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# THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

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Devoted to the Literature, History, Folk-lore and best interests of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

## THE MAGAZINE GUARDIAN

Succeeding *The* PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND MAGAZINE  
Issued Every Saturday Morning.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Some Early Fire Fighting--The First Companies Organized--The Charlottetown Department as at Present Constituted.



CHIEF RANAHAN.

engine thrown in honor on the top of the arch near the City Hall, is a very near relative of the first machines employed by the Romans before the Christian era. The inventions of the Romans undoubtedly were the forerunners of the modern hand engine, which about the middle of the last century was supplanted by the steam fire engine, of which the Rollo and Silsby formerly in use in Charlottetown were fair types.

It was not until the year 1833, that a properly organized Fire Brigade was established in Charlottetown. Previously to that the fire fighting was done by "bucket brigades" and by two hand engines one of which was imported from England by Lieutenant Governor Smith in the year 1818, and the other was the property of the soldiers and which was brought to the Island some long time before 1833. Of course in those early days the fires were not such serious matters as they became after Charlottetown began to be thickly planted with buildings; and the chains of people with buckets passed from hand to hand to be emptied into the box of the hand engine and then forced on to the flames by the men at the brakes, managed to pretty well control the ravages of the fire flood. The earliest arrivals at the station houses would run out the engines and start for the fire.

In 1843 however, as has been stated a systematic attempt at organization was made, with the following engines and men:

Hand Engine No. 1.—Called the Prince Edward. This engine was imported from England by Lieutenant Governor Smith in the year 1818. The Engine Company in 1843 consisted of:—

Capt.—James Watts.  
1st Lieut.—John Hobbs.  
2nd Lieut.—John Weeks.  
Sec. Treas.—John Fielding.  
Pipemen—Stephen Boyver, Ed. Chandler, Wm. Butcher, Sr.

Hand Engine No. 2.—This engine was imported from Scotland in the year 1843, by the Local Government. The station house was located on Pownal Square. Its first company consisted of:—

Capt.—Benj. Davies.  
1st Lieut.—Robert Hutchinson.  
2nd Lieut.—James Cairns.  
Sec. Treas.—Isaac Smith.  
Pipemen—Thomas Dodd, Silas Barnard, John Heartz.

Hand Engine No. 3.—This engine was maintained at the Barracks near Pownal Square. This is the engine which is now to be seen on top of the arch in front of the City Hall.

Charlottetown became an incorporated city in the year 1855 and the above mentioned engines were shortly afterwards all handed over to the City and by the City to the Fire Department.



Late A. N. Large,  
A Former Chief.

In the year 1862 the hand engine Tremont was purchased in Boston by Richard Heartz, acting for the City of Charlottetown. Its station house was on the Prince of Wales College grounds. With the means at their disposal the Fire Department fought many a good fight and saved the city from several destructive fires. But lack of water and the need of better machines became more apparent year by year.

On the morning of Sunday, July 15, 1866, a fire started on the south east corner of Pownal and King Streets. It developed into the most disastrous fire that has ever



James McMillan,  
Secretary of Fire Department.

visited Charlottetown. Before its course was run four entire blocks were, with the exception of a few buildings, wiped out, and an enormous lot of valuable property destroyed.

At this fire everyone worked with a will without respect of persons. Among those who manned the brakes of one of the old hand engines, No. 2, was Lieutenant Governor Dundas. This engine during the fire was stationed at the corner of Pownal and Dorchester Streets, and water was supplied to it in buckets which were emptied into the engine box. Tremont engine which was one of the best hand engines of that day drew water from Pownal Wharf, being supplied with a section hose, an improvement which the other engines lacked.

This terrible fire opened the eyes of citizens to the need of more effective protection, and shortly afterwards the No. 5 Steam fire engine Rollo was bought from Merryweather & Sons, London.

In 1872 another hand engine No. 6, with hose etc., was procured from Merryweather & Sons.

In 1877 when Mayor Carvell was at the head of the City Council Board, his well known love of system led to a proper enumeration of the City Fire Companies, and a report of their condition, etc., was

printed. From this report it is learned that the different companies were as follows:—

No. 1. Hand Engine.—Prince Edward, imported by Governor Smith in 1818, with hose and appliances, located on Grafton Street (where Charles Hermans store now stands).

Capt.—Alex. F. Watson.  
1st Lieut.—James Downing.  
2nd Lieut.—Wm E Snelgrove.  
Pipeman—Geo Sheldow.  
Secy.—H Snelgrove.  
Rank and file—28 boys

No. 2. Hand Engine. Imported from Scotland in 1843, located on Pownal Square.

Capt.—B n j Rogers.  
1st Lieut.—Michael McCarthy.  
2nd Lieut.—John King.  
Secy.—John Hagan.  
Rank and file—40 men.

No. 3. Hand Engine.—Received from the military department of ordinance. The engine was located on Peake's No. 1 wharf and the company of men were drawn from the employes of Peake Bros. ship yard, under command of Ralph Peake. This is the engine now on view on the arch at City Hall.

No. 4. Hand Engine.—Called Tremont, situated on Kent Street.  
Capt.—John A. Fraser.  
1st Lieut.—W. W. Stumbles.  
2nd Lieut.—F. H. Beer.  
Secy.—Geo Passmore.  
Rank and file 48 men.

No. 5. Steam Fire Engine.—This engine with hose, etc., was imported from London in 1866, after the fire, and was located on Grafton Street (the station house adjoined Myrick's fish market, but is now removed.)

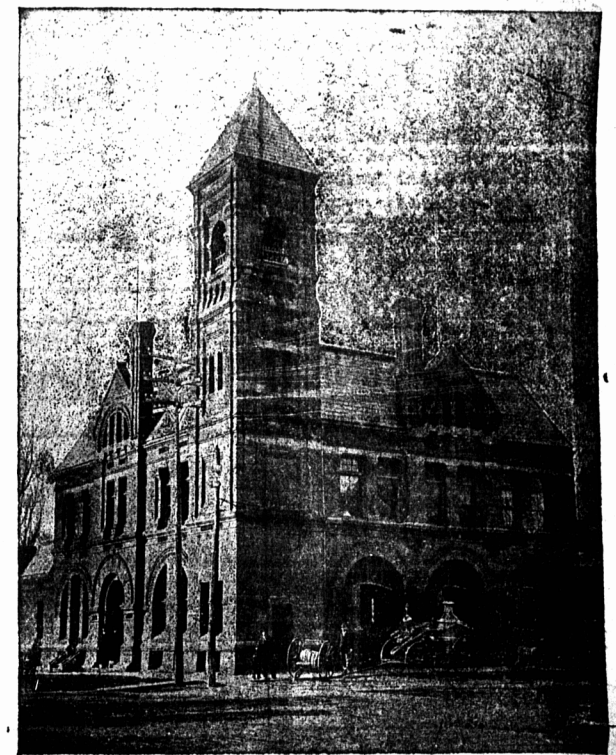
Capt.—A N Large.  
1st Lieut.—E McPhillips.  
2nd Lieut.—Geo Milner.  
Hose Sergt.—John Wonnacott.  
Secy.—James Pidgeon.  
Engineer—J A Rowe.  
Stoker—Geo Webb.

William Mahar was teamster and had charge of two horses which were kept in an adjoining stable.

The rank and file consisted of 18 men.

No. 6.—Hand Engine. This engine with hose, etc., was imported in 1873. Its location was with No. 4, but it was seldom used as there were sufficient hand engines. It was subsequently sold to the village of Alberton.

No. 7.—Steam Engine. Called the Silsby though its name is the Hillsborough. This engine is still in the Fire Department. It was bought in the year 1875 from the Silsby Engine Co., Seneca Falls, N. Y. and was located on King Street, near Great George.



CITY HALL AND FIRE STATION.

Capt.—C L Strickland.  
1st Lieut.—Matthew Murphy.  
Hose Sergeant—J A Griffith.  
Secy's—Wm Dillon.  
1st Pipeman—Michael Hickey.  
2nd Pipeman—Robert Kelly.  
Engineer—Wm H. Batt.  
Stoker—Peter Kelly.  
Teamster John McCourt, with two horses in the building.

The above as already stated was the strength of the force in 1877, and thenceforth, the fire department was kept in a high state of efficiency. Some very serious fires were fought with signal success, for it must be remembered that waterworks were not introduced into the City till 1888, and the engines had to be supplied from tanks which often ran dry under the drain of the steam engines, or from wells which, too, became dry except in the cases of one or two. A fine esprit du corps existed amongst the men and probably also a spirit of rivalry between the different companies, but this only tended to produce increased efficiency.

The installing of the present fire system of waterworks with sufficient pressure at the hydrants to throw water without the

aid of engines ended the reign of the old hand engines, and their modern successors the steam fire engines. At the same time it has simplified the firemen's work, so that it is very gratifying to say that the well trained force at present under the command of the Chief of the Fire Department let very little headway occur after an alarm is sounded now before the fire bell rings "out."

The different Fire Companies as at present constituted are:—

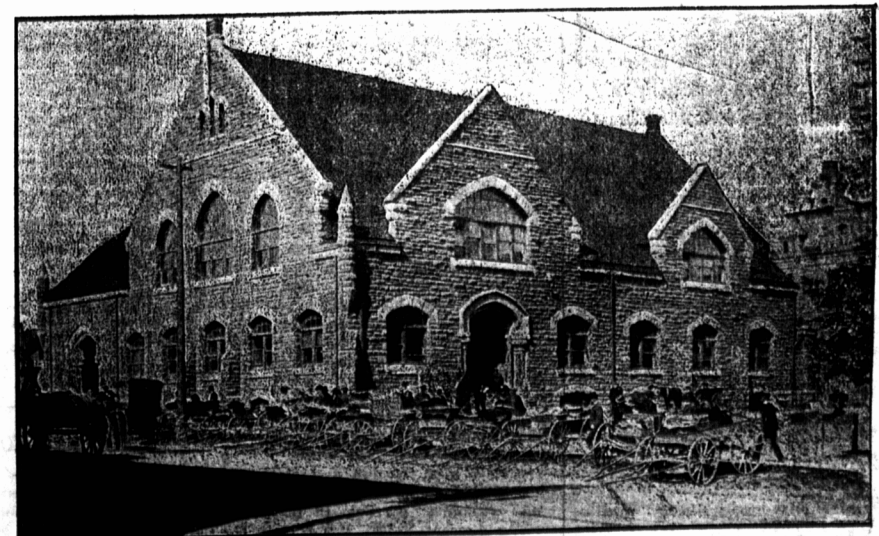
HOLLO HOSE CO.

A Vatcher (Capt.)  
H Matheson (Lieut.)  
A Dickard  
R Pickard  
S McKearney  
W Bradley  
J Turner  
M Pidgeon  
T Trainor  
T Howatt  
H Teed  
A McEachern  
I Reddin  
P Hooper  
J Darke

(Continued on page 2.)



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PRESENT MARKET.