

WEST JEFFERSON IN DAYS GONE BY

By Charlie Miller

Series 26

EARLY BUSINESS & FIRE DEPT.--- North of the Railroad (which was not elevated at that time) on a street running alongside it, (Pennsylvania Ave.) between Depot and Jackson Streets, was a Cooper Shop (a barrel maker) whose business was seasonal. In the winter he cut and stacked wood for stave stock. Different wood was used depending on what the barrels were holding. This shop was later turned into a broom corn drying factory by Lester Burnham, who was an extensive raiser of this product himself. It got its name from being used to make brooms. Medicine can also be made from the seeds. Broom corn was recorded as being used as far back as 8,000 B.C.

In 1845, a school called the Academy was built on the present site of the Apostolic Church. It was built by Jeremiah Olney, It was conducted by a stock company, but soon failed to meet their expectations, and sank into oblivion as an enterprise as it was intended. The building was bought by the School District from Horace Putnam in 1856 who had previously bought it from Olney. The building served the School District until 1868 when a new brick building was erected which sat in the present site of Garrtte Park. Some of the first School Board members were - Dr. J. N. Beach, Dr. J. T. Colliver, Jacob McNeal, Eugene Babb, and J. J. Booth.

Fire Company organized---January 11, 1849, a respectable number of citizens of Jefferson met at Jeanette Stutson's store to take into consideration the purchasing of a fire engine and hose for the said town. The results were that the following contract was read, "A fire engine could be bought for \$200.00 at delivery and \$200.00 one year from delivery." Dr. Jennett Stutson offered the following resolution, "That the town Council of the Town of Jefferson be, and hereby empowered by this meeting to buy the Niagara Fire Engine, with all her accessories and it is to be under the direct control of the Council of Jefferson forever, and under the direct control of a regularly sized fire company." It was passed unanimously. The engine was bought from the City of Columbus, Ohio.

January 25, 1847, a Resolution, "Resolved by the Town Council of the Village of Jefferson, that we receive the Niagara Fire Company as a regularly organized fire company, and as such we the council do agree to petition the legislation of the State of Ohio for the charter of said Niagara Fire Company." After considerable debate by all of the Council, the Council adjourned until Saturday the 27th.

January 27, 1849—The former motion was corrected by the insertion of this item, "To be forever the property of the Town of Jefferson and under the direct control of the President and Council, subject to the formation of a regular fire company to be acknowledged by the said Council." Ed McCauly (Ed McCauly was a wagon maker and town Undertaker, he died in November of 1860 and his tombstone can still be seen in the New Hampton Cemetery.) moved "That the Niagara Fire Company is to be acknowledged as a regularly organized fire company," this was agreed to. James Burrows offered the following amendment, "Provided the company is comprised of citizens living within the corporation of the Town of Jefferson. The company is not to exceed 50 men." This was agreed to. The fire engine was kept at the Market House. On May 31, 1849, A two-mill levy was passed on all property in the village for the purpose of paying for the Niagara Fire engine and a house to keep it in.

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