

The Beginning... The Early History of the Bay Roberts Fire Brigade

Once the members of the Bay Roberts Fire Brigade heard the horn the members would then respond to the designated location and set to work. The horn was installed on the top of the Fire Station Building located on Water Street, Bay Roberts in 1942. Each time the location of the fire Department moved so did the horn. The horn was activated when a fire was reported. It is not know when the fire horn was silenced and taken out of service. But eventually the horn was replaced with a telephone calling system. The horn is still located on top of the Bay Roberts Fire Department and is still serviceable if needed. Each member was called when a fire was reported like that of a telephone tree system. Each member was given a name to call, so eventually all members were called to the scene. Eventually the telephone system was replaced with the radio pocket pagers, which all members use today.

Bay Roberts Fire Department

In 1942 the Bay Roberts Fire Department was established with the services of a portable pump. This pump was later sold to the Cable office as a back up system to be used on a wharf adjacent to their building. An order was then placed for a truck for the town, and in March of 1946 a pumper truck was brought to Bay Roberts Fire Department by Fire Chief Blackburne and Captain Newell of St. John's Fire Department. Mr. Allan Laing was elected Bay Roberts first Fire Chief and Mr. Eric Wood as Assistant Fire Chief, with fifteen (15) members. After a short time Chief Laing resigned and Assistant Chief Wood took over with John North as his Assistant.

In 1953 Walter Baggs was elected Chief and served the town for thirty nine (39) years. He then retired in 1992. At that time Assistant Chief Newman Parsons took over as Chief with Eric Churchill as Assistant Chief.

The Fire Station was built on property belonging to the Federal Government as a wharf site. Several years later the Department moved to a section of the Town Hall. In 1962 a second pumper truck was purchased and the department increased to twenty-five (25) volunteer members.

Firefighting in the early days of Bay Roberts were responsible for all the firefighting at the Bay Roberts and surrounding areas. During the late 1980's domestic and separate fire water lines were installed throughout the town and water was pumped from the town water supply.

The Fire Equipment used in the early days bear no resemblance to what is used today. James Mercer a resident of Bay Roberts recalled what it was like before the establishment of the Bay Roberts Volunteer Fire Department.