

CHAPTER I  
1890-1899  
FORMATION AND REFORMATION

"All members who run to fires are expected to make their work as effective as possible,  
and to destroy no more property than is necessary to accomplish such effect."

Art. 17, 1890 By-Laws  
Enterprise Fire Company

## THE BEGINNING

Hatboro in 1890 was a growing commercial and residential center providing service to many Montgomery and Bucks County communities. William T. Robinson had been publishing the weekly *Public Spirit* for seventeen years, and Robert Loller's Academy had been a public school since 1848. The Hatboro National Bank was chartered in 1875 and the railroad had come to town in 1872. Notes in the "Hatboro Home Happenings" column of the *Public Spirit* informed readers that Reuben Hockman had made improvements to his barber shop. The interior was repapered and a handsome walnut marble topped cup rack had been installed along with new chairs and other accessories for the convenience of his customers. The Jones House (Hatboro Hotel – South York Road) and the Railroad House (Upper Hotel – York and Moreland) both had received liquor licenses. Postmaster James Van Horn announced that the addition to the mail facilities were ready and that there would now be three mails each way per day. Letters received in the morning could be answered by noon mail and would be in Philadelphia that afternoon. Oliver J. Rodrock had a harness shop and had just turned out harness for a four-horse team for Elwood Park, Horsham and a set of brass mounted express harness for the Mitchell Fletcher & Co., Philadelphia.

For entertainment the Hatboro Baseball Club played the most exciting game in the history of the club one Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1890, when they crossed bats with the Eclipse Club of Germantown. The game is reported to have abounded with brilliant plays and was thoroughly enjoyed by three hundred or more spectators. Hatboro won 4 to 3. There was more excitement when John Van Pelt's barrel of cider exploded one Monday afternoon in the freight car coming from Philadelphia. John went out with Tim Ely to see if gimlets and straws had anything to do with the leakage.

All around town; the matter of starting a fire company was under discussion. A meeting chaired by Alfred Cope, with Dr. John B. Carrell acting as secretary, was held in May at Collamore's Hall which was a part of the Railroad Hotel. A second meeting was scheduled for June 27 to consider ways to raise funds.

The project received editorial support in the *Public Spirit* on June 21, 1890.

“Those interested in the organization of a fire company in Hatboro are making another effort to raise the necessary funds for that purpose. There should be no difficulty in getting the amount required if the citizens of the town and adjoining vicinity would look into their own interest. At present we have no appliances whatever to extinguish even the smallest fire. Ambler and Perkasia have both recently experienced serious fires since which time each has taken the proper steps to form fire companies. Let us not wait till disaster befalls us, but be ready to meet the emergency. With the proper appliances both property and life may be saved. We understand that the citizens generally recognize the importance of the movement and are subscribing fairly well, but it must be remembered that it requires a good many subscriptions to raise the amount necessary.”

The Public Spirit reported on August 23, 1890 that the company did indeed organize and nine directors were elected. They were: William Moran, Paul Jones, Dr. Paul Markey, the Hon. Isaac Newton Evans, James Breen, George C. Yerkes, Dr. R. L. Davis, John Van Pelt, and Edmund Mottershead. The board organized by electing William Moran, president; Mr. R. L. Davis, secretary; and James Van Horn, treasurer. The paper reported:

“The name of the company is the Enterprise Fire Company, of Hatboro. A hand engine to throw two streams to the height of 175 feet, two chemical tanks, a hook and ladder truck and a hose cart have been engaged of Gleason & Bailey, of New York. A charter for the company will be secured. The borough will provide quarters for the housing of the apparatus in the town building to be erected on York Street. The amount subscribed was reported as \$790 and this will be increased. The directors will now proceed to collect the money.”

The very first order of business of the fledgling company, after official organization, was to authorize the purchase of apparatus for fighting fires. Throughout the organizational meetings, a committee on apparatus had investigated several manufacturers of firefighting equipment and had reported favorably on apparatus manufactured by Gleason & Bailey Manufacturing Company of Seneca, New York. On September 9, 1890, the order was placed with that company for a No. 2 truck and engine (pump) with wire basket seat. Apparently as part of the deal, Gleason & Bailey agreed to throw in a hose cart with the order at no additional cost.

While waiting for delivery of the new truck, actually a horse drawn wagon, there was work to be completed on the new town hall and engine house being erected on the west side of York Street near the intersection with Byberry Road. The minutes of borough council for August 1890 report that a special committee was appointed to procure additional ground to build a town hall containing council chambers and an engine house. The members of the committee were Dr. Isaac Newton Evans, Paul Jones and George Yerkes. All of the members were also founders of Enterprise Fire Company. The property was purchased by the Borough of Hatboro on November 6, 1890 from the estate of Jane Reading. The price paid for the property is unknown, but the borough issued a \$2,000, fifteen-year bond at 5 percent interest to fund the purchase and to erect the building. Work on the facilities did not progress as fast as would have been desired as noted in the minutes of the fire company on November 3, 1890 when the secretary was

instructed to notify Gleason & Bailey Company that the engine house was not complete and the company would not be ready to receive the machine according to contract.

### FIRST FIRE APPARATUS ARRIVES

By January 1891, the building was far enough along to allow delivery of the apparatus. The Public Spirit described the joyous occasion on January 21, 1891 as follows:

“When the freight came up on Tuesday, lo and behold! There was the long talked of fire truck and boxes and packages of fixtures. It was not long before a crowd collected and with gong ringing, proudly proceeded to draw the machine to the quarters provided for it in the new town hall. It mattered not that the streets were deep with mud and slush, happy was the man or boy who could lend a hand. Even the rheumatic trudged along utterly oblivious of the wetting they were getting. It was a great day for Hatboro. The truck is a “daisy,” if bright metal, and brighter paint and varnish count for anything. It is complete with ladders, axes, hooks, ropes, chemical tanks, etc. and has two tongues, one for hand use and the other for horses, in case the fire is at some distance. It presents an appearance that the Enterprise Company may well be proud of. Now let us all hope that it will be many a day before there is occasion for its real use.”

Unfortunately the first time the equipment was put into service is not recorded. Fighting fires in the 1890's was hard labor and more often than not the result was not putting the fire out, but keeping it from spreading and saving as much property as possible. The Gleason & Bailey apparatus was about eighteen feet long with a hand operated pump. The apparatus could be pulled by men or horses. There are no known records on the team size, but such a wagon would normally be pulled by a two-to-four-horse team. The company did not own or keep horses. The horses used to pull the fire apparatus came from nearby businesses such as the V. M. Wood Baking Co., and the coal and lumber dealers in town. Sometimes other citizen's horses were pressed into service, especially for fires occurring at times the business teams were busy and on weekends. Firemen responded to the scene of the fire. In addition to the horse drawn wagon, the company also had two hose carts which may have been pulled by horses, but probably were pulled by manpower. During the time it took the company to respond, neighbors did what they could to contain the fire and move the contents of the building to safety. Water for fighting fires was always a problem. The company had a hand pump which was mounted on the Gleason & Bailey apparatus. The pump required a lot of muscle power to operate and could pull water from streams or ponds if there were any nearby. Water mains and fire hydrants were not available until 1897.

### FIRST PARADE

The proud fireman lost no time in organizing a street parade to show off the new fire engine. The event was reported in the Public Spirit on February 1891 as follows:

“The fireman’s parade on Saturday afternoon was a great success, although the weather was damp and the streets were muddy. The visiting companies were Pioneer and Independent of Jenkintown, with fancy hose cart and hook and ladder truck, and the Abington with hook and ladder truck. The parade was formed with the Jenkintown companies in the lead. Horses were attached to the apparatus to do the real pulling, while the fire laddies with their big hats and bright shirts marched two by two holding the ropes. Both these companies made a good showing. They were led by the Jenkintown band which marched immediately behind Chief of Police Palmer and Marshal George Yerkes with a committee of citizens. The Abington truck was drawn by four horses and the members wore caps and badges and looked well. Then came the Hatboro band followed by the Enterprise Company drawing their handsome new truck. The engine with four horses attached was next and the rear was brought up by the juvenile brigade with spiked helmets drawing the hose cart. Seated on the hose cart was a white poodle dog which seemed so much interested in the success of the show as the marshal or his attendants.”

## NEW TOWN HALL

It was July 2, 1891 before the first council meeting could be held in the new town hall. The town hall was an impressive building standing two stories high with an elaborate slated belfry surmounted by a gilded weather vane. Large windows on the second floor looked out over York Street, and an arched doorway in the stone edifice opened on the engine bay. The room was finished in oiled pine. An iron cage in the rear of the engine room was used as the town jail. At the left of the vestibule the doorway opened into the council chamber. That room was wainscoted to a height of several feet and was plastered above. It was amply lighted by two windows. Next to the doorway to the council room was a stairway leading to a large room on the second floor which was used as a meeting room for the firemen. Later a wooden hose tower was added and the jail moved to the outside of the engine room. At some time prior to 1894 a clock was mounted on the outside wall between the windows on the second floor. It is unclear as to when the clock was installed but it was there when the building was electrified in 1894 because the firemen requested that electric lights be placed on each side of the clock. The company minutes record its removal in 1929 when the apparatus room was enlarged. It was during the 1929 renovations that the arched door was changed to a more practical door and the frame part of the building was replaced with masonry walls and enlarged.

The town streets were lit by gas and oil lamps at this time, and in February 1891, Borough Council directed that:

“a lamp be placed in the most feasible place in front of Engine House to be kept burning every night.”

Minutes of Borough Council

February 5, 1891

The town lamplighter was W. H. Watson, who was paid approximately \$12 a month to maintain the lamps with oil provided by the "Sunshine Oil Company". He was directed to light them each night at dusk and put them out at a time designated prior to dawn. He also maintained the gas lamps on York Road. Several years before in 1874, another lamplighter whose name is not recorded, was reported to have run away on a Monday night, leaving the lights burning all night.

The fire company had raised funds for its apparatus through donations and subscriptions and prior to payment being made to Gleason & Bailey the treasury of the company held as much as \$1079. The full price of the truck was \$984. The fire company had sent a deposit of 2 per cent of the purchase price when the apparatus was ordered,, and the remainder was authorized to be paid in February 1891. The minutes duly record the payment of fifty-five cents to Hatboro Pharmacy for chamois and sponge to keep the new truck in parade condition. The company also spent an additional \$1.75 to have the brass plate on the truck engraved with the words "ENTERPRISE FIRE COMPANY OF HATBORO". The company was now officially in business.

Financing for the young company was a constant concern. Although the citizens of the borough responded well to the first call for funds to purchase the fire apparatus, the treasury of the company was often near bankruptcy. In January 1892 it held only \$25.18 and a year later there was a balance of only \$9. The volunteers worked hard raising funds. In addition to annual dues of twenty-five cents, concerts, cake sales and other community activities such as a holiday fair at Christmas were held. The minutes record proceeds of \$39.50 from a concert held in June 1891 and an August cake sale that same year raised \$2.35. The first Christmas Holiday Fair was held in 1894 and netted the company \$247.19. Eli Fluck was cited in the minutes of the company as having sold the most tickets, 110 of them, and was awarded a nickel plated fire badge for his efforts.

No doubt it was the desire to attract attention, and donations to the young company that precipitated the year-old company to purchase parade uniforms. The minutes of the company provide this insight. A committee had been formed to propose the uniform and in August 1891 presented some samples to the membership, Committee Chairman Elmer E. Shelley recommended that the uniform consist of a drab shirt, cap and belt, but William Mottershead moved to amend the uniform to a red shirt instead of the drab. His amendment lost and the uniform was deemed to be drab shirts with company monogram, blue caps with the words "Enterprise No. 1 Hatboro" on front and black belts with red borders and the word "Enterprise" on the back, and "No. 1" would be imprinted on the front. A four month \$100 note was secured from the Hatboro National Bank to finance the uniform purchase. Each member bought his own shirt by reimbursement to the company. Total expenses recorded for the uniforms was \$239.70 to Henderson and Company for shirts, caps, ties and tie rings, and \$53.50 for belts. It was reported that fifty-six shirts were sold.

1893

Treasurer James Van Horn, reported a balance of \$9.00 in the treasury on January 10, 1893. Nevertheless, the first order issued by newly elected President, Isaac Newton Evans was to Chief Charles Magee who was instructed to have the fire engine and other apparatus repaired and placed in good working order. The chief was able to report the engine in good working order at the next meeting. Unfortunately, the cost of the repairs was \$10. The fire company organized the borough's Fourth of July celebration, and reported it to be a great success with a profit of \$7.35. But when Elmer Shelley, a committee of one, reported on the need for the new hose, his request was denied owing to the condition of the treasury at the time.

Chief Magee received a handsome badge from President Dr. I Newton Evans at the regular meeting of the company in June 1893. The badge was presented with a few well chosen remarks and the minutes record that Chief Magee took the opportunity to thank the members for the token of appreciation of his work for the company. An interesting thing happened fifty-three years later in 1946 when the May 27 minutes of the company record that a "fire company badge over one hundred years old" was presented to the company by Mrs. Jacob Bumm, Sr. of Fort Washington. The minutes record that Mrs. Bumm told the company that it was originally issued to Charles Magee who kept a small cigar store in Hatboro. The company accepted Mrs. Bumm's gift and never questioned her claim that the badge had been issued nearly fifty years before the company was founded.

1894

Dr. Evans was reelected president in 1894 and Charles Magee was reappointed chief fireman. After a bill for \$5.53 was paid the treasury contained less than \$14. Despite lack of funds, the company pressed on. A committee was appointed to replace the fire bell, and another committee appointed to wait on borough council and petition it for 100 feet of hose, and to further press a plea for a town water works. By May, the company had purchased a new flag for the firehouse and the bell committee reported that the old bell had been repaired. Good news from borough council was an offer to buy the 100 feet of hose provided the fire company pay back half the purchase money when possible. The company accepted the challenge. In that same month, the company applied for membership in the Pennsylvania State Fireman's Association, and Albert W. Martindell was appointed the first delegate to attend the annual convention. James Kearns was appointed as alternate delegate. The convention was held in Norristown in September 1894.

## HATBORO WATER WORKS

### CHAPTER 2

1900-1909

## A DECADE OF UNCERTAINTY

The early 1900's without Chief Shelley was a difficult time for the company. He was one of those people with a natural ability to organize and manage several things at the same time. The citizens of Hatboro depended on his leadership on borough council as well as on his abilities as fire chief. It was difficult both on council and at the firehouse to find someone to fill his shoes. Fire company equipment needed repairs and new equipment was needed, but treasurer's reports indicated no money was available. Even parades and community events were ignored by the company, either for lack of interest or for lack of funds. The very continuance of the company was in question. The presidency changed from Daniel Richie in 1900 to I. Newton Watson in 1901, Harvey Ely in 1902, and Harry Hoffman in 1903. Harry Coeyman was elected chief in 1900 and kept that office until 1904 when he turned those duties over to Alvin Craven.

### 1901-1903

The third reorganization of the company took place in 1901. A new constitution and set of by-laws were adopted at the April 22nd meeting. Apparently this reorganization was an effort to structure the company into a more efficient operation. The constitution contained twelve articles which set forth in detail the offices and duties of officers, membership requirements, duties of members, meetings, uniforms, drills and provisions for amending, conducting audits and balloting for new members. The new by-laws reduced the entrance fee for membership from one dollar to fifty cents and provided for a fine of a dollar for any member who was intoxicated on duty or who distributed spirituous liquors about the apparatus.

This reorganization offered insight into some of the problems the company faced. Membership had fallen off and the lack of discipline was interfering with the operation of the company. There was no longer a regular janitor to tend the fires and clean the rooms. In fact the company had to call a special meeting to clean the rooms, and once again the locks on the firehouse were changed to keep non-members out. Further evidence of the membership problem is found in the minutes of the August 26, 1901 meeting when "It was moved and agreed for all members to constitute themselves as a committee to solicit new members"

1904-1906

The situation began to change with the election of Benjamin Hilt as president in 1904. Alvin Craven was reelected chief. The Hilt-Craven team stayed in office through 1908, but was broken up by the death of Chief Craven in September 1908. It was a sign of problems facing the company in 1904 that president Hilt had only been admitted to membership of the company one year earlier in 1903. However, this may have been the second time he joined the company as his name appears on the roles for a brief period in 1901.

It wasn't easy for the Hilt-Craven team. The company held only one meeting in 1904, but in 1905 things were improving. Committees to inspect the fire hydrants meet with council on financial matters, and repair of the fire alarm bell were appointed and took action. The company was successful in convincing the borough council of the need for 500 feet of hose and the fire hydrants repaired. A missing handle on the hose cart #1 was replaced and in general the company was operating on a business-like basis. One problem addresses by the company was that of interested citizens interfering with the operation of fire apparatus while in service. This may have been the forerunner of the fire police.

## FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

The need for a new fire alarm system was often discussed. The first alarm was a bell that was purchased when the new town hall was built in 1891. The bell was replaced by a steel locomotive tire which was purchased by the borough from the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad for \$3 in 1897. The borough council minutes for May 6, 1897 reported that the belfry has to be raised six feet four inches to accommodate the new alarm. At the same meeting, the council authorized the placing of a box with glass front containing a key, "which glass may be broken by any citizen in case of fire and the door opened so the alarm can be rung." It wasn't until July 1897, that Chief Shelley was authorized to purchase the necessary tools to have the engine tire as a fire alarm. Steam Whistles were also used to summon firefighters. In April 1899, a committee reported meeting with Borough Council to have a steam whistle placed on the broiler of the power house (Hatboro Electric Company). Council agreed and met with the owners of the electric plant. The whistle was put into operation sometime in May 1899 and was electrically controlled from the firehouse. The cost of \$47 for having this done was paid by the

borough. There was at least one other steam whistle in town because in August that same year a special meeting was called to decide which whistle would be used for a fire alarm. The minutes noted one of the whistles was not working. The matter was tables. In September the borough paid \$9.70 to have the broken whistle fixed. The second whistle was probably on private property and probably not controlled by the fire company. The usual practice would be for the plant operator to blow the whistle when the alarm was sounded.

In 1906 the fire company was concerned that the present alarm system was inadequate for the growing borough. A committee chaired by Paul Jones met with Borough Council on the matter of the fire alarm. An agreement was reached to give the present alarm another test. A joint committee of council and fire company members were stationed at various points around town to report on how well the alarm could be heard in all areas of town. The results proved that the locomotive tire now being used as an alarm was unsatisfactory. The council agreed to purchase a new alarm and the minutes of borough council for November 5, 1906 show that Borough Council President Sprogell reported on visiting all the bells in town and it was his opinion that none of the existing bells were large enough to be used as a fire alarm. A new and larger bell was needed. Sprogell presented three proposals from different bells companies for a 500 pound bell. The contract was awarded to McNeeley and Company for \$190.72 with ordered to inscribe the bell as follows”

“Purchased By The Borough of Hatboro – Nov. 1906”

The bell has been received and installed by January 1907. The minutes of the fire company record the sale of the locomotive tire by the fire company for \$3 in September 1907, and in 1910, the old bell which was originally used for the fire alarm was sold to McNeeley and Company for \$27.55.

1907

On January 1, 1907 the fire company treasury contained \$14.07. Borough council donated \$25 in March but more money was needed. Help came in the form of an offer from the “Glenside Musical Troupe” to stage a benefit show for the company. The show took place in March and at the regular meeting on March 25, James Kearns reported that the company collected 84.60 from the entertainment. President Hilt was cited in the

minutes for selling 205 tickets. The company used the money to purchase boots and rubber coats. There were often “entertainments” to benefit the company. Some were arranged by the company, such as concerts, and dinners, and others were put on by troupes such as Doylestown Minstrel Troupe. Also about this time a baseball field was laid out behind the firehouse. When games were played, fire company members would pass through the spectators and take up collects for the company. On such collection netted \$1.39.

The fire company was growing older, or at least some of its members were. In March the Company recognized that some members were no longer able, or no longer desired to actively participate at fire, but still wanted to be members of the company and participate in the activities of the company. The constitution was amended to create a new membership category known as “Honorary Membership”. The first members enrolled in this category were listed as: Cyrus Moore, Samuel Aiman, Edmund Mottershead, J.W. Watson, Albert Martindell, Amos Mullen, Jerry C. Collamore, Byron Thompson, W. Sheldon, Thomas G. Watson, George Yerkes and Comly Walton.

1908

There were only eleven members present at the annual meeting in January, but Hilt and Craven were reelected and the first order of business was to change the firehouse locks. The company was beginning to come out of the doldrums and for the first time in many years the minutes record the acceptance of an invitation from the McKinley Fire Company of Abington to parade out of town. The company secured a special trolley car for transportation at a cost of \$10 and was accompanied by the Fife and Drum Corps of Orange Home. Chief Alvin Craven missed the parade due to illness, but Burgess Howard Winner was designated to act for the chief. After the success of the McKinley parade, the company traveled by “steam road” to Ambler for a housing of new apparatus, once again accompanied by the Orange Home Fife and Drum Corps. This time the arrangements were far more elaborate. The fireman purchased new blue shirts and fatigue caps, and assembled at the firehouse at 11:00 a.m. on parade day to march to the train station. They took the 11:55 a.m. to Glenside where they changed trains to Ambler. Each man paid his own fare of twenty-six cents each way. The company also took the truck and paid \$5 to have it transported. Although minutes do not record the method by which it was taken to Ambler. It may have been driven, but it may have also been shipped by steam train with the company. An interesting item in the May 1908 minutes was a motion and agreement to place a key to the firehouse at Samuel Gehman’s store for emergency use. Had there been a fire and nobody came with a key? Gehman owned the Hatboro Bakery next door to town hall, a favorite gathering place for the fireman.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION

There was more serious business at the August meeting. Vice President Paul Jones moved to appoint a committee of five to correspond with our neighboring fire companies with the view of organizing an association of companies. Jones was made chairman of the committee. Meetings were held at Pioneer Fire Company in Jenkintown in October 1908 and February 1909. Eleven companies participated and agreed to form an organization known as the Montgomery County Fireman's Association. The formation came in April 1909 and Enterprise Fire Company was a charter member of the association.

The newly formed Montgomery County Fireman's Association held its first parade in Jenkintown on October 16, 1909. Enterprise was there with the Hatboro Band, which after much haggling settled for a \$35 donation instead of the \$40 it had asked for. The company went to Jenkintown by trolley but this time Justice Walmsley refused to allow the company to use his horses for the parade. George Duncan was charged with the duty of finding a horse to pull the old hand engine at the parade. No report on his success. After the parade, the company spent \$29.39 to host delegates of the association for refreshments.

For the second time the company experienced the death of a fire chief when Chief Alvin Craven died on September 23, 1908. The company met in a special meeting September 24 to express sympathy to his family and make arrangements to attend the funeral. The firehouse was draped in black crepe and resolutions of sympathy were published in the Public Spirit. Craven had been in poor health for several months. His death was a serious blow to the company that was just beginning to recover. Chief Craven was succeeded by Harry McVaugh elected to fill the unexpired term on October 26, 1908.

The fire company organized a large parade for Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1908. The parade was led by Enterprise Fire Company with Ivyland Fire Company also participating. There were three bands, the New Hope Band, the Orange Home Band and the Doylestown Band. Justice Walmsley provided all the horses needed for the parade and William R. Craven organized a "Dark Town Company" (minstrel show". A luncheon served to the visiting fireman and bands at the firehouse. Additional spoons and tin cups had to be purchased at a cost of \$2.

1909

The balance in treasury on January 18, 1909 was \$37.27. Benjamin Hilt was reelected president and John Kotz was elected chief for the new year. The trustees of the company announced the cancellation of the company insurance policy with Line Lexington Insurance Company and placed \$1,500 worth of insurance coverage with the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company, a stock company. The policy was placed through agent Samuel Garner and the premium on the five year policy was \$18.

Because of insurance regulations the constitution was again amended to limit the number of active members to fifty. It had been 200. Treasurer Howard Jarrett reported receipt of \$78.80 from the entertainment benefit for the company put on by the Doylestown Minstrel Troupe. The company paid piano player, Frank Black, \$2 and the Hatboro School Board \$5 for the use of the school auditorium.

By March the treasury held 99.02. The company hadn't been so rich for a long time. The apparatus foreman was ordered to submit a written report on the condition of all apparatus and equipment. The reports were required monthly and special blanks were ordered printed for the reports. The small hose cart was converted to carry fire extinguishers and became known as a chemical cart. Foremen were ordered to purchase sponges and chamois for use in keeping their equipment clean. The money in the treasury rose to 104.90 in September, and on October 25, 1909, Francis Sniveley proposed Warren Cornell for active membership.

In March 1909 the company minutes reported that it was moved and agreed that all members should purchase red shirts with initials "E.F. Co." on them. The shirts weren't available in time for a parade on July 5 when the uniform was black pants, white shirts and black ties with fatigue caps and fire hats. In fact the red shirts may have never been purchased as they were never again mentioned as being part of a company uniform. Later that same year, Francis E. Snively reported that the Philadelphia Fire Department had dress coats available for \$5.50 each. He was instructed to purchase twenty coats and at the October meeting he reported the purchase of twenty-four of the coats.

The company wound up the second decade with another revision of the constitution and by-laws. Up until this time the constitution had always stated the purpose of the organization to be: “the extinguishment of fires and the protection of life and property”. Now the members added a new purpose by including the words “and promote social intercourse.” The number of trustees for the company was increased from three to nine and the trustees were given broad new powers including the appointment of officers when vacancies occurred between elections, control and management of property and effects, hiring and setting salary of employees, and general supervision of the affairs of the company. The by-laws changed the entrance fee back to \$1 and set annual dues at \$1 to be paid in advance at the annual meeting.

## CHAPTER 3

1910-1919

### FROM HORSES TO HORSEPOWER

Hatboro was known at one time for its number of carriage makers. One of them, Oliver T. Watson, was known far and wide in the late 1800's for the famous “Watson Folding Top” carriage which he made at his Hatboro shop. However by 1911 there wasn't one carriage maker or wagon maker left in the borough. Automobiles were becoming commonplace as Henry Ford's assembly line turned out the Model “T” by the thousands. The age of the horseless carriage was here, and some fire companies already were housing motorized equipment. Enterprise continued to respond with its twenty-year old Gleason & Bailey truck No. 2 with wire seat and hand engine, one hose cart and one chemical wagon and a recent addition of a steam engine pumper borrowed from Philadelphia.

1910

At the annual meeting of the company on January 17, 1910, William F. Wilson was elected president and John Kotz was reelected chief. Francis Snively was elected permanent chairman of the board of trustees, and notified the membership that certain committees had been formed by the trustees for overseeing the operations of the company. A Property Committee was in charge of apparatus and property; House Committee for the room and furnishings of the company; Financial Committee to devise ways and means of raising funds; and a Membership Committee to procure and recommend honorary members. The Property Committee was immediately instructed to make suitable repairs to the closet containing the coats to protect same from dampness, to enclose the tower with suitable doors enabling the rooms to be heated to keep the chemicals from freezing, and to ask for bids for disposal of unused tables, stoves and matting to be opened at the next meeting. The borough purchased and installed new gas heaters in the apparatus room, the council chamber and the fireman's room by the fall of 1910. The hose tower and jail remained unheated until a boiler was installed much later.

The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad thanked the company for use of the hose cart to fill the tank of the engine with water from Hatboro Water Company during a recent snow blockade. This service was provided to the railroad several times when snow and ice prevented the railroad from using its own water supply. The Fire Company was very accommodating but always asked the railroad for donations. Sometimes it got one, sometimes it didn't. The company received a new spray nozzle but delayed payment for sixteen days until the item could be tested. It proved to be good move because the company decided to return the nozzle after the test.

With the Willow Grove Fire Company now in business, matters concerning mutual aid with that company were a general topic of discussion. Hose couplings to allow connecting the hoses of both companies and arrangements with the trolley company to provide transportation when called upon for assistance were investigated. Chief Kotz and Foreman Ervin Amber were directed to select men for police duty and to have them sworn in as county officers.

## TELEPHONE SERVICE

At the February meeting, J. Newton Watson reported that a contract had been signed to have a pay telephone placed on the company's rooms. Although there were at least two telephones in Hatboro as early as 1893, it was not until 1899 that a switchboard was installed by the Delaware and Atlantic Company in the combined post office and general

store operated by Jesse Newton Watson. The store was on the east side of York Road between Byberry and Moreland Avenues, just across the street from town hall. Within a few months after installation of the original switchboard, a larger ten line board had to be installed. By 1911 telephones were commonplace if not yet a fixture in every home.

Foreman Ervin Amber had reported three rubber coats missing from the firehouse. At March meeting it was moved and agreed that any member taking out any property of the company for other than fire purposes, be suspended until the company could take action on the matter. The company thanked Z.B. Hartshorn for donating a carpet sweeper, and the board of trustees reported receipts of \$15 from the sale of the surplus furnishings. In April the secretary of the company was instructed to notify all of the churches in town not to block aisles with chairs, and the gas company donated two smoke guards to company. The company had been expressing concern about the water pressure at the fire hydrants. A pressure test of the hydrants found them to vary according to location. The matter was brought to the attention of borough council. Insurance coverage on company property was raised to \$2,000. The policy was placed through Warren Cornell, Sr. at a premium of \$32 and in November, the company purchased one ton of coal for the engine room stove from Glenside Coal and Lumber Company for \$13.

#### STEAM PUMPER ACQUIRED

Francis E. Snively joined the fire company in 1908. About the same time he became member of borough council. His occupation is unknown, but he evidently had connections with the Philadelphia Fire Department. In November 1910, Councilman Snively was instrumental in arranging for Hatboro to borrow a large steam pumper from the Philadelphia Fire Department. This horse drawn engine was used by the company until it was replaced by the motorized Simplex pumper in 1919 or 1920. First mention of the steam engine appears in the minutes of November 28, 1910 when the company thanked Thomas E. Paxton for giving the company coal with which to test the steam engine on Thanksgiving Day. The same minutes record the purchase of couplings for the steam engine from John H. Clay at a cost of \$10.20. The acquisition of this piece of machinery, not the least of which was the fact that the apparatus was now twenty years old and there were no funds available for the purchase of new equipment.

1911

The annual meeting of the fire company was held on January 16, 1911. William Wilson was reelected president and Cyrus C. Moore was elected chief. The year begun with a total of \$182.32 in the treasury. A dance for the benefit of the company had been held in December in Wilgus Hall and a sum of \$13.90, the proceeds from the benefit, was turned over to the treasurer. Willow Grove Fire Company had been founded in 1907 and at the urging of the Montgomery County Fireman's Association, all fire companies were to work together to determine areas of first call responsibility and reciprocal assistance programs. Cyrus C. Moore, William F. Wilson and Reuben Hockman, apparently having telephones, were designated to be called by the telephone operator if Willow Grove requested assistance. The reality of the situation was succinctly expressed in the company minutes on January 23, 1911:

“Terwood Road was agreed on as the line south between Willow Grove and Hatboro. Buildings or houses north of said road, on fire, our company to save if possible”

In April 1911 the trustees reported that progress had been made on the purchase of a chemical wagon. The company directed the finance committee to look into the possibility of purchasing an automobile chemical apparatus and gave the committee full power to act on this matter. The company recognized an urgent need for motorized equipment not only for the benefit of the borough citizens, but also to enable it to meet the need of growing community outside the borough limits. In addition to the Willow Grove Fire Company, there were only a few other fire companies in the area. Huntington Valley Fire Company was just being formed in 1911, Rockledge had had a company since 1893 and Ambler Fire Company was founded the same year as Hatboro's. There were companies in Jenkintown and Abington, but Horsham Fire Company would not be formed until 1912 and Bryn Athyn's company was not founded until 1916. There probably wasn't a company north of the borough between County line and Doylestown. That left an awful lot of territory to be covered with horse-drawn equipment.

#### MOTORIZED CHEMICAL APPARATUS PURCHASED

The trustees proceeded with arrangements to purchase a motorized chassis to be used as a chemical wagon. By June, Francis Snively could inform the company that he would arrange for a demonstration of the chemical apparatus in the near future and by July; the finance committee reported the purchase of a chassis and the awarding of a contract to construct the chemical apparatus. The chemical apparatus was built by Boyd Fire Apparatus Company. The Public Spirit reported on October 17, 1911 that the new chemical truck was handsome and described it as follows:

“The equipment engine is a powerful design and will develop a speed over 25 miles per hour and is equipped with a 40 gallon chemical tank with all the apparatus for quick loading as extra charges of chemicals are carried. Besides this there are 200 feet of chemical hose and 600 feet of regular fire hose which can be connected to the fire plugs. There are also extension ladders, hooks, crow bars, axes and picks and two hand extinguishers fitted on the machine.”

There are no accurate records on this truck. It is only referred to as a Walter chemical truck in fire company scrapbook. However, the word Walter may be a misinterpretation of Waterous. The waterous Engine Works of St. Paul, Minnesota began manufacturing fire engines in the early 1900's and it is known that Radnor Fire Company in Wayne, Pennsylvania had purchased a Waterous in 1906.

Despite the glowing reports in the newspaper, the truck would prove to be less than the powerhouse it was hoped to be. The company quickly learned that the automobile needed constant care and repair. The vehicle was woefully underpowered which caused the company to instruct the foreman in charge of apparatus to restrict the number of firemen allowed to ride on the automobile to only a few except when it was not loaded with hose.

The borough citizens got their first look at the truck when the Montgomery County Fireman's Association annual parade was held in Hatboro in October. The parade attracted 1500 participants and 5000 spectators. Extra trolleys ran every sixteen minutes to accommodate the visiting firemen and parade watchers. “Welcome Fireman” banners were strung across York Road and on the front of the firehouse, and buildings were decorated with bunting and flags. The parade was headed by a detachment of state police and borough council members. Twenty-five fire companies participated with the many bands.

After the parade, 1500 lunches were served to all those taking part in the parade. The lunches were packed in boxes and served from Drager-Robinson Garage. As the men passed through in line they were given the lunch box and a most attractive stein containing hot coffee. The ladies of the town provided fifty or more cakes.

The Warminster Driving Club offered the use of its track to Hatboro, Willow Grove and Abington Fire Companies for a horse race to benefit the companies. The race was held in November and the company received \$17.30 as its share of the receipts. This became an annual event which lasted several years. The minutes of the company note receipts of \$14.80 in 1912 and \$20 in 1913. The financial condition of the company was never very strong and nearly every opportunity to garner funds from all sorts of events was welcomed.

1912

Warren Cornell, Sr. was elected president of the company in 1912 and Reuben Hockman was elected chief. There was 344.45 in treasury. The company insured the automobile chemical truck for \$1000 with Union Mutual Insurance Company of Jenkintown. Chief Hockman reported that the company rendered good service at a fire on March 11, and in April the company received a note of thanks for its quick response and attempt to get to Ivyland for a barn fire on March 31. The Farmer's insurance Company donated \$75 to the fire company for service rendered at a recent fire.

Chief Hockman regularly reported fires and it was apparent that the company was kept busy. At the October meeting the chief reported having been in service at the following fire: barn of Harry Woodfall, Sept. 29; frame office building of Robert Laughlin, July 3; house occupied by Clifford Weiss, Oct 1; Dr. Seltzer's dairy house, Sept 4. The minutes noted that the company was unable to respond to Mrs. Stone's residence in Willow Grove.

The annual Fireman's Parade was held in Lansdale in October and the company, with the Hatboro Cornet Band, traveled to the parade by steam train. In December a benefit dance was held at Wilgus Hall which brought \$25 to the treasury. A committee was appointed to ask borough council for a \$100 donation. At the same meeting the company agreed to place some hose on the small hose cart and place the cart in another building in town in case the firehouse should catch fire and the company could not get its apparatus out.

1913

President Cornell was reelected in 1913 and Erwin Amber was elected chief. Twenty-two members were present at the annual meeting. Treasurer Howard Jarrett, Harry Wilson and Benjamin Hilt were appointed to ask borough council to take over the actual and necessary running expenses of the company. It had been the fire company's practice to ask borough council for donations from the borough treasury. Owing to the close relationship between the council and the fire company – not only were they located in the same building but most councilmen also were fireman – the donations were almost always made. Benjamin Hilt's suggestion to just send the bills downstairs instead of sending a committee each month made good sense. The borough council minutes of February 3, 1912 record that the councilman agreed to pay all necessary running expenses of the company up to \$300 per year, but refused to donate an additional \$300 to the company. The minutes state that the committee thanked council for its kind consideration in the matter.

Interestingly, soon after the company for borough council to pay its bills, the borough had to issue bonds for operating funds. At the same time Howard Jarrett reported a balance in the fire company's treasury of \$288.62 and no bills to pay. At Jarrett's suggestion and with company approval the fire company bought two \$100 borough bonds at 5 percent interest per annum. This was the first time the company was able to invest funds in an interest bearing account. Even a friendly borough council must have had second thoughts about the wisdom of its action February.

Types of alarms and methods for sounding alarms continued to be of concern in 1913. In February the company agreed that for fires out of town the bell should be tapped five times at intervals. At the same meeting Benjamin Hilt and Norman Kearns were appointed to look into the possibility of having a "gong" – actually an electrically operating bell – placed on the outside of the firehouse so it could be rung by the telephone operators. The telephone company was now Bell telephone and it agreed to the proposal provided borough council would pass a resolution releasing it from any responsibility from damage should the alarm fail to work properly. The fireman went downstairs on May 13, 1912 to seek council's approval and the necessary resolution. They came back upstairs with both shortly thereafter the alarm signal was installed on the firehouse wall. With the new arrangement the operator would throw a switch at the telephone switchboard and the bell would ring whenever the operator received a call for help.

By November, an even greater use of the telephone was initiated when the names of ten members with telephones were recorded in the company minutes. They were: Erwin Amber, George Duncan, Oliver J. Watson, Howard Jarrett, Warren Cornell, Stephen Mason, Samuel Gehman, Paul Jones, John Kotz, and Reuben Hockman. It is unclear if

these men had phones in their homes or if the phones were located at their place of business. The telephone numbers were not listed in the minutes but it wasn't necessary because one just rang the operator and asked for the person by name.

Also in November, the company agreed to loan Horsham Fire Company its old hand pump, if they were willing to accept it. Arrangements were made to hold a dance at Wilgus Hall for benefit of the Hatboro and Horsham Fire Company. The December Meeting minutes reported that the benefit was held and the profit of \$17.50 was divided equally between the companies, each receiving \$8.75.

Continuing the practice of his predecessor, Chief Amber reported all the fires for which the company had been in service. The reports were made monthly and included the following fires: In March, Mason's barn and Jesse Ambler's chicken house. Jesse donated \$5 to the company for services rendered. The school board also donated \$5 to the company for cleaning the chimney at the school. In August, Abramson's barn in maple Glen burned as a result of fireworks, and Cyrus C. Moore, ex-fire chief, had a fire at the freight house due to lightning. In October, the chief reported a house fire in Willow Grove and a barn in Johnsville.

1914

President Cornell and Chief Amber were reelected at the 1914 annual meeting attended by twenty members of the company. The treasurer reported \$101.78 in the treasury. The company began the year by appointing a committee chaired by Oliver J. Watson to investigate the different makes of automobile trucks for fire apparatus to replace the chassis used on the chemical truck, and to report the findings to the board of trustees.

#### BUICK CHASSIS PURCHASED

It was apparent almost from the day it was delivered that the Walters/Waterous truck was not powerful enough for the job it had to do. In April the company approved a recommendation that chassis be purchased from Buick Motor Co. and the body manufactured by Boyd Fire Co. be transferred to the new Buick Chassis. The ordered was

placed with the Buick Motor Co. through Mason's Garage. The Public Spirit described the new truck on December 26, 1914:

“When the Buick chassis with motor of 37 horsepower, purchased from Mason's Garage, arrived for the Enterprise Fire Company, it was taken to the Weiss Wagon Shop at Warminster to have placed on it the body, built by Boyd Fire Apparatus Company for the old car. This was nicely done and the new car being larger than the old one gives more room for all apparatus which comprises a large chemical tank with chemical hose, two chemical extinguishers, a large reel of fire hose to be fitted to the fire plugs. There is also an extension ladder and a plain ladder, axes and bars. It is lighted by Electricity and has demountable rims to the tires. There is also an extra tire on the side.”

The total cost of the new chassis with seat was \$1,235. George Weiss charges the company another \$30 to transfer the body from the old chassis to the new. Treasurer Howard Jarrett reported that with the certificates on deposit at Hatboro National Bank (\$400 plus interest), \$200 received from McVaugh for the old chassis and donations, the company had 838.12 to pay for the Buick. Borough Council donated \$300 and a note was secured from Hatboro National Bank for the remainder. Fred McVaugh purchased the old chassis in late 1914 when the new Buick chassis was delivered. McVaugh paid \$200 for the old chassis but later informed the company that it wasn't worth that much and wanted his money back. The company refunded \$25 to McVaugh on September 27, 1915 and told him to keep the chassis.

Some other notable events during 1914 included the installation of water pipes and spigot in the Engine Room and some interesting fires reported by Chief Amber. The company assisted Doylestown Fire Company in January at a major fire in that town when the Doylestown Hardware Store and several other buildings caught on fire and were destroyed. In February, a flower house burned on the Thomas reading Estate and Goessler's Hotel had an overheated flue. But pity poor Randolph Mason. In March his storage building caught fire and burned from sparks from a locomotive and in April, his manure pile caught fire from the same source. The storage building was a one-story frame building located at Byberry Avenue and the railroad tracks. Mason was using the building to store farm equipment and supplies which he sold at the Hatboro Supply Co. which was then located at Moreland Avenue and the railroad tracks. In May, S.G. Anderson's barn burned and Mrs. Hogesheimer, on Samson's Hill, lost her house in a fire that burned for three days. There were several field fires and other minor fire calls, but in December, the fire company had a major fire right in town.

## WILGUS MARKET FIRE

On December 21, 1914 the new Buick was put to test when the Wilgus Market caught fire in the early morning hours. The Wilgus Market was housed in a three story building at the corner of Moreland Avenue and Depot Streets. A public auditorium was located on the second floor and the Masonic Hall on the third floor. Wilgus Hall was used for many fire company social events. The Public Spirit called the fire the "largest and most destructive fire that has happened in Hatboro since the installation of the borough water mains 15 or 20 years ago." The fire started in the early hours of a Tuesday morning in the end of the building nearest the railroad and was first seen in a window on the second floor. The paper reported that "if it had not been for the failure of the water supply the fire could have possibly been put out with only a couple of thousand dollars loss." As it was the losses were reported to be more than \$11,000. The water problem was partially because of lack of pressure, but during that fire, the electricity was cut and the pumps at the water works could not operate thereby contributing further to the water problem. The paper reported:

"The new Buick truck proved its worth and value by quickly responding and making a number of trips to and from the firehouse...first bringing the hose cart, next pulling the hook and ladder and last the big steam fire engine which was of no service because of lack of water."

Just as soon as Chief Amber determined that the fire was a big one, he requested assistance from other fire companies. The paper reported that "it was thrilling to see the large firefighting automobiles of the neighboring towns come shooting in out of total darkness with men in full uniform." The building was a total loss with only stone wall left standing. But as the building cooled, the walls buckled and had to be torn down. Willis Wilgus reportedly reopened for business across the street from the burn-out building the very next morning.

During the height of the inferno, a large crowd of onlookers gathered to watch fireman at work. The flames lighted the sky and could be seen by early morning risers from a far distance. When the excitement was at its highest, two young men driving an automobile belonging to Ernest Jones crashed into a telephone pole near the scene of the fire. The Public Spirit reported that the front end of the automobile was broken and the windshield and lamps smashed. "As the glass fell to the pavement, Elmer Kerbaugh, a young man

standing in the crowd was thrown into an epileptic fit and was carried into a nearby house where he was treated by Dr. reading.” It was a very memorable night for Hatboro.

1915

At the annual meeting in 1915, Paul Jones was elected president and Warren Cornell was elected chief. The company had a new truck but the treasury contained only \$92.12.

Once again the fireman had been hampered by the low water pressure in fighting the Wilgus fire. Low water pressure at some of the fireplugs had been a chronic problem in Hatboro for many years. Cecil A. Keeble and Ervin Amber met with the borough council to urge corrective action on this serious problem. As a result the borough fathers put pressure on the water company to hasten the purchase of a new steam pump and to improve the delivery system by connecting the dead ends of all mains to insure equal pressure through out town.

In what was to become a long lasting annual event, the company accepted an invitation from the Montgomery County Fireman’s Association to participate in a parade and fireman’s demonstration at Willow Grove Park on July 10. Preparations were made to have the old hand pump put in working order and Howard Jarrett was instructed to secure horses for hauling the pump to Willow Grove. The matter of cheap uniforms being purchased was discussed and an evening set aside for members to come to the rooms for measurements. Unfortunately, other than this brief notation, there is no further information about this first event or how the company made out with its cheap uniforms. But we do know that Fireman’s Day at Willow Grove Park was a much anticipated event for decades.

At the December meeting, Chief Cornell reported that the company had been in service at a fire at Christ’s Homes. The alarm was given to Hatboro at noon and the company arrived on the scene at 12:20 p.m. The road was badly drifted with snow. The company was in service for three hours and the fire caused a major loss.

1916

Norman Kearns replaced Warren Cornell as chief in 1916 and Paul Jones was reelected president. The first Chauffeurs were appointed. These men were qualified drivers and the only members permitted to drive the automobile apparatus. They were: Stephen Mason, Kimball Mason, and Everett Shirer. Alvin Winner was added to the list in February. During the year the Volunteer Fire Police were established. They were appointed by borough council and sworn in by the burgess. The first men so appointed were: George Duncan, Howard Jarrett, Brinton Hamman, Stephen Mason and Silas Horner.

Chief Norman Kearns reported the first automobile fire in April when a machine owned by Robert J. Picody caught fire and burned.

1917

Twenty-nine members elected Warren Cornell president in 1917 and Stanley Cornell was elected chief. Treasurer Howard Jarrett reported \$71.53 in the treasury, and Thomas Cromley reported that a sign had been placed in front of the firehouse notifying automobile owner's not to park in front of the engine house.

## WORLD WAR I

In an address to Congress in April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson warned that "The world must be made safe for democracy." On April 6, 1917, The United States declared war on Germany. During the next three years the government inducted more than two and a half million men into the military service. The American armed forces grew to 4,800,000 over a three year period. By September 1917, Norman Kearns, past chief and now assistant chief of the company, became one of those men. The company minutes of September 24, 1917 reported:

"The position of assistant chief was declared vacant, Norman Kearns having been selected for military duty..."

Thus Kearns became the first member of the company to be inducted for World War I. By the end of the year he was joined in that category by Clifford Winner. Both men were continued on the rolls of the company, but were excused from paying dues.

Despite the war in Europe, business went on as usual at the firehouse. The company agreed to hire a member to keep the auto apparatus in good, clean condition at a cost not to exceed \$1.50 per month. Foreman Randolph Mason was instructed to purchase a spotlight for the automobile apparatus. The company accepted an invitation from the Ambler Fire Company to participate in dedication of its new firehouse and the housing of new pumping apparatus on Saturday afternoon, November 3. Sadly in November the minutes noted the deaths of two of the company's members, Thomas Paxson and Walter Cromley.

Chief Stabley Cornell reported a fire had occurred in the chimney of the home of George Mitchell in Hatboro. The company responded to two house fires in Upper Moreland Township, one of which was a total loss.

1918

Things were quiet in early 1918 with President Warren Cornell and Chief Robert Marks in charge. Other than normal business, the minutes reflect very little action. Equipment was inspected and reports made to the chief for action on repairs. The company bought white rubber coats for chief and assistant chief. Treasurer Howard Jarrett began the year with \$80.27 and ended with \$57.12. However, things sure heated up when a barn owned by S. Carl Garner caught fire on July 9, 1918.

#### MAJOR FIRE IN CENTRAL HATBORO

About twenty minutes after eleven a.m. on July 9m the fire alarm sounded and the fireman didn't have to look far to see a large blaze in a barn at S. Carl Garner's lumberyard. The building was frame and situated close to another frame buildings and directly in back of a row of frame houses on Byberry Avenue. By the time the fireman

could get into action, the building was doomed for destruction. It had been filled with hay and feed and burned rapidly. The fireman devoted their attention to trying to save surrounding buildings. Neighbors – men and woman used several sections of garden hose and buckets of water to save their buildings. When fireman connected the hose to the plug opposite the Garner office, a section of hose burst. The same thing happened when other hose was connected to a plug on Byberry Avenue. These delays gave the flames considerable headway.

When water was finally available, the flames already had spread to a small stable owned by H.E. Emery. The building has a corrugated iron roof which helped contain the flames to the inside of the building. An automobile stored in the building was saved.

Great showers of sparks were carried by the strong wind toward the southeast when the Garner barn roof collapsed. The sparks set fire to the awnings and the roof of the residences of William Wheatland and Ella Hart on Byberry Avenue. The roof on another house at the corner of Depot Street and Byberry Avenue also caught fire and suffered the most damage. The roof and most of the second floor were burned before fire companies responding from Ambler, Elkins Park and Jenkintown could combine their hoses and pump water from the Pennypack Creek a quarter of a mile away. Unfortunately, the building was completely destroyed by the time the fire was out.

Borough Council extended official thanks to the numerous fire companies that assisted Enterprise at the conflagration.

On General Pershing's Birthday, September 13, 1918, the Borough Council of Hatboro unveiled a "Roll of Honor" of boys in the service. It was placed in front of town hall.

1919

In 1919, Alvin Winner was elected chief and Warren Cornell reelected president. The out of town alarms got more sophisticated in January when the company agreed on the following procedure as recorded in the minutes of Enterprise Fire Company on January 26, 1919:

“After ringing fire bell for out of town fires, the following taps of the bell were agreed on, for information as to direction of fire: North one ring or tap, two East, three South and four West.”

## GREAT TRAIN WRECK ON CUT-OFF

The town awoke to the ringing of the fire bell very early on Thursday morning March 6, 1919. As they rushed to the firehouse, the alarm told the fireman that the out-of-town fire was to the east of town. About 5:30 a.m. a freight train stopped for water near the Davisville Road crossing on the Pennsylvania Railroad Cut-off. A second freight train did not stop and ran into rear of the first train smashing the caboose and killing four crew members. The caboose was set on fire from the coals in the stove and the fire quickly spread evenly freight cars loaded with coal, merchandise and lumber. At one point it was reported that the flames shot in the air for fifty feet and set Davisville Road Bridge ablaze.

The Public Spirit reported on March 8, 1919:

“The Hatboro fireman Thursday morning found their apparatus of little use when called to the train wreck on the cut-off railroad. They came back and took out the big steamer, but it became mired in the soft ground near the Pennypack creek and was not available.”

Clinton Morgan was sent with his team to retrieve the steam engine from the meadow and the company began to earnest search for a motorized pumper.

## SIMPLEX PUMPER

The company approved the purchase of a Simplex chassis at a cost of \$725 in April. The truck committee was instructed to have chassis equipped with everything necessary for a complete pumping apparatus. All to be accomplished at the lowest possible cost of

\$2300. Hale required a down payment of 25 percent. The company treasury contained less than \$50, and the whole project came close to being scrapped. However longtime treasurer, Howard Jarrett, offered a \$500 loan to the company for three months without interest. His generous offer was accepted with a vote of thanks. He later increased the loan by another \$75. The entire loan was repaid to Jarrett in September. Curiously company records note very little information on the Simplex pumper, and as far as it is known there are no photographs of the truck in existence.

## LADIES AUXILIARY

For several years many of the ladies in town took more than a passing interest in the affairs of the fire company. The ladies, especially spouses of some of the fireman, began to get together informally for the purpose of assisting the fireman in parade preparations, and raising funds for equipment. The ladies were very successful with their cake sales, bazaars, and raffles. Later card parties and dances were added to the list of fund raising events and over the years a great deal of money was raised and donated to the fire company.

At first the organization was very informal. Early records of the organization are lost, but at sometime during the twenties, a constitution and set of by-laws were adopted and the organization was chartered as the Ladies Auxiliary of Enterprise Fire Company. Much later records of the company identified the following as some of the charter members: Louise Chatburn, Mary Hale, Mary Hedrick, Emily Kershner, Rose Lach, Bess Longstreth, Alice Palmer, Mildred Starrett, Minnie Suntheimer, Katie Saunders, Mae Stoutenberg, Mabel Weiss, Edith White and Katherine Worhtington. Unfortunately the foregoing list is not complete and the charter date is not known.

By the mid-thirties the organization listed over sixty active members and nearly half of the members attended every meeting. The auxiliary also served as a social club with annual Atlantic City trips, card parties and special bus trips much looked forward to by the ladies. After the Second World War the auxiliary even had a uniform consisting of a white dress, blue cap and hat. Fund raising remained the primary function of the organization until the ladies were formally recognized by the fire company as official members of the company in 1953. From that time on, the woman began to make inroads into other areas of responsibility such as radio operators, and sometimes even assisted at the scene of a fire.

The fireman never refused the contributions from the ladies, but certainly did not make things easy for them. When first organized they had no official recognition from the fire company and generally were not welcome in the firehouse. However, the ladies were persistent and the minutes of the company record that some members of the auxiliary were present at the May 1919 meeting to present the company with \$300 which they had raised. The company extended a vote of thanks to the ladies present for the donation and probably hoped they would go home. But the woman stayed and heard the action of the company concerning the purchase of a new pumper and the need for money to pay for the new truck. The minutes of that meeting record that it was the ladies who proposed that a holiday carnival be held July 4th to raise funds for a new pumper. The ladies volunteered to assist and the offer was too good to pass up. Hatboro was about to have its first fireman's carnival. The financial salvation of the company, to a great extent, was to lie to the Ladies Auxiliary although this was not known at the time.

## FIREMAN'S CARNIVAL

The Public Spirit on June 28, 1919 urged everyone to attend the big fireman's carnival on July 4th, and editorially supported the fund raising activity.

“Remember that the new apparatus to be paid for with the money from the carnival is not only for Hatboro's benefit but for that of the surrounding county. The new pump will take water from a creek, from a well, or from any place that there is water and it will be of great importance to everyone within the radius of five to eight miles from Hatboro, and remember, your place may be the first to catch fire and this apparatus may be needed by you whether you live in the borough or outside. So attend and swell the crowd, spend some money, and have a good time.”

On July 4, 1919, York Road was roped off between Byberry and Moreland and a tent measuring 30 X 60 feet was erected in the middle of the street. Refreshments were sold in the tent. The Public Spirit described the scene as follows:

“Near this tent will be a bandstand; adjoining the bandstand will be a cake walk circle which will be one of the greatest novelties of the fair. Twenty-five couples or fifty people will take part at each time the band plays. Cakes, candies and many articles are to be given as prizes.”

Clustered around the center tent and bandstand were booths selling fancy articles, fruits, vegetables, novelties, five and ten-cent articles, bargain rummage, home-made baked goods, candy and cigars. There were also fortune tellers and slide shows. At 9:30 p.m. the whole event was topped off with fireworks and dancing which began at 10 p.m.

The newspaper reported that the committee had 400 quarts of ice cream on hand and had expected to serve 3,000 people. There were raffles and patriotic addresses and the grand prize was a "Liberty Bond." The whole block was decorated with red and white crepe paper on every pole and tree. Special lights were strung by the Philadelphia Suburban Gas and Electric Company, and all day long an airplane went up every fifteen or twenty minutes and flew over the surrounding countryside dropping circulars urging people to attend the fair. The paper concluded that the fair was as much fun as a circus.

The goal was to raise \$2,300 for a new fire truck, to the great joy of the company; proceeds from the grand event were \$2,371.47. Whether the fireman liked it or not, the woman proved to be great fund raisers and the fire company sorely needed their contributions. Nevertheless, it would be another thirty-four years before the fireman would amend the by-laws of company to establish the woman as official members of Enterprise Fire Company.

## CHAPTER 4

1920-1929

MORE PUMPERS

Not every fireman supported the ladies and their efforts to infringe upon the bastion of male responsibility. In fact the formation of the ladies auxiliary and the support it had from President Cornell and others contributed to a great deal of friction among some members of the company. The disagreement among the fireman came to a head at the January 19, 1920 annual meeting when the vote for president resulted in a tie between Warren Cornell and Harry Wilcke, Sr. On a second vote, Cornell was defeated by one vote and Wilcke became president. Cornell has served as president of the company for six years of the previous ten years. It wasn't until the February meeting that a motion was made and approved to extend a vote of thanks to Cornell for all his service. The part played by the ladies auxiliary in this upset was not recorded, but pleas by the new president, and others, for cooperation and harmony indicated a deep division in the company. Despite this rift, 1920 was clearly a year for winners. Alvin Winner was elected secretary and Clifford Winner became assistant chief.

#### ELECTRIC SIREN PURCHASED

By May, the company was again harmonious enough to attend to serious business. The ladies auxiliary agreed to raise funds for purchase of an electric siren for the company. The vote at the December meeting to purchase a siren was recorded as unanimous, but only after the minutes recorded that Mr. Cornell, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Wilcke gave short talks concerning the ongoing friction in the company and asked for everyone's cooperation.

The Ladies Auxiliary raised \$200 for the siren, and in February, 1921 an order was placed with Federal Electric Signal System. The fire company received the siren in March and scheduled a test for April 5 at Nine o'clock. The ladies auxiliary was invited and the president of the auxiliary was given the honor of being first to turn the siren on. After the test, the company foreman was authorized to blow the siren every Saturday at ten a.m.

Other events in 1920 included painting of the Buick Fire Truck at G.C. Weiss's shop in July. The job reported to be very satisfactory and Weiss was paid \$75.50. The company participated in Fireman's Day at Willow Grove Park and Chief Winner reported that the company won the cup offered for the fastest time in the "snap coupling class" of the pumping contest, the time being seventeen and three quarter seconds. Purchases of supplies and rope were made from Yearkes Hardware Store and Butterworth & Company, coal was purchased from S.C. Garner and insurance from Warren Cornell.

1921

The discord continued in 1921. The nominating committee attempted to smooth things out by electing Harry Wilcke, Sr. for president and Warren Carnell for vice president, but some members would have none of it and nominated Cornell for president from the floor with Harry Maurer for vice president. The committee also nominated Raymond Crockett for assistant chief to unseat Clifford Winner. Winner was also nominated from the floor and all three newly nominated candidates were swept into office handily defeating the nominating committee's candidates. After the election the minutes record that many lengthy talks were given pertaining to the good of the company and the auxiliary and all agreed to make the coming year a big one for the company. President Cornell addresses the issue by stressing what friction can do to an organization and asked that "all petty grievances cease". He also asked for larger attendance, greater membership and encouragement of the ladies auxiliary. He was joined by Vice President Maurer who offered suggestions along financial lines. He pointed out the need for working committee and heartily endorsed the entertainment committee as a source of procuring funds.

For several months the company had been discussing the purchase of another tanker for the chemical apparatus. It had been decided that a 40 gallon tank was needed but the price of a new tank was \$405. The company then began a search for a used tank and finally found one which was donated to the company from the Philadelphia Fire Department. The chemical apparatus now had two forty gallon tanks.

Other events in 1921 included the donation of a first aid kit from local druggist Samuel Lawrence, through the efforts of Clarence W. Butterworth. Chief Winner reported a fire in a motor-truck west of town on July 25. Chemicals were used but the fire was beyond control and the truck was completely destroyed. The assistant foreman reported that a garden hose belonging to the company and used in washing the trucks was missing. President Cornell diplomatically suggested that all new members present and try to locate same and return it to its proper place. Borough council had the town hall re-wired and new electric lights installed. Presumably there were more than eight lights first installed in 1894.

BRYN AYTHN TRAIN WRECK

On December 5, 1921 the company responded to a call for assistance at a wreck on the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad near Bryn Athyn. This time the fireman found a horrifying scene. Fifty people were dead at the scene and scores of others suffered injuries. The Public Spirit reported on December 10, 1921 that the accident occurred in a deep cut on the Newtown branch of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad near Bryn Athyn at 7:45 a.m. Two engines met head on at a high speed. The cut prevented the engines from turning over. Instead they rose up over one another. Hot coals set fire to the wooded coaches and the draft through the cut caused the fire to spread rapidly. The paper reported that passengers were mangled, crushed, scalded and burned alive. Doctors performed amputations to free trapped victims. Abington Hospital was credited with saving at least ten lives. The paper reported:

“Too much praise cannot be given to the fireman of Bryn Athyn, Huntington Valley, Willow Grove and Hatboro for their prompt and heroic service at the Newtown Railroad disaster on Monday. Hatboro firemen were on duty until two o’clock Tuesday morning, about eighteen hours.”

Moving picture scenes of the train wreck were shown at the Hatboro auditorium on Friday and Saturday – however, none of the gruesome scenes were shown according to the paper.

1922

Warren Cornell was reelected president and Clarence W. Butterworth was elected chief at the annual meeting January 22, 1922. The company held a lively debate on the duties of the chief and foreman. The result was an agreement to allow the chief and foreman to pick their own crews and drill them in their work. The firemen were no doubt warmed to learn of the action of the borough council to install a hot water heating system in town hall. All rooms were to be heated by a new ARCO Water Boiler, complete with thermometer and altitude gauge, set on concrete foundation in the apparatus room. Radiators were installed in all rooms including the jail. Up to this point the individual rooms had been heated by gas stoves, and the apparatus room was heated by a

coal stove that was set-up each fall and taken down in the spring. The stove required constant attention or it would go out.

Chief Butterworth was very active in all aspects of the company's activities especially in the recruitment of new members. In February, the minutes note that twenty-eight new members were admitted to the company, "mostly all these new members being turned in by Chief Butterworth." In March, another eight members joined the company including a young man by the name of Warren M. Cornell, Jr.

1923

Warren Cornell, Sr. was reelected president in 1923 and Alvin Winner returned to his duties as chief. Radio was the topic of discussion around town and around the firehouse. KDKA in Pittsburg had been on the air since 1916, and in the previous year several broadcasting companies had formed networks to provide nationwide broadcasting of news events and entertainment. There were radio sets showing up everywhere, and Hatboro was not to be behind the times. Concern grew among the fireman as rumors that radio sets and their antennas drew lightning and therefore increased the possibility of fire. At the March meeting a committee was formed consisting of President Cornell, Howard Jarrett, Ervin J. Amber, Norman R. Kearns and Jesse O. Binder to "investigate the dangers of radio installations and report at the next meeting". Luckily for Amos and Andy fans, the radio committee reported:

"radio equipment does not affect insurance rates and the same was up before State Underwriters and so far nothing has been decided against radio installation on connection with electric storms,"

Enterprise Fire Company Minutes

May 28, 1923

In April, the company purchased an insurance policy that would pay benefits to fire man injured or killed while on duty. This is an unusual policy, perhaps one of the first such policies written for volunteer fireman. The policy cost \$112.50 a year. No doubt that

insurance expert, Warren Cornell played a major role in providing this coverage. It would prove to be beneficial many times in the future of the company.

Replacement of fire hose was a routine matter and again in July the chief and foreman reported that many sections of the company's fire hose were in bad shape and the company didn't have enough hose to meet needs. The member authorized the purchase of 500 feet of hose at a cost of about \$700. The treasurer reported about \$500 in company funds. The rest was made up with a donation from borough council. In October a more serious problem was the report from Foreman Frank Wambold that the tires on the Simplex truck were in very poor condition. After much discussion the company agreed to have the wheels cut down and new tires and rims put on. After the new tires were mounted on the truck, Clarence Butterworth donated new headlights for the Simplex and A.L. Powell installed them at no cost.

Company members visited the Hatboro Foundry Co. to acquaint themselves with the fire equipment at that factory on Jacksonville Road. Also that year the Ladies Auxiliary donated a clock for the meeting room.

1924

Company minutes on January 21, 1924 record two interesting events at the 1924 Annual Meeting. First, no trustees were elected because:

“It was moved and seconded that since the body of trustees did not function, that there would be no election for the vacancies now falling due.”

And second, because there were four candidates for three assistant foreman positions, it was agreed to elect all four. That was done, but Ervin J. Amber immediately resigned in order that the constitution would not be violated. Both of these actions and Amber's resignation were conscious efforts to preserve harmony that the company was again enjoying.

In January, borough council allocated \$50 to the company for operating expense for 1924. This was the largest single grant for operating expenses to date. Foreman Clarence Butterworth reported that the radiator on the Simplex truck was in bad shape. The company approved the replacement of the radiator core at a cost of \$55. The Simplex also had three broken links in the drive train which were to be immediately repaired and there was an immediate need for new helmets, the current helmets being too small. There was no elaboration on the need for larger helmets; it could have been that with age the fireman's heads were getting larger. In February, Adam Bustard was among the new members admitted to the company.

1925

At the 1925 annual meeting the company decided to have two vice presidents and Harry W. Wilcke, Sr. and Jesse O. Binder were duly elected. There was no further explanation for this action, but it can again be assumed that it was a concession to unity. Warren Cornell continued to hold presidency. The company moved to amend the constitution to allow a first and second vice president and to strike the requirements for the board of trustees. The amendments were adopted at the March 23 meeting.

In February the foreman was directed to blow the siren at noon Saturday and at seven o'clock on meeting nights. This practice continued for many years. The company also recorded the purchase of one dozen helmets for \$93. Presumably they were large enough.

At the beginning of the year the company took tentative steps to determine the feasibility of disposing of the Simplex truck and purchasing new apparatus. The Simplex truck continued to have mechanical problems such as the loss of reverse gear reported in April. The chemical truck was not without problems. The tanks were leaking and Foreman Butterworth was unsure that they could be fixed due to their age. However, a valiant effort was made to repair them and the repairs lasted until December when new tanks were purchased from Hale Pump Company for \$275 each. In November, representatives from Mack, Ahrens-Fox, Seagraves, and Hale fire truck and pump

builders addresses the company about their products. The apparatus committee reported narrowing the choice to either an Ahrens-Fox for \$12,800 or a Hale for \$10,400. Borough council was advised of the need for a new pumper and agreed to levy a fire tax to raise funds for the equipment and to operate the fire company. On May 12, 1925, the first fire tax was enacted at 3 mills. This was in addition to the general tax of 10 mills for the borough at that time. The action was to significantly change the way funding of the company operations and equipment was to be accomplished.

1926

Cornell was reelected president in 1926, and Alvin Winner carried on as chief. However long-time Treasurer Howard Jarrett decided to take some time off. The new treasurer was George H. Bennett. The company enjoyed the refreshments provided by James Parks, manager of the Hatboro American Store, after the annual meeting business was completed.

#### AHRENS-FOX 750GALLON P./M. PUMPER

The new Ahrens-Fox pumper with a 750 gallon per minute capacity was ordered by December. The cost was \$12,800 with a \$500 trade-in allowed on the old Simplex pumper. The Ahrens-Fox Engine Company was formed in 1908. The company became famous for its legendary pumpers considered the "Rolls-Royces" of fire engines. Their quality was so good that many of the engines built in the twenties lasted in service longer than the company which was taken over by Mack in 1956.

The pumper was delivered to the company in early April and on April 6 the underwriters conducted tests on the apparatus at Willow Grove Park Lake. The Public Spirit reported on April 8, 1926:

"The big new pumper surpassed all hopes of Chief Winner and members of the Enterprise Fire Company when it not only easily passed the test but in the grueling three hours pumping at top speed it threw an average stream of more than 820 gallons per minutes:"

On April 20, 1926 the Public Spirit carried a picture of the new fire truck on the top center of page one. The paper described the housing of the new pumper as follows

“Hatboro’s new Ahrens-Fox fire fighting apparatus was dedicated and housed with fitting ceremonies last Saturday afternoon on the presence of a large assembly of visiting fireman, citizens of the borough and others from surrounding counties.

Warren M. Cornell was master of ceremonies, William Muldrew, President of Montgomery County Fireman’s Association, Pioneer Fire Company, Jenkintown, Abington Fire Company.”

The paper reported that music was provided by the Doylestown Moose Band. The visiting fire Chief’s assisted in housing the new apparatus while the band played, and the siren was blown and the fire bell rung. After the ceremonies a luncheon was served by caterer Harry Maur in the firehouse.

With the arrival of the new truck, more room was needed in the now cramped fire house. The old Gleason & Bailey hook and ladder was removed to Mason’s Garage on Montgomery Avenue where it was stored until 1928 when the company voted to donate the thirty-seven year old apparatus to Christ’s Home. Borough Council authorized alterations to the fire house to house the new equipment. The recently installed gas fired broiler was so hot it was causing damage to the apparatus and rubber hose. A partition had to be built around the broiler in the back of the apparatus room. other minor alterations and refurbishing were also authorized include ding the replacement of the arched doorway to the engine room with a more practical style door.

The fire company was not the only institution experiencing growing pains in Hatboro in 1926. The company received a letter from the Hatboro Board of Education seeking the fire company’s endorsement of a \$55,000 loan to build a new high school. The loan required voter approval and was on the ballot to be voted on by Hatboro voters in March.

## CHAPTER 5

1930-1939

### ALWAYS GLAD TO SERVE

IN 1930, Hatboro had a population of 2600 persons with another 300 persons residing within short walking distance of the borough limits. The population lived in 750 houses in the borough located on over 7 miles of borough streets, and 8 miles of independently owned streets. A total of 10.7 miles of streets were macadam or concrete paved. The town had grown from 673 acres when it was incorporated in 1871 to 901 acres in 1930 and it had a total assessed valuation of \$2.4 million. This information was contained in a Directory and Classified Business Guide for Borough of Hatboro published by the Hatboro Board of Trade in 1930. The board of trade advertised the town as “An old fashioned town with city conveniences”.

Fireman enjoyed some of the conveniences such as having Suntheimer’s Bakery located next door to the firehouse. Sumtheimer’s was one of the largest bakeries in the area and advertised wedding and birthday cakes and rolls of all kinds. Hatboro Furniture Company, Louis Gamburg, Proprietor, was the complete home furnisher and guaranteed satisfaction. Warren M. Carnell was a realtor and notary public, and John C. Miller was selling real estate and insurance at York Road and William Lane. N.E. Walton and W. Leon Felty were rightfully proud of their funeral home at York Road and Montgomery Avenue.

Some of the fireman probably got haircuts from John Scutti at his shop at York Road and Byberry Avenue. Ervin Amber was a paperhanger and sign painter whose motto was “Tell the world with signs”. Clarence Butterworth was a locksmith with a shop on Byberry Avenue, and the fire company made purchases from W.C. Fleck & Bros. Hardware Store at 56 South York Road and Smith’s Hardware Store also on York Road.

Millard Chatburn sold tires, tubes and accessories at his American Auto Supply Store, 216 Old York Road. Joseph Kapusta was a tailor, and the lowest prices could always be had at Shapiro’s Department Store, 3-5 York Road. The most modern radios could be bought at Yerkes Store or from Powell’s Electric Shop. Walter Wright at 11E. Moreland

Avenue was selling Philco, Hot point and General Electric appliances and there were no less than seven grocery stores in town.

Studebakers were sold at the Bon Aire Garage, 401 Jacksonville Road, Fords were sold by George Masland at 17 n. York Road. A new Nash could be purchased from Hatboro Nash Motor Co., 11 E. Moreland Avenue. J.B. Smith and Sons sold Willys-Knight and Whipper automobiles at 21 N. York Road. Louis Huber has a service station on E. Montgomery Avenue, Phillips service station was at York Road and Byberry Avenue, and Mason's Garage was on S. York Road. Ralph Worthington and S. Carl Garner supplied building materials as well as coal by the carload or by the sack. Fireman could refresh themselves at the Hatboro Inn or at Mary Weikel's Recreation Lunch Room.

The major employees in town were at Oscar Nebel Silk Hosiery Mill and Roberts and Mander Stove Company. There were a great many new homes being contracted in the borough. Some developments at the time were the Schneider tract on Home Road, the Seltzer tract in the N. Penn Street area, Hatboro Heights o Williams Lane and surrounding street and the Hatboro Farms tract in the Loller and Continental Area.

Down on Cemetery Avenue, Hatboro Cemetery was advertising 30 acres of cemetery lots in one of the best kept cemeteries in suburban Philadelphia.

The directory painted a rosy picture of Hatboro with excellent opportunities for employment even boasting that during the slump in 1929, Hatboro industries were operating steadily. The early thirties were not that rosy however. Most of the world suffered through the "Great Depression", and Hatboro was no immune. Borough records show increases in liens being placed against properties for delinquent taxes, and some citizens were seeking tax exonerations because they were on welfare. In an effort to help their own the "Hatboro Relief Association" was founded to provide assistance to deserving Hatboro citizens. The fire company being funded by the fire tax, now turned their entertainment activities toward raising funds for the Relief Association. Borough Council insisted that local labor be used whenever possible on all public works projects such as the construction of the sewer system and renovations to the Town hall and Fire House.

1930

Forty-one members attended the 1930 annual meeting. Jesse O. Binder was elected president, and Alvin Winner was reelected Chief. The auditors report total assets of \$1416.79. This did not include equipment or Real Estate as all equipment, apparatus and buildings were property of the Borough of Hatboro. Another new membership category has been created to recognize fireman who have been active with the company for a continuous period of twenty years. The company recognized Harry Watson as its first life member. Chief Winner reported responding to fifty-one fires during 1929. After the meeting everyone enjoyed themselves at the Hatboro Inn where the company went over budget and spent \$110.

In February the fire company telephone number was changed from "Hatboro 661" to "Hatboro 6610". This reflected the growing number of telephone users in the Hatboro exchange area. Telephones were now found in every business and almost every home. The days of asking the operator for a party you wanted by name were past, Numbers were now required.

In March the chief reported seven field fires, a barn on maple Avenue in Horsham, a house at 323 Bon Aire Avenue and a toilet at York Road and County Line. Many homes in Hatboro still had outside privies. The borough was just beginning to construct a sanitary sewer system which would eliminate cesspools and outdoor privies in the most populous areas of town. But it would be another twenty years or so before the entire borough was sewerred.

1931

President Jesse O. Binder and Chief Alvin Winner were to lead the fire company for the next eleven years as Hatboro survived the depression and faced World War II head-on. The early years of the administration were almost austere. The half mill fire tax was projected to yield \$1,200.00 a year for company operations, but with all the delinquencies and exonerations it produced somewhat less. The uncertainty of the times caused the curtailment of many purchases and improvements. Company minutes record the routine replacement of hose, rubber coats and helmets, as well as vehicle maintenance and repairs, but there were no major equipment purchased in 1931.

A highlight of the early 1930s was the acquisition of a radio for the enjoyment of the fireman at the firehouse. In March, 1931, the Philadelphia Public Ledger ran a contest to increase subscriptions in the Hatboro area. The contest offered a radio to anyone who could secure fifty new subscriptions. The fireman rose to the occasion and won a radio for the firehouse. The minutes report that the new radio was placed in a hole cut in the wall by carpenter Charles Stoutenburg. Later that same year, the company recognized Benjamin G. Hilt as a life member. Chief Winner reported fire losses in Hatboro during 1931 amounted to less than \$10,000 for the year.

1932

By mid 1931, the company was again concerned about its parade appearance. In preparation for the annual state fireman's parade in Lancaster, the company purchased new caps, badges and trousers, and the ladies auxiliary donated a new parade banner, and joined the fireman in the parade. The company brought home a trophy engraved with the word "Hatboro". The reason for the prize is not recorded.

It isn't known, if the parade uniform expenditure has anything to do with it or not, but in December borough council directed all future bills be approved by the company and then turned over to the borough secretary for payment. The company designated the foreman as sole purchasing agent for the company and directed that the borough voucher system be used. The year ended with Chief Winner reporting 35 fire calls during the year with losses amounting to \$18,875.

1933

It is an inherent trait of fireman to always be on the lookout for bargains. In 1933 one such deal had the attention of the entire company for several months. It appears that someone on the fire company made a purchase of two clocks for the firehouse from a person who represented himself as a salesman for the Postal Telegraph Company. The purchase price was agreed on at 24.30 each. The clocks were delivered with a bill much higher than the agreed upon price. When the company balked at paying more than agreed upon, Postal Telegraph sent a representative to the June Meeting of the fire company. The representative came to settle the matter or take the clocks back with him. He took the

floor of the meeting and told the company that “that man who sent the clocks must have been a crook.” He explained there were no such prices as were quoted to the company. He then offered – “in order to clear the name of the Postal Telegraph Co.” – to let the fire company purchase clock at a reduced figure of \$25.74. It was no deal with the fireman who insisted on the two clocks for 48.60 as promised. The minutes of the company go on to record that after much discussion it was finally agreed that the company would only keep one clock and pay the original price of 24.30. The second clock would be returned to the Postal Telegraph. The representative advised the fireman that he would take the proposal back to his superiors. Though not recorded, it is believed that he then quickly exited the room and left town.

On more serious matters in 1933, the company purchased shatterproof windshields for the two Ahrens-Fox fire trucks and an “all purpose” gas mask. A committee was appointed to meet with borough council again on the need for a new firehouse, and in December, George Duncan and John Leidy became life members of Enterprise Fire Company. Chief Winner reported fifteen fires ion the borough and twenty-three outside borough limits with losses of approximately \$3000 in 1933.

1934

For most of the previous twenty-eight years, Howard Jarrett had been treasurer of Enterprise Fire Company. His Management of company funds was commendable and his personal dedication to the company was often instrumental in helping the company survive hard times. In 1934, Howard retired as treasurer and the office was turned over to Alexander L. Parry with Howard’s wishes for a lot of luck and a good term of office.

The company held a banquet in February. The ladies auxiliary members were invited to join the fireman at the Hatboro Inn. The menu wasn’t recorded but the committee was directed to spend no more that seventy-five cents a plate for the dinner and no more than fifteen dollars for music. There was no report on the quality of the food, but the music was good and the fireman and ladies danced until 11:30 p.m.

1935

Leslie Winner was among the new members joining the company in January. In February, borough council began discussions again on remodeling town hall. A special meeting was held in March and council was advised that the cost to renovate the building would be between \$3,500 and \$7,000 depending on the extent of the work done. Once again the American Legion offered their South York Road property to the borough. The offer was not accepted, but council did approve the preparation of plans and specifications for renovation to town hall.

The roof was leaking and all borough offices and fire company rooms were severely cramped for space. The Ahrens-Fox fire trucks were much larger than the old horse-drawn equipment, and a boiler was taking up valuable room in the engine room. The police department needed office space too. Chief of Police Warren Kramer ran his small department from the parlor of his home. When he died in October, 1935, the borough was forced to provide a desk and file cabinet for the police department in a corner of the council chambers which had to be shared with the borough clerk. Even the jail had been converted to rooms for transients who were passing through town during these depression years, and there was no place for storage of borough records. Clearly renovations and expansion were needed.

1936

Councilman Craven reported that work on the additions to town hall was finally underway by January 1936. The project was authorized not to exceed \$5,000 and borough council had stipulated that local labor was to be employed. The Dailey Intelligencer reported the progress being made on the renovations of the town building in the January 21, 1936 edition. The paper reported that many regretted the fact that there was not a full second story instead of a "worthless attic". But, the paper praised the forbearance of the fireman:

"On account of lack of space the firemen have been handicapped, but all the same, have willingly and efficiently performed their work in and out of the borough without complaint or dissent. Their motto is: "always glad to serve."

On May 21, 1936 the Public Spirit reported:

“Newly remodeled Boro Hall which houses the fire apparatus is ready. The building which has been completed by Hatboro Boro Council at a cost of approximately \$7,000 is a one story and a half. The first floor containing the apparatus room with its two fine pumpers, council chambers and fireman’s lounge which can be thrown together for a large meeting room. Police headquarters, cells for prisoners, kitchen, lavatory and garage. The half story above has drying racks for hose and storage rooms. A new fire siren and bell are in the cupola at the rear.”

The entire two story front of the original building was rebuilt to provide for the removal of the council chambers and expansion of the engine room. The new front of the building was faced with brown stone. Two overhead doors were installed to allow both trucks direct access to York Road. The back of the building was greatly enlarged to allow room for a police office, lock-up, borough office, council chamber and meeting room for the fireman. Entry to the police office and borough offices was made through doors located along the wall on the alley between town hall and the Suntheimer’s Bakery. Hose was stored and dried on the second floor of the building. As far as can be determined the only overrun was \$278, for a new steam heating system because the old boiler just wasn’t big enough to heat the new addition. All work was completed by April except for new copper screens which were made and installed by George Blilie in May at a cost of \$47.

The renovations were paid through a half mill fire tax and contributions from the auxiliary. A celebration commemorates the opening of the new borough hall and firehouse was held. About one hundred persons enjoyed dinner held in the newly renovated engine room. Invitations were extended to fire chiefs of nearby companies, borough council and the ladies auxiliary.

Within a year completion of the renovations the problems of storing wet hose above plaster ceiling became apparent. Council ordered the installation of a “rubberoid” floor to protect the ceiling in borough hall. The problem continued to persist and in 1940 a brick hose tower was added to the back of the building at a cost of \$1,050. The siren was installed on the tower at that time. The 500 pound bell had been relocated in a smaller belfry now located on the center of the roof over the engine room. The bell was preserved as a back-up alarm in the event the electricity was cut. The original siren that had been purchased in 1921 was replaced in 1936 with a new one purchased from Federal Electric Company, Inc. for \$440.

1937

New Sirens were installed in the fire trucks in 1937. The police department used one of the old sirens for the borough police car. The company bought new ladders and the old ladders were sold for \$15. A new organization in town, known as the "Hatboro Round Table" was comprised of delegates from borough government, the fire company and all service organizations in town. The purpose was to coordinate all borough parades, carnivals and other celebrations. In May, the firemen approved the use of chance wheels for gambling at Fourth of July carnival. The company paraded at the state fireman's convention in Philadelphia, and participated in fireman's parades in Souderton and North Wales. It also turned out in uniform to assist the Hatboro Police at the annual Thanksgiving Day football game between Hatboro and Upper Merion high schools. Chief Winner reported answering thirty-eight calls in 1937, nineteen of which were in the borough with a loss of only \$60. That was the lowest loss on record and the chief reported it was something to be proud of.

1938

In March 1938 Chief Winner reported that a new forty-foot ladder had been purchased and mounted on the large truck. The ladder was purchased from Hale Pump Company for \$270 but was damaged in shipment for which the company received a \$25 refund. Recent tests on both trucks showed that the big truck pumped 762 gallons per minute at 200 pounds pressure and the small truck 566 gallons per minute at 175 pressure. The results were considered very satisfactory for trucks over ten years old. The company voted to donate \$10 to the newly formed Second Alarmers Association of Montgomery County if its charter is accepted. In May, the company along with the high school band attended the Doylestown centennial celebration. In September the company voted to attend the state fireman's convention in Lebanon.

#### LEBANON FIREMAN'S PARADE

The company routinely requested permission to take both fire trucks out of town to parades and just as routinely, borough council directed that only one truck be taken. But

even this caution came in for sharp criticism when misfortune befell the company on its way to the Lebanon parade. Just outside Reading the large truck broke down and had to be towed to the Reading municipal garage for repairs. The repairs were costly and the incident was certainly the talk of the town. The Public Spirit ran a scathing editorial in which it called the trip a “show-off jaunt” and chastised the fireman and council for wasting taxpayer’s money. The following editorial comment appeared in the Public Spirit on October 13, 1938:

“Hatboro in recent years has prided itself on having one of the best organized and equipped fire companies in this section of the state for a town of its size, and the men have a fine record for efficiency and prompt service. The boro owns the two pumpers and a committee of council controls their use. It high time both the fireman and council realize that these machines, costing well over \$20,000 are neither toys to play with nor pleasure cars in which to tour the country, but are primarily for heavy pumping and short runs to the scenes of fires.

The editorial concluded that there may be some excuse for taking part in parades in neighboring communities, but trips of 180 miles for a parade was, in the opinion of the editor – “absurd”. The truck had to be towed all the way back to Hatboro, and was back in service by October 24, 1938. It was a long time before the embarrassed firemen accepted another out-of-town parade invitation.

## WATSON BUILDING FIRE

There were only 27 fires in the borough in 1938; one of them was at the Watson building on South York Road which involved a dramatic rescue. The Public Spirit lauded the volunteers for a “striking example of unselfish and efficient service”. The paper reported that tragedy was narrowly averted by quick work of the fireman when fire was discovered in the Watson building as flames broke out in the apartment of Mrs. Ida Watson. The Public Spirit reported on December 29, 1938:

“Mrs. Watson hurried out to give the alarm but another Miss Ella Hart in another apartment remained inside. By the time fireman arrived the place was filled with smoke which was pouring out around the windows and doors. Clifford and Norman Winner forced their way in the front door and found the aged woman dazed and trapped by

smoke and heat in a corner of a first floor room. They led her to safety while other members of the company got at the seat of the fire.”

1939

In January 1939 Past President Warren Cornell became a life member, and the company sadly noted the passing of Dr. John W. Bliss on January 6, 1939. Dr. Bliss had been a long-term member of the company. Otherwise all was quiet around town, and the company – still smarting over the Lebanon incident – was eager for all the good publicity they could get.

While not exactly a report of heroic deeds in a life threatening situation, the following item in the “Hatboro Home Happenings” column of the Public Spirit on January 5, 1939 must have given the company a morale boost.

“Mrs. Caldwell’s pet cat provided a practice run for the Hatboro fireman on New Year’s Day when it left its happy home at 121 Montgomery Avenue, climbed a pole along the Reading Railroad, and refused to come down. The Caldwell’s, as a last resort, appealed to Chief of Police Findlay who in turn called Chief Winner of the fire company. One of the trucks was taken to the scene and George Shiles equipped with helmet, goggles and gloves as protection against flying claws, mounted the ladder and brought tabby safely to the ground.”

The company sadly recorded the passing of another member when Ervin J. Amber passed away on March 26, 1939. A page in the minute book of the company was set aside in his memory. Amber had joined the fire company in 1903 shortly after moving to Hatboro in 1902. In 1913 he organized the Horsham Fire Company and in the later years was instrumental in the organization of many other companies. He was district fire marshal for some time and a charter member of the Montgomery County Fireman’s Association. He was elected life member of that organization in February 1939. Amber had also served several terms as the borough auditor.

SLACK RESIDENCE FIRE

On April 12 the company was called out to a wind driven fire at Slack residence on Chester Street and Montgomery Avenue. The fire started about 10 p.m. and drove some members of the family out in their night clothes. The fire was discovered by Miss Julia Slack who was with her father in the living room when they heard a crackling noise. When she investigated she found a one story out-kitchen and the rear wall of the house ablaze. The fire company responded and found the blaze threatening total destruction to the Slack house, and the residence next door. The fireman had the blaze under control within a few minutes. The paper reported that most of the furniture was carried out safely and a large crowd of spectators “marveled” at the rapidity with which the blaze was extinguished under the handicap of a high wind and a good start.”

### HATBORO HOTEL FIRE

May was a busy month for the company with two fires in the center of town. On May 3, a fire at 4 a.m. in shed at Garner’s lumber yard was quickly extinguished but the cause of the fire was suspicious. Just two days later on May 5 the fire company responded to a fire at Hatboro Hotel on South York Road. The fire started about 8 p.m. on Friday evening and drew a large crowd of spectators. The May 11, 1939 issue of the Public Spirit reported that damage to be estimated at \$5,000. Several rooms were badly gutted and the intense heat loosened plaster ion others. Heavy smoke and water contributed to the damage.

The Public Spirit praised the fireman in the may 11, 1939 edition:

“The large three story frame building containing over thirty rooms, a bar, and large dining room, was in danger of total destruction but fast work on the part of the Hatboro fireman, aided by companies from Horsham and Willow Grove, soon had the flames under control.”

The entire building was later raised and the property remained an empty lot for several years. The fire company held several carnivals on that lot before an automobile agency erected a new building on the site.

There were also fires in a house on County Line Road on May 2, and at the State Store on May 13. In June 1939, Garbut Aiman and Edward Stauch were among the new members joining the company, and the company filed an application to participate in the water barrage at Willow Grove Park in July.

The annual Fireman's Day events at Willow Grove Park were widely attended and much looked forward to. The 1939 event reported in the Public Spirit on July 27, 1939 with the headline "Fireman Have Big Display at Willow Grove"

"with a blue and yellow National Guard airplane soaring overhead bathed in the light of two giant searchlights, the dozens of pumpers went into action around the park lake about nine o'clock. A demonstration was followed by a gorgeous display of fireworks and a water barrage of the combined unit illuminated by a flare dropped by the flame, closed the exhibition."

The paper went on to report that fire companies from as far as New Jersey and Delaware participated. We can only assume that the editors of their local papers had no problem with the distance they had to travel. Hatboro won third prize for appearance at the event sponsored by the Abington Township Fireman's Association.

Europe was at war in the summer of 1939, but in Hatboro things were quiet. Chief Winner reported no fires at all during the months of August and September. War emergency preparations were being made in town. Stanley Shiles reported that the American Red Cross and American Legion combined to oversee emergency relief in the borough and Fire Chief Winner was made chairman of emergency rescue operations. President Binder became chairman of emergency communications. The community was preparing for war, even as local Congressman J. William Ditter urged non-involvement and criticized the Roosevelt Administration for taking actions that would lead American into war.

## HATBORO HIGH SCHOOL FIRE

October passed without a fire but by the end of November there were six fires reported. None of them of a serious nature. The good luck was about to run out when an alarm at Hatboro High School was sounded about 1:45 p.m. on December 15 while school was in session.

The students were evacuated within a minute and a half. The Public Spirit reported that all were in open air without delay or hysteria. Elementary school students in the Loller Academy were also evacuated to an open field across Horsham Road to avoid York Road traffic, and then sent home. The fire company quickly responded and a widespread alarm for assistance was sounded. Hatboro was soon assisted by firemen from Willow Grove, Horsham, Abington, Jenkintown, Elkins Park, McKinley and Fort Washington. Roslyn Fire Company ambulance was on the job and did fine service aiding several injured fireman. The Public Spirit reported the fire on December 21, 1939:

“The fire raging between ceiling and roof traveled the length of the new building and halfway down the old school before it was checked. The teacher’s room, two classrooms, the second floor corridor and the loft of the stage in the auditorium were gutted by flames while eight other classrooms, two storage rooms and the first floor corridor were damaged in varied degrees by smoke, water and intense heat. At the height of the battle, fifteen hose lines were played on the fire. Some pumps were hooked to nearby fire hydrants while other pumped from the Pennypack Creek...”

Several thousand spectators watched the progress of the firefighters who had the fire practically out by 5 p.m. The fire was classed as one of the most stubborn and hard to control in the experience of the local fireman. The paper said that the manner in which it was extinguished was a testament to the efficient and self sacrificing work of the volunteers.

Chief Winner was quoted in the Public Spirit on the same date as follows:

“In all my years as a fireman I have never seen better work or a greater spirit of cooperation between fire companies. There was no question of who was to do the “dirty work” and every man pitched in and did whatever job he was assigned to. It was only through this coordination that the greater part of the building was saved. I want to personally express my thanks to our neighboring companies for their fine assistance.”

Damage was reported at \$75,000 and school was closed until after New Year's Day. Hatboro fireman Leslie Winner, John Marks and Thomas Lamall suffered burns and smoke inhalation. It was reported that at one time Leslie Winner fled the flames through a second floor window where he was left dangling while holding on with bare hands to a burning window sill.

The school fire was one of the forty-four alarms answered by the company in 1939 and by far the largest fire ever in the Borough of Hatboro. The calls were evenly distributed with twenty-two being in the borough and twenty-two outside the borough limits. The fireman had reason to be proud of the job they did at the high school fire. The company deserved the praise and recognition of the community for a job well done – not only at this fire – but for all the fire and emergencies that the company has responded to for the past half century.

## CHAPTER 6

1940-1949

### YEARS OF PREPAREDNESS

1940

The fire company celebrated fifty years of service to the community in 1940. In July a committee to arrange anniversary celebration was appointed. Adam Bustard chaired the committee whose members were Alvin Winner, L. Rosenberger, and Leslie Winner. Edward Stauch and Garbutt Aiman. A banquet was set for October 17 at Old Mill Tea House for the price of \$1.25 per person. All members who paid their 1939 dues were to be invited, plus all honorary and life members together with charter members and members of council. Chief Ross B. Davis of the Philadelphia Fire Department was a guest speaker. Among the original charter members attending were Dr. John B. Carrell, Harry Watson, W. Willis Wilgus, William Goentner, George Duncan, Harry Hoffman

and John S. Leidy. Chief Winner was presented with the original hammer used for many years to strike the locomotive tire to sound the alarm for help.

In November the firehouse telephone number was changed to Hatboro 9601 and the company was notified by Bell Telephone Company that the new number would be listed in all directories. An inventory was conducted to prepare for purchase request for 1941. Events in Europe and Asia were having a direct influence on life in Hatboro by 1941, and many plans had to be laid aside until after the war. Among them was a plan by the fire company to buy a new fire truck. The old Ahrens-Fox engines would just have to hold out for a while longer. So they were repaired, the pumps were reconditioned and they kept on pumping for the duration.

1941

War preparations were everywhere in 1941. Hatboro was growing faster than the borough fathers could prepare for it. The Brewster Aircraft factory was drawing workers from far and wide; other new industries were locating in the borough or nearby and virtually every attic, spare room and out building was being converted into "Rooms to Let". The government was planning two large housing developments just outside the borough; the sewer plant was being doubled in size virtually before the original plant was completed. Street, public transportation and recreation facilities were being taxed to the limit.

The fire company started this new decade by reelecting Jesse O. Binder president and Alvin Winner chief. New hose was purchased and the fireman coped with new regulations concerning the locking to town hall restricting access to only those with keys. New restrictions were everywhere as the nation became more security conscious. Insurance companies too were demanding stricter compliance with insurance regulations. The members were directed to prevent any non-member from riding the fire truck to fires. The company was warned that failure to enforce this restriction could result in cancellation of the insurance policy.

The February 1941 company minutes record Lee. R. Rosenberger as the first member to be called into the armed forces. As during the First World War, all members serving in the armed forces were kept on the company rolls.

There is a common bond between firefighters the world over, and so it was not an unusual act for Enterprise Fire Company to remember their counterparts in Great Britain by voting to make a donation to the British firefighters for their relief.

By June the borough had a “Local Council on Defense” operating out of Warren Cornell’s office. Defense efforts required the filing of equipment inventories with the county fireman’s association. Company minutes noted that tires, batteries and other automobile supplies for the fire trucks were getting hard to come by. The seriousness of the times were emphasized in the company minutes of June 23, 1941:

“the company agreed not to attend the parade at Glenside due to the construction of the Brewster plant and the company’s commitment to stand by for an emergency”

## WAR PRODUCTION AND DEFENSE

The responsibility of the fire company was awesome during the war years. Hatboro was a center for plants production producing aeronautical equipment for the war effort. Enterprise – with just two aging pumpers – was largest; best trained and best equipped fire company in the area. The largest plant was the huge new Brewster Aeronautical Corporation plant at Jacksonville and Street Roads in Johnsville. Today the original plant is part of the Naval Air Development Center complex. Brewster manufactured and assembled the Brewster Buccaneer, a dive bomber, and the Brewster Bermuda, a bomber. Other aircraft parts and sub-assemblies were also made at the plant which was built during 1941 and went into production during the early years of World War II.

Another large plant opened in 1941 when Fischer & Porter Company began manufacturing precise gauges and instruments for the armed forces. The plant still operates today at its original site on County Line Road. Air Shields, Inc. manufactured aircraft spark plugs and ignition equipment at a new plant on County Line Road next to the Fischer and Porter plant, and G. & A. Aircraft Company employed 550 persons at its plant in the old Pitcairn Aircraft factory on Easton Road in Horsham. Even the Roberts and Mander Stove Company on Jacksonville Road in Hatboro was engaged in 100 percent war material production, making products for the Army, Navy, Maritime

Commission and the Air Force. In all there were approximately 10,000 people employed in these and other plants in the immediate Hatboro area.

A special meeting was held on July 14 in order that Brewster plant officials could brief the fireman on Special equipment to fight fires at the new plant. Chief Winner explained that although the plant was in Bucks County the government requested that Enterprise Fire Company – being the largest company on the area – take care of any fire at the plant. Later that year the company made a tour of the Fischer & porter plant to familiarize themselves with firefighting provisions there.

Chief Winner and all of the chiefs of nearby companies worked together on defense emergency preparations. It was during this busy time that the fireman decides that it would be prudent to meet twice as month to insure that the company was kept abreast of all developments and was prepared to meet any need that might arise. The bi-monthly meeting continued for most of the war years.

To help the nation's war effort, and to raise funds, the company organized aluminum collections. In August, the minutes reported \$700 worth of aluminum was collected in the borough. A committee was appointed to fix the rope on the old bell in case it was needed for any emergency that might arise when the current was off. A new flag pole was erected and the borough clerk raised the flag everyday. As fall came more and more time was given to defense training in November, the company assisted the Hatboro Air Raid Warden with a complete canvas of the town to determine the number of persons residing in each home, their age, and names of those trained to work either air, fire or police wardens. Women were signed up for nursing and first aid duty. Times were hectic, preparation was everywhere, but the company could not keep the firehouse doors locked. Meeting after meeting there were reports of doors being left open and not enough keys for the members.

Life in Hatboro, and in most of the world, would never be the same again after December 7, 1941. When the climatic year ended, Chief Winner reported sixty fire calls for the year. Forty-four were in the borough and thirty-four of those fires were field fires. The remaining ten fires were minor in nature and losses were less than \$7,500. After the last meeting of the year the fireman went to Nicks Light Lunch for refreshments. They deserved a break.

1942

Chief Winner replaced long time president, Jesse O. Binder in 1942. Alvin Winner was reelected chief for another year. Garbutt Aiman became vice president, but the winner's were everywhere. In addition to President Chester and Chief Alvin, Norman Winner was assistant chief and Leslie Winner was assistant foreman. Dr. John B. Carrell gave a short talk to the company at the annual meeting and then treated the company to sandwiches, coffee and ice cream.

In March, Norman Winner and Marshall Taylor had the unenviable task of oiling the fire siren on top of the hose tower. In May, the company made provisions for the installation of a "call box" to be located at the gates of the Roberts & Mander Stove Company. A fire engine was stationed on Jacksonville Road near Hayne's tap room in the event of an air raid. The official reason for this location was that it would be strategically located to best respond to calls at the defense plants in that area. However, more than one fireman must have considered the comfort of the nearby tap room if things really got hot.

While the company kept busy responding to fire calls throughout 1942, none were of a serious nature. In June, the front steps of the skating rink had been garage until the enterprising owner saw bigger profits in recreation facilities for the hundreds of young workers flocking to the borough. When borough council learned of illegal conversion they determine that the best course of action was to do nothing. Not only was the conversion illegal, the owner also had the audacity to open on Sundays in defiance of state and local "blue laws" much to the consideration of some Hatboro's more staid citizens. Again council, with only three full time police officers, decided that in these times, some things were best overlooked.

Other borough recreation establishments enjoying the boom times were the Hatboro Motion Picture Theater on York Road and the Hatboro Bowling Center on Jacksonville Road. The latest motion pictures were shown at the Hatboro Theater. The theater had an excellent sound system and attractive indirect lighting. It was an amusement mecca for hundreds of people every week. The bowling alley was open from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m. every day. It had a large luncheonette and soda fountain that was a popular gathering place.

In June the company sent a carton of cigarettes to all the members serving in the armed forces. The cigarettes were ordered from Shiles Drug Store at \$2.97 a carton. Adam

Bustard was appointed to purchase a service flag and add the correct number of stars as each member was called to service. The members serving in the armed forces as of June 1942 were: David McIlhatten, Alexander Betcher, Jr., Herbert C. Craven, William Hare and Lee Rosenberger. In July the names of Lincoln Evans and George Berridge were added to the list of names and their stars were placed on the flag.

The annual Fireman's Day at Willow Grove Park was canceled in 1942 due to "present day conditions." Firemen had to wear special arm bands which identified them as fireman when responding to the firehouse during air raid drills.

In August, the LaMode Restaurant on York Road caught fire – twice. Thomas Brown had his star added to the flag. The September meeting of the company was interrupted by a fire call when the alarm sounded for a kerosene stove fire on Juniper Street in Warminster. The men were back in fifteen minutes and the meeting resumed. In over fifty years of recorded meetings this is the first record of a meeting being interrupted by a fire call. In October the meeting adjourned promptly at 8:25 p.m. due to a scheduled air raid drill.

The Hatboro School District invited sailors stationed at Willow Grove Naval Air Station to attend the annual Thanksgiving Day football game between Hatboro and Upper Moreland High Schools. War regulations required payment of a five cent tax on all seats whether paid or not. The fire company paid tax for the sailors. Members of the company serving in the armed forces received another carton of cigarettes from Shiles Drug Store as a Christmas present from the company. In addition to the aforementioned names the following members had their stars added to the service flag: Samuel Gamburg, Edward M. Kulp, Edgar McIlhatten, George W. Shiles, Howard Winner, J. Alvin Collins, Jack Cohen, Robert D. Black and Ralph Miller.

Chief Winner reported sixty-six fires in 1942. There were forty in the borough and twenty-six outside the borough. Thirty-five of the fires were field fires. The Chief made particular mention of this in hope that something would be done to curb these unnecessary fires. There were no major fires and Enterprise Fire Company was accorded the honor of compiling the lowest fire loss rate in this part of the State for 1942.

Chester Winner and Alvin Winner kept on winning in 1943 with both being reelected. Clarence Butterworth gave up his duties as foreman due to ill health. The company then voted Foreman Butterworth “Honorary Foreman for Life” in recognition of his many years of service in that office.

The year passed with the town fully settled into wartime routine. The company was instrumental in having a fireplug installed at the York Road bridge over Pennypack Creek to allow the fire trucks to draw water from the creek. This was an emergency measure in the event the water supply system became inoperable due to war or sabotage. Manpower was a serious problem because of all the young men away in service and the remaining manpower pool was engaged in defense work. The company considered allowing junior minors under the age of 18, but the matter was rejected because the insurance would not cover minors riding on fire trucks. The alarm box on the front of the firehouse had to be disconnected to prevent someone from sounding the alarm which might be mistaken for an air raid. The company installed “Indian Fire Pumps” on both Ahrens-Fox engines. These were portable pumps which fireman could carry on their backs when fighting field fires. Field fires continued to plague the fireman who responded to twenty-seven call in April, almost all of which were field fires.

In August, the Skyway Restaurant caught fire. The Skyway Restaurant was located at 177 S. York Road and served luncheons, dinner and drinks. It was a favorite watering hole for some fireman. The name was appropriate considering the booming aeronautical industry about town.

Other restaurants in town in 1943 included the Old Mill Tea House on the Pennypack, and another favorite of the fireman was a small lunch room owned by Nick Rovitis. “Nick’s Place” was a part of Suntheimer Building next door to the firehouse. Suntheimer’s was one of the largest bakeries in the metropolitan area with nearly sixty employees baking and delivering bread and baked goods as far away as Lansdale. Jamison’s Drug Store had a popular soda fountain and newspapers and magazines delivered to Hatboro Station on the first train out of Philadelphia each morning were sold a McLaughlin’s News Agency at 206 S. York Road. Millard Chatburn was the proprietor of Rube’s Service Station selling Mobil gas and Delco Batteries – if you had the ration stamps. Huber’s Atlantic Station was on the corner of York and Moreland and the Esso Service Center at 40 N. York Road. H.N. Shorday and Son operated the Frankford Store at York Road and Montgomery Avenue.

The 1943 historical and Business Directory of Hatboro was published by the Old York Road Publishing Co. and informed citizens, among other things, that Hatboro had a population of nearly 5000 persons living in 1000 homes. In 1943 there were 1500 telephones in town and the total assessed valuation all real estate was \$2.5 million. The directory called Hatboro a residential community offering all the healthful attributes of a country town yet is almost on the edge of the third largest city in the United States”

For Christmas 1943 the fire company sent each of its members in the service a postal money order for \$2.50 and a Christmas card. The company responded to seventy-one fire calls in 1943 with over half of them being field fires. There were no major fires in the borough.

1944

Alvin Winner retired in 1944 after serving as Chief of Enterprise Fire Company for Twenty-four of the past twenty-five years. The company recognized Chief Winner by electing him “Honorary Chief for Life” at the annual meeting. President Chester Winner was reelected and Adam Bustard became the new Chief of Enterprise Fire Company. In March the company learned of the death of past president, Jesse O. Binder.

Jesse O. Binder was a long time employee of Bell Telephone Company. At the time of his death he was plant wire manager at the Langhorne office. Jesse was a borough councilman for several years and President of Enterprise Fire Company from 1930 to 1941.

Service Stars were still being added to the company flag in 1944. Marshall Taylor, Warren Cornell Jr., Gilbert Smith, Garbutt Aiman, Norris Trucksess, Norman Winner and Robert Whitbeck had their stars added as they reported for duty with remaining the armed services. Garbutt Aiman resigned as assistant foreman before leaving and Chester Ford was appointed to fill the remaining term. Mike was stationed at Quonset Point Rhode Island during the war. He managed to get frequent hops on flights from Quonset Point to NAS Willow Grove and was able to attend many of the regular meetings of the company. That was true dedication.

## CIVIL DEFENSE AUXILIARY POWER

There were no major fires in the borough during the early months of 1944, but in march, the cellars of new houses located in York Gardens were flooded and the fire company, used civil defense auxiliary pumper to pump them out. The auxiliary pumper was a two wheel trailer that could be towed behind a jeep or truck. In addition to the pump it also carried 400 feet of hose. The pump could pump water from wells or ponds as well as hook up to the borough water system. When a \$10 donation was given to the company for its assistance an argument ensued as to whether or not the company should accept the donation because it was a civil defense equipment that was used. The matter was resolved with fireman logic when George Porter pointed out that the civil defense pumper was used in an emergency situation by authorized fireman and therefore the company was entitled to the donation. It made sense to those present; the money went to the company treasury.

York Garden Homes, Inc. was a new development in the Northwest area of the borough. The homes being sold for \$4,650 on a twenty-five year F.H.A. guaranteed mortgage plan. Down payments were arranged to fit the buyer's budget, or one could rent the home for \$50 a month.

## FIRE COMPANY SEVERES FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE ON BOROUGH

A special meeting was called in April, at the request of eleven members of the company to discuss a plan put forth by Chester Ford. Ford proposed to have the borough convey title to the fire company for the two trucks and all other fire equipment. The plan further proposed an annual allotment from borough funds to the company for operating expenses. New equipment and a new firehouse would be purchased with money raised by company members through funds drives and donations from the businesses served by the company. Sixty-two members attended and not all were sure it was a good idea. Fords persisted however; pointing out the company would have more pride if they worked to get new equipment and actually owned the equipment. He told the company that he already had promises from two plants in town to donate \$150 a year. The company finally approved the proposal on a 41 to 17 vote. In June, council directed the borough solicitor to convey title, and agreed to appropriate the remaining allocated fire company funds to the fire company when all outstanding bills had been paid.

The company reacted swiftly by creating a ways and means committee to raise money for the company, and to change the by-laws create trustees to be responsible for all company property. Ford also advised the company that Warren N. Cornell Sr. had donated to lots of land at the northeast corner of Chester Avenue and Moreland Avenue for the purpose of building a new firehouse. These lots are not to mention again in the minutes of the company, except with one brief reference to weeds a couple of months later. It is unlikely that the company ever took deed t the property. A new account was opened at Hatboro Federal Savings & Loan Association for deposit of funds collected for the truck and building fund. The first deposit was for \$370 collected from individuals and businesses. The newly created ways and mean committee set a goal of registering 450 new members to be known as associate members. Membership was by donation and privileges extended were hotly contested during at least two company meetings. It was finally decided associate members really had little more privilege than the privilege of donating money to the fire company and then being on the ticket sales and more donations. The committee also had tickets printed for a 50/50 club. The tickets were to sell for ten cents apiece and larger prizes were promised. A war bond raffle was also created and the ladies auxiliary scheduled monthly card parties. Each member of the company was asked to donate a deck of cards. Big plans, lofty goals.

But things have a way of not working out as planned, no matter how lofty the goal. In May, the biog truck needed major repairs and was out of service for several weeks. In June the small truck need timing gears and manifold. Borough council grew skeptical of the ability of the fire company to pay for the repairs. It withheld turning the unexpected appropriations over to the company until all equipment had been repaired and the repair bills paid. The card party netted only #36.76 of which \$15 was withheld for prizes for the next party. The 50/50 Club never got off the ground and was quickly abandoned. The war bond raffle seemed to be working out best and was continued for several months. To add insult to injury the borough ordered the company to clear the weeds of its lot on Moreland Avenue.

At the December meeting the company set aside pages in the minute's book in honor of deceased members Howard Twining and Alvin Winner.

1945

In January 1945 Chester Winner and Adam Bustard were reelected at a somewhat somber annual meeting. The company was informed that former company secretary, Edgar

McIlhatten was reported “missing in action”. Borough council allocated \$1,140 to the fire company for operating expenses for 1945. The company was dissatisfied and asked for an allotment of \$1,500. Council agreed but deducted the liability insurance premium before turning the funds over to the fire company. All to note that even though the truck titles were turned over to the fire company in 1944, the borough continued to carry the trucks as borough equipment on the borough motor vehicle insurance policies, and when the new trucks were purchased by the company in 1947 and 1948, they too were listed as borough vehicles on the insurance policies.

New by-laws were adopted in March. The major change being the creation of a board of directors which replaced the company trustees. By May, there was \$1027 in the truck and building account at Hatboro Federal.

In April, the company learned that Edgar McIlhatten had not been killed but was now listed as a prisoner of war. McIlhatten was serving with the 28th Division when he was captured at the battle of the Bulge.

The country celebrated V-E Day on May 8, 1945, and the war was finally over on V-J Day September 8, 1945, the boys were coming home. Carl Hoffman and George Shiles had already returned to civilian life, and happier times were being planned as the war effort at home was quickly turning to the peace effort. The office of Civilian Defense began disbanding from its wartime readiness status. All fire fighting equipment belonging to that office in Hatboro was donated to the fire company. Unfortunately, a complete inventory was not kept, but records indicate that the company acquired pumps, gas masks, air packs and other minor equipment. As the year ended, a committee was appointed to begin a search for a new fire truck to replace the small Ahrens-Fox pumper.

## CARNIVAL TIME

The fire company joined with the American Legion to hold a large carnival during the summer. The carnival was usually held on the vacant lot where Hatboro Hotel once stood on South York Road. It was a grand event with Ferris wheel, games of chance and skill, and the favorite booth of all “Dunk the Fireman”. Boys of all ages would line up to test their pitching skill by throwing a baseball at a target that when hit would trip a device that tipped the chair that the hapless fireman was sitting upon. He would then be gloriously deposited in a tank of water with a big splash. There were rides and

refreshments and something for everybody. The carnival lasted nearly two weeks and often time the fireman had to take vacation from their jobs to man the carnival booths. In addition to the rides and food, there was always a prize to be raffled off. In 1945 the prize was not recorded, but in 1946 it was a Bendix Washing Machine donated by Raymond Rosen Co. and in 1947 it was a television set which had been on display in Gamburg's window for several weeks before the carnival. The carnival was held again in 1948 on the lot next to Jarrett's Garage, but it was not as successful as in the past and after it was over the company voted for no more carnivals. Not all the reasons are clear, but it appears that the company felt that the work and time involved had become just too much. The company now looked to the annual Autumn Festival and Halloween Parade as an alternative means of raising funds with less work.

1946

Alfred Genner replace Adam Bustard as chief in 1946 and Chester Winner was reelected president of the company in a much more festive occasion than the last annual meeting. Several older members spoke words of encouragement to the members present and the company welcomed home several of the boys. "Pop" Butterworth expressed regrets that he was unable to be an active member and wished the company the best in their efforts as an organization. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. to a fine dinner at the Skyway.

The company held a special meeting in February to discuss the merits of fire fighting equipment by the Hahn Company, Mack Company and Ward LaFrance Company. The fire company was impressed with the Hahn fire truck and invited a representative of that company to answer questions at the next regular meeting. A fund drive was begun to raise money for the new pumper. The company erected a dummy thermometer in front of the firehouse to keep the public aware of progress on the new truck fund. By December, the Board of Directors had approved purchase of a Hahn Quad Combination Pumper, and the order was placed with Hahn Company in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. Borough Council allocated \$500 to the "Truck Fund" in the 1946 Budget whether or not the new truck was delivered in 1946.

ROGERS HOUSE FIRE

On an early February morning in 1946 a tragic fire occurred at the home of Hatboro Theater manager Ben Rogers. His family was awakened to find the rear of their home in flames. Rogers and his wife were assisted to safety by neighbors and a passing Navel Lieutenant. A cousin of Mr. Rogers who had been sleeping in the living room of the house was severely burned before he could be rescued. He died several days later at Abington Hospital. Rogers himself suffered a broken leg when he fell from the porch roof escaping from his burning home. The fireman responded to the call shortly before six o'clock in fourteen above zero degree temperature. The Public Spirit reported that Hatboro fireman were assisted by Willow Grove fireman in battling flames in the frigid weather and were successful in confining the flames to the interior of the house. Nearby homes on both sides were saved from damage, but the entire furnishings of the Rogers home including all their clothing were destroyed. The heat was so intense inside the building that metal objects were melted and porcelain was stripped from kitchen appliances. The minutes of the fire company meeting record that the company sent a letter to the Commandant of the fourth Navel District recommending Lieutenant Alfred Doebel for a commendation for his heroic efforts to save the lives of Rogers and his wife. The fireman also gave blood for Mr. Roger's cousin who required five transfusions a day before his death.

With the war over, and more and more fire companies being established in surrounding communities, territorial rights naturally came to dispute. Hatboro, with government help, had undisputed priority during the war. Now those rights were being challenged. A mutual aid agreement between Hatboro, Willow Grove and Horsham Fire Companies had been worked out in early 1946. The fire company also had agreements – more or less – with Warminster, Hartsville and other Bucks County fire Companies. Unfortunately, private citizens were unusually aware of these arrangements and would often call Hatboro Fire Company no matter where the fire. One such event occurred early in the morning of June 22, 1946. The Hatboro Fire Company was called for a fire on Jones property on Poorhouse and Valley Road in Bucks County. The company turned the call over to Hartsville Fire Company because it was in its territory. Hatboro offered to respond if needed. Many people criticized Hatboro for not responding immediately. The company had a difficult time overcoming the black eye unjustly given.

1947

The new year begun with Millard Chatburn, president of the board of directors reporting both trucks in running condition with no repairs needed during the previous year. There were 500 feet of two and a half inch hose as well as a new Hahn fire truck. The auditors reported assets of \$14,050.53 and Chief Genner reported seventy nine fires during 1946 with losses estimated around \$8,000. Chatburn was elected president of the company for

1947 and Alfred reelected chief. Dr. John B. Carrell presented outgoing President Winner with historical gavel made a piece of lumber from a part of the old home belonging to Robert Loller on South York Road near the academy. Carrell complimented the company for its efficient work and suggested that a second story be added to the firehouse. The meeting adjourned to a lunch at the Skyway.

## FIRE POLICE UNIT ESTABLISHED

On Sunday morning, November 23, 1947, in the presence of borough officials and officers of Montgomery County Fire Police Association, the Hatboro Fire Police Unit was formally created and its members sworn into office. The Hatboro unit was the fifty-second in the country out of sixty-eight eligible fire companies.

Hatboro Burgess Warren Cornell administered the oath office to Fire Police Captain Harry T. Fagan, and Officers Lloyd D. Genner, Samuel B. Erwin, Harry C. Morris and Clarence W. Butterworth. They were given full police powers at the scene of a fire and were under command of Chief of Police Charles Foster when called to duty.

1948

Millard Chatburn and Alfred Genner were reelected president and chief for 1948. There were sixty-six members present at the annual meeting and the chief reported sixty fires with losses estimated to be \$10,800 during 1947. A committee was appointed to investigate the purchase of another truck even as the new Hahn truck was being delivered.

In April a motion to purchase uniforms was tabled until the new trucks were paid for, and on May 3rd a canvass of all new homes in Hatboro was made by the fireman seeking donations to pay for the trucks. Among the new members joining the company in April were Robert Hambrecht and I.M. Jarrett. Chief Genner resigned in August because of his move out of town. Assistant Chief Leslie Winner assumed duties of Chief.

## HAHN QUAD COMBINATION PUMPER AND MAXIM TRIPLE COMBINATION PUMPER

Whenever, new equipment was ordered, the wait for delivery can seem interminable. Add to the unusual anxiety of waiting for a new fire truck, the extra measure that the company hadn't had a new truck since 1928, and you can begin to understand how the fireman felt as 1946 ended and the month after in 1947 passed with no word from Hahn. Finally in March, the truck committee visited the Hahn Motor Company in Hamburg to see the progress on the new truck. Sadly they returned to tell the company that the motor had not been delivered and production had not yet begun. In June the committee reported that the chassis had been constructed but the motor was still undelivered. In July the news was good, the motor had been delivered, and Hahn expected to deliver the truck in six or seven weeks. Weeks passed into months and in November the committee could only report that the truck was now ready for lights and ladders.

It wasn't until the end of January, 1948 that the truck was actually delivered to Enterprise Fire Company. The ladies auxiliary sent flowers to the fire company on the delivery of the new Hahn and drivers were advised to use care and not to exceed a speed of 35 m.p.h. The minutes record that the chief warned that the truck was not to be tampered with, and under no circumstances were any valves to be opened while stationary in the fire house.

An open house was scheduled for March 1, 1948 to show-off the new truck to the community.

The bright red open-cab truck with its 750 gallons per minute American-Marsh pump and 1200 feet of two and a half inch hose was worth the wait. The truck was loaded with chrome fixtures including four portable flood lights that could be used anywhere with the 200 watt portable generator. It carried 165 feet of ladders, Indian fire fighters, extinguishers, two horsepower Waukesha motor under the long red hood. The cost of the truck was \$25,000. A lot of money to be raised from donations, carnivals and card parties. On March 8, 1948, the company voted to purchase a Maxim Triple Combination Pumper for \$18,000.

The company's new triple combination pumper was delivered by the end of the year. The new pumper was manufactured by Maxim Fire Engine Company of Middleboro, Mass. Maxim had been manufacturing fire trucks since 1914, but this was the first Maxim truck purchased by Enterprise Fire Company. The truck had a three man open-cab; it was

fire engine red with beautiful gold leaf letters in the hood spelled out: "HATBORO, PA." There was more gold leaf on the door and chrome handrails and hose fittings set off red sides of the truck. The truck had a 750 gallon per minute pump and a 300 gallon booster tank. In addition to two ladders the truck also carried 1200 feet of two and a half inch hose, 400 feet of one and a half inch hose, and 200 feet of three quarter inch hose. The truck had 200horsepower motor. The company now informed the public that Hatboro was protected by "completely new and modern fire protection equipment."

## HALLOWEEN PARADE AND FESTIVAL

The Halloween Parade and Festival had been a custom in Hatboro since 1911 when the fireman decided to have a parade. The parade took on a new look compared to others because the fireman all dressed in fancy costumes. The parade became an annual event up until 1929 when economic conditions caused frivolity of the event to be out of place with the times. Townsfolk could only remember when farmers would come into town and decorate the streets with pumpkins and cornstalks or when the Chief of Police got off his horse to check on some details and the horse became frightened and ran all the way to Hartsville before being caught, or the time another horse was decorated like a turkey and caught fire. The parade was revived in 1936 for a few years until the beginning of the Second World War.

In 1948 the festival was again revived and on November 4, 1948 the Public Spirit reported that a crowd of 100,000 people came to town for the event. The turnout exceed even the most optimistic predictions and the paper reported "the town held more folks than ever before in its history". The festival was held on a Saturday but the preparations began long before the first marcher started down York Road. The Ox was roasted on a spit over an open fire on the Miller Property along the banks of the Pennypack Creek. By early evening 2000 pounds of beef had been served and 10,000 hot dogs consumed.

The Baby parade began at 4 p.m. followed by the main attraction at 8 p.m. The Public Spirit described the parade as follows:

"and from then on till 10:30 there was a procession of gorgeous color, music, high comedy, high stepping horses, antique cars, huge fire apparatus, beautiful floats and precision drilled organizations the like of which few towns of Hatboro's size have seen passing in review."

The parade lasted until 10:30 p.m. which several bands formed and continued to play dance music as people danced in the streets until the wee hours of morning. Philco TV Station "WPTZ" put the parade on the air at 8 p.m. and kept it there for over two hours. It was seen as far as Allentown and Atlantic City according to the article on the Public Spirit.

Prizes were raffled off. Garbutt Aiman won the grand prize, a 1949 Model Ford Sedan. Second Prize was a Quality Gas Range won by a Mrs. Wiley of Warminster. Mike Aiman had just purchased a new Buick the day before the parade, never dreaming he would win the grand prize. Another big prize winner that day was the Lansdowne Fire Company – First Prize for Best Entry in Parade and the Best Fire Company with Band. Unfortunately, the revived custom only lasted two years and then no more except for one other revival in 1955 when the borough celebrated its 250th Anniversary.

1949

Chester Ford was elected president in 1949 and Leslie Winner elected chief. It was a time of one of the little squabbles that happen now and again among the member ship. Some company members differed with some of the official policies concerning the number of trucks that were to be used when the company was called to fires out of town. The official policy was that on truck was to remain in town at all times. Some fireman thought that the company should provide as much assistance as possible when called upon by neighboring communities, and both trucks should respond. The discussion is not recorded verbatim, but the minutes note that it was prolonged and when it finally ended, the matter was still unsettled. However, the minutes note that the meeting ended with a concerted effort of comradeship.

## CHAPTER 7

1950-1959-

SETTING FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER

In 1950 Willow Ridge Farm was delivering milk to the doorsteps of Hatboro residents, Hatboro Federal Savings and Loan was doing business from the beautifully restored Wunderle House on South York Road across from Hatboro National Bank, and borough council was creating a park along the Pennypack at the western borough line between Moreland Avenue and Monument Avenue. Congressman Isaac Newton Evan's home "Sunset", on North York Road had become Eddie King's Hatboro Hotel. Hatboro School District merged with Horsham and was now Hatboro Horsham School District and plans were underway to expand the High School on South York Road to accommodate the additional students. South York Road itself was being enlarged and repaved with a new bridge over the Pennypack Creek. Curbs, sidewalks and sewers were being constructed throughout the borough, a sure sign of growth and prosperity.

A mutual problem facing the borough government and the fire company was the question of where to find more space for equipment and offices. Borough Council had begun a hunt for a new town hall in the late 1940's. They explored the possibility of offering to sell the present town hall to the fire company for \$20,000, but the idea was dropped because a suitable location for the government offices could not be found, at least not for the money council was willing to spend.

1950

Chester Ford and Leslie Winner were both reelected in 1950 with seventy-four members being present at the annual meeting. Clarence Butterworth and Ed Stauch urged the company to purchase an ambulance and start a volunteer ambulance corps.

On April 17, 1950, Honorary Director for Life, Warren Cornell, Sr., died. Cornell joined the company on 1909 and had served as president of the fire company for fifteen years. He had been chief in 1915. For many years he was one of the foremost political figures in the county. Between 1914 and 1949 he served as the Borough Secretary, and Burgess. In 1948, he was elected Montgomery County Prothonotary and took office in January 1949. Warren Cornell was in the real estate business in Hatboro for nearly a half century and played a prominent role in the development and growth of Hatboro.

In May, a fire in the storage room of the new Acme Market on York Road south of Lehman Avenue broke out just as the meeting was being called to order. The fire was discovered by persons inspecting the sample home in the Hatboro Gardens tract just east of the store. The blaze was minor but filled the new store with smoke. Fireman spent more time trying to get into the locked store than it took them to put out the fire. Little damage was done and the fireman returned to their meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Dr. John B. Carrell, a founder of the company died in September, 1950. Dr. Carrell was probably the best known and oldest citizen of Hatboro at the time of his death. He was 99 years old when he died. He had graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1876 and first went into practice with Dr. Isaac Newton Evans before opening his own office on York Road. Dr. Carrell was once a member of the school board. He was also a well known historian and writer. Through the years he championed many causes locally and statewide. There was probably no institution dearer to the heart of Dr. Carrell than the Enterprise Fire Company. He literally attended the birth of the company and saw it through sixty years of life. Almost to his last days he would attend annual meetings and entertain the fireman at his home on Byberry Avenue. The minutes of the company often recorded lunches served to the fireman by Dr. Carrell or comments for the good of the company presented by the good doctor. His passing was noted with sorrow and many fond memories by the firemen.

1951

The annual meeting of the fire company took place on January 15, 1951 at the Old Mill Tea House. Chief Winner reported seventy-two fires during 1949, and the auditing committee reported \$7,644.89 in the treasury. Chester Ford and Leslie Winner were reelected president and chief. The company board of directors approved the purchase of a 350 gallon per minute portable pump to be used for emergency pumping.

The fire company was continually plagued with calls for field fires. It was common practice by residents of Hatboro and nearby communities to burn off the weeds on empty lots. Often times these fires got out of control and the fire company had to be called. The problem became so severe that the fire company took an ad in the Public Spirit on March 1st, warning residents that a permit was now required to burn vacant lots. Secretary Chester Dilauro was instructed to make sure the notice was printed in bold type.

Life member, Clarence Butterworth died on February 20, 1951. A page in the minute books was set aside in his memory. Clarence was known as "Pop" to his many friends on town which included the men of the Enterprise Fire Company. He joined the company in 1921 and had been foreman in the fire company for many years. His skill was often called upon to fix things that were considered by most to be beyond repair, or to fabricate new tools or equipment for the company's use. He had been the town constable at one time and was a painter by trade. He was 69 years old when he died.

The old TV set had been enjoyed by the fireman since 1947 was reported out of order at the September meeting of the company. The board apparently did not see fit to make an expenditure for a new set, but Garbutt Aiman and Allen Meade come to the rescue and donated new Emerson television set to the company. The old set was repaired for \$13.00 and donated to Christ's Home.

Ever since the construction of the government housing known as Fulmor Heights there had been a close relationship between Hatboro and that community. Many firemen lived in Fulmor Heights, and at some time in the 1940's a fire siren was erected to all fireman living there. In 1951, a dispute arose over who should pay the telephone company bill for the siren wire. The fire company was being billed but the officers contended that the Fulmor Heights Civic Association had agreed to pay for the new line when the siren was installed. No agreement could be reached and the bill went unpaid for several until the company notified Bell Telephone to disconnect the siren in September.

1952

Chester Ford was reelected president in 1952 and Edward Stauch was elected chief. The company had responded top seventy-five fires in 1951 with forty-one of them being field fires. Losses due to fire were reported at less than \$2,000 in the borough.

The need for a two-way radio system became the topic of discussion in 1952. Robert Hambrecht and Matthew Madesky urged the company to offer to purchase test sets with a pre-arranged agreement that if the tests did not work out the sets would be returned tot eh seller. Later in the year, a demonstration of two-way radio was arranged using sets provided by McKinley Fire Company. After the demonstration, one set – a transmitter and a receiver – was purchased from McKinley for \$100. This was the first radio equipment used by the fire company. It appears that the radio was installed in the Hahn

truck and communication was with county fire radio system. In 1953 a base station was purchased to be installed in the firehouse, thereby permitting direct contact between the firehouse and the fire truck or the county radio system.

Traffic congestion was a fact of life on York Road in 1952. The fireman erected signs and asked the borough to enforce laws governing the prohibition of parking within fifteen feet of a fire plug and the entrance to the firehouse. The fireman voted to invite wives and members of the ladies auxiliary and their husbands to the annual meeting and banquet. The company received discouraging news at the end of the year when the "Fire Underwriters" report indicated that the apparatus was 68 percent deficient.

1953

Chester Ford and Edward Stauch were reelected in 1953. Chief Stauch reported seventy-five fire calls in 1952 thirty of which were field fires. Two senior members of the company, John Leidy and Harry Wilcke were present and commented on the progress of the company. They both agreed on the splendid cooperation and tremendous work involved to carry on the work of the fire company and wished the company success for a new firehouse some day.

The need for a new firehouse, and the underwriters report on the condition of the equipment, spurred the company to action. It was a fact of life that nothing could be accomplished without funds, and for the company to get needed funds, a concerted effort had to be made on solicitations, and fund raising events. It was determined at the January meeting that the company would have a dinner in March to be the first of the fund raising events. The dinner did not happen in March but was rescheduled for June. Jim Greener was put in charge of tickets and a banner was hung across York Road advertising the Ham Dinner. Chief Stauch became Chef Stauch and for many years was famous for his delicious ham dinners served at the firehouse. Tickets for the first dinner sold for \$1.35 for adults and seventy-five cents for children. The first dinner resulted in a profit for the company of \$210. The company saw bigger profits in the future and Jim Greenier, Ed Stauch and Bob Hambrecht were immediately appointed to plan the next dinner for the fall. The second dinner resulted in a [profit of \$258.19.

A borough wide solicitation for contributing members was also undertaken. By June, 422 businesses and private individuals had responded making contributions of \$1,473.50. By the end of the year 643 contributors had donated \$2,504.50 to the company.

## LADIES AUXILIARY OFFICALLY RECOGNIZED

The ladies auxiliary continued to help the company with fund raising events and equipment contributions. The auxiliary was now so much a part of the company that it became apparent that official recognition could no longer be ignored. In May the company officially amended the by-laws of the company to create a special membership unit of the company to be known as the Ladies Auxiliary Firewomen's Unit. The minutes of Enterprise Fire Company for May 25, 1953 record the duties of the members of this special unit as follows:

“Their duties shall consist of helping the members of the Fire Company, when called upon to do so, at fund raising benefits and when necessary at fires. They shall not have voting power in the Fire Company and shall only attend Fire Company meetings when requested by the Fire Company...”

The officers of the auxiliary at the time were: Mae Stoutenberg, President; Annette Croasdale, vice president; Irene Pearson, secretary; Ellen Schultz, corresponding secretary; and Louise Chatburn, treasurer.

In July the company purchased another radio set and installed it in the Maxim truck. By mid summer the company had been advised by Bell Telephone that the system would be converted to a dial system. This presented a problem for the Hatboro Police Department as well as the fireman. With local operator on duty, it didn't matter when you called for a policeman or the fire company because the operator knew where to place your call. Now with dialing, someone had better be at the number called or there would be no answer. Borough council explored the possibility of having common dispatcher serve Hatboro, Upper Moreland, and Horsham, but these communities had their own plans. The borough finally decided that the time had come for a full time dispatcher. A switchboard was installed in the police room which was manned twenty-four hours a day. When the

came, the dispatcher would blow the siren to call the fireman to the firehouse. Hatboro also served as a fire dispatcher for other nearby fire stations.

The fireman really got the Christmas spirit in 1953 and decorated the firehouse with a couple of strings of Christmas lights. They also escorted Santa to town in a parade on November 27th. An event that Secretary DiLauro recorded in the minutes as a “momentous occasion.” The company gave itself a couple of Christmas presents too. They bought a potato masher to make life easier for the kitchen crew at the next dinner and agreed to explore the purchase of a new fire truck.

1954

Chief Stauch reported ninety fire calls in 1953, and the auditors reported \$16,185.19 in treasury at the annual meeting of the company. Chester Ford and Edward Stauch were continued in office. Things were looking much better for the company. Borough Council had entered into an agreement with the Borough Authority (water company) to move to a new “Municipal Building” being constructed by the Authority at 120 E. Montgomery Avenue. The borough offered to deed the building on South York Road to the fire company with the restriction that the company would own and use, but could not sell the property.

In February two notable events occurred. The company approved the purchase of a Dodge truck Chassis for a new booster truck, and the annual fire company banquet was delayed for two hours because a fire call at 6:15 p.m. for a fire at AMSCO plant on the night of the banquet.

#### DODGE BOOSTER TRUCK

The new truck was delivered in September. The truck, built by Maxim, was on a 1954 Dodge chassis and featured foam and wet water proportioners. It had a 350 gallon booster tank and a deck gun that could be used as a deluge gun or straight stream or fog. The truck had a two-way radio, a lighting system, smoke ejector and Scott air packs along with the usual extinguishers and assortment of hoses and ladders. The Dodge was used as

an emergency auxiliary truck and responded to alarms with a small crew to quickly extinguish small fires or hold a large fire until the pumpers could hook up to hydrants.

If the engine room was crowded before, now it was even tighter with the three large trucks there wasn't much room to move around in the bay. In anticipation of the removal of the borough offices to 120 E. Montgomery Avenue, a committee was appointed to design building improvements to make more room for the new truck.

In May, the company delivered letters of solicitation for donations to every home and business in Hatboro. 798 responses netted the company \$3,762 in contributions. The ladies auxiliary held card parties and bake sales. The dinners were now making over \$300 in profits. The company also conducted paper drives, and borough council increased annual contributions to \$3,210 for operating costs and an additional \$1,500 for capital improvements. A new point system was adopted to award points to members for participation in company events and response to fire calls. Active membership was restricted by the by-laws and insurance policy to fifty members. The fifty members with the most points earned each year would be awarded active membership and carried as such on the rolls of the company.

1955

Hatboro likes to think of itself as a town ahead of its time, but in 1955 it was about ten years ahead of its time. The town held a big celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the borough. It was believed that John Dawson had settled in what was to become Hatboro in 1705. However, when a Historical Commission and Borough Historian were officially created by borough council in the early 1980's, further research revealed the date was really 1715 and hence the 250th Anniversary should have been 1965, not 1955. Nevertheless, the borough went all out in 1955 to celebrate its birthday. Burgess Warren Cornell, Jr. wrote an essay entitled Hatboro – Our Town which was published in a commemorative booklet which also contained a history of the borough by Sarah C. Pinkerton and a program of events scheduled for the entire year. The highlight of the year was the dedication of the new Municipal Building and the new swimming pool at Memorial Park on the fourth of July. Other events included an Anniversary Ball, Rare Book Exhibit, Miss Greater Hatboro Contest, sports car and antique car displays, Halloween Carnival and religious services. It was a big year for Hatboro, Even if it was early.

Cornell's essay gives us a view of life in Hatboro in 1955. He wrote of seeing old and new houses in Hatboro, with lights burning at night and with children at play during the day. He went on to speculate on how residents saw their hometown by writing:

“Maybe you visualize the 8:15 leaving the station bound for Philly in the morning or the five O'clock train edging toward the platform at the end of the day, or perhaps the old Town Hall where the kids can always see the fire engines and where the grown-ups go to vote at election time or the public clock in the center of the town. It may be that our fine churches and library enter your mental picture.

Cornell – Hatboro Our Town

He wrote of spring dances sponsored by the Crooked Billet Women's Club and the business men gathering for morning coffee at Woolworths or the diner, of the service organizations, and just plain people that made up the population of Hatboro in 1955.

Many of those same people, the businessmen, the club members and other folk were the men of Enterprise Fire Company. Chester Ford and Edward Stauch were reelected to lead the company for another year. Chief Stauch reported seventy-five fires call in 1954 with 871 total man hours devoted to fighting fires. Damages were held to \$6,240. A very good record.

The building committee had the lot surveyed and moved forward with plan to extend the engine bay of the fire house and remodel the portion of the fire house now vacated by the borough offices. A new kitchen was planned with room to hold the dinners right in the firehouse instead of having them at the Masonic Hall. In September, Jim Grenier proposed adding twenty feet to the back of the firehouse for a new kitchen. The company ran into problems with getting the renovations plans approved by the Stats Bureau of Licenses which had to pass on all public building renovations. Near the end of the year, Stewart Bearn was awarded contracts for the building renovation even though the final plans had not yet been approved. The ladies auxiliary donated new equipment for the kitchen and set up the new kitchen in time for the next fire company dinner. The new kitchen was capable of preparing dinners for up to 200 guests.

By February 1956, the plans for the engine room renovations had been approved by the state. Stewart Bearn began work on the renovations. It was at this time that the bell tower was removed and the roof repaired. The five hundred pound bell which was purchased in 1906 by the borough for the company, and which had fallen several years earlier, was sold to an unknown buyer in October 1956 for \$80.

There were three notable fires in town 1955. On February 13, 1955 the fireman had just recently returned from assisting Willow Grove in fighting a fire at the Thrift Shoe Store on York Road when the alarm sounded about 7:30 a.m. for a garage fire on Jacksonville Road in Hatboro. The two car garage was located in the rear of J. Kosticks property and was occupied by Hatboro Cab Company. Twenty-seven firemen from Enterprise and Horsham Fire Companies were in service for over two hours in frigid weather before blaze was quelled.

A more serious fire occurred on April 23, 1955 when fire swept on Bonair Avenue. When fireman arrived on the scene, flames were showing from all the upstairs front windows. It took over two hours to put the fire out. The house was badly damaged with losses set at over \$4000. The third fire occurred at the Ivyland Dairy Building, Summit and Springdale Avenues. This blaze was apparently started by boys smoking in the vacant building. Damage was limited but the building was an eyesore and nuisance for years after the fire. Lieutenant Stanley Shiles was overcome by smoke at the height of the blaze and was administered oxygen at the scene. The paper reported that the flames leapt into the sky and there were dense clouds of smoke before fireman from Hatboro, Horsham, Warminster and Lacey Park could put the fire out.

1956

The by-laws were extensively revised during 1955. One of the changes was the way company officers and line officers would be elected. The company offices of director, president, vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary, treasurer and members of relief association would be elected at the annual meetings of the company while line officers including the chief, deputy chiefs, captain, and lieutenants were all elected at the regular February meeting of the company. The change in the by-laws caused no change in leadership as Ford and Stauch were both reelected to serve as president and chief in 1956. Chief Stauch reported ninety-eight calls in 1955 with the highest losses yet reported mainly due to a hurricane.

## FIREMAN'S WEDDING INTERRUPTED

Fireman are used to cold dinners, little sleep and responding to alarms in all kinds of weather, but on Saturday afternoon, September 22, 1956 the well dressed firemen were called away from a wedding. Chief Stauch's daughter, Mary Lou, was being married to Deputy Chief Jim Greenier. Nearly every member of the company was in attendance – and then the siren blew. The place emptied fast, but to the credit of the groom and the father of the bride, they stood fast and the ceremony proceeded.

## SPOT THE FIRE DOG

Enterprise Fire Company had its own fire dog. Spot was a Dalmatian dog owned by John Manning, proprietor of "Smiley's Tydol" service station on the corner of York Road and Williams Lane. At the first sound of the fire siren Spot would open the office door of the service station and bound to the nearby firehouse. It was reported that on one occasion when the door jammed that Spot leaped right through the glass panel in the door. He made the first truck. The firemen awarded Spot a regular membership complete with company shoulder patch. Spot often won prizes when he paraded with the company.

1957

Stewart Bearn was elected President of the company in 1957. Chief Stauch was reelected chief in February. The borough allocated \$3,500 to the company for operations for the year and the company held their annual banquet at Eddie King's Hatboro Hotel on February 27. Chief Stauch reported that thirty out of the fifty fire calls on 1956 were out of town. The company averaged a turn out of 21 men for the calls and held losses to \$10,625.

## HATBORO LUMBER YARD FIRE

Around 12:30 a.m. on January 29, 1957, a fire started in the office building of the Hatboro Lumber Yard on Jacksonville Road at Montgomery Avenue. The building was attached to the mill work shop and storage building. The fire burned for over an hour before it was discovered just before 2 a.m. by a passing motorist. Fireman responding to the scene had trouble with icy roads and the fire scene soon became entirely ice encrusted. Fireman had trouble walking let alone pulling hoses and setting up ladders. The Daily Intelligencer reported that "they slipped and tumbled over the yard as they attempted to drag hoses into place. One fireman said it was almost impossible to pull the hose and stay on one's feet. Ladders rungs too, were coated with ice." The fireman could not find the source of the fire at first because of the thick smoke, although flames lit up the sky. The heat of the fire was intense. Companies used water with a chemical detergent added to make it more penetrating. Even with this the fireman could not get to the bottom of the fire. They were still at the scene at 9 a.m.

At one point about three o'clock a.m. the fireman narrowly avoided a major problem when too many hoses were pulling water from the hydrants. There were nineteen hose lines playing on the fire when the pressure fell. Quick action by Chief Stauch saved the day and the pressure quickly returned. There were about 200 firemen from Hatboro, Horsham, Willow Grove, Lacey Park, Warminster and Warrington fire companies. Huntingdon Valley stood by at the Hatboro firehouse. Damages were estimated at over \$125,000.

The ladies auxiliary donated a new parade flag and two flag cases and the company made good use by accepting invitations to participate in two Memorial Day Parades, one in town in the morning and the one in Warminster in the afternoon. They also paraded in Lancaster, Huntingdon Valley, Willow Grove Park and Burlington City. A busy year for the dress uniforms. In addition to the parades, the company turned their attention to fire prevention efforts. This was the first year that contests were held for school children to make posters and write essays on the fire prevention theme. The committee was given \$25 to buy prizes to be awarded for the best posters and essays, and arranged for fire drills to be held at the high school and elementary school. The children's posters were displayed in the windows of the town's business houses. The events were capped with an open house at the firehouse in October.

Chief Stauch reported disappointing returns from the annual fund drive. Of the 1900 letters sent to residents and businessmen of the borough, only 526 were returned at the end of the drive with a total contribution of \$1,076. The company was anticipating expenditures of nearly 10,000 for the year. With the borough's expected contribution of \$3,500 and the disappointing returns of the fund drive, it looked like a deficit was in the making. A plea went out to all residents to contribute at least \$2 a person and more

contributions were received but the trend was set, and annual fund drives were just not bringing in what they had in the past.

A turning point was reached in the way the affairs of the company were conducted in 1957/1958. President Bearn and Chief Stauch, in 1957 and Chief Aiman in 1958 provided the leadership to set the operations of the company in order. Financial Secretary Merrill Lutz, made immeasurable contributions by setting up proper accounts and making detailed reports on all funds. The officers recognized that in order for the company to save lives and protect property, training and equipment were necessary. Firemen were sent to schools, drills were held on a regular basis with points awarded for attendance. Fund raising activities were coordinated and conducted in a businesslike fashion. This groundwork began to pay off when the company officers were able to present a budget to council and substantiate the need for additional funds from the borough. Borough Council allocated \$2,000 to the company for the new truck and \$3,280 for operations in 1958.

1958

Stewart Bearn was reelected president for another year at the annual meeting of the company on January 20, 1958. Chief Stauch reported a total of eighty four calls in 1957 with the pumps in service for 28 hours and 1810 man hours devoted to fighting fires and other emergencies. The company was averaging a turn out of 20 firemen per fire, but losses were at an all time high of \$103,475 in 1957. Secretary Chester DiLauro noted in the minutes that the only "old timer" that was still living was Mr. Wilcke, and he did not attend because of his age. Garbutt "Mike" Aiman was elected chief of the company in February 1958 and would serve in that capacity for the next fourteen years. The company voted that a page of the minute book be set aside to honor past Chief Edward O. Stauch, Sr. for the meritorious work he had completed as fire chief during his tenure of office.

In February, 1958, Hatboro and surrounding communities were buried by a blizzard that dumped fifteen inches of snow on the area. It began snowing early on Saturday morning and continued to snow through Sunday. All roads were blocked and public transportation halted. The town was virtually snowed in. The fireman reported to the firehouse and stood-by to help if needed. Many stayed at the firehouse for up to forty-eight hours. Fortunately there were no real emergencies before the roads could be opened and things got back to normal.

In April, Bob Hambrecht was appointed vice president of the Montgomery County Fireman's Association for the e thirds district. Another renovation to the front of the firehouse was approved. A new single overhead door that extended for the full width of the front of the building was installed. The door had tinted glass to prevent the paint of the truck from fading. The new front was of a colonial design with brown bricks. Stewart Bearn was awarded the contract to build the new front and install the door.

## JUNIOR MEMBERSHIPS APPROVED

In September 22, 1958, the company amended the bi-laws to provide for "Junior Memberships". The change permitted boys between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years and of good moral character to be admitted as junior members. Junior members were entitled to attend all meetings and participate in all fire drills. The juniors drilled with the regular members under the direction of the Deputy Chief Bud Johnson. After six months of training at the regular fire drills a junior member would be permitted to attend fires and other emergencies upon discretion of the line officers. They could also participate in any special activities and had full insurance coverage. At the November meeting the first three Junior Members were approved by the company. They were Donald Gottshall, Albert Krugar and Robert Stauch.

## VOLKSWAGON AMBULANCE

In October, the Rotary Club advised the fire company that they were willing to provide a Volkswagen ambulance to the company with no strings attached if the fire company was willing to accept it. The company agreed to accept the offer and directed the line officers to take over the operation of the ambulance for the first year until a rescue unit could be formed. The ambulance was complete with a siren and 360 degree red light. The company used a \$450 cash donation as a matching fund to purchase a radio for the ambulance and two walkie talkie radios for the fire company. The new ambulance was delivered in April. There was immediate interest by some members to form a rescue unit. A committee was appointed to attain that goal.

The company raised \$7,087.71 from contributions in 1958 and the supper committee reported net receipts of \$517.10. Junior member Bob Stauch was put in charge of getting Santa Claus around to visit the homes of the fireman and bring joy to the children. Santa

rode in a station wagon and delivered presents to happy children all around town. The fire company rented space to the post office for the Christmas rush and Santa came to the fire company in the form of Hatboro Appliance Store which donated a 24" TV for the enjoyment of the firemen at the firehouse.

1959

Stewart Bearn was re-elected president in 1959 and Chief Aiman reported that the company responded to seventy-seven calls in 1958. They were in service for fifty-three and three quarter hours and averaged twenty-two members per fire. Losses were the lowest in many years at \$1,680. Treasurer Merrill Lutz reported \$13,373.10 in the company treasury.

Chief Aiman had inspected the Loller School and was concerned for the safety of the children attending classes in the old building. Several blatant safety violations such as grills over classroom windows had been brought to the attention of the principal and had been corrected. But the fact remained that very young children were in an overcrowded building that was not built to modern safety standards. Chief Aiman knew of the consequences of any action taken to force the closing of the building, but he also knew of his responsibility to the community. He recommended and received the support of the entire fire company to recommend the closing of Loller School. While his action did not result in the immediate closing, it did help highlight the urgent need for another elementary school in the borough and lead to the construction of the Pennypack Elementary School.

On February 6, 1959, Hatboro and eight other companies fought a spectacular fire at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station. Fire broke out in the old operations building, a large two story frame building sitting near the station's runway. There were over 150 firemen on scene, but the building was completely consumed.

Hatboro fireman got assistance from the sky on St. Patrick's Day in 1959. The company was called to assist Horsham with a massive field and brush fire at the Park Valley Nurseries. While battling the blaze Chief Aiman and his crew were cut off and had no way of communicating with the second Hatboro truck to request assistance. Much to the surprise of the chief, a U.S. Army helicopter dropped in on the chief and his men and asked if he could be of any assistance. A newspaper account of the incident reports that

Chief Aiman asked the pilot to tell the men on the second truck to send up some water tanks and brooms. The helicopter obligingly flew back and landed on the Park Road to deliver the message. Some 50 to 60 acres of fields and woods were burned.

During the year the company gave the Emerson TV to the Hartsville Fire Company, bought a new forty-nine star flag and began the process of purchasing a new aerial ladder truck. The board of directors approved the purchase, and arrangements were made with the Hatboro National Bank to borrow up to \$20,000 at 3 percent interest. The fireman would have to raise at least \$15,000 as the expected cost would be between \$30,000 and \$42,000. No matter how you looked at it, a lot of suppers would have to be served. In August, the company selected a Maxim 100 foot aerial ladder truck for \$44,000 and an order was placed. Unfortunately, the new truck was too large for the firehouse so the engine room wall had to be moved back again and the building extended by building a new kitchen on the back of the firehouse. To keep costs down, the company voted to do most of the labor themselves. The new extension built on the back of the firehouse left no further room on the lot for future growth. The company had literally built to the walls.

#### RESCUE UNIT CREATED

On July 1, 1959, a group of eighteen firemen officially created Enterprise Fire Company Rescue Unit. The unit was charged with responding to all fires and disasters with the fire company, to attend all first aid needs of the firemen, to respond to emergency calls, to assist the fire company with fund raising and to train personnel in first aid and operation of rescue equipment. The Rescue Captain would be in charge of the unit assisted by two lieutenants, and an engineer to maintain the equipment. Membership was originally limited to males over 18 years of age of good moral character and they had to already be a regular member of the fire company.

By the end of the year the company reported \$18,950.97 had been raised through donations for the new truck and regular contributions. Two ham suppers were held with 908 people served in April and 870 served in the October dinner. The company was so good at putting on dinners that they began to hire out to other organizations thereby earning additional funds for the company coffers. In addition to the regular solicitations for contributions, a special solicitation for the truck fund was undertaken. The results show that the people of Hatboro believed in and were ready to support their fire company.

## FIRE PREVENTION WEEK PROGRAM

For "Prevention Week" in October Enterprise firemen participated in a comprehensive fire and rescue demonstration at the Hatboro Horsham High School on South York Road. A simulated general alarm fire was held with fire companies from Hatboro, Horsham, Willow Grove and other from nearby communities responding. The Willow Grove Second Alarmers and the Willow Grove and Horsham Fire Company Ambulance Corps also participated. Twenty pieces and more than 200 firemen and rescue personnel were on hand. Smoke bombs were set off to make the scene realistic as the well trained volunteers' simulated rescue of injured persons by lowering them from the roof and second floor windows in "Stokes Litters" and slings. A large crowd watched the companies in action.

## BOWLING ALLEY FIRE

About 11:30 a.m. on November 9, 1959, Russel Worstall spotted smoke in his stationary store on Jacksonville Road. Further investigation revealed that the smoke was getting into his store through the ventilation system which was connected to the next door bowling alley. He called the fire company at the same time that a driver of a Delaware Valley Cement truck saw the smoke and radioed his company to turn in the alarm. The papers reported that a cloud of smoke obscured the building as the alarm was called in but had disappeared before firemen arrived. Chief Aiman speculated that the smoke had occurred when the skylight was broken sending the interior smoke out suddenly. It took the firemen about an hour to control the fire but they were on scene until 4:30 p.m. Horsham, Willow Grove, Lacey Park assisted Hatboro. Damage exceeded \$125,000. The bowling alley was gutted.

While most people were preparing for the Christmas holiday on December 24, 1959, area firemen from Horsham, Hatboro, Abington, Warrington, Ambler, Huntingdon Valley, Jenkintown, Fort Washington, Willow Grove, Warminster, Willow Grove Naval Air Station and the Second Alarmers were fighting a \$650,000 blaze at Bargain City Store on Easton Road in Horsham. The newspaper reported that the fire started about 2:30 a.m. in the store which had only been open for about two months. The entire interior of the store was gutted. Firemen were turned in to veritable ice men as the water froze on their coats, hats and boots. Just another day on the job for volunteer firemen.

## CHAPTER 8

1960-1969

### EQUIPMENT TO MATCH THE NEED

There were 7,315 residents in the borough in 1960 and the population grew dramatically each time new apartment house was opened. Apartment houses were being built everywhere. The Madison House and Osborne House were completed. Jackson House was in the planning stages, and Wynfair House was under construction. The business district was growing too. Gamburg's Furniture Store expanded with a major addition and increased off street parking by building a lot and access road to Byberry Avenue. Berlin's 5 & 10 Cent Store was also expanding, and just before Christmas the new post office on North York Road was dedicated.

1960

The officers reported \$27,144.14 total funds in all accounts at the beginning of the year. The Company thanked Chester DiLauro for his thirteen years of good and faithful service as the company secretary. Stew Bearn and Mike Aiman continued as president and chief and John Kimball became the new secretary of the company while Ken Kraske took over treasurer duties from Merrill Lutz. The ladies auxiliary donated \$500 to the company and the plans for the new aerial truck were received from Maxim. Ernest Sprouse was the Chief of the rescue unit and the company discussed the purchase of an auxiliary generator. All this business as the company got off to a good start in 1960.

Chief Aiman directed that on all house fire calls, the first man on the Dodge fire truck was to put on a Scott air pack while proceeding to the fire. The chief also reported that the Maxim truck needed \$2,000 in repairs, and that the Hatboro Junior Chamber of Commerce had presented the company with a plaque commending the firemen for distinguished service. Aiman stated that this is the first time in history that the Jaycees have ever given such an award to the fire company. The plaque was hung in a place of

honor in the firehouse. Frank Baxter was elected vice president of the Montgomery County Fire Radio Association.

## PUBLIC SPIRIT BUILDING BURNS

On March 5, 1960 the offices of the Public Spirit caught fire on the second floor. The building was built just after the civil war and was located on the west side of York Road next to Berlin's 5&10. The main offices of the paper had been moved to Fort Washington, but the local office was still housed on the first floor along with the printing shop conducted by Samuel Erwin. The second and third floors were being used for storage by Mr. Berlin.

Sub-freezing weather coated equipment and the building with ice. About 120 firemen from six companies were able to confine the fire to the second floor and kept it from spreading to adjacent buildings along York Road. During the height of the blaze, Horsham Fire Company Assistant Chief, Joseph Camp fell from a second story ledge. Fortunately he was not seriously injured. Damage to the building and its contents was reported to be between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The fire company's publicity committee reported that the fire was in five newspapers and made the television news as well as radio newscast. Not long after the fire the building was razed and a major addition to Berlin's 5&10 was constructed on the site.

## COMMUNITY DANCE

In March there was a proposal to form a "Barber Shop Quartet" but it turned out there was little support and the idea was tabled. Instead the younger members of the company organized and held a community dance on August 20, 1960 to raise funds for the fire company. The dance was held on the Hatboro Federal Savings parking lot on York Road from 8 to 11 p.m. and the admission price 35 cents a person or 50 cents a couple. Richard Teasdale was chairman of the dance committee and those assisting him were Robert Stauch, Don Gottshall, William Bailey, Harry Arnold and John Ruckdeschel. Mr. & Mrs. Bud Johnson, William Penglase and Edward Reynolds were the chaperones. The dance proved to be popular with the town's young folk and they continued for some time.

## MAXIM AERIAL LADDER

The fireman had been expecting the arrival of the new Maxim aerial ladder truck for several weeks, only to be disappointed time after time by delivery delays. Finally word was received that the truck was on its way and would be in Hatboro about noon on Wednesday. Around 10 p.m. Tuesday evening, August 23, the firehouse started buzzing with rumors that area firemen were driving to Warrington to see a new aerial ladder truck. The firemen were shocked to find out that the attraction was their truck. The driver who had driven the truck from Middleboro Mass. Had stopped for the night at a motel in Warrington, unaware that he was so close to Hatboro. The Daily Intelligencer reported a minor mutiny when the fireman abandoned their work putting the finishing touches on the firehouse renovations to go get the truck.

“The firemen wanted to go up right away and bring it back to the firehouse and start polishing it. ‘We’ll get it tomorrow’, said Fire Chief Mike Aiman. ‘We have to finish up the firehouse tonight’. The men folded their arms. ‘No truck – no work’ they said. The truck was in the firehouse Tuesday night.”

The newspaper reported that the welcome for the new truck lacked only rose garlands in the streets. As soon as firemen had the new truck in the firehouse, the siren sounded and visiting firemen for miles around came to town to see the new apparatus. The firemen were acting like fathers with a new child. They couldn’t wait to get near the new truck and shine it up. There were not alone as nearly everyone came to the firehouse to see what all the fuss was about. The Daily Intelligencer reported on August 24, 1960”

“Mothers perched their offspring in the driver’s seat and snapped their picture. The youngsters had a field day for the aerial ladder is what every child dreams of in a fire truck. The adults too haven’t hesitated to climb over it and badger the firemen to ‘please put the ladder up’.”

The truck measured 40 feet and held a 100 foot aerial ladder plus 200 feet of ground ladders. It had compartments for hose, axes, air packs, and other equipment. There was also a portable generator aboard that was capable of supplying emergency electricity for lights and could even blow the siren. The front cab had seats for five men and was uncovered. The truck had a 300 hp engine, power steering and air brakes. It tanks held enough water to spray a fire for five minutes while the firemen had time to connect hoses

to hydrants. No one who saw it questioned the \$44,000 purchase price. The beautiful red truck was worth that much for paradise alone.

Eleanor Winner and Elizabeth Kimball became the company's first woman radio operators in September 1960. With the addition of these women, all firemen were now available to go to the scene of the fire. Work continued on the new kitchen with new serving trays and a donated refrigerator being installed. There were no suppers at the firehouse during the renovations but plans were being made for a supper in early 1961 with over 400 people expected to attend. Chief Aiman had to repeatedly warn firemen about driving too fast when responding to alarms, and the year ended with the firemen enjoying a large cake donated by Stew Bearn.

Even with the excitement of a new truck, the firemen still had a job to attend to. So when the siren blew one late summer night, firemen responded to find they were needed for a manhunt – or rather a boy hunt. The *Intelligencer* reported that “One Way or Another, Those Firemen Get Their Man!” The article described the hunt as follows:

“Leave it to the firemen to turn up lost boys. Yesterday a distraught mother called the Hatboro Police to report that her sons Clinton and Jay Herne of 219 Byberry Avenue had not reported home at dark. The boys had been permitted to ‘campout’ across the street with the provision that they come in when the moon came out. The Hatboro Fire Company was alerted and the sirens wailed to call the firemen to join the search. While the firemen were scouring the area, close to 2 a.m. the two boys came home. Why? They had been frightened by the fire whistles.”

1961

President Bearn was reelected at the annual meeting on January 16, 1961 and Chief Aiman reported that the company responded to eight-five alarms during 1960. The board of directors took the men to task for the general untidy condition of the firehouse and warned that “there was too much malicious mischief and damned foolishness”. The treasury held \$7,109.47 and the company began planning for additional equipment acquisition.

The first supper served from the new kitchen was a roast beef dinner for the Masonic Order in April. The firehouse had to be cleaned and the floor painted for this occasion. The first fire company dinner was held on May 7th and the company made 570.75 profit. A new dance committee was formed and dances were held at the firehouse on a regular basis throughout the year. The first dance netted 104.06 which was put toward new tarps for the trucks.

## CARRIAGE HOUSE FIRE

A spectacular pre-dawn fire destroyed a Hatboro barn and injured four persons on November 13, 1961. The fire was discovered at 5:20 a.m. by a passing Gardenville Dairy milkman on his morning route. While passing the Carriage House Restaurant on East Moreland Avenue, he spotted the fire in a barn in back of the restaurant. The fire company responded to find a two story frame building completely engulfed. They were unable to save the barn but did prevent the fire from spreading to nearby homes. The aerial ladder was used to protect roofs of other building from showers of sparks thrown into the air as the building burned. A tenant of the Carriage House was injured when he jumped from a second story floor window to save his motorcycle that was in the blazing barn. Fireman James Greenier sprained his back, Lieutenant Albert Heeber cut his finger and Chief Aiman also suffered a back sprain.

1962

Chief Aiman reported 78 fires for 1961 and Captain John Kimball reported that \$997 had been expended for truck maintenance during the past year. Rescue Unit Chief Mel James reported that his unit had responded to 229 calls and the treasurer reported total expenses for the year were \$14,927.49. Harry Morris was elected president of the company for 1962. Stew Bearn thanked the members of the company for their help during the last four years while he was president. In February Mike Aiman was reelected chief, and Tony Purich became the rescue unit chief.

Longtime member Albert Krewson died on February 24, 1962 at the age of 78. The company honored him with a page in the minute book set aside for his memory. On May 28, 1962, William Gottshall was elected a junior member of the company. And in August James Saldutti was among the new members admitted. In November the company approved the purchase of a 10 horsepower siren for \$720 to be placed on the firehouse

hose tower, and to move the present 5 horsepower siren to the north end of town, but the Board of Directors held up on the purchase to find out if civil defense funds might be available. The siren remained on hold for to more years. Another item stayed on the agenda for a long time was the matter of some sort of alarm system installed in the homes of firemen. Bell Telephone had a proposal for a bell system that would ring when the siren was activated, but the cost was more than the company wants to expend. There was call system whereby certain members of the company were called on the telephone and they in turn call others, but the system had drawbacks, not a least of which was the time it took to make the calls.

The hard work involved in holding fire company suppers had taken a toll on firemen. In 1962 two suppers were held, but by the end of the year some firemen were proposing that no more suppers be held. Other suggested that the ladies auxiliary be asked to run the suppers and still others wanted tradition to continue. The debate continued into January 1963 when some of the young members of the company decided that they would like a turn running a supper. They scheduled a roast beef supper for May 26, 1963 and the young firemen served 661 people. Despite their efforts and hard work, the profit only amounted to \$346.91. This was the last fire company supper served at the firehouse. The kitchen equipment including plates, pots, [pans, potato mashers and salt and pepper shakers were all sold in 1964 and the kitchen was converted to a meeting and recreation room for the firemen. The dance committee continued to hold dances and wound up the year with a New Years Eve Dance. The committee collected over \$1,000 that year, and the company raised \$8,142.48 during the annual fund drive. That was \$500 less than the year before.

Facing the declining contributions and the lack of volunteers to serve on committees to raise funds, Chief Aiman met with chiefs from other fire companies to determine how their companies were funded. He reported at the November meeting that he found that a fir tax that provided adequate dependable funding was in the best interest of the fire company. After the Chief's report and a general discussion, it was agreed by the majority that a fire tax would be more fair and equal method of supporting the fire company. A committee was appointed to meet with the borough council to request that a two mill fire tax on real estate in the borough be imposed. The Company ended the year with good financial news; the final payment for the aerial ladder truck was made in December, one year early.

1963

Harry Morris was reelected president for 1963. Chief Aiman reported 112 fire calls for 1962 with less than \$15,000 in losses in the borough. The rescue unit had 287 calls and the fire police were represented at all fires and emergencies. The treasurer reported receipts for 1962 were \$18,464.01. Mike Aiman was reelected chief for 1963. Seventeen members were honored with life memberships at the January meeting of the company. They were: Millard "Rube" Chatburn, Leslie Winner, Adam Bustard, Harry Morris, Garbutt "Mike" Aiman, Russell Duckworth, Alex Parry, William Rosenburger, Stanley Shiles, Sr., William Speakman, Norman Wilson, Sr., Charles Stoutenburg, Walter Dudbridge, Frank Frey, Fred Gresens, Alfred Genner and William Wright.

### HOUSE ON WINDSOR AVENUE DESTROYED BY FIRE

On January 13, 1962, a carriage barn that had been converted into a home caught fire and the family living in the building narrowly escaped with their lives. The home was located at 325 Windsor Avenue. Fire Chiefs from Hatboro and Horsham described the rescuing of the four children by their father and mother as a miracle because of the dense smoke and rapidity of the flames. Firemen from Hatboro and Horsham battled the flames for two hours. The fire started in the furnace area of the building when one of the children was "playing daddy" and put too much wood in the wood burning furnace. The jammed furnace quickly spread flames to kindling wood stored nearby and soon the whole building was ablaze. When firemen arrived all four sides of the house were ablaze. Chief Aiman described the house fire as one of the worse in the borough. This was the first house fire in over 22 years wherein the building was completely destroyed.

Borough Council increased the fire tax to 2 mil as requested and the fire company could now plan on an income of approximately \$17,000 from the tax. In May, President Morris appointed a nine man committee to look into the purchase of a new pumper. Chief Aiman was appointed chairman of the committee. Rescue Chief, Frank Frey reported that the unit's Rescue Team won first prize in the competition at the Pennsylvania Association of First Aid and Rescue Squads conference.

### GAMBURG'S FURNITURE WAREHOUSE FIRE

A general alarm fire – one of the worst in Hatboro's history – destroyed a warehouse at Gamburg's Furniture Co. on South York Road on May 18, 1963. The Daily Intelligencer reported on May 19th:

“The mammoth blaze fed by furniture for two and one half hours left in its wake 11 injured firemen and \$175,000 to \$200,000 in damage.”

It took firemen about three hours to bring the fire under control after the first alarm was struck about 9:07 p.m. The fire company had to call in cranes to pull the remaining cinder block walls down before the fire was completely extinguished. When the fire fighters arrived flames were leaping as high as 65 feet in the air. The fire and smoke reportedly was seen as far away as Lansdale.

The paper went on to describe the fire:

“The roof of the rear level collapsed, sending a shower of sparks into the air. Then the roof fell through the second story and smashed through the floor. The fire was under control about midnight but continued to burn until about 5 o’clock in the morning.”

Fire companies from Horsham, Willow Grove, Huntingdon Valley, Warminster, Lacey Park, Warrington, Abington, Bryn Athyn, Trevoise Height and Weldon assisted Hatboro at the fire. Five rescue squads and the Second Alarmers were also on the scene. Chief Aiman called it the worst fire in Hatboro since the high school fire in 1939. He added that the lumber yard fire in 1918 was a close second.

Just two weeks later another fire did \$25,000 damage to another warehouse at the same location. The fire was discovered about 5:10 a.m. by Hatboro policeman John Kimball. While on patrol he noticed an automobile speeding out of the driveway of the Gamburg’s Furniture Co. Thinking there may have been a burglary he investigated and found smoke coming from one of the windows of the warehouse. The alarm was given and Hatboro and Horsham fire companies quickly responded preventing a re-occurrence of the major fire just two weeks before. Both fires were attributed to arson.

The Rescue Squad purchased a new Oldsmobile Ambulance from A. Geissel & Sons for \$9,320. The new ambulance was equipped with two-way radio and was delivered to the

company on June 26, 1963. The Old Volkswagen ambulance was continued in service and the Buick ambulance was used as a trade-in.

The November 25, 1963 regular meeting of the Enterprise Fire Company was cancelled with only the following notation in the minute book.

“Meeting cancelled due to the death of John F. Kennedy, President of the United States”

1964

Harry Morris continued as president of the company for 1964. Chief Aiman reported 159 fire sin 1963 with losses nearly \$300,000 to property valued at \$800,000. The rescue unit had 375 calls, 211 of which were emergency calls. Chief Aiman was reelected for another year at the February meeting. The by-laws were amended early in the year to provide for a “Radio Officer”. Frank Baxter was the first person to be appointed to that post. Baxter had been involved with the radio system for the fire company since the first radio set was purchased. He was active in the Montgomery County Radio Association, and is credited with designing, setting up and supervising the fire company’s radio system. Through his efforts, the company acquired equipment for all of the apparatus as well as base station units for the fire house and police department. He established a radio room at the fire house and maintained the required logs and licenses.

Another person was recognized for outstanding service to the fire company in March of the same year. Dr. Frank Clark had been instrumental in providing health services to the fireman for years. He would come to meetings to give flu shots and tetanus shots to the fireman and provide assistance in first aid training. President Morris presented Dr. Clark with the honorary title of “Fire Surgeon” and official recognition of the company.

## MACK PUMPERS

In January the company authorized the purchase of a new Mack 1000 gallon per minute pumper with a closed cab. Mack Motor Truck Co. had been building trucks at its

Allentown, Pennsylvania plant since 1905. The bull dog emblem was known the world over. Mack fire trucks were considered the heir to the Ahrens-Fox reputation for quality. Mack's reputation and the fire company's past experience with Ahrens-Fox probably had a lot to do with the decision to award the contract to Mack for \$28, 509.

Arrangements were made with the Philadelphia National Bank to finance the purchase for up to three years at 5 percent interest. Mack Truck co. offered a 10 percent discount if a second truck of the same type was ordered at the same time. A second truck was ordered for \$25,000 in July, 1964 after it was strongly recommended by the board of directors.

The first Mack pumper was delivered on September 5, 1964, and the second was received on April 25, 1965. The trucks were large by standards of that time and made an impressive appearance in their deep red, highly polished livery with gold leaf decoration and chrome fittings. The first truck delivered was assigned number 952 and was a 1964 model. The second truck was a 1965 model and was assigned the number 953, there was little or no noticeable difference in the outward appearance of the trucks, and they became known as the twin pumpers. The 1965 trucks is still in service today – the last red truck left in the firehouse.

The Hahn pumper purchased in 1946 was sold to Northampton Fire Company, Richboro, for \$3,000 and delivered to them when the second Mack was received. Around the same time as the second order was placed, a committee was appointed to design a new booster truck to replace the Dodge.

If the firehouse was full before, not it was almost impossible to squeeze between the equipment in the engine room. The engine bay held the Maxim aerial ladder, Two Mack Pumpers, the Dodge Booster and two ambulances, the Oldsmobile and Volkswagen. Early in 1964 some members of the company explored the possibility of purchasing the old post office building on the west side of York Road and ByBerry Avenue. The plans never went very far. Another proposal was to add a second story for meeting rooms to the present firehouse and enlarge the engine room downstairs. This approach was found to be impractical due to cost. The only solution was a new building.

In other events during 1964, the Fire Company telephone number was changed to Osborne 5-4040. A committee was appointed to plan a parade for the 75th Anniversary of the company in 1965, and Harvey McCall was added to the life membership list. The

long awaited new 10 horsepower siren was purchased and installed on the roof of the hose tower.

The matter of having some sort of alarm system installed in the fireman's homes was not settled. There was a good deal of discussion about a Bell Telephone system that consisted of an alarm bell which would ring when the siren was activated. The cost of the installation and monthly service was a matter of contention. Some thought the cost would be borne by the company; others were willing to pay for it themselves. The board of directors recommended raising the siren another 13 feet so it could be better heard all over town. The end result was 1964 passed without further action.

#### VICKS PLANT FIRE

Just a few days after the new Mack pumper was delivered Chief Aiman and some of the firemen were showing it off at the annual Library Bazaar. The shiny red fire truck was a major attraction that pleasant afternoon, September 12, 1964, as the town folk browsed through the bazaar booths and enjoyed the vegetable soup. Suddenly the town was rocked by an explosion. Chief Aiman looked up and saw a huge ball of fire in the sky and immediately sent the new truck to the scene. He then ran to the firehouse and sounded the alarm.