

History of Harrison Township Fire Department



Firefighting in the United States

In 1631 Boston's governor John Winthrop outlawed wooden chimneys and thatched roofs.^[1] In 1648, the New Amsterdam governor Peter Stuyvesant appointed four men to act as fire wardens.^[1] They were empowered to inspect all chimneys and to fine any violators of the rules. The city burghers later appointed eight prominent citizens to the "Rattle Watch" - these men volunteered to patrol the streets at night carrying large wooden rattles.^[1] If a fire was seen, the men spun the rattles, then directed the responding citizens to form bucket brigades. On January 27, 1678 the first fire engine company went into service with its captain (foreman) Thomas Atkins.^[1] In 1736 Benjamin Franklin established the Union Fire Company in Philadelphia.^[1]

George Washington was a volunteer firefighter in Alexandria, Virginia. In 1774, as a member of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Company, he bought a new fire engine and gave it to the town, which was its very first.^[2] However the United States did not have professional firefighters in the sense of government-run fire departments until around the time of the American Civil War. Prior to this time, amateur fire brigades would compete with one another to be the first to respond to a fire because insurance companies paid brigades to save buildings.^[citation needed] Underwriters also employed their own Salvage Corps in some cities. The first known female firefighter Molly Williams took her place with the men on the dragropes during the blizzard of 1818 and pulled the pumper to the fire through the deep snow.

Fire houses were a sort of social gathering place rather than a place where professionals would meet, and the money paid to the brigade went into the house's fund rather than to individual members. It was not all that uncommon to see someone "squatting" on a fire hydrant by placing a barrel over it so other fire brigades could not use it. However, paid professional firefighting services were eventually established. (Source: Documentary about the film Gangs of New York)

In 1919, the Shiloh Improvement Association attempted to contract with the Dayton Fire Department for fire protection of the Shiloh area on a pay-call basis. The initiative failed for lack of community support. The next year, three fire marshals were appointed by the association, for duties in Shiloh only.

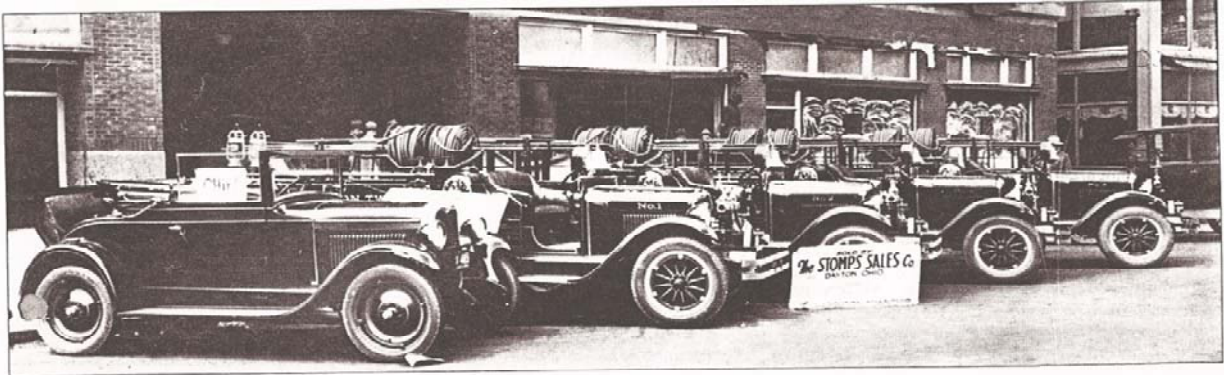
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As noted above, the organization of the Harrison Township Fire Department was started in large part by a very active Shiloh Civic Association. A series of very serious fires in the years of 1925 and 1926 led this group to the decision that with the increased growth in population and buildings there was a need in the township for some organized form of fire protection. Committees were duly formed and Mr. L. Boyer and Mr. S. Schinn were delegated to get the necessary signatures on a petition to place a bond issue for \$20,000 for fire equipment before the people at a general election. The necessary signatures were obtained for the petition and the bond issue was placed on the ballot, being approved by the voters of Harrison Township.

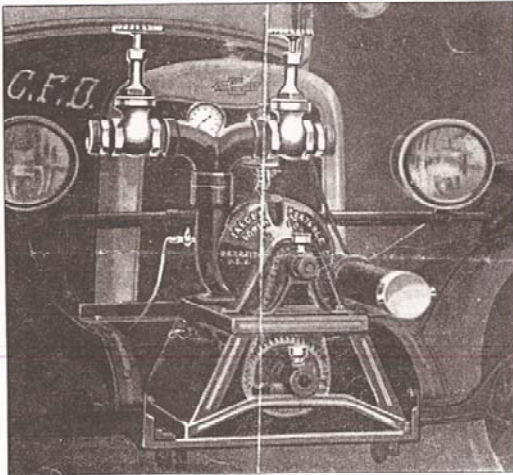
The trustees in office at the time who had to assume the responsibility of purchasing the new fire equipment were Mr. Shawhan, Mr. Rice, and Mr. Stoltz. Mr. Ed Duncan was the clerk. An order was placed with the Stomps Chevrolet for the purchase of four trucks. The bodies and pumps were installed by the Jaeger Pump Company in Detroit. The first completed truck was delivered by Stomps Chevrolet in 1927. Mr. Boyer and two others went to Detroit soon afterwards to drive the other three trucks to Dayton.

Below is a picture of the four trucks purchased from Stomps Chevrolet. The location of the picture is in front of the Stomps Chevrolet located in downtown Dayton. Also pictured is the first chief's car.

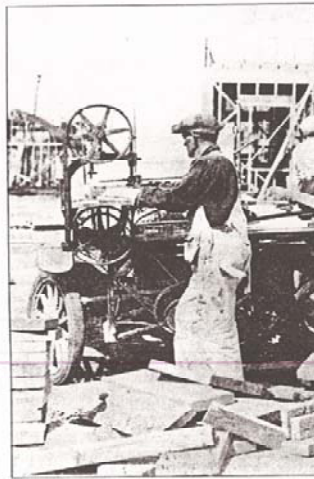
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Harrison Township, Ohio ▲



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Jaeger

Jaeger Portable Power Company
Detroit, Michigan

Charles F. Jaeger was involved in construction in Detroit just after Henry Ford made it a boom town in the late teens and early 20s. Back then, Detroit had the highest percentage of home ownership of anywhere in the country. Jaeger saw an opportunity to decrease labor on the job site by powering a hand saw off the Ford "T" engine. In 1924, Jaeger created a construction site pump similar to Barton, except the Jaeger was driven by a silent chain, similar to an automobile timing chain.

The interest shown the new pump at the IAFC convention in Louisville, Kentucky in 1925, prompted Jaeger to seek an automotive affiliation to gain the benefit of mass sales. With the introduction of the 1926 Chevrolets, it was announced that all fire apparatus jobs built by the Chevrolet Motor Company will be equipped with Jaeger pumps. In the pleasure car or light truck chassis, the pump was mounted in front of the radiator. On the large truck chassis the pump was mounted under the seat.

Upon arrival, each truck was housed so as to give protection from a central location in each of the four districts of the township. The district's at that time was known as Lakeside, Ft. McKinley, Shiloh and Northridge.

In 1927, the township established an official fire department. In 1928, the Trustees appointed Mr. Leonard E. Boyer as the first chief of the township and he had as captains for his four departments, Harry Coppock, Fred Greenwald, Chas. Webster and Merle Wick. There were 5 men per station. Mr. Boyer was fire chief from April 1928 through January 1932.

A separate telephone call was set up for each district to receive fire calls, but the first use of the new trucks came from a visual observation of a fire in the barn of Wilbur Kennedy of Frederick Road. This was approximately in the second month after the delivery of the first equipment. The barn was a total loss but it was possible to prevent any damage to the house and other out buildings.

January of 1932, John Krammer was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until January 1937. January of 1937, Charles Mobley was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until January 1942.

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In 1937, a movement was started for the purchase of better and more up-to-date equipment. The continual growth of the four communities had outstripped the adequacy of the first equipment, but they had demonstrated the value of fire protection in the saving of property and life. The result was the eventual purchase of one new Ford truck which was Howe equipped and had a Powell pump. The water tank capacity of the truck was increased to 300 gallons over the first setup, this truck went to Shiloh. In 1939 two more trucks were purchased one went to Ft. McKinley and the other to Northridge.

In 1940 another Ford Howe truck was purchased, Lakeside received this replacing the 1927 Chevrolet.

In 1941, the value of fire protection and truck with large tank capacities was well documented. This led to the purchase two additional Ford trucks, which were Howe equipped Pumper/Tanker and had a water capacity of 1,000 gallons and a 300 G.P.M pump. One each was housed in addition to the hose trucks in the more populated districts of Shiloh and Northridge.

January of 1942, Henry Trick was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until January 1946.

March of 1946, William Cheesemen was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until January 1955.

The personnel of the fire departments was handled by the township on a volunteer basis with each man being paid on an hourly service rate at each fire. Each department had in the past more or less operated as an individual unit with each captain being responsible for his telephone calls, equipment and personnel and calling for mutual aid from the other departments when it was deemed necessary. The last several years have seen some changes in cooperation as it has become necessary to dispatch more than one department in the case of house fires.

IN MEMORIUM

To those faithful firemen who have answered their last alarm, but whose faithfulness and loyalty will ever remain paramount in the annals of Harrison Township and its Fire Department.

George D. Parr, District Chief of Northridge

Seriously injured at the intersection of Needmore Road and Wagnerford Road while answering an alarm on July 31st 1948.

Died on August 5th 1948

In 1950, a central system was set up and the dispatching of equipment is up to the operator at the control board. This covers however only the districts served by Northridge, Shiloh and Ft. McKinley, while the Lakeside department still handles its own calls. This was due to a ruling of the telephone company. Where the three districts are controlled by one dispatcher, the call goes direct to the fire station in the district in which the fire is located. The

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telephone was connected to the siren on each house and once a call was placed it could not be broken until the receiver is lifted at the fire station. This relieved the district chiefs of a 24 hour responsibility of telephone coverage. The control telephone was operated from its beginning to May 1951 by Mrs. Pauline Weiss, and at that time was taken over by Mrs. Clara Wright.

Also in 1950, Northridge hosted with help from the other departments the 20th Annual Convention of the Central Western Firemen's Association. Today this convention is still held annually by rural volunteer departments.

In 1951 an order was placed with the American Fire Apparatus Company of Battle Creek for 500 gallon per minute pump with a 500 gallon capacity, this being placed on a Ford F-7. The truck was housed at the Northridge station.

January of 1955, Harry E. Heitzman was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until June of 1958.

In 1955, two other trucks were purchased with front mount pumps. These trucks were placed in service at Shiloh and Ft. McKinley.

In 1956, a one mill Fire Levy was placed on the ballot and with a lot of work by the members of the Fire Department and other people vitally interested the levy was passed by better than 82%.

June of 1958, James L. Heitzman was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until July of 1972.

The Lakeside District was annexed to the City of Dayton in 1958 and one piece of equipment which was returned from the district was put into service in a substation in the Embury Park-Ome Gardens area of Northridge. The other truck was converted to a foam truck and placed into service.

The first of three new fire stations was placed into service in January 1959 in Shiloh, the second erected in 1959 in Northridge was moved into during January 1960. Bids for the Ft. McKinley station were opened in August 1960 and the station erected, with the department moving into the building in August 1961.

1961, also saw a 2-way Radio System inaugurated with a radio being installed in each truck to help increase the efficiency of the Fire Department to the public which it serves. Firemen were alerted in their own homes by a tone controlled monitor system placed into service in the early part of 1962. When a report of a fire comes into the dispatcher, by use of a tone generator, the dispatcher alerts the firemen in the area of the fire, and repeats any information into the radio microphones and each fireman get the same information at the same time. Ambulance crews are also alerted in the same manner.

In 1961 a 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to the Northridge station.

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In 1962 a 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to the Shiloh station.

In 1963 a 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to Northridge South.

In 1964, the fire departments first aerial tower (75') was delivered from Sutphen, this was housed at the Shiloh station.

In 1965 two 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to both the Northridge North and Ft. McKinley stations.

January of 1966, was officially removed as the sub-station of the north station. William O'ryan was appointed district chief of this station.

In 1968 a 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to the Shiloh station.

In 1970 a 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to Northridge South.

In 1971 a 1,000 G.P.M. Midship American Marsh pump mounted on a Ford C-850 was delivered to the Shiloh station.

July of 1972, Ted M. Applegate was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until January of 1989.

In 1972, all four fire stations were officially given station numbers, Ft. McKinley (2), Shiloh (3), Northridge North (4), and Northridge South (5).

In 1973, a GMC Fast Attack engine was built by Chief Applegate and housed at Northridge North.

In 1975, a Ford Special Unit (air truck) was placed in service at Ft. McKinley.

In 1978, a Ward LaFrance engine was purchased and housed at Northridge North.

In 1980 a Seagraves engine was purchased and housed at Shiloh.

In 1981, a Pierce Arrow engine was purchased and housed at Ft. McKinley.

In 1982, a Pierce Arrow engine was purchased and housed at Northridge South.

In August 1984, five full-time EMS personnel were hired to cover the ambulance during the day time.

In 1984 the aerial tower purchased in 1964 was replaced with a new 100' Sutphen Aerial Tower.

In 1988 a Ford Rescue Pumper 12 was purchased and housed at station 4.

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February 1989, Thomas G. Johnson was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until June of 1994.

In 1989 a Sutphen pumper 9 was purchased and housed at station 3.

In 1992 an International truck was purchased to replace the air truck 40 purchased in 1975 at station 2.

In 1992, the past few years have found the volunteer staffing dwindling, a duty crew was put together using volunteers. This crew worked out of station 2.

The fall of 1992, a questionnaire was circulated through the volunteer ranks to check their preference on either volunteer or part-time status.

March of 1993, three full-time 24/48 captains were hired to oversee the part-time program at station 2.

In early 1994, a crew began staffing station 4, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Spring of 1994, station 2 closed due to lack of volunteers. Part time crews moved to station 3.

In June of 1994, Ronald L. Casey was appointed to the position of fire chief, his tenure lasted until June of 2007.

In January of 1995, the volunteer program was abolished, station 5 was closed. Stations 3 & 4 used to house the part-time personnel.

In August of 1995, crews began working on a trial basis a 24/48 hour schedule.

October of 1995, the Township Trustees approve the 24/48 schedule.

In a cost saving measure Harrison Township dispatch was discontinued in December of 1995. Crew began receiving calls from Northmont Center (Englewood Dispatch).

In 1997, a Freightliner engine 12 was built by Precision Fire Apparatus, this was housed at station 4. The Rescue Pumper was traded in that was purchased in 1988.

In early 1997, 24/48 shift personnel petition for a union.

In July of 1998, Trustees signed a contract with the IAFF.

In January of 1999, crews began preparing for Y2K

In 2000, a Sutphen engine was purchased (engine 10).

In 2002 a Sutphen engine was purchased (engine 8).

July of 2003, ground broken for new fire station on Turner Road.

In 2004, a Sutphen 75' ladder truck was purchased (ladder 14).

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July of 2004, station completed and crews moved in.

In December of 2005, a contract was signed with MCSO to begin dispatching fire equipment. Harrison was the second community to have the S.O. dispatch fire equipment, Jefferson Twp. being first.

In 2006, MCSO began the process of regionalizing their dispatch Center.

In June of 2007, Mark M. Lynch was appointed to the position of fire chief.

In 2008 a Sutphen 75' ladder truck was purchased (ladder 30), this replaced the 1984 100' aerial platform.

In March of 2009, MCSO opened the new regional dispatch center at the mound in Miamisburg.