

THE BUGLE

Summer 2016

SAVING HISTORY, SAVING LIVES!

Volume 22, Number 3

A Great Day for a Fire Engine Muster Annual event held in Hudson

By Paul Nelson

Once again the fire engine muster gods gave us a beautiful day on September 11th for some of the many owners of vintage fire apparatus in the area to bring out their rigs. The annual event has been known as the Bill and Ida Varnes Memorial Muster. Bill was an Assistant Chief in Hudson, the founder of the Western Reserve Fire Buffs Association in 1972 and later one of the instrumental individuals in the establishment of the Western Reserve Fire Museum and Education Center. Ida was a regular volunteer in both organizations over the years. Both are remembered in this way.



Ken Klemencic photo

The Line-up at Barlow Farm Park

The annual event is sponsored by the Fire Museum, the Buffs Club and Hudson Fire Department. Thanks to Jerry Varnes, Bill's son, who is now the Chief and the members of the Hudson Fire Department. As usual Parker Brown was organizer-in chief for the day's events.

Rigs begin to arrive about 9:30am and soon there were 13 on hand (plus another that missed the photo). The group shot was taken by Ken Klemencic of HFD from the aerial platform as all made their way to the pavilion for lunch. Also on the scene was the 1890 Howe hand engine from Chardon plus Hudson's 2015 Pierce pumper and 2010 Sutphen Aerial Tower. Owners (left to right) were Carl Raatz (63 Maxim); Jeff Campbell (75 ALF); Tom O'Brien (46 ALF); HFD (48 Jeep); HFD (48 Mack); Bob Painter (51 John Bean/FMC/GMC); Tom Green (51 ALF); Dan Semecek (34 Ford); Tim Elder (63 Barton FM/IH); Todd Wolf (68 Mack); Mike Brown (80 ALF); and, Bob Shimits (40 Buffalo).

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This newsletter is dedicated to informing the members of the Western Reserve Fire Museum and Education Center of its activities and events.

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Wherever they go, Arson and Ember, Bob Shimit's Dalmatians are always a big hit. They are seen in the photo to the right. (Bob is the one without the spots.)

Traditionally after lunch a short memorial program is held recognizing fallen fire fighters in Ohio since last year. This year a special remembrance was included for 9/11 victims exactly 15 years ago on that day.

Paul Nelson photo



Arson, Ember and Bob Shimits

(Continued on page 2, see Muster)

Muster

(Continued from page 1)

At 12:30pm the rigs lined up for a parade through the downtown area. This year was different as the parade stopped at the new Hudson Fire Museum at 27 E. Main Street located in part of the original town hall that once was the firehouse. The apparatus parked at an angle in front of the Museum with riders getting a chance to go inside and see the exhibits. In the bay was the 1928 Seagrave with the 1859 Button & Blake hand engine along the back wall. Both usually are at the Muster but this year remained in quarters. That Museum will soon have regular hours and is well worth a visit.

Work begins now on planning next year's muster that will include some new exciting additions and changes if all goes well. Some of those new additions being considered include a working steam fire engine and multiple hand drawn engines pumping in a old fashioned hand tub muster. Watch future issues of The Bugle and our website (www.wrfmc.com) for further details.

SOME SIGHTS OF THE DAY



Ken Klemencic photo



Ken Klemencic photo



Other photos by Paul Nelson



Ken Klemencic photo

Have a look all around!!!



Ken Klemencic photo



Organizing the Artifacts

By Jim Bell

The Western Reserve Fire Museum and Education Center is nearing completion of a year's long project. Since early 2105, the Museum staff has been working on a complete and thorough inventory of our artifact collection. In accordance with accepted AAM museum standards, the Fire Museum has been photographing, assigning an individual catalog number, providing a written description, and documenting the condition of each artifact within the collection.

The Museum owns thousands of artifacts and this process has been a long "labor of love." Everything from nozzles, toys, alarm boxes, turnout gear, ladders, hose, breathing apparatus, helmets and all manner of other artifacts have been professionally documented and inventoried. Not only does this give the Museum its first complete inventory, it enables the Museum to document our collection for insurance purposes, as well as compile a list of surplus items that can be traded with other fire museums and institutions.



Photos by Jim Bell



The Museum is indebted to the many donors who have contributed to our collection. The Museum is always looking for donations, big and small. In particular, the Museum is seeking donations from individuals or Fire Departments in the Lands of the Western Reserve. If anyone would like to make a donation, please call the Museum at 216.664.6312 or email the Chairperson of the Collection Committee at firebell58@yahoo.com.

Paver Update

The second batch of pavers were installed in mid-August on the Memorial Plaza on the east side of the Muecum. That brings the number of pavers installed to a total of 162 since the start of the program. Orders are now being accepted for the next installation.

The next installation will take place in November. Cost is \$200 for Museum members and \$250 for non-members. Contact the Museum at info@wrfmc.com or download forms at our website www.wrfmc.com. A number of design options are available. You will receive a proof of the inscription and must give your approval before the actual work is done.



Paul Nelson photos

New pavers laid out in order of placements



Workers from Martina Monuments install pavers

Schumaker's Mill Fire in Akron Cleveland Sends Help

By Paul Nelson

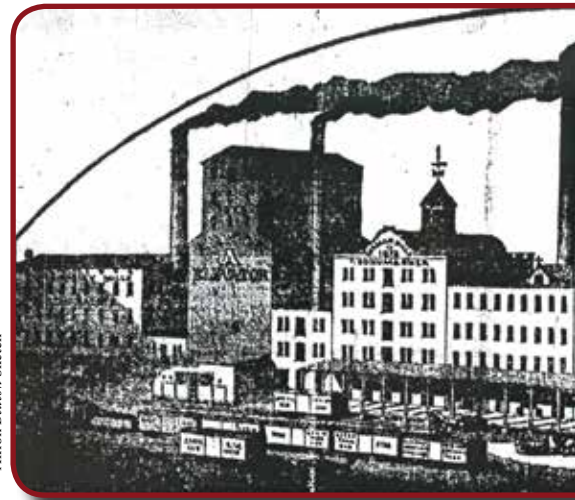
Probably the largest fire ever to occur in Akron almost destroyed the entire complex of Ferdinand Schumaker's Oatmeal and Cereal Mill on March 6, 1886. Schumaker started processing oats in 1859 and in 1863 started construction of a series of great mill buildings that was the largest cereal mill in the midwest. The site was located downtown bounded by Mill, Summit, Quarry and Bowery Streets. It took until 1874 to complete the complex including the Jumbo Mill 8-stories tall along with elevators and supporting mills. By 1886 Schumaker had become the foremost miller in the nation and supplier to hundreds of customers. After the fire he rebuilt a business known as the Ferdinand Schumaker Milling Company and by 1901, after several consolidations with others, changed the name to Quaker Oats. The name was taken from the Quaker Mill in Ravenna built in the 1870's.

On the early morning of March 6th a dust explosion rocked the 5-story Drying House on the east side of Broadway. A large quantity of oats was being put through the dry heat process at the time. An alarm was sent from Box 12, Prospect Street near Mill Street, at 2:20am and the bell in the tower of the Central Fire Station began striking. An alarm from Box 9, a private box at the German Mill A, was not received until sometime later.

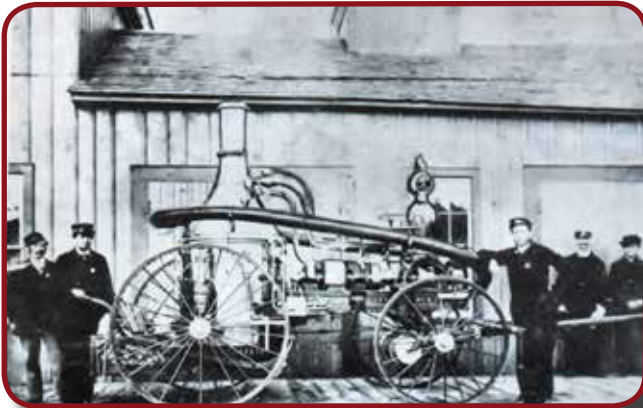
The Drying House at the north end of the complex was quickly engulfed in fire with flames that could be seen 20 miles away in the night sky. The fire spread via a wooden frame walkway to German Mill B, the 8-story Jumbo Mill, at about 3:30am. By 4:00am the giant mill began to collapse and the stone office building wedged between the Jumbo Mill and the Drying House then erupted in flames.

Realizing that help was needed, a call had gone out to Kent and to Canton at 3:30am with the realization that it would take some time for them to arrive on the scene.

With the Jumbo Mill ablaze, the fire spread next to the 4-story brick Box Department to the south. Next to erupt in flames was Elevator A, a frame structure coved with iron sheet standing the equivalent of a 10-story building. Fire started at the top of the elevator and worked down. For awhile streams directed at the bottom of the elevator kept the fire in check, but its iron cover soon glowed white-hot as support timbers and grain product burned behind the metal covering.



The Schumaker



Akron Steamer No. 1 1866 Silsby, 600gpm

The Akron Fire Department had a force of 12 full time men on the roster and 40 minute men (paid on call) members. Apparatus included two steam fire engines, one hose company and one hook and ladder. Steamer No. 1 (1866 Silsby) responded from the 6th Ward station (Station No. 2 in east Akron) setting up at Broadway south of Mill St.

Steamer No. 1 burst a flue and was rendered useless at about 3:30am and was taken to the Central Station but could not be repaired. Steamer No. 3 (1873 Silsby) responded from the Central Station and set up at Mill and Broadway. They were able to operate two lines while another three lines were stretched from hydrants. The Department used up all available 3,000-ft of hose with one line stretching 1,000-feet.



Akron Truck No. 1 1877 Babcock service ladder

The fire continued to spread and by 5:00am German Mill A, a 5-story structure immediately to the south, was next to ignite.

The Kent steamer Franklin and two hose carts arrived by special train about 4:30am at the Union Depot with Foreman F. G. Allen in charge. The steamer was directed to S. High Street near the

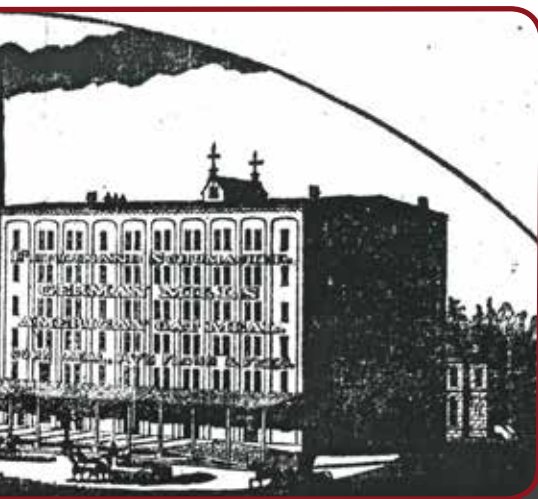
Courthouse and began to pump water from a cistern on Church Street. They were unable to use any hydrant as their coupling's thread was different than that of the private Akron water system. While pumping on S. High Street two flues failed and the engine had to shut down. It was towed to the Central Fire Station where attempts were made to repair it. Repairs were unable to be made and the Kent fire fighters walked back to the fire to assist in any way they could.

At about 4:30am Mr. Schumaker had met with Chief Frank Manderbach and Assistant Chief William Ragg asking that every effort be made to save the Empire Barley Mill. He felt that by saving that mill, last in the row to the south, the business would be saved from total ruin. At least some part of the gargantuan complex that employed 225 workers and produced 2,000 barrels per day of oats,

wheat, barley, rye, corn and other grains might continue to function at some level.

One hose line was diverted to an adjacent building window and played away on the Empire Mill. Somehow the structure was spared with only minor damage to the northwest corner as more streams were directed on the mill.

Workers carried bags of grain out of the building to nearby box cars and an engine was secured to pull the cars away.



Mill Complex

by Schumaker were destroyed. The great stone office building at the corner of Mill and Broadway was gutted and fire spread to the 200 x 500-ft occupied freight house of the N.Y.P.&O. Railroad totally consuming that building. The bell tower in the nearby high school began to smolder but did not ignite.

Cleveland also had been called for help. Engine 9 and its hose wagon responded by a special train under the command of Assistant Chief H. H. Rebbeck and Captain John Maxim of the engine. They arrived in Akron about 6:30am and went to work supplying a single line. They worked for most of the day on Church Street by the First ME Church. They later assisted in overhaul and returned to service in Cleveland about 7:00pm.



CFD History 1898

Cleveland Engine Co. 9 1879 Amoskeag, 700gpm

Their trip to Akron over the Valley Line was not without incident. Enroute the special train hit a railroad gang's hand car in Botzum. Probably neither the work gang nor the train engineer expected anyone other than themselves on the track at that hour. No serious injuries or damage occurred and the train continued on to its destination.

Besides the incredible magnitude of the fire, water supply from the private water system was unable to keep up with the demand. There were yard hydrants in the complex that were used early in the fire adding to the demand on the system.

Schumaker's frugality resulted in his buying only \$113,500 insurance for the complex; he believed it to be fireproof. Loss was estimated in excess of \$1 million. As a result of the fire, prices for oatmeal raised from 50-cents to one dollar a bushel on the following day. As a footnote, the Akron City Council sent a communication of thanks for services rendered to the Board of Fire Commissioners of Cleveland on April 3rd.

During the mid to late 1800's, as other nearby Northeast Ohio communities began to grow, their ability to fight large fires were often challenged. Cleveland was often called to assist and a number of out of town responses by both the Volunteer Department (up to 1862) and the Paid Department are documented. The requests for help were usually made in the form of a telegram. Approval to respond would have to come from the Fire Chief or the Fire Commissioners.



Tim Elder Collection

The mill in ruins at daybreak

The steamer from Canton was delayed as a special train had to be assembled. Canton thought Akron was arranging for the train but that was not the case. When they did arrive they did not pump but assisted others at the scene.

The fire extended east of the complex on Broadway between Mill Street and the Tapplin, Rice & Co. shops where two houses owned

SPAAMFAA Summer Convention Overwhelming

By John Zangerle



1965 Former FDNY Super Pumper; one of 6-units
Designed by Gibbs & Cox naval architects
Mack 715FST Highway Tractor
2400hp Napier Deltic engine; 6-stage, 8800gpm DeLaval pump

On the second day of the event you had a choice of bus tours to Ground Zero including a tour of the 9/11 Museum or an open house and flea market at Andy Leider's "Truck House", his storage facility in Middletown. The tours to the 9/11 memorial and museum were very moving and extremely well received. The group was accompanied by a retired military officer who had worked the Pile and gave a personal overview of the days following 9/11. Some of the group also visited Station 10, the fire house adjacent to Ground Zero.

For those who made the difficult choice to stay behind and look at the collection of apparatus at the "Truck House", we were also overwhelmed. Andy Leider is an attorney and was on his way to the courthouse when he saw the second plane hit the towers. As an officer in the Army National Guard he was in charge of billeting Guard members working in NYC post 9/11. These events inspired him to purchase his first fire engine. Andy's initial interest in buying and restoring a single fire engine turned into a passion for acquiring old fire apparatus. He quickly ran out of storage space in a Staten Island building and purchased a complex of industrial storage buildings in Middletown. At the time of the convention Andy was storing 312 pieces of fire apparatus in Middletown where he has also run out of space. He has another 200+ engines in storage in Pennsylvania. The apparatus ranged from some very early motorized Ahrens-Fox pumpers up to fairly modern airport crash trucks. Some were restored, but most were in original condition that in some cases meant they looked very forlorn.

On Saturday the local chapter sponsored a fire apparatus parade and static display at Andy Leider's Truck House. The parade was extremely long and featured apparatus of every type and description from the US and Canada. The FDNY Super Pumper was also on display. The flea market was very large, but the whole event was overshadowed by the extreme heat and humidity. Activities concluded with a very nice banquet for all those who attended. I left Middletown thinking that I must have missed some of the intriguing apparatus because there was simply too much to see all at once.

Some people think anyone who owns even one fire engine must be crazy, but what about someone who owns over 500!! This summer's national convention for the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America (SPAAMFAA) was held in early August in Middletown, NY. Our Fire Museum is a SPAAMFAA chapter and several of our members attended the summer convention. The host chapter organized trips to the FASNY Museum of Firefighting in Hudson, NY and the Kingston, NY fire museum the first day of the convention. If you have never visited the Hudson museum, it is a truly huge and remarkable collection of fire apparatus and memorabilia. Many consider it the premier fire museum in the country because of its unique collection that includes very early hand drawn and horse drawn pieces as well as many motorized displays.



Apparatus inside the "Truck House"



Photos by John Zangerle

Pearl River, NY 1948 Ward LaFrance 1000gpm
with fender skirts and cloth top



Maplewood, NY 1922 American LaFrance Service Ladder Truck

CFD Trivia

By Paul Nelson

Q: When did a plan exist to have 16 Rescue Squads?

A: In 1941 with a proposal that almost was executed.

Eliot Ness had become Public Safety Director in 1935 and, although a law enforcement type, he tinkered with the Fire Department structure and operations. He decided that fire rescue service could be better delivered by making it part of ladder company duties. The 16 ladder trucks in service were on the scene of a potential incident requiring rescue service quicker than the three rescue squads that had to travel a greater distance.

His plan was to disband the three rescue companies and assign the 42 members of the companies to ladder companies. He would acquire 13 new specialized vehicles and use the three existing squads to operate as the second sections of ladder trucks. They would respond in tandem on all ladder truck runs. Details and size of the new vehicles were not defined other than they would carry most of the tools found on existing squads. In 1939 CFD had just placed in service three new walk-in squads designed by Capt. Eisenhart of the Bureau of First Aid. Squads were the only companies with breathing apparatus.



CFD Archives

1939 General Detroit as RS-1 at Station No. 28

City Council had approved the expenditure of \$100,000 from the \$224,000 Council Bond Fund for this equipment plus 16 pumpers, 2 aerials, 1 water tower, 10 battalion autos and other equipment. The rationale for the new squad program was the fact that the NBFU grading schedule did not recognize squad manning in their total manpower count. If the 42 rescue squad members were on ladder trucks, it would improve at least one NBFU deficiency. CFD was a Class 3 Department then but on the verge of dropping to Class 4 or 5 because of the manning deficiency plus a lot of other problems including old apparatus. (Note: CFD acquired Class 2 status in 2015.)

World War II put an end to the plan and money available for new equipment. Strategic raw materials needed for building all apparatus was curtailed. While fire suppression apparatus might be allowed in some cases by the War Rationing Board, new little squads would never make the cut. Eliot Ness was replaced by Frank Celebrezze as Public Safety Director in 1942. He also was Civil Defense Coordinator for the County. The 16 rescue squad program wasn't high on his list of things to think about. Rescue Squad No. 1, 2 and 3 remained in service.

Calendar of Events.

- **Saturday, October 15, 2016** – Washington Twp., OH. Stark County firefighter's parade at 9:30am. Info at RBryant31@aol.com.
- **Sunday, January 29, 2017** – Cleveland, OH. Western Reserve Fire Museum and Education Center Annual Meeting at 1:00pm at the Fire Museum, 310 Carnegie Ave., Cleveland, OH.
- **February 22-25, 2017** – Alabaster, AL. SPAAMFAA Winter Convention. See the SPAAMFAA Web Site for registration and details.
- **Saturday, March 4, 2017** – Cleveland, OH. Annual Western Reserve Fire Museum Flea Market, Cleveland Fire Training Academy, 3210 Lakeside Avenue, Cleveland, OH. Doors open at 8:00am. Info at www.wrfmc.com.
- **Sat. & Sun., April 15 & 16, 2017** – Allentown, PA. Auction and Firematic Flea Market, Allentown Fairgrounds, Agricultural Hall, 17th and Crow Sts. Auction, Saturday, 9:00am. Info at www.donnandassociates.com or Donn Zalewski, 440-331-5505.
- **Saturday, April 29, 2017** – Jackson, MI, GLIAFAA Fire Flea Market, Jackson County Fairgrounds, 200 W. Ganson St., Jackson, MI. Info at www.gliafaa.com.
- **Sunday, May 28, 2017** – Cleveland, OH. Annual Firefighters Memorial Motorcycle Ride. Staging at 9:00am, start 11:00am at Alfred Lerner Way by CFD Firefighters Memorial. **Need volunteers** as the Fire Museum operates food tent. Leave message at info@wrfmc.com or 216.664.6312. Ride info at www.firefightersmemorialride.com.
- **SPAAMFAA Summer Convention and Muster** – Watertown, NY. August 2-5, 2017. See the SPAAMFAA Web Site for details.

A Parting Shot



Paul Nelson photo

They go way back

Rev. Jim Wickman (left) and Bob Gahr (right) at the recent Fire Engine Muster. Both go back to the days of the Buffs Club. Jim was Museum President for many years succeeded by John Zangerle.

**Western Reserve Fire Museum
at Cleveland, Inc.**

310 Carnegie Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2816

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FIRE MUSEUM TO OPEN SOON
See website for details



CFD Archives

When did Cleveland have 16 Rescue Squads?

Well never...but there was a plan advanced in 1941 for just that by Safety Director Eliot Ness. See those details inside The Bugle in the CFD Trivia section on page 7. The photo above shows the three new 1939 General Detroit walk-in rescue squads on the apron of Headquarters Station on St. Clair Avenue.

The Bugle is a publication of the Western Reserve Fire Museum and Education Center. The entire contents © by Western Reserve Fire Museum at Cleveland, Inc.

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