
SELBYVILLE

TRACING ROOTS!

KING OF STRAWBERRIES

"GREAT FIRE" OF 1916

75 YEARS FOR VOL. FIRE CO.

MORE PHOTOS TO LOOK BACK ON!



THE HOME OF CALEB MURRAY SIMPLER AND JULIA ANN EVANS SIMPLER IS PICTURED AT LEFT CIRCA 1899. JUST TWO YEARS BEFORE SELBYVILLE INCORPORATED AS A TOWN. WHEN IT FINALLY BECAME A TOWN IN MARCH OF 1901, THERE WERE ONLY 16 HOMES IN TOWN. THE HOUSE AT TOP RIGHT IS WHERE THE SELBYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NOW STANDS. (PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL PEPPER)

SELBYVILLE TRACES ITS ROOTS TO SANDY BRANCH

JUST HOW DID SELBYVILLE COME ABOUT?

LONG BEFORE SELBYVILLE WAS KNOWN AS SELBYVILLE, THE EARLIEST COMMUNITY WHERE THE TOWN IS NOW WAS KNOWN AS SANDY BRANCH. ACCORDING TO THE LATE HISTORIAN D.J. LONG, SANDY BRANCH WAS SO NAMED BECAUSE IT WAS VERY SANDY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE STREAM OF WATER WHICH CROSSES THE NORTH SIDE OF TOWN.

THE PIONEERS OF SANDY BRANCH WERE BENJAMIN LONG, ARTHUR McCABE, JOHN MURRAY, RUBAN STEVENS AND

ELIJAH CAMPBELL, WHO SETTLED IN THE AREA AROUND 1780. MANY DESCENDANTS OF THOSE ORIGINAL PIONEERS CONTINUE TO LIVE IN THE AREA.

ACCORDING TO HISTORIAN HAROLD B. HANCOCK'S "HISTORY OF SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE," THE LONG FAMILY DAMMED SANDY BRANCH, A TRIBUTARY OF SINEPUXENT BAY, FOR A MILL POND TO OPERATE A GRIST MILL AND SAWMILL.

THE NAME SANDY BRANCH STUCK UNTIL 1842 WHEN A MAN NAMED SAMSON SELBY (SEE RELATED STORY) OPENED A STORE THERE THAT YEAR. ASKED BY A PHILADELPHIA MERCHANT WHERE TO SEND GOODS FOR HIS STORE, HE REPLIED, "IT WILL BE SHIPPED BY INDIAN RIVER VESSEL AND THEN HAULED TO WHERE I'M OPENING A COUNTRY STORE, SO JUST MARK IT 'SELBYVILLE.'"

SELBYVILLE DIDN'T ACTUALLY BECOME AN OFFICIAL TOWN UNTIL NEARLY 80 YEARS LATER IN MARCH OF 1901. THE TOWN, AT THE TIME, ONLY HAD 16 HOMES WITHIN TOWN LIMITS

PAUL PEPPER, HUSBAND OF THE LATE SELBYVILLE HISTORIAN DOROTHY PEPPER, PRODUCED A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL INCORPORATION PAPERS, WHICH MAKE INTERESTING READING. WHILE SOME OF THE DOCUMENT'S WRITING IS ILLEGIBLE, WE HAVE TRIED TO REPRINT IT AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE:

"IN PURSUANCE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN US BY SECTION NO. [OF DELAWARE LAW], THIS IS AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE TOWN OF SELBYVILLE LOCATED IN BALTIMORE HUNDRED WHICH THE STATE OF DELAWARE PASSED AT DOVER ON MARCH THE EIGHTH, A.D. ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND ONE (1901). WE, ISAIAH J. BRASURE, ISAIAH W. LONG, ASBURY M. MURRAY, ROBERT W. HILL AND CHARLES S. HAMBLIN, THE COMMISSIONERS, THEREIN NAMED AFTER BEING ALL DULY SWORN IN DUE FORM OF LAW AND TAKING TO OUR ASSISTANCE JOHN R. STEELE, A SKILLFUL AND IMPARTIAL SURVEYOR WHO WAS ALSO SWORN ACCORDING TO LAW FOR THAT PURPOSE DID PROCEED TO SURVEY AND LOCATE THE SAID TOWN OF SELBYVILLE BY THE FOLLOWING METES AND BOUNDS, TO WIT:

THE DOCUMENT THEN GOES ON TO OUTLINE SELBYVILLE TOWN LIMITS IN SURVEYING TERMS, AND CONCLUDES:

"I, JOHN R. STEELE, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE CAREFULLY SURVEYED THE TOWN OF SELBYVILLE IN SUSSEX COUNTY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS THEREOF AND THE ABOVE PLOT IS A TRUE REPRESENTATION OF THE SAME SURVEYED AND PLOTTED MARCH 20, 1901."

- JOHN R. STEELE

"I, CHARLES S. HAMBLIN, A NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE COUNTY AFORESAID, CERTIFY THAT ISAIAH J. BRASURE, ISAIAH W. LONG, ASBURY M. MURRAY AND ROBERT W. HILL, FOUR OF THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY AN ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF SELBYVILLE WERE SWORN IN BY ME IN DUE FORM OF LAW THAT THEY WILL PERFORM SEVERAL DUTIES INCUMBENT ON THEM ACCORDING TO SAID ACT FAITHFULLY AND IMPARTIALLY ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF THEIR SKILL AND JUDGMENT RESPECTIVELY. I WITNESS WHEREOF I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND AND OFFICE SEAL THIS TWENTIETH OF MARCH, 1901.

- CHARLES S. HAMBLIN

"I, ISAIAH J. BRASURE, ONE OF THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY AN ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF SELBYVILLE DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT CHARLES S. HAMBLIN WAS SWORN BY ME IN DUE FORM OF LAW THAT HE WILL PERFORM SEVERAL DUTIES INCUMBENT ON HIM ACCORDING TO SAID ACT FAITHFULLY AND IMPARTIALLY ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF HIS SKILL AND JUDGMENT.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND THIS TWENTIETH DAY OF MARCH, 1901."

- I. J. BRASURE

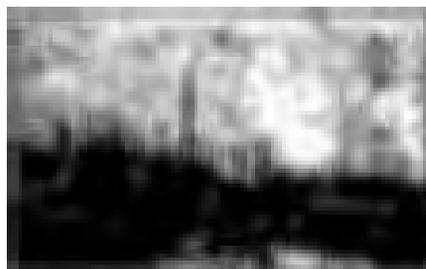
"I, ISAIAH J. BRASURE, ONE OF THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY AN ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF SELBYVILLE DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT JOHN R.

STEELE WAS THE SURVEYOR CHOSEN TO SURVEY AND MAKE A PLOT OF SAID TOWN OF SELBYVILLE AND WAS SWORN BY ME IN DUE FORM OF LAW THAT HE WILL PERFORM THE SEVERAL DUTIES REQUIRED OF HIM AS SURVEYOR ACCORDING TO SAID ACT FAITHFULLY AND WITH IMPARTIALITY.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND THIS TWENTIETH DAY OF MARCH, 1901."

- I. J. BRASURE

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THIS WAS ALL THAT REMAINED OF THE BUSINESSES ALONG CHURCH STREET AFTER THE FIRE OF 1916.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL PEPPER)

THE "GREAT FIRE" OF 1916

WHEN THE INSURANCE ADJUSTER CAME AFTER THE BIG FIRE OF FEB. 13, 1916, HE RECOMMENDED TO THE TOWN BOARD THAT THEY PURCHASE A CHEMICAL CART WHICH WOULD PUT OUT 75 PERCENT OF THE AVERAGE FIRES.

THE TOWN BOARD DID NOT ACT ON THIS RECOMMENDATION UNTIL MAY 6, 1919 WHEN THEY PURCHASED THE FIRST PIECE OF FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT FOR THE TOWN OF SELBYVILLE. THIS WAS THREE YEARS AFTER THE BUSINESS SECTION AT THE CORNER OF MAIN AND CHURCH STREETS WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY FIRE. THIS PURCHASE CONSISTED OF A TWO-WHEEL CART WITH TWO 45-GALLON CHEMICAL TANKS, HOSE, NOZZLES AND A FIRE BELL. IT HAS A TONGUE AND WAS PULLED TO AND FROM THE FIRES. IT WAS AN INTERESTING SPECTACLE TO WATCH OUR LOCAL MAN PULLING THIS CART UP AND DOWN THE STREETS.

THE TWO CHEMICAL TANKS WERE OPERATED BY TWO INDIVIDUAL HAND PUMPS SOMEWHAT LIKE A WATER PUMP. THIS PIECE OF EQUIPMENT COST APPROXIMATELY \$300 WAS OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE TOWN BOARD. CHARLES J. BAKER WAS IN CHARGE OF OPERATIONS UNTIL FEB. 28, 1920 WHEN DAVID HOLLINGSWORTH WAS ELECTED FIRE CHIEF BY THE TOWN BOARD. THIS BOARD HIRED ROBERT HILL AND JOHNNY DAISEY TO BUILD A SMALL FIRE HOUSE ON EAST CHURCH STREET NEAR THE BARN OF W.R. MCCABE OR ABOUT WHERE J. CONN SCOTT'S FURNITURE STORE NOW STANDS. THIS EQUIPMENT WAS USED UNTIL 1923, THE YEAR THE TOWN INSTALLED A WATER SYSTEM.

AT THIS TIME, THE YOUNG MEN OF THE TOWN SAW THE NEED FOR BETTER FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT SO A SMALL GROUP OF THEM HAD A MEETING AND ORGANIZED THE FIRST "SELBYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY." MANY OF THESE MEN WERE WORLD WAR I VETERANS AND HAD PREVIOUS FIRE FIGHTING EXPERIENCE WHILE IN THE ARMY MAINTAINED FIRE DEPARTMENTS.

THE OFFICERS OF THE FIRST COMPANY WERE JOHN A. TUBBS, PRESIDENT; ARMEL HUDSON, FIRE CHIEF; SPENCER TUNNEL, SECRETARY; AND WILL BURCH, TREASURER. THEY BOUGHT SOME HOSE AND NOZZLES BUT DID NOT HAVE A WAY TO CARRY THEM AROUND. THE GEORGETOWN FIRE COMPANY, WHICH WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO GET A NEW TRUCK AND OLLIE FARLOW OF THE ABOVE COMPANY GAVE THE SELBYVILLE FIRE COMPANY AN OLD TWO-WHEEL HOSE CART ON WHICH THE HOSE COULD BE LOADED AND PULLED OR TOWED TO A FIRE.

BY THIS TIME THEY SAID THE OLD CHEMICAL CART WAS A THING OF THE PAST AND DISPOSED OF IT AND ALSO SOLD THE FIRST FIRE HOUSE TO JOSHUA MURRAY. HE MOVED IT TO HIS HOME ON MAIN STREET WAS STILL USING IT AS A ONE-CAR GARAGE UNTIL THE TIME OF HIS DEATH.

THE PROBLEM OF CARRYING LADDERS, BUCKETS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT ACROSS TOWN AROSE SO THE TOWN BOARD AGREED TO PURCHASE FOR THE FIRE COMPANY A MODEL T FORD TRUCK FROM TOWNSEND AND W.G. WILLIAMS FOR \$427.90 AND PAY FOR 10 RAIN COATS AND 10 RAIN HATS TO BE PURCHASED FROM LOCAL MERCHANTS AS FOLLOWS: F.W. HOLLOWAY & Co., \$98.57; G.A. STEVENS, \$25.58; SELBYVILLE PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION, \$9.70. THE COMPANY THEN HAD A HOMEMADE BODY AND RACKS BUILT ON THIS TRUCK.

THE END OF ROBERT HILL'S PIGEON HOUSE WHICH THEN STOOD IN BACK OF RED MEN'S HALL WAS RENTED AND CONVERTED INTO A TEMPORARY FIRE HOUSE. AFTER THIS TASK WAS COMPLETED THE 10 ORIGINAL MEMBERS SAW THE NEED FOR MORE MANPOWER AND EXPANDED THEIR MEMBERSHIP.

IN 1925, THE COMPANY TRADED THE FORD TRUCK FOR A NEW AMERICAN LAFRANCE FIRE TRUCK ON A BROCKWAY CHASSIS, FULLY EQUIPPED WITH HOSE, LADDERS, 350-GALLON-PER-MINUTE PUMP, CHEMICAL TANKS AND HAND EXTINGUISHERS AT A COST OF ABOUT \$6,500. THIS TRUCK LATER ACQUIRED THE NAME OF "OLD KATE."

ON JAN. 11, 1929, THE SELBYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS INCORPORATED. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, IN MARCH 1930, THE COMPANY PURCHASED A LOT ON DUKE STREET BETWEEN RAYMOND MORRIS AND MISS CALLIE COFFIN FROM HOMER H. PEPPER FOR \$600. ON MAY 8, 1931, A CONTRACT WAS GIVEN TO SELBYVILLE MFG. COMPANY TO BUILD A NEW TWO-STORY BRICK FIRE HOUSE. THE BUILDING WAS COMPLETED IN 1932 COSTING ABOUT \$10,000.

DURING 1937 THE MEMBERS SAW THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT. THEY ALSO SAW THE NEED OF CARRYING ENOUGH WATER ON THE TRUCK TO PUT OUT A SMALL FIRE OR KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL UNTIL THEY COULD GET THE PUMPER CONNECTED TO AN ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY. TO SOLVE THIS MATTER THEY BOUGHT A NEW "BUFFALO" FIRE TRUCK EQUIPPED WITH THE ADDITION OF A 275-GALLON WATER BOOSTER TANK AND BOOSTER HOSE FOR ABOUT \$8,000.

AFTER USING THIS EQUIPMENT FOR ABOUT FIVE YEARS AND SEEING THE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION BY FIRE BY CARRYING A SMALL LOAD OF WATER, THEY DECIDE THEIR NEXT NEW TRUCK WOULD BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE ON RURAL FIRES IF IT CARRIED A CAPACITY LOAD OF WATER. TO FIT THESE NEEDS, AN OREN FIRE TRUCK WAS PURCHASED IN 1942 FOR \$10,000. IT CARRIED 1,000 GALLONS OF WATER AND WITH TWO TRUCKS CARRYING A TOTAL OF 1,275 GALLONS OF WATER OUR FIREMEN HAVE SAVED THE TOWN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FROM FIRE LOSS.

IN 1951, THE COMPANY DECIDED TO CHECK INTO THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FIRE TRUCK SO ON JULY 9, 1951 THE COMPANY BOUGHT A FORD CHASSIS FROM BOULEVARD MOTORS, GEORGETOWN, AT A COST OF \$3,396.30. ON FEB. 25, 1952 THE PUMPER FOR THE CHASSIS WAS PURCHASED FROM OREN ROANOKE CORP. FOR \$8,400 MAKING A TOTAL COST OF \$11,796.30 COMPLETE.

DURING 1955, MR. THOMAS ELLIS AND MR. PAUL PEPPER MADE A SUGGESTION TO THE COMPANY THAT EACH MEMBER SERVING 10 OR MORE YEARS SHOULD RECEIVE SOME TOKEN OF APPRECIATION FOR THE TIME SERVED AS A VOLUNTEER FIREMAN. THE COMPANY UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RULES: FOR 10 YEARS OF SERVICE A MEMBER SHALL RECEIVE A HAMILTON WRIST WATCH; FOR 20 YEARS OF SERVICE A MEMBER SHALL RECEIVE A SPECIAL FIREMAN'S RING; AND FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE A MEMBER SHALL RECEIVE A DIAMOND CHIP TO BE PLACED IN THE RING.

DURING THE FOLLOWING YEAR THE COMPANY SAW A NEED FOR A TRUCK TO CARRY ITS EXTRA FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS SMOKE MASKS, EXTRA NOZZLES, LIGHTS, COATS, HATS, BOOTS, ETC. SO ON APRIL 4, 1956 THE COMPANY PURCHASED A NEW GMC VAN TRUCK FROM ELLIS BROS. AT A COST OF \$3,028.48. AFTER PURCHASING THIS TRUCK WE REALIZED WE HAD TO DO SOME EXPANDING IN ORDER TO HOUSE THE EQUIPMENT. FACED WITH THIS FACT THAT WE DID NOT HAVE THE LAND AVAILABLE FOR EXPANSION, A COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED TO CONTACT MR. HOMER PEPPER WHO STILL OWNED THE PROPERTY ADJOINING THE REAR OF THE FIRE STATION. MR. PEPPER'S POULTRY OPERATION HAD MADE SOME CHANGES SO THAT HE DID NOT NEED ALL THE LAND ADJOINING THE FIRE STATION. HE VERY KINDLY AGREED TO GIVE US A DEED TO ENOUGH PROPERTY TO BUILD AN ADDITION TO THE FIRE STATION. A BUILDING COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED WITH MR. PAUL PEPPER AS CHAIRMAN. AFTER SEVERAL MEETING WITH DIFFERENT BUILDERS, MR. PEPPER RECOMMENDED THAT WE GET MR. HOWARD QUILLEN TO DO THE WORK ON A TIME AND MATERIAL BASIS WITH A REQUEST THAT HE SPLIT THE MATERIAL BETWEEN THE SELBYVILLE MFG. COMPANY AND THE I.W. LONG & SON LUMBER COMPANIES LOCATED HERE IN SELBYVILLE, THE TOTAL ADDITION COST ABOUT \$27,358.73 INCLUDING A COMPLETE HEATING SYSTEM FOR THE ENTIRE FIRE STATION.

ON JUNE 5, 1962 A COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT TO CHECK INTO THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FIRE TRUCK. ON DEC. 4, 1962 THE COMPANY VOTED TO POSTPONE BUYING THIS TRUCK UNTIL WE WERE MORE FINANCIALLY ABLE. TWO YEARS LATER ON FEB. 4, 1964 WE DECIDED TO BUY A NEW FIRE TRUCK AND PURCHASED A GMC CHASSIS FROM H&H GMC TRUCK SALES AT A COST OF \$7,631.20. ON DEC. 2, 1965 WE PURCHASED THE BODY AND PUMPING EQUIPMENT FOR OUR CHASSIS FROM THE AMERICAN FIRE APPARATUS CO., BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN AT A COST OF \$14,292 MAKING OUR TOTAL COST \$21,923.20. THIS PUMPER WAS EQUIPPED WITH A 750 GALLON PER MINUTE PUMP AND A WATER CARRYING CAPACITY OF 1,000 GALLONS.

ON FEB. 1, 1966, THE COMPANY AGREED TO PURCHASE KENDALL HUDSON'S HOUSE AND PROPERTY ADJOINING OUR PROPERTY FOR THE SUM OF \$7,500.

ON AUG. 18, 1970 AS A FURTHER INCENTIVE TO IMPROVE OUR FIRE TRAINING A MOTION WAS MADE TO BUY BLUE FIREMEN'S JACKETS WITH GOLD LETTERS FOR ALL FIREMEN COMPLETING FIREMANSHIP I AND II COURSES OFFERED AT THE DELAWARE STATE FIRE SCHOOL IN DOVER. THIS MOTION WAS RETROACTIVE TO INCLUDE THE TRAINING OF A FEW OF THE OLDER MEMBERS WHO OBTAINED THEIR TRAINING AT THE CAMDEN-WYOMING TRAINING CENTER PRIOR TO THE BUILDING OF THE NEW FIRE SCHOOL IN DOVER.

ON DEC. 15, 1970 AFTER A CAREFUL STUDY BY THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE THEY RECOMMENDED TO THE COMPANY THAT THE MEMBERSHIP BE INCREASED FROM 35 TO 45 ACTIVE MEMBERS. THIS RECOMMENDATION WAS ACCEPTED AND PASSED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE.

ON JAN. 19, 1971 PRESIDENT HORACE BUNTING APPOINTED A NEW BUILDING COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF ALL ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE COMPANY ALONG WITH THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

ON JUNE 1, 1971 PRESIDENT BUNTING APPOINTED A COMMITTEE TO CHECK INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF BUYING A NEW FIRE TRUCK. ON SEPT. 7, 1971 THE COMMITTEE REPORTED ITS FINDINGS TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AND A NEW FIRE TRUCK CHASSIS WAS ORDERED FROM CORDREY FORD IN MILLSBORO. COST OF THE F-900 FORD CHASSIS WAS \$10,328.20 AND ONCE AGAIN THE PUMPING EQUIPMENT WAS PURCHASED FROM THE AMERICAN FIRE APPARATUS CO. MAKING THE TOTAL COST OF THE NEW PUMPER \$38,062.20.

THIS PUMPER IS THE LARGEST OF ALL OUR PUMPERS WITH AN UNDERWRITER'S TEST CERTIFYING ITS CAPACITY AT 1,000 GALLONS PER MINUTE. THIS PUMPER WAS COMPLETELY EQUIPPED WITH 1,000 FEET OF THREE-INCH HOSE, DELUGE GUN MOUNTED ON TOP AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. THIS NEW PUMPER ALSO WAS EQUIPPED WITH BOTH A DELAWARE FIRE BAND RADIO AND A WORCESTER COUNTY FIRE BAND RADIO WHICH WOULD GIVE SELBYVILLE THE CAPACITY OF TALKING WITH MARYLAND FIRE COMPANIES WHEN RUNNING DUEL RESPONSES ON FIRES. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THIS NEW PUMPER WAS PAINTED YELLOW AND WHITE. THIS COLOR WAS QUICKLY ACCEPTED BY EVERYONE WHO SAW THE ENGINE AND WE BELIEVE THAT SELBYVILLE WAS THE FIRST COMPANY IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE TO ACQUIRE AN ENGINE OF THIS COLOR.

ON THE SAME DATE THE NEW PUMPER ARRIVED, THE TRUCK COMMITTEE AGREED TO LET THE FRANKFORD VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY USE OUR OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, A 1942 GMC FIRE TRUCK.

AGAIN THE COMPANY DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO EXPAND THE PRESENT FIRE STATION OR EVEN SELL IT AND MOVE TO

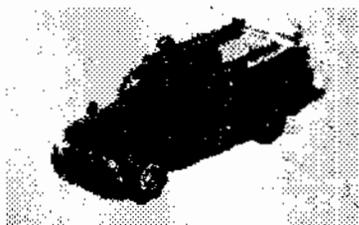
A NEW LOCATION. AFTER A SERIES OF SPECIAL MEETINGS, THE COMPANY DECIDED TO BUY THE FORMER VICTOR E. SIMPLER HOME PLACE ON THE CORNER OF NORTH MAIN AND POLLY BRANCH ROAD AND BUILD A NEW FIRE STATION ON THE SITE. THIS PROPERTY WAS PURCHASED FROM DOUGLAS MELON ON MARCH 5, 1973 AT A COST OF \$14,000. AT THIS TIME THE OLD STATION WAS SOLD TO COASTAL COMMUNICATION FOR THE SUM OF \$50,000.

ON APRIL 3, 1973, THE BUILDING COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF GARY LAW, RICHARD LORT AND FRANK HOLLOWAY PRESENTED TO THE COMPANY A CONTRACT FOR A NEW FIRE STATION. THE COMPLETED PRICE OF THE BUILDING WAS ESTIMATED AT \$180,000. THE FIRE COMPANY AGREED TO DO THE GRADING OF THE SITE AND FINAL LANDSCAPE WORK. THE COMPANY VOTED TO PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THUS THE NEW BUILDING WAS ERECTED.

IN LATE APRIL 1973 THE COMPANY FELT THAT A TANKER WOULD BE HELPFUL AT SEVERAL RURAL FIRES AND THE COMPANY SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING ONE. FIRE CHIEF RAY STEVENS CONTACTED BOTH THE HESS OIL CO. AND THE ATLANTIC RICHFIELD CO. IN REGARDS TO A LARGE TRACTOR TRAILER TYPE RIG AND THE COST OF SUCH.

AFTER PRESENTING THE FINDINGS TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP THE COMPANY DECIDED TO BUY A TRAILER FROM THE ATLANTIC RICHFIELD CO. IN PHILADELPHIA FOR THE SUM OF ONE DOLLAR. MR. BUDDY POLAN OF THE DIAMOND STATE POULTRY CO. HEARD OF OUR NEED FOR A TRACTOR AND DONATED A F-1000 FORD TRACTOR TO PULL OUR TRAILER. THE MEMBERSHIP BEGAN THE WORK ON CONVERTING THESE TWO PIECES OF EQUIPMENT INTO EMERGENCY VEHICLES AND ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 30, THE COMPLETED TRACTOR TRAILER WAS PLACED IN SERVICE HERE IN SUSSEX COUNTY.

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THIS MODEL OF SELBYVILLE FIRE COMPANY'S 1952 FORD FIRE TRUCK IS FOR SALE FOR \$39. THE MODELS ALSO WILL BE SOLD DURING THE FIRE COMPANY'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION NEXT OCTOBER.

PICTURED, FROM LEFT, PAUL PEPPER, THE OLDEST ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE SELBYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY; GIB LYNCH SR., LIFE MEMBER WHO JOINED IN 1953; WILMER LONG, LIFE MEMBER WHO JOINED IN 1958; PEP PEPPER, PAST PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE; RICK DUNCAN SR., FIRE CHIEF WHO JOINED IN 1977; AND KEN MADARA, FIRE POLICE CAPTAIN WHO JOINED IN 1975. THEY ARE STANDING BY THE 1972 FORD PUMPER THAT WAS PURCHASED FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRE COMPANY. IT WAS THE FIRST YELLOW SELBYVILLE FIRE ENGINE.



S.V.F.C. 75 YEARS

THE SELBYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY WAS FORMED IN 1919, THREE YEARS AFTER THE "GREAT FIRE" DESTROYED THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SECTION. THE COMPANY WAS OFFICIALLY INCORPORATED IN 1923, AND WHEN NEXT YEAR ROLLS AROUND, THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WHO PROTECT THE LIVES AND PROPERTY OF THOSE WHO LIVE IN AND AROUND TOWN WILL CELEBRATE THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY.

PAST FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT PEP PEPPER AND A SEVEN-MEMBER COMMITTEE ARE BUSY PLANNING THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, OCT. 4, 1998. THE CELEBRATION WILL FEATURE AN OPEN HOUSE FROM 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M. AND WILL INCLUDE APPARATUS AND SAFETY DISPLAYS, FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY WILL INCLUDE A LOOK AT THE COMPANY'S NEWEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT - A NEW RESCUE TRUCK THAT THE COMPANY IS PURCHASING FOR \$370,000. THE FIRE COMPANY EXPECTS DELIVERY OF THE NEW TRUCK BY SEPT. 20, JUST IN TIME FOR THE OPEN HOUSE.

PEPPER SAID THE FIRE COMPANY HOPES TO HAVE A BOUND EDITION OF THE COMPANY'S HISTORY AVAILABLE FOR THE OPEN HOUSE. VISITORS ALSO WILL BE ABLE TO PURCHASE A MODEL OF THE COMPANY'S 1952 FORD FIRE TRUCK FOR \$39.

THE DAY WILL CONCLUDE WITH A DINNER FOR ALL FIRE COMPANY MEMBERS, BOTH ACTIVE AND INACTIVE, AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY. THOSE WISHING TO ATTEND THE DINNER BUT WHO DON'T RECEIVE AN INVITATION CAN CALL PEP PEPPER AT 732-3536.

TO GET READY FOR THE CELEBRATION, SELBYVILLE FIRE FIGHTERS ARE BUSY MODERNIZING THEIR CURRENT FIRE STATION, WHICH WAS ERECTED IN 1973 AND COMMEMORATED THE FIRE COMPANY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY. THE FIRE COMPANY ALSO IS PLANNING A 28 BY 80-FOOT ADDITION TO THE REAR OF THE FIRE STATION WHICH, ACCORDING TO PEPPER, ALLOW MEMBERS TO CREATE A MUSEUM TO DISPLAY FIRE COMPANY MEMORABILIA AND TROPHY ROOM.

THE FIRE COMPANY CURRENTLY HAS 42 ACTIVE MEMBERS AND 10 PIECES OF EQUIPMENT. THE OLDEST ACTIVE MEMBER IS PAUL PEPPER, WHO JOINED THE COMPANY IN 1938 AND WHO HAS BEEN BUSY HELPING THE COMPANY PUT TOGETHER ITS HISTORY (SEE RELATED STORY).

ALSO TO HELP PREPARE FOR THE CELEBRATION, PEPPER IS ASKING THAT ANYONE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO HAS OLD PHOTOGRAPHS, NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, FIRE GEAR OR ANY OTHER EQUIPMENT THAT MIGHT BE LAYING AROUND TO CALL HIM AT 732-3536. ANYTHING NOT DONATED TO THE COMPANY WILL BE RETURNED.
S.V.F.C

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SELBYVILLE'S JOHN G. TOWNSEND JR. WAS 'KING

OF STRAWBERRIES¹

SELBYVILLE HAS HAD MANY OUTSTANDING CITIZENS WHO NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE TOWN, COUNTY AND STATE, BUT NO NATIONAL AFFAIRS. DONALD J. LYNCH, WHO FOUNDED ANIMAL HEALTH SALES IN TOWN, SERVED AS A STATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR MANY YEARS AND WAS LATER APPOINTED AS DELAWARE'S SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

BUT PERHAPS THE MOST KNOWN CELEBRITY IN SELBYVILLE WAS JOHN G. TOWNSEND JR., DELAWARE'S 55TH GOVERNOR, WHO DIED IN 1964 AT THE AGE OF 93. HIS HOME AT THE CORNER OF MAIN AND McCABE STREETS NOW SERVES AS THE SELBYVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY. BUT HIS LEGACY IS MUCH LARGER THAN THAT.

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM DICK CARTER'S "THE HISTORY OF SUSSEX COUNTY."

"TOWNSEND, WHO SERVED AS GOVERNOR FROM 1916 TO 1920, INCLUDING THE YEARS OF WORLD WAR I, WENT ON TO SERVE TWO TERMS IN THE U.S. SENATE AND BECAME A BUSINESS LEADER IN FARMING, ORCHARDS, THE STRAWBERRY BUSINESS, THE LUMBER BUSINESS, THE CHICKEN BUSINESS, HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION AND BANKING. THE SENATOR ALSO, ACCORDING TO INFORMATION CONTAINED IN HIS OBITUARY, INVENTED THE STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM SODA ONE AFTERNOON IN A MILLSBORO RESTAURANT.

"HE BEGAN HIS CAREER AS A RELIEF TELEGRAPHER FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD IN BISHOP STATION AND IN MILLSBORO AT THE AGE OF 21. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, HAVING HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY THE OPERATION OF THE RAILROAD AND LEARN ITS NEEDS, TOWNSEND BEGAN SUPPLYING THE RAILROAD WITH CROSSTIES. THE NEW BUSINESS SOON ENABLED HIM TO GO FROM A \$12.50 A WEEK JOB AND A ONE-ROOM HOUSE TO OWNING HIS OWN SAWMILL, MANUFACTURING CROSSTIES AND PILING FOR THE RAILROAD. IN 1894 HE MOVED TO SELBYVILLE AND BEGAN LOOKING FOR OTHER OPPORTUNITIES, WHICH HE SOON FOUND IN THE CULTIVATION OF STRAWBERRIES FOR MARKET. ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF SUSSEX COUNTY FARMERS IN DAYS OF IMPERFECT TRANSPORTATION HAD BEEN GETTING THEIR PRODUCE TO MARKET. TOWNSEND SOLVED THAT PROBLEM BY TALKING THE RAILROAD INTO SENDING REFRIGERATOR CARS TO SOUTHEASTERN SUSSEX FOR THE FRESH SHIPMENT OF HIS STRAWBERRY CROPS.

"THE NEXT PROBLEM WAS WHAT TO DO WITH THE EXCESS STRAWBERRIES AND IT WAS AT THAT POINT THAT TOWNSEND HAD THE IDEA OF MANUFACTURING STRAWBERRY SYRUP AND CANNING STRAWBERRIES AFTER HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE MILLSBORO RESTAURANT OWNER. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, HE BEGAN A CANNERY. TOWNSEND EVENTUALLY BECAME KNOWN AS THE STRAWBERRY KING OF AMERICA," AND IN HIS LATER YEARS WAS IN THE HABIT OF SENDING THOUSANDS OF QUARTS OF STRAWBERRIES TO HIS FORMER COLLEAGUES IN CONGRESS EVERY YEAR.

"HIS NEXT VENTURE WAS BANKING. TOWNSEND OPENED THE BALTIMORE TRUST COMPANY IN SELBYVILLE ON A \$5,000 INVESTMENT AND LIVED TO SEE IT BECOME ONE OF THE LARGEST BANKS IN THE STATE.

"TOWNSEND BECAME ACTIVE IN POLITICS BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND WAS ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN 1901, SERVING UNTIL 1903. TOWNSEND RAN FOR GOVERNOR IN 1916 AND WAS THE ONLY REPUBLICAN ON THE TICKET TO BE ELECTED.

"TOWNSEND ENACTED LEGISLATION AIDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, ESTABLISHED THE STATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, AUTHORIZED STATE TUITION PAYMENTS FOR TEACHERS ATTENDING SUMMER SCHOOL, AND ESTABLISHED THE STATE'S FIRST SCHOOL CODE, A MEASURE WHICH ANGERED MANY SUSSEX COUNTIANS. HE FINISHED HIS TERM WITH A SURPLUS OF \$1.7 MILLION.

"TOWNSEND, LATER KNOWN AS "MR. REPUBLICAN OF DELAWARE," ATTENDED EVERY REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION FROM 1904 TO 1960 WITH THE EXCEPTION OF 1920 WHEN HIS FELLOW SUSSEX COUNTIANS REFUSED TO ENDORSE HIM AS A DELEGATE, BEING STILL ANGRY ABOUT HIS STRONG SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND A UNIFORM SCHOOL CODE.

"AFTER HE LEFT OFFICE, TOWNSEND EXPANDED HIS STRAWBERRY OPERATION, EVENTUALLY ESTABLISHING 23 STRAWBERRY PROCESSING PLANTS FROM TENNESSEE TO DELAWARE. HE VENTURED INTO THE RAISING AND CANNING OF OTHER VEGETABLES SUCH AS STRING BEANS AND, IN THE 1920S AND 1930S BECAME THE STATE'S LEADING ORCHARDMAN WITH 1,500 ACRES OF ORCHARDS.

"IN 1928, TOWNSEND WAS NOMINATED BY THE REPUBLICANS FOR THE U.S. SENATE WHILE AWAY ON A BUSINESS TRIP TO FLORIDA. RUNNING AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC INCUMBENT, THOMAS F. BAYARD OF THE FAMED NEW CASTLE COUNTY POLITICAL FAMILY, TOWNSEND WON BY 20,000 VOTES. HE SERVED TWO TERMS IN THE SENATE BEFORE BEING DEFEATED FOR A THIRD TERM BY THE LATE JAMES M. TUNNELL SR. OF GEORGETOWN IN 1940.

"DURING THE LAST 25 YEARS OF HIS LIFE, HE LED AN ACTIVE RETIREMENT FROM POLITICAL OFFICE, MANAGING ALL OF HIS FAR-FLUNG BUSINESS INTERESTS. IN 1957, INCLUDING THEN VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON, ATTENDED AN 86TH BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR HIM IN SELBYVILLE. IN 1964, TOWNSEND WHO IN BOTH BUSINESS AND POLITICS HAD SERVED AS AN INTEGRAL LINK INTO THE STATE'S MOVEMENT INTO MODERN TIMES, DIED AT THE AGE OF 93."

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