



A 1904 PUMP wagon from the Wheeling Volunteer Fire Department

continues to unfold at the Wheeling Historical Museum, 251 N. Wolf Road.

Located in the Old Village Hall erected in 1894, the museum holds more than 200 artifacts of the past, culled from the surrounding suburban area.

While the oldest remnants on hand include simple farm tools and implements, circa 1835, brought over from the Old World to this country by early settlers, other displays seek to depict life as it was around the turn of the century.

Miniature replicas, true to history, depict the interior of a typical country store, as well as a blacksmith shop, so common to the 1890s. Another display shows Dr. Ed Larson, a real-life man of medicine from the 1920s, making a house call. In the days of Dr. Larson, Wheeling was an outpost of civilization, populated by less than 1,500, concentrated near what is today the intersection of Dundee and Wheeling roads.

"HORSES AND COWS were the livelihood of people in that time," noted museum director E. Albert Fantl, who has spent most of his life designing, building and caring for various Chicago museums before coming to Wheeling last year. "In those days there were more veterinarians than people doctors."

The miniature displays consist of figures and forms less than a foot tall, all handmade with a historian's eye for accuracy. But not all the displays have been reduced in size.

For example, the German Presbyterian Church, originally established at the corner of Dundee and Milwaukee roads in 1935, still stands in all its glory.

things were.

IN ADDITION, a new large-scaled exhibit being planned involves a 1904 fire pump wagon. More than just a remnant of the past, the pump wagon will become part of a special display to be unveiled this spring. Helping to dramatize the hardship faced by firefighters of yesteryear, four life-sized animatronic figures will transform this relic into a "live exhibit," said Fantl. The demonstration will also feature tools and furniture of that era.

The pump wagon was recently leased by the village to the Wheeling Park District, which is primarily responsible for funding the Historical Museum.

Parks Director David Phillips said the Wheeling Historical Museum reflects the district's commitment to the area's heritage.

"This works very closely with the district's responsibility to preserve, protect and enhance the local history. Our resources and history are very important to the community," Phillips said.

ALTHOUGH THE Old Village Hall was originally opened as a museum in 1960s, it was moved from S. Milwaukee Ave. to its current location in Chamber Park during the following decade, where it has undergone a recent expansion and a grand re-opening last year.

Volunteers are needed to continue the work on the museum, Fantl said. In part, their duties would include interviewing some of the oldtimers of the area in preparation for a book to be published next year, tentatively titled "Historically Yours: A History of the Northwest Suburban Area."