

Story Of The Sebring Firemen



December 1961

STORY OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN

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Note to the Reader

Please keep in mind that this work was produced and published in 1961. Although it has now been republished, many of the references are still to a Sebring as was known in the 1960's. Much of the story reads as if told in person, and unless noted in the text, that person is Allen C. Altvater (Sr.).

For more information:

Allen C. Altvater, III

49 Lake Henry Drive

Lake Placid, Florida 33852

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FOREWORD

The early history of the Sebring Firemen is a saga of service, not only to Sebring and Highlands County but to the entire State of Florida. From the beginning of the present organization in 1925, it was an association of leaders, none of whom were expecting or even wanting any praise or advantage for themselves.

On file in the archives of the Fire Department, are dozens of letters similar to the one from Lake Hamilton Chief R. E. Haskins to Chief E. C. Henshaw of New Symrna - "How well we remember the help that the Sebring boys gave us in organizing and developing our Department." And to the one by H. N. Pye, Chief Engineer of the Southeastern Underwriters Association, "... I have had an opportunity to talk to our engineers and needless to say, all reports are good and I hear nothing but praise for the splendid work accomplished."

At the same time, the Department was building an enviable reputation at home for their efficient service in all types of endeavor from that acknowledged by Mr. Ford Heacock to that noted by Mrs. Rex Beach. Mr. Heacock wrote, "I take this means of thanking you for the prompt action taken last evening when Ford Jr. was apparently lost."

When writing about a fire which the newspapers headlined "MANY LEFT HOMELESS BY FIRE." Mrs. Beach said, "Mr. Beach told me of the wonderful work you did at the fire in the quarters last night and I wish to show, even in a small degree, how grateful I am to know that your department can be relied upon."

For the past thirty years, every new member has been given the charge and obligation that was adopted by the founding fathers of the Firemen:

THE OBLIGATION. I solemnly promise and declare that I will never bring reproach upon the organization, my country, my state or my city, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert a suffering comrade.

I will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the City, both alone and with many; I will revere and obey the City's laws, and do my best to incite a like respect and reverence in those about me who are prone to annul or set them at naught, without legal authority; I will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty. Thus, in all things will I transmit this City, not less, but greater, better and more beautiful than it was transmitted to me.

THE CHARGE. Ever work unselfishly for the advancement of the community in which you live. It is unfortunate that we are so often strongly under the impression that to do a piece of work and not get credit for it, is little less than a calamity.

This habit of making the work secondary and the recognition primary is unfair to the work. It encourages a peculiar kind of ambition which is neither lovely or productive.

By doing the thing for which you may receive no credit, you are building certain qualities which cannot be hidden.

Certainly, there have been dozens of members of the Sebring Firemen who have proven that these are not merely beautiful, meaningless words but, by their service to the community, have converted them into living doctrines controlling their lives.

In recording the story of the Sebring Firemen, it is hoped that some who read it will remember and try to emulate the heroic works of Naylor, Gallaher, Chapman, the Jones brothers, the Lighthisers, the Schumacher brothers, Payne Sebring, Gearing, Greene and the many others who worked unselfishly for the community and who have passed it on much better than it was transmitted to them. They surely had the qualities that could not be hidden but which will remain as monuments to their memories as long as there is a Sebring.

Some limitations must, of necessity, be observed in these chronicles else they would never be concluded as history continues to be made every day, especially in as active an organization as the Sebring Firemen. Therefore, special attention will be given to those events that were a part of the story before the late war.

Many of the men who were members at that time have either moved from Sebring or have departed this life. It may be of interest to note that, of the 120 men who were members after 1925 and before 1940, there have been 48 who have moved away from Sebring, some of whom are probably no longer living. Another 31 are known to have died. Thirty-two still live in Sebring but for one reason or another, their names have been dropped from the rolls while another 19 are still carried as members although there are hardly more than half a dozen of these who could be classed as active members.

With these figures in mind, it becomes evident that some effort should be put forth to reduce to the printed page, some of the facts and legends of that era while they are still available as the time is drawing near when the 41 who still remain in Sebring, join the 79 who have left.

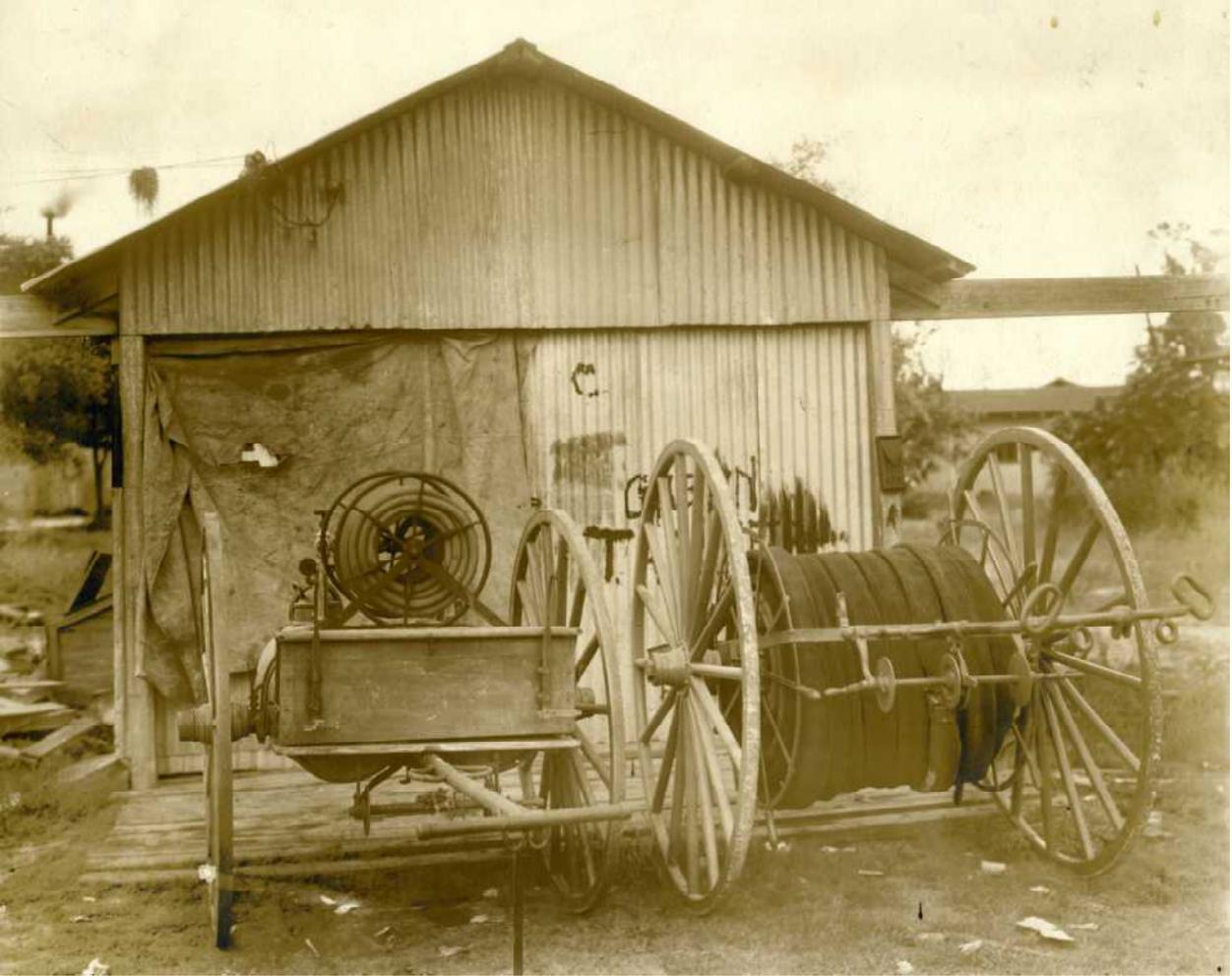
On the other hand, there are many who have been initiated since the war and who are well qualified to set down the history of that period. Many, many commendable activities have been carried on during that period, which are not narrated here, principally for that reason. Therefore, it is not suggested that this story should be considered as finished with the materials between these covers.

P. G. Gearing has promised to write the story of baseball in Sebring's early years and it is certain that Lonnie Curl can add to that as he managed several pennant winning teams in the 1950's.

Ford Heacock and Frank Bryant should feel an inspiration to commit to writing the history of automobile racing at the Air Terminal and there is a great story in the part played by the Firemen in the County Fair - a story that is barely touched upon herein but which could be more elaborately told by Howard Livingston, Miles Baker, Ray Graddy, et. al. , who have been so instrumental in making the Fair a success.

Nor is the story of the Sebring Fire Department complete until someone writes the account of the recently formed Auxiliary. These ladies have been doing some rather wonderful civic work.

Above all, it should be pointed out that this is not a promotional brochure for either the Sebring Fire Department or any individuals. It is not intended to be a model of composition or rhetoric nor a masterpiece of typographical art. It is hoped that there may some parts of the story that will interest you.



Original fire station in use 1914 to 1921.

This is the first fire fighting equipment ordered for the town by George E. Sebring.

BEGINNINGS

Although there are no existing records of an organized fire fighting unit prior to 1920, it is known that Mr. George E. Sebring bought two hand drawn reels and 800 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose when the water lines were laid in 1913. This equipment was housed in a metal clad frame building on East Center Street where First Federal Savings now has its bank building. Mr. Aaron Withers was designated as the first Fire Chief and, in the event of a fire, everyone in the new town responded as volunteer fire fighters.

Water mains, which were considered adequate at the time, were four inch cast iron on Lakeview Drive from Walnut Street on the north to Kenilworth; on North Commerce to the Circle; around Circle alley; and on Pine from Park Street to East Center. All other water lines were 2 inch or smaller. The water supply of 90 gallons per minute was pumped directly from the two deep wells to the elevated reservoir which was 90 feet high.

Just how long Mr. Withers served as Fire Chief is not a matter of record but evidence does show that, in 1920, Mr. Walter Zackary was Chief and had organized one chemical and two hose crews, several of the members of which were high school boys but the main body were leading businessmen.

Before the days of this organization, there were several major losses (comparatively speaking) the first of which was Cason's Hotel, just off the Circle on South Commerce in 1914. This was a large two story building of virgin heart pine lumber and it was doomed from the time the fire started.

Next, early in 1915, came the loss of McNeal's store on Ridgewood one block north of the Circle. When the blaze was discovered at about one o'clock in the morning, it could have been easily handled with a couple good hose streams and a trained crew but, lacking those elements; the fire quickly raced through the 50' by 150' frame structure which contained a general line of merchandise including groceries, hardware, grain and hay, all in one large room. The opinion was voiced that the owner was not too sad about the loss. He urged the firemen to spend the water to keep the safe cool and after the fire, he hired watchmen to guard the ruins for several days until he could get someone to open the safe. However, even though the contents were in almost perfect condition (to his great surprise) there was barely enough money in it to pay the watchmen. Maybe the insurance policy was there.

Since the hose lines were of no value more than a few hundred feet from the water mains, the Council decided to buy a "chemical engine." This consisted of two 40 gallon tanks mounted on high wooden wheels with a hose basket on top and was of the soda-acid type. It was housed when delivered, in the building with the hose reels.

When the salesman called the firemen together to instruct them in handling the new equipment, he built a sizable trash fire on the lot adjacent to the station. When it was blazing fiercely, the cart was rolled out and the acid bottles dumped but, for a time, nothing happened; only a very small stream emerged and the pressure was only enough to throw about four or five feet. The salesman ran around wildly, pumped the towing handle up and down and finally worked up a fairly good pressure but by that time, the liquid had been discharged and the fire had burned itself out. The stopper in one acid bottle had failed to release and, altogether, it was a pretty poor demonstration but it was really a good piece of equipment and gave good service until it was replaced by more modern engines.

During his administration, Chief Zackary made every effort to keep the department interested and active by holding practice runs but, aside from laying hose lines on prepared trash fires, no effort was put forth to instruct men in handling real fire situations. These practices were always sources of real fun for the members. To create more interest, the department was divided into three companies and the Chief encouraged rivalry by announcing the time of each team in getting its cart to the scene, laying the line and getting water.

The boys looked forward to these practice runs which almost invariably occurred on Tuesday nights. Although it was the intention of the Chief to stage practices without any previous knowledge by the men, it was never very hard to predict the date and hour of each run.

At that period of the town's history there was no organized sanitary department but "Old Man Posey", who owned a horse and wagon, was hired by merchants to haul away their waste boxes and packing materials and he was happy to have official permission to pile this waste at a point close in town. There were two such places; one where the First Baptist Church now stands and the other on about the present site of the Ingle home on South Lakeview.

As the piles grew higher, the firemen knew the time of practice was getting close so a Tuesday night watch was set in the Circle. Around eight o'clock, Chief Zackary would come down the stair of his home on the upper floor of a building on

the Circle, carrying a one gallon kerosene can and then the men would get set for the dash.

Spencer and Brandon Jones had a truck parked around the corner from the fire station while George Whitehouse had a “go devil” which too, was just out of sight with the engine running and all set to go. When the reflection of the fire showed in the sky, the Chief’s wife would step out on the porch and fire several blasts of a shotgun which was the accepted fire alarm of the day, and the race was on!

The two wheeled carts careened wildly behind the trucks on the unpaved sandy streets and often turned over when a corner was taken too fast. Then there was a time when a wheel came off and the cart rolled end over end across the sidewalk and onto a lawn. There was some justification for thinking that this might have been caused by the opposing team because sometimes such things happened as a cart being securely tied to the frame of the fire house with strong, well knotted ropes or the wheels lashed together. These things never happened except on practice nights.

At the scene of the practice, when the hoses were laid, interest centered on the battle of the nozzle men who stationed themselves on opposite sides of the burning pile and threw their streams at each other.

This condition existed until the fall of 1920 when a more serious effort was made to strengthen the fire defenses. Great stress was laid on reducing the horseplay but it was the firemen themselves, who put an end to tampering with the equipment. It seems that someone got too enthusiastic and, as a result, the Council offered a \$25.00 reward for the name of the person who cut the hose.

* * * *

In the light of subsequent events, it would be an error to leave the impression that Mr. Sebring donated the hose that he had bought in 1913. As the hose was acquired prior to the formal organization of the new town, the administration had no funds nor did it get any for some months after the election and installation of the mayor and Council (2 July 1913). But the City did assume the obligation of \$1,100.00 to the Eureka Fire Hose Co., and for the following several years, the Council hassled with the hose manufacturing company about the payment of the bill.

In August of 1915 the company brought suit to collect and the Council called a special meeting to discuss the matter. The City Attorney was instructed to advise “that there are no minutes in the City’s Book giving authority to purchase said

apparatus - ”. The Council maintained that the hose was defective and there might have been some good foundation for the claim as it was necessary to buy 1,000 feet of new hose in August of 1917.

An item of \$400.00 was set up in the budget for 1917, to be paid on this account but the suit dragged along until July 1917 when the City offered to pay \$500.00 down and another \$600.00 on April 1st 1918. Apparently this offer was accepted and the case closed.

A diligent search of the minutes of the City Council, has failed to reveal where the two tank, hand drawn chemical engine was purchased or paid for but it is known that it was in service in 1917 to 1920. The minutes of a meeting held on 1 January 1917 show that “Mr. Bobb was asked to look into the price of a chemical engine” but there was no record of any further action.

In the minutes of a Council meeting held May 14, 1920, there is an entry,

“On motion of W. F. Johnson seconded by Thos. Whitehouse that W. B. Zackary be appointed Fire Chief and with instructions to reorganize the City Fire Department at earliest date advisable - Carried.”

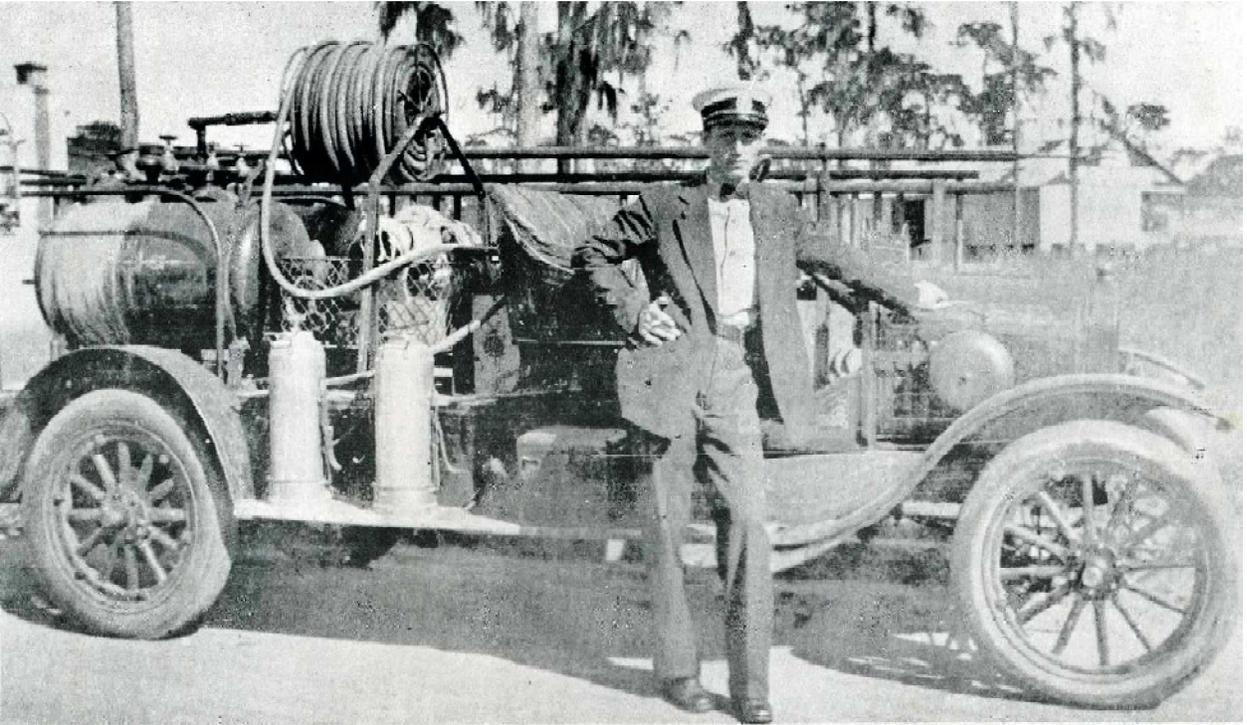
And, on June 3rd 1920, another entry,

“On motion of E. G. Skiff second by W. F. Johnson that proposition of Prospect Mfg. Co. on Ford equipped Fire Engine Truck be accepted but with the terms changed as follows. 1/3 Mar. 1st 1921. 1/3 Mar. 1st 1922. 1/3 Mar. 1st 1923 at 7% interest and said truck to be equipped with Self Starter - Carried.”

There is no indication of the full cost of this truck but the hand drawn chemical engine was traded in as down payment.

Acting on Council’s instructions, the Chief wrote the Underwriters Association and received a handbook detailing proper procedures for forming a volunteer fire company and, on 27 October 1920, a new Fire Department was organized with Zackary as Chief and P. G. Gearing as Secretary-Treasurer. For the next three years, P. G. kept the records of meetings and fire calls in his usual accurate manner, so there is an informative history of that period.

Although P. G. listed the statistical data on the fires, he could not set down the numerous situations that cause some hearty chuckles when recalled to the memories of the old-timers when they read the entries in the old book. For instance; to quote one entry -



Joe Lighthiser & Sebring's first motorized fire equipment.

“Friday, September 21st, 1923. Fire. Pentecost tent - Lot 8 Block 44 Maple Ave. 10:30 A.M. Chemicals only used. Damage \$100.00.”

This sounds commonplace enough but the story behind the fire is worth remembering. After the fire was extinguished and everybody had left the scene, a five year old boy ran into a house nearby and told his mother proudly, “Mommy, I done it. I set it on fire.” She administered the deserved licking but later laughingly told her neighbor that she had caused it all. A revival had been in progress and, during an evening of an unusual amount of shouting, the mother had said, “I wish that tent would burn down.”

Most of the accounts indicate that either the fire was out on arrival of the company or the building was a total loss. On the other side of the story, in practically every case, they also show that the adjacent buildings were saved even though the extinguishing facilities were not adequate.

A few of the entries in this book may be interesting as they show some of the problems of the young but active fire department.

“Fire call Monday June 27th 1921 at 5:25 P.M. Geo. P. Butler building in rear of Dimberline. House burned down - hit by lightning - Telephone crippled 15 minutes before alarm given. Total loss of building & contents estimated at excess of \$500.00 by Geo. P. Butler.”

“Fire 7 P.M. Saturday February 25th 1922. Mr. W. Walker house on Eucalyptus Ave. - New house completely destroyed cause unknown - twenty minutes before alarm reached company - All companies responded - both reels needed to reach house from main on Lakeview Drive - Building covered by insurance to amount of \$4,000.00. Garage saved.”

With 800 feet of hose line and a static hydrant pressure of about 40 pounds, it is easily seen that it was rather remarkable that even the garage was saved.

“Monday April 30 1923 1:30 A.M. - E. H. Waters house. Commerce Ave. S. Completely destroyed. All companies & Chemical on hand - 1 stream, hydrant at Commerce & Circle alley. Adjoining house and barn saved. Total loss reported insurance \$900.00.”

Here again, was a long line, low hydrant pressure with no booster pump and no possible hope of saving the building but, the fire was confined to the building of origin.

The climax was reached with last entry in the book:-

“Sunday Oct. 1923. 1:50 A.M. Fire at packing house, unusual quick response. 3 minutes from alarm to chemical on building. However fire had uncontrollable headway and resulted in complete destruction of packing house. All Co. responded but efforts futile on account of lack of pressure. Cause unknown - damage \$75,000.00 covered by insurance -”

The record set by this fire still stands as the greatest fire loss from a single fire within the limits of the City of Sebring in the 50 year history of the city. Occurring, as it did, at the very beginning of the fruit shipping season, it caused a still greater damage to the economy of the community, by the loss of the jobs of those who packed and shipped the fruit from this house.

However, one great benefit resulted from this fire: the citizens and the administration awoke the needs of adequate fire protection for the rapidly growing little city. This is evidenced by an item from the minutes of the Council of 19 November 1923:-

“Came before Council W. B. Zackary with report of need of water distribution and fire protection, reviewing result of his investigations and probable cost of effecting such service as would lower the fire insurance rate from 5 to 25 percent, and presenting copies of telegrams sent and received relative to make of most satisfactory equipment.

“Moved by Mr. Greene, seconded by Mr. Capwell, that action be taken to ascertaining what rate of reduction on fire insurance could be had by putting in effect the recommendations of Mr. Zackary; all Councilmen voted Aye and Chair declared the motion carried.”

The volunteer crew also took on more vigor:-

“Came before Council P. G. Gearing with reference to financial aid in putting on a Celebration January 1, 1924, for the purpose of raising funds for the Fire Department: by unanimous consent of Council, the matter was referred to Publicity Committee with power to act.”

Mr. Zackary's recommendations to the Council were the result of a special meeting that had been called On 16 November to discuss improvements to the fire defense situation and on the 19th, authorization was given to advertise for bids on a triple combination, 750 gallon pumper. On 21 December, Council accepted the bid

“- submitted by American LaFrance Fire Engine Company, Inc. of Elmira N.Y., in accordance with specifications, delivery to be f.o.b. Sebring, shipment from factory in 30 days at price of \$12,500.00 upon acceptance, on terms of acceptance of present Sebring owned chemical tank as first payment of \$1,100.00, and \$1,500.00 at end of first and second years, and \$2,800.00 at end of third fourth and fifth year after delivery with interest at 6% per annum on deferred payments.”

On 27 February 1924, the new truck was accepted and, at the same time, Council bought an additional 1,000 feet of hose. As can be easily imagined, the new truck generated an intense interest in the volunteer ranks and they bought a one ton Ford truck with funds from their own treasury which were accumulated by the payment by the City of \$2.00 per man attending each fire. This truck was used for carrying 1,200 feet of hose which was in addition to the 1,000 on the LaFrance.

The City had taken over the ownership of the utilities plant the first of 1923 but, until the end of the year, had made no extensions to the water mains. Now, began a comprehensive program of civic improvements which included new wells, low level water storage facilities, a higher and larger elevated storage tank, emergency fire pumps at the plant and at the lake, and a complete system of larger water mains, properly cross-connected to insure an adequate supply and pressure for fire fighting purposes in all sections of the city as it was then mapped.

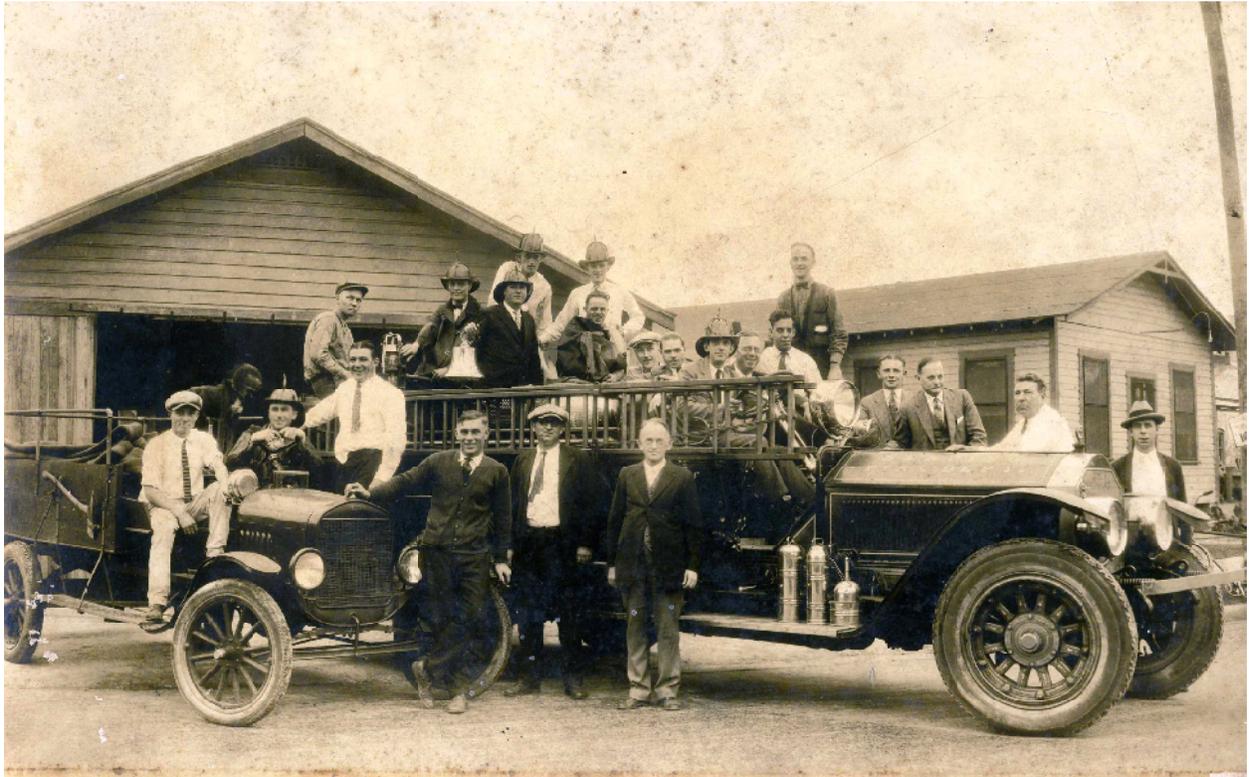
Plans for these improvements were completed and work was well under way when the famous Florida Boom struck Sebring. In the feverish excitement of this boom, interest in the volunteer department withered and died. There were no more meetings and no care of the equipment between fires. True, if an alarm sounded, any number of citizens jumped in to help but they were untrained and usually were in each other's way and did the wrong things. Many times, the trucks started to fires and got only as far as the gasoline in the carburetors would take them; somebody having purloined the gasoline from the tanks. But the worst blow was the fact that Chief Zackary had moved from Sebring. So low was the interest that it was several months before it was realized that the city had no Chief and really had no Fire department.

This condition was brought to the attention of the Council on 30 June 1925;-

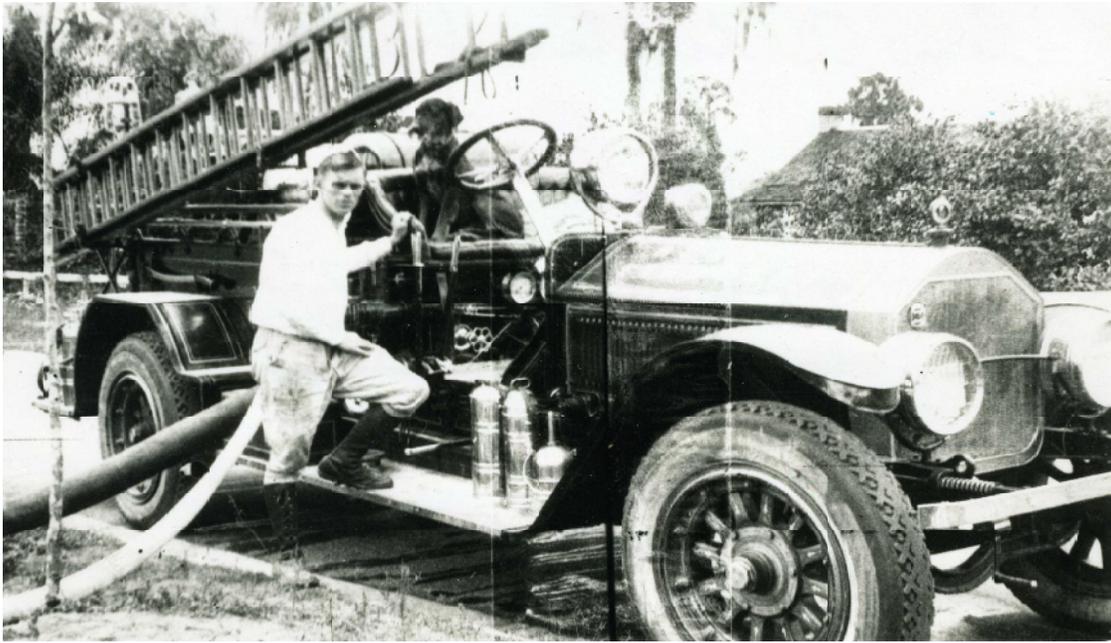
“The Mayor presented the matter of Fire Chief advising that the Town had no Fire Chief and that it was urgent that one be appointed. The Underwriters association required it and that a man be kept at the engine house. He

recommended that the Council appoint a Fire Chief who would be required to organize a Fire Department and report to the Council the requirements of such department, and that such Fire Chief serve at the will of the Council who retain power to declare the office vacant at any time.

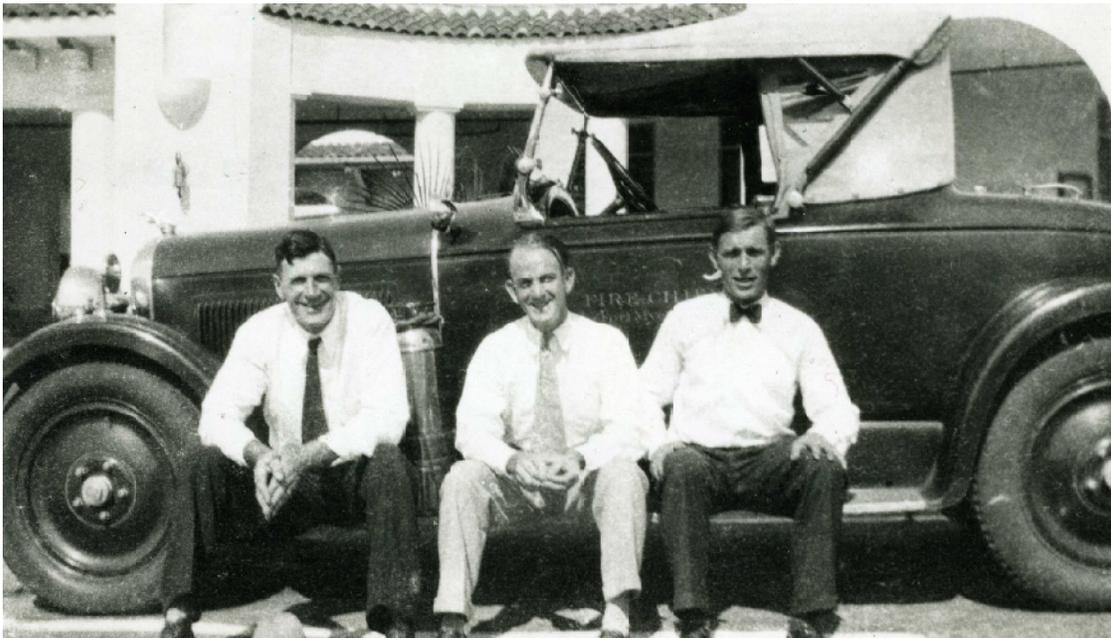
“Moved by Mr. Blythe, seconded by Mr. Capwell, and unanimous vote of Council, that the Mayor’s recommendation be accepted and a Fire Chief be appointed accordingly, and the Chair declared the motion carried. Whereupon the Mayor recommended the appointment of Mr. A. C. Altvater as Fire Chief and he was appointed with instructions to report to the Council the organization and requirements of the Fire Department.”



Feb. 27, 1924 - On small truck: Spencer Jones, Gideon Yeager; Allen’s dog Speed. In front of truck: Allen Altvater, Art Young. On big truck: Ben McGee, Brandon Jones, Payne Sebring, Roscoe Yeager, Josh Spooner, Stanley Capwell. On seat: Chal Lighthiser, C.F. Saunders, Eph Sidders, P.G. Gearing. On step: Ken Johnson, B.A. Cope, Bert Fields, Charles Beresford..



Allen Altvater and fire engine purchased in 1923. Photo taken in 1925.



Chief Anderson, Fort Myers; P.G. Gearing; and Allen Altvater. 1931.



Railroad tracks at Moore Haven after the September 1926 Hurricane.



The Sebring Relief Crew - Top row, L to R: "Red" Cleaver, N.N Vann, Ed Spear, George Wyandt, and O.C. White. Bottom row: Ernest Roberts, Glen Skipper, Chief Allen Altvater, Dr. J.W. Mitchell, Mike Kahn, and H.G. Eastwood.

Main Street of Moore Haven after the flood had receded following the September 1926 Hurricane.



REVAMPED DEPARTMENT

The reorganization of the Fire Department proceeded slowly and carefully. There was an excellent nucleus that was immediately available from the old organization. These men had experience and such training as was available at that time, so the hard core of the new group consisted of

P. G. Gearing	Ford Heacock	George Whitehouse
Spencer Jones	Brandon Jones	Chal Lighthiser
“Hetty” Greene	Roscoe Yeager	Allen Altvater
Tom Dimberline		

The Council soon after, approved the employment of two full paid engineers and Eph Sidders and Harry Kline were chosen for these jobs.

In 1926, Sebring was a young and vibrant city, full of young and energetic people who saw a roseate future and were willing to work hard to make their dream pictures into realities. By choosing the initial membership with the greatest of care, the organization was in position to accept only the most suitable material as is evident by the results which were shown from the very beginning.

Immediately attracted to the revamped department were

Payne Sebring	O. W. Chapman	Carl Tripp
E. D. Estes	K. S. Johnson	A. L. Butler
E. W. Gallaher	Al Kieffer	Joe Lighthiser
Hayden & Laurie Williams		and others

A military - chain of command - type of organization was first set up and, for the time being, this seemed to produce satisfactory results. The men took a sincere interest in the development of an efficient fire fighting unit and became proficient in the use of their equipment. But, as the fire station was still only a small, one story building with very limited space for holding meetings, the activities were confined to only those of a fire fighting group but it was a very effective one.

There were several outside factors that contributed greatly to the early success of the new fire department. The years 1925 and 1926 could be classified as “organizing years” for it was at this time that the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the B.P.O.Elks and other civic societies were formed and it was also the time when the Florida State Firemen’s Association began to function. Most of the men who formed the Fire Department were also members of one or more of the other local civic clubs and the

community spirit generated in these clubs helped in recruiting the type of men who really wanted to help their city. At the same time, a certain amount of rivalry was felt that was also helpful. Some of the leaders joined the newly formed State Firemen's Association and received greater inspiration by reason of their association with others in similar work.

Another factor that was of tremendous help, was the completion of the system of water mains to cover the major portions of the city. With adequate water supply, plus consistent training, losses were reduced and the prestige of the Department was increased. In addition to routine fire calls, there were several minor emergencies that the firemen handled with dispatch so it was only natural that the leaders of the city should call on the Fire Department to head up the disaster relief party in September 1926 when the dreadful hurricane struck the Moore Haven area.

This was an event where the teamwork that had been practiced so faithfully for the past year, really paid off. The news of the disaster reached Sebring early on Saturday night and the firemen were immediately summoned. Under the direction of the captains, one team rounded up all row boats in the community; another gathered all the outboard motors; another prepared the necessary supplies while still another attended to the miscellaneous items such as loading the train, directing the efforts of the several committees, assigning personnel, etc.

WITHIN THREE HOURS THE RELIEF TRAIN WAS LOADED AND READY TO ROLL. Aboard was a crew of firemen and selected nonmembers (such as doctors, etc.) starting on an expedition for which they were not trained except for the fact that they had reached a high degree of proficiency in teamwork. For a week, these firemen worked without sleep, without drinking water and often without food, saving lives and property in the storm torn area with such effective results that their status in Sebring was firmly established, and their ability recognized. Mr. G. T. Nelson (a Councilman) in an open letter to a local newspaper said,

“In all my experience of dealing with these Florida localities, I have never seen a volunteer fire organization that is as efficient as the one we have at the present time - -.”

Not the least of the beneficial factors, was an understanding and forward-looking Council. Its members showed their confidence in the Department in many ways and the members of the Department made every possible effort to live up to that confidence. In 1926, it was decided that a new pumper was needed and, although the Council went through the necessary legal motions of advertising for bids, they specified that the Department should make the choice as to which it considered the

“lowest and BEST bid”. The Department, in return, made a point to never take advantage of a sympathetic Council by requesting expenditures that could not be fully justified as profit bearing items.

A very close liaison developed between the two groups as a result of the appointment of Mr. E. O. Douglas as the chairman of the Fire Department Committee of the Council. Mr. Douglas had, in his earlier experiences, been a military captain so he ordered daily inspections of the men and equipment, which he personally attended. No oil on the engine, no mud under the fenders or on the under side of the floor boards, no missing button on a fireman’s shirt, escaped his notice. He attended every fire call as an observer; he sat in the conclaves of the State Association; he visited fire houses in other cities and in every possible way, made himself familiar with the problems and their solutions, of the fire fighting fraternity. More than any other one factor, the inspiration of E. O. Douglas contributed to the excellent foundation on which the present Sebring Fire Department was built.

Because of the Florida boom, Sebring was growing by leaps and bounds; the city limits were constantly being expanded, houses and business blocks were being built in amazing numbers. The Fire Department not only called attention to the fact that fire defenses must be kept abreast of this tremendous growth but it continued to keep this fact before the administration in a carefully planned program. On the Department were three excellent insurance men (Ebb Gallaher, Kenneth Johnson and Ford Heacock) who helped the Chief in preparation of studies which proved where dollars invested in apparatus and salaries, meant net profits by way of loss reductions and insurance savings. The Underwriters had made a survey of the city and when their recommendations were received, they were followed to the letter.

One of the biggest problems of fire departments of all times, has been the delayed alarm and it was so with Sebring from the beginning. The first method of arousing the public, was by firing some kind of a gun. This was logical because in those pioneering days, practically every household had one or more weapons around the house and no other provision for fire alarms had been made. This method was in vogue until 1920 when arrangements were made with the ice plant to use their whistle exclusively for fire calls. A system of long and short blasts indicated the general location of the fire in town.

Some confusion was experienced as the whistles of locomotives were somewhat similar and usually came from the same section of town as the ice plant; so a siren was purchased and mounted on the fire house. Here, other difficulties arose. Someone had to be notified of the fire and he lost time getting to the station and a siren was not so adaptable to coding. To overcome the loss of time, a switch was installed at the telephone office.

But even this step was not too satisfactory as all volunteers had to hurry to phones and all call at the same time to learn the location. So, as the Underwriters' recommendations included the installation of a modern fire reporting telegraph system, the Council contracted for a Gamewell alarm which was installed in the summer of 1926 at a cost of \$11,000.00.

The new system overcame most of the problems caused by late alarms but, for the time being, presented some new ones. The raucous blast of the diaphone gave rise to many complaints about the noise and the boxes proved too much of a temptation to some who wanted to turn in false alarms. Thirty five years later, the complaints about the tone of the diaphone are sometimes heard and false alarms will probably always be present but, fortunately, not to the extent they were in 1926.

In an effort to alleviate the false alarm situation, the Council posted a substantial reward for the apprehension of such culprits. Although several were caught, a reward was never claimed. One night, the Chief was going home and he passed a number of teenage boys on foot at the corner of South Lakeview and Pine. Among them, he noticed one boy that was almost as broad as he was tall. No sooner had the Chief entered his house than the alarm bell tapped out box #52 which was only about three blocks from his home and in the direction from which he had just come. In a matter of a very few minutes, he was back at the box and, as there was no one near it, he remembered the boys and particularly the fat one so he began to cruise the area. It was not long before he picked up the fat boy and two companions who were taken to the fire house for questioning.

For thirty minutes, they maintained that they had had nothing to do with the alarm. Finally, Joe Lighthiser showed them a box that was kept at the fire house for educational purposes and, pointing to the little glass disc on the front said, "See that glass? It took your picture when you pulled the box." One boy replied, "I know that's not so. The boy that pulled the box climbed up the other side of the pole and reached around so that it wouldn't take his picture." One of the more prominent businessmen of Sebring today, states that he was one of those boys (not the one who pulled the box).

Joe Lighthiser, who later became one of the full-paid firemen, helped with the installation of the Gamewell system and became so expert in the maintenance and repair that when other South Florida cities had trouble with their installations, the Gamewell Company recommended that they employ Joe to clear up their difficulties.

This system has proved to be one of the best investments the city has ever made.

Another ever-present problem of most small town fire departments, has been the desire of nonmembers to follow the trucks. Sebring has always had this trouble and it was especially prevalent in 1926. Ways of combating it were discussed - suggestions that a fine be imposed, etc. - appeals for cooperation through the newspapers, but no satisfactory solution. The new diaphone advised the location of the fire and by the time the trucks got on the roads, passage was already blocked with cars.

When no results were apparent from appeals to the public, Hayden Williams thought up a new approach. One week, he wrote a letter which would be printed asking for cooperation and even demanding arrests. The next week, he answered his own articles with one or more letters to which he signed "A Taxpayer" or "A Citizen", violently denouncing the writer of the previous week and saying that he had as much right to the unrestricted use of the streets as did the firemen, etc.

For weeks, he kept the campaign alive, writing the letters for both sides of the phony argument and creating more interest than could have been generated, had it been genuine. A great deal of improvement was noted - it didn't completely solve the problem but it went far in that direction and Hayden had a lot of fun.

* * * * *

The original housing for the hand-drawn reels and chemical engine, which was built in 1914, was entirely adequate for the purpose but it was also a good place to temporarily store other city equipment that was not too bulky. Oftentimes it was necessary to move shovels, rakes, surplus trash cans and other minor tools before the reels could be moved out. But it kept the equipment dry.

A bigger house was needed when the first motorized chemical engine was bought in 1920. Soon after that, the City built a one story, two car building on the site of the present station. This had a 12' by 22' room on the rear which was used as a club room and, when the engineers were hired, as sleeping quarters. When the Seagraves was put into service, a lean-to was added to the east side to house the Ford hose truck.

In the general improvement program of 1926-27, a new fire station was included and this was completed and occupied in December 1927. Months of careful planning went into this building, not only by the architect, Wm. Helm but also by Mr. Douglas and the members of the Sebring Department. Every suggestion was accepted and thoughtfully weighed and every newly built fire house in South Florida was visited, the thought being that this house should meet not only the needs for 1927 but for the long range future and it must be said that it has met this specification very well.



Second fire station, built in 1921, used until 1927.

“Dutch” Kutz, Harry Kline, Allen C. Altvater, and Eph Sidders



Central Station, soon after its completion in 1927.

First truck from left: Al Butler, Harry Kline, P.G. Gearing, Kenneth Johnson, Ford Heacock. Second Truck: Art Young (standing), Harry Raymond, Spencer Jones & Billy, Stan Wyandt, Walter Ivings, Doug Estes. Third truck - on running board: Payne Sebring, Al Keiffer, Dutch Kutz, Eph Sidders, O.W. Chapman. Roscoe Yeager & Laurie Williams on back of third truck. Allen Altvater leaning against car.

FLORIDA LAND BOOM & ARSON

In the few years immediately following the end of the Florida boom, it was clearly evident that the development of the efficient personnel and the modernization of the equipment, was to pay handsome dividends. Many people had overextended themselves in the purchase of property for which there was no resale and on which payments were coming due. All over the state there were many fires of mysterious origin the most of which strongly supported a suspicion of arson. These were generally referred to as “selling out to the Yankees”, as the insurance firms were principally northern businesses.

Several such fires “happened” in Sebring. The insurance companies sent their investigators but, in most cases, the fires were carefully planned so that there was not enough evidence to make a case. One instance of this type of fire occurred in the small hours of a very foggy morning. A home on the west shore of the lake, burned to the ground. The owner had been in the process of moving to another town and had already taken away his personal gear so “was not in town when the fire started”. However, according to his story, his most valuable possessions were still in the house (but the fire must have utterly consumed them). He had “burned some trash in the fireplace and that must have caused the fire.”

No charges were filed in this case although there were strong suspicions of arson but, in a way, the event was a boon to the Sebring Fire Department because it brought to town, Mr. Edw. S. Davies, special investigator for the Underwriters. His specialty was examining fires of probable incendiary origin and he spent a great deal of time explaining to Sebring Firemen what a “fire bug” thinks, how he works and what to look for at every questionable fire.

He pointed out that the owner of the home that was so successfully burned, probably got his inspiration from a fire that occurred a few weeks earlier in Sebring Highlands under somewhat similar circumstances but which had not been quite so successful. Mr. Davies also stressed the fact that it is important that the department officers should learn the true cause of EVERY fire as the repeated listing of “cause unknown” and “probably electric wiring” has a psychological effect on the mind of the potential fire bug. To the contrary, if he feels that firemen will not be satisfied with surface appearances but will probe deeply for the real cause, he will probably be afraid to take a chance.

Mr. Davies did not have long to wait to test how well the firemen had absorbed his teaching. The proof came in this manner;-

Mr. R was deeply in debt but his home and its contents were heavily insured. Picking a night when it was logical to assume that most of the people in town would be attending a special dance party, (to which he also took his family) he sneaked home and applied the match. By an exceptional stroke of fortune, the Chief left the dance early and smelled the fire when he passed the house. Fresh from the classes of Mr. Davies, the Chief's suspicions were aroused because the window shades were tightly drawn across every window, upstairs and down.

Therefore he waited for the trucks to arrive and lay the lines before allowing anyone to enter the building. When the door was opened, the back draft actually knocked down the first two men. On entering, the firemen found seven separate fires; 3 on the lower floor, 3 on the second floor and one in the attic. Streamers connected these locations; the beds had been soaked with kerosene and the curtains had been nailed across the windows to give the fire ample time to get a good start before it would normally be seen from the outside.

However, Mr. R had done his work too thoroughly and had failed to recognize the underlying principle that a fire must have oxygen. In his effort to delay detection, he had sealed the house too tightly and, after the initial flare up, the flames died down for the lack of supporting air. Given another few minutes, the heat would have broken a window and the fire would have gone up in one big, uncontrollable puff, but the breaks were with the firemen and the fire was held exactly as they found it. Photographs were made and later presented to a Grand Jury who brought in an indictment.

As a final result, Mr. R received no insurance, and, it was reported that he lost his home and grove when he put up his equity in making bail bond and subsequently leaving town to escape prosecution.

Luck again reacted in favor of the Firemen when they arrived at another fire in time to save all evidence that the owner had thrown gasoline into the attic but, in the process, had spilled some on his clothing and when he applied the match, his clothes also caught. After the fire, it was learned that he ran to the doctor's office to have his serious burns treated.

Following these two, the Department was not plagued with this type of fire as were some other Florida cities. Naturally, Mr. Davies was highly pleased and took every possible opportunity to tell how proud he was of the Sebring Firemen. They, in turn, elected him as one of their first honorary members and, up to the time of his death, he attended all annual meetings and other special events.



Two views of the Ranahan fire, January 1930.



ANNUAL FIREMEN'S MINSTREL

The annual Firemen's Minstrel was, for many years, a highlight on Sebring's social calendar and an event to which not only the cast but also the audience looked for an evening of hilarious enjoyment.

Although the original purpose was to raise money for the promotion of the various civic activities of the Sebring Firemen, the Minstrel grew in popularity until it became almost a tradition. The format centered around the age-old minstrel, but the olio, the after part and even the jokes were always so varied and full of surprises and novelties that the audience was seldom prepared for the innovations. On the theory that "the bigger they come, the harder they fall", the black-face comedians always had some sharp jibes at local politicians, social bigwigs and merchants. In fact, it was a mark of distinction if one was made the butt of a minstrel joke - so much so that merchants often offered propositions to the committee that made up the program as the jokes would be repeated for weeks after the show.

However, all program material was meticulously screened to be certain that nothing of a suggestive or questionable nature could ever inadvertently creep in. As a result, an excellent reputation was established and talent from outside the ranks of the Firemen was always available. Among the big names of the theatre world who offered their services on the Minstrel programs were Robert Fox, Billy Taylor, Marjory Rambeau and Fred Stone. On more than one occasion, Mr. Stone made trips to Sebring, specifically to take part in the Firemen's shows.

Superstitious folks might have questioned the wisdom of the selection of the date for the first showing which was Friday, the 13th of December 1929 but the novelty number of this program (Sam and Rastus played by Ray Morgan and Doug Estes, reading epitaphs on tombstones) went over with such public acceptance that it literally "put the show on the road" to success. Year after year, the presentations were improved and so were the box office receipts.

Those people who were in the habit of attending the Minstrel each year, still get some good old-fashioned laughs in remembering some of the gags that "went over big" but of all of the many jokes of the seventeen programs that were presented, the one that drew the most applause, was probably the simplest of all and if a vote had been taken ahead of time, it would have been given the least chance of success.

Eddie Tulk, in black face asked, "Mr. Interlocutor, can you tell me what smells worse than a goat?" Interlocutor, "No, Eddie, what does smell worse than a goat?" Eddie, "Two goats!" It was many minutes before the house became quiet enough to

go on with the next gag and after several other numbers, Eddie laughed loudly and slapped his knee and said, "Two goats". The applause began again.

On the contrary, many cleverly conceived and carefully rehearsed really funnies, "fell flat on their faces" with scarcely a giggle as a reward.

In any review of the history of the Firemen's Annual Minstrel, several names stand out as factors contributing most to the successes - some of them on practically every program from the first one in 1929 to the 17th in 1955. The most versatile of all was P. G. Gearing. In most of the performances, he was in black face but he had some part in every production - as manager, white face, premiere end, interlocutor, stage director or in charge of ticket sales. He will be remembered especially as the whipping boy in Fred Stone's specialty number in the big show of 1931 at the Circle Theatre.

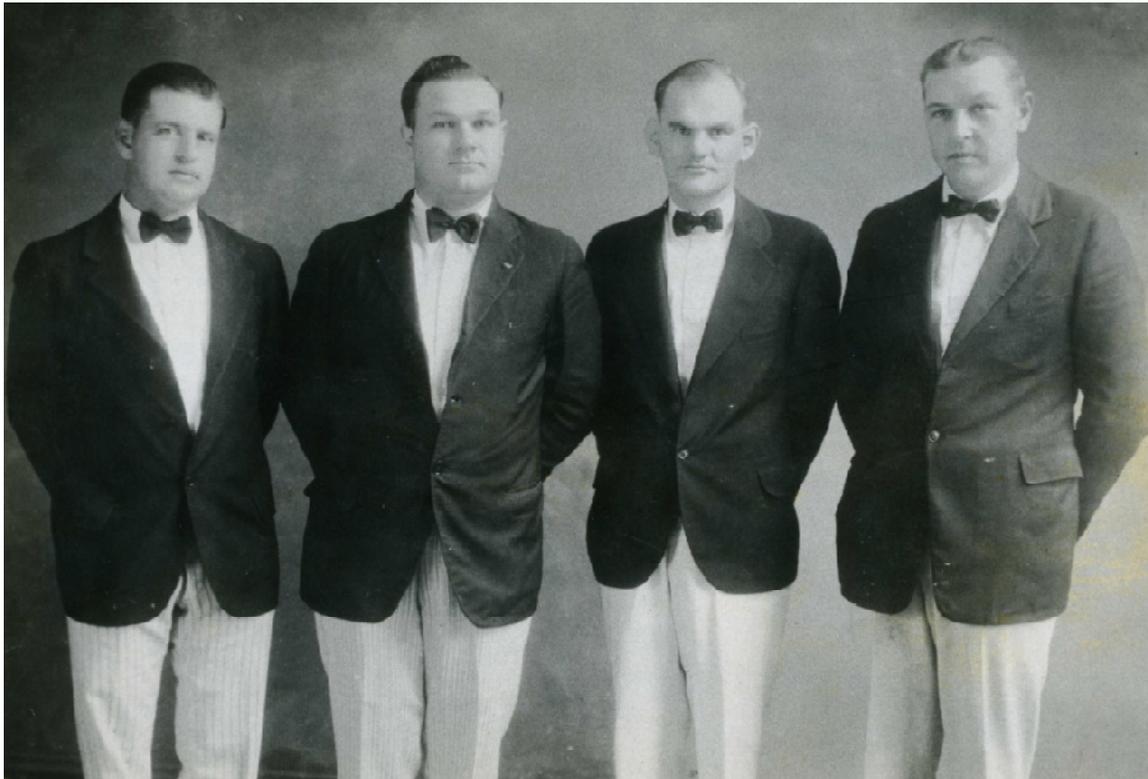
Gatchell Burton always served as "make up man" and Spencer Jones was Chief property man. Ray Morgan and Austie Heacock will always be remembered as premiere end men and ballad singers and to them usually was assigned the really hard work viz. , chairmen of the committee that organized and staged the productions.

Although several others made very good interlocutors, the finest of all and the one most frequently assigned to this position was "Mitch" Ferguson. Mrs. Marion Eyman and Mrs. Eva (Butts) Whitehouse provided the accompaniment for the singers and choruses and any successes in the musical parts can be credited to their help.

In addition to the Minstrel, the Firemen sponsored a number of other entertainment features. Because of the high regard which Mr. Rex Beach held for the Department, he arranged benefit shows in which nationally known celebrities, who were his house guests, appeared and these were not only greatly varied in nature but were also so interesting that they played to packed houses. They contributed a great deal to the cultural atmosphere of that period of Sebring history.

As an outgrowth of the Minstrel, the Firemen had, from time to time, several quartets with varying success. The first one featured "Skeet" Naylor, "Bus" Rasco, Harry Raymond and George Whitehouse and they were so good that they were in demand at other functions. Other combinations were - well, not so good.

Of one of the latter variety, Floyd Schumacher, who was secretary of the Sebring Firemen, Inc. , in 1932 wrote in his minutes "Publicity Committee reported Quartet singing at the Baptist and Christian Churches. According to the Literary Digest Poll, no applications for membership in Sebring Fire Department have been received since."



First Firemen's Quartet

George Whitehouse, "Bus" Roscoe, "Skeet" Naylor, and Harry Raymond



Front row, L to R: 1. Stan Wyandt, 2. Harry Raymond, 3. George Wyandt, 4. Taylor, 5. Joseph "Joe" C. Wagner, 6. Chal Lighthiser, 7. ____, and 8. George Hicks. Top / back row: 9. Gid Yeager, 10. Carl Tripp, 11. Doug Estes, 12. Lamont Wolfe, 13. Bus Roscoe, 14. Ray Morgan, 15. P.G. Gearing, 16. Allen Altvater, 17. Spencer Jones, 18. Hal Long, 19. Hetty Green, and 20. Eddie Tulk.

ADMINISTRATION

For the first few years immediately following the reorganization in 1925, the affairs of the Department were administered by a "Steering Committee" composed of the officers and a selected few of the members. Under this system, there were no stated meetings and no very definite personnel structure; nor were there any number of activities other than the usual fire department routine. In fact, there were no facilities for encouraging such activities, nor was there any great need to promote them. The boom was in full swing; money flowed freely and everybody in town was a civic promoter.

However, by the end of 1926, the fervor began to cool very rapidly; many of the newly acquired populace migrated to greener pastures and a definite need developed for activities that would maintain the morale of those who remained. Practically all of the men who had affiliated with the new Department, stayed in Sebring and, as most of them were in some type of business enterprise, they felt the need of a reconstruction program.

As a corollary to the Chamber of Commerce, the United Sebring Association was formed, having numerous branches or committees, one of which was a Sports Committee and, because the Fire Department was a group of younger men, they were chosen to take over all of the work of this nature.

By the fall of 1927, the new fire station had been completed, affording excellent club room facilities and attracting the interest of the members. In November 1927, a basketball team was put on the court at Tusawilla Park and, after a highly successful season, the Department felt justified in sponsoring a baseball team. To transport their teams on their road trips, a 20 passenger bus was purchased in the spring of 1928 and in the same year, a pool table and other club room paraphernalia was acquired. All of these activities required money in excess of the receipts at the gates of basketball and baseball so the members of the Department agreed to pool the money they had been receiving for fire calls from the City and to devote it to amortizing the expenses of the new activities.

The Steering Committee felt that the time had come when the members should have more of a voice in the management of the affairs of the organization and so, on 4 January 1929, the first election of officers was held with Hal Long as President, Carl Tripp as Secretary and P. G. Gearing as Treasurer. Prior to the formation of this group, it had been the responsibility of the Chief to appoint the officers of the Department and as they formed the major part of the Steering Committee, the Chief

practically controlled the Department. Now, that control passed from his hands except in the field of fire fighting and for the conduct of all members while in the fire station. This was a great stride forward.

Nevertheless, there were many more steps to be taken and the young Department was just learning to walk so it was almost inevitable that it should stumble once in a while. None of the members were older than their mid-twenties and they were all ambitious. At first, money seemed to come easily but when the effects of the boom had completely worn off, it was found necessary to adopt some more conservative measures.

Unofficially, the Steering Committee again went into action and discussed measures by which the ambitions of the young and energetic organization could be held within the bounds of its income. It was decided to seek the advice of some of the older businessmen of the City and, if they chose, bring them into the Department as associates or nonactive members. A few affiliated in this way but from the others, good counsel helped the Department over some very rough spots. These Associates were very valuable in addition to their sound financial advice. Some (Ivan Riedinger, Jack Lindsay, et.al.) made fire prevention talks to civic clubs; others served as liaison with the City Administration and all lent dignity to the Department.

During the first decade of the town's history, baseball had been moved around from one location to another and was always played on borrowed land. The costs of improving these fields were high and no permanent facilities could be provided so when a good site was found in 1930, the Department voted to go deeply in debt to buy it. For the personal protection of the individual members, it was decided to form a nonprofit corporation and so, in 1930, The Sebring Firemen, Incorporated was chartered by Judge Wm. Barker.

By this time, most of the wrinkles had been ironed out of the organizational structure; the goals had been set and the limitations were pretty well known. Skeet Naylor, the Department's smart, young lawyer, drew the form of the charter and, with one exception, it has stood up well for the past 30 years. The one exception was that the limit of the value of real property which the corporation might hold, was set at \$100,000.00 whereas, with the increased area which has been acquired, the physical improvements made and the increase in values of all property, their holdings are well worth over double the \$100,000.00. Several changes have been made in the By-Laws to meet changing conditions but these have been of very minor importance.

While the affairs of the Sebring Firemen, Inc., were solely in the hands of the

elected officers, the rules of conduct around the station were set and enforced by the Chief. All alcoholic beverages - even beer - were strictly taboo and the discussion of politics or candidacies, was prohibited. These conditions were enthusiastically observed by the members until World War II when many changes in policies were made and accepted in American points of view and in almost all organizations.

Through the years, certain practices have been continued. No member has served more than one year as president. At the annual meeting, it has been the custom of the Chief to make his appointments of his assistant, the captains and lieutenants. For the past 20 years, the Chief has also announced the names of the volunteers attending the most alarms during the year.

After the selection of the first paid firemen by the members of the Council, it became the custom for the Chief to select his engineers with the final approval by the Chairman of the Fire Committee of the Council. In fact, all matters of policy and management were cleared through this committee.

No examinations have ever been required but, before World War II, the engineers were selected from the roster of the volunteers. During the war, most of the able bodied men either joined the service or accepted jobs that paid better than the fire service could afford so many changes in personnel were made during that period. At that time, it was necessary to seek men who were in a position to accept these jobs. During recent years, there have been several changes in employment policies. Younger men have been hired and the public announcements of appointments have been made as selections by the Mayor instead of the Chief or Council.

In the appointment of the chiefs, the Mayor has always had this privilege subject to approval of Council. The first one, A. C. Altvater, served from July 1925 through December 1933 and, after a violent political upheaval, was replaced by Hal Long. Hal made an excellent record with his service until December 1941 when he resigned to enter civil service in the post office.

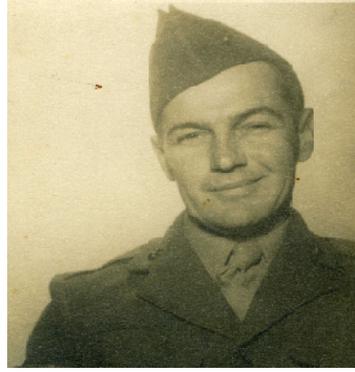
A. C. "Austie" Heacock was appointed by Mayor McGee but served slightly less than a year, resigning in November 1942 to enlist in the Navy. Forrest Howard succeeded him by appointment at that time by Mayor Payne Sebring.

After almost 19 years as Chief, Forrest was retired on pension to accept a position as instructor with the Florida Fire College. He was succeeded by G. T. Haywood, a veteran of 18 years with the department.

Chief Allen C. Altvater
1925 - 1934



Chief H. W. Long
1934 - 1941



Chief A. C. Heacock
1942



Chief Forrest Howard
1942 - 1961



Chief Thurmon Haywood
1961 -



L to R: Harry Hummel, Errol Lanier, Red Carter,
Legare Smoak, Eldridge Pollard, and Thurmon Haywood, Chief.

POLITICS

Most men who offer their services as volunteer firemen, have a sincere wish to fulfill their civic responsibilities and find an opportunity in this channel. There is no denying that there have been some who may have had selfish ambitions and have joined the Sebring Department to further those ambitions. However, it is but natural that the same type of person who will give his time and efforts, without pay, in the fire suppression service, will also answer a call to serve in elective offices.

The Sebring Firemen are proud of the high caliber of their members and of high regard in which these men have been held by the public as has been indicated by the election or appointment of these men, to positions of trust and honor. In the past 33 years, this is the record of such members:-

21	Councilmen	2	Sherriff's
3	Mayors	11	Educators
6	County Commissioners	6	Chamber of Commerce Pres.
5	Judges	4	Doctors
3	Postmasters	2	State Representative
5	Tax Assessors	1	State Senator
1	Clerk of the Court		

With such a history, some people can be forgiven for thinking that politics were a major factor on the agenda of the Firemen. Many, who have not investigated, have made such statements but the fact remains that there has never been an election in which there was anything like an agreement among the members even when one of their number was standing for election. As a matter of percentage, there have probably been as many members of the Lions, Rotary, Elks and other important civic groups, elected to office as have come from the ranks of the Sebring Firemen. In fact, when the Firemen were a young organization most of the members were active with the other clubs, also.

There has never been an objection by the Firemen, to a member seeking public office nor has there ever been a rule to bar an elected official from becoming a Fireman. In fact, one of the bylaws makes all city councilmen and the mayor, ex-officio members of the corporation so long as they hold office. However, the founders of the present fire department recognized the fact that dissention will be easiest fostered by the discussion of politics so, to prevent the breeding of unharmonious arguments, more than for any other reasons, they prescribed and religiously followed the regulation that no politics would be discussed in the fire house.

When an aspirant to public office came to the station to solicit votes, he was respectfully told that he would be heard on the street or at home but not at the station. Many candidates resented this attitude and chose to assume that the firemen would not listen to him but would encourage his opponent so, instead of being considered a virtue, it often reacted unfavorably especially when the candidate was opposed by a fireman. If the fireman was elected the scream "Little Tammany" could be heard to the north pole. However, in the long run, the policy paid off.

One event finally cleared the atmosphere and stopped most of the false charges against the department, of being a hotbed of city and county politics. A very bitter city campaign was waged in 1933 after which the victorious mayor vowed to break up the firemen's organization. In the weeks that followed, the true story was proven and, after that, there were no more accusations against "Little Tammany." The mayor learned of the public disapproval of his point of view at the next election.

(Copied from the Sebring American of 6 January 1934)

CRAWFORD TRIES TO BREAK UP SEBRING FIREMEN ORGANIZATION

FIREFIGHTERS GETTING "TOO BIG FOR CITY" IS EXCUSE ADVANCED FOR FIRING CHIEF

Offers No Proof To Substantiate "Little Tammany" Claims:
Discharge of Altvater Brings Protest From Department Members

Mayor Crawford made an attempt to explain his firing of A. C. Altvater as chief of the Sebring fire department last night. In doing so he provided an excellent example of playing politics and proved that a certain group in Sebring is jealous of the successes of the various enterprises of the Firemen - all for the benefit of Sebring.

He knew and he felt, he said, that the Firemen's organization was becoming too big for the city and that, it had reached the point that if anything was to be attempted in Sebring the permission of the department would have to be sought first. He referred to the department as "Little Tammany" by firing the man who was responsible for building up the department, one of the best in the state.

Later, when his hand was called by P. G. Gearing, president of the department, the mayor backed down somewhat. He had heard he offered no proof-about "Little Tammany;" that it was getting too big for the city, etc. But Gearing got in the last whack. He set the mayor down in a tactful manner. He told him he was "wrong, dead wrong. And the people of Sebring know you're wrong."

The mayor's outburst was the result of a request from Spencer Jones, a Fireman, for an explanation of Allen's discharge. Jones said he felt an explanation was due to the department. He also pledged his support, as did Gearing, of the Firemen to the new chief, one of their own members.

The mayor's explanation was not surprising. It was just what was expected and jibed with the tales told during the election campaign. And they were many. But the mayor offered no proof to substantiate his statements. He just tried to explain his action.

One of the mayor's supporters, G. T. Nelson, came to the defense of Altvater and said that he believed a mistake was being made by the shake-up. Nelson said he was not a friend of Altvater but admired him for what he had done for the city's benefit and for Nelson's benefit as a businessman. He referred to the organization of the fire department, whose efficiency had brought a reduction in insurance rates. He spoke of the department's sponsorship of athletics, which had added life to the city. All of which, he said, was due to Altvater's guidance.

Norman Lane also protested Altvater's discharge. He was followed by Gearing who resented the mayor's charge about "Little Tammany." Gearing also questioned the wisdom of the mayor's and council's action.

Although the mayor may be possessed with an idea that he has created havoc by the shake-up, he will find that he has done more to help than hurt the department, one member stated last night. The mayor has showed his colors, and others will do likewise, the member added.

Members of the fire department:

ACTIVE

P. G. Gearing, E. G. Burton, J. N. Ball, Carl Tripp, H. S. Jones, Tom Dimberline, A. L. Butler, Laurie Williams, Harry Raymond, P. S. Wyandt, George Hicks, Ray Morgan, P. A. Naylor, C. B. Jones, B. Taylor, D. Schumacher, F. M. Schumacher, Norman Lane, Geo. Whitehouse, C. E. Weaver, Bob Butts, Fred Wheeler, George Babcock, Clarence King, Tom Whitehouse, Joe Long, Jack Parker, Hayden Williams, H. W. Long, Joe Lighthiser, O. W. Chapman, E. D. Estes, Ray Paschall, Joe Stiles, Ray Vinton, Jack Williams, Allen Altvater, W. H. Dutton, and E. W. Gallaher.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

C. F. Saunders, B. A. Cope, Amos Cook, E. L. Greene, R. N. Durrance, Dr. L. W. Martin, Sam Dimberline, Charlie Morrison.

HONORARY

R. A. Rasco, D. Cobb, Ed Davies, Alexander Blair, Tom Pollard, Eddie Tulk, Harry K. Brown.

Associate members: (By virtue of their office as Mayor and City Councilmen) W. B. Crawford, Willard Percy, B. R. Burns, G. S. Hodil, A. M. Wolfe.

Although one of the city's youngest men, Altvater is among the oldest in point of residence in Sebring. He served on council in past years. About 1924 he was named chief of the fire department and prior to that time had been a member for several years. He also served as Chamber of Commerce president. His latest public service, in connection with his duties as fire chief, was that of superintendent of public works. Acting under instructions from council, he proceeded to collect light and water accounts, which aroused the wrath of a large number of non-payers, and at the close of his stewardship showed that the city, without sufficient taxes to operate for but a short period before closing its doors, could be run on a businesslike basis. But his activities displeased certain people and he was placed on the spot months ago both as superintendent and fire chief.



Central Station, built in 1927, still in use today!

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

1. The name of the Corporation shall be THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INCORPORATED whose principal place of business and Post Office address is Sebring, Highlands County, Florida.

2. The objects and purposes of the Corporation shall be:

A. The preservation and protection of property from and during such fires as may occur in the City of Sebring and vicinity and to study and teach the latest most approved and the most scientific means and/or methods of fire fighting and of reducing fire hazards.

B. To secure proper consideration and cooperative action affecting civic and athletic interests in Sebring.

C. To uphold the principles of good government and to encourage the application of the highest standards in sports and athletics.

D. To secure cooperative action in advancing the common interest of the members thereof, in any honorable way.

E. To purchase, hold and acquire by gift or otherwise, real estate and personal property and to issue notes, bonds and other evidence of indebtedness therefore and to secure the same by a mortgage or deed of trust on the corporation's assets.

F. To do all and everything necessary and proper for the accomplishment of the objects enumerated in this certificate of incorporation, or necessary or incidental to the attainment of the objects of the corporation and to have the same powers as prescribed generally for all corporations, by the General Corporation Laws of the State of Florida, as if each of said powers were set forth herein *have verba*.

All of which purposes are to be carried out, not for profit and without shares of stock, but simply to promote the objects of this corporation.

3. The qualifications of members and the manner of their admission, shall be as follows: Any male person of the age of 21 years or over, and of good character and standing in the community of Sebring, and who is a resident of Sebring, shall be eligible to membership in this corporation, provided that the resident requirements shall not apply to honorary membership.

The membership in this corporation shall be divided into three classes, namely, active, non-active or associate, and honorary.

Membership in this corporation shall be by election; any member shall have the privilege of presenting the name or names of candidates for election and upon report of the Membership Committee, if favorable, said candidate shall be balloted for, and if there are not more than three dissenting votes, the candidate for membership shall be elected providing the candidates' names and applications shall have first been read at a regular meeting at least thirty days prior to the report of the Membership Committee and before a ballot is cast.

4. The term for which this corporation is to exist shall be perpetual.

5. The names and residences of the subscribers of this corporation, are:

G. C. Lighthiser	whose address is Sebring, Florida
H. W. Long	whose address is Sebring, Florida
Ray Morgan	whose address is Sebring, Florida
C. F. Saunders	whose address is Sebring, Florida
A. C. Altvater	whose address is Sebring, Florida
P. G. Gearing	whose address is Sebring, Florida
Geo. W. Wyandt	whose address is Sebring, Florida
J. J. Lighthiser	whose address is Sebring, Florida
C. G. Tripp	whose address is Sebring, Florida

6. The affairs of this corporation shall be managed by a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and a Board of Trustees, of not less than three nor more than seven members.

The officers of this Corporation shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Corporation and shall hold their office for a period of one year or until their successors shall have been duly elected and installed.

The annual meeting of this corporation shall be held on the 3rd Friday of the month of February in each and every year.

7. The names of the officers who are to manage all the affairs until the first annual meeting under this Charter, are: as follows:

J. J. Lighthiser,	President
Ray Morgan,	Vice-President
Carl Tripp,	Secretary
Carl Tripp,	Treasurer

The Board of Trustees are: George W. Wyandt, J. J. Lighthiser, and H. W. Long.

8. The By-laws of the corporation are to be made, adopted, altered or rescinded and/or amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting providing such proposed By-laws or amendments thereto, shall be read at one regular meeting prior to the adoption of the said amendments.

9. The highest amount of indebtedness or liability to which the corporation may at any time subject itself, shall be Fifty Thousand (\$50,000.00) dollars, which amount shall never be greater than two-thirds of the value of the property of the corporation.

10. The amount in value of the Real Estate which the corporation may hold, shall be One Hundred Thousand (\$100,000.00) Dollars, subject, however, to the approval of the Circuit Court Judge.

WITNESS our hands and seals this 2nd day of July, A.D. 1930.

G. C. Lighthiser,	(SEAL)	P. G. Gearing	(SEAL)
H. W. Long	(SEAL)	Geo. W. Wyandt	(SEAL)
Ray Morgan	(SEAL)	J. J. Lighthiser	(SEAL)
C. F. Saunders	(SEAL)	C. G. Tripp	(SEAL)
A. C. Altvater	(SEAL)		

STATE OF FLORIDA:
HIGHLANDS COUNTY:

On this day personally appeared before me G. C. Lighthiser, H. W. Long, Ray Morgan, C. F. Saunders, A. C. Altvater, P. G. Gearing, Geo. W. Wyandt, J. J. Lighthiser, and C. G. Tripp, who being by me first duly sworn, deposes and says that they, and each of them, intend in good faith to carry out the purposes and objects set forth in the above Charter.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 2nd day of July, A.D. 1930.

Playford A. Naylor
Notary Public, State of Florida
My commission expires 12/24/30.

(SEAL)

G. C. Lighthiser
Ray Morgan
C. G. Tripp
C. F. Saunders
A. C. Altvater
P. G. Gearing
Geo. W. Wyandt
J. J. Lighthiser
H. W. Long

I find that the Charter as presented before me this 5th day of July A.D. 1930, is in proper form and for an object authorized by Chapter 3, Article 1 of Title 3 of Compiled General Laws of the State of Florida, 1927, and I hereby approve the said Charter and endorse my approval thereon.

Done in Sebring, in Highlands County, Florida, this 5th day of July, A.D. 1930.

W. J. Barker
Judge of the 19th Judicial Circuit
in and for Highlands County, State
of Florida.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SEBRING FIRE DEPARTMENT IN 1920.

CHIEF	W. B. Zackary
ASS'T CHIEF	Walter I. Moyer
ASS'T CHIEF	Wm. Vogelsong
SECRETARY & TREASURER	P. G. Gearing
CAPTAINS	
Chemical	George Whitehouse
Hose #1	Charles Shaffer
	Carl Mooreland
Hose #2	A. E. Withers
	Dr. E. G. Skiff

MEMBERS

Chemical

E. L. Greene	Lieutenant
G. V. Hudson	Nozzleman
A. P. Butts	Nozzleman
P. J. Rippberger	Nozzleman
P. G. Gearing	Tank
Elbert Collier	Tank
Clark Cason	Tank
J. Lee Johnson	Openings
A. Varena	Hoseman
Thos. Whitehouse	Hoseman

Hose #1

Fred A. Yeager	Lieutenant
Harris Muff	Hoseman
Bill Babcock	Hoseman
Sam Outlaw	Hoseman
Everet Rice	Hoseman
Gerald Bee	Hoseman
Floyd Schumacher	Hoseman
Horace Garner	Nozzleman
Dewey Monsdeoca	Nozzleman
Wiley Taylor	Hydrant
Fred Muelemister	Hydrant
John Warren	Hydrant

Hose #2

F. T. Haskins	Lieutenant
George E. Sebring, Jr.	Hoseman
Dan Andrews	Hoseman
H. O. Sebring, Jr.	Hoseman
Ford Heacock	Hoseman
H. S. Jones	Nozzleman
C. B. Jones	Nozzleman
E. W. Harshman	Hydrant

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SEBRING FIRE DEPARTMENT IN 1929.
(Prior to Incorporation)

CHIEF		A. C. Altvater
ASS'T CHIEF		Payne M. Sebring
ASS'T CHIEF		G. C. Lightiser
CAPTAINS & LIEUTENANTS		P. G. Gearing
	Carl Tripp	O. W. Chapman
	E. D. Estes	K. S. Johnson

MEMBERS

Albright, Charles	Lighthiser, J. J. #
Ball, James	Long, Hal #
Bonsall, Marion	Long, Joe
Butler, A. L.	Martin, L. L.
Coyle, Ray	McGee, Ben
Cook, Dorland	Morgan, Ray
	Morris, R. E.
Dimberline, Tom	Naylor, P. A.
Dunn, Harry	Rasco, R. A.
Frick, G.	Raymond, Harry
Gallaher, E. W.	Sidders, E. D. #
Greene, E. L.	Smith, W. W.
Hanes, W. L.	Taylor, Bayard
Heacock, Ford	Tulk, Eddie
Hicks, George	Vann, N. N.
Ivings, Walter	Whitehouse, George
Jaeger, Sid	Williams, Hayden
Jones, C. B.	Williams, Laurie
Jones, H. S.	Womble, Pete
Kieffer, Al	Wyandt, George
Kutz, Arthur	Wyandt, P. Stan
Kline, Harry #	Yeager, Roscoe

Paid Engineers

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
1929	Hal Long <i>First officers of Sebring Firemen, Inc. were elected.</i>	Ray Morgan	Carl Tripp	P. Gearing	Fatso Morris G. Wyandt J. Lighthiser
1930	C. Lighthiser <i>First Fire College - Sebring Firemen were incorporated.</i>	Ray Morgan	Carl Tripp	P. Gearing	Hal Long J. Lighthiser G. Wyandt
1931	Carl Tripp <i>Firemen's Field dedicated.</i>	J. Lighthiser	C. E. Weaver	F. Schumacher	D. Schumacher Hal Long Geo. Hicks
1932	J. Lighthiser <i>Firemen staged boat races.</i>	O.W. Chapman	F. Schumacher	Carl Tripp	C. E. Weaver C. F. Saunders E. L. Green
1933	P. Gearing <i>Firemen built Tusawilla Park pavillion.</i>	G. Burton	James Ball	L. Frantzen	O.W. Chapman Hal Long N. Lane
1934	F. Schumacher <i>Hal Long appointed Fire Chief.</i>	E. Gallaher	Stan Wyandt	R. Paschall	E. L. Green Geo. Hicks B. A. Cope
1935	O.W. Chapman <i>Firemen won another baseball pennant.</i>	Joe Long	H. Raymond	P. Gearing	J. Lighthiser F. Wheeler Ray Morgan
1936	A. C. Altvater <i>New grandstand built at Firemen's Field.</i>	Ray Morgan	Jack Williams	J. Lighthiser	E. Gallaher B. A. Cope Stan Wyandt F. Schumacher (1)
1937	Jack Williams <i>Firemen's Highlands County Fair Association incorporated.</i>	A. C. Heacock	Geo. Hicks	M. Ferguson	D. Schumacher E. L. Green G. Shurtliff
1938	R. Paschall <i>Firemen bring Newark Bears to Sebring for the third year.</i>	F. Schumacher	H. Raymond	P. Gearing	P. M. Sebring A. C. Altvater C. E. Weaver
1939	Stan Wyandt E. Wilson (2)	E. Wilson T. Pollard (3)	Hal Long	P. Gearing	B. F. Williams E. L. Green Jack Williams
1940	C. E. Weaver	A. C. Altvater	T. Pollard	P. Gearing	B. F. Williams A. C. Altvater E. L. Green

(1) Served the unexpired term of E. W. Gallaher

(2) Served the unexpired term of Stan Wyandt

(3) Served the unexpired term of E. Wilson

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
1941	P. M. Sebring	G. Burton	F. Howard	B. F. Williams	A. C. Altvater C. E. Weaver E. L. Green
1942	W. Harshman	A. C. Altvater	N. B. Graybill	C. B. Jones	P. M. Sebring A. C. Altvater E. L. Green
1943	E. L. Green	A. L. Butler	F. Howard	C. B. Jones	A. L. Butler P. Gearing J. P. Lighthiser
1944	A. L. Butler	L. C. Greene	Dee long	C. B. Jones	P. Gearing P. M. Sebring E. L. Green
1945	C. B. Jones	W. H. Dutton	B. Cartwright	F. Baguley	G. Burton P. Gearing P. M. Sebring
1946	F. Howard	M. Baker	F. Schumacher	F. Baguley	C. E. Weaver P. Gearing A. C. Altvater
1947	Doc Johnson	Miles Baker	R. Baguley	F. Baguley	C. E. Weaver P. Gearing W. Harshman
1948	Ray Graddy	B. Coker	P. Gearing	F. Baguley	Doc Johnson C. B. Jones C. E. Weaver
1949	N. Graybill	A. C. Heacock	H. Livingston	F. Baguley	C. E. Weaver C. B. Jones Doc Johnston
1950	M. Baker	C. B. Carter	F. Wheeler	F. Baguley	P. Gearing W. Harshman C. B. Jones
1951	G. Marchand	J. M. McAdams	Ray Graddy	F. Baguley	F. Howard F. Heacock D. Schumacher
1952	J. M. McAdams	T. Haywood	Ken Wilson	C. B. Jones	A. C. Altvater C. E. Weaver F. Schumacher
1953	D. Durrance	Sid Cooper	Ken Wilson	C. B. Jones	J. M. McAdams F. Schumacher J. Fulton

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1954	Ken Wilson	C. B. Carter	E. Pollard	C. B. Jones	J. M. McAdams A. C. Altvater F. Schumacher
1955	Sid Cooper	E. Pollard	Jack Hancock	C. B. Jones	W. Harshman A. C. Altvater F. Bryant
1956	W. H. Dutton	E. Pollard	J. Freeland	C. B. Jones	A. C. Altvater P. Gearing C. E. Weaver
1967	E. Pollard	J. Masters	R. Durrance, Jr.	C. B. Jones	W. Harshman C. E. Weaver W. H. Dutton
1958	L. Curl	Bill Sebring	C. B. Jones, Jr.	C. B. Jones	W. Harshman J. M. McAdams F. Heacock
1959	J. Masters	J. Freeland	C. Schumacher	C. B. Jones	W. Harshman H. Livingston F. Heacock
1960	A. Cucchiaro	C. Schumacher	H. Taylor	C. B. Jones	W. Harshman Miles Baker J. M. McAdams
1961	Gene Hamlin	Gene Sauls	E. Lanier	Jack Hancock	J. M. McAdams Miles Baker A. Cucchiaro

** Officers list continues with 1962-2007 on page 103.*



1962 OFFICERS

Front row, L to R: Errol Lanier, secretary; Jack Hancock, treasurer; Russ Albritton, vice president; Gene Sauls, president. Back row: Woodrow Harshman, trustee; Eldridge Pollard, assistant chief; Henry Bailey, trustee; Pink McAdams, trustee; G.T. Haywood, chief; C.B. Jones, Jr., chaplain.

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

P. S. Wyandt elected as Trustee 5/17/1929 to fill unexpired term of Morris, resigned.

Ray Morgan elected as Trustee 11/1/1929 to fill unexpired term of P. S. Wyandt, resigned.

C. Tripp elected as Treasurer 6/5/1930 to fill unexpired term of P. G. Gearing, resigned.

C. Tripp elected as Treasurer 5/5/1933 to fill unexpired term of Leo. Frantzen, resigned.

W. M. Williams elected as Secretary 4/17/1936 to fill unexpired term of Floyd Schumacher, resigned.

Floyd Schumacher elected as Trustee 7/3/1936 to fill unexpired term of E. W. Gallaher, deceased.

P. M. Sebring elected as Trustee 5/7/1937 to fill unexpired term of George Shurliff, deceased.

E. Wilson elected as President 5/19/1939 to fill unexpired term of P. S. Wyandt, resigned.

Tom Pollard elected as Vice President 5/19/1939 to fill unexpired term of E. Wilson, elected President.

Hal Long elected as Secretary 10/18/1940 to fill unexpired term of Tom Pollard, resigned.

P. G. Gearing elected as Treasurer 10/3/1941 to fill unexpired term of B. F. Williams, resigned.

A. C. Altvater resigned as Vice president and Trustee 10/16/1942, entered military service. No record in minutes of replacement.

Doyle Schumacher elected as Trustee 8/19/1949 to fill unexpired term of Dr. R. L. Johnston, resigned.

J. M. McAdams elected as Treasurer 8/19/1949 to fill unexpired term of C. B. Jones, resigned.

** Officers list continues with 1962-2007 on page 103.*



Some of the Early Members of the Sebring Firemen, Inc.

Photo made in 1933

Seated, L to R: B.A. Cope, Joe Long, P.A. Naylor, H.W. Long, H.S. Jones, W.M. Williams, J.J. Lighthiser, P.G. Gearing, Joe Stiles, Jack Parker, A.L. Butler, and C.F. Saunders.

Standing, L to R: Ray Morgan, E.G. Burton, Jr., P.S. Wyandt, O.W. Chapman, James Ball, C.B. Jones, George Hicks, Norman Lane, H.H. Raymond, and Ray Vinten.

**MEMBERS VOTED INTO THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.,
BETWEEN JANUARY 1929 AND DECEMBER 1961**

Albritton, Ben	1/5/1940
Albritton, Russ	12/16/1960
Babcock, George	11/21/1930
Baguley, Fred	4/16/1937
Baguley, Dick	9/6/1946
Bailey, Henry	4/19/1952
Baker, Miles	1/20/1939
Beach, Rex	6/5/1936
Bevis, Russell	9/15/1950
Blair, Alexander	10/21/1932
Bogle, James	4/16/1937
Bogle, John	5/7/1937
Brewer, Gordon	3/20/1942
Bricker, R	10/18/1940
Brown, Harry K.	1/3/1930
Brummell, H. E.	4/18/1952
Bryant, Frank	7/2/1954
Burton, E. G. , Jr.	2/5/1929
Butler, J. A.	3/15/1946
Butts, Bob	11/7/1930
Carter, C. B.	9/3/1943
Carter, DeWitt	5/18/1951
Carter, Lanier	4/15/1949
Carter, Roger	3/6/1959
Cartwright, Bob	6/4/1943
Cason, Ted	6/21/1935
Claridy, Alonzo	1/5/1940
Coker, Broward	1/17/1941
Cobb, Bill	1/4/1935
Collins, Cecil	4/17/1942
Cook, A. L.	5/15/1931
Cooper, Sam	12/19/1952
Cooper, Sid	1/21/1944
Cope, B. A.	2/21/1930
Cox, Pete	3/16/1934
Creel, James	1/3/1957
Crutchfield, Earl	3/15/1957
Crutchfield, Henry	3/19/1948

**MEMBERS VOTED INTO THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.,
BETWEEN JANUARY 1929 AND DECEMBER 1961**

Cucchiaro, Andy	1/5/1950
Culverhouse, E. C.	3/6/1959
Crawford, Gene	8/17/1956
Cummins, Vance	12/6/1929
Curl, Lonnie	12/6/1946
Darley, L. C.	6/5/1942
Davies, Edw. S.	8/16/1929
Dean, Dick	3/16/1945
Denson, Walter	10/7/1954
Dimberline, Sam	1/6/1933
Dorton, Dick	6/4/1943
Durrance, Dallas	3/20/1942
Durrance, Dallas, Jr.	6/20/1947
Durrance, R. N.	7/3/1931
Durrance, R. N. , Jr.	10/4/1956
Dutton, Richard	1/18/1957
Dutton, W. H.	5/16/1930
Dutton, W. H., Jr.	3/15/1946
Eastman, Ben	2/2/1952
Ercoli, Joe	1/19/1945
Estes, A. W.	11/1/1935
Ewing, Hoyt	7/15/1938
Ferguson, M. M.	7/17/1936
Frantzen, Leo	1/6/1933
Freeland, John	5/15/1953
Foster, Charlie	7/2/1954
Foster, Herley	11/16/1945
Fulton, Albert	11/16/1945
Fulton, James	7/15/1938
Garrett, Guy	4/18/1952
Gearing, Don	2/1/1952
Geary, James	1/21/1938
Gerling, R.	6/19/1959
Graddy, Ray	6/19/1936

**MEMBERS VOTED INTO THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.,
BETWEEN JANUARY 1929 AND DECEMBER 1961**

Grant, Harold	5/17/1946
Green, Lewis	7/17/1942
Graybill, N. B.	6/4/1941
Gustat, P. J.	3/1/1940
Gustat, Paul	11/1/1956
Gould, Tom	12/1/1950
Hamlin, Donald	4/4/1958
Hamlin, Eugene	10/5/1951
Hancock, Jack	8/18/1950
Hancock, Roscoe	11/19/1943
Harris, Albert	7/18/1941
Harris, Jesse	9/3/1942
Harrison, John	10/4/1945
Harshman, W. W.	1/7/1938
Haynes, Bill	9/6/1957
Haywood, Earl	3/6/1959
Haywood, Thurmon	3/19/1943
Heacock, A. C.	4/19/1935
Heacock, Ford	7/20/1945
Heacock, Ford Jr.	9/8/1956
Hansen, Don	10/15/1953
Heston, Norman	9/8/1956
Hodge, Winfield	9/3/1943
Howard, Bobby	6/19/1952
Howard, Forrest	8/7/1936
Hummel, Harry	11/16/1961
Hutchison, Douglas	10/5/1951
Ives, Selwyn	4/2/1937
Jackson, Jack	4/16/1954
Johnston, Dr. R. L.	9/19/1941
Jones, C. B.	7/19/1929
Jones, C. B., Jr.	10/4/1956
Jones, Tom	9/20/1940
King, Clarence	5/15/1931
Kinsey, Joe	1/20/1939

**MEMBERS VOTED INTO THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.,
BETWEEN JANUARY 1929 AND DECEMBER 1961**

Lane, Norman	12/6/1929
Lanier, E.	10/15/1959
Ley, Fred	4/16/1937
Lighthiser, J. P.	6/5/1936
Livingston, Howard	4/17/1942
Logan, Tom	12/7/1945
Long, Dee	3/20/1942
Long, Hal, Jr.	6/19/1952
Long, Joe	7/17/1931
Long, Max	5/15/1953
Longbottom, Charles	8/21/1942
Lovvorn, Chas.	9/20/1929
Mackay, W. C.	2/5/1929
Marchand, George	2/7/1947
Martin, C. S.	12/6/1935
Martin, Dr. H. W.	3/20/1942
Martin, Dr. L. W.	5/5/1932
Masters, Jack	10/5/1950
McAdams, J. M.	1/20/1939
Melton, James	7/17/1936
Miller, C. C.	10/19/1950
Miller, Bobby	11/1/1956
Morgan, Ralph	1/4/1935
Moore, J. W.	11/17/1944
Morrison, Charlie	12/16/1932
Muff, A. H.	5/7/1943
Munson, Al	4/16/1954
Musselwhite, J.	7/3/1959
Mitchell, Jim	4/16/1943
Nelson, Charles	3/15/1946
Page, Bill	4/17/1946
Pardee, C. S.	6/18/1943
Parker, Jack	4/15/1932
Paschall, Ray	5/5/1933
Perkins, B. C.	7/2/1954
Pettis, Bob	8/21/1942

**MEMBERS VOTED INTO THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.,
BETWEEN JANUARY 1929 AND DECEMBER 1961**

Poer, Mac	1/21/1938
Pollard, Bob	5/17/1957
Pollard, Dempsey	11/21/1930
Pollard, Eldridge	10/2/1952
Pollard, Tom	7/19/1929
Pollard, Willard	3/16/1951
Richardson, Ralph	6/5/1942
Roberts, Jack	9/16/1945
Rudasill, Smith, Jr.	11/4/1954
Rutland, Carnie	7/21/1950
Sauls, Gene	3/15/1957
Saunders, C. F.	9/20/1929
Sawyer, Jack	1/4/1935
Schumacher, Chas.	9/8/1956
Schumacher, Doyle	8/16/1929
Schumacher, Floyd	9/20/1929
Sebring, Bill	4/15/1955
Selph, L. E.	12/20/1957
Seron, Dr. Z.	5/5/1950
Shurtliff, George	11/1/1935
Smoak, Legare	9/21/1951
Spear, Ham	1/19/1945
Stiles, Joe	4/7/1933
Stevens, James	7/17/1942
Stevens, Wm. B.	5/17/1946
Stone, Fred	6/5/1936
Taylor, Haywood	4/3/1959
Taylor, Floyd	12/16/1960
Vinten, Ray	4/7/1933

**MEMBERS VOTED INTO THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.,
BETWEEN JANUARY 1929 AND DECEMBER 1961**

Wagner, Chas.	5/3/1929
Weaver, C. Elton	7/4/1930
Weaver, Doe	6/4/1941
Wheeler, Fred	11/7/1930
Wheeler, James	6/19/1952
Whitehouse , Tom	2/21/1930
Whitehurst, M. C.	5/15/1931
Williams, B. F.	5/7/1937
Williams, Hayden	11/20/1932
Williams, J. T.	7/19/1937
Williams, W. M.	5/5/1933
Willis, Ken	7/8/1941
Wilson, Ernest	4/16/1937
Wilson, Hank	1/7/1952
Wilson, Ken	10/5/1951
Wolff, Lamont	7/19/1929
Wolfe, Bob	11/4/1954
Woods, Jess	3/15/1946
Yeager, Roscoe	12/21/1934
Young, Dan	3/5/1943
Young, Bill	2/28/1947
Zeiss, Jack	6/4/1948

THE FLORIDA FIRE COLLEGE

It is astonishing how some of our more important advances are the results of very minor causes. A chance inane remark by a visiting volunteer fireman was really the beginning of the Florida Fire College. This volunteer came to Sebring with a basketball team that had a playing engagement with the team of the Sebring Firemen and while they were busy changing to their uniforms upstairs, he wandered around the lower deck, inspecting the equipment. Then he saw the 2 1/2" hose, he remarked that his department used hose nearly twice as large as that on the Sebring Truck.

This foolish statement set up a train of thought in the mind of the Sebring chief. With Sebring volunteers following their basketball and baseball teams around the state (and probably bragging a little, too) would they show their ignorance of fire fighting equipment and methods when they visited other towns?

Wouldn't it stimulate interest in their work and pride for their organization as well as respect by others if they knew more of the science of fire fighting; what they were doing and why they were doing it?

The Sebring volunteers were at least on an average with other fire departments in their interest in their work, their attendance at fires and at practices but the mere laying of lines, playing a stream of water and rolling hose can become very routine and unromantic even though the organization is divided into competitive groups. As an experiment, classes on Sunday afternoons were announced in the study of "The Chemistry of Fires".

Living in Sebring at that time (1928) was a retired professor of chemistry, who eagerly gave his services to the group which, just as eagerly attended his classes. Prof. Harry K. Brown began his instruction by explaining "What is Fire." Advancing from that through "What Causes Fire" to the most technical analyses of the major catastrophes, he created such an intense interest in his classes that it was felt that Sebring should share its opportunities with others and also investigate the possibilities of study along other lines of scientific fire fighting.

The first step taken was to publish Prof. Brown's papers and offer them to others. One of the trade papers published a very favorable review of the work and immediately requests began to pour in from other departments, from universities, from libraries and individuals and industrial companies. So great was the demand that the first edition of 200 copies was soon exhausted and a second printing of the same number barely filled the requests.

As a second step, the National Fire Protection Association and the National Board of Fire Underwriters were contacted and were asked for help.

It was learned that, in some states, fire colleges were being conducted - some as short courses in universities; some by local municipalities and some by state firemen's organizations all with varying degrees of success. A committee from Sebring went to the annual convention of the International Association of Fire Chiefs in Birmingham to meet and consult with representatives of the NFPA and the IBFU and to learn first hand from fire chiefs who had attended these courses. From these conferences, the committee was convinced that a state-wide fire college was the logical medium through which the members of the smaller community fire departments could gain the knowledge that has later been proven to be so essential in reducing losses from fires.

It seemed logical to assume that the natural organization to promote and foster a training program, would be the Florida State Firemen's Association which was, at the time, a young and vigorous organization with few specific objectives other than the customary annual meetings which were primarily dedicated to "making whoopee".

The officers of this organization had been wisely chosen and were sincere and dedicated firemen but at that early date in its history, there were no districts of the state and, when first approached, the Association did not show any great amount of interest in the idea although some of the officers, as individuals and heads of their departments that needed the training, were highly enthusiastic. Among these were Chief Floyd Pfaender of Winter Haven and Wm. R. Anderson of Ft. Myers.

In order to avoid further delays, it was determined, in the spring of 1929, to form another group to be known as the "Associated Fire Departments of South Florida" with member departments among the communities running from Davenport on the north to Ft. Myers on the south. Monthly meetings were held in the different towns and the fire college idea was made the major interest of the association.

It was through a committee of this group that the NFPA, the NBFU and the National Fire Waste Council (a committee of the United States Chamber of Commerce) worked together to set up the Florida fire college committee which was composed of the following members;

E. Finley Cannon, Chairman
President of the Florida Local Underwriters Association

Gainesville

J. H. Holmes, Member
Manager, Florida Inspection and Rating Bureau

Jacksonville

W. V. Knott, Member
State Treasurer and Insurance Commissioner

Tallahassee

David Sholtz, Member
President, State Chamber of Commerce

Daytona Beach

A. C. Altvater, Secretary
Fire Chief

Sebring

Early in the summer of 1929, E. P. Owens, secretary of the Florida League of Municipalities and James C. Clark, editor of the Municipal Record were contacted and they not only endorsed the college idea but gave it wholehearted support in their official publication that went to all city officials in the state and they arranged for a spot on the program of their 1929 convention where the plan was presented to city officials.

With the endorsement of the Florida League of Municipalities and the State Chamber of Commerce and with the Florida committee organized with the names of four of the state's outstanding and respected men, the Associated Fire Departments of South Florida was ready to approach the Florida State Firemen's Association for their endorsement. Chiefs Anderson and Pfaender were on the Executive Committee of the Association and they were able to persuade the president, Alex MacWilliams of Vero Beach, to hold a joint meeting of his executive committee and the committee of the Associated Fire Departments at which time the Association agreed to cooperate in the promotion of the college and a sub-committee on arrangements was appointed, consisting of;

Chief J. F. MacMillan, Chairman

Cocoa

Chief Wm. R. Anderson

Ft. Myers

Chief F. C. Pfaender

Winter Haven

Chief B. B. Hart

Daytona Beach

Chief A. C. Altvater

Sebring

The names of J. J. Parrish of Titusville, J. M. Bradfield of Jacksonville and F. C. Pfaender of Winter Haven, were later added to the Florida committee but, after the initial work of organizing the college and putting it into the hands of the Florida State Association, the Committee passed out of the picture except that it made arrangements for some of the money needed to pay the expenses of the first college session. And, as the purpose for which the Associated Fire Departments was organized had been fulfilled, it too was dissolved.

While the State Firemen's committee took charge of all arrangements, the Sebring Fire Department agreed to bear the expense of promotion and to carry on this part of the work. There were magazine and newspaper articles to be written, hundreds of letters received and answered, personal appearances before city administrations and contacts with the personnel of fire departments all over the state.

In all advertising literature and in all talks to city officials urging them to send their firemen to the college, it was promised that the session would not be just another convention or social gathering but would be dedicated to real work. Officials were promised that each student would be graded on his attendance, punctuality and effort and all these promises were rigidly kept. Monitors checked every man very, very carefully and the students learned at the very start that an absence would be reported so there was no "goofing off".

By the same token, at the end of the session the grades were compiled and sent, not to the student but to the highest official in his city together with an individual letter of commendation if the student rated it. In most cases, the student was called up before his city council and a public presentation was made of his certificate. This was excellent publicity and, as a result, the students were eager to attend subsequent sessions and came prepared to really work. It was also found that greater cooperation by city officials resulted from these practices.

The formation of sound policies by the first committees, together with strict and honest observance of these policies and the rigid adherence to promises made to students and officials, not only contributed to the success of the first College term but made it possible for future committees to carry on the work with the utmost confidence of those whose support was so essential to success.

If there are degrees of success, the first Florida College was the superlative. Held in Daytona Beach in May 1930, the attendance was far greater than had been expected; the teachers seemed to be inspired and the results were beyond the highest hopes of the committees. Even the teachers learned from the courses that were presented by the others. It is remembered that the instructor of one course said, upon first reading the program, "I don't want firemen under me studying Chemistry of fires. They will be afraid to go into a burning drug store or warehouse." After hearing the discussions on this subject, he retracted that statement. And the interest generated at Daytona did not stop there. Many of the men who studied there, went back to their homes and carried on classes so that others received benefits from the schools.

The second year, the college was held in Sebring with an enrollment larger

than at Daytona but with virtually the same course of studies and the same teachers. It was equally successful and beneficial. After that term, it was returned to Daytona Beach.

The Sebring Fire Department is entitled to take great pride in the fact that, because of its efforts in initiating the movement, Florida was among the leaders in establishing a state-wide system of training in fire suppression. This Department was the real founder of the Florida Fire College.

* * * * *

The following newspaper item which is reprinted from the Sebring Daily American, refers to the demonstrations as “stunts” and to those who merely watched the evolutions, they might appear in this light. Actually, they were designed to dramatize the appeal that had been made immediately preceding, for the assembled city officials to send their firemen to the proposed Fire College the following spring.

Through the kindness of the committee on arrangements, for the annual convention of the Florida League of Municipalities, the Fire Service Extension Committee was assigned time on the program to explain the plans for the forthcoming College. The Honorable Dave Sholtz, then President of the State Chamber of Commerce, had agreed to make the presentation of plans but four days before the scheduled talk, he wired the committee secretary, “REGRET IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO BE AT LAKE WALES NEXT MONDAY STOP HAVE QUITE A MASS OF DETAIL WHICH I WILL FORWARD YOU TONIGHTS MAIL AM ALSO ADVISING OWEN PLEASE THEREFORE ADVISE HIM PROMPTLY WHO WILL HANDLE, REGARDS. Signed, Dave Sholtz.” Mr. Sholtz had contracted a bad attack of tonsillitis and the doctor had advised against public speaking - too late to obtain a good public speaker and prepare him for the occasion.

However, the Winter Haven and Sebring Fire Departments were prepared to give convincing demonstrations on a moments notice and they very graphically proved the statements made by the impromptu speaker on the program - that, by proper training, even the smaller communities could have efficient life and fire protection as well as the larger cities.

The results of these activities were most gratifying and were responsible, to a great degree, for the satisfactory enrollment at the first Fire College.

(Copied from the Sebring American of 17 December 1929)

SEBRING FIREMEN SCORE HIT AT LAKE WALES MEETING

Life Saving Demonstration is Successful

ELEVEN STORY WALES-BILT HOTEL HOLDS NO TERRORS FOR SEBRINGITES

Delegates to Florida League of Municipalities Meet Applaud Stunts

The Sebring Firemen added another achievement to their long list yesterday when they demonstrated their life saving efficiency before the delegates to the Florida League of Municipalities at Lake Wales.

The eleven-story Dixie-Wales Bilt Hotel was the scene of the Sebring department's activities, a thrilling rescue stunt was pulled which won a long round of applause from the onlooking delegates and residents of Lake Wales.

A rope was dropped from the 10th floor of the building to the top of the one story roof which covers the sidewalk surrounding the hotel. A 20 foot ladder enabled the Sebring squad to get from the ground to the first floor roof where a ten-foot ladder reached the fire escape. Stepping up the fire escape, Chappie Chapman and Joe Lighthiser mounted the escape, Joe stopping at the sixth floor and Chappie continuing to the tenth. Using the life belt which is owned by the Sebring Department and which fastened onto the rope, Chappie swung outward and coasted down to the sixth floor where Joe awaited him. Together they brought out the "unconscious" form of another member of the department, Joe Wagner. The life belt was fastened around him and he was eased to the first floor roof by two other members. A patent feature of the belt enables a fireman on the ground to control the speed of the descent. Eph Sidders carried the victim to the ladder where he was taken care of by George Hicks and taken down the 20 feet to the ground. Here the process of artificial respiration was applied by Doug Estes and Laurie Williams. The act went over big, the local boys getting a huge round of applause for the feat.

While the reviving process was taking place, several bystanders, "taken in" by the proceeding, pressed around to view the "unconscious" form of Wagner some saying, "stand back, give him air."

Chapman then stepped off the tenth floor with the belt around his body and was pulled in by Lighthiser at the sixth floor. Joe then clung to Chapman while both members slid down the rope, their descent being “braked” by two members of the department who stood on the ground floor.

At the conclusion of this part of the stunt, Joe Wagner then slid down the rope from the tenth floor of the building without the use of the belt, his hands being protected by gloves.

To cap the exhibition by the Sebring department, Chal Lighthiser jumped off the roof of the post office building into the life net held by other members of the Squad.

A hose laying demonstration by the Winter Haven department preceded the Sebring stunts, the Winter Haven boys coupling up in short order in a fine demonstration of team work.





Florida Fire College Committee of the Florida State Firemen's Assoc., 1930.

E. Finley Cannon, Chairman, Gainesville; J. H. Holmes, Member, Jacksonville; W. V. Knott, Member, Tallahassee; David Sholtz, Member, Daytona Beach; and Allen C. Altwater (2nd from left), Secretary, Sebring.



Aerial photo of Firemen's Field (Early 1960's)

THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY FAIR

While the Highlands County Fair is operated under a separate charter and a separate corporation, it is an activity that was started and has been continuously promoted and operated by the members of the Sebring Firemen, Inc., since the fair was chartered in 1937.

Prior to this time, the County Agent, Louis Alsmeyer and Commissioner A. L. Butler, promoted and managed a fair at Lakemont for some years in the late 1920's. The list of sponsors of these fairs was mighty impressive but the work was all done by a few and, generally speaking, most fairs of the high calibre of those managed by Mr. Alsmeyer, were not self-supporting. Whether the project was abandoned for lack of funds or cooperation, is not known but there was a time gap of several years when no fairs were held.

The Firemen had sponsored a carnival during the boom on the block where the Tourist Club is now located but later refused several times to lend their name to similar projects as they felt that they performed no beneficial service to the city even though the public seemed to patronize them generously, thereby indicating that they wanted something of this type of amusement.

In December 1936, the advance representatives of a carnival company contacted the president of the Firemen, stating that if the Firemen did not sponsor their carnival, they would pay the license and operate independently. At this point, the idea of reviving the County fair was considered and the contracts were signed.

Firemen who were active at the time of the first fair (in 1937) will long remember the problems experienced by the committees in charge of this project. As the men were all inexperienced in this line of endeavor, it is understandable that some mistakes should be made and, except for the ability and determination of Elton Weaver, one mistake could have wrecked the entire future of the County fair. The carnival company had been investigated properly and appeared to be reliable but it is presumed that they sensed the inexperience of the Firemen because they failed to meet their financial responsibilities to the local group and left town without settling their obligations. However, Elton followed them doggedly from one location to another until he collected the money due the Department.

With the help of the County Agent and others, the first fair, which was held at the north end of Ridgewood Drive, was an unqualified success. Every member of the Department shared in the work, some by publishing an attractive premium book,

others by taking tickets at each of the shows and rides and some by promoting exhibits. Among those who checked the admissions on the "Girl Show" each night, was George ("Geeky") Shurtliff, a close relative of Rex Beach and an ardent associate member of the Department. Each day, Geeky would arrive promptly in a chauffeured limousine and take up his work as faithfully and untiring as any other member. When the lights went out at the end of the long day, his limousine would come to pick him up. This was symbolic of the spirit that was displayed by all Firemen and which has encouraged public co-operation, not only for the Fair but all other projects.

After two years at the Ridgewood Drive location, the Fair was moved to the corner of Lemon and Orange streets for one season but this was not a desirable location because of the need for parking space which was not available at this point. It was suggested that the Fair be moved to Firemen's Field but the property the Firemen owned at that time, included only the baseball area and it would have ruined the diamond if the tents were erected there so the Firemen began the task of acquiring the property between the diamond and Kenilworth Blvd. Whereas, the property on which the ball field was located had been bought as one solid block of lots, the proposed addition was in a large number of individual ownerships, and many of the owners of these lots were out-of-town residents. Through the persistent efforts of Payne Sebring and Ford Heacock, all the parcels were finally acquired some by trades, some by tax deeds and some by purchase.

At the time, there was some minor criticism to the effect that the Firemen were buying more land than was needed but now it can easily be seen that efforts should have been made to acquire more for needed expansion.

One of the biggest of the early problems was the use of tents as exhibit areas. The rental of tents of sufficient size was expensive but this was the least of the troubles. They leaked in the event of rain, so exhibits were spoiled. They could not be properly secured or guarded so articles of value were stolen and livestock owners refused to show animals as the flapping of the canvas frightened them and the owners felt that tents were not safe enough. It was evident that permanent buildings were essential if the Fair was to continue.

In the fall of 1948, a contract was awarded to Miles Baker to build a concrete block building 40' X 200' for \$8,100.00. By the end of the year, the structure was finished and dedicated. When it came time to pay Miles on the contract, he would accept only \$7,450.00 which represented merely the costs of construction.

The money to pay for this structure had been borrowed but it was all repaid by the end of 1954 so the machinery to build a second exhibit hail (this one for cattle) was put in motion. This was a prefabricated steel building 50' X 100', erected at a cost of \$9,045.00. Through the good offices and hard work of Howard Livingston, a bureau of the State government bore half the cost of the cattle exhibit hall.

New interest in the Fair was created and exhibits could be planned with assurance of safety so need for more space was certain. Howard Livingston again went to work and received confirmation that the State would accept responsibility for \$7,500.00 of the \$17,954.00 which was the cost of the third permanent structure which was also of steel construction. It was completed in time for the 1957 Fair.

One of the features of recent Fairs has been the selection of a Beauty Queen and a special stage was built between two exhibit buildings for this pageant. This stage and the buildings have also been useful for purposes other than the Fairs. During race seasons, one of them housed some of the racing cars. Another is used throughout the year as a headquarters and repair depot for the equipment of one of the road districts of the County. On one occasion, a Bible School held a summer conference in one of the structures.

At this time (the end of 1961) plans are in the making for a fourth large, permanent structure, which is estimated to cost more than \$20,000.00.

The Highlands County Fair is growing steadily in size an importance with each year's showing.

**CORPORATE CHARTER
OF
SEBRING FIREMEN'S COUNTY FAIR
ASS'N, INC.**

Sebring, Highlands County, Florida, a corporation not for profit.

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY:

TO ALL WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

This is to certify that the undersigned subscribers do hereby associate themselves together in a corporation not for profit under and by virtue of the provisions of Section 6495 et seq. of the Compiled General Laws of Florida of 1927, and the several supplements and acts amandatory thereof.

ARTICLE I.

----NAME----

The name of this corporation shall be Sebring Firemen's County Fair Association, Inc. and the place where it is to be located shall be in the City of Sebring, Highlands County, Florida.

ARTICLE II.

----OBJECT----

The general nature of the object of this corporation shall be: to hold and give fairs and places for the display of' stock, goods, wares, merchandise, fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy products, manufactured goods, of any and all kinds and to afford opportunity for the owners of any and all live stock, grain, vegetables, and products of every kind, and manufactured articles and machinery of all sorts, kinds and classes manufactured for any and all purposes whatsoever; and to give premiums in any sums and amounts desirable and justifiable for speed, quality, workmanship, beauty and utility of any and all above mentioned articles; and to own and hold sufficient and suitable real estate, buildings and structures, tracks and all appurtenances and necessary places for the sufficient and proper exhibit from time to time as may be justified, required and supported by the people and public generally; own and operate amusement organizations, lunch stands, concessions, riding devices and other forms of amusement, or to hire the same on a percentage basis; solely for the benefit of said Association.

ARTICLE III.
----MEMBERS----

Any reputable citizen of Highlands County, Florida, shall be eligible for membership in said Association, upon payment of registration fee to be fixed by the By-laws of said Association, and when the Secretary of the Association shall have reported to the Board of Directors that the proposed member has so complied with said By-laws.

Any member of said Association may be expelled therefrom by a Committee elected from among the members of the Board of Directors upon evidence of the disloyalty of said member to the said Association, but said member shall have the right to appeal from the decision of said Committee to the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV.
----DURATION----

The term for which this Association shall exist shall be the period of ninety-nine years.

ARTICLE V.
----OFFICERS AND MANAGEMENT----

The affairs of this Association are to be managed by the following officers: a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Manager and Treasurer. The said officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors from the membership of said Board at its annual meeting to be held on the first Tuesday in December of each year; and the Board of Directors shall consist of not less than five (5) members nor more than twenty (20) members, as may be prescribed from time to time by the By-laws of said Association, which said Board of Directors shall perform such duties as may from time to time be prescribed by said By-laws. Said Board of Directors shall be elected at the annual meeting of the members of said corporation to be held on the first Tuesday of December of each and every year and said Board of Directors shall be elected for a period of one (1) year.

ARTICLE VI.
----NAMES OF OFFICERS----

The names of the officers who are to manage all the affairs of this corporation until the first election under this Charter are as follows:

President	A. C. Altvater
Vice-President	Ray Morgan
Secretary	W. M. Williams
Treasurer	J. J. Lighthiser
Manager	W. M. Williams

and a Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII.
----BY-LAWS----

The By-laws of this Association are to be made, altered or rescinded by a majority vote of the membership.

ARTICLE VIII.
----INDEBTEDNESS----

The highest amount of indebtedness or liability to which the corporation may, at any time, subject itself, shall never be greater than the sum of One Hundred Thousand (\$100,000.00) Dollars, provided, the said corporation may subject itself to bonded or mortgage indebtedness in addition to the general indebtedness herein set forth in the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand (\$25,000.00) Dollars for the purpose of erecting buildings and purchasing equipment to be used in connection with and for the purposes of this Association.

ARTICLE IX.
----VALUE OF REAL ESTATE----

The amount in value of the real estate which this corporation may hold, subject always to the approval of the Circuit Court, shall be Twenty Five Thousand (\$25,000.00) Dollars which may be sold or conveyed to further the objects of the Association.

ARTICLE X.
-----QUORUM-----

A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum of said Board for the transaction of business of said Board and twelve (12) members shall constitute a quorum of the membership of said Association for the transaction of business at any annual meeting or special meeting of the membership of said corporation, or any adjourned meeting thereof, provided that notice of said meeting shall have been given by publication thereof, two times, in a newspaper published in Highlands County, Florida.

ARTICLE XI.
-----NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF SUBSCRIBERS-----

The names and places of residence of the subscribers to this corporation are as follows:

NAMES	RESIDENCES		
A. C. Altvater	Sebring, Fla.	Bob Butts	Sebring, Fla.
W. M. Williams	"	W. H. Dutton	"
R. N. Durrance	"	C. B. Jones	"
J. P. Lighthiser	"	A. W. Estes	"
Ray Morgan	"	C. F. Saunders	"
E. L. Greene	"	Thos. Whitehouse	"
H. S. Jones	"	Joe M. Stiles	"
Joe Long	"	Ray Paschall	"
P. S. Wyandt	"	C. S. Martin	"
J. J. Lighthiser	"		
Fred P. Wheeler	"		
O. W. Chapman	"		
Ray T. Graddy	"		
Geo. H. Shurtliff	"		
Hayden Williams	"		
H. W. Long	"		

IN TESTIMONY of the intents of good faith to carry out the purposes and obligations set forth, we have here unto set our hands and seals this 2 day of February, A.D. 1937.

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HIGHLANDS

Before me, the undersigned authority, personally appeared, A. C. Altvater, Ray Morgan, and W. M. Williams, each a man of good character and reputation, who acknowledged, each for himself, that he executed the foregoing proposed charter freely and voluntarily for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and official seal at Sebring, Highlands County, Florida this the 2 day of February, A.D. 1937.

Playford A. Naylor (seal)
Notary Public

AFFIDAVIT.

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HIGHLANDS

Before me, the undersigned authority, personally appeared A. C. Altvater, Ray Morgan, and W. M. Williams, who after being duly sworn says that the sole object of this Association is for public service and that there has been provided for the purposes of the Association property, money, and other valuable assets in value exceeding \$5,000.00 and that it is intended in good faith to carry out the purposes and objects therein set forth.

A. C. Altvater (s)
Ray Morgan (s)
W. M. Williams (s)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this the 2nd day of February, 1937 at Sebring, Highlands County, Florida.

Playford A. Naylor
Notary Public.

The foregoing charter is approved this 8th day of February, 1937, at Sebring, Florida.

W. J. Barker, (signed)
Circuit Judge



1929-30 Basket Ball team

L to R: George Hicks, Eb Gallaher, Hal Long, Bob Butts, Orvel Chapman, Joe Lighthiser, Walter Ivings, and Tommy Whitehouse.

ATHLETICS

Throughout the years, the Sebring Firemen have been the leading organization in the promotion of sports programs and athletics in the city. The initial effort in this direction was made in November 1927 by the formation of a basketball team managed by Eph Sidders and coached by Jack Lindsay.

On this team was George Hicks, all-state center from Southern College; Merle Dawson; Bobby Butts; Eph Sidders; Doc. Yechout; Chuck Albright; Joe Lighthiser; Hal Long; "Rich" Richards; P. G. Gearing and Russell Tinney. To these were later added, Tommie Whitehouse; Ebb Gallaher; Walter Ivings; Dr. L. W. Martin; Orvel Chapman and Jim Ingle. After the first season, George Hicks took over the the coaching duties and for the next four years, did a magnificent job of guiding the play of a winning team.

The Firemen became well and favorably known throughout the state as one of the strongest competitors on the courts and they accepted games with any and all teams including Southern College, the University of Florida, the University of Miami, the House of David, the Celtics, etc. But it is not the contests with the nationally recognized squads that remain most vividly in the memories of the fans but rather, two games that were of relatively minor importance.

In those days, the ball was returned to center after each basket scored and as this consumed much of the playing time, the total tally of a winning team rarely exceeded 60 points even in a free-scoring game. St. Cloud sent a town team to Sebring and the Firemen just couldn't miss that night. They beat St. Cloud 113 to 15 but the boys from St. Cloud were working just as hard at the final gun as they did at the opening whistle. They gave the Firemen a wonderful lesson in sportsmanship that night, that will not be forgotten.

On another occasion, the Firemen's basketball team accompanied a large contingent of Sebring Firemen to a district meeting of the Florida State Firemen's Association at Ft. Myers. That city had a strong basketball league and from the players of all teams, they selected the best to make up a squad that were to play the Sebring team as the feature attraction of the district conference. From the very first, it was evident that the teams were evenly matched. First one would be in the lead and then the other. Never was the score more than three or four points apart until at the very end of the final period, Ft. Myers led the Firemen 27 to 26. The ball went to center for a jump shot. George Hicks tipped it to Joe Lighthiser who passed Ebb Gallaher.

Ebb shot from well out on the floor and with the ball half way to the basket, the game-ending gun went off and the ball fell cleanly into the basket with scarcely a ripple of the net. The Firemen won 28 to 27. That was a game to remember.

One man, to the exclusion of all others, is qualified to write the history of baseball in Sebring, and the part played by the Sebring Firemen. P.G. Gearing was a member of the team before the boom when the city had a full paid professional squad. After these players left town and the Firemen voted to organize an amateur team, P. G. was the manager and coach. In fact, for years he was known as “Mr. Baseball” in Sebring and old— timers all over central Florida still recall the name as one connected with pennant winning baseball teams.

As he has promised to give a complete story of the place occupied by baseball in the history of the Sebring Firemen, it would be superfluous to comment further on that phase here except to state that the game played a tremendous part in the building of the Sebring Fire Department and it also served to create opportunities for several Sebring lads to try their wings later in the field of professional baseball. No doubt, P. G. will comment on this aspect as well as the benefits derived from the big league teams that were attracted to Sebring as a training site.

In 1928 the Firemen accepted a responsibility conferred upon them by the United Sebring Association, to head up the recreational program of the city. The stewardship of this responsibility outlived, by far, the parent organization and a feeling of obligation still exists in this area among the members. Whereas other cities have spent thousands of dollars on facilities, on recreation boards and directors of programs, the Fire Department furnished these services for years without a cent of cost to the taxpayers.

With E. L. Greene at the head of the original athletic committee, a comprehensive program was formulated which provided recreation and entertainment for citizens of all levels and ages in the city. Teams were entered by civic clubs, merchants and others, in volley ball, diamond-ball, horse shoes, shuffleboard and other contests. The committee arranged the schedules and even posted some of the prizes.

In order to have a place to play these games, the Firemen built the diamond-ball court, the shuffleboards and the tennis courts in the block now occupied by the Tourist Club and municipal parking lot. When the Tourist Club was formed, the shuffleboards were turned over to the club and the Firemen developed the diamond-ball grounds at Tuscawilla Park.

Long before the movements that created the Little League, the Babe Ruth League and the American Legion League, the Sebring Firemen organized and financed a “Junior Firemen” team. They also provided the initial funds for high school baseball. Later, they joined with others in the formation of the present high school athletic association. For the high school basketball team, they provided the first warm-up clothes of the team and kept the playing floor in condition so that the school had a place to play.

Since baseball no longer enjoys the popularity it once did, the members of the Fire Department have concentrated their efforts in the area of sports and athletics, toward providing facilities for the use of the High School teams. Firemen’s Field, which had been built in 1931, was first lighted for night play in 1939 under the direction of a committee headed by Ray Paschall but the lighting system was vastly improved in 1950 under the direction of George Marchand.

High School football, which had always been played on the outfield of the baseball area, did so much damage to the turf that it was decided to build a separate field on which the team could practice. The committee, under Eldridge Pollard, made such an excellent field that steps were taken to install a separate lighting system on this area and use it for conference games. This was finished in 1960.

The following year, a grandstand was built to accommodate 1,000 persons with showers and lockers in the space below the seats.

The Sebring Firemen and their sports programs have been nationally publicized by H. Allen Smith in his popular book, “Life in a Putty Knife Factory” from which the following is quoted;—

As for the Lions Club, I became a member of this group when I was editor of the local newspaper in Sebring, Florida, back in 1926. The Lions met once a week for luncheon at the Hotel Nancesowee, and I lasted one meeting. I arrived five minutes late and found that the club inflicted a penalty for tardiness. I was compelled to mount a chair and sing a little song. The song went like this:

I’m a litt—tul prairie flower,
Growing wilder every hour;
Nobody cares to cultivate me.
I’m as wild as I can be.

While singing this song I had to place my right hand above my head with the middle finger pointing downward, and then I had to revolve slowly on the chair until the song was finished. I did it.

This matter or the Lions Club is brought up because it marks the climax of my career as athlete. Two days after the first meeting the Lions Club baseball team played the Sebring Volunteer Fire Department. A young man named Payne Sebring was supposed to pitch for the Lions, but when the time came for the game to begin he could not be found. Somebody asked me if I knew how to pitch and I said certainly and took the mound.

So far as I know they are still playing the first inning and the firemen are still at bat. They hit every ball I threw at them. I'd try throwing them ten feet out in front of the batter, but those firemen would simply run out of the box and slap them. - - -

- - - Naturally, this continual crying for the Lions' regular pitcher didn't do my control any good. When the score reached nine to nothing with nobody out and the bases loaded, they yanked me. The shortstop took over the pitching job and the man with the bad back went in at short. I went home. I didn't attend the next Lions Club meeting, or any after that, and I'm sure nobody minded.





Top row, L to R: Joe Lighthiser, Ralph Morgan, Bill Mackay, Eb Gallaher, Fred Wheeler, P.G Gearing, Jack Parker, Hal Long, Tommy Whitehouse, and Allen Altvater. Bottom row: Zeke Etheridge, Tom Dimberline, Joe Long, Hoyt Ewing, Walter Ivings, Doug Estes, and George Hicks.

FOREST FIRE CONTROL

Thirty years ago, there was no organized forest fire suppression in the State of Florida. Then, it was all open range and cattlemen set fires that burned, out of control, damaging not only the forests but also citrus groves, buildings or any other materials in their paths.

There were many who felt that some control was needed. Among these were Mr. Alexander Blair and the State Forester, Mr. Harry Lee Baker. Mr. Blair made available, a specially built woods fire truck for each of the communities of Lake Placid, DeSoto City, Sebring and Avon Park and the volunteer fire departments in these communities gave their time and hard work in suppressing woods fires in all of Highlands County.

It must not be imagined, for one moment that this was a simple matter. It was the most frustrating drudgery of all the projects undertaken and necessitated businessmen and other citizens neglecting their livelihoods sometimes for a full day to work hard and gratuitously in some remote section of the backwoods.

As there were very few laws and as the few that did exist were not understood, the fire fighters did not realize that the land owner had a right to burn on his own property so long as it did not go beyond his boundaries. As a result, the firemen pounced upon every woods fire and often found that as fast as they extinguished the fires, the cattleman would follow them at a distance, setting new ones. In this manner, co-operation was completely lacking.

Highlands County was the first in the state to have county-wide control and the experience gained here, was helpful in setting up the later program of the state. This should be considered as one of the major accomplishments of the Sebring Firemen and a tremendous contribution to the advancement of the State and County.

THE VALUABLE MAN AWARD

For the past thirty years, it has been the custom for the Firemen to publicly recognize exceptional service and/or outstanding efforts of citizens of Sebring. Until just recently, this ceremony was more of a tradition than a ritual made mandatory by a section of the By-laws.

It started in 1928 with a testimonial dinner given by the Chief in honor of the Assistant Chief, Chal Lighthiser. When the Department was re-formed in 1925, Chal was one of the most diligent and effective workers in the reorganization, but he was not chosen to fill one of the two paid positions that were open at that time. They went to relatives and friends of the city officials. It was but natural that he should feel that his efforts were not appreciated so, to let him and all the City know that the Firemen did acknowledge his valuable and untiring services, he was publicly commended at the dinner.

It seemed such a weak gesture to merely acknowledge the years of faithful devotion to the fire department, that Spencer Jones had freely given, by a rising vote of thanks so the steering committee decided to thank him with a more elaborate ceremony and, as a memento of the Occasion, they presented him with a very ornate pool cue in 1929.

In 1930 it was Doyle Schumacher for his splendid work in building Firemen's Field. He was followed in 1931 by P. G. Gearing and so the tradition was started.

At first, the steering committee decided as to the one to be honored but it was soon agreed that those who had been "tapped" were best qualified to make the selections so, without any formal action, they took over that duty. Also, by tacit agreement, the latest recipient automatically became the chairman of the committee for the following year.

There have never been any definite or clear-cut rules to guide the Committee in the selection of the man who is lauded as the "Most Valuable Man" for the year. But, it is generally the purpose to try to point out the one who has done the most to benefit the City and/or the Fire Department. This honor is not reserved to members of the Firemen but it is only natural that the Committee would be better acquainted with the work and value of firemen and would want to reward persons who had helped their organization so, as a natural result, more members than non-members have been cited.

However, several non-members have been named and many of the awards have been based on activities that did not necessarily, directly benefit the Fire Department. Distinctively, along this line, were the occasions when “Prof” Gustat and “Buck” Pardee were cited for their exceptional work among the youth of Sebring as they were not members of the Department when they were chosen. Later, however, they became associated.

Only in two years, were more than one person designated as “Most Valuable”.

During World War II, a committee composed of Dee Long, Hayden Williams and Forrest Howard, issued a bi-monthly news letter which was sent to every Sebring man in the armed forces. This was such an excellent piece of work that it won many words of praise from the men who were away from home and plaques of recognition from the committee-men.

In 1954, when Ray Graddy earned the applause of his fellow firemen for his years of service as a member and officer of the Sebring Firemen, Inc., and as the head of the Fair Association in the year when they built the first permanent fair exhibition building, a scroll was drawn up memorializing the tremendous contributions of Alexander Blair, not only to the benefit of Sebring and Highlands County but to the State of Florida and to all mankind.

Unfortunately, there are several features in the method of choosing the most valuable man, that make it impossible to arrive at selections that will be unanimously agreeable. Since the rules are so informal, no score or tally sheets are used so, if the majority of the committee members present and voting are baseball fans, the choice for that year might be influenced in favor of one who had performed outstandingly for the benefit of that activity.

Likewise, a man may labor diligently for years, successfully fulfilling every job assignment given him, in a quiet and unostentatious manner and thereby make himself invaluable but may go on for years almost unrecognized because another person, in one year only, performed a flashy piece of work that is quickly seen. While it is not meant that any award has been made that was not merited, many, many men have really earned recognition but have never been publicly cited.

There are several salient examples of this condition, including Harry Brown, E. L. Greene, W. J. Amy, George Hicks, Col. Bailey, Joe Lighthiser, Ebb Gallaher and many others. These were outstanding in their continuous service to the Fire Department and the City of Sebring but when their names were placed in nomination, the Committee had other selections for that specific year.

It has been often said that no man is indispensable or irreplaceable but it is an obvious fact that no man has filled the places of the leaders (in their fields of activity) who have left Sebring.

One fact is very noticeable. Most of the men who have been designated as “most valuable man”, continue to serve the public year after year even though it has been the practice to not name the Same man more than once. This appears to prove the wisdom exercised by the selecting bodies.

Recently, the By-laws were amended to make the committee official and to outline its duties and privileges. It is generally conceded that the custom of naming the year’s most valuable man, is one of the Department’s more important activities.

1929	Spencer Jones	1944	Bill Dutton
1930	Doyle Schumacher	1945	Floyd Schumacher
1931	P. G. Gearing	1946	Brandon Jones
1932	Skeet Naylor	1947	Fred Baguley
1933	Hal Long	1948	Elton Weaver
1934	O. W. Chapman	1949	Howard Livingston
1935	Allen C. Altvater	1950	C. B. Carter
1936	Ray Paschall	1951	Dick Dorton
1937	Jack Williams	1952	Woodrow Harshman
1938	Payne Sebring	1953	Ford Heacock, Sr.
1939	Prof. Gustat	1954	Ray Graddy
1940	Gatchell Burton	1955	Kenneth Wilson
1941	Joe Kinsey	1956	Lonnie Curl
1942	Buck Pardee	1957	L. R. Carter
1943	Forrest Howard	1958	J. M. McAdams
	Dee Long	1959	Miles Baker
	Hayden Williams	1960	Frank Bryant

** List continues with 1961-2007 on page 106.*



FIREMAN'S DRUM CORPS

O.W. Chapman, Joe Lighthiser, Arthur Kutz, Laurie Williams,
Marion Bonsall, K.S. Johnson and Al Kieffer



AWARD PRESENTATION
Allen Altvater presenting Henry
Bailey with the Valuable Man
Award in 1961

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

Although it is always much more pleasant to remember only the successful ventures, it would be unfair to the story of the Sebring Firemen to try to create the impression that there were no mistakes, no failures or that no projects were attempted unless they were preordained to be successful. It has been said that only those who do nothing ever can be counted as never having made a mistake or had a failure and that errors can be numbered in direct ratio to the activities of the person or organization.

This adage is probably proven by the activities of the Sebring Firemen. Several abortive activities will long be remembered by the older members as, for instance, the time in 1935 when additional money was badly needed to apply to projects on hand, it was decided to raffle off an automobile to raise the funds. Money was not too plentiful that year and on the day of the drawing, the income from ticket sales was far short of the cost of the car. The deficit had to be made up from the treasury.

Months of after-hours and Saturday work were spent on beautifying the approach road to Highlands Hammock which was newly created in the early 1930's. All the members gave generously of their time and labor to this project which was eventually scuttled by thieves who stole the palms and other ornamentals the Firemen had planted and carefully tended and by roaming cattle that grazed on what were not stolen.

On numerous occasions, efforts were made to arouse interest in a greater awareness of the lake and a more wide-spread use of it by the citizenry. Several Department-sponsored water carnivals and races failed to generate enough enthusiasm to encourage continued expenditures of efforts and money in this direction.

For years before the second World War, the only gymnasium and public auditorium available in Highlands County, were the school assembly halls and an open air building in Tusawilla Park which served as a basketball court, a tent-city club house, church, court room and numerous other purposes. It was far too small for most needs and, in the winter, could not possibly be heated.

For many years, the maintenance of this building was a major project of the Firemen and a very expensive objective as the weather beat in the un-walled building and rotted the parts of the floors the termites did not attack. An ambition took shape in the Department to build a combination auditorium and gymnasium at Firemen's Field and, in 1936, a definite plan was drawn up by an architect (Wilbur Cornell) and several meetings of representatives of all civic clubs of town, were held. These

meetings brought out the fact that such a structure was not only sorely needed but would have the support of all organizations in the area.

The only deterrent was the fact that the proposed building would cost a great deal of money which was in short supply but the Firemen planned and saved for the purpose and immediately at the close of World War II, launched a campaign that was designed to raise \$80,000.00 to start the principal part of the building program. The response was startling even to the committee headed by Payne Sebring and Floyd Schumacher.

Added to the funds that the Firemen had provided, the Lions Club gave their check for \$500.00; three individuals each gave \$1,000.00; one gave \$1,500.00 and others swelled the cash-in-hand to \$10,000.00 with pledges for additional money in an equal amount.

The big blow fell when the school board announced plans to build recreation buildings in Lake Placid, Avon Park and Sebring, which would fill some of the needs for which the Firemen's building was designed. As one basket ball floor was ample for Sebring and as it was felt that the new high school gymnasium would be satisfactory for an auditorium for conventions, etc. The greatest needs for the proposed new building were met even though the new school building did not provide for boy and girl scout headquarters, a decent community dance and recreation floor and numerous other civic advantages. So, the project was dropped and the money returned to the donors.

There are numerous successful projects in which the Firemen may take justifiable pride, among which are the following:-

Every member joined The Tropical Parks Association which initiated the movement which ultimately resulted in the establishing of Highlands Hammock State Park. On the occasion of the dedicatory ceremonies, they all worked on the arrangements for traffic control, seating, ushering, public address system and other functions which made that event so successful.

They purchased the land and established a permanent athletic field (known as Firemen's Field) which has been a credit to the community, at no cost to taxpayers. It has provided the schools and the youth of the area a definite assurance of continued use of a high quality athletic field. In this way, it is possible that they have contributed a great deal to the low incidence or delinquency among the youth, of which this community can boast.

In the early 1930's, they built a radio broadcasting station (for which they could not get a license) which showed great promise of success. They entered floats in many parades which were popular in the earlier history of the town, and co-operated in the presentation of "Founder's Day" and "Nan-Ces-O-Wee Day". To generate and hold interest of members, a weekly bulletin was published in which was listed a calendar of events, items of personal interest and news of the Department. This reached its peak of service during the war when it was issued bi-weekly and sent to all men in the armed forces.

At first, it was either mimeographed or multigraphed but the war—time copies were printed in a very attractive manner and contained a great deal more news of the city in general as well as information about the men in service. After the war, publication was limited to an annual edition which is distributed at the annual meeting.

A drum and bugle corps was organized in the Department in 1928 and the participants became very proficient on their instruments. Roscoe Yeager instructor of the drum corps and Orvel Chapman was the strutting drum major. Brilliant red coats with brass buttons, white trousers and firemen's caps made up the uniforms and the aggregation made an impressive showing at firemen's conventions and in local parades. When the corps was disbanded, the drums were given to the school band and the red coats continued to serve a useful purpose in the annual minstrel shows.

The bus which was originally bought to transport the basketball and baseball teams, also was useful throughout the year as a conveyance for the members to conventions, conferences, fire college and numerous other events. It was always much more fun going places in the bus than in separate cars and more economical, too.

The one activity that most of the present residents of Sebring will recognize was the assistance given the first sports car races at the Sebring Air Terminal. Since this project is so recent that it is still clear in the recollection of most people, there is little reason to dwell on the role played in the promotion of the project that has been almost universally agreed as a great boon to the community.

Through the medium of the Associated Fire Departments of South Florida and the Florida State Firemen's Association, the Sebring Department has been able to help other fire departments improve their conditions by aiding in the establishment of the Fire College and helping in the organization of their associations.

FIRE LOSSES

It will be noted that, in the Articles of Incorporation of the Sebring Firemen, the first objective cited is “the preservation and protection of property from and during such fires as may occur - -”. This has always been the foremost purpose in the minds and hearts of the Firemen. All other projects have been secondary.

Aside from the professional, fully paid engineers, no fireman has received personal payment for his services. The low loss record for the past three decades may be envied by cities having far greater resources than Sebring and they testify, by far better than any words of praise, to the effectiveness the volunteers and their training.

The table below gives the number of fires and the total loss for each year.

1926	62	\$5,455.00	1944	89	\$6,653.95
1927	77	12,731.25	1945	123	3,785.00
1928	52	4,156.70	1946	64	5,898.00
1929	58	4,420.06	1947	84	4,098.50
1930	44	3,285.00	1948	48	2,778.33
1931	42	7,828.35	1949	97	1,333.95
1932	32	1,075.00	1950	91	4,793.00
1933	44	3,500.06	1951	89	56,054.27
1934	56	392.64	1952		not available
1935	57	4,744.05	1953		not available
1936	50	771.67	1954		not available
1937	42	175.41	1955		not available
1938	51	3,338.00	1956	145	5,363.56
1939	36	4,145.10	1957	65	6,625.00
1940	35	486.00	1958	62	9,194.15
1941	27	1,225.91	1959		not available
1942	74	2,439.33	1960	69	17,286.60
1943	82	13,636.93	1961	86	7,821.70

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1962	Eugene Sauls	Russ Albritton, Jr.	Errol Lanier	Jack Hancock	W. Harshman J.M. Pink McAdams Henry Bailey
1963	Russ Albritton, Jr.	Lanier Carter	Errol Lanier	Jack Hancock	Henry Bailey Eugene Sauls Eldridge Pollard
1964	Bill Young	Charles Schumacher	Harry Hummel	Jack Hancock	Russ Albritton, Jr. J.A. Butler Eldridge Pollard
1965	Charles Schumacher	Earl Haywood	Harry Hummel	Eugene Sauls	Henry Bailey Pink McAdams Bill Young
1966	Lanier Carter	Haywood Taylor	Jim Pyle	C.B. Jones, Jr.	W.W. Harshman Charles Schumacher Russ Albritton, Jr.
1967	Haywood Taylor	Earl Haywood	Jim Pyle	C.B. Jones, Jr.	Malcolm Watters Miles Baker Pink McAdams
1968	Eugene Sauls	Tommy Logan	Roe McAdams	C.B. Jones, Jr.	Pink McAdams Ray Graddy C.B. Jones, Sr.
1969	Jim Pyle	Jack Hancock	Roe McAdams	C.B. Jones, Jr.	Miles Baker P.G. Gearing Haywood Taylor
1970	Roe McAdams	Ray Gerling	George Crist	C.B. Jones, Jr.	Legare Smoak Pink McAdams Russ Albritton, Jr.
1971	Ray Gerling	Gene Crawford	Terry Keller	C.B. Jones, Jr.	Pink McAdams Miles Baker Russ Albritton, Jr.
1972	E.C. Culverhouse	Wayne Harris	Rodney Walker	C.B. Jones, Jr.	Miles Baker Jim Pyle Charles Schumacher
1973	Gene Crawford	Floyd Taylor	Jack Hancock	Jim Livingston	Miles Baker C.B. Jones, Jr. V.L. Smoak
1974	Floyd Taylor	Rodney Walker	J.C. Leaphart	Emmett Andrews	Lanier Carter Pink McAdams Charles Schumacher
1975	Rodney Walker	Lanier Carter	Cecil Heston	Emmett Andrews	Roe McAdams Miles Baker Floyd Taylor
1976	Cecil Heston	Ken Wilkinson	Daniel Selph	Emmett Andrews	Floyd Taylor Ray Gerling Pink McAdams

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1977	Ken Wilkinson	Tim Hurner	Terry Leaphart	Rodney Walker	Jim Pyle Cecil Heston Robert "Bob" Pollard
1978	Tim Hurner	Mike Swaine	J.C. Leaphart	Wayne Harris	Ray Gerling Cecil Heston Ken Wilkenson
1979	Mike Swaine	Charles Cullens	J.C. Leaphart	Wayne Harris	Jim Pyle Cecil Heston Tim Hurner
1980	Charles Cullens	Steve Whitney	J.C. Leaphart	Jack Stroup	Mike Swaine Kenny Haynes Charles Schumacher
1981	Wayne Harris	Hank Eures	J.C. Leaphart	Jack Stroup	Mike Swaine Jady Hill Robert Baker
1982	Hank Eures	Jady Hill	Irvin Fordham	Jack Stroup	Bill Graybill Eddie DeLoach J.C. Leaphart
1983	Jady Hill	Jim Gose	Irvin Fordham	Jack Stroup	Bob Butts Tom Dunn Charlie Cullens
1984a	Carey Carlton	Irvin Fordham	Richard McClain, Sr.	Jack Stroup	J.C. Leaphart
1984b	Irvin Fordham	Hank Eures			Cecil Heston Jady Hill
1985	Richard McClain	Bob Butts	Rick Moyer	Jack Stroup	Irvin Fordham Dave Travers Jack Stroup
1986	Bobby Butts	Dave Travers	Rick Moyer	Jack Stroup	Roe McAdams Richard McClain, Sr. Irvin Fordham
1987	Dave Travers	Rick Moyer	Chris Andrews	Jeff Keith	Jady Hill Mark Gose Bobby Butts
1988	Dave Travers	Rick Moyer	Chris Andrews	Ned Hancock	Jady Hill Richard McClain, Sr. Gary Rapp
1989	Dave Travers	Steve Brown	Charlie Taylor	Ned Hancock	Mark Gose Richard McClain, Sr. Steve Bronson
1990	Dave Travers	Charlie Lanier	Mike Waldron	Tommy Lovett, Sr.	Mark Gose Richard McClain, Sr. Paul Sparks
1991	Charlie Lanier	Steve Bronson	Guy Maxcy	Tommy Lovett, Sr.	Dave Travers Paul Sparks Bobby Butts

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1992	Charlie Lanier	Guy Maxcy	Rodney Leach	Dave Travers	Donald Hamlin Paul Sparks Bobby Butts
1993	Tommy Lovett, Sr.	Rodney Leach	Mike Waldron	Dave Travers	Richard McClain, Sr. Mark Gose Steve Bronson
1994	Mark Gose	Skip Adams	Robert Freeland	Dave Travers	Tommy Lovett, Sr. Jady Hill Ned Hancock
1995	Jady Hill	Skip Adams	Wendell Whitehouse	Dave Travers	Steve Brown Tommy Lovett, Sr. Mark Gose
1996	Skip Adams	Curtis Weldy	Wendell Whitehouse	Dave Travers	Tommy Lovett, Sr. Steve Brown Mark Gose
1997	Curtis Weldy	George White	Wendell Whitehouse	Dave Travers	Tommy Lovett, Sr. Paul Sparks Mike Brown
1998	Curtis Weldy	Tom Culverhouse	Wendell Whitehouse	Dave Travers	Tommy Lovett, Sr. Richard McClain, Sr. Jim Gose
1999	George White	Tom Culverhouse	Matt Gose	Dave Travers	_____
2000	George White	Tom Culverhouse	Matt Gose	Dave Travers	Tommy Lovett, Sr. Michael Knott Bob Terrell
2001	Austie Heacock	Matt Gose	Kelly McGee	Dave Travers	Tommy Lovett, Sr. Bob Baker Mike Brown
2002	Austie Heacock	Bob Terrell	Kelly McGee	Dave Travers	Michael Knott George White Richard McClain, Sr.
2003	John Shoop	Kelly McGee	Jonathan Spiegel	Dave Travers	Michael Knott Richard McClain, Sr. Skip Adams
2004	John Shoop	Kelly McGee	Jonathan Spiegel	Dave Travers	Michael Knott Richard McClain, Sr. Skip Adams
2005	John Shoop	Kelly McGee	Jonathan Spiegel	Dave Travers	Michael Knott Richard McClain, Sr. Skip Adams
2006	Richard Martin	Jack Pollard	Jonathan Spiegel	Dave Travers	Bob Baker Curtis Weldy Austie Heacock

OFFICERS OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN, INC.

	President	V. President	Secretary	Treasurer	Trustees
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
2007	Jack Pollard	Jonathan Spiegel	Tom Stenshorn	Dave Travers	Kelly McGee Michael Knott Curtis Weldy

VALUABLE MAN AWARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 93

1961	Henry Bailey	1985	Dave Travers
1962	J. A. Butler	1986	Charlie Cullens
1963	Eldridge Pollard	1987	Richard McClain, Sr.
1964	Jack Masters	1988	Jack Stroup
1965	Broward Coker	1989	Mark Gose
1966	V. Legare Smoak	1990	Charlie Lanier
1967	G. T. Haywood	1991	Tommy Lovett
1968	Gene Sauls	1992	Donald Hamlin
1969	Joe Ercoli	1993	Bob Terrell
1970	E. C. Culverhouse	1994	Dave Chambers
1971	Russ Albritton, Jr.		Jim Gose
1972	Bill Young	1995	Curtis Weldy
1973	Ray Gerling	1996	Bob Baker
1974	Roe McAdams	1997	Paul Sparks
1975	Floyd Taylor	1998	Wayne Gill
1976	Cecil Heston	1999	Michael Knott
1977	Ken Wilkinson	2000	George White
1978	Tim Hurner	2001	Gary Rapp
1979	J. C. Leaphart	2002	Austie Heacock
1980	Bill Graybill	2003	Tom Culverhouse
1981	Mike Swaine	2004	Jack Pollard
1982	Eddie DeLoach	2005	John Shoop
1983	Jady Hill	2006	Steve Bronson
1984	Irvin Fordham		

FIRE CHIEFS

Aaron Withers	1913	G. Thurmon Haywood	1961-1969
Walter B. Zackary	1914-1924	V. Legare Smoak	1969-1979
Allen C. Altwater	1925-1933	Eddie DeLoach	1979-1994
Hal W. Long	1934-1941	Kenneth G. Haynes	1994-2006
Austin C. Heacock	1942	Bradley H. Batz	2007-present
Forrest Howard	1943-1961		

City of
SEBRING — Fire / Rescue
Serving Proudly Since 1913

June 27, 2007

Fire Chief Bradley H. Batz

Fire Inspector Mike McCann

	A-Shift	B-Shift	C-Shift
Deputy Chief	Mike Roberts	Charles Lanier	Tom Dunn
1st Lt.	Dirk Riley	Ken Barefield	Mike Altman
2nd Lt.	Miles McGee	Bobby Border	Charles Byrne
Fire Fighters	Don Clarke	Darrell Carson	Ryan Feickert
	Chuck Piper	James L. Baker	Jarred Measner
	Kyle Yancey	Jarrod Gavagni	Eric Hanks
	Aaron Eures	Ryan Marin	Wayne Suttles

The Sebring Fire Department is responsible for the protection of the City of Sebring. The city has a population of over 10,000 residents and covers approximately 12 square miles. The department consists of 23 personnel, a Fire Chief, a Fire Inspector, (3) Deputy Chiefs, (3) Lieutenants, (3) 2nd Lieutenants, (12) Firefighters with (3) members serving as Fire Inspectors. Most of our Firefighters are dual certified as Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians. The Sebring Fire Department currently holds an ISO fire rating of “5”.

The department operates out of 2 stations and responds to emergencies with two BLS (Basic Life Support) engines and one 105' quint. We also have (1) reserve engine and a brush truck. These units responded to over 1,400 alarms in 2004. The Sebring Fire Department provides mutual aid response to other Fire Departments located in Highlands County. The department utilizes a 2-tier rescue system, in which medical patients are treated by the department until the arrival of an ALS (Advanced Life Support) ambulance from Highlands County Emergency Medical Services (HCEMS), at which time our department assists Highlands County. HCEMS then transports the patients to the hospital.

301 North Mango Street
 Sebring, Florida 33870
 Phone (863) 471-5105 - Fax: (863) 471-5123



Chief Bradley Batz



Inspector Mike McCann



Deputy Chief Mike Roberts



Deputy Chief Charles Lanier



Deputy Chief Tom Dunn



1st Lt. Dirk Riley



1st Lt. Ken Barefield



1st Lt. Mike Altman



2nd Lt. Miles McGee



2nd Lt. Bobby Border



2nd Lt. Charles Byrne



Don Clarke



Darrell Carson



Ryan Feickert



Chuck Piper



James L. Baker



Jarred Measner



Kyle Yancey



Jarrod Gavagni



Eric Hanks



Aaron Eures



Ryan Marin



Wayne Suttles



Photography by Mike Sawyer

IN MEMORIAM

- | | | | |
|------|-------------------|------|------------------------|
| 1933 | Chal Lighthiser | 1974 | Thomas Gould |
| 1936 | E. W. Gallagher | | Kenneth Wilson |
| 1937 | P. A. Naylor | | Ray Paschall |
| | G. H. Shurtliff | 1975 | Howard Livingston |
| | O. W. Chapman | | F. R. Howard |
| 1939 | C. F. Saunders | | Alexander Blair |
| 1943 | W. M. Williams | 1976 | D. H. Durrance, Sr. |
| 1944 | J. W. Geary | | H. E. Brummell |
| 1945 | H. K. Brown | 1977 | Jack Jackson |
| | Sam Dimberline | | Dick Dorton |
| | E. S. Davies | 1978 | Dick Baguley |
| | Joe Hawkins | | R. L. Johnson |
| 1946 | Tom Pollard | | Hal Long |
| 1948 | Geo. Whitehouse | 1979 | Ray Morgan |
| 1949 | Dan Young | 1980 | George Crist |
| | Rex Beach | 1982 | Wilbur "Cracker" North |
| 1950 | Claude Darley | | Broward Coker |
| 1952 | P. J. Gustat | | Guy Garrett |
| 1953 | E. L. Greene | | Hans Grotewold |
| | Tom Jones | 1983 | A. C. Heacock |
| 1956 | Fred Baguley | | Frank Bryant |
| 1959 | J. P. Lighthiser | | "Jake" Butler |
| | Fred Stone | 1984 | Doyle Schumacher |
| 1961 | Jim Bogle | | Jack Masters |
| | Bill Jones | 1985 | Bill Graybill |
| 1962 | Hayden Williams | | Albert Harris |
| 1963 | Charles Foster | 1986 | Joe Ercoli |
| 1964 | Ben Albritton | | Gene Hamlin |
| 1965 | Cecil Collins | 1987 | Fred Wheeler |
| | Connor Rutland | 1988 | Henry Bailey |
| | Neil Durrance | | Ken Wilkinson |
| 1966 | H. Spencer Jones | 1989 | L. R. "Red" Carter |
| | A. L. Butler | | M. M. Ferguson |
| 1969 | Dee Long | | Bill Young |
| 1970 | C. E. Weaver | | Cecil Heston |
| | Joe D. Keene | 1990 | W. W. Harshman |
| 1972 | C. B. Jones, Sr. | | Floyd Schumacher |
| | Max Long | | Tommy Whitehouse |
| | Roscoe Yeager | 1991 | Gene Crawford |
| 1973 | E. G. Burton | | Norman "Jug" Heston |
| | Ford Heacock, Sr. | | Hoyt Ewing |
| | Bob Butts | 1993 | Andy Cucchario |
| | Bill Mackay | 1994 | Allen C. Altvater |
| | | 1995 | Bob Wolfe |
| | | | Jim Pyle |

IN MEMORIAM

1996	Ron Bricker Malcolm Watters Bob Weed	2002	Bob Brado Thurmon Haywood
1997	Bill Dutton, Sr.	UNK	C. D. Richardson
1998	P. G. Gearing Jim Fulton	2003	Jimmy Gose Ben Eastman Jim Musselwhite
1999	J. C. Leaphart	2004	Cleve Culverhouse Dave Chambers Irvin Fordham
2000	J. M. McAdams Miles Baker Ray Gerling Al Munson Jimmy Whitehouse	2005	Allen C. Altvater, Jr.
2001	Jack Hancock Tommy Logan	2006	Bill Page Dick Smith Hank Eures



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Allen C. Altvater, Jr.

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