

Looking back at fire power

By Gordon B Seavey

WHAT A BLAST! At first it surprised the entire neighborhood a loud fog horn blast of noise from the cupola of the old Academy building, now the town museum. This was nearly half a century ago.

It was the new fire horn installed by the fire Engineers to connect with the new alarm systems in Forge village and Graniteville - and the year was 1941. Ed Rogers, Harold Wright and Dick Hall were the Board of Engineers.

Westford Wanderings

The system too could be used in national defense as an air raid signal!

Perley Carlin was named the town's first permanent fireman and he and his wife Jessie moved into the little white house on the same lot as their fire station. It was their duty to man the signal system (pushing the buttons) when the emergency arose on a 24 hour basis. Perley augmented his meagre \$100 yearly salary by driving a school bus. Jesse stayed by the phone.

This was the big year before changes in the fire department. An attractive brick station was built near the mill dam in Forge Village; a new pumper (for \$8,500) replaced an antique piece of equipment - and the firemen purchased new uniforms, dress parades and funerals. The insignia on Perley's hat and coat have been presented to the museum by his widow.

All this up-dating of the department resulted in a lower fire insurance rating, moving from Class D to Class C. A considerable saving to all property owners.