



Photo by George Christy

AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH of the Stony Creek Rescue Fire Company was taken in front of the Stony Creek School. Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society.

Pictures of the Past

Department celebrates anniversary

Stony Creek Fire Dept. 90th Year

At the turn of the century Branford started to organize fire departments following a national trend that began in the large cities. By 1900 Branford center had several departments - Martin Burke Company (started at the Lock Shop), Louis Fisk Company (Hillside Avenue) and M.P. Rice. The village of Stony Creek would be the first of the outlying areas to organize a fire department.

There were several large fires in Stony Creek which precipitated the organization of the department. On June 8, 1900 the home and shoe store of Charles Gilley caught fire and took with it the newly-opened Stony Creek Library and the Congregational Church. The local bucket brigade could not save the buildings and they all burned to the ground. Joseph Ablondi's store was totally ruined by fire in August 1900 and the following week on Sept. 7, 1900 Branford's third selectman, David S. Ashman of Stony Creek, organized the department's first meeting at the Stony Creek Town Hall on School Street. Charter members were Alexander L. Sutherland, foreman; J.A. Greenvall, first assistant foreman; George E. Bishop, second assistant foreman; William T. Howd, secretary; William Spargo, treasurer; C.E. Clark, steward;

P. Ambrosoli, W.E. Lake, N.F. Zenders, H. Julian, J.R. Dower, M. Moriarity, E.T. Fox, J. Russell, R. Rose, R.W. Edwards, E. Cole, A. Banco, Harry Page, T. Killion, P. Nelson, J. Peterson, E.E. Fenner, J. McAvoy, J. McMillan, P. Burns, F. Adams and A. Caddy.

The Stony Creek Fire Department was started as a bucket brigade and hook and ladder and was later named Stony Creek Rescue Fire Company No. 5. The company purchased the first fire apparatus in 1902 which was a hand-pulled pump nicknamed "2 Ton 10." The department's first fire engine was purchased in 1924. The fire station was built on the grounds of the schoolhouse next to the town hall in August of 1901. It was designed and built by Oscar C. Kelsey for \$700 and took only two weeks to build. This old station still stands as part of the land trust property on School Street. A new firehouse designed by Melville Robertson of Stony Creek was built onto the rear of the old St. Therese's Church and today still serves the community.

For 90 years the members of the Stony Creek Fire Department have volunteered their time serving the community and can take pride in their many accomplishments.

Jane Peterson Bouley