

# Yesteryear

A King-Size Mini-Book

By: D. Craig Asbury

ANNUAL #3 – 2023

MOBERLY, MISSOURI

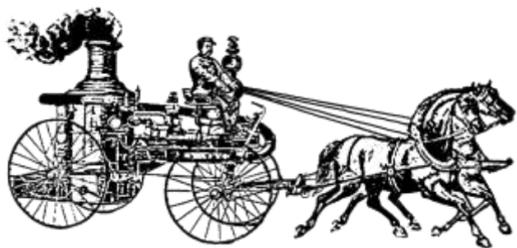
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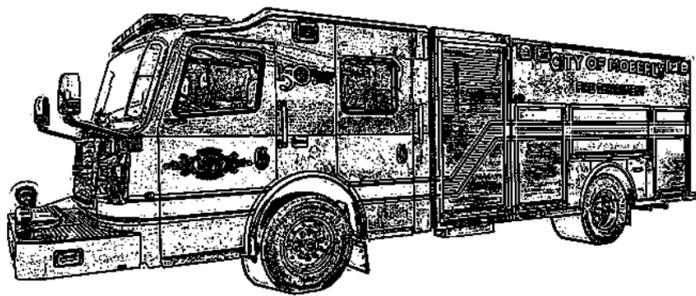
## 150 Years of the **MOBERLY**



# FIRE DEPARTMENT



**1873**



**2023**

## And the Story of Moberly's Water Works

### THE MOBERLY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The current citizens of Moberly almost take for granted the efficient and well-trained firefighters and their state-of-the-art equipment. It is well known that if a fire occurs, the resourceful Fire Companies can handle the situation.

It was not always that way. A lot of 'dominoes' had to fall for it to become the effective Fire Fighting Force it is today.

This is that story.

**(To Follow the 'Dominoes', Read the Pages in Order)**

### CITIZEN FIREFIGHTERS

In the late 1860's, Moberly was a mere settlement on the plains at a railroad junction. No legal paper acknowledged the existence of this hamlet and the community only had to answer to the laws of the county.

People were pretty much free to build as they saw fit and run their businesses and homes as they chose.

As more people moved to the village, it became a haphazard conglomeration of wood structures. Privies (outhouses) and cisterns or wells were in every yard, along with a family cow, horse and a hog or two.

For the less than seasoned citizens and to impress how primitive things were, a cistern is a barrel above ground or a wood lined hole in the ground. It was usually filled by the rainwater from the house gutters. This would be a household's water source.

If there was no rain, the family would have to pay to have water hauled from a farmer's pond out in the country.

No one had piped water or a sewer system (the reason for privies and cisterns/wells). Running water was when a kid would run out to the well or cistern, get a bucket of water and run back into the house.

Whereas there was no type of local government overseeing the public services seen in organized towns, such as water, streets, law-making, police and firemen, the Moberly folk would come together as a community when the need arose.

Firefighting was one of those needs.

It was an era where open fires existed in every home and business. There was no electricity and no piped natural gas. Buildings were heated by wood fireplaces or coal stoves.

Meals were cooked on a wood or coal stove. Lighting was provided by

coal oil lamps, candles or kerosene lamps.

Kerosene of the day was an extremely unstable liquid as it was not as refined as it is today. Lamp explosions were not uncommon.

Women's aprons would easily catch fire if they came too close to the cooking stove or fireplace. Faulty flues were a major source of building fires. (Flues are the stove pipes that carried the spark-laden smoke away from a stove and up the chimney.)

If a fire broke out, neighbors from all around the area would run to assist in putting it down. Bucket brigades would be set up, while others tried to save the contents of the building.

These 'bucket brigades' were not the well-oiled productions where everyone worked in a choreographed order. It was a bunch of non-trained citizens doing whatever they could to put out the fire.

Access to water was the main drawback with just wells or cisterns.

As the buildings were wood and built with no fire-stopping design, the actual purpose of the bucket-brigade

was to keep the fire from spreading to surrounding structures.

### THE TOWN ORGANIZED

In 1868, Moberly was officially incorporated as "The Inhabitants of the Town of Moberly". A new city government set out to organize the business of a town.

Ordinances were passed for taxation, road maintenance and city salaries. A marshal was appointed whose main jobs were to collect taxes, put a path of cinders across the dirt streets for crosswalks, shoot rabid dogs, round up wandering hogs, build wood sidewalks on city-owned property and to arrest the occasional drunk.

[Local Historical Note: In the summer of 1870, one of the duties assigned to the marshal was to inspect the condition of all the privies. He resigned the next week.]

The subject of firefighting was broached in 1870. A recommendation of some ladders, fire extinguishers, buckets and hooks was submitted, along with the cost. As there was no money, just a few hooks and ladders were purchased to aid the citizens in the fighting of fires.

The next year, the town passed a fire ordinance (no building of new wood structures downtown without permission) and appointed a fire warden whose job was to inspect

\*\*\* CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 \*\*\*



Non-Trained Citizens Putting Out a Neighborhood House Fire

**THE TOWN ORGANIZED**

(Continued from Page 1)

flues and look for obvious fire hazards.

In November, 1871, a major fire broke out in the downtown area:



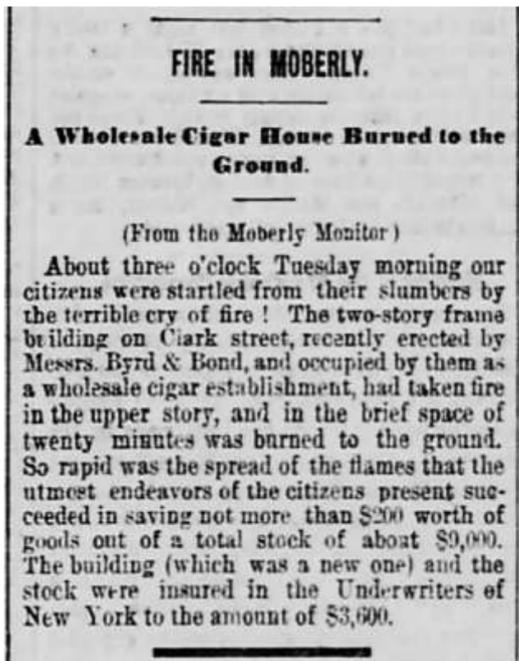
After that fire, one of the town trustees (before there was a city council) proposed that if a volunteer fire company was organized, the town should purchase some firefighting equipment for their use.

A volunteer fire company was not uncommon in that era, as most towns did not have the financial resources to fund a city-backed department.

In April of 1872, Moberly was designated to become the location for the railroad's manufacturing shops.

This would bring hundreds of railroad jobs into town and many more businesses and citizens along with it. The town was on the verge of becoming a true city. With the influx of people and buildings, the possibility of fires dramatically rose.

On July 22, 1872, another major fire broke out in Moberly.



Shortly afterwards, a totally volunteer fire company was organized. The company was run by a board of citizens that donated their time and resources to maintain the department.

The volunteer firemen were ordinary citizens that left their jobs when required to take up the mantle of firefighting, assuming all the risks but receiving no rewards.

The city agreed to donate some hooks, ladders and buckets for the volunteer firefighter's use. The town trustees would sometimes pass a few dollars to the fire organization after fighting a fire.

[Historical Note: In large cities, there would be several volunteer fire departments. As an incentive for promptness, insurance companies would give a payout to the first department on the scene. When a fire bell sounded, all the departments would scramble as fast as they could to be the first one there and therefore claim the payment from the insurance company. Sometimes these groups would get into a fistfight to drive each other off – and yes, while

the brawling was going on, the building was burning down.]

The Moberly leaders knew that if they wanted the town to thrive, they would need obtain some real firefighting equipment.

With the city expanding each day by the influx of new businesses and citizens, the increased tax base added to the town's prosperity and Moberly began to make money. The dialog was seriously opened to create a permanent city-run fire department.

**A STRATEGY PROPOSED**

A plan was formulated in April of 1873 to obtain a horse-drawn fire engine pumper and construct a Firehouse. They would also employ a man to maintain the fire engine, hitch the horses, drive it to the fire and run the pump. This person would have the title of Fire Engineer and get a regular monthly salary.

The Council would also elect a City Fire Chief whose responsibilities were to organize the volunteer firefighters and act as liaison between the volunteers and the city. He would be paid a token monthly salary of \$5 (about \$120 today). Each volunteer company would maintain their own unpaid chiefs.

The city would pass along a small amount of money monthly to the volunteer fire committee to divide

among the men as they saw fit.

The main problem with having a pumper was access to water. There was no water system in the town and there were no available standing bodies of water within miles of Moberly for the pumper to use. This was years before Water Works Lake and Rothwell Lake were built.

There were a few small farm ponds around, just outside of the town proper and the small lake that the railroad built for their steam engine locomotives to the northwest of the Coat Street railroad crossing but the town had no access to those.

The small cisterns and wells located about the town tended to be for general water use: drinking, cooking, occasional bathing and clothes washing. Those water sources did not have the volume needed to fight a major fire.

Large cisterns at various locations would need to be built throughout the downtown. If a fire occurred in the residential area, the fire engine pumper could use a well in the area.

The plan was in place, now it had to be implemented.

**A FIREMAN'S TOAST IN 1855**  
*"To the ladies – their eyes kindle the only flames which we cannot extinguish and against which there is no insurance."*

**MOBERLY'S FIRST FIRE ENGINE**

In the spring of 1873, the City Council proposed the purchase of a horse-drawn water pumper. There were two main types of pumpers, those that were hand-pumped and those that were steam driven.

After some review, a horse-drawn, coal-fired Silsby steam pumper was decided upon. The pumper would cost \$5,000 (\$120,000 in today's money), in five annual installments at 10% interest a year.

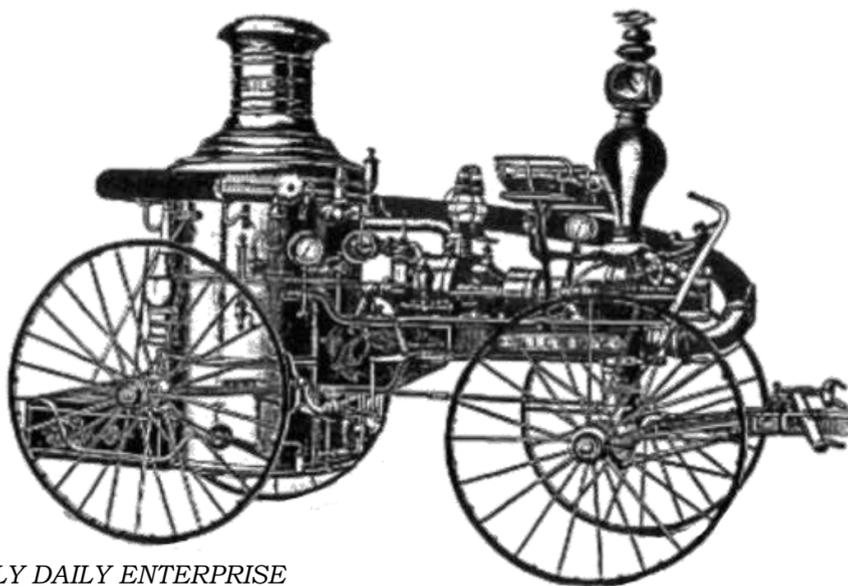
This opened the floodgates into setting up a City-controlled fire department. Property was purchased on the east side of Clark Street, about a half block north of Coates.

Here a two-story brick building was built. The ground floor was for the fire department and the second floor was for the city council. This building was about where the current Fire Station #1 is now.

As water was an issue, large, oak-lined cisterns were dug at various places around the town. The main one was located directly in front of the Firehouse and held 22,000 gallons of water.

Four other cisterns, each holding 12,500 gallons, were also constructed around town.

The Silsby Third Size Steam Fire Engine, Serial #404, arrived in town. It was christened with the name "City of Moberly".



**MOBERLY DAILY ENTERPRISE**

**TESTING IT**

*Our New Fire Engine is Tried and Works to a Charm*

*At one o'clock yesterday afternoon our new Silsby Fire Engine, "City of Moberly", was taken to the lake, near the Machine Shops, for the purpose of giving it a trial. When everything was prepared, the engine was set to work, surrounded by at least one thousand spectators, it worked charmingly. Everything ran as smooth as clock work from the beginning. The engine was afterward brought into the city and placed in the rear of Harmonia Hall, where it was again set to puffing. Two streams were thrown high into the air, each stream passing through five hundred feet of hose.*

*The engine was out most of today throwing streams to the delight of every person.*

*The engine gives universal satisfaction, and is truly an admirable piece of equipment.*

(See the map on Page 3 for the location of the Lake and Harmony Hall)

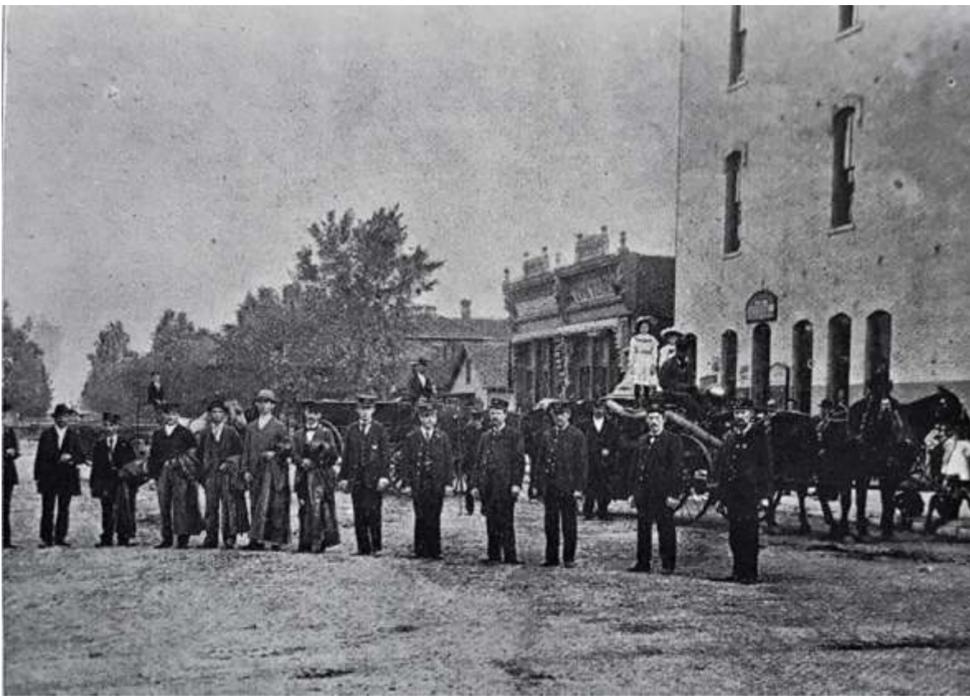
On August 22, 1873, the Council accepted the new fire engine. The city-backed Moberly Fire Department was now not just words on a piece of paper, it had a true physical existence.

**MOBERLY'S SILSBY STEAM PUMPER FIRE ENGINE**

The Only Two Known Photographs of the Moberly's First Fire Engine



1877 Parade on Reed Street  
The Fire Engine is in the Center With a Flag



Prior to a Parade - Two Girls are Standing on Top of the Fire Engine.  
The Men in Front are the Firefighters  
(The Large Building on the Right is the Current Radio Station)

**EARLY DAY FIRE ALERT**

In the early days of Moberly, the railroad assisted in giving the alarm when a fire occurred.

As the railyard ran along the north part of the town, rail workers had a view of the city.

If a worker saw a fire or heard the fire bell ring, they would notify a yard train engineer.

The train engineer would let loose a loud sustained blast on its steam whistle.

This whistle could be heard all around the town and the citizens and volunteer firefighters would know there was a fire.

**OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES**

MOBERLY MONITOR-INDEX  
July 8, 1932

Over the week-end, members of a family reunion near Huntsville chose the long, cool hours at dusk to stage an important natural history lesson for the benefit of a 4-year-old in their midst.

While the little-girl watched, someone snatched a passing firefly from the air and held it so she could inspect its glowing abdomen.

"This," said the adult, with studious emphasis, "is a lightning bug."

"Yeah," said the modern infant, "Lightning bug? When is it going to thunder?"

**HELPING HAND**

In 1886, the Grand Central Hotel was a large 3 story building on the SE corner of 4th and Coates.



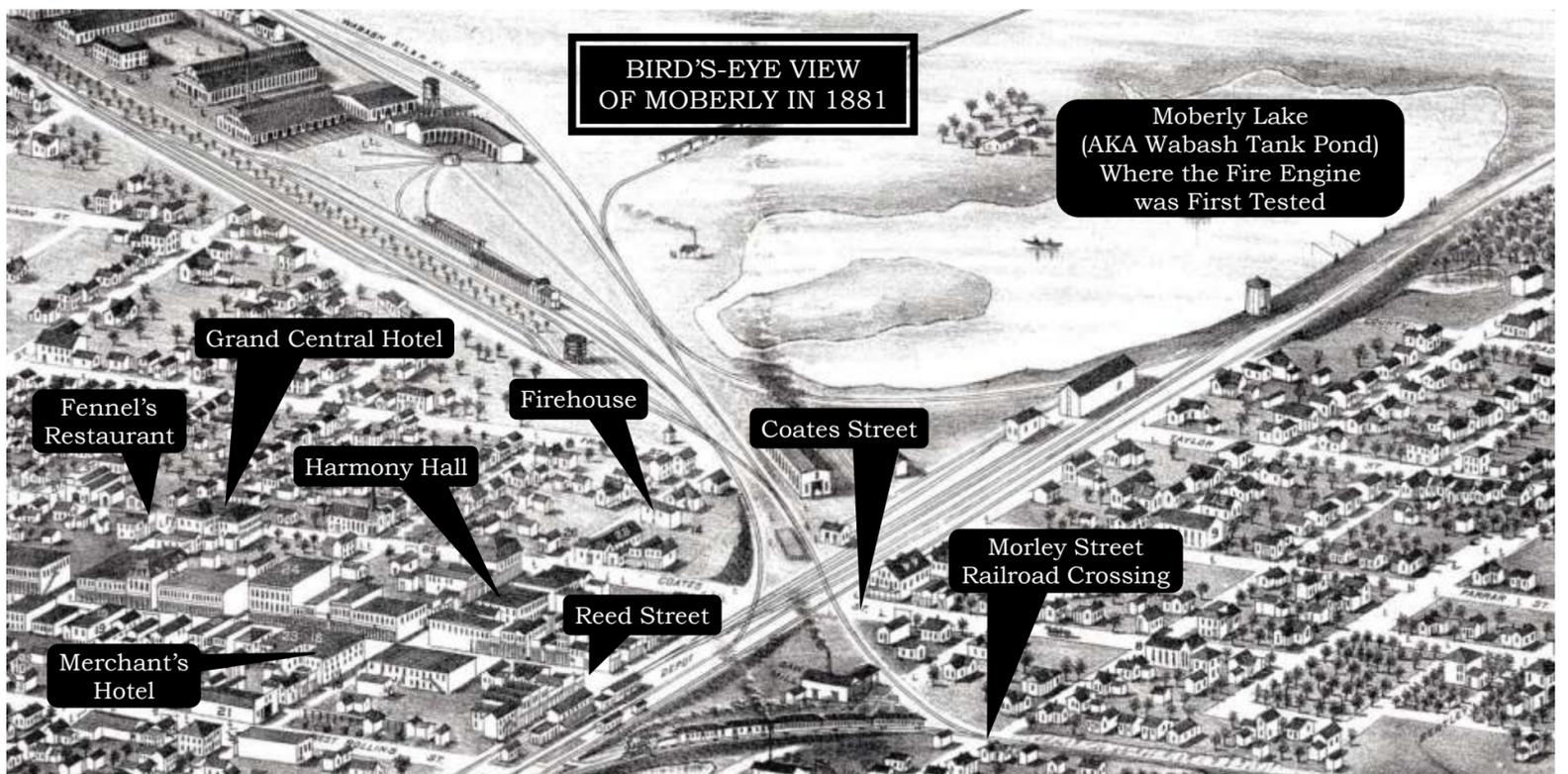
On the west end of this building was Berlett's Saloon. (Where Coates Street Corner Grill is now located.)

Across 4th Street, to the west, was Werner Fennel's Restaurant.

One day Fennel's restaurant caught fire. It was very common at that time for citizens to assist in carrying out items from stores that were nearby a fire in an attempt to save them in case the fire jumped.

Two men were in the area and one asked the other, "Should we help move out Berlett's whiskey?"

To which the other replied, "I have been helping him move it out for the last four years."



## STEAM PUMPER INFORMATION

Before the steam pumper fire engine, bucket brigades were the method of fighting fires. Then the innovation of using a portable boiler heated by a coal fire to power a water pump was conceived. The boiler and pump were placed on a special carriage and pulled by horses to the fire. In essence, fire was now used to fight fire.

While Moberly purchased a steam pumper fire engine, it did not buy any horses to pull it. If the fire bell sounded during the daytime, the first drayman that showed up to the station would hitch his horses to the fire engine. (A drayman was a person that used a horse-drawn wagon to deliver freight around town.)

The drayman would drive the Fire Engine with his hitched team to the fire.

The City would then pay the drayman a token amount.



MOBERLY DRAY LICENSE  
From the Collection of Phil Wetrich

If there was a fire after dark, the firemen would secure two horses from a nearby livery (a place that rented horses and buggies).

Another concern was to get the boiler water up to temperature as quickly as possible. It would take a minimum of six and a half minutes for the cold water to start boiling.

Another two minutes of heating would create enough pressure for a 100' stream of water. It would take a total of almost eleven minutes to build up steam pressure for a 200' water stream.

To facilitate the heating, the coal sat on wood tender and all was soaked in kerosene. The tender would be lit before the fire wagon left the station so that the fire would burn up through the coals to heat the boiler water on the way to the fire. (Starting at the bottom ensured that all the coal would catch fire – just like one should do with charcoal grills and lighter fluid.)

One method used by some Fire Departments to assist in getting steam quickly was to connect the boiler to a stationary hot water heater at their Firehouse with quick disconnect hoses between fires calls. This would maintain hot water in the boiler at all times. There are no indications that Moberly did this.

The big drawback of the times was the lack of water. Moberly had no standing water sources within the town proper they could access.

The steam pumper carried no water and relied on the availability of water at the fire scene. Every house had its own well or cistern for residential use. But as Moberly's steam pumper could discharge up to 500 gallons of water a minute (rarely set that high), these could be emptied in a few minutes. The City constructed several large cisterns around the downtown area.

The fire pumper would park next to a cistern or well and drop its supply hose into it. Then fire hoses would be laid from the fire to the pumper. The Fire Department initially used a hand-pulled hose cart to carry the fire hoses and string them out.

In the time it took to get the fire pumper to a cistern and the fire hoses laid and connected, the boiler would be up to steam and water was ready to be pumped.

It was not uncommon for a cistern to be emptied while fighting a large fire and the fire engine would have to be relocated to another one and the fire hoses re-laid.

One old-timer reminisced in 1939 about the steam pumper:

*"Oh boy! Believe me it sure was some fun for the boys and girls to go to a fire in those days. It was exciting to see the horses come flying down the street, with smoke rolling out of the top of the stack on the fire engine, and to hear the engine chugging when it commenced pumping the water out of the well and shooting it out of the hose onto the fire."*



### THE FIRE ENGINE'S FIRST FIRE

Just a month after the fire engine was obtained, it was inaugurated with its first fire.

Not much is known about the fire as no local newspapers remain from that time.

From the *Sedalia Democrat*:

**The Moberly Enterprise compliments its new fire engine for its effective initiary service on Monday evening in putting out a rousing fire.**

On October 6, 1873 the City Council Minutes noted the following item:

*Resolved that the Council under a vote of thanks to the fire co. for their prompt action and successful management in suppressing the fire on the night of 29th of Sept.*

### THE EARLY FIRE COMPANIES

The volunteer firefighters were divided into two different companies. Company #1 became attached to the steam pumper and wielded the hoses. Company #2 hauled the hooks, ladders and axes.

Initially, the Council tried to put forth a proper city fire department by purchasing the steam pumper, building a Firehouse, ordering uniforms and obtaining additional equipment.

Then the Panic of 1873 set in and the town found itself deeply in debt. The number of uniforms was reduced and additional equipment was eliminated. (See YESTERYEAR, Annual #1, 2021, for the story of Moberly Money and the Panic of 1873.)

The Council could not provide the funds required to properly equip the volunteers. To raise money to maintain their equipment and to be able to purchase additional items, the volunteer firefighters would hold benefits.

**The Hi Lo Hook  
AND  
LADDER CO.,**  
Will give a  
**GRAND BALL!**  
At the  
**OPERA HOUSE,**  
For the purpose of enabling them  
to purchase a Hook and Ladder  
Truck, Fire Extinguisher,  
&c, &c., same to be the  
property of the city.  
The object is a worthy one, and  
every citizen should attend.

(A 'Truck' was a Hand-Pulled Cart)

Only the Fire Engineer (the man that maintained the steam pumper) and Fire Chief received any type of salary from the City. These positions were at the political whims of the Council. It was not uncommon for the men in these positions to be moved out when new town officials were elected each year.

As time went on, the Council took on the authority to accept or not accept each volunteer fireman. They were each paid \$2 per fire when water was used and \$1 for each false alarm (they were still volunteers and left their paying jobs whenever the fire bell sounded).

There tended to be 10 to 12 volunteers and they did not always get along with the Council.

At a council meeting, a council member stated that he never saw a fireman at the Firehouse.

Evidently not understanding what being a volunteer entailed, he said that the firemen should be seen at the Firehouse.

The mayor agreed and ordered that all firemen should meet at the Firehouse first before going to a fire.

Before, when enough men had reached the Firehouse to get the steam pumper on the road, they left for the fire. The firemen further away went directly to the fire. They now had to wait for everyone to show up before leaving.

Besides slowing down the response time, this mandate made no sense, as firemen would still not be seen at the Firehouse. When the fire bell rings, people don't go to the Firehouse, they go to see the fire.

Later, the members of Company #1 quit after being criticized for being too slow at getting to a fire.

Company #2 then took over the steam pumper. A couple of years later, they quit after the Council replaced the Fire Engineer with their own politically-chosen, but not necessarily qualified man.

A third fire company was formed to take over the steam pumper. A few years later, half of that department quit after being criticized by a Council Member.

These ups and downs of the early fire service eventually changed the fire department organization.

The Fire Chief was put in charge of all Fire Company policies, but the City maintained control of the hiring and firing.

The City increased the payments to the volunteer companies and obtained more equipment.

Being a fireman was a very hazardous job with dangers coming from both the fire and the water.

Required equipment now, were luxuries back then. After one fire, the fire committee insisted that the Council purchase rubber coats for the men.

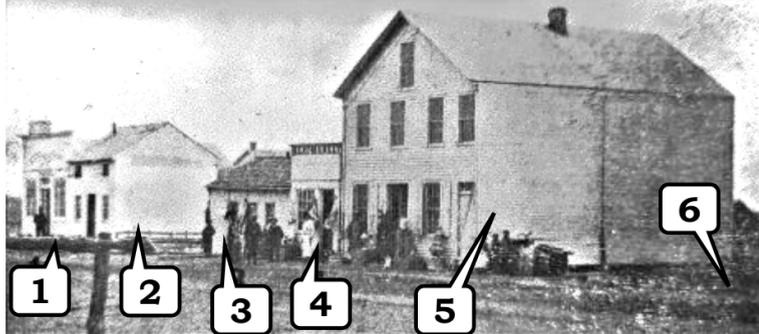
Hoses leaked like sieves and one volunteer had died from exposure by being drenched with water while fighting a fire in freezing weather and another one was on death's door.

## A Little Corner of History: THE END OF A BEGINNING

Local people are probably aware of the first house in Moberly. It was a log cabin that belonged to Patrick Lynch who had moved it by oxen from 'Old' Allen. (For the story of 'Old' Allen, see *YESTERYEAR* – Annual #2, 2022.)

As Lynch was the first person to move to Moberly, in 1866 the railroad gave him 140 ft on the south side of Reed Street, from Clark and going east to the alley.

Soon Patrick sold off some of his land and businesses popped up.



THE BUILDINGS c1868 (For Historical Reference)

- (1) Wooden storehouse built by Lynch
- (2) Wood framed hotel named the Randolph House also built by Lynch The hotel had a horse and buggy hitching lot to the west for customers.
- (3) Lynch's log cabin (about where New Beginnings Furniture is now).
- (4) Henry Overburg's meat market
- (5) William Seelen's hardware store
- (6) Vacant lot on the SE corner of Clark and Reed owned by F. Hegarty

By 1880, Patrick had sold off the rest of his downtown property. The businesses became:

- (1) Hutton's Grocery Store
- (2) Palisade Hotel
- (3) O.N. Kaar's Barbershop. Lynch's log cabin had been moved back from the street several feet and a new front room was put onto it. Kaar ran the barbershop in the new front room and lived in the old cabin part
- (4) Henry Overburg's meat market
- (5) Henry Conrad's Bakery
- (6) F. Hegarty's flour and feed business, a two-story brick building built in 1874.

Just after midnight, on the morning of Friday, March 20, 1880, a fire was discovered behind the Hegarty brick building [6], close to Conrad's bakery [5].

Someone ran to the Firehouse and rang the bell. Soon, the firemen hurried from their homes to the Firehouse. The boiler was lit, the horses were hitched and the steam pumper was on its way.

The fire took hold of the bakery [5] and the meat market [4]. The firemen were working feverously trying to contain the fire but they were simple wood structures that easily burned. Citizens and the business owners tried to get whatever they could out of the buildings.

The barbershop [3] went up next. The flying embers and sparks jumped to the hotel [2] and it also quickly went up in flames. Soon Hutton's Grocery Store [1] caught fire.

The heat from the fire was so intense that a piano in a room across the street was blistered through a window. The glow from the blaze was seen as far away as Madison and people came to town to view the fire.

The firemen concentrated on keeping the fire from crossing the alley and engulfing the buildings to the east, (where Homecare of Mid Missouri is now located). The Ax Brigade torn down the side wall of the grocery which helped hold the fire in check.

While in the middle of stopping the fire from advancing, the steam fire pumper lost a water flue which caused the boiler water to put out the boiler fire. (A water flu was a pipe that circulated the water through the boiler.)

The pumper engineer plugged the flue with a piece of wood and rebuilt the fire. Soon the steam was back up and pumping water. A fireman injured his left arm holding one of the nozzles, but never left his post.

The firemen stopped the fire from progressing, but the wood structures were a total loss, including the first house in Moberly, Lynch's log cabin.

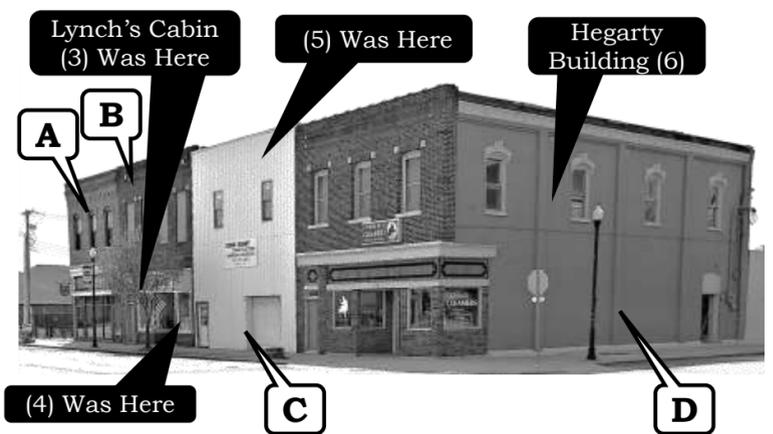
The Hegarty brick building sustained damage to the rear and east walls due to the heat and water. This building is where Moberly Cleaners was located and the brick structure will be 150 years old next year.

The fire was determined to be the act of an arsonist. The Huntsville newspaper stated, "if the scoundrel had confined his work to 'Whiskey Row', he would, doubtless, have received the thanks of the good people of that entire town." (More on 'Whiskey Row' later.)

In just a month after the fire, the lots had been cleaned up and the construction of 5 two-story brick buildings (east of the Hegarty Building) to replace the burned wood structures had begun.

According to a Moberly newspaper article, good did come out of the fire as "a large number of rats and bed

bugs lost their lives".



THE CURRENT BUILDINGS IN 2023

- (A) Bean 118 Cafe (built 1880)
- (B) New Beginnings (built 1880)
- (C) Done Right Construction (built 1880)
- (D) Moberly Cleaners (built 1874)

(Two other buildings that were built in 1880 no longer exist. One was located where the Bean 118 Cafe drive-thru window annex is now located and the other was where the drive-thru lane is next to the alley.)

Two months later, just after midnight, on the morning of Saturday, May 22, the fire bell was again sounded. A fire was sighted at the Bon Ton Restaurant, located on the north side of Reed Street, between Clark and the alley to the west (the half-block of Reed where Bud's Hair Lounge is located)

The firemen and their pumper showed up as area people were helping to remove goods and furniture from nearby buildings to save them.

The pumper was throwing the water and the firemen almost had the fire under control when the cistern went dry. The pumper had to be relocated to another cistern two blocks away and the hoses re-laid. Then a water flue broke on the fire engine and put out the boiler fire.

The entire half-block on Reed Street burned down and seven businesses destroyed.

These two major back-to-back fires had the citizens of Moberly up in arms. The lack of water had hindered the fire department's ability to properly fight the fires.

Actually, at that time, Moberly had much more water than would have been needed.

### MOBERLY'S FIRST RESERVOIR

Back in 1879 Moberly was bursting at its seams. In 1866, the population was one family and in less than 15 years it had swelled to over 6,000 people. Growing pains were felt throughout the town, with water being a main concern.

The town owned a steam pumper fire engine but lack of water hindered its ability to properly fight fires.

The City knew something needed to be done as water was a valuable resource that would be required if the town was going to attract new businesses. Just a short distance to the west of town laid rolling hills and several ravines. At the end of 1879, the city purchased 48 acres of this land that had a ravine.

Work was immediately started to build a dam to create the necessary reservoir. After the new lake was full, a pump house was planned to be erected to supply the town with piped water.

James Sanderson (who later started the Moberly Brick Company) was contracted to build the dam. He employed 20 workers and eight ox teams with drivers. The top of the dam was 280 feet long and 80 feet wide. The spillway was cut through rock and was 20 feet wide and 200 feet long. The dam cost \$5,000 (about \$150,000 today) and the lake was estimated that it would hold over 25 million gallons of water.

On March 1, 1880, the Town Council accepted the new reservoir. It was stated that "the City needs never again complain of a scarcity of water".

While that statement was true in the aspect of plenty of water in the lake, the city did not have the financial resources to build the pump house and pipe the water into town. The lake and the land around it sat unused (except when citizens would use the land to dump their trash or dead horses).

Three weeks later, the Lynch fire happened downtown, destroying a half of block of businesses and then two months after that, another half block of downtown burned to the ground.

There was enough water in the reservoir that the Silsby steam pumper fire engine could have continually pumped its maximum capacity 24 hours a day for 30 days straight and not empty the lake, but not a drop was used on any fires.

Moberly's original reservoir and the area around it later became the start of the current Rothwell Park and the lake is now known as the Deer Pond.

## THE FIRST WATER WORKS

In 1884, the citizens of Moberly were getting frustrated at the deficiency of water. Any lack of rain would cause cisterns to dry up and wells go down. The townsfolk would sometimes have to purchase water hauled from out of town.

The City Council was looking for a solution and several ideas were bantered about, including deep wells, piping water from the Missouri River and a new, larger reservoir. No single direction could be agreed upon.

The Moberly Board of Trade was an organization made up of local businessmen and citizens that wanted to promote the commercial aspects of the town. Bringing industries to the area was their main focus. They knew that the lack of water was holding Moberly back.

On June 2, 1884, the Board got together with the Council and proposed to drill a deep well close to downtown to see if that was a viable solution to the water situation. The Council agreed to work with the Board and a deep well was drilled and outfitted with a stationary steam engine to pump the water.

At noon on January 17, 1885, hundreds of residents showed up to see the operation of the machinery.

The steam engine was fired up and the pump went into gear. It soon started drawing water from the 540 foot deep well. 1,000 gallons an hour of clean, pure water was pumped into the 4,000 gallon tank. It was estimated that the well could produce two and a half gallons of water each day for every citizen. This was termed as a liberal amount, if judiciously used. (Today, that would be just one toilet flush.)

It was a time when there was no running water or indoor bathrooms. Water was mainly used for drinking and cooking as baths and clothes washing were few and far between.

For baths, the family would fill up a single tub and, starting with the oldest, all would take their turn using the same water. By the time the youngest had a bath, the water was a dark, muddy mess. After use, the dirty water would have to be hand-carried out of the house. This was the origin of the saying, 'Don't throw the baby out with the bath water'.

Imagine no piped water, no electricity, no natural gas. Any water needed would have to be hauled by a bucket from a well or cistern into the house. Then, if hot water was needed, there would be the chopping of wood or hauling of coal and the building of a fire in the fireplace or cookstove.

One would have to wait for the cast-iron pot to heat the water and then carry the hot water to where it was needed. The used water would be hand-dumped in the backyard. Is it supposed that there would be a lot less baths and clothes washing done?

The new deep well storage tank was for any citizen to take a bucketful home. A faucet in the tank's fill pipe was purposed to let someone grab a quick drink.

The exact location or what became of this deep well is not currently known.

The City knew this was not a long-term solution to the water issue and the deep well would not be capable of supplying water in the quantity required in case of a major fire. The steam pumper fire engine could empty the storage tank in just a few minutes.

Something on a much grander scale was needed.

## THE SECOND RESERVOIR AND SECOND WATER WORKS

The need for water was high on the agenda of the town council. They hired a civil engineer to survey the ravines west of town to locate a suitable location for a large reservoir. A site was selected that was easy to dam and with the water shed that wouldn't use any possible polluted runoff from the town proper. (There were privies in every yard, horses 'doing their business' on all the dirt streets and loose hogs roaming the town.)

Unfortunately, Moberly did not have the immediate financial needs to purchase the property and construct the dam, the pumping facility and the water mains. An outside organization was formed, the Moberly Water Works Company, which jumped in and offered to build the enterprise and sell the water to the town.

In 1885, an agreement was written up with the requirements of the water service, one being the ability of the fire department to discharge six streams of water at least 85 feet high. 65 fire hydrants scattered around town were also stipulated to be installed.



WATER WORKS LAKE DAM UNDER CONSTRUCTION

It was 30 feet high and 400 feet long. Note that the spillway is on the south end of the dam where today it is on the north end

In a few months, the reservoir was filling up with an estimated 40 million gallons, enough for 4,000 gallons per person of the town and was said that the lake would refill faster than any water use.

A large brick pump building was constructed that held the two coal-fired steam engines that would pump the water to town.



MOBERLY WATER WORKS COMPANY PUMPING STATION

It was Located to the Immediate NW of the Current Rotary Club Fishing Dock. The Current Boat Ramp and Spillway are Located Just to the Right of the Canoes.

The required mains were laid and the Moberly Water Works Company was in operation. When the lake was completely full, it held 150 million gallons of water (6 times the size of the Deer Pond).

In October, a test was held where the Fire Department attached to six different hydrants throughout the downtown and started their streams. Horizontally, the streams appeared to have the same distance. When turned 45 degrees upward, the streams varied from 65 to 80 feet in height.

Several other tests were given and the firemen amused themselves between the tests by spraying down the crowd.

Even though not all the tests met the contract requirements, the city officials were suitably impressed. On October 27, 1885, the Council accepted the Moberly Water Works tests. Residents and businesses soon requested to be connected to the mains.

Now that the fire hydrants were in place, the town wouldn't have to reply on the horse-drawn steam pumper and cisterns. The Fire Department could directly connect the hoses to the hydrants.

The water plant would maintain a low water pressure throughout the mains, enough for everyday use but not enough to fight a fire (as not to put excessive pressure on the pipes when not required).

When a fire was spotted, someone would telephone the water plant. The telephone was a new-fangle invention at that time and there were very few in town. A special phone was set up between the Firehouse and the water plant.

The plant would stoke up its boilers to increase the power of the steam engine pumps.

The plant would sound its deep-throated steam whistle that could be heard all the way downtown to let the fire department know that the water pressure was increased.

With water flowing into town, a way to eliminate it was also needed. Sewers were built to remove the waste.

Moberly now had a working water system.

# 1983 WAYBACK PAGE

Items Gathered from Moberly Newspapers 40 Years Ago (Prices or Coupons No Longer Valid)



**You'll Love Us!**  
**Morning-Noon-Nite!!!**

**The Steak Palace**  
New Highway 63 South 263

**COUNTRY KITCHEN**

**Country Kitchen's Weekly Favorites**

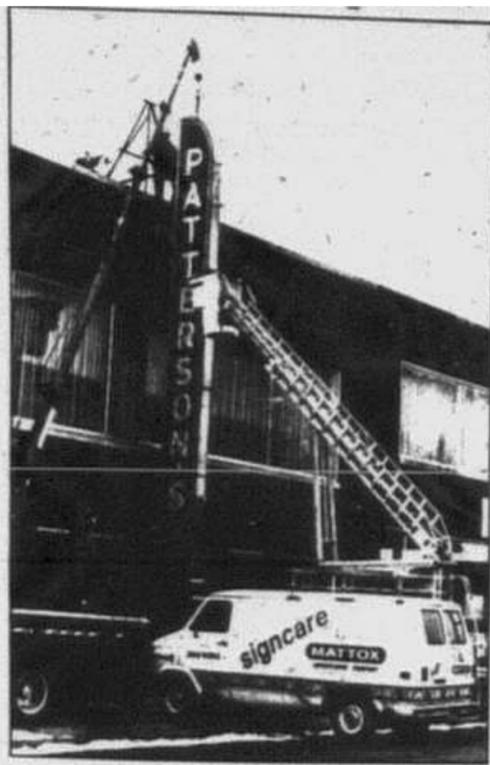
Mon.: Mini Chef ..... \$2.49  
Tues.: Mexican Hat Salad .. \$2.99  
Wed.: Salisbury Steak ..... \$3.49  
Thurs.: Hot Potato ..... \$2.99  
Fri.: Seafood Platter..... \$5.49  
Sat.: Prime Rib ..... \$5.99  
Sun.: Baked Ham ..... \$4.49

**Our Kids Special Continues**  
Kids 12 and under can still eat free when accompanied by an adult. One child for each adult please.  
**Hwy. 24 East**  
Open 24 Hrs. 6 Days a Week: Sun Till 10:30 p.m.

**Monday Luncheon Special**  
**Moo Goo Gai Pan**  
Served with egg roll, fried rice and egg drop soup.

**For Only \$2<sup>55</sup>**  
Now Open on Sundays from 12 to 7 p.m.

**HUNAN**  
**Chinese Restaurant**  
537 West Reed • 816 263-2000  
Moberly, Missouri  
RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED



REMOVAL of this sign early this year marked the end of a 34-year era for Patterson's department store here. Patterson's closed at the end of December. Pat Ammons, Moberly, was manager at the time. The store was opened on May 13, 1948, by Mrs. Mae (Patterson) Nagel, Moberly.

**Bottled Right Here In Moberly Since 1878**



**Great Taste!**

Discover Moberly's Finest!

Priced Right in Your Favorite Store

**Moberly Bottling Company**  
111 W. Rollins 263

**EVERY TUESDAY**  
**Taco Special**  
**50¢**  
**EVERY SUNDAY**  
2 Soft Shelled Tacos  
**\$1.69**

**TACO JOHNS**

400 N. Morley - Moberly 263

June 16th, 1971  
**Moberly's First Good Pizza**

March 13th, 1983  
**Moberly's Best Pizza**

We are proud to have done our part and continue our part in Moberly's Progress.

**Merrill's Pizza**  
1401 So. Morley 263  
Lunch Tues.-Friday Evenings Tues. thru Sun. Closed Monday

**Bouquet Shop**  
Celebrating Our **10th Year** in Moberly  
Proudly meeting all your floral needs



- Fresh Flowers
- Green Plants
- Silk Flowers

Bridal Registry—Gift Items  
530 W. Reed 263

**Monthly Specials**  
**\$6<sup>95</sup>**

**MONDAY**  
Bar-B-Q Prime Ribs  
All You Can Eat

**TUESDAY**  
8 Oz. K.D. Strip  
With Sauteed Mushrooms

**WEDNESDAY**  
Coquille St. Jacques Scallops  
In Lemon Sauce

**THURSDAY**  
Italian Gourmet Night

**FRIDAY**  
Hot Spicy Boiled Shrimp  
All You Can Eat...\$8.25

**LOUNGE**  
**BIG BENNY WEBER**  
Tuesday Thru Saturday  
Country Sounds  
Of The 60's

N. WILLIAMS DOWNTOWN MOBERLY

**Sandwiches**  
(Everyone's Favorites)  
Never Frozen, Always Fresh

Our Ever Popular Hamburger ..... Only \$1.10  
Baconburger..... Only \$1.80  
Breaded Tenderloin..... Just \$1.65  
(Breaded in our own kitchen)

**Ya Can't Forget Our Dinner Specials**  
Try our Hot Beef served with Mashed Potatoes and Gravy ..... \$2.70  
Hamburger Steak (the Best in Town), Choice of 2 vegetables or a salad and 1 vegetable... \$2.75  
Try our Salmon Croquettes—Choice of 2 vegetables or a salad and 1 vegetable..... \$2.75  
These dinner specials include a Medium Drink.

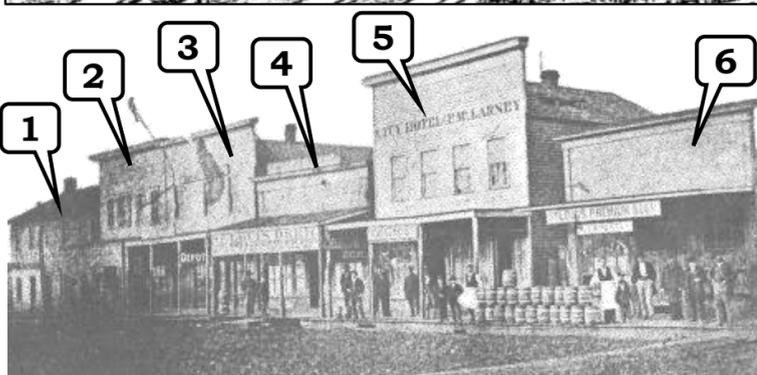
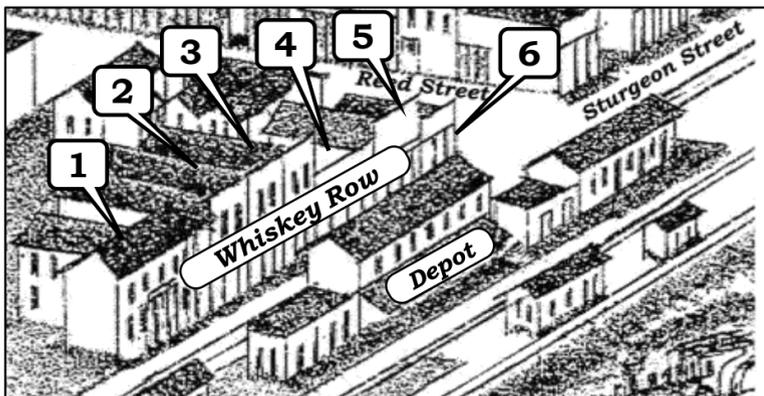
**M&N CAFE**  
HOURS: Monday thru Sat., 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Thursday & Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
407 W. Reed 263

**WHISKEY ROW**

Back in 1866, when Moberly began, it was just a stop along the railroad. Seedy hotels and saloons popped up along the west side of the 100 block of Sturgeon Street, just across from the original depot, to indulge the travelers. (For information about the Moberly Depots, See YESTERYEAR – Vol 2 - 2022.)

Whiskey, warm beer and cheap rooms could be had, along with ‘short-term companionship’.

These buildings became known as Whiskey Row and were located across the street from the current Railroad Museum. The steep hill on Sturgeon did not exist at that time as there was no true Rollins Street underpass, it was a culvert over a small ravine that wasn’t large enough for a wagon to pass. (Over the years it was enlarged)



WHISKEY ROW ON STURGEON STREET c1878  
(Across the Street from the Current Railroad Museum)

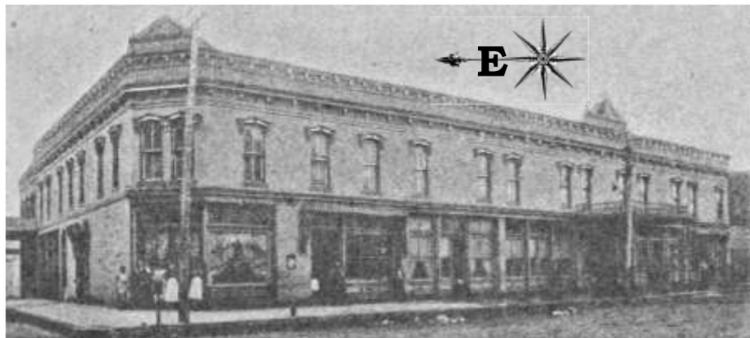
- #1: American Hotel
- #2: Hogan’s Boarding Home
- #3: Depot Hotel
- #4: Robinson’s Saloon
- #5: City Hotel
- #6: Curry’s Saloon

Around 1882, John Orrick purchased the frontage lots on the south side of the 100 block of Reed Street that extended from Sturgeon Street westward to the alley (where Homecare of Mid Missouri is now located, across Reed Street from City Hall). This land included the three buildings shown on the right in the above photo, which were torn down. He built the large Florence Hotel that faced Reed Street. Half of Whiskey Row was now gone.

The American Hotel [#1] stayed the same, the Hogan Boarding House [#2] became the Palisade Hotel (it appears as if the management had moved there after the original one burned in the ‘Lynch Block Fire’ of 1880) and the Depot Hotel [#3] had become Fisher’s Restaurant and Lodging House.

All of these places were actually just saloons that also served food. The upstairs rooms could be rented out on a ‘temporary’ basis.

Robinson’s Saloon [#4] became just a vacant lot behind the Florence Hotel. The City Hotel [#5] and Curry’s Saloon [#6] were where the eastern end of the Florence Hotel was located.



FLORENCE HOTEL – FACING REED STREET  
(Now the Location of Homecare of Mid Missouri)

Hotels of the era were not just a single large building. They were actually several smaller buildings built next to each other with the second floors set up as hotel rooms and meeting halls. A single facade enclosed all the building fronts to appear as a single building.

The hotel would use the first floor of one of the buildings as its lobby with stairs to the second floor. Another building’s first floor would house the hotel’s dining room.

The other building’s first floors were then rented out to other businesses. The Florence Hotel was made up of seven smaller building.

**THAT WAS A LAW?**

In the early days of Moberly, a woman was looked down upon if she partook of alcoholic beverages in public places, especially in saloons which were known as hangouts for those of ill-repute. To try to get around this stigma and to increase their business, saloons around town would set up a room in the back where females could drink out of the sight of prying eyes.

These places were known as “Wine Rooms”, even though both wine and beer were served. The city issued a special Wine Room license that was separate from the all-inclusive Dram license (liquor by the drink.)

Many saloons also served food. A woman seen coming out of a saloon could say she was there just getting something to eat, but was still looked upon with accusing eyes.

Soon, other types of businesses set up Wine Rooms. A half-block north of Whiskey Row was Ed Miller’s grocery store. The back room had been set up as one of these Wine Rooms. This discrete place was a popular locale where women could imbibe adult beverages without public disgrace.

Grocery stores at that time were nothing like they are now. A customer would give their order to a clerk, then the clerk would go around and collect the requested items. Think of Ike Godsey’s Store in *The Walton’s*.

The customer would then have to wait for the clerk to fill the order. What better way for the woman to spend her time waiting for her groceries than to visit with her friends in the back room over a couple of drinks? When she left the store with her items, it would look like she was just shopping.

Some women would still visit a saloon’s Wine Room, but this reflected bad on the town for its female citizens to be associated in any way with a saloon.

In 1914, the City Council jumped in and made an ordinance where it was illegal to sell any intoxicating liquor to women in a saloon Wine Room. The owner could be fined \$100 (\$3,000 today) and be imprisoned for up to 3 months.

They also made it illegal to sell food in a saloon. There was now no reason for a genteel lady to visit a saloon except to drink where everyone could see, which would cast a dark shadow on her as having a ‘loose’ character.

As women did not want to give up their ‘social time’, more Wine Rooms were opened in non-saloon businesses that served spirits to their female clientele in secluded back rooms. Moberly took on the thin facade of having ‘proper womenfolk’ that wouldn’t be seen in a saloon.

These Wine Rooms were, in a way, the precursors of the Speak-Easies that popped up during Prohibition a few years later.

And as a sidenote, a grocery store chain in Tennessee by the name of Piggly Wiggly stood the grocery business on its head by allowing its customers to use a cart and do their own shopping in 1914. Within a few years, this changed the way retail stores everywhere conducted business.

**WABASH FIREFIGHTING LOCOMOTIVE**

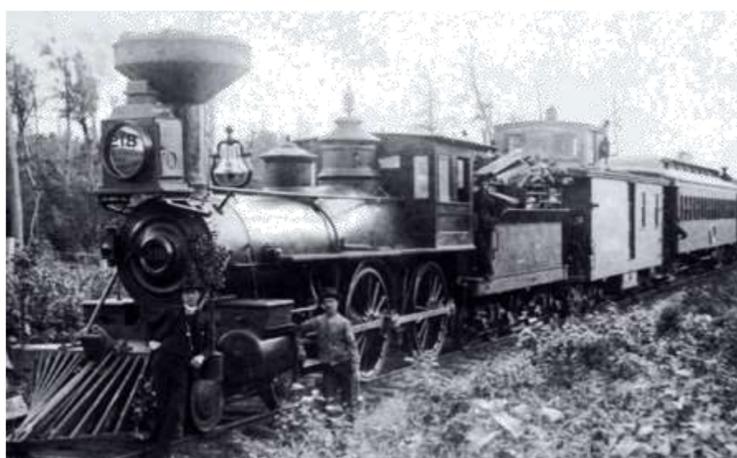
At 10:30 PM on April 8, 1884 (before the Water Works was set up), a fire started in the Wabash Railroad Administration Building. The train engines let loose their whistles and the city bell was soon clanging.

Only Moberly’s Hook and Ladder company could respond as the Moberly Fire Engine was being repaired.

With the lack of a water pumper, not much could be done. The railroad lost its main building, a large library, railroad supplies and a railcar. All the records, maps and blueprints, dating back to the founding of railroad, were lost. Irreplaceable records and five million dollars (today’s money) of assets went up in smoke.

The railroad was not about to let that happen again. It outfitted two locomotives with steam powered water pumps. Several cisterns were dug throughout the railyard. One thousand feet of hose was obtained to fight fires anywhere on railroad property.

A water tank railcar could be pulled by the engine to fight fires away from the cisterns.



LOCOMOTIVE 218 BEFORE IT WAS CONVERTED FOR FIREFIGHTING

After It was Converted, It Used in the ‘Whiskey Row’ Fire (Next Page)  
Image Courtesy of Larry VanHouten, Wabash Historian

THE END OF WHISKEY ROW

At 4:30 PM on Friday the 13th of August 1886, a fire broke out in a store house behind the American Hotel. The wind was coming out of the SW and blew the flames toward the frame buildings of Whiskey Row on Sturgeon Street.

The fire was spotted and the alarm needed to be given. Unfortunately, the City's fire bell was broken. The railyard was notified and a yard train blew its steam whistle. A phone call was made to the Water Works to increase the water pressure to the town's mains.

The fire leapt to two out-buildings, one to the north and one to the NE. This in turn brought the fire to the corner of the Palisade Hotel. The fire at the northern out-building then crossed over the alley to the west and set a residential house to flames. The recent drought made everything a tinderbox.

The City's steam pumper fire engine was not available as it was at the railroad's machine shop being repaired, but with properly operating fire hydrants, the hose wagon was all that was needed.

People did whatever they could to drag the contents of the Sturgeon Street buildings out into a pile on the street. The firefighters arrived and connected to the hydrants and got into position.

The Palisade Hotel quickly went up in flames and tongues of fire reached high in the sky over Sturgeon Street. Fisher's Restaurant that sat to the north of the Palisade Hotel went up in flames. The American Hotel to the south also went up.

Now a huge wall of flame was on Sturgeon Street. These flames were so intense that the wooden railroad depot that had been moved from "Old" Allen was in danger.

The heat from the fire started the pile of furniture and bedding in Sturgeon Street on fire, adding to the peril of the depot.

The railroad sent out the railyard fire crew and its pumper train engine with a water tanker car attached to save the Depot and the Railroad Dining Hall.

The town volunteer firemen were in a desperate fight. They could only use three lines of hose to battle the blaze because the water pressure was so low. These three lines barely produced the water needed to create the streams of water necessary; any more lines and none would have worked. (The contract with the Water Works called for the ability to throw six streams of high-force water.)

While the Water Works had been notified about the need for pressure, there were issues with their two boilers. They had been changed out the day before and

only one boiler had fire in its firebox. The other one with cold water had to be started from scratch.

The mains themselves had very little pressure to begin with due to the boilers being off-line and people watering their drought-stricken lawns.

The railroad firefighters connected two hoses to their train fire engine water tanker, with one spraying down the depot's walls and the other spraying down the dining hall. The searing heat coming from the Sturgeon Street buildings and pile of burning furniture in the street took a toll on the railroad firemen and mattresses were held up to help protect them.

If these structures went up, the buildings on the east side of the tracks would be in danger and a new fire line would be opened up.

Fortunately, the depot had been coated with a fire-proof paint that was embedded with sand. This, along with the massive water poured on it, saved the structure from going up in flames.

The four-year-old brick Florence Hotel that faced Reed Street was poised to be the next to burn. The wood-framed kitchen behind it was already on fire. The City Fireman had one hose dedicated to the spraying down of the hotel's rear wall, while the other two hoses tried to keep the progressing fire in check.

Even with the constant water, the hotel's wooden eaves and window frames began to blaze. Then the east end of the wood roof started on fire. Fear ran rampant that the wind would then carry the fire north across Reed Street to the frame buildings there.

When the railroad firemen had their structures thoroughly hosed down, they saw the flames on the Florence Hotel roof. They then turned their attention there and helped to subdue it.

The cooperation between the two fire departments extinguished the fire and limited damages to mainly the east end of the hotel. When it was over, all the firemen had burned clothing and blisters on their faces.

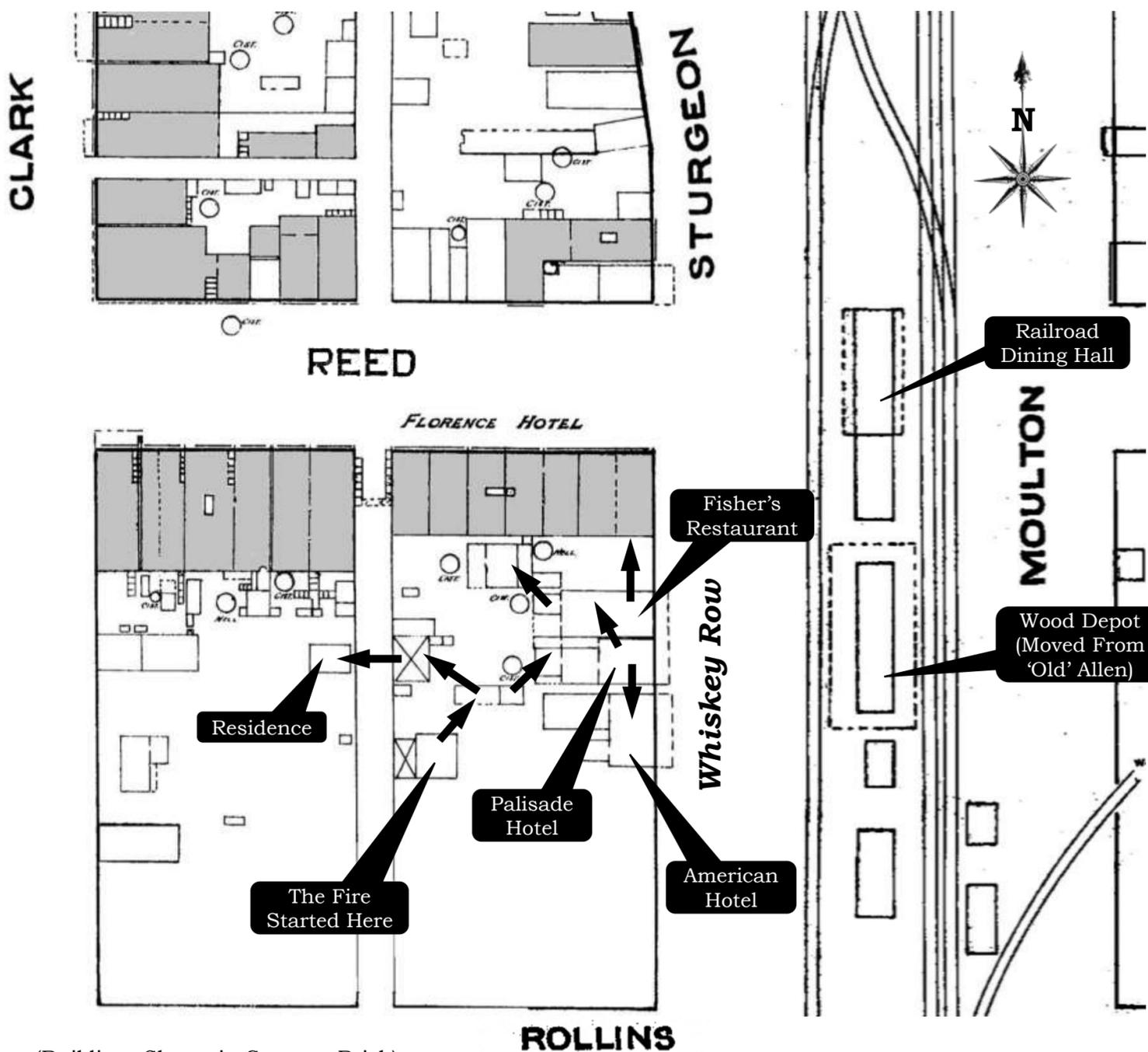
The Florence Hotel had over \$120,000 in damages in today's money.

While the businesses that burned down were seedy hotels and run-down bars, the owners lost over \$330,000.

The Town Council purchased a new fire bell by the end of the year.

The redeeming factor was that the fire did wipe out the last vestiges of a blight that was on the city:

Whiskey Row.



(Buildings Shown in Gray are Brick)

MOBERLY'S THIRD WATER WORKS

The Moberly Water Works Company was an independent business supplying water to the town. Not everything was 'peachy' between the company and the city.

Low pressure affected firefighting and the water just tasted bad.

Water supplied by the company came directly from the Water Works Lake to the customer. There was no filtration and no chemical treatment. The taste of the water varied due to the season and level of the lake.

It was common for long-lasting droughts to occur every few years. The lake level would drop and the water company would have to pump water that was close to the muck on the bottom.

The water was once described: "For the long dry seasons it is scarce, in the spring it is muddy and dirty, in the summer its taste is slimy and its odor disgusting."

The City demanded better service from the company but nothing was done. The cost of building the dam, the pump house and constructing the mains had put the company deeply in debt. There were no company funds available to improve the service.

The City Council decided to confront the company head-on about the poor water pressure that affected firefighting. The City refused to pay the rent for the fire hydrants, which they considered exorbitant. A comparison of other similar towns showed that Moberly was paying 20 - 40% more for their hydrants.

In preparation for an expected legal battle and the possible suspension of water service, the city had the neglected fire department's steam pumper repaired and the city cisterns put back in order.

The lack of income to the company

forced it into foreclosure.

In 1891, the lake, pump station and mains were sold on the Courthouse steps to a New York interest and the city's water was now supplied by the newly formed Randolph Water Works Company.

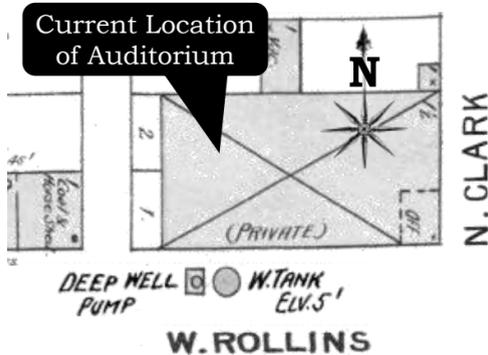
The city made an agreement with the new company that if it improved the water, it would pay the back bills.

This company drilled two deep wells close to the lake to mix with the lake water prior to pumping and raised the dam a foot and a half. These measures added to the volume of water available and also improved the taste.

This did make for better water service, but unfortunately another drought happened the next year and the deep wells could not keep up with the demand.

With the lack of water, the city stepped up to see if it could assist with the water crisis.

In 1892, the City contracted a well borer and drilled a new deep well on Rollins Street, located several feet into the street just to the south of where the SW corner of the current Auditorium is now. It had both a windmill and a steam pump.



The rains finally returned and the City well was no longer required.

Then in 1900, the drought

returned. This turn-of-the-century drought hit hard and long. The Water Works' lake was again low.

The City again got the old fire engine back up and running and refurbished their downtown deep well to fill the cisterns.

This up and down service from the Water Works could not be tolerated from the City. Efforts were made for the town to purchase the Water Works but it was not for sale.

The lack of water was seriously affecting the railroad to supply its steam engines and watering livestock in transit. Within a couple of years, the railroad's lake had dried up, it had drained the Deer Pond and was unable to get water from the Water Works.

The railroad hauled water from the Grand River and contracted with the City to get water from its downtown deep well, but it knew it was not a long-term solution.

The railroad threatened to leave Moberly if the situation wasn't remedied. The City bought the ravine to the southwest of the Deer Pond and allowed the railroad to build a dam.

The railroad would have the exclusive use of the water for 10 years. This, the then future body of water, is now known as Rothwell Lake.

Meanwhile, the City was having problems with their firefighting ability. There was only 4 feet of water left in the Water Works lake and the company really could not supply the pressure required to fight a fire. The pressure was so low that people living on a second floor had no water.

With the cycle of hotter and dryer summers back then, fires were a constant threat. A way to fight them with a shortage of water needed to be found.

MOBERLY'S NEW CITY HALL OF 1892



THE ORIGINAL FIREHOUSE (Ground Level) AND CITY HALL (Second Floor) BUILT IN 1873

By the start of 1892, the town of Moberly's population had dramatically increased and the need for a new City Hall was realized. An ordinance was passed and bonds were sold. Construction was quickly started.

It was situated on the city-owned lot directly to the south of the Firehouse. The Firehouse building was cleaned up and retrofitted to better serve as a Fire Station.

On December 16, 1892, the Mayor officially received the keys to the new City Hall. It was a two-story brick building with a full basement and had a tall cupola. The price tag was \$7,500 (\$250,000 today).

The first floor held the offices for the clerk, collector and the police chief along with the police court. In the northeast corner of this floor were the cells for law-breakers.

The second floor housed the council room and the Mayor's office.

The basement contained the furnace

and a 7 X 9 foot brick cell, known as the 'dungeon', used for drunks to 'sleep it off'. Additional area was available if more cells were needed.

The grand opening had roller skating on the council room's floor.

As the structure housed the police station, the building was always unlocked. Hobos soon found out that they could easily sneak in and slip into the 'dungeon' in winter to get a warm night's sleep.

The 'dungeon' eventually served as the dog pound, but became so filthy that the city's health commissioner condemned the place and a new dog pound was built behind the Firehouse. The brick cell was cleaned up and put back into working order.

The Council members were always complaining about the interruptions from noise of the train traffic. It was a time when dozens of trains, day and night, came through the town. (City Hall was just a half block from the Coates Street crossing and trains sounded their horns prior to crossing.)

In 1906, the cost of physically moving the building to another place was sought. The ideal location was some empty lots that the City already owned a few blocks away.

When the moving price came back at \$3,661.20 (\$125,000 today), it was decided that it was too expensive and the town could not afford to build new one.

The suggested new City Hall location was a preview of future Moberly when the Municipal Auditorium and City Offices were constructed on the empty lots in 1939.



THE NEW CITY HALL BUILT IN 1892 Located Directly South of the Firehouse

(Life-long Moberly Boomers might recall this building. If not, there is a good chance they will by the time they finish this newspaper.)



REAR VIEW OF THE CITY HALL Photo Taken During the Rebuilding of the O'Keefe Building After the Original Brick Building Burned Down in 1911

**THE NIGHT THE FIREHOUSE ALMOST BURNED DOWN**

In 1897, on the south side of the Firehouse was the City Hall. To the north was the 2-story brick building of the F.D. Crow Milling Company and to its north was the several story tall grain elevator, a wood structure.

At 8:15 PM on May 20th, a fire was discovered in the grain elevator and the alarm was given. The tall wood structure went up in flames like a pile of matchsticks.

The fire traveled to the north, engulfing a warehouse and then B. O’Connell’s house. It then jumped south to the roof of the Mill. Sparks from the flames were carried by the light wind over the town buildings.

The fire was so intense that the railroad yard fire department sprayed down the foundry to keep it from burning.

The heat from the fire kept the city fireman from getting close to the inferno. They drug a hose up to the fire department’s second floor and

poured a stream of water through a window onto the mill fire.

It quickly became evident that the mill’s brick walls were ready to fall. The firemen abandoned their position just as the south wall of the mill fell onto the Firehouse at 8:45.

Then the cupola of the City Hall caught fire.

The fireman wrestled a fire hose up into the City Hall’s belfry to extinguish it. Both firemen and citizens worked feverishly to save the City Hall. After the fire was put down at the Hall, they used that location to spray down the Firehouse roof and to fight the mill fire.

Meanwhile, sparks had blown onto the Fennell’s Blacksmith Shop and started a fire. Townspeople and firemen quickly worked to put it out.

Small fires popped up on the roofs of several wood buildings within several blocks of the fire and citizens

were busy trying to take care of them.

One block away, a school commencement was going on at the Hegarty Opera House (the current Randolph County Historical Society), but the audience was told that there was no concern and the program went on .... all the while employees were dumping buckets of water on the burning embers that landed on the roof.

Through the combined effort by the firemen and citizens, the fire was eventually put out.

The City Hall sustained \$500 in fire and water damages (about \$20,000 today). The Fire Department suffered \$750 in damages (\$30,000). The north wall of the Fire Department was damaged by the falling of the mill’s brick wall onto it, but it was described as “slightly sprung, but it is said not so badly injured as to not permit it holding up all right.”



**MOBERLY’S CHEMICAL AND HOSE WAGON**

In 1906, Moberly was still fighting the on again, off again of the water service from the Water Works. The cycle of having no water due to droughts forced the town to look at an alternate method of firefighting.

In April, the Fire Department purchased a horse-drawn chemical and hose wagon from the Anderson Coupling and Supply Company for \$950 (\$32,000 today) This new type of wagon replaced the simple old wagon used to carry the fire hose.



1906 CHEMICAL AND HOSE WAGON

The Buildings in the Back are the Rebuilt Mill, the Firehouse (with the white awning) and the City Hall

Not only did the new wagon carry hoses, it also carried ladders, hand-held fire extinguishers and other miscellaneous fire equipment on its substantial frame.

The main feature was a 30-gallon tank filled with fire extinguisher chemicals with a long hose that could be used on small fires and when water was in short supply.

In the fall, a pair of horses and a drop-harness apparatus were obtained for \$580 (\$19,500 today). One fireman was put on salary to stay at the Firehouse at all times. An apartment was built upstairs for him and his family to live. He was never to be more than a half-block from the building. (How that exactly worked is unknown.)

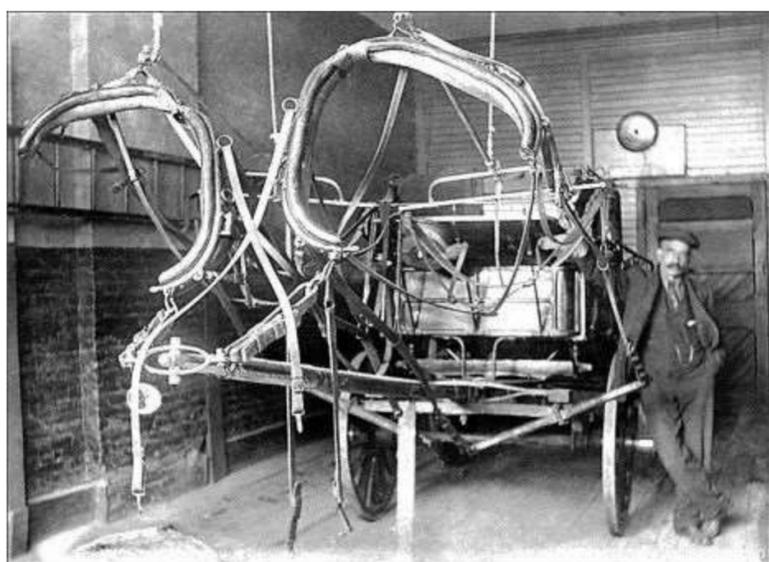
The drop-harness was a simpler way to get the horses hitched, but to be really fast, two men were required to connect them up. Another fireman was hired to live at the Firehouse and another apartment was constructed upstairs.

The fire horses needed to be intelligent and able to follow directions. As every second counted in responding to a fire, these horses had to be able to get hitched to the wagon as quickly as possible. The bits were always kept in the horse’s mouths except during feeding.

The Fire Department had a spring-wound gong that was activated at a push of a button that replaced the old fire bell. When the gong sounded, it would automatically open the horse stalls.

After much training, the horses would walk out by themselves and back-up into the proper positions.

Everything was already attached between the wagon and the special open harnesses. When the horses were in their places, the open harnesses were dropped down over the horse’s necks, closed and latched. The reins were connected and the rig was ready to go.



A DROP-HARNESS APPARATUS

Eventually, the horses could be hitched to the hose wagon in a matter of seconds.

A complete speed test was once conducted. The gong sounded, the horses were hitched, pulled the 3-ton hose wagon five blocks, a hose connected to a hydrant and the water turned on. Time: One and half minutes.

The quicker the firemen could get to a fire, the less water they would need to put it down. A smaller fire could be extinguished with chemicals. The Fire Department was now supplied with the equipment and training needed to work under those parameters as long as increased water pressure was available to fight a major fire.

In August, a fire occurred in a grocery store and the Water Works was informed to increase the pressure. A few minutes later, the extra force burst an old water main and the water pressure dropped in the fire hydrants.

The problem of the aging water pipes was now exposed. Even if there was water, it was wondered if the old pipes could still handle the increased pressure required to fight large fires.

Scarce water and low water pressure limited the ability of the Fire Department to do their job. The City Council knew something serious needed to be done.

MOBERLY'S FOURTH WATER WORKS

Moberly was suffering from bad water and unreliable water pressure from the Randolph Water Works Company. Cyclical droughts had affected the water supply and in 1906 the Water Company was looking at shutting the water off at night for conservation.

Many already did not have water unless there was a fire and the water pressure was increased. (Who thought that the benefit of a fire was that one could get a drink of water?)

The City demanded for the company to provide better water service or to sell the Water Works to it. The company refused on both accounts.

The Council took a firm hold on the problem and put the issue before the citizens of Moberly to appropriate \$100,000 (over \$3 million today) to have a city-run water works, which could be either to purchase the existing one or build a new one. The measure overwhelming passed.

The Randolph Waters Works Company was now between a rock and a hard place; if they didn't sell, Moberly would build a new facility and the company would be left with a white elephant. The company agreed to sell the Works to the town for \$85,000. This left \$15,000 (\$500,000 today) to upgrade the system.

Moberly took ownership of the Water Works in 1910 and set out to improve the service.

Electricity was the power of choice, but the town's electricity came from an independent light company. Just the few downtown street lamps were a huge expense to the City.

A new pump building was constructed in 1911 that was across the road and to the southeast of the old plant. As the power had to be reliable regardless of the weather, two generators driven by coal-fired steam engines were installed. They provided electricity for the new water pumps and also for city illumination.

Now with its own electric dynamos, Moberly put 50 new electric street lamps down Reed and on Clark and created its own 'Great White Way' (named after New York City's illumination project).

Moberly's entire downtown was now fully lit with the bright white light of electricity vs the old fashioned dull yellow glow of gas lamps.

Local Historical Note: If a downtown photograph has a three-globed street lamp in it, it was taken between 1911, when installed, and 1927, when replaced with single lamp units.



Several new deep wells were bored in the immediate area in the Park around the new plant and a settling basin was constructed to further purify the water. New water mains were constructed to reach all areas of the town along with new fire hydrants.

Water meters were installed instead of using the flat rate system.

The flat rate system was a general monthly connection fee and additional fees by item type, such as hotels per room, barbershops per chair, bathrooms per seat and if a residence had a bathtub.

People were now charged by the amount of water actually used, a usage fee, not a property fee.

(As a Sidenote: No one actually owns their house or car totally free and clear in Missouri, they are still encumbered by yearly property taxes – don't pay them and see what happens.)

While Moberly was on its way to having a fully functional and palatable water system, there were still a couple of issues that needed to be addressed.

One was if the current lake and deep wells could provide enough water during droughts.

Another was the many miles of old pipe possibility breaking and hindering firefighting.

The decision on these issues would affect the course of Moberly's progress.

WHEN THE FIREHOUSE CAUSED A FIRE

On April, 3 1914, smoke was seen coming from the tower on City Hall. The Firehouse next door was notified and sprung into action.

The hose wagon was rolled out and a hose was connected to a hydrant. The firemen snaked the hose through the various stairwells that led to the tower and the fire was subdued.

It was determined that the flying embers from the Firehouse's chimney had caused bird's nests on the tower to ignite.

During the fire, no one thought to remove the four terrified prisoners that were locked up in the Police jail.



CITY OF MOBERLY'S WATER WORKS PLANT BUILT IN 1911 Currently the Maintenance Building for the Parks and Recreation Department One of the old Deep Well Towers can be Seen to the Left of the Smokestack

MOBERLY'S FIRST MOTORIZED FIRE ENGINE

The old water pipes and lack of water were weighting heavily on everyone's minds. Many times it was suggested to obtain a new fire vehicle for additional chemical fire extinguishing capability.

In the spring of 1915, the City Council decided to look seriously for a motorized fire engine. A fire engine was purchased from the George C. Hale Company of Kansas City with a 70 HP motor, chain drive, solid rubber tires and carried 1,500 feet of fire hose. (AKA: Velie Hose Truck, Second Size.)

It contained a 40-gallon tin-lined copper fire extinguisher tank with a long hose. The tank could be connected to a hydrant when it ran dry so firefighting could be continued (although it was like using a garden hose).

The were also 2 fire axes, 2 brass torches, 2 hand-held fire extinguishers, a 20-foot ladder, a 12-foot ladder and a 10-inch locomotive bell. The hood was proudly painted in gold lettering: "MOBERLY F.D. No. 1"

To save money, the City did not order the self-starter and did not get vehicle insurance. The 2 fire horses (Mack and Buck) that had been in service for 6 years were given in trade.

The cost: \$3,768.75 (about \$120,000 today).

The Fire Chief traveled by train to Kansas City and drove back to town in the new engine with a company representative. They left early in the morning and reached Carrollton that night. They arrived in Moberly the next day, often reaching speeds of 24 MPH (roads at that time tended to be just dirt or gravel).

The day after receiving the new fire engine, the Council members and other participants, 18 in total, took a ride on the truck. It rode up the Fisk Avenue and Franklin Street hills with ease. It was opened up on Concannon where it reached 35 MPH. It barreled down the ungraded Grand Street dirt road with no problems.

That afternoon, a call came in that a grocery store was on fire. The engine hurried the 12 blocks to the building in three minutes. It was found that the call was made by a Councilman and was just another test for the new truck.

Moberly's Fire Department officially entered the 20th century. The firefighters christened this truck with the name 'Lizzie'.

On Halloween, a couple days after arrival, the new motorized fire engine responded to its first fire. It was a grass fire that also burned down two sheds behind the Pelley house on Horner Street. (The story about an infamous, yet mostly forgotten house on Horner Street will be in next year's YESTERYEAR, Annual #4, 2024.)



MOBERLY'S FIRST MOTORIZED FIRE TRUCK (1915) The Brass Plaques Across the Front of the Truck and Above the Rear Wheels Read: HANDS OFF CAR (Tire Chains were Placed on the Vehicle Anytime it Looked Like Rain to Add Traction)

### JIMMY THE FIRE DOG

Jimmy Newton, a fox terrier, was brought to Moberly from Kansas City in a boxcar by a tramp sometime around 1908. The tramp, needing money, sold the dog to Joe Parrish for \$2, with the understanding that the tramp could rebuy him. As could be expected, the tramp never returned. Parrish sold the canine to Ira Davis for a buck.

Jimmy the dog was sort of a hobo himself and didn't stay in one place very long. He got along with horses and spent most of his time going between the various livery stables around the town.

After a couple of years of wandering, Jimmy happened onto the Firehouse with their horses. The firemen took the canine in and the dog became their mascot.

At first, Jimmy just watched the proceedings at the station and learned the activities. One day, Jimmy noticed that one of the fire horses was a little slow at getting to the hitch. The dog got behind the sluggish horse and nipped at its legs to hurry it along.

Whenever the fire bell rang after that, Jimmy got into position behind the horse to 'encourage promptness'.

Jimmy rode on the hose wagon to every fire. He would occasionally climb the ladders and always stayed as long as the firefighters did, no matter the type of weather.

The mascot didn't take to other people besides the firemen. When someone would enter the Firehouse, Jimmy would walk away, barely acknowledging their presence.

There was only one non-fireman that Jimmy would approach, and not in a friendly way. It was William Misemer, the dog enumerator. The job of the dog enumerator was to count the dogs around town, issue dog tags and impound unlicensed ones.

Whenever Misemer came into the Firehouse, Jimmy would get up and bark incessantly at the man. Jimmy had once been an inmate at the 'dog jail'.

The mascot also disliked other dogs and was known to take on dogs twice his size. It was said that Jimmy didn't always claim the opening round but always finished the fight in good shape.

One of the best traits of the dog was his rat killing ability. With the Firehouse having a flour mill next door and a livery stable (with horse feed) across the street, rats were always a problem with the firemen.

Rats that lived in the station would run in and out of the building after dark to feed. The fire horses would be up and down all night because of the rats which made it hard for the firemen who slept there to actually get any sleep.

MOBERLY WEEKLY MONITOR  
November 11, 1915

**NEW CONCRETE FLOOR**  
A force of men started work today, laying a concrete floor in the fire station. The new floor was ordered laid by the council at the last meeting of that body, and was deemed necessary since the motor fire truck reached the city. It will be a great improvement. "Jimmie" the little canine mascot of the fire ladders, had a great time killing rats when the old wooden floor was taken up.

When the first motorized fire engine appeared, Jimmy learned to ride on it.

One day, when the fire engine was rounding a corner while responding to a fire call, Jimmy fell off and was run over by the ladder wagon following it. A hip was broken and he was nursed back to health but he didn't quite have the 'giddy up' as before.

Jimmy never again rode a fire truck, but would anxiously await the firemen's return.

As Jimmy aged, he became blind in one eye and lost most of his teeth.

In January of 1923, the elderly dog took on one of the largest rats seen at City Hall in years. It took several minutes for the gamed-legged terrier with missing teeth to overcome the varmint, but afterwards proudly dragged the dead rat to the Firehouse next door to show the firemen.

Then, on April 19th, Jimmie's health took a turn for the worse. His ulcerated teeth got the best of him and he was listless all day, lying in his bed suffering with pain. The firefighters refused to have the beloved mascot put down, in hopes that he would improve.

A few days later, the swelling in the dog's mouth had gone down and he was able to eat. Jimmy even took a short walk. High hopes permeated throughout the town that the local-famous canine would recover.

This did not last long as Jimmy had a relapse a few weeks later. It was determined that he wouldn't improve. At 10:38 AM on June 4, 1923, Jimmy Newton, the fire department's cherished mascot for over a dozen years was euthanized. He was given a funeral which included the traditional show of flowers.

In a tribute to Jimmy, Fire Chief John Crews stated that he didn't think the dog ever did anything that

was wrong, unless killing 1,000 rats was wrong.

When asked if there would be another mascot, Crews answered that he didn't think so. Losing Jimmy was like losing a member of the fire department.



JIMMY AND FIRE CHIEF CREWS  
(Jimmy is on the left)

In 1923, the Massachusetts Society For The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ran an article in their monthly periodical about Jimmy and his contributions to the Moberly Fire Department.

**DOG MASCOTS**  
The real reason Fire Departments have a dog mascot is to help them find the fire hydrants.

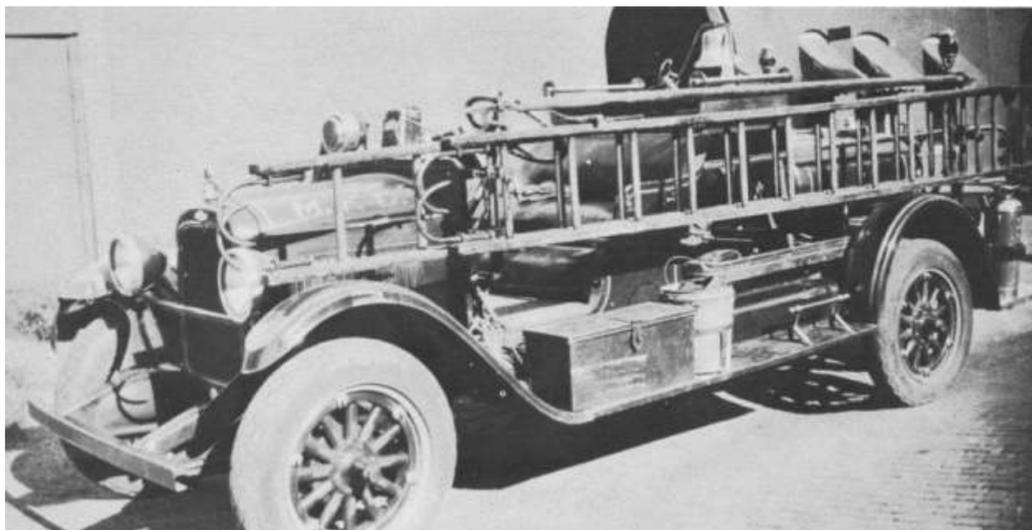
### MOBERLY'S SECOND MOTORIZED FIRE ENGINE

The Missouri Inspection Bureau would review the firefighting capability of cities and give them a Fire Class Rating. This rating would be used to establish local fire insurance rates.

In January of 1918, the Bureau stated that Moberly needed better protection during times of water scarcity.

A couple of months later, the town ordered a new Fire Engine that arrived at the end of summer. It was a Chevrolet 'Baby' Overland chemical truck.

It contained two 35-gallon chemical tanks and carried hooks and ladders. The firefighters christened this engine with the name 'Barney'.



MOBERLY'S SECOND MOTORIZED FIRE TRUCK (1918)  
The Building in the Back is the Old JT Cross Lumber Company that was Across the Street from the Fire Department

**A FIRE CALL**  
A frenzied woman called up the Fire Department. Over and over she kept saying, "There's a fire! There's a fire!"  
The dispatcher asked her the location, but the woman would only say, "There's a fire! There's a fire!"  
Finally, in a slow authoritative tone, the dispatcher asked the woman, "How do we get there?"  
To which she responded, "Use the big red truck."

# 2003 WAYBACK PAGE

Items Gathered from Moberly Newspapers 20 Years Ago (Prices or Coupons No Longer Valid)

**Patricia's BUY 4 LE\$\$**

**IGA**

519 Highway 24 East • Moberly • 660-263-XXXX  
 Store Hours: 6:00 A.M. - 10:00 P.M. Monday - Saturday • 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. Sunday  
 PRICES EFFECTIVE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2003 THRU TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2003

Lean & Meaty Family Pack <b>PORK STEAK</b> LB. <b>98¢</b>	 Family Pack <b>PORK SPARE RIBS</b> <b>\$1.69</b> LB. Family Pack Butterfly Boneless <b>PORK CHOP</b> <b>\$2.29</b> LB.	<b>RED DELICIOUS APPLES</b> LB. <b>38¢</b>	<b>CRISP BROCCOLI</b> Bunch <b>98¢</b>
 12 Oz. <b>SEITZ LUNCH MEAT</b> <b>99¢</b>	<b>HEAD LETTUCE</b> EA. <b>48¢</b>	Superior 28 Oz. <b>SALTED PEANUTS</b> <b>\$1.48</b> SAVE \$2.51	Barrel O Fun 12 Oz. <b>CHEESY CURLS</b> <b>\$1.19</b> SAVE \$1.30
Reg. & Light 24 Pack <b>BUSCH BEER</b> <b>\$13.99</b> SAVE \$1.00	Best Yet 24 Oz. <b>CHOCOLATE SYRUP</b> <b>99¢</b> SAVE 76¢	Case of 24 <b>SHASTA SODA</b> <b>\$2.99</b> Single Cans SAVE 6/\$1.00 \$3.73	IGA 12 Pack 1/2 Liter <b>SPRING WATER</b> <b>\$2.99</b> SAVE \$1.00
Gold Medal 5 Lb. Bag <b>FLOUR</b> <b>\$1.19</b> SAVE 60¢	IGA 8 Oz. <b>COLBY CHEESE</b> <b>2/\$3.00</b> SAVE 49¢	Corn, Peas, Mixed Vegetables, California Blend FreshLike, 24-28 Oz. <b>VEGETABLES</b> <b>\$1.88</b> SAVE 81¢	Chicken of the Sea 14.75 Oz. <b>PINK SALMON</b> <b>\$1.69</b> SAVE 64¢
24 Pack <b>COKE PRODUCTS</b> SAVE 80¢ <b>\$5.19</b>	Best Yet 48 Oz. <b>APPLE JUICE</b> <b>68¢</b> Case of 8 <b>\$4.99</b> SAVE \$1.31	Musselman 9 48 Oz. <b>APPLE SAUCE</b> <b>\$1.88</b> SAVE \$1.09	<b>ALL GREETING CARDS</b> <b>99¢</b> While Supplies Last



Pizza Hut is open at their new location next to Wal-Mart Supercenter on Hwy. 24 East in Moberly. The new building seats 120 customers and offers a convenient drive-thru window. You are invited to call in your order before leaving work, use the convenient drive-thru and pick up pizza for supper without leaving your vehicle. Pizza Hut hired and trained a number of new employees before the move with plans to hire more. Be sure to check out their lunch buffet and the play area for the children complete with television and toys.

[The Original Pizza Hut's Grand Opening was 50 Years Ago in 1973]

**PROM TUXEDOS**

Starting At \$49.00  
Over 100 Fancy Vests

**Duval & Reid Menswear**

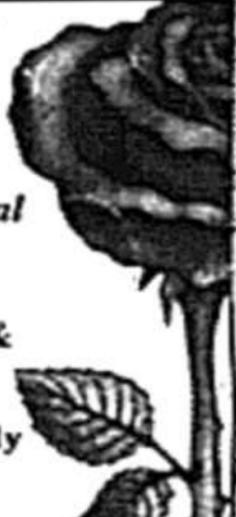
"The Style Store Since 1928"  
318 W. Reed • Downtown Moberly  
660-263-XXXX

**Tedford Florists**

Friday Flower Special  
**ROSES**

**\$4.98** Cash & Carry  
Doz.

413 West Reed • Moberly  
Call the FlowerPhone  
660-263-XXXX



## Postal service: better late than never at all

Amy Compney  
Index Reporter

MOBERLY — Carpenter Street Baptist Church got a surprise in the mail Tuesday. As Marie Taylor, secretary of the church sifted through the usual bills and junk mail, a post card caught her eye.

The card was addressed to Rev. Jack Stanton, who ministered at the church from 1947 to 1951. As if that wasn't enough, Taylor noted the date on the piece of mail - Oct. 30, 1949. The post card was even marked as canceled at 9:30 p.m. in Burbank, California and sported a one cent postage stamp.

The mail was sent to Stanton from the Rev. Del Schensfeld of St. Louis, Mo., an evangelist. It was an invitation to attend a revival in Burbank, Calif. on Oct. 16 through Oct. 30. Topics of the revival included Are we to meet God?; Will the atomic bomb end all? and the Battle of Armageddon.

The card bore no street address or zip code; it was just addressed to Rev. Jack Stanton in Moberly, Mo.

"It's in really good shape," Taylor said. "I was surprised."

Taylor said she wished the card had arrived a bit earlier as Rev. Stanton just passed away this last year. She said the church is in the process of tracking down the pastor who sent the card, to let him know it finally arrived and to inform him of Stanton's passing.

Taylor said she thinks Schensfeld may have been a former stu-

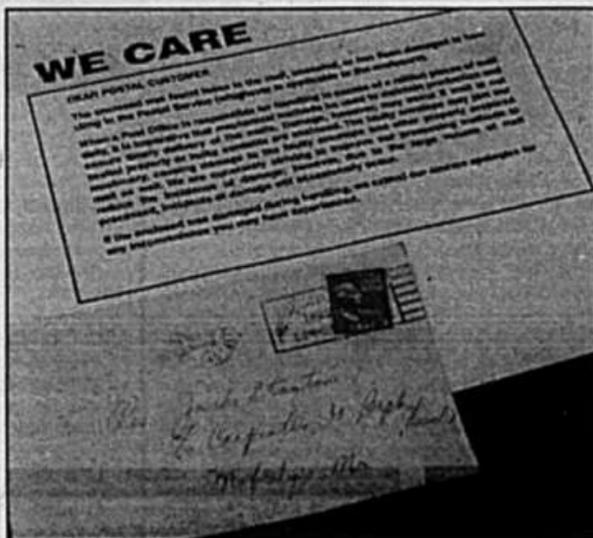
dent of Stanton's, or someone he may have baptized.

"I went on-line to see if I could find the church - Valley Baptist Church in Burbank, Calif. across from Lincoln School - but haven't had any luck yet," Taylor said.

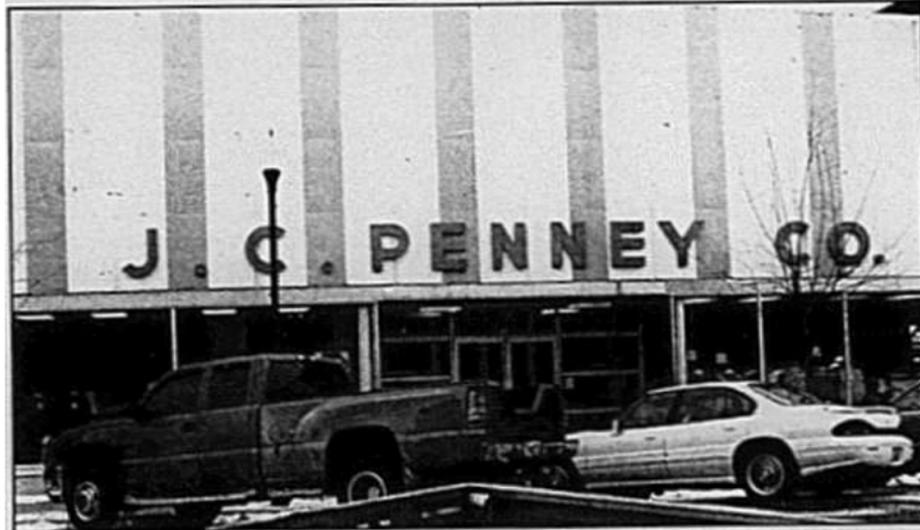
Taylor said she will continue to unravel the mystery of the 54 year

old mail.

Taylor said a comical twist to the late letter came when reading the envelope the United Postal Service sent it in stating that due to mechanical methods of delivery being implemented, customers were ensured timely delivery of the mail.



A 54 year old post card that just arrived in the mail Tuesday at Carpenter Street Baptist Church in Moberly is shown above along with the envelope from the United Postal Service it was delivered in. The Postal Service's envelope reads that due to mechanical methods, timely delivery of the mail is ensured.



Moberly's J.C. Penney store, the first Penneys store opened in the state of Missouri, is closing its doors April 26 after 85 years in business. A company spokesperson said the decision was made after analysis of declining profits and sales at the store.

## Missouri gasoline prices among lowest in nation

The average price of a gallon of regular unleaded is selling for \$1.51 in Missouri, second to Oklahoma's \$1.50 and well below the national average of \$1.67. Some states are still paying more than \$2 per gallon, including California, where the average price is \$2.17, according to AAA's nationwide survey.

## THREAT CONDITIONS

There are five threat conditions, each identified by a description and corresponding color. From lowest to highest, the levels and colors are:

- Low = green
- Guarded = blue
- Elevated = yellow
- High = orange
- Severe = red



Osama bin Laden

The higher the threat condition, the greater the risk of a terrorist attack. Threat conditions refer both to the probability of an attack occurring and its potential gravity. Alerts may be assigned for the entire nation or for a particular geographic area or industrial sector.

**U.S. BOMBS IRAQ**

Military moves against Iraq begin

MOBERLY'S THIRD RESERVOIR

Soon after Moberly purchased the Water Works, there was talk about needing an even larger water supply for the town. The water from the deep-wells was not conducive to manufacturing and other commercial ventures as it was very hard, full of minerals. The water pressure was still a concern as the Water Works Lake level was susceptible to the frequent droughts.

By 1920, the Fire Rating Class of Moberly had slipped from 4 to 4-1/2. (The lower the number, the better the fire insurance rates for businesses and homes.) The town needed to find a way to regain its Class 4 rating.

It was advised that the City build a new reservoir with a capacity of 500 million gallons, three times the size of the current lake. Several locations were identified and a ravine that was a few miles to the northwest of Moberly appeared to be promising.

A hydraulic engineer gave a report on the proposed site and submitted plans for the new water supply. This suggested lake was said to be able to provide water to Moberly for the next 25 years.

In 1920, the City appropriated \$375,000 (\$6.5 million today) to construct the new reservoir and pumphouse. A chemical and filtration plant on the northwest corner of the city limits was also part of the plan. Moberly was projected to have one of the finest supplies of soft water of any Missouri city.

A 27-foot-high dam was built that created the 165-acre Sugar Creek Lake, holding 330 million gallons of water. The dam could be raised an additional 12 feet in the future to increase the lake to 300 acres.



1922 Sugar Creek Dam and Spillway (The Lake was 100 Years Old Last Year)

With this new water system, Moberly hoped to regain a Fire Insurance Class 4 rating and reduce its rates.

A new electric power plant was initially proposed to supply the power to the pumps and also the Great White way. To cut construction costs, the power plant was eliminated and a contract was made with the independent local power company for electricity. The 1911 pumphouse at Rothwell Park was closed down, but one old dynamo and coal-fired steam engine were kept as a backup to produce electricity if required.

To further reduce expenditures, the City Council replaced some large water main pipes in town with a smaller size and incorporated 700 feet of the retrieved larger pipes into the supply line from the new lake.

The City also purchased wood pipe for the rest of the main supply line instead of cast iron to save \$12,000 (\$200,000 today).

In early summer of 1922, a review of the completed Sugar Creek project was done and several defects were found. A few of which were:

The wood supply pipes did not perform as was expected. There were initially almost 600 leaks, which were repaired, but within ten days, 54 new leaks developed. The water department was repairing leaks almost daily and relegated do so until the wood pipe could be replaced with cast iron.

There was one pump at the lake that pushed the water to the filtration plant. Another pump was at the plant that pumped the water into the town's mains.

Each of the two individual water pumps performed to spec, but when the mismatched pumps ran in concert, they fought each other and lost 30% in total volume. And to make matters worse, one pump was controlled at the filtration plant, but the other one was controlled at the lake, four miles away. Any time the pressure needed to be increased for fire fighting, someone had to travel to the lake to control that pump.

The railroad also had a water contract that siphoned off about half of the pumped water from the new lake for their use. (The railroad water issue was a convoluted problem that plagued the City of Moberly for decades until the railroad switched from steam engines to diesel.)

While the water quality for the citizens was first-rate, the pressure required for firefighting was now less than what was available from the steamed-powered pumps of the old Randolph Water Works when the lake was full. There was now plenty of water, but the standard pressure dropped from 65 PSI to 50 PSI and for fighting fires, it was only 90 PSI, down from the old 120 PSI.

Moberly did not receive the Class 4 rating it wanted.

The Missouri Inspection Bureau made several suggestions to offset the water issues to aid firefighting which included increasing the size of water mains at several locations within the city and to add more fire hydrants, more firemen and more pumps.

Finger pointing was now in earnest between the construction company, the suppliers, the engineers and the Council. The 100+ page city ordinance detailed the exact specifications on the individual materials and the method and construction of the water system (from how to mix the concrete for the dam, down to on how to hand twist a retaining wire), but never did it state what was required from the completed system. Nowhere in the contract was the need to be Class 4 compliant even mentioned. The wood pipes were only required to be tested to 50 PSI.

After spending over \$6.5 million, the town was really not in much better shape in regard to firefighting than the old horse and wagon days.

The City now had to take a hard look at what was needed to be done to be certified as Class 4 and to safeguard Moberly from the ravages of fire.

MOBERLY'S THIRD MOTORIZED FIRE ENGINE (THE FIRST MOTORIZED PUMPER)

Moberly was in a firefighting ability crisis. The wood water supply pipes and the old city mains could burst at any time. Low water pressure to fight fires hindered putting them out.

For each 100' feet of fire hose, the water pressure would be further reduced by 9 PSI. Depending on the distance from the hydrant to the fire and how many hoses were connected, the 90 PSI firefighting water force quickly faded. A pumper engine was needed.

Macon brought its pumper down for the city to review. At normal water main pressure, 50 PSI, the engine would increase that to 120 PSI and produce a stream that was six stories high.

To illustrate the proficiency, the water main pressure was increased to 'fire mode' and the hose was directly attached to the hydrant but the stream could only reach half the height of what was achieved by the pumper. When two hoses were used, it appeared as if someone was just watering their lawn.

In April of 1924, Moberly purchased a Metropolitan Reo Triple Fire Engine. (Triple for pumper, chemical tank and hose hauler.) It cost \$5,250 (\$92,000 today). It was the town's first white Fire Engine.

The City was now one more step closer to a better fire rating and better firefighting.



MOBERLY'S FIRST MOTORIZED PUMPER FIRE ENGINE (1924) Note that the first 3 engines were open-cabs without windshields. (Imagine that in freezing rain conditions.)

1976 WAYBACK ITEMS

Items Gathered from Moberly Newspapers 47 Years Ago (Prices or Coupons No Longer Valid)

Advertisement for Nostalgia Days! Each Monday & Tuesday All Day Long Dinner Box. Includes 3 pieces of chicken, whipped potatoes and gravy, stew and a roll. Price \$1.55. Also features Kentucky Fried Chicken advertisement with hours: Sunday Thru Thursday 10 A.M. To 1 P.M., Friday & Saturday 10 A.M. To 10 P.M.

Advertisement for Briggs & Dailey's featuring various food items: Grade A IGA Large Eggs (Dozen 79¢), Fresh Ground Beef (Family Pack 69¢/lb.), Little Dixie Old Fashion Sausage (\$1.09/lb.), Sliced Bacon (\$1.29/lb.), Hamburger, Sausage, Pepperoni or Cheese 13 oz. Jeno's Pizza (79¢), and Ice Cream (Half Gallon 79¢).

REMODELED FIRE STATION #1

The Council had moved out of the City Hall by 1921 and into offices downtown. The police were still stationed on the first floor of the building but the second floor was vacant.

In 1929, both the City Hall and Firehouse buildings were determined to be in bad condition. As it was the start of the Great Depression and future finances were unknown, nothing was done.

A couple of years later, the Moose Lodge rented the second floor of the old City Hall and held athletic exhibitions (wrestling and boxing) in the old council room. In October of 1932, the City Engineer declared that both structures were unsafe and should be vacated ASAP.

A proposal was put forth in 1933 to remodel and strengthen the old City Hall to house both the fire and police departments. Ludwig Abt, local renowned architect, drew up the design for the renovation. Construction was soon started.

The main flooring of the building was lowered to be level with the street. The fire department's trucks were on the south 2/3 of the main floor with the sleeping rooms in the upstairs south 1/3. There were two slide poles from the second to first floor.

The police facilities were on the north 2/3 of the second floor with the entrance to the stairs on the north 1/3 main floor.

In the late summer of 1934, the remodeled building was ready for use at a cost of \$13,433.91 (about \$320,000 today).

The old firehouse's second floor was removed in 1939 and the reduced building became the Street Department.



BEFORE



AFTER

Left Building: South Side of the Firehouse
Right Building: City Hall Built in 1892

Left Building: Old Firehouse Revamped for Street Department Use
Right Building: City Hall to Fire and Police Department Renovation in 1934
(Do the Local Boomers remember this building now?)

HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY

Why is it good to see a member of the Hook and Ladder Company walk into a bar?

Just in case the drinks are on the house.

BAR FIRE

A fireman pulled a drunk out of a burning bar and asked him how the fire started.

He answered, "How should I know? It was already on fire when I walked in."



An Old-Time Moberly Fire Department Badge

(Date Unknown)

WATER, WATER NOWHERE AND NOT A DROP TO DRINK

When one thinks about the Dustbowl of the 1930's, images of Kansas with rolling waves of dust and locusts swarms might come to mind. The drought was actually a widespread U.S. occurrence that deeply affected Missouri and Moberly was not immune.

By February of 1931, Sugar Creek Lake had less than eight feet of water and the old Water Works Lake in Rothwell Park just had a few feet of water in it.

The City overhauled two of the deep wells in the Park and put them to use. The spillway at Sugar Creek was raised eighteen inches. (The dam itself was not enlarged, and when full, the added water put additional stress on the existing structure.)

The City cut off the railroad's water supply from Sugar Creek and told them that they had to pump from Rothwell lake.

The town limped through the next couple of years with occasional rain and Sugar Creek level slowly refilled to within two feet of the spillway.

Another prolonged dry period hit the area in 1934. Both Sugar Creek and the old Water Works Lakes again just had a few feet of water in them.

The Park deep wells were out-fitted with new pumps to increase the water volume. The railroad was denied any water use, so they hauled water from the Grand River.

Water was restricted to drinking, cooking and sanitation purposes only.

The fire department attached a hose to a hydrant in front of the station and for a half an hour a day, it was available for children, age 12 and under (in bathing suits), to use it as a shower.

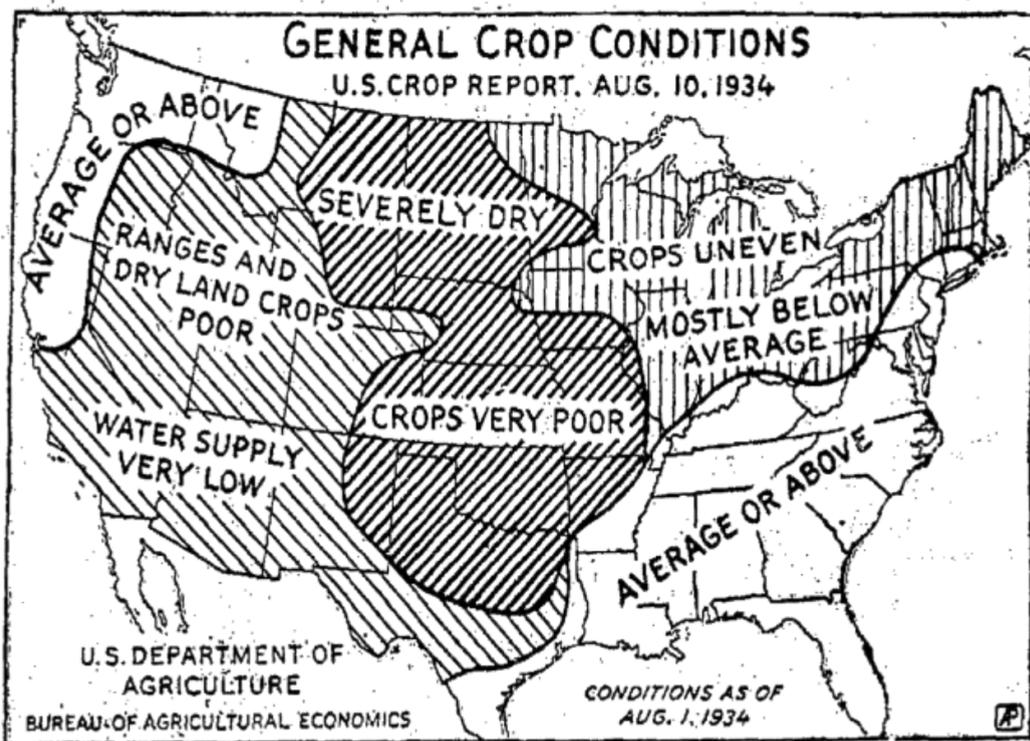
With the low water, fish and water plants were dying in the lakes. The Filtration Plant increased the use of chemicals to kill the added bacteria from those elements.

By June, it was estimated that if no rain fell, the City would be out of

water in two months. Fortunately late summer rains came and added six and a half feet to the lake level by September.

Moberly barely navigated through the Dust Bowl Drought and with droughts tending to coincide with low sunspot activity every 11 years or so, or some other natural events such as the 1980 eruption of Mt St Helens, a major rehaul of the water system was badly needed.

THE NATION'S DROUGHT SITUATION AT A GLANCE



History in Plain Sight: MOBERLY FIRE BELLS

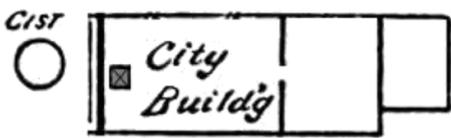
MOBERLY'S FIRST FIRE BELL

On December 19, 1874, the Moberly City Council offered and adopted the following resolutions:

"Resolved that thanks of the City Council and the entire city are due to the worthy chief and members of Moberly Fire Co. No 1 for their generous efforts in purchasing and presenting to the city a Fire Bell, and that the City Council will use every means possible to record their efforts to prevent the City from the dire calamities of Fire."

"Resolved that C.B. Rodes, General Insurance agent in his donation to the fire company of one hundred dollars to aid in purchasing of said Bell, has entitled himself to the gratitude of the City Council and the people of Moberly. (\$100 was about \$2,500 today.)

A cupola was constructed on the roof of the Firehouse and the Fire Bell was soon hung there.



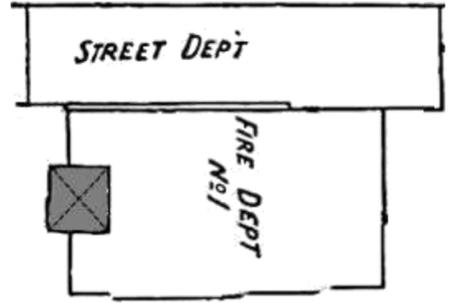
The bell sounded out anytime a fire was spotted. Any citizen could run to the Firehouse and ring out the alarm. Over the next few years, the clanging of the bell left its 'toll' and the bell had to be repaired on numerous occasions.

After over a dozen years of service, it was determined that a new bell was needed.

MOBERLY'S SECOND FIRE BELL

In 1886, the city purchased a bell for \$214.03 (\$6,500 today) from the L.M. Rumsey Company. (It is not known what happen to the original bell. As it was broken, it was probably taken to the railroad foundry shop and melted down.)

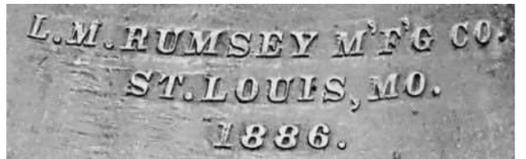
Instead of hanging the new bell in the cupola, a bell tower was built to the south side of the Firehouse and the bell was hung there.



The bell hung there until around 1974, when the Firehouse and Street Department building were torn down to make room for the new Fire Station #1.

In March of 1976, the new Fire Department #1 was completed and the fire bell was placed on display in front of the building, almost in the same spot, but 20 feet lower, where the first bell was hung.

A suggested new tradition for the Fire Department would be to ring the old fire bell on each Sept 29th to commemorate the extinguishing of the first fire by the Moberly Fire Department in 1873.



The 137 Year Old Fire Bell on Display in Front of Fire Department #1

THEY ACTUALLY USED TO DO THAT

MOBERLY MONITOR-INDEX April 19, 1937

How to get aerial-minded cats out of trees has been a problem to city fire department members in other communities - but not here.

Saturday morning Sam Sparkman reported at the fire station that a cat had been perched in a large maple tree in Tannehill Park for several days. Two firemen, Joe Parrish and Chester Iverson, set forth on the errand of mercy to free it.

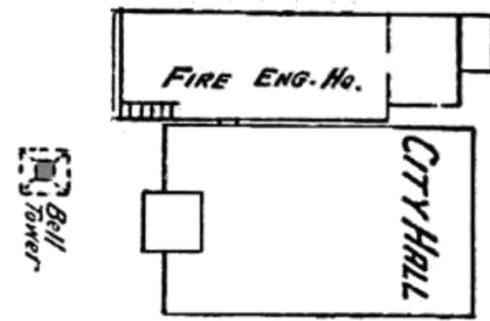
While business district on-lookers wondered where the fire truck was bound, it sped to the park. A ladder was raised against the tree and Iverson went aloft.

The task of grounding the cat was over in a twinkling. As Iverson drew near, the cat gave him one look, delivered itself of a lusty "Miaaouw!" and jumped out.

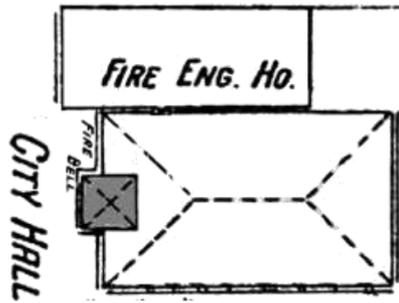
It hit the ground running and hasn't been seen in the park since!

I once asked my father (a fireman) if he ever had to get a cat out of a tree and he just looked at me and said that they got up there by themselves and they can get down by themselves.

In 1892, a new City Hall was constructed to the south of the Fire house and the fire bell tower was moved out to the street.

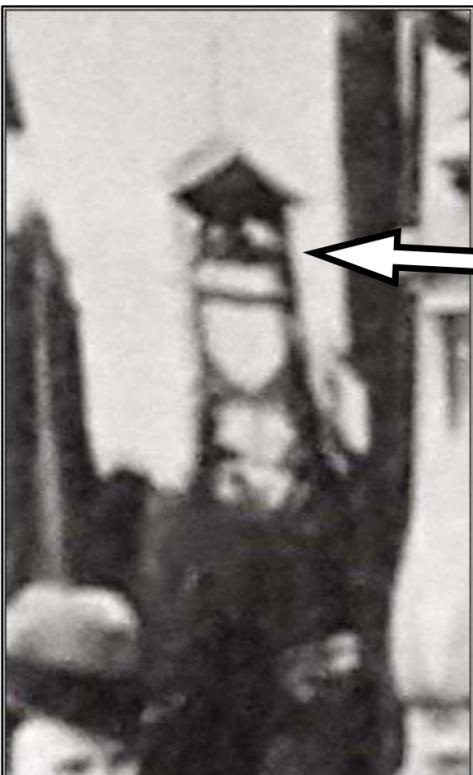


In 1895, the bell was removed from the tower and placed into the cupola of the new City Hall.



In 1934. The old City Hall building was renovated to house the fire department and the bell was hung in the reduced cupola.

Reflecting On the Past: THE OLD FIRE BELL TOWER



GEORGE BESTEN'S BARBERSHOP LOCATED IN THE MERCHANTS HOTEL - 1895 (The Merchants Hotel was where the old downtown Commerce Bank is now.)

In the reflection of the left window, the old fire bell tower can be seen. According to the date in the right window, this photo was taken on August 23rd. The bell was moved into the City Hall belfry and the tower torn down just one month later.

**CHIEF, WE HAVE A PROBLEM**

In the early evening of March 11, 1934, the Fire Department received a telephone call informing them that there was a fire at the Wabash Depot. The phone receiver was barely back on the hook when the fire truck set out.

A few moments later, the fire truck was outside the Depot. They searched the building, but there were no flames or smoke to be found. The firefighters went across the street to the Oliver Taxi Company office (located in the east end of the Florence Hotel) to use the phone to call the station to verify the fire's location (this was before 2-way radio). They were told that they were at the correct place.

As they had found no fire, they went outside to go back to the Firehouse, but there was one problem: The fire truck was missing.

The firemen spread out and began looking for the vehicle. A minute later, the truck was seen rounding a corner and pulled up in front of the depot. A stranger jumped out of the cab and walked toward the train passenger platform. The firefighters quickly surrounded the man to get answers.

The day before, Moberly had been host to a state-wide American Legion get-together. 1,500 Legionnaires had shown up for speeches, promoted the organization and members reconnected with brethren to swap war stories.

As one of the visiting Legionnaire's had turned in the false alarm and then "stole" the fire truck was a war veteran and no real harm was done, he was allowed to board his train and head home.

After all, it was just a joke played on them by a fellow firefighter, a Captain with the St. Louis Fire Department.

(The firemen were not amused.)

**THE FIRST FIRE STATION #2**

By 1941, the immediate need for an east-side Fire Department was recognized as there were times the trucks from Station #1 could not get across the tracks.

Trains sometimes blocked the crossings all around the town. A train could stretch from Coates to Urbandale. Another train could be blocking Ault, Roberts and Morley (before the underpass was built).

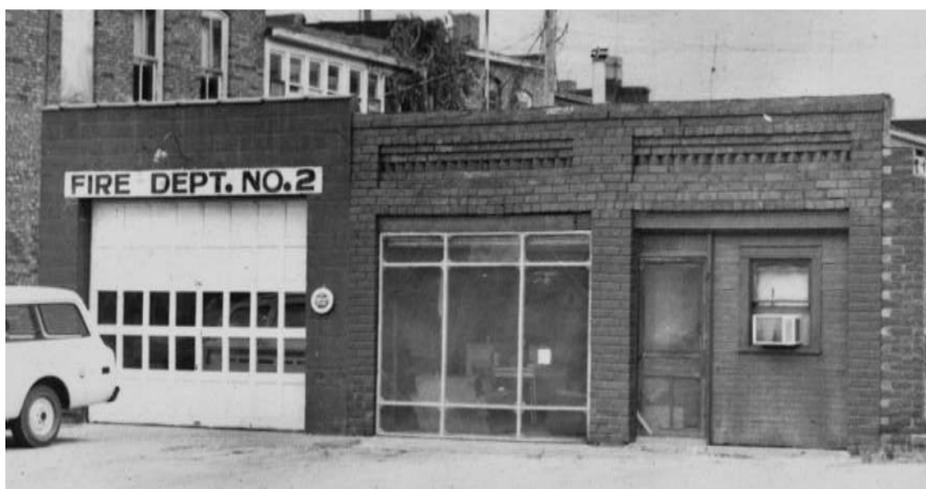
The only other way to the northeast-side was to travel all the way over to Emerson, which may also be blocked by a train as there was no underpass there at that time either. (The Emerson Street underpass was not opened until 1949).

The Rollins Street underpass sometimes flooded and occasionally was closed for repairs.

It was not unknown for train cars to be uncoupled to allow fire trucks to cross the tracks, but this took time. These circumstances impacted the City's fire insurance rating.

A brick building on Ault Street was obtained in December. After some remodeling and repairs, the station was ready to use. Two additional firemen were hired and a fire truck was relocated to the new building in 1942. The stations were just two blocks way from each other, but on different sides of the railroad tracks.

In 1964, new Firehouses and locations were proposed. A new Station #1 was to be located at the corner of Clark and Carpenter and a new Station #2 was to be at the corner of Morley and Fulton. The submitted bond issue was not passed by the voters, so the stations remained in place.



**THE DAY I HELPED THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

It was a summer day sometime around 1965 or so. I was maybe in 3rd grade and lived a half-block from East Park School.

My father was a fireman stationed at Firehouse #2, located on Ault Street.

The telephone rang and I answered it. (This was a time when the whole family had just one land-line phone and you would actually have to rotate the dial with a finger for every digit.)

It was my father and he told me to come up to the station. I walked the 3 blocks to the Firehouse.

When I got there, I saw my father, another fireman and an elderly lady

standing in front of her home next door.

The woman had locked herself out and was seeking help in getting in.

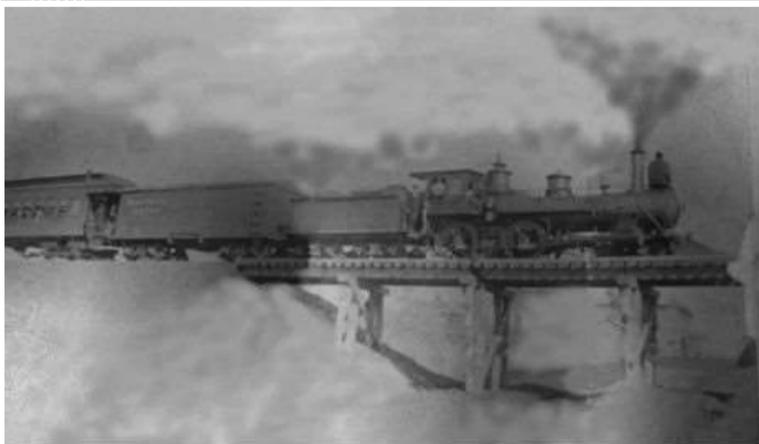
The firemen had found no easy access except for one window that they had gotten raised a few inches.

My father told me to crawl through the window and unlock the front door. I squeezed (actually was pushed) through the opening, unlatched the front door and then went home.

Recently, I found out that the elderly woman was the grandmother of the "Voice of Moberly's History", J.W. Ballinger.



JW Ballinger as a Toddler (circa 1948) with Two Firefighters in Front of Fire Station #2



**EARLY ROLLINS STREET UNDERPASS WOULD HAVE BEEN SIMILAR TO THIS ONE**

Image Courtesy of Larry VanHouten, Wabash Historian



**MORLEY STREET RR CROSSING PRIOR TO UNDERPASS CONSTRUCTION**

Image Courtesy of Larry VanHouten, Wabash Historian



**2-LANE ROLLINS STREET UNDERPASS BUILT IN 1921 Replaced with Current 4-Lane Underpass in 1974**



**1954 2-LANE MORLEY STREET UNDERPASS GRAND OPENING OF MORLEY STREET UNDERPASS**

### SUGAR CREEK REBOOT

In 1942, World War II was in progress. The military looked at the possibility of building an Air Training Camp at the Moberly airport and also a defense production plant in town. These would bring hundreds of soldiers, workers and their families to the town – a certain boost for the local economy.

The plan was ultimately rejected by the government as it was determined that the city’s water supply was insufficient. Moberly now had to rethink their Water Works if the town was to flourish, but it would have to wait until the end of the war.

In 1947, an engineering firm was hired to report on the condition of Sugar Creek reservoir and possible enlargement. The lake was shown to contain 1 billion gallons of water when full and should adequately provide for a population of 20,000 unless major industries came to the area.

It was also determined that during an extended long drought, the lake would be depleted in 2 years. If some water-intensive industries were in production, the water would only last one year.

It was highly suggested that the dam and spillway be raised to increase the lake level by 10 feet.

The report was read and placed on a shelf.

In the early 1950’s, several severe heat waves and droughts visited the area. Water use was on the rise. It was not unknown for the town to use one and a half million gallons of water a day, close to the filter plant’s capacity. Water was being drawn from both the Sugar Creek Lake and the old Water Works Lake at Rothwell Park.

By January of 1954, Sugar Creek Lake was six feet below the spillway, down over 40% in volume. An inspection of the dam found some cracks and divers were employed to ram sacks of expanding clay into the voids.

By March, the water level had decreased another half a foot. Summer brought scorching heat. Several consecutive days were over 100 degrees, with one reaching 114 (this was before there was any home air-conditioning). At times, the water supply pumps were unable to meet the demand.

After over two years of low water conditions, the lake finally reached full capacity in 1955. There were concerns with the pressure exerted on the spillway.

In 1956, a major leak was discovered in the spillway of Sugar Creek Lake. One wingwall of the spillway had a large triangular break that was eight inches at the bottom and one-inch at the top. The massive structure was slowly tilting and sliding downhill.

The dam was on the verge of being ripped apart. Immediate action was needed to be taken.

The old 1947 report was dusted off and used as a template for a new assessment.

A bond proposal for \$1,449,000 (around \$16.5 million today) was submitted to the voters in September of 1956 for enlarging and updating the water system. The fiasco of the 1922 was still in the back of the minds of the citizens that had spent \$6.5 million for the original Sugar Creek dam construction but still had to pay higher fire insurance rates. The proposal barely passed.

In February of 1957, an ordinance for water improvements was written and work was started.

The dam was raised 13 feet, engulfing the old spillway and pumphouse locations. A new spillway was built on the west end of the dam that was 10 feet higher than the old one.

Sugar Creek Lake now had twice the amount of water, two billion gallons of water. The watershed was so large that it was estimated that only seven inches of rain per year was required to replace any water used.

A new pumphouse was constructed a short distance downstream with new electric control equipment and four pumps. A new chemical treatment and filtration plant with enhanced pumping capacity was built to replace the old one.

All was accepted by the Council in the spring of 1958. Moberly had a water source that could take it into the 21st century.

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Sugar Creek Lake Spillway – 2023  
(See Page 15 for Photo of the 1922 Spillway)

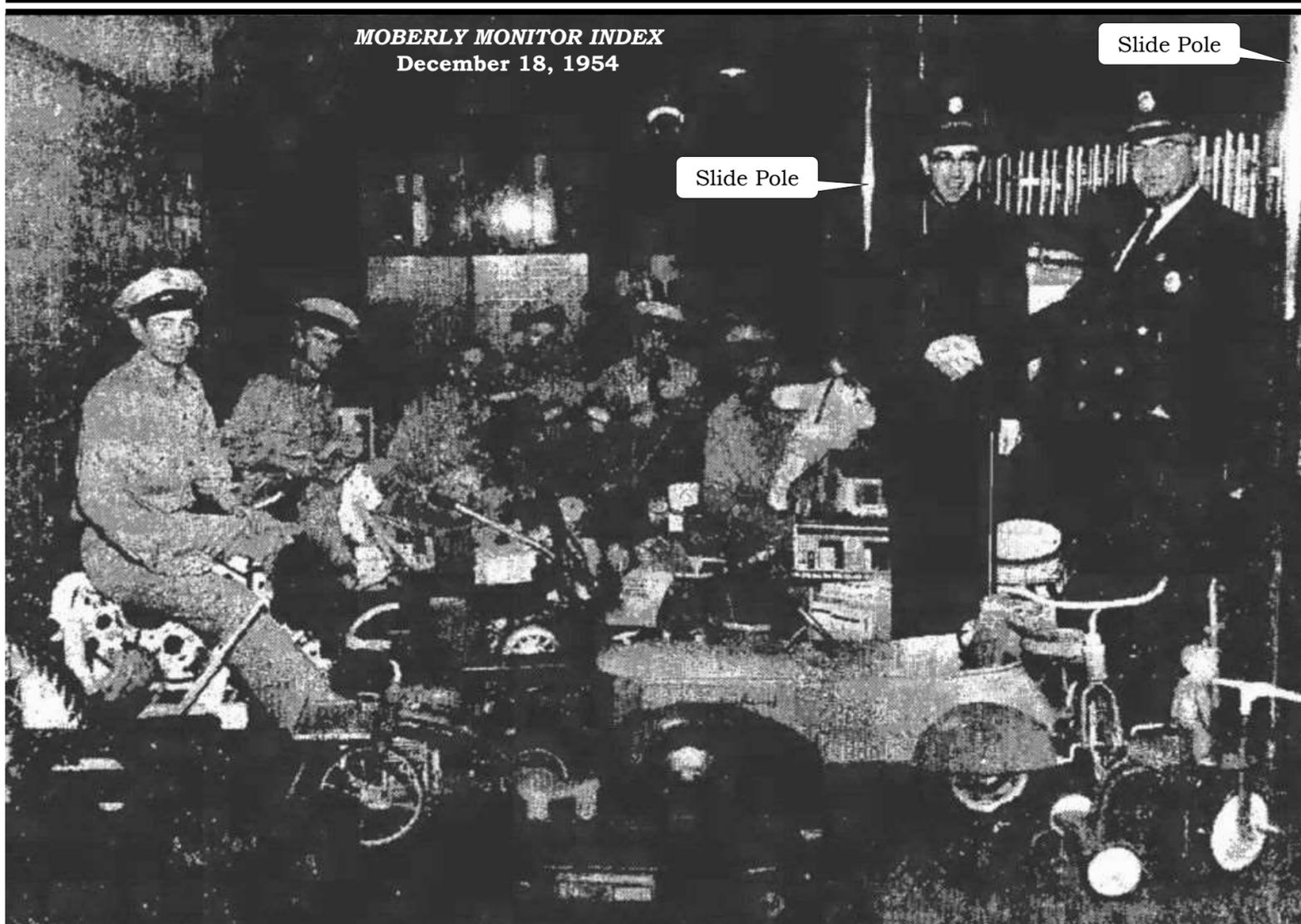
### CHRISTMAS TOYS



In 1930, the Fire Department teamed up with the local Boy Scouts and began a service to provide toys for underprivileged children at Christmas. The call went out for old and used toys that the Boy Scouts would pick up and the firemen would repair. The firemen refurbished over 1,000 toys that year that were distributed to those in need.

For decades, various organizations helped with the effort. Then toys changed and this Yuletide Tradition faded.

MOBERLY MONITOR INDEX  
December 18, 1954



**CHRISTMAS TOYS**—Shiny toys for underprivileged children are shown being given by the Moose Lodge and Moberly firemen to the Moberly unit of the Salvation Army, which will distribute them. Firemen repaired broken toys brought to the fire department, with the Moose Lodge sponsoring the plan and furnishing equipment. Shown in the picture are (left to right) Lt. Wallace Blakley, Howard Asbury, Moose Lodge Secretary Ray Ryan, George Garrison, Capt. Glen Rogers, William Pollard, and Salvation Army Capt. Leon Turner, who is thanking Fire Chief S. R. Stinebaker for the donation. Other members of the fire department helping on the project were Ira Givens, Kenneth Waterfield, James Stansel, Bob Burrus, Wallace Wilson, Orville Vance, Floyd Jenkins, Leonard Leathers, Garl Forrest, Gifford Farris, Leroy Willis, Charles Shipley and Stanley Schwieter. Firemen and the Moose Lodge express thanks to the people of Moberly for their cooperation in the project, saying that without their support the project could not have been a success.

**“KEEP HANDS OFF” - SLIDING DOWN A FIRE POLE**

The following information was obtained when I was a kid. Hopefully, I remember correctly what I saw and was told – it was a very long time ago.

I once asked my father to slide down the pole when he was at Station #1. He obliged. I stayed on the ground floor and he went upstairs. Overhead, I saw the trap doors swing up.

In almost a blink of eye, he was standing next to me with a blanket in his arm. The 16 foot or so slide had been so fast and quiet that I almost missed it.

He then explained the basic workings so that I would know to never touch the pole.

The firemen’s bunks were on the second floor. There were two brass poles that went from the ceiling of the sleeping quarters to the concrete floor below. The poles were positioned between the side-by-side parked fire trucks. Two hinged halves of a trap door in the bunk floor surrounded each pole for safety. Each half was hand-rotated up and out of the way to provide access to the pole.

Back then, fire poles were kept well oiled to reduce friction and increase speed. It had to be a labor-intensive task to polish and oil the 24-foot or so tall poles.

A red rubber pad, about 2 foot in diameter and 2 inches thick, painted with “Keep Hands Off” in white letters surrounded each pole at the bottom to cushion the landing. (The white paint was all cracked due to age.)

When sliding down the pole, the fireman would not touch it with any skin. Skin contact would remove the oil from the pole, create a drag spot and slow the descent of the next man. It would make a ‘squeak’ sound when sliding if oil was rubbed off.

Not touching the pole also kept the slick oil off the firefighter’s hands which could be detrimental in handling equipment.

The shoes did not touch the pole either, as the rubber or leather would also slow the descent and possibly get oil on the soles.

In one quick, fluid motion, the fireman would wrap one of his sleeved arms and the opposite trouser leg around the pole, lean back and step off. If in short sleeves, he would first grab a towel or blanket to quickly wrap around the pole or his bare arm. (My father had been in short sleeves, thus the blanket he had.)

Just before reaching the bottom, the firefighter would slow his slide by leaning into the pole, unwrap his leg from the pole, land with both feet on the pad and quickly step back to get out of the way of the next man coming down.

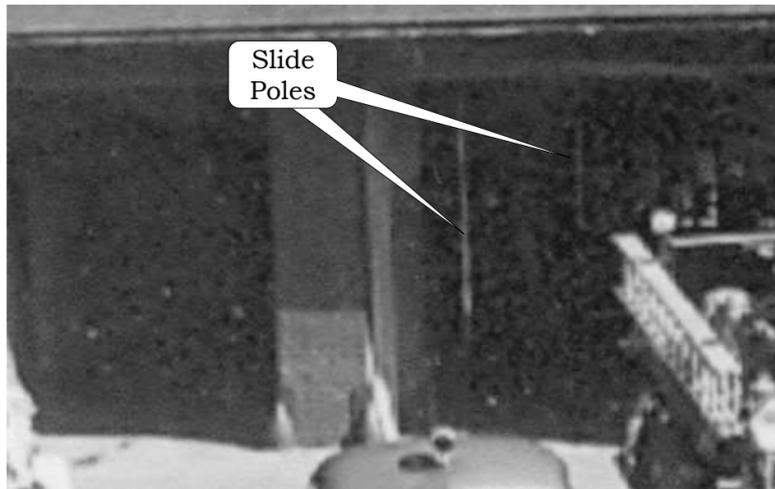
This may be a lost art, as fire stations with poles don’t oil them anymore. The firemen just grab the dry pole with their bare hands which tend to squeak on their slower ride down due to the high friction.

Sliding down a pole has inherit hazards and it is

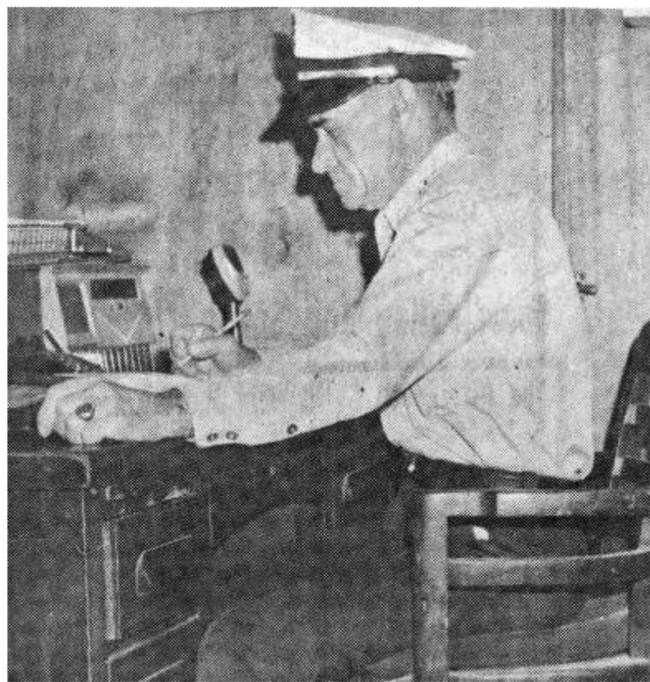
thought that the lower speed of the un-oiled poles of today is no faster than running down a wide stairway or having a one-level Firehouse.

A section of one of the original fire poles is at the Randolph County Historical Society.

(I still haven’t touched it.)



**In Remembrance  
Captain Howard R. (Bud) Asbury  
(My Father)**



**Died While Fighting a Fire  
Moberly Firefighter: 1952 - 1976**

SOME FIRE ENGINES OVER THE YEARS



(Inside the Original Firehouse)



(In Front of the Original Firehouse)



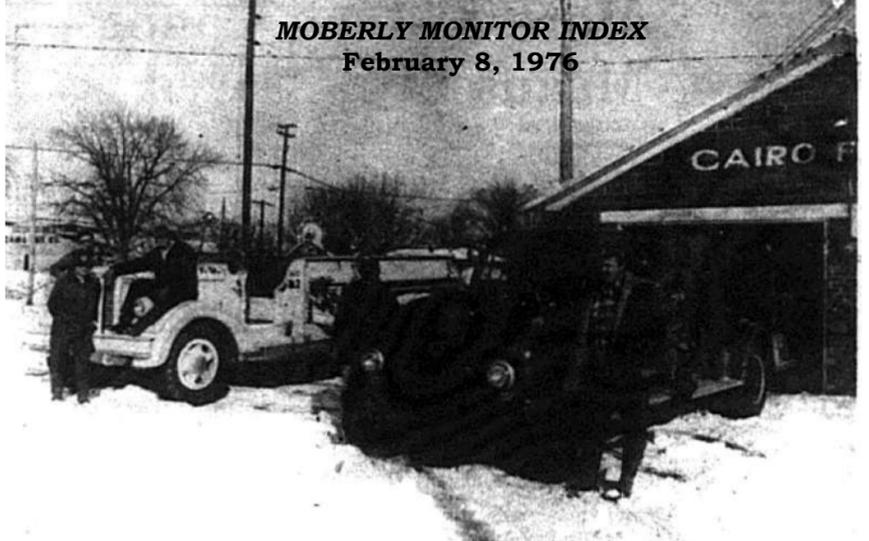
**MOBERLY MONITOR INDEX**  
May 31, 1946

**RIDING THE CITY FIRE TRUCK** was a great thrill for these eight youngsters who cooperated with Fire Chief Charlie Pardue in a recent clean-up campaign. As a reward for writing the fire chief notes on how they helped clear away fire hazards at their own homes, the children were given a 10-block ride on the bright red truck.

In the picture, left to right are: Fire Chief Pardue (standing), Elmer Kitchen, fireman (at the wheel); Francis Rychnovsky, 632 West Logan, who won \$1 in the contest as well as the ride; Billy Steinkamp, 314 North Moulton; Tommy F. Gillette, 512 Taylor street; Douglas Gulick, 1202 Fisk Avenue; Katherine Westhues, Route 3; Doris Coleman, 111 1/2 East Coates street; Bobby Steinkamp, 314 North Moulton; and at the end, an unidentified little girl who was not in the contest but somehow got in with the group to get the ride.



SOME FIRE ENGINES OVER THE YEARS



MOBERLY MONITOR INDEX February 8, 1976

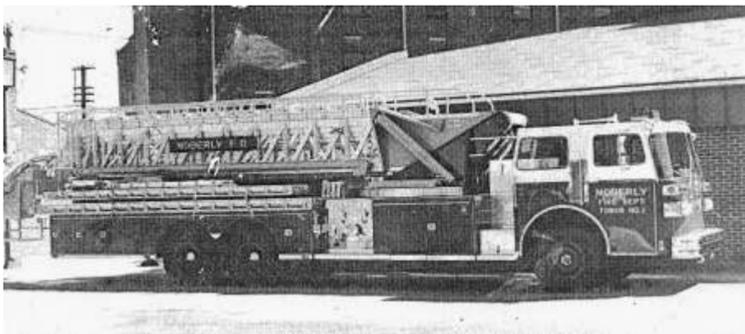
CAIRO FIRE STATION was a hub of activity at Cairo Tuesday afternoon when the latest equipment acquired, a white colored fire engine, retired from use at Moberly, arrived to become part of the fire fighting capability there. The truck was a gift from the Moberly City Council. Pictured with the

two trucks now available, from left, are Phillip Bowden, Thurman Balley and Larry (Pete) Balley, grouped at the former Moberly fire engine; and J.W. Ballinger and Rob Goodding, standing by the veteran Cairo fire vehicle.

(Staff Photo)



1967 -My father testing out the repaired aerial ladder that was damaged by a falling brick wall of the TG&Y fire.



1976 WAYBACK ITEMS

Items Gathered from Moberly Newspapers 47 Years Ago (Prices or Coupons No Longer Valid)



- T-Bone Steak . . . . . Tender Baby Beef . . . . . lb. \$1<sup>69</sup>
- Grade "A" Fryers . . . . . Plump; Tender Whole Birds . . . . . lb. 49<sup>c</sup>
- Cornish Hens . . . . . Manor House Grade "A" . . . . . 22-oz. Ea. \$1<sup>39</sup>
- Smoked Ham . . . . . Fully Cooked Shank Portion . . . . . lb. \$1<sup>19</sup>
- Corned Beef . . . . . Columbia Brand A Family Favorite . . . . . lb. \$1<sup>49</sup>
- Boneless Ham . . . . . Wilson's Savory Fully Cooked Whole or Half . . . . . lb. \$2<sup>49</sup>

Everyday Low Price!!

BABY BEEF SIRLOIN STEAK \$1<sup>49</sup> lb.

Everyday Low Price!!

BABY BEEF CHUCK STEAK 79<sup>c</sup> lb.

SPECIAL LOW PRICE!

PACKAGE CONTAINS FIRST AND CENTER CUT CHOPS ASSORTED PORK CHOPS \$1<sup>39</sup> lb.

Every Tuesday Night is **FAMILY NIGHT**  
 4 P.M. Till Closing  
 Big Brazier, French Fries, Medium Sized Soft Drink and Small Sundae. \$1<sup>29</sup>

**Dairy Queen**

1714 N. Morley 263 Moberly, Mo.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

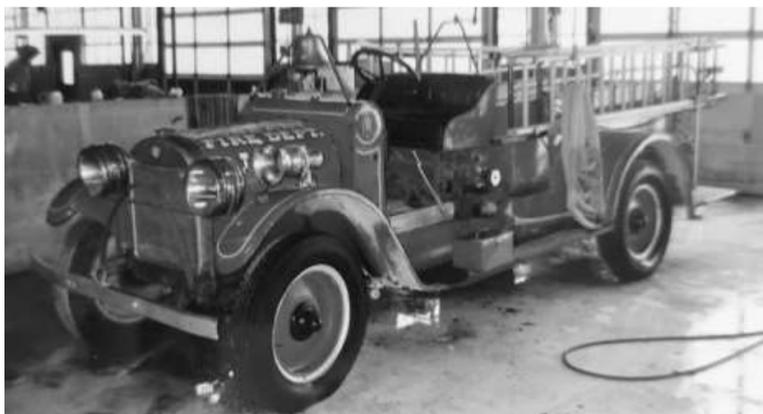
Most of Moberly's retired fire engines were sold or given to other fire departments when new ones were obtained.

A few had a different outcome.

Moberly's first motorized fire engine (1915) outlived its usefulness for fighting fires. The equipment was removed and a dump bed was added for use by the Street Department.

The second engine's (1918) chemical tank exploded and was proposed to put a booster water pump on it to act like a regular pumper. It was involved in a major accident and was scrapped.

The current whereabouts of the third engine, the first motorized pumper, (1924) is unknown. In 1989 it was known to have been painted red and was owned by Orscheln Farm and Home.



The old prison fire engine is on display at the Devil's Elbow, MO.



The 1947 pumper was given to the Cairo fire district. It eventually was purchased by Art's Appliance and then sold to Firehouse Design where it was painted red and placed on display in their Jefferson City offices.



WHAT BECAME OF THE SILSBY STEAM PUMPER FIRE ENGINE?

The 1873 Silsby Steam Fire Engine Pumper was never a reliable firefighting vehicle for the City. Within a few years of ownership, the unit started to break down and it spent a lot of time in the repair shop. Whether it was overworked, poor maintenance or just a lemon can't be determined.

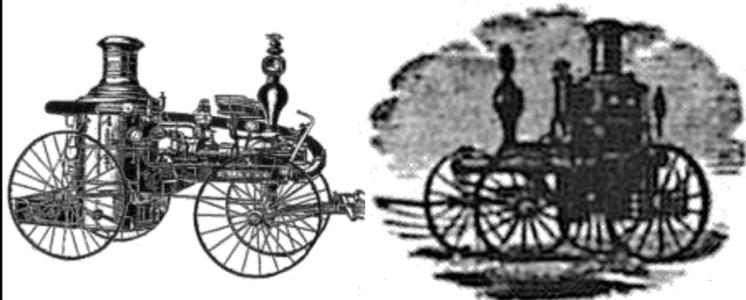
There were many attempts over its years to sell the Fire Engine but there appears to have been no takers. It was relegated to being just a parade ornament.

If anyone has a photo or postcard of Moberly's old steam fire engine, knows what happened to it or has seen something that may be what is left of it in an old garage, barn or hollow, please let me know.

While the engine had its issues, it did save much property and is a piece of Moberly's early firefighting history.

Any other Fire Department or fire related photos or artifacts one might have to help document the history would be appreciated.

Contact me through the Randolph County Historical Society.



CURRENT FIRE STATION #1

During 1975 Construction (Rear View)



2023 Rear View



2023 Front View

CURRENT FIRE STATION #2



CURRENT FIRE ENGINES

FIRE STATION #1



2023 Rosenbauer Commander

Firefighters Testing, Cleaning and Loading Equipment into the New Engine



2006 Sutphen 100' Aerial Ladder Engine

FIRE STATION #2



2014 Pierce Saber PUC Rescue Engine



2002 Pierce Contender



Hose being pressure tested and cleaned

FUTURE FIRE STATIONS

Plans are currently underway for a new Fire Station #1. It will be located on the west side of South Morley Street where the old Heddinghaus Building was located.

The new structure will have larger bays for the equipment, larger bunk areas, an emergency generator and a designated area for future training.

The current Fire Station #1 building will be upgraded and Fire Department #2 will be relocated there.

It is unknown if the fire bell will be moved to the new Station #1 or remain in the place it has occupied for 137 years.

1975 WAYBACK PHOTO



**FIREFIGHTERS:** It's not about what they do each day, it's about what they are willing to do every day.

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  - ❖ 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic in Randolph County
  - ❖ The Story Behind Moberly Money
- 2022 - ANNUAL #2
  - ❖ Stories and Location of Old Allen
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