

The First Three Years of the Culver Volunteer Fire Company No. 1



CULVER VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NO. 1

The firefighters of the early years pose with their equipment. They are Archie Blanchard, Al Roberts, Charles Asper, Art Fishburn, Jim McFeeley, Oland Gandy, Ed McFeeley, George Howard, Earl Zechiel, Perchis Blanchard, J.R. Saine, Arthur Castleman, Monton Foss, Harry Litzenberger and Fred Hinshaw. "Pork", the fearless Fire Dog, is pictured in the lower right of the photo.

It has been a privilege to read the minutes of the organizing meetings of the Culver Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 (henceforth to be referred to as "The Company".) We will review the years from 1903 through 1905. I would like to share every word with you but in the limits of available space I must condense the minutes of their meetings. I will make an effort to use the words of these gentlemen as they set about filling an essential need of their community.

The volunteers held their meetings in the business places of the members. They met in D. B. Young's and Tony Young's Machine Shops, Monton Foss's Harness Shop, Fred Cook's Blacksmith Shop, Al Mawhorter's Tin Shop and the back porch of the Saine and Sons Store. They had many discussions about finding a permanent meeting place of their own.

As these first three years progressed there were many changes in membership. There were those ready to join The Company as others dropped out by resignation or by being dismissed for non attendance.

- 1903 -

Jan 22 - A meeting was called by Monton Foss for the purpose of organizing a Volunteer Fire Company. Temporary officers were elected by the thirteen Charter Members. Those elected were Chief; Harry Saine, Asst. Chief; Arthur Morris, Secretary; J.R. Saine, Treasurer; Thos. Slattery. The members then resolved to divide the town into four wards.

1st Ward all North of the Bakery
2nd Ward all between Bakery and
Mawhorter's corner

3rd Ward all between Mawhorter's Corner
and Assembly Grounds

4th Ward all South of North Assembly
Grounds Corner

After a few remarks as to how the movement could best be forwarded, there was a motion for adjournment to the call of the Chief. Carried.

Mar. 11 - The meeting opened with the reading of the minutes and the roll call. There was a reading of the By-Laws as a whole and a reading of Fees and Fines. (The members were fined 20 cents for missing a meeting and 10 cents for being late.) Motion was made to adopt the Constitution and By-Laws by C. E. Medbourn and seconded by Geo. Smith and carried. Motion by Monton Foss for anyone addressing Chair to address Mr. Chief instead of Mr. Chairman. (Mr. was dropped) Seconded and carried. (Then they signed the Constitution and the By-Laws.) The Motion was made to ask the Culver City Council to permit the Fire Department to meet in the Culver City Council Hall.

April 8 - A name was proposed for membership with the fee of 25 cents paid. It will be balloted upon at the next meeting (The vote is taken by ballot and should there be no black balls the candidate is elected. If one or more black balls appear another ballot is taken, and if two or more black balls appear the candidate is rejected and so declared.) A Motion was made that we adopt a By-Law as follows: Any member who is absent two successive meetings shall be notified by the Secy to be

(Continued on next page)

Fire Company No. 1

(Continued from page 1)

present at the next regular meeting and if He fails to appears or send a Lawful written excuse He shall at the discretion of the Company be expelled. Carried. Discussing the question of meeting in the Council Chamber held the floor for a short time. Brother Al Mawhorter extended to Our Company the privilege of meeting in His Tin Shop.

May 11 - A called meeting - The purpose of the meeting was to have all the company support those who were in favor of fire protection in the coming City election.

May 13 - Another name was presented, with fee, for membership. Resignation of Asst. Chief Arthur Morris. Fred Cook being elected Asst. Chief to fill the vacancy, Moved and seconded that we present petition to the City Council asking for permission to meet in City Council Chamber.

July 8 - Two members were present who gave legal Excuses for their absence on previous meetings and were excused.

Aug 10 - Moved and Seconded that a member (who had missed several meetings) be considered a dropped member. Two members were fined 20 cents each for absence on meeting night of July 8th and fine paid. Moved and seconded that we adopt the following: A by law prohibiting the use of Tobacco in any form in the meeting room unless by Permission of the majority of members present. Also that each member Chewing Tobacco must bring his own Cuspidor. The penalty for Violating this law will be ten (10) Cents.

Sept. 9 - Three names presented for membership. It was moved, seconded and carried that we send for some (record keeping) books and that each member present Paying his Share. A general discussion followed. Two members were fined 20 cents for non attendance.

Oct. 14 - There was discussion about one member and it was decided to write to him and learn if he intended staying in Chicago or retuning home. Three applicants voted into the Company. It was moved that smoking be allowed the remainder of the evening, seconded, Balloted on and Carried.

Nov. 11 - The Chief was notified that the Company would not be permitted to meet in the Council Hall without paying rent. The majority of the members present voted to meet in Mr. Foss's Harness Shop where we all felt a welcome. Moved and seconded that we discard Bro. Mawhorter on account of his moving away. Discussion regarding a new meeting place and getting a stove.

Dec. 9 - After the roll call there was a discussion regarding a toller on M. E. Church Belfry and regarding a fire pump. One member was balloted out of the Company for non attendance without any excuse.

- 1904 -

Jan. 13 - This being election night the following officers were elected Harry Saine, Chief; Fred W. Cook, Asst Chief; Monton Foss, Secy, Timothy Wolfe, Treas. The Secy for Coming year was elected roustabout by Motion with a Carried Vote.

Jan. 27 - A bill of Cook Bros. for the safe and bolts for use in our new fire alarm was allowed. Moved and carried that we place an assessment of 5 cents upon each and every member of The Company to pay for same.

Feb. 11 - Motion was made and seconded that the Secretary thank M. Koontz for the Company for the write up in the Citizen.

Mar. 10 - The treasurer resigned and E.W. Koontz was elected treas. by ballot. Bond for the treasurer was fixed at twenty-five dollars.

April 14 - The money for fire alarms was paid by Sec'y to Cook Bros. Am't 75 cents. An amendment was made to our by-laws to have a fine of 5 cents on each member ten minutes late after last bell without a legal excuse. Moved and Carried. We adjourned until our next regular meeting.

May 12 - Two members voted in. One name dropped. A new committee was appointed to look up rooms for Fire Company's use.

June 9 - The Chief was fined 20 cents for missing the last meeting while being away on a pleasure trip. One member fined 5 cents for being late.

June 13 - Called Meeting - It was brought before the Company that we, The Fire Co., organize a band. Chas. Medbourn and Henry Menser were instructed to go among the businessmen and others and see what money could be raised by subscription among them. It was talked of in general of how best to forward our involvement.

June 16 - Called Meeting - The two subscription papers were reported with much success and after a few remarks, Adjourned.

June 20 - Called Meeting - More money had been added to the subscription. The two boys were told to solicit more money. Two people were appointed to look up all the horns used in the old band and see what condition they are in and to find out what an instructor for the band would cost. There were four old horns given to us by John Beryll and presented to The Company for inspection by committee.

June 27 - Called Meeting - We took in a few outside boys to play in the band and the movement was started to collect in all money out. The needed horns were sent for and all are now here and we will proceed to practice and we hope the horns (are) in the hands best suited to play each horn. The band shall be known as the Culver Volunteer Fire Company Band No. 1. and shall be governed by said Company.

July 14 - The band was talked about some and it was decided that it was best to leave the band in the hands of the Fire Co. After the routine business was finished the boys talked of the probability of building a room large enough for the use of our Fire Co. and band.

July 22 - Called Meeting - The purpose of the meeting was to decide some questions on the Band. And it was moved and seconded that the Officers of the Band must and shall be a member of the Fire Co. and also of the Band and he loses his office in case he drops out of either one.

Aug. 11 - One name was dropped from our Company for non attendance according to our bylaws.

Sept. 8 - The Chief and Assistant Chief were requested to meet with the City Council and try to get them to furnish the Fire Co. and the band a room to meet in. The Fire Company agreeing to give the amount of town taxes set aside by law for them as compensation for their room.

Nov. 10 - Mr. Fred Cook was appointed to see if the Fire Co. could meet in their band room, and how much it would charge for meeting.

Dec. 8 - One man applied for membership with proper admission fee of 25 cents, The name will be voted upon at the next meeting.

Jan. 12 - Three names were submitted for membership. Mr. Harry Saine was appointed to go to Plymouth to see about the tax exemption for the Company. His expenses will be paid for by the Company. Election results. Harry Saine, Chief; Chas. Asper, Ass't Chief; Archie Blanchard, Secy; James McFeeley, Treas.

Paid out for Moving Bld'g	\$2.00
Paid out for Lock and Material for Bld'g	.92
Paid out for Lumber	1.47

Mar. 9 - A name was defeated for membership. It was decided that we have a knock as a signal to who is at the door. It was agreed upon that a member coming in late shall give three taps fast and then two slow immediately after. Monton Foss was fined 10 cents for interrupting the meeting, fine collected. One name dropped. The treasurer was ordered to pay Mr. Harry Saine 56 cents for carfare to Plymouth and return.

Apr. 13 - Culver Volunteer Fire Company met in regular Session in their hall, Chief Saine in Chair. Change of membership, One asking for admission, One name dropped. Fines, One Coming late, 5 cents. One not attending fire \$1.00. The certificate of share and keys for building were handed out to five members.

Mar. 12 - The Fire alarm rang at 8:30 Sunday Evening. The Company responded promptly and found that the fire was Mr. Wright's residence in the 4th Ward. The Company could do nothing towards saving the building but turn their attentions to the neighboring property.

May 11 - One member voted in. The Sec'y was notified to notify all members of the payment of their share will be due next meeting. A card of thanks was voted to Mr. Gandy for the boots gotten up by him and presented to the Co. Voted unanimously.

Mar. 16 - Called Meeting - The object of this meeting was to buy the building occupied and owned by Peter Keller as a barber shop. After fully discussing the subject the following provision was presented by Oland A. Gandy - and was adopted unanimously by the Company with the understanding that Brother Gandy should rewrite the provision in the form of a by-law and present it to the company for final action at the next meeting.

June 8 - One applicant for membership. More members received their certificate of stock and keys. There being short (in the treasury) \$1.50. Mr. T. O. Saine suggested that he would loan the amount to the Company. A motion was made to that effect. It was moved, second and passed. Also this amount must be paid before any other bills out of the treasury.

Aug. 10 - A motion was made that we borrow money of Harry Menser to pay balance of J. O. Ferrier's note. Carried. The company borrowed \$4.00 for thirty days at 8%.

Sept. 1 - The Catholic Church was struck by lighting and burned. Nothing could be done. Out to protect other buildings nearby.

Sept. 4 - A collections was taken up and it amounted to \$4.50. The collections was taken to pay the Company debt which was \$4.00 to Harry Menser and \$1.50 to Harry Saine. Since there was not enough to pay the debts there was a motion we draw out of the treasury enough to pay the balance. Motion carried.

Oct. 12 - One certificate of stock was returned for redemption for sale by Company.

Nov. 9 - Monton Foss and Samuel Jones presented a worn out organ to the Company that was given by The Order of Pithias Lodge. There were fines of 10 cents for being late and two fines of 20 cents for being absent at the last meeting. Meeting time change, 7:30 to 8:00. Volunteer Janitors for the next quarters are J.R. Saine, O.A. Gandy, Sam Jones, Chas. Asper. The Co. sold the organ to J.R. Saine for \$2.75 with consent of Foss and Jones. A note of thanks to Foss and Jones for presentation of the organ. A motion was made that the janitor that does not do his duty will be fined 10 cents.

Dec. 14 - One application for membership with 25 cents fee. The blank bonds have been handed over to the Co. by Monton Foss, in whose care they had been placed before having a home of our own. Nominations of officers for the coming year were made. Voting will be at the next meeting.

Our thanks to Fire Chief Lance Overmyer for allowing us to look into the early years of our Culver Volunteer Fire Company. We give our respect and gratitude to those who serve our community and recognize the value of these documents and have preserved them.



Beginning in May 1905 every fireman was required to buy one stock certificate at three dollars per share. These funds were used to cover the cost of a permanent meeting place for "The Company."

Fire Station

For the purpose of providing a fire station and meeting house for the Company, the following provisions be made.

Sec. 1 That fifteen shares of stock of the par value of three (\$3.00) dollars each be issued and purchased by the members of the Company-No member of which shall hold more than one share. (The remaining six sections of the by-laws dealt with how these shares would be handled as the membership changed and that each member must buy his share within ninety days with an interest rate of 8% for those not buying their share immediately.)

Shares that were sold immediately raised \$16.50. It was voted that we draw from the treasury \$1.66. It was voted that we borrow \$15.00 from Mr. Menser and give a note for same for ninety days with interest @ 8%. Mr. Menser agreeing to take said note provided that John H. Saine should go the Company's security - this Mr. Saine Cheerfully agreed to do.

J.O. Ferrier held a lien on said building with \$6.48 yet unpaid. He agreed to take the Company note for said amount due in Four months with interest at 8%. The building committee is to take receipts for all money taken out.

Henry Litzenberger proposed that the Company should move the building on his lot just South of the Foss property for the privilege of which the Company is to pay the sum of One dollar per year-payable annually.

WINTER, 2001
NEWSLETTER

Antiquarian and Historical Society
P.O. Box 125
Culver, Indiana 46511-0125

Letter From The President

As president of an organization with almost 200 families in its membership, I am struck by the fact that we have had almost unanimous support for each of the Society's projects. I mention this because our most recent project, the preservation and expansion of the Culver-Union Township Library at the downtown location, has caused some controversy among members. Because the Society has committed so much of its time and resources to the project, I would like to go into the background of the initiative.

Three or four years ago, The Society became aware that the library board was planning to build a new library outside of the downtown area. The members of the Society seemed to be of one mind that everything should be done to preserve and maintain the historic Carnegie building and to keep it's present location. A committee was appointed, with Marcia Adams as the chair, to meet with the Library Board to see what could be done about these objectives. The committee's campaign was low-keyed but persistent. Finally, after many months of negotiations, the library board asked our assistance in working with other civic organizations to come up with a financially feasible plan to keep the library downtown.

Along with the Culver Chamber and the 2nd Century Committee, we have been providing both financial and technical assistance to the library board in the planning and implementation of the library renovation and expansion. During this period we made it clear to the library board that the Society's objective was twofold: to maintain the architectural integrity of the original Carnegie library and to keep the library in its present location. At no time did we seek to influence the architecture of the library expansion or the internal floor plan. We did, however, ask that one of the library addition rooms be set aside for a community history room. From what was perceived by the library board as an adversarial position at the

beginning of our committee's work, I believe we have now achieved an excellent working relationship with the board.

The project is moving forward at an accelerating pace. The library has moved to its temporary quarters and the demolition of the insurance building is scheduled for this month. The society is now beginning to work on plans for the community history room. A committee is being formed to work on the concept, design, furnishing, and the funding of this room. It is our objective to make the history room the focal point of the Society's purpose; to preserve and promote the legacy of this unique historic community.

The Antiquarian and Historical Society of Culver has accomplished a great deal in its short history. As president, I am often congratulated for what we have done. Many community people tell me that Heritage Park was the beginning of the Culver Renaissance. Certainly there is a new pride and spirit in our community for which I believe we can take some credit. The credit is due to the dedicated members of this organization who unselfishly give their time and money to make our community a better place to live.

*Happy New Year,
Jim Peterson*

YEARLY DUES STILL \$10.00

If you haven't already sent your check for 2001 family dues, please do it soon. Send dues to The Antiquarian and Historical Society, P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511-0125

Donations
Donations in memory of Ralph Vonnegut, who was a valued member of our Society, are being gratefully accepted. Our thanks to Richard Ford whose thoughtfulness initiated this memorial to honor Ralph. Friends and neighbors on Lake Maxinkuckee miss his presence, his walks with the dogs, and his canoe on the lake. We offer our sympathy to his family.

Name _____
Summer Address _____
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Winter Address _____
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Make checks payable to the Antiquarian and Historical Society,
P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511