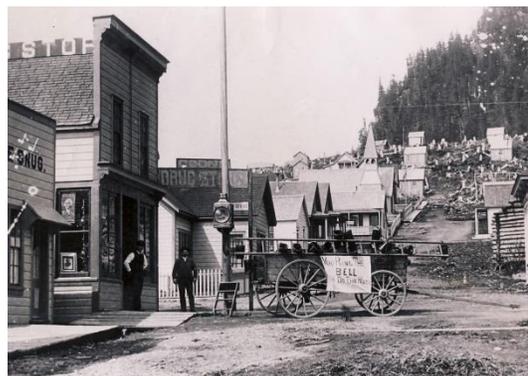


In 1881 Juneau was a mining camp of tents and rough wooden buildings perched high above high tide at the foot of the mountains. The first residents were miners who came in open boat with their households on their backs. They had cause to know how easily the fires that warmed them could be the distraction of their few positions.

By 1885, when mining operations had spawned a business community, wooden structures dotted the town site. Given the threat of loss of life or property to fire it is not surprising that in 1886 the Juneau fire association was the first organization founded in the isolated community. A January 1887 census counted a population of 860. 60 of those men were members of the Juneau fire association and the fire chief elected was Herman H. Heart.

The early years of the fire association we're not smooth. In 1888 the association was criticized for a lack of organization and discipline. The disarray is not surprising; Juneau was still very much a settlement and gold mining camp. It was a time when there was a tidy sum to be made for a person who put his fingers in the right part, which were not only mining claims but the businesses that sprung up to serve the industry. With all the bustle, if a lengthy period went be Without a fire enthusiasm for the fire association naturally went idle.

On August 28, 1890, there was another call via the newspaper for revived activity on the part of the fireman. Several hundred dollars had been raise for firefighting



purposes and purchase further equipment. Equipment on hand by the time included a hand-drawn hose cart purchased from the Perkins carriage company of Lawrence Massachusetts and wagon with wooden ladders and buckets.

The fire association members were often Juneau's business leaders and first real estate speculators. The Men who had been teachers and clerks in the states were reborn as tycoons after a successful spell in the gold fields. Many of them invested their earnings in the town and had a good reason to ensure the capacity for fire protection for their fine new buildings.

One of the local businessman John Timmins was quoted in the newspaper stating that "the fire association is our only safeguard and insurance against loss by fire and in perfecting the fire Association with the best possible means of firefighting and extinguishing it, so let the good work go on". In 1890 for the first fire plug under pressure from Louis hydraulic plant had just been put in. For the next 20 years hydrants were continuously added a few at a time and till the whole town was connected to the system.

Again in the early 1890s the fire association was criticized for having lack of discipline and was disbanded. A Local businessman B. M. Behrends and jeweler Emory Valentine planned to establish two hose cart companies. One was to be for the section of the city above Second Street and the other for the



area below second and along the waterfront. At this time there was also a Hook and Ladder Company that continued its work although meeting separately. Valentines hose company or hose Company number one quickly replaced written mention of the previous fire association. Hose Company 1 was an organized company and of course needed to look at the part. So hose Company one ordered spiffy uniforms with the red flannel shirts faced with black satin and adorned with brass buttons. A

leather belt inscribed with hose number one and a blue with braided and patent leather visor completed the example of a well-dressed a fireman.

In 1896 any member of the public upon discovering a fire would rush to the fire bell on Franklin Street in ring the alarm then wait to tell the firemen where the fire was located. During the winter a watchman was hired to patrol the town and keep a lookout for Sparks blowing onto Roofs and igniting them.

In 1998 the community of Douglas across Gastineau channel founded their own volunteer fire department. It worked closely with its neighbor the Treadwell Mine that had its own fire brigade. The Treadwell Mine was at one time the largest and most gold producing hard rock mine in the world.

In 1899 another exciting piece of equipment was purchased Juneau's first fire engine. It was a hand pulled Indian manufactured by the Seneca Falls iron manufacturing company carrying 300 feet of hose in capable of throwing a stream of water 100 feet.





Juneau became incorporated city on July 3, 1900. With one of its first acts the newly formed city council, created a fire department and provided for fire protection under the governance of a chief and three Fire Warden's. Broad powers were given to the department, to enter any structure and examine the construction and condition of chimneys, fire places, hearths, stoves, flus, etc. used in and about any buildings and to remove any deemed dangerous.

At the turn of the 20th century fireman still hand pulled the heavy fire apparatus, often uphill and over planked streets. Given the climate of a rainforest normal dirt streets would have been impassable with the annual rainfall. The city council voted in 1913 to allow the use of horses to pull the heavy equipment as the distance within the town has become too great for hand pulling. Less than a year later, however, the council agreed to purchase one of Juneau's first automated fire engines. The truck, a 40hp Stewart with electric lights and a siren arrived in August 1914. It was a combination hose and chemical truck, caring and 80 gallon chemical tank with 300 feet of chemical hose and 800 feet of 2 1/2 inch firehose. The fireman's new truck had a home in the new Juneau City Hall at fourth and Main Street. The department apparatus and equipment along with a game well automatic alarm system had been stored in that building since it's opening in November 1913.

On November 20, 1914 the city Council re-organized the fire department and replaced Chief Milton Winn with Sim Freimen. Wanting to support the new Fire Chief the city council approved the purchase of a "double system automatic indicator" for the game will alarm system. The system alerted the firemen at headquarters to the location of the fire by tapping out the number of the box that the call came from. The attachment to be added would make a paper tape of the call and the firemen would not have to wait for a second series of bells. Also under the recommendation of the new chief the upstairs of City Hall was to be made habitable with beds for men to sleep in and carpet for the floors also that the firemen bathtub be attached to its proper place so the firemen living at the hall would not be compelled to go downtown and run the risk of being caught in a bathtub far away from the firehouse during an alarm.



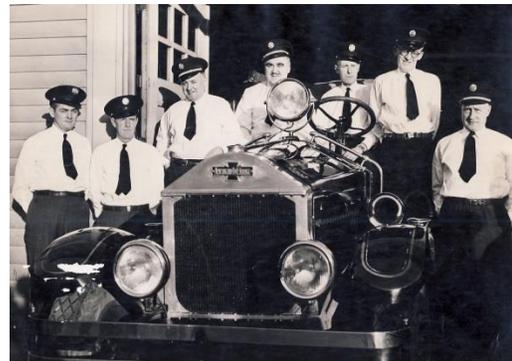
Chief Sim Freeman held his first organized meeting on December 7, 1914, Charles W Carter, was elected assistant chief, J.W. Bell was elected secretary treasurer. Frank Sargent and Jim Wheeler were elected truck driver and assistant truck driver. Also during this meeting the Chief appointed a committee to draft

bylaws for the newly re-organized fire department. The bylaws committee presented its work two weeks later and in the new rules it was stated that the department would hold his regular meetings on the first Thursday of each month and the organization would be called the Juneau Volunteer Fire Department. The department was still re-organizing up to and during World War I. The members were carefully laying the foundation upon which the body depended for the rest of the century.

World War I had its impact on that apartment; all of its younger members were called into service in the country after the US entered the war on April 6, 1917. To help offset the manpower shortage the city Council agreed to purchase a second automated firetruck. It was an American LaFrance type 12, combination of chemical and hoes car with a junior pump. The Chief began appointing a "hall "crew, who for two months at a time, reported to the fire hall when the alarm ring and stood by in case of a second alarm. On April 18, 1921, J. L. "Dolly" Gray was elected to replace Chief Freiman, who had just resigned.

Just like many fire departments across the United States there were fraternal and social aspects to the organization. This was no different in Juneau and the fire department became a major source for community events. The fire department even eventually bought land and built a baseball diamond which was the center of the community for many years. Teams were formed from community and department members and even from across the channel from the Douglas Volunteer Fire Department.

State of the art equipment always appealed to the Juneau Volunteer Fire Department. Six months after the end of World War I, in the summer of 1919, the department purchased the LaFrance-Yablick smoke and gas mask for fireman." The facemask was attached to a canister that contained filters to remove smoke, gas, and ammonia from the air breathed in. In September 28, 1927 the city of Juneau ordered a 500 gallon American LaFrance fire engine, six Sanderson Company protection helmets and along with them 10 rubber coats stenciled JVFD. The first turnouts were kept on the trucks for use as needed by the volunteers.



As time went on the city grew an extended out into the now area called the "flats." A major bone of contention between the department and the suburban dwellers resurfaced during this period. The use of the department apparatus at fires beyond city limits have been, and continued for another four decades to be, resisted and resented. It was decided that the chief would recommend to the city Council that whenever alarms came in from outside city limit. Property owners receiving such fire protection be charged for those services. The other internal complaint of the volunteers, that the difficulty of getting through traffic during an alarm was briefly addressed by a directive from the Chief. He instructed the volunteers to wave a white handkerchief out the window while driving to fires to indicate their need for the right of way. Although the departments generously objected to providing service outside the city limits, they were ready and willing to assist their sister city across Gastineau Channel in the event of a "big one." In October 20, 1937 they decided to petition the city council to allow a truck and several

members to travel to Douglas to familiarize themselves with the conditions and equipment there. The department was authorized to make a run to Douglas anytime in emergency existed. An invitation was extended to Douglas to come to Juneau for an inspection tour also.

With World War 2 and military service looming just around the corner for many of the members were blood typed by the public health service. The age limit for the department membership was dropped, and the assistant Chief lectured the members on fighting fires caused by incendiary bombs from air raids. The plan called for truck number one to remain at the fire hall, truck number two to report to the Bergman hotel at Harris and Third Street, and truck number three to remain at the public roads barn on Willoughby Avenue. Company forming a sign members to stations, and agreements reached with the AJ mine for its use of its tugboat and with the US Coast Guard for use of their pumps in case of an attack upon the city. Fears of a major Japanese attack on Alaska or widespread; children were instructed in school to encourage their families to develop evacuation plans, nighttime blackouts were observed, and regular patrols of the city were conducted after dark. Despite the worry hanging over the small, isolated city with its young men off to war in Japan seeming so close there was still enthusiasm. Sense better than half of the apartment now consisted of newer members, a stronger effort was needed to train and develop a firefighting team. On January 1945 Chief Mulvihill resigned from the department and A. Minard Mill was appointed Chief. Just after this tragedy struck the department in May 20, 1946 Bill Roudolf, died of injuries he sustained in a fall from a ladder when he attempted to help put out a fire after Perelle apartments, this would be the fire departments first line of duty deaths.



With veterans returning from World War II To keep up with the growing city in January 20,1948 new Seagrave 730 gallon pumper was purchased for the department and increased medical training. On



February 1950 the City mayor requested the fire department cooperation with the police in the future operation of the new ambulance. The ambulance was to work from the department truck room and the Chief order the volunteers to review their first aid, and wish they had received considerable and regular training.

Time rolled on and in 1952 the city built a new combination City Hall and fire station on Marine Way (current City Assembly Chambers). The community was expanding the small settlement "out the road" in Auke Bay founded its own volunteer fire department to meet its community's needs. Through the early 1950s and early 1960s the department showed steady growth. In addition to two monthly drills, the members watched instructional films at meetings, and sought out new equipment that would meet the cities firefighting needs. Chief Mills urge the volunteers to familiarize themselves with all equipment, and made it clear that he was at all times open to suggestion for whatever was needed to modernize their apartment. The discussion to

purchase a new aerial ladder truck a rose repeatedly, a salvage crew was developed, and more modern protective breathing apparatus, the first Scott air packs were obtained.

With the changing times came also a change for the fire department. More calls for service work taking up more of the Fireman's time. A decision was made to sell off the baseball park land to the federal government. The sale of the ball park was the greatest issue the volunteers had ever wrestled with as a group some members are opposed to the sale. In 1960 the land was sold to the US General Services Administration as a site for the new Federal Building to be built in Juneau.

In 1963 the department elected a new Fire Chief John Morrison and a brand new snorkel truck. The super modern firetruck an American LaFrance Arrow Chief aerial platform arrived in Juneau in September 1963. Its 70 foot boom, powered by the same 305hp engine that drove the vehicle made it the most versatile fire fighting vehicle in the city. The arrival of the aerial truck meant the departure of the ambulance. For the time that the first ambulance came to town in 1950, the department had housed the vehicle and supplied the driver. A police officer accompanied the the ambulance and administered the first aid. Space was needed for the new truck at the fire hall and the ambulance duty was shifted to Telephone Hill and responsibility to the police. Also during this time under suggestion by fireman Jerry Godkin a new radio system was purchased. The first 40 sets of Plectrons were purchased for \$5000 dollars. The Plectrons were kept at home or at work, alerting the volunteers by sounding a tone what an emergency occurred, and then announcing the exact location where they were needed. After a several years, these were upgraded even further, two portable "beeper" units. Also to help out with the department the city hired additional full-time, paid firefighters. There were eight full-time fireman in 1967, the (Chief), Asst. Chief Brian, and six drivers who work in pairs on 24 hour shifts. A federal training program Grant in the 1970s funded the hiring of the additional staff, which were trained as emergency medical technicians as well as firefighters, and a medic one program was initiated. In 1968 more residents that had moved out to the Mendenhall Valley and the booming community founded their own fire service, the Glacier Volunteer Fire Department.



In February 1969 Chief John Morrison resigned from the department during his tenure as Chief he helping many of the improvements started by Chief Minard Mill to for fruition. Douglas C. Boddy succeeded Morrison and Sevarin Swanson was appointed Assistant Chief. Under new leadership the operation of the ambulance service had been transferred from the police department back to the fire department, and that you know and now glacier fire departments were responsible for ambulance calls in their respective districts. Since ambulance calls have been more frequent than fire calls, and emphasis was placed on medical training for paid firefighters.

The 1970's brought much change to Juneau. The City & Borough of Juneau became incorporated on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1970 which now brought Douglas and all the other small community's under one entity. The

population had burst out of the limits of the downtown district and by this time the city and borough had five separate fire departments operating, Juneau, Douglas, Glacier, Auke Bay and newly formed Lynn Canal Volunteer Fire Department. The areas on Glacier Avenue that had once been dairy farm or pig ranches had long ago been covered with houses, and the building boom marched "out the road." In 1975 a new road had been built the Egan Expressway it expedited the trip from downtown Juneau to the Mendenhall Valley. The focus of community life is no longer the central downtown area. Businesses, entertainment, education, and the civic enterprises disbursed. The role of the Juneau Volunteer Fire Department shifted also.

With a larger paid staff at the fire hall, the volunteers' responsibilities were downsized. The volunteers, who in the past had reviewed and selected equipment for purchase, inspected buildings, and conducted fire investigations, prepared fire service budgets, lobbied at City Hall, and selected personnel yielded to career employees. Perhaps the clear symbol of change was the silencing of the fire horn. The city manager ordered it stopped; since portable pagers had a laminated any need for a horn to identify the location of a fire. No longer was the community to be involved in what I had become the fire department business, no longer was community response or interest required. As Juneau underwent a metamorphosis firefighting became a science. Advances in equipment for fire suppression and communication leapfrogged. New technologies and materials made fires more dangerous but also provided



advances and protective clothing and gear. The JVFD turned to more technical instruction, began a more formalized program for firefighter training, and assisted members with the cost of EMT and other training beneficial to the department. Specifications were developed for training and evaluating of volunteers on forcible entry techniques, use of a breathing apparatus and increasingly technical firefighting tools and appliances, as well as basics such as ropes and ladders. A rescue squad was formed of the volunteers who are certified EMTs. Downtown Juneau was evolving; multi-story office buildings and multi-unit condominiums represented firefighting challenges and potentially

great loss in the case of fire. The city's borough community college was just destroyed by a fire in 1974 and part of the insurance payment was used to acquire a new aerial ladder truck and pumper, which were delivered in 1978.

1978 was a critical year. Allen Jensen was promoted to assistant chief; the department received a new ambulance in October and on November 16 moved into its new dedicated building on Glacier Avenue opposite the side of the ball park they had once been its pride. Allen Jensen was elected Chief when Doug Boddy retired in June 20, 1980 after 28 years in the department. The population had burst out of the limits of the downtown district and by this time the City and Borough had five separate fire departments operating; Juneau, Douglas, Glacier, Auke Bay and newly formed Lynn Canal Volunteer Fire Department.

For the better part of a decade the City and Borough operated with 5 separate combination or volunteer fire departments. Along with this came many challenges, with 5 different fire chiefs and 5 different ways

of conducting operations. So around 1990 the City & Borough set out to have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party independent study conducted to set a road map for the future of Juneau's fire service. In 1992 under the newly hired fire Chief Larry Lundfelt , a new fire department was created, Capital City Fire Rescue. All the fire departments in the area were now under one umbrella. The rode was rocky and change was hard to accept but the decision to unify the department was made to better serve the greater community.

We have had a few different fire chiefs since the unification of the department. In 1998 Chief Michael Doyle replaced Chief Lundfelt and served CCFR for 6 years followed by Chief Eric Mohrmann for 6 years. In 2010 Chief Rich Etheridge was hired, Chief Etheridge is born and raised in Juneau he served as an Alaska State Trooper and Juneau's Fire Marshal before becoming the current fire chief.

The future is bright for us here in the Capital of Alaska, the department now has 36 career firefighters, 9 administrative staff and about 40 volunteers. CCFR has seen historic call volume increase within the last few years, 2016 we responded to 4,517 calls and we are on pace to top 5,000 for 2017.

Excerpts taken from:

Running Towards The Fires (101 years of the Juneau Volunteer Fire Department)

By Sandy Harbanuk