



HISTORY OF THE ELKINS PARK FIRE COMPANY

Elkins Park Fire Company was the **FIRST IN CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP**, and one of the first in the Old York Road area. A collection was taken up among the villagers to purchase buckets, ladders, lanterns, and fire hooks. In those days, when a fire was sighted, the alarm was sounded by a steam whistle on top of the power station. Then the entire community would turn out to help extinguish the flames.

SEPTEMBER 20

1892

1890

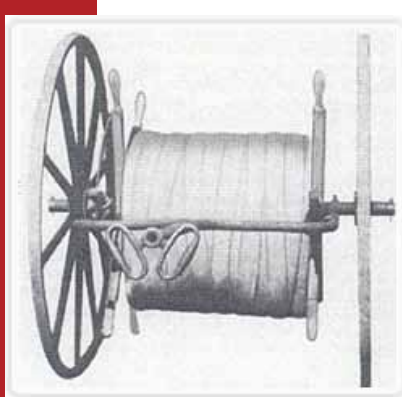
1892

1900

1904

"MILLIONAIRE FIREMEN PROTECT ELKINS PARK"

was the headline in the *Philadelphia North American*. Prestigious names such as Wanamaker, Elkins, Israel, Widener, Shoemaker, Stetson, and Wall were among the volunteers.



A hose reel was purchased in 1893 and fire hydrants were installed throughout the area for more effective fire fighting.

Improvements to the community encouraged development, and by the turn of the century, the population had increased by another 50%



DECEMBER

1904

IN 1904, CLEMENT B. HOOPES LED A GROUP that chartered the organization as the Old York Road Fire Company of Cheltenham. With land donated by William E. Dobbins and equipment from the Ashbourne Improvement Association, the building was finished in December of 1904. J. Frederic Herbert, M.D., was the first president, and Charles D. Ferguson was the first chief. To this day, the original building is nearly unchanged.

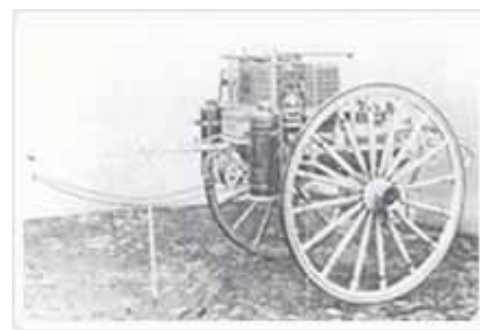
1910

Through the years, the EPFC has been lucky to have the finest and most modern equipment — greatly due to the generosity of its contributors. In 1913 the EPFC obtained the first motorized pumper in Cheltenham Township.

THE 1,000 GPM PUMPER NICKNAMED THE "GRAY TERROR", WAS ACTUALLY A LIGHT BEIGE COLOR WHICH HAS REMAINED THE TRADITIONAL COLOR OF EPFC TO THIS DAY. In 1920, a second truck was obtained — a Model T Ford chemical engine and in 1925, a gift from Mr. P.A.B. Widener helped to purchase a 1,300 GPM pumper.



In 1907, the changeover from manpower to horsepower in pulling the new combined Chemical Engine and Hose Cart. Problem was, the EPFC didn't own any horses. Instead, it offered a \$5 bounty to the first man to get his team to the firehouse upon hearing the alarm.

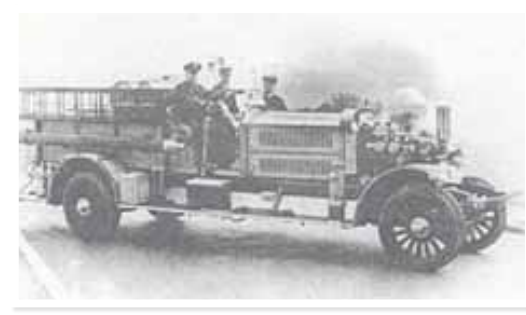


1913 Webb 1,000 GPM Combination Pumper

1913-1925



1920 Model T Ford Hose & Chemical Engine



1925 Ahrens-Fox 1300 GPM Combination Pumper

1926

IN 1926, THE OLD YORK ROAD FIRE COMPANY WAS RENAMED THE ELKINS PARK FIRE COMPANY.

1930



IN 1937, ELKINS PARK'S CHIEF WILLIAM H. SNYDER BECAME THE FIRST CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE MARSHALL. Chief Snyder remained the life's blood of the EPFC for 51 years. Despite warnings from his doctor that his heart could no longer take the strain, Snyder was still leading his men to fires at the age of 67. He died in his boots after a fire in 1943.

1937

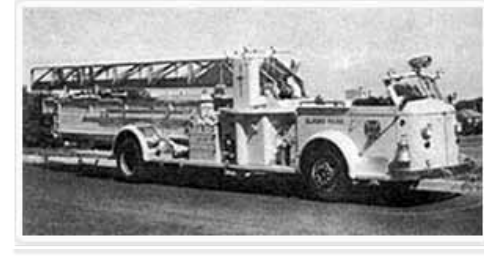
1940

1950

- In 1950, purchased a Maxim 750 GPM pumper truck
- 1954 an 85' aerial ladder truck and a 750 GPM, 400-gallon tank booster truck by American-LaFrance.
- In 1951, 7820 Montgomery was purchased and is used as a parking lot.
- The Gottschalk Fire Training Area on Tookany Creek Parkway was dedicated in 1955
- 1957 the Fire Training Tower was dedicated for use by the township



1950 Maxim 750 GPM Combination Pumper



1954 American LaFrance 750 GPM Combination Booster Pumper

1960



1960 American LaFrance 750 GPM Combination Pumper

THE 1960s



1963 American LaFrance 100ft Aerial Ladder Truck 14

- In 1968, The blood bank was started to provide blood to the Red Cross
- An emergency generator was installed in the building
- The company switched from single to dual radio frequencies.
- Every member received a home Plectron radio alarm

- Map books were placed on all the trucks in 1972
- In 1973, the bell from the 1913 pumper was mounted in the engine room
- Dana Gilman and John Marshall began the "Hot Line" publication
- Ordinance for homes to have at least one smoke detector and all commercial building have smoke detectors

THE 1970s

IN 1970, WOMEN GAINED THE RIGHT TO BE IN THE FIREHOUSE UNTIL MIDNIGHT (EXCEPT ON TUESDAYS)



IN 1989, EPFC ARRIVED IN THE 21ST CENTURY. A COMPUTER WAS PUT INTO OPERATION AT A COST OF \$6,120.

- Bunker pants became part of the standard equipment.
- In 1984, the Melrose Park train station was decimated by a blaze.

THE 1980s



As kerosene became popular for home heating, accidents associated with it began to cause concern. Bud Carlson, a member of EPFC, urged State Rep Charles Nahill to look into a way to prevent gasoline/kerosene mishaps. In July of 1988, the kerosene project (Senate Bill #738) was submitted to prevent gasoline from being delivered to a kerosene fuel pump.

IN 1999, ELKINS PARK FIRE COMPANY RESPONDED TO 406 RUNS, THE MOST IN THE HISTORY OF THE FIRE COMPANY.



1992 Pierce 105' Ladder Tower

In the early 1990's, the handling of the fire calls for the whole township was dramatically changed by means of having a new dispatch procedure, the enhancement of 9-1-1 in Montgomery County. More modern equipment was added in November 1991 when a cellular phone was installed on the booster.

THE 1990s

2000-PRESENT

September 11, 2001 firefighters nationwide were dramatically affected as the Twin Towers collapsed during rescue efforts and immediately killed 343 New York City firefighters. Flags across the nation were lowered to half mass as a sea of national support for the United States unfolded. Firefighters could be seen on every home, on every lawn, and on every car and truck. With that support came a realization of our domestic protectors, our firefighters.

In 2002, federal grants were initiated to help subsidize cost for needed equipment for communities, which proved to be less than par during the New York incident. All fire companies were eligible to apply. President John Hearn proposed to all five fire companies in the Township a "Gentleman's Agreement", which indicated a desire to participate in a grant proposal on behalf of all five companies. An award of \$488,000 was utilized to purchase and install the new radios in all five fire companies and fire apparatus for each officer.

In 2004 the federal government grants to help Volunteers Fire Companies obtain needed equipment. March 12's annual banquet guest, Governor Ed Rendell, commended life active member Charles "Chubby" Obrecht for 50 years of active service.

