A History of the Bowling Green Fire Department: A Look at Two Traditional Methodologies

Edward McCurley
Western Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses

Part of the Oral History Commons, Public Administration Commons, Public History Commons, Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons, Social History Commons, United States History Commons, and the Urban Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/2594

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
McCurley,
Edward B.
1982
AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF THESIS

Permission is hereby

☑ granted to the Western Kentucky University Library to
make, or allow to be made photocopies, microfilm or other
copies of this thesis for appropriate research or scholarly
purposes.

☐ reserved to the author for the making of any copies of this
thesis except for brief sections for research or scholarly
purposes.

Signed

Date 5/5/62

Please place an "X" in the appropriate box.

This form will be filed with the original of the thesis and will control
future use of the thesis.
A HISTORY OF THE BOWLING GREEN FIRE DEPARTMENT:
A LOOK AT TWO TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGIES

Recommended April 7, 1982
(Date)
Lynnwood Montee
Director of Thesis

Approved April 28, 1982
(Date)
Lemon Grey
Dean of the Graduate College
## CONTENTS

- LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ........................................ iv
- ABSTRACT ................................................................... v
- INTRODUCTION ......................................................... vii
- CHAPTER ONE: THE VOLUNTEER YEARS ....................... 1
- CHAPTER TWO: PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS .............. 12
- CHAPTER THREE: A PERSONAL HISTORY ....................... 26
- CHAPTER FOUR: FOLKLORE AND HISTORY ..................... 46
- EPILOGUE ................................................................... 52
- APPENDIX ................................................................... 53
- BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................... 55
- GLOSSARY .................................................................... 58
ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harold Hazelip</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee-grinder</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Fire Department, 1874.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Wilkerson</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Moltenberry</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Department, 1909</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Department, about 1920</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A HISTORY OF THE BOWLING GREEN FIRE DEPARTMENT:
A LOOK AT TWO TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGIES

Edward B. McCurley May 1982 62 pages

Directed by: William Lynwood Montell, Jay Anderson and Burt Feintuch

Department of Modern Languages Western Kentucky University and Intercultural Studies

The history of the Bowling Green, Kentucky, Fire Department is presented through the use of two methodologies. Traditional historical methodology has been applied to compile the first ninety years of history while traditional folklore fieldwork—the collection of personal narratives through interviews—has been applied to compile the last fifty-six years, concluding with 1970. Six years, from 1914 to 1920, reflect the blending of the two methodologies.

The personal narratives used in this study are those of Assistant Chief Harold Hazelip, who joined the fire department in 1952. Recognized informally as the department's historian, Hazelip's recollections include his own personal experiences as well as second-hand experiences told to him by retired firefighters during the early part of his career.

The juxtaposition of the methodologies permits some comparisons and contrasts concerning their strengths and weaknesses. It is demonstrated that neither methodology can be used alone to construct a complete history. Historical records are often incomplete while personal narratives focus only on those events which are significant to the narrator.

A discussion of the methodologies leads to the conclusion that since history does not take place in a vacuum it
is best portrayed through a blending of traditional historical method and folklore fieldwork. The former can provide information about statistics and events that have occurred while the latter provides information about the persons who shaped history.
INTRODUCTION

This project presents the history of the Bowling Green, Kentucky, Fire Department through the use of two research methodologies. Traditional historical research was conducted in an effort to compile the history for the years 1820-1914, while folklore fieldwork—the collection of material through interviews—was used to record the narratives of Assistant Chief* Harold Hazelip, whose personal recollections cover the years 1914-1970.

The use of these two methodologies in one project serves three purposes. First, it provides the opportunity to present a documented history of fire protection in Bowling Green, beginning in 1820. Heretofore, an accurate history of Bowling Green's volunteer fire companies* has never been presented. Second, the use of dual methodologies preserves many of the personal narratives of Chief Hazelip. While his narratives do not represent a complete history, they do reflect the events that are important to him and to his understanding of firefighting in Bowling Green. The narratives portray a human history, as they contain personal experiences and second-hand information which is now part of the fire department's tradition. Third, this approach has

*All words, terms and phrases which are marked by an asterisk are defined in the glossary.

vii
allowed me to juxtapose the two methodologies and to examine
some of the implications of each. The project becomes a
laboratory, in a sense, for experimenting with both the pos-
sibilities and limitations of traditional historical method
and folklore fieldwork.

The use of traditional historical method has resulted
in a presentation which is largely statistical and, perhaps,
objective. We discover when events occurred and quantita-
tive information relating to them. We can learn, for exam-
ple, when Bowling Green's first fire engine was purchased
and how much it cost. Sometimes we learn names, yet we
ascertain nothing about the people involved in the event--
the people who helped to shape Bowling Green's firefighting
history. This type of history is important, however, espe-
ially when old documents are the only keys to the past.
Traditional historical method allows the construction of a
history that is complete only to the extent that past
records are complete.

The use of folklore fieldwork, in this case reliance
on personal narratives, yields a presentation which is per-
sonal and, therefore, subjective. The narratives focus on
persons whose lives helped to fashion history. Chief
Hazelip has recalled those events which define his under-
standing of and contribution to the fire department's his-
tory. They are complete only to the extent that his per-
ceptions and interpretations are complete.
A more thorough presentation through folklore fieldwork could be accomplished by interviewing additional informants. Each person would present, undoubtedly, those events which have significance for him. Some events may hold significance for everyone while other events may be significant for only one person. All of the narratives together, following comparisons and contrasts, would provide a more comprehensive oral history than is possible through one person's recollections.

This project, however, does not seek to provide a comprehensive oral history. It focuses on the one man whom Bowling Green's firefighters and fire service officers informally recognize as the department's historian. I began looking to Chief Hazelip as an informant when each inquiry that I made into the past drew a response indicating that I should confer with him.

A native of Warren County, Harold Hazelip was born on January 4, 1930, and began his career in firefighting on June 26, 1952. As a young man, Hazelip listened to stories by and about retired firefighters. His vivid recollections provide him with a depth of history unequalled in the Bowling Green Fire Department. When I interviewed him during 1977 and 1978, I found him knowledgeable and willing to share his information about local firefighting history. Additionally, I found that his historical narratives typify the stories that I heard from other firefighters in Bowling Green who worked with and for him.
Chief Hazelip and I talked at the Central Fire Station, Bowling Green's headquarters, then located on Tenth Street, behind city hall. The interviews took place in induced natural contexts, either in groups of firefighters or with the two of us alone. Both contexts were quite natural since Hazelip often told his stories in the presence of one or more persons. When I was in attendance, I simply asked a question in order to elicit a story rather than waiting for someone else to ask or waiting for the general discussion to lead, eventually, into a story. Provided that I did not abruptly interrupt the ongoing discussion, my questions were always welcomed. At each interview, I established a direction for the session and Hazelip readily took up the discussion.

The following work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter covers the years 1820-1898 when volunteer fire companies served Bowling Green. This chapter was compiled through the use of traditional historical method. The second chapter begins with the establishment of Bowling Green's professional fire department and concludes with the 1930's. Both historical method and folklore fieldwork were used to construct this period of time. The third chapter relies solely on Chief Hazelip's personal narratives. The narratives which are presented in this chapter cover events from the 1940's to 1970. The final chapter discusses some of the strengths and weaknesses of traditional historical method and folklore fieldwork. It suggests that these two methodologies can be used in a complementary manner in order to
construct a complete history. Such a history would focus on persons who have helped to shape the events that we call history in addition to focusing on the events themselves and the statistics which surround them.

Since firefighters use many expressions which are unique to their profession and apply special meanings to commonly used words, a glossary has been included and begins on page 58. An asterisk following a word, term or phrase indicates that the reader should consult the glossary in order to achieve a better understanding of the text.
Assistant Chief Harold Hazelip
CHAPTER ONE

THE VOLUNTEER YEARS

Awareness of the need for fire protection in the city of Bowling Green emerges in official records for the year 1820. On February 14 of that year, the General Assembly, meeting in Frankfort, gave the trustees of Bowling Green the authority to raise not more than $700.00 for the purpose of buying a fire engine. It was not until July 26, 1831, however, that the trustees took any action concerning the purchase of such an engine.

It remains unknown what kind of fire protection, if any, Bowling Green had prior to 1831. Based on developments in other American cities, one can speculate that a bucket brigade* existed in Bowling Green, along with the requirement that every household should own at least one bucket to be used for fighting fires. While this is logical speculation, no records exist which indicate that this was actually the case.

Whatever the situation was, it changed on July 26, 1831, when the following resolution was offered by Richard

---

Curd, Esq.:

Resolved that it is expedient to purchase for the use of this town (Bowling Green) the Engine, now offered for sale by the agent of the American Hydraulic Company, at the price of Three Hundred Dollars to be levied and collected [sic] in pursuance of an act of the general assembly of Kentucky approved on the 14th day of February 1820 Entitled an act concerning the town of Bowling Green.¹

The resolution passed, and Henry Shanks was appointed to take charge of the fire engine, recruit a fire company and report his progress to the board at their next meeting.

The American Hydraulic Company produced fire engines called "coffee-grinders," also known as "side-winders" or "rotary engines." These engines were ten feet long and ranged from three to three and one-half feet in width. "Coffee-grinders" reached their peak in popularity in eighteenth century England and America.² While this type of engine reached Bowling Green later than it reached other cities, it represented a considerable improvement over a typical bucket brigade in efforts to extinguish a fire.

On such a machine, water would be dumped into the tank or "box." By turning the cranks on the side of the engine, a gear and axle rotated, forcing water through the nozzle.* While the engine may seem primitive by modern standards, the steady stream which its nozzle supplied represented

¹Bowling Green, Kentucky, Minutes of the Trustees for the City of Bowling Green (1831), July, located in the State Archives in Frankfort, Kentucky.

a significant improvement for the bucket brigade which, now, emptied its buckets into the engine's tank.

"Coffee-grinder"

Whether Henry Shanks ever organized a fire company remains unknown since the minutes of the trustees contain no record of his reporting back on the matter. In any case, Bowling Green made the final payment for its fire engine on July 18, 1832. The total amount paid, including interest, amounted to $318.00. By September of the same year, an engine house had been constructed\(^1\) though the location is no longer known.

Officially, no further action concerning Bowling Green's

\(^1\)Bowling Green, Kentucky, Minutes of the Trustees for the City of Bowling Green (1832), September, located in the State Archives in Frankfort, Kentucky.
fire protection appears to have occurred until May 3, 1834 when the trustees appointed John L. Lucas and Michael Shanks "to procure substantial fire hooks* and two good ladders for use of this Town in case of fire and report to this board." Once again, no record of a follow-up report exists so it is unknown if the equipment was procured.

Four years after the purchase of the fire engine, official records indicate the formal establishment of a fire company. The following is recorded in the minutes of the trustees for the meeting of June 6, 1835:

Jonathan Hobson reported to this board that a fire company has been organized agreeable to law, and all necessary officers elected and the fire engine being in repair, it is ordered that the officers of said company take charge of the engine and use it for the benefit of this Town.

It is clear that Bowling Green possessed a fire engine by June 6, 1835 and boasted an organized volunteer fire company to operate the engine. It remains unknown as to what happened during the four years between the purchase of the engine and the organization of a fire company "agreeable to law." Had Henry Shanks been unable to organize a fire company in 1831? Did it take Bowling Green four years to establish a fire company? These questions remain unanswered, as do any questions that might be posed involving Jonathan Hobson's fire company since Hobson is not mentioned again in the official records.

By 1838, Bowling Green was in the market for another fire engine, though records do not indicate if it was to
replace or to supplement the 1831 engine. On September 5, 1838, the board of trustees appointed three men to look into a

first rate fire engine with not less than three hundred feet of hose, and make a purchase, providing they do not cost more than one thousand Dollars, Six or seven hundred Dollars to be paid this year, and the bal lance to be paid next year.

The February 27, 1839 minutes indicate the success of these men, recording that the engine was ready for delivery at Philadelphia at a cost of $700.00. Since numerous fire engine manufacturers existed in Philadelphia, it is not possible to say anything specific about the engine that was purchased. Given the time period, however, we can reasonably assume that another hand-operated engine was purchased. Undoubtedly, it was a larger machine, requiring greater manpower since the type of engine manufactured by the American Hydraulic Company had fallen into disuse.

Records for the years 1840-1849 are missing. The early 1850's, however, indicate various expenditures for the fire department. Additional hose and engine lamps were added to the city's fire equipment collection.

The year 1856 seems to have been one of concern for fire protection in Bowling Green. On April 30, William Cook and D.H. Phillips were ordered to inquire into the state of the Fire Department and they are directed to cause the engine and other apparatus to be put in order for efficient use by repairing old or purchasing new.

On August 27, $360.00 were allocated for the purchase of four
hundred feet of hose; and on December 8, it was reported that the hose had been received. Also on December 8, a public meeting was called for the purpose of organizing a fire company. The final entry concerning the fire department for the year 1856 was made on December 23 when a lengthy ordinance was passed, spelling out fire prevention laws, specific responsibilities associated with the laws, and punishment for any violations of the laws.¹

It seems proper to raise some additional questions at this point. Why was there a renewed interest in the fire department, especially to the degree of establishing a fire prevention law in addition to restoring the equipment when relatively little had been done with the department during the last several years? Why was it necessary to call a public meeting to organize a fire company? What happened to the company organized in 1835? No existing records tell us exactly what happened, but it appears that the 1835 fire company disbanded at some point. That may have happened to the fire company that Henry Shanks was supposed to have organized in 1831. There may be some basis, however, to speculate about the renewed interest in the fire department and in fire protection.

On March 16, 1856, a month and a half before William Cook and D.H. Phillips were directed to "inquire into the state of the Fire Department," Nashville, Tennessee

¹See appendix for a complete text of this ordinance.
experienced a large fire on its public square in which thirteen houses were destroyed. While no direct reference is made to Nashville, amidst the concern in Bowling Green, it is not likely that the incident went unnoticed. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the citizens of Bowling Green questioned their ability to cope with such an emergency. Additionally, any concern would have been sustained when news reached the city that a second Nashville fire, on July 9, burned eight buildings, including the Masonic Hall.

Interest in fire protection and the fire department continued into January of 1857 when discussion at the January 19 meeting resulted in the board of trustees directing W. Cook, T.C. Calvert and S.A. Barclay "to investigate the subject of procuring an engine house and they are directed to take into consideration the propriety of purchasing the old Baptist Church from that purpose." The church in question was probably one abandoned by the United Baptist Congregation about 1854. The building stood on the corner of Green (now Center) and Main Streets. Subsequent records do not indicate if an engine house was secured.

---

2 Ibid.
3 Hayward Brown, Charles Bryant and Julia Neal, eds., History of the First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, Kentucky 1818-1968 (Bowling Green, Kentucky: First Baptist Church, 1974), p. 52.
The 1860's saw various purchases made for the fire department in order to keep it in good condition. In February of 1866, Bowling Green was again in the market for a fire engine. For the sum of $700.00, the "Osceola" was purchased from New Albany. The minutes do not specify if this was New Albany, Indiana. Since the name "Osceola" probably refers to the name of the fire company which used the engine,¹ prior to selling it to Bowling Green, little can be said about it except that it was probably another hand-pulled, hand-operated machine.

The year 1873 saw the beginning of additional change in the fire department, bringing with it the establishment of the first department which continued to exist over a long period of time and the demise of which has been recorded. It is also the department which should be considered the immediate forerunner of the current fire department. The November 22, 1873, edition of the Bowling Green Democrat reported that the following proposal was put to the common council:

The proposition made is that the city furnish all the necessary equipment for an organized fire company, working without engines* and by the force of water* from fire plugs located throughout the city at an expense not to exceed $300.00.

The proposition received a favorable response. The following

¹Since no fire engine manufacturing company ever operated under this name and given the penchant of fire companies for naming themselves, often with American Indian names, it is reasonable to suggest that "Osceola" refers to a New Albany fire company.
photograph,¹ taken on February 10, 1874, shows members of the Bowling Green Volunteer Fire Department posed on Fountain Square near the corner of State and Main. E.A. Waggoner, chief, stands near the center of the picture holding a trumpet, the symbol of his rank, while uniformed firemen stand near their hand-pulled hose reels* and hand-pulled ladder wagon.

Two points become apparent. First, Bowling Green

¹This photograph and subsequent photographs were copied from originals in the Camilla Gerard Collection of the Kentucky Library at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky.
possessed a water system by 1873. Second, the water system sustained a high level of pressure, high enough to force water through a hoseline and a nozzle and send out a stream of water that would be sufficient to use in fighting fires.

On February 12, 1925, Bowling Green's Park City Daily News published an interview with John Moltenberry, who had been a member of the volunteer fire department. He describes the volunteer system as it existed in the 1890's:

In those days we all lived at our homes and ran to the fires from our work when the alarm was sounded. The alarm in use at that time was the ringing of the court(house) bell and blowing the whistles at the railroad station. We were paid $2.00 for each fire we attended. In those days we had nothing but the hose and the old hand reels and no horses to pull them.

The accourtment [sic] of one company were stationed at the depot and the other consisting of the hook and ladder and three reels was at the old station house on State Street next to the jail. . . . In those days the average of fires (per year) was about sixty.

During the 1870's, 80's and 90's, the fire department was kept in good condition. Records of the meetings of the common council show that various and numerous purchases were made in order to add to the fire department's inventory as well as to maintain the condition of the firefighting apparatus.

The demise of the volunteer system as a first line of defense against fire began on July 3, 1898. Engaging in some sort of pre-Fourth of July celebration, most of the volunteers had succeeded in achieving an inebriated condition. Unfortunately, a fire alarm sounded at the height of the celebration. The Potter Opera House at the corner of
Main and College was burning. The ineffective response of the volunteers caused the opera house to burn completely while Potter's Bank and the Watkins Furniture Store, located nearby, received heavy damage. The delay surrounding the volunteers' response, their substandard efforts and the extensive property damage caused substantial discontent, leading to efforts to establish a paid fire department that would always be prepared to respond to fire alarms.*
CHAPTER TWO

PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS

On September 1, 1898, Bowling Green's paid fire department began operation. John Moltenberry and Dave W. Harrison, who had served as volunteers, received appointments as full-time firemen.

James A. Wilkerson received the appointment as chief of the department. Wilkerson worked as the city engineer at the
time the fire department became a paid operation and had served as the chief of the volunteers. He continued to serve as city engineer while exercising his responsibilities as fire chief, a position he held until 1904.

The new department moved its headquarters from the old volunteer station on the west side of State Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, to a new location on the east side of State near the Park City Hotel. The move was not the only change that accompanied the advent of the paid department. A horse-drawn hose and chemical wagon replaced the hand-pulled apparatus as the first line of equipment for fighting fires. John Moltenberry stated that the "first hose and chemical engine was purchased in the fall of 1898, the second in 1900, and the hook and ladder in 1901, all under Dr. Townsend's administration." 1

The horse-drawn chemical wagon carried a supply of hose and a tank containing water. Chemicals added to the water created pressure, forcing the mixture through the hose and nozzle onto the fire. The system worked similarly to present-day soda-acid fire extinguishers. 2 If the suppression of a fire required a greater quantity of water than was carried on the wagon, then larger diameter hose lines were connected to fire hydrants; and hydrant pressure was used to

1"3 Members of Fire Department of City, Including the Chief, Belonged to Volunteer Corps," Park City Daily News, February 12, 1925, Camilla Gerard Collection.

2This technique is further explained on pp. 20-21.
extinguish the blaze.

Through the early 1900’s, even after the paid fire department grew larger than two men, volunteer firefighters aided the paid men. Upon hearing an alarm, the volunteers ran to the fire station, manned a hand-pulled hose reel and raced to the fire in order to assist.

According to the Park City Daily News,¹ Bowling Green had seventeen fire alarm boxes located in the business section of the city. The boxes, used around the turn of the century, remained locked. In order to transmit an alarm from one of these boxes, a person had to secure a key from the porch of a neighborhood house. Assuming that a person found a porch where a key was stored, he could unlock the box and pull down on a hook, located inside, transmitting a signal to the fire station over a special set of wires. A code of numbers at the station, punched out on paper, indicated the origin of the transmission.² When the system became faulty, transmitting alarms at random and on its own, it was abandoned. Private, residential telephones became the vehicle for transmitting fire alarms. This system remains the primary one today.

On April 1, 1904, after having spent two years as a fireman and three years as a captain, John Moltenberry received the appointment as fire chief. Except for the years

¹ "Do You Remember When?" Park City Daily News, September 28, 1941, Camilla Gerard Collection.
² This system is called the "joker."
1909-1911 Moltenberry remained chief until the end of 1938, serving in that position longer than any other individual. His firefighting career began on the volunteer department where he worked with hand-pulled apparatus, saw the advent of horse-drawn equipment and ushered in the motorized apparatus era in Bowling Green. Though he was an experienced firefighter who initiated change and saw two eras pass before

---

In 1909, Giles E. Townsend replaced George T. Wilson as mayor and appointed W.J. Hendricks as fire chief although Hendricks was not a firefighter. Since records for the year have been lost or destroyed, the motivation for this appointment remains unclear. Possibly, Hendricks was given this position as a reward for supporting Townsend's mayoral bid.
him, Chief Hazelip remembered Moltenberry for two peculiarities in this exchange of conversation between him and present-day Captain Rob Roberson:

Hazelip: This was before my time but the old-timers told me about it, that Chief Moltenberry wouldn't allow, that was to smoke or to whistle. He'd send a man—he had the power to hire or fire. And if he caught a man whistling in the station, he'd send him home. And if he went over to town or something, they'd—one of the men—would stand in the front door and watch for him, and the rest of them would get back here by Old Nebo, this old stove, they called it. That was their pet name. It was the brand name. And they would all hang around Old Nebo and they'd smoke their cigarettes. And there'd be two rules broke right there. They'd hear a whistle, they'd throw those cigarettes in the stove and . . .

Roberson: They were allowed to smoke a pipe, though, weren't they?

Hazelip: The chief smoked a pipe and everybody else that wanted to smoke a pipe, smoked a pipe. But they couldn't smoke cigarettes.

While Moltenberry seems to have been respected in the community, he was unable to withstand political interference in the fire department and was ousted from his position as fire chief. Along with Moltenberry, several of his men found themselves outside the fire department during the years 1909-1911.

W.J. Hendricks replaced John Moltenberry and spent his first year and a half as chief without any particular problems. The ramifications of having a political appointee as fire chief, instead of a veteran firefighter, became obvious to the community on March 15, 1911, when a small downtown fire turned into a major conflagration that threatened the courthouse.
Lacking substantial firefighting experience and knowledge, Hendricks directed his men to attack the flames from the side of the building where the fire began, directing streams of water in the same direction that the wind was blowing. This technique pushed the flames into an adjoining building where the wind carried them on down the street, obviously worsening the situation. The wind changed, relieving Hendricks until he saw the courthouse dome ablaze.¹

Two firemen, who had been dismissed from the department during the political upheaval, ran to the nearby fire station and pulled out one of the old hand reels that John Moltenberry had insisted on keeping as emergency back-up equipment. They proceeded to climb to the belltower through the inside of the courthouse and extinguished the flames, saving the structure.

Four months after this fiasco, on July 5, the McCormack Building burned. At the time, it received billing as the worst fire in Bowling Green's history, and it probably was the worst. Regardless of the accuracy of the statement, the result was Hendricks' resignation. Moltenberry received an invitation to return to the department as chief and did so on the condition that he could have his old crew back. The condition was met. Porter Dodd, a fireman who was hired in

1900 and ousted during the political interference, chronicled the events: "Fired Dec. 6, 1909" and several pages later, "Reappointed Dec. 11, 1911."1

When Chief Moltenberry and his men returned to the department, they received raises in pay effective January 1, 1912. The chief would earn $85.00 per month, with captains receiving $65.00. Firemen with more than two years experience would earn $60.00 while eighteen months to two years work qualified a man for $57.50. Twelve to eighteen months experience earned a man $55.00 while those with less than a year in the department received $55.00 per month.2 The department consisted of ten men. Until the early 1940's, firemen worked six twenty-four hour workdays followed by one day off.

Until 1909, firemen responded from two locations, one on State Street and the other at Main, near Adams. These were, respectively, Company One and Company Two. The latter served as Chief Moltenberry's headquarters until the new Central Fire Station on Tenth Street behind city hall was completed in 1909. All apparatus was moved into the new facility.

The new $10,000.00 station accommodated a chief's buggy, two hose and chemical wagons and a ladder wagon, all powered by horses. The station boasted four large, modern, 

---

1Porter Dodd's notebook, Camilla Gerard Collection.
2Bowling Green, Kentucky, Minutes of the Bowling Green Council (1911), December 22, State Archives, Frankfort.
double doors along the front.

Bowling Green Fire Department, 1909

Early in 1912, the fire department suffered its only work-related fatality. "Mourning in the Fire Dep'tment," an unidentified newspaper clipping in the Camilla Gerard Collection of the Kentucky Library recounts the February 29 tragedy:

This morning at 7.45 o'clock, the house of Monroe Browning, colored, on East High Street, was burned to the ground.

The fire department responded immediately, and when fire wagon No. 1 reached College and Second streets with "Dan" and "Doc" pulling, old "Dan" dropped dead. The firemen saw the horse was tired and stopped to let it rest, when the animal fell to rest forever.

When Wagon No. 2 was turning the corner of College and Sixth streets, the rear wheels skidded against the curbing on account of the snow, turning it over. The firemen jumped and Leslie Dodd's foot was slightly bruised. The other occupants were Firemen Ed Moltenberry, Porter Dodd, and Claude Wheat, who escaped injury. The wagon
turned on its left side and all the chemical apparatus was badly damaged.

Mayor Townsend, with Patrolman Connors and the city prisoners, took the hose and hurried to the fire but the flames had gained too much headway before the department could arrive on account of the accidents, and they were prevented from rendering much service. The origin of the fire is unknown.

"Dan" was about eighteen years of age. This horse was purchased by the city thirteen years ago, during the first administration of Mayor Townsend, for $165. Mayor Townsend was returning from Louisville, and as he passed through Cave City, he saw "Old Dan" in the field of Mr. Dan Middleton. He sent Dr. John E. Gray to Cave City to examine the animal. Mr. Allen Jenkins had an option on the animal, and the city purchased it from Mr. Jenkins at the above amount.

The other gray horse which was driven with "Dan" is named "Doc," for Dr. Townsend, and is twenty-one years of age and almost like "Dan."

In 1913, the sun began to set on the equestrian era in the Bowling Green Fire Department, though it took nearly six years for all of the horses to be replaced. At an April 21, 1913, meeting of the city council, a report raised the suggestion that the city purchase a "Fire Auto Truck" in order to do away with the expense of keeping so many horses. Chief Moltenberry favored the move because "the horses were always getting sick." On May 5, 1913, the council recommended the purchase of a "Motor Hose & Chemical Wagon" since it found that one "could be had on reasonable terms & price." The resolution passed by a vote of seven to three. Chief Hazelip describes the motorized equipment, including the first purchase, as he remembers the information being told to him:

The first truck they got, the first motor vehicles that they got, were nothing but like a pick-up truck, but they had a chemical tank like a large soda-acid fire extinguisher and reeled hoses. Instead of unwinding off the reel, it was a round basket and it was coiled down in this basket and they'd come out with this.
And they had an agitator, a lever, to stir the soda and water and spilled the acid and that would build up the pressure. The only other thing than that, they just hauled hose. They were hose wagons. Next, they got Kankakees. That was the brand, Kankakee. It was built in Kankakee, Illinois. Then, the next thing they got was pumpers called Ahrens-Fox. And they had piston pumps, front-end mounted, in front of it, sticking out in front of the radiator. It had a big pressure dome up on top. It brings pressure. And they were driven off the engine. And they were, I believe they had two Ahrens-Fox.

They had a horse-drawn hook and ladder. Later on, they had a trailer. They converted it to be pulled by a truck.

Porter Dodd's notes indicate that the first motorized vehicle was an Ahrens-Fox fire engine, not a hose and chemical wagon. The notes indicate that delivery was made on April 17, 1914. Additional notes made by Dodd indicate that on October 10, 1918, a Kankakee hose and chemical wagon, such as the one described by Hazelip, was delivered. On December 31 of the same year, a second Kankakee hose and chemical wagon and a Kankakee designed to pull the ladder wagon arrived in Bowling Green. Trucks designed to accommodate horse-drawn equipment were commonplace in American fire departments at this time.

There is, however, more logic in Hazelip's recollection than in the historical events which appear to have occurred.

---

1 This, now defunct, manufacturer of fire engines was located in Cincinnati, Ohio.

2 Hazelip and Dodd agree on the kind of equipment that Bowling Green purchased. Only chronology remains in question. I am inclined to rely on Porter Dodd's notes since he was a member of the fire department when these trucks were delivered. Hazelip has second-hand information, though it is accurate for the most part.
evolved. In the development of firefighting apparatus, chemical equipment preceded the development and use of piston and centrifugal pumps, although the eras overlapped. Normally, fire departments moved from chemical equipment to gasoline engine pumpers,* the latter being considered more modern and efficient. Bowling Green's purchase of a piston pumper, followed by purchases of chemical apparatus, represents an unusual direction.

While the direction may have been unusual for most communities, Chief Hazelip himself may have provided a clue that helps to explain this reversal in development. He said, "Bowling Green always did have good hydrant pressure* . . . as long as you didn't try to get a lot of volume." Since
the volunteers appear to have successfully fought the city's fires with hydrant pressure and their hand-pulled hose reels, it is possible that the more expensive pumpers were regarded as unnecessary expenses. Perhaps chemical apparatus did the job.

As the chemical apparatus era ended and the Kankakees were replaced, piston and centrifugal pumps took over; and all subsequent engine purchases brought new pumpers to Bowling Green. The next purchase, following the 1918 Kankakees, brought the first Seagrave fire truck to Bowling Green. The Seagrave purchase began a long tradition in the Bowling Green Fire Department where most engines have been furnished by Seagrave since 1924.

The colorful era of steam-operated, horse-pulled fire engines never arrived in Bowling Green. It never arrived in many towns of a similar size. Allusions to this era, however, do exist in the Bowling Green Fire Department's oral tradition. When I asked Chief Hazelip what he knew about it, he responded:

Well, I haven't ever found a picture or anything of it, but Porter did tell me. He told me how he lit the fire on them. Let me ask the chief if he ever heard about them. [Leaves and returns a few moments later.] He said he's heard them talk about it, but as far as finding any records or pictures, he hasn't been able to come up with them.

Since no evidence, written or photographic, exists to support the allusions to steam engines, I believe it is fair to conclude that none ever belonged to the Bowling Green Fire Department. This conclusion is true especially
in light of existing photographs which provide unbroken continuity concerning the fire department's apparatus. None of these facts preclude the possibility that Porter Dodd operated or helped to operate a steam engine that was passing through Bowling Green or that was located in some other community.

During the year that brought an end to the equestrian era in Bowling Green's fire department, a national flu epidemic stretched across the United States. Bowling Green was not spared and attempted to operate the fire department with a complement of sick firefighters. As Hazelip and I stood in a doorway at the front of the engine room looking out onto Tenth Street at the building across from city hall, he spoke of the epidemic:

Porter wasn't the only one that told me this, some of the other old-timers told about it. In 1918, people were dying around with that flu, real bad. And that was the funeral home right there and that was the door where they took people in. And right after the funeral, they'd take them out the front door to the hearse and take them off to the cemetery. And there was so many people dying that they had them stacked out there along that wall on the sidewalk. They didn't have enough room inside for the bodies. And when they'd take one out, they'd move one more in. In line, they'd move them on up. And everybody, practically, had the flu and they couldn't hardly do anything. The only ones that could take care of people was the ones who hadn't caught it yet or already got over it.

And the firemen, here, all had it. But not a one of them took off from home, I mean took off from work and none of them died. They all made it. But they, all of them, sat around Old Nebo, the stove, and old furnace that they used to have sitting right here, hooked in right there where that heater is, there. And there used to be a furnace they'd set it up in winter time and tear it down in the summer and move it out back in the shed back there. And they all sat around it with blankets around them and the mayor brought in a case of whiskey.
And they sat there and got stinking drunk, all of them did. And they just stayed as hot as they could and wrapped up, drank whiskey and sweated it out. And everyone of them made it through it. And they said that everyone of them was expecting to join the crowd across the street just any minute, they was so sick. He said they made some runs back in that bad weather in the shape they was in. They was lucky. They didn’t have a major fire.

Generally, one expects firefighters to involve themselves with the suppression of fires and related activities. Generally, that assignment has occupied the Bowling Green Fire Department. Sometime in the 1930’s, however, the firemen were called upon to prepare themselves to perform an unusual task. Directing my attention to a light bulb, no longer functional and covered with the same green paint that covered the wall, high up on the east wall of the engine room, Hazelip explained that the bulb used to be red. He continued:

About forty years ago, John Dillinger was supposed to have come to town. And they were afraid he was going to rob somebody, one of the banks or something. I guess it was one of the banks. And the police, they were afraid that if he was to go into the bank and the alarm would go off, that they wouldn’t have enough men, in case they got into gunfire, a shoot-out.

And so, they run a special alarm, a wire, from the bank to the fire station and to that light bulb. And if he was to break into the bank, then that light would blink. And they placed a gun rack, filled with shotguns, at the bottom of the brass pole.* If that bulb was to blink, the firemen was supposed to slide down the pole, grab a shotgun, climb onto the engines and go help the police.

Hazelip went on to comment that the device was never used.
A PERSONAL HISTORY

Chief Hazelip's repertoire of personal experience narratives covers twenty-eight years of fire department history. His own experiences demonstrate the development of the department and reflect the days prior to his appointment. Until the 1950's, the fire service changed very little in towns such as Bowling Green. The equipment changed in appearance, but the strategies remained very much the same. While John Moltenberry saw the department develop from a volunteer system with hand-pulled equipment into a horse-drawn era, followed by motorization, the basic techniques for fighting fires remained the same. When Harold Hazelip joined the department in 1952, little had changed since the days of the coffee-grinder. The basic strategy involved getting as much water onto a fire as quickly as possible. Fundamentally, only the transportation changed.

In his twenty-eight years with the fire department, Hazelip saw more change, though less visible, than had occurred in the previous one hundred twenty-one years. It would be five more years, about 1957, before these less visible changes would begin. The first five years of his service accurately reflect the work that had gone on prior to his entrance into the fire department. His narratives of the
ensuing years reflect, typically, the experiences and history of Bowling Green's firefighters.

When Hazelip went to work as a fireman, not all the proper protective gear was available, as it is now. Currently, each new firefighter receives a full set of modern turn-out gear.* In Hazelip's rookie* days, this was not the case:

We had old, those aluminum construction helmets. That's what the city furnished for fire helmets at that time. I'd been here ever since June and this was some time about January, I think it was. And the chief would go out every day and I'd say, "Chief, don't forget to get me a helmet." "Oh yeah, I'll get you one." Well, he'd go. He'd forget it. He'd go down to McGinley's and buy the helmet and he never had bought me a helmet.

And I found an old metal helmet that was shaped something like the regular fire helmets are, and up in the loft. It was dirty! It looked like a coal bucket, a used one at that! And I cleaned it up and was wearing it around here until he could remember to get me one of those others. And it didn't have any strap. It just fit down over your head like a hat.

On the way to a fire, with Hazelip riding the back* of the pumper, he found that his new piece of equipment failed:

We'd rounded the corner down here by, what's the federal building now, but it was the post office then and the wind blew it off. I lost it. We got down there and some college boys picked it up and followed us down there and give it back to me.

Equipment problems of one sort or another have plagued the fire department over the years. Until 1977, turn-out gear worn by Bowling Green's firefighters ignited at a lower temperature than infant sleepwear. Trucks have not always been replaced when it was necessary, causing firefighters to operate with malfunctioning equipment.¹ Even the metal

¹In a forthcoming narrative, difficulty in raising a ladder compounds the problems at the Mansard Hotel fire.
construction helmet that eluded Harold Hazelip had not been designed for fire department use. Still, the department functioned.

A general consensus of firefighters shows that they believe their department suffers since it is not revenue-producing. Unlike the police department, which produces revenue through various citations, money spent in the fire department does not bring any return. The equipment is expensive. A modern pumper costs at least $80,000.00. Firefighters generally believe that the city is reluctant to spend money in an area where no financial return exists.

Chief Hazelip’s career began inauspiciously. His first working fire\(^*\) is memorable for two reasons. First, it was his first working fire, an event that marks an important occasion for a firefighter. In a large city, this event may come during the first day on the job,\(^1\) though for Hazelip it came a bit later. Second, the event is surrounded with mistakes that Chief Hazelip recalls with delightful affection and humor. These are once in a career mistakes which taught him what he should not do, contributing to his firefighting education.

The first working fire I ever went on, it was on West Eleventh Street, just across the railroad tracks and it was a duplex apartment. It was fully involved.*

---

I was riding the back of the pumper, old Pumper One that we still have as a stand-by.* I was riding the back and Chief Bill Kemp was riding shotgun.* Lonnie Bellamy was driving. And we got to the corner of Eleventh and Clay Street. There was a hydrant there and the chief hollered for me to catch that hydrant.* Well, I jumped off and looped the hose* and he said to Lonnie, he said, "He might not know how to do that. Run back and see if he knows how to hook that hydrant up."* Lonnie ran back, jumped out of the cab, ran back there and said, "You know how to do it?" And I said, "Yeah, go on." So he ran back around and got in the truck, the pumper, and they took off for the fire.

The other pumper had already pulled up in front of us. And they were taking off. I think they must have--they was going to lay a line from there down to the next hydrant. I guess that's what it was. Well, anyway, Pumper One went on down to the front of the building that was on fire. And they got out and come around, thinking they had plenty of time to pull off some extra hose, break the line* and put the nozzle on.

Well, I went ahead, hooked up, turned the hydrant on and the water got to them before they could break the line. And I ran down there and tried to help them kink the hose to stop it and it filled the bed* full of water.\(^1\) Of course, every bit of the hose that was up in the bed just started swelling up and getting full of water. Well, we got it kinked and shut off, got a hose clamp* on it. The chief says some choice words and says, "Here, you all hook it up and take it down the other side." And just went off and left us, went around to help the other firemen fight the fire. So, I don't think he thought we knew how to go ahead and do what he told us to do. He thought, "If I keep them two busy out here, they won't be getting in the way."

We went ahead and got the nozzle on it and released the hose clamp and took off down the other side of the house, like he said. We got down there and the only flames we could see was what was coming over the top of the house. So, that's the flames we threwed water* on. It wasn't long until here he come running around there, a-cussing and a-roaring, telling us to shut it down. We was drowning everybody on the other side of the house. We wasn't putting a bit of it on the fire. Of course, we never got to live that down. The chief told that on us from then on, as long as he lived.

This story is regarded as humorous because it reflects the ineptness of the new recruits and the chief's lack of

\(^{1}\text{That is, it filled the hose full of water.}\)
knowledge concerning their abilities. Hazelip's independent actions led to confusion, and compliance with the chief's instructions led to further confusion. The nearly nonexistent training procedures of that time resulted in such predicaments.

Chief Hazelip described the training procedures that had been used throughout the fire department's history until the late 1950's:

We just didn't have it. You learned, get on the back of the truck the day you got here and try to do what you see the others do until you found out how to do it.

Gilbert was awful good at training us, Gilbert Chaffin. He was a good training officer about things like that. But still, it took a certain amount of time to get it done. He would drill us on city map. I know the first thing they showed me was how to ride the back of the truck without getting thrown off. That was to keep your knees bent and ride with the weight on your toes.

Of course, I still had to learn that the hard way. Because the first trip we took down Kentucky Street, I was standing flat-footed. We hit that double dip at Eighth and Kentucky and I was wagging in the breeze like a flag behind it.

Learning through imitation has disappeared as the basic method of education in the Bowling Green Fire Department. All rookies now undergo rigid training before they approach a fire engine. Classroom education and practice, through simulated conditions, provide new firefighters with basic knowledge so that mistakes are minimized when they begin their jobs.

As I have previously suggested, the basic principle used in fighting fires in Bowling Green and many other cities involved inundating a structure with as much water as
possible, as quickly as possible. From the coffee-grinder to the 1950's, this technique applied. Now schooled in the latest firefighting techniques, Hazelip reminisced about the old days, both nostalgically and drolly, poignantly illustrating the obsolete technique:

McCurley: Did you use straight pressure* off the hydrant then?

Hazelip: Back then we did. We just took, we'd catch a hydrant with a two and a-half inch hose, lay the hose to the fire, disconnect it, put a straight stream nozzle* on it, go in the front door and take the fire, the pictures off the walls, the furniture, and the rugs off the floor and all of it right out the back door. We was really good at putting fires out in them days. Of course, they used to say, they'd talk about the water damage a lot, then. They'd say, "There's a lot of water damage." And looking back, I imagine there was. We just, we'd sure put them out fast.

McCurley: What did you use the pumper for?

Hazelip: Transportation.

McCurley: Is that all?

Hazelip: Most of the time. Now something like a warehouse or something like that, we'd pump. But if it was a residential house, most of the time if it wasn't the booster line* power, it was a two and a-half inch line off the hydrant and no pump was even thought of being used. Didn't even use a combination nozzle.* We'd use a straight stream.

While tales centering around lack of training and misuse of equipment may be recalled with a sense of humor, not all of them involve innocuous situations. The narrow escape motif appears in the repertoire of every experienced firefighter. The job is inherently dangerous even with the best training. Burning structures filled with dense smoke eliminate visibility. Firefighters often find their way through
an involved structure by touch, extending a gloved hand into unknown darkness, hoping their training and instincts lead them the right way. The dangers of falling through a weakened floor, stumbling onto explosive materials in burning houses, of finding oneself buried beneath burning debris, remain ever-present threats. Firefighters experience narrow escapes many times in the course of a career. The lucky ones live to tell how they evacuated a building which exploded as they departed through a door or a window. They tell about roofs that collapsed as they stepped onto the aerial ladder.* Each story is unique and each story is the same, a narrow escape from injury or death. The potential for tragedy looms before each firefighter at each fire. Few firefighters escape at least one work-related injury each year. Deficient training and unfamiliarity with equipment compound the hazards. As a rookie, Chief Hazelip experienced a narrow escape, rooted in the normal hazards of firefighting and compounded by unfamiliarity with the capabilities of equipment:

Of course, I came to work here in June of 1952. And that winter during real cold weather, ice and snow on the ground, there was a tobacco barn, Burford's. One of Burford's barns down there, kind of like to the back and over to the side of where Derby Underwear is. I think Derby uses that for part of their employees parking lot now. That barn caught afire and burnt down during the night. It was on a Saturday night, late after midnight sometime. And that was the first big fire I ever went on.

Of course, Chief Bellamy and I were both rookies at that time. And there was another fellow came on about the same time that's not working here no more. It was Cecil Beech.
We had a row of houses across the railroad. There was four houses in a row down there. When the barn was falling, it was putting out so much heat that it set a bunch of rail cars on fire. We put them out and the switch engine pulled them out of the way and we extinguished the fires on them as they was pulling away.

And then, that exposed those houses and they started blistering, just the front of them. The paint on the front would just ignite. And they had a fence between every yard. And we was running from one house to the other with a two and a-half inch hose line. Jumping the fence, dragging it over and run to the next one and work our way from one end to the other. And on one of those lines was Beech and myself.

Well, about the third or fourth trip down through there, all of a sudden, I just saw the ground coming up at me. And I went out from heat and exhaustion. And Beech, they tell me, it seems like I heard a little of it. But they said he started screaming, "Gilbert!" just as loud as he could. That was the captain's name, Gilbert Chaffin. He hollered for Gilbert.

He grabbed the hose up and pointed the nozzle at my face and was fixing to open the line* up to wet my face to revive me. And Gilbert was hollering at him, "Don't do it! Don't do it!" and running just as hard as he could and threw a tackle into him just in time, when he pulled the, opened the nozzle.* And it dug a hole in the ground right beside my head that you could have buried my head in.

I'm glad Gilbert, I was really lucky that Gilbert threwed that tackle into him 'cause it would have probably knocked my eyeballs out through my ears. And, of course, that was some of our great training back in them days.

The lack of techniques and under-utilization of equipment were not peculiar to Bowling Green. Most cities and towns in most states approached firefighting in the same fashion. Except in larger cities such as New York, Chicago and a few others where experimentation occurred, most fire departments extinguished fires by using the greatest volume of water in as short a time as possible. During his own career, Hazelip recognized and welcomed new, more efficient strategies.
One of the first changes occurred when the combination nozzle replaced the straight stream nozzle. The new nozzle boasted a control by which firefighters could increase or decrease the flow of water, depending on the size of the fire and need for volume. This change resulted in less water damage to areas that had not been burning. Education, initiated at the state level, increased the professionalism and efficiency of Kentucky's fire departments. In response to my question concerning the beginning of change in the Bowling Green Fire Department, Hazelip explained:

Well, let's see. I'd say in the, about middle sixties. Early sixties. In the early sixties we started. Let's see, fifty-two. No, I guess it's in probably the late fifties because in, the state started sending in a man once a year for two weeks and give us intensive training. And that was the real technical firefighting strategy that we had in those days, was from this man that came in.

And, let's see. I guess it's been, he came for about ten years and then, of course, we started a drill program here and started getting some well-trained drill instructors. Each time we'd get a new drill instructor, he was a better man at the job. Now, we've got a deal the way it is, our company officers have, most of them, have had good training through the state and also through the university up here. And our line officers are trainers. Several of them are state instructors. They go train volunteer fire departments over this area of the state. They do that on their days off.

I'd say that since I've been on the fire department, there's more improvements than there was from the beginning up to when I came. Not so much in amount of man-power and what we've got to fight fire with, as much as knowing how to use what we have. That's the main thing. And it had to be that way because of modern materials and things that they have now. Plastics and, of course, a whole lot more petroleum products and things of that nature. There's just a whole lot more to it.

And there, it was a case of have to. You just had to learn. It was like, what do they say, necessity is the mother of invention? Necessity was the mother of our learning how to fight fires different from the way we had, instead of just pointing a nozzle and throwing
water at it. Knowing how to approach it, knowing how to evacuate certain areas. There's just a whole lot more to it than there used to be.

Today, firefighting's not a job. It's a science. A lot of people don't realize that, I'm sure, especially our city fathers. They still look at us about like I look at my children. They've grown, but I still call them kids. I think that they still think we play checkers and sit around and wait for the bell to ring so we can blow the siren and take off down the street like a bunch of clowns or something. I've had, up to now, twelve hours of college credit in fire science up through Western. And I've, I would say, I've doubled my knowledge with that twelve hours of fire science, if not more.

The work schedule, too, has changed for firefighters over the years. While no specific dates have been recalled, it is clear that at the outset of the paid fire department Bowling Green firemen worked six twenty-four hour workdays, followed by one day off. Around 1940, the schedule was revised to twenty-four hours on duty, followed by twenty-four hours off duty. In 1964, it was revised to the present schedule of twenty-four hours on duty, followed by forty-eight hours off duty.

This work schedule lends itself to a unique comraderie among firefighters. Each fireman lives one-third of his working life with a team of others in his profession, whereas an office worker spends less than one-fourth of his working life with associates. Moreover, firefighters live with the awareness that their lives depend on their own actions and the prompt action and decisiveness of their colleagues. The mutual dependency causes the group to take on the aspects of a family, according to many firefighters. Emotions and thoughts are shared within the unit, and an individual remains
part of the group even when others may be angry with him. Any anger and dissension, however, dissipate when the alarm bell* rings. The "family" has a job to do and the pride of being professional firefighters takes over. As the engine leaves the station, with red lights flashing and siren sounding, the focus of attention shifts to saving lives and property. For a firefighter, these responsibilities transcend all else.

Yet, long periods of time may pass when a shift* will make no runs.* Sometimes, two shifts will catch all the runs while the third shift experiences no alarm for as much as three weeks. Even with complete schedules each day, time drags. The routine clean-up procedures, the training periods, the meals, all become over-shadowed by anticipation. The longer they go without a run, it seems, the more imminent an alarm becomes; and the anticipation and pressure build.

As an outlet for the pressure, firefighters often rely on pranks and jokes. "The pranks and jokes in the firehouse act as a counterpoint to the hours of drill, memorization of street locations and specific buildings. Without these occasional outlets the pressure of the job would be unbearable."\(^1\) Bowling Green firefighters perpetrate numerous and sundry jokes and pranks. One prank, however, stands out for Harold Hazelip, even though it occurred before he joined the department. According to him the following prank attained some fame:

\(^1\)McCarl, *Good Fire/Bad Night*, p. 11.
Well, I don't know, I might have mentioned to you about Aaron Moore. Aaron was one of the assistant chiefs that passed away about six or seven years ago. But the day, the story is, he came to work here, oh, let's see, it must have been forty-eight, forty-nine, somewhere along there. And the night that he came to work at the fire department, they had a big fire at the old freight depot, where the brickyard is now, by the railroad. And they fought that fire all night long. It was a doozey. They finally got it knocked down.* They was in here the next morning. They got things put away, the trucks ready to go, getting ready to change shifts.

Aaron told the chief, he said, "Chief," he said, "I quit a good job with the state to come here. My father wanted to be a fireman." He said, "If I was to quit now, Merit," he called her. Her name was Mildred, but he always called her Merit. He said, "Merit would kill me if I quit this job the first day. But, if you see that I'm not going to work out and you decide that you don't want me to be a fireman, you just tell me I won't work out and you decide that you don't want me to be a fireman, you just tell me I won't work out and tell me to leave. And I'll shake your hand and leave and you'll be the best friend I ever had." The chief laughed and, of course, he stayed. He used to say, "I could do better with one old mule and an acre of ground at Alvaton."

Well, he hadn't been working here long and Wayne Constant who's the chief of police now was, I think, he was a deputy sheriff or something like that at that time and he had several friends here in the fire department, some of the old-timers. He'd come by and loaf with them. And he knew Aaron from years before and he loved to play jokes on him.

And up here across from the courthouse, there was a little old novelty shop. One morning he sneaked off and went up there and bought a little rubber mouse and brought it down to the fire station.

And, I think you've heard me mention Bee Carpenter. Well, Bee wore glasses that was about as thick as the bottom of a Coca Cola bottle. And he kept fingerprints on them all the time. And Bee, when he wanted to see something, he'd look over them or under them or something like that.

And they went up to eat dinner.¹ And the usual thing, the cook would eat first and come down and sit on the phone* and let the rest of them go up. And the chief would go home for dinner. Well, that day, the chief was in on it. He stayed and stayed on the phone and let them all go up and eat the same time as the cook 'cause the cook wanted to be in on this.

¹Refers to the noonday meal.
And they slipped this mouse to Bee Carpenter and Bee set right at the end of that big long table. And Moore sat right around the corner to his right. Well, they passed the bean bowl around and all the other things. When they got to Bee, Bee set the bowl down and started putting beans in his plate. And he looked over there at Moore and looked down at the rest of them.

And somebody down there set, a couple of the young guys, set to pushing and elbowing each other or something. You know, making a little commotion. Moore was looking down there at them, what was going on, and Bee laid that mouse in his own plate. And took these beans and poured over top of it, passed it on, then set to eat.

After a while, old Bee, he rared back and got to looking at his plate like that [close inspection] and took his fork, started punching them beans like that [jabbing into the beans]. Everybody stopped and looked at Bee and said, "What's the matter, Bee?"

I don't usually use this word, but I'm going to 'cause that is what they said. He said he got to pushing that and Moore was looking too, and everybody was looking. He reached down and got that mouse by the tail and he brought it up out of the beans and held it up like that [raised arm, out in front at eye level]. That beans and bean juice dripping off it right back down in the plate. He said, "What is that?" He says, "It's a goddamn mouse!"

Well, he got up and he went into the kitchen to the garbage can and all of them was saying, "Ooh Lord! Aw, that's awful!" you know. And he said, "That's the nastiest looking thing I ever saw!" you know and dropped it in the garbage can and come back in there. And he says, "You ought to have drowned, you little son of a bitch!" Come back, sat down and started eating his beans, you know.

Well, Moore started swelling up like that [puffs out cheeks] and he heads for the door. Well, little old Hubert Pendix was sitting on the other side and he had a weak stomach anyhow. He knew what was going to happen and it was more than he could stand and he headed for the door and they got there at the same time. And they was shoving at each other, trying to get through the door. Well, Hubert broke loose first and run to the bathroom, throwing up.

Well, Moore couldn't get in there, so he comes running downstairs to this one down here. And he comes out here. He run past the chief, a-gagging, and he got back there and he threw up everything he'd eaten for a week. And he come out and he's rubbing the sweat off his face and he's saying, "Oh me! Oh me!" The chief says, "Aaron, what's the matter?" He says, "Oh! They found a mouse in the beans!" He said, "Oh." He says, "That's
not so bad is it? They took him out didn't they?"
"Yeah," he says, "but they kept on eating the beans!"

In forty-seven they had a state fireman's convention here. And, of course, they told it. It was one of the jokes that was told around during the fireman's convention. And for years after I come to work here, in fifty-two, we could go somewhere, to another town two or three hundred miles from Bowling Green, go into another fire station, introduce ourselves as firemen from Bowling Green and they'd say, "Oh yeah, that's the place where they had the mouse in the beans."

All experienced firefighters in Bowling Green, and probably firefighters elsewhere, can recall a "most memorable fire." The fire will differ from one man to the next since each has his own reason for emphasizing a particular conflagration. Sometimes that memorable fire involves death. Death resulting from fire is rarely discussed immediately after the event. The rare comments usually involve an absurdity or humor, done, I believe, to relieve the deep feelings associated with such a tragedy. Later, from a distance of two or three months, death is discussed matter-of-factly or with pathos, depending on who opens the topic for discussion.

In a narrative that began matter-of-factly, setting the stage for his most memorable fire, Chief Hazelip told a grim story in which his voice approached the inaudible at times. At those times, the sentences shortened. Though nearly ten years old, the tragedy remained fresh in his mind. Perhaps adding greater tragedy is the fact that all experienced firefighters can tell this tale. Only the time and places change in this tale which really transcends time. It is one of the experiences which makes firefighters brothers
This fire took place on July fifth, the day after the Fourth of July. It was over one hundred degrees. And it happened "C" shift was on duty, about sixty-nine or seventy, something like that.

Well, Chief Whittaker was in charge of that shift. He had to go to Indianapolis for some reason or other. Someone was sick in the family or something. Anyhow, he wanted, back then we could work for each other, and I came in for him and I was in charge of the shift. And about ten o'clock that morning, I was coming down and I got a call to go to the hospital for something. I've forgotten, there was something they wanted to check on up there. I believe the fire inspector was having a fire drill. I went up there to help him out.

I was coming back to the station, coming down Main Street, and I saw some smoke coming from the top of the Mansard Hotel. I thought, "I don't know whether that's coming from a chimney or what it is. I better drive there and check it out." I got to College Street and they called me on the radio that they needed me here for something. So, I turned and came on in here and forgot. Never said anything and thought nothing more about it.

And that afternoon, it was on up late in the afternoon, I had gone to Cabell Drive. McGalliard was the captain out there at the time. I was, I went out there to take them some supplies or something. I remember now, it was a window fan that we'd repaired that they needed. I delivered it.

And I'm standing, talking to him out front, getting ready to drive off and come back to headquarters and got the call. There was an alarm at the Mansard Hotel. And so, I started for the Mansard, to come back downtown, red light and siren on. I got about two blocks from Cabell Drive and saw the smoke. We had a working fire. I wondered if it's been burning since then, when I saw it this morning. If so, boy it's on fire good. The closer I got, the blacker the smoke got and the higher in the sky it got. 2

I hadn't been used to working with that shift and

---

1This context means that he had gone to the fire station on Cabell Drive.

2Black smoke rising high into the sky indicates a very bad fire.
came over to a handicap there. At the same time, they had just hired some new men and they had promoted, made some promotions in the department, and they had a couple of sergeants that hadn't been under fire yet, very much to speak of, who were engineers. When I got there and when I got there, there was a pumper with the hose laid, just laying there. I didn't see no one.

Fire was coming out of the third floor window. Didn't see a fireman anywhere. I went on down to the corner and there was a new sergeant standing there by his pumper, pulling his hair out. And I said, "Where is everybody?" He said, "They're trying to get people out of the second and third floor windows on the upper side." I said, "While they're doing that, disconnect this hose here, you and I will do this, and you go on to the next hydrant, up on the middle of the block." I said, "It's the best hydrant in the history of the town. It's on a big main that comes down Spring Alley." I said, "Lay a double line down there and get hooked up and when I get some men over here, to advance the hose line, we'll have it ready. You have it charged, ready for me to go, to go in with." Then he started on down that block.

Well, another, off-duty major came in about that time. He said, "What do you want me to do?" Being that I was in charge, he reported to me. Right now, if you would, go with him. He's new on that job and make sure he hooks up okay." So, he went with him.

I went up behind, the upper side of the building where they was getting people out, just in time to see a woman not wait for a ladder or anything, jump out of a window and broke her leg. And they thought they had everyone out.

Then, I got them dispatched back to what they was supposed to be doing. Well, the thing was completely out of control by that time. And I radioed and told them to call in all off-duty men and the chief. We were fighting the fire pretty good by the time they got there. And I was getting ready for them to advance into the lobby and try to advance up the front steps.

I tried to cut it off. I had an aerial truck at the back. It was an "L" shaped building. And right at

---

1 The fire department consists of three shifts. Each shift is accustomed to the way its assistant chief operates and vice versa. Each shift has its own characteristics and method of operation. Therefore, an assistant chief operating with a shift to which he is not regularly assigned, is at a disadvantage.

2 When two officers of equal rank arrive at a fire scene, the one who arrives first is in command.
the back at this end, it was the Center Street side that was involved, the third floor. There was a window in the hall. Put that aerial ladder up there and put a master stream* down that hallway. We could cut it off, stop it.

We had the new aerial truck ordered. The old aerial truck's hydraulic system was not working good. They had trouble getting up there. We didn't, the hydrants behind the building and up here on this corner were red. Red coded hydrants which is five hundred or less.1 With all the pumping they could do, the master stream just didn't amount to a hill of beans. And they had, they couldn't stop it. 'Cause the master stream just wasn't a master stream. Running it through the booster line would have been about as good. We just didn't have the water.

I believe that if we had the water we've got today, since then they've put a big sixteen inch main up there. If we'd had that then, I believe we'd have stopped it because we had good pressure from the other engines. A good volume and good in-town pressure, there's no doubt we'd have stopped it.

Well, there was an old gentleman on the second floor, that was a night clerk there, way in the back, way in the corner near the fire, had gotten other people out. And he went back in his room to get what appeared to be his coin collection that he had in his dresser. Well, a few people started missing him, wondering where he was at. By that time, the fire was in his room, too. So, as soon as, we were concentrating on that area, extinguished the fire there in that area. And we went in. And we found him. He was in the shower. He was dead.

After it was all over, Covington, the company has the cranes and stuff, the wrecking company came in and knocked the walls in that were still standing. That big old chimney that stood, probably ninety foot in the air. It took some beating to knock it in. And the front end of the basement area, where the shops and barber and everything had been.

The next morning, down in there, you could smell burned flesh. It'd just tear your insides out. And I tried to start digging but the manager of the hotel give us some trouble all the way through it. He ended up suing. He broke every fire code there was and he was trying to blame the firemen for all his troubles. I think one of the Nashville papers listened to him rather than me.

---

1A fire hydrant with a water flow of less than five hundred gallons per minute is not adequate in coping with a large fire.
Some of the men and I wanted to cut the fire off to save that wing and they decided it wasn't worth the risk of our lives and they forbid us to try to go in after the fire, to fight it from the outside, just protecting surrounding properties. So, it burned down.

But this man did not want us digging. I believe it was two, one at least, or more transients down in there. 'Cause I know what human flesh smells like when it burns. It'll tear your insides out. It's the most horrible odor that a human being can smell. It starts with your toenails and turns you wrong side out. And it was there. If we'd have done some digging under that stuff. Instead it was filled and paved over.

That was some fire. The front of the building, the front corner of the building. You've seen old pictures of fires and things were a whole building would fall out into the street? Well, that's the way that did. And they had the federal building, they had to keep it cool. They had the building across the street at Main. They had to keep them cooled down, wet the roofs. Debris was flying through the air, burning. People had to back off to keep themselves from burning.

It was, there was a lot of things that happened. It indicated to me, not to the public, but to myself that we wasn't as trained as sharply as we should have been, then. It was still a good bunch of firefighters. To me, I wasn't personally, wasn't personally satisfied with some of the things that took place. Especially at first, where everybody went up there. It didn't take every man on duty to get those few people out of there and help them out.

I got ahold of some of them. They was helpless. They didn't have anything to do anything with. The main thing was water. If we'd have water, we'd have enough, still saved the building, regardless of what other things happened. And I say that was one of the biggest buildings like that I've ever seen burned, one of the most dramatic fires.

Perhaps less typical of a firefighter's experience, though part of the experience of working out of Bowling Green's Central Fire Station on Tenth Street, involved sharing facilities with a reputed ghost. The old station, constructed in 1908, saw many people pass through, both firefighters and visitors. Maybe it should not be considered unusual that someone wanted to stay just a little longer.
Having heard discussion surrounding a ghost but unable to secure any details, I turned to Chief Hazelip for the specifics:

Well, Eugene Girard, who started the funeral home. It was on the corner across the street [facing College, across Tenth from city hall]. They lived in the house where the funeral home is now [next to the fire station, on the west]. Well, he was the firehouse ghost.

Back in the horse and buggy days, this was above where this office is, was a hayloft. At night, a lot of times, when he'd get through embalming somebody or something, at two or three o'clock in the morning, he'd decide he couldn't sleep. Then he'd come over and sit with whoever was sitting watch* that night.

He didn't want to wade through the stalls downstairs, coming inside. That's where the horses were. So, he'd come up them steps, come across the hayloft and down them steps. Down and set with the guy that was setting night watch.

Well, years went by and he passed away. But, on hot summer nights, whoever is setting watch down here, still can hear him come up them steps, walk across and come down over the landing. I've heard him many times.

Of course, what it is, is the old building settling and cooling. You can actually follow it, follow it moving across the loft and down the steps.

Eugene Girard, as it turned out, was not the only one who elected to stay. Porter Dodd, who joined the fire department in 1900, found a home there. In order to understand Hazelip's ensuing remark about Dodd, "He was feeble," it is important to know why a feeble person lived in the firehouse.

When the "old-timers" of Hazelip's rookie days retired, they were offered positions as watchmen if they had no families to which to turn. In theory, a watchman made sure that the fire station and grounds around it remained secure, free from transients and other unauthorized persons. Since, however, a fire station is somewhat of a public place, being owned and operated by the city, and open for business
twenty-four hours a day, the job had no real requirements in practice. It boiled down to a humane effort to provide a home for retired firemen who had nowhere else to go. The position required them to live at the firehouse and provided a small stipend for personal needs. A man could retire, have a place to live and continue to have an income, thereby avoiding indigence and the loss of self-respect.

As Hazelip explains, Porter Dodd continued to stay, even after his days as a watchman had passed:

He got to where he would come down about three, four o'clock in the morning. You'd hear him come down the hallway and down the steps. That fourth step always creaked and it still does. That fourth step's loose.

And he'd come down there and get to the landing. And when I was desk watch, I'd usually, he was feeble, and I'd go up and meet him and help him the rest of the way down, to his chair that he kept down here. And he'd spend the rest of the night telling me stories about the old days.

And when he passed away, you could still, many a time I've heard him get to that top step, there, to that landing and stop. I'd look up the steps and there'd be nobody there.
CHAPTER FOUR

FOLKLORE AND HISTORY

This project illustrates the use of two traditional methodologies in the presentation of Bowling Green's firefighting history. Except for the years 1914-1920, each of the two major eras in the fire department's history has been reconstructed by employing a distinct methodology. Attempts to reconstruct the first ninety-three years reflect traditional historical research while reconstruction for the last fifty years reflects traditional folklore fieldwork in its simplest form, the collecting of information through interviews with one informant. The former is discussed first.

The prevailing attitude among historians has emphasized the importance of formal history compiled through the use of appropriate documents and archaeological study. Theoretically, the result is a complete and objective presentation of history or some segment of history. This tenet has been challenged by proponents of oral history.1

Pointing to a major weakness in this doctrine, Barbara Allen has suggested that "both written and spoken history are products of the same process of selectively characterizing past events." Essentially, history, oral or written, involves an interpretative process, reflecting to some degree the bias of the author. Moreover, I remain unconvinced that written history reflects, or can reflect, a complete representation of the past or present.

While this project does not attempt to construct a wide-ranging overview of world history, it successfully presents a documented history of volunteer firefighting in Bowling Green based on extant evidence. While I leave it to the reader to determine the writer's bias, it is clear that the history remains far from complete. The available formal documents do not always contain the necessary follow-up information, or documents have been lost altogether. I have suggested various logical possibilities that may help to fill in the gaps, yet these remain little more than educated conjectures, hardly definitive history. Much of the history of Bowling Green's volunteer fire companies will remain unknown in spite of the best historical research efforts.

The entire history of firefighting in Bowling Green can be constructed in the same way that I have constructed the volunteer years. Such a history, especially beginning with the paid fire department, would be far more detailed.

---

1"The Personal Point of View in Orally Communicated History," p. 115.
Record-keeping, an interpretative process, began when a logbook, describing each fire, its cause and responding fire companies, found its way into the paid department. These are on file in the department's headquarters. Over the years, the logbook gave way to detailed reports which contain information deemed pertinent by the officers who completed them. Extensive public documents exist, as do more complete newspaper accounts. The quantity of information that is now on file could be an historian's delight.

The traditional methodology of folklore has yielded a collection of narratives. These provide an entirely personal view, in this case, a personal view of firefighting history which should not be construed as a definitive oral history of the fire department. This history remains incomplete, but no claim has been made for completeness. Neither has a claim been made for objectivity. Incisively, Allen has suggested that "history communicated orally seems to focus on events, periods or persons that have special significance for a group or an individual."¹ Noting that one event may be reflected through several narratives, while others receive no attention, she has observed that orally communicated history is not necessarily presented cohesively or chronologically, citing The Saga of Coe Ridge² as a primary example.

¹Ibid., pp. 113-114.

The lack of completeness and the emphasis on those "events, periods or persons that have a special significance," are immediately recognizable in Harold Hazelip's recollection of history. Each narrative that is presented reflects the "personal and immediate history" with which Hazelip was concerned.

The personal accounts that I have presented are both limited and incomplete. Inclusion of additional narratives would not result in a more expansive time period. Neither would the types of historical narratives be expanded. A more comprehensive presentation would be accomplished through narratives collected from numerous informants with their divergent personal histories and individual emphases. Yet, with one or several informants, only half a history can be presented. Likewise, a fully documented written history provides only half a history. "The Volunteer Years" represents a history destitute of the human element even though human beings are responsible for everything that occurred. Conversely, Hazelip's human history lacks the research method of the first chapter. Each, however, contains merit. The former presents a fully documented history, previously not readily available, while the latter preserves information before it becomes inaccessible.

In both cases, the presentations might be enhanced with complementary material. Neither is complete enough to

\footnote{Dorson, "The Oral Historian and the Folklorist," p. 45.}
rely merely on supplemental material. Had oral narratives been available for the volunteer era, a blended, reasonably complete history prepared from documents and personal experiences could have been constructed, yielding a whole history, a more humane history, focusing on persons as well as on statistics and events. The documents are available for the researcher who wishes to blend the traditional research methods of history and folklore into a whole and humane history of the fire department in the twentieth century.

The years intervening between the methodologies illustrate the value of a whole history. Porter Dodd's notes and photographic evidence indicate the type of motorized fire equipment that Bowling Green first purchased, but the information provided by Hazelip brings meaning to the documents. Even though his narratives are second-hand at this point, he speaks meaningfully about part of his own firefighting history and tradition. The same is true for the 1918 flu epidemic. It is highly doubtful that a document, if one exists, could speak so meaningfully of the firefighters who remained on the job.

By collecting personal narratives and constructing an oral history subsequently blending it with written historical literature, it is possible to compile an accurate history which focuses on statistics, events and the persons who shaped the events that we call history. Since all history involves persons, it would seem appropriate to emphasize the human element. Montell suggests this approach
in the following statement:

My own thesis is that oral folk history can complement written historical literature in any situation in which the human side of history is involved, i.e., when the stress is on the individual as a person, not as a statistic . . . 1

History does not occur in a vacuum, i.e., events do not take place apart from the human beings who are the central actors. The blending of history and folklore methodologies will help us to fashion a more complete history.

1"The Oral Historian as Folklorist," pp. 51-52
EPILOGUE

History, it seems, is not static. From 1909 through 1954, the Bowling Green Fire Department operated from one fire station located on Tenth Street. As the population of Bowling Green grew, additional fire stations were constructed to provide more efficient service to the city. In 1955, fire companies began operating from Cabell Drive and West Eleventh Street. In 1970, a station was opened on Industrial Drive, providing the community with fire service from four stations.

In 1981, a new fire department headquarters was opened on Fairview Avenue, and the Tenth Street station was razed. The Cabell Drive station was closed and the fire company which had operated there was relocated near the airport in order to serve both the airport and the direction of Bowling Green's growth, along the Scottsville Road.

On July 1, 1980, Chief Harold Hazelip retired from the Bowling Green Fire Department following twenty-eight years of active service. Shortly after his retirement, he moved to Florida.
APPENDIX

An ordinance for the better protection of the Town against Fire.

Sec. 1. Be it ordained by the Chairman and Board of Trustees of the town of Bowling Green. That it shall be unlawful for any owner or occupants of any house, shop or tenement within said town to place new burned ashes or coals in any wooden box, barrel or other wooden vessel or permit the same to be done and deposit the same in the house or any shed or out house attached to the same or in any other manner place such ashes or coals, so as to endanger such buildings by fire, or other property such person so offending shall be fined for each offence not exceeding sixteen dollars.

Sec. 2. Be it further ordained, That if any person or persons the occupants of any house, shop, or tenement in said town, who shall put up or use any stove or furnace, and insert the pipe through a wood wall, partition window, ceiling or roof, or otherwise so as to endanger by fire igniting there from such building or other buildings shall be fined not more than twenty dollars for each day's offence.

Sec. 3. Be it further ordained, That if any person or persons within said town who shall put up or use a flue or chimney in any manner defective so as to endanger by fire such property thereto attached or other property shall be fined for each offence not more than fifteen dollars.
Sec. 4. Be it further ordained, That if any person or persons shall, or cause the same to be done, place or use fire in or adjacent to any building, or otherwise so as to endanger by fire any property in said town each person so offending shall be fined not exceeding ten dollars.

Sec. 5. Be it further ordained, That it shall be especial duty of the Marshal to see the provisions of the preceding sections of the ordinance enforced and observed.

Sec. 6. Be it further ordained, That no person or persons on the public square or within four hundred feet of the same, shall erect or conduct any candle or soap factory, butcher shop or slaughter house or other occupation of business by which the health or property of citizens would be damaged or endangered, any person so offending shall be fined not exceeding twenty dollars for each day that such offence may continue.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bowling Green, Kentucky. Minutes of the Trustees for the City of Bowling Green. State Archives. Frankfort, Kentucky.


Bowling Green, Kentucky. Kentucky Library at Western Kentucky University. Camilla Gerard Collection.


Davidson, H.R. Ellis. "Folklore and History." Folklore 85 (Summer 1974), 73-92.


Kentucky. Acts Passed at the First Session of the Twenty-eighth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky (1820).


Myers, John L. "Folkmemory." Folklore 37 (1926), 12-34.


GLOSSARY

Aerial Ladder: A sectional, extendable ladder permanently attached to a specially built truck. Capable of three hundred sixty degree rotation, Bowling Green's aerial ladder extends vertically to one hundred feet. The term can refer to the ladder alone or the entire piece of equipment, ladder and truck. The context establishes the meaning.

Alarm: Refers to the telephone call or other form of notification that advises the fire department of a fire. Use of this word automatically implies the ringing of the alarm bell.

Alarm Bell: Electromagnetically-induced bells are located in the Tenth Street fire station. The sound like the ring of a telephone, only much louder and without intermittent rings. Rung for approximately three seconds, these bells notify firefighters that an alarm has been received.

Assistant Chief: Also "shift commander" or "major." This is the third level from the top and the highest rank officer normally to appear at a fire. The Assistant Chief gains an overview of a fire and directs the operation of the fire companies. The second level of command is the Deputy Chief while the top level is the Chief. The two officers who occupy these positions perform administrative tasks pertaining to the smooth operation of the fire department and attend fires which the Assistant Chief assesses to be extremely serious.

Bed: Refers to the back, upper part of the pumper where the hose is stored.

Booster Line: The reeled, rubber hose lines that are generally seen about half way back, along the top of a pumper, just in front of the bed. These are used on extremely small fires such as trash fires.

Brass Pole: Also "sliding pole." This pole extends from the sleeping quarters to the engine room below. By sliding down the pole a firefighter expedites his travel to the fire engine.
Break a Line: Disconnect a hose at its coupling. This allows firefighters to use only as much hose as is needed.

Bucket Brigade: A group of people, all carrying buckets, who form a line in order to pass buckets full of water which are dumped onto a fire or into a "coffee-grinder." The buckets are passed empty along another line and refilled so that the process can continue.

Call: See "Alarm."

Captain: The officer in charge of a fire company.

Catch a Hydrant: Refers to the act of connecting a hose to a fire hydrant which is located near a burning structure. The hose supplies a steady flow of water from the hydrant to the fire engine.

Charged Line: A hose that is full of water, ready to be used when the nozzle is opened.

Cut It Off: Stop a fire from spreading.

Desk Watch: Also "sit watch" or "sit on the phone." This refers to an assignment where a fireman sits at a desk, prepared to answer telephone calls that indicate a fire or fires.

Drill Instructor: The person who instructs firefighters in new techniques and reviews existing techniques with them.

Engineer: Also "sergeant" or "D.P.O." The engineer is the Driver-Pump Operator. He drives the fire engine and maintains the flow of water through the hoses.

Engine House: Antiquated term referring to the building in which a fire engine is stored. "Fire Station" is the current term.

Engine Lamps: Oil lamps used for visibility in the dark. Antiquated.

Engine Room: The large room in the fire station where fire engines are parked when they are not in use.

Fire Company: A fire engine and the staff of firefighters that it takes to operate the engine. Currently, this is two firefighters, one engineer and one captain. "Fire Company" and "Fire Department" may be used interchangeably if a fire department consists of only one fire company.
Fire Department: The branch of city government which administers fire suppression. Bowling Green's fire department consists of six fire companies which occupy four fire stations.

Fire Engine: Also "pumper," "apparatus," or "piece of equipment." A truck designed to carry firefighters and equipment used in the suppression of fires.

Firefighter: Also "fireman." One who extinguishes fires professionally or as part of a volunteer fire department. In Bowling Green, "firefighter" and "fireman" are used interchangeably.

Fire Hooks: Hooks used to pull away burning material or to pry away a veneer.

Fire Hydrant: A street-level outlet from which water may be drawn out of water lines below the street.

Force of Water: Also "hydrant pressure." The water pressure which comes naturally from a fire hydrant.

Hand-Pulled Hose Reel: A device with large wooden wagon wheels. Hose was wrapped around a core that rode free of the axle so that the wheels could turn without the hose rotating and vice versa.

Hook Up: The act of connecting a supply line to a fire engine. This is normally done by the engineer. See "Supply Line."

Hose: Also "hoseline" or "line". Rubber, covered with cotton or nylon and either one and one-half inch or two and one-half inches in diameter.

Hose Clamp: A tool used to stop the flow of water through a hose.

Involved: Burning.

Knock Down: To extinguish most of a fire so that it no longer burns uncontrollably. Small, isolated pockets of fire remain, but pose no threat of returning to an uncontrollable level.

Lay a Line: Also "stretch a line." The act of connecting a hose to a fire hydrant and extending it to the fire engine or the act of connecting a hose to the fire engine and extending it toward the fire.

Line Officer: See "Captain."
Loop a Hose: Method of wrapping the end of a two and one-half inches diameter hose line around a fire hydrant so that the fire engine can move in the direction of the fire, causing hose in the bed to be pulled out. See "Supply Line."

Master Stream: A volume of water, supplied by several two and one-half inches diameter hose lines and forced through an extremely large nozzle.

Nozzle: A control device held by a firefighter who projects water onto a fire. A nozzle is normally found at the end of all sizes of hose.

Open the Line: Also "open the nozzle." Adjustment of the nozzle so as to permit the passage of water.

Pumper: See "Fire Engine."

Riding Shotgun: Riding in the passenger seat on a fire engine. Currently, this is where the captain sits.

Riding the Back: Also "back of the truck." Standing on a specially designed platform on the back of a fire engine and holding onto a safety bar while the truck is in motion.

Rookie: A firefighter with less than one year of experience.

Run: As in "catch a run" or "make a run." It means to respond to a fire alarm.

Sergeant: See "Engineer."

Shift: Twenty-four hours of duty. Also, the group of firefighters which works the shift. Bowling Green has "A," "B," and "C" shifts. Each works twenty-four hours followed by forty-eight hours off duty.

Standby Pumper: An outdated fire engine used only when another engine undergoes repairs.

Straight Pressure: See "Force of Water."

Straight-Stream Nozzle: A device over which a fireman has no control. Water rolls through a hose and out the tapered end of the nozzle which forces it into a projected stream.

Supply Line: A hose which provides a continuous flow of water from a fire hydrant to a fire engine.
Throw Water: The act of projecting water onto a fire through a hose and nozzle.

Turn-Out Gear: The protective helmet, coat, boots and gloves worn by firefighters.

Under Fire: Experienced.

Working Fire: A fire which takes a great deal of effort to extinguish and requires a continuous supply of water.

Working From Hydrants: See "Force of Water."