

Zebulon's First Fire Engine

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Our friends at the Zebulon Fire Department share a pair of new-found photos. Two views of the town's first fire engine, a 1920s Ford Model A combination chemical and hose truck. The apparatus was obtained in 1928 and converted into a fire engine by members of the department. Previously, they utilized a trio of hand hose reels, as well as a hand-drawn hook and ladder. [Read some of that history.](#)

Looking closely at the apparatus, you'll see a hose basket on the top. That held the rubber hose-- maybe one-inch diameter-- that was connected to the chemical tank. By 1944, said Sanborn Maps of that year, the truck carried 700 feet of 2 1/2-inch hose. Based on pictures on the web, the truck's model year could also be 1928. The town very likely could have obtained a new truck for conversion to their first fire engine.

The top picture was probably made around the time the town's 1948 Mack Type 45 pumper was delivered. ZFD still owns that beauty, having acquired same from a private owner in recent years. The bottom picture is probably a view from inside the first station on East Horton Street. These are also some of the oldest fire departments found to date, from anywhere in Wake County!

Guess we'll need to update the *Raleigh and Wake County Firefighting* books someday. Or maybe just go wide, and finally produce a book of historic fire department photos from across North Carolina. And wouldn't it be great to find photos of the county's other early trucks, such as Apex's 1927 American LaFrance pumper, Cary's 1922/23 Ford/American LaFrance chemical car, and Wendell's ex-Virginia Beach Seagrave purchased in 1941. Click to enlarge:





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