MONTVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

1910-2010

100 YEARS OF SERVICE

An Abbreviated History of Montville’s First Fire Dept.
In 1910 a group of men employed by John H. Capstick saw a need for a fire department in Montville.

Capstick put together a proposal and on August 1st, 1910 the Excelsior Fire Company No. 1 was formed.

Contrary to Neighboring Boonton the majority of Montville in 1910 was farmland with the exception of the Montville Finishing Company.
The initial roster was made up of 29 volunteer members.
The First Chief

- The first Chief of Montville Fire Department was elected during the organization meeting in 1910.

- The first fire drill was held on, September 24, 1910. The drill was conducted under the direction of Harry Apple, a member of the Boonton Fire Department.
• On February 6, 1911 construction began on Montville’s first firehouse located just outside the factory complex.

• Materials for the project were donated by Capstick and construction was completed by the eager group of volunteer firemen.
The Firemen's Relief Association of the Company was incorporated on November 6, 1911 and the Company was recognized and taken over by the Township Committee.

The Montville Township Committee donated the money for fire signal rings. The rings were placed throughout town and a map was created to show the new fire zones.

During the meeting on June 2, 1914, a communication from the township assessor was received stating that he would grant the request of the Fire Company to exempt all firemen (in good standing) from the poll tax.
The First Apparatus

Mr. Capstick procured a hand or horse drawn hook and ladder truck equipped with fire buckets.

The truck, pulled by horses, was purchased in Elizabeth on October 1, 1910, at a cost of $330.50.
In May of 1917 a Rumsey deck pump with brass connections was purchased for $31.35 to replace the “Bucket Brigade”.

- 100 ft. of second hand hose at $0.20/ft, 25 ft. of suction hose at $0.80/ft, brass couplings and nozzle, $52.00, total $83.35.

- The Township Committee paid $75 of this and the Fire Company the balance of $8.35.
• The Montville fire department went through a period of tough times between 1917 and 1920.

• Funds for much needed equipment were nearly impossible to come by.

• The township committee struggled with who should control funds and how the fire districts should be divided.

• Their primary supporter, John Capstick, passed away in 1918.

• Attendance of the original eager members dwindled and the organization was twice threatened to be disbanded.
It was finally decided that a mass meeting be called. The meeting, which was highly publicized, was held on Friday evening, August 11, 1918. There was a large attendance of many members of the community at the meeting.

There were good speakers present who brought out the points and need for better fire protection in Montville. They made strong comparisons between the old hand-drawn hook and ladder and the motorized equipment. The hand drawn apparatus was awkward to drag by hand over hills and through the mud of our then unimproved roads.

Among the speakers were Mr. John H. Van Riper, H. S. Barclay, the Hon. David Young and others.

The Township Committee gave their assurance of doing all in their power to secure better fire protection to benefit the township as a whole. This report was received at special meeting on September 17, 1918. The secretary was authorized to draw up a contract covering the fire services for the sum of $40.
• The township committee decided that it was up to the various Fire Companies to advertise and hold an election for five commissioners for each fire zone.

• An election of five fire commissioners was held on August 27, 1921. The following men were nominated and elected:
  – Harry S. Barclay; term expiring May 22, 1922
  – John VanRiper; term expiring May 24, 1924
  – Edward Cayhart; term expiring May 24, 1924
  – Edward A. Theile; term expiring may 26, 1926
  – Richard Rost; term Expiring may 26, 1926
• Bonds were finally assembled to procure a new apparatus.

• The winning bid of $3,200 for a 1922 Model T Ford 1 ton O.J. Childs triple combination chemical, pumper, and hose fire apparatus.

• After much debate the Montville fire dept members received its first motorized chemical engine on September 7, 1922.
Montville Appears in Ad

- Montville’s new truck was selected to appear in a magazine ad for the O.J. Childs apparatus company.

- Montville’s members praise their new 1922 Model T in an ad proclaiming its “strong streams going high enough to protect any building in the district.”
Montville and Towaco Fire Departments paraded with O’Dowds Band of Pine Brook in the North Jersey volunteer Firemen’s association parade
Boonton NJ, June 3, 1931
Proud members took delivery of a “state of the art” 1932 Buffalo purchased to replace the Model A which struggled up the rolling hills of Montville.
In 1935 the new firehouse was constructed as a DPW project to replace the original firehouse on Taylortown rd.

Property was donated and the Ladies Auxiliary covered the cost of $500 to survey the new property.
Montville Fire dept was the first in Northern NJ to win the National Fire Prevention Award.

In 1957 the department was nationally awarded for organizing one of the first Junior Fire Marshal programs.

The first department to distribute reflectors to invalids.

The first department to spray Christmas trees with fire retardant.
In 1952 twin International 500GPM High pressure pump trucks were added to the fleet.

They were dubbed corn binders by local farmers due to the association of International Harvester with farm equipment.
Company 2 was established in 1955 to better cover the hills of the Taylortown district.

Local members established the new organization called Excelsior Fire Company No. 2.

The Buffalo was moved to the new location where it continued to serve the community before being replaced with modern apparatus.
• The Buffalo apparatus was purchased by Morrota Valve to use its high pressure pump to test hydraulic valves and as part of the fire brigade.

• In 1976 the Buffalo was returned to its former glory when it was pulled from the woods behind Morrota and restored by the Members of Montville fire dept.
In all, the Buffalo received hundreds of trophies for restoring a piece of history back to its former glory.
Expansion
Circa 1929

Helmet: $15.30
Jacket: $5.50
Gloves: $0.75
Boots: $5.40

Total: $26.95

Circa 2010

Helmet: $400
Hood: $100
SCBA: $6,000
Jacket: $900
PASS Device: $300
Gloves: $45
Pants: $850
Boots: $275

Total: $8,870
New Generation

- Rescue 1
- Engine 351
- Engine 354
- Engine 353
- Truck 350
- GIG
More than Just Fires

Ice Rescue

Search and Rescue

Landing Zone

Haz-Mat

Jaws of Life
Honorable Members
While browsing Through the history of the department you will continue to see family names reappear.
Fire Scenes
Fire Scenes