Fifty Years of Service
1902 1952
Dedication

This History of the Hillsdale Fire Department is dedicated to the Faith and Tradition of the "Volunteer Fire Department."

The future rests upon the experiences of the past.
Hillsdale Fire Department


The following month, April, 1902, the Hillsdale Fire Association had its formal beginning in the room over the Hillsdale Railroad Station. The following officers were elected: John H. Riley, President; J. W. Banta, Recording Secretary; E. F. Taylor, Financial Secretary; O. S. Trall, Treasurer; William Neuberg, Franklin J. Myers, John G. Ackerman, as Trustees; Thomas C. Demarest, Foreman (Captain); Henry A. Hering, Assistant Foreman (Lieutenant).

The Association was incorporated the following year, 1903, and remained in being until dissolved in 1925.

The first fair held by the Fire Association, from August 9th to 16th, 1902, with the assistance of the Ladies, enabled the purchase of an equipped hose reel and pump (called a “Jumper”) and a building to house it. Before the erection of Fire Alarm Gongs, the tolling of the Methodist Church bell or continued whistle blowing of railroad engines summoned the firemen to their quarters, from where they pulled their apparatus to the fire by means of ropes. On arrival at the scene, a convenient water hole or the like was sought, the suction hose dropped in, and after much pumping, a thin stream of water was the reward; if insufficient hose, a bucket brigade was formed.

Through continued fairs and by subscriptions in the form of script, the Association was able to secure horse-drawn apparatus and also was able to build the present Fire Headquarters, in 1906, mostly through the efforts of John H. Westphal, H. A. Hering, Cynric C. Davis, John W. Kinmoth and George Saul. (The building was remodeled by the Borough in 1928).
E. L. Greenin became the first assigned driver of horse-drawn Hook & Ladder Company No. 1 (1906) carrying a 40-foot ladder and undetermined amount of hose. Horses were rented from Mr. Calvin Gardiner's Stables located on Park Street (what is now the bank parking space) and the response to an alarm was the signal for much activity getting the horses to Fire Headquarters. The following year (1907) a horse-drawn hose cart was secured and fitted out. The two Companies numbered 71 members.

A water franchise was granted the Hackensack Water Company by the Township of Hillsdale, September 9th, 1903, in return, Hillsdale received 2 miles of water mains and 24 fire hydrants.

The good citizens of the Township desiring to assist the Fire Association, voted by referendum in 1907, the sum of Six Hundred Dollars for fire hose, and January, 1908, the Fire Association was given 1000 feet of 2½ inch single jacket rubber lined fire hose (conforming with specifications of the Board of Fire Underwriters). Also in February of 1908, the Board of Fire Underwriters inspected and

Hillsdale Fire Department in Action — 1915
approved 26 fire hydrants in the Township—today there are 146 fire hydrants located within the Borough, and the Fire Department today has 2700 feet of 2½ inch double jacket rubber lined hose and 1000 feet of 1½ inch double jacket rubber lined hose.

In March, 1912, by resolution regularly approved by the Association, an active "Fire Department" was created; "Its membership to consist of those in the Association who desired to do active service and become Active Firemen." Charles E. McCleary was Chief. Others interested in the Fire Association remained as Social Members.

Until March 20th, 1914, the Fire Association was an independent organization. On this date a resolution of recognition was spread on the records of the Township of Hillsdale, and the Hillsdale Fire Association designated the "Bona-fide Official Fire Department of the Township of Hillsdale." Henry J. Werner was Chief. Also during this year, fire gongs were placed throughout the Township and a bell was hung in a wooden tower erected adjacent to the south-westerly corner of the present Fire Headquarters.
On December 10th, 1912, the Township Committee had recognized Hilldale Hose Company No. 2—in 1919 this company merged with Hose Company No. 1, of the Association, and the equipment of Hose Co. No. 2, including a hand-drawn fire apparatus plus 625 feet of hose, was donated to the Township in April, 1923.

During 1914, the Fire Association purchased a Mathieson automobile, fitted it out and called it Hose Company No. 1, replacing the horse-drawn vehicle.

On March 14th, 1917, the Township recognized thirty-five citizens as members of the Hilldale Fire Patrol, and they were vested "with authority to act as Fire Patrol with rights to arrest any person who attempts to hinder the rules and regulations of the Fire Department or the laws of the State of New Jersey, at a fire only," and during 1918, the Township replaced the Mathieson with an Alco Six auto which was made the hose truck and equipped the Mathieson as a Chemical Apparatus, and same turned over to the Fire Patrol.

Also the Active Fire Department and the Fire Association raised a sufficient sum of money by subscription to purchase a Stutz Chassis and the Township purchased a two-ton Smith Universal Truck, which was attached to the Stutz chassis and thus made a Hook & Ladder Truck, retiring the horse-drawn affair. (Most of the work of equipping this truck was done by the firemen). On July 8th, 1921, the Hook & Ladder and the Chemical apparatus were donated to the Township by the Fire Association.
On July 8th, 1911, under Chief A. Bachman, Ordinance 45 was adopted by the Township which established the Hillsdale Fire Department and "the same to consist of the Hook & Ladder Company No. 1, Hose Company No. 1" and the Fire Patrol was designated as "Chemical Company No. 1." . . . on August 9th, 1926, Chemical Company No. 1 amalgamated with the Hook & Ladder Company. From February 1st, 1922, until August, 1926, the three companies; and since August, 1926, the existing two companies have operated on a Department basis under the control of the Board of Fire Officers, as directed by the Fire Ordinances. J. E. Butenschoen, Sr., was Chief in 1922.

The first fire siren was installed on the roof of the Firemen's Hall in July, 1923.

In April, 1926, the Borough purchased a Mack combination Hook & Ladder truck, which was replaced in 1941 by the present Ward LaFrance Cities Service Truck (Hook & Ladder Company No. 1).

The present Sanford Pumper and Hose Truck was purchased by the Borough in March, 1929, and the present Mack Pumper and Hose Truck in 1950.

On April 3rd, 1922, the Hillsdale Fire Department was given authority by Ordinance to investigate and report all dangerous accumulations of refuse, etc., and to conduct inspections of the public and business buildings in the Borough—(The fore-runner of the Fire Prevention Bureau which the Borough plans to set up this year by an enabling ordinance).
Since 1915, the Hillsdale Fire Department has won various first prizes and other awards in hose-laying, ladder contests—also best appearing in line of march at parades (September 18th, 1915, at the Ho-Ho-Kus Fair Grounds, from a running start, on a quarter-mile stretch, 150 feet of hose was coupled to a hydrant, nozzle attached, and all ready for action in 41 seconds, a new world record, but this was topped by the Hillsdale firemen in a like contest in 1916 by four seconds. This record of 37 seconds will stand for a long time in the annals of hose-laying contests. . .

On November 9th, 1931, at the State Firemen's Home at Boonton, in a ladder climbing contest, Albert Westervelt won first prize, making the fast time of 8¼ seconds climbing a 25 foot ladder after a 100 foot running start. . . A visit to fire headquarters will disclose two glass cabinets containing quite a few trophies won by the Hillsdale Fire Department—also the Ladies Auxiliaries and Exempt Firemen Association.
HILLSDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT 1952
with BOROUGH OFFICIALS

Seated Left to right:
Borough Clerk G. A. Storms
Councilman A. F. Westervelt, Deputy Fire Commissioner
Councilman C. W. Hillabrant
Councilman Carl Abbenseth, Fire Commissioner
Mayor J. A. Tatem
Councilman Adam Pech
Councilman John Williams
Councilman T. E. Mullins, Deputy Fire Commissioner
Left to Right

1941 Ward La France Combination Hook & Ladder
F. D. Whalen, Mechanic

1929 Sanford—500 G.P.M. Pumper and Hose Truck
W. Ottignon, Mechanic

1950 Mack—750 G.P.M. Pumper and Hose Truck
C. S. Westphal, Mechanic
The Hillsdale Fire Department was instrumental in beginning the Welfare Committee during the depression, handling this phase from 1929 until the fall of 1932.

The Fire Department started the annual Fire Prevention Essay Contests in the Hillsdale School in October, 1936.

On Decoration Day, 1942, a World War II Honor Roll, erected under the auspices of the Hillsdale Fire Department was presented to the Borough, the Department maintained this Honor Roll until 1950 when it was turned over to the Hillsdale American Legion General Leonard Wood Post No. 162, and where it is being maintained in their Hut.

The following firemen served in the Armed Forces of our Country during World War I—

August Bachman, Herman Bachman, Albert Bartz, Dwight Kinmonth, Stanley Kinmonth, Robert Long, Cyrus Mead, and John Wolfangel.


The Hillsdale Fire Department has been a member of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association since 1916, a charter member of the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association, which was conceived in Hillsdale in 1915 (H. J. Werner of Hillsdale was the first president) (a convention of the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association was held at Hillsdale, July 8th, 1922, with the convention meeting in the morning and a mammoth parade in the afternoon)—Hillsdale was also host to the New Jersey and New York Firemen's Association in connection with two neighboring towns for the 35th Annual Convention and parade in 1941 . . . also a charter member of the Pascack Valley Firemen's Association since its inception in 1945.

The Hillsdale Firemen's Band Association, Inc., was organized April 7th, 1948 and incorporated the same month, with 26 players. The Band Association, patronized by the Hillsdale Fire Department has the following officers: Oscar Bartalot, President; Arthur E. Arnold, First Vice-President; Jack Keller, Second Vice-President; Harry J. Sutphin, Secretary; Arthur L. Young, Treasurer; John H. Powell, Asst. Secretary. 

Bartalot, Jack Keller, Harry J. Sutphin.
Bartalot, President; Albert Loschman, Vice-President; Francis Whalen, Secretary; Arthur Sampson, Treasurer and the following Trustees: George Wogon, Jack Keller, Arthur Sampson, Frank Rahrig, Leonard Otter, Director Frank Powell, Assistant Director Albert Loschman.

The records of the Fire Association between 1902 and 1909 are incomplete, but from 1909 to 1925 the presidents of the Fire Association were as follows: P. W. Fluhr, George Saul, H. G. Hering, II., Fred C. Walker, L. J. Forbes, Theo. Haubner (organized the Fire Patrol in 1917) J. G. Hansen, L. H. C. Geel and Harvey E. Hering.

Since 1949 with the adoption of a revised set of By-Laws, it has been permissible for the Department to designate other than the Chief as President of the Department to relieve the Chief of this duty and permitting the Chief to give his entire attention to firemanic matters including the supervision of the Fire Prevention Bureau which is being set up by the Mayor and Council and is to become law in 1952.

The first President of the Hillsdale Fire Department was Ex-Chief Wilbur Ottignon who held office in 1949 and 1950. Ex-Chief Francis D. Whalen has been President from 1951 to the present date. Ex-Chief William T. Pitt has been Vice-President since 1951.

Fire Chiefs Since 1909

C. Steinhauer, 1909
John H. Westphal, 1910-1911
Chas. E. McCleary, 1912-1913
H. J. Werner, 1914-until June, 1915
Chris Deis, June 1915-Dec. 31, 1915
F. L. Mead, 1916
J. Schlotterbeck, 1917
C. C. Rickie, 1918-1919
C. V. Shuttleworth, 1920
A. Bachman, 1921
J. E. Butenschoen, Sr., 1922
Walter Hering, 1923
Edward Roede, 1924
Fred Beneway, Sr., 1925
George Gosman, 1926
F. E. DeBaun, 1927
W. A. Farley, 1928
Jacob Ackerman, 1929
August Graf, 1930
W. Diefenbach, 1931
W. Ottignon, 1932
A. Westervelt, 1933
Edw. Broegler, 1934
Geo. Zengerle, 1935
Louis R. Bartalot, 1936
William Weaver, 1937
C. S. Westphal, 1938
E. O. Phillips, 1939
Martin Schafer, 1940
R. Margolies, 1941
W. J. Ravason, 1942
R. C. Appeld, 1943
William T. Pitt, 1944
F. D. Whalen, 1945
Oscar Bartalot, 1946
H. G. Hering III, 1947
R. S. Rawson, 1948
J. E. Brower, 1949
J. J. Scianni, 1950
J. E. Butenschoen, Jr., 1951
Reinhard Fpft, 1952
Hillsdale Fire Department 1952

Reinhard Felten, Chief
Charles E. Schill, Assistant Chief
Rudolph C. Appeld
Clerk, Board of Fire Officers

HOSE CO. No. 1

Reinhard Felten, Chief
Edward P. Hughes, Captain
Fred L. Winkler, Lieutenant
L. C. Hering, Secretary
Charles S. Westphal, Treasurer
Louis R. Bartalot
Oscar Bartalot
William A. Bender
John S. Conklin
George W. Kehr
Vincent F. Kovar
William T. Kovar
Herman Ornini
John W. Ottignon
Wilbur Ottignon
Alex Paull
William T. Pitt
Robert S. Rawson
Walter J. Schilling
Martin Schaefer
Joseph J. Sciannmanico
Harold R. Shuttleworth

Francis D. Whalen, President
William T. Pitt, Vice-President
Alex Paull, Secretary
Martin Schaefer, Treasurer

HOOK & LADDER CO. No. 1

Charles E. Schill, Assistant Chief
E. Lewis Jeffries, Captain
Victor J. Wazeter, Lieutenant
Rudolph C. Appeld, Secretary
George W. Stein, Treasurer
George C. Baner
Robert J. Blinn
John E. Butenschoen, Jr.
Charles H. Connelly
William J. Connelly
Joseph Farley
John C. Greve
Walter Higinson, Jr.
Walter Higinson, Sr.
Fred L. Markle
Charles McDevitt, Sr.
Clarence F. Mills
E. Oliver Phillips
Herbert G. Phillips
William Weaver
Albert F. Westervelt
Francis D. Whalen
James Zimmerman

*In service U. S. Marines

Honorary Members Hillsdale Fire Department

Rev. Harold N. Smith
Dr. Louis M. Sosnow
Fred Beneway, Jr.
John Marsala
Frank S. Scott
John Broegler
LeRoy H. Sassenscheid
W. Diefenbach
E. O. Broegler
W. J. Rawson
J. E. Rawson
Henry Hering, III

A veteran member of the Hillsdale Fire Department has entitled himself to receive the financial aid of the Allowance Fund. In the event of his death the Fund will go to the widow and children. The retired Firemen's Benevolent Association has contributed a sum which will enable the veteran to spend his retirement in comfort.

The Hillsdale Fire Department
President
George W. Stein
Vice-President
Walter Higinson, Sr.

The Hillsdale Fire Department
V. Shuttleworth
A volunteer fireman making sixty percent of the calls for each of seven years is entitled to exemption. He may still continue in active fire services as long as he is capable, as most do. An Exempt Fireman receives the full benefit of a Burial Fund. In order to assist in maintaining this fund and to provide fellowship for retired Exempt Firemen as provided by law, the Hillsdale Exempt Firemen’s Association was organized on September 23rd, 1918.

The first officers were—T. C. Demarest, President; H. J. Werner, Vice-President; L. J. Forbes, Secretary; Harvey E. Hering, Treasurer, J. G. Ackerman, George W. Saul and L. C. Meyer, Trustees.

The present officers are—Wilbur Ottignon, President; Martin Schaefer, Vice-President; W. Diefenbach, Secretary; Albert F. Westervelt, Treasurer; C. V. Shuttleworth, John W. Kinmonth, and C. S. Westphal are Trustees.

The New Jersey State Exempt Firemen’s Association held its annual convention in Hillsdale in June, 1922.
Ladies' Auxiliaries

In 1902, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Hillsdale Fire Association was organized with Mrs. John Riley as chairman. A re-organization was effected in 1906 with thirty-two members, and Mrs. M. Clausen was chosen president.

The Ladies assisted at dances and carnivals and later took over the motion picture project of the Fire Association.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Fire Association dissolved on May 12th, 1924, and immediately re-organized as the Ladies Auxiliary of the Exempt Firemen's Association, with thirty-seven members on the roll, and Mrs. W. Werkeiser was chosen president, Mrs. N. Housman, Vice-President; Mrs. J. Kuhn, Treasurer, and Mrs. C. J. Potter, Secretary.

At present this organization consists of thirteen members with Mrs. Stephen Streich, President; Mrs. Jacob Ackerman, Vice-President; Mrs. August Bachman, Secretary, and Mrs. J. Kuhn, Treasurer—(Mrs. Bachman has held the office of secretary for the past 25 years—and Mrs. Kuhn, the office of treasurer for the past 27 years).
The present Ladies Auxiliary to the Active Fire Department was organized in June, 1928, through the efforts of Fire Chief William A. Farley. Eighteen Ladies were enrolled at the first meeting when the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Ann Farley (McGoldrick); Vice-President, Mrs. Florence Westervelt; Secretary, Mrs. Eudora Seekler; Treasurer, Mrs. Ann Gosman.

At present this organization consists of 25 members with Mrs. Alva Bartalot, President; Mrs. Mildred Wazeter, 1st Vice-President; Mrs. Rose Arigot, 2nd Vice-President; Mrs. Ronnie Hughes, Secretary and Mrs. Cecelia O. Pitt, Treasurer.

Mrs. Dorothy Knight served in the SPARS during World War II.
# Fiftieth Anniversary Committee

## EXECUTIVE
- Rudolph C. Appeld, *Chairman*
- Charles S. Westphal, *Vice-Chairman*
- E. O. Phillips, *Secretary*

## Martin Schaefer, *Treasurer*

### ENTERTAINMENT
- William Weaver, *Chairman*
- Oscar Bartalot
- William T. Pitt
- Victor J. Wazeter
- John E. Butenschoen, Jr.
- Edward Broegler

### INVITATIONS
- Francis D. Whalen, *Chairman*
- Reinhard Felten
- Charles E. Schill
- Wilbur Ottignon

### ANNIVERSARY BOOK
- Louis R. Bartalot, *Chairman*
- Fred W. Winkler
- Robert S. Rawson
- E. Lewis Jefferies
- Edward Hughes
- Joseph J. Scianimanico

### FINANCE
- Wilbur Ottignon, *Chairman*
- William T. Pitt
- Charles E. Schill

### HISTORIAN — PUBLICITY
- Rudolph C. Appeld

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*Photos by G. E. Scott*