

Wallace Fire Department Enjoys Excellent Record of Service Here

Organization Was Formed in 1926, Being Governed by Rules and Regulations of State Firemen's Association.

MANY DESTRUCTIVE FIRES FOUGHT SINCE BEGINNING

Averages Being on Honor Roll Six Months Out of Each Year, Sec. Reports

It is often said—and with truth—that a town is as good as its citizens. This could be amended—and still with a lot of truth—a town's as good as its fire department. For it is a fact that without the efficient work of a good fire department irreparable damage could result to a community, both in loss of money and in prestige.

That Wallace can and does boast of one of the most efficient fire-fighting units in any town in North Carolina, size for size, is well known to residents in Duplin's strawberry belt, and to many people in other places. It is therefore, with a desire to give credit where credit is

due, and to offer a word of praise to the local fire laddies for their unselfish and efficient work that this article is written.

For a long time prior to 1926, the people of Wallace and vicinity were aware of the fact that their community needed a fire department that was able to cope with destructive fires, and much talk was from time to time indulged in with this end in view. But little was done towards accomplishing anything until the closing days of 1925. At that time the growing town more than ever felt the need of a reassurance that only a well-conducted fire department could give.

Accordingly, on January 15, 1926, plans came to a head, and a meeting was called by J. Aubrey Harrell in the old Wallace Motor Company building where the Cavanaugh Chevrolet Agency is at present located, for the purpose of organizing a fire department for Wallace.

On the afternoon of that day, the meeting was held, plans and

resolutions were drawn up and the present Wallace Fire Department came into being, with fourteen members. Mr. Harrell was unanimously elected chief of the new organization, and the following were charter members: R. L. Fields, Howe E. Dunn, J. P. Murray, J. W. Hoffer, H. A. Register, R. W. Fountain, Emmett Williams, O. T. Fountain, W. C. Sykes, Jr., Geo. L. Boney, M. P. Kimball, Graham Pope, and B. H. Ipock.

Equipment was immediately purchased, and this included various pieces of fire-fighting paraphernalia, such as a fire truck, hose, axes, etc. Later on in the same year uniforms, consisting of coats, hats and boots, were purchased by the Town of Wallace for the department.

Until April 14, 1933, the fire department operated under the direction of Mr. Harrell, but at that time Mr. Harrell was forced to resign the leadership, owing to ill health. The department then unanimously elected J. W. Hoffer as chief to succeed Mr. Harrell in appreciation of his work, who was given the title of honorary chief of the fire department for his lifetime. Mr. Hoffer has served ever since.

Another "old timer," who has served as an official of the Wallace Fire Department since the date of its organization, is Howe E. Dunn. Mr. Dunn was elected secretary and treasurer at the first meeting, and has retained that position from that day until this. To no small degree is the record of the local fire department due to the tireless energy of this local business man.

The present fire department is a member of the North Carolina Firemen's Association, and operates under the rules and regulations as set up by that body. Each year two delegates, with all expenses paid, are selected from among the local firemen and sent to the state convention held by the Association.

A complete system of fire alarm boxes, fire fighting equipment and water mains serves Wallace, and for the outlying districts chemical equipment is carried by the truck for use where water is not available, or when for any other reason its use is necessary.

Under the efficient leadership of both Chief Harrell, and, later on, Mr. Hoffer, the present chief, the Wallace fire laddies have established an enviable reputation for their skill as fire fighters. It is in the records that they have never refused to answer a call for assistance, either in Wallace or nearby points. They have helped to fight fires in Rose Hill, Teachey and Burgaw, and also in several outlying rural districts.

To show the versatility of the local department, the firemen at one time went to Rose Hill and helped the county fire warden fight and control on one Sunday a destructive forest fire, for which piece of valuable work a letter of commendation was forwarded to the local outfit by the North Carolina Department of Conservation.

From time to time, in appreciation of the good work of the Wallace Fire Department, the entire personnel has been invited to dinners in the homes of Wallace citizens.

As a tribute to the extraordinary work of the local fire department, it averages being on the honor roll of the State Firemen's Association around six months out of each year. To be eligible for this honor roll, a fire department must hold down the fire losses in the community it serves to a minimum of five dollars or less in a current 30-day period. That the local boys are able to do this is an excellent indication indeed of their fire-fighting abilities. In addition to this honor, there have been received from time to time by the fire department many letters of congratulation and thanks from various concerns and individuals whose places the Wallace firemen have been instrumental in saving.

Once a year, usually in October, a national Fire Prevention Week is proclaimed by the President of the United States and the Governor of North Carolina. This week is participated in by the local fire department through the holding of fire drills in both the colored and white schools. There is also some member of the department selected to give a talk in the schools on fire prevention methods and similar subjects.

Throughout the years which have passed since the local department came into being there

have been many fires fought, any one of which could be mentioned as an example of the ability of the members to fight fires and take it. Several instances of extreme heroism in line of duty have been performed, but in no single case has any fireman ever suffered any other than minor injuries, a record of which any town or city, either, could be justly proud.

One of the most outstanding acts of heroism performed by a local fire laddie, was that of Fireman H. B. Dunn, who has been the secretary and treasurer of the Wallace Fire Department from its beginning. On January 21, 1927, Fireman Dunn, at great risk of his life, entered a building which was almost completely on fire and after his third attempt succeeded in bringing to safety a small colored child imprisoned in the blazing structure.

Another example of the tenacity and heroism of the local boys was on the occasion of the burning of the old Bank of Duplin and Wanoca Theatre buildings. This destructive fire took place in bitterly cold weather during February 1932, on the 21st. For five hours the local firemen battled the flames against the greatest of odds, not the least of which was the ice

and slush that formed in the freezing temperatures prevailing. Time and time again it looked as though the whole place would be destroyed, but the boys of the Wallace Fire Department never stopped fighting until the fire was out. The buildings were valued at \$16,000, and the loss was kept to \$7,500, all of which was covered by insurance.

While a system of alarms has been in operation for several years, a better system has been installed with the following numbers: No. 1, telephone call; No. 2, Dees Pharmacy corner; No. 3, M. O. Powell corner; No. 4, Frank Boney corner; No. 6, John Wells corner; No. 8, W. D. Campbell corner; No. 9, William Farrior corner.

Undeniably, the air of excitement and danger which surrounds a fire must be counted a factor in holding the interest of any volunteer fireman, but this, to a certain extent, wears off after a long period of service. When this becomes true, one can truly describe a volunteer fireman only by saying that his is one of the most unselfish services any citizen of any town is called upon to perform.

—Come to Wallace June 7-12—
Attend the Strawberry Festival here all Next Week.

STRIP-CROPPING HELPS

(Continued from Page 3)

John C. Shiver, assistant soil conservationist.

Such crops as small grains, sorghums, legumes, and grasses are readily adaptable to the strip cropping and fit in well in strip rotations with clean-cultivated crops. Strips can be used to

establish terrace lines, making it possible to build terraces at a more convenient time.

Width of the strips is dependent upon the slope of the land and requirements of the individual farmer, Shiver said. On gentle slopes it is considered good practice to lay off the strips 20 to 30 feet wide and on steep slopes 40 to 50 feet wide.

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"Gabe" and His "Crew" . . . every one of 'em, make their Bows to "King Strawberry", and heartily Join in extending a Glad Hand to all who will come our Way. "Gabe" and His "Crew" would be mighty Glad to Know you . . . so Come to see Us.

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