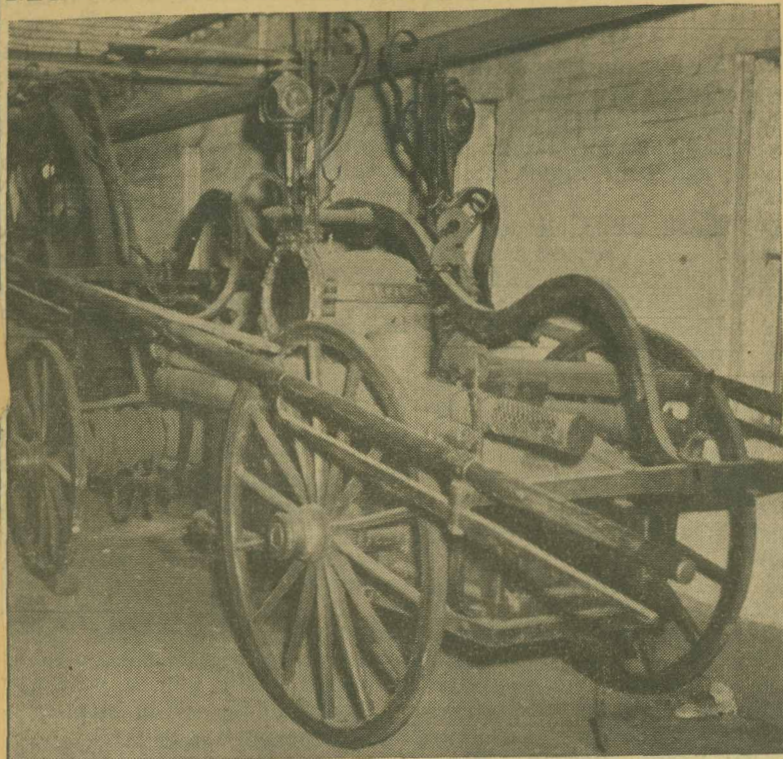


### Museum Pieces In Town Hall Basement



Provincetown has three ancient fire pumps that would be proudly displayed in any museum of antiquities but here two of them are collecting dust in Town Hall basement while the third and oldest is hidden away in No. 2 Fire House on Johnson Street. Shown above is the rear view of the "Benjamin Franklin" and behind it is the "U. S. Grant" and the one at No. 2 is the "George Washington". On the side of each is a portrait, hand-painted in full color, of the celebrity whose name the pumper bears.

### Why Hide Them?

Provincetown might do well to rediscover and reassess forgotten and neglected relics of its picturesque past. By doing so it could add interesting items to tourist attractions without an outlay of great amounts of cash or effort.

Pictured on page one of this issue of The Advocate is one of three almost ancient pumps, now owned by the Town of Provincetown. Two of them, the "U. S. Grant" and the "Benjamin Franklin" are moldering away in the dark recesses of the basement of Town Hall and the third, the oldest, the "George Washington," with wide banded wheels for traversing Cape End sand, is hidden away in the No. 2 Fire House on Johnson Street.

Not only are these intensely interesting pieces of early fire-fighting equipment but they are fine examples of hand-wrought iron work, revealing all the grace and beauty that our early artisans seemed, somehow, able to put into their products intended for ordinary use, whether a clipper ship or a kitchen chair. On the sides of our early fire pumps are the portraits, done in oil, of the celebrities after whom they are named. Intact are the grab irons used in hauling the pumps to fires, and the long lengths of rope for those who assisted. Intact, too, are the hand-wrought brass fixtures and the lamps which are similar to those used on horse-drawn carriages of many years ago.

There is hardly a museum of antiquities in the country that would not consider these fine old pumps priceless acquisitions. They would show them proudly and prominently, restored and polished, as they once were when they were important items of the community's equipment.

Now that the Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association, which has charge of our Pilgrim Monument, has broadened its scope to include the operation and supervision of the Historical Museum, it is hoped that this organization will find a suitable and easily accessible place for these priceless old fire pumps where they may be seen and appreciated by visitors as well as by townspeople, the majority of whom have probably never seen them. We should put to good use every asset we have.

- December 3, 1959 -

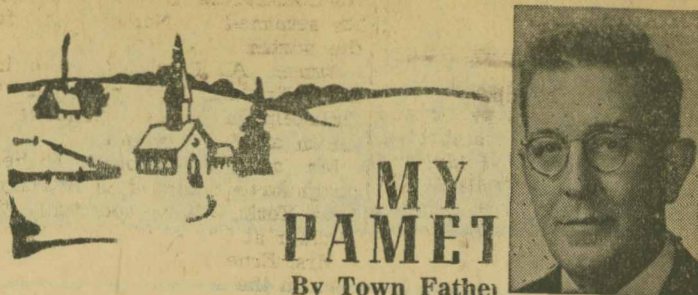
**THIS WEEK** Fire Pumper No. 3 should be back in its house for which contractor Joe Bent has built a new first floor from the foundation up to the second story. A new lift type door has been installed and it will be painted red and the house, itself, will be painted. So Pumper No. 3 will really have renovated quarters throughout and once more Driver Norman Cook will be able to slide out from Adam's Pharmacy to the wheel of the pumper and have it on its way to a fire before the siren stops sounding.

NOVEMBER 14, 1957

### Fire Signals

- District 1—Provincetown Inn to Franklin Street. Signal—One blast on Fire Siren.
- District 2—Franklin to Court Street. Signal—Two blasts on Fire Siren.
- District 3—Court to Center Street. Signal—Three blasts on Fire Siren.
- District 4—Center to Howland Street. Signal—Four blasts on Fire Siren.
- District 5—Howland Street to Town Line. Signal—Five blasts on Fire Siren.

- October 23, 1958 -



Well sir, these Fall evenings could be a mite boresome if it weren't for an occasional unusual happening or two . . . Last night it was the sudden, frightening blast of a jet plane breaking through the sound barrier somewhere over the Narrow Land . . . party lines jangled as triple vibrations shook window sashes and bric-a-brac danced on Pamet mantles . . . Reminds us of the time the forest fire broke out atop Peters Hill, overlooking North Truro. Long before the days of fire apparatus in town, the blaze was fought by the strong arms of men wielding shovels, and brooms, and limber branches of green brush. Started near the State Highway, if memory serves, and, on a strong southeasterly breeze it worked back from the road in the general direction of John Lucas' property.

John, in those days, engaged in the distribution of ardent spirits, and since the law frowned on this practice, John found it necessary to cache his supply in the golden sands of Peter's Hill . . . The acreage was spotted with shallow holes, each containing a choice item of Lucas stock . . . Here a half dozen home-brewed potato lager beers . . . there, in the oak copse, a clutch of Black Rod, or William Penn or Old Quaker (the labels were different, but some folks claimed the contents were the same) Booth's Old Tom, crystal clear and pure as a maiden's gaze, reposed at the foot of a scrub pine, and Red Heart rum from the West Indies snuggled in the tangled roots

of a beach plum bush . . .

Well sir, John saw the fire as soon as anybody—shooed a pair of customers from his kitchen, dashed out the back door and headed for the conflagration. "I ran up to the boys fightin' the fire and grabbed a shovel," is the way John used to tell the yarn. "My mind was buzzin' like a fly in an empty beer bottle—problems? I had a dozen of 'em . . . First off, was my stock buried deep enough to resist the heat of the flames? Secondly, suppose them over-zealous firemen dug into a sample; wouldn't they suspect there was more of the same? Thirly—even if the fire burned over my hoard without damaging it—how in tarnation would I recognize the hiding spots without bushes, and trees, and grass clumps to orient myself? . . .

"So John prayed silently and fervently for a quartering breeze, but to no avail . . . "All of a sudden, along the fireline, I could hear a POP . . . POP-POP . . . and the pleasant, heady aroma of malt beverages filled the air . . ." John used to choke up, usually, at this point, but there were usually others who knew the story and who could fill it in . . . By the time the fire had burned itself out on the shores of Great Swamp, the doughty volunteers had unearthed a goodly supply of John's inventory . . . And there are those on the fire department today who will recall the old days with a bit of nostalgia as they appraise the shiny apparatus, and the two way radio, and the tank truck . . . "Good equipment," they'll sigh, "But you should'a been there the day of John Lucas' fire, on Peter's Hill . . ."