

1905 - Tom Davies' Bakery, Grocery and Icecream Parlour, and dwelling
June
9th upstairs on the ground where Les Welch is to-day. We hadn't any idea we could stop this fire without burning all the west side of the street. After sizing up the situation we decided to call the Ridgetown Fire Brigade. They responded at once, and secured a R.R. engine and flat car, loaded their outfit on and down they came. We were able to keep the fire from spreading until they arrived. After the fire was over, it being towards noon, we asked the Hotel to give the firemen their dinners. When the bill came in, it was for 105 meals. Most of our town helpers had joined the Fire Brigade and secured their dinners too. It was worth it as the village was saved. Fire started from the bake oven and the Davies lost everything, except a few fixtures out of the store. Police were: J.J. Mistele, Wm. Flater, E.G. Lusty. Trustees donated \$25.00 to Ridgetown for their service.

1908 - The N.S. Lusty and Sons Saw and Planing Mill, corner Back and Furnival Sts. owned by F.A. McCallum. This was a complete loss.

1908 - Between Beattie's Drug and Eby's store (of to-day) Mr. Charles
Apr.
22nd Brown residence, where Dr. H.M. Wilensky of London was born. Brown's Hall with C.A. Telfer, photographer and Jettie, Thompson Bake Shop as tenants. Mr. Chas. Martini hardware store, stables in the rear, all a total loss.

This is the site of our present Town Hall and Post Office. Up to this time Rodney hadn't any fire protection of any kind, not even a well that would give many barrels of water. There was always talk, but no action.

1910 - Mahlan Smith's Butter-Spat factory on the ground where our fine Canada Wood Product Plant is situated to-day. A total loss.

On February 25, 1910 a delegation from the Women's

Institute waited on the Rodney Council to press for fire protection. On April 7, 1910, J.J. Mistele, reeve, and George R. Whitton, councilor, went to Toronto where they purchased from the Ontario Wind and Pump Company a complete equipment. A little Giant hand pumping engine of a size which could be handled by 8 - 12 men pumping at one time. Also 25 feet of suction hose, 250 feet of delivery hose, reel and all complete (new) . Price \$300.00 subject to a discount of \$25.00 which Mr. Dave Mistele, their representative here, was going to donate. Mr. Dave Mistele was appointed Fire Chief over the outfit. The money for this equipment was raised by a donation from the Woman's Institute, a series of concerts in the Whitton Hall (above Vince's store), and the balance by private donations.

1911 - Mowbray's Saw and Shingle and Basket Factory owned by Wm. Flater, on
Mar. 5th the grounds just north of the Pentecostal Church. All was a total loss.

1911 - Wm. Morris' General Store on the lot north of Liebner Furniture store,
Nov. 11th where D.A. Scott and Son have a car lot. This was a flash fire as it started in the oil room where they were drawing a gallon of coal oil. They attempted to put the fire out, which was burning on the oil-soaked floor, by slashing it with gunny sacks, when one of the men hit the oil tap breaking it off and letting all the contents of the barrel out. Very little of the contents of the store was saved. To make matters worse they got a large Grand Piano stuck in the side door, leading to Harper St. and were unable to move it either way.

This was the first test our new fire fighter had and it could do nothing to save the store, but it did do good service in saving adjoining buildings, and especially Liebner's furniture store which would have gone if we hadn't had this pump.

1912 - Harry Keutch's residence on the grounds where Mrs. Keutch lives to-day.
Jan.9

This was a good frame building painted white. (It was in this house that I was born.) This was a very slow fire starting upstairs in a wall behind the chimney and should have been saved. It was a very cold night, 5° below zero. Our little engine was soon on hand, but had to be primed. They attempted to prime it with cold water which froze the cylinder shut. Before we could get it thawed out, the building was enveloped in flames and it was too late to do anything.

1913 - Canada Casket Factory and Lusty Lumber Co. where Dr. Steele and
Apr. Frank Graham and others are living at the present time. The Casket
10th Co. was a joint Stock Company with local capital invested, and was a good going concern with plenty of business. The Lusty Lumber Co. was owned by N.S. Lusty and Son (W.N.). They had a good up-to-date mill and plenty of lumber on hand. All this was burned.

The Lustys were also heavy stock holders in the Casket Co. Our little fire pumper wasn't of any value at this fire.

1915 - The old Aldborough Township Hall, built in 1872, and the Crystal
July Palace on the Fair grounds, all owned by the Fair board. These buildings were filled with baskets owned by the Canada Wood Products and all were a total loss. Pump was of no value at this fire. It was much too small.

1915 - John McCarter's Livery Stable on the grounds where the Legion Hall
Sept. stands, facing Victoria St. This was a total loss, with feed, harn-
25th ess and equipment including some buggies. The horses were all saved. It had been a former cheese factory.

1915 - Canada Wood Products storage, in a building south of the M.C.R.R. tracks and east of the M.C.R.R. station, built as a grain elevator, but used for storage and was filled with baskets. Building and baskets all burned.

- 1917 - Jack McIntyre (now of Ridgetown) Planing Factory, south of the CHES & OHIO tracks on the Hydro lots as of to-day. Total loss.
- 1918 - Rodney Mercury Printing Office owned and operated by Mack MacLean, stood where Bert Lashbrook's egg grading plant is to-day. This building was built in Centerville and used there as a store. The upstairs was a boarding-house. Also it contained the Post Office run by Albert Humphrey, grandfather of Mrs. McLarty and Mrs. Tough. After this building was moved to Rodney, it was used by S.B. and Wm. Morris as a general store with a liquor license.

The K.O.T.M. Lodge used the rooms upstairs for their meetings. Plain to be seen our little fire equipment didn't prove to be of much value. So with Reeve Howard Thomson and Councillors John Woods, Simon Speirn, James Burnett, and John Gaynor, Rodney decided to purchase something better. They secured from Hugh Carmichael of West Lorne a very nice little pumper driven by an auto engine for \$700.00. This would pump very well after you got it started, but just when you wanted it worst, it was like a balky horse and just wouldn't go. It had to be hauled where it was wanted by another vehicle. We haven't any records where it ever put out any fires.

In June 1924 E.G. Lusty, reeve, and councillors Hugh Degraw, Frank Graham, John G. Gillies and Earl Keutch, decided to improve our fire protection, so we purchased from the Bickle Co. of Woodstock a real up-to-date fire engine with 20 feet of suction hose and 1000 feet delivery hose for \$5,800, and trade in the old one for \$800.00 on the deal. We enlarged the fighting force and had practice regularly with George Mistele as Fire Chief.

We dug a number of large wells so we should have plenty of water. We made a lot of enemies by raising the taxes some, but by so doing, the Insurance companies reduced their rates enough to off-set out raise.

Early in the following year a fire broke out in the attic of the house now owned by Cecil Arnold, occupied at that time by Fred Galbraith now of Chatham. It gained great head-way and was threatening Alf. Branton's house before the equipment arrived. When it did arrive, the fire was soon cooled down, and with a few dashes on the Branton house, we had everything out of danger. From then on we were "a good lot of fellows" and never any more complaints from the villagers.

1925 - Jas. A. McLean's barn on Third St. back of his house was struck
June
30th by lightning. The barn was on fire everywhere when the equipment arrived and could not be saved, but they did save his stable that stood very close on the north side and the stable of the Presbyterian Manse on the south.

1926 - Dan Glassford's barn, back of Kruppe's house, started by some
May
21st children playing. The fire engine responded at once but could do nothing to save it. The wind was very high and from the west blowing cinders a great distance. Another call came from Earl Keutch that fires were starting around his barn. We responded at once, and were successful in saving everything there.

1928 - The Royal Hotel barns where the Howard Machine Shop is to-day.
Oct.
9th The barn burned, but the Lashbrook egg grading station and buildings were saved.

1931 - Canada Wood Products Factory. A very disastrous fire broke out
Mar. in the early hours of the morning; with the help of Dutton and West Lorne fire equipment the men were able to save the end of

the factory where the machinery was. We had plenty of water from the creek there.

1931 - Mrs. J.D. Paterson's barn behind her residence struck by light-
Sept. 4th ning. Nothing could be done to save it.

1937 - Royal Hotel very badly damaged inside by some fire, lots of smoke
Feb. 13th and water. Good work done by our firemen in saving the building.
Owner and manager was Chas. Dalley at that time.

By 1941 under Reeve Ernest Lashbrook a contract had been made with the Township to fight their fires. Two new fire engines were purchased for \$5,000.00. One chemical outfit that could go to the township fires. The other to remain in the Village to take care of what might happen here. We didn't have much to trade in to Bickle as we retained all our hose, chemical tanks, and all movable parts which were built on to the new one. The engine bought in 1924 from Bickle was sold to Skinner and Gray (fishermen) and is used by them for washing their nets-- and is still doing a good job!

1950 - The Thomas apartments caught fire in the basement and gained considerable headway before the firemen were able to locate the fire which was mostly in the partitions and hard to get at, but it was soon controlled.

This paper was compiled and signed by

Ernest G. Lusty



Rodney School. Built 1875
Anney of School. Built 1878.

Adult at left - E. A. Hugill

Teacher at extreme right - Minnie Lavin

Man with beard - Dan Markle - Trustee.

Chief of Staff: E.A. Hugill

Member at extreme right: Missie Levin

Adjutant General: Dan Mandel, school trustee