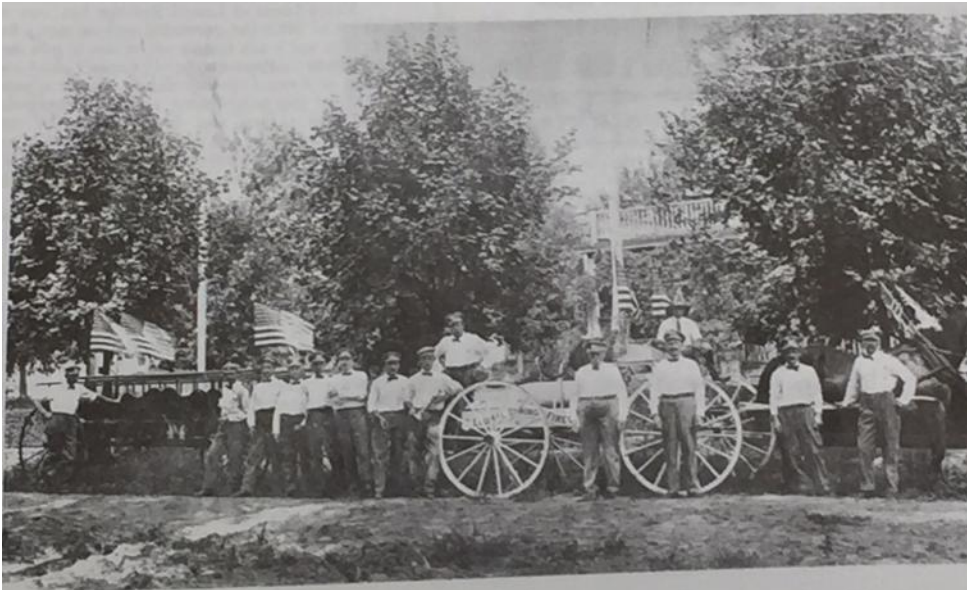


HISTORIC LAUREL SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT

On November 18, 1893, thirteen men met in the Philadelphia & Atlantic City Railroad Station to organize the first volunteer fire company. Their firehouse was a barn on the Stafford Farm on Maple Avenue. Their first fire-fighting equipment was a hand drawn hose cart with 2-inch rubber hose and fire buckets. The alarm sounded from a large 150-pound bell suspended over the firehouse and could be heard two miles around.



Laurel Springs Fire Co. No. 1 with hose carts - 1904

Eleven years later after the town grew, several members who lived on the west side, broke away and formed Laurel Springs Fire Company Number 2. Securing a lot on Stone Road, they built a station (now a residence at 1100 Stone Road) and thanked friends in Cape May who gave a hand-

drawn hose cart. Later they secured a hand-drawn hook and ladder truck to match Company Number 1's equipment and by 1916 both companies shared a Model "T" Ford chemical truck. The two companies incorporated in 1938, building their headquarters on Tomlinson Avenue.

The first local physician, Dr. Frank B. Cook, arrived in 1907. One of the first in town to buy an automobile, he always responded to fire alarms and pulled the fire engine to the disaster scene. Dr. Cook is still remembered for his untiring efforts to check the severe flu epidemic which raged through most communities during World War I. He saved many but himself succumbed to the disease in 1918.

Besides maintaining a credible record fighting fires, the fire department always pitched in on town activities. As early as 1894 they took charge of the town Fourth of July celebration and in the early years before the automobile created a mobile society. The fire stations were social centers, scheduling any parties, concerts, shows, masquerade balls and debates.

