

UPDATED: Benson's Fire Wagon and Some History From Walt McCall

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February 23

Lee Wilson paid a visit this week to the Benson fire station, and took a couple photos of the old engine. [Visit his Flickr site](#) to see more, or enlarge the photo and zoom in good and close. Looks like restoration is finished. What a beauty.



Lee Wilson photo

September 18, 2012

Our friends in the Benson Fire Department share a photo of their first fire engine, which has been undergoing restoration since being returned to the department last September. ([Read about](#) that effort.) The horse-drawn, gas-powered pumping engine dates to 1907. They've been slowly restoring the thing. ([See a photo](#) from May.)

Here's a photo, click once or twice to greatly enlarge:



They've also been researching the engine's history, and came upon a clue. Their question is below. Let's begin a lightning round of Stump the Chump.

Last week, while greasing one of the axels, one of our firemen made the biggest discovery yet, he found a make name. 'Concord Express' was stamped on the axel. We did a little research and found that Concord Express was made by Abbott and Downing Company, which was out of Concord, New Hampshire. All we know is they specialized in Stage Coaches. Do you have any knowledge of this company in the fire service or any knowledge in general of this company? We seemed to have hit a dead end.

Responds Mr. Blogger AKA Captain History AKA The Hawaiian Shirt Guy:

Consulting Walt McCall's insanely helpful *Illustrated Encyclopedia of American Fire Engine Manufacturers*, published in 2007, the author lists Abbott & Downing Truck & Body Co. as producing fire apparatus from 1916 to around 1930. The Concord, NH, company was famed for its stagecoaches-- named Concord-- of the mid 1800s. They were a wagon and carriage maker known to have also constructed bodies for some horse-drawn and motor fire apparatus during the aforementioned period. In 1916, they began building assembled fire apparatus on their Concord commercial truck chassis. They built a triple combination pumper for Hardwick, MA, in 1929. The company ceased to operate during the Depression. Man, McCall sure makes it easy for folks to access the past.

Thanks for the info, Mike. The life story of this wagon is gradually starting to fall into place and the retransformation of it through restoration efforts have come a long way in a short time, thanks to many dedicated individuals.

Jerry (BFD) - 09/19/12 - 10:32

What a BEAUTIFUL restoration job!!! Jerry, you and the other members who have been working to restore this old beauty should be proud. In my opinion it is one of the sharpest if not THE sharpest horse drawn fire antiques I have ever seen. Who ever decided to remove the paint from the wood and return it to a natural finish is a genius. I hope one day to be able to see this masterpiece in person.

Galax, Va - 09/19/12 - 16:03

Name: (real name preferred)
E-mail: (optional)

Remember personal info?
Yes
No