

History of Truro Township

Fire Department

On April 22, 1937, a volunteer organization was formed in order for Truro Township to purchase a fire truck. Also on April 22, Vinton H. Raymer was selected as the first Fire Chief of Truro Township.

The first piece of firefighter equipment purchased by the volunteer organization consisted of a 99 horse-powered truck capable of discharging 500 gallons of water per minute. It also carried 1,000 feet of hose, two attachable ladders, nozzles, fire axes, extinguishers and other equipment. The truck was delivered August 1, 1937.

Truro Township's newly acquired firefighting apparatus successfully passed the approval of the Ohio Inspection Bureau, rating organizations for fire insurance companies, in a three-hour test on Friday, August 27, 1937.

The new equipment purchased by the township created a slight problem. There was no firehouse to house the new truck. After a discussion with the volunteer firemen, Chief Raymer's garage became a temporary firehouse.

The first fire run for Truro Township Fire Department was September 9, 1937. Reynoldsburg Volunteer Firemen and Truro Township's new apparatus demonstrated their worth to the residents of the community in answering the very first call. The prompt response of the firemen and the efficient manner in which they operated the new apparatus saved the Jerry Myer's Service Station, located just a couple of miles west of Reynoldsburg, from possible destruction. The alarm came in at 4:50 on Sunday afternoon and six minutes later the firemen had the fire under control. Chief Raymer was out of town for the first fire run of Truro Township.

A new fire siren was purchased and attached to the Knights of Pythias building on Main Street in Reynoldsburg. It was used to call the volunteers to the station house whenever fire calls were registered at the telephone office. The telephone operator on duty at the time had the responsibility of sounding the alarm.

On September 23, 1937, it was decided that a new firehouse should be built. Construction hinged on popular subscriptions. The brick for the structure was donated by the Gail Landrum Construction Company. Financing of the building came strictly from donations. On May 19, 1938, ground was broken for the first firehouse of Truro Township. A new 220-volt siren was purchased by the township and put atop the new fire station. This would alert firemen living two to three miles away in case of fire or emergency.

Truro Township Fire Department had always been a volunteer fire department, receiving no pay. This was to be changed in April of 1939 when Chief Raymer received a monthly salary of \$30 and the firemen, up to six in number, received \$3 each for every run they made.

On August 8, 1940, Truro Township trustees purchased one of the first resuscitators in Franklin County. The resuscitator cost \$439 which was paid for with township funds. It was used for respiratory emergencies such as drowning, gas poisoning, suffocation, heart attack, etc. Should an emergency arise, the Fire Chief or one of his men, would rush the instrument to the scene of need and render its services.

The life-saving instrument proved its worth for the first time on October 10, 1940. Mrs. Gregg was driving with her brother and his wife on Route 40, near Rose Hill Road, when she suffered a heart attack. Stopping at a filling station on the corner, they called Truro Township Fire Department. Fire Chief Raymer, Don Compton and John Schwartz responded to the call. Chief Raymer applied the resuscitator for about 10 minutes until the instrument indicated that Mrs. Gregg was breathing on her own.

While the firemen were administering aid, the family physician, Dr. Rhodes of Columbus, was called to the scene. He and Mr. Adamson, Mrs. Gregg's brother and passenger in the car, complimented Chief Raymer and his men on the way they handled the case. Mr. Adamson repeated his thanks in a letter to Chief Raymer. He also enclosed a check for \$10 as a token of his appreciation. "You and your assistants," wrote Mr. Adamson, "were certainly on the ball and deserve great credit for your skill in handling such a case as you had." He added that Mrs. Gregg was now resting comfortably and was on her way to recovery.

Because of the increase in fire runs, the Truro Township Volunteer Firemen built a new fire truck on a 1-1/2 ton chassis on September 21, 1940 to replace the old chemical outfit used by the fire department. The money to build the truck came from monies that were raised from annual dances, with the firemen donating their labor. The truck's 500 gallon water tank and pump were purchased by the Reynoldsburg City Council on January 1, 1941.

Fire Chief Raymer was appointed the first Fire Warden of Truro, Jefferson, Marion, Madison and Hamilton Townships of Central Ohio on January 8, 1942. On March 13, 1942, the citizens of Truro Township and the village of Reynoldsburg were

shocked to read in the paper that Fire Chief Raymer resigned as chief, effective April 10, 1942. When Raymer began in 1931, the only piece of equipment was a two-wheeled chemical cart. During his years as Chief, he built one fire truck, the firehouse and watched the department grow to the wealth of equipment in 1942.

In the summer of 1942, John Cobel became the second Fire Chief of Truro Township. During his administration he installed a new alerting system. A fire phone was put in Chief Cobel's home, another one was put in the funeral home which was across the street from the firehouse, and one was put in the firehouse itself. During the daytime, the fire phone was answered by the funeral home and at night it was answered by Chief Cobel or his wife. On weekends, it was answered by firemen on duty at the firehouse.

In 1947, three things happened to the fire department to increase the service and respond to the citizens of the community.

- New firehouse twice the size of the old one.
- New 1947 International pumper truck that discharged 500 gallons per minute.
- First emergency squad equipped.

Due to the increase in emergency squad runs, a second squad was purchased by the township. It was a 1955 Ford Seabert with the older squad being used as a backup squad.

In 1959, a second fire station was built, this one was located on Brice Road in the small village of Brice. This gave better protection to the residents of Truro Township who lived in the southwest portion of the township. A new 1962 Ford pumper was purchased that was capable of discharging 750 gallons of water per minute. A GMC emergency squad was purchased in 1963 by the township. Once again bad news hit the citizens of Reynoldsburg and Truro Township when Chief John Cobel resigned in 1964 after 22 years of service.

For six months after the resignation of Chief Cobel, John Knight served as acting chief for Truro Township. In the summer of 1964, John Knight became the third Fire Chief of Truro Township. One of the first changes to come about under the new administration was the purchase in the Spring of 1965 of new helmets, boots and canvas fire coats for all the firemen. Up until that time the firemen still wore the old rubber coats used when the fire department first began.

Other events occurring in the growth of the department include the following.

- 1966 —
- A Mack fire truck purchased for \$35,000 with pump capacity of 1,000 GPM.
 - Alerting system updated to a plectron system. Each volunteer fireman had radio which received signal alerting them of fire or emergency.

- 1970 —
- Six full-time firemen hired at \$7,200 per year.
 - All firemen were required to complete a 60-hour training course.
- 1973 —
- Staff increased to 8 full-time employees.
- 1974 —
- Staff increased to 12 full-time employees.
- 1975 —
- Eight firemen took paramedic training at Ohio State.
 - Datascope heart machine purchased.
 - New fire station purchased at 6900 E. Main St., the largest fire station in Central Ohio.
- 1976 —
- Staff increased to 18, including chief.

Once again, Truro Township made news when two ladies, Pat Melcher and Joann Miller, were elected members of the Board of Trustees. They are currently serving their third term in office along with Mel Clemens serving his fourth term. During this boards' tenure in office, many policies and procedures were implemented. Station facilities were remodeled into more functional facilities, and additional specialty equipment was acquired such as a rescue van and a water rescue and recovery trailer. Advanced mobile medical units were updated along with policies effecting our medical personnel.

Extensive training programs were provided, pay incentives for EMT-A and EMT-P certifications were put into effect. Numerous pay increases and benefits were granted, bringing our department more in line with other departments our size. The board also realized the impact that the paramedic program had on the Truro Township Department and it was at this time they decided to upgrade the hiring policy and procedures. It was decided at this point to hire only certified para-



TRURO TOWNSHIP Volunteer Fire Department in 1939, poses in front of fire station with Chief V.H. Raymer (in white slicker).

medics and establish entrance exams, eligibility tests and a two-year waiting list. They, along with this procedure, established the criteria for promotion within the department ranks by having competitive exams.

During the past nine years, they have added approximately 12 new employees and implemented various policies for 24-hour around-the-clock dispatching which included the hiring of part-time dispatchers from other departments. In the past several years much of our fire fighting equipment has been replaced due to old age and outdated equipment. The equipment at this time consists of (2) 1986 Pierce Engines, (1) 1969 Ford engine, (1) Pierce Snorkel, (1) heavy rescue, (2) medic squads, (1) emergency squad, (1) 4-wheel grass fighter, (3) station cars and a water rescue trailer. Who knows what the future has in store for Truro Township, the story is continuing.



TRURO TOWNSHIP Fire Department's newly remodeled building as it appears today.