



# THE TORRENT

ISSUE 3

THE FORT WAYNE FIREFIGHTERS MUSEUM

WINTER 2025

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## Welcome to our newsletter

Welcome The Torrent. Our goal is to keep you informed about what is happening at our museum. We will also share ways that you can get involved in everything that happens here. We always welcome so, contact a board member if you have any questions.

## Museum Notes

Our Board would like to welcome our newest Board member, Russ McCurdy. He will be a great addition. We have added a new membership option to help raise needed funds. This would be our "Corporate Memberships" for any business or corporation who would like to support our museum or just needs a tax write off. There are several different levels to this membership and can be found on our web site under "Memberships". If you know of a business who would like to support us, guide them to our web site or have them contact any of our Board members. We hope this will be a success.

Stop by and see us. We are open 5 days a week, closed Sunday and Wednesdays. You might be surprised at what you find here, things you've never seen before, info you never knew. We have both Fort Wayne Fire history and fire history in general from all over.

**"Good Firefighters will know their job. Great Firefighters will also know the job of the person above them as well as teach their job to the person below them."**  
— *Bob Muszynski*

## Upcoming Events

**"Saving Santa"**  
**Sun. December 6, 2026**  
**12:00 – 3:00**

## THE STEAM FIRE ENGINE

In 1907 Fire Station 3 was enlarged due to the rapid growth of the city. A new front door with a bell tower on top and two additional bay doors were added on the west side of the building. When completed in early 1908 it became the largest station in the city. A new Seagrave automatic aerial truck, with an 85-foot ladder, and an extra first-class Nott steamer went into the enlarged house. The 1908 Nott steamer was pulled by three horses whose names were Sam, Pete, and Max, a clever take-off on the old Sam, Pete, and Max clothing store at the corner of Main and Calhoun. This steamer and the new aerial ladder at station 3 were the only two vehicles pulled by three horses in the entire fire department fleet. Other than the chief's buggy, pulled by 1 horse, all of the other apparatus were pulled by two horses. When the steamers here in Fort Wayne were taken out of service for the motorized trucks, they were no longer useful so they were scrapped. None remain in existence.

The 1893 Extra First class Amoskeag steamer we now have on display at the museum was purchased from the Henry Ford Museum. Built by the Manchester Locomotive Works in Manchester NH, this extra first-class size double steam, 1100gpm pump, has a crane neck frame, serial number 701. This steamer weighs 9,000lbs and needed three horses to pull it. Purchased and used by the Detroit Fire Dept. in 1893. Engine #9 and used until 1930. It was then sent to the Henry Ford Museum and sat in storage until the early 1980's when we purchased it.



Fort Wayne's 1908 Extra First-Class Nott Steamer #3



Detroit's Extra First-Class Amoskeag Steamer #9

## **“Saving Santa”**



Sunday December 7, 2025 Santa came to the Museum for a visit. After he was dropped off on the roof and the reindeer left, he realized we had no chimney. He was Stuck up there with no way down. A call was made to 911 and Truck 1 came and rescued him and got him to the ground. He then went inside and met with the children who had come to see him. Another awesome rescue for the crew at Station 1 on the C Shift.

Now that that's out of the way we would like to report that our Saving Santa event was a success even with all of the snow. A big Thank You to all involved.

The crowd started arriving at noon and by 1:00 were ready to see Santa rescued. A couple hundred people lined up to talk to Santa and he was more than willing to try and grant the wishes of all of the children. The cherry candy canes that Santa gave out were a big hit and so was the coffee and hot chocolate that was available through Nomad Coffee. This was the first year for them to help out with our event and it was great having them. Adam Leon and his wife Jen did a great job and the coffee was delicious. Perfect for that wintery day.





## **History Lessons**

### **Big Fire**

Fire is essential to our survival as well as being one of the most destructive forces on Earth.

A firefighting company was organized in Fort Wayne on March 1, 1839. An engine was purchased, and a small building was leased from W. G. Ewing for 3 years at \$6. It was located on the northeast corner of Clinton and Main Streets. The first engine was a William Jeffers of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Five hundred feet of riveted hose, a two wheeled cart, and the "Gallery Side Brake" engine comprised the first equipment.

Proportionally, the worst fire in Fort Wayne occurred on the night of May 20, 1849. At this time the original Fort Wayne Fire Company No. 1 was no longer in service have been disbanded in 1848. The new German Fire Company (Hermans) was the only company in operation from 1848 until 1856. About 3am a fire was discovered at Conrad and Kleoppinger's Toy Store on Calhoun Street. Other buildings destroyed were B. Saunders Grocery Store, Gurnsey's Bake House, Foellinger's Shoe Shop, Bailey's Warehouse, The City Mills, Furnan's Blacksmith Shop, and two houses across the canal. All in all, a total of 15 buildings were destroyed. The total loss was estimated at \$35,000

Taken from the book "Fires That Have Ravaged Fort Wayne"

### **Mutual Aid**

On April 18, 1914 there was a large fire in Winona Lake, In. Fort Wayne was called for help and sent a steam engine, with manpower, by rail to the scene and helped extinguish the blaze.

"Great tragedy in Winona Lake," the 1914 fire that destroyed 23 homes on Chestnut Street. Then valued at \$100,000, it would now be valued at over \$2.6 million. The fire was sparked by burning leaves on the lawn of the Winona Hotel. The sparks got away and began catching homes on fire. With no proper local fire team, a team decided to blow up houses in the path of the fire in hopes of stopping it. A telegram man telegraphed over to Fort Wayne requesting firemen to take the train into Winona Lake.

They brought with them a pump that they placed at the lake to pump up water to extinguish the fires.

Take from the Kosciusko County Historical Society



FWFD Steamer #8 Arriving at the Winnona Lake Train Station

## History of Fort Wayne Fire Stations

In this article we will be looking at all of the Fort Wayne Fire Stations in the paid firefighter era, where they were and how long they operated. Other than station 2, the first stations built for horse drawn equipment were first designed in 1892 by Architect Brentwood Tolan, he passed away in 1892 before and building was started. In 1893 the architectural firm of Wing & Mahurin completed the build. Stations 1, 3,4,5, and 6 were built. Stations 7 & 8 were built in 1898 using the same design. The west side of station 3 was added in 1907 and designed by John M. E. Riedel. We will try and spotlight two stations per issue.

### STATION 3



Original Station 3 (East bays) was built in 1893; The west bays were added on in 1907.  
226 W. Washington Blvd. Is now the Firefighters Museum.

### STATION 4



First Station 4 built in 1893 shut down in 1973  
1202 Maumee Ave. Now Honda Repair Shop



Second Station 4 built in 1996, still active  
4130 Lahmeyer Rd.

# Planned Giving

A HUGE "Thank You" to all of you who are members or have been members of the museum. Your support means everything to us. Without your help we may never have grown to where we are today. In the past we have had former members of the department remember us in their estate after passing. Elmer "Doc" Gamon was the first. His estate gave us a sizable donation that helped get the museum up and running. Later on, Margaret Johnson, the first chief's secretary, set up an account with the Community Foundation to take care of her in her last few years, with the museum receiving the remainder of her estate upon her passing. The museum couldn't have expanded as quickly as we did, had it not been for their generous donations. We thank them and their families.

## HELP NEEDED

The Museum is always looking for help. We have several openings on our Board of Directors. We could also use more part time staff. And as always, volunteers to help out with projects and special events. If you would like to help out, contact our Director at the Museum or any of our Board members



## Become a museum member

If you are not a member of the museum and want to be one, there are three simple ways to become one.

### Active FWFD Firefighters;

1. Go to the FWFD intranet, forms, Union Forms, UN-04 Museum Deduction form. Fill out and return to payroll. (check your pay stub to see if you are a member)

### For Retirees and civilians

2. Pick up a membership envelope at the museum, fill out the info, add your money, send back to the museum.

Or

3. Stop by the main branch of the Fire Police City County FCU and get our membership form, fill it out and give to the Credit Union. (It has banking info on it. Do Not bring to us. Leave at Credit Union)

All forms can be picked up at the Museum.

## Contact Us

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.fortwaynefiremuseum.com](http://www.fortwaynefiremuseum.com)  
and find us on Facebook





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