

(Transcript: The Early Hattiesburg Fire Department)

(1904 photo of the Hattiesburg Fire Department with a horse-drawn fire truck)

In the 1880's, small towns like Hattiesburg relied on volunteers to man their fire departments. Fire fighting equipment was crude, and fire fighting vehicles were only special-purpose, horse drawn wagons.

(An early 1900's street scene in downtown Hattiesburg)

Fire fighting was especially challenging in the early days, because most homes and businesses were wood frame structures.

Early on in Hattiesburg's history,

(Late 1800's, early 1900's photo of downtown reconstruction after massive fire)

city leaders updated building codes to require brick and stone construction after a massive 1893 fire destroyed numerous downtown businesses.

(Photo of early fire department items on display in the HAHS museum)

The city also began considering the possibility of a full time fire department. A. F. Potter became Hattiesburg's first paid fireman in 1904.

(Photo of additional early fire department items on display in the HAHS museum)

The city's first motorized fire truck was purchased in 1915.

(Photo of fire department badges on display in the HAHS museum)

Early fire department items on display in the museum include these badges from former fire chiefs, courtesy of Tom Phillips.

(Photo of the steering wheel from the city's 1921 fire truck)

This steering wheel is a remnant of the city's 1921 LaFrance fire truck that was demolished in a tragic accident not long after it was purchased.

(Photo of reference materials and journals from the department's early days)

Handwritten journals chronicle the department's day to day operations, while reference materials like this

Underwriters Laboratories manual were probably used, in part, to establish fire safety codes.

(Photo of the Hattiesburg Fire Department logo)

The department has grown steadily since those early years, and by 2009, 118 salaried fire fighters worked in 8 stations located throughout the city.

**(Photo of a modern Hattiesburg Fire Department fire truck, logo and Facebook link:
<https://www.facebook.com/Hattiesburgfiredept/>)**

Today, the Hattiesburg Fire Department has some of the finest equipment available, and professional fire fighters undergo extensive and rigorous training. The department even has its own Facebook page. You can keep up with their latest news at the link shown on the screen.