

November 20, 1947

# T. Julian Lewis Of Provincetown To Quit Dec. 31

Top Post Obtained  
In 1933; 'Getting Old'  
Is Principal Reason

PROVINCETOWN, Nov. 20—The resignation of T. Julian Lewis as chief of the Provincetown Fire Department, received today by Provincetown Selectmen, brings to a close a career in the department which covers more than 66 years.

The resignation is effective Dec. 31, and Selectmen said today there would be no immediate action in naming a successor.

Chief Lewis' career in the department extends from the days of the old hand pumps to today's five

motorized pumbers and a hook and ladder, plus a forest fire piece.

## 80th Birthday Passed

He joined the department when he was 14, first in the "boys' company," and when 18 he transferred to the regular department. The chief was 80 Armistice Day and in March expects to celebrate his 55th wedding anniversary.

Appointed a captain of the old No. 1 company, now No. 4, in 1888, Chief Lewis was appointed to the board of fire engineers in 1904, and retained his captain's rating until appointed chief in 1933 on the death of Chief James H. Barnett. said today, were the high school fire in 1930 and the Colonial Cold Storage blaze, also during Chief Barnett's term as department head. This last fire, Chief Lewis said, was the only one in Provincetown that ignited and burned an adjoining house.

In his resignation, Chief Lewis expresses his "regrets that I am sending in my resignation from the Fire Department to take effect at the close of this year, Dec. 31, 1947."

## 'Getting Pretty Old'

"My interest," he continued, "has been in it many years, as I first joined the boys' company, called the Tigers, when I was 14 years of age and in grammar school, and

for 66 years I have given my best to the cause. I shall always be interested in its welfare."

The first motorized equipment, he said, a chemical, was acquired by the department in 1918, with the first pumper, named the James H. Barnett, purchased in 1931. In 1936 the second pumper, named after Chief Lewis, was acquired, the next, the Jack Leonard, in 1940, and the last two in 1946, the T. J. Lopes and the Joseph DeCosta.

The chief said his main reason for resigning was that he was "getting pretty old."

I am reminded of a Town Meeting proceeding in Provincetown a long time ago. An old timer got up to oppose the purchase of a steam engine for the fire department. He had his opinion and he boomed it so that every word was a clarion challenge throughout the meeting hall:

"Cold water will put out a fire just as well as 'biling' water! What's more, there aint no danger of scalding people all around the fire!"

— J. J.

FIFTY YEARS AGO  
August 17, 1899

Excelsior Fire engine No. 4 was shipped off Monday of this week to Smith Mills, Mass., where she will be used for fires. The old engine is in good condition and can do active and effective service in extinguishing a blaze. Many pleasant memories have been revived and stories told of her high rank and past record in fires and musters.

In the belief that it is too late now for 1951 to spoil its excellent record in the matter of infrequent fires and low fire loss, it should be safe to make the prediction that the record will be one of the very best in many years. It has been so good and Fire Chief Joe Matta has been able to save so much money out of his budget that he has been able to equip four of the six pieces of Department apparatus with two-way, FM radios without asking the voters for a cent. The installation of the four radios has been completed and the required permits and licenses have been granted by the Conservation Department and Federal Communications Commission. Through a smart buy, Chief Matta was able to acquire the equipment at about 50 per cent of listed prices. By means of the radios the crews of Pumbers 3, 4 and 5 and the Department jeep will be able to talk to each other and to other radio-equipped departments and apparatus. The Chief feels that the addition of radio communication will greatly increase the prompt mobility of the various apparatus and add to their efficiency in fire fighting.

## Old Chief Greets the New



Joseph E. Matta, left, Provincetown Health Agent who took over as Fire Chief Thursday, receives the best wishes of T. Julian Lewis, who retired after 66 years' service to the Fire Department, more than 14 as Chief. The new Chief has been in the department for 17 years and until his appointment was captain of Pumper No. 1.

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