



"The gentleman is Chief Braun. The truck was housed in his barn next to his hotel. J. H. Ackerman's general store and coal yard in background." ---Violet W. Straussman.

Although the need for efficient means of fire control had been apparent in Allendale for some time, a disastrous fire that broke out on December 26, 1909 convinced Allendale's residents to formally organize an official fire fighting company without delay. The post-Christmas blaze resulted in the complete destruction of two buildings, Max Scholz's home and barber shop (combination) and the former Kornhoff Bakery, occupied at the time of the fire by a family named LaCompte. Within a week of the fire, on December 31, 1909, a community meeting was held at Archer Hall. At this meeting a committee of seven was appointed to look into the formalities of organizing a permanent fire-fighting company. The committee, working with remarkable speed, was responsible for the formal organization, on January 24, 1910, of the Allendale Fire Association. Incorporation papers were filed and 57 members were enrolled in the Association at this meeting. Officers of the Association elected that night were William Dewsnap, President; William C. Tallman, Vice President; J. M. Christopher, Treasurer; C. N. Elliott, Jr., Secretary; R. W. Steele, Chief; Valentine J. Braun, Foreman; Max Scholz, Assistant Foreman; and Arthur Dathe, Second Assistant Foreman. The Board of Trustees were John W. Winter, R. W. Rodman, R. Moelhausen, S. J. Van Blarcom and William C. Lee.

In March 1910 a new hook and ladder truck was ordered from the Combination Ladder Co. The long-awaited truck arrived in August 1910 and was housed in V. J. Braun's barn next to the Allendale Hotel. This photograph probably dates from 1910, soon after the truck was delivered. The barn served as a makeshift home for Allendale's fire truck until April 5, 1913 when the cornerstone of the new fire house was laid amid ceremonies attended by many borough dignitaries and residents.

In the background can be seen J. H. Ackerman's general store, formerly run by his father, Richard V. Ackerman. This building today houses the Allendale Print Shop.

----Patricia A. Wardell