

The City Of Hackensack Fire Department was established April 1st, 1871. It has its origins going back to March 11, 1864. That evening a meeting of all citizens was held for the purpose of devising measures to protect the village from fires. Two weeks later, on March 25, 1864, it was reported that the village commission had no power to raise money by taxation for fire apparatus of any kind, but suggested that the fire committee try to raise \$500.00 by voluntary subscription to purchase hooks, ladders and buckets. Thus the Hackensack Fire Department was born. In 1871, the State Legislature created the Hackensack Improvement Commission empowering them to organize a Fire Department. The response from the community was immediate and within a short time the following Volunteer Fire Companies were formed: Bergen Hook & Ladder Co. 1; Relief Hook & Ladder Co. 2; Protection Engine Co. 1 ; Vigilant Engine Co. .Liberty Hose & Steamer Co. 1; And A Fire Patrol Co. was formed on July 4, 1876. Six years passed until Alert Hose Co. 2 was formed and in 1890 Hudson Hose Co. 3 incorporated. In 1895, Union Hose Co. 4 was formed.

### **Bergen Hook & Ladder Co. #1**

Bergen Hook & Ladder Co. 1 was organized June 1, 1871. The first truck operated by this company was purchased in Jersey City. This apparatus was built in 1868 for Bergen Hook & Ladder Co. 1, in Jersey City. It was then sold to a private company who in turn sold the rig to the Hackensack Fire Commission after it had been decided by the Jersey City Fire Department to purchase trucks hauled by horses. The truck was sold to the Bergen Hook & Ladder Co. 1 of Hackensack for \$500., a bargain since it originally cost \$1400. A committee of the Bergen H&L was appointed to bring the truck from Jersey City. At the same time another volunteer company was sent out on a similar mission with the understanding that the apparatus reaching Hackensack first would have the title of No.1. The Bergen Company won the race and the truck was stationed in a small building on State St. near the Susquehanna Railroad for a few years. They then moved into quarters with Protection Engine Co. 1 on Bergen St. They remained here until March 30, 1894 when they moved into new quarters on Morris St. with Protection Engine Co. 1. The truck was sold to Rockville Centre, N.Y. in September, 1896. In 1896 they had 34 members.

### **Relief Hook & Ladder Co. 2**

Relief Hook & Ladder Co. 2 was also formed June 1, 1871. They lost the race back from Jersey City and thus were dubbed No.2. Their first apparatus was twenty years old when it was purchased by the commission. The apparatus was remodeled in 1891, getting a new frame and the ladders being placed on rollers. Two ladders were fitted together to make an extension ladder 43 feet long. This rig served for a few more years until a new two-horse steel frame truck was purchased from the Gleason and Bailey Co. for \$1350. The company was originally housed in a blacksmith shop on Union St. It then moved to a boat house on Anderson's dock at the rivers edge near the intersection of Passaic and River

Sts. In March 1896 they moved for the last time to quarters at 346 State St. between Passaic and Berry Sts. In 1896 they had 42 members.

### **Protection Engine Co. # 1**

Protection Engine Co. 1 was formed in November 1871. They were put into service on May 6, 1872. They were quartered alone on Bergen St. and on March 30, 1894 larger quarters were built on the same site and Bergen H&L moved into the second bay. Also in 1894, an American La France engine was purchased. This company was considered by many to be the best firefighting company in the city, and there was a waiting list to join the company. In 1896 they had 34 members.

### **Liberty Hose Co. #1 -Liberty Steamer Co. #1**

Liberty Hose Co. 1 was formed September 19, 1882 with 12 men. On November 2, 1885 they were put into service. On June 10, 1888, a hose carriage of -at that time- the most modern construction was purchased, and was delivered September 19, 1885. It was owned solely by the company. The company ultimately arrived at the conclusion that it could do better service with an engine than with a hose carriage, so a steamer was purchased for \$3000. This apparatus was accepted by the company on April 14, 1893 and was the first steam fire engine in the City. In September 1893 the company sold its hose carriage to the Maywood Fire Department, and then purchased a Gleason & Bailey improved hose wagon. It was at that time that the company changed its name to Liberty Steamer Co. 1. They were housed in quarters at 346 State St. with Relief H & L Co. 2. In 1896 they had 21 members. This structure later became the municipal building.

### **Alert Hose Co. # 2**

Alert Hose Co. 2 was organized in a cigar store at 70 Main St. on March 21, 1883. On May 9, 1893, the company purchased an up to date hose wagon built to order by J.J. Post Of Paterson. On September 25, 1893 the wagon was formally turned over to the company. This Company in 1910 had a chemical and hose wagon in their house to try it out before it was given to Union Hose Co. 4. The Company was quartered on Mercer St. and, due to its location, responded to more alarms than any company in the city. These quarters were to become the first headquarters of the paid department. In 1896 they had 19 members. They were disbanded May 11, 1911 as their quarters became the first paid headquarters, with their members able to join the other volunteer companies. This building later became police headquarters.

### **Hudson Hose Co. # 3**

Hudson Hose Co. 3 came into existence on June 16, 1890 at the Franklin House on Hudson St, and membership commenced on July 7, 1890. This company came about due to the citizens and taxpayers of the old Third District wishing to be furnished with greater protection against fire. This section was at that time being built up very rapidly. The Company was placed into service on July 7, 1893. A new firehouse was built at 199 Hudson St. This was the only Company to own their own firehouse and is the only volunteer fire house in the City still standing. It is still occupied by Engine Co. 301. In 1896 they had 20 members. In 1910 they were issued a Chemical and Hose Wagon and became Chemical 2.

#### **Union Hose Co. # 4**

Union Hose Co. 4 was organized on May 8, 1895 and was placed into service on June 1, 1895 with 12 members. Its first apparatus was a four wheeled hose reel powered by the members. This hose reel was purchased by the commission from the Liberty Hose Company, who purchased it Flushing, N.Y., where it was known as the "Village Belle". In 1910, it was doing auxiliary duty at Hackensack Hospital. They were then given the Chemical and Hose Wagon first assigned to Alert Hose Co.2. and became Chemical 3. It was drawn by two horses. The Company was first quartered in a shed at the old Fairmount Hotel until the commission built a house at 787 Main St. in the Fairmount Section. These quarters were located directly across from the present Engine 305. In 1896 they had 13 members. This structure burned to the ground in ???

#### **Fire Patrol Co. #1**

Hackensack Fire Patrol No. 1 was organized for the protection of property taken from burning buildings. The members were appointed deputy sheriffs and put into service on July 4, 1876 with 10 men to preserve order during the centennial parade and fireworks show. On March 14, 1879 the state legislature passed an act defining the duties of the patrol and specifying that the company should have 20 men. In May 1887, The Hackensack Improvement Commission granted the application of the Fire Patrol for an improved equipment, and in August 1887 a new wagon equipped with canvas covers, stretchers, ropes, lanterns, etc. was delivered to the Company and housed in the quarters of Relief H & L Co. 2., where it was organized. In February 1893 the wagon was moved to the firehouse on Mercer St. In 1896 they had 17 members.

#### **Vigilant Engine Co.**

Vigilant Engine Company was only around for a very short time and not much is known about their history. It is believed that they were formed June 1, 1871 and were disbanded on December 12, 1872.

Horses were first used to haul fire apparatus in Hackensack in 1891. Bergen H & L Co. 1 was the first company to abandon the use of rope hauling, followed by Relief H & L Co. 2.

According to one early historical account the volunteers were described as "a gay lot of young blades who boasted a fierce pride in their respective companies and an insane jealousy of their accomplishments." According to the 1896 book Hackensack Illustrated, the "value of the Fire Department equipment, including real estate and fire alarm telegraph is \$26,000. The department owned 5050 feet of cotton jacketed rubber lined hose. Apparatus consisted of two steam engines, one hose wagon, three hand carts, two hook and ladder trucks, and one patrol wagon". There were 200 men in the department in 1896.

On May 20, 1896 Firemen's Day was celebrated in Hackensack. The State convention was held here and it was called "the greatest parade that Hackensack ever held". There were many volunteer companies from all over the state on hand to help celebrate the occasion, which also was the 25th anniversary of the volunteer department.

On July 24, 1896, John Gamewell, the inventor of the Gamewell Fire Alarm System, died in his Hackensack home. The Gamewell System of Fire Alarm Boxes has been in place in the city since the 1880's and there is even a street named for him; Gamewell Street.

On May 19, 1905 a monument to Hackensack firemen was unveiled at Hackensack Cemetery, where it still stands today.

Motorization came to the Hackensack Fire Department in 1909, when a group from the Heights Hill section of town organized Engine Company #5 located in that area. They felt that they had inadequate protection due to the long run by horse drawn apparatus from the Mercer St. firehouse. The residents of the Hill Section had subscribed \$6000 for the purchase of an automobile fire engine. The members of Engine 5 had planned to ask the city to build them a firehouse but this was deemed unnecessary when the city purchased a chemical and hose auto. Engine Company 5 was never officially incorporated but the members attached themselves to Alert Hose Co. 2 and answered alarms with them.

Fire Chiefs in the volunteer days were known as chief engineers. John Ward was the first chief engineer of the Hackensack Fire Department. In all there were 22 chief engineers. William Ziegler was the last chief engineer in 1913-14 and the first paid fire chief, in which capacity he served from 1914 to 1933.

In 1911 the necessitation for a full time fire department was recognized and on May 11th of that year an ordinance was passed by the Hackensack Development Commission creating such a department. Headquarters were located on Mercer St. in the former quarters of Alert Hose Co. 2. 4 men were appointed to these positions. They were William

Jackson(first paid driver), Michael Wygant(the captain), Joseph Mercier, and William Bahlburg. They worked 11 days straight and then had 24 hours off. They were allowed to leave three times a day for one hour for meals. They slept upstairs in the Mercer St. firehouse and were still on call on their 12th day. There were often times when there were only one man on duty, so the volunteers were still an integral part of fire suppression. The paid department had the only motor driven fire equipment in Bergen County in 1911, and the horse drawn equipment was still used by the volunteers. Unlike today, in those days Hackensack had low water pressure, so steamers were used to help pump multiple lines while using any available sources of water, since hydrants were few and far between.

In 1911 there were two ways of reporting a fire, either by telephone or by the 40 fire alarm boxes located throughout the city. When an alarm box was pulled it rang a bell on the front tower of the Mercer St. firehouse and blew a compressed air whistle at the rear of the building.

During this time the Fire Patrol ran out of the Mercer St. firehouse using the volunteers. They had a horse drawn wagon used to carry tarpaulins and lanterns. Although there were electric lanterns back then they were not in abundant supply, so oil lanterns and carbon arc lamps were used. The patrol did salvage work and also was used to maintain order at fire scenes. In 1921, the patrol became a salvage company, and performed many of the same duties.

The introduction of paid men began the end of the volunteer days and on December 15, 1914 the Commission created a full paid and part-paid fire department. Ten paid and thirty part-paid men were selected by the Commission. Chief William Ziegler, the last volunteer chief, was appointed Chief Of Department. The other men selected by the commission were Captain William Jackson; Mechanic H. Gross; 1st Lt. William Bahlburg; 2nd Lt. Joseph Mercier; 3rd Lt. Frank P. Walsh; and paid firemen Henry D. Rinker, Garrett W. Vreeland, Frederick Schrader, and Frederick W. Lavach.

The thirty part-paid men were split up to four companies. Chemical Engine 2 had a captain, lieutenant, and six firemen. Chemical Engine 3 was assigned a captain, lieutenant and four firemen. Assigned to Engine Co. 1 were eight firemen, with Truck Co. 1 also getting eight men. Part-Paid men were essentially volunteers, but were paid \$50.00 per year. Each member failing to answer an alarm was assessed a fine of \$1.00, unless a satisfactory excuse was presented. All fines were pooled and at the end of the year, split among the members who answered at least 75 percent of the calls. Members answering less than 50 percent of the calls were subject to dismissal.

The volunteers, who had served for 43 years, were dissolved on that same evening. The men at that time worked 72 hours on and 24 hours off. This was a one platoon system

which stayed in effect until 1928, when a second platoon was formed by voter referendum. This meant an 84 hour average work week consisting of alternating 72 and 96 hour weeks. On January 1, 1933, the form of city government changed and officially the paid department as a whole was dissolved, however this was only done on paper. Due to this change, the part-paid section was placed out of municipal control on January 1, 1933 with disbandment of the part-paid section occurring on October 16, 1933.

In 1947 there was again a referendum to reduce the work week from 84 hours to 67 hours but it was defeated, and instead a 70 hour week was instituted in 1949. In 1956, the Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association Local 16(FMBA) sought to have a 56 hour work week instituted. This caused a conflict between the firefighters and the city manager. The city offered to compromise with a 63 hour week, and was rejected by the men. This created a local uproar in which newspaper ads were taken by both sides pleading their case. By a narrow margin the 56 hour week was voted into place and took effect January 1, 1957. At this time a third platoon was added and 9 new firemen were hired. In 1964 there was another referendum and the firefighters won a 42 hour work week. A fourth platoon was added and 20 new firefighters were hired. This new workweek took effect January 1, 1965, and remains in effect today. In 1971, there was a change in Unions, with the firefighters voting overwhelmingly to move to the International Association Of Fire Fighters Local 2081(IAFF)

The demand for the fire department services in this community has climbed steadily every year. Nearly 30 years ago, in 1974, the department had 1415 runs, and had 119 firefighters. In 2003 the department responded to 5143 calls for help, and had 98 firefighters. This tremendous increase in call volume is due to the increased rescue and EMS demands on the Fire Department, as the department responds to all life threatening medical emergencies, in addition to fire suppression, and other responsibilities.

### **Chief Of Department**

The first Chief of Department was William Ziegler. He was the last Chief Engineer of the Volunteer Department and was in command from December 15, 1914 until October 16, 1933. With the adoption of the City Manager form of government in 1933, and the creation of the position of Director of Public Safety, the position of Fire Chief was eliminated. Chief Ziegler retired, and Captain Frank Walsh was placed in charge of the Division of Fire and Public Safety. On June 17, 1937, the city abolished this title and appointed Captain Walsh to the position of acting Fire Chief. However, in December 1940 an ordinance was passed providing for the recreation of the office of Fire Chief. On December 18, 1940, former Chief William Ziegler was named Fire Chief for one day, then retired on pension. Acting Chief Frank Walsh was then put in command. He remained in this position until 1946. Battalion Chief William Frodsham was named Chief on February 22, 1946 and was instrumental in creating a new engine company, along with purchasing

many new pieces of apparatus during his tenure. Upon his retirement on July 1, 1964, Deputy Chief Vincent Hoffman assumed command. Chief Hoffman was responsible for the modernization of the department at that point, purchasing the latest in radios and breathing apparatus. He was also able to get three engines and one ladder truck purchased in a five year period. His death on May 11, 1971 saddened the entire community. Deputy Chief John Bishop was appointed that same day and was in office while the new headquarters was being built. The Fire Patrol was reestablished in 1974. It was during his term that the apparatus color was changed to lime green.

On January 10, 1974 Chief Bishop left office, and was succeeded by Deputy Chief Charles Jones on June 18, 1974. During his time in office the department ranks swelled to 119 members, a luxury which did not last. He also oversaw the purchase of a Mack engine and a Mack Tower Ladder. This was a departure from the make of apparatus typically bought by the department. This proved to be a prudent move as these two rigs served nearly 30 years each. Upon retirement of Chief Jones on March 1, 1980, Deputy Chief Anthony Aiello became Chief of Department. He retired on October 1, 1989. On December 4, 1989, Deputy Chief Ronald Freeman, a 33 year veteran of the department assumed command. Under his command, the department progressed further. New Standard Operating Procedures were established, along with a safety committee. The newest in apparatus was purchased, with the purchase of a Seagrave engine and Seagrave aerial ladder. The color of apparatus also went back to the traditional red. In 1994 Chief Freeman retired and Deputy Chief Richard Johnson was appointed Chief on Feb 1, 1994. During his tenure the medical first responder program was implemented. Two new Seagrave engines and ambulance have been purchased and a new rescue unit donated to the department during this time. In 2001, Chief Johnson retired. Chief Rick Yannelli was appointed Chief of Department, with Deputy Chief Joel Thornton appointed as Chief of Operations. In just 2 short years the department has evolved tremendously. Modern equipment that has been sorely needed for years has been purchased, and placed in service. Grant monies available thru federal programs have been aggressively sought out and awarded to us, with specialized equipment for the Special Operations teams being purchased, at little cost to the city taxpayers. Several of our members have been recruited for the New Jersey USAR team, a highly specialized rescue operations team within the last 2 years. Morale among the men has skyrocketed, and the numerous special operations programs that were begun under this leadership have placed the Hackensack Fire Department eons ahead of where we were just a couple of years ago. The current department leadership has made a commitment to the men to obtain the finest in training and equipment, and the men have responded in a positive way, volunteering for the various teams that have been formed in the last two years. Because of this new direction, the Hackensack Fire Department is known throughout the state as a highly motivated, well managed department that is ready to serve not only in our city, but wherever we are called to go.

## **Training**

The first formal training program for Hackensack firemen was begun in 1936. An officer of the department was sent to the New York City Fire School, and, upon his graduation, was named supervisor of the training program. Thirty hours of outdoor training evolutions were conducted in the spring and fall each year. Three hours per week were devoted to classroom study during the winter months to keep up with the growing fire-fighting problems arising as a result of the new synthetic products, high-rise buildings, and changes in firefighting techniques. In 1974, the department instituted a sophisticated training program developed by Oklahoma State University. Today, several hours a day are spent in both classroom and practical drill evolution, using modern equipment and technology, ensuring the safety and welfare of the citizens. With the recently developed special operations teams, hundreds of additional man-hours per year of training are spent outside the firehouse. Even more additional training is taken by the members on their own time, with numerous members traveling to Indiana, Baltimore, and other places to attend classes on their own time and at their expense to further their knowledge. Today's fireman does far more than fight fires. Building collapses, Hazardous Materials incidents, High Angle Rescues, and Confined Space/Trench Rescue are but a few of the disciplines that we are trained for and ready to act on.

## **Rescue/EMS**

In 1956, an International Emergency Unit was given to the department by the Federal Government for civil defense and was assigned number 328. Thus, the Rescue unit was born. The Rescue was equipped with a winch and many special tools needed for all types of rescues. This unit was special called to emergency incidents. It also responded to emergency medical calls when ambulances were not available. It responded to auto accidents for extrications and for the use of the winch. Extrications were performed using hydraulic porta power tools.

As the city grew, it became evident that more sophisticated tools were needed to perform the ever increasing amount of rescue calls. In 1983, a new Rescue unit was purchased and also purchased were the Jaws Of Life rescue tool, and its many accessories. There is a firefighter/EMT assigned to the unit with a lieutenant. They are trained in advanced emergency medical procedures, and are used in that capacity when the ambulances are not available. In 1995, a new rescue unit was acquired. Hackensack Medical Center donated a Freightliner/Marion rescue unit to the department to take the department into the 21st century. We have outgrown this unit, and will be spec'ing out a new one, hopefully in late 2004.

General Order 93 of March 27, 1963 provided for the Hackensack Fire Department to take over the responsibility of providing ambulance services for the city from the volunteer

corps, using an ambulance leased from the volunteers. This was done due to declining volunteer membership. The Fire Department provided the service from 0600 to 1800 Monday thru Friday, a policy which remains today. Firefighters were given first aid training, and took turns on the ambulance. In the early days of the service, the procedure was for the department clerk, who was a lieutenant, and a firefighter to respond on all medical emergency calls. This practice lasted only a short time. After this, the ambulance ran out of Engine 302's quarters. During the daytime, the ambulance sat in front of the engine; at night they were switched around. The way it worked was that the last man on the engine and a police officer responded to the medical call, leaving Engine 302 undermanned. Eventually all four platoons had a regularly assigned firefighter who drove the ambulance, and the second man assigned was rotated. This procedure lasted for 14 years.

In November 1977, Hackensack moved to the forefront of emergency medical care, sending seven firefighters to paramedic training. At first these men were assigned strictly as paramedics, but shortly after were assigned to a platoon and also fought fires. Also in 1977, the department hired civilian paramedics and had as many as fourteen of them by 1981. For the first time a female civilian paramedic was hired by the department. She worked day shifts only while the others were assigned to a platoon.

In 1981, the State of New Jersey ruled that the Hackensack Fire Department Paramedics must be reassigned to Hackensack Hospital by May 5, 1981 so that a greater number of municipalities could benefit from the advanced life support they were trained in. To cover the gap left by their departure, the department hired civilian Emergency Medical Technicians. There are currently only 7 EMT's on the job, and they man the two Fire Department ambulances from 0600 to 1800 weekdays, while the Hackensack Volunteer Ambulance Corps man their own ambulances from 1800 to 0600 weekdays and all day on weekends. In 2003 the Fire Department ambulances responded to a total of 3015 calls while only being in service 60 hours a week.

Two of the ways a person can report a fire are by pull box and by telephone. In 1896, there were 22 pull boxes. They were primarily located south of Passaic St., as very few people lived in the Fairmount section of town at that time. The signal codes were very simple: 3-return taps 5-testing fire alarm 6-shut off water 10-relief call. There were two districts with 10 boxes in district 1 and 12 boxes in district 2. They were:

### **District No. 1**

24-Hudson and Lafayette Sts.      35-Essex and Union Sts.

26-Hudson and Kansas Sts.      36-Myers and Union Sts.

32-Main and Morris Sts.                      37-Essex and Second Sts, Hospital  
33-Main St. Oddfellows Hall                38-Railroad Ave. and Beach St.  
34-State and Lawrence Sts.                42-Main St. and Susquehanna RR Depot\*

(\*Entire Dept. Responds To This Box)

**District No. 2**

43-Main and Salem Sts.                54-First and Passaic Sts.  
44-Park St. and Central Ave.            62-Main and Ward Sts.  
46-Prospect and Central Aves.        63-Main St. and Euclid Ave.  
51-Camden and State Sts.                64-Railroad Ave. and Anderson St.  
52-Railroad Ave. and Berry St.        65-Grand Ave. and Clinton Pl.  
53-Union and Passaic Sts.                2-Main St. and Spring Valley Ave.

Some of these boxes remained in 1910, but most either changed number or location. In 1910 there were 42 boxes in the city.

**District No. 1**

21-Broadway School                      32-Main St. and Washington Pl.  
22-Hudson St. and Vreeland Ave.        33-Main and Warren Sts.  
23-Hudson and Lafayette Sts.            34-State and Lawrence Sts.  
24-Hudson and Kansas Sts.                35-Union St. School  
25-Campbell Ave. and Maple St.        36-Beech St. and Prospect Ave.  
26-Essex and Union Sts.                37-Vestibule of Hospital  
27-Kansas and Cleveland Sts.            38-Beech St. and Railroad Ave.  
28-Morris and State Sts.                213-Union and Gamewell Sts.

31-Essex and First Sts.

03-Main and Mercer Sts.

## **District No. 2**

42-Main and Salem Sts.

412-Prospect and Lookout Aves.

43-Central Ave. and Park St.

61-Clarendon Pl. and Anderson St.

44-Central Ave. and First St.

62-Railroad Ave. and Anderson St.

45-Central And Prospect Aves.

63-Main and Anderson Sts.

46-Summit Ave. and Passaic St.

64-Main St. and Euclid Ave.

51-State and Camden Sts.

65-Grand Ave. and Clinton Pl.

52-Union and Clay Sts.

66-Grand and Poplar Ave.

53-Berry St. and Railroad Ave.

67-Main St. and Poplar Ave.

54-Passaic and First Sts.

68-Hackensack Ave. & Cross St.

56-Passaic and Union Sts.

72-Main St. and Spring Valley Ave.

57-Passaic and Main Sts.

73-Second and Cedar Sts.

On October 1, 1952, a phantom fire alarm system was installed. Every intersection of the city and numerous buildings were assigned box numbers. There was a filing system in the Headquarters deskroom with all the running cards in it and when a call came by phone, the desk man pulled the card and then tapped out the box number to the responding companies. This system remains in place today as the cards remain, and in case of emergency can still be put into use. Today, there are 151 boxes in the city.

With the creation of the new fire department, the city was divided into response districts. The districts were drawn and essentially remain the same today, except that Co. 3's area had been reduced with the addition of another company on the southside of town. Hudson Hose Co. 3 responded to all alarms south of the Susquehanna Railroad which runs east-west through the city. Union Hose Co. 4 went on all alarms north of Passaic St. to the city line. Headquarters companies responded to all single alarms in the city center and all fires within the city.

## **Fire Headquarters**

**1911-1921 17 Mercer St**

**1921-1975 217 State St.**

**Engine Co. 4/Engine Co. 1/Engine Co. 304**

**Truck Co. 1/Ladder Co. 306/Ladder Co. 307/Ladder Co. 314**

**Reserve Engine 303/Truck Co. 2/Reserve Ladder 314**

**Boat 330**

The first headquarters of the paid department was located on Mercer St. between State and Main Sts. It was formerly the quarters of Alert Hose Co. 2, and later became the first City owned police headquarters. On December 28, 1921 a new fire headquarters was formally opened. This building, located at 217 State St. was built in a similar style to the original headquarters. It was a two story, 10,000 sq. ft. structure which was designed to accommodate two engines, one truck, a salvage truck, and one chief's car. The rear portion of the ground floor consisted of a kitchen, small repair shop, and a hose drying tower, which doubled as a drill tower. Hose was washed outside and hung in the tower to dry. It was originally hoisted by hand, using ropes and a pulley, but later an electric winch was purchased and installed. A wooden hose rack lined one wall of the repair shop. The Dispatchers room was established in a front corner of the apparatus floor. It contained a telephone switchboard and a register tape to receive box alarms.

The second story consisted of dormitory, recreation room and locker room. The living quarters were designed to house 12-15 firemen. A fire alarm equipment room was located next to the dormitory. This room later became the Deputy Chief's office when the Fire Alarm Office in Foschini Park was built. The Chief's office and the department office took up a small portion of the second floor. The department office was shared by the Fire Prevention Bureau when the bureau was established.

As additional apparatus and personnel were added to the department, headquarters gradually became overcrowded. It became necessary to park the ambulance, fire patrol cars and staff cars outside, due to the lack of space. Later, the ambulance was housed in the rear of Engine 302. Also, as more private alarm systems were added to the city's structures, the dispatchers room became overcrowded.

**Fire Headquarters**

**205 State St. 1975-**

## **Engine Co. 4, Ladder Co. 1, Rescue Co. 1**

## **Reserve Engine 3, Reserve Ladder 2, Reserve Rescue 2**

## **Marine 1, Marine 2**

## **Special Operations 1**

When the city planned a new municipal complex, a new fire headquarters was included as a top priority. After two years of building, the fire department, on July 1, 1974, moved into its present headquarters at 205 State St. The old headquarters was soon torn down, however, part of it is still intact. Three walls of the old structure were left standing and are visible in parts of the new complex.

The present headquarters building is a two story, 38,000 sq.ft structure with a six story hose and training tower. It has a five bay apparatus floor which currently houses the Chief of Department car, the Platoon Commander vehicle, 2 ladder trucks, 2 engines, a rescue unit, 2 ambulances, a 14' boat, and the 1871 hand drawn pumper. There is also a bay used by the department mechanic. At night and on weekends the Fire Prevention cars and the Alarm Division truck are stored here. There are three mechanical hose dryers on the apparatus floor, and hose racks line two of the four walls. A state of the art SCBA room is located in the rear of the floor. The Dispatchers room is not only responsible for dispatching fire and ambulance calls but also is a regional 911 center, answering calls from several surrounding communities.

Separated from the apparatus floor by a public access hall, are the administrative offices. The Chief of Department has his office here. The Fire Prevention office is also in this area.

The second floor consists of the Deputy Chief's and Company Officer's quarters. Information Management Offices are located here as well. There is a large kitchen, locker room, dormitory, and day room, which is also used for classroom drill.

## **Engine Co. 3/Engine Co. 1/Engine Co. 301**

The Quarters of Engine Co. 301 at 199 Hudson St. are the same quarters as Hudson Hose Co. 3. It is the only firehouse not owned by the city. The Exempt Association owns the building and a family estate owns the land. It was given to the city with the stipulation that the firehouse remain in use on the plot. Since the firehouse is just over 100 years old it lacks certain modern amenities, however it more than makes that up in charm and nostalgia. One could imagine the horses turning out. The first floor consists of the

apparatus floor, kitchen, and common area. The second floor has two bunks for the firefighters and lockers, with the officer having a private room.

### **Engine Co. 5/Engine Co. 302**

The Quarters of Engine Co. 302 at 107 South Summit Ave. were constructed in 1950. It was built into a hillside, so from the front it appears to be a one story building, but is in fact two. The department has the main floor, and the city rents the lower floor to a private organization. The house was built in an art deco style, and is quite spacious. The setup is the same as Engine 301, but on one floor. The Volunteer Ambulance used the lower floor for a time, until their present quarters were built behind Headquarters.

### **Engine Co. 2/Engine Co. 305**

The Quarters of Engine 305 at 784 Main St. was constructed in 1924 in a Spanish mission style. It is unique in that there are very few structures in Hackensack built in that style, however, one block due west of the firehouse there is an entire cul-de-sac of houses in this style, which were built by the same builder. This house is setup similar to the other single houses, however it was built having separate rooms for each member. In 1956, plans were considered to expand the firehouse and install a truck company to protect the north end of town, but were scrapped as too costly.

### **Apparatus**

In 1914 the department fire apparatus consisted of a chemical and hose wagon at the Hudson St. Station, and Engine 1, Truck 1, and Chemical 1 in Headquarters. When the house was built in the Fairmount section in 1924, they received an Engine and it was designated Engine 2. In 1925, Engine 3 was purchased and given to the Hudson St. Station, and they ran as a two piece company for several years. In 1927 Truck 2 was purchased and put in Headquarters. Sometime between 1933-1940 Chemical 1 and Engine 1 were placed out of service and Chemical 2 was remodeled to serve as a combination hose and salvage wagon, and placed at Headquarters.

In 1911, an American La France Type 5 combination chemical/hose wagon was purchased.

In 1914, an American La France Type 11 combination pumper/hose wagon was purchased.

In 1914, a Cadillac combination chemical/hose wagon was purchased.

In 1915, a horse drawn Seagrave combination chemical/hose wagon was purchased. It was in reserve until 1919.

In 1917, a Knox 3 Wheel hook and ladder truck was purchased.

In 1918, an American La France Type 31-6 65' aerial ladder was purchased. It was placed in reserve status in 1927.

In 1924, an American La France 750 GPM rotary pumping engine was purchased, and designated Engine 2. It was placed out of reserve status 2-16-57, and was sold 2-28-57. This engine was used by the auxiliary members at the end of its first line service life.

In 1927, an American La France Type 17-6 85' aerial ladder was purchased. it was placed in reserve status in 1948, and recieved an International R-190 tractor in 1957. It was put in service January 2, 1958. It was disposed of in 1967.

In 1938, Engine 4, a white Ahrens-Fox, was purchased and placed at Headquarters. It was serial number 3446, and delivered on October 8, 1938. It was painted red in 1949, when it was designated Engine 3. It was put into reserve in 1962 and out of service December 26, 1967. It was sold to Maywood NJ in 1971 and they have restored it to its former beauty.

In 1947, an American La France 75' midmount aerial ladder was purchased and placed in service as Truck 1. It was placed in reserve status in 1969 and sold in 1980.

Also in 1947, two American La France 1000 GPM pumpers were placed in service. One was placed in reserve on December 26, 1967 and sold in 1968. The other (s/n L3097) was placed in reserve December 11, 1968 and disposed of August 23, 1976.

In 1949, an American La France 1000 GPM Quad was purchased. It was placed in reserve in 1969 and disposed of in 1974.

In 1959, an International A-182 rescue truck was purchased(s/n SA118258F). It was delivered May 14, 1959. It was transferred to Mid-Bergen Haz-Mat July 13, 1991.

In 1962, an American La France 1000 GPM pumper was purchased. This was the last open cab engine purchased by the department, however it was badly damaged in an accident and the cab was replaced with a closed version. It was placed in reserve in 1976 and sold in 1985.

In 1967, an American La France 1000 GPM pumper was purchased. In 1976 it was assigned to Engine 1 and remained there until it was placed in reserve in 1985 and disposed of in 1986.

In 1968, an American La France 1000 GPM Spartan pumper was purchased(s/n 5-1-1427), at a cost of \$32,330. It was delivered November 20, 1968 and placed in service in

December 1968. Originally assigned to Engine 2, in 1976 it was assigned to Engine 5 and remained there until it was placed in reserve in 1985 and sold for \$500 to Barahona, Dominican Republic on November 15, 1991.

In 1969, an American La France 85' midmount aerial ladder was purchased(s/n 7-1-1428). It was delivered February 28,1969 and assigned as Ladder 307 and placed into reserve status in 1976. It was disposed of in 1994 at city auction. It was sold twice within the city to private individuals, then bought by a movie company. It can be seen in an episode of the TV show Seinfeld. It was last seen sitting on the side of road on Rt. 17K in Monticello, NY.

In 1970, a Starcraft 18' rescue boat was purchased and designated Boat 330. It was originally painted lime green and cost \$877.70. It is now called Marine 2.

In 1971, an American La France 1000 GPM Metropolitan 1000 series pumper was purchased(s/n 16 1 3020). It was ordered August 3, 1971 at a cost of \$43,395.80, and delivered May 18, 1972. This would be the last American La France apparatus bought by the department, and the last red apparatus until 1990. It was assigned first to Engine 4. In 1976, it was repainted lime green and reassigned to Engine 2 and in 1985 it was reassigned to Engine 5. It was placed in reserve in 1991 and in November 1995 it was disposed of.

In 1976, a Mack/Baker 75' Tower Ladder was purchased(s/n CF685FAP1893), at a cost of \$161,430. It originally was lime green and was designated Tower Ladder 314. It was delivered on January 30, 1976 and placed in service February 11, 1976. It was taken out of front line service and put into the reserve fleet on October 24, 1990 and in 1991 was sent out for refurbishing by Fire Apparatus Unlimited and was repainted in the new white over red color at a cost of \$61,500. It was sold in December 2003 to the Rootstown FD in Rootstown, Ohio, where it will be painted solid white and placed in service.

In 1976, a Mack 1250/500 engine was purchased(s/n CF611F1794), at a cost of \$72,304.96. It was delivered in the lime-green color scheme on August 20, 1976 and put in service as Engine 304 on August 23, 1976. In 1985 it was assigned to Engine 302, and in 1991 was reassigned again to Engine 305. In 1995, it was designated Reserve Engine 303. It was sold at City Auction in 1997.

In 1977, a Ford/Hurst MERV rescue unit was purchased. It was very unpopular with the members and did not perform well at all, and was sold in 1979.

In 1983, a new rescue was purchased, at a cost of \$23,894.86. It is a GMC/Reading on a commercial chassis and was also lime-green and was designated Rescue

308(s/n1GDHK345XDV525587). In 1995 it was taken out of first line service and redesignated Rescue 307 and is being used as a spare. It is now called Rescue 2.

In 1984 two Mack/Ward 79 1000/500 engines were purchased, each costing \$148,962. They were also lime-green. One was assigned to Engine 301(s/nCF611FC2262) on April 15, 1985, and one was assigned to Engine 304(s/nCF611FC2263) on April 22, 1985. In 1991 this rig was reassigned to Engine 302. In 1996, the engine assigned to Engine 301 was refurbished at a cost of 30,000. It was repainted white over red, and had body and electrical work done, and a year later the Mack assigned to E302 had substantially same work done. Engine 301 was traded in with the purchase of the new Pierce engine in 2000. The Department got 25K for it, and put it up for sale for 55K. It sat on the dealer lot in Pennsylvania for a year. Immediately after September 11th the cab was repainted and striped in FDNY colors. The rig was used in several funerals, and was kept for a couple of days in HFD headquarters during this time, so the members of FDNY Squad 41 would not have to drive it back and forth from the Bronx. After its use in funerals it went back to the dealer where it sat until 2003. In 2003 the rig was sold to Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus for 5K. Brindlee Mountain is the used E-1 truck dealer. They got a contract to supply 2 fire trucks to the TV show Rescue Me. This rig was one of those 2 rigs, and was seen in all but the first episode of the show in 2004. Engine 302's rig became Reserve Engine 303 with the purchase of the 1999 Seagrave. It is now a spare known as Engine 3, after the 2002 redesignation of fleet numbers.

In 1990 a Seagrave 110' Rear Admiral aerial ladder was purchased(model JP-09-DH s/n Y75609). Placed in service October 24, 1990, it was the first rig to be painted red over white and was designated Ladder 306. This rig was redesignated Ladder 1 in 2002, and is now a spare called Ladder 2. It was sent to Seagrave in early 2004 for an aerial refurbishment, and came back in October 2004.

In 1991 a Seagrave 1500/500 engine was purchased(model JB-50-DF s/n Z78344) at a cost of \$226,650. It was delivered in the new red/white color scheme, and was assigned to Engine 304 on July 15, 1991. In June 1995, this rig was reassigned to Engine 305.

In 1995 a Seagrave 1500/750 engine was purchased(model JB-50-DF s/n Z78689) at a cost of \$279,839 and placed into service as Engine 304 in June 1995. This rig was then moved to Engine 302 in 1999 with the delivery of the 1999 Seagrave. Engine 302 is now designated Engine 2.

Also in 1995, a Freightliner/Marion 19' Rescue was donated to the department and was placed into service as Rescue 308(model business class s/n 54034). It is now called Rescue 1.

In 1999, a Seagrave 1500/750 engine was purchased(model TB-50-DA s/n 78920). It was assigned to Engine 304. It was moved to Engine 301 with the 2000 purchase of a new Pierce Dash engine. Engine 301 is now called Engine 1.

In 2000, the departments' first Pierce apparatus was purchased(s/n 12060). It was assigned to Engine 304(now Engine 4). It was built on a Pierce Dash chassis, and cost \$309,000.

In 2002, the 200 Club, a local organization committed to the support of public safety departments throughout the county, donated funds for a large utility trailer. It was purchased and outfitted with equipment used in Confined Space, Trench Rescue and High Angle rescue.

Also in 2002, the 200 Club purchased a new rescue boat which is more suited to our needs than the old boat. It is known as Marine 1.

In 2003, an International Utility truck was donated to the fire department by J. Fletcher Creamer Contactors, a multinational construction concern headquartered within the city. It was repainted and placed into service as Special Operations Unit 1.

In 2003, the department took delivery of Pierce Dash 105' rearmount aerial ladder. This apparatus was delivered painted solid red, and is the first to be painted as such since 1972. It is also the first apparatus ordered and delivered fully equipped in several generations. No longer will members coming on a fire recall be forced to ride a poorly equipped apparatus. Prior to this reserve apparatus were poorly equipped with very basic equipment. Virtually all equipment that was assigned to the 1990 Seagrave stayed on the 1990 Seagrave, meaning a safer apparatus for the members to ride, but also a safer one for the citizens. Another commitment of the current administration.

In 2004 a Ford E350/Grumman 14' box truck was donated to the department to be used as a Hazmat/Decon truck. It was repainted and put into service in October 2004.

In 1967, the department purchased its first ambulance, a 1967 Chevrolet.

In 1968, a Cadillac ambulance was purchased.

In 1972, an International ambulance was purchased.

In 1977, a Chevrolet Modular ambulance was purchased. It was disposed of July 27, 1988.

In 1986, a Chevrolet/Horton modular ambulance was purchased (vin # 1GBJC34W1G5169030), at a cost of \$63,576. and placed in service December 9, 1986. It was disposed of in 1994.

In 1988, a Chevrolet/Horton modular ambulance was purchased (vin # 1GBJR34W7JJ111302), at a cost of \$66,750, and placed in service July 27, 1988. The lower half of the rig was repainted red in 1994. It has been known as Ambulance 317 and Ambulance 327. It also was designated Ambulance 328 before the renumbering, and is now known as BLS 3, and is a spare, although on rare occasions when are enough EMT's on duty to staff 3 ambulances it is a front line rig. It was disposed of in 2004.

In 1995, a Ford/Horton modular ambulance was purchased and put in service as BLS317. with the purchase of the 1997 Ford/Horton, it was redesignated BLS 327, and with the renumbering is now known as BLS 2.

In 1997, another nearly identical Ford/Horton ambulance was purchased. It was designated Ambulance 317, and is now known as BLS 1.

The department is expecting delivery of a new F550/Horton 4 wheel drive ambulance in 2005.

### **Never to be Forgotten**

Nine Hackensack Firemen have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is to their memory which this volume is dedicated.

Fireman Frederick Maas-Truck Co. 1-Killed February 6, 1919.

Fireman Maas was only on the job for 36 days when he was killed. While responding to a reported grass fire on Prospect Ave., lost control of the rig he was driving and crashed into a tree at the corner of Essex and State Sts. He was trapped between the seat and the steering wheel and died of massive internal injuries. Three other men on the apparatus jumped to safety. Ironically, the truck, a 3 wheel Knox tractor, had crashed in a similar accident when its front wheel got caught in trolley tracks a year previous. He was 35 years old.

Fireman Robert Paget-Truck Co. 1-Died Of Injuries June 6, 1935.

Fireman Paget died of injuries sustained as a result of an accident in September 1932. In that accident, he was the tillerman of the truck, and while responding to a fire the tiller section seperated from the tractor and crashed into a car. He was thrown against the ladders and injured his hip. At the time the injury didn't appear serious, however later

doctors determined that the hip was chipped and the long neglect aggravated the injury, so an operation was necessary. In the operation, a piece of his lower leg bone was grafted into the hip and the operation was deemed successful. Sadly, while being taken back to his hospital room he suddenly died. He was 35 years old, and a fireman for 9 years.

Captain Frederick Mathews-Engine Co. 5-Killed March 23, 1953

Fireman Andrew Lange-Engine Co. 5-Killed March 23, 1953

Captain Mathews and Fireman Lange were killed while responding from Headquarters to a grass fire on Summit Ave. Engine 5 was responding west on Passaic St. when a car went through the light at the intersection of First and Passaic Sts., striking the engine. Despite an attempt by the chauffeur to swerve and avoid the collision, Captain Mathews was thrown over the windshield and died of a broken neck. Fireman Lange was thrown back toward the rear wheel. He succumbed due to internal bleeding due to numerous fractures. Two other firemen, Frank Russo, the driver, and Fireman Fred Knopf fortunately suffered less severe injuries. Captain Mathews was 56 years old and had almost 29 years on the job, and Fireman Lange was 59 years old and had 37 years on the job.

Captain Richard Williams-Engine Co. 304-Killed July 1, 1988

Lieutenant Richard Reinhagen-Engine Co. 302-Killed July 1, 1988

Fireman William Kresja-Engine Co. 301-Killed July 1, 1988

Fireman William Kresja-Engine Co. 302-Killed July 1, 1988

Fireman Steven Ennis-Rescue Co. 308-Killed July 1, 1988

Captain Williams, Lieutenant Reinhagen, and Firemen Kresja, Radumski, and Ennis were killed while fighting a fire at Hackensack Ford, 320 River Street. These 5 men were in the structure, a bowstring truss building, when the roof suddenly collapsed. Williams, Kresja, and Radumski were killed instantly, and Reinhagen and Ennis, despite heroic rescue attempts, succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning. This fire, the worst tragedy to befall this department, caused sweeping changes in many aspects of fire fighting not only in Hackensack, but the whole country.

The memory of these nine brave men will live in our hearts forever.