

## Russell Fire Department From big fire to present

Research by Norm Inglis, Fire Chief.

In May 1915 the first adequate fire equipment was purchased. Two soda and acid chemicals. Before delivery of this equipment on June 6, 1915, at 9:30 a.m. Burn Murray's Tin Shop started a fire that wiped out the entire business centre of Russell. Fanned by a strong wind the fire burned all day. Frantic calls were sent out to the Ottawa Fire Department who sent out a steam fire engine by flat car on the New York Central Railway.

This upright fire engine was placed in the Castor Bridge, just west of the present Bridge, and was fired by the late Arthur Fraser. By evening the fire was under control. It was reported later that the locomotive engineer

was suspended on this run as he made the distance from Ottawa to Russell in too short a time making it dangerous to the rails and railway property. This La France steam fire engine was purchased by Russell Village. It was used in stopping many fires, aided by the two 60 gallon soda and acid chemicals.

Later a three inch pipe line was laid along the main street with hydrants. At this time the Fire Department consisted of Village Trustees and anyone capable of operating the steamer and the chemicals. Arthur Fraser, Charlie Buckley, Andrew Walker and Milton Walker were a few of the old time firemen of the boiler. In 1952 a new Bickle Seagrave

pumper carrying 500 gallons water, an auxiliary FZZ. two booster lines with advanced pressure, 1200 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose, 1200 feet of 1 1/2 inch hose, were purchased and also a new fire hall. A Volunteer Fire Department was established under the direction of Fire Chief Joseph Payette. Regular practices were held and the department became more capable to cope with the fast service required in today's firefighting. A 40,000 gallon water tank was purchased from the New York and today many sources of supply can be utilized with the aid of the FZZ auxiliary.

Due to sickness in 1953 of Chief Payette, Russell Phair was named Chief, and at that time a Junior Fire Department was formed. The new year our department entered the Fire Prevention contest and was honourably mentioned for all of Ontario. In 1956 we were honourably mentioned again. In 1951 a Mutual Aid Agreement was formed with Embrun Fire Department and in 1954 with the Vars Fire Department. With our combined efforts we were able to establish a good record in saving the Russell Hotel.

In 1956 Russell joined the Russell Prescott mutual aid association and remains a member to this city. Through the 1960's Russell won several awards and was honourably mentioned several times in the Ontario Fire Prevention Contest.

The present fire hall was built in 1971 through the efforts of the Lions Club and many volunteers from the village. The pump house which fed the hydrants along Concession Street was removed from the river bank because of its deteriorating condition and last year the fire hydrants were removed. A 2,000 gallon milk tanker was purchased and adapted to fire department use.

In 1973 Russ Phair retired and James Eadie took over as fire chief. Jim was successful in acquiring a new Thibeau pumper in 1977 to replace the 1952 model. The new truck has a larger pump and water reservoir than the old one. The 1952 pumper is still in operating condition and can be used as a back up unit. A new equipment van was also purchased that same year to carry the various pieces of equipment needed by the department.

In late 1979 Mr. Eadie retired from active service and Norman Inglis was appointed as the new Fire Chief. The department now consists of 21 members, 2 pumper trucks, 1 tanker and 1 equipment van.



RUSSELL FIRE DEPARTMENT '80

Members of the Russell Fire Department are front row, from left, Ron Hubbard, Dave Davies, Chief Norm Inglis, Don Garvey, Roger Pharand, Wilton Gamble. Middle row, John Hayward, Jack Feeley, Rolly Staal, Cliff Cullen, Ian Wade, Al Rothenberger, Mike Pygas, Sheldon Box. Top row, Harry Honey, Bill Cherry. Absent, Deputy Chief Irvin Sunstrum, Bill Paul, Mike Fletcher, Rick Corneau. (Michael Van Dusen Photo)

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## A very unusual fly

By Margo M. McCallum

Meg has as you know, recently become a teenager. Now this is often a difficult time in a young lady's life. So I think we must take our leave of her for the moment, 'though I daresay she will visit us now and again.'

Meg has introduced me to a friend named Alfred, and he has given me some stories to pass along to you.

Going, going, gone! Alfred moved just as the auctioneer's hammer fell, closing the bidding on the old rocking chair.

Alfred is a fly.

Not just your ordinary everyday garden variety sort of fly. Dear me, no. Alfred came from a long line of survivors. His family had been around since the great flood. They had adjusted to all the well-known flybaits and pesticides and any fly worth his salt could keep out of the way of flyswatters and flicking dishcloths.

Alfred loved to travel. He sometimes hitched a ride from one end of the country to the other. He never ventured into the northernmost parts, although he heard that doors and windows were wide open up there and didn't even have screens.

How lovely, thought Alfred, to fly in and out as one pleased.

But Grandad Whirlygig fly spoke up with the wisdom of old age — being 105 — and allowed that "if a place with doors ajar and no screens did exist it would be a good place to stay away from. Whoever got rid of the flies there in the first place, would make short work of you Alfred."

Alfred agreed and never did go North, but kept on with his travels having a fine old time.

Now Alfred, as I have said, was a very unusual fly. He was thirty-seven years old. He had very large ears and he could understand and speak every language and even read and write.

Oh, I don't mean plain fly talk. No, Alfred understood the mayflowers and swamp iris and could tell the big maple what the nesting birds were whispering.

When people remarked, "My! if only those walls could speak, I bet we'd hear a tale or too," or again, "What I wouldn't give to be a fly on the wall." Alfred knew just what they meant. He had been present at many important meetings. Never once did he tell any secrets. Alfred had been strictly reared and knew right from wrong. been sold.

Now as Alfred moved away from the auctioneer's hammer, he lit on the very chair that had "Pardon me," said Alfred.

"Not at all," replied chair, not the least bit surprised to find herself conversing with a fly.

"I do love auctions," went on Alfred. "This has been a lovely spring so far. The sun is so warm."

"Yes," said chair, "but I am very old and what with sitting out in the yard for the last while waiting for today's sale, my poor rungs and stretchers are aching badly. The night air affects me you know, to say nothing of all the twisting and turning these bargain hunters have given me."

"Oh! Oh! Looks like I am to be loaded on that truck," said chair. "Say why don't you come along for company?"

"Yes I would like to go along," said Alfred. "You have a very agreeable rock. I'll just cling to this crack and do my upside-down exercises as we ride."

"Squeak," sang the truck tires as they ground to a halt.

"Well mother," called the man as his wife appeared at the back door. "I brought you a high backed rocker. I'll just set it here in the workshop."

Mother came in looking at the chair carefully. "Well now," she said, "This is a find to be sure. It's a nursery rocker, a cricket rocker my ma called them, on account of being so low I expect. I'm sure it will refinish beautifully, Dad. It is about the same age as the pitcher on the shelf. "Oh! If only they could talk! What tales of long ago they would tell."

"Ho, Ho," chuckled Alfred to himself.

"They can talk — and I can write it all down. I will do chair's story first and then the others here, and they shall all begin with "Once upon a time" for its a well known fact that all the very best stories start with Once upon a time."

Alfred searched his knapsack for pencil and paper, then settled back comfortably. It was going to be a very exciting visit, yes indeed.



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