

Motorized Fire Apparatus Made Albion's Department Best in the Nation



Vol. 3, No. 19

On November 19, 1913, the Ever-Ready Manufacturing Company of Buffalo delivered a six cylinder, 90 horsepower Thomas flyer hose, chemical, and ladder truck for the Active Hose No. 2 Fire Company in Albion. At a cost of approximately \$6,000, the fully-loaded vehicle was said to max out at 75 miles per hour. A year and a half prior to this delivery, Dye Hose No. 5 Fire Company purchased a similar machine, making Albion's fire service one of the best in the United States.

This photograph shows Chief Engineer C. Royce Sawyer, right, seated in his recently purchased 1913 Buick Model 30 Roadster, which was designated as the chief's car for the Dye Hose Company. The vehicle was equipped with a carbonated gas fire extinguisher, visible on the car's driver-side running board.

Around the time this photograph was taken, two of Albion's volunteer companies took out incorporation papers following village approval to do so. The process of incorporation allowed both companies to move their automated fire apparatus to the municipal building shown in this photo. Sawyer was an incorporator of the Dye Hose Company, while J. Wallace Eggleston, seated left, was an incorporator of the Active Hose Company.

At the time of his retirement, Eggleston had responded to over 2,000 fire alarms with the Active Hose Co. No. 2, becoming an inactive fireman in 1966 after more than 50 years of service. When the Orleans County mutual-aid system was established in 1949, he served as its first coordinator. He worked with Sawyer to motorize Albion's fire apparatus, encouraging village officials to invest in the machine purchased by Dye Hose. Eggleston was also an advocate for the creation of fire districts, convincing nearby towns to enter into contracts with the village to provide fire protection. This effectively spread the cost of the fire department across the tax rolls and reduced fire insurance rates for rural residents.

In the far bay with closed doors, you can see the Dye Hose fire apparatus parked inside. Active Hose housed their vehicles in bays located along Platt Street. This building was later converted into offices for the Village of Albion and the Albion Police Department.