

# Ben Lomond Fire Volunteers' Background Is Rich Tradition

Editor's note—Some of the fire departments in the county already have a rich tradition behind them. Keeping the materials up to date and in order is an important part of the job. Some go to greater extremes than others to squeeze more life out of ancient equipment which has to do until the struggle for donations or tax money allows improvements.

By Wally Trabing

In October, 1903, the town hall in Ben Lomond was decorated for the first benefit dance to raise funds for a volunteer fire department.

The dance was a success and after scanning a number of catalogs, a gleaming two-wheeled red cart striped with gold was purchased.

It was fully equipped with drag line and handy jockey box containing two spanners and a monkey wrench. It is said that every adult in the countryside fought for a place on the line to pull the vehicle, and there were many tales of speedy runs and fast hookups. Ben Lomond was the envy of every hamlet between Big Trees and Saratoga Gap.

Later, through the persistent promoting of W. F. Silvey, labor by Eric Peterson, James Franklin and others, quarters for the "fire engine" was built on the F. A. Cody property.

The same year nine hydrants were installed and the late Charles Hartman was elected chief; Ed Dougherty and Tom Peterson were chosen captains and the department came into existence. Alarms were sounded on a huge steel triangle.

In 1909 the department was enlarged and a fire bell replaced the triangle. Old timers tell of the great Ben Lomond hotel fire in 1913. All the firemen rallied around the flag pole eventually. It was the only thing saved.

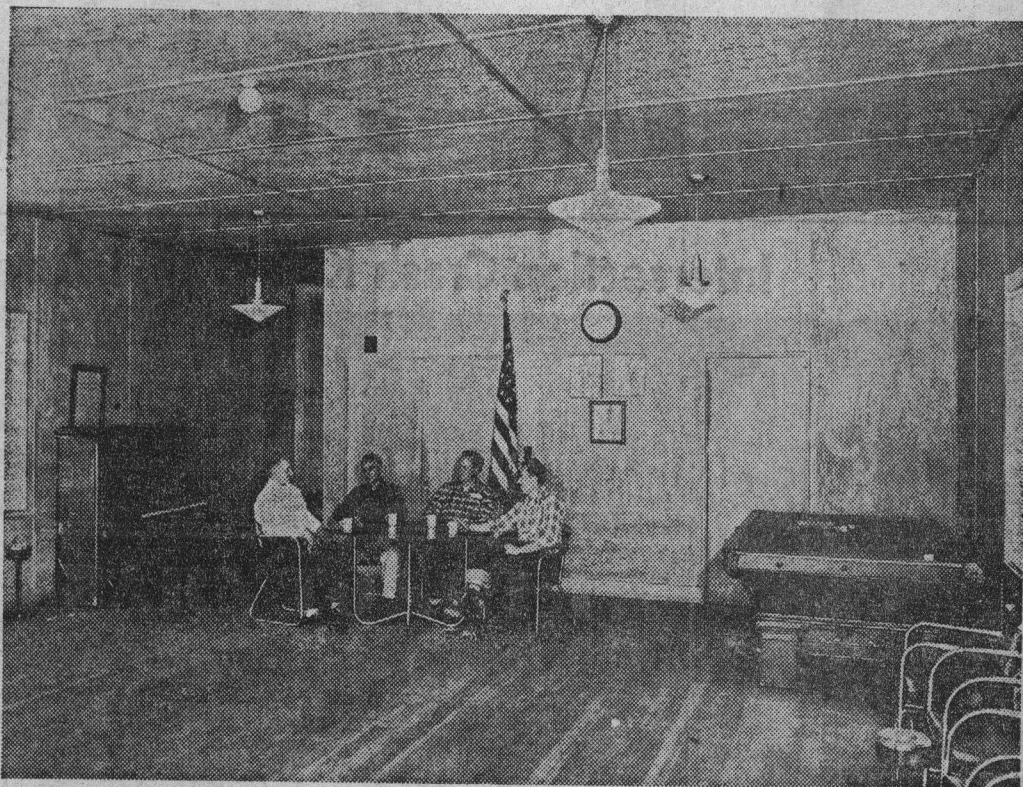
W. F. Paradis went in as chief in 1914. The volunteers were still using the cart.

In 1923 the department was led by the late L. E. DeJoiner. Commissioners were C. A. Bradshaw and F. A. Dickinson. They bought a Ford fire truck and formed the Ben Lomond fire district. It was the first district formed in the county. Frank Thomson became chief in 1926 and a Reo fire truck was bought. Chiefs that followed were Earl Lyon, Merve Kenville and the present leader, Angelo Lauritano.

Now the department is one of the largest volunteer groups in the county, with three trucks, a beautiful fire house, 31 firemen, and 70 to 80 non-fire fighting members.

Here is the present volunteer list: Lauritano, chief since 1950; Jack Ryan, assistant chief; Charles Fisher, captain; Don Liebenthal, lieutenant; Bert Bail, captain; Clay Ament, captain; Frank Henfling, Jack Miller, Ray Laurent, Herb Meller, Bob Druhe, Earl DeMoe, James Helmer, John Mitchell,

## Ben Lomond Is Proud Of Firehouse



This is the club room in the Ben Lomond Volunteer Fire department fire house where

the men and their wives hold social functions or just relax. Sitting around the table are

Bob Drake, left, Angelo Lauritano, chief, Charles Fisher and George Bennett.

William Harvey, Tom Harvey, John Bell, Dave Watson, Ray Emrick, George Bennett, Rube Overfield, Rudy Christenson, Bob Illingworth, Chuck Hayes, Elmo Nicoli, Henri Van Hulle, Arne Johnson, Robert Taylor, Cecil Sloane, Jack Vaughn, and Carl Tripp.

Commissioners are Carl Conelly, chairman; William Jones, and Jack Ryan. Ralph Berry is secretary.

Officers of the department handling the honorary members are Charles Fisher, president; T. Harvey, secretary; and Chuck Hayes, treasurer.

Women's auxiliary officers are: Mrs. Louise Rawson, president; Mrs. Vora Larsen, vice president; Mrs. Goldie Hayes, secretary, and Mrs. Josephine Lyon and Eleanor Koenig, directors. Mrs. Lee Watson is treasurer. Ben Lomond organized the first auxiliary in the county.

Equipment includes three trucks. The largest is a 1949 1000-gallon White with a 350-gallon per minute pump. The second is a 350-gallon Mack purchased in 1930 with a 500 per minute pump. The third is a 250 gallon International bought in 1954.

There is a special crew within the department which handles the resuscitator usually administering to heart attack and water accident victims.

The crew is called by a siren. When someone calls the fire number, ED 6-5134, the phone rings in four places. The fire officer or volunteer receiving the call takes information and flips a switch beside his phone. This automatically sets off the siren, opens the firehouse doors and turns on the lights in the engine room. Meanwhile the first to hit the fire house answers another phone and takes the address of the fire which he records on a blackboard so that those arriving too late to catch the trucks can be informed as to the location of the fire.

Boundaries for the district are roughly: Blake Hammond school along Highway 9 to the north; Brackney bridge along the same highway to the south; Alba road, toward Empire grade; and Glen Arbor and the Ben Lomond dumps to the east.