

Original Signatures of Charter Members

ACTIVE MEMBERS.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. August Durmig | 21. Willard C. Striffler |
| 2. Willford Dayton | 22. Samuel Conklin |
| 3. David A. Ward | 23. Fred G. Downs |
| 4. C. E. Shaw Cooper | 24. Frank Dessors |
| 5. C. H. Odell | 25. Purse Taylor |
| 6. James F. Gleason | 26. Oliver C. Conklin |
| 7. James C. Striffler | 27. Walter S. Murrain |
| 8. E. L. Brown | 28. Isaac Taylor |
| 9. J. Martin | 29. John L. Schaefer |
| 10. Fred H. Pape | 30. Francis J. Strohoff |
| 11. H. D. Odell | 31. W. P. Peebles |
| 12. William C. Jones | 32. Clyde A. Bogert |
| 13. Charles Zuber | 33. Francis W. Deaton |
| 14. Sven M. Sunders | 34. Henry Shonkerson |
| 15. J. R. Humphreys | 35. Herman J. Herles |
| 16. R. A. Kent | 36. C. W. Miller |
| 17. Ephraim Hoffmann | 37. Luther A. DeLaney |
| 18. Harold Sunders | 38. F. W. Kugel |
| 19. George Ward | 39. Geo. B. DeLaney |
| 20. James C. Robertson | 40. G. Frank |

41. James E. Ekerson

Harrington Park Fire Co. No. 1, Inc.

When our town was formed from the Harrington Township in 1904, there was no organized means for the protection of life and property from fires. This greatly worried a group of civic minded citizens, so they asked for and received a certificate of incorporation for a fire company and had it recorded in the office of the Clerk of the County of Bergen and filed in the office of the Secretary of the State of New Jersey at Trenton on August 8, 1911.

Mr. Edward Striffler sent out a call for active members and associate members. Forty-one signed up as active members and eighteen as associate members.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. W. E. Cooper | 10. Iron Jones |
| 2. William Grob | 11. Louis Schmitt |
| 3. Alfred Wenzel | 12. Ed. Stevenson |
| 4. Edmund Kent | 13. J. Ekerson |
| 5. J. Hart | 14. Charles Odell |
| 6. H. E. Taylor | 15. Edward Dunphy |
| 7. Edward W. Walters | 16. G. J. Senior |
| 8. Mrs. K. Van Orman | 17. T. L. Biran |
| 9. Garret Ekerson | 18. John Nutting, Jr. (M. D.) |

A meeting was called for September 11, 1911, to be held at the Old School on Hackensack Avenue. Mr. Striffler was duly elected chairman of the meeting and Mr. F. X. Walters was elected secretary.

After the certificate of incorporation was read and filled a committee was appointed to prepare a constitution and a set of by-laws for the regulation of the affairs of the company.

The committee made its report and the Constitution and By-laws were accepted. The Chairman then proceeded with the election of officers. The following men were elected.

Mr. David A. Ward President
 Mr. Fred Pape Vice-President

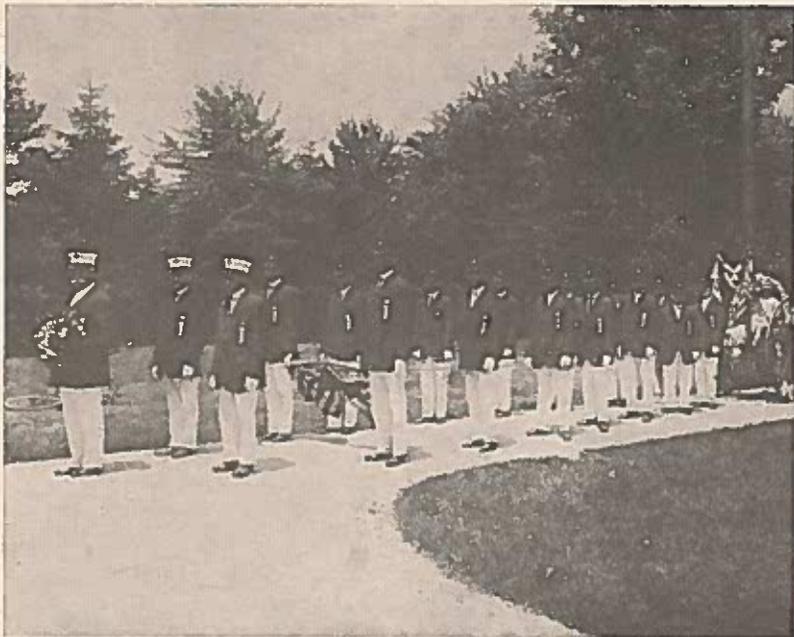
Mr. August Rummig ----- Secretary
 Mr. James F. Gleason ----- Treasurer
 Mr. Williford Dayton ----- Chief

After the election, it was clearly stated that they were to receive no salary.

The next meeting was also held at the school. Since the Board of Education was charging them \$6.00 for the meeting in the school it was decided to ask the Board to reduce it to \$4.00. This request was refused so, Mr. Gleason the Postmaster invited them to meet in the Post Office which was located just across the tracks from the Railroad Station. Dues of ten cents a month were assessed to active members and three dollars a year to associate members.

After the Nov. 6 meeting Chief Dayton reported the purchase of fifty badges at fifty cents apiece and five hundred feet of hose at fifty cents a foot.

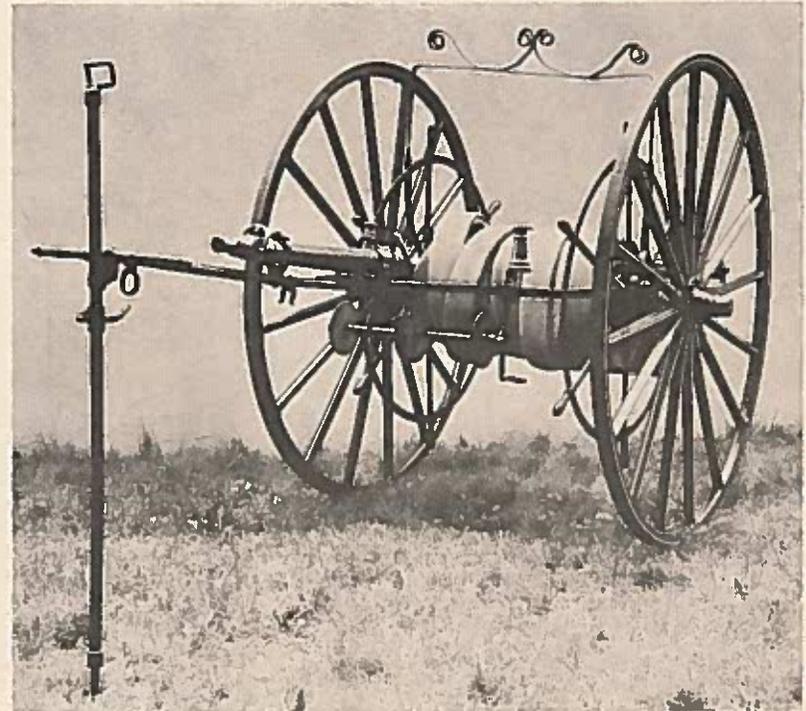
Mr. Striffler kindly offered the use of his garage for storing any apparatus that may be purchased.



PARADE DRESS — 1912

These men seemed to be keenly interested and active in the affairs of the Company because at the Dec. 4, 1911 meeting, it

was reported that the Borough Council had passed an ordinance to recognize the Company and fix the Fire Limits. A Ladder Cart for \$80.00 and a Hose Cart for \$104.00, which incidently is not yet



FIRST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT — 1911

retired, were purchased. The Ladder Cart was housed in Kent's Barn and the Hose Cart in Striffler's Barn. Also eight steel locomotive tires to be used for fire gongs had been ordered from the New York Central at \$1.60 apiece. One of these remains in front of the Fire House for its historical value. Responding to alarms with the equipment in two different locations it soon became evident that a Fire House was needed.

A minstrel and dance was held on March 1, 1912, in the school hall. At that time the School on Hackensack Avenue, which is now an apartment house had two class rooms on the first floor and a community hall on the second floor. This was later made into two class rooms by a partition. The men were overjoyed when they heard that half the members of the Westwood Fire Companies would attend the minstrel and dance. They made a handsome profit of \$159.08.

Whenever a little money had accumulated, most of it was spent for hose, nozzles, pike hooks, lanterns, fire buckets, or anything else that was needed. The balance on hand was rarely over \$25.00.

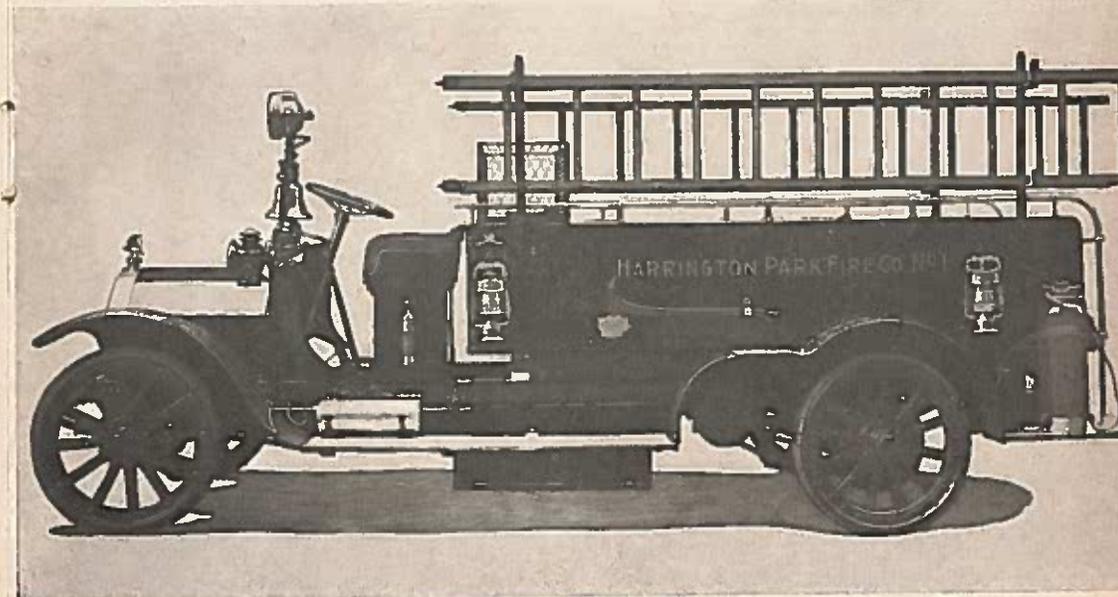
The December 16, 1912, regular meeting of the Fire Company must have been a happy one. It was reported that the two lots on the East side of Kline Street one hundred and fifty feet north of Harriot Avenue, had been purchased for \$600.00 and that a contract had been awarded to Strickert and Frank to build a fire house measuring 30 by 50 feet of wooden construction and that men were engaged on the work.



In January 1913, the Fire House was enclosed, but no electric lights had been installed and the doors had not yet arrived but were expected momentarily. Already the new building was found to be too small, so they planned to build an extension 36 x 10 feet at the cost of \$335.00. This was to be finished on the outside only. The Fire House was built and maintained by the firemen, therefore the Borough Council agreed to rent the Fire House for the Borough owned apparatus. This rental agreement between the Fire Company and the Borough is still in effect today.

On April 19, 1915, application was made for membership in the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemens Association.

Realizing the need for fire protection of life and property the Town Council appropriated on May 15, 1915, \$200.00 for fire protection and \$150.00 for fire extinguishers, rubber coats and helmets. On May 17, the Council appropriated an additional \$1,200.00 for the first motor fire truck in this area.



FEDERAL FIRE TRUCK — 1916

As evidence of unity between the Borough Council and the Fire Company, a change was made in the Company's by-laws that the elected Chief and officers should be confirmed in the same manner as any regular appointments by the Mayor and Council.

On August 16, 1916, it was decided that the Fire Company borrow \$2,000.00 for the purpose of making extensions and improvements on the Fire House in accordance with the plans and specifications by Carl P. Johnson, Architect. These extensions and improvements included raising the Fire House to a height of eleven feet above the present foundation, putting on a new foundation and making other additions and alterations, thus creating the present two story structure.

Chief Gleason reminded the Company that they had arrived at their fifth anniversary and asked that it be fittingly celebrated. He suggested that a certificate of incorporation be suitably engraved and the names of the Charter Members printed thereon.

Chief Gleason presented a bell to the Company, which is still in use today on the Reo Truck. The Board of Education rented the Firemen's Hall for Graduations. This practice continued until the new school on Harriot Avenue was ready for occupancy. In 1924 they also rented the hall to serve as two classrooms.



FIRE HOUSE BECOMES TWO-STORIES IN 1916

Five years had passed. The Fire Company was well organized, the men superbly drilled and they had a suitable building. They were members of the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association, The Firemen's Relief Association and the Exempt Firemen's Association. They participated regularly in the Conventions and parades and social activities in all the nearby towns. It was recognized as one of the best organized Volunteer Associations in the State of New Jersey. One could go on indefinitely about the achievements of this organization.

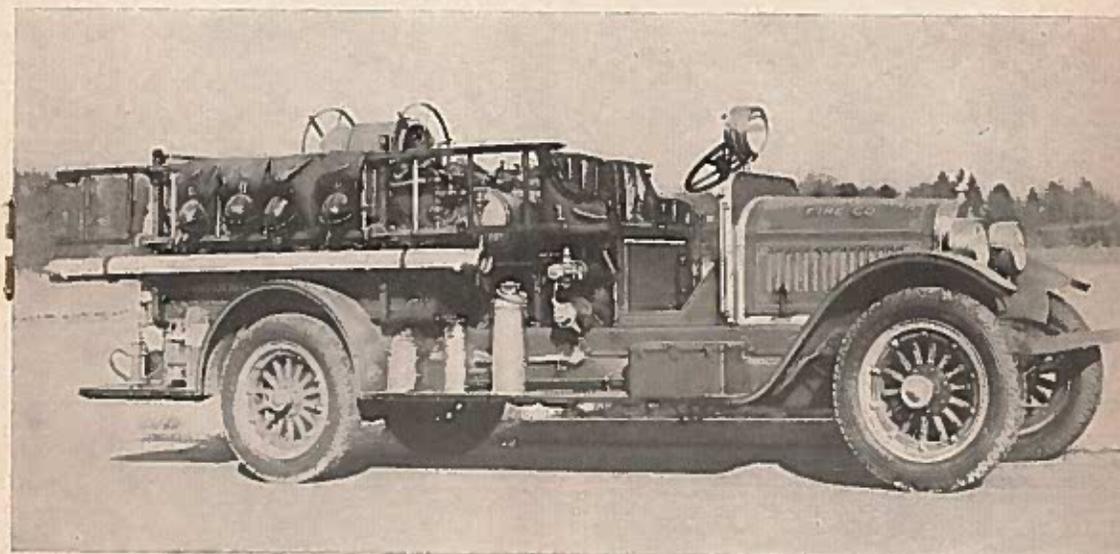
As the town grew, the needs of the people increased so the duties and problems of the Fire Company were necessarily expanded. Before Blood Banks were established, all firemen had their blood typed and cheerfully responded when needed by the Harrington Park citizens. They responded to any call for their help or sympathy. Before the Volunteer Ambulance Corp was organized

the firemen carried First Aid materials on the trucks and were skilled in their use. Today practically all the firemen are members of the Volunteer Ambulance Corp, in addition to their fire duties. The social life of the community was increased by the organization of a Ladies Auxiliary, the Saturday Movies and other activities.

The Barn Dance was an annual event eagerly anticipated by every one. It was an evening of gaiety and fun for young and old. Many prizes were awarded, such as live sheep, pigs, turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens and cases of canned goods.

Young boys could hardly wait to become old enough to join the Fire Company. They admired the men for their bravery, their splendid uniforms and their importance to the town. They also envied them the right to ride on the Fire Truck, and to leave any meeting, even a church service, when the alarm sounded.

At the County Fair, Labor Day, 1917, George Ward won the greased pig event and later turned the pig over to Gus Frank. No one quite knew what to do with the pig as it had a good appetite and the cost of keeping it was mounting steadily. It was discussed at several meetings and finally they gave Mr. Frank power to dispose of it at once. It seems that he didn't do it because later he and William Haslop decided that it would be a good thing to sell chances at twenty-five cents apiece and award the pig at a dance and entertainment to be held on Washington's Birthday evening.



STUTZ FIRE ENGINE — 1925

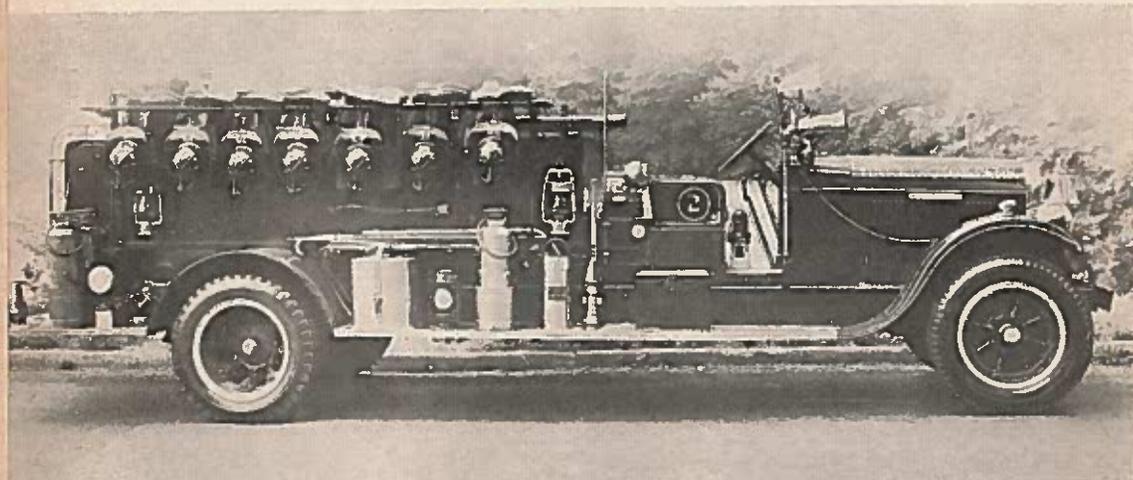
This was done. They made enough on the raffle to pay George Ward five dollars for the pig, pay for the food it ate and net the Company \$56.50. The record does not say who won the pig but it was cooked and the Company had a party.

In 1925, the second motorized apparatus, a Stutz Fire Engine Pumper of 500 gallon capacity was purchased. The price quoted was \$7,500.00.

For some time it was felt that locomotive tire fire gongs were not adequate. Unknowingly people would use the wrong signals, the wind would blow from the wrong direction or they would be forgotten altogether. So a Fire Siren was purchased and placed in the cupola atop the Fire House. The Chief of Police or whoever wanted to turn in an alarm had to go to the Fire House to operate the Siren. Considerable time was lost in sounding the alarms. An alarm box was placed on the outside of the Fire House by the Firemen so that the alarm could be sounded without going into the Fire House. This equipment used parts of old Ford brake rods and a discontinued fire box from the Nyack Fire Department. This box is still in use today.

In 1930 the first piece of motorized equipment, the Federal Truck was retired. The body was removed and placed on a Reo Truck Chassis and is still in use.

Up to this time there were very few fire schools where Volunteer firemen could go for instruction. The need was realized and schools were established from Nyack to Newark, through Edgewater and Teaneck. Today schools are held at nearby communities



REO FIRE TRUCK WITH FEDERAL BODY — 1930

under the direction of the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association. Harrington Park's Firemen have attended these schools in the various towns and today's Firemen must attend today's schools in order to become an officer in the Department. This has been done and is done on their own time and mostly at their own expense. In addition the Fire Department conducts its own training and drill program 52 weeks a year.



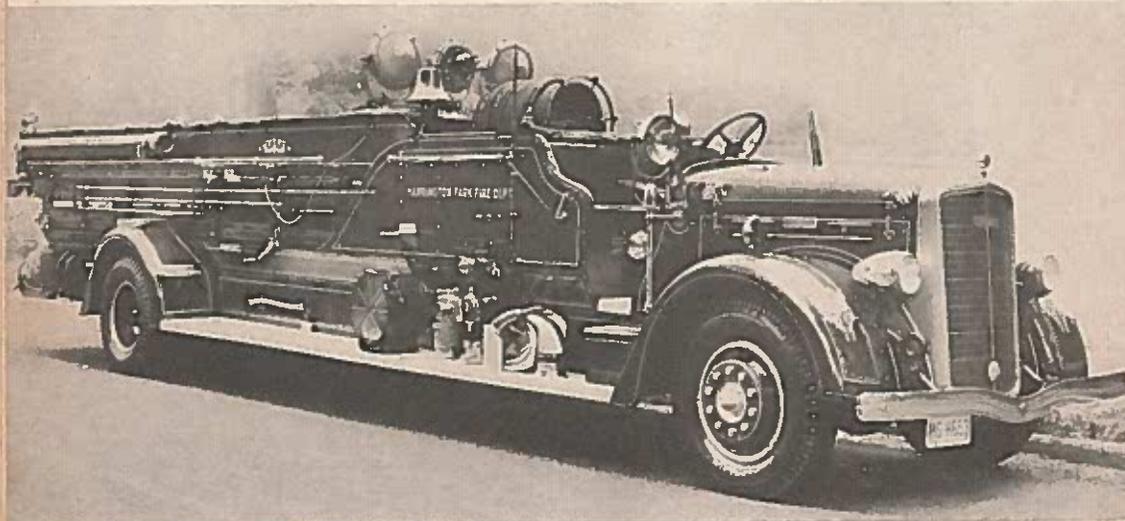
OIL PIT FIRE — PART OF THE ROUTINE TRAINING PROGRAM

Due to the expanding population it was found that the siren did not provide the necessary range. It was decided to remove the Cupola and place the siren on a tower atop the Fire House. For this the Company purchased an old windmill that was standing in River Vale, for ten dollars. The men took it down and cut it up to make the tower which is on the Fire House today.

In 1938 a new alarm system was devised. This to consist of overhead wires to be run from the Fire House to the Chief of Police Burkhardt's home and to the Plaza Store street corner. Rockland Electric Co. wanted \$600.00 to place these wires, but the Firemen felt they could do it for less. P. Demarest and Merritt Dean with the aid of Mr. Schultz, Sr., put the wires up and connected all necessary equipment for the sum of \$205.80, the cost of materials only. The entire project took six weeks of their spare time. After

a few years the system was again revised. The overhead wires were removed due to maintenance problems, lines were rented from the Telephone Co. and the control boxes were moved to the present Police Headquarters. With the advent of two way radio another control box was located in the Closter Police Station thus giving the town 24 hour coverage for fire. Later additional sirens were placed at strategic locations throughout the town. This system is maintained by the Firemen.

In 1939 the third piece of motorized equipment the Ward La France Truck was purchased. The addition of this truck enables the Fire Department to effectively ladder any building in the Borough.



WARD LA FRANCE LADDER TRUCK — 1939

From now on the firemen were to concern themselves with their schooling and training routines and answering alarm of fire for which they have trained so vigorously.

With the coming of World War II, the younger members were being called into the service of our Country. The firemen found their ranks greatly depleted. The responsibility of Fire protection again rested on the older members. Words cannot express enough thanks to these men, who with rationed gasoline would jump into their cars to respond to a fire call and continue to attend drills, when manpower was so vitally needed on the home front.

In 1954 the Mack Fire Truck was purchased. Also this year



MACK PUMPER #1 — 1954

the firemen undertook the complete renovation of the Fire House, which included exterior shingling and painting, remodeling of the hall and complete new heating and electrical system.



INTERBORO MUTUAL AID DRILL — HARRINGTON PARK



FIREMEN PRAISED

UNDAUNTED is the word for Harrington Park fire-fighters . . . really covered themselves with glory despite heat and extenuating circumstances last week-end. The group arrived among first at Reuten warehouse fire in Closter after midnight Friday and worked some 22 hours. Took a brief intermission to go home, wash up and appear in River Vale's 50th Anniversary parade . . . AND . . . copped first prize as the best appearing unit. The Fire Lassies were in the parade too . . . but . . . riding in Dave Sunden's 1915 Model T Ford.

TYPICAL OF VOLUNTEER FIREMEN

and the way they perform is the tense action displayed in the above photo during fire in warehouse of Fred Reuten Inc., Closter, before dawn Saturday as fire-fighters risked injury to combat flames, heat and smoke. Scenes similar to above were uninterrupted for 34 hours before firemen were assured there were no smoldering embers.

(QUOTING FROM JUNE '56 PAPERS)

In 1955 The Northern Valley Mutual Fire Aid System was started with Cresskill, Closter, Bergenfield, Dumont and Haworth participating. It was later joined by Harrington Park, Alpine, Norwood and Northvale.

The present officers are:

President --- H. D. Herpst, Asst. Chief, Harrington Park Fire Dept.
 Vice President ----- Arthur Griffen, Chief, Demarest Fire Dept.
 Secretary ----- J. R. Boenau, Chief, Harrington Park Fire Dept.
 Treasurer ----- N. Buongiorno, Chief, Dumont Fire Dept.

Their purpose is a mutual defense against fire. So that they will be prepared for extraordinary emergencies. A complete list of each town's fire equipment is kept at each company's headquarters. Meetings are held the second Sunday of each month, and each town must hold at least one mutual aid drill per year.

Any town may call upon any other for fire equipment or manpower, or to cover up in case of large fires. Companies are called through the cooperation of the Police Departments.

In 1958, Ordinance #180 was passed which allowed for the adoption of a Fire Prevention Code prescribing regulations governing conditions hazardous to life and property from fire or explosion and establishing a Bureau of Fire Prevention. It provided for officers and defined their powers and duties. The first Chief of the Bureau of Fire Prevention was P. W. Demarest.

Most of the foregoing facts have been gleaned from the minutes transcribed by men who have gone to a better world but their work still goes on. Present day Firemen do so much for the town that has so little to do with fires. They are interested in the joys and sorrows of all our citizens and participate wholeheartedly in all their activities.

On days when storms cause one-session or no school, a signal is given from the Fire House to warn parents, thus making life easier for them.

At Christmas time, cards are mailed to everyone. They are colorful, cheery and carry good advice.

Explicit directions are given by card and in the Telephone directory about the correct method to report fires.

Fifty years of fruitful activity have passed. Crises have been met and overcome, problems have been solved, prejudices overcome and lessons learned that will make the coming years better ones for our town.