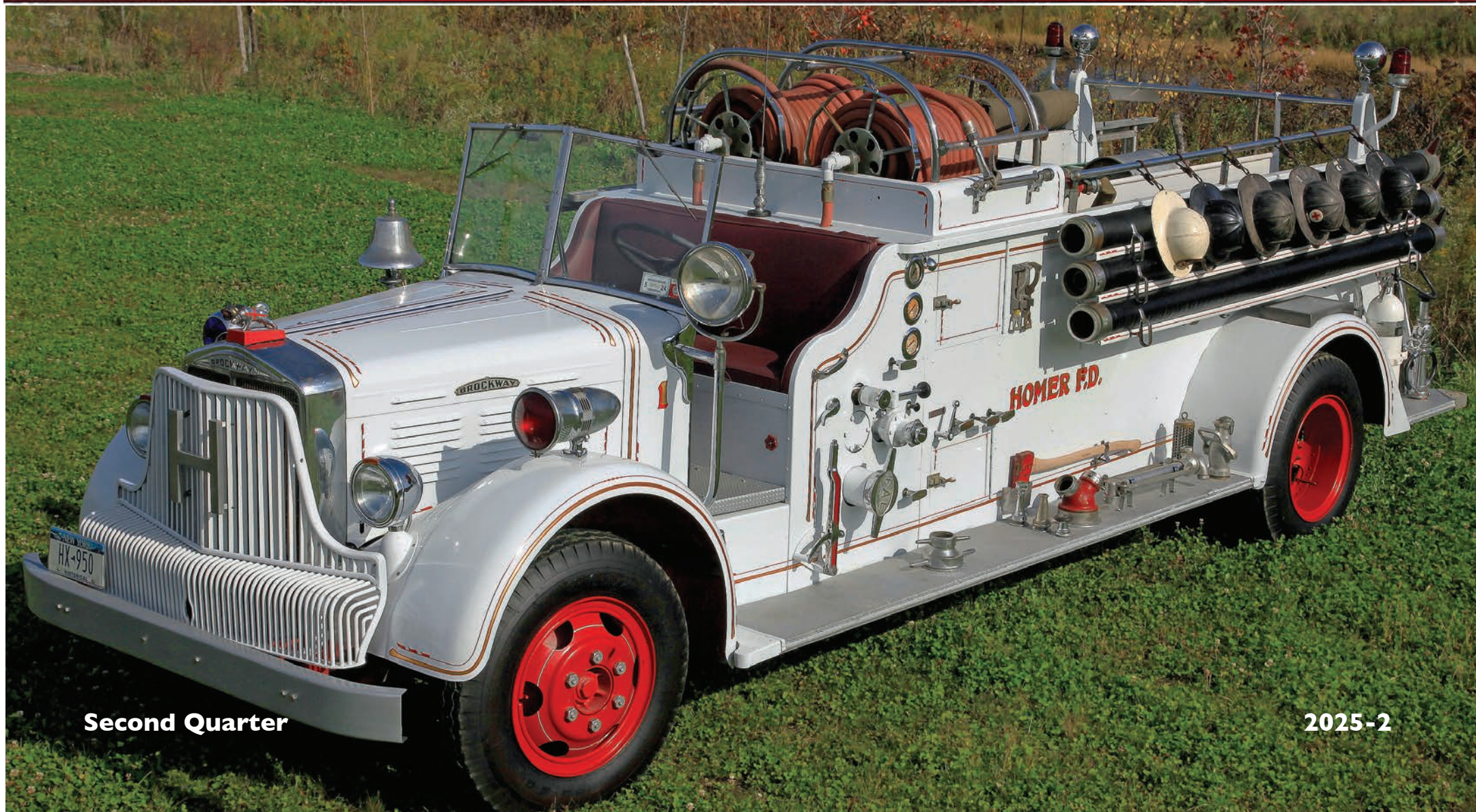


ENGINE! ~ ENGINE!



Second Quarter

2025-2

In light of Walt McCall's recent article on the FWD/Seagrave Museum in this issue we thought we would include a few more classic long-nose FWD rigs. These rigs are all from the West Coast and all photos were taken by Bill Hattersley.



McMinnville (OR) Fire Department's Engine 12, a 1952 FWD pumper. This rig has a 1,000-gpm pump, 80 gallons of foam, and a reel with 1,300-feet of 5-inch hose in the rear.



Walla Walla (WA) was running this 1953 FWD pumper as Reserve Engine 1 when Mr. Hattersley took this photo. It is equipped with a 750-gpm pump and a 550-gwt. Note the front bumper is set-up to have personnel ride for brush fires.



Potlatch (ID) Fire Department's Engine 1. This 1956 FWD pumper has a 750-gpm pump and 550-gwt.



This 1949 FWD was in service for the Benicia (CA) Fire Department as Reserve Engine 5 when this photo was taken. The pumper has a 1,250-gpm pump and 500-gwt.



(ISSN 0362-2487)

2025-2

Second Quarter

Published quarterly by SPAAMFAA, the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America, P.O. Box 296, Carthage, NY 13619, an educational, historical, non-profit corporation chartered by the Regents of the Education Department, State of New York.

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~ On the Front Cover ~

With the help of social media, Mahkon Irish Jr. was able to track down this 1950 Brockway/Fire Apparatus Engineering (FAE) pumper (ex-Homer, NY) that was thought lost. Needing a restoration Mahkon jumped in and started the work.

By a strange quirk the Brockway is also mentioned in Anthony Buono's article Also Made in New York in this issue. In Anthony's article the rig is lettered for the Alma (NY) Fire Department. Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.

Chief's Chair

Fellow SPAAMFAA Members,

By the time you read this, we will have returned from our summer meeting in Missouri. I will have more about that in the next issue as this is being written one week before I leave for Kansas City. I do know that Jeann and I, as well as everyone else that attends, will have a great time.

I look forward to this summer muster season having just attended two events. The first was a Fire Festival in Laval, Canada. Bill Blunden has been going to this event for several years and has been trying to get me to take my Seagrave, but it had engine problems (finally straightened out this year). After arriving home from Laval, it was time for the annual muster of my chapter, the Chesapeake Antique Fire Apparatus Association (CAFAA).

Both musters had very close similarities. Both events felt like I was with my extended family.

The group in Canada made us Yanks feel right at home and took care of everything for us and our rigs. I now have a new family. My CAFAA family provided a great day of rigs and time to visit with adopted family members that I only get to see a few times a year,

Getting to the point, no matter where we go in our hobby, we are all one big family. Fun, Friends, Family, and Fire Trucks. There will be many more opportunities this summer to meet with more of our extended family members. I can't wait to see you all.

Chief's Chair (continued)

I have had a discussion with the Executive Board about the need for a Membership Committee. The purpose would be to help increase membership and encourage members to renew their membership as well to entice the younger generation to join. If any of you would like to step up and lead this endeavor, please let me know.

Till then, remember I can always be reached at timothycosgrovejones@gmail.com with any questions or concerns

Best,
Cos

Upcoming SPAAMFAA National Conferences

Winter 2026 - San Antonio, Texas
March 3 - March 7

Summer 2026 - Marlborough, Massachusetts
August 27 - August 30

Winter 2028 - Open

Summer 2027 - Osh Kosh, Wisconsin
In June

Winter 2029 - Open

Editor's Notebook

Greetings,

We rarely get articles about West Coast apparatus manufacturers, but Ed Hass has written an article about fire apparatus builder Van Pelt and the start of their custom fire apparatus, the 300 Series.

Anthony Buono has written another deeper dive article about the fire apparatus featured in his Made in New York book. Some of the manufacturers Anthony covers include early firms, local builders, and companies that predominantly served the market on Long Island.

In a bit of irony, Mahkon Irish Jr. penned an article about finding and restoring his 1950 Brock-way/Fire Apparatus Engineering pumper (ex-Homer, NY and ex-Alma, NY) that is in a photo on page 10 in Anthony's Also Made in New York article.

Muster season has started, enjoy the summer!

Thank you all,
Scott Rollins, *Co-Editor*
Duane Trautman, *Co-Editor*

Future E!E! issue submission due dates:

2025-3 due by 07-01-25
2025-4 due by 10-01-25
2026-1 due by 01-01-26
2026-2 due by 04-04-26

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The First Van Pelt Full-Custom Fire Engine

by Ed Hass

This article is about the first P.E. Van Pelt Custom 300 fire engine, one of the backbones of the California fire service during the 1960's and 1970's.

This historic pumper traces its roots back to 1918. Upon discharge from the Navy, 29-year-old Percy Edward Van Pelt – “Van” to everyone who knew him – moved from his native Stockton to Oakdale (CA), where he established an orchard. In 1921, Van became a salesman for the local Ford dealership, but quickly became disenchanted with Fords after he crashed his own Model T.

The next year, Van bought the Central Garage in Oakdale and established a local Dodge dealership. In 1923, Van and Oakdale fire chief O.Z. Bailey built the first fire engine designed specifically for vegetation fires. I just a few years, so many communities were asking Van to build fire engines that he established another company in a separate building adjacent to his Dodge dealership. The new building was exclusively for the manufacture of fire engines, and by the late 1930s, Van Pelt fire engines were in service all over the western U.S.

Change was in the air. As early as 1938, American-LaFrance of Elmira (NY), had introduced cab-forward styling with their JO and JOX aerial ladders, followed by the 700 Series in 1947. On the other side of the country, the Crown Coach Corp. of Los Angeles (CA) had introduced its own cab-forward fire engine, the Firecoach, in 1951. The new offering was based on the styling of the cab-forward school buses Crown had been making since 1932.

Ahrens-Fox, Inc., of Cincinnati (OH) and C.D. Beck Buses of Sidney (OH), teamed up to design and build their own cab-forward design. Only six were built between 1955 and 1957, with another seven orders for this design completed by Approved Fire Equipment of Island Park (NY), between 1958 and 1960, using Ahrens-Fox supplied parts. In late 1957, the production rights to the Ahrens-Fox cab-forward were sold to Mack Trucks, which built hundreds of Mack Model C cab-forward fire engines.

By 1958, the landscape of the fire apparatus industry was very different than it had been in 1923. Cab forward trucks, diesel engines, power steering, power brakes, and centrifugal fire pumps were conquering the industry. Until then,

Van Pelt was strictly a commercial chassis apparatus builder. Every major commercial truck chassis was used: Autocar, Chevrolet, Diamond T, Dodge, Ford, GMC, International Harvester, Kenworth, Mack, Oshkosh, Peterbilt, REO, Studebaker, and White.

Van Pelt had hired George Chappell as a janitor in 1937. When the top brass at Van Pelt noticed his skills as a mechanic, he was quickly promoted to fire apparatus assembler, then to delivering and testing new fire engines, and finally to Chief Engineer, with the rank of a Vice President. Focused on western U.S. sales, it was Chappell who thought-up an idea for a custom cab-forward pumper to compete with the ALF 900, Mack C, and Crown Firecoach.

George sketched out his design in soapstone, right on the factory floor. Van told George, “I like it. Build it.” There were two major problems: Van Pelt had never built their own custom chassis before and the company had only 45 employees, including executives and sales staff.

For the prototype, on November 20, 1958, Van Pelt purchased a new Diamond T Model 920B chassis #920B-2043 for \$3,564.00 (plus \$300.00 shipping) from Diamond T Motor Truck Corporation, Chicago. As delivered to Van Pelt, this chassis consisted only of frame rails, axles, wheels, and 11.00 x 20 tires. Van Pelt purchased a Hall-Scott Model 6156FE overhead-valve, 935 cubic inch, 300 horsepower motor #6605496 for \$5,164.47 (plus \$224.62 for shipping) from Hercules Motor Company, Canton (OH).

Van Pelt installed the Hall-Scott into the bare Diamond T chassis and so completely modified this chassis, it took 14 months to build – more than twice the usual Van Pelt build time. When delivered, it bore no resemblance to anything which Diamond T ever built before or since. Visually, the biggest difference was the first Van Pelt Custom 300 cab in the space where the Diamond T hood and grille would normally have been. The motor was now installed behind the cab.



George Chappell, designer of the Van Pelt Custom 300, behind the wheel, and P.E. Van Pelt on running board of the first Van Pelt Custom 300 fire engine, serial #1412, completed for Mountain View, CA in 1960. The heavily modified chassis started out as a Diamond T in 1958. All subsequent Custom 300s used Van Pelt's own custom chassis, built in-house. Lynn Chappell collection.

Why was this new type of Van Pelt called a Custom 300? Van Pelt was also a Chrysler-Plymouth-Dodge dealer and the Chrysler 300 was the top-of-the-line car that they offered. It was only logical to also name their first full-custom fire engine, their top-of-the-line model, as a 300.

This first Van Pelt Custom 300 featured a semi-cab (doors but no roof), a two-pane windshield, a rear-view mirror and a revolving red gumball light atop the windshield, a small spotlight on each side of the windshield, quarter windows on each cab door, dual headlights and an arrow turn signal on each side of the cab front, a siren at the center of the cab front, a three-man bench seat inside the cab, a rear-facing jump seat on each side of the motor at the cab rear, two round turn signals on the front bumper, a grab handle behind each cab door and another behind each jump seat, and a hand rail for each jump-seat rider.

In addition to the altered cab and motor location, other modifications by Van Pelt included power steering, four-inch brakes, and a tougher transmission and clutch than on the standard Diamond T chassis. Van Pelt installed a 1250-gpm Hale midship centrifugal pump, a 500-gallon water tank, a hose body for 1000 feet of 2-1/2" hose and 800 feet of 1-1/2" hose, two top-mounted reels of booster hose, a top-mounted deluge nozzle, two hard suction hoses, a roof ladder, a two-section extension ladder, an axe, fire extinguishers, two rear hose

pickup lights, a compartment at each side of rear of cab, and three compartments in each rear fender.

On February 29, 1960, Van Pelt's son-in-law, Nip Dallas sold the completed 11-ton Van Pelt fire engine, serial #1412 for \$26,655.00 to the fire department of Mountain View (CA). George Chappell delivered the engine to Fire Chief Leslie K. Coon and it was stationed in fire headquarters, at Villa and Franklin streets.

In the early 1970s, Mountain View added a cab roof, and three more compartments above each rear fender. At that time, it was designated as Engine 54. Van Pelt #1412 was replaced in the 1980's by a new Westates cab-forward pumper. The fate of the 1960 Van Pelt remains unknown.

The ground-breaking Mountain View pumper was Van Pelt's test lab, working out all the bugs of transitioning from an apparatus assembler to a full-custom apparatus builder. All subsequent Custom 300 cab-forwards had the chassis completely custom-built in the Van Pelt factory, not modified from a commercial truck chassis.

After Van Pelt was sold to FMC in 1978, the FMC corporate bean-counters decided that a full-custom chassis was simply too expensive to build, and the Custom 300 was discontinued. From 1978 until production ceased in 1987,



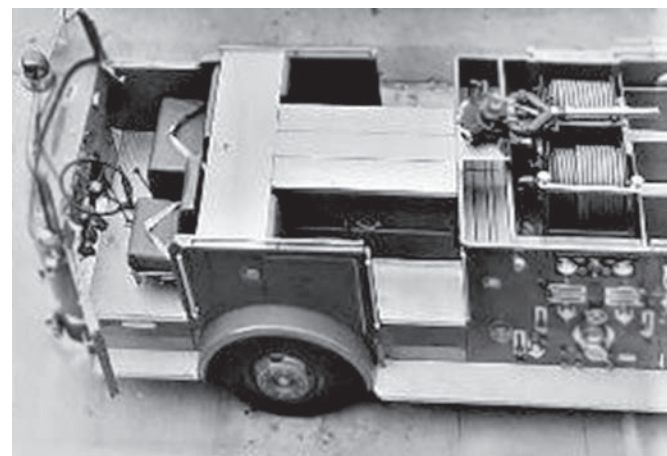
Van Pelt factory delivery photo. Joe Raymond collection.

customers who wanted a cab-forward Van Pelt had a choice of International, Duplex, Oshkosh, Warner & Swasey, or Spartan chassis.

Thanks to former Van Pelt employees Lynn Chappell (son of Van Pelt Chief Engineer George Chappell) and Ben Ruthman for the information and photos that made this article possible. The author is the secretary of the Van Pelt chapter of SPAAMFAA.



300 series front photo from a Van Pelt sales brochure. Joe Raymond collection.



Top view of the first Van Pelt Custom 300. Joe Raymond collection.



1960 Van Pelt Custom 300 #1412 at a smoky house fire before suction and discharge hose lines were connected. Mountain View Fire Department photo.



More than a year after the first one for Mountain View, the second Van Pelt Custom 300, serial #1512, was sold and delivered for \$33,216.56 to San Rafael (CA) on June 7, 1961. It was the first to use Van Pelt's own factory-built chassis frame. The front siren was mounted higher and it had no compartments above the rear fenders. Van Pelt factory delivery photo from Lynn Chappell collection.



George Chappell's 1958 soapstone sketch on the Van Pelt factory floor probably resembled this sketch used on Van Pelt company letterhead. This sketch is also part of the logo of the Van Pelt chapter of SPAAMFAA. Lynn Chappell collection.



The Van Pelt 300 in service at Mountain View (CA). Photo from Scott Mattson collection.

Also Made in New York

Lesser-Known New York Fire Apparatus Builders

By Anthony G. Buono

The many manufacturers of fire apparatus that once called New York State home are explored in the 2023 book *Made in New York*, which was published as a fundraiser by the SPAAMFAA Archives Committee. *Made in New York* is the most comprehensive history of New York builders of fire apparatus. It is soft-bound with 384 pages, including a 48-page color section, and is illustrated with more than 700 photographs from the SPAAMFAA Archives.

Among the companies explored in *Made in New York* are well-known names, like American LaFrance, Buffalo, Mack, Saulsbury, Sanford, Ward LaFrance, Ward 79 and Young. *Made in New York* also examines the many smaller firms that are not well known or, in some cases, are almost completely forgotten. Most of these smaller firms did not build many pieces of apparatus. However, some of them made significant contributions to the development of fire apparatus and/or built some interesting apparatus.

Although half of New York State's population over the course of the 20th Century lived in New York City, most fire apparatus builders were located outside the City. This is because this is where the market was for fire apparatus. The FDNY may be the largest fire department in America and protects almost half the population of New York State. However, throughout the 20th Century, it is just one of around 1700 fire departments in the State and has operated no more than 600 apparatus at any one time over the past century.

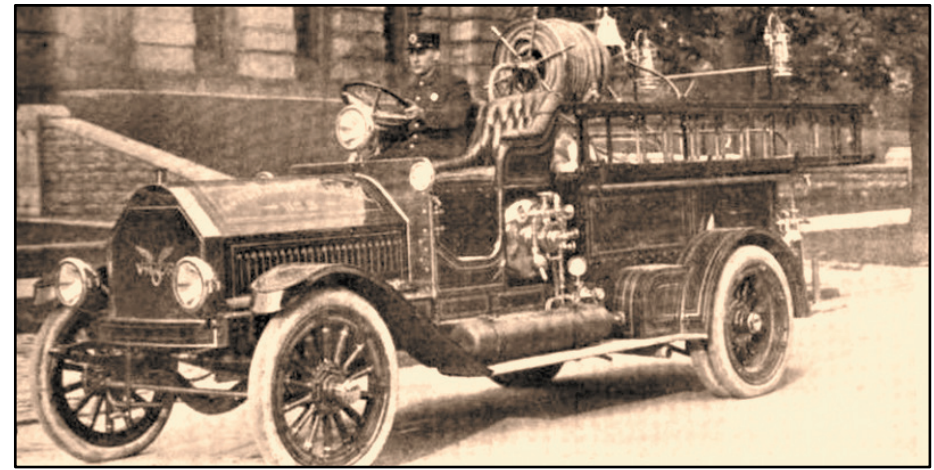
Meanwhile, roughly 1700 other fire departments, most of which are all-volunteer, have protected the approximately 11-million other New Yorkers who live in communities outside of New York City. These departments combined operate several times as much apparatus as the FDNY. This has created a vast demand that has shaped the apparatus market and created opportunities for local apparatus builders and small shops.



Among the many not-so-well-known fire apparatus builders in New York State was Garsite Products, Inc., of Long Island, which built this unique 1967 industrial pumper on a Walter 4x4 chassis.

In this article, a dozen builders are surveyed. These can be divided into four different types of firms that made fire apparatus in New York State. These include (1) pioneering and early firms, (2) small local builders, (3) firms that were acquired by other larger firms or changed names after a change of ownership and (4) firms that predominantly served the market on Long Island.

Among the earliest builders of motor fire apparatus in New York State was the **Victor Motor Truck Company** of Buffalo. This firm was an overly ambitious truck manufacturer, which went out of business about as quickly as it boldly launched into the fire apparatus business. The company was founded in 1910 and immediately began to offer a very broad product line of commercial trucks, buses and fire apparatus. None of its products were standardized and used different chassis, powerplants and other components.



This 1912 Victor chemical fire engine and hose wagon combination served in Buffalo, New York. The large tank on the running board is compressed air for the Kanawha system, which used compressed air instead of a chemical reaction to push the water out of the chemical tank.

November, 1910
THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE
73



VICTOR SIGHT-SEEING CARS
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650 Main Street, Buffalo, N. Y.



VICTOR FIRE TRUCKS

To offer such a broad product line, without standardization, required a very large, and expensive, parts inventory. This made manufacturing trucks, buses, and fire apparatus very expensive. This inefficiency made it impossible for Victor to compete with better run firms that had more focused product lines. By early 1912, Victor already was in serious financial trouble. Early in 1913, the company was bankrupt and went out of business.

The Ajax Fire Engine Works was founded in the City of Brooklyn in the 1890s. It manufactured hand-drawn chemical engines for municipal and factory fire protection. By the early teens, Ajax was building motor chemical engines using Ford Model T chassis. Ajax also built some triple combination pumpers. Ajax stopped building fire apparatus in the 1920s. Ajax probably was the last maker of hand-drawn fire engines to operate in New York State.

FIRE SERVICE

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Type 20



Type 21

There are more AJAX Chemical Fire Engines (on wheels) in actual service than all other makes of engines combined. More Ajax Chemical Engines are sold each year than all other makes combined. In one month, last year, the United States Government purchased 907 Ajax Chemical Fire Engines; 500 forty gallon, 100 sixty gallon, and 307 double tank engines.

AJAX Chemical Fire Engines

ARE APPROVED AND LABELED BY THE UNDERWRITERS' LABORATORIES, INC., OF THE NAT. BOARD OF FIRE UNDERWRITERS.

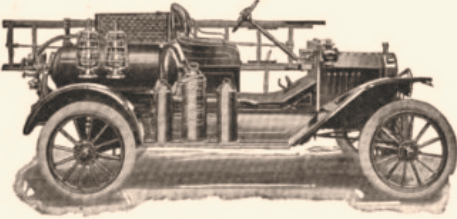
We manufacture a complete line of Chemical Fire Engines — 20 gallons, 25 gallons and 40 gallons upright type, 40 gallons light and heavy horizontal, 60 gallons, double 35 gallons, double 40 gallons, etc.

Also Double Tank Chemical Engines and Combination Chemical and Hose Cars on Ford Touring Chassis and Ford One Ton Trucks. Also Equipment and Bodies suitable for all makes of chassis. Also Hose Carts, Racks and Reels, Extinguishers, Ladders, Bucket Tanks, etc.

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Type 5

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Ajax Fire Engine Works

BUSH TERMINAL BUILDING TEN,
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, U. S. A.

This 1919 advertisement for Ajax is from Fire Service magazine.

There are many small volunteer fire departments in upstate and western New York that protect large districts with less than 2500 residents. These departments have neither the budget nor workload that would permit or require custom fire apparatus. They also face significant water supply issues in protecting districts that rarely have hydrants. This created a demand for affordable apparatus as well as tanker trucks. Several apparatus builders operated in this market niche.

Among the notable small local apparatus builders that operated in New York State is **Fitzgerald Custom Fire Apparatus**. Fitzgerald had a small facility in the Village of Cattaraugus, which is about 50 miles south of Buffalo. From the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s, Fitzgerald used a variety of commercial chassis to build pumpers, tankers, and brush trucks for the local volunteer fire service. Fitzgerald apparatus can be identified by its distinctive five-sided cut-out for the rear wheel wells.



This 1979 Fitzgerald 1800-gallon tanker was built on a Chevrolet chassis for the fire department in the Town of Boston in Erie County.



The Kaustine Furnace and Tank Company built this 1500-gallon tanker for the West Lake Road Fire Association on a 1958 Chevrolet chassis.

The **Kaustine Furnace and Tank Company** was founded in 1905 as the Kaustine Company, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The company manufactured chemical toilets. In 1915 the company moved its factory to the Village of Perry in Wyoming County, New York.

With the proliferation of indoor plumbing, the need for waterless indoor toilets declined. To survive the Kaustine Company changed its product line to include septic tanks and various other types of storage tanks. The company name also was changed to Kaustine Furnace and Tank Company to reflect this new product line. In the post-war boom, Kaustine started to build steel tank bodies for trucks. Eventually, the firm started building tankers for the fire service. These all served in western New York. By the early 1980s, Kaustine stopped building fire apparatus.

Another notable apparatus builder, which probably was the northernmost in New York State was the **Fire Apparatus Engineering Corporation**, which is better known as F.A.E. The company built fire apparatus in its factory located in the Village of Clayton. Clayton in Jefferson County is on the south bank of the Saint Lawrence River opposite Gananoque, Ontario, Canada.

F.A.E. built a variety of fire apparatus on commercial truck chassis from the mid-1930s to the late 1950s. F.A.E. maintained a sales office in Syracuse. Most of the approximately 50 pieces of apparatus built by F.A.E. served with rural volunteer fire companies in central and western New York.



The Fire Apparatus Engineering Corporation of Clayton built this pumper on a Brockway truck chassis for the fire department in Deansboro, New York.



The Fire Apparatus Engineering Corporation built this doorless open cab 500 gpm pumper for the fire department in Alma, New York. Today, this pumper is collector owned.

Ribley & Harpinger were one of the many companies that built structural fire apparatus for the U.S. Army for the protection of the scores of Army bases across the United States during World War Two. Ribley & Harpinger built this triple combination on a 1943 Chevrolet chassis. After the war, it was sold as surplus to the fire department in Bryans Road, Maryland.





The Valatie Fire Department in Columbia County operated this 500-gpm triple combination pumper that was built by Ribley and Harpinger.

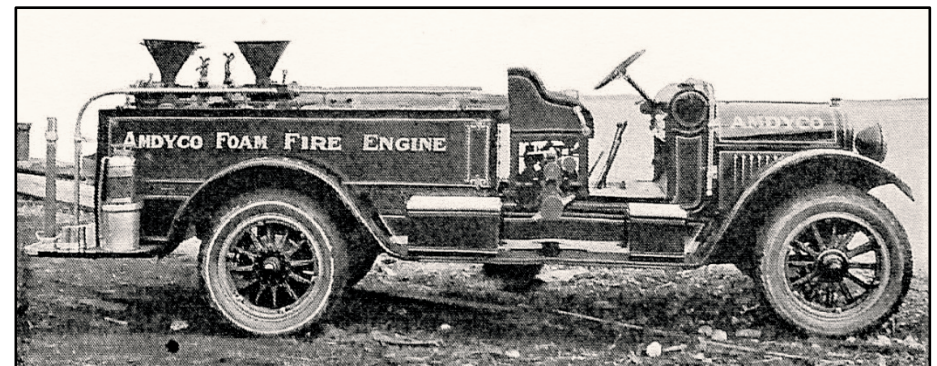
Ribley and Harpinger, Inc., was a small body shop located at 3702 State Street in the City of Schenectady. The firm started building fire apparatus sometime in the 1930s. At that time Schenectady was home to industrial giants General Electric and the American Locomotive Company.

Schenectady is part of New York's "Capital District," which includes the cities of Albany and Troy and the many suburban and rural communities that surround them. Ribley and Harpinger apparatus served with volunteer fire departments in these communities. These often were suburban districts or villages, many of which had hydrants in at least part of their coverage area. For these customers, Ribley and Harpinger used a variety of commercial chassis including Ford, GMC and Dodge to build mostly triple combination engines. Some of these had tanks as big as 1200-gallons.

By the start of World War Two, Ribley and Harpinger had built about 20 pieces of fire apparatus. During the War, the firm built several Class 500 structural pumpers for the United States Army. Ribley and Harpinger left the fire apparatus business sometime around 1964.

Part of the business world in every industry is one business purchasing another business or businesses merging into one company. This has been a predominant story line in the history of the fire apparatus industry. The most well-known of these stories, of course, is how the American-LaFrance Fire Engine Company, founded in 1904, traced its roots back to 1834. There were several less well-known fire apparatus builders in New York State that were acquired by other larger firms or changed names after a change of ownership.

The American Dyewood Company of New York City was better known as the **Amdyco Corporation**. In 1924, the firm developed a foam powder and foam generator for use on burning liquids, such as oil or gasoline.



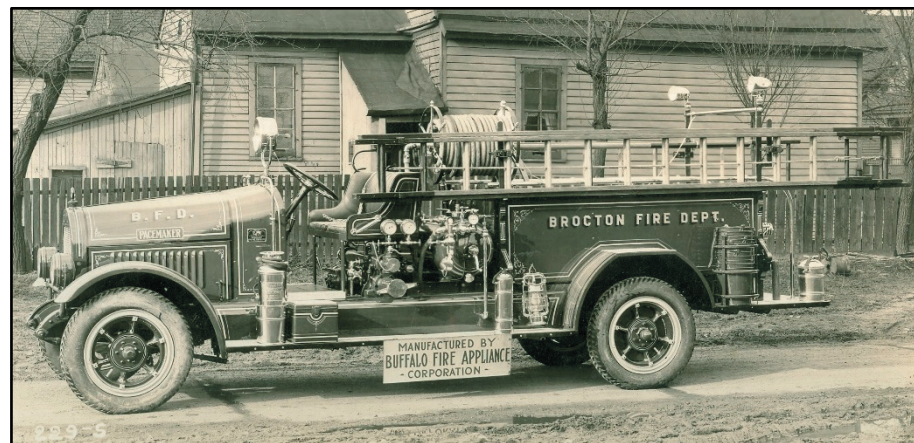
Introduced in 1924, the Amdyco Foam Fire Engine is significant as one of the first purpose-built industrial fire apparatus that was designed for fighting petroleum-based liquid fires.

The next year Amdyco started building motor fire apparatus using its foam system. These were called the “Amdyco Foam Fire Engine.” Amdyco also sold a model of triple combination pumping engine that was equipped with an Amdyco foam generator. These were called the “Amdyco Quadruple Combination.” These were significant as being an early purpose-built industrial fire apparatus designed specifically for fighting petroleum-based liquid fires. The success of Amdyco attracted the attention of the Foamite-Childs Corporation of Utica, which purchased Amdyco in August 1926.

The Selden Truck Sales Corporation was formed in 1912 by George B. Selden. Selden is among the more controversial figures in automotive history. In 1895 he received the first patent for a horseless carriage powered by an internal combustion engine. Although he never built a working model of his patent, Selden exploited this patent and patent law to profit from the innovations of early automobile makers. Selden’s scheme ended in 1912 after an epic nine-year legal battle with Henry Ford and other manufacturers.

The Selden Truck Sales Corporation built both commercial trucks and fire apparatus. The company was notable for offering one of the earliest manufacturer’s financing plans. In an era when automobile loans were generally not available, it was brilliant marketing. Selden did not build much fire apparatus. However, many Selden trucks were used by other firms to build fire apparatus. These included the Buffalo Fire Appliance Corporation and the O.J. Childs Company.

In 1930, the owners of the Hahn Motor Truck Company of Hamburg, Pennsylvania, purchased Selden Truck Corporation, and Selden production was moved to Pennsylvania. By that time, the economic downturn that had started in late 1929 was growing worse. In 1932, Hahn and Selden went out of business.



Selden did not build many complete pieces of fire apparatus but several firms used Selden trucks to build fire apparatus. The Buffalo Fire Appliance Corporation built this triple combination on a Selden Pacemaker chassis.

894
FIRE ENGINEERING
September 10, 1926

Selden

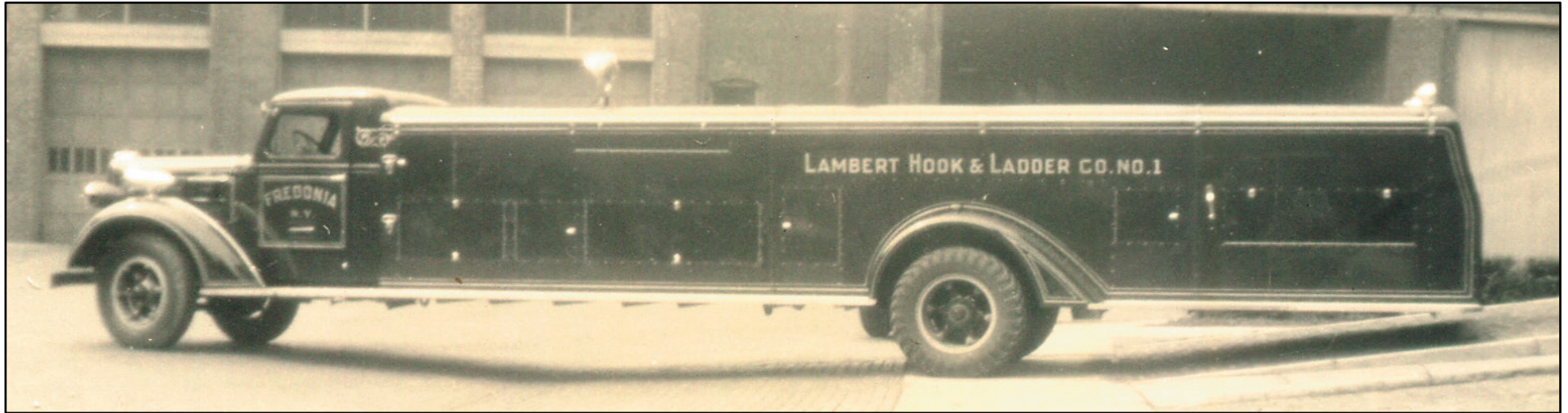
Performance and Beauty

Roadmaster chassis with 6-cyl. 72 H.P. motor, equipped with triple combination fire fighting apparatus including rotary pump and two 35-gallon chemical tanks in-service in the City of Lyons, N. Y., who are highly pleased with its performance. This is their third Selden Fire Truck.

SELDEN TRUCK CORPORATION, ROCHESTER, N. Y.



For a brief while Selden built its own complete fire apparatus. However, more Selden truck chassis were used by other New York companies to build fire apparatus. These included Buffalo and Childs. This 1926 Selden 500-gpm triple combination pumping engine served in Wrentham, Massachusetts.



In 1937 the Cayasler Manufacturing Company built this fully enclosed city service ladder truck on a Stewart truck chassis. It was 36 feet long. It was reported to be the first fully enclosed ladder truck built in America. It served the Fredonia Fire Department, in Chautauqua County, New York.

The **Case Manufacturing Company** was founded in 1932 by Allan Case. The firm built five fire engines over the next couple of years. Then brothers Theodore and Peter Geisler became partners and the company name was changed to Caseler Manufacturing Company. In 1935, Lester Young, a former executive at the Buffalo Fire Appliance Corporation, joined the firm. In 1937, Young became a partner in the company. The company name was changed again, and the Cayasler Manufacturing Company emerged.

During World War Two, Cayasler built Class 500 structural firefighting pumpers for the Army. In 1943, Cayasler received the Army Navy "E" Award for excellence in war production. That same year, Lester Young purchased a majority ownership interest in the company. In 1944, he incorporated the company as the Young Fire Equipment Corporation.



This 1935 Cayasler triple combination pumping engine was built on a Dodge chassis for the fire department in Frewsburg, New York.



This 1938 Cayasler pumper was built on a Ford chassis with a 500-gpm pump and a 150-gwt. It served in North Branch, New York.

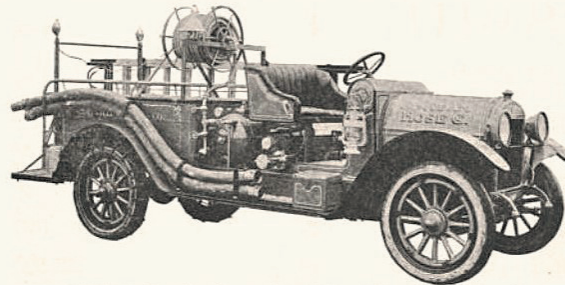


Cayasler built this 500-gpm pumper on a Chevrolet chassis for the U.S. Army in 1943. It later served in Willington Hill, Connecticut.

In 1899, Utica businessman Orlando J. Childs founded **the O.J. Childs Company** and purchased the business operations of Utica Fire Extinguisher Company. He expanded the product line to include a variety of hand extinguishers as well as hand and horse-drawn chemical fire engines for structural and industrial fire protection.

In the teens, Childs began to build a variety of motor fire apparatus. Childs advertised that “We mount our equipment on any type of chassis.” The company also did a lot of business selling fire apparatus bodies that were shipped to a customer to be mounted locally on a commercial truck chassis of the customer’s choice. By 1920, Childs was building pumping engines and triple combination pumpers and had a well-established national sales network.

HIGH GRADE MOTOR FIRE APPARATUS



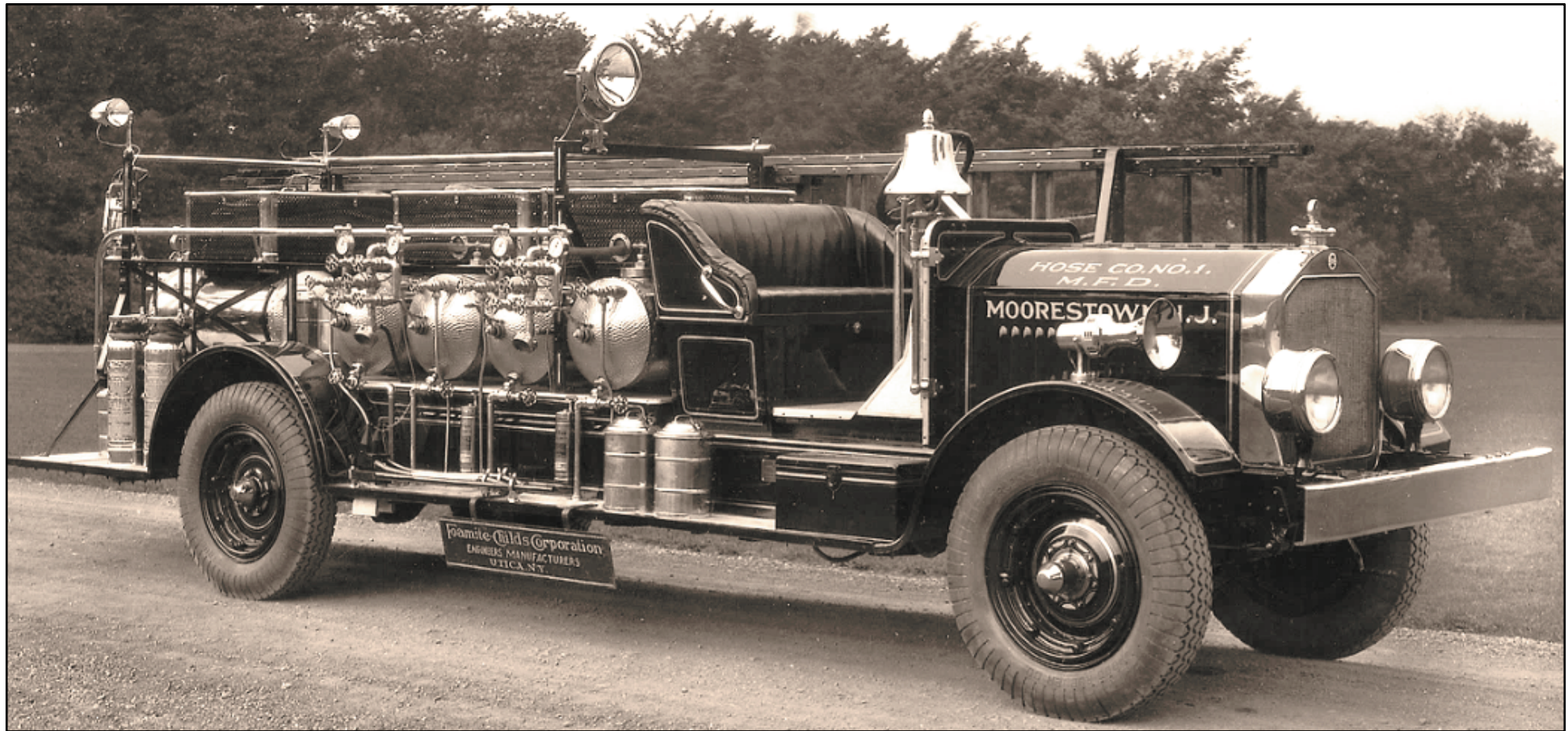
Triple Combination Pump, Chemical and Hose Car Equipment
Mounted On REO-Speedwagon Chassis

O. J. CHILDS COMPANY, INC.

FIRE APPARATUS
UTICA - NEW YORK

New York Chicago Boston Philadelphia	1265 Broadway 440 S. Dearborn St. 644 Old South Bldg. 1210 Arch St.	SALES OFFICES Pittsburgh Detroit	322 Fulton Bldg. 1723 Ford Bldg.	Cleveland Houston Atlanta Omaha	506 Bangor Bldg. 1106 Rusk Ave. Trust Co. of Georgia Bldg. 1113 Farnam St.
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The O.J. Childs Company of Utica had built a national sales network by the time of this 1921 advertisement in Fire Service.



Foamite-Childs built this unusual six tank chemical engine for the fire department in Moorestown, Pennsylvania.

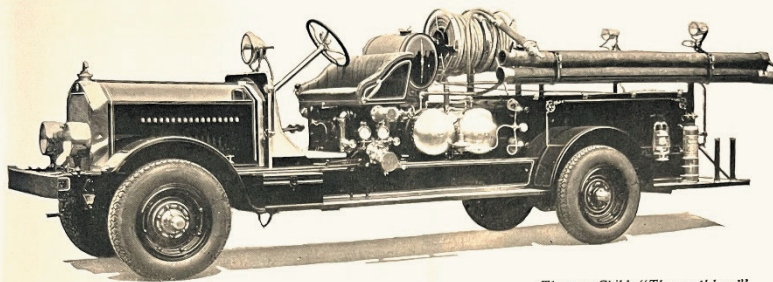
In 1922, the O.J. Childs Company purchased the Foamite Firefoam Company of New York City. Foamite Firefoam sold chemical foam fire extinguishers, which were effective in fighting burning liquids by smothering the fire with a floating layer of foam. The new company was known as the Foamite-Childs Corporation and continued to operate from Utica. In 1926, Foamite-Childs purchased the Amdyco Corporation to further expand its product line.

By the mid-1920s, the success of Foamite-Childs drew the attention of the American-LaFrance Fire Engine Company of Elmira. American-LaFrance was interested in Foamite-Childs' firefoam and chemical extinguisher products. In 1927, Foamite-Childs was merged with American-LaFrance to form the American-LaFrance-Foamite Corporation. The Utica factory was closed and all manufacturing was moved to Elmira.

January 12, 1927

FIRE ENGINEERING

7



The new Childs "Thoroughbred" Heavy Duty Fire Apparatus—available in all the usual combinations

Why we call it the "THOROUGHbred"

POWER alone wouldn't be enough. Nor speed alone. Nor even stamina. But when these and a dozen other desirable qualities have been developed over a period of thirty years and then combined into a unit that comes through the most severe tests crying for more punishment, "Thoroughbred" is the only name that does it justice!

This is not the place to attempt even an outline of the features which make the new *Childs* Heavy Duty Motor Apparatus a valuable addition to the fire-fighting equipment of any community. Our literature tells the whole story. And we believe you will find the prices of this new line an agreeable surprise.

FOAMITE-CHILDS CORPORATION

Fire Protection Engineers and Manufacturers

360 Turner Street, Utica, N. Y.

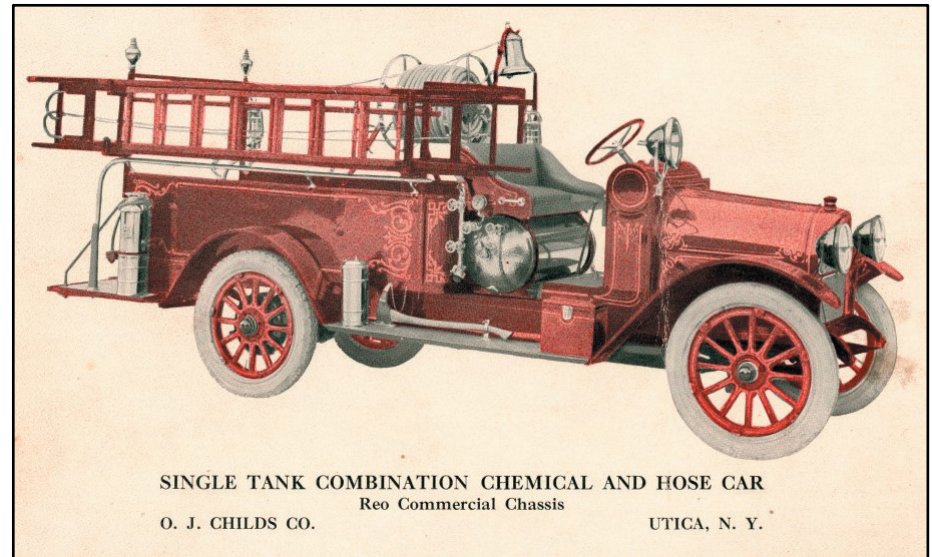
Sales and Engineering Representatives in all leading cities
Foamite-Childs of Canada, Ltd., Toronto, Ontario.

Foamite-Childs Protection

A Complete Engineering Service

Against Fire

O.J. Childs and later Foamite-Childs built apparatus on a variety of commercial truck chassis. The Thoroughbred was built on a Kerns-Dughie truck chassis, but was marketed as a mid-priced custom option.



SINGLE TANK COMBINATION CHEMICAL AND HOSE CAR

Reo Commercial Chassis

O. J. CHILDS CO.

UTICA, N. Y.

Reo truck chassis were a popular choice for apparatus in the 1920s.

Immediately east of the City of New York are Nassau and Suffolk Counties, which comprise the balance of the land mass known as Long Island. Suffolk and Nassau counties are the largest counties outside of New York with about 1,500,000 and 1,400,000 million residents respectively. To protect the communities on Long Island there are 181 fire departments. Many of these departments operate multiple stations. Altogether the fire departments on Long Island operate well more than 1000 pieces of apparatus.

During the post-war boom, the populations of Nassau and Suffolk Counties exploded and had quadrupled by the 1970s. This created a tremendous increase in the demand for fire apparatus. Several small firms operated on Long Island and provided an interesting variety of fire apparatus to local fire departments.

Garsite Products, Inc., operated from a factory in the hamlet of Deer Park in the Town of Babylon in Suffolk County. The company was founded in 1952. Garsite was a pioneer in the development of hydrant type aircraft refueling equipment and aircraft ground support equipment. In the mid-1950s, Garsite started building airport crash trucks. These included small rapid intervention vehicles as well as some massive crash trucks.

Garsite also built some industrial and municipal fire apparatus, most of which were tankers. Garsite tankers were used by fire departments in Nassau and Suffolk County, such as Jamesport, Huntington, Eastport and Flanders. In the late 1980s, Garsite ceased building crash trucks and fire apparatus and moved its manufacturing operations from New York State.



Garsite built this massive 4200-gallon tanker on a 1978 Autocar chassis for the Eastport Fire Department in Suffolk County.



The North Merrick Fire Department in the Town of Hempstead, Nassau County, operated this compact 1962 Garsite 500-gpm pumper that was built on a Ford C-600 chassis.

The **Van Buren Truck Body Company** started in business in the 1930s in the Village of New Hyde Park in Nassau County. The firm later moved to the neighboring Village of Garden City. Prior to World War Two, Van Buren sold and serviced commercial trucks and vans and had done body fabrication. In the late 1930s, Van Buren built its first fire apparatus. After the War, Van Buren continued to build fire apparatus, which included some interesting walk-in rescue trucks. Overall, fire apparatus comprised only a small portion of Van Buren's sales. Today Van Buren continues in business as Van Buren Truck Sales in Farmingdale.

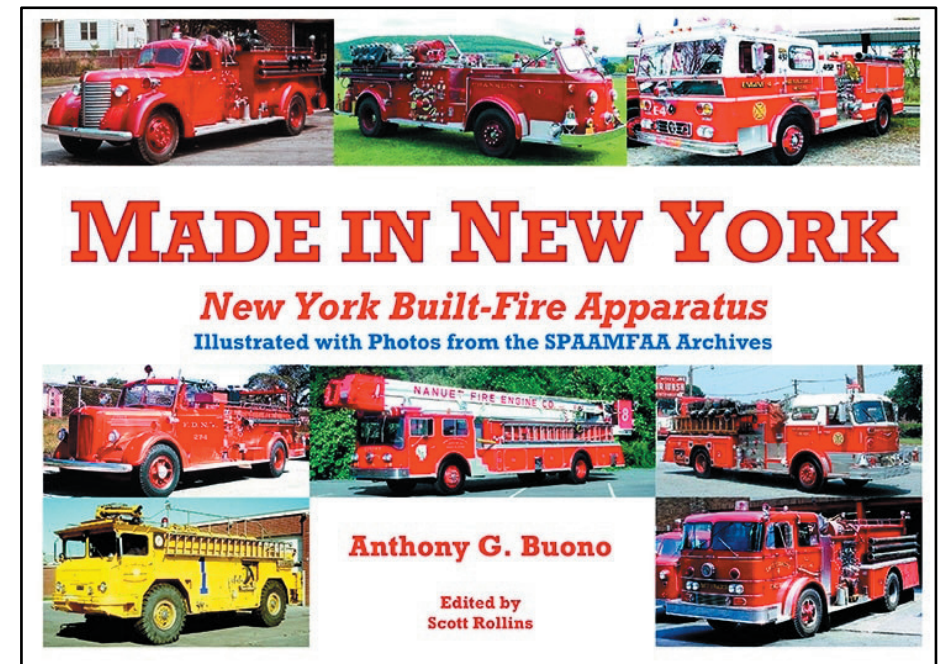


The fire department in East Rockaway, Nassau County, operated this Van Buren emergency squad that was built on a 1950 Mack Model A chassis.



The North Patchogue Fire Department in Suffolk County operated this Van Buren emergency truck that was built on a GMC chassis.

Copies of *Made in New York* still are available for purchase. All proceeds from the sale of *Made in New York* benefit the SPAAMFAA Archives. For a limited time, with your order of *Made in New York*, you will receive a bonus of two years of back issues of *Engine!-Engine!*



You can purchase your copy of *Made in New York* for just \$50 plus \$5 shipping through the SPAAMFAA website, **SPAAMFAA.org** or by using this QR code.

Homer, NY Fire Department Brockway

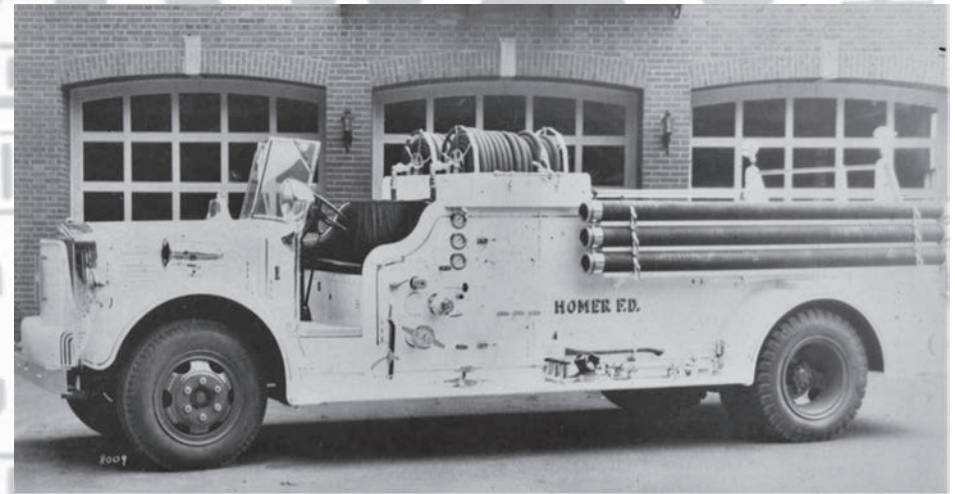
by Mahkon Irish Jr.

The Homer (NY) Fire Department had two Brockway/Fire Apparatus Engineering (FAE) pumpers, a 1939 and a 1950, the latter thought to be long gone. On social media some 50 years later, I saw a photo of a pumper lettered for Alma, NY and recognized it as the 1950 Brockway. I contacted the fire department to see if they still owned the truck. The answer was no, but they knew where it was.



The bare Brockway chassis ready to be taken to Fire Apparatus Engineering for the installation of the fire equipment in April of 1950. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.

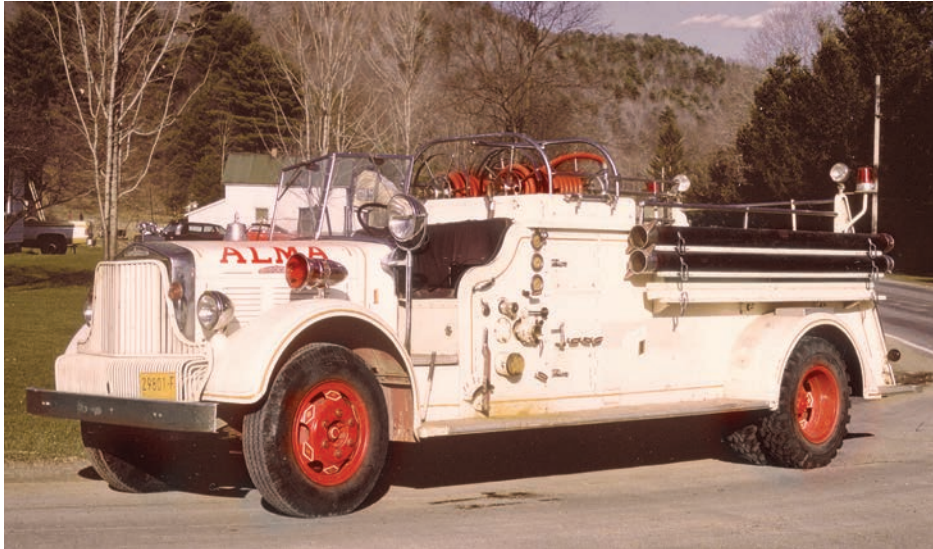
I received the contact information of the owner and searched for his address on Google Earth where I could see the rig sitting in a field on his property. I contacted the gentleman and asked if the Brockway was indeed still there and if he would be interested in parting with it. We discussed the history of the truck in Homer, NY and that I was the fire chief at the time of purchase during 1950. The owner said he would sell it, but he wanted me to come and physically look at the truck before we talked price.



The 1950 when delivered. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.

One Saturday morning, a few friends and I drove to western New York to a place called Belmont where the truck sat in the field just as I saw online. Having looked it over, we discussed price and came to an agreement. I made arrangements for transportation back to Homer and it returned to mate up with the 1939 on June 13, 2020.

The ownership of the truck can be followed all the way from the beginning to the present. Homer sold it to the McLean (NY) Fire Department in 1964-65 when Homer purchased a Mack pumper. McLean then sold it to the Alma (NY) Fire Department, which may have been around 1970. The specific years are unknown. The Brockway was then purchased from Alma by the Cline family and I purchased it from them in June of 2020.



The Brockway after Alma sold it. Photo from SPAAMFAA Archives.

This was the winter project for 2020-2021. The motor was not running, the fuel system needed work, the brakes did not work, the transmission needed adjustments, and the electrical system was in very bad shape. The body and exterior were in rough shape from sitting outside for nearly 20 years. After the winter months, hours and hours of work, and many dollars spent, the truck was running and in somewhat decent shape. The truck made its inaugural debut at the Homer Fire Department parade on June 12, 2021.

Restoration continued with bead blasting, paint, and gold leaf striping and lettering applied. I was also looking for period correct equipment as close as possible to when it was in service. After the additional work, it was ready for the 150th anniversary of the Homer Fire Department in 2023. It was also displayed at the annual Brockway Show held in Homer.



The back of the 1950 pumper, a tanker, and a LaSalle rescue truck assumed to be at a training of some sort. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.



The 1950 when found. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.



The Brockway as found in 2020. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.



Getting the Brockway ready to move to its new home. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.



The painting has begun. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.



Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.



The Brockway mascot was a Husky; the helmet is a nice touch! Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.



Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.



Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.

Fire Apparatus Engineering was a small regional builder of custom fire apparatus on various chassis. The factory building still exists at 300 James Street in Clayton (NY) and is pictured below.



Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.



Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.

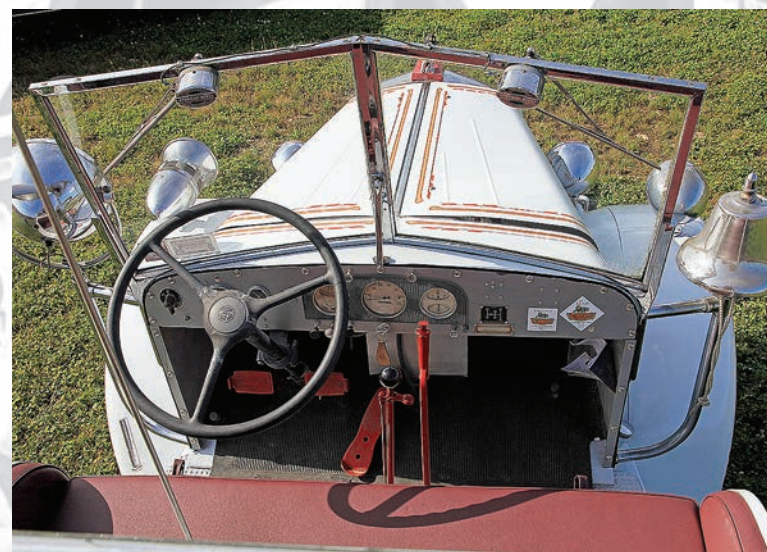


Photo by Richard J. Allen, Sr.



The 1939 and the 1950 together in 2021. Photo courtesy of Mahkon Irish Jr.



Owner's Pride

1945 Mack Pumper

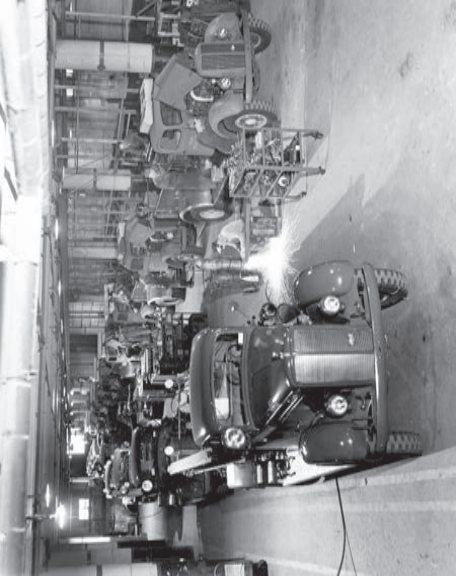
LaFayette (NY) Volunteer Fire Department

The LaFayette (NY) Volunteer Fire Department was founded on August 3, 1945. The Mack pumper was purchased just a few months later on November 14, 1945. The pumper was in service until the early 1970s.

Now fully restored and still owned by the fire department, the Mack attends parades in and around the Southern Hills of Onondaga County, New York.



Photo by Jay Erickson.



1945 Mack pumpers being built in the Mack factory in Long Island. The U.S. government allowed Mack to start building civilian fire apparatus again in 1945. Photo courtesy the SPAA/MFAA Archives.