

The History of Fire Fighting



~ 100 BC - ~50 BC

Marcus Licinius Crassus creates the first "Fire Brigade" in Rome. However, this serves as a scheme for him to take advantage of property owners. His 500-man brigade would only put out fires if the owner agreed to sell the property to Crassus at ridiculously low rates.



1690

John Lofting, a Dutch inventor, who had worked with der Heyden created the first fire engine calling it the "Sucking Worm Engine". It required a small team of men to operate.



1721

Richard Newsham patented and produced an improved engine that could be pulled by a cart to the fire and needed a team of 4 to 12 men to operate. It delivered up to 160 gallons of water per minute at distances of up to 120 feet. Newsham's company operated under various names into the 1770's.



1810

Napoleon Bonaparte forms the first professional firefighters known as the Sapeurs-Pompiers or Sappers-Firefighters. These firefighters were organized under the French army, commanded by the Commandant of Engineers.

1818

Molly Williams becomes the first known female firefighter. She served with the New York Oceanus Company No. 11 and was famed for hauling on drag ropes to pull a pumper to a fire in deep snow during a massive blizzard.

1824

The first organized municipal fire brigade in the world was created in Edinburgh, Scotland and was led by James Braidwood. The founding of the brigade would also establish what would be expected for a formal and effective fire department.



1853

Cincinnati, Ohio creates the first professional fire department with all full-time employees. It would also be the first to truly use steam powered, horse drawn, fire engines. The "Uncle Joe Ross" fire engines, had a range of 240 feet and could power up to six streams of water.

1873

The Boston Fire Department launched the first fire boat, the *William F. Flanders*.



1896

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) was established. Helping to standardize fire codes and training for firefighters.



1916

Garrett Morgan and a team of volunteers use Morgan's gas mask design to successfully rescue 32 salt miners from a gas filled tunnel located, 250 feet under Lake Erie. This prompts fire departments around the US to order the self-contained breathing apparatus.

2019

Today there are over 1.1 Million firefighters in the U.S. With 69% being volunteer firefighters. Each day they save countless lives from fires, floods, and other dangerous situations.

~ 300 BC

Ctesibius of Alexandria invents the first water pump for fighting fires.



~ 60 AD

Emperor Nero takes Crassus' idea and forms the Vigiles to combat fires without extortion. Hundreds strong they used bucket brigades, pumps, poles, hooks, and ballistae to combat fires and prevent them from spreading even if it meant tearing down parts of buildings.

1716



François du Mouriez du Périer gave 12 pumps, of der Heyden's design, to Paris, forming the Compagnie des gares-pompes, or literally the "Company of Pump Guards. Creating the French word for fire fighter, Pompier, or literally "pumper".



1731

New York first fire brigades are formed, with Engine Company 1 and 2 using Newsham's fire engine designs.



1752

Benjamin Franklin emulates the European model and establishes the Philadelphia Contributionship. They issue "fire marks" that mark insured buildings for the paid fire fighters to see when responding to a fire

~1800's

New York City fire companies attempt to sabotage each other by covering hydrants with barrels and other tricks to compete for the right to fight fires and be paid out by insurance companies for their work. This eventually morphed them into political machines with Boss Tweed and his Engine Company Number 6 being among the most famous examples.



1829

The first horse-drawn steam powered fire engine was invented but took another 3 decades for this innovation to catch on.



1852

William Channing, a Boston based doctor creates the first alarm system that uses a telegraph signal to send a fire alarm.

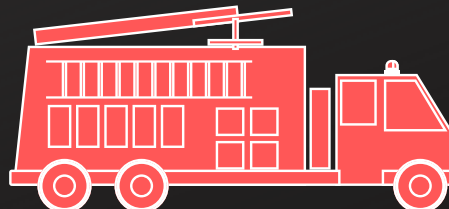
1868

Daniel Hayes, a San Francisco firefighter, invents an extension ladder that can attach to a ladder truck. This ladder uses a spring-assisted mechanism that could help raise it so it could be used to save people trapped in higher stories.



1905

The first self-propelled, internal combustion, fire engine was introduced. Manufactured by Knox Automobile, in Springfield, MA.



1973

The report by the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (NCFPC), America Burning, proves to be a landmark report. Making various recommendations to better control and prevent fires.

