

# Eagle Squad 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Congratulations

## Historic Little Falls

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### PUTTING OUT THE FIRES!



In December of 1902 the old wooden Methodist Church which then stood on Warren Street caught fire. While this building was destroyed a bucket brigade was destroyed, a bucket brigade was formed and prevented the fire from spreading to the new church which had just been completed.

It wasn't until 1903 that a water system was installed in the town. For a while hollowed out oak logs cemented together with

tar were used as water mains. In the Passaic Valley Water Commission Museum they have a replica of the early pipes for delivering water.

In November of 1904 the first volunteer fire company was formed. James Steel, publisher of the local newspaper, the Little Falls Eagle, was instrumental in organizing the Eagle Hose Company. The other members were Joseph Moore, the first fire chief, James Madden, of the Prudential Insurance Company, Austin Reilly, the local druggist and Harry Wood, principal of School #1, at that time.

The only piece of equipment the Eagle Hose Company had was a two wheel hose cart which was pulled by hand or attached by a pin in the shaft to a trolley if one came along and was heading in the direction of the fire.

In 1907 this cart was housed in a shed on the corner of Stevens

Ave. and Warren Street. This property was purchased by the Eagle Hose Company. Later the company agreed to relinquish the land to the Township with the provision that if the town would build the Municipal Building on the lot, then the Eagle Hose Company could have space in the new town hall for their equipment.

It wasn't until 1914 that the Municipal Building was erected and when completed the Eagle Hose Company was provided with two bays in front of the building for their equipment. By this time the company was provided with a Brockway Combination Hose and Chemical truck which remained in service until 1927. While this equipment occupied one bay the hand drawn cart was in the other bay.

In the latter part of 1927 the Township purchased an American La France 600 gallon per minute pumper and assigned it to the Eagle Hose Company.

In the early days the firemen were called into service by the ringing of the bell in the tower of the First Reformed Church on Main Street. After the Municipal Building was erected a bell tower was constructed along side of the building. Not only was it used to call the firemen into service but was later used for the 9:15 curfew each evening. This system was used until 1957 when the tower was demolished, the bell removed, placed in the Memorial Park on Main Street and used as a memorial for deceased firemen.

### *A Tribute To Our Brave Volunteers*

Have you ever wondered what it was like in Little Falls back in the early 1800's? A number of grist and lumber mills along the Peckman River with farms scattered throughout the region. I would guess if you stood on the porch of the Smith's farm on Lindsley Road you could almost see the Passaic River. It is known that all these farms scattered in the region had their own wells, and a cistern or two to store the rain water for the farm or to be used in an emergency. To be sure, these stout-hearted souls must have worked together in time of crisis.

With nothing but all wooden homes and open fireplaces, caution was on everyone's mind. Bucket brigades manned by women, children and men were not uncommon.

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