

# MY MEMORIES OF 50 YEARS WITH THE NEW HACKENSACK FIRE COMPANY

by Bill Parsons

In 1949, if someone told me I'd be writing about the past 50 years of the New Hackensack Fire Company, I probably would have thought they were on something. However, here I am, after being charged by those working on the 50th, to tell the things I remember about the Fire Company during its half-century service to the residents of the New Hackensack Fire District — and especially the early days.

To start at the beginning, prior to the birth of the fire district and fire company, there was no fire protection — and homes and barns just burned to the ground in what was called "No Man's Land." This section of the Town of Wappinger called No-Man's-Land took in the majority of the town (20 square miles) — it did not include the areas around Hughsonville and Chelsea as they already had fire companies — and of course, the village of Wappingers Falls which had and still has two fire companies.

Fortunately, several concerned citizens (also members of the Mt. Hope Grange) took the bull by the horns in 1948 — and with the help of a few members of the New Hackensack Dutch Reformed Church, went about the task of forming a fire district that would cover all of the properties in No-Man's-Land.

This area officially became a new fire district on March 3, 1949 and five men were appointed fire commissioners by the town board. These five (now all deceased) put out a call in late May for volunteers to join what was to be the New Hackensack Fire Company.

And that's where I came into the picture. On June 6, 1949, about 40 local men met upstairs in the Mt Hope Grange hall on Myers Corners Road. By the end of the evening, 31 of us had signed on, firematic and company officers were picked — and I ended up the company's secretary.

Needless to say, that didn't set too well with me. After all, I'd been to Europe, seen Paris at night (all courtesy of Uncle Sam) — and I had joined to fight fires, not write letters and keep minutes. Anyway, being the youngest there, I got out-voted.

After that night, we were a honest-to-goodness fire company — with a couple of problems. We didn't have a fire truck or firehouse to house it. Fortunately, shortly after our first meeting, the fire commissioners bought 1.9 acres across from the Mt. Hope Grange from local farmer, Fritz Kapfenstein.

They paid Fritz \$1,000, although thought to be a bit too much by many of us as it was rather low ground, but he wouldn't back down, so the deal was made.

Before I go any further, I better explain our name. Back 50 years ago, New Hackensack was a thriving little hamlet with many homes as well as Denney's Blacksmith Shop and Gulf Gas station, Sid Smith's General store and some others I can't remember. The airport was there, but not as large. It was built during WWII as an alternate to what now is Stewart Field — which during WWII was where the West Point cadets learned to fly. This was way before the Air Force became a separate branch with their own academy in Colorado.

Anyway, realizing the hamlet of New Hackensack was at the north end of the district, it was decided to put the firehouse in Myers Corners, a more central location. Of course, this upset a few in New Hackensack, some left in a huff, but most came back.

Getting back to what we didn't have, a mortgage of \$5,000 was obtained (guaranteed by five members) and with a small amount of outside help, the fire company members went to work and built a 30x50 firehouse with room for two vehicles.



It also had a kitchen in the back equipped by the Ladies Auxiliary — who also purchased the roofing, both with funds they had raised.



*Original Firehouse—1949*

The mortgage payments were \$38.25 a month, paid with the \$40 a month rent received from the Fire District.

Our long-awaited fire engine arrived in May 1950. This beautiful (to us) shiny red engine, built by the Sanford Fire Equipment Co, was a pumper with a 500 gal tank, a 500 GPM pumper mounted on a 1949 Ford F-7 powered by a Lincoln 336-cubic inch flathead V-8 engine putting out 152 horsepower. It had a five-speed transmission and you had to double-clutch to shift it. The art of double-clutch shifting died out about 40 years ago as manual transmissions were improved.

It cost \$13,500 and that included six sets of boots, six coats and six helmets, 1,000 foot of 2 1/2 inch hose, an axe and a few other miscellaneous pieces of equipment. The district took out a 10-year bond to pay for it.

Our fire reporting system was rather primitive, but effective. When you called the fire reporting phone number, a special telephone rang in five nearby homes and in the firehouse. Answering it would be one of the five ladies, who had the firephones in their homes. They would take the information and set off the siren with a switch by their firephone.

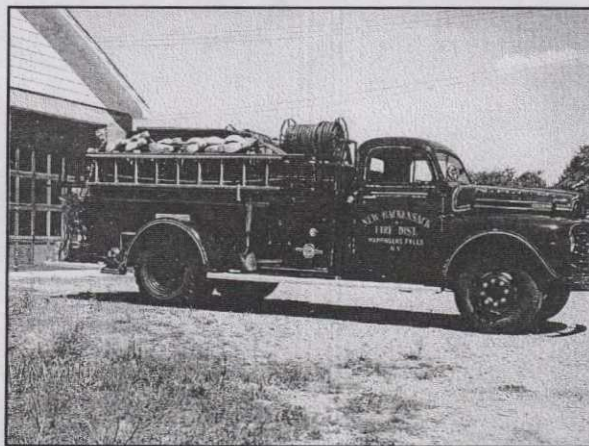
They would stay on the line until the first fireman reached the firehouse. He would pick up the firehouse firephone and ask where the fire was. He in turn would write the location on a blackboard in front of the firehouse and respond with the

engine. Meanwhile, the ladies would get busy calling members in case they didn't hear the 12 cycles of the firehouse siren.

Enough can't be said about the dedication of those five ladies, all volunteers, one of which was my mother. For 19 years, they made sure one of them was always home to answer that firephone 24-hours-a-day. During all those years, that firephone never went unanswered.

Once trained on our new engine, we finally were a full-fledged fire company. Of course, not everyone was pleased the way some of us drove the fire engine. The older members frowned on the way my brother John, Roger Humeston Sr. and I pushed that overloaded, under powered fire engine over the road.

The downside of our first engine was that it's wheelbase was too short, which left too much of the body hanging way out over the rear wheels. John and I both drove trucks for a living so we and Roger used to drive the engine like a race car going into a corner and when the back end started to come around we'd "backwheel" it (steer into the skid) and that way we keep up its speed while responding to an alarm.



*Original Engine—1949 Ford Sanford*

Of course, some of the older members wouldn't ride with us, but we never put a scratch on it in the 13 years we had it — which was more than some of the older drivers could say.

While on the subject of our first engine, it had many other faults, some of which were not its fault. You have to remember, as time went on, everything we owned and used was piled on the poor overloaded truck. The best you could get out of it



going up All Angels Hill was 10 mph and you were in second gear all the way.

It's had a 6-volt electrical system (as all vehicles did at that time) and you never knew when that 6-volt battery would refuse to start it. Fortunately, traffic was light back then and we could push it out of the firehouse and get it rolling down toward the corner — and start it in third gear.

Of course, with the siren blowing and something burning, it also heard many choice words about its pedigree. At night, you didn't blow the big old siren on its left front fender because if you did the headlight went very dim and you couldn't see where you were going. With its small 6-volt generator and battery there just wasn't enough electricity for both.

However, it could pump a lot of water (if available) and considering we were a bunch of beginners, it served us well as our only pumper for over 10 years. Oh yes, shortly after we got it — and to get a few more badly needed horsepower — one night I quietly disabled the governor on its engine. I didn't tell about that until about 10 years later because if I had, I probably would have been thrown out of the company — and I wouldn't be writing this.

Just barely surviving financially during those early years, sometime during the mid to late 1950's we got a shock when we were told we had to pay land and school taxes on the firehouse. Not only that, the assessor for the Town of Wappinger who claimed volunteer fire companies were not exempt from property taxes, was a member of our fire company.

Needless to say, he became very unpopular and soon left. However, it took a bill in Albany to relieve all volunteer fire companies from being taxed. If I remember correctly, we never did pay that tax bill.

It didn't take too long for us to learn that one of the most valuable tools in fire fighting was water and 500 gallons didn't go too far if something was really burning. In 1954, the District purchased a used 1948 former Mid-Hudson Oil Company fuel oil delivery truck for \$3,975.

It had a 1,350 gallon tank mounted on a six-cylinder Chevy cab-over-engine chassis with a 4-speed transmission and a two-speed rear end. It's bronze-gear oil delivery pump could push a half-

inch stream of water 80 feet, so it not only gave us more water, you could fight fire using its former oil hose which was mounted on a reel.



1948 Chevy Tanker

Wanting it to look like a fire truck called for a complete paint job. That called for many hands sanding the complete vehicle one Saturday morning. That afternoon, outside the firehouse in the fresh air, with me on a stepladder, with my older brother Ed mixing the paint with thinner, I completely sprayed the entire vehicle with about five gals of bright-red paint with my little portable sprayer — a quart at a time.

Even back in those days, New Hackensack was ahead of the times as this was the first tanker in the area and it made many mutual aid calls to neighboring fire companies.

Yes, mutual aid has been around for over 50 years, although today's mutual aid is light-years different than back then. First off, you have to remember there were no radios in our fire apparatus — and even if you had one, there wasn't any fire alarm headquarters to talk to. If you were on the scene of a big one, and wanted mutual aid, you got to the nearest phone and called that fire company's firephone.

If you didn't have their number, you called our fire number and asked one of our ladies to contact the other company or companies. It took time and sometimes their help arrived too late to do much good. However, since this was a 99 percent farming community, most of our big fires were barn fires and they took a long time to extinguish so mutual aid really helped in those cases.



In 1954, the county got involved in mutual aid when the county's Board of Supervisors gave each fire company one two-way radio and a Motorola Quick Call receiver. The call letters for this radio frequency was (and still is) KED348.

After that, if you needed help, you called on your radio and you were answered in the City of Poughkeepsie dispatch center. They in turn would set off the siren of the company you asked for by putting out tones for their Quick Call receiver.

Don't confuse this with our present-day county dispatch, our five ladies still answered our firephones, set off our siren and gave the information to the first fireman arriving at the firehouse. On July 1, 1965, the county started handling its own dispatching and Al Kaehler (14-4) was one of the original county dispatchers. (Al also is the one who gave me the information about when the county became involved.)

Somewhere around 1965 we got our first nine home alerting receivers (Electrons) and using New Hamburg's base station, John Sloper of the Sloper-Willen Ambulance service dispatched us. John Sloper was John Sloper, and when he handled our calls, he had no problem telling you what and how to do your job.

We still kept our five-lady phone system as back-up until 1968, when we did away with that system and let the county take over. If I remember correctly, we didn't go with county dispatching when it began in 1965 because (being a conservative bunch) we weren't ready to trust our dispatching to some strangers the other side of Poughkeepsie.



1958—1<sup>st</sup> Four Wheel Drive

The fire company's mortgage was paid off in 1957, but by 1959 we needed more space as we now had our 1949 engine, our 1948 tanker, and in 1958 we added a used 4-wheel-drive Jeep as a brush truck. It didn't carry any water, but it did carry several full Indian tanks and other brush fire tools.

In 1960, the company spent \$19,000 adding a big meeting hall, an additional bay and a larger kitchen. By now, the District increased the rent paid to the company to \$100 a month. The district budget for 1959 was \$5,200. To compare then with now, the district's budget for 1999 was \$681,740. As you can see, a lot happened just in the last 40 years.



1960—Firehouse Expansion

Also in 1959, I lead a group of concerned volunteers at a meeting with the board of fire commissioners. They were a tight fisted board as you can see by their \$5,200 budget for the year, but I (backed up by the others) pointed out that our equipment was outdated, getting tired — and needed replacing. After much discussion, we got our point across.

That's how in 1960, we got our first BIG fire truck. It was one of the first new larger type fire apparatus mounted on a much bigger Ford F-950 series chassis. It had a 477 cubic-inch overhead valve V-8 engine, with a five-speed tranny — and it had a 500 GPM pump and it carried 1,200 gals of water. It replaced our old oil company tanker and was used as a pumper/tanker.

It cost \$15,877 and it made our 1949 engine look like a midget. It became our first-due engine and it could go up All Angels Hill at 25 mph fully loaded. Its only drawback was it had no power



steering and it was a brute to steer at a slow speed or at a stop. As for brakes, none of our equipment had air-brakes, so I remember there were times when I couldn't get stopped when arriving at a fire scene and had to back up because of the poor hydraulic brakes we lived with those days. (Yes, I know I should have slowed down earlier.)

1963 saw the arrival of a new Ford/Sanford 750 GPM pumper mounted on a 1963 Ford cab-over-engine C-950 with a 534 cubic-inch V-8 engine, a five-speed tranny — and power steering. It carried 1,000 gallons of water and tons of other equipment. It cost \$19,888.



1963 Ford Sanford

This new rig spelled the end of the line for our first engine, the 1949 Ford/Sanford. It was traded in for \$1,000 and ended up at Vassar College as their primary engine for the campus. As glad as I was to get it back years later, I wasn't sorry to see it go as it had outlived its usefulness in a rural fire company like ours.

As the 1960's went by, we kept adding more up-to-date equipment. I joined the board of fire commissioners on May 17, 1965 when (I believe) Larry Becker moved away. One of the first things I pushed for was an equipment capital reserve fund and we never borrowed money after that for equipment.

The company sold the firehouse and grounds to the fire district for \$31,350 in 1967, thus relieving the company of the financial burdens of ownership. In 1968, the district approved a \$42,000 needed addition to the fire station.

In 1970, the district got serious about having enough water to fight fires when they paid cash

for two 2,000 gallon Saulsbury tankers mounted on C-950 Ford chassis — with power steering and air brakes. They also had something else that was another first in a fire company in this area — they had automatic transmissions.



1970—Firehouse Expansion & New Tankers

I thought I was going to get run out of town when I suggested we go automatic. All I heard is, "A fire truck with an automatic tranny?" No self respecting truck driver would drive a truck with automatic!" You have to remember that back then, if you considered yourself to be a truck driver, you also had to be good at shifting up and down.

Unfortunately, when it came to drivers, at about this time our membership was made up mostly of IBMers, not farmers who were also truck drivers. The IBMers were good at many things we farm-born knew nothing about — and they thought automatic trannies were a good idea. Anyway, we never again bought a rig with a stick shift, automatic turned out to be the way to go.

We got another new pumper in 1971. With that in the station, we now had three pumpers and two tankers — as we do today.

Knowing all we expected of our Chief Officer and pleased that we were fortunate to have a Chief like Bud Pottenburgh, in 1972, the district purchased a car for the exclusive use of the Chief. This was another first for New Hackensack as we were the first volunteer fire company in the county to furnish a chief with a car. It was a 1972 Ford station wagon. For the past dozen years or so, all three of our chiefs are now furnished a car.



We started to take 16-year-old members in 1972, and while some thought it would bring nothing but trouble, it turned out to bring us many interested dedicated young men that went on to be some of our best firemen. One of those in the first group was 16 year-old Kyle Pottenburgh who went on to be our Chief and now is a Deputy County Fire Coordinator — and still a very active volunteer in New Hackensack.

Being a believer in that program from the get-go, I always said by taking them at 16 we get a chance to get them interested in the fire service before they get too interested in girls. Of course, I'm a lot behind the times on that subject nowadays. Fortunately, today, the girls share them with us.

One of the most unusual pieces of fire equipment (for those times) was purchased in 1974 from Young Fire Equipment Co of Buffalo. A normal looking 1,000 gpm pumper with a 1,000 gal water tank, mounted on a C-950 Ford. However, it was powered by a Detroit Diesel 8V-71, 350 horsepower engine with an Allison automatic transmission.



1979—Firehouse with 1974 Young

Young converted those pumpers, from the low-powered gasoline engines that came with the trucks, to the big diesels, in their shop, and these engine conversions were a blessing for fire companies in hilly country like ours.

Always trying to get a fire prevention message across to the residents of our district, in 1975 the company started publishing a newspaper.

Preaching fire prevention, but giving them other interesting bits of information about who we are and what we do, this paper was and still is well received by our residents.

Completely done in-house (except for printing) by members, it was and is hand delivered to over 5,000 homes by our members over the course of two days during Fire Prevention Week in October.

October 1, 1977 saw another first for a county volunteer fire company. To go back to the late 1960's for a moment, the auto and truck business my brother and I ran just up the road from the firehouse pretty much furnished the bulk of the first-alarm day-time firemen, (a second alarm got many second-shift workers out of bed).

This was during IBM's hay-day and most members did not work nearby and the farmers of 1949 were mostly out of business. We generally responded to calls with five guys, most were drivers. They were John and I, Ralph Ames, Wally Hall (who was also chief of Hughsonville during some of that time period) and John Angelo. A couple of others who worked for us a short time also would respond.

It was a given, regardless of what we were doing, even if you were in the midst of selling a car, you said, "Sorry, got to go." Did we lose customers? Very, very few! Most folks were very understanding. Of course, back then a call was an actual fire or a real emergency, we didn't have automatic fire alarms or CO detector type calls like we have today — which turn out to be nothing 99 percent of the time.

Getting back to October 1, 1977, some of our day-timer firemen employees had left our employment for IBM — and I for one was getting a bit old to be charging into burning buildings. Therefore, as a commissioner, I suggested we hire an experienced fireman to work during the day, Monday - Friday, 7 am to 5 pm. That way we'd be sure to get a rig on the road in a short time.

My idea didn't set too well with some because generally mixing paid firemen and volunteers in the same company was like trying to mix oil and water. After a bit, I won out, mainly because the number one man on the county civil service list was one of our own, Rick Andersen and he was with us for a number of years. Rick is now a Lieutenant in the Arlington Fire Dept.

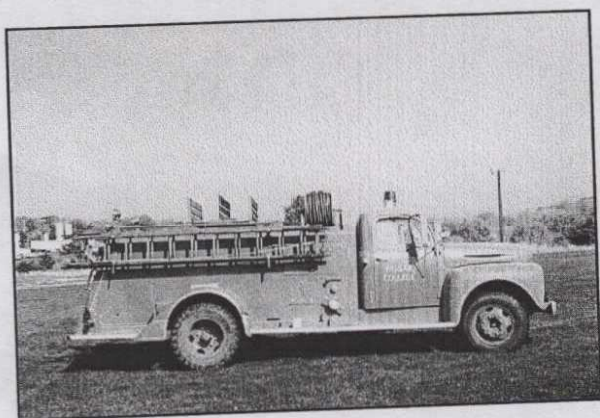


Oh yes, we still have one paid man (John Ineson) on duty Monday-Friday, and it still works well because we try to pick someone who will get along with the volunteers.

June of 1979 saw our first Bavarian Fest and we held one for the next 18 years. Thousands of people from all around enjoyed themselves over those years, and it was a good moneymaker for the company. However, everything has a life and the concerns and liabilities associated with drinking caught up with it.

An unexpected surprise took place in 1980. We heard that Vassar College had replaced our 1949 Ford/Sanford with a newer rig from the Arlington Fire Department. Past Chief Howie Prager, myself and I think it was Al Lehigh visited Vassar and after a little horse trading, we agreed to swap them an old two-way radio we were no longer using for the old engine.

After jump-starting it, Howie drove the 30-year-old engine back to its original home. Surprisingly, it still ran well even though it looked pretty bad. Later on, member Bob Butler, who teaches at the Dutchess County BOCES Tech Center, got the school's body shop students to repair and refinish the entire outside of the body.



1980—Old Engine Returns from Vassar College

The old engine wrote its own story (with a little help of a member) of its trials and tribulations over the past 30 years. This story appeared in the Poughkeepsie Journal, the Southern Dutchess News and the nationally known Firehouse Magazine.

The Firehouse Magazine also ran a second article on it later that year when the editor and his

staff visited our firehouse and served lunch with the old engine in the background.

Needing a home for our old engine, in 1981, just like in 1949, the members built an exact replica of the original 30x50 firehouse on the east side of the property. This time Don Feeney laid the blocks with me as his helper. The members did most of the rest of the construction.

As for the roof, and knowing we needed help, the Bitzko family who were professional roofers (two of the family, Mike and Bob were members) showed up one day with their equipment and had the roof on in no time — No Charge!

If you're wondering what happened to our original 1949 30x50 firehouse, it's still there — its just kind of hidden in amongst the many additions that were added over the years, although you can see one part of it on the south-west side of the present firehouse.

Always have a bit of a hang up about having a flag flying over the firehouse, Helen and I donated the 60 foot flag pole that flies the fire company's 12x18 American flag. In June of 1980, it was dedicated to the early (1949-1959) members of the Fire Company and the ladies auxiliary.



1980—New Firehouse Flag Pole

Always short of space for training, offices (to do the endless paperwork now required) and meetings, we, the commissioners, decided to have built (attached to the firehouse) a District Headquarters and Training Center building. It was dedicated on May 20, 1984.



By this time, we had gone to bigger custom pumpers and in 1985 we purchased our second one. We had also replaced our two Ford/Saulsbury 2,000-gal tankers with two new Ford/Saulsbury 2,000 gal tankers. However, before we took delivery, these tankers both had their gasoline engines removed and replaced with Detroit Diesel engines, one with a 8V-71 and the other with a 6V-92. This again improving our respond time to calls in our hilly area.

The 1960's and 70's saw us add a 2.9 acre piece in the rear of our property as well as a 1.3 acre piece on the west side of the firehouse for parking.

In 1992, with the cooperation of the owners of the former Fairchild property, (the Schlumberger Corp. of California) we were able to tap into their town-supplied water system which gave us a hydrant for training and a good water supply for the firehouse.

Having dealt with the Schlumberger Corporation officials as a member of the town's planning board over the years, I was able to convince them to sell the fire district their now abandoned 60-acre parcel — with them first removing the building.

The deal we worked out was they would sell us the property for what it would cost to remove that large building. The figure came to \$164,000 — and that's what the district paid at the closing in Nov. 1995. Unfortunately for them, when the building removal began, asbestos was found concealed in the roof and floor and it cost them over \$500,000 to remove the building.

Why did the district buy it? The price was very right for 60 acres and it also gave us a much-needed larger training area with a couple of good buildings to practice on. Besides that, looking to the future, probably well past my time, it would be an ideal place to build another firehouse. And that need may arise if they widen Myers Corners Road one more time.

The Town of Wappinger War Memorial was dedicated in May 1993, at nearby Schlathaus Park, on Memorial Day. The New Hackensack Fire Company donated and raised the first 8x10 foot American flag that flies over it. Not only that, the company voted to supply the necessary flags for that memorial from here on. The Fire Company also goes through a very formal flag-changing

ceremony each Memorial Day during the town's annual Memorial Day program.



1993—World War II Memorial Flag Raising Ceremony

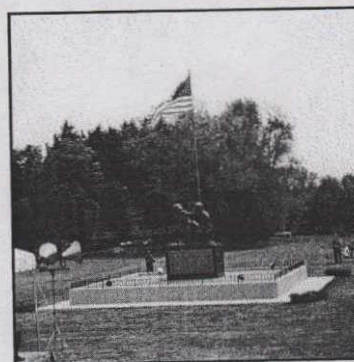
In March of 1997, we traded in our older rescue for a new E-One state-of-the-art heavy rescue with the latest equipment for auto accidents (which we have many of) and fire scenes.

In 1998, a Jeep Cherokee was added to our fleet as 52-67 for responding to assist the Sloper-Willen Ambulance Service on life-threatening EMS calls in our fire district.

Did I forget some of what took place over the past 50 years? I'm sure I did.

However, I hope my memories will keep alive some of the problems, struggles, accomplishments, and difficulties the volunteer members went through while protecting the residents of the New Hackensack Fire District over the past 50 years.

To say we've come a long way is best shown by the fact that in our first year we responded to about a dozen calls. In 1998, we responded to 624 calls.



1993—World War II Flag Raising Ceremony



**NEW HACKENSACK FIRE COMPANY  
LADIES AUXILIARY  
FOUNDED MAY 19, 1949**

**CHARTER MEMBERS**

Elva Gigliotti  
President

Edna Cox  
Vice-President

Florence Decker  
Secretary

Donna Kenney  
Treasurer

Barbara Acker  
Irene Acker  
Eva Andersson  
Ethel Berberick  
Florence Bisulk  
Katheryn Bisulk  
Mrs. Boyce  
Elsie C. Brown  
Gertrude Butler  
Helen Collins  
Marie Dalianis  
Dorothy Ervin  
Helen Evanitz  
Eleanor Gardner  
Betty Holt  
Margaret Horton  
Helen Howel  
Alma Inglis  
Mrs. Kopfenstien

Inger Jensen  
Anna Kopser  
Lillian Lieban  
Kristena Merritt  
May Paskey  
Emily Race  
Madeline Rodriguez  
Betty Roessler  
Betty Rowe  
Edna Schmalzl  
Esther Schoonmaker  
Mary Schuerman  
Hazel Smith  
Marjorie Steele  
Charlotte Straley  
Jean Swenson  
Eleanor Tidrich  
Edna Van Voorhis  
Marian Widmer

The Fire District and Fire Company members submit their heartfelt thanks to the Ladies Auxiliary members for the many supportive hours provided to the men during emergencies, social functions, fundraisers, and other times of need.

"They will always be remembered"



# The Ladies Auxiliary of The New Hackensack Fire Company History

by Kay Valentino

The date was May 19, 1949 as a group of ladies met at the home of Mrs. Lorenzo Acker. The purpose of the meeting, to discuss the formation of an auxiliary to the newly formed New Hackensack Fire Company. The guest speaker was Mrs. Kenneth David, former president of the Red Oaks Mill Ladies Auxiliary. Mrs. David explained to us how to set up our organization, the duties of the officers, writing a constitution and how to organize fund raisers!

It sounded like an awesome task as the sixteen ladies present digested all the information. However, as they proved over the years, they were up to the challenge. They set about electing the first officers of the New Hackensack Ladies Auxiliary and chose: President – Mrs. Carmen Gigliotti; Vice-President – Mrs. Clarence Cox; Treasurer – Mrs. George Kenny; Secretary – Mrs. Clifford Decker; Publicity – Mrs. Coert Van Voorhis, Mrs. Sidney Smith, and Mrs. William Schuerman.

Dues for the year were set at one dollar with meetings to be held on the first Tuesday of the month. Future meetings were to be held at the Mt. Hope Grange with a stipend of one dollar a month to be paid to the Grange. They would check with the Grange to determine if this was acceptable. Each member was asked to bring another lady with her to the next meeting. Mrs. Van Voorhis, Mrs. Schuerman,

Mrs. Boyce, Mrs. Vincent Bisulk, Mrs. Fred Ledrich, and Mrs. Leon Evanietz were appointed to the Refreshment Committee.

At the June meeting a total of 29 enthusiastic women were present. A committee was chosen to draw up a constitution and a spirited discussion was held on ways and means to raise funds. A committee of two, Mrs. Esther Schoonmaker and Mrs. Eva Anderson were to contact the Luckey Platt Co. in Poughkeepsie (the Filene's of the time) to request permission to hold a Bake Sale in their store. It was agreed upon and was the first of many successful bake sales held at the Luckey Platt store. At the June meeting it was also agreed to have a Stanley Brush party at the home of Mrs. Boyce, and all prizes would be used in a future raffle to raise money.

They voted to have a Bazaar in the Fall and to make a quilt to be raffled off. Chance books were given out to members to sell for a set of stainless steel cutlery, which had been donated to them. They formed a committee to make sandwiches for the Fire Company dance to be held on July 15th at the Oak Grove Grange Hall, and needless to say, this was just the beginning! Plans went ahead for the Bazaar and it was decided to hold it on October 15<sup>th</sup>, followed by a dance in the evening! These were ambitious ladies, working all day at the bazaar and a dance at night! Needless to say, it was a great success.



The years that followed were busy ones. Their purpose was to aid the Fire Company in every way and to cultivate good feeling to all the families in the district, and they worked very hard to accomplish their goals. In 1950 they had their first booth at the Dutchess County Fair with Mrs. Alma Ingalls as Chairperson assisted by Mrs. Gigliotti, Mrs. Decker, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Gardner, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Decker, Mrs. Bisulk and Mrs. Ifill. Once again it was another successful venture and continued for many years. In addition, they held dances for every holiday, Christmas parties for district children, held game nights, more food sales and Stanley brush parties. In 1954 the Fire Company, assisted by the Auxiliary, sponsored a carnival which was held on Rt. 376 near the Woronock House. This was a joint effort to pay off the \$3500.00 balance of the mortgage, and through all their efforts, they paid off the 20 year mortgage in just 8 years.

In addition to all the previously mentioned successful fund raisers, over the years many Card Parties, Penny Socials, and bake sales which included the sale of vanilla and cook books consisting of recipes compiled by the members were held. In addition, there were pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, roast beef dinners, and chicken dinners, all of which were open to the community, that were successfully undertaken. In 1962, the Ladies successfully sponsored a fashion show aptly named Fashions in an Envelope. It was held at the Woronock House, as the Wappinger Central School District was renting the fire house for kindergarten classes that year. The men built us ramps, and all the fashions were made by the members of the auxiliary. In all, there were 33 models gracing the runways showing off the fashions. It was so successful

that for several years it became an annual event.

They entered parades and marched behind the Fire Company, donating the flag and banner for the Fire Company to use for the first parade they marched in. They worked together to be a success and to be of service to the community. So many activities were planned that they had a special meeting to create a Community calendar to avoid conflicts with other groups. They developed a newsletter sent to all members called The Squaw, and for over 20 years sponsored Cub Scout Pack 40. In 1973 the Auxiliary started printing the men's monthly newsletter along with their own. In February 1974 they bought a new reproduction machine to print both newsletters at the fire house.

They worked alongside the men for 19 years at the annual Fire Company Bavarian Fest, held each year in June. Preparing for the Fest was a huge undertaking, and many hands were needed. They helped in the day to day preparation of food, work in the food booths serving the food, and helped run some of the game booths. In this way they assisted the men in making the Bavarian Fest the huge success it was.

The Ladies continued their support of the Fire Company by purchasing kitchen equipment for the men, buying drapes for the meeting room, cooking at major fires, drills and other functions, and marching in the annual community day parade. The Auxiliary continued their support of the community by helping with the Special Olympics in May 1983, a Walk-A-Thon for Guiding Eyes School, RID and the American Cancer Society. In November 1984, the Auxiliary started proceedings to "adopt" a fireman. We were



the first auxiliary in Dutchess County to "adopt" a fireman from the Hudson Valley Fireman's Home. In December 1984, we "officially adopted" Wendell Perry, who lived at the Fireman's Home in Hudson, NY. Over the years, the members would visit with Wendell, and bring him Christmas and birthday presents.

Over the years there were many new members, but there were also losses due to many retirees moving away, and older members passing on. As the 80's went on, membership participation waned. It became more and more difficult to function as the same people had to contribute more time on committees. Finally on September 12, 1990, Maureen Wolfe, who was President at the time, had the unhappy task of

writing a letter to the Commissioners of the Fire District and the President of the Fire Company informing them that the Auxiliary was disbanding. This was not a decision made lightly and it pained all those still participating but it was necessary to do.

The Ladies can hold their heads high for all they accomplished, and I know I've touched on only a small portion of all that they have undertaken through the years. I'm sure there are many other memorable occasions I haven't mentioned, as I too was not there for a time. However to all the members past and gone and to all those still here, I can only salute them all and say "A job well done, you served with dignity and pride."



*Ladies Auxiliary Marching in City of Poughkeepsie*



*Charter Member and Past President Florence Bisulk at 1983 Bavarian Fest*



*Practicing on Fairchild Road*



*Elaine McKinney, Maybelle Paskey, Eunice Porter, L.E. "Ev" Maynard*



**New Hackensack Fire Company  
Ladies Auxiliary  
Past Presidents**

Elva Gigliotti	May 19, 1949 – May 1950
Elsie Brown	May 1950 – May 1951
Florence Bisulk	May 1951 – May 1952
Elva Gigliotti	May 1952 – May 1953
Florence Bisulk	May 1953 – May 1955
Anna Kopser	May 1955 – May 1956
Helen Seligson	May 1956 – May 1957
Helen Collins	May 1957 – May 1958
Nancy Van DeWater	May 1958 – May 1959
Mary Thompson	May 1959 – May 1960
Betty Holt	May 1960 – May 1961
Mary Becker	May 1961 – May 1963
Bea Roe	May 1963 – May 1965
Marilyn Heady	May 1965 – May 1967
Bonita Tust	May 1967 – May 1969
Grace Haack	May 1969 – May 1971
Judy Welz	May 1971 – May 1972
Marilyn Heady	May 1972 – May 1974
Nina Budd	May 1974 – May 1977
Peggy Roe	May 1977 – May 1979
Susan Prager	May 1979 – May 1982
Glenda Slater	May 1982 – May 1983
Mary Valentino	May 1983 – May 1984
Nina Budd	May 1984 – May 1986
Maureen Wolfe	May 1986 – May 1988
Nina Budd	May 1988 – May 1990
Maureen Wolfe	May 1990 – May 1991



## CHARTER MEMBERS

## COMMISSIONERS

Thomas K. Race  
Chairman

Nils Andersson    Malcolm Grahame    Stuart Reynolds    Sidney Smith

John Ervin  
Secretary-Treasurer

## FIREMATIC OFFICERS

Carmen Gigliotti  
Chief

Lorenzo H. Acker    Arthur Young    Earlman E. Schoonmaker    Rev. Delmer Cooper  
Captain    1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant    2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant    Chaplin

## COMPANY OFFICERS

George Kenney    John Vorndran  
President    Vice President

William T. Parsons\*    Clifford Decker    Albert Schottler    William Inglis    Fredrick Rowe  
Secretary    Treasurer    Trustee    Trustee    Trustee

## MEMBERS

Vincent P. Bisulk  
Harry F. Holt  
Howard B. Jones  
Edward S. Parsons Sr.  
Wasili Reip

Rober Bulter  
Charles Horton  
Frederick Kapfenstein  
Edward S. Parsons Jr.  
George Schlathaus  
Henry Vorndran

Anthony Daino  
Gordon Humeston  
Frederick Lederich  
Ernest W. Paskey  
William T. Tierney

Our Sincere Gratitude to all those who "SPARKED" our Formation,  
The Patrons of Mt. Hope Grange No. 902  
& The New Hackensack Reformed Church.

\* Still Active