The History of the Raleigh Fire Department

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Presenter Information

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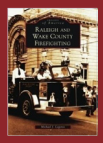
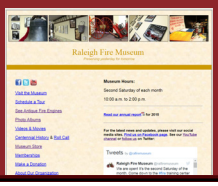


Raleigh Fire Museum

www.raleighfiremuseum.org



Today

Office of the Fire Chief

Office of the Fire Marshal | Operations | Services | Training

How did we get here?

Milestones

1792
City of Raleigh created.

1819
First fire engine and fire company.

1852
Fire department organization created.

1912
Fully-paid fire department created.

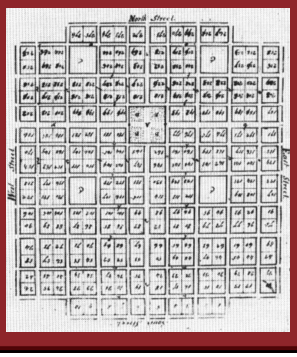
Going Back in Time

1900s

1800s

1700s

1792



- City of Raleigh created
- One square mile
- 699 residents by 1803

1792

How to protect from fire?

Prevent fires

Extinguish fires

1792

Early fire protection measures:

- Planners design **wide streets**, to help prevent fire spread.
- Many **trees** also left intact, to also help.
- No **wooden structures** added to building fronts. Early regulation.

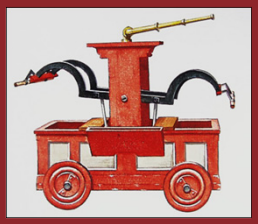
1802

Fire Engine.

The Subscribers to the Fund for purchasing a Fire Engine for the use of this City, are requested to meet at the Court-House, on Friday next, at four o'clock, for the Purpose of giving an Order for the Purchase of the Engine and other Apparatus, (a Sufficiency of Money for the Purpose being subscribed) and for forming a Fire Company.

As the Articles of Association will be drawn at this Meeting, and the Officers of the Company elected, it is hoped that a full Attendance will be given. *August 16.*

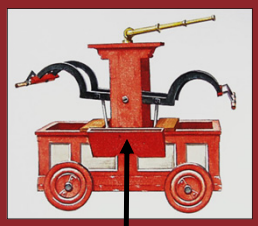
1802



1802

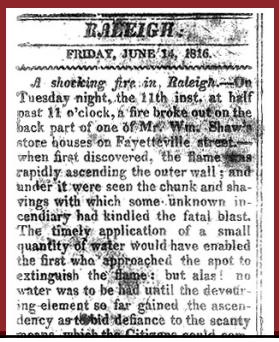
Nozzle that swivels

Handles for pumping



Water poured into basin using a chain of buckets (brigade brigade)

1816



RALEIGH.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1816.

A shocking fire in Raleigh.—On Tuesday night, the 11th inst. at half past 11 o'clock, a fire broke out on the back part of one of Mr. Wm. Shaw's store houses on Fayetteville street,—when first discovered, the flame was rapidly ascending the outer wall; and under it were seen the chunk and shavings with which some unknown incendiary had kindled the fatal blast. The timely application of a small quantity of water would have enabled the first who approached the spot to extinguish the flame: but alas! no water was to be had until the devouring element so far gained the ascendency as to bid defiance to the scanty

- First major fire
- June 11, 1816
- Dozens of volunteers
- Bucket brigade
- 51 buildings destroyed
- Controlled by blasting
- Fire engine ordered
- Water system attempted (1818)

1819

A very complete Fire-Engine from Philadelphia, with a Supply Pump, a sufficient length of Hose, Fire-Hooks, Chain, &c

- Joseph Gales, President
- Beverly Daniel, Vice President
- Jacob Lash, Captain
- John T. C. Wiatt, Lieutenant
- William F. Clark, Lieutenant
- Thomas Cobbs, Lieutenant
- Thomas Henderson, Lieutenant
- John Dunn, Treasurer
- John Bell, Secretary

1819-1843

1821
Firemen exempt from militia duty.

1826
Citizens can be drafted for firefighting.

1831
State Capitol burns. Stone and brick for government buildings.

1838
Building regulations for fire protection.

1843
Second fire engine, second fire company.

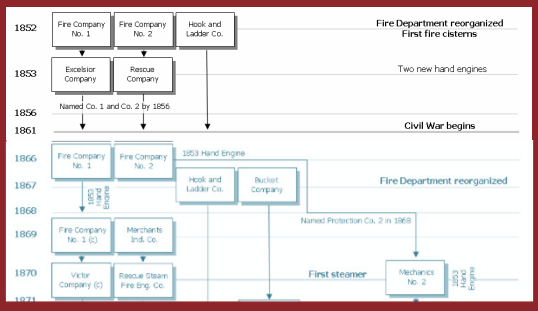
1851

APPALLING CONFLAGRATION!

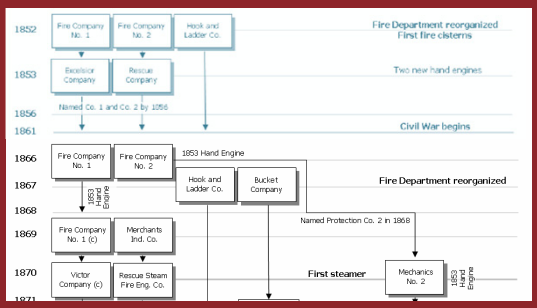
About half past 12 o'clock, on Monday morning last, our citizens were alarmed by the cry of FIRE, and the other signals usual on such occasions.—The wooden tenement on Fayetteville Street, occupied by H. A. Depkin, as a Boot and Shoe Store, was found to be in a blaze, but not to such an extent that it might not have been promptly suppressed did we possess the most ordinary water facilities. In a very few moments, the destroying element extended itself, in one direction, to the residence of Wm. White, Esq., and the City Post Office connected therewith, and in the opposite, to the Confectionary Store of Mr. Griffice and the Saddlery Establishment of C. W. D. Hutchins, Esq., and to many small wooden buildings in the vicinity—all of which were entirely consumed. The flames now spread so rapidly as to render any efforts to check them entirely impotent. The

- December 15, 1851
- Over 17 structures
- Ordinances adopted
- Better water supply
- Better fire equipment
- First engine house
- First Fire Chief
- Fire Dept. reorganized

Before Civil War



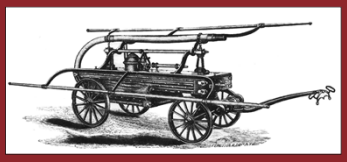
After Civil War



Let's interrupt our timeline…

Apparatus

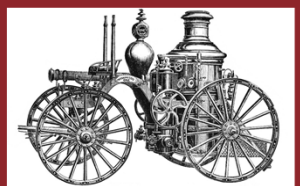
1819, 1873



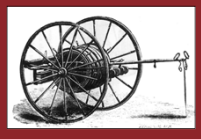
Philadelphia-Style Hand Engine, 1819 (left)

Rumsey Hand Engine, 1873 (right)

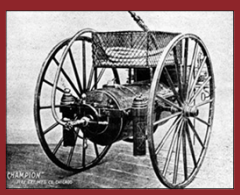
1870

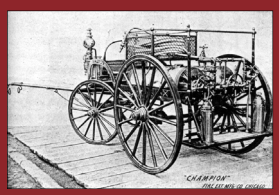


Gould Steamer and Hose Reel



1878, 1881





Champion Chemical Engines

1852-1890

Hook and Ladder Trucks

1852-1890

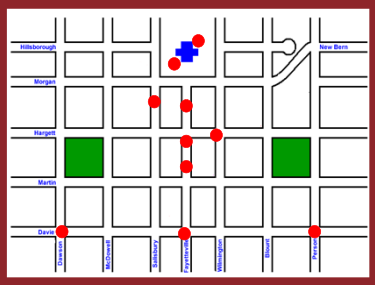
"Working" Truck

"Racing" Truck

Hook and Ladder Trucks

Water Supply

1852-1887



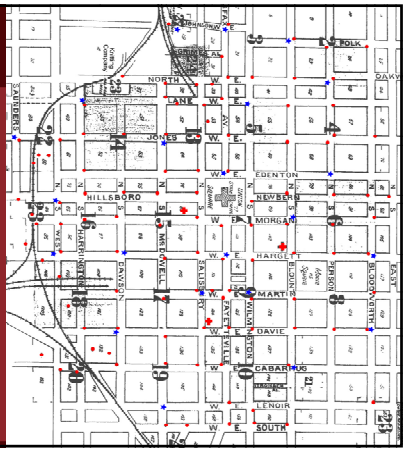
Capacity in No. of gallons.	Number of Openings.
40,000	2
7,000	1
7,000	1
7,000	1
10,000	1
30,000	2
30,000	2
40,000	2
30,000	2
30,000	2
30,000	2
50,000	1
50,000	1

Fire Cisterns

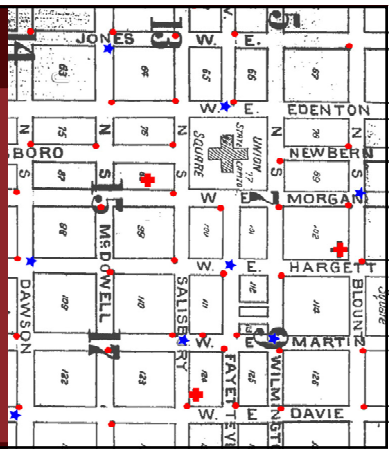
1887

- Made by Matthews.
- 120 hydrants, double outlets.
- 64 to 80 pounds PSI, 144 to 161 gallons per minute.
- Eight hydrants supplying eight streams.
- Direct pressure on request.

1903
Hydrant Map



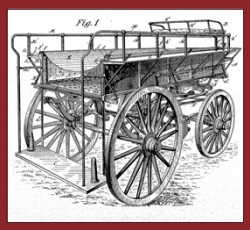
1903
Hydrant Map



1887

Hand-Drawn
Hose Reels

1890

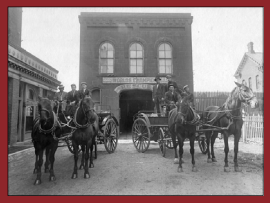


Horse-Drawn Hose Wagons

Engine Houses

1870

Metropolitan Hall
Fayetteville Street

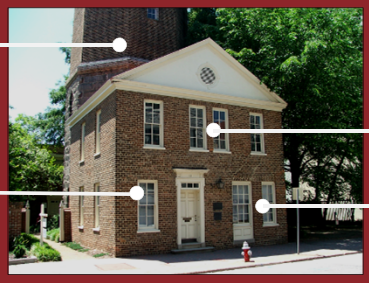


Rescue Company Engine House
Fayetteville Street

1887

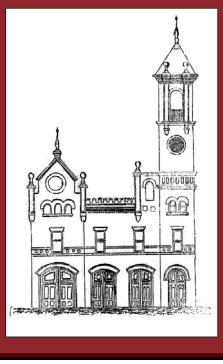
Capital Hose Company House
West Morgan Street

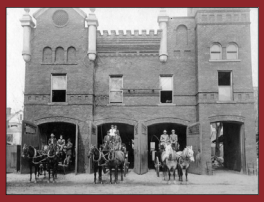
1887



Capital Hose Company House
West Morgan Street

1896





Headquarters
West Morgan Street

1897

THE FIRE LAST NIGHT

The Victor Engine House is Badly Damaged.

HORSES BURNED TO DEATH

THE FLAMES STARTED FROM AN EXPLODING LAMP.

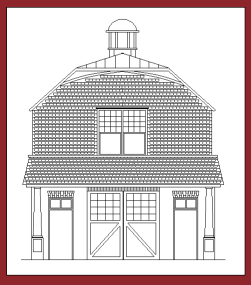
The Loss is Between $500 and $1,000 --The Victor Reel Was Not Ruined But is Badly Damaged.

The criminal negligence of Joe Penny, one of the night watchmen at the Victor Hose Reel engine house, cost the city last night upwards of $1,000, to say nothing of what might have proved a disastrous fire and the pitiable spectacle of seeing two fine horses burned to death.

Victor Company
Engine House Burns

South Salisbury and
West Davie Streets

1898



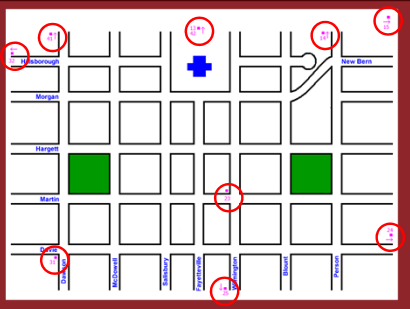
Victor Company Engine House
East Hargett Street

Fire Alarm System

1888

Street Box - Alarm Bell

1888



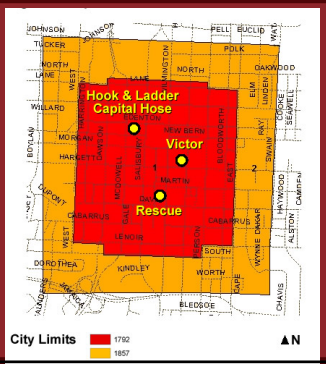
Original locations of alarm boxes

Back to our timeline…

1870-1890

- First steam engine. (1870)
- First chemical engine. (1878)
- First fire horses. (1879)
- First fire hydrants, first hose companies. (1887)
- Fire alarm system installed. (1888)
- Last hand-drawn apparatus. (1890)

1900



Demographics

1.8 square miles

13,643 residents

Three fire stations

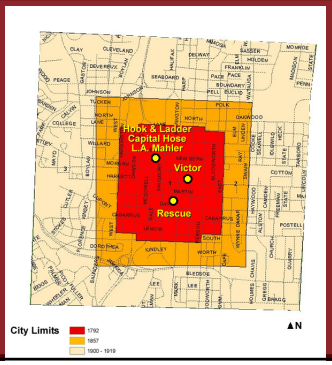
90 members

1905

New American LaFrance Steamer

New Steam Engine Fire Company

1910



4.0 square miles

19,218 residents

Three fire stations

127 members

1912

RALEIGH WILL HAVE A PAID DEPARTMENT

First Class Fire-Fighting Apparatus to Cost Less Than $35,000 Will Be Installed By Capital City at Early Date

Fully-Paid Fire Department

Fire Chief Sherwood Brockwell

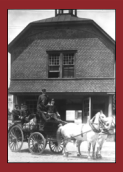
1912

First Full-Time Firefighters

1912

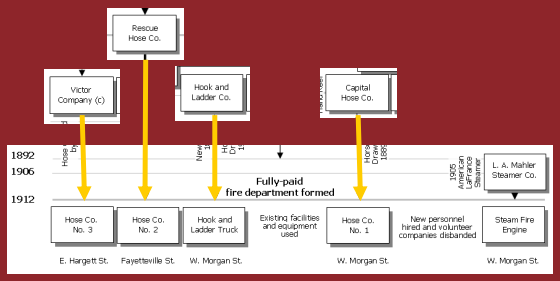
Station 1

Station 2



Station 3

1912



1913

FIRE WAGONS ARE ENROUTE

Automobile Trucks Expected to Reach Raleigh By Tomorrow

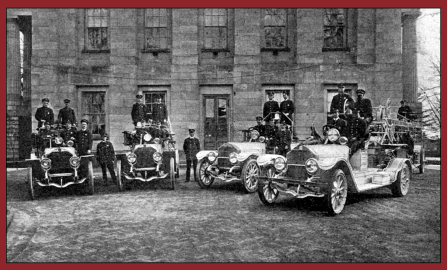
Fire Chief Sherwood Brockwell has received information from the manufacturers that the two automobile fire trucks ordered for Raleigh have been shipped and the chief is expecting them tomorrow. One of the trucks will be placed in the Capital Hose Company quarters, and the other in the Rescue quarters. The two trucks weigh 7,500 feet 30 feet 3 inches long, have forty-gallon chemical tank, a roof ladder, turret pipes, axes and other paraphernalia. Chief Brockwell will drive one truck and Assistant Chief Farmer the other until the regular chauffeurs are trained for the work. The headquarters of the Victor company has been fitted up for service as a hosewagon and team will be stationed there. Chief Brockwell has his men at work every day.

American LaFrance Chemical/Hose Cars

1914

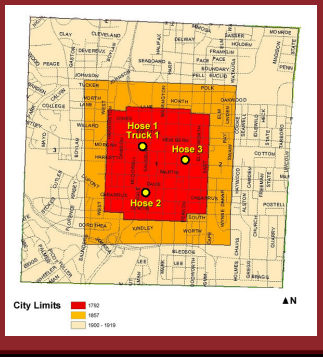
Station 2 – South Salisbury Street

1914, 1916



1914 American LaFrance Pumper,
1916 American LaFrance Aerial Ladder

1920



6.9 square miles
24,418 residents
Three fire stations
~30 members

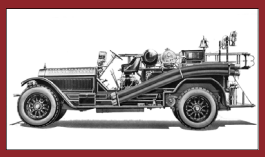
1920s

Station 4 - 1926
Jefferson Street

Station 5 - 1926
Park Drive

1920s

1922 American LaFrance
Service Truck



1926 American LaFrance
Pumper

1924

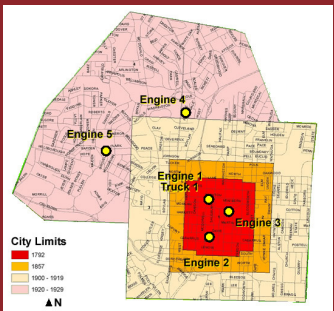
Two Platoons Created

Day Watch	0800 to 1145
	1145 to 1530
	1530 to 1900
Night Watch	1900 to 2230
	2230 to 0130
	0130 to 0430
	0430 to 0800

1910-1929

- April 24, 1913 – News & Observer building
- March 25, 1914 – Tompkins Hall, A&M College
- April 10, 1926 – Insane Asylum
- **July 3, 1928 – Yarborough Hotel**

1930



7.6 square miles
37,379 residents
Five fire stations
56 members

1930s

City Auditorium,
Burned 1930

Station 2 at Memorial
Auditorium, Opened 1932

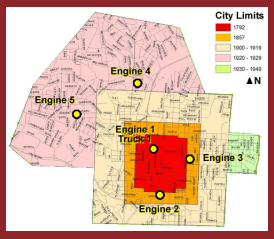
New 1936 Pumper

1939 Tractor for 1916 Tiller

1930s

- 1935 – Civil service protection gained.
- 1938 – Local 548 of IAFF chartered.
- 1959 – Ceased operations after state ruling.
- 1968 – State ruling overturned by feds.
- 1969 – Local 548 re-chartered.
- 1986 – Local 548 re-chartered again.

1940



10.88 square miles
46,897 residents
Five fire stations
~56 members

1941

- Station 1 on Morgan Street closed.
- Engine 1 moved to Old Station 2 on Salisbury Street.
- Aerial ladder and service truck moved to Station 2 at Memorial Auditorium.
- Engine 2 moved to Station 1 on Salisbury Street.

1941

Civil Defense
Air-Raid Drills
Auxiliary Firefighters
Materials Restrictions

World War II

1940s

Station 6

Opened 1943
2519 Fairview Road

Moved 1949
2602 Fairview Road

1940s

1948 Ford Auxiliary Truck

1919 American LaFrance

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

24 Hour Shifts

1949

1949 FWD Pumper

1950 Mack Pumper

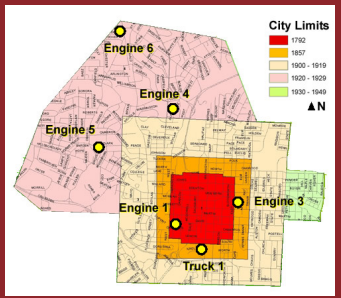
1949

Fire Prevention Bureau Formed

1930-1949

- March 25, 1935 – Efird's Department Store
- May 18, 1939 – Norfolk Southern Railway Shops
- January 7, 1943 – Wake County Group Home
- **December 29, 1943 – Bellas Hess Clothing Store**
- February 1, 1948 – Carolina Country Club

1950



10.88 square miles
65,679 residents
Six fire stations
67 members

1950s

New Station 1

1951 ►
◄ 1953

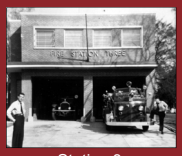
American LaFrance Pumper

Raleigh Emergency Rescue Squad

◄ 1953
1958 ►

American LaFrance Aerial Ladder

1950s



Station 3

1954 ►
◄ 1951

Training Tower

Ladies Auxiliary

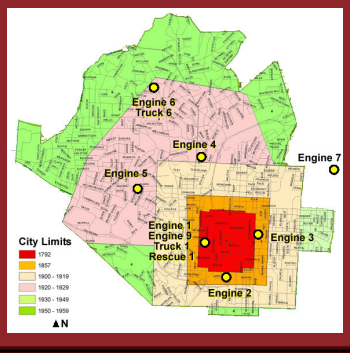
◄ 1951
1959 ►

Station 7

March 10, 1956

Line of Duty Death – Lt. Vernon Smith

1960



33.67 square miles
93,931 residents
Seven fire stations
123 members

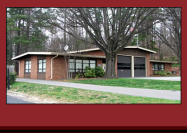
1960s

New Station 2

1969

New Shop at Station 2

New Station 4



1961 ►
◄ 1963

New Station 5

1960s

Station 8
◄ 1960
1963 ►

Station 9
1963

1964

Smokehouse

1960s

American LaFrance Pumpers

American LaFrance Aerial Ladder

GMC Service Truck

GMC Tankers

1960s

Foam Trucks

1950-1969

- March 3, 1952 – K&W Motor Company
- July 28, 1958 – Edenton Street Church
- September 5, 1962 – Hayes Barton Church
- **February 22, 1965 – Pullen Hall at State College**
- April 1968 – Civil unrest

1963-64

First black firefighters hired in 1963 and 1964:

- Larry Gene Williams
- Welton Jones
- E. Louis Stephens
- James L. Giles
- James Greene Jr.
- Norwood M. Peacock
- Richmond Davis Jr.

April 20, 1965

At Blaze

Fireman Dies on The Job

Raleigh fireman Paul A. "Pallie" Mimms of 215 Georgetown Rd. died early Tuesday from what was believed to be a heart attack as he helped fight a fire at 1908 Hillsboro St.

Fire Chief Jack Keeter said, Mimms, 41, fainted as he was operating a pumper on a fire truck and was pronounced dead on arrival at Rex Hospital.

The fire chief said the examining physicians suspected a heart attack. Keeter said he expected them to make further studies as to the cause of death.

The fire was in the basement of Norden Laboratories Inc. and was discovered about 12:15 a.m. Mimms had driven the pumper truck to the fire scene from Station No. 5 where he was assigned.

Started in Wiring

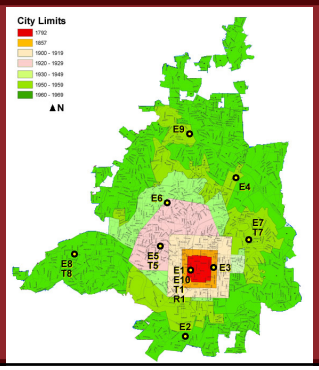
Assistant Fire Chief F. M. Burnette said the fire apparently started from wiring in the basement of the Norden firm, which handles veterinary drugs and supplies.

The blaze was confined largely to the basement area, firemen said, but burned through the floor of the drug firm and through the floor of the adjoining College Court Billiard Parlor.

Firemen had to evacuate the College Court Apartments on the second floor of the building because of the smoke. One woman took refuge from the smoke on a small balcony on the second floor of the apartment. Chief Burnette said, and was taken down by ladder.

Line of Duty Death – Lt. Paul Mimms

1970



44.93 square miles
122,830 residents
Nine fire stations
196 members

1970s

Station 10
Station 14

Station 11
Station 15

Station 12
Station 16

1971 – 1971 – 1974 – 1974 – 1974 – 1979

1970s

Mack Fire Apparatus

1970s

Chevy service truck
Chevy rescue squad

Mack aerial platform
Mack tractor

1970s

- 1972 - City/county emergency communications center.
- 1973 - Fire alarm boxes removed.
- 1973 - Replaced by telephone boxes.

1970s

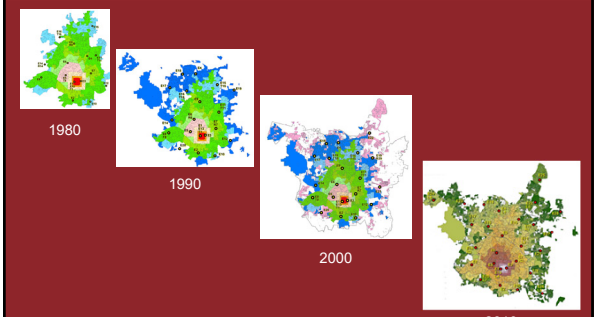
- Third platoon (shift) added. (1970)
- First two battalions (districts) created. (1971)
- **EMT training starts. (1976)**
- Third battalion (district) created. (1977)
- First recruit academy*. (1978)
- First female firefighters hired. (1978)

* Mike, explain that asterisk!

1980-2010

Now we go faster…

1980-2010



1980-2010

1980-2010

Mack – Pirsch – EEI – Pierce – Quality – ALF – Pierce

1980-2010

Seagrave – Pierce – American LaFrance – Spartan – Simon - Quality

1980-2010

1980-2010

EMT / Rescue / USAR

1980s First-responder goes city wide.
Haz-mat.

1990s EMT- D program.
Confined space and trench rescue.
High-level rescue.

2000s Swift water rescue.
NC USAR Task Force 8.
NC helicopter rescue team participation.
NC regional haz-mat team to Raleigh.

1980-2010

1980s

- Keeter Training Center
- Fire investigation team.
- First mobile air unit.
- Explorer post.
- Honor guard.

1990s

- First Division Chief
- First closed-cab apparatus.
- Fire safety house.
- Rapid Intervention Teams (RIT).

2000s

- Fourth battalion.
- Bike team.
- Full time investigators.
- Thermal imaging cameras.
- Eighth ladder company.

2010s

- Fifth battalion.
- Squad companies.
- Heavy rescue company.
- Ninth ladder company.

1982

July 7, 1981
Mangel's Building

- 124 Fayetteville Street Mall
- Built 1890-1900
- Two-story, wood-frame
- 24,940 square-feet
- 100+ firefighters including 21 recruits
- 30 with injuries

1982

Keeter Training Center Completed

1988

North Raleigh tornado

1992

STOCK PHOTOS NOT RALEIGH!

Fire Protection Engineer

1993

EMT defibrillator program started.

1996

Hurricane Fran

2003

North Carolina Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Task Force 8
Raleigh – Cary – Chapel Hill – Durham

2005-2006

Old tower demolished in 2005
New tower built in 2006

2006 and later

2006

Bike team created

2006

Construction Division Added

2007

February 22, 2007
Pine Knoll Townes

- Six alarms
- 19 engines 6 ladders
- 10 relief companies (8 engines/ 2 ladders)
- 11 departments covering city from Wake and Durham counties
- 27 homes destroyed, 11 damaged.
- 12 four-unit structures involved
- 29 families, 72 people displaced
- $4 million damage

January 22, 2008

Line of Duty Death – Lt. Herman Jones

2009

Ladder	4	Ladder	1
	11		2
	17		3
	1		4
	22		5
	24		6
	20		7
	26		8
Rescue	19	Rescue	1
	7		2
	14		3

2009

Ladder 4 overturns – July 10, 2009

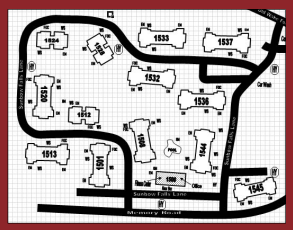
2010

Fire Prevention Division / Office of Fire Marshal

FY70	6	FY80	5	FY90	7	FY00	13
FY71	6	FY81	5	FY91	8	FY01	13
FY72	6	FY82	5	FY92	10	FY02	13
FY73	6	FY83	6	FY93	12	FY03	13
FY74	6	FY84	6	FY94	12	FY04	13
FY75	6	FY85	6	FY95	12	FY05	13
FY76	6	FY86	7	FY96	13	FY06	13
FY77	6	FY87	7	FY97	13	FY07	21
FY78	6	FY88	7	FY98	13	FY08	25
FY79	5	FY89	7	FY99	13	FY09	25
						FY10	25

2010

Pre-Incident Survey Project



- First phase.
- Over 12,000 structures surveyed over 18 months.
- Every occupied structure city, except single/double-family homes.
- Conducted by engine, ladder, and rescue companies.

2010-2011

New tiller
New decon trailer
New training apparatus

2011

Raleigh Fire Museum Opens

2012

Raleigh Fire Department celebrates centennial

2014-2015

SCBA upgrade
New filling stations
Second air truck

2011

Rescue pumpers for Squad companies

"Coffin compartments" on top!

2015

Station 29
Second Tiller
Ninth Ladder

2016-2017

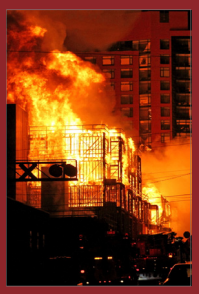
- ISO 1
- Party Rock Fire
- Metropolitan Fire
- Station renovations
- Hydrant colors change

2018-2019

But what about that big fire downtown?

2017

2017



2017

2017

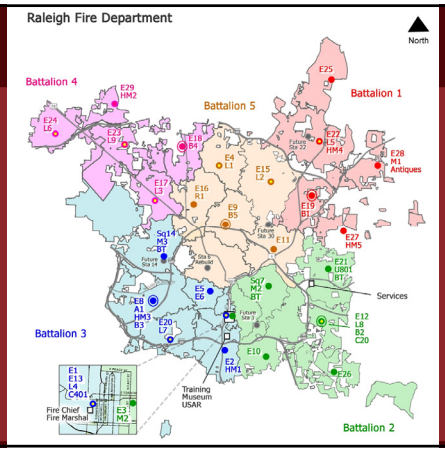
Today

Office of Fire Chief

Office of Fire Marshal | Operations | Services | Training

Today

- 28 Fire Stations
- 27 Engine Companies
- 2 Squad Companies (rescue pumpers)
- 9 Ladder Companies
- 1 Rescue Companies
- 5 Battalion Chiefs
- 621 Uniformed and Civilian Personnel



Questions?

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