

History of Schuylerville Fire Service

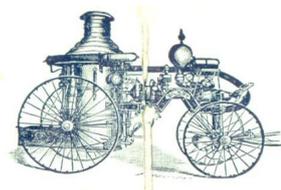
Written by Administrator

Thursday, 18 November 2010 13:44 - Last Updated Friday, 05 August 2011 11:29

The Village of Schuylerville was incorporated April 16, 1831 with Gilbert Purdy as President (Mayor). President Purdy organized the first means of fire suppression with a bucket brigade. Each resident of the village who owned a home was required to provide himself with two buckets bearing his initials and kept in a convenient place in his home. When an alarm was given he had to appear on the scene with the buckets filled with water. The President or a trustee directed the fire extinguishing.

In 1836 the village officials realized the bucket brigade was not the best means to extinguish fire. On August 15, 1836 the Schuylerville Fire Department was officially organized. Mayo Pond was appointed as captain with a roster of thirty one firefighters. The President and trustees purchased the first hand pumper for the Village of Schuylerville. In 1837 an Engine House was built on Church St. Around 1870 the village purchased another hand pumper to replace the original hand pumper. This hand pumper was purchased from the City of Albany where it had seen much "action". The hand pumper was built by Button of Waterford in 1856 for the Number 4 Engine Company of Albany. The hand pumper was renamed General Schuyler Engine No. 1. Today the hand pumper is known as "Old Betsy"

On December 21, 1888 the fire department was reorganized as the General Schuyler Steamer Company with forty members. Anson Paris was the company Foreman and Ralph Russell the President. Soon after the Schuyler Hose Company No. 1 and General Schuyler Hook & Ladder Companies are also formed. From 1891 until 1899 the Steamer Company became very active in hand pumper musters. During this period "Old Betsy" competed in several musters, winning nine of them and finished second or third in eight of them. Total muster winnings totaled nearly \$2,500. "Old Betsy's" claim to fame was at the Coney Island Muster where the firemen pumped a stream 234' 11" setting a world record.



Silsby Steamer

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At the turn of the century the apparatus of the company consisted of a Silsby Steamer, Hose Cart with 2000 feet of hose, a Hook and Ladder Truck and Button Hand Pumper. Both the Hose Company and Hook & Ladder Companies had disbanded and joined the Steamer Company. The company is now know as the General Schuyler Steamer & Hose Company and its eighty members elect Anson Paris as Foreman and Charles Woodcock as President. In 1903 the water system was installed introducing hydrants to the village. In 1905 the D.A. Bullard Hose Company was formed in addition to the Steamer Company. The Bullard's held their meetings in the office building originally occupied by the paper mill on south Broad St.. In 1923 when Joseph Glass was elected mayor of Schuylerville he organized the Schuyler Hose Company and appointed himself as Fire Chief. The company purchased for the village its first motorized fire engine a 1926 Seldon. Late in 1929 this fire company resigned in body. A new Schuyler Hose Company was formed under the direction of James Cudahy, Sr. as President. This company served the village for twenty four years with Daniel Brennan as Fire Chief for the last nineteen years.

In November of 1953 the company again reorganized with Clarence King as the appointed Fire Chief and Roy Myers as President. The second half of the 20th century brought the beginning of many changes. An addition was built on the fire house to accommodate additional fire apparatus in 1954. In 1956 the company added radios in the trucks, later adding direct communication to Saratoga County. Fire Chief Leon Mathis was strict regarding training which resulted in the achievement of one of the best fire companies in the area. Chief Mathis introduced SCBA's, hose master stream devices and a maintenance program for the fire apparatus. In 1960 Ray Zerwick was elected Fire Chief and served in that position for twenty one years. Chief Zerwick was also a firm believer that strict training was necessary for successful fire companies.

In 1977 a large drive was started to replace the century old fire station on Church St. Supported by the village taxpayers a new fire station was built at the corner of Green St. and Spring St. In late 1978 the new fire station was complete and Schuyler Hose Co. moved all their equipment and apparatus into their new quarters. Apparatus consisted of:

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E-571 1953 Maxim Ford Pumper

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ETA-572 1973 Maxim International Pumper

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EL-573 1967 Maxim City Service Truck/Pumper

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TA-574 1955 Ford Tanker

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R-576 1970 International Rescue Van

Today Schuyler Hose has thirty-nine active members with Richard Behrens as President and Brian Myers, Jr. as Fire Chief. Schuyler Hose is still quartered at the fire station at the corner of Green St. and Spring St. The Schuyler Hose Co. provides fire protection for the Village of Schuylerville, portions of the Towns of Northumberland and Saratoga in Saratoga County and portions of the Towns of Easton and Greenwich in Washington County. The members today continue to carry on the tradition and philosophy of our forefathers; providing the community with one of the best fire departments in the area!