

Mazeppa 1988 - 2013

The timeline in history is ever evolving and we have reached another milestone with the 150th Anniversary of the Nyack Fire Department and Empire H & L Co. #1. Congratulations!

Since the last milestone, 125th anniversary in 1988, Mazeppa founded in 1852 has completed 161 years of service. Some highlights in the last 25 years are noted as part of our history.

Our firehouse built in 1872 is the oldest firehouse in continuous use in Rockland County. Like all buildings, renovations are necessary and in 1988 changes were made to meet our needs. The recreation room was upgraded with new carpeting, shelves and wainscoting and accent lighting was added to accentuate the original fieldstone fireplace. Mobility improvements were made by reversing the staircases to the basement and upstairs so access to the basement was directly from the engine room instead of the rec room. In addition, the engine room floor was replaced, the entrance bay for the apparatus was widened by 10 inches and a new overhead door installed. What a difference these changes made. In 2008 the Nyack Fire District upgraded our kitchen with new cabinets, sinks and marble counters.

In January 1994, we accepted delivery of our new Seagrave 1500 gpm pumper that replaced the 30 year old 1963 Seagrave 750 gpm pumper. The winter weather necessitated testing the pump at the indoor water pit at the Westchester Fire Traing Center. The first real ride was across the Tappan Zee Bridger on a snowy windswept day. Oh what a ride!

2002 marked our 150th Anniversary. We held special events and enjoyed good social times within the community and friends from out-of-town. Each month we had a special event and hosted the Nyack companies for a meal after a monthly meeting. Jackson Hose reciprocated and invited us for a nice gathering at their firehouse after the February meeting.

On May 11, 2002, we celebrated the anniversary with a gala cocktail reception and dinner at the Colonial Manor in Old Tappan. Guests included chiefs, ex-chiefs officers of each Nyack Company, Fire District Commissioners, officers from Highland Engine Co. in Cornwall, Lewis Tompkins Hose in Beacon and local elected officials. It was a wonderful celebration!!!

In August, a picnic was held at Marydell with our good friends from Highland Engine Co. of Cornwall. This friendship has been ongoing since 1948. Not sure who won the softball game, horseshoe tournament or volleyball match, but win or lose, we had a great time.

On October 5th, our anniversary parade in conjunction with Chief Ted Ryder's inspection was held with 35 guest fire units from throughout Rockland, Westchester, Orange, Dutchess and Bergen counties. Nyack firefighters serving in the NY City fire and police departments were the honor guard. The Best Overall trophy was won by Slater Chemical Co. of Glenham, NY.

The end of the 150th anniversary year was a Christmas cocktail party at the River Club on Burd Street. Once again, Nyack fire officers and guests from Cornwall and Beacon celebrated the final event of our 150th Anniversary. It was a grand year!

On October 3, 1998 as part of Chief Jay Phillips inspection, the fire houses and apparatus were judged by chiefs of other departments and we were awarded an eagle statue with a plate engraved Best Appearing Nyack Company in the under ten category. The member's hard work was thus recognized.

In 2009, members of the company traveled to Empire Plaza across from the State Capitol in Albany, NY for the annual Fallen Firefighters Memorial Ceremony. For several years we petitioned the administrators of the monument to include our member Gomer W. Morgan on the wall of firefighters who died in the line of duty. Gomer's death occurred while fighting the Luvina yacht fire on August 11, 1926 which is noted in the department history under "In Line of Duty." He is now recognized on the Memorial Wall of Honor along with the names of over 2,400 career and volunteer firefighters.

Throughout the years Mazeppa has continued participating in many parades and in keeping with the tradition of our past members we were successful in winning trophies for the appearance of the apparatus and marching in our dress uniforms. Highlights were Best Overall awards in Congers, Harriman, Newburgh and Verplanck and the Best Apparatus and Best Color Guard in Cornwall's 175th Parade in 2005 which included color guard members of Orangetown Fire Co. This was the hottest parade with the temperature at 104 degrees. It was sweltering, but we survived and enjoyed a great time.

As the Nyack Fire Department continues forward, the next 25 years of our history will be recorded for the 175th Anniversary in 2038. Continued best wishes to our future leaders of the Department.