

# Raleigh Fire Department History

Excursions, Conventions, Contents, 1868-1912

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## Change Log

May 20, 2019 – Corrected the year of the colored fireman’s association formation, from 1888 or 1889 to 1890.

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## Introduction

This document compiles accounts of excursions, conventions, and contests of North Carolina firefighters from the late 1860s through the early 1910s, as seen through the activities of the volunteer fire companies of the Raleigh Fire Department. These accounts are drawn primarily from articles and announcements published in Raleigh newspapers. The disparity in information about the North Carolina State Firemen's Association conventions and the North Carolina Colored Volunteer Fireman's Association conventions represents the disproportionate amount of newspaper coverage of the time.

## Travels

On September 1, 1868, both active and honorary members of the Hook and Ladder Company traveled to Morehead City. Also that month, the city's fire companies received an invitation from their Fayetteville counterparts to visit them at the "District Convention" on September 9.<sup>1</sup> In September 1869, some 30 members of the Merchants Independent Fire Company traveled to Morehead City in a "special attached to the mail train." En route, they were received in New Bern by the town's Steam Fire Engine Company. The firemen were invited into the depot, where "ample refreshments were spread," After a half-hour, the Raleigh firefighters boarded the train and departed to "cheer after cheer."<sup>2</sup>

On May 20, 1871, the Rescue Company was accompanied by the Raleigh Brass Band when they traveled to Charlotte to participate in the Mecklenburg Declaration Celebration. During their visit, a "plan of mutual aid was discussed and formulated."<sup>3</sup> The following year, however, both the Rescue and Hook and Ladder companies declined the invitation of the Charlotte Fire Department to attend.<sup>4</sup> Other excursions included a visit by the Rescue and Hook & Ladder companies to Fayetteville in July 1873<sup>5</sup>, the Hook & Ladder Company to Portsmouth, VA in September 1874<sup>6</sup>, and the Rescue Company to Norfolk, VA in June 1876<sup>7</sup>.

In September 1872, the city entertained firefighters from Charlotte and Petersburg, V.A. The visiting companies were the Hornet Steam Fire Company No. 1 and Hook & Ladder Company No. 2 (Charlotte) and the Bollingbrook Steam Fire Company No. 1 (Petersburg). The two-day Firemen's Jubilee included parades to escort the visitors from the railroad depot, a parade of steam fire engines in the Capitol Square, an address by Maj. Seaton Gales at Metropolitan Hall, and dinner at the National Hotel.<sup>8</sup> In October 1877, the city entertained the Hose Fire Company from Danville, V.A, when they visited during the State Fair.<sup>9</sup>

The city's colored firefighters also traveled about the state, often visiting other firefighters. On June 2, 1873, the Victor and Bucket Companies left on trip to New Bern, where they would be joined by fire companies from other towns. They were accompanied by a number of citizens, both colored and white, and presented a "gala appearance" as they marched to the railroad

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Aug. 31, Sept. 3, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Standard*, Sept. 2, 3, 1869.

<sup>3</sup> *Telegram (d)*, May 21, 1871; *Daily Sentinel*, May 8, 1871; Raleigh Fire Department, *A Historical Sketch of the Fire Department of the City of Raleigh, N. C.* Raleigh, 1944.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Star*, May 20, 1872.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, June 15, 1873.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Sept. 9, 1874.

<sup>7</sup> *News*, May 23, 1876.

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Sept. 26, Oct. 5, 1872; *News*, Oct. 9, 1872.

<sup>9</sup> *Observer*, Sept. 27, 1877.

depot.<sup>10</sup> They visited cities and towns including Fayetteville in September 1877<sup>11</sup>, Charlotte in August 1880<sup>12</sup>, Wilmington in August 1882<sup>13</sup>, Warrenton in June 1887<sup>14</sup>, Charlotte in August 1887<sup>15</sup>, and Fayetteville in 1888<sup>16</sup>.

The Victor and Bucket companies also hosted visiting colored fire companies, such as two Wilmington companies in August, 1874. They were met by the Raleigh firefighters and marched to Metropolitan Hall, where Mayor Jo Holden welcomed the visitors with a brief speech. A dance was held at the same hall, and featured a brass band brought by the visiting firemen.<sup>17</sup> Three years later, colored firefighters from Charlotte, Goldsboro, and Warrenton were welcomed to Raleigh, and given a "grand festival" at Metropolitan Hall.<sup>18</sup>

## Early Contests

On October 25, 1870, the third day of the North Carolina State Fair included a parade of fire companies and a pair of fire engine contests.<sup>19</sup> Visiting firemen from other cities were requested to join the parade. It rained that day, however, and "incommoded them considerably." The fire companies paraded after the storm.<sup>20</sup> Raleigh's Rescue Steam Fire Engine company won a silver trumpet for best steam fire engine. The contest likely consisted of either fastest or farthest water thrown. Steam fire engines from New Bern and Wilmington may have participated.<sup>21</sup> Raleigh's Fire Company No. 1 won a silver trumpet for best hand engine on display.<sup>22</sup> They were named the "Victor" in newspapers, and fire company was soon renamed the Victor Fire Company. The "wives, daughters, sisters, and sweethearts" of the Victor members gave them a "complementary supper" in the basement room at Metropolitan Hall.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, June 2, 3, 1873.

<sup>11</sup> *Observer*, Sept. 22, 1877.

<sup>12</sup> *Observer*, July 20, 1880.

<sup>13</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 11, 1882. The Wilmington visit included a contest for a prize, awarded to the "best time in running with a hose reel carrying 300 feet of hose a distance of 250 yards, running 100 feet of hose from the reel, attaching it to a hydrant, and supplying with water." The city's Cape Fear and Dread Not companies participated, but Raleigh's Victor Company declined to participate as they did not "understand the handling of the hydrant."

<sup>14</sup> *News & Observer*, June 12, 14, 15, 1887. The Warrenton excursion resulted in a rail crash, with coach cars damaged and the engine derailed. Several people were injured.

<sup>15</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 6, 1887.

<sup>16</sup> *News & Observer*, May 26, 1888.

<sup>17</sup> *News*, Aug. 20, 1874.

<sup>18</sup> *Observer*, July 16, 1879.

<sup>19</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Oct. 14, 1870; *Daily Standard*, Oct. 19, 1870.

<sup>20</sup> *Daily Star*, Oct. 20, 21, 1870.

<sup>21</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Sept. 18, 1870. Though they expressed their intention to participate, the New Bern and Wilmington companies were not listed in the accounts.

<sup>22</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Sept. 20, Oct. 26, 1870. Raleigh's Mechanics Fire Company No. 2 also entered.

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Oct. 27, 1870.

The 1874 state fair included premiums for fire companies and apparatus: "For the best fire company with first and second class engine and men not less than forty, machine to be considered, trial to take place on the grounds, Diploma and \$25 in gold. By Rescue Fire Company, of Raleigh, additional premium \$25 (gold). Best Hook and Ladder Company, men not less than twenty-five, and apparatus to be considered, Diploma and \$25. Best Hand Engine Company, men not less than twenty-five, machine to be considered, diploma and \$25. An entrance fee of \$20 will be charged for each Company (not over fifty men) competing for the above premiums, which will entitle them to admission to the Grounds during the period required to make the test."<sup>24</sup>

Prizes were offered in 1878, for best fire company with steamer, and best hand engine company. The Pioneer Steam Fire Engine Company from Charlotte was expected to attend that year, but ultimately did not.<sup>25</sup> In July 1882, the *News & Observer* noted that Charlotte's Neptune Fire Company extended a challenge to the colored fire companies of the state, and would "keep it standing." The Neptunes claimed to be "champion runners" and they wore the "championship belt."<sup>26</sup>

## State Convention of Colored Firemen

One of the earliest recorded conventions of North Carolina firefighters was held in Raleigh on October 15, 1873. The meeting, called for all colored firemen in state by members of fire companies in Raleigh, Fayetteville, New Bern, and Wilmington, was held in the Victor Fire Company hall. The goal of the meeting was conveyed in a newspaper announcement: "The object of the Convention is to establish a unified understanding with all the colored firemen in the State, with regard to our future welfare and prosperity. We believe it to be our duty to assist in extinguishing any and all fires that occur in any city or town in this State. We believe a good reliable fire company in any town is as good as an insurance company. We further believe our movement will encourage those who are ready and willing to build up the good old North State. We hope that all colored companies in North Carolina whose intentions are to protect property with their labor against fire will comply with the request for a Convention by sending delegates there to. The said Convention will be composed of five delegates appointed from each colored fire company in the State, or each company is entitled to five votes on all questions in Convention. Also every company is solicited to attend in full as it is an important object."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Daily Standard*, Sept. 25, 1874.

<sup>25</sup> *Observer*, Oct. 8, 1878.

<sup>26</sup> *News & Observer*, July 29, 1882.

<sup>27</sup> *Daily Sentinel*, Sept. 30, Oct. 9, 1873.

## North Carolina State Fireman's Association

In 1888, Chief E. B. Englehard of Raleigh, Chief C. D. Benbon of Greensboro, and Chief James D. McNeill of Fayetteville called a meeting of the state's firemen in Greensboro on September 26, 1888.<sup>28</sup> Held at Bogart Hall, the 8:00 p.m. meeting was called to order by Greensboro Fire Chief Frank Thomas. Mr. E. B. Engelhard, of Raleigh, was appointed temporary secretary and Mr. C. D. Benbow of Greensboro was requested to explain the purpose of the meeting, which was to organize a state fireman's association of white volunteer fire companies, to discuss such measures, and to take action upon such matters concerning fireman as would best promote their interests.<sup>29</sup>

The Richmond & Danville Railroad have offered reduced rates and will run special trains to Greensboro during the occasion of the great firemen's tournament, which takes place Sept. 12 and 13. Trains will leave here at 7:30 a.m., arriving at Greensboro at 11.15 and returning will leave Greensboro at 8.35 p.m. The rate for the round trip is \$3. There will be band contests, steam engine contests, hook and ladder truck racing, hose carriage and reel racing, foot, bag, and wheelbarrow racing.

News & Observer, September 5, 1888.

A roll of all volunteer fire companies in North Carolina was called, and the following cities were represented:

Durham	Dick Blackwell Hose Company
Fayetteville	Chicora Steam Fire Engine Company
Greensboro	Hook and Ladder Company Steam Fire Engine Company
Raleigh	Capital Hose Company

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<sup>28</sup> Four years earlier, the *News & Observer* on May 29, 1884, carried a notice that a "move is in contemplation for organization of a State Firemen's Association." The objective was to have "representative men or delegates from every organized fire company, and the chief engineers and other department officers meet in Raleigh" and create such an organization.

<sup>29</sup> To promote the meeting, Mr. W. F. Bogart of Greensboro made a "tour of the whole state" and "advertised the event far and wide." *News & Observer*, Sept. 8, 1888.

	Independent Hose Company
	Phoenix Chemical Company
	Rescue Steam Fire Engine Company No. 1
Reidsville	Steam Fire Engine Company No. 1
Salem	Rough and Ready Steam Fire Engine Company
Winston	Steam Fire Engine Company No.

A committee of three, composed of Fayetteville Fire Chief J. D. McNeill, Raleigh Fire Chief T. W. Blake, and Greensboro Fire Department President C. D. Benbow, was appointed to recommend a plan of organization. They suggested the Constitution and By-Laws of the Virginia Firemen's Association be used as a basis for their own Constitution and By-Laws. It was moved their suggestion be adopted, and that the committee make such suggestions and changes that they deemed best, and report at the next meeting of the Association. It was moved and carried that the Association be called the North Carolina Fireman's Association.<sup>30</sup>

An election of permanent officers was subsequently conducted and the following were elected:

President	Statistician
C. D. Benbow, Greensboro	H. J. Elam, Greensboro
Vice-Presidents	Executive Committee
J. R. Donnell, Greensboro	C. D. Benbow
H. E. Heartt, Durham	T. W. Blake
F. H. Lumsden, Raleigh	H. E. Heartt
J. D. McNeill, Fayetteville	J. D. McNeill
F. C. Meinung, Salem	J. T. Thacker
J. F. Stultz, Reidsville	
J. T. Thacker, Winston	Legislative Committee
Recording and Corresponding Secretary	T. W. Blake
E. B. Engelhard, Raleigh	J. D. McNeill
	William Palmer
Treasurer	
F. H. Vogler, Salem	

It was moved and carried that the members now joining the Association were charter members, and each paid \$1.00 as their annual dues. Future members would pay a \$1.00 initiation fee and \$1.00 annual dues. With the new organization in place, the group adjourned to meet at

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<sup>30</sup> N.C. General Assembly, *North Carolina Private Laws*, 1889, Chapter 251.

the same time and place on September 27. The following day, the roll and minutes of the prior day were read. Motions regarding fees and annual dues were made. The Secretary was ordered to have applications printed and to forward to each fire department in the state. The Secretary was also ordered to have the proceedings printed and distributed to the state's firefighters. Raleigh was selected as the next meeting location, and the Executive Committee was empowered to name the time of the meeting. They were also instructed to select the topics for discussion. After a unanimous vote of thanks to H. J. Elam, C. D. Benbow, and others, as well as to the Fire Committee and the citizens of Greensboro, the meeting was adjourned.<sup>31</sup>

The following charter members joined the newly organized North Carolina State Firemen's Association on September 27, 1888:

Durham	Raleigh
H. E. Heartt	T. W. Blake
	F. Brannan
Fayetteville	E. B. Engelhard
J. D. McNeill	F. H. Lumsden
	Salem
Greensboro	A. B. Horney
C. D. Benbow	F. C. Meinung
A. T. Boyd	F. H. Vogler
J. R. Donnell	
J. G. Fowler	Winston
H. J. Elam	W. F. Keith
J. W. Griffith	S. A. Sink
C. F. Thomas	C. A. Snipes
R. E. Waggaman	J. T. Thacker
C. Whittington	
S. D. Wilson	

The charter of the North Carolina State Fireman's Association was ratified by the General Assembly on March 11, 1889. The purpose of the organization was "the protection and promotion of the best interests of the firemen of North Carolina, the compilation of fire statistics, the collection of information concerning the practical workings of different systems of organization, the examination and inquiring concerning the merit different kinds of apparatus in use and the improvements in the same, the cultivation of a fraternal fellowship between the different companies of the state."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> N.C. General Assembly, *North Carolina Private Laws*, 1889, Chapter 251.

<sup>32</sup> N.C. General Assembly, *North Carolina Private Laws*, 1889, Chapter 251.

The September 26 meeting was conducted in the context of a two-day fireman's tournament, which also took place. With a crowd exceeding 5,000 in number, the event opened with a "grand street pageant." Every attending fire company participated in the procession, which included "a number of elegant and costly floats." The contest in the afternoon of steam engines was won by Salem (first place) and Greensboro (second and third place). On the second day, first place in the reel race was won by the Independent Hose Company of Raleigh. They covered 150 yards in 38 seconds. They also won first place in the grab race. The foot race was won by Greensboro. There were also "voting contests," such as a flower basket competition. The day concluded with a "grand ball." Raleigh's returning fire company was met at the rail station by a crowd and a band. They were given an oyster supper by Mr. Hubbard a couple days later to celebrate.<sup>33</sup>

The first annual meeting opened in Raleigh on **August 13, 1889**. The first fire company to arrive in the Capital City was New Berne's Atlantic Company, accompanied by the New Berne band which marshaled them with "gay music." Upon their arrival, the visitors were conducted uptown and served a "splendid array of refreshments" provided by the Raleigh Fire Department. The two-day event began at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 13, with staging for a fireman's parade on Fayetteville Street at Davie Street.<sup>34</sup>

The order of the parade:

1. Platoon of Police, Maj. C. D. Heart, Chief.
2. Chief Marshal and Assistants.
3. Raleigh Cornet Band.
4. Governor's Guard.
5. Mayor City of Raleigh, Committee on Fire Department, Officers of North Carolina State Firemen's Association, Mayors and Chiefs of visiting departments in carriages.
6. Phoenix Hook and Ladder Company, Columbia, S.C.
7. Phoenix Reel Company, Columbia S.C.
8. Atlantic Steam Fire Engine Band.
9. Atlantic Steam Fire Engine Company and Reel, New Bern.
10. Winston Steam Fire Engine and Reel, New Bern.
11. Goldsboro steam fire engine and reel, Goldsboro.
12. Greensboro steam fire engine and reel.
13. Hornet Reel Company, Charlotte.
14. Dick Blacknall Hose Company with horse reel, Durham.
15. Dick Blacknall Reel Company with hand reel, Durham.

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<sup>33</sup> *News & Observer*, Sept. 27, 28, 29, 30, 1888.

<sup>34</sup> The parade was under control of the Chief Marshall, R. E. Lumsden, and Assistant Marshals C. D. Benbow of Greensboro, J. T. Thacker of Winston, Joesph E. Robinson of Goldsboro, H. A. Reams Jr. of Durham, J. S. Correll and H. F. Smith of Raleigh, and H. J. Lovick of New Berne.



16. Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, Raleigh.
17. Rescue Steam Fire Company No. 1 with steamer and two reels, Raleigh.
18. Phoenix Chemical Engine Company, Raleigh.
19. Capital Hose Company No. 3. with wagon and reel, Raleigh.
20. Independent Hose Company No. 4, Raleigh.

Marching orders were given at 10:30 a.m. and the companies proceeded up Fayetteville Street to the Mayor's office, where Mayor A. A. Thompson delivered a welcoming address.<sup>35</sup> C. D. Benbow, President of the fireman's association, responded for the firemen. Raleigh's Capital Hose Company, as represented by J. N. Holding, then presented a hose wagon as a gift to the city. W. R. Womble, Chairman of the Committee on the Fire Department, accepted the wagon.<sup>36</sup>

Planned discussion topics:

1. Should not a special tax be levied on insurance companies for the benefit of firemen, and should not the State make an appropriation? 2. What is the danger from electric wires, and how best remedy the trouble? 3. What class of men are best suited to make good firemen? 4. What are the advantages of shut-off nozzles, and relief valves on fire engines? 5. Which is the best hose-- considering strength, durability, cost and care in handling, and what style of nozzle is best suited for fire service. 6. Should there not be an officer in every city whose duty shall be to inspect all buildings and to examine into the causes of all fires? 7. How best shall firemen protect property from water damage? 8. What are the benefits of a chemical engine, and how best utilized?

*News & Observer*, April 17, 1889.

The convention contests started in the afternoon, with the steamer contests commencing at 1:30 p.m. at the corner of Fayetteville and Davie streets. Goldsboro, New Berne, Raleigh, and Winston entered the steamer contests. Goldsboro won for distance and New Berne won for quickest steam. The Championship Reel Race commenced at 3:00 p.m., with the competing

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<sup>36</sup> An advertisement noted the segregated nature of the convention, inviting "every volunteer white fire company" to attend. *News & Observer*, Apr. 20, 1889.

companies reporting to the judges at the head of Fayetteville Street. The contest was entered by Durham and two Raleigh companies, and won by Raleigh's Capital Hose Company. The day's last event, the horse reel race, took place after 5:30 p.m. at the corner of New Berne Avenue and Person Street. Durham and two Raleigh companies participated, and the contest was won by Raleigh's Rescue Reel No 5.<sup>37</sup>

"You ought to see our fire brigade in its full dress uniform. Raleigh must be wide awake next week, or our boys will not come out second best this time."

*Greensboro North State*, August 8, 1889, "The Durham Fire Department is looking forward to having a grand time [ and ] they are basing more expectations on the hand reel contest than on any other."

*Durham Globe*, August 8, 1889.

Wednesday, August 14, opened with a exhibition by Raleigh's Phoenix Chemical Company on Fayetteville Street at 9:30 a.m. This was followed by an exhibition by the Phoenix Hook and Ladder Company of Columbia, South Carolina at 11:30 a.m. and also on Fayetteville Street. The exhibitions were followed by foot, wheelbarrow, and other races. The foot races were entered by runners from Charlotte, Columbia, Durham, Greensboro, New Bern, and Raleigh and won by William Pittman of Columbia who raced 100 yards in 10 3/4 seconds. Tom Daniels from New Berne took second place with 11 seconds.<sup>38</sup>

The reel races commenced after 2:30 p.m. at the head of Fayetteville Street. Companies from Charlotte, Columbia, Durham, Greensboro, and Raleigh entered the competition. Raleigh's Capital Hose Company No. 3 won the first race in 30 seconds, requiring running 150 yards and throwing water after attaching to a hydrant. The Greensboro team won the second race in 24 seconds, requiring running 150 yards, grabbing the rope of the reel while running, carrying the hose to the hydrant, and flowing water.<sup>39</sup>

The grand finale was a foot race between first and second place winners William Pittman and Tom Daniels. The race took place at 7:00 p.m. and was won by Daniels, after which he was

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<sup>37</sup> The reel race results were later contested and in December, three people decided "1. The run of the Rescue reel, No. 1, was not properly timed, and that reel be required to make another run. 2. That the Capital Hose, No. 2, are entitled to a run. Chief Englehard is instructed to appoint a day for the race." *News & Observer*, Dec. 4, 1889.

<sup>38</sup> *News & Observer*, Dec. 4, 1889.

<sup>39</sup> *News & Observer*, Dec. 4, 1889.

"borne vicariously on the shoulders of his adoring companions up and down through the crowd while the air was rent with cheers for a half hour." There was also a hundred-dollar stake on the race. In addition to the contests, the firemen also conducted meetings during the two days and elected new officers: Raleigh Fire Chief E. B. Englehard as President, H. J. Elma of Greensboro as Secretary, and T. W. Blake from Raleigh as statistician.<sup>40</sup>

From data presented at the convention, the estimated population of cities and towns in North Carolina with organized fire departments was 135,808. The apparatus in the state consisted of 18 steamers, 13 other engines, 16 hook and ladder trucks, 51 hose carriages and wagons, 1,468 active members, 30 horses, 39,700 feet of serviceable hose, 23 non-electric alarm systems, 3 electric alarm systems, and 50 alarm boxes. The water supplies included 713 hydrants and 81 miles of pipe. These numbers were based on reports from 31 locales, though 5 reported no fire protection at all.

*News & Observer*, August 24, 1889.

Also during the tournament, the Raleigh Fire Department presented a gold medal to the State Fireman's Association. Measuring eight inches long and four inches wide, it featured a series of "bars of scrolls of different color gold, surrounding an oval centerpiece," encircled by a wreath and featuring an enameled hose-reel monogram. The \$150 medal was designed and largely made by L. A. Mahler. Named the State Championship Medal, it would be raced for under the following rules and conditions:

"None but the regular organized companies, which have been recognized as such for at least sixty days previous to the annual tournament, and whose officers are members of the North Carolina State Fireman's Association can contest for the championship medal. Companies are allowed the use of any two or four-wheeled hose cart or carriage to be drawn by hand, the same not to weigh less than five hundred pounds, and any cart or carriage weighing less than five hundred pounds shall be weighted to the required weight. Companies shall furnish weights to judges previous to race. All companies competing for prizes to be required to use a screw coupling three full threads. Distance to be run shall be two hundred yards to hydrant, attach and lay one line of hose three hundred feet from hydrant, break coupling and attach pipe ready for water, all connections to show *three full threads*. Each cart or carriage to carry not less than three hundred and fifty feet of stand 2

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<sup>40</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 1889.

1/2-inch hose, reeled in one consecutive line, all couplings made. Couplings must be broken with the hands or with the use of spanners, and couplings shall be made within twenty feet of the three hundred foot line. Plug must be closed at time of starting. When the couplers have completed the coupling they shall drop the play pipe on the ground and time shall be taken by the timekeepers when it touches the ground, and if couplers touch pip or couple after dropping same it shall be declared foul and no time shall be allowed. There shall be three judges, to be appointed by the association, who shall have entire control of the race. They shall appointed one timekeeper, who shall start and stop the watch only, and the judges shall decide the time made and assignment of it. They shall appoint all other help necessary. The 'Championship Medal' shall be competed for annually, and shall not be the property of any company until it has won it three times. Prize: Gold Medal, value \$150, won first time by Capital Hose Team, Raleigh, NC, August 13th, 1890. Presented by the Raleigh, NC, Fire Department to the NC State Fireman's Association. The medal is to be delivered to the foreman of the company winning it each year, who is to give a receipt for its delivery, in the same condition as when presented to the president of the association ten days previous to the annual tournament." <sup>41</sup>

The second annual convention opened in Charlotte on **May 21, 1890**. The Capital Hose Company competed against Greensboro for the Championship Reel Race. Though Greensboro finished with a faster time, a dispute sent the medal back to Raleigh until the two companies could re-race. Also at the convention, T. W. Blake of Raleigh was elected Statistician.<sup>42</sup> The reel contest was re-run on May 12, 1890. A tremendous crowd gathered on New Berne Avenue to watch the Rescue and Capital companies race. Their total times, of 83 seconds and 55 seconds respectively, were weighed against Durham's Dick Blackwell Hose Reel Company, which recorded its time in August of 94 seconds. Though the Capital Hose company ran faster, they failed to "show water" and were thus disqualified. Thus, the Rescue Company and their gray horse Henry were declared the winners.<sup>43</sup>

The May issue of "Fire and Water," published at 14 Cortland Street, New York, included "a superb write-up of the Raleigh Fire Department along with handsome cuts" of the Chief, Assistant Chief, and the State championship 300 yards gold medal. <sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *News & Observer*, Feb. 25, 1890.

<sup>42</sup> *News & Observer*, May 22-23, 1890.

<sup>43</sup> *News & Observer*, May 11, 12, 1890. The Rescue Company received a prize of "\$50 in gold." *News & Observer*, May 23, 1890.

<sup>44</sup> *News & Observer*, May 30, 1890 .

Rates for round trip tickets to Charlotte, by the Richmond & Danville Railroad Company. Durham, \$4.30; Goldsboro, \$5.65; Greensboro, \$3.15; Henderson, \$5.50; Raleigh, \$4.70 Selma; \$5.15; Winston-Salem, \$3.85.

*News & Observer*, April 27, 1890.

During the second annual North Carolina State Fireman's Association tournament in Charlotte on **May 21, 1890**, the Capital Hose Company was "refused the privilege of using a reducing coupling, which they intended to use in order to place them on an equal footing with other companies in making connection with the Charlotte hydrants." Early, Captain Woollcott of the Capital team wrote to Secretary McCausland of the association asking to use the attachment and the Secretary replied that there was no objection, and that the Capital team would be allowed to use it. The letter was shown to the judges, but the judges refused to allow the coupling and thus the team refused to run entirely. Another incident at the tournament involved the 300-yard champion reel race. After the gold medal, currently held by the Capital Hose Company, was awarded to Greensboro, the Raleigh company entered a protest "on account of the distancing having been 50 feet over the 300 yards when they ran for the medal." Thus judges decided that another run must be made for the medal and sent the gold award back to Raleigh until another contest could be run.<sup>45</sup>

Two days later, the following editorial appeared in the May 23, 1890 edition of the *News & Observer*:

### **Was There Ground for Complaint?**

The Greensboro Patriot has some very ungenerous and impolite things to say about the Raleigh Capital team in their contention for their rights at the contest at Charlotte. The Patriot labors under the disadvantage of not being in possession of the information which it ought to have before it tries to discuss the subject. If this is not the cast it strangely misrepresents. With regard to the champion medal reel race the Patriot says: "If the track was too long for Raleigh, it was too long for Greensboro. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

This is misleading and everybody who was on the ground knows it. As a matter of fact the distance staked off for Raleigh to run was not the distance which Greensboro ran and which Charlotte ran.

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<sup>45</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 21, 23, 1890.

We ask the Patriot to answer these questions:

1. Was not Raleigh the first town to run?
2. When Raleigh ran and laid its hose was it not found that the hose was not to cover the distance marked off?
3. Did not Raleigh then put in a protest that their hose was the proper length, and that the distance measured was in excess of what it should be ?
4. Was not a measurement then made and was it not discovered that the distance was fifty feet over the three hundred yards which it should have been?
5. Was not the distance then corrected and the fifty feet knocked off, and did not Greensboro make the three hundred yard run which was fifty feet less than Raleigh ran?

Let the Patriot answer these questions fairly and squarely. If the above is found to be true, did not Raleigh have a right to complain? She made the run, and finding that the hose was not long enough, one of the men ran back to see if it was stretched the whole length. In the meantime a foul was called and the men halted. After this delay they decided to attach the nozzle anyhow, not knowing what the trouble was, and then they were awarded 57 3/4 seconds. That they could have made it in far less time if there had been no inexcusable bungling in the measurement nobody is unreasonable enough to gainsay. The Patriot says the Capitals "seeing they were likely to be beaten began kicking as usual. The judges offered them another trial and Greensboro and the other companies made no objection, but they declined." Will the Patriot explain why the judges offered Raleigh another run? For no reason except that they knew that the first run was unfair to them. In addition to this any fireman knows that the team was exhausted after the first run and could not have done itself justice on a second run. A three hundred yards run is no child's play and they would have been foolish to run it a second time.

It may be next in order for the Patriot to explain the remarkable conduct of the judges since it has presumed to denominate the Raleigh boys as "Kickers." The judges declared the race off and said it must be run again. Why did the judges declare the race off? Certainly for good reason. And the race was off. There was no race that counted. The next morning there were no teams to run. Greensboro said it would not run again as it had on the medal. Was not this a refusal to acquiesce in the decision of the judges. But the judges then assumed the very arbitrary prerogative of awarding the medal to Greensboro. What power had the judges to do this after having declared that there had been a race? they placed themselves in a ridiculous attitude, and cannot sustain their action. The Raleigh boys claim the champion medal, and they will hold it till there is a fair contest for it.

With regard to the ruling out of the Capitals on the hundred and fifty yard race in the morning on the ground of their using an adjusting coupling, the unreasonableness of that is too palpable for comment. The use of the coupling was the same thing as if they had carried their hose to Charlotte. They left the hose here in order that the city might not be deprived of it in case of a fire, having first been assured by the secretary of the association that there would be no objection.

Also in 1890, a meeting of the state's Fire Chiefs was conducted in Greensboro on November 12. Railroads throughout the state pledged a free pass to the Fire Chief from every town in the state.<sup>46</sup> In 1891, the North Carolina Firemen's Relief Fund was created. The fund, created to aid disabled firemen, was enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly on March 9. An amount of \$2,500 was hereby appropriated annually, and paid to the Treasurer of the State Firemen's Association. The fund was for aiding firemen "who may be injured or rendered sick by disease contracted in the actual discharged of duty as fireman," as well to help widows, children, and other dependents. The provisions of the fund applied to "any firemen who is a member of a regularly organized fire company."<sup>47</sup>

On **August 25, 1891**, the third annual convention opened in Durham. Among the delegates attending from Raleigh included R. E. Lumsden and T. W. Blake from the Rescue Company; William Woollcott and L. A. Mahler from the Capital Hose Company; Miles Goodwin, Jr. and J. H. Parham from the W. R. Womble Hook and Ladder Company. Chief Engelhard and Assistant Chief Ferrell also attended along with association President Howard Heartt, also from Raleigh. For others attending, the August 21 edition of the *News & Observer* noted that they could leave on the 8:15 a.m. train and return at 10:40 p.m. The newspaper encouraged readers to "go with the boys."

The next day's newspaper regrettably reported that the Capital Hose Team was "somewhat crippled," with slack-puller J. Floyd Brown having injured his knee some weeks ago. Walter Woollcott, the old captain and "coupling breaker," had been away on business for nearly a month. Thus, their two positions were filled with "less experienced men." The hose company nonetheless won the championship three-hundred yard reel race. The Rescue Steam Fire Engine Company also competed in steamer contests.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *News & Observer*, Oct. 30, 1890.

<sup>47</sup> N.C. General Assembly, *Laws of North Carolina*, Session 1891, Chapter 468. Fire duty was defined as "service in the fire department from the time of the fire alarm until the members are dismissed by the company officers at roll-call." It also included "actual duty connected with the fire department" when directed "by the officer in charge."

<sup>48</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 18, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 1981.

#### Rates to the Firemen's Tournament in Durham

For the above occasion, the Richmond & Danville Railroad will sell tickets to Durham and return at the following rates from points name, tickets on sale August 24th, 25th, and 26th, limited returning August 29th: Charlotte, \$4.30; Greensboro, \$2.10; Winston-Salem, \$2.85; Henderson, \$1.80; Raleigh, \$1.20; Selma, \$2.10; Goldsboro, \$2.60. Rates from intermediate points in same proportion.

August 18, 1891 *News & Observer*

On **July 13, 1892**, the convention opened in Asheville. Rescue Company Foreman R. E. Lumsden was the only delegate from the city who attended the three-day event. The first two days consisted of business meetings, and the third day was devoted to contests.<sup>49</sup>

On **July 26, 1893**, the convention opened in Wilmington. Some 20 companies were members of the association, with nearly all present. Among the business discussed on the first day was a report by the treasurer, who noted \$1,116 had been paid during the year to disabled firemen. The annual tournament was not held, however, as the hosting fire department found it "quite impossible" to raise the necessary funds. The first day was devoted "entirely to the business of the association." On the second day, the Wilmington Fire Department took their visitors on a excursion to Carolina Beach.<sup>50</sup>

On **August 29, 1894**, the convention opened in Winston. The tournament opened at 3:30 p.m. on August 30 with a steamer contest entered by Greensboro, New Berne, Salem, Wilmington, and Winston No. 1 and Winston No. 2.<sup>51</sup>

On **August 7, 1895**, the convention opened in New Bern. Raleigh firemen arrived Tuesday night, August 6. Other firefighters from Greensboro, Salisbury, and Winston arrived with bruises and a few more serious injuries after their train rear-ended a slower-moving freight on a sharp curve at Haw River. The collision occurred on 10:00 a.m. on August 6. Two of the three occupants of the freight train's caboose were seriously injured, one with life-threatening injuries. The contests featured thirteen prizes, ranging from \$25 to \$100. No teams from Raleigh competed, however. The four-day event closed with a steamer excursion down the Neuse River. The five-hour trip to the Pamlico Sound included a brass band. The convention was also attended by the President of the state colored fireman's association.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *News & Observer*, Apr. 6, June 19, July 14, 1892.

<sup>50</sup> *News & Observer*, July 22, 25, 1893.

<sup>51</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 30, 31, Sept. 1, 1894.

<sup>52</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1895. The business session of the first day lasted until 11:30 p.m.!



On **August 4, 1897**, the convention opened in Fayetteville. The president of the association noted in a July 29 letter to the *News & Observer* that "It is with much regret that I hear that our capital city will not be represented in our tournament. Everybody else will be here." Though none of Raleigh's fire companies attended, the August 4 newspaper noted that "Messrs. J. N. McRary, Alf. Thompson, Jr., Stanley Faison, W. S. Moye, and T. P. Lumsden" attended as representatives. The paper also noted the passing of a large delegation of firemen from Durham passing Raleigh on August 3, and that those from Greensboro and Winston "went down the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley road." The number of white fire companies in the state that year numbered 59. No teams from Raleigh competed in the contests, which were attended by 10,000 people. The tournament included interstate contests with companies from South Carolina. Invitations were also extended to fire companies of Virginia. Association President James McNeil, who was also the Fayetteville Fire Chief, held a reception at his resident for 500 visiting firemen.<sup>53</sup>

On **July 27, 1898**, the convention opened in Goldsboro. Among the activities including passing of a resolution thanking the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line railroads for free transportation of apparatus and denouncing the Southern Railway for refusing free transportation. The July 29 edition of the *News & Observer* noted "several members of the association were outspoken" in this matter.<sup>54</sup> Raleigh's Rescue Company was represented by Frank Brenig and Will Moye. The company would have sent full equipment and made a splendid show, except they would have had to pay freight. The railroads refused to aid them. The association passed resolutions thanking the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line for the free transportation, while denouncing the Southern Railway for refusing to providing free passage.<sup>55</sup>

On **August 2, 1899**, the convention opened in Greensboro. The Capital Hose, Hook and Ladder, and Rescue Steam Engine companies attended, but did not compete in contests. Other participants included companies from Asheville, Concord, Durham, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Henderson, New Bern, Wilmington, Wilson, and Winston. The event lasted four days; the tournament offered 19 prizes. During the convention, the association voted to allow members of water works companies to join.<sup>56</sup>

On **July 11, 1900**, the convention opened in Wilmington. Between 400 and 500 firefighters were estimated to be attending, and between 12,000 and 15,000 visitors had been drawn to the coastal city. The four-day event opened on a Tuesday. Events included a street parade on the second day and a floral parade on the third day. Attending fire companies included:

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<sup>53</sup> *News & Observer*, July 29, Aug. 4, 5, 6, 1897.

<sup>54</sup> *News & Observer*, July 28, 29, 1898.

<sup>55</sup> *Time-Visitor*, July 27, 1898.

<sup>56</sup> *News & Observer*, July 20, Aug. 3, 4, 5, 1899.

Atlantic Junior Fire Company (New Bern)  
 Atlantic Steam Fire Engine Company (New Bern)  
 Chicora Fire Engine Company (Fayetteville)  
 Eagle Hose Company No. 4 (Salem)  
 Eclipse Fire Company (Goldsboro)  
 Button Fire Company No. 1 (New Bern)  
 Hook and Ladder Company (Asheville)  
 Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 (Charlotte)  
 Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 (Wilmington)  
 Hose and Hand Reel Company (Concord)  
 Hose Company No. 1 (Durham)  
 Hose Company No. 1 (Fayetteville)  
 Hose Company No. 2 (Durham)  
 Hose Company No. 2 (Wilmington)  
 Hose Company No. 2 (Wilson)  
 Independent Steam Fire Engine Company No. 1 (Columbia, S.C.)  
 Monaghan Hose Company No. 2 (Sumter, S.C.)  
 Nelson Hose Company (Henderson)  
 Palmetto Fire Company (Columbia S.C.)  
 Palmetto Fire Company No. 2 (Columbia, S.C.)  
 Pioneer Fire Company No. 2 (Charlotte)  
 Southern Hose Company No. 1 (Spencer)  
 Southside Hose Company (Greensboro)  
 Steam Fire Engine Company No. 1 (Goldsboro)  
 Steamer Company No. 2 (Winston)  
 Though Raleigh sent delegates, but teams attended to compete.<sup>57</sup>

On **July 24, 1901**, the convention opened in Charlotte. Raleigh again sent delegates, but no teams to compete. The attending delegates were W. W. Parrish and J. A. Pugh from the Hook and Ladder Company, Burke Parker and Henry Bunch from the Capital Hose Company, and R. E. Lumsden and J. N. McRary of the Rescue Company. Some half-dozen other members also attended. During the horse hose wagon races on the first day, Asheville fireman Henry Coffee fell from the apparatus. He sustained internal injuries and was taken to a private hospital. Initially thought fatally injured, his prognosis improved with each passing day. He sustained several broken ribs and a ruptured blood vessel.<sup>58</sup>

On **July 23, 1902**, the convention opened in Raleigh. Over thirty-two fire companies participated in the tournament, from cities and towns including Burlington, Charlotte, Concord,

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<sup>57</sup> *News & Observer*, July 10, 12, 13, 14, 1900.

<sup>58</sup> *News & Observer*, July, 25, 26, 27, 1901.

Durham, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Goldsboro, Greensboro, Henderson, High Point, New Bern, Rocky Mount, Salisbury, Salem, Southern Pines, Spencer, Washington, Wilson, and Winston. Raleigh's Hook and Ladder Company broke a "world's record" in their contest, competing against Greensboro. The Capital Hose Company also broke a "world's record," competing against Charlotte, Concord, Raleigh's Rescue Hose Company, Salem, Spencer, and Tarboro. The Capital Hose Company also won the Championship Reel Race after all other companies failed to "make a proper connection."<sup>59</sup> The tournament also marked the last public appearance of the Rescue Company's steam fire engine. At the corner of Fayetteville and Davie Streets, company members competed in the "long distance" contest.<sup>60</sup>

After the Raleigh firefighters returned, a barbecue was held on August 14 at the State Fair building to commemorate the victories of the Capital and Hook and Ladder companies. Over 300 people were present, including the Rescue, Capital, and Hook and Ladder companies as well as state, county, and city officers and other distinguished citizens. The menu consisted of pig, chicken, and other meats, Brunswick stew, potato salad, tomatoes, and other trimmings. Ice-cold water, "huge tubs of lemonade," and other liquid refreshments were present. Finally, the "cigars in profusion" topped off the dinner. Some speeches were made and some sports events engaged in, included ball games and a race between two horses.<sup>61</sup>

On **August 12, 1903**, the convention opened in Durham. The Capital Hose Company again broke a "world's record," winning the Championship Reel Race. Also competing was a junior reel team.<sup>62</sup> To fund the attendance of the junior team, a lawn party was held at the Catholic parsonage on July 27. Miss Emma Roberts was voted "most popular young lady" at the event and received a rocking chair donated by Royall & Borden. Gordon Harris was voted "most popular fireman" and received a box of cigars from Mr. L. B. Peagram. The Southern Air Line Railroad provided lights and receipts totaled \$25.00 after expenses.<sup>63</sup>

On **August 2, 1904**, the convention opened in Salisbury. The Capital Hose Company won the horse hose wagon race, competing against Durham, Fayetteville, and Goldsboro. Upon returning to Raleigh, the Acting Fire Chief and others met the wagon which was "bedecked with streaming colors." Also at that year's convention, the Association's Statistician presented the first-ever compiled summary of companies belonging to the organization:<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *News & Observer*, July 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 1902.

<sup>60</sup> Raleigh Fire Department, *A Historical Sketch*.

<sup>61</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 1902.

<sup>62</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 11, 12, 13, 14, 1903.

<sup>63</sup> *News & Observer*, July 29, 1903.

<sup>64</sup> *News & Observer*, July 31, Aug. 4, 6, 1904.

1904

Total white companies	67	Total hand hose reels	58
Total colored	13	Total horse hose wagons	42
Total white firemen	1,022	Total chemical engines in use	4
Total steam fire engines	18	Total feet of hose in use	67,850
Total horse hook and ladder trucks	17	Total value of real estate and apparatus used for fire purposes	\$391,811
Total hand hook and ladder trucks	10		

All cities and towns presented by association have water works, except Kinston, where one is being constructed. Water pressure in the state ranges from 35 to 150 pounds.

On **July 19, 1905**, the convention opened in Winston. The Hook and Ladder Company won their eponymous contest, competing against Asheville. The first-place prize was \$125, with the runners-up getting \$75. The Capital Hose and Rescue Hose companies also competed in contests. The association's membership consisted of 56 fire companies from 26 cities and towns.<sup>65</sup>

On **July 10, 1906**, the convention opened in Asheville. The Rescue Hose Company won the horse hose wagon contest and broke a "world's record," competing against Asheville, Durham, Goldsboro, Kinston, Raleigh's Capital Hose Company, and Statesville. After the contest, Durham's Fire Chief announced that they would withdraw from the association on account of an alleged unfair decision by the judges. As reported in the July 13 edition of the *News & Observer*, the "Durham boys" charged that Rescue Hose Company member Gordon Harris "yanked back the hose" from Durham's coupler, thus adding several seconds to the tobacco town's time. The judges promptly voted to expel Harris, but could not change the Durham fire company's time. Thus, unable to accept the time awarded by the judges, Chief Maddry expressed that the company would withdraw from the organization.<sup>66</sup>

On Friday afternoon, July 13, Raleigh's firefighters returned home. Awaiting them at Union Depot were the Mayor, the Board of Alderman, city officers, and several hundred citizens including "scores of beautiful women" as a newspaper noted. The entire fire department and all its apparatus was also at the depot and the "jolly boys" were given a ride to Metropolitan Hall, where a banquet was awaiting. Acting Fire Chief Bob Haines presided over the affair, while the Mayor and Alderman and Fire Committee Chairman Edward Hugh Lee made speeches. Others

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<sup>65</sup> *News & Observer*, July 18, 19, 20, 21, 1905.

<sup>66</sup> *News & Observer*, July 11, 12, 13, 14, 1906.

spoke and gave speeches and the winning drivers of both the Rescue and Hook and Ladder companies were "rushed to the stage" for applause and ovations. The matter of Gordon Harris was also discussed, noting that the Rescue Company member was not expelled as originally reported. Harris explained that his reported interference was incorrect and the judges agreed and allowed his continued participation in events that day.<sup>67</sup>

On **August 6, 1907**, the twentieth annual convention opened in Wilmington. The L. A. Mahler Steam Fire Engine Company competed in the steamer contests and won the long-distance challenge competing against Elizabeth City but not Goldsboro and New Bern, both of whom suffered engine problems after the quick-steaming contest.<sup>68</sup>

On **June 17, 1908**, the convention opened again in Wilmington. Early arrivals included Chief S. G. Bernard and 21 men from Asheville, Chief J. W. Thurman and a team from Rocky Mount, Chief J. Frank Muldry and 14 men from Durham, Chief Robert Thomas and 18 men from Tarboro, Captain E. H. Brown and 10 men from Henderson, and the Capital Hose, Rescue Hose, and Hook & Ladder teams from Raleigh. The convention opened at 11 a.m. at the Court House with an address by Mayor William E. Springer. Business sessions were conducted through the evening. The last order of that day was the election of officers. A parade opened the second day, followed by "engine contests at the foot of Market Street" and the horse hose races. Between 8,000 and 10,000 people watched the contests that day.

Competing fire companies on the second day included Asheville, Durham, Goldsboro, Henderson, High Point, Kinston, New Bern, Raleigh, Rocky Mount, Sanford, and Wilmington. Other companies competing over the next days included Chapel Hill, Graham, Monroe, Salem, Salisbury, and Tarboro. In the On the last day of the tournament, Raleigh's Rescue Hose Company "took first money" in the interstate horse hose races with a time of 30 seconds and beating Asheville No. 1 (35 seconds), Asheville No. 2 (33 seconds), Durham No. 1 (35 4-5 seconds), Durham No. 2 (34 seconds), Goldsboro Eclipse (31 1-5 seconds), New Bern Atlantic (32 seconds), and New Bern No. 1 (33 4-5 seconds). Also on the last day, the hand reel races were repeated after Raleigh's Capital Hose and Rocky Mount tied on the day before, with second place times of 32 seconds. Goldsboro won first place in the original race, and Raleigh won second place, the second time.<sup>69</sup>

On **July 6, 1909**, the annual convention opened in Asheville at "the auditorium." Rev. R. F. Campbell of Asheville did the invocation. He was followed by President James D. McNeill, who introduced "Corporation Counsel S. G. Bernard, of Asheville, former chief of the Asheville Fire Department, who, in a few but well chosen words, extended to the firemen of North Carolina a hearty welcome on behalf of the fireman of Asheville, and all the people." He received a "round

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<sup>67</sup> *News & Observer*, July 11, 12, 13, 14, 1906.

<sup>68</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 1907.

<sup>69</sup> *News & Observer*, June 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 1908.

of applause" from his audience. Following Mr. Bernard, ten minutes were spent with "firemen from different sections and all sections of North Carolina" telling the former Fire Chief "what they thought of Asheville and the welcome and hospitality" that "the town accords." Respondents included Chief Lark of Southern Pines, Mayor Grier of Statevilles, and Mr. Douglas of Greensboro. The chairman introduced Insurance Commissioner Young, who "spoke for thirty minutes with reference to the building inspection laws and the firemens' relief fund." Regarding the fund, he said "several towns in the State had not complied with the law in the matter and that as a result they were denied the benefits." He also noted that several towns failed to comply with the building inspection law and "lost between \$10,000 and \$12,000." His "straightforward, heart-to-heart talk" was "listened to with close attention and keen interest." The afternoon session involved "the question of establishing a fire insurance company" and the firemen "wrestled with the proposition for about two hours, without coming to any decision." That evening, officers were elected and both Charlotte and New Bern requested their cities for the next convention.<sup>70</sup>

The second day of the convention opened with a parade, which "was pulled off amid bursts of sunshine and torrents of rain. The boys did not seem to mind the rain and a large crowd gathered along the streets, standing in the rain waiting for the parade." It was led by former Chief Bernard along with the First Regiment band. Starting at the corner of Montford Avenue, the band was followed by "reel teams with the racing squads in white duck trousers," horse-drawn hose wagons, the New Bern steam engine, and the entire Asheville Fire Department. Following the parade, the tournament started. Raleigh's Capital Hose Company won first place in the reel race and setting a new "world's record" of 27 1-5 seconds. The previous record of 28 seconds was won by Raleigh's Rescue Hose Company in Asheville in 1906.

Wrote the *News Observer* "the reducing of the record by the Capital City was the signal for wild enthusiasm on the part of members of the company and their friends and notwithstanding a heavy downpour of rain; regardless of personal comfort or discomfort, the boys of the Capital City literally did an Indian war dance on the course after the race, and in the presence of probably 5,000 spectators." The races were "pulled off in a torrential rain," starting with a delay after the scheduled start time of 2:30 p.m. On the third day, rain postponed the hand reel and grab reel races until the afternoon. The interstate hand reel and grab reel races were moved to the morning of the fourth day, which also featured the interstate horse hose race. On that day, "the weather was ideal and several thousand people gathered on South Side Avenue" to watch the races.

Competing fire companies included Asheville, Biltmore, Chapel Hill, Hickory, Morganton, New Bern, Raleigh, Salem, Salisbury, Spencer, and Statesville. During the horse hose wagon

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<sup>70</sup> *News & Observer*, July 6, 7, 10, 13, 1909.

race, "a bridge across a small stream on which many people were standing gave way." Though they fell about 18 feet, "nothing other than a wetting resulted."<sup>71</sup>

### The Firemen Return

#### Greeted by Mayor Wynne and Justice Stronach - Receive Great Applause

The members of the Raleigh fire department who attended the tournament at Asheville, returned to the city yesterday afternoon at 7:15 o'clock and were greeted at the [railroad] station by Fire Chief Lumsden, Mayor Wynne and Justice Stronach. The young men were in good spirits, rejoicing over their excellent records made in the "Mountain City."

Those of the Capital Hose who returned yesterday afternoon were: Fred Hilker, Charles Farmer, Gilbert Billings, Hubert Pulley, Phil Utley, Bud Pool, Celly Pool, and Henry Carver; and of the Rescue: Pete Harris, Pete Hinnant, Walker Simpson, Pap Harris, Seymour Doolittle, Peter Welch, Frank King.

The young men were accompanied by Captain James D. McNeill, of Fayetteville, president of the State Firemen's Association, who, in company with Police Justice Stronach, Mayor Wynne and Chief Lumsden, rode up Martin Street to Fayetteville [Street], thence to the Capital Hose fire house, in an auto, followed by the Capital Hose, Rescue and Hook and Ladder wagons.

As the victorious teams made their way up Fayetteville Street, they were greeted with cheers from all sides.

It will be remembered that on Thursday the Capital Hose won first money in the State race, making the time in 27 1-5 and that the Rescue won third money in the Inter-State race on Friday, making the time in 27 4-5, while the Capital Hose made the time in 28 seconds flat.

July 13, 1909 *News & Observer*

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<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, *Raleigh Times*, July 7, 1909. The *Raleigh Times* reported that the Rescue Hose Company won first place in the horse hose race, both setting a new "world's record" of 26 seconds and lowering the record of 28 seconds they previously set in Asheville in 1906. "The Rescue Company is a volunteer organization of Raleigh and among its members are some of the best fire fighters in the south. Mr. Gordon Harris, foreman of the company, has been the buttman in both of these record-breaking runs, while today M.r Walter A. Simpson was the coupling breaker. J. A. Hinnant drove the fine black gelding "Bill" down the track in the remarkably fast time. Three regular time-keepers with standard stop watches timed the races, and there will be no trouble in declaring this to be the world's record." Raleigh's Capital Hose Company, however, "had the misfortune to blow off at the hydrant." They added "they also had a fast team and would have made them all hustle but for their misfortune."

On **July 28, 1910**, the convention opened in New Bern. The Capital Hose and Rescue Hose companies competed in contests, while the Hook and Ladder Company was represented by delegates only. The four-day event was attended by representatives from 76 of the 100 member fire companies. Sessions were held in the "new Masonic opera house." Severe weather delayed the contests until third day. The Capital Hose team tied with Kinston for third place in the morning horse hose wagon race, while the Rescue Hose team won fifth prize. The Capital Hose team was comprised of Captain C. D. Farmer and Bud Poole, Mechie Billings, Pallie Mangum, Fred Hilker, Alex Kreth, and Ed Pulley. The Rescue Hose team was comprised of Captain C. T. Hinnant, "Pete" Hinnant, A. A. Doolittle, E. S. Doolittle, W. N. Fowler, "Pete" Harris, and P. G. Welsh. In the second day of contests, the Rescue Company won third place in the Interstate horse hose wagon races. Kinston won first place and Asheville was second. Other competing teams were from High Point, Sanford, Statesville, and Raleigh's Capital Hose Company.<sup>72</sup>

On **May 16, 1911**, the convention opened in Charlotte. The four-day event opened on a Tuesday, with President James D. McNeil calling the convention to order at the courthouse. Business sessions were held that day. The second day opened with a "grand fireman's parade", and then an engine contest in front of the U. S. Mint. Afternoon activities consisted of hand reel, grab reel, and hook and ladder contests. The third day opened with a horse hose wagon contest. The Capital Hose Company competed, and finished just one-fifth of a second shorter than the first-place New Bern team. After noon activities included the interstate hand reel and grab reel contests. That evening featured a drum and bugle corps exhibition, a parade of Native American Indians, and amusements at a park. The fourth day opened with an Interstate horse hook and ladder, and horse hose wagon contest. The convention ended after the morning contests. Competing teams for the four days included firefighters from Asheville, Burlington, Charlotte, Concord, Hickory, New Bern, Raleigh, Salem, Salisbury, Sanford, Spencer, Statesville, and Tarboro.<sup>73</sup>

## North Carolina Colored Volunteer Fireman's Association

A second group of the state's firefighters was organized in **1890**<sup>74</sup>. Originally named the North Carolina State Volunteer Fireman's Association, the group was later known as the North Carolina Colored Volunteer Fireman's Association<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> *News & Observer*, July 28, 29, 30, 1910.

<sup>73</sup> *News & Observer*, Mar. 26, May 17, 18, 19, 20, 1911.

<sup>74</sup> *Greensboro North State*, Sep. 18, 1980.

<sup>75</sup> Milligan, Chuck. Early Black Firefighters of North Carolina, Charlotte, web site, <http://legeros.com/history/ebf>. An earlier version of the organization may have existed. On May 18, 1881, the *News & Observer* printed notice of a State Convention of Colored Firemen meeting in Tarboro on June 15, 1881. It requested all officers and members attend.



Like the North Carolina State Fireman's Association, they also conducted annual conventions and tournaments around the state. A "colored fireman's tournament" was held in Raleigh on **August 7, 1888**. Companies from Charlotte (Neptune) and Chester, S.C. (Lincoln) joined Raleigh's Victor Company. The Neptunes and the Victors competed in a reel race and a grab race. Charlotte won both, with Raleigh's team disqualified in the first contest due to their turning on the water before the hose had been correctly connected with the hydrant. For the foot race, all three companies competed. First place went to Tom Terrell of the Victors.<sup>76</sup>

The charter of the North Carolina State Volunteer Fireman's Association was ratified by the General Assembly on **February 13, 1891**. The trustees were listed as William M. Logan, Stephen J. Hawkins, John W. Patterson, Frank Milligan, John N. McDuggie, Elisah Gause, John Smith, D. W. McCain, Peyton H. Smith, Thomas B. Burghes, Lewis McMillian, and William Croom. The charter declared that the officers of the association would consist of a President, two Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, and a board of nine Directors.<sup>77</sup>

On **July 15, 1891**, the convention opened in Wilmington at City Hall at 2:00 p.m. John H. Webber, of the city's Phoenix Fire Company, was President, and Louis McMillian, also a member of the Phoenix Fire Company, was Secretary. He was assisted by Elisha Gause. Delegates from Charlotte, Durham, Salisbury, and Wilmington provided reports, along with the association officers. Other routine business was transacted and officers were elected: President S. B. Burton, Vice-President James Pemberton, Recording Secretary J. A. Waugh, Financial Secretary J. A. Fox, Treasurer J. H. Webber, Chaplain J. T. Smith, and Chief Marshall Manuel Nichols.<sup>78</sup>

On **August 9, 1892**, the third-annual convention opened in Raleigh. Hosted by the Victor Fire Company, the visiting companies included the Cape Fear Steam Fire Company of Wilmington, the Excelsior Hose Company No. 2 of Greensboro, the Enterprise Hose Company of Henderson, the Eclipse Hose Company of Greensboro, and the Dread Not Hose Company of Charlotte. On the first day of the two-day event, all visiting companies met at 9:00 a.m. at "firemen's headquarters" on Wilmington Street, and formed a procession. They marched to City Hall, where they formally welcomed at noon at Metropolitan Hall by Alderman J. E. Pogue, as the Mayor was absent. His invocation was followed by Chief Englehard's address on behalf of the Victor Company. The business meeting was called to order by W. M. Logan, acting as President. "Devotional exercises" were performed by Raleigh's J. H. Jones. Two committees were formed, a "Committee on Credentials" and a committee to "wait on the Legislature with a view to obtaining aid from the State for the firemen of North Carolina." Other actions including the appointing of a nine-member board of directors, and electing officers: President W. M.

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<sup>76</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 9, 1888.

<sup>77</sup> N.C. General Assembly, *North Carolina Private Laws*, 1891, chapter 53, p780.

<sup>78</sup> *Messenger*, July 16, 1891.

Logan (Greensboro), Secretary J. H. Johnson (Charlotte), Treasurer J. W. Patterson (Greensboro), and Chaplain J. H. Jones (Raleigh). Later that day, the Wilmington steamer company demonstrated their steamer in front of the Post Office. They threw "a fine stream high above that building." Competition events were spread over two days and included steamer contests on the first day and assorted races on the second. On the night of the first day, a Sylvester Dibble of Washington led a fireman's drill at the fireman's hall. Music for the occasion was provided by the Greensboro band. The Victor Company won the 150-yard race on the second day and broke the tournament's state record with 29 3-5 seconds. Other races on the second day consisted of a grab race, a 100-yard foot race, a potato race, and a wheelbarrow race. All of the other races were won by the Greensboro fire company, or one of its members.<sup>79</sup>

On **August 9, 1893**, the convention opened in Charlotte. The Victor Company attended the two-day event. Business was conducted the first day, and contests were held the second. After a "grand parade," the member assembled in the auditorium and the meeting was called to order by the Secretary of Charlotte's Dreadnaught Fire Company. He "introduced His Honor, Mayor Brevard, who delivered an address of welcome to the visiting firemen, adding that if there was anything he could do to help them enjoy themselves he would be glad to do it." In response, President W. M. Logan "called the attention of the association to the great importance of the meeting and hoped that each company would have an eye single to the interest of the State Volunteer Firemen's Association." Speeches were also made by "various visiting members." On the afternoon of the second day, the tournament started at 4:00 p.m. Tryon Street served as the "race course" and it was "packed with people both white and black." Five companies competed in three races, each company running three times: Raleigh, Henderson, Greensboro, and the Neptunes and Dreadnaughts of Charlotte.<sup>80</sup>

Reel Race

	Plug	Water
Greensboro	20	32 3/4
Raleigh	20 3/4	33
Henderson	22 1/2	37 1/2
Neptunes	24	39
Dreadnaughts	24	00

First prize, \$15, won by Greensboro. Second prize, \$5, by Raleigh.

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<sup>79</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 2, 10, 11, 1892. Badges were available to arriving members from Agent R.L. Smith on their arrival in Raleigh, and cost 10 and 20 cents each. The badge permitted entrance into the fireman's hall at night.

<sup>80</sup> *News & Observer*, July 6, Aug. 9, 10, 1893. *Charlotte Daily Observer*, Aug. 10, 1893.

### Grab Race

	Plug	Water
Raleigh	16 1/2	22
Neptunes	17	24 1/2
Greensboro	17	00
Dreadnaughts	17 3/4	00
Henderson	2	00

First prize won by Raleigh, second by Neptunes.

### Dry Race

	Plug	Water
Neptunes	14 1/2	19 1/2
Greensboro	14	20 1/2
Dreadnaughts	14 1/2	21 1/2
Raleigh	15	00
Henderson	20	00

On **August 14, 1894**, the convention opened in Durham, attended by about 100 firefighters. In addition to 15 firemen from Raleigh, other attending companies included the Cape Fear and Phoenix companies of Wilmington; hook and ladder companies from Charlotte, New Bern, Monroe, and Wilson; and hose and reel companies from Concord, Henderson, Salisbury, and Washington. At 10:30 a.m. on the first day, a "procession was formed on Mangum street, whence it proceeded down Main street and then through the city." The parade included several bands and S. Dibrelle of Washington served as Chief Marshall. On the second day, "only four companies so fitted out as to make active contests for the prizes." Greensboro, Henderson, Raleigh, and Salisbury companies competed. The Victor Company tied with Greensboro for the best time in the 150-yard hand-reel race, and won first-place in the 100-yard grab race. During their return to the Capitol City, William Haywood fell from the train while it was moving near the Method community. The train was stopped and backed, and the injured man was brought back on board. No bones were reportedly broken.<sup>81</sup>

On **August 13, 1895**, the convention opened in Henderson. Sixteen fire companies were represented from Charlotte, Concord, Durham, Greensboro, Henderson, Monroe, New Bern, Raleigh, Salisbury, Warrenton, Washington, Wilmington, Wilson, and Winston:

Cape Fear, Wilmington  
Concord Hook and Ladder  
Dread Naughts, Charlotte

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<sup>81</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 17, 1894.

Eclipse, Greensboro  
Enterprise, Henderson  
Excelsior, Durham  
Excelsior, Greensboro  
Henderson Hook and Ladder  
Monroe Hook and Ladder  
Neptune, Charlotte  
New Berne Hook and Ladder  
Phoenix Hose, Wilmington  
Plummer Hook and Ladder, Warrenton  
Red Hot, Wilson  
Salisbury Hose Reel  
Victor, Raleigh  
Washington Hook and Ladder  
Winston Hook and Ladder<sup>82</sup>

Attendees assembled in Burwell Hall at the opening. After their business was done, the Cape Fear Fire Company of Wilmington exhibited their steamer. "President V. Howe [of the Cape Fear] displayed the skill of his company by throwing water to the height of nearly 250 feet from the steamer." The contests took place late the next day, but only four companies participated: Raleigh, Henderson, Wilson, and Wilmington's steamer company. Raleigh's Victor Company won first place in the reel race and grab reel race.<sup>83</sup>

In **August 11, 1896**, the convention opened in Wilson. The Victor Company attended along with fire companies from Charlotte, Concord, Durham, Greensboro, Henderson, Monroe, New Bern, Salisbury, Warrenton, Washington, Wilson, and Winston. At noon, the association assembled at the courthouse and conducted their regular business after "welcome addresses." On the second day, "the morning was taken up in arranging the schedule of races and transacting the business relating to the management of the association during the ensuing year." The tournaments took place that evening, though few of the companies participated due to a lack of apparatus. The Enterprise Company No. 2 of Henderson won the hand reel race and the grab reel race. A member of that fire company also won the running race. The Winston Hook and Ladder Company won that contest. Tournament officials included Time keeper A. P. Branch, Judge

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<sup>82</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 14, 1895. *Henderson Gold Leaf*, Aug. 15, 22, 1895. Prior to their attending, Victor Company Foreman James H. Jones presented a "handsome badge" to each member of the company. It was described as "one of the handsomest ever used in the state," and featured Jones' name and picture.

<sup>83</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 14, 1895. *Henderson Gold Leaf*, Aug. 15, 22, 1895. Prior to their attending, Victor Company Foreman James H. Jones presented a "handsome badge" to each member of the company. It was described as "one of the handsomest ever used in the state," and featured Jones' name and picture "on enamel."

Doane Herring of the Wilson Fire Department, and Judge W. H. Revis of the Henderson Fire Department.<sup>84</sup>

In **August 11, 1897**, the convention opened in Winston. After several days of practice, the Victor Company attended along with delegates and fire companies from Charlotte, Concord, Durham, Greensboro, Henderson, Rocky Mount, Salisbury, Statesville, Washington, Wilson, and Wilmington. The event opened with a street parade featuring "steam engines, hook and ladder [trucks], hand trucks and hose trucks, horse hose wagons, hand reels, hydraulic hand trucks, and other modern equipment." The fire company members wore full uniforms and paraded in formation. The annual tournament took place on the second day and the Victor Company won first prize in the grab race. Other winners: Winston won the long-distance contest for engines, Henderson won the hose reel race, Winston won the hook and ladder contest, and Jim Bailey of Winston won the individual foot race of 100 yards. Among the officers elected was Reverend R. H. W. Leak of Raleigh, as Chaplain. Charlotte was selected as the location of the **1898** convention.<sup>85</sup>

On **August 9, 1899**, the convention opened in Washington. The Victory Company attended the two-day event and took part in the tournament. They practiced daily for six weeks, and sent about 25 firemen to the convention. The Victor Company won the reel race, beating Wilson and Henderson. In the grab race, they tied with Wilson to beat Henderson. Upon their return to Raleigh and displaying flying banners and a long cloth on the side of the car reading "Raleigh Victorious," the firefighters were met with "congratulations and hurrahs" from friends. During the convention, the "good people of Washington" expressed themselves in the local newspaper by commenting "We must commend the gentlemanly deportment of the colored firemen since their stay in the city. During the three days they have been here, we have yet to see a single fireman intoxicated or acting in a way unbecoming."<sup>86</sup>

On **September 11, 1900**, the convention opened in Salisbury. The proceedings were called to order at 9:30 a.m. at the courthouse. Hand engine and hose reel contests took place on the second day, and the remaining competitions took place on the third and last day. The Victor Hose Reel Company won first place in the hand hose reel contest on the second day, completing the 150 yards in 33.33 seconds. Raleigh Alderman Correll, chairman of the Fire Committee, received telegrams announcing the victory. The third day's events included a hook and ladder contest, a wheelbarrow contest, a potato race, a sack race, an individual foot race, a grab reel contest, and a Championship contest.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 12, 13, 1896.

<sup>85</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 4, 12, 13, 1897.

<sup>86</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 8, 10, 11, 12, 1899.

<sup>87</sup> *News & Observer*, Sept. 12, 13, 1900.

### **The Colored Firemen**

Monroe, N.C., August 13 - The Colored State Firemens' Association met here today. Nineteen companies are already represented. The tournament will be given tomorrow.

*News & Observer*, August 14, 1901.

On **August 26, 1902**, the convention opened in Raleigh. The Victor Company hosted the event in Metropolitan Hall. The approval for the building was approved on August 1, along with a request for "25 uniforms consisting of cap, shirt, belt, and trousers at a cost not exceeding \$62.50." The program:

Tuesday, August 26

9:00 a.m. Convention called to order by President J. S. Plummer. Prayer by William M. Walters, Rocky Mount, N.C. Address of welcome by Mr. C. L. Lumsden of the Capital Hose Reel Company. Response by L. R. Randolph, Washington, N.C. Regular order of business.

Wednesday, August 27

9:00 a.m. Street Parade  
11:00 a.m. Hand Engine Contest - First place \$25, second place \$15  
2:00 p.m. Hook and Ladder Contest - First place \$25, second place \$15  
3:30 p.m. Championship Hand Reel Contest - First place State Belt  
5:00 p.m. Chemical Contest - First place \$5, second place \$2.50  
8:30 p.m. Oriental Dramatic Company presents a drama in three acts, "Saved from the Wreck."

Thursday, August 28

10:00 a.m. Hose Wagon Race - First place \$20, second place \$10  
11:00 a.m. Hand Reel Contest - First place \$30, second place \$15, third place \$5  
2:00 p.m. Grab Reel Contest - First place \$20, second place \$10, third place \$5  
3:30 p.m. Special Feature Races - Wheelbarrow race \$2, foot race \$2.50<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 24, 28, 30, 1902.

Among the many committees contributing to the organization of the event were the Governing Committee, the Music Committee, the Soliciting Committee, the Executive Committee, the Provision Committee, the Track and Water Committee, the Reception Committee, the Entertainment Committee, the Public Comfort Committee, and the Auditing Committee. Monetary contributors included the Capital Hose Company (\$25), the Rescue Hose Company (\$15), First Baptist Sunday School (\$6), Captain S. E. Linton (\$5), House of Ruth No. 1 (\$5), House of Ruth No. 2 (\$5), Jerusalem Lodge No. 6 (\$5), St. Ambrose Church (\$4), the Victor Ladies (\$3.80), St. Matthew's Church (\$1.25), and E. A. Johnson (\$1).<sup>89</sup>

The parade took place on Fayetteville Street with enormous crowds lining the sidewalk. The firemen presented a "gorgeous spectacle" in their bright-colored uniforms, with red, white, and blue the predominate colors. Many wore red shirts and some had blue trousers as well. The fire companies parading were Warrenton Plummer Engine Company No. 2, Winston Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, Rocky Mount Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company, Concord Hook and Ladder Company, Fulton Hook and Ladder Company of Tarboro, Athletic Hose Reel Company of Salisbury, Enterprise Hose Reel Company of Henderson, Winston Hose Reel Company of Winston, Red Hot Hose Reel company of Wilson, Salamander Hose Reel Company of Washington, Dibble Hose Company of Washington, Statesville Hose Reel Company, Henderson Hook and Ladder Company, and Raleigh's Victor Hose Wagon Company.<sup>90</sup>

Immediately after the parade, the hand engine contest commenced at 12:30 p.m. at the intersection of Fayetteville and Davie Streets. Only one company entered and Warrenton Engine Company No. 2 shot water 100 yards in 37 seconds. They were awarded the \$25 prize. At 2:30 p.m., the hook and ladder contest started on Wilmington Street. The 100 yard course was designated from Christ Church to the "unfinished colored church" at the corner of Morgan Street. A large grandstand had been erected, with a ten-cent admission charged. The Winston company won the hand-pulled contest and \$25 award, with Concord and Tarboro following second and third respectively. The Rocky Mount company was ruled out after an accident. An individual foot race followed, won by Thomas Dulin of Hook and Ladder Company 2. The Championship Reel Race was ran about 5:00 p.m. Four companies from Henderson, Salisbury, and Winston competed in the 300-yard contest. The Winston Red Hots captured the silver cup.<sup>91</sup>

The final day of the convention opened with the hose wagon contest. With only one entry, the Victor Hose Company completed the 300-yard run in 45 and 2/5 seconds. Reported the newspaper "the Raleigh wagon made a splendid run, and the buttsman and coupler jumped in perfect style and made the attachment of the hose with a hitch. The horses were excellently handled by the driver." The prize was \$20. Raleigh also won the hand reel races with a 30 second

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<sup>89</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 24, 28, 30, 1902.

<sup>90</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 24, 28, 30, 1902.

<sup>91</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 24, 28, 30, 1902.

time laying 150 yards of hose. Charlotte took second prize and Salisbury was third. The last races were the grab reel contests, won by a Winston company.<sup>92</sup>

On **August 19, 1903**, the convention opened in Warrenton. The two days of session were conducted in the courthouse. The meeting was "called to order by the president, Jno. S. Plummer, and he in a few appropriate words introduced Mr. Tasker Polk, who delivered a most cordial welcome address on behalf of the Mayor and citizens of the town. Prof. L. R. Randolph, of Washington, N. C., responded on behalf of the Association and J. L. Montgomery on behalf of the home Company. Revs. T. O. Fuller, and J. G. Banister as well as others made short speeches." There 22 fire companies in the association membership, and about 50 or 60 delegates attended the convention.<sup>93</sup>

On **August 10, 1904**, the convention opened in Wilson. Five-hundred firefighters attended the event, which opened with a parade featuring the Red Hots Fire Company of Wilson, Victor Company of Raleigh, Athletes Hose Reel No. 4 of Salisbury, a Winston hose reel, Fultons Fire Company from Tarboro, Warrenton Hand Engines No. 1 and No 2., Salamanders Fire Company No. 1 from Washington, Excelsior Fire Company from Rocky Mount, Enterprise Fire Company reel team from Henderson, and carriages containing officers. A reel race was held that afternoon, with Raleigh, Henderson, Salisbury, Wilson, and Winston entering. The 100-yard race required each team to "tap" a hydrant and show water. The Victor Company won in 31.5 seconds, followed by Henderson with 32.1, Wilson 32.33, Winston 32 but without showing water, and Salisbury with 33.1. The first, second, and third-place prizes were \$20, \$15, and \$10, respectively.<sup>94</sup>

On **August 10, 1905**, the convention closed its session in Washington. The elected officers were President J. S. Plummer of Warrenton, First Vice-President F. F. Chambers of Statesville, Second Vice-President Dr. S. R. Wright of Salisbury, Financial Secretary Col. C. S. L. A. Taylor of Charlotte, Recording Secretary Peter Collins of Warrenton, Treasure J. G. Latta of Winston, Statistical Secretary A. J. Brown of Washington, Chaplain Rev. McIntyre of Rocky Mount, and Chief Marshal Sylvester Dibble of Washington. The tournament included a hook and ladder contest with Rocky Mount, Tarboro, and Winston. The session was attended by an estimated 1,000 visitors. Winston was selected as the location for the **1906** convention.<sup>95</sup>

On **August 14, 1907**, the convention opened in Durham. Bart Barbee, Foreman of Durham's Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company, opened his home to the association's officers. Over 600 people attended from other cities and they were housed in private homes. Unlike the ease of

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<sup>92</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 24, 28, 30, 1902.

<sup>93</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 20, 1903. *The Record*, Aug. 21, 1903.

<sup>94</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 12, 1904.

<sup>95</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 11, 1905.



lodging for the white firefighter's tournaments, there were no black hotels in this era. Visiting firemen were housed by the black citizens of a sponsoring city.<sup>96</sup>

The meeting opened at courthouse, when the eighteenth annual session was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President J. S. Plummer, of Warrenton. City Attorney R. O. Everett spoke in the mayor's stead, who was visiting a sick relative in Hillsboro. After the city officials welcome address, other speakers included Prof. L. R. Randolph, of Washington, and Dr. James E. Shephard, of Durham.<sup>97</sup>

James D. McNeil of Fayetteville, President of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association, was also asked to speak. He sent a telegram that was received during the meeting, stating he could not attend. McNeil also sent a letter, received after the last session, expressing his regret.<sup>98</sup>

Some 20 companies paraded on the second day of the event, as well as large number of carriages and floats. The mile-long procession also included two bands. Prior to the parade, a short business session was conducted. After the parade, "there was nothing else doing this afternoon, with the exception of the practice of the various teams." There were also a couple races conducted in the late afternoon.<sup>99</sup>

The regular tournament started on the third day. Raleigh's Victor Company competed in three events and won first place in each: the 150-yard reel race, the 50-yard grab reel race, and a 100-yard foot race. The latter was won by John Haywood with a 10 1/4 second time. Upon their return to the Capital City, the victorious team was greeted by a cheering crowd at Union Depot.<sup>100</sup>

On **August 11, 1908**, the convention was held in Rocky Mount. The Victor Company attended the four-day event, including convention delegates S. J. Hawkins and Frank Killibrew, and Foreman S. J. Hawkins. Raleigh's fire company won first prize in the grab race. Other contests were won by Rocky Mount (hook and ladder) and Fayetteville (reel race). A baseball game was played each day, and the Tarboro band provided music for the event.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 16, 1907.

<sup>97</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 16, 1907.

<sup>98</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 16, 1907.

<sup>99</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 16, 1907.

<sup>100</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 15, 16, 1907.

<sup>101</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 8, 1908.

### **Colored Firemen Off to Rocky Mount**

Statesville, N. C., August 11 - Eighteen members of the Statesville Defiance Fire Company No. 2, colored, left yesterday for Rocky Mount, to attend the State tournament of the colored firemen which will be in session through Friday. The Statesville company has been doing some fine practice work with their hand reels and they will enter every race and contest at Rocky Mount, and expect to win something. John Chambers is the captain of the company.

*News & Observer*, August 12, 1908.

On **August 17, 1909**, the convention opened in New Bern. Firefighters from 26 cities attended the three-day event, with an estimated 3,000 visitors to the eastern North Carolina city. Mayor M. H. Allen welcomed the visitors at the courthouse. Business sessions were held in the afternoon and evening. On the second day, 25 fire companies participated in the parade, with Raleigh's Victor Company eliciting applause from "hundreds of sightseers." The parading men numbered nearly 500 and were "attired in nobby and varied uniforms." The parade included "beautiful floats with colored girls singing national anthems," hose reels, and "hook and ladders of various companies." The second day also featured a hook and ladder race, a grab hook and ladder race, and an exhibition hose wagon race. The New Bern fire company completed the latter in 33 2-5 seconds.<sup>102</sup>

A memorial service eulogized deceased members, and officers were elected for the year:

J. H. Plummer, President  
F. F. Chambers, First Vice-President  
P. A. Stevenson, Second Vice-President  
J. W. Lattle, Treasurer  
J. Q. Grimes, Statistician  
C. C. McIntyre, Chaplain  
T. M. Harston, Chief Marshal  
C. S. Lattyford, Financial Secretary  
P. Collins, Recording Secretary.

"Thousands of enthusiastic people" cheered for the contest participants on the third day, which featured the grab reel race, the reel race, and the foot race. Raleigh's Victor Company won second place in the reel race, with 28 2-5 seconds following Fayetteville's 25 2-5 seconds. Teams competing that year also came from Enfield, Monroe, New Bern, Oxford, Salisbury, Statesville,

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<sup>102</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 18, 19, 20, 1909.

Tarboro, and Wilson. Entertainment for the visiting firemen was funded with "hundreds of dollars" donated by white citizens.<sup>103</sup>

On **September 6, 1910**, the convention opened in Winston at the courthouse. Mayor O. B. Eaton was the principal speaker, who said "I commend you for engaging in such an important work. Such a meeting draws you closer together, helps to develop the better feelings and sentiment of your natures." He exclaimed "You represent economic force and value that are enhanced by your intelligence, sense of duty and character." Other speakers included firefighters J. S. Plummer, President of the association, H. W. Hunter, J. G. Lattie, and J. R. Respess. Over 350 colored firefighters attended. The tomorrow at Peidmont Park was conducted the next day and included "races of various descriptions."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *News & Observer*, Aug. 18, 19, 20, 1909.

<sup>104</sup> *News & Observer*, Sept. 7, 1910.