

# *Ridgewood Fire Department*

*From Yesterday to Today*

*1897-1997*


*Celebrating...  
One Hundred Years  
of Service to the Village*

LOCAL  
HISTORY

REFERENCE

*From the archives of the Ridgewood Fire Department,  
a historical collection of photographs and events  
of our firefighters over the first one hundred years.*

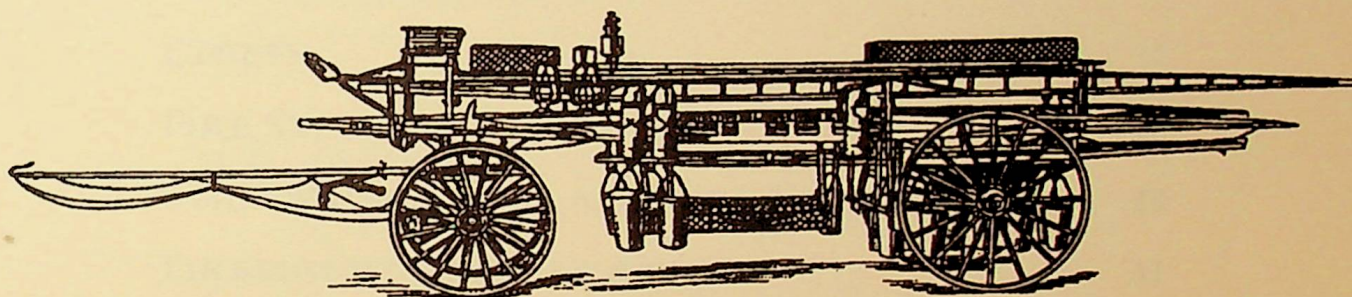




*Ridgewood firefighters on roof of house fire at 149 Sunset Avenue.  
Research shows to the best of our knowledge that the fire was in the  
winter of 1955 and firefighters are believed to be Harris Weaving,  
Robert Clare and Unknown.*



# THE RIDGEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT 1897-1997



## CENTENNIAL ALBUM

Local History Archives  
Ridgewood Public Library  
125 North Maple Avenue  
Ridgewood, NJ 07450



THE  
RIDGEWOOD  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
1897-1997



CENTENNIAL  
ALBUM

Look Henry Brown  
Fireman Ridge Road  
1897-1997  
The Ridge Road Fire Department  
1897-1997  
The Ridge Road Fire Department  
1897-1997  
The Ridge Road Fire Department  
1897-1997  
The Ridge Road Fire Department  
1897-1997





# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
CONTRIBUTORS	vi
PROCLAMATION & LETTERS	vii
THE DEPARTMENT: 1897-1997	1
CHIEFS	17
FIRE STATIONS	22
THE HORSE TEAMS AND FIRE DOGS	28
FIREFIGHTING APPARATUS	32
MAJOR FIRES	50
ALARM SYSTEMS	74
FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU	79
FIREMEN'S MUTUAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION	84
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	86
SCUBA RESCUE SERVICE	89
DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP	90
DEPARTMENT PHOTOS	94
PARTING SHOTS	107



# INTRODUCTION

Organized fire protection began in the Village of Ridgewood in 1897 with the formation of the Protection Hook and Ladder Company #1. Much has happened since that time, and the history of the fire department takes us from a Bucket Brigade to automated master streams. Numerous stories about our history—the fine fire officers and fire-fighters, the myriad of apparatus, the fire horses, Dalmations, the fire stations, glorious parades, and of course, the many tragedies and lives lost over the past century—unfolded as we delved into the past.

The Ridgewood Fire Department Centennial Committee has attempted to accurately reconstruct the department's history and put it into an informative and interesting format. This has been a fascinating, yet somewhat difficult task because many records were not saved or were incomplete. Information has been gathered from the Village and Fire Department records, from the Ridgewood Library, *The Ridgewood News*, *The Bergen Record*, the Paramus Historical Society, and from interviews with Village residents and fire personnel, both past and present. Our careful research using the above sources has corrected many previously publicized "facts" and uncovered historical items previously unknown.

The newspaper clippings and log book entries used in the production of this album are real and accurately identified. Because of the poor quality of photocopies of the clippings, some of the news articles have been completely re-typeset, however, the original grammar, spelling, and punctuation have been retained. Every effort was made to avoid errors and omissions, and we regret if any exist; our desire is to publish a complete and detailed department history.

Your comments and/or corrections are welcome. Please submit them to:

The Ridgewood Fire Department Centennial Book Committee  
Ridgewood Fire Headquarters  
201 East Glen Avenue  
Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We convey our appreciation to all those individuals who have contributed towards the publication of this commemorative album.

## BOOK COMMITTEE

Chief Robert D. Missel—*Research, writer, funding procurement*  
Firefighter David Biswurm—*Research, writer, photography, layout coordination*  
Chief's Secretary Patti Herman—*Design, secretarial-transcription, treasurer*  
Fire Prevention Bureau Secretary Dolores Tomei—*Secretarial-transcription*  
Firefighter Paul Monton—*Research and photographs*  
Firefighter Theodore Carman—*Writer for F.M.B.A.*  
Retired Assistant Chief Robert Clare—*Historical contributions*  
Retired Chief Thomas Keeley—*Photographs, historical contributions, and wisdom*

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Lieutenant Philip Francis—*Department Photographer*

Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations who contributed their photographs and information:

<i>The Ridgewood News</i>	Kathleen Duxbury	Tony Loving
<i>The Bergen Record</i>	Ret. Ff. Edward Hallahan	Ret. Asst. Chief Bob C
The Ridgewood Public Library	Ret. Chief Francis X. Nolan	Mrs. Blanche Neuhs
Ff. Christopher DuFlocq	Ret. Chief Thomas Keeley	Ret. Capt. Stan Riker
Lt. Philip Francis	The Haldane Family	John Frei
Capt. Albert Whitaker	Ff. David Biswurm	Ret. Dep. Chief James N
Chief Robert D. Missel	Ff. Paul Monton	Monton
Dep. Chief LeRoy W.	Ret. Vol. Capt. Albert Schuman	Ms. Susan Hitchcock
Mullay, Jr.	John Rogers	Ridgewood Camera Exchange

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The success of this book is due to the hard work of the Ridgewood Fire Department Book Committee and the support for the project we received from the department members. We would like to thank Joanne Riker and Edie Riker of East End Publishing Services for their help and assistance in making this book a reality. Many thanks to Lyn Wolfstirn who gave a lot of her time proofreading the copy.

Special thanks to John Wolfstirn and Art Brierley of Jacobs & Whittaker, Inc. printing for their hard work and cost-saving suggestions that have allowed us to produce this album.

If we have inadvertently forgotten to mention anyone for their contribution, we apologize for the omission.

In doing research for this album, some sections were compiled after reading various articles in *The Ridgewood News* and *The Bergen Record* newspapers. Credit is given here for the assistance these articles provided.





# CONTRIBUTORS

## SPONSOR

The Valley Hospital

## PATRON

Ridgewood Fire Department Association

## SUPPORTERS

Lieutenant Philip Francis  
Daily Treat Restaurant  
Bolger & Co., Inc.  
Ridgewood Savings Bank of New Jersey  
Murphy Fire & Safety, Inc.

MC Electronic Consultants, Inc.  
Van Dyk Health Care, Inc.  
Cairns & Brother, Inc.  
Fire & Safety Services, Ltd.

## FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTMENT

Smith Brothers Dining Saloon  
Hoskins Hardware Co., Inc.  
Lord Properties  
Fairway Dodge  
Barry Poskanzer, AIA  
Taste of Italy  
Brogan Cadillac, Inc.  
Neil Hardware, Co.  
Lorne Cohen, M.D.  
Turn-Out Fire & Safety, Inc.  
George & Mary (Haldane) Moore & Family  
Firefighter David Biswurm  
Commerce Bank

Chief Robert D. Missel & Family  
The Hitchcock Family  
Sabbath, Struble, Ragno, Petrie,  
Oroho, & Spinato  
The Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce  
Feeney Funeral Home  
John A. Earl, Inc.  
Absolute Fire Protection, Inc.  
State Line Fire & Safety, Inc.  
Van Der Wall Heating & Fuel Co., Inc.  
Ridgewood Post 53 American Legion  
The Ridgewood Fourth of July Committee  
Country Curtains

## BOOSTERS

Patti Herman & Family  
Lieutenant Ronald Gimbert & Family  
(Donna, Brian, & Lauren)  
The Regensburg Family  
Hudson City Savings Bank  
Michael J. Dwyer of Dwyer, Dwyer, & Welch

David Raimondi Painting  
Gilbert A. Stephen, V.P.—Letzner Inc.  
Ann Sutherland Saunders  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Gage & Family  
(In Memory of Edward Gage)





Office of the Mayor

# Proclamation

WHEREAS, on the evening of January 11, 1897 a meeting was authorized by the Village Trustees and called to order by Dr. Walter Van Emburgh to organize a Fire Department and submit a list of members to the said Trustees; and

WHEREAS, for this past century, these Firefighters have valiantly protected the lives and property of our citizens at great risk to themselves; and

WHEREAS, this sense of duty and vigilance has been maintained to the best of their ability by every member of the department for this past one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, this proud tradition is not only to safeguard the community, but to educate our most precious resource - the children of this Village against the hazards of fire.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Patrick A. Mancuso, Mayor of the Village of Ridgewood, do hereby proclaim

The year 1997 to be

The Centennial Celebration of the

Ridgewood Fire Department

and extend my heartfelt thanks to these brave men to whom we owe so much.



*Patrick A. Mancuso*  
Patrick A. Mancuso  
Mayor





*Village Mayor Patrick Mancuso*





## VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

131 NORTH MAPLE AVENUE  
RIDGEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07451  
(201) 670-5510

PATRICK A. MANCUSO  
MAYOR

March 1, 1997

It is with great pleasure that we congratulate the Ridgewood Fire Department on its 100th Anniversary Celebration.

Ridgewood's Bravest have a long history - rich in service and tradition - protecting the lives and property of our residents at great risk to themselves.

While fire suppression is their most noticeable function, our department does much more than just put out fires. The Fire Prevention Bureau performs business inspections for all merchants, public buildings, school and multiple dwellings, and health care facilities on an annual basis. These inspections are to protect the public. Firemen educate our children about the dangers of fires and how they can prevent them. Much is done out of the spot light because it is the Ridgewood Fire Department's way...to serve and to protect.

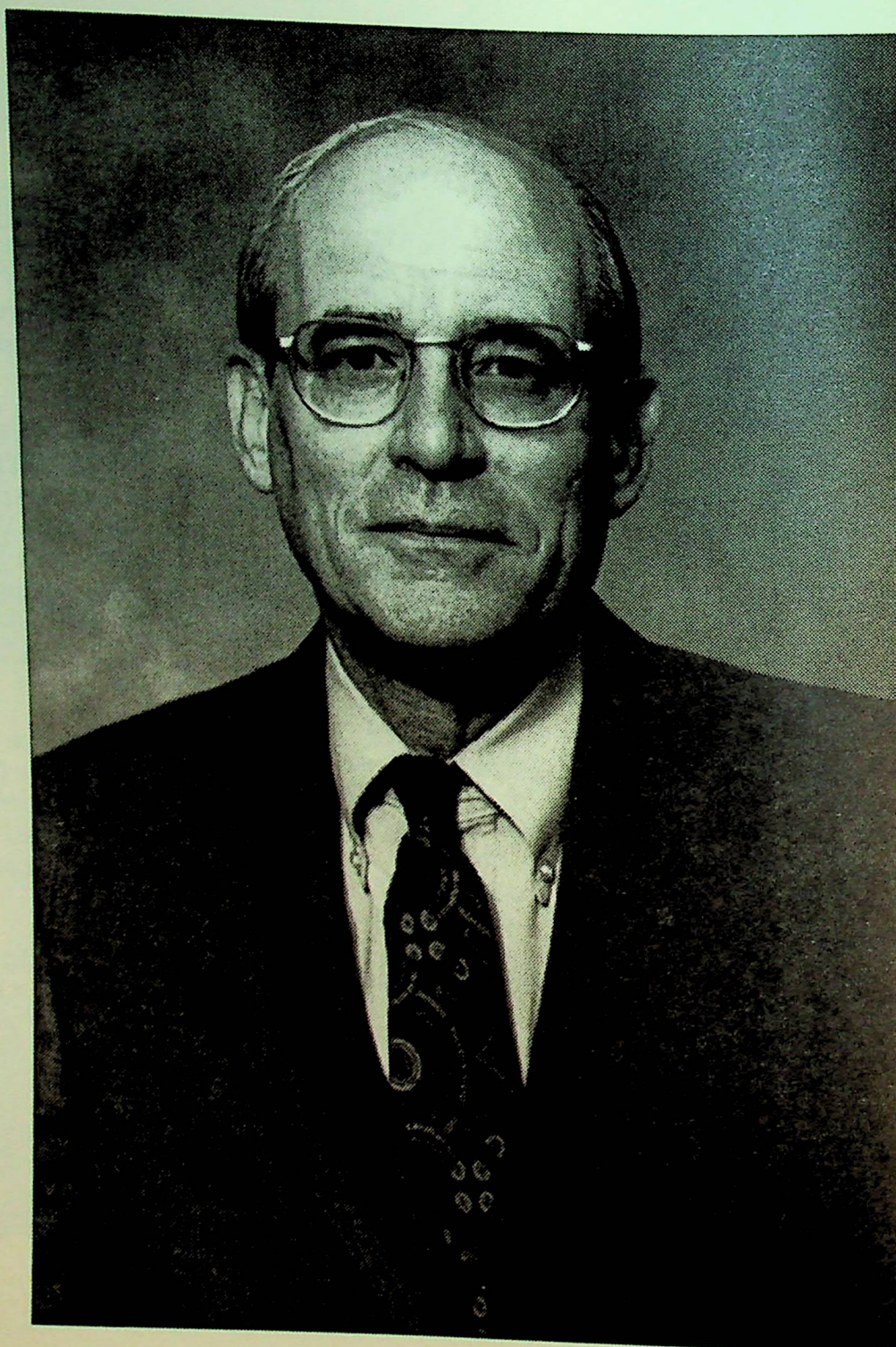
In this year of the 100th Anniversary Celebration, we should acknowledge the wonderful efforts of those who have left foot prints for us to follow. As another example of how these brave members are special, they have formally expressed their full support to expand the volunteer membership. Their commitment will guarantee our success in this undertaking.

We are very proud of Ridgewood's Bravest and acknowledge their dedication, commitment, and courage. Please join me in thanking them and their families for all they do for all of us.

Patrick A. Mancuso  
Mayor

PAM/sg





*Village Manager Larry D. Worth*





## VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

131 NORTH MAPLE AVENUE  
RIDGEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07451

(201) 670-5504  
FAX (201) 652-7623

LARRY D. WORTH  
VILLAGE MANAGER

March 13, 1997

Chief Robert D. Missel  
Ridgewood Fire Department  
201 E. Glen Avenue  
Ridgewood, NJ 07451

Dear Chief Missel:

I would like to add my personal congratulations and compliments to the Ridgewood Fire Department on the occasion of its Centennial Celebration! The Department today and historically has been made up of very dedicated and loyal members that have provided exceptional service to this community 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You are there not only to fight and suppress fires when they occur but you also work tirelessly to prevent fires from occurring in the first place. In addition, you provide incredible assistance to our homeowners in other times of need including pumping flooded basements and responding to medical emergencies in conjunction with the Ambulance Corps.

As you and many of the firefighters know, my father was the first fire chief of my hometown's fire department so in many respects the fire service is in my blood. Ridgewood may be proud that our Fire Department has always been and still remains among the very best.

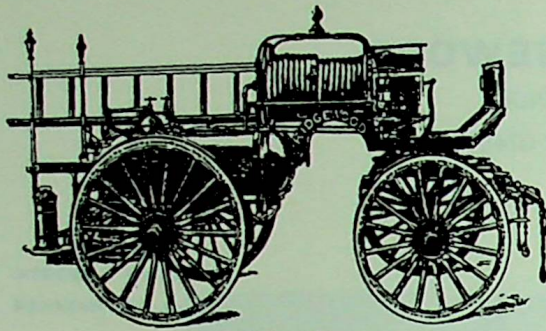
Sincerely yours,

Larry D. Worth  
Village Manager

L.W/mh



100th ANNIVERSARY



1897-1997

CHIEF ENGINEER'S OFFICE  
RIDGEWOOD  
FIRE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT D. MISSEL, Chief Engineer

Ridgewood, N.J. .... January 1, 1997

I have had the honor to serve the Ridgewood Fire Department for the past thirty-two years. During my career, I have had the privilege to work with many of the fine Firefighters, Fire Officers and staff of this department.

On behalf of the members of this department both past and present, we wish to honor the men and women who have risked life and limb in the performance of their duty.

The publication of this Centennial Album is a celebration of our long history and Fire Department tradition. This album is also a tribute to those who have answered the call and we are proud of their dedication and commitment.

As we reflect on the history of our department, each of us should be reminded that as we pass by, we are only the temporary custodian of the public trust. It is, therefore, our responsibility to those who will come after, to leave them a department that will be better than what we inherited.

We must always strive to give our citizens the quality of service they have come to expect and so richly deserve, for that is the "Ridgewood Tradition".

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert D. Missel". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'R'.

Robert D. Missel  
Director & Chief



# THE DEPARTMENT: 1897-1997

The Ridgewood Fire Department has evolved over the past 100 years from an all-volunteer department to a paid professional fire department that is supplemented with volunteers. The department grew and changed to meet the needs of a town that experienced rapid economic growth after both World Wars. As the department grew from a "bucket brigade" to a hi-tech fire protection system, the goal has always been the same: to provide the best protection for the residents and businesses of Ridgewood. The following is the story of the formation and evolution of the department.

## FORMATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

In researching the archived records of the Ridgewood Fire Department, a journal was found that had been kept by Leonard N. Taft, one of the original fire department members and the founder of the *Ridgewood Herald Newspaper*. The journal begins with the first meeting, held on January 11, 1897 and chronicles the meetings to organize the first volunteer fire department in Ridgewood. The following is the "official" record of the formation of the department, as recorded by Mr. Taft.

RIDGEWOOD, N.J.    JANUARY 11, 1897

*After the need of a local fire department was clearly demonstrated by several heavy losses by fire, without sufficient means at hand for saving life and property, the idea of forming the*

### RIDGEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT

*became one of the most popular subjects of general discussion among residents, particularly the faithful members of the*

### "BUCKET BRIGADE"

*and a meeting of the citizens interested was called to meet in the "Town Hall" or the basement of the OPERA HOUSE at Van Neste Square on Monday evening January 11, 1897.*

*The meeting was noticeable for the large attendance of those interested in the subject. The matter had been so thoroughly discussed prior to the meeting personally and by the Press that many who were present quickly offered their services and it was decided to try and form a Volunteer Fire Department for Ridgewood.*

### FIRST MEETING

*Walter Van Emburgh, Jr. called the meeting to order and asked for nomination for Chairman and Secretary for the meeting.*

*J. Irving Bogert was selected as Chairman and S.F. Lynch was Secretary.*

### PERMISSION TO ORGANIZE

*Mr. Van Emburgh stated that he had been authorized by the Board of Village Trustees to organize a fire department, have by-laws adopted, and submit to them a list of members for their approval.*



*The Chairman called for nominations for officers and the following*

#### OFFICERS ELECTED

<i>Chief of Department Walter Van Emburgh, Jr.</i>	<i>Dept. President R.M. Bridgeman</i>
<i>Asst. Chief J. Irving Bogert</i>	<i>Dept. Vice President Edward Rague</i>
<i>I Edw. Nickerson</i>	<i>Dept. Secretary S.F. Lynch</i>
<i>Asst. Foreman E.B. Van Horn</i>	<i>Dept. Treasurer I.E. Hutton</i>

*Committee on By-Laws*

*Leonard N. Taft   Chas. S. Keyson   S.F. Lynch*

*Meeting was then adjourned to January 18, 1897.*

#### JANUARY 18, 1897

*An adjourned meeting was held on the above date.*

#### COMPANY NAME SELECTED

*On motion of J. Irving Bogert the name of*

*PROTECTION HOOK AND LADDER CO. OF RIDGEWOOD, N.J.*  
*was adopted.*

*Annual meetings decided for the 4th Monday in March of each year.*

*Regular monthly meetings to be held 2nd Mondays of each month.*

#### JANUARY 28, 1897

#### DEPARTMENT FUND RAISING

*Harry Terhune kindly offered to give entertainment for the benefit of Protection Hook and Ladder Co. and a special meeting was called and held at the*

#### ROUCLERE HOUSE

*at which meeting the following committee was appointed to confer with Mr. Terhune and make all arrangements for the entertainment.*

<i>Committee:</i>	<i>H.A. Tice</i>	<i>George Corse</i>
	<i>W.O. Cruse</i>	<i>Geo. R. Young</i>

#### FEBRUARY 8, 1897

*The benefit for Protection Hook and Ladder Co. by*

*"MILDRED AND ROUCLERE"*

*netted the Co. \$300.00 and a vote of thanks were given them.*

#### MARCH 1897

*The apparent delay in providing the Fire Company with an apparatus seemed to annoy the firemen and others and a special meeting was called to consider the matter.*



*Jos. W. Edwards, President of the Village Trustees called the meeting to order and after the matter had been carefully considered, committee of three were appointed to wait on the Board of Village Trustees and ascertain the cause of delay in procuring the fire apparatus since \$1,750.00 had been voted for that purpose.*

*The following were the committee appointed:*

*Leonard N. Taft*

*George Corsa*

*E.B. Van Horn*

*Taft and Corsa of the committee appeared before the Village Trustees on the following Wednesday.*

*It was learned that the "Committee on Fire Apparatus" appointed by the Board had not examined any apparatus as yet. Consequently, no action could be taken by the Board.*

*Taft and Corsa mentioned the fact that since the tax payers had voted an appropriation of \$1,750.00 for fire purposes they urged that prompt action be taken.*

#### MONDAY, APRIL 12, 1897

*The term of Asst. Chief had expired and J. Irving Bogert was re-elected without opposition.*

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 1897

*The Board of Village Trustees held a special meeting and the first step taken for a*

*"Supply of Water"*

*for the Village.*

#### MAY 6, 1897

*At a special meeting of the Village Trustees a contract was signed with—*

*"Messers Gleason and Bailey" of Seneca Falls, for a Hook and Ladder Truck weighing 1,250 lbs. costing \$900.00.*

#### AUGUST 6, 1897

*At the suggestion of the Board of Village Trustees that since the previous meetings had been more or less informal that a meeting of the firemen be called "Legally" organize the Fire Department since the law required certain formality to be followed to be legally constituted Fire Department. "Protection Hook and Ladder Co." of Ridgewood, New Jersey was then legally constituted by the election of officers and the signing of the By-Laws.*

*The discussion by the Trustees that only those signing the By-Laws would be considered as a member of the Fire Department. As the names of the original list was called and signed the By-Laws paying a fee of .25 completed his membership in the department.*

*The following is an accurate copy of the list signed by each one.*



Original List of Members  
of the  
First Fire Department of Ridgewood, N.J.

John Al. Bogert, Jr.	Jas. Houlihan	E.B. Van Horn	C.E. Bechtloff
Leonard N. Taft	A. Pennal	R.M. Bridgeman	Jos. W. Edwards
T.L. Terhune	Jesse Van Wagenen	J. Calvin Bogert	Edw. Nickerson
George Borchers	H.A. Tice	Jos. H. Christopher	M.T. Richardson
Chas. S. Keyser	P.W. Van Dien	W.O. Cruse	Jas. Keeley
S.F. Lynch	Geo. Donholt	Chas. A. Howlett	Dr. John B. Hopper
T.H. Mead	G.L. Steadman	O.W. Balliet	C.C. Ackerman
W.J. Gormley	Dan'l Roman	E.J. Keeley, Jr.	
J.D. Van Emburgh, Jr.	Wm. P. Morgan	J. Blaur Hopper	
W.A. Clark	J. Irving Bogert	G.W. Slingerland	

*The total receipts from members were \$7.75 which was added to the fund.*

*The following officers were then elected:*

*President R.M. Bridgeman*

*Vice President H.A. Tice*

*Secretary S.F. Lynch*

*Treasurer Isaac E. Hutton*

*Trustees: Asa Zabriskie, Wm. P. Morgan, J.D. Van Emburgh, Jr.*

*The Village Trustees having appointed J. Irving Bogert as Chief and Edw. Nickerson second Asst.—Mr. Van Emburgh resigned as Chief and Mr. Nickerson resigned as Foreman, the Company proceeded to elect a 1st Engineer, Foreman, 1st and Second Asst. Foreman.*

*The following were elected:*

*H.A. Tice was elected Vice President in place of Edward Raque.*

*Foreman Jos. H. Christopher*

*Asst. Foreman D. Soman*

*1st Asst. Engineer George Corsa*

*Messers H.A. Tice, J.D. Van Emburgh, Jr., Leonard N. Taft, Jos. H. Christopher and J. Calvin Bogert were appointed as a committee to make suitable arrangements to receive the New Truck.*

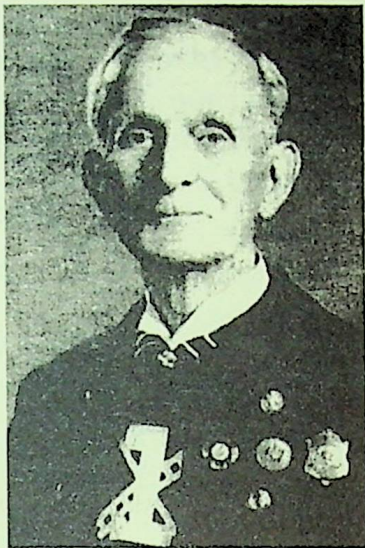
*Messers J. Irving Bogert, C.S. Keyser and E.B. Van Horn were appointed a committee on uniforms.*

As can be seen in Mr. Taft's journal, by mid-summer 1897, the formation of the fire department was completed. They had 37 members and a hook and ladder truck about to be delivered. The fire station on Hudson Street was under construction and would be completed by the fall of 1897. During the month of August, the fire department received their parade dress uniforms and on August 30, 1897 the first annual parade and lawn party was held. It was at the party that the new

truck was officially turned over to the Protection Hook and Ladder Company.

The president of the Village Trustees Mr. Jos. W. Edwards officiated and presented Chief J. Irving Bogert and Assistant Engineer Edward Nickerson with their trumpets and badges. (Irving Bogert had replaced Dr. Walter Van Emburgh as Chief). Within the next few days the first Company Drill was held with the new apparatus at Joseph Edward's barn.





*Leonard N. Taft in 1938 at age 83. He is wearing his original 1897 Protection Hook and Ladder Company uniform.*

According to Mr. Taft's records, on September 15, 1897, the Ridgewood Hook and Ladder Company attended the annual Hackensack parade. The Ridgewood unit won the "Best Appearing Company" in the parade and "Best Drilled Company in Line," as quoted by the Hackensack Fire Chief and the local press.

During the summer of 1897, the membership of the Ridgewood Fire Department grew from the original 37 members who signed the by-laws to 53 men, leaving only seven vacancies in the 60-member company.

The October regular meeting was the first held in the parlor of the new firehouse on Hudson Street. At this meeting, four new members were elected. Although no annual reports for the early years could be found, records indicate that the first fire to which the department responded to was a house on Irving Street that was occupied by a Mr. Lawrence. Despite the firemen's efforts, the house was totally destroyed, because even though the department had its first apparatus, the only supply of water was from wells, cisterns, and nearby streams. Unfortunately, in 1897, Ridgewood still relied on the "bucket brigade," but that was soon to change!

## THE WATER SYSTEM

After a number of serious fires, Village officials realized that the efficiency of the newly formed fire department would depend on the adequacy of the

water supply. A city water system would deliver safe, potable drinking water to residents while also providing a water supply with pressurized hydrants for fire protection.

A 15-year contract agreement was awarded to the Bergen Aqueduct Company in 1900 to develop and operate a water system. The system consisted of a pump station located at North Maple Avenue and Harrison Avenue and a water storage tank located at Sunset and Valley View. A water main system with 75 fire hydrants was also required. The system was completed and tested by Village officials, company representatives, and Chief D.J. O'Neill in early 1901. Shortly thereafter, a hose tender apparatus with a supply of fire hose was put into service.

By 1905, there were 84 public and 11 private fire hydrants on the water system. The number of hydrants increased every year as the system was expanded.

In 1909, to meet the demands of a growing community, the Bergen Aqueduct Company began buying water from a newly formed affiliate company, the Bergen Water Company. Water from their wells was distributed throughout Ridgewood and by 1917 there were 146 public and five private fire hydrants on the system.

During the 1920's, the Village purchased both systems and the Ridgewood Water Utility was formed. Mr. Carr, who was the supervisor for the Bergen County Aqueduct Company, was hired as the Ridgewood Water Superintendent.

## A TRANSITION PERIOD

For the first 28 years, Ridgewood was a fully volunteer fire department. By 1920, the membership of the department was approximately 35 volunteer members, who made up three companies. During the mid-1920's there were numerous resignations by department personnel because of the disharmony of fire department "politics."

The first paid positions in the fire department were that of a part-paid Fire Chief and a part-time Fire Inspector. This ordinance was introduced by Mayor Garbor and was approved by the commissioners in early 1923. The paid positions were to start on January 1, 1924. The Chief's salary was set at \$2,000 annually and the Fire Inspector was to be paid 50 cents for each



hour of inspections conducted. Chief H.A. Tice was the first part-paid Chief, followed by Chief Carlock and Chief Van Wagenen.

In an effort to provide better fire protection and promote department stability, the Village officials had considered adding more paid staff, but not before disaster struck in the form of two school fires that demonstrated the need for a professional fire department.

The following excerpts from a 1927 letter published in *The Ridgewood News* from Village resident S. Wilson Richards expresses the frustration and need for action that many residents felt after two school fires within a year caused complete devastation of buildings and left 500 children without their school buildings.

*... To our new board of Village Commissioners is also handed a problem, which it is to be hoped they will be able to solve to the welfare of this town without delay, and not allow the Village to longer face such unforeseen calamities improperly prepared.*

*The Willard School fire showed conclusively that our Village was not adequately protected against the attacks of the fire flames, but so far as the ordinary citizens can see no steps have been taken in the past nine months to profit by what experience that plainly pictured.*

*At the Monroe Street School fire it was again plainly indicated that Ridgewood has long since outgrown our Volunteer Fire Dept. and to anyone with foresight at all it is more than apparent and has been for some time that with our antiquated and worthless alarm system and the single narrow defile under the railroad tracks for the passage of all fire apparatus and all other traffic, the West Side of the Village especially is at the absolute mercy of any fire that may start there. No one can find fault with our Volunteers, they do the best they can under the circumstance and with the facilities put at their command even though the hose is weak and bursts under pressure.*

*... Our fire department should be immediately placed on a paid basis with trained fire fighters from top to bottom and as long as we have grown to cover such a large area and have an almost insurmountable barrier dividing our Village in half, the time has come to install two fire units on the West side of the tracks and revamp the*

*old Circle Avenue Firehouse and its equipment that we can with a modern fire alarm system feel reasonably sure that our lives, our homes, our schools, our churches, and business houses are adequately protected. . .*

S. Wilson Richards  
June 8, 1927

Oliver Vance was appointed the first full-time paid fireman on October 26, 1928. Records are unclear as to his exact working hours, but he was working as a paid driver out of the Circle Avenue fire station. The second floor ballroom of the fire station was converted into an apartment, and at different times firemen and their families lived in the fire station during the early years.

In January 1930, the Village Commissioners hired two additional full-time employees: John A. Kennelly, a retired New York City Fire Captain, was hired as the first fully paid Chief at a salary of \$2,500; and Ernest Ferrari, a Ridgewood volunteer, was hired as a paid fireman at \$2,000 per year. In April of the same year, William McCullough, Sr. and John Vybel, both volunteers themselves, were put on the department's payroll. By April of 1931, three more firemen were hired: John Neuhs, Harris Weaving, and Edward Orr. Captain Baker, who had been a volunteer fireman since 1923, was listed as a working paid inspector and fireman. He retired in January, 1934, shortly after Chief Kennelly resigned.

## THE EARLY WORK SCHEDULES

The work schedule during this period was a modified one-platoon system. The men worked a combination of 24-hour and 12-hour shifts with one "Kelly Day" off. Under this system, the work week averaged approximately 100 hours. (the term "Kelly Day" refers to a rotating day off during a normal work period; the term dates back to the turn of the century when many fire departments in cities in the northeast worked in excess of 100 hours per week and the work force was predominately Irish.)

By 1937 William Haldane was hired as the ninth paid fireman. The paid department was then reorganized into two platoons of four men each under Chief Art DeMouth, who worked days. On each platoon three men were assigned to Head-



quarters and one man was assigned to Hose Company #1 on Circle Avenue. They worked 24-hour shifts and were on call much of the time. While on call they could not leave town without the Chief's permission. The ten-day work cycle was:

Day 1	24 hours on duty
Day 2	24 hours on call
Day 3	24 hours on duty
Day 4	24 hours on call
Day 5	24 hours on duty
Day 6	24 hours off duty
Day 7	24 hours on duty
Day 8	24 hours on call
Day 9	24 hours on duty
Day 10	24 hours on call

The work week averaged 84 hours on duty and 49 hours on call each week. Each fireman was given eight working days vacation, which when worked into the cycle, gave him 15 days of leave. He also had his birthday off as a "Kelly Day." This schedule prevailed through the late 1930's and into the 1940's.

#### CIVIL DEFENSE UNIT

During World War II, the Civil Defense Fire Department unit was formed in conjunction with the War effort to assist the local government in providing essential services. The Civil Defense unit consisted of approximately 25 men who assisted the regular fire department. They maintained one engine and received training from fire department personnel. This unit existed until 1984, when its members were combined with the volunteer division.

#### THE PLATOON SYSTEMS

After World War II ended in 1945, the Village began growing at a rapid pace, and a second fire station was built on the west side of town, necessitating an increase in the size of the paid fire department. By 1947, there were two platoons of eight men each: five were stationed at Headquarters and three manned Engine Company #31 on West Glen Avenue. Each fireman worked an 84-hour week consisting of 24 hours on duty followed by 24 hours off duty, and everyone received a two-week vacation based on seniority.

By the early 1950's, the size of the paid department had increased to 25 paid firemen which consisted of 11 men per shift, a Chief, an Assistant Chief, and one man in the Fire Prevention Bureau, working days. The platoon worked day on, day off, with every 11th day off as a "Kelly Day." This was a 78-hour work week. The vacation schedule allowed one man off at a time for a two-week vacation.

The career department grew in size during the 1950's, and on April 30, 1959, the department went to a three-platoon system, whereby each fireman was averaging a 69-hour work week with 24-hour shifts. While the fireman's work week went down from 78 to 69 hours, there were terms and agreements connected with the reduction in hours. First, from July 1 through September 1, there were three shift vacation periods so that while one platoon was on vacation, the other two platoons worked day on, day off. Second, all firemen were required to live in town and had to be available for re-call. Lastly, they had to have alarm tappers installed in their homes. The top pay for firemen was \$5,320, with a \$400 spread between the ranks.

In 1966, the average weekly working hours were reduced to 56 hours per week on a three-platoon 24-hour work schedule. This was accomplished by changing the vacation schedule to allow one man off each shift at a time and continue the regular work schedule through the summer period.

By the late 1970's, Ridgewood was one of only five departments in the state whose members still worked a 56-hour week. Most other departments had gone to the national standard of a 42-hour work week.

Today, Ridgewood is still on a three-platoon system, but has reduced working hours to approximately 50 hours per week by giving personnel additional time off as compensation, or Kelly-type, days. This system is a cost-saving measure to the Village, as it has reduced working hours without requiring a fourth platoon of personnel.

As we enter 1997, our one hundredth year, we do so with less staff than in past years. The old adage applies, "We do more with less." The current career fire department is comprised of 40 career firefighters and two civilian secretaries. The volunteer division is made up of one Captain, one Lieutenant, and five firefighters.



The career department includes a Chief, Deputy Chief, and two Fire Prevention/Inspection personnel. There is one secretary assigned to the Chief's office and another to the Fire Prevention Bureau.

The firefighting force is divided into three platoons (designated A, B, and C) of 12 men each. On any given day, there are usually nine to ten men on duty. The men are assigned as follows: one Lieutenant and two firefighters man Engine #31 at the West Glen Avenue fire station. At Fire Headquarters, one Lieutenant and two firefighters man Engine #35, one firefighter operates the aerial ladder truck, one firefighter responds with the rescue truck, and the Captain responds as tour commander in car 38. The Fire Dispatch is handled by civilians at Central Dispatch.

### THE DAILY ROUTINE

While on duty, firefighters keep a busy schedule by maintaining equipment, drilling, cleaning the firehouse, and of course, responding to alarms.

Much of the work around the firehouse is accomplished by groups of men working together and is known as "committee work." The first record of committee work dates back to 1947, fifty years ago. Committee work is an organized schedule of weekly chores. Examples of these chores, which are divided into each day of the week, are: inspecting and wiping down all ladders, cleaning running boards and undercarriages, inspecting and testing self-contained breathing apparatus, vacuuming offices, polishing chrome, waxing floors, and washing windows.

Many of these tasks have been done according to the same schedule for the past half century! Windows are always washed on Fridays and it is a firehouse joke with both current and retired firemen that even when off duty, some feel inclined to clean their own windows on Fridays because it became a habit! One task firefighters *don't* look forward to is the annual hose testing which is done during the month of September. Every piece of the approximately eight miles of fire hose that the department owns must be laid out, pressurized, and checked for damage. It then must be repacked on apparatus or rolled and kept in reserve.

It is hard to imagine the on duty fireman's life sixty years ago in the 1930's. There was only one man on duty at Engine Company #2 in the Circle

Avenue firehouse. Department journals indicate fire calls were few and far between, and during some years the men worked several 24-hour shifts in a row! According to the journal, the engine was started once a day to make sure it would run and probably the floor was swept. Beyond that, we can only speculate.

Today, the firefighters' day starts with line-up at 8:00 a.m. Notices and duty assignments are reviewed and every piece of apparatus is checked and started. The firehouse is thoroughly cleaned, including the kitchen and bathrooms. The remainder of the morning is drill time, which consists of practicing firefighting techniques, going over new equipment, or classroom instruction on a topic such as first aid. After lunch, engine companies may be sent out on fire prevention inspections. When they return to the station, they continue committee work and do routine maintenance of equipment and the firehouse. Of course, this "normal" routine is interrupted as alarms are dispatched. Today, Ridgewood firefighters respond to an average of six or seven calls per day.

After dinner, the firefighters are permitted to relax and watch television if they wish. No one is allowed to go to bed until after 9:00 p.m. Usually the night is punctuated by several alarms, and while firefighters rest between calls, they rarely get a full night's sleep.

### LIFE AT THE FIREHOUSE

Since fire protection must be provided 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, and there are only three shift platoons in the Ridgewood Fire Department to provide the coverage, the platoons spend one third of a year together! Because they spend approximately 56 hours per week working together, they become like a family in many ways. They work and respond together, entertain themselves, and they even celebrate the holidays together when on duty and away from their own families. On Thanksgiving and Christmas they always try to have a special holiday dinner.

Traditionally firefighters are known for the great meals they prepare in the firehouse. One man is elected to cook on each shift and many times the detail is rotated. Lucky is the shift that finds one man who loves to cook. All chip in to pay for the meals and the cook generally plans menus and shops for food and supplies for the shift. Oh! you



thought the city fed the men? Not so. Because firefighters are confined to the station for twenty-four hours, unless responding to a call, they must cook for themselves and also pay the food bills. It is hard for a civilian to imagine cooking for a shift knowing that the alarm will probably go off just as they are about to serve the meal. Well, that's generally what happens and firehouse cooks have to deal with it. That's why to be a successful firehouse chef, meals must be inexpensive and very re-heatable. That's why dishes like 19 Alarm Chili, Poor Al's Pot Roast, Chris' Beef Stew, Slum Gullian Casserole, Mother's Marvelous Meatballs, and All Hands Chicken are longtime favorites around Fire Headquarters—recipes available upon request!!

Ridgewood firefighters chip in to purchase barbecue grills for each firehouse. There are two reasons: one is that the food tastes better when grilled, and the second reason arose from avoiding a very unappealing chore—keeping the stove and oven clean! At one time, some platoons drew cards to see who cleaned up after a meal. Sometimes, when the cook and cleanup man didn't get along, it seemed like every pot and plate in the firehouse was dirty and needed cleaning!

Like any typical family, the fire department has its pranksters. Harmless firehouse pranks are as common today as they were one hundred years ago. New probationary firefighters are the target of many jokes. Most firefighters will always remember their first day at the firehouse. Many a

“probie” has been sent into a panic when asked “Where are the ignition keys to the engine?” Thinking he'd lost them, he would search frantically for them until he realized, or had to be told in a few cases, that the apparatus does not require ignition keys for just that reason! And after a long, tiring day of learning new skills, the probie would climb into his bunk for some rest, only to have the bed suddenly sink several inches. Muffled snickers are heard from the others in the dorm who had placed empty soda cans under the four bed legs!

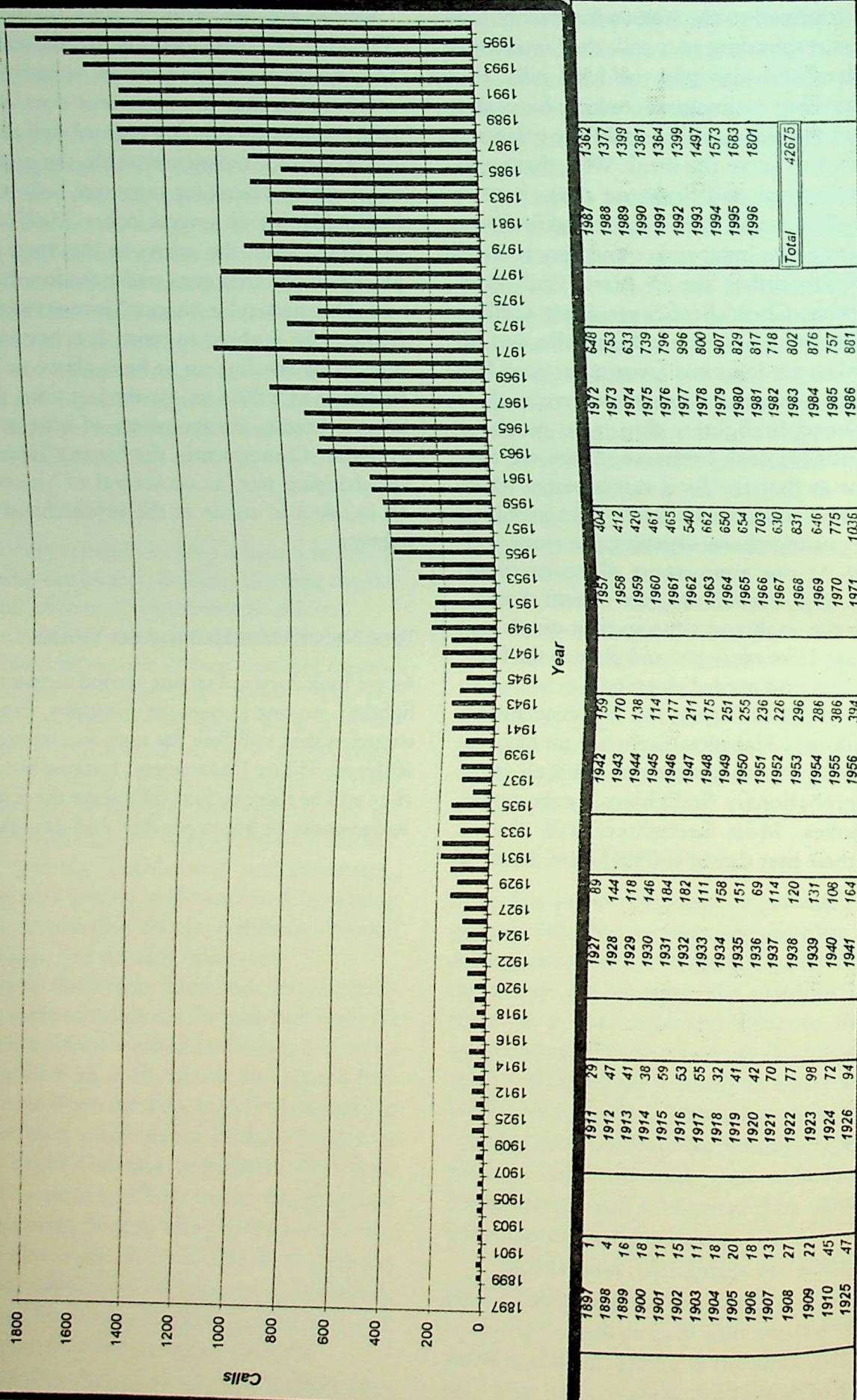
One particular “honor” is reserved for a firefighter who is about to retire. It is bestowed *upon* him at his last line-up as he is about to leave the firehouse at 8:00 a.m. for the last time. At a firehouse, there is always plenty of hose and water available. Consequently, the “retiree” leaves quarters dripping wet, as do several of his comrades! All is taken in stride in the brotherhood of firefighters.

#### THE NEXT ONE HUNDRED YEARS

As we look forward to our second century of firefighting, no one knows the triumphs, dangers, or tragedies that will face the men and women of the Ridgewood Fire Department, but rest assured that they will be there to faithfully serve the residents of Ridgewood 24 hours per day, 365 days per year!



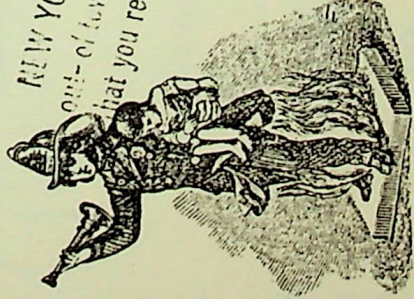
# Ridgewood Fire Department One Hundred Years of Service



While conducting the research for this album, the committee compiled the actual number of alarms that the department responded to each year. This information was compiled and put into a graph format which illustrates the dramatic increase in the number of alarms. The total number of alarms the department responded to in its first century was 42,675. Chart prepared by Robert D. Missel, Jr.



BUSINESS FOUNDED 1836.



NEW YORK BANKS  
out-of-town checks, K  
that you remit in NEW YORK

# CAIRNS & BROTHER,

MANUFACTURERS OF  
**UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENTS FOR FIREMEN,**  
GENERAL FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPPLIES.

143 GRAND STREET, NEW YORK, *June 30/99*  
*Sold to Protection Hook Co.*

*Ridgewood N.Y.*

ORDER NO. *7/12137*

Terms, C. O. D., \$

and charges. Privilege of examination.

*47 Steam Hatts. front 325*

*\$1,527.75*  
CASH  
DISCOUNT ALLOWED.

**Received of Cairns & Brother**  
**CAIRNS & BROTHER**  
*W.* AUG 16 1899

*Sent N.A. Tree*  
*Asst Foreman*  
*via W.F.F. Co*

We still buy our leather fire helmets from Cairns & Brother. In 1899, the Protection Hook and Ladder Company purchased 47 helmets and front pieces for \$3.25 each.



70

THE RIDGEWOOD LIVERY.

Ridgewood, N. J., Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 1899

M. Protection H & L No 1

To E. B. VAN HORN, Dr.,

Livery, Boarding, Sale and Exchange Stables.

Furniture and Pianos Removed. Trucking. Coaches for Weddings and Funerals a Specialty.

Rock Avenue.

Storage Warerooms.

TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS.

Sept 20 Plan for Apparatus  
to Hackensack

\$ 5.00

Recd frag ment  
Oct 27 - 99

E B Van Horn

Next to the Hudson Street Firehouse was the E.B. Van Horn Stables. They provided horse teams to pull our apparatus prior to the Village owning their own horses. In 1899, the cost to rent a team was \$5.00 to pull an apparatus to a parade in Hackensack.



TELEPHONE  
575  
JOINT

New York! Oct. 7 1902

(10) *Mr. Ridgewood Fire Dept.*

*Protection H. & L. Co.*

BOUGHT OF **THE C. G. BRAXMAR CO.** *Ridgewood N. Y.*

INCORPORATED,  
CAPITAL STOCK \$100,000.

**MANUFACTURING JEWELERS**

NO 10 MAIDEN LANE,  
NEW YORK CITY.

TERMS:

THIS BILL IS NET.

NO DISCOUNT FOR CASH.

PAYABLE IN N. Y. FUNDS.

**LODGE SUPPLIES**

— AND —

**KNIGHTS TEMPLAR EQUIPMENTS.**

*1<sup>10</sup> del*

*Order 7433*

*42# 147 F Nickel*

*@.40*

*1680*

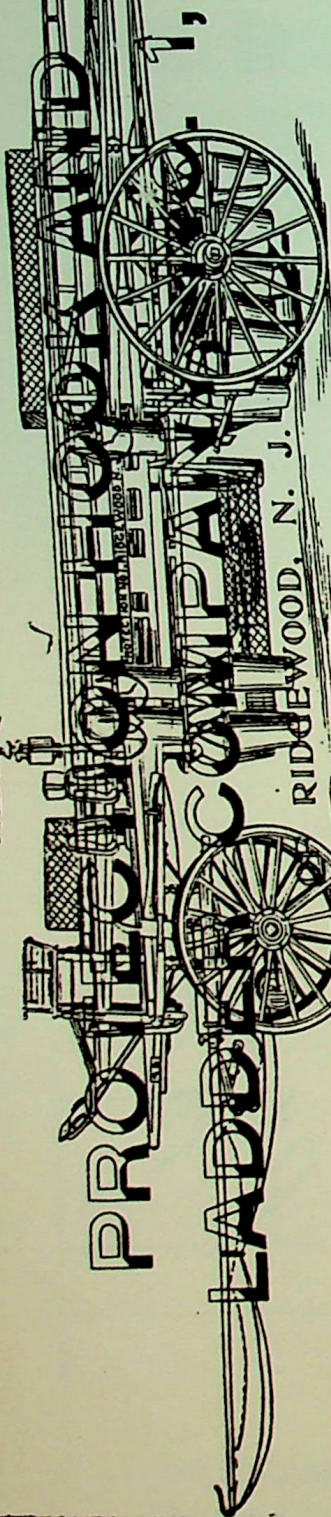
*Return to  
B. Gray Treas.*

*JA*

Our badges are still purchased from the Braxmar Co. any. In 1902 they cost only 40 cents each!



HEADQUARTERS OF



Ridgewood, N. J., Oct. 11/04

P. N. 53 No #1

20 260 Cense 10

3 month services received for July, No. 3 00

Postage

50

\$3.00

Handy. action by mail      Recd Payment  
 W. E. Mearns

A 1904 receipt for secretarial services on Protection Hook  
 and Ladder stationery picturing our 1897 ladder truck



New York, 1900 190

W. Protection Road & Ladder Co No 1.  
Ridgewood N.Y.

Bought of Geo. W. Berrian,  
Manufacturer and Dealer in

Rubber Goods of every description

Special articles of any desired pattern made to order.

20 Maiden Lane

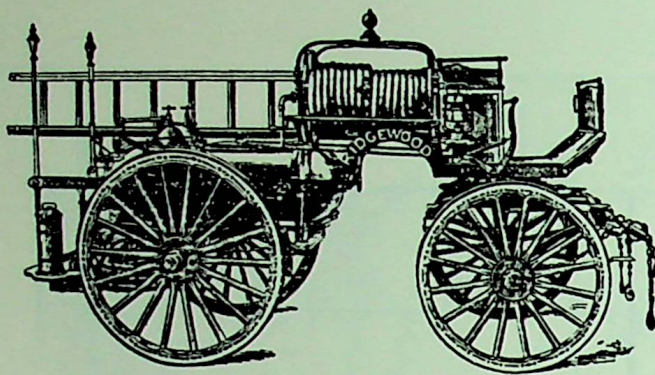
P.O. BOX 1891.

TELEPHONE CALL 1156 CORTLANDT.

33	Firemen's Coats	@ 3.50	115.50
34	Signs and Fallens	By Cash	
35		June 23	14.00
36		July 2	70.25
37		84	
		Edward Payne	
		JUL 9 1900	
		Geo. W. Berrian,	
		Per.....	
			31.50

Receipt from 1900 for firemen's rubber turnout coats which cost \$3.50 each.  
Today's cost is approximately \$870.00 for a complete turnout ensemble.





# CHIEF ENGINEER'S OFFICE RIDGEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT.

D. J. O'NEILL, Chief Engineer.

Ridgewood, N. J. July 30, 1904

John B. Hopper Esq  
Asst Engineer R.F.S  
Dear Sir

On & after Aug 1/04 Chemical  
Engine + H. + L. Truck will answer all alarms  
Protection Horse Wagon will answer on First Alarm Box

14
15
16
24
25
26
32
34

on Second alarm Box

35
36
37

Eagle Horse will answer on First Alarm Box

14
32
34
35
36
37

Eagle Horse will answer on Second Alarm Box

15
16
24
25
26

Make your calls accordingly

Syorkill Chief

A directive on apparatus response from D.J. O'Neill, Chief of the Department, to John B. Hopper, Assistant Engineer. On the letterhead is our 1899 Chemical Engine.



# FIRE CHIEFS

## WALTER VAN EMBURGH (1896-1897)

In 1896 Dr. Van Emburgh was appointed by the Village Trustees to the position of Fire Chief. He, with other community leaders, was responsible for the formation of Protection Hook and Ladder Company #1. He resigned from the position of Chief in August, 1897 after the company was officially organized. Dr. Van Emburgh, born in 1856, was also Ridgewood's first dentist.

## JACOB IRVING BOGERT (1897-1898)

J. Irving Bogert, born in 1862, was appointed Chief by the Village Trustees in September, 1897. He served one term as Chief and became an Exempt Fireman in Ridgewood, resigning from the department in 1904. He was a butcher by vocation. His father, John opened the first butcher shop in Ridgewood.

## EDWIN NICKERSON (1898)

Edwin Nickerson, born in 1860, was appointed Chief by the Village Trustees in 1898. He served one term as Chief and became an Exempt Fireman in Ridgewood, resigning in 1904. He had served the Village from 1890-1893 as a Township Committeeman. He co-owned the Nickerson Lumber Company in Ridgewood.

## DAVID J. O'NEILL (1899-1910)

Born in Brooklyn, New York in the 1840's, Chief O'Neill was appointed by the Village Trustees in 1899. He was the first chief with any fire experience and is largely responsible for establishing the organizational structure, policies, and procedures during the early years of the department.

Chief O'Neill began his career in 1862 as a fireman at Hook and Ladder Company #1 in Brooklyn. He was a Civil War veteran, having enlisted as a medic in 1864 with the 31st New York Regiment. In 1866 he moved to Orange, New Jersey and became a member of Watchung Steamer Company #1. Historical records from Orange indicate that the first hook and ladder company in that city was named the David O'Neill Truck Company in honor of the Veteran New York Fireman and popular townsman. He was chief of





that department from 1870-1873 when he returned to regular company duty. He served the City of Orange until 1892 when he moved to Ridgewood.

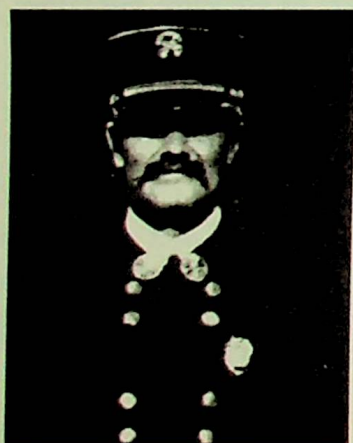
Chief O'Neill was involved with the Highwood Land Company in addition to his involvement with the fire department. Upon his retirement in 1910, after 46 years in fire service, he remained active in the Exempt and Relief Association.



JOHN B. HOPPER (1910-1912)

Born in 1871, John B. Hopper was a founding member of the department in 1897. He was appointed Chief by the Village Commissioners in 1910 and resigned in 1912 in conflict with the elected officials. He was instrumental in obtaining Ridgewood's first motorized fire apparatus. He also participated in planning the grand opening of the New Hudson Street Firehouse on July 4, 1911.

He later served the Village as a Commissioner and served two terms as mayor. As mayor, he appointed the first paid fireman, setting the stage for the present career department. Chief Hopper was well known in the area as a veterinary surgeon specializing in horses and was a life-long village resident.



GEORGE COURTER (1912-1915)

Born in 1863, George Courter joined the department in 1900. As a resident of the east side of the village, he was active in forming the Eagle Hose Company of Circle Avenue. He was appointed chief by the Village Trustees in 1912 and served until 1915.

Chief Courter was a local builder who built many homes in Ridgewood as well as major buildings including the Union Street School and the Hopper Building.



HERMAN A. TICE (1915-1927)

Born in 1869, Herman Tice was a founding member of Protection Hook and Ladder Company #1. He was the local pharmacist who owned Tices Drug Store, located in the Pioneer Building on Ridgewood Avenue.

Appointed by the Village Commissioners in 1915, he held the position until March, 1922 when he resigned. He was re-appointed Chief in July, 1923, becoming the first part-paid chief, earning \$2,000 annually. He resigned in 1927 because of a controversial investigation that was conducted by Mayor John B. Hopper concerning allegations of misconduct by Chief Tice.



JOHN D. CARLOCK (1928-1929)

John Carlock joined the fire department in January, 1900 and was appointed Chief in 1928 by the Commissioners. He served one year as chief and resigned from the department in 1930 with the rank of Assistant Chief.

Chief Carlock worked for the Village for many years as the Superintendent of the Street Department.



JESSE VAN WAGENEN (1929-1930)

Chief Van Wagenen was born in 1870 and was a charter member of the department. He rose through the ranks and was appointed part-paid chief in 1929 at an annual salary of \$2,000. He served one year.

After 33 years of service he retired from the fire department, but continued to run his barber shop, located at 18 South Broad Street, until 1950.



JOHN A. KENNELLY (1930-1933)

Chief Kennelly was appointed by the Commissioners on January 1, 1930. He was a retired New York City Fire Captain and was the first fully paid chief of the Ridgewood Fire Department with an annual salary of \$2,500. At the time of his appointment it was the general opinion of the governing body that discipline, training, and a re-structuring of the department was necessary. Chief Kennelly was not popular with the men, but he achieved his goals.

Chief Kennelly resigned in July, 1933 because the New Jersey Legislature passed a law making it illegal for a New Jersey municipal employee to collect a pension from another state.



ARTHUR J. DEMOUTH (1933-1945)

Born in 1882, Chief DeMouth was elected as a volunteer firefighter in 1914. In 1920 he began working for the Village in the Street Department. He rose through the ranks and was appointed a paid chief in 1933. He held the position until his death on December 30, 1945.







HENRY J. LEUNING, ACTING CHIEF (1946-1947)

Born in the Netherlands in 1892, Henry Leuning came to work in the Ridgewood Shade Tree Department in 1916. He joined the fire department in 1919 and moved through the ranks, becoming Deputy Chief in 1933. He was Acting Chief in 1946 and 1947, but retained the rank of Deputy Chief until his retirement from the department in 1970.

Mr. Leuning was very well respected in the community. Director of the Shade Tree Department for many years, he was responsible for many of the beautiful trees that still line the streets today, as well as the construction of Graydon Pool. Leuning Park is a tribute to his memory.



OLIVER M. VANCE (1948-1954)

Chief Vance, born in 1904, joined the fire department as a volunteer in July, 1928 and was appointed the first paid fireman in October, 1928. He was appointed Chief in 1948 and was the first Chief to serve under the Civil Service System that was adopted by Ridgewood. An electrician by trade, he retired from the fire department January 1, 1955 with 26 years of service.



WILLIAM H. HALDANE (1955-1977)

Chief Haldane, born in 1912, joined the Volunteer Fire Department in 1934. A machinist by trade, he was appointed a paid fireman in 1937. In 1947 he achieved rank of Lieutenant and became Assistant Chief in 1948. In 1955 he was appointed Chief, a position he held for 23 years until his retirement. During his term of office he established many of the policies and procedures that have become a tradition of the department. His nickname was "Wild Bill."



THOMAS E. KEELEY (1977-1981)

Chief Keeley, born in 1917, became a volunteer fireman in 1941. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1943-1945. In 1946 he was appointed to the paid department. He was promoted through the ranks under the Civil Service System and was appointed Chief in 1977. He retired in 1981 with over 35 years of service.



FRANCIS X. NOLAN (1981-1984)

Chief Nolan was appointed to the paid department on July 1, 1957. He is a Navy Veteran who served in World War II. He was promoted through the ranks under the Civil Service System and appointed Chief in June, 1981. He retired in 1984 with 27 years of service.



GEORGE A. HAMLING (1984-1987)

Chief Hamling, born in 1923, was appointed to the career department in 1958. He was an Army Air Corp. Veteran serving in World War II. He was promoted through the ranks under the Civil Service System and appointed Chief in 1984. He retired in 1987 with 29 years of service.



ROBERT D. MISSEL (1988-PRESENT)

Born in 1941, Chief Missel was appointed to the career department in 1964. He is an Army Veteran who served during the Vietnam War. He was promoted through the ranks under the Civil Service System and appointed Chief on January 1, 1988.





# FIRE STATIONS

During the past one hundred years there have been five fire stations built in the Village of Ridgewood. From a two-story wood frame structure in 1897 to the 17,000-square foot state-of-the-art fire headquarters built in 1992, Ridgewood's commitment to fire protection has endured as the town developed into a residential and business community and as firefighting technologies evolved.

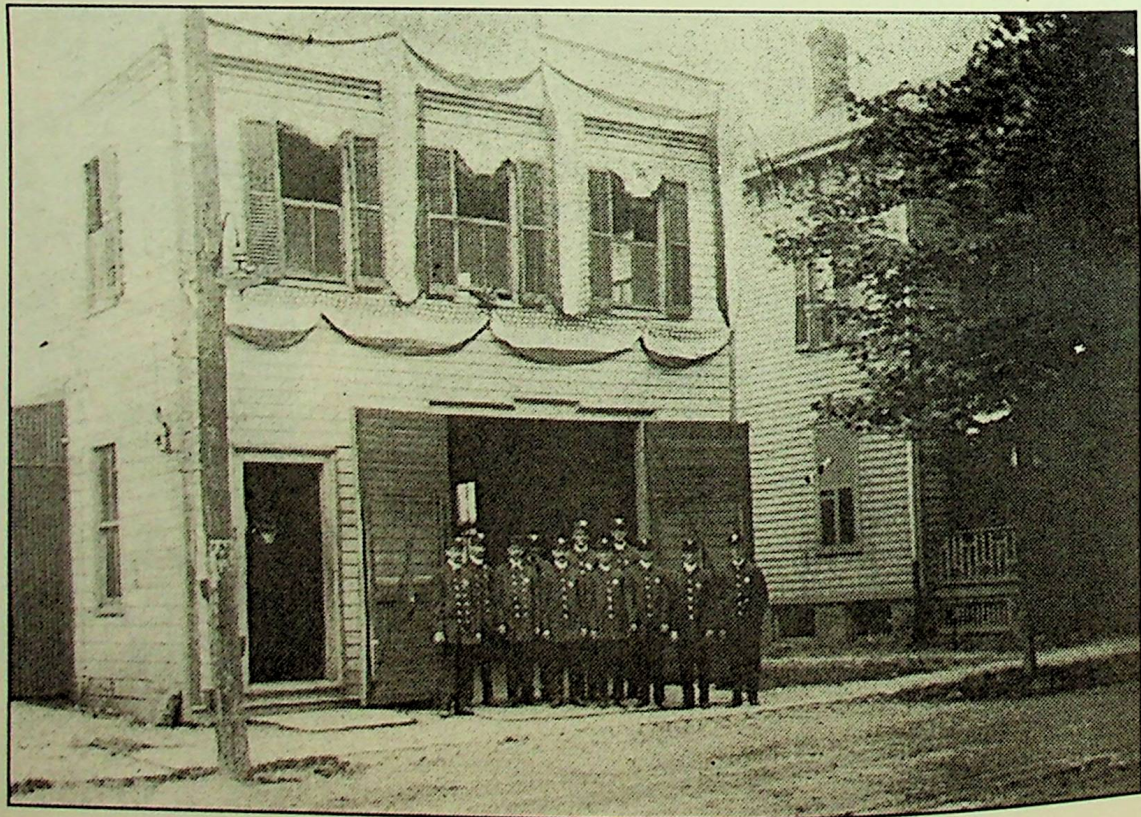
## PROTECTION HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY #1 (1897-1910)

In early 1897, plans for the first fire station were discussed and approved by fire department members and the Village Trustees. The building was to

house the apparatus and serve as a meeting place for department members.

The plans were prepared by Mr. I.E. Hutton, a department member who owned the local lumberyard on Rock Avenue (now known as South Broad Street). The location chosen was on Hudson Street on property adjoining Mr. C.P. Crouter's butcher shop. Later, the address would be known as 25 Hudson Street.

A contract to build the two-story wood frame structure was awarded to a local builder, George E. Ferguson, on July 12, 1897. The cost of the project was \$1,246 and construction was finished by early fall of that year.



*The first Hudson Street Firehouse, known originally as Protection Hook and Ladder Company #1, was built in 1897.*



## EAGLE HOSE COMPANY #1 (1900-1940)

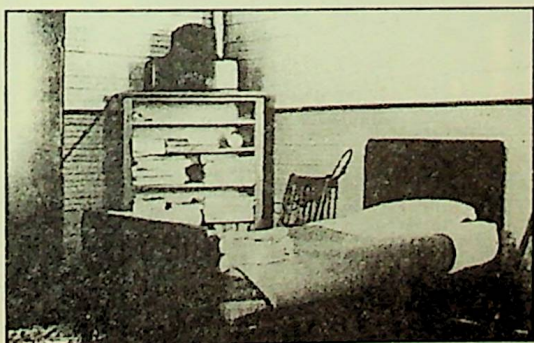
During the 1890's, there was substantial growth on the east side of the Village. Residents living east of the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook pressed for additional fire protection closer to their homes. The first meeting of the new company was held on January 31, 1900 in the old Kenilworth Church, located at the corner of East Ridgewood Avenue and Pleasant Avenue. Chief D.J. O'Neill reported to the Village Trustees that he had organized Engine Company #1, but the Trustees objected to the term "Engine Company" because they had not agreed to purchase a second chemical engine. After much discussion, they finally agreed to the name "Eagle Hose Company #1." Mr. Charles A. Sworn was selected Foreman of the new company; Assistant Foreman was Mr. George Courter. (Later this company *would* become known as Engine Company #2 as the town expanded its motorized apparatus).

The company was first located in a barn owned by Mr. Sworn on Kenilworth Road. The first apparatus was a long wagon with extension and scaling ladders, water buckets, extinguishers, and axes. In August 1901, 1,000 feet of 2½-inch hose was bought for the company after the water

pressure on the new Village water system had been tested by Chief D.J. O'Neill and Village Officials.

On Saturday, September 20, 1902, the cornerstone was laid for the new Eagle Hose Company Firehouse at 19 Circle Avenue. There was a ceremony attended by Village Trustees, clergy, and Fire Department personnel. The new fire station was a two-story wood frame structure similar to the Protection Hook and Ladder Company on Hudson Street. The building was 28' by 65' with a bell tower on one corner. On the first floor were the apparatus room, stable, storage area, and meeting room. The second floor consisted of a ballroom, kitchen, and dining area.

The cost of constructing the building was \$3,000, and it was owned by the members of the Eagle Hose Company until 1905 when the Village bought it from them. In 1923, the name of the fire company was changed to Engine Company #2 when the department's 1912 Locomobile chemical engine was moved here from the Hudson Street firehouse to make room for a new engine. The building served the east side of town until 1940 when it was torn down due to its poor condition.



*"Cozy" quarters for "The Man" on duty at the Circle Avenue firehouse. This photo was taken just before the building was vacated in 1940.*



*The Circle Avenue Firehouse, which housed the original Eagle Hose Company #1, was built in 1902.*



## MUNICIPAL COMPLEX (1911-1993)

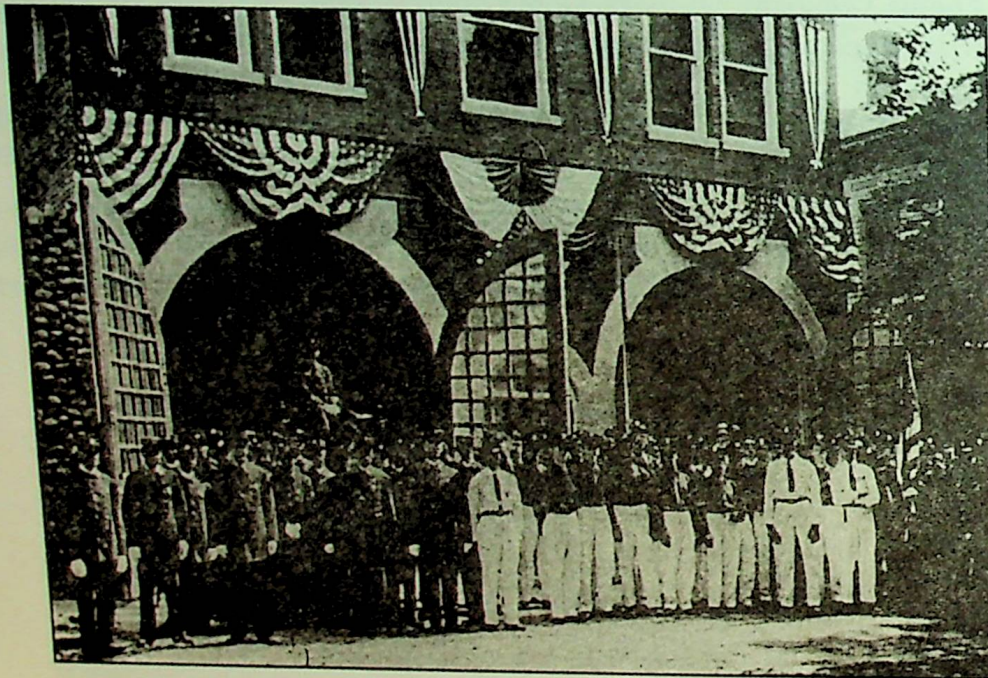
Chief D.J. O'Neill reported to the Village Trustees in the annual Fire Department reports of 1908 and 1909, that "The Hudson Street House is in a most dilapidated condition." The Trustees appointed a Building Committee to investigate Village needs and it was determined that a municipal complex was needed. The Building Committee appointed an architect to design a building to house not only the Fire Department, but also the Police Department and the Village offices, including both municipal and district courts. The entire cost of the building was \$15,000 and an open invitation to inspect the facility was extended to the public in July, 1911.

In 1929, an addition and new facade were completed at a cost of \$35,000. The first floor addition included a new police station with a pistol

range. Additional Village offices were added to the second floor to accommodate growing municipal needs.

Later, as the Village offices required even more space, the Village Hall was relocated to Oak Street and then to the current Village Hall on Maple Avenue. By 1955, the Police Department was also moved to the current Village Hall.

The Fire Department remained at the Hudson Street site until a new Headquarters building was completed on East Glen Avenue. The last shift which worked at the Hudson Street facility was on July 30, 1993, when the station closed at 4:46 P.M. and all headquarters personnel relocated to 201 East Glen Avenue. The building was torn down in October 1993.



*The grand opening and dedication of the new Hudson Street Firehouse, July 4, 1911. The police station and Village offices were also located in this building.*

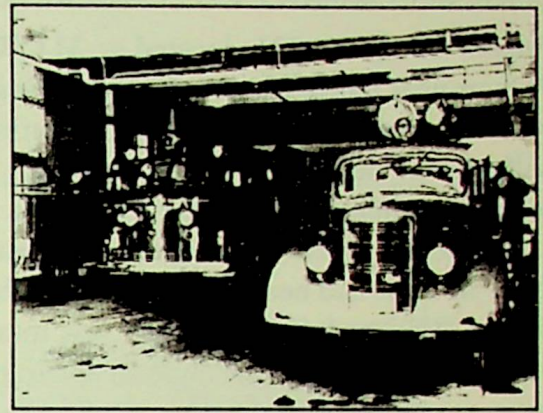
*In 1929 the municipal complex was renovated and a new police station with a pistol range was constructed. The second floor housed the Village offices until they outgrew the space and were moved to Oak Street.*



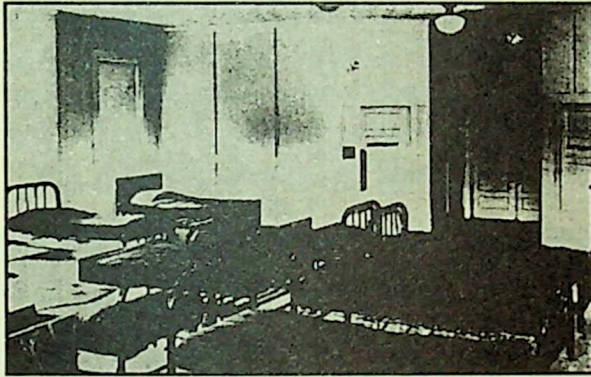




Early "Housewatch" radio desk in Hudson Street Firehouse manned by John Neuhs talking to Probationary Fireman Tom Keeley, about 1940.



The early apparatus was smaller and fit better in the Hudson Street Firehouse than today's modern equipment, which is much larger. Photo from 1956.



Hudson Street Dormitory, which changed little over the years.



Repacking hose on the apparatus at the Hudson Street Firehouse after a house fire in 1947. (O. Vance, E. Ferrari, T. Englishman, and R. Pearston)



A 1947 first aid class held in the kitchen of the Hudson Street Firehouse. (Clockwise from left, W. Haldane, T. Keeley, B. Clare, E. Ferrari, J. Neuhs, and J. Vybel)



The classroom in the Hudson Street Firehouse. Captain T. Keeley giving a lecture to (left to right): E. Babcock, T. Driscoll, H. Pruiksma, J. Nicklus, R. Pendlebury, J. Caren, A. Clark, J. Neuhs, F. Nolan, C. McKechney.



#### ENGINE COMPANY #31 (1947-PRESENT)

Engine Company #31, located at 311 West Glen Avenue near North Monroe Street, is the site of the fourth firehouse. By the 1940's, the west side of the Village was developed and the need for fire protection became essential after a fatal fire.

The fire station was opened on January 13, 1947 in what had been a barn on a farm belonging to Mr. William Jeffer. The barn was totally renovated and expanded to include an apparatus room, offices, and living quarters for the firefighters. The small house to the west of the firehouse was originally the summer kitchen/cookhouse for the main farmhouse which still stands adjacent to it today.

Sometimes referred to as "The Hill," or "31," the fire station houses one Engine Company with a three-person crew and one reserve engine.



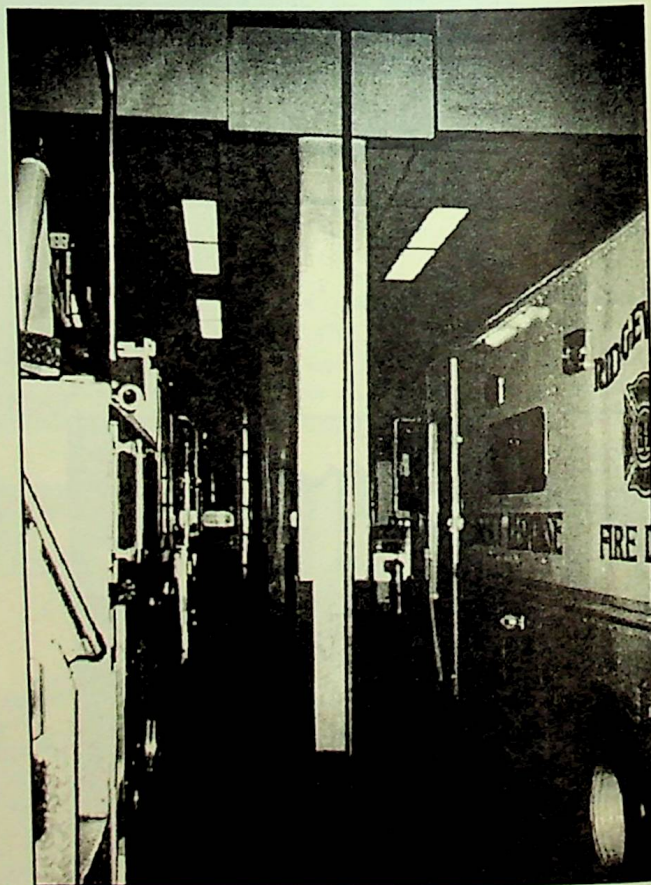
*Engine Company #31 on West Glen Avenue. Formerly a barn, it was converted into a firehouse in 1947.*

#### FIRE HEADQUARTERS (1992-PRESENT)

The Fire Headquarters building at 201 East Glen Avenue is the newest fire station in the Village. The building was dedicated on April 15, 1992 and put into service on June 1, 1992. It replaced the headquarters building on Hudson Street that had become dilapidated and too small to house all fire protection equipment. The Hudson Street fire station remained in operation until July 30, 1993 when replacement of the bridge at Maple and Glen Avenues was completed.

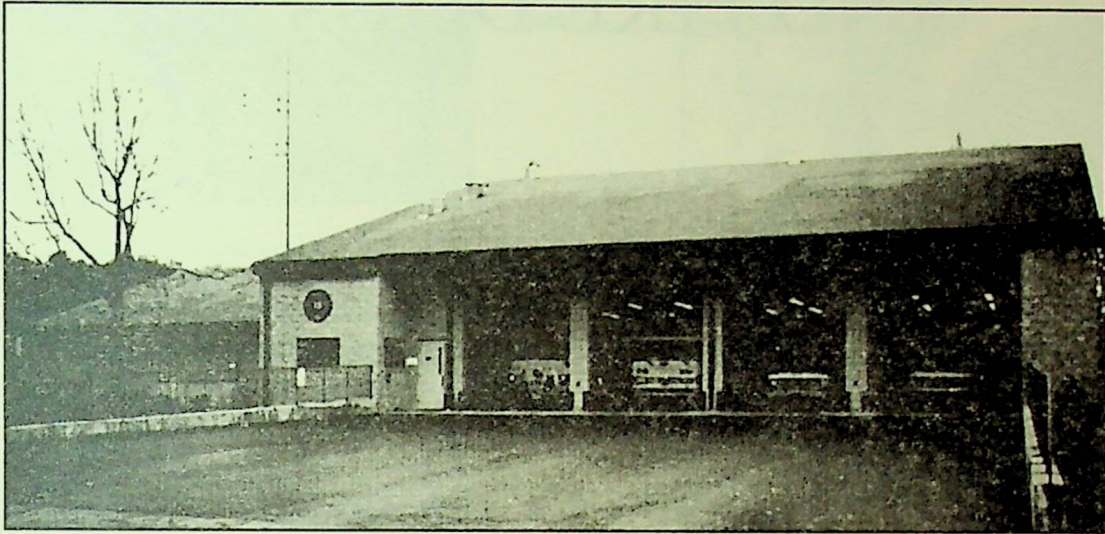
The new building sits on land that originally housed the Village Traffic and Signal Department.

The original building was completely renovated and a large apparatus floor and dormitory were added at a cost of \$1,595,945. The building houses the Fire Prevention Bureau and the Fire Department Administrative Offices, as well as quarters for the officers and crews of Engine Company #35, Ladder Company #36, and Rescue Company #42, which are on duty 24 hours daily. In addition, the building also houses Engine Company #37, the Village's volunteer division.

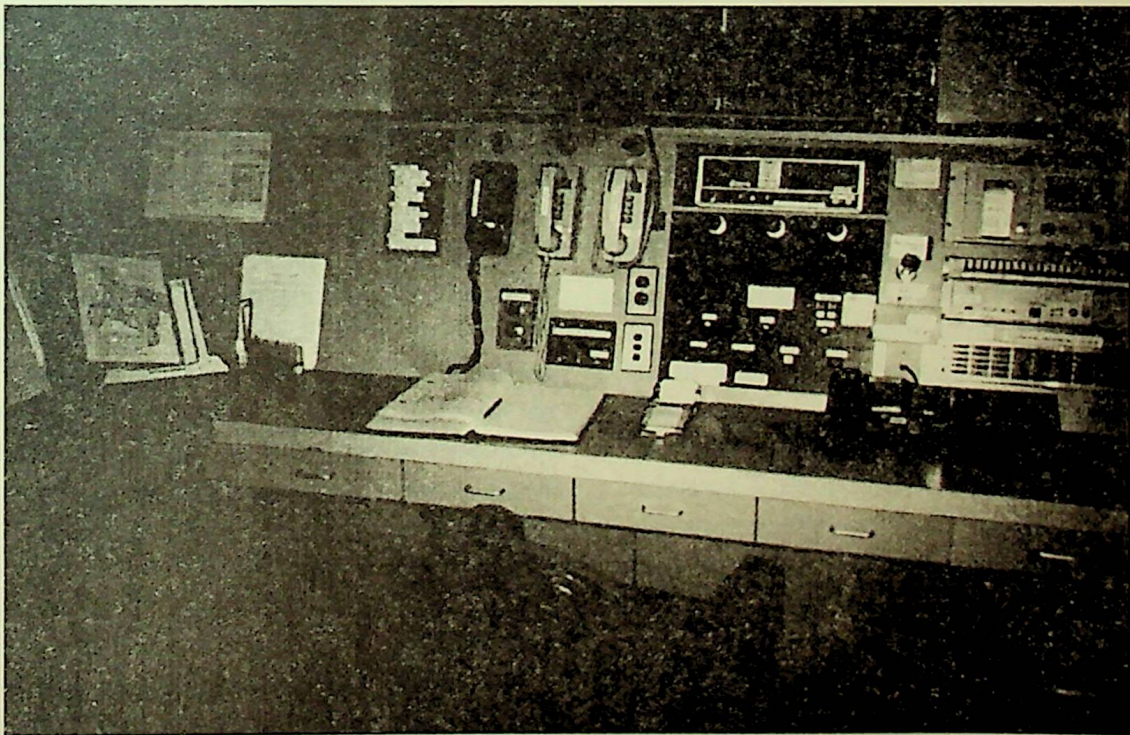


*The brass pole on apparatus floor of the East Glen Avenue Fire Headquarters.*





*The current Fire Headquarters at 201 East Glen Avenue.*



*Communications Desk "Housewatch" at East Glen Avenue Headquarters*



# THE HORSE TEAMS AND FIRE DOGS

During the first 30 years of the Ridgewood Fire Department, horse teams were the primary means of pulling apparatus to a fire. It is all but impossible today to find anyone in town who remembers seeing a team of Ridgewood Fire Department horses responding to an alarm, but what a sight it must have been! Picture the apparatus flying down the street, being pulled to the fire by a galloping team with their manes flying . . . one fireman at the reins, encouraging the team on . . . the men hanging on to the engine for dear life . . . the bell clanging to clear the streets!

Once at the scene of the alarm, one fireman was detailed to tend to the team. The team was unhitched and walked to cool down after a long hard run. The horses were covered with blankets to protect them from rain or winter weather.

In the early years of the department, Ridgewood did not own its own teams. The department depended on hired teams and horses brought in by residents and business people in the area. Arrangements for horse hire were made with local livery stables. The name that appears most often in the Department records is that of "Ridgewood Livery," located on Rock Avenue (now known as South Broad Street) and owned by Mr. Edward B. Van Horn, a founding Fire Department member. An agreement was made with Mr. Van Horn for a fresh team to be kept at the stable at all times, ready to be hitched when the alarm sounded.

On a working fire, a minimum of three teams was required to roll the Headquarters apparatus. At the turn of the century, the cost to hire a team of horses was \$5, and the annual budgeted amount was \$300.

In 1904, the village purchased its first horse to serve both the Eagle Hose Company on Circle Avenue and the Ridgewood Street Department.

The horses that served the Eagle Hose Company were required to stay on the east side of Maple Avenue so there could be a fast response in the event of an alarm.

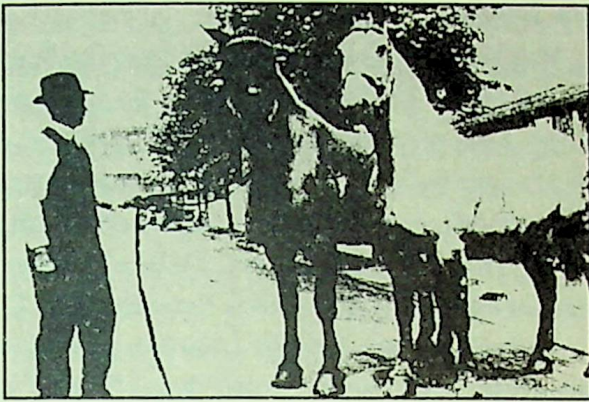
In 1908, with the purchase of a new ladder truck, two new horses were put into service. This team, Pete and Dixie, was the first of the Ridgewood horse teams.

The type of horses used by the department had to be larger and stronger than riding horses. They were called truck horses and were generally 17 to 19 hands high. Effort was made to match the horses of a team by size, temperament, color, and general appearance. Joe and Dan, the town's second team, were an exception on the color matching but they worked very well together as a team. This team loved their duty and from the first clang of the alarm bell they were quivering with excitement and ready to go!

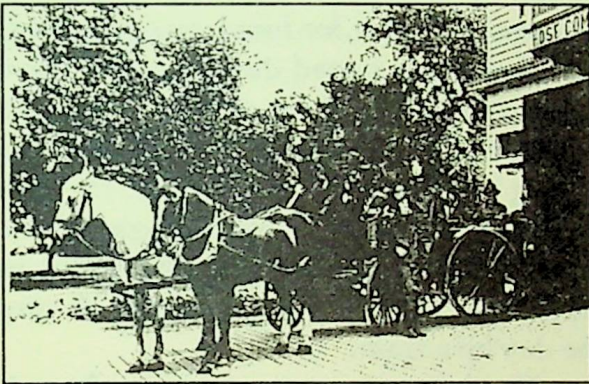
At night the horses were kept in stalls at the rear of the Circle Avenue Fire Station and at E.B. Van Horn's stable. The harnesses were suspended from the ceilings over the wagon shaft. When the alarm was sounded, the well-trained animals spontaneously appeared under their harnesses. Collars were snapped, reins hooked up, and they were off! The speed at which the team could get the apparatus moving was consistently under two minutes. In fact, it is assumed that the 1912 Locomobile was sent back to the Green Motor Car dealer in Paterson to have an electric starter installed because the horses were faster getting out of the firehouse than the Locomobile!

Generally, one man was assigned to feed and tend to the horses. They had to be fed three times a day and were groomed to always look their best. Their hoofs were painted black for appearance and protection.

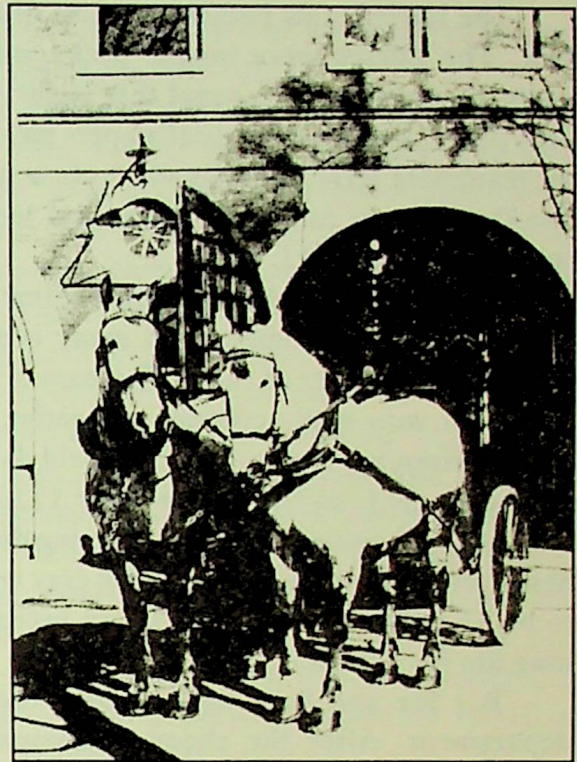




*Horses used to pull fire apparatus*



*The 1904 Eagle Hose Company in turnout gear in front of the Circle Avenue firehouse. The horses are the famous team of Joe and Dan.*



*"The Grays" at Fire Headquarters around 1920. The driver is Thaddeus Wikoff.*

## The Ridgewood News

OFFICIAL ORGAN FOR RIDGEWOOD VILLAGE AND GLEN ROCK BOROUGH.

RIDGEWOOD, N.J. THURSDAY EVENING APRIL 26, 1907

### E.B. VAN HORN'S LOSS

#### His Great Boarding Stables Gutted by Fire

At half past one Tuesday morning, the Dispatch Stables on Christopher Street, New York, of which Mr. E.B. Van Horn is the proprietor, burned. There were in the immense building 130 horses on the third floor and 190 on the second. Of these all on the third floor were killed by the fire or the smoke, and on the second floor, all but 12 of the horses were killed. Mr. Van Horn lost six of the twelve horses he owned that were in the stable. His employees in charge of the stable were saved.

The bodies of four men were found in the ruins were supposed to be Italian stable men. Mr. Van Horn was fully insured, but the loss that cannot be insured will be about \$5,000.00. He had a business worth \$1,000.00. per month. Most of his customers lost all they had.

It will take two or three months to put the building in shape again and when that is done the business must be built up.

The business was almost entirely the boarding of high class truck horses and those that were burned would average at least \$250.00 each.

*An article from the Ridgewood News, April 26, 1907 reporting a devastating fire at stables owned by Ridgewood businessman E.B. Van Horn. Before Ridgewood purchased its first team in 1904, horses were hired from Mr. Van Horn's livery near fire headquarters.*



The horse teams became the pets of the firemen. The horses were taught tricks and given treats for rewards. It was said that Nellie, an Iron Gray Mare, loved pie, especially apple pie. She and her teammate Jerry got their share of pie at all the Fire Department functions! Nellie and Jerry were put in service in 1912.

The Ridgewood horse teams became famous in the area. They competed in many events and won a good number of them. The team of Joe and Dan even won many contests competing against motor driven apparatus, including field day events in Bogota, N.J. as late as the early 1920s. They won 16 trophies over the years, earning the title of best team in the state. Joe was a big gray who lived to be 31 and Dan lived to be 38, an exceptionally long life for a horse.

But Joe and Dan outlived their use by the department. After the chemical company was motorized in 1912, the days of the fire horse were numbered. And even though they were still pulling first-due equipment in 1920, progress was coming fast to Ridgewood. By 1923 the hose company was motorized, and in 1925, with the purchase of a new aerial ladder, the entire department became motorized and the horse teams were relegated to the Village yard for use by the Street Department.

## FIRE DOGS

The Ridgewood Fire Department has not had a resident fire dog in fifty years, but in the early years of the department, dogs played an important role in firefighting by running with the horse teams to ward off other animals that might chase after and unsettle the team. Of course, Dalmatians were the breed of choice to be used as "coach dogs."

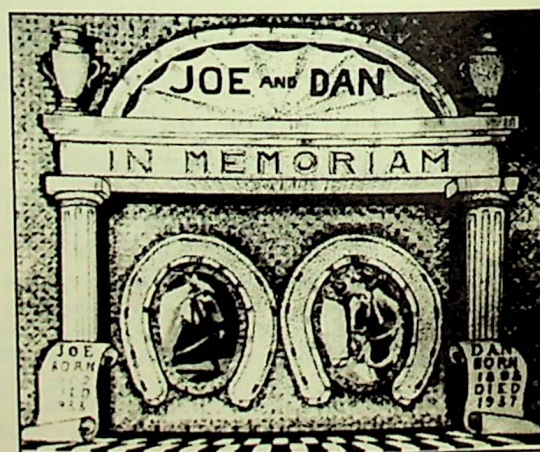
After the department became motorized, the dogs were kept as firehouse pets. "Ned," a Dalmation mutt, made his home at Fire Headquarters on Hudson Street during the 1930s. He was donated to the department by Ms. Sellae, a high school physical education teacher. We are told that she would stop by the fire house weekly to see Ned and on occasion, she would bring a steak for his supper. The firemen on duty always promised that they would cook it for him later; poor Ned!

Ned was a petted darling of the department and was loved by all the neighborhood kids, too. He was aware when a telephone alarm of fire was coming in because in those days, the local telephone operators were able to jingle the incoming call! Ned knew this and was always the first one aboard the engine! Unfortunately, he was killed one day by a train.

The following is a true story about Ned, as



Horses Joe and Dan pulling the 1904 hose wagon at a 1916 New York/New Jersey Volunteer Firemen's Association Competition held at the Ho-Ho-Kus Race Track. In this event the horse team pulled the rig a quarter mile, then the firemen connected the hose to a hydrant, stretched it 200 feet and placed the hose stream on the target. The Ridgewood team won first place.



Memorial plaque made for Ridgewood's prized fire horses, Joe and Dan.



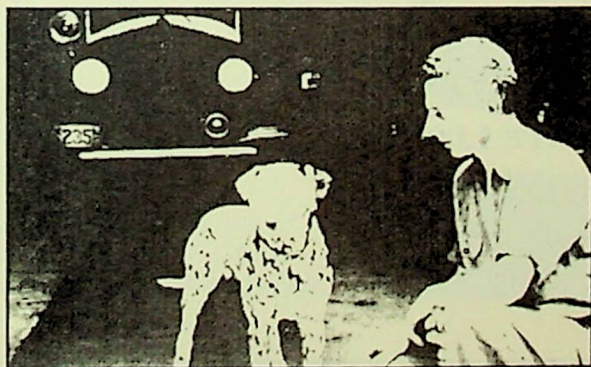
told by Bob Clare. It demonstrates Ned's protectiveness and dedication to the Fire Department.

This event happened sometime during the years 1932–1935 when the department had in service a 1930 Buick Chemical Engine with a hand-made body. For some unknown reason Fireman Harris Weaving was on duty alone at Fire Headquarters when a call came in for a brush fire. He and Ned responded, and while driving east on Ridgewood Avenue, the engine hit a rough piece of roadway at the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. The bump caused the hose reel to shake enough that the booster hose began to unravel as Harris continued along. By the time he noticed the problem, about 75 feet of hose was bouncing back and forth across the roadway! He stopped the truck and started to get the hose aboard. A policeman saw the problem and stopped to help Harris, but Ned, ever protective of the equipment, would not let the policeman

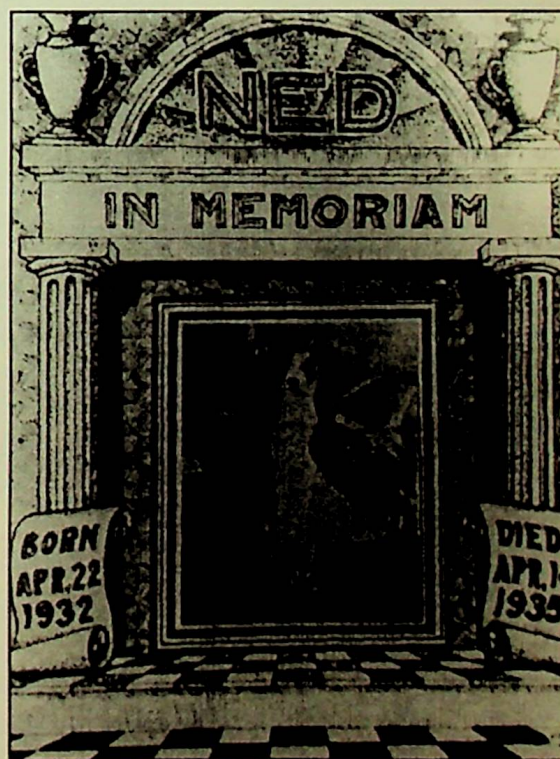
help! It was clear that he was not going to let anyone else touch the hose line!

On another occasion, it was said that Captain Baker, John Neuhs, Harris Weaving, and Ned responded to an accident involving a bakery delivery truck. While the firemen took charge of the accident scene, Ned took care of the baked goods! He ate some immediately and decided to bring home several delicious cream puffs for later. He gently placed them on the seat of the apparatus. Later, when Captain Baker got in the rig, he sat on them, much to his surprise. When both John and Harris denied any knowledge of the cream puffs, it only left Ned as the culprit, and he looked guilty!

The next mascot was also a Dalmatian, appropriately named Smoky, who had been presented to the department. He was later given to the Fireman's Home in Boonton where he served as mascot for many years.



*William McCullough, Sr. with Smoky.*



*Memorial plaque made for Ridgewood's favorite fire dog, Ned.*



# FIREFIGHTING APPARATUS

## APPARATUS ROSTER

1897	GLEASON & BAILEY HORSE-DRAWN LADDER TRUCK
1899	C.T. HOLLOWAY HORSE-DRAWN CHEMICAL ENGINE
1900	CARPENTERS WAGON (USED TO CARRY LADDERS, BUCKETS, ETC.)
1904	HOSE WAGON CUSTOM BUILT BY BENJAMIN ELGIN, VILLAGE BLACKSMITH
1908	AMERICAN LAFRANCE THIRD SIZE CITY SERVICE TILLERED HORSE-DRAWN LADDER TRUCK
1912	LOCOMOBILE MOTORIZED CHEMICAL AND HOSE CAR
1923	AMERICAN LAFRANCE 750 GPM ENGINE
1925	AMERICAN LAFRANCE 75 FOOT TILLERED AERIAL LADDER TRUCK
1928	AMERICAN LAFRANCE 1,000 GPM ENGINE
1930	BUICK CHEMICAL/EMERGENCY APPARATUS
1936	DODGE ENGINE
1941	MACK 500 GPM ENGINE AND SEARCHLIGHT TRUCK
1947	TWO AMERICAN LAFRANCE FOAMITE 1,000 GPM ENGINES
1948	AMERICAN LAFRANCE 65 FOOT AERIAL LADDER
1954	GMC 500 GPM ENGINE/HOSE TENDER
1962	MACK 750 GPM ENGINE
1965	MACK 1,000 GPM ENGINE
1971	AMERICAN LAFRANCE 100 FOOT AERIAL LADDER
1977	MACK 1,250 GPM ENGINE
1979	MACK 1,250 GPM ENGINE
1982	MACK 1,250 GPM ENGINE
1986	EMERGENCY ONE LIGHT RESCUE TRUCK
1989	PIERCE 1,250 GPM ENGINE
1991	PIERCE 105 FOOT AERIAL LADDER WITH 1,500 GPM PUMP
1994	PIERCE 1,250 GPM ENGINE



The apparatus of the Ridgewood Fire Department has evolved over the years from very basic to state of the art equipment. During the past century, the Village has purchased at various times over 26 pieces of firefighting apparatus to protect its residents. At the turn of the century, fires were extinguished by throwing buckets of water on the flames. In contrast, current equipment combined is capable of pumping in excess of 7,500 gallons of water per minute on a major fire!

#### THE FIRST APPARATUS

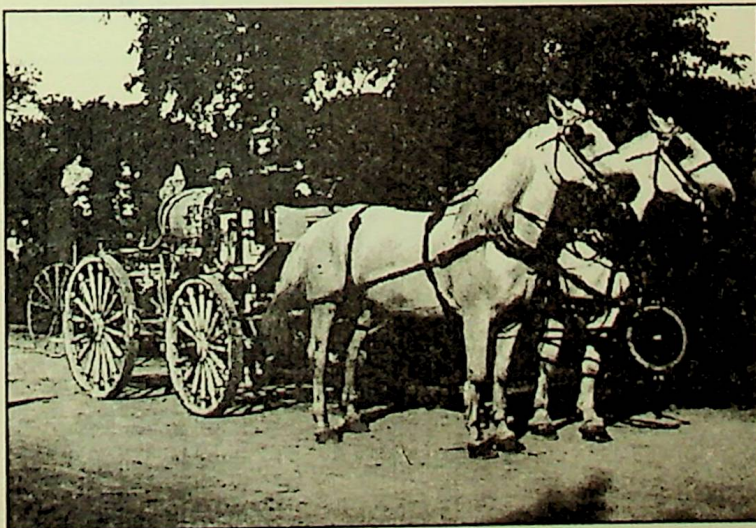
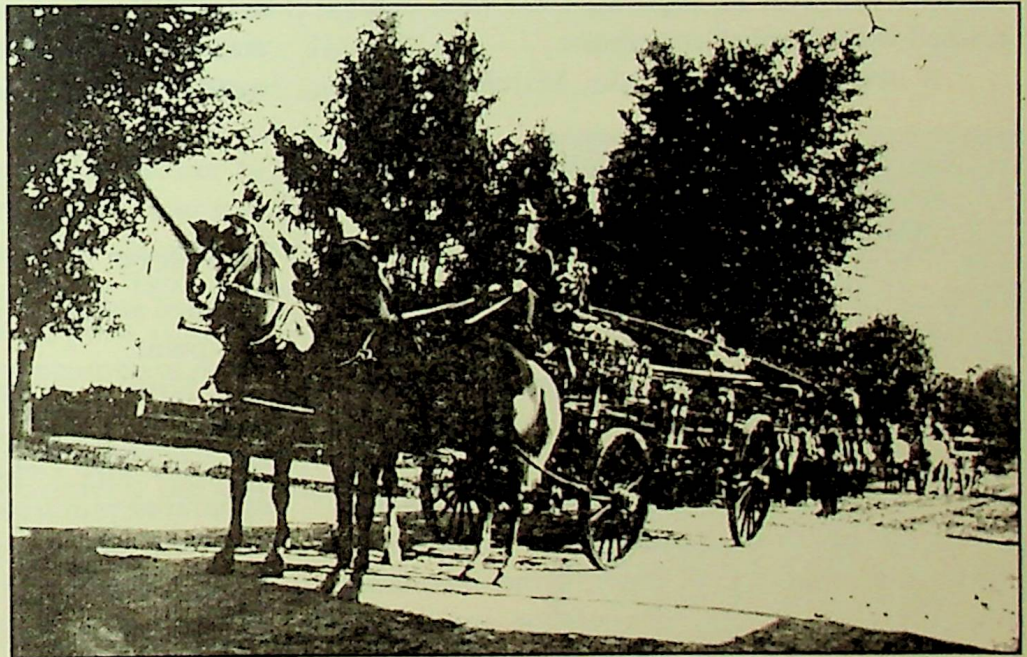
When the Fire Department was formally organized in 1897, it was realized that more than a bucket brigade of men was needed to fight fires. Equipment was needed, so voters approved \$2,000 to be used to purchase apparatus and firefighting equipment. Community dances were held to raise addi-

tional money needed to buy the first piece of apparatus. According to the records, during the summer of 1897 the first ladder truck was placed in service. It was a horse-drawn rig built by Gleason & Bailey of Seneca, New York. It weighed 1,250 pounds and cost the Village \$900. It was a simple unit which carried ground ladders, buckets, and small tools. The ladder truck could be pulled to fires by the firemen if a horse team was not available. This rig was housed in the newly constructed firehouse on Hudson Street, known as Protection Hook and Ladder Company #1.

#### CHEMICAL ENGINE

In 1899 the second piece was purchased, a horse-drawn chemical engine manufactured by Charles T. Holloway Company of Baltimore. It was housed in the Hudson Street Firehouse, and like

*Ridgewood's first piece of fire apparatus, a 1897 Gleason & Bailey ladder truck on parade.*



*Ridgewood's first engine, a 1899 Holloway chemical rig, pictured here around 1900.*



the ladder truck it could be pulled to the scene of a fire by hand if no horse teams were available. It had dual 40 gallon chemical tanks and a hose reel.

The principle of a "Chemical Fire Engine" is as follows: the two 40-gallon tanks were filled with water to which sodium bicarbonate was added and dissolved. At the top of the tank was an upright bottle filled with acid. When the chemical engine responded to a fire, the bottle containing the acid was dumped into the tank by use of a lever. The chemical reaction of the acid and the sodium bicarbonate created tremendous gas pressure that forced water through the hose. This came to be known as the "Soda Acid Principle" for fire extinguishment. Fires were extinguished quickly with this type of apparatus, even though only a total of 80 gallons of water was carried between the two tanks. Statistics from the period indicate that over 80% of all reported fires were extinguished with chemical equipment.

A newspaper report from March 17, 1899

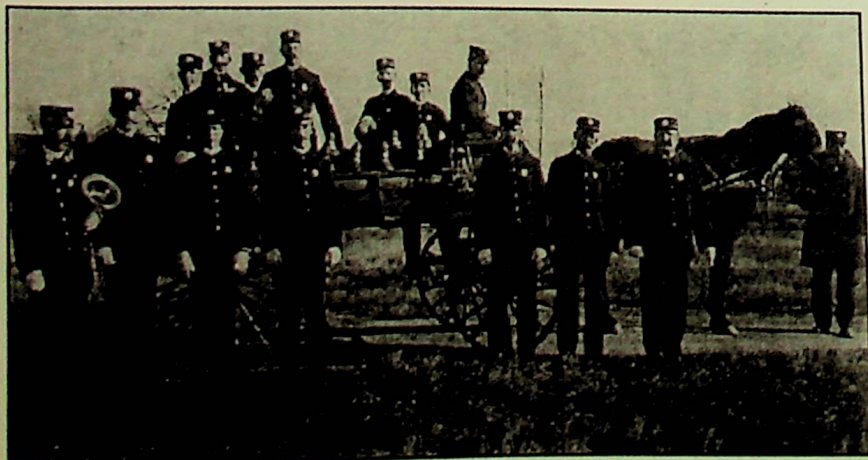
credits the Holloway chemical engine with "saving the Village from a disastrous conflagration." A fire had developed in a business on Prospect Street near Hudson Street one evening and ironically, the chemical engine had been somewhat dismantled in preparation for being sent to the factory in Baltimore for service. The article says firemen responded with the ladder truck and made an unsuccessful effort with a bucket brigade to stop the fast spreading fire. Meanwhile, a half dozen men went to the Firehouse and re-assembled the Holloway Engine. After some time the engine "had gotten back into shape" and was used to save a barn behind the burning buildings, but not before several more structures had ignited. The City of Paterson also sent one of their chemical engines and between the two engines the fires were brought under control and extinguished. This fire was cited as a good test of our Village firemen and the efficiency of a chemical engine. There was no further question as to the worth of either!

#### CARPENTERS WAGON AND HOSE WAGON

As Ridgewood continued to grow, residents east of the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook spoke up with their desire for closer fire protection. Consequently, Eagle Hose Company #1 formed in 1900. Their apparatus consisted of a horse-drawn Carpenter's Wagon containing ladders, buckets, and tools. This rig was housed in a barn until the opening of the Circle Avenue firehouse in 1902. Several other milestones were reached at the turn of the century: a Gamewell Fire Alarm system was installed with a bell atop the Opera House to alert firemen. A water supply system with fire hydrants was

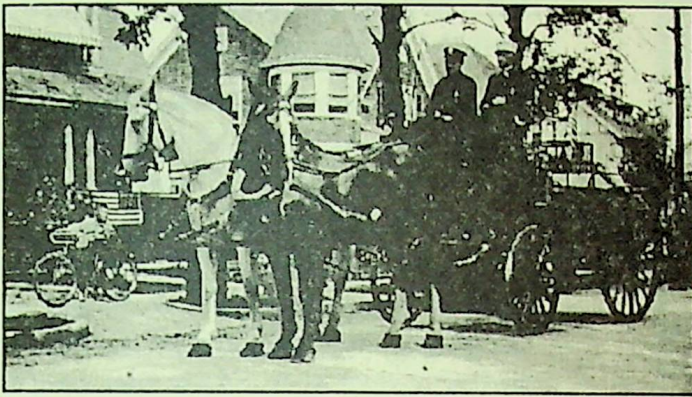
installed and the first horse team was purchased by the town.

With a second firehouse open on Circle Avenue and a water system with adequate pressure, the Fire Department decided that the next apparatus purchase should be a hose wagon. In 1904 Village Blacksmith Benjamin Elgin was commissioned to build a Hose Wagon for the Eagle Hose Company on Circle Avenue. This horse-drawn rig was a hose tender, carrying hose which could be attached directly to a fire hydrant.

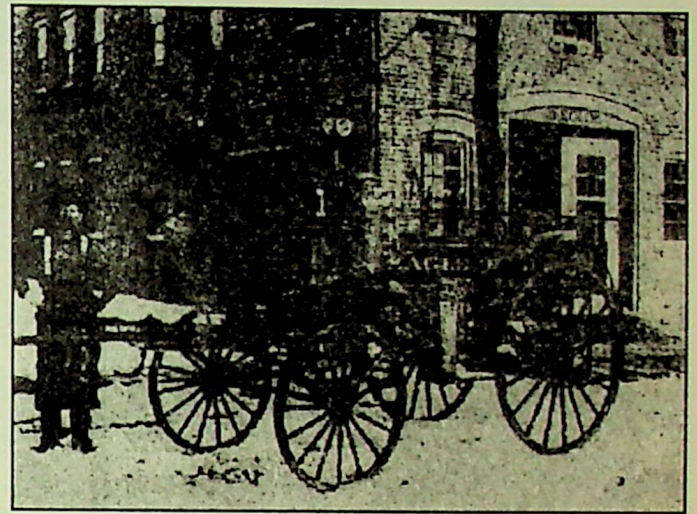


*The first apparatus for the Eagle Hose Company which protected the east side of the village was a carpenter's wagon. It was acquired in 1900 and carried ladders, buckets, and tools.*





*1904 hose wagon on parade, July 18, 1925, just prior to the retirement of the famous horse team of Joe and Dan. Charles Clare is driving and Lieutenant Charles Shoudy is next to him in white hat.*



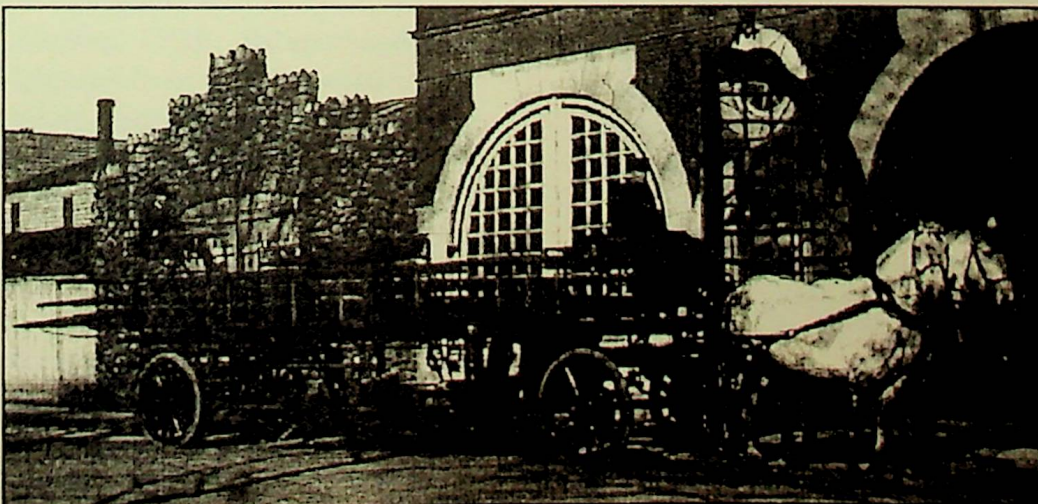
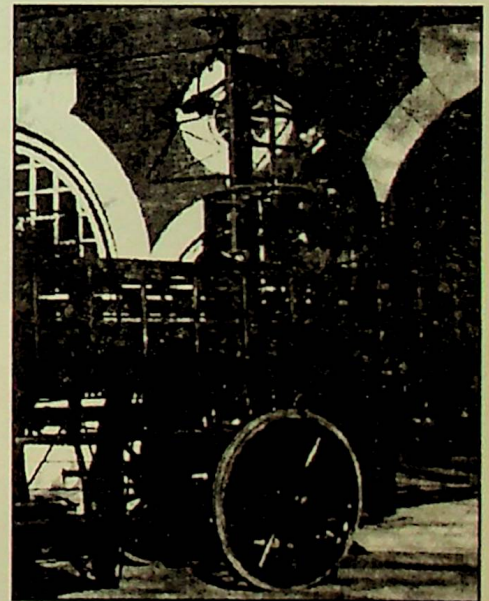
*The hose wagon constructed in 1904 by Village blacksmith Benjamin Elgin (at left).*

### THE FIRST TILLERED LADDER TRUCK

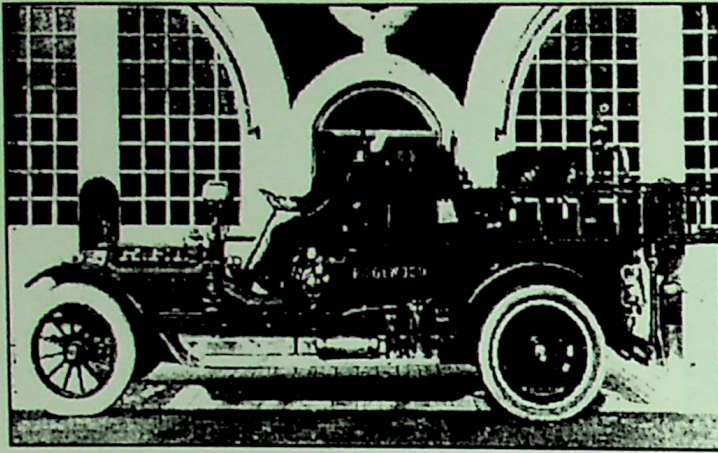
The next apparatus was purchased in 1908 and it became a classic. It was a horse-drawn American LaFrance Third Size City Service ladder truck. This truck was tillered, meaning a fireman rode atop the rear with a steering wheel that turned the rear wheels. This feature made it easier to position the apparatus and make tight turns on narrow streets. It carried 212 feet of ground ladders and other assorted tools and it was stationed on Hudson Street after the 1897 ladder truck was taken out of service because of its poor condition.

As the Village's firefighting equipment roster continued to expand, larger quarters were needed. In 1911 a new two-story firehouse was constructed on Hudson Street. This housed Fire Headquarters, the Police Department, the Courtroom, and other municipal offices.

*The 1908 American LaFrance Third Size tillered city service ladder truck in the photo below is shown in front of the Hudson Street Fire Headquarters. The driver is Thaddeus W. Wikoff with his son E. Marshall Wikoff, who is shown steering the rear tiller wheel in the closeup photo to the right.*



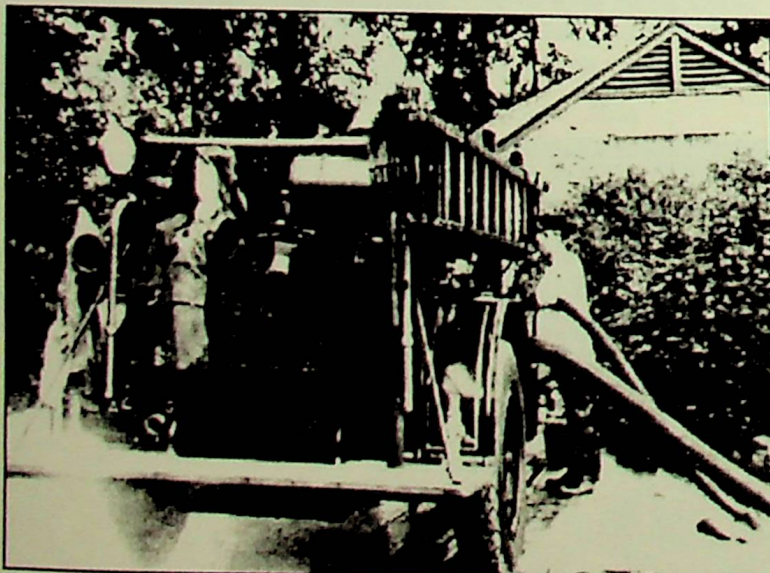




*Ridgewood's first motorized apparatus, a 1912 Locomobile chemical and hose car. Alphonse DeRock is in driver's seat.*



*Ridgewood's first pumping engine, a 1923 American LaFrance 750 gallon-per-minute engine, shown here at Graydon Pool.*



*Rear view of the 1923 American LaFrance*

## RIDGEWOOD ENTERS THE MOTORIZED AGE

By 1912 Ridgewood had entered the motorized age with the purchase of a Locomobile chemical and hose car. This was a gasoline-powered truck (or "automobile" as it was called in those days) which had a 50-gallon chemical tank attached to a booster reel and several hundred feet of 2½-inch hose. This rig was quartered at the Hudson Street Firehouse.

It was several years later when the next apparatus was purchased. In 1923 an American LaFrance 750 gallon-per-minute rotary gear pumper was added to the roster. This was the first rig that had a pump that could boost fire hydrant pressure to produce adequate hose streams. It had a 100-gallon booster tank and could "draft" water through suction hoses from ponds and streams. This was especially important because Ridgewood still had a lot of open land and wooded areas that were plagued by numerous brush fires.

This engine was housed at the Hudson Street Firehouse and the 1912 Locomobile was moved to the Circle Avenue Firehouse. Their hose wagon became a reserve apparatus at the Hudson Street Firehouse.



## THE FIRST AERIAL LADDER

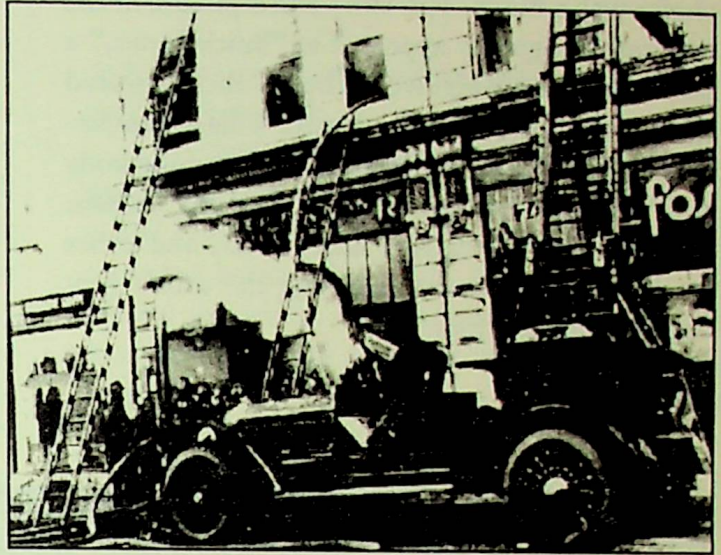
In 1925 an American LaFrance 75-foot ladder truck was purchased at a cost of \$15,000. This rig, as were the other American LaFrances, was a chain-driven truck. The ladder consisted of a bed ladder with two fly sections. This truck, like the previous ladder truck, needed a tiller man to steer the rear wheels. Its wooden aerial ladder was spring-assisted; it had to be raised by a hand crank and rotated by handwheels that took several men to operate. In order to raise the ladder, the rear seat was swung to the side and the steering wheel unpinned and removed. Stories still circulate of the day this truck responded to a fire when the steering wheel pin was not engaged! The unknowing rear tiller man stood up and grabbed the wheel for more leverage during a turn. The steering wheel popped off, and the rear trailer portion of the truck crashed into several cars and a storefront!

## THE DEPARTMENT EXPANDS

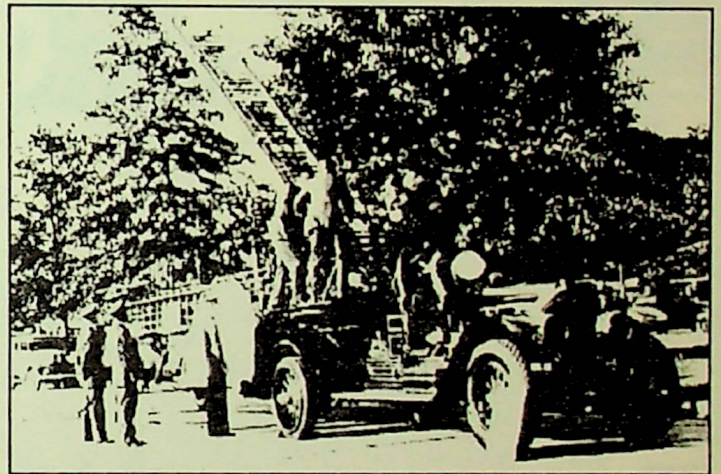
1928 saw the purchase of another American LaFrance rotary gear 1,000 gallon-per-minute pumper at a cost of \$12,000. With two pumping engines now on the roster, the engine company designations were split: Engine Company #1 was located at the Hudson Street Headquarters and the Circle Avenue Firehouse was designated Engine Company #2.

During 1928, Ridgewood also took another bold step forward by hiring Oliver Vance as the first paid firefighter.

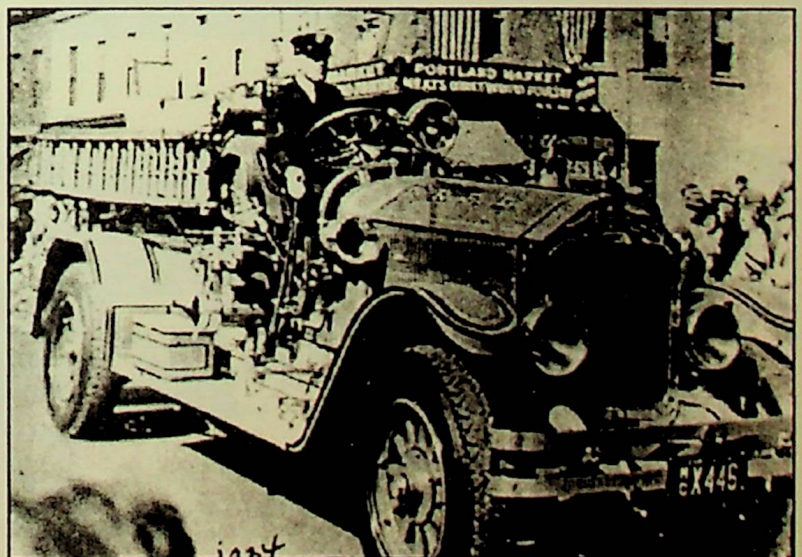
On June 19, 1930, an article appeared in the *Ridgewood News* highlighting the department's most recent purchase: a 1930 Buick chemical emergency truck. According to the article, Chief John Kennelly, who owned a Buick himself, wanted a powerful, quick, and economical vehicle for a chemical engine. His natural



*The 1925 tillered American LaFrance 75-foot ladder truck in use at the Muster and Bauman Drugstore fire at 70-76 E. Ridgewood Avenue on October 1, 1948.*



*The 1925 tillered American LaFrance 75-foot aerial ladder being raised by four firemen during a fire prevention demonstration at Station Plaza in October, 1933.*



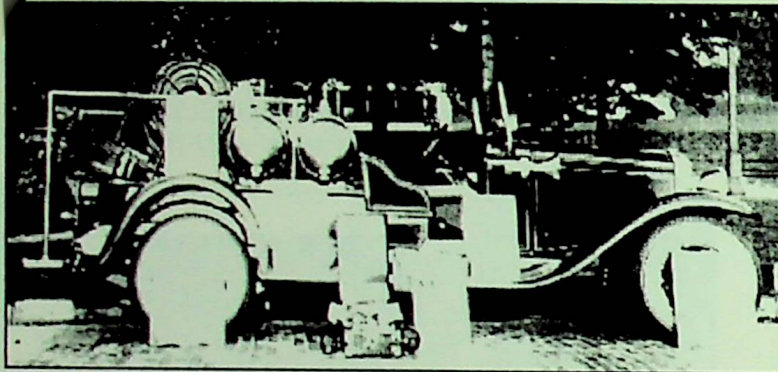
*The 1928 American LaFrance 1000 gallon-per-minute engine in parade during 1934.*



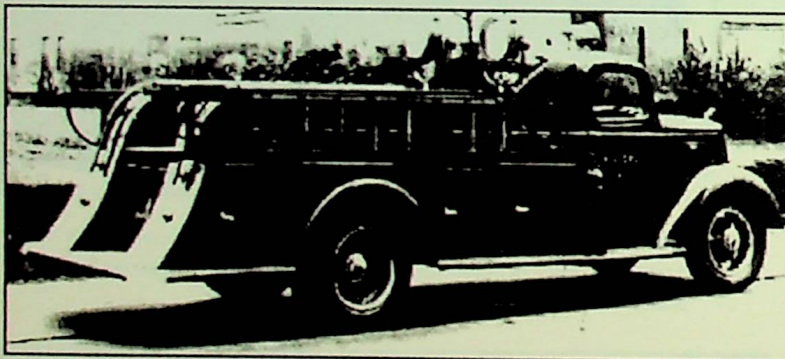
choice was a Buick. This story and a picture of the apparatus originally appeared in "Buick News," a publication of Ridgewood Buick Incorporated where the chassis was purchased. Village maintenance mechanic James Smith constructed the body and mounted the chemical tanks on the chassis. This vehicle also carried hose, tools, and other emergency equipment including the area's first oxygen inhalator unit.

During 1936 the Village purchased a Dodge Pumper. Little is known about this apparatus except that it had an open cab and at some point a deluge gun was mounted atop the rig.

In 1941 a Mack 500 gallon-per-minute pumper was bought. It had a 250-gallon booster tank with a booster hose reel mounted on the rear. This rig was also equipped with two 500-watt floodlights and two 250-watt floodlights to illuminate fire scenes.



*1930 Buick chemical emergency rig at a fire prevention demonstration on Station Plaza in October, 1933.*



*1941 Mack engine and searchlight truck parked opposite Fire Headquarters on Hudson Street. .*



*1941 Mack pumper and hose tender. Behind is 1936 Dodge engine.*



## THE POST-WORLD WAR II YEARS

After World War II ended and money, metals, and rubber became available again, apparatus purchases continued to replace an aging fleet. In 1947, two open-cab American LaFrance Foamite 1,000 gallon-per-minute pumpers were purchased. These were unique-looking rigs with their motors mounted behind the driver and a rounded nose. Some likened them to an upside-down bathtub. In addition to carrying 2½-inch hose, these rigs were later retrofitted to carry 1½-inch hose, which was more maneuverable when working inside buildings.

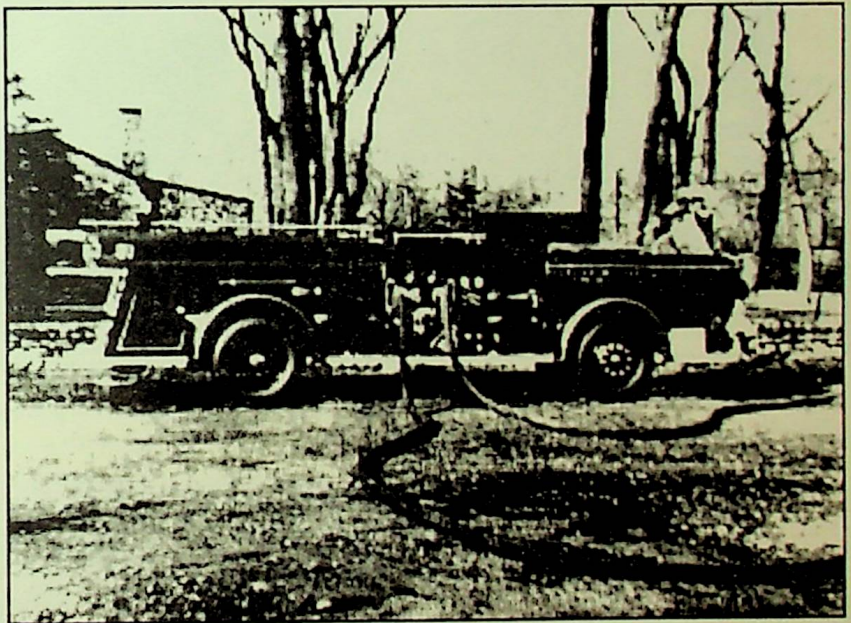
One of the pumpers was stationed at Engine Company #31 on West Glen Avenue and had a large three-section 35-foot extension ladder mounted on its side to reach some of the large West Side homes. Eventually an overhead ladder

rack was constructed and this ladder was carried over the hose bed.

In 1948, a 65-foot aerial ladder truck was purchased from American LaFrance. It had a steel aerial ladder and an open cab with the motor mounted behind the driver. A compartment just behind the ladder turntable housed a folded life net that was used as a last resort for someone trapped by a fire. The net offered survival only from a jump a few stories high.

A ladder pipe nozzle which could be fastened to the tip of the ladder to flow water down on a fire was purchased for this truck. To support the ladder when elevated, this rig had two simple screw-down stabilizing jacks on the frame, a far cry from today's hydraulic stabilizing jacks.

*One of two 1947 American LaFrance 1000 gallon-per-minute engines shown here in the Graydon Pool parking lot drafting water from the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook.*



*One of two 1947 American LaFrance 1000 gallon-per-minute engines shown here at Engine Company #31 on West Glen Avenue. Note 35-foot ladder on side of rig.*



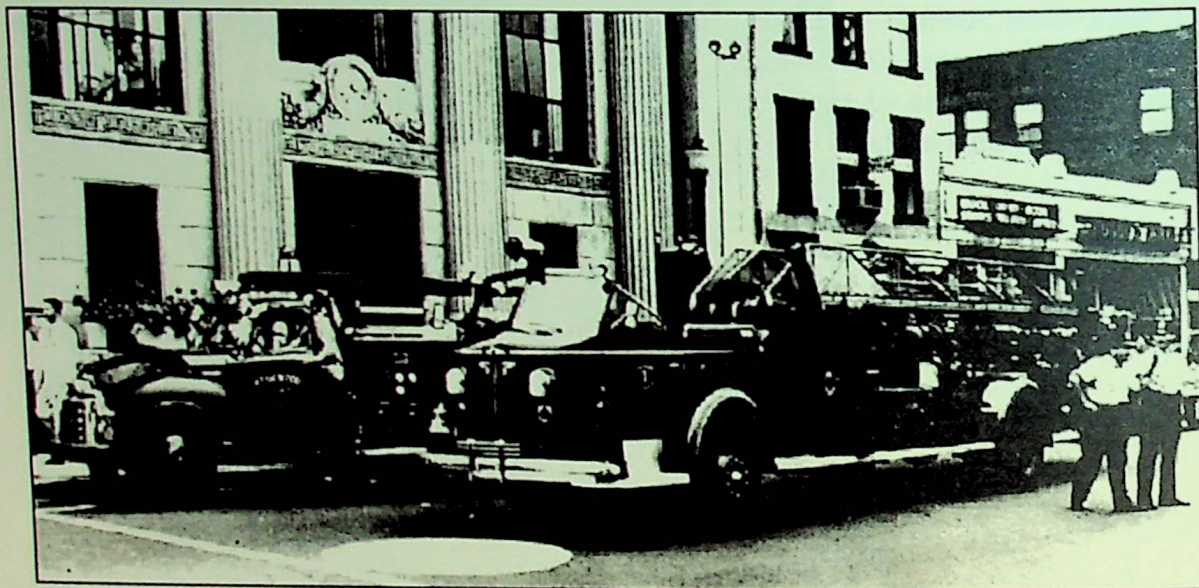
Because it had a straight two-axle chassis, unlike the old tillered tractor-pulled trucks, this rig only required one man to drive it. Because it took only one man to operate the truck, an unfortunate precedent was set: even today, Ridgewood's ladder truck is manned by only one firefighter! The firemen who drove the open-cab ladder trucks preferred them due to the great visibility and easy placement.

This ladder truck was the last piece of Ridgewood's apparatus to have an open cab. All future rigs had enclosed cabs for the safety of firefighters and protection from the elements.

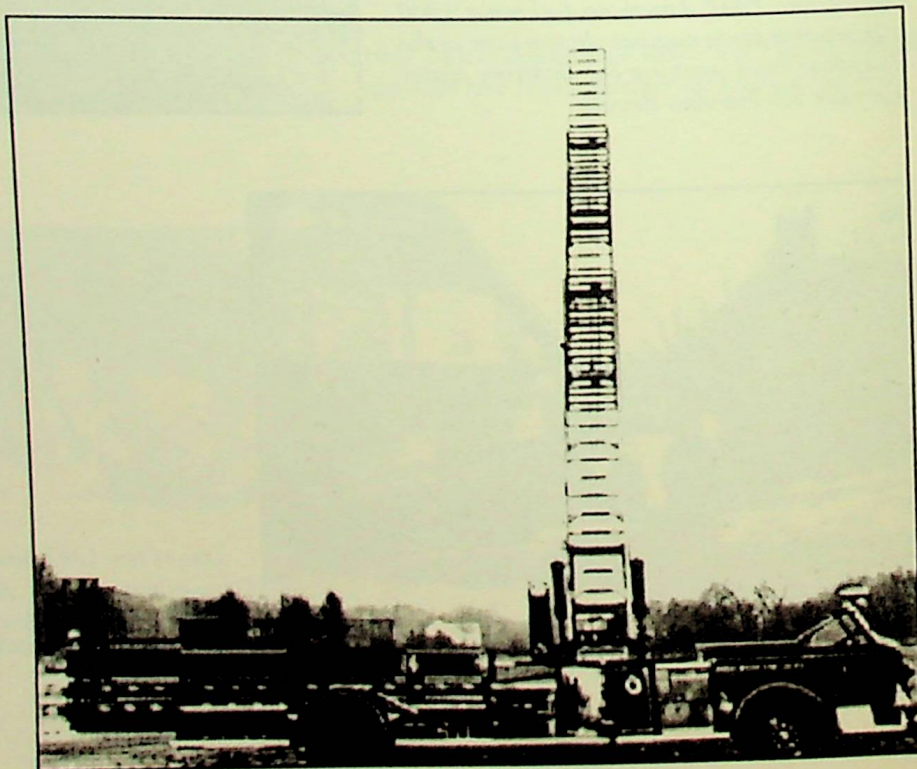
In 1954 a small GMC hose tender rig was

purchased. It was converted into a pumper in 1955 with the addition of a 500 gallon-per-minute pump. For several years this rig ran "first due" to all fire alarms out of Headquarters. Prior to being sold in the late 1970's, it was assigned to the Civil Defense Auxiliary Firemen and was housed by the Street Department in a garage on Chestnut Street.

During the 1950's, all apparatus was equipped with two-way radio communications. Prior to this, the only means of communicating with Headquarters while at a fire scene was via the Police or by use of telephone or telegraph keys in the fire alarm boxes.



*The 1948 American LaFrance 65-foot aerial ladder and the 1954 GMC 500 gallon-per-minute engine at a fire call on East Ridgewood Avenue in front of the former Citizens Bank building.*



*The 1948 American LaFrance 65-foot aerial ladder truck when new. Note the simple screw-down stabilizing jacks.*



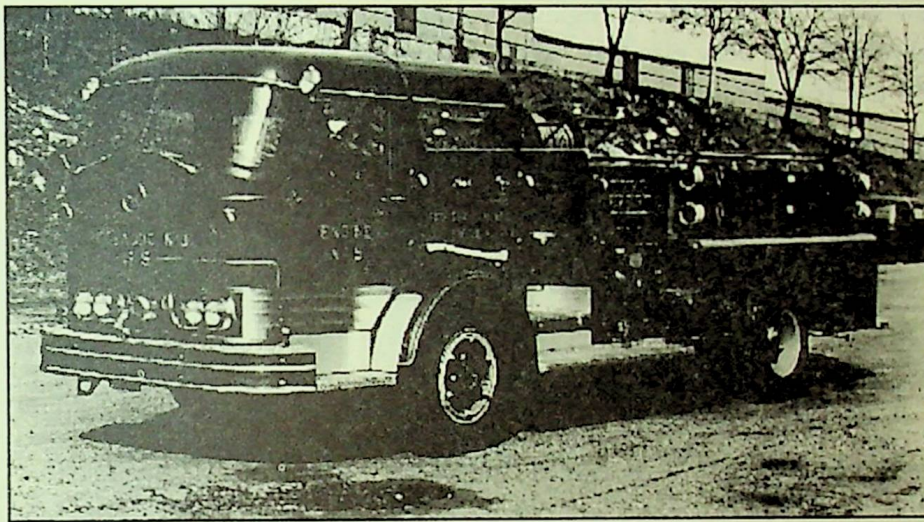
## THE MACK PUMPERS

The first in a series of several Mack Pumpers was purchased in 1962. This was a cab-forward design with a 750 gallon-per-minute pump. In addition to the front seat passengers being enclosed in the cab, the jump seats (small bucket seats facing rearward) were under a canopy. The cost of this engine was \$29,000.

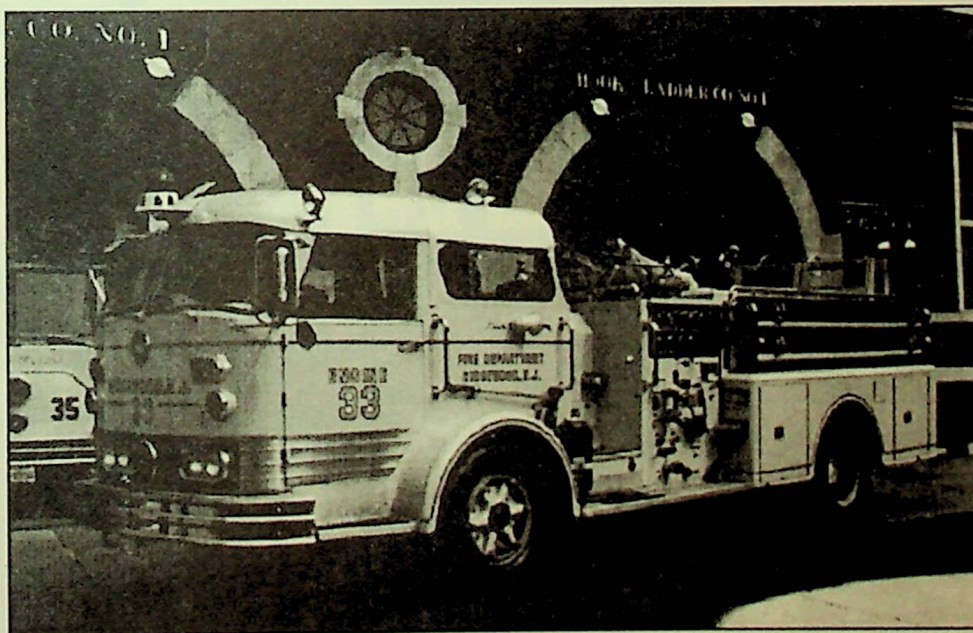
In 1965 another Model C-95 Mack Engine was purchased for \$34,000. It was almost identical to the 1962 rig, but had a larger 1,000 gallon-per-minute pump and power steering. Both of the Mack

rigs had hinged windshields added to the rear hose bed to protect the men riding on the "back step."

Over the years, fire apparatus continued to be built larger and larger. With the advent of closed cabs, height became a consideration when ordering an apparatus. For example, height was a critical factor at the West Glen Avenue Firehouse. Because of low door and ceiling clearance, warning lights on the cab roof had to be mounted low and large deluge gun nozzles on the rear of the engine had to be fastened down to clear the doorway.



*1962 Mack 750 gallon-per-minute engine as delivered from the factory*



*1965 Mack 1000 gallon-per-minute engine after refurbishing with diesel and automatic transmission. Picture taken in 1983 when rig was returned to service.*



## DIESEL POWER

The first diesel-powered apparatus was purchased from American LaFrance in 1971 at a cost of \$56,000. This was an aerial ladder truck with a 100-foot mid-ship mounted three fly-section steel ladder, powered by a Detroit 6-71 diesel. It has a four-speed manual transmission and three manually operated tormentors to stabilize the truck. This was also the first Ridgewood truck with air brakes, which are considered to be much better than the vacuum-assisted hydraulic brakes. A 100-foot aerial ladder is required in Ridgewood to reach the roofs of several buildings in the Central Business District. It is also needed for many other buildings due to the set backs and ladder placement angles required. The 100-foot ladder is very effective on ladder pipe operations due to increased height and

reach. This truck also has the distinction of being the last rig to have the traditional bell mounted on the front, and the last one to carry a life net.

In 1977, a Mack 1,250 gallon-per-minute pumper was placed in service. This diesel rig was the new CF600 model with a square-looking cab. These newer type rigs also came with air brakes and numerous compartments which allowed expensive equipment to be stored away from weather and theft. This engine was the first to have small hose beds, called "crosslays," above the pump panel. The crosslays carried 200 feet of 1½ inch hose that was pre-connected to the pump and had a nozzle attached to the end. This greatly reduced the time required to put the hose into operation and attack a fire.



*1971 American LaFrance 100-foot aerial ladder. It is now in reserve status as Ladder #44.*



*1982 Mack 1250 gallon-per-minute engine. Currently Engine #33 housed at West Glen Avenue firestation.*



*1971 American LaFrance 100-foot aerial ladder performing ladder drill on North Broad Street, February, 1972. (J. Monton, E. Fetkowitz, and R. Missel)*

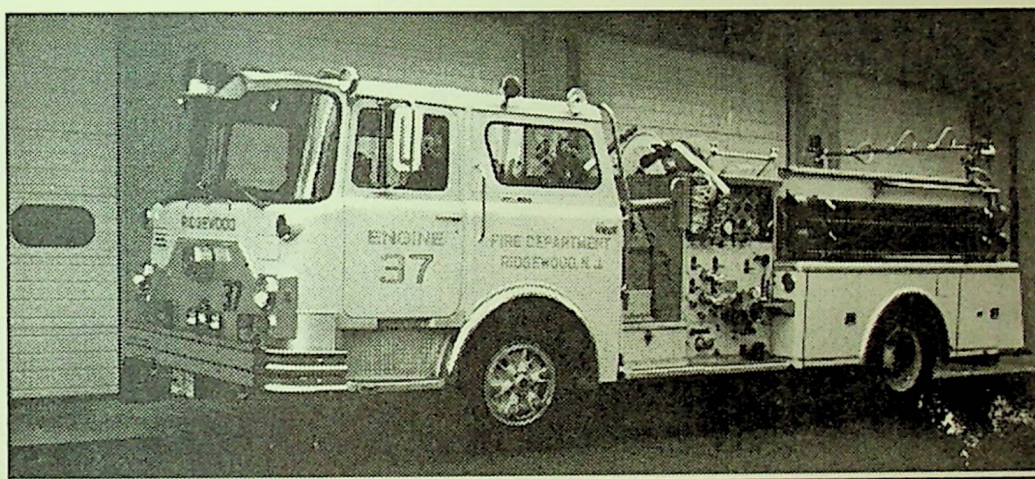


Perhaps the most striking and obvious change in Ridgewood fire apparatus began with this rig: it was painted lime green! National studies had been done concerning visibility and safety of fire apparatus at night and in bad weather situations; experiments were conducted using different colors and it was found that this lime green color was most visible in low light conditions. At the time many towns and cities began choosing lime green (or lime yellow) as the safest. More recent studies now indicate that lime green is no safer than other colors, but Ridgewood has elected to stay with the color.

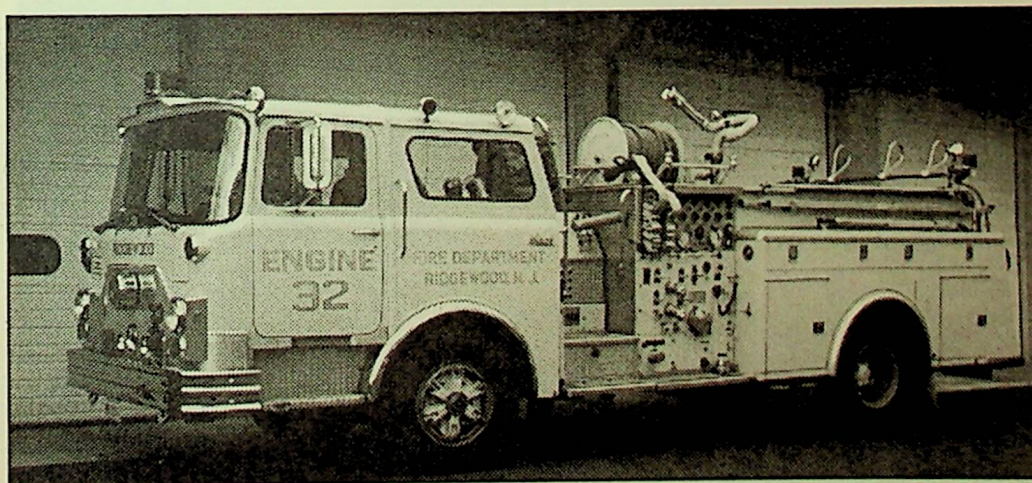
In 1979, another Mack 1,250 gallon-per-minute pumper was purchased. This rig, and all future apparatus, was equipped with an automatic trans-

mission. It also had a "stang" deluge gun mounted on the rig that was piped directly to the pump.

The last Mack truck was delivered in 1982. Also a 1,250 gallon-per-minute pumper, it was ordered and designed to fit the West Glen Avenue Firehouse. This engine is equipped with a generator that powers a unique piece of equipment known as a "stemlight." This is a flood light unit on top of the engine with a collapsible shaft that extends upward 10 feet; on top are rotating lights which warn distant approaching vehicles. This is particularly useful on sections of Route 17 where speeding traffic comes over the crest of a hill towards an emergency scene. This pumper is now housed in reserve status at Engine Company #31 on West Glen Avenue.



*1977 Mack 1250 gallon-per-minute engine. Currently Engine #37*



*1979 Mack 1250 gallon-per-minute engine. Currently Engine #32*



## RESCUE VEHICLE

In 1986, Ridgewood purchased a light duty rescue truck manufactured by the Emergency One Company on a GMC chassis. Prior to this, the rescue equipment was jammed into the Tour Commander's vehicle or scattered on other apparatus, making it very hard to get all the necessary rescue equipment to a scene. This unit has four-wheel drive and is equipped with a winch and a large generator. Flood lights are mounted on top for quick access, and even with its limited space, it carries a wide array of rescue tools, including the Phoenix "Jaws of Life," air bags, porta-power hydraulic set, wood cribbing, long duration breathing equipment, and much more.

During the 1980's, the Fire Department began carrying 1½-inch hose on pumping apparatus, replacing the 1½-inch and 2½-inch hoses as fire attack lines. The 1½-inch attack lines were fast

becoming the new standard in fire service during this period. They can deliver close to the same gallonage as the standard 2½-inch attack line, but they are lighter and more maneuverable, thereby requiring less manpower to operate. This is important as engine company crew sizes drop to as low as three men.

## THE PIERCE FIRE EQUIPMENT

In 1989 the first Pierce fire apparatus was purchased: a 1,250 gallon-per-minute engine. For safety, the entire cab (including the rear jump seats) is enclosed with doors due to new PEOSHA requirements. All firefighters are required to ride inside and no one is permitted to ride the "rear step" as was common until the late 1970's. This rig, like all future rigs, has the upper portion of the cab painted white, with a wide reflective stripe



*1986 Emergency One light rescue truck on a GMC chassis. Currently Rescue #42.*



*1989 Pierce 1250 gallon-per-minute engine. Currently Engine #35.*



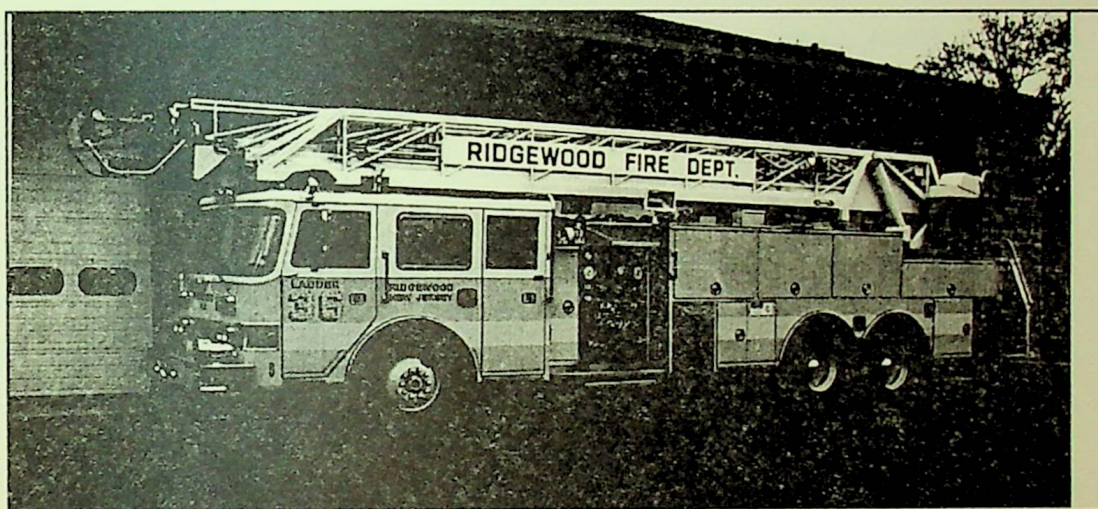
around the body. Specialized first aid equipment, such as a trauma kit and resuscitator, are carried on this engine because it responds to emergency medical calls. The cost of the apparatus was \$164,000.

To replace the aging American LaFrance aerial ladder, a Pierce 105-foot aerial ladder was purchased in 1991. This truck is powered by a Detroit 8V-92 turbo-diesel that produces 450 horsepower. The apparatus weight is 60,000 pounds less equipment. The ladder strength and hydraulics allow for a 500-pound tip weight to be picked up with the ladder fully extended six degrees below horizontal. This is a far cry from the old LaFrances that could not pick themselves up from a horizontal extension.

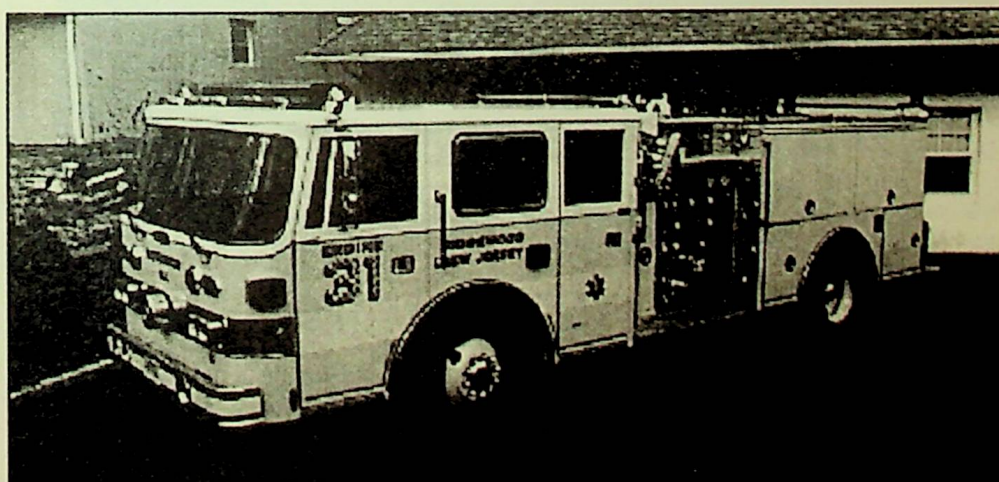
In order to supply water for the pre-piped ladder deluge gun, this rig is equipped with a 1,500 gallon-per-minute single-stage pump. This truck

incorporates the latest in safety technology. It has four hydraulic outrigger arms in the rear to stabilize the truck when the aerial ladder is in operation. It carries 174 feet of assorted ground ladders, roof and rescue saws, numerous hand tools, and a generator to supply power to several flood lights. To carry the weight of this vehicle, it has two rear axles. The cost of the truck was \$305,000.

The last piece of apparatus purchased by the Fire Department is a 1994 Pierce 1,250 gallon-per-minute pumper. This engine is the Arrow model with the same cab as Engine #35 and the Pierce aerial ladder truck. It is assigned to Engine Company #31 on West Glen Avenue. It was ordered without a booster hose reel, and has a different mounting mechanism for the top-mounted deluge gun so that it would clear the low ceiling of the fire station. The price for this rig was \$192,000.



*1991 Pierce 105-foot aerial ladder, currently Ladder #36.*



*1994 Pierce 1250 gallon-per-minute engine, currently Engine #31.*



Today's engine fleet includes two career-manned engines, one volunteer-manned engine, and two reserve engines. The department also cur-

rently has in service one aerial ladder truck and one in reserve, one light-duty rescue truck, and one utility vehicle for the Shift/Incident Commander.

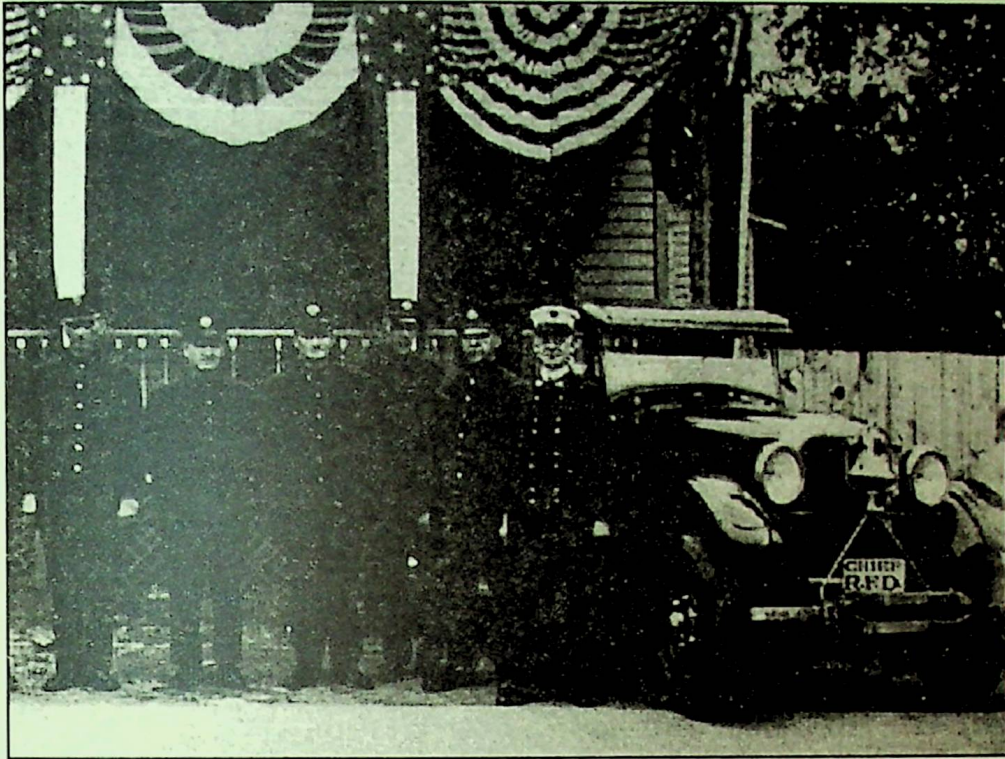


*1988 Dodge Ramcharger used by the Shift/Incident Commander, then Car #38.*

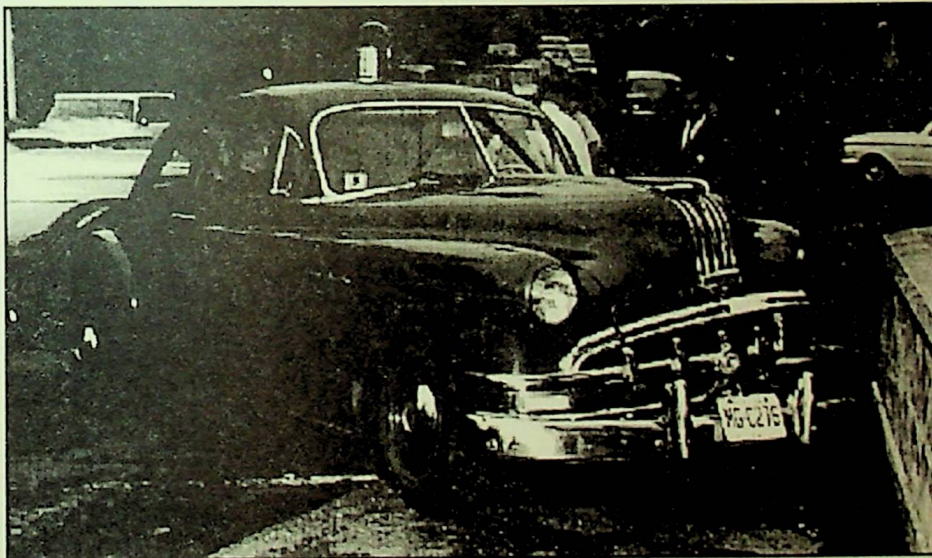


*1988 Chevrolet Step Van Emergency Response Unit. This truck carries hazardous material equipment, scuba gear, and a mobile radio communications station. Currently #34.*



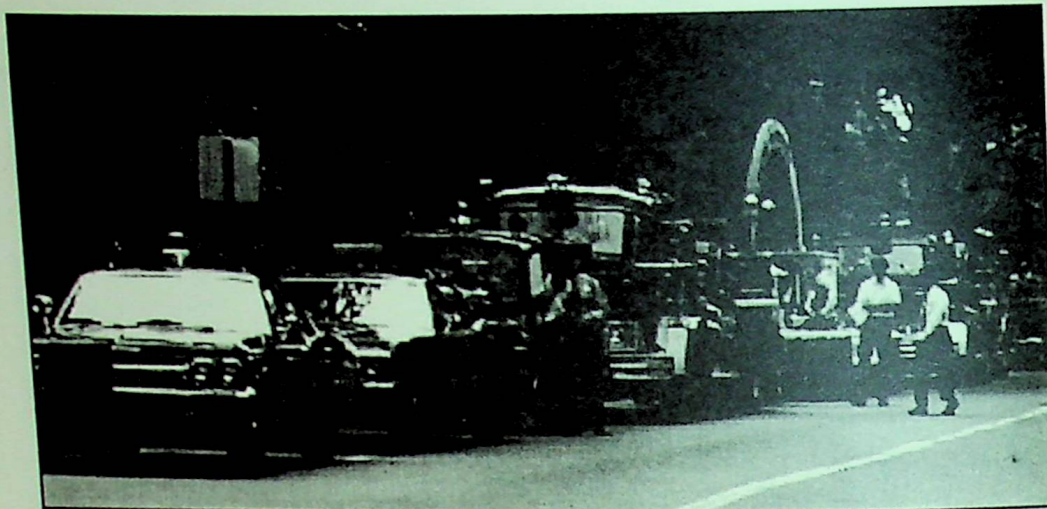


*The Chief's car, a Buick, in 1926. Chief Herman Tice, in the white hat, is standing next to car.*



*An accident involving the Tour Commander's car while responding to an alarm on June 9, 1961. It occurred at Glen and Maple Avenues while being driven by Captain Thomas Keeley.*

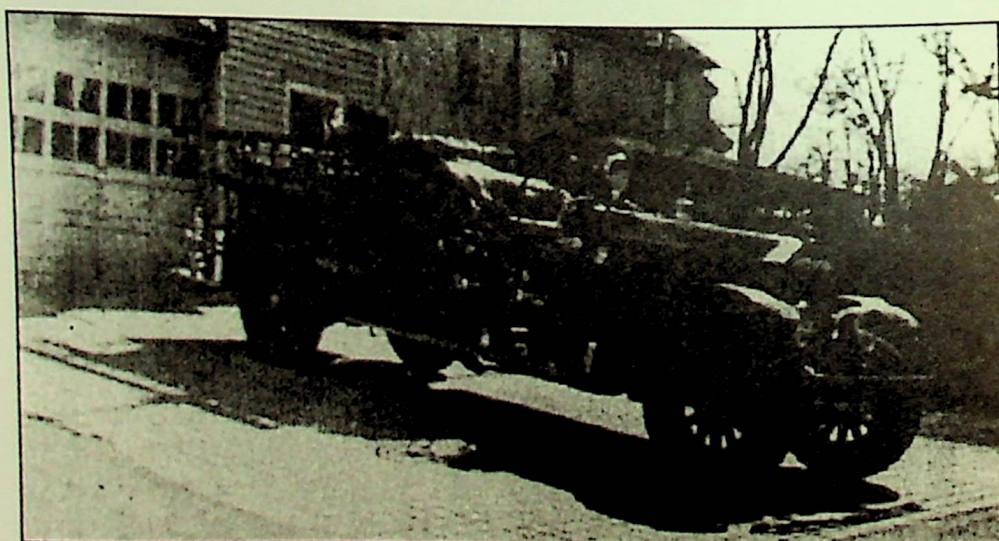




*Fourth of July parade in 1972. Firefighter Bob Waddington giving the Tour Commander's van a last minute sprucing up while Deputy Chief Keeley walks past the float.*

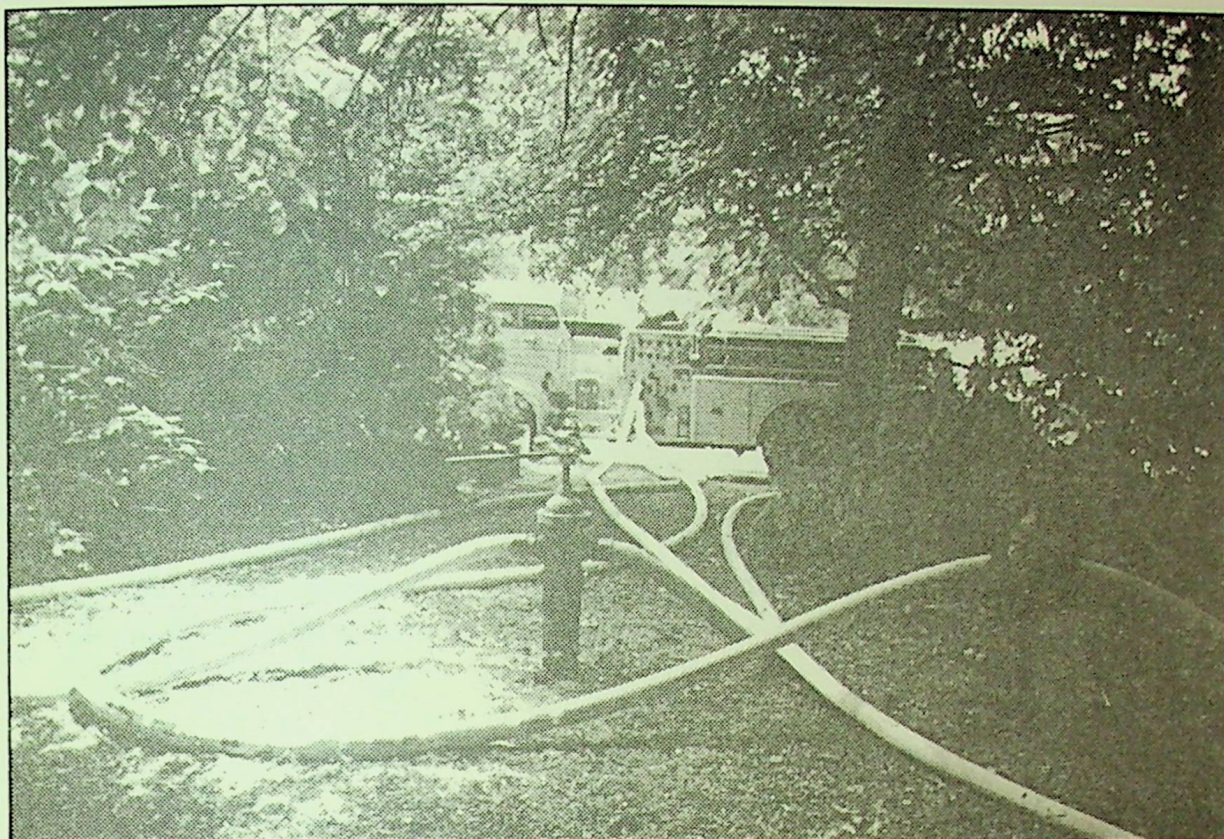


*1925 American LaFrance ladder truck parked in Station Plaza in 1932*

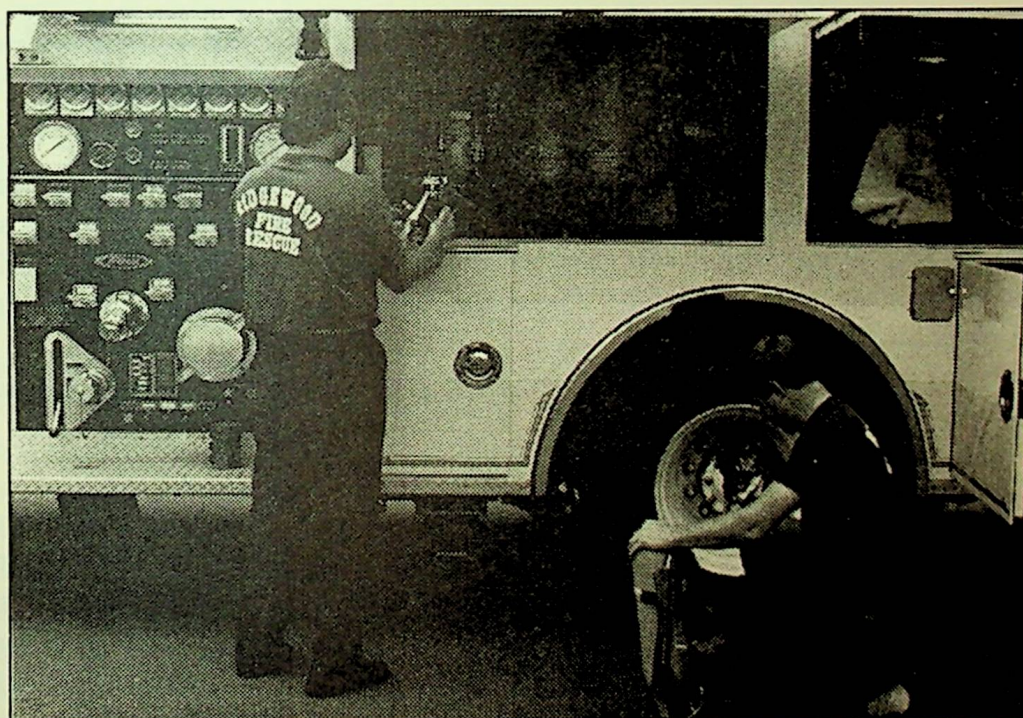


*1928 American LaFrance 1000 gallon-per-minute Pumper in front of the Circle Avenue Firehouse*





*Ridgewood's apparatus is sometimes called upon for duty other than firefighting! During the long, dry spell of the summer of 1988, firemen pumped water purchased from the Hackensack Water Company from the hydrant shown on left into a Ridgewood Water Company hydrant on right. Ridgewood firefighters manned a pump at Linwood Avenue and Paramus Road 24 hours a day for three days.*



*Firefighters perform daily checks of the apparatus, including the self-contained breathing units, shown here being checked by firefighters Greg Hillerman and Bob Hyslop.*





# MAJOR FIRES

The inadequacy of the old Bucket Brigades was clearly demonstrated in 1876 with the destruction of the Ridgewood Avenue hotel and again in the conflagration of 1881, which started in a barn used by J.J. Bogert for the storage of hay. The fire spread to the Franklin Hotel on Ridgewood Avenue and swept westward to Rock Avenue (now Broad Street) destroying a Wheelwright Shop and other small buildings and shops, continuing southward on Broad Street to the area of Hudson Street, where it destroyed the Whritnour and Colfax's store.

"On January 25, 1884 Ridgewood was threatened by a near conflagration which may have proved disastrous. Mrs. Lydia Van Buskirk's house on Robinson Lane started on fire. The cause was an overheated wood stove. Butcher Crouter and others came to the rescue. The fire which was making rapid progress was arrested with the timely arrival of the neighbors. Had the fire not been stopped in time there is no telling how far it may have spread. Ridgewood has no fire apparatus."

*Bergen County Democrat*

Again, in 1889, a portion of the business district was destroyed including a meat market, two feed and grain stores, the Shuart Building, and slight damage to the Zabriskie Building.

"On October 3, 1890 a large framed house located in the Ridgewood Heights which was owned by Mrs. Siebel was destroyed by fire. The fire was reported at 7:30 p.m. and is supposed to be incendiary in nature. The building unoccupied was valued at \$4,000. There was only \$3,000 of fire insurance on the structure."

*Bergen County Democrat*

## FIRES PRIOR TO DEPARTMENT FORMATION

Following the fires of the late 1880's and early 1890's, citizens realized the need for better fire protection and began discussion of the formation of a modern volunteer fire department. It was difficult, however, to raise the funds required to form a fire department and purchase the necessary equipment by voluntary subscription of money from the citizens.

With the incorporation of Ridgewood in 1894, the Village could now establish its own fire department. The fire department was organized in

1897, and by 1898 was equipped with a ladder truck and various tools. On September 14, 1898 a Holloway Chemical Engine with two forty-gallon tanks was ordered, to be delivered early in 1899. On March 11, 1899, the newly delivered chemical engine responded to its first working fire on Prospect Street, just around the corner from the Hudson Street Fire Station. The following is a portion of the original newspaper article detailing the event:





*On March 9, 1881, a late night fire destroyed a major part of the business district. The fire occurred prior to the formation of the fire department, and consequently there was no fire apparatus in the Village. The fire started in a barn behind the Franklin House (a hotel) on East Ridgewood Avenue. The fire traveled westerly on East Ridgewood Avenue, then spread south on Rock Avenue (now South Broad Street). The fire destroyed the Franklin House, Ryersons Wheelwright, a blacksmith and paint establishment on East Ridgewood Avenue, and it consumed Ackers Shoemaker shop, a boarding house, Whritenour's Grocery, and several smaller buildings.*

## BUSINESS DISTRICT IN FLAMES

Saturday night's fire on Prospect Street demonstrated conclusively two things—the wisdom of the organization of a fire department in the Village and the need of a water system.

Fortunately, there had been a delay in the removal of the chemical engine back to the factory in Baltimore, and the apparatus was still at the firehouse, though in a somewhat dismantled condition, and some valuable time was lost in putting it together. When at the fire the chemical did good work and saved the Village from a disastrous conflagration.

The story of the fire in brief is as follows: Mr. Cammaratta, who occupied half of the last of the

one-story structures on Prospect Street as a shoe shop, left the Village on the 9 o'clock train for Newark. His premises were securely locked up and there was neither fire nor lamp burning therein. At 10:30 those in the vicinity were startled by a loud explosion in the building. Those who reached it almost immediately found the back door open and the interior of the apartment in flames.

A rush was made for the Fire House, the alarm sounded, and the members of the company responded with commendable promptness.

Within five minutes the truck was at the scene of the fire and the boys were fighting the flames like veterans. A half dozen remained at the Fire



House and put the dismantled chemical engine together, but before this could be done the flames were spreading in the directions, east and west.

First, it communicated to M.L. Gorlin's tailoring establishment, in the other half of the building occupied by Cammaratta, separated by a thin board partition. Mr. Gorlin, who lives in the rear of the store had retired for the night, and in the excitement simply escaped with his life, saving nothing, being even minus his hat.

Almost at the same time the fire communicated with Mr. Benjamin Eglin's Blacksmith Shop and carriage factory on the other side. The building, a two-story structure, burned like tinder and the fire was fast eating its way toward his barn and residence on Hudson Street. The chemical engine had gotten into shape by this time, and the firemen devoted their energies to stopping the course of the fire in that direction and saving the barn, in which they succeeded. Before the arrival of the chemical engine, a bucket brigade did good work in the same direction.

In the meantime, the fire was spreading to the west and the building occupied by Mr. Demarost as a photographic and picture store was soon in flames, followed by the restaurant and bicycle establishment of Mr. Lawrence, who was in the rear of the restaurant taking a cup of coffee.

The next building in the path of the fire was occupied as a Chinese laundry and in order to stop the further spread of the flames it was decided to pull it down. This left a gap of about 25 feet which the firemen succeeded in preventing the flames from crossing.

In some as yet unaccountable way, a call for assistance was received in Paterson at 11:40 and at 12:15, Chemical No. 1 from that city arrived on the scene and placed itself under the direction of Chief O'Neill. With their assistance, the fire, which was now under control, was gradually extinguished leaving the smoldering ruins of four one-story and one two-story buildings on one side of Prospect Street and the ruins of the Chinese laundry on the other.

Saturday night's fire was a good test of the caliber of our Village firemen and the efficiency of the former and the practical worth of the latter, that doubt was practically settled on this occasion, when the Village was saved from a disastrous fire.

It is unnecessary to say that our boys and the Paterson contingent fraternized. They were entertained at Coomb's confectionery with supper, but it is hoped that the next time they show their faces in Ridgewood it will be the occasion of festivity rather than fighting fire.

*Ridgewood News*  
March 17, 1899

## THE SCHOOL FIRES

Two serious fires early in the development of the Ridgewood Fire Department resulted in a major change in the Fire Department staffing structure. Both fires occurred in school buildings, and subsequently destroyed each. Because the fires happened less than a year apart and on the west side of the Village, the Board of Education was hard-pressed to find classroom space for all the displaced students. The fires had residents outraged and demanding better fire protection.

The first fire took place at Willard School on California Street on September 9, 1926. The school was erected in 1915 and was enlarged only one year before the fire. It contained eleven classrooms. The first phone call, which reported a fire near Avondale Road (two blocks away) was answered by Chief Tice at 4:31 a.m. The Fire Department was made up of volunteers except for

Chief Tice, who was partially paid. It was unclear if Chief Tice slept in the firehouse or had a fire phone in his home. Two more phone calls immediately followed confirming that the school was ablaze.

The Village had two firehouses at this time, Headquarters on Hudson Street and Engine Company #2 on Circle Avenue. The west side of town had no firehouse, as Engine Company #31 at Glen Avenue and Monroe Street was not opened until the late 1940's. According to newspaper accounts, passage to the west side of town was accomplished by driving under a narrow one lane underpass at the site of the present Franklin Avenue underpass. Hence the fire had several factors on its side as it quickly grew in intensity.

News reports stated, "The blaze, when the firemen arrived, was shooting four ways from the



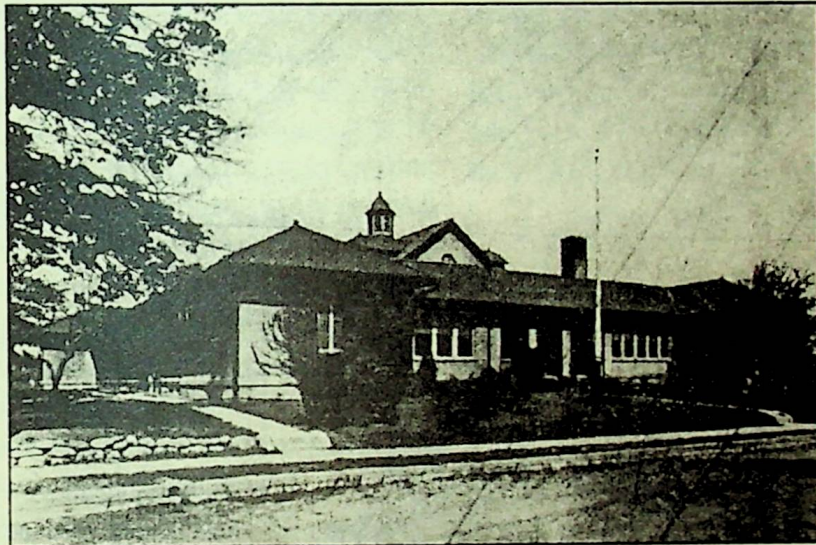
building. Although on the south side it seemed more advanced. The firemen battled bravely but to no avail and the structure was soon leveled to the ground." The cause of the fire was officially listed as unknown. The fire was on a Thursday, and by the following Monday the Board of Education had made temporary plans to relocate students to other schools and churches.

The second fire occurred just nine months later, on June 6, 1927 at the Monroe Street School on South Monroe Street and Washington Place (this school is now known as the George Washington Middle School). The building was 2½ stories high, constructed in 1905, enlarged in 1911, and contained fourteen classrooms.

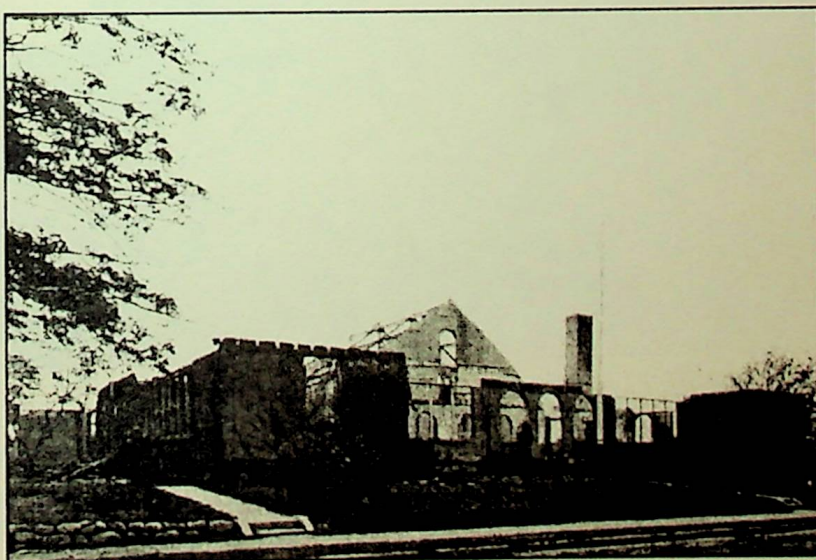
At 10:10 p.m. a phone call was made to the Ridgewood Fire Department (which was still a

volunteer department). Fireman William Baker answered the call and was informed that the Monroe Street School was ablaze. The alarm was sounded and firemen ran to the station from all directions. According to news accounts, "The last tap of the gong was not stilled before the apparatus was on its way to the fire." Several minutes elapsed before firemen reached the school. Smoke was issuing from the north door and flames could be seen licking their way up from the basement. One hose line was stretched and a stream directed through the doorway and basement windows. But suddenly thick smoke poured from under the front roof. Before a stream of water could be directed upon it, flames broke through the roof.

The firemen placed ladders against the front of the building and a hose stream was played



*Willard School at Morningside Avenue and California Street prior to the fire. It was built in 1915.*



*Willard School after the disastrous fire on September 9, 1926.*

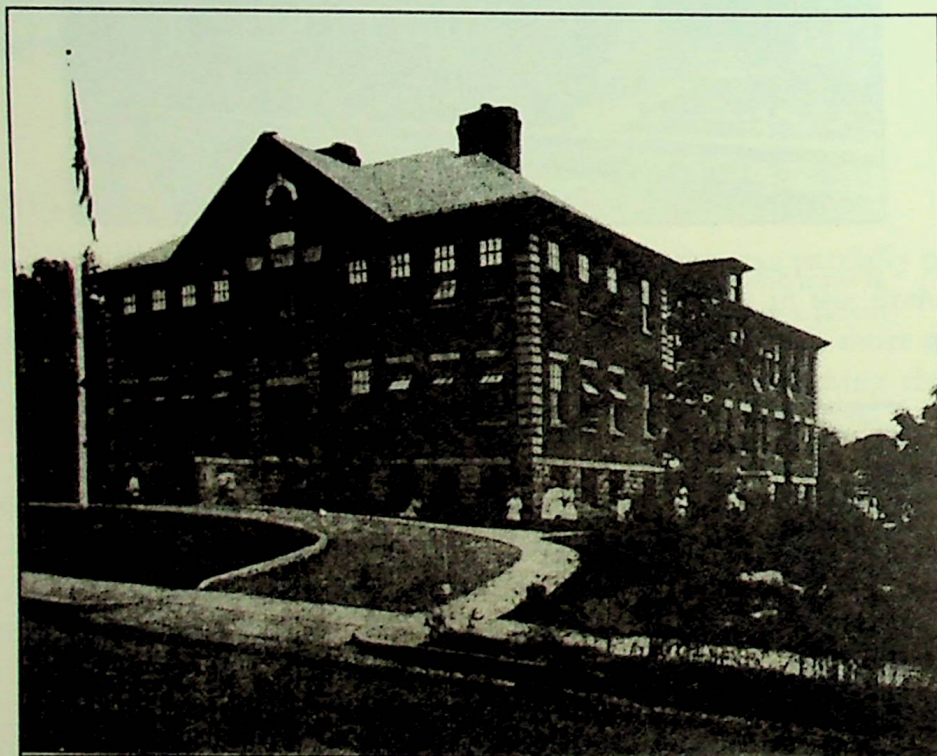


through the second floor windows. At this point, a call went out for Engine Company #2 on Circle Avenue to respond. Help was also requested from Ho-Ho-Kus and Glen Rock. A number of firemen from Hawthorne arrived shortly thereafter, but without any apparatus. For some reason Chief Tice declined to accept their offer of assistance. Despite that fact, a number of Hawthorne firemen pitched in to the work at hand and rendered valuable assistance.

Additional hose lines were set up, and water played onto all four sides of the school. But constant breaks in the hose tended to lessen the pressure and made it difficult to get streams to do much more than hold the flames down. The flames, which were licking the support beams of the roof, caused the roof to collapse. This showered the firemen and hundreds of spectators with sparks. Flames shot up through the opening and lit the sky to such an extent that it attracted the attention of people from miles around. When the roof fell in, Chief Tice was standing in front of the school. He had to flatten himself against the wall to avoid being struck by the falling cornice.

Firemen remained on the scene for thirteen hours, but nonetheless, the school was heavily damaged. As in the Willard School fire, no cause could be determined. Mayor Hopper referred to the Monroe Street fire as another calamity to strike the Village. He thanked the firemen from Glen Rock, Ho-Ho-Kus and Hawthorne who assisted. Superintendent of Schools, Ira W. Travell, began the job of finding room to house the students in other schools and churches.

With fires consuming two schools in less than one year, residents were becoming outraged with the Board of Village Commissioners. Many felt it was high time for the Village to hire paid firemen. In an open letter to the citizens, Mr. S. Willson Richards writes "The Willard School fire showed conclusively that our Village was not protected adequately against the attack of fire but no steps have been taken in the past nine months to profit by what experience that pictured. Now the Monroe Street School fire again plainly indicates that Ridgewood has long since outgrown our Volunteer Fire Department." Consequently the first full-time paid firefighter was hired October 28, 1928.



*The Monroe Street School at South Monroe Street and Washington Place prior to the fire on June 6, 1927. The school was built in 1905. No photos are available of the building after the fire.*



## MUSTER AND BAUMAN DRUGSTORE FIRE

The Muster and Bauman Drugstore, one of the best equipped pharmacies in the state, was the scene of a serious fire. The blaze at 76 E. Ridgewood Avenue, according to *The Ridgewood News*, "Tested the mettle of the firemen, who took terrible punishment before they got the better of it." This fire occurred before the Fire Department owned any breathing apparatus or air masks.

At ten minutes after noon on Saturday, January 3, 1942, Police Officer Theodore Bouma noticed smoke coming from the store. He pulled Fire Alarm Box #21 at Ridgewood Avenue and Oak Street; at the same time Mr. Bauman, one of the Drugstore partners, opened a cellar door after smelling smoke and was met with a flash of flame. According to Mr. Bauman, "in the twink of an eye the fire apparatus were pulling up in front of the building."

The article continues, "The first part of the firemen's attack on the blaze was most spectacular and fraught with great danger. As the sidewalk cellar doors were opened, volumes of black smoke poured out. Every few seconds there were muffled reports as bottles of alcohol, stored in the cellar, exploded. The firemen had their lungs filled with a mixture of gases from the burning chemicals and staggered out gasping and choking." An inhalator was set up at the scene, and as many as twenty fire-fighters were overcome and received oxygen.

Firemen attacked the fire from the front and rear of the store. At one point, the first floor buckled and later dropped into the cellar. Shortly after their arrival, the men realized "A fireman's worst nightmare," that the flames were traveling unchecked through the walls to the two upper floors. The 1925 Ladder Truck had been positioned out front, and its 75-foot wooden ladder along with several ground ladders, was raised. Firemen climbed up and smashed windows of apartments, and thus were able to enter and fight the progress of the blaze between the wall partitions.

Fire Chief Arthur De Mouth was in the thick of the smoke and fumes for hours, and repeatedly cleared out his lungs with the aid of the respirator inhalator. He was finally ordered to quit by Dr. Percy Fisher, and was taken to his home on Crest Road in a police car. His condition was such that he consented to go home, but not before saying that "it was the toughest fire that the Department ever had and that he was proud of his men. The

grit of the suffering firemen was amazing. As soon as their lungs were cleared of the fumes that partly knocked them out, most of them returned to their hazardous job of putting out a fire with more determination than ever." It should be noted that three years later, in 1945, Fire Chief Arthur De Mouth died of heart and lung disease.

According to *The Ridgewood News*, Mr. Bauman said that "many of the drugs in the store and cellar may not be easily replaced due to their scarcity in this country. For example he said the store had two years supply of Belladonna on hand, and it is now extremely difficult to get this drug. This particular supply was imported. As soon as the alarm was sounded, the laboratory staff rescued some of the more valuable lab instruments and carried them to safety. The other business partner, William Muster, risked his life several times by working his way into the store through dense smoke, saving what he could. Thankfully he was able to save armfuls of old prescriptions and locked them up safely in another store." The loss to the building and contents was estimated to be in the neighborhood of \$50,000. The cause of the fire was believed to be an overheated furnace.



*The Muster and Bauman Drugstore fire at 76 East Ridgewood Avenue. The firemen had to "eat smoke" as they entered the building without modern day "air packs."*



## HOUSE FIRE—435 HILLCREST ROAD

Fires which result in injury or death are tragedies to those involved, but when young children perish, it is especially heart wrenching. This was the case shortly before 1:00 a.m. on Friday, August 31, 1945. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Gessinger and their children, Joan, age two and Robert, age five, were asleep on the second floor of their home at 435 Hillcrest Road. There were no smoke detectors in those days to give early warning of a fire. A deadly fire producing toxic smoke and hot gases began on the first floor of the house. When Mr. and Mrs. Gessinger finally realized their home was on fire, they were barely able to escape themselves. Entry to their sleeping children's rooms was blocked by heat and smoke.

After receiving a third party call through the operator, which gave the location as 435 Ridgewood Avenue, firemen received a call from an Upper Boulevard resident confirming the fire was on Hillcrest Road. The only firehouse in Ridgewood at this time was the Hudson Street Station. Station #31 at West Glen Avenue and Monroe Street, five blocks from the fire, was only in the planning stages. This fire, with its tragic results, was instrumental in expediting the opening of the new firehouse.

Once firefighters, under the command of Assistant Chief Henry Leuning, arrived at the scene they were directed to the rear bedrooms where the children slept. Ladders were raised, but according to newspaper accounts, firemen were driven back by the fierce heat in the rooms. Finally Fireman William Haldane was able to use a hook to pull the crib in which Joan was sleeping to the window and lift the child out. Fireman John Neuhs then got the boy and brought him down the ladder.

Firefighters using their inhalator/resuscitator worked over an hour in attempts to revive the children. At approximately 2:30 a.m. Dr. D.H. Russ Stoltz, the family physician, and Dr. William B. Wilson, the Fire Department physician, confirmed that both children were dead. Attention was now turned to the parents, who were suffering from shock.

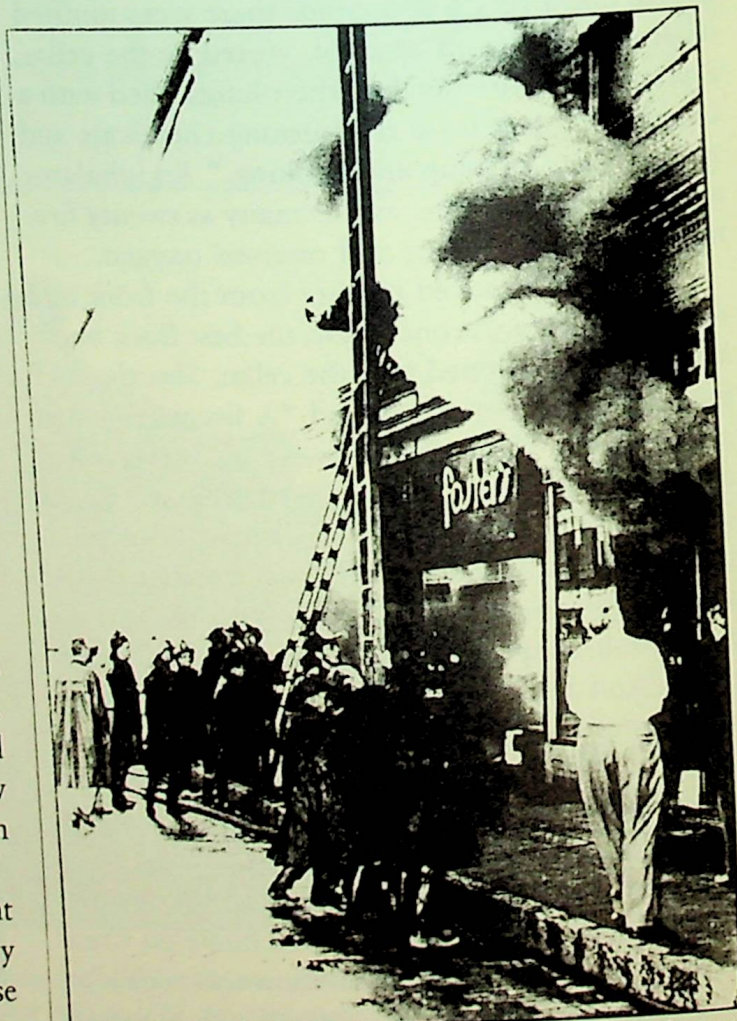
Meanwhile, the rest of the Fire Department was fighting the blaze. Three alarms were necessary to bring adequate personnel to the scene. Because of the limited manpower initially on the scene, Chief Leuning reported that while the rescue was

being attempted, "two hose streams were being used to hold back the heat and flames from the children's rooms. We were thinking only of the children and we had to let the rest of the house go."

The entire house was gutted, and all furniture and clothing was lost. The fire apparently started in a sun room beneath the children's rooms. When Fire Commissioner Rurode entered the house several hours later, he said "A glass partition in the sun room looked like melted sugar." The cause of the fire could not be determined.

## FOSTERS AND WINCHELLS FIRE

On Friday, October 1, 1948, a fire of unknown origin broke out in the basement partition wall between Winchells Gift Shop at 70 East Ridgewood Avenue and Fosters Paint and Hardware at 74 East Ridgewood Avenue. While patrolling East Ridgewood Avenue, Patrolman T. Bouma observed smoke coming from the stores at 6:41 a.m. He reported his observation directly to Fire Headquarters, which at the time was right around the corner.



Firemen raise ladders to gain entry and ventilate smoke at the Fosters-Winchell fire at 70-74 East Ridgewood Avenue.



While apparatus responded, box #21 was transmitted over the air horns to recall off duty men and volunteers. Arriving firefighters were met with dense smoke and flames emanating from the basement, eventually traveling to the third floor. Nine hose lines were needed to extinguish the fire, which was eagerly fed by chemical and paint products from the hardware store. The 75-foot aerial ladder, as well as numerous ground ladders, was utilized to access the three floors from the front and rear. The second and third floors contained apartments, and residents had to be quickly helped to safety.

Both Fosters and Winchells sustained heavy damage. The Ridgewood Pharmacy (Baumans) at 76 E. Ridgewood Avenue suffered light water damage to the contents of the cellar, and slight smoke and heat damage to the laboratory on the first floor balcony. The pharmacy was the scene of an equally serious fire six years earlier. No civilians were reported injured, but seventeen firefighters were hurt.

#### ZABRISKIE LUMBERYARD FIRE

Few Village residents will remember a lumberyard on South Van Dien Avenue. This is because on Sunday, February 26, 1950, a fire broke out, destroying the business. Currently the property,

which is at 304 South Van Dien Avenue, is occupied by the Van Dyk Manor Nursing Home.

At 6:47 a.m. on a cold Sunday, firemen received an alarm from Box #235 at South Van Dien Avenue and Laurel Road, reporting a fire at the Zabriskie Lumberyard. The lumberyard was located at the rear of the property, with Peter L. Zabriskie's (the owner of the lumberyard) residence in front. When firemen arrived, they found the frame buildings at the lumber business in flames. Hose was immediately laid from three nearby hydrants, and eventually a total of 4,100 feet of hose was used to quell the fire.

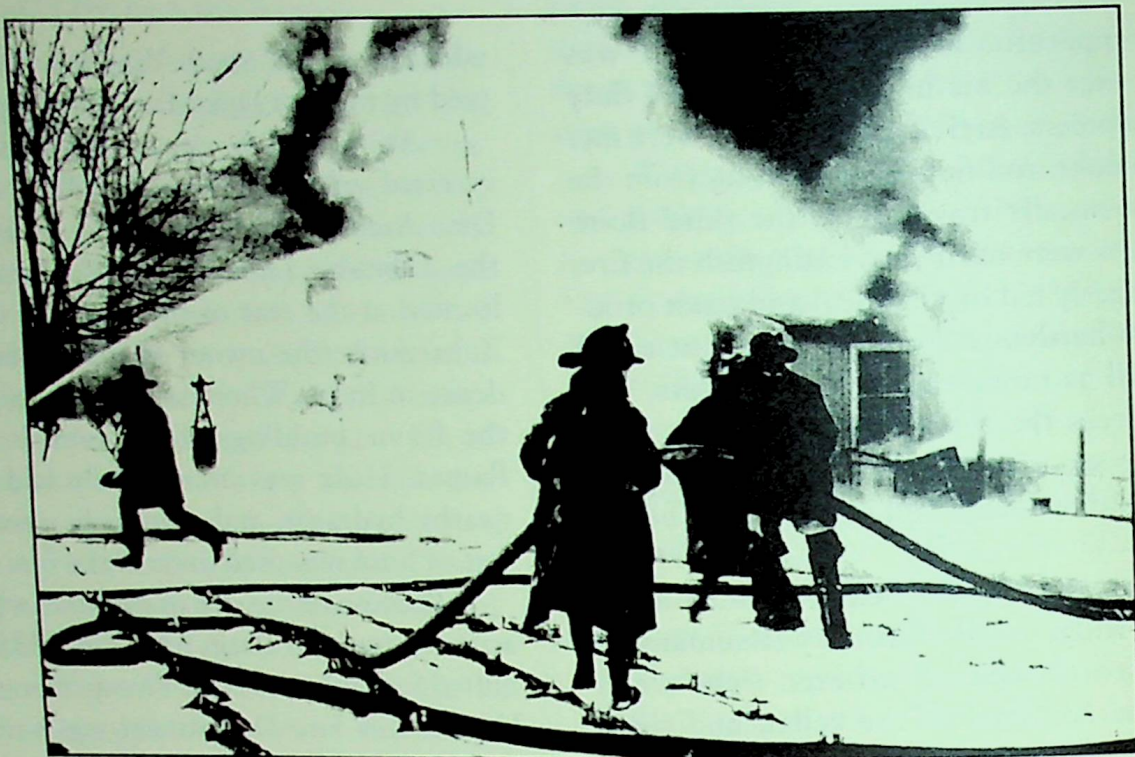
Because of the size of the blaze when firemen arrived, a second alarm from Box #235 was transmitted four minutes later. Twenty minutes later the Ho-Ho-Kus Fire Department was summoned to the scene by Chief Vance, who was assisted by Assistant Chief Haldane. They also requested the Wyckoff, Midland Park and Paramus Fire Departments to stand by in their quarters in case more help was needed at the scene, or other fire calls were received in the Village.

During the course of the fire, flames spread to Mr. Zabriskie's home, scorching the roof and rear of the house. Also damaged was a garage to the south at 312 South Van Dien Avenue, and a home at 288 South Van Dien to the north. Thirteen firefighters



*A lumberyard burns. An early morning blaze destroyed the Zabriskie Lumberyard at 304 South Van Dien Avenue in 1950. The location is now occupied by the Van Dyk Manor Nursing Home.*





*Firemen struggle with large hose lines in freezing weather while attempting to control the blaze at Zabriskie Lumberyard.*

were injured fighting the fire, many suffering from exposure to the cold. In those days, a fireman's gear consisted only of a rubber raincoat and unlined rubber boots. In addition, 350 feet of hose was burned, and there was burn damage to two apparatus and a cracked windshield from the heat on one.

Firefighters were on the scene for almost twelve hours before they returned to quarters. Fire Commissioner Faber authorized the hiring of a bulldozer to help tear the buildings down and check for remaining fire. The cause of the fire was unknown, and damage to the lumberyard alone was estimated at \$285,000.

#### HOUSE FIRE—64 GLENWOOD ROAD

Tragedy once again struck a Ridgewood family in the early morning hours of July 7, 1956. It was frighteningly similar to the fire on August 31, 1945 in which two children perished. Shortly after 1:00 a.m., while John and Virginia Glenn and their three children, John, Jr., age two, Virginia, age one, and Gerald, age five weeks, slept, a fire started in a living room sofa in their home at 64 Glenwood Road. This fire occurred before the invention of smoke detectors.

Mr. Glenn reportedly was awakened by dense smoke in his second floor bedroom. When both parents got up to investigate, they found the hallway leading to the children's rooms full of smoke

and fumes. The parents' bedroom door had been closed, while the two doors to the children's rooms were open, letting in the smoke, gases, and superheated air. With access to the children's rooms and the stairway cut off, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn narrowly escaped to the front porch roof. Their screams of horror awakened neighbors. Meanwhile, Mr. Glenn attempted to enter the window of the eldest son's room from the porch roof, but after he broke the window, heat and smoke drove him back. One neighbor called in the alarm to the Fire Department, but in her excitement forgot to give the address and hung up. A telephone operator was able to trace the call, but not without considerable delay to firefighters during the first few critical minutes of the growing fire. John Nelson, a neighbor, and Police Officer Anthony Cortazzo attempted to enter the front door to reach the children, but were unable to do so because of the flames and smoke. Nelson and another neighbor, Gus Zimmerman, retrieved ladders and placed them against the house. Cortazzo climbed one and broke a window to a second floor bedroom, but again was driven back by heat and smoke.

Meanwhile, firefighters were responding from the two Village fire stations. Engine Company #31 located on West Glen Avenue was only one-half mile from the scene, but due to the size of the department, was staffed by only two firefighters. A



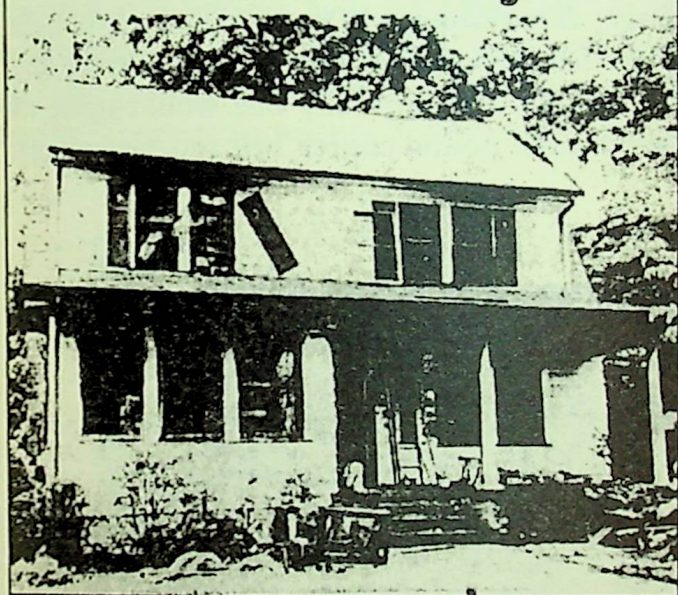
new policy was adopted immediately after the fire stating that no engine company would be manned by less than three firefighters.

When the first firemen arrived, they rescued the hysterical parents from the porch roof, which was becoming surrounded by heat and smoke. Mr. Glenn shouted to firemen that the children were in the two side bedrooms. "The first floor was an inferno" stated newspaper accounts. "Entry could only be gained after firemen reduced the flames by shooting water into the upper and lower floors." Chief William Haldane organized a rescue attempt, and had Lieutenants Abe Banta and Tom Keeley, along with Fireman Al Clark, don air masks and enter the children's rooms while hoses played on them. The children were removed via ladders before the fire reached them, but all three had suffocated from breathing the smoke and heated air.

Nonetheless, firefighters and police officers attempted to revive the children with artificial respiration and oxygen. The parents, who were watching this, collapsed in shock. The little bodies were later pronounced dead by Doctors W. H. Pyle and Louis DeLuca.

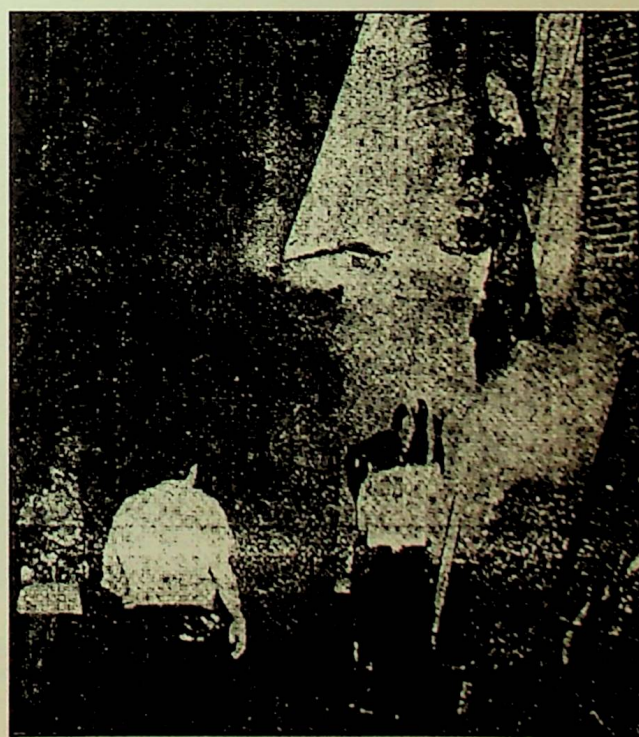
The fire was finally extinguished two hours after the initial alarm. Although flame damage was confined to the lower floor, the upstairs rooms were blackened by soot, and walls blistered from the intense heat. When firemen first arrived, they noticed blue/green flames coming from the living room windows. This was believed to be caused by the synthetic foam cushions and perhaps the recently applied wall finishings. No definite cause for the fire was determined, but it appeared it may have started in a living room sofa at the foot of the stairs, perhaps from a discarded cigarette.

### Scene of Fatal Fire in Ridgewood



*The house at 64 Glenwood Road where three children perished in a fire.*

*Firemen lower the body of one year-old Virginia Glenn. The fire at 64 Glenwood Road filled the children's rooms with heat and smoke before they could be rescued.*





## THE FIRST REFORMED CHURCH FIRE

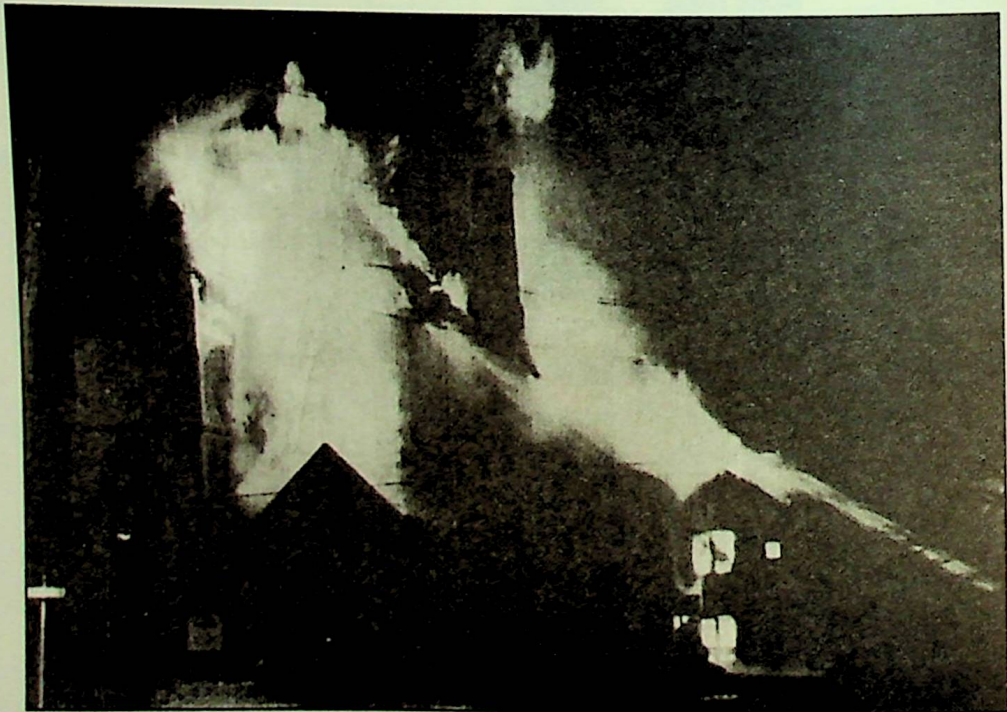
On a damp and misty Wednesday, January 21, 1959, firemen were awakened at 3:30 a.m. to alarm bells and a bright glow outside the windows of the firehouse. The eighty-four year old First Reformed Church, two blocks away on the corner of Union and Dayton Streets, had caught fire. Box alarm #228, as well as a phone call reported the blaze. Flames were visible in several areas of the church, and as one firefighter recalls, "Fire was blowing from the front doors as we pulled out of the firehouse."

Minutes after firefighters arrived, it was obvious, with the magnitude of fire and close proximity of other buildings, that they would need help. The first hose lines were used to protect adjacent buildings. Chief Haldane requested Mutual Aid from Glen Rock, Ho-Ho-Kus, Midland Park, Waldwick, Fair Lawn, and Wyckoff. Numerous deluge guns and Ridgewood's ladder pipe were set up to play water on the spectacular fire, which had flames leaping as high as the fifty-foot steeple.

The intense heat from the fire prompted firemen to evacuate a four-apartment house to the

rear of the church at 170-172 Dayton Street. Firemen quickly awoke and escorted residents across the street "amid a tangle of falling wires emitting sparks like fireworks," according to *The Ridgewood News*. Hose streams were then played on the apartment building, but not before it was damaged by the heat and falling debris. Other residences at 121 and 110 Union Street also had hoses aimed at them because they began to catch fire from the radiant heat. Chief Haldane reported that homes along Prospect Street were in danger during the height of the blaze as falling embers continually fell on them. Curtains of water provided by firemen and the light rain helped protect neighboring homes and the business district.

While the fire was being fought, firemen were able to remove two cars from a garage adjacent to the church. Shortly afterwards, a wall of the church weakened by the fire toppled onto this garage, demolishing it! During the course of fighting the fire, hose streams were directed at the fifty-foot steeple. Occasionally one would strike the five-hundred pound church bell and, according to



A nighttime photo of firefighters from seven towns battling an enormous fire at the First Reformed Church at Dayton and Union Streets. The fire damaged several nearby houses and buildings.



newspaper accounts, "this caused the bell to toll throughout the night ringing its death knell of the church."

Due to the heat of the fire, firefighters were taking a beating. The Box 54 Club, Teaneck's Canteen Unit, responded and served cold drinks and coffee.

Five firemen were injured fighting the fire. Firefighter Albert Clark was taken to Valley Hospital for treatment of a facial injury sustained when a sudden change in pressure tore a hoseline from his hands, causing the nozzle to strike him. Newspaper accounts also report that a Waldwick firefighter was taken to the hospital after he was struck by the car of a second firefighter as both prepared to leave for the Ridgewood fire. An estimate of two hundred firemen battled the blaze.

The fire was brought under control at approximately 7:00 a.m., 3½ hours after it was reported. It is unclear how long the fire burned before being reported. Chief Haldane attributed the rapid growth of the fire to a "fire storm" created by "congested amounts of heat causing air to

rise. Fires like that make their own wind," the Chief explained. The fire is believed to have started in the area of the boiler room, but the cause was officially listed as undetermined.

Pastor Johan Mulder said "The firemen deserve the greatest possible credit for the battle they waged to save the church, and we cannot ever adequately express our appreciation to them for the magnificent job they did." Once the smoke cleared the next morning, all that stood were the masonry walls and a weakened steeple. The Ottilio Construction Company from Paterson was called and subsequently knocked down the teetering steeple and walls before they could fall, possibly injuring someone.

Thankfully, the First Reformed Church had previously purchased property at 303 Prospect Street. The congregation had rapidly outgrown the current building and members of the church were looking forward to the erection of a new structure, which now became an immediate necessity rather than a future plan. Ground breaking ceremonies had already been scheduled for the spring.



*This is what was left of the First Reformed Church the morning after the fire. Because of its unstable condition, the steeple had to be knocked down by a crane.*



## THE HIGH SCHOOL FIRE

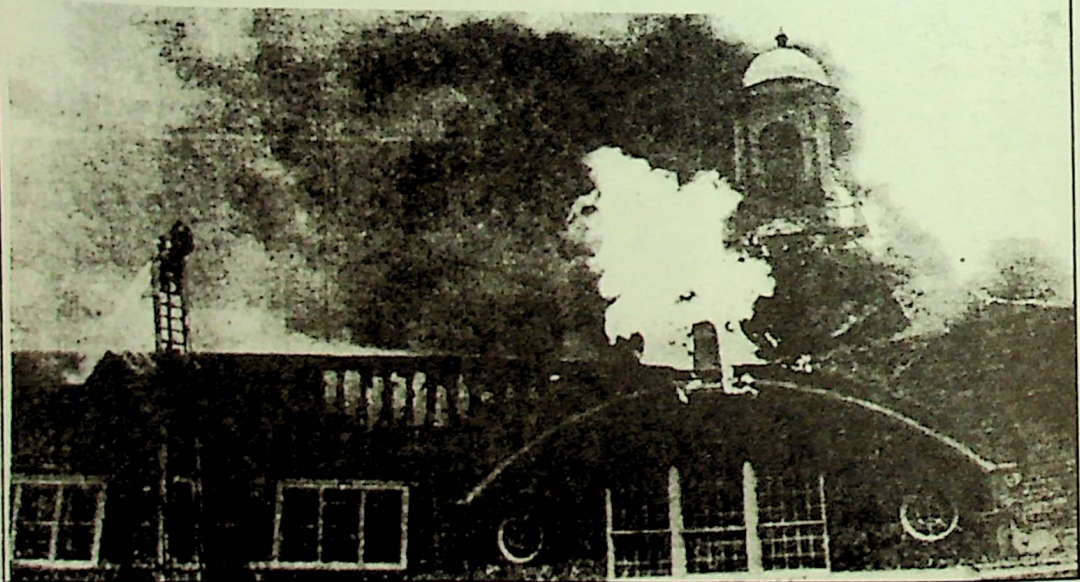
Many a student jokingly wishes their school would catch fire, canceling classes. But when the real thing happened on October 28, 1960, some students sobbed as they watched the flames. It was no joke when an arson fire destroyed the roof and attic of the Ridgewood High School on Ridgewood Avenue and Heermance Place. Shortly after 3:30 p.m., Principal William Leach heard shouts that the school was on fire. He and Vice Principal Ralph Miller ran to the attic door on the third floor where they found heavy smoke pouring from under the door, according to newspaper accounts. They made a wise decision not to open the door, ran to pull the alarm which sounded in the school, and then ran outside to pull the street box that notified the Ridgewood Fire Department.

At 3:36 p.m. the first box alarm was received via the Gamewell Alarm System at Fire Headquarters, indicating Box #248—Ridgewood High School. Shortly thereafter, Box #241 at East Ridgewood and Brookside was also pulled. Luckily, school had been dismissed for the day and only

about 75 students and teachers were in the building. All were able to leave the school safely.

When the first engine arrived, smoke was pouring from beneath the cupola. Soon flames burst out of the roof and cupola tower. Minutes later, according to published accounts, the flames were leaping 30 to 40 feet in the air. The first arriving firemen were stunned by the quickly growing fire, but nonetheless hurriedly connected supply hoses to hydrants and raised the aerial ladder to begin an aggressive attack on the fire. Captain Pete Verhulst was in command while Chief Haldane was away on vacation. (The Chief rushed back to town several hours later.) Within minutes of the fire department's arrival, assistance was requested from Glen Rock, Ho-Ho-Kus, and Midland Park. Wyckoff was asked to stand-by at Ridgewood's Headquarters. A ladder truck from Fair Lawn was also requested. Deluge guns and ladder pipe nozzles were used to attack the fire from the outside, while firemen wearing self-contained breathing apparatus (air masks) entered the build-

## Fire Destroys Roof, Attic, School to Close for Week



*From the front page of The Ridgewood News, October 30, 1960.*



ing to battle the flames from inside. It is reported that during the height of the fire, almost two hundred firemen were fighting the blaze. The fire was brought under control within an hour, and as a result of the hard work of the firemen, fire damage was confined to the roof and attic. But water damage was everywhere.

As tons of water were poured on the fire, the stairways leading up the slope in front of the school became a waterfall. As soon as the fire was under control, firemen quickly spread tarps on the lower floors to catch the cascade of water. It was reported that there was a foot of water on the third floor. On the first floor water was two inches deep. Even though fire damage was confined to the attic, water-logged plaster ceilings collapsed in many rooms on lower floors.

Approximately two hours after the fire began, as several firemen worked off ladders leaning against the gray slate roof of the tower, the cupola began to tilt. The firemen were ordered down, and twenty-five minutes later the landmark

fell to the second story roof in a cloud of smoke. It landed with a hollow thump heard blocks away. Thankfully it didn't break through the roof. A crane from the Ottilio Construction Company had been summoned to remove the unstable cupola just before the tower crashed down.

Two firemen were taken to Valley Hospital after being injured: Robert Christopher injured his leg after falling through the roof and Robert Pearston suffered smoke inhalation. Fire Commissioner B. Franklin Reinauer II praised the firefighters and reported that Ridgewood firemen were familiar with the building due to frequent inspections and mock training drills. According to the Commissioner, "they knew how to fight the fire before they got there."

Firefighters worked through the evening with janitors trying to clear the building of water and salvage the contents. Since electric power was cut to the school during the fire, there were no lights. The Fair Lawn Civil Defense unit sent a heavy rescue truck with a large generator, which supplied



*Firefighters from the first arriving engine company hustle to connect hose lines to a hydrant in front of Ridgewood High School on Heermance Place.*



*A young girl watches in disbelief as fire destroys the roof and attic of the high school as firemen struggle to get the fire under control.*



mented the Fire Department generators in providing lighting. The Teaneck Fire Department's Field Canteen unit known as the "Box 54 Club" also responded to their first out-of-town call with their new truck. They provided coffee and refreshments to the weary firemen.

The fire occurred on Friday, and over the weekend offers were received from churches and

other school systems for classroom space. The school was closed for many months while repairs were made. Students attended classes in split sessions at Benjamin Franklin Jr. High School and George Washington Jr. High School. Following the investigation, it was found that two Ridgewood High School students had started the fire in the attic.



*Ridgewood firefighters operate a ladder pipe from atop the 1948 ladder truck.*



*The steel covered cupola lies on the second floor roof after toppling off the gutted tower. Firemen were kept away from this area for fear that the cupola would fall while they were fighting the blaze.*

### THE DRAPKIN'S FIRE

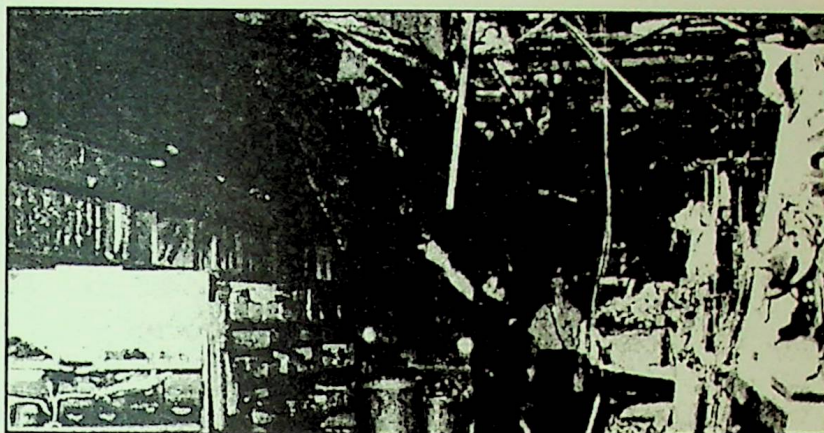
Tuesday, September 12, 1972 had been a slow day for Platoon C. The drill for the day was pump testing Engine #37. There had been only one other call so far that day and it was an assistance call. At 10:41 p.m., Box #15 sounded for Broad Street and East Ridgewood Avenue. It was later discovered that the box was pulled by Marge Clark, a fireman's wife who lived on the second floor of 30 East Ridgewood Avenue, over Drapkin's Stationers.

The building, known as the Hopper Building, is a three-story masonry and frame structure and was fully involved on the first floor on arrival. As the firefighters rounded Broad Street from Hudson Street they could see the smoke. A full box assignment responded, and a general alarm was ordered

upon Captain Riker's arrival. Engine #35 took a steamer connection on the hydrant across the street. The Captain ordered a 2½-inch line to the front of the building, and a second 2½-inch line to the floor above the fire. Fireman Clark took the line to the second floor with a look of determination; he was going to save his apartment! A quick search conducted on arrival had confirmed all occupants had been evacuated.

A crew was sent to the rear of the building to vent and check for extension of fire to the attached warehouse, a metal-clad barn. Upon arrival the first floor was fully involved, but starting to darken down due to lack of oxygen. When the door was forced open, the first floor lit up as the three-





*The destruction inside Drapkin's Stationers after a serious fire. Firemen pull down the ceiling looking for hidden pockets of fire.*

man hose team moved in to hit the fire. The fire was extremely hot due to the fire load of plastic and stationery supplies. A second line was stretched to the first floor and good progress was made, with the fire under control in less than thirty minutes.

There was minor fire extension to 28 E.

Ridgewood Avenue, a luggage store, that was quickly knocked down. There was heavy smoke damage in the apartments on the second floor, and at Biltmore Formal Wear located at 36 E. Ridgewood Avenue. Overhaul was completed and apparatus returned to quarters at 3:29 a.m. A fire watch remained on the scene.

#### BUILDING FIRE

On Friday, January 19, 1980, Fire Headquarters received Station #22 at 3:00 p.m. As the box alarm was coming in, the phones started to ring and the housewatch was informed that there was a working fire at 181 E. Ridgewood Avenue. Upon arrival the building was fully involved with flames burning out through the front windows. Engine #35 went into soft suction and two 2½-inch lines were stretched to the front of the building by Engine #35 and Engine #32 to control the fire.

The ladder company vented the building by removing the skylights. Engine #31 was used to protect exposures at 177 East Ridgewood Avenue (The Daily Treat) and 185 East Ridgewood Avenue (Horse Feathers). This mercantile occupancy was under construction at the time of the fire.

The cause of the fire was determined to be the unventilated use of solvents to remove floor tile adhesive. The total manpower on scene was thirteen firefighters.



*Firemen arriving at the scene of this fire at a business under renovation at 181 East Ridgewood Avenue were met with a spectacular fire as flames roared out of the entire storefront. The fire, which apparently started while workmen were in the building, blew out the store windows.*



## RED CROSS BUILDING ARSON FIRE

Just after midnight on a balmy summer evening, an arsonist set fires on several floors of the historic Red Cross building at 74 Godwin Avenue. The man broke into the building, which serves as headquarters of the Bergen Crossroads Chapter, and stole a bicycle that the Red Cross had planned to raffle off. Before he left, he set the fires with a cigarette lighter.

The nine firefighters on duty that day, the 28th of June, 1994, had just turned in for a few hours rest after several previous alarms. At 12:44 a.m. they were abruptly awakened by a call for the interior alarm activated at the Red Cross building. In less than a minute, two engines, a ladder truck and a rescue unit were on the way. But even the quick response couldn't halt the flames which had been burning for several minutes before they were detected. A developed fire can grow to twice its size each minute it burns.

When the Tour Commander rounded the bend from Wilsey Square, he was greeted with the sight of flames shooting from every first floor window, and fire was visible on the upper two floors. The handful of firefighters were working feverishly to connect feeder lines to hydrants and to initiate an attack with two deluge guns mounted on the engines and the ladder pipe nozzle on the aerial ladder. Within a minute of their arrival, a general alarm was transmitted, calling in the volunteer firemen and all off duty personnel. Mutual Aid was sent from Ho-Ho-Kus, Midland Park, Waldwick, and the Saddle River Valley Rescue Squad to standby at Ridgewood Fire Headquarters.

Eventually three hand-held hose lines, three deluge guns, and a ladder pipe were placed into operation, pouring approximately 5,000 gallons per minute of water onto the flames. In addition to the water supply availability at the scene, Engine

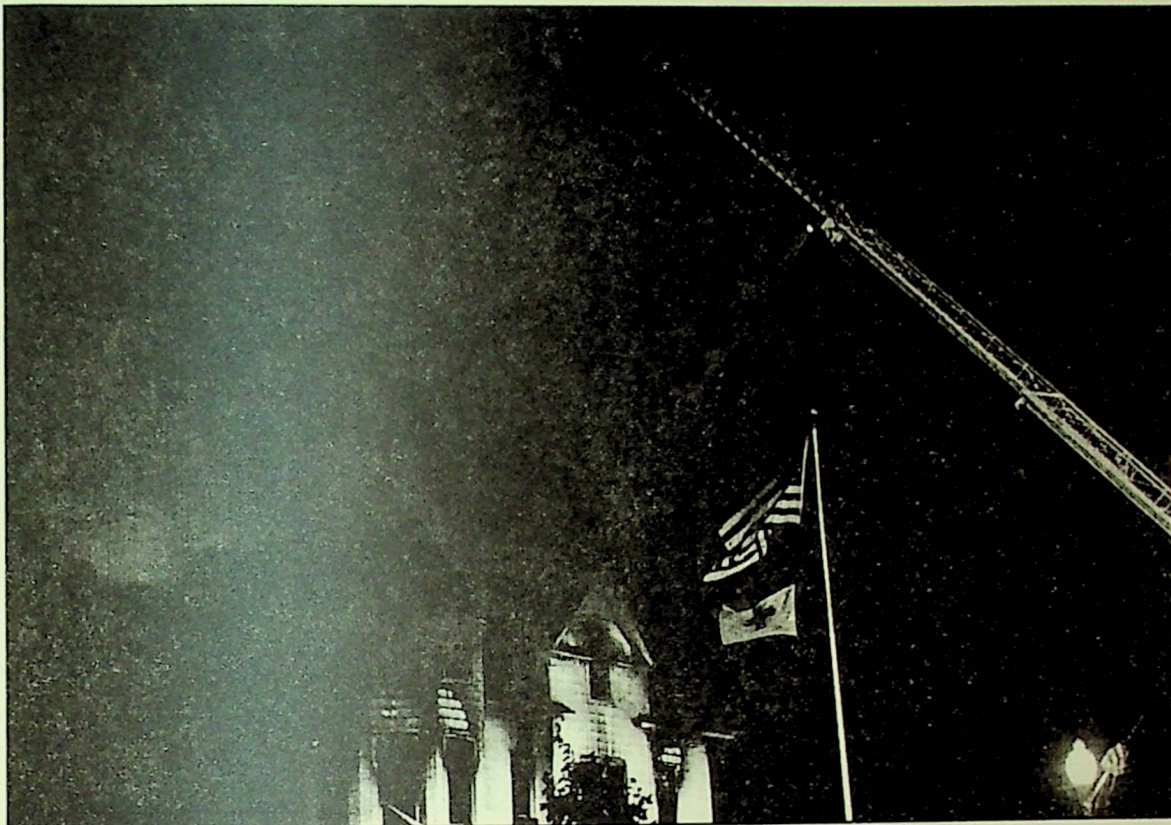
#37 stretched five-inch hose back to a West Ridgewood Avenue water main. The Ridgewood Water Department Wortendyke Pump Station boosted the main pressure in the area in an effort to maintain the water supply.

Meanwhile, the man who had set the fire pedaled back to the scene on the stolen bicycle to watch the fire. A Red Cross worker in the crowd recognized the bicycle and alerted police. The man was taken into custody and later charged with aggravated arson, burglary, and theft.

It took almost two hours to bring the blaze under control, and the rest of the night to extinguish it. The smell of smoke permeated the town and could be detected several miles away. The orange glow in the sky attracted hundreds of people who came and stood silently watching. Among those were scores of Red Cross volunteers and administrators who watched with tears in their eyes as flames devoured almost everything in the building.

Just before the first light of day, Teaneck's Canteen Unit, the Box 54 Club, arrived and served coffee and refreshments to the weary firefighters. The aerial ladder and one engine remained on the scene all morning, dousing hot spots and searching for hidden pockets of flame in the debris. Once the fires were completely extinguished and overhauling was complete, firefighters gingerly climbed through the rubble in attempts to retrieve important records and documents. Thankful Red Cross workers took the salvaged items across the street, where they temporarily conducted business from a neighbor's porch. Eventually they found office space from which to operate in a local bank. In time, the building was razed, but the community rallied support for the Red Cross and a new building was built on the same site.



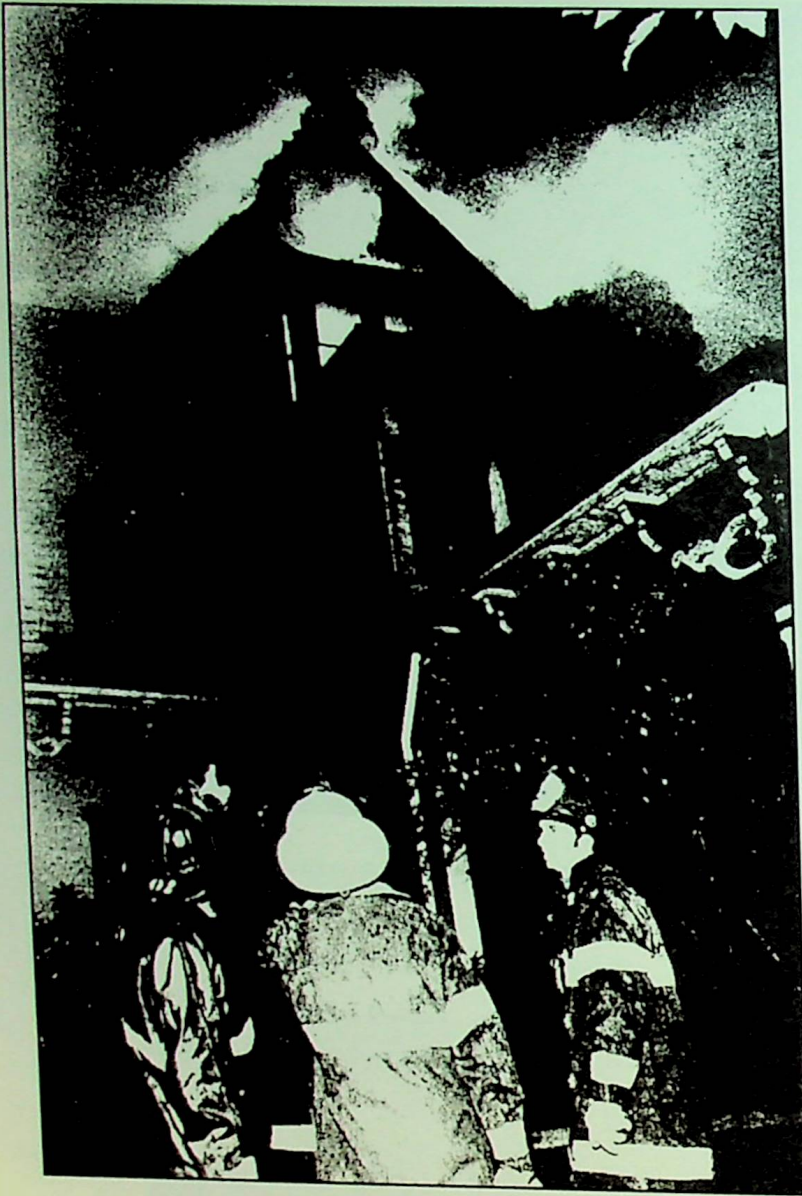


*One thousand gallons of water per minute shoot from the ladder pipe nozzle of Ridgewood's aerial ladder.*

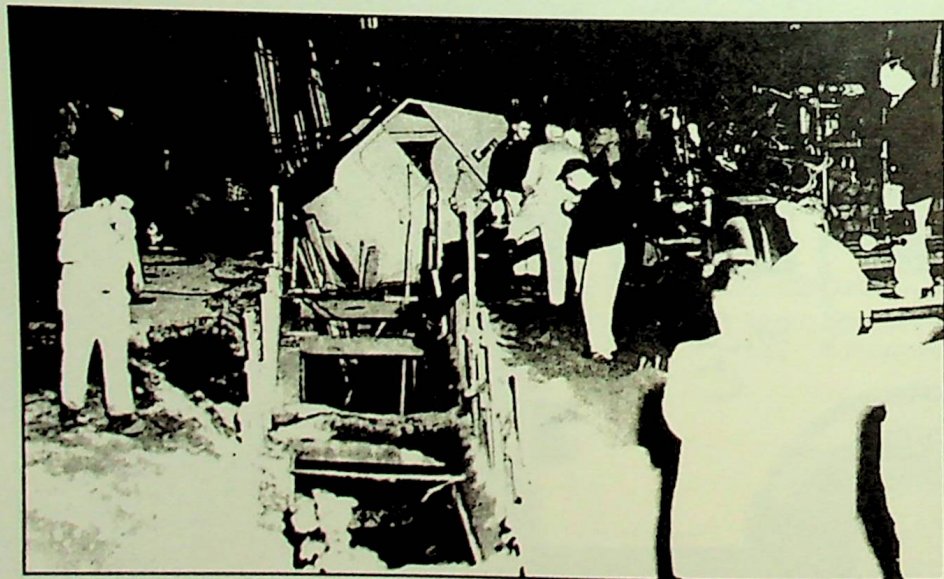


*The aftermath of one of Ridgewood's worst fires at the Red Cross Building, 74 Godwin Avenue.*





*The Lester Home, at 257 North Maple Avenue, was left to the town, and while a debate was going on as to the future of the building, a suspicious fire destroyed the structure. When firefighters arrived on the scene late in the evening on September 12, 1977, they found flames that had begun beneath the rear porch had already engulfed the first, second, and third floors as well as the attic. Here, Chief Thomas Keeley directs the futile effort to save the historic building. Eventually the stable was moved from the rear of the property to where the house stood.*



*A trench collapsed on Linwood Avenue just east of Paramus Road, about 1960. One workman was killed. Here the firemen pump out water and remove debris from the trench in attempts to rescue the victim.*





*Fire destroyed a barn belonging to John Burke at 330 Franklin Turnpike on March 5, 1968. This is now the site of the Ridgewood Manor Nursing Home.*

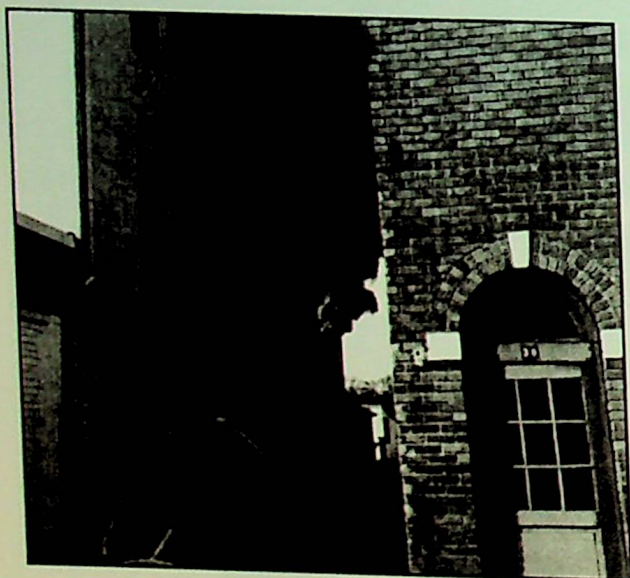


*Firefighters are silhouetted against flames of a barn fire at the rear of several stores at 580 North Maple Avenue. The fire, which was reported at 4:28 a.m. on March 14, 1979 destroyed a valuable car inside the barn. Left to right are Firefighter Charles Hazekamp, Lieutenant Robert Misset, and Firefighter Robert Hancox.*





*On August 13, 1980 a fire which was believed to be electrical in nature caused heavy damage to the Ridgewood Animal Hospital owned by Dr. Dean Hopper. In the building, located at 333 Prospect Street, eight cats and seven dogs perished despite efforts to save them.*



*On December 27, 1987 at approximately 10:00 a.m. a fire was reported in a second floor rear apartment above Spallino's Restaurant at 28 Oak Street. A general alarm was transmitted eventually bringing 38 firefighters to the scene. This photo shows flames roaring from windows and the door. At the bottom of the door you can just see the air tank of one of two firefighters who are advancing a hose line into the building as flames flashed over their heads.*



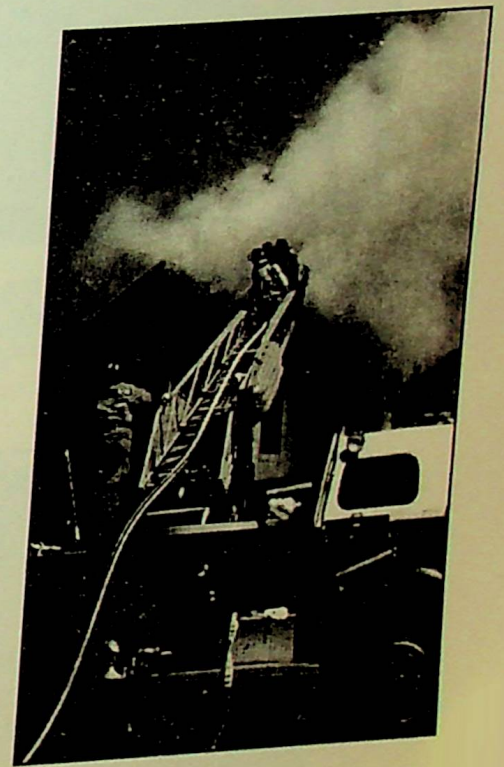
*On January 13, 1988 an ice storm coated roads in the area and caused a 14 vehicle chain reaction crash on Route 17 near Paramus Road. The 7:01 a.m. accident injured seven and claimed the life of one man. The deceased's car overturned, trapping him in it. The gas tank ruptured covering him and the roadway with gasoline. Firefighters had to quickly extricate the victim using the jaws of life tool and also cover the area with foam.*



*Hunan Villa Restaurant at 192 East Ridgewood Avenue was the scene of a late afternoon fire on September 3, 1991. Unattended cooking on a stove started a fire in the kitchen, which caused considerable damage to the restaurant. Here two firemen (kneeling) don air masks just prior to entering with the first hose line, while a third carries tools used to gain entry if needed.*



*On September 3, 1990 a fire, which was ignited by a gas stove, heavily damaged a building containing four apartments at 172 Dayton Street. The fire, which quickly traveled behind walls and ceiling areas, later burned through the roof. In this photo, firefighters utilize an aerial ladder to ventilate and extinguish the fire under the eaves of the multi-family dwelling.*



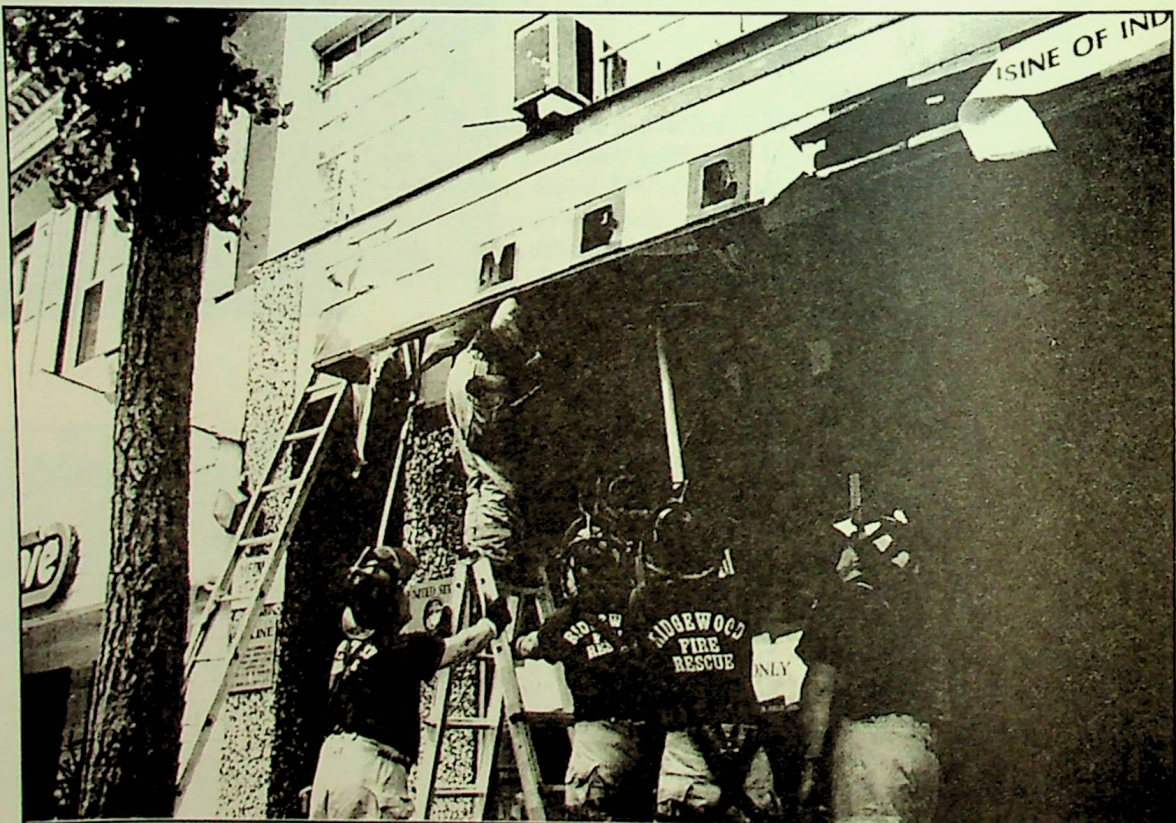
*A man who illegally entered a vacant building at 158 Franklin Avenue started a fire in it on December 5, 1993. While firefighters fought the 8:00 a.m. blaze, which consumed three floors, police arrested the trespasser and charged him with arson and burglary. The fire burned a large, gaping hole in the floor of a second floor bedroom, creating a hazard for firefighters fighting the fire inside in the blinding smoke. This photo shows firemen entering the first floor with a hose line while an axe is used on a second floor window to gain entry.*





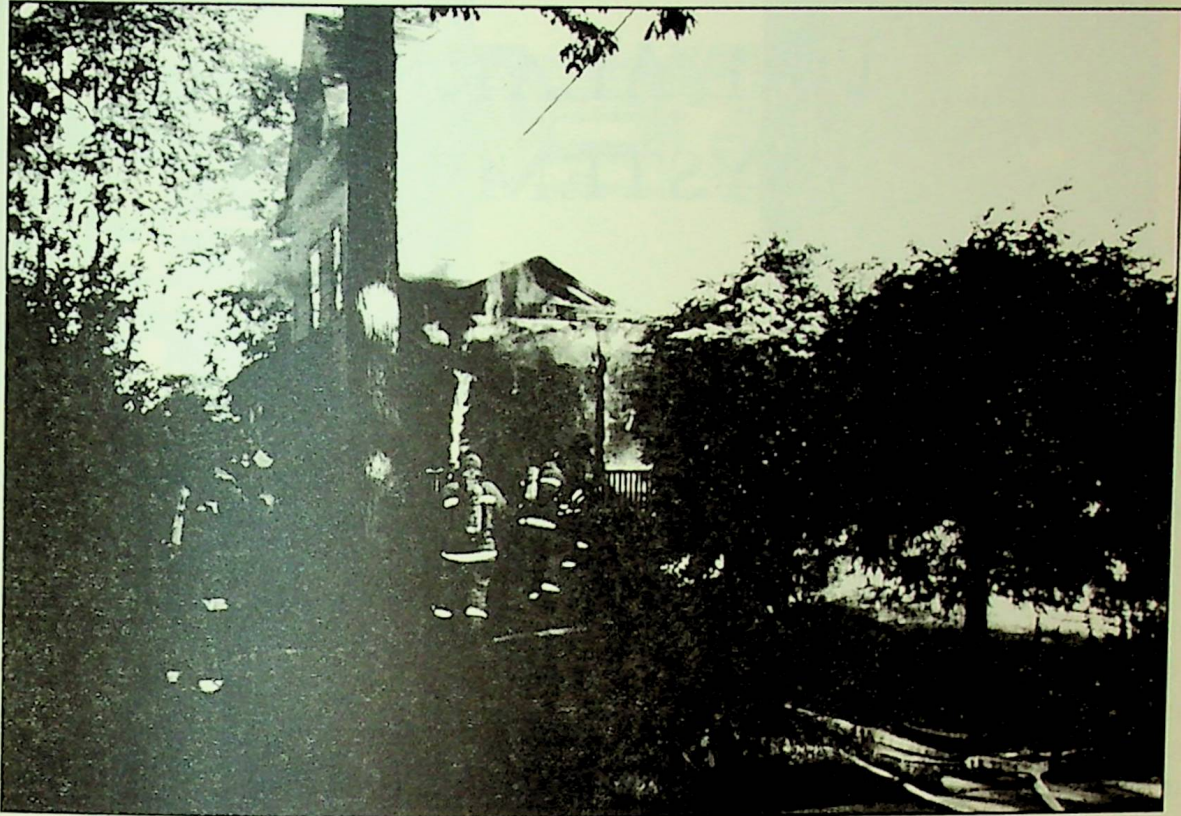


*An unfortunate plumber started a fire on the morning of January 29, 1996 at 133 Kenilworth Road. While he was soldering in the wall of the first floor kitchen, fire developed in the open wall and traveled to the attic, causing extensive damage. A general alarm brought a total of 32 firefighters to the scene.*

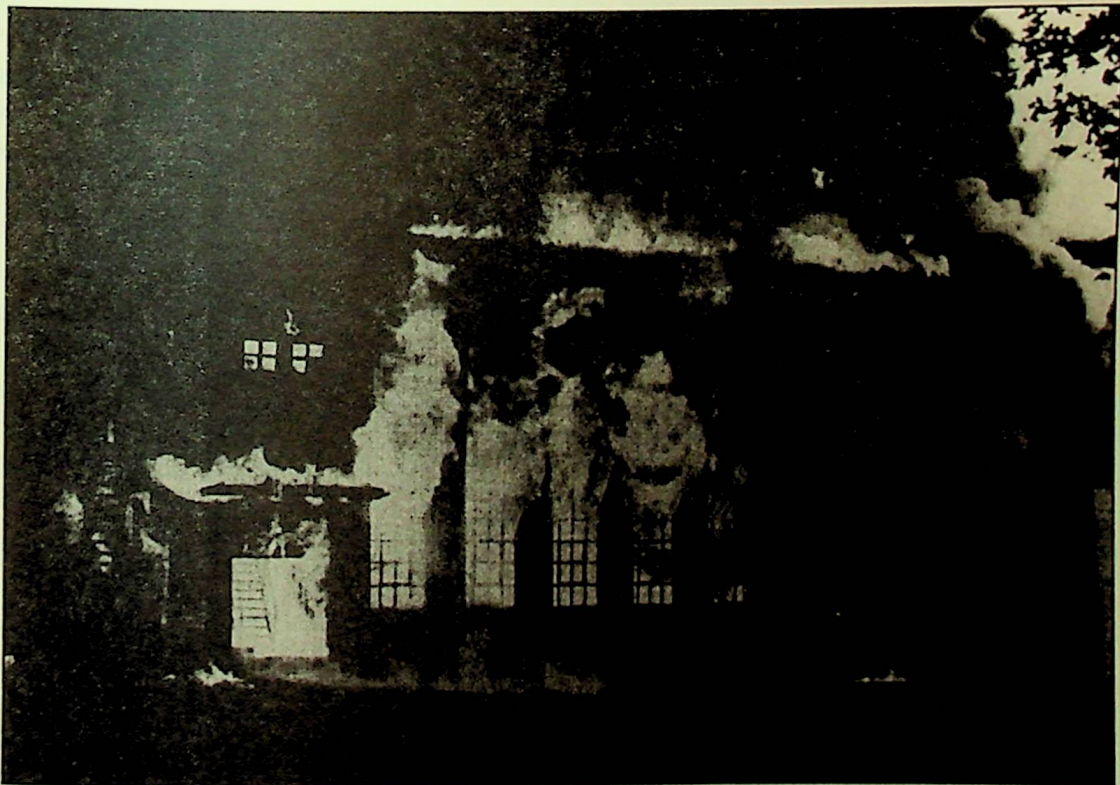


*On August 8, 1996, shortly after noon, firefighters responded to a report of smoke coming from a restaurant at 49 East Ridgewood Avenue. On that hot and humid day they found an electrical short had resulted in fire under the awning in an enclosed space.*





*Just after sunrise on July 6, 1996, a passerby pulled alarm box #26, reporting a fire at 160 South Broad Street. Responding firefighters found fire in several locations, indicating a suspicious blaze. Here firemen prepare to charge the second hose line while the first attacked the fire from the inside.*



*Golitz Confectionary Company fire on September 9, 1950. This building was located at 44 Godwin Avenue in Midland Park where a medical office building now stands (prior to the medical building, the Town & Country Diner was located on the property). Ridgewood had responded on Mutual Aid to this fire with one engine and 22 firefighters.*

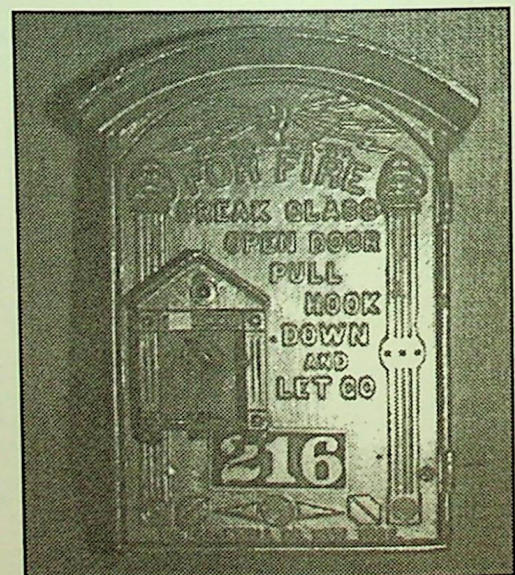
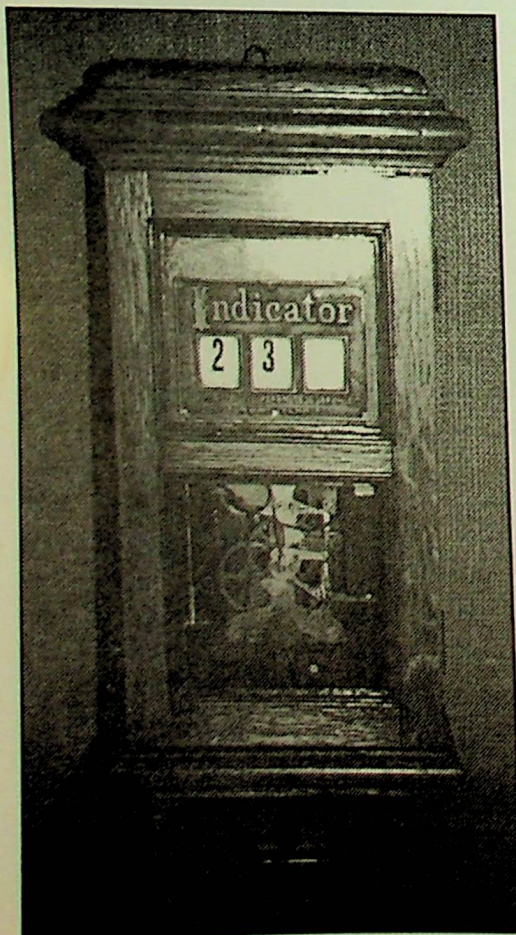


# FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

After the organization of the fire department and the completion of the Hudson Street fire station, a means of fire alarm notification was required. In 1898, a one-thousand pound bell was purchased and installed on the Hudson Street fire station. Word of mouth spread the news of a fire to the fire station. Once a fire started, it took time for word to reach the fire station and the bell was rung by hand to notify firemen to respond to the station for an alarm. It then took more time for a sufficient number of firemen to be found to respond. By the time firemen arrived at the scene, the fire had often spread, causing damage to surrounding structures.

In today's high-tech society, with cellular

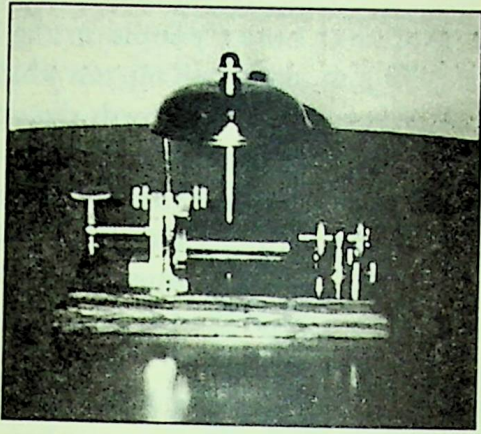
phones, fax machines, computers, and computer-aided dispatch systems, it is hard to imagine a world without instant communications, but in the 1890's, an automated electric fire alarm system was cutting-edge technology. Although there were telephones, the system was still in its infancy and very few telephone instruments were in use by the general public. In 1894 there were only two telephones in Ridgewood (both pay stations): one was in John Cruse's General Store on Rock Avenue and the other in Harry Tice's Drug Store on Ridgewood Avenue. By 1900 there were only 25 phones listed as in service in the Village. And since the telephone switchboard, which was operated by Mr.



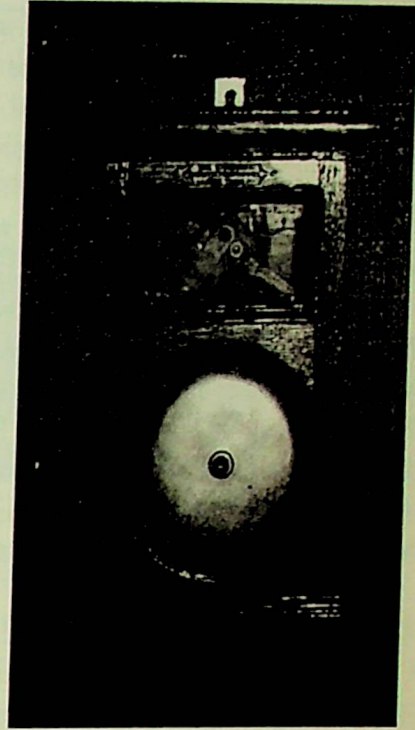
*Above: Gamewell Excelsior fire alarm box with a Cole key guard in use during the early 1900's. To avoid false alarms these boxes required a key to access the alarm. Keys were in possession of residents or shopkeepers near the box.*

*Left: The Gamewell Visual Indicator that was installed at Fire Headquarters. As an alarm came in the number of the firebox which was pulled appears in the window.*





*The Gamewell Umbrella-style tapper bell, also known as a "Turtle Bell." The Village installed these tappers in the officers' homes in the early 1900's to notify them of alarms. Later, all firemen had bells in their homes as they were required to respond to every box alarm.*



*Six-inch Gamewell Excelsior gong used in Village firehouses in the early 1900's. The Gamewell company boasted that their mechanisms and oak or walnut cases were made of the best materials with high quality workmanship. They displayed the mechanism inside the glass window as proof of their dependability.*

Tice's employees, only operated between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., it wasn't possible to rely on telephone service to provide notification of fire!

The need for a fire alarm system was apparent, and by 1900 the first automated telegraph system was installed and operational. The first Gamewell system consisted of 11 excelsior model fire boxes, two bells, one indicator, and three tappers.

The fire boxes, like most of the era, could only be opened by key. Keys were issued to all firemen, policemen, and local businessmen with property located near the fire box. The use of keys was said to help prevent false alarms, however, a passerby trying to locate a store owner or other key holder could result in a delay. A 1911 article in *The Herald* called on Fire Chief Hopper to publish the names and addresses of all keyholders and box locations. The article noted that five or six businessmen whose places of business were on Ridgewood Avenue between the railroad tracks and Prospect Street did not know the exact location of the nearest fire box (it was on the west corner of Ridgewood Avenue and Prospect Street).

Chief Hopper implored the people of Ridgewood to "take pains to learn the exact location of boxes . . . and acquaint themselves with the working of the system."

The new fire alarm system had a two-thousand pound bell with an electric striker that was located in the tower of the Ridgewood Opera House. The original bell was relocated from the top of the Hudson Street firehouse to the east side of town, where a tower was constructed on the property of Ridgewood Fireman Charles A. Swarn at 18 Kenilworth Road.

In 1902, with the completion of the Circle Avenue fire station, the east side bell was moved from Mr. Swarn's property and installed in the bell tower of the new fire station. The bell was fitted with an electric striker and connected to the alarm system. With the completion of the new municipal complex on Hudson Street, the bell from the Opera House was transferred to the roof of the new fire station.

By 1918, there were 28 street boxes and five special boxes that were located in each public



school. There were four tappers (located in officers' homes), two tape registers (one in each fire station), and the two bells, all connected by 22 miles of hard drawn copper wire. The original fire alarm system was installed and maintained by Frank A. Harrison, who was an electrician with an office and storefront at 37 Prospect Street.

In 1921, the system was taken over by Charles M. Clare, a Village fireman, who served as Alarm System Superintendent until 1953. During the 1920's, the existing Gamewell System became outdated because it did not have enough circuits to allow for the increasing need of additional fire alarm boxes as the Village experienced rapid growth.

In 1927, a bond ordinance was passed in conjunction with the new police station addition to the Village Municipal Complex on Hudson Street. The new system, completed in 1930, was a combination police and fire alarm telegraph system. The system consisted of 30 police boxes and 85 new type fire alarm boxes which no longer required keys for access. The two fire bells were replaced with louder air horns on the Hudson Street fire station. The cost of the alarm system was \$35,000.

It is said that many people in the Village missed the 9:00 p.m. daily bell tap test which could be heard all over town. Our records show that the noon test of three taps, which we still continue today, started on August 5, 1930, and that the first test was sent in by retired Chief J. Van Wagenen. Mr. Van Wagenen is also credited with sending in the first alarm on Station #14, testing the original Gamewell System in 1900.

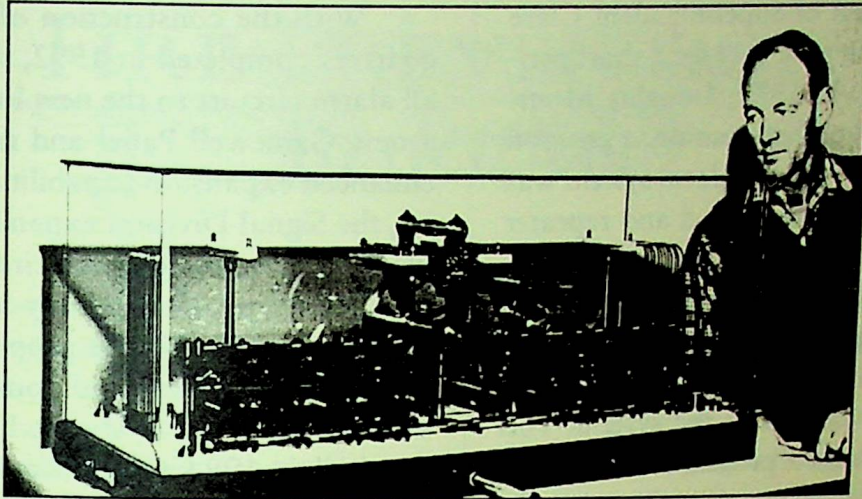
In addition to the street boxes, which when pulled sounded a numbered station or box number over the horn and bell system in both Fire Headquarters and the Circle Avenue Station, a system was required and devised that assigned a box number to street locations where there were no actual fire boxes. These box numbers were called phantom station alarms. The purpose for these box numbers was to sound or retransmit the alarm to inform firemen that there was a fire at a certain street location. This also called volunteers and off-duty firemen directly to the scene. By the late 1930's there were 112 phantom box numbers. If firemen were required to report to Headquarters, 3-3-3 was sounded on the horn and tapper bell system.

In 1953, Chuck Clare retired as the Alarm



*The Gamewell air horns were used to broadcast alarms from fireboxes throughout the Village. They are shown here mounted atop the hose tower on the Hudson Street Firehouse, where they remained until the building was torn down in 1993.*



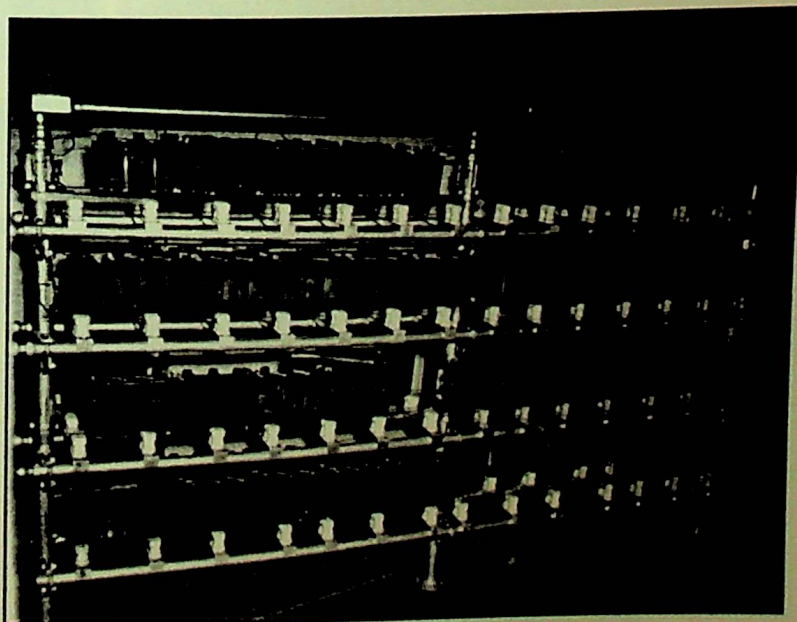


*Signal Bureau Superintendent Robert Clare at Gamewell automatic repeater which repeated alarms to other circuits. (Circa 1950's)*

Superintendent and his son, Robert B. Clare took over the position, transferring from line duty as a paid fireman to the Alarm Bureau. To assist him in maintaining the system, Andrew Williams was also transferred to the Alarm Bureau. Both men continued to be active department members and responded to all alarms of fire during their careers. They retired from the Police and Fire Pension System.

By the mid-1960's, there were 215 street boxes and tappers installed in all the firemen's

homes. There was an automatic tie-in with the Village System for Village-owned buildings, Valley Hospital, and all nursing homes. It was also during the 1960's that the Signal Division became a separate unit no longer under direct Fire Department control. During this period, the Signal Division took on other duties including painting, street marking, traffic signs, and traffic signals. In 1970 they took over the parking meter authority and by the 1980's they had taken over building maintenance.



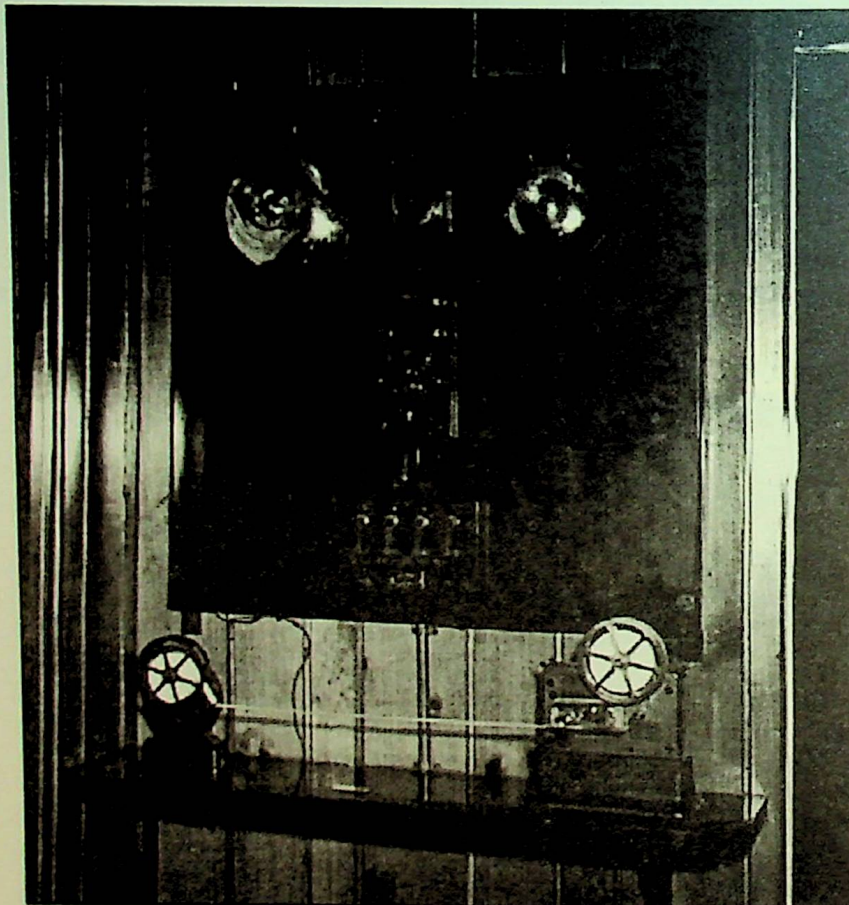
*Glass wet cell battery system used to power the Gamewell alarm system in place at the Hudson Street Firehouse.*



With the retirement of Superintendent Clare in 1975, John Strealman took over for a short period as Superintendent. In 1977, Douglas Montgomery was appointed to that position, a position he currently holds. In 1978, the alarm system was rebuilt, installing a new main panel and repeater system.

The fire alarm system today consists of 276 street boxes and 39 special type master boxes that connect additional life hazard use buildings and target hazard type buildings to the system. This includes all Village-owned properties and school buildings, lumberyards, senior citizen housing, the Y.M.C.A., and other target hazards.

With the construction of the new fire headquarters completed in 1992, the Village extended all alarm circuits to the new location and installed a new Gamewell Panel and repeater system with enhanced expansion capabilities. During this period, the Signal Division expanded the system cable plant to include additional circuits, eliminating the need for telephone company-leased phone lines to inter-connect the Village properties' alarm systems and to connect data and communication systems with a new Central Dispatch Center. The center was built in 1994 and is located in the basement of Pease Library.



*The Gamewell alarm system at Engine Company #31 which includes the electro-mechanical house gongs, the tape register, and the switch for the fire station lights.*



# FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

The Ridgewood Fire Department has performed fire inspections and prevention work almost from its inception. By 1923, due to the increase in the number of fire inspections required for a rapidly growing community, Village officials passed Ordinance #393, a law that allowed fire department members who were performing fire prevention and inspection duties to receive compensation at the rate of 50 cents per hour.

During the 1920's, the fire department, in conjunction with the Board of Education and the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce, developed an elaborate and effective fire safety program for the school system. By 1929, Ridgewood's Fire Safety school program was observing Fire Prevention Week during the month of October, a tradition continued today.

In the early days, volunteer Captain William

Baker was Ridgewood's chief inspector and was very involved with developing fire prevention and education programs. In 1930, Captain Baker designed a fire prevention banner, the first of its kind in the country. During the 1930's Ridgewood won many State Fire Prevention awards for its fire safety programs, including three first place and two second place awards.

In 1934 the Village passed ordinance #843, a law which established a separate Fire Prevention Bureau within the fire department. The Bureau, under the supervision of the fire chief, consisted of a Chief Fire Inspector William Baker and a number of Assistant Inspectors that would be determined by the Public Safety Commissioner. This ordinance created the foundation for the Bureau as we know it today. After the retirement of Captain Baker from the volunteer department, Chief



*Fire Prevention Week, 1936. Pictured left to right are Fireman Oliver Vance driving the 1936 Dodge pumper, retired Captain William Baker, Fireman Edward Orr, Fireman Ernest Ferrari, and driving the 1925 ladder truck, Chief Arthur DeMouth.*



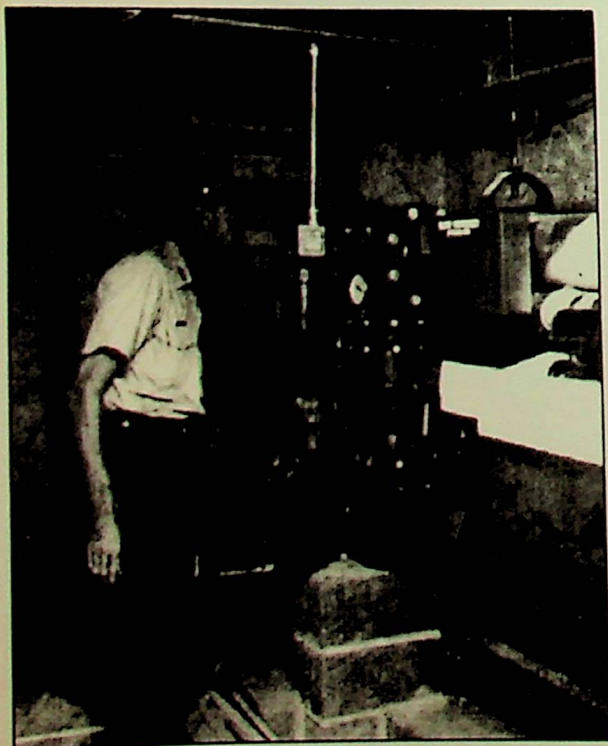


*A fire drill during Fire Prevention Week in 1945 at the Harrison Avenue School. Fireman Oliver Vance is standing at left, Principal Samuel Maggio is in the foreground.*

DeMouth was named Chief Fire Inspector and Fireman William McCullough, Sr. and Fireman Oliver Vance were listed as inspectors. The firemen performed inspection details and prevention activities as required, but were not full-time inspectors.

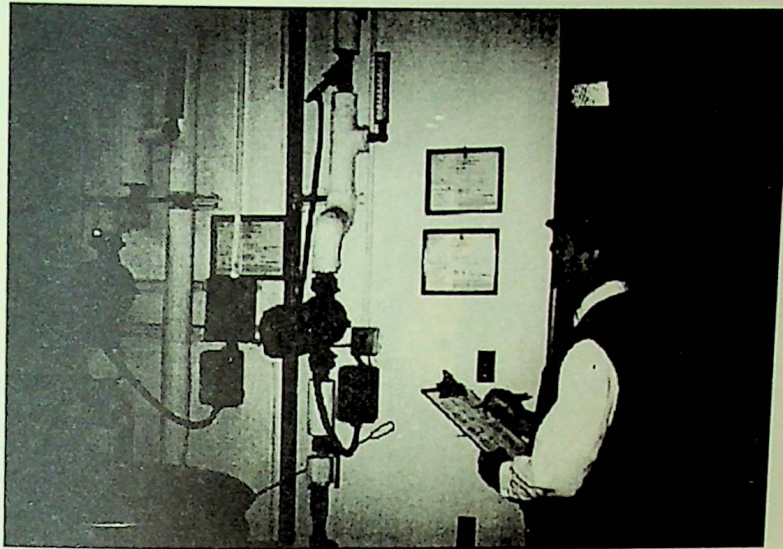
After World War II, Ridgewood again experienced a building boom. The volume of new construction inspections increased to the point that a full-time inspector was needed. Officers and engine

companies were doing inspections to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau in not only new building construction, but also issuing oil burner and burning permits, school and church inspections, and regular district inspections. On June 1, 1949, Chief Vance detailed John Vybel, a 20-year veteran of the department, to the Fire Prevention Bureau. He served in that position until his retirement in July, 1956. Fireman Elmer Babcock was assigned by



*Inspector Ronald Merritt inspecting a fire sprinkler system. (Photo circa 1970's)*



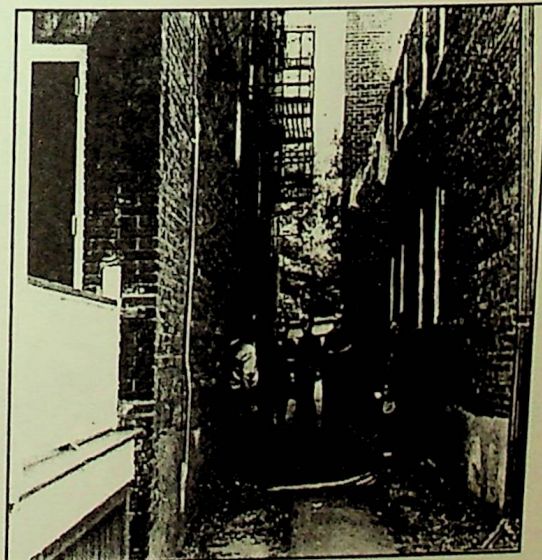


*Fire Official Lieutenant Ronald GimBert performing an inspection. Fire inspectors conduct inspections of all life hazard occupancies and new construction.*

Chief Haldane to the Bureau in October, 1956. He served as Chief Inspector until July, 1969, when he returned to line duty.

Fireman Ronald Merritt transferred from line duty to the Bureau in 1969 and served it until his death in May, 1983. The current Chief Fire Inspector is Lieutenant Ronald GimBert, who was detailed to the Fire Prevention Bureau by Chief Nolan.

The many changes in law during the late 1970's and 1980's affected the operation of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The responsibilities of the Bureau increased significantly with the adoption of the Building Officials and Code Administrators (B.O.C.A.) laws, Ordinance #1929 regulating gasoline storage tanks, Ordinance #2000 requiring smoke detectors to be installed and maintained upon the sale or rental of one- and two-family



*Firefighters inspect a fire escape during "Company Inspections," when engine company crews familiarize themselves with various buildings in town. Pictured, from left to right are: Captain Stan Riker, Firefighters Robert Missel, LeRoy Mullay, Jr., Alan Gudrian, and Charles Hazekamp.*





*Whenever formal tours are made of Village fire stations by school children, firefighters show them their fire gear. It is of great interest to the children, but more importantly, the kids become familiar with what a fireman looks like in the event one has to search for them in a smoke-filled house.*

homes in the Village, and the implementation of the Sesame Street Fire Safety Program for pre-school and kindergarten classes. It was apparent that an additional inspector was needed, so Lieutenant Dominic Bounassi, Jr. was detailed to the Fire Prevention Bureau in February, 1985.

Educating youngsters about Fire Safety is a major focus of the Bureau. In 1989, Deputy Chief LeRoy W. Mullay, Jr. was instrumental in develop-

ing the New Jersey State Fire Safety Skills Program that is used not only in Ridgewood schools, but in school systems all around the state. Children are taught that they can't hide from fire, but they can escape. They are taught that they should have two escape routes from each room and have a place to meet outside of the home.

In 1997, the Fire Prevention Bureau has two full-time Fire Prevention Officers, Lieutenant



*Engine Company #35 crew, Firefighter Matthew Ramge, Lieutenant Mark Bombace, and Firefighter Gary Wilking on a fire prevention inspection. Here they examine a commercial furnace. The benefit of having all personnel assisting with inspection duties is the familiarity they gain of the buildings throughout the Village.*



Ronald GimBert and Firefighter Robert Hyslop and a bureau secretary, Dolores Tomei. The Fire Prevention Officers are licensed for Fire Sub-Code and Fire Prevention inspections pursuant to the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code Act and the New Jersey Fire Safety Act.

The department is responsible for inspecting and maintaining records for over 1,200 commercial, life hazard, school, and health care facilities. Inspection services include new construction, fire prevention, maintenance inspections, life hazard use, underground tank, and smoke detector inspections in accordance with local ordinances. The Bureau issues violation notices and makes re-inspections to ensure compliance with the laws that are designed to protect people and property.

In many cases, fire prevention maintenance district inspections are performed by the Engine Companies that are in radio service. This is done not only to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau, but also to enable firefighters to become familiar with the hazards and layouts of the various buildings in Ridgewood.

The Bureau is responsible for preventative measures, including public fire safety education. While a trip to the firehouse for school children used to mean a tour and getting to ring the bell, on-duty personnel now conduct structured fire safety lessons for the children in the Fire Headquarters classroom. Regular programs have been developed and are conducted in the schools, in Valley Hospital, in nursing homes, and for other civic organizations as needed.



*"GET IT OFF!" Children love to touch things. Back in the early 1980's, when fire helmets were light, youngsters enjoyed trying them on. The leather helmets that are worn today weigh over four pounds and can actually injure a growing child's neck.*



# FIREMEN'S MUTUAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

The Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association (F.M.B.A.) is a fraternal organization comprised of career firefighters in the State of New Jersey. Ridgewood's local chapter #47 received its status on January 2, 1934. The organization is officiated by firefighters for firefighters to deal with legislative laws, safety issues, community affairs, and contract items.

Since its inception, the F.M.B.A. has been instrumental in lobbying state legislators to pass laws that allow New Jersey's firefighters to provide the best fire protection for residents and businesses. While it would seem that the organization is primarily concerned with the safety and welfare of its firefighter members, it is the public who ultimately benefits from mandated concerns. At a time when budgets are being slashed, it is the F.M.B.A. who stands up and fights to keep fire stations open and adequately manned.

The F.M.B.A. is actively participating with the Mayor and Council's Volunteer Recruitment Committee. Attempts are being made to build a good back up volunteer group to augment the current career firefighters. F.M.B.A. members also serve on a departmental safety committee to improve firefighting practices and the firehouse work environment.

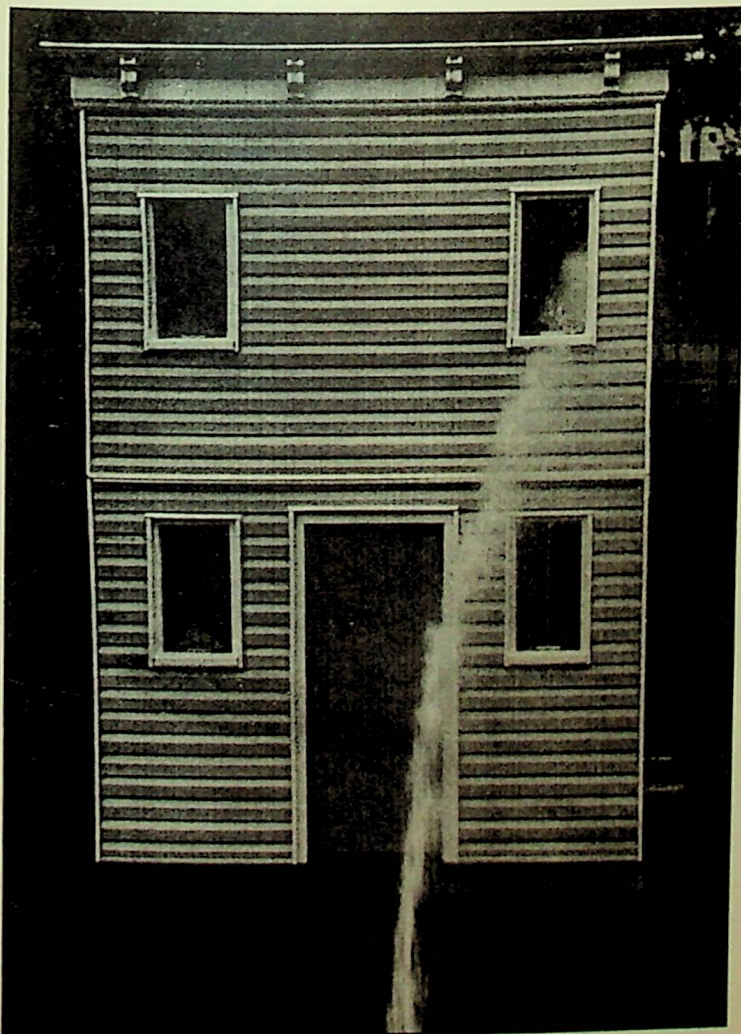
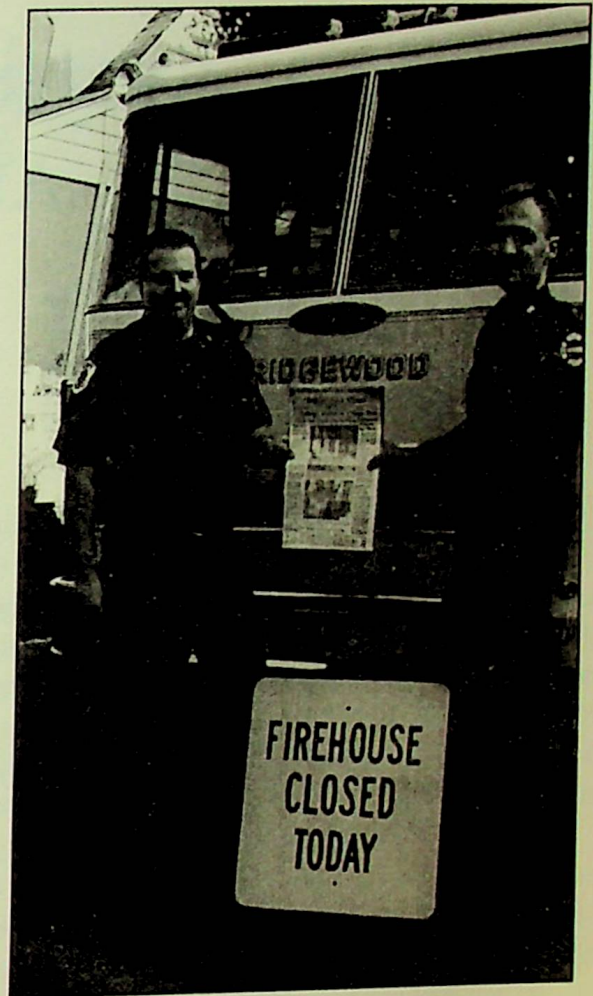
The Ridgewood F.M.B.A. supports the community by teaching fire prevention, educating youngsters, sponsoring local sports teams, helping at civic events, and donating to local charities. During the past year, Firefighter Greg Hillerman along with several other F.M.B.A. members collected funds and donated materials to construct a Fire Safety House Facade. Many weeks of the firefighters' off duty time were spent building this project, at which children use a low-pressure hose to "douse" wooden flames on hinges that appear in the windows. This fun exercise is coupled with other Fire Prevention programs to teach children about fire safety.

Local members have held offices in the State F.M.B.A. William McCulloch was State President in 1945, and for many years Tom Englishman was on the legislative committee dealing with laws and issues at the State Capital in Trenton. At present, Firefighter Theodore Carman is the State Executive Delegate representing Ridgewood's Local #47 at the State F.M.B.A. Other current officers are: John Albano, President; Christopher DuFlocq, Vice President; Joseph Carney, Alternate State Delegate; Russell Gebhard, Secretary/Treasurer; and Sean Daly, Sergeant At Arms.





Due to a manpower shortage, Engine Company #31 was tentatively scheduled to be closed when not fully staffed in the fall of 1995. F.M.B.A. members concerned about the effect this would have on residents' and firefighters' safety mobilized and alerted citizens. Public pressure kept the firehouse fully staffed and open. Here Firefighters Dave Biswurm and Paul Monton exhibit newspaper from the 1950's, when several children perished in a fire just blocks from this firehouse when manpower was lowered.



A committee of F.M.B.A. members headed by Firefighter Greg Hillerman spent several weeks constructing this fire safety facade. Incorporated into fire prevention activities, youngsters aim hoses at the windows knocking down the flames and "extinguishing the fires."



# EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

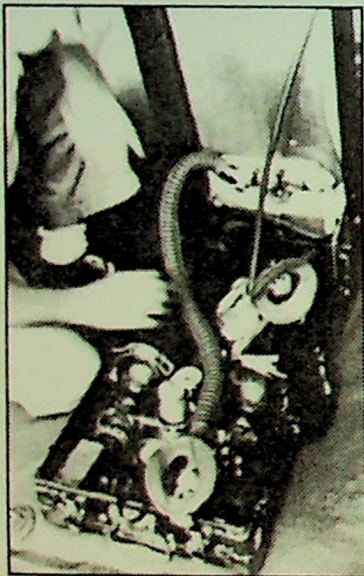
## HISTORY

The Ridgewood Fire Department has been providing emergency medical assistance for more than 65 years. Ridgewood was one of the first local units to have an oxygen powered inhalator. The inhalator was carried on the 1930 Buick Emergency Truck. Calls were received from Glen Rock, Paramus, Wyckoff, Ho-Ho-Kus, Allendale, Midland Park, and Washington Township requesting the use of Ridgewood's inhalator to revive a patient. The first recorded call for the inhalator was on May 31, 1931 when a six-year-old child

drowned in Midland Park. Ridgewood firemen worked on the child for over two hours, but were unable to revive him.

The inhalator had two oxygen tanks that usually were empty at the completion of a call. In the early days, the nearest place to get the tanks refilled was in Hoboken, and a fireman would drive his own car there to refill the tanks.

During the 1930's, many of the inhalator calls were for persons overcome by gas fumes. Occasionally the Fire Department responded to

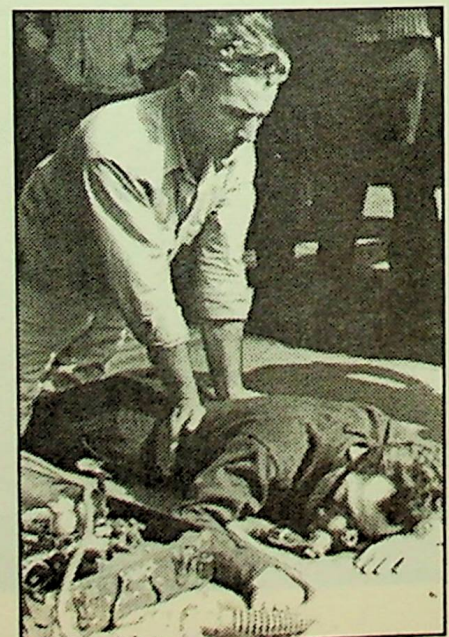


*Left: The Inhalator unit, which was the only one in the area during the 1930's and 1940's.*

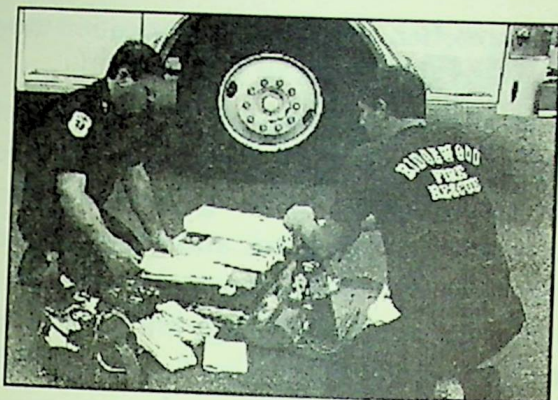
*Upper Right: Firefighter using the inhalator after suffering smoke inhalation at a fire on S. Maple Ave.*

*Lower Right: Firefighter performing early method of artificial respiration with inhalator.*

*Below: Early Packard Village Ambulance.*







*Firefighter/EMT Mark Bombace and Firefighter Hyslop checking first aid equipment that is carried on an engine.*



*Firefighters performing Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). (J. Albano, S. Daly, G. Wilking)*

the "Maternity Hospital" (on Godwin Avenue near Monroe Street) with the inhalator. In one instance, a firefighter remained at the hospital operating the unit for 14 hours and thankfully was able to revive a baby. According to Fire Department records, calls for the inhalator continued into the late 1940's to revive victims of heart attacks and suicides, as well as one call to assist a person who suffocated under an avalanche of sand.

#### AN INNOVATIVE SYSTEM

For many years Ridgewood had ample volunteer coverage of the Ambulance Corps, however, the Village has not been immune to the problem of volunteer staffing during weekday hours. In 1986, Ridgewood addressed this problem by allocating Fire Department resources to make sure that Village residents are provided with the best emergency medical service available. Monday through Friday, from 6:00 AM until 7:00 PM, the Department works in conjunction with the Ridgewood Ambulance Corps to respond to emergency medical calls. At all times the crews of the two engine companies

include at least one career firefighter who is also a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). When an emergency medical call is received, the nearest engine company is dispatched, along with the ambulance which is manned by an ambulance corps member. The Fire Department responds to about 600 medical calls annually.

The current system of dispatching an engine company to an emergency medical call began in March, 1990. Using the Fire Department and one paid ambulance member has been lauded as one of the quickest and best systems in the area. In Ridgewood, medical assistance usually reaches the scene within three to four minutes, while in other local towns it sometimes takes 15 minutes or longer to assemble volunteer ambulance crews during the day. At the scene of a medical emergency, while the fire and ambulance EMTs treat the patient, the other two members of the engine company carry and set up first aid equipment. One of the biggest advantages of having extra personnel comes when it is time to move and carry the patient, especially when flights of stairs are involved.



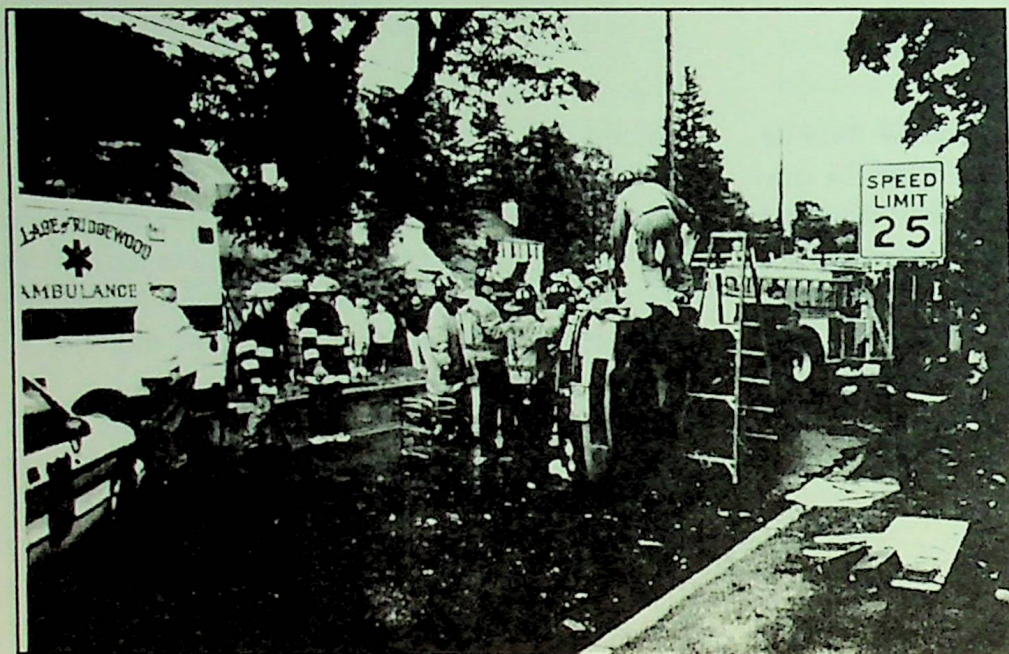
*Many hands make a safe trip. Firefighters and EMTs carry a patient down a flight of stairs. (Bentley, Van Goor, Hillerman, Missel, and Regensburg).*



Since the Village began using firefighters to handle medical emergencies, 19 firefighters have completed the extensive emergency medical technician training. All members of the fire department have basic first aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training, and each engine company carries a complete first aid/trauma kit and an oxygen unit. Many of the daily training (or "drill") sessions for firefighters deal with related medical topics, including methods for carrying unconscious victims, lowering patients by rope in a basket

(stokes) stretcher, and vehicle extrication using rescue tools and the "Jaws of Life."

The system has been proven very beneficial, especially at motor vehicle accidents where personnel can work together treating the injured, extricating those who are trapped, and containing any fire hazards. The fire department has also been dispatched when the two Village ambulances were in use at other emergencies. The firefighter/EMTs can begin treating and stabilizing the patient until an ambulance can reach the scene.



*Firefighters and ambulance personnel at a motor vehicle extrication. "Jaws of Life" generator is at center.*



*Firefighters were first on the scene of an accident opposite fire headquarters. Here they and ambulance corps personnel remove the injured. (M. Bombace, Lamb, Hyslop, and Monton)*



# SCUBA RESCUE SERVICE

During the late 1950's, the Fire Department acquired several sets of underwater "dry suits" and masks to be used by firefighters for diving. When necessary, regulators and air tanks were borrowed from the Graydon Pool facility. Little formal training was available, but the men were ready when needed. Over the years, as equipment aged and deteriorated, this service was discontinued.

Then, in the spring of 1989, several youths ventured into Graydon Pool late one evening for an unauthorized swim. One of them did not resurface after diving in. The ambulance corps responded, as did the fire department. However, because the pool was closed, no lifeguards were on duty and consequently the pool's diving equipment was locked away. A call was made for the Bergen County Dive Team, but due to the time delay, the boy was unable to be revived after he was recovered from the water.

The need was obvious, so in 1989 the Ridgewood Fire Department formed a scuba dive rescue team. Ten firefighters completed certified dive

training and several participated in a search and rescue course. The fire department purchased four sets of diving gear, including regulators, air tanks, flippers, masks, weight belts and other associated items. This equipment is currently carried in Emergency Response Van #34. There is an air compressor at Fire Headquarters, which is used to refill the department's air tanks as well as those belonging to Graydon Pool lifeguards.

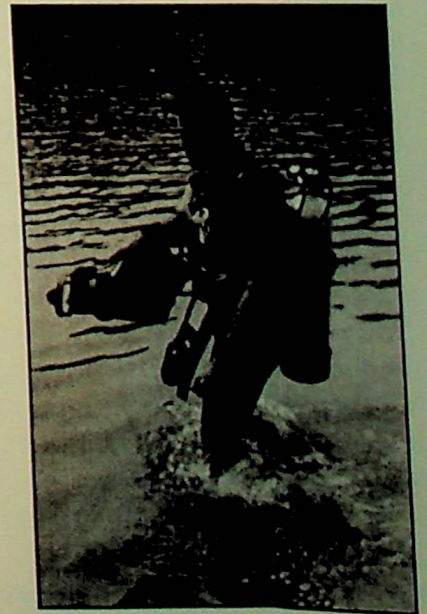
Whenever the lifeguards at Graydon receive a call of someone missing or a possible drowning, the fire department is summoned. Training sessions are held with the lifeguards to practice dives and review search and rescue patterns.

Since the inception of the scuba dive rescue team, it has been dispatched several times every year, primarily to Graydon Pool. While many residents think of Graydon Pool as the only deep water in the Village where scuba dive rescue team response is necessary, there are in fact several large ponds located in Ridgewood where the dive team may be needed—any season of the year.



*Left: Early scuba team from the late 1950's. (H. Pruiksma, S. Riker)*

*Right: Current scuba dive rescue team member Bob Kozielski, Jr. with equipment during practice at Graydon Pool.*





# DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP

Following is a list of the 405 Firefighters that have served the Village of Ridgewood since August 7, 1897, as recorded by the New Jersey State Fireman's Association and the Ridgewood Fire Department.

J.A. Bogert, 1897-1924  
 Leonard N. Taft, 1897-1904  
 T.L. Terhune, 1897-1904  
 George Borchers, 1897-1901  
 C. Sidney Keyser, 1897-1906  
 D. Frank Lynch, 1897-1909  
 Theodore H. Mead, 1897-1904  
 W.J. Gormley, 1897-1900  
 J.D. Van Emburgh, Jr., 1897-1904  
 William A. Clark, 1897-1911  
 James Houlihan, 1897-1904  
 Adam Pennal, 1897-1914  
 Jesse Van Wagenen, 1897-1930  
 Harry A. Tice, 1897-1927  
 P.W. Van Dien, 1897-1916  
 G.A. Donholt, 1897-1913  
 G.L. Steadman, 1897-1911  
 Daniel Roman, 1897-1901  
 William P. Morgan, 1897-1899  
 J. Irving Bogert, 1897-1904  
 E.B. Van Horn, 1897-1906  
 R.M. Bridgeman, 1897-1904  
 J. Calvin Bogert, 1897-1904  
 Joseph H. Christopher, 1897-1908  
 William O. Cruse, 1897-1919  
 Charles A. Howlett, 1897-1904  
 O.W. Balliet, 1897-1903  
 E.J. Keeley, Jr., 1897-1904  
 J. Blauvelt Hopper, 1897-1904  
 George W. Slingerland, 1897-1901  
 Joseph W. Edwards, 1897-1906  
 C.E. Bechloff, 1897-1904  
 Edward Nickerson, 1897-1904  
 M. Whrittenour, 1897-1903  
 James Keeley, 1897-1904  
 John B. Hopper, 1897-1912  
 George A. Young, 1897-1899  
 C.C. Scherman, 1897-1904  
 M.E. Slawson, 1897-1899

F.M. Merritt, 1897-1902  
 John M. Clarkson, 1897-1912  
 Stephen K. Turner, 1897-1905  
 William J. Lally, 1898-1915  
 Charles A. Sworn, 1898-1905  
 Howard Maltbie, 1898-1905  
 F. Gibson, 1898-1901  
 Peter Wentink, 1898-1911  
 Charlie Whipple, 1898-1899  
 Bert Grey, 1898-1905  
 J.H. Van Dorn, 1898-1900  
 Harvey G. Ward, 1898-1899  
 Ralph Costa, 1899-1910  
 D. John O'Neill, 1899-1910  
 D.H. Thurston, 1899-1900  
 William Johnson, 1899-1900  
 George W. Courter, 1900-1915  
 Charles W. Barton, 1900-1900  
 Fred W. Stewart, 1900-1901  
 Walter W. Hanham, 1900-1907  
 William Van Dien, 1900-1923  
 J. William Edwards, 1900-1905  
 Mike J. Mack, 1900-1900  
 Garrett Tallenan, 1900-1900  
 John D. Carlock, 1900-1930  
 H. Sherman, 1900-1901  
 George W. Van Horn, 1900-1907  
 J.A. Walthery, 1900-1906  
 T.E. Lockwood, Jr., 1900-1900  
 Garret J. Doremus, 1900-1905  
 Daniel Helms, 1900-1919  
 Edward D. Christie, 1900-1945  
 J.O. Zabriskie, 1900-1900  
 Jacob Keifer, 1900-1915  
 Frank A. Harrison, 1900-1903  
 Harry B. Hopper, 1900-1905  
 Fredd T. Ryder, 1901-1902  
 Frank B. Rae, Jr., 1901-1902  
 George W. Healsey, 1901-1901



H. Kiefer, 1901-1905  
 Clarence Isurman, 1901-1903  
 W.F. Palmer, 1901-1903  
 William J. Colwell, 1901-1902  
 Sefert G. May, 1901-1904  
 Everett G. Hopper, 1902-1904  
 Henry T. Walthery, 1902-1916  
 Theodore DeGraw, 1902-1911  
 William B. Feadius, 1902-1904  
 Edward A. Jones, 1903-1911  
 Benjamin Elgin, Jr., 1903-1907  
 Joseph M. Duffy, 1903-1912  
 Edward G. Houlihan, 1903-1912  
 Liland E. Cooper, 1904-1905  
 Chester A. Van Dalinda, 1905-1914  
 Thomas V. Reed, 1905-1905  
 Charles F. DeRichmond, 1907-1908  
 Garrett J. Heigginson, 1907-1910  
 Howard N. Hunt, 1907-1908  
 John Heerema, 1907-1915  
 Chester A. Bogert, 1908-1919  
 Arthur Salter, 1908-1909  
 R. Kievit, 1908-1909  
 Joseph B. Houlihan, 1908-1912  
 Edwin T. Jones, 1909-1909  
 Bertram Grace, 1909-1920  
 Dana F. Reed, 1909-1912  
 Jacob Kiefer, Jr., 1910-1919  
 George B. Richardson, 1910-1912  
 Jasper Kievit, 1911-1917  
 James Powers, 1911-1912  
 Ernest McMasters, 1911-1912  
 Charles M. Pearsall, 1911-1952  
 Charles A. Burnett, 1912-1930  
 Alexander Cuneo, 1912-1912  
 Charles Shoudy, 1912-1929  
 William Krisskop, 1912-1912  
 Henry E. Miller, 1912-1916  
 Alphonse DeRock, 1912-1920  
 John D. Brown, 1912-1912  
 Charles W. Donholt, 1912-1912  
 William Ford Bell, 1912-1912  
 H. LaCour, 1912-1914  
 William W. Wood, 1912-1919  
 J.W. Pearsall, II, 1912-1918  
 Peter Bouma, 1912-1916  
 W.W. Truax, 1912-1912  
 Raymond Banta, 1912-1940  
 Roy W. Mabie, 1912-1913  
 Harvey Winters, 1912-1924  
 Walter Van Lesiten, 1912-1918  
 John Vaday, 1913-1916  
 Edward Orr, 1913-1952  
 Edward N. Riopel, 1913-1915  
 Edwin A. Westervelt, 1913-1927  
 Arthur J. DeMouth, 1914-1945

J.T. Mangin, 1914-1920  
 Charles H. Howlett, 1915-1919  
 Burnett D. Naugle, 1916-1922  
 Charles W. Clare, 1916-1966  
 John B. Van Dien II, 1916-1928  
 Charles E. Phillips, 1916-1920  
 E. Marshall Wikoff, 1916-1925  
 Jerry J. Fisher, 1916-1921  
 Edward DeRocker, 1917-1971  
 Robert Cartwright, 1917-1922  
 Lester Van Horn, 1917-1922  
 W. Stewart Moore, 1917-1928  
 Donald R. Moore, 1917-1934  
 Charles V. Simola, 1917-1927  
 Sylvester Duryea, 1917-1921  
 Thaddeus W. Wikoff, 1918-1926  
 Charles L. Meissner, 1919-1930  
 Norman Mouro, 1919-1922  
 Henry Leuning, 1919-1980  
 Edward A. Cuneo, 1919-1921  
 Frank D. Livermore, 1919-1929  
 Winfield Scott, 1920-1930  
 John D. Gordon, 1920-1932  
 Howard W. Abbott, 1920-1923  
 R. Floyd Trumper, 1921-1921  
 Chester F. Nickerson, 1924-1977  
 Edward Howard Koehler, 1922-1923  
 James Gaddis Tucker, 1922-1922  
 Percy A. Banta, 1923-1951  
 James Wilke, 1923-1927  
 William D. Baker, 1923-1934  
 Roy E. Hopper, 1924-1925  
 Edward L. Gilmour, 1924-1930  
 Frank A. Simola, 1924-1925  
 Charles Leroy Goodspeed, 1924-1925  
 Alphonse Pyle, 1924-1938  
 William R. McCullough, 1924-1955  
 Russel D. Van Dien, 1925-1927  
 John J. Mulqueen, 1926-1930  
 Marvin P. Fritz, 1926-1929  
 Ray Lippincott, 1926-1927  
 Robert H.B. Coyle, 1926-1929  
 Harold Van Emburgh, 1926-1930  
 Ernest C. Ferrari, 1927-1959  
 Charles M. Pearsall, 1927-1952  
 Herbert J. Lauth, 1928-1953  
 Percy H. Jones, 1928-1930  
 Alex D. Pearston, 1928-1941  
 Oliver M. Vance, 1928-1955  
 Harvey A. Carlock, 1928-1934  
 John Vybel, 1928-1956  
 Irving H. Wittag, 1928-1929  
 William Eppel, 1928-1930  
 George A. Buck, 1928-1932

Lavarnus Van Dyke, 1928-1934

*Continued*



## MEMBERSHIP, *continued*

Herman Adicks, 1929-1931  
 Arthur Milliken, 1929-1936  
 Harris Weaving, 1930-1956  
 John Hoffman, 1930-1942  
 Fred Judge, 1930-1931  
 Edwin F. Grandy, 1930-1944  
 James Powers, 1930-1931  
 Henry Hollander, 1930-1938  
 Michael Catanzaro, 1930-1949  
 John Neuhs, 1930-1964  
 Harold Florence, 1930-1959  
 James Smith, 1930-1931  
 George Arnold, 1931-1960  
 Frank T. Baldwin, Jr., 1931-1945  
 Russell Flaker, 1931-1941  
 Fred W. Schraeder, 1931-1933  
 Ralph Costa, Jr., 1932-1934  
 Charles W. Schurtz, 1932-1933  
 John Merck, 1934-1974  
 Herbert Clark, 1934-1942  
 William Haldane, 1934-1977  
 Charles A. Yearling, Sr., 1934-1960  
 Milton Banta, 1934-1951  
 Andrew Marshall, 1934-1955  
 Clarence Milliken, 1934-1936  
 Edward Garcia, 1934-1944  
 Phillip Reddy, 1934-1936  
 John Orr, 1934-1942  
 Gerald Reddington, 1934-1955  
 George Hunt, 1936-1939  
 A. Aupperlie, 1936-1937  
 Joseph Ferraro, 1936-1944  
 Arnold Roman, 1936-1938  
 Arnold Banta, 1937-1972  
 Frank Conklin, 1937-1942  
 John Nagelhout, 1937-1966  
 Peter Sinkway, 1938-1956  
 Robert Clare, 1939-1975  
 Donald F. Vaupel, 1939-1950  
 Manuel Menduno, 1940-1970  
 Thomas T. Haldane, 1941-1951  
 Thomas Keeley, 1941-1981  
 Herbert Maviglia, 1941-1960  
 John Muller, 1941-1966  
 Fred Crum, 1941-1948  
 George Miller, 1941-1975  
 Michael Placa, 1941-1960  
 Stephen L. Koller, 1941-1948  
 Julius Monton, 1942-1979  
 Henry Marlin Fulkrod, 1942-1950  
 George J. Smith, 1942-Present  
 William E. Demarest, 1942-1955  
 Andrew Nagelhout, 1942-1960

A. Krausse, 1944-1967  
 George Richter, 1944-1958  
 B. Washburn, 1944-1970  
 Donald L. Knapp, 1946-1957  
 George E. Secor, 1946-1946  
 Raymond Holzel, 1947-1974  
 Robert Pearston, 1946-1974  
 Peter Drenth, 1947-1953  
 Thomas A. Englishman, 1947-1974  
 Andrew E. Williams, 1948-1974  
 Peter Verhulst, 1948-1978  
 Charles R. McKechney, Jr., 1948-1972  
 William R. MacDonald, Jr., 1948-1951  
 Albert J. Clark, 1948-1973  
 Joseph E. Bartell, 1948-1948  
 Henry Vriesema, 1948-1959  
 William A. Pearston, 1948-1976  
 William R. McCullough, Jr., 1949-1974  
 Herman J. Pruiksma, Jr., 1950-1975  
 Garret Nagelhout, 1950-1985  
 Edward S. Hallahan, 1950-1981  
 Elmer Babcock, 1950-1978  
 George S. Javras, 1951-1960  
 Harry Vriesema, 1951-1959  
 Henry Dienema, 1951-1953  
 Edward S. Meyers, 1951-1979  
 Anthony S. Placa, 1951-1960  
 John N. Pruiksma, 1951-1979  
 Joseph Nicklus, 1951-1962  
 Donald Ovens, 1952-1963  
 Henry Kirkenir, 1953-1958  
 John Kirkenir, 1953-1959  
 Robert T. Waddington, 1954-1972  
 Garret Dykhouse, 1954-1981  
 Charles F. Hazekamp, 1954-1981  
 Phillip Cenicola, 1954-1976  
 James Simos, 1954-1957  
 Albert R. Schuman, 1954-1987  
 William M. Menduno, 1955-1960  
 Alfred Piazza, 1955-1964  
 Edward J. Gage, 1955-1983  
 Michael T. Driscoll, 1955-1981  
 Harold V. Florence, Jr., 1955-1988  
 Everett B. Palmer, 1956-1981  
 Russell L. Pendelbury, 1956-1981  
 William Kemmerer, Jr., 1956-1984  
 Joseph F. Caren, 1956-1981  
 David Washburn, 1957-1958  
 John D. Vander Ploeg, 1957-1958  
 Francis X. Nolan, 1957-1984  
 Stanley Riker, 1958-1984  
 George Hamling, 1958-1987  
 Willard Morgan, 1958-1968



John Babcock, 1958–1983  
 Steven Lieber, 1958–1968  
 Robert J. Christopher, 1959–1985  
 Edward G. Liptrot, 1959–1985  
 William Weiner, 1959–1971  
 Henry W. Redyke, 1959–1965  
 Robert Marshall, 1960–1976  
 Henry A. Schnaars, Jr., 1960–1968  
 John R. Speich, III, 1960–1975  
 Andrew Marshall, Jr., 1960–1969  
 Ronald S. Merritt, 1961–1983  
 Ronald C. Badger, 1961–1963  
 Karl Meyer, 1961–1974  
 Robert E. Smith, 1961–1967  
 John J. Sahlberg, Jr., 1961–1980  
 Robert Brokaw, 1962–1969  
 Thomas L. Priestley, 1962–1964  
 Edward Fetkowitz, 1963–1988  
 James N. Monton, 1964–1989  
 Daniel F. O'Connell, 1964–1966  
 Allan D. Gudrian, 1964–1995  
 Robert D. Missel, 1964–Present  
 Edward J. Outslay, 1965–1995  
 Richard Craig Naudain, 1965–1967  
 Louis R. Toth, 1965–1977  
 Benedict C. Parisi, 1966–1980  
 Dominic Bounassi, Jr., 1966–1996  
 Richard J. Zelenka, 1967–1967  
 William D. Randall, 1967–1986  
 Raleigh L. Haydon, Jr., 1968–1973  
 John R. Yanick, 1968–1985  
 Thomas C. Taylor, 1968–1969  
 William P. Massaker, 1968–1972  
 Edward Norman Boutin, 1969–1994  
 John Francis Dunworth, 1970–1991  
 Bruce Henry Mammen, 1970–1971  
 Louis Edward Bauerlein, 1970–1970  
 William J. Siegers, 1971–1996  
 Frederick C. Krenrich, Jr., 1971–1972  
 LeRoy W. Mullay, 1973–Present  
 Gerald L. Currie, Jr., 1973–1986  
 Howard L. Husselman, 1973–1977  
 Richard F. Kane, 1973–Present  
 Kerry E. Wilkie, 1973–1978  
 Joseph F. Lockwood, 1973–1974  
 Peter J. Hynes, 1973–Present  
 Maurice Muser, III, 1973–1977  
 James W. Wanamaker, 1973–1992  
 Robert Thomsen, 1974–Present  
 William Regensburg, 1974–Present  
 Arthur Bentley, 1974–Present  
 Ronald GimBert, 1974–Present  
 Gerald Wolvers, 1974–1990  
 Robert A. Hancox, 1975–1979  
 Charles R. Lamb, 1975–Present  
 Richard Dykhous, 1975–1975

Richard Scalione, 1976–Present  
 Edward J. Weining, 1976–1976  
 Terry Barszcz, 1976–1979  
 Katherine Muser, 1976–1981  
 Victor E. Virgens, 1976–Present  
 Bruce Virgens, 1976–1991  
 Richard Urbanik, 1976–Present  
 Theodore D. Carman, 1976–Present  
 Raymond Virgens, 1976–1979  
 Robert Hyslop, 1976–Present  
 Donald Henry, 1977–Present  
 Richard Van Zile, 1978–Present  
 Albert Whitaker, 1978–Present  
 David Yaden, 1978–Present  
 Joseph Carney, 1978–Present  
 Christopher Raimondi, 1979–Present  
 Roger Ter Kuile, 1980–1988  
 John Wolfstirn, 1980–Present  
 James A. Bombace, 1980–Present  
 Daniel Cahill, 1980–Present  
 Mike Dunworth, 1981–1988  
 Kevin McGuire, 1982–Present  
 David Biswurm, 1982–Present  
 Philip Francis, 1983–Present  
 Steven Maffei, 1984–Present  
 Mark Bombace, 1984–Present  
 Gary Wilking, 1984–Present  
 John Albano, 1984–Present  
 Edwin Ermilio, 1985–Present  
 Benjamin Yaden, 1985–Present  
 Gerard J. Sippel, 1985–1988  
 Robert J. Kozielski, Jr., 1985–Present  
 John Walker, Jr., 1985–1988  
 Gregory J. Hillerman, 1985–Present  
 John Sharo, 1986–Present  
 Christopher Du Flocq, 1986–Present  
 James Van Goor, 1986–Present  
 Cynthia Brown, 1987–1988  
 Sean Daly, 1988–Present  
 Raymond Marmion, 1988–Present  
 Russell Gebhard, 1989–Present  
 Paul Monton, 1988–Present  
 Richard Shortway, 1989–Present  
 Steven Missel, 1989–Present  
 Mark Cassidy, 1989–Present  
 Charles Flynn, 1991–1995  
 Sean Flynn, 1991–1995  
 Paul Grygiel, 1991–1993  
 Eugene Dell'Aglio, 1991–1995  
 Daniel Steen, 1991–Present  
 Douglas Henky, 1992–Present  
 Anthony Monton, 1994–Present  
 Matthew Ramge, 1996–Present  
 Kevin Reilly, 1996–Present





Photo of the 1904 Hose Wagon taken in 1912 in front of the Circle Avenue Firehouse. Pictured, from left to right, are: Chief George Courter, Asst. Chief William Van Dien, Capt. John D. Carlock, Lt. Edward Christie, Ff. Bert Grace; on the apparatus, from left to right, are Ff. Henry Miller (holding the reins), Ff. Jacob Kieler (in driver's seat), Ff. Edward Westervelt, Ff. Henry Walthery, Ff. Charles Pearsall, Ff. J. Harvey Winters, Ff. Daniel Helms (on rear step, front), Ff. Ollie Carlough (rear step, rear). The horses are Joe and Dan.

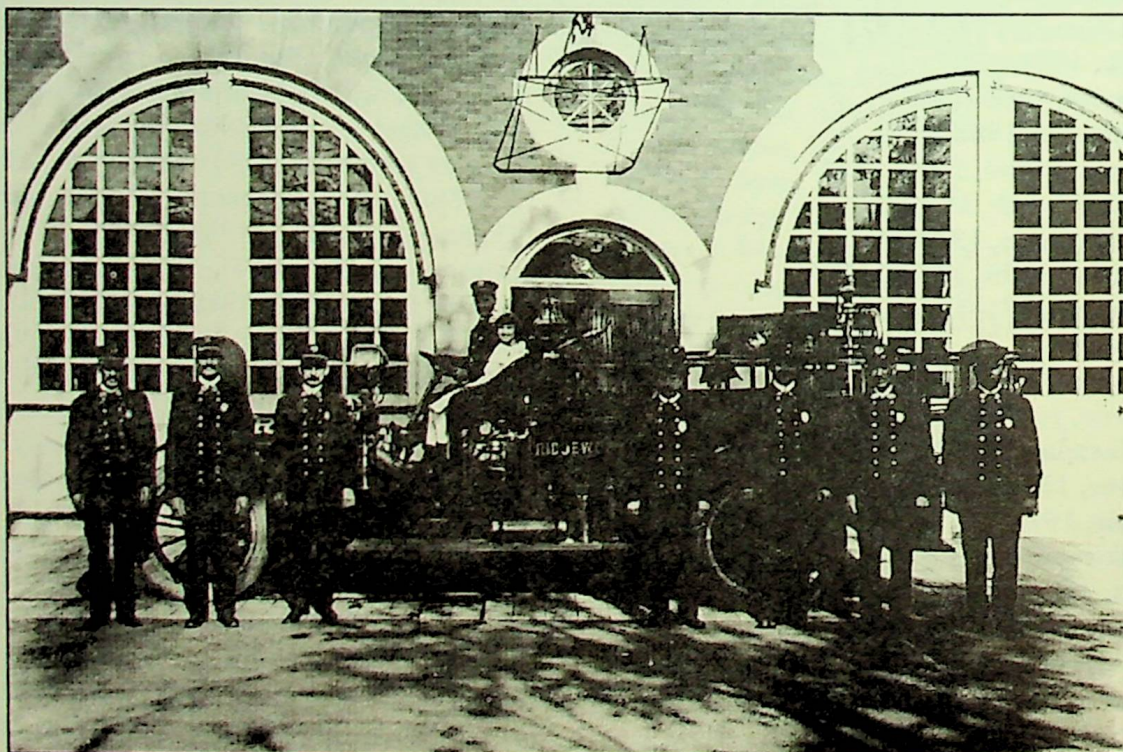


Photo of 1912 Locomobile taken in 1914 in front of the Hudson Street Firehouse. Pictured, from left to right, are Asst. Chief Edward Van Dien, Chief George Courter, Asst. Chief Harry A. Tice, driver Alfonse DeRock, Jesse Van Waggen, A. Pennel, John Carlock, and Edward Christie. The name of the child is not known.



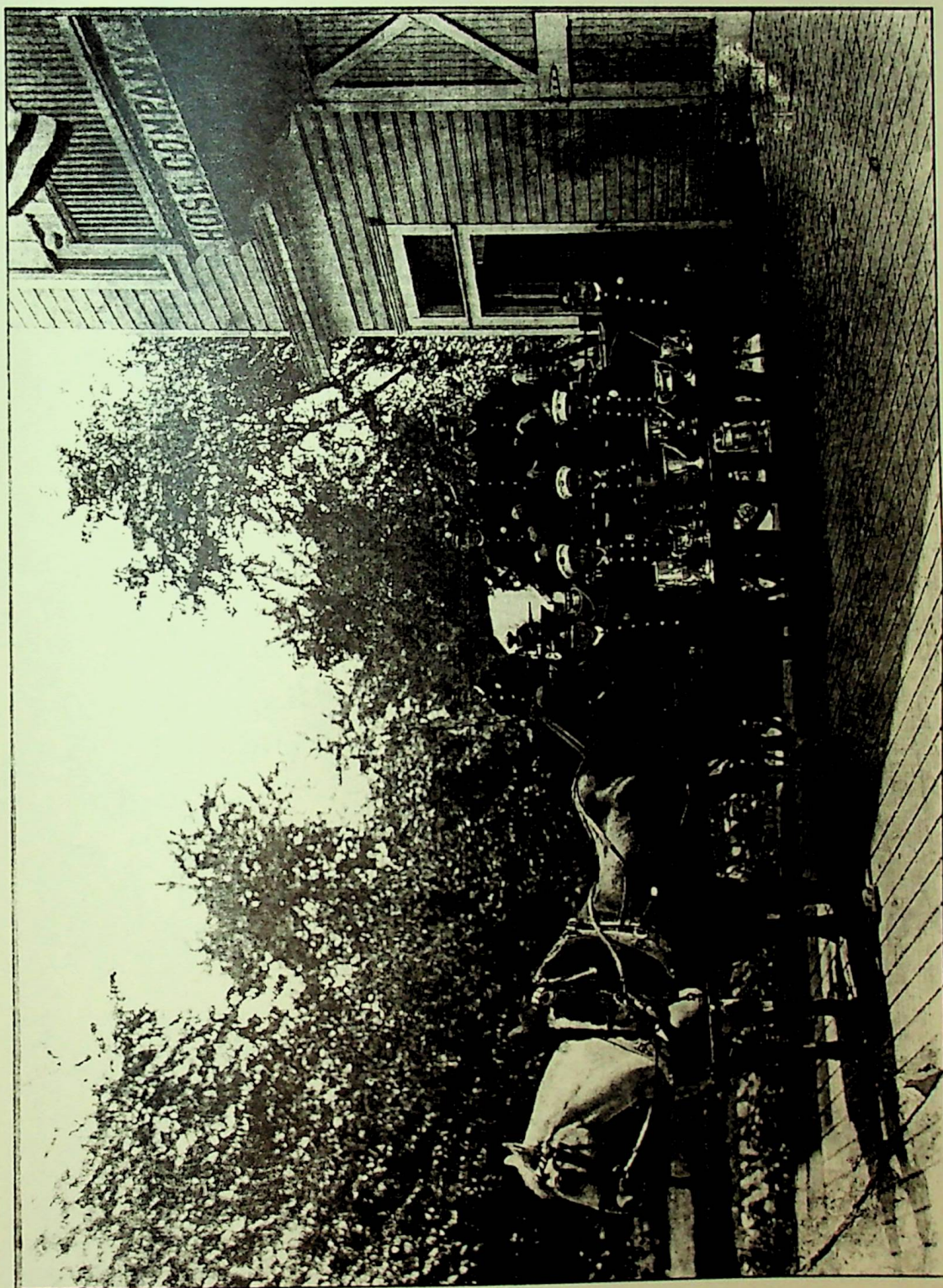
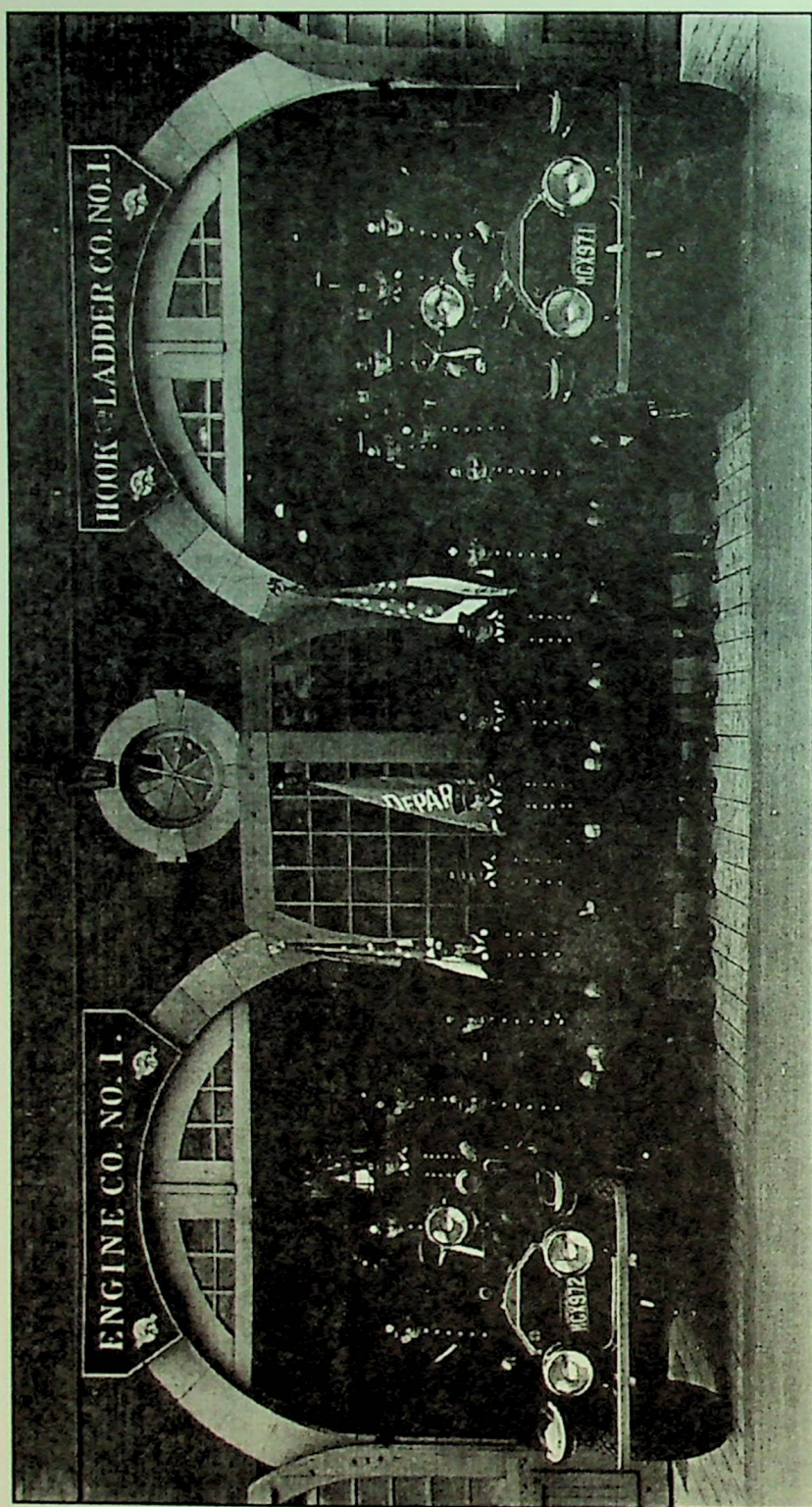


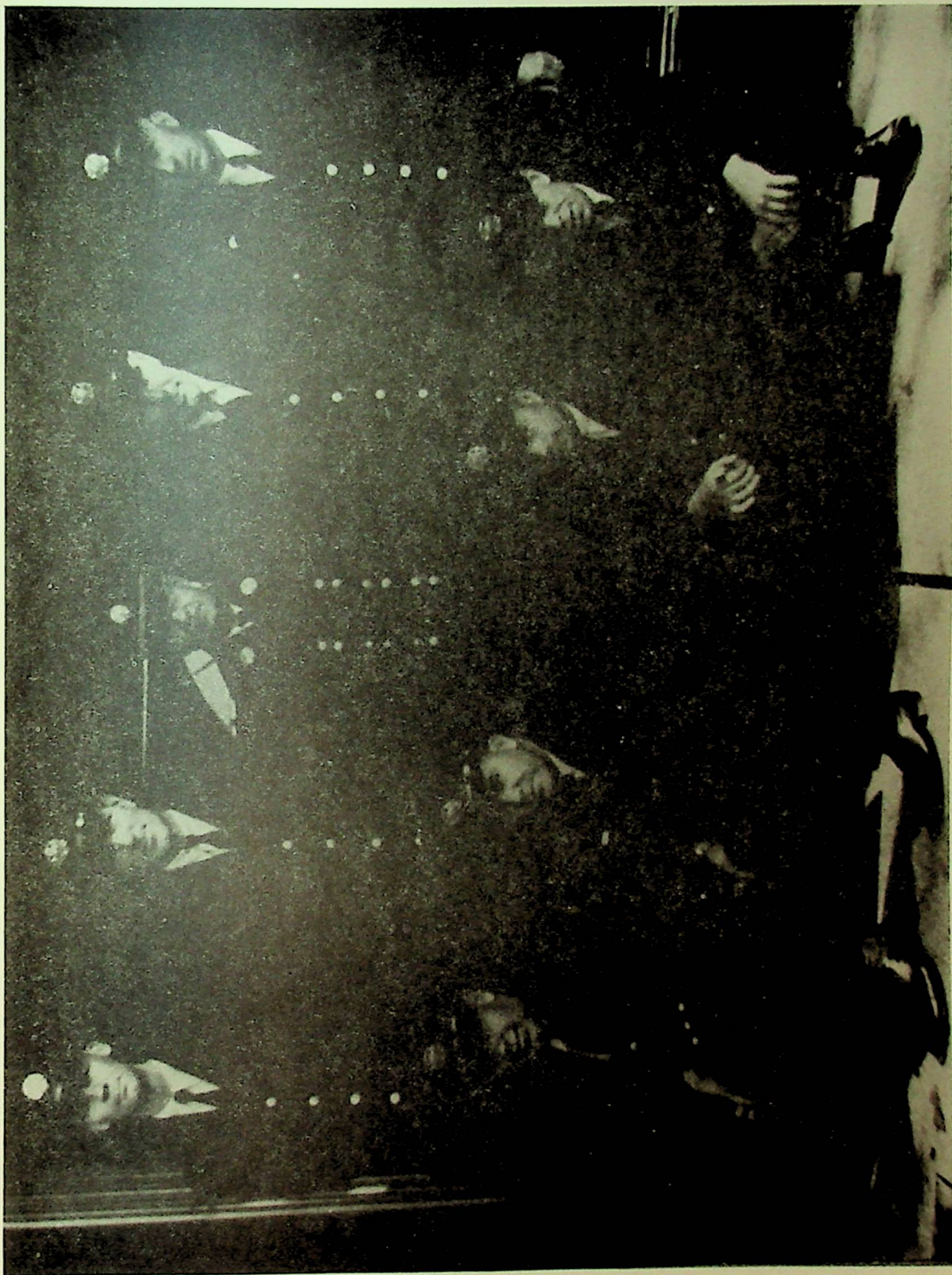
Photo taken in 1922 in front of Circle Avenue Firehouse. Shown in picture are the driver, Henry Miller; seated on apparatus: Charles Clare, Percy Banita, and Edward DeRocker; and standing from left to right are: 1. Harvey Winters, Capt. Edward Christie, Asst. Chief John D. Carlock, Lt. Charles Pearsall, and Charles Shoudy.





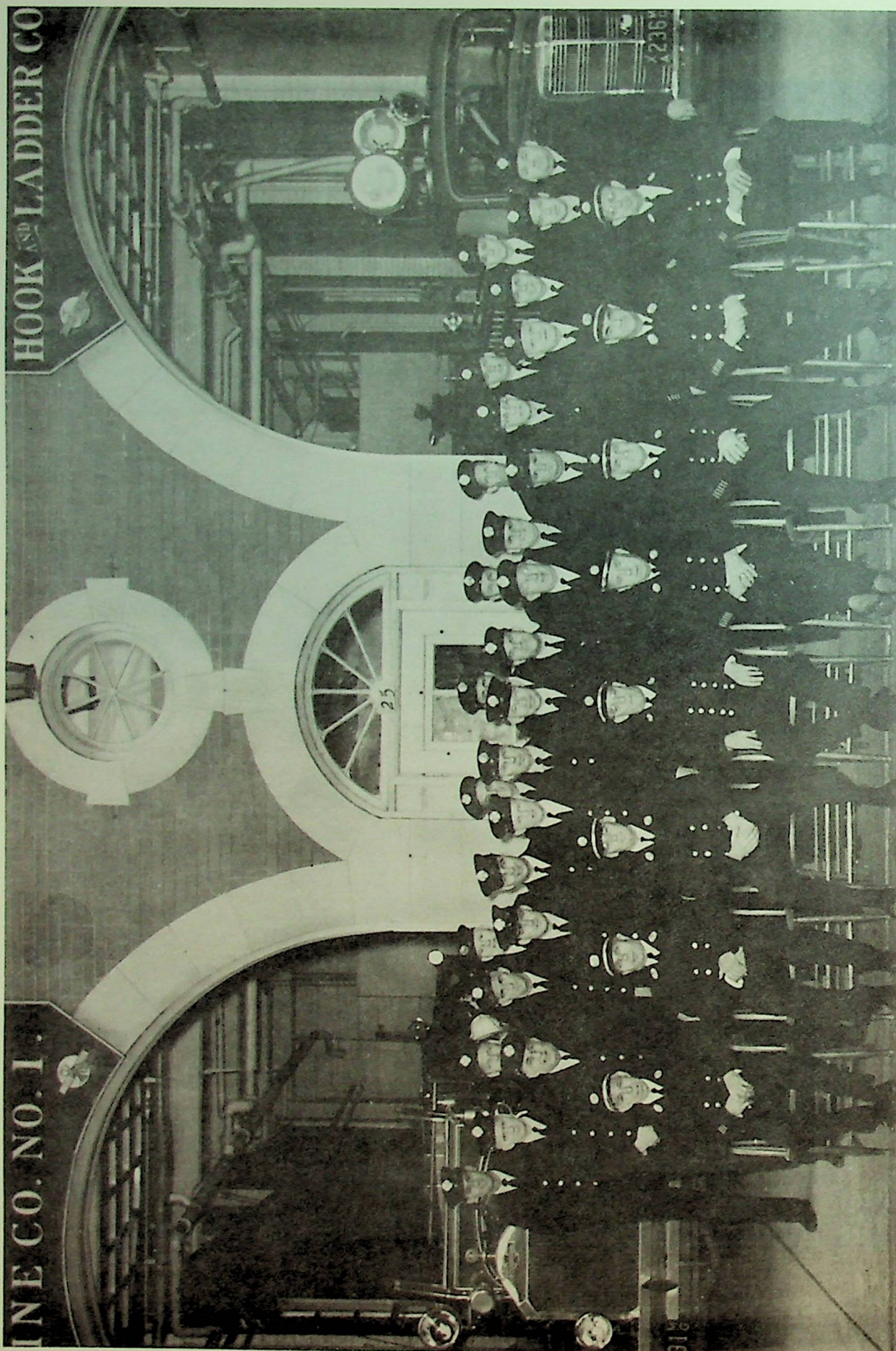
1930 Department Photo. From left to right are: Oliver Vance, William McCullough, Sr., Capt. William Baker, unknown, John Hoffman, Ernest Ferrari, Capt. John J. Kennelly, Asst. Chief Arthur DeMouth, Capt. Charles W. Clare, Raymond Banta, Alfonse Pyle, unknown, Edward Grande, John Vibel, Capt. Henry Leuning, Herman "Ham" Adicks.





*The 1937 Ridgewood Paid Fire Department. Front row, from left to right: Edward Orr, Harris Weaving, John C. Neuhbs, Oliver M. Vance. Back row, from left to right: William H. Haldane, John Vybél, Chief A.J. DeM- Ferrari, William R. McCullough.*





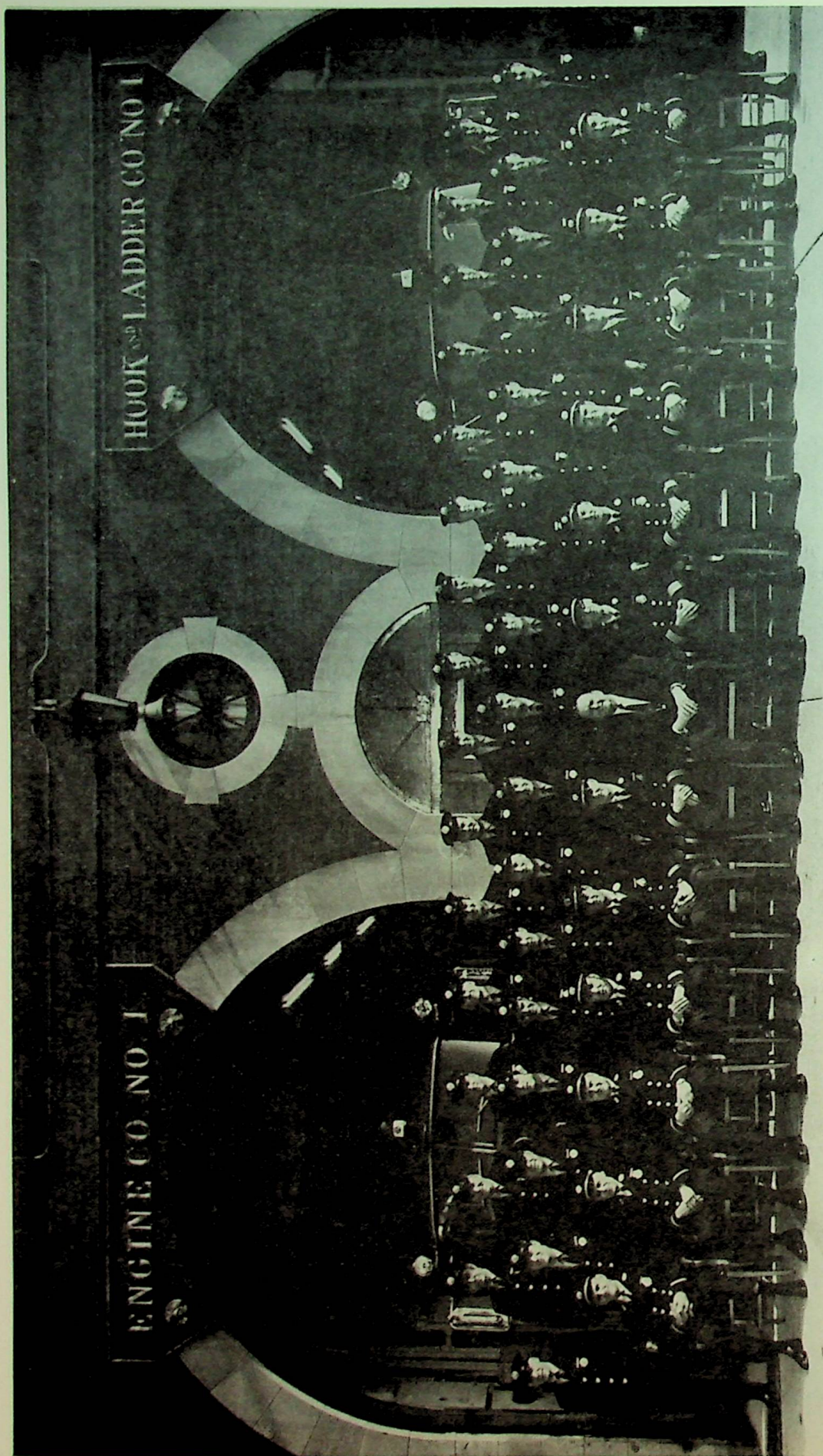
1953 Department Photo. Seated, from left to right: Andy Marshall, Sr., John Neuhs, William Haldane, Oliver Vance, Henry Leuning, Charles Clare, Chester Nickerson, Jack Merck. Second row: Mike Placa, Joe Nichlus, Thomas Keeley, Brian Washburn, Harold Florence, Sr., William Pearson, George Arnold, Donald Owens. Third row: John Pruikmsma, Albert Clark, Edward Meyers, John Nagelhout, Harris Weaving, Robert Pearson, Arthur Krause, Tony Placa, John Muller. Fourth row: Charles Mckechney, Jr., Elmer Babcock, Jerry Reddington, Julius Monton, Peter Verhulst, unknown, George Demerest, Edward Hallahan, Herman Pruikmsma.





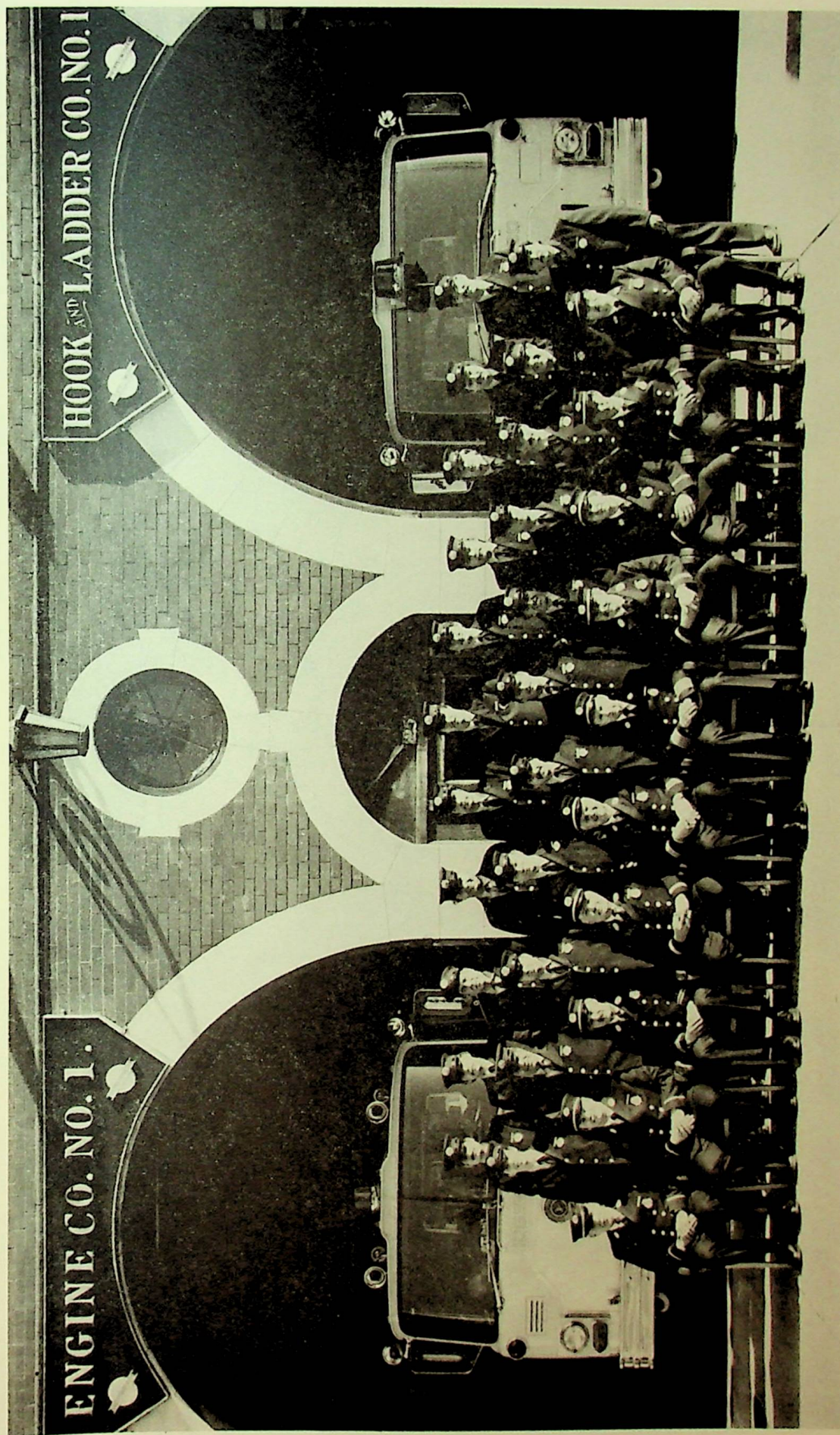
1960 Department Photo. Seated, from left to right: Lt. Arnold Banta, Capt. John Neuls, Capt. Peter Verbulst, Asst. Chief Robert Clare, Chief William H. Haldane, Commissioner B. Franklin Reinauer II, Capt. Charles McKechney, Capt. Thomas Keeley, Lt. Philip Cenicola, Tex Williams. Second row: Firefighters Edward Liptrot, Raymond Holzel, Everett Palmer, Francis X. Nolan, Joseph Nicklus, Henry Redyke, Russell Pendlebury, William Morgan, Robert Waddington, Charles Hazekamp, Thomas Englishman, Robert Pearson, Albert Clark, William McCullough, Jr., Garret Dykhous. Third row: Firefighters Joseph Caren, Herman Pruiksma, John Pruiksma, Thomas Driscoll, Fredrick Piazza, Robert Christopher, Stan Riker, William Weiner, John Babcock, Edward Hallahan, George Hamling, William Kemmerer, Elmer Babcock.





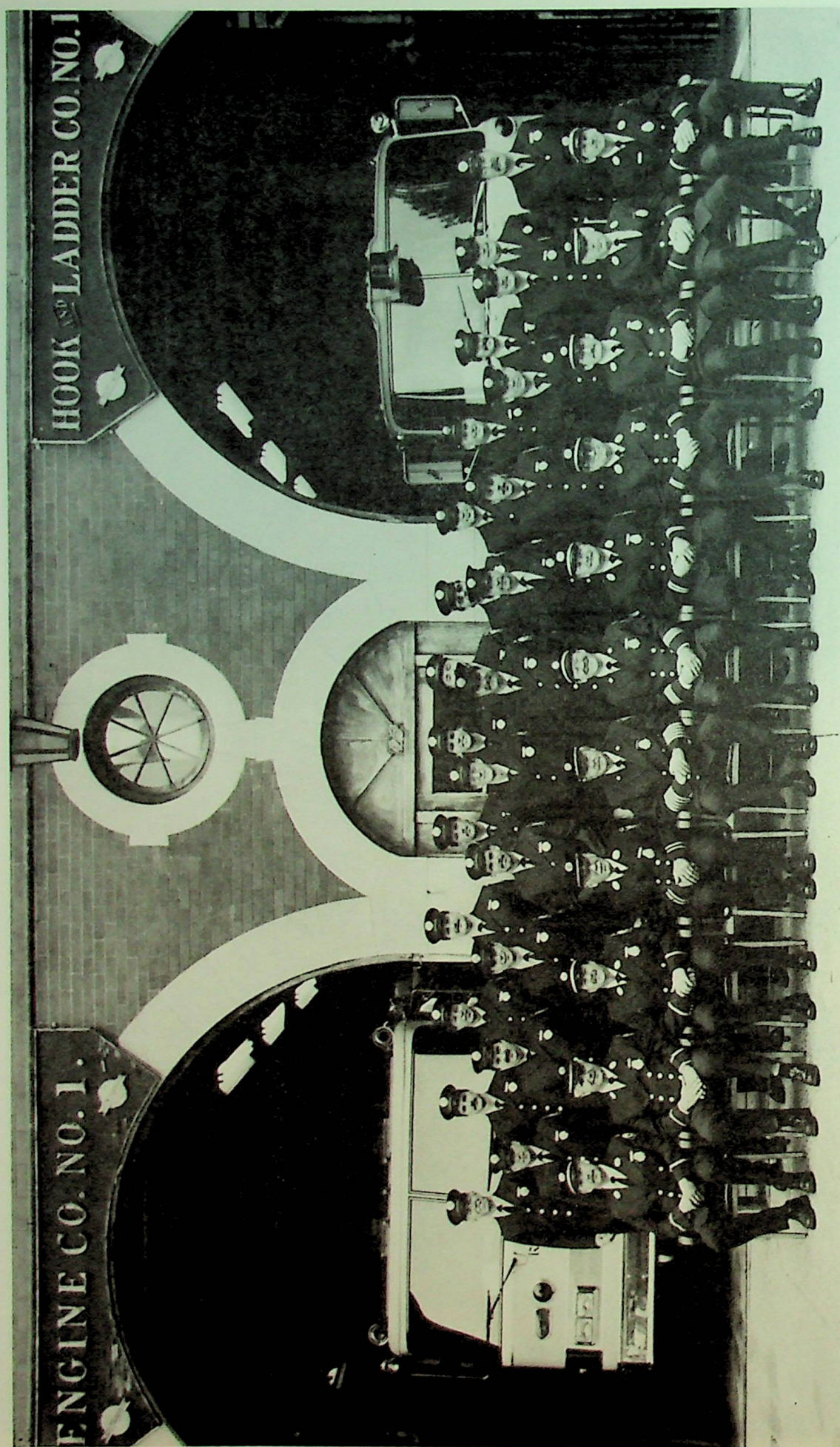
1970 Department Photo. Seated, from left to right: Lt. Arnold Banta, Lt. Philip Cenicola, Lt. George Hamling, Capt. Stan Riker, Capt. Charles R. McKechney, Deputy Chief Thomas Keeley, Commissioner John C. Conklin, Chief William H. Haldane, Asst. Chief Robert Clare, Capt. Peter Verhulst, Lt. William Kemmerer, Lt. John Pruikma, Lt. Francis X. Nolan. Second row: Firefighters Everett Palmer, Edward Liptrot, Dominic Bounassi, Jr., Raleigh Haydon, Russel Pendlebury, Charles Hazekamp, Robert Waddington, Raymond Holzel, Elmer Babcock, Edward Outslay, Louis Toth, Ronald Merritt, John Sablberg, William McCullough, Jr., Albert Clark, Garret Dykhouse, Edward Fetkowitz. Third row: Firefighters Joseph Caren, Robert Pearson, Herman Pruikma, Thomas Englishman, Benedict Parisi, Thomas Driscoll, Allan Gudrian, William Weiner, John Babcock, Robert Missel, Robert Christopher, Edward Hallahan, Norman Boutin, James Monton, Tex Williams.





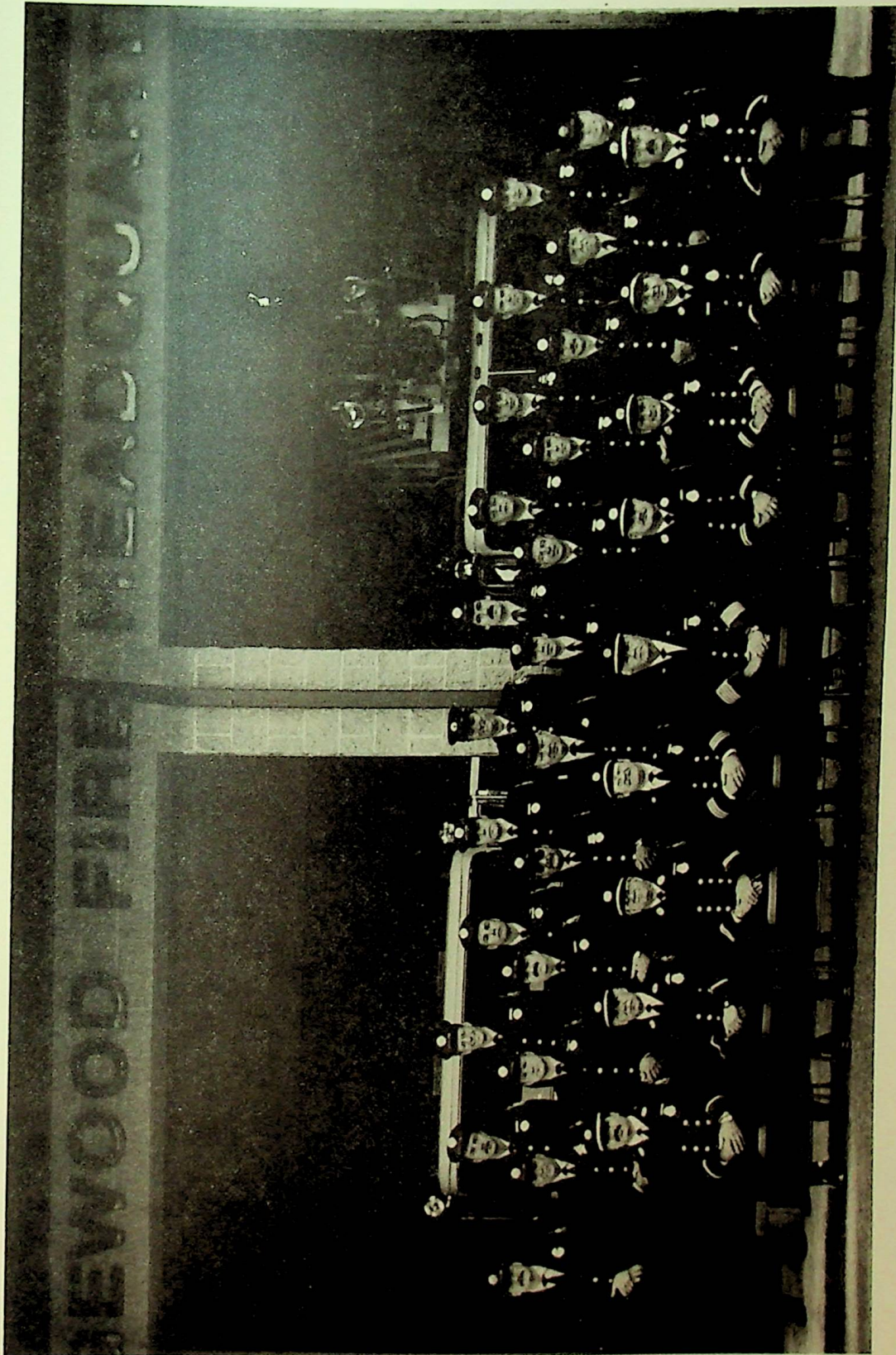
1984 Department Photo. Seated, from left to right: Lt. Norman Boutin, Lt. Robert Thomsen, Capt. James Monton, Capt. Stanley Riker, Deputy Chief George Hamling, Chief Francis X. Nolan, Capt. Robert Missel, Lt. Ronald Gimbert, Lt. Gerald Curry, Jr. Second row: FF. Daniel Cahill, Dominic Bounassi, Jr., Albert Whitaker, John Wolfstirn, Arthur Bentley, William Regensburg, Richard Van Zile, Richard Kane, Kevin McGuire, Edward Liptrot, Richard Urbanik. Third row: FF. James Bombace, David Yaden, Robert Christopher, Allan Gudrian, Peter Hynes, Robert Hyslop, Charles Lamb, Donald Henry, Edward Outslay, David Biswurm, Philip Francis.





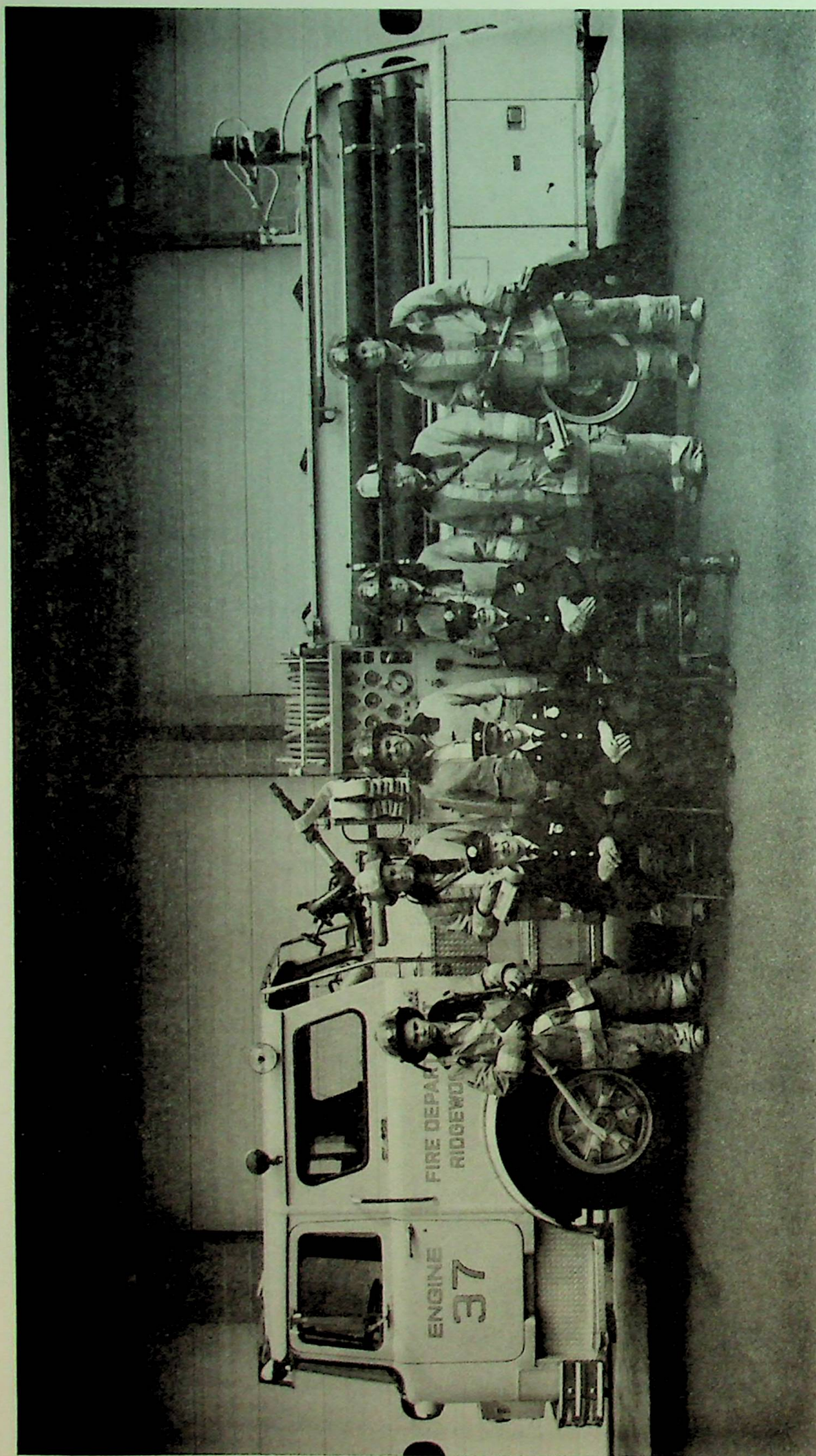
1990 Department Photo. Seated, from left to right: Lt. D. Yaden, Lt. A. Gudrian, Lt. E. Outslay, Capt. N. Boutin, Director/Chief R. Missel, Deputy Chief L. Mullay, Capt. R. Thomsen, Capt. A. Whitaker, Lt. C. Lamb, Lt. R. Kane, Lt. R. Gimbert. Second row: Firefighters J. Sharo, D. Bisuwurm, J. Albano, C. Duflocq, R. Gebhard, R. Hyslop, P. Hynes, J. Van Goor, J. Wolfstirn, R. Shortway, P. Francis Third row: Firefighters R. Van Zile, K. McGuire, S. Daly, S. Maffei, R. Marnion, R. Kozielski, D. Henry, G. Wilking, M. Bom-bace, W. Regensburg, A. Bentley, T. Carman.





1997 Ridgewood Fire Department Photo. Seated, from left to right: Lt. M. Bombace, Lt. D. Yaden, Capt. A. Whitaker, Deputy Chief L. Mullay, Director/Chief R. Missel, Capt. R. Thomsen, Lt. J. Bombace, Lt. R. Gimbert, Lt. P. Francis. Second row: Firefighters J. Carney, J. Sharo, M. Range, D. Biswurm, G. Wilking, J. Wolfstirn, D. Cahill, S. Daly, R. Marmion, K. McGuire, R. Van Zile, T. Carman. Third row: Firefighters J. Van Goor, R. Gebhard, R. Kozielski, S. Missel, R. Hyslop, G. Hillerman, M. Cassidy, J. Albano, C. DuFlocq, P. Monoton. Not pictured: Lt. R. Kane, Lt. C. Lamb, Lt. W. Regensburg, FF A. Bentley, D. Henry, P. Hynes, S. Maffei, R. Shortway, R. Urbanik.





1997 Volunteer Division Photo. Seated, from left to right: Life Members, Victor Virgens, George Smith, Benjamin Yaden. Back row: Douglas Henky, Lt. Christopher Rai-  
mondi, Edwin Ermilio, Anthony Monton, Capt. Richard Scalone, Daniel Steen.





*1997 Fire Department Administrative Staff*

*Seated, from left to right: Chief's Secretary Patti Herman and Fire Prevention Bureau Secretary Dolores Tomei. Standing: Senior Fire Prevention Officer and Sub-Code Official Lieutenant Ronald GimBert, Fire Inspector John Wolfstirn, Deputy Chief LeRoy W. Mullay, Jr., and Chief Robert D. Missel.*



*"A" Platoon, Fall 1996*

*Front row, from left to right: Lt. Richard Kane, Ff. Peter Hynes, Capt. James Bombace, Lt. Philip Francis. Back row: Firefighters Richard Urbanik, Kevin McGuire, Chris DuFlocq, Donald Henry, Steven Maffei, Mark Cassidy, Raymond Marmion, Richard Van Zile.*





*"B" Platoon, Winter 1997*

*Front row, from left to right: Lt. David Yaden, Capt. Albert Whitaker, Lt. Mark Bombace. Second row: Firefighters John Sharo, Daniel Cahill, Russell Gebhard, Robert Kozielski, Jr., Joseph Carney. Firefighter Gary Wilking on running board. On ladder: Firefighters Matthew Ramge, John Albano, Sean Daly*

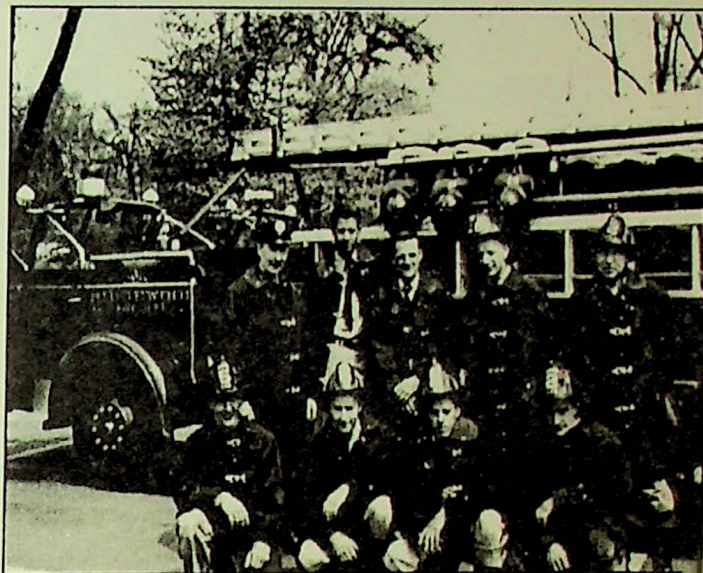


*"C" Platoon, Winter 1997*

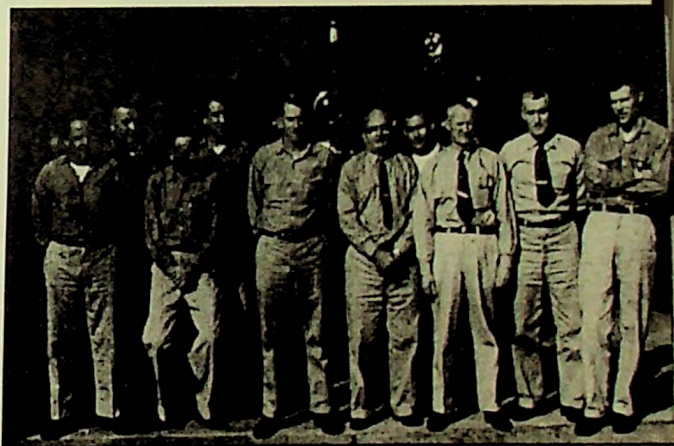
*Front row, from left to right: Lt. Charles Lamb, Firefighters James Van Goor, Richard Shortway, Gregory Hillerman, Capt. Robert Thomsen, Lt. William Regensburg. Second Row: Firefighters Arthur Bentley, David Biswurm, Theodore Carman. Back row: Firefighters Steven Mysel, Paul Monton*



1960. Front row, left to right: Charles Hazekamp, Frank Nolan, William Morgan, Henry Redyke. Back row: Thomas Driscoll, Charles McKechney, Arnold Banta, Garret Dykhous, Bryant Washburn.



"C" Platoon, circa 1960. Front row, from left to right: Russell Pendlebury, Robert Waddington, Herman Pruiksma, Capt. John Neuhs, Capt. Thomas Keeley, Albert Clark, John Babcock. Back row: Stan Riker, Robert Christopher, Joseph Nicklus



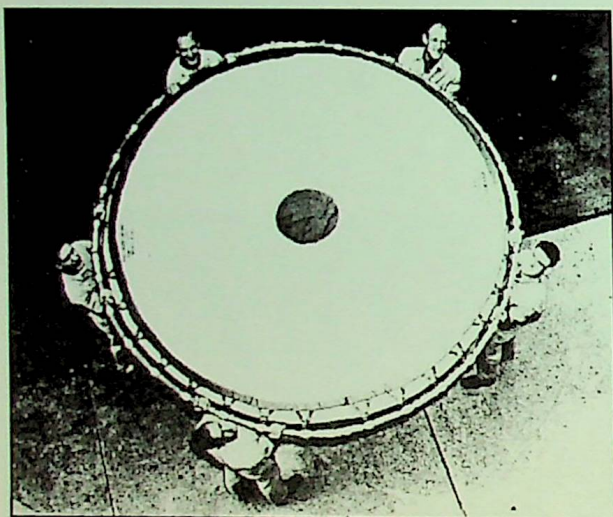
"B" Platoon farewell to Firefighter Edward Liptrot as he is about to retire in 1985. Kneeling in front is Firefighter Liptrot, standing from left to right are: Firefighters Edward Outslay, Robert Hyslop, Capt. James Monton, Lt. Bud Mullay, Firefighter John Albano, Lt. Edward Fetkowitz, and on apparatus are Firefighters Theodore Carman and David Biswurm.







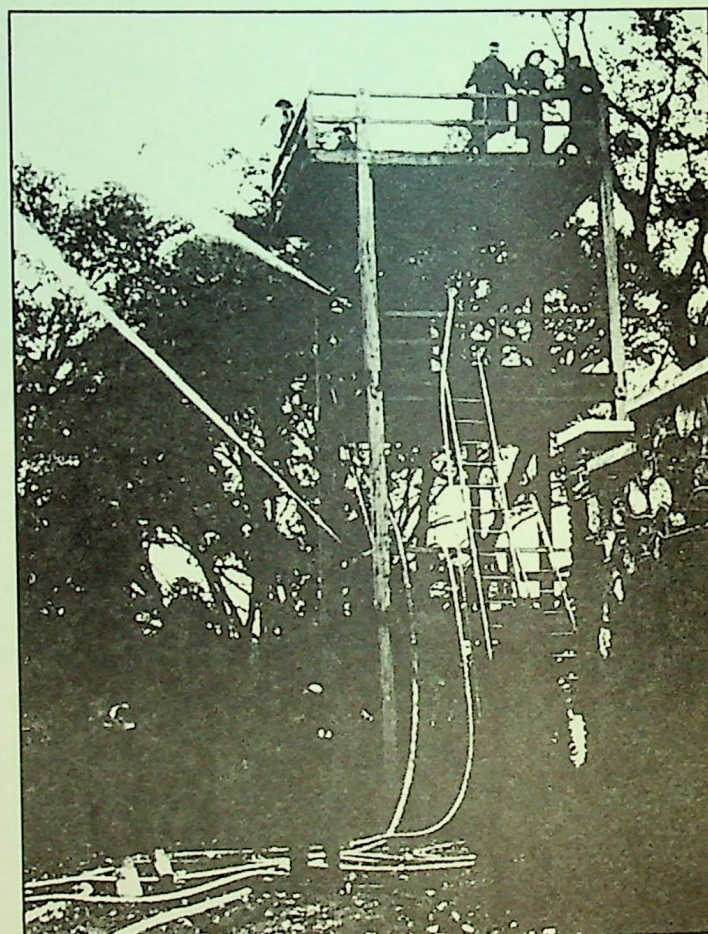
*The last "line-up" at the Hudson Street Firehouse, prior to the demolition of the historic building. Firefighters Chris DuFlocq, Ted Carman, Don Henry, Pete Hynes, and Paul Monton were on duty the last day it was manned, July 30, 1993.*



*Lifenet practice. Top right clockwise: Bob Clare, Tex Williams, Harry Vriesema, William McCullough, and William McDonald*

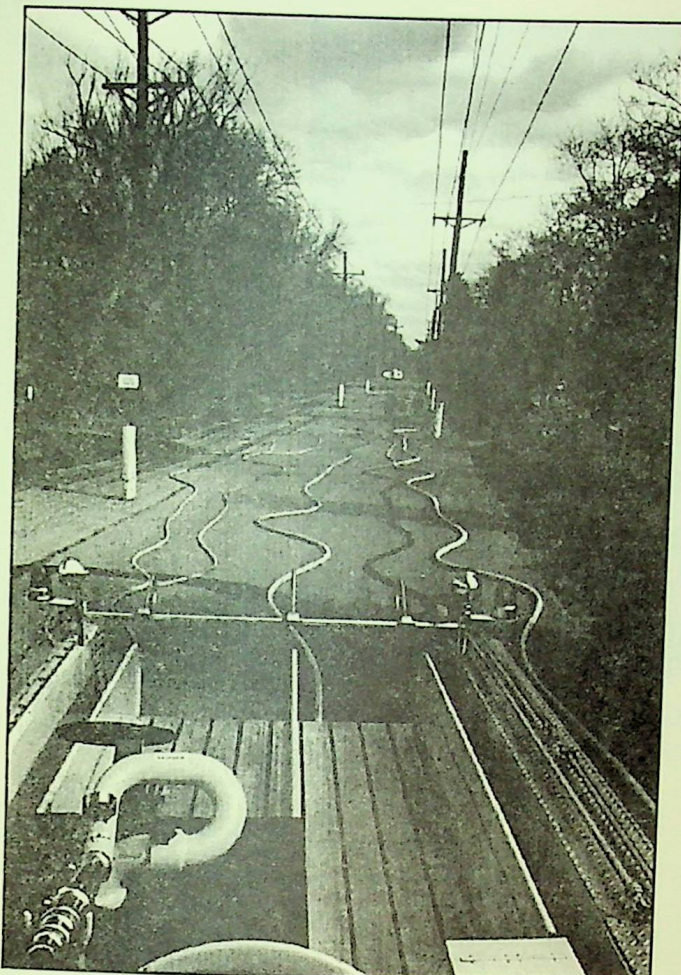


*Firemen practice "opening up a roof" of a fire building to vent smoke and hot gases. This enables other firefighters to enter rooms below with a hose line to safely and quickly extinguish the fire. It also helps to limit the spread of flames and affords occupants a better chance of survival. Pictured left to right are: Capt. Albert Whitaker, Capt. Robert Thomsen, and Lt. Mark Bombace.*

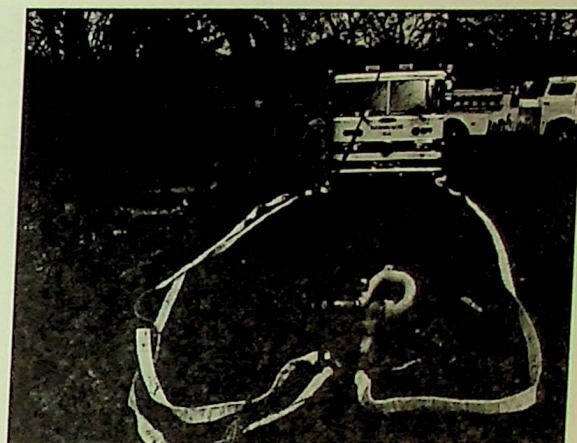


*Training tower constructed by firemen for \$150 at the north side of the Graydon Pool parking lot in 1934. Fireman on ground to the left is Charles Clare. The other men working on the tower are Ernie Ferraro, Oliver Vance, Andrew Marshall, Bud Vaupel, Bob Clare, and John Hoffman.*

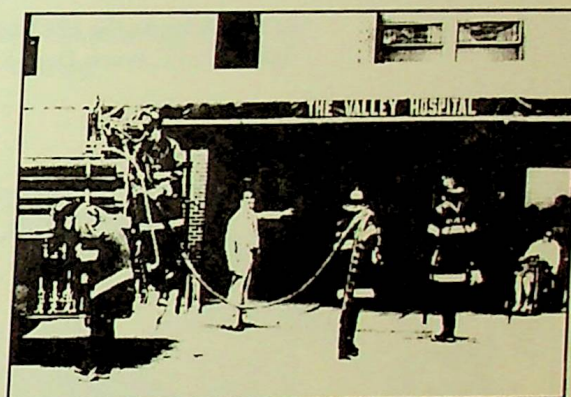




Annual hose testing at Graydon Pool. One by one, every engine is stripped of its hose, the lines are pressurized and checked for damage, and then neatly re-packed. Each engine carries an average of 3,300 feet of hose.



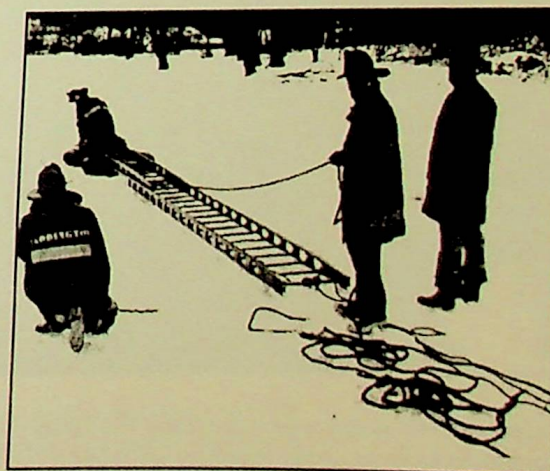
Annual pump testing at the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. Each piece of pumping apparatus is tested annually to ensure that it is up to the manufacturer's standards and complies with insurance rating standards.



A practice drill at Valley Hospital. Pictured left to right are: unknown, Charlie Lamb, Al Wagner (Hospital Engineering Department), Art Bentley, and Lt. Robert Missel.

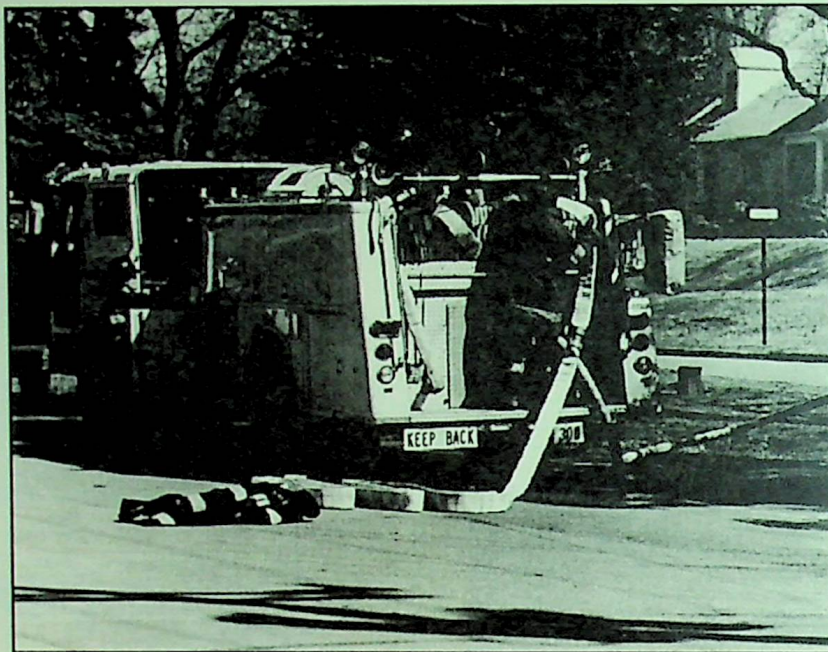


Until the 1960's, firemen used a practice "smokehouse" which stood between the current Fire Headquarters on East Glen Avenue and the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. From left to right are: Firefighters Robert Pearston, Ray Holzel, Captain Peter Verhulst, and an unknown new firefighter.

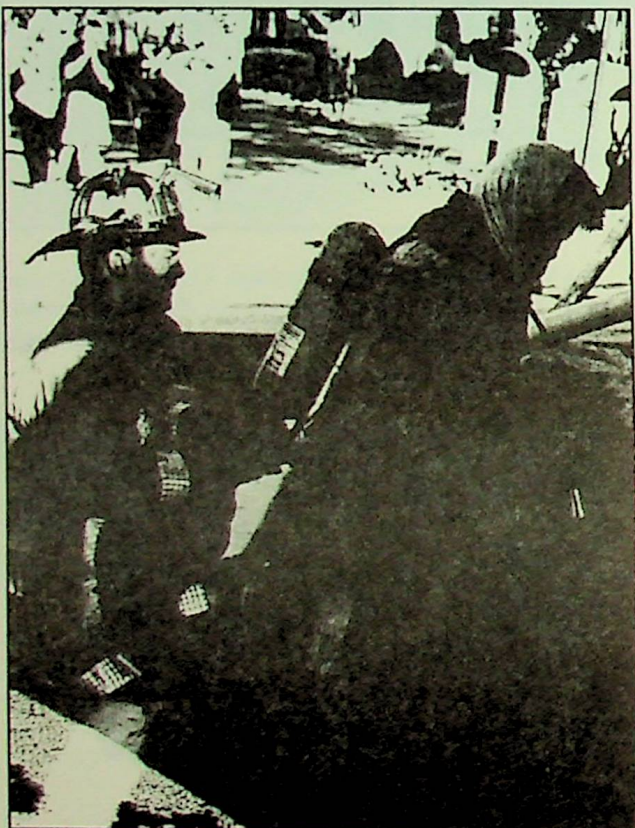


Ice rescue drill. Shown from left to right are: Robert Waddington, Robert Missel (on ladder), unknown, and Robert Christopher.





*Packing hose on the 1982 Mack in 1985. Pictured left to right are: Firefighters Ted Carman, Dave Biswurm, and Ed Liptrot.*



*A typical scene at any major fire. Here Firefighter Paul Monton replaces an empty breathing air cylinder for Lt. Philip Francis. Exhausting a 30-minute air cylinder in a fire should be followed by a short rest period, but many times firefighters are forced to go through several tanks before relief.*

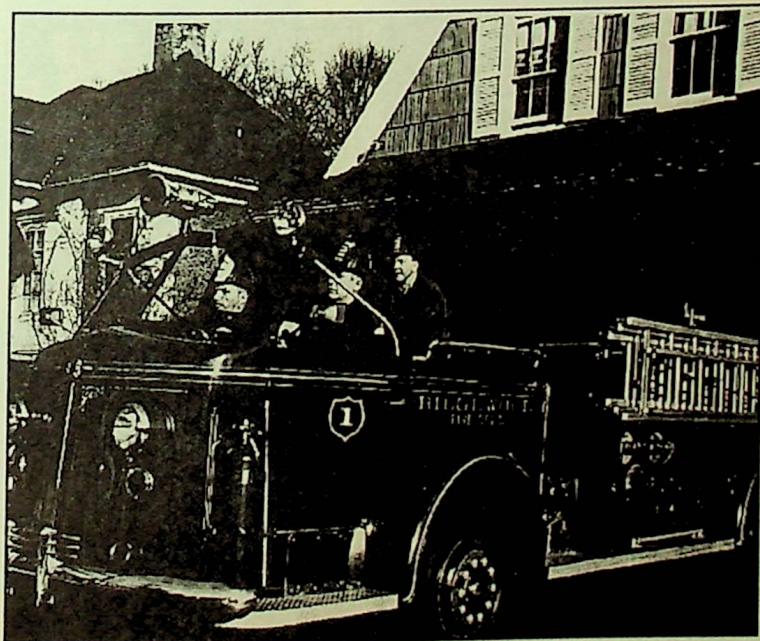


*Amidst the smoke, Lt. Allan Gudrian checks for fire extension on the roof of the Human Villa Restaurant at 192 East Ridgewood Avenue. Fire heavily damaged the kitchen on September 3, 1991.*



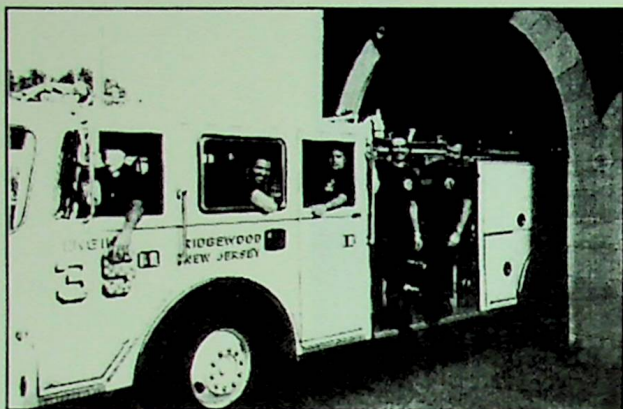


*Engine Company #31, 1948. Standing in rear is Thomas Englishman, seated is Lt. John Neuhs, and in front is Harris Weaving.*

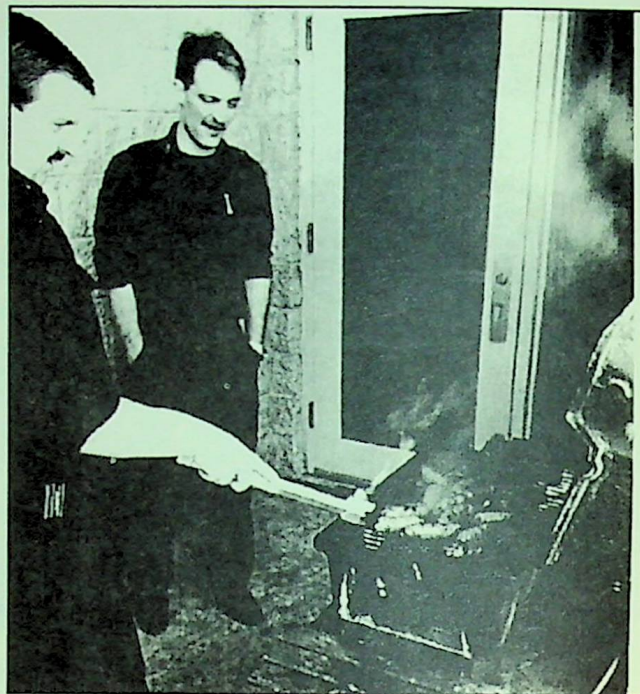


*Responding to an alarm from the West Glen Avenue Firehouse in 1948. Driving is Thomas Englishman, Lt. John Neuhs, and Harris Weaving is in the rear.*

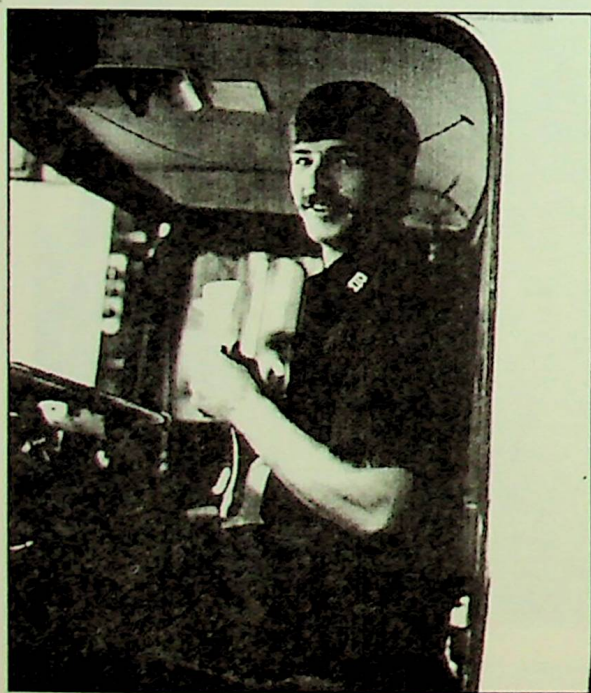




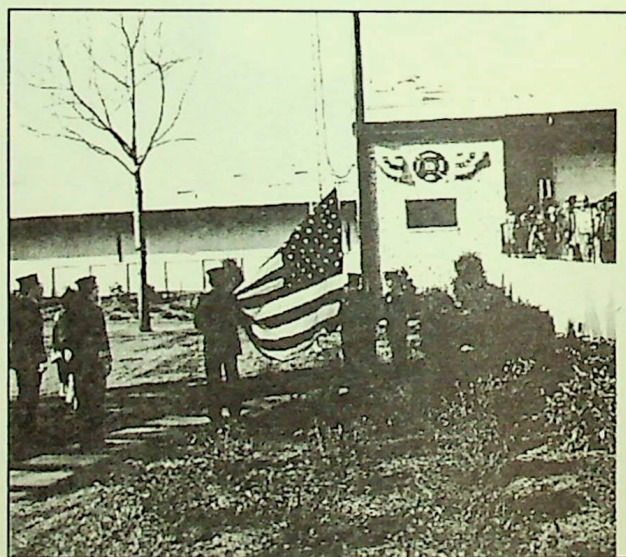
*The engine pulls out of the Hudson Street Firehouse for the last time. At 4:46 p.m. on July 30, 1993 the station was closed and Engine #35 and Ladder #36 were moved to the new headquarters at 201 East Glen Avenue. Riding the engine out are Firefighters Pete Hynes, Chris DuFlocq, Ted Carman, Paul Monton, and Don Henry. The building was torn down three months later.*



*Firefighter Dave Biswurm grills dinner for "C" Platoon while Firefighter Paul Monton looks on. The firefighters pay for and prepare their own meals while on duty.*

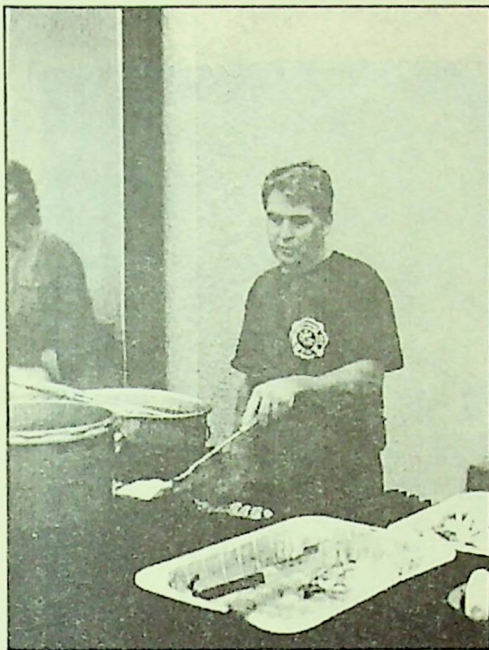


*Firefighter Kevin McGuire with checklist performing a daily apparatus check in 1984.*

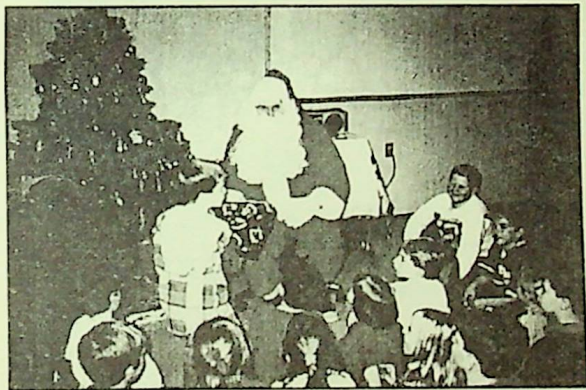


*Dedication of the new Fire Headquarters at 201 East Glen Avenue on April 15, 1992. The color guard raises the flag on a flagpole that was donated by the Dunworth family in memory of Volunteer Firefighter John Dunworth.*



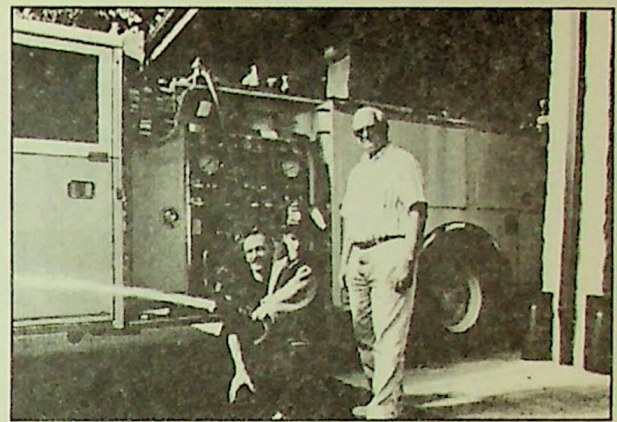


*"Master Chef" Art Bentley preparing food on a grill the firemen built themselves. The event is the 1996 department picnic.*



*The 1994 Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association Christmas Party at Fire Headquarters. Firefighter Dave Biswurm played Santa. Santa's helpers are Firefighter Jack Wolfstirn and young Rich Shortway.*

*Shown here are retired members of the department at the Annual Fire Department Picnic in 1996. In foreground are Helen Nolan and Retired Firefighter Bob Christopher. Facing camera are Retired Firefighter Bob Pearston, Dot Hallahan, Retired Firefighter Ed Hallahan, and Retired Firefighter Ed Liptrot.*



*Every child's dream! Firefighter Paul Monton ran the pump for retired Captain Peter Verhulst and his grandson when they visited in 1995.*



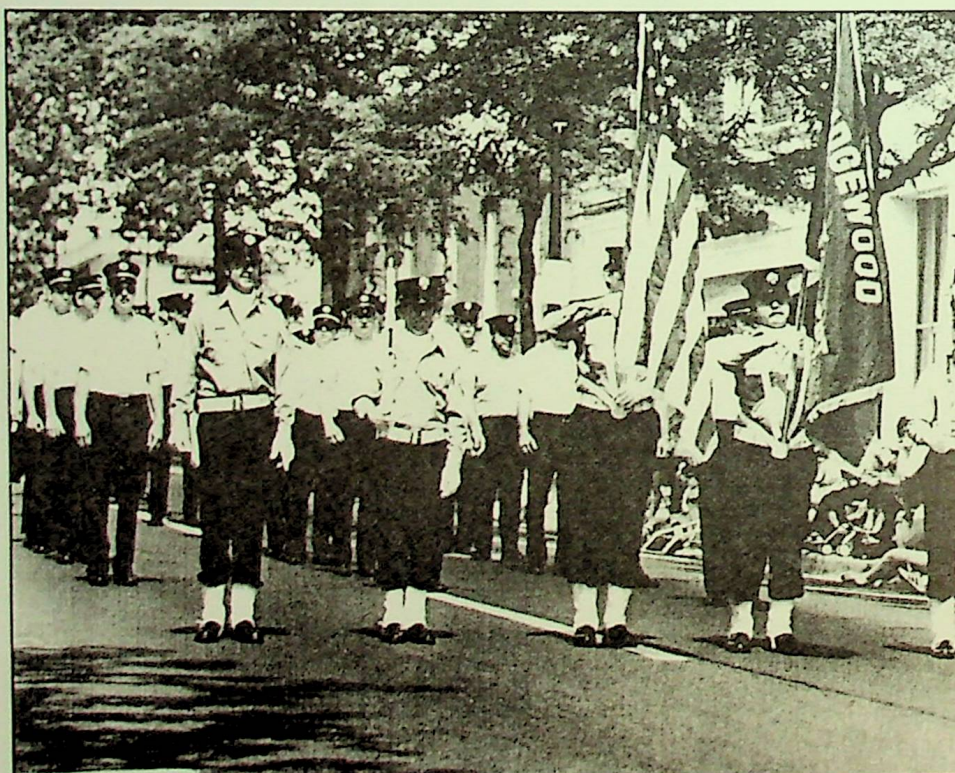
*Kids are important! To entertain the children at the 1996 department picnic, a "bouncing air house" was rented.*







*Ridgewood's Protection Hook and Ladder Co. #1 marching in a Hackensack parade on September 22, 1899. Twenty-five men and their shining Holloway Chemical Engine traveled by train and horse to attend the parade. Wearing parade uniforms, from left to right, are: First Assistant Chief John B. Hopper, Chief Engineer David J. O'Neill, and Second Assistant Chief C.S. Keyser.*



*1985 Fourth of July parade. Pictured is the Color Guard, from left to right: Firefighters Peter Hynes and Richard Van Zile, Lt. Charles Lamb, and Firefighters Donald Henry and William Regensburg*





*Ridgewood Fire Department Halloween party, sometime during the 1940's, held at the Elks Club (which is now Village Hall at 131 North Maple Avenue). With assistance, we have attempted to identify those in the picture to the best of our ability. From left to right, front row: Bill McCullough, Sr., Ellen Florence, Clara Leuning, Johnny Orr, Henry Leuning, Mary McCullough, Blanch Neubs, John Neubs. Seated in second row: Sis Clare, unknown, Betty Ferrari, Dutch Hoffman, Mrs. Hoffman, Unknown, Mrs. White, Chief DeMouth, Unknown, Mrs. Clare. Standing in third row: unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Cbet Nickerson, unknown, Commissioner White, Edward Orr, Sr., unknown, Harris Weaving, unknown, Abe Banta, unknown, Thomas Keeley. Standing in back row: unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Ethel Weaving, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, unknown, Chuck Clare.*



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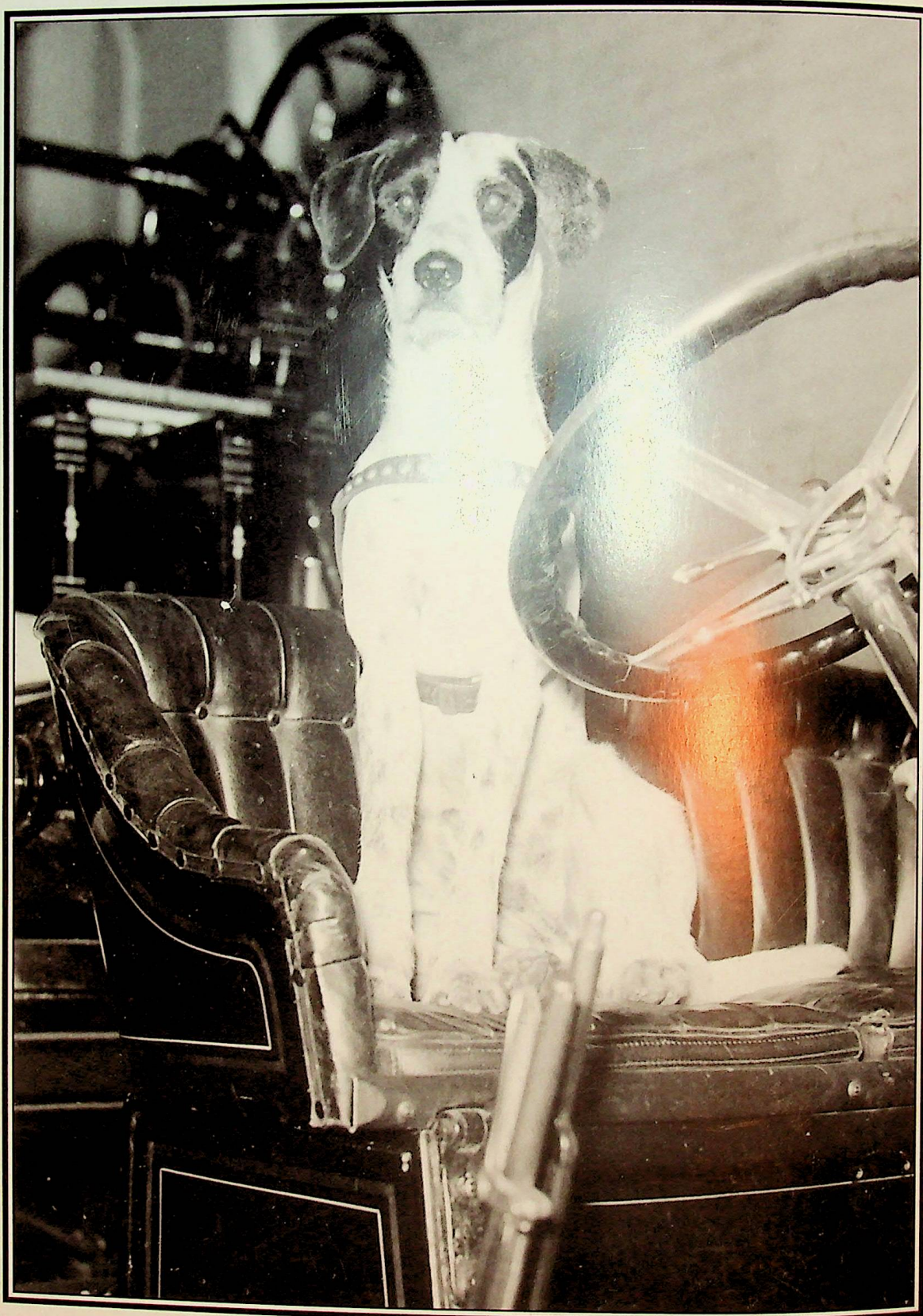
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*Ridgewoods 1925 American LaFrance ladder truck after being sold to a collectors group. It appears here in a Franklin Lakes parade in the early 1970's*





1934  
*A very distinguished "Ned" seated on 1925  
Ladder Truck waiting for the next alarm.*