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THE HISTORY OF DELRAN FIRE COMPANY NO. 1
OF BRIDGEBORO, NEW JERSEY
INCORPORATED AUGUST 8, 1916

BEING IN THE TOWNSHIP OF DELRAN OF THE STATE OF
NEW JERSEY



RECORDED THIS FIFTH DAY OF APRIL IN THE YEAR OF
OUR LORD, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FIVE

THE HISTORY OF DELRAN FIRE COMPANY NUMBER 1

INCORPORATED AUGUST 8, 1916

Dedicated to our founding fathers and those who have served
and have been called to GOD'S duty.

INTRODUCTION

This is not a complete history of Delran Fire Company No. 1,
merely an effort to record the facts surrounding our organization
from it's birth to the present day. Our history will continue
to grow as the years pass behind us. One thing that is near im-
possible to record is a list of names of all the dedicated men
and women, past and present, who have helped us grow over the
years through their untiring work. Were it not for their sense
of pride in the community and their desire to help prevent loss
of life or property by fire to their fellow man, we would not
have the fine organization we now have.

MOTTO

" WHEN DUTY CALLS, TIS OURS TO OBEY "

OFFICERS

CHIEFS

1916/1925 William J. Smith
1926/1927 William Landis

PRESIDENTS

1916/1917 J. Norman Spawn
1918/1919 Howard Anderson

CHIEFS

1928 Earl Hubbs
1929/1936 William J. Smith
1937/1940 Charles Anderson
1941/1943 Lester Hubbs
1944/1945 Horace Anderson Sr.
1946 Warren Frech
1947 Jim Hutchinson
1948 Earl Hullings
1949 Paul Dennler Sr.
1950 Lawrence Frech
1951 Frederick VanSciver
1952 Carl Wells
1953 Paul Gaskill
1954 August Leusner
1955 Donald H. Anderson
1956 Carlton Ely
1957 William Kain
1958 Lewis Matlack
1959 Horace McCurdy
1960 Ed Miller
1961 C. K. Anderson
1962 Charles John
1963/1964 Wesley Espenscheid
1965/1966 Aubrey Turner
1967/1968 Forman Shemeley Jr.

PRESIDENTS

1920/1921 Royden Woodington
1922 Roland Haines
1923/1925 Clarence Gaskill
1926 William Landis
1927 Howard Anderson
1928/1936 Clarence Gaskill
1937/1939 Howard Quigg
1940/1943 Clifford Little
1944/1945 Lester Hubbs
1946 Charles Anderson
1947/1948 Howard Anderson
1949 Carlton Ely
1950 Carl Wells
1951/1954 Lawrence Frech
1955 Carl Wells
1956/1961 Donald H. Anderson
1962 C. K. Anderson
1963 Lester Hubbs
1964 Fred Neuman
1965/1967 Wesley Espenscheid
1968/1969 Joseph Leusner
1970 Edward Orfe
1971 Joseph Leusner
1972 Donald V. Anderson
1973/ Wayne Wm. Smith

CHIEFS

1969/1970 Ronald Hubbs
1971/1972 Horace Anderson Jr.
1973/1975 Joseph Bennett

From the first page of minutes book of Delran Fire Company No. 1

Bridgeboro, N.J.

March 28, 1916

A public meeting of a number of citizens of Delran Township met at Lester Fortnum's Garage to consider firefighting. George Friday was elected chairman and W. E. Newkirk, Secretary. Moved and seconded that a committee be appointed to canvas the Township. Motion carried and committee appointed, Wm. Smith, W. E. Newkirk, Lester Fortnum, G. Zeigler, Wm. Landis, Earl Hubbs, Frank Fenton, Frank King, Ed Mason, John Mitchell, Clarence Gaskill, Addeson Kendall. Moved and seconded that Wm. Smith act as treasurer- motion carried. Moved and seconded that we adjourn and meet wednesday April 5 at 8 o'clock at Fortnum's Garage. Motion carried

W. E. Newkirk, Secretary

For a few years preceding 1916 this town was the scene of several bad fires which resulted in considerable property loss. This was due to the fact that ^{there} was no fire company with the equipment and trained men to fight them, so a group of citizens decided to organize a fire company. They held several meetings in various places such as Fortnum's Garage, Isaac Brown's Store, and the old WCTU Hall and appointed George Friday as the first chairman, Wm. J. Smith as treasurer, and W. E. Newkirk as secretary. April 5, 1916 they were organized and elected Wm. J. Smith as chief and J. N. Spawn as president. They incorporated on August 8, 1916.

On September 27, 1916 our first Chicken Supper was held at a charge of 35¢ per ticket. With the profit from the first supper and donations from the people of the town our first piece of equipment was purchased. This being a Simplex Chassis from Philadelphia and a chemical tank unit from Ward LaFrance Company. The chemical tank units and chassis were built into a fire engine through the combined efforts of Fortnum's Garage and George Heaton's Blacksmith Shop. When it was finished it was housed in Fortnum's Garage until the original fire house was built. We still have two charter members left from those days long ago, namely, Joseph Friday and Conrad Friday. Finances for the company started with the Chicken Supper that helped finance our first piece of equipment. The drive to raise money for the company didn't end there though. For along with the apparatus it was recognized that a building would be needed to house it in. In July of 1917 a carnival was held and a Ford car was raffled off for a net profit of \$ 484.80. The following year another carnival was held that took in

somewhat less, not bad for those days, though. Getting back to the building itself, a committee was appointed on April 28, 1916 consisting of Wm. J. Smith, Frank Fenton, Walt Southwick, Dan Haines, and Howard Anderson. Since the WCTU Hall was being used for a meeting place at times, it was felt the the company should try to buy it. However, before the WCTU people could make up their minds on the matter the company decided to aquire land and build it's own building. The original building was started on land donated by Isaac Brown and another lot bought from Wm. Smith in July of 1917. The members did most of the work on the building themselves. The men handmade the building blocks for the original building. The estimated cost for the building before construction was \$ 269.00, the approximate cost when finished was \$ 2000.00. About the time the building started the company recieved a donation from Wm. Bramall. The gift was a tower he had on his land that we could move to our own site and install a fire alarm on it. Wm. Bramall was made a life member of the company for his gift, he was the first life member of this company. The tower is still located behind the fire house where it has seen many years of service drying hose and supporting our siren and bell. However, the first fire alarm we had was an iron ring from a train engine wheel that hung in the tower. It was sounded by striking it with a hammer that lay on the ground beside it. Work continued on the fire house for the rest of the year. The first meeting in the new fire house was on January 13, 1918 at which time a presentation was made to us from Union Fire Company of Mt. Holly. The gift was a bell to be used in our tower, the same bell that had given them many years of service. To my knowledge

this is the same bell that now hangs in the same tower. The fire house was the scene of continual improvements through out the years. Suppers, carnivals, minstrels, and other sources of fund raising were held to help pay off debts and maintain the fire company.

Around the mid 1950's it was decided to enlarge the original fire house. More land was bought from Wm. Smith and the newer part of the fire house was added on. Not only did this allow more room for the equipment which was cramped for space but gave us more room in which to hold functions. The addition was designed by Horace Anderson Sr. and most of the work was done by the membership, just as the original building was done. Around 1965 the old Redman's Hall was bought so we would have more land. The old Hall was relocated to Abrasive Alloy, the foundry. The Redman's lot was landscaped and made into a park. We moved the memorial stones to this area as well as the flag pole, in 1965 this area was dedicated as the Veterans Memorial Park. The newest addition to the fire company grounds is the multi- purpose training tower designed and built by Ron Hubbs with help from the membership. This is the largest tower of it's type in the county and has been used by other fire companies to train their men in multi-story structure fires as well as simulated smoke drills for attack work as well as rescue with Scott air packs. This tower also allows us to hang our hose to dry in an enclosure rather than in the old tower exposed to the elements as in the past.

Our first fire was on Hartford Road, Trump's Farm, On January 18, 1917 at 12:35 am. As of December 1974 we have answered 2415 calls. In 1974 we had 152 fires, that is the largest amount of alarms we

have ever had in single year. Through the years not all of those calls were for fires but we are always ready to help in any emergency. In recalling some of those alarms, without going into details, there were;

Bridgeboro Bridge 7/5/17, house owned by Harry Wilson located on the Cirrincione Property 8/17/17, Ben Funk's barn 8/4/21, Cap't Moore's boat 4/20/23, Jim Mitchell's barn and chicken house 4/10/24, Adam's Wharf a rum barge 10/2/25, forest fire at Camp Ockanikon 5/20/30, Jim Mitchell's barn 2/12/23, Bridgeboro Foundry 3/15/41, called to wash wine off the highway after a tank truck had upset 4/2/43, called to get a horse out of a well at Howard Winner's farm 4/26/43, on the foggy morning of 11/6/43 we were called for a serious accident at the corner of Rt. 25 (Rt. 130) and Riverside Road. Involved in the accident were 2 cars, two trailer trucks, and our Hahn fire truck. One of the truck drivers was killed, not ours. On 11/10/44 we were called to help the State Police capture a prisoner that had escaped their custody, called to Rope Works in Beverly 12/23/45.

In the early years we were called to quite a few fires that were out of our township as noted above. Today we have Mutual Aid whereby we could be called out of the township to help one of our neighboring community's battle a fire. The only difference between the early years and now is that there is a system for calling for help, but when called we still go. Through the ensuing years we have had many large field fires that have required our attention, some of them for a good part of a day. At other times we have had as many field fires in one day

as six. One of the largest structure fires that we have been involved in was the Riverside High School in 1957. A large portion of the building was destroyed in a fire that apparently started in the auditorium in the stage area. Millside Farms was the scene of a large conflagration in the early 1950's. Eventually we had a fire in every building there, most of which were suspicious in nature. In 1962, the day of our 46th anniversary, we had a double structure fire consisting of the Scott- Nesbitt houses on Rt. 130. We were hampered in our efforts there due to the lack of sufficient water and high winds in the afternoon. Another large structure fire that we were called to fight was the Fox Theater in Riverside in 1964. The theater was totally destroyed along with a few small shops in the same building as well as a furniture store located in the front corner of the building. With the advent of the building of developments in the township our structure fires increased accordingly. Millside Manor has been the scene of several fires, the worst being 84 building. There was total loss of that entire unit. Going across the highway to Tenbytowne, we have had a few fires in units there also. Our worst fire there was in K building, in the center section, from the cellar to the roof. Most of the fires we have had in Tenbytowne have started in the cellars shared by the occupants of the units. All of the fires there are under investigation by the township fire marshall, Ron Hubbs, as possible arson cases. The coincidence of the fires that have started in the cellars makes investigation necessary. Our worst fire by far, in terms of loss, has been Rapagna's. That was the day after Christmas in 1971. The fire started in the recreation room and before the family had a

Chance to escape the intense heat, smoke, and fumes their efforts turned into panic. Two members of the family, the father and one child, managed to escape the holocaust. Three other members of the family, the mother and two children, were not so fortunate. The tragedy surrounding the fire and their attempts to escape makes this a horror story. It hurts us because it is our nemesis, the very thing we try so hard to prevent. Death by fire, an unnecessary tragedy. There have been and undoubtedly will continue to be structure fires in Delran Township. Our most fervent hope is to never have a repeat of the Rapagna Fire.

At different times through the years, since the Simplex, we have purchased new trucks and equipment as we needed them and as funds would allow. Among them a 1926 GMC truck with a 300 gal. Hale pump this was our first pumper, a 1929 Hahn with a booster tank and pump, a 1935 Ford with a 500 gal. pump and booster tank, a 1948 Pirsh with a 500 gal. pump and 500 gal. tank. This last truck was considered the latest in fire apparatus for a county district. Around 1946 we bought more hose that gave us 3000 feet of 2½ inch hose and 700 feet of 1½ hose that enabled us to cover almost any fire in the community. In 1950 we bought a Ford 500 gal. pumper with a booster tank. This truck enabled us to fight most of the grass fires we had at that time, while still using the Indian Tanks. In 1953 we bought a surplus Army weapons carrier that we converted into a field truck for grass fires. This truck saw much use through out the years. Being a rural town we had our share of grass fires. In 1962 we bought a Hahn 750 pumper with a 600 gal. booster tank. This truck carries our high expansion foam

equipment used on special applications such as liquid fires. We have on this truck our heavy hose stream deluge gun for supplying water applications greater than those achieved by 2½ hose and nozzle. In 1965 we purchased our present grass truck, a Dodge Powerwagon with a 280 gal. tank. This replaced our old field truck. Our Dodge was nothing more than a chassis, engine cowling, front fenders, and wind shield when we bought it. The completed truck was built by DeCou's Body Shop in our town. The last piece of attack equipment that we bought was a 1968 MACK 1000gal. pumper with booster tank. The Fire Commissioners bought us a 1971 MACK 1000 gal. pumper, diesel powered. Both of our MACKs carry Scott air packs in the jump seats for quicker attack at a fire scene. Our diesel, 1122, is our main attack truck at a structure fire with the other MACK, 1123, as a supply or rear attack truck. We bought a used 1964 Ford step van that we converted from a Courier Post paper truck to a rescue and salvage truck. This truck is being equipt with our cascade system that we designed. This enables us to refill our Scott tanks right at a fire scene. We also carry spare Scott tanks on this unit. This truck responds to all structure fires as well as vehicular accidents. The reason for this is that besides salvage work this truck is set up for heavy rescue operations. This piece of equipment rounds out our complement of fire fighting equipment. Our present hose complement is 1500 feet of three inch hose, 4000 feet of 2½ hose, and 2700 feet of 1½ inch hose.

Several of our members have and are taking courses in fire fighting as well as first aid which enables them to render better service to the community. Three of our members served with the Fort Dix fire

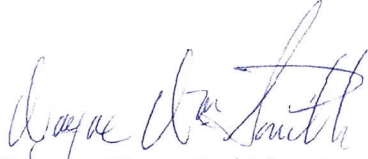
department during World War 2, not to mention the fact that quite a few of our members served our country during that war. During those years we served on the Civil Defense team by having one of our members in the fire house through the night incase of air attack. We are also proud of the fact that we had members of our company in the Armed Services during the Korean War as well as the conflict in Viet Nam.

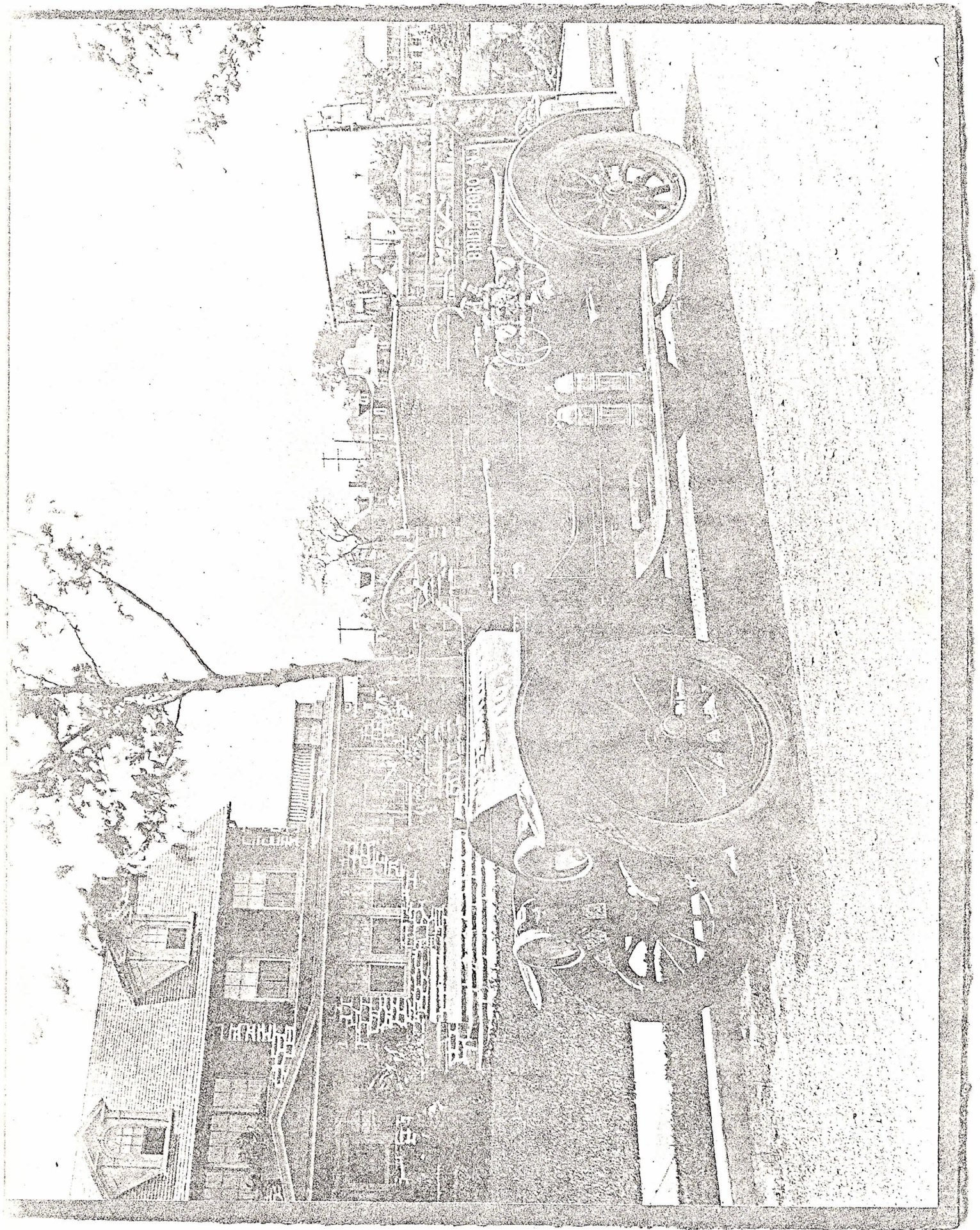
We have one of the best and most co-operative Ladies Auxiliary in the county. They have equipt the kitchen of our fire house with nearly every item necessary for the preparation and serving of dinners. The dinners served at the Bridgeboro Fire House are known county wide for the quality and quantity of the food served. Through the efforts of the devoted Ladies and the many hours spent in "their" kitchen they have amassed the funds to equip our trucks with many of the items necessary to us to perform our jobs on the fire ground. Our famous turkey suppers had grown in size from servings of a few hundred to over 1500 when we discontinued them in 1957. Most of the present members can well remember the work involved in turning out one of those dinners for 1500. The late 1950's saw the demise of the turkey suppers because of rising costs and lack of help. Attendance at the dinners around that time was generally over 1100. As many as 40 turkeys were roasted to serve fifteen hundred people. The dinners were served twice yearly. The preparations started days in advance and clean up lasted well after the dinner had ended. Our fund raising efforts and the Ladies work didn't end with the dinners though, we still relied on the coin cards used in the yearly donation drive. We had started Bingo games held weekly in 1958 as another means of fund raising and this in turn gave the Ladies the

chance to further their financial goals by serving refreshments at the games. Attendance at the games grew to a near constant level of 150 people. Popularity of Bingo grew through out the area with fire companies and other organizations. Prizes offered by larger organizations outgrew those we were able to give, at times help to run the games became a pressing problem. In 1968 it was decided to drop Bingo. In 1969 the Board of Fire Commissioners came into being with the hope of being a panacea for both township fire company's. Since that time this company has not undertaken any major fund raising functions with the exception of a few car washes and spaghetti dinners which proved profitable. We are however, always looking for new ways of raising funds for the purpose of bettering the fire company.

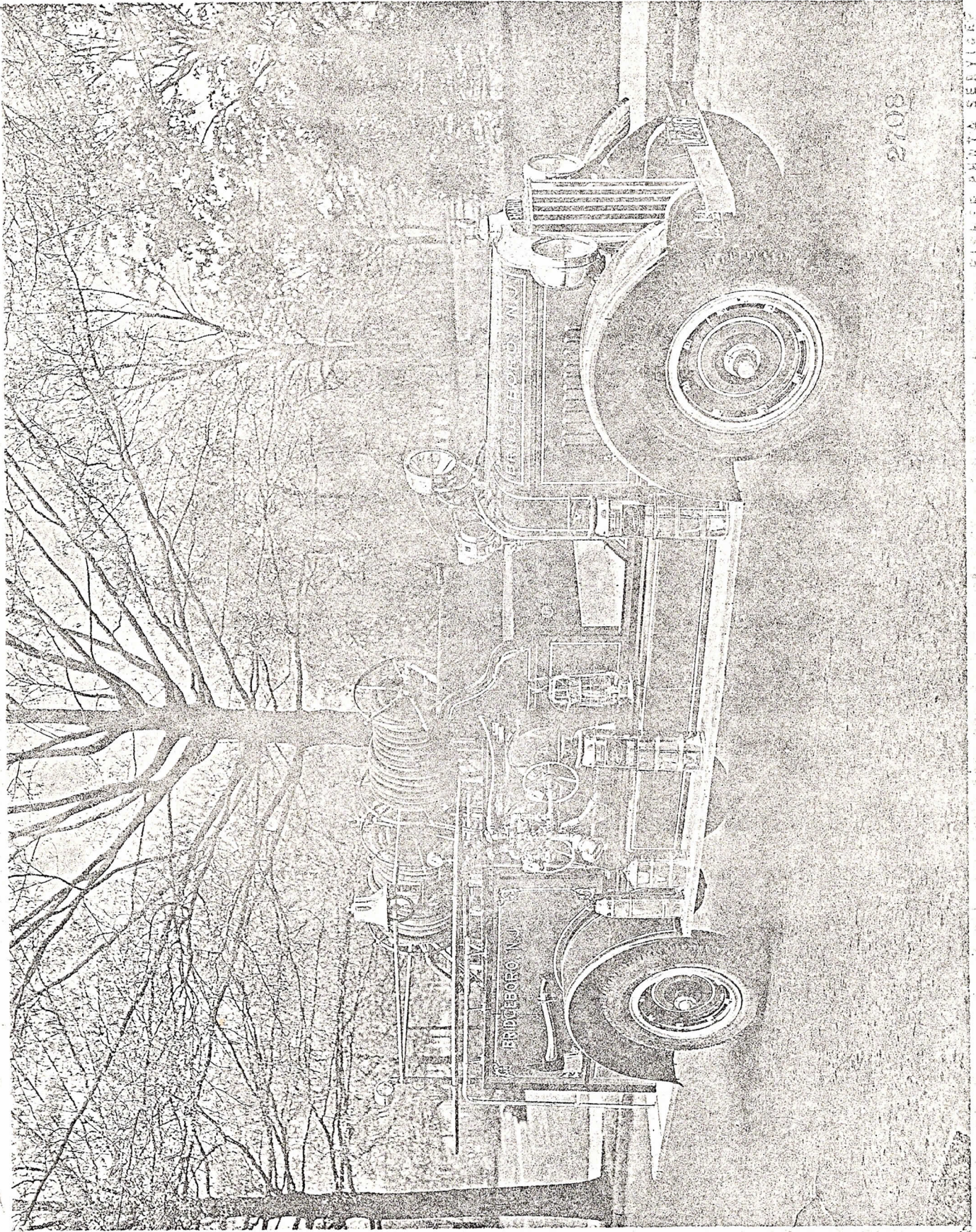
Our first fire was Trump's farm and a good many of our fires after that were barns or farm related. The township has grown continually from a farm community to a bedroom community with light industry and heavy commercial interests. There is still considerable room for growth in the township and the type of construction to take place remains to be seen. One fact that is certain is the era of barn fires is behind us, our future appears to be in structure fires of dwellings, commercial buildings, and public buildings.

Through continual training and upgrading we are becoming more sophisticated in our methods and actions. Knowing that we have the good will of the community we feel the existance of Delran Fire Company for the past fifty nine years has been justified. Our record indeed shows that we have been a service to our citizens. With good luck and God's blessings we will continue to do so.


Wayne Wm. Smith, President
Historian for the Company



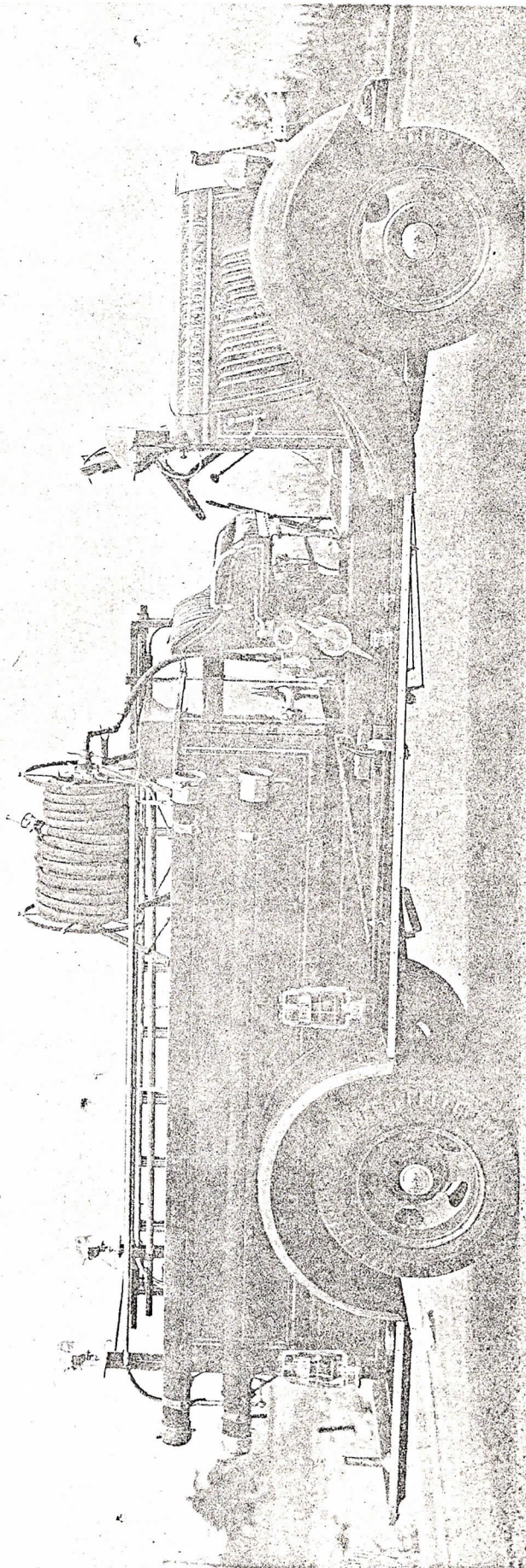
1916 SIMPLEX



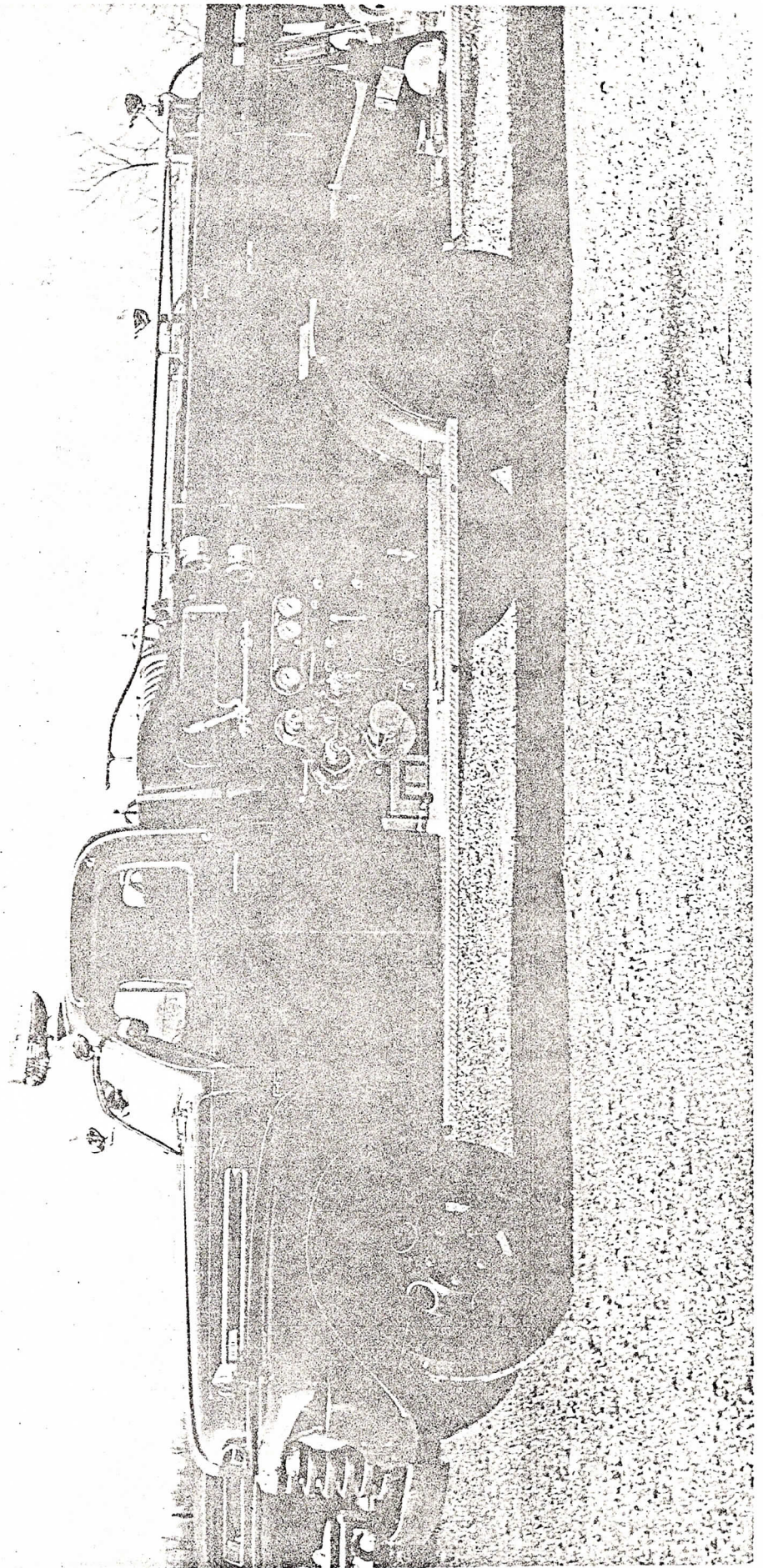
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FISHER PHOTO SERVICE

1929 HAHN



P1576



1950 FORD



CHARTER MEMBERS: CONRAD FRIDAY, WILLIAM J. SMITH, JOSEPH FRIDAY