

## FOREWORD

One of the definitions of history is:- The science of dealing systematically with the records whence information about human action in the past is derived, and sifting and co-ordinating the evidence which these records reveal.

In compiling this history of the Maynard Fire Department, I would first like to acknowledge the co-operation of Chief George Whalen, in making all of the existing records of the department available to me. Other sources of information, were the complete files of the annual town reports in the Maynard Public Library. The files of the old Maynard News, from 1900 to 1942. The files of the Concord Enterprise, in the Concord Public Library, which carried all of the news items of the Maynard Enterprise. Records of both the Concord and Hudson fire departments; and the files of the Hudson Daily Sun which carried Maynard news items going back to 1884.

My own personal recollections go back to childhood and cover more than the last two thirds of the existence of the department. It was also my privilege and pleasure to have served in the department with some of the men who were in the department from its earliest days. Men like John Wollerschied, John Maley and James Cheney, and to have lived in the old station on Nason Street with Tony Collins and Bill Quinn, and to have listened to some of their tales of the past.

No attempt was made to compile a roster of the call force, as there are very few records and these are ambiguous and conflicting. Even the records of the first organization meetings of the two companies do not coincide with those of the board of engineers and the newspaper accounts differ from both.

A HISTORY OF THE MAYNARD FIRE DEPARTMENT

1890 \* 1970

By Henry T. Hanson

INDEX

Chapter	Pages
1. Organization, Administration and Personnel-----	1 - 32
2. Buildings-----	a 1 - a 7
3. Apparatus and Equipment-----	b 1 - b 29
4. Fire Alarm-----	c 1 - c 14
5. A Chronology of Important Fires-----	d 1 - d 24
6. Social and Fraternal Activities-----	e 1 - e 7



## CHAPTER I

Organization, Administration and Personnel

## Organization, Administration and Personnel

The first town meeting, which was held on April 27, 1871, by acclamation, elected three fire wardens, George R. Cutting, J. A. Harriman and William Cullen. The office of fire warden, often confused with forest warden, which did not exist until 1908, was similar to that of fire ward, except that fire wards were appointed by the selectmen. Few towns had fire wardens. Most towns had fire wards if they did not have a fire department. The duties of either, was to attempt to direct any people at the scene of a fire, in the salvaging of goods and controlling the fire. The latter usually being futile, due to lack of equipment and organization.

The annual town meeting of 1872, voted \$65.00 for the purchase of ladders for fire use. These ladders were stored in a shed, owned by the mill, and located on the site of the present post office. The ladders were kept chained together and padlocked to prevent their unauthorized use.

At this time the mill had a volunteer brigade of their workmen whose primary purpose was the protection of the mill property. The mill had pumps that supplied river water to their yard hydrants. Although this mill brigade did respond to some fires outside the mill yard, there was little that they could do without a town water system or any kind of pumping equipment. This arrangement could hardly be called a fire department. It must be remembered, that even today, there is no law that says a town must have a fire department, the laws are only permissive legislation that allows a town to expend money for fire protection.

During these first years of the town's existence as a corporate body, there was continuous agitation to have a formally organized fire department, so at a special town meeting held January 1, 1890, it was voted to expend \$6,000 for a building and \$2,000 for equipment for a fire department.



March 10, 1890, it was voted in town meeting to establish a fire department under Chapter 35 of the General Laws. This provided that the department would be governed by a board of fire engineers, appointed annually by the selectmen, who were empowered to appoint as many as twelve engineers, who among their numbers, would elect a chief engineer, one or more assistant chief engineers and a clerk. This law under which the department was organized, was enacted in 1761, under the colonial government and was intended to govern a purely volunteer department.

The first board of engineers appointed, consisted of: Warren Peters, David Henderson, Julius Loewe, George W. Jordan and Alfred T. Haynes. Peters was elected chief. Warren Peters was related by marriage to the Maynard family and held an executive position in the mill; and until the station on Nason Street was completed, the board of engineers held their meetings in the mill office.

March 19, 1890, a hose company was organized at a meeting held in Cooperative Hall. The hose company consisted of fifteen men. Officers elected were: E. M. Johnson, foreman; D. A. Sawyer, assistant foreman; Thomas Sweeney, clerk; E. W. Garlick, treasurer; James Clafflin, steward; Alex McIntyre, Richard Parmenter and Hugh W. McGrail, standing committee. Other members elected were: C. E. Brooks, Peter Kivilhan, George Dunn, C. Fred Canill, Aquilla Reynard, John Dacey and Charles Roberts.

April 29, 1890, at a meeting in Cooperative Hall, a hook and ladder company of twenty men was organized, with Levi Cheney, foreman; John Thane, assistant foreman; Warren Haynes, secretary; William McAuslin, treasurer; other members were: Henry Ledgard, John Lawton, P. J. Sullivan, Allie Martin, James Coughlin, C. Murphy, Jesse Sims, A. H. Haynes, Albert Randall, Daniel Kane, William Starling, Hugh Mears, Sam Harding, John Thompson, James R. Bent and David Sullivan.

All elections to membership in either company had to be confirmed by the board of engineers, who made the final appointments.



The new hose wagon was delivered May 30, 1890, and as the station was not completed, it was stored in a shed owned by the mill, located on the site of the present Post Office. When the ladder wagon was delivered in August, the hose wagon was moved to a shed in the rear of the Congregational Church and the ladder wagon was put in its place.

Shortly prior to the delivery of their apparatus, the hose company went to Hudson for a practice session with one of the Hudson hose companies; in order to familiarize themselves with the equipment and procedures. After both of the companies acquired their equipment, they held regular practice sessions either on the Harriman Laundry or the Acton Street School.

On October 3, 1890, the State Fire Insurance Commission witnessed a demonstration of the department throwing four streams of water over the Glendale House (Later known as the Maynard Hotel). They were satisfied enough with the performance to give the town an insurance grading.

The new station on Nason Street was occupied on January 29, 1891 and in April of this same year the same engineers were reappointed.

At town meeting it was voted to pay the men a salary of ten dollars per year. It was also voted to appropriate \$800 for the operating budget of the department and \$2,000 per year to the water department for hydrant rental.

At the end of his second term in 1892, Chief Peters declined reappointment because of pressure of business entailed with his position with the mill. So only four engineers were reappointed; with David Henderson being elected chief.

Henderson, a native of Northern Ireland, was a jack of all trades, he had at various times held the office of selectman, moderator, board of health, overseer of the poor, constable and justice of the peace. For a livelihood he was a wood dealer, a horse trader, a veterinarian (Of sorts), an auctioneer and operated a livery stable.



During his term as chief he instituted the practice of hiring a horse to pull the hose wagon. Of course the horse was from his livery stable; there was no conflict of interest law in those days. He also rode to fires in a style befitting a large city chief, as he had a buggy equipped with a gong operated by a foot pedal and pulled by a fast trotter.

In 1894, only three engineers were appointed, David Henderson, Levi Cheney and Alfred T. Haynes. Henderson was again elected chief. There was no change in the board the following year, but in 1896, a whole new board was appointed consisting of Dennis Spain, Charles F. Cahill and Thomas Sweeney. Spain was elected chief. He worked in the mill as a spinner and lived in one side of the Sheehan house at the corner of Glendale and Acton streets. His regime which lasted only the one year, seemed to have been an uneventful one.

The titles of foreman and assistant foreman were changed to captain and lieutenant in 1897. In this same year and the following year, the board consisted of Samuel Lawton, Thomas Sweeney and John MacPherson. Lawton was elected chief in both of these years. Samuel Lawton was from one of the town's older families, he was employed as a carpenter in the mill. He had served as a selectman from 1893 through 1895. There were no significant changes in the department during his term as chief.

In the years of 1899 and 1900, Charles F. Cahill, Thomas Sweeney and John MacPherson were appointed engineers, with Cahill being elected chief in both of these years and continued to hold the post until 1906; the longest tenure of any chief up until that time. Charles F. Cahill was better known by his middle name of Fred. He was active in town politics and had held numerous minor town offices, he had been a constable, special police officer and lamplighter. He was employed as a teamster in the mill yard. Before coming to Maynard he had served on the Saxonville Fire Department, and was a charter member of the Maynard department.



Cahill loved excitement and if there was not enough of it he would create some.

One quiet August Saturday afternoon in 1901; Chief Cahill decided to test the efficiency of his department, so with his watch in hand he pulled in box eighty six, which was at the corner of Harriman Court and Main Street. One of the stable hands at the Coughlin Stable responded promptly to the station with a pair of horses for the ladder wagon. However it so happened that there was nobody at the Sheehan Stable to get the single horse out for the hose wagon. So some of the men of the hose company who had assembled at the station, ran down to the Sheehan Stable, at the corner of Acton and Glendale streets, and backed out the first horse that they came to and ran him back to the fire station. It happened to be a very light driving horse, and with the ill fitting collar, had trouble even getting the wagon started off of the level floor. Once through the door and on the down grade, the men piled on the wagon, making a good load for a pair of heavier horses. With the ladder company about five minutes ahead of them, which was humiliating to say the least; the driver laid the whip onto the poor little horse unmercifully. People along Main Street who witnessed this cruelty, informed Mrs. Sheehan of what had taken place. She immediately informed Chief Cahill that she would never allow the fire department the use of any of her horses again, even if the whole town was burning up.

In 1901, the selectmen must have felt that they were a law unto themselves, for after appointing Cahill, Sweeney and MacPherson as engineers; they appointed a fourth engineer in a special category of his own; a procedure entirely contrary to the law under which the department was governed; They appointed Paul Wilson, the master mechanic of the mill, as a special chief for the mill property. He was to have no pay, voice or vote with the regular board of engineers; but was to assume full charge of the town fire department in the event of a fire involving the mill property.



This was probably done to attempt to relieve the strained relations between the mill management and the fire department. During the entire occupancy of this property by the American Woolen Company, it had been their policy to attempt to handle their fires with the maintenance crew, as they wanted no public records of fires, fearing an adverse effect on their insurance rates.

In 1902, the pay of callmen was raised to \$20.00 per year and that of the engineers to \$35.00 per year. Cahill, Sweeney and MacPherson were reappointed but the special category chief was not. Cahill was again elected chief engineer.

Early one balmy summer evening, a small fire broke out in the Glendale House, Maynard's leading hotel, located on the site of the present War Memorial on Summer Street. This was not their first fire, nor was it to be their last. The department responded to the alarm in full force, and so did about everyone else in town. A difference of opinion arose between Chief Cahill and Engineer MacPherson as to the tactics that should be used. MacPherson was a pretty rugged man, he was a blacksmith, and ran a shop in what is now the southeast corner of the schoolyard on Glendale Street. With John's strong arms waving and leather lungs bellowing, he seemed to be getting the best of Chief Cahill. At about the point where John seemed ready to take a swing at Chief Cahill's jaw, the full board of selectmen appeared on the scene and MacPherson was ready to take them on too. After a hasty retreat, the selectmen held a brief meeting after which they returned and informed MacPherson that he was fired. To which John replied with that time honored rejoinder; - "You can't fire me; I quit!" Arthur Coughlan was appointed to fill out the rest of MacPherson's term.

The following year of 1903, Arthur Coughlan was elected a selectman in a very bitter election. The burning issue being the liquor license question. The town voted "no license" by a margin of 73 votes, making Maynard dry for the first time in nine years.



The same board of engineers was reappointed, Coughlan being a selectman, was a party to his own appointment. He was also the town moderator. The board organized with Cahill again chief, Sweeney assistant, and Coughlan clerk.

This year of 1903 was to see a monumental change in the fire department. With the appointment of a full time man, the department started to move out of the status of a social organization towards that of a professional one.

Thomas F. Collins was appointed the first permanent man on May 1, 1903. The term permanent man was just about what it meant. The job was twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, with fourteen hours off of one day each month. The salary of \$600 per year came to less than eight cents per hour.

Thomas (Tony) Collins was without doubt the most colorful character in the history of the department. He was born in Hudson Mass.; his father Irish and his mother Canadian French. He had a mop of red hair and a typical Irish face. Although he did not let it be generally known, he spoke French quite well, this gave him many a chuckle when Frenchmen would carry on a conversation within his hearing, thinking that the Irishman would not understand them.

In recalling as to how he got the nickname of Tony; it seems that as a small boy he acquired a fascination for horses and managed to cultivate the friendship of an Italian fruit peddler, who would let him ride on his wagon and sometimes even let him hold the reins. When the fruit peddler asked him his name, he replied; "Tommy". This evidently did not fit the Italian language, so he became Tony and the name stuck to him for the rest of his life.

There were four children in the Collins family; Tony being the oldest. When Tony was twelve years old his father died, and in those days it was a hard struggle for a widow to support a family by such menial tasks as scrubbing floors and taking in washings. So Tony saw little of school after that. He managed to get a little work around a livery stable, allowing him to make a little contribution towards the support of the family and to work with horses which he thoroughly enjoyed. A couple of years later his mother remarried and Tony



took to the road. He followed the trotting tracks for a number of years, working as a hostler and a trainer of trotting horses.

Shortly before the turn of the century, the activities at the numerous trotting tracks went into a drastic decline; brought about by the passing of laws against betting. In the heyday of the tracks, the bookmakers used to go through the stands waving bills in the air and hawking their trade like a peanut vendor.

With the betting curbed, most of the small tracks closed down; so Tony went back to the livery stables, finally landing at the Coughlin<sup>a</sup> Stable on Summer Street. The building is now a part of the Fine Arts Theatre. He slept in an upstairs room that was provided for the night man. At this time the stable was furnishing the horses for the fire department; so this job involved Tony with the department; so when it came to the selection of their first permanent man; Tony was the most logical choice.

The election of 1904 was even more bitter than the year before, the liquor license was beaten by a margin of only sixteen votes. Sinister hands behind the scenes were out for revenge. The fire department became a political football. The selectmen became deadlocked on the appointment of the fire engineers for four meetings. Finally at a special meeting of the board of selectmen, held at six thirty in the morning of April first, all of the engineers terms having expired on the previous midnight, the selectmen voted to reappoint the same board, but again added a special category engineer for the mill. Peter Wilcox, the master mechanic of the mill, was appointed to serve without pay, voice or vote in the fire department; but in case of fire in the mill property, he was to have full authority over the regular board of engineers. An entirely illegal proceadure.



At the organization meeting of the board, Thomas Sweeney was elected chief, Fred Cahill, assistant and Arthur Coughlan, clerk.

Thomas Sweeney was born August 14, 1860, in a house on Main Street that was later moved across the street to make room for the shipping room of the mill. It being before the incorporation of Maynard so was then a part of the town of Sudbury. He was a charter member of the hose company and it's first clerk. He lived on Nason Street and was employed as a clerk in the Riverside Cooperative; so whether at home or at work he was always very close to the fire station.

Following their organization for the year, it had always been a matter of routine, for the engineers to reappoint the members of each company from the roster furnished them by the respective company clerks. This year was to be different, Coughlan and Cahill refused to sign the appointments of Samuel King of the hose company and Joshua Edwards of the ladder company. Purely a political vendetta. Both men were highly respected, both in the department and the community. King had been a loyal member of the hose company since 1892 and Edwards was a charter member of the department. He had taken care of the fire alarm batteries for the eight years prior to the appointment of the first permanent man. This was a disagreeable job that required daily attention, washing out the jars and handling the corrosive chemicals, spoiling clothes, all for the munificent salary of twenty dollars per year. The report of the engineers in the 1897 town report, reads:--"We wish to make mention of the battery room which is under the supervision of Mr. J. Edwards, the management being highly satisfactory and pleasing to the department".-- He was clerk of the ladder company, and his records, still in the fire station, are complete, neat and legible. In spite of this vicious unfair treatment, he continued to serve the town unselfishly for many years after. Serving at various times as sealer of weights and measures, a member of the board of health and as a member of the board of public welfare.



The following year, 1905, the same board was reappointed, but the special category chief for the mill, Peter Wilcox, was dropped. Cahill was again elected chief. In 1906, the same board was again named but organized with Coughlan as chief, Cahill assistant and Sweeney clerk.

Arthur Coughlan was born in West Concord, but the family moved to Maynard when he was twelve years old. He served the town as a selectman, tax collector and moderator. He was elected to represent the district in the state legislature in 1912 and in 1915 was appointed postmaster of Maynard. While he was a member of the board of engineers he was engaged in real estate operation, was an insurance agent, sold fire extinguishers and was an auctioneer. As a young man he had served five years in the navy, which accounted for his nickname of Admiral. He was a very dignified looking man, always well dressed. It was said that he would not leave his house to go to a fire without a collar and tie on. At a fire, he would never enter a building, but stood out in the middle of the street, leaving the details of the operations to his subordinates. This was often called a grandstand act, by some of his political adversaries.

In April of 1907, Tony Collins resigned from the department to take the job of coachman for Raymond Kitchen the resident agent of the American Woolen Company. John White was appointed to his place as driver of the hose wagon. White stayed on the job until November of that same year, and when he left, Tony Collins returned to the job; to continue it until the day of his death in 1939.

This same board of engineers continued to be reappointed each year through 1911. They each held the same position, with; Coughlan, chief; Cahill, assistant and Sweeney clerk.

In 1908, the pay of callmen was raised to forty dollars per year. And in this same year, the town accepted the statute that authorized the appointment of a local forest warden. This office was actually a state appointment as it was made by the state commissioner of conservation upon the nomination of the



board of selectmen, who usually named the head of the fire department. However, some awkward situations could develop, as the terms of fire engineers ran for one year, starting in April, and the term of the forest warden ran for a year starting the first of January. So if a change was made in the head of the fire department in April, the former chief, by virtue of his authority as forest warden, had control of the fire department in the event of a fire involving woodland or brush. So unless the old warden resigned, he held the office for the rest of the year. He could only be removed by the appointing authority, and then only for just cause, after a hearing. This the state officials were reluctant to do. The first controversy to develop over this division of authority, occurred in the spring of 1911, when Chief Coughlan was confined to his home by a long illness. It was a dry spring and there was a rash of brush fires. Assistant Chief Cahill refused to accept responsibility for brush fires, claiming that Coughlan was the forest warden and was collecting the twenty five dollar per year salary for the job. The outcome, was Cahill resigning from the board of engineers. He was replaced by George Gutteridge; who, with Albert Coughlan, captain of the hose company, were made deputy wardens to serve without pay.

Until 1911, the engineers had always been paid the same pay, regardless of the position they held on the board, which was then fifty dollars per year. The engineers voted to make the salary of the chief engineer \$100 per year plus an additional twenty five dollars for the forest warden job. This action of the engineers, which was entirely within their power, irked the selectmen who put an article in the town meeting warrant limiting the pay of all of the engineers to fifty dollars per year. The article passed easily, with Chief Coughlan the victim of some verbal brickbats on the town meeting floor.

In 1912, the same board was reappointed, but reorganized with George Gutteridge, chief; Arthur Coughlan, assistant and Thomas Sweeney, clerk. A short time later Sweeney resigned and was replaced by James Cleary.



George H. Gutteridge was a lifelong resident of Maynard. He was a graduate of the local schools and of a watchmakers school. He was town treasurer for many years. He operated a jewelry and watch repair shop on Nason Street. He joined the department in 1899 and at the time of his appointment to the board, was captain of the hose company. Gutteridge was a very progressive chief. Everything that he bought for the department was of the best quality available. He was the first chief to drive a car, so had opportunities to visit other departments and observe their mode of operation and equipment. He traveled to the scenes of large fires, even outside of the state. He held membership in the chief's organizations and attended their meetings and conventions. He encouraged the men to do likewise and made provisions to provide substitutes so that the permanent men could attend their conventions. He was interested in fire prevention and favored the adoption of a local building code, despite the fact that the idea was very unpopular at that time.

In 1913, the same board was reappointed but early in the year James Cleary resigned and was replaced by Peter Wilcox. In 1914 they were again reappointed and again organized with Gutteridge, chief; Coughlan, assistant and Wilcox, clerk. In this same year, the hose company was motorized and the horses were shifted over to the ladder wagon, which had always been drawn by hired teams. This meant the appointment of a second permanent man. To the surprise of most people who knew him well, although Tony Collins was a born horseman, he chose to give up driving the horses and learn to drive the new motor truck. He had learned to ride a motorcycle a couple of years before but had never owned one. This meant hiring a new driver for the ladder wagon. The records of the board of engineers show that William Hagerty, who had been driving Strout's team that had been hauling the ladder wagon, was appointed to the new permanent driver position, however, he never worked at it and the job was filled by Henry Hodges.



"Bud" Hodges, as he was usually called, like Tony Collins had followed the trotting tracks and was a skilled horseman. He stayed on the job just a little more than a year, during which time he had an understanding with the engineers that he was anxious to get out of the job as soon as they could find a replacement for him. The job paid nine dollars per week, for twenty four hours a day, seven days a week with fourteen hours off on one day every second week.

In March of 1915, William Quinn took the job. Bill Quinn, like Tony Collins, was a native of Hudson, he too was a bachelor, but did marry late in life when the hours of the job became a little more humane. Bill Quinn had driven a grocery wagon in Hudson. He lived with his parents, next door to the fire station and was a call man in the department. As the Hudson department had three pairs of horses in this station. Bill often filled in as a spare driver.

During the next twenty four years that Bill and Tony worked together; it was sad to say, but was to be expected, where two men were confined together in what were almost the conditions of a jail; their relationship was not exactly congenial. They seldom spoke to each other unless it was necessary or concerned some very unusual event. On a warm summer evening they would be seen standing out in front of the building on opposite sides of the main doors. Yet they shared the work equally and kept the old station on Nason Street spick and span, and when Tony died suddenly in 1939, Bill Quinn probably felt the loss more deeply than anyone.

In 1915, Gutteridge and Coughlan were reappointed but Peter Wilcox was not. He was replaced by Albert Coughlan. George Gutteridge was again elected chief. During this term, Arthur Coughlan who was a staunch Democrat, received the appointment of postmaster, so had to resign from the board. He was replaced by Albert Axford. This same board was reappointed again in 1916.



In 1917 Gutteridge and Axford were reappointed but Walter Priest was appointed in place of Albert Coughlan. Fred Axford resigned during the year and he was replaced by Lee Donahue. From 1918 until 1921, these same engineers were reappointed. And organized with Gutteridge chief, Walter Priest assistant and Lee Donahue clerk.

In September of 1918, Bill Quinn was drafted into the service in World War I. His place was taken by Edward Redding, who only stayed a couple of months. It was wartime and there were plenty of jobs that paid twice the money for half the hours. It was impossible to find anyone to fill the job. So Joe Farrell, who slept in the station nights, would drive the team at night and if an alarm came in during the day, Gutteridge would run across the street, from his store, and drive the truck and Tony Collins would take the horses with the ladder wagon. At times that Tony would have the horses out on the street with the tip cart or the water wagon, there would be nobody in the station. In case of a phone call, the operator would switch the call to Gutteridge's jewelry store.

When Bill Quinn returned from the service in 1919, the pay of Tony Collins had been raised to \$18.75 per week and his to \$16.25. The following year the pays were raised to \$23.00 and \$22.00 per week respectively. The pay of callmen was now \$75.00 per year and that of engineers \$100 and chief \$125.

Gutteridge had not been chief long when he realized that the system of a board of engineers, was years out of step with the times, in his associating with other chiefs he had come to look upon the title of fire engineer as something as out of date as a lamplighter.

In 1919 the fire underwriters made a survey of the town, and in their report, the very first recommendation was: "That the chief of the department be appointed for an indefinite term, with removal only for cause, and solely responsible for the direction, efficiency, and control of the department subject to the approval of the board of selectmen."



This meant that upon establishing the office of fire chief, the board of engineers would be automatically abolished. When Gutteridge suggested to the selectmen, that they put the question up to the voters in town meeting, they attempted to find every possible excuse to evade the issue. They did not want to lose their political plums, the annual appointment of fire engineers.

Gutteridge was not interested in a job as full time fire chief, but was willing to carry on the job as a call chief, with Tony Collins as the full time deputy chief. A similar arrangement existed in the police department. Although this would not have been the ideal setup, it would have been a long step in the right direction. The selectmen continued to be evasive, so Gutteridge turned in his resignation. They begged him to reconsider and promised him that they would eventually correct the situation. They continued to procrastinate. When Gutteridge pressed them for action they harped on the same old excuse, that the people would not vote for it.

In 1921 the same board was reappointed, but before the end of the term, Lee Donahue died, he was replaced by William Naylor. The following year 1922, the same board was reappointed, and organized with Gutteridge chief, Priest assistant and Naylor clerk. Before the end of the year, Gutteridge, tired of broken promises, resigned. Joseph Farrell was appointed in his place, the board reorganized with Naylor chief, Priest assistant and Farrell clerk.

William Naylor had been a member of the department since 1912, he was superintendant of the water department. He was born in Maynard a graduate of the local schools, and to use the parlance of his day, was a man of sterling character. Loyal and generous to his church and fraternal affiliations, and a lifelong abstainer from liquor and tobacco. Unfortunately these virtues were not appreciated by the boys at the firehouse. His penny pinching policies aroused the ire of the entire department. His philosophy was the exact opposite to that of his predecessor George Gutteridge, whose thinking was that the best



was none too good, where with Naylor, the cheapest cost too much. His answer to any suggestion of improvement that would cost money was: "It's not necessary!" He wanted to abolish the position of driver of the ladder truck and revert back to a one man department. However he was overruled by the other two members of the board, who had been pressured by the selectmen.

When it became absolutely necessary to purchase hose, it was of the poorest quality, single jacket, usually called mill hose, as it was generally used for private fire protection inside buildings, where it would not have to stand the abuse of being dragged in the street where sharp pebbles would puncture the single cotton jacket, making the whole length useless. When one of the drivers complained that the old battery would hardly turn the motor over when starting, despite daily recharging, Naylor's answer was: "Use the crank!" It was the same with batteries for the fire alarm, due to age, they were too weak to operate the steam whistle beyond the first blast. The Maynard Enterprise referred to it as our one lung fire alarm system.

The men treated Naylor with utter disrespect and insubordination, he was even threatened with physical violence. Even when he was right he was ignored. One case in particular, was when he purchased some one and one half inch hose. The men flatly refused to put it on the trucks. They disparagingly called it "Naylor's garden hose!" Yet it is still the universally accepted type of equipment for use on inside fires today.

The pay of callmen was raised from seventy five to one hundred dollars per year in the hopes of pacifying the men, but that did not seem to do any good. Pressure was being put on the selectmen from all sides to get rid of Naylor as chief; it became a major issue in the election of the selectmen in 1924.

When the annual appointments were made that year, the selectmen had to do something about their pre-election promises. Lacking the intestinal fortitude to tell Naylor outright that they did not want him, they resorted to a cowardly trick that backfired on them. They appointed five engineers,



to Farrell, Naylor and Priest, who were on the board, they added John Wollerschied and Frank Parks. Hoping that Parks, with his own vote, could get two of the other four votes and be elected chief. It did not work out that way. They all wanted to be chief except Farrell and he gave his vote to Naylor. So this scheme of appointing five engineers accomplished nothing except to make a bad situation worse. When Farrell was asked why he voted for Naylor, he replied that he thought that Naylor was the lesser of five evils. Farrell, in his own mind, was satisfied that the system of a board of engineers was then long outmoded. The next year the same five engineers were appointed and again the same deadlock prevailed, with Naylor again the winner. The following year of 1926, the selectmen exacted promises from Wollerschied and Priest to vote for Parks as chief, before they would give them their appointments. So after three attempts, they had finally ousted Naylor as chief, but he was still on the board of engineers and often held the deciding vote on important matters.

Chief Parks had been a member of the department since 1917, he served in the army during World War I, and was employed by the American Woolen Company.

Progress in the department was at a standstill, if not in reverse. The only improvements mentioned in the 1926 town report, was the purchase of six electric hand lights to replace the old kerosene lanterns, and twelve new helmets, five of them white, for the engineers, these five white helmets were hung along one side of the old hose truck, which was now a museum piece, making it look all the more ridiculous.

These same five engineers were reappointed each year through 1932. The department continued to retrogress. True they were getting fires out after a fashion, but their mode of operation had not improved over that of the first days of the department. Things managed to keep going on the loyalty of some of the old timers, who still retained the pride that they had for the department when it was at its best. There were men like Bill Priest, who operated a market next door to the fire station, who, when the alarm sounded, would be seen hanging



to Farrell, Naylor and Priest, who were on the board, they added John Wollerschied and Frank Parks. Hoping that Parks, with his own vote, could get two of the other four votes and be elected chief. It did not work out that way. They all wanted to be chief except Farrell and he gave his vote to Naylor. So this scheme of appointing five engineers accomplished nothing except to make a bad situation worse. When Farrell was asked why he voted for Naylor, his reply was; that he thought that Naylor was the lesser of five evils. Farrell, in his own mind, was satisfied that the system of a board of engineers was long outmoded. The next year the same five were appointed and again the same deadlock prevailed, with Naylor again the winner. The following year, 1926, the selectmen exacted promises from Wollerschied and Priest to vote for Parks as chief before they gave them their appointments. So after three attempts, they had finally ousted Naylor as chief, but he was still on the board of engineers and often had the deciding vote on important matters.

Chief Parks had been a member of the department since 1917, he served in the army during World War I, and was employed by the American Woolen Company.

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on to the tail end of the old La France hose wagon, his white butcher's apron flying in the breeze, while his customers were left standing in the market with nobody to wait on them. Or Mike Cleary who lived at 50 Summer Street, just over the tracks in back of the fire station, who during brush fire season, would go to the seven o'clock Mass on Sunday morning, so that he could get home early and change into old clothes for the day, in anticipation of an alarm. There was nothing to attract the interest of younger men and some of the older men were only hanging on to collect the fifty dollar salary every six months.

In 1932, a Chamber of Commerce was formed in the town, with the usual good intentions. After electing a board of officers, a number of committees were formed, most of which never functioned. The one notable exception being the civic committee, purely a political machine; which seemed to have had but one objective; to tear the fire department apart. In the shape that the department was in, it was like beating a dead horse. Any organization that was supposed to have had civic betterment as an objective, should have been trying to do something to improve the department, and there was plenty of room for that. Instead, the hatchet men managed to reduce the appropriation for salaries of call men enough to cut the call force from twenty seven to twenty four men. This was the only accomplishment of the civic committee, after which they folded up their tents and stole away in the night. The whole Chamber of Commerce was to lay dormant for years. In this shakeup, John Wollerschied and Joe Farrell resigned from the board of engineers, leaving it again a three man board, with Frank Parks, chief, Walter Priest, assistant chief, and Naylor clerk.

By 1934 things had reached bottom, true, they were still getting fires out after a fashion, or at least confining the loss to one building. That the town did not suffer a major conflagration could probably best be credited to Divine Providence.



A complete new board of selectmen was elected in 1934, none of them had ever served on the board before. The terms of selectmen were then for only one year. Frank McCarron was elected chairman. He was in the insurance business and had been having difficulty getting some of the companies to take coverage on mercantile risks, so he was quite concerned with the condition of the fire department. His two colleagues on the board of selectmen agreed that they would go along with any reasonable changes that he might propose in regards to the fire department.

McCarron did at least start out in the right direction, he arranged for a conference with the manager of the rating bureau Percy Charnock; a very abrupt man, careful of what he said and even more careful what he wrote. The town of Maynard was then graded sixth class. Charnock at the very beginning informed McCarron that he would not make any commitments without an up to date survey, the last one was now fifteen years old. Underwriters reports were always one of the best kept secrets of the board of selectmen. In fact there were men who had held the office of selectman for years, who would deny to the uninitiated that such a thing as an underwriters report existed.

After considerable discussion, mostly one sided, during which Charnock kept his teeth tightly clamped on his ever present cigar; McCarron was able to get just one brief suggestion out of him, it was: -"Get rid of those engineers and get a chief to run your department." Unfortunately McCarron thought that he simply meant to get rid of the present board of engineers and appoint others in their place. Of course what Charnock meant, was for the town to establish the office of chief of the fire department, which would automatically abolish the board of engineers. So when the new appointments were made; Parks and Naylor were replaced by George Priest and Michael Louka. They organized with George Priest, chief; Walter Priest, assistant and Michael Louka, clerk.



George Priest was known to most people as Tom, his middle name was Thomas. He was born in Maynard and grew up with the fire department in his blood, as his father ran a market next door to the fire station and was a call man in the department. Shortly after his twenty first birthday, in 1925, he became a member of the department and a short time later, he took on the obligation to relieve the one man who was on duty, during his meal hours, on the days when the other man would be off. The two permanent men were now getting fourteen hours of every fifth day off. So this meant that Tom would be tied down on many Sundays and holidays and no extra pay for any of it.

As chief, Tom had his work cut out for him. The department was in sad shape. It would be pretty safe to say that Maynard was the only town of it's size in the country without pumping equipment of any kind. Everything in the department was run down. Immediately, Chief Priest started to build up the equipment. He received advice and encouragement from former Chief Gutteridge, who was pleased to see the department that he once was so proud of, begin to shape up again.

The new chief joined and became active in the fire chief's organizations. Men were sent to the State Department of Education Training School in Arlington. A training program was started within the department that some of the older men found difficult to keep up with, so bowed out gracefully, allowing younger, more active and interested men to take their places.

This same board of engineers was appointed each year through 1938. The department continued to progress. Of course there were snipers who grumbled about nepotism, there were four members of the Priest family in the department, and they were usually the first at any fire. There were moans about wild spending in the fire department, inspired by the small town politicians who knew full well that the only money that any town department can spend, is what the people vote to spend in town meeting.

In 1939 when the new appointments were made, Walter Priest and Michael Louka were replaced by Raymond Connors and Richard Allan. George Priest was again elected chief



Thursday, February 23, 1939, was Tony Collins' regular day off, and as was his usual custom, he took the morning train to Boston. He went to a Washington Street theatre. Nobody saw what happened or at least did not volunteer any information if they did, but Tony was found at the foot of a flight of stairs, unconscious with a fractured skull. He died in the hospital the following day. As he had no established home other than the fire station, and as funeral homes were still considered by many of the older people as being cold and impersonal, his body was taken for repose, to the home of Chief George Priest, from which it was taken to Saint Bridget's Church for the funeral service, with burial in the family lot in Hudson.

Harold Priest was appointed to fill the vacancy left by the death of Tony and the pay of the two drivers was equalized at \$33.50 per week, Tony had been getting \$35.00 and Bill Quinn had been getting only \$32.00.

In November of 1939, Chief Priest informed the selectmen that he could no longer carry on the work that he was doing for anything like the \$150 per year that he was getting. The family business was heading for the inevitable fate that befell most small independent markets. His father could no longer afford to pay help to replace the time that Tom was devoting to the fire department. If they chose to keep him on the job, he requested a pay of \$35.00 per week which was \$1.50 more than the drivers were getting. The selectmen then offered him \$400 if he would carry on the job as he was doing until town meeting. At the March 1940 town meeting, the fire department budget was increased sufficiently to make the position of chief engineer full time, at \$35.00 per week.

With the 1940 appointments, Walter Priest was returned to the board of engineers, making it a four man board. In this same year, the contributory retirement system was adopted by the town.

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in hydrant capacities were brought to light. At that time much of the distribution system was of badly tuberculated, unlined, cast iron pipe. Flow tests on some hydrants showed as little as forty gallons per minute available, whereas the minimum requirement was one thousand gallons per minute.

Of course the first recommendation in the underwriters report was the same as that of twenty one years before, and was to take almost twice as long again to accomplish, namely:- That the office of chief of the fire department be established. This would abolish the politically appointed board of engineers.

In attempting to get the selectmen to make a move towards following out this recommendation; Chief Priest found himself in the same position as that of Chief Gutteridge, twenty one years before. In fact the selectmen were using the same old excuse, that the people would not vote for it in town meeting. They could be sure of this because they never intended to allow the people an opportunity to vote on it anyway.

The same board of engineers were reappointed in 1941. The country was preparing for war, defense industries were booming, wages were rising and men were changing to better jobs out of town. It was getting difficult to get callmen who were always available. It had always been a rule of the department that if a callman took a job out of town he would have to resign from the department. This rule had to be relaxed, it was the beginning of a trend that was to continue. So it was proposed that another permanent man be added, as the two drivers were still working twenty four hours a day with fourteen hours off every fifth day, so that if either of these men were to leave for a better job, of which there were plenty, it would likely have been impossible to replace him.

At the end of the year Raymond Connors resigned from the board of engineers and took the third job, this allowed the men to work two straight days with the third full day off, leaving two men on duty at all times except during meal hours, which the chief covered.



There was another turnover in the board of selectmen in 1747 and the new board was out to get the chief's hide. Like some of their predecessors, they lacked the courage to withhold the chief's reappointment, but resorted to a political maneuver that was to accomplish their purpose. They did not reappoint Walter Priest, but in his place appointed William Naylor. Naylor was now sixty seven years old, two years beyond the legal age limit for a firefighter, but he could hold the position of a clerk until he was seventy.

Of course this was more than Chief Priest could stand, so he resigned to take the position of chief plant security officer for the Curless Wright Aircraft Corporation in New Jersey, where he enjoyed a most successful career until his retirement. What the local small town politicians really did, was to kick him upstairs into a position far above anything that the town of Maynard could have given him. The Maynard News, in one of its rare editorials wrote the following: --"The utter fallacy of allowing politics to enter fire and police departments in any community, has never been more glaringly evident than in the departure this week of Chief George T. Priest of the Maynard Fire Department. This young man discouraged and perhaps dismayed by the threat of outside influences disrupting his carefully organized department, leaves Maynard for greener pastures, with no one in sight who can adequately fill his place. He has left his home town feeling that his work was unappreciated. Wholeheartedly devoted to the task of building an organization of firefighters that had at all times efficiently protected this town of some 6000 souls. He might have stayed on indefinitely had non-interference in an already splendidly functioning department been the policy of the town.

Always interested in lowering insurance rates for the taxpayers, in securing a water supply that would be adequate to protect this leading defense center, and in the education of every resident in fire protection, he steps up the ladder of life in another community."



The resignation of George Priest left a vacancy on the board of engineers, the job went begging, finally the selectmen appointed Henry Mariani, a relatively newcomer to the department to the vacancy. Mariani was the first man to be appointed an engineer who was employed out of town. During his entire years of service, he was employed in Watertown, so was out of town all day long. However, he served on the board until his death on April 24, 1963, making his tenure the longest of any engineer up until that time. The board reorganized with Allan, chief; Mariani, clerk and Naylor as corresponding secretary, a new title invented to avoid having him classified as a firefighter, a position he could not legally hold because of his age. The position of assistant chief engineer was never filled again.

The position of chief was reverted back to a part time job. If this was supposed to have saved money, the records show the exact opposite, as the salary expenditure for 1941, with a full time chief was \$7,560.82 and for the following year with a part time chief, it was \$8,135.68 and there was no raise in the pay rate.

Richard Allan was a native of Scotland but came to Maynard before he was twenty. He became a member of the department in 1919. He was employed in the maintenance department of the American Woolen Company.

In August of 1942, Harold Priest resigned as a permanent driver and was replaced by Fred Elson, who served only until October when he resigned, he was replaced by Howard Clark.

After the resignation of George Priest, Raymond Connors was appointed forest warden, creating the absurd situation where in the event of an outside fire, his authority, under state law, superseded that of the head of the department that employed him.

James Allan, the chief's son, was appointed a permanent man in May of 1943 and in December of that same year, Raymond Connors enlisted in the navy and Howard Grady was appointed a military substitute.



In April of 1945, James Allan entered the military service, and his father, who was the call chief, took on the duties of a military substitute with the pay of both jobs being set at \$45.00 per week. This arrangement was continued until James Allan returned from the service about three months later.

In 1946, William Naylor having reached the age of seventy could no longer serve in any capacity, so was replaced on the board of engineers by Philip Wilson. The board organized with Allan chief, Mariani, clerk and Wilson, recording secretary. There seemed to be no reason for not electing an assistant chief, but the position was never filled again. Although at times some of the members of the board of engineers called themselves deputy chief, a position that did not legally exist under the law that the department was governed by, nor was the position ever mentioned in the records of the board of engineers.

The four permanent men, Wm. Quinn, Raymond Connors, Howard Clark and James Allan were now working alternate shifts of twenty four hours each, making an eighty four hour week.

The following year 1947, the same board was reappointed and reorganized with Allan, chief, Mariani, recording secretary and Wilson with a brand new title, chairman of the board of engineers. The same appointments were made the following year 1948, but at the organization meeting Wilson was elected chief, Mariani, chairman of the board and Allan, clerk.

Philip A. Wilson was a lifelong resident of Maynard. His father was the presiding judge of the Concord district court. Phil was a graduate of the local schools and Dartmouth College. He was a practicing attorney and following the death of his father, carried on his extensive law practice, with offices located on the second floor of Hedgard's building, next door to the fire station on Nason Street. Wilson became a member of the department in 1943 and rose to the position of chief engineer in a shorter space of time than any chief in the present century. He seemed to be satisfied with the system



of a board of engineers, which he was always able to completely dominate. He dictated the appointments to the board and any selectman that ever attempted to give him any opposition to his way of thinking came out the loser. The tail wagged the dog.

Late in the year of 1967, Wilson's physical condition became critical. He had been bravely battling a malignancy for several years and had undergone major surgery which was not successful. He faced the inevitable end with courage and fortitude that few men in any walk of life could equal, he passed on December 22, 1967.

In 1949, Wilson and Mariani were reappointed but Martin Gruber was appointed in place of Richard Allan. This was snappy treatment of a man who had given his best to the department for thirty years and had carried on the thankless job of chief during the difficulties of the war years. This same board of engineers continued to be reappointed through the year of 1954.

Two additional permanent men were added to the force in March of 1951. Alton Whitney and Edward Murphy were appointed, so with six men, it gave three men on a shift. The work schedule still being twenty four hours on and twenty four off. The pay was \$46.45 per week for each of the new men, \$64.05 for the two drivers and \$68.00 per week for the two senior men, William Quinn and Raymond Connors. The pay rate for the two senior men was considered as supervisory pay. They were not given an officers title at first, as there was no provision in the statutes under which the department was governed at that time, for the appointment of officers, the law specifically stated that the officers must be elected by the members of the various companies. Eventually these men were called captains, so that there were two categories of captains; the permanent captains who were appointed by the engineers and the call captains who were elected by the men of each company. Later when a town personnel



board was established, the job was given the title of captain.

May 1, 1952, Captain William Quinn retired, having reached the mandatory retirement age of sixty five. He had thirty seven years of service. Howard Clark was promoted to captain and George Whalen was appointed a permanent firefighter.

In 1954, the town adopted a by-law that gave the permanent men a fifty six hour week. Putting the department on a three shift basis, creating three more positions, Walter Croft, Richard Higgins and George Edwards were appointed and James Allan was promoted to captain. In this same year, James Rodway a call man who was in the armed forces, lost his life in the Korean conflict.

When the annual appointments were made by the selectmen in 1955, they did not reappoint Martin Gruber, but appointed Walter Allan in his place. Chief Wilson immediately gave the selectmen an ultimatum to restore Gruber to the board, which of course they did after a couple of days of bickering during which Wilson threatened to quit. As they had already given Allan an appointment for a year, they could not remove him without cause, so he held the post for the year doing little more than carrying the empty title. He was not appointed the following year. It again became a three man board, consisting of Wilson, chief; Gruber, clerk and Mariani with no designation. They continued to be reappointed annually for the next seven years. In 1956, George Edwards resigned as a permanent firefighter and was replaced by Leonard McEnenna.

In 1958, Alton Whitney retired and was replaced by Anthony Arcieri.

A town personnel board was established in 1959. The duties of this board was to recommend a salary scale for all town employees. It was a great improvement over the old system of having each department battle in town meeting for the pay scale of their employees, resulting in many inequities in the pay between departments. The pay of firefighters was set at \$4,000 for the first year of service, with annual step raises up to \$4,450 after four years. Captains were given a four step scale starting at \$4,400 and reaching a maximum of \$4,050



after four years. Call men received \$150 per year, engineers \$250 per year and the chief engineer \$500 per year.

Captain Raymond Connors resigned in 1960. George Whalen was promoted to captain and Theodore Clancy was appointed a permanent firefighter. In 1963, Captain James Allan retired, Richard Higgins was promoted to captain and Pat Lalli was appointed a permanent firefighter. In April of this same year, Engineer Henry Mariani died following a long illness. His place was filled by Robert Whitehouse. When the board organized, Wilson was of course elected chief, Gruber clerk, but Whitehouse was given no designation, nor did he ever have one as long as the board of engineers continued to exist, the appointment of Robert Whitehouse was the last change made in the board of engineers which was finally abolished in 1968.

In 1964, a scuba diving team was organized by some of the men of the department, it included Captain Richard Higgins and Theodore Clancy of the permanent force and Francis King and William Tobey of the call force, both King and Tobey were later appointed permanent men. This scuba team performed valuable service in a number of communities outside of Maynard, in the recovery of bodies of drowning victims.

Captain Howard Clark resigned in 1965 and Ronald Cassidy was appointed a permanent firefighter, but the engineers delayed the promotion of a firefighter to the vacant post of captain. Howard Clark had left the department on April 25th and by the middle of July his position had not yet been filled. So the selectmen decided that they would prod the engineers to take action on this vacancy. They sent the board of engineers a letter ordering them to appear before them at their meeting of July 20th. The engineers appeared at the selectmen's office at the appointed time. Naturally Wilson acted as spokesman for the engineers, and he proved himself to be quite capable. After some heated words from both sides, Wilson stated his position very clearly. He told the selectmen



in words to the effect that he was running the fire department and not the board of selectmen, and that he intended to continue to run it in his own way and if they did not like the way he was running it, they could try to fire him if they dared. He then turned around and walked out of the room, leaving the selectmen dumbfounded. Of course they dropped the whole affair like a hot potatoe. The following year, when Wilson's term expired, they all dutifully signed his new appointment. About a month after this episode, Walter Croft was made captain.

The pay scale of captains was now from \$5,850 to \$6,250 and that of firefighters was from \$5,250 to \$5,675. The pay of callmen and the engineers remained the same, \$150 per year for callmen, \$250 for engineers and \$500 for the chief engineer. The pay of callmen was to remain unchanged until 1969.

In the year of 1966 a very progressive step was taken in the policy of the administration of the department. The senior captain, George Whalen completed the basic firefighters course at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and later went on to take more advanced courses. He was followed by other men of the department. It had always been the policy of the chief to minimize the value of formal training. This was a way of thinking typical of most part time chiefs not having time to participate in such programs themselves, so did not want their subordinates to acquire more knowledge of the job than they had themselves.

Following Captain Whalens completion of the instructors course at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, he was designated drillmaster of the department. He then inaugurated a regular program of weekly drills for the permanent men and semi-monthly drills for the callmen. At first these drills were confined to such fundamental evolutions as hose laying and ladder work. Later they were expanded to cover all aspects of firefighting and prevention.



In March of 1967, Captain Walter Croft retired because of disability. Anthony Arcieri was promoted to captain and Francis King was appointed a permanent firefighter.

On December 22, 1967, Chief Engineer Wilson passed away following a long illness. The selectmen did not make an appointment to fill out Wilson's term, which ran until April, but allowed the department to drag along with the two remaining engineers, Gruber and Whitehouse. As Gruber was beyond the age limit where he could serve as an active firefighter, he could not hold the position of chief engineer, and as he would not vote to make Whitehouse chief, the department was without a chief until May of the following year.

At the annual town meeting, held on March 4, 1968, article 17, on the warrant, provided the voters with their first opportunity to decide whether or not they wished to establish the office of chief of the fire department. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of adopting the provisions of Chapter 48 of the General Laws, which established the office of chief of the fire department. So after more than half a century after it was first proposed by Chief Gutteridge, the department was placed on a businesslike professional basis. This same meeting authorized three additional permanent men, which provided for four men on duty at all times. The salary of the chief was set with a minimum of \$8180 for the first year, with a \$9,267 maximum after four years.

Although the selectmen were authorized to make the appointment of a chief on March 4th, they did not do so until May, when they promoted the senior captain, George Whalen to the post. Leonard McKenna was promoted to captain and William Floyd was appointed a permanent firefighter. The following month, the three new firefighter positions authorized by the town meeting were filled by the appointment of William Tobey, George Hardy and Charles Morrison.



During 1969, no changes were made in the permanent force of the department. Salaries were adjusted to give the chief a new four step scale, starting at \$10,000 and advancing to \$10,750 after four years. Captains were given an \$8,300 to \$9,250 scale and firefighters were given \$7,250 minimum with an \$8,000 maximum. The pay of call men was raised from \$150 to \$300 per year, with additional compensation of \$2.00 per hour for actual fire fighting or other emergency work.

With the chief having sole control of the department, many long overdue improvements were made in the areas of fire prevention and the mode of operation at fires. Regular inspections were established, covering all mercantile and manufacturing establishments, as well as schools, churches and all other places of assembly. Where bad conditions were found, formal notices of violations were given the owners, and the conditions were promptly corrected. A regular schedule of preventative maintenance was established for all apparatus and equipment. With the knowledge gained through courses taken at the fire academy, maximum utilization was made of the pumping equipment through the use of pre-connected initial attack lines and the use of three inch hose for feeder lines, with inline pumping. Efficient use was made of fog nozzles and air masks. The wearing of proper protective clothing was now a must, so that the men not only looked like firefighters but acted like them.

Chief George Whalen and Captain Leonard McKenna attended classes on municipal fire administration at Massachusetts Bay Community College. Captains Higgins and Arcieri attended classes on fire protection at Quinsigamond Community College. Captain McKenna attended a three week course on Fire Instructor Training and Firefighters Clancy and Ling, attended a two week course on advanced firefighting at the Massachusetts Fire Training Academy.



In March of 1970, William Floyde resigned and was replaced by Paul Cobleigh. The annual town meeting of that year, voted a forty eight hour work week for the permanent men. They had been working a fifty six hour week since 1955, with three shifts, each shift working a twenty four hour tour of duty with the following forty eight hours off. The new schedule eliminated the twenty four hour tours, by creating a day shift of ten hours and a night shift of fourteen hours. The adoption of this forty eight hour week required two additional permanent men to maintain the same coverage. Robert DellaRusso and Robert Bernard were appointed to these positions. In order to have a captain on duty at all times, Edward Murphy, the senior firefighter, was promoted to captain.

In October of 1969, the call force was reorganized. The company system was abolished. It had not functioned as such for years anyhow. It was replaced by a four group system, headed by a call captain, who has authority over all call men but has no authority over the permanent men and is subordinate to the permanent officers. The four groups of call men, which presently consist of five men each, are each headed by a call lieutenant.



buildings

CHAPTER 2



## Buildings

Prior to the organization of a fire department, the only firefighting equipment owned by the town were a couple of ladders, stored in a shed owned by the mill, located on the site of the present Post Office Building. In 1873, the town spent \$1.65 for a padlock and chain to secure these ladders against unauthorized use. When the new hose wagon arrived on May 30, 1890, it was placed in this shed. When the ladder wagon was delivered on August 30, 1890, it was put in this shed in place of the hose wagon, which was moved over to a smaller shed in the rear of the Congregational Church. This was only a temporary arrangement while the new station on Nason Street was being built.

A town meeting held on January 1, 1890 had voted to organize and equip a fire department. \$6,000 was appropriated for land and a building. The committee named to carry out the project consisted of: Warren Peters, David Henderson, Julius Loewe, Abel Haynes and M. Howell Garfield.

The first choice of a site considered by this committee, was the present location of a gas station at the intersection of Main and Sudbury streets. This land was then owned by Artemus Whitney. It was, and still is, a better location for the purpose than either of the subsequent location of the fire department. However; the committee could not reach a favorable agreement on price, so they purchased a small parcel of land on the westerly side of Nason Street from Thomas Brooks at a total cost, including legal fees, of \$961.66. This is the present location of the Town Paint Company.

A contract was given to Barker & Marshall of Hudson for \$5,485.19, to erect a two story frame building, without basement, 51' X 35' with a 9' X 9' hose tower attached to the center of the rear outside wall. The hose tower was about sixty feet high, so that full lengths of hose could be hung without folding. Unlike most hose towers built before this time, this one was not designed to have a bell, as it was a matter of a few years when fire alarm bells were generally



displaced by steam or air whistles.

The building had a hip roof with a gabled dormer in the front. The first floor, undivided, had two large doors for the apparatus. These were double doors with spring loaded hinges that swung inward and could only be opened from the inside. There was a window between these two doors. The entrance to the building was an ordinary outside door on the south end of the back wall. This door opened out onto a partly enclosed porch, which held the coal bin. This first floor had a large gravity hot air furnace located in the rear southwest corner, with a large pipe running to each of the six rooms on the second floor and a smoke pipe that ran into the chimney which was located on the south wall. The whole affair resembled a giant octopus lying on it's back.

Along the back wall of the apparatus room were two flights of stairs, running up to a landing in the center and directly over the door to the hose tower, a short wide flight of steps lead from the landing back to the second floor central hallway.

The second floor was divided into six rooms. The two rooms in front were meeting and recreation rooms, the one on the south side was for the hose company and the other for the ladder company. The next two rooms which were of equal size, were located in the middle of the building on each side of the hallway, the one on the north side was an office for the engineers and the other was fitted out for a kitchen, with a coal burning range, a small sink room was partitioned off from the west end of this room. When the first fire alarm system was installed, the wet cell batteries were placed on shelves in this little sink room. The two rooms at the rear corners were also of equal size, and like the other rooms were nearly square, these rooms were at first used for smoking rooms, the one on the south side for the hose company and the other for the ladder company, smoking was not allowed in any other part of the building.



Lighting was provided by kerosene lamps. There was no plumbing except the kitchen sink and another small sink on the apparatus floor, both of these sinks simply drained down into the crawl space under the building, along with the drainage from the hose tower. This water collected and became stagnant, creating a problem that had to be corrected by building a masonry sump at the base of the hose tower and laying a drain line across Nason Street to the low land between Nason and Main streets.

In 1900, a toilet was installed in what had been the hose company smoking room. In this same year electric lights were installed in the station.

Shortly after the turn of the century there was considerable interest in establishing a second hose company; to be located either on Maynard's mill or in the west end of town, as the department still had the original light hose wagon in storage, it having been replaced by the heavier horse drawn wagon. Julius Loewe offered the town a gift of land for a station on Harriman Court. It was at this time that the original small wooden school on Main Street, on the site of the present Municipal Building, was being replaced by a new brick building. The fire engineers were interested in acquiring this building and converting it into a fire station, so at a town meeting in 1903, it was voted to turn this building over to the fire department and \$1,000 was appropriated to remodel it into a fire station. However with the employment of a full time driver for the hose wagon then in service, response was so improved, that the idea of a second station was dropped, although it was considered again a few years later.

In 1903, the station on Nason Street was remodeled by James Mullen to accommodate a man and horse. The kitchen was dismantled and converted to a sleeping room which had a hole cut in the floor and a sliding pole installed. The two flights of stairs on the back wall of the apparatus room were removed and a single flight was run up from the middle of the floor to the landing and the wide stairs from the landing to the upstairs hallway were narrowed to half their original width. The southwest corner of the apparatus floor was partitioned



off to allow the installation of two horse stalls. These stalls were equipped with doors in front, with spring loaded hinges, so that they could be tripped open by a rope, that ran over pullies, to the foot of the sliding pole, allowing the driver to release the horses as soon as he landed on the floor. At first only one horse was used. A false ceiling was built over the horse stalls to make a hay loft, which was loaded with baled hay, through a small door cut in the south wall of the building. This loft had only about three feet of headroom, so that the man who had to feed the horses, three times a day, had to crawl on his hands and knees to open the bales of hay, shake it out, and poke it down the feeding chutes. The man may have had to assume a position of prayer, while performing this chore, but it is doubtful if his utterances were very pious when he bumped his head on the low ceiling. A new entrance door was cut near the front of the building, on the south wall. The old hot air furnace was replaced by a steam boiler, with radiators placed throughout the building including the hose tower.

In 1905, the town sold a strip of land along the south side of the station despite the fact that there was insufficient room around the building as it was.

When the hose wagon was converted to a double hitch, in 1906, it became quite obvious; that the small low apparatus doors, which were designed to accommodate hand drawn apparatus, presented a serious hazard, as the driver had to almost lay down across the high seat, in order to get under the door header. This was bad enough with a single horse, but to control a pair of spirited horses, required the driver to have both his feet braced solidly on the footboard and have his whole weight on the reins. To relieve this dangerous situation, the original door openings were enlarged, both in height and width and the small entrance door on the side of the building, was moved out to the front, in place of the window between the apparatus doors.



A couple of years later, the men using company funds, purchased a shower bath outfit from a local barber who had decided to get out of the shower bath business. The town paid a plumber to install this outfit, which consisted of two wooden shower stalls and a forty gallon hot water tank with a gas stack heater, in the former smoking room where the flush toilet had been previously installed.

When the hose company was motorized in 1914, the horses were shifted over to the ladder side of the house. Because of the length of the ladder wagon, there was not room enough on the apparatus floor for the horse stalls, so a twenty one foot addition was built on the rear of the building by John Nordberg at a cost of \$360. The horse stalls were moved over into this addition.

With the adoption of motor apparatus, the added weight, and the vibration, particularly when heavy tire chains were used, weakened the apparatus floor, which was of wood planking laid on wooden floor joists. Dampness and rotting were taking their toll of all of the wooden underpinning, so that constant jacking up and blocking of the main floor was necessary. By 1926, the north wall of the building was bulging out at the bottom, as the sill was completely rotted away in some places. This side of the building was jacked up, the bad ends of the studding cut back and a part of the sill was replaced at a higher level, supported by a concrete footing. This work was only a stop gap, as the same condition was fast developing all around the building, so in 1930 a contract was given to Ernest Barilone, to install a complete new concrete foundation and floor. With this work a small cellar was put under the southwest rear corner of the building and a new steam boiler was installed in it. This allowed the heating coils to be lowered from the ceiling down to floor level, making it possible to heat the apparatus floor properly. This cellar was below ground water level, and although the cement was water-proofed, a crack soon developed that seeped water in the cellar constantly, making it necessary to bail water out by pailfuls daily. The only entrance to this cellar was through a small trap door in the floor and down a vertical steel ladder, so the water and ashes had to be hoisted by hand up through this door.



It was the intent of the board of engineers to install an oil burner at the time that the new boiler was put in, but as so often happens, the appropriation was insufficient to complete the job.

Another improvement that was made, when the new floor was put in, was the elimination of some of the supporting columns from the middle of the apparatus floor. When the building was built, a row of wooden posts ran down the center of the apparatus room. Most of these posts were removed and replaced by a horizontal steel beam that had been salvaged from the old Walnut Street bridge; this made room for a third piece of apparatus. A short time before this work was done, the men of the department removed the partition between the two upstairs front rooms, making one large room across the front of the building. The only other changes made to the building were; in 1935 when a new pair of overhead doors were put in place of the old swinging doors. In 1940 a slight change was made in the stairs, providing a little more room on the apparatus floor. After the war, when restrictions were removed on the use of oil, the boiler was converted from coal to oil.

At a special town meeting, held November 15, 1954, \$166,000 was appropriated to build a new building to house both the police and fire departments. The committee named to carry out this project, consisted of; Leo Mullen, Ernest Mariano, William Naylor, David Pallian, Frank Punch and Harold Wilcox.

The appropriation was not sufficient to purchase a suitable site for the building, so it was squeezed into the small triangular lot at Summer and Acton streets, which was already owned by the town. To have obtained a more desirable location would probably have required the taking of land with buildings on it, which would have greatly increased the cost. This location was not much better than the old one on Nason Street. The total cost of the building when completed, was \$144,115.44, nearly \$22,000 less than the appropriation.



The building itself, left much to be desired, much valuable space and money was wasted by the inclusion of a nose tower, a feature as outmoded as horse stalls. Much wooden construction was used in the interior. The fire alarm equipment was placed in an upstairs room, having no windows, it had a wooden floor and wood joists and studding. All of the interior of the building was of inferior material for a building of it's type, hollow panel doors, wood floors and lowest grade of fibre board for ceilings. Even the lighting fixtures had to be replaced in a very short time. However, the brick exterior does at least, present a respectable appearance to people entering the town.



## CHAPTER 3

### Apparatus and Equipment



## Apparatus and Equipment

The original appropriation to equip a fire department provided for the purchase of two peices of hand drawn apparatus,fully equipped. A hose wagon and a ladder wagon. This equipment was furnished by the F.H.Keyes Wagon Company of Clinton Mass. The hose wagon,delivered ready for service on May 30,1890 at a cost of \$360,was a very light wagon carrying 600 feet of single jacket two and one half inch hose,two ten quart soda and acid hand extinguishers,an axe,gates,spanners and nozzles but no hydrant wrench,the original hydrants were installed with spanner lugs on the caps,so that the fire department could remove the caps and attach their hose,but only the superintendent of the water department could open the hydrant,needless to say,this arrangement did not last long,as the town was paying the water department \$2,000 per year for hydrant rental.

In purchasing this type of hose wagon rather than two wheeled reels,which would have been cheaper,lighter and easier to handle,the committee must have had in mind the eventual use of a horse,as they had a pair of detachable shafts, which could be quickly substituted for the guiding tongue,included with the wagon.

The ladder wagon was delivered August 20,1890,at a cost of \$555,it too was fitted out to be drawn either by hand or with a pair of horses,as it was much heavier than the hose wagon. The ladders were of solid beam construction, arranged in double bank. A basket mounted over the ladder bed held minor tools. Two ten quart soda and acid extinguishers and half a dozen leather buckets completed the equipment.

It should be noted that the hose company carried no ladder nor did the ladder company carry any equipment capable of delivering water except the leather buckets,so that each company operated pretty much independent of the other. If there happened to be more hosemen early at the scene of a fire



than were needed, the hosemen might stand and watch a couple of laddermen struggling to raise a heavy ladder that required the use of four or five men to raise properly and safely. In fact they would probably jeer and taunt them. Although we have no records of such happenings in our fair town, there were many instances, in other places, where rival companies engaged in fisticuffs in the middle of the street while a building burned. An entry in the records of Maynard Hose 1, made in 1900, reads:—"Every man should stand by the foreman and get to the scene of the fire before the hook and ladder, as we are the most important factor. The hook and ladder imagine that they are the people, but what a mistake. It is a waste of energy for them to tire themselves out running to a fire for the sake of getting there first. What would the result be? For a moment, imagine twenty men strung out six hundred feet, passing those little tomato cans half full of water, and finally emptying nothing on the flames, only to be repeated until the building is a shapeless mass of ruins. We are the people. We carry the apparatus, which with water, destroys fire. Let us be first in fire, first in water, first in everything."-

During the first few years of the department, the apparatus was pulled by hand, with ropes. But gradually, hired livery stable horses and sometimes horses being used by some tradesman who happened to be handy, took over this burden.

In 1896, the first addition to the equipment was made, with the purchase of a fifty five foot solid beam extension ladder, referred to as a Boston ladder. Built by the Moulton Ladder Company of Somerville. This ladder required ten men to handle it properly, it was a monstrous affair. The fly ladder was extended by means of a rope running over a pulley and back to a windlass at the base of the main ladder, an arrangement similar to that used on some of the early aerial ladders. There was a removable crank on each end of the cross shaft which meant that it required two men just to raise the fly. Although often raised in practice sessions, there is no record of it ever having been used at a fire. When the old ladders were sold at auction in 1912, nobody would make a bid on



it, so it laid on the ground, up at the old town farm, until someone sawed it up for firewood.

In 1897, to comply with the tenement house law, the department purchased a life net for the ladder company at a cost of \$30.00.

By 1900, the apparatus was no longer drawn by hand, horses being hired from the livery stables, a single horse for the hose wagon and a pair for the ladder. Drop harnesses were installed in the station at this time. The term drop harness was a misnomer. No part of the harness actually dropped on the horse, it had to be pulled down. Most writers have been inclined to glibly describe the hitching operation as a marvel of simplicity, usually saying something like this: At the sound of the gong the stall doors flew open and the horses ran out under the harness, which dropped down on their backs and they dashed out the door. This was oversimplification. The harness, to start with, differed greatly in design from a regular work harness. First the bridle, which was actually a halter with a bit attached, was worn at all times by the animal. This precluded the use of any type of harsh bit. The usual type of bit used was the simple jointed bit. This type of bridle also lacked blinkers, which gave the animal unrestricted vision in all directions, which meant that the animal had to be well trained. The usual collar and hames were not used, but instead, a combination collar and hames, which hinged at the top and fastened at the bottom was used. This type of combination collar was not heavily padded like the usual work collar, but was usually made entirely of metal with no padding at all. No neck yoke or backing straps, just a short length of chain of about three links connected the end of the pole to the side of the collar of each horse. A very inefficient hitch for backing or holding back the wagon going downhill. However, the wagons were always equipped with brakes so that the driver had control of the wagon on down grade and as all wagons were of the cut under type, they could be turned



around in their tracks without backing. When it was necessary to back up, such as backing into the station, there were always men enough around to put a shoulder to the wheel.

The harness was suspended from the ceiling by ropes running over pullies, to counterweights along the wall of the building. In later years, these pullies and weights were displaced by spring loaded drums which rolled up the supporting ropes when they were released from the harness.

Although there were some almost unbelievable time records for hitching a team and getting out on the street, these fast hitches were usually made by companies in large cities, where they averaged some half dozen runs a day, and with a full crew of permanent men, who worked together like an athletic team, each man performing a predetermined specific operation, allowing the driver to only have to climb up on the seat. However in a department like Maynard's, the driver was fortunate to have anyone to help him hitch. When the horses were released from their stalls, they seldom stopped in exactly the right spot under the harness, so would have to be backed up and nudged over under the harness, the open collar pulled down and snapped shut, the reins had to be snapped into the bit rings, the breechings had to be pulled down and the horse's tail pulled out over it. Then the most dangerous move of all had to be made, by reaching under the belly of the keyed up animal, to reach and fasten the girth.

Although many stylish carriage horses had cropped tails, this was never done with fire horses, even though it would have eliminated one move in hitching. In fact, few departments clipped the manes of their horses, one notable exception being the city of New York. With the team in Maynard it was a necessity to clip their manes, as the horse, Tony, generally referred to as "The crab", because of his ornery disposition, had to be constantly restrained from biting his mate, by keeping the outside reins shorter than the middle splice reins,



this pulled the horses heads around in opposite directions,if it were not for the chains between the collars and the pole,one horse would have gone up Nason Street and the other down the street,when they came out the door. When they were running,their heads were pulled around to the outside until they touched their collars,so if they had long flowing manes,they would have been constantly snarled up with the reins and the guide rings.

In 1902, 1000 feet of new hose was purchased,this was the first replacement of hose. The original supply of hose was now twelve years old and was no longer dependable. In those times hose was not treated to resist rot and mildew.

The light hose wagon,which was never meant to be pulled with a horse, or carry the weight of the men,was of constant concern to the engineers. The springs were sagging and the axels had to be removed and straightened out after any run over a rough road,so \$350 was appropriated for a new nose wagon. The new wagon was built by the Keyes Wagon Company of Clinton,builders of the original hose wagon. Although the price was ten dollars less,this new wagon was much heavier than the old one and carried 150 feet more hose,making the hose load 750 feet. It was convertible to either single or double hitch. Shortly before the new wagon was delivered in July of 1902,a rear wheel collapsed on the old one,while responding to a grass fire in the New Village. The wheel had to be replaced. When the new wagon was placed in service,the old one was given a fresh coat of paint and varnish and placed in storage. In one year alone, forty dollars was paid for storage of this wagon which was never used again.

By 1903 it was getting difficult to obtain a suitable horse from the livery stables to pull the hose wagon. As the new wagon was much heavier than the old one,a light driving horse could not pull it up Nason Street,around the corner and over the railroad crossing. People on the street would push it.

Another problem that was concerning the selectmen,was that of sprinkling the streets. In dry weather it was just about impossible to hire a



team as they were all busy haying at that time of year. So it was proposed that the town buy a horse and hire a full time driver for the hose wagon. The cost would be partly offset by doing the street sprinkling. The man could also do the janitor work in the station and take care of the fire alarm batteries, making a small savings on these items, although the people who were doing this work, received only a token payment for their time and effort. The station was remodeled to provide living quarters for the man and horse. Thomas F. (Tony) Collins was appointed the permanent driver of the hose wagon and custodian of the station.

A dark, dappled gray horse, weighing 1420 pounds, was bought for \$250, from the sales stable of Webb Robbins, in East Acton. A new one horse watering cart was bought for \$289 and a shed was built for it, in back of the station, at a cost of \$129.86.

The winter of 1904 saw a lot of snow, and with no snow removal in those days, it became necessary to lay up the hose wagon and purchase a one horse delivery pung, from the W.A. Haynes Company, and pack the hose load in it.

By 1905, the engineers had become disenchanted with their horse. Truly he was a fine looking animal, sound of wind and limb, and well mannered, but he was in the wrong job. He should have been pulling a plough, he had one speed, slow. He was sold for \$130. A new horse was bought for \$300, from the Charles Hanson Sales Stable in Lowell. After about a year with this horse, the engineers decided that possibly, the slow performance, particularly on the hills, was not entirely the fault of the horse, they were just expecting too much from one horse, so the wagon was converted to a double hitch and another horse was purchased. Again from the Charles Hanson Sales Stable for \$300. After a couple of years of satisfactory service with this team, one of the horses developed a condition that was generally referred to as, "Monday morning leg", a condition where after a couple of days of idleness, a leg would swell up and stiffen. After a little



exercise the swelling would quickly go down and the horse's gait would return to normal with no apparent ill effects. However in the fire service there was no time for this limbering up process, so he was sold for \$111.35 (Horse traders drove a hard bargain). A new horse was bought from the Hanson Stable for \$300, the third horse from the same stable for the same price.

In July of 1908, while hitching, the horse "Tony" started up before his mate was hitched, pulling the wagon ahead enough to catch a hind leg of the free horse under a front wheel of the wagon, disabling the animal. The hose wagon was then converted back to a single hitch and for the next three months, all kinds of patent remedies were tried, to reduce the swelling and lameness of the injured horse; all to no avail. Finally Dr. Henry Alderman of East Lexington was called in, and he diagnosed the injury as a split pastern bone, which is the short bone between the fetlock and the hoof, and he was of the opinion that there was no hope of cure, so the animal was humanely put out of the way.

As it was necessary to obtain another horse, Chief Engineer Coughlan and Tony Collins took an early morning train to Boston, and after looking over a number of horses in the various sales stables that then lined Canal Street, were not satisfied with any that they saw, so took a train to Lowell, back to the Hanson Stable again. As they walked into the stable yard, they spotted a beautiful dappled gray gelding, tied to the tailboard of an express wagon. Inquiry revealed that he was one of a select pair that had been bought for a very particular customer and that his mate had died of shipping fever, a motion sickness that effected most young horses that were shipped long distances in freight cars. As this horse had not fully recovered from the shipping fever himself, Chief Coughlan and Tony Collins left the sales stable without a definite commitment to purchase him, but returned in a couple of days to find the animal fully recovered. They bought him for \$335, the highest price the department ever paid for a horse. Their secret ambition was to eventually get rid of the



older horse "Tony" and get a better match for the new horse called "Prince", for the only similarity between the two horses was their color, the new horse being nearly two hands taller and a couple of hundred pounds heavier than "Tony". He was intelligent, obedient and gentle mannered yet spirited, while "Tony" was mean and tricky, he could not be trusted for a minute. But they were destined to work together for the next fifteen years.

By 1909 it had become impossible to obtain dependable service with hired horses for the ladder wagon. The horses used were hack horses, so during a funeral they were unavailable. Often when there was a large funeral out of town, there would be no horses available for hours, so an article was placed on the warrant for the annual town meeting, to purchase another pair of horses for the ladder wagon. The article was badly beaten. The Maynard News, in its account of the meeting, stated that the voters appeared to care less, how, if ever the ladder wagon got to a fire.

The engineers then entered into an agreement with W.O. Strout, who operated a furniture moving and teaming business, to furnish a pair of horses for the ladder wagon for a flat price of \$5.00 per week, whether they were used or not.

In 1910, four salvage covers were bought for the ladder company. At this time only a few of the large cities were using this equipment. As nearly all roofs were covered with wooden shingles, many of the fires were roof fires, which meant that water would run down through the whole house. It would be hard to estimate how many times these covers paid for themselves in saving furnishings and other goods from damage by water.

By this time the condition of the ladder wagon had gone from bad to worse, axels were sprung, wheels were loose and wobbly, and the men of the ladder company had made a formal complaint in writing, to the board of engineers concerning the hazardous condition of the wagon. At the annual town meeting held in March it was voted to have a special committee investigate the need of a new ladder



wagon. Named to this committee were; Chief Coughlan, James Cleary, Julius Loewe, Abel Haynes and Joseph Gately. This committee reported to a special town meeting on April 4, 1910, that the old wagon was unsafe for use and should be replaced. No action was taken at this time, but the following year at the annual town meeting held on April 3, 1911; \$1,800 was voted to purchase a new wagon.

A contract was given to a Waltham wagon builder, James Mullen, to furnish the department with a fully equipped two horse ladder wagon. When this wagon was delivered on November 7, 1911. It was a beautiful looking piece of equipment. It had a steel frame, Archibald wheels with ball bearings and rubber tires; it had automobile type brakes and was equipped with American LaFrance trussed ladders, a fifty foot extension with guy poles, a thirty five foot extension, two twenty five foot straight wall and roof ladders, along with a number of shorter ladders, all with folding roof hooks, making a total of one hundred and ninety nine feet of ladders. Along with a full complement of plaster hooks, axes, crowbars, ropes, a large pull-down hook and other minor tools. However, as fine a looking rig as it was, it was already on it's way towards obsolescence. Motor apparatus had been in use in many departments for several years and was constantly proving it's superiority over horse drawn apparatus. Despite the sentiment attached to the glamorous fire horse, his days were already numbered.

The old ladder wagon and equipment were sold piecemeal at auction, the total sum realized by the town being \$22.00, after Chief Coughlan the auctioneer, had deducted his commission.

In 1912, W.O. Strout informed the board of engineers that he wanted to terminate his agreement to furnish the horses for the ladder wagon. The engineers then offered him \$3.00 per week if he would continue the arrangement, this he agreed to; but not for any definite time, and he suggested that the engineers give their best efforts towards finding some alternative. Many people thought that Strout had the town over the proverbial barrel; as he had the only available team heavy enough to handle the new wagon which was far



too heavy for the light hack horses that had been used with the old wagon. This was an unfair assumption, as Strout was a practical and successful business man whose word was a bond, and when he said that he would have a suitable team at the department's immediate disposal at all times, that is exactly what he meant and did. He had one team that delivered freight to the downtown district from the freight house on Main Street, so with the commitment to the fire department, this team could not be utilized for much of anything else. A less scrupulous person would no doubt have taken chances and sent this team out on other jobs that would have taken them a considerable distance from the fire station. It also meant having someone available twenty four hours a day, every day of the year, to get the team out in case of an alarm, there was also the high risk of accident, running with the horses at night, from the barn on Concord Street, down over Brooks Street, to the fire station, was a peril to life and limb, especially during the winter, with hard packed snow and ice on the streets.

Milton "Jack" Whitney, who worked for Strout many years, recalls an incident, when William "Husky" Hagerty was delivering the freight in the business district. He had loaded the load in the usual manner, with the first delivery on the back of the wagon and the last up front, this last delivery was a shipment of penny candy, packed in wooden buckets, consigned to Lord's store at the corner of Walnut and Parker streets. Hagerty had got rid of most of his load and was heading up Parker Street with only the shipment of candy buckets stacked up in the front end of the wagon, which had the tailboard down, when suddenly the fire whistle blasted out. The horses leaped forward, tipping over the stack of candy buckets, rolling them out in the street and smashing most of them open. The results were a field day for the small fry and a bill for the truckman Strout.

At the first of the year of 1913, Strout gave the engineers a deadline of April to make some other arrangement for the ladder wagon, the job was costing him money. The engineers were traveling around to demonstrations of new motor



apparatus. Late in the year of 1912, the engineers had made a trip to Lawrence and inspected a motor ladder truck that had been converted from a late model horse drawn rig similar to Maynard's. The equipment had been transferred from the horse drawn running gear to a White fire apparatus chassis, a twenty five gallon chemical tank was mounted in place of the driver's seat and a narrow hose bed had been mounted along each side of the truck, each bed having a capacity of 500 feet of two and one half inch hose. The White Motor Company was one of the earliest successful producers of motor fire apparatus and commercial trucks. Although they no longer specialize in fire apparatus, they are today one of the leading producers of high grade heavy duty commercial vehicles. And their early model fire trucks gave years of excellent service. The engineers were in unanimous agreement that this was the truck that they wanted.

On December 26, 1912, a special town meeting was held for the express purpose of resolving the ladder wagon problem. Arthur Coughlan, the assistant chief engineer was also the moderator of this meeting. The board of engineers at this time, consisted of, George Gutteridge, chief, Coughlan, assistant chief and James Cleary, clerk. After lengthy discussion and debate, there were still many people who were not convinced that the motor truck was superior to horses, the meeting was adjourned to January 9, 1913. At which time it was so voted:--"To instruct the engineers to purchase a chassis at a price not exceeding \$4,500, according to the plan of the engineers, namely, to place a motor propelled chassis under the present hook and ladder truck, so that it can carry, in addition to its present equipment, 1,000 feet of two and one half inch hose and a twenty five gallon chemical tank." This was the wording of the article which was moved by Chief Engineer Gutteridge and voted by the meeting. There seems to be no room for doubt as to what the intent of either the engineers or the voters was. The engineers stated that they



intended to accept the proposal of O.F. Kress & Son of Lawrence, who had agreed to furnish the chassis and perform all of the necessary work, for the sum of \$4,000. The \$500 balance of the appropriation, would allow the purchase of 1,000 feet of additional hose. This plan seemed to have had considerable merit, as it would have more than doubled the effectiveness of the department, as the horse drawn hose wagon carried only 750 feet of hose and did not have a chemical tank. The Maynard department, unlike most small town departments, did not even have a single hand drawn hose reel kept in reserve. All of their readily available hose was carried on the one wagon.

With \$4,500 at their disposal, the engineers were besieged by salesmen, some of whom represented companies that had not yet built their first machine. In April, a representative of the Underhill Motor Company of Boston was given permission to demonstrate a Knox - Martin tractor on the ladder wagon. They sent a man out with the machine for a two week trial, with no obligation to the town and the company agreeing to compensate the town for any damage that they might cause. The king pin was released from the front wheels of the ladder wagon which was then jacked up and the front wheels and axle, with the fifth wheel were removed, the tractor, which was fitted with a fifth wheel, was backed under it and hooked up in the same manner as a modern tractor trailer rig.

The most unusual feature of this tractor, was that it had only a single wheel in front, like a tricycle. It also had but a single headlight, mounted on a swivel in the middle of the dashboard, with a kerosene lamp on each side. The headlight burned gas and had to be lit with a match. The motor had to be hand cranked, with the crank on the side of the machine, like a hurdy gurdy. The advantage claimed for the three wheel arrangement was that it was supposed to be able to negotiate sharp corners better than the conventional four wheeled machine, but this was debatable at the time, and soon proved to be erroneous.



During the two weeks that this machine was on trial, it answered two alarms, one for a small fire at 19 Railroad Street and the other for a brush fire on Great Road near the cemetery. It was driven around the streets of the town daily, hoping to impress the taxpayers. It failed to arouse much enthusiasm and the town was fortunate that they did not buy one, despite the attractive price of \$2,700, as they proved to be unmanageable in snow or frozen ruts, of which there were plenty in those days. In a couple of years the company was out of business and repair parts were unavailable.

Chief Gutteridge continued to look around at new apparatus; in Waltham he witnessed the demonstration of a new American LaFrance hose truck, he was very much impressed with its performance. He came up with the idea of purchasing a new motor hose wagon and shifting the horses over to the ladder wagon. He was able to sell his idea to Engineer Coughlan but the third member of the board, James Cleary, would have none of it. Cleary maintained that it was not what the town meeting had voted. (See page b II)

Coughlan and Gutteridge entered into a contract with American LaFrance to furnish a hose truck with a chemical tank, then called a combination, as it was a combination of what were usually two separate pieces of horse drawn apparatus; a hose wagon and a chemical wagon. Cleary refused to sign the contract so it was executed with only two signatures, which was a majority of the board. The price of this truck was \$5158.50, which was over \$600 more than the appropriation. There was evidently enough fat in their regular budget to make up the difference. Later there was another added item of expense entailed in altering the station to accommodate the horse stalls on the other side of the building.

However one thing must be said for the deal; they could not have acquired a better truck. American LaFrance is one of the few manufacturers of fire apparatus at that time that is still in business and one of the leaders in



the field. Some of the makes considered are now almost forgotten, such as Webb, Thomas Flyer, Stoddard Dayton, Pope Hartford, Garford and Boya.

The new truck was delivered February 4, 1914. It was known as a type ten; builders number 365. The body was of an unusual design, it had flared sides, with seats running along each side, the length of the body, which held 1,000 feet of two and one half inch hose. A forty gallon chemical tank was under the drivers seat, with 250 feet of one inch chemical hose in a metal basket mounted over the front end of the hose bed. There were two ten quart hand extinguishers on the right running board and a twenty eight foot extension and a fourteen foot roof ladder along with a plaster hook mounted on this side, which was the drivers side.

The motor was a four cylinder Continental of 77 horsepower; more than twice the horsepower of a commercial truck of it's size. It had a Gray & Davis, two wire, electrical system with a starter, which was an optional item, and was to be for a number of years after; as many fire officials were of the opinion that an electric starter was not dependable on a heavy truck motor. This one never gave any trouble. Another optional item was a Jones speedometer, the invention of a West Concord man. This speedometer, which was driven by a cable from a gear on the right front wheel, had a telltale hand which stopped at the maximum speed attained and required a key to be set back. The motor was equipped with what was known as the Pederson lubricating system. An oil tank under the hood which held about a gallon, feeding the oil by gravity directly to the main bearings, through sight feed drip glasses on the dashboard. The disadvantage of this system was that the driver was inclined to be too generous with the oil feed rate, causing excessive smoking at the exhaust. The later models were equipped with the present day type of crankcase with a pump and most departments had their trucks changed over; but this one never was. Final drive was by chains from a jackshaft to the rear wheels. The differential and the transmission were in a single unit. The transmission had three forward speeds, with the



shifting lever and hand brakes on the outside out over the right hand running board, the shifting pattern was what was generally called; off hand, that is the first gear was in the lower right hand position on the quadrant. The tires were 38 X 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  Dayton Airless, with dual tires on the rear. The Dayton Airless tire was a compromise between a solid and a pneumatic. It was made and mounted like a pneumatic tire but instead of having an inflated inner tube, it had blocks of solid rubber in the casing, they were more expensive than either the solid or pneumatic tire and had a very short life. This truck was an excellent performer, it could climb up Dartmouth Street as well as any passenger car.

When the new truck was placed in service, the two horse hose wagon was placed in storage in the shed at the rear of the station, displacing the old one horse hose wagon which had been stored there. The one horse wagon was sold to Harry Fishman the junk collector for \$27.00. Shorn of it's steps, handrails and other appurtenances and given a coat of green paint, it was reduced to the ignominious role of hauling old rags and bottles and being drawn by a poor old nag who was only a short trip from the glue factory.

The first alarm that the new truck responded to, was for a fire on February 24, 1914 when box forty two, at the corner of Concord and Tremont streets came in at 4:50 P.M. A milk shed in the rear of the barn of Daniel Parmenter was fully involved causing a total loss. This shed was located at about what is now the corner of Walcott and Lewis streets, then an open field. Tony Collins drove the truck through deep snow, as close to the building as possible, the forty gallon chemical tank was discharged but proved to be entirely inadequate to control the fire. In attempting to turn around and come back out, the rear wheels of the truck slid over an incline, with chains only on the outside rear dual wheels Collins was unable to move, the more he spun the wheels, the worse off he seemed to be getting, the crowd of spectators continued to grow. The cries of



"Get a horse" grew louder, and soon even Chief Gutteridge realized that it was going to take more than one horse to get the truck back up on level ground.

Dan parmenter had a fine pair of heavy draft horses in his barn. Chief Gutteridge asked Dan if he would hook his team onto the truck. The chief must not have chosen the right tone of voice, as Dan, who required considerable tact and diplomacy to deal with, gave him a curt "No sir" and went into his house. After a few minutes of thought, Dan probably realized what a precarious position the town was in. All of the available fire hose in town was useless, stuck out in his barnyard. There was no hose on the ladder wagon. So he came out and told Chief Gutteridge, that if he would shut off the truck motor, turn off the lights and quiet the crowd of hecklers, that he would pull the truck out onto Concord Street. This he did, but it left Chief Gutteridge in an embarrassing position, with the worse to come; the annual town meeting was only a few days away.

Sure enough, on the night of town meeting, when the appropriation for the fire department came up, the verbal brickbats flew thick and fast. One local character, Jim Hapgood, who believed that his bicycle was the ultimate in transportation, ridiculed the department and called the motor truck their plaything, their teddy bear.

The hostility of the voters towards fire department expenditures in the town meetings of 1914 and 1915, was probably one of the reasons for the department being so slow to motorize the ladder truck. The annual report of 1917 mentions the ever increasing cost of keeping the horses, but no action was taken towards a change. In the 1919 town report, the engineers state that the apparatus was in first class condition except for one horse that should have been at Red Acre Farm (a retirement farm for old horses) three years ago. By 1925, the horse "Tony" was in bad shape. Bill Quinn, the driver, had to keep the whip on him constantly, while at the same time keeping a tight rein on him to keep him from biting his mate.

William Naylor became Chief Engineer at this time and he was very anxious



not only to eliminate the expense of keeping the horses but also to eliminate the pay of the driver as well. He proposed motorizing the ladder company and reverting back to one permanent man, depending on call men to run to the station and drive the ladder truck. He was overruled by the rest of the board on the latter proposal. So at a special town meeting held July 30, 1923, \$6,500 was appropriated to purchase a new motor ladder truck.

At this time there was a radical difference between a commercial truck and fire apparatus. Fire apparatus was of a highly specialized design. Any attempt to adapt a commercial truck to the fire service was at best a poor makeshift, particularly in a ladder truck, which required a longer wheelbase than the commercial vehicles built at that time, it was still ten years away from the successful use of a commercial chassis for first line fire apparatus.

Any of the standard makes of ladder trucks, at this time, would have cost around \$7,000 completely equipped with new ladders and a booster tank. But the engineers were going to save money at any cost, so a contract was awarded to the Combination Ladder Co. of Providence R.I. to transfer the equipment from the old horse drawn ladder wagon to a Federal commercial truck chassis which had been extended about five feet. The total cost of the chassis and work being \$5559.

Evidently these people did not trust measurements, as they had the horse drawn wagon stripped of all of its ladders and other equipment, which was loaded in a freight car and shipped to Providence so the truck could be built to fit the equipment. As one wag remarked, "It was like bringing a bung to a cooper to have a barrel built around it!" Meanwhile the department had only the one twenty eight foot extension ladder and the fourteen foot roof ladder that was on the hose truck to use in case of fire. After some prodding by some of the mill officials, the engineers went out and borrowed some old ladders from the local painters and tied them onto the skeleton of the ladder wagon with pieces of clothes line. Driver Bill Quinn always said that he was thankful that he did not have to go out on the street with this rig. Ladders spattered with paint



of all the colors of the rainbow and then some; and with the white clothes line it looked like something that you would see in a horribles parade.

The truck arrived January 2, 1924. The man who delivered it, backed it into the station and as quick as he could get one of the engineers to sign the receipt of delivery disappeared. This truck did not have a redeeming feature. The ladders were carried in a single bank, an outmoded design which made the whole rig a couple of feet higher than was necessary. It had no booster tank, running boards were of wood, whereas the ten year old American LaFrance that stood beside it had no wood in it's body construction at all. It had no warning lights of any kind, and no siren, the only warning device it had was a small brass bell that had a tone like a blacksmith striking his anvil. Actually warning devices were not too important, as small boys on bicycles would easily pass this truck on the way to a fire, even though the accelerator was down to the floor.

The Federal truck had a four cylinder motor of forty two horsepower, a four forward speed transmission was mounted about half way back between the clutch and the worm gear rear end. The weight of the transmission in the middle of the stretched out frame, caused the whole truck to spring up and down in the middle. This stretched out arrangement made it necessary to use five universal joints in the drive line. Tires were pneumatic, 40 X 8 singles on the rear and 36 X 6 on the front. As the longest ladders had to be run up under the drivers seat, the gas tank was moved out on the left hand running board; a fire hazard in itself. Brakes were two wheel mechanical and did not hold too well.

While the department still had the horses and the two horse nose wagon, they laid up the LaFrance hose truck for some repairs and then sent it over to West Acton to Costello's paint shop for a coat of varnish. Placing the horse drawn nose wagon in service in it's place.



On January 22, 1924, box 24, located at the corner of Parker Street and Roosevelt Street, came in at 10:15 P.M. Joseph Farrell, a member of the board of engineers, who slept at the station, took the ladder truck, Tony Collins and Bill Quinn hitched the horses to the hose wagon. They had the horses hitched as soon as Farrell could get the motor started on the truck, they started out the doors at about the same time. The old horses must have sensed that it was to be their last hour of glory, for they ran better than they had run for years, of course the hose wagon was much lighter than the ladder wagon that they were used to pulling. As they started down Summer Street, the glow from the fire lit the way, it was the grocery store of John Salsa, located on the east side of Parker Street, between Burns Court and Fowler Street, fully involved. The team hardly slowed down on the long up grade, from Paper Mill Corner to Fowler Street, where they had to turn around at the hydrant and lay hose back to the fire. They had the line laid and water on the fire before the ladder truck got there.

The horse drawn ladder wagon was sold to a group of volunteers in Warwick R.I. who fitted it with a Christie tractor and used it for quite a few years. The horses were kept until the March town meeting when it was voted to retire them to Red Acre Farm on April 1, 1924. The horse "Tony" was so mean that he could not be turned out to pasture with the other horses, so was put out of the way. "Prince" adapted quickly to his new environment and at times was loaned to local farmers who used him for light farm work. The tip cart and hose wagon were sold to Martin Peterson for \$70.00. The hose wagon was last seen on the Freeman farm at Fletcher Corner with its gold striping and lettering still intact.

Not long after the Federal ladder truck was placed in service, an alarm came in from the street box at the corner of Main Street and Great Rd. Fortunately it was only a grass fire, as the ladder truck never got out the door, the entire transmission had fallen apart and was lying on the floor. An examination of the pieces of the transmission case revealed that it had



been damaged in an accident and painted over. The Federal Company denied any responsibility, claiming that they had never sold the town of Maynard a truck, and what the town had, as far as they were concerned, was a used truck that the town had bought from the Combination Ladder Company. The Combination Ladder Company in turn, denied any responsibility, claiming that they were body builders and were never in the motor vehicle business, so the town paid the bill.

As the ladder truck had no more equipment on it than the old horse drawn wagon, the wire basket on top was extended about six feet and packed with five hundred feet of two and one half inch hose, making it a little more useful if and when it ever did get to a fire.

To conform with a state law which became effective in 1926, all hydrants, hose couplings, nozzles and other fittings, had to be changed over to standard thread. For when the town installed their water system, the mill had four hydrants in their yard which had a fine pipe thread, so instead of the mill changing their threads to standard, the whole town was put in with mongrel thread, which was to be a source of expense and trouble for years.

In this same year of 1926, we had a very heavy snowfall, and only the main roads through town were plowed, so the two horse pump was taken out of storage and loaded with hose and a pair of horses were hired from Barilone Brothers, the contractors. This team was kept in the station until the first of May, when finally all of the streets in town were passable.

A new life net was purchased in 1928 at a cost of \$175. This net was known as a Greenfield net, named for the Ohio city where it was made. This type of net, which had a circular metal frame, that folded in two, was carried on the side of the ladder truck. This type of net never gained much popularity as it was heavy and cumbersome.

Both trucks were fitted with canvas and isinglass windshields in 1929 at a cost of fifty dollars each.



By 1934 the whole department was in sad shape, they had bought nothing but single jacket hose for the past ten years. Most of it being of a type known as loose lined, that is, the rubber lining was not attached to the outside cotton jacket, an experiment that did not work. The loose lining stretched and bunched up and would sometimes get pushed up the line until it plugged the nozzle. At some fires there would be more water coming out of the leaks than there would be at the nozzle.

It would probably be safe to say, at this time, without fear of contradiction that the Maynard department was the only department in the country that had two permanent men but no pumping equipment of any description, not even a hand tub.

George Priest became chief engineer at this time, he had taken the job with the understanding that he would have to have some equipment. The first thing that he did was to obtain a thousand feet of good quality double jacket hose.

The LaFrance hose wagon was now twenty years old, the wooden spokes wheels were badly rotted and warped, particularly the front wheels, the outside rear Dayton airless tires were ragged. So, with a transfer of \$150 from the finance committee reserve fund, a new set of steel wheels were put on the front end with a pair of 34 X 7 pneumatic tires. The old front tires were shifted to replace the two poorest tires on the dual rear wheels.

At the annual town meeting, in March, \$3000 was appropriated to purchase a new truck to replace the old American LaFrance hose wagon. The amount of this appropriation was about half of what it would have cost for a good first line 750 gallon per minute pumper, which was the minimum size recommended by the underwriters. But this was at the depths of the great depression and the town of Maynard was hard hit.

A new B3 model one and one half ton International truck chassis was



purchased from the J.A.Coughlin garage on Summer Street, for \$1,900. The International truck was one of the better commercial trucks that could be adapted to the fire service. The motor in this truck was of ninety horsepower, six cylinders with overhead valves. The transmission had four forward speeds. Tires were 6.00 X 20, with dual rear wheels. Brakes were four wheel mechanical. The electrical system was six volt. Gross vehicle weight was 10,050 lbs. However this little truck was badly overloaded for good road performance.

A contract was given to Clarence Farrar of Woodville, to mount a pump and build a body for \$1,100, the balance of the appropriation. When the truck was delivered in July of 1934, it was equipped with a Barton American Marsh front end Type U 40 single stage pump, which was supposed to have a capacity of 400 GPM at 120 PSI. However it was not given an underwriters test until 1940, at which time it delivered only 336 GPM, of course some of this deficiency could be contributed to its six years of service. The body which was of ample size, had a booster tank of 150 gallon capacity. With a space ahead of the booster tank that held six two and one half gallon soda and acid hand extinguishers. A twenty eight foot extension and a fourteen foot roof ladder were carried on the left hand side of the truck, running forward of the driver's seat, so that the driver had to get in on the right hand side and slide across the seat. Two ten foot lengths of four inch hard suction hose was carried on the right hand side of the truck. One hundred and fifty feet of one inch booster hose was carried in a wire basket mounted over the booster tank, which was in the front end of the body. In later years a reel was mounted to carry the booster hose and additional hose was added. The hose bed was large enough to carry about 1,400 feet of two and one half inch hose but the men of the department partitioned off about ten inches of the width, to make a compartment for two hundred feet of one and one half inch hose, still leaving room for a thousand feet of two



and one half inch nose.

This was the first use of inch and one half nose by the Maynard department, although it had been the universally accepted method of handling inside dwelling house fires for more than a decade. In fact when William Naylor was chief, ten years earlier, he had bought five hundred feet of inch and one half hose and the men flatly refused to let him put it on the truck. Unfortunately they were mistaken as to his motive, true it was cheaper and used less water, but it was also more maneuverable and effective on inside fires than the larger size nose. It laid out in the back room of the station, where it was disparagingly referred to as; "Naylor's garden hose", until 1929 when it was loaned to the contractor who was installing the town sewer system and was never returned. This was a case where Naylor was deemed wrong, when he could not have been more right.

When the new truck was placed in service, the old LaFrance was moved over to the middle of the floor and kept in service as a reserve piece. Prior to this time, the station would sometimes be empty for hours during a fire.

In 1935, a Clark inhalator was bought to replace the old pulmotor which had never been very successful, probably doing more harm than good in many cases.

By 1937, something had to be done about the ladder truck. The wooden ladders were now twenty five years old and were splintering badly. The truck itself had been nothing but trouble from the day it was put in service. Even while setting in the station, water had to be added to the radiator daily and water had to be drained out of the crankcase at the same rate. Repair costs had now added up to \$1.65 per mile of travel.

The annual town meeting in March 1938, appropriated \$9,800 for a new ladder truck, this was sufficient to buy a first line, fully equipped, straight city service type ladder truck. But Chief George Priest was foresighted enough to realize that the powered aerial ladder truck was soon to make the straight ladder truck obsolete in even the smallest of towns, so he drove a hard bargain with the Peter Pirsch Company of Kenosha Wisconsin. The Pirsch Company is today one of the



few builders of fire apparatus that were in the business before the turn of the century. The Pirsch family were of German extraction, skilled mechanics and took great pride in fine workmanship. However their business had been mostly in the western part of the country; and as they were anxious to get into the eastern market, they agreed to furnish a fully equipped aerial truck within the \$9,800 appropriation. When this truck was delivered in October of 1938, it was the first fully powered, one man operated, aerial truck east of the Mississippi River. It was in a class of its own, it was a showpiece. Officials came from all over New England to see it; resulting in the company making many more sales in the area.

The truck had a sixty foot, two section, aluminum alloy ladder, raised by hydraulic pressure. The turntable and fly ladder movements were powered mechanically from the power takeoff through gears and shaftings controlled by multiple disc clutches. Two hundred and forty feet of trussed ground ladders were carried in double bank. A fifty gallon booster tank on each side of the truck, ahead of the hose beds, with cross connections; gave a total of one hundred gallons of water. A positive displacement booster pump was driven by a transmission power takeoff. One hundred and fifty feet of one inch booster hose was carried on a reel in the rear. A hose bed along each side carried a total of nine hundred feet of two and one half inch hose. The main ladder carried an Eastman ladder gun, to be fed by a fifty foot length of three inch hose which was carried in a running board rack, along with a leader line of one and one half inch hose made up with gate and nozzle. Open compartments along each side of the main ladder carried minor tools, coats and salvage covers. The life net was in a compartment under the turntable.

The truck was powered by a one hundred and sixty five horsepower six cylinder Waukesha motor with a complete dual ignition system; the regular battery system and a high tension magneto system, each with its own set of spark plugs so that the motor would run without any battery in it at all.



Brakes were vacuum booster. The transmission was four speeds forward. Performance and handling were better than anything built up to that time.

The old Federal truck was sold to a group of volunteers in Blackstone Mass. for \$200. They had been operating with hand drawn apparatus, they put another motor in the old Federal and got a couple of years more of service out of it. This volunteer company was paid forty dollars by the town for each alarm that they responded to, this is what the town had been paying the Woonsocket R.I. fire department for sending a ladder truck to their fires.

In 1938 the town moth department procured a new spraying machine so discarded the old horse drawn rig that was bought in 1913. The men of the department removed the pump and motor from this rig and with the help of Ray Carruth, the town mechanic, mounted it on a homemade four wheel trailer, which had a reel on it holding fifteen hundred feet of one and one eighth inch forest fire hose. It was a crude looking affair but performed very well. The triplex plunger pump was capable of pressures far in excess of what the forest fire hose could stand so it had a safety valve on the discharge side of the pump. As heavy and awkward as this rig was, it did have the advantage of being a self contained unit that could be unhooked from the truck and left at a fire of long duration, freeing the truck for other duty. In 1942 the Original Buffalo engine on this rig gave out and as parts were no longer available, it was replaced with a 1928 four cylinder Chevrolet engine.

In 1941 a metal rescue boat was bought and mounted on a two wheeled homemade trailer. In this same year a portable lighting outfit and an airline mask were added to the ladder truck equipment.

In 1942 a second hand 1935 Dodge truck with a five hundred gallon per minute, single stage Hale midship pump was purchased from the Maxim Motor Co. of Middleboro Mass. for \$2500. This was a regular one and one half ton commercial chassis with a full cab, the body had a twenty four foot extension and a twelve foot roof ladder on the left side and two ten foot lengths of four and one



half inch hard suction hose on the opposite side. There was a one hundred gallon booster tank in the front end of the body, with one hundred and fifty feet of one inch booster hose on a reel over the booster tank. The hose bed carried 1,200 feet of two and one half inch hose. There were no compartments for minor tools, in the body. It was placed in service in place of the old LaFrance hose truck. The 1934 International continued to be used as the first line piece. The old LaFrance, which was now nearly thirty years old, was put in storage and was never used again. After the war, it was given to the American Legion, who ran it in a couple of parades. It was last seen in a North Acton junk yard.

The Dodge truck saw very little service in the seven years that it was in Maynard. It was never given an underwriters test, so its actual pumping capacity was never known. It was an awkward machine to operate, as some of the pump controls were in the cab and some were outside.

In 1944, the Civil Defense Agency loaned the town two five hundred gallon per minute trailer pumps. These pumps were built under wartime restrictions and contained no critical materials, they were built for temporary use. These pumps were never used at a fire while they were in Maynard. After the war, they were turned back to the government.

In August of 1949 the Dodge pumper was replaced by a new piece built by Farrar of Woodville at a cost of \$10,070, this was the first piece of apparatus to cost the town more than \$10,000. This truck was considerably heavier than either the 1934 International or the 1935 Dodge. It was built on an International KB 12 chassis, the six cylinder motor was rated at 148 HP. The transmission was syncromesh, with five forward speeds. For some unexplained reason, this truck was equipped with two pumps. The larger one being a type U60 Barton American 600 GPM, single stage, front end mounted. The second pump was a 200 GPM midship, driven by a power takeoff from the transmission. This pump did not give satisfactory service, so was removed and the booster tank piping was connected to the front end pump in the conventional manner.



The body was of open construction with a wide front seat that resembled the front seat of an old time open street car. The hose bed had a capacity of thirteen hundred feet of two and one half inch hose and five hundred feet of one and one half. The booster tank was flat, running the full length of the body with a capacity of three hundred and fifty gallons. Two ten foot lengths of four and one half inch hard suction hose were carried in compartments inside the body, an awkward arrangement that required the suction hose to have to be pulled out of the back of the truck and carried around to the front end pump. A thirty five foot three section aluminum ladder was carried on the left side and two ten foot aluminum straight ladders that could be joined together to make an eighteen foot roof ladder were carried on the right side. Tires on this truck were 9.00 X 20.

Before the old Dodge was disposed of, the 1954 International was sent over to Farrars shop for repair. A new slightly larger booster tank was installed, using the space that used to carry the six soda acid hand extinguishers. A reel was mounted across the body to carry forest fire hose. This increased the load on this little truck which had always been overloaded, eventually the springs had to be reinforced. The pump was overhauled and a new improved priming device installed. The headlights were changed over to sealed beams. This work cost \$1120, more than one third the cost of the whole truck when new.

A portable pump was bought in 1953 to replace the old homemade trailer with the spraying machine pump, this portable pump could be carried anywhere by two men.

A third pumper was placed in service in December of 1957. Built by Farrar of Woodville at a cost of \$14,475, on an International chassis. It was a model V-196 with an eight cylinder motor of two hundred and fifty six horsepower, the transmission was synchromesh with five forward speeds, brakes were vacuum booster and tires were 9.00 X 20. The body was equipped with a semi cab, the booster tank had a capacity of five hundred gallons, two electric rewind reels each



carried two hundred and fifty feet of one inch booster hose. The pump was an American Marsh, midship mounted, Duplex model, of seven hundred and fifty gallons per minute capacity. A two way portable deluge gun was included with the equipment.

By 1958, the wooden ladders on the ladder truck were twenty years old, which the engineers considered to be about the maximum age that they could be depended upon. These ladders were replaced by similar Pirsch wooden ladders at a cost of \$1,449.64.

In 1963, the 1938 Pirsch ladder truck was replaced by a new one of the same make, at a cost of \$42,000 without the ground ladders, the ground ladders were transferred over from the old truck. This new truck cost more than four times that of the 1938 model which came fully equipped with the full complement of ground ladders. Of course we had steady monetary inflation during most of these twenty five years and there were many improvements made in fire apparatus.

The new truck was heavier than the old one. It had a three hundred and twenty five horsepower Waukesha six cylinder motor. A five speed transmission, air brakes and 9.00 X 20 tires. The aluminum alloy aerial ladder had a reach of eighty five feet and was made up in four sections, so that the overall length of the retracted ladder was much less than that of the old two section sixty foot ladder. All movements of the ladder were by hydraulic power. The booster tank had a capacity of two hundred gallons, a positive displacement booster pump was driven by a power takeoff on the transmission. A hose bed ran along each side of the body, each one holding five hundred feet of two and one half inch hose. There were large enclosed compartments, for minor tools, which the old truck lacked. A demountable ladder gun, capable of being mounted on the tip of the top fly ladder gave a much better stream elevation than the old rig where the ladder gun was mounted permanently on the bed ladder. The gun was fed by a length of three inch hose.

The old 1938 Pirsch ladder truck was sold to the town of Lyndonville Vermont



December 4, 1968, a new one thousand gallon per minute pumper was placed in service. Built by Farrar of Woodville, at a cost of \$20,000. The apparatus was built on a Ford F-850 chassis with a full cab. The motor was eight cylinder, which was rated at two hundred and eighty five horsepower, transmission had five forward speeds. Brakes were air and the steering had power assist. Tires were 9.00 X 20.

A twenty eight foot extension and a twelve foot roof ladder were mounted on the right side. With two ten foot lengths of five inch hard suction on the left side. Booster tank was of five hundred gallons capacity. The divided hose bed carried six hundred feet of three inch hose and six hundred feet of two and one half inch, along with two preconnected lines of one and one half inch hose, each of two hundred and fifty feet. The Eastman deluge gun that had been carried on the seven fifty International was shifted over to the new truck and fitted with two short lengths of two and one half inch hose for a quick hookup for initial attack with a master stream. The three inch hose load on this piece was the first use of three inch hose in the department except for the single length used to feed the ladder gun. The three inch hose had two and one half inch couplings, so it could be used with any layout.

The 1934 International was traded in this transaction. In this same year a new Dodge Coronet station wagon was purchased for a chief's car. The first car supplied the chief by the town.

At the annual town meeting held March 2, 1970. \$42,000 was appropriated for the purchase of a new twelve hundred and fifty gallon per minute pumper to replace the 1949 six hundred gallon per minute International.



## CHAPTER 4

### Fire Alarm



## Fire Alarm

With the organization of the fire department in 1890, it could be called a well equipped department. But the town still lacked the prime requisite of a complete system of fire protection; an alarm system. The best fire department in the world is useless, unless they know there is a fire and where it is.

At this time there were a number of bells that were being used for a fire alarm, there were a couple of bells on mill buildings, two of the churches had bells and there was a bell on the schoolhouse on Nason Street. There was however, the problem of gaining access to ring these bells, particularly at night. There was also confusion as to whether the ringing of the bell was actually for a fire. An entry in the records of the hose company, made February 2, 1891, reads as follows:- "The question:- Do we know just what the alarm is? Is it the school bell? The mill bell? The church bell? Or the one attached to the Fitchburg Railroad locomotive? Any information on the subject will be thankfully received".

In 1892, \$487 was appropriated for a fire alarm system. A Gamewell bell striking machine was installed in the tower of the schoolhouse on Nason Street, at a cost of \$220.50. A single circuit of galvanized iron wire was strung along buildings and trees, there being no utility poles at that time, to the mill gate. A street box was placed at this location, numbered seventy five. The reason for having such high numbers, was to get a greater number of strokes from the bell. Four rounds of box seventy five would give forty eight strokes of the bell. As there was insufficient money left in the appropriation to purchase this box, the company loaned it to the town until the following year, in anticipation that the town would appropriate enough money the following year to pay for it and possibly purchase additional ones.

This box was as simple a device as it was possible to make, it had no succession or non-interference mechanism. However, it's simplicity must have been it's salvation, for despite years of neglect, during some of the times that



the department was in the doldrums. It is still in service at the same location, renumbered as box fifty two. The box was kept locked at all times. Keys were kept in the mill office and in Parkers Hardware, across the street, there were also keys in several nearby homes and police and firemen carried keys.

Power for the system was provided by a battery of forty eight gravity cells, each glass jar holding about six quarts of blue vitriol solution, these jars were arranged on shelves in a small room off the kitchen. As this was a closed circuit system, drain on the batteries was constant, so required daily attention to progressively replace the crow foot elements, wash out the jars and replace the exhausted blue vitriol solution, a few were done each day. D.W. Adams took care of this chore for the first three years, at a salary of fifteen dollars per year. In 1895, Henry Ledgerd carried on the job for a short time and then from November of 1895 until the permanent man was engaged in May of 1903, Joshua Edwards maintained the batteries. His conscientious service being rewarded by a raise to twenty dollars per year in 1900.

The outside lines that ran between the school bell and the street box also ran into the Odd Fellows Building, into the jewelry shop of William Oliver, where a key similar to a telegraph key, provided a means of testing the system. Oliver was paid twelve dollars per year for striking the test at 12:10 P.M. daily. At first only a single stroke of the bell was struck, but when it was learned that a single stroke proved almost nothing. He was instructed to strike two strokes.

The striking of this daily test also provided a time signal for the townspeople to set their clocks and watches by, there were no radio or television time signals, nor were there electric clocks to maintain accurate time in those days. There was one accurate daily time signal sent out from the observatory in Washington over all telegraph lines at twelve noon. Providing a standard for all railroad clocks and the watches of employees. This ten minute past twelve test time gave Oliver an opportunity to go up to the railroad station at



noon,synchronize his watch with the time signal and get back to his store,adjust his master clock and strike the test. In later years,when horses were kept in the station,these test blows kept them in the habit of running out under the harness when it was struck,after which they were fed their midday meal of oats.

There was another key in the station that was used to strike an"All out" signal of two strokes,after a fire was completely extinguished. This"All out" signal gradually fell into disuse along in the forties.

The Gamewell Company was paid their \$50.00 for the box at the mill gate the year after it was installed. To make sure that it was in working order,the engineers established a practice of ringing in this box on the first Friday of each month at 12:10 P.M. instead of the regular two stroke test.

By 1896 there were three boxes in service,eighty six at the corner of Main Street and Harriman Court,seventy five at the mill gate and ninty four at the fire station. Keys to all of the boxes were kept in nearby homes and places of business;police and firemen also carried keys. In 1888 a new box was placed at the corner of Main and Summer streets and numbered ninety seven. The following year,a tapper was installed in the home of Chief Canill.

At the annual town meeting of 1900,a committee comprised of: Chief Canill, John Flood and Julius Loewe,were appointed to investigate the need of additional fire alarm boxes.

The firemen were constantly complaining that they could not hear the fire bell at night,at one alarm in the night,during cold weather when windows were closed,only nine out of thirty five men heard the bell. It was a comparatively small bell for a fire alarm.

In 1901,a tapper was installed in the home of Arthur Coughlan,a member of the board of engineers,who lived on Nason Street almost under the school-house bell. In this same year the fire alarm boxes were painted with aluminum



paint for better visibility at night, this paint did not stand the weather, so the following year they returned to the traditional red.

Following the recommendations of the special committee on fire alarm boxes, three additional boxes were added to the system in 1902, box sixty eight, at Parker and Roosevelt streets, eighty eight, at Great Road and Main Street and fifty nine at the corner of Park and Sudbury streets. A tapper was installed in the Coughlin Stable on Summer Street, who furnished the horses for the department.

By 1903, there were eight fire alarm boxes in service. The men were continuing to complain that they could not hear the schoolhouse bell at night. The Concord Maynard and Hudson Street Railway had offered to allow the department to install a steam whistle on their power station on Great Road at no cost to the town. However, the engineers felt that this location was too far from the center of town, and at the same time they were negotiating with the American Woolen Company to allow them the use of the whistle that had formerly been used to call the help to work, and had been displaced by the variable pitch whistle on the new number five mill. The old whistle was on the boiler house.

A small building was built on the boiler house roof, directly under the whistle to house the operating machine, which with the building, cost a total of \$589.26. The whistle itself was the second largest in the state; the one on the General Electric Company in Lynn being larger. The whistle was actually three whistles combined. The two main bells were mounted with the longest, which was about four feet long, in an inverted position, the other main bell, which was about a foot shorter, was mounted above it in the conventional manner, so that they both were fed by a common outlet. These bells had a very deep tone like a steamboat whistle. Another smaller three chime whistle was mounted on top of these two bells and received its steam through a pipe that ran up through the top main bell. Steam was supplied through a four inch pipe from the auxiliary header which always had a head of about one hundred and sixty pounds, as it supplied



steam to power the stokers and the boiler feed pumps. A three inch pilot valve controlled the steam to the whistle. The machine that activated the whistle valve was powered by weights, that had to be wound up with a crank like a large tower clock. This weight mechanism was controlled by a solenoid in the alarm circuit, through an escapement similar to that on a large clock striking control.

With the whistle in the same circuit as the bell on the schoolhouse, they both sounded simultaneously, if they were both working properly, the bell actually being the more dependable of the two.

A short time before the whistle was put in service, an incident occurred where there was considerable delay in sounding an alarm, because there was no one at home in any of the houses that had a box key. So a small box with a glass front was mounted on the pole alongside of each alarm box. This small box held a key on a chain. Instructions were printed on the box, to:--Break the glass remove the key, open the box, pull the hook down once and let go. This system too had it's drawbacks; as a solid object was required to break the glass with; it was not always easy to find a stone in the dark or when the ground was covered with snow. So in 1924, these small key boxes were removed and the keys were replaced by a tee handle mounted permanently in the box door.

When the steam whistle was cut into the system, all of the street boxes had to have their timing slowed down, as the whistle operated at a much slower speed than the bell striker. The code wheels were also changed to smaller numbers, so that no box would have more than a total of forty blows on the whistle.

A tapper and an indicator were installed in the station at this time. The indicator was a device that registered the box number that was being struck, in somewhat the same manner as the odometer on an automobile, except that the numbers were large enough to be read from the middle of the floor. This device was fine when it worked right, but it could play tricks, as it depended on springs and escapements for timing, it really needed periodic inspection and adjustments



by an expert, which it did not get. One slip of a cog and the department would head out in the wrong direction, while at other times, a box number that did not exist would show up on the indicator.

Shortly after the first permanent man occupied the station, a switch was installed that would turn on the lights in the station when an alarm came in. This was a simple device, consisting of a single pole switch in the lighting circuit, which had a soft iron armature bolted to the handle. This armature held the switch in an open position by a solenoid in series with the alarm circuit. The first break in the flow of current in the alarm circuit would allow this knife switch to drop into the closed position. The armature would then be far out of the magnetic field of the solenoid and would remain there until reset manually.

At about this same time, a telephone was installed in the station with a direct line to the exchange, which was then located in the Naylor Building in the square at the corner of Main Street and Nason Street. The fire department was given number one, which it had until the dial system was put in town.

When the telephone exchange was operated manually by local operators, like the two Peterson sisters or Grace Sweeney, who knew most of the subscribers personally; valuable time was saved in many instances, by these operators tracing the origin of a call, when the person making the call would drop the phone and run out of the building before completing the call; which may have been the wise thing to do. As one of the serious drawbacks of using the private phone for reporting a fire, is that the caller is usually in the building involved, which in some cases has proven fatal. The report of the fire department in the 1947 Maynard town report reads in part: "It is unbelievable what excited people do in making these phone calls. People rarely tell you who they are, where they are, what kind of a fire they have or what their address is."

A controversy arose in 1905, between the school committee and the fire



engineers over the use of the fire alarm for a "no school" signal. At first the engineers flatly refused to consider the thought. But after a threat by the school committee to have the fire alarm equipment removed from the Nason Street School, the engineers relented. So the fire alarm has been used for a "no school" signal ever since. In this same year, box forty two was installed at Concord and Tremont streets.

In 1908, box twenty three was installed on Glendale Street. In 1909, box fifty one was placed on Dartmouth Street, and the following year, box twenty one was installed on Hayes Street, making a total of thirteen boxes in service.

By 1913, the practice of sounding street boxes for small grass and rubbish fires was being discouraged and people were being asked to use the telephone to report this type of fire. The audible signal for a brush fire was a single round of the box on the station, numbered forty one. The only way that a single round of a box could be struck, was by punching out the number manually with the key in the station, or it could be done with a key that was in each street box, which required a key to an inside door to get at. It was difficult to time the first four blows accurately, so the whistle machine often stuck, which meant that a man would have to climb up to the roof of the mill boiler house to correct it. So the signal was modified to: two, two, one, which was easier to time by hand.

In this same year of 1913, two more boxes were added to the system, box twenty two at the powder mills; no doubt prompted by the delay in sounding the alarm for the disastrous barn fire of the previous year, and box thirteen in the yard of the American Woollen Company. Although this box was on private property and was listed as a private box, it was paid for by the town.

The following year, nearly all of the outside iron wire was replaced by copper wire, where some of the old wire was still strung along buildings and on trees, all of the new wire was strung on two pin crossarms, mounted at the top of the utility poles. One short section of iron wire that was not replaced was the pair of wires that ran from the pole on the westerly side of Nason Street



to the belfry of the school. The year of 1916 was to be the last year that this building was to be used as a high school, so some of the boys of the graduating class made a large banner, which they somehow managed to string out over the middle of Nason Street on one of the bare iron fire alarm wires. During the night, a brisk breeze sprung up, swinging the banner so that at times the two bare wires would cross, shunting out the current to the bell striking machine, which caused the bell to sound a single stroke every time the wires touched. This continued until the next morning, by which time the weights that powered the striker were completely run down. About three months later, September 20, 1916, the schoolhouse burned flat to the ground and with it went the fire bell.

During the first World War, zinc and copper for the wet cell batteries became very expensive, so they were replaced by a storage battery system which consisted of two sets of batteries having sixteen cells each, mounted on metal racks in the engineers room. By means of a single throw switch, one set of batteries would always be on the line while the other set could be charged up. Charging was done with a thirty two volt direct current generator, driven by a half horsepower electric motor. A couple of years after this system was put in service, a second motor and generator were installed for a reserve as the town was then supplied with electricity by the American Woolen Company which was forty cycle alternating current, so that all motors had to be special built, it was impossible to buy a stock forty cycle motor as there was only one other small town in the country that had this current.

In 1919, the area suffered the most disastrous ice and sleet storm in its history, bringing down all overhead wires. Most of the town was without electricity or telephones for weeks. But the firemen managed to patch up the fire alarm wires within a day, so that this most important means of communication was maintained with little interruption. After this storm, all of the outside wires were again replaced. There had been legislation passed by the state, requiring all fire alarm wires to be carried on the bottom crossarms of the



utility poles rather than the top. This was brought about by a number of accidents to municipal employees who had come in contact with high tension power lines, while climbing up through them to work on fire alarm lines. There were also incidents, one having happened in Maynard, where a broken fire alarm wire had dropped down on a high tension power line and carried the lethal high voltage into the fire alarm switchboard. So all of the new wire was strung on the lower crossarms.

When the outside lines were replaced they were rearranged in a different street pattern, so that four pairs of wires entered the station. The town report at that time erroneously described this as dividing the system into four circuits, which is what should have been done. But what was actually done was to simply make four loops which were tied into a single circuit in the station. This did at least provide a means of cutting out parts of the circuit manually, in case of a break. If the break was in the loop with the whistle, the only thing that could get the whistle back in operation, was to locate and repair the break. What should have been done at this time was to have installed an up to date switchboard with repeaters, so that each of these loops would function as an independent circuit; with the whistle, tapper, indicator and light switch on a local circuit.

In 1920, three new boxes were added to the system, twenty six at Paper Mill Corner, fifty four at Walnut and Hillside streets and forty six at the corner of Acton and Walcott streets. These boxes were made by Gamewell and were known as the Peerless model. But like the older boxes; they lacked succession and non-interference mechanism.

In September of 1925, a transmitter was installed in the station at a cost of \$317.50. A modern transmitter would have cost about \$400. The transmitter that was installed, was built by an independent operator, who had no patents of his own, so had to be sure that none of the features of his machine, infringed on the patent rights of any of the larger manufacturers. This device was long



outmoded when it was installed. It too, lacked succession or non-interfering features. It was simply a street box movement with interchangeable code wheels, one for each street box number, so that any street box could be struck from the station. There were also eight additional wheels for locations known as phantom boxes, there being no street box at the particular location. The numbers given to these locations were made up by adding a single blow ahead of the nearest street box number. This was the reverse of the usual practise of adding the extra digit after the street box number.

In 1934, a doorbell was finally installed at the front door of the station. Up to this time, anyone wanting to rouse the men at night, without pulling the box on the front of the station, had to pound on the door and yell at the top of their lungs. It was a long way from the front door to the sleeping rooms. In this same year, copper oxide rectifiers were installed, which eliminated one set of batteries and the motor generators. The batteries were now kept fully charged at all times.

In 1936, the first additional street box in sixteen years was installed, box thirty one was placed in the square. This was also the first box with succession and non-interfering mechanism, however with the rest of the system obsolete, this desirable feature did not function. In 1937, box twenty seven was installed at the corner of Butler Avenue and Garfield Avenue, the following year, box fifty five was placed at Great Road and Espie Avenue. In 1939, this box was moved to Thompson and Fairfield streets and a new box, numbered thirty four was put in it's place.

The hurricane of 1938, wreaked the same havoc on the outside lines as the ice storm of 1919, and again by working throughout the night, the men of the department were able to patch up wires, so that by morning, the only box out of the twenty two, that was not working, was box forty three, at the corner of Summer Street and Bent Avenue. There was not a pole left standing from



the high school to Summer Hill Road, so there was nothing to string wire on.

A W.P.A. project was acquired to replace all of the old wire and crossarms, all of the new crossarms were four pin. A total of seventeen miles of wire was strung, but none of the old boxes or obsolete inside equipment was replaced.

By 1939, the whistle control machine on the mill boiler house was giving constant trouble. This machine had been built by an independent operator, W.E. DeCrow of Lynn. He lacked facilities for producing a first class job. The entire framework was of wood, so after thirty five years of exposure to the gasses, steam,, and heat of the boiler house, the wood had warped and rotted, throwing gears and shaftings out of alignment. As steam whistles were now pretty much a thing of the past, there being very few plants that maintained a constant head of steam, the department was able to obtain a late model Gamewell machine that had been used but a short time by the city of Woburn. This machine was furnished and installed by L.W. Bills of Lexington for \$100, the machine alone had cost over \$700 just a few years before.

The old indicator, which had never been very dependable anyway, was giving constant trouble in 1940, so it was replaced by a tape register, built by L. W. Bills. The following year, box twenty eight was installed on Main Street near River Street. A new type of lightning arresters were installed in the station by Gamewell to minimize some of the problems created by electrical storms.

By the end of 1941, the country was on the brink of war, and there was grave concern about enemy air attack, as this area was close to prime military targets and the local mill was engaged in huge military contracts. A civil defense program was set up. Some system of public air raid warning had to be provided. Officials at the national level did not approve of the use of the fire alarm as an air raid warning, particularly where it was located on the most likely target; the mill. They wanted a separate and distinct system.

A compressed air horn was installed at the fire station at a cost of \$1,440, this installation was made by the Gamewell Company of Newton. Due to



government restrictions on critical materials, all kinds of problems were encountered with this installation. The only type of horn that could be obtained was a diaphone horn, this type of horn used very little non-ferrous metal in its construction. It used a comparatively small volume of air for the sound produced, so it operated with smaller tanks and compressor than the conventional diaphragm horns. The diaphone horn was designed primarily for fog horn use. It had a very low pitch that was anything but musical. Its volume of sound did not compare anywhere near to that of either of the mill steam whistles.

During the war years not much could have been done to improve the system, even if there had been any inclination to do so. It was not until 1948 that any further changes were made, in that year, box forty one was moved from the front of the station to the corner of Summer Street and Florida Road and box forty three was moved up Summer Street, from Bent Avenue to Pompiciticut Avenue. The following year, box one twenty one was placed at Waltham and Third Street, one twenty four at Great Road and Parker Street and one thirty three at the corner of Great Road and Fletcher Street. In 1950, three more new boxes were added, fourteen at the corner of Summer and Nason Street, fifteen at the Coolidge School and one forty five on Brown Street near Wilder Street.

By 1950, the American Woolen Company had ceased operations. At times the steam pressure at the mill was allowed to drop to a point where it would not blow the fire whistle. The engineers had to provide something different for an audible alarm. They decided to revamp the air raid signal which was no longer used. A pair of diaphragm horns replaced the diaphone horn, new larger storage tanks and a larger compressor were installed. So that except for a little piping and the control valve, the whole whistle system had been replaced. Something like the old joke about raising the hood and putting a new car under it. The air horns were cut into the system and like the old school bell, blew simultaneously with the steam whistle, this arrangement lasted only a short time.



When the Maynard Industries acquired the mill property, they replaced the steam driven fire pumps with a diesel unit. Allowing them to reduce their boiler pressure below fifteen pounds, eliminating the requirement to have licensed men to operate them. This was the end of the steam whistle; one of the last.

In 1952, two way radios were installed in the three trucks. The following year a base station was installed. Frequencies were reassigned so that Concord, Maynard and Acton were on the same frequency. Later Stow and Boxboro were added to the net.

The 1954 town report was the first in years without a list of fire alarm box locations. This was done in the hope of cutting down the number of irresponsible motorists who create traffic congestions that greatly hamper the movement of fire apparatus, particularly in laying additional hose lines from distant hydrants when necessary.

When the new building was occupied in October of 1955, two separate phones were installed, one being numbered 7-2121 to be used exclusively for fire calls and the other 7-2345 for business calls, leaving the fire phone free.

In the designing of the new building, which left much to be desired in many ways, an upstairs room, which had no windows, was set up for the fire alarm room. In a building with wooden interior construction, this was the most vulnerable spot that the alarm system could be housed in. The whistle equipment was transferred from the old station, and an antiquated switchboard, no better than the one in the old station was installed. This still left the outside lines all on a single circuit. A new transmitter was installed and again it was one built by an independent operator, so in order to avoid patent infringements, it was of obsolete design. This new transmitter at least did not have to have a separate wheel for each box. So the system of phantom boxes was expanded, but lacking a definite grid pattern, it was a hodge podge of numbers that



would confuse even the originator of it.

In 1958, all utility wires on Main and Mason streets, in the principal mercantile district, were placed under ground. Although the utility companies provided two ducts, as required by law, for fire alarm wires. Little use was made of them. Rather than pull wires through the ducts to the box in the square, which covered the most critical area in town, the box was simply removed. Later it was used on Great Road near the entrance to the Green Meadow School. The box on Main Street, near River Street, was moved to the first pole on River Street with overhead wiring strung the whole length of River Street to connect with the overhead line on Walnut Street.

During the residential building boom, along about this time, no attempt was made to enact a town by-law which would require the developers to install fire alarm boxes in new developments as was done in the surrounding towns. In 1970, at the request of Chief Whalen, the planning board had their regulations amended to require the installation of fire alarm boxes in all future developments.

An underwriters survey made in 1967, showed the fire alarm system to be the weakest link in the town's overall fire protection.

Alarm systems in the newer school buildings were connected with the fire station by means of leased telephone lines; a constant source of trouble. So at the annual town meeting of 1970, an appropriation of \$9,800 was requested for the modernization of the inside system, in order to obtain all of the advantages of the modern street boxes. Unfortunately the finance committee failed to realize the importance of this request and failed to approve it, so it was voted down in the town meeting.



## CHAPTER 5

### A Chronology of Important Fires



## A Chronology of Important Fires

Some of the fires noted here may seem insignificant, but they all have some unusual interest; some were tragic. This account does not include all fatalities caused by fires, as some of these did little or no damage to property, so were not even reported to the fire department.

The town of Maynard is fortunate in not having as part of its history: "The big fire", as so many cities and towns do. No fire in Maynard ever attained conflagration proportions, in fact, few fires ever caused much damage beyond the building of origin.

Before the organization of the fire department, fires were fought by hastily formed bucket brigades, consisting mainly of employees of the mill, assisted by any man, woman, or child able to carry a bucket of water. Early town reports show items of one or two dollars, paid to watch, after a fire, to guard against a rekindle. Among the names of those paid for this service, were those of C. Fred Cahill and John Wollerschied. Both of these men became members of the fire department when it was organized. Cahill later serving as chief and John Wollerschied as a member of the board of engineers.

The town report of 1878, shows items of payment to the Assabet Manufacturing Company and the Riverside Cooperative, for pails lost or damaged fighting a fire in the original schoolhouse on Nason Street, the building which now stands at 26-28 Acton Street. Loss was given as \$400, so it must have been quite an extensive fire, as \$400 would have built a small house in those days.

A very serious fire occurred on the evening of July 7, 1886. When shortly after nine o'clock, sparks from the locomotive of a freight train, ignited the wooden shingles on the roof of Flood's Stable, located at the end of Harriman Court. A bucket brigade found themselves helpless against such



overwhelming odds. The eleven horses that were in the stable, had been led to safety, but any thought of saving anything else in the building was out of question. All efforts were directed towards saving the adjacent property, by the use of wet blankets, kept soaked by the bucket brigade. The telegraph operator at the railroad station sent out appeals for help to Concord Junction (Now West Concord) and Hudson. The message to Hudson did not reach anyone with authority to act, until the next day. The message to West Concord fared much better, as the following entry appears in the records of the Concord Fire Department:--

"Westvale, July 7, 1886.

The department were called to Maynard at 9:30 P.M. for a fire that at one time threatened the greater part of the town. The boys responded promptly, and done great work. Traveled three miles. Laid 500 feet of hose. Paid Waldo Chaplin four dollars for horse hire."

The quarters of this hand engine company still stands, with little change in outward appearance, on the north side of Main Street between Damon Street and Conant street in West Concord.

As this fire was before the installation of the water works, the water had to be pumped from the canal in the rear of the houses on High Street. Needless to say: the building was a total loss, along with sixteen sleighs, fourteen sets of single harness, two sets of double harness, seven ton of hay, three hundred bushel of oats and three live hogs that were in the cellar. Two nearby buildings owned by James Sweeney were damaged. Loss on the building and contents was estimated at \$3,000. With insurance coverage of \$1,350.

The town paid a bill of \$6.99 for refreshments for the Concord firemen and paid the Assabet Manufacturing Company \$11.83 for pails lost or broken.

In 1889, while the town water works were being installed, a fire broke out in the Stuart Building, located on Main Street at the corner of Naylor Court, now an entrance to the municipal parking lot. This building is at present



occupied by the New Idea Store and Western Auto Supply. Thomas Naylor, superintendent of the water department happened to be working nearby with a crew of men. Using a couple of lengths of hose that they carried on the wagon, for puddling ditches, they hooked them up to the hydrant that was almost in front of the building and had the fire out in a couple of minutes. This was the first use of the new water system in extinguishing a fire.

The first entry made in the official records of the fire department is for a fire in a house on Front Street owned by the mill. Damage was estimated at \$56.00 and the cause was given as children playing with matches. The date of this fire was February 15, 1890. As the fire department was not authorized until the annual town meeting held nearly a month later, March 10, 1890, it may be assumed that this fire was handled by the bucket brigade from the mill.

The first fire that the newly organized hose company responded to, was on July 4th, a month after receiving their apparatus. The fire, caused by fireworks, was in a fruit stand on Main Street. The stand was valued at \$35.00 and damage was estimated at \$20.00.

The second fire that the hose company responded to was on August 1, 1890, just twenty days before the ladder company received their apparatus. This was a more serious fire, as it completely destroyed the cider mill of Luke Brooks, located just off Summer Street near where the oil tanks of the United Cooperative now stand.

The first fire that both companies responded to, was at 7:00 A.M. January 19, 1891, in the barber shop of Michael Crowley, in Darling's Block, later called the Eagles Building, located at the corner of Summer and Nason Streets. Loss was estimated at \$25.00. Cause was given as; careless use of matches.

The first fire that the department responded to from the new station on Nason Street, was again in Darling's Block, at 6:30 A.M. March 5, 1891 in the meat market of Alex McIntyre, a member of the hose company. Loss was set at two



dollars.Cause was given as incendiary.

December 11,1891,an alarm on the Nason Street School bell,at 7:40 P.M., called the department to the farm of Calvin Whitney,site of the present Maynard Country Club,where a large barn filled with hay was completely destroyed, along with fifty head of cattle.This was the second barn to be destroyed by fire on this farm.The department could do nothing,as the nearest hydrant was far beyond the reach of the six hundred feet of hose that they carried.

May 5,1892,an alarm was given on the schoolhouse bell,for a fire in the Riverside Cooperative Building,now known as the Knights of Columbus Building. Damage to the building was set at \$3700 and to stock at \$800. Without an organized fire department and a good water supply,this fire no doubt,could have developed into a general conflagration that could have wiped out the center of the town,which was all of wooden frame construction.

May 15,1892,Box 75.The barn of Daniel Parmenter,off Concord Street,on what is now Lewis Street,completely destroyed,along with three horses. This was the first alarm given on the new fire alarm system.

May 14,1894,Box 94at 9:30 P.M. The old paper mill,located on the site of the present Murphy and Snyder printing shop,a total loss. A fire in the building two nights previous had been extinguished,but this one had too good a start. This property had been vacant for eighteen years.It consisted of a number of attached,rambling one to three story buildings,in bad repair,doors and windows open,making it a convenient hangout for tramps,who are believed to have caused the fire.Loss was estimated at \$1000.

July 4,1894.The hose company responded to an appeal for help from Hudson, where a general conflagration wiped out the whole center of the town. The run was made with a mare named Nancy Hanks,owned by Warren Haynes the grain dealer.The trip was made in thirty nine and one half minutes,with such a load,this nearly killed the horse;the animal was never of much use afterwards.The town report of that year shows an item of \$20.00 paid to Haynes for horse hire.



As this was far in excess of the usual rate, which was sometimes as little as fifty cents, it may be assumed that this amount was to partly compensate Haynes for the damage done to the animal. The whole trip was in vain as the Maynard hose thread would not fit the standard threads on the Hudson hydrants.

September 6, 1903, the hose company went to West Concord to assist at a bad fire in the business district on Commonwealth Avenue. The Maynard department could do nothing as they had no pumping equipment of any kind. The people of Maynard, along what is now Route 62, were treated to a spectacular sight when the Hudson department came through town with four horses on their steamer, with its shrill whistle and trail of smoke, sparks and steam.

February 2, 1905-Box 41, -5:15 A.M. The third serious fire on the farm of Calvin Whitney totally destroyed a large building used as a cider mill, tool storage and workshop; it also housed a gasoline engine which pumped water for a large herd of cattle. The fire is believed to have been started from thawing a frozen water pipe with a blowtorch the night before, the pipes were insulated with wool waste and it was thought that some of this material became ignited and smouldered through the night; breaking out early in the morning. A hired hand discovered the fire and had to run all the way down to the fire station to pull the box, which was then the closest one to the scene. Both the whistle and the schoolhouse bell failed to operate. Tony Collins responded to the fire alone with the one horse pump which carried 600 feet of hose, which was about 200 feet short of reaching the fire from the nearest hydrant; which was on Tremont Street. So Tony drove back to the station and loaded on more hose. Needless to say, that by the time he got back to the fire, unrolled and laid this additional hose, the building was flat to the ground.

March 31, 1906-Box 52, -10:30 A.M. A small fire in Block 3, Florida Court, took the life of Mrs. Annie Laakonen, when she poured kerosene on a coal



fire in the kitchen stove.

July 6, 1906, Box 41, - 3:15 A.M. - Booths Bowling Alley, located directly across the street from the fire station, a total loss. The fire is believed to have been started by a pet monkey, that escaped from his cage and overturned a kerosene lamp.

November 26, 1912. Box 25, - 3:30 A.M. - Music Hall, usually called "The rink" located on Main Street, on the site of the parking lot of Kelly's Lanes, a total loss estimated at \$12,000. Eli Gruber was the owner.

This huge frame building was the largest place of assembly in the town. It was used for roller skating, dances, sporting events, banquets and theatrical performances. It had a fully equipped stage and a large balcony along the sides and rear of the hall. It was the center of the social and sporting life of Maynard. There were four stores facing Main Street, a meat market, a shoe repair shop, a barber shop and a pool parlor.

The fire was believed to have started from a cigarette butt, in the balcony. There had been a basketball game in the hall the night previous. The steam fire whistle failed to operate, but the box registered in the station and the school bell sounded but many of the men failed to hear it.

There was only one man in the station in those times and he had to hitch up a pair of horses alone. The department encountered further delay, when they were unable to open the hydrant that they first hooked up to. Because of the size and the all wood construction of this building, hand lines, with only direct hydrant pressure, had little effect on the fire. Most of the effort was directed towards protecting the adjacent buildings. The heat of the fire was so intense that it broke the large plate glass windows of the DiStasio Market across the street. This fire caused nearly \$2,000 damage to exposures, probably more damage to exposures than any fire up to the present time.

This again was a fire that had terrific potential, in such a closely built up area of wood construction, with wooden shingle roofs all over town.



December 9, 1912, box 43, -8:00 P.M. The house and barn of Simon Hartford on Summer Street, later known as the Mason farm, a total loss. The barn contained twenty ton of hay. This farm was then far from any hydrant.

December 12, 1912, 8:30 P.M. The third major fire in sixteen days, completely destroyed the barn of the American Powder Company, located on the site of the present H.H. Scott plant.

This was the largest barn in the area. It was of frame construction, with a gambrel roof having a central cupola. There were sixteen horses in the barn when the fire was discovered, fourteen of them were rescued by the men of the village; all of the houses in this part of town were owned by the powder company and were occupied by employees. The nearest fire alarm box was the one on the fire station, a mile away. The alarm was given by blowing the steam whistle on the power house of the powder mills, located just across the bridge on High Street in Acton. The sounding of this whistle and the glow in the sky alerted the Maynard Fire Department. As many of the calmen were in the station at this time of the evening, no alarm was sounded on the Maynard fire alarm system.

The powder company had their own volunteer fire brigade which had a couple of two wheeled hand drawn hose reels, fortunately they had adapters that allowed the use of their standard thread hose on the Maynard hydrants.

The Concord Fire Department was called by officials of the powder mills. The Concord department responded with a Anox motor hose wagon, the first motor apparatus to see service in the town. By using the powder company's adapters, Concord stretched in two lines of hose from a Maynard hydrant, which with the three lines that were already operating off of the single dead end, six inch main, reduced the pressure to almost nothing, even with the tiny three quarter inch nozzle tips, no stream would carry more than a dozen feet, so they were unable to save any of the attached sheds. The wind was blowing directly towards the mill yard, carrying brands and embers into the mill yard. As there was no



snow on the ground, these brands started grass and brush fires in the mill yard that ignited and exploded three of the wheel mills.

In addition to the two horses that could not be saved, a third horse was so badly burned that it had to be killed; several other horses had their hair singed. Seven pigs in the barn cellar were lost; along with a large quantity of hay, grain, harness and all other stable equipment. This fire was of suspicious origin.

July 22, 1913, - 11:30 A.M. A call for assistance was received from West Acton, where a general conflagration was raging out of control, eventually destroying fourteen buildings and damaging many more.

As Chief Gutteridge did not want to sound the whistle, he called the mill to have the lights blinked throughout the mill, this was used as a signal that all callmen were wanted; they would get directions from the gate tenders as to the location of the alarm. This was done, because as loud as the whistle was, and it could be heard in Waltham with a favorable breeze, it could not be heard in some parts of the mill above the sound of the machinery. He also called the street railway, requesting the use of the car on the West Acton branch, which was due back in Maynard shortly. This car was to be run as a special car to carry the men to West Acton. He sent Tony Collins out alone with the two horse nose wagon, calculating that the men would get to West Acton before the nose wagon. It did not work out that way; nobody was leaving West Acton in the midst of the greatest catastrophe to befall the village, so the crew of the trolley car were in no hurry to leave either.

Tony trotted the horses along at a fair clip until he was past South Acton without meeting the car. As it was a single track, Tony knew that they could not send another car out of Maynard until this one had returned, so he slowed the horses down to a walk. Just before Richardson's Crossing, he heard the car coming down the private right of way. He then knew that it would be more than half an hour before the car could possibly get back from Maynard with the men. It was an extremely hot day, so when Tony reached a point



opposite the cemetery, he stopped and pulled the team over to the side of the road, into the shade of a big tree, and let the horses rest until he heard the whistle of the street car coming back from Maynard. He then took off; with the horses well rested, they galloped into the center of town, straight out, making a grandstand finish. In the account of the fire in the weekly Acton Enterprise, it stated: "Hose one of Maynard made a flying trip over the road and came dashing into town with foam flecked horses."

Again it was a case of the Maynard department being stymied with their mongrel hose thread. They could not use their hose on the Acton hydrants. The men did give the local volunteers a hand with their hoses. The only equipment that the Maynard department utilized were two ten quart hand extinguishers which they used on the roof of the freight house when it became ignited by a fiery brand. After this experience, the Maynard department acquired some adapters so that their equipment could be connected with standard thread hydrants.

February 24, 1914, - box 42 - 4:50 P.M. Milk shed of Daniel Parmenter on what is now Lewis Street a total loss. This was the first alarm answered by the new American LaFrance hose truck.

May 2, 1916, - box 52 - 9:15 A.M. Slight property damage in block 3 Florida Ct. Mrs. John Stephanowicz lost her life when she poured kerosene on a coal fire in the kitchen range. A repetition of a similar tragedy, in the same building, ten years before at almost the same hour of the day.

September 12, 1916 - box 41, 11:25 P.M. The Nason Street School damaged to the extent of \$250 by a fire of suspicious origin.

September 20, 1916, - box 41 - 10:55 P.M. The Nason Street School a total loss.

This building of frame construction, was located on the same foundation as the present Roosevelt School on Nason Street, but was much higher, as it



had a pitched roof with dormers, the whole being surmounted by a belfry, with a bell that was connected to the fire alarm system. This third floor held an assembly hall and several other smaller rooms. The building was still being used as a high school. The building committee was not satisfied with some of the work of the contractor on the new high school building on Summer Street. So had refused to accept this building. There was strong suspicion that this disagreement with the contractor and the two fires were something other than coincidental. However a formal inquest by the state fire marshall's office failed to produce substantial evidence of arson. The school building committee had no alternative but to accept the new building on Summer Street.

At the time of this fire, there were many more exposures around the site than at the present time. There was a lumber yard and a large grain elevator directly in the rear of the houses on the opposite side of Nason Street. There were houses along Glendale Street, in what is now schoolyard and an old blacksmith shop stood near the southeast corner of the building. Any thought of controlling the fire in the school building was hopeless. All efforts were directed towards protecting the surrounding buildings. One line of hose was kept on Glendale Street, wetting down the roofs of houses, all of which were covered with wooden shingles, which were very dry and being showered with burning embers.

February 4, 1916, - box 41 - 4:40 A.M. The Naylor Block, located on the north side of the square, a total loss. This building of two stories was of frame construction, having stores on the ground floor. One being the jewelry shop of Chief George Gutteridge and another was the clothing store of Sam Lerer, whose sons are still in the business on Main Street. The second floor held offices and the telephone exchange. Columbus Rainville, the night operator on duty, was awarded the Alexander Graham Bell gold medal for devotion beyond the call of duty.

This whole area was then a much greater conflagration threat than at the present time. What is now Memorial Park and the parking area was then very closely packed with frame buildings, including a hotel, houses, stores, stables, a blacksmith shop and a paint shop. This fire was fought in sub zero weather



and a strong wind. But the department was able to confine the fire to the one building, which was a total loss.

January 25, 1918, box 33 - 9:25 P.M. The Concord Maynard & Hudson Street Railway car barns, located on Great Road at the end of Main Street, a total loss. This was a brick building with planked tar and gravel roof, two hundred and four feet long and eighty six feet wide. Twelve wooden passenger cars, a work car, a line car and a snow plow were destroyed along with all office and maintenance equipment.

This was a fast burning fire, starting in one of the wooden cars, it found plenty of fuel in these wooden cars with their many coats of paint and varnish. The building was completely involved when the department arrived, despite the efforts of the night watchman to hold the fire in check with the small fire hose that was kept connected and packed in a rack just inside the doors. The only two cars that were saved were the two cars that were out running on the line, and one of the two snowplows happened to be out in the yard, so it was not burned.

October 17, 1918, - box 41 - 10:10 P.M. A bad fire in the Maynard Hotel Stable. Captain Albert Smith of the ladder company broke a leg, when he was forced to jump from the second floor, when the weight of the water, that had been absorbed by the hay, caused the floor to collapse.

February 1, 1919, box 33 - 5:15 P.M. The ice houses of James Bent, on the river, near the pumping station, completely destroyed.

August 12, 1919, box 41 - 1:40 P.M. Fire in the cellar of the Riverside Cooperative on Nason Street caused a loss of \$3,600.

January 20, 1920, box 41, 1:40 P.M. The Maynard Hotel completely gutted, with a loss of \$13,000. The fire started by fat igniting on the kitchen range.

This was a three story frame building, with mansard roof, located on the site of the War Memorial on Summer Street.



March 25,1920,box 41,-2:20 A.M. The remains of the Maynard Hotel completely destroyed. The ruins of the old hotel had been sold by Martin Peterson to James Hapgood,who had planned to salvage some of the lumber,but after this second fire there was nothing left but ashes and the cellar hole.

August 17,1920,box 41 - 1:45 A.M. The huge barn of the American Woolen Company located between Hillside Street and the river,with adjacent sheds and all contents,including four heavy draft horses,a total loss. This building was square,with a high loft and a mansard roof surmounted by a central cupola.

The fire was spotted by the engineer of the mill power house,on Walnut Street. There was no fire alarm box in the vicinity,one was installed right after the fire,at the corner of Walnut and Thompson streets. The engineer at the power house started to blow the variable pitch whistle at the same time that someone downtown had pulled the box on the front of the fire station. The pedlam created by the blowing of both of the whistles and the glow that lit the whole sky,attracted a huge crowd from miles around,despite the early morning hour.

Eight lines of hose were used on the fire with no effect. Five of these lines were laid by mill employees from hydrants near the barn that were on the mill system,which was supplied with river water delivered by the two steam fire pumps in the mill boiler house. These mill fire pumps had a rated capacity of 2500 gallons per minute,but like all steam driven pumps were capable of delivering far in excess of their rated capacity. A total of 2350 feet of hose was laid,the largest amount of two and one half inch hose ever laid in Maynard and was to be so for a good many years after. Nine hundred feet of hose was laid by the town department,which was about all that they carried,the remaining 1450 feet being laid by the mill brigade from their two wheeled hand drawn hose reels. The total loss was set at \$15,700.



May 4, 1921,- Still alarm,- 3:00 P.M. 2 Pleasant Street. A fire caused by the explosion of a kerosene lamp, took the life of Mrs. Richard Swanson and badly burned her two year old son George. Damage to the house was negligible.

January 22, 1924,- Box 24,- 10:00 P.M. The grocery store of John Salsa, located on the lot now occupied by the dwelling house at 62 Parker Street. The building and contents were a total loss. This was the last run of the hoses, they were being used on the old hose wagon while the LaFrance hose truck was in the paint shop. This was the first run of the Federal ladder truck.

April 2, 1924,- Box 45,- 3:15 P.M. The Joel Parmenter house on Acton Street, a total loss. The location is now known as Rockland Avenue, which at that time was the driveway to the farmyard. This was one of the older houses that predated the incorporation of the town. It was a large rambling structure of two stories with a mansard roof. It had always been a two family house. In later years the property had been divided so that the property line ran through the house. Only one half of the house remained in the Parmenter family; the other half was owned by Martin Peterson, who had owned the former Maynard hotel which had burned four years previous. It was in the side owned by Peterson that the fire started. The entire house was then vacant.

This building was then far beyond the reach of a hydrant. But firemen who were early on the scene, said that the fire was small when they arrived and that they had it almost out, using all available hand extinguishers and the forty gallon chemical tank on the hose truck. These men were of a very strong opinion that if the newly acquired ladder truck had been equipped with a booster tank they could have easily have saved the house.

May 24, 1924,- Still alarm,- 8:00 P.M. The Cricket Club, located near the site of the present Green Meadow School. A total loss. No attempt was made to extinguish this fire as the roof was down before anyone noticed it, as it was during a heavy rain storm. This was the second clubhouse to be destroyed by fire at this location.



October 24, 1927, - Box 24, - 1:30 A.M. - The Washington Parmenter house, located off Parker Street, on what is now "B" Street, occupied by the family of Karl Shalston. The house and entire contents were a total loss.

This was one of the oldest homes in town, occupied for many years by the Parmenter family, who were early settlers of Sudbury, this part of Maynard was originally a part of Sudbury. This fire was small when the department arrived. They laid out all of the hose that they carried on the two trucks, 1,000 feet on the hose and 500 feet on the ladder. This came four lengths short of reaching the fire. So the hose truck was driven back to the station and loaded with rolls of extra hose. By the time that they got back and unrolled and hand laid this additional hose, the fire was completely out of control of this one feeble stream. They were using 1,700 feet of two and one half inch hose, connected without a pump, to a hydrant on a dead end, four inch, unlined cast iron main, with a static head of less than seventy pounds.

December 19, 1927, - Box 41, - 3:10 A.M. The Silverstien Block, a total loss. This one story block of stores, located on the west side of the square, had been built only two years previous, on the site of the Maynard estate. The block had six stores on the street level and a bowling alley in the basement. The fire alarm failed after the first blow, so there was a critical shortage of manpower from the very start, to cope with a fire in a building of this type.

March 16, 1932, - 3:30 P.M. The department was called to West Concord, where a general conflagration that involved half a dozen buildings, including the fire station, where the fire started, was raging out of control. The Maynard department might just as well have stayed at home; as they were no better equipped than they were when they went there nearly thirty years before. They were helpless without pumping equipment.

April 30, 1932, - Box 26, - 12:30 A.M. The Waltham Street Hall a total loss. This huge frame structure of two and one half stories, with a pitched roof, covered the entire lot between thirty nine and thirty three Waltham Street and backed up to the rear of the houses on Grant Street. It housed a large



hall with a fully equipped stage, along with kitchen facilities and other special function rooms, also living quarters for a custodian, which were unoccupied.

It would be hard to call this fire anything but a fiasco. The hall had just been closed, following a dance, when someone noticed a flicker of light in an attic window. The box at Paper Mill Corner was pulled immediately and the fire department responded promptly. They laid a single line of two and one half inch hose from the hydrant on Waltham Street, just below Garfield Street. They dragged this heavy line up nearly three tall flights of winding stairs to the attic. It appeared that they had the fire under control. Most of the crowd of spectators had left. One of the five white helmeted engineers had his head out of an attic window; bellowing at the top of his lungs: "We got 'er licked! We got 'er licked!" over and over again. When suddenly the whole sky lit up as flames roared up the dry wooden clapboards on the back of the building. Within minutes the whole upper part of the building was involved. The men scrambled out of the building and laid two more lines, but these were from hydrants on old four inch mains, so the feeble streams at the nozzles had about as much reach and penetration as water thrown from a bucket.

With flames leaping high in the air and burning brands showering all around; Frank Binks, who was then chairman of the board of selectmen, and lived in the second house on Garfield Street, little more than a hundred yards away, became very apprehensive and had calls for help sent to Concord and Acton.

When these out of town companies arrived on the scene, they were greeted by the engineers of the Maynard department, like the proverbial skunks at a lawn party. Lacking any sign of cooperation, the Concord department laid a line from the fire back to the hydrant on Waltham Street, near Garfield Street, which the Maynard department had a single line hooked to, and hooked up their seven fifty pumper to the other outlet of this hydrant. This of course developed the only decent stream on the fire, but created the ridiculous situation of the Maynard line getting only the residual pressure of the suction side of the



Concord pumper, which had two more outlets that were not being used, but Maynard would not shift their lines onto them. The Acton department, who had responded with every piece of apparatus in their town, laid two lines of hose from the Middlesex Laundry and drafted water from the river, using little three quarter inch tips on their nozzles, as their pump had a capacity of only three hundred and fifty gallons per minute.

February 10, 1933, - Still alarm at 10:00 A.M., followed by box 121 fifteen minutes later. The home of Louis Boeske at the corner of Third and Fourth streets a total loss.

This was a classic example of the fallacy of not striking a box for a fire known to involve a building. The owner was attempting to thaw a frozen water pipe with a blowtorch; which ignited woodwork behind a partition. The owner called the fire department and in a clear calm voice, gave the driver who answered the phone, a clear picture of exactly where the fire was and what was involved. The driver of the hose truck went out alone, which was the policy of the engineers at that time. They probably did not want to be disturbed too often by box alarms. When the driver tried to handle the fire alone with hand extinguishers he soon realized that the fire was gaining on him and that he was fighting a losing battle, so he phoned back to the station to strike the box. As there was no box closer than Hayes Street at that time, the box that was struck was a phantom box. The closest hydrant to the scene was on Waltham Street near Wood Lane. This hydrant was fed by a four inch main. All of these adverse conditions should have been taken into consideration immediately upon receiving the call. It took nearly all of the hose that was carried in both trucks to reach from the hydrant to the fire. Without a pump the pressure was so poor that the water barely ran out of the nozzle. This meager water supply merely prolonged the agony, as it took half of a bitter cold day to completely consume the building



February 1, 1934, Box 24, - 1:00 A.M. The Balcolm house, one of the town's landmarks, located on Parker Street near the site of the present Atkins & Merrill plant, a total loss. This was just another case of the ineffectiveness of a long stretch of hose, directly off a hydrant, without the use of pumping equipment.

July 14, 1934, Box 41, - 4:45 A.M. The Gruber Building on Main Street was severely damaged. The lower part of this building still stands and is still owned by the Gruber family and part of it is occupied by the Gruber Furniture Company.

At the time of this fire, the building had an additional story, which held a movie theatre that was not operating at the time. Above the lobby of the theatre was an apartment which was also vacant at the time. The front of the second story, which was not burned, held several town offices. The first floor was occupied by the Gruber furniture store, Higgins and King liquor store, the police station and a bakery shop. The baker discovered the fire in the rear of the building and ran up to the fire station to give the alarm.

This was the first fire that the Maynard department had three pieces of apparatus available for use. Damage was estimated at \$22,000.

January 30, 1936, Box 41, - 6:20 P.M. The Cooperative building severely damaged. The lower part of this building, located at the corner of Summer and Nason streets, is now known as the Knights of Columbus building. It had another story and a half above the roof of the present building. It was seventy four feet from the ground, on the south side of this building, to the peak of the roof. This third floor, from the Nason Street side, held a large hall, with a stage and a balcony. Town meetings were held in this hall. Above this hall was another smaller hall, built within the four gables of the roof, which was covered with slate.

The fire started in a barrel of rubbish that had been left in the stairway to the small banquet hall, which had not been used for years. There



had been a wedding party in the hall a couple of days before, so this rubbish, consisting mostly of paper cups and plates, must have contained some scraps of food. A rat nibbling at this food, must have nibbled a match, as the body of the dead rat was found in the barrel, after the fire was extinguished.

As this building had long been considered doomed, in case of a fire involving the upper floors; Chief Priest called aid from Stow, Acton and Concord. The concept of mutual aid was now pretty much established, it was no longer considered a disgrace, but rather a sign of good judgement, for a chief to request outside help on a serious fire. The Stow and Acton companies worked with Maynard at the fire, while Concord filled in at the Maynard station.

Despite the height of this building and the lack of aerial equipment, the fire was confined to the third and fourth floors. Damage to the building was set at \$13,000 and to contents at \$8,000, mostly caused by water and subsequent freezing, in the Morse Grocery store and the Murphy & Snyder printing shop, both of which were located on the Nason Street floor level.

February 3, 1936, - Box 42, - 1:30 P.M. Fire started by sparks from the chimney, igniting the wooden shingled roof, of the home of Harry Frye at 12 Vernon Street, damaged the house beyond repair. The only available hydrant was fed by a four inch dead end main and a test made later, by the rating bureau, showed a flow of only forty gallons per minute at twenty pounds pressure. Most of the firefighting had to be done with the one inch hose from the booster tank of the only piece of apparatus that was so equipped.

December 8, 1939, - Box 52, 3:35 A.M. The Minto House, a frame thirty two room lodging house, located at 175-177 Main Street. This building was three and one half stories on the sides and rear, as Main Street is on a deep fill, with a high retaining wall, at this point. Much of the building was vacant at this time. A very strong wind was blowing from the south, the south side of the building was fully involved when the fire was discovered. The fire spread to the next building, which was of the same size and construction. Damage to



this second building was held to \$65.00. The aerial ladder was used to good advantage in the rear of the building, with two lines feeding the ladder gun. This was the first use of a major stream appliance in Maynard.

During the course of this fire, the Stow department covered the Maynard station and answered two calls, one for a chimney fire on Maple Street and the other for a chimney fire on Railroad Street.

A total of 3,400 feet of two and one half inch hose was used, the most hose ever used at a fire in Maynard up until that time. Most of the south side of the building was destroyed, this part of the building was replaced by the building now occupied by Bucemi's Market. The north side was repaired and remodeled into apartments. Loss was set at \$7,000

March 9, 1941, box 25, - 7:25 A.M. A bedroom fire in the rooming house on the second floor of the building at 34 Main Street, took the life of Michael Esmanowicz. He was alive and conscious when firemen carried him from the building but died in the hospital the following day. Damage to the room was slight.

December 26, 1943, box 28 - 5:50 A.M. A two family frame dwelling at 27 River Street was the scene of a fire that took the life of Anna Helin, the year old daughter of Charles and Eva Helin. Loss to the building was \$3,500.

January 20, 1948, box 46, - 8:50 P.M. Joseph Tucker lost his life in a fire in his home in the two family frame dwelling at 85-87 Mason Street. Damage to the building was \$5,000.

November 18, 1950, box 34, - 12:05 A.M. Ice houses of the Maynard Ice & Oil Company off Winter Street, near the pumping station a total loss. The buildings had been unused for several years. They were built on the foundations of ice houses that burned in 1919.

July 20, 1952, box 43, - 3:27 A.M. The home of Chief Engineer Wilson at 114 Summer Street was damaged to the extent of \$12,000 by a fire believed to have been of incendiary origin. The family was away on vacation at the time.

October 31, 1952, box 32, - 9:00 A.M. A large three story frame tenement house at 171-173 Main Street a total loss.



A fire started by a carelessly discarded cigarette in dry leaves and paper, between the sidewalk retaining wall and the building, quickly involved two propane gas tanks. The fire running up the dry clapboards on the front of the building and into the windows, involving the interior on all floors in a matter of a few minutes. Fifteen people were made homeless by this fire. Fortunately most of the upper apartments were vacant. Loss was set at \$25,000. The Acton department assisted at this fire.

December 16, 1952, - Box 32 - 5:15 A.M. The Wilson School, which was located on the site of the present Municipal Building was a total loss. This building of brick construction, held six classrooms and was built in 1902.

The fire of undetermined origin, had gained considerable headway before being discovered. It was believed to have started in the basement.

The Stow and Acton departments assisted by pumping water from the river. This use of the river water was unnecessary, as the town water system at this location was capable of supplying far more water than the available equipment could handle. 3,000 feet of two and one half inch hose was laid. The loss was set at \$150,000.

March 13, 1955, - Box 14, - 8:30 P.M. The Eagles building a total loss. This building was of frame construction and was located at the corner of Summer and Nason streets, and covered the same area as the present Eagles building, but was of three stories, the third story being included within the mansard roof. The upper floors held a hall and clubrooms. The first floor had four stores; Messier Photo Studio, Beacon Publishers, Laurson Shoe repair and Goodrich Cleaners, where the fire started. Interior walls and ceilings of this building were a combination of wood sheathing and sheet metal; both notorious fire breeders. The fire traveled quickly up between the walls and partitions to the mansard roof.

Aid was called from Acton, Concord and Stow, the latter covering in at the Maynard station. Concord responded with a thousand gallon pumper, a nose wagon and an aerial ladder; the first time that two aerials were ever



utilized at a fire in Maynard. The Maynard ladder truck was set on the Nason Street side but proved ineffective, as they were attempting to operate the ladder pipe with two direct hydrant lines, without a pump, although they had pumpers standing idle in the street. The Concord ladder was set on the Summer Street side, a highly effective stream was developed by their ladder pipe which was fed with two lines from their thousand gallon pumper, which was hooked up to the first hydrant on Maple Street. 5,400 feet of two and one half inch hose was used. Loss was estimated at \$50,000.

October 19, 1960, - Box 45, - 5:45 A.M. A single family frame dwelling, located at 88 Acton Street, a total loss, taking the life of the lone occupant, Thomas Wright, 82 years old.

June 31, 1964, - Box 22, - 12:31 A.M. <sup>Restaurant -</sup> Twin Tree Inn, 34 Powder Mill Road, a total loss. This building was a large two story frame structure that had been remodeled and added to, a number of times over the years. The fire broke out right after closing time but employees were still in the building, cleaning up, when a passing motorist saw the flames in an upstairs window and gave the alarm. The Concord and Acton departments worked with Maynard at this fire while Sudbury covered the Maynard station. Water was pumped from the river, which was unnecessary, as there was an ample supply in nearby hydrants that were not utilized. 1,300 feet of two and one half inch hose was laid. Loss was set at \$150,000.

June 7, 1964, - Still alarm at 8:35 A.M. A two family dwelling located at 26 - 28 Mill Street was damaged to the extent of \$5,500 and took the life of Karl Benz, the owner of the property, who occupied one half of the house. Most of the damage to the building was caused by the initial explosion of volatile vapors from an adhesive that the owner was using to lay a tile floor in the basement. These vapors were ignited by the pilot light of a gas burning hot water heater in the area.



June 31, 1965, -Box 51, -4:00 A.M. The old Maynard mansion, located at the corner of Dartmouth and Elmwood streets; a total loss. This frame building, of three stories, including the mansard roof, was built by the Maynard family, founders of the woolen industry that once dominated the economy of the town. When the American Woolen Company acquired the property of the Assabet Manufacturing Company, this mansion and a similar one, located at the lower end of Dartmouth Street, were included in the transaction. They were both converted to multiple family dwellings. Around 1940, the one that burned had been converted to a Polish Church, which was used but a short time. At the time of the fire it was again being converted back to an apartment house. The plaster had been torn out of the entire building, so that when the fire was discovered, flames were roaring from the cellar to the roof.

The Stow and Acton departments worked with Maynard at the fire while Concord covered the Maynard station. Because of the high elevation and the six inch dead end main, water supply was poor, making lines that were connected directly to hydrants, without a pump, almost useless. A total of 3600 feet of two and one half inch hose was used. The fire was of suspicious origin.

September 9, 1965, -Box 14, -8:35 P.M. Buildings of Sedar & Richmond, used for storage and sales of hay, grain and building materials; a total loss. This building was actually two buildings that had been connected together, being the last of a number of buildings that were originally built by Warren A. Haynes, over a period of years when he conducted an extensive business, dealing in hay, grain, lumber and farm implements. During later years, most of the buildings had been torn down, these remaining buildings were between Nason Street and the railroad tracks, north of Summer Street. The part of the building directly in the rear of the present frame business and apartment block, at the corner of Summer and Nason streets



was of frame construction, two stories high, with a pitched slate roof. This building was in a bad state of repair, with many windows broken out, giving full vent to the flames from the very start. This building was only a few feet from the two connected buildings at the corner of Summer and Mason streets, posing a serious threat to these buildings which were weatherbeaten frame construction. The one story grain storage section was also of frame construction with a pitched slate roof, but the side walls were covered with sheet metal, making it very difficult to gain entrance to or to ventilate. The interior of this building was covered with years of accumulation of grain dust, creating an almost explosive situation.

Acton and Concord assisted the Maynard department at the fire, while a Sudbury engine company covered the Maynard station. A total of 3,450 feet of two and one half inch hose was laid. Loss was estimated at \$25,000.

November 25, 1966, - Box 322, - 1:30 A.M. The two family frame house located at 38-40 McKinley Street damaged to the extent of \$15,000 and took the life of Mrs. Barbara Cookson, in whose apartment the fire started.

February 26, 1967, - Box 32 - 11:30 A.M. The old Pastime Hall, located at the end of Harriman Court, a total loss. This building was originally a large livery stable, built in 1886, to replace a similar structure that had been destroyed by fire.

The building was of typical frame barn construction, with a high gabled roof covered with slate and surmounted by a central cupola. When this building was converted to use as a hall, many of the heavy supporting timbers were removed, so with the heavy slate roof, it was in every sense a firetrap.

When state regulations restricted the allowable capacity of this building to such an extent that it was no longer profitable to rent it as a hall, it was utilized as a warehouse and shop by the Brackett Heating & Ventilating Company



When the department arrived on the scene of this fire, the interior of the building was completely involved, any thought of operating lines inside of this building would have been foolhardy. The only hydrant on Harriman Court was directly in front of the building, this hydrant was on a dead end unlined cast iron main nearly eighty years old and badly tuberculated. Recent flow tests showed that this hydrant had a capacity of only 115 gallons per minute at a residual pressure of twenty pounds; less than half the water required for one fire stream. The fire department was aware of the meager water supply to this hydrant and exercised good judgment in not even hooking up to it, as it would have been a waste of valuable time. Instead, lines were stretched from hydrants on Main Street, which are fed from the twelve inch main on the line from the center of town to the Summer Hill reservoir. Pumpers were hooked up, making maximum effectiveness of these lines. A Concord pumper was hooked up on Spring Lane and was able to get a fair stream on their ladder pipe using a small nozzle tip.

Concord and Acton worked with the Maynard department at the fire, while a Sudbury engine company stood by on High Street to protect exposures and the Stow department covered the Maynard station.

A total of 7,000 feet of two and one half inch hose was used, the most hose ever used at a fire in Maynard up to that time. Loss was set at \$31,000, \$3,000 on the building and \$28,000 on the contents. Very little insurance was carried because of the high rate on a risk of this kind.



## CHAPTER 6

### Social and Fraternal Activities



## Social and Fraternal Activities

At the time that the Maynard department was organized, fire departments, except in the larger cities, were considered to be primarily a social organization. To gain membership in the department required sponsorship by a member and a vote of the company membership for admittance, so the candidate had to decide beforehand which company he had the best chance of being elected to. Rivalry between the companies was fierce.

Each company had its own treasury and funds. During the first year of the department's existence, the town paid no salaries at all. The men were assessed a twenty five cent fine for each fire or meeting missed. This money went into the company treasury for use for entertainment and refreshments. Fairs, raffles and dances were held regularly by each of the companies to raise funds for their respective treasuries. One of the first major expenditures from these funds was for uniforms. The ladder company being the first to be completely outfitted and the hose company followed shortly after. The uniforms were made by P.J. Sullivan the local tailor.

Although the station had an imaginary partition through the middle, both companies were allowed equal use of the kitchen; committees would be appointed to confer on an agreement as to the time allotted to each company. One of the few joint ventures of the two companies, was the purchase of folding chairs and tables along with dishes and kitchen utensils. Usually one or the other of the companies would have a Saturday night supper at the station. The apparatus would be pulled out on the apron in front of the station and the tables set up on the apparatus floor.

Shortly after acquiring their apparatus, both companies had a group photograph taken by Holmes the photographer and each company in turn made a formal presentation of their framed picture to the other company. These photos are now in the possession of the Maynard Historical Society.



The seriousness and formality with which the membership dealt with what we now would consider trivial affairs, is shown in the records of the ladder company, where at a meeting held February 2, 1892; after lengthy discussion, it was voted to discharge a two man committee that had been named by a previous meeting to investigate the purchase of a mirror for their meeting room. As this committee had not made a satisfactory report of progress; they were replaced by a committee of one: namely:- John Wollerschied; who reported back at the next meeting that a very fine mirror could be purchased at the Haynes Furniture Company for eight dollars.

Following the dedication of the new station on February 13, 1891, which was celebrated with a catered banquet held on the apparatus floor, the engineers adopted a set of rules of conduct for the members use of the building. Foremost among these rules was one forbidding the possession or use of liquor in the building or on the grounds; there was very little of the grounds that were not covered by the building. The boys quickly found a way around this one. They obtained a piano box, fitted the cover with hinges, a hasp and a padlock. They set the box out in back of the station, where on special occasions, it could be moved a couple of feet over the property line onto what was actually railroad property. The piano box became an institution that survived for years.

The old timers used to tell a story about the Saturday night that the hose company was going to have a clam chowder supper. The committee had worked hard peeling and slicing the potatoes and onions, but the stoker was having a hard time getting a good fire going in the kitchen range. This delay did not seem to bother most of the boys too much, as the piano box was pretty well stocked. It was pretty late in the evening, when the kitchen committee, who had made quite a few trips to the piano box themselves, served the clam chowder. When the meal was finished, the committee was given the usual rising vote of thanks for preparing what was praised as the best clam chowder that they ever had. When the committee returned to clean up the kitchen the next morning, they found



the gallon of clams, that were supposed to have been put in the crowder, still under the kitchen sink.

As an example of the extent of some of the activities of the department, Company records show that in one short period in 1899; starting August 5th, they took part in a parade and field day in Concord Junction (now West Concord). On August 20th, a clam bake, prepared by Adelbert Martin, was held with guests from the Hudson department. September 5th, marched in uniform in a parade in Marlboro. September 16th, participated in a muster at Hudson and September 30th, competed in a hose race at Ayer. It must be remembered that the only means of transportation in those days was by either horse and wagon or trains.

During the July 4th celebration in 1903, the hose company made an exhibition run from the station on Nason Street, with the one horse hose wagon, and had a stream of water on the steeple of the Catholic Church in three minutes and twenty five seconds after the horse was released from his stall. In October of that year, the entire department appeared in uniform at the annual concert and ball of the South Acton Volunteer Fire Department.

In 1902, the hose racing team consisted of: Wm. Punch, Lawrence Fletcher, Albert Coughlan, Geo. Lynch, John Lawton, Joshua Edwards, John Dacey, Fred Axford and Wm. Lawler. Their record of victories was not spectacular. There are however, a few trophies still in the station today. One is a beautifully engraved speaking trumpet won in 1900 at the Hudson Firemens Fair. A cup won in a tug of war at the July 4th celebration held at Crowe Park in 1920. There is another cup that was won by a hastily assembled water polo team at the 1935 Acton Fair, despite the fact that none of the men had ever handled inch and one half hose before the contest. The Maynard department did not acquire this type of hose until the following year. In fact it was the primary objective of this team, of which the author was a member, to demonstrate to some members of the finance committee who witnessed the contest, the maneuverability of the inch and one half hose. We never expected to win the first prize.



From 1890 until 1905, the gala event of the year was the annual Thanksgiving Eve Ball, at first held in Cooperative Hall and later in Music Hall. These affairs were a huge success socially, but did not do so well financially, the one held in 1902 made a profit of fifty five cents and the last one held in 1905, lost fifteen dollars, and as was the general rule, an assessment was made against every member of the department to cover the deficit.

After 1903, when the permanent man and the horse occupied the station, the Saturday night suppers became impractical as the kitchen had been dismantled, so in 1907 at a joint meeting of the two companies it was voted to sell the chairs, tables and kitchen equipment to the Cricket Club and divide the money equally, but before the Cricket Club paid for this equipment, their clubhouse burned flat to the ground, so it was a long time before the firemen finally got their money.

The first active member of the department to die, was Captain Michael Sheehan, who died May 21, 1901, so starting that year, on the second Sunday of June, which is Firemens Memorial Sunday, the department inaugurated the practice of decorating the graves of deceased members. For a number of years the firemen marched to the cemeteries with the Fraternal Order of Eagles, who observed the same day. A three man drum corps was hired to provide the cadence for the marchers. Along about the twenties, the spirit to march to the cemeteries had waned and the men started to ride up in cars.

By 1937, what were left of the old uniforms were so out of style that a complete new set of uniforms were bought and a cedar closet was built in the station to store them in. The following year the firemen marched in the May 30th Memorial Day parade. In this same year, new bronze grave markers were bought to replace the old cast iron ones. A few years later the men returned to the practice of decorating the graves on the regular Firemens Memorial Sunday, which was continued until 1953. When this practice was discontinued, the men started to attend a church service, in uniform, in a body, at different churches each year.

In 1970, the graves were again decorated, but by this time all of the bronze



markers had disappeared; the work of cemetery vandals.

Throughout the years from the beginning of the department, little thought had ever been given to the possibility of men being killed or injured at a fire, but on October 17, 1918, at a bad fire involving the Maynard Hotel Stable, off Summer Street, Albert Smith, captain of the ladder company, was forced to jump from a high loft window, suffering a broken leg, which along with the pain and suffering, cost him a sizable medical bill along with the loss of more than three months pay due to absence from his regular job. At that time there was no legal way for a town to compensate firemen for expenses caused by injury in the line of duty.

Of course the men of the department promoted a number of benefit affairs to raise money to assist the unfortunate brother with his financial burden. This incident sharply pointed out the need for some predetermined plan of assistance to any member of the department who might become injured in the line of duty or suffer some other very serious misfortune. Considerable thought was given towards the organization of a firemen's relief association.

The Maynard Firemen's Relief Association was formed in 1920. The constitution and by-laws were adopted by a vote of the combined membership of the two companies at a joint meeting held August 3, 1920. The first officers elected were: Chief George H. Gutteridge, president; William H. Priest, vice president; John Croft, secretary; John Maley, treasurer and a board of directors consisting of; Joseph Farrell, Fred Kelly and Albert Smith. It became a tradition to elect the chief engineer as president each year. This tradition was broken in 1946 when Warren E. Bemis, captain of the ladder company was elected president.

The funds of the two companies were transferred over to the relief association shortly after it was organized and all outside fund raising activities of either of the individual companies were then discontinued. Monies received from fines



were periodically donated to the relief association. The first fund raising activity of the association was held the year following their organization, when they entered into an agreement with the Peoples Theatre, to get the proceeds, over and above expenses, of a movie show, to which the firemen were to make an advance sale of tickets. This annual movie show was a fair source of revenue for several years, in 1926, \$311.90 was realized, but that was the peak year, from that time on the return to the association diminished steadily.

By 1928 the balance in the treasury was \$397.50 and continuing to shrink steadily. Times were hard and during the next few years, money was voted to assist the families of some of the members. This was done with considerable reluctance on the part of some of the members who felt that this was not the original intent of the association. By 1934, there was almost nothing left in the relief fund and nothing was being done to replenish it, this period of time was probably the lowest point in the morale of the department. April of this year saw a change in the board of engineers and a rejuvenation of the department.

The men were now deeply concerned about the condition of the relief association. The risk of injury was increasing, new hazards were facing the fire service everywhere. The widespread increase in the use of oil instead of coal, as a domestic fuel created greater risks, with the usual lag in legislation to control its use, storage and transportation. Another area of danger was the increase of traffic which created a greater risk to the callmen when responding to alarms in their own private cars.

The thought of building up the reserve fund in the relief association to a point where it would provide adequate protection seemed hopeless, so consideration was given towards obtaining a blanket insurance coverage. This proved to be a comparatively costly item because of the high premium rate on the two permanent men. However it was the unanimous decision of the callmen, who were certainly in the majority, that the two permanent men



should be given the same protection as the callmen.

To finance the insurance cost, the relief association ran a whist party in the Parker Street Hall. The men conducted a door to door canvas, selling tickets at thirty five cents each. This affair yielded a profit of \$437.85 which was about sixty dollars more than was needed for the insurance, the balance being placed in the reserve fund. These parties were held yearly until 1942, when wartime restrictions on travel cut the interest. So the following year a turkey raffle was held, which was continued each year until 1950, when the balance in the reserve fund stood at \$1569.75, but the following year the turkey raffle was resumed.

By 1958, legislation had been passed which allowed the town to pay the premiums on accident insurance for the men, so the town has paid the premiums from that time on.

In May of 1967, a water polo team was organized to take part in the Annual May Festival at Stow. This was the first participation of the department in this type of activity in more than thirty years. They have since taken part in this affair each year, winning first prize for three consecutive years between 1968 and 1970, giving them permanent possession of the trophy. In 1969, a ladies muster team was formed, composed mostly of wives of members of the department. Both teams joined the Massachusetts Muster League and took part in seven musters. The men's team scored fifth place for the season but the ladies scored third place. On August 2, 1970 a very successful muster was held at Crowe Park. The last such event to be held in the town was in 1903.

In 1968, The Reverend Richard A. Taylor, Rector of Saint George Episcopal Church, was named the department chaplain, the first chaplain in the department's history.



Thursday, February 23, 1939, was Tony Collins' regular day off, and as was his usual custom, he took the morning train to Boston. He went to a Washington Street theatre. Nobody saw what happened or at least did not volunteer any information if they did, but Tony was found at the foot of a flight of stairs, unconscious with a fractured skull. He died in the hospital the following day. As he had no established home other than the fire station, and as funeral homes were still considered by many of the older people as being cold and impersonal, his body was taken for repose, to the home of Chief George Priest, from which it was taken to Saint Bridget's Church for the funeral service, with burial in the family lot in Hudson.

Harold Priest was appointed to fill the vacancy left by the death of Tony and the pay of the two drivers was equalized at \$33.50 per week, Tony had been getting \$35.00 and Bill Quinn had been getting only \$32.00.

In November of 1939, Chief Priest informed the selectmen that he could no longer carry on the work he was doing for anything like the \$150 per year salary that he was getting. The family business was heading for the inevitable fate that befell most small independent markets. His father could no longer afford to pay help to replace the time that Tom was devoting to the fire department. If they chose to keep him on the job, he requested a pay of \$35.00 per week, which was \$1.50 more than the two drivers were getting. The selectmen then offered him a lump sum of \$400 if he would carry on the job as he was doing until town meeting. At the March 1940 town meeting, the fire department budget was increased sufficiently to make the job of chief engineer full time at \$35.00 per week.

With the 1940 appointments, Walter Priest was returned to the board, making it a four man board. In this same year, the contributory retirement system was adopted by the town.

Late in this same year an underwriters survey of the town's fire protection was made by the rating bureau. In their tests of the water system, of which former chief, William Naylor was the superintendent, many glaring deficiencies



## Buildings

Prior to the organization of a fire department, the only firefighting equipment owned by the town were a couple of ladders, stored in a shed owned by the mill, located on the site of the present Post Office Building. In 1873, the town spent \$1,65 for a padlock and chain to secure these ladders against unauthorized use. When the new hose wagon arrived May 30, 1890, it was placed in this shed. When the ladder wagon was delivered on August 30, 1890, it was put in this shed in place of the hose wagon which was moved over to a smaller shed in the rear of the Congregational Church. This was a temporary arrangement while the station on Nason Street was being built.

A town meeting held on January 1, 1890 had voted to organize and equip a fire department. \$6,000 was appropriated for land and a building. The committee named to carry out the project consisted of; Warren Peters, David Henderson, Julius Loewe, Abel Haynes and M. Howell Garfield.

The first choice of a site considered by this committee, was the present location of a gas station at the intersection of Main and Sudbury streets. This land was then owned by Artemus Whitney. It was, and still is, a better location for the purpose than either of the subsequent locations of the fire department. However; the committee could not reach a favorable agreement on price, so they purchased a small parcel of land on the westerly side of Nason Street from Thomas Brooks at a total cost, including legal fees, of \$961.66. This is the present location of the Town Paint Company.

A contract was given to Barker & Marshall of Hudson for \$5,485.19, to erect a two story frame building, without basement, 51' X 35' with a 9' X 9' hose tower attached to the center of the rear outside wall. The hose tower was about sixty feet high, so that full lengths of hose could be hung without folding. Unlike most hose towers built before this time, this one was not designed to have a bell, as it was but a matter of a few years when fire alarm bells were generally



snow on the ground, these brands started grass and brush fires in the mill yard that ignited and exploded three of the wheel mills.

In addition to the two horses that could not be saved, a third horse was so badly burned that it had to be killed; several other horses had their hair singed. Seven hogs in the barn cellar were lost; along with a large quantity of hay, grain, harnesses and all other stable equipment. This fire was of suspicious origin.

July 22, 1913- 11:30 A.M. A call for assistance was received from West Acton, where a general conflagration was raging out of control; eventually destroying fourteen buildings and damaging many more.

As Chief Gutteridge did not want to sound the whistle, he called the mill to have the lights blinked throughout the mill, this was used as a signal that all callmen were wanted; they would get directions from the gate tenders as to the location of the alarm. This was done, because as loud as the whistle was, and it could be heard in Waltham, with a favorable breeze, it could not be heard in some parts of the mill above the noise of the machinery. He also called the street railway, requesting the use of the car on the West Acton branch, which was due back in Maynard shortly. This car was to be run as a special car to carry the men to West Acton. The chief sent Tony Collins out alone with the two horse hose wagon, calculating that the men would get to West Acton before the hose wagon. It did not work out that way; nobody was leaving West Acton in the midst of the greatest catastrophe to befall the village, so the crew of the trolley car were in no hurry to leave either.

Collins trotted the horses along at a fair clip until he was past South Acton without meeting the car. As it was all single track, Tony knew that they could not send another car out of Maynard until this one had returned. So he slowed the horses down to a walk. Just before Richardson's Crossing, he heard the car coming down the private right of way. He then knew that it would be more than half an hour before the car could possibly get back from Maynard with the men. It was an extremely hot day, so when Tony reached a point



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