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100 YEARS

WESTFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT 1875 - 1975



WESTFIELD

EXEMPT

FIREMEN'S

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Robert A. Green, *Assistant Chairman*

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Richard Moncur

Alfred Linden

Edward Sobin

Lawrence Palmer



WESTFIELD EXEMPT FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION FIRE HEADQUARTERS WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07090

March 1, 1975

It is with great pleasure that I offer my congratulations to the Westfield Fire Department on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

Much of the success of our modern, up-to-date, fire fighting organization is due to the dedication of many of our retired and deceased members. To them, I humbly dedicate these pages from our history.

The history contained in this commemorative issue is an accurate account of the activities of the Westfield Fire Department, from its inception, through its years of trials and tribulations, to the present. The difficult task of gathering and assembling this authoritative record of one of Westfield's finest institutions fell mainly on the shoulders of one man. My heartfelt thanks, and the appreciation of all members, goes to Alfred H. (Bud) Linden, Jr. for his efforts in producing this memorable record.

May the next one hundred years be as fruitful and rewarding as the last.

Richard A. Moncur
RICHARD A. MONCUR, PRESIDENT
WESTFIELD EXEMPT FIREMEN'S ASSN.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is hereby expressed to those Fire Department members, both active and retired, who assisted in this project. Fireman Robert Schierle must be commended for his relentless pursuit of data, photos and memorabilia. My wife Ellen must also be identified for her patience and her editorial expertise. Finally, my gratitude to the Westfield Bicentennial Committee for its interest and advance of seed money which helped defray the cost of printing this book.

THE AUTHOR

Westfield, N.J. Fire Department.

WESTFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT 1875 - 1975

Compiled by: Alfred H. Linden



STEPHEN S. MAPES.
FOUNDER OF 1st FIRE DEPT
WESTFIELD, N.J.



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WESTFIELD

BICENTENNIAL

COMMITTEE

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WESTFIELD NJ



BICENTENNIAL
1776-1976

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Westfield was not much more than a village in the 1870's. Within its boundaries it included areas currently occupied by Mountainside and portions of Garwood, Clark, and Scotch Plains. There was no fire fighting organization in those days. In the event of fire the citizens that were available would pitch in and attempt to extinguish it using buckets filled with water from nearby wells, cisterns or streams.

As necessity is the mother of invention, it took a large conflagration on August 10, 1874 to awaken the people to the fact that they had no fire department to handle such a situation, should it occur again. The fire, to be described more fully later, began in Gales Drug Store on the north side of East Broad Street and spread eastward to Elm Street and westerly to the three story Darsh Building, destroying all in its path. A call for assistance went out and Chief Doane of Plainfield responded with Gazelle Steamer No. 1 and Scotch Plains' Excelsior Hook & Ladder arrived and were able to stop further progress of the fire.

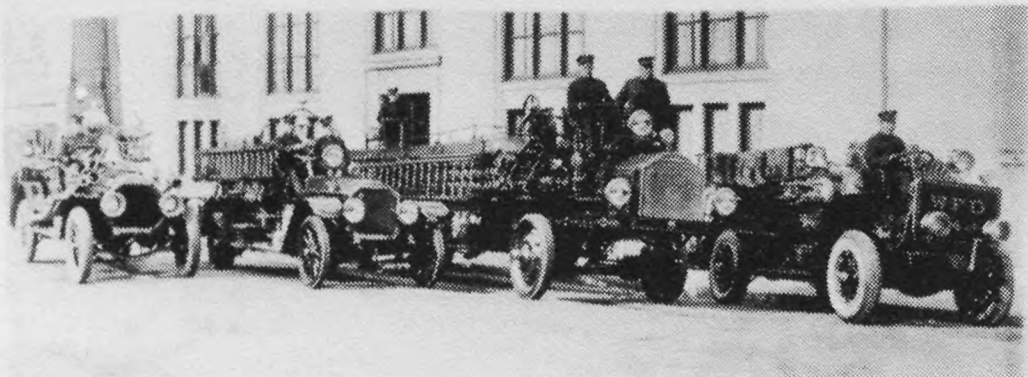
Because of this fire's destruction and the fact that insurance companies were adverse to accepting insurance business in a community without a fire fighting organization, it was decided to organize a fire department. A citizen's committee known as the Westfield Fire Department Association was formed to purchase equipment and recommend the best method of organizing a department. As a result of their study, the parent company, known as the Westfield Hook & Ladder Company No. 1, held its first meeting in the office of D. W. Lamon on Monday evening March 1, 1875. At this meeting Joseph L. Clark was elected Chairman and James L. Miller, Secretary.

Answering the roll call were: S. S. Mapes, Joel Moffett, J. L. Clark, and J. L. Miller. At the meeting a letter from the Trustees of the Westfield Fire Department Association was read directing the committee on apparatus and building of the Association to loan its fire apparatus and building to the Hook and Ladder Company for the protection of the lives and property of the citizens of Westfield. The Westfield Hook & Ladder Company No. 1, a volunteer organization, was incorporated on November 10, 1876, for a term of 50 years, under an act of the New Jersey Legislature dated April 2, 1876 as follows:

A second volunteer company, Bucket & Engine Company, was organized on August 8, 1881, and held its first meeting August 22, 1881 at the Hotel Hall Building on East Broad Street. This building is now known as the Russell Building. The following officers were elected:

Otis G. Webb	Foreman
J. H. Manning	1st Asst. Foreman
C. F. W. Wittke	Treasurer
J. M. C. Marsh	Secretary

The apparatus of this company consisted of black fire buckets, each member having one in his possession.



Westfield's Apparatus — Circa 1922 — Copy Photo by R. Schierle

The Empire Engine Company No. 2 was incorporated and held its first meeting on January 27, 1883, with the following charter members:

F. R. Pennington	P. Traynor	Thomas Love
George W. Peek	E. Hart, Jr.	J. B. Harrison
Richard Seybold	C. Eggers	John Hodges
E. K. Schroepe	George Todd	H. I. Boice

The following officers were elected at this meeting:

F. R. Pennington	Foreman
P. Traynor	1st Asst. Foreman
Thomas Love	2nd Asst. Foreman
George W. Peek	Secretary

The Empire Engine Company's apparatus was a Holloway Chemical Engine purchased with funds provided by Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1. It was later reimbursed by Empire Engine Co. after they borrowed funds from the Relief Association.



Clown Brigade at Westfield's 50th Anniversary Celebration

The Westfield Fire Department was incorporated on February 5, 1883, by two representatives each of Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1, Bucket & Engine Co., and the Empire Engine Company. The incorporation into the Westfield Fire Department was in accordance with legislative acts of 1877 et seq. wherein townships of a certain size were permitted to assume the costs of fire protection through taxation by the election of district fire directors and the subsequent expenditure of funds under their control. Township Committees were further given the authority to establish regulations governing the use of township fire apparatus and the appointment of fire company members.

While the three companies may have incorporated in 1883 it wasn't at least until December 30, 1886 when the Township Committee accepted, by letter, the proposition of the companies to lease their equipment to the Township for ten years at one dollar per year provided that they be constituted the "Fire Department of Westfield Township."

Westfield N.J. Dec 30th 1886

Chas R. Blatt's Esq.
 Bucket & Engine Co. & C. Co. & C. Co. & C. Co.
 Sir

At a meeting of the Town
 Committee held this evening the following resolution
 was adopted: to wit

Resolved That we accept the
 proposition of Messrs R. Blatt's of Empire Engine Co. #2
 & J. Miller of W. A. & L. Co. #1. and Chas R. Blatt
 of Bucket and Engine Co. #1. to lease to the Township Com-
 mittee for ten years their fire apparatus for one dollar
 per year, and upon the acceptance of these terms we
 will constitute and appoint these companies the
 "Fire Department of Westfield Township".
 Awaiting your further pleasure in the matter would
 remain yours &c. By order of Town Council,
 L. M. Whitaker
 Clerk

Letter forming Township Fire Dept.

Apparently there were some problems that had developed between the firemen and the Fire Department Corporation or perhaps in the transition of the Township Fire Department to the Town Fire Department when the municipal form of government changed in 1903. For in September 1903, W. A. Cootter, Esq. held in a legal opinion that the incorporation of the Westfield Fire Department in 1883 and the subsequent turning over of its equipment to the township was illegal and thus void, thereby reverting to the Westfield Relief Association. In any event the problems must have been resolved for the department as constituted under township government ceased when the Fire Department of the Town of Westfield was organized under the provisions of an ordinance adopted by the Town Council on December 14, 1903.

The ordinance established the Westfield Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1, Empire Engine Co. No. 2, and the Bucket & Engine Co. No. 2 as the Fire Department of the Town of Westfield with manpower limitations of 20, 10, and 25 men for each company respectively.

The reasoning for the restriction to 10 men for the Empire Engine Company is open to conjecture. Perhaps they resisted their loss of independence to town control over membership appointments, equipment or the appointment of the Chief Engineer by the Town Council instead of the annual election process used previously. In any event a town council resolution was adopted on August 15, 1904 accepting an offer of the Empire Engine Co. to sell its apparatus, harness, blankets, hose, lanterns, signs, etc. to the town for \$250.00.

An amendatory ordinance adopted August 15, 1904 called for the following companies and men:

Hose Co. No. 1	—	30 Men
Truck Co. No. 1	—	20 Men
Engine Co. No. 1	—	20 Men

This comprised the organization until March 25, 1925 at which time the Town Council adopted a new ordinance and general rules to govern the Fire Department.

In 1953 the ordinance was further amended abolishing the three companies and reconstituting the department into a paid division and a volunteer company. As of February 1, 1975 the department consists of a paid Chief, 40 paid firemen, a 25 member volunteer company, and a fire prevention officer.

HEAD OFFICERS AND CHIEFS

The original head officers of the department were the Foremen and the Assistant Foremen of the respective companies who came from the ranks of the volunteer firemen. These and the administrative officers were elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the respective companies. In the event of a fire and in the absence of the Foremen or their Assistants the by-laws designated the first member arriving at the engine house to assume command until the officers arrived.

The first Foreman of the Bucket & Engine Co. was Otis G. Webb who was elected on August 22, 1881. The members of Empire Engine Co. No. 2 elected F. R. Pennington as its first Foreman on January 27, 1883.

The records of Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 are more complete than the other companies as indicated by the following listing of Foremen of that organization:

HOOK & LADDER CO. NO. 1 FOREMEN 1875 - 1886

J. S. Clark	1875 - 1877
J. S. Burhans	1877 - 1879
C. W. Harden	1879 - 1881
A. Z. Chambers	1881 - 1882
J. R. Barcalow	1882 - 1883
Mathias Clark	1883 - 1884
A. Z. Chambers	1884 - 1885
C. H. French	1885 - 1886

At the scene of a fire the companies operated independently of each other under the direction of the company Foreman, with no single Foreman having command responsibility. This situation did not pass unnoticed however, for the *Constitutionalist's* account of the Miss M. Johnson Drygoods & Millinery Store fire on March 2, 1884 reported . . . "The citizens of Westfield may well feel proud of the way the several fire companies worked together at the fire. The members of the Westfield Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1, Bucket & Engine Co. No. 1, and Empire Engine Co. No. 2 all worked together in harmony and did their utmost to protect and save property. There is only one thing to make the Fire Department of Westfield more effective, that is to have a central head, and we hope to record the establishment of such at no distant day."

The recommendation of the *Constitutionalist* was implemented in 1885 when James Mofett became the first Chief of the Fire Department. He was elected by secret ballot by the members of all three companies. The process of electing the chief officer continued through 1903. As evidenced by the following news story from a local weekly about the 1890 election of officers, campaigning and balloting was in the true democratic process:

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

"The most close and exciting election which has occurred in years took place at the Engine House, Westfield, last Tuesday evening. The contestants for the office of Chief of the department were John J. Schmitt and P. Traynor and it was impossible to judge at any time during the evening as to the result of the vote. Polls were open until nine o'clock and then the vote was counted showing the following result: For Chief, Schmitt, 66 votes; Traynor, 48 votes; scattering, 1 vote . . . Out of a total membership in the department of 121, there were 115 votes cast, being the best showing yet on record."

The following is a listing of volunteer Chiefs who served their community from 1885 through 1903.

VOLUNTEER FIRE CHIEFS
WESTFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

1885 James Moffett	1895 C. P. Wilcox
1886 C. W. Harden	1896 E. J. Wilcox
1887 Patrick Traynor	1897 J. A. Dennis
1888 F. R. Pennington	1898 J. P. English
1889 Anson B. Smith	1899 Wm. H. Chamberlain
1890 John Schmitt	1900 J. A. Dennis
1891 John Schmitt	1901 M. Miller
1892 Robert Woodruff	1902 Thomas O'Neil
1893 C. H. French	1903 I. Lambert
1894 I. Seeley	



J. MOFFETT
1885



C. W. HARDEN
1886



P. J. TRAYNOR
1887



F. R. PENNINGTON
1888



A. B. SMITH
1889



J. J. SCHMITT
1890-1891



ROBERT WOODRUFF
1892



C. H. FRENCH
1893



I. SEELEY
1894



C. P. WILCOX
1895



E. J. WILCOX
1896



J. A. DENNIS
1897



J. P. ENGLISH
1898



W. H. CHAMBERLAIN
1899



M. MILLER
1901



THOS. O'NEIL
1902



O. LAMBERT
1903

In 1904, pursuant to an ordinance adopted by the Town Council on December 14th, the Fire Department was completely reorganized. Central to the reorganization was the creation of the position of Chief Engineer. On February 28, 1904 Frederick Decker was appointed by the Town Council. The December 14, 1903 ordinance was amended on August 15, 1904 providing for an annual salary of one hundred dollars for the Chief Engineer. Chief Decker had been a member of the Hook & Ladder Co. since 1892 and was its Foreman in 1898. Chief Decker remained as Chief until his retirement in 1938.

William H. Linden, a paid fireman since 1927 and a Captain since 1933 was promoted to Chief Engineer in October of 1938. He served over 19 years as Chief until his retirement in July 1958.

Captain Martin D. Burke was appointed as Chief to replace William Linden in 1958. Burke, a volunteer member since 1939, joined the paid department in 1946. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1953 and Captain in 1956. He served as Chief until his sudden death on December 4, 1969.

Norman J. Ruerup, a Deputy Chief since December 1, 1963, was named Chief on January 27, 1970. Joining the Volunteer Company in April 1946 he became a paid man on November 1, 1948 and was promoted to Captain on May 6, 1961.



FREDERICK C. DECKER
1904 - 1938



WILLIAM H. LINDEN
1938 - 1958



MARTIN D. BURKE
1958 - 1969



NORMAN J. RUERUP
1970 - PRESENT

We have not been able to determine the exact date that paid personnel were added to the department in addition to Chief Decker. However, council minutes in 1907 and 1908 record Chief Decker's appearances before the Fire Committee requesting an additional paid man. A council salary resolution approved on December 16, 1912 indicate salaries paid to Cory Wilcox at \$85. per month, and to Harry Free and Fred Warden at \$80. per month. Temporary help was used during vacations for Edward Edgar was employed as an extra man in 1911 at a salary of two dollars per day.

Other names appearing on reports include Edward Pfirrmann who, in 1925 along with Fred Warden, signed fire reports as Assistant Engineer or Captain. An ordinance adopted on April 13, 1925 provided for the appointment of two Assistant Engineers as well as setting up departmental regulations.

At the time of the 50th Anniversary celebration of the department in 1925, the paid sector consisted of a Chief and eight paid firemen including the two Captains. The paid men worked an 84 hour work week on two platoons and by mid-1932, the number of paid personnel had increased to twelve. A seventh fireman was added to each shift in 1944.

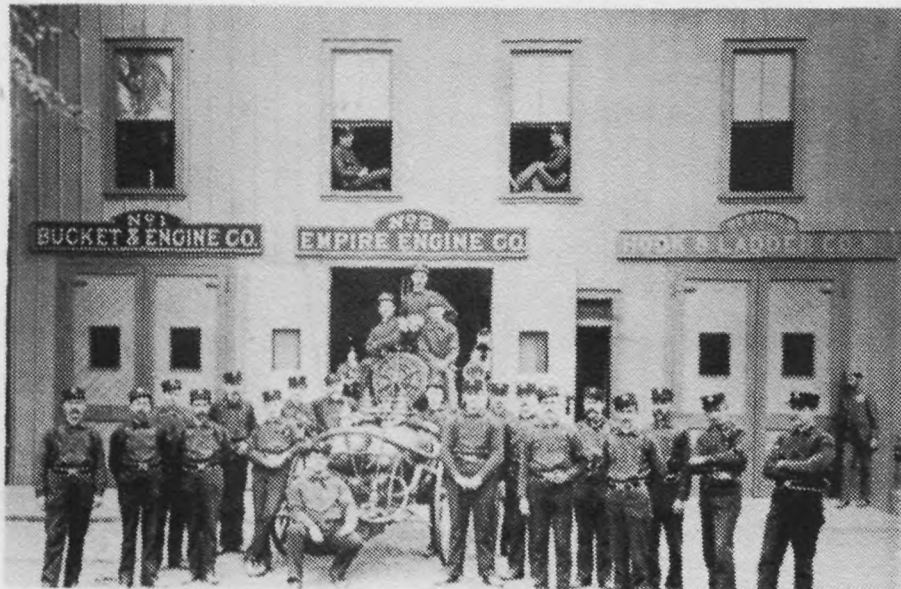
In August of 1947, probably as a result of the work week reduction to 72 hours, the position of Lieutenant was created. When weekly work hours were further reduced to 56 hours effective January 1, 1950 four firemen were hired and an additional platoon created. With the third platoon and a vacancy through retirement, the two Lieutenants were promoted to Captain.

In June of 1953 three Lieutenants were appointed, one for each platoon. The arrangement of one Captain and one Lieutenant per crew continued until March 10, 1959 when newly appointed Chief Burke had an ordinance enacted shifting the Captain's title to Deputy Chief and the Lieutenant's title to Captain. From 1959 through 1963 manpower was added to the department, raising the number of firemen per platoon from seven in 1958 to twelve in 1963.

In August of 1963 the rank of Lieutenant was again filled when the South Side Fire House began operations. A Deputy Chief and Lieutenant served at headquarters, while a Captain was in command of Station 2. The three officers per platoon system continued until January 1, 1973 when the Town Council enacted an ordinance creating the 42 hour work week for paid firemen. This action required the creation of a fourth platoon which entailed the employment of five new firemen and the appointment of one new Deputy Chief, Captain and Lieutenant. At present the paid force consists of four ten-man platoons plus the Chief and the Fire Prevention Officer.

Actually the 42 hour work week had been approved by the town's voters through a non-binding referendum in November of 1964. However, reluctance on the part of the Town Council to add the manpower that the Chief demanded delayed the work week reduction until 1973. In April 1965 the work week was reduced somewhat to 51 plus hours on a six week cycle through a "Dot Day" system whereby individuals on each platoon alternated taking days off when their crew was on duty.

The Fire Prevention Bureau got its start in 1970 when Deputy Chief Onksen was on light duty due to an injury. He served until his disability retirement in 1962 when John W. Dries was promoted to Captain (Deputy Chief in 1965) and assigned to the Fire Prevention office. When he left the department in July of 1973, Captain Paul Battiloro assumed the functions of the bureau.



Empire Engine Co. in front of 1888 Fire House

ENGINE HOUSES

The first fire house for Westfield was located on a lot on the northerly side of East Broad Street where the building at 121 East Broad Street now stands. The lot for the fire house was donated by William F. Peck (some sources state that it was the site of Aunt Phoebe Ross's house). The construction of this building, to house the "Little Giant" and the ladder truck, was financed by the Westfield Fire Department Association through public conscription. The present occupant of the first floor of the premises is the Corset Shop with apartments in the upstairs floors.

On August 17, 1887, the Westfield Fire Department purchased the present fire headquarters site from the Central New Jersey Land and Improvement Company for the sum of \$450.00. The original wooden structure, which was erected on this site had a frontage of 38.8 feet and a depth of 150 feet. Prior to the construction of the new firehouse, Robert Woodruff purchased the old building for \$160 provided that he remove it from the site within 10 days.

In 1910, in conjunction with the construction of the present headquarters building an additional lot, 22 x 150 feet, was annexed per a lease to the town by the Central Railroad of New Jersey with the stipulation that the site be used for fire department purposes. Earlier histories of the department report that this arrangement was negotiated during a very pleasant conference held with W. G. Besler, Vice President of the Railroad, and R. F. Hohenstein, Chairman of the Fire Committee, Charles H. Darsh, Architect of the building, and Frederick C. Decker, Chief Engineer of the Fire Department.

The present fire headquarters building, located on North Avenue at the railroad station was formally opened on Monday, May 29, 1911 with a gala banquet. The structure, built in the Moorish style, was recognized at the time of construction as one of the best appointed in the metropolitan area. The structure cost \$23,000 and Charles H. Darsh of Westfield was the architect and John Goltra was the general contractor. According to the May 26, 1911 issue of the Union County Standard . . . "One of the 'cozy corners' in the new fire house is the reception room on the second floor which is being furnished. The room is carpeted with the \$300 rug recently presented by Assessor Appley. It also contains a piano and 36 handsome chairs. On the same floor is a pool parlor, reading and store rooms and the dormitory, lockers and shower baths.



Fire Headquarters decorated for World War celebration — copy photo by R. Schierle

"The first floor is roomy containing seven horse stalls and adequate stable room while a 45 x 50 ft. space is reserved for the apparatus. The banquet room on the top floor is arranged for public meetings, banquets, lodge celebrations and similar affairs."

Many changes have taken place in the building over the years, however, its basic architectural lines remain the same. The stable area was removed with the departure of Bill and Bob, the last of the fire horses. The original Gamewell Alarm board was then installed in a portion of it in 1922. This area reverted to a tool room and work space in 1961 when a new compact alarm system was purchased and installed in the desk watch area.

The four doors and rounded support columns were replaced in 1955 with steel support girders and overhead doors, thus providing increased lateral clearance for the department's equipment. The fascia board over the western-most door was removed and an additional door panel installed in 1973 to provide extra clearance for Snorkel No. 1. This door became power operated at this time while the two middle doors were mechanized in early 1974 when the fire dispatchers were transferred to police headquarters.

The decorative wooden dome atop the hose tower which in part gave the building its moorish architectural style was removed in the early sixties due to structural instability. In 1961, shortly after the Plainfield and Newark civil disturbances, the three exterior windows in the desk watch area were bricked in and bullet proof glass installed in the front window casement for security purposes by Chief Martin Burke. This renovation placed considerable limits on one of the firemen's favorite pastimes, girlwatching.

On April 25, 1961, the Town Council introduced an ordinance providing for the construction of the south side fire house, located on Central Avenue northwest of Sycamore Street. The structure, designed by local architect, Julian C. Couzens, was originally proposed to be sited at Tice Place and Clifton Street, but strenuous local objections caused the shift to the already town-owned property. Originally estimated to cost \$70,000, the building contracts were let at \$112,119. It was opened for service on August 1, 1963, with one engine and three men to provide additional protection for residents of the town's south side.

The colonial style red brick building was designed to preserve residential property values in the area and is fully shrubbed and landscaped. The apparatus room is to the rear of the building and the equipment emerges from the side doors. In addition to space for fire equipment, the building contains sleeping quarters, storage areas, a recreation room, kitchen facilities and office space for the Chief and Fire Prevention Officer.



South Side Fire House — Central Avenue

APPARATUS

After the disastrous fire on Broad Street in August 1874 a citizens' committee, known as the Westfield Fire Association was formed to study and recommend the best method of obtaining fire protection for the town. Apparently the Association had made some equipment purchases for, when the Westfield Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 held its first meeting, a letter was read from the Trustees of the Association loaning the company its apparatus and building.

The first apparatus consisted of a hook and ladder truck and a hand drawn chemical pumping engine. The engine is said to have been purchased by voluntary contributions by department members and some citizens that were not members. Little is known about the ladder truck other than that it was hand drawn. The chemical engine, a soda and acid pumper, is said to have cost \$250. and was named the "Little Giant" after Stephen S. Mapes. Mapes, an energetic and peppery little man, is considered to be the founder of the fire department. Active in town affairs, he served as a member of the Fire Department Association and was a charter member of the Hook and Ladder Company.



The Little Giant — photo by Westfield Studios

The apparatus of the Bucket and Engine Company consisted of large black buckets with which each member was provided. The Empire Engine Company used as its equipment a chemical engine purchased from the Holloway Co. of Baltimore for \$2000. in June of 1883.

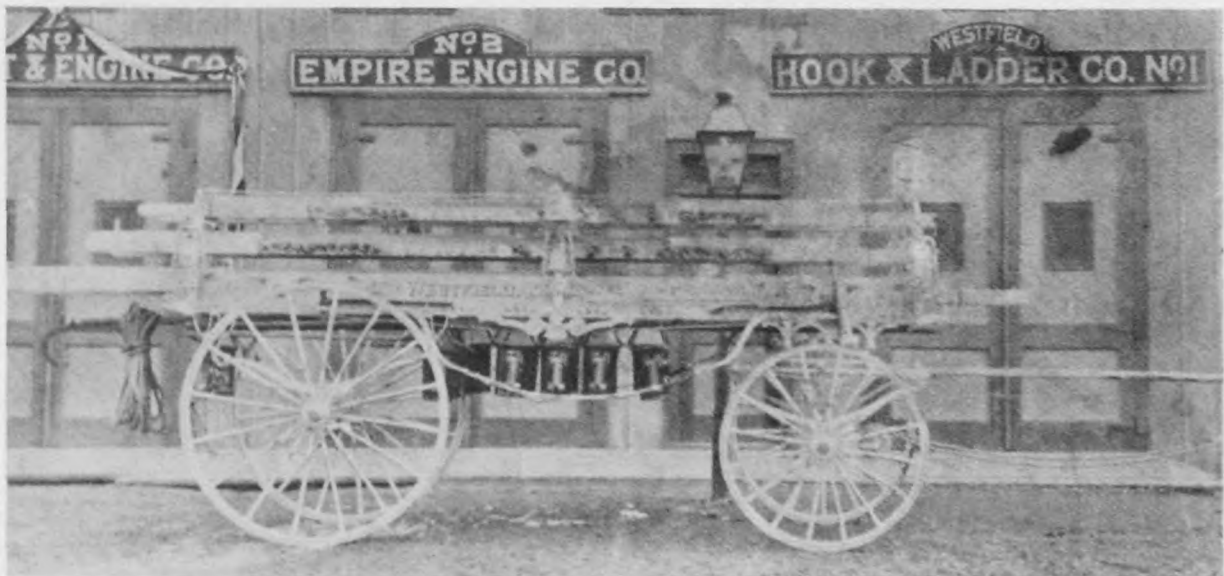
The Plainfield Constitutionalist's edition of August 20, 1883 printed a report on Westfield's Holloway Empire Engine prepared by Benjamin Mumford, Foreman, Zephyr H & L Co. No. 1 on request of Andrew L. Carney, Esq., Chief Engineer of the Plainfield Fire Department.

... "The apparatus consists of two tanks, with the necessary hose, pipes, cut-offs etc. The tanks are of polished brass, having a capacity of 50 gallons each, with gauges for each tank, rated for a pressure of 200 lbs. per sq. inch. They are filled with water by a double acting force pump, attached to the rear of the apparatus, taking suction from brook, well or cistern, which is used when the fire is under control, for washing same down, thus saving their tank. It is capable of throwing a stream through 50 feet of 3/4 inch hose, with a 1/4 inch nozzle 65 feet. In the top of each tank is a glass ball, which is controlled by a crank and filled with 4 lbs. of vitrol. When the engine is put in action this ball is upset by the crank and the acid is dropped into the water which contains 25 lbs. of soda. By the same crank the ball is returned to its proper place — the tank is then ready for action." ...



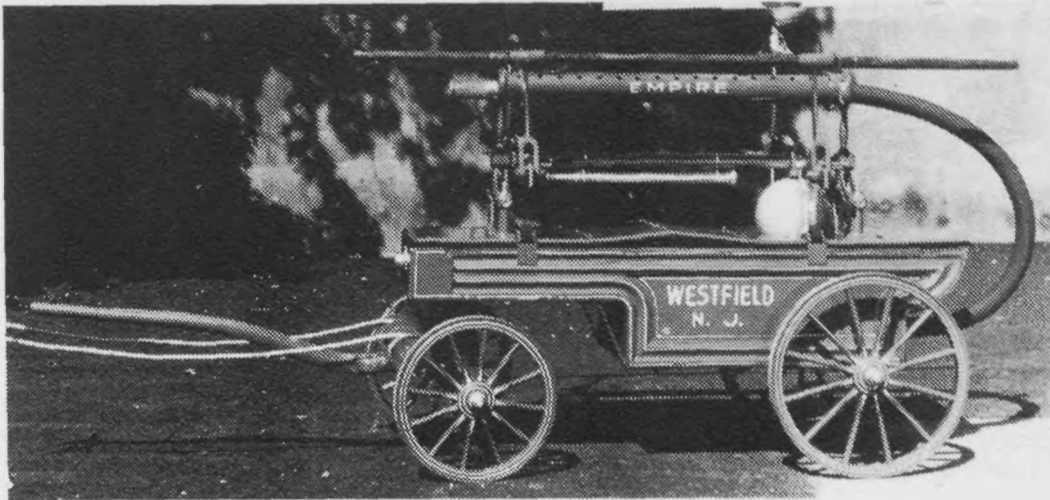
Empire Engine — copy photo by R. Schierle

In September of 1890, the Hook & Ladder Co. celebrated the delivery of its new ladder truck with a parade and refreshments. The machine was purchased from the Gleason & Bailey Mfg. Co. of New York. "It was pronounced by them to be far above the usual truck sold. It was 28 feet long, 7½ feet high, 5½ feet wide, and had a 35 foot extension ladder." It had four additional ladders and was furnished with the necessary hooks, poles, etc. It is believed that this truck was originally hand drawn but was later converted for horse drawn use.



1890 Ladder Truck — copy photo by R. Schierle

We have been unable to trace the origin of the hand pumper which was restored by the volunteer company in 1960. It currently bears the name "Empire" but it is not the Empire rig described above. A picture taken at the July 4, 1946 parade shows the old pumper that was restored dating it to 1896 and belonging to the Bucket & Engine Co. However, the ink notation on the photo states that it was bought in 1891. Based upon the above photo, a statement in the Frazee book stating that the apparatus was improved in 1892, and news stories mentioning the Bucket & Engine Company's pumper supplying water to the chemical engine at fires it is the writer's opinion that the old two cylinder piston pumper was purchased in 1891 or 1892.



Hand Drawn Piston Pumper after restoration - 1960 — photo by Westfield Studios

We have not been able to authenticate any apparatus purchases for the period 1890 to 1907. Old photographs taken after the opening of Fire Headquarters in 1911 show two horse drawn hose carts in front of the fire house. Another photo shows members of the Bucket & Engine Co. standing in front of what appears to be a hose reel. One of the hose carts was sold to H. Lambert for \$75.00 on February 19, 1912.

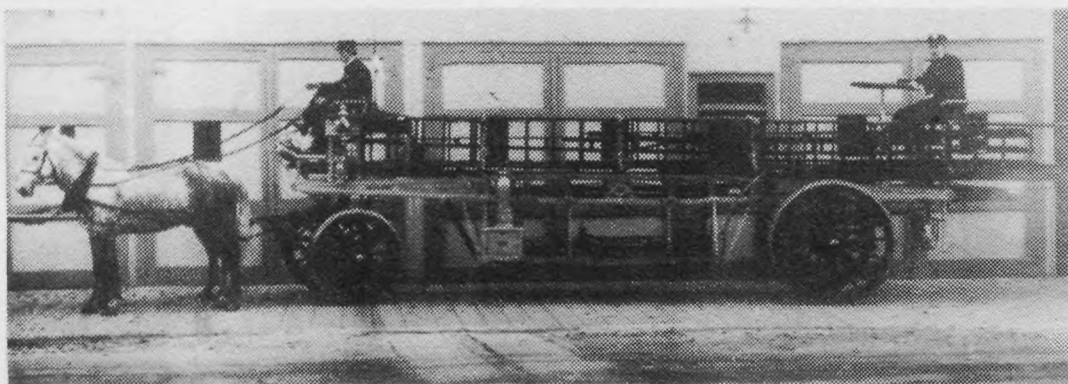


Horse Drawn Hose Cart — copy photo by R. Schierle



Horse Drawn Hose Cart — copy photo by R. Schierle

In April of 1907 a new horse drawn hook and ladder truck was ordered from the Combination Ladder Co. of Providence, R.I. at a cost of \$2950. An aerial ladder was not included although the truck had a tiller man and carried the normal amount of ladders and other equipment.



1907 Ladder Truck — copy photo by R. Schierle

The Fire Department used horses to pull its equipment from 1883 (Empire Engine) to 1922 when the 1907 ladder truck was replaced. The horses had names like Tuck, Fred, Hugh, Bill and Bob. Tuck came from a set of horses called Nip and Tuck owned by the North Plainfield Fire Dept. After Nip died, Tuck was sold to Westfield. Fred came from a horse dealer in Newark and Hugh was donated to the department by local attorney W. G. Peckham. Bill and Bob were the last team used.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION ADOPTED
FEBRUARY 19, 1912**

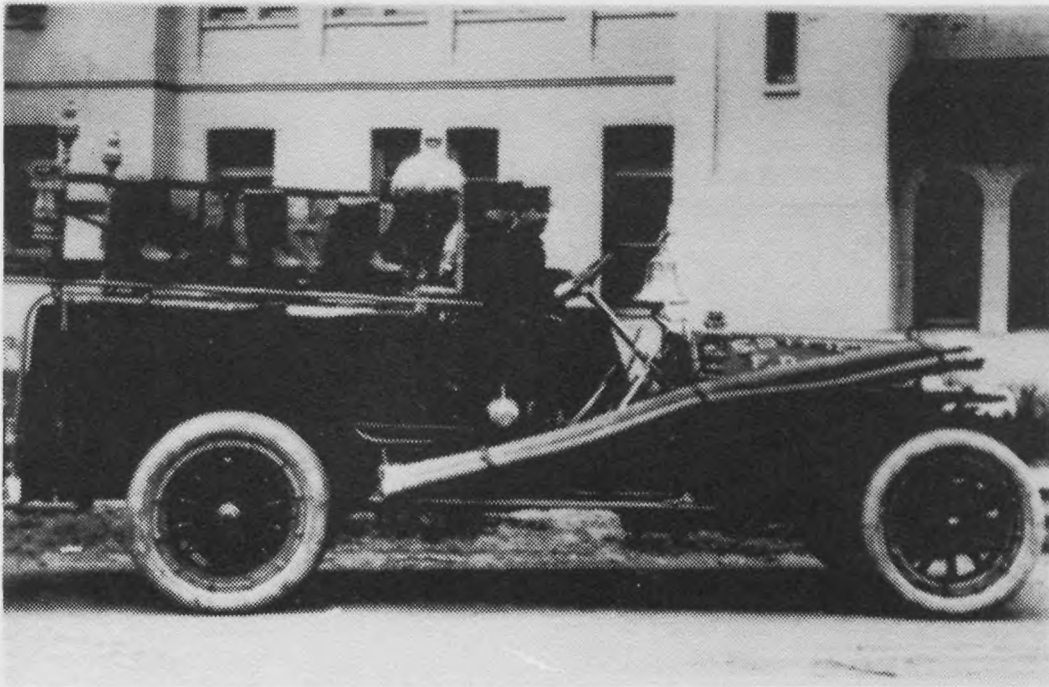
BE IT RESOLVED that the Town has no further use for the Fire Horse known as "Dick", his age and a bad condition of foot known as seeder toe and his long and faithful service, he be disposed of by the Chairman of Fire Committee where he will have a good home and good care without cost to the Town."

Since Westfield did not have many fire calls in the old days the horses lacked exercise. Therefore they were loaned out to the Town Public Works Department for various projects. When the fire alarm sounded the horses took off for the fire house as fast as they could. There were times when the department was without horses, when needed they were borrowed from local businesses such as Woodruff's Storage on North Avenue. The horses were also revenue producers for the town, for at the Town Council meeting of January 13, 1909, the Council accepted the offer of S. D. Winter to purchase fire department manure for \$15.00.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION ADOPTED APRIL 25, 1904
unanimously adopted

"In as much as a part of the original plan in getting the horses for the fire department was that they should be used for work on road and for sprinkling same,

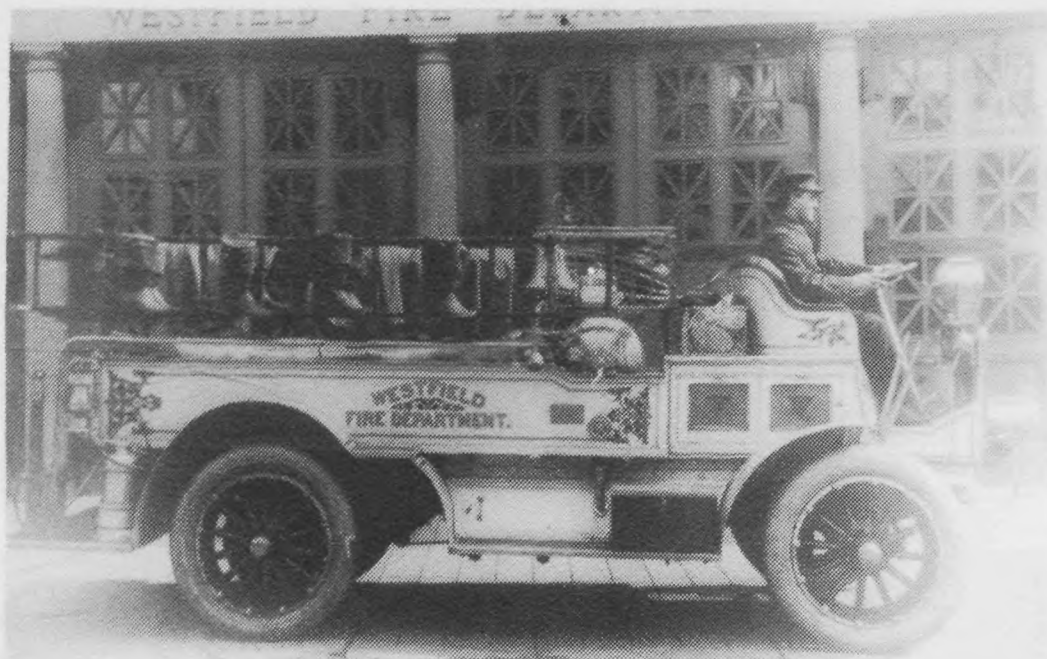
RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Fire Department Committee be and it hereby is authorized and instructed to have the Department horses used to sprinkle the streets in the center of the town, and that the adjustment of the collections of fees for this service be left with the incoming Council."



1911 Webb Pumper — copy photo by R. Schierle

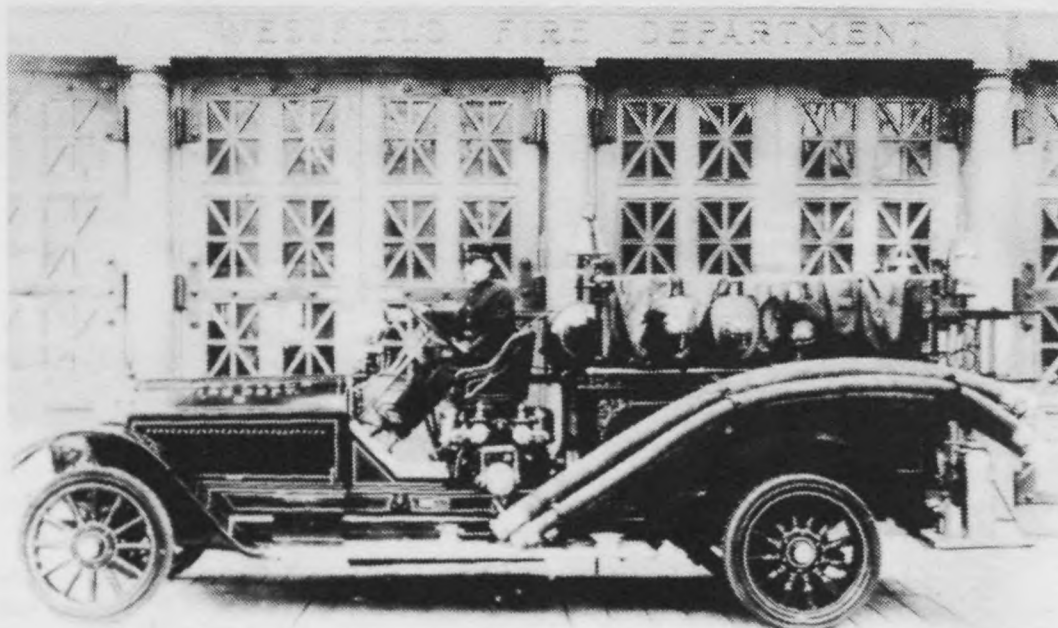
In 1911, after much rhetoric about the need to modernize the town's fire equipment, a Webb pumper and a Seagrave chemical engine were ordered. The Webb machine was ordered from the Woodhouse Mfg. Co. and cost \$8500. It is believed to be the first motor driven apparatus in Union County. Its first working fire was the Casino on Elm Street on December 6, 1911 where it performed admirably. One newspaper account of the fire reported that "the new apparatus had a fine teest yesterday and everyone is satisfied that the machine is what is needed." The Webb was accepted by Council resolution on December 18, 1911.

The Seagrave was accepted by the Council on February 19, 1912 at a cost of \$5,500 to be paid to the Combination Ladder Company. The Seagrave had an air cooled engine and was chain driven. It had a chemical tank, booster hose, and had a hose body. Painted white when first delivered, it was later painted red and had the number 4 painted on its front. Both the Seagrave and the Webb were retired in 1939.



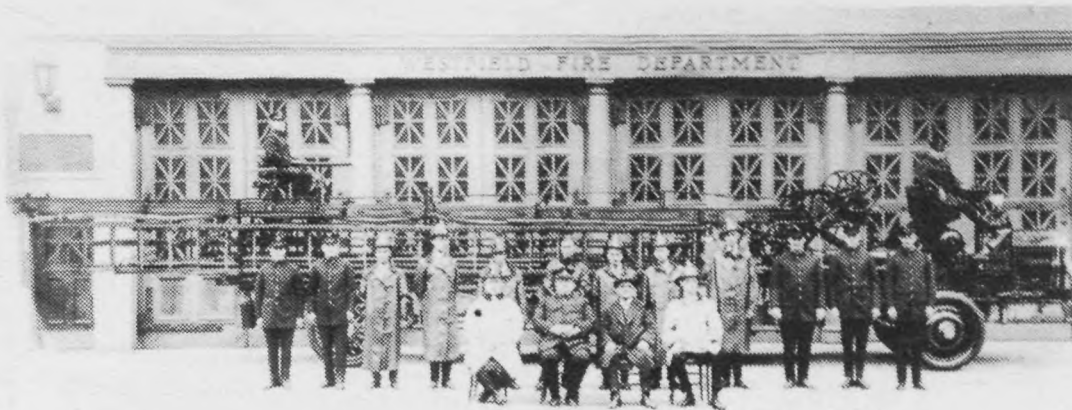
1912 Seagrave Chemical Engine — copy photo by R. Schierle

With the town's population reaching 9,063 in 1920, additional pumping capacity was added with the purchases of 1000 gallon per minute American LaFrance pumper in 1921. Called Engine No. 3, the hard rubber tired vehicle cost \$12,500, and remained in service until 1950. At that time it was assigned to the Civil Defense organization and, in 1956, it was donated or sold to Holiday magazine for use as a prize in a promotional effort.



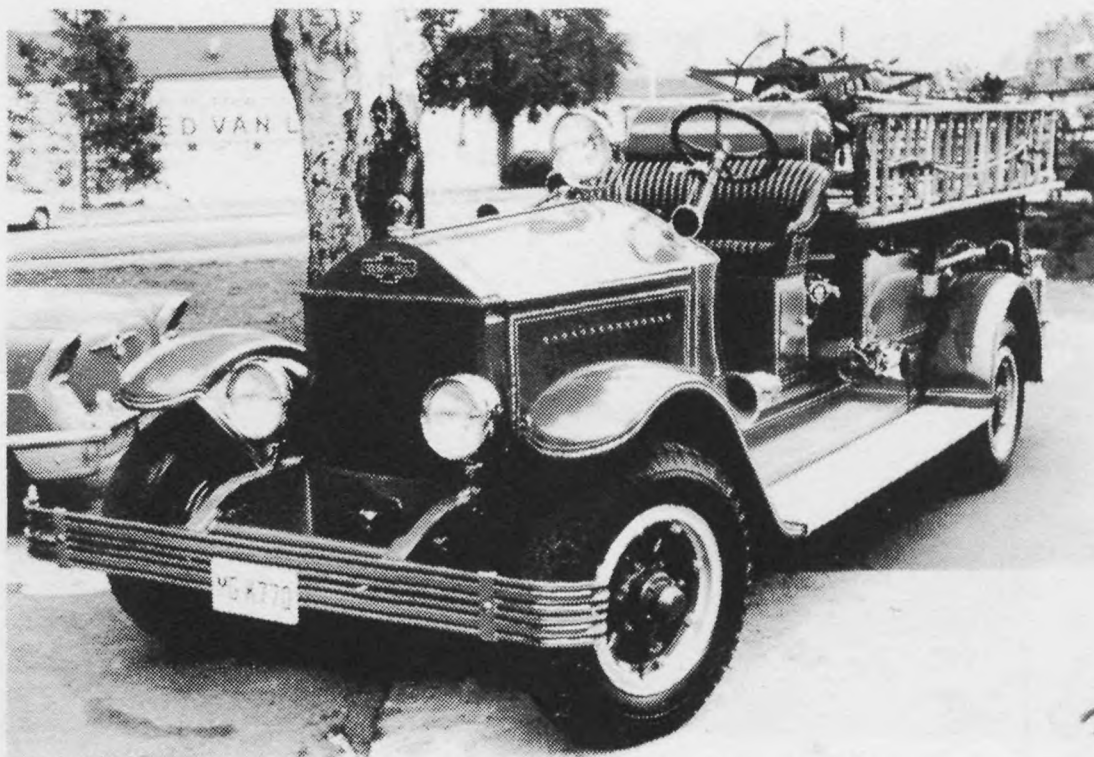
1921 American LaFrance 1000 g.p.m. Pumper — copy photo by R. Schierle

In 1922 the department purchased a 65 foot American LaFrance aerial ladder truck for \$15,250. This machine replaced the 1907 ladder truck, thus ending the careers of Bill and Bob, the last of the fire horses. The truck carried 196 feet of ground ladders in addition to the 65 foot aerial. Truck No. 1 ended its career gloriously by performing well at the H. P. Townsend warehouse fire on North Avenue in October of 1949.

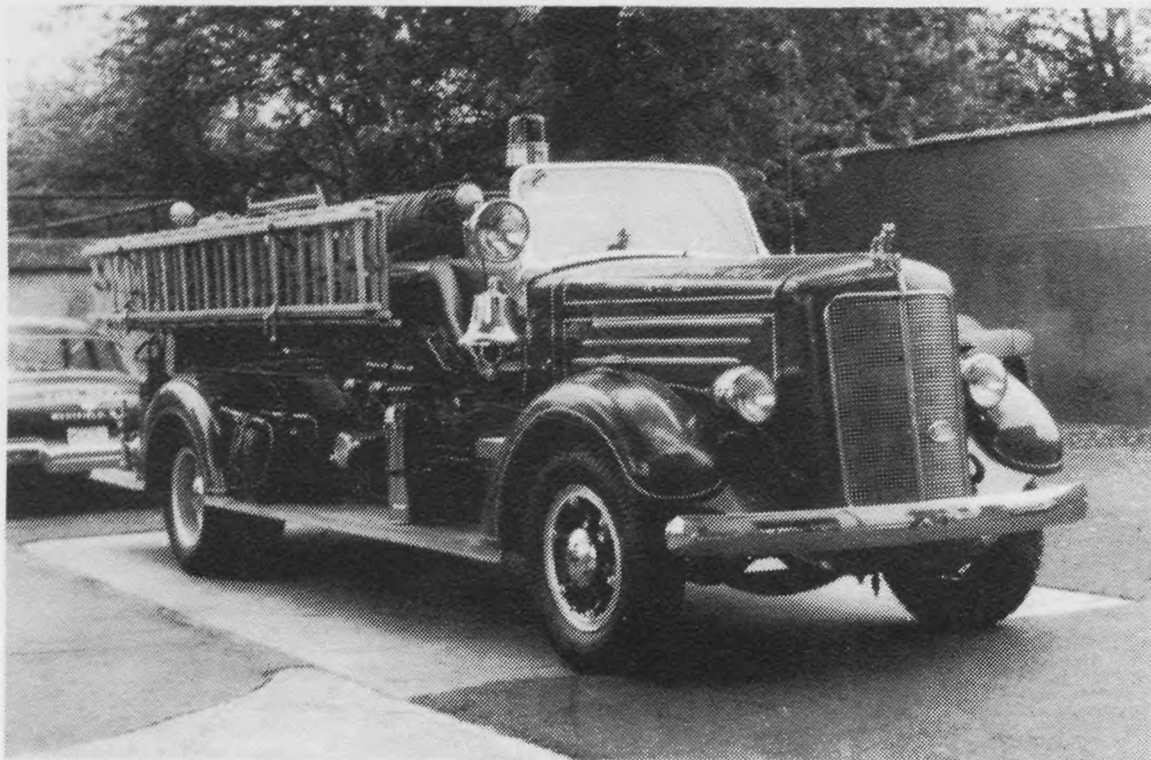


1922 American LaFrance 65' Aerial Ladder Truck — copy photo by R. Schierle

The front line of the department became 100% American LaFrance on July 3, 1930 when Engine No. 5 was delivered. It is a Type 91, 500 gallon per minute rotary gear pumper with a 100 gallon booster tank. Costing \$6,750. it originally had two booster reels but one was removed and installed on the 500 gallon per minute Mack (Engine No. 4) in 1939. Engine No. 5 remained in active service until June of 1956 when it was assigned to the Civilian Defense organization. In 1966 the volunteer company completely restored the old pumper. It was assigned to them by the Mayor and Council and has been used by the volunteers at parades and musters.



1930 American LaFrance 500 g.p.m. Pumper — Photo by R. Schierle



1939 Mack 750 g.p.m. Pumper — Photo by R. Schierle

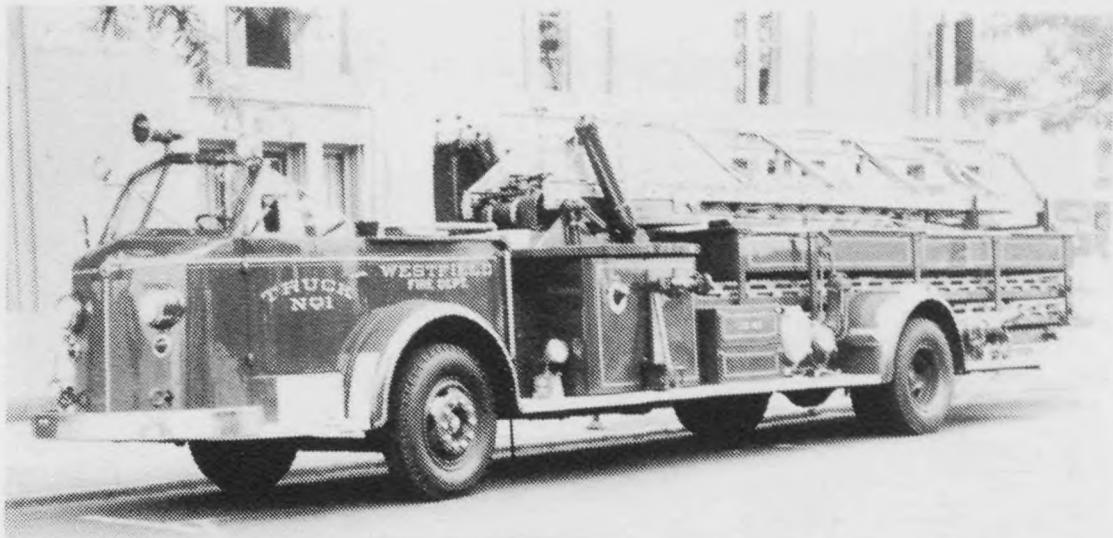
In September of 1939 the Mack Motor Company delivered two pumpers costing \$12,900.00 to replace the 1911 Webb and the 1912 Seagrave. Engine No. 2 was a 750 gallon per minute pumper and Engine No. 4 was a 500 gallon per minute pumper. Engine No. 4 was the department's workhorse for 20 years until it was replaced in 1959. Engine No. 2 served actively until 1965 when it was sold to the G. A. F. Corp. in Linden on March 8, 1966 at a bid price of \$350.



1939 Mack 500 g.p.m. Pumper



Hand Drawn Piston Pumper in 1946



1949 American LaFrance 65' Aerial Ladder Truck — photo by R. Schierle

The 65 foot American LaFrance aerial was retired in October 1949 and replaced with a new American LaFrance hydraulic aerial costing \$27,000. This unit was put on reserve status in 1973 when Snorkel No. 1 was placed in service.

On November 11, 1951 the Ward LaFrance Corporation delivered a 1000 gallon per minute pumper to replace old Engine No. 3. The pumper cost \$15,300 and has a Waukesha engine and a Waterous pump.



1951 Ward LaFrance 1000 g.p.m. Pumper — photo by R. Schierle



1956 Mack 750 g.p.m. Pumper — photo by R. Schierle

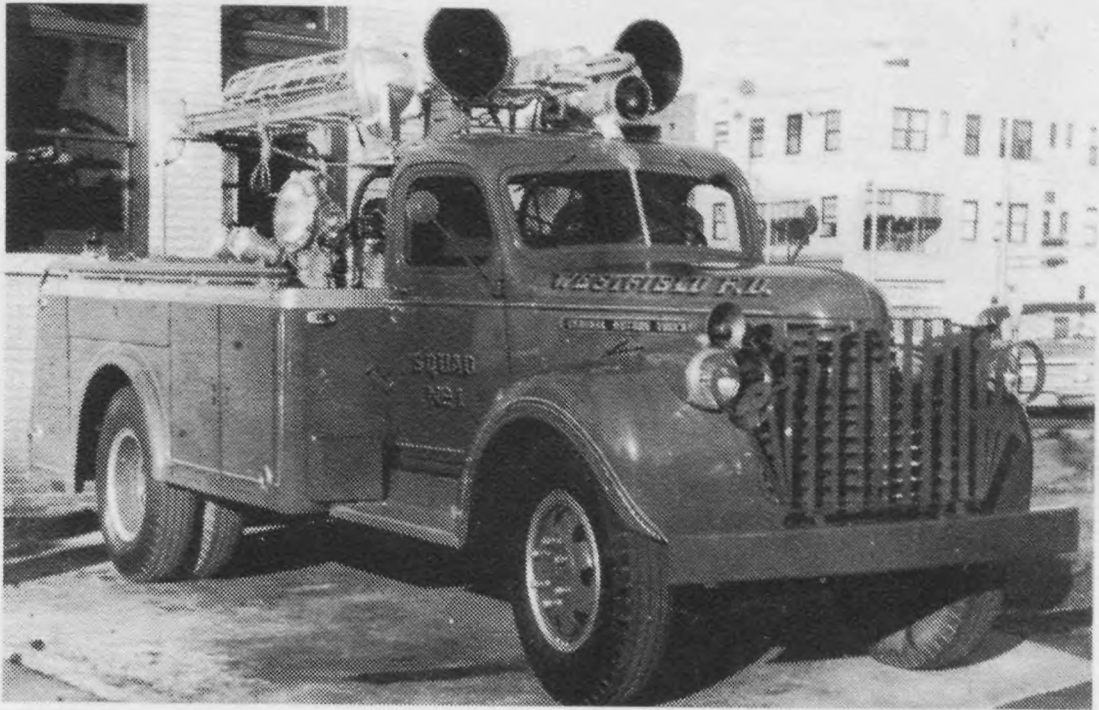
Mack Motors delivered a new 750 gallon per minute pumper on June 6, 1956. This machine cost \$14,600. and with its acceptance old Engine No. 5 was retired. New Engine No. 5 has a Hale centrifugal pump and is powered by a Mack engine.

In August 1959 the TASC Co. (Trautwein & Sons) delivered a new 750 gallon per minute pumper to replace Engine No. 4, the 1939 100 gallon per minute Mack. The TASC was constructed on an International chassis, has a Hale pump, and cost \$19,000.



1959 TASC 750 g.p.m. Pumper — photo by R. Schierle

In 1961 The Exxon Corporation donated a 1946 G.M.C. truck for use as a Squad Truck. The truck was restored by the department and put into service on January 5, 1962. Squad No. 1 was taken out of service in 1973.



1946 G.M.C. Squad Truck

The Hahn Motor Co. of Hamburg, Pennsylvania delivered Engine No. 1, a 1000 gallon per minute pumper on April 1, 1965. The truck cost \$24,950. and it is powered by a Waukesha engine and is equipped with a Hale pump.



1965 Hahn 1000 g.p.m. Pumper



1973 Seagrave Snorkel — photo by Westfield Studios

The Seagrave Company delivered Snorkel No. 1 in March of 1973, thus placing Truck No. 1 in reserve. The \$93,000 Snorkel has a 75 foot articulating boom plus the normal complement of ground ladders. Snorkel No. 1 is Westfield's first apparatus in active service to be painted yellow. Also, it is the first Westfield fire truck to be equipped with an automatic transmission.

The Town Council awarded a contract to the Seagrave Co. in August of 1974 for the purchases of a 1500 g.p.m. pumper to be built at a cost of \$59,500. Delivery is expected in early 1976.

The first Chief's car purchased was a 1950 Dodge sedan. Prior to 1950 the Chief received an allowance plus gasoline for the use of his personal car on departmental business. The Dodge was replaced with a 1956 Plymouth sedan, and, on January 11, 1960, a new Dodge station wagon was bought. Other station wagons purchased include: a 1963 Rambler, a 1968 Rambler, a 1970 Plymouth and a 1972 Ford. As new Chief's cars are purchased the old one is passed down for use by the Fire Prevention Bureau.

The first utility truck to service the alarm system was an old GMC formerly used by the Police Reserves and turned over to the department in November of 1945. This unit was replaced by a 1952 Dodge half-ton pickup. In 1966 a Chevrolet truck was purchased for \$2800.

The two way radio system is worth noting. In July of 1954 radios were installed in the Chief's car, ambulance, and Engines No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4. The fire department shared the same frequency with the police department until 1960. In fact, the base station in headquarters was installed in late March 1960 and by April 1 new equipment on the Union County fire frequency had been installed on all apparatus. The Union County fire frequency, 46.6 megacycles serves all Union County communities except Elizabeth, Summit and New Providence.

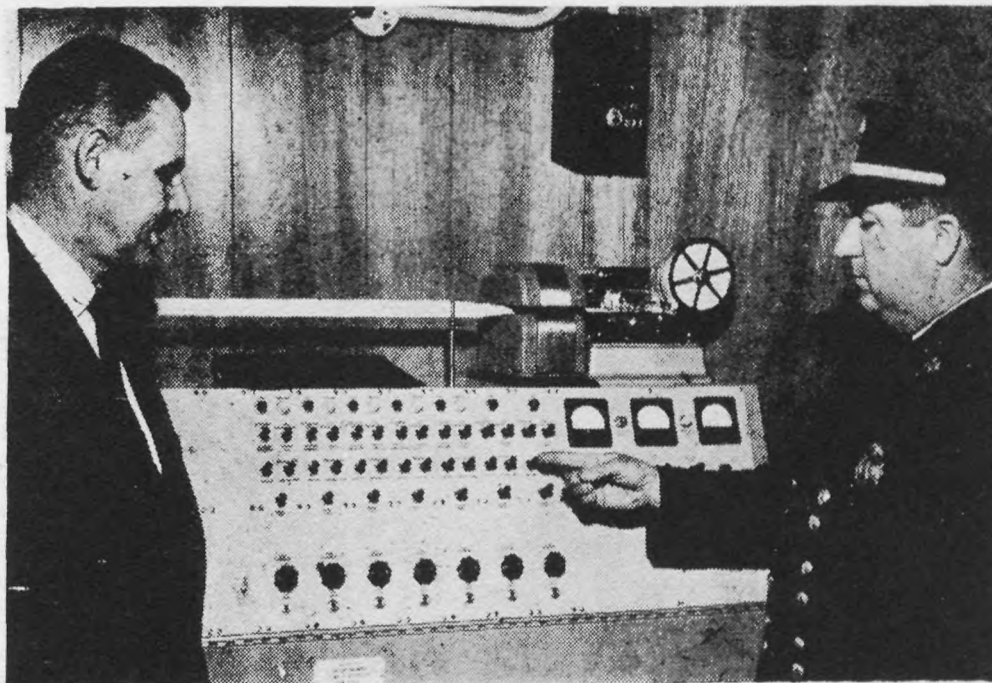
FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

The first fire alarm for the town consisted of the ringing of the school bell at the old Prospect Street School (now the A & P parking lot) and the Presbyterian Church bell (some accounts report the ringing of the Methodist Church bell instead). Later, around 1884, the Hook and Ladder company supplemented the bell system with a steel locomotive tire which was installed on a lot on Elm Street owned by P. Traynor. One of the local weekly newspapers was concerned about the effectiveness of this rim, for in 1884 it reported . . . "it is very doubtful from its present location whether it can be heard for a very long distance. We would suggest if it is to be left in its present location, that the posts be painted which support the (tire)."

This system was at times supplemented through the courtesy of locomotive engineers for the railroad. The *Plainfield Constitutionalist* account of the fire on the morning of March 2, 1884 in the fancy goods and millinery store of Miss M. Johnson at Broad and Elm Street reported that the engineer of Engine No. 116 of the P & R Railroad warned the inhabitants of the town of this fire by the shrill notes of his engine whistle. He then took his train to the Fanwood station and advised the night operator, who ran to Scotch Plains to notify the fire company of the need for assistance in Westfield.

In 1890, in typical Westfield fashion a study committee, known as the Bell Tower Committee, was appointed to recommend the location, material, height and other specifications of a proposed bell tower. The committee, composed mostly of representatives of the three fire companies, labored through 35 meetings over a period of four years. They finally chose a 75 foot high, steel tower to be located to the rear of the fire house on North Avenue. It further recommended the selection of the design submitted by the Kirk Company of Plainfield whose bid was \$690.00 plus extras.

The fire bell was placed at the top of the tower and one fire box, Box 889, located in front of the fire house became the nucleus of the present box alarm system. The first Gamewell alarm switchboard was installed in 1922 at a cost of \$2500.00. The system presently consists of 68 fire boxes located at strategic places throughout the community.



DISCUSS ALARM CONTROL PANEL — Fire Chief Martin D. Burke, right, of Westfield discusses with Fire Commissioner Herbert R.

Welch Jr. left, a few of the features of the Westfield Fire Department's recently installed alarm control panel. (Photo by Fred Keesing)

Alarm Panel 1961

The alarm bell on the tower remained in service until June 20, 1939 when it was replaced by an air horn located on the roof of the fire house. The fire house alarm box, originally Box 889 and later Box 89 was changed to Box 15. The bell tower was dismantled on April 14, 1947 by the Elizabeth Iron Works and the bell placed on a suitable pedestal in 1949 in front of fire headquarters.

The old, cumbersome equipment needed for the box alarm system occupied a large area to the rear of the fire house. This area became a storeroom in 1961 when the old equipment was replaced by a modern, compact unit supplied by the Fyr-Fyter Company of Edison at a cost of \$8,000.00. However, the manual encoder for the new unit never functioned properly and has been replaced by a second-hand encoder.

In addition to the box alarm system other automatic alarm systems have been installed throughout the town in places of public assembly such as churches, stores and schools. In January 1961 a home alerting system was instituted for both paid and volunteer members. The system consists of a radio receiver in each firemen's home that is activated by a control unit. The dispatcher is able to verbally give the location, type of fire, and any other pertinent information.

Punish the Offenders.

Some half a dozen boys got together Thursday night at the corner of Prospect street and Dudley avenue, and concocted a scheme to get the fire department out and see some "fun." As a false alarm, tended to test the efficiency of the service, the scheme worked admirably, but the firemen don't see it in that light, and should any of the culprits be caught it would go hard with them. As the boys rushed down Prospect street they yelled "fire" at every jump, and before they were half way to Broad street the alarm had been taken up in the village and the engine house doors were being thrown open and the school house bell rung. Inside of five minutes after the first alarm was sounded, Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 was speeding along up Prospect street with the engine some distance in the rear, but making as good progress as their weight would allow. At the junction of Dudley avenue a halt was called to discover the whereabouts of the blaze, but as no suspicious light could be seen in any direction, it dawned on Foreman Kurzhals and his men that they had come out on a false alarm so they turned about and went back to the truck house. Chief Schmitt, to make things sure, ordered the engine around by way of Mountain avenue, but everything was secure in that direction, and they also came back to headquarters without even having had a whiff of smoke except from the cigars some of them puffed at. The promptness with which the truck and engines came racing up Prospect street, was worthy of the highest commendation. A STANDARD reporter happened to be on upper Prospect street at the time the alarm was first given and he has seen a longer time elapse between the sending out of a call in New York city and the arrival of the engines from a near-by engine house, than passed before the Hook & Ladder men hove into view on the street in question. *5-10-91*



Ladder Drill on the Fire Bell Tower circa 1941

There has been erected by the H. & L. Co. on Elm street, a fire alarm, consisting of a steel locomotive tire, but it is very doubtful from its present location whether it can be heard for a very long distance. We would suggest that it is to be left in its present location, but the posts be painted which support the

The Hook & Ladder Company Alarm

TRIED TO POST LETTER IN FIRE ALARM BOX

Department Responded Quickly to
Find Elderly Lady Much
Chagrined.

At one-thirty o'clock yesterday afternoon the fire alarm box at the corner of Park street and Central avenue sounded the alarm. The firemen were quick to respond but on their arrival at the box indicated they found a very much chagrined lady who had mistaken the fire alarm box for a letter box and in the search for a place to put her letter she had pulled the alarm lever. The lady proved to be Mrs. Price, mother of A. L. Price, of 119 Park street, and seemed so much upset over what she had done when approached by Fire Chief Decker that the chief was very sympathetic and with a graceful bow told the lady not to think of it again and offered to bring the letter to the post office for her. This favor the lady accepted and the incident closed.

WATER SUPPLY

Brooks, ponds and four cisterns in the town center furnished the fire fighting water supply for the community. At times a bucket brigade was formed to work in relays from a distant well or a stream which may have had to be dammed or cleared of ice. A public water supply was first introduced in 1893. At that time there were eight hydrants in town. John Henry Frazee wrote in his book entitled *Memories of Old Westfield*:

"Oh, I can remember when the Senator Charles N. Coddington house went afire. That took plenty of water. Soon the wells were depleted and they had to resort to using the cisterns. What a mess the place was!! There was tissue paper hanging from the rafters. One couldn't go in there for three months after!! That was some fire and we had to revise our firefighting procedures."

In 1925, at the time of the fire department's 50th anniversary celebration, there were 333 hydrants distributed throughout the town. The anniversary program listed the W. H. Grogan Hotel on North Avenue as the first consumer of water for commercial and private use. A 1932 program issued in connection with the State Exempts Association Convention reported 420 hydrants and, as of January 1, 1956, the Chief's Annual Report listed 546 hydrants as being in service.

The Plainfield Water Supply Company, formed in 1869, and the Union Water Supply Company, formed in 1870, consolidated and created the Plainfield Union Water Company. The original source of supply for this water utility was a large well field located in the Netherwood area of Plainfield. The dependence on wells caused considerable concern during the droughts of 1953 and 1955 when water pressure at the gauge in fire headquarters approached zero on several occasions. To offset this and to increase the amount of water available, an oil tank truck was borrowed from the Dean Oil Company of Fanwood for use as a water carrier. Fortunately the water available from this truck was never required.

The Plainfield Union Water Supply Company served as Westfield's purveyor of water until June 30, 1961 when it consolidated with the Elizabethtown Water Company. The company is a fully integrated system which provides its customers with metered service in Westfield as well as fifteen other municipalities in Union County. In addition, the company serves five other counties in a franchise area which exceeds 350 square miles.

Today, Westfield receives most of its water from Elizabethtown Water Company's main treatment plant at the confluence of the Raritan and Millstone Rivers and the Delaware-Raritan Canal, augmented by the state-owned reservoirs, Spruce Run and Round Valley.

The main supply is supplemented by several wells within Westfield and neighboring Mountainside, Kenilworth, Scotch Plains and Plainfield. The waters from the main treatment plant as well as the well system are fed into an extensive transmission and distribution system which serves adjoining municipalities as well as Westfield. In addition, there are large distribution storage facilities throughout the transmission and distribution system which assure adequate water supplies during high demand periods such as the time of fire or summer peaks.

As of the end of 1974, there were 685 fire hydrants servicing the town.

BLAZES

DATE	LOCATION
8/10/75	East Broad St. - stores and homes
12/2/78	Methodist Church
3/26/84	Broad and Elm St. - M. Johnson Store
1/4/92	East Broad St. - stores and homes
1/24/96	Broad and Elm St. - Will Gilby's Store
12/6/11	Elm St. - Westfield Casino
8/3/18	North Ave. and Elmer St. - Traynor's Warehouse
9/17/19	Garwood - Bronze Co. - North Ave.
3/29/25	Elmer St. - T. Will's house
6/29/26	North Ave. - Traynor's Coal Yard
4/5/27	56-58 Elm St. - stores
3/25/30	47 Elm St. - stores
11/1/30	North Ave. - Woodruff's Barn
5/22/31	Broad St. - Rialto Theater
1/2/32	Scotch Plains - South Ave. - County Road Dept.
4/26/37	348, 354, 356 East South Ave. - dwellings
7/27/38	E. Grove St. - Public Service Car Barns
6/16/39	Clark - Gering Products - Rahway Ave.
11/14/42	Scotch Plains - Shackamaxon Country Club
2/13/43	Elm St. - Westfield Leader
12/24/43	Plainfield - Plainfield Lumber Co. - North Ave.
1/24/44	Plainfield - Plainfield Amusement Arcade - Watchung Ave.
3/28/46	Garwood - Thatcher Furnace Co. - South Ave.
2/4/48	548 Lenox Ave. - dwelling
3/20/48	131 Effingham Pl. - dwelling
6/3/48	625 Downer St. - dwelling
10/16/49	241 North Ave. W. - H. P. Townsend Warehouse
3/15/50	411 W. Broad St. - Plinton Funeral Home
5/1/55	Garwood - General Cellulose Co. - South Ave.
3/5/58	Garwood - Phoenix Asbestos Co. - South Ave.
7/13/58	Clark - National Chair Co. - Walnut Ave.
12/5/57	300 North Ave. E. - Venneri Lumber Co.
8/2/59	Garwood - Garwood Foundry - North Ave.
3/17/62	Scotch Plains - Drug Fair - Second St.
4/23/63	Clark - Frank's Wheel Inn - Raritan Rd.
4/29/63	Clark - National Chair Co. - Valley Rd.
10/6/64	Scotch Plains - Danker's Bar - Lamberts Mill Rd.
1/19/65	Clark St. - Girl Scout House
6/4/65	232 Prospect St. - dwelling
7/22/65	143 Stanmore Pl. - dwelling
10/30/66	Roselle Park - Chestnut St. - stores
11/20/66	311 Central Ave. - dwelling
1/7/67	Cranford - Elyse St. - multiple dwelling
11/3/67	Springfield Ave. - Geiger's Restaurant
3/29/68	Mountainside - Three Coin's Restaurant - Route 22
7/29/68	208 North Ave. E. - Westfield Hairdressers
1/25/69	210 Lenox Ave. - dwelling
7/4/69	Fanwood - Marlou Lights Co. - South Ave.
4/6/70	Scotch Plains - Ray's Sports Shop - Route 22
5/19/70	304 Clark St. - Clark Homestead
9/2/70	304 Clark St. - Clark Homestead
12/5/70	Linden - Exxon Refinery
3/6/72	123 Cacciola Pl. - dwelling
5/3/72	54 Elm St. - Westfield Leader, Jarvis Drugs
8/30/72	431 Hillside Ave. - John List House

August 10, 1874



Broad Street, seen from Elm, after the fire of '75. The fire was checked at the Darsh Building, at the left, and in the background will be seen the Prospect Street school. Note the lady carriage in the middle foreground. That is little Freddie Decker, Chief of the department from 1904-1908—in the driver's seat.



Broad Street, after reconstruction, about 1880. Left to right: Bayard's (afterwards Dorval's) drug store, Whitaker's boot shop, Schoonover's meat market, Gale's stationery, Decker's tailor shop and post office, Pierson's general store at Elm Street. Reproduction from a daguerreotype lent by Hampton Hannan.

5. The Fire of '75—And After

The earliest recorded conflagration in Westfield occurred in 1875, when a section of the north side of Broad Street, west of Elm, was burned to the ground. The fire started in Dr. William Gale's stationery store and swept eastward through the tailor shop and post office of Fred Decker, Sr., and the general store of Moorehouse and Pierson, at Elm Street; westward, it destroyed a one-story building owned by John Darsh and occupied by Schoonover's meat market and L. M. Whitaker's shoe shop.

There was no organized fire department in that day. Yankee ingenuity saved the three-story Darsh bakery and apartments, separated from Whitaker's store by a narrow lot. Carpets were strung from the roof along the side of this building and a continuous stream of water

poured over them. Every pail, bucket or other container in the village was requisitioned for this work. Thus the fire was held in check until the Plainfield department, under Chief Doane, arrived.

A few years later, the forethought and daring of Christopher Harden, who was then foreman of the Bucket Co. and afterwards Chief, prevented a similar fire. Smoke was pouring from the doors of J. T. Pierson's general store, at Broad and Elm Streets, when he entered and, pushing the little giant engine ahead of him, crawled along the floor, under the smoke, until he was near the flames. It was not long before he emerged from a side door, and remarked that the engine had worked perfectly. "It's all over now, boys," he added. "Let's go home!"

New York, Tuesday, August 11, 1874.

THE HERALD FOR THE SUMMER RESORTS.

FIRE AT WESTFIELD, N. J.

Large Destruction of Buildings—Post Office and Bank Burned—The Loss and Insurance.

WESTFIELD, N. J., August 10, 1874.

This morning about half-past one o'clock, fire was discovered in the clothing store of Frederick Decker, which is also used as the Post Office and Dime Savings Bank, and the building and its contents were totally destroyed. The fire was then communicated to the dry goods and grocery store of Pierson & McRehouse, which was also burned to the ground. Thence the flames spread to Gale's drug store and to Godfrey & Marsh's real estate office, both of which were completely gutted. Armstrong's furniture store next caught fire, but the building was pulled down to stop the further progress of the flames and succeeded in so doing.

The loss is about \$25,000 and the insurance \$15,000. Gazette steamer No. 1, of Plainfield, and Excelsior Hook and Ladder No. 1, of Scotch Plains, promptly responded to calls for assistance and did effective service. The former had to run seven miles through very heavy roads. A collation was served to the firemen by the citizens.

MATTERS IN WESTFIELD.

ALMOST A BIG FIRE.

Pierson's Store Guttled—Good Work of the "Little Giant."

At between four and five o'clock Sunday afternoon, persons on Broad street saw smoke issuing from the front of the store on that street, occupied by Mr. J. T. Pierson, with a general stock of dry goods and groceries. An alarm of fire was at once started and in a few minutes afterward Mr. Waticar and Dr. Gale had pulled the "Little Giant" chemical engine from the engine house, a little further down Broad street to the fire, and a stream was started through the front door, which was opened a little. The smoke inside was so dense that no entrance could be made, and after playing for a few minutes until the gas from the chemicals had penetrated to all the fire in the front of the store, the hose was taken around and through the rear door. Meantime another line of hose was fastened to the driven well in front of Dr. Gale's drug store, and a stream of water was taken to the second story, helping to drown out the fire from above.

After half an hour's hard work the fire seemed so far under control, that the doors were opened wide and the smoke thus driven out. An investigation then showed that every spark of fire had been extinguished by the gas from the chemicals, even where it had worked through between the floors.

The whole interior of the store had been pretty thoroughly gutted, the stock being entirely ruined and the ceiling, which was of wood burned up entirely. The fire had also gone up a back stairway and done considerable damage in one room of the second story of the building, but spread no further there, on account of the numerous partitions dividing up the floor and the fact that all the doors and windows were closed.

In the second story was the insurance office of J. M. C. Marsh, containing a large quantity of valuable papers, and the office of W. Connolly, where were many important town ship papers and records. While it was still uncertain as to whether the fire would be subdued, these papers were thrown out of the window and taken care of.

It had probably been smoldering all the afternoon, as the person living on the second floor noticed a strange heat about two o'clock in the afternoon. At a little after four o'clock, as he was coming down stairs he saw a little smoke coming up through the boards, and in a few minutes after the smoke had filled the whole house.

The building was owned by a man of North Branch, N. J., and was damaged, it is thought, to the extent of \$1,000. The stock was valued at \$3,000 or \$4,000, upon which there was an insurance. It is probable that the net loss above insurance will not be large. Among the uninsured property destroyed was the store car, who died of acute suffocation.

Everyone is enthusiastic this now over the "Little Giant," a machine concerning which there has heretofore been much scepticism. The fire Sunday, had it got fairly under way, as it certainly would have done, had it not been for the "soda water" that the "Little Giant" poured on it, must have destroyed the whole business block of Westfield, and entailed a loss of many thousands of dollars. Those who grumbled at voting an appropriation of \$250 for the Fire Department are now convinced that the machine will prove a saving one.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

FIRE HATS VS. CAPS.

MR. EDITOR:—

As I understand the subject of proper uniforms is to come up before the members of the Westfield Fire Department at the next regular meeting, I should be grateful if you will allow me space in your columns to call the attention of those interested to the advisability of deciding in favor of a regular fire hat, in preference to cloth or other caps, that I understand are being urged by some of the members on the ground of economy. I consider this economical argument a very lame one, to begin with, as the expense of fire hats over caps will only be about half as much again, and they will last five times as long. It is not only the expressed, but adopted opinion of the chiefs of the different fire departments, that a fireman is not only protected to a great degree from heat when wearing the hat, reversed, as generally worn for service, and the danger of injury from falling plaster, boards or bricks greatly lessened, but on account of these reasons he is enabled to do more effective or closer work. In the department where I had the honor of serving, it was against the rules for a member to do duty unless he wore his hat, and if some of the cap gentlemen could see the dents and scars that a fireman's heavy leather hat receives after a few month's service, for their own safety they would buy a hat if it cost ten times more than a cap.

AN OLD FIREMAN.

70-72 TRINITY BUILDINGS,
111 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

PECKHAM, WARNER & STRONG,
COUNSELLORS AT LAW,

A. C. TELEPHONE, CORTLANDT 102.
A. C. TELEPHONE, WESTFIELD 11.
CABLE ADDRESS: "JOURNAL."

W. D. PECKHAM,
JOHN DE WYRE WARNER,
O. H. STRONG.

NEW YORK, Dec. 29th, 1902.

Cyrus P. Wilcox, Esq.,
Westfield, N. J.

Dear Sir:—

I will give my horse Hugh to the fire department on the following conditions: 1- That he be treated kindly and kept in a loose stall.
2- That they give him back to me whenever they do not want him.

Happy New Year to you and to the Fire Company.

Yours truly,
W. D. Peckham.

A CHURCH'S DANGER FROM FIRE.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

WESTFIELD, N. J., Dec. 2.—Fire broke out in the Methodist Church in this place at 6 o'clock this evening. The firemen, under the foremanship of J. S. Burhans, were promptly on hand and worked so efficiently that the flames were soon extinguished. The loss is trifling. The church is fully insured.

December 2, 1878.

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 188

MATTERS IN WESTFIELD.

A BARN BURNED.

A Hot and Hard-Fought Fire The Little Giant, Hook & Ladder and Westfield Young Ladder.

On Thursday afternoon last, about three o'clock, the barn of Mr. John N. Wilcox, situated near the railroad, was discovered to be on fire. The alarm spread quickly, but the fire burned quicker, and when the firemen with "Little Giant" reached the place the flames were burning so fiercely that it was useless to attempt to subdue them. Immediate attention was turned to the work of saving the neighboring buildings, a large number of which were in danger on account of the high wind prevailing. The Hook & Ladder fire was drawn to the spot by a team of mules as soon as the engine got there, and the numerous sheds near to the burning building were pulled down. The "Little Giant" meanwhile did good work in helping to extinguish the fires kindled in neighboring buildings by the spark.

The high wind fanned the flames and made the heat intense, so that the work of the firemen was unusually connected for the skill, perseverance and success with which they battled the flames.

A noticeable and much-commented on fact was that a number of the young ladies of Westfield were workers at the fire, although a score of great strong men stood around and criticised the firemen's work.

The barn and contents—some hay, implements, etc.—were entirely consumed. The loss is total, there being no insurance.

The fire is supposed to have originated from a spark from a locomotive.

Circa 1880

Foreman Chambers of Westfield H. & L. Co., has had the "Little Giant" thoroughly overhauled and repaired, so that it is now in perfect working order. 1881

On Sunday morning last, at 2:45 a. m., a fire was discovered in the fancy goods store, corner of Broad and Elm street, in our village. It was some time before many of the members of the several Fire Companies arrived on the scene. All the pumps in the neighborhood having become frozen up from the severe cold of the night before, it was impossible to get water before the fire had gained considerable headway in the building where it originated, so the firemen turned their united efforts to save the store building of E. Miller & Sons, then only twelve feet distant, which after an hour of very hard work they succeeded in doing with but little damage.—The building destroyed belonged to the estate of Samuel M. Foster and was a total loss. It was insured in the Fire Association of Philadelphia for \$2,000, which will not cover the loss. The store part of the building was occupied by Miss M. Johnson as a fancy goods and millinery store and the stock was a complete loss. It was insured in the Liverpool, London and Globe for \$1,200, and in the Home of New York for \$300, which will probably cover the loss. Mrs. Elizabeth Welch, who occupied the dwelling part of the building, suffered an entire loss on furniture and but very little of her other effects were saved, on which she had no insurance. The store building of E. Miller and Sons was insured in the American Fire of Philadelphia and the Manufacturers of Boston. The loss on this building will not be over \$100. The citizens of Westfield may well feel proud of the way the several fire companies worked together at the fire. The members of the Westfield Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1, Bucket and Engine Co. No. 1, and Empire Engine Co. No. 2, all worked together in harmony and did their utmost to protect and save property. There is only one thing to make the Fire Department of Westfield more effective, that is to have a central head, and we hope to record the establishment of such at no distant day. The thanks of the community is due to the engineer of engine No. 116, of the P. and R. railroad, for the way he warned the inhabitants by the shrill notes of his engine whistle, and also to the night operator of Fanwood

station, who ran over to the Plains, over a mile distant, to notify the fire company of that place and to which notification the foreman and several members of the Bucket and Engine Co. responded to and came upon the scene. The Empire Engine Co. No. 2, with their Holloway chemical, did effective service in helping save E. Miller & Sons' store building. They found the Bucket and Engine Co. boys on hand to furnish all the water they wanted, as also did the members of Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1, in getting upon the building and hanging carpets and druggets over the end of the same and keeping them wet. F. Henckie, who lived over Millers' store, moved his furniture out of the building, but fortunately had a chance to move back in the morning, having suffered, nevertheless, the loss of a carpet that was used on the building. After the fire was out the respective fire companies were entertained at the Hotel, where coffee, sandwiches and other refreshments furnished by Henry Hosford, Esq., of Elm street, and E. Miller & Sons, were thoroughly enjoyed. 1881

March 26, 1884.

TUESDAY NIGHT'S FIRE. ★

E. C. Sanford's House Totally Destroyed. Damage \$4,500.

E. C. Sanford's house on First street was totally destroyed by fire Tuesday evening. The fire started in the attic and was first discovered by Mr. Carpenter who lives opposite. He saw flames issuing from the windows and at once gave the alarm. The bells of the Methodist church and school house were rung and in a few minutes the fire companies were at the scene of the fire.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilton H. Bennet who lived in the house, first knew their danger when they heard men outside calling to them that their house was on fire. With the aid of the firemen they succeeded in saving nearly all the furniture on the first and second floors. A large quantity of valuable clothing and furniture which was stored in the attic was destroyed. The firemen worked at a great disadvantage because of the scarcity of water, and all the wells in the neighborhood were drained, the fire gained headway until it was impossible to save the building. Attention was then given to John Ledger's house twenty feet off the blazing building and with hard work the flames were prevented from spreading. Fortunately there was little or no wind blowing.

The house was valued at \$4,000 and covered by insurance to the amount of \$2,500, which places Mr. Sanford's loss at \$1,500. The furniture and personal effects of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet were insured for \$1,000.

The origin of the fire is somewhat of a mystery. When first discovered the flames were in the eastern end of the house. Mr. Bennett's theory is that the house had been on fire some time before it burst out, and that it started near the chimney, at the end of the building and burnt along the roof. Mrs. Bennett told a STANDARD reporter that a new fire had been started in that end of the building that morning.

SPARKS FROM THE FIRE.

—The high brick chimneys were the last to fall.

—Wm. Kelly has stored the Bennet's furniture.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bennet will move to Brooklyn.

J. M. C. Marsh worked as hard as anyone at the fire.

—E. C. Sanford recently offered to sell the house for \$3,800.

—The burned house was but eighteen feet from Ledger's house.

—Two hundred families neglected to finish Tuesday night's dinners.

—No water in the brook and a few strokes of the pumps sucked the wells dry.

—The fire alarm committee should wake up and see about a regular alarm system.

—The furniture and other effects in J. Ledger's house were all in readiness to be moved out.

—All the fire companies were at the fire within a few minutes from the first strokes of the school house bell.

—Chas. Cox, foreman of the Little Giants worked as hard as anyone to save Ledger's house.

The flames were seen in Plainfield and the fire companies there stood ready to respond to a call for assistance.

—The firemen had all the assistance they wanted from private citizens and many of these lent valuable aid.

Everyone has words of praise for the excellent manner in which the fire companies did their work Tuesday night.

—The burned house was built eighteen years ago by E. C. Sanford at a cost of \$4,500. It was finished in hard wood.

—“Thank Heaven, there's hardly any wind. If it had been last night the whole block would have gone” said the firemen.

—The Hook and Ladder Company did excellent work in tearing down the building and in that way keeping the blaze close to the ground.

—Foreman Henzel's horse Charlie refused to do fire duty Tuesday night, and the Engine Company pulled the engine to the scene of the fire by hand.

—John Ledger had just finished supper when Mrs. Ledger discovered the fire. They thought at first it was their own house.

—“Smith's lumber yard,” declared several hundred persons living on the north side of the railroad when they first saw the blaze.

—As is always the case, the family lost many articles which had no money value to anyone else, but were worth several dollars to the owners.

—Half the town witnessed the conflagration. Fully 500 people were gathered on First street and the vacant lots on Westfield avenue.

—The Little Giant worked nobly. They were first at the fire and at once went to work on John Ledger's home. They deserve a great deal of credit for saving it too.

—John Ledger was in the STANDARD office first thing Wednesday morning with a request to publish his thanks to the firemen for saving his house. The STANDARD does so gladly.

—John Ledger's damage will amount to less than \$100, which is covered by insurance. The side of the house nearest the fire is scorched and many of the panes of glass in the windows were broken.

★—At ten o'clock on Friday evening of last week another alarm of fire was given. The school bell and the Methodist church bell were rung, bringing the firemen out in a hurry. B & E Co. No. 1 had their machine on the road at first call, the truck came next, attached to C. H. French's wagon, while Empire Engine waited for its team of horses. The fire was out on Broad street in an old barn on the Stitt property near J. H. Vail's. It was a long pull for the machines and No. 2's proved the superiority of horses over the hand ropes by being the last to start and coming in nip and tuck with the truck, which, but for the help of C. H. French's horse and wagon might have been last in the race. Only one end of the barn was burning. Ladders were quickly raised and Wm. Stitt climbed aloft, with No. 2's hose and had the blaze under control in a jiffy. The “bucket” boys established their machine at an old well near Mr. Vail's barn but their hose was too short so they kept the pumps working and supplied the Chemical Engines tank. Mr. Vail asked the firemen in his house for some more coffee. “It's a good way for you folks to come; but you came,” said he, “and it may be some body's house out this way, perhaps mine, next time and we'd like you to know that we are grateful for good treatment.”

Advice to Firemen.

“Firemen would do well to bear in mind that one gallon of water at the bottom of a fire will do more to quench it than ten gallons at the top. ‘Play low’ is the true motto for the firemen. To play on the roof of a house on fire is to waste water; be sure to play low; get the water near the fire, and then you need not pour on a river. A few gallons at the bottom of a fire will rise in clouds of steam when the fire is rising, and will quench it. A gill of water thrown into the bottom of a grate equals a quart thrown on top. For a similar reason, water on the windward side is more effective than on the leeward. The big blaze on the leeward looks fearful, but it cannot be affected by playing on that side. Throw water in the bed of coals under the retort that is sucking them, and it will go out—that is to say, play at the bottom of the windward side of a fire and you take the speediest and surest way to quench the whole leeward side, blazes included.”

EXTRA

THE WESTFIELD LEADER

WESTFIELD: ITS INTERESTS AND INSTITUTIONS.

VOL. III. NO. 19.

WESTFIELD, N. J., MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY 4, 1892.

\$1.00 PER YEAR. 5 CENTS PER COPY.

FIRE!

FIRE!

FIRE!

The Greatest Blaze in
Westfield, Since 1874.

MIDNIGHT ALARM.

The Fire King, With a Force
Resistless, Wraps His Arms
Around the Arcanum Build-
ing, and the "Leader" Office
and the "Standard" Office.

THE CORNER OF BROAD AND
PROSPECT STREET GONE
EVEN THE EARTH.

THE FIERY BANNERS LEAP AGAINST THE MIDNIGHT SKY.

A Million Glowing Sparks Shoot Up-
ward Through the Chill Night Air,
As If in Pony Rivalry Against the
Stars That Look Unpitied Down
Upon a Scene of Fiery Carnage.

At half past one last night the shrill
alarm that always strikes terror to the
heart, and comes with double force at
night, Fire! Fire! rang out. The
peaceful slumber of our citizens was
broken with startling abruptness. The
largest building in this town, known as
the Arcanum building, was on fire, and in
an incredibly short space of time was
one mass of flames from stoop to flag-
staff.

The firemen responded with alacrity
to the alarm rung on the school house
bell, but when they reached the scene in
force it was plain to the veriest tyro that
the old building that had been West-
field's pride for years was doomed.

THE FIRE SPREADS.

Moffett's carpenter shop, standing
next on Prospect street and somewhat
in the rear of the Arcanum building, next
caught fire from the sparks and intense
heat, and was soon rapidly dissolving
into the elements. The building of J.
F. Lightfoot, standing next, caught
about the same time, and the way the
inmates hustled their goods and chattels
out across the street would have made a
professional mover faint.

POTTER'S BUILDING NEXT.

Potter's building was in the path of
the roaring, crackling flood of flame,
and it too was doomed. The firemen
made a brave and stubborn fight here to
prevent the further progress of the
flames, and with the destruction of this

building the progress of the fire on Pros-
pect street was stayed.

THE BEGIN OF TERROR ON BROAD STREET.

While the combat raged on Prospect
street with varying fortunes, the flames
caught the cornice of the *Standard*
building and all hope of saving that
building was abandoned. In a few mo-
ments the end occupied by the W. C.
F. L. was a roaring furnace and the
flames rapidly worked into the main
part of the building. The store next
to the Temperance Hall was soon gutted.
The families upstairs hastily removed
their effects and watched the destruction
of their domicile.

The *Standard* office was doomed and
the firemen turned their attention to the
saving of Darsh's building standing
next. In this they succeeded and the
progress of the fire on Broad street was
stayed.

THE DAMAGE.

The office of the WESTFIELD LEADER
in the Arcanum building is a total loss
from office towel to cylinder press. Not
one penny's worth of all the property
within was saved.

Schenover & Scudder, butchers
occupying the front store in this build-
ing, also lost everything. There was some
property in the room where the band
practiced and that too was lost.

Nothing was saved from this building. Carpenter Moffett loses his tools and the material in his shop. In the Light-foot building, occupied by Gus Heckel and Fred. Hennis, much property was lost, Hennis' family escaping in their night clothes. Mr. Potter loses most of his stock, but saved some of his household goods. In the Standard building everything was lost except some of the office furniture.

CASUALTIES.

This fire was singularly free from fatal accidents, considering the risks that some of the gallant firemen took. A man called "Dip" Conger is said to be missing. He slept in the butcher shop of Schoonover & Scudder, but it is thought that he was home last night. J. H. Cash, publisher of the LEADER had a narrow escape while trying to get into his office. He was caught by a falling wall, but managed to extricate himself, sustaining only a few slight bruises.

THE FIREMEN.

Too much cannot be said in praise of our gallant firemen. They responded promptly and worked like the heroes that they are. Chief Schmitt was early on the ground and marshalled his forces. If special mention is due to any one it is due Cyrus Wilcox and Howard Manning. But each in himself a host and leader seemed.

Requests for help were telegraphed to Plainfield and Elizabeth. The alarm was sounded at Plainfield about 4 o'clock. Elizabeth responded to our cry for help and sent steamer Rollo No. 2 on a flat car, and it did good work at the last.

HUMORS.

Judge Collins lost his court records that were in the LEADER office. Though he is a professional joker, he does not see any fun in that.

The Chinese laundryman threw out a box of starch and then in his hurry knocked it over with a chair.

One man had his whiskers in a blaze during the hottest of the fight.

LESSONS TAUGHT.

That we need greater water facilities for an emergency like this.

That hand-engines are not as effective as steamers.

That larger ladders and more of them would not be amiss.

INSURANCE.

So far as we can learn at this writing, the Arcanum building was insured fairly. Moffett was insured for \$500. Lightfoot covered. Potter, stock and furniture fully, building light. Heuss, no insurance.

The LEADER office was insured, \$1,500; loss altogether about \$2,800. In the Standard building, which was fairly covered, the Temperance people had no insurance. Heinecke insured light, the Standard office only partially.

THE ORIGIN.

The fire started in some part of the Arcanum building, just how or where is not known and probably never will be.

THIS IS A GOOD TIME

To Mention That Fabled
Hen Bird, the
Phoenix.

SHE HAD A HABIT OF RISING FROM
THE ASHES, SO DOES "THE
LEADER."

Our office is in ashes. Yet some line of type have we saved. Even our blarney rest in ashes in the one grand ruin. But here we are again. Up and at it. It fills the heart with conflicting emotions to stand by and see the work of years fly heavenward in smoke, but feelings are crushed down. We are saving the people of Westfield and we will keep our faith if it is within the range of possibility to do so.

We expect to get the LEADER out this week, but we may be a little late. You all know the usual saying, "circumstances beyond our control," etc. It was plain to all who stood by and saw our office vanish, that it was under circumstances widely beyond our control. But we will meet the events from now on to meet you.

The Great Fire of '92.

Every old timer, from Maine to Maryland, claims a share in the Great Blizzard of March 12, 1888, but the Great Fire of January 4, 1892, belongs exclusively to old Westfielders. A Standard reporter who arrived upon the scene with the Bucket Brigade, described it as "the greatest and most destructive fire that ever visited the town," and such it has remained even to this day.

The fire started at 1:30 A. M. in the rear of the Arcanum Building, a two-story frame structure, 75 x 100 feet, at the corner of Broad and Prospect Streets, on the upper floor of which was the town's largest general assembly hall. After the first burst of flame, there followed "a booming sound which a score of people who heard it said was an explosion." Spreading rapidly from one "tinder box" to another, the fire soon destroyed a dozen business establishments, including both local newspaper plants, rendered several families homeless, and transformed an acre of buildings into great piles of smoldering debris.

Westfield's Volunteer Firemen, under Chief John J. Schmitt, fought valiantly, but they lacked the equipment to cope with a fire of such proportions. They dammed the brook run-

ning under Broad Street in two places, and pumped in vain to produce a stream of sufficient size and force to reach the heart of the flames. They pulled down chimneys and side walls and hacked away at burning timbers until they toppled over. They carried buckets of water from the brook and from the cellar of Grogan's North Avenue Hotel (filled by recent heavy rains) and passed them to men on ladders who kept a steady stream pouring over the steaming roofs of nearby buildings.

Their heroic work held the fire in check at the John Darsh Building, at Broad Street, and M. H. Ferris' Hardware Store, on Prospect Street, until Rollo Engine No. 2 arrived on a flat car from Elizabeth and "got in a stream from their engine, and what was left of the flames vanished in a twinkling."



Patrick Traynor in the doorway of his Centennial Stores (built 1876), Elm Street near Broad. The building with the French roof was torn down in 1889 and a brick building erected on the site which is now a part of the Murphy Store. Mr. Traynor came here from County Tyrone, Ireland, when eight years old. He was a leading merchant for more than 50 years, a volunteer fireman for 16 years, and served three terms on the Town Council. He died in 1934, aged 84.

Explosion At Traynor's Store

Old timer laid aside the morning paper and tucked his spectacles carefully away in his upper waistcoat pocket. "What I've been reading," said he, "reminds me of the big explosion we had in 1906, when Pat Traynor's grocery store on Elm Street was nearly blown off its foundation. I imagine if such a thing were to happen here today folks would run for shelter thinking a flock of Nazi bombing planes was paying us a surprise visit.

"This explosion caused no end of excitement. It happened around 6 o'clock when hundreds of commuters were coming home from New York. Windows were blown out and glass flew in all directions. One large piece crashed against the iron bars of a window of the Westfield Trust Company on the opposite side of the street; another tore a hole in the awning in front of Snyder's Stationery Store. Only one person was mortally hurt. Leonard Giles, a clerk, the innocent cause of the explosion, received internal injuries from which he died some months later in Muhlenberg Hospital; Mr. Traynor, who was at his desk going over the day's accounts, was thrown to the floor and got off with a few bruises; Charles Wittke, the stationer next door, was scratched by a splinter of flying glass; but, as luck would have it, most pedestrians were out of range.

"It happened this way: There were old pipes fastened along the rear wall of the

cellar which had been part of a special lighting apparatus installed by Mr. Traynor in the early days before electricity was used. They were not in the way and when the old building was torn down and a brick building erected on the old foundation he did not bother to take them down. But, as an investigation afterwards proved, these pipes had had gas or some combustible vapor in them all those years. When Giles went to the cellar to fetch a bag of potatoes, he was in an awful hurry to get through and he forgot to turn on the switch at the head of the stairs. He groped around in the dark, feeling his way along the wall until he came to one of the old pipes. Then he lit a match. . . .

"Everything in the cellar was blown to smithereens; the rear wall was blown out and you could have driven a horse and buggy through the hole in the floor over the spot where Giles was found, unconscious.

"The fire, after the blast, didn't amount to much. There was little to burn; and, being a former chief of volunteers, Mr. Traynor knew precisely what to do and had things under control when the firemen arrived. The damage was small compared with the conflagrations of earlier days, but this explosion sticks in my mind because it came within a few seconds of maiming for life, perhaps killing, a lot of folks."

Only Front Porch Left of Popular Hall—Cause of the Fire Is Not Known.

AUTO ENGINE AT WORK

(From Staff Correspondent.)

Westfield, Dec. 7.—The popular Westfield Casino which was totally destroyed by fire yesterday was constructed little more than twenty years ago. The building was constructed by H. C. Sergeant, for the Westfield Athletic Club, which failed. The place was then occupied by the Westfield club, which was suspended about eight years ago. Since that time the building has been used for various entertainment purposes. The property, which is now owned by the Sergeant estate, is fully covered by insurance. The building is valued at \$20,000, and has for the past two years been used as a moving picture house on the top floor, pool and billiard parlor on the first floor and bowling alleys in the basement. The Casino was practically the only place in Westfield fitted for entertainments and dances. Various clubs and organizations have been turned out of their place of amusement by the destruction of the building.

It is most fortunate that the fire started as it did, on account of the inadequate means of exit. Miss Florence was to have held her dancing class there yesterday afternoon. It probably would have been very disastrous if the fire had started while the class was in session. The destruction of the building will probably mean the erection of a more up-to-date and fire proof building.

The fire originated in a live room adjoining the furnace room in the basement, where stores are kept. An employe of the Casino told Chief Decker that he had smelled smoke and upon investigation found the little storeroom in a blaze. He obtained a fire extinguisher and thought that he had the fire out, but discovered that the flames had reached the beams of the floor and were gaining headway. Manager Lowenthal then ran to Ellsworth Ledley's lunch wagon, in Elm street, and notified the fire department by telephone.

The firemen had a stream on the blaze three minutes after they reached the alarm by phone. Chief Decker stated this morning that he was more than satisfied with the working of the new apparatus, but the odds were against them, as the fire had gained too much headway before their arrival. The blaze had gained considerable headway before the alarm was given, and upon the appearance of the fire department the building was a mass of flames. Chief Decker said that seven streams would have been of no avail.



Two streams were played on the fire by the new machine. One stream was 1½-inch and the other, 1½-inch. Owing to the unfamiliarity of the firemen in dealing with high pressure, one of the nozzles was shut off in moving the hose. The high pressure burst the hose, but the break was quickly repaired. The new apparatus had a fine test yesterday and everyone is satisfied that the machine is what is needed.

Chief Doane of the Plainfield department, came to Westfield in his auto upon hearing of the fire. He praised the work of the firemen and said that if they saved the least fragment of the building they would have done well.

A communication was received from Chief Gerstung, of Elizabeth, saying that he was sorry he was unable to go to the fire, as he was very busy at the time.

CHIEF DECKER STEPS ON NAIL

(Special to the Journal.)

Westfield, Dec. 7.—Fire Chief Fred C. Decker injured his foot late yesterday afternoon by running a nail into the flesh while he was directing the pulling down of the big chimneys at the ruins of the Casino, which was destroyed yesterday.

The successful operation of the automobile fire engine at the fire saved the First Baptist Church parsonage, which is located within fifty feet of the burned structure.

Several curios were taken from the ruins yesterday afternoon, including bowling balls and pins. The fire was the largest in this place in over twenty years. The last big fire was the destruction of Arcanum Hall Building, which stood at Broad and Prospect streets, where the handsome Dughi Building is now located.

Fire destroyed the entire stock of Will Gilby's General Store, at Elm and Broad Streets, Friday, January 24th. The loss (partly covered by insurance) was estimated at \$25,000. Nearby buildings escaped damage.

1896.

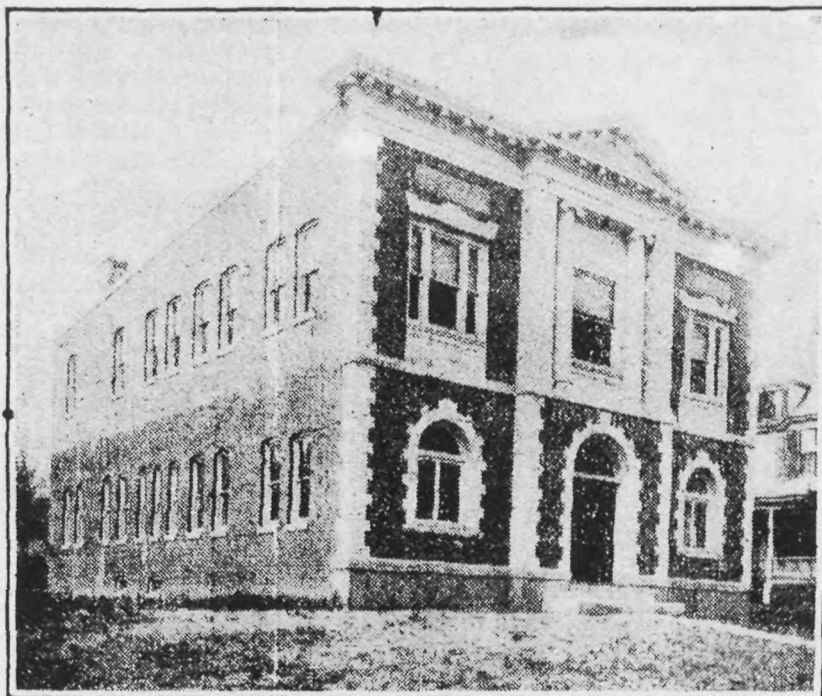
TOWN COUNCIL HOME IS LOST IN WESTFIELD

Midnight Fire Ruins Assemblyman Lloyd Thompson's
New Building.
MYSTERY AS TO HOW THE
BLAZE GOT START.

(Special to the Journal.)

Westfield, Jan. 17.—Fire ruined the interior of Assemblyman Lloyd Thompson's building in Prospect street at midnight on Saturday, causing over \$12,000 damage to the building and its contents. The building was occupied by the Standard Publishing Concern, Assemblyman Thompson, Harold Thompson, his secretary, and Town Engineer Vars.

The front of the Standard office was a complete wreck. The Standard occupied the entire lower floor. All of the newspaper office furniture, records, files and closets of stock stationery were burned. The books in the safe, however, escaped damage. The printing and type rooms were badly damaged. The loss will be \$5,000, being partly covered by insurance.



Assemblyman Thompson's property, in Prospect street, which was ruined by fire at midnight on Saturday.

Elm Street Stores Damaged by Fire

Quick Work of Firemen Confines Fire to Small Area.

A fire of undetermined origin early Tuesday morning swept through a portion of the one storied frame business building on Elm street, causing an estimated loss of \$35,000 to building and merchandise carried by merchants in the block. The blaze was discovered at 12.45 o'clock by patrolman Albert Hann who turned in the alarm from the box at Broad and Elm street. When the firemen arrived a few minutes later, flames were shooting through the roof of the grocery store operated by Earl A. App.

The flames quickly spread to the adjoining store occupied by the Westfield Shoe repair service. With three lines of hose at their disposal the firemen confined the flames to the northerly end of the building. The stores occupied by App and Jerry Sansone as a shoe repair shop were gutted, and the undertaking establishment of E. N. Brown was damaged by smoke and water. Smoke caused considerable damage in the fruit store of Nick Michione, and stocks of clothing in Wolf Ox's store. Christoforo's barber shop was slightly damaged by smoke.

The flames quickly spread to the ad-roof put a telephone cable out of commission, temporarily disrupting service to several hundred telephones. A cable of the police alarm system was also affected, causing the burglar alarm on the Westfield Trust Company building to start its clamor. For a few minutes it was thought that the fire might be a distraction to aid in a bank robbery, and a cordon of police was thrown around the bank building as a precautionary measure. When the bank alarm sounded, William M. Beard was called at his home and arrived soon after the cause of the disturbance was discovered to have been the disrupted cable. Mr. Beard discovered his law office in the Pierson Building filled with smoke, and after airing out the place, was content to leave for home.

The fire is thought to have started in the rear of an ice box in the App grocery store. The damage to the building, which is owned by F. R. Doerrier, was covered by insurance. All of the business men in the building carried fire insurance.

March 27, 1930

Destroyed by Fire This Morning

Spectacular Conflagration

Causes \$150,000 Loss to Theatre and Office Buildings

Defective Wiring in Organ Room Thought Cause of Fire. Low Water Pressure Hampers Firemen. Adjoining Buildings Threatened. Plainfield Department Sends Aid.

BLAZE DAMAGES WESTFIELD BARN

Spreading Fire Causes Request for Help of Plainfield.

Special to the Journal.

WESTFIELD, Nov. 3.—Fire of undetermined origin Saturday night damaged the Robert Woodruff storage barn in North avenue to the extent of about \$5,000, according to an estimate made by Fire Chief Decker. The blaze started on the second floor and went through the roof.

All Westfield fire apparatus was used in the fight to extinguish the blaze and a call was sent to the Plainfield Fire Department for aid, but by the time the latter arrived the fire had been brought under control by the Westfield men.

The blaze extended to the roof of a building in which the first floor is occupied by the Charles Bloom Paint Stores, Inc., and to a second floor rat poison plant operated by John Ten Eyck over the Schoonover Taxi Service Garage.

The fire attracted a large crowd. Firemen said it must have been under way a long time before it was discovered, as it had gained considerable headway.

The Rialto Theatre building was destroyed by fire this morning. The fire was discovered at eight o'clock. The alarm was turned in from box 31, corner of Broad and Elm streets, at 8:10. Smoke was seen in the vicinity of the theater, some time before the alarm was turned in, but passers-by attributed it to the starting of the oil burner, or burning rubbish in the vicinity.

A 8:20 fire burst through the roof at the Central avenue end of building and the adjoining Savoye house, occupied by Dr. Fiske and caught fire. Streams of water were constantly played on the fire to prevent the spread of flames. Two minutes later the theatre building roof was burning, the tar coating causing dense black smoke to rise in a column hundreds of feet high. The roof crashed in a few minutes later.

Immediately on the arrival of the fire apparatus, three lines of hose were laid and played on the fire. Chief Frederick C. Decker directed the department and soon after his arrival realized the extent of the blaze and called Plainfield for aid. Chief W. J. Decker of the Plainfield department arrived at about 8:30 with a pump engine and within a few minutes the Westfield department in fighting the fire. Lack of water hindered the firemen at the outset, due to the fact that three lines of hose were fed by the local engine. With the Plainfield apparatus two more lines were laid and the fire was soon under control.

The Rialto building was built in 1921 by the Realty Investment Corporation at a cost of \$100,000. It was formally opened in September, 1922. An addition to the building has since been made.

May 22, 1931

7/27/38

Fire In PS Car Barns Causes \$150,000 Damage Last Night

**Nine Pieces of Equipment Lost, Building Guttled. Believe
Blaze Started in Bus. Firemen Work Five Hours**

Damage estimated at around \$150,000 was caused last night in the Public Service car barns in Grove street when fire broke out at 6:30 and destroyed nine pieces of transportation equipment, including new-type all-service buses, some old ones, a snow plow and a truck.

Although PS officials have not released their damage estimate, the figure was given by other quarters as being reasonably accurate.

When firemen arrived at the scene, the flames had attacked the entire building. Employees, after giving the alarm, emptied four extinguishers and then had to flee before the quickly-spreading blaze. In a short time the center section garage of the building was open as the flames ate through the roof and the large doors at each end fell outward. About an hour after the firemen arrived, the north side of the structure, constructed of brick walls, collapsed. None was injured.

The local fire department used all its equipment in combating the destructive blaze and played streams from all angles. The Garwood de-

partment arrived with a large complement of men and pumbers under Fire Chief Thomas Brittain.

Despite the fact that the alarm was given at a time when most local residents were concerned with evening meals, and despite the terrific thunderstorm which fell from 7:30 to 8 p. m., about 150 cars and hundreds of pedestrians soon crowded the area.

The car barns are a landmark in this vicinity and people of surrounding towns traveled here when they learned of the fire. The heavy rainfall acted both for and against the firefighters; water quenched the flames, but impeded human efforts.

Besides the damage to the garage space, workshops, and other equipment, two apartments, one on each end of the building on the Boynton avenue front were damaged. Most of the fire, however, was confined to the car barn section.

Although no definite cause of the fire has been determined, it is believed to have started in a bus, parked inside in front of the door.

Westfield firemen worked until 11:15 p. m. in an attempt to clear debris from the building.

July 27, 1938.

Early Start On Thatcher Rebuilding

Reconstruction Work To Begin Next Week After \$500,000 Fire

GARWOOD—It is expected that contracts for rebuilding will be let Tuesday night, and that the construction work will actually be underway before the end of next week at the Thatcher Furnace Company plant on South avenue, Russell M. Cook, vice-president, revealed this week, following the spectacular \$500,000 fire which gutted a 700-foot section of the factory between South avenue and the Jersey Central tracks last Thursday night.

Mr. Cook declared an exact determination of the damage had not yet been made, but he said the estimate of \$500,000 released by company officials immediately after the fire probably would prove right. In addition to destruction of buildings, the loss includes the thousands of completed home heating units, a quantity of recently received factory machinery which had not yet been installed, contents of the main stockroom and hundreds of items in process of manufacture.

The raging fire at its height was visible for miles around and attracted large crowds from nearby communities as well as local residents. Fire fighting and first aid units arrived from Westfield, Kenilworth and Mountainside to offer assistance to the Garwood Fire Department and Rescue Squad. Charred pieces of debris were reported as having fallen as far away as Springfield avenue in Cranford, and an engine and crew from the Cranford Fire Department was stationed for a short while on West Holly street to see that fires were not started by live sparks carried over the area by the wind.

October 16, 1949



—Photo by Joseph DeCaro

BATTLE WAREHOUSE BLAZE--Firemen are shown fighting a fire which raged through Townsend's Storage and Warehouse building at 241 North Ave., West, Westfield, for several hours yesterday afternoon before it was brought under control. The fire was the worst

in Westfield since 1931 when the old Rialto Theater burned. The warehouse is owned by Henry P. Townsend of 319 Lenox Ave., Westfield. Adjoining the fire-damaged building is a new cement and brick fireproof building also used as a warehouse. To the right is the Sensbaci Brothers Taxi Service office.



December 5, 1957.

SEARCHING FOR ELUSIVE SPARKS—Regular and volunteer Westfield firemen are pictured looking for the last embers of a \$300,000 fire which swept this three-year-old structure and an older wooden building last night. They

are owned by the Arthur Venneri Brothers Lumber Company. At lower left is one of the many power tools which were damaged along with a quantity of finished cabinets which were ready for shipment. (Eric Munn Photo)

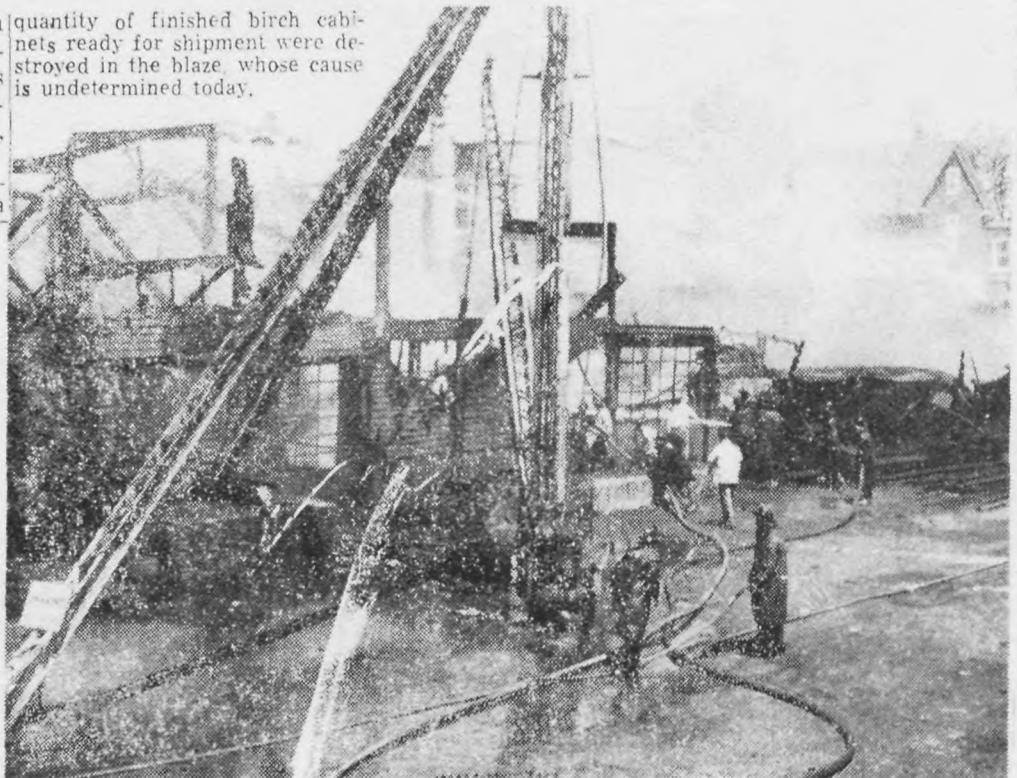


\$300,000 Fire Sweeps Lumber Firm in Westfield

Westfield—A fire caused an estimated \$300,000 to \$500,000 damage to two buildings of the Venneri Brothers Lumber Company, 300 North Ave., yesterday.

Early \$100,000 worth of power tools were damaged and a

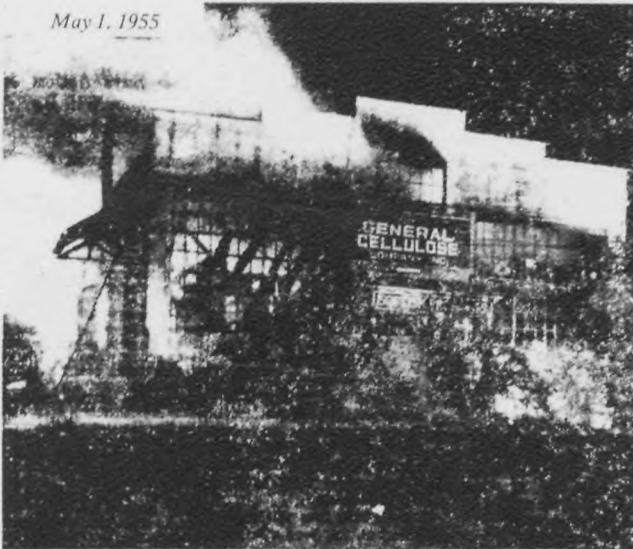
quantity of finished birch cabinets ready for shipment were destroyed in the blaze, whose cause is undetermined today.



Fire men battle blaze at Garwood foundry

August 2, 1959

May 1, 1955



FACTORY DESTROYED—Flames feeding on highly flammable material rage inside shell of General Cellulose Co. building in Garwood.

\$100,000 Garwood Blaze Destroys Tissue Paper Store, Warehouse

Leaping Flames, Visible for Miles. Attract Hundreds of Spectators as Westfield Firemen Aid Borough Department in Seven-Hour Battle

GARWOOD—Fire visible for several miles destroyed a retail store and warehouse of the Tissue Converting Co., a subsidiary of the General Cellulose Co. Inc., 544 South Ave., at 9:30 o'clock last night.

Damage was estimated at \$100,000, including \$25,000 worth of paper goods. An inventory was to be taken today in an effort to determine the loss in stock. Cause of the blaze has not been determined, firemen said.

Firemen from this borough and Westfield battled the blaze more than seven hours, but the one-story brick and steel structure was gutted. Two smaller buildings used for storage also were destroyed.

Neighboring buildings, including an auxiliary and the main plant of General Cellulose, were threatened by the flames but were not damaged. Several railroad cars on sidings near the

destroyed plant were removed by Central Railroad crews.

Low Pressure Handicap

Firemen were handicapped in their efforts by low water pressures and the lack of an automatic alarm system in the plant, Fire Chief Thomas F. Brittain said. Firemen reported the entire 50x150 foot building was in flames when they arrived.

Chief Brittain contacted the Plainfield-Union Water Co. and pressure in the lines was boosted, he said. Firemen poured water on the blazing building about six hours.

Garwood Blaze

GARWOOD — A stubborn fire, which firemen battled for nearly six hours in 11-degree weather, caused damage estimated at \$125,000 last night at the Magnus Chemical Co., 608 South Ave. A general alarm was sounded at 6:45 o'clock.

P. E. Gabelmann, director of manufacturing, who gave the damage estimate, said the blaze was confined primarily to the office section of the equipment division building.

Firemen said the office, including all equipment and records, appeared to be a total loss.

The chemical facilities division of the company was not touched, Mr. Gabelmann said.

However, there was damage to manufacturing facilities in the equipment division, he added.

Towns Send Help

Approximately 100 firemen from Garwood and seven other communities fought the blaze. They were hampered by frigid weather made bitter by a biting wind.

No injuries were reported.

The origin of the fire was not determined, according to Assistant Fire Chief Patrick Christiano, who was in charge of operations.

Mr. Gabelmann said watchmen at the plant had completed an inspection tour at 6:30 o'clock and failed to notice any signs of a fire.

He said an employee who entered the building to get a piece of equipment a few minutes later discovered smoke.

February 7, 1963



WHERE THERE'S FIRE: Firemen play stream of water on blaze which caused \$125,000 damage to building housing equipment division of Magnus Chemical Co., Garwood, last night. Firefighters were hampered by 11-degree cold which froze water on ladders and protective clothing.

Two Clark Plants Damaged by Fire

By PRISCILLA SAMUEL
Staff Correspondent.

CLARK — Flames, whipped by high winds, raced through the National Chair Co., Inc., yesterday afternoon reducing it to a brick shell and causing over \$650,000 damage to it and the Electro-Metals Co., Inc.

Five fire departments, hampered by low water pressure, battled the four-alarm blaze on Walnut Avenue, off Valley Road as 20 mph winds threatened to spread it to five buildings and three homes nearby.

The Clark, Westfield, Cranford, Garwood and Winfield fire departments fought successfully to save three homes close to National Chair and fronting on Valley Road. Five persons, at home when the fire broke out, including a sick one-year old baby, and a dog were evacuated unharmed.

Second Disaster

Yesterday's fire was not the first of the chair company's disasters. It burned to the ground in 1958 when it was located in an other one-story building in the same industrial tract. Also destroyed in the 1959 fire was the Hubert Distributing Co., a two-story brick building adjacent to National Chair.

April 29, 1963



Newark News Photo

SHELLED BY FIRE—Clouds of heavy smoke pour out of the National Chair Co. and Electro Metal Co. as flames ravage the interior of the building in Clark Township.



April 23, 1963, Frank's Wheel Tavern

January 19, 1965.

SEARED CENTER—Fireman leaves charred Westfield Field Center of the Washington Rock Girl Scout Council after fire today swept the unoccupied, frame building at 231 Clark St., Westfield. The fire, of undetermined origin, started in the cellar and spread upward through walls and roof. It was brought under control in two hours.

June 4, 1965.

6 Firemen Overcome Fighting Stubborn Westfield Home Fire

Westfield — Six firemen were overcome with smoke inhalation last night as a stubborn fire gutted portions of a 3-apartment house at 232 Prospect St.

Two other firemen and a spectator suffered minor injuries as firemen fought for two hours to bring the blaze under control.

Five persons were left temporarily homeless.

Two Alarm Fire Hits Armory

A two-alarm fire struck the New Jersey National Guard Armory on Railway Ave. at 12:30 p.m. yesterday but was kept under control through the efforts of the Westfield Fire Department. Closed metal fire doors kept the blaze from spreading into the Armory proper before the firefighters' arrival.



Pottery Kiln's Faulty Wiring Blamed For \$20,000 Blaze

WESTFIELD—Faulty wiring in a pottery kiln may have touched off yesterday's fire which destroyed a 2½-story dwelling at 143 Stanmore Place, according to Capt. Jack Dries, fire prevention officer.

He said the cause probably was "electrical." Firemen said they also found remains of paint cans near the kiln at the foot of the cellar stairs, where the fire started.

The blaze sent a family of five fleeing into the street in their night clothes.

Mr. and Mrs. William R. Black owners of the property, had their hair singed by the flames. Their children, Margot, 16, Sharon, 14, and John 11, were uninjured as Mr. Black routed them out of the house with the flames trailing their heels.

July 22, 1965

November 3, 1967.



Westfield Blaze Guts Cider Mill

NOV - 3-1967

WESTFIELD — A 3-alarm fire injured one fireman and gutted the Geiger Cider Mill and Bakery and damaged the Geiger Restaurant in Springfield Avenue early this morning.

Fireman Lawrence Knight suffered a burned ear in fighting the blaze. He was taken to his own doctor for treatment.

The Westfield Fire Department, including all off-duty firemen, were aided by 11 Springfield firemen. Plainfield and Mountainside firemen manned the fire house here under the mutual aid plan.

First to spot the blaze at 3:04 a.m. was a patrolling Mountainside police car. Westfield police and fire units were alerted and, on their arrival at the scene, flames reached high in the air and sparks were flying.

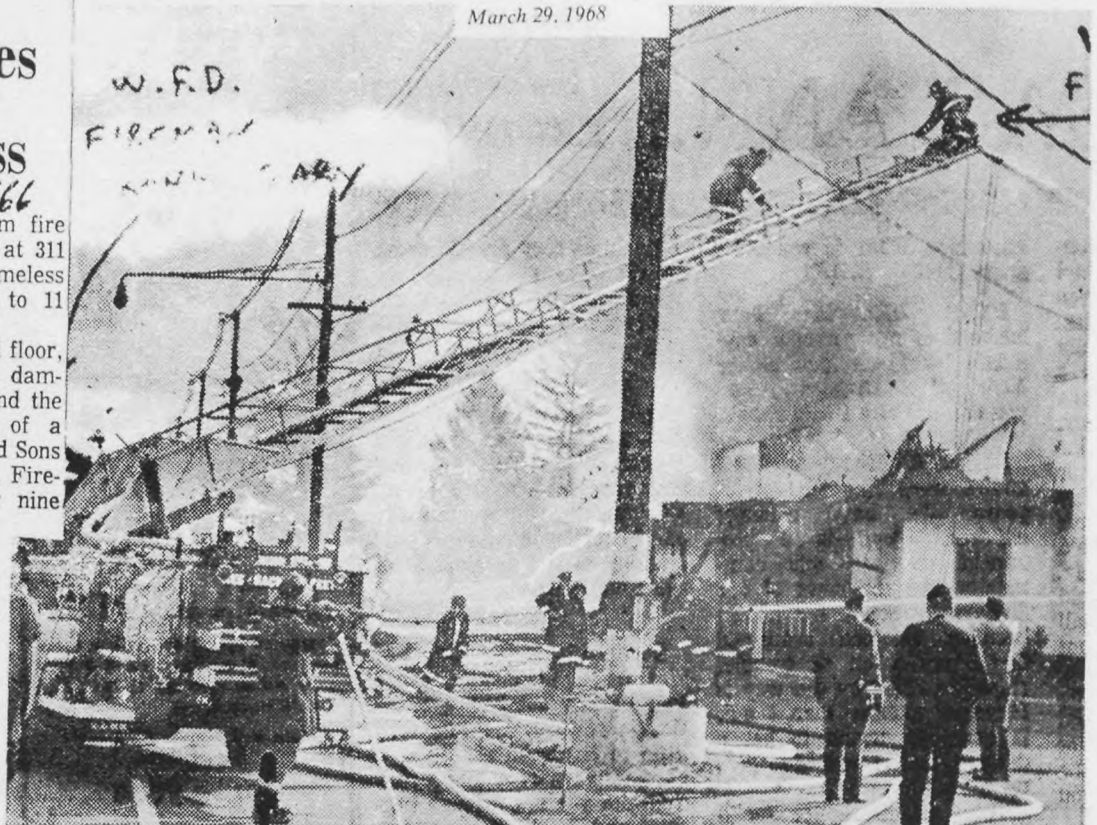
Westfield Fire Leaves 9 Homeless

NOV 20 - 1966

WESTFIELD—A 2-alarm fire early yesterday morning at 311 Central Ave. left nine homeless and resulted in injuries to 11 firemen.

The fire gutted the third floor, destroyed the roof, and damaged personal property and the first and second floors of a house owned by Villani and Sons Corporation, 612 Salter St. Firemen fought the fire for nine hours.

November 20, 1967.



FIREMEN'S BATTLE — Working from an aerial ladder, firemen battled in vain this morning to save the '3 Coins' restaurant in Route 22, Mountainside. (Photo by Chas. F. May Jr.)

May 19, 1970

Four Firemen Hurt in Blaze

WESTFIELD — Fire of unknown origin raged through a house at 304 Clark St. here yesterday, heavily damaging the building.

Firemen responded to an 11:25 a.m. call from Howard Smith of 531 Pierson St., a workman helping to renovate the building.

Minutes after the firemen arrived, they sounded a second alarm. The blaze was controlled in less than hour, but not before the rear and upper portions of the 3½-story house were gutted.



Clark Homestead



September 2, 1970

Blaze Hits Westfield Newspaper

WESTFIELD — An early morning, general alarm fire destroyed the plant and offices of the Westfield Leader, the community's weekly newspaper, today.

Fire Chief Norman Ruerup said his men responded to the alarm shortly after 5 a.m. "When we arrived at the scene the flames were already shooting out of the second floor windows and due to the construction of the building it was a very difficult fire to fight.

Chief Ruerup said the weight of the presses collapsed the second floor of the building almost immediately and the presses crashed all the way through the first floor into the basement.

We were very fortunate in that no one was injured."

All off duty Westfield firemen responded to the alarm and they were assisted by units from Plainfield and Rahway.

May 3, 1972

"It was very difficult to get inside so we had to fight it mostly from the outside," he said. Thick yellow black smoke also hampered the firefighters.

Teams of police and firemen evacuated residents in an apartment building at 66-68 Elm St., adjacent to the Leader plant.

The fire also destroyed the Jarvis Pharmacy and Restaurant next to the Leader building. The buildings are located at the apex of the corner of Elm Street and Quimby Street, a main business section of the town.

Mayor Donn Snyder, on the scene early, said, "the police and firemen did a great job of evacuating the people from the adjoining buildings, and the fire department did everything possible to save the buildings.





Mystery Fire At Scene Of Mass Slaying

August 30, 1972

WESTFIELD—The “List house,” this community’s “murder mansion,” was destroyed early this morning by a fire of undetermined origin.

The house had been empty since last Dec. 8, when it attracted nation-wide attention. The night before police discovered the bodies of Mrs. Helen List, 46; her mother-in-law, Mrs. Alma List, 84; and the three List children, Frederick M., 13, Patricia, 16, and John F., 15. They had been shot to death and lined up in the ballroom of the house. Police estimated they had been dead for a month.

John E. List, husband and father, was missing — and he is still missing. List was indicted for the mass murderer and is high on the FBI priority of most wanted men.

Deputy fire Chief George Breitfeller, who commanded firefighters during the early morning hours, said, “We received a report of smoke — fumes on Birch Avenue at 3:17

a.m. but could not locate the fire. (Birch Avenue is about a mile south of the List house.) At 3:37 a.m. the fire was discovered in the List home.”

“When we arrived, smoke was shooting through the roof of the three-story building and the house was totally engulfed in flames,” he said.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Westfield Exempt Firemen's Association

The Exempt Firemen's Association was first organized on November 12, 1896 with C. W. Harden as its first President. At the present time the organization consists of 44 members.

President:	Richard Moncur
Vice President:	Roy Cross
Secretary:	Peter Giordano
Treasurer:	Edwin Lemke
Trustees:	Frederick Metz Henry Buccino

Members

Edward Marengi	Edward Sobin	Raymond Aufiero
H. P. Townsend, Sr.	Alfred Linden	Joseph DeBella
F. Essig	Roy Cross	Frank Gary
Walter Whalen	Robert Schierle	Vincent Marotta
Harold Rowland	H. P. Townsend, Jr.	Lawrence Palmer
Rudolph Jahn	John Dries	Ronald Price
Walter Frickman	Edwin Lemke	Henry Buccino
Fred Onksen	Anthony Mazza	Lawrence Larkin
Edward Seeman	Peter Giordano	Thomas Stevenson
Frederick Metz	Lawrence Knight	Robert Green
Sam Baker	Ralph Buonanno	John McCormack
Donald Lane	Walter Ridge	Frank Isoldi
Norman Ruerup	Daniel Kelly	Anthony Vastano
George Breitfeller	Richard Moncur	John Hagy
Albert Lanza	Gustave Buonanno	

Westfield Firemen's Relief Association

The Westfield Firemen's Relief Association was organized on April 12, 1880. At its first meeting held May 10, 1880 C. W. Harden was elected President and J. R. Connolly was elected as Secretary. The Association was reorganized and incorporated on August 25, 1885 pursuant to a legislative act of March 25, 1885. The purpose of the Relief Association is to establish and maintain a fund for the support of indigent firemen and their families and for the burial of firemen who have served actively for the required number of years. The present officers and representatives are as follows:

Board of Representatives

Chief Norman J. Ruerup	
John Seemon	Daniel Kelly
Edwin Lemke	Roy Cross
Peter Giordano	Ralph Buonanno

Officers

President:	Edward A. Sobin
Vice President:	Robert A. Green
Secretary:	Alfred H. Linden
Treas./Collector:	Norman J. Ruerup

Trustees

Raymond Aufiero	Thomas Stevenson
John Hagy	Gustave Buonanno
Walter Ridge	Robert Schierle

WESTFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

NORMAN J. RUERUP, *Chief*

PAID DIVISION

DEPUTY CHIEFS

GEORGE BREITFELLER
ROY CROSS
LAWRENCE PALMER
WALTER RIDGE

CAPTAINS

FRANK GARY
ALBERT LANZA
EDWIN LEMKE
RICHARD MONCUR

LIEUTENANTS

ROBERT DENMAN
JOHN McCORMACK
THOMAS STEVENSON
ANTHONY VASTANO

FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER

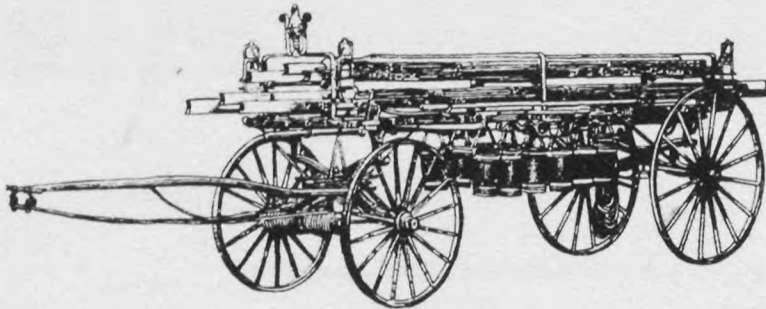
PAUL BATILORO, *Captain*

FIREMEN

JOHN SEEMON
ROBERT SCHIERLE
RALPH BUONANNO
GUSTAVE BUONANNO
JOHN HAGY
PETER GIORDANO
RAYMOND AUFIERO
VINCENT MAROTTA
JAMES TESTA

JOHN BRENNAN
JOHN CASTELLANO
HENRY BUCCINO
FRANK ISOLDI
DENNIS BURKE
ROBERT DUNLAP
RICHARD GREEN
CHARLES PFEIFFER
RAYMOND LUCK

ALAN DEAK
THOMAS DRIES
JOHN DUELKS
BRUCE MILLER
JAMES RYAN
GLEN LANZA
JOSEPH WALDRON
RICHARD FAGGANS
JOHN MORRISON



VOLUNTEER COMPANY

ROBERT A. GREEN, *President*
RONALD PRICE, *Vice President*
KURT PETSCHOW, *Secretary*
LESLIE DETLEFS, *Treasurer*

EDWARD A. SOBIN
ALFRED H. LINDEN
DANIEL KELLY
JOSEPH DeBella
ROBERT W. SELVIG
WILLIAM NOLAN
ROBERT W. BRENNAN
ERNEST R. SETTLES
LESLIE H. DETLEFS

DANIEL SIMONE
CHARLES TATE
BRUCE WALL
JOHN HONYMAR
JAMES T. PFEIFFER
STEVEN CORWIN
MICHAEL GIORDANO
GREGORY PAPAILIOU
JOHN DeBella



FIREMEN!

Here's to fire fighters all!
Always at your beck and call!
Vigilant and unafraid . . .
Volunteer or city-paid!

Scientific men are these
Fighting fire — a dread disease —
Challenging a flaming hell
At the ringing of a bell!

Unknown heroes, clad in blue,
They give up their lives for you!
Pray for them as they go past . . .
Every ride may be their last.

Nick Kenny



THE MALTESE CROSS

When a courageous band of Crusaders, known as the Knights of St. John fought the Saracens for possession of the Holy Land, they encountered a new weapon unknown to European warriors. It was a simple, but horrible, device of war, it wrought excruciating pain and agonizing death upon the brave fighters for the cross.

The Saracen's weapon was fire!

As the Crusaders advanced on the walls of the city they were struck by glass bombs, containing naphtha. When they became saturated with the highly inflammable liquid, the Saracens hurled a flaming tree into their midst.

Hundreds of the Knights were burned alive. Others risked their lives to save their brothers in arms from dying painful, fiery deaths.

Thus these men became our first firemen — and the first of a long list of courageous firefighters. Their heroic efforts were recognized by fellow Crusaders who awarded each hero a badge of honor — a cross similar to the one firemen wear today.

Since the Knights of St. John lived for close to four centuries on a little island in the Mediterranean Sea named Malta, the cross came to be known as the Maltese Cross.

WESTFIELD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

LH Westfield, N.J. Fire Department.
974.939 Westfield Fire Department, 1875-



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WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY



