

When the first volunteer fire brigade was formed in Port Credit in 1928, a youth of 17 was among the first to join up. His name was Bill Newman.

Newman retired recently after 38 years service.

It was no surprise that young Newman decided to take on the duties of a fireman. In fact, it would have been unusual if he hadn't, because his father, William, organized the brigade and became its first chief.

Being a fireman in the early days of the Port Credit volunteer brigade was a job for a dedicated man. The rolling stock consisted of one open-cab truck, and that meant frozen hands and faces whenever the fire siren blew in mid-winter.

#### LARGER AREA

Port Credit's fire-fighters covered a much larger area in the 1930's and 1940's than they do now. The department answered calls from Clarkson and Cooksville, as well as the town. That increased the number of fires a fireman would be called to.

Newman remembers answering as many as three or four calls in a day, to points throughout the township.

In the dead of winter of 1930, Newman, along with his father and one other volunteer, rolled out of Port Credit in the open-cab truck to answer a call in Clarkson. The temperature was 36 below zero.

#### FIRE IN FIREPLACE

When the three arrived at the Clarkson address, they found a small fire in a fire-

## We Salute...

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place. It was nothing serious, and the occupants had it under control when they got there. There was nothing to do but turn around and drive back to Port Credit.

Bill, who drove the truck, says his hands were frozen in the position they had been to hold the steering wheel, and his face felt like a balloon.

But there were good times along with the bad. "We had some close calls," says Newman, "but we always pulled through."

Among the good times Newman remembers were the weekly fire practices at the fire hall. Meeting the same men every week, Newman says, it became like a club. The fire brigade became such an important part of his life, that he has never joined any other clubs or organizations.

#### TRAGEDY

Newman has also seen his share of tragedy during his years on the fire department. He remembers serious house fires in which families were turned out on the street wearing nothing but night clothes. "That was during the depression," he says. They had nothing else to wear.

During his 38-year fire fighting career, Newman served under only two chiefs; his father who held the position until his death in 1940,

and the present chief, Bob McKee. With Newman's retirement, McKee is the only remaining member of the department who served on the first brigade.

Newman was captain of the brigade until the position of deputy-chief was created. He retires with that rank.

Newman, born and educated in Port Credit, also has long service to his credit in the jobs he has held. After leaving school, he worked at St. Lawrence Starch Company for 19 years, before moving to Texaco where he is in his 20th year.

#### CHANGES

Newman has seen a lot of changes in the fire department through the years. Although its members now receive training in fire-fighting, he was "a self-made fireman."

But now he thinks it is time to leave the demanding duties to younger men. "I thought I had done my share after 38 years," he said, "besides, it is a job for younger men."

Married 31 years, Newman has three grand children. His son, William, and daughter Donna Marie both live in the area.

Newman says his favorite spare-time activity is travelling, and now that he no longer obeys the wail of the siren, he can go where he likes.



**BILL NEWMAN, THE EX-FIREMAN**

Given a clock for long service