

Hand Drawn Hose Cart



A Canadian fire department poised to run the hose cart to a fire scene.



The same team in a blur of action.

FIRE DEPARTMENT APPARATUS

For Progressive Towns and Boroughs

WHERE conditions require a light weight, speedy hand-drawn hose cart the Wirt Style "L," shown here, cannot be beaten. It is of tubular steel construction, which gives it great strength at minimum weight, and with the addition of roller bearings the Style "L" is the most mobile cart of its size.

The regular equipment comprises a fireman's axe and crowbar, nozzle holders, rope reel and drag rope, tongue rest, tool box and friction roller at the rear.

The handle bar, hub caps and other trimmings are polished brass or nickel-plated. The wheels are of the Archibald type, and are the best wood wheels made. Catalog "C" describes our other apparatus, and we will be pleased to send you a copy.

Style L
Light Weight
Roller Bearing Cart.

WIRT & KNOX MFG. CO. 2367 SEDGLEY AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNA.

This hose cart was advertised "for progressive towns and boroughs."

On October 9, 1871, Fennville and Holland, Michigan burned to the ground, on the very same day as the great fire in Chicago. Saugatuck was spared but the citizenry were suddenly highly aware of the need for modern fire protection.

Saugatuck's first fire department had just been established in January of that same year. After the Fennville/Holland/Chicago fires, Saugatuck purchased 200 pails that were distributed around town.

By 1881, the city's engine company had 32 members with a hand pumper and hose cart. A photo, circa 1910, shows the Saugatuck fire department posing with two hose carts. Although horse-drawn hose carts existed, Saugatuck's carts transported hose to a fire scene using only manpower. The carts were in use for 50 years, before being replaced by a Ford truck.

To deploy, the ropes on the front of the cart would be unwound, and 10 or more men would run out in front to pull the hose cart to the fire scene. Two men would hold onto the tongue to steer and/or attempt to brake the cart.

At the scene, the hose was unwound from the cart, laid out and connected to a hand pumper to move water from a cistern or pond to the source of the fire.

Hose carts included various places for attaching fire-fighting equipment. A bell, mounted to the top harp, on a spring tab, or near the wheels so it was struck every time the wheel made a revolution, alerted people (and livestock) to clear the way.

Hose carts had wood or metal wheels, narrow tired for primarily paved areas, wide tired for off road and gravel conditions.

The copy for the hose cart advertisement, at left, reads:

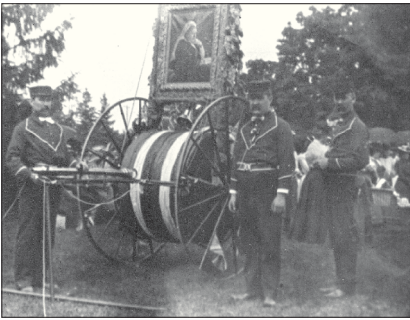
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Saugatuck's firefighters assembled by the Village Hall, circa 1910.
The cart on the left of this photo is the cart on display.



Just as today, early fire departments were proud of their equipment. The harp over the top of hose cart could be employed to display a plaque identifying the department or hose company. A Canadian fire department's cart (left) is adorned with a portrait of Queen Victoria. Although the monarch's image may have been motivational for men pulling the cart over poorly paved roads, these sorts of ornaments were only used for parades and holidays.