

The History of the Chattanooga Fire Department 1871 – Present

(Produced by the Chattanooga Fire Department History Book Committee, including Captain L.C. Williams, Lieutenant R.J. Payne, Lieutenant L.V. Myers, and Mrs. Judy Wilson.)

During the Civil War and the federal occupation which followed, the responsibility of fighting fire belonged to the military. In October of 1865 the military allowed an election of a mayor and an alderman. Their immense task: a complete reorganization of the local government. Included in the reorganizing was a plan for assuming the responsibility of fire protection. The government donated one engine, a few feet of hose and the fire hydrants which had been placed on a few corners downtown. Of our department we can say this, however meager, was the beginning.

The water supply seemed equally meager. Federal troops had constructed a reservoir on Cameron Hill into which water was pumped by an engine stationed at the edge of the river. The water flowed from the reservoir by gravity. This water system was not donated to the city by the government but rather was sold to an individual. Mr. A.M. Johnson operated the water works, but whether he was also the purchaser cannot be ascertained.

A Chief Engineer and two assistants were selected to direct the firefighting efforts. For identification at fire scenes, the Chief wore a leather cap initialed C.E.F.D. and his assistants wore leather caps initialed A.C.E.F.D. The engine, which had been donated by the government, was later lost by attachments for bad debts.

Looking at the department at its very inception, it seems that they faced problems which have become so common to fire departments all across the land and remain with us even until today: manpower, equipment, and water supply.

In 1866, Tennessee was readmitted to the Union and the military occupation of Chattanooga ceased. An election had been held and a new Mayor and Aldermen elected. To them fell the awesome responsibility of operating the city under probably the most adverse circumstances any local government officials have ever faced.

Few today could comprehend the barriers they had to remove or cross. In their hands was the task of rebuilding the small, war-torn city. The physical destruction they could have overcome and the battle scars they could have erased, but our area was in the midst of the “brother pitted against brother” belt and the emotional upheavals had to be dealt with face to face and hard to arrive at decisions had to be made to stand firm.

It is probable that the fire department, fledgling that it was, was not shoved to the rear and forgotten. If it were they were soon to be made astonishingly aware of its importance.

In 1867 the “Great Flood” came and brought with it devastation. This disaster was followed by the total destruction by fire of the Crutchfield House, which stood about where the N.W. corner of Ninth Street and Broad Street is now.

In 1871, fire unleashed its hottest fury ever upon the unprepared little city and when it finally withdrew its army of flames, every building on the west side of Market Street between Seventh and Ninth Streets had been destroyed. The equipment that our department had at that time was two hand pumps and a few reels of hose. As for fire protection, we had been weighed in balances – and found wanting.

This fire, devastating and destructive as it was, brought a wind of good. The wind was of gale force as it awakened the people to the danger of this unpredictable enemy, thus allowing or requiring, as the case may have been, the Mayor and Aldermen to act.

A city could not be built to be lost and they now stood ready to do battle with their great potential archenemy – fire. They were acutely aware that they could work for months and years and with one fell swoop of the dread sword of flame, their labors and those of countless others could be lost in a fortnight. The problem – fire potential; the answer – fire protection.

The two greatest weapons of this now declared war on fire, they had captured and held in their possession. The first of these weapons was awareness and it gave them desire. The second was public support and it gave them confidence. The Mayor and Aldermen with the active interest and participation of Colonel Tomlinson Fort, reorganized the Chattanooga Fire Department.

The department was volunteer and it was considered an honor to be a member. When the public petition was circulated, it received 105 signatures.

The petition stated: “We, the undersigned agree to form ourselves into a Fire Department, for the protection of life and property in case of fire and bind ourselves to comply with all rules and regulations usually governing similar associations providing, however, that the citizens and City Council will sustain us in our undertaking.

It is interesting to note that the volunteer was fined 50 cents for missing a fire alarm. He was fined one dollar if he left the scene of a fire without permission. The time any member was allowed to speak was five minutes at any one time and not over twice on the same subject during any session of the company.

Subscription was started and in 1876 a new engine was purchased and delivered at a cost of \$6,000.

Chief Wilcox was the first Chief and by 1876 the volunteer department had three companies. The three companies were Lookout Fire Company located on Market Street between 8th and 9th Streets, Alert Hose Company No. 1, located on Cherry Street between 5th and 6th Streets. Each company had a foreman, assistant foreman, a secretary and a treasurer. Harry McQuade was the First Assistant Chief and William Freadman, Second Assistant Chief.

In January of 1879, Vulcan Company No. 3 was organized but Alert Hose Company No. 1 was disbanded so we still had only three companies. Vulcan Hose Company was located at the corner of Whiteside and Missionary Avenue. Whiteside later became Broad Street.

In 1880 the first change of Chief took place when Harry McQuade became the new Chief. Chief McQuade served in the capacity of Chief until 1882 when he resigned and was succeeded by William Freadman. Chief Freadman had as assistants H.A. McQuade and Thomas Wilcox.

The year 1882 was quite a significant year in our history. It was “the year of change.” It was in this year that two new companies were organized: Chattanooga Company No. 1 and Alert Fire Company No. 2. During this same year we see the last of Carlile Hook and Ladder No. 1.

The year 1882 was also the last year the department was altogether volunteer for in 1883 it was partly paid and partly volunteer.

The men in the paid department all worked at Firemens Hall, located on the N.W. corner of West 9th and Poplar. The paid department consisted of one steamer, one hose reel, one hook and ladder truck, five horses and 16 men.

The department continued to grow in number of men, equipment and stations and very importantly, in prestige.

In 1885, the paid department included two companies and the volunteer department included three companies. The paid department consisted of: Lookout Fire Company, which had a steamer, hook and ladder, tow hose reels, eight stationary men, five call men and 1,200 feet of hose.

Carlile Fire Company had a steamer, hose reel, seven stationary men, three horses and 500 feet of hose.

The paid department controlled 78 hydrants.

The volunteer department had three companies. Each company has a hose reel. Two of the companies had 400 feet of hose and 15 men each. The third volunteer company had 500 feet of hose and 20 men.

In 1886, Charles Whiteside became Chief. Chief Whiteside was a rich man and personally financed the installation of the Gamewell System of Fire Alarm Telegraph. He bought the poles and wire needed in the construction and was not reimbursed until two years after the system was in operation. The boxes were kept locked and keys were left at the house nearest the box. Each policeman and many responsible citizens were also given keys.

When a box was unlocked and an alarm turned in the key would not release until a second key was used. The second key was carried only by the Chief of the Fire Department. There was a heavy penalty inflicted for turning in a false alarm.

Twenty-five boxes were installed and this became a giant step forward. The Gamewell System was not, however, the only improvement under Chief Whiteside. Fire hydrants were increased to total 97 and an additional 1,800 feet of hose was purchased.

Fountain Square Dedicated to Firemen Iler and Peak

The memorial fountain at Fountain Square stands today as a tribute to the bravery and Firefighters Henry Iler and W.M. Peak, who were burned to death in the "Bee Hive" fire at Fourth and Market streets on June 9, 1887. The following is an account published in The Chattanooga Times, September 18, 1938:

"These two firemen were trapped in the collapse of a brick building at the rear of a firm which manufactured a device making the use of illuminating gas cheap. The gas stored in the building exploded and three tons of bricks fell over the firemen. Peak was pulled out by Chief Whiteside and other firemen, but died three hours later. Iler died instantly. Chief Whiteside burned both hands badly as he frantically threw aside the hot bricks in a desperate effort to reach his trapped men."

Early in 1888, the Chattanooga Times raised the funds with which was erected the firemen's fountain near the courthouse. Florence Gerald, member of a Casino Stock Company playing in Chattanooga at the times of the fire which cost the lives of Peak and Iler wrote a poem dedicated to them. Copies were printed by the Chattanooga Times were sold by firefighters and school children for 10 cents. The money was spent on a fountain monument on land donated by the city at the intersection of Lookout and Sixth streets and Georgia Avenue. The present statue is a replica of the original and occupies the same location.

Chief Whiteside retired from the fire service in 1890 and was replaced by Chief S.H. Martin. In 18890, headquarters were located at W. Ninth and Poplar Street.

The city directory for the following year, 1891, lists a Board of Fire Commissioners located in City Hall with B.T. Howard and Creed Bates as co-chairmen with William Cotter serving as secretary.

In this year, No. 4 Engine Company was formed and located at 209 East Eighth Street. The company consisted of nine men and four horses operating a steamer and hose reel. No. 4 Engine, which was changed to Garnet Andrews No. 3 (at the same location) in 1906, is the oldest continuous company in the department today.

It was customary for a fire company to take a name and number for its title. Usually the name of a locally prominent person or something connected with the city such as Carlisle Company No. 2, Lookout Company No. 1, etc.

In keeping with this custom, Engine Company No. 4 took the name Garnet Andrews No. 4 and was changed in 1906 to Engine Company No. 3 and Eighth Street and Park Avenue.

On January 1, 1894, Thomas A. Mulligan was unanimously chosen Chief by the City Council. Tom Mulligan was the first Chief on record as having risen through the ranks to Chief of the Department. Having served ten years as a hose company foreman, six years as Assistant Chief, he was the most experienced man the fire department had known as Chief and the department under him became known as a fire department second to none of its size in the world.

Through his foresight, there was established the first reserve engine in the department. It was housed at Station No. 2.

T.S. Wilcox, who became Chief in 1898, served one of the shortest terms any chief has experienced since in the following year, 1899, H.A. McQuade became Chief. A man whose name was to etched deeply into our history, William Toomey, served as Assistant to Chief McQuade.

Through 1904, the fire department had operated under the Mayor and Aldermen with a committee on fire protection, but in 1905 the fire department and the police department were placed under a single committee. They continue to operate under the same division of the city government, one commissioner representing both departments, through today.

William Toomey became Chief of the Department in 1906, a post he was to hold for the next 24 years.

Chief Toomey saw more changes, some of them revolutionary, than any other Chief in the history of the Chattanooga Fire Department. During his term as Chief he saw the department expand almost wildly. He saw annexation, a word which we have all come to know so well in our city; he saw veritable "wars" between insurance underwriters and city government, challenges tossed out, threats made and refusal by the city government to obey the underwriters or even to recognize their alleged authority.

He saw his department bear an undeserved share of burden with the underwriters threats were made good and the city was dropped to Class IV and its fire protection described as next to nothing. He was Chief during the great depression and was Chief during the entire transition from horses to motorized equipment. His reign started in 1906.

It was under his leadership that Engine Company No. 5, located at Orchard Knob Avenue and Vance Road, was added to the department in 1907.

This company consisted of a steamer, a hose wagon, seven men and four horses. Establishment of two new companies, Engine Company No. 6 and Engine Company No. 7 occurred in 1908.

Engine Company No. 6 was located at Sixth and Prospect. Engine Company No. 7 was located at 620 Main Street.

At the turn of the century, the city had a population of over 30,000 people and visions of the greatness that lay ahead. The next 20 years were marked by a large-scale construction and expansion program, in which a new library, the first "skyscraper" office and hotel buildings, a new city hall, a new courthouse, and many important new industrial plants were built. In 1913, Hale's Bar dam was completed, giving Chattanooga an abundant supply of electric power and a 9-foot channel for navigation on the Tennessee River.

By 1920, the city had grown to 58,000 people and its more than 200 industries employed about 13,000 persons. In 1925, and again in 1929, a number of populous suburbs were annexed and the area of the city quadrupled. In 1933, the momentous establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority began to bring to Chattanooga the tremendous lasting benefits of low-cost power, flood control, and modern water transportation.

Chattanooga Today

From its incorporation as a small town in 1839, Chattanooga has grown in its first one hundred years to a metropolitan community of nearly 250,000. Much of its growth has been due to the early recognition and continuing development of the advantages of its strategic location as a transportation center and to its close proximity to the natural resources of agriculture, forest, and mine as a source of raw materials for manufacturing.

Today, its 300-odd thriving industries employ more than 40,000 workers, and their 1,500 different products make Chattanooga the South's most widely diversified industrial city. Although primarily an industrial community, as the largest within 150 miles, Chattanooga is also a major retail and wholesale distributing center. Culturally, the

community has more than kept pace with its economic progress, and its preparatory schools, drawing students from a wide area, rank among the best in the country.

For vacationing, recreationing, honeymooning, or high adventure in sightseeing, beautiful Chattanooga is one of America's most interesting cities, long the mecca for sightseers from the world over.

Set in the geographic center of the great Tennessee Valley, now so much in the public eye, and rimmed about with rugged mountain grandeurs, this richly-favored city presents for your attention a unique blending of enchanting scenic wonders, fascinating historic background of Civil War battlefields, and a bustling scene of industrial greatness.

Within Chattanooga's metropolitan area and easily accessible in all seasons are many intriguing spots for visitors: world-famous Lookout Mountain with its many attractions; Chickamauga National Military Park, the nation's largest battlefield memorial; National Cemetery with its more than 15,000 graves of war dead; Lookout Mountain Cable Incline Railway, steepest in the world; Signal Mountain with its superb view of the Grand Canyon of the Tennessee, and world-famous Orchid Gardens; Point Park on Lookout Mountain, Rock City Gardens, Lookout Mountain Caverns, Montlake, and many others.

By any standard, life in Chattanooga is pleasant. Its equable climate, its business and employment opportunities, its social, cultural and educational advantages, combine to make it one of the country's most delightful residential cities. With its natural scenic setting, its unusual historic background, and its desirability as a place to live, work and play, Chattanooga looks forward to its next hundred years with confidence and enthusiasm.

Population Growth in Chattanooga

<i>Year</i>	<i>Chattanooga</i>	<i>Hamilton County</i>
<i>1860</i>	<i>2,545</i>	<i>13,258</i>
<i>1870</i>	<i>6,093</i>	<i>17,241</i>
<i>1880</i>	<i>12,892</i>	<i>23,642</i>
<i>1890</i>	<i>29,100</i>	<i>53,482</i>
<i>1900</i>	<i>30,154</i>	<i>61,695</i>
<i>1910</i>	<i>44,604</i>	<i>89,267</i>
<i>1920</i>	<i>57,895</i>	<i>115,954</i>
<i>1930</i>	<i>119,798</i>	<i>159,497</i>
<i>1940</i>	<i>128,163</i>	<i>180,478</i>
<i>1950</i>	<i>131,041</i>	<i>208,255</i>

A loss on buildings and contents of \$60,000 was entailed on July 9, 1904, by fire in the Posey Block on Carter Street. There were eight buildings in the block and the middle

four of these were completely gutted by the flames and little more than the bare walls were left standing. The two buildings at the corner next to Fort Street were badly damaged, and the two at the other end of the row were not injured by the fire, although the contents suffered some water damage.

F.E. Kuster & Co., manufacturers of paper boxes, were the heaviest losers, their loss on stock and machinery being \$12,000. The insurance covered about half the loss. Trigg, Dobbs & Co. lost heavily on the stock they had stored in three of the buildings, but their loss was covered by insurance. The Butner Produce Co. suffered a loss of about \$5,000 with no insurance. The loss on the buildings was about \$28,000, partially covered by insurance.

The fire broke out in the rear of the basement of Number 304 in a quantity of straw board which was stored there by Kuster & Co. The basement and the two upper floors of the building were occupied by Kuster & Co. and the ground floor was used by Trigg, Dobbs & Co. who were hauling sugar from the building. Smoke was noticed issuing through the floor and an investigation made.

A telephone alarm was sent in to Firehall Number 1 and later a general alarm was turned in. The flames spread rapidly to the adjoining buildings and in a short time had gained great headway. The upper floors and the building on the south side were stored with paper and cardboard, which caused a quick, hot fire.

The vacant store next to the box factory also caught and quickly burned, and next to it the building occupied by the Butner Produce Co. The fire was checked here on the south side and did not go down farther on the block. The two buildings on the end occupied by the Lookout Confectionery Co. and S.E. Creelman & Co. were not damaged.

On the north side the flames penetrated the walls of Number 302 and considerable damage was done in the upper floors of this building.

A hard fight was made by the firemen to save Number 300 at the corner of Fort Street. In this building the flames got between the ceiling and the roof and considerable trouble was experienced in reaching them. Only once did the flames break through the roof and that was in the rear of the building. The upper floor was full of dense smoke, but the firemen made their way through it and finally succeeded in extinguishing the fire in this building.

It required about an hour to get the fire under control and nearly as much more time was required to extinguish the blaze in the corner of the building. The fire was fought both from the front and rear and the extension ladder was raised on the street. At the rear was a passage with railroad tracks and this formed a point of advantage for the firemen in their fight.

The great quantity of flammable material in the buildings occupied by Kuster & Co. made the fire very hot, and a light breeze, which was blowing, drove the smoke and sparks down on the firemen who were at the rear of the buildings. Pieces of burning

paper were carried through the air and there was a shower of sparks falling in the vicinity and endangering neighboring buildings.

The scaffolding supporting the water tanks on the roof of the Chattanooga Ice factory caught fire a number of times. It was only by extreme watchfulness that the fire was prevented from spreading to these buildings in the rear. Men were stationed on the roofs with buckets of water and several times they had trouble in extinguishing the blaze caused by falling pieces of burning cardboard.

During the height of the conflagration the roof of the stockyards, several blocks away caught fire and a company was sent there. This blaze was extinguished with little trouble.

The origin of the fire was not known. Just before it broke out an engine passed at the rear of the building. The theory was that sparks from the engine fell through a grating into the basement. Another theory was that a lighted cigarette might have been dropped through the grating by some little boys who were playing in the alley.

The firemen did good work in confining the flames to the buildings. Several times it looked as if other property in the neighborhood would catch. The buildings in the block were very old and twice before this, fire had visited them.

The two buildings on the corner were occupied by Triggs, Dobbs & Co. as store houses and were stored with sugar and candy. The ground floor of the adjoining building in which the fire originated contained 500 barrels of sugar, all of which was destroyed. The doors of the outer two buildings were opened and 150 barrels of sugar were rolled out and hauled away. Other wagons were secured and buckets of candy were carried out by a constant stream of men and boys. One little boy dropped a bucket and it burst scattering the contents in the muddy street. There was an instant rush made for it and the candy was picked up. A barrel of sugar also burst open and this formed a feast for the little children.

After the fire was under control and in the afternoon while the firemen were playing the hoses on the smoldering remains of the stock of the box factory, a gray cat crawled from under the ruins and looked about her. She came from under piles of ashes and cinders and pieces of machinery just where the fire had been the hottest. She was slightly singed and soaking wet. She was rescued by the firemen and taken to Firehall Number 1. Down in the cellars of the buildings a number of rats were found sitting on whatever floating objects they could find in the waste of waters.

Flames that were sudden, stubborn and spectacular gutted a new, three-story brick building at 725 Cherry Street and consumed its contents on May 26, 1908.

The building was occupied by Willard Brothers & Holt, dealers in paints and builders' hardware, and the Parham Mattress factory.

The general alarm of fire which followed the first alarm turned in from the box at Seventh and Cherry streets at 5:05 o'clock brought out all of the engines in the city, including the reserve. For about four hours and a half, from five to nine streams of water were kept on the fire, flooding the basements along the west side of Cherry Street and several belonging to merchants on Market Street.

Nothing but unstinted praise was given for the department by the thousands of spectators for their effort to put out the fire and keep it from spreading. As Chief Toomey was out of the city, T.S. Wilcox, chairman of the board of public safety, donned the conventional fireman's hat and coat and assisted by Assistant Chief John Garner, directed the efforts of the men.

By the time the fire department had arrived in response to the general alarm, the entire building occupied by Willard Brothers & Holt was in flames. Five streams were soon playing on the building from the front, while four were thrown from the rear. With the exception of bursts of flame marking the ignition of large quantities of asphaltum, the firemen converted the visible flames into dense clouds of smoke, both in the front and rear, and rendered the outlines of the burning building as well as those adjoining, invisible for a greater part of the time.

From previous experience "Chief" Wilcox immediately saw that it was impossible to put out the fire in the store of Willard Brothers & Holt because of the combustible materials carried. He then turned his attention to preventing the fire from spreading. Efforts along this line, so far as the building occupied by the Parham Mattress factory was concerned were in vain. Within less than an hour after the fire had started, smoke was rolling from the windows and basement of the mattress factory. The flames had eaten their way through the partition and basement. Only a spark was needed to ignite the bedding and mattresses. It was at once acknowledged that the only thing to be done was to deluge both buildings with water. The fire department then settled down to pouring steady streams of water into the buildings, and particularly along the north wall of the mattress factory and the south wall of Willard Brothers & Holt, to prevent it from spreading to adjoining buildings.

After the department had poured water into the building for over two hours the fire in the building was entirely quenched, and the firemen were able to devote their entire attention to the mattress factory. This proved to be exceptionally stubborn, as the wet bedding material sent up clouds of smoke from all of the windows, preventing the firemen from getting inside of the building until the fire was well under control.

The basement of the building occupied by Willard Brothers & Holt was used for storing asphaltum, building papers and builders' hardware. On the first floor was located the saleroom, where fancy mantels, grates, canned paints and builders' hardware were on display. On the second floor was stored a large amount of fine wooden mantels and hardware used in building. On the top floor was stored window glass and tiles.

The basement of the building occupied by the Parham Mattress factory was used for the storage of bales of bedding and pillows. The first floor was used as a salesroom and for the office. On the second floor was located the factory while the third floor was used for the storage of feathers and pillows.

After the hardest kind of work the members of the Engine Company No. 3 succeeded in beating down the flames from the second floor of the building occupied by the mattress company. The blaze after an hour's labor was confined to the basement, which for over an hour and twenty minutes was a solid mass of fire. Mr. Wilcox realized at once that if the blaze in the basement was not extinguished the structure to the north of the Parham building was doomed. He accordingly ordered that the iron grating in front of the building be broken. At this time great tongues of fire were angrily licking the side of the building, and darting fiercely from the basement windows.

One of the most trying moments of the whole fire came at this time. Mr. Wilcox ordered that a ladder be lowered into the flaming pit. He then ordered Assistant Chief Garner to descend into the basement and carry a hose into the mass of flames. Handing his hat to a newspaper man, who was standing near, Chief Garner started down the ladder. He had hardly taken four steps when the flame shot with redoubled fury through the window. Seeing that unless the flames were driven back the assistant chief would be unable to enter the building cellar, Mr. Wilcox ordered three streams turned on the window. Under cover of these Chief Garner, after considerable difficulty, succeeded in making his way to the basement below. Here his way was blocked by four heavy iron bars. Calling for a sledge hammer he went to work on the bars. The space between the window and the outside wall of the building is very narrow. This prevented Chief Garner from getting in full blows on the iron bars. But he stuck to his work and finally succeeded in smashing the bars. The window fell with a crash into a mass of flames in the basement. Protected by three streams of water, Chief Garner then entered the cellar. Mr. Wilcox had already gotten another line of hose in order. This was pushed through the smoke and flames to Chief Garner. Foot by foot the flames were driven back until the rear of the building was reached. At this part of the building the flames were finally conquered between four streams of water, two from the front and two from the rear.

In addition to the two buildings, which were practically destroyed, a stock of building papers in the basement of the building at 709 Cherry Street, occupied by the Tom Snow company was damaged by water. There was over four feet of water in the basement after the fire had been put out. The basement of the store of the Woodworth Hardware company in the rear of the store of Willard Brothers & Holt, was partially flooded by water.

An exceptional example of devotion to an employer's interests was shown by Charles Holmes employed in the paint store. Although the flames and smoke were breaking from all of the windows in the rear of the building, he was seen in the midst of them tossing cans of carbide stored on the rear platform to the ground. He remained at this station until driven away by the smoke.

John A. Frazier of Woodworth & Co., was one of the first to discover the fire and assisted by the clerks of the store, hurriedly carried a quantity of dynamite and powder stored in a strong box in the rear of the store to a place of safety. The strong box was located just across the alley from the rear of the Parham Mattress factory.

While the firemen were at work, cups of steaming coffee prepared by a restaurant nearby were passed along to the men.

One of the features of this fire was the work done by the police department. At the time the alarm was turned in Chief Moseley was busy in his office at headquarters. On learning the magnitude of the blaze he at once ordered all available officers to the scene.

Within less than twenty minutes, ropes were thrown across Cherry Street, both on the north and south side of the burning buildings.

The alleyway on Seventh Street was also closely guarded by Patrolmen Kessler. None but newspaper men, firemen and city officials were allowed inside the fire lines.

Chief Moseley himself arrived shortly after the first squad from headquarters took up its position. From that time until the blaze was over the chief himself remained in command of the situation.

At 5 o'clock the same afternoon, the criminal court room presented anything but a cheerful appearance. Judge McReynolds lounged on the bench and the effects of a long, tedious day's work was plainly apparent. The attorney general had already deserted and in his seat sat W.H. Cummings, manfully endeavoring to show interest in the testimony of the witness on the stand. The jury too, was exhibiting signs of weariness and back in the gloom of the courtroom sat a score of jurymen and friends of the prisoner on trial and the gentle snoring of two or three disturbed none.

Clang, Clang, and Engine No. 3 passed by and instantly every man in the courtroom was on the alert. With one accord, the spectators made a rush for the doors and windows, the jury straightened up in their chairs and the judge looked interested. One by one the lawyers and students inside the bar remembered some unfinished business somewhere and with the dignity and deliberation of only those learned in that profession, walked to the door, then ran.

Then in an anxious voice Judge McReynolds called out: "Where is the fire the jury wants to know."

But no one knew and for fifteen minutes the curiosity of the judge, the jury, the prosecuting attorney and the counsel for the defense, the witness on the stand and the prisoner at the bar, was not satisfied.

Endurance has its limit, even with a reporter, and grabbing his hat, he fled, leaving the judge, the jury and the prisoner as sole occupants of the courtroom.

One of the most conspicuous and dramatic fires in Chattanooga's history partially destroyed Hamilton County's courthouse on May 7, 1910.

The estimated loss amounted to \$85,000 and consumed the second floor and roof.

Standing out boldly from all the facts and circumstances surrounding the great fire was the central thing that the offices containing the most valuable of the county records, the ones which could not be duplicated or could be replaced only by infinite pains, long drawn out time and tremendous expense, were practically, if not entirely, intact.

Chattanooga's large and splendid fire department was immediately rushed to the scene upon the sounding of the alarm, and fought valiantly, though badly handicapped for a precious few minutes. Their effective efforts are well evidenced by the fact that although the blaze had a bad start even before information was had of its ravages, the damage was nearly confined, except for water, to the roof and second floor.

Lightning was the cause of the fire, which wrought such havoc with Hamilton's stately courthouse on the hill, in the beautiful grove of familiar trees. At twenty minutes before ten o'clock one of the many flashes which were making the night uncanny and awe inspiring, vented itself upon the west or Walnut Street side of the building, creeping along wires leading into the structure in the vicinity of the county judges office. Directly the damage-dealing flames were at their work of destruction, and in a few more minutes the clanging of the firebells and the dash of trained horses feet through the city to the scene betokened the culmination of the storm's attack. Not content with the havoc she had wrought in setting fire thus thoroughly, Dame Nature continued her manifestations well through the period in which the firemen were working desperately against odds with thousands of excited people thronging on all sides to watch them and the flames.

Despite the heavy downpour of rain, the flames spread from side to side of the roof. About as fast as there seemed to be hope of stopping their progress at one point, the flames broke out in another.

Then, too, nature contributed to the destruction begun at the courthouse by partially confusing the electric system by which the firehalls were communicated with. Some of the companies were a little late in arriving because of this.

The crowds which quickly gathered only partially guessed the cause of the delay and were inclined to be critical. But as piece and piece of the fire apparatus arrived, organization followed confusion and all came under the guiding hand of Chief Toomey and his subordinates, where could be nothing but admiration for the men in whose hands were the valuables of the county in the hour of peril.

From the moment the chief arrived upon the scene, and saw at a glance the situation, his line of action was mapped out. The roof was doomed, he realized, and he made up his mind to save the lower floor and, above all things, those offices containing the most

valuable of the records. To that end, every effort was bended, and to the wisdom of such policy the gutted building, demolished as it may have seemed will be seen today.

The very location of the building made the fire harder to handle in the opening stages of the fight. Standing by itself though it was, a wide expanse of lawn on every side, bordered by a stone wall, separating it from the water plugs and a maze of wires surrounding the big building added a decided essence of danger to the situation. Within a few minutes after the first engine arrived, there were ten streams of water playing upon the building, two of them from inside.

The flames leaped skyward, as if paying homage to the elements which had created them. The lightning performed weird incantations at intervals of moments, adding to the dramatic side. The vivid flashes illuminated the heavens as if to complete the carnival of flame raging at courthouse hill. Frequently the flashes seemed so intimately connected with the flames that for a startling moment it seemed that an explosion or other foreign element had added its perilous tinge to the situation. Inverted pyramids of lurid sparks and jet smoke from the panting engines all around the burning building formed a brilliant setting for the central flame.

At frequent intervals throughout the well-rounded hour during which the fire was at its height, there was the resounding crash of falling ruins, sometimes outside the walls, more often within. That no one was hurt among the crowds which gathered all too close at times, was scarcely less than wonderful. That the members of the two groups of firemen who invaded the building to guide effective streams of water from points of vantage escaped absolutely unscathed, may be set down to the credit of fickle chance.

And the courthouse clock, right there speaking of that four-faced, almost human thing, which has long surmounted the courthouse, is where the truly dramatic steps in. It seems almost like relating the demise of an animate object, an old-time friend instead of a mere combination of springs, wheels and the other component parts of a chronometer. The courthouse clock, often before it had excited the interest of the scribe, but this night saw its downfall, literally. How many of the thousands who have glanced upward in daylight hours to note the time or listened intently in the night for its clear tone, would know it this night, a tangled, contorted, fire-wrecked skeleton of a thing, buried in a mass of debris? With the devouring flames raging around it here and there pieces of wreckage hurtling down, the old clock made one last bid for recognition, and the recognition was forthcoming. That one stroke of the bell at just about 10 o'clock was the subject of more comment, doubtless, than any other sound which ever emanated from the timepiece on the hill. One last, but half-muffled peal, and the courthouse clock had said its say. When the mechanism stopped forever its labors in the vertex of flame, the minute hand showed about a minute before ten. But several minutes thereafter elapsed before the wondering beholders turned one to another for the exclamation evoked by the last stroke. The spring, doubtless, stretched or worn through by the furnace heat, gave way, and the clapper met the gong for the final stroke. Soon after the bell itself joined the debris below.

Probably a large portion of Chattanoogaans saw the lightning flash, directly or by reflection, that began the havoc at the courthouse. More heard the deafening double clap of thunder which followed on its heels. Jailers Charles Springfield and M.D. Elliott were aware of both, seated in the office of the county jail, just across from the courthouse. They discussed it from the standpoint of possible damage in the vicinity. Opinions differed as to which direction the sound indicated that the stroke was. Not until a man rushed in and told of fire across the street did they know the close proximity of the stroke. Mr. Springfield immediately turned in the alarm, which was communicated to the various firehalls all over the city.

Company 3, Georgia Avenue, was first to reach the courthouse square, and soon had a stream of water playing on the burning building from the Walnut Street side. Number 1, Carter Street, was next. Chief Toomey, at home when the alarm spread, dashed up before even a second stream had been turned on and took charge. Number 4, at whose hall the alarm was storm-confused, located on arrival at Georgia and Oak, with the Dugger. Number 5, the Howell, who had been held up in Highland Park extinguishing another lightning-ignited blaze, was stationed at Sixth and Walnut; Number 2, the Garnett Andrews, McCallie and Georgia, was a trifle late, due to confusion of alarm. Number 6 took up position at Sixth and Georgia Avenue, but was soon put out of commission by the breaking of a yoke. After the mishap, the streams were weakened considerably, only the water main pressure being available. Number 4 arrived a little late, there being some trouble with the alarm, and on the way met an automobile dispatched by the Chief to summons it.

From very early in the fight, and lasting through to the moment of control, there were two streams, at least, playing from inside the building. All told, there were ten streams playing on the building from various points of vantage and the lines were changed as new phases of the destroying element developed.

At first it seemed, to the onlookers at least, as if the fire would be confined to the Walnut Street side. But before the cauldron of flame in the portion of the building where the fire started could possibly be put under control, the center, and even eastern portions of the roof were smoking badly and even broke through. Gaining the air the flames made great progress and the entire roof was a mass of flames. Special attention was wisely and systematically given the offices of the county clerk and county register, because of the priceless papers within. In County Court Clerk Hay's office a gas light, left burning for the night, calmly burned on, and when the fire above was finally burned out, had not gone out. Register Carroll's roof, because of the more violent flames above, coupled with the fall of the heavy material in the tower, weakened, and finally a desk, all aflame, burst through. The door was broken in – this not becoming necessary until well along toward the finish – and the burning desk thrown out.

While the fire was still practically in the Walnut Street side, Judge McReynolds, whose office was on the second floor opening from the courtroom, went upstairs. Judge McReynolds had an idea of saving at least part of the contents of his office, which included a law library worth \$500, on which he had no insurance. The judge saw

reflections of fire in his office and decided the property within was not worth the trouble. Later, Frank West, one of the busiest of the civilian helpers, prepared to gain the judge's office by ladder from the ground. The judge discouraged this effort and begged Mr. West and others who proposed to help from making the attempt. The ladder was placed, however, the windows broken and books and papers in a general mixture flung outside to the ground, with the rain beating down upon them. Judge McReynolds quickly moved his property from the damp lawn to the Calumet Club.

Fire apparatus and snaky lines of taut hose cut off the Oak Street and Hill City car lines. Transfers were effected, and anybody who was lack luster enough to seek home before the fire died down had opportunity to go along.

From the standpoint of the curious spectators, the county home on the hill was a howling success as a scene for a big fire. The lawn itself, water-soaked as it was, formed good stamping ground for a sort of progressive stag party. The streets on all sides, jail lawn, Bijou front, First Baptist front, First Christian front, etc. afforded grandstand room for hundreds upon hundreds attracted by the excitement. There were all kinds of people and all kinds of costumes.

On June 26, 1911, at about 9:00 p.m., a \$100,000 fire destroyed the Loomis & Hart Manufacturing Company demonstrating to officials and citizens the poor condition of hose in the department at that time as well as the inadequacy of hydrants in the vicinity. The large plant was located on the waterfront near the bridges.

Because of the dry condition of the building and its contents and the fact that the fire had gained considerable headway before the arrival of the department, it was impossible to save any part of the building. It was stated that all outbuildings, the warehouse, the finishing plant, the sawmill, and hundreds of stacks of lumber were preserved by the effective work of the fire department.

The blaze was the most spectacular Chattanooga had seen in a long time and was witnessed from every quarter of the city. Thousands of people were drawn even from the south end and streets were crowded for two full blocks. Dr. J.B. Steele saw the fire from Chickamauga Park and thinking the entire city was in flames, made a record run from there.

A watchman for the plant discovered the flames while making his nine o'clock rounds. He ran for an extinguisher and attacked the fire but was unable to extinguish it and subsequently discovered that the fire had started in the basement of the building. He then ran to the nearest phone and reported the fire. A box was also pulled to sound the alarm.

Several employees of the company who lived nearby saw the flames and rushed to the plant but found the fire so advanced as to make their efforts to extinguish it fruitless.

Within a very short time after the alarm had been turned in Chief Toomey arrived on the scene, leading six engine companies, the chemical, and the ladder company. They

quickly laid lines to the fire and shortly had eight fire hoses at work. This number was increased as the seriousness of the conflagration was realized. Chief Toomey remained on the scene throughout the night, directing the work of the firefighters.

It was reported that an excellent run was made by the auto fire engine and that this piece of apparatus gained a position well up toward the fire. After being used for a few minutes and doing effective service it was found that the heat was too strong and Chief Toomey ordered the big engine moved back to another plug. A lighter engine slipped in and when the auto engine reached the plug at Water and Chestnut, the plug was already in use. The newspaper story says this left the most valuable piece of apparatus in the department out of service and the big \$10,000 beauty stood idly by and mutely watched its comrades battle with the fiercest flames of the year. Much criticism was heard among bystanders relative to the absolute idleness of this engine, but it was based principally on ignorance, for last night's nonperformance was by order of those in charge.

The first alarm was responded to by members of the police as well as the fire department. Captain Will Hackett with a squad of officers and some heavy rope was on hand early to prevent the great crowds of spectators from moving too near the flames and interfering with the work of the ladies. While the streets for blocks around were literally packed with men, women and children, not trouble was experienced in keeping them back because of the intense heat.

T.C. Betterton, commissioner of fire and police, was within the fire lines when a reporter reached the scene. He was watching, not directing, the work of both departments. Mr. Betterton confined his work to keeping an eye on sparks falling around a small building in which was stored a quantity of explosives. This sat within a few feet of the hottest flames, and but for a steel covering would have been among the first of the adjoining objects to be devoured. Had a live spark ever found a resting place among the high explosives here there might have been an added story of human life destroyed. The crowds were entirely ignorant of this, however, and gazed in blissful innocence though within 30 feet of the danger house. Commissioner Betterton found a door open in this house after the flames had been burning for more than an hour. Robert Green, wagon driver, volunteered to close it before a spark dropped in a did so, though it was learned later that there was nothing stored there. The more dangerous liquids were in a small building just below.

With but slight exception the fire was confined to that part of the property lying south of Water Street. A boiler room located only a few feet from the plant was burned almost as soon as the main building, collapsing before the firefighters had all their lines down.

Behind the boiler house was a large pile of sawdust, and some kindling used for fuel and this caught from the sparks. No attempt was made to extinguish this, as it was practically worthless and was not close enough to anything valuable to be of danger. Sparks from the main fire landed on a wooden portion of a water tower adjoining the warehouse and finishing plant and burned merrily until Chief Toomey directed a hose against it. This tower was steel. Two wooden troughs ran up the sides, and it was here that the sparks

found a resting place. The oil building was located almost directly under this tower, but luckily the stock of oils was not as heavy as is ordinarily carried.

Great, glaring sparks flew from the spectacular blaze with the wind and fell on houses toward the city. There was a great deal of alarm on Poplar Street, just above the plant on Reservoir Hill, and one woman even had the movable portion of her household goods packed for hurried transfer.

The sparks fell in numbers on the warehouse, but this was saved by a tin roof. An automatic sprinkling system installed here several years ago was in readiness, and would have given valuable aid to the department had the flames reached this building.

The sawmill was saved by the distance which separated it from the furniture factory. Had sparks reached here as they fell on the warehouse and other buildings toward the east and south it is likely that the loss would have been much greater.

Waste slabs, sawdust piles and rough lumber stacked near the dry kiln furnished a large part of the spectacular blaze, and kept the firemen working practically all night.

In 1911, there occurred the most revolutionary change our department has ever known. The Chattanooga Fire Department purchased one of the contraptions which were being so highly praised by other departments that tried them – the automobile fire engine. The experience with it was successful beyond the wildest dreams of its most ardent proponents. The municipal record dated August 15, 1912 contains an article headed by these words: “Fortune on Insurance Saved Chattanooga By Their Excellent Fire Department.”

The citizens and government were proud of their fire department and its automobile fire engine and the article says that it has greatly increased the efficiency of the department. It is called a distance devouring firefighter that has no district. It answers all calls in the city regardless of location. Its powerful engine is used for both motive and pumping purposes and it can run many blocks and arrive before or at the same time a horse company gets on the ground from the station a comparatively short distance away.

Since the men have become as familiar with the operation of it as the old fashioned apparatus, it has become more and more apparent that the motor engines are the things here. Aside from the increased promptness with which fire alarms can be answered with the motor driven engines, an important item in favor of the change is the savings in salary and other details of expense.

For the past five months, the expense of maintaining the automobile engine company has been only about one fourth as much as required for similar equipment drawn by horses.

Chattanooga was proud of its fire department. This was shown in the annual message as submitted by Mayor Thompson in November of 1912. It was decided the Chattanooga Fire Department could experience a total change.

The city wasted little time in starting a transition which was to be swift and complete. The January 1913 Municipal records reads, "Within a short time perhaps this month the Chattanooga Fire Department will have a motor drawn chemical engine, it having been decided to purchase this additional piece of equipment."

Chattanooga will, with the acquisition of this machine, have two motor drawn firefighting appliances, not counting the automobile run-abouts used by the chief and his assistant.

The chemical engine was delivered in August of that year and stationed at No. 6 Fire Station. It responded to all alarms in the city.

At this time there were still 35 horses in the department and in 1913 more were bought at a cost of \$300. In 1913, \$460 was spent for shoeing horses, \$2,653 for feed, and the total budget for salaries was \$71,750.

In 1913, the force for the department was one chief, one assistant chief, one building and electrical inspector, nine captains, nine lieutenants, eight engineers, two assistant engineers, six stokers, fourteen drivers, fifteen pipemen, three ladders, one lineman, seven watchmen, which made a total of 77 men.

The locations of the fire companies in 1913 were:

#1 Engine	Carter St. at 11 th
#2 Steamer	610 Whiteside
#3 Steamer	515 Georgia Avenue
#4 Steamer	E. 8 th St. at Park
#5 Steamer	Orchard Knob at Kirby
#6 Steamer	6 th at Prospect
#7 Steamer	6 th at Prospect
#8 Steamer	620 East Main
#1 Chemical	Carter St. at 11 th
#1 Truck	Carter St. at 11 th

The alarms and fire losses for this general period are:

Year	Alarms	Losses
1907-1908	265	\$131,582.10
1908-1909	248	\$95,449.61
1909-1910	260	\$116,136.79
1910-1911	275	\$185,745.61
1911-1912	259	\$100,647.57
1912-1913		\$66,096.95

The city auditorium had been built in 1896-1897 on East Ninth Street during the last administration of Mayor George W. Ochs. The American Missionary Association had

established a school on the site in 1872 and in 1886 a manual training department was established there.

The city government bought the school property from the American Missionary Society on July 29, 1884, for the sum of \$4,500. Some of the outstanding people in our nation's history had been heard from the auditorium rostrum, including William Howard Taft, Teddy Roosevelt and William Jennings Bryan. The reunions of the United Confederate Veterans and the Grand Army of the Republic had been held there. It was a great building in our city.

On June 9, 1916, a church rummage sale was being conducted in the basement of the auditorium. At 1:15 p.m., a telephone call was made to police headquarters by a man who refused to identify himself, but said there was a fire at the city auditorium. An officer went there to investigate and reported there was no fire there. Two detectives, Wells and Krug, were then dispatched and even talked to some of the ladies who were conducting the rummage sale and no fire was found in the auditorium.

Chief Toomey was then notified of these events and took the chemical engine to investigate. He did find a fire underneath the stage in some rubbish that had been allowed to collect there.

Oddly, at this very time the city commission was holding a meeting in Commissioner Betterton's office with Allen D. Albert, President of the International Rotary Clubs of the World, who was gathering information about the city. They were discussing the need for a new city auditorium when the telephone alarm in the adjoining office tapped three times and the commissioners were informed that the auditorium was on fire.

When there was little smoke visible to the spectators, a general atmosphere of amusement prevailed with quips about our good fortune that the auditorium was on fire. But those who know the characteristics of fire in open buildings found nothing amusing about the situation; nor did the spectators for long. The flames soon shot upward from behind the stage and spread to the main floor, galleries and the roof. Chief Toomey and his men had to retreat; some of the men had their clothing ignited by the flames.

The stage soon collapsed and flames jumped to every part of the interior of the auditorium. The firemen barely reached the exits and Chief Toomey called for a general alarm. At the same time the additional companies arrived, the roof collapsed and flames shot high into the air and came out every opening in the building. The heat of this fire was very intense and a stiff wind increased its threat to several wood structures at the south end of the building. Chief Toomey personally took charge of all the operations in that area of the fireground. The crowds which had gathered on A Street had been driven back by the heat.

The intensity of the heat soon built up on the east side of the building and all efforts were directed toward saving that section of Ninth Street. Commissioner Betterton was in charge in that fireground area. He took a nightstick from a policeman and attacked a

locked iron gate with it. He opened the gate and personally led the line advancement right up to the burning building. The wall in the center of the building wavered and he ordered a quick retreat. Almost immediately that portion of the wall fell on the exact spot where Commissioner Betterton and his men had been standing.

Electric poles burned and collapsed and wires were sparking in the area. Other wires sagged. Telephone service from Ninth Street south for seven or eight blocks was interrupted because the wires were burned so badly.

In less than two hours it was burned. All that remained was portions of brick walls, twisted steel beams, bent and burned iron seat frames. A final note of interest is this: the building was fireproof.

On the night of January 20, 1917, at about 9:30 p.m., a night watchman for the J.V. Wells Brick Company saw smoke coming from the rear of the lumber plant of the Chattanooga Manufacturing Company. The plant was the old Chattanooga Box and Lumber Company and had recently been reorganized under the name of Chattanooga Manufacturing Company. The building was a one-story frame structure, which covered an acre or more and was located on Blackford Street at the rear of Erlanger Hospital.

Shortly after the watchman spotted the smoke, a police motorcycle patrolman saw the sky suddenly light up with flame. He investigated and found almost the entire plant in flames. He rushed to turn in a telephone alarm and companies 3,4,6 and 7 responded. The fire hydrants were a considerable distance from the fire and the companies had great difficulty in laying hose lines across railroad tracks and into the lumberyard. No. 3 pumper was hooked up at the city water company quite a distance away and had to pump water over a hill. Blackford Street was not in good repair and No. 7 Engine Company ran into a hole in the street and could not get out. The pumper remained there until the fire was extinguished and other engines pulled it out of the hole.

The building burned very rapidly and was one of the brightest blazes seen in Chattanooga for some time. Thousands of spectators came to the scene and lined Blackford Street and Harrison Avenue. So many calls went into "central" inquiring about the fire that the board was jammed and in many other places calls were interrupted altogether.

The building and much valuable machinery was lost, despite the desperate efforts of the firefighters. Officials of the brick yard in the rear praised the firemen for saving their plant and praise was also heaped upon the department for saving several frame houses in the vicinity.

In any revolutionary change there are doubters and it is not improbable that there were doubters that our change over from horses to motor power would be so complete. If any doubts were harbored, they were soon to be dispelled by a decision concerning construction of a fire station on Dodds Avenue in Ridgedale.

But since the decision had been firmly made to discontinue the use of horses in favor of the more effective and economical motor powered fire pumpers and trucks, when why provide the horses?

In 1914, No. 8 Fire Station was built on Dodds Avenue and became the first station our department had ever built designed to house a motor driven fire apparatus. Heretofore, fire stations were large, bulky and roomy, but this new station needed no hayloft, no oat line, no corn barrels or horse stalls. It was new in its design and looked cramped, but it was not. A new Type 12 American LaFrance triple combination pumper and 2,000 feet of Eureka Paragon hose was put into service and the station was called Auto Engine House No. 8.

Another American LaFrance pumper was purchased and put into service at No. 6 Station in 1914. This was a type 12 dual combination apparatus and became unique in our annals in that it was the first motorized apparatus, which replaced another piece of motorized equipment. The apparatus which it replaced at No. 6 Station was a Webb Chemical motorized pumper, which was repaired and placed in first class condition by member of the fire department. After it was repaired it was sent to No. 7 Station and replaced their horse drawn apparatus which was a 350 gallon Ayers engine, which was 29 years old.

In 1915, the department had ten companies. Three of these, Engine Company Nos. 6, 7 and 8 were motorized. Six engine companies, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and Truck Co. No. 1 were horse drawn. One, the Chemical Company, had both a horse drawn and motor apparatus.

In 1916, we see the end of an era. The era of the horse-drawn fire engine comes to a close. It had been an era of excitement, an era of beauty, of unique sounds. People were not surprised. Those with even the most elementary knowledge of fire service could easily detect the great effectiveness of that which took their places. It cannot be said that they slowly faded away into a murky background from which they could not be seen. It would be much more accurate to describe their end as a mercy killing for they left swiftly; so swiftly that not even one was kept for emergency use.

The very sight of them in action was exciting. If one saw them simply grazing behind a fire station, his imagination conjured up pictures of flames leaping out windows of multi-storied buildings, or he could see the horse in place stomping in his anxiety to have the harness attached so he could rush wildly out of the station straining to pull that which was his usual burden. To more clearly understand the greatness of their beauty, we need only to recall the many times artists have tried to capture their beauty on paper. They were well kept and their coats were glossy as was their harness and the apparatus they pulled, and it all served to make them into something which is special and beautiful. Their unique sound was the rhythmic clip-clop of their hoofbeat against the street with the clang of a bell behind them, which upset the stillness and called attention to them and excited them all the more. Every one of them had a name and the firefighters protected them and even fought anyone who abused them and there existed a mutual respect between them and the firefighters. The horses too were firefighters.

We have stepped somewhat away from factual history and have written about the horses as we truly believe that no history of the fire department would be complete without it. Any living thing which has contributed so much to the fire department deserves an obituary. This was theirs. We close this romantic era of the fire horse. They are gone. They are no more in our service.

The first motor aerial truck in the Chattanooga Fire Department was purchased in 1916. It was a 75-foot spring hoist aerial and was the apparatus of No. 1 Truck Company, which was in that year our only truck company.

All the while another great change was taking place almost unnoticed. This was the elimination of the steamers. The last steamer in the department was at No. 1 Fire Station used by No. 1 Engine Co. It was replaced in 1917 by a motor pump and it was this steamer which stood for so many years at Warner Park. It was saved by the strenuous efforts of the fire department. In 1917, for the first time in the history of the fire department, the entire department was standardized.

Shortly before midnight on April 24, 1917, fire broke out on the fourth floor of the Mountain City Stove and Manufacturing Company Store at 523 Market Street in downtown Chattanooga. The fire evolved into a general alarm and threatened the entire block. Except for the extreme front of the ground floor the entire stove company building was completely destroyed.

The third and fourth floors of the Sterchi Brothers Furniture Company north of the stove works building were destroyed and the water used in extinguishing the fire at Sterchi Brothers ran in streams through the lower floors.

Immediately north of Sterchi Brothers was Fritts and Wiehl, a wholesale paint and drug firm. This firm did not burn, except for small spots which ignited from Sterchi Brothers fourth floor, but the excessive heat caused the sprinkler system to go off on every floor except the first and the building was flooded.

Luckily the flames were kept away from the Rogers-Bailey Hardware, which was just north of Fritts and Wiehl. The hardware company had a large number of baskets of dynamite and other explosives in stock. A tremendous amount of heat built up in the store and when flames reached the roof of the building, next door they were removed from the building and loaded onto a wagon. As accompanies all large fires, there was a crowd of spectators. The crowd in this case was so big in fact, that both Market and Broad Streets were blocked by the curious spectators. The wagon loaded with the dynamite and ammunition was hauled through the crowd, which did not even know the contents of the wagon when they stepped aside to let it through.

Adjoining the stove company on the south was the Miller Bros. Co., which had three water tanks constructed on the roof. One of these was of wood and sparks from the stove company building ignited it. At one time the huge wooden water tank was flaming from

top to bottom. It was not connected to the sprinkler system, but contained a reserve water supply for Miller Bros. Co.

A man passing in front of the stores spotted the fire and turned in a telephone alarm reporting the fire at Seventh and Market Streets. The downtown companies responded as did Chief Toomey, who upon his arrival turned in a general alarm. The fire had already broken through the roof at the rear of the stove company building.

Commissioner Betterton also responded and helped to direct the fire fighting efforts. He sought and received the assistance of some 20 young men and boys who were spectators and they helped him to take a hose line up the fire escape ladder of L.G. Gillespie's store. The water was then turned onto the top of Fritts and Wiehl's store. About 20 boys also helped firemen to raise a second hose line to the roof of the Sterchi Brothers store. These were the first two lines on the roof of any of the buildings during the fire.

The entire department of eight companies was called out to fight the fire and one source says that the hard and untiring work of the firemen aided by the sprinkler system of the Fritts & Wiehl Company saved the entire north end of the block from being wiped out.

The aerial truck was used for a second time in its existence and did good work on the Broad Street side of the fire. At this time we still had steamers in use and it was reported that the big steamer mounted on an auto chassis was kept steadily at work amid a fountain of sparks. The newer automobile engines were hooked up to every available hydrant.

When the fire spread to the fourth story of the Fritts and Wiehl Building, police were called in from all over the city as it was feared the oils and paint there might explode and blow down the walls. At the height of the fire the telephone, telegraph and trolley wires were cut down to give the solid streams more maneuverability and decrease the probabilities of accidents from live wires in case the walls fell.

The whole downtown section was lighted up by the fire, which was among the most spectacular in our history because of its location, intensity and the hazardous contents of some of the threatened structures.

On all fire stations at this time there was mounted a huge, heavy bell. The bell, for instance at No. 1 Fire Station at 11th and Carter Streets, weighed 1,100 lbs. Because of the tremendous size of these bells and their being mounted so high, the sound of these bells could be heard for great distances. The far-reaching sound was necessary.

The shift which firemen worked was 24 hours per day for seven consecutive days, then one 24-hour period off. Then seven more consecutive 24-hour shifts and then another 24-hour period off.

During his tour of duty, consisting of the seven consecutive 24-hour periods, each fireman was allowed "meal time." He was allowed to go home to eat his meals with his

family, then return to the fire station. If an alarm was received while he was home eating his meal, he was notified by the ringing of the huge bell in the tower of the fire station. He was required to then rush back to the fire station and respond to the alarm with the company. It was for this reason that firemen were required to live very close to the station where they worked.

In October of 1919 a great change was made in the work schedule of firemen when the department went to the two platoon system. In the new work schedule firemen worked 12-hour shifts daily.

One platoon, say the Red Platoon, worked 12 hours each day, beginning on the first day of the month. The other platoon, say the Blue Platoon, worked 12 hours each night. This schedule continued through the 14th of each month. On the 15th day of the month, the Red Platoon worked a 24-hour tour of duty and the platoons were then changed with the Blue Platoon working days and the Red Platoon working nights. This schedule continued until the last day of the month when the Blue Platoon worked a 24-hour shift and the platoons were changed back. On this schedule each shift worked two weeks on the day shift and two weeks on the night shift. There were no days off. This schedule was followed for many years in the fire department.

The chief did not call second or third alarms in those days; he called for additional help or a general alarm. This was done via the fire alarm telegraph boxes. The chief specified the company he wanted when he called for additional help on a particular fire. This was done by tapping the key two additional times to the company number he wanted. If, for instance, he wanted to call Number 4 Company to the fire scene, he tapped the key six times. If he wanted Number 5 Company, he tapped the key seven times. A flaw in this method was that he could never call for Number 8 Company to help on a fire since this would have required ten taps. Ten taps on the key meant general alarm and on a general alarm all companies in the department responded and none were kept in reserve. A reserve pumper was used on back-up equipment for the entire city.

Each fire station had watchmen who stayed at the station and did not respond to alarms. In case a general alarm was called, the companies which were still in the stations responded to the alarm and it was the responsibility of the watchman to sound ten gongs on the tower bell, which signified a general alarm, thus calling in the "off" shifts, all of whom lived near enough to hear the bell.

All the boxes were kept locked and the key was left at the house nearest the location of the box. The keys were left on the front porch and all were numbered. When the key was used to open the box it would not release until the chief officer used a key to release it. The system seems crude to us today but it was not crude to the citizens, nor to the firemen in the teens.

A structure considered by most people as the oldest on Lookout Mountain was completely destroyed by fire in the early morning hours of July 21, 1921. The Lookout Mountain House, originally the homestead of the late J.A. Whiteside, who for years

owned practically all the property on Lookout Mountain, erupted into flames about 1:00 a.m.

Some 15 to 20 minutes after the fire was discovered, No. 2 Engine Company was dispatched to the scene of the fire. Although the house, which had been converted to a hotel, was outside the city limits, it had been extended fire protection via a unique fire protection plan guaranteed by Mr. Gardner Bright. Unfortunately, the hotel was completely engulfed in flames and destroyed before #2 ever reached the scene.

Fire authorities theorized the fire began in an outhouse and rapidly spread to the main building. There was evidence which indicated the fire might have been the work of an arsonist. The spectacular blaze could be seen clearly from Chattanooga and consequently attracted the attention of thousands of people.

With the destruction of the Lookout Mountain house, a cycle of Lookout Mountain hotel fires, which began about 1909, was completed. During this 12-year period, the Natural Bridge Hotel, the Lookout Mountain Inn, and the Lookout Mountain Home Hotel were all destroyed by fire and all under mysterious circumstances. The Lookout Mountain House was the last of the mountain hotels.

A fire, attracting several thousand spectators to the heart of the business district, erupted in the Dewees Grocery Store on August 21, 1921, at about 7:15 a.m.

Responding to the scene of the spectacular blaze were fire companies No. 1, No. 8, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6, which had received the alarm at about 7:20 a.m.

Firemen, arriving on the scene, were confronted with a fire which seemed to be originating from the center of the second floor, where the store's stockroom was located. With black smoke pouring from the windows in the front and back of the store, several lines were laid on both Market Street and Cherry Street. A two-inch line was carried by firemen through the front door while other lines were being trained on the fire through second-story windows.

Several minutes after the firemen had arrived and were pouring water from three lines onto the roof from the Cherry Street side of the building, the roof collapsed and flames began to shoot straight up in the air, to such an altitude that it was feared that the Friedman Building, which adjoined Dewees and the Loveman's Building would soon be aflame. Luckily, the thirty-inch wall of the Loveman's Building protected it and also due to the fact that there was practically no breeze discernible, the Friedman Building only suffered a negligible amount of damage.

Hindering firefighting efforts on the Cherry Street side of the store, especially in the placing of ladders, was a network of live wires generating about 2,300 volts of electricity. Several times in the insulation from the wires in the vicinity of the fire burned away causing dangerous electrical hazards. Thus confronted with an additional problem, fire authorities summoned the superintendent of overhead wires for the Chattanooga Railway

and Light Company, who supervised the cutting of the power mains, thereby permitting the firemen to continue their efforts unencumbered by live wires.

Although there was practically no breeze present during the fire, it burned stubbornly nonetheless, primarily due to the fact that a large portion of Dewees stock was of an inflammable nature. Then too Dewees, a two-story building was located between two buildings of four and five stories respectively and this caused a down draft which fanned the flames.

Assistant Chief I.G. Barklay, directed the firefighting effort at the scene. Engine Companies remained at the scene for a little better than thirty minutes after the fire was brought under control a little after 8 o'clock.

Fire authorities weren't certain how the fire started since no fires were burned in the store at that time of year, plus there wasn't any electrical wiring in the part of the store deemed to be the center of the blaze.

With most of the store's stock either burned or water-damaged, total damage was estimated at about \$30,000, and although the fire had gotten a head start in the store before the alarm was turned in, the fire department was still lauded, from any many quarters, for the speed with which they arrived on the scene, hooked up to the fire hydrants in the immediate vicinity of the fire, and began pouring the numerous streams of water on the fire. And lastly, the department was praised for the speed with which it brought a major business district fire under control without a loss of life or serious injuries.

After considering the headway gained by the fire before the department was notified and the quickness with which the flames brought under control, the firefighters demonstrated their competence and in doing so had reasserted their value to the community.

One of the most spectacular blazes ever battled by the Chattanooga Fire Department broke out in the main plant of the Southeastern Oil Company on Central Avenue Wednesday morning, doing estimated damage as being in excess of \$100,000. The flames, which quickly spread to all parts of the plant, were said to have had their origin from a truck which was being loaded for distribution to customers of the concern. The first explosion occurred shortly after 9 o'clock and was followed in rapid succession by others, as heat from the flames enveloped some fifteen or more large storage tanks which were filled with gasoline, kerosene and lubricating oils.

The flames shot several hundred feet into the air and could be seen for several miles. Thousands of people quickly gathered on the scene and were loud in their praise for members of the fire department who fought the flames with untiring effort.

It was shortly after 9 o'clock that one of the truck drivers drove his truck under one of the large tanks for the purpose of loading for his daily round. It appears that the driver left the engine of the truck running and that sparks from the motor in some manner ignited

the oils. A slight explosion followed and several workmen endeavored to control the flames by using a special preparation used for fighting flames which originate in that manner.

The first explosion was followed by another which was far more severe and those fighting the flames were forced to abandon their efforts.

A general fire alarm was turned in to fire headquarters and every piece of firefighting machinery in the city, with the exception of one company, was rushed to the scene. Chief Toomey was the first fireman to reach the fire and he was followed by Commissioner Ed Herron, who had an accident near the corner of Main Street and Central Avenue and was forced to abandon his car. Assistant Chief Baker arrived next and was followed by every company of fire-fighters on duty, with the exception of No. 8, which was called in from Ridgedale to answer a fire that might have broken out in other sections of the city.

According to Commissioner Herron, the entire plant was apparently afire when he and his men arrived. The flames were shooting out into the street and it appeared that the entire block would be wiped out before the firemen could lay their hose. The Texaco Oil Company, located just across the street, added to the peril of those who were battling the flames, as it was feared the fire would spread to it.

Hose was laid from every plug within several blocks of the plant and within a very few minutes more than a dozen streams of water were being played on the sixteen tanks, the majority of which had already exploded.

Firemen off duty at the time soon received a report of the general alarm and regardless of the fact that many of them appeared in their best clothes, they threw off their hats and went to work, uniting in their efforts to save the Texaco Oil Company, O.B. Andrews Box Company and adjoining residences to the burning buildings. So thorough was the work of the firemen that a house occupied by E.P. Carden at 1917 Central Avenue and only a few feet from the flames was saved from any material damage.

In a statement issued shortly after the excitement had subsided, Marl Senter, President of the Southeastern Oil Company, stated that he was unable to make an estimate of the damage, but said it would be in excess of \$100,000.

The manner in which the firemen were compelled to fight the flames was much different from the usual method. Instead of playing their hose on the main bulk of the flames, the hose were laid close to the ground, and used to form a barrier to prevent the oils from running out on surrounding territory. All hose lines were played low on the flames, preventing the spread.

The bursting of the several large tanks of oil and gasoline offered a most spectacular view.

The flames shrouded in heavy clouds of black smoke, rolled hundreds of feet into the air.

Extra police were rushed to the scene, practically all of the downtown traffic men on duty being ordered to certain traffic centers near the scene of the blaze, while other uniformed men on duty were rushed to certain vantage points with orders to keep the premises cleared for firemen.

During the blaze, Commissioner E.D. Herron ordered several uniformed men to patrol Central Avenue for a distance of three blocks in each direction, and tag every automobile parked in that space. As the result, some fifty drivers of machines were ordered to court Thursday to answer charges of hindering firemen while in the performance of their duties. Two blocks from the scene, Commissioner Herron's wrecked machine was discovered. It was reported that Commissioner Herron collided with Pat Dunnagan, member of the fire department. However, when questioned about it, Dunnagan stated that the report was false, and that he knew nothing of any such mishap. Commissioner Herron was driving Chief Baker's car at the time, his high-powered machine being in the repair shop.

Commissioner Herron was loud in his praise for the work shown by the firemen. He stated that the blaze was one of the worst which had presented itself during his term as fire commissioner, and spoke in unquestioned terms his gratitude to the men who fought the flames so gallantly. "It is one of the worst which we have had to battle in many years," stated Commissioner Herron, "But I am more pleased with the great work which our men have done. An oil flame of this sort is one of the worst to handle, and only those familiar with the manner in which they are to be handled can appreciate the difficulty experienced by firemen in preventing a spread to adjoining property. We were aided by a low wind, which might have caused untold damage had it been otherwise. The Texas Oil Company, located just across the street, was threatened one time when the wind arose, but firemen took their stand and battled them back."

Commissioner Herron was loud in his praise of F. Wilson, an employee of the oil company, who displayed remarkable courage and daring in an effort to reach the main faucets of three large tanks which contained gasoline.

With three large streams of water being played upon him by firemen, standing off several feet, Wilson leaped through the flames, and despite the intense heat, succeeded in disconnecting three large lines which might have later caused serious trouble. Commissioner Herron remarked that it was a most remarkable example of courage, performed at a great risk to his life.

Seven automobiles and three oil trucks, said to have exceeded \$15,000 in value, were destroyed by the flames. The greater portion of the office buildings were saved. The room, which adjoins the main structure of the plant, was partially saved. The large garage in which many of the private cars and trucks were being stored was facing the main part of the flames, making it impossible for firemen to remove them because of the extreme heat.

So extreme was the heat that a second stream of water was being played upon the firemen who were fighting the flames at close range. This method was entirely new to the majority of spectators. The heat caused from the burning oil made it almost impossible for firemen to get close to the tanks which were aflame. The second stream of water was played upon the clothing and bodies of those nearest the flames.

Considerable comment was heard regarding the manner in which officials of the Belt Railway handled the moving of the five tanks of gasoline which were on the sidetrack near the flames. One official of the fire department contended that it was an hour and fifteen minutes before the tanks were moved after officials of the concern were notified. Had these tanks exploded as was expected, the O.B. Andrews Company would have been endangered to the extent that it is doubtful if flames could have been prevented from destroying it.

November 23, 1925, a fire which raged out of control about midnight destroyed a business block north of the river. Engine Company No. 3 answered the first alarm. Upon arrival the fire was so extreme that telephone wires were down, and when Engine Company No. 3 tried to summons help, it was twenty minutes before anyone could be reached by telephone. No. 6 Engine Company arrived upon the scene, and one whole block of business dwellings was engulfed in flames.

Menaced by falling electric wires and exploding tanks of gasoline, firemen from Engine Companies 3 and 6 with stood blistering heat and smoke for five hours and finally contained the fire which destroyed an entire block of North Chattanooga, with the exception of the modern, brick-constructed Moses building. The effected block was on the north side of West Frazier Avenue, extending from North Market Street to Woodlawn.

Destroyed by the flames, which leaped mountain-high into the darkened heavens, were the Signal Auto Painting Company, North Chattanooga Electric Company, Walker and Wiggs Barber Shop, North Side Restaurant, Smith Tin Shop, two dwelling houses and a new building under construction, but practically completed.

Only a courageous flight waged by firemen in the face of extreme heat so intense that it cracked plate glass windows seventy-five feet away, saved the service station at the end of Market Street and the Moses building, in which was the Hill Home Store. Had the fire leaped the intervening space from the north side to the south side of West Frazier Avenue, it was reported that the flames could not have been stopped and the whole business section of North Chattanooga would have been destroyed.

When the Signal Auto Painting Company burned, twelve cars were destroyed. The owners of that business reportedly sustained a loss of \$25,000. They stated that they carried no insurance because the premiums were too high.

The discoverer of the fire is unknown, but due to the magnitude of the fire, and intense heat when the first company arrived, it was figured that the fire was well under way

before it was reported. One other element hampered firemen. Trolley car lines fell around, carrying thousands of volts. The fire was spectacular, with flames lighting up a wide area bright as day. It was visible over the entire city, drawing thousands of spectators. These curiosity seekers persisted to get in the way, and it was necessary several times for them to be forced back to avoid their being hit by electric wires and falling wood.

Shortly before dawn the fire reached its climax. After that it was a battle to confine the flames to the original area. Men and machines, worn to the extreme, finally secured the block and by the time dawn arrived, the fire had been brought under control.

Damages in the amount of \$75,000 were sustained, however, compared to the potential loss, business men and citizens were grateful that the loss figure was held to this amount. Many thanks went to the Chattanooga Fire Department for the courageous battle and endless work to contain, and finally defeat this fire.

When East Chattanooga was annexed to the City of Chattanooga, the fire protection responsibility was assigned, at least temporarily, to No. 5 Company located on Kirby and South Orchard Knob in Highland Park and No. 8 Company located on Dodds Avenue near Main Street in Ridgedale. These locations were some distance from East Chattanooga and the residents thought this protection was insufficient. They began to exert tremendous pressure on "City Hall" to provide more adequate protection by placing a fire station in their community.

City Hall was now in the midst of the very bitter battle with the underwriters over classification. Money had to be a decisive factor in any decision which the city fathers made and they were approaching a dilemma.

The No. 4 Station which was located at Eighth and Park in what was called the "Irish Hill" area was only about ten blocks north of No. 7 Station on Main Street near Central and only some ten blocks east of No. 3 Station on Georgia Avenue. The commissioners met with Chief Toomey and it was determined that No. 4 was vulnerable.

The city acquired the old W.W. Buster Grocery building on Dodson Avenue at Glass Street in East Chattanooga and prepared it for use as a fire station.

On April 25, 1925, No. 4 Station on Eighth and Park was closed and the new No. 4 Station on Dodson Avenue at Glass Street was opened. The closing of the old No. 4 Station brought screams of protest from Irish Hill residents but no avail. The old No. 4 Station was turned into a theatre.

Assigned to the East Chattanooga station was E.F. Meidling as Captain, Luther P. Huffaker as Lieutenant and W.T. Burns as engineer. Others assigned there are not known. Hydrants were not located in the area by this time and during the first year of operation the company was severely handicapped in their efforts. During their first year of operation they were subjected to the brashest of criticism by the residents of the

community. It is to their credit that they continued to perform as best they could under the conditions for they eventually won the support of the community through their efforts.

Not long after the annexation of East Chattanooga, East Lake was annexed. A garage on the corner of 46th Street and Rossville Boulevard was rented and made into a fire station. On August 18, 1925, a new company was placed in the building and called No. 9 Engine Company. Assigned to the new No. 9 Station were George Clinton as Captain and his crew was Raymond Coulter, Driver, Carl Davis and "Buster" Renshaw. The other shift was commanded by Lieutenant Thompson and his crew was Engineer Jack Morrison, Arthur "Bocky" Henderson and W.L. Woods. It was stated by some of the men there that the building was dilapidated and that insects made life miserable for them.

It was intended all the while that a new station be constructed and plans were soon drawn up and the station begun. The new station was built on 6th Avenue at 37th Street and on August 27, 1927, No. 9 Engine Company moved into these new quarters where they remain until today.

With the annexation of East Chattanooga and East Lake and the new location of No. 4 and the establishing of No. 9 Fire Stations, the fire department was quite "spread out." The city limits now reached areas far apart and the question arose as to what to do in case a fire should occur in East Chattanooga while one was in progress in East Lake. Or worse still, what about the protection in the high value district downtown while the chief was directing operations on a house fire far from the downtown area.

The city decided in 1926 to prepare in advance for such an occurrence and Chief Toomey was given some help. Two assistants to the chief were appointed and they became the first in the Assistant Chief chain which remains in our fire department structure today. Robert Jones and Amos Teppenpaw were promoted to the rank of assistant of Chief William Toomey. The schedule which each worked is not clear but the city was covered by two chiefs during fire prone hours and each chief had a driver furnished.

In April of 1926, the Tennessee Inspection Bureau informed the city officials that Chattanooga was about to be dropped from third to fourth-class rating. The biggest reason for this change in the rating was the recent annexation of East Chattanooga and East Lake. The addition of these two suburbs to the city coupled with a fire department already in need of some improvements were the deciding factors in the decision by T.I.B. The increased cost of insurance premiums would have amounted to between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The cost to the city to conform to all recommendations to the T.I.B. would have been about \$300,000. It was the consensus of the city commission at the time that the taxpayers could better afford the increased insurance premiums than the increase in taxes which they held would have been necessary to meet the underwriters demands to maintain out Class III rating.

The recommendations included a brand new electric fire alarm system. One additional pumper, two additional aerial ladder trucks, a drill tower and regularly scheduled training drills, and 48 new men.

This announcement created quite a stir all over the city and it was to last several years.

Fire prevention programs were begun in earnest. Harry "Smoky" Rodgers performed in nearly all of the city schools. He used a clown act to coat facts and figures in a way designed to win the children over to a well-rounded Fire Prevention Program.

The Chamber of Commerce headed up a drive in which most of the civic clubs in the city participated. The aim of which was to make everyone conscious of fire prevention.

In September of 1927 the insurance companies began raising their rates in Chattanooga. The original estimate of \$50,000 to \$75,000 increase fell short of the actual figure which came to about \$200,000.

The homeowner was the first to feel the pinch then the manufacturers joined the protest. The insurance companies added a new twist by adjusting the face value of unprotected property to three-fourths of the value of the property. The courts held this move to be illegal.

This controversy lasted several years. In 1932 we were dropped to a fifth class rating. No increase in premium accompanied this drop and in 1938 we were moved back to fourth class. During this time and in the years to follow, it seemed as if the insurance companies wanted to blame the fire department for the rate increases when it was not really our fault. Soon after this we were moved back to third class, which is the rating we still enjoy today.

On March 24, 1926, Commissioner Ed Herron announced that Capt. Robert Jones of the Chemical Company and Capt. Amos Teppenpaw of Engine Company No. 3 were appointed as acting assistant chiefs. They were to take up their new duties immediately.

"With the two assistants to Chief William Toomey, the chief or one of the assistants will answer every alarm and be actively in charge," Commissioner Herron said.

On October 29, 1927, the fine reputation of the Fire Department was well maintained when a \$60,000 fire at the Van Deman Building was brought under control within half an hour.

Elevator shafts under repair were believed to have started the blaze. This belief was substantiated by flames approximately fifty feet high leaping up the elevator shafts at the time of the fire department's arrival.

The fire was discovered at 11:45 P.M. by Police Captain Carter and Patrolman Brooks, who turned in the alarm from a nearby box. The officers said they saw smoke coming from the elevator shaft on top of the building.

Minutes after firemen arrived the Eighth Street entrance of the building was discovered in flames and with conditions becoming worse on the Market Street side, the building appeared all but doomed.

At this time a daring exhibition of firefighting technique was performed. Amid a breathless silence, two firemen mounted a swaying ladder and inch by inch climbed to the top of the burning building. After a brief pause to catch their breath, the two "smoke-eaters" disappeared over the edge of the wall. Within minutes the heavy hose which had been pulled to the top of the ladder was over the edge of the roof and in operation.

Within minutes a building that had seemed doomed, was being brought under control by two lone firefighters atop a steaming roof high above hundreds of awed spectators.

After the most dangerous part of the fire was extinguished, hose lines were hoisted up the fire escape on the side of the building. Entering the building about midway up, the firemen put the finishing touches on a job well done.

Scott Probasco, Vice President of American Trust & Banking Co. stated that automatic closing fireproof doors were a major factor in the minor damage caused to the adjoining Banking Company Building.

Mr. Probasco complimented the department for their quick response and diligent work in putting out the fire, which probably saved adjacent buildings.

W.T. Walker, Chattanooga fireman from Company No. 6, lost his life in smoke and flames which ravaged the stock rooms of the Tennessee Paper Mills in North Chattanooga early February 29, 1928. Lt. Homer ("Red") Elkins, also of Company No. 6 and five other firemen were overcome by smoke and injured in the fire, which damaged the Mills property to the extent of \$50,000. Huge rolls of paper burned through the following day under the control of the firemen.

Walker met his death while attempting to make an opening in the roof of the building for a stream of water to be played into the large warehouse stored with paper and manufactured paper trays. Walker and fellow firefighters had just completed the opening in the roof. Then suddenly came a terrific blast, more like a huge puff of hot, stifling smoke and flying embers. Walker and Lt. Elkin were hurtled into the dense inferno to the floor below.

Walker, a large man, must have been stunned by the fall from the roof. At any rate, he was caught in a pocket of shifting paper and in blinding smoke and unable to extricate himself.

Lt. Elkins, groping blindly, managed to stagger into the open air again, where he collapsed. He was soon revived, however, and insisted that he be allowed to return for Walker, who lay unconscious within.

A rope tied securely around his waist, Lt. Elkins again plunged into the warehouse, which was now pouring smoke and flames from every opening. He went straight for the spot he knew his brother firefighter lay. But there was too much against him. Again he collapsed and by main strength was pulled out by a rope. Unconscious and in a serious condition, he was rushed to Erlanger Hospital.

In the meantime, Capt. J.H. Ragon of No.2 Truck Company, J.T. Lawson of No.2 Company and Herman Bolen, an employee of the paper mills, prepared to enter.

Equipped with smoke masks, they entered the building and began a search for Walker. He found his prostrate form wedged in by sodden bales of paper and succeeded in pulling him out. Walker had been in the building about forty minutes.

Fire Chief William Toomey had fire companies Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 6 and a truck from No. 2 on the scene a few minutes after the fire was reported. Chief Toomey expressed his opinion that the fire was caused by spontaneous combustion among the stored waste paper in the building.

Efforts to check the progress of the fires were hampered, said Chief Toomey, by the serious lack of water and pressure. On only one of the two fire plugs available was it possible to draw enough pressure to assist fighting the fire.

The fire was one of the most stubborn of blazes the Chattanooga Fire Department has been called upon to extinguish. Deeply rooted in the bales and rolls of paper, it was virtually impossible to extinguish it directly by means of a stream of water. Only by controlling the flames and soaking the paper until it could be raked from the building was it able to be put under control completely. It was necessary to play a constant stream of water into the warehouse for two days.

A serious hazard to the firefighters also confronted them by the expected collapse of the wide brick wall on the west side of the plant. The wall under the intense heat generated by the slow burning wet paper threatened to cave in momentarily.

On the scene of the fire, words of praise for the heroism and efficiency of the fire department were heard on every side.

In 1929 referendums were held to determine whether the citizens of Alton Park, St. Elmo, Missionary Ridge, Brainerd, North Chattanooga and Riverview desired to be annexed to the city of Chattanooga. St. Elmo, Brainerd, North Chattanooga and Riverview voted for annexation. Alton Park and Missionary Ridge, both incorporated areas, voted against annexation. The city limits of Chattanooga would then have extended beyond

Missionary Ridge into Brainerd, but the township itself of Missionary Ridge lay in the center. The city of Missionary Ridge was about 5 ½ miles long and 1,100 feet wide. It extended 500 feet to the east and 600 feet to the west of the Crest Road and extended from 580 South Crest Road north to the third house north of the old north (DeLong) Tower. The township boundary followed the same contour as the Crest Road.

Before any if these areas were actually annexed, officials of the City of Chattanooga met with leaders of the two dividing areas and certain agreements and concessions were made.

Some of the concessions involved the fire department. Missionary Ridge and Alton Park both had fire departments and it was agreed that the men who were working in their departments would be taken into the fire department for the City of Chattanooga. The time they had worked in the Missionary Ridge or Alton Park department would be credited to them as time worked in the Chattanooga Fire Department. Also, their officers were allowed to keep their rank when they became members of the Chattanooga Fire Department.

With these concessions, another referendum was held in Alton Park and Missionary Ridge, this time with the strong support of some key leaders in each area. In this referendum both areas voted to be annexed and in 1929 Brainerd, Missionary Ridge, Alton Park, St. Elmo, North Chattanooga and Riverview were all annexed to the City of Chattanooga.

The fire station in Alton Park had been in the business district and the City Of Chattanooga left the station there. It was centrally located for the area and no changes were made. Since it had been a municipal department the city simply assumed the operation of the station and left even the apparatus in service. It was called No. 10 Station House and No. 10 Engine Company.

Missionary Ridge had a similar, but not identical, experience on being annexed to the city and to the fire department. Their station, located across Crest Road from the Bragg Reservation (and tower), required additional space. It too had been a municipal department and the City of Chattanooga simply assumed the operation of it. Six men had been in the Missionary Ridge Fire Department, each of whom were taken into the Chattanooga Fire Department. The apparatus was left in service also. A bedroom and kitchen were added onto the station by the City of Chattanooga. Missionary Ridge became No. 11 Station House and No. 11 Engine Company.

Neither Brainerd, North Chattanooga, Riverview nor St. Elmo had a municipal fire department but Brainerd and probably the other areas had private protection available. No agreements were made with the private companies prior to annexation but some of the men who worked for them were taken into the Chattanooga Fire Department.

It was decided that in the area north of the river which included North Chattanooga and Riverview, one company could cover the entire area. Brainerd and St. Elmo would each require a station.

For apparatus in these areas, three new American LaFrance pumpers were purchased.

Fire stations don't just appear, nor can they be built on a moments notice. Rather, they must be planned giving consideration to size, location, availability of property, expected apparatus assignment, major traffic arteries, etc. Temporary quarters, therefore, were acquired in each of the remaining three areas while permanent sites were being selected and station houses planned and built.

When the depression came in 1929 the salary in the fire department was \$160.00 per month. During the depression there were two pay cuts, the first being \$12.00 per month reducing the salary to \$148.00 per month. The pay scale continued for a period and then a second reduction was made. This time the reduction was \$20 per month, the salary being adjusted down to \$128.00 per month.

There seems to have been no great objection on the part of firemen because the \$128.00 per month was a livable salary and the firefighters, like others who were fortunate enough to be working, were glad to have a job.

These pay decreases were never repaid as such because the recovery from the depression was a long, slow process and pay increments were small. More times than not the city fathers were anxious to talk "time" benefits rather than pay increases.

The following year, 1938, firemen were awarded pay for the one day off per month they took, but the days were not accumulative. If a man failed to get his day off for a particular month, say August, the day could not be taken at a later day and was, therefore, lost. In 1939, the firefighters received two days off per month under the same conditions as existed the previous year.

This was a period that required great understanding between the men and City Hall. It is to the credit of both that time passed without harmful incident. Much credit is due the men who were in the department during that period for the tremendous work load they shouldered. Every man had to work harder than ordinary, but the job was done with little or no complaint. We must remember, too, that this was a "peak" fire period. But credit is not due to the firemen alone. The city fathers, just to make ends meet, had to do a skillful bit of maneuvering. There is no doubt they knew the strain from an extremely heavy workload on their employees. They understood and showed leniency. This era of our history should teach us, the city fathers, and all concerned today a great lesson in the value of understanding and cooperation.

In 1941 firemen received one day off per week if no one else in their company was off. If any member of the company was off injured, ill, suspended, or for any other reason, the days off of all the other men in the company were cancelled. The missed days, still could

not be accumulated but rather were just lost if not taken. Furthermore, the captain could let any man in the company off any time he wished but was required to keep the days off "fairly" even.

It was in 1949 that the days off were enacted into law by the state legislature and they became accumulative. If a man missed a day off due him he was allowed to take it at a later date. At this time also, every man got the same number of days off. There were two men in the department in line for the position left vacant by the death of Chief Toomey. They were Assistant Chief R.W. Jones and Assistant Chief Amos Teppenaw, both of whom had a number of years service with the department. Assistant Chief R.W. Jones was promoted to chief of the department by Commissioner Bryan.

The appointment of Chief Jones met with general favor and he was showered with congratulations when the information was given out that he would head the department.

Between 200 and 300 box cars were destroyed in a spectacular fire in the Southern Railway System's old Citico yards in the early morning hours of July 20, 1932.

First estimates placed the number destroyed or damage at 1,000, but the estimate was lowered and it was finally determined that 287 box cars had been destroyed by fire.

The yards were in the rear of Lincoln Park. The fire was discovered about 3:00 A.M. and firemen fought the stubborn blaze for more than eight hours. The cause was not determined.

The fire spread up and down the tracks until it burned cars for a distance of half a mile. Thousands of cars were on the tracks in close position and this condition handicapped the work of the firemen. More than 12,000 feet of hose were laid through Lincoln Park to the scene of the blaze.

Firemen perched themselves on top of box cars which were not blazing and from these vantage points they poured streams of water onto flames. Clouds of smoke blackened the air in the vicinity.

The flames were not completely extinguished until after 10:00. Six engine companies from the local fire department answered the alarm. Chief Jones personally directed the activities of the firefighters.

On October 15, 1933, all fire stations in Chattanooga were made into city police offices and all fire captains also became police captains under a new system placed in operation by Commissioner Eugene Bryan.

While the fighting of fires remained the first duties of the captains stationed at the fourteen fire halls scattered throughout the greater city, they also had assigned to them the task of looking after other affairs pertaining to their particular territory.

At a conference called by the commissioner and attended by all the captains and lieutenants of the department, Commissioner Bryan outlined what he expected them to do in addition to their regular duties as firemen. It was to be part of the duties of the captains to make frequent inspections of their districts, report any bad traffic situations, where street lights were out, holes in the streets, conditions that might affect the health of the citizens and everything else in this connection that should be remedied.

These fire captains were to receive complaints from citizens of their district and report them to the Chief of Police and in cases where remedies were not provided take the matter up with the commissioner. Commissioner Bryan said he adopted this system because of the smallness of his police force and urged citizens to make any complaints they may have to the fire captains in their district.

The commissioner instructed the fire officials to make a minute survey of fire conditions in their districts and to use tact and diplomacy in going about their duties.

Fire destroyed all merchandise stocks in the four-story basement building occupied by the F.W. Woolworth Co. at 710 Market Street in December, 1933, putting the store completely out of business until after the Christmas season.

The fire was reported at about 4 a.m. and by the time firemen reached the spot had gained such headway that authorities despaired for a time of saving an entire business block.

Fire Chief Bob Jones said the fire apparently started on the first floor in the rear of the store, the flames moving rapidly upward through the elevator shaft. The roof and upper floors of the building were enveloped in flames when the fire engines arrived. Police and Fire Commissioner Eugene Bryan, who was summoned to the scene after the second alarm was sounded, said that at his arrival, it appeared that the entire business block surrounding the Woolworth store was doomed. Chief Jones directed twenty-one streams of water into the upper floors of the business.

The S.H. Kress Company and the Lane Drug Company's store on either side of the gutted building opened for regular business and were undamaged, even by smoke.

The terrific heat of the fire had shattered a plate glass window in the front of the store and an officer, reported to be F.L. Pierce, heard the crash of the glass as he walked his beat a block away on Broad Street. He investigated the crash and turned in the alarm at a nearby fire box.

Battling the fumes of ammonia which "knocked out" several firemen, companies sent to the scene of a fire on March 8, 1934, at the J.H. Allison & Co. storage plant No. 2 at 2414 East Main Street, fought for three hours before extinguishing the flames.

Employees of the plant discovered the flames in the rear of the building where numerous motors and transformers were stationed. The alarm was telephoned to fire headquarters at 2:20 p.m.

As the firemen reached the interior of the building the intense heat of the fire caused several pipes that convey the ammonia gas to the freezing vats of the ice plant to burst. A dense cloud of the strangling fumes soon spread to every corner of the structure, driving out the fighters, several of whom were rendered unconscious and had to be revived by artificial respiration.

Officials of the fire department reported that although six men were strangled to unconsciousness during the fire, none were seriously injured.

Chief Robert Jones, who was directing the fight against a fire in an apartment at Ninth and Douglas Streets when the Allison Company fire alarm was sounded, was notified and he arrived as his men were forced back by the ammonia fumes. Realizing the difficulty that would be encountered in subduing the blaze, Chief Jones ordered a fireman to call for assistance. By fighting with the wind to their backs, the firemen were able to bring the flames under control.

Fire broke out in the rear of a building owned by Squire J.G. Burge at 428 East Ninth Street shortly before the Allison Company blaze. It was a two-alarm fire.

Engine Companies Nos. 1 and 3 and Truck Company No. 3 answered the first alarm. After the steady wind caused the flames to appear as if they might get beyond control, Engine Company No. 6 and Truck Company No.1 were summoned on the orders of Chief Jones.

A large porch on the back and much of the interior of the rear part of the structure were destroyed.

Prior to 1930 men who were hired into the department learned mostly by experience. This was because no provisions were made for training, and we have all heard the numerous stories of the problems encountered by the "rookie" who tried to learn too fast or too much, particularly about the apparatus. Though firemen are traditionally free-hearted and friendly, a driver was not anxious to share his knowledge of pumping with anyone. There had to be a reason and one factor had to be had to be that he felt this heart-earned knowledge was the greatest job security. It may have been so we should not be too quick to condemn, especially since with the innovations of methods of learning we now have in the fire service our condemnation would serve to harm our predecessors and help no one and consequently serve no useful purpose today.

Those who were the leaders in the fire service certainly were aware of the problems encountered by men who sought to learn and recognized the ultimate value of knowledge. In 1929 Chief Toomey had sent Assistant Chief Amos Teppenpaw and Lt. Lucious Miller to a training school for firemen in Chicago, Illinois. After their return he had a conference with them at No. 1 Fire Station and came away totally convinced that we must train and teach our firemen.

Memphis, Tennessee, had a structure which designed and used to train men in every area of firefighting. Chief Toomey requested a set of their plans which he received and studied. He asked that such a building be constructed for the fire department and on January 31, 1930, it was announced that the structure would be built at a yet to be determined location.

Soon it was announced that the building would be constructed on a site immediately north of and adjoining the property of No. 5 Fire Station, Kirby and Orchard Knob Avenues in Highland Park.

Chief Toomey did not realize that this was to be his last great program contribution to the Chattanooga Fire Department of which he had been chief for almost 24 years.

The training tower was constructed, being completed in 1934. It was four stories high and of wood frame construction. A fire escape extended from the second to the fourth floor on the north side of the tower and a metal wall ladder extended from the second to the fourth floor on the south. The tower had a stand pipe in the northwest corner with connections on every floor and clapper valves. The stairway was on the south wall. Windows were on all four sides of the tower on each floor but on the east side were located halfway between floors. It was an ideal training structure and continued in use until January, 1962, when No. 5 Company moved to a new station at Vance and Willow and to be housed with No. 8 Company and the No. 5 Fire Station and the drill tower were razed by the Fisher and Massengale Wrecking Company.

A new training tower was built on the grounds of the new No.1 Fire Station on West 9th Street in the Golden Gateway and was first put into use when the new station was occupied December 13, 1963.

In the early hours of February 11, 1935, a fire was beginning near an inner stairway in the rear section of the Central Hotel at East 9th and Georgia Avenue.

There were approximately 35 person lodged in the small thirty-room hotel. Two were seriously injured when they attempted to fight their way out of the burning building.

About half a dozen cab drivers became amateur firefighters that night. They assisted firemen with raising ladders, holding life nets and, of course, the all important rescue of many.

Chief Robert Jones and Assistant Chief Ammos Teppenpaw directed the firefighters. A total of nine engine companies poured streams of water on the fire while three truck companies worked to rescue trapped victims.

Streams of water thrown on the old structure tamed the fire within two hours after firemen arrived. Although no floors collapsed, rooms and corridors were a mass of sodden pulp and charred ruin. Damage was estimated to be between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

Although our fire apparatus since and today are equipped with life nets, they have not been used since that fateful night in 1935. Their value was proven that February morning when they were used to save twelve lives. This piece of equipment was then folded and silently stored in its compartment...waiting.

The Grand, Chattanooga's fourth largest hotel and a landmark on lower Market Street since 1910, was damaged by blazes, smoke and water when on December 21, 1936, the fire of undetermined origin broke out on the top floor of the building, destroying a portion of the roof and attic and threatened to spread to lower floors.

Two firemen, L.J. Bradford and W.L. Jones were injured when a portion of the roof caved in on them.

A conductor for the Southern Railway a resident of the hotel, discovered the flames and called the day clerk, who telephoned the fire department.

It was reported the fire might have started in the elevator shaft, but this was not certain.

Thirteen line of water were turned on the fire by a force of 120 men who fought the flames.

Firemen were able to confine the blaze almost to the point of origin. A section of approximately 300 square feet in the roof was consumed. The roof, of tar composition, appeared highly inflammable. It was against these flames that firemen directed the water lines to keep them from spreading.

Fire, raging out of control, swept through a four-story building of the Lookout Furniture Company, 613 Market Street on January 27, 1937.

Originating in an elevator shaft on the third floor of the brick building, the flames rapidly gained headway and completely destroyed the three upper stories.

Desperate battling crews of firemen confined the blaze to the furniture store building. A small store between the furniture company and the Gilman Paint company was only slightly damaged, but danger that the flames would spread to the paint store diminished as the fire was gradually brought under control.

Several firemen were endangered when the roof caved in on the Broad Street side raining timber and bricks on the men.