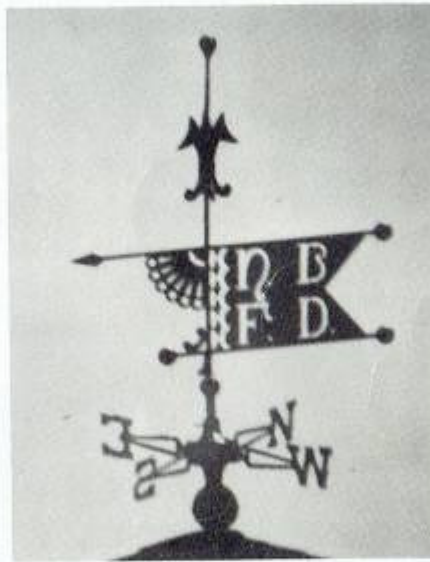


**UNDER
THE
FIRE HOUSE
ROOF**



**144 YEARS OF FIRE FIGHTING
IN NEW BOSTON
1845-1989**

UNDER THE FIRE HOUSE ROOF
144 years of fire fighting in New Boston, N.H.
1845 – 1989

A history of the New Boston Fire Department
Compiled by Rena Davis.

Dedicated to all the faithful men and women who have volunteered
to protect life and property from fire in New Boston.

Photograph Credits

- Cover - Weather Vane on the fire house. Fire Dept.
1 - Constitution #2 hand tub. Historical Society.
2 - New Boston Village after the May 11, 1887 fire. Historical Society.
3 - Old Fire House. Courtesy of Charlotte Smith.
4 - Little Pinball Pumper. Courtesy of C. Davis.
5 - 1924 REO Fire Truck. William Dotey picture.
6 - 1937 Howe pumper. Courtesy of Charlotte Smith.
7 - Old fire house after it was remodeled. 1959 town report cover photo.
8 - 1964 Howe pumper - M-1. 1964 town report cover photo.
9 - New fire house. 1973 town report cover photo.
10 - Riley's fire, March 16, 1971. C. Davis photo.
11 - N.B.F.D. Ambulance. 1978 town report cover photo.
12 - American LaFrance M-2. Geoffrey Katz photo.
13 - M-4 Reel truck. Courtesy of C. Davis.
14 - Daniels Garage fire, April 9, 1980. Loaned by Ella Daniels.
15 - Campbell place on River Road, Jan. 4, 1981. Fire Dept photo.

144 years of Fire Fighting in New Boston

FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! Those words are as dreaded today as they were in our ancestor's time. The loss of all one's worldly possessions by fire is still a horrifying experience.

The methods and equipment used to fight fires has changed greatly over the years. The protection of life and property from fire has always been the aim of firemen, even when the only equipment was a bucket brigade.

This history traces the New Boston Fire Department, first called Constitution #2, from the era of the hand-pump to the modern, well equipped force of today.

Engine Company #1

The first organized attempt at fire protection came in the 1840's. The New Boston Fire Insurance Company (NBFIC) was formed in 1841. At the 1845 town meeting the NBFIC sponsored an article which read "to see if the town will vote a sum of money to purchase a fire engine and erect an engine house for the use of the town". The article was defeated, but at a special meeting on November 29th of the same year, \$25 was appropriated to fix up a room under the town house for safe keeping of the fire engine. There is no record of the purchase of the fire engine between the regular town meeting

and the November special meeting. However, it is thought that the NBFIC was responsible for the purchase of the engine, which was not unusual for that time. Also at the special meeting of November, 1845, Benjamin Fletcher moved the town adopt appropriate sections of Revised Statutes Chapter 111, as they applied to the extinguishing of fires in New Boston. In addition, he asked the town to choose a board of fire wards.

This item was passed and the following sections of the statutes were adopted:

- 1) Fire wards of the town elect a chairman and clerk
- 2) Fire wards go to the place of the fire with their badge of office, which shall be a pole five feet long painted red, and get assistance from other people to extinguish the blaze.
- 3) Fire wards have control at all times over fire equipment in town.
- 4) Fire wards have the right to arrest any person refusing to obey their commands at fires and also arrest any person caught plundering at fires.
- 5) Fire wards shall appoint enginemen and hosemen not to exceed eighteen to each engine, but more may be appointed if it seems necessary.
- 6.) Appointments shall continue in force until they resign or move from town, or be discharged by the fire wards, and they shall be exempt from serving on juries and from military duty.

Five fire wards were chosen at that meeting, the first New Boston fire department. The men chosen were Waterman Burr, Benjamin Fletcher, Rodney McCollum, Abraham Cochran, and Jeremiah Burnham. They took their oath of office in February of 1846, forming engine company number one.

From military records of 1846, firemen were exempt from militia duty, as they were needed in town in case of fire. There is an order issued by Benjamin Fletcher, chairman of the firewards, signed by the clerk Waterman Burr, dated May 16, 1846, appointing Franklin French and David McCollum members of engine company number one and exempting them from militia duty. The following year, 1847, eighteen men were declared members of engine company one and exempted from militia duty.

The town paid these firemen an annual salary of between \$30 and \$36 dollars. It is not stated how many were paid or the exact amounts issued. In 1853, Henry Damon is listed as foreman of twenty-four firemen. Henry, the village blacksmith, lived at Elsie Warren's farm, now Jerry Kennedy's home at 52 Clark Hill Road.

New Boston Fire Insurance Company

The early history of fire fighting and fire insurance protection are closely linked in New Boston. A fire insurance company was formed in 1841. Eighty citizens met in the town house on January 1, 1841 to form a mutual insurance company. The coverage would be limited to the town of New Boston. A committee of six was chosen to draft a constitution.

Incorporation papers, signed by Governor John Page on June 28, 1841, gave Waterman Burr, Robert B. Cochran, and Ninian Crombie power to conduct the fire insurance business in New Boston. However, policies had been issued as early as February of that year.

There are three small record books preserved at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord. They detail proceedings of the directors of the insurance company, their annual meetings, election of officers, and records of losses suffered by policy holders.

Before the formation of the insurance company, the only accounts of fires are those few mentioned in the town history. A store and dwelling house owned by Thomas Stark burned to the ground around 1800. It was located near Four Way Farm at 240 Cochran Hill Road. A barn owned by Deacon Adams was struck by lightning and burned in 1824. Marshall Adams manufactured woolen cloth in the lower village when he first came to town. He later moved to Gougeville, now Sisk's home at 373 Lyndeboro Road. There he conducted his carding, dyeing, and clothing business. In 1852, he

moved his operation to the upper village, locating on Meetinghouse Hill at 15 Bedford Road. The buildings of Solomon Dodge burned October 30, 1829. Those of his brother, Jacob two weeks later on November 14.

These early fires usually burned themselves out, as the only way to fight them was a bucket brigade, hoes, and shovels. After 1845, the town gained a measure of security with the protection of both engine company number one and the fire insurance company.

Interesting tid-bits of New Boston history are scattered throughout the pages of the insurance company's records. The first paid loss of a policy holder was Francis Peabody's shop. Records show they paid \$250 in damages for the December, 1844 fire. There is no specific mention of Peabody rebuilding at the location near Grosso's store. However, when he moved to Amherst in 1846, he sold the building to Mr. McLane for his door manufacturing operation, so he did rebuild.

Two years later \$225 was paid to George Neville for the loss of his blacksmith shop. He lived where the Molly Stark Tavern is today, and the shop was the original building where Neville Mill Hall is now. Mr. Neville made "sharps", edged tools such as axes and adzes. The present building was rebuilt after the 1846 fire. It was between these two fires that engine company #1 was formed.

The town history tells of the barn owned by Deacon S.L. Christie burning after a lightning strike on October 18, 1852. His home was saved by a sudden shift in wind direction. Fire insurance company records indicate a payment of \$250 in November for the loss of the barn, which is now Olmstead's home at 111 South Hill Road.

For 1858, the insurance company held 191 policies: 67 under \$500, 108 between \$500 and \$1000, and 16 at over \$1000. By 1865 the number of policies was up to 225. As the company grew, the by-laws were changed or amended. One such change notified all policy holders that they were prohibited from keeping ashes in any wooden vessel in or near any insured building. By 1866, if you made a change to your heating system, you had to notify the company, as John Dodge did when he set a small boiler in his dairy room instead of using one in his kitchen. Other notifications included George Shedd replacing a fire frame (fireplace) with a stove and a Dr. Danforth moving a boiler out of his kitchen and putting in a fire frame and stove from his sitting room.

The insurance company records provide other insights to the goings on in New Boston. In December of 1866, Charlie Wilkins, owner of the tavern, took down his barn and shed and erected new ones. He also made alterations to the tavern. This was the village tavern, later owned by James B. Whipple. In 1870, Zechariah Morgan took the grist mill out of his shop and replaced it with a planer. He lived at 96 Scobie Road, now Hundred Acres. The mill was on the stone work that remains on the brook near his home. This may have been the time he started making tables.

From 1853 to 1866 only four losses were paid to policy holders. In 1853, Miles Nourse', home at 22 Molly Stark Lane (now John Ballou's home) was damaged by fire. In 1860, Mrs. Eliza Lease lost her barn. The next loss was in 1866, when the home of Jesse Beard at 82 Lull Road (now Paul Keiner's house) was destroyed. In 1866, Whipple and Atwood were paid \$200 for loss of goods in a fire at their store.

By 1867, the amounts of insurance were increasing along with the number of policies. Jonathan King insured his mill and Sandy Smith his shop and house. Even the village district school and the #6 school house were covered by the New Boston Fire Insurance Company. Two losses from 1870 were \$500 to Sam Worthley for his store and \$900 to John Gregg for his blacksmith and carpenter shop including his machinery, tools, and stock in trade.

By this time Engine Company #1 had served New Boston for 27 years. The town decided to improve fire protection and purchased the Hunneman hand tub in 1872. We know this unit as Constitution #2. We have very detailed records of the action the old hand tub saw from the fire companies books, but first we will continue the story of the insurance company. With the better protection now available, it would seem that more policies would be sold. While some people

increased their coverage, others were dropping their policies and buying from other companies. By 1879, only 97 policies were still held by the New Boston Fire Insurance company.

Five fires were reported between 1882 and 1885. Mrs. Stanley's house, barn, and cow barn on Old Coach Road were destroyed. A.J. Bennett (Paul Paige's home at 253 Francestown Road), Richard Batten, Walter Woods on Frog Rock Road in Gougeville, and David Woodbury on Weare Road, all lost their buildings to fire. The Woodbury fire, on July 23, 1885, resulted in a disagreement over the amount of damages the company was willing to pay. Woodbury claimed he had coverage of \$300 on his dwelling, \$300 on two barns, and \$200 on his cider mill and mill house, for a total of \$800. The insurance company agreed to pay a total of \$644. The issue was resolved in the company's favor by the New Hampshire courts. Final payment to Mr. Woodbury was not made until March of 1887. The buildings, now cellar holes on Weare Road near Middle Branch Corner, were never rebuilt. Mr. Woodbury bought the farm at 466 Weare Road, where Gardner LeBaron now lives.

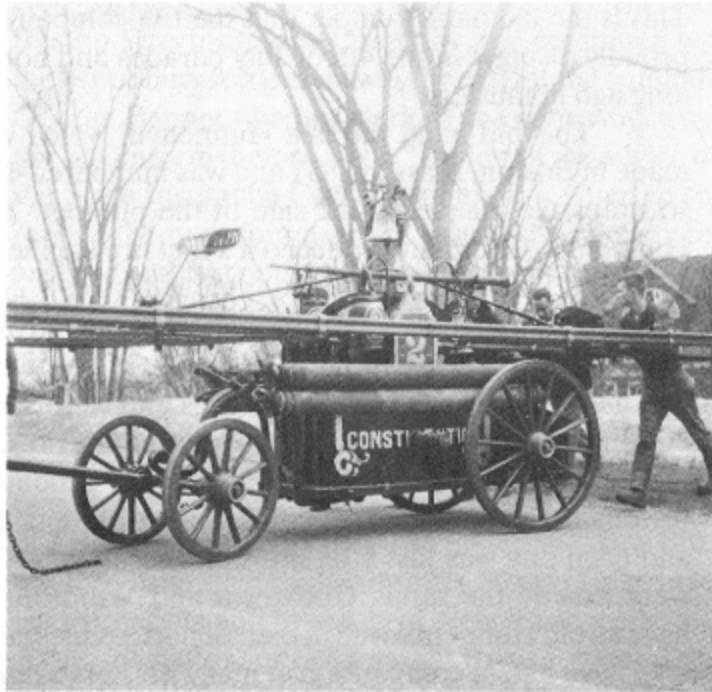
Two months later, May 11, 1887, the disastrous village fire destroyed the buildings of George Wason, Abram Wason, Harriet McNeil, Nancy McLane, and Neil McLane. These were all insured by the New Boston Fire Insurance Company and combined with the Woodbury settlement was the end for the company. George Bennet, the last clerk of the company, wrote the last entry in their records. "In view of the advice of the State Insurance Commissioners it is voted to surrender the premium notes as fast as the assessments are paid and that policy holders surrender their policies at that time by taking their note to the secretary." This last entry, dated January 21, 1890 continued "at a meeting of the directors of the New Boston Mutual Fire Insurance Company, at the dwelling of Rodney McLane, it was voted that all unpaid assessments due from losses sustained by the May 11, 1887 fire be put in the hands of J.P. Tuttle for collection". So ended the New Boston Fire Insurance Company after 50 years of protecting the people and property of New Boston.

It would seem logical that Engine #1 probably retired when Constitution #2 was purchased. Whether it was owned by the town or the insurance company, it is believed it stayed in town. At a muster, October 12, 1899, New Boston had two hand tubs entered, Constitution #2 and "Swamp Angel", along with little Pinball. This is the one and only mention of Swamp Angel of New Boston, but it would be nice to say "Swamp Angel" might have been New Boston's first fire engine. Who knows? No one seems to recall what Engine #1 looked like, except once Rev. Swanson described the first pumper as an old wooden tub which was replaced by the iron tub.

Constitution #2

Constitution #2 was purchased in May of 1872 with money raised by the citizens of the town. When Salem, Mass. purchased a steam fire engine they sold their Hunneman pumper to New Boston which was named "Constitution" and that name was retained. This is the old hand pumper that the fire company so proudly displays in the 4th of July parades and not so long ago in musters.

This old hand tub is a Hunneman which was made in Boston, Mass. in 1851 and was numbered 427, so states the plaque on the side of the pumper. The Hunneman Company produced its first fire engine in 1792 and these pumpers were famous for their light weight and mobility. It has a crane-neck end-stroke, making it easier for turning. Its brakes, or pump handles, are mounted along the sides and were swiveled into a front and rear position when fighting fires. In the 91 years that the Hunneman Company produced fire engines, they made 716 of these end-stroke engines and each one was just a bit different, so no two tubs were exactly the same. Goffstown and Wilton each have an old Hunneman tub in their departments, which they have had in competition at many musters against New Boston.



Constitution #2 Hand Tub

First Engine House

In 1872 the town records tell about building an engine and hearse house for \$412.06, and it is believed this was in the lower village by the town house, nearly the same site as the town office building, commonly called the old fire house. This engine and hearse house burned in the 1887 village fire and they rebuilt the hearse house up in the cemetery and rebuilt the fire house near the town hall. It was probably built to house the new hand tub which they had purchased in May of 1872.

The town reports are the only source of information about the fire company's finances, but the annual payroll was going up each year for it had risen from \$30.00 to between \$60-70.00 and the fact was, it took more men to pump the new Hunneman than the old pumper.

For some reason the town was slow to finish building the engine house and the clerk's records show that on April 5, 1875 the fire company appointed a committee of three, A.J. Burnham, Ezra Mudgett and Sol Atwood to meet with the selectman in regards finishing the house. It took another year of waiting, but they finally did get \$105.00 at the 1876 town meeting for that purpose, only to have it burn flat 11 years later.

John Johonett was paid for hauling the fire engine to fires with his team as he had a livery stable on River Road. In 1880, A.J. Burnham painted the fire engine for \$36.00 and he also painted the hearse for \$16.00. Three years later E.C. Colby purchased hose for the fire engine for \$128.00 and a new suction hose was purchased the following year for \$130.00. You can see New Boston was always generous keeping their fire company well supplied. The ranks of the engine company were swelling for payroll by 1885 had increased to over one hundred dollars.

Constitution #2 Fire Company

The old engine company #1 must have been reorganized with the purchase of the new pumper, for on May 6, 1872 the Constitution #2 Fire Company was formed, a constitution and by-laws adopted and officers elected. The officers chosen were George Chandler, foreman; John D. Colby, assistant

foreman; John Gregg Jr., foreman of leading hose; his assistants were David M. Brooks, Peter C. Douglas and John Johonett; Albert Goodwin, foreman of the suction hose, with assistants E.D. Moody, Frank Gregg and John Mudgett; John Colby, clerk and Albert Goodwin was chosen treasurer.

The records of the Constitution #2 show that the first fire the hand pumper was called didn't occur until October 15, 1874, over two years after its purchase. "Alarm of fire was given from the school house this morning at 4 o'clock. The fire was in F.S. Richard's tannery, north of the village. The engine in charge of the asst. foreman had a stream of water playing on the fire in 30 minutes after the alarm was given. 23 members answered the call." 30 minutes may seem like a long time today, but the men had to either pull the tub to the fire or hitch a team and it made it slower in those days. The tannery was on Route 136 across from Hechtl's house at 99 Francestown Road. Some folks could remember the tall chimney which stood, the only remains of the tannery, not too long ago and believe Luther Colburn took it down when he lived there.

Two months later, on Christmas day, the engine was called to a fire in the barn of Solomon Dodge. No results are given to the extent of the damage, but when a fire makes a head start just one hand pumper can't always save the property.

No mention of fires occurring in 1875, but in 1876 on July 3rd., "an alarm of fire was given at 5:30 P.M. The fire was in William Buxton's house which was burned down. Engine and company was promptly on hand and done all that was possible."

False alarms plagued the fire company in 1877 just as they do today. The day after Christmas at 7 o'clock, at night, an alarm was given of a light in the direction of John H. Lamson and the engine was taken within a few rods of his place before the mistake was discovered. Lamson's place is Wellswood at 75 Hooper Hill Road.

Some of the accounts of the old hand tub had happy endings such as the alarm of fire on May 9, 1879 at the paper mill in Gougeville, now 353 Lyndeboro Road, but when the engine arrived with 24 men, the fire was out without much damage. Another account was of the alarm at S.D. Atwood's store (now 7 Central Square) on November 29, 1880, "the engine was taken out but not used." On April 12, 1884 there was also an alarm at the brick store of C. H. Dodge, 1 High Street, and the records stated, "the engine started for the fire but was stopped on the way because it was quenched."

Luck was with the fire company again, when it was called to the house occupied by Mrs. Alfred Cochran on the River Road (maybe George Perron's at 110 River Road) when the firemen put out the blaze before it made any headway without the use of the engine.

There was only one loss from fire, until the big village fire, and that was at Walter Wood's place on Frog Rock Road, which was at 2 o'clock in the morning and even if 17 men and the engine did answer the call promptly, nothing could save the buildings.

Village Fire – 1887

It was on May 11, 1887 that New Boston experienced the worst fire the town had ever seen and although this fire has been told and retold time and time again, no history of the fire department would be complete without it being narrated again.

It is best told by the clerk, William Woodbury, of the old fire company and here is what he recorded in the company's record book.

"An alarm of fire was given at 12 o'clock, noon. The fire was in an old barn of S.D. Atwood and was supposed to have caught by a spark from Abram Wason's steam shop close by. The company with the engine was promptly on hand and done all that was possible for them to do. The fire was so hot that it burnt holes in the leading hose so that it was impossible to throw water with any force. There being a strong northwest wind, the fire spread rapidly leaping from one building to another and in one hour and a half, the following buildings had all fallen in - S.D. Atwood's store and out buildings, J.N.

McLane blacksmith shop, dwellings of Neil McLane, Nancy McLane, Abram Wason, J.P. Tuttle and Harriet McNeil. The Baptist church and chapel, engine house, school house, Presbyterian chapel and parsonage also burned. A messenger was sent to Goffstown for help. They responded with 150 men and an engine but not in time to be of any practical good - only to play on the ruins and the loss of property by this fire is estimated to be \$50,000.”

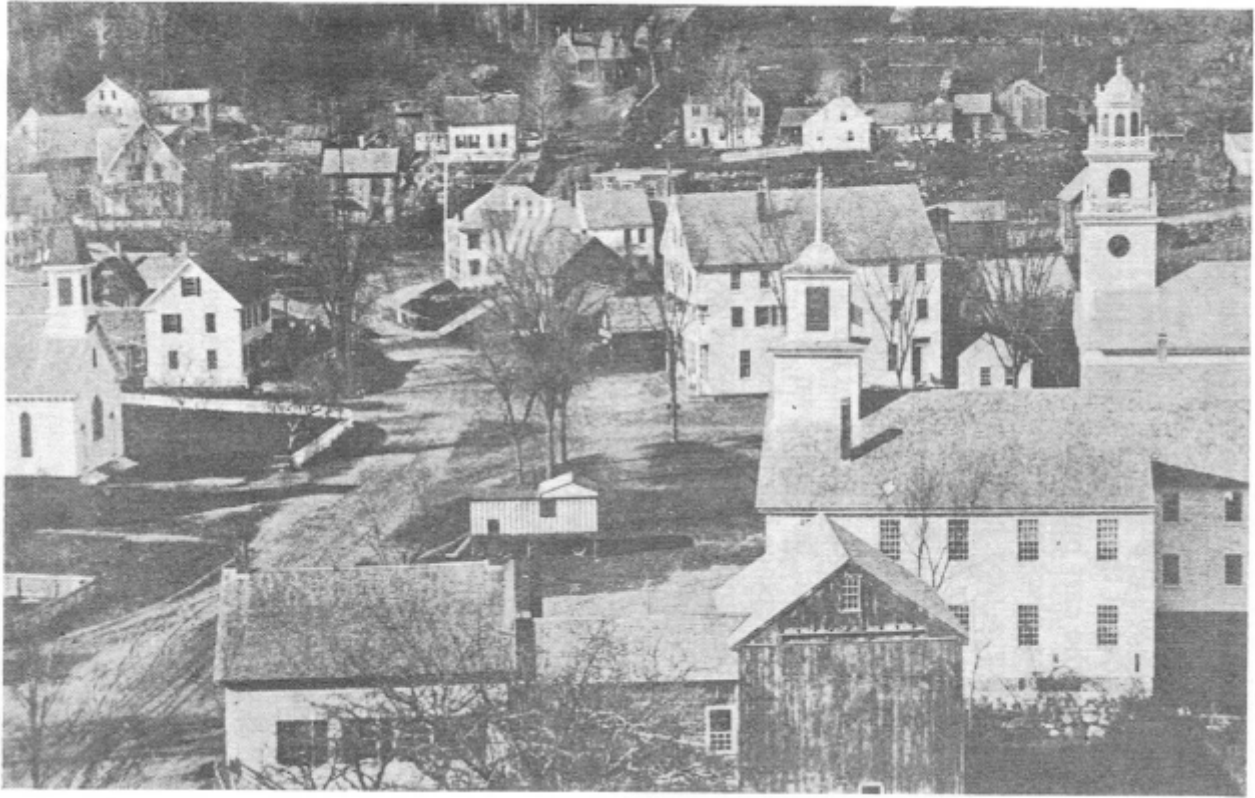
Just to bring these locations of buildings up to date, the old barn belonging to S.D. Atwood was near Young’s apple house, 3 Central Square, and Atwood’s store was at Dodge’s store site. The Wason’s steam mill was on the river bank back of the Creamery (5 Central Square) and it is ironic that this old mill never burned but was left standing and a few days later Wason was about to put it back in operation when there was so much opposition against it he decided to shut down. Later J.R. Whipple bought it, tore it down and built the creamery nearly on the site. McLane’s blacksmith shop was Napa Auto Parts, 1 Central Square, Henry Farley’s house was next to the town hall, now Ryans at 9 Meetinghouse Hill, and J.P.Tuttle’s home was across the street at 40 Mill Street. Hattie McNeil lived at 36 Mill Street now Leon Daniels, Neil McLane’s home was the Library site at 2 Central Square, Nancy McLane was at 3 River Road and next was Abram Wason’s home at 5 River Road. The site of the Baptist church is marked by a boulder on the common, the engine house was located where the Town office is today at 5 Meetinghouse Hill and the town hall at 7 Meetinghouse Hill is the same as the present building. The school house was located where the new fire house is at 4 Meetinghouse Hill and the chapel was the site of the present Presbyterian Church, 2 Meetinghouse Hill.

After the Village Fire

The village fire caused the ending of one era of New Boston but the rebuilding of the town was a new beginning for another era.

The fire engine, Constitution #2 had been saved as it was out of the engine house along with the hose cart, but the cart burned while it was in the street in front of the blacksmith shop, along with all the hose. Soon after a new hose reel carriage and hose was purchased from Boston for \$276, as it was essential to the fire company. The new nozzle that they had purchased the year before could be repaired. The fire engine was housed at different barns until a new fire house was built, but the town had more important buildings to replace like the school and town house, so no fire house appeared in the warrants until 1889. The town appropriated \$1200 and James Whipple, who owned the tavern, donated another \$300, so there was a total of \$1500 towards rebuilding a new fire house.

It took 26 days to complete the new building and there probably was a dedication, but no account of any can be found, except in the minutes of the fire company on December 7, 1889, where the company voted to dedicate the new engine house. This had two doors facing the street and these two bays served the department until more room was needed and a side addition was built with the doors facing the common.



New Boston before the Fire of 1887



New Boston after the May 11, 1887 fire



Old Fire House

The next year after the village fire, James Waldo petitioned, “to see if the town would vote to disband the fire company of the town.” The following article was a petition also by Waldo, “to see if the town would vote to allow the village to form a fire precinct, with suitable boundaries, and donate all fire apparatus belonging to the town to the said precinct when duly established.” It can almost be certain that all the voters on the outside farms probably didn’t take too kindly to Mr. Waldo’s idea, for New Boston never had a village precinct.

Musters

Old fashioned competition between Goffstown and New Boston’s fire companies began in 1886 when New Boston invited Goffstown to a “Trial Contest” on September 25th, of throwing water horizontally. Goffstown beat New Boston by throwing a stream of water 176 feet, or 16 feet further than the Constitution #2. After the contest both companies were treated to an oyster supper at Young’s hotel, where the bank is now located at 2 High Street. On October 23, Goffstown invited New Boston for a return muster. There was parade through town and then the fun began. This time it was a different story, New Boston beat both of Goffstown’s tubs by 23 feet, and this was all due to the fact New Boston had just invested in a new nozzle.

Musters were growing in popularity between many of the engine companies and musters with large money prizes were appealing. In 1894, Nashua merchants hosted a Fireman’s muster and New Boston took her engine on a special train. The accounts of the company tell of arriving in Nashua at 9:00 A.M. in time to enter the parade. Later the trial of throwing water through 200 feet of hose was the thrill of the afternoon. The best throw of Constitution #2 was only 187 feet, or fifth place, with first place going to South Gardner, Mass. with 192 feet. The company arrived back at New Boston at 9:00 P.M., unhappy to come home without any prize money, but happy with the thought that Goffstown only came in tenth place.

Uniforms made the companies stand out in parades and New Boston’s firemen voted to buy fifty uniforms, not to exceed \$200, as the annual Nashua parade and muster was to be in October of 1895. Once again the engine company went by special train and again New Boston was disappointed by being only in fifth place. Milford won first, Wilton received third and Goffstown was in seventh place. In December the engine company voted to purchase new brakes, or handles, the same as the

Wilton company had on their Hunneman tub. These brakes would be twenty feet long, provided the town would fix the walking beam and put the cylinder in "proper shape". This work must have been done during the winter, for on May 3, 1896, they worked the engine with the new twenty foot brakes, throwing water 200 feet through 100 feet of hose with 42 men at the brakes.

In September there was a big muster in Boston when the Constitution #2 made big preparations by paying \$20.00 entrance fee, printing badges at Greer's drug store for the extra fifteen men and also buying white gloves, but the cost couldn't exceed 15 cents per pair. They left New Boston by special train September 23 at 6:30 A.M. and there was the usual parade through the streets of Boston before the serious business of pumping water. New Boston's best throw was only 148 feet which was only 14th place out of 23 entries, but all the men were guests of J.R. Whipple at his hotel after the muster which made the trip worthwhile.

In October, 1896, it was time for that annual Nashua muster but because of the rain and mud, the parade was short and only ten pumpers appeared for the trials. New Boston managed to defeat Goffstown, but they only showed seventh place with 192 feet, better by far than their Boston record!

It was voted to buy a new piece of suction hose ten feet long in 1899, and they also decided to buy coupling to fit the four inch hose. Maybe this equipment would make the engine more efficient.

The 1899 muster was held in Manchester where Goffstown walked off with first prize of \$400 in gold. It was at this muster that New Boston entered the Constitution #2, The Swamp Angel, and little Pinball, which by the way, threw a stream of water 81 feet. This is the only record of Pinball being in any muster. The Manchester muster in 1900 had a large number of entries with 37 pumpers and again Goffstown received first prize, but New Boston's record was only 183 feet which was only 13th place out of 37. This was the last record of any muster which New Boston entered, until about 50 years later.

Don't think the old hand tub was only used for musters for it was busy going to fires, as it was the only piece of equipment the town had for fighting fires. In September of 1887, the house of J.C. Lease, on Molly Stark Lane in the upper village, caught on fire and nothing the engine could do helped to save the house, but two barns were saved by the effort of the fire company. No big fire was reported until July 19, 1894 when Allen Leach's buildings were destroyed after being struck by lightning. This was a brick house with a wooden ell.

The New Boston railroad had been built in 1894 and the depot at 29 Depot Street was the stone and stucco building that now houses the police department. On January 31, 1895, an alarm of fire was given at 3:15 a.m. for a fire at the Concord & Montreal R.R. depot. The fire company with the engine was promptly on hand but not used, for two lines of hose were used from the creamery hydrant. This fire started from a "baker heater" in the baggage room which gutted the inside of the depot, but part of the roof was left standing.

Fire Hydrants

After J.R. Whipple built the creamery all the fire alarms were given by the steam whistle from there and not by ringing the school house bell. Whipple had a steam pump in the creamery that had a hose attached to a near by hydrant. The water supply was from a spring on the hillside that furnished water for the creamery where Whipple had a large tank that he kept full by this steam pump. This supply of water cost Whipple over \$2000 to dig and lay the pipes but after that "awful" loss from the village fire it was considered money well spent.

This was a boost to the fire department towards fighting fires in the village and in fact it proved it's usefulness at the depot fire, and it was realized then that hydrants were an aid to the fire company.

An article appeared in the 1895 warrant to see if the town would appropriate money to lay pipes connecting with the steam fire pump at the creamery and to two or more hydrants, one of these to be set somewhere near the grist mill, and one on the common opposite the fire house. George Hadley

was paid \$585 for laying these pipes and hydrants. It has been told that the pump in the creamery could force a stream of water over the church steeple which was impressive for those days.

Some hydrants belonged to J.R. Whipple for use on his farm and some of these were located on the corner of High Street and Valley View, back of Wayne Daniel's house at 11 Weare Road, near Almus Chancey's garage at 1 High Street and at the bridge near the depot. There was a hydrant near Manna's at 8 River Road and the town put one on the common in 1895-96. Later, in 1907, a new hydrant replaced the old one by the meat market, now Abigal's bakery at 8 Mill Street.

In the Constitution #2 clerk's records it is told that several practice meetings in the summer of 1898 were trials of laying hose. These consisted of taking the engine from the house, detaching the hose carriage from the engine, running to the nearest hydrant, laying fifty feet of hose and have a stream of water in less than three minutes.

This was done in teams of eight men and different hydrants were used at different practice runs. One team would go to the hydrant near the band stand (this was on the oval opposite the Tavern, now the bank) and another team would run to the Grist Mill, now Parker's.

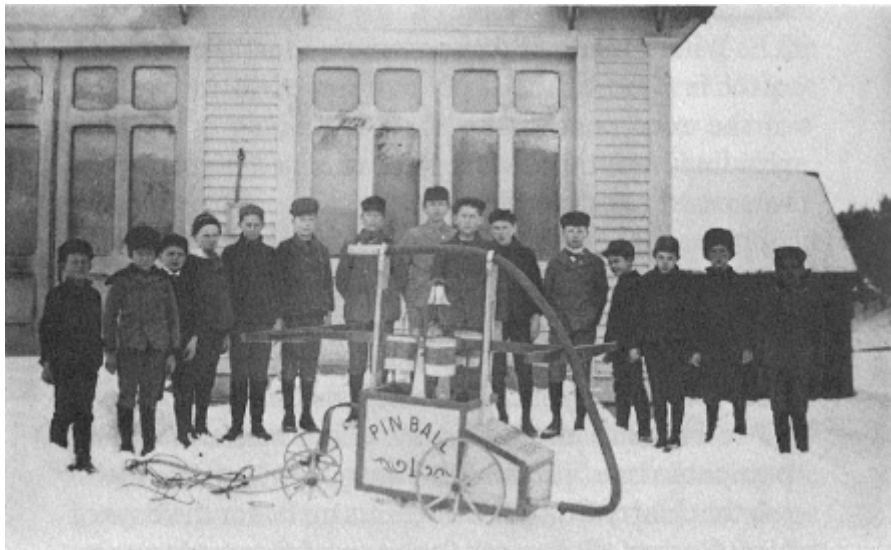
There were several of these practice runs and by the end of August the time was reduced to one and one half minutes. All this practice came in handy on New Year's Day, 1899, when an alarm of fire sounded from the creamery for a fire in the house of Mary Hill. The firemen laid a line of hose from the hydrant and extinguished the fire before too much damage was done from an over heated chimney.

Flag Pole

In the spring of 1898 the fire company voted to put a flag pole on the fire house and purchase a flag to be in place by Memorial Day. The foreman, E.A. Edwards and R.W. McLane were the committee to get this done. On May 28 they had a flag raising and Rev. J.E. Wildey made a "fitting remark." In old pictures of the fire house the flag pole can be seen over the peak of the roof nearest the town hall. This is where it remained until the doors were changed and the pole was never relocated.

Little Pinball

This might be a good place to interrupt the Constitution story and tell about the little hand pumper, Pinball. There are probably other miniature hand pumpers made just for fun", but not any just like the tub that Harry Colby and Joe Fitts made for the boys of New Boston. Colby was foreman of the engine company and a fireman on the New Boston Railroad, Fitts also a railroad man. The boys had an organization called "Pinball Junior Fire Company" which was formed about 1900, and this little pumper could throw water 75 feet or more. They would amuse the city guests at the tavern by pumping water from the watering trough at the tavern barn and throwing it across the street. Pin money was picked up by the boys from tips thrown out by the boarders. There is only one muster when their "throw" was recorded and that was in Manchester when the boys pumped 81 feet. Every so often the little Pinball is dusted off and paraded on July 4th, but seldom is it ever pumped. This tub is kept in the fire house near the Constitution #2 hand tub.



Little Pinball Pumper

The Church on the Hill

Next to the village fire, the burning of the church on the hill was probably the most spectacular, across from Wason's at 6 Bedford Road. At 11 A.M. on November 9, 1900 the creamery whistle alerted the fire company to a fire at the old Presbyterian church on the hill. It had been struck by lightning at the very apex of the steeple during a heavy thunder shower. The lofty location of the fire made it difficult to fight, but by soaking the woodwork with water from several extinguishers, the flames appeared to be out. However, a second alarm at 5 P.M. sounded, for a high wind had fanned the fire to life again and this time the efforts of 150 men were powerless to save the old church. The walls fell in about 6:30 and the flames could be seen over in Manchester. It looked like a giant torch in the sky. The unoccupied building was owned by Atwood and was used as a storehouse.

The engine company did save the Charles Adam's buildings (the Adams place at 15 Bedford Road), which were 150 feet away, by wetting them down. Arthur Holt summed it up nicely when he stated, "the hand tub came into good use at this time, showing that men from all parts of the town are willing to lend a hand at such times and stick to the brakes." Mr. Adams gave the fire company \$50.00 to show his appreciation for saving his home and the fire company invested this money towards a relief fund for members of the company who may get injured while on duty.

Honor Roll

A new amendment was adopted to the constitution in March of 1900 which was Article 11, or the formation of an honor roll. It read, "There shall be a roll of "honorary members". Persons eligible to honorary membership shall be those who served not less than five years as active members of the company and have been honorably discharged." At this meeting they also voted to have the honorary membership framed and hung in the engine house and that the first name on this list be Harry S. Colby. Mr. Colby had just retired that January after serving 21 years as a fireman. He had joined the company in November of 1879 and remember he was co-builder of little Pinball.

In 1945 the by-laws were changed to a minimum of 25 years of service, 20 of which must be on the active list were required for a member to be placed on the honor roll, but in 1958 it was reduced from 25 to 20 years of active service.

The present honor roll lists the names of 77 firemen retired since 1900, the first was Harry Colby and the last name is George Pierce. Three generations of Boses appear on the roll, Robert Bose

Sr., his father T.A. Bose Jr. and his grandfather, T.A. Bose Sr. Fred Brown and Thomas Cochran both became members of the company three days before the village fire. Brown served 51 years before retiring and George Mansfield was another long time fireman of 51 years.

Seven honorary firemen are still living in New Boston today, Howard Prince, Robert Bose, Roland Sallada, Dean Yost, Ken Barss, John Colburn, and Charles Davis.

This honor roll has recently been neatly calligraphed by G.L. Wheeler and is framed and hangs in the fire house.

Chemical Fire Engine

New Boston was slowly improving its fire company as items in the town reports show that three chemical fire extinguishers were bought in 1901 by the fire wards, Arthur Holt and James McLane. Two years later they purchased \$70.00 worth of suction hose and the following year more new hose was added. In the fall of 1902 it was found necessary to do something about new suction hose as the old one was useless. The engine company and not the town had two lengths of the best rubber hose which they had purchased for muster purposes. The town borrowed this and purchased two more lengths and a brass strainer to match. By vote of the fire company they were willing to sell their two lengths of hose at cost, to the town. It is assumed this is the extra hose that the town purchased.

The engine house was given a new coat of paint in 1905 and it was also wired for electricity by P. Wilson. The town hall roof had been slated and the town decided was the cheapest and best roofing material, so they had G.W. Darrah put a new slate roof on the engine house for \$162.50.

The biggest investment was requested at the 1911 town meeting when the fire wards asked for \$1000 for new equipment and with this appropriation they purchased a chemical fire engine. In 1912, George Dennison was chief fire ward and made this report, "The fire department is now in good condition. There has been purchased a two tank chemical fire engine with 500 feet of hose, 12 chemical hand fire extinguishers and a 35 foot ladder." This chemical could be either hand drawn or horse drawn, the tanks held 35 gallons of sodium bicarbonate and water and a small bottle of sulfuric acid which was added to make carbon dioxide.

Maybe the first response for this new unit was a chimney fire at Mrs. Butterfield's home on Old Coach Road, where they reported it was extinguished by use of the "pony tank" without much damage.

In the company's 1912 records there was a change in the by-laws because with the new equipment, new positions became effective in the department. The old title of foreman became captain, and with the chemical engine there was now a chemical lieutenant and a lieutenant of hook and ladder. These new officers became official in January 1913.

Joe Rockingham was the first to hold the new title of captain, William Patterson became the Lieutenant of the chemical engine and Bill Fox held the honor of being Lieutenant of hook and ladder.

Brush Fires

At the turn of the century, a tremendous amount of lumbering took place in New Boston with many portable saw mills leaving acres of slash land behind. This was the cause of most of the brush and forest fires that plagued the fire department for about ten years. A bad brush fire occurred August 4, 1900 on the lot of Charles Goodrich and because this was a drought year, it was very difficult to fight, requiring several days to bring it under control because of the water shortages. The following year, a brush fire on the Whipple lot owned by Read brothers threatened the buildings of Eliphalet Richards, but thanks to a large response of men it was soon brought under control.

In April of 1902 there were two fires, one on the land of Charles Shedd which was caused by sparks from a steam mill and the fire on Charles Todd's land was started by a tramp. That December a steam mill burned on the Stearn lot in the western part of town.

The next spring there was a fire on the McCurdy lot which took three days to bring under control and in the year 1904, New Boston contended with four brush fires. It was beginning to be a difficult season, for there were six fires in 1905 between April and July. The worst of these was near Butterfield Mill which was reported, "kept all available help of the town busy all day May first, and some for the next 48 hours, however no large amount of damage was done and a dangerous locality was cleaned up."

Would you believe there were seven brush fires in 1906 and three of these were on B.J. Lang's land in three different months where there had been lumbering?

June 29 and 30 of 1913 was the loss of Forest Dearborn's steam mill and also the loss of \$20,000 worth of lumber.

In about 1913 or 1914, the state of New Hampshire had a forestry department which began to reimburse the towns for the cost of forest fires. These accounts were handled by the chief forest warden and his several deputies.

Fires at the Turn of the Century

Let's go back to 1903 and see what the Constitution #2 had been doing. In June, the Benjamin Colby place burned, a total loss from a defective chimney. The Colby place was near Frog Rock and was owned by the Read brothers. February 13th was unlucky for the Charles Colburn family lost their house, ell and horse barn which were all connected, however a cow barn was saved. This is the Colburn homestead owned by Robert Colburn at 280 Colburn Road, off Francestown Road.

Two fires of destruction occurred during 1906, Albert Goodwin on Cochran Hill lost a henhouse and the wooden railroad station at Lang's burned which was valued at \$180.00. There was a lull in structure fires during 1907, but 1908 wasn't so fortunate. On July 27, the George Cluchee place on Cochran Hill burned from a defective chimney. During a thunder shower on August 5th at 4 A.M. Charles Tucker's entire buildings burned after being struck by lightning, and later that same day, at 3 P.M. two barns of George Mansfield, on Hooper Hill also were struck by lightning, but from a different storm.

The fire engine was called out at 3 am on January 21, 1910 to a fire at Ray Gilman's house on the old road beyond Strong farm, called Helena Drive. The fire had gained too much headway for the old pumper to do any good and the buildings were lost. Later, in April, there was a fire at the Poor place, at Tucker Mill corner, now Belanger's at 181 Tucker Mill Road. One barn was entirely consumed, but the other buildings were saved.

On January 6, 1912 at 7:00 p.m. an alarm for a fire in the house of Albert Shedd was called when the house and barn were entirely consumed.

The year 1913 was unlucky for four sets of buildings, a saw mill and lumber were all lost by fire. On March 4, the old house of J.N.Dodge place, on the John Newton Dodge Road, occupied by Kelly Stevens, was destroyed from an overheated stove, but a barn was saved. The house and barn of Sam Herrick, on Joe English Road were burned on August 12, and on October 25 the barn of Henry Kelso, now Eiermann at 35 Bedford Road burned. It was a total loss and a horse, two cows and 150 chickens perished in the flames. A house and barn of George Ordway were destroyed on December 14, cause of fire another overheated chimney.

Two sets of buildings were destroyed in 1914 when the Harry Simon's farm on the Riverdale road burned on March 27th. They were preparing the house for the summer boarder business, and on June 5, a fire caused by rubbish too near a chimney destroyed the house of E.M. Kimball in the south part of town.

Here is the story of how neighbors help each other when the need arises. A spark from a chimney caught onto the roof of Miss Hattie Eaton's house. She was an elderly maiden lady who lived

where Marion Woodbury lives at 450 Weare Road. One side of the roof was badly damaged and a volunteer "work bee" from all the neighbors helped put a new roof on her home.

Double trouble occurred on August 15, 1915 during a severe thunder shower when an alarm was sounded at 7:20 pm for a fire at the buildings of E.W. Morse, 54 Scobie Road, the cellar hole near the monastery. It had been struck by lightning and the house and barn were destroyed. About ten minutes later, the barn of C.H. Sargent, 26 South Hill Road, now owned by Paul Delphia, was also struck and burned. The barn was replaced by moving the Frank Lamson barn to the Sargeant place.

It is rare for three fires to be set off by the same electrical storm, but this event happened on August 23, 1916. The day had been one of a storm build-up with hot, muggy, dog-day weather, and along towards evening the temperature dropped 20 degrees, and a severe shower followed with a total rainfall of three inches between 5:00 pm and 9:30 pm. The buildings of Alonzo Blood, at 9 Joe English Road, Arthur Wilson on 7 Wilson Lane and Thomas Cochran at 177 Bedford Road were all struck by lightning from that storm. It is assumed the engine went to Blood's as that is the nearest to town, as only a bucket brigade of neighbors was all that tried to save the Wilson Farm. Wilson rebuilt his house and moved the Saunder's barn to his farm, Cochran rebuilt and Shaw later moved his ell over to the Blood cellar hole. The original ell to the Cochran place was built in 1763 where the first town meeting was held and in 1816 the two story addition was made. Remember the only fire equipment was the Constitution hand tub and the chemical cart, but thoughts of more modern fire fighting equipment was being considered by a few people in town, but it took a half a decade and three more devastating fires before a motorized fire truck became a reality.

One of these fires was September 3, 1918 when the Best farm or the old Kelso farm, 408 Joe English Road, beyond Evelyn Barss, was destroyed from unknown causes when the house, ell, connecting barn and another barn were all lost plus a tractor and farming machinery.

On October 19, 1919, the Sylvester Webster house across from 290 Cochran Hill burned while it was occupied by a Miss May and her parents, who had rented the house for her health as she was a tubercular patient.

The following year, 1920, saw the loss of the old Thomas Bose house on Lyndeboro Road. A barn and some furniture were saved and Bose built a new house across the road at 14 Lyndeboro Road.

The efficiency of the old hand pumper was fading fast for time was essential to prevent fires from gaining head start and the old equipment was just too slow and outdated. New Boston needed a change!

First Motorized Fire Truck

In 1916, eight years before the town purchased a motorized fire engine, there was an article at town meeting calling for the purchase of a new auto truck for the use of the fire department. But the town's people were not convinced of the effectiveness of motorized equipment. The article was voted down. Again, in 1920, the vote arose for a chemical truck. Again, this was indefinitely postponed. In 1922, Alvin Smith wanted the town to buy a new Dodge truck for the fire department only to be postponed. The question of a fire alarm system also came up that year. No, again!

When the New Boston Chamber of Commerce was formed, one of their goals was better fire protection. The town had a hand pumper and a chemical cart, but by 1924 other towns were beginning to have motorized fire equipment. New Boston was noticing how much more effective and faster this was for fighting fires. Mont Vernon had a truck in 1918 and Amherst bought their first engine in 1922. Weare purchased a motorized fire truck in 1926. But it wasn't until 1937 that Francestown acquired a Model A fire truck.

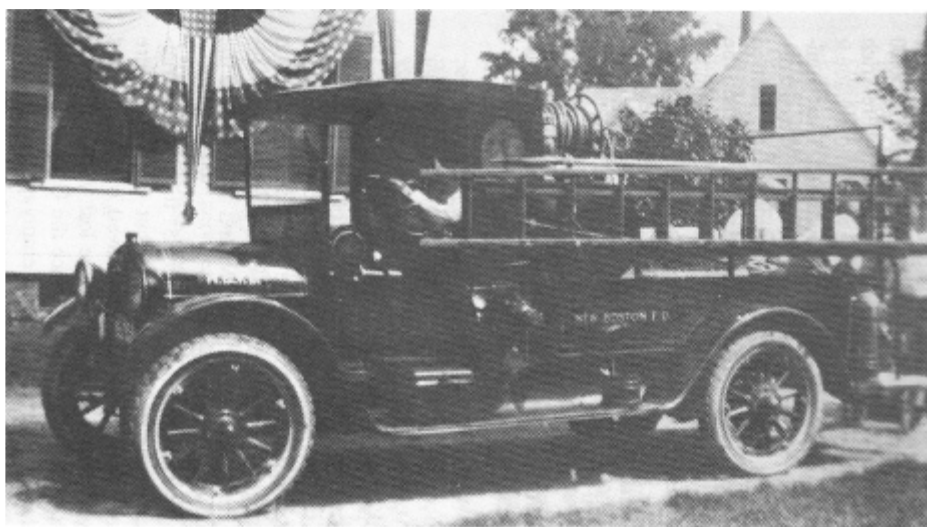
It was time for a change. Maybe the fire scare of January 24, 1924, helped change opinions. The wind blew so hard making fire containment difficult that the townspeople decided it was now time to consider retiring the old Constitution. Finally, at the 1924 town meeting, the town voted for a new

fire truck. A committee of three, Arthur Holt, Osborne Sutherland and Charles Blanchard, were chosen to purchase this truck. They bought a second hand three-quarter ton REO "Speedwagon" for \$800. It was equipped "with hand extinguishers, ladder, pails, hoes, shovels, and many other things which are needed at fires".

Where they bought this truck or the exact date is not told in the fire company clerk's records. However, the truck responded to George Dearborn fire in South Weare on August 2, 1924. This was the first record of a fire response.

The year 1924 was a particularly bad year for fires in New Boston. Twenty were reported. Only ten of these were chimney fires. Harry Simon's house in the Riverdale section was burned, caused by defective wiring. This was his second house to burn. The Giddings place (Willard Dodge's at 116 Tucker Mill Road) was destroyed and spread into a forest fire. Fred Towne's barn, 214 Beard Road, was struck by lightning. The stable burned at Malcolm Lang's now Barnett's home on West Lull Place. A fire at Peletier's at Howe Bridge burned the ell and barn. Goffstown came to the aid of New Boston at the Peletier fire. It was quickly seen how much more effective their truck with a water pump was than New Boston's REO. The following year, 1925, the fire wards asked the town purchase a pump to be installed on the REO. There had been a fire at the White and Dunklee lot. Several dollars worth of lumber burned which could have been saved if the engine had a pump. A nearby brook would have furnished a good water supply for a pump and houses rather than the hand equipment used by the Company.

The town did appropriate \$1200 at the 1925 town meeting to buy a pump for the REO fire truck. The fire wards, Brainard Newton, Harlan Shedd, and Charles Blanchard, were authorized to purchase it from Howe Fire Apparatus Company. The story has been told that the REO was loaded onto a flat car and sent to the Howe Co. to install the pump. When it was returned to the fire company, they tested their old hose with the new pump. It was discovered only 200 feet of their 850 feet of hose was serviceable. More hose was purchased bringing the entire cost \$1467.45. It must be remembered that these hoses were with the Constitution #2 hand tub for pumping water not the REO fire truck. Now there was greater water pressure through them with the mechanical pump. The old ones didn't hold up to the strain.



Old 1924 REO Fire Truck

The town now had a REO fire engine with a Howe pump and a chemical cart, but in 1929 the fire wards asked for an auto or truck chassis on which to mount the chemical tanks, and in 1930 a Studebaker chassis was purchased from Houghton garage for \$50.00 and the two tanks were mounted

on it. Henry Freidrich and other firemen did most of the work and it made it more convenient to have it self contained. The chemical engine worked on the idea of a mixture of bicarbonate of soda and water mixed with sulfuric acid created a pressurized gas, carbon dioxide which expelled the water mixture. This was ideal for smaller fires, chimney fires and gas and oil type fires. In fact in 1937, a saw mill caught fire near Brown Pond and the comment was made, "that the need of chemicals to fight gasoline and oil fires was demonstrated here."

What happened to the two chemical tanks or when they ceased to be used isn't known, but the old wheels were sold for \$5.00.

The Next Two Decades

The biggest fire of 1930 was probably the fire at Fitzgerald's, or the Whipple farm barn and piggery. This was the stone foundation back of Wayne Daniel's house at the junction of 77 and 136, and the piggery was the stone foundation beside the cider mill of Bob Belanger. The barn was 150 feet long, with 25 box stalls for horses, tie up for fifty cows and two silos and the piggery was 1000 feet long.

It was the night of March 31 that the fire originated in the end of the house but the flames were fanned away so the house was saved, but the barn and piggery north of the barn were lost. Although these buildings had been empty since the Gilman brothers sold to Fitzgerald, they left an empty spot in the hearts of all the people who could recall the good old farm days.

In 1933 on March 28, an alarm was sounded for a fire in Joe Daniel's brooder house, 55 Laurel Lane. The report read, "the roads were almost impassable, but three trucks got there but not in time to save the brooder house. Other buildings were saved but 3000 chickens and the 90 foot brooder house were a total loss." If you notice the report stated three trucks responded. Truck #1 was the REO, truck #2 was the chemical truck in charge of Lee Osborne and truck #3 was the Cadillac that was used for forest fires which they purchased in 1932 for \$50.00. It was a "made-over" truck which they used to haul Indian pumps and tanks for forest fires.

It was mainly chimney fires that kept the department busy but on January 16, 1936 at about 9:30 pm a call came for a fire at Fred Hadley's, now Vardaro at 267 Middle Branch Road. When the company arrived the whole house was engulfed in flames. It was impossible to save either the barn or the house. Hadley rebuilt a new house using some of the lumber from the Riverdale railroad depot. In 1936 the fire company voted to spray shade trees with a portable pump on the evenings of May 21, 22, and 23. 7500 gallons of spray was put on the shade trees in the village, but here is what will make the environmentalists shudder, as "300 pounds of arsenate of lead was used and the entire village and upper village was cared for." W.O. Mason loaned the use of a 500 gallon tank and the firemen donated their services and the owners of the shade trees were assessed twenty cents per tree to pay for the poison.

Ella Farley Bequest

The fire company was bequeathed \$1,000 by the will of Miss Ella Farley in 1936. She established the Elbridge Colby Constitution #2 Fund in memory of her father, Henry Farley. Ella and her father, Henry lived in the Ryan house next door to the town hall where she died, October 9, 1936.

There was a fire at Ethel French's on Meetinghouse Hill, now Adams, 15 Bedford Road on February 24, 1937. The REO pumper was stationed at the brook below the house and two lines of hose were laid, but the fire had completely enveloped the barn, but by the good work of the fire company the house only suffered minor smoke damage.

It was on March 4, 1937 that the REO was answering an alarm for a chimney fire at Calvin White's at Joe English when "the REO truck died natural death midway of Hogback beyond Will Dodge's and had to be towed back." Time for a new truck as the REO had to be replaced.

The '37 Howe

Fred Cann wrote in his clerk's records that the new dual wheeled V-8 truck completely equipped arrived Saturday, May 15. This truck was a Ford chassis purchased from South Weare Garage and they bought a Howe pump to be installed for \$1734.50. This had a semi-cab and was kept in service until it was auctioned off after they purchased the 1964 Howe pumper. The new 1937 was entered in the 4th of July parade for the whole town to see and admire.



1937 Howe Fire Truck

In August of 1938, the tragic drowning, in the mill pond, of 11 year old Joyce Michaud, prompted the town to think of emergency measures. An inhalator was being purchased by citizens of New Boston and the fire company gave \$25.00 towards its purchase and they also bought a stretcher for the fire truck. In October an emergency squad of five men was appointed by the Captain to have charge of the inhalator and it's operation. This squad's members were Arthur Hill, W. Leland, Lawson Smith, Joe Kennedy, and Fred Cann. The American Red Cross also gave lessons in artificial respiration. This was the fore-runner to the rescue squad.

Alert Systems

The church and school house bells had been used to sound fire alarms and later the steam whistle at the creamery was used, but with the closing of the creamery a different system had to be studied. As early as 1922 the fire company asked for a fire siren at town meeting, but was turned down. Then in 1930, Paul Saltmarsh was appointed to investigate the cost of an electrical fire alarm. Nothing

came of this either, for it wasn't until 1939 that the town actually voted for a fire alarm. It was purchased from the Sterling Fire Alarm Company at a cost of \$380. Art Boulter placed it on the town hall roof and W. Leland wired it. The siren was blown from the telephone office, as all fire calls usually came by phone, and it was tested every noon except Sunday. Later, the siren was placed on the front of the fire house where it remained until it was put in its present location, after the new fire house was built. The old siren has been alerting firemen of trouble for nearly fifty years.

The red phone network came into service after the old telephone was changed over to dial. The telephone operators had been receiving all fire calls, but after October of 1954 emergency calls were dialed 4872626, and answered through five red phones which have been in different locations. One in the fire house, Norman's garage, Kane's Drug Store, Chief Barss' home, Dodge's store, Mansfield home, and Young's house have been the locations of some of these phones. Later a base station was purchased and the tower was located at Mansfield's, behind 22 Joe English Road. Recently this tower has been relocated to a higher location on 77 Ridgeview Lane. The small building was built and donated by Robert and Jerry Kennedy. In 1984, all emergency calls for New Boston were dispatched by Goffstown, and the red phones became obsolete which were being covered at the homes of Gloria Barss, Jeanne McCreary and Margit Hooper and our thanks goes to these ladies who answered the incoming calls and also tested the fire siren every noon. Martha Mansfield and Rita Young have also answered red phones and today there are still three red phones in New Boston, Chief James Dodge's house, the Fire House, and at the Goffstown dispatch. The New Boston firemen now respond to calls by pagers. Please remember New Boston's emergency fire number - 487-2626. It could save your life!

Fires in the Forties

The old Hubley place, or Lendell Dodge farm, across from 238 South Hill Road, burned September 1, 1939 while it was owned by Robert Bonner and in 1941, three structure fires caused total damage to a brooder house, a barn and a workshop and henhouse. It was to Doug Campbell's on 193 Lull Road that the company was called on March 21 to a fire in his brooder house. The source of water was some distance away and the portable pump was used, but because there was snow with a crust, it made it difficult to carry the pump to the water source. Clint Smith came up with the idea of having skids on the pump for winter transport, which made it easier to pull rather than lug through the snow. Bill Barss bought this old pump for \$10.00 when a replacement was purchased.

On April 12, late in the afternoon, there was a call for a fire at Rev. George Lewis' residence, off Joe English Road at 17 Lewis Road. The fire originated from a brush fire which spread to his machine shop. Several piles of lumber caught on fire and Rev. Lewis' automobile, parked between the lumber piles started to catch fire. Dr. Lewis drove it out of danger but not before the roof was afire. The heat was so great inside the car that the doors stuck and he was unable to get out. Willard Archibald arrived just in time to free him; as it was, Mr. Lewis was severely burned about the head and hands. The barn fire was on December 11, at Vera Cuddy's place on South Hill.

Bombing Range Fire

The spring of 1942 was hot and dry, so forest fire danger was high and on April 24 a fire occurred on the bombing range which luckily was only minor, but on Saturday, May 2, a really big one started which raged until Wednesday, before it was under control when rain finally put it out. This was a very costly fire to fight. A forest fire truck was made that year from a chassis from Ralph George Motor Company for \$275 and with other materials, the total cost was only a bit over \$600.

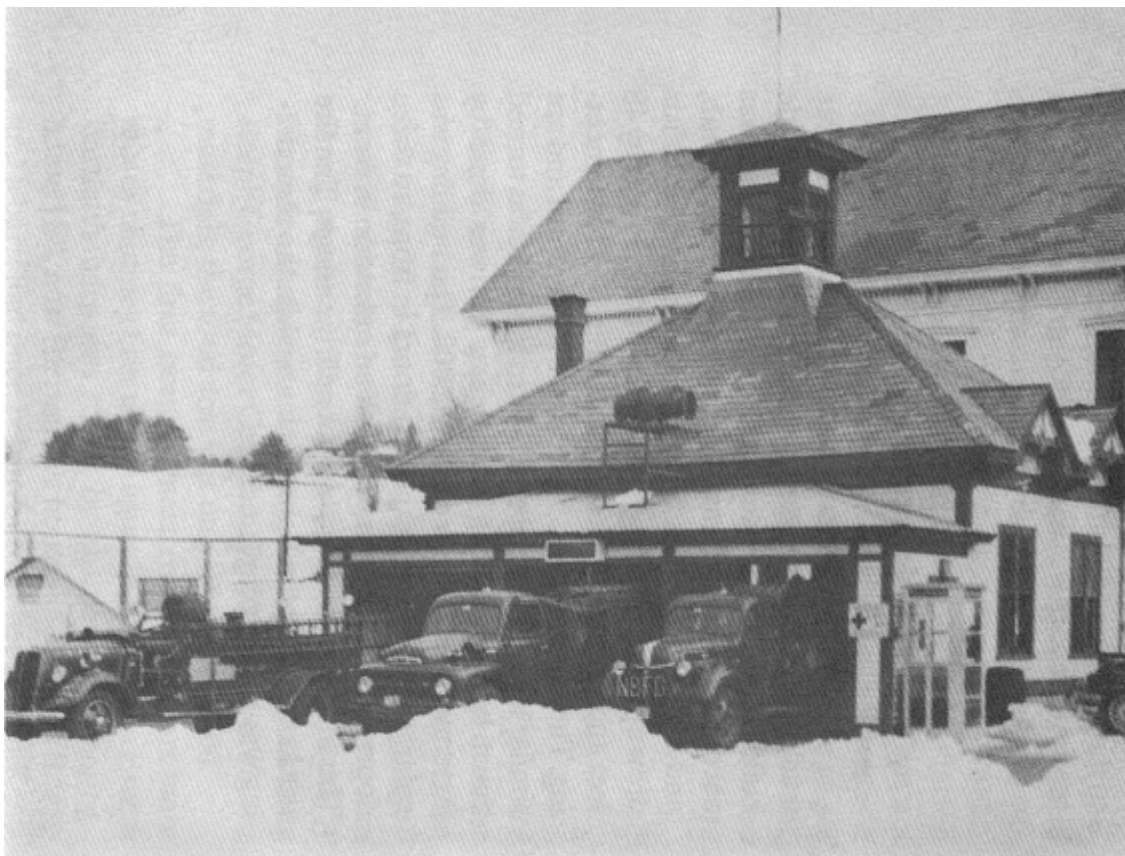
The fires over the next couple of years were mostly chimney fires until August 14, 1944 when Ernest Bartlett's barn was struck by lightning on Meetinghouse Hill, now Eiermann's house, 35 Bedford Road, and a barn had once before burned here when Kelso owned it.

It was March 17, 1945 that the company responded to a fire at Albert Kane's cement garage on 16 High Street, now Lanzillotti's home. It was caused by spilled gasoline which quickly ignited the clothing of Mr. Kane, who was in the garage at the time, severely burning him. He later died from these burns.

A year later, again in March, on the 13th, E.A Beals had been burning grass when it ignited the barn to the house on 159 Lull Road, now Kenneth Colbert's house. The barn was connected to the house and it took a great deal of effort by the fire company to save his house.

Remodeling the old Fire House

The old fire house was just too small for three trucks and still have work space. Remember this little building was built back in 1889 when all that was needed to be stored was the Constitution #2 hand tub, and now more room was necessary. The fire wards drew up plans for a larger three bay house, 36 feet by 48 feet and presented these plans at the 1949 town meeting. These plans are pictured in the town report and are similar in looks to our present fire station. It was turned down by voters, so a remodeling job was done by Artemus Boulter, at a cost of \$2,000. The building was enlarged by changing the two doors in front, to three doors facing Dodge's store with an extension in front. This made extra room, but not nearly enough. The fire trucks were kept in Babson's barn while the remodeling was being completed.



Old Fire House after remodeling

Mutual Aid

During the fall of 1949, the neighboring towns decided to form a mutual aid pact which would greatly help the smaller towns in case of a major fire. Robert Barss was captain of New Boston's company and plans were made with Francestown, Mont Vernon, Weare and Goffstown to go to the aid of each other's departments if the need arose. This was a big help when more pumpers were needed for large structure fires. Mutual aid has grown since the 40's. New Boston is now associated with the Souhegan Mutual Aid Association.

Two major fires were in March of 1949, both over Gougeville way. Robert Grant's henhouse at 329 Lyndeboro Road was a total loss. The big barn at the Heath place burned. A horse and farm equipment were lost in the March 14th fire. At the time of the fire, it was owned by Margarian. We now know it as Gomes' house at 44 Misty Lane and all the cattle and farm equipment were lost in the fire March 14th.

THE WIGWAM FIRE

The 1950's had their share of bad fires, mostly in the winter months when they are the most difficult to control. On November 18, 1951, fire fighting took a mysterious twist. Smoke was sighted by Captain Robert Barss from his house. It was 8:30 on a Sunday morning when he called the alarm. The Company responded to an abandoned house on the bombing range called the Wigwam. The fire trucks arrived to find smoke seeping through the shingles of the back ell. After extinguishing the flames, the fireman sought the source of the fire. They found a smoldering bundle of rags in an upstairs closet. The bundle of rags was the charred remains of a woman. The police were called to investigate. They later identified the body as that of Gertrude White from Trenton, New Jersey. The official verdict was death by carbon-monoxide poisoning and ruled a suicide. But, it was almost impossible for White to first wedge herself into the closet then set fire to herself. Today it remains a mystery – SUICIDE or HOMICIDE?

DURING THE 1950'S

The old Dane farm, 438 Clark Hill Road, was totally destroyed in a structure fire on January 24, 1952. Mrs. Alice Dane, holder of the Golden Cane as the oldest New Boston resident, lived there at that time.

Kenneth Klardie, the twelve year old son of Wilfred Klardie, was a hero when their home at 685 Bedford Road caught fire from faulty wiring on March 22, 1953. He was babysitting his younger brother and sister and led them to safety with his quick actions.

It was nearly a year later, March 14, 1954, that the house and barn of Roland LaMarch burned. The next morning, March 15, Joe Finnerty's house near the Mulley Bridge at 350 Butterfield Mill Road was partially lost by fire.

January 12, 1955, the fire company had another "cold" fire to fight. They responded to 342 Lyndeboro Road, the home of Hiram Silver, which was lost. Two weeks later, January 25, an 1:45 A.M. fire alarm called the Company to Beauchemin's house which was a total loss.

COLD was the watchword on Saturday night, December 10, 1955. Fred Cann's apple storage barn at 3 Central Square was on fire. The alarm sounded at 5:30 P.M. The fire company battled the blaze until midnight. The fire was high on the roof near the chimney. Goffstown responded with their new ladder truck. Roland Sallada vividly remembers carrying the hose up that ladder and the force of the water through the nozzle as he struggled to maintain his position.

Charles Davis recalls the severe cold that night. The water supply was from the river. They used torches to keep their pumps from freezing and were able to maintain the flow of water to the hoses. Only the roof and upper story were damaged and Cann repaired it.

On August 12, 1957 occurred the destruction of the old Hagland drug store which was then owned by Bernard Kane, 1 Maple Street. The fire was caused by an explosion of an oil-burning hot water heater early in the morning. Kane rebuilt the present building at Maple Steet, now Hunter's Fly Shop.

No dwellings were lost to fire in 1958 but it was a bad year for chimney fires as the fire company answered the call for 12 chimney fires. John Conley's house on Cochran Hill was the scene of a structure fire on March 4, 1959 which was caused by a power surge in the attic. It was never rebuilt.

The fire company answered two alarms the same day for fires at Thomas Tanner's, 13 Clark Hill Road, or the old Shedd place. It was about 6:00 pm on September 16, 1960 that a call came for a fire in the basement. This was quickly doused and again about 9:00 pm there came another call for a fire in his living room, near the fire place. These two fires were always rather suspicious but no formal charges were ever made.

Revival of the Old Time Musters

In 1956 Manchester made plans for an old hand tub muster as it had been fifty years since the last one in 1906. It was scheduled for Labor Day with a big parade down Elm Street and then on to Pine Island Park where the contest would begin.

If New Boston were to enter this muster, the old hand tub had to be spruced up a bit for it hadn't been used since 1925, so the Ladies Firemen's Auxiliary held card parties to help defray the cost of restoring the Constitution #2. Mrs. William Patten and William Melhorn each did some painting on the tub and Henry Friedrich repaired the wheels on little Pinball, so it too, could be in the parade. All this preparation was to no avail for New Boston was eliminated on the trial run as the hand tub blew a cylinder, to the disappointment of the town.

Later, Goffstown made big plans for a Labor Day Muster in 1959 and invited New Boston to enter the Constitution #2. This was brought up at the August fire meeting and it was voted to form the New Boston Hand Tub Constitution #2 Association, and elected Harlan Brown the president, Paul Mansfield, vice president and Edward Locke the secretary-treasurer. The sole purpose of this organization was to restore and preserve the old hand tub. Sixty four persons who joined at that August meeting became the charter members. The Fireman's Auxiliary gave \$25.00 to start a fund to restore the tub and this fund quickly grew.

Every year after 1960, the hand tub participated in many musters, winning a trophy for New England Championship Class 2, in 1963 at Plymouth. They bought a trailer and went as far as Rhinebeck, New York and several times to musters in Rhode Island and Connecticut. During the late 1960's and early 1970's they won over \$5,000 in competition prizes. The record throw was at Hampton Beach, August 28, 1965 with a distance of 221 feet and they received \$200 for that first place.

That year, 1965, Bob Card repainted the Hunneman and new brakes, or handles, were made. In 1972, Mr Vassel made new wooden sides and it was lettered for \$200.

Harlan Brown retired after being foreman for twelve years and was given a fly rod in appreciation for his faithful work. Robert Foote became the new foreman until the last muster in 1977 when there were only three musters held. High insurance liability rates became the factor for the ending of the old hand tub musters, but while it lasted, it was a fun filled twenty years of rivalry.

Changing the Name

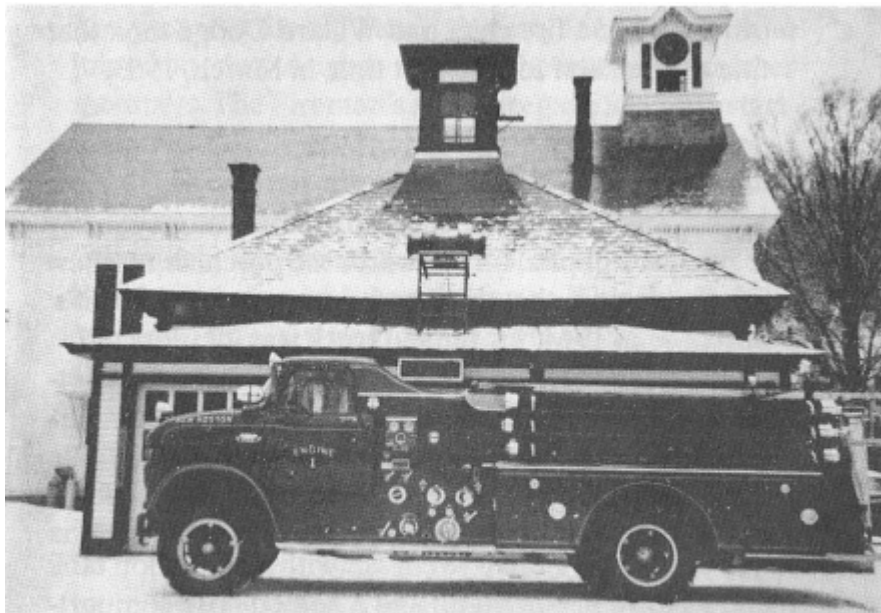
Since 1872, under article 1, section 1, the fire company was called the Constitution #2, but in 1963 by a change in the by-laws it became known as the New Boston Fire Department. At this same March meeting the company also voted to change the number of fire wards from three to seven. The warrant stated, "There shall be seven fire wards and one of which shall be elected chief." This was the first time New Boston officially had a fire chief and Willard Dodge took that title of fire chief for the first time in March, 1963.

The 1964 Howe

The town had been appropriating money yearly to put into a capital fund towards the purchase of a new fire truck and the time had come to vote for it's purchase in 1964, for the old truck was 27 years old.

Thursday, September 10, 1964 was the red letter day, for that was the day the new Howe pumper tank truck arrived to be admired by the townspeople and to be tested by the New Hampshire Underwriters. It was manufactured by Howe in Anderson, Indiana and was a 1964 Ford V-8 chassis with a 500 gallon tank and a Howe piston pump and a heated hose compartment, at a cost of \$15,000. The old 1937 Ford Howe was auctioned off on October 10th to the highest bidder for 215.00 to Franklin, Maine. A two-way radio was purchased for the new truck with this auction money. Today, New Boston still has this 64, known as Engine 1 in active service in the department. It is thought the first fire the new 64 truck responded was the fire at Lawrence Sullivan's house, 99 Francestown Road, on October 4th.

1965 was the last year New Boston had a high school and with it ended the Future Farmer's classes. The F.F.A. had a GMC truck which the school district officially gave to the fire department. They transferred the old forestry tank onto this chassis and was put in service in late 1966. On February 11, 1967 the fire company auctioned off the old truck.



1964 Howe Pumper M1

New Fire House

Talk of a new fire house was “in the wind”, for more space was needed again. In July of 1966, Kenneth Barss, John Young, John Colburn, Richard Whynall, Charles Davis and John Ballou were chosen to serve as a building committee to select possible sites for a new fire house.

By October they had chosen three possible sites; the ice house off Mill Street site, (Babson had torn the ice house down), the Cain place, 7 Clark Hill Road and Vic Daniels land on the River Road near Central School.

The firemen felt that in some way they should be thinking of ways to start a building fund and the idea of a monthly raffle was begun with drawings the first Wednesday of each month with prizes of \$100, \$50, \$25, \$10 and three \$5 winners. Murray Pringle, John Young and Warren Moss was the committee that set up this raffle which proved to be profitable, with the first drawing in October 1966. These monthly drawings are still continued today and the profit goes towards new equipment that the department may need.

There was talk of converting the old high school building into a combination fire house and police station, but that didn't prove feasible so in 1968 the school district transferred the high school property to the town of New Boston and after many heated debates on the question, the old building was razed in 1971.

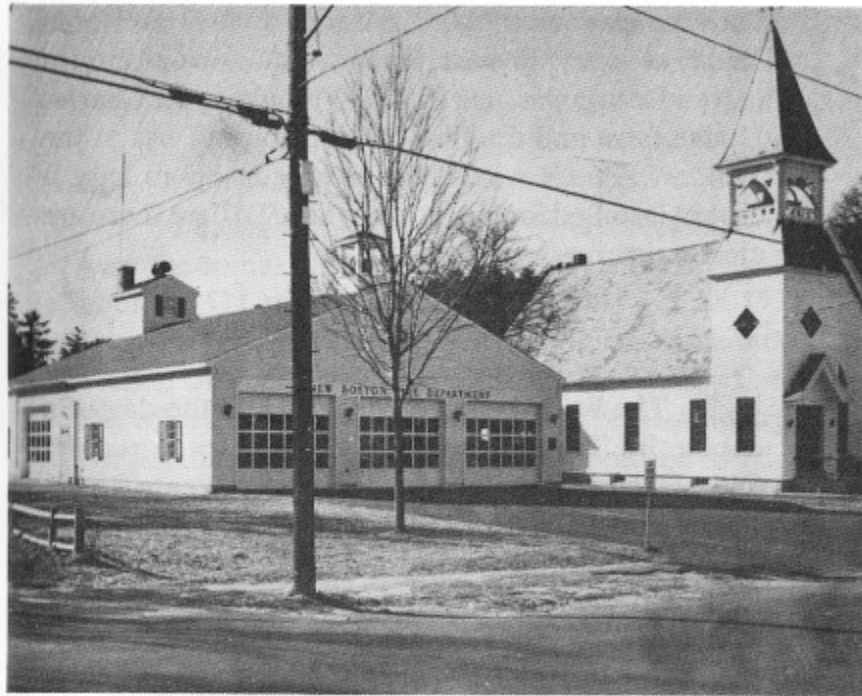
At the 1972 town meeting it was voted 140 in favor and 44 against, to build a fire house 48 feet by 70 feet, of wood, to house six pieces of apparatus and the fire company was to contribute \$7,000 from their building fund. However, a special town meeting was called for Tuesday, June 13, for the purpose to reconsider the location of the new fire house which had been approved in March. Ella and Leon Daniels and Harry Smith claimed ownership of part of the old high school lot and the warrant asked the voters to reconsider relocating the new fire house to land on the River Road, near Daniel's garage instead of the center of town, but the voters upheld the vote in the affirmative of the March town meeting.

Kennedy Brothers were the lowest bidders and Alex Majeski was the architect and contracts were signed October 7, 1972 to construct the new fire house on the site of the old high school. It was completed within a year and the fire company moved into the new building on October 12, 1973. They held an open house and served a ham and bean supper on November 10, when 200 New Boston residents came to inspect the new station. The old fire house was to be used to store historic relics.

At the March meeting in 1977 it was proposed that the old fire house be converted into town office space for \$10,000 and \$15,000 be spent for an addition to the new fire house to store the cannon wheels, the hand tubs, and the Tavern wagon and provide more storage space for the firemen. There was a shortage of money to finish the conference room in the town office building, so the Historical Society furnished it with display cabinets and paneled the walls. The North Branch Builders built the addition onto the fire house

The carriage lights beside the front doors of the new fire station were donated by Chris Dumaine and the black letters over the doors proclaiming it to be “New Boston Fire Department” were a gift of the Nixon family. The bell which hangs in the little belfry is the same bell which rang so long from the school calling children to classes and the golden weathervane was the old hand crafted weathervane that once graced the old fire station. It was taken off when the antenna was placed on the hose tower and was thrown in the town dump to be later recovered and saved by Charlie Davis. Reg Hayes gold leafed it before it was put in its place of honor atop the new fire station. The black blinds were bought from donations of town people who thought they were a finishing touch to the new building.

The ham and bean supper became a popular annual event at the fire house and from donations received a scholarship fund was set up to give a New Boston high school senior financial aid towards college. The first recipient of this scholarship was Jackie Gallup.



New Fire House

Dry Hydrants

In case of a fire in cold weather the water supply would be frozen and difficult to pump a stream of water to the fire. The idea of dry hydrants to ease this situation became a reality in the 60's. One of these was installed at the pond at Hersey Farm and another at Olmstead's on South Hill Road. One can be seen at the River Road opposite Howard Prince's house, also one is at Dodge Road near the Dodge farm. Several others have been installed recently at Grosso's, Gardner LeBaron's on Weare Road, Kennedy's Ridge View Road, Summit Drive, and Whipple's industrial development. The cisterns at developments are a means of fighting fires both summer and winter with a guaranteed year round supply of water. The first cement underground cistern in New Boston was built by J.R. Whipple on the Charles Dodge farm and the first one for housing was at the Waldorf Estates where it is required now to have a cistern installed for five or more lots. To date there are eleven cisterns in place.

Some Fires of the 60's and 70's

The week before Christmas was the day of a double fire. The call came in the morning for a structure fire at Howard Woodbury's home on 466 Weare Road. This is where Gardner LeBaron lives today and Woodbury rebuilt. It was later that same day when Steve Lemire's trailer, on McCollum Road, burned and was a total loss. Two fires so near Christmas is always a sad day. It was in the night that the town grader mysteriously caught on fire and burned in a gravel bank off Bedford Road on August 26, 1967. The home of Arthur and Doris Houghton on 80 Weare Road burned on February 28, 1969. Houghton rebuilt and this is now the home of their son, Walter Houghton.



Riley's Fire

During the 1970's some of the structure fires were the homes of Robert Riley and Peter Shea. Riley's home on 11 Cross Road was destroyed March 16, 1971 and was rebuilt. Shea's home was in the Riverdale section of town. Jack Kilmartin, 82 Dougherty Lane had a fire in his barn in October of 1971 but damage was confined to the second floor. A trailer owned by Rick Farella at 762 River Road burned on January 14, 1979.

First Woman Member

On July 6, 1977, Cora (Corky) Trimbur made fire company history by becoming the first woman to join the New Boston Fire Department. Corky has proven to be a great asset to the company at fires and also to the rescue squad of which she is captain. Several women have since joined the department and at present eleven are on the membership roll.

Ambulance 76-X2



Ambulance 76-X2

The New Boston Fire Department has had a rescue squad since 1938 to a certain extent, but more and more calls were being handled by the fire company every year. The Tracking Station and Weare had been coming to the aid of New Boston with their ambulances, but only in a matter of life or death situations, so the fire wards asked the town to purchase an ambulance in 1978. There was much debate over which model to purchase but when written ballots were counted the results were 132 for and 59 against the purchase of the \$27,500 vehicle.

It is a Ford chassis, four wheel drive purchased from a Connecticut agency and the ambulance was built in Goshen, Indiana by the Travel Equipment Corporation.

Jim Dodge, David Sullivan and Ken Barss went to Indiana and drove the ambulance back to New Boston around the first of July and it was “showed off” in the Fourth of July parade, but due to minor technical difficulties it was not put in service until November.

The first rescue call was for a logger who had cut his leg with a chain saw and was transported to Peterboro Hospital. For the next ten years the rescue squad has answered many calls which are listed in the annual town report, nearly 100 calls in 1987.

The rescue squad trains to be “tops” and to help train, a manikin practice respirator called “Annie” was purchased with donated funds. It started as a dare from Roland Sallada and Charlie Davis that if one donated \$50, the other would follow suit. This was the beginning of this fund. Another type of fund drive was for a defibrillator for the rescue squad which reached its goal in only two months, of \$10,000 in June of 1987. The generosity of the townspeople made both these purchases possible.

The New 76 - M2

In 1981 the most beautiful of all New Boston’s fire equipment was purchased, the American LaFrance pumper at a cost of \$93,600. This model has a five man cab, 1000 gallon per minute pump and a 1000 gallon tank and for the people not familiar with this beauty called M-2, they can see it in the fire house or pictured on the cover of the 1981 town report. This truck was purchased to replace the 1964 Howe, but that engine is still in service with the department today, called M-1, or engine 1. This American LaFrance was purchased through Gilbert Welding. The department also purchased that same year a breathing air cascade system for \$1400.



American LaFrance M-2

Tanker Trucks

The history of the fire company's tankers is a complicated one, but should be told so the town can see how the firemen have made and replaced these tankers at great cost to the company itself with only minimum aid from the town.

In 1941 a tank and reel was put on a Ford chassis, most of the welding was done by Chuck Thompson, that became known as M-3. In 1966, this tank was put onto the school FFA truck chassis, a GMC and in 1976 this existing tank was transferred again onto another GMC chassis, but was a 1966 Army chassis. This was converted from a 6X6 to a 4X4 by the fire company and a power take-off pump was added by Gilbert Welding. This served as M3 until 1984 when a 1973 International 4X4 was purchased by the fire company from Clark Hill Farm, William Nickerson, for \$5,000. The dump body, plow frame and plow were sold for \$1,200, so not a bad deal! Again, this old tank was put on a different chassis, the old tank was built to last!

Engine 4 was constructed in 1980, which is the pumper with the big hose reel. This was made at a cost of \$15,000 to the fire company and is an Air Force highway tractor, a 1972 International, which was purchased for \$500. A 1,000 GPM front end pump was purchased from Gilbert Welding and Roger Follansbee constructed a reel which is hydraulically powered with 3,000 feet of four inch hose. This M4 didn't cost the tax payers, as it was completely paid for by the fire company.



M-4 Reel Truck

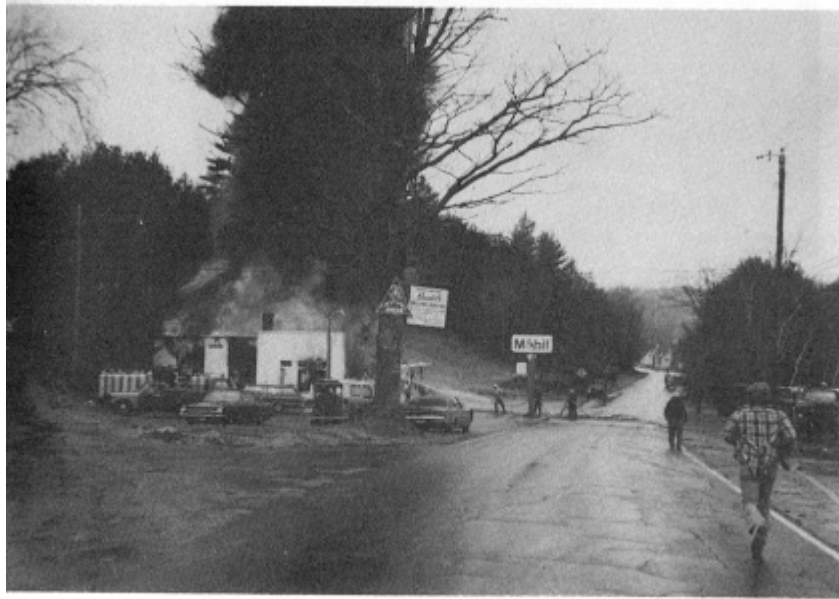
Tanker 1, better known as K1, has a history going back to the days of Army surplus, for the first tanker was a REO, used for civil defense purposes, called "Tarzan." This had two tanks which were later replaced by three oblong tanks, and later was again replaced by one large square tank of 2200 gallons. The tank was later placed on an old state of New Hampshire highway truck which was purchased from Eldon Townes by the fire company. This is the truck sometimes described as a square box on ten wheels. This is the truck in which Don Belanger installed a new engine and the tank was remodeled with new baffles at a cost of \$11,000. This vehicle is usually sent to fires with pumper M2 and makes many mutual aid runs. Tanker 1 was kept outdoors for years because there wasn't any room to house it under cover before the new fire house was built. This was the only truck of its kind and it served neighboring towns before these other departments had tankers of their own.

House Numbering

John Bunting undertook the task of numbering houses and roads for better locations of fires and directions for answering emergency calls. This was accomplished in 1979, the same year Ken Barss resigned as fire chief after serving thirteen years and James Dodge was appointed by the fire wards to be the new chief. In 1986 Chief Dodge received the State of New Hampshire volunteer fireman's award from Governor Sununu.

Fires during the 1980's

During the 1980's there were several structure fires. On January 25, 1980, Vandenberg's house was destroyed by fire on 75 Thornton Road and Clifton LaBree lost his saw mill at 101 Wilson Hill on February 26th.



Daniel's Garage Fire

April 9th was the date many firemen will recall as Daniel's Garage at 84 River Road was destroyed from a fire caused by a gasoline spill which was ignited by the oil furnace. This was a real test to the fire department to keep the gas pumps and LP gas tanks from exploding. On November 5th, Linden Hodgkins' barn on 54 Parker Road, or the old Oscar Johnson place, burned.

There was only one structure fire in 1981 and that occurred early January 4th at the Campbell house, 7 River Road, better known as the Bill Fox place. This house had been the scene of fires in past years, as once the garage had an oil pit fire when Paul "Stubby" Rogers lived there, a fire destroyed the "made-over" barn and this 1981 fire destroyed the house.



Campbell Fire

There were two barn fires in the spring of 1982, Tremblay's on Parker Road and at Frank Fillmore's on Jesscia Lane. On July 9th Maurice Briere's home on 82 Colburn Road was leveled by fire, and Mr. Briere rebuilt on the same site.

A house on 216 Bog Brook Road owned by Arthur Johnson and occupied by Don and Ellen Murray burned on November 3, 1985. This was also the year of the LP gas truck roll over on Hogback, Route 13, on April 25th. Maybe town folks remember how long Hogback was closed to traffic while firemen kept water on it to keep it cool while the gas was being transferred to another truck. A very hazardous situation was handled very capably by the fire department. The following year, Weare had a similar situation on Route 114.

On February 10, 1986 the home of Peter and Cindy Herbert on 330 Mont Vernon Road burned. They had just completed construction of this new house which might have been saved if the shut off valve to the LP gas tank hadn't been frozen in the ice so that the gas could have been shut off. It took courage but they rebuilt another new house on that site.

It was on September 20, 1987 that a fire partially destroyed Tim and Judy Knight's home on 11 Mont Vernon Road which was the L.P. Michaud house. It was two weeks later that fire struck again to a newly constructed home. This time it was the house of Danny Towne on 88 South Hill Road. Knights and Towne both have rebuilt these homes.

To round off the history of the fire department, credit must be given to the Ladies Auxiliary for their helping hand. The organization began in 1956 and the first assistance they gave to the fire company was towards restoring the hand tub for the muster. They helped furnish the kitchen in the fire house and later they held auctions and the proceeds from one of these auctions went towards repairing the siren in June of 1979. The annual open house and ham and bean supper at the fire house is organized by the Auxiliary and the proceeds go towards the scholarship fund. This group of ladies are the ones who feed all those weary fire fighters. The New Boston fire company is very grateful for all the assistance that this auxiliary gives to the department.

This history of the New Boston Fire Department is written with the sincere hope that it has given the citizens of New Boston a greater understanding and appreciation for those firemen who volunteer so much time and effort towards protecting the residents of New Boston.

**Members of the New Boston Fire Department
1989**

James Dodge
John Bunting
David Poole
Richard Moody
John Statt
Robert Kelly
George O. St. John
Daniel MacDonald
Daniel Benard
Lester Byam
Harold (Bo) Strong
Donald Bouchard
Glenn Dodge
Scott Dana
Gordon Carlstrom
James W. Dodge III
Gordon Smith
Dennis Hooper
Cora Trimbur
Jess Koch
Dale Smith
Nancy Surette
Charles Osborne

Anne Christoph
Burt De Young
William Manna
Paul Keiner
William Hebert
Donald Chapman
Sheila Strong
Clifford Plourde
Randall Byam
David Ballou
Robert Winslow
Zeke DeNomme
Jennifer Dodge
Russell Freeman
John Jolin
Dayne Morgan
Daniel Teague
Anne Nattila
Judith Knight
Pat Bergen
Rebecca Grosso
Sharon Spinard
Mona Winslow