

# *We've Come a Long Way...*

**(50 Years of Fire Protection in  
Marmora, New Jersey, 1947-1997)**

**By Stan Totten**

*Life Member and Former Chief*



**Marmora Volunteer Fire Company  
Marmora, NJ 08223**

***To*** the memory of those whose vision and untiring efforts organized the Company,

***To*** those who continued the effort over the years, and

***To*** the present members who carry on the tradition...

...this history of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company is dedicated.

## Preface

"We've come a long way..." is a phrase that Marmora Volunteer Fire Company members often used when they looked back and reminisced about past achievements. Probably this was stated when the first fire engine was received after only four or five months of existence. It was repeated many times as each new apparatus was received or as each improvement in the station was made. It was proclaimed also, when through training and experience, the members won some battles with fire that previously they had lost. Not long ago, while talking to several members who have served for a number of years, I heard it again: "We've come a long way." But it doesn't require many years of service to feel the progress that takes place in Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. Members with only a few years behind them have been heard to express the same sentiment.

I would like to acknowledge the aid of Chief Jay Newman and President Russ Barham who provided help in gathering information for this history. Thanks also to a number of other members - some whose names elude me - who by word and obvious pride in the fire company have helped to maintain my interest and pleasure in the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. Names of individuals (except those in the early days) have been avoided in these accounts to avoid the inevitable omission. Over these 50 years, there have been hundreds of members and friends of Marmora Volunteer Fire Company who have worked as a team in the development of the organization.

Truly: "**We've** come a long way!"

There is one member of the Marmora Fire Company that I feel should be honored for his longevity as an active member, and for his loyalty and service to the company and community. I trust that you will allow me this moment.

He joined Marmora Volunteer Fire Company in 1951 when he moved to Marmora. Forty-six years later, he is still active in company affairs and in fire organizations in Cape May County. In Marmora, he served 5 years as

Fire Chief, 23 years as Assistant Chief and 16 years as Captain. He has served on numerous committees in the fire company and performed a million unsung tasks. For a several years, he was an officer of the Cape May County Rescue Squad in Ocean City. He is currently a Trustee of the Cape May County Firemen's Association, President of the Cape May County Firemen's Aid Association, the Northern County Coordinator with the County Fire Marshal's Office. Counting several years as a member of the Dennisville Fire Company before moving to Marmora, **Carl Madden** has well over 50 years of active fire service.

Finally, to all the past and present members of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company, thanks for giving me the opportunity to write this account of the first 50 years. Without all of you, it would have been impossible to say, ***"We've come a long way!"***

Stan Totten

Townsend, TN  
May 1997

## The Way It Was...

The flames, quickened by a gentle May breeze, danced gaily as they fed on dry leaves in the pile of debris. The house had been vacant all winter and much of nature's trash needed to be removed. Pushing leaves and grass into a pile and igniting them seemed the best and easiest way to accomplish this, and, indeed, the fire had burned since early morning, consuming large quantities of the unwanted stuff.

The day was now dying, the setting sun beginning to cast the longer shadows of afternoon. As the temperature over the land dropped, the breeze freshened, blowing in from the nearby ocean. The slowly dying flames felt new life breathed into them and danced anew amid the ashes, reaching for the vital food that lay deeper in the pile. As the flames grew, the added heat carried more and more smoking embers upward and spread them farther than they had gone all day. Seeing this, those who were working on the clean-up project, raked a little around the fire and left it, thinking, "Those sparks aren't really going very far and the grass all around is pretty green now. There's nothing to worry about."

As time passed, the flames continued to dance according to the whims of the wind - sometimes quietly as a couple sways to soft music, and at times gyrating wildly as the Indian in his war dance. Suddenly, but without fanfare, an entire blazing oak leaf was wafted aloft in the rising air and smoke. Drifted by the breeze toward the north, the leaf landed on the roof of the house. Its trip through the air currents had nearly exhausted it and had almost extinguished its flame. Almost - but not quite - extinguished, it nestled in the crevices of the ancient, dry wooden shingles.

The sun settled more in the west as its rays began to weaken and the shadows grew ever longer. The clean-up crew, satisfied with the day's work took one last look at the now nearly dead fire there on the ground and, putting tools aside, went into the house for supper. That meal would taste good - even if it were only hamburgers and beans - for each one of them had worked hard today. Tomorrow - well, tomorrow was another day - but right now it was inside to get ready for supper.

The tiny spot of heat that had been an oak leaf had also found itself a meal. The leaf itself was, by this time, completely gone, but in its place glowed an ember which was its offspring. The ember was nestled between two of the dry cedar shingles and directly below the edge of another. In this shelter, the heat produced by the ember was trapped. Very slowly, probably too slowly to be measured, the temperature of the wood rose.

The meal was nearly ready now. As they waited and relaxed, their conversation had turned to other things. Their favorite subject concerned the fun and pleasant times that awaited them during the coming summer. It had been a cold and tiresome winter in the city and everyone looked forward to vacation time when they could roam the open fields, go swimming or boating at the nearby bay, or just sit in the sunshine and soak up the warmth. Of course, it would not all be fun. "Mom will still have to cook!" "This old house has to be painted!" "I hate to paint!" "Dad will only be here on weekends most of the time." These comments crept in and punctuated the conversation, but, even so, the summer held promise for a good vacation.

Up on the roof a small red spot had begun to show, even though the light of the sun still shone on that part of the building. A wind stirred the leaves on the ground and caused the glowing spot on the shingles to break out into a burst of flame, but almost as quickly the momentary gust died and the flame collapsed into just a glowing spot once again. Only a small tell-tale wisp of smoke betrayed its short-lived exuberance.

Even if someone had looked closely at the fire, he would not have noticed any real change in the size of the reddish spot. But unseen, almost undetectable, the fire had gained a little stronger hold on the shingles. For the next fifteen or twenty minutes, the wind continued its gentle huffing and puffing and with each fresh gust the fire felt new life breathed into it. Slowly, but as surely as the sun would set in the next hour or so, the spot grew bigger, built up more heat and dug more deeply into the wood.

The fire feeding on the dried and cracked shingles began to feel a strange change come about it. Somehow the air, its breath of life, seemed to be coming from some new source. Without knowing why, the little fire had sought to push its feet into the shingles from the moment that it landed there. Now it had succeeded in digging deeply enough so that a small opening had developed into the attic space below the roof. Finally, it knew why for through the hole came a steady and nourishing flow of air. With this breakthrough the sparks became a full-fledged fire complete with blossoming flame.

Rising from its bed in the shingles the flames reached upward toward the sky. One inch, two inches, - the flame grew steadily, but then - it paused briefly as it reached out its warmth to the surrounding area so that these materials would be ready when it needed them as fuel. Thus the fire prepared its dinner as the cheery and welcome call, "Supper's ready" was given down in the kitchen. Leaping from their seats, the entire family converged on the kitchen. They dug into the food before them and hardly paused at all.

Meanwhile, the flame on the roof had prepared a great deal of fresh food for itself and had enlarged the hole through which it breathed. Now it jumped afresh as it clambered from shingle to shingle. At the same time other prongs of flame reached inside the opening and spread out and upward along the inside of the roof. It made little difference whether it was on the inside or the outside, for now that the opening was big enough, the fire could get what seemed like endless amounts of fuel and air. The flames grew and played over the shingles. The house was on fire!

In the kitchen, the occupants were completely unaware of the drama that was unfolding no more than twenty feet above them. The hamburgers were great and the beans tasted good. A coffee cup was lifted and tipped so that the contents could be savored when - BANG! BANG! - a fist fell heavily on the door and the cry of "FIRE!" was heard. The coffee

cup clattered to the floor, a chair upset, and a small traffic jam developed as everyone attempted to answer the door at the same time.

They burst through the door! It seemed as if they all reached the porch at the same time. A quick glance upward confirmed the report. A pall of blue-gray smoke lingered in the front yard and plume of whitish-gray smoke rose from the roof and drifted lazily to the north. Dad responded immediately to the situation, exclaiming, "Good heavens, it is on fire! Somebody call the fire department!"

Call the fire department! Easy to say - the first thought in case of fire - but in this case, not so easy to do! First, you had to find a telephone, but in the days of the late 1930's, there weren't so many such conveniences around. Then you had to decide which fire department to call for there was no local group available. The nearest fire department on the mainland was a good ten miles away and no one could tell how long it would take for them to get there, or you could call the nearest city whose department would have to send men and equipment at least eight miles by a round about route over the drawbridges. If the fire on the roof had the ability to think, it would surely have received great consolation from these facts. Maybe it could - after all - really gorge itself on a big meal!

More than a mile down the road, the boy and his family had just finished supper. It was a warm evening. The sun had shone brightly all day and even though a gentle breeze had sprung up late in the afternoon, it promised to be a very pleasant, though not very exciting, evening. There wasn't much to do in those days of 1939. Probably he would just play around the house until it got dark and then maybe sit on the front porch with Mom and Dad until it was time to go to bed.

But this evening was to be different! Shortly an unfamiliar sound brought everyone to the front yard. Up the road - moving at what seemed breakneck speed - came, of all things, a fire engine! And right behind it came another one! Oh, how those red trucks glistened in the rays of the settling sun! He stood transfixed to that spot in the front yard, with mouth



hanging open and eyes nearly ready to pop. It was as if he had never seen a fire engine before. Indeed, such a sight was an unfamiliar event around here. Several times there had been fires in town, but most of the time things just burned. Fire engines didn't usually come!

In front of the burning house, the family also stood, staring silently at the smoke as it rose. Dad had moved to the south side of the house and stood gazing hopelessly at the flames working up the roof. He had acted quickly and had called the Ocean City Fire Department. He knew that they were coming, and he was sure that the firemen would come around the curve at any moment. Mom stood out front by the roads, wringing her hands and occasionally daubing at her eyes with her apron. A small crowd of neighbors had begun to gather and finally one of the older residents stepped forward.

"Give me a hand here," he shouted as he headed for the front door. "Let's try to save something!" Several times in his lifetime, he had seen house fires in this community. The house always burned down - he knew that - but if you worked fast while the fire was still small you could get some of the furniture and clothing out. Following this self-appointed leader, several of the men, including family members, entered the house, flung open the doors and windows and began handing various things through the openings.

What little breeze there had been seemed to die, but the fire didn't seem to notice. In fact, to the onlookers below, it appeared that the flames jumped up and began to grow noticeably bigger! Unthinking - perhaps not knowing what they were doing - the men who had entered the house had helped the fire. As each window and door was opened the supply of fresh air for the fire increased until the fire had all that it could use. The fire burned merrily now for it had all it wanted - plenty of nice dry wood and lots of air - what more could a fire ask?

It seemed to be hours - actually it was about twenty minutes - since the first alarm had been given. Like others before them and as thousands yet

to come, the family and sympathetic bystanders felt a panicky sensation that perhaps the firemen were not coming, or that perhaps they weren't sure where to come, or maybe the drawbridge was open and they couldn't get across. No, the neighbor who had called the fire department was sure that they knew where the fire was. No, there certainly wouldn't be much boat traffic so the bridge wouldn't be open. As this reasoning spread, a sense of indignation and anger arose and many critical comments were heard: "Where in the world are those firemen?" "They must be walking!" "The house could burn down by the time they get here!" "What's taking them so long?"

The age-old criticism was being voiced once again. No one in the crowd stopped to think - or if they did think, they didn't speak up - that these firemen were from another community; that they had seven or eight miles to travel; that if they drove their engines too fast, they would be accused of recklessness; that they were coming to a fire in unfamiliar territory. Most important of all, no one in the crowd seemed to realize that at times like this when the pressure is high, the tension great, and the fire burning, that time drags by. To the person awaiting the fire truck, or ambulance minutes seem to be hours.

He was pedaling now, just as fast as he could go. The second engine had hardly passed when the ten-year old boy had fallen to the urge to follow and was racing after the fire trucks. Like boys of every era, the excitement of the moment drew him like a magnet toward the scene of action. Hardly touching the seat, he felt just a blur on the spinning pedals, he raced up the road in pursuit of the two fire engines. He was sure that he could follow them for there was just one road and only two or three side streets so that they really couldn't lose him. He soon discovered that he had another thing in his favor. As he approached the first side street, he noticed a small knot of people excitedly talking, but all looking in one direction. There was no doubt that these folks were staring in the direction that the trucks went. So now he just pedaled, as fast as he could, and kept heading in the path indicated by the excited faces that gathered here and there all along the road.

It seemed as if he fairly flew along the road, but by the time he rounded the last curve, he saw a scene which made his eyes pop! There was the house with smoke pouring from it and angry fingers of flame clawing at the weakening roof. In the distance, out on the bridge over the bay, was a fire engine and stretching from it toward the house was a long thin light-colored object which he soon realized was a hose. And there in front of the burning building was another fire engine. Firemen were busily working to connect the hoses.

Soon the hose pulsed with the onrush of water from the engine on the bridge, and shortly the hose held by the two men on the south side of the house jumped and writhed like a snake. Almost immediately a gush of water spurted from the nozzle and within seconds the firemen held an effective tool for dealing with the flames. A powerful stream shot up to the roof and began tearing at the shingles, scattering them in all directions. Less apparent at first, the water also began its job of drowning the fire.

In the meantime, as the drama unfolded below, the fire had been happily dancing there on the roof for nearly an hour. By this time it had begun to feel that it owned the building. It had managed so far to chew out a large hole and now tongues of flame reached up and down along the rafters on the inside. A few pieces of these ancient beams had fallen to the attic floor and with satisfaction the fire saw its offspring beginning to gnaw into that surface.

Suddenly there was a sort of roaring sound and a gush of air from somewhere. The fire felt itself in the grip of an awful suffocating something with which it had no experience. The flames dodged and ducked, they fought back, but finally the fire just dug its feet into the wood with a determination to stay. This fire had just been introduced to its eternal enemy - water.

Of course, it did not just end abruptly, for the firemen had to dig out and extinguish every spark there in the roof. To the boy watching from the ground, it seemed that it was all over very quickly. He did not notice that

the sun had finally set and darkness had begun to settle on the community. He watched in wonderment as the firemen continued to spray water on the roof from the ground, but then - what was this - the firemen were pulling a smaller hose in the front door of the house. From his vantage point across the street, he could see that they were pulling it up the stairway inside the door. Shortly a fireman with an axe appeared in the gaping hole which had been the peak of the roof and with another man began to chip away at the jagged edges and wet the area with water.

Back home, Mother and Dad were beginning to worry a little about the boy who had so impulsively jumped on his bike and went tearing down the road. It was getting dark now - where could he be? Still the fire engines hadn't returned yet so perhaps there really wasn't need to worry.

Finally - somewhat sadly - the boy remounted his bike. There wasn't much left to see. The firemen had rolled up most of their hoses and one of the trucks was just about to leave. Rather slowly, he pointed the bicycle toward home. What had started out to be a rather dull, routine evening had suddenly erupted into one packed with excitement! On the way home, he began to think - it's too bad Mr. Klein hadn't been so fortunate when his big chicken house burned down, but then there was no water available and the firemen had to just stand and watch it burn; the same thing had happened on other occasions, but why worry about it, for what could a ten year old do about it?

- \* The above is an account of an actual fire that occurred in Beesley's Point in the late 1930's. The exact date is unknown. Some details have been added. The house was repaired and still stands not far from the bay in Beesley's Point.

## **The First Years...**

It was nearly ten years later, and a World War had been fought. The boy had nearly forgotten his thoughts of that evening. "A lot of water had flowed under the bridge", as the saying goes. His family had moved away and then, after the war, had moved back to Marmora. He was graduating from high school and getting ready to go to college. For nearly another decade the people of the area had accepted the fact that, if a house caught fire, it would most likely burn down - few were as fortunate as the house near the bay had been.

Marmora and the surrounding area was a rather small place in those days - much smaller than it is today. There were not very many people and only a few businesses. A number of the men from the area - Marmora and Beesley's Point - hung out at the Texaco gas station at the corner of Shore Road and Roosevelt Boulevard. In fact, there was a back room with chairs, a pool table and a dart board. Many things - the weather, politics and maybe people "got talked about" there. It was probably there in the gas station during 1946 that the idea of a "Marmora Volunteer Fire Company" was conceived.

Exactly what sparked the discussion of forming a fire company, we can't be sure. It may have been a disastrous fire that claimed children's lives in Dennisville or it may have been several serious brush fires that occurred in South Jersey during the middle 1940's. At any rate, the idea developed and, in late 1946, the men of the area held several meetings. These were informal meetings - probably some of them right there at the gas station. Other meetings were held at the clam and seafood place that Ralph Clayton, Sr. had along Roosevelt Boulevard by the drawbridge. At least once or twice, meetings were held in the basement of Sal Frasca's home on South Shore Road.

At some point in time, they organized informally. On December 17, 1946, incorporation papers were drawn up and signed. The six men who signed this document were: Clinton Walker, Ralph Clayton, Sr., Samuel Beyel, William Godfrey, M. Spencer Young, and Mahlon McMaster. These papers were drawn up by a Mr. Scott who was an attorney

in Atlantic County and who did the early legal work for the Fire Company. He lived in Beesley's Point at the end of Harbor Road.

On the 7th of January 1947, the members met and elected Spencer Young as temporary chairman. He immediately called for nominations of officers and upon their election at that meeting, relinquished his position as chairman. Those elected for one year terms were:

President: William Godfrey  
Vice Pres.: Clinton Walker  
Secretary: Samuel Beyel  
Treasurer: Joseph Lovette  
Fire Chief: Mahlon McMaster  
Asst. Chief: Charles Cossaboone  
Joseph Lovette

Mr. Godfrey wasted no time appointing committees to get to work on three important areas of concern to the new Fire Company. These committees were Fund Raising, Equipment and By-Laws. The committee chairmen and members were:

Fund Raising Committee: Spencer Young, Chairman, Albert Corson, Hobart Sapp, Sal Frasca, and Clarence Wilkie

Equipment Committee: Mahlon McMaster, Chairman, Clinton Walker, Lou Sanders, Earl Sapp, Joe Lovette, Andrew Young, and Charles Cossaboone

By Laws Committee: William Godfrey, Chairman, Sal Frasca, Spencer Young, Norman Schenck, and Clinton Walker

The papers were filed in the Cape May County Courthouse on January 24, 1947 and the Certificate of Incorporation was filed with the Secretary of State in Trenton on the 28th of January. Marmora Volunteer Fire Company was official!

Sources of revenue for the new fire company were pretty slim! It is not recorded anywhere, but it is likely that the individual members - or at least some of them - put their own money "in the hat" in order to pay for the necessary expenses to get things started. There was no apparatus, no firehouse, and no land on which to build a firehouse. But, there was a vision of the future! At that first meeting, dues for membership in the new organization were set at two dollars per year. The members agreed to hold meetings every first and third Tuesday and to "hold firefighting and first aid classes every Thursday".

The new Marmora Volunteer Fire Company began to get donations almost immediately. In fact, at that first meeting on January 7th, it was reported that a large siren had been donated by the City of Ocean City. The siren had been part of the air raid warning system during the war and was no longer needed. This siren became part of the first alerting system for Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. It was set up on a pole on top of the gas station. A switch was installed on the side of the building and now anyone that needed to alert the firemen to a problem simply had to run to the gas station and push the button. Of course, a lot of time was lost!

It wasn't too long until Charles Brown, who lived near the gas station volunteered himself and his family to receive fire calls on his own private telephone line. Thus, these family members became the first dispatchers for Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. But the switch was still on the gas station, and when an alarm came in, someone had to run across Shore Road to the gas station before the siren would start to blow. (Fortunately, the traffic on Shore Road and Roosevelt Boulevard was almost non-existent then!)

The sirens of those days, and even today, have a limited range because sound will travel just so far. Alerting its members was a problem for the new Marmora Volunteer Fire Company because the sound of the siren only reached about a half a mile unless the wind was blowing. Then the

people downwind might hear it while the people upwind did not. These problems plagued the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company for many years.

Other kinds of equipment began to be procured - again mostly by donation. Some used Civil Defense hose and some appliances (nozzles, wyes, etc.) were donated to the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. This hose had iron pipe threads! Thus, the long tradition of iron pipe threads on inch and a half hose began.

The first equipment purchased by the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company was six Indian Tanks and a dozen brooms. The quoted price was \$18.00 each for the Indian Cans and \$1.50 each for the brooms. This purchase was authorized at a meeting on April 1, 1947. Grass fires were the most common type of fire in those days. With no apparatus and no fire station, this new equipment was kept at a central location where it could be picked up quickly when there was a fire. Response time must have been extremely long sometimes.

The equipment committee worked hard trying to find a piece of apparatus that was workable, adaptable to the Marmora situation and affordable. On April 14, 1947, an apparatus was purchased from the Perkins Motor Company. The purchase price was \$1200.00. It was a "1942 6-cylinder Ford Fire Truck" but as the minutes of April 15th reveal, "the 100 gallon per minute pump [is] out of order"! By early May, two 500 gallon per minute Barton pumps had been located and purchased - one for the truck and one for spare. The pumper had been used during the war by the Navy as a fire apparatus. It had a 500 gallon water tank. The pump was front mounted and that caused problems in later years, but for now the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company had a piece of firefighting apparatus and an extra pump. This was the first fire engine.

The Ford pumper worked well and did a good job, but with only 500 gallons of water in the tank, it would often run out of water before mutual aid could get to the scene to help. For over two years, the company endured this problem. In late 1949, a committee was appointed to find a tank truck



that could support the pumper. At the meeting of January 2, 1950, the committee reported that they had "found one we could get now". It was a Dodge truck with a 1300 gallon tank on it. The price was \$850 plus an extra charge for installing the spare pump the fire company had. As was done frequently in the early days of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company, the committee "was authorized to act as they see fit." Not only did the early members have a vision for the future, but they often exhibited a respect for the judgment of others in matters that were for the good of the company. Apparently there were some other extras in addition to mounting that pump. Possibly they added a bright red paint job because on January 17, 1950 the committee reported that it had purchased the tanker with a \$500 down payment. \$1000 more would be due on delivery and the remaining \$185 would be carried on a 60-day note. The total price of \$1685 was nearly double the original price. When the Ocean City Police Department donated a used siren for the tank truck, it was a big help!

There was something innovative with this truck - not too many fire engines have been built with the engine up front and the pump back on the rear step. A long shaft was required to drive this pump and it was soon found that this shaft vibrated badly when the engine speed was increased. Several revisions were made over the subsequent years to improve the design. The Dodge tanker served Marmora Volunteer Fire Company well for many years. It was taken out of service on December 1, 1964.

The year of 1950 might be known as the Year of Apparatus Acquisition in the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. Not only was the Dodge tanker purchased but also two other used apparatus were acquired. The first one, a 1927 Hale city service ladder truck, was purchased in March 1950 from the Defender Fire Company in Runnemede, New Jersey for \$300. It came equipped with a full set of wooden ground ladders including a 55 foot Bangor ladder. It was a good running truck but that 55 foot main ladder extended so far behind the rear wheels that the end of the ladder moved as far in one direction as the front wheels moved in the opposite direction when it was steered. Getting in and out of the firehouse was

tricky! There was a lot of equipment on that truck in addition to the ladders, and for many years, Marmora used axes and other tools with "DFC" - Defender Fire Company - branded in the handle. The ladder truck was removed from service and sold in March 1958.

Sometime in 1949, it was discovered that Ocean City had a skid pump - a 500 gpm Hale pump coupled directly to a Chrysler engine - that was not being used. After discussions with the authorities in Ocean City, it was agreed that Marmora could have it on loan with the condition that if Ocean City needed it, the unit would be returned. For a time, a four-wheel farm wagon was used for this pump. It would be picked up and towed by a member to the point where it was needed. Usually, it was taken to what was called "the water hole" - an area where Vernon Road ended at a sand pit. There was water in the pit and a box had been built for drafting purposes. This was the primary source of water for several years.

In May 1950, Ocean City advertised one of their old fire engines for sale! The apparatus had been out of service for several years. It was a 1922 White pumper with a 350 gallon per minute rotary pump under the driver's seat and a water tank that held about 25 gallons. The truck had a huge hose bed - probably capable of holding about 2000 feet of 2-1/2" hose. Marmora Volunteer Fire Company didn't have that much hose but they had a different use for the truck. The bid was \$100 and Marmora Volunteer Fire Company won. The skid pump was loaded into the hose bed. Thus they had a motorized apparatus to carry the pump unit. Ocean City recalled the skid pump unit in June 1952 and the White Pumper was later sold.

During 1950, Marmora Volunteer Fire Company ordered and received its first new fire hose. In August, the Chief reported that he had ordered 1000 feet of inch and a half hose. Five hundred feet arrived in October and the remainder of the order was delivered in November. The cost was \$1120.70 - about \$1.12 per foot! It is interesting to note that several lengths of this hose were removed from the apparatus in October 1978

when the entire hose load had finally been converted to synthetic fiber hose to replace the cotton hose.

With apparatus and equipment being acquired, the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company needed a place to keep it. By the time the Ford fire truck was received, it was warm enough that no protection from cold weather was needed, so through most of the summer of 1947, the pumper was parked by the gas station where it could be manned by whatever volunteers responded. When cold weather arrived in the late fall some kind of shelter had to be found for it. A barn located at the corner of Shore Road and Tuckahoe Road was offered as a place where the truck could be kept. This was a barn - not a firehouse - and heating it was a problem from the very start. A kerosene heater was procured and placed in the barn and this helped, but there was the problem of tending the heater and when the temperature got very cold, it was insufficient. Two or three freeze-up problems occurred during that winter of 1947-48.

Early in 1947, a committee had been formed to look into securing property on which to build a fire house. The members wanted the firehouse to be on Shore Road in Marmora, but most of the land in that area was already in use. It was thought that a good alternate location would be in the West Ocean City subdivision. (This was a 1920's sub-division that had lain idle for nearly 20 years.) There was a gentleman that owned part of this tract that ran all the way down Roosevelt Boulevard. He was approached about selling a parcel for the firehouse. He responded that he would be glad to donate a building lot, but in his formal offer of the land, he placed a stipulation that the property must be used forever to house a motorized fire apparatus and that if, at any time, the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company failed to do this, the property and any improvements would revert to him. This did not set well with the membership.

About the same time Miss Mabel Clark who owned the next section of the West Ocean City tract offered a lot to the fire company without cost and without any conditions. All the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company had to do was pay the closing costs. Miss Mabel suggested a piece

on Norwood Road that was right next to her boundary line on the south side. This actually gave the fire company a little more than one lot. The fire company ended up with 50 feet instead of 40 feet. In gratitude for her generous gift, the members of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company voted in April 1947 to make Miss Mabel Clark a Life Member. She was the first to be so honored.

A building committee was appointed. In addition to planning the building, the committee had a concurrent task of procuring financing. In September and November of 1947, it was reported that applications for loans had been turned down by two different lenders. At the meeting on December 2, 1947, the minutes record: "It was decided to start our new firehouse after the first of the year, as the approaching holidays and deer season would take most of the mens time up."

Fund-raising was accomplished in various ways. Donations were a major source of funds for the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company and many people donated materials or money for the firehouse. A display was set up in the general store and the gas station giving people the opportunity to buy concrete blocks for the new firehouse. Many people "bought a block" and the building fund began to grow.

In January 1948, authorization was given by the company for the electric company to set a pole on the property. Apparently a two-story structure was initially planned for the minutes of March 2, 1948 report that the plans were changed to a "one story building, size 32 x 70".

Thus the Marmora firehouse was constructed on Norwood Road about one block from Roosevelt Boulevard and two blocks off Shore Road. This was to prove to be a pretty good location and the Fire Company occupied this location for over 30 years. A lot of time and labor was donated and very little was expended for anything other than materials.

Recognizing the need for a steady and reliable source of revenue for the fledgling fire company, the members sought to create a fire district.

The minutes of September 7, 1948 contain a motion "...that we appoint a committee, for the purpose, of making a fire district." As a result, a committee consisting of Spencer Young, Chairman, Clint Walker and Joe Lovette was appointed.

The first Fire Commissioners for Fire District #3 were elected in February 1949. They were: Charles Brown, Chairman, Joe Lovette, Hobart Sapp, Harold Gannon and Sal Frasca. The amount to be raised by taxation was \$1,000.00. This provided enough money to pay the annual insurance bill. Other expenses would still be funded by donations and fund-raising events.

## ...Fire Engines, etc. ...

As the years went by more apparatus was acquired. One of the big dates in the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company was when a "real" fire engine was backed into the fire house. This occurred in January 1953. The company had decided that they needed something better to replace the Ford which had served well but was having more and more break-downs. New Jersey Fire Equipment Company was contacted. They had taken a pumper in trade that had belonged to Hope Hose Company in Bordentown, New Jersey. It was built on a Diamond-T chassis, had an open cab, a big hose bed, a 500 gallon per minute pump, but it had only a 275 gallon tank. It was a nice running truck that was not too big - it was especially low so it easily fit in the firehouse. The water capacity was a problem because if the alarm was at a distance from the firehouse, the initial attack had to be modified in order to keep the water flowing until the tanker could get there and get hooked up. Nevertheless, the Marmora Volunteers were quite proud of their "new" fire engine. They paid \$8000, got a trade-in of \$825 on the Ford and financed it over four years.

Tactically, in the early days, the philosophy was: "we need to keep water flowing on the fire at all times" and all attempts were made to prevent loss of water flow. For instance, if an inch-and-a-half hose was required, a booster line was often used in order to "save the water". The net result was that often the company (and sometimes mutual aid units) were out for extended periods of time hauling water. Afterwards, they would congratulate themselves that they never "lost water" but they lost the building. This was not uncommon among fire departments of that era. The philosophy of a strong aggressive attack was often forgotten in the desire to keep the water flowing.

Incidentally, the Diamond-T was the first vehicle to be equipped with a radio. In April 1957, it was reported that a radio would be installed and that the call number would be "MF-9". The Chief had made arrangements to have this radio operate under the license of Ocean City Fire Department. In May of 1958 a second radio was installed in the Dodge tank truck. The company ultimately operated up to four mobile radios in cooperation with Ocean City until, in 1967, Marmora Volunteer Fire

Company received a license to operate on the Cape May County fire frequency.

In September 1954, the company approved \$250 for the purchase of a "Ford chassis". This chassis came to be known as the old "bomb truck". A gentleman who lived in Beesley's Point had gotten a surplus World War II bomb handling vehicle. It was a Ford 4-wheel drive, cab forward vehicle but it had no cab!. It had good engine when you could keep it running. Some members got the idea that if the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company could get that truck, they could build a tank on it, mount a portable pump and use it as a pumper or to shuttle water. Actually, when it was all finalized the man donated the vehicle to the fire company. They got steel to make the tank and fabricated cabinets out of galvanized sheet metal. They mounted the portable pump and hose reel. In fact, the truck was used on a couple of occasions to shuttle water, but most of the time it was a white elephant - the alarm would sound and a member would start it and begin the response. It always started easily, but most of the time, it would get part way to the fire and the engine would die. No amount of cranking would start it. The driver would just have to sit and wait until someone (usually returning from the fire) came along. Then followed the embarrassing tow back to the firehouse. Its use on an actual fire was rare.

In 1958, the Chief recommended the purchase of a utility vehicle to carry equipment and to provide an emergency vehicle to handle operations such as first aid, resuscitator calls and automobile accidents. The Marmora Volunteer Fire Company had acquired a resuscitator in 1951 and had used it many times. The resuscitator had always been in a compartment on a fire engine. Usually, when it was needed a member would run to the firehouse, pick up the resuscitator and respond to the emergency in his private vehicle. This was recognized as a safety hazard. It also consumed valuable time, as the heavy equipment was transferred from the firehouse to a car and then rushed to the scene in a vehicle without any emergency status. A panel body truck was ordered and delivered to the company in June 1958. The vehicle was sold in 1967.

Another piece of apparatus that served the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company well for a long time didn't cost anything to acquire. The first mention of the International (Woods Truck as it came to be called) is found in the minutes of November 1, 1960 when a discussion was held regarding the possibility of organizing a "Volunteer Fire Group" in the Seaville area. It was thought that if such a group could be organized that they could use this truck. How the vehicle came to Marmora Volunteer Fire Company is both odd and interesting - it needs to be told.

Some years before, there was a Commanding Officer at the Palermo Radar Station who had been involved with a fire during a previous assignment. As a result, he was very fire conscious. On one occasion, when at the old Atlantic City Naval Air Station, he visited the salvage area. There the Colonel found a vehicle that had been a crash truck on the base. It was on an International chassis and had a Hale skid pump mounted across the chassis with a 500 gallon water tank and two hose reels on it. The Navy had apparently written it off the active inventory and the commander was able to get the fire truck signed over to the Palermo Station.

Personnel there refurbished the vehicle and got it to be a working fire truck. Commanders changed a couple of times and in the late 1950's, a colonel who was apparently not so fire conscious but was concerned with strict interpretation of regulations was now in charge. On one occasion while preparing for an inspection, he discovered that he had a fire engine that was not authorized. He ordered his subordinates to get rid of it, but they found that since the Navy had left the Atlantic City airport, it couldn't go back there. They drove it to the Marmora firehouse and parked it on the side lot. They stopped at the gas station and verbally gave the message that the fire engine was now Marmora's, that they didn't want to hear anything about it again and that the colonel never wanted to see it on the Palermo Radar Station. This presented some problems. It was a welcome addition - it pumped, carried water and it ran - all the necessary qualifications for use. But there was no title for it and without a title it couldn't be insured. It apparently still belonged



to the Navy, but they had long since written it off their inventory. After much research, a representative of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company had to go to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the Navy could dig out the records and make the transfer. Finally, in June 1961, it belonged to Marmora and could be placed in service.

This truck really couldn't be hurt because it was already in pretty rough condition, but it worked! The "woods truck" was used primarily for operations in off-road and forest fire situations. After many years of that kind of service, it was finally retired in 1972 when it was replaced by the 1968 GMC.

The old "wood's truck" was refurbished by the members, repainted and used for several more years as a parade vehicle. For a time the company members used it as a focal point for their comedy team. During these years, it traveled to numerous parades in New Jersey and ventured into Pennsylvania. Two other distinctions came its way. First, a picture of the truck, taken during one of those parades, was published in a book titled, *American Volunteer Fire Trucks* by Wood and Sorenson. It may be the only Marmora apparatus to have been illustrated in a published book of fire apparatus. The second event was the entry of Marmora's comedy team in the 1970 Miss America Parade. The "woods truck" may have been the only fire apparatus to ever take part in that event as an entry.

In the minutes of December 20, 1960, the following is recorded: "Past President Lovette asked that the company consider making as its goal for 1961, the purchase of a new piece of equipment." As a result the president appointed a committee to present recommendations. That committee consisted of Joe Lovette, Chairman, Carl Madden, Frank Foglio and Harold Gannon, Sr. This committee met and at the meeting of June 6, 1961, the purchase of a new apparatus and the trade-in of the Diamond-T was authorized. The new apparatus was to be purchased from New Jersey Fire Equipment Co. at a price of \$15,180 less a \$2000 trade-in.

This brand new apparatus, built especially for Marmora, was delivered in mid-November 1961. A 750 gallon per minute pumper with a 1000 gallon tank, it was built on a GMC chassis with a V-6 engine and a 5 speed transmission. It had a limited hose bed, a booster reel, and a pre-connected attack line. A second pre-connect was added later. When this truck was delivered the door height in the firehouse was only eight feet and the vehicle wouldn't go through the doors! It was sent to a hydrant in Ocean City and filled with water. With the added weight, it slid into the firehouse with barely one inch of clearance at the rear warning lights. The '62 GMC was a very good piece of apparatus and a big improvement in the firefighting capabilities of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company.

Shortly after the delivery of the '62 GMC, a local fuel oil distributor had a tank truck for sale. Marmora Volunteer Fire Company bought it for \$300 and after making adjustments in the springs to carry the water load and doing some piping changes, it was placed in service. In use the tanker provided water directly to a pumper using hard suction or used a portable pump to relay water. Built on a 1948 International chassis, it had an 1800 gallon tank. This additional amount of water (the Dodge tanker was still in service) made it much more feasible to make an aggressive attack. Officially, the standing orders were to make such an attack even at the risk of running out of water, but old habits are hard to break and for a period of 4 or 5 years, there were still times when the attack was not very vigorous. However, after a time the attacks became more aggressive and the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company began to use its water to save buildings. Ironically, something else happened that was not discovered for several years. When researching the fire records prior to the purchase of a new apparatus, it became clear that with the consistent development of the aggressive attack philosophy, water consumption had dropped from over 900 gallons on the average fire to about 300 gallons per fire!

Marmora Volunteer Fire Company did not stand still with the acquisition of the '62 GMC. This pumper was paid off in just over three years and, in October 1965, the President appointed a committee to investigate the

purchase of a new apparatus. The committee was thinking about another 750 gallon per minute pumper, but this time it would have a 1500 gallon water tank. A problem developed with this truck before it even got off the drawing board. Because of the added water, the chassis had to be bigger than the earlier pumper and thus the truck would have to be higher.

When this was reported to the company in February 1966, the committee also reported that they were looking into the cost of increasing the door height. Not knowing whether it would fit in the station, but with the vision and self-confidence that the founders had shown nearly twenty years before, the members authorized the committee to order the new pumper! It would be about a year before the vehicle would be delivered and, in the meantime, the door height would be increased. This was reported accomplished in October 1966. Even then, when the new apparatus arrived in March 1967, it had to be filled with water to get it through the doors. On the positive side, the door height no longer represented a problem for the '62 pumper or the tankers.

With the '67 pumper in service, the members immediately began thinking about a new tanker. The Dodge had finally given out. A fire on the Upper Township landfill one night in 1964 kept the members busy all night shuttling water from the air base. The old Dodge worked its last fire on this trash fire. Taken out of service, it was sold and the buyer used the tank on another chassis for several more years. A new truck committee was appointed in April 1969. This committee prepared specifications for a tank vehicle.

In those days, it took a year or more to get an apparatus delivered. Backed up with orders for Class A pumpers, the manufacturers did not need to "experiment" with a tanker. As a result, all the bids submitted described the Class A pumper that they wanted to build. Most important every set of specifications cut the water tank capacity to 500 or 750 gallons instead of the minimum 2000 gallon tank in the fire company specifications. All bids were rejected and the committee began to look for a different way.

The owner of Moyer Ford in Ocean City was a member of Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. Through him the company bought a Ford tilt-cab chassis and had it delivered to a tank truck manufacturer in Collegetown, PA. They put together a tank truck capable of carrying 2000 gallons of water with a power-take-off pump that would deliver 450 gallons per minute. The unit had limited compartment space in which to carry a basic hose load and tools. There was a pre-connected attack line and a pre-connected two and a half inch line to feed a pumper. Marmora Volunteer Fire Company now had a tank unit that could function in both water shuttle and attack modes. Formerly, the tankers have required two or more personnel to man them. This new tanker was designed so the driver alone could efficiently deliver water quickly to a pumper and when empty the driver could refill it just as easily from the hydrant. This speeded up operations and reduced the manpower required. The Ford tanker was a 1970 model. The completed apparatus cost less than \$20,000 (as opposed to quotes of up to \$60,000 that the fire apparatus manufacturers had made). The Ford tanker was refurbished in 1982 and continued to serve well until about 1990 when it was replaced and sold to Town Bank Fire Company where it is still in service.

Another member of the fire company was affiliated with a major oil company. He found that his company had a used tank trailer that could be given to a fire department. At the fire company meeting on March 2, 1971, the members agreed to go ahead with procuring this trailer. Obviously, a tractor would be required and in June 1971, the company paid \$1200 for a small Brockway tractor. The trailer was brought to Marmora from the oil company salvage yard in North Jersey. The trailer needed a lot of work and although used for drill purposes a few times, the 6300 gallon unit was not used for firefighting for some time. Finally, after a couple of false starts the tractor trailer tanker, (with a different tractor that was purchased from Rio Grande Fire Company), was put into service on the 3rd of July 1976. On that day, at the 4th of July parade in Tuckahoe, the tanker was publicly displayed as a Marmora Volunteer Fire Company unit. The very next day the tractor-trailer saw service on its first fire at the Bayside Training School in Beesley's Point. Once again tactics changed

as the presence of this large reservoir of water on the scene made possible the use of larger lines in the attack.

In the early 1980's, a newer tractor was acquired for this unit. This was a Mack Model R tractor. A few months later another trailer was secured to replace the aging (and leaking) tank trailer. Combined with the tractor, this unit could haul up to 8500 gallons of water. An improvement over the earlier tractor-trailer was the addition of a self-powered pump on the trailer.

In December 1971, a small pumper was acquired from a fire department in Middletown, Pennsylvania. It was actually an old American LaFrance fire engine body that had been mounted on a 1968 GMC chassis. The pump had been replaced by a self-powered 350 gallon per minute pump. The water tank had a capacity of about 400 gallons. This vehicle served as a quick attack apparatus for a number of years until it was replaced in 1982 by an Emergency One midi-pumper. The pump was removed from the '68 GMC and mounted on the tractor-trailer tank truck.

The President appointed a new apparatus committee in 1978. This committee developed specifications for a large apparatus with a 1250 gallon per minute pump and a 2500 gallon water tank. When completed in 1980, it was constructed on a 1979 Hendrickson chassis. Its diesel engine, automatic transmission and tandem rear axle were all "firsts" for Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. This unit was formally housed in May of 1980 during the same ceremonies at which the new fire station on Old Tuckahoe Road was dedicated. Refurbished in 1985, it is still in service.

In 1982 a new GMC attack pumper was delivered to the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. Built by Emergency One, this four wheel drive vehicle had a 750 gallon per minute pump and a 500 gallon tank. It was in service until 1991, when it was sold to Strathmere Volunteer Fire Company. It is still in service there.

In 1984, Marmora Fire Company scored another first. During this year, a Ford pumper with a 55' telesquirt was placed in service. This unit was the first aerial apparatus in active service in Upper Township. The apparatus included a 1250 gallon per minute pump and a 500 gallon water tank.

In 1984, the Chief was able to secure a used station wagon in very good condition. The vehicle was painted red and white. Lettering was applied to make it an official Marmora Volunteer Fire Company vehicle. Used for a variety of activities including the transportation of members to training, fire association meetings and other such purposes, the station wagon was in service for about two years when it was replaced by a new 1986 Ford LTD station wagon. The 1986 wagon is still used by the fire company for transportation duties.

A 1250 gallon per minute pumper built on a Ford C-series chassis was the next apparatus delivered to the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. This vehicle has a 1200 gallon water tank. This apparatus was the first one with a hose load that included large diameter (5 inch) hose. This engine was delivered in 1988 and is still in service.

About two years later, in 1990, Marmora Fire Company received a Grumman Supertanker. This large tandem rear apparatus has a 1500 gallon per minute pump and a 3000 gallon water tank. A first for Marmora on this engine is the 8 man cab so all firefighters ride inside the vehicle when on a response. Safety is of prime importance in Marmora Volunteer Fire Company and no one is allowed to ride on the tail board or anywhere else on the outside of any apparatus.

Also in 1990, the fire company added a Ford Explorer to be used as a command vehicle. The Explorer, equipped with lights, siren and communications equipment, provides the facilities of a command post. It also can be used for the safe transportation of personnel to and from the scene of an emergency.

A year later, in 1991, a rescue truck, built on an International chassis was also added to the Marmora apparatus. This apparatus is designed to deliver rescue equipment to the emergency scene. Among the many items of equipment is the "Jaws of Life". The arrival of this new equipment brought with it the need for additional training in vehicle extrication and rescue techniques including high angle rescue.

The most recent vehicle acquired by the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company arrived in 1995. This vehicle is a 1995 Chevrolet Suburban. It is used by the First Responders who respond to medical emergencies in the Marmora Fire District. Although it is not used for the transportation of patients, the vehicle provides for the rapid and safe response of personnel and their equipment to the emergency scene.

## **...Fire Houses and Other Things...**

Constructed on Norwood Road near Wistar Avenue, the first Marmora firehouse was built to a large extent with donated labor. The members pitched in and worked hard to get the building up and under roof. Actual construction began in January 1948. It is not recorded when the project was finished but a bill of \$461.16 for concrete blocks was paid in May 1948, and the minutes note late in 1948 that the heating contractor is going ahead with the duct work.

The building was planned initially to be 32 feet by 70 feet. The floor was poured that size. The lot was about 4 feet above the street, and, in order to put a 70' building on a 90' lot and obey the proper set-offs from the back line it was necessary to have the fire house rather close to the street. With only about 16 feet from the street line the apron had to be pretty steep. The members of the building committee planned to have the lot excavated to get the building lower. They had a contractor who was willing to bring in his grading equipment and donate the work, but it was off on another job and wouldn't be available for two or three weeks. The members got anxious and they went ahead, set the forms and poured the floor on the higher level.

This was to prove somewhat costly in later years especially as fire apparatus got heavier and higher. The steep grade caused the failure of clutches and limited the height of apparatus. But initially it was great! In fact, it was a help in the early days because if there was trouble starting the apparatus, all you had to do was get the front wheels over the lip and started down the grade. This gave the truck a good roll onto the street and the driver could "pop" the clutch and get it started - tough on apparatus but it worked.

Various friends of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company gave their time to help build the firehouse. For example, the fire company bought the necessary stone, sand and cement to pour the floor. A concrete contractor in Ocean City brought his mixer to the site, - there wasn't transit mix in those days - mixed the concrete, and supervised the members in pouring the floor.



The building was to be a concrete block building. Other friends, a masonry contractor and his son agreed to lay the concrete blocks for the walls at no cost. The company bought the blocks and the members helped by mixing mortar, carrying blocks, and the many other tasks required.

For the roof structure they needed some lumber. One of the committee members contacted someone in the Public Works Department in Ocean City. Just who that person was, we don't know, but permission was obtained for the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company to take what lumber it needed from the area of the dump in Ocean City. At that time, the landfill was located about where the airport building is today. As the Public Works crews would remove lumber from various locations - especially the boardwalk - they would stack it at the landfill until a use could be found for it. It was well weathered lumber having been on the boardwalk many years. The reason for its removal from the boardwalk was that it was becoming splintery and was therefore a safety hazard. But the wood was still sound and it worked out just fine for building the trusses and purlins for the roof of the new Marmora firehouse. Thus the materials for the roof were donated and the members assembled trusses and erected the roof. The roof was shingled and the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company firehouse was in operation.

A firehouse needs doors. Just what kind of doors were in the original firehouse is not known. It appears that initially the doors were rather makeshift - maybe even ones that simply had to be picked up and slid out of the way in order to open it up and let the fire apparatus out. At any rate, overhead doors were installed within the first year.

In order to conserve heat a temporary wall was built about halfway back in the building so there wasn't as much space to be heated in the winter. Since there was only one piece of apparatus, all that space wasn't needed. No doubt there were some members who would have been satisfied with a single bay fire house, but the majority had a vision of the future and could see that the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company would grow beyond its single engine beginnings.

Apparently during the construction of the firehouse, there was some controversy, because in the minutes of March 16, 1948, it was moved and passed, "... that we build the firehouse, size 32 x 30, and put in full footing for size 32 x 70, and install temporary back. Building committee to go ahead, and bar all discussions, pertaining to them, at future meetings, till the building is done." It is questionable whether this type of tactic would work in the present day, but certainly the members of the company had faith in their building committee members and were willing to forego talking about it until the job was done.

At any rate, the building was finished as a simple concrete block structure (32 feet by 70 feet) with two doors in the front. The doors were nine feet wide and eight feet high. Although these doors were large enough for anything available in the late 1940's, this became a problem in later days when the company began to buy apparatus that was bigger and it needed much more headroom than 8 feet.

Additions were made to the original firehouse. The first one was on the southwest corner of the building. This was done to house restrooms and a kitchen. Several years later a meeting room was added. These were of the same concrete block construction as the rest of the building. The additions had a nearly flat shed roof that extended out to the south side of the firehouse.

Sometime in the mid 1950's someone acquired a metal tower that had been used on a farm for a windmill. It was about 10' across the bottom, about 3' across at the top and about 30' high. Although the roof was probably not designed to take that kind of weight, this tower was mounted on the front portion of the roof of the firehouse. It was enclosed with plywood in order to form a hose drying tower. For many years, after each alarm the wet hose was draped over a pipe frame and hauled with block and tackle to the top of the tower to dry. A few years after the installation of the tower, it was decided that a new siren could be placed on top of the tower. A 5 horsepower horizontal siren was purchased. This was an improvement in the alerting system but hearing it still depended on the weather and the distance from the firehouse.

More changes to the firehouse on Norwood Road were made in the 1966 when it simply became impossible to buy a fire engine that was low enough to pass through those eight foot doors. The firehouse had been constructed with a heavy poured reinforced concrete beam across the front of the building above the doors. Both the door width and height needed to be increased and that beam had to be removed. This beam was about 18" high and 8" thick and at least 24 feet long.

A work crew of members planned out the job, shored up the truss work across the front of the building and removed the beam. They replaced the concrete beam with a steel beam of smaller height and gained about a foot in headroom. After new doors were installed the openings were 10' wide and 9'2" high. The doors were still restrictive, but at least, it was possible to get an apparatus that would fit through them. Another restrictive aspect of the original fire house was the 10' ceiling height inside the building. Simple chores like packing hose and working on the apparatus often required that vehicle be pulled outside.

In the late 1960's, a six tank breathing air cascade system was installed in the firehouse. This system was used to fill the air tanks of the self contained breathing apparatus. Prior to this improvement, air tanks had to be taken to Ocean City where the fire department filled them at their 9th Street station. This cascade was supplied by having an industrial gas distributor bring in full tanks in exchange for empty ones. This installation provided for increased training with the breathing apparatus and thus increased use of them on fires.

Several years later, when the company moved to its new quarters on Old Tuckahoe Road, the cascade was moved. Later, in the mid 1980's, a high pressure compressor was added so that there would no longer be dependence on the distributor.

Because the tower was causing stress on the roof structure of the fire house, it was decided, in 1967, to remove it. Shortly after the dismantling of the tower, it was discovered that the roof shingles were in bad shape

and needed replacement. A bid of \$800 was received from a contractor to do the work. At a meeting in July 1967, the members decided to do the work themselves. Two evenings later the roof was finished at a cost of \$275.

It was obvious for a number of years that new or enlarged quarters would be necessary at some time in the future. Several suggestions as to how the fire station on Norwood Road could be altered were discussed and some plans were even drawn. The problem of how to pay for any such changes was always a roadblock to the plans. Furthermore, the low ceiling, limited door size and other difficulties with the old firehouse would still be present.

A building fund was established during the 1970's, when the Ladies Auxiliary sent a \$200 check to the company for "a new building". The members were not sure what to do with this money, but after discussion it was decided to establish a separate fund for the purpose. Spurred by the beginning of the fund, a search was begun for a piece of property on which to build. The building committee found a parcel along Old Tuckahoe Road. The owners, Edgar and Mary Corson were approached about selling the land which was an abandoned sand pit. They indicated that they would be willing to transfer ownership to the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company for the amount they had invested in the property. This amounted to about one thousand dollars. The transfer was completed and a sign was erected announcing the future location of the new fire station. Progress toward the goal of new quarters was slow, but finally, in February 1979, ground was broken at the site for the new Marmora Firehouse.

Completed in 1980, the new fire station was a steel structure. With overall dimensions 80 by 90 feet, it was large enough to have completely contained the old firehouse! There were three engine bays, two of which were drive-through. A 30-foot section on the east side of the building was separated by a fire wall and designated as a meeting hall. A kitchen was arranged at one end of this section. Above this meeting room area,

offices, a company meeting room, recreation room and storage areas were provided. A communication room and shop area were located on the engine room floor.

One of the obvious advantages of the new station was the ceiling height in the new building. With at least 16 feet clear above the floor, packing hose inside the firehouse was no longer a problem and with doors 12 feet wide and 14 feet high, the problems of the old station's small doors was eliminated. Marmora's new firehouse was dedicated in May 1980. The 1979 Continental pumper tanker was housed at the same time. The parade associated with these ceremonies included over one hundred pieces of fire and rescue apparatus.

Feeling the need for more space both in the engine room and in the offices upstairs, the members recognized the need to add onto the firehouse. In the early 1990's, a additional drive through vehicle bay was constructed along the entire length at the rear of the building. Part of the first bay behind the meeting room was used to provide more space for service area on both floors. Then the spaces on the upper level were completely renovated to make offices available for the various members with positions of command and administrative responsibility. Provisions for a library and learning center were also made.

Soon after these renovations were complete, the Marmora Fire Company acquired a substantial structure that could be used as a training tower. With this acquisition, the area northwest of the main structure was fenced and developed as a training center. This center includes various facilities to enable the members to train in Marmora instead of traveling to Cape May Court House to use the training center at the county complex. In addition to the tower, the training center includes a "smoke and burn" building as well as a storage building for training supplies.

About the same time that the training center was being developed, a study of the members and their family situations was made. It was de-

terminated that at almost every alarm - especially in the daytime - several more members would be able to respond if a means of caring for their children could be provided. It was further found that the same situation prevailed for work sessions and training. The idea of a play area was introduced and the members approved it. Costs were held to a minimum because the members provided all the labor. When the playground was finished it was made available to the children of the neighborhood as well as the children of members. Thus, in solving a problem, the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has provided an additional service for the community.

In 1993, a 30kW standby generator was acquired and installed in its own enclosure to the north side of the building. Providing sufficient power to supply all essential electrical requirements of the firehouse, this addition made the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company headquarters self-sufficient in any emergency. The unit automatically starts when a power outage occurs so that building functions continue without interruption.

For fifty years the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has been a "tank truck" company, hauling the water that it needed for firefighting. In the early days, the water source was two or three drafting points. Later, the mutual aid agreement with the Ocean City Fire Department, gave permission for Marmora to fill water tanks at one or two hydrants along 34th Street. Then, with the construction of the B. L. England Generating Station, about ten hydrants were installed there and Marmora was given permission to use them. Access to these hydrants behind the fence was sometimes limited and runs to Ocean City hydrants continued to be commonplace.

Then, in the early 1980's, about two years after occupying the new fire station, the membership authorized the drilling of a 10 inch well on the back of the property. With the installation of a submersible pump, the well could deliver several hundred gallons of water each minute. Now there was a water source for filling the tanks without having to go to a hydrant in Ocean City. This well is still operating as a water source for fire fighting water supply.

The most recent development in the water supply situation occurred in January 1997, when 14 hydrants went into service in the “Downtown” Marmora area. This represents a big step forward in the fire protection of this area, but large portions of the Marmora Fire District still require the tank trucks for firefighting water supply.

## **...Notable Fires and Events...**

Over its 50 years of existence Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has engaged in the suppression of thousands of fires. It would be impossible and quite boring to attempt to review all of these operations. On the following pages are accounts of notable operations - notable because of their magnitude or for some other reason that makes them especially memorable to Marmora firemen.

The first engine didn't get into town in time for the first fire! Actually there were a couple of small grass fires prior to the arrival of that pumper. In fact, the first grass fire after the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company organized had to be handled by Ocean City Fire Department which came to Marmora to put out a fire right along Roosevelt Boulevard at Vernon Road.

### **1947            Pig Pen Fire**

Also before the pumper arrived in May 1947, the first real structural fire occurred. The Marmora Volunteer Fire Company had the Indian cans and brooms but no pumper and so the very first structural fire was fought by mutual aid units. But importantly those units would no longer be called by individual citizens seeking help, but instead they were called by the fledgling Marmora Volunteer Fire Company as a mutual aid response. This began the continuing tradition of cooperation with surrounding units that is alive and well today. Ocean City, Ocean View and Tuckahoe all sent help on this occasion.

Ironically, the fire was in the pig pen and one of the out-buildings on Mahlon McMaster's farm - yes, the first structural fire experienced by the new Marmora Volunteer Fire Company was on the property of the Fire Chief. The buildings were not saved and some pigs died, but several pigs were saved and the fire spread was limited to the buildings where it started.

Many years later, after the farm had been sold, the farmhouse was the scene of a rapidly spreading fire, the leveled the entire building. At that



time the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company was assisted by both Tuckahoe and Seaville Fire Companies who were called for mutual aid.

## **July 1949                      Stagecoach Road Fire**

It really wasn't an inferno nor was it a huge building! Actually, the building on Stagecoach Road midway between Tuckahoe and Church Roads was a small one story house with an attic like many of the old houses in Marmora - two rooms and a shed roof kitchen downstairs and one or two rooms upstairs under the sloping roof.

The siren blew about 6:00 P.M. calling the Marmora volunteers from their suppers. The boy of 10 years ago, was home from college for the summer. Dad jumped up from the table, ran out the door, and headed for the firehouse just a couple of blocks away. The student finished his supper and, although not a member of the fire company, he wanted to help. Soon the siren of a fire truck could be heard getting closer and closer as the pumper with its empty tank came down the street in front of his house to get water from the "waterhole". He went out and asked the firemen if he could help. They sent him to Roosevelt Boulevard and Vernon Road to give them a "go" or "no-go" signal as they headed back to the fire. Presently, other fire engines from Tuckahoe and Ocean View came to the water point to refill. Each truck made repeated runs from the fire to the waterhole and back to the fire.

Very little was saved and to add to the problems of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company, the Ford pumper blew its engine. An emergency meeting was held late that night to authorize a new engine for the Ford and to try to figure out how to pay for it!

The young man went home feeling satisfied that he done something to help! Dad proposed him for membership at the next meeting. Thus, he joined the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company.

## **1957                    The Irrigation Pond Tragedy**

It had been an exceptionally cold month. Ice had formed on many of the ponds in the Marmora Fire District. Late one afternoon a call for help came from the Palermo Radar Station. Three of the children of personnel living in dependent housing were missing!

The records do not indicate how the irrigation pond just south of the housing area was pin-pointed as the site, but broken ice on the pond and small footprints on the bank led to the conclusion that the boys had fallen into the water. Fire companies from Marmora, Ocean City and Ocean View as well as the Rescue Squad from Ocean City responded. All the firetrucks there began to draft water from the pond to lower the water level while rescue squad divers attempted to locate the boys. A large twin rotor helicopter called by the Air Force searched the surrounding area.

Finally, it became a dragging operation and after several hours, the three small bodies were pulled one by one from the pond. The entire area was stunned by the deaths. Although not a "first" to be cheered, Marmora Volunteer Fire Company had experienced its first fatalities on an emergency operation.

## **Dec. 31, 1961            Beesley's Point Hotel Fire**

Every small town fire department has at least one building that is their "if that one ever goes" location. The members, when idly talking about possible fires in their area, frequently refer to the location as the place where a bad situation could develop. Marmora firemen from the very beginning had often said "if the Beesley's Point Hotel ever goes!" The Beesley's Point Hotel was a large four-story frame building that has stood at Shore Road and the bay since before the turn of the century. It was a local landmark. In the late 1950's, the hotel was mostly vacant except for the restaurant and bar that operated on the ground floor. Then the

electric company decided to construct a power station in Beesley's Point. Quickly the hotel was alive as out-of-town workers occupied many of the rooms.

On New Year's Eve 1961, the Beesley's Point Hotel "went"! The Marmora Volunteers found themselves celebrating the beginning of 1962 fighting a major fire. The fire had begun in the heater room on the ground floor and had raced to the fourth floor via an open stairway. Quick response by fire units from Ocean City, Somers Point and Tuckahoe to assist the Marmora firemen resulted in stopping the fire with only one wing damaged, but the damage was enough that considering its the owners decided to demolish the building.

### **Mar. 6-7, 1962      March '62 Storm**

No one in Marmora (nor anyone in the South Jersey area, for that matter) was particularly concerned about the weather conditions in early March 1962. A northeaster was brewing, but as usual, the prospects of such a storm were met with the normal "ho-hum" attitude of people who had experienced three or four such storms every year as long as they could remember. But this one would be different! The convergence of three low pressure areas along the Atlantic seaboard brought unprecedented high tides and sustained winds that raked the South Jersey coast for two full days and left the barrier islands with tremendous damage.

In Marmora, the operations began on Monday, March 5th with an early evening fire alarm in Palermo. Completely unassociated with the storm, the alarm was for the odor of smoke in a home. A partially clogged flue on a space heater was the cause, and the Marmora units returned to their station. Importantly, the coincident fire alarm had the effect of calling the firemen to duty. They remained at the station for the next 72 hours.

The tide was high and was beginning to encroach on Roosevelt Boulevard. As had been done in the past in similar situations, a Marmora fire truck was dispatched to the water's edge to stop traffic and advise motorists that attempting to go into Ocean City was unsafe. By the time of the next high tide on Tuesday morning, waves were breaking across the Boulevard. The fire truck was moved to the west side of the Parkway. Each succeeding tide came in higher than the one before, and it soon became obvious that flooding damage in Ocean City would be extensive.

The Marmora firemen accomplished the evacuation by boat of a small group of residents from the Cedar Swamp Creek area of Tuckahoe Road. They continued to maintain the road block on the Boulevard. The fire-house became a shelter for a few stranded motorists.

Finally the wind died down and the water began to recede. As soon as it was possible to get to Ocean City, aid was sent. Since most of their hydrants were covered by sand and could not easily be found, Marmora's tank truck was stationed for about a week at Ocean City's 29th Street fire station. Every 8 hours a new driver was sent to that station. Members of the Marmora Fire Company also served as volunteer guards to man the roadblocks at 34th Street, keeping the curious from entering the area of greatest destruction.

## **1963            Atlantic County Forest Fires**

It had been a rather dry spring and the woods were tinder. Several smoke clouds rising from Atlantic County could be seen from Marmora. In the late morning, a call was received requesting assistance. The International "wood's truck" and a tank truck were dispatched. They were directed to report to the Bargaintown Fire House. Arriving there, the Marmora units were immediately sent to Tilton Road where they were used to protect structures as the fire came through the woods. As the crown fire passed, Marmora was reassigned to the Black Horse Pike where the units participated in the final stand that stopped the forest fire that had cut a wide swath across South Jersey.

Sent to the Northfield Fire Station, the Marmora firemen were there only long enough to grab a sandwich and cup of coffee before they were dispatched to Zion Road. There the tank truck was held in a staging area while the wood's truck with a five man crew was sent to protect three newly completed houses along Zion Road. The fire, running parallel to the course of the fire earlier in the day, destroyed nearly everything in its path except where a fire truck had been stationed. The three houses protected by Marmora firemen stood unharmed in contrast to the completely blackened woodland surrounding them. Other buildings along the road were destroyed because there was not enough fire apparatus available.

### **Nov. 1964     Big Dump Fire**

When the Marmora Fire Company was first organized, there was a small trash dump provided by the Township for the use of residents in the Marmora area.\* It was not a very large area, but it seems that the trash caught fire periodically. In fact, the fire company minutes of June 21, 1949 report that "The Chief and the President went to the Township Committee about the dump and the recent fires there. As a result they were appointed watchmen."

After a few years, this dump was closed and Upper Township established the township landfill on Butter Road in Palermo. This was in Marmora's fire district. Like its predecessor, the Palermo landfill had fires occur on it from time to time. Most of the time, the fire was small and easily controlled with the water from a single pumper or tanker. In 1964, however, a fire reported on the landfill was different. Arriving units from Marmora found the dump on fire from one end to the other - about 200 yards of trash blazing and threatening to spread to the surrounding woodland. It was a Saturday evening and all Marmora firemen and equipment quickly became involved in the attempt to control the fire.

The fight continued all night with very little results. During the early morning hours there were three explosions. Also two men were almost lost when the trash bank caved in suddenly dropping them several feet into a cavity in the pile. Fortunately, they both had presence of mind to hang onto the hose line and the man tending the hose up above was able to help them back up to the top. (It was later learned that old car bodies with the fuel tanks still in them had been pushed over the edge of the trash pile which was in several places at least twenty feet high.) As Sunday morning dawned the flames were unabated. The Township mayor was called to provide a bulldozer and truckloads of gravel to begin the task of burying the fire.

This was the last time that the Marmora Fire Company attempted to fight a dump fire. From then on the tactics changed to purely defensive operations until the Township workers could get to the landfill to cover it.

\*(It may be of interest that the training facility at the Marmora Fire Station is located on the site of the old trash dump mentioned in the 1949 minutes.)

## **Feb. 20, 1972 Train Wreck**

About two o'clock on the Saturday afternoon of February 20, 1972, the Marmora Fire Company dispatcher received a call reporting that a train delivering oil to the B.L. England Generating Station had derailed in the area of the railroad crossing on Tuckahoe Road. Responding units found the wrecked train down a dirt road about 400 yards from the paved highway. The odor of fuel oil hung in the air and could be detected 300 feet away from the tank car that was in the worst condition. It was soon evident that this tank car was leaking its crude oil cargo at a moderate rate. Probably a thousand gallons or more had escaped by the time firemen arrived.

Six other tank cars that were also derailed were determined to be sound and not leaking. Acting upon advice from an electric company representative to "treat it like gasoline", the spill area was quickly foamed. A call was made to Ocean City for additional foam supplies which were promptly delivered to the scene. A Marmora fireman was able to significantly slow the leak with a tire tube and some hose clamps. To further reduce the hazards, the railroad removed about thirty other tank cars that were still on the tracks and undamaged.

Marmora crews were rotated around the clock for the next 72 hours. (Actually hardly anyone left the scene for this was the first train wreck most of the members had ever witnessed and they didn't want to miss anything.) Members of the Ladies Auxiliary went to the firehouse and for the entire three day operation prepared soup and other food to be transported to the incident scene to feed the firemen and workers there.

Since the temperatures throughout the operation were below freezing, it was necessary to replace hoses every time replenishment of the foam blanket was needed. The wet hose was returned to the firehouse to be dried. Finally, on the third day, the derailed cars were all returned to the rebuilt roadbed and tracks. With all these tank cars moved safely to the power plant, the Marmora firemen returned to their station. A hazardous job had been completed safely and efficiently.

### **May 10, 1979 Harbor Road Fire**

The fire apparently began about 7:30 in the morning, but the Marmora Fire Company was not notified until nearly nine o'clock. By the time the first arriving units were on the scene, the garage was fully involved and the flames were coming through the roof. Noting smoke also coming from the second floor of the house that was still under construction, Marmora's Assistant Chief called immediately for assistance from Seaville, Tuckahoe, Somers Point and Ocean City.

As the attack progressed against the fire in the house, the Seaville firemen were directed to provide an attack line on the fire in the garage to reduce the exposure to the house. As the line was maneuvered into position, it got caught on something near the garage. Quickly, a Seaville man jumped in to free the line and at that moment the concrete block walls of the garage collapsed. Struck by some of these blocks, Curtis Corson suffered fatal injuries. The tragedy hit the entire Upper Township area hard and focused much attention on the fire companies.

The investigation of the fire determined the fire to be of incendiary origin because there were several points of origin in the house and garage. Because of the death of the fire fighter, the fire was declared an "arson-homicide". Unfortunately the perpetrator was never identified nor apprehended.

### **Early 1980's Holtz Boat Works**

The boatyard and repair facility on Tuckahoe Road at Cedar Swamp Creek was packed with a variety of craft. Many were in storage for the season - some were being overhauled in the shops. A fire broke out and quickly involved one of the buildings. Several boats and one of the buildings were lost, but the majority of the boats and the other buildings were saved from the destructive flames. Complicating the situation were adverse weather conditions including high winds which could have driven the fire into the exposed buildings, but which were spared by the aggressive operations of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company.

### **1987 Tire Fire in Elwood, NJ**

With over a million tires ablaze and little or no water available, the firemen of Atlantic County needed help. The help they needed came in the form of tank trucks from many places. Marmora Volunteer Fire Company, in what may be the longest distance ever traveled by Marmora to



supply mutual aid, sent the tractor-trailer tank truck and other apparatus with personnel to the scene. Marmora apparatus was on the scene for a full week.

### **1987                    Christmas Day on Hilltop Drive**

The last thing any firefighter wants to hear is an alarm for a house fire especially on Christmas Day. Marmora firemen are no different. On Christmas Day 1987, a large house on Hilltop Drive caught fire! Marmora Volunteer Fire Company responded and immediately requested mutual aid from neighboring Seaville and Tuckahoe. True to tradition, over 100 members of the three companies responded to the scene. Although the fire badly damaged the upper portion of the house, enough was saved to permit the house to be rebuilt.

### **March 1992    B. L. England Coal Pit Fire**

Called to the B.L. England Generating Station for a coal fire, most responding Marmora firemen probably thought they were going to what would be a boring, dirty job. Upon arrival, they found that fire was several stories down in the ground in a pit below the coal car unloading facility. It was a long, dirty, dangerous job. Involved in the fire was the conveyor system that brings the coal to the surface from its underground storage area. This fire is probably the largest dollar loss fire in the history of Marmora Volunteer Fire Company.

### **September 1993    South Shore Auto World**

It was a Saturday morning in September and everything in Marmora seemed calm and quiet. The Fire Chief had left town early to go to the New Jersey State Firemen's Convention in Wildwood to register Marmora's units in the parade. This was the day of the huge Firemen's

Parade in which Marmora Volunteer Fire Company expected to participate and hopefully bring home a trophy as they had in the past.

The alarm was sounded for a fire at South Shore Auto World on Shore Road just south of Tuckahoe Road. First arriving units reported heavy smoke and called for more response. Without the Chief to “run the show”, a young Deputy Chief stepped in, took control of the situation and by the time the Chief could return to Marmora from Wildwood, the Marmora firemen were overhauling the fire. Damage was heavy but the main production part of the building had been saved.

### **Ocean City Mutual Aid**

From almost the very beginning of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company, there has been cooperation with the Ocean City Fire Department. Ocean City officers conducted frequent training sessions for the members of the fledgling fire company. Mutual aid began soon after Marmora was organized and continues to the present. One of the first recorded opportunities in which Marmora helped the Ocean City firemen occurred in August 1954, when a massive grass fire occurred along Bay Avenue in Ocean City. In those days Bay Avenue was lined with cat-tails and reeds from 24th to 34th Street. The Marmora tanker was used to supply water to the pumpers attacking the fires.

As the new company became more competent and better equipped, it was called for mutual aid whenever Ocean City had a fire big enough to require a general alarm. On such occasions, a Marmora engine and crew reported to Ocean City’s 29th Street Station and stood by in that station to cover the entire southern portion of the island. Later, in the 1970’s when Ocean City built a new station at the south end of the island and Marmora had more apparatus and personnel, the Marmora Fire Company sent men and apparatus to both of those stations.

In the early 1980's, Ocean City had a fire in the 800 block of Central Avenue. On this occasion, Marmora was called to the scene and assigned a position at the rear of the fire building to protect exposures. This was the first time that a Marmora unit had ever been called to work on the scene of a general alarm fire in Ocean City. It would not be the last time.

When the Village Theater on the Boardwalk in Ocean City burned, Marmora was again called to the fire scene to assist. Another such situation occurred in the 900 block of the Ocean City Boardwalk when fire claimed an area known as Fisherman's Wharf.

## **...And a Little of Something Else...**

While reviewing records and notes from the past, a number of interesting items seemed to “jump off the page”. The following notes contain some of the “flavor” of the first 25 years of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company when things were different than they are today.

“...Also an [anomous,] letter, from some crank, telling us how to run the company.”

*-from Company Minutes, Feb. 18, 1947*

“...That we pay Spencer Young \$16.00 for nozzles and that we buy 500 ft of hose, at ten cents a foot, and some necessary nozzles.”

*-from Company Minutes, Aug. 5, 1947*

Notice was given to amend the By-Laws to take in the Ladies Auxiliary “as a unit to function for the benefit and welfare of the fire company.”

*-from Company Minutes, Nov. 2, 1948*

[Note: This amendment was approved and the Ladies have been an active part of Marmora Volunteer Fire Company ever since.]

... voted to buy license plate tags to read

“Marmora Fire Dept.” 100 for \$37.50

*-from Company Minutes, Dec. 7, 1948*

“Hereafter be sure that [before] leaving for a fire, that the location is posted on the board.”

*-from Company Minutes, Oct. 17, 1950*

Moved that any member in good standing being

drafted or enlisting in armed services be carried on roll as paid up until honorably discharged.

*-from Company Minutes, Apr. 17, 1951*

No regular meeting this date due to "a very important meeting of the School Board"

*-from Company Minutes, Sep. 7, 1954*

"A case of Athlete's Foot has been reported. Boots are suspected. A disinfectant is to be procured and each pair of boots to be dusted with this at frequent intervals."

*-from Company Minutes, Oct. 5, 1954*

"A motion was made and carried that we pay our County Assn. dues. However they are to be paid in cash. The Treasurer will make a check payable to the secretary who will cash same and pay dues at the meeting tomorrow night."

*-from Company Minutes, Feb. 7, 1956*

Due to complaints regarding sounding of siren it was decided to test in future at noon on Saturday - prior to this had blown siren one blast to signal meetings and drills on Tuesday evening at 7:00 P.M.

*-from Company Minutes, Mar. 18, 1958*

"It was moved, seconded and carried that between November 1st and March 31st the fire hall will be rented only if adequate substitute housing of the equipment can be arranged by the house committee chairman or by the persons desiring to rent the hall. The purpose of this motion was explained to be that the pumper and tank truck be properly protected during severe weather."

*-from Company Minutes, Nov. 21, 1961*

Word of thanks from L. Lilly, Jr. to Marmora for efforts to organize a volunteer fire company in Seaville. Due to lack of men at this time nothing came of it. [Marmora had put the "bomb truck" in Lilly's gas station. ]

*-from Company Minutes, Dec. 19, 1961*

Reported that we supplied Stainton's dredge with 2000 gallons of water. We are to get 1000 gallons of fuel oil for the firehouse in return.

*-from Company Minutes, Feb. 19, 1963*

[Note: That 1000 gallons of fuel oil never ran out! Mr. Stainton, always a friend of the Marmora Fire Company, supplied the heating oil for the fire house until his death!]

"No Meeting, President absent. Vice Pres. absent. No officers present to conduct Meeting. All bills & business carried" [Above note hand-written on a page in the minutes.]

*-from Company Minutes, Mar. 19, 1964*

Note made of "newly organized Seaville Group"  
Marmora Volunteer Fire Company went on record  
wishing the organization "much encouragement and  
best wishes".

*-from Company Minutes, Aug. 4, 1964*

"A resolution was made stating that the Company  
wished to back up our Fire Commissioners on our  
Boundary Limits of the Fire District. It was  
decided to check the legal status of such a move  
by another Fire District and the Township Committee."

*-from Company Minutes, Apr. 20, 1965*

Meeting with representatives of Seaville Fire Company  
reported.

*-from Company Minutes, Jul. 6, 1965*

More "problems" mentioned regarding Seaville  
Fire Co. and its territory. Fire Commissioners  
are to meet with Seaville Co. and solicitors  
at Township meeting.

*-from Company Minutes, Oct. 5, 1965*

Christmas trees are here and set out on side lot.

*-from Company Minutes, Dec. 7, 1965*

"...discussed the advisability of calling Ocean City Fire  
Dept. if no member shows up within five minutes..."

*-from Company Minutes, Jan. 18, 1966*

"H. Schneider made mention of the fact the Fire Commissioners met with the Township Committee on Jan 24, 1966. There will be 5 candidates on the ballot and there will only be a 24 hour period when there will be no Fire Commission. Dissolved Feb 18, election Feb 19."  
*-from Company Minutes, Feb. 1, 1966*

Foley, Grubb, Sharp, Mitchell and Schneider elected Fire Commissioners.  
*-from Company Minutes, Mar. 1, 1966*

Fire house needs new roof - got price of \$800 from Earl Shaw - decided to purchase materials for \$330 and do work ourselves  
*-from Company Minutes, Jul. 11, 1967*

Roof finished except for cap - cost about \$275  
*-from Company Minutes, Aug. 1, 1967*

Two walkie-talkie radios (CB) were auth.  
*-from Company Minutes, May 2, 1967*

Chief authorized to purchase 3 Survivair masks. Three old oxygen masks to be donated to SVFC.  
*-from Company Minutes, Oct. 15, 1968*

Trustees and Fire Commissioners authorized to investigate electric door operators for the firehouse.  
*-from Company Minutes, Oct. 15, 1968*



Letter to Fire Commissioners requesting installation of door operators.

*-from Company Minutes, Nov. 6, 1968*

"A card from one of the bus passengers from Shamokin, Pa. was read telling us that he was sending a box of peanuts for the holidays. It was reported that these had been received and consumed." [This was the result of using the firehouse to shelter the passengers of a bus broken down on the Parkway during the previous Labor Day weekend. - reported 9/3/68]

*-from Company Minutes, Jan. 7, 1969*

Suggestion that company should provide a radio for the Chief's (private) car. [This didn't happen, but the Chief's wife gave him a used radio for Christmas.]

*-from Company Minutes, Feb. 2, 1970*

"...asked President to contact the treasurer and see if he is going to attend meetings or give up being treasurer."

*-from Company Minutes, Mar. 17, 1970*

Seaville Volunteer Fire Company requested to operate three mobile radios on our license. Will apply for more mobiles on license.

*-from Company Minutes, Jun. 17, 1970*

Fire Comm. purchased new revolving amber light  
for siren poles

*-from Company Minutes, Jul. 7, 1970*

Motion that Chief approach Township Committee  
about requesting them to reimburse for fire  
school costs.

*-from Company Minutes, Sep. 15, 1970*

Call for anyone interested in joining Upper  
Township Rescue Squad. There will be a meeting  
Oct. 21, 1971.

*-from Company Minutes, Oct. 19, 1971*

[Note: The purpose of this meeting was to get  
the Squad to station an ambulance in Marmora.  
About 15 members of the Fire Company and the  
Ladies Auxiliary attended. As a result an ambulance  
was stationed in Marmora until the Squad moved to  
its building in Petersburg about ten years later.]

## **...The Way It Is Now!**

That boy of the late 1930's grew up and married, and after living away from Marmora for a few years, he returned to live here. Renewing activity in the fire company seemed a natural thing to do. He now has grandchildren who are older than he was when he chased the fire engines up Shore Road. He has followed with interest the growth of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company over the past fifty years and takes pride in the fact that he had a part in that development.

Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has progressed tremendously since those slow, almost painful, beginnings fifty years ago. The expanded fire station on Old Tuckahoe Road contains a fleet of "state-of-the-art" apparatus. With a total pumping capacity of over 5000 gallons per minute and the ability to carry over 15,000 gallons of water in tanks, the fire company is ready to meet the emergency needs of the community. Compared to the 500 gallons per minute pump and the 500 gallon water tank on that first fire truck, it is obvious that Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has "come a long way"!

Seemingly endless sets of turnout gear line the engine room walls in readiness for the next alarm. The amount of personal protective equipment attests to the number of active members that exhibit a high degree of interest in the daily operations of the fire company. Statistics are seldom very interesting but in this case they reveal an important fact about the volunteers of Marmora. During 1996, the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company responded to 120 fire alarms and 150 medical calls. The average response of personnel for those fire alarms was 27 in the daytime and 44 during nighttime hours! Many fire departments in much larger cities and towns would love to be able to turn out numbers like that.

In 1995, recognizing a need to help the community with medical response, the MVFC members decided that they wanted to assume another service to the community. The First Responder Program was initiated on August 1, 1995. As a result, a number of members volunteered to take the necessary training to be certified as first responders. Quite a few of this number continued on to become Emergency Medical Technicians.

Currently there are 22 Emergency Medical Technicians and 8 First Responders in the membership.

All 60 active members of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company are trained to the State certification requirements of the Fire Fighter I level. Many have training much beyond that. Several members are qualified fire service instructors and at least six have Level II Instructor certification. Some have completed Fire Science courses at the college level. This training plus the equipment available to them and the professional attitude that they exhibit provide an emergency service of which the people of Marmora can be justly proud.

Beginning in January 1995, the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company formally organized a Junior Firefighter Program. For many years, the sons, and sometimes daughters, of active firemen have been coming to the firehouse with their fathers. Sometimes these visits were at the time of the alarm and, at other times, on drill nights or sessions. When they came on alarms, there were long waits either at the station or in the family car, because they were not allowed to take any part in the emergency response. On rare occasions such as parades, the children were allowed to ride on the apparatus. Sometimes when they came to drills or work sessions, they may have been allowed to run errands or help clean equipment. When they reached the age of eighteen they were eligible to join the fire company and many of them did. There were no formal rules for this activity - it just happened.

The Junior Firefighter Program allows 17 year olds to join the company. Enrollment is limited at any time to just five individuals. They are restricted in the duties, hours and activities in which they can participate. They are not allowed to drive apparatus or fight fire. On their 18th birthday, they may begin the probationary period required of all members. Up to the date of this writing every junior member has become an active member of the fire company.

Female firefighters in the fire service have been accepted nationwide. The Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has come right along with this trend. Currently, three of the active members are female firefighters and one of the junior members expects to become the fourth female firefighter in the Marmora Fire Company.

The success of any organization can be traced to the leadership as well as the members of the group. Marmora Volunteer Fire Company leaders for 1997, the Fiftieth Anniversary Year, are listed below.

Administrative Officers:

President:	Russell Barham
Vice President:	Joe Bologno
Secretary:	Jeff Hogg
Treasurer:	Cindy Swenk
Historian:	Joe McAfee
Corr. Secretary:	Joe Walters
Trustees:	Brian Baughman
	Rob Lea
	Joe Moyer II
	Joe Moyer III
	Tom Swenk
	David Wood

Line Officers:

Chief:	Jay Newman
Deputy Chiefs:	Jeff McIntyre (Operations)
	Kurt Austin (Operations)
	Don Tomlinson (Safety)
	Ed Kooker, Jr. (Chief Engineer)
Captains:	Jeff Pierson, Sr. (Asst. Safety & Training)
	Carl Madden (Chief Investigator)
	Chris Breunig
	Russell Barham

Captains: Tom Kruegl  
Chuck Liston  
Bob Macom  
Bob Millar  
Bill Miller (Fire Police)  
Joe Moyer III (Fire Prevention)

The current Fire Commissioners of Fire District #3 are:

Bob DiNick, **Chairman**  
Tom Kruegl  
Rich Lee  
Chuck Liston.  
Bob Smith

Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has had an ongoing fire prevention education program in place for a number of years. Several years ago, following a classroom visit at the Elementary School, one of the teachers with her class wrote a thank you to the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. This note printed on a large piece of poster board occupies a prominent spot in the library and study room at the firehouse. It reads as follows:

To Our Friends At  
Marmora Volunteer Fire Company

We saw a shiny fire truck  
All big and bright and red;  
We met a friendly helper,  
His name was Fireman Ed.  
Fireman Jeff and Fireman Bob\*  
Both helped us to learn  
How to exit safely  
If our house should start to burn  
We learned to stop and drop and roll,  
We learned to crawl, not walk,  
We learned to check our doors for heat,

We learned much from their talk.  
Is that the fire bell ringing  
'Cause smoke is in the air?  
Relax, the Crew is on its way...  
Marmora will soon be there!

Love and Thanks for Coming  
Mrs. Denton's Kindergarten

\* Firemen named are Ed Kooker, Jr., Jeff Pierson, and Bob Smith

The residents of the Marmora area can be assured that when the need arises, Marmora Volunteer Fire Company will be there to help! From humble beginnings to the fine professional organization that it is today, the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company has certainly "come a long way"!

Postscript

\*\*\*\*\*

It would seem fitting at this point to inscribe "THE END", but this not really the end. Rather 1997 is the beginning - the beginning of another 50 years of progress, service and dedication by the Volunteers of Marmora. Let us all hope that in 2047, the members of Marmora Volunteer Fire Company will be able to look back and say, "We've come a long way!"

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## List of Fire Company Presidents

<b>President</b>	<b>Years</b>
William Godfrey	1947-1948
Frank Vinnacombe	1949-1950
Peter Totten	1951-1952
Edward Getty	1953
Filbert Corson	1954-1955
Edward Getty	1956
Hank Schneider	1957-1958
Richard Onley	1959
Joe Lovette	1960
Billy Cabiness	1961
Joe Dailey	1961
George Grubb	1962-1963
Dale Adams	1963
Leonard Clark	1964
Gabe Saxe	1965
Connie Lea	1966
George Young	1967
Bruno Tropeano	1968
John Davis	1969
Bill Bianchini	1969-1971
Frank Madajewski	1972
Ed Reese	1973-1975
Richard Lee	1976-1982
Jeff Pierson	1983-1984
Kurt Austin	1985
Jay Newman	1986
Joe Seyfert	1987-1988
Bob Smith	1989-1992
Jeff Pierson	1993-1996
Russ Barham	1997



## **List of Fire Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs**

<b>Chief</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Assistant chiefs</b>
Mahlon MacMaster	1947	Charles Cossaboone Joe Lovette
Charles Brown	1948	Earl Sapp Sal Frasca
Joe Lovette	1949	Harold Gannon
Harold Gannon	1950-1955	Joe Lovette Carl Madden
Carl Madden	1956-1958	Filbert Corson, Jr. Peter Totten
Frank Foglio	1959-1961	Carl Madden Ben Guiles Stan Totten
Stan Totten	1962-1980	Carl Madden Joe Lovette Hank Schneider Charles Battersby Carl Singer Tom Ward Wilfred Lea
Carl Madden	1981-1982	Tom Ward Wilfred Lea

## **List of Fire Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs (Cont.)**

<b>Chief</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Assistant chiefs</b>
Richard Lee	1983-1994	Tom Ward Wilfred Lea Bob DiNick Jay Newman Jeff McIntyre Bob Smith Kurt Austin
Jay Newman	1995-date	Jeff McIntyre Kurt Austin Don Tomlinson Ed Kooker, Jr.