

HICKORY FIRE DEPARTMENT

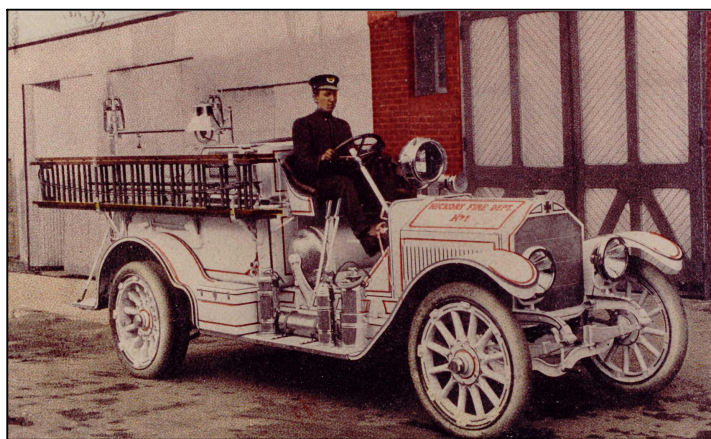
A Brief History

There was a time when the cry “Fire” brought all residents of the village of Hickory to help form a bucket brigade, which was organized by the late F. A. Clinard in the 1870’s. A diary kept by C. C. Bost listed 36 charter members as of December 1882. In 1891, a newspaper article

named the number one problem as the lack of water for firefighting. In 1905, the Board of Aldermen formally organized a fire company for the protection of Hickory. When Hickory acquired its first fire wagon horses, it was arranged to house them and the

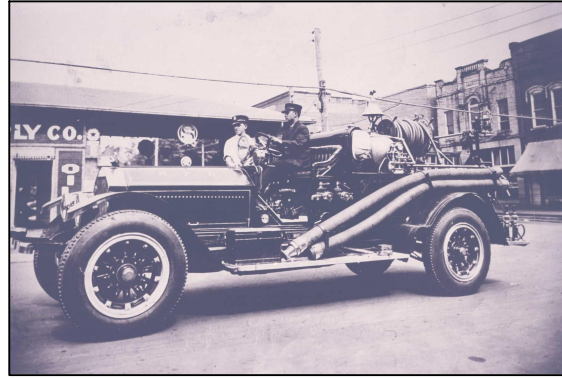


firefighting apparatus on the first floor of the city offices. The old City Hall stood on the same location but was about the size of an ordinary storefront without the basement. Sleeping quarters were in the front of the second floor for the drivers of the horses, Jack and George.



In September of 1906, the Board of Aldermen established the first fire alarm system for the city. It is reported that in 1919 the first motorized piece of apparatus was brought into service. This unit was a pumper truck.

Following this unit, the city purchased a pumper and a ladder truck in 1924. In 1936 a new pumper was added to the city's motorized fleet.



Late in 1948, an aerial ladder truck and a 1948 1,000 gallon per minute triple combination pumper were delivered. Also during the same year, a new substation in the West Hickory area was completed. In 1949, another substation for the Highland area was opened.

A new 750-gallon per minute pumper was purchased as a replacement in 1952.



In 1954 the first paid career Fire Chief was appointed, Chief Earl Moser. Also that year, a full-time Training Officer was appointed, Harry Yount. Late in 1954, the Fire Prevention Bureau was established under Larson Moore.

In 1956 the National Bureau of Fire Underwriters awarded a Class 4 insurance rating to the City of Hickory Fire Department. In 1956 the fire alarm was upgraded, and a base station radio and mobile units were installed in all first-line vehicles.

In 1958 another 1,000 gallon per minute triple combination pumper was purchased by the city. In 1961 construction began on the new central fire station and was completed in mid 1962. Also in 1962 the National Board of Fire Underwriters upgraded Hickory's classification from Class 4 to a Class 3 rating, thus being the lowest rating for a city of its size in the Southeastern United States. In 1968 another 1,000 gallon per minute pumper was purchased to replace an outdated piece of apparatus. In 1972 the first diesel pumper was purchased to replace an older unit. Late in 1974, the city took delivery of two more diesel driven fire trucks, a pumper and an 85-foot aerial ladder truck.

In 1938 the department had a paid staff of six people. In 1954 that increased to 18 staff members, and in 1968 it increased to 49 members. In 1979, the Hickory Fire Department received yet another diesel pumper to replace an older unit. The first of 1975 saw the department change when all personnel were put on three shifts instead of two. With this came an increase of staffing to 77 career positions within the department. In the 1980's, a lot of progression was made towards training. The City of Hickory was one of the first to use large diameter hose in 1981 and has since implemented newer and more aggressive ways to fight and prevent fires. Hickory has always been among the elite in terms of equipment and apparatus. In the 1980's, we also included hazardous material response and incidents involving vehicle accidents. Several contracts with local volunteer departments, both for service and merger, were developed and agreed upon during this time.

Another station located at the airport was constructed and staffed in 1980. In 1988, a



fifth station was built on Sweetwater Road followed in 1989 by the opening of yet another station on Highway 127 North. In 2003, a seventh station was constructed on Catawba Valley Boulevard. This brought the number of fire stations to seven in the corporate limits of the City.

Starting in 1989 and continuing on to the present, we have acquired several new pieces of apparatus to maintain the level of service that the citizens of Hickory and local elected officials have decided is desirable for our city. In 1995, the City of Hickory was re-evaluated by Insurance Service Organization (ISO) regarding the Public Protection Classification Rating for insurance purposes. A Class 2 insurance rating was assigned. Hickory became one of four Class 2 departments' in the State of North Carolina.



In 1997-98, the department realized a need to expand its delivery system and began training in January 2000. The Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) classes were completed in mid October 2000. Approximately 112 personnel received 200 hours of training each to gain their EMT and EMT-D (Emergency Medical

Technician Defibrillator) certifications. The EMS service was added to the fire department's delivery system in January 2001.

Personnel of the department are involved in the Emergency Rescue Technician (ERT) training that will last approximately three years. Personnel have already completed the extrication portion and are, at present, providing extrication service to victims trapped or pinned in vehicles.

A list of Fire Chiefs began in 1905 when P. A. Rowe served as Chief. H. E. Whitener was Chief from 1913 to 1916, and A. T. Yoder served as Fire Chief from 1916 to 1929. Donald Shuford was then appointed Chief in 1929 and served to 1932. H. E. Whitener was then reappointed Chief from 1932 to 1933. Donald Shuford was once again appointed Chief in 1933 and remained in the position until 1954. In 1954, the first full-time paid Fire Chief was appointed, Earl G. Moser. He remained Chief until his retirement in 1978.

That year saw the appointment of Larson Moore as Chief, for which he served until his retirement in 1988. Following him, Tom Hardin was hired as Chief and served until 1990. In that year, Herman R. Bishop was appointed Chief and retired in 1997. Tom Alexander was then appointed Chief that year and is currently serving the department.