



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark 1863 Schoolhouse Museum

Town of Deerpark Historian, 25 Grange Rd., Huguenot, NY 12746

(845) 856-2702 www.1863schoolhouse.org

September 2017

Vol.14

No.3

Celebrating 100 Years of Community Service Sparrowbush Engine Company, Inc.

**Everyone Invited
Come - Enjoy the Celebration!**

Sunday, Sept. 17

9:30 am - Sparrowbush Engine Company

Flag raising ceremony

10 am - Memorial Service

Breakfast to follow

Saturday, Sept.23

2 PM Sparrowbush Engine Company is hosting

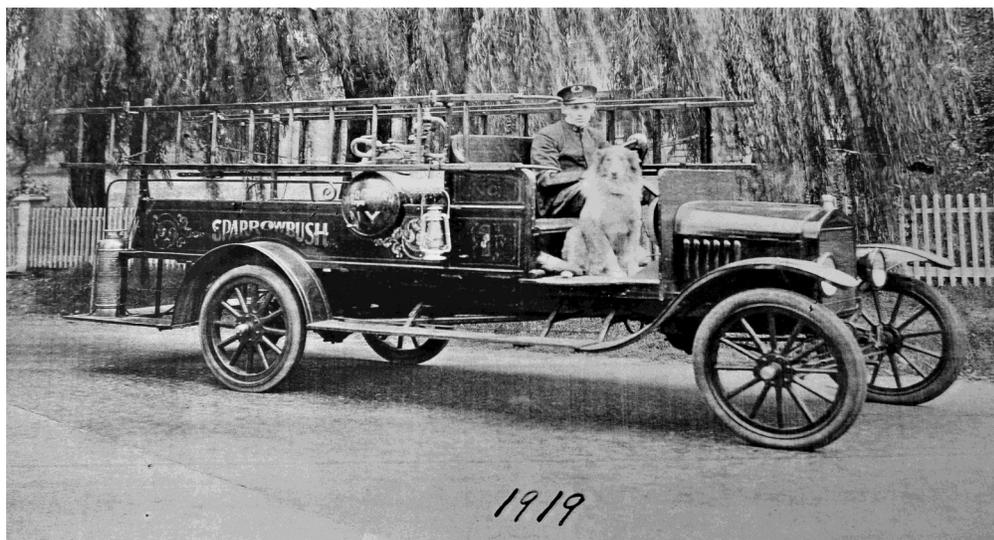
Orange County Fire Parade

Routes 42/97 to firehouse on Main St.

After parade festivities include:

“Emish” – Irish Rock Band

Fireworks



Sparrowbush Engine Company

The following article is a reprint of “A Short History of the Sparrowbush Engine Co, Inc.” which was created some years ago.

“The Sparrowbush Engine Co, Inc. was organized April 24, 1917 following the near disastrous burning of a home located on Main St. in Sparrowbush.

“The first fire-fighting equipment was a hand-pulled two wheeled chemical truck which had a capacity of approximately 250 gallons. The water in the tank contained soda with a bottle of acid attached to the top of the tank. When needed at a fire, the acid was released by a lever attachment and mixed with the soda and water.

“For several years the fire company meetings were held and the apparatus housed in the basement garage of the Henry Mink Sr. home on Main St.

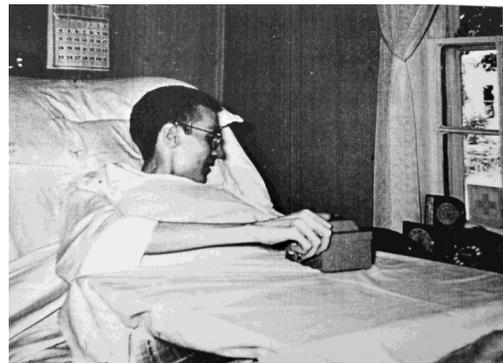
“A Ford truck was purchased in 1919 to replace the chemical truck.

“Sometime in the early 1920s, the Town Hall, as it was then called, was acquired from the Hammond Estate and transferred to the fire district. The basement was excavated under the building for a truck house and meeting room. The upstairs was used for voting, plays and basketball.

“The first alarm system consisted of two railroad engine rims or tires, as they were called then. One was located in the upper part of town and the other on a hill across from the church. The rims were suspended between two posts and struck with a large hammer in the event of a fire. Later years, an electric siren was installed.

“From 1954 until his death in 1964, Francis “Pete” Skinner, an invalid confined to his bed, answered all emergency calls from his home on a 24 hour basis and activated the alarm system by a special hook-up located

by his bed. Different types of answering services were then used until 1994 when all emergency calls were handled by the KEE 315 control center to the present 911 system.



Francis “Pete” Skinner

The department was known as the Hammond Chemical Company from 1920 to 1947, when it changed to the Sparrowbush Fire Company. In 1965 it was incorporated under the name of the Sparrowbush Engine Company, Inc.

“An Oldsmobile firetruck was secured in 1925 and a new Ford fire-truck was purchased in 1931. In 1947, a new LaFrance was put into service. In 1953, a used 1934 American LaFrance and in 1961 a used Mack pumper, both formerly owned by the Port Jervis Fire Department were purchased.



**The old fire house
1958**

“The boundaries of the fire district, at first, were a one mile radius from the firehouse. In 1940 that radius was extended to two miles and in 1968 extended to the Sullivan County lines with the approval of the State Comptroller.

“In 1967, land was purchased from the Patterson Estate for the construction of a new firehouse on Main St. Construction was started on October of 1960 and was completed and accepted by the Board of Fire Commissioners in May 1970. Dedication ceremonies were held in May, 1971.

“In 1970, a new Seagraves pumper was received and in 1971, a new International tanker was placed into service.

“To secure better response time, a sub-station was built in 1990 on a piece of property donated by George Dean, a local business man. It is located about three and a half miles north of the Main St. firehouse on Route 42. At present it houses our pumper/tanker and mini-pumper.

“An addition was added to the rear of the Main St. firehouse in 1992 to furnish offices for the Fire Commissioners and the Chief. Another addition was added to the east end of the building in 1995. It enlarged the dining room and kitchen and furnished handicap accessible

restrooms. As with the original building, the interior was completed by the company members.

“A new enclosed 52,000 gallon cistern, used as a water supply source for filling the trucks, was completed in 1997 to replace a deteriorating pond built in the 1920s for the same purpose.

“Tragedy struck the Engine Company on December 15, 1979 when at the age of 25 years, Vincent C. Innella lost his life while fighting a structure fire on Old Cahoonzie Rd. Also burned very severely was 21 year old Robert Ey Jr. Both men were ascending a stairway when a “flashover” occurred from the upstairs room.

“The Company’s Fire Police was formed into a squad, with its own company approved by-laws, in 1980. To be on the squad, an active member must complete a state approved training course and be registered with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. They are also required to take the Oath of Office before the town clerk. While on duty, the Fire Police are considered peace officers but carry no firearms.

“The Company’s Ladies Auxiliary was organized in 1928. The Auxiliary has made many contributions, both in services and cash. Many times they have assisted at extended emergencies by furnishing food and refreshments for everyone on the scene regardless of the time and weather conditions. They can always be relied upon to assist the Company’s numerous fund raising activities.”



The following vintage newspaper articles give a nostalgic glimpse into the early years, prior to and just after the firefighters organized in 1917.

The Evening Gazette
September 29, 1881
Fire At Sparrowbush

“Shortly after nine o’clock Wednesday night fire was discovered issuing from one of the barns belonging to Frank Yetter of Sparrowbush. The fire was well advanced when discovered, and no means being at hand to stay the flames, they soon burned the building and fired another barn belonging to Mr. Yetter, which stood about 15 feet away. This was also burned. In the barns there were 1,000 sheaves of rye, a quantity of hay, and 30 hens. The contents were all consumed. The barns were insured for \$200 each, which will cover loss on buildings. There was no insurance on contents. The cause of the fire is unknown.”

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Tri-States Union
January 26, 1893

Fire Near Sparrowbush

“An old tenement building located on the towpath near the canal bridge at Sparrowbush took fire about five o’clock last night, and was totally destroyed. The house had been recently vacated, and had been repaired. In order to dry it out a fire had been started in the stove, which was supposed to have caused the trouble.”

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Tri-States Union
November 28, 1901

**Mrs. John Harneit’s Large
Barn Burned
Last Friday Night**

“The large barn near the watering trough at Sparrowbush was destroyed by fire at about 12 o’clock last Friday night.

“The barn was about 30x40 feet in dimensions and was owned by Mrs. Emma Harneit, widow of John Harneit, who at present lives in Franklin Furnace, N.J.

“Only a few people in Sparrowbush saw the fire. It is believed by some to have been of incendiary origin.”

Bad Forest Fire Near Sparrowbush

Sixty Men From Sparrowbush Called Out By Wardens

"Sixty men from Sparrowbush and vicinity fought fire for several hours on Wednesday afternoon before they extinguished a bad forest fire which threatened to consume the cut timber on the L. A. Johnson tract of land back of Sparrowbush.

"Mrs. McBride on the Gilson place was burning some rubbish when the flames fanned by the wind got beyond her control and spread over the Fuhrberg place. This latter tract of land was covered with slashings of timber that had been cut and carried away. This made a furious fire and Fire Wardens L. A. Johnson and Conrad Happ called out volunteers who were taken eight at a time in Mr. Johnson's large automobile to the scene of the fire. The men fought for a considerable time backfiring in order to get the blaze under control on two hundred acres of land. Men from Cahoonzie also assisted in the work. Mr. Johnson's timber consisting of one thousand railroad ties that had been cut and piled and many cords of cut wood were saved.

"The men worked until midnight and the rain that commenced at that time put out the fire that was still burning. A barn on the Gilson place was burned down."

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The Port Jervis Union
October 06, 1917

Sparrowbush Firemen Organize

"Town Clerk Happ reported that the citizens of Sparrowbush had organized a fire company, with Henry Fuhrberg, Chief Engineer: John Fink and L.A. Johnson, Assistant Chief Engineers: James W. Kinney, Secretary: Conrad Happ, Treasurer: William Darragh, John Maley, John Hall, Conrad Happ and L. A. Johnson, Fire Police. James J. Day was added to the membership of the company. The citizens of the fire district have voted to raise \$600 for the purchase of fire engines, \$250 for buildings, and \$50 for maintenance.

"At a recent meeting of the company the firemen learned that the two necessary chemical engines of 45 gallon capacity, would cost \$375, or \$700 for the two. As this is \$100 more than the amount appropriated, the Supervisor and Clerk were authorized to investigate the matter and see if the apparatus could be purchased for \$600. It was also decided to have a practical test and demonstration of the apparatus at Sparrowbush under the supervision of the Town Board and Sparrowbush Hose Company before any purchase was made."

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The Evening Gazette
August 21, 1917

Ice Cream Social

"An ice cream social for the benefit of the Sparrowbush Fire Company will be held on the lawn of Robert Dedrick, Cahoonzie, Friday evening, Aug. 22. The public is cordially invited to attend and help to outfit this new company."

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The Evening Gazette
May 28, 1920

Sparrowbush To Have Big Time Memorial Day Parades of Soldiers and Civic Organizations and Exercises At Cemetery

"Sparrowbush, May 28. - Sparrowbush will again follow its usual custom of holding services commemorative of departed soldiers, Sunday May 30. But it will observe this custom in a larger way than ever. This is due to the patriotic spirit of the newly organized Fire Department and the Deerpark Fife and Drum Corps.

"The Sparrowbush Fire Department and the Deerpark Fife and Drum Corps will meet at the Hose House at 10 a.m. and march to Red Men's Hall. The Junior O.U.A.M., Red Men of Port Jervis, Red Men, and Degree of Pocohantas of Sparrowbush, the G.A.R. and returned soldiers will assemble at Red Men's Hall. These various organizations will then proceed to the Sparrowbush M. E. Church where the public and Sunday Schools will fall in line. The parade will start for the Sparrowbush Cemetery at

10:30 a.m., where the program will be carried out, consisting of the beautiful ritual exercises of the G.A.R and Junior Order.

"There will be addresses by Judge H. B. Fullerton and Rev. S. N. Thomas, pastor of the Sparrowbush M. E. Church. L. A. Johnson will preside. Musical selections will be rendered by the church choir and Deerpark Fife and Drum Corps followed by the decoration of soldiers' graves.

"The committee in charge of the arrangements are Fire Chief John Fink, chairman; Samuel Osterhout and Rev. S. N. Thomas representing participating organizations. The committee cordially invites everyone to attend and persons having automobiles to take the aged and infirm and join in the parade.

"Should the weather prove stormy, the program will be held in the M. E. Church."

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The Port Jervis Union
October 22, 1924

Radio Concert and Dance

"Wednesday, Oct. 22, Village Hall, Sparrowbush, under the auspices of the Sparrowbush Fire Department. Music by the wonderful Ambassador Radio from all over the country. This is dance program night. Hear the Philco Storage Battery talk, sing and entertain. Hear the famous European pianist, Mr. Pflanz and his orchestra. Mr. Joe Gibbons, radio expert will operate the radio."

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**Christmas Pageant 1924
Village Hall**

**Sparrowbush Firefighter
Danielle Glynn
First Woman to lead OCVFA**



Deerpark's very own Danielle LaBagh-Glynn was honored in 2017 for becoming the first female to become president of the Orange County Volunteer Firemen's Association, an organization with an over one hundred year history. Danielle is the bookkeeper/clerk for Deerpark Town Supervisor Gary Spears.

Danielle comes from a family with a long tradition of community service. She was voted Firefighter of the Year in 1999. A hard worker, she was ready to take on the extra duties and responsibilities that come with such a position. The OCVFA was formed to be a voice for issues and legislation affecting volunteer fire services and to promote comradery among members and Orange County fire service organizations.

The culmination of Danielle's year will be the Orange County Firemen's Parade scheduled for Saturday, September 23 at 2 pm in Sparrowbush, NY.

**"2017 Autumn
Open House"**

Please join us for Deerpark's "2017 Autumn Open House" to be held Sunday, September 17 from 11-4 at the Deerpark Museum and Grange Building Annex located at the intersection of 25 Grange and Big Pond Roads in Huguenot, NY. In the 1863 red brick one-room school-house museum, local folk artist and vintage sign painter Peter Koenig will set up a display of his work. Across the street at the Grange Building, a host of area organizations will feature programs and displays. Museum members will honor the 150th Anniversary of the Grange Movement, which was organized in 1867 to give voice to farmers. The Mt Hope Historical Society will bring a display of their extensive farm tool collection. The Port Jervis Council for the Arts will present speaker Lori Strelecki, Museum Director for the Pike County Historical Society at the Columns in Milford, PA. Ms. Strelecki's noon time talk and slide presentation will be entitled "Pulp and Circumstance: The Story of John Newton Howitt."

At 2pm in the Grange Building, we are excited to present R.J. Storms and his Old School Blue Grass Band, which promises to fill the rafters with down-home music.

While you are here don't forget to get your free copy of the new **Deerpark Historical Markers Brochure with map.**

**Town of Deerpark
Veterans Memorial
Dedication**



On Saturday, September 9, 2017, the new Deerpark Veterans Memorial will be dedicated at the Sparrowbush Fire House, 79 Main St, Sparrowbush, NY. After years of planning, fund raising and much hard work by volunteers, the memorial is now complete. Over 175 pavers have been ordered containing the names of service men and women. The pavers were ordered by family and friends in remembrance of their loved ones who have served our country.

The ceremony will begin at 1 PM and will include a Flag Raising Ceremony, a separate march for the MIA/POW Flag, an invocation by Pastor Amy Garret of the Sparrowbush Methodist Church and remarks by Town Supervisor Gary Spears. Viet Nam War veteran Floyd Babcock will speak. He is one of many veteran volunteers who saw this project through from its inception.

What a wonderful memorial to the men and women of this valley who share a rich tradition of protecting, defending and serving in our country's armed forces. This tradition goes back as far as the early local militias at the time of the French and Indian Wars in the 1750s.

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