



Portsmouth Firefighting (Images of America)

Steven E. Achilles

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In September 1756, with only fire buckets, two hand tubs, and citizen volunteers safeguarding the Colonial seaport, Portsmouth decided to organize and regulate its fire protection. By 1852, the Portsmouth Fire Department boasted six suction engines and in 1864 entered the age of steam power when the first steam fire engine was delivered. Disastrous fires and a growing city required the department to modernize as it moved into the 20th century. The department's first motorized engine was purchased in 1912, and by 1921, there was a new central fire station along with a new gasoline-powered ladder truck. Through an exceptional collection of photographs, Portsmouth Firefighting richly illustrates the story and tradition of a fire department forever connected to its brave firefighters, their magnificent fire engines, and the spectacular blazes they fought.

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