

# *ISCHUA VALLEY*

## *HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

### **MERLE BULL'S MEMORIES OF THE FIRE IN ISCHUA**

Fires have always been the most destructive force in our town. Bulldozers are probably next. Sometimes the remains result in a new building. Sometimes the scenes of the disaster remain a vacant spot forever.

The fire hall was downtown. The whistle would blow. Most of the inhabitants would assemble. When sufficient numbers of men appeared the big new red mack truck would be fired up and would venture forth. Most of the cars in town would pull in behind. Then there was a parade to the fire.

One day I turned into the Five Mile Road. There was a plume of black smoke in the sky. We sped to the source where a barn was on fire. We helped carry things out of the milk house. Pretty soon a fire truck pulled up and they just sat there. The truck was from the Ischua Fire Department.

Mr. Nix, about 80 years of age, was the driver. The crew was a lady and a 14 year old boy hanging on the rear for dear life. They knew not how to operate anything but give them credit they were there. A gray milling truck soon came upon the scene. The driver was a Franklinville fireman and soon the pump was working. But it was too little and much too late.

I had been warned about the risk of following overly excited crowds to a fire. In the heat of this frenzied activity I completely forgot this warning. One day I was speeding down Elm Street on my Elgin bicycle. I slowed a bit so as not to get ahead of that big red truck. My attention was momentarily diverted or my judgment was somewhat less than good.

I plowed into the front fender of Frank James' new Oldsmobile. I was air born across the hood. Frank took it surprisingly well. The front of my Elgin was bent right back to the sprocket. I was shaken and bruised and never did get to that fire.