

**Wilkinson Boulevard Fire Department**

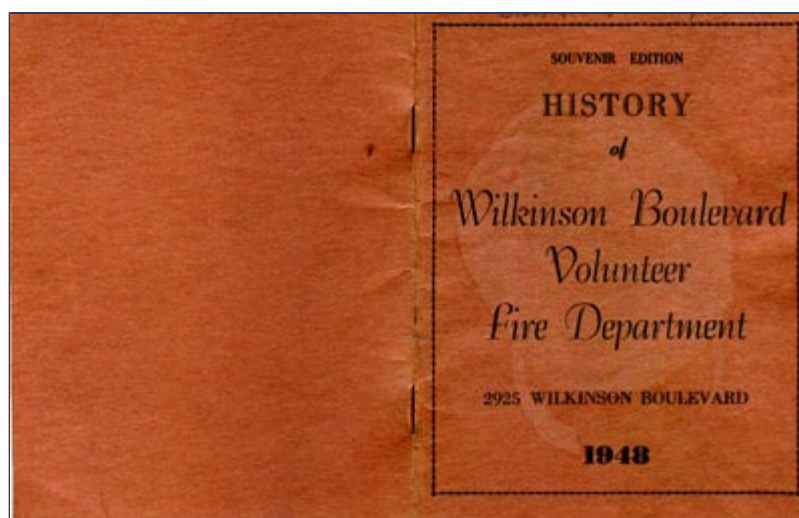
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Found a nifty booklet on the history of Wilkinson Boulevard Fire Department of Mecklenburg County, one of the first rural fire departments in the state<sup>1</sup>. It clarifies some facts about Wbfd. They attempted to organize in 1943<sup>2</sup>, but didn't successfully form a fire department until 1947.

The impetus was the burning of two houses on May 1, 1943. They were located on Gary Street, just off Wilkinson Boulevard, and one mile west of the Charlotte city limits. Several neighborhood property owners were present, and did what they could with garden hoses.

Shortly after the incident, a water main was installed along Wilkinson Boulevard. This led to a meeting of the neighborhood, to investigate installing hydrants. This beget the installation of plugs, which beget the acquisition of hose, which beget the formation of a fire department.

Or at least, the first incarnation of the fire department. Click the cover to read the complete early history:



The first fire station was a 12 by 24-foot building located at [2925 Wilkinson Boulevard](#). The lot was donated, and the building erected on a Saturday by volunteers. Early apparatus included a [1941 Army Holabird pumper](#) and a 1948 Ford pumper, 500 GPM with a 1,000 gallon tank. Click to enlarge:



By 1967, the fire station had been relocated farther west-- presumably due to annexations-- to [2904 Little Rock Road](#), just north of Wilkinson Boulevard. That year, they had 30 members led by Fire Chief Mackie Hunter. Apparatus included a 3,000 gallon tanker and four other units. The prior year, Wbfd answered 66 fire calls and used 385 man hours.



That structure is still standing and is presently empty. And for rent! And in a colorful commercial district! Part of the fire department's name is still visible on the front of the building.



Wilkinson Boulevard fire department operated until 1984, when it merged with Moores Chapel Fire Department to form West Mecklenburg FD. The two stations remained open, until a new station was constructed for the 66-member department. WBFD was WMFD Station 2 and MCFD was WMFD Station 1.

<sup>1</sup>See this [prior blog posting](#) about the first rural fire departments.

<sup>2</sup>The year 1942 had been previously cited by myself as their year of organization. Don't recall where I read that. The North Carolina Secretary of State lists March 7, 1947, as the date their corporation was formed. The October 11, 1967 edition of the *Charlotte News*, in a profile of county fire departments, cites June 26, 1950, as their date of organization.

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**What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?**

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