

Register of Old Buildings
Wacon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: 1174 East Locust^s (also given as 1160 East Locust)
Northwest corner, Jasper and Locust
Legal description:
Carver's Addition
(Exc St.) 575' Lts. 19 & 20 Blk 6

Date of original construction: 1912 (See news item)

Name of original owner: City of Decatur

History:

1. Data from available city directories:
 - Not listed in the 1911 city directory
 - 1912-1915 unavailable
 - 1916-1963 listed as #4 Firehouse, 1174 E. Locust
 - 1964-1965 unlisted - - - - -
 - (May have been included as part of 1160 E. Locust, 3rd United Brethren Church, later 3rd United Methodist Church)
 - 1974- Third United Methodist (Rummage Room)
2. Data from Decatur Township assessor's office:
 - Legal description available
 - Size of lot 69' x 75'
 - Since this property has always been non-taxable, no other information is given.
3. History - Brad Cantrell describes the structure as follows:
 - a. Number 4 Firehouse is distinctively Chicagoan in design. Its long overhanging eaves supported by brackets, strip window effect in the second story and lowness add to its Chicagoan appearance. The firehouse is very functional in design, but at the same time very charming.
 - b. Clippings from Decatur newspapers, as follows:
 - (1) Review, June 5, 1910, p. 18, Chief Decore Asks for Automobile Fire Wagons.
 - (2) Review, Dec. 1, 1912, Decatur Fire Department Is Modernized Swiftly.
 - (3) Herald-Review, March 6, 1938, Fire Fightin' Horses Live in Legends of the "Old Days"
 - (4) Review, September 7, 1943, Remember How Firewagons Ran on Prairie Avenue? In
 - (5) January 4, 1942, Decatur Fire Engine/Service at 50.

Present owner: Third United Methodist Church.

117~~9~~ East Locust



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Photos - Margaret M. Meyer, 1995

BORCHERS CAN HAVE HIS WAY ABOUT SCREENS

...that any progress will be license measure at the ... tomorrow evening. The ordinance is to be report- ... of four mem- ... committee, at the action that was rec- ... committee meeting. ... will go over for a ... with the practice of

the screen is that it is something to be determined by the patron who wants to buy a drink. People who live here-abouts have formed the habit of doing certain things with some measure of privacy in the surroundings; among these things are eating and drinking. It is pointed out that when lights are turned on in the dining room at home in the evening the housekeeper instinctively goes to the windows and pulls down the shades. The folks don't want to eat in public. It is the same way with drinking.

It is mentioned that in some restaurants there are tables that are close to the front window; it is declared it will be found these tables are the last ones to be occupied; they are never taken until after all others. Some will go away and hunt another place rather than take a table that gives a public exhibition of their eating function.

SOME WETS FAVOR NO SCREENS.

There is something in all that, of course; but it still remains that where the screenless saloon has been tried for a time it is found to work satisfactorily; at least the matter ceases to be a disturbing issue. It is mentioned by some wets that it will prove not to be a bad thing for the saloon to take away all screens, that it will cause some to drop prejudices they now have.

Because the public can't see what goes on in a saloon, a great many who do not enter such places imagine terrible doings; they think that all who enter are hurrying on to perdition. A short time since two Decatur men, a wet and a dry, were discussing this matter. The dry expressed his conviction that all who drink are well on the way to the dogs.

SURPRISED TO LEARN IT.

"A good many men who amount to something drink," observed the wet. "And who are they?" asked the dry. "Well let us run down the list of our neighbors in two blocks," proposed the wet.

They did so. The dry was startled to learn that a very decided majority of the men in the two blocks drank some; it took some time to convince him that they were right. Later the wet in talking about this discussion, remarked:

"That man had known those among his neighbors who drank he at least would have been aware that not all drinkers are failures; he would have known that some pretty hefty citizens take an occasional drink. If there is objection at the front of a saloon perhaps this man and others like him will be enlightened as to who drinks and how much. It is pretty sure to have some effect on his views in relation to the glass of drink."

KEEP BOYS AWAY

It is agreed that one thing is accom- plished in removing the screens: It keeps the boys away. No proprietor will dispute about his place if they can keep the boys away. As a matter of fact, boys have not been allowed to enter saloons, but in former times the parents and some places the saloonkeepers had come that the boys were not equipped with saloons.

Chief Devore Asks For Automobile Fire Wagons

Cites Great Loss of Last Year as Reason For Increase in Size of Department—Total Loss \$779,619 in the Fiscal Year.

With a total fire loss of \$779,619.66 and a loss to the insurance companies of \$660,320.15, all existing records of the local fire department were broken during the year ending April 30, 1910. The total of insurance involved, \$1,383,886, was also the largest in local history.

These facts are gleaned from the annual report of Chief C. W. Devore to the board of fire commissioners of Decatur. It is the twentieth report compiled by Chief Devore and the twenty-sixth of the paid fire department.

TOTAL EXPENSES \$36,377.

The expenses of the department for the last year were \$36,377.09. The estimate of expense for next year is \$38,800. During the last year the department responded to 181 alarms, traveled a total distance of 644 miles, and laid 63,200 feet of hose.

There is now a total of thirty-one men employed on the department. Not counting Chief Devore, James Park, acting captain at No. 1 house, is the oldest man on the department in point of service. He has been employed twenty-four years. Captain Edward Platt of No. 2 house and John Duffey of No. 1 house have each been employed twenty-two years. Twenty head of horses are owned by the department.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the report is the section devoted to recommendations. Summarized they are as follows:

FOR EAST END FIRE HOUSE.

That a fire house be built on the lot owned by the city at the corner of Jasper and Locust streets, and that it be equipped with an automobile chemical and hose wagon, to be manned by five men, requiring an outlay of \$13,000 to build, equip and maintain for the current year.

That an automobile combination chemical and hose wagon be purchased for the No. 3 house, replacing the horse drawn apparatus, requiring an outlay of about \$3,000.

WANTS SIX MEN.

That six men be added to the department, to be distributed among the apparatus already in service, so that there

will be enough men on the wagons at all times to do effective work at the beginning of fires when time is valuable.

This last would call for an addition of \$3,990 to the appropriation.

MAINTENANCE LESS EXPENSIVE.

Chief Devore has lately been giving much attention to the subject of automobile fire apparatus. He has found that apparatus of this kind has been run for a year at an average cost of from 11 to 17 cents a day, exclusive of salaries and the fixed charges of housing, as against a rate of 45 cents a day for the feeding and bedding of a team of horses. Not only can an automobile reach a fire more quickly than a team of horses, but there is no delay afterwards, such as blanketing horses and securing men to hold them while the drivers serve as firemen.

NEW TEAM NEEDED.

A new team of horses has to be bought for the No. 3 house. Instead of buying it Chief Devore recommends the purchase of an automobile combination chemical and hose wagon and the selling of the horse drawn apparatus.

Three large fires, that at the Decatur Cereal company's plant, June 7, 1909, that of Aug. 22, 1909, which started in the Morehouse & Wells store and ate up nearly a block of the uptown section, and that of the Decatur Wholesale Grocer company Feb. 24, 1910, were responsible for the heavy fire loss the past year. These three fires are instances of the wisdom of increasing the department, both in number of men and equipment.

CAUSES OF FIRES.

Of the 181 alarms responded to, the fire cause in thirty-one cases was unknown, defective flues were responsible for twenty-one, defective wiring for nineteen, grass and rubbish for sixteen, defective stoves, furnaces and grates for thirteen, gasoline stoves for twelve, and spontaneous combustion for seven. Some other causes were sparks from flues, children playing with matches, tramps, cigars and cigarettes and unclean furnaces.

The following table shows the insurance, loss and loss to insurance companies by months the past year:

	On Buildings.		On Contents.		Insurance
	Loss	Insurance	Loss	Insurance	
May	\$ 205.00	\$ 5,950.00	\$ 205.00	\$ 205.00	\$ 205.00
June	111,318.46	89,400.00	69,684.95	122,275.00	122,275.00
July	66.32	10,500.00	61.32	61.32	61.32
August	119,745.84	220,300.00	117,914.84	200,000.00	200,000.00
September		4,500.00			
October	228.50	3,500.00	228.50	228.50	228.50
November	2,506.10	83,330.00	2,482.00	425.00	425.00
December	4,447.40	15,905.00	4,447.40	4,447.40	4,447.40
January	1,316.00	107,500.00	1,316.00	1,316.00	1,316.00
February	36,899.75	23,250.00	36,899.75	36,899.75	36,899.75
March	643.50	12,900.00	643.50	643.50	643.50
April	4,082.00	24,250.00	4,082.00	4,082.00	4,082.00
Total	\$282,476.97	\$645,005.00	\$282,476.97	\$788,804.00	\$471,352.70

ROUGH STREETS

These are the east end of East William street.

THIS WAY OF CLEANING.

A woman residing on West Eldorado street sat in her front window one day and saw the street cleaners at work.

Big Fires in Decatur

Wabash freight house, Nov. 21, 1890	\$ 44,000
Union Elevator, Nov. 21, 1890	100,000
Furniture factory, Nov. 19, 1891	50,000
Decatur Lumber & Mfg. Co., Nov. 19, 1891	12,000
Old Library block, Feb. 21, 1892	100,000
Old Smith opera house, Sept. 11, 1894	15,000
B. O. McReynolds, Feb. 9, 1895	10,000
P. Loeb building, March 15, 1895	75,000
Union Iron Works, Aug. 6, 1895	30,000
Powers opera house and Linn & Scuggs, Nov. 5, 1895	250,000
Gebhart block, Feb. 29, 1896	60,000
N. A. Cruzan and Wabash avenue property, April 12, 1896	60,000
C. B. & Q. factory, Jan. 17, 1899	35,000
Faries factory, Oct. 9, 1900	35,000
Shellbarger mill, Dec. 26, 1901	35,000
Mueller, Platt & Wheeland Co., Feb. 11, 1901	116,000
Decatur Gun Co., July 4, 1901	20,000
Charles T. Johnson store, July 6, 1901	21,000
Central Malleable Iron Works, Nov. 14, 1904	35,000
Decatur and Arcade hotels, Nov. 17, 1904	37,000
Decatur Cereal mill, June 8, 1909	265,000
Morehouse & Wells and other buildings, Aug. 22, 1909	508,049
Mantel factory, Jan. 8, 1911	200,000
Suffern-Hunt mill, Nov. 30, 1913	30,580
Linn & Scuggs and Powers theater, second fire April 7, 1914	565,117
Decatur and Arcade hotels, second fire, April 21, 1915	180,000
Seovill Furniture store, Oct. 1, 1917	140,000
Leader Iron Works, Nov. 6, 1920	125,000
Bowman Barn fire, Feb. 13, 1922	15,000
Shellbarger Elevator Co., Feb. 3, 1923	125,000
Wabash Shops, Feb. 26, 1924	250,000
Irwin Neisler, Dec. 25, 1925	100,000
W. C. Starr garage	200,000

#4 firehouse built in 1912

Little About Decatur Firehouses To Remind Present Generation of Days of Horses and Clumsy Steamers

1845-1929
"What has become of all the old fire equipment that used to attract great crowds to West Prairie street on inspection day?"

Chief S. T. Lowry blew smoke from his pipe and allowed the main events of his 35 years on the Decatur fire department to pass through the haze in review and admitted that the question was hard to answer.

Junk Old Equipment

"Probably no one living," he said, "can say what has become of a lot of it. Some of it was sold and much of it was just worn out and junked years ago."

"I know that No. 1, a thousand gallon steamer, was sold to Bryan, Ohio. The other steamer was sold to some town in Ohio, I believe, but I don't remember just where. I suppose that most of the old horse equipment, after it became obsolete and no longer useful was junked. Anyway it is all gone just as all the fine horses we used to have. They belong to the past and have gone back to dust."

Motors Unreliable

"Now there was the chief's buggy in which he used to ride to the fire. I wonder where that went? No one knows. We used to have two 90-gallon chemical engines, two straight-hose wagons, one combination chemical and hose wagon and a one-horse ladder truck. They are all gone now, junked long ago, I guess."

The chief said that much of the first equipment bought at the time of the transition from horse drawn

to motor propelled apparatus could be accounted for. He talked interestingly of the days of the first feeble attempts to motorize when many believed they would never be able to depend upon a gasoline motor to throw water on a fire. "Too darned uncertain. Apt to stop on you right in the middle of a fire," people avowed.

Started Change in 1910

"It was in 1910," he said, "that we took the first step. It was that year we bought the chief's car. I remember it well. It was a Rambler roadster, special built. Then in 1911 the first truck was bought. It was quite a success and another was purchased in 1912. These first two were combined chemical and hose wagons. They were called combination wagons."

"The 1911 truck has been junked but the 1912 engine is at Engine house No. 2 and will still run."

"Before 1912 there were three fire stations in Decatur. Stations 1, 2 and 3 were built for horses. In 1912 when practical men were still uncertain as to whether or not the motor truck had come to stay horse house No. 4 was built for both horses and trucks. But no horses were ever used there. Stations 4, 5 and 6 have never sheltered horses."

Had Daily Run

Chief Lowry described the old days of the horse drawn equipment as the day of romance.

"People don't get the thrill out of a fire run with present day equipment they used to get in the horses went out. There is a romance about horses. We had

tise run every evening at 7 o'clock and there was never an evening when there was not a crowd of people to see the horses leave the station.

Inspection Big Affair

"Then there was annual inspection day. Once a year we were supposed to take the horses and equipment out for a run to be inspected by the mayor and the members of the city council. The show was usually held on West Prairie street or West William street. The run would be made from Pine street to Church street. The street would be so lined with people that they had to be pushed back to let the horses pass. I wonder what a piece of horse drawn fire equipment would do in the traffic we have today."

The annual report of the fire chief for 1910 showed that the department had a chief, 31 men and 20 horses. The department now has 61 men including the chief.

Use More Man Power

The 1910 report carried a recommendation that "automobile equipment" be bought. One of the great advantages the report said was that "drivers were immediately available as workers at fires and do not have to delay to blanket their horses and find some one to hold them before they are of any service as firemen."

August 22 will be the 20th anniversary of the Morchouse and Wells fire. That year the fire loss in Decatur was \$770,619.66, the greatest in the history of Decatur up to that time.

The report ending April 30, 1928

Decatur, Pa. ...

August 18, 1929

#4 ...

DECATUR FIRE DEPARTMENT IS MODERNIZED SWIFTLY

THIS year the Decatur fire department has been revalued, reorganized and equipped with beyond recognition. According to the personnel it is about as modern as any department in the city of a year ago.

SWIFTLY DONE

It is probable that in no city in Illinois has the modernization been so rapid as in the Decatur. It is believed that such a location has been secured for the new fire station. The new station will be built on the corner of North Main and Second streets. Twelve horses will go into the station.

A NEW MODEL

At the same time the department has been revalued by the city. The new valuation of a pair of powerful horses racing at twelve speed and drawing after them a heavy piece of fire apparatus is about a thing of the past. The value of W. C. Hayes a dozen years ago of heavy propelled fire apparatus has been raised.

THE LIST

The following schedule will furnish a budgetary view of the Decatur fire department as it is today:

No. 1

Fire house on West Main street. Construction new and chemical water truck. No. 1 steamer. Chief's automobile. Chief Devore, Captain Hollister and four men.

No. 2

Fire house on North Main street. New big better truck. Two horses. Construction chemical and fire automobile truck. No. 2 steamer. Assistant Chief Devore and four men.

No. 3

Fire house on North Main street. Construction new and chemical water truck. No. 3 steamer. Captain Tom Devore and four men.

No. 4

Fire house on North Main street. Construction new and chemical water truck. No. 4 steamer. Captain James Devore and four men.

TOTAL

Four fire houses, four steamers,

five horses and thirty-five men, including the chief and assistant chief.

USE OF TRUCKS

As will be seen from this schedule only four automobile trucks are in use yet twelve horses have been discarded. The steamer teams at No. 1 and No. 2 houses have been disposed of and the steamers when needed will be pulled to fires by the motor trucks. Under the present plan the steamers will be seldom needed. Only in cases of big fires will the department be unable to cope with the situation with the pressure in the city mains. In the business and manufacturing districts the pressure furnished by the water-works pumping plant will be sufficient for ten leads of hose. If more water is needed the steamers will be brought into the requisition and the motor trucks whose hose is already in service will return to the stations and take out the steamers.

EFFICIENCY INCREASED

It is not merely that motors have taken the place of horses thus relieving

(Continued on Next Page)



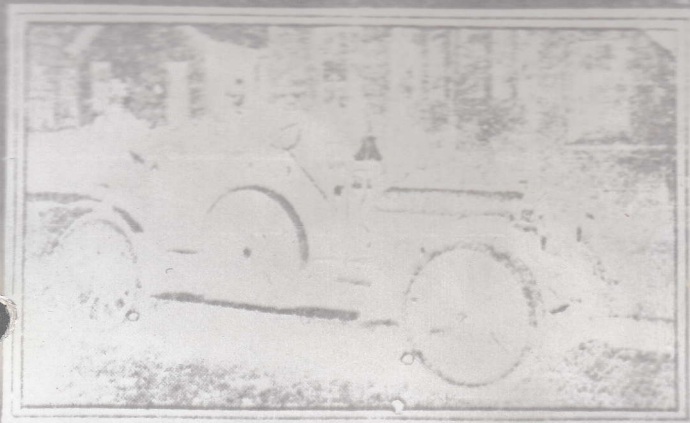
New No. 4 Fire House

Built this year at the North-west corner of Major and Second streets.



No. 1 Automobile Truck and No. 1 Steamer

The steamer is taken out only when it is known that a fire will be a big one. The No. 1 steamer is the largest in the city. The main job of the No. 1 is taking out the steamer in the big fires.



Chief's New Automobile.

One of the additions of this year. Chief Devore is seated on the left. Engineer Elias Lowry is in the driver's place. The other man is John Putnam.



Assistant Chief Ed Platt in the Driver's

This is one of the No. 2's which are left out of duty in some of the big fires.

FIRE DEPARTMENT MODERNIZED SWIFTLY

(Continued From Previous Page.)

ing the department of the care and upkeep of horses but the efficiency of the fire department has been materially increased by the use of motor trucks. A motor truck can easily protect a territory two or three or even four times as large as that which can be protected by a horse drawn truck. The motor truck gets there quicker and the saving of seconds at the start of a fire means the saving of many dollars. Big fires do great damage, even when the fire department wins, but it is in preventing little fires from becoming big that the department renders the greatest service to the public. Therefore the apparatus which most quickly gets to a fire is most desirable.

DO NOT FEAR RUD.

The motor truck is clumsy and a run of one or three miles does not hurt it in the least. The drivers have learned to fear the road with automobile. As long as there is a bottom the automobile can go on a road street and when there is no bottom horses are about as helpless as the automobile.

Not Big Year for I. T. S.

In the matter of expenditures the fire department for the year 1912 has been the slowest year the department has had since 1908. The total this year is only \$100,000, which is divided as follows:

Salaries	\$1,500
Supplies	1,000
Repairs	1,000
Other	1,500

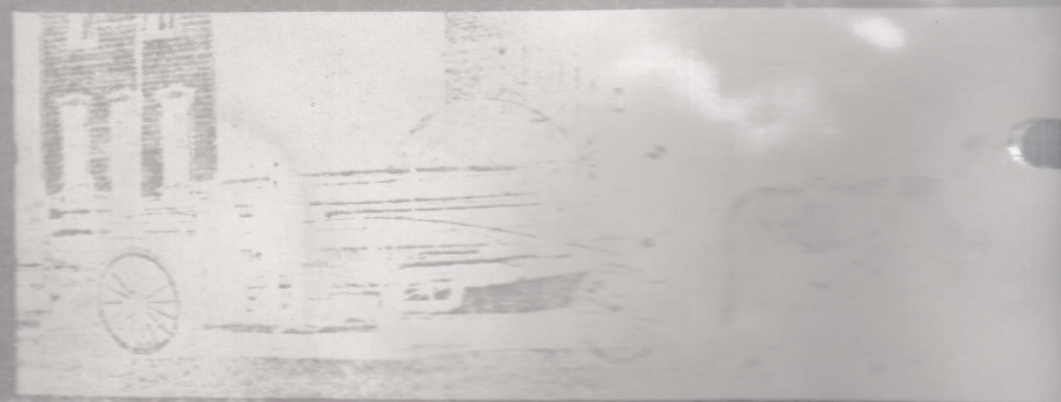
The department will save of the year in the expenditure of horses and the purchase of new horses is reduced to a minimum. The department will also save in the purchase of new apparatus.

THE NEW TRUCKS.

There is to be a purchase of new trucks in the next few months. It is expected that the department will purchase a number of new trucks. These trucks will be used for fire fighting and for other purposes. The department will also purchase a number of new horses.



No. 1 Automobile Truck.

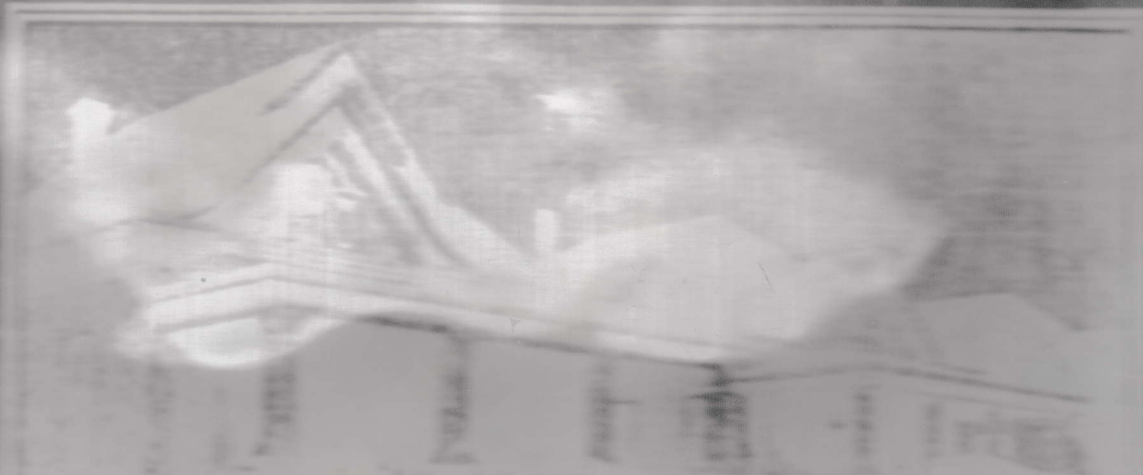


Book and Ladder Truck.

One of the few pieces of apparatus in the Decatur fire department still pulled by horses.

EVERYBODY LOVES MUSIC

BUT FEW HAVE THE ABILITY TO PLAY THE PIANO



When construction of the new building was first started, suggestions began to come in from interested citizens that the building should be named for Mrs. Evans, in recognition of her 40 years of service as Decatur's librarian. Members of the Library board said last evening that they had never had any thought but that the building should be named for Mrs. Evans, but they guarded the intention as a secret.

Montgomery Accepts.

First announcement of the name came in the course of the dedication, when W. F. Hardy, chairman of the Library board, presenting the new building to the city, pronounced it "The Alice G. Evans Branch Library." Commissioner J. W. Montgomery, representing the municipality in the absence of Mayor Borchers, declared in his speech of acceptance that all of his votes went for Mrs. Evans. During the program in the building, flames from the No. 4 house next door quietly placed ladders and unveiled the name tablet over the door, which had been covered with boards since it was set in place.

The main room in the new building was filled by the audience that came for the ceremony, and for the address by S. H. Ranck, librarian of Grand Rapids. Members of the Library board and many former members were there, together with the entire public library staff, a handful of interested citizens from all parts of the city, and a great many patrons of the branch. Men, women and children were among these, who were most eager and interested in the inspection of the building, with its row on row of shelves already filled with books.

Congratulates Decatur

Erection of a separate branch library building in a city of Decatur's size is a noteworthy achievement. Mr. Ranck told the guests for the dedication, complimenting the community upon a new facility for library service which, he said, will make for greatly increased use by the public.

"The Public Library as a Community Vitalizer" was the subject of Mr. Ranck's address, in which he cited instances from experience in Grand Rapids showing important economic and social contributions by a public library to its community. "A community that once realizes that its library is a conscious, socialized effort in promoting the best development of its people no longer looks upon its public library as a luxury," he said, "but as a vital necessity—an investment for constructive manhood and womanhood, the leading agency in adult education."

From the July 22, 1922 news article regarding the dedication and naming of the Alice G. Evans Branch Public Library at 1429 North Jasper — next door neighbor to the #4 Firehouse, at 142 East Locust.

FIRE FIGHTIN' HORSES LIVE IN LEGENDS OF THE "OLD DAYS"

Decatur Firemen Who Started in the Horse-Era Say That the Automobile "Youngsters" Will Never Experience the Real Glamour of the Service.

By ROBERT A. BARRACKS
Herald-Review Staff Reporter

SOMEWHERE on the Frank Elliot farm northwest of Decatur is an unmarked grave. It is the last resting place of "Jerry", last of Decatur's fire horses.

With the passing of Jerry in 1924, nothing remains but memories of those gallant veterans of the department who served side by side with their human companions in the protection of life and property only to succumb to the march of progress when the horse age passed and the machine age entered.

Intelligent, loyal, proud beasts they were. Vain and prancing on parade, alert and serious when the gong tapped, those fire horses of the old days were almost human. Ask any of the old timers of the department and they will declare that their horses thought and reasoned as well as their drivers. Some will declare that their charges showed more intelligence than some of their two legged co-workers.

Each horse had a personality all his own. This one was a joker, delighting in playing pranks on his fellow team-mates or on the firemen. That one was a woman who would permit none of the op-

posite sex near his stall. Talk to a veteran of the department about his horses and you loose a flood of reminiscence of the "good old days" and not a one of those old-timers who has survived his four-footed friends, will admit that motorized equipment is altogether better than the horse-drawn wagons.

Much of the glamor went out of fire fighting with the horses. The days when the tap of a gong sent the horses rushing from their stalls to pause under the hanging harness as the collars were snapped, and then out into the street, muscles rippling under satiny coats, each giving his best as the wagon rumbled behind and songs changed—those were the good old days.

"DID you ever hear about Maude?" asked Bob Lunsford, (the man who drove them all), as he sat in his little billiard room on East Wood street. A reminiscent smile quirked the corners of his lips.

"Well, Maude was a real he-horse in spite of his name, and its no disrespect to him that he got a lady's name.

"We bought Maude from Ham Alexander who lived east of town. When they brought him to me I said to myself 'there's a horse', and he started out like he was going to live up to expectations. The first thing we used to do when we got a green one, was to put him in his box stall to sort of get accustomed to things.

"I had hardly left him, when I heard the gosh-awfulest commotion and I turned around to see what was going on. There was that horse, on his hind legs with both forefeet hooked over the side of a six and a half foot box stall, looking around the fire house with the funniest expression on his face I ever saw on horse or human.

"He looked just like the mule 'Maude' in the funny papers, and I named him 'Maude' right there, gender notwithstanding.

"After Maude had been in service for a long time, he met with an accident that made the name even more fitting.

"We were going to a mill fire one night, and arriving there, we had some trouble at

a plug. A deputy sheriff was on the scene and I asked him to hold the reins while I helped out with the plug. He insisted on holding the horses by their bits, and I warned him that if anything happened to start them off, he would get the worst of it. He insisted he could hold any team, and I was in a hurry, so I let him alone.

"I had just got off the wagon, when Chief Devore dashed up in his buggy driving Jerry. As he swung past, he sideswiped Maude and Mike. The horses left there in a hurry and the deputy almost got killed.

"Those two horses ran to Wood and Webster streets, where Maude slipped and fell into a ditch. It was a deep ditch and with the wagon piling up behind, Mike was shoved on top of Maude, although still on his feet. When we got there, Mike was still standing on Maude, but he was as quiet as though his feet were planted in a basket of eggs. As tangled up as Mike was, and as frightened as he had a right to be, he was careful not to harm his teammate and was just waiting for help to come.

"Maude got a slight skull fracture out of that fracas, and in fixing him up, it was necessary to do some cutting and put in several stitches. When the wound healed, Maude had a scar over one eye and a ridge of skin that made him look just like the funny-paper mule with one eyebrow lifted. There was no chance of ever changing to a masculine name after that."

BOB LUNSFORD could tell you about "Ock" too. Ock was one of the oldest horses, in point of service, on the department and was retired from duty in 1905 after sixteen years of loyal service.

Ock was a fastidious creature. He would never drink from the watering trough that the other horses used, but had to have a private bucket of his own. When feeding time came, he was imperious in his demands for attention and would pound on the stall with his forefeet. He knew within five minutes of the time for feeding, and resent any delay.

With all that, Ock would condescend to play now and then, and enjoyed a game of

hide and seek with the firemen while waiting for an alarm. A fireman would open the door of his stall suddenly and about "Boo!" and run away. Ock would come charging out in hot pursuit and chase the playful one all over the firehouse. When he caught his man, he always demanded a lump of sugar. Whenever visitors came to the old No. 1 station, which stood at the northeast corner of Church and West Main, Ock would beg for candy and sugar, and few could resist his pleadings.

A bad accident often ruins a fire horse, but Ock cared nothing for bruises and skinned places. Once on a run, the wagon he was pulling collided with another from No. 2 station at the corner of Morgan and Orchard. Ock was thrown to the pavement and his own wagon ran completely over him. He lost a lot of skin and was badly bruised, but he seemed to forget it immediately and it never affected his work.

Ock was retired twice. A few months after he was mustered out of service, a horse at one of the stations got sick. In the emergency they recalled Ock. There were three alarms that first day, and Ock

went through the routine as though he had never missed an hour of service. When he was finally retired, he was taken to No. 3 station where there was plenty of stable room and a lot for exercise. For days, whenever the gong tapped and the wagons rolled, Ock reared and plunged and attempted to go along.

"**J**ERRY," who was Decatur's last surviving fire horse, was the king of them all. The fastest and most level-headed of the whole stable, Jerry was the one chosen to pull Chief Devore's buggy, and for years, swung away in a run at the head of all the apparatus when the wagons rolled.

There was just one blot on Jerry's record. That came when he ran away after sideswiping Maude and Mike at the mill that cold night so many years ago.

You couldn't blame Jerry for bolting in the excitement. He traveled at top speed and ran fully five miles out into the country. After the fire, a shamed-faced horse

Fire Fightin' Horses - - - 2

was found walking back to town, pulling the chief's buggy behind him. Firemen say that Jerry was very sensitive about this, and they were considerate enough never to mention the subject in his hearing thereafter.

The old-timers speak respectfully of Frank, too. Frank was one of the veterans of the service and one of the fastest runners. At the end of eighteen years in the game, he could still outstrip any horse in a straightaway.

It wasn't long after he was retired, that Frank died. The boys will tell you today that Frank died of a broken heart. At any rate, he did not long enjoy the rest that his years of service had earned.

* * *

THE end of a fire horse's career was a sad thing. Noble animals that had served so well for so many years, they seemed to feel it keenly when their working days were ended. Their drivers felt it as keenly as their charges.

There was a party at the No. 2 fire house the day that old Jerry was retired. Chief Devore, Captain Platt, now fire chief, were there to bid their pal farewell. It was a sad parting and when Jerry walked out, the old station had said goodbye forever to the cheerful whinnying and the comfortable stamping that was as much a part of station life as the big gong or the brass pole.

Jerry was given to the late Frank Torrence to use as his personal horse in driving about the parks over which he had supervision. Frank took him on his promise that he would care for him to the end of the faithful beast's days, and he kept that promise. He buried him on the Elliott farm.

Then there was Spike, another chief's horse. Old Spike's passing still brings tears to the eyes of the men still living who knew and loved him.

Spike was sold to Art Fletcher, who lived between Lovington and Sullivan and who was a friend of many Decatur firemen and a lover of good horses. Fletcher prom-

ised to make Spike's last days pleasant, and many a fireman took the long drive to the Fletcher farm now and then to see their old friend.

One Thanksgiving day, Fletcher invited Bob Lunsford and two or three other firemen out to the farm for a hunting trip. As they came into the barn lot at dusk, Old Spike whinneyed and left his stack of clover hay to trot over to the fence and greet his old friends.

"He knew us and seemed overjoyed to see us," said Lunsford, telling about it. "The old rascal had that whole stack of clover for himself and he certainly was fat and heaving."

"When we left him, he was still standing at the fence, peering after us in the gloom with his age-dimmed eyes."

"Next morning we got up to start for Decatur. We went out to tell Spike goodbye. It was too late. Spike was lying dead by the fence where we last saw him."

"It wasn't a very happy bunch of firemen that went into the station that afternoon. We knew that Chief Devore would ask us about Spike the first thing. None of us wanted to break the news."

"Sure enough, the first thing Chief asked us was, 'How's old Spike.' We had to tell him that Spike was gone."

"The Chief stood with his head down for a moment, and then asked: 'He's going to be buried, isn't he? They're not going to leave him lying out there?'"

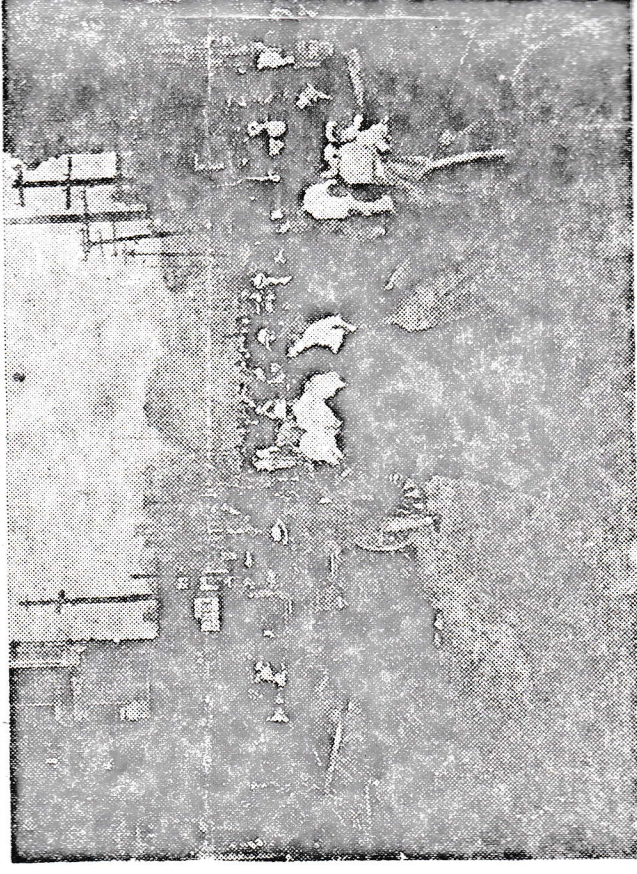
"We told him that Spike would be buried right, and the Chief turned away and went into his office and closed the door. He loved that horse, and so did every one of us."

* * *

THE affection of the firemen for their horses was almost pathetic. One reason for the close attachment between horse and man was that each man had a horse to train and care for and that animal came to be a "one man horse".

Youngsters in the service were trained many hours a day in the routine of the station, and the same man did the training

Below, Ed Platt, now chief of the Decatur fire dept. then assistant chief, driver of "Randy".



A fire scene in downtown Decatur in the gay nineties when horses got the work there and women wore petticoats and puffed sleeves.

Fire Fightin' Horses --- 3

end of the horse in 25 1-5 seconds by a stopwatch.

"One time," he continued, "John Duffy hopped from his bed upstairs, dressed, slid down the pole, hitched two horses by himself and was rolling in 17 seconds."

"At a tournament here a team from No. 1 station made ten straight hitches, with the harness lying on the ground in the street, and the average time for the ten was 2.25 seconds. The team would be unhitched and the harness dropped to the ground. The horses were led to points each opposite a rear wheel of the wagon. At the word 'Go' the horses would dash to their positions and the harness snapped. On several occasions this hitch was made in 2 seconds flat by stopwatch time."

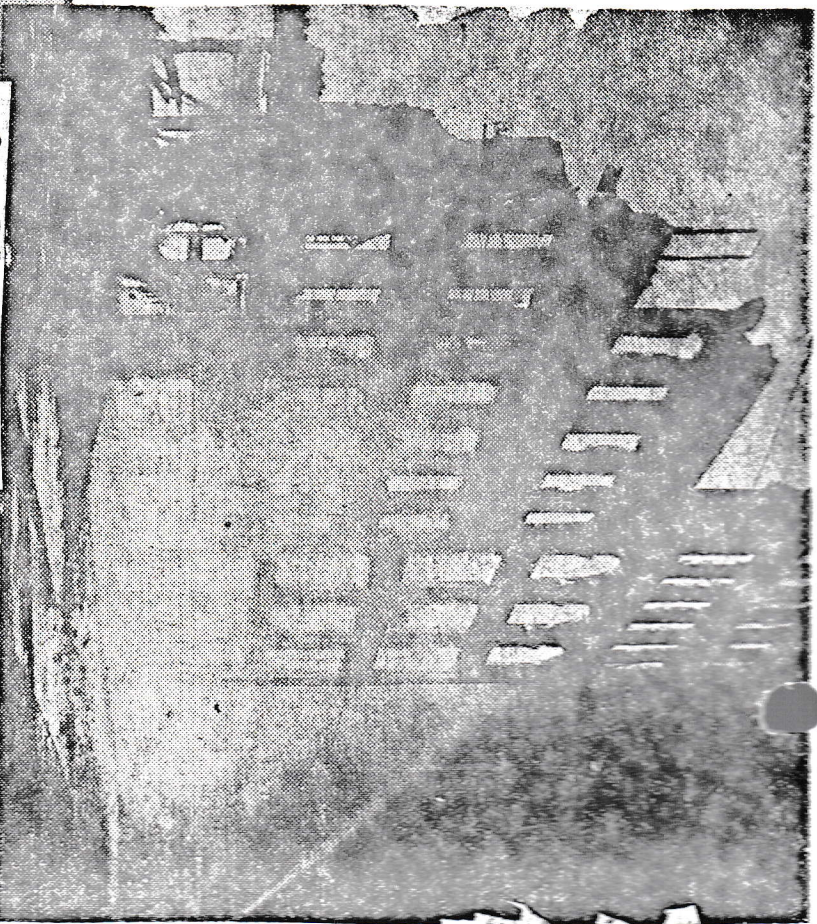
"Talk about speed in getting to fires," he continued. "We made a timed run from the No. 1 station at Main and Church to the corner of William and Morgan in 2 minutes and 40 seconds from the tap of the bell. The automobile outfits can't beat that very much." *continued on card 4*

In most cases, the horses were first taught to leave their stalls at the tap of the gong, and it is remarkable with what speed they picked it up. Many a horse has been trained in two weeks to dash from his stall when the gong sounded and the chain across the front of his stall dropped automatically. He would rush to his station at the wagon tongue, duck his head under the collar, and be off as the collar snapped.

The speed with which horses were hitched in those days is almost unbelievable, but the time of some of the old contests is a matter of record.

Capt. Sam Morthland, one-time veteran and now at the Staley pumping plant, tells of some of the old records.

"At No. 1 station one time we measured the distance from the stalls to a fire plug on the corner. It was 137 feet. The bell tapped, the horses went to their stations, the hitch was made, the wagon pulled to the plug and we had water coming out the



One of Decatur's worst fires. The Arcade and Decatur Hotel fire on April 21, 1915. The seven story Arcade building which stood about

where the Lincoln theater is now, and the Decatur Hotel next door burned that night with a loss of two lives.



Old alarm at old Number Two station on North Morgan street. The firemen have been routed from their beds by the gong, the stall chains have tipped and the horses have rushed to their positions under the harness. George Bastob, since died, gone to bed with his boots on, for he is at the pole, ready to take the slide. Ed Platt, present chief, was hard to arouse, for pushing the covers back in the left background. Bill Platt, now captain at Number Two station, is pulling them up while next riding fireman is a close second. The late Jim McKinley is next in the row while Jack Sheehy, who was killed in the



Left, Billy Kuesick, chemical wagon driver at old Number One station polishing up the harness, one of the indoor sports of firemen in the days of horse-drawn equipment.

Decatur Fire Engine in Service at 50

**Sold 25 Years Ago
To Bryan, Ohio**

Back in 1915 Decatur motorized its fire equipment and sold an old 1,000-gallon steam engine to the department at Bryan, Ohio. Although now 50 years old, that same steam engine is in such excellent condition that the Bryan fire officials refuse to junk it, even though it is considered obsolete.

According to word from Bryan its pressure is still as good as the day it was made and with the connections the fireboys have to haul it behind their trucks, it is just that much added protection in case of a big fire.

This former horse-drawn, piston-type pumper still throws 1,000 gallons of water a minute. It is such a rarity that visitors in Bryan stop to admire it, and the firemen swear by its efficiency.

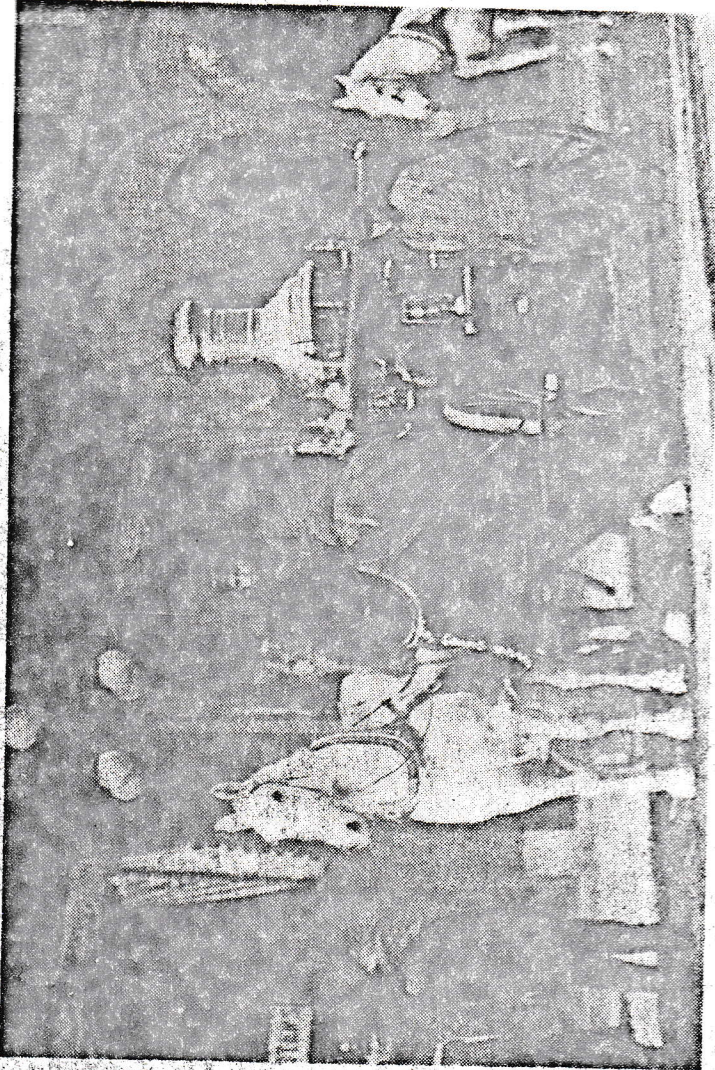
Remembered by Platt

Former Fire Chief Will Platt, who was on the Decatur department over 49 years before his retirement last summer, had vivid remembrances of the old steam engine last night. He said Decatur purchased the engine 25 years before it was sold and that it played a vital part in fighting some of Decatur's biggest fires.

Drawn by those powerful and fast fire horses which were the pride of the department early in the century, former Chief Platt said that it was a thrilling sight to watch the equipment being rushed to the scene of a fire in those days.

According to Mr. Platt the old steam engine was an Ahrens-Fox and required the services of three men to operate—a driver, a stoker and an engineer. He said the Decatur department had two such engines, one larger than that now still in operation in Bryan.

"That engine was used to fight



This old steam fire engine, formerly used by the Decatur fire department, is still in such excellent condition that officials at Bryan, Ohio, will not discard

it from their fire equipment. Its pressure is still as good as the day it was made. Now 50 years old, the former horse-drawn engine is now hitched to

big fires such as the one in the Liberty block, the Linn & Scruggs fire, the old Opera house fire, and the big blaze in the old Arcade block, now the site of the Lincoln Square theater," Mr. Platt said last night. "It was a good one, too, but when motorized equipment became popular, it was discarded for the more modern apparatus."

The old steam engine is still kept as a part of the Bryan apparatus, but it is only used in case

of extra large fires. Former Chief Platt said that in his opinion the piece of equipment would still be of use to the Decatur department, although newer models insure even more gallonage per minute and higher pressure.

"I remember when the engine was sold—in fact I helped load it onto a flatcar so that it could be shipped to Bryan," Mr. Platt said.

T. W. Lowe, 450 North Broadway, had a letter last week from his

modern pumpers by the Bryan volunteer department. The engine pumps 1,000 gallons per minute. It was sold when Decatur motorized its equipment in 1915.

brother, Charles R. Lowe, of Bryan, in which he told of the old steam engine still being kept by the department there. A photograph of the engine was carried in the Bryan Press, during "Fire Prevention" week.

Bryan has two modern fire trucks which are also used in the city, Center and Pulaski townships and in nearby towns when called. There are 27 members in the Bryan volunteer fire department.

Remember How Firewagons Ran On Prairie Ave.?

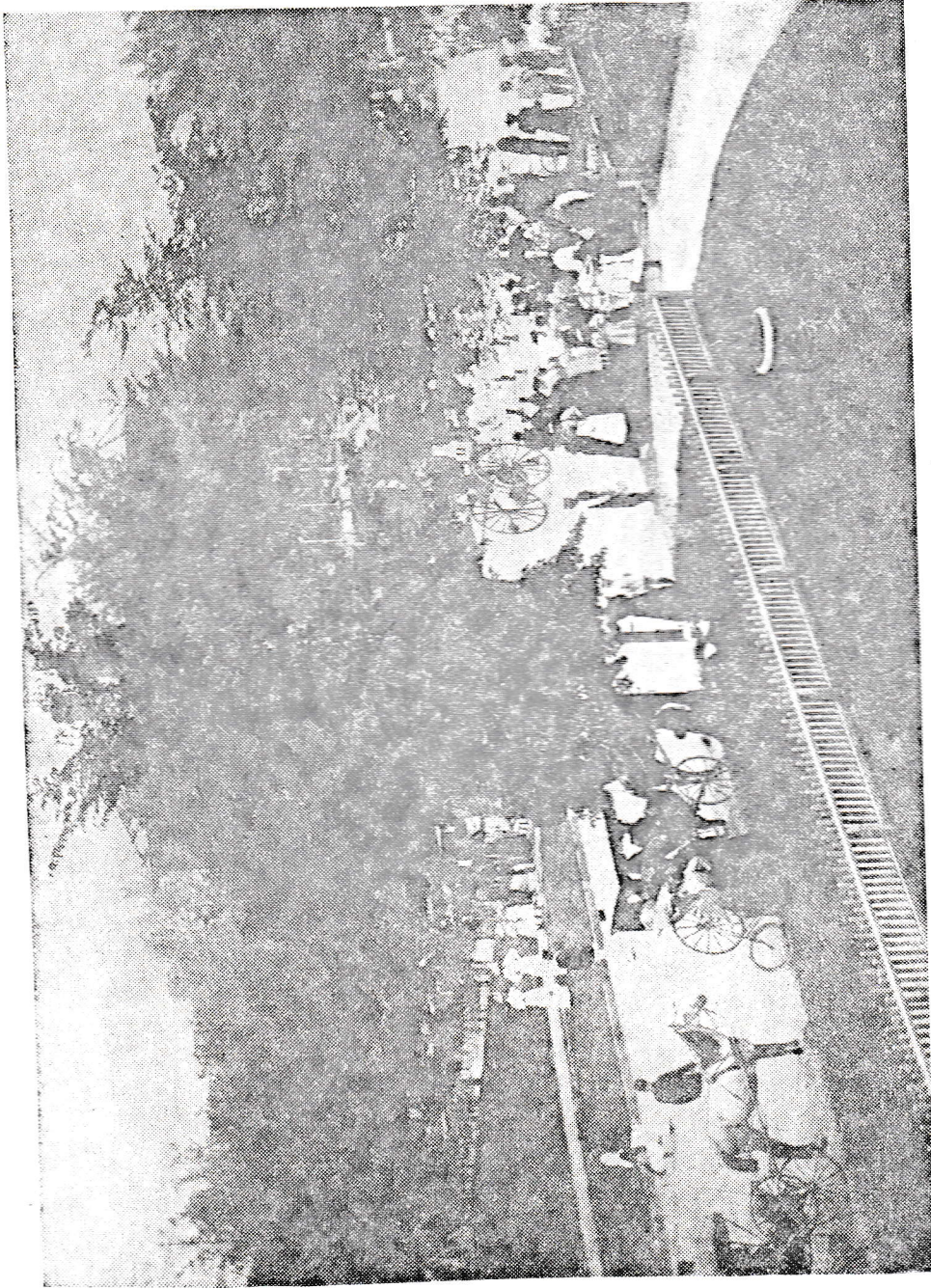
Announcement of the forthcoming Oct. 2 fire department parade has stirred memories of the famous Prairie avenue runs in the minds of those old enough to remember, and stories of those days have been told wherever a few old residents have gathered in the last day or two.

That was before the department was motorized, when the finest big horses were in the fire service. Once a year they would be given a tryout from First Presbyterian church down Prairie avenue to Pine, where the James Millikin and Hill homesteads stood. The latter has been torn down many years to make way for Millikin Place.

The wagons, shined and polished to the last inch, with the handsome big horses groomed and curried and their very hoofs polished, ran in competition, the time of each kept for comparison with other wagons, and with each wagon's own run the year before.

All the householders on both sides of Prairie could expect guests that evening, for the run was just before twilight. Friends went year after year to the same porch, sometimes for a picnic supper, other times just for the run. The yards and sidewalks and curbsings were packed with other persons, darting out into the street to see if an outfit were coming yet, hustled back by a blueclad policeman, cheering the charging horses and rumbly wagons the full length of the street. The "engine", steam up, sparks flying and black smoke trailing, was always last and most popular. It was heavy and seldom made good time, but it was far and away the most spectacular.

No matter what the fire fighters and their modern motorized equipment give the town on Oct. 2, it won't be a patch on the old-time run, in the opinion of those fortunate enough to remember



Fire races down Prairie Avenue or William Street were events of major importance in the early 1900's. The races were at twilight on the annual Fire Department Inspection

Day, usually in June. Persons who lived along the street turned the spectator event into a social one when they invited friends in for picnic lunches on the lawns. For weeks before the event, firemen groomed their horses and polished the equipment and there was much good-natured bantering about who had the fastest team. This 1895 picture shows the inter-

section of William and Edward Streets. The present Decatur Day Nursery is in the background, the home of Dr. William Carto at the time.

section of William and Edward Streets. The present Decatur Day Nursery is in the background, the home of Dr. William Carto at the time.

Sunday Book

North Vietnam

By Elliot Fremont-S
 (c) 1968 New York I
 "BIG VICTORY, G
 TASK": North V
 Minister of Defen
 sses the Course
 War. By Gener
 Nguyen Giap, in
 tion by Davis
 brant. 120 pages.
 \$4.50.

The book could be
 more timely. It comes
 attention after two of
 shattering events in So
 Vietnam, and on the one
 made are to be held
 major battle of the
 where enemy troops are
 the under the direction
 to Nguyen Giap, the "V
 "Duc Thang" and
 North Vietnam's milita

N.Y. Times Best Seller

(c) 1968 New York T
 An analysis based on
 from more than 125 bo
 in 84 U.S. communities.

Fiction

1. THE CONFESSION
NAT TURNER—Styron
2. CHRISTY—Marshall
3. TOPAZ—Uris
4. THE GABRIEL B
—Stewart
5. VANISHED—Knebe
6. THE INSTRUMEN
Hara
7. ROSEMARY'S BA
vin
8. THE EXHIBITION
Sutton
9. THE CHOSEN—Pa
10. THE FRESH
PLANE IS MISSING—G

General

1. "OUR CHOICE"—E
Jewish Families of Ne
—Birmingham
2. NICHILAS AND
ANORA—Moss
3. BETWEEN FRIEND
CHILD—Galt
4. BACKPACKER—
editorial
5. TRULSI—Toght
6. REPORT FROM
MOUNTAIN—Lewin
7. THE NATED AR
ch
8. MEMOIR—G
9. AT RISE—Shaw
Friedl—Eisenberg
10. THE NEW INDI
STATE—Galt

Tuition Paid 9 Years Late

Make Your Make
 In Cooper last the
 Falls School District a c
 \$50 is payment for the
 final semester of the
 year in high school.
 Cooper is an accom
 note contains the le



Rescue equipment taken out of No. 1 fire station, which was on the 28 Block W. Main St. at the time.

Decatur Diary

Spectators Loved Dashing Fire Horses

By Dan Hoover

Of the Herald and Review

Before the time of the
 fire department's fire equip
 ment was widely adopted,
 the equipment was either pul
 led and pushed by men, or pul
 led by horses.

The city of Decatur purchased
 the first team of fire horses and
 a new fire engine on March 1,
 1868. The first driver was
 Benjamin.

The volunteer fire depart
 ment was the young man's all
 time center of the town, just a
 few rods from the central square,
 depending on the time of day
 he spent with.

For many years there were
 three fire companies. The No. 1
 fire company was called Resc
 ue Co., the Edwards Co. was
 No. 2 and Co. 3 was the Harri
 son fire company. Harri was re
 organized into the Neptune fire
 company in 1875.

But James was Rescu
 e Company No. 1, which for 13
 years the volunteer in state
 and national tournaments.

Some modern equipment
 had not come into being, it was
 necessary to have young men,
 first of all, to stretch - out
 and make long lengths of hose.
 For many years the fire
 engines were drawn by horses,
 but with the advent of the auto
 mobile, it was only a matter of
 time until their eventual disap
 pearance.

Just any horse could not be
 a fire horse. The fire animals
 used by the fire department
 were subject to strict discipline
 and training. They enjoyed the
 work and the attention of the fire



Fire Chief C. W. Devore thrilled spectators as he lead e equipment to a fire.

Soviet Churches Spared Wrecking For Patriotism

Moscow (AP)

Bulldozers crashing through
 slums to build a massive urban
 renewal project carefully steer
 around the small white Church
 of Simeon Stolpnik.

With its green Byzantine
 domes and vaulted arches, the
 17th century Russian Orthodox
 church has been spared destruc
 tion while other old buildings
 make way for skyscrapers.

Its preservation is another
 victory for Nikolai N. Sobolev,
 the man responsible for saving
 churches from destruction in
 this citadel of atheism.

As chief inspector of the
 preservation of architectural
 monuments in Moscow the
 white-haired official also fights
 to save other old buildings.

Decatur Yesterdays

From the Files of the Herald & Review

10 Years Ago—1958

A federal labor conciliator
 entered negotiations on Deca
 tur's 13-day-old bus strike as
 talks resumed for the first
 time in nearly a week.

Lakeview Unit District
 school teachers are asking for
 salary increases and a gradu
 ated salary schedule equal to
 the one in the Decatur public
 school system.

Gas and electricity consump
 tion has soared during the
 past five days of the recent
 cold spell. The average mean
 temperature has been 7 de
 grees above zero.

Millikin University's second
 summer enrollment of part
 regular daytime courses to
 totals 976.

A survey of Macon County
 for teachers not registered
 with the county school office
 was started at the request
 of the state superintendent of
 public instruction.

Duke, a handsome German
 shepherd belonging to Dr.
 W. D. Hatfield, is going to
 war. He will report to the
 Chicago Dogs for Defense ex
 amination station.

50 Years Ago—1918

The ITS announced another
 new time card eliminating
 all limited passenger trains.
 Still another new ruling of
 the U.S. Post Administration
 outlined post office dealers not
 to buy or sell bees from Feb.
 23 to April 1, this is order to
 protect the egg supply.
 Decatur people are buying

25 Years Ago—1943

See first column reverse side

Patriotism

10 Years Ago—1958

A federal labor conciliator entered negotiations on Decatur's 13-day-old bus strike as talks resumed for the first time in nearly a week.

Lakeview Unit District school teachers are asking for salary increases and a graduated salary schedule equal to the one in the Decatur public school system.

Gas and electricity consumption has soared during the past five days of the recent cold spell. The average mean temperature has been 7 degrees above zero.

Millikin University's second semester enrollment for the regular daytime courses totals 976.

25 Years Ago—1943

Formation of victory farm volunteers to do the farm work as proposed by Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard is under way in Illinois.

Rolla C. McMillen, Decatur attorney, was one of six new members of the State Housing Board named by Gov. Green.

From previous page

Public Library

Books Help Raise Children

Children are challenging, fascinating and rewarding—and often they are endlessly exasperating, exhausting, and loud. The Decatur Public Library, its branches, and Bookmobiles have the following books available to help parents bring up their offspring wisely and safely and still keep the fun in their lives.

The currently popular "Between Parent and Child" written by Dr. Haim G. Ginott, child psychologist, has an ambitious purpose: to make life between parent and child less irritating and more satisfying.

If you've ever been bored with a baby book or found that after reading pages of advice you still don't know what to do then "How to Raise Children at Home in Your Spare Time" is your happy answer. Dr. Marvin J. Gersh, the author, is a pediatrician with a sense of humor.

Carol Bartholomew's latest book "Most of Us Are Mainly Mothers" is based on a great amount of practical experience—the author has six sons.

What a father should know about his child's development. The author is a "point of view" that by using imagination we can make the job of raising children easier, that no mother should allow herself to be overwhelmed by the needs of her child, and that the ideal of a father is an important and desirable part of a child's development.

not need to worry about patients waiting in the outer office or the harassment of the telephone. "A Pediatrician Talks to New Mothers" is a delightful series of letters written by Dr. David T. Hellyer, which provides a month by month account on the pre-school child.

Dr. David Goodman, a marriage and family counselor, introduces his book, "What's Best for Your Child and You" with a statement from the Upanisads: "Today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope." He believes that by daily losing ourselves in the vocation of being good mates, good parents, and good citizens we can create whole children (those with healthy minds and souls as well as bodies) and thereby achieve wholesome family living.

"The Modern Encyclopedia of Baby and Child Care" edited by Dr. Benjamin F. Miller, is a very attractive five-volume set listing over 700 entries, arranged alphabetically, covering both the physical and psychological aspects of child care.

If father is feeling that all child care books are directed mainly toward mothers, then he will enjoy reading an anthology of stories, letters, poems, and comments by world famous authors on the delights and despairs of fatherhood. "To Be A Father" edited by Alvin Schwartz is about fathers of every kind. The collection illustrates problems, opportunities, and roles that most fathers share.

A survey of Macon County for teachers not registered with the county school office was started at the request of the state superintendent of public instruction.

Duke, a handsome German shepherd belonging to Dr. W. D. Hatfield, is going to war. He will report to the Chicago Dogs for Defense examination station.

50 Years Ago - 1918

The ITS announced another new time card eliminating all limited passenger trains.

Still another new ruling of the U.S. Food Administration notified poultry dealers not to buy or sell hens from Feb. 23 to April 1, this in order to protect the egg supply.

Decatur people are buying 2,500 "smileage" books for men in the army camps. The books contain tickets admitting the men to theaters.

As a fitting climax to a series of Red Cross parties in homes of the women members, a big party was held at the Elks club and \$1,000 was cleared.

- 4. HICKENBACKER enbacker
- 5. TOLSTOY—Troyat
- 6. REPORT FROM MOUNTAIN—Lewin
- 7. THE NAKED ARTIST
- 8. MEMOIRS—Kenna
- 9. AT EASE; Stories Friends—Eisenho
- 10. THE NEW STATE—Galbraith

TUITION PAID 60 YEARS LATE

Idaho Falls, Idaho Ira Casper sent the Falls School District a \$35 in payment for the final semester of the year in high school.

Casper, in an account, explained that he at graduation time and able to attend commencement exercises for the class but remembered that forgotten to make his tuition payment.

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