

Durham Fire Department – Career-Era Milestones

Last updated February 14, 2025

Research notes

[illegible]

1909		Snapshot	To help clarify some of the terminology, we have found that a "hook" with the Hook and Ladder Company, was a hook that was connected onto chains, and this allowed the fire fighters to pull walls away from buildings. "Runners" were paid very little for their services. Runners were paid in 1909 to respond to the fires as firemen assistants. They fought fire and anything else ordered by the paid men. The "stoker" position was the man who help get the steam built up in the steamer so the "engineer" could operate the engine at the scene.
1909		Hook and ladder truck replaced with new horse-drawn wagon.	The hook and ladder truck was replaced in 1909 with a new horse drawn ladder wagon for the price of \$1,500. Four regular African Americans and quite a few runners had manned this unit.
1909	1909-02-15	Chief D. C. Christian starts Chief Heartt stops.	
1909		Snapshot, fire alarm system	In 1909 and until 1924, the fire alarm system was a two-circuit battery system, using blue stone batteries. In 1909 the number of boxes totaled 30. The tower bell in the First Baptist Church, located across the street from No. 1 station was connected to this alarm system; the bell at No. 1 Station was hooked up to the system and the church bell was no longer needed.
1909		City's first adoption of fire codes.	Records have shown that the city first began adopting codes to promote fire safety in 1909. Some of the earliest codes assured illuminated exit signs and an unobstructed means of egress.
1912	1912-07-08	Second steamer delivered, 1912 American LaFrance Metropolitan, 750 GPM	Source: Legeros
1912	1912-07? [dmh, 6/27/12]	Station 3 opened on East Main Street. Company 3 activated.	To help the department grow with the ever-growing town, Fire Station 3 was built in the year 1911, at East Main Street and Peachtree Alley (600 block East Main Street). This station housed a steamer. This steamer is now located at the Training Academy on East Club Boulevard. A hose wagon was also housed at this station for many years. Legeros: Morning Herald from 6/27/12 said Station 3 was almost ready. Thus sounds like 1912, not 1911, was the year it opened.
1912	1912-07? [dmh, 6/27/12]	First motor apparatus delivered, 1912 [?] Webb combination hose/chemical car	The first motor driven truck in Station No. 3 was put in service in 1915. This truck was known as the "Red Devil." This was a combination hose and chemical truck. Because of the uncertainty of motors pumping water at the fire scene, for a number of years this truck pulled the steamer behind it... Just in case the motorized equipment failed. Source: Legeros
1912		First motor apparatus delivered. Note: Make/model incorrect in book.	The first motor driven apparatus Durham purchased arrived in 1912. This was a 750 g.p.m. American Lafrance. This unit was used continuously until 1942. An accident on Fayetteville Street damaged this unit extensively.
1913		Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company relocates to 104 Holloway Street	The Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company until 1913 had operated at 206 Pine Street (Roxboro Street). Then, the company was moved to 104 Holloway Street, located behind No. 1 station.
1913	1913-02-12	Fire Commission orders that black members of Excelsior Hook & Ladder Company be replaced by white firefighters. [DMH, 2/12/13]	
1914		Major fire – First block of West Main Street	

1914	1914-03-23	Major fire, worst in city's history	Durham's worst fire in history was recorded March 23, 1914. The fire destroyed a large portion of the Downtown Business District, particularly that part bounded by Main, Corcoran, and Mangum Streets. This million dollar fire took out many, many businesses. It started at 10:30 p.m. and shortly turned out to be the only conflagration that Durham fire fighters were unable to get under control in due time. One signal that was started with alarm boxes on the onset of the fire alarm system, was three taps of the alarm signifying that the fire was under control. Three taps on this fire came 3:00 p.m. the next day. The water system failed on Durham's largest fire. With the contract running out with Mr. Howland, Durham looked for new plans for their water system. The Eno River had been the town's water source, and future water would come from the Flat River. By 1925, Lake Michie was formed. To this day Lake Michie supplies most of Durham's water.
1915	1915-04-12	City officials place order for motor pumper and motor ladder truck. [DMH, 4/13/15]	
1915		First pumper delivered, 1915 American LaFrance Type 12, 750/80	Delivered by Sep 14, 1915 (DMH, 9/15/15)
1915	1915-09-14	First motor ladder truck delivered, 1915 American LaFrance Type 20 combination service truck	Source: Legeros
1918		New pumper placed in service at Station 2, 1918 [?] White Last horse-drawn wagon retired [from front-line service?]	In 1918, a triple combination white pumper was installed in No. 2 station replacing the last horse drawn wagon. The horses had been a joy and pride to the men who had taken care of them and a beautiful and familiar sight to the citizens of Durham.
1918		Two pumpers delivered, 1918 [?] White, 500/40	Both delivered by Jul 2, 1918 (DMH, 7/2/18).
192_		Fire department phone number changed to 953, then to 116	By 1925, you called the operator and ask for the fire department. Shortly after this the number 953 was used up until the number changed to 116
1920s		NC fire college held in Durham for many years	Because of the fine training facility, the N.C. [State] Fire[men's] Association held its meetings [fire colleges] in Durham several years. The building included a standpipe, smoke room, safety net, and platforms. Drill tower training continued as a regular part of the agenda until the early 1970s when the department decided the tower was unsafe for renovation.
1921	1921-06-21	Chief Bennett starts Chief Christian stops	
1921	1921-10-26	Fire destroys 22 houses in Hayti.	Citation HS, 5/1/50.
1922	1922-01-26	Last call for second steamer.	Lincoln Hospital fire. [DS, 10/11/40]
1923		Major Fire – Trinity Methodist Church	
1924		Station 1 rebuilt.	In 1924, Station No. 1 was torn down and while Station No. 1 was being rebuilt, the city housed the motorized ladder truck at Station No. 3.
1924		New pumper, 1924 [?] Ahrens-Fox, 750/60	Delivered by Dec. 23, 1924 (DMH, 12/24/24)
1924		Fire alarm system upgrade	In 1924 the fire alarm system was changed to a 12-circuit system. Forty-five miles of wire were put up to update the system. Approximately 175 fire alarm boxes were in service as the red boxes disappeared. Aside from pulling a box to report a fire, telephones were starting to be very popular. To report a fire by phone one dialed 152.
1924		Station 1 remodeled to house the hook and ladder truck, that was housed at Station 4, a small building behind Station 1.	

1926	1926-12-26	New pumper added, 1925 Ahrens-Fox, 900/80	Accepted on that date. DMH, 12/17/26
1926		First aerial ladder, 1926 American LaFrance Type 17-6, 75-foot	Delivered by Mar 20, 1926 (3/21/26)
1926		Station 4 opened on McMannan Street. Engine 4 activated.	Year from DFD/AF site
1926		Major fire, Dixie Wholesale House.	
1926	1926-05	Training tower completed	In May 1926 the fire department started using its first training tower. This tower was located on Washington Street near the city garage. This five story, 61 foot tall brick structure was the most modern training structure in the state. This is incorrect. The structure was erected in 1928, not 1926. Construction bids were opened on February 3, 1928. Source: FB posting by Legeros
1926		New Station 4 opened on McMannan Street. Hose/engine Company 4 activated at this time?	In 1926 Station No. 4 was built at the intersection of McMannan Street and Cobb Street. Cost of this station was \$14,350. Since 1909 Station No. 4 was located behind Station No. 1. It was a small building that housed the Hook and Ladder truck. Station No. 1 was remodeled so it would house the Hook and Ladder Truck in 1924.
1927	1927-12	Service truck wrecked	The 1915 American LaFrance service ladder strikes a telephone pole. City chooses to replace instead of repair. (DMH, 1/7/28)
1927		City recognized for best record of fire prevention in US with same-size population.	In 1927, the Durham Fire Department was recognized for having the best record in prevention of all the US cities with its same population. We won honorable mention for prevention in 1928, 1929, 1933, 1936, 1937, and 1938.
1927		First fire inspector appointed.	In 1927 Captain C.H. Ross was appointed Durham's first fire inspector. Once a month he would have an engine company meet him at some designated business in the downtown fire district. The Captains would inspect fire extinguishers, means of egress, exit signs, trash accumulation, and other basic fire codes on all downtown mercantiles. These were inspected once a month and their locations were transcribed on 6x8 cards. Theaters were inspected weekly. In the late 1940s and early 1950s Lemuel Foster would oversee these inspections and conduct his own inspections as well.
1929		Major fire, old cotton mill.	
193_		Frank Bennett appointed fire chief	In the 1930s fire departments across the state would share ideas at the fire conventions. Numerous articles have led us to believe that Durham was one of the leaders in the fire service. Other cities from across North Carolina came to Durham to collect ideas for their departments. One of the names that continued to lead the fire service was one of our own, Chief Bennett. He was looked upon as a friendly, outgoing man with one thing on his mind; making the fire department safe for its members as well as for the citizens. Chief Bennett has been given credit for starting public relation programs, as in schools, business and fire prevention. Legeros: Be careful not to confuse the annual convention, with the annual fire college. The latter was repeatedly/frequently held in Durham. Legeros: Chief Bennett was also known as the state's "singing fireman."
193_		Two-platoon schedule started.	By 1938, the two-platoon schedule of work 12 hours off, 12 hours on was established.
193_		Council of Association of Durham Firemen created.	In the 1930s, Durham Firefighters were known as "The Council of Association of Durham Firemen." Membership of this Council is not known.
1930	1930-10-31	Major fire, American Tobacco company storage warehouse.	Citation HS 5/1/50.
1931		Boston bulldog added as mascot	After the horses left the fire service other animals took up at the fire stations. In 1931 "Kaiser," a big Boston Bulldog became "the pride of the fire department" for six years. Kaiser would spend one night at No. 1, then No. 2, No. 3, and finally No. 4, before starting his rounds again. He would ride the fire trucks incessantly. He attended fire prevention programs. Upon his death Kaiser was mounted and kept at No. 2 Station on Main Street. Rumor has it that he ended up in the attic at the Children's Museum.

1937		Snapshot	In 1937, Durham's Fire Department had only 57 paid men. Only a few fire fighters were hired to help man the trucks. During the 1930s, the Depression Years, were hard for the fire apparatus industry. The city was unable to keep up with the demand for new fire equipment. Their Ahrens Fox Pumper and the two Seagrave Triple Combination Pumpers were nursed and repaired for many years. Legeros: Another factor during this time was the War, and restrictions on vehicle and materials purchases, such as fire apparatus, or building materials for new fire stations.
1941	1941-12-07	Impacts of wartime	After December 7, 1941, the impacts of wartime included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New apparatus delayed, including ordered replacement for 1925 pumper. • Auxiliary firefighters organized. Squads created from male high school students. [HS, 1/7/14] Additional squads created of industrial auxiliary firemen, from local industry. [DS, 4/10/42] Nearly 500 auxiliary firemen trained. [HS, 4/11/42] • Three city trucks converted into fire engines with front-mounted pumps added, around July 1943. [DMH, 7/22/43] • Three skid-mounted pumps, 500 GPM, procured by July 1943. Awaiting mounting on vehicles. [DMH, 7/22/43] • Five trailer pumps procured by July 1943. [DMH, 7/22/43]
194_		New light grey uniforms	The 1940s also saw the traditional light gray uniforms issued to the fire fighters. These uniforms were recognized by the public for many years. Not until the mid-1980s were the uniforms changed.
194_		First breathing equipment	Some time in the 1940s, several types of breathing equipment were introduced. A mask attached to a very long rubber hose attached to a bellow pump was used for a short while. As the fire fighter pumped the bellows by turning them, fresh air was relayed to the fire fighter inside. Stories of foul odors being placed at the fresh air inlet as a joke always made the masked man holler!! One type was the canister type referred to as MSA. The shortcomings of this equipment was the lack of oxygen in the surrounding air. Dense smoke and depleted oxygen could confuse and disorient a fire fighter with hazardous results. Legeros: MSA = Mine Safety Appliances, I think, the maker of those old masks.
194_?		First fire mechanic was Joe Johnson.	Through the years, maintenance on the trucks has been performed by fire mechanics. Joe Johnson was the first fire mechanic. Others were Cliff Rich, William Browning and Bill Turner. In 1995, the mechanic now was J. W. Roberts. For years supplies such as uniforms, equipment, etc. was the duty of the Deputy Chief. As years progressed, the supply clerk was created for the department. Teresa Hayes was hired to this position, and in 1995 Cecil Howard was the clerk.
1940	1940-08-19	IAFF local created.	On August 19, 1940, 54 members of the Durham Fire Department formed together and joined the International Association of Firemen. This affiliation lasted for a while.
1940*		Auxiliary truck program started. * More likely late 1941 or early 1942. Both were in service by Feb 1942, from news reports.	Perhaps one of the best programs was started back in 1940. This was the introduction of specialized units into the fire department. Until now, only large, slow fire engines were being utilized. Two specially equipped auxiliary trucks were placed in service giving the department added protection for life and property, plus a more economical operation for the fire service. Local fire fighters turned their talents to converting the bare trucks into well-equipped engines for combat-ing fires. Equipment on the trucks including an electric siren, ladders, fire extinguishers, axes, pike pole, tarpaulin, water hose, wrenches, 120-gallon water tank, and a 500-watt light to illuminate the scene of a night fire. Two men teams were trained to man these trucks The first day the truck was placed in service, a fire on Elizabeth Street broke out in an occupied residence. Five people were saved due to the quick actions of the auxiliary truck. At this time, Durham was the only department to have an auxiliary truck in service. Legeros: The auxiliary trucks were also called "squads", but were NOT rescue squads. They were also operated in Raleigh, Greensboro, Wilmington... and maybe other NC cities. I suspect they were a response to staffing challenges during the War years. In Raleigh at least, men were leaving, either drafted or taking higher-paying jobs associated with the industries supporting the war effort. The auxiliary trucks were also perhaps easier to acquire and equip, during the war-time restrictions. In Raleigh, the squad truck (they had just one) would also respond on out-of-city calls in the county.
1941		Apparatus accident, 1915 ALF pumper wrecked responding to a grass fire.	Source: HS, 4/2/43.
1941, by		Gear	Fire Helmets were not in existence during these years. Only water proof rain hats were issued. There was no "tum out" gear. Fire fighters fought fire in regular work clothes. By 1941 "night clothes" could be purchased by the fire fighters from the city—along with fire boots.
1942		1915 ALF pumper retired after extensive damage in accident.	

1943	1943-04-08	New pumper added, 1943 Seagrave	Accepted on that date. DMH, 4/9/43
1944	1944-07-08	Major fire – Morgan Street warehouse	
1946	1946-11-26	Chief Cox starts Chief Bennett stops (dies in line of duty?)	
1947	1947-10	Voters approve \$7.5M in bonds	Fire received \$175,000, for relocating Sta 2 and Sta 3, buy equipment for new station and 40 more men, purchase three new pieces of apparatus, a new automobile, hose, and more equipment. [HS, 12/18/50]
1947		72-hour week schedule started.	In 1947, Council approved the 72-hour week schedule.
1948	1948-08	First county pumper delivered, 1948 Mack, ___/600	Source: Legeros
1948		First two-way radio [correct?], purchased for installation on the county fire truck.	Source: HS, 4/6/48.
1948, by		Education programs by FPB start at the local hospitals.	Educational programs were taught to the Old Watts Hospital, Duke Hospital, and VA Hospitals as early as 1948. The officers would actually pour gasoline on a bed and light it on fire to train the staff in the use of fire extinguishers.
1949	1949-06-21 [DS, 6/22/49]	New aerial ladder delivered, 1949 American LaFrance 700 Series	Ordered May 5, 1948. Delivered June 21, 1949. Housed at Station 1. Cost \$35,505.60. [DS, 6/22/49]
1949	1949-03?	New pumper delivered, 1949 Seagrave, 750/300	Ordered May 5, 1948. [DS, 6/22/49] By March 2, 1949 (DMH, 3/2/49)
1949?		New service ladder delivered, 1947 Mack	Ordered May 5, 1948. [DS, 6/22/49] Place in service by Jan 18, 1949. Housed at Station 1. (DMH, 1/18/49)
1952	1952, summer	Department builds new pumper.	Uses new cab and chassis, with 600 GPM pump, 400 gallon tank, cost around \$7,000 versus around \$11,000 for a new pumper. Assigned to Station 1, replaced one of the “two small trucks” (auxiliary trucks?) used since 1942. Will answer small fires plus buildings in south and east residential districts. [DS, 6/24/52]
195_		Fire department phone number changed to 5401	Then in the 1950s, 5401 was used.
195_		Short-sleeve shirts for summer added.	Early in the 1950s the request for short sleeved shirts for the summer was granted. A dark blue cotton shirt was worn with no tee shirts exposed and the "Bell Boy" hat was compulsory. These shirts were somehow waterproof. Perspiration could not penetrate this cloth. It formed in little rivulets and by gravity followed the natural channels of the body to run all the way to your socks. This was tolerated for about two years for fear of going back to the long sleeves and neck tie. Finally negotiations began and a gray shirt replaced the dark blue.
195_		DFD becomes involved in MDA and assists with stuffing envelopes.	During the 1950s and 1960s fire fighters across America became involved in Muscular Dystrophy Association. Fire fighters would assist the association by "stuffing" the envelopes that would be mailed to everyone. Durham participated and soon the department was helping with Easter Seals and Christmas Seals. It wasn't until the early 1970s that this gesture was stopped.
195_?		56-hour week schedule started.	After the 72-hour work week members voted on the 56-hour shift. This schedule remains in effect today.
195_?			Another safer type was the CHEM-OX. This was similar to the MSA but no outside air entered the mask. Oxygen was generated in a bladder on the chest containing chemicals that converted the moisture in your breath and the exhaled air into oxygen. Navy Seals now use equipment resembling the CHEM-OX so no bubbles are emitted to give their position away when in hostile waters. Strong warnings that grease on the face could cause severe burns stopped some personnel from using this equipment. Oxygen equipped masks were on the ladder trucks at No. 1 and No. 2. These carried a green tank and had to be sent out to be refilled. The fear of facial blisters and the fact that the tanks had to be sent out to be refilled were two reasons these were not used.
1950	1950-09-28	Station 2 relocated to 1001 Ninth Street	Opened and dedicated on September 28, 1950. Cost \$165-170K. [HS, 9/28/50] Housed engine, new service truck, and an auxiliary truck.
1950	1950-10	Station 1 caught fire	In the wee hours of the morning Mr. Thurman Woodlief was passing by the station and he noticed smoke coming from the attic of the fire station. He pulled in and went to the watch room where he found fire fighter Sidney Levy on watch. He reported the station was afire. Levy nearly wore the bells out arousing the fire fighters from their sleep. Only some old fire prevention reports stored in the attic were lost.

1950s >		Pets	All of the city stations had decent equipment, and morale was high. Off duty fire fighter wanted to, he could catch the truck and go on the call. Durham never had Dalmatians to run with the steamers, but there were several Dalmatians at the stations ... Lady, Smokey, Spanner, Sparky and Flint. Flint was a mixed Chow that lived at No. 4 for a while. Another mixed breed was Rufus at Station No. 7. Perhaps the last dog was a Chihuahua named Sheila at Station 3, Station 8 had Charlie, a pet squirrel. Most all of the critters were loved by the men, and as usual, hated by some.
1953		Two-way radio system added. Communications room added at Station 1.	Source: DS, 4/25/53.
1953		Snapshot – Class 3 fire insurance rating. With 19 captains, 20 drivers, and 61 fire fighters.	Durham maintained a class three fire insurance rating. The department was faced with the usual problems, lack of stations and equipment. In 1953 we had 19 captains, 20 drivers, and 61 fire fighters. As in earlier years, people lined the streets to watch the fire trucks go by. Everybody loved a fire fighter.
1955	1955-12-17	Service truck totaled in collision.	The 1928 Ahrens Fox was struck by a tractor-trailer truck. [DS, 12/17/55]
1956	1956-04-23	Station 3 relocated to Driver Street. Old Station 3 closed.	New \$70,000 station was occupied on April 23, 1956. [DS, 4/23/56]
1954		First (modern) fire helmet, "construction style" helmet	In 1954 the fire fighters received the "construction" helmet for head gear.
1957	1957-12-22	County fire truck damaged in collision	Truck is totaled. One civilian is killed. Others are injured, along with firemen. N&O, 12/23/57
1958	1958-10	First black career firefighters.	First proposed as early as July 1949. [DS, 11/22/49] Station No. 4 was a first. Not since 1913 had any African-Americans fought fire in Durham. Station No. 4 was to house small African-American crew. The ten men were selected and placed under the training of Captains Herman O'Briant and J.A. Miller. Chief C.L. Lawson also assisted. The crew proved to function as a team, and for many years would serve the city well. Legeros: Believe they were the second career black FFs of the era, after Winston-Salem. Then came Greensboro, I believe, and then Raleigh. Need to check. They started work on October 1, 1958, and had a six-day weekly schedule. During that month, they trained at the drill tower and the fire station. [DS, 11/2/58]
1958*	1958-11-01	Station 4 relocated to Fayetteville Street. Old Station 4 closed.	The city's first career black fire company was activated on Nov 1, 1958, at new Station 4. [HS, 11/2/58]
196_		SCBA refilling station added at Station 3	A cascade or manifold system for filling the air racks on the ladder trucks were installed at No. 3 at Main and Peachtree. The only good reason not to use this equipment was the ridicule of fellow fire fighters. The amount of smoke you could eat was the only measure of a good fire fighter. A set of leather lungs was the only acceptable breathing equipment. Regular use of SCBA did not become common until the late 1960s.
196_		Brotherhood of Durham Firemen created.	In the 1960s some Durham Firefighters re-organized a new group. and started the "Brotherhood of Durham Firemen." In a short time period this organization became inactive.
1960	1960-01-09	Engine 5 activated by that date, housed at Station 4.	Source: HS, 1/9/60.
1960	1960-02-01 [PHODFD]	Station 5 opened.	Station No. 5 was built to accommodate the Lakewood section. Men and equipment were moved in February 1960. Cost of Station No. 5 was \$90,000.

1960		Rescue truck added	DFD receives 1957 GMC rescue truck from county Civil Defense, serves as city-county unit. Source: Legeros The first rescue truck was given to the fire department from the Civil Defense Office. A 1957 GMC truck was placed at No. 2 Station. This truck was to be manned by fire fighters who were Red Cross Trained in First Aid. The truck would also respond to wrecks, plane crashes, hospital fires, etc. Shortly after inception, this truck became known as Rescue 11.
1960	1960-11-17	City Council adopts 1960 edition of national fire code.	On November 17, 1960, the City Council adopted the 1960 edition of the Fire Prevention Code that was prepared and recommended by the National Board of Fire Underwriters.
1960s		Major fires	There were several fires that did do considerable damage. Fires in the Morgue Building, Research Labs, and the Bell Building were without loss of life, but high in property loss.
1960s		Major fires	Fires were hot and many during the 1960s. Some of the more notable fires were Dowd Street School, Yellow Cab Company, Ingold Tire Company, Capitol Furniture, Texaco Service Station, Downtowner Motor Inn, and Edgemont School.
1961		Fire Chief's Secretary added	In 1961 the chief got a part-time secretary. She was Delores J. Barbour. She soon was hired to a full-time position. Following Mrs. Barbour was Linda Currin, Amelia Baker, Dianne Bowers, and Dot Watson. Without computers, secretaries were a must for all of the fire fighters
1962	1962-08-01	DFD takes over operation of county rescue truck.	Durham FD takes over operation of county rescue truck, though the service is called the Durham County Rescue Squad. It was previously operated/augmented with volunteers. Four men on each of the two shifts are assigned to the truck. They serve with their regular duties as firemen "without extra pay." Each has received or is receiving special training. Source: Legeros
1964		Station 1 relocated	After serving downtown Durham for 72 years, No. 1 Station was moved to Morgan and Cleveland Streets. At a cost of \$296,000, Station No.1 was one of the most modern fire stations in the state.
1964		Snapshot	Until 1964 reported fire calls were routed through No. 1 Station. Fire fighters stood at roll call every morning, "on going" and "off going." The "on going" crew would be told what truck they would be assigned to. They would also be told what "watch" he would have. All fire fighters were trained on how to take a fire call and to dispatch the trucks.
1964	1964, summer	Maintenance shop moved from Station 1 to Station 2	Space at Station 2 converted into a single-bay maintenance shop. The shop was previously housed at old Station 1. There were plans to move the shop to new Station 1, but there was not enough money available. [DS, 8/18/64]
1965		Communications relocated to basement of police station.	When the new Police Station was built in 1965, the radio, telephone, and fire alarms were received in the basement of this building, commonly called "the Hole." For the first four or five years, fire fighters from station one would relieve watchmen in the "Hole" for lunch and dinner.
1966	1966-11-06	Rescue truck damaged in collision	Durham County rescue truck damaged in a vehicle collision at Holloway Street and Alston Avenue. The 11:55 p.m. accident injured both men in the rescue truck, and the two people in the car. All were treated at Watts Hospital and released. The severely damaged truck requires replacement, and another vehicle is pressed into service as a temporary replacement. Sources: DS 11/7/66, DS 11/9/66
1966		New rescue truck, late 1960s GMC van	Durham County rescue truck replaced with late 1960s GMC van.
1966	1966-01-01 [ds, 12/31/65]	County tanker placed in service, 1966 International/Atlas [?], 1200	Rescue 11 was moved to Station One. This truck had no paid position, and a person from each of the pumpers was assigned to ride the Rescue Truck if it was needed. With an aerial truck, two city pumpers, and one county truck and a tanker, Station No. 1 was full. On an average 20 to 24 men manned the equipment.

1966	1966-04? [dmh, 4/20/66]	Two pumpers delivered, 1966? International/Ward LaFrance, 1000/___	
1966 ?		Annexation	With the annexation of 13 square miles of the county, the fire department was able to acquire new pumpers in 1966. With the pumpers came a class of recruits, known as the "Fabulous Fifteen."
1968		IAFF local re-organized.	In 1968, members of the Brotherhood of Durham Firemen reorganized and again affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the International Firefighters Union.
1969		New fire helmets, plastic	The construction helmets were issued in the mid-1950s. This helmet would be worn until 1969, when the first "plastic" helmets were issued.
1969	1969-02-01 [PHODFD]	Station 6 opened at 3700 Swarthmore Road Engine 6 activated	Year from DFD/AF site
1969	1969-02-01 [PHODFD]	Station 7 opened at 3919 N. Duke Street. Engine 7 activated	Year from DFD/AF site
1969		NC EMS system started First EMT class in NC given to Durham Rescue personnel	In 1969 the North Carolina EMS System was started. Until now the only first aid fire fighters had was American Red Cross classes, and this wasn't mandatory. The states first EMT class in this area was given to Durham Rescue personnel at Durham Tech. This 81-hour EMT class created the Fire Driver/Rescue Specialist position on Rescue 11. All emergencies in Durham and Durham County were answered by Rescue 11. With hardly any volunteer companies in service, twenty to thirty calls a day were answered by Rescue 11. This made Rescue 11 an undesirable truck for most fire fighters.
197_		Sta 2 changed to PSO – Need date	By 1980 Stations No. 2 and No. 3 would be taken over.
197_		Sta 3 changed to PSO – Need date	Class after class of new PSO's were trained and manpower at No. 1 Station was down to 8 to 10 persons per shift.
197_		Fire Prevention Bureau begins conducting arson investigations.	The Bureau has conducted arson investigation since the mid 1970s. The first officer responsible for arson investigation was Clyde Gregory. Chief J. M. Beck handled most all of the investigative work throughout the days of Public Safety.
1970	1970-11-06	City Council votes to start Public Safety Program	After opposition from fire fighters and police officers, the council voted 11-1 in favor of starting the Public Safety Program. They recommended that a person cross-trained in both fields would be cheaper for the city.
1970, circa		Street alarm boxes replaced with emergency telephones	Around 1970 box alarms were replaced with emergency phones on poles. The emergency number became 911. Emergency pole phones were discontinued in the late 1970s.
1971	1971-05-01	Public Safety Program becomes operational	First unit of PSOs assumed full-time fire and police duties at Station 5. There were 37 officers who completed a 16-week course. FFs assigned to Sta 5 were reassigned to the city's other six stations. Two PSOs were on duty with the fire truck at the station at all times. Officers PSOs were assigned patrol beats around the station. Other PSOs were assigned to police HQ. Four patrol cars are being used, marked "public safety." [DS, 5/1/71] PSOs began operating. [DS, 5/4/73] Nearly all of the police officers signed up for this new program and only a few fire fighters.
1971	1971-05-01	Sta 5 changed to PSO.	With the new annexations of the city facing the departments it was agreed that the merger would come slowly. Station No. 5 would become the first station with PSO's.

1971	1971-09-07	Sta 7 changed to PSO	After 26 new PSOs graduated from a 16-week course on August 27, there were 18 assigned to Sta 6. The rest were assigned to police HQ. Two men were on duty at all times at the station, with two officers and a patrol supervisor on patrol. Sta 7 was previously staffed with 10 full-time FFs. [DS, 9/8/71]
1971	1971-05-17	City Council adopts new fire code. Fire Prevention Bureau created, to conduct inspections and enforce code.	Almost 11 years later, on May 17, 1971, the Council adopted a new code and created a Fire Prevention Bureau to conduct fire inspections and enforce the code. The new code was known as the Fire Prevention Code by the American Insurance Association, 1970 edition. The Bureau's supervisor was to be appointed by the Chief of the Fire Department. The Chief at this time was Chief Cosmo L. Cox and his first appointed prevention chief Fire Marshal was James G. Eubanks. Captain Dillehay acted under James Eubanks as a fire prevention officer in the day time and as a fire captain in the evenings until he was finally assigned to the new Bureau. The following list includes all of the officers who have served as the head of the Fire Prevention Bureau from 1971 to present: James G. Eubanks Troy Riley Charles Ray Taylor Norman Leathers Jarius Wilson (Acting) George King Milton Smith
1971		IAFF affiliation discontinued with inception of PSO program.	
1972	1972-07-01	Chief Letzing starts Chief Cox stops	
1972	1972-06-01	Sta 4 changed to PSO.	Out of 28 graduates on Apr 26, 1972, 20 PSOs would take over Sta 4 on June 1. The training was 16 weeks long. There were 13 firefighters presently assigned to Sta 4. [DS, 4/27/72]
1972	1972-01-01	Sta 6 changed to PS	Sta 6 was planned to open as PSO on January 1, 1972. [DMH, 12/18/71]
1973	1983-07-01	Chief Letzing stops	
1973	1973-06	New rescue truck, 1973 [?] Chevy/Murphy ambulance	New Durham Rescue 11 placed in service. The Murphy body is mounted on a one-ton Chevy chassis and includes patient compartment, for "transported of accident victims if necessary." Though it normally doesn't transport patients, and instead, leaves that task to Durham Ambulance Service. The truck is also equipped with an electric winch, a generator, "more lights," and "more storage space for first aid equipment." The truck cost \$12,000, including the equipment on it. It was purchased with local and Civil Defense funds. The old rescue truck is retained, probably a standby unit. Source: Hose & Nozzle, July-August 1973; DMH, 6/8/73.
1973	1973, May	Sta 3 adds PSOs	PSOs were planned to begin sharing duties at Station 3 by the end of May 1973. [DS, 5/4/73]
1974	1974-07-09	Rescue truck damaged in collision	Durham Rescue 11 collides with a truck at Roxboro Road and Geer Street. The squad was responding to a medical call, and struck a pick-up truck that didn't stop for the lights and siren. The pick-up truck overturned, and slid into a dump truck parked nearby. No serious injuries were reported. The cab of the rescue truck is totaled. Source: DMH, 10//74.
1974		Rescue truck repaired with new chassis, 1974 [?] Ford	Durham Sun reports that Durham Rescue 11 has returned to service, with a new/updated truck that was received last week. The original Murphy body has been remounted on a larger chassis with a larger cab. Source: DS, 11/4/74.
1974	1974-11-15	Station 8 opened Sta 8 changed to PSO – Need date	Date from DS, 11/16/74
1975	1985-10-28	Chief Thompson starts	
1975		Station 3 changed to PSO	City council approved changing on Mar 17, 1975. [DS, 3/18/75]
1975		Public safety department reorganization	City council approved plan to reorganize department to set-up more neighborhood-oriented police and fire protection. [DS, 3/18/75]
1975		First female firefighter	The first female fire fighter was Jinx Pulley who graduated from Public Safety Academy in November 1975. She was also the first female fire fighter in North Carolina. Alana Steele Ennis became the first woman certified to drive during Public Safety Academy No. 11 in 1976/77. In 1980 she was promoted to sergeant and became the first female public safety supervisor in Durham and the State of North Carolina. Alana continued to command fire scenes until 1984, when she transferred to internal affairs. Captain Elizabeth Partin is the first female Captain in the department. Kelley Wimberley was the first female hired for fire prevention. Public Safety Academy numbers 15 through 21 (from 1980 through 1985) produced 17 more police and fire trained women for the field. It was in the fall of 1985 that the two divisions split into separate departments.

1977		Station 9 opened Sta 9 changed to PSO – Need date	Year from DFD/AF site
1977		Second aerial added at Station 2	Aerial 21 assigned a 1976 Sutphen aerial platform. [HS, 6/8/78]
1978	1978-06?	Third aerial added at Station 3.	Aerial 31 assigned a 1978 Sutphen aerial platform. Delivered around May 8. [HS, 6/9/78]
1979		First large-scale educational program begins.	The first large scale educational program began in 1979 under the direction of Chief Riley. Jarius Wilson was responsible for developing and teaching the program that was integrated into the city school system. This program was expanded with the current school system and in 1995 was taught in over 18 schools
198_		First female graduate of Durham Fire Academy	Hattie Mitchell was the first female to graduate from a Durham Fire Academy (No. I) in 1985/86. Over the years, from Public Safety to present time, there have been 33 women serving Durham, 16 of those Public Safety Officers and 19 fire department personnel. In 1995, there were 17 women serving in suppression and prevention divisions.
198_?		New IAFF local created, Durham Firefighters Association.	
1980		Station 10 opened E10 activated on that date?	Year from DFD/AF site
1981 [?]		New rescue truck, 1981 Ford F-700/FrontLine	Source: Legeros
1982		First female PSO [?] employee of DFD	Elizabeth Partin from Public Safety Academy No. 17 in 1982, became the first woman to be employed by the Durham Fire Department. Already certified to drive in 1983, she was promoted to Lieutenant in charge of an Aerial Company in 1987. She served in this position until 1990, when she was promoted to Career Development Officer and soon after gained the rank of Captain. In 1993, Elizabeth became the Administration Officer for the department and still holds that position today. Among her many accomplishments, she pulled a 74-year old man with critical burns out of a house fire on Maynard Avenue (1985); created a recruitment plan to bring more women in contact with the fire service (1987); and has been instrumental in developing several key policies for the Durham Fire Department throughout the years.
1983	Summer	Second engine added at Station 7	As of June 16, 1983, the pumper was due for delivery within a few weeks. Source: DMH, 6/16/83.
1984	1984-07-09?	Station 10 activated	Activated on Sunday on/before July 10, 1984. The station was finished in 1978, but didn't open due to legal challenges to city annexation. [DMH, 7/10/84]
1985	1985-04-02	City Council votes to end Public Safety Program	Public Safety came with heated arguments, and on April 2, 1985 a heated meeting in council chambers ended Public Safety. It was found that by splitting the police and fire departments 18 million dollars would be saved. PSO Officers were given their choice--fire or police. In due time personnel that requested the fire department were assigned to the department. Chief Nathaniel Thompson was named Chief to fill the vacant office. A re-birth of the department was beginning.
1985	1985-04-01	County ends funding for engine, tanker, and rescue at Station 1.	County paid for half of rescue expenses, and all of expenses for pumper and tanker. Engine 13 was retired and Tanker 16 was replaced by a city truck. [DMH, 1/26/85]
1985		Public Safety Program ends. Date of operational split?	From 1971 to 1985 the City of Durham operated a Public Safety Department. During this time personnel were trained as police officers, as well as fire fighters. After much debate and controversy, the decision to split finally came. At the time of the split there were 67 sworn fire fighters who had never been trained as public safety officers (PSO). Seventy-five PSOs at this time switched over to the fire department.
1985	1985-08-23	PSO transition started.	On that date, 62 PSOs transferred to fire. Other changes were also implemented. [HS, 1/7/15]
1985		Snapshot	At the time of the split there were 10 fire stations in the city. These stations housed 11 engines and three ladder trucks, one rescue truck, and one tanker. During this period there was only one battalion chief to respond to the entire city. This was later increased to two per shift.
1985	1985-08?	Second engine at Station 7 deactivated.	Noted the Fire Chief, Engine 71 operated as a second piece of Engine 70. It was never staffed with its own crew. [DS, 8/29/85]

1985		Arson investigation returns to FPB with dissolution of Public Safety Program.	In 1985, Public Safety dissolved and arson investigation again became a responsibility of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Because it is cost effective, the Bureau continues to investigate all arson suspected fires. Since 1985, arson investigation has been conducted by Milton Smith, sworn officer and current Fire Marshal for the City of Durham's Fire Department.
1986		Rescue truck damaged in collision.	After extensive repairs, it's repainted in department's new white-over-red color scheme. Source: Legeros
1986	1986-01-10	First fire academy graduates	The first fire academy graduated 31 fire fighters on January 10, 1986. Since the split, 158 fire fighters have graduated from eight academies.
1986	1986-01-13	PSO transition, phase two.	Second phase transferred 11 more PSOs to fire, the graduation of 30 recruits from the fire academy, and the placement of fire captains in all stations. Will the change, public safety sergeants no longer had any fire responsibilities. The first stage transferred fire responsibilities from PS lieutenants to fire battalion chiefs. After that date, seven of ten stations had fully manned fire trucks. Two PSOs continued to respond with Engines 80, 90, 100. [HS, 1/7/86]
1986	1986-0-13	New tanker added by this time.	Old tanker was donated to Bahama. [HS, 1/7/86]
1989	1989-07-06	New aerial platform delivered.	Cost \$477,000. Replaced the Snorkel, which would be refurbished, then moved to reserve fleet until Station 11 was completed, then activated as Ladder 11.
1989	1989-08-31	Station 12 opened, 1230 Carpenter Fletcher Road. E12 activated on that date? L12 activated on that date?	Station No. 12, located at 1230 Carpenter Fletcher Road in the southern part of the city was opened August 31, 1989 due to annexations. This station houses an engine company and the fourth ladder company. Station 12 was the first station built to blend in with the neighborhood and to utilized drive through bays. Another first for the fire department built into this station was the individual bedroom concept. This was done mainly to accommodate the female fire fighters and also to provide more privacy for everyone.
199_		First contracts with county FDs?	Due to the amount of annexation that has taken place in Durham over the last several years, there are contracts with several of the county volunteer stations that surround the city limits. There are also dual dispatch agreements in place for a quick response of neighboring departments to respond to structure fires. With the building of new stations in annexed areas, these types of contracts will probably be eliminated in the future.
1990	1990-08-03	Station 11 opened, 2800 W. Cornwallis Road Engine 11 activated 1990. Ladder 11 activated with snorkel, 1990.	Station 11 opened in June, 1990 [corrected date 8/3/90, from DS that date] at 2800 W. Cornwallis Rd. This station houses an engine company and a ladder company. The engine company for this station was moved from Station 2, leaving only one engine company at Station 2. Using the same floor plan as Station 12, the outside was changed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood.
1991		New chassis for rescue truck	Rescue 11 body remounted onto new, four-door International chassis by Excellence Ambulance. Unit is equipped for patient transport, and is used when all the EMS units were unavailable. It was remounted as the cab and chassis needed to be replaced, and not because the truck was involved in an accident. Sources: FAJ, DFDH. Note FAJ cites 1992 as year for remount, which appears to be incorrect.
1991		IAFF charter, Bull City Professional Firefighting Association created.	Came to Durham via Firefighter Willie Alston in 1991. BCPFA is a Charter member of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters with a national membership of over 65,000. Mission was promoting racial harmony; cultivating and maintaining professional competence among firefighters; being role models and mentors for young black children; and being aware of and reacting to the increasing complexity of our problems within the black community.
1992	1992-07-01	City Council adopts new fire code.	The Bureau currently enforces the North Carolina State Building Code, Volume 5, Fire Prevention that was adopted by the Council on July 1, 1992.
1992	1992-03	Honor Guard organized.	In March 1992 the Durham Fire Department initiated the formation of the first Honor Guard in the Durham Fire Department's history. Assistant Chief William A. Bibby, III spearheaded this effort with assistance from Battalion Chief James B. Yeagan, and Captain Plummer S. Seward. A total of 13 volunteers, varying in rank, within the department comprised the initial honor guard.

1993	1993-10	First Responder program starts	After several years of debating, the department decided to start answering medical calls. All members were trained to the first responder level and the department started answering life threatening medical calls. This program has proven to be very beneficial to the citizens of Durham. Many lives have been saved due to the fact the fire department is arriving on scene quickly and starting life support measures. By 1995, over half of the department is at the EMT level, and about half of the EMT's are EMT-D.
1994		Communications system upgraded and moved to new police station.	This new communication system was a repeater system that worked well until 1994. At this time communication was upgraded and relocated in the Police Station on Chapel Hill Street.
1994		Station 2 renovated, includes new bedroom concept.	Station 2 was renovated in 1994 to include the individual bedroom concept.
1994		Rescue 11 ranked 30 th busiest heavy rescue truck in nation in 1993, in survey by Firehouse magazine. Survey included 315 departments. [HS, 6/27/94]	
1994		First professional Association fundraiser.	Fundraiser funded purchase of over 500 smoke detectors to give away to needy families.
1995		Station 1 renovated, includes new roof and individual bedrooms.	Station 1 was renovated in 1995 to include a new roof and the individual bedrooms. Crews moved out in October 1994 and units were moved to temporary quarters at four nearby fire stations. E1 to Sta 4. L1 crew on reserve pumper and BC to Sta 3. L1 apparatus to Sta 11. R11 to Sta 2. Air truck to Sta 5. Admin staff moved to the gym at the fire training facility. [DMH, 10/11/94] After eight months, they moved back in June 1995. [DMH, 6/14/95]
1995	1995-09	Haz-Mat unit moved to Sta 1	
1995	1995-12	Tactical rescue team activated	Durham FD activates Tactical Rescue Team at Station 5. They utilize a 1978 Ford C/1994 M&W box truck created from a former Ford C8000 pumper. Unit later moved to Station 9 for six months, before relocating to Station 7 for years. Team plans to be fully trained in areas of high-angle and trench rescues by July 1, 1996, and swift-water, confined space, and mass casualty by end of 1996. Sources: DMH, 1/22/17; OH.
1995		Snapshot	Currently the department operates with 12 engine companies, four ladder companies, one heavy rescue company, one mobile air unit, one tanker, and one hazardous materials unit. Additions to the department since the split is an additional battalion chief per shift, three safety/training officers, supply officer, EMS coordinator, planning and research officer.
1995		800mhz radio system added	The department, along with the rest of the city, will start using the 800 MHZ radio system in the fall of 1995. This new radio system will be very beneficial to the department in respect to communications. This new system will put all responding agencies on the same frequency. No longer will the communicator have to relay messages between agencies.
1995-96		Computers purchased for all fire stations.	Computers will be purchased in the 1995-1996 budget year for all stations. The city is using a high tech paperless computer system called "imaging." Personnel files and some pre fire plans are in this system. The goal is for the fire officer to do his reports, evaluations, and other records on computer. This should prove to be a very effective way of managing the paperwork of the department.
1996		Squad program started	Durham FD starts squad program, with Squad 1 activated as cross-staffed unit with two people from Ladder 1. First vehicle was a Chevy Blazer, former Battalion Chief's vehicle. Second vehicle was an old city Ford F-150 pick-up truck. Source: Legeros
1996		EMT-D added.	Most of department's firefighters become EMT-D certified. [HS, 5/24/20]
1996		Academy 9 started in spring.	The academy will be about 18 weeks in length and will teach fire fighting and emergency medical skills.
1997	Summer	Chief Thompson retires.	Asst. Chief William Bibby appointed acting chief. HS, 6/16/98.
1997		Engine 14 activated at Station 7	Year from DFD/AF site
1997	December	Ladder 11 moved to Lebanon VFD	Needed to cover areas annexed last year. HS, 12/3/98.
1997	Summer	Squad 7 activated	Year from HS, 6/26/97.
1997	Summer	Station 8 closed Engine 8 relocated to new Station 3.	

1997	August?	Station 13 opened at 2901 S. Miami Boulevard Engine 13 activated	Year from DFD/AF site
1998		Rescue 11 renamed Rescue 1	Source: Legeros
1998		Station 4 relocated to 1818 Riddle Road	Dedicated Tuesday on/before Feb 24, 1999. [HS, 2/24/99] Year from DFD/AF site
1998		Station 3 relocated to 822 N. Miami Boulevard	Year from DFD/AF site
1998		First mobile support unit added.	Delivered by March 13, 1998. [DMH, 3/12/98]
1998	June	New Fire Chief, Otis Cooper Jr.	Former fire chief of Winston-Salem. HS, 6/16/98.
1998		IAFF local re-chartered (?)	HS, 11/26/98
1999	April	First thermal imager	Carried on Rescue 1, cost \$19,595. HS, 4/10/99.
1999		Hydrant program started.	Hydrants painted red, had been yellow and orange for decades. All public hydrants will also be inspected and tested. HS, 5/13/99.
2000	2000-12	Station 14 opened at 1327 Umstead Road	Opened last week of December with Engine 14 and a swift-water rescue truck. Cost \$1.8M. HS, 1/2/01
2000	2000-05	Rescue 1 removed from service and other changes.	Durham FD rescue changes: Durham FD Rescue 1 removed from service on May 22, 2000. Squad 1 (activated?) assigned with dedicated personnel. They operate the old Rescue 1, a 1991 International with an older remounted Frontline ambulance body. Unit is re-lettered with "Squad 1". Squad 2 and Squad 4 activated. Each operate a former EMS unit. All three squads can transport patients if necessary. Extrication equipment added to all ladder trucks, from Rescue 1 and with newly purchased additional tools.
2000	2000-11	DCEMS adds ambulance at Station 5	First time co-locating at a city fire station. HS, 11/20/00
2000	2000-07-01	EMT-Intermediate level of service added.	Durham FD adds EMT-Intermediate level of service to the firefighters assigned to Squad 1, Squad 2, and Squad 4. Each squad can also transport patients if needed. Source: HS, 5/24/2000; DMH, 7/9/00.
2000?		Engine 14 activated at Station 7.	Date by May 24, 2000. [HS, 5/24/20]
2005	2005-07?	New Station 8 opens Engine 8 relocated from Sta 3 to Sta 8	Completed in July. [HS, 8/31/05]. When did it open? Dedicated September 3, 2005. [HS, 9/4/05.]
2006	2006-10	Station 16 opens. Engine 16 activated.	Cost \$1.2M. [HS, 12/10/06] Year from DFD/AF site
2007		NC Task Force 8 placed in service, with Durham as member.	NC USAR Task Force 8 activated, with Durham FD as one of four member fire departments. They receive one of four identical 2007 Ford F-550 Super Duty swift-water rescue units, equipped with walk-in utility body [built by who?] plus a boat trailer and equipment.
2010	2010-06-21	Station 15 opened. Engine 15 activated.	Cost \$2.6M [HS, 6/21/10] Dedicated on/before Saturday, Aug 15, 2010. [HS, 8/15/10]
2014	2014-05	Union buys old 1949 ALF aerial ladder.	Alas, the truck sits at training for years and is never restored. Later sold/disposed/scrapped. [DHM, 5/19/14]
2017	2017-04-13	Station 9 relocated to 1648 Midland Terrace	Project was planned for completion in 2013, but the construction process saw delays. [HS, 4/27/14]

2018	2018-07-01	Durham County Fire-Rescue merges with Durham FD Engine 17 activated. Ladder 17 activated. Engine 18 activated. Quint 19 activated. Many other changes.	
2018	2018-11-13	Robert J. Zoldos II starts working as fire chief.	Fire Chief Dan Curia retired this summer. Asst. Chief Chris Iannuzzi served as acting chief. [HS, 10/10/18]
2018	2018-07-01	Station 18 opens.	
2018	2018-07-01	Station 19 opens.	
2018	2018-08-23	Station 17 opens at 5503 Leesville Road	
2019	2019-11-16	Rescue 1 reactivated	Durham FD re-activates Rescue 1 as a fully-staffed fire company. The apparatus is a Durham County unit, which was the former Parkwood Rescue 81, a 2006 Spartan Diamond/EVI walk-around heavy rescue that originally served Orange Rescue Squad in Hillsborough.

Sources

DFD/AF - <http://www.angelfire.com/nc3/dfd/>

PHODFD – Partial History of Durham Fire Department, September 1970 – Author TBD