



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark Historian's Office
25 Grange Road, P.O. Box 621, Huguenot, NY 12746 (845) 856-2702

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#2

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standing: R. Lange, C. Post, A. Morey, W. White, F. Van Leaven, R. Cooklin, B. Johnson, B. Hallick, R. Johnson, F. Johnson, kneeling: T. O'Hirok, B. Fieger, R. Fieger

Courtesy of Bill Fieger
Deerpark Fire District #1...

Better known as the Cuddebackville Fire Dept. encompasses the eastern end of the Town of Deerpark and an area along Oakland Valley Road in Sullivan County.

Prior to 1946, this area was covered by the City of Port Jervis Fire Departments.

On February 14, 1946, town-appointed fire commissioners held an organizational meeting at the home of Simon Berman in Cuddebackville. At that meeting, Mr. Berman was elected chairman and Clyde W.

Eaton was elected secretary. The remaining commissioners were Ralph Johnson, Alvey Pantley, Jesse Runnals and William Wilby.

The first fire department meeting was held on February 18, 1946. William Fieger was elected Chief, Floyd Johnson—Assistant Chief; William Hottois—Foreman; Carl Bentsen—President; Robert J. Winter—Secretary-Treasurer. There were thirty charter member volunteer firemen.

A motion passed to make their first fire equipment purchases: six Indian tanks, one portable pump, 500 feet of hose, three gallons of foam and two 1½ quart extinguishers.

These early fire fighters had little or no training. Bill Fieger had gotten some training when he was a member of the Port Jervis Maghagogmuck Fire Company.

At the March 7th meeting, Franklin Van Leuvan was elected to the post of Assistant Foreman.

After a referendum was approved by the voters of the fire district on April 18, 1946, the commissioners issued bonds in the amount of \$6,500 for equipment and \$3,500 for the construction of a firehouse.

The firehouse, a two story block structure with a single truck bay on the first floor and a meeting room above, was erected along Route 209 in Cuddebackville across from the D & H Canal. The property, centrally located

within the district, was donated by Miss Mary Cuddeback.

In June 1946 the Fire Police were formed, consisting of William Johnson—chief, Alfred Brown, John H. Durland and Relen Hummel.

That same year, a 1944 International front end pumper with a 300 gpm pump and a 500 gallon tank was purchased from the Army Depot in Schenectady. The truck, which was originally green and then painted red, was temporarily stored in a garage on Oakland Valley Road.



Ray Lange driving 1946 Fire Truck
Courtesy of Bill Fieger

By December 5th, the firehouse had been built, the truck moved in, and the building was being used for the regular monthly fire meetings. The fire alarm was located on the top of the building. People called in fires to the Chief or Assistant Chief who then rushed to the fire house, rang the fire alarm, wrote where the fire was on an outside slate, and drove the truck to the fire. The rest of the firemen would rush to the fire house, note where the fire was located and made their own way to help. There were no radios or other quick means of communication in those days.

In 1950 rest rooms and a kitchen were added to the building. In 1955 a second truck

bay was added bringing the building to the size it is today. A second truck was purchased, a GMC 6x6 from Sam Goldman which cost \$350.00. The firemen also bought a 1,200 gallon tank from Shield's Brothers in Port Jervis and built their own tanker.

1955 was a memorable year. In August, Hurricane Diana roared into the region bringing severe flooding and damaging homes and roads. The Fire Department spent three days pumping out homes and stores here and in Port Jervis. In appreciation, Port Jervis presented the Department with a plaque.



The growing community made it necessary to acquire newer and better equipment. In 1969, a new 950 series Ford front end pumper was purchased. It had a 750 gpm pump and could carry 1,500 gallons of water.

In 1975, an International Loader 1,800 tanker with a 300 gpm rear pump and carrying 1,200 gallons of water was purchased. These trucks, thousands of dollars of additional equipment, and years of practice and experience, greatly improved the ability of the department to fight fires in the area.

In time the members of the fire department realized that their building was too small and that they needed a new one.



Cuddebackville Fire House, Route 211.

The new building was constructed on the Route 211 site. An addition was built to house the Cascade System (to fill air bottles)



Middletown Fire Parade 2005

Courtesy of Bill Fieger
In 1988 a medical component was added. At that time the police department handled all motor vehicle accidents. The fire companies were called to extricate people if necessary. Chief Bob Cromie worked with Police Chief Tony Tufano to set up a system so that the fire department was also called for a motor vehicle accident.

The firemen were trained in advanced first aid, and then as first responders. Six firemen took an EMT course and Cuddebackville became the first fire company with trained EMTs and the first company to be defibrillator certified in Deerpark. Today all EMTs have that training.

They started their medical work with a budget of \$100.00. Today it is \$5000.00. Fifty percent of their calls are for medical assistance.

A family from New Jersey who vacationed here donated the first ambulance and \$1000.00 in

supplies. Then the department bought a truck for \$13,000 (#801) which is used in a medical response. Another truck was donated from an ambulance company in Rockland (#804) which is outfitted for medical rehab.

Truck #804 is sent to larger fires, manned by EMTs to help the firefighters who are fighting the fire. The EMTs have a supply of water, food, fruit, protein bars to help those in need of aid so they can get back to working at the scene of the fire. An injured firefighter is taken to the hospital.



Cuddebackville Training Center Rt. 209

The Old Firehouse
After the new firehouse was built in 1987, volunteers built a training center in the old firehouse.

Firefighters train there under simulated conditions. There are tunnels and crawl spaces to teach escape techniques by removing breathing apparatus, pushing it through the confined space and putting the breathing apparatus on again; piles of debris to be climbed over; up and down ramps simulating rafters; loose cables which need to be cut to experience getting stuck in a collapsed wall with tangled electric wires; a 2' x 2' opening with sheetrock on both sides for the firefighters to get through without taking off their breathing apparatus; and a trap door which opens and lowers the

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firefighter into a maze to find a victim and bring the victim back up to the trap door.

The second floor simulates a home with two bedrooms, one bath, living room and kitchen and is used to teach search and rescue. Firefighters have to climb a ladder, find the victim, go back down the ladder without running out of air. If their air is gone they are taught to stay low, remove the air system, pull their hoods over their faces to breath "filtered" air.

In the back of the building is an area to teach rappelling.



May 2006, Orange County Fire Training Center
C. Brennan, C. Sibilia, J. Cirilli, T. Hall, S. Scott, C. Parلمان, F. Werlitz, C. Brown, K. Beisten, L. Roberts, A. Koos, D. VanDermark

Courtesy of Kevin Belsten

The Fire Department Today

There are five vehicles in the department: two ambulances, one mini pumper, one 1000 gallon pumper tanker and one 2500 gallon pumper tanker.

The district covers 50 square miles plus Oakland Valley Road into Sullivan County.

There are forty members in the fire department. Their responsibilities are many: 2-3 firematic drills per month; 2-3 EMS drills per month; fire calls; medical calls; emergency calls; regular meetings; commissioner meetings; work detail, which includes cleaning the trucks, building, bays, getting ready for special events, checking hoses, repacking equipment and

supplies.

Currently plans are being made to buy a third new fire truck, expected to be in operation in 2007.

Volunteers are badly needed. Fire volunteers need to have a desire to help others. The members become like a family. Fighting fires is not the only job which can be done by volunteers. Other jobs to fill include: driving a vehicle to free up a firefighter; preparing meals; operating a bay station; watching children so their parents can go out on calls; cleaning and repairing equipment. Much needs to be done to run a smooth operation.

Taxes do not cover all of the expenses so fund raisers are necessary to offset the expenses.

These men and women who give so much to the community say that they receive much, knowing that they are helping others in need.



White Horse Lodge Fire 1978

White Horse Lodge Fire

Middletown Times Herald
Record 10-26-78

"Cuddebackville—A spectacular fire Wednesday morning, believed to have been started by a wood-burning stove, destroyed the White Horse Lodge on Route 209 in Cuddebackville.

"Charles Post, first assistant chief of the Cuddebackville Fire Department, said the blaze was being investigated, but a

preliminary examination pointed to a wood-burning stove on the second floor as the cause.

"Post said the owner of the three-story wood structure, Maurice Ramsey of Cuddebackville, was inside when the fire broke out but escaped unharmed. No injuries were reported.

"Ramsey said he was renovating the structure and planned to turn it into a discotheque.

"He said he had not been able to obtain insurance because of the renovations.

"Post said that when firemen arrived on the scene at about 9:30 a.m. the upper stories were completely engulfed in flames.

"The fire was declared under control at 11:30 a.m. Post and Ramsey said the building was a total loss.

"Cuddebackville firefighters, aided by Westbrookville and Huguenot fire companies, were called back to the scene in the afternoon to hose down the structure, which had rekindled.

"Ramsey said he believed a clogged chimney connected to a wood-burning stove had started the fire.

"I saw smoke, and in five minutes everything was gone," he said."

Firehouse, schoolhouse fates pose a dilemma

By John C. Ennsin
Time Herald Record 7-2-84
(Excerpts)

"Cuddebackville—Deciding the relative fates of a 48-year-old firehouse and one of the last one-room schoolhouses used in Orange County has posed a dilemma for officials in the Cuddebackville Fire District.

"Herein lies the problem: The fire district owns both building. It would like to replace the firehouse, a two-story cement block structure in need of repair, without having to demolish the schoolhouse, a graceful Greek revival-style building, where some of the firefighters once went to school.

"But the property where some of the fire officials would like to build a new fire station is on Route 211 where the schoolhouse has stood since possible the late 1800s.

"We'd really hate to see anything detrimental done to it," said Annette Mundy, one of the district's fire commissioners. "But by the same token, we need that land."

"The fire commissioners tried to interest the county Historian's Office in finding the school a new location, possibly the Delaware & Hudson (D & H) Canal Park about one mile away.

"But both county Historian Colin A. Faulds and officials at the park have discouraged the idea...

"Faulds believes the school may have been the last in Orange County to have been in active use as a one-room schoolhouse when it was decommissioned in the early 1960s...

"Since the fire district acquired the school, it has been used as storage space. It sits boarded up behind a row of trees...

"Another fire commissioner, John Kehlenbeck Jr., 33, remembers attending the school with six grades of about 3 to 4 children each. He said the building still has the bench where each grade was called to

the front for lessons while the others studied at their desks.

"Faulds suggested the building could be put to a new use, possible as a social hall or senior citizen center... 'I feel it should be left where it is'..."

"The Neversink Valley Historical Society (incorrect name—should be Neversink Valley Area Museum—editor's note) has been reluctant to accept the school as part of its D & H Canal Museum.

"Overall, our emphasis at the park has been keeping its historical integrity intact," said Charles Thomas, a museum coordinator...

"The district does not own other suitable property or have the funds to buy any, said Mrs. Mundy. She also questioned the value of keeping the school at its original site as opposed to creating a museum...

"I can sympathize with both sides," said Carey, who said as a fire commissioner several years ago, he tried to interest the D & H Canal Park into accepting the schoolhouse.

"Kehlenbeck said one other possibility would be to move the schoolhouse several hundred feet back and build the new fire house at the front of the property. Mrs. Mundy said the district has received one estimate of \$5,000 for moving the school back about 350 feet.

"We would like to save it," said Mrs. Mundy. "I'm a history buff. I can't see something like that not being saved..."



Cuddebackville One Room Schoolhouse

The Rest of the Story...

Margaret and Jerry Peill asked the Fire Commissioners for permission to dismantle the building, and remove it for storage. The Commissioners approved this proposal, with a 13 week deadline to clear the site, from February through mid-April, 1986. With the aid of volunteers, the building components were marked, dismantled and stored on the Peill property. There were no takers for the resultant construction kit so in 1987, the Peills with the aid of volunteers began the work of rebuilding the school on their lot.

Six years and eight months after the Fire Commissioners' approval, the building and contents were ready for unveiling. On September 20, 1992 close to 50 people showed up to welcome the schoolhouse back to the community.



Feb. 17, 1977 Deerpark Landfill Fire

Do You Remember...

The Town of Deerpark had its own landfill located at the intersection of Route 211 and County Route 61 just west of Ottsville. On February 17, 1977, there was a stubborn blaze at the landfill which kept the Cuddebackville firemen busy for an entire day trying to put the fire out. They were called back again during the night because gusting winds rekindled the blaze.

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