

New York (NAPS)— Next time you hear the shrill sound of a fire engine racing along to a local blaze, give a thought to the early days of American fire fighting with its colorful engines and courageous volunteers.

An entire town during Colonial times would turn out for a fire, everyone shouting the alarm to his neighbor who, likely as not, was already shouting the news to the next house; the heavy engine was dragged through the streets; men appeared with axes, chains, ropes, buckets, saws and other tools which might be handy; animals squealed and bellowed, while impossible numbers of boys scurried about vying with one another to be most in the way. Despite such feverish activity, however, the fire was often not extinguished—particularly if it had made any headway at all.

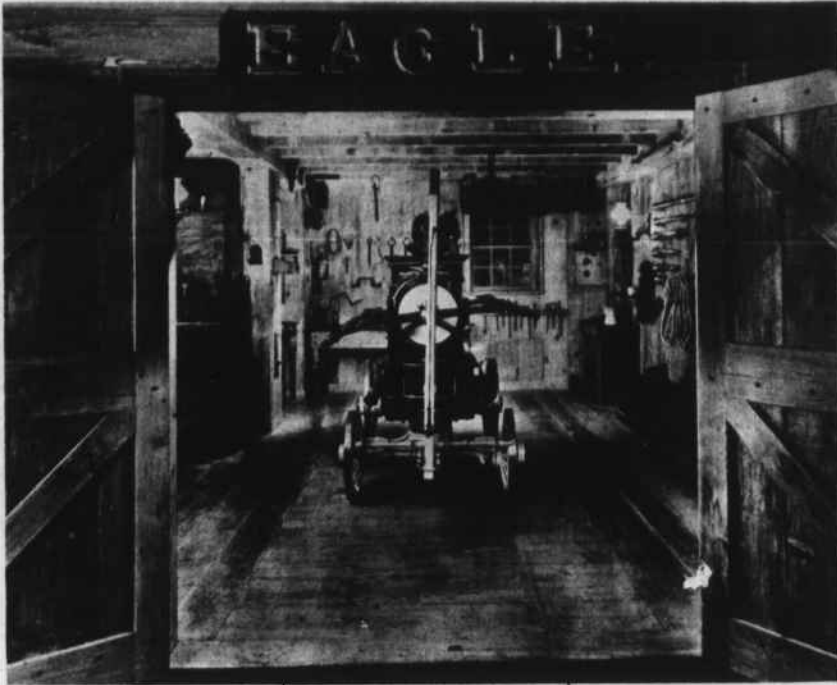
Surprisingly enough, the fire engines used at this time go back to the second century B.C.—and are based on a Greek mechanic's invention of the force pump. The apparatus is lavishly described in several books of the time, and seems to have met all the needs of the people, except one; it had a tendency to fall apart!

During the Middle Ages there was at least variety in the methods of fire fighting, if not much practicality; men alternated between an old standby, the bucket brigade, and the latest innovations: hand squirts and syringes.

A complete set of fire-fighting equipment of the 16th century consisted of a squirt, three buckets, a sledge hammer and two firehooks. The hooks were used for pulling down burning roofing, and one still hangs ready on a wall in the main street of West Lavington, in England.

In the late 16th century, however, a sturdier fire-pump was introduced with moderate success. An engine of the time consisted of a pump mounted in a tub of water on a sledge. The pump handle was worked by two men; a third directed the feeble stream of water issuing from a tube, while the fourth member of the team replenished the water in the tub—with a bucket!

The Great Fire of London



in 1966, which demolished 90 churches and more than 13,000 houses, naturally stimulated a concern for fire engines and better fire fighting methods. It also prompted the organization of insurance underwriting companies—which issued distinctive metal fire marks to the owner of buildings that were to be insured.

The largest collection of British and American fire marks—as well as fire fighting equipment through the ages—is located in The Firefighting Museum of The Home Insurance Company, in New York City. Founded by Harold V. Smith, an untiring collector and for many years the President of Home Insurance, the museum also has on display models of early hand-pump engines, toy fire equipment of yesterday, and dozens of fine prints and woodcuts.

Other museum features include ornate silver and brass trumpets, helmets, hat fronts, watchman's alarms, buckets, salvage bags, ancient syringes, and extinguishers—in fact, practically every item pertaining to early American fire fighting days and the insurance industry.

The museum is open to the public by appointment

only. Tours can be secured by written permission. The museum is particularly successful in keeping alive the romance and adventure of early fire fighting in this country, particularly in the case of the colorful and daring volunteer firemen of New York. These

men, who served without pay, did so out of devotion and a sense of pride. They loved their pumps, painting them in bright colors and gay designs, and worked the hand bars furiously to outpump rival volunteer companies. As an individual, the vol-

unteer fireman was expected to stop whatever he was doing, whether at work or at play, and hasten to his fire station when the alarm sounded. If he failed to follow the strict rules, he was fined. In the minute book of Engine 13, the following entry was made on January 15, 1807: "Harris Sages' excuse is received. He says at the time of fire he was locked in someone's arms and could not hear the alarm"—but there is no comment as to whether he was fined or "pardoned."

Because of the lack of dependable water supply, it was often necessary for the hand-pumped engines to form a line, one pumping into another. At a fire in a food store at Eldridge and Rivington Streets, New York, in the 1860's 23 engines with six thousand feet of hose were connected in line to produce one stream of water.

To the beloved hand-pumper, time added the steam pumper, drawn by horses, which could throw 750 gallons of water a minute—and finally the efficient gasoline or diesel engines and pumps that we are familiar with today.

Fire fighting has come a long way from the primitive bucket brigade, and for that we can be thankful.

Attend Conference

Mrs. Ialeen Mode, Rolene Collins and Mrs. Marjorie G. Leonard are attending the annual conference for Vocational Home Economics Teachers at U.N.C.G. from Wednesday Aug. 7th through August 10th.

Dr. Catherine T. Dennis, recently retired State Supervisor of Home Economics, will be honored at a luncheon on Wednesday by the Home Economics Division of the North Carolina Vocational Association.

The theme for the conference is "Perceiving, Becoming, Behaving: A Focus for Home Economics Education." Dr. Bruce McQuigg, Education Department, Indi-

ana University and Dr. Rebecca Smith, UNC-G will highlight the theme by participating on the program.

Mrs. Ernestine Frazier is State Supervisor of Home Economics Education and is also district supervisor for the Franklin County area.



STYLISH COMBO—Dots and checks make a happy mixture in this smart three-piece ensemble. Houndstooth checked cotton corduroy shapes the vest and skirt with a deep inverted front pleat. The pin-dotted blouse has a removable ascot. By Gien of Michigan.

Decoupage Exhibit Planned

The final Decoupage class will meet Monday August 12, at 8 P.M. in the Home Economics Cottage of the Franklinton High School. Please bring your finished and unfinished pieces. Those who missed the series are invited to attend and enjoy the showing. Directions for the decoupage are still available and since much of the work is done at home you may like to work on your own.

Also Mrs. Mode will have directions and samples of several other handicrafts for your Christmas projects.

The time for a vacation is when you can get it. Don't worry about the work you leave behind, it will be there when you return.

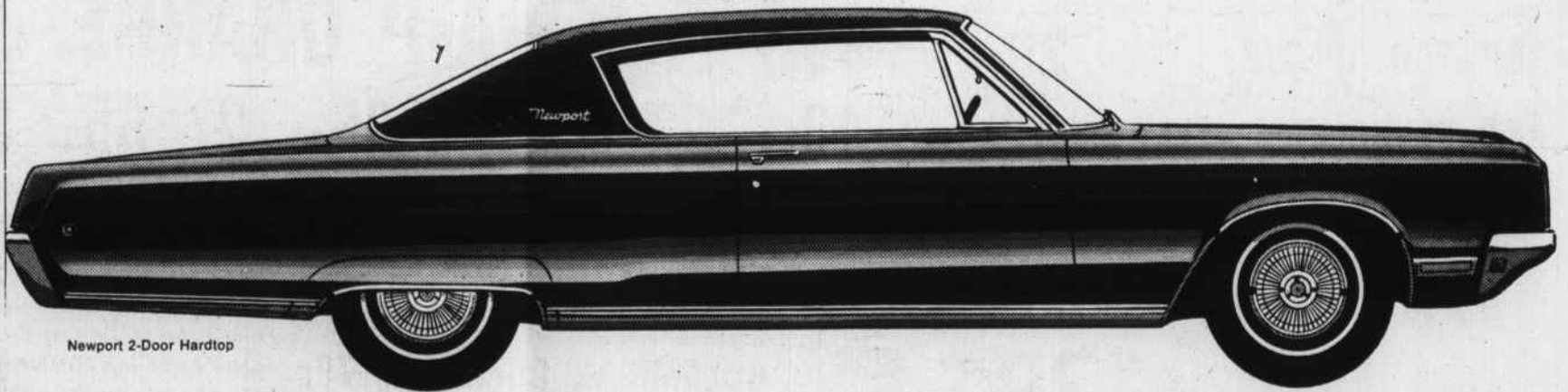
Masonic Notice

Louisburg Lodge 413 A.F. & A.M. will hold a stated communication on Tuesday evening August 13 at 7:30 in the Masonic Temple on Jolly Street. All Master Masons are fraternally invited.

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