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After 25 yrs. Service- Schoharie Fire Dept. Marks Anniversary

Editor's note: With this article, the third in a series, the Gazette closes its series on the background of the two construction events which will be celebrated on July 4 in Schoharie. On that date the cornerstone of the new firehall for the village will be laid and the village's new sewer system will be dedicated. Previous articles have involved the sewer project. This one describes the history of the volunteer fire company.

With a cornerstone laying ceremony held in conjunction with the July 4 celebration at Schoharie this year the Schoharie volunteer fire company will mark 125 years of service.

THE CORNERSTONE laying will signal start of construction on a modern firehall for the company to be located at the site of the village parking area on Grand street.

The company was previously located in the building now occupied by the movie theater and more recently at a building at the corner of Johnson avenue and Main street.

The Schoharie fire department was organized on April 23, 1832 by the town board of the Township of Schoharie shortly after the passage of enabling legislation in the state legislature.

A phrase of the enactment states "... shall during their services such firemen be exempt from militia duty except in case of invasion or insurrection."

Before and during the Civil war the firemen operated with hand operated pumps, leather and rubber hose and water buckets. They obtained water from wells, cisterns and later on from driven wells.

In 1868 the company purchased a hand operated pumper from the City of Albany. This pumper was reported to be the largest hand pump ever made, which accounts for its name—Niagara 6. Albany had purchased it in 1863 and had used it but five years.

With twenty men on each side to operate it, Niagara 6 was known to have been able to throw a good size stream over the court house.

The fire company was reorganized in 1870 and adopted the name of this remarkable pumper as the company name.

In 1868 and 1869 there occurred two great fires in Schoharie's business section.

THE BLAZE of 1868 started in a shed standing on the ground now occupied by the Bellinger garage at Wood's hotel. The fire raged from the Throop Drug store to the telephone building. Only one building remained, the one now occupied by the Scribner store. Present day Shannon avenue, which

might have served as a fire-break, did not exist.

In 1869 another shed, this near the present sheriff's office, started a fire which spread up and down the street from cemetery lane to Spring street. It destroyed the courthouse and the successor of the present day Parrott House.

At that time and until 1904, the village "hydrant" was a cistern located in front of the courthouse.

FIRE CHIEFS during the period the company had Niagara 6 were: Darius Scott, 1870-78; F. M. Mayham, 78-80; Albert Haines, 80-82 and 85-87; Peter S. Clark, 82-85, Arthur H. Farquher, 87-89, 90-92, and 95-98; Cyrus Gullin, 89-90, 92-93; Albert Rickard, 93-94; Don S. Maham, 94-95; Solomon Sins, 99-1901, and DeForest Rickard, 01-03.

In 1904 a high pressure water system, still in use today, was installed. With hydrants available, old Niagara was pensioned off.

This new water system replaced previous systems which dated back to 1795, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, municipal water systems in New York state.

Also at the fort is Deluge No. 1, built in London about 1720 and purchased by New York city in 1731. It was brought to Schenectady by General North and entered the museum after service in Esperance. Deluge has been called America's oldest fire engine.

FOLLOWING 1904 for some 30 years the company used hand carts hitched behind passenger cars for mobile equipment.

During this period chiefs included Guy D. Vrooman, 1903-18; Frank Feck, 18-20; and John Fain, 20-34.

In 1936 the firemen persuaded the village board to purchase a modern fire truck which is still in operation.

For out-of-town calls the firemen shortly after bought an old Henney hearse and remodeled it, fitting it with a front mounted pump hose, and other equipment.

This truck was disposed of after World War II when a war surplus Chevrolet fire engine was purchased.

Recent chiefs include Harold A. Bouck, 1934-37; S. A. Scranton Jr., 1937-45; Imer Bellinger, 1945-56; and Herman Klahr, 1956.

Thus, through 125 years, from the hand-operated pump to the old hand pumper through the towed hose carts up to the modern fire engines of today, Niagara Engine Company No. 6 looks back on a history of satisfying service.

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Death Toll From Storm In La. May Reach 500

12 Rescue Workers
 Seized as Looters;
 Cameron Area He
 As Uninhabitable
 Period of 3 Week

LAKE CHARLES, July 1 (AP)—A seemingly endless cortege of hurricane dead moved north to from coastal Louisiana. A silent cargo came out of land so grievously devastated that it can no longer sustain human habitation.

THE DEATH TOLL Thursday's great storm, it now feared, would reach 500. Peterson, President Eisenhower's personal representative on scene, so reported by telephone the chief executive before flying back to Washington.

At receiving centers here bodies had been counted, many of them robbed of their identity by the erosive effects of water and sun.

Not until yesterday was it opened to the stricken Cameron area of southwestern Louisiana so that a mass removal of victims could begin. Until then, only water and craft were able to bring out the dead.

A dozen volunteer rescue workers in the area were seized as looters, accused of a ghoulish betrayal of trust to the disaster living and dead.

However, civil defense officials did not regard the looting grave or widespread. They said

"MARTIAL LAW has not been declared in the Cameron area, it is there any intention of doing so. Martial law implies a complete breakdown of government and there is a government in Cameron."

Public health authorities declared the Cameron area uninhabitable, probably for three weeks at least. They said