

HISTORY OF THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



1809 – 2015

LIEUTENANT SCOTT A. HOLST

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WATERVILLE
FIRE DEPARTMENT



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Since the earliest years of city history, Waterville's firefighters have put their lives on the line to protect its citizens from fire. Written by past experts on Fire Department history, this book documents the evolution of city firefighting from the earliest bucket brigades through to the post 911 Department. It also documents the biographies of Fire Officers, Career firefighters and many fire incidents throughout the department's history. Illustrated throughout by many photographs.

History of the Waterville Fire Department 1809-2015

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HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

1809-2015



Kennebec County, Maine

**A COMPLETE RECORD OF FACTS AND EVENTS PERTAINING TO
THE FIRE SERVICE FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF
THE TOWN TO PRESENT TIME**

Lieutenant Scott A. Holst

Dedicated to all past, present and Future Firefighters of Waterville

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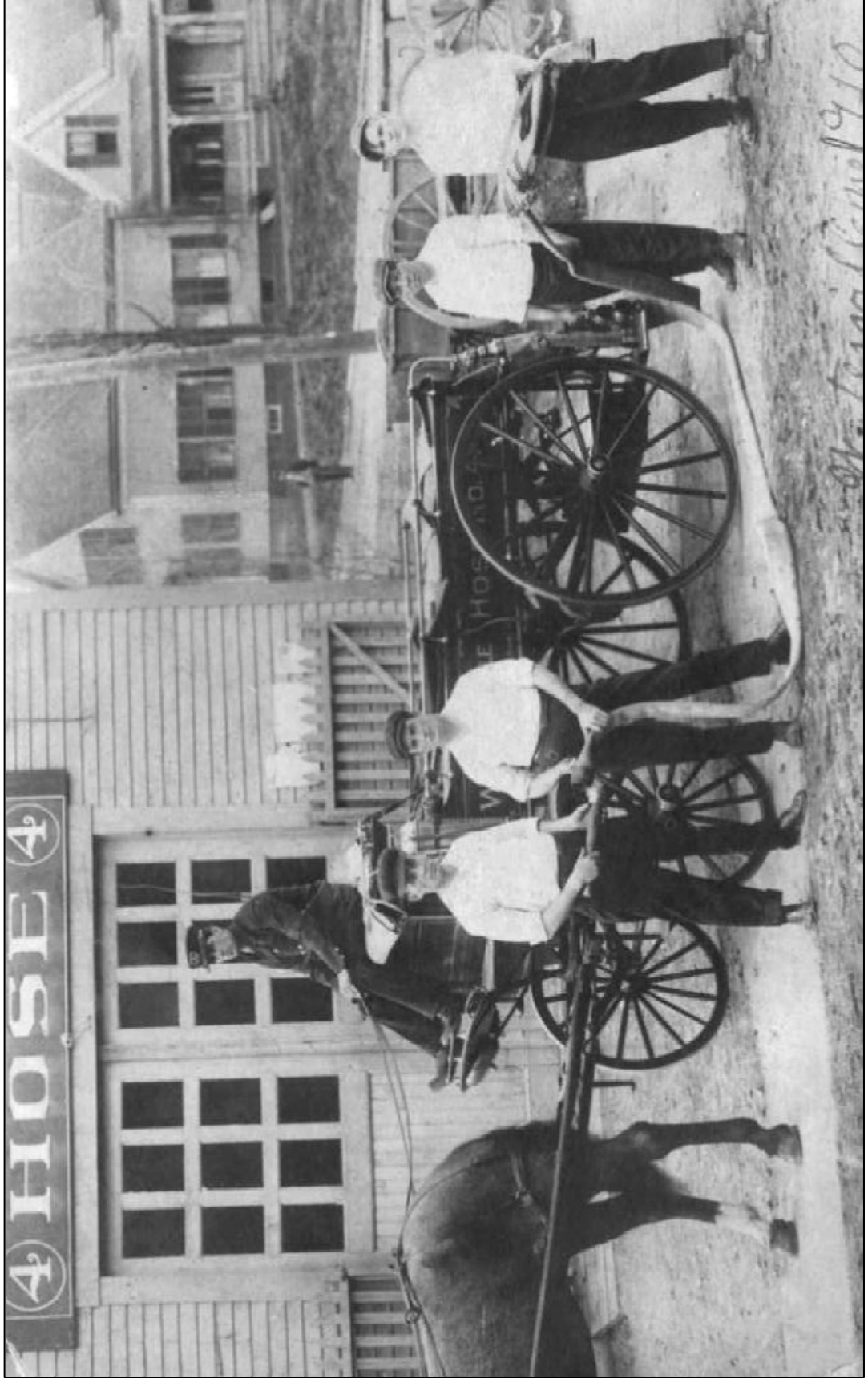
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First Edition



Mr. T. J. C. 1910

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**WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
PATCHES**



INTRODUCTION

In realizing that there was a wealth of material of absorbing interest in a record of Waterville fire annals, and desiring to preserve the same in substantial form, have prepared this volume as a History of the Waterville Fire Department.

Careful research has been made among all the old records, for the purpose of getting together everything bearing on the subject, and thereby making the history complete from the settlement of the town to the present day. Many incidents of personal recollection have been preserved and utilized, and having its preparation in charge is confident that this book contains as faithful a record of everything pertaining to the fire department as is possible to make. No article or topic found could be left out due to the interesting and historical value.

With the help of newspaper articles throughout the history of its excitants, this book could not have been kept true to its history. Many thanks goes to the Waterville Morning Sentinel, for its reporters and photographers who have written and kept accurate accounts of everything that has happened in the City and its Fire Department.

Much more valuable material has been discovered than at first was thought possible to obtain, and in consequence the book has been made as concise as was deemed consistent with a faithful record of events.

This volume is therefore presented with the history of the department in a systematic yearly review, with the hope and belief that it may not only be found interesting to all the older residents and firefighters of Waterville, but that it will serve as a medium for preserving many facts and incidents that time would surely obliterate.

The book also highlights the biographies of the men and women who served with the department and made the history of the city and fire department what it is today. Every person has a story to tell and it was with great respect that these men and women are brought out for all to read and admire.

A statement I truly agree with that was written on August 10th, 1884, and it still holds true today; *“Waterville has been very fortunate in the matter of fires; we have never had a sweeping conflagration. This is due to the fact that we have always had an excellent department. We have had as many fires as other places; who have lost their whole infrastructure; but owing to the efficiency of our fire department they have always been stopped in the building where they originated. We feel quite sure no place in Maine is better protected or can show so good a record. Thanks to the men and women of the department, who sacrificed their lives to protect their city from any complete destruction due to fire.”*

The Fire Department desires to thank all who have manifested an interest in the publication of the book, without whose assistance it might never have been written. The follow people I want to give a special thanks for all their time and work in helping me write the true facts; Meta Vigue – Waterville Public Library; Bryan Finnemore – Waterville Historical Society; Patricia Burdick – Colby College Special Collections and William Chase – Retired Career Waterville Firefighter.

Just a small disclaimer about the photos. The photo placed on the pages of this book, are placed in randomly. They do depict photos from the time period being written about, but they do not depict the paragraph that they may be associated with.

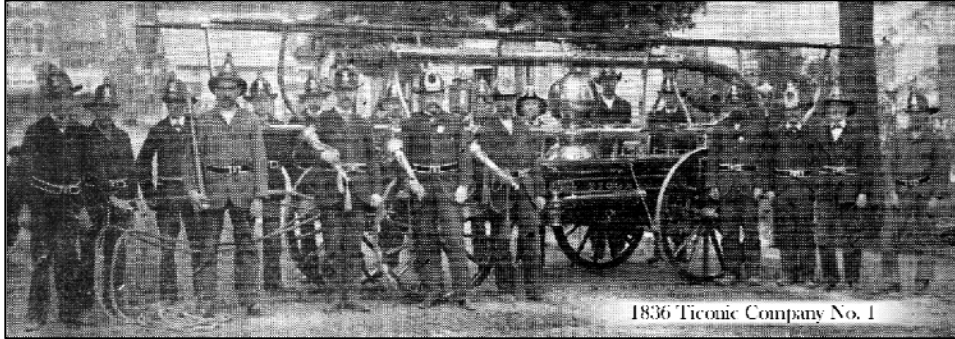
The cover was chosen to adorn this book for its authentic nature of the department. The photo depicts Hose 1 on its way to a fire call with John Davis and his team of grays down Main Street. Photo was taken by Willard R. Jones, who owned a Drug Store at 50 Main Street.

2015

Lieutenant Scott A. Holst



HISTORY OF THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



The name Ticonic, which the native American Indians—the most mysterious race in history—had given to the falls in the Kennebec River at this point, and to a considerable section of surrounding country, including the larger part of what is now the city of Waterville. The pioneers knew no name but Ticonic for the settlement on the west bank of the river, and were tenacious

of the name long after the incorporation of the old town of Winslow in 1771, which included the present city of Waterville. There are strong proofs that the population of the west side of the river early exceeded that on the east side.

The Incorporation Act of the town of Waterville was passed to be enacted in the Massachusetts House of Representatives on July 23, 1802. It had several readings and was passed by the Senate and approved by Governor Caleb Strong on the same day. By this act the present city of Waterville commenced its municipal career. Winslow, which lay on the Eastern side of the Kennebec shall retain the name of Winslow, and the part which lay on the Western side are erected into a town by the name of Waterville.

The story of the fire fighters in Waterville follows along the same lines as that of many other towns and cities in the United States. Firefighting is an inherent quality in man, just as he fights other foes. For many hundreds of years, towns and cities have had firefighting organizations, and these have been composed of the very best of their local citizenship.

In "ye olden days" a fire company was a sort of social organization and the roster of some of the departments contained the names of many men prominent in affairs of state and nation. In fact it was at times a detriment to protection to have such organizations especially if the various companies came from different sections of the town and the rivalry was such that a company came first, town afterwards.

In Waterville, records show first the organization of bucket brigades. Citizens were thrown into helping whenever a fire struck the town. Many families were required to purchase fire buckets to have on hand to grab whenever they were called into action. "Bucket Brigades" were used commonly which consisted of 2 lines of people stretching from the town water supply to the fire. They passed buckets of water to the fire apparatus tub, and empty buckets back to the well to be refilled. The Foreman of the pump companies would use a large "speaking trumpet" to give orders to and urge his crew on.

Organized as a town in 1802, various companies were created to combat fire, and these companies operated more or less independently. This of course created a great deal of rivalry, often proving a bit disastrous, as the companies vied with each other in their attempts to arrive first at a fire, and then to seize the better places from which to draw water and even if the only thing left of a building was the foundation, you may be sure that the secretary of each company faithfully recorded the events in his books, and we may read how the company responded to the call of the bells and the fine work they did. To arrive first at a fire with its apparatus, was the desire of each company. Each company kept its own records and elected its own officers. Of course there was a chief, chosen perhaps by the town, or possibly by a combination of the companies in the department.

Waterville history gives the first date of a truly organized fire company as 1809. The names of Elnathan Sherwin, James L. Wood, Moses Dalton, Asa Redinton and Eleazer W. Ripley were elected fire wardens. From that time on some of the foremost citizens of the town have served in the fire department. It has been to them a matter of Patriotism, an honor and a safeguard to the town. These men would make sure when the department was called upon, the fire was handled in a proper systematic fashion. Besides getting the manpower to run the new tubs, bucket brigades were still formed to fight the fires.

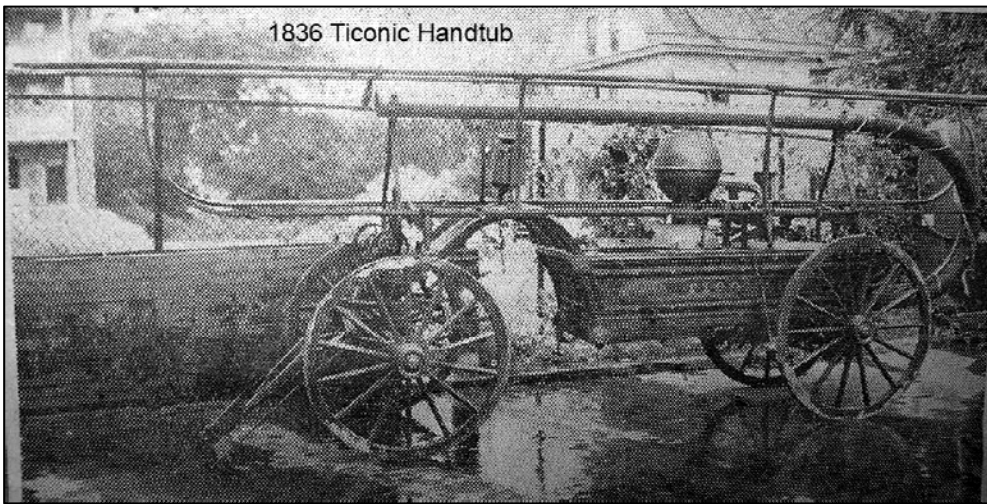


New fire companies were being formed around the town to protect the residence and businesses from fire and each company was proud of their group and a festive occasion for firemen was the annual town parade, where each party, dressed in colorful uniforms, would march down the main street. Here too, companies sought to outdo each other. Lavish helmets and uniforms, fancy fire axes, decorative parade torches, hand painted stovepipe-shaped "fire hats," fancy painted fire buckets, and engraved silver speaking trumpets were commissioned for these parades. The speaking trumpets were sometimes used for shouting insults at rival parties. If they had a hand pumper, it was decorated too, often by celebrated artists.

The first engine company was formed about 1810, the Ticonic Village Corporation, included such men as Captain Abijah Smith, Nehemiah Getchell, James Stackpole, Timothy Boutelle, Russell Blackwell and others. A hand engine, made by Stephen Thayer, of Boston, was purchased. This was of the most primitive construction. Water had to be brought in pails, and turned into a tub, from which it was forced by a couple of ordinary pumps through a leaky hose. One day someone wrote the word "Bloomer" on the machine, and at the time bloomer dresses were being worn by a few daring women. The joke took

the fancy of the boys, and by the name it was run, retired and is now remembered. This company and this engine were all the protection Waterville had for years against fires.

At the town meeting of March 3, 1823, five new names were elected to be the new fire wardens; Johnson Williams, Jediah Morrill, Nehemiah Getchell, William Pearson, and Hall Chase. These upstanding citizens watched over the new fire companies and ran a tight ship. Regulations of the Village were stringent, and sensible rules were made concerning the management of fires and stoves in private buildings. Some of the restrictions were curious, and some were impracticable. A fine of one dollar was imposed on the owner of any chimney, flue or stove pipe that should burn out in such a manner that the flames were visible at the upper end thereof, or that should throw out burning cinders, except where the roofs of buildings were wet, or covered with snow, and between the hours of sunrise and noon. No light should be carried into a hay loft, or other place filled with highly combustible materials, except in a lantern and a fine of fifty cents was imposed for smoking a pipe or cigar on any street or sidewalk, or in a stable yard or outhouse, with a provision that a person might smoke in his own workshop.



In 1834 on March 3rd, the Ticonic Village Corporation was hereby invested with the power at any legal meeting to raise money for the purchase, repair and preservation of one or more fire engines, hose and other apparatus, and for erecting and repairing of engine houses, and water cisterns and organizing and maintaining an efficient fire department and also further sum not exceeding \$50 annually to pay expenses of ringing one of the bells of said village. The officers of said

corporation shall be a supervisor, a clerk and treasurer. It was voted to purchase two fire engines. The cost not to exceed over four hundred dollars each. Cash to be paid for one and the other one to be purchased upon credit for one year. (The engine, the Ticonic No. 1, was not purchased until 1836 by the Ticonic Village Corporation).

Engine Company No.1, for the Ticonic Village Corporation, was organized in 1836. This Company, with the first Ticonic Engine, did admirable work for nearly twenty years, when a new generation, in 1854, organized the famous Waterville 3.

Actual records of Waterville firemen and their activities come from the books of Engine Company No 1 of the Ticonic Village Corporation, a body incorporated to care for the affairs of the settled part of the town of Waterville. A

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constitution was adopted and it was voted that "the first fines be used by the clerk for the payment of a book for the use of the clerk to keep records of doings of the company." Fines of 50 cents were levied against the members for not being excused from meetings or missing fires. The company then adjourned to work the engine, which was called the Ticonic. No. 1, a Button Built Hand Tub. The members of the company in 1836, were names of many leading residents. Many Waterville folk of today can trace their ancestry to these men. Some of their portraits may be found on the walls of Central fire station today.



Historical Society or in Central Fire's Library.

On May 1, 1848, the town took over the control of the company from the corporation, but records show that on July 25, 1850, it was voted to return the engine and its apparatus to the newly formed "Company No. 1 of Ticonic Village Corporation" authorities. A meeting was held on July 29, 1850 to vote on adopting the Constitution of the former Company until a new constitution be formed for this new company. J. B. Bradbury was voted as its new Foremen.

In 1853, there were two fire companies in Waterville, one composed of boys and young men and the other made up of older men. Neither a machine was of the best type, even for those times. Some of the more progressive of the young men of the town conceived the idea of organizing a new company which would be fully up with the times. A meeting was held in January of 1854 and plans for the formation of a new company were made in February and the organization of a new company was complete.

Engine Company No. 3 was organized and the engine, 'Waterville 3', was built to order by L. Button & Company of New York and arrived in Waterville on Friday, March 3, 1854, and was given a test the next day in public under the direction of the builder, who accompanied the tub. The test being satisfactory, so the tub was accepted at a meeting held the next evening. The first officers of the company were Joisah H. Drummond, foreman, William A. Caffery, first assistant, John R. Bradbury, second assistant, E.L. Getchell, Clerk; and George H. Esty, foreman of the house.



Record books were authorized and used through the life of the companies, were they became a stamp album of the history and activities of the Companies. They were kept by the firemen at different houses throughout the years, until rescued by someone who realized its historical value. The books are still in existence and its entries are interesting to read. They show the admission of new members, the discharge of those who fell by the wayside or who left the service and even the suspension of those whose conduct at fires evidently did not meet the approval of their fellow firefighters. These record book can be seen today at the Waterville

The company was called out for its first alarm on Saturday, August 15, 1854. The men hauled the tub as far as the Universalist Church (corner of Silver and Elm Streets) where it was found that the fire was so far out of town that the machine was returned to the house. The first real service it got was on September 4, 1854, in the rear of Appleton hall on Main Street, when the engine was worked from 10 a.m. until 12:30 and is recorded as saving property to the value of over \$100,000. Among the largest conflagration which it helped to subdue were those of the mills on the site of the present Lockwood Cotton mills in 1859.

Engine Company No. 3 and their Engine, The Waterville 3 tub was a prize winner, her first being a silver trumpet won at Augusta, July 4,

1854, the machine playing 190 feet to a Gardiner engine's 165 and a Hallowell tub's 161 feet and 3 inches. In later years this tub played a prominent part in all musters. At 47 musters it won 27 prizes aggregating \$3,650. On one occasion it threw a stream 212 feet and 9 inches which was truly a remarkable performance. The organization of the company remained intact until the steam fire engine was purchased. When the company disbanded and the prize trumpets were given to four oldest in service and they were, Edward G. Meader, James Preston Hill, Simeon Keith and Mathew Fardy.

The famous tub was sold in 1891 to the Veteran Firemen's Association of Newton, Mass., and was renamed the Nanantum, She would still continue to win many prizes in the Bay State and it was feelings of deep regret that the old engine was allowed to leave this city.

The night of August 20th, 1859 was made memorable by a fire which destroyed over \$12,000 worth of property in mills and machinery belonging to Daniel Moor, W. & W. Getchell and Furbush & Drummond.

Waterville's first recorded "fatal fire" accrued in 1859. The wife of Mr. Moses Yewyah, a Frenchman who lives on the Plain, was burned by burning fluid. Mrs. Yewyah was filling a lighted lamp from a jug, when the blaze caught the flame and she threw the jug in such a manner as to set fire to the clothes of their two children. In her efforts to save them, the flames caught her clothing, and she rushed out doors where some men who came to her and help to extinguish the flames; but not until she was so shockingly burned that she did not survive long. The children were badly burnt, but not fatally.

On May 16th, 1860 as a result of a big fire in the plains (an area now known as the South End, Water Street), a new engine company for the Ticonic Engine was organized and it was to be known as the Ticonic Engine Company No. 1 with J.C. Bartlett as it's Foreman and F.A. Heath as 1st Assistant and Willard B. Arnold as Clerk.

The "Old Ticonic" (purchased in 1836) as she is very respectfully called, was a noble reputation some years ago, but has fallen a little out of date for the want of an efficient company to keep her up to times. With her present company she will soon prove herself capable of stirring up the pride of a fireman. She is now in good hands, as her list of officer's shows; and they are supported by a company who are interested in the prosperity and reputation of the Village, and have all the capacity for doing good service to both.

The Village now has two efficient fire companies, with a small engine for a third which organized also on May 16th, 1860, it would be known as; the Bloomer Engine Company with David Drummond as it's Foreman and J. Frank Elden as 1st assistant and Frank Bodfish as Clerk.

It is interesting to note that on July 14th, 1860, the Ticonic Engine was called to combat a fire at the home of Mr. Ezekiel Page, on Sherwin Street, between Silver and Summer Street. The alarm was given at three o'clock and it is recorded that "Ticonic" engine was the first at the fire. The Ticonic was furnished with water from a steam engine here on exhibition from Novelty Works manufacturing company in New York. The Ticonic played through 500 feet of hose, supplying Waterville 3 and then playing on the fire. While assisting in taking Waterville 3 past the burning building, Mr. James Ray, an aged and worthy citizen, fell and was ran over by the engine, which broke several of his ribs. He was to survive his injuries.

Horses were being purchased or rented for the town's fire apparatus in around 1870's and along with the horses came the famous "Dalmatians." As the town grew outwards, the need to pull the apparatus were getting harder on the men, so the town began using horses as a way to deliver the apparatus to fires. The horses were often trained to the sound of the bell to get out of their stalls and stand at the front of the apparatus, usually with the help of the fire house dog, the Dalmatian.

Dalmatians were originally chosen as fire dogs because they formed a strong bond with the fire horses. They guarded the valuable equine and kept them company in the station. Often, at the sound of the bell, the Dalmatian would rouse the horses, and then run out to the apron to bark at people trying to cross in front of the fire house. They would then chase the fire apparatus to the scene. The end of the era for Dalmatians as a coaching dogs for fire departments, became about the advent and introduction of motorized cars and fire engines. However, Waterville had many famous Dalmatians with the last one leaving the fire house in the 1950's.

In 1864, the Ticonic Village Engine Company purchased a new Button & Blake Hand tub, which they named, "Ticonic." The "Old Ticonic" was renamed, "Veteran Engine #2."

On October 22nd, 1878, a new organized company was formed and was called, the Veteran Company No. 2. The old Veteran Engine No. 2 hand tub was turned over to them. The company would be located on Water Street and would have a large membership. Their Foremen was Joseph Micue, Asst. Foreman: Paul Marshall and Clerk: Fred Pooler Jr. and a membership of 52 men.

Their Constitution stated the following: We the Subscribers do virtually agree to and with each other to form ourselves into a society to be called, Veteran Engine Company No. 2 of Waterville, Maine. We severally bind

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ourselves to be governed by the By-Laws annexed and by the General Ordinance governing the Fire Department of Waterville.



The Company was disbanded in 1884 and would become Hose Company No. 3. Their engine was sold in 1889 to parties in Bath for \$75.

Ticonic No. 1, would reorganized their Company on September 28th, 1880, only to dis-band completing its duties on March 5th, 1886, when at the regular monthly meeting the report of the treasurer was read and accepted and the members proceeded to divide the money in the treasury and also divided the relief fund.

The company was then declared disbanded.

The Neptune Hose No. 6 was created and organized on October 22, 1878. They were quartered in the house of Ticonic No. 1 on Silver Street. A modern fire engine had been purchased and replaced the old hand pumping engine. Their Foreman was C. H. Sloper, Asst. Foreman: John Murray and Clerk: J. Walter Steward and a membership of eight men. The company would be dis-banded in 1891.

Sometime between 1879 and 1880, the Appleton Hook & Ladder was organized. This company would be housed next to the Hose 1 Company on Main Street. The company was run by their Foreman, F. N. Esty and Asst. Foreman, F. U. Lampson. The ladders were often very heavy and required the efforts of several firefighters. The firefighters would lift the ladders as needed using gears and pulleys, giving rise to the name hook and ladder truck. Hooks were provided so the firefighters could hook a wall to pull it down to help stop the spread of fire. The Company carried; 1 50 foot Bangor Ladder, 1 19 and 20 foot roof ladder, 1 26 foot ladder, 2 24 foot ladders, 2 20 foot ladders and 2 large fire hooks.

The Appleton Hook & Ladder Company was renamed in 1894, going by the name of the Hook & Ladder Company. This name would follow the Company till 1971 when the department purchased a new ladder truck. It became known as the Ladder 1 Company. The company was dis-banded in 2004 and the members joined forces with Engine 2 Company.



The second fatality due to fire in Waterville was reported as that of a prisoner in the town lockup on Common Street which burned on the night of April 2nd, 1884. It was alleged that the prisoner, Peter Vigue, a Frenchman from Canada, himself set the fire. The coroner's inquest finds he came to his death by suffocation from a fire that kindled in his cell by himself, accidental or otherwise. The inquest found his arrest to be justified and commended the police for attempts to rescue him. The fire was discovered between 11 and 12 o'clock in the Waterville Lock up. The building was thoroughly gutted by the flames before being extinguished by the fire department. Peter Vigue was arrested for drunkenness, and the unfortunate man was burned almost to a crisp and when the rescuers were dragging him from the flames, one leg was pulled off. The body was then taken to the Town Hall.

There is much feeling among Waterville citizens over the matter as they think the officers did wrong in placing the man in the cell in.

The lock-up was thoroughly repaired and the future prisoners had found it not so easy to break out or set it on fire. One cell has been lined with sheet iron, which, while it gives it an uninviting look, makes it fire proof.



1882 John Mullholan

In 1884, many of the members of the Waterville 3 company were too old to get out at nights to fight fires and it handicapped considerably the work of the department. Chief Josiah D. Hayden, Fire Chief at this time, went to them and asked that some changes be made, but they would not listen to him. He finally told them that he had disbanded their company. At that time, the company had furnished their quarters in good style and had many trophies which they had won with their engine at the various musters, so when they left the house, they took everything with them. Chief Hayden was not worried in the least however, for he refurnished the house and organized another company of younger men.

On May 16th 1884, Waterville Three Engine Company had their last annual supper at the Elmwood. Foreman James P. Hill called to order and announced that the company now closed its existence and that while it was

pleasant to meet old friends in this genial way, to those who had been identified with the fortunes of the old tub for so many years, rejoicing in its victories and mourning its defeats; it was a period of sadness, especially as they reflected that this was their last supper, for their services being no longer needed; a new order of things will be introduced.

Assistant Foreman Meader stated that there were two classes of men he envied, old soldiers and old firemen, who conscious of having faithfully done their duty, could sit down with satisfaction to talk over past lives; to fight their battles over and rejoice at the final victory. He stated that it may be sad to see the old machine go out of its place, but all could be proud that it has done its duty on all occasions. Everyone should be grateful that all youth does not die with us, and that younger men are to take their places; those who come after us may be able to do even better service than we have done.

Waterville 3 was removed from its Main Street home and placed in the house on Water Street, home of the Veteran Hose 2 Company. Here she would remain till she was sold to Newton, Massachusetts in 1891.



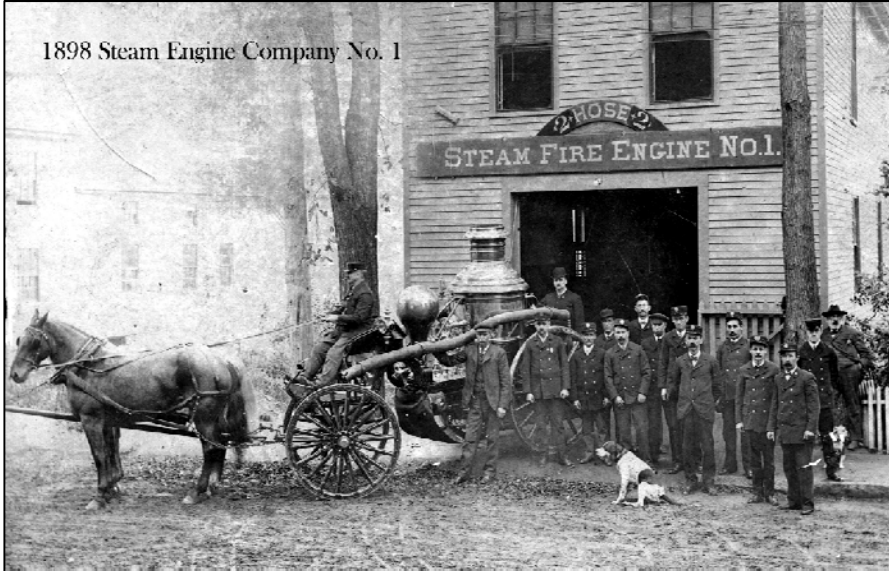
1885 Hose 1 Company & Steam Engine Company 1

Chief Hayden also had trouble with the company on Silver Street. At that time, the men of the department were not receiving any money for their work and it was hard at times to keep everything working. The Silver street boys did not like their foreman and they would only go to fires when they felt like it. After urging the boys to work together and when receiving no response, Chief Hayden disbanded the company, but this time took the precaution to lock the doors of the house so that the company could not carry off the furnishings. Another company was soon organized and Chief Hayden said that he had no more trouble with the men after that.

Chief Hayden had the Town of Waterville purchase a Button steam fire engine on May 27, 1884 making a decisive change in the fire department. The cost of this engine was \$3,500, and this Steam Engine was number 148 of 229 that were built by the L. Button & Company out of New York. The

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Steamer, on delivery, was accompanied by Mr. Lysander Button himself, who ran the acceptance test. The test was to be conducted before Waterville accepted the engine. On its first test the Steamer failed as a part on the boiler malfunctioned. Within a week the part was delivered and the Steamer was repaired. Mr. Button also fixed some leaking problems that Waterville had with the other Button hand tub, the Waterville 3. The Button Steamer was tested again and passed all its test and was pronounced a most excellent piece of workmanship. The firemen were very confident that they had a first class machine.



With the purchase of this steam engine, a new fire company was formed, the Waterville Steam Engine Company No. 3. But a few months later the company would vote to rename the Company and it was then known as the F. C. Thayer Steam Engine Company No. 1.

The Steamer would get a facelift in 1902 with a complete rebuild. New boiler, pump, metal work and paint job, costing the City \$1,500.

The Fire Department kept this Steam Engine until late 1957, when at that time the Engine left Waterville, being sold to Edaville Railroad Company in South Carver, Massachusetts for \$250. This company was owned by F. Nelson

Blount of Bellows Falls, Vermont. Mr. Blount was president and founder of Blount Seafood Corporation. He was a millionaire and a collector of vintage steam locomotives and rail cars. He founded Steamtown, USA, which was operated by the non-profit corporation, the Steamtown Foundation. The Steamer would eventually be moved to this location and was displayed in this museum for many years. Blount died at the age of 49 on August 31, 1967 in a small aircraft accident. Without his funds, Steamtown fell on hard times, and the harsh winters helped speed deterioration of much of the collection. Steamtown was then moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1984. The Steamer was displayed in the National Park Steamtown museum until 1988 when it was auctioned off. Arthur Swank, who purchased the steamer for \$7,500, had intentions of restoring it, but never did. The Steamer sat outside till 2012 in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, where it was rescued by Jerry Voisinet, of Ohio, who contacted Andy Swift of Hope, Maine who restores antique fire engines, moving it back to Maine. Andy started restorations on the old steamer in March 2012. Jerry Voisinet purchased the engine for \$1,500.00. The engine is due to be completed in the spring of 2015.

On January 6, 1885, Dr. Frederick C. Thayer would turn in his resignation from the Company and he would requested to have an Honorable Discharge. It was not till May 3, 1884 that the Company would vote on the resignation and the Company voted to accept Foreman Thayer's resignation. Appleton H. Plasited would be voted the Company's new Foreman.



With a new Steam Engine that could pump water from a stream, pond or river, had the City needing a better way to draw water from. Certain areas of the city were many hundreds of yards from the nearest water source. So the fire department found it was necessary to install many

more "fire cisterns" to draw water from. Cisterns were placed in strategic spots about the city. Many of the cisterns for firefighting were built during Chief J.D. Hayden's time as chief. Twenty-two cisterns were in use and each were of

different sizes, the smallest being 945 gallon; corner of Temple and Main Street, and the largest being over 60,000 gallons, in front of Common and Main Streets. The cistern on Common Street was enlarged about the time of Mr. Hayden's term of office.



Chief Hayden recalled the construction of the first cistern which was located at the junction of Main and Elm Streets. This cistern was built about 1861 and one man was killed. The cistern was built of concrete but they did not leave the supports in long enough and the wall fell in on three of the workmen. One man was crushed and one of the others was blown out through the manhole.

When Chief Hayden mentioned the little cistern at the corner of Silver and Main streets he laughed heartily as he thought of an amusing incident in connection with it. When he was chief, the Milliken block, situated at the corner of Main and Silver streets caught fire one cold night and the little cistern which held only about 40 hogsheads of water was soon emptied. A pipe line was also soon laid from the Lockwood cisterns and the fire was extinguished after a time. After the fire had

been placed under control, Chief Hayden started to make an inspection of the building and he said that when he opened the door into the third floor, water which stood over the tops of his rubber boots, rushed out and flowed down stairs bringing up in the cisterns which it completely filled, saving the department the cost of carrying water from the river.

With the innovation of the fire hydrant in the early 1900's, the cisterns were eventually discontinued. Then 12 miles of pipe were laid and the water supply was taken from the Messalonskee Stream and piped to 50 new hydrants. As the years went by, new hydrants were placed around the city and as the roads were repaired, the cisterns were removed or filled in with earth. The last cistern, a mammoth cistern having a capacity of 16,000 gallons of water, was removed in 2001 when Silver Street was being constructed for re-pavement.

With the placement of water lines from the Messalonskee, the water pressure has since been so high that only on a few occasions has it been necessary to use pumping apparatus at fires. Later, when the source of water supply was changed to China Lake, storage and pressure conditions became improved and now no city can boast of better water conditions than can Waterville.

The Kennebec Water District (KWD) was founded in 1899 and they control and maintain the hydrant system in the City of Waterville and surrounding communities. They would begin to charge hydrant rental fees to the communities they serve. In 1958 the City of Waterville was charged \$30 for each of its 238 hydrants, or a total of slightly in excess of \$7,000. The Public Utilities Commission rendered a decree, effective August 1, 1958, requiring Waterville to pay \$20,230 each year, along with a stepped up schedule for new hydrants. Today, in 2015, Waterville has 600 hydrants and pay a rental fee of \$336,530 per year. Today when a new hydrant is to be installed, unless the hydrant is to be placed on public roads, it is up to the land developers to pay for the installation and yearly rental fees.

At times the firefighters were criticized by the public. Chief Hayden said that in those days people would stand around and offer all kinds of advice and criticism to the firemen but that they could not be induced to lend a hand themselves and assist in stopping the flames. He mentioned an incident which occurred at a night fire on the Plains when several houses were destroyed. The fire occurred on a very cold night and the men had to keep working every minute to keep the tubs from freezing. A group of college boys were standing around offering advice and criticism and Chief Hayden asked them if they would not relieve the men at the brakes who were tired out by the constant grind. They replied that they would not and became so saucy that Chief Hayden decided to make them an example so he requested a police officer to put them at work. The officer took them up to the machine and made them work until the fire had been placed under control. Chief Hayden said that the law at that time gave the chief a right to call on citizens for assistance at any time and when they would not work voluntarily, they could be forced to help.

With the mention of the old Waterville 3 tub, Chief Hayden would talk about its days of running many Musters throughout the state. He stated that the old engine brought many trophies and money to Waterville and then he would mention the friendly feud which existed between Waterville and the Fairfield Companies. The Fairfield boys

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

bought a hand tub to compete against the local tub, buying a much larger machine and they issued a challenge to the locals for a purse of \$100. Josiah Drummond was then foreman of the Waterville 3 Company and he accepted the challenge and chose Emerson Bridge (bridge over the Messlonskee where Silver Street meets Kennedy Memorial Drive), as the place for the match. During to match, the Waterville 3 boys beat the Fairfield boys, and in doing so, they broke their machine. The visitors felt so badly that they would not eat the big supper which the local boys had provided at their fire house, which cost considerably more than the \$100 which had been bet on the match.



1898 Hose 1 Company

The two companies had another meeting at Bangor and again the Waterville 3 boys were victorious and Fairfield was also defeated by a tub much smaller than their own from some town in the eastern part of the state. Both companies returned on the same train and when they reached Fairfield, the captain of the Fairfield Company asked the conductor to stop the train and he invited the Waterville boys to a supper at the Fairfield hotel which did much to heal the breach between the companies.

Ticonic No. 1 was sold on September 3th, 1888 to the town of Ellsworth for the sum of \$700.00. That city had several such engines and all were destroyed by a huge fire that burned most of the town, but the Ticonic Engine survived. She is housed in the city building in Ellsworth and is in good condition. Efforts have been made to buy her back for Waterville, but she is still a

favorite with the old timers there and they refuse to sell. The hand tub returned to Waterville in 1952 to help Waterville celebrate its Sesquicentennial. The City of Ellsworth loaned the "Ticonic" to Waterville for its parade. Anyone wishing to view the "Ticonic" today, can travel to Ellsworth, Maine, as it is still owned and housed in Ellsworth.

In 1888 when the "City" form of government was adopted, the charter provided that each year there should be elected a chief engineer and two assistants for the fire department and that members of the department should be chosen each year. This system led to the influence of politics in the fire department, and in the police department as well, and if the opposite party came into control at the annual March election, the employed drivers immediately planned to pack their belongings and move out of the stations and members of the various companies looked for a new men to replace them the following May. So it was that there really existed two sets of firemen who served according to their political affiliations. But, whether they were of one party or another, it seemed that there were always trained men available and such changes were taken more or less as a matter of course and in good nature.

Yet this was a condition that did not make for the greatest efficiency and in 1907 the city charter was amended by the state legislature and since that time a fireman, whether a regular driver or a call man, when elected may serve until he wishes to withdrawal, or there are definite charges preferred against him why he should not continue his work.

It can be said that when a man applies for membership in any of the fire companies, which are judges of their own elections, subject to the approval of the city council, he is elected upon his ability to fight fire and the only questions asked are, "will you respond promptly to all calls?" and, "Will you stay on the job until it is finished?"

The first chief under the new charter was Horace G. Tozier, who served for three years and was succeeded through the years by others, according to the wishes of the city fathers. All were men who had served their apprenticeship in the ranks and through various grades, all capable and each in his turn adding something of a permanent nature to the department. One of the members of F.C. Thayer Steam Engine Company No. 1 in 1888 and first driver of the department, Frank H. Reed, hired in 1885, and he received a salary of \$42.00 a month.

Veteran Company No. 2 was disbanded January 10th, 1888 and became Hose Company No. 3. The old Neptune Hose Company No. 6 became Hose 2, with the Steamer at the home on Silver Street. In 1892 a house was built on Ticonic Street and Hose 4 was organized.

The ringing of church bells summoned firemen to fires in the "good old days." It was in September 1892 that a contract was made with the Gamewell Company to build an alarm system with 13 boxes at a cost of \$2,300. The bell in the steeple of St. Francis de Sales Church and the Second Baptist Church on Water Street, tapped out the alarms

from then until 1913 when the present system of an air operated siren on the roof of the Central Fire station was put into service. Boxes were placed in service throughout the city and when a fire was discovered, someone would run to the nearest box to the fire, and pull in the alarm. The firefighters would count the number being rung in, check their run sheet to see if the fire was in their section of town. The Company that was assigned to that box being rung in would respond, all the other companies would not respond unless they were requested to by addition alarms that would be rung in.

The town was divided up into three districts, which were as followed; District No.1, North of Railroad Tracks off College Avenue; District No. 2, Between Railroad Tracks and Sherwin Street; and District No. 3, South of Sherwin Street.

The alarms outlined by Chief Warren F. Brown were as follows: General Alarm - A general alarm may be run by order of the Mayor and companies will report at Steamer Company's house. The alarm system consisted of thirteen strokes of the bell to be followed by the district numbers, which were: No.1, four strokes of the bell: no.2, five strokes; and No. 3, six strokes with the district number to be continued for "not more than ten minutes."

An alarm in the day did not bring a rush of fire trucks to the scene of a blaze, but rather called for a lot of hard running on the part of department members with much of the apparatus being of the hand drawn variety with the exception of a few pieces of horse drawn equipment including the steamer.

Two horses were placed in the old Main Street station in 1895, with the first swing harness. The department has for some time been in need of a pair of new horses to take the place of the pair of blacks that have been run on the hose cart. The blacks had gotten too old for the service, and Robert L. Proctor, First Assistant Engineer, recently went to Boston and brought back on trial a pair of very handsome dappled grays. The price asked for them was \$400. They are very kind, and it is believed that they can do the required work better than any pair the city has yet owned. The two old blacks was kept for a while to do easy work, and when their period of usefulness was gone, they were put out of the way humanely. They were not sold as everyone was afraid that they would have been ill-treated. Horses for other apparatus were hired until the turn of the century. Horses became a matter of history in 1927 when the department had a complete equipment of motor driven trucks.

The first recorded "Line of Duty Death" of Waterville's famous fire horses, assigned to Hose No. 1, came on October 15, 1900. A report of the fire alarm system being out of order sent Drive George Proctor to drive down Pleasant Street to see where the trouble was. During the week the wires in front of the High School on Gilman Street, have caused trouble having been displaced by footballs being kicked from the High School yard.

Directly in front of the High School, the wires of the New England Telephone Company and the fire alarm system had become crossed with the 2,000 volt wire of the Waterville & Fairfield Electric Railway & Light Company, having burnt off, fallen to the ground, charging the ground so that the fire horses were thrown to the ground about twenty feet away from the wires. Struggling to their feet, they made one more plunge and fell dead, some five feet away from the wires. Proctor received a violent shock but escaped serious injury. A lineman of the Electric Light Company, who was already on the scene, quickly cut the wires to avoid other accidents.

Jack, the fire dog assigned to Hose No. 1, was also on duty this sad day. He was a great favorite with the men and has always been on very familiar terms with the Hose 1 horses. When the two grays were taken out, Jack was along as usual. When the horses first struck the electricity charged street, Jack was in the rear of the Hose Cart, but as soon as he saw that there was some trouble, he came rushing up eager to take part in any excitement there might be. When he struck the charged earth, however, his eagerness suddenly left him, and his dash became a hobble.

That was the last that Driver Proctor saw of him and he supposed that he had crawled off somewhere to die, until in the evening when Mrs. Proctor sent word that Jack was in the house on her best bed and she couldn't get him off. It seems that the dog survived his shock, went home and on being admitted to the house, went directly to the bed room and hauled himself in the middle of the bed, all muddy as he was. He was thoroughly frightened and would allow no one to dislodge him until Mr. Proctor went to the house in the evening.

The fright is nothing to what Jack suffers from a few days later. His feet are sore, and worst of all is he could not wag his tail. Jack is a Pointer dog and had a tail that stood out straight and wagged very easily, but the end of his tail drags on the ground and try as hard as he may, he can't raise it nor can he wag it. It seems Jack's days as a Fire Dog for Hose No. 1 had ended that day.

Another "Line of Duty Death" came to another Fire Horse on March 1902. An alarm of fire rung in at 4:30 o'clock from Box 47 at the corner of College Avenue and High Street, to the house occupied by Honorable William T. Haines. In responding to this alarm, the fire department met with a severe loss in the death of the black mare, "Jet," one of the Hook & Ladders pair. John Davis was driving the pair at the usual clip up College Avenue and just before making the rise near Hazelwood Avenue "Jet" faltered and fell and was dead when Driver Davis reached her. Davis stated that Jet was in her usual health when the start for the fire was made. It is thought old age played an important

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part in her sudden death. She was purchased nine years ago along with her mate, "Dick," the pair costing \$350. Her age was sweet sixteen and she grew old gracefully, so all said who had anything to do with her.



A horse was brought up from the stable of J. P. Goddard to help haul the apparatus the rest of the way to the fire. Ira Mitchell's pair of bays were commissioned for the present time and the report from the Chief Engineers was that the City will purchase a new pair as soon as possible to take the place of "Dick and Jet."

The first "Line of Duty Death" of a fire fighter came on June 21, 1901, when George H. Proctor, driver of Hose No. 1, of the Waterville Fire Department, was instantly killed at the Wentworth Street gravel pit. A team was sent to the pit to assist the street department in making repairs on the roads. Mr. Proctor, contrary to his custom, was assisting in loading the team, when a cave-in occurred and frightened the horses, which started on a dead run. Quick as a flash Proctor seized the reins but was thrown down,

the heavy wagon passing over his body. One leg was fractured; the ribs of one side of his body were crushed against his heart, causing almost instantaneous death. Mr. Proctor was 29 years old and very popular at the central fire station. A wife and two children survived him. Coroner Snell was at once summoned to the scene of the accident, but deemed an inquest unnecessary. The remains were given over to the care of an undertaker. The runaway horses were stopped near the Flood's coal sheds and the animals were uninjured. The horses were only recently purchased by the city.

In 1902, Waterville celebrated their Centennial year. A book written by Frank Redington writes about the great increasing pride in the Fire Department and the local insurance men being much pleased with the efficiency of the Fire Department. An estimated \$75,000 in insurance premiums were paid to insurance companies annually. In the Centennial of the City of Waterville Parade, Chief Davies had a delegation consisting of his two aids and carriages transporting the Ex-Chiefs of the Department. The Bloomer (our first hand pumper, purchased in 1809) was also shown

The Waterville Relief Association was formed in the early 1900's. Its objective was to give financial aid to those who were injured in the discharge of their duties. Danger confronted the brave firemen with accidents, pain, and maybe death. This organization promises to be a valuable aid to the Department. This fund was used many times and its funding came from each company. Whenever a member missed a fire or training, he was to pay the company 25 cents, and this money was kept and recorded by each Company Clerk. Each company in Waterville at this time would take their collected money and place it in the Relief Fund. It was the duty of the Company Clerk to keep track of how much monies each Company had placed into the fund, even though the Relief Fund was divided equally to any injured firefighter, no matter which Company he was assigned too.

Thomas Landry, was the City's electrician and was also hired by the fire department to be in charge of the Gamewell fire alarm system. While working on the system on July 11, 1902, Thomas crossed two wires and was electrocuted. He died instantly. Thomas was 37 years old and was survived by his wife and seven children.

In 1904 the fire department was in need of a better fire alarm system to alert their firefighters around the city, so the department approached the city fathers in hopes of solving this issue. The question of improving the fire alarm of the city became a rather puzzling matter. The bell being used at the St. Francis de Sales church cannot be heard distinctly at all times in all parts of the city. At first a compressed air whistle was considered, as it would work like a charm in the warm weather and the cost of operating it is small, but it did not seem possible that it would be able to withstand the Maine winter and do its work faithfully all of the time. A steam whistle was thought of and a meeting with the Hollingsworth and Whitney Company was done regarding the placing of a big fire whistle at the plant, as the steam is kept up all the time and there would be plenty to blow any alarm. But it was deemed that it would be too far from the business center and would it be powerful enough to be heard throughout the city. A bell was finally settled on, a bell that would weigh in at 1000 pounds and would cost around \$200. An order was passed authorizing the

purchase and the placing it at City Hall. It was decided once the bell arrived to replace the bell at the St Francis de Sales church and not spend the money to construct a new building on top of City Hall for the bell. The church bell at the French Baptist Church on Water Street would also be used. House bells in the homes of the firefighters were also installed at this time.



1907 Chaplin & Ticonic Street

A still alarm was struck for a rubbish fire on Swan Street, with Hose 1 Responding. When the fire was discovered, little attention was paid to it until it assumed proportions that cause anxiety to the property owners in the vicinity. The fire had too much of a start, so Hose 1 was called by telephone. The run was a long and hard one for the horses, but they stood the test well, arriving on the scene in remarkably quick time, considering the fact that as it was the dinner hour, and there was few of the firemen at the station when the alarm came in and the horses had to be held in several times to enable the driver to pick up a crew. This, however made only a few seconds difference in the time of the run. The drenching of the blaze was a matter of a few minutes, and the men and horses returned to their interrupted dinners.

A banquet was held in 1905 for the newly elected Chief Roscoe W. Hanson and

at this banquet the Mayor praised the fire department for the work they had done and the promptness in responding to alarms. He stated he was concerned with the construction of the building within the city, and he question the need to have fire-proof building built in the city and buildings with fire escapes added for the safety of the citizens. Sheldon E. Whitcomb, a member of the fire department committee, was next called on and he paid more particular attention to the drivers, saying that a driver on one of the hose carts had about as much responsibility as a driver of a locomotive and in some ways more, for the track was supposed to be clear for the locomotive while the driver of the hose cart has to pick his way through the crowd. He told in particular of the fine work that had been done by the present drivers and remarked on the fact that if the fire teams should run into and damage a team in coming down the street to a fire, the city would have to pay for the damages and thus it required a first class man for the place. He thought that the men who were now in the positions were the best men possible and said that he hoped to see them retained.

The fire department has always done its best to be the best, have the best equipment and be efficient in its training as to get the best insurance rating for the city, but in 1906 the local insurance agents had received a notice of an increase of 20 cents to insurance rates in the heart of the business section of the city. The New England Insurance Exchange stated that an area known as the "Conflagration area", will receive the increase. It stated that the charge is being made in all the cities on account of various defects in the fire department and water protection and lack of electrical inspectors. Within the days of this notice, the city will be examined by an inspector of the National Board of Fire Underwriters and hopes were expected that the present condition of Waterville may be such that after such an examination a part of the change at least can be taken care of.

In 1907 Walter W. Berry was made Fire Chief. Chief Berry recommended building a Central Station at the Hanscom Place, the current site of Central Fire Station. He also recommended that more fire escapes be installed throughout the city. There were only three in existence and two of those were in real bad shape. He feared the large loss of life, if certain conditions arose. Because the Department only has one extension ladder.

In his report to the City, Chief Berry included the following: "I do not know if it is of any use to offer any recommendations, for not a single one that I offered in my reports has been complied with, but I will offer the following: the first thing is to purchase a lot on which to build a new Central Fire Station. Next, put the fire alarm system in first class condition. Buy some modem fire apparatus, and by this I mean a new steamer and combination chemical hose wagon, more hose, new ladders, a life net and other minor apparatus."

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Waterville has always been very ready to assist her neighbors and has a definite agreement with departments of surrounding towns to give or receive aid in case of emergencies. Perhaps the most notable case of going out of town was on April 30th, 1911, when Chief Walter W. Berry took the Steamer No.1, Hose No. 2 and 40 men, by rail car to Bangor, where they rendered all possible assistance and did not return home until May 1st, at 09:00 a.m. Their work helped Bangor with one of the worst conflagrations in Maine's history.

As of the story of so many years, the City had to address the accuracy of their fire alarm. There had been many fires that had gone undiscovered by the current fire alarm system due to some malfunctioning wires. With the winter months approaching, it was predicted that there would be more trouble to come. It had been suggested that the only

safe way to have the wires of the fire alarm system taken care of was to put them in underground conduits where they would not be interfered with by the heavier voltage wires. The system also would not be interfered with whenever there came a storm, either of wind or electrical, either to blow the wires about and mix them up and to break limbs and have them fall across the lines, or have the lighting strike them.

There was in the city at the time, about 32,000 feet of wire on the Gamewell circuit and about 22,000 feet on the auxiliary alarm system, for a total of 54,000 feet of wire. Part of the auxiliary wire ran along the same streets as the Gamewell wires, and could be accommodated in the same conduits. Much of the trouble from grounds in trees and opens caused by falling limbs would be eliminated. It would also be proper to have the cable of such size that all the wires in the police signal circuit could be cared for also. This plan would not only insure better, more positive and reliable service, but would mean a savings of money to the city in fewer of its instruments being burnt out.



The New England Telephone & Telegraph Company a few years before had laid new underground conduit for their wires and had left a duct for the city to have, in case they were to ever need it. The manager of the company stated that it is the custom of the company, whenever a conduit is laid, to make this large enough so that there will be one duct left for the use of the municipality. The only issues was getting some of the alarm box wires to these conduits, as the conduits were placed under the principal streets throughout the city. The fire department did take advantage of these conduits, but only the boxes closest to the Telephone's conduits were done, which was mostly the downtown area.

An annual supper of Hose 2 was held at the their house with Mayor Redington, Chief Berry, assistant engineers, and representatives of the committee on the fire department and most of the members of the company present and it was one of the jolly good times for which the department is noted. Members of the department took occasion to call attention to changes and improvements that are needed and much of value was said and which will doubtless bear fruit in the city government during the coming year. The location for the central fire station was one of the principal themes and nearly all of the speakers favored the Hanscom lot, each one giving good reasons for this choice. The handling of the teams in work outside the department was also discussed with police protection at fires and other similar matters.

Poor old Maud, the horse at Hose 2, came in for a big lot of criticism and there was so much of it, of such a severe character, that Mayor Redington finally suggested she be brought up stairs to speak for herself. She has been

causing so much trouble when being harnessed for alarms that all the men who have anything to do with her had a grievance. It is probably that the meeting will result in ending the career of the horse in the department, for it seemed to be the general opinion that she is a long legged, long backed, long eared lunkhead, incapable of education, without loyalty to the cause and a general nuisance that is perfectly useless for fire purposes. That the horse is a bad one in the business, has been for some time, but few outside Hose 2 thought she had so many bitter enemies as developed at the meeting. With Captain Coombs starting the attack on the horse, Maude, the poor girl was so excited after the meeting she didn't get a wink of sleep the rest of the night, for it certainly looked like a public carriage or some other equally mental occupation for her. The mayor seemed to be her only friend, although Chief Berry did make some excuses for her and she was certainly astonished to find herself so unpopular.



1910 Hose 2 in Parade

But aside from old Maude there was very little criticism of anyone or anything and the spirit to make the best of everything, be first in and last out, get next to a fire by the shortest route and show it no mercy, beat the other company if you can and if you can't be glad they get there quicker than you did and all of that which has had so much to do with giving the Waterville Fire Department a name all over New England was present in abundance.

Captain Coombs called the men to order and introduced the speakers. Mayor Redington, being the first to be called upon, began with some reminiscences, suggested by the portraits of former firemen on the walls of the room, giving some interesting facts and incidents about them. He said that since he took office, he has found there were many duties connected with the office of which he had been ignorant. He stated that he believed that for the size of the city, the Waterville fire department is the most efficient in the state and New England as well. The record of fires and fire losses leaves a good balance in the city's favor. There has been no large fire for many years, most of them being what might be called

incipient. The department can be depended on to handle fires well under all circumstances. He stated that the greatest need now is a new central fire station. He stated that he was not settled his mind on a location but he stated that they should not put up an inferior building or go to a poor location and it never pays to do anything poorly and what they do, they should do it well. He stated that they should do what the fire boys want, what the citizens want and a properly equipped station in a good location.



1910 Hose 1 in Parade

Chief Berry spoke has he believed the Hanscom lot has advantages to be found in no other in the city and the principal objection to it he has heard was that it would send the teams onto a street with car traffic. But the way the cars stop now, this would cause little trouble and with the motormen paying any attention to business there would be no danger of collisions. The lot is easy to access from all parts of the city and while costly may be purchased reasonably. He stated he did not favor a wooden building of any kind when one is built, but one of brick and concrete, as whatever is built now must last for many years. One other good reason for the Hanscom lot was that when the team of horses would leave the station, they would have straight runs to most any part of the city.

A Conference Committee was set up in 1910 to study and review locations for a new Central fire station. The committee was appointed by the city government to see if the alderman

and councilmen could not come to an agreement on the matter of the purchase of the Hanscom lot as the site for a Central fire station. The Committee came to no decision, but it is understood from a member that the majority of the members favor the selection of the Hanscom lot as the place on which to build the new fire station. Another meeting was set and a report will be made then. The committee talked over other sites and they will be investigating the Hanscom lot, the Snell lot on Front Street, the land which the Waterville Motor Company's garage is at the present location on Upper Main Street and a lot on Appleton Street near Charles Street (this location would have been land behind the Waterville Public Library).



In early 1911 the Conference Committee had finally settled on the Hanscom lot and send out a public notice, requesting anyone interested in placing bids to build the new central fire station. Realizing the inadequacy of the buildings housing the apparatus in the central part of the city, a new station, first recommended by Chief Appelton H. Paisted in 1894, was built on College Avenue near Post Office Square. On August 14, 1911, five bids were open to see who would built the new station. In accordance with the plans and specifications as furnished by Architect H.F. Freeman, of Massachusetts, the bid was awarded to Augustus Carey & Company of Waterville, at a cost of \$12,037.00. The successful bid was the second lowest bid with the highest being \$13,623 from L.E. Bradstreet & Sons Company of Hallowell, Maine.

The teams at the Central Fire Station on Main Street, will be taken out of their quarters and placed at the Elmwood stables on Main Street until their house is moved to the new lot recently purchased by the city. The property which was sold to the city by Martin Bartlett was formerly owned by Dr. Holmes, well known to the older people of the city, and is one of the oldest houses in the city. This old landmark will be removed to make way for the Central Fire buildings and eventually will be the site of a modern brick station.

The House will be moved to a lot in the Gilman field, where it will be thoroughly repaired. This will be started the first week of September and as soon as it is moved the Central fire buildings will be transferred to the new lot. Several of the tall and handsome shade trees on College Avenue will have to be removed.

It was thought that the old fire houses on Main Street could be moved to the lot and used while the new station was being built. This of course was not done as the old fire houses on Main Street were not firm enough to be moved and the town's people are well

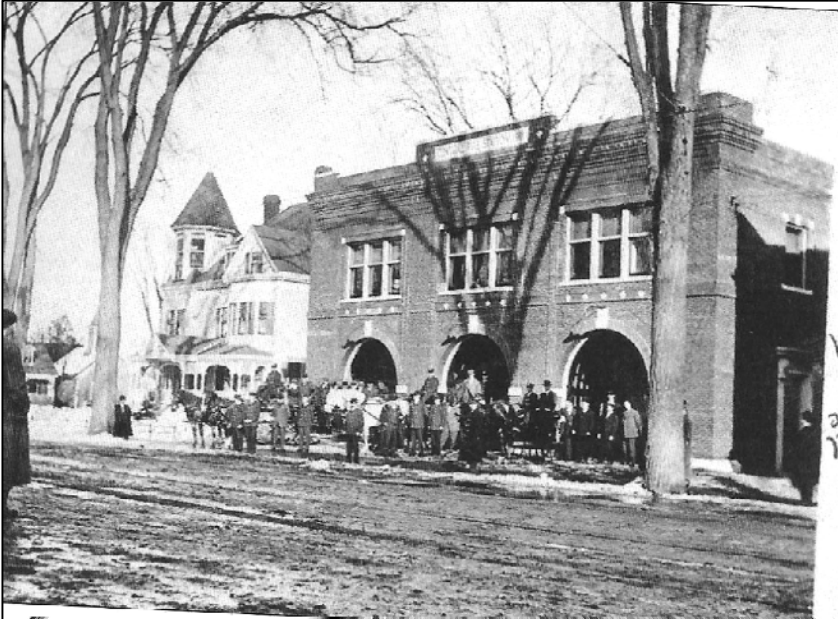
convinced that it would be a waste of money to move the old fire buildings from their present location. It would cost about \$2,000 to make the transfer and to move the buildings again when a new station is built. So for a while, the firemen will work out of the stables at the Elmwood Hotel Stables off College Avenue.

The city's plan at the time, as a cost saving measure, was a plan to have the city build the shell of the new station and furnish only the ground floor. This would cost about \$10,000, and it is thought that the financing could be carried through somehow to finish the second story. With the ground floor finished, the apparatus and horses could be housed and a temporary quarters made for the drivers. Then when the city was a little richer, the upper part could be completed. As the construction of the building started and as the months followed the first laying of the bricks, the money was found to complete the whole project. Some of the new firefighters in the year 2002 will re-call that this also happened to them when the City decided to place an addition onto the old Central Fire Station. In a cost saving measure, the second floor of the new addition was going to remain empty, unfinished, until funds could be found in the future so they could finish the project. This did not set well with the firefighters and citizens, so the project was finished even though the project ran over cost.

In October 1911, a simple ceremony, without a word of speechmaking, although several local orators were present, the official laying of the cornerstone of the new Central Fire Station was held. Among those present were Mayor William R. Pattangall, Chief Walter W. Berry, Chief E. W. Allen of the Winslow Fire Department, Assistant Chief Luke Ivers, Jr. and the Captain of various companies, Former Chief George F. Davies, Building Inspector L. C. Pollard, Contractor Augustus Carey, and others.

The teams of the fire department were drawn up in lines in front of the building. As a matter of fact the cornerstone had been put in position some time ago, a space being left in which a copper plated box with appropriate records was sealed. The box contained a copy of the Waterville Morning Sentinel and a copy of the Kennebec Journal for October 26th, 1911; a copy of the building contract; pictures of Jack the dog; the section of buildings saved by the Waterville firemen at the Bangor fire; and fire station with the Hose 1 team and company in front; the roster of the fire companies which will occupy the house; the cards of present and former officials of the fire

department, and many other souvenirs. The box was put in place, bricks and mortar soon surrounded it and the ceremony was over.



In the summer of 2014, the area where the cornerstone was laid, was broken into to see if the copper plated box still existed. There was nothing found in this location, so it is believed that some time ago it had been opened, but there is no firefighter or city official who remembers when this had happened. No record of the cornerstone being open can be found at this time.

On December 26, 1911, there has been one of the greatest changes in the fire houses in the history of the Fire Department. The old firehouses that was located at the present site of the TD Bank on Main Street was torn down to make way for a new Federal Post Office.

On January 8th, 1912, Chief Walter W. Berry stated in an interview with the Morning Sentinel, barring any inconveniences, he would have the most of the fire apparatus, now spread over the

city, quartered in the New Central Fire Station on College Avenue within the next week. This will be good news to the firemen and the citizens at large as the past arrangement, although necessary from the sale of the old quarters, has been entirely unsatisfactory. The apparatus has been spread over too great a territory and while the city has been most fortunate in not having any great conflagration, the conditions have been poor.

The new station on College Avenue will be one of the finest in New England goes without saying. Chief Berry stated that he had occasion to be in many houses over the state and that the one in this city had more floor space than any he had ever been in. Four pieces of apparatus will be stationed on the first floor. These will be Hose 1 team, which will occupy the middle section; Hook & Ladder truck, which will have the north section; the Hose 2 team, which will occupy the south section and the Steamer which will be placed just back of the Hose 2 cart.

Four brass poles will be installed for the use of the firemen coming from the second floor. On the second floor will be found a large assembly room in front. At one corner will be the office of the Chief. Directly back of the assembly room is a large hall with a skylight above, as this will be unutilized by the firemen as a game room. Back of this are the sleeping rooms of the drivers and those firemen who make the house their home.

On January 25, 1912, with horns blowing, bells ringing and other available instruments of noise busy, the members of Hose 1 Company, who have been stationed at the old Hose 2 house on Silver Street since the destruction of the Central station, left their old quarters and drove to the new station on College Avenue yesterday. They were met there by the Hook & Ladder Company and Hose 2, who have been stationed at the Elmwood stables. At precisely 1 o'clock Chief Walter W. Berry gave the word and the three large doors swung open and the teams backed into their new home. It was a day long to be remembered by the present firemen.

A large number of citizens were on hand to witness the entrance. Everything worked like clockwork and there was not a hitch in the arrangements. After adjusting the harnesses the horses were placed in their stalls. At first it appeared rather strange to them but after pulling the doors several times they ran to their accustomed places under the harness in their old time manner. The firemen then began arranging their new quarters.

Besides the drivers, four men will stay at the house at night. There is an ample accommodation for all. The drivers' room has been fitted with an auxiliary telephone in case of a night call. Formerly it was necessary to dress and hurry downstairs to answer the telephone.

For the first time in the history of the city the Central companies are now housed under one roof. It has been a date long awaited for and now everything is complete. Dr. Frederick C. Thayer, ex-chief of the department, said; "I am glad that I have lived to see it."

A year later on January 28, 1913, a delightful house warming was held at the Central Fire Station by the members of the three companies, Hose 1, 2 and Hook & Ladder No. 1. As invited guests they had the honor of having with them the board of engineers and the drivers of the three companies. The banquet was served in an

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admirable manner by Edward Butler. It was a fitting opening of the new home and an occasion that was enjoyed by every firemen present.



The only regrettable occurrence of the evening was when the boys were just ready to take their places at the tables that the alarm was sounded from Box 63. But there was no confusion in any way and the firemen took their time and had the apparatus on the way in but a few minutes. The alarm was preceded by telephone call for chemicals and two men were on their way to the scene when the alarm came in.

A singular coincidence was the fact that the fire was at the home of the caterer of the evening, Mr. Butler, the proprietor of the Appleton Inn. It was in his own room and he went with the boys. When it was over he returned to fulfill his duties at the banquet hall. Another coincidence was the fact that it was the first bell alarm since entering the new quarters. It will be an evening long to be remembered by the fire boys.

The installation of a complete, up to date fire alarm for the city was one of the Chief Berry's items of interest at the first annual banquet held at the New Central Fire Station in 1913. While the fire system was the chief object for discussion by many speakers, other matters of equal importance crept into favor. These were the installation of a police signal system in conjunction with the fire system, the modernizing of the apparatus, the increase of the firemen's pay for their efficient service and the taking of other steps that will place Waterville the foremost city in Maine.

Mayor Pattangall acknowledged that the Waterville had the best department, but the worst fire alarm system in the world. Many close calls for alarming the firefighters to calls were avoided by other means when the fire alarm system now guarding the city had failed. He stated; "In a city like Waterville we must provide for all the city's needs although it may seem temporality extravagant. You have a new high school building and no one has felt the expense and so on in other lines. During the coming year there is nothing to be built in the way of public buildings and there is no reason why the system should not receive attention. It should not be looked at as a matter

of expense because if we do not better the system it means a raise in the fire insurance rates."

Ex-Mayor Frank Redington stated that the fire system should be the best the city could afford. He suggested that the fire alarm system that rings the bell at the St Francis de Sales Church on Elm Street be taken down and placed at the Central Fire Station. So in 1913 the Waterville City fathers took the important step insuring the funds to replace the much needed fire alarm system needed for the city. The City contracted with the Gamewell Fire Alarm Company of Boston to install a system for \$7,800 according to the specifications and agreement.

According to the recommendations it was necessary to have an active new system as the old one that was in use, was inadequate for the present day use. A fire-proof house was needed to also be built to house the mechanical apparatus, together with the batteries and switchboard. The Gamewell representative stated that such a building should be built behind the Central Fire Station. The fire-proof building would not only include the switchboard but also the repeater, the charging board and a stop clock. A manual transmitter will be installed inside Central Fire Station which will have 60 wheels corresponding with the box numbers and special calls, which may be sent in from any box in the City. An air horn was installed on the roof of the Central station and operated by a compressed air plant. The box numbers were cut down, for example, large numbers like 58 and 59 was changed to 121 and 123 and only three rounds will be sounded instead of four.

One of the finest piece of property in the City, was now a mass of blacken ruins. The Notre Dame Catholic Church on Water Street in the south end of the city was practically destroyed by fire in March 1913. It was a three story building brick and granite and had cost \$70,000. It had not been fully completed and had only been occupied less than a year. People living in the neighborhood stated they were awoken by the sounds of an explosion at about 11:30 p.m. and when they investigated they found the church in flames. (See story on page).

Eager to assist their fellow neighbors, Steamer Company No. 1 along with Hose 2 was called to assist Augusta at an early morning fire. The order came by telephone to Chief Berry at 1:40 a.m., who immediately aroused the sleepers at the Central Fire Station. No alarm was sent in but those who lived in the immediate vicinity were hustled

out of bed. The Steamer and Hose 2 with extra hose was soon on the way to the train station, where they were loaded. The fire train was delayed a few minutes at the Winslow station on account of an east bound passenger train.

A quick run was made to the Capital City but on arrival the local firemen had the fire all under control and the services of the Waterville department were not needed. The firemen after looking over the ruins for a few minutes started on their homeward trip, arriving home about 5:30 a.m.

Waterville purchased a White motor hose carriage which was placed in commission January 5th, 1915 and will be placed at the Central Station. An order to purchase this wagon and a pair of horses. The committee was also give the authority to sell or exchange the spare horse and all this had to be done on a budget of only \$1,600. An hour after its commission, the White fire truck made its first run. The department was called out for a chimney fire at a home on Water Street. The fire did not amount to anything, but it afforded Waterville citizens a chance to see the new fire truck in action for the first time.

The truck arrived in the city during the day and was unloaded from the rail car at a little past 7 o'clock, reaching Central station at about 8. It was placed downstairs and about 1000 feet of hose had been loaded into it and a few of the accessories put it place when the alarm came in. Chief Walter W. Berry immediately ordered it out and although the driver had an awkward place to get it out, but he passed the hose team before it got to Temple Street, and was at the scene of the fire some few minutes ahead of the rest of the apparatus.

The truck is what is known as a Kress-White combination hose and chemical fire car. It is painted a bright red with gold striping and with the letters, W.F.D. on each side of the hood and the word "Waterville" across the back. It is nickel trimmed with exceptionally large headlights and a high nickel rail running up over the ash to which is fastened the searchlight and fire bell. On the running boards are placed axes, bars, lanterns and other accessories needed by fire fighters. The chassis is the regular White fire truck chassis, with a six cylinder 64 horse power motor, fitted with an electric starter and electric lights, two powerful headlights, two side lights and a large 14 inch searchlight that can be turned in any direction. The transmission is the regular cone clutch and four speed selective gear set, geared up on high. It has a shaft drive and full floating rear axle, and dual wheels on the rear fitted with pneumatic tires, all the same size of 37x5. The body is of the flaring side type, built of steel and lined with wood and so constructed that seats are provided for the men over the hose. The car carries 1200 feet of hose, and a 40 gallon chemical tank. It is capable of speeds of better than 60 miles per hour. On its first run it ran at a good clip in spite of the fact that it was forced to slow down for the teams that followed.

One of the many things that the fire department did was to demonstrate their worth at any occasion. A Carnival was held in the city in 1915 and the department took advantage of the warm weather to show the citizens how they can respond quickly to a mock fire. The exhibition run and rescue by the fire department went off with a spirit and vim which showed that in an emergency the local department would be there with the goods. Just 65 seconds elapsed from the time that the hook was pulled at Box 25 to the time that the headlights of the Chemical truck passed the hydrants and just four minutes and 25 seconds from the time the hook was pulled until Miss Ethel Farnham landed safely on the ground, having descended the ladder in the arms of a member of the department from the top of the Kruitzy block. As with any drill, firemen always say they can do better. It was no different with this group of firemen. The member wished to make another try at this test as they felt sure they could have cut down their time considerably. This was the first time that a fireman has ever carried another person down the big extension ladder although the trick was pulled several times with shorter ladders. The victim, Miss Farnham was given a drive to the fire station on the truck where she was presented with a beautiful fountain pen and a box of candy from the members of the company.

"Will Waterville have a motor driven hook & ladder?" For the first time in 1916, the thought of getting a motor driven ladder truck came to light. Just what will happen with the proposed plan to motorize the Waterville Fire Department which has been one of the aims of the present administration from the first of the year, but which was killed when Alderman Butler "bucked." Fate gave Alderman Butler most of the cards in that particular game for both Alderman Cowan and Spaulding, who, it is understood, are in favor of the proposition, were out of town and Alderman Pulsifer was also absent. Both Alderman Cowan and Spaulding planned to attend the meeting but the freight wreck at Freeport delayed them until the meeting was over.

It was reported that at a committee meeting the previous week, Alderman Butler promised to support the bill, although he was not in favor of it. So when the City Clerk called for the roll, Mr. Butler's negative vote came as a great surprise. Alderman Lewis, who has been in favor of preparedness in the fire department, was the only supporter of the bill, registering the only affirmative vote. The department would try again for a motorized, but it was not until 1922 that it got its first motorized ladder truck.

At the annual banquet in 1917, John S. Caldwell, engineer for the New England Fire Insurance Exchange told the member attending that the city needed more hydrants, a new motor driven Hook & Ladder and more regular

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firemen. He stated that the Exchange has brought up the matter to the city government and it is now up to them to see that it happens. He explained the system of regulating insurance rates in Maine by classifying every city and town according to the amount of fire protection, showing just why Waterville is rated a Class C city and how by making needed improvements, Waterville would rise to a Class B and thus lessen to a great extent the insurance premiums paid by local property owners.



Chief Berry spoke stating that the fires for the past year were small and the cost of property losses, are the smallest since his connection with the department. He attributes this chiefly to the effects from inspections being made of businesses and residences. He encouraged each citizen of the city, to use their best endeavors to reduce to best of their knowledge and fire hazards. We don't know when the sounding of an alarm may mean the death of a fireman or friend. The fire drill of school children should be dramatized more to make it realistic. The people of this

country are treating this question practically altogether from the property loss standpoint. They have apparently lost track of the great number of human lives which are taken every year as a toll. We must all pull together and endeavor to prevent this awful waste by being more careful in every way.

For the year 1918, at a speech at the department annual banquet, Mayor E. C. Wardwell stated that the Waterville has the best fire department of any city of its size in the state, both in personnel and material. The principal object of the fire department is to put fire out and some people he stated find fault because the fire department uses too much water, but when there is a fire in the old wooden buildings of the city and the city is threatened, they will be glad that they used a lot of water. Time after time fire have caught in the old wooden buildings and the Waterville Fire Department have been "Johnny-on-the-spot." It is no cinch to turn out in the dead of the night, in the winter with the wind blowing and crawl up ladders onto icy roofs where a slip might mean death or broken limbs. There must be something in it besides money. Not all the heroes went to the front lines. Many times the firemen risk life and limb in their work.

Before introducing the next speaker, Chief Berry took occasion to bring sharply to the attention of those present a few facts in regards to common infraction of the rules of the city ordinance in regard to fires. He said, "I am no speech maker but I have some random shots that I want to hammer into you tonight. Under the new ordinance there are several things that you cannot do and be inside the rules. One thing that is common to do is to sweep out the store with some sweeping compound and gather a lot of rubbish and when you come to the stair, sweep the whole thing down the stairs where it is allowed to accumulate. That must be cut out. I have seen heaps of rubbish containing from one to 100 bushels in the cellars of some stores. Another thing is the keeping of gasoline, naphtha, or burning fluid. You are not allowed over six gallons and this must be in a safety can. If there are two families, in the house, they can only have three gallons each. The insurance exchange will not stand for it."

School superintendent, W. H. Patten, stated that he thought that the boys and girls in the school system, should be taught the problems of fire prevention and that he had been making up an outline of English for the public schools in which topics should be taken from the fire department, and this would be run through the grades as the topical outline of composition work. He spoke of fire drills in the schools and stated that no human product is too valuable to take any chances with danger from fires.

On February 21, 1921, Ex-Fire Chief Josiah D. Hayden dies at the age of 82, in his home on 7 Gilman Street. Fire Chief Hayden was head of the fire department in 1881, 1882 and 1885. He was instrumental in having placing cisterns throughout the city for water supply. He was also a member of the "Waterville 3" engine that competed throughout New England in fireman's muster winning many trophies and money. He was also helped Waterville move into the modern era with the purchase of a Steam Fire engine.



1922 Stutz Ladder Truck
in 1952 Parade

In early 1922, an article was done with, then, the oldest member of the fire department. No member of the fire department at that time has seen the same amount of continuous service as has John J. Lintern who has given nearly 37 years as a member of the firefighting ranks of the city. During that time many interesting events have taken place and Mr. Lintern recalls vividly many of them. Mr. Lintern was interviewed in regards to the by-gone days in the service and the most interesting thing that he told was about the so-called strike of the firemen which took place after the election of Cyrus Davis as mayor of the city. At that time the chief of the department was appointed by the political party in power. Calvin Dow of Hose Company No. 3 had been selected by the Democrats to succeed George Davies who was a Republican and who held the position of chief.

Mr. Lintern said that at 10 o'clock on the night that Mr. Dow was selected to succeed Mr. Davies, the firemen disbanded and left the fire house. Of the 15 men in the Hook & Ladder Company, 11 went out and about all of the men of Thayer Hose Company. Even the pictures on the wall and the records of the companies were taken and the dispute over these pieces of property went to court. The members of the company on the Plains and on Silver Street remained put and did not join the so-called strikers. Nothing daunted Mayor Davis, he went out that very night and secured enough volunteers to fill the vacancies. Mr. Lintern said that the members who remained in the Hook & Ladder Company, of whom he was one, all were Republicans who did not believe in deserting their duty to the city in the manner that the others had over a political difficulty. After Mayor Davis had gotten his recruits together that night, he encouraged them to the extent of presenting them with \$100.

The pay of the firemen when Mr. Lintern first joined was \$15 a year and there was a fine of 25 cents for being absent from a fire. Robert Steward was Captain of the Hook & Ladder Company when Mr. Lintern joined. When meetings were called a lighted sperm oil torch was placed outside the fire house to attract the attention of the members of the company.

Mr. Lintern spoke of the cisterns that were used as the water supply. One of these was near Sheldon E. Whitcombs store. This was covered over in 1915. There was another cistern near the Milliken building, where Giguere's store (the Blues Club) now is. Often the apparatus was gotten to a fire with one horse and a man running to steady the pole and the man had to run with all his speed to keep up. Contests were frequently held between the various companies and on one occasion it took the Appleton Hook & Ladder men just 2 minutes and 17 seconds to run from the station near where the old post office now stands and get a man on the roof of the Milliken building. Five pounds of steam were always required in the engine and when a contest was on, rosin and kerosene were used to make the fire burn faster.

The fire officers and members finally got their request fulfilled since first approaching the city government in 1916. The fire department received their first motor driven Hook & Ladder truck. On October 5, 1922 a handsome piece of firefighting apparatus, arrived in the city from Portland, being driven from the city by E. L. Myers, delivery engineer of the Stutz Fire Engine Company of Indianapolis. Mr. Myers will be teaching members of the department how to operate the machine. Chief Walter W. Berry stated that he had not the least idea who will be given the appointment as driver. Mayor Tebbetts stated after the arrival of the truck, an inspector from the New England Insurance Exchange will be here to test the truck for the underwriters. He explained that the truck cost the city \$8,300, in regard to a better insurance classification for the city as a result of the purchase. A pair of horses will be replaced by the truck.

The truck is what is known as a Stutz city service truck. It has about 300 feet of ladders and the same length in chemical hose. It has a 90 horse power Wisconsin motor, capable of making 40 miles an hour. It has a 40 gallon

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chemical tank, and the machine is equipped with a worm drive rear axle. It has a 252 inch wheel base. The longest ladder is 55 feet. The tires are 38x7, and like all trucks of its make, it is operated from the right side, being what is called right hand drive. It weighs 10,500 pounds. A ladder brake is used to steady the ladders. Babcock's and Pyrene are used as hand chemicals. A bell was installed that could be rang from either side and a siren may be used by the driver if necessary. The horse stalls and hay room were removed to make room for the new motorized Hook & Ladder truck.



The first recorded car fire was on July 3, 1922. Chemical Company No. 1 responded to a car fire at Franklin's Garage on Charles Street. Firefighters used 40 gallons of chemical to extinguish the fire.

Firemen who worked on the morning of December 4th, 1922, when the Lambda Chi Alpha chapter house on Colby College campus was destroyed, will never forget the deaths of four college men. Alton L. Andrews, senior of Belfast, Me., Warren L. Frye, special student of Revere, Mass., Charles M. Treworgy, senior of Surry, Me., and Norman M. Wardwell, sophomore, of Newport, Me. Charles B. Chapman of Springfield, Mass., leaving on an early morning train, saw flames shooting into the air. He telephoned from the railroad station to the Central Fire Station, and a general alarm was sent in. Fire apparatus was delayed several minutes because the train was in the way and the engine had to drive around it. The four men along with Ralph Bradley of Hanover, Pa., a junior, raced heroically to the fifth floor and went from bed to bed in the darkness, awakening the men and assisting them to escape, thus saving many lives.

It was on November 22, 1922 that the New England Insurance Exchange improved Waterville's fire Class rating, from a Class C to a Class B. The new schedule of rates which has been received by the insurance men of the city show's a small reduction as applying to mercantile property but the rate on dwelling property has been reduced 20 per cent. This is

something that the city has worked for, for several years. There has been several inspections by officials of the Insurance Exchange which resulted in the cleaning of rubbish from cellars of many of the business houses and the cleaning up of alley ways and back door pits. These all added up to the rating of the city and the good work must be kept up in order to maintain it.

The acquisition of the Hook & Ladder auto truck was the last factor in raising the classification of the city. The city has received benefits amounting approximately to \$10,000 a year on insurance, which is shared by the property owners.

The department purchases a new Dodge Hose cart in 1924, for the cost of \$1,128. It features a 55 gallon water supply tank on the back and the nickname of "Pee Wee" was given to it.

In his augural speak on March 6, 1927, Mayor Herbert C. Libby spoke of the possibility that the time has come when it would be to the best interest of the city to employ a full-time fire chief. He has promised that the problems of the department will be studied by the fire committee of the city government, in co-operation with officer of the fire department. Several, when asked, expressed the opinion that the idea of having a full-time fire chief was a good one. The chief could live at the Central station, be on the job at every fire, carry on the work of inspector and see that all fire hazards were removed insofar as possible. The chief would act as superintendent, having active oversight of the upkeep of equipment and the proper functioning of all branches of work.

The idea of a full-time Fire Chief was shot down due to budget constraint, but the thought of having a full-time chief would come up many more times in the coming years of the fire department, each time getting shot down. It was not until 1981 that the city saw this idea of a full-time chief come to light.

Walter Wesley Berry retired on March 12th, 1927, after 26 years of service, 21 years as Chief. Mayor Libby stated that he had received Chief Berry's resignation by special delivery mail. It is expected that First Assistant Chief Luke Ivers will be appointed Chief for the time being. The announcement of Chief Berry's resignation came as a complete surprise to the men with whom he had worked for years as well as to the newer members. On behalf of the

members of the fire department in appreciation for faithful service rendered, Chief Berry was presented with a beautiful "gold watch." He was then elected an honorary member of each of the fire companies.



On May 4, 1927, Grover Dennings Lovejoy becomes Waterville's new Fire Chief. He is not by any means a new man at the fire game for he has been connected with the local department for the past ten years. He knows the "ropes" of the game perfectly if the opinion of one fire fighter is correct. Fighting fires seems to be a hobby of this man. The new chief is also the city electrician, having been elected to the office last summer. Mr. Lovejoy is very popular with the boys of the fire department which should aid

him in his new undertaking.

The city received a gift of a Pierce-Arrow from Walter E. Reid which was converted into a fire truck and a Mack pumper was bought December 15th, 1927 and the last horse in the service was led from the Central station on that date. The Waterville fire protection took a decided boost when Chief Grover D. Lovejoy drove the new Pierce-Arrow combination fire truck into the Central Fire Station. The addition to the present firefighting apparatus in Waterville appears to be the last word in a fire truck.

The machine and equipment is the gift of Honorary Walter B. Reid of Portland to the City. First he gave the city an expensive Pierce-Arrow sedan to be used in charitable work and later consented to have the machine built into a fire truck. At a firemen's banquet in Waterville during the summer he presented Mayor Herbert C. Libby with a check for \$3,125. This money was used to pay for having the sedan converted into a fire truck.

The new machine has a 35 gallon chemical tank, roof ladder, 24 foot extension ladder, two pony chemicals, two nozzles, lanterns, axes, lights, electric siren horn, and a turret gun as standard equipment. The latter article will be a powerful aid to the local fire fighters. It is an instrument by which the firemen can secure the force of up to four lines of hose.

The Central Fire Station was for the first time, completely motorized. The apparatus consisted of: one Stutz Motor Hook & Ladder Truck; one White Combination Chemical and Hose; one Pierce Arrow Combination Chemical and Hose; one Mack Combination 750 gallon Pump Engine; and one Dodge Hose Truck, one Steam Engine of no value, one 2-horse Hose Wagon, three one-horse Hose Wagons, two one-horse Pungs, one horse drawn Hook and Ladder. The old horse stalls were removed to make the main floor larger and better to house the present equipment. The Dodge truck was put in Hose Co. No. 3 Station on Water Street, and the White put in Hose Co. No. 4 Station on Ticonic Street.

In 1927 the city had brought up the option of centralizing the fire department. A meeting was held and at times became very heated. An order had been prepared asking that the city fathers vote to centralize the department, but it was not introduced after the lengthy discussion which had brought out many points. Alderman Napoleon Loubier of Ward 7 was in opposition. He stated that the city ought not to be in a hurry about closing the fire buildings on Water and Ticonic Streets. He stated that there was a feeling in Ward 7 against it and the men in that section don't want to give up their clubhouse and go into Central Fire station. Closing of the house will take away much enthusiasm from the fire fighters and it is not a really necessary move. Alderman Edwards stated that the Maine Central trains carry a hundred cars and if anything should happen to block the crossings, people along the College Avenue section and other sections in the northern part of the city would have no protection if there was no fire house on Ticonic Street. The Mayor, who is in favor of the move, stated that the saving would be in fuel, oats, heating and repairs. It has been pointed out that the city is spreading to such an extent that except when the blaze is quite near one of the smaller stations, the motor trucks can get there quicker than the horse drawn vehicles. It is believed by some that this method would give adequate protection than is given at the present time and would cut down the expense of operating three stations. The drivers of the smaller stations could come to the Central station to work and could take charge of the calls in their sections as at present.

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Firemen of the companies at the central station answer more calls than do the members of the companies in the north and south ends of the city. The pay of a fireman is by the hour and naturally the firemen answering the most calls make the most money. The suggestion has been made that when Central station companies answer calls in the territories covered by the two outside companies, if the latter company can handle the work without help, it would be better for the Central Station companies to withdraw. Also, in larger fires in the same territory, the company from the central station could withdraw as soon as the fire was under control allowing the other firemen to finish up the work.

The entire affair passed into history when Grover D. Lovejoy, the fire chief, spoke. He said that the Days of Vaudeville has gone into

history and now is the time to make forward steps. After all the discussion, the order of "centralizing" was not introduced for passage.

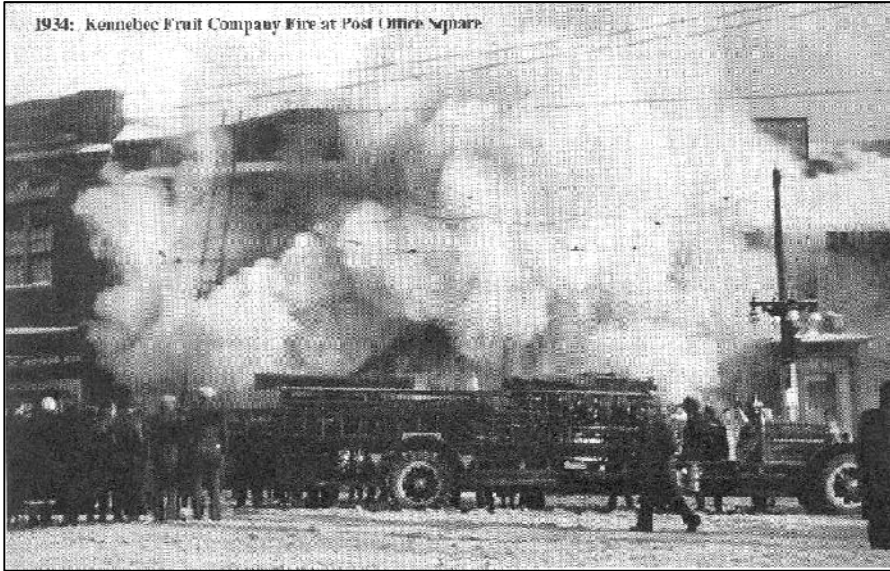
The city fire officials, having a great fleet of apparatus and group of Maine's best firefighters, now want to turn their ideas and thoughts into changing their fire codes. Retired Fire Chief Walter W. Berry spoke to the fire officials at a meeting, stating the present fire codes should be changed, as he told how quickly it was thrust upon the fire officials who had worked for several years to have the city pass a code. They had little opportunity to study the code before it was passed by the city government. Under the terms of the code, the chief of the fire department and the building inspector are responsible for the fire prevention within the city. The offices are so interlocked, that it leaves a wonderful chance to "pass" the buck. The code should pin the fire prevention duties onto one man.

He spoke of the building inspector as a person who is not qualified for the position of importance. He stated that building starts with construction and it is for this reason that permits are required before one is allowed to build. The building inspector is not paid enough to attend to his duties as they should be and that building after building have been built in the city without permits. Such condition should be changed he stated.

Fire inspections were another cause for concern for the fire department. In 1927 they implemented a schedule where the fire chief would inspect the cellars in the business district for accumulation of waste paper, and old cartons. The likes have been the cause of many bad fires, it is said and Waterville is not immune to such a fire. With wooden buildings in between the brick blocks on Main Street, a fire getting a good start might cause untold havoc.

A fight over how and with what authority does the department conduct its fire inspections, has been fought for many years. From implementing fire inspection in late 1900, the Fire Engineer was the man who did and ruled the inspection program, which latest till the 1960's when regular fire fighters were used to help with the growing need for inspection the buildings throughout Waterville. The department would conduct "Life Safety" inspections to help home and business owners in getting better insurance ratings, along with helping keep the City's Class-B insurance rating. Today's inspectors are licensed NFPA Life Safety Code Inspector 1 and they work closely with the Maine State Fire Marshall office.

Back in this time, like the beginning of the organization of the department, members were voted on by the companies and then the new members were presented to the city council to approve or disapprove. The recommendations of new firefighters usually went off without any problems, but on one day in 1928, a recommendation of a career driver for the department came with a huge heated battle. The war started over the election of a driver for one of the city's fire trucks, reached such a height and conclusion that Chief Grover D. Lovejoy jumped to the floor and tendered his resignation.



The entire story reverts back many weeks when the fire committee started to pick a candidate for the driving job. Their first recommendation was George Vashon and his name was placed before the city government, but the election was tabled after the board of engineers of the fire department had refused to give their recommendation. At that meeting words were tossed back and forth with little regard for their meaning and it failed to produce a driver.

The night before the next meeting, the application of George N. Pelletier for the position was introduced and before it went to a vote. A councilman opened the war that followed.

The councilman said that George Vashon had been recommended for the position and had appeared before the fire committee who discussed the position with him. There were many things in his favor and the committee voted to recommend him to the city government. The name was tabled when the board of engineers refused to give their approval to this man, claiming that he was not suitable.

The names of Vashon and Pelletier were presented to the city government, after a long night of accusations between the fire engineers and the fire committee, a vote was taken finally and Vashon was elected by a vote of 8-4, with some members not voting. When the vote was announced, the Mayor stated that at the fire committee meeting of a week ago, it was voted to endorse the engineer's candidate. "When the city council takes this power out of my hands, I tender my resignation as chief of the fire department," stated Chief Lovejoy. The mayor expressed great sorrow for the attitude taken by Chief Lovejoy and expressed the belief that the city council members had taken the wrong action. He averred that their action will be detrimental to the morale of the Waterville Fire Department.

In January 1928, Chief Lovejoy stated that he will discard horse drawn apparatus in early March, to pave the way for a fully motorized department. At the present time the Central Fire Station is the home of five modern and well equipped pieces of motorized apparatus and there are horse drawn fire wagons at the Ticonic Street and Water Street stations. He stated that two fire trucks from the Central station would be moved into the other houses and that the horse drawn apparatus would be discarded. Fine fire apparatus would be useless without a good board of engineers and in this respect Waterville is not lacking.

The work of the department has not gone without occasions of tragedy. Men have been injured and one member of the department, Millard C. Godin, was killed, October 1st, 1929, while riding to a fire in Clinton and being thrown off a truck while riding through Fairfield.

On August 27, 1929 Waterville held a two day convention for the Maine Firemen's Association. 300 delegates of this Association attended. Delegates from Massachusetts, New Haven, and Lynn, Mass., were on hand to speak on subjects of great interest to every firemen. A parade was the high point of the two days. Grand Marshall was Waterville's own Assistant Chief Luke Ivers., being escorted down Main Street by the Waterville Firefighters color guard. Apparatus included Oakland's Hook and Ladder, old hand tubs and antique fire engines. No truck from Winslow or Fairfield were in the parade.

In the Annual report dated 1930, the Mayor of the City wrote about his feeling on the department; "This department has been maintained according to its usual high degree of efficiency and, as I have said on various occasions, we have reason to be proud of this municipal department. The equipment has been kept in good condition. The men who belong to the different companies are to be congratulated on the service they are rendering to the city. For very little pay, undoubtedly actuated by motives of loyalty and service, they risk their health and frequently their life."

"It is a pleasure for me to record that there is a very fine feeling towards the city of Waterville in the towns that surrounds us, because of the willingness of our department to co-operate with them and to stand ready to render aid whenever it seems necessary. Of course, it is not often that our department is called out of town, but when it has been necessary, I have informed the chief that it was my desire that these towns should be charged an amount

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merely representing our actual expense, without any desire to profit thereby. As a result of this policy, an extremely fine spirit has been developed in several towns relative to the city of Waterville."

"During the past year, several new fire alarm boxes and hydrants were installed, and I believe it should be the policy of incoming administration to install, as rapidly as possible, additional fire alarm boxes and hydrants in the outlying sections of the city, in order to afford the highest degree of fire protection. Everything must be done to make sure that our present fire insurance rating is maintained, in order that our insurance rates may be kept at a low a level as possible."

The fire department was successful in 1930 to have some city ordinances changed for their safety. No motor vehicle under the control of a person other than a member of the Fire or Police Department of the City, shall follow, within 300 feet behind any Fire Department vehicle responding to a fire alarm. No motor vehicle shall approach within 600 feet of any piece of Fire Apparatus in operation, at a fire, and no privately owned vehicle shall be left in the vicinity of a fire in such condition that members of the police or fire department of the City of Waterville or their agents, may not immediately move the same, if necessity demands. And no vehicles controlled by a person, shall cross any line of hose laid for use at a fire, and in the event of such crossing, by error, the driver of such vehicle shall immediately proceed to place said vehicle outside said line of hose, and subject to the regulations.

Firemen from Hose No. 3 battled a stubborn blaze at the South End dump, when a pile of rubbish had been scorched by the steady low flames in the morning and broke into a terrific flame. After lying 250 feet of hose and playing water for about a half hour, the men succeeded in quelling the flames and stopping further outbreaks. Although no damage occurred the dry grass which surrounds the dump spreads to nearby houses and the precaution was taken. During the fighting many rats were given a dousing as they scooted from the burning homestead.

1931 is the 20th anniversary of the building of Waterville's new Central Fire Station. This great event was shown by a big banquet put on by the ladies from the Methodist Church. Many Chiefs, past and present, firefighters, special guest speakers and many Waterville citizens were on hand to celebrate the anniversary and the firefighters on their excellent work throughout the past year.

Many things had changed for the department in the last twenty years. The old horse drawn apparatus have been replaced by motorized driven apparatus and the old steam engine which rattles through the streets has taken a back seat. Many huge fires were taken head on by the firefighters from the fire department. And the citizens have experienced some great saves from their well-trained firemen, saving their city from some of the most possible conflagrations ever seen.

The department also has seen the moving of their local college to a new location on the outskirts of the city. Mayor F. Harold Dubord spoke about this at the banquet. He predicted the building of the new Colby College was not so far in the future that it could not be seen and that with the building of the college, the fire department would expand equally in comparison. It was thought that since Colby was in the process of moving from the downtown area, and being close to the now Central Fire station, that the city should at some point look at purchasing some land near Colby for a sub-station. It wasn't till 1972 that the department saw a sub-station built near this part of the city.

On January 2, 1931, damage estimated at \$10,000 was done to the Pray building and the Woman's Association building at the corner of Main and Temple Streets. Damage to the Association building was confined to smoke and water. Box 123 brought the three trucks from Central Fire Station to the scene of the blaze. When the department arrived smoke was pouring from the entire block and there was some difficulty in locating the fire.

Firemen are known to always play tricks on one another and sometimes with the general public. This helps with the camaraderie with one another and helps with the interaction with the public. Every year on April Fool's day the firemen at the Central Fire Station "rig up" a stunt to fool the constant flow of pedestrians that pass to and fro by the station. These courageous fire eaters nailed a twenty-five cent piece on the walk in front of the station. The "boys," along with many spectators, peeking through the windows on the swings doors, chuckled gleefully many times throughout the day as the would-be-lucky-one stopped to pick up the stray coin. Along came a bunch of young youth's from Coburn and before the firemen could say "little jack little" one of the Coburnites with the aid of a screwdriver pried up the quarter and in a jiffy they scooted down Main Street at a fast pace with several of the firemen in pursuit. The "hunt" ended on Temple Street opposite the Boys Club as the firemen gave up the chase and returned to the station. It wasn't long before the "boys" had another quarter nailed down on the walk to fool the innocent passer-by. A bright Coburn student retorted "Well, I guess those firefighters haven't heard the wise saying of Abe Lincoln's - "You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all the time."

These actions do not continue in the present day with the public, but it is known to still exist among the firefighters. Being able to play tricks on one another adds to the easiness of becoming a firefighter in their close knit family.

Lieutenant Scott A. Holst

On May 21, 1931, a general alarm was sounded for a fire of undetermined origin which swept the Kennebec Boat & Canoe Co. storehouse on High Street. One home was destroyed, another ruined, several shacks were razed and other homes threatened. One member of Hose Co. 4, 2nd Assistant Engineer Walter McAlary, was injured. The total destruction was estimated at \$80,000.

With the up-and-coming breakthrough in technology, equipment was hard to purchase because of the cost associated with it, like to new equipment of today. But on August 8, 1931, through the courtesy of the Central Maine Power Company a modern inhalator, a much needed bit of apparatus in emergency cases of asphyxiation, was introduced at Central Fire station and will be available to the department, local doctors, neighboring towns and in fact to anyone in need.

E. P. Noyes, safety director of the Power Company, gave a very vivid demonstration of the inhalator to members of the local power crew, the firemen and police officers, of Waterville. This was held at Central fire. The inhalator, Noyes said, is well adapted for all types of asphyxiation and is of great assistance to carbon monoxide illumination gas and smoke victims.

The need of such apparatus has been a long felt want, which is certain. Several calls have been received during the past few weeks for the instrument, but it was not available for each call. George D. Hagarty, district manager of the power company, stated that the placing of the inhalator at Central Station was undoubtedly the best thing to do, due to the location of the place and the facilities of obtaining it at a moment's notice. Mr. Hagarty stressed the fact that the apparatus was available to not only local cases that may occur, but to all outside emergencies. This device has recorded many lives saved throughout its years of service with the department.

The pay for the department in the beginning of 1932 shows that men would work for the loyalty and respect for their city that they live and play in. No fireman whom you may talk to will ever say they do this job for the money that it brings to their family. The pride of assisting their fellow man is the only reason for the duty that they do. The following is the amount the men received for their loyal work per year; Chief - \$400, 1st Assistant - \$240, 2nd Assistant - \$200, Captains of Fire Company - \$31, Lieutenants of Fire Company - \$23, Clerks of Fire Company - \$31, Regular Line Firemen - \$18, Drivers 24 Hour day - \$4 per day (All drivers one week's vacation with pay; all drivers one day of 24 hours each six days of the year off duty with pay; no sick leave for more than three days without direct authority of the City Council).

Firefighters would continue to work under these conditions for many years until the firefighters came together in 1966 to become the 10th Chapter in the State to become members of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Union. A few Fire Chief's did work throughout the years before the Union vote to make better working conditions for the Drivers, but it wasn't till the "union" vote that the work hours, time off and pay became better for the firemen.

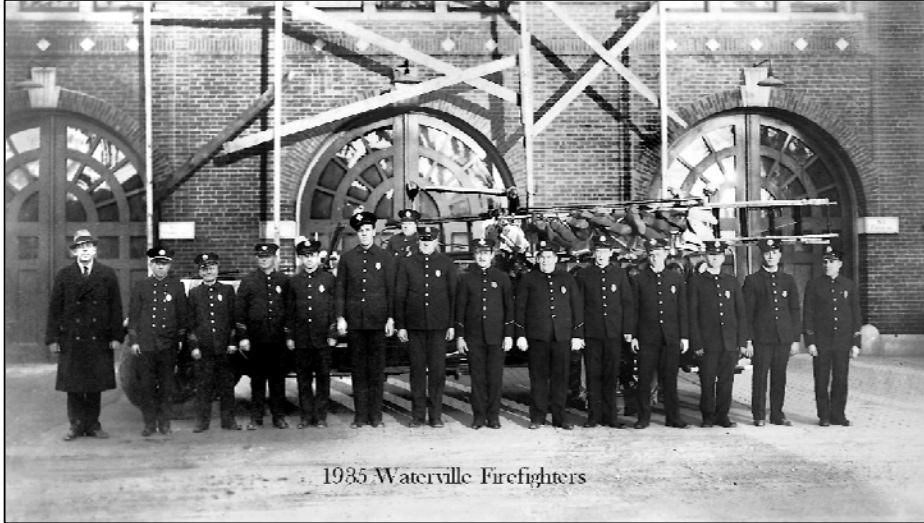
In a letter to the local newspaper, a Mrs. Alice I. Libby writes; *"Fire is one of the greatest detriments to a community and its prevention is one of the largest expenses which every city must incur. All though the country fire ravages homes and other buildings, leaving desolation and despair in its wake. According to the monthly report of the National Board of Fire Underwriters, the fire losses in this country for March 1932 amounted to \$49,198,124 which is an increase of \$5,114,763 or 11 per cent over the same month in 1931. It is through the untiring efforts of the Waterville Fire Department, headed by Chief Grover Lovejoy, that our city can enjoy the protection which we receive. The Waterville Fire Department is one of the most efficient in Central Maine.*

During this period of economic depression it is impossible for the city of Waterville to furnish new equipment in order to bring the department up to a standard required by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. This department should have on hand 5,000 more feet of hose, another pumping engine and an aerial ladder. There should be at least fifteen more fire alarm boxes and about 40 more hydrants. The permanent personnel of the department should be increased by five more men. In order to facilitate the work on night fires, a portable auxiliary lighting plant should be used in the burning area.

Efficient fire protection is one of the greatest assets which any community can have in the advanced age. It is necessary for the protection and safety of property and human lives; the people of Waterville are indeed fortunate in having such a truly live-wire fire department."

Grover D. Lovejoy, in 1933, was elected president of the Maine Fire Chiefs' Association. Chief Lovejoy was the first Fire Chief from Waterville to be elected president of the Maine Chief's. Holding lectures at Central Fire and a dinner at the First Baptist Church, the fire chiefs from throughout Maine hear various talks by fire prevention officials and representatives of insurance organization.

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Literally put on the shelf when the fire department was motorized, the antiquated horse drawn steamer purchased by the city, May 26, 1884, saved the city a large sum of money in the winter of 1934. The steamer was put into novel use that of thawing out frozen sewer lines about the city. Hundreds of pipes were opened by the force of the steam worked up by the old apparatus under the supervision of Robert "Pumper" Beane, veteran truck driver of the fire department. While it had been taken out on several instances for exhibitions at firemen's musters, the cold winter resulted in its being called out for a

real service, and it has done its duty in this line as well as it did when it was one of the finest firefighting pieces of apparatus in the fire department of yesterday.

In 1934, the year saw "Harry" the faithful fire horse died while working. Harry, who's every nerve quivered at the blast of a fire alarm, died while still working for the city. Harry's powerful legs, which carried him through wintry snows and the mud lanes of spring back in the old days when in spirited fashion he hauled the Hook & Ladder cart.

The dapple gray horse, working for the street department in his retirement from duty, dies as the result of injuries received when he slipped and fell on Merrill Avenue. He was one of three living horses formerly used by the fire department and he ended his colorful career "in the harness." "Prince," a massive brown horse, and Billy, another gray, are still alive, the former now being worked in the street department and the latter being used at the City Farm.



Harry was 27 years old. He saw his first service in the fire department in 1916 and was broken to the Hook & Ladder cart at Central Fire Station. He held this post until the apparatus at the Central station was motorized and in 1922 he was transferred with honors to Hose 4 where he remained for two years. Another motorized truck for that station ended Harry's career in answering alarms.

Accustomed as he was to respond like a flash at the sound of the fire alarm, Harry found it difficult to accustom himself to the routine work in the street department when he was transferred. Like all veteran firefighters, he was part of the department and during the first few months he hauled gravel carts, he gave his handlers plenty of trouble. Whenever he chanced to be, the sound of an alarm would bring new life to the dappled gray. He pranced about in his harness and waited vainly for the command that never came.

Upgrades to the city's apparatus was always an ongoing project that the local firemen always took upon themselves to do. Having a capacity of 96 gallons of water, a new booster tank has been attached to the Chemical truck, thereby improving this apparatus considerably. Besides the tank, the truck has also been improved by the addition of a pump with a capacity of 120 pounds pressure, capable of producing 80 pounds of pressure at the nozzle.

When the tank has been emptied, the truck is so equipped to enable the truck to pump water from a reservoir, such as a brook or well, direct to a line of hose and can produce 80 pounds pressure at the nozzle in this manner. Much of the installation work was done by Harry Roux, regular driver of the truck, with the assistance of other regular firemen on duty as well as other members of the department.

At a dinner for the Waterville Rotarians in 1935, Chief Grover Lovejoy spoke about the working of the fire department and outlined the future needs and past accomplishments. He praised the department, and termed the workers as "unreasonable paid." Of the critics of the department, he said, "Constructive criticism is welcomed, but ten

cent criticism doesn't help put out fires. And for those who say the boys don't work, try following them around to some good-sized fire."

A pension for firemen was under consideration by the city fathers in 1936. A new city ordinance which would provide for an enlistment and retirement age limit for the personal of the fire department and would authorize pensions for retiring members who have served at least 20 years was under consideration. The ordinance, which has not yet been fully approved by the city solicitor pending further study as to its set-up. It would set 45 years of age as the limit for eligible members of the department and sets 65 years as the retirement age.

Under the terms of the ordinance a member who has served at least 20 years with the department would receive a pension as long as he continued to reside in Waterville following retirement. The pension as proposed by proponents of the ordinance would be in the following amounts; Chief and Drivers, \$40 a month; Assistant Chiefs, \$29 a month; Captains and Clerks, \$12 a month; and call men \$10 a month.

This pension article was pushed aside, voted down until it came back to life again in 1941, when the city placed at vote through referendum in front of the citizens. For the first time in the city's history, Waterville voters will be able to vote on whether or not the police and fire department will have a pension plan. The pension bill has been supported publicly by numerous well-known local persons and bids fair to be approved by the voters with margin to spare.

Should the bill be approved by the voters, the City of Waterville would be authorized to appropriate money for the payment of pensions, the city's original appropriation to be added to during future years by contributions of 3 1/2 percent of the annual pay. The institution of the Social Security form of pensions for the layman has been a major wedge in the request for police and firemen pensions as the members of these two departments are not eligible for Social Security. The proposed pension plan would enable police and firemen to join in procedure of their own which would not be unlike the Social Security plan in force throughout the nation for Mr. Average Citizen.

Only the members of the department contributing to the pension fund would be eligible for benefits, which would be available to members reaching the age of 65 years, or might be petitioned for by members reaching the age of 60 or with 25 years of service or by members of the department becoming totally disabled. In the event a member of either department lost his life, his widow would receive the benefits from the pension. The pension would be equal to two-thirds the regular salary at the time received by the members of the respective departments serving in the same capacity as the pensioner was serving at the time of retirement.

With less than 2,000 persons voting, residents approved the pension plan by a three to one margin. Every one of the city's seven wards were substantially in favor of the pension plan.

On the first day of February, 1961, the City Government adopted the Maine State Retirement System, and members of the Local Pension Plan were given an opportunity to transfer to MSRS with special arrangements to carry their credit in the local plan with them. These credits are known as Prior Service. Eleven policeman and four firemen made the transfer. These eleven men contribute 3.5% of their gross earnings into the local plan, and their contributions in 1963 was \$1,723.77; but this is less than is paid out to pensioners in one month.

Eight men have retired and were drawing a monthly pension checks ranging from \$66.67 to \$312.00. The amount paid to pensioners in 1963 was \$23,715.96. Subtract from this from the contributed amount of \$1,723.77 and the net cost against the 1964 budget was \$21,992.19.

There was neither an endowment nor a reserve fund of any kind to support this pension and so it was a heavy budgetary item each year, and it will remain that way for many years. The situation got progressively worse because the time came when there was several pensioners and no contributing members.

Eventually all police and fire members joined the MSRS and those drawing funds from the Local Pension Plan have died off, and the Local Plan was scrapped. Today all members are eligible to retire after 25 years and will receive 3/4 pay upon retirement.

A survey of the firefighting apparatus owned by the city showed that although it is kept in excellent condition much of it is very old and entirely inadequate for a city of this size with the fire hazards which enlist here. It was decided by the joint standing committee of the city council on fire that a new triple combination fire truck should be purchased. Members of the committee made a careful study of apparatus on the market and in use in other cities in Maine and Massachusetts. Upon recommendation of Chief Lovejoy and with the approval of the city council and the finance commission, a Seagraves pumper was soon ordered. A new Seagraves pumper was put into service and commissioned June 15th, 1937, allowing a Dodge truck to be converted into utility use. It boasted a V-12 Engine and served as Engine 1.

The Board of Finance had also approved \$5,000 for installation of a sprinkler system at the city hall building. Installation of the sprinkler system, for which the city council raised a \$5,000 appropriation, was immediately

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approved after the board had given it consideration. It was pointed out that the system would result in a yearly reduction of \$1,012 in the insurance premiums covering the city building.



A story was written in 1939 on the "Life of a Fireman." People have always thought firefighters have soft cushy jobs, but in 1939 the life of a permanent firefighter was found not to be all that "comfy." Perhaps you are one of those who, when passing Central Fire Station, and seeing one of the men sitting by the open door, have said that a fireman had a soft job. The average day of a regular firefighter back in the day would have been as follows.

First, the firemen would put in a 24 hour duty for six days a week, and would do about everything besides fighting fires. Four men were on duty at Central Fire at all times, their duty begins a 6 a.m., unless they are called to a blaze. Two would go to breakfast on arising returning at 7 a.m., when the remaining two would then leave to eat. The day's work begins with housework, of all things, the beds have to be made, sleeping quarters tidied up, all floors swept, the fire tended, rooms dusted, all brass polished, the trucks are dusted and polished, and the brass work shined.

After each call which takes a truck out, the vehicle gets a thorough going over, its equipment is checked, and the truck cleaned. After a general alarm all trucks are washed, all equipment used in fighting the blaze is checked, repaired, and placed in service. It takes about two days to "clean up" after apparatus has been out on general alarm.

Following a fire where hose is laid, this has to be laid out on racks in the basement, closely inspected, after being dried out, and tested under 200 pounds pressure before being returned to service. Aside from these tests every foot of the hose in the department is pressure tested twice a year and the unfit discarded.

Aside from the routine work at the station, all regulars, and most of the call men are required to learn the exact locations of all hydrants in the city, as well as the alarm boxes. All firefighting equipment in public buildings is inspected periodically and as the result of the numerous acid and soda chemicals are refilled by men at the station annually.

Regular men are required to familiarize themselves with the location and peculiarities of all buildings housing businesses, as well as memorizing the names and locations of all the streets in the city. The men see humorous situations as well as fire tragedies, as they are called many times a year, always late at night, to let someone into a second story window of their home, having lost a key. Many calls are also received to remove pet cats from trees, and other rescue work.

Many records are kept at the station, entailing much book work. First as accurate record of all calls answered must be kept and entered in a daily ledger.

Each driver is responsible for the condition of his truck, and does all minor repair jobs on them. A small machine shop is located in the basement for this purpose. Large repairs are made in local garages, but these are few and far between due to the excellent care taken of them. The oil is changed and all trucks are greased by the regular men.

A full day's work is put in by all men at the station even if calls for fires do not come in. The men retire about 10 p.m. and beside each bed is a pair of boots fitted into trousers, so that a jump from bed at an alarm. Two or three call men also sleep at the station, which also helps on a late night fire, as a nucleus of a crew leaves on the truck as it goes with the call men not far behind. If all the firemen had to do was wait for a fire to fight, the department would be swamped with applications, but that 24 hour tour of duty, six days a week, dampens the enthusiasm.

In 1942, the department had to come to a decision on what to do with their old Steam Fire engine. As in the past, the department was reluctant to part with their worthy and prized piece of fire apparatus. Swapping a fire engine for a steam roller was the deal made when the committee of the city council on the fire department held a meeting on the fate of the old piece of fire apparatus. It had been suggested that the fire department do its part in national defense by turning into the scrap pile, the steam fire engine and the body of the old horse drawn ladder truck. There had been objection made to this proposition on business and sentimental reasons and the whole thing was referred to the fire department committee which was given power to act.



The street department found that it had on hand an ancient steam roller that had outlived its usefulness, and that department put up the proposition that it would take over the steam fire engine and put it in working condition and keep it for such work as required the use of steam, and give in return the 12 ton roller. The street department would have steam generator handy and if on occasion the fire department needed the services of the engine, it could take it.

The fire department, now with a steam roller on its hands, can adhere to its original purpose and make an even better donation to the scrap pile than before. The ladder truck was ordered scrapped and will be turned over to the street department. Wheels and other parts that can be used, will

be saved.

Chief Lovejoy recommended that the City purchase a 65 foot aerial truck to replace the present one that was 23 years old. He also recommended that a full time fireman be elected to act as city electrician. He would have to maintain the Police and Fire signals systems, as well as, do all the city electrical work and see that the cities electrical code is enforced. The City would put off the purchase of a new ladder truck or making a fireman full-time City Electrician, but they would instead, purchase a new Ford Fire Truck for Engine 4.

In 1942, the trial of Fire Chief Grover D. Lovejoy on a charge of manslaughters, was scheduled for February 16th, 1942. Chief Lovejoy was indicted by a grand jury in connection with the death of Rex McNamee of Millinocket, a Colby College student who died following an auto accident in Waterville in October 1941. The day of the trial eight witnesses were used by both sides.

On the morning of October 18, 1941, three Colby College students, Stanley Short, Rex McNamee and Gerald Cole, were riding along College Avenue toward Fairfield. In front of them was a ton and a half truck, operated by Lovejoy. Both vehicles were traveling at about 25 miles an hour. Shortly before reaching the intersection of Hazelwood Avenue, the truck pulled off the cement highway on the east side, started a U turn, with that, the two vehicles came together. The roadster in which the boys were riding was thrown on its side, off the pavement at the west side of the Avenue. McNamee's skull was so injured that he died about an hour later.

Lovejoy, after the accident, told Captain George Beckett of the Waterville Police that he pulled off the highway with the intent of making a U-turn and returning to Waterville; he stopped, looked back, and seeing no cars, he started to make his turn. Stanley Short, driver of the roadster stated that he had slowed down when Lovejoy's truck pulled off the cement of the highway, he accelerated his roadster, that's when he saw Lovejoy start to make a U-turn across the road. He tried to avoid a collision by further accelerating his roadster as the distance was too short to try to stop.

The jury deliberated for a thirty minutes and upon returning to the bench, Chief Lovejoy was acquitted of the charge of manslaughter. It was the state's contention that Lovejoy was guilty of criminal carelessness in that he did not take full and proper precautions to see that the road was clear before starting to turn. The defense contended that the respondent took all the precautions a prudent person could be expected to do.

Active and devoted member of the Waterville Fire Department for many years, long time firefighter, 1st Assistant Fire Chief Walter R. McAlary had died in 1942. Ill health for a number of years and victim of severe injuries when he was crushed by fire apparatus at a fire at the Kennebec Canoe storehouse and had never really recovered from his injuries. Chief McAlary started with the department in 1905 and was a very dedicated member of the department.

In March 1944 the city purchased a new 750 gallon pumper of the Seagraves make which replaced the Pierce-Arrow truck in the Water Street station. Driver George Vashon of Hose Company 3, backed the new piece into the station on Water Street. On the acceptance test, the engine pumped over 800 gallons per minute. The new piece

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replaces the old Hollway truck, a Pierce-Arrow car which was presented to the city by Walter E. Reid and converted into a fire truck in October 11, 1927. It has been at the Water Street station since July 1937.



The new Seagraves engine will give the city three pumping engines, two on the floor of Central Station and one in the southern part of the city. The crew which will man Engine 3 is captained by Albert Maheu, who has been a member of the department since 1902. George Vashon is the driver and engineer.

Silas A. Dickinson, 94, the oldest active fireman in Maine, dies in 1944. Silas was a member of the fire department, joining in 1890. His name remained on the roster of Hose Company 1 and Engine Company No. 1 until his death. He maintained a deep interest in the department and in firefighting and even as an elderly man, continued to answer alarms.

On February 18, 1945, the Department was called to extinguish a blaze at the Jefferson Hotel. The hotel,

originally built in 1901, sustained consisted damage in excess of \$50,000. The fire claimed the lives of two victims and there were nine injuries. Four firefighters were among the injured.

The fire department kept by its campaign of trying to install new boxes around the city each year. Some years seen more installation than others. In 1945 two new master boxes were installed at City Hall and the Junior High School. The boxes will be installed outside and connected with the sprinkler system in each building and then will be tied in with the city alarm system. A recent breaking of a sprinkler head at the school caused considerable water damage before the water was shut off, as the fire department was not immediately notified. Master Boxes throughout the city has helped in notifying the fire department of many fires. Many homes and businesses were saved because a nearby box could be pulled when a fire was discovered. Telephones were used also at this time, but it was the outside boxes on a nearby telephone pole that was the quickest way to notify the fire department. Pulling of the box would set off the air horn on top of Central Fire and everyone for miles around would know that a fire was in town. Those residences that had a fire alarm card, which showed each numbered box throughout the city and its location, would know right were the blaze could be located.

It wasn't till 1980 that the city, as a cost saving measure, had many fire boxes removed throughout the city. Fire Chief Lucien LaCroix had received orders from City Hall to dismantle approximately 70 boxes located on the telephone poles around the city. A number of private boxes, such as those found at hospitals and other large buildings, would not be affected by the cutbacks. Asked how the lasted cutbacks will affect the efficiency of department operations, the chief said that there will be virtually no change whatsoever. The emergence of the 911 system has eclipsed the call boxes as the most practical method of reporting fires. Chief also noted that the boxes have been a major source of false alarms in recent years. A major area of waste for any fire department.

Today fire boxes are all privately owned and are placed in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, colleges, and large businesses. The city maintains an active fire alarm system, at no cost to the owners. There is one city firefighter that is in charge of the fire alarm system. In the past the city had hired a non-firefighter to maintain their alarm system. Now it is done through the fire department, and like in the past history of the department's fire alarm, it is a constant struggle to keep the system up and running and up to date for the modern times.

For many years as a business man in Waterville, a former representative to the State Legislature, and for 21 years chief of the fire department of Waterville, Chief Walter W. Berry, 70, dies at his home, 18 Center Street from ill health. Walter was very active in his stationary business, but he was very instrumental in seeing that the fire department move in great heaps into the future. He saw the department move into their new station, get a complete fire alarm system, and the passing of horses for motor driven fire apparatus. He often spoke of the famous pair of horses, "Major & Colonial." It was one of his saddest days of his life when he had to see them either sold or killed.



Napoleon Marshall was named Fire Chief in 1946. He served one year before resigning due to illness. Marshall had taken over for Chief Grover Lovejoy. Marshall would stay on with the department to serve as a member, but he would not be involved in firefighting due to his health.

In 1947 Ralph Gilman, 1st Assistant Chief was appointed Fire Chief. This action came as a joint meeting of the City Council bodies at which several other appointments were made, one of them being contested. Urban V. Stedman, himself Alderman from Ward One, was appointed first Assistant engineer in place of Gilman.

The contest came when the Fire Committee recommended that Harry Pooler be appointed second assistant engineer in place of Stedman. Alderman Herman Rines motioned for appointment of William Mingo to the post, while Alderman Melvyn Laggett motioned for appointment of Errol Gilman. Stedman himself motioned in favor of Pooler. In a secret ballot 17 votes were cast, Gilman getting eight; Mingo and Pooler each four and one ballot being blank. Errol Gilman failed to receive a majority but did so in a second vote, the 17th vote this time being recorded in his favor. There are 10 drivers who work on day and night platoons, and 72 call men.

In the winter of 1945, the city was hit with a fire that claimed two female lives. The department was called to extinguish a blaze at the Jefferson Hotel, which claimed two victims and injured nine, with firemen among the injured. This led Chief Gilman in early 1947, declaring that the department is without a new ladder truck long enough. In a letter addressed to the Mayor and City Council, he called attention to the lives lost and the

injuries that occurred at the recent Jefferson Hotel fire and declared steps should be taken immediately to prevent such a disaster happening here again.

He wrote; "I am asking you to seriously consider what I think is a very important subject. Namely, the purchase of an aerial ladder truck. A similar suggestion by former Chief Grover D. Lovejoy has been in the city report for the last four or five years. Our present ladder truck was purchased in 1922, and it is practically impossible to get parts for it. If the Elmwood hotel, the Crescent hotel, of the Melcher apartments should catch fire and people were trapped on the upper floors, we have no ladder long enough to reach them. When people are trapped in a burning building, the speed by which a rescue can be effected means the difference between life and death."

The longest ladder in the department is a 55 foot extension ladder carried on a truck. On a public building such as a hotel or school, a man can be sent up a ladder to reach a third story. Over that, a rescue would be impossible. In operating a ladder now in use in Waterville, seven men are needed to remove the ladder from the truck, raise it properly and pull the extension part upward by means of a rope pulley. In the aerial ladder trucks, the driver of the apparatus can with ease raise the long ladder by power devices and a man can reach the top in a matter of seconds. Firemen at the Central Station say they fear the old Stutz truck will fall all to pieces on any run.

It was not until 1949 that Chief Gilman and his firemen finally received their new power driven Aerial Ladder Truck. The new 1949 Seagraves 75 foot Aerial Ladder truck arrived in Waterville by Rail Car. The public received a demonstration when the 75 foot aerial ladder was raised on some of the tallest buildings in Waterville; Elmwood Hotel, Crescent Hotel and the Melcher apartments. The tests were observed by many spectators and at City hall, members of the city government saw the truck and watched the big ladder being raised in front of the building and laid against the eaves. Members of the regular corps of drivers have been drilled on the truck. It will be placed in commission and members of Ladder Company No. 1, who will man the apparatus, will be given opportunity to learn its mechanism and action.

In 1947, a new horn for the department's fire alarm system was installed and was officially inducted into service at curfew time at 9 o'clock. The new horn is diaphragm device, replacing a style used since the system was begun in 1913. The old reed operated horn was well worn out. Occasional blasts during the day were sounded for trail purposes, giving the public opportunity to know how the new device sounds. The horn will tap out the numbers in a very regular manner.

The air horn system was used more than just tapping out fire alarms from boxes that were pulled throughout the city. The firemen at Central Fire would at times tap out certain numbers that meant special types of calls. The air horn was used to notify the city residence of the following calls; 9 p.m. curfew, No School except High School, No School for Entire City, Civil Defense, National Guard Call, and special Fire Company Calls.

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



Left to right in this photo of Engine 1 at City Hall Square, dated July, 1952: Alva Gilman, Lucien LaCroix, Roland Williams, Roland E. LaCroix, and David Morin.

Whenever the air horn blow, every residence in the city could be sure to hear it, no matter day or night. It wasn't till 1969, with the introduction of the plectron boxes handed out to firefighters to have at home, that the city would just use the horn to blow the 9 p.m. curfew or to use it on special occasions. Evidentially the system was phased out completely. The air system was drained and the air horn system sat quite till it was removed in 2003 when Central Station got its new facelift and addition.

In 1951, Chief Gilman recommended that the Hose 4 station on Ticonic Street, be replaced as the Building inspector had condemned the building three years ago. He suggested moving the equipment to Central Station but, the insurance rating people opposed it. It wasn't till 1953 that the City Council took up idea of replacing the aging condemned Hose 4 Sub-Station on Ticonic Street.

The long smoldering question of a new fire station in Waterville's north end burst into flames when a delegation of firemen showed up at a council meeting to ask the City to take immediate action on the matter. The Ticonic Street headquarters of Hose 4 have already been termed antiquated and inadequate, and \$20,000 has already been appropriated. Mayor Dubord pointed out that favorable lots of land in the North End are have been tagged at too high a price by the owners. He suggested erecting a fire station on city-owned property near Webb Street and Drummond Avenue. This would eliminate spending money for a lot. One lot on Oak Street was generally favored by the North End delegation and the land is pegged at \$4,000.

Asked about his preference, Fire Chief Ralph Gilman replied; "If you put it up on Drummond Avenue, I think you will kill the morale of the men and make it kind of tough for the men who stay up there all day long. The Ticonic Street station has been condemned since 1947, and the equipment should not be left there another winter. For one or two thousand dollars give the boys what they want. Why not give us the thing we desire, what we feel is more efficient for us to handle." Mayor Dubord and the Fire Committee would meet again to map out a course of action and it was finally decided that the old fire house would be torn down and a new Engine 4 house would be built on the same location.



In 1955 a new station was built on the site of the former fire house. This fire house would become a fixture in the north end. The firemen stationed at this house would entertain the local children with letting them view the station and its fire engines, or help the firefighters out in washing the engines. The local residence come to look forward in seeing their firefighters come at a moment's notice to assist them in anything they had problems with. In order to locate the new station a proper distance from the street to permit turning of fire apparatus, it was necessary to purchase a small triangle of land to square off the rear of the lot. After various legal difficulties in connection with the title to the property were straightened out, the land was acquired at a very reasonable cost. Carl H. Crane was retained to draw plans and specifications, and to supervise construction as the city's architect. The project was advertised for bids and a contract was awarded to Oakley C. Lambert, the low bidder. The station is a single story, flat roof, brick building with comfortable living quarters for the men, and two stalls for apparatus. While only one of these stalls is presently in use, the committee believes that the proportionately low cost of adding extra space during construction warranted providing an additional stall for future expansion. This fire house would fall victim to city cutbacks in 1980 when all sub-stations throughout the city were being shut down to save money. This fire house would sit empty for several years before it was purchased and opened as a Social Club for the local people. The fire house can still be seen at its location on Ticonic Street at the corner of Brooks and Edwards Streets.

Chief Gilman recommended that the regular firemen, who worked 12 hour

days, seven days a week, be given one day off a week. It seemed that 84 hours a week with no day off was unfair and should be changed. The pay for a career firefighter was; \$4 per day with 1 week vacation with pay; One day off of 24 hours each 6 six days of the year off duty with pay. No sick leave for more than three days without direct order of the City Council.



On August 24, 1954, five children ages 15 months to 7 years, died as a result of a fire on King Street. A defective wire in the bedroom began the blaze. The children were discovered huddled under a bed. They had died from smoke inhalation.

In 1957, the Department's new \$17,000 American LaFrance Truck arrived and was stationed in the North End fire house after testing for insurance underwriters. The oldest vehicle now owned by the Department is a 1937 Seagraves Pumper, with capacity of 1,250 gallons per minute.

In 1959 Chief Gilman, while pushing to have all truck to have 2-way radios, finally got two trucks in his fleet of many, equipped with a 2-way radios. Chief Gilman also started an inspection program where firefighters would inspect the Public Schools. With his program running he praised them for getting sprinkler systems,

fire escapes and more exits as improvements for the schools.

Heads of Police, Fire, PW, and CD were enthusiastic about the workings of new two-way radio hookups after installation resulting from a Civil Defense appropriation. Chief Ralph E. Gilman praised the workings of the apparatus in providing directions for trucks meanwhile keeping track of their whereabouts. In addition, there are tie-ins with the Police Department and Civil Defense. The Department's equipment was of dual frequency, so that Firemen could converse with radio-equipped machines of other towns whenever there was a need. Chief Gilman had this to say of the equipment: "A sound fire protection program for coping with serious fires and disasters must be built around our Fire Department operating procedures and one of those procedures is the installing of two-way radios."



A tribute to one of the most ardent fire chasers in the city, the Department's Mascot, Spanner. Regardless of the hour, or where she might be when the fire alarm system sound to call the firefighters to their stations, the first one aboard the truck leaving the stations was usually Spanner.

Spanner, a Dalmatian dog, could be seen at all fires, winter or summer, rain or shine. She came to Central Station in July of 1955, and since that time has made her home with the members of the department. Her white and black spotted form is a familiar sight to residents. She has been trained some, and can do a few tricks, but in general she lives an easy life.

In 1963, Spanner past away. Spanner was eight years old and due to incurable illness, had to be put away. Friends of the friendly Waterville fire canine will miss her familiar black and white figure proudly seated on the first truck out of the station on sounding of an alarm. It was nervousness that spelled Spanner's end. She became high strung and the fire station boys think she was nipped by a bolt of lightning. To cure the condition at that time, her veterinarian prescribed human tranquilizers as part of her diet. Following a firemen's field days in Anson, Spanner ran off into the woods after being spooked by low flying jet planes, firecrackers, and a loud sharp sound from a .22 blank pistol signaling the start of the events. A two hour search turned up nothing, and the Waterville crew had to return home without their dog. She was found several hours later roaming along

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a highway in the North Anson-Solon area by a Somerset County deputy sheriff. Although back home, she never recovered from the shock of the weekend experience, and tranquilizers took hold only temporarily.



Franklin Pooler, Lt. Arthue Baldic, Ernest Pooler

The Fire Department has had a resuscitator in service for more than 15 years, but the fact has not been publicized. It could mean the difference between life and death. At times, it has meant just that. It has been used as necessary. Recently, Chief Ralph E. Gilman was stricken with a heart attack, and the resuscitator was summoned. Each of the drivers in the department have been instructed in the use of this Emerson Resuscitator. Some of the volunteers were also taught. The machine is frequently checked. It has two oxygen tanks enclosed, which are always ready for use. A third tank, larger is carried in reserve on the Hook and Ladder truck, in which the resuscitator is kept. Chief Gilman cited several instances when the unit has meant a life was saved.

In 1961, after a colorful career of fire-fighting, a career that started on July 3, 1923. Ralph E. Gilman, 75 year old, officially retired from his chores as Chief of the Department. A Department he has headed for nearly 15 years. Chief Gilman states he wishes to resign July 1, 1961, because of advanced age and state of health. For months there has been discussion of a possible change in the lineup of the

administration of the affairs of the fire department that could result from a move by Chief Gilman toward retirement. It is known that City Councilors have been approached for approval of a full-time "career man" as chief. Chief Gilman, as did his predecessors served in the office part-time, at an annual salary of small proportion. July 1st, 1961, Bernard D. Larsen, 53, of 15 Sanger Avenue was appointed fire chief, another part-time position. He defeated the nomination of Urban Stedman by a 14-5 vote.

Chief Larsen stated that the time when there will be a full-time chief here is a lot closer at hand and is a necessity. Larsen points out the move could be just around the corner. He didn't stand alone in this thought. Recommendations that the city institute a full-time chief was made by the National Board of Insurance Underwriters after its representatives paid a visit and surveyed the fire department system. Larsen stated that he has the responsibility of 14 regular drivers, eight trucks, and three stations. There are daily inspections to be made and complaints to be investigated. It's a big job to be doing on a part-time basis, if it was to be done properly.



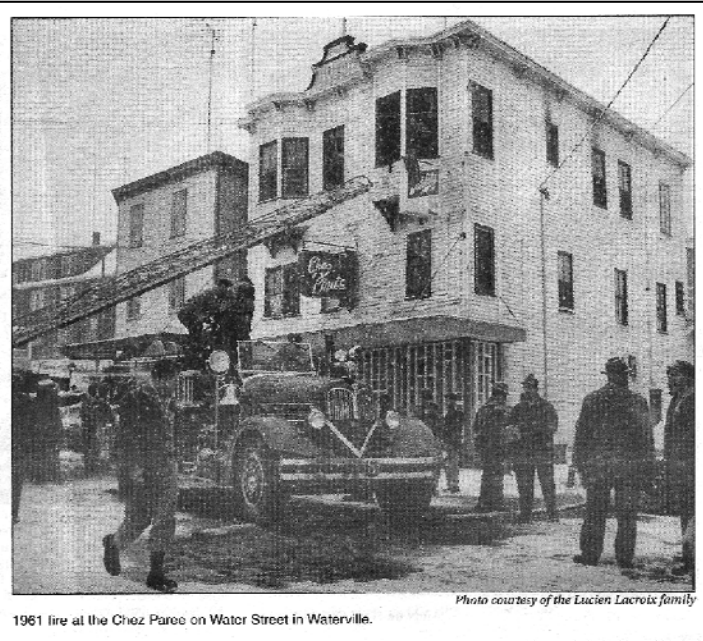
1957 Alex Loisel, Spanner and Fernando LaFrance

Asked whether or not he'd be interested in being full-time chief, if the post became a reality, Larsen, who has a business of his own, promptly, replied: "Yes, I'm very interested, as a matter of fact, I wrote the Mayor a letter the day after his inauguration asking him to consider me as a candidate when and if the machinery goes into motion." Referring to the Mayor's address when he stated the possibility of a full-time chief merited serious consideration which his administration will undertake as one of its projects.

It was also mentioned at this time if the whole department should have permanent men, having no call men, and Chief Larsen responded by saying, "The advent of a permanent department doesn't seem likely to me for at least another eight or nine years. I don't think the taxpayers will stand the great additional expense which would estimating to

jump to a cost roughly at \$150,000." Asked what was behind the talk of a permanent department, the chief indicated

there's an element that believes response of hose company call men to alarms has not been as good as it should be during recent years and borders on classification of being poor, especially in daytime. He added that it is tough in this modern era to find good men who are willing to leave their high paying jobs when the horn blows and fight fires for \$1.50 an hour, the current rate.



1961 fire at the Chez Paree on Water Street in Waterville.

Photo courtesy of the Lucien Lacroix family

It takes a real fire buff to give up his \$1.75-\$2.00, or higher hourly pay and take something lower in money for work which sometimes is physically more difficult than he normally engages in, the chief observed. "Each company used to have waiting list of men to join a few year ago. Now you have to go out and look for call men to keep up the company's strength. Some drop off the force through disinterest or other reasons." Expressing neither favor nor objection to a permanent fire department, the chief presented a few cold facts that would apply if it existed. According to him, 12 to 14 men would be needed on each of two shifts. That would double the present payroll on which there are 14 full-time employees classified as drivers. Each new man would probably draw about \$4,000 per year. Larsen stressed that firemen here have to be on duty 72 hours a week for just a few dollars more than what local police receive in wages for a 48 hour work week. A permanent department is likely to mean a \$250,000 budget, pointing out the 1963 fire department allocation was \$95,000. The chief also stated that the

moving to a permanent department would not give the City a better insurance rating. He stated that the City has a "Class B" rating and moving to a permanent department he doubts would boost it to a "Class A" rating.

Waterville hired its first Career Firefighter, Donald Pooler, in 1961. Ever since the first career firefighter hired in 1885, all career firemen were hired only as drivers of the apparatus. Donald Pooler was hired to ride out on the first engine and was the first firefighter suited up to enter a burning structure. As the years went on more "firefighters" were hired and it wasn't till the creation of a Rescue Unit, did the department use these men to be the first to be suited up to fight fire. Today, all hired Career Firefighters are hired as drivers, but at any time could be used to fight fire.



More disaster—the ruins of a Water Street store after a fire in 1963.

On November 12, 1962 the department gets a new truck, a Seagraves 1,000 gallon pumper will be seen in the traditional Veterans Day parade. The department also got a new Pick-Up Truck. Waterville Auto Sales was awarded low bid on the 1963 Ford F100, half-ton pick-up truck at a price of \$1,461.98 with trade in. The truck is red in color, has a flare side body, six-cylinder engine, and three-speed transmission.

After 65 years of sounding the bell for fire calls, the Second Baptist Church in the South End of the City has come to an end. A new fire alarm system was installed at Hose 3 with two horns and is now providing more modern fire alarm service in the area. The Mayor, Cyril M. Joly, Jr., had extended thanks for the city to the members of the church for allowing its use for so many years. Fire Department Electrician Herman Claprod helps update the city's Fire Alarm System. Sixty thousand feet of wire was used to renovate a 51-year-old system, an old battery power system was replaced, two new horns were installed and the equipment house

renovated with new heating equipment.

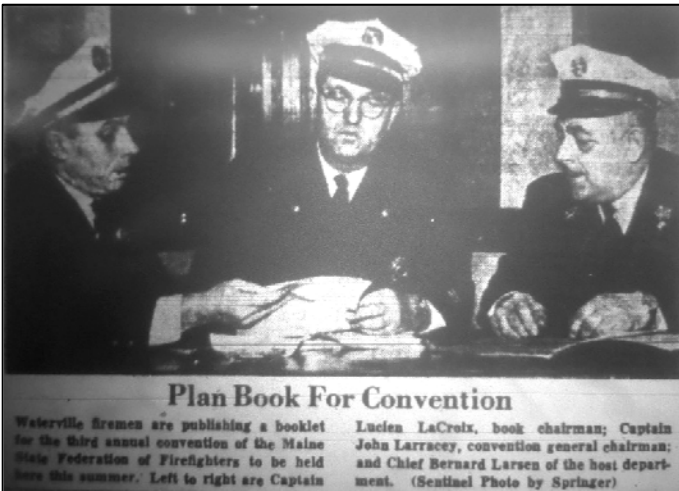
HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire's Aftermath On Sherwin Street

In 1966 the Career Firemen join a union. The Department was granted a charter from the International Association of Fire Fighters AFL-CIO. The Department is organized under Local 1608, they were the tenth local in Maine to receive their Charter. First order of business was to get \$10 weekly increase for Captains, Lieutenants and firefighters. In 1981 the Career Firefighter left their chapter of the I.A.F.F. and became new members of the Teamsters Union under Local 48 and then Local 340. The Union Firefighters had many issues over the years with the City over new Union Contracts, but for the first time in 2003 the Union Firefighters came to blows with the City Council that would end up with the members staging its first Union Informational Picket. The Firefighters took their issues on a "Lack" of a contract, to the City streets. They would come together and picket outside the Council chambers on their meeting nights and would picket in front of Central Fire during the

daylight hours. Several firefighters, some with spouses, stood outside holding placards that bore slogans such as, "City Unfair to Teamsters Local 340," "Honk for Firefighters," and "SINGEL'D OUT," referring to City Administrator Ronald J. Singel's involvement in negotiations. The contract would eventually become settled with both side not getting what they were looking to get. The "Picket" would come to hurt the firefighters in the future as a member of the council would become Mayor and he would make it his mission to belittle and blame the firefighters for years of spending the cities tax dollars and make them pay for their uprising. Three firefighters were laid off, the overtime budget would be cut and the department would not have a 100% Fire Chief. Waterville would hire William P. Page, Fire Chief of their neighboring Town of Winslow, to become Chief of both communities. The sharing of a Chief is still in existent today. It wasn't until 2010 when the fire house would slowly get back to normal, but it took Mayor Paul LePage to leave and become the Governor of Maine. The department never regained the lost three firefighter.

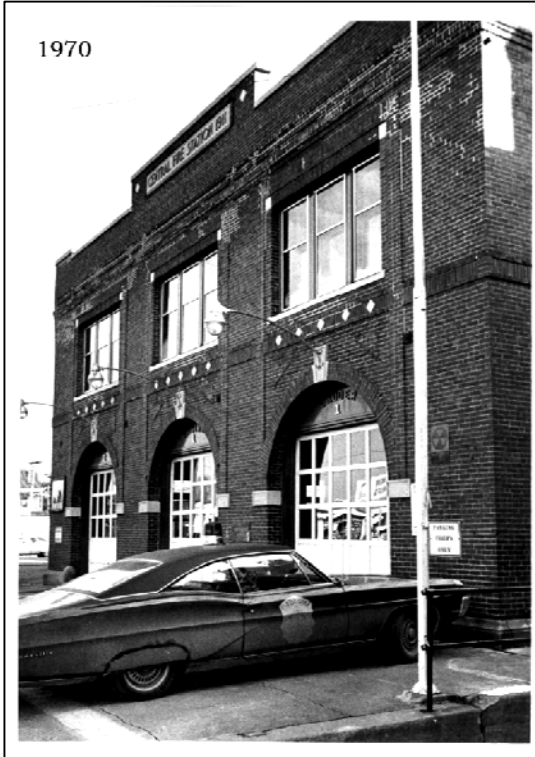


Plan Book For Convention

Waterville firemen are publishing a booklet for the third annual convention of the Maine State Federation of Firefighters to be held here this summer. Left to right are Captain Lucien LaCroix, book chairman; Captain John Larracey, convention general chairman; and Chief Bernard Larsen of the host department. (Sentinel Photo by Springer)

In 1959, a new organization was organized to help firefighters in trainings and getting laws passed that would help Maine firefighters to do their jobs, began in the State and would be known as the Maine State Federation of Firefighters. Each year, starting in 1963, they would hold a Fire Convention in a host town or city. In 1966, Waterville hosted their first of five state conventions for the Maine Federation. The convention had its headquarters at the Elmwood Hotel. Among the highlights of the two day gathering of firemen will be a four mile long parade and a water battle among the various departments. Waterville's first ever held Convention chairman was Captain John Larracey. Waterville would hold a total of five Conventions in the Federations history, 1966, 1969, 1980, 1998, and 2011.

The State Convention would always contain a meeting, parade, musters and banquet. As the years would go on, the convention would become a three day event, adding fire related vendors who would display their new and modern firefighting equipment, which always included the newest in Fire apparatus. The banquet would become a gathering of fellow firefighters and their government supporters. The dance that would be held after the banquet would give way to comedy related shows. The conventions would have an estimated gathering of close to 1,000 firefighters from around the state.



In 1967, the Waterville Fire Department enters a new era. The City of Waterville purchases its first Rescue vehicle, a 1967 Chevy Van. The department was now set to respond for medical calls. Back then not too many citizens would call for a rescue for medical calls. They would just simply gather their injured or sick and drive them into the emergency room.

In 1968, the Rescue Unit was a mere one year old, but there are not enough fingers on your hand that could count the number of times it has already been used during its young life to free an injured person, mostly from the twisted metal of automobile wreckage. In Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, Oakland, Benton or Clinton, it holds no city or town as its boundary wherever its stock of tools and trained personnel may pull a life out of jeopardy. A man stricken by a heart attack, a woman faints while shopping, the Rescue truck and crew are on hand in a jiffy to render assistance with oxygen.

The Rescue was set up be ready on a 24 hour round the clock bases. It is the first unit to leave Central Fire on any alarm, whether just one fire engine is sent or the entire detachment. The first duty of the driver upon arrival at the scene of a fire is to check and make sure all persons are safely out of the building. If he cannot positively ascertain this from people outside, he must enter the structure whenever conditions make it possible and make a thorough search. Besides, regular firemen's garb, he has a variety of other protection clothing and equipment at his immediate disposal in the truck to facilitate completion of his primary duty.

The first three "Rescue Technicians" were; Joel Caron, Robert Trahan, and Rene Martin. All three men took special courses during a two week period in heavy rescue work and first aid. The intensive training program was conducted in Topsfield, Massachusetts.

Today, Rescue One is still covered by professional Rescue Technicians that are required to have special rescue training in many different aspects of special rescues, wither it be Water Rescues, Below Grade, High Angle, Confined Space and Vehicle Entrapment rescues. A Rescue Technician is a promotional position. There are minimal requirements to be assigned on the Rescue Unit.



In 1968 the City Council took the action of addressing the need for Waterville's fire sub-stations. With the need to upgrade the Engine 3 house on Water Street and building a station on the west end of the City, a heated debate over if the Water Street station should be upgraded or put on hold till after a sub-station could be built on Western Avenue. The feeling was that the old firehouse on Water Street was outdated and inadequate and not a safe structure for the equipment that it houses. The Fire Chief was in favor of rebuilding a structure, but the location as it sits, was thought to be a bad location. He thought it would be better if a station could be built more centralized. The sub-station covered from Silver Street to Water Street and from Sherwin to Grove Street.

A few of the sites that were discussed were; Gold Street in front of the South Grammar School and on Grove Street, which would provide speedy access to fires in the area and would be close to the Sidney

Road (West River Road) section. It was eventually settled that Engine 3 house on Water Street would receive a new facelift, at its present site and the Western Avenue sub-station would be placed on hold for a few more years.

In 1971, with Sirens wailing, clanging bells local fire apparatus laid out a Welcome Mat for the department's new aerial ladder truck as it came off Interstate 95 at 11:55 a.m. The unit was ordered after the City Council authorized

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the purchase. Normally, time on an aerial ladder truck order until delivery is 229 days, but Waterville got the opportunity to buy one already in production and grabbed the chance to cut down the waiting period. With a little bit of reshuffling and doubling up, the Department's new closed cab American-LaFrance Aerial Ladder Truck, a 100-footer, longest in the section of the state, took its place. The new truck gave firefighters greater reaching power on the city's tallest structures. It consists of four intertwined 24-foot sections controlled from the rear and feeding up from the front, just the reverse of the 1949 open cab Seagraves it replaced. It was put into service under the direction of Fire Chief Bernard Larsen, Assistant Chief Lucien LaCroix, and Captain John Larracey, head of the ladder company.



For the first time Central Fire housed two aerial ladder trucks. Whenever a West End fire station becomes a reality, it will be built with enough depth to house the 1949 Seagraves aerial which underwent a major overhaul to put it in tip top shape earlier in the year. The only two-bay sub-station, home of Engine Company 4 on Ticonic Street, isn't long enough to accommodate the Seagraves aerial, thus the tight packing at Central Fire.

In late fall of 1971, the department started assigning numbers to the career firefighters for record keeping. With the promotions of two new Captains, Boulette and Brown, the number system began. Soon the driver started placing their assigned numbers on everything they owned. The number became one that would never be assigned to anyone else, so it then became their badge number. Whenever a firefighter

is hired, the department would purchase their first assigned number badge.

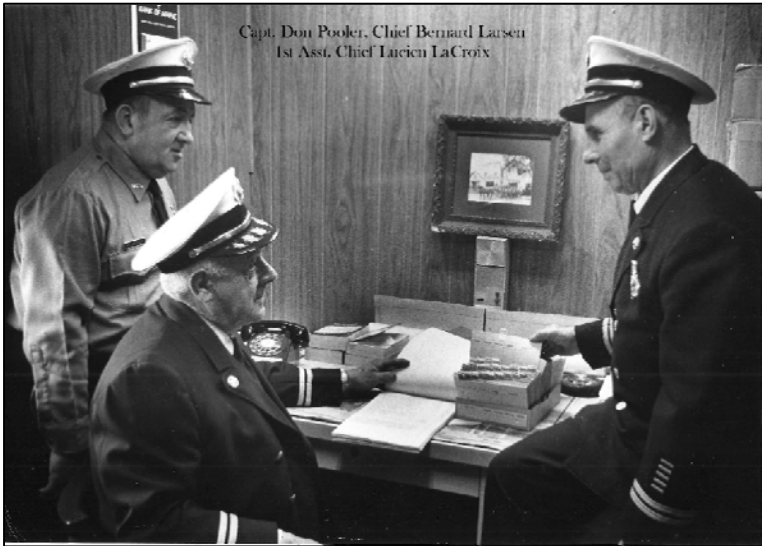
In 1972, the City opens a new fire station on Western Avenue, known as Engine 5. This station would house the 1949 Seagraves Aerial Ladder truck (Ladder 2), Engine 5 an 800 gallon tanker (old Engine 3) and Ford Pick-Up truck (5-6). The staffing would include the hiring of three new firefighters, Richard Muzerole, Joseph Roy and Christopher Libby, although which men will actually be assigned to the new station would be decided by bidding among the department's driver force. As for the callmen, the officials say they will utilize a pick-up crew of men from other companies who live in the area of the new station.



Assistant Chief Steve McGraw made the formal presentations. He quickly countered several Council suggestions, that Engine 2 be transferred from Central Fire by saying that the 180 gallon capacity of the truck is sufficient for a primary truck. McGraw also said that Engine 2 is needed downtown in its present role of a support unit for Engine 1. In addition, he stated drivers from Engine 2 have received extensive training and are used as additional men on the rescue unit. As to the need for full manning of the Western Avenue station, McGraw claimed that in the past five years the department has received 386 calls involving actual fire. If these, only 28 of them, or seven percent, were within the three quarter mile projected radius of equipment from the new station.

Around 1973 or 1974, Air New England became a certified airline and it was required that fire protection be provided. Engine 3 from Water Street would go to the airport to cover each Air New England

landing and takeoffs. When Engine 2 was moved to Western Avenue, it was decided that coverage of the Air New England would be split between the Engine 2 and Engine 3. Engine 2 would cover the morning and evening and Engine 3 would cover the afternoon flights. In 1975, a light duty Dodge "Crash Truck" was purchased with FAA funding and was staffed by the Engine 2 drivers. It was housed in two different buildings at the airport, over the approximately five years that it covered Air New England flights.



Capt. Don Pooler, Chief Bernard Larsen
1st Asst. Chief Lucien LaCroix

In late spring or early summer of 1975, while on a mutual aid call to Fairfield, Engine 5 was shuttling water to a house fire on the Apple Farm Road, engine being driven by Richard Muzerolle, blow the engine. Engine 5 was shut down and scrapped. A driver from the Western Avenue was assigned to a new Utility position that was created and that person would assist Rescue and drive the ladder truck. Engine 2 would move to the Western Avenue station. The sign on the front of the building would be changed from Engine 5 and would become Engine 2.

In 1976 Mayor Richard Carey looked closely at closing down the four year old sub-station. He stated that the \$70,000 station had answered only 16 calls in the past 11 months and seven of those calls were for grass fires and not one was for a major conflagration. He stated that officials were "looking" at the feasibility of closing the station

down as a good try for the winter months, with the chance that it will be done permanently. He issued an economy warning to municipal department heads to prepare for "bare bone" budgets for 1976.

Each time the Rescue unit is summoned from Central Fire, the Engine 5 man drives to Central Fire as a standby driver for Engine 2 if a fire should be reported. He stated that if the Western Avenue station could be closed then the Engine 5 man could be on duty at Central station and could be proven more valuable and the Western Avenue station could be leased out to Delta Ambulance service who is now housed at Seton Hospital.



1974 Lunn Farm Fire

The station was shut down for a few months before the council became aware of the Mayor decision to do so and they became concerned that they were not brought in on the decision. The station was ordered reopened and it remained a working fire house. Engine 2 lasted only till 1981 when it was closed and turned over to the Department of Park and Recreation. The two bay structure still housed one spare fire department apparatus until 2003 when a new addition to Central Fire made it possible to house all equipment under one roof. Department of Park and Rec left the building in late 2010 when they moved to the old building of Public Works on Wentworth Street. Today the Western Avenue Station is own by the LaCroix family and soon to be used as a bakery business.

Stating in the fall of 1980 the City decided that the only way to start saving money, they would be starting to close down Waterville's sub-stations. This measure would save the city approximately \$13,000 per year in reduced maintenance and overtime cost. Waterville currently maintains its large central station along with three manned substations, currently, these facilities provide protection for the city's 13.5 square miles, an area substantially smaller than most every other city in the state. Chief Lucien LaCroix stated, "As far as I'm concerned, the substations are too close together for the number of vehicles

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that we've got." At a recent budget session with the City Council, LaCroix admitted that the department's response capability would not be compromised by a move toward centralization. "I'd hope we'd get there from Central at least as fast as the horses did," he quipped.



Engine 4 from Ticonic Street, would be sent to Central Fire and Engine 3 from Water Street, and would be sent to Engine 2 Station on Western Avenue. In the fall of 1980, Engine 2 would be sent from Western Avenue and Engine 3 would be left behind, which lasted a few more months.

In January of 1981, Engine 2 on Western Avenue, was the last of the three substations to finally close. The station was only built nine years before. This closing leaves Central Fire on Main Street as the sole firefighting operations base in the city. Mayor LaVerdiere and Captain in charge, Fred Brown, stressed that the changes in store for the department are designed to strengthen its effectiveness while at the same time saving the taxpayers' money. Meetings were held almost daily in an attempt to head off a threatened drop in insurance rating by the ISO. The agency informed the city in October that unless corrective measures were taken, the local rating would drop from 4-B to 5-C, meaning higher insurance bills for taxpayers. The final word from the ISO was that the City's rating will remain a 4-B.

The closing of the stations would clear the way for an extensive overhaul of operations at Central, including; the housing of three front line engines, one spare engine, a ladder truck, the rescue unit, and the airport crash truck in one location; the presence of sufficient personnel to roll all pieces of equipment at all times on a moment's notice; an increase in the number of "utility men" from one to two per shift. The duties of these men will be flexible, including the manning of the airport crash unit, backing up on rescue calls, handling dispatch responsibilities during fires, and filling in for full-time drivers during incidents of sick leave or vacation; consolidating of Engine Companies 2 and 4 into a single Engine 2 Company, relieving a "manpower shortage" in each unit. Engine 4, a 750 gallon pumper will be transformed into a backup for Engine 2.



Roland LaCroix, Richard Muzerolle
Dana Rossignol, Capt. Jerome Boulette

In 1972, the 911 emergency phone system came to the area. When the Communication Center went to the 911 emergency number, it became the first time in the nation that 911 has been used in an area concept. David Brown, Waterville radio executive, who had been serving as consultant in establishment of the center here said that eventually it planned to have the 911 number operative throughout the country. The idea is that wherever a person is, they will be able to get help in an emergency by simply dialing 911.

The City scheduled a number of meetings to develop coordination and procedures, and late in 1970, plans were started for the inclusion of the New England Telephone Company's "911 Emergency System." in the Greater Waterville Area Communications Center. During the summer of 1971, the actual construction of the facilities began. The Police Department was relocated to the lower level in Waterville City Hall and a new room for the communications center began to take shape.

Four civilian dispatchers were hired to operate the Communications Center and a shift sergeant of the Police Department was assigned for each shift to assist the dispatchers during periods of heavy traffic to better coordinate the activities of the department. The Police, Fire and Public Works Departments of the communities of Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, Oakland, and Benton are linked by radio and telephone to the Communication Center

Two Waterville Firefighters rescued a nine-year-old girl from the second story of a burning dwelling at 146 College Avenue at the corner of Crescent Street. The Department's aerial ladder truck reached the upstairs window from which the unconscious girl was removed and given

emergency treatment by Lieutenant Fred Brown and rescue unit driver Robert Trahan. The girl was treated for smoke inhalation.



A College Avenue, motel operator, appeared before the Waterville Safety Council to criticize the operations of the local fire department at the major fire on College Avenue. The criticism involved the length of time it took for firemen to rescue nine year old Paula Whitish from her second floor bedroom in her burning house. However, after listening to a detailed explanation by fire officials, Safety Council members said they were satisfied that the rescue had been made as quickly as possible. They stated that the girl was rescued in about 15 minutes, pinpointed by a tape recording at the Communication Center of all radio and telephone calls during the emergency.

The following article was placed in the Morning Sentinel a few weeks after the fire; *Two Waterville firemen were honored Saturday evening for their parts in rescuing a young girl from her burning College Avenue home.*

Lt. Fredrick Brown of Ladder One and Rescue Driver Robert Trahan received certificates of appreciation. These were presented by Mayor Richard J. Carey in behalf of the City of Waterville at a Central

Station ceremony.

They were cited for the parts which they played in saving the life of nine year old Paula Whitish. Miss Whitish who was rushed to a local hospital and treated for smoke inhalation, was also on hand at the ceremony.

Firemen were dispatched to the burning Whitish home at 146 College Avenue shortly after noon Jan. 29 when a call from the girl's mother was relayed from the police department's Area Communication Center. On arrival, they found the girl trapped in a second floor bedroom due to extreme heat and smoke.

As other firemen cut holes in the roof to vent the fire, Lt. Brown climbed the departments aerial ladder and found the girl; unconscious under a bed. He carried her to the ground where Trahan took over and administered as she was rushed to the hospital.



Paula would grow up to be a healthy woman with a family of her own. She would become an Emergency Medical Technician working for the Delta Ambulance Corporation. In 2015 we find her married with two grown daughters living in North Carolina. She is married to Dan Palladino and has they have two Grandchildren.

On May 5, 1973, Operation Red Ball, then renamed, "Tot-Finder®" decals, was completed in the Waterville-Winslow area,

through the combined efforts of the Jaycee Wives and the Waterville Fire Department Auxiliary. The idea of the project was to place a Tot-Finder® decal on the windowpanes of rooms in which children or a handicapped person sleep. This identification alerts firefighters allowing for quick access.

Over the years, many families have affixed decals known as Tot-Finder® stickers to the window or door of a young child's room to alert firefighters to the presence of that child. The bright red and silver, reflective decals are

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

emblazoned with the words "Tot Finder" and an image of a firefighter carrying a child to safety. But the NFPA doesn't recommend using the stickers, citing three concerns; The decals might direct an intruding child abductor to a sleeping child; and if a child no longer sleeps in the bedroom with the decal - either because he or she has moved to a different room or is older and no longer needs the assistance of the sticker - it could waste valuable time for a firefighter trying to get the most vulnerable family member out of danger.



"We would much rather a family get together and plan a home fire escape plan that includes the whole family, where if there was a child who couldn't get out on his own, there was an adult assigned to that child and the child would get out." Window decals which identify the location of a child's room are NOT the solution to home escape planning with small children. The NFPA recommends that all families install and regularly check smoke alarms for their effectiveness and that they develop and regularly practice a fire escape plan in their homes.

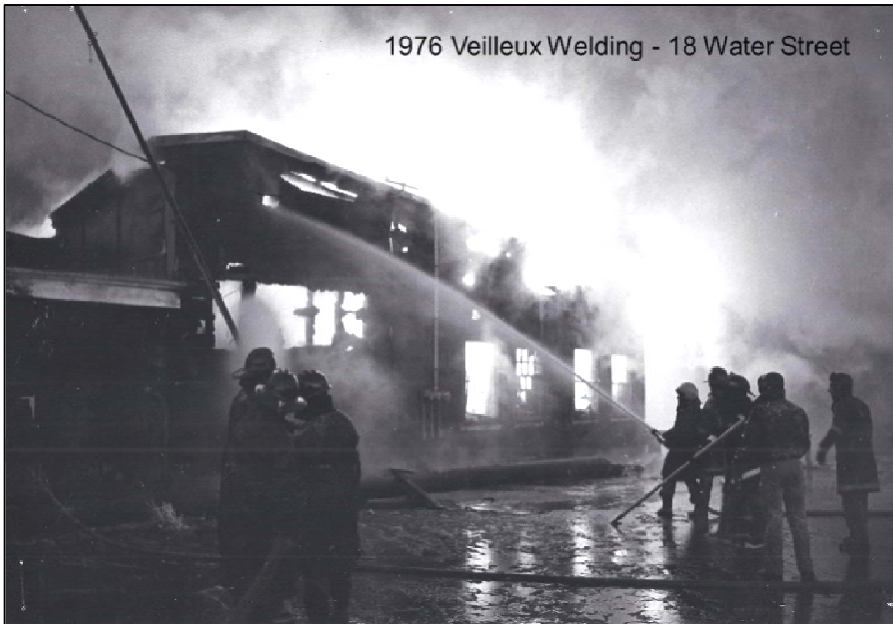
In 1973 the Waterville's new Rescue Unit went into service. It replaced a smaller van purchased several years ago. Purchase of the new vehicle was approved by the City Council when it was faced with repair costs to the old van after a traffic accident. Fire officials at that time explained that their rescue equipment had outgrown the older vehicle and the new van has a custom designed body with separate compartments for most frequently used equipment.

A \$250,000 fire destroyed several businesses and apartments on Main Street. Fire was located between Common Street and the Federal Trust Company (now known as Casco Bank).

In 1974 the City purchased a Dodge Crash Unit for use at the airport. This unit was stationed at Engine 5 on Western Avenue for a while, but was transferred to the airport and house in a hanger on the grounds. It would respond whenever an airplane would take off or land. In early 1990, this

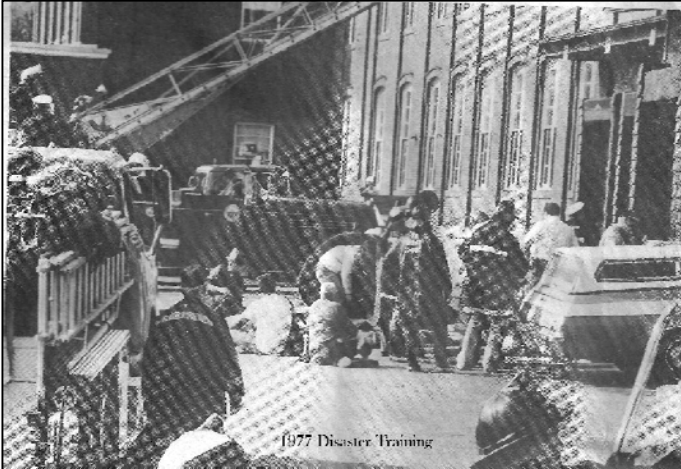
apparatus would be discontinued as a crash unit and made into a Brush Unit. This 1974 Dodge Ram is still in use today.

Pine Tree Society began as Pine Tree Society for Crippled Children. In December of 1935, a group of 25, including doctors, officials associated with state government and other interested parties, met at the State House in Augusta. Their purpose was to form a Maine Society for crippled children. After the Social Securities Act was established, it seems like it was a national trend that each state would then establish their own organization for crippled children.



For many years the members of the Waterville Fire department would take and spend a day at the Pine Tree Camps for crippled Children in Oakland, Maine. They would join in the many events that went on at the camp. They raised money to help complete a houseboat, which could accommodate six to seven wheels chairs. The Hose 3 firemen entertained the campers each year. The Company would support this organization late into the 1980's.

Today, Pine Tree Camp is perhaps the most visible of the Society's programs. The funds also gave Pine Tree Society the ability to explore new opportunities. During that time programs like Audiology and Interpreting Services were established.



In 1974, the City Council met in a special session to direct the Waterville Fire Department's three member board of Engineers, Engine Company 4 Captain Clarence Boudreau, and three callmen from that company to meet in an attempt to resolve their differences. After listening to much dialogue between the two sides, Councilman Clair E. Wood said, "The crux of the matter seems to be friction between some of the men in this company and the Captain."

The problem erupted when three callmen missed three consecutive practices allegedly in protest over a new rule from the Board of Engineers stating that only six men could ride on a truck. The three were given letter of dismissal.

Public Safety Director, Ed Hachey said that the six man limit directive was instituted because "we don't

want these fellows to get hurt." Hachey was high in his praise of the Waterville's Board of Engineers, calling them "the best of any around." Waterville Fire Chief Bernard Larsen pointed out that "of the five companies making up the Elm City department, four have been and are running smoothly." Larsen also pointed out that Company 4 men "have no respect for the Captain of the company and jumped the chain of command." "They go straight to the Mayor, jumping over the board of engineers, and the director of public safety, not to mention the company Captain."

In October 1976 Waterville received its new custom brand Pierce 1250 Pumper. The pumper arrived in time for the fire prevention week. It would cost the city \$64,125.00. The new pumper would be housed in Central Fire replacing a 1961 Seagraves 1000 pumper which has been transferred to Engine 2 on Western Avenue. The pumper was the first truck that was not painted the traditional color of red. Because it was found that red was too dark a color to be seen, this new pumper came in in a high visible lime green color. From this point on, every truck ordered for the department came in the high visible lime green color.

This engine would go through a complete restoration in 1991 after the City purchased a new 1991 Spartan Central States 1500 gpm pumper. Engine 1 would be repainted red and then would become Waterville's new Engine Three.



All new fire apparatus ordered after 1976 came in the lime-yellow green color scheme. It wasn't till 1990 that the trucks would go back to red. Making a return to the days of old, the fire department would plan to repaint the city's fire and rescue vehicles red from the current lime-yellow. Fire Chief Darrel G. Fournier said he is making the color change in conjunction with the city's purchase of a 1971 red and white pumper truck from the Syosset Fire Department on Long Island, New York.

Fournier would send each truck to Berard's Auto Body on Water Street for extensive body work and they will be painted the traditional color of red. The new color scheme will call for painting the top half of the truck cabs white, and the bottom half and the rest of the vehicle red. For increased visibility, a white 6 inch wide reflective stripes around all of the vehicles will

be added. The entire seven truck fleet should be back to traditional red in about three years.

With the increasing traffic throughout Waterville and the increasing number of calls that the department were receiving, Fire Chief Bernard Larsen decided to install three new high velocity sirens on utility poles running down Elm Street to ensure a clear passage for the department's vehicles responding to emergencies. At a cost of \$500 each, the sirens were placed at the intersections of Park Street, Spring Street and Western Avenue. The sirens will be operated from Central Fire Station, either sequentially or simultaneously and the plan was to run them on a 15 or

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20 seconds ahead of responding fire trucks to alert motorists to clear the way. Chief Larsen hopes the presence of the sirens will reduce the chances of traffic accidents with the fire equipment on the busy downtown artery. Three similar sirens on Main Street from Post Office Square to Water Street have been in operation for more than 20 years.



street lights in the City to a new updated system. With this, the DOT added a new feature, "Traffic Signal Preemption" to the system in which all emergency vehicle could be equipped with a white "Emitter" strobe light mounted on top of the unit. An emitter, when activated, would preempted the light cycle to turn the light green for the oncoming emergency vehicle, and the other intersecting light would turn to red. Once the units had cleared the light, it would resume its normal operation. This system has decreased the number of intersection accidents with the department's vehicle.



Larsen was named Chief of the department in 1961 and served under the director of public safety, although the city has not had any person serving in this office since the resignation of Richard L. McClay in 1976. Assistant Fire Chief Lucien LaCroix was named the new Fire Chief at this time.

In 2003 when the new addition to Central Fire was completed, the uses of the outside sirens were discontinued. The only remaining siren was located on the front wall of the old Central Fire. This siren was only used whenever a fire unit was leaving Central Fire on an emergency call, or returning and backing into the station. Once the new addition was constructed with a bigger apron for the fire units, the use of the siren was not needed. Without the use of the siren, the station was equipped with a 2 minute cycle switch that would turn the traffic lights out front of Central Fire to red. The units would have two minutes, to clear the area before the lights would reset back to its normal cycle. In case of where not all emergency units having to leave, the cycle could be reset manually by someone within the station.

In 2012, the State of Maine DOT department took out and replaced all the

A 67 year old Waterville landmark and popular College Avenue night spot was destroyed after a stubborn 12 hour fire, which began shortly after 12 noon on January 25, 1977. Damage to Hotel Emma was unofficially estimated at a quarter of a million dollars, but no one was injured. The fire left the Hotel practically gutted. The roof had collapsed, 2nd & 3rd floors destroyed. The first floor flooded. Firefighting strength included five pumpers, and three ladder trucks.

In 1977, Bernard D. Larsen, 66, has headed the Waterville Fire Department for the past 16 years, submitted his resignation. Larsen, who became a fire fighter in 1934, said he just didn't have time anymore and it was time some younger person had a shot at the job.



The Waterville Fire Department Color Guard was awarded the Outstanding Marching Unit at the recent Maine State Federation of Firefighters Convention held in Calais, Maine. They also won the Outstanding Fire Truck with their Engine 1.

After running the department for the last three years as its Fire Chief, Lucien LaCroix hands in his resignation to the Mayor Paul R. LaVerdiere. After the department received a report from the Insurance Safety Occupation, the City was faced with a department that had many deficiencies that needed to be addressed. Following some special meetings of the City Council in which the ISO findings were reviewed in detail, LaCroix was reportedly pressured by his supervisors to prepare his resignation. Chief LaCroix would resign his post on October 1980.

In the upcoming year of 1981, a whole new era will set the Fire Department into a new way of

operating. The City had finally come to the realization that the department needed to be run by a Full-Time fire chief and needed to meet the rule and regulations set forth by the Insurance Safety Occupation department.

Turning the attention to the department's ability to respond to structural fires, the ISO has agreed that all sections of the city can be covered out of Central Fire without any loss of efficiency. The only set-up that the ISO had with the department was its lack of fire training and education. Even though this was not a huge budget worry, it was a big deal when it came with the ISO rating for the City. Waterville at the time was a Class 4-B rating. Without a new program for training of the department, the city was looking at a lower Class 5-C rating, which would have meant high insurance cost throughout the city and its taxpayers.

In a report to Mayor Paul R. LaVerdiere, the ISO cited a number of deficiencies uncovered during its examination of the department. A severe lack of training for both full-time personnel and call men. Out of a possible 10 points in this category, Waterville received only a .95 a personnel score that is roughly one-half of the maximum granted by the ISO. Waterville's 21 full-time firefighters qualified for 7.28 points, compared to a maximum of 15. An overall score of 23.64 for Waterville's fire department, compared to a maximum of 50.



Local officials have speculated that as much as one-half of the shortfall can be easily made up by beefing up the firefighter training program. But those gains could be severely curtailed if cutbacks in personnel become a reality. There has been widespread speculation that within the department that as many as nine full-time firemen might be laid off, a reduction that would leave the city with an additional deficiency of 1.26 percent in its ISO score. Because of the possible drop in the ISO rating due to the lay-off of full-time firefighters, the City decided not to lay-off any firefighters at this time.

Captain-In-Charge Fred Brown implemented a new plan and it was reviewed by an ISO representative. The representative spent a day checking out the progress in training and the state of existing equipment. The report from Mayor Paul R. LaVerdiere stated that the city could retain its rating if it continued "to do well." The Mayor praised the

firefighters for the work they are doing in the area of fire prevention which he stated is equal to, if not more important, than firefighting itself.

Under the direction of departments newly appointed training officer, Dana Rossignol, the department has since developed an ongoing program that will draw upon local and state expertise in educating city firefighters. All the

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

instruction is based on materials used in the state's Firefighter 1 and 2 certification courses. This form of training still continues today. Captain Rodney Alderman is the present day Training Officer and each year he runs a "Rookie School", which uses the state's certification programs. All city firefighters are required to attend all training programs, which amount to hundreds of hours a year. There are many OSHA mandated classes that the department needs to meet every year, so you could say that running the departments training program is a full time commitment.

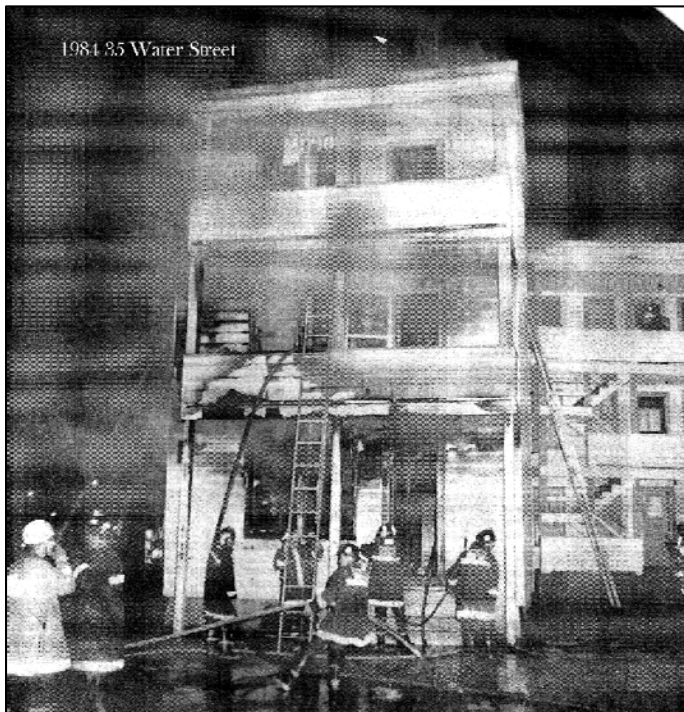


With the retirement of Chief LaCroix, it left the City with a decision on what they should do next. Should they finally hire a full-time fire chief or return back again and hire a part-time chief. While they were taking their time to find out what they were going to do, they did decide to place Captain Fredrick Brown as Captain-In-Charge of the department.

Mayor LaVerdere said despite the problem that the department has been having, he stated the moral at the department seemed to be "pretty good." At least among a number of the firefighters. One reason he stated was because they firefighters contract negotiations had been settled amicably, with a 6.5 percent pay increase and fringe benefits which might bring the overall

increase to nearly 10 percent.

After much discussions and meetings, Frederick A. Brown is named Fire Chief on January 30, 1981. The Captain-in-charge that led the Department through a major reorganization that began in October of 1980, was named the city's first full time Fire Chief. City Administrator Robert W. Palmer, Jr. said of the appointment: Captain Brown has performed over and above the call of duty these past few weeks, particularly in working on the problems that have been confronting the fire department. Chief Brown has been a full time member of the Department since 1956. He served as a Captain since 1972. Previously, he served as a Lieutenant for four years, and as a driver for 12 years before that. He stated that one of his major goals would be to continue the upgrading of department procedures that began with the ISO report, particularly in the area of training.

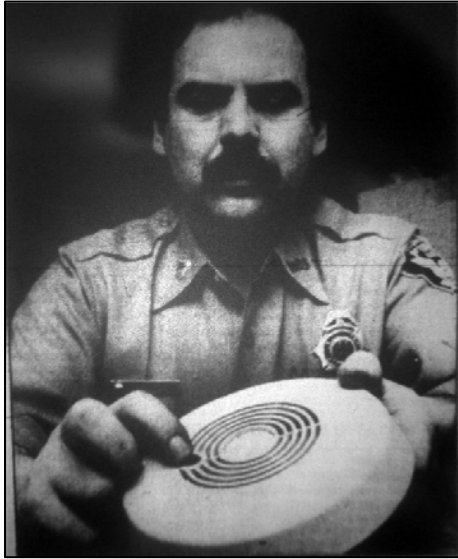


A former Waterville fire official has been retained by the city to serve as a consultant to the Fire Department and as acting chief whenever Fire Chief Brown was out on vacation, and he was to do this for free. Steve McGraw, an engineer at Keyes Fibre Company, was reported to have been one of the most highly sought after candidates for the fire chief's job after the resignation of Lucien LaCroix. The city's decision to put McGraw in a supervisory role while Brown in on vacation was treated as a slap in the face by some of the long-time personnel within the department.

According to Captain Jerome Boulette, he felt that the city did not think that anyone in the department knew anything. Boulette stated that the department was not notified of McGraw's appointment and the extent of his involvement in departments planning until Brown was headed off for a two-week vacation. City Administrator Robert W. Palmer Jr. stated that the city needed someone in administration charge and in the absent of the Chief, McGraw will act in his capacity working with all Captains, both regular and call.

McGraw will be paid for mileage expenses and trips that are considered necessary for the benefit of the

department, according to city officials. Mayor LaVerdere stated he has also been authorized to use city equipment, including a mobile radio. His help was solicited because of his expertise in firefighting. He will serve in this appointed for only six months and it was the intention then that the City will advertise and hire a part-time fire chief. This was never done due to budget cuts throughout the city, but it wasn't till 1994 that the City would hire a full-time Assistant Chief, only to lose it again in 1999. Waterville has not hired an Assistant Chief to this day.

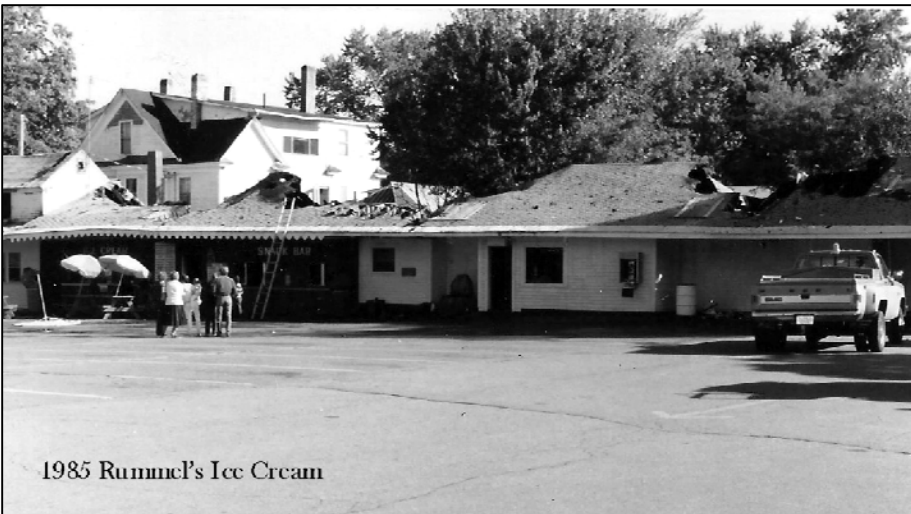


A test of their new training and firefighting skills came to a test when on March 11 a fire on Main Street was reported. Intense heat and a totally involved building greeted firefighters at the former Waterville Hardware Store on Main Street. The fire of undetermined origin gutted the structure. Although empty for two years, fire broke through a firewall and badly damaged six apartments in the adjoining building. It was believed the fire had been going for quite some time before it was discovered and was of suspicious origin. Chief Fred Brown said the fire began inside on the north wall of the vacant building. One of the problems in fighting the fire was that it had been very heavily boarded up in the rear making it difficult to vent. Also, the old structure with its tar and gravel roof, double ceilings, and many additions gave firefighters problems in getting the fire totally extinguished. Chief Brown said that during the long night, firefighters were fed coffee and donuts from the Salvation Army and Dunkin Donuts. The fire did about \$50,000 in damage. The owner will remove the rear portions of the building, but the basic brick structure will be kept.

The first notice of the fire was received at the Waterville Area Communication Center when one of the tenants ran over to report it. Engines 1 and 3, Ladder 1 and Rescue responded to the scene along with police. Shortly after arrival, Winslow Fire Department ladder truck was called to the scene as well as a unit to stand-by at Central. Although there were no serious injuries, one firefighter suffered a minor shoulder injury and another, smoke inhalation.

Starting in April 1981, Waterville was under siege by an arsonist that has been striking vacant buildings throughout the City. Fire were fought at 72 College Avenue, Chaplin Street warehouse, Allen Street, 10 Pearl Street, Veteran Court, 31 1/2 Water Street, 24 Oakland Street, Green Street, Knights of Columbus on Silver Street, 28 Hillside Avenue, Myrtle Street, Healy Court and Sturtevant Street. A total of over 22 fires were arson related and would take over a year to investigate, with suspects arrested and convicted.

State and local officials at a two-hour conference at Central Fire offering rewards up to \$1,000 for information on an arson spree that has plagued the city for three months. The money is being offered through the Maine Arson Information Program.



1985 Rummel's Ice Cream

An Ex-convict was arrested on arson charges. A man who lived in the building which was the most recent site of a suspicious fire has been arrested and charged with four counts of arson. Each charge of arson, a Class A crime, carries a penalty of up to 20 years in jail. His bail was set at \$50,000.00. He allegedly confessed to several arsons was ordered back to prison. He was sentenced to eight years in prison.

A 14-year-old boy was arrested on felony arson charges, less than two weeks after Police re-entered the probe of the city's nearly year-long arson epidemic. The youth was

charged with setting a fire in the Valley Distributors warehouse on Allen Street last June 19 and a subsequent blaze at a Sturtevant Street House November 10. Judge Ronald D. Russell found the 14 year-old male guilty of arson in

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connection with the November 10, 1981, fire in an unoccupied Sturtevant Street house. He received three years' probation.



Police solve another case of arson. Another arson case was erased from the Fire Marshal's book when two young children from the South End of the City made their admissions to authorities.

Waterville's first female firefighter was hired as a callman on June 29, 1981. Maxine Maheu stood watching a group of firemen battle a Water Street blaze. "Hey, I'd like to do that," she thought. Ms. Maheu who is 27 noticed the fire department was asking for volunteers and she decided to join. "I really was interested, and I figured it was worth the chance to see if I could get on. I knew they didn't have any women on the force and it might be a big deal, but I wanted to try anyway, she explained.

She was assigned to Engine 3, under the leadership of Captain Roger Richards. "Both the

Captain and the fire chief were very supportive and excited about the idea of a woman on the force. The Chief said, "you'd better stick with it and show everyone you can do it." She said. Any doubts about that proved unfounded. After the six-month trial period on the force, she was approved by the department and, officers say, has proved an asset to her company.

According to Captain Donald G. Pooler, "She's a real good worker. Better than some of the men. She'll do anything that has to be done." Ms. Maheu's presence hasn't gone completely unnoticed by her fellow male firefighters. "There was a lot of friction when I first started on the force – and there still is. Men will push me out of the way and say, "Hey, I'll do that." Her response? Maheu smiled. "I just push them right back. Whatever they give to me, I give right back to them. I don't want them thinking they have to worry about me – I can take care of myself."

On June 6, 1982, Firemen's Memorial Sunday was started with Chief Brown and Captain Peter Maroon, unveiling a memorial stone at the St Francis Cemetery. The stone was to replace the placards and flags that used to be placed at each firefighters grave.



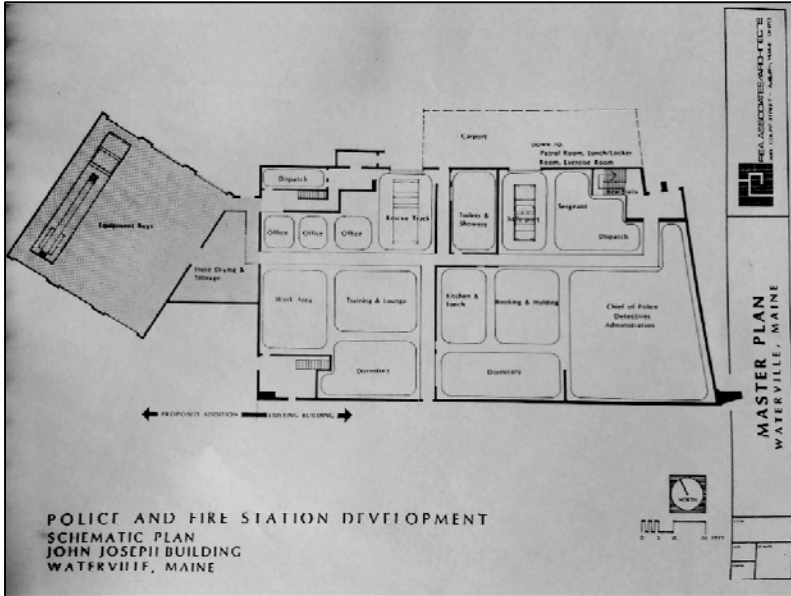
This event was changed to May for the Memorial Day celebration, were firefighters in Class A dress along with police and Veterans, have a small ceremony to honor all our local public men and women who has passed. The event is held every year and is still being put together by Peter Maroon.

In the middle of 1986 the fire department make a jump into the computer age. After five years of waiting, Chief Brown finally has the piece of equipment he feels he needs to keep the department as modern and as efficient as possible. The department received a Tandy 1200, a computer purchased through the capital improvement package approved by City Council. When the computer came on board, Toby Hilton from Biddeford, a Thomas College intern had been hired to program the computers to meet the needs of the department.

The computer, purchased for \$2,960, will save taxpayers' money because of the improved efficiency of department operations. It also could indirectly save lives by improving firefighters' response time and giving them vital information about a building involved in a fire before they arrive on the scene. The department had much of the information already on file in card catalogues and loose-leaf notebooks, but it takes several minutes to round up. And keeping up changes, such as building renovations, is cumbersome with a paper system.

Today, the department is run by the computer in every way. Everyone and everything is run by the computer system that the City has installed throughout the city. Every department is now connected to one another, which makes the communications a lot faster. Having the World Wide Web also a function

available to the department has made the department very efficient in getting any information that they need in the field, or researching new equipment.



When Fred Brown took over as Waterville's first full-time fire chief, it wasn't long before he created a special Bureau to investigate the city's fire alarms. The complete process of investigations, the analysis, and use of resultant data, is basic to good fire department management, since it brings to light factors which could lessen the number and severity of fires.

The primary responsibility of Waterville's investigators is to determine the area of origin, cause, and circumstances surrounding a fire. Based upon education and experience, using powers of observation, and interviews to eliminate possible causes, he is to establish a most probable cause and properly support his determination.

The Waterville Fire Department's Investigation Bureau has set up a working relationship with such agencies as, the

Waterville Police Detectives and Juvenile Officers, State Fire Marshall's Office and has gained the respect of insurance companies throughout the state. The bureau at this time was headed by Robert H. Pelletier, and he was in charge of two men per shift as Fire Investigators.

These men were mandated by the department to attend various schools and seminars in fire investigations. The unit has proven itself by the marked decrease in Arson incidents and by a number of convictions. Before the unit was formed, many fires were labeled as arson, but were actually accidental in cause. Many fires were labeled as electrical, but when thoroughly investigated, were found to be of some other cause.

Today's Fire Investigation Bureau is still a key function to the department investigating fires. The team worked at every fire to determine the cause and still works closely with other agencies.

The department at this time also has a Fire Alarm Maintenance division, headed by Captain Roland LaCroix who supervises two other men. All three men were certified as Fire Alarm technicians who monitor the seven municipal fire alarm circuits that link some forty two Master Boxes connected to building alarms with in the city. Most of the work by the fire alarm crew had been responding to breaks and the replacement of old wire.

Today the fire alarm is maintained by one Fire Alarm Technician who is a full-time firefighter. The fire alarm system monitors 128 boxes throughout the city. He is in charge of repairing all breaks, hooking up all new boxes throughout the city, working and making decision on what a company needs for a fire alarm, assigning a box number, and replacing any wire.

With the closing of the sub-stations and all equipment moved into Central Fire, Central was very over crowded, so Chief Brown had been requesting that they City spend some much needed money on a new fire station. In 1986 the City Council approved a study be done. Waterville, which has neglected its aging public buildings over the years, should construct new police and fire stations, and expand its Public Works Department facility says a \$20,000 architectural study of municipal departments.

The survey prepared by REA Associates Architects of Auburn, estimates the cost of the new construction and renovation at \$2.8 million. The architects would say the buildings was grave enough to warrant a major capital expenditure by the city. They stated that Waterville has always got along for "one more year" with minimum outlay for capital improvements and this approach has been going on for way too many years as the buildings are in need of replacement.

City officials stated they were already working on a solution, and are considering a plan to buy the former New England Telephone Company on Main and Center Streets (were Rite Aid now stands), to house the police and fire departments. The projected cost of buying and upgrading the property, owned by John Joseph of Waterville, was to cost \$1.4 million, lower than the estimated \$2 million cost of a new building.

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



The survey found that the fire department's "turn-of-the-century" building is no longer adequate to support an efficient department. Siting deficiencies as; lack of separation between the area where trucks are stored and dormitory spaces on the floor above, a busy intersection in front of the station, which could be dangerous in congested traffic conditions, lack of proper dispatch area near the front of the building to control movement of vehicles, and cramped parking areas for fire trucks and engines.

While the report suggested that the city could opt to expand the present fire station, it would involve acquiring and demolishing the gas and service station on the adjoining property. But, the expense of building a new station, about \$950,000, is not much greater than the \$797,000 cost of renovating the

existing one, stated the survey. The architectural survey, approved by the City Council last year during the administration of former Nancy Hill, is the third city report conducted in the past year.

As usual at this time the report was pushed aside, but some renovations was made to all departments in the survey to get by "one more year." But in December 1994, a "Public Safety" building was Ok's by the City Council.

The City Council narrowly approved a measure to borrow \$4.8 million for a capital improvements program that would include a new public safety building. Following a heated discussion at the meeting, councilors voted 4-3 to approve a municipal bond issue to fund the package. This was the third and final vote in the approval process. The Public Safety Building, housing both Fire and Police, would cost an estimated \$2.5 million.

Several councilors and Waterville residents spoke in opposition to the package, mainly because of its cost and the fact that no concrete plans for the building have been suggested. Charles Gaunce, owner of Central Maine Motors, was the key organizer for a petition drive that followed the meeting. Mr. Gaunce and his supporters had gathered an estimated 1,700 to 1,800 signatures to give the City Council 60 days to repeal its vote, but if not, the matter must be put to a citywide vote.

At its next council meeting, the City Council rescinded its decision to build a \$2.5 million public safety building. The unanimous action by the council followed a petition drive that gathered 1,900 signatures from residents who opposed the capital improvement plan.



A new fire station was again brought up in 2001 and this time the council unanimously agreed to spend \$3.5 million for a new fire station, which came with an around of applause. The applause, by the board and more than 40 people in attendance, came after the five city councilors present voted to finance construction of a new fire station that would incorporate the existing turn-of-the-century structure. The fire station actually was part of a \$4.1 million bond that also included \$500,000 to repair and maintain city roads and \$100,000 to upgrade the North Street soccer fields. The department hopes to complete the project by August 2003.

On May 28, 2002, after ninety-one years after the city built a fire station to house equipment hauled by horses, officials broke ground on the new addition and renovation to Central Fire. Approximately 70 firefighters, city officials, police and others turned out for the

ceremony at the College Avenue facility. Even firefighters from New York stayed to witness the groundbreaking.



Chief Poulin thanked the building committee, past and present city councilors, Mayor Nelson Madore, City Administrator Ronald J. Singel, and the Public Works Department for helping make the project possible. Councilman Rosemary Winslow, Mayor Nelson Madore and Fire Chief Poulin pitched golden shovels into a pile of dirt on the site, tossing a load into the air. Blane Casey of South China is the contractor for the project.

The project would run short of money when the City had to spend unbudgeted money on removal of hazardous material. To save money the Public Works Department razed the old gas station, but when the company hired to dig the area for preparation for the new foundation, they came across two old fuel tanks that were left over from the gas station days. These tanks were filled with sand too soak up the fuel it had contained. These tanks and the soil around the work site, had to all be dug up and removed as the soil was

contaminated. This placed the project in jeopardy of running over cost and completion. Fire Chief Raymond Poulin stated a web site in hopes of getting people to donate money to raise money to save the project. "Save our Station" was a short lived plan to raise some money. The project continued on with some major cut backs in some of the "wants" designed into the project.

At one point of time in the project, the city council stopped the construction to spend money on a survey to see if the Police Department could be added to the project. The City Council spent \$20,000 on a survey that showed were they would need to spend an additional \$1.7 million to the current project to add the Police Department. The current project was then started up again, without the addition of the Police, but at a very high cost to the city.



When the new addition was completed in October of 2003, the city would need to vote to approve borrowing an additional \$315,000 to renovate the old Central Fire Station, too complete the whole project. Removal of the contaminated soil from the old gas station on the site depleted the city's contingency fund for the project between \$250,000 and \$260,000. Being stuck between a rock and a hard place, the city council voted 6-1 on borrowing the money to finish the fire station project.

On October 30, 2003, firefighters would spent their first night in their new Central Fire Station. Firefighters finally were able to round up all the equipment they have had to store on other parts of the city and in other towns to park permanently in the new station.

The total move into a completed fire station would not be till the spring of 2004 when the renovations to old fire station would be done.

It had been since 1936 that the Waterville area had a huge flood, but on April 1, 1987, the area saw its first huge flood in 51 years. One river, the Kennebec, unleashed its power and turned our world upside down. Homes were destroyed, washed away or left filled with mud and debris. Roads were smashed by the force of the torrent ice water. Bridges were pounded by the rushing water and battered with debris. For many, the flood of 1987 would be an once-in-a-lifetime spectacle to be witnessed, something to be etched in memory for ever.

The clean-up continued for weeks. The repairs went on for months. The area had seen the power of the river which some had never seen anything like it, the force of the raging river, the shocking devastation. In Waterville,

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lower Water Street had to be evacuated. The Warnaco (C.F. Hathaway) plant was flooded, its parking lot was a wash. For two days, the flood paralyzed the region shutting down factories. Workers at the Waterville Sanitation District had to be rescued by the fire department. Commuters followed detours through rural areas to skirt flooded bridges and traffic backed up as everyone had to see the river.



It wasn't until Friday, April 3, that the sun came out and the waters began to recede. The extent of the damage hit home. City officials, firefighters and police officers worked to coordinate evacuations, house displaced residents, and keep the curious from getting in the way. Two radio dispatchers were on duty to handle calls that at one point were coming in at the rate of 320 per hour.

In late 1987, Waterville will get into the field of Haz-Mat when Chief Brown is appointed by Gov. John R. McKernan to a statewide commission charged with planning the state's response to accidents involving hazardous materials. General duties of the commission include designing emergency planning districts to implement emergency response plans; collect information about chemicals spills; notify the public about potential hazards; participate in

emergency drills; supervise and monitor hazardous materials training programs.

Today the department is assigned to the Team Five group that response to hazardous materials incidents from Searsport to Jackman, Maine. The Team responds with a haz-mat truck that is housed at Central Fire. The team consist of a group of firefighters trained in hazardous materials from the Operations to Haz-Mat technician levels. The Team is headed by a full-time Captain with the Waterville Fire Department. He is in charge of making sure all training is conducted and the truck in ready to roll at any given minute. The Team trains monthly and when the State Emergency Management Agency has a hugs state drill, the Team is involved.

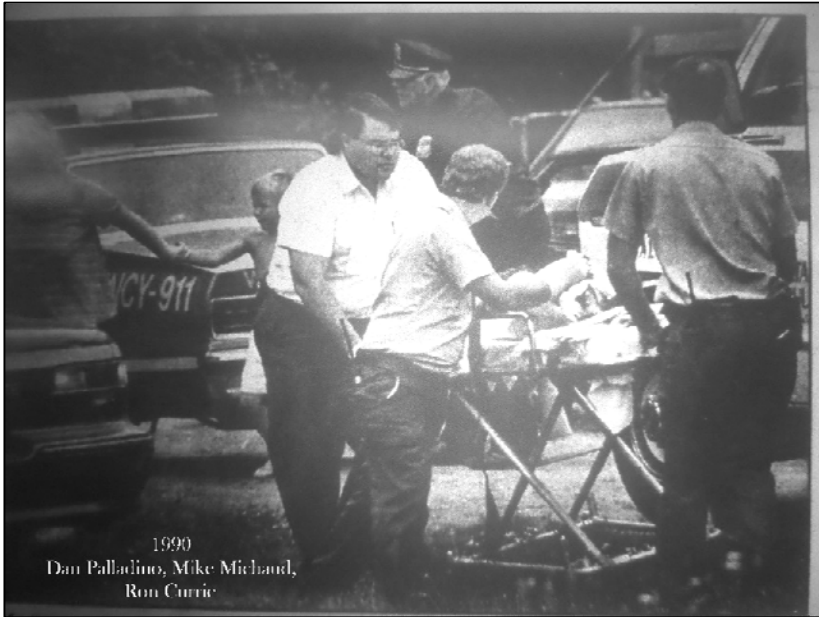


The City Council unanimously approved a bid of \$59,325 for a new Rescue Unit for the station in 1987. A year before, Chief Brown requested a new Rescue at a cost of \$73,000, which was turned down. The council told Brown that they thought the price was too costly and was not needed at this time. Brown would set his sights on a new rescue with a much lower bid and he got his wish and the council's approval. The Rescue Unit would come from Precision Emergency Vehicles of New England Inc. of Webster, Massachusetts. Because of the current truck's low trade-in value, it would be kept and resigned as a "command post on wheels," with telephones and radios, in case of emergencies like fire or floods.

After almost 33 years as a city firefighter, Chief Brown, who will turn 57, stated he plans to retire as Fire Chief. He stated that he will continue as the local director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency. Since 1984 that post has been combined with his position as Chief. He was named by Mayor Paul R. LaVerder as the city's first full-time fire chief in January 1981, after serving for three months as captain-in-charge following the resignation of Chief Lucien LaCroix.

On June 23, 1990, Waterville will hired its next full-time fire chief. A 34-year old Freeport man was hired as new Fire Chief. Chief Darrel G. Fournier, has been Chief of the Freeport Fire Department since 1983, will begin his new duties on July 30. Chief Fournier replaced Chief Frederick G. Brown who retired

after 33 years of service to the city as a firefighter. Chief Brown had become the city's first full-time chief in 1981.



1990
Dan Palladino, Mike Michaud,
Ron Currie

Both Mayor David E. Bernier and City Administrator John R. Chmura announced Chief Fournier's hiring. Mayor Bernier said Chief Fournier was chosen from about 20 applicants. He is highly involved in the Fire Chief's Association and is educationally oriented. His enthusiasm, number of years of experience and the different kinds of programs he has promoted in the Freeport area that dovetail with what the city is trying to promote, according to Chmura.

Less than a few weeks on the job, a fire at 19 Union Street will greet the new fire chief. The chief was notified about 9 p.m. at his Freeport home that a large apartment building located a stone's throw from Central Fire was ablaze. After getting the call, Fournier jumped behind the wheel of his four wheel drive truck, hit the flashing red lights mounted on the bumper, and made the 60 mile drive to Waterville presumably at a pace

we would all like to try occasionally without the threat of receiving a court date.

Recapping his first two weeks on the job, Chief Darrel G. Fournier states, "The Department is on top of it, well educated, with regard to firefighting and rescue techniques. The Department would be well served by designating a Deputy or Assistant Fire Chief. Even if the city continues to discuss but never builds a combined public safety building to house police, fire and rescue, the fire department will need more space for equipment and administrative functions. In general, I like the idea of a public safety building. The city does not need a public safety director."

"Development in outlying areas and construction of the second bridge (Carter Bridge) will basically cut the city in half. After it is completed, it will make it necessary for the city to at least consider the need for a second fire station."

"The department will have to further develop its methods for checking and ensuring that businesses meet all fire and life safety. Area municipalities are fortunate to have a rescue system in which the fire department's rescue unit and a private ambulance service, Delta, respond to most rescue calls. And in virtually all instances in which people must be taken to a hospital."



1992 Water Street

In 1990 the department would purchase a 1971 American LaFrance, used fire truck to replace Engine 3. The 1971 American LaFrance was purchased from Syosset, New York and will replace a 1969 Ford pumper in need of extensive body work. This Engine would become Engine 4 and would be used as a spare engine, being stored at the Park and Recreation building on Western Avenue (Old Engine 2 Sub-Station). Although the new truck from New York is only two years newer, its body is in much better condition. It will have a diesel engine, automatic transmission and water pumping capacity of 1,250 gallon per minute.

The city had budgeted \$18,000 for the body work on Engine 3. Instead however, the chief preferred to replace the truck due to its extensive rust and because it has a gasoline engine, a standard transmission and only a pump capacity

of 1,000 gallons per minute. The city purchased the new truck for \$17,500.

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The Consolidated Firefighters of Waterville is formed on March 5, 1991. CFFW is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to develop common interest of, and promote comradery and harmonious cooperation among the Firefighters of the City of Waterville. It is made up of career, on-call, retired, or disabled firefighter. Monies raised help the many charities of the CFFW.

The organization is still in existent and is heavy into fundraising to support the local charities that they fund every year. Many of their fund raising efforts include; raffles, car shows, toll booths for muscular dystrophy and

bowling tournaments.

The rescue squad had their first meeting on January 8, 1991 at Central Fire. The squad has been developed to provide assistance to the Rescue Unit and render medical aid in the event of a medical disaster in the community. All members of the Rescue Squad must be a minimum of eighteen years old and have had a minimum of the Certified Fire Responder course.

The Rescue Squad was not fully utilized until year 2000, when they were called out on all second rescue calls that came in whenever a pumper had to respond to a medical call. They would also be called out on all water, searches and special technical rescues. All members now need to hold a Basic Emergency Medical Technicians license.

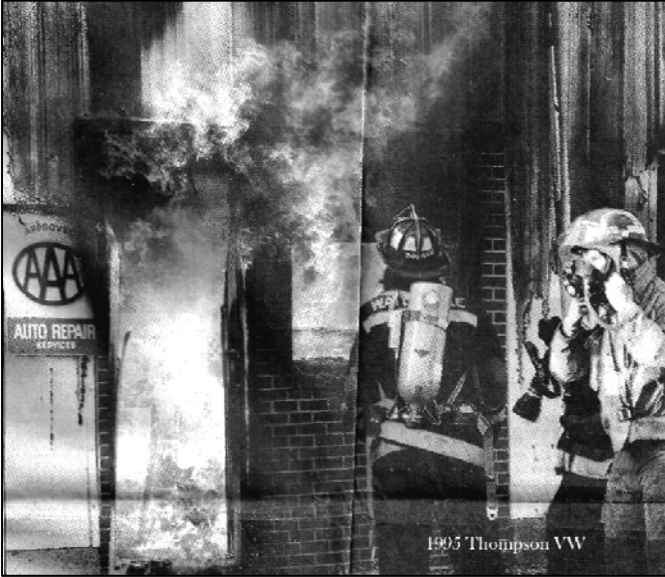


1994 Railroad Square

In November 1991, two people were found dead at an early morning suspicious blaze on Reservoir Street. Police did not discount the possibility that both victims were dead before the fire started, but stopped short of saying a murder had occurred.

The fire ripped through the two-story home at 7 Reservoir Street, leaving two people burned beyond recognition. They were found on the first floor of the dwelling. Chief Fournier said after dousing the fire and discovering two bodies at the rear of the home, he notified investigators from the State Fire Marshal's Office. A neighbor heard a big bang, saw all the windows blowout, and the entire house exploded in flames. One neighbor thought she had heard some shots.

The department would hold their first annual awards banquet in many years in April 1991. The banquet would be attended by many firefighters and their spouses, City Administrator Scott Shanley and retired firefighters. The new banquet would hand out firefighter of the year awards too; Career Firefighter Joseph Roy and Call Firefighter Michael Vashon.



The banquet would remain a tradition that is held every April, with awards for years of service, firefighter of the year and special chief awards, being handed out. The firefighters would make and serve the buffet meal themselves.

In August of 1992, the city moves its code enforcement personnel into Central Fire, in order to better co-ordinate the needs of contractors and residents to obtain permits. The move also facilitates joint inspection of business's and tenement buildings. With the move, the code inspectors are to be overseen by the Assistant Fire Chief, which was hired.

The Code office will move back to City Hall prior to the start of construction of the new Central Fire addition. Once the building was completed fully in 2004, the code enforcement office was again moved to a new office within Central Fire. This lasted a few years before the city would again move the offices back to City Hall, were to this day it is still located.

On August 28 a fire in the Colby College Gym would destroy a huge portion of the gym. An early morning blaze raged through the interior of Wadsworth Gymnasium, destroying or damaging 25,000 square feet of office and recreational space on the Colby Campus.

Chief Darrel G. Fournier speculated that much of the destruction could have been prevented had the building been equipped with a sprinkler system. A Colby spokesperson said the gymnasium is probably the last building on campus that didn't have a sprinkler system. Systems had been installed in other buildings and at some point would have been installed in the gymnasium. But it was a low priority compared to residence halls and classrooms.

The fire started in the bleacher area of the gymnasium that is located in the college's 93,000 square-foot field house. It damaged the free weight room and five squash courts, as well as the overhanging press box, and three coaches' offices. The basketball court located inside the building was not fire-damaged, but thousands of gallons of water were poured on the newly refinished floor, and the wooden gym floor was struck by burning debris.



As a "Thank You," Colby threw a lobster dinner and gave the Central Maine Fire Attack School \$1,000. This was a great gesture on the part of the College and put on a very personal face on their gratitude for the time the firefighters took to save their gym from greater destruction. Firefighters and their spouses were treated to a two lobster dinner and speeches from the College officials. Firefighters from Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, Oakland, Vassalboro, Sidney, Rome and Belgrade were treated to a great dinner.

On November 2, 1992, Bruce Hensler is chosen to be the city's first full time Assistant Fire Chief. Bruce came to the Department from the Rockport Area, and is well versed in Code Enforcement. His job is to head the Code Enforcement division and run the station in the absence of the fire chief. Bruce would serve this position till 1994.

In March 1994, Raymond Poulin was chosen from 20 applicants to become the Department's 2nd Full-Time Assistant Fire Chief. Raymond has worked at the Department for 17 years as a career firefighter and put in three years as a call firefighter. A job search through Maine and New England generated 20 applicants for the job. The field was narrowed to four candidates, and Ray was chosen. His duties include: supervising the city's two code enforcement officers, and eight fire inspectors. He is also second in command of the entire Fire Department. He works closely with Chief Fournier, Fire Investigators, and the Training Officer.

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Raymond would hold this job until 1999 when Fire Chief Darrel Fournier resigns to become Chief of the Freeport Fire Department. Raymond would be hired as Waterville Fire Chief and the city would not hire another assistant chief. Raymond was the department's last assistant chief.

The Department receives a training grant from Maine Technical College system in September 1994. Funding from this grant is used to construct a three-story ladder tower on city land at the airport. Captain Dana Rossignol coordinated the construction and design of the tower. The tower is used by Central Maine Fire Attack School and area fire departments to increase firefighters' skill levels.

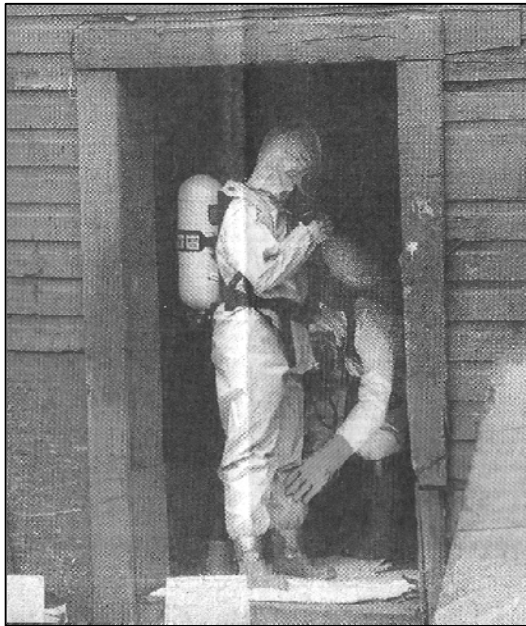
The training site would be used for many hours of training throughout its years at its site. A 20,000 gallon tank was brought in to have water available on site, along with a box rail car for a small burn building. A mock propane Class B burn site was set up for technical training. This site was utilized by many fire departments and fire schools through its existent.

In 2007 the land was taken over by the new airport management and used for new hangers. All the equipment used for training was removed from the site except for the three story wooden training building. This building was used one last time for search and rescue and then the crew on hand burned the building to the ground.

In 1995, came the first discussion of a regional firefighting department. The majority of the council at their regular general meeting were willing to spend \$10,000 to analyze the need for a regional public safety building. Council Chairman Nelson J. Megna, argued that the city should investigate what a regional approach would mean to Waterville before spending the money to actually involve architects and engineers.

George Dunkel, an assistant fire chief with Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue in northwest Oregon, was sponsored by the City officials to talk about regionalization because he was involved in the process in Oregon. He stated large regional fire departments can save taxpayers money by eliminating duplication and playing on economies of scale without sacrificing fire protection. Creating a regional department isn't an overnight job. It can take years to convince naysayers and turf protectors that it will work.

Waterville area already has a good base for a regional fire department. In addition to mutual aid agreements, there is a regional hazardous materials team and the Communication Center also does some dispatching for Winslow and Oakland.



The city would take the suggestions of Chief Dunkel and meetings were set up with the area officials, but no one wanted to be controlled by Waterville, so the idea stayed and died on the table.

In April 24, 1995, Chief Fournier placed a memo to all call firefighter seeking anyone interested in being a "Battalion Chief" for the department. This position would be filled by one of the current call firefighters that are serving the city. He stated that this position was needed to improve communications, training schedules, and personnel issues that arise among the call division. The Battalion Chief would receive \$150 per year stipend, and a per hour rate of \$7.50/hr.

An overview if the job description read as follows; The Battalion Chief is responsible for routine management of the fire department, and supervisory responsibility for call companies. As required, the Battalion Chief assists the Chief in various general administration tasks, and in possess a thorough knowledge of current fire suppression and prevention techniques and practices, and a thorough knowledge of the proper training for call personnel. The Battalion Chief must be able to project a positive leadership role both internally for department personnel and externally to the community at large.

The essential job functions consisted of; assists the Chief in management of routing operations, including supervision and discipline of call personnel. Assist in formulating of the budget, short and long term financial planning, and complete necessary reports. Coordinate trainings and activities in conjunction with the Career Captains

assigned to these functions. Plan, organize and direct call firefighters in activities including the supervision of these functions. Attend conferences, conventions, etc., to ensure current firefighting methods and procedure. And assist the Chief in community awareness and public affairs programs.



I cannot find the number of call men who had turned in their resumes for this position, but the idea was scrapped on September 29, 1995. The Chief stated that he would revisit this position again in 1996, and those who had handed in their resume, would be kept on file. This position was never brought up again.

On August 8, 1997, a mercury spill was reported to the fire department, when children reportedly brought mercury home in glass jars in the High Street area. Chief Fournier said Waterville officials called Alan Wolman, owner of Wolman Steel Co., to have him secure the crumbling wooden building, which he did. But a week later, kids broke in the building again.

The DEP was notified of the presence of the mercury sometime in Mid-August. Waterville officials did not realize how dangerous the substance was and Wolman

stated that he had 20 pounds of the material. DEP's Hazardous Materials Team showed up on site to remove the mercury.

Federal Superfund technicians joined state health and environmental officials at Wolman Steel Co. to assist in cleaning up they are. Approximately 30 homes and up to 74 people were exposed to the toxic chemical. Approximately 50 pounds of Mercury had been removed and a toxic brew of other hazardous substances also were removed for disposal at a government sanctioned site out of state.



All affected homes were monitored to detect any mercury and all area residences effected by the spill were tested and were given their results. All the homes were to be found with very low levels and were deemed safe to occupy. Area residences that were tested, showed no effect of any type and were said to be in good health.

In 1997, Chief Fournier pushes for a new ladder truck. The chief is worried that if there was a serious fire on the top floor of the Elm Towers building, city firefighters might not be able to rescue elderly people living there. And if a roaring blaze were to break out in a dormitory at Colby College, rescuing students could be difficult, maybe impossible.

The reason; Waterville does not have a functioning aerial ladder truck that can reach the upper floors of these and other building throughout Waterville. On October 1, 1997, a representative from the Underwriters Laboratory Testing Company did a service check on the city's 1971 American LaFrance 100 foot aerial ladder truck. He found several problems, the most critical

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of which is a “rusted and deteriorated” torque box on the back of the truck that attaches the truck’s frame and holds up the ladder. The equipment could cause the ladder to collapse; therefore, the ladder cannot be used.



Staff photo / JONATHAN MIANO
Waterville firefighter Cory Wyman, left, and rescue technician Jeff Brexler carry signs in front of Central Fire Station in Waterville on Wednesday. They are waving to passers-by.

Mayor Ruth Joseph disagrees with Fournier that a 100 foot aerial ladder truck is needed to fight fires in some taller buildings and at structures that must be reached from the streets. Fournier estimated that a new truck could cost the city between \$473,805 and \$491,377. The Town of Winslow could respond with a 75 foot aerial ladder truck, but their ladder is not long enough to reach floors or roofs of the tall buildings in Waterville.

The City Council knowing that the City could not get by without a ladder truck, has Mayor Joseph approach Chief Fournier and told him to start looking for a used ladder truck, as the city could not afford a new truck. Chief Fournier stated that the city’s money would be better spend on a new ladder truck, as the life of the truck would be 30 years compared to a used ladder truck that would last a short time. Mayor Joseph tells Chief Fournier that if he pushed for a new ladder truck,

his position as Chief in Waterville would be shorted lived as his contract was soon coming up.

Chief Fournier presented the City Council with all the option he has gathered for a replacement ladder truck for Waterville, and in the fall of 1998 the Council would approve a new \$550,000 Smeal Ladder Truck, to be built in Synder, Nebraska and Chief Fournier would soon leave Waterville for a new fire chief’s job in Freeport, Maine.

With the new 1999 Smeal 100’ Tower Truck soon to arrive in Waterville, City councilors took a significant step toward housing the new fire apparatus. They voted to purchase two lots next to Central Fire to create a temporary housing for the Tower. They approve to spend \$40,000 for building materials and would use volunteer help to construct a new temporary home for the Tower.

The Council approved the purchase of the service station next to the fire station and an apartment building behind it on Union Street. The Goodhue’s property sold for \$130,000 and the apartment property for \$95,000. Plans call for demolishing both structures and erecting a 24 x 60 foot prefabricated wood frame building to house the new Tower truck due in May 1999. The truck is too large to fit into the current fire station.



Staff photo / JONATHAN MIANO
From left, Teamster business agent Kenneth Eaton, Waterville firefighters Jim Roy and Bob Shay, and Shay’s fiancée Cathy Gilbert sit in protest at a City Council meeting on Tuesday night. The city’s firefighters have been without a contract for more than six months.

Fire Chief Raymond Poulin stated the building would not be done in time for the arrival of the new truck, so between the time the truck arrives and completion of the building, the new Tower truck will be housed at night at the city Public Works garage and during the day, be parked at the fire station.

When the truck arrives, it is welcomed with open arms. There was no fanfare to welcome the truck, just a lonely ole tone was placed to make the announcement. The Tower was kept at the Public Works garage and whenever a call went out, it was up to the Utility firefighter on each shift to drive the department’s pickup truck to the city’s garage and pick up the truck to respond. This lasted for about four months until the new Tower building, now known as; “Union Street Station,” was completed. Once completed it was the job of the Utility firefighter to run out the back door of the

fire station, down a set of stairs, across the back yard to Union Street, enter the building and respond.

With stating the construction of the new addition to Central Fire on 2001, the “Union Street Station” was picked up and moved to a new location just outside the Public Works door yard. The building would become the new office

for the Public Works. The Tower would again move back to the City's garage till the completion of the new addition to Central Fire.



With the departure of Chief Fournier, Raymond Poulin was named the new Fire Chief in 1999. He started as a call fireman in 1973 at the Water Street station and three years later, became a career firefighter. He was a rescue worker and drove the ladder truck for several years before becoming the driver of Engine One. He drove that truck until 1994 when he was named Waterville's second full-time Assistant Chief.

Before the completion of the new addition and renovations to Central Fire Station, Fire Chief Raymond Poulin resigns on August 28, 2003 and ends a 30 year career with the Fire Department. With the resignation on Chief Poulin, a call will go out for a new fire chief. While the process for a new Fire Chief is starting, the city will name Police Chief John E. Morris the safety director for the city on an interim basis, starting on August 18, 2003. He will direct both the police and fire departments and

oversee supporting records, communications services and training activities. The city will be advertising in local, state and national publications for a new chief and expect to interview candidates by early September 2003.

Morris acknowledged that he will face challenges, including the hiring of both a fire chief and captain, as Captain Roland LaCriox also will retire in August 2003. Morris will not receive a salary increase for serving in the new position, but will instead receive some additional buyout of sick time at the end of his employment with the city.

The city had received 35 applications for the chief's job and they finally settled on a man from out-of-state. Scott Lewis, from Pahrump, Nevada was chosen to run the fire department and was expected to start around the first week of February 2004. After two weeks of making the announcement that Scott Lewis would become Waterville's new Fire Chief, Mr. Lewis would inform City officials that he had changed his mind and will not accept the job in Waterville.

Left with what to do next, the city decides not to re-advertise for a new chief, but to keep Police Chief John Morris in his role as Public Safety Director and approach Winslow's Town Manager and Fire Chief, William P. Page, and offer him a job of running both the fire departments. The Town of Winslow, Waterville and William Page will work out a deal so he could be hired to run both departments, but he will have to work under the direction of John Morris. Fire Chief William Page will have the title in Waterville as "Operations Manager" of the Waterville fire department.

Morris would take on many tasks while he ruled the public safety position. He will oversee that the completion to the fire house and negotiate a new contract for the fire fighters. Morale among career firefighters deteriorated during the tenure of Police Chief John Morris and due to his shroud way of negotiation, the firefighters would for the first time in their Union history, formed an informational "Picket."

He would also slash the fire departments budget by laying off three firefighters and cutting the overtime pay by \$130,305 for a total savings of \$235,039. One of the ways overtime was cut was due to when a firefighter goes out sick or on vacation, his position is not covered. The department will now have five firefighters per shift, but at times will work with only 4 per shift. There will never be any fewer than four per shift, so overtime will fill in the position to always maintain a 4 man minimum.

Of the three firefighters laid off, Eric Pelletier was offered and accepted a job as a dispatcher for the communications center. Firefighters Mark Hamilton has chosen to work outside the city and the third, Darin White, will replace Chris Libby, a 32 year department veteran who will retire in September 2004.

The department has three designated Rescue Technicians. Previously, if one was sick or on vacation, one of the other two would come in for a 24 hour shift. All firefighters are EMT's, so instead of replacing the technician for 24 hours, one of the EMT's on shift will assume the duty and be paid the differential pay for the day.

Fire Captains who call in sick or are on vacation will not be replaced until 5 p.m. on work days, as part of the new policy. They figured that their new "Operation Manager", William Page would cover the Officers position during the day hours. This lasted one time and a union grievance was filed. Director Page would state that he needed to

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have the Fire Captain on duty at all times, as he still had the Winslow Fire Department to run. Morris would back down and whenever a Captain was out, his position was replaced no matter what.



Changes to how the rescue would respond to call was changed with rescue not going on every single 911 medical call that came in. They would only respond to certain emergency calls and Delta would handle the minor calls on their own.

Changes to the way the department was dispatched would also change. In the past one firefighter would stay behind run the dispatch on a fire incident. With the cuts and new replacement policy, the department could not afford to leave a firefighter behind, so when a fire call came in, all firefighters would leave and the dispatching would be handled by the Communications Center.

On November 2004, City officials would work out a deal with Delta Ambulance Corporation to house an Ambulance at Central Fire. Their primary headquarters was at the

Seton Hospital on Chase Avenue. Officials had been working on a plan to put an ambulance in Central Fire, basically the purpose was to provide a more efficient and effective service to the community with faster response times. Morris stated that having the move will improve the standard of service, and eventually lead to cost reduction. Delta was to pay a fee of \$100 a month to cover electrical and water use.

As of 2014, the department still works with a combined Chief with Winslow, but the city no longer has a Public Safety Directors position, Delta Ambulance has built themselves a new Station and will remove the ambulance from Central Fire, Rescue will start running on all 911 emergency calls and the moral for the firefighters would finally improve, to which the department and the citizens that serve to protect, will benefit with more excitement in moving the department forward from its dark years of repression.



February 2004 saw the arrival of Waterville's new Medium Duty Rescue Truck. The department would display their new apparatus at Colby College, as Colby had donated \$125,000 toward the purchase of this new piece of rescue equipment.

President William D. Adams, who made the decision to donate money to allow for the purchase of a new rescue vehicle, stated that the college "agreed to roughly fund about half the cost." Colby would refund the City \$25,000 a year for the next five years. President Adams stated that the money would come from assets and funds of the College.

"Colby is a non-profit organization and does not pay taxes, but we have an obligation to participate in ways that seem appropriate," Adams stated. He added that the College "has traditionally had a commitment to being engaged in Waterville."

"The emergency vehicle was seen as a priority."

In 2004, City officials would again set up a committee to explore the possibility of combining the Waterville and Winslow fire departments, as a part of regionalizing the area departments. The Councilors would unanimously approve Mayor Paul R. LePage's appointment of Council Chairman Dana W. Sennett and Councilor Antone "TJ"

Travares, to a committee to study the issue. LePage said the committee plans to discuss the issue with Waterville Public Safety Director John E. Morris and city's Fire Department Operations Manager, William P. Page, and look at possible obstacles and opportunities associated with combing the departments. Then they will contact Winslow officials to see if they are willing to look at the issue.



The committee will explore several issues associated with union contracts, retirement, infrastructure, and the fact that Delta Ambulance has stationed an ambulance at Central Fire. LePage stated that the area school systems are much further ahead with regionalization efforts such as sharing bus and food service.

The merger study would last two years, with an outside source being brought in to meet with each department's officials and firefighters, along with both community officials. They found that this is a do-able task, but many fields will need to be ironed out before anything could move ahead, and even if things were to be worked out, it would take years to get straightened out, so the department could run smoothly.

In 2006, a meeting was held with both community officials, both fire officials and firefighters from both departments. They were told of the study that was

done and how this could work if both sides would agree to how it will start. After the meeting, it was found that each side did not want to give up its "turf" and that there are way too many questions on how this merger could get started. The nearly three hour meeting would end with the merger dying on the table. No further action would be taken on this matter.

In 2004, the Consolidated Communications Bureau was created by the State of Maine, for the purpose of providing consolidated emergency communications to state, county and local public safety agencies. The Bureau operates four Regional Communications Centers (RCC) in Augusta, Gray, Bangor and Houlton that provide both Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and emergency dispatch services for police, fire and emergency medical services. The RCCs provide dispatching services for State Police, Maine Warden Service, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, State Fire Marshal's Office, Maine Turnpike Authority, and the Departments of Marine Resources and Environmental Protection. In addition, each of the four Regional Communications Centers provide dispatch services for dozens of fire, rescue, police, and ambulance services across Maine.



The Waterville Communication Center, which was formed in 1970, would remain open as a Regional Communications Center and would dispatch for nine emergency departments in the Kennebec and Somerset area. Effective on October 10, 2007, the Waterville Communications Center is no longer answering E-911 calls. This is as a result of the PSAP consolidation laws. Starting on October 10, 2007 if someone would dial 911 from the nine emergency departments, their call will be answered by the Central Maine Regional Communications Center or the Somerset County Communications Center. If your emergency is located in one of the towns that the Waterville Communications Center dispatches for, the call will be transferred here

to a dedicated phone line where information will be obtained and the appropriate responders will be dispatched.

This system still remains as of today, but has shown that it has many problems. This new system adds many minutes to an emergency call, and minutes are very important. This would be proven an issue on June 6, 2011, when a high profile murder and suicide in Winslow highlighted the concern among the emergency responder's officials, as

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

they could be dispatched to a wrong address. Emergency workers initially where dispatched to Murray Lane instead of Marie Street. Since the Winslow case, both Waterville and Somerset dispatch centers have adopted policies that street names in emergency calls had to be spelled back clearly to avoid confusion.



The Mid-Maine Technical Center in 2007 started a new program in training young high school students to become firefighters. They would be only one of a handful of technical high schools across the state that would offer such an education. Joshua Wheeler would become its first Instructor. Its first year students would be; Shawn Stetson, Waterville, Brittany Corey and Cheyenne Paradis, of Oakland.

Those in the fire service in Maine, hoped that a lot of the high school students would see that the Mid-Maine Technical School firefighting course as critical to ensuring that each student going through this program, will produce some young, qualified recruits. "This is our feeder program for the future," stated Fire Chief William Page.

The program would have a functional fire truck donated by Waterville Fire, an ambulance,

donated by the Winthrop Fire Department, and used fire turnout gear donated by both Waterville and Winslow fire.

Today the program is still up and running, but is not as functional with producing qualified young firefighters. The program has fallen onto hard times with its budget cuts and new instructor problems.

In 2006, desperately needing a couple new fire truck, the fire department set out to apply for a grant through the Homeland Security Act Grant program. Waterville Engine 2 and 3 both needed to be replaced, but the grant would only support one pumper. On February 2, 2007, Waterville was granted a grant for \$283,575 to purchase a new pumper, with 10% being paid by the City.

On October 18, 2007, Waterville's new Ferrara Engine 2, a 1,500 gallon per minute single stage pump, which carries 1,000 gallons of water, was delivered to Central Fire by Ed Pollard, a salesman for the Ferrara Fire Apparatus Company of Holden, Louisiana. To outfit this new pump to its full capacity to fight fires, the final cost was \$325,000, which the City paid a total of \$41,425. Engine 3 would last another two years until it was too unsafe to perform its duties as a fire engine. Engine 3 would be given away, at no cost, to the Maine Prison system, who also purchased Engine 2 in the fall of 2006, for \$1,200.



On July 1, 2008, the areas first combined fire chief for Waterville and Winslow, William P. Page, would retire. In a letter to Waterville City Manager Mike Roy, Page, said his 47 year career in the fire service is coming to an end. Page has served a large role in regionalizing some emergency services between Waterville and Winslow, having taken the Chief's spot in Waterville in 2004 while serving in the same capacity in Winslow.

The city would begin its next venture in advertising for a new Fire Chief. Waterville received 17 applicants, five of whom were interviewed, and on July 1, 2008, a 23 year veteran of the Waterville

Fire Department, longtime Captain David Lafountain will be hired as the next fire chief. Lafountain is a Winslow native, and knows Winslow very well, so he's will be coming on board ready to hit the ground running. Lafountain would become the second fire chief that Waterville and Winslow would share. Waterville will pay 60 percent of his salary.



Starting in January 2009, three firefighters were promoted to a newly formed Lieutenants position. Not since Frederick Brown was promoted to Captain from Lieutenant in 1968, did the departments have Lieutenants in its department. On January 30th, Scott A. Holst would become the first Lieutenant in 41 years. John Gromek would follow on January 31st and Rodney Alderman, on February 1st.

The creations of these positions were to do the fact that the City wanted to cut back on the overtime that the Captains were receiving. A Captain would always replace a Captain to always have an officer in charge of the daily shifts. The City would bring back the position of Lieutenant so whenever a Captain

was out on a shift, the Lieutenant would step up and become the officer of the vacate shift. This would help in reducing the money spent on overtime in the department's budget.

Waterville would again apply and receive a grant for a new fire engine through the Homeland Security Act Grant. In early 2012, Waterville would apply for the grant and a truck committee was formed on what the department would need for a truck. It was decided to make this new truck a "Rescue Pumper." Which would mean that the truck, having the availability to be used as a pumper at fire calls, will also be used for all special technical rescue emergencies, such as car accidents, water rescues, high angle and below grade rescues.



A grant for \$350,000 was awarded to Waterville and the department would again go with the Ferrara Fire Apparatus Company of Holden, Louisiana. The truck would arrive in August 2012 and take a month to get everything on it and have it ready to roll on any type of emergency call.

On May 3, 2013, a big fire in almost 30 years hit the downtown area, at 18 Main Street. Firefighters from four departments raced to the scene, where flames were shooting out of third and fourth floor windows and fire was ravaging wooden porches and fire escapes on the back of the building. The buildings sprinkler system had been turned off and parts of the system had been dismantled. When the firefighters hooked up to the sprinkler system, it did not do any good as the water did not reach the upper floors.

John Week's who owns the building, had gotten permission to shut down the system in 2005, when he ran his pawn business out of the building. He was told that whenever he left the building, the system was to be placed back in working order. He had stated that he had not gotten around to getting the system up to working order after he moved his business to Elm Street and opened the building to renters.

More than 30 firefighters from Waterville, Winslow, Oakland and Fairfield fought the blaze from the roof, from inside the building, on the ground and perched atop ladder trucks all around the building, the back of which faces Spring Street Extension. Mayor Karen Heck rode her bicycle downtown after hearing about the fire. She said she was relieved that nobody was hurt. "I really appreciate the firefighters' ability to contain it to one building," she said. "I'm grateful that they got here so quickly."

HISTORY of THE WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



The City Council would take on the action on “requirements” for downtown sprinklers systems, at its meeting on September 2, 2013. Should downtown buildings be required to use sprinkler systems? If so, which buildings? Waterville firefighters battle a fire at 18 Main St. on May 3, and it was this fire that has prompted the City Council to consider on mandating sprinkler systems, inspections and other safety measures for downtown buildings.

Councilors discuss things the city can do to ensure fire safety without being too heavy-handed, Roy said. "I think the question is, to what degree they (fire codes) will be enforced?" he said. "Obviously, some very basic life safety and fire safety rules have to be enforced. The need for sprinklers — I think that's the No. 1 regulation or requirement of most concern. What kind of buildings need to be sprinkled and which ones can get by without?" After the 18 Main St. fire, councilors formed a committee to study downtown fire safety

issues, including sprinklers. LaFountain, who is authorized by law to enforce safety rules, heads up that panel. The city would give the fire chief the authority to enforce NFPA Life Safety Codes, including sprinklers, to the downtown area only. This area was considered a high hazard area, so the city fathers wants to make sure this area was protected.

Today, the Waterville Fire Department run out of one central fire station located on College Avenue. This house contains 1 - Rescue Emergency Medical truck, 1 - 100 foot Aerial Platform Ladder truck, 2 - 1500 gallon per minute fire pumpers, 1 - Rescue Pumper, 1- Brush unit, 1 - Utility pick-up, 1 - Hazardous Materials truck, 1 - Cascade truck, 1 - Rescue boat, 2 - Jet Skis, and a Confine Space trailer. These pieces of apparatus are covered by 1 - Fire Chief, 15 Full-Time Career Firefighters and 28 Call Firefighters.

The department call volume, which seems to increase each year, will close out 2014 with a total of 3540 incident reported calls, which if you do the math would calculate to 9.69 calls per days. These reported calls do not include all the extra duties that the firefighters handle on a daily bases, like maintenance on the equipment and building to cover OSHA related regulations, Fire Inspections, Fire Investigations, Public Safety programs and Public Speaking.

Like all fire departments throughout the country, the Waterville Fire Department is dealing with the reality of having to respond to more emergency calls with fewer people. The past decades have brought about advances in technology and increased government regulations. The fire service has become more aware of hazardous materials, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and personal safety. Federal and state regulations required improved equipment, more accountability at emergency incidents, increased training and better physical fitness of firefighters. These substantial changes occurred in a relatively short period of time. The Department met the challenges then and will continue to meet them well into the future.

Like typical firefighters do, Waterville firefighters are meeting these challenges, but it takes its toll on the department and community from time to time. The need for advance and high tech equipment can bring about a large tax on the budget, which takes away from the much needed equipment and the advance training that is required.

The firefighter spirit is strong; and while the Waterville Fire Department and its faces have changed over the years, a new generation of firefighters remains dedicated to the department's mission to protect lives, property and the environment – and to promote public safety education for the good of all of us who call Waterville “home. Their dedication is unswerving; their attitude is professional; and their commitment to the Waterville Fire Department and the community of Waterville will continue on.

HISTORY OF THE
WATERVILLE
FIRE DEPARTMENT



1809 - 2015

LIEUTENANT SCOTT A. HOLST

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