

# They Pay for the Right to Fight Fires

## Endwell Company Had Its Origin In Barn-Burning

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Fire-fighting in Endwell as in thousands of hamlets and villages throughout the United States is a community affair.

It has been so there for 38 years. It was in 1921, in the fall of the year, that the O. L. Davis barn caught fire. Neighbors helped put the blaze out but not before the building was a complete loss.

Mr. Davis, his view of Endwell's puny fire-fighting muscle sharpened by personal loss, offered area residents a plot of land for a fire building.

They organized, 38 of them, raised the money for the fire-house, and built it. And with a Ford truck, gift of the late George F. Johnson, EJ founder, the group was in business.

Only six of the original 38 survive—George W. Burt, Frank Knapp, Cecil Jones, Homer Brink, Fred Hall and Frank Nystrom—but the company, as Endwell, has grown with rapidity and vigor. Some 115 men today are members of the O. L. Davis Fire Station, Company 1.

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**ALL THE MEN**, of course, are volunteers. They are divided into day and evening crews so that when the alarm whistles sound someone always will be available.

Three fire trucks—one a fogger and the others 500- and 600-pound pumpers—make up the company's equipment pool. Fire Chief Francis E. Nystrom maintains that his company is one of the best equipped volunteer units in the country.

Chief Nystrom, who, by the way was elected to his post by the company, is a second generation fire-eater. His father, Frank, was a charter member of the group and one of its six survivors.

The chief recalls spending much of his youth in and around the two-story frame fire building, going to all the fires, wishing very hard that he would grow the necessary inches and age the necessary years for fire-fighting.

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**ALL HIS ENDWELL** life, which has been all of his life, Chief Nystrom said that he has been fascinated by fire and efforts to extinguish it.

His Endwell address, however, foiled attempts to join the Endicott Fire Department which until recently hired only village residents.

He says that his organization is a pretty efficient operation, lots of loyal members, all paying dues for the privilege of fire-fighting, no hangers on and no characters.

Even the kids don't cluster around the old fire station as they did when he was a boy.

Old-timers recall that many times it was impossible to get the trucks out and over to the fire because of the number of kids underfoot.

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**THE FIRE COMPANY** always is in training, new members and old alike. Fire-pits just south of the station are the source of billowing black clouds and lean orange flames from four to six times a year.



—Sunday Press Photo.

### FIRE-EATERS, COUNTRY STYLE

Endwell Fire Chief Francis E. Nystrom, right, and Homer Brink, one of the charter members of the Endwell volunteer fire department, stand at alert at the company equipment.

At other times, classes in the fire house are conducted in use of equipment and new fighting techniques.

Besides fighting fires, the group also has prepared itself for disaster work in floods. A 14-foot boat is stored nearby the station and the men have been taught flood-lighting techniques. They also are ready for anything that might result from air attack, the chief said.

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**BIGGEST BLAZE** the department ever fought was the oil fire which occurred when a number of Erie Railroad freight cars was derailed in the early 1930s near Hooper Road. The fire killed one boy and seriously injured several others. And the stream that runs through that portion of Endwell was alive with burning oil for hours after the wreck, it is recalled.

Small fires, of course, take place maybe once a week and at all hours. Last year the men went out on 60 fires.

To join the organization an applicant must be at least 16 years old, pass a number of tests and an investigation by a company committee, have \$3 available for dues every year, love fire-fighting (after a while you can't help loving it, Chief Nystrom says) and have a sincere, perhaps burning, desire to keep your home and the homes of your neighbors safe.

Most leading Paris newspaper have raised their prices for street sold and home-delivered copies for the second time in six months.