Shoreline

Proud to Feature - Bass River Fire Brigade

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Early Beginnings of the Bass River Fire Brigade



Bass River Fire Brigade's trucks all lined up outside the fire hall. (Facebook photo)

Compiled by Linda Harrington

The Bass River Women's Institute was the first to call a meeting to consider fire protection for the area. This took place on March 21st, 1959 at the Community Hall. A "Fire Protection Committee" was formed with the following members: Chair- Lindsay McLellan, Secretary- Mrs. Gilbert, Lloyd Cooke, Chester Fletcher, Willard Fletcher, Charles Fulton, James Williams, Mrs. Wyman MacLellan, Kevin Wynn, Councillor William Faulkner and Rachel Wilson.

Colchester County Council was planning for fire protection at that time, funded by a Fire Tax levied on the property

Members of the Bass River Women's Institute canvassed the community to determine the interest in fire protection and \$889 was promised. Mrs. Wyman MacLellan was appointed Treasurer.

A Labour Day Picnic at Mayflower Park was held in 1959 to help raise extra funds.

In November, 1959, a portable pump, hose and fittings were purchased for \$740 and these were housed in Arthur Wilson's barn.

Charles Campbell completed a survey of water supplies in the community and distance between properties.

Purchasing a truck became the next major concern, but

with limited funds most were financially out of reach. Committee members spent many hours and travelled many miles to look for a suitable truck. In November, 1960, a 1957 Ford Truck was purchased for \$800, \$300 from cash on hand and the remaining \$500 through a loan from Arthur Wilson.

Many men in the community spent countless hours mounting tanks to the truck and making room for ladders and other gear.

J.S Creelman agreed to have a garage built near Dominion Chair Factory to house the new truck. Rent was \$8 per month, with heated supplied by the Factory. When an oil heater was installed, Billy Faulkner (Chair of the Committee), made a trip morning and night through the winter to check on the oil heater to make sure it was working.

A Community meeting was called in September, 1960 with members of the Bible Hill Fire Brigade invited to explain Bylaws and Constitution necessary to organize a Fire Brigade and also the duties of the Fire Commission. Members of the Fire Brigade were responsible to raise money for their own personal equipment such as hats and coats but the Fire Commission was responsible for providing the necessary Fire Fighting Equipment.

On Dec. 5th, 1960, members of the Bible Hill Fire Brigade

were invited to organize the Bass River and Area Fire Brigade. According to the minutes of this meeting the following were inducted as Charter Members: William Faulkner, Arthur Dickie, Ivan Lewis, Gordon Lewis, Harold Corbett, Oswald Mosher, Fulton, Donald Donald Campbell, Henry Starritt, Donald Taggart, Robert Taggart, Vincent Faulkner, Spurgeon Carr, Hugh Canning, Arnold Rutherford, Dr. J.J. S. Wilson, Lloyd Cooke, Hilton Grue, Carleton MacLellan, Clayton Lewis, Lester Cards, Robert O'Brien, Ernest Rushton, Ralph Thompson, Lee Gilbert, Leslie Grue, Lloyd Fulton, and John

Dunham. Harold Corbett was elected as the first Chief, Don Taggart as Deputy Chief, Secretary-Treasurer was Bob O'Brien, Captain of Police and Salvage was Lloyd Fulton, Captain of Equipment and Hose was Hilton Grue and Lloyd Cook was elected Stewart.

The new members were invited to a meeting at the Bible Hill Fire Hall on Dec. 14th, where they received assistance with training and information to help in getting their new Brigade up and running.

The Brigade received a great deal of community support over the years. Many fund raisers were held to assist with the purchase of equipment. A clipping from the Chronicle Herald dated March 20th, 1961 reports \$190 had been raised at a Bean and Chowder Supper in support of the Fire Equipment Fund. The Fund is reported to have a total of \$550. În a 1967 clipping, \$363 has been collected in a drive for the Fire Brigade.

Bass River Fire Brigade, assisted by Great Village Brigade, responded to a fire at the home of Mrs. and Mrs.

Stanley Fulton on Feb. 22nd, 1961. The house was totally destroyed but they were able to save the barn and chicken house. A newspaper clipping reports the efforts of the two brigades was hampered by a lack of adequate water supply. "This was a big fire at the time and all we had to fight the fire was the portable pump and some hose," says Arthur Dickie.

Construction of a new Fire Hall began in May, 1970. Land was donated by Willard Fletcher and Harold Corbett was appointed Chairman of the Building Committee. In the minutes from that time, Harold reports "there was a good turnout on Saturday for the laying of cement for our new fire hall." In the June minutes, fill had been placed in and around the hall by work crews and lumber was being purchased. A plan for the new hall was presented. The roof was being shingled by July minutes.

The hall was completed by February, 1971 and equipment was moved from the Factory garage. There was still work to be done on the recreation room. Bills amounting to \$6,941, for the construction of the hall, had all been paid. Chair of the Building Committee, Harold Corbett, paid tribute at the time to the members of the Fire Brigade and the district for their splendid co-operation and the many hours of volunteer labor provided to make possible the construction of the hall.

Tom Grue remembers back when the emergency phone line was the only way to report a fire or emergency. "The fire would be reported to the central operator and she would call four numbers. These ladies would then each call five more until all firemen knew of the call" he says

The Fire Brigade served the

area from Economy River to Everett Boyd's in Portapique Montrose and Portapique Mountain. They assisted other fire brigades and Dept. of Lands and Forest outside this area. In 1972, Chief Clayton Lewis reported the Brigade had answered 11 calls.

A new International Truck was purchased in October,

The Fire Brigade and Fire Commission worked together closely over the years hosting picnics, suppers, concerts until the Commission was disbanded

The annual Fire Brigade Picnic has many fond memories for the community. Originally it was held at Saint's Rest, with a bond fire on the beach at day's end. Later it was later moved to the high school property. A parade through the community, with children on bicycles or pushing carts, floats and of course decorated fire trucks was enjoyed by all as they made their way to the school for games of chance and a delicious supper, sponsored by the Bass River Firemen. Many children enjoyed a ride on the firemen's round-about over the years.



Fire Chief Mike Taggart (1984-88, 1991-94) thanks Rachel Wilson for her detailed historical report at the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Bass River Fire Brigade. (scanned photo)



Bass River Fire Chief Alfred Grue helps a young girl hold the fire hose, while the Brigade's oldest member Arthur Dickie controls the water pressure. Bass River Fire Brigade has hosted many picnics and events over its 50 year history. (Harrington Photo)

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Trucks were moved into the new Bass River Fire Hall in February, 1971. (scanned photo)



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