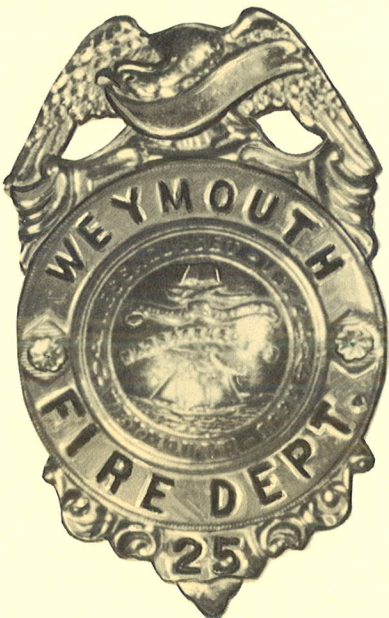




*Proud Winners of an
early Fireman's Muster*



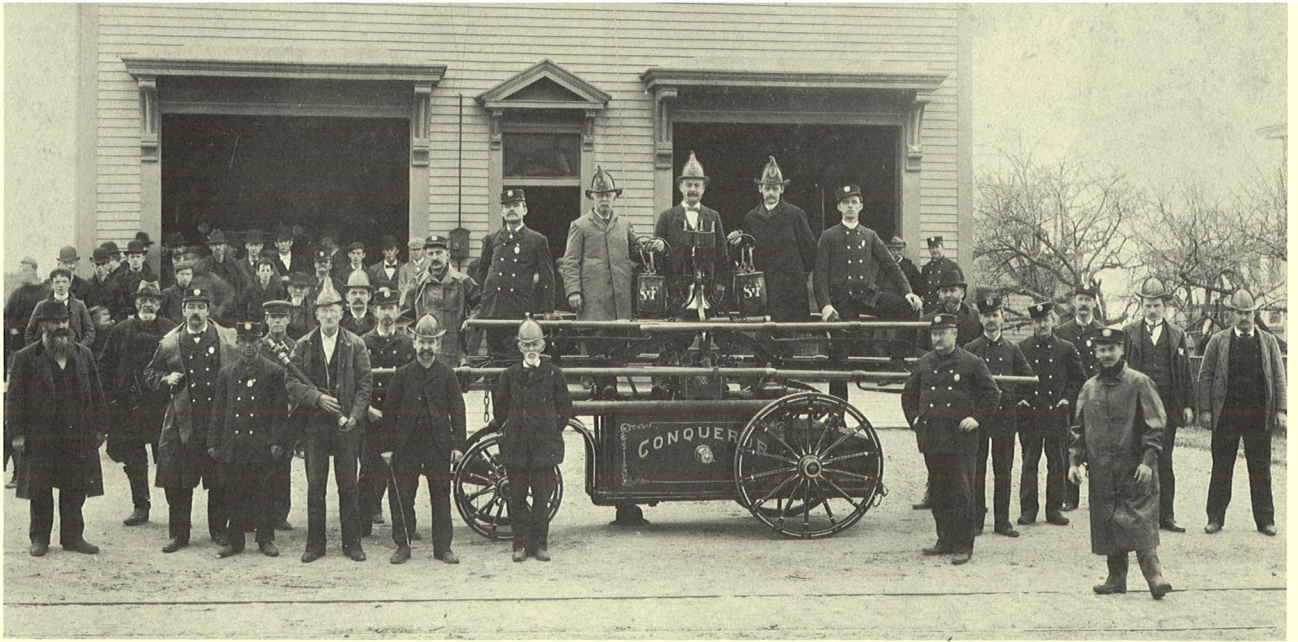
Protection from fire was considered highly important, but prevention was more practical than fire-fighting. Torches and firebrands were the most common means of starting fires, while an axe, a shovel and a bucket were the only appliances available for subduing a fire. About 1648 it was ordered "that no inhabitant, stranger or seaman shall carry any fire, unless it be in a pot or other covered vessel, between the first day of the first month (March) and the last day of the eight month (October)." The penalty was 20 shillings.

Up to 1800, the severest loss by fire had been in the burning of the meeting-house in 1751. There was no real order or method used to put out fires or save property; no one but a constable had authority to give orders or take charge of property, and buckets were the only means of conveying water. About 1807, a volunteer fire company of over fifty men was formed at Weymouth Landing, and a hand fire engine was procured. For more than twenty years this was the only fire company in town. In 1816 two men were elected special officers for fires, and were called "fire wardens"; a fire warden was in supreme command at fires after that.

In 1844 the town attempted to take some systematic action for better fire protection but did not accomplish much. An independent fire district was formed later at Weymouth Landing, and another was formed about 1870 at South Weymouth. About all the town did until 1877 was to put in several rain-water reservoirs in public squares. The only other available water supply



*"Gen. Putnam"
Hand-Pumper ca 1880
Nash's Corner Sta. #4*



*"The Conqueror"
South Weymouth Sta. #5
Bought 1872*

was from wells, streams and ponds.

In 1833 water from Great Pond was piped through the town and the Water Department was organized making private wells and public reservoirs obsolete. The Fire Department soon had the care of many hydrants and an unfailing water supply. This led to the reorganization of the department, the purchase of steam fire apparatus and greater efficiency in service. In 1913 and 1914 with the advent of motorized fire equipment, the fire companies were organized for continuous day and night service.

In 1925 the Town accepted the General Laws relative to the powers of the Chief and his permanent appointment by the Selectmen. The first permanent Chief was John Q. Hunt, 1924 to 1929. He died while responding to an alarm.

Our Fire Department grew from its unsure beginning to an organization of over 120 men, many of whom stay abreast of the most modern techniques of fire fighting by taking courses at our local colleges.

Our officers are not only trained in the latest fire fighting methods, but also in first aid and resuscitation. Some of the future goals of our Fire Department under the present Chief, James Stevens, are a fire prevention bureau, a drill master, and new construction and equipment to keep up with the tremendous growth of the Town.



*Hose Co. #5
South Weymouth
ca 1900*

*Photos Courtesy
Weymouth Historical Society*