

ENGINE! ~ ENGINE!



Fourth Quarter

2024-4

Emergency One – The Early Years

by Steve Hagy

In issue 2022-4 of Engine!~Engine! we featured photos of mini and midi pumpers from the early days of Emergency One. This issue will offer a selection of some of the full-sized apparatus that was produced by the Ocala, Florida based manufacturer during its first 10 years of operations.



Front-mounted pumps were beginning to lose favor with the small town and rural fire departments where they could most often be found. Bagdad, Kentucky took delivery of this 1,000-gpm engine built on a GMC chassis in 1977. The booster tank carried 500 gallons of water. Jerry Sudduth photo.



Hahn supplied Emergency One with the 106' aerial that is mounted on this quint for Northfield, Illinois. The chassis is a Hendrickson with a Custom Contour cab. This big rig could pump 1,250-gpm and was also equipped with a 200-gallon booster tank. Jack Connors photo.



Diamond Reo chassis were a rare choice for fire apparatus. Water Tender 2840 at Imperial County, California was furnished with this pumper/tender in 1981. Emergency One built the body which is carrying 4 lengths of hard suction hose. A 1,000-gpm pump and 2,000-gallon tank were also on board. Bill Hattersley photo.



Ladder 13 of the Albuquerque, New Mexico Fire Department ran with this 1983 delivery that was built on a Pemfab "Wedge" style chassis. The 110' aerial is equipped with a pre-piped waterway. Aerial ladders of 100' or longer on a single rear axle chassis had virtually disappeared but have made a strong return to the fire service recently. Eric Hansen photo.



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~ On the Front Cover ~

The Woodbridge (NJ) Fire Department operated this 1982 walk-in rescue that was built in New York State by the Saulsbury Fire Apparatus Corporation on an American LaFrance Century Series chassis. See page 10 for the start of Anthony Buono's Saulsbury Spectacular! Photo courtesy Anthony Buono.

Chief's Chair

Fellow SPAAMFAA Members,

I hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. It's always great spending quality time with family and friends. I know because the grandchildren were here and kept us all very busy.

This year is rapidly coming to an end, and I look forward to what the next year is going to bring the organization. The winter meeting in Florida is fast approaching and Bob Roming and his crew have put a great event together. Please be sure to get your registration sent in. Of course, your Board of Trustees will be involved with their meetings to keep the organization moving forward.

I also look forward to the Summer meeting in Kansas City. The Independence 76 Chapter is finalizing the plans and will have a presentation at the winter meeting with the details.

The Massachusetts Antique Fire Apparatus Association is in the midst of their planning for the Summer 2026 convention and muster. This event will be in Marlborough (MA) which is about 30 minutes west of where the 2022 convention and muster was held in Woburn.

If you recall, there have been two previous Winter meetings held at fire museums. The first was at the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting in Phoenix and most recently, the Fire Museum of Memphis. This was because no chapter had placed a bid to host the Winter meetings. District 1 Trustee Brian Anderson

Chief's Chair (continued)

offered the idea that we contact the museums to see if they would host a meeting. Well, the rest is history. On the suggestion of Chuck Montgomery, who is the Executive Director of the Hall of Flame, Executive Secretary Bill Blunden and I traveled to Houston, Texas to attend the Fire Museum Network meeting to present to their members the concept of hosting a SPAAMFAA meeting. The presentation was well received and there were many positive comments.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mark Davis for taking on the job of Treasurer from LeRoy Wilder, who did a great job. Mark has realigned our financial records and has offered great advice on our budget and investments.

Remember to please send in your photos of your Chapter's previous musters to Scott Rollins and/or Duane Trautman. Let's make the upcoming Muster issue of Engine!~Engine! the largest ever.

Jeanne, Patrick, and I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Best,
Cos

Upcoming SPAAMFAA National Conferences

Winter 2025 - Kissimmee, Florida

March 4 - March 8

Summer 2025 - Kansas City, Missouri

June 18 - June 21

Winter 2026 - Open

TBD

Summer 2026 - Marlborough, Massachusetts

August 27 - August 30

Editor's Notebook

Greetings,

In this issue, Anthony Buono takes us back to New York for an in-depth look at Saulsbury. The article, A Saulsbury Spectacular, is every bit of any known definition of spectacular. From the birth of its founder to the closing of the plant, an estimated 3,000 rigs serve as testimony to the family success that ended in Preble, NY, over two decades ago. Chronicled here in Engine! ~ Engine!, the history of Saulsbury is now preserved in print for the enjoyment and research of our members.

From Clintonville, WI, Associate Editor Walter McCall presents a narrative and photos of the FWD Seagrave Museum collection. Home of the first four-wheel-drive vehicles as well as the venerable Seagrave name plate, Clintonville seems to be another item to add into the bucket list for many of us.

An organization is only as strong as the membership supports and in turn, allows it to be. Accurate membership rolls and scheduled contact, such as dues and publications, keep an organization close to its members, instilling an important sense of belonging. As editors, we strive to provide a publication of interesting topics, mechanical help, pertinent apparatus history, and great photos. Engine! ~ Engine! is the largest annual expense of SPAAMFAA and for good reason! This quarterly publication serves as a glue for our members to enjoy being part of something bigger than themselves. Our goals? Quality topics and quality writing, a good read, learning something new, and perhaps a smile on your face along the way.

Don't forget to send your chapter's event photos for the muster issue right away!!

Wishing you the very best of the new year and the continued, successful story of SPAAMFAA, now in its seventh decade.

Enjoy,
Scott Rollins, *Co-Editor*
Duane Trautman, *Co-Editor*

Future E!E! issue submission due dates:

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FIRE APPARATUS PRESERVATION AWARD

The Fire Apparatus Preservation Certificate provides recognition for a fire department that maintains a piece of fire apparatus in original, near original, or restored condition. Any municipal, volunteer, industrial or military fire department is eligible. Any SPAAMFAA member or Chapter may nominate a fire department for this award.

Westminster Fire Engine and Hose Co. #1

Westminster, Maryland

1898 Charles T. Holloway

Four-wheel hand drawn hose carriage

Apparatus History

This unit was actively used for about 10 years. We are very proud to display this apparatus anywhere requested. It has been in several Maryland State Firemen's conventions and other local events in our community and surrounding communities.

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Ted W. Eldred
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Notary Public
Date



The FWD/Seagrave Museum: Two Great Fire Apparatus Collections Under One Roof

by Walter M. P. McCall

I recently had the pleasure of visiting one of America's seemingly lesser-known but most significant fire apparatus museums. The pleasant little city of Clintonville, Wisconsin (population 4,500) has been the longtime home of two of America's oldest and best-known fire apparatus manufacturers – the Four-Wheel-Drive Auto Company and, since 1963, Seagrave.

Located directly behind the sprawling plant and head office complex of Seagrave Fire Apparatus LLC, – the **FWD Seagrave Museum** houses an impressive collection of more than 60 vehicles built by these prominent American fire engine builders. A few blocks away, in a quiet residential neighborhood, is a separate intimately-related museum – the **Zachow-Besserditch Machine Shop** – where America's four-wheel-drive vehicle industry was born. But before we step inside the FWD Seagrave Museum, capsule histories of these famed American fire apparatus builders are in order.



Welcome to the FWD/Seagrave Museum. Photos by Walt McCall.



The Zachow/Besserditch Museum - birthplace of Four-Wheel-Drive!

Founded in Detroit 143 years ago, **Seagrave Fire Apparatus LLC** of Clintonville (WI) is the oldest continuous manufacturer of firefighting apparatus in America. The iconic Seagrave script nameplate has outlived countless rivals, large and small, in this notoriously competitive, highly specialized vehicle industry – including perpetual archrival American-LaFrance – for most of the 20th century the dominant player in the North American motor fire apparatus industry. Seven years from now, Seagrave is on track to mark an unbroken century-and-a-half of industry-leading fire apparatus design and production.

Born in Needham (MA) in 1849, Frederic Scott Seagrave began making ladders for use in the apple orchards in the Rochester (MI) area where he had his family eventually settled. Inevitably perhaps, local volunteer fire companies asked Mr. Seagrave to make ladders – and wheeled carriages to transport them on – for them. Before long, his fire equipment business had eclipsed his agrarian market, and in 1881 Mr. Seagrave moved his business to downtown Detroit.

The Seagrave & Company's signature product was the incredibly sturdy trussed, steel-bound ladder Mr. Seagrave had invented and patented in 1893. By now, in addition to ladders and hand-and horse-drawn hook and ladder trucks, his company was also making hose reels, four-wheel hose wagons and chemical engines. In 1891, seeking venture capital for expansion, Mr. Seagrave moved his thriving fire apparatus and fire equipment business to Columbus (OH) – the company's home for the next 72 years.

In the early 1900s Mr. Seagrave designed and placed into production the company's first aerial ladder truck. Raised by a pair of heavy steel springs mounted under the two-section ladder of Seagrave's distinctive double-trussed design, the horse-drawn Seagrave 75/85' aerial was introduced ca. 1904. The company built its first motor-driven apparatus, a buckboard-style combination hose and chemical engine powered by a Frayer-Miller air-cooled engine – in 1907. Eschewing the glamorous steam fire engine era entirely, Seagrave didn't build its first pumper until 1911. Powered by a huge six-cylinder engine coupled to a rear-mounted Gorham Turbine centrifugal pump, the first one was delivered to Oakland, California in 1912.

While arch-competitor American-LaFrance favored a midship-mounted rotary gear pump and Ahrens-Fox a front-mounted positive-displacement piston-type pump, Seagrave's early automobile pumpers were equipped with rear-mounted Gorham centrifugal pumps. By 1913, Seagrave's more conventional touring-car style pumpers had midship-mounted Manistee (Rees Roturbo) centrifugal pumps. By the 1930s, the centrifugal pump pioneered by Seagrave emerged as the industry standard and remains so to this day.

By 1914 the company was making its own four and six-cylinder engines. Other significant Seagrave product advances included the company's first all-steel, hydraulically operated 65' aerial ladder truck introduced in 1935 – soon supplemented by 75, 85 and 100' metal ladders. In 1936-37 the Columbus (OH) plant delivered eight fully-enclosed "safety sedan" pumpers to the Detroit Fire Department (the first of more than 60 delivered up to 1965) and in 1937 introduced its distinctive steel-framed, rear-entrance canopy style cab, which was produced into the 1970s.

With subtle streamlining advances and enhancements, Seagrave's pleasing "waterfall grille" styling would remain basically unchanged from 1936 until mid-1951, when it was finally succeeded by the company's bold, new siren-in-the-nose 70th Anniversary Series. Twelve years after rival American-LaFrance introduced its game-changing cab-forward 700 Series, Seagrave finally introduced its first cab-forward fire apparatus in 1959 - which from the get-go far outsold its long-nosed 70th Anniversary models.



In the main exhibit hall is a trio of classic Seagrave 70th Anniversary Series pumpers, all with open semi-cabs.

In a move that shook the rest of the industry, in 1963 the FWD Corporation of Clintonville (WI) acquired Seagrave. Seagrave fire apparatus production was transferred to FWD's plants in Clintonville, and the Columbus (OH) plant – Seagrave's home since the early 1900s – was closed. Amazingly, virtually all of the former Seagrave plant and office complex at 2000 South High St. in Columbus is still there today. Clintonville has now been Seagrave's home for 60 years. Utilizing its own distinctive custom chassis and boxy four-door crew cab, the Seagrave LLC plants turn out a steady stream of pumpers, aerial ladder trucks, aerial platforms, rescue vehicles and other specialty types. The company's principal customer is the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) which has purchased hundreds of Seagrave pumpers, aerials and ladder/towers over the years, and continues to do so.

ABOUT FWD...

In 1906, Clintonville blacksmiths Otto Zachow and William Besserditch developed a mechanism to deliver driving power to the front wheels of an automobile. With the help of local attorney Walter Owen they patented their front axle ball-and-socket assembly. In 1908 Zachow and Besserditch built America's first successful four-wheel-drive vehicle. The Four Wheel Drive Auto Company was incorporated in 1910 with Mr. Owen as President. During the First World War FWD built thousands of rugged, go-anywhere FWD Model "B" trucks for the U.S. Government. With its remarkable ability to churn through deep snow and mud, the pug-nosed Model "B" appealed to fire departments in Wisconsin and other northern states where severe winters were common. The first FWD sold to a fire department was a Model "B" hose wagon delivered to Minneapolis (MN) in 1914.



Ex-Chicago Fire Department 1954 FWD 85' tractor-drawn aerial, one of 31 delivered to Chicago.

Beginning in 1927, FWD delivered substantial numbers of ladder truck tractors, hose wagons and aerial ladder trucks to New York City. In 1941, the company introduced the distinctive long-nosed Brooks Stevens-styled front-end ensemble with tall grille and set-back front axle that would be a hallmark of FWD fire apparatus into the 1960s. The Chicago Fire Department purchased more than 60 FWD pumpers and aerials between 1949-1956. The FDNY got 25 FWD spring-raised wood aerials in 1955. These and seven more delivered to Chicago in 1956 would be the last manually-raised wood aerials built in the US. In 1957, FWD entered into an agreement with Geesink – a Dutch firm – under which the company marketed compact Geesink rearmount aerials on FWD chassis.

In 1959, the Four-Wheel-Drive Auto Co. marked its 50th anniversary with the introduction of its first cab-forward apparatus. New FWD Tractioneer 4X4 and 4X6 conventional and cab-forward models joined the line in 1960. The company also got a new corporate name – FWD Corporation. As noted earlier, FWD acquired Seagrave in 1963, following which there was some blurring of product names. During the 1960s FWD delivered substantial numbers of long-wheelbase cab-forward Snorkel elevating platforms, bodies for which were subcontracted to Pierce Mfg. of Appleton WI. By the 1980s, the FWD name had all but disappeared. The former FWD Corp was now known as *Seagrave Fire Apparatus*.

THE MUSEUM

The FWD/Seagrave Museum at 325-15th St. is housed in two large buildings formerly occupied by the Topp-Stewart Tractor Company. Established in 2016, the FWD Foundation started out with the acquisition of the original Zachow-Besserditch Machine Shop at 40-11th Street where two local blacksmiths invented and patented the first successful four-wheel-drive vehicle in America. The foundation subsequently also acquired the former tractor factory buildings that house the museum and its adjacent vehicle storage and maintenance facility.

While FWD and Seagrave fire trucks are the principal focus of the museum, several other historic vehicles are also on display there, too: a 1916 FWD Model "B" ammunition carrier, one of more than 20,000 shipped overseas during the First World War to haul guns, ammunition, troops and supplies to the battle fronts. After the war 5,000 war-surplus Model "B" FWDs were distributed to state highway departments to support the national road building program. Two early automobiles in the museum collection are a 1909 Badger-FWD touring car – generally acknowledged as the first four-wheel-drive

automobile built in America – and a 1911 two-seat roadster the company utilized as a delivery and mail car for many years.

As you enter the museum, there are several small anterooms just off the main entrance hallway with special exhibits which, while not firefighting related, are well worth a look. They include a large model truck collection, another gallery devoted to various types of steam gauges, and a third room that traces the origin of what ultimately became North Central Airlines (long since absorbed into Delta) as well as an FWD Eliason motor toboggan. There's a research and archival resource library on the second floor.

Lined up in orderly rows in the museum are vintage FWD and Seagrave fire trucks in original and nicely restored condition. There are separate groupings of long-nosed and cab-forward FWDs, and Seagraves ranging from the 'teens into the 1970s. The oldest Seagrave product on display is a two-wheel, hand-drawn hose cart from the 1880s. The oldest motorized example is a 1916 Metropolitan pumper – the original gable hood and radiator on which was later replaced with a 1930s era front-end ensemble that houses a gargantuan 1,717 cubic inch Seagrave "H" engine. The display also includes a stand-mounted big Seagrave 900 "J" V-12 that actually runs.



Circa 1880s Seagrave two-wheel, hand-drawn hose cart.

In the FWD display are pleasingly styled 1936, 1940 and 1941 FWD pumpers: the '41 is the first one built with the marque's trademark long-nose front end that was produced into the mid-1950s. Interspersed among the fire trucks are several massive FWD snowplows (think Wisconsin winters!) and a heavy-duty wrecker. Among the curiosities in the collection is one of three experimental fiberglass-bodied Seagrave automobiles built in the early 1960s.

Following are the rigs that most impressed us during our leisurely visit, when we had the entire place pretty much to ourselves.

Our hands-down favorite is a fully-restored 1954 FWD tractor-drawn 85' aerial – one of 31 delivered to the Chicago Fire Department, along with 30 FWD pumpers, in 1949, 1953-54 and 1956.

An unrestored 1923 Seagrave water tower with rear-mounted 65' mast – the first of three identical towers delivered to the Windy City in 1923, 1925 and 1928. The museum's rough but complete example ran as the C.F.D.'s Water Tower No. 3.

In the main exhibit hall is a trio of three classic Seagrave 70th Anniversary Series pumpers, all with open semi-cabs. In the wide aisle near the entrance is an ex-Santa Ana CA 1957 Seagrave 85' tractor-drawn 85' aerial which is regularly taken out for parades and other special museum promotional activities

The annex – Building "B" – is where the FWD/Seagrave collection's various other rigs are stored and maintained. Among the more than 20 rigs we saw in there was an unrestored 1912 Seagrave city service ladder truck and several huge FWD airport crash/fire/rescue trucks.

After you've completed your tour of the FWD/Seagrave Museum, be sure to leave yourself time to drive the few blocks over to the related Zachow/Besserditch Museum – the original machine shop where front-wheel-drive was invented. There are lots of interesting historical items and displays to look at there, too.

What does the future hold for the FWD/Seagrave Museum? Continued expansion! During our visit, our genial host, FWD/Seagrave Museum Foundation Chairman Mark Thomas, proudly showed us the 8,000 square foot former supermarket the museum recently acquired in the north end of town that will ultimately house the organization's extensive corporate archives and general automotive historical materials.

Check the museum's website – www.fwdseagravemuseum.org – for current visiting hours. The phone number is 715-823-4011.



On the left is a 1912 Seagrave City Service and on the right, a 1947 Seagrave Ladder (ex-Columbus, IN powered with a Cummins diesel engine from new) in an adjacent vehicle storage/maintenance building.



FWD and Seagrave cabover pumpers.



One of two rows of classic long-nose FWDs.



The Museum's 1930 Seagrave Suburbanite in front of the FWD mural at entrance.



1923 Seagrave water tower with rear-mounted 65' mast, one of three delivered to Chicago Fire Department. This rig ran as Water Tower No. 3.



Hometown hero, Clintonville Fire Department's 1934 FWD pumper.

A Saulsbury Spectacular

By Anthony G. Buono

New York State very likely was the home of more builders of motor fire apparatus than any other state. One of the most notable of these builders was the Saulsbury Fire Apparatus Corporation, which operated in Onondaga County in the central part of the state. Saulsbury built many traditional triple combination pumpers and various types of ladder trucks between 1958 and 2003. However, Saulsbury would leave its mark on the fire apparatus industry with its many important contributions to the development of specialized fire apparatus.

As discussed in *Made in New York*, the story of Saulsbury is like a nutshell version of the story of the fire apparatus manufacturing in New York State. Both stories start with hard-working craftsmen and were full of family traditions. Both end with corporate cost-cutting measures, mass layoffs and jobs leaving New York for other states. Saulsbury receives 17 pages of treatment in *Made in New York*. In this "Saulsbury Spectacular" issue of *Engine!-Engine!*, we are going to explore the amazing variety of fire apparatus built by Saulsbury in even more depth with many more great photos from the SPAAMFAA Archives, most of which do not appear in the book.

The logo for Saulsbury is presented in a stylized, bold, sans-serif font. The word "saulsbury" is rendered in a light gray color with a subtle 3D effect, set against a solid black rectangular background. This black background is framed by a thick, vibrant red border. A horizontal gray line runs beneath the letters, starting from the left and ending with a slight curve under the final 'y'.



The Saulsbury Fire Apparatus Corporation was incorporated in 1960. This flat sided tanker was built by Saulsbury the next year and delivered to the Eden Fire Department in Erie County, New York.

A Humble Start

Fancher “Sam” Livingston Saulsbury was born in Tully, New York, on November 18, 1918. Tully in Onondaga County, central New York, had a population of about 1300. The town is about 19 miles south of Syracuse, just east of the Finger Lakes.

Sam Saulsbury was the oldest of the three children of Carl Henry Saulsbury (1899-1936) and Ruth Marion Fancher Saulsbury (1899-1936). When he was born, his father was a laborer in an automobile garage.¹ By 1930, his father was the manager of a garage and a Ford automobile sales agency in Tully as well as a volunteer firefighter. His mother was the Tully Town Clerk.²

His grandfather, Henry H. Saulsbury (1854-1933), was a blacksmith in Tully. In 1910, he owned his own shop, the Saulsbury Garage.³ Henry was a founding member of the Tully Fire Department in 1896. He later would be chief. Using his smithing skills, he built the first hose wagon and ladder wagon for the Tully Fire Department. Sometime in the 1920s, Henry retired from blacksmithing and worked as a salesman of Ford automobiles with Carl.⁴

Sam Saulsbury’s childhood ended tragically and abruptly on August 18, 1936, when his parents committed suicide together by asphyxiating themselves in the family car. According to the August 22, 1936, issue of the *Syracuse Journal*, their suicide was prompted by financial problems.⁵ They left 17 year-old Sam, 12 year-old Carlton and four year-old Raymond to be raised by their paternal grandmother, Alice Saulsbury, and Uncle Fane Saulsbury, who was a house painter.⁶ The tragic fate of Carl and Ruth Saulsbury was all too common during the Great Depression. During that period the United States experienced the highest suicide rates on record, which were twice those of today.⁷

¹ 1920 Census: Tully, Onondaga, New York; Page: 5A; Enumeration District: 233.

² 1930 Census: Tully, Onondaga, New York; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0189.

³ 1910 Census: Tully, Onondaga, New York; Page: 2b; Enumeration District: 0196. FHL microfilm: 1375068. Gebet, Joel L. *Saulsbury Fire Rescue Apparatus -1956-2003 Photo Archive*. Hudson, Wisconsin; Iconografix, 2003, p. 6.

⁴ 1930 Census: Tully, Onondaga, New York; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0189.

⁵ “Couple Who Took Lives To Lie in Same Grave.” *Syracuse Journal*; August 22, 1936, p. 3.

⁶ 1940 Census: Tully, Onondaga, New York; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 34-79.

⁷ “Impact of Business Cycles on US Suicide Rates, 1928–2007.” *American Journal of Public Health*; June 2011, pp. 1139-1146.

In 1940, Saulsbury was working as a grocery clerk according to the 1940 census. He worked around 70 hours per week and earned around \$13 per week.⁸ He later went to work at the Brewer Tichener Company in Cortland as a machinist and welder.⁹ While in Cortland, Saulsbury served as a part-time firefighter from 1940 to 1952. By the late 1940s, he was the First Assistant Foreman of the Water Witch Steamer and Hose Company No. 1.¹⁰

In 1948, Saulsbury started selling Ward LaFrance fire apparatus and firefighting equipment. The Ward LaFrance Truck Corporation had its factory in Elmira Heights, which is about 55 miles south of Cortland. In 1952, Sam Saulsbury moved to the Town of Preble, which is about 10 miles north of Cortland. He left the Cortland Fire Department and started as a volunteer with the Preble Fire Department.

In 1954 Saulsbury was elected chief of the Preble Fire Department. He would hold the position for ten years. In 1955 he was appointed to the Cortland County Fire Advisory Board.¹¹ On the Board, he had the opportunity to meet and deal with other fire chiefs and the County's political leaders.

In 1956, the Ford squad/utility truck owned by the Preble Fire Department was damaged in an accident. Saulsbury volunteered to rebuild the damaged truck. His fine work on this project over the course of three months so impressed the members of the department that they awarded him the contract for a new tanker to be built on a Ford C Series chassis.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gebet, p. 6.

¹⁰ "Swift Name Foreman of Hose Unit." *Syracuse Herald Journal*; December 13, 1948, p. 2; "Swift Heads Hose Company." *Syracuse Herald Journal*; December 27, 1949, p. 3.



Sam Saulsbury stands between two members of the Owasco Fire Department of Auburn, New York, in April 1962, when he delivered this 1,600-gallon flat side tanker, which is very similar to the first apparatus built by Saulsbury in 1958. Photo courtesy of the Owasco Fire Department.

In 1957, Saulsbury rented a shop in the town of Chittenango, just east of Syracuse. There he built a remarkable tanker of his own design. Through the first half of the 20th Century, rural water supply typically was limited to what was carried on a triple combination pumper, or had to be drafted and relay pumped to a fire. Some departments had adopted using tanker trucks for water. These usually had been built as oil or gasoline tankers. Because these petroleum products were lighter than water, the trucks often did not perform well when pressed into the fire service. They could be underpowered or top heavy.

¹¹ "Cortland Co. Supervisors Reorganize." *Syracuse Herald Journal*; January 6, 1955, p. 2.

Saulsbury's design was for a flat-sided tanker that had a low center of gravity. The low center of gravity was an important safety innovation. It improved the stability and handling of the apparatus on rural roads, which generally were not well-suited to fire apparatus and, in many instances, were not paved.

In 1958 Saulsbury delivered this new tanker to the Preble Fire Department. His innovative design and the tanker's performance soon attracted the attention of the local fire service. Saulsbury received additional orders for apparatus from several local departments. He built these early apparatus under the name of the Saulsbury Fire Equipment Company. His initial products were tankers as well as some brush and utility trucks. Saulsbury's apparatus quickly developed a reputation for craftsmanship and quality.

In 1960, Saulsbury incorporated the Saulsbury Fire Apparatus Corporation. As production increased, the firm sub-contracted out work with the nearby firm of Kurtz Welding. In 1966, Saulsbury adopted the slogan of "Fire apparatus built by firemen for firemen."



Rescue Apparatus

In the mid-1960s rescue trucks were becoming increasingly popular with the fire service. Several manufacturers had emerged in this expanding yet crowded segment of the market. These included the Approved Fire Equipment Company, which was featured in the 2023-4 issue of *Engine!-Engine!*, and the H&H Truck Tank Company, Inc., of Jersey City, New Jersey, which was featured in the 2021-4 issue of *Engine!-Engine!* Other firms that had built or were building rescue trucks by the mid-1960s included the Flour City Body Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Lacey Body Company of Boston, Massachusetts, the Gerstenslager Company of Wooster, Ohio, Diehl and Sons of Queens, New York, and the Adam Black Company of Trenton, New Jersey. Pennsylvania probably was home to the most builders of rescue type apparatus. These firms included the Allegheny Body Company of Philadelphia, the Brumbaugh Body Company (BRUCO) of Altoona, the Reading Body Works of Reading, the Swab Wagon Company of Elizabethville, and the Morysville Body Works, Inc., of Boyertown, among others.

Saulsbury Fire Apparatus built its first walk-in rescue truck in 1967. This was delivered to the West Corners Fire Department in Endicott, New York. Saulsbury's craftsmanship was well-suited to building specialized custom rescue apparatus. Through the late 1960s and into the 1970s, rescue trucks became an increasing portion of Saulsbury's production.

This walk-in rescue truck was built by Saulsbury in 1967 on a Ford C-600 chassis for the Commack Fire Department in Suffolk County, New York. It was replaced in 1986 by another, larger Saulsbury rescue truck built on a Mack R chassis.



Saulsbury built its custom rescue trucks on many different types of commercial chassis. This 1971 walk-in rescue was built on Ford C-600 chassis for the Nesconset Fire Department in Suffolk County, New York. The Ford C was the most popular among Saulsbury's customers and the most popular across the fire service.



In 1977 the fire department in Bergenfield, New Jersey, had Saulsbury build this walk-in rescue truck on a Peterbilt Model CB300 cab-over engine chassis. The Peterbilt Model CB300 chassis was designed for refuse trucks and was a very unusual choice for fire apparatus.



The Coles District Fire Station 6 in Prince William County Virginia, operated this 1973 Saulsbury rescue squad that was built on an International Harvester cab over engine chassis. John Floyd photo.



Among the most impressive rescue trucks built by Saulsbury was this one that was built in 1977 for Syracuse, New York, on an all-wheel drive International Paystar 5000 chassis. Its 18-foot body had access to the cab. It had 17 Kw generator and a 20,000 lb. capacity winch.



Saulsbury used a 1979 Mack F Series cab-over-engine chassis to build this tandem axle walk-in rescue truck for Lock Haven, Pennsylvania.



By 1968 Saulsbury sales were about \$1 million. While this may be the price of a custom pumper today, in 1968 this sales figure was a significant milestone for a small company. To keep up with the demand for its products, in 1972 Saulsbury broke ground for a new 40,000 square-foot factory in Tully. The new factory opened in 1973 and the firm grew to have about 100 employees by the mid-1970s. By the end of the 1970s, Saulsbury emerged as the leader in building specialized rescue apparatus. By that time, rescue trucks were being used by fire departments of all sizes and were no longer just a “big city” type of truck.

Sam Saulsbury passed away on August 9, 1978. He was only 59. He was survived by his wife and four children. On Saturday, August 12, 1978, Saulsbury’s funeral services were held at the Tully United Community Church. According to the *Tully Independent*, more than 200 firefighters from across New York attended. He was interred in the Tully Cemetery.¹² The company remained family-owned with Sam’s sons Alan and Richard and son-in-law Dave Carlton taking over the operations of the business.

In the 1970s rust became a major problem with automobiles and fire apparatus. The rust epidemic had several causes. These included poor quality steel, poor quality paint and poor workmanship. In response to this, in 1979 Saulsbury started building stainless steel apparatus bodies. Other builders started using aluminum.

Left: Saulsbury used a conventional engine-ahead Ford L-Series chassis for this 1981 walk-in rescue built for the Willow Street Fire Company in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

¹² “Large, Final Tribute to Francher (Sam) Saulsbury.” *The Tully Independent*; August 17, 1978, p. 1 and 14; “Sam Saulsbury: Man Among Men.” *The Tully Independent*; August 17, 1978, p. 2.



This 1983 walk-around rescue on a Hahn chassis, built for Emmaus, Pennsylvania, is reported to be the first Saulsbury rescue to be built with roll up compartment doors. Roll up doors were first used on beverage trucks starting in the late 1950s. It took three decades for the fire service to adopt roll up doors.



The American LaFrance CTC chassis was designed for commercial applications, but some were used for fire apparatus. In 1983 Saulsbury built this truck as a "Mobile Medical Unit" for the FDNY, and had a second career with the Bargaintown Fire Company in Egg Harbor, New Jersey.



Some specialized Saulsbury apparatus was rather simple, such as this 1985 Haz-Mat unit for the Cleveland Fire Department, which was built on a GMC chassis and shares the same lines as a UPS truck.



The fire department in Boonton, New Jersey, operated this 1986, walk in rescue/salvage unit, which was built on a Mack MC chassis. The cab-over MC was introduced in 1978 and was a fairly popular choice for Saulsbury heavy rescue apparatus.



Seaford, Delaware, operated this heavy rescue that Saulsbury built on a 1986 Pierce Arrow chassis. The Arrow was introduced in 1979 and had an all-aluminum cab. It was the first custom chassis built entirely by Pierce.



Sixty miles north of Seaford, is Odessa, Delaware, where this 1986 Saulsbury walk-in rescue served. It was built on a conventional Freightliner chassis. It was retired in 2007. It replaced a 1974 Saulsbury walk-in rescue that was built on a Ford C Series chassis.



Livingston, New Jersey, operated this 1987 Saulsbury heavy rescue that was built on a Mack MC chassis and featured a rear mounted crane.



The Valley Stream Fire Department in Nassau County, New York, operated this 1987 Saulsbury walk-in rescue that was built on a Mack CF Chassis. It was part of an all Mack CF fleet with four engines, an LTI rear-mount aerial and an Aerialscope tower ladder.

In 1988, Saulsbury's sales reached \$8 million. With a typical pumper selling for about \$100,000 in the late 1980s, this figure is far more impressive than it may appear today. Saulsbury's production reached about 100 units per year by the mid-1980s. By this time, it was clear that Saulsbury had outgrown its Tully facility. A new 85,000 square-foot \$3 million facility was built in Preble and manufacturing operations were moved there in 1988. The Tully facility continued to operate as a service facility.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, Saulsbury was a leader in the national market with its heavy rescue and other specialized apparatus. Some of these were used beyond the fire service, such as the various trucks built for the New York City Police Department for its Emergency Service Units. In the 1990s, Saulsbury's production was about 125 units per year. Over the course of the 1990s, Saulsbury's sales more than quintupled to more than \$40 million. At its peak, Saulsbury had about 300 employees.

Saulsbury built hundreds of rescue trucks that served in small-town rural fire departments, large metropolitan departments, and everything in-between. Saulsbury used a wide variety of commercial chassis for its specialized and rescue apparatus. These included Ford, International, Freightliner, Peterbilt, Kenworth and Volvo. Saulsbury built on a variety of Mack chassis. Saulsbury also used several types of custom fire apparatus chassis for rescue apparatus. These included Spartan, HME, Hahn and American LaFrance.

In August 1989, SPAAMFAA's 31st Annual Summer Convention and Muster was held in Syracuse. Among the events on the program was a tour of the new Saulsbury facility in Preble. A decade later, the 1999 Summer Convention and Muster in Syracuse also included a tour of the Saulsbury factory.



Some specialized Saulsbury apparatus was used beyond the fire service. Above is a 1986 walk-in rescue truck that was used by the NYPD Emergency Services Unit Truck 6. Below, ESU Truck 4 operated this 1990 Saulsbury that was built on a Mack DM chassis. The DM Series was designed for dumpers/mixers and resembled the R Series.





The Rescue Company in Albany, New York, operated this 1988 Saulsbury rescue. Built on a Spartan chassis, this rescue truck is notable for its diamond plate body, which was "spartan" in the truest sense of the word.



The Coles District Volunteer Fire Company Number 6 replaced their 1973 Saulsbury rescue with this 1991 Saulsbury rescue that was built on a tandem axle Spartan chassis.



The Fire Department in Bay Shore, Suffolk County, New York, operated this 1990 Saulsbury walk-in heavy rescue built on a Mack MC chassis. The last fire apparatus to be built on the Mack MC chassis was another 1990 rescue truck, which Saulsbury built for Westbury, New York.¹³



The Volvo FE was an unusual choice for fire apparatus. This one was used by Saulsbury in 1993 to build this walk-in rescue with roll up doors for the Neptune Fire Company in Richland, Pennsylvania.

¹³ Eckart, Harvey. *Last of the Breed*. Middletown, New York; The Engine House, 1994, p. 13.



Among the more impressive heavy rescue trucks built by Saulsbury was this one, which was built in 1993 on a tandem axle Spartan chassis. It is equipped with a 57-foot 14-ton JLG crane. It serves with the Aberdeen Fire Department in Harford County, Maryland. Its first due area includes Interstate 95.

The Chicago suburb of Orland Park operated this 1998 Saulsbury walk-in rescue that was built on a Kenworth conventional chassis. Kenworth is a very unusual choice for fire apparatus as is the deep burgundy livery of this very muscular looking rescue truck.





The Queensbury Central Volunteer Fire Company, in Warren County, New York, operated this 1996 Saulsbury walk-around rescue that was built on an HME chassis. In 2014 it was sold to Greenwood, Maine.



The Getzville Fire Department in Amherst, Erie County, New York, operated this 1997 Saulsbury walk-around rescue that was built on a Spartan chassis and featured a 16-inch raised roof on its cab.

In 1998, Saulsbury was purchased by the Federal Signal Corporation of Oak Brook, Illinois, for about \$19 million. At the time, Federal had more than 6,000 employees and operated about 40 facilities around the world. Federal Signal was a leading builder of warning sirens, including the classic Federal Q. By the late 1990s, the company had diverse holdings that included the manufacturing of street sweepers and vacuum sewer cleaners and fire apparatus. In 1991, Federal Signal had purchased Superior Emergency Equipment of Alberta, Canada, which was Canada's largest fire apparatus manufacturer. Federal Signal also was the parent corporation of E-One of Ocala, Florida.

In the 1980s and 1990s E-One emerged as one of the most prolific and important builders of fire apparatus in North America. For its apparatus, E-One used extruded aluminum-bodies that were immune to rust. E-One also used modular construction techniques with pre-built components from which a customer could design a piece of "custom" fire apparatus. This business model allowed E-One to deliver a piece of apparatus much quicker than traditional custom builders, like Saulsbury.

After Federal Signal purchased Saulsbury, the company announced that none of Saulsbury's 225 employees would be laid off. By acquiring Saulsbury, E-One/Federal now was able give its customers an option of steel and stainless steel apparatus bodies to complement E-One's line of aluminum-bodied apparatus. Also, Saulsbury rescue bodies then were offered on E-One's premium Cyclone II and mid-price Typhoon custom chassis.



Saulsbury built many specialized rescue apparatus for the FDNY. High Rise Unit 2 operated this 1997 Saulsbury walk-around rescue that was built on a Mack MR chassis. High Rise Units respond to working fires in commercial high-rise buildings and second alarms in high rise residential buildings.



The Peterbilt Model 379 is a popular over-the-road chassis. This 2001 example was fortunate to be used by Saulsbury to build a walk-in heavy rescue for Hollywood, Maryland. The Heavy Rescue is seen here in its second career in New Market, Maryland. John Floyd photo.



The most recognizable Saulsbury units that served in the FDNY were five heavy rescue trucks, delivered in 1996, which were assigned to each of the Rescue Companies. This is Rescue 5, which served on Staten Island. All five Rescue companies responded on to the World Trade Center on 9-11 and Rescues 1 and 2 were destroyed. The former apparatus of Rescue 4 has been restored and is on exhibit in the Hall of Flame Museum, in Pheonix, Arizona. John Floyd photo.

Pumpers

In the 1970s Saulsbury was one of the many firms that built mini-pumpers. Mini-pumpers had gained popularity with the fire service in the early 1970s because they were versatile and inexpensive. Mini-pumpers could handle many types of incidents that did not require a full size apparatus. This saved wear and tear on full size pumpers.

Saulsbury built a variety of mini-pumpers using Ford, GMC, Chevy and Dodge chassis. Saulsbury equipped these with front mounted, skid mounted or traditional mid-mount pumps. Saulsbury mini-pumpers were sold as the Olympic, Sierra and Cherokee Series. All of these featured aluminum or steel bodies and were offered with a variety of options such as brush guards, crosslays, full-through compartments, telescopic lights, winches and generators.

In the mid-1970s Saulsbury began building its heavy-duty “High Seirra” midi-pumper. As the name suggests, the “midi” was larger than a mini-pumper, but not as capable as a regular triple combination structural pumping engine. The High Sierra midi-pumper had a 250 or 400 gpm pump and a 400 or 500 gwt. This was followed by the more capable Phoenix Series, which had 750 gpm pumps and 350 to 500 gallon water tanks. Some of these were built with full body compartmentation.

The mini-pumper concept lost popularity by the early 1980s because of its inherent limitations. An apparatus with just two men and 250 gallons of water was unsafe for structural firefighting. However, mini-pumpers were well suited to dealing with brush fires and Saulsbury continued to build these units as brush trucks or forestry units.



Before building full-size pumpers, Saulsbury built many mini-pumpers, such as this 1975 unit on an International chassis for Livingston in Columbia County, New York. It had a 350-gpm pump and a 275-gwt.



The Community Fire Company in Seven Valleys, Pennsylvania, operated this 1976 Saulsbury mini-pumper that was built on a Dodge 4x4 chassis. It had a 250-gpm pump and a 200-gwt.



Somewhat overlooked by history is the “midi” pumper. The concept never gained any traction in the fire service. Parsippany, New Jersey, operated this 1976 Saulsbury “High Sierra” midi-pumper, which was built on a Chevrolet chassis. It had a 250-gpm pump and a 250-gwt.



The Berlin Fire Department in Rensselaer County, New York, operated this 1981 Saulsbury Bison Series tanker built on an International chassis with a 1,000-gpm pump, a 1,600-gwt, an aluminum body and a rear quick dump.



Two Federal Q sirens would be overkill for a full-size pumper, let alone this 1977 midi that was built on an International chassis for Washington Township, Pennsylvania, with a 500-gpm pump and a 500-gwt.



In 1983 Saulsbury built this interesting 4x4 rescue truck for Ravena in Albany County, New York. Rescue 8-8 was built on an International chassis with a 1,000-gpm front mounted pump and a 500-gwt.



Four-door cabs still were not standard in 1987 when this Saulsbury triple combination pumper was delivered to East Norwich in Nassau County, New York. It had a 1,750-gpm pump and a 500-gwt. East Norwich operated several other Saulsbury apparatus.



Responding as Engine 343 in Valley Stream, Nassau County, New York was this Mack CF pumper built by Saulsbury in 1988 with a 1,500-gpm pump and a 400-gwt. The pumper also carried 100 gallons of foam.

¹⁴ Eckart, p. 29.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Saulsbury was still building tankers. Some of these had large front-mounted pumps. These were sold as the Bison Series “pumper-tanker.” While some of these were fully equipped as a triple combination pumper, others were more tanker than pumper and built to suit the needs of the customer. The Bison Series was superseded by the Mohawk Series pumper-tanker in the 1990s

From these endeavors, Saulsbury eventually moved on to building complete triple combination pumpers for which it used a variety of commercial chassis. These included International, Ford F and C, as well as the Mack R and MC. In 1987, Saulsbury began using the iconic Mack CF chassis. Mack had ceased building complete fire apparatus in 1984 and made the CF available for other firms to use for complete apparatus.¹⁴



The Fuller Road Fire Company in the Town of Colonie, Albany County, New York, operated this 1993 Saulsbury 2,000-gpm pumper that was built on a Pemfab chassis. It had an extended cab and a 500-gwt.

Also in 1987, Saulsbury began offering its own line of custom chassis pumpers. For these Saulsbury predominately used Spartan chassis. The other types of chassis used included Simon-Duplex, Pemfab, Hahn and American LaFrance, all of which Saulsbury already was using for its custom chassis rescue trucks. Saulsbury offered its customers a choice of Hale or Waterous pumps with capacities up to 2,000-gpm.

Among the most capable and impressive of the early Saulsbury custom pumpers were a trio of 2,000 gpm “maxi” pumpers, which were fitted with a 55-foot LTI Fire Stix telescoping boom. These were delivered to the Syracuse Fire Department in 1987. In the 1970s, Syracuse adopted two piece engine companies with a “maxi” and a “mini” pumper.¹⁵ Although the mini-pumper craze of the 1970s had faded, Syracuse’s mini-maxi concept worked well for the department, which did not confuse a mini-pumper for a piece of structural firefighting apparatus.

Syracuse previously had purchased similar “maxi” pumpers from Ward LaFrance, Pierce, Sanford and E-One. Saulsbury later delivered four maxi-pumpers to Syracuse in 1999 and 2000. These were delivered in red livery, which was adopted in 1998. For more about the Syracuse FD Maxi-Mini concept read “The Evolution of the Syracuse Mini Pumper” in *Engine!-Engine!* 2023-2.



Syracuse, New York, operated this 1987 Spartan-Saulsbury “maxi” pumper with a 2,000-gpm pump a 500-gwt and a 55-foot LTI Fire Stix.



In the 1990s Saulsbury built many pumpers on Simon Duplex chassis, like this 1996 rescue pumper that was built for the Milton Engine Company in Ulster County, New York. It has a 2,000-gpm pump and a 900-gwt. It also carries 100 gallons of foam and extrication equipment.

¹⁵ “Syracuse Updated.” *Fire Chief Magazine*; October 1974, pp. 27-30.



This 1990 Saulsbury rescue pumper looks more like a rescue truck than a triple combination pumper. It served in Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey. It had a 1,500-gpm pump and a 1,000-gwt.

Saulsbury's extensive experience building rescue trucks naturally led to it building what have come to be known as rescue pumpers. The rescue-pumper concept may have originated in Boston in 1954 when several Mack triple combination pumpers were rebuilt with high-side compartments and overhead ladder racks. These were designed as "engine-squad" companies.¹⁶

This type of apparatus were traditional triple combination pumpers built with a greater amount of compartment space that allowed them to carry a variety of truck company or rescue company tools, such as extrication equipment. They also carried large generators, powerful winches, cascade systems and had other features that substantially augmented the capabilities of an engine company.



The Schodack Valley Fire District in Rensselaer County, New York, is a rural/suburban district. Its hazard profile includes everything from single family houses to large warehouses. It also has unpaved country roads as well as Interstate 90. This 1995 Saulsbury rescue pumper was built on an HME chassis with a 1,250-gpm pump and a 1,000-gwt. It was designed to address the varied challenges presented by this district.

¹⁶ Adams, Bill. "Is It a Pumper-Rescue or a Rescue-Pumper?" *Fire Apparatus & Emergency Equipment*; October 2, 2013.

Although Saulsbury did not invent the rescue pumper, the company contributed significantly to the development and popularity of this type of versatile apparatus. Saulsbury initially introduced the “Cougar Series Pumper-Rescue.” Later Saulsbury introduced the “PTR Pumper Rescue Series.” The term “rescue pumper” or “pumper rescue” was used interchangeably initially but today more often is called a rescue pumper.

Rescue pumpers allowed smaller rural and suburban fire departments to have rescue company capabilities, such as vehicle extrication, without the need to add a dedicated rescue apparatus. The trade off with rescue pumpers was a significantly smaller water tank than a comparable traditional pumper. Typically, the difference was around 250 gallons. Rescue pumpers also were taller, and could tend to be top-heavy. As the rescue pumper concept evolved, rescue pumpers were built with features like overhead or through tank storage for ground ladders and hard suction hoses. These features also appeared on pumpers that were not “rescue” pumpers. Today there is no clear dividing line between what constitutes a “rescue pumper” and a pumper that just happens to be exceptionally well equipped.

The expanding role of the fire service in the 1980s included emergency medical services on the EMT and paramedic levels. The American Heart Association developed various guidelines for delivering medical intervention and recommended a model response time of four to six minutes. In order to be able to provide the best possible response times and meet the American Heart Association model, many career fire departments started to have engine companies respond to some or all EMS calls.¹⁷

¹⁷ Rubin, Dennis L. “Paramedic Engines - A Key To The Future.” *Firehouse*; September 1, 1997.



As the fire service began to perform much more emergency medical services than actual firefighting, Saulsbury started to build paramedic pumpers like this 1999 example that was built on a Spartan chassis with a 1,250-gpm pump, 500-gwt. and ample EMS compartments.

To meet the needs of its customers, Saulsbury started building pumpers that were designed to be able to provide a level of emergency medical services. These included what often are called “paramedic” pumpers. While there is no formal design standard for a paramedic pumper, Saulsbury offered its customers pumpers with compartments and cabinetry designed specifically for emergency medical service equipment and the proper storage of the drugs that paramedic/firefighters would need to have available to them.

This operational model reduced response times. However, it did not provide transport capabilities and it put excessive wear on fire apparatus. The demands of EMS on apparatus continues to be one of the major issues in the fire service today.



The Saulsbury Stealth was a unique design that featured the engine mounted amid-ship, where the pump traditionally was located. This made the cab quieter, cooler and much roomier. The pump panel was moved to a rear compartment on the driver's side. The intakes and discharges were located on the rear of the apparatus.

Left: This 1994 Stealth was built on a Spartan chassis for Anaheim, California.

Below: This 1996 Stealth was built on a Simon Duplex chassis for Fair Lawn, New Jersey.





This 1998 Saulsbury pumper was built on an American LaFrance Eagle chassis. It still is in service with the Sea Cliff Fire Department in Nassau County, New York.

The Eagle was a custom chassis introduced in 1996 after American LaFrance operations resumed in 1995 under the Freightliner Corporation. Eagle chassis were built in North Carolina. Besides American LaFrance and Saulsbury, the New York based R.D. Murray Company also used the Eagle chassis.

After Saulsbury was acquired by E-One, Saulsbury customers had their choice of E-One products or Saulsbury products built on an E-One chassis. The Trumbull Center Fire District in Connecticut operated this 2003 Saulsbury rescue pumper that was built on a E-One Cyclone II chassis with a 1,500-gpm pump and a 750-gwt. Its delivery was delayed by the closure of the Saulsbury facility by E-One. In 2021 this engine was sold to the fire department in Seneca Rocks, West Virginia.



Tankers

Saulsbury had its genesis with a flat-sided tanker that was well-built and well-suited to the demands of rural fire protection. The company built many similar units and went on to build many large tankers as well as a broad variety of large “pumper-tankers” to meet the needs of its customers.

Saulsbury built pumper-tankers with front-mounted or traditional mid-mounted pumps with capacities from 1,000 to 2,000 gpm and tanks ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 gallons. Pumper-tankers were built on commercial as well as custom chassis. Larger pumper-tankers required tandem rear axles.

Traditional Saulsbury single axle tankers and large pumper-tankers were used by rural and suburban fire departments far beyond New York and the Northeast.



The Village of Munnsville in Madison County, New York, operated this 1972 Saulsbury tanker that was built on a Ford C-900 chassis with all-wheel drive.



The Secretary Fire Volunteer Fire Company in Maryland operated this 1976 Saulsbury tanker that was built on a Ford Louisville Series chassis with a 750-gpm front mounted pump. John Floyd photo.



The fire department in Monroe, Connecticut, operated this 1979 Saulsbury tanker that was built on a GMC General tandem axle chassis. This had a 400-gpm pump and a 3,600-gwt.



Saulsbury built this 3,500-gallon flat side tanker for the fire department in Woodbury, Orange County, New York, on a 1979 Chevrolet Brigadier chassis. It had a 400-gpm pump.



This 1984 Saulsbury tanker served in Green Township, New Jersey. It was built on an International chassis with a 750-gpm pump and a 2,000-gwt, which was about the most water that could be carried safely on a single rear axle.



Sugarloaf Key in Florida was protected by this massive 1981 Saulsbury tanker-pumper that was built on a GMC General tandem axle chassis. This had a 1,000-gpm front mounted pump and a 3,000-gwt.



Saulsbury built this one-off pumper-tanker on a 1988 American LaFrance Century 2000 chassis. It served in Middletown, Connecticut, and had a 1,250-gpm pump and a 2,000-gwt. The Century 2000 was built in Bluefield, Virginia, by American LaFrance after the company was resurrected after closing its New York factory in 1985.



The Etna Fire Department in Tompkins County, New York, operated this 1993 Saulsbury 2,500-gallon tanker, that was built on a Ford L-9000 chassis with a 1,500-gpm pump.



The flat sides of this 1992 Saulsbury 3000-gallon tanker provided a large canvas for a mural of a historic fire. This unit was built on a Mack RD chassis and had a 450-gpm pump. It also carried a 1,500-gallon folding tank. As the mural says, it serves in Quakertown, New Jersey.



Built in 1994 with a 1,500-gpm pump and a 1,500-gwt, on a Freightliner chassis, this unit seems to straddle the line between pumper-tanker and tanker-pumper. To the uninformed, this might appear to be just a triple combination pumper. It still serves the fire department in Vergennes, Vermont, where it is identified as a tanker.



Saulsbury built this unit in 1995 on a Simon Duplex chassis with a 2,000-gpm pump and a 2,500-gwt for Hainesport, New Jersey. In 2014, Tender Engine 3911 was remounted by Pierce on an Arrow XT chassis.

Aerial Apparatus

Saulsbury did not build many pieces of aerial apparatus. The aerial apparatus market in the 1960s through the 1990s was extremely competitive and crowded with products and firms. Seagrave, American LaFrance, Pirsch, and Maxim all offered their own complete aerial apparatus. Many other firms used aerial ladders from Grove or LTI. Various other aerial devices built by Snorkel and Baker/Aerialscope and complete tower ladder apparatus, like those built by Sutphen, also competed for the aerial market.

Given the level of competition and the additional overhead costs involved, Saulsbury probably did well to avoid making aerial products a mainstay of its product line. Nevertheless, Saulsbury did build a variety of aerial apparatus albeit in rather limited numbers as compared to its other products.



Fairfield, Connecticut, operated this 1995 Saulsbury rear-mount aerial ladder that was built on a Duplex chassis with a 100-foot LTI aerial ladder. Fairfield also operated a 1987 Saulsbury rescue, and a pair of 1995 Saulsbury pumpers.



The Wayland Fire Department, in Steuben County, New York, operated this no-frills aerial unit. Squirt 1 was built on a Freightliner chassis with a 1,500-gpm pump, a 1,000-gwt. and a 50-foot Tele-Squirt aerial device.



Jersey City, New Jersey, operated this Saulsbury tower ladder that was built on a tandem-axle Simon Duplex chassis with a 95-foot Baker Aerialscope. John Floyd photo.

In 1999, Saulsbury built this 100-foot rear-mount ladder truck for the Woodmere Fire Department in Nassau County, New York, on a Spartan tandem axle chassis with an LTI four-section aerial. Woodmere also operates a pair of Saulsbury pumpers that were delivered in 1999 and 2001 respectively.



The fire department in Clearwater, Florida, operated this 1993 Saulsbury quint that was built on a Spartan chassis. It had a 1,500-gpm pump, a 500-gwt. and a 75-foot LTI aerial ladder.



Saulsbury built 34 tower ladders with Baker Aerialscopes for the FDNY between 1989 and 1996. The first 15 were on Mack CF chassis and were delivered in 1989 and 1991. The next 19 were delivered in 1994, 1995, and 1996. These used FWD chassis but were identified by the FDNY as Seagrave towers. FWD is the parent company of Seagrave. Starting in 1997 Seagrave started building complete Aerialscope tower ladders. The FWD/Saulsbury tower ladders, like this 1995 delivery, can be identified easily by their unique single front stabilizer jack.
Mike Martinelli photo.

The End of the Road

Saulsbury continued to operate under the Saulsbury nameplate until May 2003, when E-One suddenly changed the signage on the Preble facility to E-One. Customers ordering apparatus built in Preble then had the option of having a Saulsbury or E-One nameplate of their apparatus. By that time, Saulsbury's workforce was down to about 240 employees. Many Saulsbury family members and managers had left the company already.

In 2003, Federal Signal changed the name of Superior Emergency Equipment to E-One Canada. That year was not a good one for Federal Signal. Sales of E-One fire apparatus declined by about \$15 million. The decline continued in the first half of 2004. In June 2004, E-One announced that it would institute several cost saving measures. Among these was a consolidation of its manufacturing operations at the Ocala facility. This meant the closure of the Saulsbury facility in New York. E-One previously had closed its aerial ladder production facility and consolidated those operations in Ocala.¹⁸

¹⁸ "Saulsbury Fire Rescue To Close Upstate New York Plant." *Firehouse.com*; July 1, 2004. <https://www.firehouse.com/home/news/10515836/saulsbury-fire-rescue-to-close-upstate-new-york-plant>

There were several reasons why E-One, like many other companies, were moving their operations from New York State. For E-One, operating costs in Florida, including the cost of labor, were significantly less than those in New York State. Florida also was more business friendly than New York, with lower taxes and less regulation. Saulsbury's acquisition by E-One and its closure also was endemic of the continuing demise of family owned businesses in the exceedingly more competitive and consolidated fire apparatus industry.¹⁹ This consolidation and increased concentration continues today.

The closure of the Saulsbury facility meant the elimination of more than 200 jobs. Cortland County officials, the New York State Department of Labor and the Cortland County Business Development Corporation all offered E-One incentives to remain in New York. E-One rejected all of these.

On July 1, 2004, E-One President, Harold Pinto, personally delivered the bad news to Saulsbury employees at the factory. He explained that the closure of the Preble facility was not a reflection on the quality of the workforce in Preble. He went on to say that "competitive business conditions require us to constantly improve and adapt to a changing environment in order to prosper. These changes cause unfortunate employee displacements from time to time."

E-One offered relocation packages to about three-quarters of Saulsbury's employees. Only 13 took the offer. Layoffs started in September. Only about 40 employees remained on the payroll in December 2004, when the plant was closed.²⁰

¹⁹ Mc Loone, Chris. "Cantankerous Wisdom: La Familia Fire Trucks." *Fire Apparatus and Emergency Equipment Magazine*; September 5, 2018.
<https://www.fireapparatusmagazine.com/fireapparatus/cantankerous-wisdom-la-familia-fire-trucks/#gref>

Over the course of almost five decades in business, Saulsbury's total output was more than 3,000 units. Twenty-one years after the closure of the Saulsbury factory, some Saulsbury apparatus continue in front line service.

Saulsbury's real legacy remains the popularization and proliferation of custom-built specialized rescue apparatus. While this type of apparatus once was operated by only the largest urban departments, now many small town fire departments operate very well-equipped rescue trucks. These apparatus have helped the fire service evolve to perform new roles such as vehicle extrication, swift water, ice and high angle rescue, as well as urban search and rescue, and hazardous materials operations. Saulsbury apparatus literally helped carry the American fire service into the new century.

Further Reading: The Saulsbury Fire Apparatus Corporation is a subject worthy of its own book. Fortunately, there are two in print. In 2003 Iconografix published Joel Gebet's *Saulsbury Fire Rescue Apparatus: 1956-2003 Photo Archive*. The FDNY was the largest single user of Saulsbury apparatus with 93 units. Those apparatus are explored in *Saulsbury Fire Apparatus of the New York City Fire Department* by Jack Calderone, which was published in 2022 by Fire Apparatus Journal.

²⁰ "No Rescue Fire Apparatus Plant Closes." *The Associated Press*; January 1, 2005.
https://www.rutlandherald.com/news/no-rescue-fire-apparatus-plant-closes/article_f8641b9e-0fc1-5a54-9652-83c644681159.html



Owner's Pride

1925 Mack AB Pumper

The Herman Family, Chesterfield, VA,
The Lakewood (NJ) Fire District #1 and
Rescue Fire Co.# 2 and the Cross Anchors
Volunteer Fire Department (SC)



This antique fire truck was a "barn find" and had been in storage for approximately 20 – 25 years. Its history at the time was mostly unknown but what was known is that it last served at the Cross Anchors Volunteer Fire Department, located about 20 miles south of Spartanburg, SC. Upon retirement from service there, the pumper was put up on sealed bid and sold to a local antique vehicle collector, who then placed it in storage. It was never touched again until March 15, 2012, when we extracted it from where it had been sitting.

The Mack model AB, or what we refer to as a "Baby Mack" is a relatively rare fire engine and rarely is seen for sale in the marketplace. Most Mack fire engines of the time-period were the model AC, which is a full size fire truck and was produced in fairly large numbers. Even these full size Macks are rarely for sale.

Because of the rarity, we decided to take a chance on it as many fire trucks that come out of a fire station and are placed in unheated storage are ruined in the first freeze that hits it as private owners that are not former firefighters or fire truck collectors do not know how to drain everything that has water in it. With completely unknown history and in non-running condition, any collector that takes it on is taking a big chance and could be in for some real disappointment!

Starting out, one of the first things to do is research the history of the vehicle. Fortunately, the Mack Truck Museum has all the Mack build records and often will have what we refer to as "delivery photos." These records and photos are crucial to the preservation efforts. With a letter to the Museum listing the Serial # of the truck, we obtained the factory specs & build sheets and found that the truck was originally delivered to The Lakewood (NJ) Fire Department. We immediately contacted the fire department and began corresponding with their department historian. He provided copies of many photos including the original delivery photos and photos of the truck while serving their department. They were also delighted that their old Mack still existed!

We had been asked many times if that truck had responded to the Hindenburg Disaster, which occurred in 1937 in nearby Lakehurst, NJ and we responded no, that this truck belonged to Lakewood, NOT Lakehurst. Months later, we received a letter from the Lakewood historian explaining that this very truck had in fact responded to the Hindenburg because of a mutual aid agreement that was in place.

From then on, this truck has been referred to as **"THE HINDENBURG MACK"**!

Time had taken a toll on the truck, but we were surprised at how well preserved the truck really was, even though it was missing most of its equipment, some of the rare & hard to find parts were all there. The engine was not locked up but, unfortunately, we did end up having to completely tear it down, deck the block, mill the heads, have water manifolds cast, etc. Amazingly, the cylinders, pistons, bearings & valves were in excellent condition. It runs & drives beautifully!

Still being in original condition, it is a true survivor and as caretaker it is our job to preserve the originality to the full extent possible.

We hope you enjoy the opportunity to view this rare piece of American history!