



*The fire hall on Watson Road was built for \$1,200.00 on land purchased for \$250.00.*

on the condition the land company could use it when it wished. At this point the volunteers decided to sell the hand-drawn cart and purchase a second-hand hose carriage. On December 15, 1891, the land company bought a hose carriage for the volunteers and then leased it to them for \$1 a year with an option to buy.

The first house fire the Fanwood Fire Company responded to occurred on October 20, 1891, at 7:40 P.M. The home of Charles Richardson was destroyed but "through the effort of the local company, assisted by Scotch Plains, the rest of the houses in the row were saved." High winds blew embers among these houses, and the house next door was on fire a number of times but was

eventually saved. The second response on December 3, 1891, was to Plainfield for mutual aid. This request was made by telegraph as that was the quickest means of communication available. This fire was at Boice Lumber Yard. The loss resulted in damages totaling over \$100,000.

In January 1892, the first protective coats were delivered; they were made of rubber. Helmets with front shields that stated Fanwood Fire Company were also ordered.

A committee was organized to purchase an adequate alarm system, and on August 16, 1892, the committee reported that a bell costing \$65 had been installed in a tower built next to the firehouse. This bell was originally used on a Central Railroad Company ferryboat. Although installed in August 1892 the bell was not rung to call firemen to duty until the following July. Files reveal that there were no fires from December 1891 to July 1893!

The Fire Department now had an alarm system, but how would the system operate? A newspaper article explained the solution to this problem:

"There were no police cars or fire engines, no radios or teletypes. However, the Rainier house at the southwest corner of Watson Road and Martine Avenue, which is still standing, solved many of the problems of public officials.

Mrs. Rainier, a public spirited citizen of her day, constituted the Fanwood communications system. Her home was the 'alert' center for police alarms and fire calls. As a lone policeman patrolled the borough streets on foot or on bicycle, he kept an eye on Mrs. Rainier's front porch. When a citizen needed police help, he contacted Mrs. Rainier and she would then set out a green light to alert the policeman. Whenever he saw the light he stopped in to receive his message. In case of fire, Mrs. Rainier also was contacted. She