Chapter 1 - The Eighties, 1880-1889

1880
9,265 people and 1.8 square miles

North Carolina's capital city emerged physically unscathed from the Civil War. By 1880, ten years after the official withdrawal of occupation forces, Raleigh had added new industries, a federal courthouse and post office, and a four-story "skyscraper." Just nine years after opening his hardware business on Fayetteville Street, Thomas H. Briggs built what was the tallest building in eastern North Carolina. Also that year, construction was continuing on Central Prison, the State Fair had moved just north of Hillsboro Street, and the first telephone exchange was operating. Raleigh in 1880 also had a loan association, a YMCA, and a luxury hotel. The popular Yarborough Hotel was also serving as the Governor's residence, as the Governor's Palace was considered unfit for use after Sherman's arrival in 1865.

Raleigh's educational institutions at the time included Saint Mary's School, Saint Augustine's Normal School, Peace Institute, and Raleigh Institute, later known as Shaw University. Retailers thrived on Fayetteville Street and the city's largest mercantile firm occupied the first two floors of the three-story Tucker Hall. The top floor featured a 1,200-seat auditorium that hosted entertainment acts ranging from Colonel W. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody to tenor Pasquale Brignoli. Outside, Raleigh's unpaved streets were lit with gas lamps. Horses and horse-drawn carriages filled the rough roadways, while steam locomotives ferried people and produce in and out of the city.

The fire department was organized as a collection of private fire companies operating under the direction of a municipally appointed chief. Each company was comprised of volunteers using either privately acquired or city-purchased fire equipment. These fraternal organizations elected their own officers and controlled their own memberships with minimal influence from city officials. Decades had passed since the general citizenry were summoned to fight fires, while partial-paid firefighters were still years away. Though each fire company had parade uniforms, the dirty business of firefighting was performed in street clothes and sometimes in a member's best clothes. And if their outfits were practically ruined, the joy of the experience outweighed the material damage.[1]

At the beginning of the decade, Raleigh's fire five companies operated a variety of hand- and horse-pulled apparatus. The Rescue Company, housed on Fayetteville Street, operated a horse-drawn second-size steam engine. The Phoenix Company, housed in the 300 block of Wilmington Street, operated a hand-drawn, single-tank Champion chemical engine. Raleigh's remaining fire companies were housed in the east end of the Market House, also called Metropolitan Hall: the Victor Company, which operated a hand-drawn Ramsey[2] hand engine; the Hook and Ladder Company, which operated a hand-drawn hook and ladder truck; and the Bucket and Ladder Company, which operated a hand-drawn equipment truck.

The fire companies were also segregated. The Rescue, Phoenix, and Hook and Ladder companies were comprised of white firefighters, while the Victor and Bucket and Ladder companies were "colored companies." By April 30, 1884, the total staffing of the companies was reported as 281. In this annual report to the Mayor and other city officials, Raleigh Fire Department Chief Engineer T. W. Blake add that the nearly 200 men were all neatly uniformed and took great pride in

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[1] *Raleigh Times*, December 17, 1912. The article recounts parade attire: "Rescue men wore big leather helmets, blue shirts and black trousers; the Victor company, colored, wearing red shirts and black trousers with the same sort of helmets." Fred A. Olds in the *Raleigh Times*, July 6, 1914, described the Rescue uniforms as "helmet, red shirts and black trousers, with white and red belts."

[2] Ramsey is a possible misspelling of Rumsey. The manufacturer Rumsey and Company built fire apparatus in the 19th Century.

their appearance.[3] His comments on appearance referred to the firefighters' dress uniforms, used for parades and other events. By April 30, 1887, the number of volunteer firefighters had dropped to 222. Additionally, both the engineer of the Rescue Company steamer and a Keeper of All Machines were paid annual salaries.[4]

The quarters of the Rescue Company was built in 1870 on the Salisbury Street side of the county courthouse lot.[5] The land was leased from the county and the two-story brick building was small but sufficient for storing the large fire engine. As the steamer was hand-pulled for its first seven years[6], provisions were housing horses were not necessary 1877. The first horses were provided by the city and were likely kept elsewhere. The horses were also likely shared with other city departments, for hauling or other duties. In 1884, a stable was added to the Rescue Company station at a cost of about $600.[7] With additions, the building measured around 2,000 square-feet.[8] The first floor housed the horses and the fire apparatus; the second floor housed the requisite meeting room.

[GRAPHIC Rescue Company]

The Phoenix Chemical Company was housed at 308 1/7 Wilmington Street[9] in a building built by the fire company's founder Dr. T. D. Hogg and owned by the fire company.[10] Found in 1879, the fire company possessed both a single- and double-tank Champion chemical engine. Invented in France in 1864, chemical engines were simply wheeled tanks of soda water holding between 40 and 80 gallons per tank. Upon arriving at a fire, a quantity of acid was added and created a chemical reaction discharging the water under its own power. Thus they were ideal for quickly extinguishing small fires, though they could only be used once without recharging. By February 28, 1889, the Phoenix Company moved to the corner of Davie and Salisbury Streets, to a single-story engine house located adjacent a city storage lot.[11]

[GRAPHIC Chemical Wagon]

The Victor, Hook and Ladder, and Bucket and Ladder companies stored their apparatus in the east end of Metropolitan Hall. Built in 1870 between Fayetteville and Wilmington Streets, the long, two-story building housed the Town Hall and the public market. The building also had a clock tower with a bell used to signal fire alarms. The lower level of the east end was later enclosed for the purpose of housing fire apparatus, though the action was protested by many citizens. The hall was not an ideal location for storing fire apparatus, as the fire department later discovered.

[GRAPHIC Market House]

The Victor Company's apparatus was described as a "double-decker hand engine" with two sets of handles, or *brakes*.[12] To operating the engine, the firefighters positioned themselves on either side of the engine. One line of men stood on the ground, the other on the engine itself. Water was drawn from the fire cisterns in the street using a suction hose. As water was trained on the fire, most likely through hose to a hand-held play pipe[13], the company foreman shouted orders to the

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[3] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1884.*
[4] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1887.*
[5] The engine house was built by the Rescue Company to house their new apparatus. The steam engine cost $5,000 and the Rescue Company provided the first payment. The city paid the remaining two installments. *Raleigh Times*, July 6, 1914.
[6] As many as 100 men might pull the 5,000-pound steamer to and from fires. *Raleigh Times*, December 17, 1912. The firemen and sometimes citizens grabbed the long lines of rope with colored cords and tassels and handholds of knots every few feet. The rope was pulled from a small reel in the front of the engine and away the crowd went and sometimes through mud that was knee deep. *Raleigh Times*, July 6, 1914.
[7] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1884.*
[8] Sanborn Maps, various years.
[9] Sanborn Map, 1884
[10] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1884.*
[11] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending February 28, 1889*; Sanborn Map, 1888.
[12] *Raleigh Times*, December 21, 1912.
[13] Early hand engines had fixed play pipes that required apparatus to be positioned dangerously close to fires. Improved hoses in the early 19th century allowed the engines to be placed farther from the fire. Hoses could be carried inside structures and interior attacks were made possible. See http://www.firehouse.com/magazine/american/colonial2.html for information on the development of fire hose.

crew with a speaking trumpet. These metal megaphones amplified the voice of the foreman so he could be heard about the noise at a fire.[14]

[GRAPHIC Hand Engines]

By 1885, the Chief Engineer recommended that the apparatus be moved elsewhere as the heat from "eating houses with constant fires burning" was damaging the apparatus. He cited ladders and running gear drying out, both of which were often so shrunk that the trucks had to be run on rainy days to prevent greater damage. He also cited serious impairing of the valves and pumps of the Victor Company's hand engine.[15] He repeated his recommendation to remove the apparatus in 1886.[16]

The number of fires during these years was comparably small. In fiscal year 1885, only 12 fire alarms were reported with only two fires were of any magnitude. [17] In fiscal year 1887, only 14 alarms were reported. The largest and most destructive was the Raleigh Oil and Fertilizer Company mills, which burned on March 27, 1887. During the fire, two firefighters were injured by falling buildings and a third was badly burned.[18] When a fire was discovered, the event was a considerable amusement for citizens other than the person whose premises were burning. Recalled a *Raleigh Times* writer: "Once there was a big fire here, quite a spectacular one by the way, at which chairs were brought out and placed on the law of another home near by, and there a large party gathered and enjoyed the scene, nearly all being ladies. As the fire went out one lady remarked 'I declare it has been a real treat.' "[19]

With hydrants still several years away, water for fires was supplied by several underground cisterns throughout the downtown area. Constructed of brick and stone and supplied by a series of gutters and pipes that captured rain water, the cisterns were installed as a series of municipal improvements after an 1851 fire that destroyed more than 17 structures. The lack of a sufficient water supply necessitated the use of dynamite to control the December 15 blaze. By April 30, 1885, thirteen cisterns of varying capacities were located downtown:

#	Division	Ward	Streets	Gallons	Openings
1	Fifth	Third	Fayetteville & Davie	40,000	2
2	Fifth	Third	Fayetteville between Martin & Hargett	7,000	1
3	Fifth	Third	Fayetteville between Martin & Hargett	7,000	1
4	Fifth	Third	Fayetteville between Hargett & Morgan	7,000	1
5	Fifth	Third	Hargett & Wilmington	10,000	1
6	Fourth	Fifth	Hillsboro & Harrington	30,000	2
7	Third	Fourth	Lenoir & Salisbury	30,000	2
8	Third	Fifth	Davie & Dawson	40,000	2
9	Second	Second	Davie & Person	30,000	2
10	First	First	New Bern & Bloodworth	30,000	2
11	First	First	Blount & North	30,000	2

[14] See http://www.firehouse.com/magazine/american/fireground.html for information on the evolution of fireground command.
[15] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1885.*
[16] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1886.*
[17] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1885.*
[18] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1887.*
[19] *Raleigh Times*, December 21, 1912. The writer also recounted "In another case, a year or two ago, what seemed to be a fine fire drew quite a crowd, some people running quite a distance to reach the scene, but it turned out to be a pitifully small affair, and one of those who had come some distance expressed very deep regret at the fact that only one building was on fire and said it was a great disappointment to run so far through the mud to see so little."

12	Fifth	Third	Capitol Square, east side	50,000	1
13	First	Third	Capitol Square, west side	50,000	1

Fire equipment improvements during the 1880s included an automatic relief valve installed on the Rescue Company steamer by April 30, 1884. The valve helped the pipeman with directing a stream and gave absolute control over the amount of water used, thus wasting very little water. Another improvement for the Rescue Company was the addition of a horse to pull the "hose reel truck." Thus, a large supply hose could closely follow the engine when responding to fires.[20] That same fiscal year, the Phoenix Company added a hose reel to their single-tank chemical engine. The added reel also helped distribute the weight of the apparatus and thus improve its handling.

Another improvement for fire equipment was the remodeling of the Bucket Company's "bucket, ladder, and axe truck." The turning radius was shortened so the apparatus could be turned on its own length. Springs were also added, allowing the truck to run lighter and carry equipment more securely. One piece of older equipment still in possession of the fire department that year was the old No. 2 hand engine. By April 30, 1884, it was moved to the railroad cotton platform. The hand pump was stored in a shed under the water tank and the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Company promised to put it in "good working order" once they were provided hose for its use.[21]

Another development during the decade was the appointment of the first Fire Commission. In 1886, the Chief Engineer's annual report dated April 1 asked for the creation of a Fire Committee. Like the Street Committee, Light Committee, and Police Committee, this group of citizens would review concerns and make recommendations regarding fire protection.[22] The suggestion was repeated the next year and on November 4, 1887, the Board of Alderman appointed Raleigh's first five-member Fire Commission.[23]

By 1887, the Capitol City's third attempt at a municipal water system was underway. Fire hydrants would soon be installed throughout the downtown area and officials began evaluating the purchase of additional fire equipment. On April 1, 1887, the Fabric Fire Hose Company of New York proposed to furnish the city with 500 feet of their "Arrow Brand of Mildew and Rot-proof, Balance-woven, Cotton Rubber-Line Hose." The 2 1/2 inch diameter hose was fitted with standard screw couplings at 60 per foot and included either one-horse or hand-pulled hose reel. The sample lot would be shipped by May 1, 1887 and subject to fire tests when the waterworks opens and accepted only if proves satisfactory. The proposal was accepted.[24]

The "waterworks" were completed by October of that year and include 120 hydrants. Hose streams could now be supplied throughout the city, with firefighters connecting their hoses directly to hydrants. Neither steam- nor hand-powered pumps were required within the areas served by the water system. Accordingly, the fire companies began receiving new equipment, beginning with a horse-drawn hose wagon for the Rescue Company.[25] New fire companies also began appearing at this time. With fire protection no longer requiring an expensive steam engine or a labor-intensive hand engine, additional fire companies could join the Raleigh Fire Department with lower equipment costs and a smaller number of personnel.

The Capital Hose Company was one of the first new fire companies to organize. The first officers were F. H. Lumsden, Foreman; John T. Davis, First Assistant; J. W. Cross, Second Assistant; Will Rosenthal, Secretary; H. F. Smith, Treasurer; C. C. Hamlet, C. W. Carter, W. R. Bunch, and J. J.

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[20] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1884.*
[21] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1884.*
[22] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1886.*
[23] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1887.*
[24] ibid.
[25] With the development of cotton-jacketed hose in the 1880s, wagons could be used to transport hose instead of reels. Unlike rubber hose, which had to be wound on a reel, cotton-jacketed hose could be packed flat. Hose wagons could also carry more equipment and provided better riding positions than the older apparatus. See http://www.firehouse.com/magazine/american/apparatus.html for more information.

Whitehead, Nozzlemen; L. A. Mahler and R. K. Williams, Engineers. The company had 25 members and was housed at E. H. Lee's stables until a permanent engine house was erected later that year on West Morgan Street.[26] The company held another election of officers on December 6, with F. H. Lumsden elected Foreman, John R. Ferrall the first assistant foreman, John T. Davis the second assistant foreman, Walter Wollcott Secretary, and H. F. Smith Treasurer. By this time, the fire company was housed in their new quarters and had appointed committees on uniforms and soliciting. The former was charged with providing "the ways and means for uniforming the company" while the latter would "present the claims of the company to the citizens" with "respectful requests for assistance."[27]

The Capital Hose Company's engine house was located at 117 West Morgan Street and adjoined the water tower. The first floor was divided into two rooms, one of which served as the principal office of the Raleigh Water Company. The other room housed the hand-drawn hose reel and was equipped with spring-loaded doors that automatically opened as soon as unlocked. The apparatus room was also equipped with a 40-candle power gas light that lit as soon as the doors were opened. The second floor was a large room that served as a fireman's hall. Closets were provided for uniforms and general outfits, and a number of cots were placed in the hall as at least one member would be sleeping at the engine house every night.[28] The building was owned by the water company, however, and the city paid a monthly rental fee for the hose company.

On Sunday, July 3, 1887, the Raleigh Fire Department gave a demonstration on Fayetteville Street. Beginning with an inspection at 4:00 p.m. in front of Metropolitan Hall, the exercise commenced with the Rescue Company hose reel running from the door of the telephone exchange to the hydrant at the Raleigh National Bank corner. The Rescue Company members attached and laid 200 feet of hose in the direction of Brigg's store, then detached the hose from the reel and affixed the play pipe. The Capital Hose Company ran from opposite David Rosenthal's to the hydrant at Stronach's lower store. They attached and laid 200 feet of hose in the direction of Williams & Haywood's drug store.[29]

The Victor Company hose reel ran from the bridge in front of the Rescue Company engine house to the hydrant in front of the post office. They attached and laid 200 feet of hose in the direction of the courthouse. The Bucket and Ladder Company ran from the Yarborough House to the hydrant at the Citizen's Bank corner. They attached and laid 200 feet of hose in the direction of the Yarborough House. The companies each consisted of nine men carrying either 300 feet or 500 feet of hose. The members of the Chemical and Hook and Ladder companies reported to the Chief Engineer and acted as special police to keep the streets open from Citizen's Bank to Tucker's Store. Members of the Victor and Bucket and Ladder companies not running with the hose reels also reported for special police duties on Fayetteville Street from Martin Street to Davie Street.[30]

The Independent Hose Company was also formed in 1887. Like the Capital Hose Company, the "Independents" elected officers and maintained a roster of volunteers. They also operated a hand-drawn hose reel. On February 10, 1888, the company petitioned the Board of Alderman to furnish a room for the fire company to use. The Board agreed to fine a room at a cost of not more than $3 a month.[31] By February 1888, the fire company was housed in the Rescue Company station on Fayetteville Street.[32] These were likely temporary quarters. By April 28, 1888, the Independent Hose Company had moved to a rented building on East Morgan Street just east of Blount Street.[33]

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[26] *News & Observer*, July 30, 1887.
[27] *News & Observer*, December 7, 1887.
[28] *News & Observer*, November 3, December 7, 1887.
[29] *News & Observer*, July 3, 1887.
[30] *News & Observer*, July 3, 1887.
[31] *News & Observer*, February 11, 1888.
[32] Sanborn Map, 1888.
[33] *News & Observer*, April 28, 1888.

By February 28, 1887, seven volunteer fire companies were operating in Raleigh with 275 volunteers: the Rescue Company, the Capital Hose Company, the Independent Hose Company, the Phoenix Hose Company, the Hook and Ladder Company, the Victor Company, and the Bucket and Ladder Company.[34] The Phoenix Hose Company, also formed in 1887, soon disappeared from the rosters and its members merged with the Capital Hose Company.[35]

One year later, an electric-telegraph fire alarm system was installed and the modernization of the Raleigh Fire Department was reflected in the city's second survey by the Sanborn Map Company. Their seven-sheet map of February 1888 listed a volunteer fire department of 200 men operating four hose carts, two hook and ladder trucks, one single-tank chemical engine, one double-tank chemical engine, one hand engine, and one steam engine. The new fire alarm system had 10 boxes and the new water system had 12 miles of water mains and 125 fire hydrants. [36]

By way of comparison, North Carolina's other major cities had fire departments of the following sizes: Asheville with 50 volunteers in 1891, Charlotte with 14 paid men and a volunteer company of 60 men in 1890, Durham with 85 volunteers in 1888, Fayetteville with 60 partly paid men in 1891, Greensboro with 3 paid men and 106 volunteers in 1888, New Bern with 158 volunteers in 1888, Wilmington with 13 paid men and 237 volunteers in 1889, and Winston and Salem with 40 volunteers and 20 paid men respectively in 1890.[37]

With the new alarm system and new firefighting equipment, Raleigh's volunteers were faster and more effective. Even early morning fires brought a remarkably rapid response, as the December 7, 1889 edition of the *News & Observer* noted: "The alarm of fire was turned in yesterday morning at 2:53 o'clock from Box 31. It was cold and most people satisfied themselves by turning over and feeling the wall to see if it was hot and then going back to sleep again. The first detachment of the fire department reached the fire in two minutes after the alarm. The fire was at a small store owned by Eliza Bishop, colored, and occupied by Andrew Mitchell. The fire was quickly drowned out and the damage was slight."[38]

While the volunteer fire companies and their members were focused on fire suppression, the responsibility for fire prevention fell primarily upon the Fire Committee and the Fire Chief. They reviewed construction plans within the downtown area, called the fire district, and paid particular attention to building materials, heating and cooking sources, and stored combustibles. They also evaluated requests for fire hydrant and fire alarm box placement. Citizens and businesses were continually requesting one, the other, or both. Some commercial firms even paid for their own hydrants or alarm boxes. The Fire Committee and Fire Chief also proposed resolutions for life safety. One such resolution was adopted by the Board of Alderman adopt on November 18, 1889 and required that stationary iron or steel fire escapes be placed on all buildings required by law, one escape where 25 people gather, and additional escapes in proportion. The escapes were required to be placed on buildings on or before December 18, 1889.[39]

Early Fires

By the 1880s, the era of destruction downtown conflagrations had passed. Fires in the city proper were both better prevented and better controlled. The great fires of 1832, 1833, and 1851, were things of the past. Outside of the downtown fire district, however, larger blazes were battled such as Saint Augustine's Normal School on **March 6, 1883**. The main building was discovered ablaze at four in the afternoon that Tuesday, from flames in a defective flue apparently having smoldered since the night before. Fanned by a "lively breeze," noted the *News & Observer* account the next day, the building burned "like timber." As the school was beyond the city limits, the Mayor's per-

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[34] *Annual Report of the Mayor and Offices of the City of Raleigh for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1887.*
[35] *Raleigh Fire Department 1984.*
[36] Sanborn Map, February 1888.
[37] Sanborn Maps, assorted years.
[38] *News & Observer*, December 7, 1889.
[39] *News & Observer* November 19, 1889.

mission was required before a portion of the fire department responded. The Rescue Company steamer, the Phoenix Company's smaller single-tank engine, and the Bucket Company equipment truck raced to the scene. The steamer laid a line from a bridge at the head of a lake, its suction hose dropped into a spring there. Though plenty of water was available, the delayed response afforded the flames plenty of headway. The steam engine also had some trouble, requiring the Engineer to fix some "disarranged" machinery. Firefighters were ultimately unable to control the blaze, which spread to four other wood buildings. Only one building, a dormitory, was partially saved. Teachers and pupils saved both their personal effects and nearly all of the school's furniture. By 6 p.m., the fire was extinguished. The loss was estimated at about $16,000. Saint Augustine's was located one mile northeast of the State Capitol. The total attendance of the school, later named Saint Augustine's College, was 125. About 80 boarders lived on campus.[40]

Two years later, the Art Gallery at Saint Mary's School burned in the early hours of **January 6, 1885**. That day's edition of the *News & Observer* wrote "At 12:30 o'clock this morning the beautiful new art gallery at St. Mary's was found to be on fire. The building was of wood, 80 x 50 feet, two stories high, resting on a brick foundation. In the basement was the heater, from which the flues ran in all directions. It appeared to be not a minute after the discovery of the fire that the entire interior of the building was a mass of flame. The alarm was given by telephone from Maj. R. S. Tucker's. The Rescue and double-tank chemical engines responded to the alarm. The building was connected with the other buildings by a covered-way, the roof of which was tin. Along this the fire soon swept and endangered the other buildings. The chemical engine did some work in checking it until after the roof and timbers of the burning building fell in. The east "rock house" stands within about 60 feet of the burned building. Luckily this is entirely of stone, which a brick cornice and a tin roof, and though so greatly endangered did not catch and was not injured. The covered-way was not destroyed, the Rescue getting on two streams and extinguishing the flames." Saint Mary's School was located seven-tenths of a mile west of the State Capitol.[41]

Another large fire occurred on **March 27, 1887**, when the two largest buildings were gutted at the Raleigh Oil and Fertilizer Company at the corner of West Harrington and South Davie streets. Reported about 7:00 a.m., the roaring blaze also burned large seed sheds, offices, and an extensive cotton seed meal storage room. At the rear of the plant, a dwelling was also destroyed. Firefighters saved the guano house, however. Radiant heat drew rosin from fences 100 yards away, reported the *News & Observer*, and burned the tops of telegraph poles 50 yards away. The heat also distorted several feet of nearby railroad track. Several Victor and Bucket Company members were slightly injured when a seed shed roof collapsed, while another colored firefighter was seriously injured. Victor Company member Jordan Brooks was "badly scorched," noted the newspaper, with "all of his hair burned off." One month later he was still suffering from his injuries and unable to return to his "daily avocation." Another colored firefighter suffered a broken finger at the fire while trying to pull down a wall. Losses at the mill were estimated at $100,000.[42]

On **May 7, 1888**, the Holman cotton gin burned in the southern part of the city. The alarm was reported from box 25 after residents spotted a black column of smoke in that direction. Following a crowd rushing in that direction, arriving firefighters found a brick structure located just outside of the city limits. The hose reel companies combined several hundred feet of hose and controlled the blaze, which burned the roof and woodwork. The fire also did considerable damage to the equipment inside the building.[43]

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[40] *News & Observer*, March 3, 1883.
[41] *News & Observer*, January 6, 1885.
[42] *News & Observer*, March 27, 1887.
[43] *News & Observer*, May 8, 1888.