



# A HISTORY IN FLAMES

The Story of the Volunteer  
Firemen of the State  
of Delaware

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spite of hard work by his friends and neighbors in forming a bucket brigade to try to save his house as well as the assistance of the Robbins Hose Company firemen. Many believe that because the wind was blowing in as easterly direction that night, the entire town of Cheswold was saved from destruction by fire.

Legend has it that the only piece of equipment the firemen had at that time was a hand pumper borrowed from Robbins Hose Company. Not too much happened that first year in spite of the elections and the borrowed equipment. The firemen met again in April of 1928 but they did not adopt any constitution or by-laws until April 10, 1931 and became incorporated in August of that same year.

In order to purchase fire fighting equipment, several Cheswold residents signed a note to pay for it. Later, suppers, bake sales and carnivals enabled the new fire company to purchase a second piece of equipment and pay off the note on the first one. P. L. Barcus, W. S. Scarborough, J. M. Ford, Edward Streets, W. E. Barcus, W. W. Kerper, D. R. Morris, B. S. Creadick and L. Anderson were among the original signers of the note and also charter members of the first fire fighting unit.

The first truck was a 1928 Model T Ford pumper which had two chemical tanks and 150 feet of one-inch hose. The bell from that truck is displayed in the trophy case in the present firehouse.

Their first firehouse was an old school building moved from Ham's Branch which was the original Cheswold school for white students and also served as the post office, which was located on Railroad Avenue. The fire siren was a rail-

road rim mounted on poles and hit with a sledge hammer in front of the firehouse. It is now located behind the firehouse. In 1952 the fire company moved to its present location when it purchased the old public school building #88 located on Main Street. The building was expanded in 1952 and again in 1970.

The original company banner, with a hand painted center design on black silk with gold tassels and its original wooden holder dating from 1928 is also in the trophy case.

Those few men interested in an organized fire company back in 1927 kept busy trying to increase membership and improve their equipment. Their efforts paid off, as shown in the present total membership of almost 70 men, more than half of which are active. They are now the proud owners of five engines, a rescue truck, a boat, and two ambulances. They have been in the ambulance business since 1948 and have been averaging more than 500 ambulance runs a year with about 35 members of the department as trained Emergency Medical Technicians. Their modern firehouse boasts a large banquet hall where they conduct bingo every Saturday night, a successful annual Hobby Show and Flea Market, a monthly Blue Grass Musical Festival, an annual ham and dumpling Mother's Day Dinner, and other suppers catered throughout the year by their active ladies auxiliary.

One of the first fire companies to obtain a bingo license to help raise funds, the Cheswold firemen and their ladies auxiliary can look with pride at the almost \$500,000 worth of real estate and equipment they now own. It's true that nothing succeeds like determination and community spirit.



A meeting for the company was held in the village on October 2 attended by thirty students of Brandywin the general vicinity.

As a result of the meeting, the fire company officers were elected and the first Fire in the company for 4

The company was granted by the Secretary January 2, 1929. As received, plans were fire apparatus and election of a firehouse. T sufficient funds to work both the equipment piece of equipment Company 400 gallon 35 gallon chemical inch chemical hose hose.

The membership in on a new firehouse 1929 at which time the The total cost of the was about \$11,000. T by the firemen and June 1931.

In February of 1933 the U. S. Fire Appa

