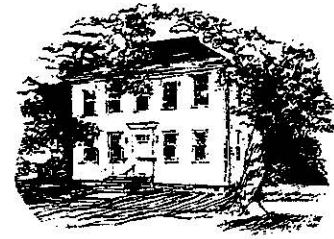


IMAGES

. . . then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Snow Removal by the Service Department's Warriors



When winter weather strikes, the Indian Hill Service Department responds. To keep village roads passable, these professionals work hard night and day, treating the byways even during the worst weather conditions.

If a storm is predicted, Rick Robinson, Director, and one of three supervisors monitor information from local weathermen and the Internet. Once the determination is made to treat the roads, a crew of 10 is assembled, including a supervisor, a loader operator, a mechanic, and 7 men to drive the 7 trucks. The men are asked based on seniority if they would like to work during the storm; and if the storm occurs at night or on weekends, they are paid overtime wages.

Various factors determine the strategy used to clear the roads, including, the type of snow/ice, its moisture content, the temperature, wind velocity, accumulation of the snow, and duration of the storm. Each driver loads his truck with 8 to 9 tons of salt and treats his designated route of 10 – 11 miles, which generally takes 2 hours to complete. When conditions warrant (usually if more than 2 inches of snow) plows are attached to the trucks. The men have two-way radios to communicate with each other and the supervisor. Once the route is finished, the driver returns to the Service Department in Camp Dennison, reloads his truck and repeats his route until the storm stops or a second crew relieves him. Even after an "all-nighter", the men report to work on time the next morning for regular duty.

The drivers are often plowing in the front and dumping in the back. The back of the truck has an auger that delivers the salt to the spinner, which is calibrated (1-9.) The driver controls the salt's density and the distance it is thrown. The plow's front blade must be properly aligned to the street. When moving from a wide street (Miami) to a smaller one (DeMar), adjustments are made to the blade, auger, and spinner. The men must be alert for mailboxes and manhole lids that might break the blade, as well as tree limbs that might snap off if the dump bed is raised.

During snow emergencies, the Service Department concentrates on primary roads, then proceeds to the secondary and private roads. The Village does not plow homeowners' driveways. For ice storms, chains are put on the trucks' tires. Salt is the main deicer used in village trucks, but if the temperature goes below 20 degrees, salt loses its effectiveness. Then liquid calcium chloride (from a tank) is mixed with the salt to give the salt a melting boost.

In 2000 a new salt storage dome was built at the Service Department on St. Rt. 126. A barrel shaped building, it has the capacity to store 4000 tons of salt. Before its construction, salt was stored in a small pole barn with a 1400 ton capacity. In the 1990's the Village was unable to get enough salt some winters, which created problems; and the new dome allows the purchase of a large order of salt once a year, and also permits driving trucks inside to load salt.

Once in the north Village, under severe conditions, stranded motorists in cars were parked in the street. The snowplow driver had little room to operate, and he was unable to drive forward because the road was so slick. So the man treated all of Hopewell Road while going in reverse, salting the road before he drove over it. He zigzagged amongst the paralyzed vehicles, freeing up cars one by one, and stopped to shovel salt by hand under each auto.

Because snow and ice is efficiently removed from village roads, travel is safer. Nearby communities compliment Indian Hill as having the "cleanest roads in town". Though preparation, equipment, and supplies factor into this reputation, the dedication of the Service Department's winter warriors is what really makes the difference.



Thanks to Rick Robinson for help with this article.