

The  
**Louisbourg**  
**Fire Department**

Louisbourg, Nova Scotia

William A. O'Shea

LOUISBOURG FIRE DEPT



Errata -

Page 47: Top left, l-r: Richard Cross, Joe Trimm, Jean Bagnell, Fabian Trimm, Everett Beaver.

Page 55: In the photograph Eileen Kennedy should read Eileen Burke.

Page 57: In the photograph Eileen Trimm should read Eileen Burke.

Page 59: Bottom left, back l-r: Stephan MacDonald, Mary MacMullin, David O'Neill, Scott Kennedy.

# **The Louisbourg Fire Department**

**William A. O'Shea**



**Louisbourg Heritage Society**  
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**The year 1995 marks the 90th Anniversary of organized fire fighting activity in the Town of Louisbourg.**

**Over the years, many men and women of this community have donated their time and talents to support the various Fire Departments. I wish to extend my personal thanks to all of them - past and present.**

*Joseph Trimm*



**Fire Chief Joseph Trimm  
1986 - present**



**Fire Chief Guy B. Hiltz  
1928 - 1933**



**Chief Robert A. Peters  
1933 - 1945**



**Fire Chief Daniel Townsend  
1945 - 1947**



**Fire Chief Harvey Lewis  
1947 - 1961**



**Fire Chief Vernon MacIntyre  
1961 - 1963**



**Fire Chief Everett Beaver  
1963 - 1986**

**Front Cover:** Town of Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department in front of the Fire Station on Main Street May 22, 1995. Front row kneeling l-r: David Skinner, Fabian Trimm, Stuart Pellerin, John Spawn, Maurice Burke, Clifford Hoban, Eugene Magee. Back row standing l-r: Chief Joe Trimm, Vince Ley, Tom Carter, Ashley Hill, Victor Durnford, Philip Burke, Neil MacKeigan, Michael Burke, Henry Dibbon, Hector Baldwin, Leo Carter. (W. O'Shea)

**Back Cover:** Top - Francis Kennedy's boat on fire on July 6, 1990 (courtesy Eugene Magee). Bottom - Sydney & Louisburg Railway Historical Society caboose in flames on August 12, 1987. Though there was a great deal of damage the caboose has been repaired and is on display (courtesy S&L Railway Historical Society). Left - Benjamin Heckman's store after the fire in April 1934. The Dundonald Inn is in back on the right (courtesy Harvey Lewis).



## The French Period

The 18th-century town of Louisbourg was established as a base for the fishery. Its strategically-located and relatively ice-free harbour soon made it an important port and trading centre. Ships from Europe, the West Indies, Quebec and New England gathered here each summer. The French fortified the town with massive stone walls and artillery. Inside the walls, the homes, warehouses and military buildings were clustered close together in organized blocks. Open hearth fireplaces, forges, bakery ovens and cast iron stoves were used for heating, cooking and work. Creosote buildup and sparks from chimneys posed an ongoing threat to safety of the community.

The concern over fire was demonstrated by a local regulation in 1720 forbidding the common wall of two buildings to be constructed in wood only. In addition, free standing buildings were supposed to be at least 3 feet apart.<sup>1</sup> All buildings, civilian and military, were to have ladders on the roofs next to the chimneys to allow quick access to the roof in the event of a chimney fire. In some instances rental agreements called for a chimney sweep. Daniel Augier rented a house from officer Robert Duhaget in 1753. Augier agreed to sweep the chimneys of the fireplaces once a month, not bring musket powder, hay or straw into the house or sublet it to innkeepers whose business might damage the house.<sup>2</sup>

A contemporary method for extinguishing a chimney fire involved firing a musket charged with powder and a small handful of salt up the flue. If the flue was straight, one firing was supposed to be enough. If the flue was not straight or the roof covering could catch fire, air was prevented from entering the chimney by stuffing wet hay into the bottom of the flue or by hanging a thick wet cloth over the opening of the fireplace.<sup>3</sup>

The military engineers who designed the fortifications at Louisbourg were particularly conscious of the possibility of fires. Early on in the construction of the barracks and hospital buildings, the civilian contractor installed fire ladders on the roofs.<sup>4</sup> The Engineer, Etienne Verrier, believed that even though a masonry building cost about a third more than a timber building that it was a bargain because of the reduced risk of fire.<sup>5</sup> When the massive barracks in the King's bastion was planned the original specifications called for wood shingles on the roof. The engineer replaced these wooden shingles with slate. He said that if wood shingles were used the 14 fire walls that subdivided the barracks would have to be raised above the roofline to prevent fire spreading.<sup>6</sup>

Additional fire precautions for public buildings included employing a chimney sweep. A 1736 contract for sweeping government chimneys listed equipment including scrapers, poles, ropes and ladders and directed that the cleaning would occur every two months.<sup>7</sup>

Fire fighting depended largely on bucket brigades, and the barracks rooms and guardhouses were equipped with leather buckets. In 1750 there were 100 leather buckets purchased to be used in case of fire in government buildings.<sup>8</sup> A year earlier, a contractor installed ladders for the wooden barracks that the New Englanders had erected in the Queen's Bastion after their successful siege of 1745. He also provided additional equipment including buckets, tubs, rope and poles to fight a fire, placing them in a special room in the building.<sup>9</sup>

But there were also fire pumps in 18th-century Louisbourg. In 1743 two pumper tanks, "pompes a caisses", were recorded in the colony's inventory.<sup>10</sup> In 1751 there were 2 fire pumps in the King's stores list.<sup>11</sup> These were used to fight the fire in the King's bakery in 1756. In the 1757 inventory of merchant and innkeeper, Julien Fizel, there was a small wheeled cart with a copper pump that was possibly a fire fighting apparatus.<sup>12</sup>



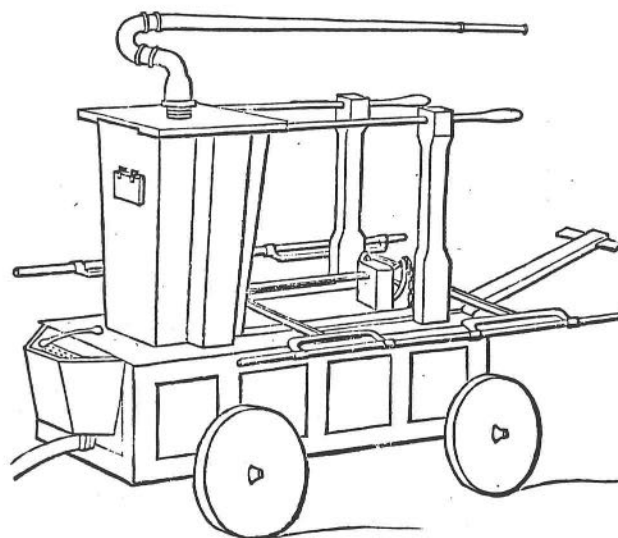
There is no description of the Louisbourg fire fighting machines. In general though, "the typical eighteenth century fire engine comprised a cistern of oak, mahogany or other hardwood mounted on four wheels. Two single-acting pump barrels were placed in the cistern and an air vessel was connected to the delivery outlet to ensure a continuous discharge. On some models the water had to be poured into the cistern using leather buckets, but most engines had a suction inlet for hose so that the cistern could be filled either by suction or by buckets."<sup>13</sup> Some of the engines in use did not have an air vessel which meant that the water spray was not continuous. While leather hose had been developed in the previous century there were machines which still used a fixed brass nozzle on top of the machine to direct the flow of water. The advantage of all these machines was that they could deliver a relatively steady stream of water to the fire rather than depending on buckets of water thrown or poured on the fire.<sup>14</sup> And, in having these engines, Louisbourg was on a par with other colonial towns on the Atlantic coast.

In the short life of the 18th century town there were a series of spectacular fires. One of the first structures to burn was the lighthouse. A stone lighthouse was completed in 1733 at the mouth of the harbour. It stood near the present concrete lighthouse and was over 70 feet tall. The fuel for the light was cod oil held in a bronze basin. A copper ring, smaller than the diameter of the basin and containing 31 wicks, was floated on the oil by small pieces of cork. In September 1736 the lantern section, over 20 feet in height, was completely destroyed by fire. The lantern was rebuilt with fireproofing in mind. The dome was brick, the window frames iron, and the roof was clad in soft lead. As for the light itself, wicks were placed farther apart in basin.<sup>15</sup>

Three houses located side by side along the waterfront burned in 1737. The fire also damaged the large, government-owned, residence of the Civil Administrator. There is no record of the actions taken to fight the fire.<sup>16</sup>

In 1756 the King's bakery burned. The bakery supplied the weekly ration of bread to the several thousand soldiers that were in the garrison. It was fortunate for Louisbourg that soldiers, sailors and citizens fought to restrict the blaze. But it was the fire pumps that were credited with saving the neighbouring storehouses.<sup>17</sup>

The siege of 1758, pitting a major English force against a smaller Louisbourg garrison, created some of the most devastating and frightening fires. That summer there were 5 French warships in the harbour - the *Célebre*, *Entreprenant*, *Capricieux*, *Prudent* and *Bienfaisant*. As the attacking English force advanced its artillery around the harbour from the lighthouse, the ships were forced back against the quay of the town. On July 21 an English shot struck the *Célebre* setting off cartridges in the powder magazine. The fire moved quickly and the small crew could not put it out. She swung on her anchor and sparks caught the *Entreprenant* which in turn set fire to the



*A Newsham fire engine c 1740. It is not known what style of machine was used at Louisbourg.*



Capricieux. According to historian J. S. McLennan "The horror of the conflagration was increased by the loaded guns of the ships, as they became hot, going off and taking effect on the other ships, on the boats, and town. The ships made a prodigious blaze all night, and finally drifted with the tide to the Barachois shore..."<sup>18</sup> On the morning of July 22 an English shell fell on the north end of the 300 foot long barracks in the King's Bastion. The barracks contained rooms for soldiers and officers, the Governor's apartments and the chapel of St. Louis. The fire lasted for about six hours and while the men of the garrison and ships carpenters were fighting it the English continued to fire into the area. McLennan quotes Governor Drucour's description of the plight of the women, children and wounded officers in the casemates adjoining the barracks building. "There was every reason to fear that the fire would reach the protection which had been placed in front of these casemates, and by the direction of the wind the smoke might stifle the women shut up in them, so that all the women and a great number of little children came out, running to and fro, not knowing where to go in the midst of bombs and balls falling on every side..." When the fire was finally over the barracks except for the Governor's apartments was destroyed. McLennan writes that, "... only by pulling down the neighbouring huts and a favouring wind, was fire prevented from spreading to the town."<sup>19</sup> The original slate roof of the barracks had been replaced by wooden shingles except for the Governor's section of the building. The slate roof was probably a major factor in saving the Governor's apartments.



*The reconstructed portion of the 18th-century fortified town of Louisbourg, the scene of many spectacular fires in war and peace. There were fire pumpers here in the 1740s and 1750s. (Fortress of Louisbourg NHS)*



## After the Siege

After the siege of 1758 the English garrisoned Louisbourg. A number of civilians, merchants and fishermen along with their families, also lived in the town. The dangers of fire remained much the same as in French Louisbourg. On March 22, 1762 there was a major fire in the centre of the town. The fire was described by the garrison commander Lt. Colonel Tulleken. "On the 22d instant about half an hour after nine o'clock in the Morning Wee had the Misfortune here to have a fire break out upon us at our Bakers nearly the centre of the Town. It at first burst forth with such violence. And the houses on all sides being built with wood, that it made some progress before I could get my people together, tho' every body turned out with the utmost alacrity. It was unlucky, but it so happene'd that a snow storm commenced with the fire. And the wind blowing very strong at East and withal variable, so as to change two or three Points each way, we had for some hours great reason to fear that most of the Town would be consumed. It was above four hours before wee was able to master it. There is about Twelve houses burnt down, and four or five pull'd down, which was done to stop the progress of the flames. All the publick buildings our Barracks and store houses are safe. Our loss is litle except the houses And them wee have still great plenty off. One or two of the inhabitants lost part of their effects, tho' not much as wee readily give them every assistance in our power. I cannot halp observing upon this occasion how much the officers and men of the 45th Regiment are to be commended, As to their readiness Activity and good behaviour it is entirely owing, that any part of the Town was saved."<sup>20</sup>

There is no record of fires for the rest of the century. The Old Town of Louisbourg fell into ruin as people moved to the new capital of Sydney and the deserted buildings were plundered for brick, cut stone and iron hardware. In 1827 the population around the entire harbour was 141 people in 23 households. But Louisbourg still was significant as a port and coastal shipping depended on the harbour in the event of storms. In 1842 a new lighthouse was constructed adjacent to the ruins of the French light. The light keeper, Laurence Kavanagh, in his journal for 1849 makes some observations about fires. On June 13 he writes of the "great smoke in the air from land burning in the back settlements." By June 16 "The weather was very dark owing to such an immense quantity of smoke in the air. Several houses were burnt down on the Old French Road & at Mira River." Smoke continues to be mentioned in his diary until the week of the 25th, but on the 26th there was rain which ended the fires temporarily. It was a bad summer for forest fires. On August 28 it "was a dark dull day, very dense smoke in the air owing to some large fires in the Island and not far distant." Similarly on September 6 he writes that ". . . the air was dense with smoke and ashes intermixed with fog." He mentions no attempt at fighting these fires.

## Louisbourg at the Turn of the Century

Many years ago, a sailor coming ashore from a ship in Louisbourg harbour noticed that there was a house on fire in the town. On landing, he met a local man on the wharf and asked him, "Are there any hydrants in Louisbourg?" "No," the local man replied, " they're mostly Townsends and Tuttys."<sup>21</sup>

This story says a great deal about Louisbourg just before the turn of the century. In the 1891 census there were 24 Townsend families and there were no hydrants or hoses. House fires were fought by volunteers forming bucket brigades.



The arrival of the Dominion Coal Company in 1895 introduced many changes. The Coal Company provided regular work on the Sydney and Louisbourg Railway and the coal pier. The pier was a major structural feature, extending two hundred feet into the harbour, and dividing the town into east and west sections. Its construction signalled the coming of a new age. New people were moving into Louisbourg from the surrounding communities. It was believed that a rail line would be constructed from coal mines at Broughton to Louisbourg and another would be built along the east coast of Cape Breton from St. Peters to Louisbourg. There was a great deal of new construction - up to thirty wooden buildings a year in the first five years of the century.<sup>22</sup> Private investors formed a company to bring water to serve the coal pier's boiler house, S&L locomotives and ships, and the hydrants and standpipes along the pier. The optimism of the times was reflected in the incorporation of the Town of Louisbourg in 1901.

But if Louisbourg was booming, it was also burning. There were a number of fires in the expanding town. In January 1902, Mitchell's Hall (the American House), located on Main Street where the Town Hall is today, caught fire and burned to the ground. The cause of the fire was a defective stove.<sup>23</sup> On the second floor of the Hall, there were meeting rooms for the Masonic Lodge, Salvation Army and Sons of Temperance. Both newspapers and local histories record the loss of all the Masons regalia in this fire. Harvey Lewis, a former Mayor and Fire Chief notes that the Minute books were saved because they were in the residence of E. M. Dickson.<sup>24</sup> Ironically, less than 2 months later, Dickson's building was destroyed by fire. The Sydney Daily Record of March 10 records that, "a strong effort was made to contain the flames, but they gained too much headway and it was only by hard fighting that several neighbouring buildings were saved. The cause of the fire is a mystery."

The Dickson fire took place on Sunday morning. On Monday evening a store owned by Stanley Hooper was damaged by fire and on Tuesday night a small building used as a store by a Mr. Gibbons was damaged. In both instances the fires occurred at the place where a stovepipe or chimney came through the roof. The Louisbourg correspondent for the Daily Record noted that, "We will soon need a fire brigade and a fire engine."<sup>25</sup>

If anything, it was odd that there was no organized fire fighting force in Louisbourg. Fire departments had been established for a number of years in Sydney, Glace Bay and North Sydney. There was also the memory of the disastrous Sydney fire to encourage Louisbourg's thoughtful citizens to action. On October 19, 1901 a major fire destroyed two entire city blocks in Sydney causing \$500,000.00 in damage. There were 78 buildings and 68 businesses destroyed.<sup>26</sup> The possibility of the same thing happening to Louisbourg was not out of the question.

By 1902, some residents of the newly-formed town had responded to the need for organized protection against fire by establishing an ad hoc fire brigade. The newspaper notes that "The members of the fire brigade were at practice Friday evening. At seven o'clock an imaginary alarm was sounded from the Dominion Coal Co.'s engine house. The brigade then began work and in seven minutes from the time the alarm was sounded three streams of water were pouring on the Dominion Coal Co.'s office building. After saturating the office the hoses were turned on the engine sheds, power house and other portions of the shipping pier. The men were well practised and would soon put out a real fire should one occur in the vicinity of the pier."<sup>27</sup>

Two years later there was still no response to the need for a formal municipal fire brigade. In early January 1904 the store of Mayor W.W. Lewis on Commercial Street was totally destroyed by fire. There was a strong breeze and the fire spread so rapidly that nothing



could be done to save the structure. "The Dominion Coal Co's hose was brought into play on the house of Mr. D. Cameron adjoining Lewis Co and for a while it looked as if Mr. Cameron's store and the Louisburg Club building would be destroyed... This morning's fire must make it apparent to our citizens that Louisburg needs a fire-fighting apparatus. At the present time the town is poorly prepared to cope with fire. The Dominion Coal Co. has other property pretty well protected and could save their buildings and property in the event of a fire. They use their hose to good advantage but if a fire occurs any place below the pier there is no means whatever of checking its progress. It may not be out of place to-day that several of our young men worked heroically in trying to prevent the spread of fire this morning. While not wishing to particularize, it must be said that William Snow did good service this morning in working to subdue the flames... If Louisburg had a fire brigade of men such as Snow, it would be one that the town might be proud of."<sup>28</sup>

The Sydney Record also talks of bush fires. "Extensive bush fires were raging yesterday in various places outside the town. One of these fires started at a point in Louisburg and burned clear through to Little Lake about a mile to the rear of Louisburg. It was only the fact that the fire was burning through scrub brush and the fact that the ground was wet from rain that there was no damage done."<sup>29</sup> The fire was dormant for a week and sprang up again. It was fortunate that the wind blew the fire away from the town or the new Marine Hospital at the top of Kent Street would have been in danger. According to the newspaper, "Several fires are burning in the woods in this vicinity, and the place is almost enveloped in smoke."<sup>30</sup>

A typical fire for the time was one in a house on Main street rented by John Snow. A newspaper article describes the response. "The fire caught on the roof from a stove pipe which projected through it. Councillor Smith, who was just returning from dinner, met Snow who was shouting fire. Mr. Smith hastened to the place where a good many men had already congregated. Procuring a ladder he ascended to the roof, and by means of a few buckets of water extinguished the blaze."<sup>31</sup>

That September, Elbridge Dickson was looking out the window of his newly-constructed building on Main Street, and noticed a fire in J. E. Petrie's store across the street. Petrie's store and Dr. Barnaby's house stood on the land presently occupied by First United Church. According to the Sydney Daily Post of September 23, 1904, "He immediately dressed, went out and gave the alarm. The Dominion Coal Co's whistle was sounded and the men on hand at the time turned out. And inside of one and a half hours the fire was put out. While the Dom. Coal Co.'s hose was got ready, Rev. Mr. Draper and Dr. Barnaby had their hose throwing water on the building and the fire was kept under control." Draper was concerned about his rectory, enlarged the year previous from a flat roofed structure to the one with a high roof. It was one of Louisbourg's most prominent buildings.

The description of Dickson's response to the fire was also typical at that time. In order to have the whistle sounded it was necessary to go to the Coal Company boiler house which was on the south east side of Aberdeen Street. At the sound of the whistle, men working on the pier would get their hoses into play and other citizens would form a bucket brigade. It is also evident from the description that individuals on the water line had hoses which could be used as initial attack. For any structures located off the Main Street the only means of fire suppression was the bucket brigade.

There is a story of a resident of Main Street in Louisbourg who awoke to discover a fire in his house. He is remembered as a dapper man who would never go out in public unless he was completely dressed. Even the pressure of a fire did not change his habit with the result



that by the time he had discovered the fire, gotten appropriately attired to appear in public and down to the boiler room to have the steam whistle sounded, the fire was out of control and he had lost his building.

In October 1904 there was another fire. The Coal company whistle blew to inform the people of the town of the emergency. This time the fire was in the Seaman's Rest - a pool hall on the Commercial Street owned by M. A. Holland. According to the Louisbourg correspondent, "The Dominion Coal Co's hose was very soon brought to play and in a short time two well directed streams of water were playing on the building. Although there was no possible chance of saving the building the flames were prevented from reaching other buildings nearby. The firemen would when the fire blazed fiercely through the roof send a good stream of water, thus preventing sparks and cinders from falling on the adjacent buildings. When the fire would somewhat subside a goodly stream of water would be turned on the power house, Duncan Lamont's hardware store<sup>32</sup> and W.W. Lewis Co's store. Nothing scarcely was saved from the burning building except two or three barrels of beer and some beer in bottles."<sup>33</sup>

### **First Fire Brigade - Dominion Coal Company - 1905**

The first official Louisbourg fire brigade was formed to protect the Dominion Coal Company property - coal pier, freight pier, boiler house, round house and office. D. J. MacInnis was appointed captain and each fireman was presented with a nickel badge. This was not a local initiative, but part of a company-wide policy to organize fire protection. In 1905 the Dominion Coal Company formed a Fire Protection Association. At all the mines there were fire brigades composed of about 40 men equally divided between surface and underground. Meeting rooms were constructed at the collieries and attached to the buildings were areas to store hose reels.<sup>34</sup> The formation of the coal pier brigade may have taken advantage of the ad hoc group of volunteers which formed in 1902.

In Louisbourg the coal loading pier held a great potential for fire particularly after the construction of the pocket used to stockpile coal. In March 1901 there were 2 fires in the coal pocket. In the second fire it was pointed out by the newspaper that, "Many people hastened to the scene, and were it not for the assistance rendered by other people not employed by the Dominion Coal Co., a general conflagration might have ensued."<sup>35</sup>



*Badge presented to Dominion Coal Company firemen in 1905. It is white metal, 37 mm x 38 mm, with a copper pin clasp at the back. (S & L Railway Historical Society)*



*D. J. MacInnis, first captain of the Dominion Coal Company fire brigade in Louisbourg. (photo courtesy - Mrs. Edith Smith)*



The ability of the Coal Company to form an effective fire fighting body was assisted by the presence of a water system. Installed by the Louisbourg Electric & Power Company in 1901, the system supplied the coal pier and railway as well as people living along the main water line.<sup>36</sup> There were a number of standpipes, hydrants and lengths of hose located along the coal pier. The steam whistle, installed in the boiler house in 1901 to signal beginning and end of work, was used to signal fires. Pumps were installed in 1904.<sup>37</sup>

Over the years the Coal Company fire department fought fires in the coal pocket, the round house and aboard ships tied to the shipping pier. But it also helped the town. When a fire was reported the Coal Company whistle blew and the Company brigade would bring its hose and pitch in. The 1944 Insurance Underwriters plan of Louisbourg records a 12 man fire brigade, force pump, 7 standpipes on the trestle, 2 hydrants, 1,600 feet of hose and a hose reel stored in a pump house near the boiler house.<sup>38</sup> The Coal Company Brigade continued to assist the Town during World War II and as late as the Cecil Stevens fire in February 1956.

### **Town of Louisbourg - 1907**

In the first months of 1907 there were 6 fires in town and a strong suspicion that there was a firebug on the loose. On January 30 there was a major fire that destroyed a building owned by Michael Holland and the residence of Donald MacKinnon on Main Street. According to the Sydney Record for February 2, 1907, "About half past one o'clock the upstairs portion of the building was seen to be on fire and an alarm was sounded by the whistle of the Coal Co's power house and several men employed about the coal piers who were out at work and many others who had been aroused from their slumbers by the blowing of the whistle hurried to the scene of the fire. It was at once seen that the building was doomed as the town has no fire fighting apparatus of any kind. It was feared that a general conflagration would occur and the furniture and effects were removed from Mr. Donald MacKinnon's house and from Mr. Joseph McDonald's. The morning was calm, and that prevented a more serious fire. When the flames burst through the burning building Mr. MacKinnon's house caught and before the Coal Co.'s hose could be brought into play with a good stream of water the building was consumed. When it was seen that there was no possibility of saving Mr. McKinnon's house the water was kept on James McPhee's store and as the morning was frosty the water became frozen as soon as it struck the building and in this way the building was saved as was also the house owned by John Murphy on the other side. Had Mr. McPhee's store caught, the dwelling of Mr. John Gillis would have gone also . . . the people of this town and the insurance companies owe a debt of gratitude to the Dominion Coal Co. for the use of their hose in bringing the water to play on the buildings. This is not the first time that serious damage from fire has been prevented by the Coal Co.s appliances and surely this morning's fire will have the effect of bringing the town fathers to a realization of the miserable position that the town stands in regard to coping with fire."

On March 4 the Sydney Record reported that the store and home of J.E. Petrie and the residence of Dr. C. D. Barnaby were also destroyed by fire. Petrie had turned his grocery business into a pool hall and Barnaby's wife ran a millinery store in the front part of the house. Both these buildings had been threatened by fire in 1902. On April 7 a restaurant on Commercial Street owned by Murdock Cameron burned to the ground. The heavy wind at the time made attempts at saving the building fruitless.<sup>39</sup>





*The Louisbourg Coal pier which was begun in 1894. The Robbins Conveyor which moved slack coal from the coal pocket was enclosed in the roofed structure. The fire in November 1922 burned for almost 4 hours destroying 300 feet of the conveyor and causing \$10,000 worth of damage. (photo courtesy S&L Railway Historical Society)*

Reacting to the threat of losing more buildings the insurance underwriters threatened to increase the fire insurance rates in the town. There were rumours of a firebug on the loose. The newspaper reported the following. " Speaking of the recent fires, a gentleman of this town remarked the other day that it is wonderful how some people know that some particular building is going to be burned. He (has) remarked, heretofore, how it would be openly asserted by numbers of people that this house would be burned or that vessel would be wrecked before long, and he remarked that such really occurred. What puzzled him was did these people really know these things are going to happen or did they merely surmise, the same, and their surmises happened to turn out to be correct. At any rate it seemed strange to him." <sup>40</sup>

At a Council meeting in July 1907, Councillor Guy B. Hiltz stated unequivocally that, "You've either got to stop the fires or establish a suitable fire fighting apparatus with an organized crowd and comply with the wishes of the ratepayers since a certain amount of money was voted by them for this purpose." This certain amount of money was \$2,000.00 voted by the ratepayers in the summer of 1902. <sup>41</sup>

Mayor Lewis was fully supportive of Hiltz and said that it was "ridiculous that every



town under Christendom did something towards fire protection except Louisbourg.<sup>42</sup> This statement by Lewis is significant. A fire department was not merely for fighting fires - it was also an indicator of the importance of a Town. In those heady days at the turn of the century, Louisbourg saw itself in competition Sydney and Glace Bay. Louisbourg shared with these towns other symbols of municipal importance including a Citizens' Band and a Yacht Club. There were 5 religious denominations including Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Salvation Army and a Marine Hospital. But there was no Fire Brigade.

There were reminders of this inadequacy in the local newspapers. In 1903, in Glace Bay, there was the 1st Annual Sports Day of the Glace Bay Fire Department in which Sydney, Dominion #6, Glace Bay and the Steel Works competed in the 25 yard hose coupling event, 150 yard hose coupling event, hose reel race and tug of war. There was even, "That ever interesting and exciting event, the fat mans race . . . and the puffing and spasmodic efforts of some of the fat ones towards the close of the race was certainly amusing." There is also an account of the big firemen's parade in Glace Bay in 1904. Towns all around the Industrial Area took part except, of course, Louisbourg.

The summer of 1907 rolled on and, in August at a Council meeting, the Town policeman who had been directed to investigate the rash of fires, reported that he had found nothing. Councillor Hiltz had been expecting a more positive report. He reacted to the policeman's failure to find the culprit by suggesting that a few special constables ought to be appointed to various parts of the Town instead of going to the expense of paying a policeman. Hiltz had also been costing fire equipment and said that the apparatus, and a building to house it, could be purchased for \$4,000.00 with five years to pay it off.<sup>43</sup>

These were the times when major proposals to borrow on behalf of the town were presented to a meeting of ratepayers. The clerk was directed to call such a meeting at which time Councillor Hiltz presented his fire apparatus proposal.<sup>44</sup> At the meeting, John Weatherbee, merchant and undertaker, was the first ratepayer to speak. Dividing the town into halves, using the coal pier as the line of separation, Weatherbee pointed out that to the east there were 145 to 150 houses and only one fire in the past seven years. That had been the fire at Mitchell's Hall in 1902. To the west, he said, there were 108 houses and fifteen fires in seven years - six of them in the past six months. Weatherbee felt that increasing the tax rate to pay for the new fire equipment would be unfair to those east of the coal pier, since they had fewer fires.

During the discussion, John N. Spencer said the move was worthless and Duncan Lamont asked how the engine would get through the streets if the winter was like the previous one. Spencer jokingly retorted that it would move on its own. County Warden H.C.V. Levatte, a resident of Louisbourg, said the Council had yet to appoint fire wardens and it would be difficult to sell bonds to raise the capital required. He suggested a return to the \$2,000.00 that had been voted in 1902. After some discussion the Hiltz proposal was voted down with only four votes in favour.<sup>45</sup>

Another result of the ratepayers meeting was that the Mayor and Councillors James MacPhee and Guy B. Hiltz were appointed to investigate the fires. The insurance underwriters had suggested an investigation and to underline their concern the Nova Scotia Board of Fire Underwriters increased rates in Louisbourg by 25% on new insurance and renewals.<sup>46</sup>

At the November meeting of Town Council, Hiltz came back with a cost of \$800.00 for a less expensive fire fighting apparatus. He was given the authority to write for additional prices.<sup>47</sup> The question was raised about the findings of the committee established to investigate the fires. The Mayor said he did not know when the committee was going to hand



in its report. I get the sense that he looked around the table at MacPhee and Hiltz until he was reminded that he was chairman.

That was the end of talk of a Town fire brigade for many years. In the February 1908 elections Guy Hiltz did not reoffer, and would stay out of public office until a by-election in 1920. The identity of the fire bug or fire bugs, the fate of the insurance investigation, the reason for the Hiltz disagreement with the police force, why the equipment was never purchased with the \$2,000 - the answers to all these questions went up in smoke with the Council Minutes in the Louisbourg Town Hall fire in 1982.

## **Fires in the Teens and Twenties**

From 1907 until 1928, Louisbourg depended on spontaneously-formed groups of citizen volunteers and the Coal Company brigade to put out fires. The Coal Company was always responsive to fires outside the coal pier, but was limited to the standpipes along the pier and its existing hose. A radius of about 800 feet from the pier was the effective range.

During this time some of the fires which totally destroyed buildings included:

Archie Hare, December 1914 - business destroyed  
James MacLean, March 1917 - house destroyed  
Thomas Hart, April 1918 - house destroyed  
Capt Dan Harris, April 1918 - house destroyed  
S&L Roundhouse, February 1920 - totally destroyed  
James MacDonald, December 1920 - barn destroyed, calf killed  
John N. Spencer, January 1921 - house destroyed  
Coal Pier Conveyor House, November 1922 - major damage  
P.J. Wilcox, February 1923 - unoccupied house destroyed  
Lighthouse, June 1923 - destroyed  
Mrs. K. Defriese, September 1925 - unoccupied house destroyed  
Marconi Office, West Louisbourg, February 1927 - destroyed  
John Murphy, August 1928 - store destroyed

There were also smaller fires, many associated with overheated chimneys, in which there was less damage. In addition there were minor fires in the coal pocket in 1914 and 1921 and on the coal pier conveyor in 1920. In May 1921 a bush fire raged at the back of the town near Little Lake. In September of the same year there was a forest fire near Catalone and Grand Lake. Melvin Huntington wrote in his diary on September 4, that the town was threatened by forest fires.

A number of particularly serious fires in the 1920s destroyed or seriously damaged major landmarks. On February 1, 1920 the S&L Roundhouse was completely destroyed by fire and locomotives Number 56 and 58 were badly damaged. Only the strenuous efforts of the Coal Company Fire Brigade prevented the fire from spreading. As it was the damage done to the locomotives meant that the regular passenger run between Louisbourg and Glace Bay was postponed for a number of days.

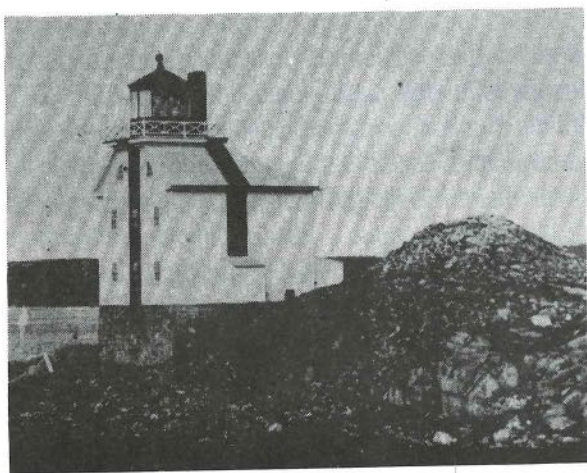
November 19, 1922 saw a major fire on the coal pier conveyor house. The fire burned for almost four hours, destroyed 300 feet of the conveyor and caused \$10,000.00 damage. The coal pier was a major structural feature in the town standing from 30 to 50 feet high and



extending 200 feet out into the harbour. On top of the pier was a roofed structure housing a conveyor belt. Coal was put on board ships either directly by coal cars pushed onto the pier and dumping coal into loading chutes, or via the Robins conveyor picking up coal from a coal pocket. According to M. S. Huntington the, "Fire gained considerable headway before being discovered and it took the coal company's Fire Brigade assisted by Citizen Volunteers considerable time to get it under control." The Canadian Government Steamer Stanley was in port and came to the assistance of the local fire fighters. The Glace Bay Fire Department had been advised of the threat and came to the assistance of the coal pier though it arrived too late.<sup>48</sup> It was believed locally that this fire was arson and there is a story that the person presumed guilty left Louisbourg for a number of years.

In June 1923 the lighthouse, built in 1842, caught fire and burned. The lighthouse was a large structure combining both light keeper's residence and the light mechanism. It was painted white with a wide vertical black stripe in the centre. Huntington records that the fire started about 7 PM, but that the alarm was not turned in until 8 PM by which time it was too late to save the structure. According to the Sydney Post headline for June 4, 1923, "No Help Was Available, And There Being No Means of Fighting the Flames Nothing Could Be Done except Watch the Flames as They Destroyed the Tall Structure Which Stood at the South Side of Main Entrance to the Harbour." Huntington and a number of volunteers formed a bucket brigade and stood by to prevent the spread of the fire to the fog alarm building. The government ship S.S. Lady Laurier was in port and the firefighting crew was sent to help.<sup>49</sup>

Finally in February, 1927 the Marconi office in West Louisbourg caught fire and "the office, engine and operating rooms (were) completely destroyed."<sup>50</sup> The Marconi complex was constructed in 1913 as a trans-Atlantic wireless receiving station. It consisted of 6 antenna towers, work buildings, a hotel and several houses. The station was not operating at the time of the fire having been closed that year in favour of a new facility in Drummondville, Québec.<sup>51</sup>



*Louisbourg lighthouse constructed c 1842 and destroyed by fire in June 1923. ( M.S. Huntington photo - Louisbourg Heritage Society )*



*Marconi site in West Louisbourg circa 1925. The office is the long low building in the centre of of the photograph. (Fortress of Louisbourg NHS)*



## The Louisbourg Town Fire Brigade Formed - 1928

It was the accumulated impact of these fires, minor and major, and the threat of increased insurance rates in the town that resulted in the formation of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Brigade in 1928. Insurance underwriters mapped the town in 1926 and, though the accompanying report on water works and fire protection has been lost, I suspect that the Town fathers were criticized.<sup>52</sup>

The loss of the Council minutes in the Town Hall fire of 1982 leaves a major information gap in the early story of the fire department. Still it is obvious that thought was being given to its formation during the summer of 1928. In July, H. J. McCann, the General manager of Coal Mines for BESCO, wrote to Mayor Huntington saying that the Coal Company would let the Town make use of the hose and reel in case of fire. The Town was to dry out the hose, return it immediately and make good any loss. McCann's understanding was that " This arrangement will hold good until the Town of Louisburg can provide itself with sufficient equipment for its own protection. I understand that your policy is to purchase a certain quantity of hose each year until you have accumulated the desired quantity."<sup>53</sup>

Reinforcing the urgency for a fire brigade was the fire in John Murphy's store on Main Street in August. This fire had frightening potential and M. S. Huntington writes that it threatened to destroy a large portion of the town.

In September Huntington recorded in his diary that the second of four fire hydrants were ready.<sup>54</sup> By July 1930 there would be 5 hydrants in place. These were located, on Warren Street near Minto, and on Main Street across from Strathcona Street, in front of the Anglican Rectory, in front of the School and near the Railway crossing.

The culmination of this activity was the formation of the Town of Louisbourg Fire Brigade in November 1928. The official statement of organization, dated November 16, 1928 read, "We the undersigned, hereby agree to become members and serve without remuneration, on the Louisburg Town Fire Brigade. We also further agree to turn out to all fires within the town, at all hours of the day or night, and to attend fire drills, whenever possible, when called upon to do so by the fire chief or any other person in authority."

There were 22 signatures on this document including those of, D. A. Campbell, G. B. Hiltz, N. H. Murphy, R. A. Peters, M. S. Huntington, Emerson Grant, Percy MacKinnon, J. R. Defriese, J. H. Crowdis, Ranald McVicar, James Burke, Paul Bates, Alex McDonald, Fred Burke, Alfred Hunt, A. Tilley, L. H. Cann, Archie Williams, William Lewis, Jr., James W. Baker, John A. McPhail and Sam Dowling.<sup>55</sup>

A typed minute of the meeting, dated November 16, 1928 and signed by A. Tilley as Recording Secretary, lists the following officers: D. A. Campbell - Honourary Chief, G. B. Hiltz - Chief, N. H. Murphy - Deputy Chief, R. A. Peters - Captain, M. S. Huntington - 1st Lieutenant, Percy MacKinnon - 2nd Lieutenant, Emerson Grant Secty - Treasurer.<sup>56</sup>

In addition Emerson Grant, A. A. Martel and L. H. Cann were appointed to draw up the By Laws of the Fire Brigade. Unfortunately the By Laws or minutes of meetings prior to 1951 have not been located.<sup>57</sup> Tilley notes the presence of B. W. Heckman and George Lewis at the organizational meeting. Neither they nor A. A. Martell were amongst the 22 signatories to the agreement to volunteer.<sup>58</sup>

The only other list of firemen from this period is in Huntington's Diary for February 7, 1933. His list of officers and men includes the following firemen: Robert A. Peters - Chief, Percy MacKinnon - Deputy Chief, Walter Jewell Sr. - Captain, M. S. Huntington - 1st Lieutenant, Fred Burke - 2nd Lieutenant, Walter Tucker - Secty/Treasurer and



James Baker, Paul Bates Jr., James Burke, L. H. Cann, James Coveyduc, James A. Crowdis, G. B. Hiltz, Alfred Hunt, Walter Jewell Jr., George Lewis, Wm. Lewis Jr., John MacKinnon, John MacPhail, Rannie MacVicar, A. A. Martell, John Parsons, Archie Williams.

The formation of the Louisbourg Fire Brigade in 1928 must have been a great vindication to Guy B. Hiltz who, over 20 years before, had urged the Town Council to form a fire brigade and purchase equipment. It was also most appropriate that he be chosen as the first Fire Chief. Hiltz remained chief until the annual meeting in 1933, when he resigned because of the pressures of work. R. A. Peters took over as chief in 1933 but Hiltz continued to serve as a member of the fire brigade for a number of years after.

On November 23, 1928 Huntington recorded the "first drill of a regularly organized town brigade in the history of the Town of Louisbourg." On November 27 there was a dance sponsored by the newly-formed department and the next day the fire hydrants were checked by the insurance inspector from Halifax. On December 18 the Fire Brigade met for its first meeting in the Coal Company fire hall.

Tragedy struck Louisbourg on December 28 when Mrs. William MacDonald died in her home on Main Street from a fire that caught in her clothing. Her sister, Sarah MacLean, was fatally injured trying to extinguish the flames and died the next day. Mrs. MacDonald and Miss MacLean lived with their brother Angus. All three were over 85 years old. The fire was noticed by George Harris who saw smoke coming from an window and put out the flames before any serious damage was done to the building. The fire brigade was not involved.

The Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Brigade responded for the first time on June 1, 1929 to roof fires at the Anglican Church rectory and Beecher Spencer's house. Both fires were put out with several buckets of water. Spencer's house was on Station Hill on the south side of Main and well beyond the range of the nearest fire hydrant. It is fortunate that the fire in his house was so easily extinguished since it would be years before it would be within the reach of hydrant and hose.

On June 28, 1929 there was a bush fire that started on the west side of Riverdale Street. The firemen were called out and fought the blaze from 10 AM until 4 PM. On August 14 there was another fire west of the bridge on Riverdale Street near the town boundary. This was put out by a bucket brigade using a nearby stream.

## **Equipment and Fighting Fires**

Equipment at the disposal of the Fire Brigade consisted of buckets and fire hose and the new fire hydrants. Hose was transported on a hose reel. At first both hose and reel were borrowed from the Coal Company. The first Town-owned hose was used on June 4, 1929.

The first fire vehicle was a second hand car, a Chevrolet 490, purchased in 1929 or 1930 for \$50.00.<sup>59</sup> It was converted to a truck and was used for the first time in a drill on 20 June 1933. Huntington wrote, "A number of us turned out but the fire truck refused duty and so we had to postpone the drill until this afternoon." The truck proved temperamental and it was sold in 1934.

In April 1934 the Fire Brigade purchased 10 waterproof outfits - hats, coats and boots at \$11.41 per suit. Store owner and volunteer fireman Reuban Lipkus made the purchase.<sup>60</sup> The firemen wore their new gear at a fire drill on May 2. They went to each hydrant, connected the hoses and checked the pressure. At the easternmost hydrant by the railway



crossing they connected 600 feet of hose in order to reach the town hall. At that time the Town Hall was located in what is presently the Church of God on the south side of Main Street where it meets Pepperrell Street.

There was obviously some concern that the new equipment might go missing for the following resolution was passed at meeting in April 1934. "Whereas the Louisburg Volunteer Fire Brigade has purchased ten suits of waterproof clothing, including coats, hats and boots, and Whereas: said waterproof clothing has been acquired for the purpose of protecting the members of the Louisburg Volunteer Fire Brigade from water and the inclemency of the weather, while engaged in fighting fires or attending regularly authorized fire drills, Be it therefore resolved; that we the members of the Louisburg Volunteer Fire Brigade, shall keep the said waterproof clothing, including coats, boots and hats, in a place assigned for it, in the Louisburg Fire Station when not in use for the purpose of fire fighting or attending authorized fire drills. Be it further resolved; that said waterproof clothing, including coats, boots and hats, shall not be used for any other purpose than the protection of the members of the Louisburg Fire Brigade, while on duty at fires or authorized fire drills, and that immediately after a fire has been extinguished, or at the conclusion of a fire drill, all said clothing and every part thereof shall be returned to the place assigned for it, in the Louisburg Fire Station, and shall remain there until the members of the brigade shall require it for a similar purpose. We hereby certify that the above resolution was passed unanimously, at a meeting of the Louisburg Fire Brigade, at a meeting held in the Louisburg Fire Station, on April 30, 1934. R.A. Peters - Chief, Louisburg Fire Brigade, M.S. Huntington - Acting Secretary."<sup>61</sup>

Funds to purchase equipment were raised through dances and dinners. At one dance the receipts were \$49.35. The band cost \$15.00, the Hall \$8.00 and other expenses were \$2.00. There were no dress uniforms for the department, but at the annual meeting in January 1930 badges were distributed to all members of the fire department who were present.

The first meeting of the Brigade was held in the Coal Company's fire hall, but within a year the headquarters had been transferred to the old Town Hall and lockup on the west side of Aberdeen Street where it remained until 1960.<sup>62</sup>

Firemen responded to calls as they always had from the beginning of the century. The alarm was taken to the Coal Company power house and the steam whistle was blown. Firemen would then proceed to the fire hall on Aberdeen, take out the hose reel and hose and go to the location of the fire.

### **Fire Prevention Week and the School**

The first visit to the school during a Fire Prevention Week was in October 1929. Melvin S. Huntington records that he visited the school with Rev. D. A. MacMillan and they gave a short presentation on fire prevention.<sup>63</sup> By 1931, there was a high school fire brigade. Huntington reported on Fire Prevention Week in October 1935 that the Junior Fire Brigade, Chief Donald Lewis, responded with a stream of water on the school in 45 seconds. For many years this was the practise for every Fire Prevention Week - a visit to the school with a presentation by Huntington and other members of the Fire Department and perhaps a clergyman. There was a fire drill and the school children exited the building in an orderly manner. Then the Junior Fire Brigade would attach the hose to the hydrant in front of the school and turn on the water. The Junior Fire Brigade lasted until 1952 when it was recommended that it be discontinued because of the potential danger to the boys. This was



true since, as part of its efficiency demonstration, the Junior Brigade would take a connected hose back through the school and out a trap door in the roof. In 1952 the duties of the Brigade were changed to keeping doors open while younger children passed through.<sup>64</sup>

There were fires at the school over the years. The first was on April 15, 1931 when Freeman MacKenzie notified Huntington that the roof was on fire. Huntington ordered the fire alarm sounded and the hose reel and 300 feet of hose was taken to the scene. There was another fire at the school on May 8. This time there were two hoses connected to the hydrant in front of the building. One was taken up through the building and the other onto the roof. In this instance the roof was scorched and the interior badly soaked - but the building was saved. It is fortunate that a photograph of this fire, survives as the earliest pictorial record of the Louisbourg Fire Brigade and the Junior Brigade.



*The Louisbourg School fire of May 8, 1931. The alarm was called in at about 10:15 AM and the Louisbourg Brigade soon had two streams of water on the blaze which broke through the roof. The roof was badly scorched and the interior was soaked. The blaze was out 15 minutes after the firemen arrived. Damage was estimated at \$800.00. (Louisbourg Heritage Society)*



## Arson in Louisbourg

On October 21, 1931 the Fire Brigade experienced its first case of arson. This was in the Silverman building, a large vacant store which was located on the north side of Main Street roughly across the street from the present-day town hall. The firemen were notified early and managed to put out the blaze. M. S. Huntington records seeing the entire ground floor of the building strewn with newspapers saturated with kerosene or gasoline. A stranger was seen in the vicinity and questioned by the police. At the time he could not be linked directly to the fire and was released.

The next day, after he and the police surveyed the building, Huntington wrote that, "After making a careful search of the building we came to the conclusion that six distinct fires had been set. Sunday editions of newspapers from which the heading had been cut soaked in oil was the material used for starting the fires. The fragments of three one gallon bottles which evidently had contained gasoline were in the porch. The fire in the dining room was evidently caused by gasoline as the wallpaper on the four walls to the ceiling was almost entirely burned off with the floor and wainscoting being little more than scorched."

On January 15, 1932 the Sydney Post reported that arson charges had been laid against the stranger that police chief Neil Murphy had found near the scene of the fire in October. This individual was tried in Supreme court, found guilty and sentenced to a three year term in Dorchester Penitentiary.<sup>65</sup>

Other fires in the 1930's which totally destroyed buildings included:

Mrs. Hooper, April 1931 - residence gutted

Capt Trenholm, September 1932 - house totally destroyed

Benjamin Heckman, April 1934, store destroyed

A.W.Cameron, February 1935, garage, 3 trucks and Overland Touring car destroyed

Arthur M. Townsend, March 1936 - house totally destroyed

Gordon Stevens Jr., February 1939, store destroyed

Emerson Grant, February 1939 - Z.W. Townsend store destroyed

The building owned by Mrs. D. S. Hooper on the south side of Main caught fire in the early morning hours of April 18, 1931. It was completely gutted including the store on the bottom level run by John Murphy - who had lost his store to fire in 1928. The residents had smelled smoke at about 10 PM but could find nothing. Shortly after 2:30 AM the smell of smoke was worrying people and a watch was put on the building by the Fire Brigade. While the fireman on watch was temporarily absent the building burst into flame.

The Trenholm fire, of September 18, 1931, demonstrated the ongoing problem of being unable to get water to a building located at any distance of the Main Street. The Trenholm house was located on Havenside, on the site of the home of Blair Cross. It was a windy night and by the time the firemen arrived the building was beyond saving. The blazing house situated on the height of land provided a spectacular sight for people on the town side of the harbour.

The Townsend house was on Main Street near the railway station. "The fire alarm was sounded shortly after 10 AM and the firemen made a quick response but owing to there being no water system in that part of the town were unable to prevent the building from being a total loss. They however saved the greater part of the furniture and with the aid of buckets prevented the fire from spreading to other buildings near at hand."<sup>66</sup>



## More Arson

In 1939 and 1940 there was a rash of fires in Louisbourg. On February 1, 1939 a store on Riverdale street near Gerratt's Bridge owned by Gordon Stevens Jr. was totally destroyed by fire. Just over two weeks later, on February 18, a fire "totally destroyed the building owned and occupied as store and dwelling by Emerson A. Grant and seriously damaged a building owned and occupied as a store and dwelling by Gordon Stevens Sr." Emerson Grant's store, the Z.W. Townsend building, was on the corner of Main and Minto where the children's playground is located.

That fall, on October 9, there was a fire in the garage behind James Crowdis' house, presently owned by Alex Storm, at the corner of Main and Aberdeen. The Fire Brigade responded, but the building and a car were destroyed.

On December 25, there was a fire in the school. It started at the north east entrance of the building. The fire was put out easily after which Mayor M. S. Huntington and Police Chief Dan Johnston followed the footprints in the snow from the school to Main Street. Huntington called on the assistance of the RCMP tracking dog from Sydney but the dog lost the scent at Main Street as well.

Dan MacLean's home on Main Street was the first major fire in 1940, burning to the ground on May 25. There was no one in the building at the time, the family having gone to Lorraine for fishing.

There was a fire at the home of Mrs. Daniel Tutty on Havenside on June 13. This fire started outside and at the back of the building. According to Huntington. "The fire which was undoubtedly of incendiary origin started outside at the back of the house in a corner where a porch joins the main building where the back entrance is located. When discovered . . . it had burned the shingles off exposing the boarding for a height of several feet and had reached as high as an upstairs window scorching the sill."

On June 20, 1940 a fire was started in a barn adjoining Peters' Brothers store and hall on the north side of Main Street. It destroyed the store and damaged Fred Burke's barbershop next door.<sup>67</sup> The destruction of Peters Store lost to Louisbourg an important community focal point. From its construction in 1902 the hall above the store had served as the location for meetings, dances and visiting entertainers.

The fires in 1939 and 1940 may well have been the result of actions by several arsonists working independently. One person was caught, on July 6, 1940, in the act of setting fire to the Masonic Hall on Upper Warren street after a dance. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to several years in Dorchester penitentiary.<sup>68</sup>

## The One Man Fire Brigade

No history of the Louisbourg Fire Brigade in the 1930s would be complete without the addition of Melvin S. Huntington's poem, "*The One Man Fire Brigade*," written in 1935. The incident which gave rise of the poem was a fire aboard the steamer Blue Peter docked on the east side of the coal pier on January 21, 1935. The fire fighters turned out with the hose and reel but by the time they arrived the fire was under control. With tongue in cheek, the long-time Mayor of Louisbourg tells of the incident and the actions of fireman Jack Johnson. He read the poem at the annual meeting of the Louisbourg Board of Trade in January 1937.<sup>69</sup>



The whistle blew long and the whistle blew loud,  
The smoke and the flames rose up in a cloud,  
A ship at the dock, had caught from a heater;  
This ship, I am told was called the "Blue Peter".

Said Fireman Johnson as he heard the alarm.  
"A fire for me always holds out a charm".  
He leaped out of bed, and made for the street;  
And each step that he took, he covered ten feet.

O where are you going? the neighbours all shout  
Pray tell us what's all this hurry about?  
To questions and taunts, he made no reply,  
But boldly pressed forward to do or to die.

Where, O where is the Chief? he to himself said,  
And the rest of the boys, are they still in bed?  
He looked up and down and he looked round and  
round,  
But no where in sight was a fireman found.

O what has become of our gallant brigade  
Who were always on hand when a fire was made?  
And all worked like heroes, while others stood by,  
And had it "All Out" in the wink of an eye?

Jack Johnson was the first to answer the call  
And also the first to arrive at the hall;  
He found the lock frozen, and that got his goat  
While the fire still raged, on board of the boat.

He grabbed at the lock and inserted the key,  
And twisted and jerked as hard as could be;  
But the lock wouldn't yield, it was not made of  
cheese,  
Then he wished all locks were, where locks do not  
freeze.

Then he cursed and he swore, as most anyone would  
But the language, though vile, didn't do any good.  
He sputtered and stuttered and tore at his hair,  
And raged like a lion, just out of his lair.

From the rear to the front, he dashed with a roar,  
And like a wild bull he charged the front door'  
But try hard as he could his efforts were vain  
Til he made for the window, and kicked out a pane

The glass in the window came down with a smash,  
The sound of his voice, was drowned in the crash,  
Such antics and didoes may cause you to smile  
But the jingle of glass could be heard for a mile.

When he landed inside he rushed for the suits  
The hat and the caps, the coats and the boots;  
He tore them all down, from their pegs on the  
wall,  
But the coats were too big, and the boots were too  
small.

O where are the men of our sleepy brigade  
He said to himself, as he shouted for aid?  
But no one showed up for to lend him a hand,  
While he laboured until, he scarcely could stand.

Seizing the ladders and the spanners and hose,  
Then forth to the fire out bold hero goes;  
But from what I have told, you surely must know,  
With no one to help, his progress was slow.

But now to be fair, whether gentile or jew  
All honour should rest, where honour is due;  
For while his old comrades were snoozing in bed  
He was laying the hose, wrong end ahead.

While he grumbled and growled and pattered  
about  
The fire I am told, had burned itself out.  
Then he sneaked off for home, and 'tis my belief  
Under his breath cursed the Deputy-chief.

On reaching his home, I would have you know,  
Without a good word for friend or for foe  
He loudly proclaimed as the back door he  
slammed,  
The next ship that burns may burn and be damned.





Fireman Jack Johnson and the new 1952 pumper photographed circa 1955. (courtesy LHS)

Protect Your Home or Business

## FIRE

is and always has been Man's Greatest Enemy

• BE PREPARED

EVERY YEAR we hear of the remarkable efficiency of these easily carried G-H-G Fire Packs. Hundreds are now in use in every part of the country and thousands of dollars are being saved annually by their use. For several years G-H-G Fire Packs were sold only to government and forestry protective associations. Lately home owners and tenants and storekeepers are buying steadily. In the early stages of a fire there is nothing more practical providing water is handy.

G-H-G Fire Packs are easy to operate and fire rangers count them one of their most useful and necessary pieces of equipment. For controlling grass fires, patrolling the outskirts of forest fires and extinguishing fire in the tops of trees G-H-G Fire Packs are indispensable as they will throw a stream 65 feet and a spray 20 to 30 feet.



No. 10—G-H-G METAL FIRE PACK

No. 10—G-H-G METAL FIRE PACK  
AS ILLUSTRATED

Made of Galvanized iron shaped to fit back of operator. Water enters through brass wire strainer. Extra heavy rubber hose with brass pump. Nozzle chain attached.

Advertisement for the Fire Packs purchased by the Fire Brigade in 1939. (W. O'Shea)



Jack Johnson's grave marker in Willow Grove Cemetery, Louisbourg with the L.F.D. badge at the top of the stone.



### *More Equipment - Fire Packs*

The problem of being unable to get water to areas far off the Main Street has been mentioned. An attempt to remedy this occurred in 1939 when fire packs were purchased. Fire packs or firefighting packsacks, were containers made of galvanized iron or linen that could hold several gallons of water. They were carried on the back and operated through a hand pump. According to the advertising flyer they could throw a stream of water 65 feet and a spray 20 to 30 feet. The Louisbourg Fire Brigade ordered 4 galvanized fire packs.<sup>70</sup>

Huntington reports on September 8, 1939. " Fire packs were used for the first time in the town of Louisbourg in fighting a fire in a building today. I arrived the fire by auto about five minutes after the alarm was sounded with my fire pack and at once went into action."

For Fire Prevention Week that year the firemen paraded the street with hose and reel and attached the hose to the hydrants on Warren Street and near the school The pressure was good. At the same time they tested two fire packs.

### **During the War**

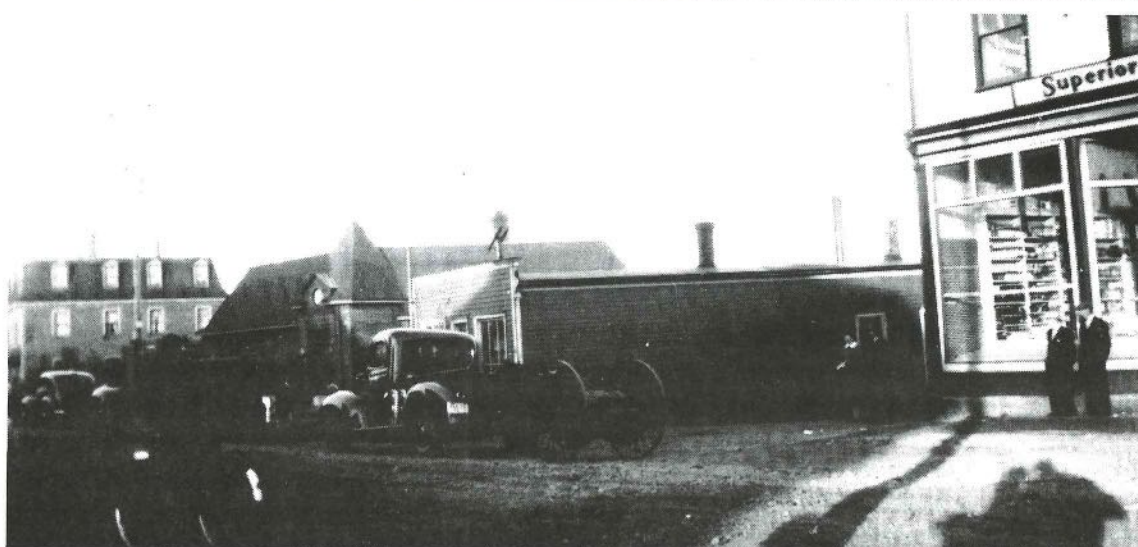
During World War II the port of Louisbourg was a secondary staging area for coastal convoys and a backup to Sydney in the event that harbour was closed by submarine activity. By 1942 there was an artillery emplacement erected on Havenside, a Naval presence managing the anti-submarine net and an Air Force radar establishment located along the old Sydney to Louisbourg road. There was also a ship repair facility.

There were concerns about attacks by submarines but also attacks from the air. The concern of air attack resulted in the establishment of Air Raid Precaution organizations, one of which was in Louisbourg. The ARP committee was chaired by Mayor Melvin S. Huntington and William Lewis was the Warden in charge of operations. The Air Raid Precaution Fire Brigade was formed to assist the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Brigade in the event of an air raid.<sup>71</sup> John MacDonald was a member of the ARP brigade. He still has the helmet which was issued and remembers wearing coveralls, a heavy coat with an arm band and carrying a fire pack.<sup>72</sup>

The Louisbourg Brigade and the ARP Brigade held joint meetings and practices. At ARP meetings the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Chief and the Coal Company Chief presented reports. The Chief of the ARP brigade was William Lewis a long-time member of the Volunteer Fire Brigade. During this time G.B. Hiltz, another volunteer fireman, was the chief of the Coal Company brigade.

There was a meeting of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Brigade on April 4, 1940, which gives an idea of the composition of the Department just before the war. In attendance were: R. A. Peters - Chief, Fred Burke - Deputy Chief and Melvin S. Huntington - Secty/Treasurer. Fire fighters included: Ralph Baker, James Burke, John Johnson, D. J. MacKeigan, Freeman MacKenzie, Rannie MacVicar and Abe Wilcox. There were also two new members John MacMillan and Burns MacMillan.





*A parade in Louisbourg in circa 1941. Top: The Louisbourg Fire Brigade hose reel. Centre: The Dominion Coal Company hose reel. Bottom: The A.R.P. Fire Brigade, second group from the left. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*



## Equipment Purchased During the War

In the early May 1941 a hose reel was purchased by the Town for the Volunteer Fire Brigade from Oxford, Nova Scotia. It was second hand and cost \$15.00. Up to this point the firemen used the Coal Company hose reel which was stored in a small shed on the north side of the boiler house located at the bottom of Aberdeen Street. After this time the firemen had their own hose reel and hose located in the Town fire hall - also on Aberdeen. In May 1942 the Air Raid Precaution Committee received a Bickles-Seagrave Fire Pumper, 2,000 feet of 1 1/2 inch hose and 3 sirens. This equipment was tested on June 2 with the Lewis & Co truck used to transport it to Gerratts Brook, then Havenside and finally the stream at the foot of Lorraine Hill. Huntington noted on 3 July 1942 that the Dominion Coal Company steam whistle was discontinued after 40 years of use as a fire signal by the Coal Company and the Town. One of the ARP sirens was placed on the fire station.

## After the War

The Towns Incorporation Act of 1941 stated that "All fire companies and protection companies now organized in any town, shall be subject to the control of Council, provided that such companies shall have power to select their own officers and members, and to make rules, regulation and by-laws for the management of such companies." This was supported by the Town of Louisbourg bylaws of 1945.<sup>73</sup>

The Town became directly involved in the affairs of the Fire Brigade in 1944 when Chief Peters was asked to appear before the next meeting to discuss the reorganization of the department. According to the Post-Record, "It was pointed out that at the present time many of the younger members of the department are not able to participate actively in the affairs of the Fire Department due to enlistment and away from town due to work."<sup>74</sup>

But change was not quick in coming. It was not until more than a year later, in November 1945, that there was a meeting held to reorganize the Department. According to the minutes of the meeting "Mr. Peters addressed the meeting and stated that since he was leaving town he would not be able to carry on as chief. He also suggested that the department needed new blood and that a new slate of officers would be advantageous."<sup>75</sup> The new executive included Dan Townsend - Chief, Fred Burke - Deputy Chief, Freeman MacKenzie - 1st Lieutenant and Alex Smith - 2nd Lieutenant.

The Department had been rejuvenated but it was faced by the same problems. The fact that there were still only 5 hydrants throughout the town was driven home on December 11, 1945 when it responded to a fire on Pepperrell Street at a house owned by Ivan Fleet and occupied by Hector Smith. Huntington records a two hour battle and because there were no hydrants the equipment used included 2 firepacks and 6 stirrup pumps. These, according to Huntington, "proved to be very effective as fire fighting equipment."

The reorganized department met on January 10, 1946. The following members were present. Daniel Townsend - Chief, Fred Burke - Deputy Chief, Freeman MacKenzie - 1st Lieutenant, Alex Smith - 2nd Lieutenant, M.S. Huntington - Secty Treasurer, and members Charles Bagnell, Everett Beaver, Howard Cann, Albert Dowling, William Hilchie, Lloyd Harris, Bert Hiltz, Alfred Hunt, John C. Johnson, Earl Lewis, George Lewis, William Lewis, Edward Levy, Donald J. MacKeigan, Donald J. MacLeod, Burns MacMillan, Rannie MacVicar, Frank O'Keefe, John Parsons, Joseph Ranson, Emerson Townsend, Louis



Townsend and Walter Tucker.<sup>76</sup> The only order of business was a motion that the Town be asked to purchase 100 feet of fire hose for the department.

Former Fire Chief Dan Townsend remembers that, "In 1945 our equipment consisted of twelve buckets and an axe, a hose reel, approximately three or four hundred feet of hose, three hundred I believe. We also had a pump, a four cylinder engine left over from the ARP Unit together with boots, coats and hats. The pump, I remember, had no electric start and had to be cranked to start and it was not very reliable... When I first joined we responded to a steam whistle from the power house operated by Dominion Coal Co. During the war a siren was placed on the roof of the fire station..."<sup>77</sup>

The January 10, 1945 Minutes, one of only two meetings recorded from the 1940s, are the last on file until October 1951. In the interim there were changes. In 1947 the Department was reorganized again and Harvey Lewis was appointed Chief by Mayor Guy B. Hiltz. Daniel Townsend had left Louisbourg in the spring of 1947 to look for work in Montreal.<sup>78</sup>

Between 1947 and 1952, the Department still operated with the old equipment including the hose reel with 400 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose, 900 feet of 1 1/2 inch hose, fire buckets and stirrup pumps. The only addition to the service was an increase in the number of hydrants to ten. There were fourteen men serving not only Louisbourg but the outlying districts and villages in a radius of 15 miles.<sup>79</sup> There is a story in the 1958 Women's Institute history that reflects the weaknesses of the old equipment. "At a fire at Edison Skinner's House on Warren Street, the reel was being towed by the Fire Chief's car, but when the car arrived at the scene of the fire, it was discovered that the hose reel had broken clear at the corner and continued up Main Street. When it was retrieved and finally arrived at the fire, the fire had made considerable headway and the damage to the house was much greater than it should have been."<sup>80</sup> The Dominion Coal Company Brigade was still in existence at this time with Harold Rudderham as the chief.<sup>81</sup>

The 1950s opened with an increased optimism in the community but with increased pressure on the Fire Department. The Louisbourg Development Company, set up in 1944, and chaired by George D. Lewis, had managed to attract major fish processors to Louisbourg. Excavation on the site of the new fish plant started in 1950 and in 1952 Gorton Pew Ltd., National Sea Products Ltd. and Louisbourg Fisheries opened the doors of a new plant that would employ 200 local people. Associated with the processing plant was a new wharf, spur railway line, underpass, a new municipal water system and Main Street was paved.<sup>82</sup>

By the summer of 1951 members of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department included the following people: Harvey Lewis - Chief, Fred Burke - Deputy Chief, William Dearing - 2nd Deputy Chief, Ranald MacVicar - Hose Captain, Alex Smith - Hose Lieutenant, George Phalen - Ladder Captain, Dan Joe Thomas - Ladder Lieutenant and hosemen Freeman MacKenzie, Malcie MacLeod, John MacDonald, Angus MacKay, Archie Leahy, Jr., and Roland Harris.<sup>83</sup>

That year, the Fire Marshall recommended that the Department be incorporated and that it purchase a small pump. The formalization brought on through incorporation, the new water system and new fish plants provided the impetus to obtain a pumper truck.

In the fall of 1952 as part of the entry form for the 1952 Fire Prevention Week contest Harvey Lewis wrote. "The Louisbourg Fire Department is a volunteer organization of fourteen men protecting an area consisting of the Town with a population of 1200, and outlying districts and villages in four directions totalling approximately 700 in a radius of 15 miles. Until this year the only equipment available for fire fighting consisted of a hose reel with 400 feet 2 1/2 inch hose, 900 feet 1 1/2 inch hose, fire buckets, stirrup pumps and other



small gear. The Town has a privately owned water system servicing the western half of the Town with 10 hydrants." At a meeting held a year earlier on October 24, 1951, with Chief Harvey Lewis presiding, there was some discussion about purchasing a pumper but there were not enough members in attendance to make a decision.

### **The First Fire Truck - 1952**

The campaign to raise money for a fire truck began at the November 28, 1951 meeting when it was decided to buy 500 tickets to be sold on Tom the Firemen's Turkey. Additional support was expected from the Town Council. It was at this meeting that the firemen were informed that as of January 1, 1952 they would be covered by insurance provided by the Town when they were on duty.

The meeting and annual banquet on January 16, 1952 was held at Tom Wong's Restaurant (currently the Grubstake Restaurant). It was reported that the balance in the bank was \$1201.73. It is also of interest to note that while firemen did not receive any sort of direct remuneration they did have some advantages. Rate payers were exempt a portion of property taxes while others did not have to pay the poll tax. There does not seem to have been a specific budget line for the Fire Department in the 1950s. The Town allocated funds for special purchases.

The annual report of the Fire Department stated that "The town appropriated \$200 for equipment for us in 1951 and although we all appreciate the financial circumstances of our town a larger appropriation is essential this year if our objectives are to be attained."

On January 30, 1952 a motion was passed to approach Council for an appropriation of \$1,500.00 and to ask if it would take steps to secure a site for a new fire station. The February 27 meeting also noted the receipt of a cheque for \$100.00 from Cape Breton County to cover fire services. This was only a portion of the total payment due the Department since at the Feb 23, 1953 meeting it was noted that Catalone and Mainadieu districts each paid \$100.00 while West Louisbourg district paid \$150.00.

The purpose of a special meeting on March 10, 1952 was to discuss the fire "apparatus". At the meeting it was learned that Council had approved \$2,600.00 to purchase a truck chassis. At the next meeting, on March 26, Gordon Elman, the representative for Bickles-Seagrave Fire Apparatus, came to Louisbourg to explain his product. At the same time the Department was looking at equipment supplied by the LaFrance company. Eventually, Elman was given the contract. The truck was delivered on November 11, 1952 and was taken to the Lewis & Company wharf where it was tested by a representative of the insurance underwriters.<sup>84</sup> The Town of Louisbourg provided \$2600.00 towards the cost of the truck and the Fire Department added another \$2600.00 for the 50 % down payment. The remainder of the loan was guaranteed by 13 firemen and was paid off by 1956. Bottles were put in stores to collect donations for the truck and over the next few years money was raised through bingo games, dances, indoor carnivals and door to door blitzes.

The new fire truck, a 1952 Chevrolet, was able to provide protection for houses beyond the reach of the hose and hydrant.<sup>85</sup> In its August 2, 1954 fund-raising flyer sent to all citizens of the town, the Fire Department noted that "Those of you who have had to renew (your) fire insurance during the past year will realize the saving that has been made possible by the reduction in rates due to the fire protection now available." The rates had been reduced soon after receiving the new truck. The Town had been surveyed by the insurance



underwriters during the summer in anticipation of having the new truck and because the new water system was in place.<sup>86</sup>

### **Tom the Turkey**

A key part of the fund raising drive for the fire truck in 1952 was Tom the Turkey. Harvey Lewis tells Tom's story. "I'd gone over to Prince Edward Island in the fall as we usually do, because Kathleen's home is over there and so I bought a live turkey - a white turkey. I brought it home and this was the one we were selling tickets on. We must have had a month and a half or two months to sell the tickets. Of course, we named the turkey Tom the Turkey. We had a big wire cage about four foot cube in which we used to keep the turkey. I put him out in the front of the store ( Lewis & Co) early in the morning when the kids would be going to school and the kids became very attached to Tom the Turkey. He was a friend. Eventually we sold the tickets on him and he was won by Tom MacKinnon after drawing for it at a bingo game. There was a lot of fuss over the turkey - so much that it gained national importance and it was written up in the national papers and I did a CBC (Radio) interview with Kate Akin - with the CBC in Toronto. She was the women's morning programme hostess in Toronto. . . So when the ticket was drawn and the turkey went to Tom MacKinnon the kids made a fuss. They didn't want the turkey killed and served on a plate. They raised such a cry we just couldn't do it. So we had to buy Tom MacKinnon a turkey up at the store and there we were still with Tom the Turkey. George Phalen was with the fire department and so the duty of looking after Tom was passed to him. George was the milkman and he delivered milk around town in an old army truck. He also used to save the base oil - couldn't waste anything. Anyway the turkey got loose in the barn one day and got into the big buckets or tubs of base oil and got himself in an awful mess. However, prior to that we wondered what we were going to do with the turkey. We decided since he was so famous that we might as well try to make more money out of it and we could do something for all the other fire departments. So we distributed tickets all over Nova Scotia to the fire departments to sell on Tom the Turkey expecting that someone would win him as a pet and we'd get rid of him. We got the publicity out and the tickets all distributed and were about to start the campaign when George came up one day and said that Tom was dead. We thought of replacing him then we figured we were better off and so we cancelled the whole programme."<sup>87</sup>

### **Fire Prevention Week 1952**

Fire Prevention Week for 1952 included a school inspection and exit drill, films shown to students, a fire prevention colouring book, fire prevention comic book and an essay contest. Florence Cameron in Grade XI was the winner with an essay entitled " The Effects a Fire could have on Louisbourg". There was also an inspection of the local hotel and fish processing plant and the sprinkler system and hydrants were checked. On Thursday evening there was a bingo game, followed by free films on fire prevention from the Fire Marshall's library. This was followed by the Fire Ball, the annual Firemen's dance. Music was supplied by Jerry Coleman and his orchestra. Hot dogs and coffee were available.

What made the week stand out, however, was a graphic display set up in front of the Post Office. This consisted of a wooden coffin and a mannequin of the Grim Reaper. There



was a large sign advertising that "You can Win this Lovely Coffin" accompanied by a list of dangerous practices. This was an effective, if not particularly popular choice, for an exhibit. According to Harvey Lewis, "When this idea for a display was first formulated, we were hesitant, lest the reaction of the townspeople toward this grim display might be unfavourable. We consulted all the clergy first and, although they admitted it was grim, it was original and to the point. We proceeded with our plan and we received some very scorching remarks. Very few people complimented us, but one thing was certain, everybody in Town knew that that week was Fire Prevention week regardless of whether or not they like the display."<sup>88</sup> Naturally this made the newspapers. On the night of the Fire Ball someone uprooted the Grim Reaper and placed him in the coffin.

The 1952 Fire Prevention activities were entered in the national competition and won Louisbourg recognition across the province. For three years the Louisbourg Fire Department placed first for towns with populations under 2500 and one year placed twentieth in competition with over 700 departments from across Canada.

### **The Department in the 1950s**

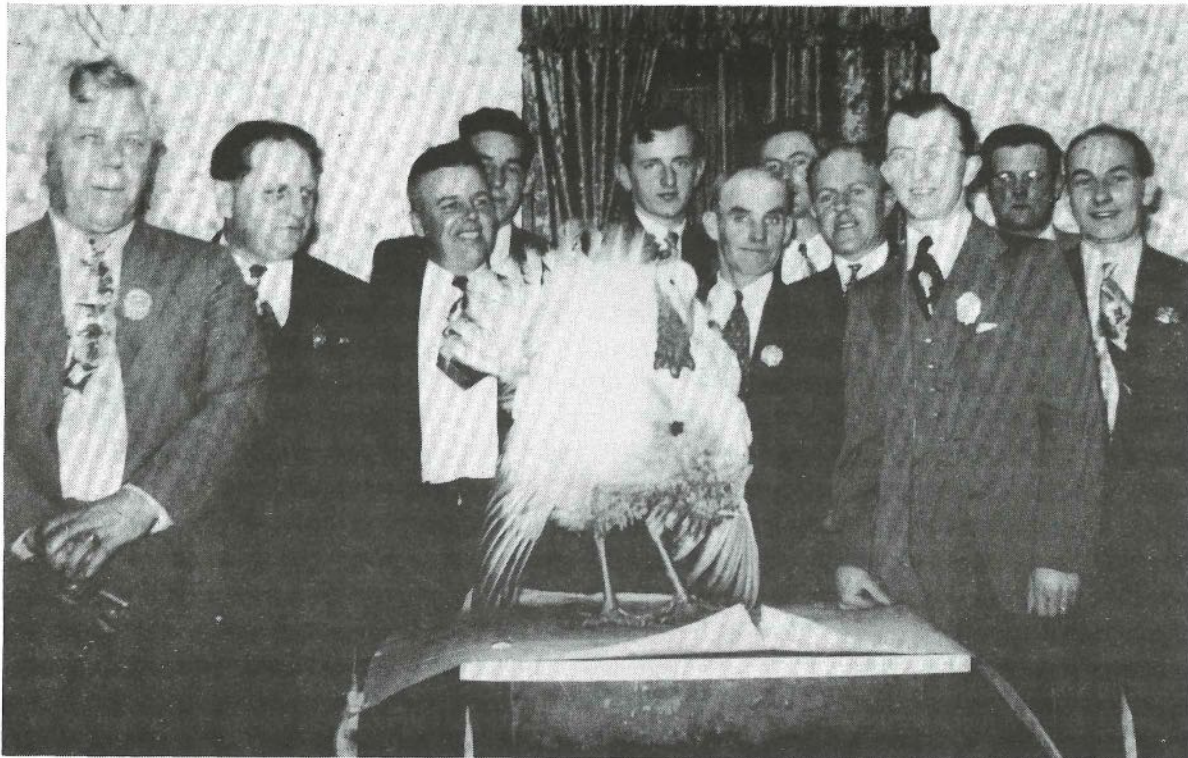
At the April 29, 1953 meeting it was decided to maintain a logbook to keep record of all fires. The one book that remains was obviously backdated to 1951 and records fire response until 1957. During this period there were 90 alarms with a low of 5 in 1952 and a high of 28 call outs in 1957. Fires ranged from brush and grass fires, house fires caused by defective chimneys or sparks from chimneys, overheated stoves, cigarettes or, in one case, children with firecrackers, boat fires, car fires, an electrical pole fire, an exploding furnace and arson.

In his 1954 address to the Fire Department, Chief Lewis pointed out that income was down and it was necessary to borrow from the bank to pay the insurance. The contribution from the County had dropped from \$350.00 in 1953 to only \$125.00 in 1954. Even the bingo games which were a mainstay for raising revenue had made no profit and had been temporarily discontinued. There was need for additional equipment. Lewis recommended that the Town purchase a minimum of 400 feet of 1 1/2" cotton rubberlined hose. The ARP hose, in use since the War, had been condemned. He said that the firemen were dealing with War Assets Corporation to obtain protective headgear. He noted that, "an appropriation by the town to be paid to the Fire Department Treasury to help meet our financial obligations would lighten the burden and greatly improve the morale of the volunteers of the department."<sup>89</sup>

In 1955 the Department wrote to the Fire Wards Committee of the Town.<sup>90</sup> The firemen requested that the Town, make arrangements to have Maritime Telephone Company operate the fire alarm signal, call for six more members, and alter several hydrants to bring the pumper outlets to an accessible height. The report also mentioned that the Department had asked the Council for fire helmets. There had been no action on this front and eventually the Fire Department borrowed \$60.00 and bought 30 helmets.<sup>91</sup>

The request to have Maritime Telephone operate the fire alarm signal was repeated again in 1957, and by 1958 the Fire Department had a telephone and the ability to sound the alarm siren using a telephone line.<sup>92</sup>

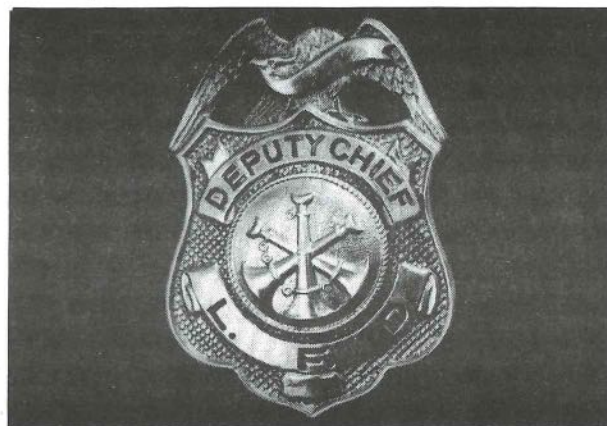




*Annual meeting on January 17, 1952 held at Wong's Cafe. Left to right: Bill Dearing, Fred Burke, Dan Joe Thomas, Malcie MacLeod, John Wilcox, Rannie MacVicar, Alex Smith, Angus MacKay, Harvey Lewis, John E. MacDonald and George Phalen with Tom the Turkey on the table in front. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*



*Melvin S. Huntington presenting silver lapel pins recognizing 25 years of service in 1954. Left-right: M. S. Huntington, Fred Burke, Ranald MacVicar, John C. (Jack) Johnson. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*



*Badge worn by Deputy Chief Alex Smith. Similar badges can be seen on the lapels of the firemen in the photo above. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*





*The New fire truck at the school in 1952/3. Dan Joe Thomas is the driver. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*

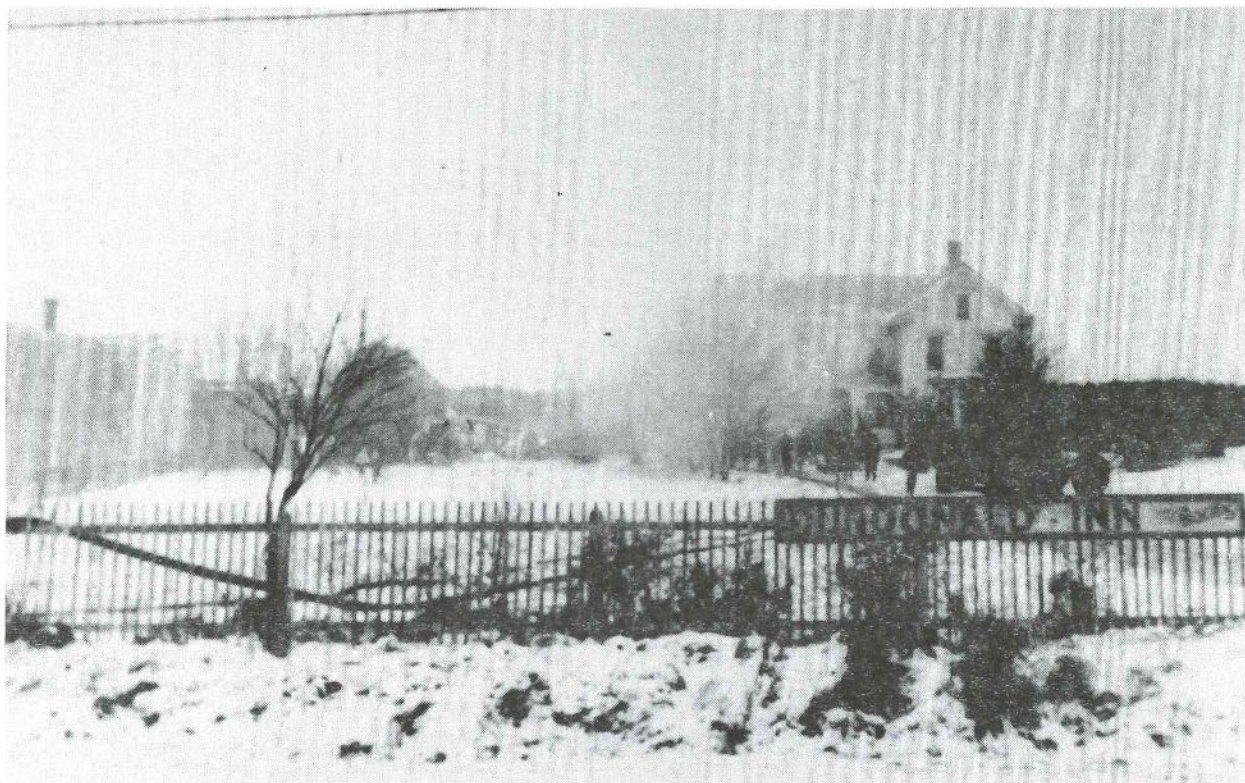


*The 1954 Fire Prevention Week display set up in front of the post office with a coffin and the grim reaper. This caused some local consternation but won the Department recognition and a prize. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*

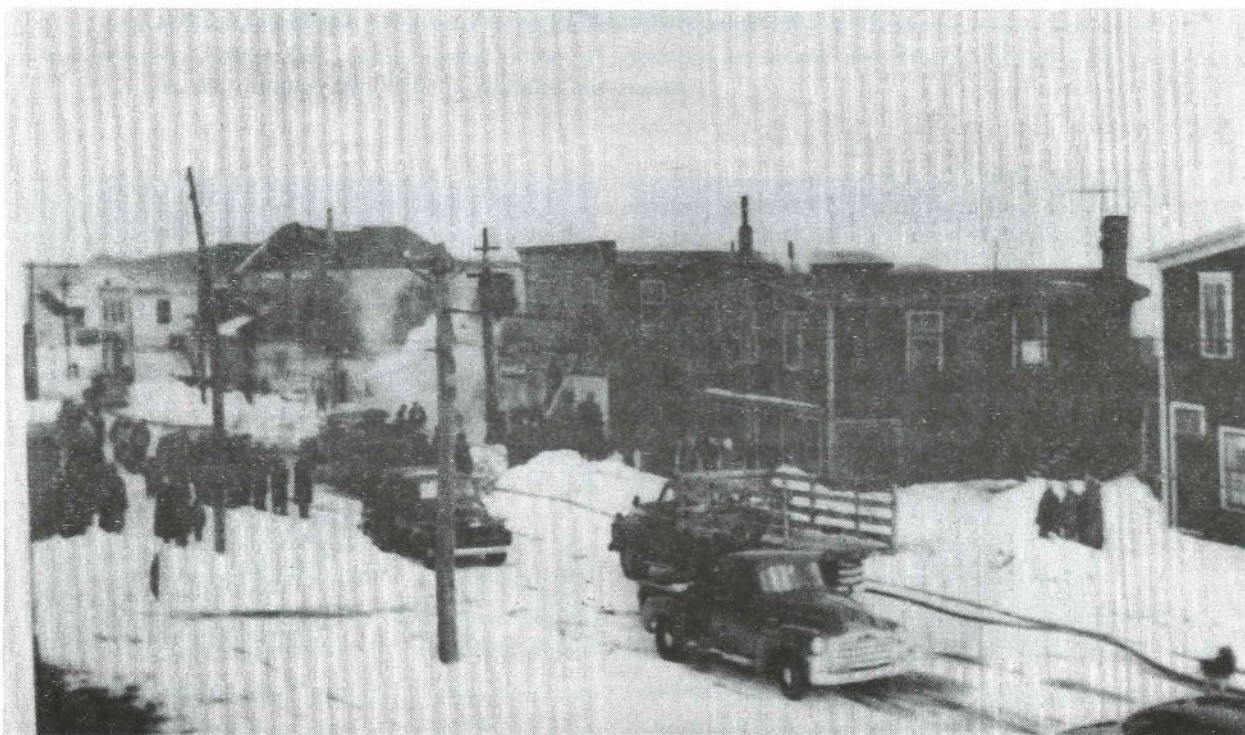


*The 1955 Fire Prevention Week display also set up in front of the Post Office. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*





*Fire at the Dundonald Inn on 15 February 1951. The fire hose is strung across the fence on the left side of the photo. The fire caused major damage to this Louisbourg landmark. (courtesy Eleanor Huntington)*



*Fire at Cecil Stevens store on 27 February 1956. The pumper is parked in front of the building and firemen have erected a ladder to the second story. (courtesy Eleanor Huntington)*



The last complete list of firemen at this period was in 1956 and included the following: Harvey Lewis, Fred Burke, Alex Smith, Dan Joe Thomas, Ranald MacVicar, William Dearing, Freeman MacKenzie, Archie Leahy, Jr., Donald MacIntyre, Carl Levy, Roland Harris, George Phalen, George Wilcox, John (Jack) Johnson, Fred MacIntyre, John E. MacDonald, Vernon MacIntyre, Sam Dowling, Steve Whynott, Malcolm MacLeod, Peter Hutt and James Harte.<sup>93</sup> M. S. Huntington was Honourary Chief.<sup>94</sup>

With 1995 being an anniversary year for the Louisbourg Fire Department it is interesting to read the brief minute of 9 July 1958. That year was the 200th anniversary of the English siege of Louisbourg in 1758 and major events were planned for the fortress site. "A special meeting of the Louisbourg Fire Dept ( was held ) to make plans for a booth to serve pop, ice cream, hot dogs, chips and cigs at the fortress on July 26, 27, 28 for the 200th celebration." Attending that meeting were Harvey Lewis, John MacDonald, George Wilcox, George Phalen, Malcolm MacLeod, Freeman MacKenzie, Jack Johnson and Donald MacIntyre.



*The Louisbourg Fire truck purchased in 1952. This copy of an Abbas photo from the Cape Breton Post was submitted by the Department as part of the submission to the 1952 Municipal Fire Prevention Week Contest. (Fire Department files)*

## **Fires in the 1950s**

Major fires in the 1950s included the following:

M.R. Chappell, February 1951 - Marine Hospital major damage - defective chimney  
 Percy Wilson December 1951 - barn destroyed - children with firecrackers  
 James Burke, November 1953 - barn destroyed - arson  
 Hazard MacRae, February 1954 - 4 vehicles burned - arson  
 Matthew Kelly, December 1955 - house destroyed, West Louisbourg  
 Cecil Stevens, February 1956 - store destroyed - furnace exploded



The fire at the Marine Hospital, on Main Street on February 15, 1951 seriously damaged a local landmark. It was a large house of about 20 rooms ( behind Stella Maris church ) constructed in the last part of the 19th century by William MacAlpine and later owned by Dr. D.W. Morrison. After Dr. Morrison's death in 1931 his son Edgar and afterwards the Ingraham family operated it as the DunDonald Inn. The, "Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department was summoned to the scene and turned in a marvellous job assisted by the Dominion Coal Company firemen and the men of the Maritime Foundation Company. . ."<sup>95</sup> George Phalen, his wife, invalid mother and 2 children were evacuated along with 6 Lunenburg fishermen ill with influenza. The building was seriously damaged particularly the west end. It was estimated that the damage amounted to \$5000.00.

There was also a spectacular and potentially dangerous fire at Cecil Stevens store on February 27, 1956. Stevens lived upstairs in his Main Street building, with his wife and daughter Kathleen, and operated the store on the ground floor. There were customers in the store that day shortly after lunch, when the furnace exploded. Fortunately they were able to get out in time and no one was hurt though the Stevens family lost all their possessions. According to the Post Record, "Quick action on the part of Town and Dominion Coal Company firemen was credited with saving adjacent buildings threatened by the blaze..."<sup>96</sup>

### **Some More Arson**

On February 24, 1954 the Department was called out to Hazard MacRae's garage on Main Street at Strathcona. The firemen arrived to find two cars and one truck on fire at the garage and one car on fire at Duncan Mackay's house nearby. According to the newspaper report "prompt work by the fire department headed by Chief Harvey Lewis, prevented a conflagration as one of the vehicles was parked within a few feet of the service station gas pump."<sup>97</sup> This was an obvious case of arson but no one was ever caught.

Nothing is sacred, and on December 24, 1955 there was a blaze in the fire hall on Aberdeen Street. Actually it was started in the jail section of the building, by an inebriated prisoner. There was little damage and fortunately no one was injured. This was not the first time there had been a fire in this building. On January 5, 1909, while the building was serving as the Town Hall, the clerk accidentally upset a can containing kerosene which ran under the stove and caught fire. A Council committee reviewed the mishap and agreed with the clerk on how the fire happened. However, "The committee could not explain the loss of books and would recommend that this be placed in hands of police for investigation." <sup>98</sup>

### **A New Fire Station**

From about 1931 the fire station had been in the small building on Aberdeen that it shared with the town lockup. The truck purchased in 1952 all but filled the old station and even before it was purchased the Fire Department was encouraging the Town to provide a new building. The old station was originally the County Building and was located on Main Street directly on the intersection with Aberdeen Street. When Aberdeen Street was constructed in 1902 this building was moved down to the west side of the new street, in the approximate location of Rovie's Pizzeria. In this location it served as the Louisbourg Town



Hall from 1902 until about 1916/17. At that time a new school was completed and the old school building - now the Church of God and formerly the Potager Restaurant - became the town hall. The old County building remained as a lockup and by the early 1930's was a firehall. Meetings were held upstairs. Once the truck was purchased in 1952 this building became quite inconvenient. Harvey Lewis' speech notes for the 1955 Annual Meeting sum it up well. "Everyone is aware of the inconvenient arrangement at Aberdeen Street for the storage of the Fire apparatus. This situation was emphasized during the recent cold weather when it was impossible to keep the station warm enough to prevent freezing of the water in the pump(er). Any action that could be taken this year toward fulfilling the Fire Marshall's recommendation of having the Fire Station on the Main Street would help to remove this condition. The present happy arrangement for maintaining heat at the Fire Station during the winter months can not be expected to be available for may more years and will be very difficult to replace."<sup>99</sup> The happy arrangement referred to by Lewis was Jack Johnson who looked after the fire in the winter. As another former Fire Chief, Everett Beaver, remembers, " Jack was a lifesaver in a way . . . Where they used to keep the old truck, there was just a wood stove or a coal stove . . . well that poor old fellow used to keep that fire going on cold nights like tonight. He'd be down there practically all night keeping the fire going. It was Jack that kept the truck from busting to pieces."<sup>100</sup>

By 1956 the Department had a bank account set up for the new building. At the January meeting it was proposed to ask the town for \$400.00 for operating expenses and to bring the fire station account up to \$1,200.00.<sup>101</sup> By February 1956 it had been decided by the Department that the preferred location was the corner lot at Main and Aberdeen Streets. Later that summer a committee consisting of Chief Lewis, Donald MacIntyre and John E. MacDonald were appointed to meet with the Council. The meeting did not go particularly well and it was reported that Council had decided to purchase another property instead. The firemen were not be stopped from their planning and a motion was made to purchase the Kennedy property on the corner of Main and Aberdeen. The Coal Company agreed to convey a piece of its property once the Kennedy property was purchased. Harvey Lewis, John MacDonald and Alex Smith were appointed trustees to hold the land for the Fire Department.<sup>102</sup> But it was not until 1960/61 that a new fire station was obtained. At that time a building on the waterfront, part of the L. H. Cann property, was purchased and moved to the present site on the corner of Main and Aberdeen. It was a small structure with 2 bays. But it was a new fire hall and increased the profile of the Fire Department through its location on the main street. It was also a better facility for ensuring care of the fire engine.

### **The 1963 Reorganization of the Fire Department**

Harvey Lewis resigned on May 25, 1961 at a special meeting held in the new fire hall.<sup>103</sup> At the annual banquet on May 8, 1963 he was formally thanked for his contribution to the fire department.<sup>104</sup> Lewis had done much to improve the equipment base of the Department as well as its public profile. It was during his tenure that the first fire truck was purchased and a new fire hall acquired. He also got the Department actively involved in Fire Prevention Week on a provincial and national level and got Louisbourg national attention with his Tom the Turkey promotion.





*Clearing the ground for the new fire hall circa 1960. Fireman Jack Johnson in the foreground. (courtesy Harvey Lewis)*



*The new fire hall in the late 1960s. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*

At the meeting of May 26, 1961 there was a motion that Harold Rudderham be recommended to the Fire Wards for the position of Fire Chief. Rudderham, who had been chief of the Dominion Coal Company Brigade, was not present at the meeting and probably turned the job down. There was a special meeting called for July 18, 1961. At that meeting the minutes of May 26 were stricken from the record, Harvey Lewis' resignation was accepted and Vernon MacIntyre was elected chief by secret ballot. At this time attendance was a problem - there were never more than 10 or 11 members present at meetings. The meetings of March, April, May and June 1963 all mention the concern over lack of attendance. At the June meeting "The matter of attendance received another lengthy discussion with all present taking part. It was finally moved by Fred MacIntyre, seconded by Freeman MacKenzie that the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Dept disband effective July 31, 1963 and that the Town be notified to this effect." The motion was carried with one dissenting vote from R. MacVicar. Those present at the meeting were Archie Leahy, Everett Beaver, Rannie MacVicar, Freeman MacKenzie, Richard Cross, Fred MacIntyre and George Phalen.

Everett Beaver was asked to take on the role as Fire Chief. He received the following memo from the Town Council.<sup>105</sup> "Please be advised that the Town Council at a meeting held on September 12, 1963 accepted the applications for firemen from the following applicants: J. V. MacIntyre, Everett Beaver, Florian Bryan, Richard Cross, Freeman MacKenzie, Ronald MacVicar, John Burke, Gerald Gartland. As the former Volunteer Fire Department is now disbanded, will you kindly meet at once to form (a) new Department. The Town is calling for additional new members at once to supplement the above list. Yours truly. D.F. Nicholson, Town Clerk."

At a meeting held in October 1963 those elected included: Everett Beaver - Chief, Donald MacIntyre - 1st Deputy Chief, Steve Whynott - 2nd Deputy Chief, John E. MacDonald - Secty/Treasurer, Freeman MacKenzie - Ladder Captain, Fred MacIntyre - Hose Captain; Millan Beaver - Engine Captain and Richard Cross - Salvage Captain. The executive consisted of William Gartland, James Harte, Herman Hardy and Florian Bryan.

By the end of the year, Vernon MacIntyre was no longer with the department. Additional members included: Roy Bussey, Roland Harris, John G. MacKeigan, Percy MacKinnon, Malcolm MacLeod, Fabian Trimm and George Wilcox.<sup>106</sup>



## The Newly Organized Department

An early concern of the newly-organized department is reflected in a letter to the Council in 1966. "A study of our fire records shows that we have just about as many out-of-town fire calls as we do in town. For this service we receive \$200.00 from the County each year. It is the opinion of the Department that this is not nearly enough, in view of the number of calls, and the time and expense involved. We therefore ask you to write those concerned, in the County, to get this payment increased to, say, \$1,000. We would consider \$500.00 the absolute minimum for this service. If the County is unwilling to pay more for its fire protection, we would suggest restricting fire calls to a 3 or 4 mile radius from the Town."<sup>107</sup> At that time the range of the Department extended to include Albert Bridge.

A year later the Fire Chief wrote to Council once more because there had been no action on the request. Chief Beaver pointed out that a new truck would be needed sometime in the future and the \$200 received from the County was not enough. Once more he asked Council to write to County Councillor Ernest Bishop to advise that the cost of providing fire protection would be increased to \$1000 or \$100 per call.<sup>108</sup>

The rate paid by the County would not increase by much until the mid 1970s and Louisbourg still provided coverage of the wider area until the Albert Bridge and the Mainadieu/Bateston Fire Departments were organised in 1977. At present the Department is responsible for the area which includes Louisbourg, Little Lorraine and highway #22 to the Catalone cross roads.

A major challenge facing Chief Beaver was the deplorable state of the equipment. He set about getting the truck repaired and purchasing new fire fighting gear and uniforms over the next several years. The budget with which he worked was not large. Still, with the reorganized department the Council provided a larger working budget than previously. Expenditures for 1965 included the following.<sup>109</sup> Supplies 991.75, Painting Truck 100.00; Gas, Oil, Fuel Oil 150.00; 1 tire 100.00, Insurance 90.00, Phone 92.00, Light & Power 100.00, Building interior 50.00, Freight & Express 50.00, Compensation 180.00, Magazine Subscriptions 20.00, Hose 950.00, Truck repairs 100.00

In 1966 the department spent \$3,633.26 and it was allocated \$3500.00 in 1967. The expenditure in 1968 was \$3,000.00.<sup>110</sup>

The proposed budget for 1966 included 10 uniforms at \$65.00 each. These first uniforms were issued to Everett Beaver, Richard Cross, Florian Bryan, Fred MacIntyre, Fabian Trimm, Millan Beaver, Steve Whynott, Rannie MacVicar, Herman Hardy and Gerry Gartland.<sup>111</sup> In the 1967 budget there is a listing for 10 uniforms at \$80.00 each. A major addition to the equipment list was an old Chevrolet truck, purchased in 1965, from an employee at the Fortress of Louisburg. It was converted to carry portable pumps and back tanks.<sup>112</sup>





*The reorganized fire department in the mid 1960s. Front l-r: Steve Whynott, Gerry Gartland, Richard Cross, Everett Beaver, Herman Hardy, Florian Bryan. Centre l-r: George Wilcox, Charles Lewis, Jr., Fabian Trimm, Fred MacIntyre, Ashley Hill, Archie Leahy. Back l-r: Malcolm MacLeod, Roy Bussey, Freeman MacKenzie, John George MacKeigan, Rannie MacVicar. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*

## **Fires in the 1960s**

Between 1963, when it was reorganized, and 1969 the Fire Department was called out 113 times. These ranged from 34 call outs in 1964 to 7 in 1967. There were 40 calls outside the town. There were car fires, grass fires, forest fires and house fires. There were six calls to the Fortress Inn between May and October 1964 for minor fires.

Skinner/Vallis fire, July 1961 - house lost and 1 death

Hugh Kennedy, March 1965 - house total loss

J. W. Bagnell, May 1966 - laundromat gutted

The most tragic fire in the history of the Town of Louisbourg occurred on July 22, 1961. Barbara Vallis, the 5 year old daughter of Marjorie and Cecil Vallis, died in a fire that destroyed the home of her grandfather Bill Skinner.<sup>113</sup>

The home of Hugh Kennedy was destroyed on March 14, 1965. According to Kennedy's daughter Florence Wadden, "It was on a Sunday. It was a chimney fire. I was at work and by the time I got there my mother and father were both out. The house was gutted by the time I got there. It was a windy day. About all they got out was a t.v. or something. My mother had been in bed and by the time my dad got her out they didn't save a thing."<sup>114</sup>



## The Department in the 1970s

In 1970 the members of the Louisbourg Fire Department were Everett Beaver, Richard Cross, Gerry Gartland, Duncan Beaver, Millan Beaver, Florian Bryan, John Burke, Roy Bussey, Herman Hardy, Aubrey Harris, Roland Harris, Ashley Hill, Lloyd King, Kevin Kendall, Archie Leahy, Donald MacIntyre, Fred MacIntyre, J. G. MacKeigan, Seward MacKeigan, Clarke MacKinnon, Percy MacKinnon, J. A. MacKay, Malcie MacLeod, Freeman MacKenzie, Fabian Trimm, Joe Trimm and Steve Whynott. Ronald MacVicar and George Wilcox were honorary members.<sup>115</sup>

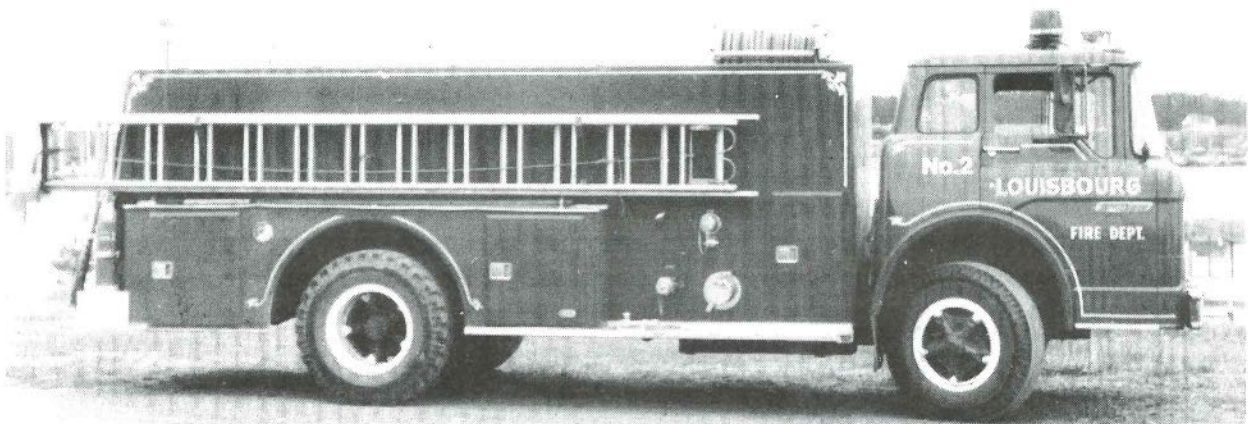
In May 1971 the Department purchased a 1969 Ford panel truck to replace the old Chevrolet. The amount allocated for the new vehicle was \$1900.00. The Chev truck was sold for \$200.00. There was also a discussion in May of an addition to the fire station. This discussion continued at the October meeting when the executive and building committee were directed to go to the Bank and Central Mortgage and Housing to look into borrowing additional money needed for an the extension.<sup>116</sup> By February 1972 there was still no approval for the extension from Council, with the result that a committee consisting of Richard Cross, Fabian Trimm, Clarke MacKinnon and John Burke were appointed to attend the next Town Council meeting.<sup>117</sup> At the same time as the Department was looking for an enlarged fire hall it also undertook the purchase of a new fire engine. The firemen were successful in both these ventures and at the September 1972 meeting Aubrey Harris was asked to contact the Cape Breton Post to make arrangements for pictures of the new truck and the opening of the hall. The enlarged fire hall was officially opened when the new truck was received during Fire Prevention week in October 1972.<sup>118</sup> It was a 1972 Ford chassis with a Thibeault-built body capable of holding 750 gallons of water and pumping 625 gallons per minute.

In earlier years firemen were exempt from poll tax if they were not property owners and, if they owned property, a portion of property tax. It became harder to apply the tax benefit when the poll tax was dropped and as a result a stipend was instituted. At the December 20, 1961 meeting there was a motion to write "to the town hall concerning a bonus for the Firemen." By this time the Firemen were given 100.00 at Christmas. At the January 31, 1973 meeting there was a committee formed to ask the Fire Wards to increase the firemens pay. The annual stipend was small but important to the individual firemen. At a meeting on 27 September 1978 it was suggested that firemen give up the stipend towards purchase of a new van. It was not a popular suggestion and not implemented. The stipend is voted on annually by the Town Council on the basis of a list provided by the Fire Chief.

In May 1973 Everett Beaver told the members that he was part of a committee formed to create an ambulance service in Louisbourg. A Fire Department committee consisting of Everett Beaver, Richard Cross and Fabian Trimm was also set up to look into the feasibility of establishing an ambulance service.<sup>119</sup> At the September meeting John George MacKeigan told the members that Council had voted \$1,500 to improve the van for an ambulance service.<sup>120</sup> Unfortunately the ambulance service was not to be for a number of years, though MacKeigan pursued the goal until the service was initiated in 1979.<sup>121</sup>

In 1975, Councillor Alex Storm resurrected an old topic. He asked if the town was negotiating with the County of Cape Breton for an increase in fire protection fee. He said that it should be increased or the service withdrawn. Mayor George Lewis said that Councillor Ernest Bishop was considering upping the fee to \$3,000.00 from \$1,000.00. A motion to increase the County contribution to \$3,000.00 was passed by Council.





*The Fire Truck purchased by the Department in 1972 and still in use. (W. O'Shea - Louisbourg Heritage Society)*



*Cape Breton Post photo, October 16, 1972. The official opening of the firehall extension and receipt of the new truck by the Department. Left - right: Donald Cross - Deputy Chief, Everett Beaver - Chief, Duncan A. MacKay - Steel City Sales, Donald Beaver - Deputy Mayor and John G. MacKeigan - Councillor. (courtesy Joyce Trimm)*





*The Fire Department in 1972. Front row l-r: Fabian Trimm, Everett Beaver, Richard Cross, Freeman MacKenzie. Centre row l-r: Joe Trimm, John A. MacKay, Archie Leahy, Seward MacKeigan, Lloyd King, John Burke. Back rows l-r: Percy MacKinnon, Kevin Kendall, Aubrey Harris, Duncan Beaver, Malcolm MacLeod, Gerry Gartland, Roland Harris, Herman Hardy, Ashley Hill, Millan Beaver, Clarke MacKinnon, Donnie MacIntyre. (courtesy Everett Beaver)*



*Fire Department in 1978. Front l-r: Ashley Hill, John A. MacKay, Richard Cross, Everett Beaver, Fabian Trimm, Percy MacKinnon, Joe Trimm. Centre l-r: Seward MacKeigan, Gerry Gartland, Freeman MacKenzie, Roland Harris, Fabian Lahey, Steve Whynott, John Price, Aubrey Harris. Back rows l-r: Clifford Hoban, Clayton Murray, Millan Beaver, James Kennedy, Bernard Kennedy, Kevin Kendall, John Burke, Stuart Pellerin, Marmon Smith, Lloyd King. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*



Councillor Gerry Gartland, expressing the wishes of the Fire Department, suggested that the \$6,000 be placed in a separate account with signing officers from the Town and the Fire Department. The members of the Fire Department wanted assurances that the money received from the County and the Fortress would be applied against their needs and not disappear into a general municipal budget. There was no consensus on the matter. Councillor John MacRury, representing the opposing view, stated that if money came to the town it would be administered by the Town's signing officials. Councillor Gartland's recommendations for a special account were left over to the next meeting<sup>122</sup>

At the next meeting Councillor Gartland raised the matter only to the extent of asking the solicitor if such an account would be legal. He was told it would be legal, but did not pursue it.

In October 1974 there was a major fire in the chapel at the Fortress of Louisbourg. One result of this fire was the development of a structural fire fighting capability at the Fortress including a fire engine (1979) and training for the security staff. The other result of the chapel fire was increased cooperation between the town and fortress, largely encouraged by Chief Park Warden Ben Roper. At the May 29, 1975 Council meeting there was a letter from Roper reporting a "mock" alarm which had indicated that the Fortress chapel was on fire. The only people knowing about the mock alarm were the Chief Park Warden and the Fire Chief. It took only 9 minutes for the Louisbourg Department to get to the Fortress and have the water ready to go. According to the minutes Roper considered the work of the Louisbourg Fire Department most excellent.<sup>123</sup> Until his retirement from Parks, Roper remained a close friend to the Louisbourg Fire Department. He taught First Aid courses on a regular basis, set up Park-based training courses to which he invited town firemen and was guest speaker at the annual banquet on many occasions.

Concern over having an assured response to fires in the town was addressed in July 1975 when former Councillor John George MacKeigan was given permission to address Council. MacKeigan said that at the last Fire Department meeting "a proposal was made that during summer months when quite a few firemen were away (that) two firemen be on standby at the fire station on Saturdays and Sundays in case of fire. This would be a 48 hour shift for 2 men at \$50 each." The motion was tabled for a future meeting and the first and only attempt to have paid firemen came to an end.

### **The Council, the County and the Fortress**

In October 1976, the discussion in the Town Council meeting concerned approaching the County for additional money. Councillor Gartland also said that Council should negotiate with the Park for money owed to the Town for fire protection but there was no explanation of what this meant. There was a motion put that the Town write County Councillor Bishop and ask for \$10,000 a year in advance for service to the county, "otherwise this service would be discontinued.." <sup>124</sup> In spite of this position the County kept the \$3,000.00 annual contribution. At the February 22, 1979 meeting of Council there was a letter from County Councillor Bishop saying that he was budgeting that amount for the year.

The Fire Department was brought up in Council again in March 1977 when Councillor Gartland revived the idea of setting up a special fund with the monies received from the County and Fortress with the Town as signing authority. This was a change from his earlier proposal that there be a representative from the Fire Department as a signing officer. The



firemen were not satisfied with this position and in May requested a meeting with the Fire Wards. The Mayor reported on the meeting with the Fire Department. He said that the firemen wanted to set up a fund for fire equipment and wanted \$6,500.00 placed in it each year. The Mayor expressed the opinion that it was the Town, not the Fire Department, that was responsible for setting up the fund.<sup>125</sup>

At the September 1977 Council meeting there was a letter from the Fortress proposing to reduce the annual service contract paid by the Fortress to the Town for fire protection from \$7,000.00 to \$4,000.00. The contract had been established after the fire of 1974. At the same time the Fortress offered to assist the Town in the purchase of a new fire truck which would be the property of the Fire Department. There was a motion that the Fire Wards, the Fire Chief and executive of the Department would meet with William O'Shea and Park Superintendent John Fortier.<sup>126</sup> The Firemen reported at the January 1978 Council meeting that they, along with members of the Council, met with representatives from the Fortress to negotiate for the proposed new truck. It was agreed that it would be paid for jointly by the Town, Department of Indian & Northern Affairs and the provincial government.<sup>127</sup> Movement was slow and in May 1978 there was a letter from the Fortress asking whether the Volunteer Fire Department wished to continue the fire services contract with the Fortress. The letter, from William O'Shea, said that because of fiscal restraint the Fortress could not pay more than \$3500.00 as an annual grant to the Department.<sup>128</sup> There was a great deal of discussion on the matter leading to a motion by Councillor Howard Mousseau seconded by Councillor James Steylen to write John Fortier, "and advise him that if they are unable to pay \$10,000 per year to the town for fire protection than the whole deal will be forgotten about." On the question Councillor Larry O'Toole suggested renegotiation. Councillor MacRury agreed saying, "we are still going to the County for \$3,000.00 and here we are refusing to go to the Fortress for \$3500.00." The motion was lost but discussion continued and Councillor O'Toole pointed out that, "we have an agreement with the Fortress for \$7,000, for fire protection and here we receive a letter cutting it down to \$3,500 and the new fire truck is not even mentioned." Another motion was passed to contact O'Shea and find out about the contract for fire protection and the contribution to the new truck.<sup>129</sup> At the next meeting there was correspondence saying that the \$3,500.00 mentioned in O'Shea's letter was for the annual contract. The funding for the truck purchase was a separate amount and the Park was awaiting information about provincial and municipal share of funding and the design and capacity of the truck.<sup>130</sup> By September the Park had received the specifications for the pumper truck, but information about contributions by other levels of government was still outstanding.

In the fall of 1978 there was the opportunity, encouraged by the Fire Department, to purchase a new pumper truck with a 625 gallon tank for approximately \$38,900.00. This truck had been sent to St. John's on spec, had not been sold and was being driven back to Quebec.<sup>131</sup> Not all the Councillors agreed with the proposal by the Fire Department to buy this vehicle. The Mayor said that a new truck with a 1,200 gallon capacity could be had for \$45,000.00. Without support from the Town the truck could not be kept and went on to Montreal. After this point the negotiations with the Fortress to purchase a truck, though mentioned on several occasions in Council minutes, effectively came to an end. The opportunity to obtain a new fire truck would have to wait for 10 years.

By 1978, the Department's membership had changed somewhat though there was still a core of senior fire fighters. The membership included: Everett Beaver - Chief, Richard Cross - 1st Deputy Chief, Fabian Trimm - 2nd Deputy Chief, John Allan MacKay - Treasurer and



Carter Stevens - Secretary. Members included: Millan Beaver, John Burke, Aubrey Harris, Roland Harris, Ashley Hill, Clifford Hoban, Kevin Kendall, Donald Gordon Kendall, Bernard Kennedy, James Kennedy, Lloyd King, Fabian Lahey, Fred MacIntyre, John George MacKeigan, Seward MacKeigan, Percy MacKinnon, Clarke MacKinnon, Malcolm MacLeod, Clarence MacMillan, Clayton Murray, Stuart Pellerin, John Price, Marmon Smith, Joe Trimm and Steve Whynott.

At a meeting held on March 28, 1979 there was some discussion about purchasing a new van. The Department received financial support from the Ladies Auxiliary. At the April 28 meeting it was decided to buy the van from Chebucto Motors in Dartmouth for a firm price of \$7142.80. It was moved also that the old Ford panel truck be sold within the Department and that Marmon Smith have the first offer.

### **Fires in the 1970s**

The record for the 1970s is incomplete for two years. But for the remaining eight years there were 239 call outs for the Department. Of this 96 were to the county. Significant fires included:

Kenneth Whalen - April 1973 - Mainadieu - house destroyed and child burned  
M.V. Cape Smokey - May 1974 - major damage  
Fortress of Louisbourg - October 1974 - chapel in barracks destroyed  
Immaculate Conception church - June 1976 - church destroyed

The home of Ken and Wendy Whalen was destroyed on April 9, 1973 and their nine-month-old daughter Kimberly Dawn died in the fire.<sup>132</sup> A year later in June 1974 a newly-constructed Whalen home was destroyed in the Mainadieu forest fire.

The M. V. Cape Smokey was a stern dragger owned by National Sea Products. The vessel was moored at the National Sea Products wharf when the fire started in the wheel house. The estimate of damage was \$350,000.00.

At the Fortress of Louisbourg a major fire in the chapel in the barracks occurred in the early hours of October 16, 1974. The Louisbourg Department responded promptly and assisted Park staff in containing the fire. Though a great deal of damage was done to the chapel interior, the rest of the massive structure was not damaged. According to the Cape Breton Post for October 16, 1974 the Park Superintendent "Dr Lunn said three factors prevented much greater damage - the quick response by the Louisbourg Fire Department, the fire doors and fire walls that separate the chapel from nearby segments of the barracks and the excellent water pressure inside and outside the building." Lunn estimated that there was \$85,000.00 worth of damage done to the chapel.<sup>133</sup>

Immaculate Conception church, a landmark in Mainadieu, constructed circa 1885, was destroyed by fire on June 6, 1976. This was part of a major forest fire which also destroyed 17 structures including 13 homes in Mainadieu. Newspaper articles estimated the loss at \$1,000,000.00. Volunteer fire departments from Louisbourg, Coxheath, Port Morien, Westmount, Grand Lake Road and Sydney River responded. According to the Cape Breton Post, "it was the most serious forest fire in Cape Breton since the early 1950s when a blaze ravaged Pleasant Bay forcing the evacuation of scores of families by sea."<sup>134</sup>



## The Department in the 1980s

Everett Beaver was Fire Chief until 1986. It is noted in the January 24, 1986 minutes that he was stepping down as Chief but staying on as a fireman. Beaver had served the Department well. In a period of increased support from the Town he had obtained new and up-to-date equipment including a new truck and van, expanded the fire hall and introduced uniforms for the first time. By 1987 he had retired from the Department but requested honorary membership. At the meeting on February 27, 1987 he was recognized as Honorary Fire Chief.

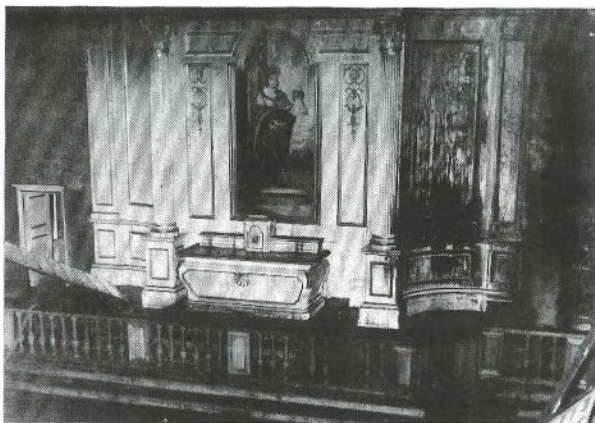
Joe Trimm was elected Chief in January 1986.<sup>135</sup> This was the first election since 1980 in which there were no other contenders for the post. At same meeting Richard Cross stepped down as 1st Deputy Chief and was replaced by Leo Carter. Aubrey Harris was elected 2nd Deputy Chief and Ian Harte was elected Secty/Treasurer.

By 1986 the truck, purchased in 1952, had reached the end of its useful life. Repairs would cost at least \$1500.00. The suggestion from the Fire Wards to the September meeting of Council was that the it be sold. The truck was sold to Pius Campbell of Sydney who restored it.

Acquiring a new fire truck, to support the 1972 pumper, was foremost in the minds of members of the Department. The May 1986 Fire Wards report to Council quoted a section of the contract with the Fortress which said that the town agreed, "to maintain an adequate force of trained firemen, and such mobile firefighting equipment to establish and maintain the L'bourg Vol. Fire Dept as an effective fire fighting force." Fire Ward Greta Cross went on to note that "The Fire Department contends that the Town has reneged on this commitment insofar as equipment is concerned. The need for a new pumper has been stressed since 1981 and to date nothing has been done about this very serious matter. . . I move that the Fire Wards engage in dialogue with governments in search of funding for a new pumper for the Louisbourg Fire Dept." In defence of the Council, it had placed a new fire pumper in its list for capital improvements in 1982, but the destruction of the Fire Hall in July that year set the priority for capital spending for the next few years.<sup>136</sup>

At the annual meeting in March 1986, Chief Trimm announced the plans to purchase a new truck. He addressed Council in September stating that the Fire Department had commitments for \$33,000.00 but needed an additional \$70,000.00 to \$75,000.00. Council agreed to provide the extra funding.<sup>137</sup> As a result, a new truck was added to the Department in 1988. It is a Ford truck chassis and a Hub-built body, holds 1,000 gallons of water and can pump 840 gallons a minute. The truck cost \$121,000.00 of which National Sea Products contributed \$20,000.00 and the Town of Louisbourg \$79,000.00. The Fire Department raised the remaining \$22,000.00. The 1972 Ford is kept as backup. In 1989 the Department also acquired a 1985 one ton GMC Cube Van which it uses to carry turnout gear. The old 1979 van was sold.





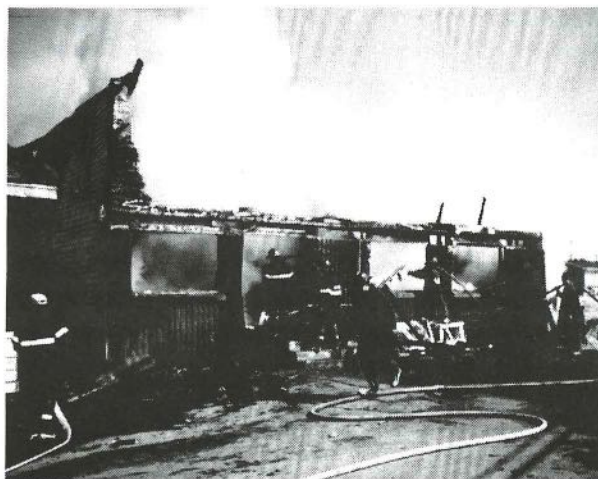
*Chapel of St. Louis at the Fortress of Louisbourg after the fire in October 1974. (courtesy Fortress of Louisbourg NHS)*



*Immaculate Conception church in Mainadieu, destroyed in June 1976. (courtesy Owen Fitzgerald)*



*Louisbourg Town Hall fire July 1982. (courtesy Carlton Lunn)*



*Bussey's Store fire April 1989. (courtesy Eugene Magee)*





*Firemen presenting keys to the new 1979 Ford van to Councillor Jean Bagnell. Left - right: Richard Cross, Joe Trimm, Jean Bagnell, Everett Beaver. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*



*Mayor Harvey Lewis and Chief Trimm with the new with the new fire truck in 1988. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*



*Amy MacKay of George D. Lewis High presenting Chief Trimm with a donation towards purchase of the new truck in 1988. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*



*The new fire truck put into service in 1988. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*



## Fires in the 1980s

There were 175 calls, including a number of false alarms, in the 1980s. These included house fires, boat fires, grass fires, chimney fires, and car fires. All fires in the 1980s were eclipsed by the destruction of the Town Hall on July 21, 1982.

Former Fire Chief Everett Beaver remembers that "The Town Hall fire really sticks out because it was so hard to fight and so difficult to extinguish. And the reason for that was because of so many departments in it - there were an awful lot of rooms in the old building. It was renovated over the years and this created problems. It was a very dangerous fire, because the fire got into the building everywhere. It seemed like it was through all the walls. There were dropped ceilings in the building that created problems. Really, you didn't know when the building was ready to collapse. We got the call, I think it was somewhere around 4 o'clock in the morning. When we arrived on the scene the fire was coming through the window in the police department. We entered the building at that point and put out what fire was there and thought we had extinguished it, but by that time it had gone through the whole building."<sup>138</sup> According to the Cape Breton Post, " . . . the mayor ( Harvey Lewis ) said the fire resulted in the loss of the towns records, including those of the town hall, police, planning commission and the various groups which used the building for meetings such as the senior citizens and two fraternal lodges."<sup>139</sup> Lewis also noted that the structure had a great deal of symbolic importance locally, being not only the Town Hall but having served for many years as the Louisbourg school.

The loss of valuable Town records was anticipated in an audit of 1937. Though the auditor's comments referred to an earlier town hall the conditions applied in 1982.

Auditor A.A. Martel, himself a former Mayor of Louisbourg wrote, "You have a more complete record of the Town's affairs since its incorporation, than is possessed by many towns, and these records would be most valuable in writing up a history of the town. However, these records are mostly in manuscript form, and kept on shelves in the town hall. They are most valuable and should be treasured. Your safe is already overcrowded and not able to accommodate these records, and to purchase sufficient safe room to cover your requirements would be very expensive indeed. I would therefore suggest that you consider building a concrete vault in the building with ample room to provide for the future years. This would not cost a great deal, and if you did not think you could afford the expensive vault doors generally used; a door could be cheaply constructed of Iron plate, asbestos and wood which would be fireproof and enduring. The town hall is a wooden building, and is being used for other purposes as well as town affairs, and therefore the fire hazard on that account is somewhat increased."<sup>140</sup>

The second major fire of the 1980s was at Gordon Bussey's Home Hardware store and took place on April 13, 1989. "Responding to a 5:50 A.M. call Louisbourg firefighters found the two story wooden structure completely involved. Firefighting efforts were concentrated on surrounding properties since little could be done for the hardware store. Seventeen members of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department remained on the scene for over six hours. The fire was particularly difficult to fight because of the presence of cans of paint, solvents and live ammunition, all of which exploded at intervals due to intense heat . . . A subsequent investigation by the Louisbourg Fire Department, RCMP and the Fire Marshall's Office determined that the fire was deliberately set with both ends of the building ignited at the same time."<sup>141</sup> No one was ever charged in this latest case of arson in Louisbourg.



In 1989 the members of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department included the following: Joseph Trimm, Leo Carter, Hector Baldwin, Michael Burke, Tom Carter, Richard Cross, Henry Dibbon, Aubrey Harris, Jason Harris, Ian Harte, Ashley Hill, Clifford Hoban, Walter MacInnis, Fred MacIntyre, Clarke MacKinnon, Percy MacKinnon, Eugene Magee, James Mahon, Stuart Pellerin, Cindy Trimm, Fabian Trimm, and Jeff Vallis.



*Fire Department in 1987. Front l-r: Byron Fiander, Leo Carter, Joseph Trimm, Fabian Trimm, Ian Harte. Back l-r: David Tellum, Clifford Hoban, Henry Dibbon, David Shepard, Ashley Hill, Melvin Smith, Clarke MacKinnon, John Hardy, Fred MacIntyre, Walter MacInnis, Tom Carter.*

### **The Department in the 1990s**

Training was a significant aspect of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Terry Redden of the Nova Scotia Firefighters School conducted a Level 1 Course in October 1991. Members of the Department took advantage of the opportunity and a number received their Level 1. Training has always been a part of the ongoing life of Louisbourg volunteer fire fighters though it has been regularized over the past 30 years. They meet in the fire hall on Tuesday evenings for practice except for July and August. Business meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month. For the past number of years the Fire Wards, representing the Town Council, sit in on the first part of the business meeting to discuss matters of concern to the Department.

The ongoing discussion with the Fortress concerning the contract for fire services came to a head in the early 1990s. By that time the contract called for a fixed annual fee of \$1,000 and the possibility of two practices at \$500.00 for each practice. In February 1990 the Fire



Wards met with the Park Superintendent, Roger Wilson, who encouraged them to approach officials of the County of Cape Breton for additional funding on the basis that the County was receiving the federal grant-in-lieu of taxes. Wilson also assumed, from the meeting, that the Fire Department would continue to provide primary support to the Fortress.<sup>142</sup> At this time the Park contract offer was reduced to \$500.00 for each of two practice drills. Additional financial support from the County was not forthcoming and the Fire Wards reported to Council in June 1990 that "Due to the County's negative response to our request for additional funds to provide fire protection to the Park, it was agreed that we contact Roger Wilson for help in obtaining this funding." This contact did not solve the problem and the Fire Wards reported in September 1990 that "The fire department executive was informed that talks will soon be resuming between the Council and Parks Canada. Also the existing contract, or lack of it, between the town and the fortress was examined. It was the general consensus that our department not participate in a full practice with Parks Canada until Council has had an opportunity to review the present situation." In January 1991 Council passed a resolution to the effect that the Town of Louisbourg would not be providing fire protection service to Fortress Louisbourg. In his response to the motion the Park Superintendent wrote, ". . . I wish to note that the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department is legally required to provide protection services to a distance of (5) miles from the location of the Fire Hall.<sup>143</sup> In spite of this comment there is no record of such an agreement between the Town of Louisbourg and the County in the Town records. The Town Clerk, elected officials and Fire Chiefs all believed that the money received from the County was for the area east of the Town while the reconstructed fortress was covered by the Park contract.



*The executive of the Fire Department in March 1995. Left - right: Eugene Magee, Neil MacKeigan, Philip Burke, Tom Carter, David Skinner, Hector Baldwin, Chief Joe Trimm, Ashley Hill, Leo Carter, Vince Ley. (W. O'Shea)*



Nonetheless, the volunteers of the Fire Department acknowledge the value of the reconstructed fortress to the tourism economy and are always ready to assist the Park in the event of fire. A positive step to future co-operative efforts took place in 1993 when the Fortress entered into a cost sharing arrangement with the Fire Department to purchase a compressor system which fills air bottles.

Beginning in April 1991, the representatives of the Fire Department held meetings with Mayor Victor Hanham in an effort to obtain a new fire hall. It was hoped that the fire hall could be combined with a recreation centre attracting a grant from the province to pay up to 1/3 of the cost. It was expected that much of the labour would be provided through a variety of make work grants. In preparation, the Town contracted preliminary drawings in early 1992. According to Chief Trimm the anticipated cost for this structure was in the area of \$800,000.00. To date there has been no agreement and the Firemen have considered enlarging the existing fire hall.

For the past number of summers the Department has been involved in the introduction of the 911 system. In the summer of 1993, Clayton Moore and Laurie Carter collected important information on all residences including number of people living there, type of heating system and family members needing special attention. This information has been entered into a data base which is readily accessed by the firemen.

The new Regional Municipality of Cape Breton became a legal entity in July 1994 and will come into practical effect on August 1, 1995. The report on the new municipality addresses the matter of small volunteer fire departments, such as Louisbourg, recognizing their value to the community. However, there has been no decision about the level of funding to be made available. In recent years the budget for the Department, provided by the Town Council, has been approximately \$40,000.00. This includes costs for electricity and heating of the building, but it is a budget that recognizes the real needs of the Department. Chief Trimm has been meeting regularly with area Fire Chiefs as well as the Chief Administrator for Fire Services in the new Regional Municipality to ease the transition.

The Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department as of February 1995 includes the following members: Joe Trimm - Chief, Leo Carter - 1st Deputy Chief, Philip Burke - 2nd Deputy Chief, Neil MacKeigan - Secretary, Hector Baldwin - Treasurer and members Bill Burke, Maurice Burke, Michael Burke, Tom Carter, Henry Dibbon, Victor Durnford, Aubrey Harris, Jason Harris, Ian Harte, Ashley Hill, Cliff Hoban, Stanley Hunt, Vince Ley, Fred MacIntyre, Eugene Magee, Stuart Pellerin, Glen Shepard, David Skinner, John Spawn and Fabian Trimm.

## **Fires in the 1990s**

So far in the 1990s the Department has responded to more than 85 fires. Large fires include:

Denise Burke - January 10, 1990 - Little Lorraine - house destroyed

Francis Kennedy - July 6, 1990 - fishing boat destroyed

George Henry Philips - July 31, 1992 - house destroyed

Howard Mousseau - Feb 16, 1993 - damage to 4 houses on Milton Street (Mousseau, Sam Vardy, Margaret Gallant, John Moore)

Henry Dibbon - March 17, 1994 - propane blew the western end of the house

Tom Kennedy (Wilfred MacInnis) - May 30, 1995 - house destroyed



## **The Fire Department and the 1995 Commemoration**

The year 1995 is important for the community of Louisbourg as it commemorates the 1720 founding of the colonial French town, the 1745 siege by New England troops and the arrival of the Sydney and Louisbourg Railway in 1895. A great deal of money is being invested in the community in infrastructure, marketing and for events throughout the year.

As part of the celebrations for 1995 the Louisbourg Fire Department is commemorating 90 years of fire service to the Town of Louisbourg beginning with the Coal Company Fire Brigade which was founded in 1905, extending through the Louisbourg Fire Brigade of 1928, the ARP Brigade during World War II to the present Department which was reorganized in 1963. There is a weekend of friendly competition and family entertainment planned for June 24 - 25 to which all Cape Breton fire departments have been invited to participate. In addition, the Department is commissioning a memorial from John D. Steele's & Sons in North Sydney. The memorial will be unveiled on the June 24 weekend and it will be formally dedicated on September 17 on the occasion of the Firemen's Memorial parade. The monument is erected to in memory of deceased firemen of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department.

## **Some Changes Over the Years**

A great deal has changed in the Department over the last 30 years since it was reorganized. Chief Joe Trimm recalls that in addition to acquiring two new fire engines "We have 13 sets of breathing apparatus and 14 extra air bottles. Now we have a cascade system and a compressor which gives us the capability to fill our own air bottles - versus driving to Sydney to have them filled in previous years. It takes four or five minutes to fill a bottle."

On the topic of communications changes Trimm remembers, "When I joined there were five or six homes that had fire phones. When the fire was called in to the operator the phones rang in all of these homes and whoever picked it up and answered the call got the information - where the fire was. They'd set off the fire whistle which was on top of the fire station. There was a switch next to the phones - the fire phones - and they'd set off the whistle with that. Somebody in the house would stay on the telephone line until the first person got to the fire station and when they answer the phone at the fire station, the information was passed on to them. . . Now we have a 24-hour answering service in Sydney. They answer all the fire calls and they send the message out through radio equipment and pagers. Everybody gets the same information at the same time over the pager and responds to the fire hall. They just tell you to respond to a fire at the address that they have. We have all Motorola equipment - a base station in Sydney and our own firehall - 4 mobile radios in the trucks and 3 hand-held radio which each chief carries, and 25 pagers, one for each fireman. The company is telephone Answering Service Cape Breton, We are hoping in the near future that we will all go to the same answering service that the police and ambulance services are using right now - all emergency services can be answered at one location.

The switch to radios was in the very early 80s. What happened, was that at first all these homes had fire phones and there always seemed to be someone home. But in recent years you get a lot of families with 2 people working and people seem to travel a lot more than they did. It was getting to be a problem having people at home to answer the fire phones." <sup>144</sup>



## Community Activities

The Volunteer Fire Department exists to fight fires, but it is also an important community service organization. It provides a sense of worth and accomplishment to its members. At the same time it supports the Louisbourg community in a number of ways. Since the mid 1980s the Fire Chief has been responsible for coordinating the Emergency Measures response in Louisbourg. The first major test was the efficient preparations for a major storm that was expected on March 24, 1993. Fortunately, the storm did not strike this area but the opportunity showed the Fire Chief and the Fire Department to be well organized to respond to emergencies in the community.

The Fire Department is the prime mover, along with its Auxiliary organization, behind the highly successful Crabfest held at the end of August. Begun as an experiment in 1993, the Crabfest is a major contribution to the community's tourism profile. The success of the festival has been such that the Firemen received the Cape Breton Tourist Association "Festival of the Year Award" for 1994.

Since 1963, the Fire Department has sponsored a Christmas party for the children of Louisbourg. A feature of the Firemen's Christmas is a tree decorated with electric lights and placed either on top of the fire station or on the ground in front of the building. For a number of years, into the 1970s, there was an annual Christmas dinner.<sup>145</sup> There has also always been a Santa Claus for the children. A Santa Claus suit was purchased in 1972.<sup>146</sup> Over the years Santa has been played by Seward MacKeigan, Stuart Pellerin and Richard Cross. Dougie Pearl has also volunteered on a number of occasions. The minutes show that the Department was pricing a new Santa Suit in 1991 and noted it would not be lent out to other groups. Charlotte Steele was asked to make a new suit for 1992.

The Department took part in Regatta Days and Action days for Town in 1970s. This usually involved setting up the dunk tank.<sup>147</sup> Firemen also sponsored a variety of local young women as princesses. Some of the princesses included: Judy Whynott, Ann Lovett, Sheila Beaver, Donna MacIntyre and Nancy Smith.<sup>148</sup>

Since 1967 the Fire Department has sponsored or partially sponsored a Little League team.<sup>149</sup> This included over the years purchase of uniforms and other related equipment.

Bingo has been an important means of raising money for the past 45 years. It was not always a straightforward matter of setting up the hall and having cards available. In 1951 the school board wrote the following. "At a meeting of the School board held on the 22nd inst. I was instructed to write you regarding the presence of school children at bingo games operated by your Fire Department. The Board respectfully requests that, in future, no school children be permitted to attend these games, for very obvious reasons."<sup>150</sup> At the November 28 meeting in 1951 it was decided to buy a 10 pound Turkey from Lewis & Co to use as a door prize before Christmas. For many years the bingo was held in the Navy League building or in the Masonic Hall on Upper Warren Street. One of the ongoing problems was ensuring that all the firemen took their turns and there were several instances when it was suggested that firemen, some with many years of service, be ejected from the Department for not showing up for their turn at bingo. It got to the point that there was a motion at October 1980 meeting to cancel bingo by the end of December and find another way to make money. It was impossible for the Department to compete financially with the games giving away large prizes. The Department still has some involvement in bingo. Each week on Sunday it gets the profits from the first game of the night at the Albert Bridge firehall.

In the fall of 1972 there were three Pig & Whistle entertainments sponsored by the



firemen to assist raising money for the new fire truck and extension to the firehall. Over the years money was raised through bean suppers, Jigg's dinners, herring suppers, tickets on Christmas or Easter dinners, even splits and dances and, in recent years, an annual ham and salad dinner.

In 1964 the firemen were part of the community effort to raise support for the Karen Burke fund. For many years during the 1970's Timmy Cluett was a special friend to the Department. Each Christmas he was given a present by his friends in the Fire Department.

In January 1994 the Firemen sponsored the Beavers in Louisbourg and beginning that year they have taken on the responsibility of flooding the Strathcona Street Rink.<sup>151</sup>

The Firemen participate in parades for Summerfest and Remembrance Day and send representatives to the annual Memorial Parade in the fall.

The annual meeting and banquet takes place in March. The banquet is held in one of the church halls, features a guest speaker, Chief's report and swearing-in of the officers of the Department. The meeting is normally followed by a dance in the School gym, the Lions Club or the Legion branch. In 1952 the annual banquet was held at Tom Wong's Restaurant (the Grubstake). It was planned that after the first course there would be a toast to the King by Chief Lewis, then a toast to the Department by Charles Bagnell, Chairman of the Fire Wards and a response by Deputy Chief Fred Burke. This was followed by the financial report, the annual report, regular business, installation of officers, a speech by Mayor George Lewis and finally entertainment.<sup>152</sup> Additional speakers at the meeting were L.E. Smith of National Sea Products and A. Thurston of Gorton-Pew. There were four members of the Bible Hill fire department in attendance as well.<sup>153</sup> In 1956 it was planned to hold the banquet at the Crowdis Hotel, but it was discovered that the firemen would have to supply tables, dishes and silverware. The result was that it was decided to hold the banquet at the Louisbourg Cafe.<sup>154</sup> The 1995 banquet, the last with Louisbourg as a separate municipality, was held on March 26 in Stella Maris Church hall. The Mayor, Councillors, Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk were presented with plaques in appreciation for their support of the department in the past. Mayor Hanham was Master of Ceremonies and guest speakers were Bill O'Shea and Harvey Lewis.

### **Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary**

"The original purpose of starting a Ladies Auxiliary was to assist the firemen, both morally and financially. It was also felt that they could assist in worthwhile causes in the town. The original purpose is still followed today."<sup>155</sup>

Forming an Auxiliary was discussed at a Fire Department meeting on September 30, 1964 though nothing was decided. The next mention is at the June 4, 1966 meeting when it was decided to call a meeting of firemen and their wives. There is no record of that special meeting but the Auxiliary was formed on July 13, 1966. According to the Auxiliary minutes, "All present were in favour of forming the organization and a number of the ladies not present who were called on the telephone were also very much in favour." The officers appointed from the floor at this first meeting included. Jennie Whynott - President, Betty Beaver - Vice-President, Greta Beaver - Secretary, Georgina MacKinnon - Treasurer, Chris Gartland - Ways and Means, Agnes MacLeod - Fire and Rescue, and Edie MacIntyre - Publicity. Others present on July 13 included Frances Ann Kendall, Jane Harris and Cora Burke.



At the same meeting the ladies moved directly into fund raising by proposing a home cooking sale to get money to purchase supplies for card games. It was planned to hold the card games on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at the fire station. Admission was to be .50 with a lunch served. The three ladies catering would supply the 3 prizes for the game. This approach was taken until some additional money could be raised. One way of raising some money was to have each member pay .25 a month.<sup>156</sup> At the meeting on August 4, 1966 it was decided to hold the regular meetings on the first Tuesday of each month in order to "suit members and help increase our attendance." The meetings during that first fall were taken up in part planning a variety concert to take place in Calvin Hall (on Strathcona Street). The secretary was instructed to write to the steering committee for the Centennial events planned for the town in 1967. The Auxiliary proposed to hold a luncheon of lobster rolls, salad, dessert, tea or coffee in the fire station. The November 1966 meeting saw the organization of the first Christmas party, slated for December 17 at the fire station - a ham and salad supper. Each member paid \$1.00 towards expenses and the members of the Fire Department were invited. At the December 7, 1966 meeting it was decided that prizes for the December card game would be 2 turkeys, 2 chickens and 2 boxes of chocolates. This was the first time that there is a record of a contribution to the Fire Department as well. The Auxiliary voted to return \$100.00 as partial payment for the purchase of tables and chairs and an additional gift of \$35.00 towards the Christmas treats for the children of the town.<sup>157</sup>



*Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary members in March 1995. Front l-r: Kathleen Ley, Maureen Burke, Sylvia Trimm, Eileen Kennedy, Joyce Trimm. Back l-r: Sharon Carter - President, Louise Carter, Linda Burke. (W. O'Shea)*



The Auxiliary raised money in the early years through card games and bingos, annual ham & salad suppers and fish chowders. The fish chowders were begun during the Centennial year in 1967 when the Auxiliary worked with the Fire Department.<sup>158</sup> In 1968 it sponsored a fish chowder week from the 5 to 10 of August. Money was also raised on raffles for dolls, cushions, watches and "bottles of cheer". In the spring of 1974 the ladies sponsored a series of three Pig and Whistle evenings.

When the group first formed, the members were concerned that newly purchased tables and chairs not leave the fire hall without their permission. But at the January 10, 1967 meeting it was made clear that the Auxiliaries of the Legion and the Orange Lodge might borrow them. The Auxiliary also cooperated with community organizations by cancelling or changing the times of bingos for the CWL Tea and Sale for Home and School and Lions club concerts. It supported local hockey, made a contribution of \$20.00 towards the cenotaph in 1968 and pledged \$200.00 to the construction of a sports centre in Louisbourg in 1971. For a number of years the Auxiliary supported a foster child through the Christian Children's Fund. The child, Amolo Oyugi, was born in 1960 and attended the Kibos School for the Blind in Kenya.<sup>159</sup>

Money gained through fund raisers was used to purchase materials for the kitchen but also to assist the fire department. The Auxiliary purchased overcoats for the firemen in 1974, a Scott Air Pac in 1976 and contributed \$2,000.00 towards a van in 1977. Each year some financial support is given to the Fire Department at its annual meeting.

The Auxiliary provided a number of social occasions for its membership and the firemen in the 1970s. There was an annual Lobster dinner for the Auxiliary members held each June. On this occasion, every second year, the new slate of officers was sworn in. The Auxiliary members also sponsored a Christmas supper either in December or January for themselves, the firemen and guests. For a number of years there was also a Christmas party held for the children of the firemen. This was in addition to the annual Christmas treat sponsored by the Firemen for all the children of the community.

The Auxiliary began to face problems in the early 1980s. Margie Smith, the last president of the Auxiliary which formed in 1966, says that there weren't enough members to keep it going.<sup>160</sup> As a result it was disbanded for a number of years.

It was organized again on June 3, 1991. Those in attendance were Linda Burke, Louise Carter, Sharon Carter, Patsy Harris, Olive Spawn, Joyce Trimm and Sylvia Trimm. This organizational meeting was the result of an earlier meeting with Chief Joe Trimm and Deputy Chief Leo Carter who encouraged the women to form an Auxiliary to provide the Department with support and the ability to raise funds. At that first meeting in June the membership was set at \$1.00 a year and meetings were set for the first Monday of each month. This was later changed to the second Monday to make it more convenient for the membership. The objective at the first meeting was a membership of 25 and it was anticipated that membership would be open to the general public.<sup>161</sup>

The Auxiliary moved quickly to raise money with a hot dog sale as part of the Summerfest and a home bake sale in October. The home bake sale was repeated in 1992 and 1993. Additional fund raisers have included a table at a flea market, and a sweet and sour meat ball dinner in 1992. Support for the fire department has included cash donations each year and assisting with the purchase of a generator and a new stove for the kitchen. In 1992 the Fire Chiefs Convention was held in Sydney and the Louisbourg Auxiliary hosted a fish chowder lunch for the spouses who were visiting the Fortress.<sup>162</sup> The Auxiliary members feel that their role supporting the fire department is a natural extension of the fact that their



husbands are firemen. They are proud that their fund raising efforts purchase important equipment that helps to keep the department in top shape.

As with the Fire Department, the Auxiliary has a larger community role to play. The organization provides social benefits to the members. The regular meetings are relaxed and informal, though minutes are kept and all the other requirements of an organization are met. This winter there was an evening pot luck sponsored for members, reminiscent of the June lobster dinners in the 1970s. The Auxiliary has supported the Brownies and has sponsored snow sculpturing during the Louisbourg Winterfest for the past two years.

Perhaps the major involvement as both a fund raiser and as a contribution to the development of tourism in Louisbourg is the Crabfest. In June 1993 Auxiliary members Olive Spawn, Maureen Burke, Eileen Burke and Sylvia Trimm met with Deputy Chief Leo Carter to discuss preparing the coleslaw to be served with the crab at the Crabfest. By the end of the meeting the Auxiliary had agreed to take on the project and prepare 400 crab dinners and 50 ham dinners.<sup>163</sup> In 1994 the ladies planned for 1,000 dinners and actually prepared over 1200. To give some idea of the scope of the work this involved peeling and cooking 800 pounds of potatoes. Volunteers worked in the kitchen or serving dinners from 7 AM to 7 PM. It is anticipated that the 1995 Crabfest preparations will require 1600 pounds of potatoes and a great deal more work.

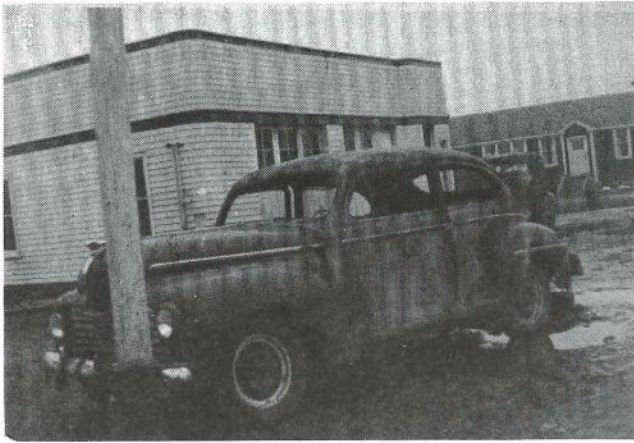
The 1995 the executive of the Auxiliary includes. Sharon Carter - President, Eileen Burke - Vice President, Sylvia Trimm - Secretary, Linda Burke - Treasurer, Olive Spawn - Membership Convener.

The presidents of the Auxiliary have been: Jenny Whynott (1966), Georgina Cross (1968), Frances Ann Kendall (1970), Agnes MacLeod (1972), Muriel Burke (1974), Chris Gartland (1976), Greta Beaver (1978), Margie Smith (1980), Sharon Carter (1991 - present).



*The men and women of the Town of Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department & Auxiliary in May 1995. Front l-r: Vince Ley, John Spawn, Stuart Pellerin, Eugene Magee, Neil MacKeigan, Fabian Trimm, David Skinner. Centre l-r: 2nd Deputy Chief Philip Burke, Maureen Burke, Joyce Trimm, Eileen Trimm, Louise Carter, Chief Joe Trimm, Sylvia Trimm, Kathleen Ley, Auxiliary President Sharon Carter, Linda Burke, Deputy Chief Leo Carter. Back l-r: Ashley Hill, Victor Durnford, Hector Baldwin, Michael Burke, Clifford Hoban, Maurice Burke, Henry Dibbon, Tom Carter. (W. O'Shea)*





*One of the cars burned at Hazard MacRae's Garage in February 1954. (courtesy - Joe Trimm)*



*Florian Bryan, Princess Judy Whynott and Chief Everett Beaver in 1972. (courtesy E. Beaver)*



*Timmy Cluett donating the savings from his piggy bank towards the new truck. L-r: Timmy Cluett and fireman Percy MacKinnon. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*



*Chief Joe Trimm making a presentation to Chief Park Warden Ben Roper at the annual banquet in 1987. (courtesy Joe Trimm)*





*Fire Department Yankees in the mid 1980s. Front l-r: Tony Lilly, Cory Boudreau, Danny Boudreau, Curtis Vardy. Back l-r: Coach Darren MacLeod, David Hoban, Artie Kennedy, Jackie Penney, Todd MacIntyre, Dexter Vardy, Assistant coach Robbie Hoban. (courtesy Louisburg Little League)*



*Yankees in 1989. Front l-r: Amy Whynott, Laurie Carter, Chad Burke, Mark MacDougall, Glen MacDougall, B. J. MacInnis, Chris Tellum. (courtesy Louisbourg Little League)*



*Yankees in 1994. Front l-r: Michael Goodman, Mark Langille, Matthew Burke, Craig Carter, Tyler Kennedy. Standing l-r: B. J. Kennedy, Michael Langille, Nicole Langille, Deanna Carter, Jennifer Carter, Andra Hanham, Jennifer Pitcher, coach Philip Burke. (courtesy Louisbourg Little League)*



## Membership of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department and Auxiliary

Over the years many citizens of Louisbourg have served with the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department or the Auxiliary. Here is a list. The date, after the name, represents the first time it appears in Fire Department or Auxiliary records. There are gaps in the record, particularly for the 1930s and 1940s, and so some members of the early Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Brigade may have been missed.

Bagnell, Charles 1946  
Bagnell, Warren 1954  
Baker, Ralph 1940  
Baker, Brent 1982  
Baker, James W. 1928  
Baldwin, Hector 1988  
Bates, Paul 1928  
Bates, Paul Jr., 1933  
Beaver, Duncan 1968  
Beaver, Millan 1963  
Beaver, Everett 1945 Chief 1963  
Bryan, Florian 1963  
Burke, Joe 1982  
Burke, Leonard 1986  
Burke, Bill 1992  
Burke, John 1963  
Burke, Philip 1991  
Burke, Maurice 1992  
Burke, Leonard, Jr. 1986  
Burke, Fred 1928  
Burke, William, 1993  
Burke, Michael 1988  
Burke, James 1928  
Burke, John 1963  
Burke, Philip 1991  
Burke, Phonse 1966  
Bussey, Roy 1963  
Campbell, D. A. 1928, Hon Chief  
Campbell, Anthony 1990  
Cann, Howard 1945  
Cann, L. H. 1928  
Carter, Thomas 1986  
Carter, Leo 1984  
Coveyduc, James 1933  
Cross, Richard 1961  
Cross, Darrell 1981  
Crowdis, J. 1928?  
Dearing, William 1951  
Defriese, J. R. 1928  
Dibbon, Henry 1986  
Dowling, Sam 1928  
Dowling, Albert 1951  
Durnford, Victor 1994  
Fiander, Byron 1983  
Gartland, William G. 1963  
Grant, Everett 1966

Grant, Emerson 1928  
Hardy, Herman 1963  
Hardy, John 1985  
Harris, Jason 1989  
Harris, Roland 1952  
Harris, Aubrey 1967  
Harris, Lloyd 1945  
Harte, Ian 1982  
Harte, James 1955  
Hilchie, William 1945  
Hill, Ashley 1965  
Hiltz, Bert 1945  
Hiltz, G. B. 1928, Chief  
Hoban, David 1992  
Hoban, Clifford 1975  
Hunt, Stanley 1991  
Hunt, Alfred 1928  
Huntington, M. S. 1928  
Hutt, Peter 1955  
Jewell, Walter Sr. 1933  
Jewell, Walter Jr., 1933  
Johnson John (Jack) 1940  
Kendall, Kevin 1966  
Kendall, D. G. 1977  
Kennedy, Albert 1983  
Kennedy, Bernard 1977  
Kennedy, James 1977  
Kennedy, James N. 1978  
King, Lloyd 1969  
King, Jackie 1983  
Lahey, Fabian 1978  
Leahy, Archie Jr. 1951  
Levy, Ed 1945  
Levy, Carl 1956  
Lewis, Earl 1945  
Lewis, William Jr. 1928  
Lewis, Harvey M. 1947, Chief  
Lewis, Charles, Jr. 1965  
Lewis, George 1933  
Ley, Vince 1991  
Lipkus, Reuben 1939  
MacDonald, Laurence, 1961  
MacDonald, John E. 1951  
MacDonald, Alex 1928  
MacInnis, Walter 1986  
MacIntyre, Donald 1951



MacIntyre, Fred 1953  
 MacIntyre, Vernon 1954  
 MacKay, John A. 1968  
 MacKay, Angus 1951  
 MacKeigan, John George 1963  
 MacKeigan, Donald 1964  
 MacKeigan, Neil 1994  
 MacKeigan, D. J. 1940  
 MacKeigan, Seward 1969  
 MacKenzie, Freeman 1940  
 MacKinnon, Percy 1928  
 MacKinnon, John 1933  
 MacKinnon, Percy 1963  
 MacKinnon, Clarke 1968  
 MacLeod, Donald J. 1945  
 MacLeod, Malcolm 1951  
 MacMillan, Butch 1977  
 MacMillan, Burns 1940  
 MacMillan, Clarence 1978  
 MacMillan, John 1940  
 MacPhail, John A. 192  
 MacVicar, Ranald 1928  
 Magee, Eugene 1989  
 Mahon, Jim 1989  
 Martell, A. A. 193  
 Miller, Marvin 1987  
 Murphy, N.H. 1928  
 Murray, Clayton 1977  
 O'Keefe, Frank 1945  
 Paige, Henry 1961  
 Parsons, John Feb 33  
 Pellerin, Stuart 1976  
 Peters, R.A. 1928 Chief 1933  
 Phalen, George 1951  
 Price, John 1977  
 Ranson, Joseph 1946  
 Shepard, David 1986  
 Shepard, Glen 1992  
 Skinner, David 1992  
 Smith, Melvin 1986  
 Smith, Marmon 1974  
 Smith, Alex 1945  
 Spawn, John 1991  
 Stevens, Carter 1977  
 Tellum, David 1981  
 Thomas, Dan Joe 1951  
 Tilley, A. 1928  
 Townsend, Dan 1945  
 Townsend, Emerson 1945  
 Townsend, Louis 1945  
 Trimm, Allan 1991  
 Trimm, Cindy 1989  
 Trimm, Fabian 1963  
 Trimm, Joe 1969, Chief 1986  
 Tucker, Walter 1933  
 Vallis, Jeff 1989  
 Whynott, Steve 1956  
 Wilcox, George 1956  
 Wilcox, John 1952

Wilcox, Abe 1940  
 Wilcox, Phil 1954  
 Williams, Archie 1928

**Ladies Auxiliary:** The Auxiliary was established first in 1966 and again in 1991.

Beaver, Betty 1966 founding member  
 Beaver, Jeanette 1972  
 Beaver, Greta 1966 founding member  
 Bryan, Dolly 1966  
 Burke, Maureen 1992  
 Burke, Muriel 1966  
 Burke, Cora 1966 founding member  
 Burke, Eileen 1991  
 Burke, Linda 1991 \*  
 Bussey, Ester 1967  
 Carter, Louise 1991 \*  
 Carter, Sharon, 1991 \*  
 Chisholm, Darlene 1991  
 Cross, Georgina 1966  
 Dibbon, Darlene 1991  
 Gartland, Chris 1966 founding member  
 Grant, Tony 1966  
 Harris, Patricia 1970 \*  
 Harris, Jean 1966 founding member  
 Hill, Eileen 1966  
 Hoban, Linda 1975  
 Kennedy, Valerie 1977  
 Kendall, Frances Ann 1966  
 Kendall, Mary 1977  
 Kennedy, Judy 1975  
 Leahy, Margaret 1967  
 Ley, Kathleen 1992  
 MacIntyre, Edie, 1966 founding member  
 MacKeigan, Geraldine 1971  
 MacKenzie, Evelyn 1967  
 MacKinnon, Diane 1969  
 MacKinnon, Georgina 1966  
 MacLeod, Agnes, 1966 founding member  
 Murray, Irma 1975  
 Pellerin, Marge 1991  
 Price, Starr 1976  
 Smith, Margie 1974  
 Spawn, Olive 1991 \*  
 Trimm, Tanya 1991  
 Trimm, Sylvia 1971 \*  
 Trimm, Joyce 1966 \*  
 Whynott, Jennie 1966 founding member  
 Wilcox, Edith 1974

\* founding member of the 1991 Auxiliary.



## Endnotes

1. September 20, 1720, C11C, Volume 15, f. 230. The references to 18th-century Louisbourg are made thanks to the research notes of Eric Krause, historian and Historic Records Supervisor at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site.
2. G3, Carton 2041, piece 41, July 20, 1753.
3. Liger. *La Nouvelle Maison Rustique* ( Paris 1755) pp. 101 - 102.
4. C11B, volume 9, May 4, 1727, f. 229, 178v; C11B, volume 9, November 1727, f. 249; B, Volume 50, June 10, 1727, ff 595 - 597; C11B, Volume 9, November 17, 1727, ff. 141 - 147v; C11B volume 9, November 24, 1727, ff 95 - 95v; C11B, Volume 27, 1727(?) ff. 315 - 315v; C11B, Volume 9, November 26, 1727, f. 32v.
5. C11B, Volume 12, November 29, 1731, ff. 119v - 120.
6. Blaine Adams, *The Construction and Occupation of the Barracks of the King's Bastion at Louisbourg*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, No. 3, Indian and Northern Affairs, Minister of Supply and Service Canada, 1978, pp 71-72.
7. C11B, Volume 18, October 25, 1736, ff. 365 - 366.
8. Archives Maritime, Port de Rochefort, Series IE, Volume 145, November 11, 1748, p. 731
9. C11B, Volume 28, December 31, 1749 ff 330v, 335, 336, 337v, 339, 345, 348.
10. C11B, Volume 25, November 21, 1743, ff. 153 - 154.
11. Typed Bordereau, 1751, Fortress of Louisbourg NHS archives, p. 8.
12. G2, Volume 209, Dossier 508, August 3, 1757.
13. Trevor Whithead, Fire Engines,. Shire Publications #68, 1981, p. 7.
14. Thomas Ewbanks, Hydraulics & Mechanics, Bangs, Platt & Co, 240 Broadway, New York, 4th edition 1850, pp 323-334.
15. John R. Dunn, The Louisbourg Lighthouse,. Manuscript Report Number 32, National Historic Sites Service, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, July 1971.
16. Brenda Dunn, Block 2, Louisbourg, Fortress of Louisbourg, September 1971, Vol. 1.
17. C11B, Volume 36, October 1, 1756, ff. 28 - 28v, 145 - 147v; C11B, Volume 36, November 29, 1756, ff. 165 - 169; C11B Volume 36, December 9, 1756, ff 263 - 267; C11B Volume 36, December 20, 1756, ff. 271v; Volume 36, December 9, 1756, ff. 263 -267; C7, 220, June 30, 1756,p.6.
18. John S. McLennan, Louisbourg: from its foundation to its fall, Fourth ed. 1979, The Book Room Limited, Halifax, p. 281.
19. Ibid., p. 282.
20. P.A.C. MSS. War Office 34, Vol. 18 (M.G. 14, B10) pp. 67, 68.
21. Harvey Lewis, businessman, former Mayor and Fire Chief. Louisbourg, Nova Scotia. Conversation 18 November 1994.
22. *Sydney Daily Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 3 July 1901; 22 April 1902.
23. Ibid., 15 January 1902.
24. Conversation with Harvey Lewis, Lewis Store, Main Street, Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, December 1994.
25. *Daily Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 20 March 1902.



26. *Sydney Daily Post*, Sydney, Nova Scotia. 22, 23, 31 October and 1 November 1901. Also 19 October 1906 "Fifth Anniversary of Sydney's Big Fire."
27. *Sydney Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 23 June 1902.
28. *Ibid.*, 25 January 1904.
29. *Ibid.*, 7 July 1904.
30. *Ibid.*, 9 July 1904.
31. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1904.
32. Duncan Lamont's store still exists. It was moved from the waterfront to Main Street early in this century. It is the building located immediately west of the Royal Bank and is now owned by Jon Lawrence and used as a bakery and apartments.
33. *Sydney Record*, 4 October 1904.
34. Nova Scotia, Department of Mines Report for the Year Ended September 30th, 1905. pp. 39 - 40, (Beaton Institute).
35. *Daily Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 4, 5 March 1901.
36. *Ibid.*, 14 September 1900, 6 October 1900, 14 May 1901.
37. *Ibid.*, 6, 17 March 1904.
38. Public Archives of Nova Scotia. *Louisburg*, Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Limited, Totonto and Montreal, July 1924, revised to Sept 1944.
39. *Sydney Record*, 7, 9 April 1907.
40. *Ibid.*, 13 March 1907.
41. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1902.
42. *Sydney Daily Post*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 20 July 1907.
43. *Ibid.*, 17 August 1907.
44. *Sydney Record*, 20, 22 August 1907.
45. *Sydney Daily Post*, 28 August 1907.
46. *Sydney Record*, 14 August 1907. *Sydney Daily Post*, 1 October 1907.
47. *Sydney Daily Post*, 23 November 1907.
48. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 19 November 1922. *Sydney Post*, 20 November 1922.
49. The light keeper was William Cameron.
50. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 11 February 1927. *Sydney Post*, 12 February 1927.
51. Mary K. MacLeod, *Whisper in the Air, Marconi: The Cape Breton Years, 1901 - 1945*, in Kenneth Donovan, ed. Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays in Honour of the Island's Bicentennial 1785 - 1985, University College of Cape Breton Press, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1985, pp. 117-123. Also Henry Bradford, A Short History of the Marconi trans-Atlantic Receiving Station in Louisbourg 1913 - 1926, March 1995, p. 7.
52. *Louisburg*, Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Limited, July 1924, revised to September 1944. The loss of the Council Minute Book in the fire of 1982 creates a major information gap in understanding the process of organizing the fire department.



53. Memo from H. J. McCann to M.S. Huntington, 26 July 1928, Louisbourg Heritage Society files.
54. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 28 September 1928.
55. Louisbourg Town Volunteer Fire Brigade, 16 November 1928, on stationery from Mayor's Office, Louisburg, N.S. Canada, Louisbourg Heritage Society files.
56. Minute of meeting, 16 November 1928, signed by A. Tilley, Louisbourg Heritage Society files.
57. At a meeting in 1951 Fred Burke asked that the Minute book be obtained from Melvin Huntington, but this does not seem to have been done. There is a record of 2 meetings from the mid 1940s in a Minute Book in the Louisbourg Fire Department files.
58. These are not the only documents relating to the formation of the Fire Department. M.S. Huntington also records the officers and membership in his diary for November 16, 1928. He does not mention James Baker, Sam Dowling, B. W. Heckman or H.W. Tucker. None of the original members of the Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Brigade remain to sort this problem of documentation.
59. Written presentation made to Harvey Lewis, 8 May 1963, on the event of his resignation from the Louisbourg Fire Department. Harvey Lewis files.
60. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 17, 30 April 1934.
61. Files, Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department, Louisbourg, N.S.
62. This small gable roofed structure was originally the County Building and jail and located on Main Street at the point where Aberdeen Street begins. It was moved in 1902 to make way for the construction of Aberdeen. When the Town was incorporated in 1901 the County Building became the Town Hall and remained so until after 1916. By that time a new School had been constructed and the old school building (now the Church of God) was taken over for municipal purposes.
63. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 11 October 1929.
64. Text accompanying 1952 Fire Prevention Week submission, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
65. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 23, 25 February 1932.
66. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1936.
67. Report to the N.S. Fire Marshall 20 June 1940, R. A. Peters. The Peters Bros building was a total loss. The fire started in an adjacent building used as a barn. Louisbourg Fire Department files.
68. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 6, 15 July 1940. *Post-Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 8, 16, 31 July 1940.
69. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Louisbourg Board of Trade held at the Dundonald Inn, 8 P.M. January 14, 1937. W. O'Shea files. Also M.S. Huntington, Diary, 21 January 1935, 14 January 1937. Huntington also read a poem called, *The Ups and Downs of a Community Tree*, concerning the Community Christmas Tree that was lit on 24 December 1936 on the lot at the corner of Main and Warren where the Post Office now stands.
70. Memo to D. M. Johnston from S.S. Holden Ltd., Ottawa, 27 March 1939. Circular entitled *Safety First, Buy the G-H-G Fire Pack*. Memo to M. S. Huntington from S. S. Holden Ltd., 19 April 1939, Louisbourg Heritage Society files.
71. See Jean Kyte, Heritage Notes, No. 6, May 1995, *Special VE Day 1995 Edition*, Louisbourg Heritage Society.
72. John MacDonald, Main Street, Louisbourg, 5 January 1995, Louisbourg Heritage Society.
73. The Towns Incorporation Act, Chapter 3, The Acts of 1941.
74. *Sydney Post-Record*, Sydney, N.S., 28 March 1944.
75. Minute Book, Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department, 9 November 1945.



76. Ibid. 10 January 1946.
77. Letter Daniel Townsend to William O'Shea, 27 February 1995.
78. Written presentation to Harvey Lewis, 8 May 1963, Harvey Lewis files. Letter from Daniel Townsend to William O'Shea, 27 February 1995.
79. Submission on Fire Prevention Week, 31 October 1952, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
80. History of Modern Louisbourg 1758 - 1958, Published under the auspices of the Louisbourg Branch of the Women's Institute of Nova Scotia, 1958. Reprinted in 1988 by Louisbourg District Planning and Development Commission, p. 58-59.
81. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 17 January 1951.
82. "Excavation Started on Site of Louisbourg \$3,500,000 Fish Plant," *Sydney Post-Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 21 September 1950, June 18 or 19, 1952. "The Moral of the Louisbourg Story," Editorial, *Sydney Post-Record*, 22 September 1950. "A Town United Built Itself A Most Encouraging Future," *The Souwester*, Yarmouth. N.S., 30 November 1968, p. 3.
83. Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department - Attendance Register, November 1951, Harvey Lewis files.
84. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 11 November 1952.
85. The 1952 truck was purchased by Pius Campbell of Sydney, N.S. As of December 1994 he still owned the engine and stores it in Iona during the winter. Telephone conversation William O'Shea with Pius Campbell.
86. *Insurance Plan of the Town of Louisburg, N.S., August 1952*, Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Limited, Toronto and Montreal, Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton.
87. Interview with Harvey Lewis by Elaine Kelly-Harte, 24 January 1989, Louisbourg Heritage Society.
88. Letter, Harvey Lewis to Roy Cook, Lunenburg, N.S., 8 November 1952, Harvey Lewis files.
89. Typed notes probably for 1954 annual meeting. Louisbourg Fire Department files.
90. Memo to Fire Wards, 29 September 1955, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
91. Ibid., 29 September 1955.
92. Cape Breton District, Telephone Directory, August 1958, Louisburg Fire Dept #162, William O'Shea files.
93. Harvey Lewis, Fire Chief, to Alex Nicholson, Chairman of Fire Wards, Town of Louisbourg, 27 February 1957. Louisbourg Fire Department files.
94. Minute Book, Louisbourg Fire Department, 22 Jan 1958.
95. *Sydney Post-Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 16 February 1951.
96. Ibid., 28 February 1956.
97. Ibid., 25 February 1995.
98. *Sydney Record*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 8, 18 January, 1909.
99. Typed notes - probably for the 1954 Annual Meeting, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
100. Everett Beaver, interview with William A. O'Shea, February 1995.
101. Minute Book, 29 January 1956.
102. Ibid., 22 February, 27 June, 11 July 1956.



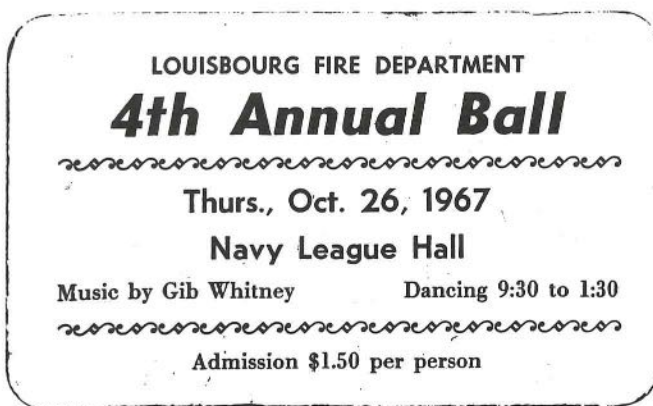
103. Memo Harvey Lewis to Mayor and Council, 25 May 1961, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
104. Written presentation to Harvey Lewis, 8 May 1963, signed by George Phalen, Stephen Whynott, Everett Beaver, Rannie MacVicar, Malcolm MacLeod, Morrell Hutt, Richard Cross, Freddie MacIntyre, Donald MacIntyre, John MacDonald. Harvey Lewis files.
105. In "Louisbourg Heritage Notes," *Louisbourg Seagull*, Fortress Senior Citizens Club, Louisbourg, N.S., April 1993.
106. Firemen in good standing for the year 1964. Louisbourg Fire Department files.
107. Memo to Town Council from Wm Gartland, Secretary, Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department, 28 April 1966, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
108. Everett Beaver to Council, 27 April 1967, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
109. Proposed budget for 1965 on Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
110. Town of Louisbourg Budget 1967 and 1968, Fire Department Expenditures, 14 Nov 1972, Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department Proposed Budget for 1965, 1967 & 1970. Louisbourg Fire Department files.
111. Minute Book, February 26, 1966.
112. *Ibid.*, 23 October 1965.
113. M. S. Huntington, Diary, 22 July 1961 and *Cape Breton Post*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 24 July 1961.
114. Telephone conversation with Florence (Kennedy) Wadden, 29 April 1995.
115. On Louisbourg Volunteer Fire Department letterhead, list of those in good standing, Louisbourg Fire Department file.
116. Minute Book, 30 May, 4 July, 27 October 1971.
117. *Ibid.*, 27 February 1972.
118. William G. Gartland to Council, 25 November 1971. Also 29 March 1972 minute in Treasurer's notebook. Louisbourg Fire Department files. Minute Book, 27 September 1972. *Cape Breton Post*, Sydney, N.S., 16 October 1972.
119. Minute Book, 2 May 1973.
120. *Ibid.*, 26 September 1973.
121. History of Louisbourg, 1958-1982, Draper Art Gallery, Greta Cross and Margie Cameron, City Printers, no date, p.48.
122. Louisbourg Council Minutes, 27 February 1975.
123. *Louisbourg Council Minutes*, 29 May 1975. While the Council Minute Books were destroyed in the Town Hall fire of 1982, some copies of minutes, which were circulated to individual councillors, survive from the late 1960s.
124. *Louisbourg Council Minutes*, 28 October 1976.
125. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1977.
126. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1977.
127. *Ibid.*, 26 January 1978.
128. Memo, W. O'Shea to Mayor Guy Hiltz, 9 May 1978, Louisbourg Fire Department files.



129. *Louisbourg Council Minutes*, 25 May 1995.
130. Memo, W. O'Shea to Mayor Guy Hiltz, 13 June 1978, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
131. Conversation with Fire Chief Joe Trimm, 7 April 1995.
132. *Cape Breton Post*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 10 April 1973.
133. *Ibid.*, 17, 24 October 1974.
134. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1976.
135. *Louisbourg Council Minutes*, 29 January 1986.
136. *Ibid.*, 22 March 1982.
137. *Ibid.*, 24 September and 29 October 1987.
138. Interview - Joseph Trimm, 1 October 1994, Louisbourg Heritage Society.
139. *Cape Breton Post*, Sydney, N.S. 21, 22 July 1982.
140. Auditor's letter to Mayor and Councillors, Town of Louisbourg, 1 February 1937, Heritage Society notes.
141. *Atlantic Firefighter*, May 1989.
142. Roger Wilson, Park Superintendent, Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park to Gerry Gartland, Chairman, Louisbourg Fire Wards, 28 February 1990, Town of Louisbourg Files.
143. Roger Wilson to Town of Louisbourg, 20 February 1991. Town of Louisbourg files.
144. Interview - Joseph Trimm, 1 October 1994, Louisbourg Heritage Society
145. 10 November 1976 meeting, J. A. MacKay, Xmas arrangements - pink Hilroy notebook, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
146. Minute Book, 20 December 1972.
147. *Ibid.*, 26 April 1978, 31 May 1978, 27 June 1979, May 1979.
148. Judy Whynott (*Minute Book*, 7 July 1971 ), Ann Lovett (26 July 1972 ), 1973 Regatta Week ( Treasurer's Book 73/74), Sheila Beaver ( Treasurer's Book August 1975), Donna MacIntyre ( Treasurer's book - July 1976 expenses), Levatte Girl (Oct 25, 1978) Nancy Smith ( 29 August 1979), Louisbourg Fire Department files.
149. A memo from D. F. Nicholson, Secty, Little League baseball to Everett Beaver 7 March 1968 was the first in a long line of requests. Louisbourg Fire Department files.
150. Memo from D.F. Nicholson, Secretary, 23 May 1951, Louisbourg Fire Department files.
151. This Strathcona Street rink was first opened in the early 1940s and by the early 1960s was no longer functioning. As one of his first challenges Councillor Allister MacDonald after being elected in the fall of 1991 undertook the reconstruction of the rink with the assistance of town maintenance superintendent John George MacKeigan. The rink was opened in 1992.
152. Minute Book, 9 January 1952.
153. *Ibid.*, 16 January 1952.
154. *Ibid.*, 25, 29 January 1956.



155. History of Louisbourg 1958 - 1982, Drape Art Gallery - Greta Cross & Margie Cameron, City Printers, no date, p.55.
156. Minute Book, Ladies Auxiliary, 13 July 1966.
157. *Ibid.*, 11 October, 1 November, 7 December 1966. The actual amount given to the department was \$150.00 as noted in the 10 January 1967 minutes.
158. *Ibid.*, 10 January 1967.
159. Memo J. Rainer, Field Director, Christian Children's Fund, Inc. Nairobi, Kenya to Mrs. Stephen Whynott, 5 July 1977.
160. Margie Smith, telephone conversation, 17 April 1995.
161. Minute Book, Ladies Auxiliary, 3 June 1991.
162. The chowder required 75 pounds of haddock.
163. Minute Book, Ladies Auxiliary, June 1993.



*Left: Shoulder flashes. The top flash is the earlier one beginning in the 1960s through the 1970s and is associated with older uniforms. The bottom one is the most recent and worn on all newly-issued uniforms (courtesy Joe Trimm). Top right: Stamped white metal badge, 45 mm x 45 mm, dating to the early 1960s (courtesy Ashley Hill). Bottom right: Ticket to the Fourth Annual Fire Department Ball in 1967 (Fire Department files).*







