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The following article appeared in THE CAMPBELLSPORT NEWS, Thursday, June 30, 1960. It summarizes the history of the Campbellsport Volunteer Fire Department. It was written by Henry J. Weld, January 24, 1960.

[The entire June 30, 1960, issue of THE CAMPBELLSPORT NEWS can be found in F-38, located in Oversize Box 1.]

Fireman's History Parallels That of Village Since 1902

A History of the Campbellsport Volunteer Fire Department

This was compiled by Mrs. Catherine Weld and her son Henry and read at the Firemen's annual dinner January 31, 1960.

In order to understand the history of the fire department, a brief review of the history of the Village of Campbellsport should be given.

The original old village in the town of Auburn was built on the main branch of the Milwaukee River. Luden Crouch of New York and John Howell of Waukesha first settled in this territory in 1845. At a celebration in 1846 the place was named Crouchville, and in 1856 was renamed New Cassel by Emil Breyman. This family came from Kassel, Germany, and they named their new home after the old one.

Campbellsport, the new village was built after the Air Line Railway (C&NW) was built here in 1872 in the town of Ashford. The land was owned by Stuart Campbell and the village was named after him; but the railroad station was still called New Cassel until 1873 when it was changed to Campbellsport.

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There was a large space between the two villages and finally in 1902 after years of bickering, they were incorporated under the name of Campbellsport. M. L. McCullough was the first president and H. A. Wrucke, the first village clerk.

On Monday evening, March 14, 1904, at a meeting of the citizens of Campbellsport held in Henry Braun's hall, (now Bauer's hotel), a volunteer fire department was organized and the following officers elected:

Fire Chief: Wm. Wedde; First Ass't, J. P. Gilboy; Second Ass't, P. M. Schlaefer; Secretary, C. E. Broughton; Treasurer, J. P. Schlaefer.

A week later a second meeting was called at which a constitution and set of By-Law for the department were adopted. This constitution with amendments and additions has guided the department for 56 years, through good and bad times, two world wars, a depression and a recession. The history of the department reveals how these events affected its existence.

After the organization meeting, the first big job with which they were confronted was how to raise money to purchase equipment. They finally decided to give a series of home talent plays. These proved highly successful with John Kohler as comedian and Frank Flanagan as the star of the productions. They finally had enough money to purchase a horse drawn pumper, a hose cart and 1,000 feet of hose. Later on they purchased a

second-hand hook and ladder outfit and chemical cart from the Ripon department. James Farrell, then a lad of 16, remembers that he had to have his father's permission to join the department and that his 1st job was to keep the lanterns clean.

One of the first big fires took place in 1908, when the Seaman, Loeb's and Knickel building which stood at the bank corner, burned to the ground. In the winter of 1910-11 another big fire hit the village when the Odd Fellow's Hall and a residence which stood on the Campbellsport Mutual site, were destroyed.

Followed a period of inactivity but in December 1913 a re-organization meeting was held with 19 members casting votes for the following officers:

Fire Chief, Wm. Wedde; 1st Ass't John Granger; 2nd Ass't Emmett Curran; Secretary, Wm. Martin; Treasure, Eugene Glass.

In January 1914, the following men answered the first roll call: Albert Schwandt, L. J. Hall, James Farrell, A. F. Schmidt, Herman J. Paas, Ray Wenzel, E. Redfern, W. J. Sullivan, Chas. Nolan, Eugene Glass, John Kohler, Wm. Guenther, C. R. Van de Zande, Henry Kloke, Charles Seering, Joe Schlaefer, Wm. Martin, John J. Pesch, Frank Bauer, Otto Cole.

Alfred Van de Zande was captain of the Hook and Ladder Co., with these members: J. P. Schlaefer, Nic Schlaefer, Arnold Ertz, Frank J. Becker, Math Schlaefer, John Jewson, Leo Husting, A. E. Rudolph, Andrew Sukawaty, Pearson Brown and George Braun.

In 1915 they decided to buy uniforms and the local tailor, Hugo Kuehl, was consulted and given the order to make the uniforms. A loan of \$100 was made from the bank and caps were bought for \$1.55 each.

With the coming of World War I the department was reduced to a skeleton force. By 1919 things were booming again with Henry Lichtensteiger as chief and membership went up to 50. In 1920 they staged their first drive for funds in the county. As a result, the village purchased a Howe-Ford fire truck with the department repaying the village with \$100 payments. Ben Day was the first driver of this piece of equipment with Ed Rudolph and John Pesch assisting. The first fire was on the John Miller farm on Country Trunk Y. Another big blaze occurred on September 7, 1919 when the barns on the John Stoffel and Frank Gremminger farms were destroyed. That same night the blaze again broke out and the barn on the Becker farm ignited, but was saved.

Once again the department fell into evil days and reached a low period when "Judge" Wm. Henry Ferber was chief. This eccentric old gentleman was more interested in crowing Queens at the annual May Ball than fighting fires and membership dwindled to about half a dozen.

In 1926, Andrew Sukawaty was chief and they built three cisterns and in 1927 purchased the first siren and mounted it in the tower of the old village hall.

Under "Suky's" leadership the department made rapid strides. In 1941, a Reo Speed Wagon pumper was purchased. The custom of holding an annual picnic was started the first of these held on Main street with the two business blocks being roped off. Later the picnics were transferred to the present site, then known as Schmidt's Woods.

During this period, the village finally got around to installing a water works system, a project which the department had worked on for many years.

Some spectacular fires took place during this time among them the McDougal fire which destroyed two large barns on what is now the Floyd Bauer farm; the Old St. Joseph Convent fire, Stella Cheese Co., warehouse fire of 1936 Schlaefer's Hardware, the high school and the Armistice Day fire at the St. Joseph's convent barn.

The depot fire was one of the most spectacular in the summer of 1933. This started when a county highway employee opened the vent of a tank car of road oil while carrying a lighted lantern. The tank car blew up igniting the depot and several other railroad cars and sending gallons of burning oil into the streets. Press service carried the story from coast to coast.

In 1939 the Firemen finally were able to purchase a parcel of land from Fred Schmidt which was the start of the present day park. Andrew Sukawaty, Marvin Barnes, Ed Rudolph and Charles Van de Zande signed a note for \$3,000 and W. S. Hayhoe furnished the money and held the mortgage to complete the deal. Negotiations with the WPA took up most of the time regarding park improvement.

At the annual meeting in 1939 Lewis (Bups) Schwandt was elected chief. In 1940 he was transferred to West Bend and Ed Rudolph was elected to replace him.

The draft started in October 1940 so once again the department's strength went down. In 1941 membership was as follows: Ed Rudolph, chief; A. Sukawaty, 1st Ass't; C. Kudek, 2nd Ass't; Marvin Barnes, Treas., Charles Van de Zande, sec'y. Joe Bauer, Jr., F. Bleck, James Farrell, W. Hayhoe, W. Kloke, H. Setniacker, H. Roate, R. Waldschmidt, Glen Kippenhan, A. Berge, Ken Farrel, C. Vincent, E. Wanzlaff, Syl Wenzlaff, R. Kleiber, Harry Lueders, R. Hensen, E. Wisckerchen, Dave Twohig, L. Morgan and Alvin Waldschmidt.

That year the building of a Boy Scout cabin at the park was first discussed as the department had sponsored the local troop for many years. At the annual meeting H. Roate and H. Lueders were named to the Park Board. A large fire took place at Bauer's elevator and calls for help to other departments by unauthorized persons was the cause of considerable debate. In 1946 the picnic was held for the first time since the war.

At the annual meeting January 9, 1947, Harold Lueders was elected chief to succeed Rudolph. Other officers were Sukawaty, 1 Ass't; C. Kudek 2nd; M. Barnes, Treas.; Van de Zande, Sec'y; J. Farrell, H. Roate, Park Board.

Most of that year was spent in discussions with various Town Boards in regard to fire runs into their territory. All officers were re-elected in 1948. Park improvements were the big topic of discussion during meetings, new caps and badges were purchased, that year a gross income of \$4,023 was reported by the picnic committee, and on August 18 they purchased more land from the Schmidt estate for \$600.

In 1949 officers were Lueders, Chief: Kudek, 1st; Tom Johnson, 2nd; Van de Zande, Sec'y; Barnes Treas; and Roate, Park Board. On February 17, Lueders resigned as Chief and Charles Romayko was elected to succeed him. In May \$400 worth of playground equipment was purchased for the park. In December a First Aid course was begun under direction of Dr. Leo Hoffmann and an annual banquet held at Bauer's in January 18, 1950.

Charles Vande Zande who had served as secretary for 29 years, refused to be a candidate for re-election in 1950 and Ed Ours was elected to the office. On April of that year several members appeared in the Boy Scout's Amateur Show with Don Welsh and R. Reese in charge. The custom of electing assistant chiefs was discontinued and the

Chief appointed Tom Johnson and Sly Wenzalff as his assistants. Members of the park board were Romayko, Barnes, Roate, Hensen, Ours, T. Johnson and Welsh. At the October meeting another piece of land was bought from Ray Hendricks for park purpose with Art Brandt in charge of the deal.

At the 1951 January meeting, James Farrell was made an honorary member; he had been an active member for 47 years. The department purchased three water stock tanks for the use in country fires and the picnic netted \$2,028.73. At the annual meeting in December 1951, Lester Butschlick was elected chief, Leo Janous, secretary and Art Brandt, treas. Marvin Barnes, the retiring treasurer, had held that position for 18 years. The chief appointed Earl Scheid and Leo H. Ketter as his assistants and Roy Ours was named a member of the Park Board.

Other important events in that year, was the building and completion of the Boy Scout cabin in the park, negotiations were begun in regard to the purchase of a new fire truck, and Art Yankow was hired as the caretaker of the park and cabin. The village began planning for the building of the village hall and fire station and the department was vitally interested in this.

In 1953 the Dodge fire truck was purchased from Howard Motor and the old Reo truck was converted to a tanker.

1954 saw the dedication of the new village hall and fire house; David Twohig, Art Brandt and Dante Camilli were members of the Dedication Committee.

On March 20, 1954, it was decided to purchase a 1937 Buick ambulance. Members of the rescue squad for ambulance service were Jim Weyer, Joe Thelen, Les Butschlick, Ed Ours, Leo H. Ketter, Leo Janous, Syl Wenzlaff, Eldon Spradau, Albert Kulod, Dave Twohig and Don Howard.

The department also purchased an additional three acres of land from Ray Hendricks for park purposes, later on these three acres were traded to Mrs. Mary Wondra for three acres of wood-lot and a new line fence was erected.

The chief order of business in 1955 was park improvement, rural fire calls and fire department phone service. A new siren was purchased by the village and C. J. Kleinhans was honored for his work with the Boy Scouts and park board.

In 1956, the old Reo truck gave up the ghost on a fire run to the Kettle Moraine State Park and a used Chevrolet truck was purchased to re-place it as a tank truck. At the annual meeting Eldon Spradau was elected secretary.

In 1957 the Buick ambulance was replaced by a Cadillac. A substantial donation by Dave Saoff helped the purchase. The chief appointed the following assistants: 1st ass't, Earl Scheid; 2nd ass't, Ed Ours; 1st Engineer, Joe Thelen, 2nd Engineer, Vernon Feuerhammer.

In 1958 the rest rooms were built in the park and a skating rink and Little League baseball diamond erected in the park, Everett Miller was elected to the Park Board and all other officers were retained.

In 1959 the department took charge of the Muscular Dystrophy drive in the village and sponsored a bowling team at the local lanes.

The present members of your department are: Lester Butschlick Chief; Earl Scheid, 1st Ass't; Ed Ours, 2nd Ass't; Eldon Spradau, Sec'y; Arthur Brandt, Treas; Wm. Baumann, John Collier, Hilton Danielson, Vic Del Ponte, Math Flitter, Vernon Feuerhammer; Ray Gessert, David Gremminger, Leo Janous, Harvey Jockman, Richard

Johnson, Albert Kulow, Lloyd Lemke, Benno Miller, Everett Miller, George Miller, Norman Miller, Jim Mair, Roderick Reese, Eugene Scuddella, Frank Stoffel, Joe Thelen, Dave Twohig, Syl Wenzloff, Kenneth Stuart, Harlow Roate; Ray Weis, Hilary Rahn, Erwin Kolitz, Paul McGray.

The officers and Ev. Miller are Park Board members.

For long and meritorious service to the department the following men are listed as honorary members: Clem Kleinhans, (Park Board), Tom Johnson, Roy Ours (Park Board), Alvin Waldschmidt, Arthur Yankow, James Farrell, Ed Rudolph, Charles Van De Zande, Marvin Barnes, Ellie Schaefer.

Because of the loss of many vital records, some of the dates used in this history may be wrong.

The following helped me get the facts to write this history: Mrs. Art Yankow, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Schlaefel, Mr. and Mrs. James Farrell, Andrew Sukawaty, Ed Rudolph Sr., Mr. and Mrs. L. Schwandt, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Van de Zande, Herman Paas, Mrs. Mary Lichtensteiger, and my mother, Mrs. Catherine Weld.

Henry J. Weld, January 24, 1960.