

Later this month, Lackawanna firefighters at Firehouse 1 will gather their equipment, supplies and trucks and leave the red brick building at 209 Ridge Road for good, to move into brand new facilities four blocks down the street. When the last man walks out, he'll close the door on 80 years of fire-fighting tradition.

Firehouse 1 is a good barometer of the times, beginning when horses pulled the engines from the only firehouse in town; to the 1950s and '60s when up to 17 men were stationed there; to today, when just three men are on duty and respond to every call because of a manpower shortage.

Many firefighters are looking forward to the new building at Simon Street and Ridge Road.

"Most, I think, will be glad to get out because of the condition of the building. I'm glad I'm going to the new firehouse for the new facilities," Firefighter Rocco Giannicchi said.

Old firehouse 1 is in bad shape, with water running down the walls and into the kitchen when it rains. It's also expensive to heat, since

the living quarters are in the same large room with the trucks.

Years ago, it was known as Stony Point Hose Company, and many current firefighters had a relative with ties to the firehouse.

"I WAS stationed there quite a few years, and my grandfather was captain there several years," Chief John J. Baran said.

Lt. Reynold Jenetti remembers that his grandfather bought one of the original firehouse horses to pull a cart for him. The horse-drawn cart eventually evolved into a small hauling business with trucks.

Daily log books recorded the fires, the rescues and the deaths, and more. Like the time one of the horses was sold so city fathers could balance their budget. Somehow the horse ended up in the Sanitation Department, hauling garbage. When his former teammates would go running off to a fire pulling the engine, he wanted to go too, and would gallop after them, leaving a trail of garbage.

Other fond and not-so-fond memories are recalled when "Chief" is mentioned to firefighters. The Dalmatian thought of the firehouse as his own and drew blood from more than a few firefighters to prove it. He eventually was muzzled full-time.

Chief would attack any unfamiliar person coming into the station, and as each man was assigned there, first he had to get by Chief, who usually accepted him after the first confrontation.

"The kids would play and pet him across the street, and he wouldn't do anything, but once he stepped into the fire station ... We could go to a fire and leave the door open and know that everything would be here when we got back," Mr. Giannicchi said, remembering that Chief cornered several would-be burglars.

Former Chief Edwin L. Kij tells of one Election Day when Chief let voters in but attacked the election inspector who came to get the voting machine.

"Anything that was in the fire hall belonged there, he thought," Mr. Kij said.

ALTHOUGH the building is in bad repair, some of the older furnishings are in mint condition. A shiny brass pole still is usable, but not many firefighters slide down it anymore since one fractured his leg during a demonstration for schoolchildren.

A brass gas light is still hooked up. It originally was used to light a fire in the engine to create steam. Later it mainly was used to light cigars and cigarettes.

On the walls of the second floor are old portraits of firefighters and city officials long since out of office, like the one dated 1910, when Robert H. Reed was mayor, John O. Bouley was chief, Leon Tarnowski was assistant driver, and Bill, Dick and Tom were the horses that pulled the engine.

The new fire station will have some borrowed tradition — two red watch lights that were outside the old building will be placed by the door of the new building.

The new station is almost completed. It will have living quarters on one side and engines on the other, with separate thermostats. Front and rear doors will allow the trucks to be driven in the back and ready to go out the front without having to be backed in to the station. A police substation will be located in the back of the building. The emergency traffic signals will be moved down the street in front of the new building.

The city plans to use the old fire station for storage.

"I'd hate to see a building with this architecture fall down, and I'd like to see it utilized differently than a garage," Lt. Jennetti said. He proposes renovating it to a theater, to be used by the Lackawanna Civic Theater Group and the Phoenix Players.

"I feel sad to see it taken out of service (but) it's done its duty, seen its day — it's time to go," Chief Baran said.

## Postal Holiday Today

There will be no home mail delivery today, and all local post offices will be closed in observance of the Columbus Day holiday. The air mail facility at Greater Buffalo International Airport will be open 24 hours for the acceptance of express mail.

There will be no window service at post offices today, and post office box service will be provided on a holiday schedule.