



Sandy's Fire Department in full uniform. Back row: Fon Crapo, Albert Brokmeyer, Archie Crapo, Clyde Swenson. Middle row: Arnold Peterson, Art Sorenson, Dick Jensen, Arch Gardner, A. Robert Larson, LaFay Raddon, Tom Allsop. Front row: Henry Marriott, Wick Wilson, W.W. Wilson, Ole Nelson, Chief Lawrence Petersen, Sam Christensen, Wallace Anderson, George M. Farnsworth. Sandy Museum Foundation Photo.

■ *The firemen of Sandy City carry on a tradition of community service and provide a trust that makes even a small child feel safe when their whole world is ablaze.*

Sandy—a Century of Service . . . A Look at the Fire Department

By Robin B - Free Lance Writer

Sandy City is celebrating their 100 year anniversary. As part of this celebration I thought it might be interesting to take a look at the history of their Fire Department, and what a history it was!

Sandy City's Fire Department was established in 1906, though the official date is August 20, 1908. What Mayor W.W. Wilson had envisioned as an organization of at least ten men, turned out to be a volunteer force of twenty. Though the city had ordained the department, finances were left up to the men. Providing their own uniforms and the money to start their own department, they paved the way for what is today one of the finest departments in the valley, still imbued with old fashioned values.

It started with the "Bucket Brigade."

Fighting fires with hand held buckets and forming a line to the nearest water supply, sometimes more than 100 feet away, they fought through black smoke and heat, so intense it often burnt flesh, to save what life and property they could. When using buckets you would have to get right into the fire to have any effect at all. This practice continued even after the first motorized truck was bought in 1928.

The city council paid \$300 of the \$600 needed for the purchase of a Model A Ford that was to become the city's first fire truck. That first truck was only a 100 gallon soda, acid and water tank truck, and while in those days was considered state of the art, still very often ran out of pressure half way through the fire, then it was the old bucket brigade to the rescue. This first truck was finally retired in 1956 and was the only fire truck in use

until 1942. This was also the year that Fire Chief John Bolliger got a new \$3,500.00 fire truck and was authorized to increase the originally approved 10 men to a 30 man department. *An interesting note: In 1960 when the Model A was taken in for its 100,000 mile check up, the President of the Ford Motor Company himself came out to see the "Little Old Fire Truck".* In 1958 the city bought the department nine firecoats, five of which were stolen! So, it was agreed that the first four men who got to the fire wore the coats. 1958 was also the year that the firefighters received their first badges.

Yes, there were quite a few changes between 1908 and 1958. Notice in the photos the number of volunteers had gone from twenty to twenty-four, and the faces had changed (look real close and you'll see that a couple of



Sandy's 1958 Fire Department. Back row: George Morrow, Virgil Jacobson, Dee Elswood, Paul Anderson, Delmus Larson, William Ottman, Phill Tolman, Ravell Beckstead, Vern Anderson, George Saunders, Marvin Bird. Seated: Albert Hardcastle, Reg White, Arnold Peterson, John Bolliger, John Hughes, Clyde Swenson, G. Leonard Larson. Front row: Martin Meissner, Delos Beckstead, Levern Farnsworth, Ernest Coddell, Charles Wright, Alma Wright. Sandy Museum Foundation Photo.

those faces are the same though aged a bit). Looking at the 1908 photo you'll see that Ole Nelson wore a star on his hat

signifying his status as Chief but I was not able to discover the significance of the white belt worn by one man in the front row. Sources speculate this may have identified him as the leader of the pulley harness which used manpower to pull the "Hose Cart" (100 feet of hose pulled on two giant wheels) that very often did not reach the water supply . . . enter bucket brigade. When the fire alarm sounded the cart was "pulled by hand or behind the nearest team or wagon we could find."

Over the years, the Sandy Fire Department, like many others, held the annual Firemen's Ball at the fire hall along with monthly dances and other fund raising events to raise money for the department. While not a lot of money was raised, it did help supplement the "almost \$2.00" the volunteers received and split among the men who

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Sandy's 100 Years . . .

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had fought each fire. During the 50's the fire hall was also used as the Sandy Co-op Store. Chuck Wright, one of the six living volunteers of that era, remembers having to argue with the city council for gas money for the fire truck. While this situation might have been o.k. in 1934 when the station log read "No fires in city limits in 1934, no calls, no losses, hope 1935 will be the same," Mr. Wright may not have had to argue this point had the council considered that the fire truck may have run out of gas on the way to a fire where their own family members may have been involved.

In 1973 the city hired the first full time employee of the fire department, Chief Bill Clough. In 1974 it hired five more bringing that number to six full time firemen. The department was still mostly volunteer and still paid for most of its own equipment. Luckily the Mayor and City Council came to realize the ben-

efit of a properly organized and outfitted fire department, due largely to the efforts of now retired Fire Chief and Mayor, Bill Clough. He helped bring a 30 member

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volunteer organization to a fire department employing 100 full and part-time employees. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1986 stated that all firefighters must be paid. This year the Fair Labor Standards Act was amended, once again opening the way for the tradition of the

volunteer firefighter. Remember it all started with those volunteers. Although there will always be a need for updated equipment and training we will probably never again see the days when the Sandy City Recreation Hall burned while the firefighters on duty were getting hand dialed phone calls to bring them out to fight the blaze.

But wait a minute, I don't want you to think being a fireman is all seriousness and work. Chuck Wright, his wife and Bill Ottman (also one of the six living volunteers of the 50's era) with a sparkle in their eyes recounted some of their experiences and recollections:

Chuck was a plumber when he joined the team and one of the first things he noticed was that after every fire they would pour 3 quarts of oil into the pump. This seemed a little strange because at the next fire the first thing out of the pump and onto the fire was 3 quarts of oil. When he asked them why they did this he replied, "because we've always

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Fire account 1933

Nov. 24 a. m. Peterson

G L Larson

John Hughes

Al Hardecastle

Wallace Anderson

F A Orton

Fred E. Swenson

Delmas Larson

Vergil Jacobson

Allen Hagander

Marion Bird

A M Nelson

Nov 24

P.M. roof

fire, tank

cameras used

damage 10.00

fire at Frank Obarne

Paid \$6.00

Dec 6 1933

NO fires in city limits in 1934

NO calls, NO losses,

Hope 1935 will be the same J S Bolliger
secty

Fire report 1935

Feb 20 ✓ Roof fire at Loren P.M.

Rasmussen damage

Home valued at 4000.00

Firemen attended fire

Grant Loump

J S Bolliger

Vergil Jacobson

Allen Hagander

Els Farnsworth

Albert Hardecastle

Wm Hughes

E. Lyde Swenson

Jyde Swenson

F A Orton

G L Larson

a m Peterson

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Sandy Fire Department . . .

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done it!" I guess some traditions need looking into and no, they no longer put oil in the pump! Note: Often when the hose would not reach a hydrant they would use the canal as a water source and did need oil for the motor. They also kept a tank of oil to prime the pump on the truck.

Picture this, 1956 at a parade in Price, Utah and you wonder why the women in the Sandy Division all have five o'clock shadows. "We had Jack Hughes dressed up as our queen riding on the "Little Old Fire Truck", said Bill and Chuck. Even Todd Hyer remembers the time they all grew mustaches and played the "Keystone Cops" he emphasized that "those mustaches came off

the second the parade was over."

I want to thank the Sandy City Museum at 8744 South 150 East and Historical Society Members Bertha Rand, Joanne Bolliger Smith and Lerona Pierson Carpenter for guarding and preserving this living history and for taking the time to guide me through it. Sandy Station 31, Todd Hyer and his friendly enthusiastic personality made it a joy to do research. Gary Rymders for allowing me access to copies of information needed for this article. I enjoyed meeting all of you.

The firemen of Sandy City, as well as all over the Valley, carry on the tradition of community service and provide a trust that can make even a small child feel safe when their whole world is ablaze. Please accept our thanks and admiration for your courage and skill. ■



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