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Collection Summary

Repository: Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

Creator: Fire Department. City of Manchester, NH.

Title: Fire Department Annual Reports

Collection Number: 0405.001

Accession Number: 2014.103

Dates: 1868-1987 (non-inclusive); 2013

Volume: 2 linear feet

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Related Collections: Board of Fire Commissioners Records (0405.002).

Access: Access to collection is open to the public. Please contact the archives for an appointment to view materials. Cite the collection number, box and folder numbers when making an appointment. Some original records may be in extreme states of fragility; access may be limited to copies at the discretion of the archivist.

Digital Note: Materials are not accessible online at this time.

Conservation Notes: Not applicable.

Finding Aid Prepared by: Mike Intranuovo, 2015.

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Historical Note

On October 26, 1839, the town of Manchester held a meeting in which voters adopted certain fire protection measures. There was an appointment of eleven fire wards, a chairman, and a chief. There was also a purchase of some equipment, a new station was built, and there was an appropriation of \$1,000.

In April of 1841, almost a full year after a major fire destroyed the Island Mill building which was located below the Amoskeag Falls, the first hook and ladder company was established in Manchester. The company served as volunteers, without compensation, until 1852.

In 1845, after the original town hall building was destroyed by a fire on August 12, 1844, a Board of Fire Engineers was established. This board replaced the previous organization of fire wards, and was led by Daniel Clark, the first Chief Engineer. At the annual town hall meeting on March 10, 1845, it was voted to pay fire fighters ten cents an hour for actual service at fires.

After Manchester became a city, the department went through numerous organizational changes and experienced different technological advances in its equipment, including motorized vehicles replacing horse-drawn carts.¹ The Board of Mayor and Aldermen approved the establishment of the Board of Fire Commissioners on March 27, 1917, and it was organized on May 1 of the same year, bringing the department under its auspices.²

Although it has evolved over the course of its history, the City Fire Department continues to provide Manchester with emergency response services.

Collection Description

The collection consists of annual reports created by the Fire Department from 1868 to 1987 (non-inclusive), which were sent to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for its review. Early reports were compiled and written by the Chief Engineer, while later reports are credited only to the department. As the inventory shows, there are significant gaps in the collection, with many years missing.

Early annual reports include content related to the department and its functions, including administrative information such as rosters and fire house inventories. They also include locations of hydrants and alarm boxes. Data on fires, alarms, damages, etc. are included, usually in a numeric table. Early reports also include a substantial narrative from the Chief Engineer describing the activities of the department over the course of the year, discussing the current state of the city, and addressing the department's needs in the future.

Later reports include similar information, but are less formal and include no narratives. They are not credited to the Chief or a specific person, but instead to the department only.

Included in the collection is one Commemorative Yearbook created by the department in 2013. It includes color photographs of firemen and other department personnel.

The collection is a strong representation of the department and its activities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

¹ Pierson, Charles, and James Burkush. "History – Reflecting the Past." *Manchester Fire Department, 1839-1994*. Manchester, NH: Manchester Fire Dept., 1994. 10-27. Print.

² Annual Report, 1917; pages 3-4. Fire Department Annual Reports. Collection 0405.001, accession 2014.103. Box 01, Folder 19. Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

Inventory

<i>Folder Title</i>	<i>Box Number</i>	<i>Folder Number</i>
Annual Report, 1868	01	01
Annual Report, 1871	01	02
Annual Report, 1887	01	03
Annual Report, 1889	01	04
Annual Report, 1890	01	05
Annual Report, 1901	01	06
Annual Report, 1902	01	07
Annual Report, 1903	01	08
Annual Report, 1904	01	09
Annual Report, 1905	01	09-A
Annual Report, 1906	01	10
Annual Report, 1907	01	11
Annual Report, 1908	01	12
Annual Report, 1911	01	13
Annual Report, 1912	01	14
Annual Report, 1913	01	15
Annual Report, 1914	01	16
Annual Report, 1915	01	17
Annual Report, 1916	01	18
Annual Report, 1917	01	19
Annual Report, 1918	01	20
Annual Report, 1975	01	21
Annual Report, 1976	01	22
Annual Report, 1977	01	23
Annual Report, 1978	01	24
Annual Report, 1979	01	25
Annual Report, 1980	01	26
Annual Report, 1981	01	27
Annual Report, 1982	01	28
Annual Report, 1983	01	29
Annual Report, 1984	01	30
Annual Report, 1985	01	31
Annual Report, 1986	01	32
Annual Report, 1987	01	33
Commemorative Yearbook, 2013	02	01