2, reunited in 1909.



Lake Andrew at Bates College.

The water in the lake (sometimes known as Prexey's Puddle) was gratefully utilized by the firemen called to fight the fire in Parker Hall in the 1970's.

WATER SUPPLIES



A hydrant on Ware Street.

Chapter 2

WATER SUPPLIES

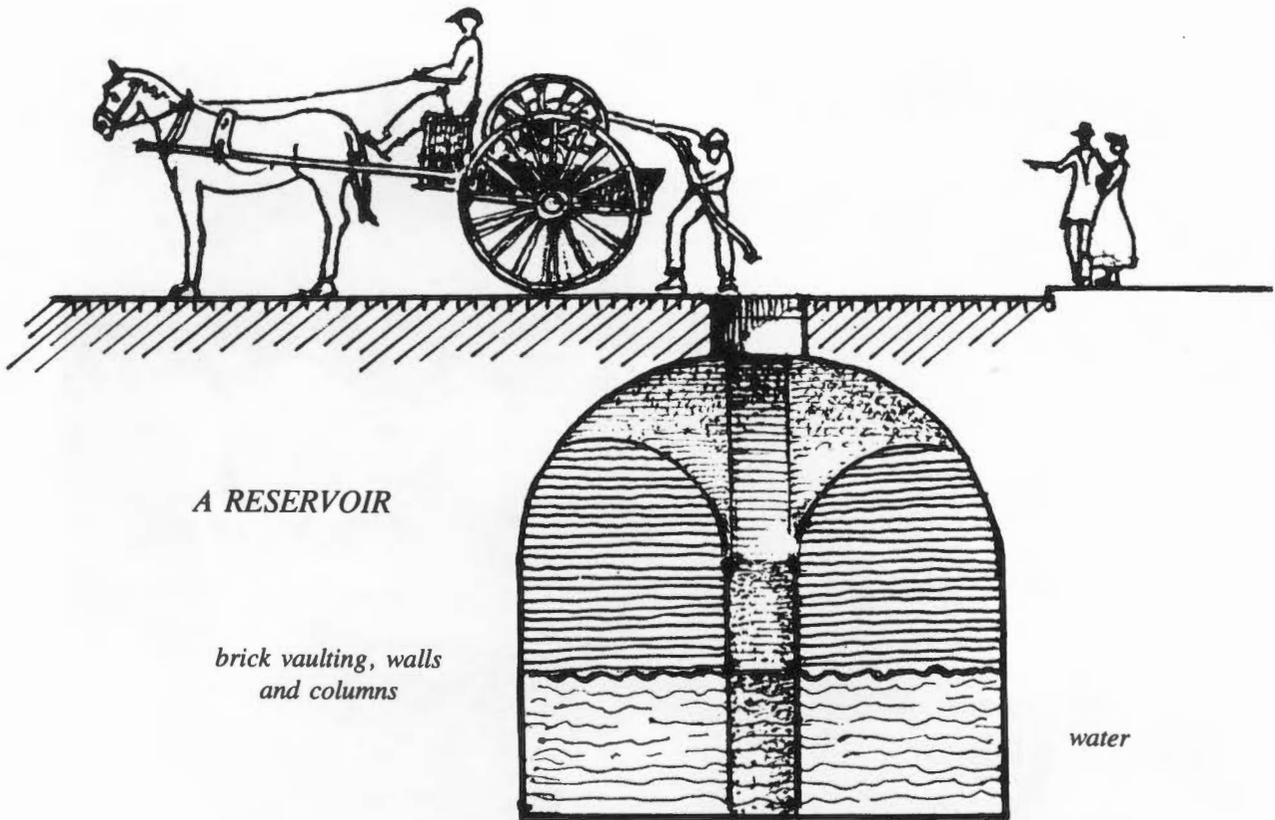
A major problem was noted by the chief engineer William Waldron in his report in the spring of 1860 and substantiated by a committee of selectmen organized to investigate the situation.

“One important essential item was almost wanting, to wit water... We have felt a constant alarm through the winter, from the unprepared state we were in to meet any emergency in the way of fires, from the want of a supply of water. It will be readily seen by looking over the ground, that if fires had taken in many or even in most places in our village, that we should have been almost powerless to subdue it, or arrest its progress.”

In view of this rather desperate situation the selectmen decided that the choice before them was either to end the fire department with all its expense to the town or make provision for an ample supply of water. Happily for the safety of Lewiston, they chose the latter.

The sources of water for fire fighting were the canal, river, ponds and wells to which the bucket brigade could go. In order to reach the water in the canals and river easily there were three platforms built out over the water so that engines could be driven onto them. They were located at the rear of J.G. Cook's (87 Lisbon Street), at the rear of George Webber's shop (B. Peck's) and over the river at the head of Chapel Street.

After purchasing the hand engines the town had need of reservoirs strategically located throughout the community. Those built before 1856 were the work of the Village Corporation, but after that year the town government had them constructed. The water supply was reached through a manhole cover in the street which was removed to put in a suction hose.



Following is a list of reservoirs existing in 1870:

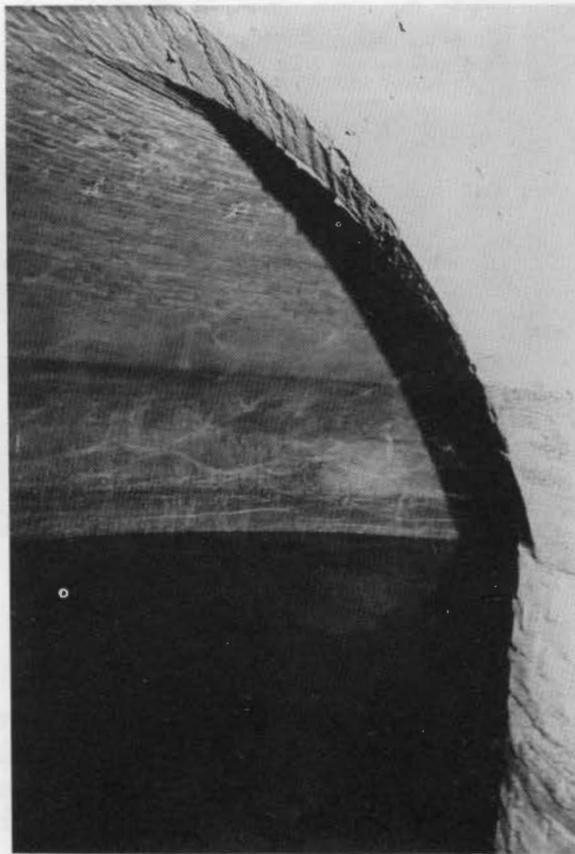
1. Corner of Main and Sabattus Streets
2. Ash Street near the post office
3. Corner of Pine and Horton Streets
4. Corner of Pine and Bates Streets
5. Main Street near Captain Holland's
6. Main Street in front of the Engine House (now bus terminal)
7. Knox Street near the school (east side of the street, midway between Birch and Maple Streets)
8. Seminary Street (now Central Avenue) near James Wood's
9. Corner of Pierce and Walnut Streets
10. Park street near the Engine House (now 75 Park Street)
11. Bates Street near Maine Central Depot (now Steel Service Center)
12. Main Street at the rear of J.B. Jones (now CMMC parking lot)
13. Corner of Blake and Birch Streets
14. Corner of Sabattus and College Streets
15. Jones Street near the fairgrounds (now Spring and Whipple Streets)
16. Main Street near the Intermediate School
17. Bates College (open pool near the present chapel)

Exploring...



*A reservoir that still exists today,
on Main Street, in good shape.*

*brick
vaulting*



*brick arch
and column*

water

*Inside #6 on Main Street
with 4'-6' of water.*

...the Lewiston Underground

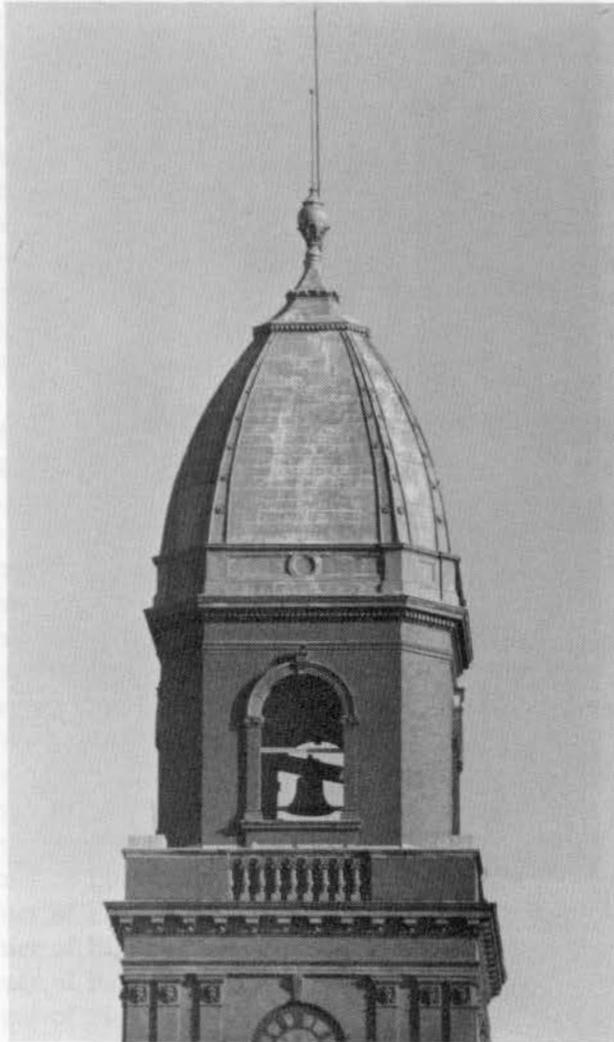


Lewiston Water Works (now demolished)

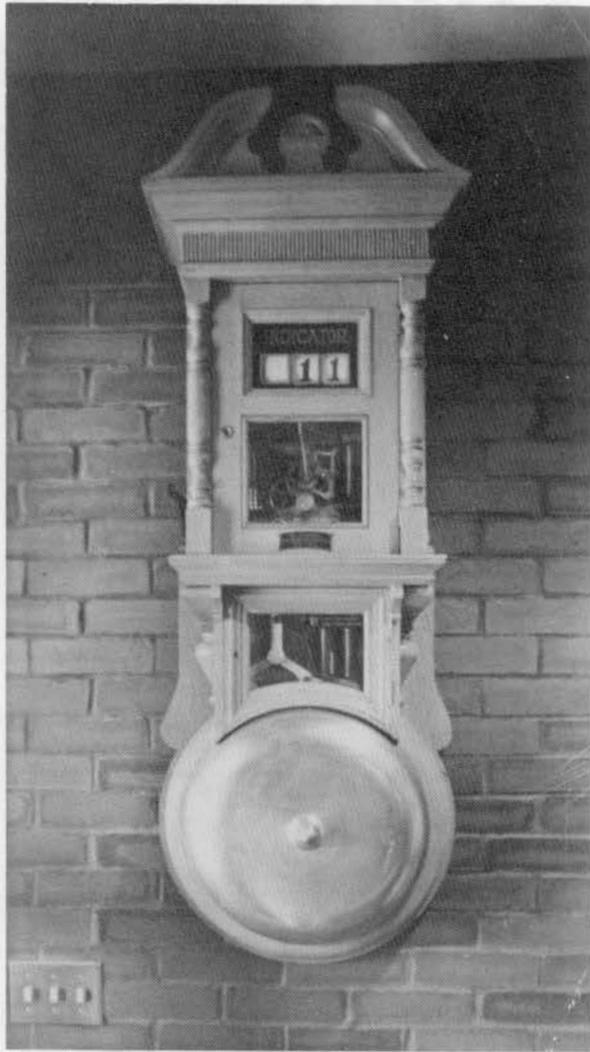
A new Lewiston Water Works was ready for operation December 24, 1878. Pipes were in place throughout the city for domestic water supply, and 120 hydrants were attached to supply water for the fire department. The municipal pumping station, which was on Island Avenue at the falls, secured water from the river rather than Lake Auburn. The firemen were elated to have a ready, adequate supply of water because the Lisbon Street area had suffered from numerous bad fires that year and the previous year. No more reservoirs were constructed after this date. In recent years, during street reconstruction remains of some reservoirs have come to light.

Chapter 3

ALARM SYSTEMS



The Bell in City Hall



A Gong and Indicator—1885

Chapter 3

ALARM SYSTEMS

Prior to 1880 any person who detected a fire started shouting "fire, fire" and went to the nearest church or school to have the bell rung. Some other bells took up the alarm, but this made it impossible to learn the exact location of the fire. A coding system was needed. An October 1875 newspaper article said:

"Lewiston ought to have some better system of fire alarm. We have so many bells for work and for lunch that it is often difficult to say whether a bell means fire, labor or religion. The other evening the entire fire department got on bell call, but found that they were called out to a prayer meeting. They would undoubtedly all have gone to church if they had had their good clothes on; but as matters were the call was irritating."

In 1880 the Electric Fire Alarm Company installed fire alarm telegraph boxes at fourteen locations. The first number of each digit indicated the ward in which it was located.

- 17 corner of Main and Frye Streets
- 18 corner of College and Vale Streets
- 19 corner of College and Sabattus Streets
- 27 corner of Main and High Streets
- 28 Lewiston Machine Company Shop (West Bates Street)
- 35 corner of Main and Lincoln Streets
- 36 corner of Main and Lisbon Streets
- 38 corner of Main and Bates Streets
- 43 corner of Lincoln and Chestnut Streets
- 47 corner of Lisbon and Pine Streets
- 57 corner of Pine and Pierce Streets
- 62 corner of Birch and Bates Streets
- 63 corner of Park and Maple Streets
- 72 corner of Pine and Webster Streets

A keyholder in each neighborhood was summoned to unlock the box and pull a hook down once when he was alerted to the existence of a fire. The boxes were coded so that the designated number struck a bell in the tower of City Hall. These were the 1880 instructions to keyholders, who unfortunately could not always be found:

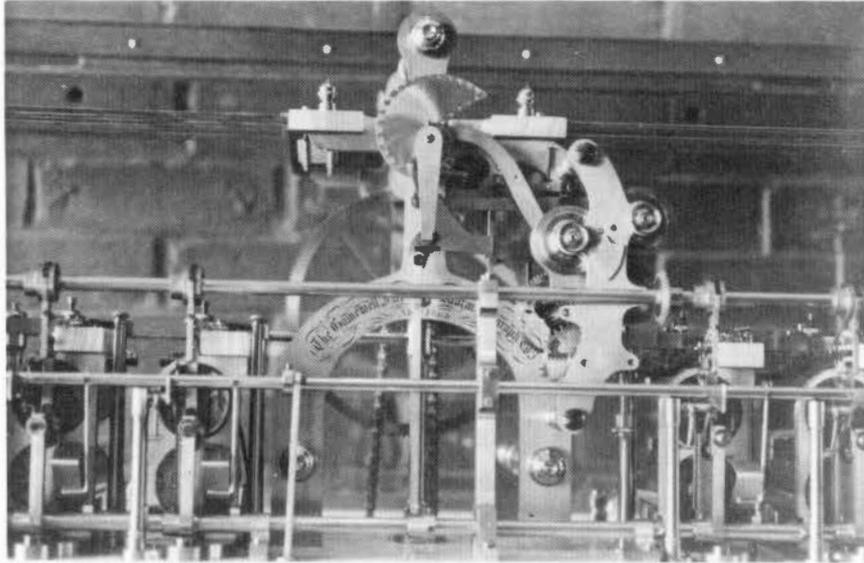
"Key-holders, upon positive information of a fire, will unlock the box and, if the city hall bell is not striking or the small bell in the box, pull the hook easily down to the end of the slide once and let go immediately. Do not pull a box when city hall bell is striking, After pulling a box remain at the box, if possible, until the firemen arrive, to direct them to the fire. If you hear no clicking sound in the box after pulling the hook, go to the next box and give the alarm. No box in Lewiston should be pulled for a fire in Auburn. Never give an alarm for a fire seen at a distance. First locate the fire, then go to the nearest box to the fire and give the alarm. Never pull a box for a burning chimney. In no case is more than one box to be pulled for the same fire, and that box should be nearest the fire. Key-holders changing their residence, will please return their keys to the Superintendent of the line and in no case leave them with new tenants. All complaints concerning the boxes or wires, must be made to the Chief Engineer or Superintendent of the line. It will be the duty of the police after an alarm from any box, between the hours of nine o'clock in the evening and three o'clock the morning, to ring Main Street Free Baptist Church bell."

Newspaper ads instructed citizens in the workings of the system and box locations. Police notified citizens that the cry of fire would not be tolerated; the alarm system must be used. The first alarm under this coded system was struck on October 28, 1880 for a roof fire on Lincoln Street.

Auburn was interested in making a joint financial effort to have the alarm system extended. In 1882 five locations in Auburn were added and wired to the bells in the Free Will Baptist Church tower next to the Library in Auburn. These would code the alarm in unison with the one on city hall in Lewiston. The city of Auburn paid \$35.00 a year for the privilege of using the church bell.

Over the years improvements were made. In 1885 a gong and indicator were installed in the station. In 1898 a steam whistle was installed on the roof of the Bates Mill boiler house to augment the bells. In 1900 an air whistle was installed on the pumping station to replace the steam whistle which was shut down at times when the mill was not operating.

An entirely new system, the Gamewell, was installed in 1909. This was a telegraph system. When a circuit was broken by the tripping of a lever in the alarm box, it set off a tapper in every fire station, in the chief's home, the pumping station, the police station and many firemen's homes and indicated to them the fire location.



Detail of Gamewell Repeater on display at Central Station.

At 8 p.m. citizens often gathered to watch the show at the engine house when the test was made every evening to see that the fire alarm caused the gas light to come on and stalls to open automatically. The horses galloped from their stalls and backed under swing harnesses as they would in case of a fire. By that hour of the day some men called "sleepers" had come to sleep for the night to augment the few regulars on duty. The horses which had been out working during the day for the public works department had been brought to the engine house for the night.

An automatic sprinkler alarm system was instituted in 1916 to protect business establishments. It operated on a separate circuit which sounded only in the fire stations but did not activate the public alarm. In 1920 Lewiston and Auburn separated their alarms and Lewiston discontinued its 8 p.m. test schedule. In 1920 a transmitter with one hundred interchangeable break wheels was installed. This enabled the central dispatcher to activate any alarm box, if he received a telephone message about a fire, and thus the call men could be summoned.

The air whistle was discontinued in 1938 due to renovations at the pumping station. Its replacement, an air horn, was the subject of much merriment for a time because it was not as robust as its predecessor and was said to be as meek as Ferdinand the Bull. The City Hall bell drowned it out, until finally a third horn was added.

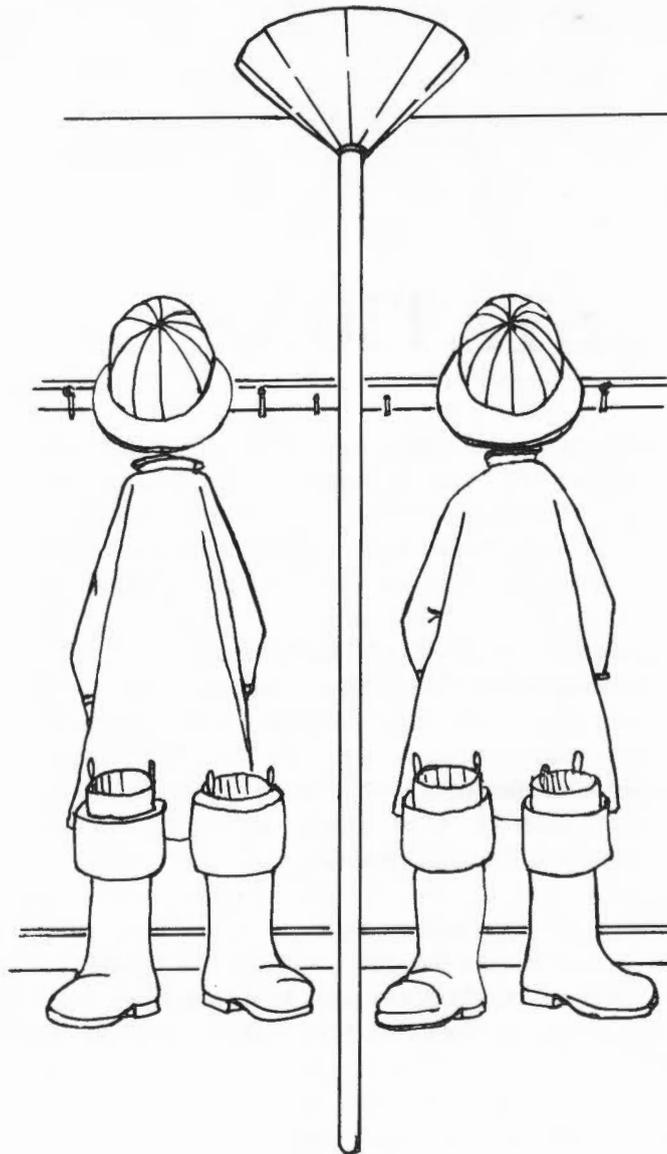


The present alarm system was installed in 1972. Much money would have been needed to update the old system and federal funds were available to help purchase a radio type alarm system. On January 17, 1973 the last coded alarm was sounded. No longer were there any call men to summon and no longer would the public be alerted to the location of fires and possibly handicap the fire department operations.

Superintendents of the Alarm System

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1880-1889 | Forrest Bisbee, later Superintendent of the Electric Light Company and Superintendent of the Auburn department. |
| 1889-1911 | Frank R. Whitney, also a telephone company employee. |
| 1911-1923 | Fred E. Paige. |
| 1924-1937 | Kenneth A. Kirk, an electrician. |
| 1937-1955 | Charles Delisle, the first full-time superintendent. |
| 1958-1976 | Joseph Theriault. |
| 1976- | Richard Grondin. |

FIRE STATIONS





*1873 Central Station, Ash Street.
Hose Tower was added in 1879 with weather vane.*

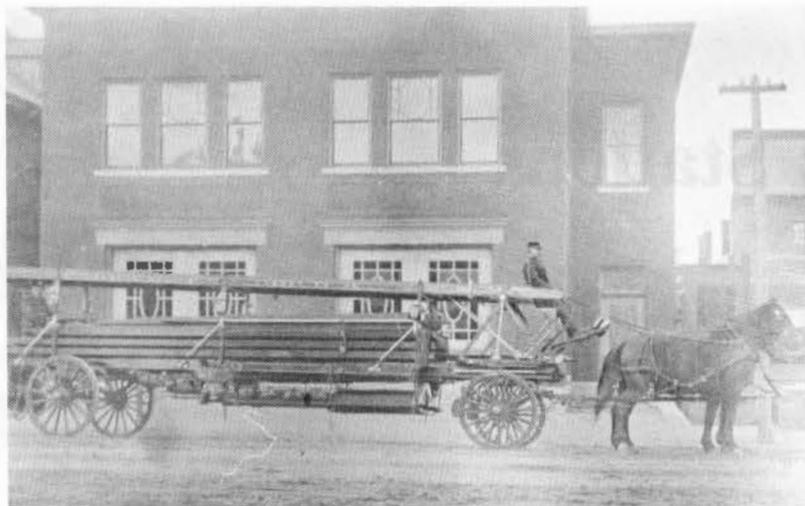
Chapter 4

FIRE STATIONS

Originally buildings were constructed to house particular pieces of equipment such as a hose and ladder or tubs. A station did not have a variety of equipment as in recent times. In 1849 the first station was built on Chapel Street at the rear of the chapel on the corner of Main Street. It housed the Androscoggin #1, a Hunneman tub. In 1877 the building was sold for \$157.00 and moved away.

On Park Street a structure costing \$740.00 was put up in 1856 for Lewiston Engine #1, a Hunneman Hand Tub #562 acquired that year. When the first Hook and Ladder #1 was acquired in 1860 it also was stationed here in the basement. In 1883 a barn was added for two horses. The year 1864 saw another station on Franklin Street (now Middle Street) on the site of the former Steckino's Restaurant to house Hook and Ladder #1. After 1866 this housed No. 4 Hose Company and later was used by Hand Tub Fountain #2.

By 1866 steam engines had come on the scene and a station at Haymarket Square (now the bus terminal) housed the steamer called Liberty #4. When Liberty #4 moved to Ash Street the building was used by a new Hook and Ladder Rescue #5. A temporary station on Bates Street (now the Knapp Shoe parking lot) was built in 1868 at a cost of \$524.35 for a second steamer Androscoggin #3. However, a station at the corner of Ash and Bates Streets was built in 1873 at a cost of \$18,744.30 as a permanent home for Engine #3 as well as Liberty #4 and their hose companies. This station, enlarged in 1921, served as central station until 1973.



*Rescue Hook and Ladder No. 1.
Park Street, Lewiston, Maine*

The outlying areas were growing and needed protection. Consequently in 1883 space was rented at Barkerville for Hose #6 run by twelve volunteers. This station operated spasmodically until the city bought a lot in 1898 and built a hose reel house.

Also, in 1898 the Park Street station was replaced with a two story, two bay brick station. It closed in 1932 and the equipment was sent to Central Station. That building at 75 Park Street was demolished during the Urban Renewal program. The last pair of horses had been stationed there but died in July 1932. However, once more the fire department had need of horse power during a major blizzard, in January 1935. Horses were rented from the Lake Auburn Crystal Ice Company and stationed at the Malo home on East Avenue, another team at the Bartlett home at Barkerville, and still a third on the Sabattus Road.

The heavily populated Lincoln Street area received attention in 1908 when a remodeled school house became quarters for Hose Company #4 which had been renovated after being used as a coal wagon to haul extra supplies of cannel coal to fire the big steamers for the big fires. Outer Sabattus Street got a new station in 1940, outer Lisbon Street in 1950 and replacements for older Barkerville and Lincoln Street stations were built in 1953 and 1964.

When the flooring of the old central station was found to be unsafe a new station was built at the intersection of Oak, College and Bates Streets at a cost of \$875,000.00. It opened in August 1973.

Today's Stations

*Main Street
1953*



*Lincoln Street
1964*



*Lisbon Street
1950*





*Sabattus Street
1940*



*New Central Station, 1973
at Oak College, and
Bates Streets.*



Steamer Androscoggin No. 3

Chapter 5

APPARATUS YESTERDAY

The first piece of equipment in 1849 was a Hunneman Company Hand Tub named the Androscoggin #1. It was an open tub with a copper lined tank mounted on four wheels and hauled by hand. Two piston type pumps—one on either side—ejected the water as six to eight men on each side pushed down on the rails. Since they needed to rest periodically a large company of men was needed. Because the hand tub had only five hundred feet of hose it had to be situated near the burning building. If it was also near a source of water, then a suction hose twenty feet long could draw up the supply. Otherwise the tub had to be filled by a bucket brigade.

Androscoggin #1 was exchanged in 1874 with the town of Hartland for a Jeffers make hand tub known as Fountain #2. In 1856 another hand tub called the Lewiston Engine #1 was bought from the Hunneman Company. It was later sold to South Berwick which renamed it the Citizen and it is still located there.

Hook and Ladder #1, a hand-drawn piece of equipment, was bought in 1860. It was a village type with five ladders. The hook was a rugged metal one about 18 inches across. When fire threatened to spread from a seriously damaged building, the hook could be inserted into the window frame, perhaps, and pulled by men or horses in order to bring down a wall.

The first steam engine drawn by two horses was bought in 1866 from the Johnson Company and named Liberty #4.

The next steam engine, the Androscoggin #3, was purchased from the Amoskeag Company in 1868 for \$4100.00. In 1877 the L.C. Peck #4 was bought from the Amoskeag Company to replace the 1866 Johnson. It rated 900-1000 g.p.m. and cost \$4200.00.

Kindling of birch edgings was kept in place in the steam boiler so that, when a fire call came, a torch dipped in kerosene would quickly light the fire. Gradually cannel coal was thrown on. The underwriters testing the L.C. Peck Engine #4 found in 1877 that it took seven minutes to get up 15 pounds of steam pressure which was enough to start pumping, nine minutes to get up forty-five pounds, and eleven minutes to get full steam which is one hundred pounds pressure. This steamer, which could pump 900-1000 g.p.m., needed three men to operate it—a driver, a stoker to tend the fire and an engineer to tend the pump.



Steamer L.C. Peck, No. 4



Hose Jumper



Hose Reel



Hose Wagon

In the horse-drawn days response to a building fire was by four types of apparatus—a chemical engine to make a quick attack, a hose wagon to lay 2½ inch lines in the street from the water supply to the fire, a steam engine to pump water, and finally a ladder truck to raise ladders and perform salvage of building content. When motors replaced horses, much heavier loads could be carried, so that the duties could be performed by one of the modern "combination units".

Vehicles to carry hose to fires and to lay the lines from the hydrants or pumpers were hand hauled two wheel reels originally. Each could carry 500 feet of 2½ inch hose. In 1879 Lewiston purchased a larger two wheel reel which carried 800-900 feet. This unit, called a hose jumper, was hauled by a single horse and the driver sat in a "spring seat" mounted over the reel.

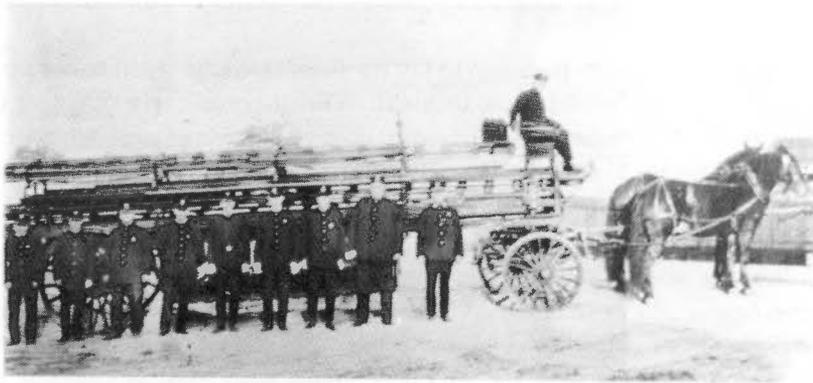
The following year a four wheeled one horse reel was purchased. Starting in 1885 these hose units were changed to wagons. Then the hose could be laid flat in a hose bed rather than being wound on a reel. The wagon hauled by two horses could carry up to 1200 feet on 2½ inch hose. They were used as first line equipment until the 1920's when they were replaced one at a time by motorized vehicles. Until the last one was discarded in 1932 they were kept as reserve units which could be pulled by horses in case of a major fire. During periods of heavy snow pungs replaced the wagons.

In winter the companies simply used more horses to haul a steam engine, but hose and related equipment could be reloaded from the carts onto pungs and the wheels of ladder trucks were removed and runners put onto the same axles.

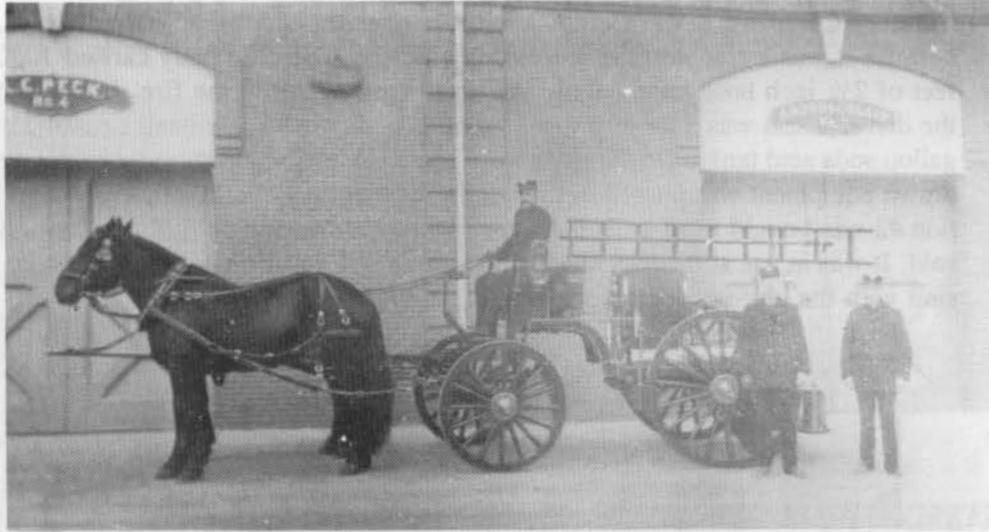
Horses were quickly harnessed to engines by use of a device called a swing harness. The whole harness assembly already attached to the engine hung from the ceiling on counterweights. The horse was trained to back under it when the alarm sounded. The driver pulled the shafts down until the collar reached the neck of the horse, snapped it around the neck, fastened the reins, pulled up the belly girt, released the bar that held the whole assembly and allowed the bar to rise back to the ceiling out of the way. The whole operation required only fifteen to twenty seconds before they were off to the fire.

In 1873 a new hand-drawn Hook and Ladder, called Rescue #5, was bought from the Laverick Company for \$1457.00 to replace Village #1. It carried eight ladders raised by hand. In 1883 this was converted to a horse-drawn vehicle.

A new type of equipment appeared in 1888 when the city paid \$3000.00 for the Rescue Hook and Ladder #1. It was a second class Hayes Aerial which besides the hand ladders had a sixty-five foot aerial ladder cranked up by hand from a turntable mounted on the apparatus. Two drivers were needed to control these long vehicles; the one controlling the rear wheels was called a tillerman. This equipment was in service until 1930 when it was replaced by a motorized tractor-type seventy-five foot ladder, which also needed a tillerman.



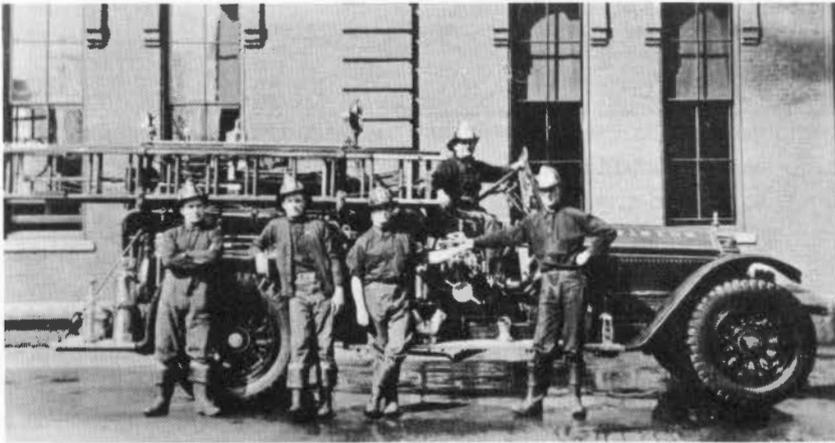
The 1902 Ladder Replaced in 1925.



Chemical No. 1

Chemical Engine #1 was purchased in 1893 for \$2600.00 from the Muskegon Company. It carried two sixty-gallon tanks, each filled with water and bicarbonate of soda. A bottle of sulphuric acid was placed in each tank which was then sealed. There was one outlet from each tank to a one-inch hose. Upon arrival at a fire a tank was half rotated to spill acid into the water and start the chemical reaction to build up the pressure of carbon dioxide gas within the tank and thus force the water out into the hose. The extra tank could be used while the first was being recharged. These chemical engines could be useful only on small fires which did not need large amounts of water. There were two other drawbacks. Once a tank was charged it could not be stopped until the contents were emptied; and the chemical itself would damage some types of property more than plain water would. Three men—a driver, a hoseman and a tank man—operated this engine.

The first motorized equipment was purchased in 1911 from the American Lafrance Company. It was Combination #1, sometimes known as "Dirty Mary", because it was a troublesome piece of equipment. The hose body carried 1000 feet of 2½ inch hose for a supply line from the hydrant to the fire. In back of the driver's seat was a large chemical tank. There were a few hand carried 2½ gallon soda acid tanks. On the sides were some ladders mounted on racks. Horse drawn equipment was phased out gradually, ending in 1932. Another Combination #2 was bought from Indiana Company in 1919 when the old Muskegon was sold. It was in use at the Lincoln Street station until it was demolished in a collision with the city-service type ladder #1 in 1926.



Engine #1 bought in 1924 from the American Lafrance Company was a Triple Combination Rotary pumper, pumping 750 g.p.m.. It was triple in that it combined hose, chemical tank and pumper. The rotary type pump replaced the older piston type, used on steam engines. Several of this type were purchased over the years. Centrifugal pumpers replaced rotaries after 1940. The last time any steam engine was used was in 1927.

In 1952 the city acquired a Triple Combination which had a 500 gallon capacity tank of water added to discharge directly through the pump through a 1½ inch hose to give at least 90 gallons per minute. This provided an instant supply of water upon arrival at a fire before the lines could be attached to a hydrant. Triple Combinations now carry larger tanks.

APPARATUS TODAY



SNORKEL #1

*Pvt. Tim Myers
Pvt. Gerry Rioux
Pvt. Norm Tancrede*

In 1972 a snorkel was secured a cost of \$79,817. Its elevated platform can be raised to a height of 85 feet. It is still in service but has had improvement added.



LADDER #1

*Lt. Laurier Poulin
Pvt. Brian Bernier
Pvt. Dan St. Onge*

In 1985 Ladder #1 was purchased for \$225,000 it extends to any desired height up to 100 feet.



ENGINE #1

*Capt. Reginald Doucette
Pvt. Ronnie Begin
Pvt. Roger Roy*



ENGINE #3

*Lt. Marcel Beaudoin
Pvt. Robert Oulette
Pvt. Daniel Roy*



ENGINE #4

*Lt. Gratien Roy
Pvt. Mike Bailey
Pvt. Brad Dresser*

ENGINE #5

*Lt. Robert Townes
Pvt. Albert Landry
Pvt. Arlon Webster*



ENGINE #7

*Pvt. Don Saindon
Pvt. Bill Beaulieu
Pvt. Robert Cailler
Pvt. John Cloutier*



NOZZLES



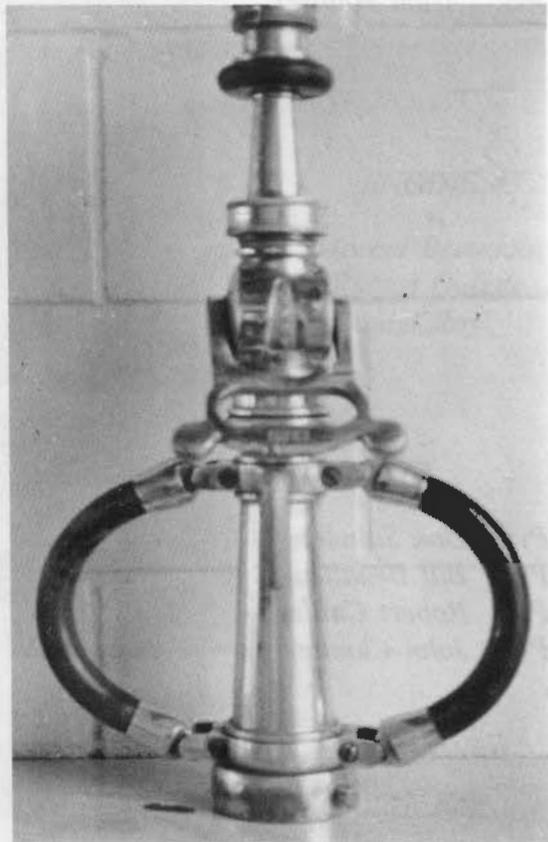
1. *Two and a half inch straight or solid water stream nozzles used in the L.F.D. from circa 1930 to the late 1970's. It was known as an extension or reducing nozzle. A thread protector can be removed from the tip and a 1½ inch sized hoseline attached to advance on an interior fire.*

2. *First developed by the U.S. Navy during World War II. Manufactured by the Rockwood Co. and made available to municipal fire departments in 1946.*

This nozzle was adjustable, so that either fog or straight steam could be used. It was also equipped with extensions installed by the nozzle man as needed. One extension, called a "Bayonet" or piercing nozzle could be forced through a ceiling for fighting fire in a blind attic.

The Lewiston Fire Department was fully equipped with this type of nozzle for use on 1½ inch hose for fighting interior fires.

They were in use for about 25 years, and finally replaced with a different type.



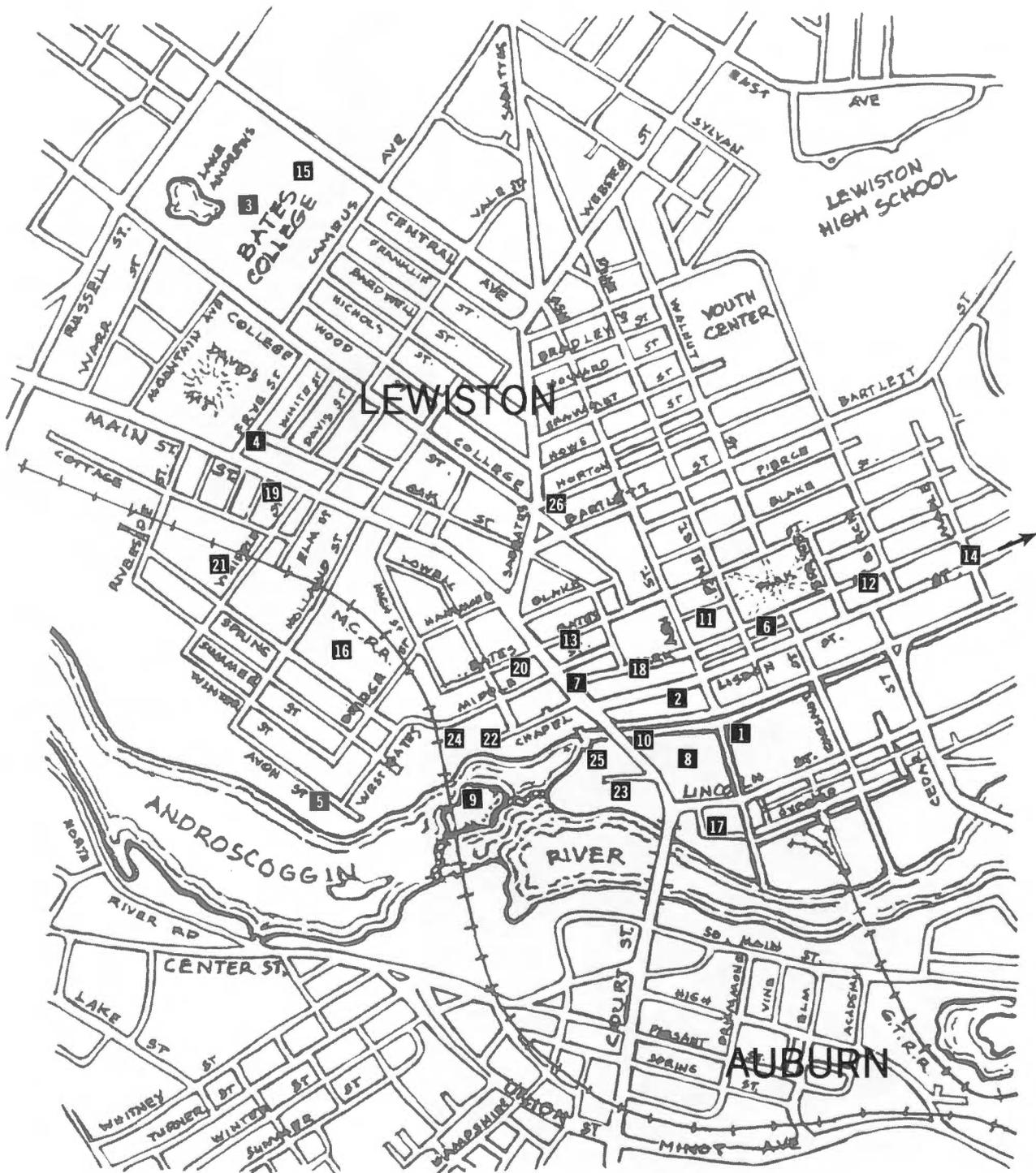
3. *Booster nozzle used on 1 ¼ inch hose used for fighting minor fires, this nozzle has adjustments to vary the "fog" pattern, and alter volume of water delivered from 12, 23, or 30 gallons per minute.*

This nozzle is presently used by the L.F.D. on booster lines and the same type used on 1 ½ inch and 2 ½ inch hose lines.



GAS PATCH TANK FIRE
Sept. 24, 1974

Showing Leadertip nozzle and a hoseclamp to stop flow of water while hose is being extended.



MAJOR FIRES



LIBBEY MILL
(from bridge)

Chapter 6

MAJOR FIRES

Tribute is due to the Lewiston firefighters because there has never been a conflagration in this city of primarily wooden buildings. A conflagration would be defined as a fire which has spread far beyond the buildings which are directly exposed to the point of origin of the fire. With few exceptions most cities in the U.S. suffered sweeping conflagrations during the 1800's and early 1900's.

1875 Fire destroyed completely the Cloth hall of Bates Mill, a building 300 feet long and 3 stories high. The silver trumpet awarded by Bates Mill to Androscoggin Company #3 for their fine service is now in the Androscoggin Historial Society Museum. [1]

1877 As mentioned in the chapter on Water Supplies this was a bad year in the Lisbon Street area. On January 12 three buildings on Lisbon Street were lost, on May 18 two more at the corner of Lisbon and Ash, on September 15 another three, on September 27 the Hathaway woodyard between Franklin (Middle) and Park Streets, and finally on December 8 four tenements. In this last one a man on the street was killed when a bureau was thrown out of an upper window and he ran under to catch it. [2]

1881 On March 2 at Hathorn Hall on the Bates Campus fire started on the third floor, presumably from the chimney. This building housed the chapel, library, laboratory, society rooms, recitation rooms and the ornithological and mineralogical collections. Students carried books and display items to safety at Parker Hall. Although the fire was confined to the third floor the remainder was in bad condition due to torrents of water. Firemen had arrived in a short time, considering the condition of the road in which horses sank deeply into the mud at every step. [3]

1883 Senator William P. Frye had built in 1874 a very fine two story frame home with a slate mansard roof at the corner of Frye and Main Streets. It was occupied on 1883 by the family of his son-in-law Wallace H. White. Shortly after noon on January 22 fire broke out in the upper story. Many people stripped the house of its contents so that carpets, furniture, library, engravings and clothing were saved. The walls and roof were still standing and the building was later reconstructed. It is now on the National Register of Historic Places. [4]



Hathorne Hall (1984 photo)



Frye House (1984 photo)

1889 July 5. At 11:05 p.m. fire broke out at the Pingree Lumber Mill on West Bates Street (site of Pineland Lumber Company today). From the main mill it spread to the stables from which all horses were saved. By 11:15 p.m. Lewiston streets were as bright as day from the glow of the fire. Burning shingles showered the city even a mile from the fire. Men sat on roofs in the neighborhood to control burning brands. Three steamers pumped water all night and burned five tons of cannel coal before the all out signal at 8 a.m.. [5]

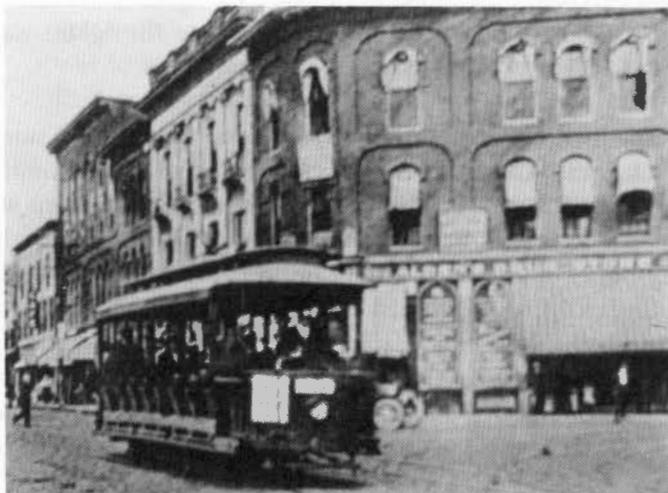


The Morning After the Fire

1890 Lewiston City Hall built in 1872 at a cost of \$250,000.00 housed the city offices, armory, post office, library, police station, liquor agency and exhibition hall. On January 7 a fire started at 5:20 p.m. in the basement from straw and refuse from a poultry show. By 6 p.m. fire had reached the tower 200 feet high, which fell into the center at 7:20 p.m.. When the liquor agency caught, the fire increased in intensity and the ammunition in the armory (3700 rounds of cartridges) sent forth a crack-crack. Four prisoners were released. The Androscoggin Poultry and Dog Show had been located on the top floor. The dogs were turned loose on the streets and 600 hens were lost.

The mayor telegraphed to Portland which reached Lewiston within an hour and to Bath which came 50 minutes later, but did not work. There was no insurance on City Hall, which was a total loss. On the same location a new city hall was constructed in 1892. This building is also on the National Register of Historical Places. [6]

- 1890** The Davis block (or Central Block) at the corner of Main and Lisbon Streets had its east section destroyed, but a solid wall saved the west section, although the roof overall was destroyed. The rebuilt building (now J. Dostie and Northeast Bank) has a different roof line from that seen on earlier photographs. [7]
- 1896** The R.C. Pingree Company had another lumber mill located where the Bates weave shed is now in a block bounded by the lower MCRR, the main canal, the first cross canal and Main Street. The twelve buildings and stock of lumber were destroyed. The Bates Mill and Maine Central Railroad station were threatened. Spectators who had climbed onto box cars were taken on an unexpected ride when the cars were pulled rapidly down the tracks to safety. Tenement houses in the Linclon Street area were evacuated. Excited tenants ran with their possessions, "jabbering in languages ranging from Yiddish to Russian and Greek". [8]
- 1897** On December 21 the Jordan and Frost Lumber Yard (later J.W. White Company) on Lincoln Street burned, destroying a planing mill, boiler house, storage shed and three open sheds. It spread to the Gibbs and Dain Sash and Blind Shop and Union Water Power Red Shop on Cross Canal #1. [9]
- 1899** The Island Garden Theatre built in 1891 by the Lewiston Auburn Railroad was owned by the Lewiston Brunswick and Bath Railroad at the time it burned. This had been an entertainment area on an island above the falls, but had become a hangout for bums. To fight the fire a hose wagon laying a hose line as it went was pulled across the suspension foot bridge by hand, as the bridge was not considered safe for horses. A steamer pumped from a hydrant at Dickey Belting Company on Island Avenue and another line was laid by hand across the Maine Central Railroad bridge to the island. [10]

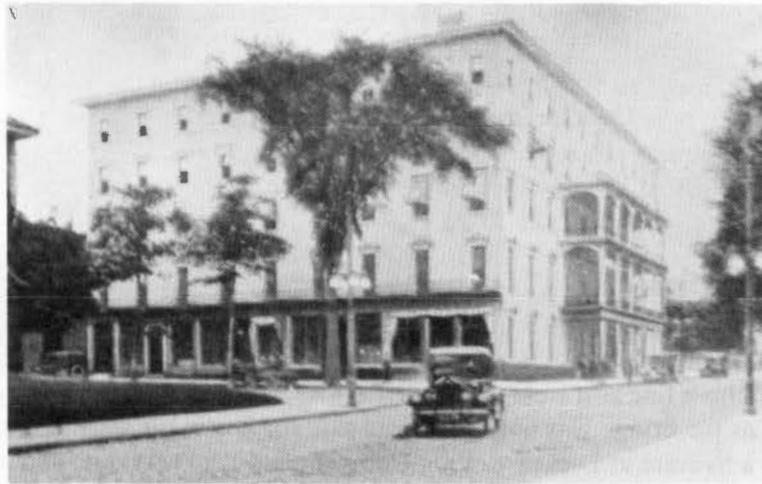


*1892 Central Block
Lisbon & Main*

1908 On July 29 three buildings just below the canal on Main Street, Fogg's Harness Store, Mear's Candy Store and Newman's Restaurant, were destroyed. [11]

1909 July 20. On Sabattus Street 15 houses were involved. [12]

December 1. The DeWitt Hotel at the corner of Park and Pine Streets was badly damaged. Firemen got to the liquor supply which badly handicapped their firefighting ability. For some time thereafter this was a sore point. The mayor berated the City Council at one meeting for continuing to refer to it and said that although Auburn firemen who had come to aid were just as drunk as the Lewiston men, no issue was made of that. [13]



DeWitt Hotel

December 24. Two firemen were killed in line of duty fighting the fire at Callahan block on Lisbon Street. This was the first time a firefighter was lost. [14]

1910 February 8 A fireman was killed in the fire which destroyed the 2½ story frame Clifford block at the corner of Main and Middle Streets. The family on the second floor escaped in their night clothes. At 11:30 p.m. an attempt was made to sound the alarm box at the corner of Lisbon and Main Streets but the key held by the police officer on the beat would not open the box. A telephone call finally reached the fire department and later a key was located and a bell alarm sounded. The whole interior of the building was on fire and the smoke dense. Two firemen ascended a ladder to the roof to direct a stream of water. Suddenly the roof fell in, walls flew out and the ladder was hurled across the street. One man died and three were injured. [15]

- 1920** The West Rose Hill school house was destroyed on December 30. The present Martel School replaced this. ^[16]
- 1925** On June 2 Bates College Gymnasium was destroyed in the night. There was some difficulty with students who shut off hydrants and cut fire hoses. They were not anxious to save the old gym. ^[17]
- 1927** On October 7 the L.C. Peck Engine #4 was used for the last time at the J.B. Ham Grain Elevator fire in the Maine Central Railroad yard. When the tower of the seven story elevator fell the show was over. From Portland two engines and fourteen men had come in one hour. ^[18]
- 1935** May 27 The J.W. White Lumber Yard was demolished. ^[19]
- 1936** January 14 F.W. Woolworth store on Lisbon Street burned. ^[20]
- 1938** February 12 The Gammon Cabinet Works on Whipple Street was a hot fire. ^[21]
- 1939** June 29 P & P Fuel Company. ^[22]
- 1945** December 18 was the start of thirty-six days of duty for firemen to combat a persistent blaze in wool waste at the Max Miller Dusting Mill at the Grand Trunk yard. ^[23]
- 1947** March 1 All buildings next to the present Hall and Knight Company on the west side of Chapel Street were destroyed. ^[24]
- 1972** December 13 At the Libbey Mill fire broke out at 11:24 a.m. when there was an explosion in a tank of flammable liquid. The explosion smashed the water lines that fed the sprinkler system. Two employees were killed and four others injured. Six firemen were injured. That part of the mill known as Columbia Mill was totally demolished. ^[25]
- 1989** On a bitter cold winter morning in February a pre-dawn fire in a residential district consumed six buildings on Bartlett Street and two on Horton Street. When the firemen arrived on the scene at 3:45 a.m. their first task was to search and get the people out. In battling the almost overpowering flames they were helped by mutual aid from surrounding communities—the Auburn team playing a big part in stopping the fire from spreading on Hebron Street. The buildings which were three and four story tenements, were of wood construction and burned rapidly.

Fifty people were left homeless, unable to salvage much of anything of their clothes and personal belongings. In addition to financial aid from concerned fellow citizens, these people were helped in the emergency by the Tri-County Chapter of the Red Cross which was able to assist sixteen of the families in finding temporary shelter.

Meanwhile, the Snorkel went back to the Central Station nursing a wind-shield broken by the intense heat which also curled and removed much of the vinyl from the siding of adjacent buildings. ^[26]



1970's Samson Furniture Warehouse (photo by Wardwell).



1964. Sliding down from 4th to 3rd floor when cut off by collapse of roof.



1972. Saving a Libbey Mill worker Donald Grondin overcome by smoke inhalation while trying to escape.

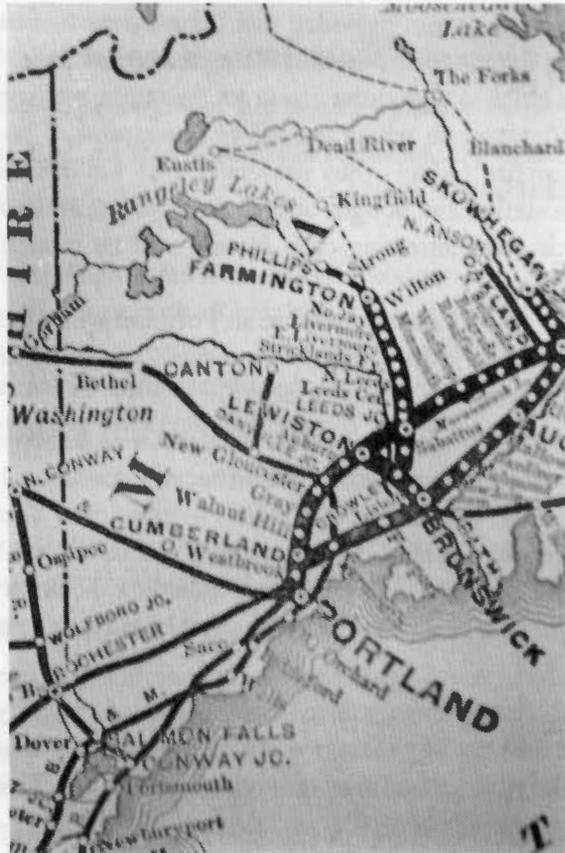


Dec. 12, '81

106 Pine Street

(photo/Simokaitis)

MUTUAL AID



*Detail of Map of Railroads of Maine 1885
Compiled by Dr Wm. B. Lapham
in Sanford Atlas*

Chapter 7

MUTUAL AID

Lewiston and Auburn have always found it sensible to assist one another in fighting major fires. Other large communities in cases of conflagration have called on Lewiston. Calls for aid have come from small towns with small volunteer crews. The mutual aid system provided that the mayor of a stricken city should send a telegram to the mayor of the city being asked for help. That mayor then requested his fire chief to sound the alarm. A fire train was made up consisting of a locomotive, flat cars on which to load fire apparatus, a box car for horses, a passenger car for fire fighters plus passenger cars for curious spectators who rushed to the train station and bought tickets when an out of town alarm sounded. Some of the major and interesting calls for aid will be related.

- 1866 July 4.** This was the disastrous fire in Portland when the whole center of the city was destroyed. Auburn's Excelsior #2 went by railroad with forty firemen (20 Lewiston and 20 Auburn).
- 1882 November 11.** Widgery Wharf in Portland was destroyed. There was a near riot at the Lewiston railroad station because spectators had bought tickets to ride the train, but then Portland sent word to hold because the fire was thought to be under control. Passengers alighted and started for home. Shortly the order was reversed and the already steaming locomotive pulled the fire train out, leaving the ticket agent to face irate passengers who were left behind.
- 1886 October 22.** In Farmington thirty-three dwellings and forty businesses were destroyed. Androscoggin Engine #3 and thirty men made the run in 65 minutes, after receipt of a telegram at 10:50 p.m.. They did not return until 1 p.m. the next day.
- 1887 November 2.** In Winthrop the W.E. Whitman Agricultural Works was completely destroyed and sparks ignited fifty more buildings. The Lewiston fire train made the run in thirty minutes and carried 100 spectators.
- 1894 May 9.** A fire started in the C.B. Cummings Mill in Norway and spread up the west side of Main Street and jumped to the other side. It then destroyed both sides of Main Street to the site of the present Stephens Hospital. L.C. Peck Engine #4, a hose reel and twenty men went to the Lewiston Grand

Trunk Railroad yard to load at 2:30 p.m. but could not leave until 3:30 as they had to wait for an incoming train to clear the main line. The L.C. Peck pumped from the bridge near the shoe factory and succeeded in protecting the shoe factory.

1895 December 16. In Lisbon Falls fire demolished the Parkin Block housing, the Lisbon Enterprise newspaper, and the fire station itself. The Lewiston Engine was called at 11:20, arrived at midnight and pumped from the canal at the mill.

1898 July 5. Lewiston aided Bath where the Methodist Church and twenty-two dwellings were demolished.

September 10. In Livermore Falls the whole center of the town burned.

1901 April 6. The entire center of the town of Lisbon Falls was destroyed.

1908 February 4. The Lewiston department before starting to Berlin, New Hampshire had to unload coal from a Grand Trunk railroad car in order to get cars to use.

1911 April 30. A telegram came from Bangor reading: "Business section burning. High wind. Come with all help possible." Spectators filled all available train space and those hanging from the cowcatchers had to be forcibly removed before the train could leave the station. Three hundred buildings were destroyed in the center of Bangor.

1912 December 13. Using a flat car on the Lewiston Auburn Electric Railway, Lewiston responded to Turner's call for help when two houses were destroyed and several damaged in the center of the town.

1913 October 21. Monmouth Center lost several stores and dwellings.

1914 The Lewiston department went to the Grand Trunk yard, only to find no available cars to take them to South Paris. By the time they secured cars at the Maine Central station the fire was under control, but the Maxim Grain Mill had been destroyed, along with several dwellings.

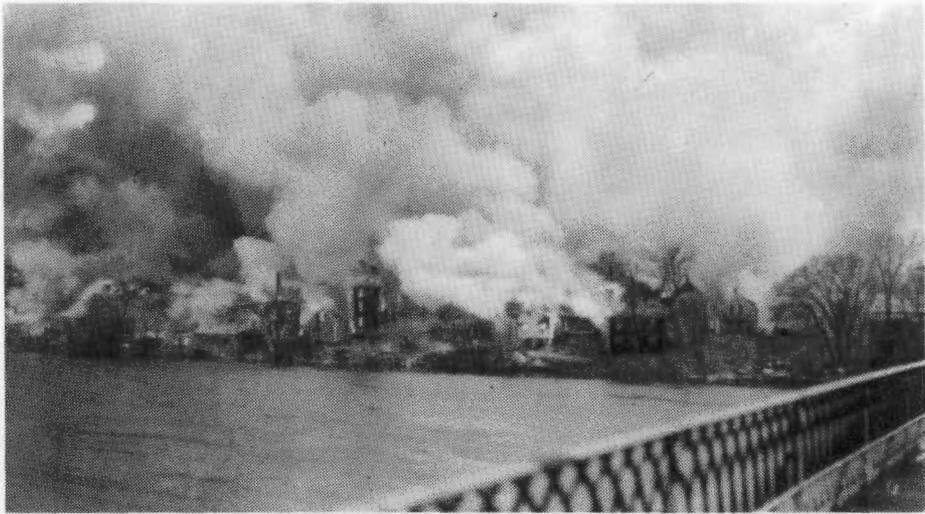
1919 August 8. Rumford 10,000 cords of pulp were destroyed at the paper mill. Androscoggin Engine #3 pumped forty-one hours continuously.

1923 August 2. Again Rumford asked for help when twenty-one buildings were destroyed, leaving 300 homeless.

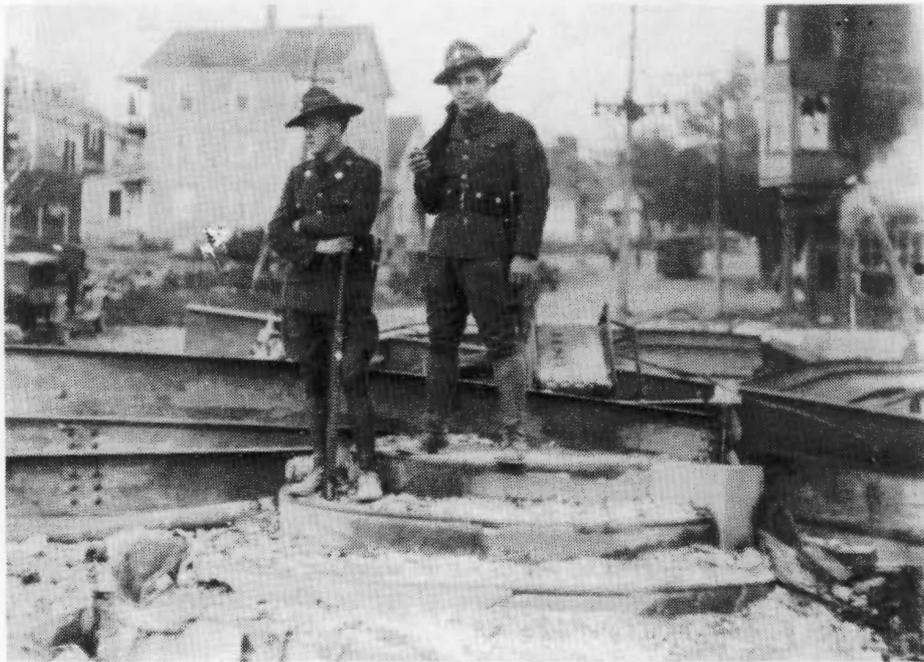
From this point in time there were no more railroad runs because the city had turned to motorized equipment. Calls for help were less frequent, because smaller towns had acquired more and better equipment of their own.

- 1927 April 12.** American Lafrance Engine #1 responded to South Paris' call when five buildings in Market Square were destroyed. The Deputy Chief and five men went by taxi!
- 1929 March 4.** Lewiston assisted in Chisholm where the finishing plant of Otis Paper Mill was destroyed.
- 1933 May 15.** The New Auburn Conflagration. A fire on Western Promenade was requiring the attention of the Auburn department when the alarm sounded at 1:10 p.m. in New Auburn. Since there was only one engine with 3 regular men and 6 callmen to respond, the responsibility to fight the fire fell first on the Lewiston department which started with one engine and one ladder truck, but later sent all available apparatus. By 6 p.m. the fire was under control but 249 buildings, including two schools and a synagogue, were destroyed and 2000 people were homeless. The loss totaled over \$2 million.

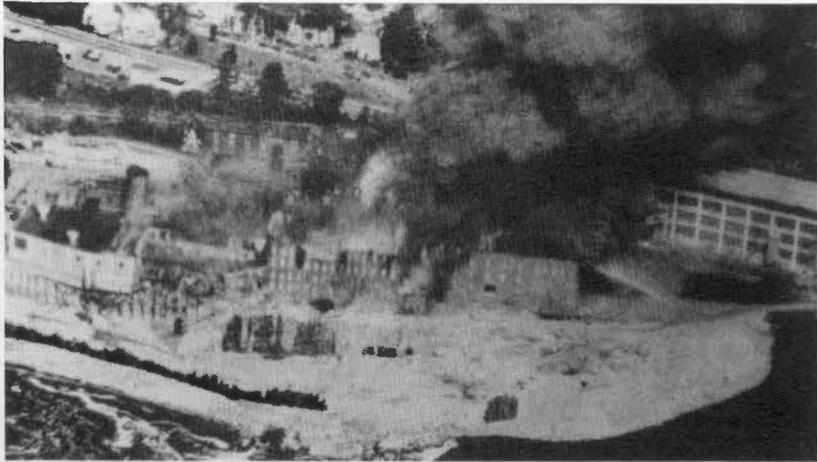




View From Cedar St. Bridge



National Guard Keeping Watch

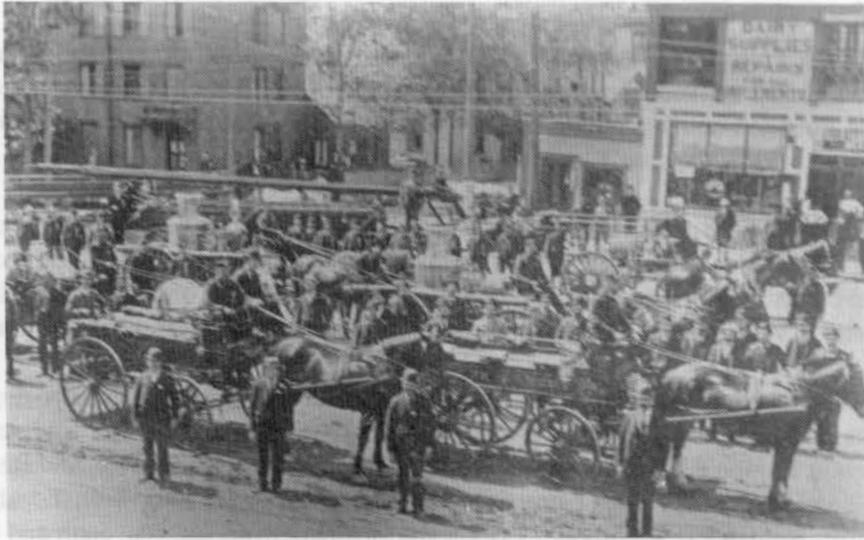


*1987 July 23 Worumbo Mill in Lisbon (Don Himsel/Journal Photographer)
Aerial view with Adroscoggin River and the falls. The site of the new dam
and hydro-electric station.*



*A fire fighter keeps hose on fire as flames shoot out of every window and
the five story historic structure crumbles.(Don Himsel/Journal
Photographer)*

PARADES, MUSTERS, AND SOCIALS



*1890's Parade
Lewiston's 2 Steamers, Hose No. 3, and 2 Chemicals*

Chapter 8

PARADES, MUSTERS, AND SOCIALS

A muster was originally a gathering of hand tubs from all over the state. There was a contest to see which team could pump a stream of water the farthest distance. Later other events were added. In a hose reel race, a team raced a distance, hooked to a hydrant and laid a line of hose and knocked down a target with the resulting stream of water. The team with the best time was the winner.

On July 4, 1866 there was muster on Canal Street. Excelsior #2 had just won the "First Trumpet", the prize for throwing a stream of water the farthest distance, when a runner arrived from the railroad telegraph office to say that help was needed at the Portland conflagration. Twenty Lewiston and twenty Auburn firefighters departed with Excelsior #2 on the Maine Central Railroad.

As a part of the centennial celebration of independence on July 4, 1876 firemen had an exciting tournament when 50,000 people gathered in Lewiston (15,000 coming in by train). A muster was held in Railroad Square (corner of Court and Railroad Streets) in Auburn and Chandlers Band played. But showers broke up all events.

In the morning there was a parade which covered a five mile route. Fire departments had one division of the parade. Lewiston provided Lewiston Engine #1, Fountain Engine #2, Androscoggin Steamer #3, Liberty Steamer #4, and Rescue Hook and Ladder #5. Tubs came from Rockland, Gardiner, Hallowell, Topsham, Auburn, Brunswick, Richmond, Lisbon and steamers from Auburn, Bath and Gardiner participated.

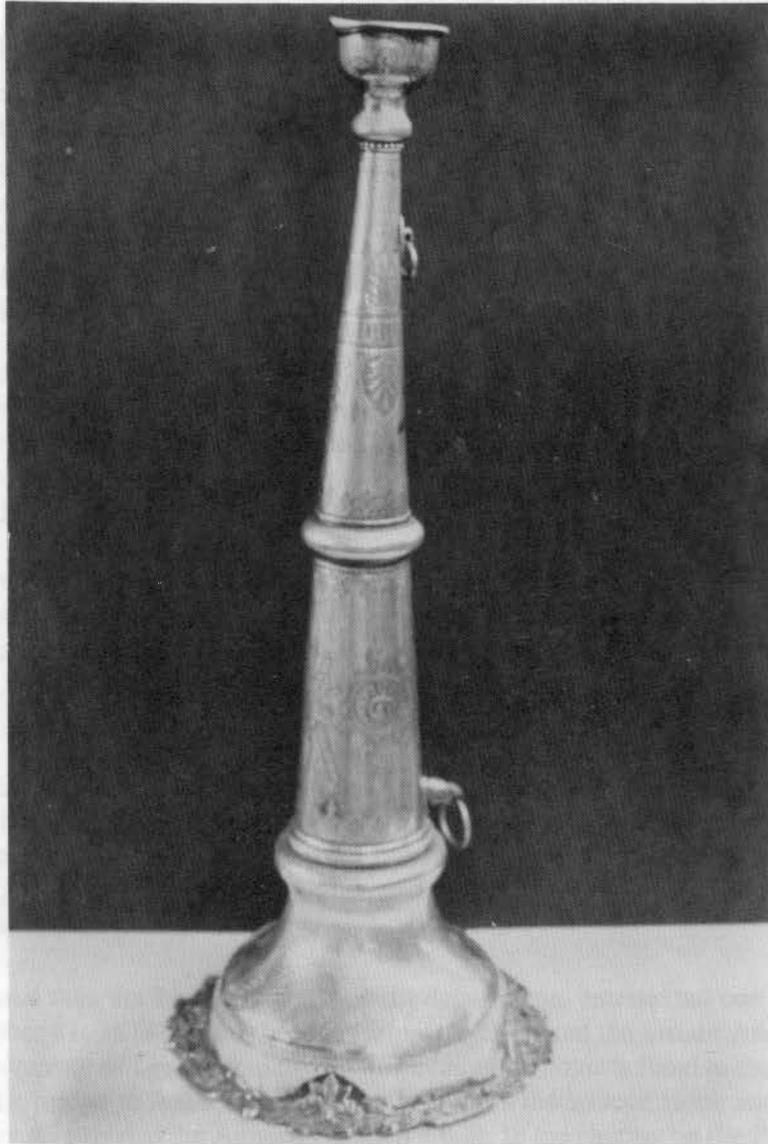
Now and then the Lewiston and Auburn departments entertained one another. On October 31, 1878 Auburn Engine Company #1 invited the former Androscoggin #3 company of Lewiston to supper and even sent Glover's Band to escort them across the bridge to Auburn. On October 26, 1889 the Rescue Hook and Ladder Company #5 attended the Auburn Firemen's Ball. In the chapter on the Firemen's Relief Association will be found information on the Lewiston Fireman's Balls.

There was a Merchant's Week Exhibit in December 1909. On December 10 fifteen pieces of fire department apparatus started at 7:45 from City Hall and paraded to Lisbon Street, to Main, across the bridge to Turner Street and back to Lewiston. The line included in this order—Lewiston and Auburn Police, Hobb's Band, Chief Moriarty's single hitch buggy, Chemical #1, Hose #3, Hose #2, Steamer Androscoggin #3, Steamer L.C. Peck #4, Hook and Ladder #2, Aerial #1, Auburn Chemical #1, Auburn Hose #1, New Auburn Hose #4, Auburn Hook and Ladder, Auburn Steamer #1 and Auburn Excelsior #2.

In recent years musters have become New England wide affairs and have been kept alive by interested groups called Veteran Firemen's Association—uniformed and drilled—but rarely composed of actual firemen.

A "FIRST TRUMPET"

*Now in the Androscoggin Historical Society Museum in Auburn.
It was won by Steamer 3 in a competition July 5, 1869.*



*L.L. Parker was the Foreman and the winning distance for
"horizontal play" was 236 feet.*

DIRTY MARY AND OTHER ODDITIES



1911 — *The first piece of motorized equipment.*

Chapter 9

DIRTY MARY AND OTHER ODDITIES

The first piece of motorized equipment arrived on August 9, 1911. This machine, manufactured by the American Lafrance Company of New York, was designed to carry 1000 feet of hose and a large chemical tank with a booster line attached. Minor equipment such as ladders, 2½ gallon soda and acid tanks, axes, etc., were also carried. Title to the machine was to remain with the Company pending demonstrations of the truck's abilities for the city fathers and general public. After a week of fire service and display at the State Fair the city was to take title.

The driver of the horse-drawn chemical engine had spent two weeks at the American Lafrance factory learning to operate this machine. The first demonstration was held August 13, conducted by two men from the factory. They made a trial run up Main Street to the Fair Grounds with the speedometer showing 60 m.p.h. at times. This was great speed with hard rubber tires on gravel roads. The truck went over Goff Hill readily with nine men aboard. But during a demonstration at the State Fair the gears were stripped and the truck was out of service until September 30. Then on October 2 the truck was the first to leave the station to respond to a fire at 217 Park Street. It stopped dead in front of the Post Office and the horse-drawn units passed it. After some delay it arrived at the fire scene and was assigned to make a run to the CMG Hospital with a fireman who had been overcome by smoke. Something went wrong with the steering mechanism and the truck careened into the curb at Lisbon and Ash Street. The undercarriage was smashed, putting the truck out of commission until October 14. The driver resigned at this point due to ill feelings developed over some period of time. The fire commission appointed a committee to arrange for the instruction of operators of the combination and also to look into complaints that the machine made unnecessary noise.

In January 1912 the snow was deep enough for all fire department apparatus to be on runners. On January 17 an alarm was received at 7:30 p.m. from the box at Bates and Birch Steets. The auto chemical was the first unit out of the station, but once into the snow it balked and several attempts to start it were almost useless. Eventually it started but due to the deep snow it was impossible to steer

or keep it in the middle of the road. So opposite the Stanley “dry plate” factory at the corner of Bates and Ash it stuck in a drift. Time and again the engine was started and all possible power put on. The water in the radiator boiled away and the motor overheated. Two hours later it was dug out and pushed back to the station.

On January 27 that same year it was returning from a minor fire on Middle Street. The driver turned the corner onto Ash Street only to find the way blocked by a farmer’s team. While trying to avoid hitting the horse he steered into a utility pole, bending the mudguard and the hood and breaking a spring. On February 2 the same driver responded to a bell alarm on Lincoln Street, but at the corner of Ash and Park Streets crashed into the Horse-drawn ladder truck from the Park Street station, which was late starting because the driver was out to supper. No explanation was given as to why the auto chemical was late in responding. Under normal conditions it should have been far ahead, but on arriving at the intersection the driver mistakenly thought the intersection was clear.

And so this unfortunate piece of equipment earned the affectionate name of “Dirty Mary” among the men of the department. It continued in use until 1926.

Three ‘firsts’

The corner of Lincoln and Main Streets is the scene:

1. October 28, 1880—The first **coded alarm!** It signaled a fire in a tenement house at the site of the present F. W. Webb Co. building formerly owned by Carmen Thompson.
2. April 1, 1916—the first alarm in the **automatic sprinkler** circuit was received from the F.G. Davis Company directly across the street from Carmen Thompson.
3. December 13, 1972—the first sprinkler alarm by **radio**. This came from the Libbey Mill directly across Lincoln Street on Main Street.

An imported fire

On April 27, 1892 the Tibett’s Grain Shed on Turner Street in Auburn was burning. A carload of grain on a siding next to the grain shed was burning and could not be pulled back to extinguish it without endangering some shoe shops. Auburn called Lewiston to say that they were shunting the car across the bridge so the Lewiston department could meet it at Middle Street and fight the fire there. The chief remarked that Lewiston had sent aid to other towns many times but this was the first time another town had sent a fire to them.

Unusual transportation

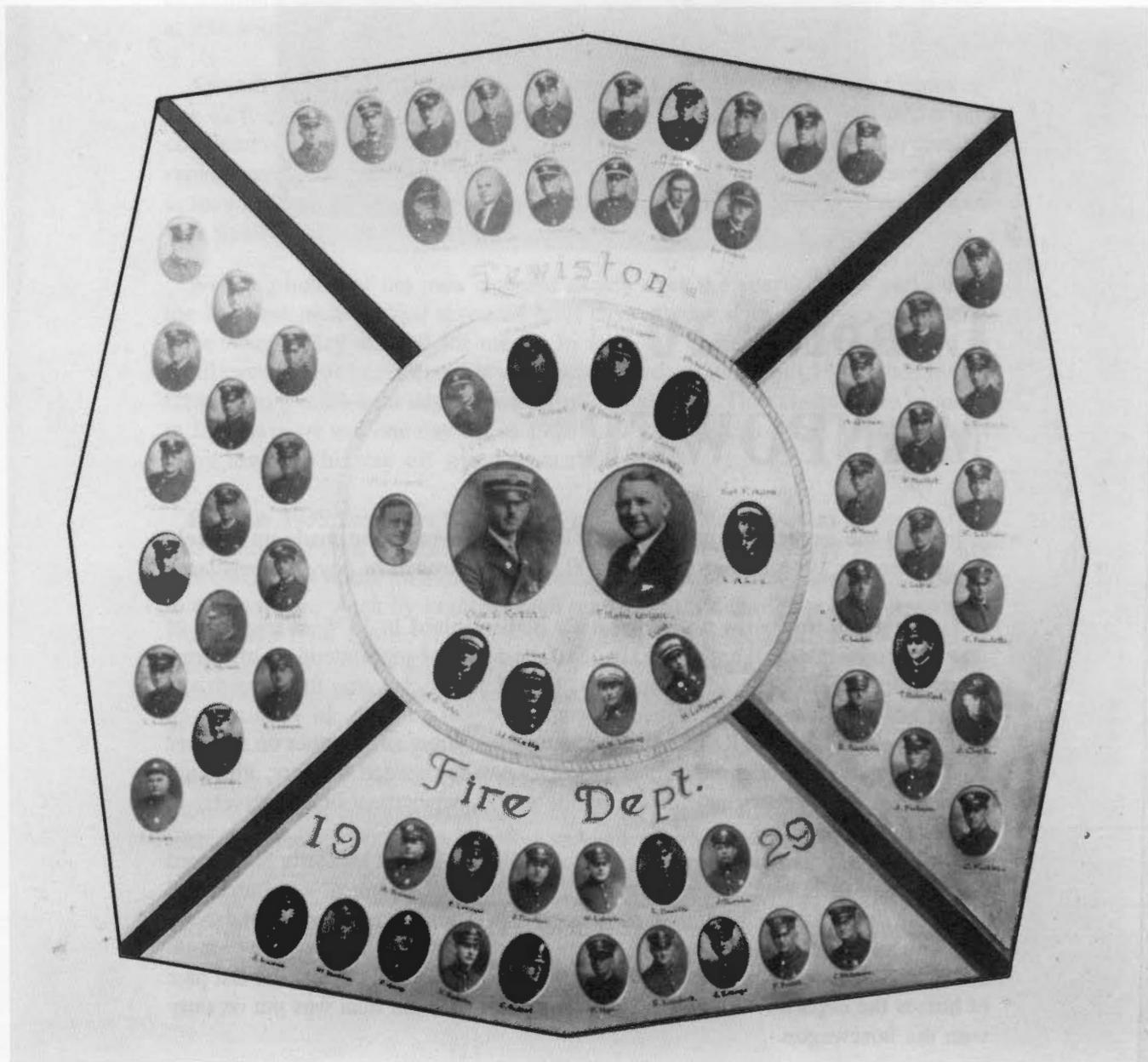
On December 11, 1909 twenty-five men with hand extinguishers boarded the electric trolley at the corner of Lisbon and Ash Streets to respond to a fire at a farm home at Crowley’s Junction.

The Vinegar Fire

September 6, 1929 was the date of this fire when the department arrived at the farm stand of J.M. Sawyer in Greene and found the big haybarn and two smaller buildings completely involved. The spacious dwelling was threatened but the water supply was running low. Volunteers brought great quantities of vinegar stored in barrels in the cellar and filled the booster tank of the pumper. The house was saved.

MANPOWER

1929 — Octagon Photo





Chapter 10

MANPOWER

In 1863 the annual payroll was \$1,071.45 for a department made up entirely of callmen. In 1986 a payroll of \$2,200,000 was needed to pay 102 regulars.

The first full time man was Forrest E. Bisbee, hired in 1876 as engineer of steamers to maintain all apparatus. In 1880 the duties of superintendent of alarms were added. In 1879 an additional man, Fred L. Tarr, became full time driver of the new one horse hose jumper at a salary of \$50 a month. In 1883 a swing harness was installed on Rescue Ladder #5 on Park Street and another on Steamer Androscoggin #3. Full time horses and drivers were needed on duty, although during the day they worked for the public works department on the streets.

The first full time chief came on the force in 1891. Michael Moriarty had served one year as a call chief. When the two horse Muskegon Chemical was purchased in 1893 it needed three full time men to operate it. They were classified as driver, tankman and hoseman. One more man was added in 1903 when Fred Nye became driver of Steamer Androscoggin #3. He continued until 1932 driving the last pair of horses the department owned. That same year a second man was put on duty with the hosewagon.

A twenty man reserve force was created in 1910 to answer third alarms or other alarms that came in while a fire was in progress. They also replaced men who had responded to an out-of-town fire.

In 1911 a motorized combination replaced the horse-drawn Muskegon Chemical engine and needed a crew of four, three of them simply being transferred from the horse-drawn unit. When a second motorized chemical was purchased in 1920 an additional four men were needed, bringing the department to ten full time men at this point.

Another increase came in 1922 giving to Combination #1 six men, to Combination #2 five men and to the ladder truck two men. A new addition in 1924, a triple combination engine, required four more men. From 1924 on motorized apparatus rapidly replaced the horse-drawn equipment and more full time men were added to man it. The call force was reduced in size as the full time force increased and was finally disbanded in 1943.

Working hours of the men changed slowly over the years. In the early days the full time men worked seven 24-hour days a week with one evening off and three hours a day allotted for meals. In 1915 the evening off was increased to a full twenty-four hours and this work schedule continued until 1923 when it was changed to five 24-hour days followed by 24 hours off. The schedule was reduced to four days on and one day off in 1926 with the stipulation that no man was to leave town on his day off without permission.

By June 1939 the hours were 48 on and 24 off, but there was a change to a two-platoon system the following year, so that each man worked 24 hours and was off duty 24 hours for a total of 84 hours per week. This was gradually reduced to 63 hours per week by granting each man an extra day off for each three days worked. In 1966 a three-platoon system was started so that each man worked 24 hours and was off duty 48 hours for an average of 56 hours per week. At present additional days off are granted so that each man is on duty an average of 48 hours per week.

During the 1930's there were four men on duty with each company. When additional time off was granted in 1939 the on duty manpower was reduced to three men per company. As duty hours were reduced, more men were added to the department to maintain the 3-man crews. This standard was maintained until 1980 when the budget was cut and total manpower was reduced from 102 to 96. To compensate for this reduction one company was decommissioned. With a budget cut in overtime some companies operate with two men when men are on sick leave.

TODAY'S FIRE FIGHTERS

- Jan. 14, 1988 -

CHIEF



Richard Mailhot

ASSISTANT CHIEF



Richard Guay



Chief



Deputy Chiefs



Assistant Chief

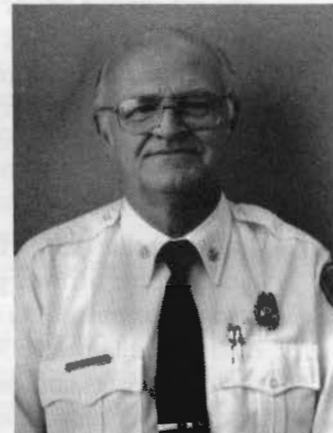
DEPUTY CHIEFS



Robert Laplante
Platoon "A"



Louis Dumais
Platoon "B"



Marcel Thibault
Platoon "C"

PLATOON "A"

ENGINE #1

Capt. Reginald Doucette
Pvt. Armand Beaulé
Pvt. Donald LeGrange
Pvt. Roger Roy
Pvt. Gerry Riouz *R/MAN*

ENGINE #3

Lt. Marcel Beaudoin
Pvt. Robert Ouellette
Pvt. Daniel Roy
Pvt. John Daniels
Pvt. Norm Tancrede *R/MAN*

ENGINE #4

Lt. Gratien Roy
Pvt. Michael Bailey
Pvt. Roland Levesque
Pvt. Bradley Dresser
Pvt. John Cloutier *R/MAN*

ENGINE #5

Lt. Robert Townes
Pvt. Albert Landry
Pvt. Arlon Webster
Pvt. Paul Fournier

ENGINE #7

Capt. Gerald Turcotte
Pvt. Donald Saindon
Pvt. William Beaulieu
Pvt. Robert Cailler
Pvt. James Coty *R/MAN*

SNORKEL #1

Lt. Robert Rundstrom
Pvt. Lucien Lepage
Pvt. Tim Myers
Pvt. Wally Veilleux

LADDER #1

Lt. Larry Poulin
Pvt. Michael Lajoie
Pvt. Brian Bernier
Pvt. Daniel St. Onge

PLATOON "B"

ENGINE #1

Capt. Maurice Gauthier
Pvt. Roger Label
Pvt. Donald Mercier
Pvt. Steve Wrentzel
Capt. Rick Cailler *R/MAN*

ENGINE #3

Lt. James Morin
Pvt. Robert Beaulé
Pvt. Donald Boucher
Pvt. Marc Lemay

ENGINE #4

Lt. Ralph Desroseir
Pvt. Paul Roy
Pvt. Louis Morin
Pvt. Bruce McKay
Pvt. Bruce Tufts *R/MAN*

ENGINE #5

Lt. Chesley Fournier
Pvt. Gerry Soucy
Pvt. Ray Desrosier
Pvt. Denis Chamberlain

ENGINE #7

Capt. Alcide Dupile
Pvt. Larry Roberts
Pvt. Vicki Rundstrom
Pvt. Donald Blais
Pvt. Shawn Metayer *R/MAN*

SNORKEL #1

Lt. Marcel Lessard
Pvt. Roger Pelletier
Pvt. Daniel Turcotte
Pvt. Cris Keneborus

LADDER #1

Lt. Laurier Morin
Pvt. Lacié Longtin
Pvt. Rick Dostie
Pvt. Rick Paradis

PLATOON "C"

ENGINE #1

Capt. Ronland Boileau
Pvt. John Parshall
Pvt. Paul Leclair
Pvt. David Gideon
Pvt. Donat Nadeau *R/MAN*

ENGINE #3

Lt. Ronald Cote
Pvt. Andre Bergeron
Pvt. Denis Braton
Pvt. Steve Beaudin
Pvt. Marc Goulet *R/MAN*

ENGINE #4

Lt. Paul Laliberte
Pvt. Bert Lavoie
Pvt. Donald Vachon
Pvt. George Wright

ENGINE #5

Lt. Joe St. Pierre
Pvt. Richard Sanford
Pvt. Lorence White
Pvt. Ronnie Begin

ENGINE #7

Capt. Roger Beaudoin
Pvt. Albert Lemelin
Pvt. Larry Pettengill
Pvt. Tim Traynor
Pvt. David Beaulé *R/MAN*

SNORKEL #1

Lt. Lionel Bisson
Pvt. Gerry Roy
Pvt. David Gagnon
Pvt. Gene Gregoire

LADDER #1

Lt. Victor Gaudreau
Pvt. Paul Robitaille
Pvt. Don Bannister
Pvt. George Merrill

MEN KILLED

IN ACTION



Chapter 11

MEN KILLED IN ACTION

Phillippe Bazinet

He was born in Tabaskaville, Canada and became a watchman at the Hill Mill. He joined the department in 1900 and had been a captain of the Hose Company #4 on Lincoln Street for two years when he died at age 42. On December 24, 1909 he was killed when a wall collapsed at the Callahan Block fire at 274 Lisbon Street. He was a brother of Napoleon Bazinet, a member of the fire Commission.

Thomas King

A young man of 28, he died in the same fire as Bazinet when his chest was crushed. In Hose Company #3 he was a substitute for a few weeks for a regular man.

John B. Byrnes

He had been born in County Kerry, Ireland and came to Lewiston in 1880. He was employed at the Lewiston Bleachery and as a janitor at Frye School. He joined the department in 1904 and became clerk of Hose Company #1. On February 8, 1910 a wall of a burning building at Main and Middle Streets collapsed and threw him from a ladder into the street. On February 15 he died from the injuries.

Marcien Vallee and Russell Tarr

On July 7, 1949 a Lewiston and an Auburn vehicle collided at the corner of Court and Main Streets as both responded to a fire alarm. These two men died, as well as the policeman directing traffic, and three others were injured. Marcien Vallee was born in Lewiston in 1922 and was a veteran of World War II. He joined the department in 1948. Russell Tarr was born in Lewiston in 1901. He became a permanent member of the department in 1938 and was promoted to lieutenant and then in 1949 to captain.

Willie Mailhot

Born in Lewiston in 1904, he became a callman in 1937, a permanent man in 1938 and was promoted to lieutenant and then captain. At age 60 he was killed at a fire on Lowell Street on May 2, 1965. When Engine #3 was laying hose from the hydrant he fell under the wheels and was crushed.

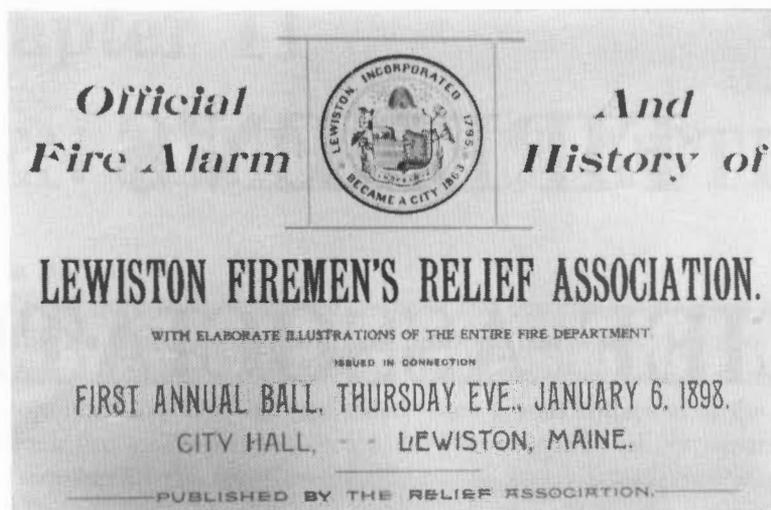
Gerard Desjardins

September 6, 1982. At age 35 he was run over by his own truck while answering a false alarm.

FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION



*Michael J. Moriarty
Chief Engineer Lewiston Fire Department
Organizer and founder of the
Lewiston Fireman's Relief Association.*



Chapter 12

FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

Chief M.J. Moriarty called a meeting of the men in January 1895 to see if they desired an association to "afford aid and relief to sick and disabled members." The idea appealed and the group adopted its constitution on February 5, 1896, and legally incorporated November 18, 1896.

Dues were set at 25¢ a month (although the first year 50¢ per month was needed). Meetings were held quarterly. Attendance was required and a fine of 50¢ per quarter was assessed for unauthorized absence. In a few instances members were dropped for non-payment of dues and/or fines. The first officers were:

President, M.J. Moriarty
Vice-President, J.B. Longley
Recording Secretary, Patrick J. Cronin
Financial Secretary, James E. Scott
Treasurer, F.R. Whitney

A board of nine men was also chosen to represent the various companies.

From the outset they planned a ball partly as a social event, but essentially it became an annual affair after the first one on January 1896 to provide funds for relief purposes. The community as a whole came to consider the Fireman's Ball an event of the social calendar. Balls were not simply a dance, but included fireman's exhibitions, such as a reel race and hose company race. Tickets in the early days were \$1.00 for floor seats and 35¢ and 25¢ for balcony. They netted a profit of \$204.00 in 1897.

Death benefits paid from the fund were originally \$50.00 but over the years rose to \$100.00 in 1899, \$200.00 in 1903, \$300.00 in 1945, \$400.00 in 1949, and \$500.00 in 1957. Sick benefits were \$5.00 a week for a maximum of 10 weeks, but later 13 weeks were authorized in any one calendar year. In most years an average of 6-8 men drew benefits. Near the end of its existence the association changed to \$10.00 a week for five week maximum.

It was necessary to employ an association physician to examine applicants for membership. The first, Dr. W.H. Hawkins, received \$50.00 a year for his services. At one point they tried unsuccessfully to get the Fire Commission to hire him.

It was customary in the early years to attend the funeral of a member in uniformed body. A floral tribute inscribed "Last Call" was sent and two drummers employed. Also a committee would drape the firehouses in mourning black. In the minutes of the association meeting a resolution was adopted and a copy sent to the bereaved family. Association members were assessed 25¢ to pay for the flowers. In later years only a delegation of 4-6 members attended funeral services. For some special grave markers were provided.

Besides the ball there were events of a somewhat social nature. In August 1898 they attended a muster in Bath and won \$50.00. In 1900 they went to Gardiner in June and then Portland in July. On Independence Day in 1901 Engine #4 engaged in a steamer contest and on Labor Day they went to Waterville. In September 1902 they went to Bath.

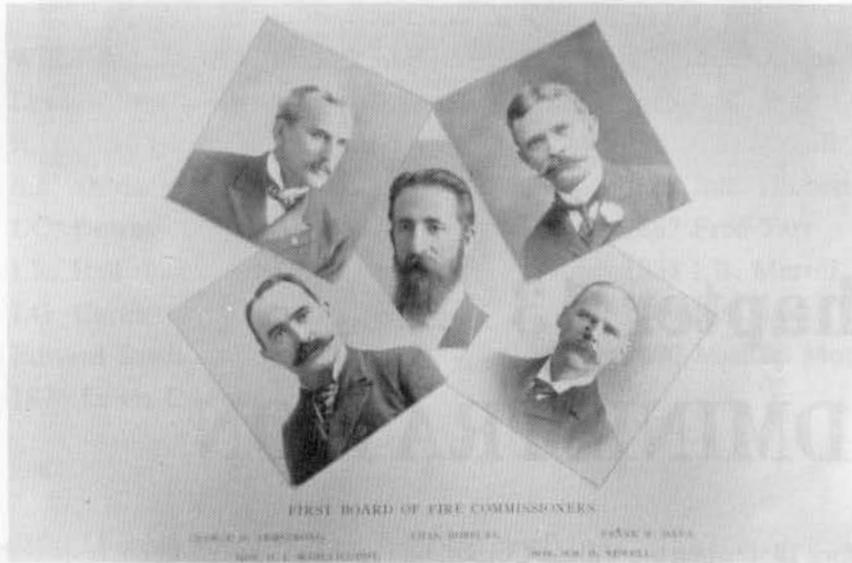
A service to the community was the annual publication of a street directory for Lewiston and Auburn. It includes the location of fire alarm boxes. Costs were met by solicitation of advertisements from local businesses.

There were some honorary members—persons who had served the association well, probably through financial support—such as William P. Grey, George Pottle, Ernest Saunders, Henry Free, George Lane, A. Mandleson, and Horace Munroe.

In September 1963 they began to consider disbanding. Life insurance was common, and health insurance policies could provide greater benefits than the association could afford. On April 12, 1966 the association voted to disband and distributed its funds to the members on the basis of length of membership.

With the demise of the Firemen's Relief Association some of its activities were taken over by other agencies. The marking of graves and placing of flags became a function of the new union. A special Firemen's Fund was created into which each firefighter pays 50¢ per week. This pays for four items: a TV set in each station, a private telephone in each station, flowers at funerals of deceased members and finally retirement events.

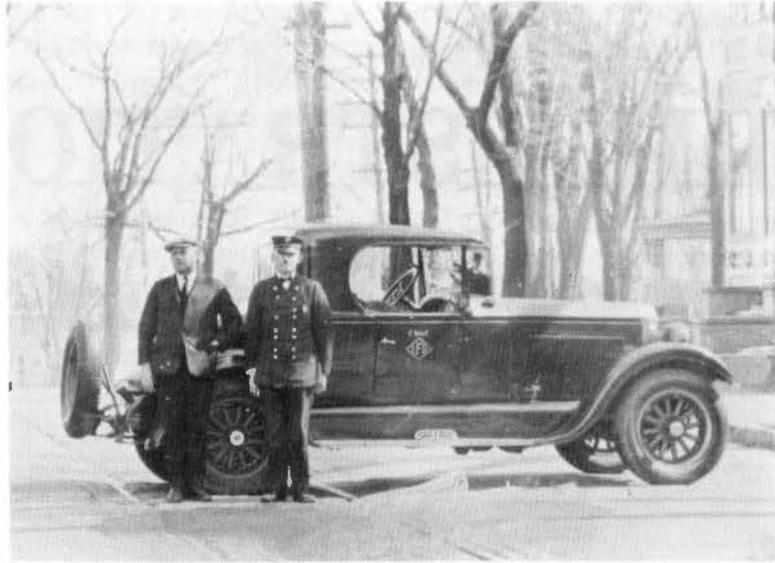
ADMINISTRATION



FIRST BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

George D. Armstrong, Chas. Horbury, Frank W. Dana

Hon. D.J. McGillicuddy, Hon. Wm. H. Newell



Chapter 13

ADMINISTRATION

Before 1856 when the Village Corporation ran the fire department responsibility for administration was in the hands of fire wards, a chief and five assistants. When the town of Lewiston took over the department it named each year a chief fire warden and four assistants. When the city government came into existence in 1863 the picture changed. Policy making was handled by a committee made up of aldermen and councilmen. Day to day operations of the department became the responsibility of a chief engineer (more commonly called simply chief). In 1891 the committee was replaced by a board of fire commissioners with the mayor as chairman. In 1921 there was a single commissioner. When a new charter was instituted in 1939 there was a three-man commission, changed in 1948 to five members. The present charter adopted in 1980 abolished the commission and put the department, as most others, directly under the city administrator.

FIRE WARDENS AND CHIEF ENGINEERS

1857 Charles Niebuhr, Chief Warden
 1858 Marshall French
 1859 William H. Waldron
 1860 William Knowlton
 1861 I.S. Faunce
 1862 William R. Ham

* * * * *

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1863 William R. Ham, first Chief Engineer | 1877 I.C. Downs |
| 1864 Lewis C. Peck | 1878 L.C. Peck |
| 1865 R. Jordan | 1881-1882 I.B. Merrill |
| 1866 S.I. Abbott | 1883-1885 John Hibbert |
| 1867 I.C. Downs | 1886-1887 Fred Tarr |
| 1868 I.R. Hall | 1888 I.B. Merrill |
| 1869 I.G. Curtis | 1889 S.S. Shaw |
| 1870 Edward Sands | 1890 Michael Moriarty |
| 1871-1876 Lewis C. Peck | |

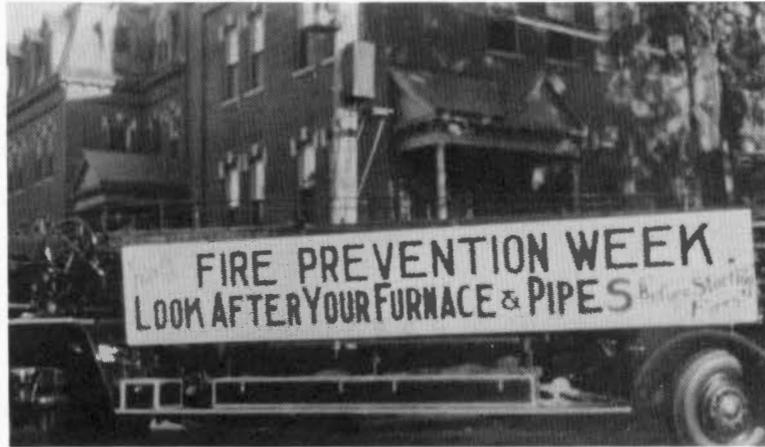
* * * * *

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1891-1920 Michael Moriarty (first full time chief) | |
| 1920-1921 Frank L. Richards | 1939-1957 Zepherin Drouin |
| 1921-1924 Wilfred Samson | 1957-1971 Roland Dumais |
| 1924-1925 George Monto | 1971-1980 Reginald Doucette |
| 1925-1932 Charles Fortin | 1981-1985 Sherman Lahaie |
| 1932-1939 Reuben Estes | 1985 Richard R. Mailhot |

BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION



MATCHES ARE NOT TOYS



Chapter 14

BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION

Believing in the old adage that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", the department in early years had inspections done by its Board of Engineers, which were actually call men who were assistants to the chief. They checked in tenement districts for the existence of fire escapes, to be sure that hallways were kept clear and that rubbish did not accumulate in cellars and alleys. After the phasing out of the callmen the fire department clerk became a full time position and he handled inspections.

In the 1950's a Bureau of Fire Prevention was formed with one full time inspector and a second was added later. Annually they inspect manufacturing, mercantile establishments, and schools. Apartment buildings are not their responsibility, but rather that of the fire company in the areas where they are located.

The Bureau investigates the causes or origins of fires. If arson is suspected, the office of the State Fire Marshall is called. A fire prevention program in the schools includes drills and lecture demonstrations using Sparky the Dog and Smokey the Bear. In hospitals and nursing homes they instruct personnel in prevention, handling of fires and evacuation of patients.

During the 1985-1986 school year a cooperative educational program developed between the Lewiston School Department and the Lewiston Fire Department. Work began between the two departments to train the Grade 2 teaching staff in the curriculum area of fire safety and education. The program selected to be used is called "Learn Not To Burn". It identifies twenty-four behaviors and teaches children to protect themselves from the hazard of fire.

An in-service course for teachers taught by Fire Department officials, staff development sessions, and after school discussions all became part of a strong commitment to safety education and successful classroom experiences for children. The program continues to grow with the school staff using a large variety of resources available from the Lewiston Fire Department, fire personnel actively involved in classroom presentations and a recognition program for students who have successfully completed the program.

As a direct result of instruction in fire safety at the grade two level, the real intent is to decrease greatly the number of deaths and severity of injuries caused by fire among children.

(Janice Plourde)



Art work by students at Martel Elementary



Instruction: By Fire Prevention Instructor and Assistant.



A REWARD: A Fireman's hat.

EMERGENCY REPORTING COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS





Chapter 15

EMERGENCY REPORTING COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

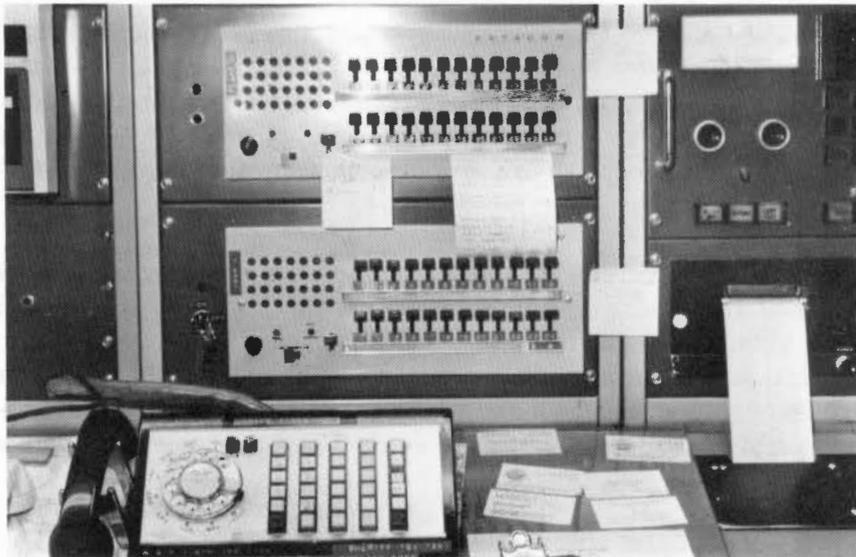
Both Lewiston and Auburn had great concern about the need for expanding emergency services to their citizens and about costs for delivery. Nationwide the 9-1-1 idea had taken root and it seemed desirable to institute this universal system of dialing for emergency help—fire, police, and ambulance service. After months of committee work the system began operation August 27, 1979 under the supervision of an agency known as Lewiston-Auburn 9-1-1 Committee. The composition of the committee is the fire chief, the police chief and an elected official from each city. These six select a seventh citizen with no involvement in city affairs to serve as the chairman for a three year term. The secretary and treasurer are not necessarily committee members.

The two cities share the costs of operation on a 50-50 basis. The communication center is located in the Lewiston Central Fire Station where one Auburn and one Lewiston dispatcher are on duty at all times. Each is paid by his own city and is cross-trained to enable whichever answers a phone call to dispatch needed help. Ambulance calls are referred to a special medical dispatcher located in the same office.

The Lewiston-Auburn Chamber of Commerce donated \$25,000 towards the purchase of the initial equipment. A Vocalarm transmitter/receiver enables the dispatcher to communicate with all fire stations and the two police stations. A dictaphone multi-channel logging recorder system records all incoming and outgoing telephone calls, radio transmissions and the Vocalarm and public address system messages. These are retained for 24 hours in case a check back is needed. Another recorder enables storage for 30 days which might become important to an investigation. The call check-instant replay message repeater makes it possible for the dispatcher to review quickly the last telephone calls by pressing a button. To connect the Lewiston center there is a multi-conductor cable installed part underground and part above ground.

Both cities prepared a complete street location file in order that the dispatcher may find quickly all streets in Lewiston and Auburn and know what pieces of apparatus need to be dispatched depending on the buildings located there.

The American District Telegraph Company installed in the center a receiving unit which gives a print out of the location of any fire in the mercantile, commercial or public buildings which utilize that company's alarm services. An English print recorder receives information on alarms from all street boxes.

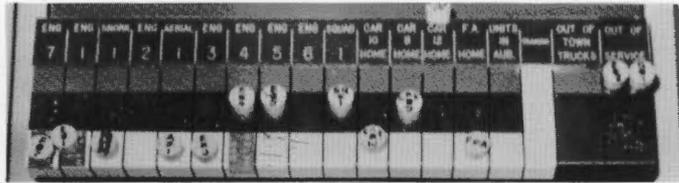




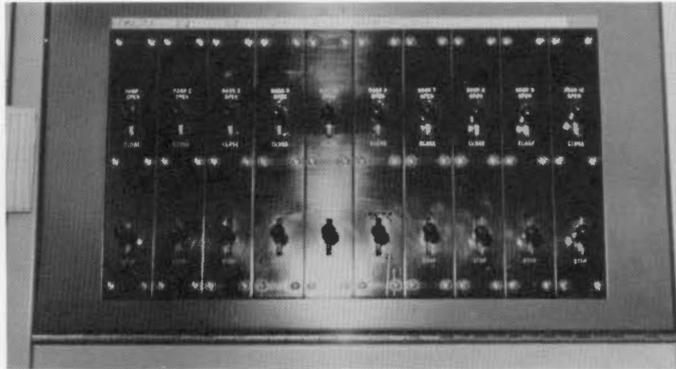
LEWISTON/AUBURN SWITCHBOARD

The New England Telephone Company installed a system which is in use in only three other cities in the country. The center (receiver) has full control of all incoming telephone calls, rather than the usual system whereby the calling phone controls the line. Thus the dispatcher can lock in a call and have the telephone company trace a call from a person who failed to give all needed information or can trace a crank call. The dispatcher may ring back the caller and also may establish a three way connection with the police department. In the Lewiston-Auburn area there are 27,000 telephones served, all whose numbers are 782, 783, 784, 786, and 795 exchanges.

A special problem exists for the 150 deaf and/or mute persons in the area. They are provided three cassette tapes with the appropriate information to call for fire, police, or ambulance. In an emergency such a person dials 9-1-1 and plays the appropriate tape in the phone. The communication center has on file the pertinent information to enable handling the emergency. In 1979 the center received 21.6 calls a day and in 1980 had 28.31 calls a day. Most are police calls, with ambulance next and fire calls last.



STATUS BOARD
Showing locations of each piece of apparatus.



DOOR CONTROLS
To Central Fire Station



TELEPHONE CALL DIRECTORS