

# THE BUGLE

April-September 2007

WWW.WRFMC.COM

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## President's Log by John Zangerle

There have been some major developments to report since our last newsletter.

First, the fun stuff. The Museum has acquired an original Cleveland Fire Station Bell from 1872 with a full inscription on the face of the bell. I won't spoil the full story about how we acquired the bell that will be a separate article in the next issue of the Bugle. I feel it is a very significant addition to our collection. Shortly after its acquisition, our firefighter volunteers made an impressive wooden support to hold and display the bell. This was completed just in time to be an essential part of the Firefighter's Memorial dedication June 15, 2007. The bell was rung as the name of each line-of-duty death was read. Thanks to the many people who helped with this project. The Museum

also provided two antique fire engines that participated in the ceremonial parade from the old Memorial to the new Memorial.

While not nearly as exciting, our work on the fund raising side continues. As I re-

Another significant development during the last several months is a tentative resolution of the Innerbelt on-ramp location controversy with the Ohio Department of Transportation. The Museum has been an active participant in the ODOT process and we were invited to a meeting with the major parties affected, including the Cleveland Indians, the Cleveland Cavaliers the Gateway community development group and the City of Cleveland Traffic Division. ODOT has decided to do a grade level ramp that will start very near the current ramp entrance. This should be far enough away from the Museum to give us the space and access that we need.

Everyone enjoys a parade and the Cleveland/West Park Fourth of July parade has become an event that the Museum regularly supports and

*Photo by Paul Nelson*



*Ringing of the Museum's Bell at the Fire Fighter's Memorial dedication ceremony*

ported in the last issue of *The Bugle*, our by-law changes have allowed us to expand our Board. We have taken advantage of this opportunity by adding a number of community leaders to our Board. The Board has also created a Capital Committee to take the lead in major fund raising. The Committee had its first meeting in July and we hope to be well underway with fund raising efforts this fall. An article on the fund raising plan and a profile of our new members will appear in our next issue of *The Bugle*.

The Capital Committee is extremely important because we are rapidly reaching the stage where we have completed as much of the demolition work as we can do on our own. We are now ready for the next phase of the project which will require the oversight of a general contractor. Obviously, capital funds will be needed for both labor and supplies even though we know a significant portion of the work will be donated. Our project manager's report in this issue provides additional details.

participates in. This started years ago when then-councilman **Mike Dolan** requested my antique fire truck for the parade. This year the Museum participated with the support of newly elected **Martin J. Keane**. This parade draws huge crowds and I think **Dan Hayden** knew half of them. I want to thank all those who brought their rigs. **Bob Gahr** deserves the "longest-distance" award for finding a trailer and hauling his 1919 Model-T all the way over from Chardon!

If anyone wonders about the appeal of a Fire Museum, you should know that we continually receive requests for visits from out-of-town firefighters and fire buffs. In the last six weeks we have had firefighters from Cincinnati, Chicago and New York stop by. Even though there is little to show them at this time they are equally excited about the potential for our Museum with its terrific location, historic significance and unique Gamewell system in the alarm office.

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

This is a publication of  
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## Did You Know?

Did you know that the Fire Museum has a large collection of Cleveland Fire Departments Journals, some dating to the beginning of the paid Fire Department? Did you know that the Fire Museum has a large collection of paper memorabilia pertaining to the Fire Department. Dear Museum members who are reading this newsletter and thinking, "How can I help?" — "I can't swing a hammer; I can't lift buckets of construction debris; I have a bad back, bad knees, arthritic hip..." Well, if you can pick up a phone book or a twelve-pack of beer then you should be able to pick up a journal and help preserve the history of the fire department. Can I count on you to help?

Also, I am calling on those Fire Museum members who were the movers and shakers involved with the Fire Department and the Union, to step forward and give us a hand. We are meeting weekly with city, county, and state officials. We are asking Judges to help out. We have the Building Trade Unions getting involved with the project. We need YOU to help US. You have the connections, the know-how, to help with the Fire Museum. Please don't be an outsider, come down and join the fun!

**Dan Hayden**, Executive Director

### Work Days Schedule Cleanup for October 11 Event

- Thursday, Sept. 27
- Tuesday, October 2
- Thursday, October 4

Contact Dan Hayden if you can help

*LOG, continued from page 1*

Finally, **Mayor Jackson** and **Chief Stubbs** again asked us to participate in the display at the City Hall Rotunda honoring Cleveland Safety forces. We worked with the Cleveland Division of Fire providing historical displays. Our efforts last year were impressive and I hope our members had a chance to stop down and see the display this year from August 13 through September 11. A ceremony was held at City Hall at the close of the display September 11.

Have a safe and happy summer.

John Zangerle

## Fundraising, Planning, Public Relations, and Construction

**The Fire Museum Project is more than just a  
demolition project**

**Project Manager's Report**

**By Scott Carpenter**

For the majority of our readers *The Bugle* is the main source of information about the Fire Museum project. So, in this issue, with few or no articles about construction, you may have gotten the impression that the volunteers have completed construction. The reason for this is simple — the Fire Museum project is more than just a construction project.

**Dan Hayden's** report about the Journals Project touches one of the other projects we're working on. Care of our collections is one of the most important aspects of our operations, and is, in fact, an ongoing part of the museum business—as long as we continue to collect artifacts we will continue to have collections projects. For the Fire Museum, the journals, with more than 3,000 of them, is the largest project of its kind and when completed there won't be a collection like it anywhere in the country.

Nevertheless, the Project continues to be everyone's top priority. These last few months we've been working very hard at building up the Board and developing a Capital Campaign Committee. A list of new board members and Capital Campaign Committee members is included in the President's Log. Both of these groups are needed to help raise the money and in-kind gifts needed to complete the project. To meet this need we've been meeting with prospective givers as well as those who can help with the campaign. While we've been developing these committees, we've also been solidifying our agreements with the Trade Unions and Donley's Inc., our construction manager. Each has made a significant pledge of support for the project. We also received \$40,000 from Cleveland City Council to help pay for the fire alarms and sprinkler systems. But that's not all...

Getting the word out is of growing importance. To earn the support of the philanthropic community we have to prove our value—we have to effectively demonstrate the importance of what we're doing and why. So with the fundraising campaign comes a public relations campaign. To meet this need we recently promoted the project on Applause, an arts and culture program on WVIZ, Channel 25. The producer and the host like the project so much that they've decided to follow the progress of the project in future programs. They've also expressed interest in doing a documentary about the fire service and more specifically our Alarm Office. We hope to do programs about the capital campaign, the ground breaking, and the opening of the Fire Museum.

To get ready for the ground breaking and construction, Donley's has developed a project schedule with a list of phases and costs associated with those phases. With this information and our architectural plans and specifications, we, along with Donley's, the Trade Unions, and our architects, will be asking sub-contractors, vendors, and manufacturers to support the project.

And still demolition continues. We've been steadily making progress on work that needs to be done in anticipation of the elevator. Walls, plumbing, and electrical demolition continue. And now that the weather has gotten better, minor work on the exterior is underway. In May we removed a variety of old unused antennas, brackets, and lighting fixtures that were attached to the face of the building.

So, although we have made tremendous progress to date, much more work is ahead. Your continued support is needed. Please call us or just show

# BITS AND PIECES OF HISTORY

by Paul Nelson

## THE MYTH THAT JUST WILL NOT DIE



*Illustration of Fire Station No. 28 in The Architectural Record, pg 139, February 1927 (WRFMC Collection)*

The other day **Dan Hayden** attended a CFD fire fighter's retiree's dinner and heard the story again. "The Alarm Office was originally built for the railroad as a baggage handling center. The space between the floors was for a baggage conveyor." Not true! Here are the facts.

City Council passed an Ordinance on June 23, 1924 to replace Station No. 28 on Hill Street that also housed the Alarm Office on the third floor. The structure, as well as the whole neighborhood, was to be razed for the Union Depot and Terminal Tower project. That property along with Station No. 2 on Champlain Street and the Police Headquarters were all sold to the Union Terminal Company for a total of \$1,633,400. The site for new Station No. 28 and Alarm Office at the junction of Central Viaduct and Central Avenue was authorized by Council on April 16, 1924 and the purchase approved on May 14th. \$40,000 was allocated for two complete parcels and two partial parcels known as the Kelly and Walworth allotment. The Union Terminal Company had sold that property to the Berg Land Company who was acting as agents for transactions during the massive construction project. Perhaps this involvement with the Union Terminal Company is the underlying root of the myth.

The new station site was then occupied by a variety of two story commercial buildings and a string of tenements.

The City Council authorized \$175,000 for construction of the new station and \$108,000 to move the cables and terminal equipment to the new alarm office. An additional contract was subsequently awarded to the Gamewell Company for alarm room operating equipment. The structure was designed by Cleveland City Architect Herman Kregelius who also designed the new Police Headquarters (current 3rd District building) on Payne Avenue to be built at the same time. A contract was awarded to the Selden Excavating Co. on August 3, 1925 in the amount of \$3,790 for site preparation. On May 18, 1925 a contract was awarded to The de Hamal Construction Co. in the amount of \$138,400 to furnish material and erect the structure. An additional contract was awarded to the Fort Pitt Bridge Works on May 8, 1925 in the amount of \$11,400 for furnishing, fabricating and erecting the steel for the structure. The 4-ft, 8-in. crawl space below the alarm office operating room was designed for cable and wiring runs to enter the circuit board panels in a protected manner from the space below.

On August 26, 1926 Engine Co. 28 vacated their quarters and relocated to the new Station No. 28 that officially carried the address of 325 Central Viaduct. The company log book recorded that the engine went in service in the new location at 11:10 a.m.. Two days later the Alarm Office, officially known as the Fire Exchange, began operations at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 28th. The first alarm received at the new Fire Exchange was from Box 885 at the north end of the Brooklyn Bridge originating from an auxiliary box at the Born Steel Range Company, 3945 W. 25th Street. The last alarm received at the Hill Street Alarm Office was from Box 661 at Woodland and E. 40th Street. (Almost all the street boxes were 3-digit boxes until new street boxes were installed in 1929 and 1930.) Cut over time from Hill Street to the new Fire Exchange was shown to be 9:01 a.m., August 28, 1926.

No photos of the station under construction have ever been located. The Museum continues to seek assistance in finding old photos during demolition of the pre-1925 structures and construction of the new stone firehouse. We do have a photo of the buildings and the Sanborn map of the area pre-1925.

## BITS AND PIECES OF HISTORY

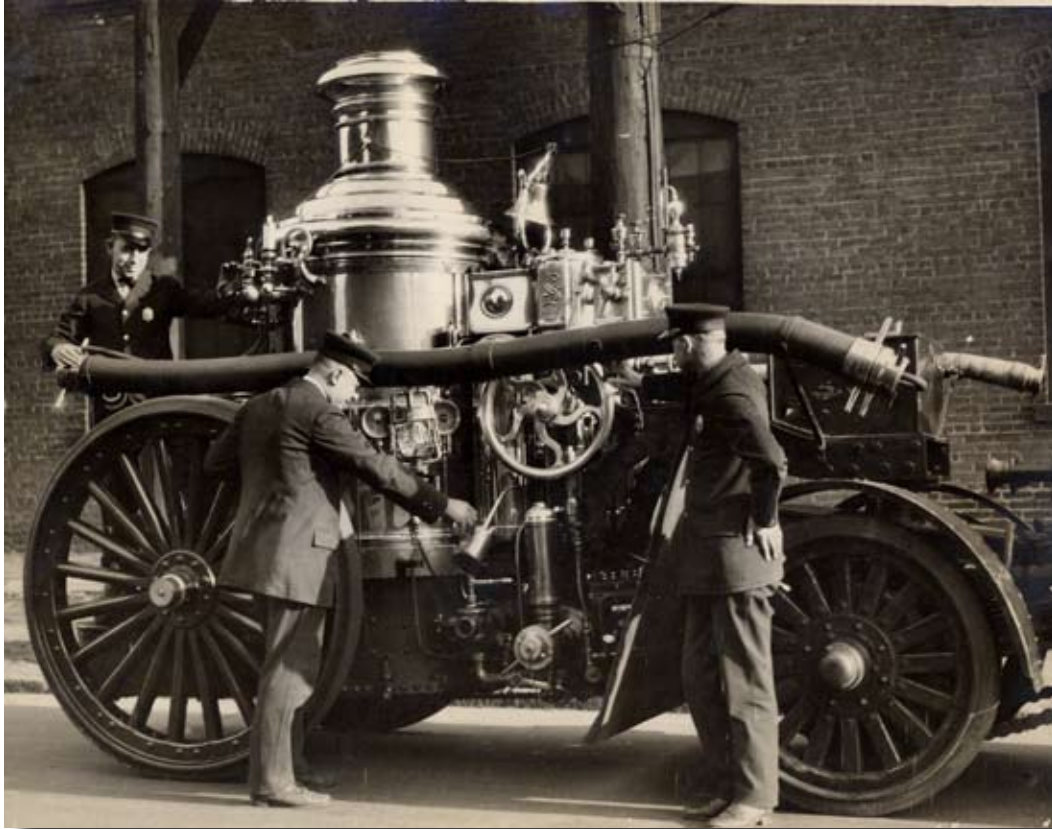
by Paul Nelson

### THE LAST STEAMER

The Cleveland Fire Department purchased its first steamer in December 1862 for Engine Co. 1 and retired its last steamer in 1931 at Engine Co. 33. It was a 1916 American LaFrance steam fire engine with an attached motorized tractor that had been

used by Engine Co. 14 from 1916 to 1929. In 1920 Engine Co. 33 retired its horses and was assigned an 1885 Clapp & Jones steamer with a 1913 Peerless tractor from a ladder truck. It was accompanied by an 1918 South Bend hose wagon. The Department used 52

steamers from 10 different builders. The last horse drawn steamer, a 1904 Nott 900 gpm piston engine, was retired from Engine Co. 6 (Lorain and Abbey) in 1925. That company and the Water Tower were the final two apparatus in service to be drawn by horses.



*Company members of Engine 33 work on their Clapp & Jones steamer in this 1927 photo (WRFMC Collection)*

### ENGINE CO. NO. 37

The museum continues to receive great photos of old apparatus from individuals cleaning out old collections. One of those recent photos was a 1941 shot of Engine Co. 37 and its crew in front of quarters on Broadview Road.

Engine 37 had the shortest lifespan of any Cleveland company being established from Hose Co. 4 on May 17, 1922 and disbanded on June 9, 1949 to become the new Engine Co. 42. The company members are identified left to right as Ellwood (Lt.), Freitag, Casey, Peters, Novotny, Vormelker, and Krueger.



*1939 American LaFrance (500 Series), 1000 gpm (31F7) and crew in front of station at 2314 Broadview Avenue, SE (WRFMC Collection)*

## FIRE FIGHTER'S MEMORIAL

A 12-year project has been completed with the sculpture placed on the base at the monument between Browns Stadium and the Great Lakes Science Center that contains the names of 76 fallen Cleveland fire fighters. The project was started by then Fire Chief **Walter Zimmerer** and brought to fruition by BC **Chris Sheeche**, president of the Cleveland Firefighters Memorial Fund. The sculpture was begun by **Luis Jimenez** of New Mexico, but was left unfinished by his untimely death.

Director of the project **Rob Hartshorn** helped to facilitate the completion of the work by local artist **Ralph Brussee** of Body Exotic. It will replace the existing monument in Willard Park that was designed by Cleveland Art Museum designer **William E. Ward** and dedicated on October 12, 1965.



*Sam Miller speaks to attendees at the dedication of the Firefighter's Memorial*



*Kneeling fire fighters in front of wall of flame at Fire Fighters Monument*



*Joe Mason and fellow firefighters honor fallen heroes at the Firefighter Memorial Dedication Ceremonies*

*John Zangerle in his partially restored Cleveland Engine 32 participates in the procession to the Fire Fighters Memorial with fellow Museum members.*



*All photos by Paul Nelson*

## THE BELL

by Paul Nelson

One of the most significant artifacts in Cleveland Fire Department history to be acquired by the Museum is now in the building...an 1870 firehouse bell that is dated and marked. Its history is a bit sketchy, but an examination of available facts and some logical assumptions suggest that the bell was used at Station No. 8 on Scranton Road. When discovered it was located in front of Villa Mercede, 1313 W. 70th Street, adjacent to Mt. Carmel Church.

And, how was that conclusion of Station No. 8 reached? Let's connect the dots. The markings include: CLEVELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT, 1870, CHIEF ENGINEER JAMES HILL along with CAST BY A. FULTON'S SON & Co., PITTSBURGH. The hanging collar, which may or may not have been cast with the bell, has the marking PATENTED NOVEMBER 1869.

A. Fulton's Son & Co. was a bell foundry located at 91 First Street in Pittsburgh according to the 1867 Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Directory. An 1876 publication indicated that the foundry was established in 1832 by Andrew Fulton and the company did cast firehouse bells. The patent date on the bell is consistent with these dates.

The CFD Annual Report for 1870 has the following entry in "Expenditures on Account of the Fire Department for the Year:" "Paid for the new 1,260 lb..

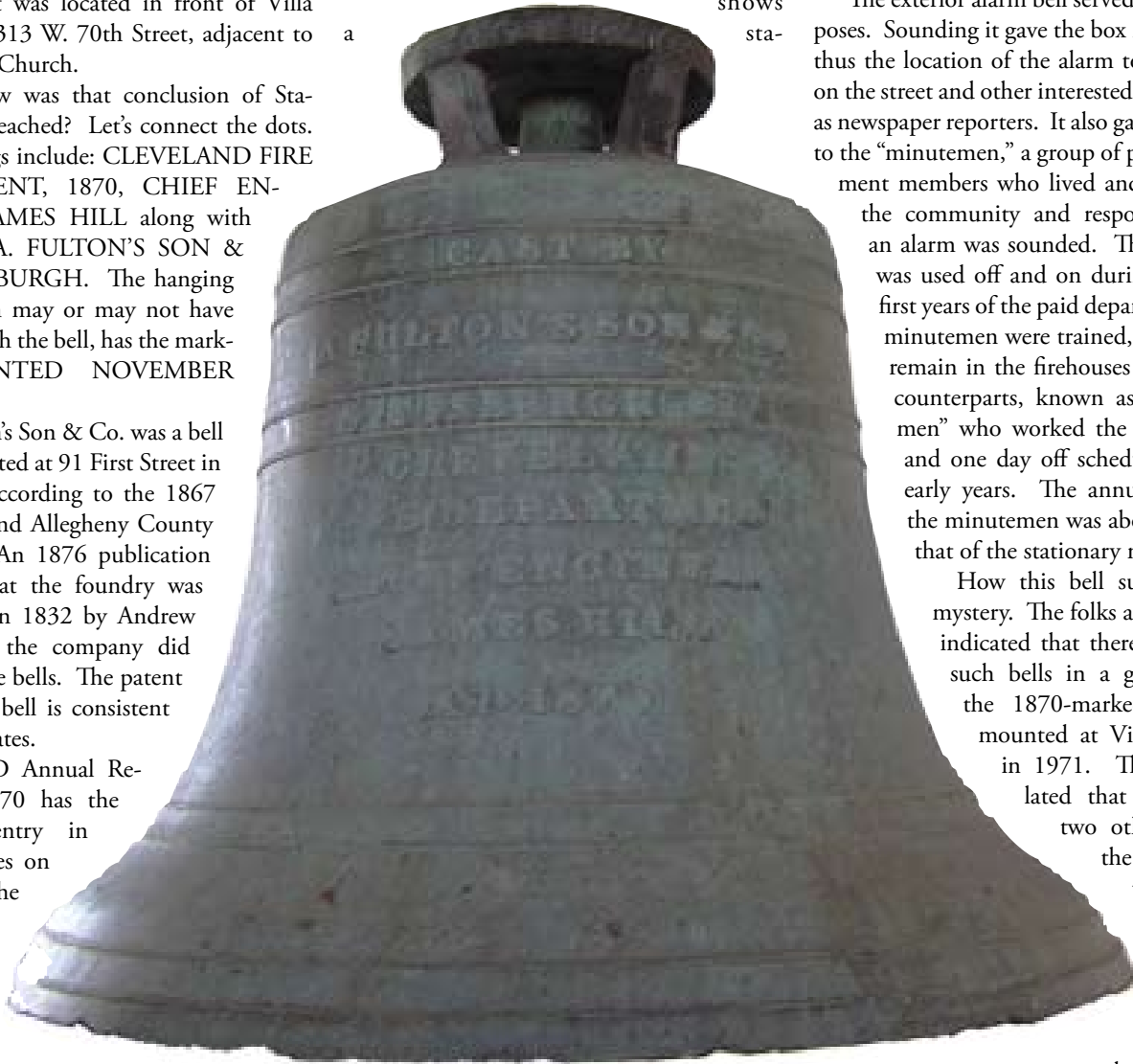
bell and hangings - \$534.30". There were no details on the supplier or the destination of the new bell.

The same Annual Report has a complete inventory of property at each firehouse in service (a total of seven) showing an alarm bell at each firehouse. The seventh firehouse was placed in service in 1868 suggesting that any bell then in service would have a date earlier than the 1870 date of our bell.

Construction of the new Fire Station No. 8 on Scranton Road was started in 1870 and

placed in service in November of 1871. It was the last station in the tenure of Chief Engineer James Hill who served as chief of the department from 1864 until he retired in 1871. The patent date on the hanging, the date on the bell, the information contained in the 1870 Annual Report and the fact that the 1872 CFD

Annual Report shows a sta-



tion alarm bell at Station No. 8 all point to the conclusion that the bell came from station No. 8. Unfortunately the 1898 CFD Commemorative History photo of Station No. 8 does not show a bell probably because it was mounted on the roof at such an angle not captured by the camera.

Other photos show firehouse bells mounted on a lattice-type structure about 6-feet high. There is little written on use of

the alarm bells, but it is known that they did strike the alarm box number in the same manner as the inside station gong. It utilized a horizontal traversing arm that manipulated a mechanism that would strike the exterior of the bell. Our bell has a series of strike marks in one area that would indicate such to be the case.

The exterior alarm bell served several purposes. Sounding it gave the box number and thus the location of the alarm to policemen on the street and other interested parties such as newspaper reporters. It also gave the alarm to the "minutemen," a group of paid Department members who lived and worked in the community and responded when an alarm was sounded. This manning was used off and on during the early first years of the paid department. The minutemen were trained, but did not remain in the firehouses as did their counterparts, known as "stationary men" who worked the six days on and one day off schedule of those early years. The annual salary of the minutemen was about one-half that of the stationary men.

How this bell survived is a mystery. The folks at the church indicated that there were three such bells in a garage when the 1870-marked bell was mounted at Villa Mercede in 1971. They also related that there were two other bells at the garage, but they were stolen.

It is not certain when the firehouse bells were removed from the station, but a set of firehouse photos of 1940 show the bells gone. Several Department Communications during World War II encouraged members to collect unused scrap metal including firehouse bells and old steam fire engines and forward them to be melted down to aid the war effort. Somehow this bell survived and has become a wonderful part of the Museum's fire service artifact collection.

# JOHN F. SYTSMA

1921 - 2007

by Paul Nelson

The world of fire buffdom lost a giant on May 29, 2007 with the death of John F. Sytsma in Salt Lake City. Working his way up to an engineer on the Susquehanna & Western Railroad, he eventually became President of the International Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers headquartered here in Cleveland until his retirement in 1986. He was a constant participant in labor discussions at our nation's capitol and a visitor to the White House under four different administrations. He was the consummate business executive, but he always said his real joy was taking fire and fire apparatus pictures and supporting the activities and causes of fire fighters everywhere.

Probably many current members of the Museum did not know John. After his retirement he moved to the Salt Lake City area to be closer to family. There he devoted many hours in serving as "official, but volunteer" fire photographer of the Fire Department in

Salt Lake County (a department of 24 stations) and all-around champion of fire department activities around the area. At his funeral Chief Don Berry of the Salt Lake County Unified Fire Authority, a fire buff and avid model fire apparatus builder himself, delivered a poignant eulogy.

John moved to Cleveland in 1956 and started taking pictures whenever time permitted. Much of the Museum's photo archives include John's photos from that 30-year span until he retired. He and his wife Phyllis were charter members of the Western Reserve Fire Buffs Association when it formed in 1971. He worked tirelessly in association activities and spent time with CFD personnel beginning with Chief Bill Barry to foster credibility of the fire buffs. He was a cheer leader of the group with his constant reminder, "Someday there WILL be a fire museum in Cleveland."

He was an author and historian as well and probably the most knowledgeable authority on the history of the Ahrens-Fox fire engine. His books included photos and history of Ahrens-Fox, interesting fire apparatus pictures and rigs fighting fires. Some of his photos were used in *Wheels Rolling*. John amassed a collection of over 10,000 apparatus photos and as many color slides. He added another 10,000 to his collection after he moved west.

John's funeral was complete with Fire Department honor guard and one of the county's sixteen brand new Seagrave pumpers that led the procession to the cemetery. It was a beautiful sunny day in the valley of the Wasatch mountain range. After the service Chief Berry arranged a photo taking trip of fire apparatus commenting, "John would like that!"

He will be missed by his friends here and around the country. Rest in peace

## Parting Shots

*Parting shot photos were taken at a multi-million dollar loss fire which occurred in Solon, Ohio on May 13, 2007. The fire at Erico, 31700 Solon Rd. caused extensive damage to the plant while water from sprinkler activation mixing into large tanks of Quench Oil overflowed to cause a hazardous materials threat to the surrounding environment. Sprinkler activation followed by quick action by the responding fire departments and Haz Mat team averted a potential disaster. A tip of the hat goes to the following emergency services: Solon Fire Department, Solon Police Department, Bedford Heights Fire Department, Chagrin Falls Fire Department, Orange Fire Department and the Chagrin / Southeast Regional Hazardous Materials Team. with assistance from The Illuminating Company All photos by Ed Hawk*



BHFD prepares to pump into the sprinkler system



Advancing line to the roof



Knocking down fire beyond the reach of the sprinkler system



Haz Mat Team prepares to gather samples of the material entering a nearby stream

## Calendar of Events

- **October 13th, 2007** – North Industry, Ohio Stark County Firefighter's Parade and Memorial Service. Tentative: Parade line-up at Southgate Plaza, 9 a.m.; starts 9:45 a.m. Service at Peace Lutheran Church starts after the parade (about 10:15 a.m.). Wear dress uniforms if you have them. Contact Rev. Ron Bryant, phone (330) 699-2546, RBryant31@aol.com
- **October 14th, 2007** - Ashtabula County Fire Department tour sponsored by WRFBA. Tour starts with meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Geneva, Ohio I-90 exit. Tour will include several Ashtabula County Fire Stations and will end at the Fire House Winery. Contact Paul Nelson, (330) 467-7330 or Rob Shelton, (440) 466-2138.
- **November 3rd, 2007** – Solon, Ohio Ohio Haz-Mat Teams Conference, 8th Annual Haz-Mat Technician / Specialist Refresher Training. Program begins at 8:00 a.m. with registration and exhibits followed by a keynote presentation by Bill Hand of the Houston, Texas Hazmat Team (retired), followed by several break-out sessions. There is no charge for this event. For details see web site - [www.ohiohazmatconference.com](http://www.ohiohazmatconference.com)
- **February 22nd - 25th, 2008** – Dallas, Texas, SPAAMFAA Annual Meeting and Convention hosted by the North Texas Chapter.

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