



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2007

## Turmoil In Hightstown, or, the Origins of a Fire Department

by Richard S. Hutchinson

### THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF THE STORY PRINTED IN THE MAY - JUNE 2007 ISSUE

#### The Americus Engine Company, No. 1 - the First Fire Department in Hightstown's History

In 1866 and 1867, a number of events took place. The businessmen and other citizens of the community came together and volunteered to help fight the fires. With the purchase of a "new" engine, called the "Americus," and with the appropriation of money for a building in which to store the engine, they loosely formed an organization and called themselves the "Americus Engine Company No. 1." With this organization having the blessing of the town father's, this was the beginning of future problems with the organization.

HG - 30 May 1867 - The new Engine House is so nearly completed

that it affords a shelter for the Fire Engine, which, by the way, is in need of a thorough cleaning and polishing. The painter is giving the finishing touch to the wood work of the building, and it is hoped that we shall soon have the Lock-up and Council Room also completed.

HG - 11 July 1867 - The contractors for sinking Cisterns in various parts of the Borough for the use of the Fire Department are at their work. It is claimed in some quarters that the price agreed upon was an enormous one. We should like to have some malcontent figure up the actual (not estimated) cost of one cistern. The items are easily procured.

HG - 26 September 1867 - Our town was aroused just after midnight between Saturday and Sunday last by the cry of fire! Mrs. Diana Tindal, a colored woman, living alone near the outskirts of the borough, about three-fourths of a mile from the center of town ... [lost her house due to a fire in a shed connected to her house; she had

a neighbor, George Phares, who spread the alarm.] ... The fire engine arrived in time to have been of service, but the suction-pipe was found too short to reach even the scanty supply of water in the well, besides which, there seemed to be profound ignorance as to the management of such a piece of machinery ... The necessity of an organized and well drilled Fire Company cannot be over estimated by any one who witnessed the fire and contemplated the possibilities ... [It has been suggested that a subscription be begun for building Mrs. Tindal another house on the same foundation.]

HG - 2 January 1868 - The cistern erected on Morrison Street being now ready to receive water, to be used in case of fire in that vicinity, the citizens of the borough are requested to assemble at the Engine House at 9 o'clock this (Wednesday) morning, to assist the fire Company in filling said cistern. The labor attending the filling of this cistern will be quite laborious and, it is earnestly hoped that a sufficient number of

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### SEPTEMBER

4 \*\*\*\*(Tuesday due to Labor Day)\*\*\*\*  
Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson  
West Educational Center

#### OCTOBER

1 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson  
West Educational Center

### Museum Chairperson Wanted

If you have good organizational skills, are computer literate, good with office work, and interested in learning the history of the items and the people of this community, we are looking to fill the volunteer position of Museum Chairperson. If you are interested in interviewing for this position, you can contact the present Museum Chairperson, Julie Ely, at 448-3155. The person for this position would be responsible for accepting in and recording the museum type items donated to the Society, maintaining their records, and work with the exhibits within the Ely House and the Sara H. Hutchinson Educational Center. If you are interested in helping the Society in this position, please contact Julie.

## Fire Department , continued from page 1

persons will be promptly on hand to aid the Company in the work. S. Shangle, Mayor. [Sering Shangle, owner of the Iron Foundry - Ed.]

HG - 16 January 1868 - On Sunday morning last, at half past eight o'clock, our people were aroused by the alarm of fire, which was found to be raging fiercely in the old tenement house adjoining Rev. J. Seger's on Main street. [Rev. John Seger, Baptist Church, b. 14 Feb 1786, NY City - Ed.] The engine was speedily got into position on the little stream on the rear of the property, but owing to the hose being frozen, it was some 20 minutes before the water could be forced through it, and when finally it did get to work its effectiveness was considerably lessened by reason of the frequent stoppages of the nozzles, from bits of ice which were forced through the hose. This, however, was soon obviated, and when once fairly at work, a flood of water was thrown upon the burning pile, completely deluging it, and extinguishing the last spark of fire before 10 o'clock. Before the engine had got into operation the house of the late Mrs. Downs [Elizabeth Downs, b. NJ, aged 83 in 1860 Census - Ed.] adjoining was in extreme jeopardy, and it was only through the most persistent efforts of three or four brave fellows upon the roof that it escaped. The engine was faithfully worked, the citizens coming forward freely to assist the company.

The fire which originated in the roof is supposed to have been contracted

from a spark from a brisk wood fire just kindled. Two families were rendered homeless, though the principal part of the goods was saved. There was no insurance.

Thus has another of the old landmarks fallen before the destroying element. Its Revolutionary history has frequently been told in these columns, and is familiar to most of our readers. Many old people will recall the times when there was no house between this and the old Britton tavern [Isaac Britton, Sr. b. 15 Dec 1800 - d. 24 Feb 1869 - Ed.], and many comparatively young persons will remember the time when there was none beyond it to the south, and this was considered quite out of town. But the tide of improvement has gone beyond it and around it, and we look forward to the time, in the early future, when its site will be occupied by a handsome residence, and it will only be remembered in history.

HG - 12 August 1869 - At a meeting of the Americus Fire Co., held on Monday evening, Dr. Woodward was elected Foreman and John Valentine, Assistant. We hear rumors of an appropriation by the Council for the purpose of purchasing more hose, which certainly is needed.

HG - 2 September 1869 - ...This is now the fourth fire within a week, and the sixth during the month of August, all of which, with one exception, are unexplainable. Several of them bear

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## The Society's Train Layout

**Train Volunteers - Please Take Note!!** There is a need for the space currently being taken up by the train layout in the Society's meeting room. Since it has been over three years since a "train program" for children has been presented, and there being an apparent lack of enthusiasm over the same period by the previous volunteers with the train layout, there is a consensus among the officers of the Society that the space taken up by the train layout should be used for other exhibits and therefore should be dismantled. There is also the opinion that the layout itself and the buildings should really reflect the actual appearance of this community at that period rather than what presently exists. If there is no further interest, and/or contact, by the "train volunteers" in reference to this exhibit, it will be dismantled.

## HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Hightstown, New Jersey  
founded 1971*

609-371-9580

**To educate, while preserving for  
future generations, our people  
and our community's history.**

*Editor, Richard S. Hutchinson*

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..... Corresponding Secretary  
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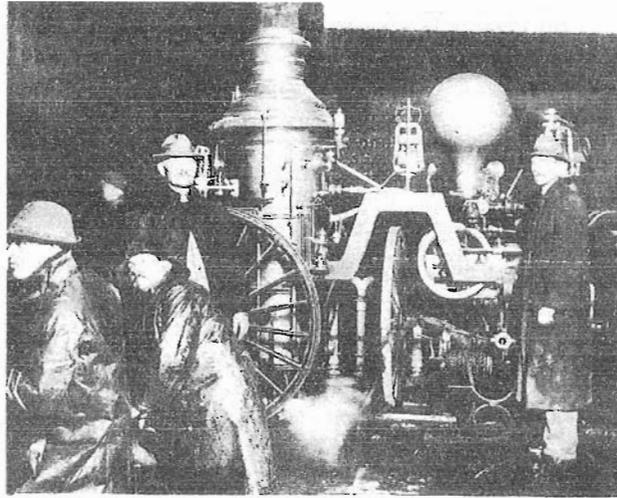
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## Fire Department , continued from page 2

unmistakable evidences of incendiaryism, for what motive it is not apparent ... One hour's constant pumping did not exhaust the water in the tank on the north end of Main Street, at the fire on Thursday last. Indeed, it would have held out an hour longer. The money expended in building that tank, as well as the other two, situated at the south end of Main, and in Mercer, near the Methodist Church was well spent. The original intention was, we think, to build five, but the Council gave way to the clamor of the people, against what they declared to be a waste of money, and the consequence is that certain portions of the borough are still without water facilities in case of fire. Near the junction of Morrison and Stockton Streets, and about one third way up Morrison Avenue, tanks should be constructed at once. Should a fire break out in either of these localities, the engine would be entirely useless, for a supply of water is not present to be had. The Common Council should see to it that these tanks and some in other localities if they are needed, are made at once.

HG - 7 December 1882 - "Another Fire - Just as the clock struck eleven on Thanksgiving night the alarm of fire was heard from the bell at the engine house. The scene of the conflagration was the building belonging to Mr. Jacob Early, known and now used as a canning factory by H. I. Burtis & Co. The building in the corner of which the fire started was the old chair factory, which contained also a boiler and many of the machines used by the company in making cans. Beside the machinery a large number of empty cans, and a thousand cans of peaches were stored in the building. A small barn adjacent contained Mr. Early's old machines, and material, and a load of hay. It was a long while before the engine could be brought into position, and then it was found impossible to induce men to work it. Both buildings were burned to the ground, but the main factory as

well as other buildings near were saved. It is to the credit of a few noble hearted citizens, a dozen or more, that they were not content to stand by and see a neighbor's property burn up, but



First Steam Fire Engine 1887

manned the brakes and worked the 'old man-killer' to the best of their ability, while others did good work in watching and protecting other buildings. The danger to these and to the main part of town was much greater than many seemed to appreciate.

The small building attached to the freight house has been for years used for the storage of coal oil and the floor in the corner toward the fire was well saturated. No very intense degree of heat would have been required to liberate and ignite the subtle vapor and once ignited nothing could have saved from destruction the entire freight building, and perhaps much other property. The efforts of several workers were of course directed toward this point and were happily successful. During the progress of the fire the strong draft caused by the burning of rosin and oil in the factory carried upward great quantities of burning fragments and the steady breeze from the southwest bore them down over the central portion of the town, where but for the snow lying on the roofs the danger of other conflagrations would have been imminent. All along the railroad near the passenger station, numerous large brands were scattered and one

particularly savage looking one, lay within twenty feet of the large stack of stalks in Mrs. Smith's barn yard [Probably, the rear property of what we call the "Smith House" on Stockton St - Ed.] Other fragments were found in the vicinity of Norton's flour mill, and some were reported even beyond Lantz's hotel ... [The Lantz Hotel stood where the present day Fire house stands - Ed.]

HG - 7 December 1882 - "A meeting was held in Pearce's Hall [corner of Rogers Avenue and Mercer Street, where the bank now stands - Ed.] on Monday evening to take into consideration the expediency of purchasing a steam fire engine. Mr. Enoch Dey was elected

chairman, and Mr. John V. D. Beekman, secretary. [Enoch Dey was a Blind & Sash Manufacturer, in 1860 and Beekman operated Planning & Molding mill- Ed.]. A general discussion of ways and means was carried on for some time. A resolution authorizing the Common Council to purchase a steamer was made and withdrawn as premature. Justice Shangle decided that the law of 1877 would apply to this borough, which provides that bonds may be issued by Common Council for this purpose, on the petition of a majority in numbers of the property holders, and an endorsement by a majority vote of the citizens of the borough, at an election to be held for the purpose. Capt. Charles Keeler, Hon. T. C. Pearce [Thomas C. Pearce, blacksmith - Ed.] and Rev. O.P. Eaches [Owen P. Eaches - Baptist Minister] were appointed a committee to secure the names of property-holders to a petition asking the Common Council to submit a resolution authorizing the issue of bonds, not to exceed \$2500, for the purchase of a steam fire engine. Opinions as to what was best to be done were widely at variance. A few were in favor of a \$5000 steamer, others thought

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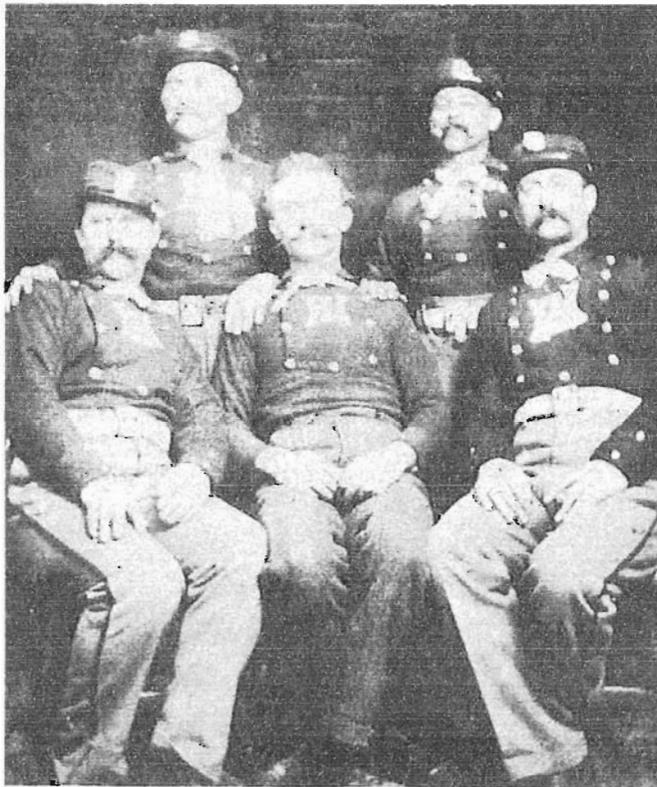
## Fire Department , continued from page 3

\$1000 or \$1500 was enough to expend. Another opinion was that without a better administration of borough matters and better care the money spent in this way will be thrown away. The trouble with the hand engine has been that it was difficult to get it to the fire and hard to work it. A steamer will get there with no less labor, and will not be of service so quickly. If we could buy a steamer, organize a proper force, and were willing to pay the expense of keeping it in order and ready for every emergency, it might at sometime save the town. But a steamer standing neglected for for (sic) years, with cold water in the boiler, and no means at hand to get it speedily to the scene of danger, would be no better than what we have.

However, the people are to decide. There are on the duplicate this year two hundred and thirty-seven owners of real estate. When the committee have secured the names of one hundred and nineteen of these property owners, certified as such by the Assessor, then the Common Council will be authorized to fix the time for an election, at which the people shall decide for or against the issue of bonds. The expected increase in the tax rate next year, which will result from the extravagant and blundering law experience of the present Council will have a bad effect upon this project, and it is worthy of note that the Council and Dr. Dawes will probably spend more than the price of a fire engine in the unfortunate litigation over street lines which could have been arranged without costing either party a dollar."

HG - 20 December 1883 - "A Factory Burned - At noon yesterday the straw-bottle-cover factory of Mr. David A. Lantz [owner of the Lantz Hotel and adjacent structures and business operations - Ed.] was found to be on fire and the alarm promptly brought out the engine. As

the hour was one when everybody was on their way to dinner there was plenty of help, and had the contents of the building been of a less flammable nature the structure would have been saved, but the blackened frame still standing is all that is left. The firemen however succeeded in saving the blacksmith shop adjacent and preventing the spread of the flames in other directions. The building was but a shell but its destruction will throw a dozen or more people out of employment. A number of covers ready packed for shipment were also burned.



First Uniforms Issued

As the works were just in the rear of the hotel, only a few feet away from the stables and barns, it is plain that Hightstown is once more indebted to the snow and the old engine for a narrow escape from a more extensive conflagration. Mr. Lantz is very thankful to his neighbors and fellow citizens who so promptly replied to the alarm and worked so hard to save his live stock and other property."

HG - 3 Jan 1884 - "At the regular meeting of Americus Fire Company of Hightstown, held December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1883, the following resolution was unanimously

adopted: Resolved, That the thanks of Americus Fire Company, No. 1, are hereby tendered to the citizens of Hightstown and vicinity for the assistance rendered in working the fire engine at the late fire at the straw cover factory of D.A. Lantz. By order of Company, H.I. Burtis, Sec'y, pro tem ... In another column the Americus Company thanked the citizens for assistance at the recent fire. It is now in order for the citizens to pass a resolution thanking the Americus for the use of their engine. In these holiday times we should all 'reciprocate'."

### A New Fire Company Appears Upon The Scene - "Hightstown Engine Company, No. 1"

There were times in the preceding years that the Americus fire company, not sanctioned by the town, was almost defunct. But, from time to time it would rally with new enthusiasm and new members. Eventually, a new fire company was formed to compete with the Americus company. However, the old Americus company was not about to "leave the scene" quietly nor easily. Therefore, on January 31, 1887, not in 1835, the "Hightstown Engine Company, No. 1" was actually formed.

HG - 27 Jan 1887- "The New Fire Company - Hon. J.V.D. Beekman was called to the chair. After discussing the

object of the meeting some seventy names were proposed as members of whom thirty-five were elected. The list includes some of the most active and enterprising of our young men who, with training, will undoubtedly constitute an efficient organization. The following are the officers who have been chosen to govern the new company: President, C. J. Hazard; Vice President - E.E. Anderson; Sec'y - F.T. Magowan; Treas.- J.V.D. Beekman; Auditing Committee - J. A. Taylor, W.D. Wear, E.T. Cunningham, Jr.; Steward- Aaron Savidge; Foreman-C.J. Hazard; 1<sup>st</sup> Ass't-Jeremiah Brandt; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ass't-L.W.

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## Fire Department , continued from page 4

Grover; Engineer-Isaac Wolcott; 1<sup>st</sup> Ass't Engineer-Aaron Savidge; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ass't Engineer-Thomas Ryan.

We have been asked to decide which is the real fire company of the borough. We do not know that the borough has any. It can have no fire department legally except such as may be established by an ordinance, duly passed by a majority of Common Council and publishing according to law. Any other professed fire department, either new or old, is informal. Why will not people read the charter instead of asking us these easy questions?"

Mayor Carr [William H. Carr - Ed.] said at the turbulent council meeting the other night that if there was going to be so much wrangling he was sorry they had ordered the engine. Do not cry over spilled milk, Mayor, but we told you so all the time. No doubt you will be still more sorry before you get through with the business.

The classification act must be changed. Talk about Hightstown being called a 'third class borough', when it has a bonded debt, two fire engines, two fire companies, and a big chance for a free fight whenever they come together. If that is not first class we do not understand the term.

'The king is dead—long live the king', does not work in the fire business. The new company is in, but the old company refuses to be considered out. They claim to be regularly organized, thoroughly efficient, and perfectly competent to take charge of the new apparatus. They say they have done the hard work and do not wish to be pushed aside now that there may be some boodle in it. They charge that a citizen's meeting has no more right to order a change in the fire company than to petition council to appoint other borough officers. Suppose that same meeting had recommended to council that a more efficient attorney was needed, and had named Mr. Ely or Mr. Schanck for the position; would Mayor Carr have put the motion? They say not. On the other hand the new company claim that the old one had gone out of existence, that it had not

been fit to take charge of the old machine and keep it in order, and in fact had done nothing except claim exemption from tax. They do not want that kind of men in charge of the steamer. It is a sad quarrel, and we do not wonder that Mayor Carr threatened several times to countermand the order for the machine.

An adjourned meeting of Common Council was held on Thursday night. Mayor Carr, and Councilmen Hunt, Wyckoff, Fryer and Wolcott were present. Several bills were ordered paid. The greater part of the meeting was spent in listening to the instructions of Counsel Smith in regard to the proper manner of issuing bonds for the new steam fire engine...On Tuesday night the regular monthly meeting of Council was held. All of the Council were present excepting Mr. Chamberlin and Mr. Hunt...The fire engine committee reported that the engine would soon arrive and that they had purchased a \$45 hose cart and 800 feet of hose costing \$480. The committee was continued. The standing Fire Committee reported that the floor of the engine house was undergoing repairs and that the roof had been mended...Dr. Hazard presented a petition to the Council showing that a fire company had been formed, and requesting that the company be approved and vested with proper authority by the Council. This created quite a little breeze among the citizens

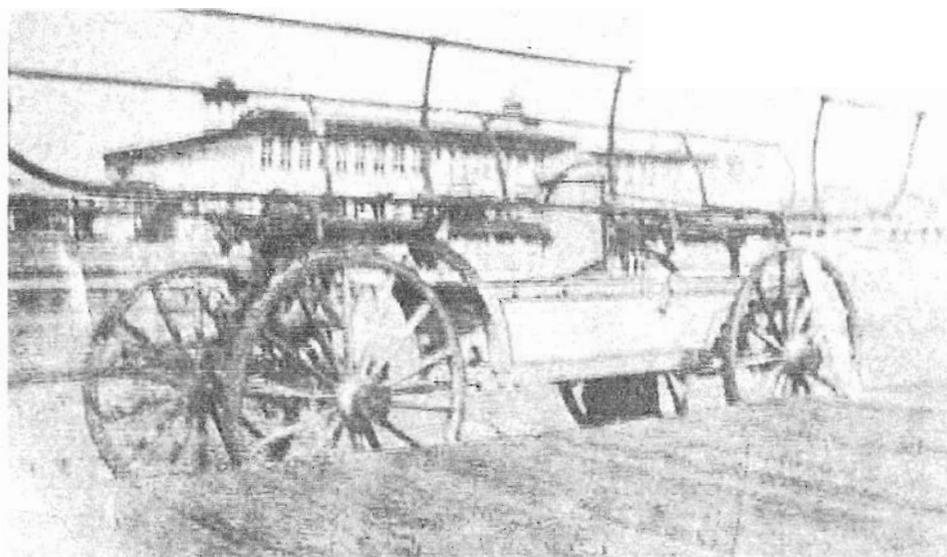
present and called for somewhat of discussion. The members of the old fire company claimed that they were still in existence, were capable of taking care of the new engine and were entitled to recognition by the Council. A rather lengthy debate ensued, in which Messrs. R.D. Norton, Sering Shangle, Dr. C.J. Hazard, Hon. J.V.D. Beekman, and members of the Council participated. After the war of words had been waged for a while without any serious damage, the report of the new company was endorsed by the Council, and the meeting adjourned."

10 Feb 1887 - "A meeting of the new fire company was held at the Town Hall on Thursday evening. President Hazard occupied the chair. Constitution and By-Laws were adopted for the government of the organization. The company will be called Hightstown Steam Fire Company No. 1."

HG - 17 Feb 1887 - "On Tuesday the members of the new fire company stored old Americus safely away in one of Mr. Jacob Early's unused buildings."

HG - 17 Feb 1887 - The New Steamer - The much-talked-of and long-looked-for steam fire engine came on Saturday, and on Tuesday was given a public test. Everybody in this section turned out to view the machine and

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*Hightstown's First Fire Engine - the "Man Killer"*

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business generally was suspended during the afternoon. At two o'clock the engine was taken to the other side of the pond and put in position for work. It is a single pump Button engine and apparently a perfect little machine. When loaded with fuel and water it weighs something over 4000 pounds. A difference in size of the couplings of the hose and of the engine caused a delay of several hours but did not dampen the ardor of the audience or the firemen. After the difficulty was remedied, the fire was started and water was thrown from the nozzle of the hose in a little less than six minutes. The engine was tested in many ways and did excellent work. With 850 feet of hose on water was thrown to a distance of 190 feet. The experiments were continued until every one was satisfied and nearly every one was wet, and the engine was then taken to the Main street bridge. Hose reaching to the Baptist church was then attached and a stream was thrown well up the steeple. The engine even when doing its best works evenly and quietly. The firemen under the command of Chief Hazard showed that they meant business and were not afraid of work. Yesterday morning the engine was again taken out by the company under the charge of Assistant Foreman Grover and the hose of the old engine was tested, with various results. It is understood that the old machine will be repaired and if possible sold. The committee report themselves as satisfied with the new engine and have formally accepted it. The community in general seems to be very well pleased with the selection made by the committee, and with the working of 'Hightstown 1'."

### The Americus Company, Referred to as the "Old" Company Meets

HG - 17 Feb 1887 - "The Old Company Meets - A breezy meeting of the old Fire Company was held in the Town Hall on Monday evening. Mr. A.S. Voorhees was called to be chair and 'Squire' Sering Shangle acted as secretary. After some preliminary business a motion was made to suspend such rules as conflicted with the immediate admission of members. This was carried and a number of new members were proposed and elected. It was also

decided to remit all fines which had been imposed for absence from meetings. Mr. H.H. Cunningham moved that a committee be appointed to petition Council to find a place for the old engine. Mr. T.M. Scroggy moved to amend by submitting the word 'new' for 'old'. The amendment caused considerable discussion but was finally carried with the motion. The chair appointed Mr. Scroggy and Mr. R.D. Norton as the committee. The remainder of the evening was spent in discussing the motion which had just been carried. After calling the roll of members the meeting was adjourned."

HG-24 Feb 1887 - "The old engine house has been transformed into quite comfortable quarters for the new company, and although closed curtains guard the sacred precincts from the prying gaze of travellers (sic) on the street, the hours of weary waiting for the first alarm no doubt pass in a pleasant way. All interested in the welfare of the boys of Hightstown, No. 1, will be glad to know that card playing is prohibited by the by-laws of the company. Why would it not be a good thing for the Common Council to pass a protective ordinance something like they have at Ocean Grove, that no bar room or beer saloon should be licensed within one mile of the door of the engine house? We can not do too much to guard the welfare of the men who sacrifice their comfort for the safety of the town."

HG-3 March 1887 - "The meeting of Common Council last Tuesday was well attended. Councilman Chamberlin was absent, and Mr. Pierson was home sick. After the usual routine opening a number of warrants were drawn on the treasury, including one for \$70.27 for lumber for the engine house ... Mayor Carr reported for the special fire committee that they had purchased engine and hose at a cost of \$3,645.00. The standing fire committee reported that they had put new floor, ceiling and other improvements in the engine house. A suggestion was made that a small door should be cut in the front. Mr. Fryer inquired the intent of this and Mayor Carr explained that the people needed it for passing in and out at elections. Mr.

Fryer explained to the Mayor that the engine house was not used for elections much now. The committee was empowered to paint the roof, get coal and make necessary repairs. They were also authorized to sell such part of the old hose as was not fit for use .... Mr. T.M. Scroggy, for a committee of the original company, made a request that Common Council provide a place for the new engine and give the old company possession of their quarters from which they had been wrongfully driven. That they were still in existence, larger in numbers than the new company. That their engine had been moved out to have the room repaired, but that it should now be put back. A discussion of the petition was closed by referring the whole matter to the fire committee for investigation and report."

HG-10 March 1887 - "It is reported that Mr. Thomas Foster will have charge of the Hightstown engine house as Mr. Aaron E. Savidge goes to South Amboy as fireman."

A Council meeting was held in the Town Hall last night .... Mr. Wolcott reported for the fire committee that a coat of paint was needed for the engine room roof, that the old engine was sadly out of repair and that only about 400 feet of the old hose was fit for use. Mr. Fryer, another of the committee said that he thought the best way would be to find a place for the old engine as it was now in a poor building and could not be readily brought out in case of fire. He thought they ought to have the old machine repaired and build a house for it. Mr. Wolcott thought it would be advisable to employ a practical mechanic to examine it and report what could be done with it. On motion this was ordered done..."

HG - 9 June 1887 - "The fire companies want uniforms so that they can parade on the Fourth. Mayor Chamberlin and others are soliciting subscriptions for this purpose. Of course this is proper, but care must be taken to see that the money is fairly appropriated between the two companies, and that the uniform suits purchased for them are all alike. It

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## Fire Department , continued from page 6

will not do to excite any feeling of jealousy between them. If they are to live in one house they should be dressed alike and kept on good terms..."

HG - 7 July 1887 - "Hightstown, No 1 had their machine out on Monday, and did some good work on North Main street in laying the dust and washing the houses. We are sorry to learn that the new hose made a bad exhibition of itself however, with less than 180 pounds pressure several lengths of it bursted and tore out the couplings. Good judges had insisted that the committee was deceived in that lot of hose, but as it was "warranted" everybody hoped that it would at least stay together long enough to be used at one fire. We suggest, if there is any man in town who knows anything about hose, that it will be well to appoint him on the hose committee."

HG - 21 July 1887 - "At about half past three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, July 16<sup>th</sup>, the fire bell gave the alarm for what proved to be one of the most rapid and disastrous conflagrations with which this town had ever been visited. In one hour from that time the entire establishment of Messrs. Chamberlin & Hutchinson, including engine houses, hay presses, store-rooms filled with straw,

hay and grain, and the new canning factory, were reduced to heaps of cinders and ashes. The property was the homestead of the late Benjamin Reed, the present business started there twelve years ago by the late Ezekiel C. Chamberlin. The property belongs to Mayor J. A. Chamberlin, who a few years ago formed partnership with Mr. T. Ely Hutchinson, Chosen Freeholder from the township. At the time of the fire, the buildings were filled with hay and straw in bulk and bale, while around the buildings were stored and piled stacks of straw and heaps of corn, oats and other grains. The presses were at work, the engines running, farmers unloading hay, and the members of the firm were sitting in the office when some one discovered flames issuing from that part of the establishment in the rear of the engine house. As quickly as possible the alarm was sent into the town and responded to with commendable promptness by Fire Company No. 1 and every able bodied man in town. The steamer was quickly fired up and located at one of the cisterns near the fire, and in as quick a time as the inexperience and lack of drill of the men would allow, connections were made and they had a stream of [on] the fire. The location of the engine was soon found to be a mistake as the cistern was quickly drained,

and it was taken back to the Main street bridge near the mill, and a new line of hose laid to the fire. At this time the hand engine was brought and placed in service near the fire. In the meantime, willing hands had assisted in saving livestock, removing the books and papers from the office and tearing down buildings that communicated with the house.

A large and effective bucket brigade was organized quickly and succeeded in saving Mr. Chamberlin's residence which was in imminent danger. From the first it was evident that no amount of service on the part of the fire department, even had they many more engines, could have saved any of the buildings or their inflammable contents. There was but little wind and this and this establishment being the last buildings on that side of the street, the only danger of the fire spreading was by the adjacent residences or the houses opposite. Both the fire companies and their volunteer assistants were ably managed and deserve the highest commendation for their arduous, persistent, although unavailing laborers, and while the steamer attracted much attention by the regularity and ease with which she did her work, everybody was equally pleased with the assistance of the

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### Join today, become a member!

Individual Membership  
**\$20.00**

Family Membership  
**\$25.00**

Booster/Patron  
Membership  
**\$40.00**

Sustaining Membership  
**\$50.00**

Life (individual) Membership  
**\$200.00**

Life (married) Membership  
**\$275.00**

### Annual Membership Application (January - December)

- Individual       Family       Booster/Patron  
 Sustaining       Life (individual)       Life (married)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the completed application, along with a check made payable to the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society to:

Membership Committee  
Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society  
164 North Main Street  
Hightstown, NJ 08520

# Fire Department , continued from page 7

old engine, and the boys whose muscle worked her were not ashamed of the stream which she poured from her nozzle. There will be no more talk about selling the faithful old machine. When time had to be taken to change location and lay the hose for the steamer, the "Americus" was there and

ready. The steamer had to work through a very long line of hose, and met every reasonable expectation. As to the hose itself, we do not think we shall be asked to contradict the statement this time that it did burst. The Common Council should at once have the steamer furnished with a lot of hose

which can be relied on. Such accidents are bad enough after years of wear, but it is not right that the company should be hindered by having to use rotten hose now ..."

**to be continued in the next issue**



## New "HIGHT" Family Info & Photos

In the Spring, I was contacted by a Hight family descendant who lives out of state and who was very distressed at the fact that she had hired a researcher who visited the Society for the purpose of reviewing the Society's Hight files and artifacts but was only given a couple of pages from Ms.

Pullen's book on the Hight name. Knowing that her ancestors had donated specific items and files to the Society many years ago, she was left with the impression that the Society today had no knowledge of their whereabouts. I assured her that was not the case and that everything that had been given to the Society in the past was still maintained at the Society and that the artifacts, the primary documents and the research files on the Hight family were at the Society.

After several communications between us, I sent her all the info I had in my files, including the scanned images of the Hight family photos at the Society, which she had never seen before. As a result of this contact, we began an exchange of info. In return, I received other Hight family research and new images of Hight items within her possession that were carried by her Hight ancestor, John N. Hight. John N. Hight served in the Middlesex Militia during the Revolution and was later, in 1793, Captain of the First Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, of the Middlesex Co., New Jersey Militia. [Remember that Hightstown was in Middlesex Co. until 1838 when Mercer Co. was formed.]

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