

On June 23, 1923, thirteen men met together at the home of George Bartell located in the Tacoma Park Section of Westville Grove to form a volunteer fire company. After much discussion these members voted to name the organization The Tacoma Fire Company of Westville Grove.

The following men were responsible for forming the Tacoma Fire Company: George Bartell, Mr. Sprague, Mr. Hoffman, Elmer Angeroth, Harry Craig, Tom Quinn, Israel Blumberg, Lloyd Trowbridge, Al Frietas, Leon Little, Charles Brenner, Mr. Davidson, and George Vogel.

These men started to meet every Friday night at different homes to come up with ideas on how they were going to build a firehouse and choose a location. It took the men and ladies almost 2 years to raise enough money to build the firehouse and purchase a piece of equipment, a Winton 6 fire truck.

During this time both men and women from the newly formed fire company held dances and socials located at the New Sharon Firehouse and the Union Fire Company in Westville.

Finally, the day came when they had enough money to build their own firehouse. Under the direction of one of the members, Sam Magill, the building was completed and the first piece of fire equipment was placed into service.

The men and women were always doing something to raise money. They ran dances every Saturday night, made collections from coin tosses on a dirt road called Delsea Drive and even held boxing matches on the side of the firehouse. With the money raised from these affairs they had enough money to buy a new 1927 Chevrolet pumper. It took until 1935 to replace the Winton 6 with a homemade 1935 Ford tanker built by the members. By this time, the fire company was on the move and decided to place an ambulance into service that was formally housed at the VFW Post 2174. It became known as the Tacoma Ambulance Squad.

There was no official dispatch agency with call takers and home alerting devices for firemen, just places where the telephone would ring and the people answering would run to the original firehouse to sound the siren for a fire or ambulance call. The two people that took on this task were Mrs. Rita Angeroth, wife of Retired Chief Harold "Bubby" Angeroth and the Three Points Café owners Raymond and Connie Karlowicz. No one ever thought about 50 or 75 years of service to the residents or business in the Westville Grove protection area, let alone on June 23, 2023 a 100 years of service celebration.

In 1949, the fire company purchased a new F7 Ford chassis from Rice and Holman. The membership constructed the remainder of the fire truck by installing a 500 GPM pump along with a 750 gallon water tank. This vehicle replaced the 1927 Chevrolet. In 1956, a new Ford

Oren 750 GPM pumper was placed into service from the New Jersey Fire Equipment Company, replacing the 1935 Ford homemade tanker.

With the fire company well on its way, tragedy struck. On July 5, 1964, the old building caught fire and burned beyond repair, however the members saved the fire trucks. Now it was time to rebuild, under the direction of Chief Harold "Bubby" Angerth. With the building completed it was now time to replace the 1949 with a new 1965 Ford Thibault pumper and again, another setback with the Ford Motor Company factory strike. The new pumper would not be ready for service until 1966.

In 1966, a new turn in the fire service would have a dramatic affect on the Tacoma Fire Company and the 7 other fire companies in the Township of Deptford. The voters of Deptford Township approved the formation of a Fire District. With the Deptford Fire District now in place, equipment and apparatus replacement would be the responsibility of the newly formed 5-member Board of Fire Commissioners, thus easing the financial burden placed on the volunteer fire companies.

A central township wide call center formed which became known as the Deptford Fire Control. There were home alerting devices activated by radio along with the fire station sirens.

Moving further along, the Deptford Board of Fire Commissioner hired the first of full time career firefighters to supplement and aid the weekday daytime responses.

In 1971 a major apparatus replacement was made to replace aging pumpers located in the fire companies with the township. It was now time to replace the 1956 Ford Oren pumper with the fire company's first diesel powered 1250 GPM custom Imperial Pumper, one of the first of many future purchases to be made by the Deptford Fire District. The 1956 ford was relocated to our sister station, the Helping Hand Fire Company.

The fire apparatus of the Tacoma Fire Company was white over red in color and numbered Engine 951 and 952. The northern end of Deptford was protected by the Tacoma Fire Company of Westville Grove, Station 95, and Helping Fire Company of North Woodbury, Station 97. The two fire companies merged in 1999/2000 to provide better coverage for the north end by having both houses running together on all calls.

In 1986, the Deptford Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) purchased a 1986 Grumman 102' Aerial Cat Tower ladder to replace the 1968 Maxim 100' straight stick at the Almonesson Lake Fire Company. With this purchase, the 1968 Maxim Ladder was relocated to the Tacoma Fire Company to permit the Deptford Fire Department to have two aerial devices. This was done due to the Township's growth in industry, commercial and residential construction. The

Maxim was painted the white over red color to match the Tacoma apparatus and numbered 956.

During the year of 1986 The Tacoma Fire Company acquired its first Hurst rescue tool, a Hurst Omni Combination Rescue Tool. Engine 952, the 1971 Imperial was designated as a Rescue Pumper. Tacoma Fire Company received the older Hurst tools from the rescue after the BOFC took custody of the rescue truck from the Deptford Ambulance Association and placed the rescue truck in Blackwood Terrace Fire House.

During the year of 1995, the BOFC purchased a 1995 GMC Suburban 2500 for use at a command vehicle number 950. After the merger, the vehicle was repainted and given the number 920.

During the year of 1996, the BOFC purchased a 1973 Young/Snorkel from the Chews Landing Fire Company to replace the aging 1968 Maxim Ladder. The paint remained black over red and the Deptford Fire Department name and insignias were placed on the truck, however kept the designation of 956.

During the year of 1997, the BOFC made a major apparatus purchase to replace the Deptford Fire Department's aging fleet. Seven (7) KME units were purchased. 1 Rescue/Engine for Tacoma, 1 Foam Engine for Almonesson, 4 engines for Union, Oak Valley, Jericho and Helping Hand and a Cascade/utility for Community. This purchase also included a standard color of White over Black with a 6" gold stripe. This standard color came from the Deptford High School colors. At one time, the Deptford Fire Department, Deptford Police Department, Deptford Emergency Medical Services and Deptford Public Works vehicles all had some form of this color combination.

In 1999, The BOFC purchased a 1999 American LaFrance Eagle with a LTI 93' Mid-mount Tower Ladder that was a Demo unit. The Ladder was originally white over red and repainted the Deptford Colors of black and white with a gold stripe and numbered 956 before delivery.

During the year of 2000 the Deptford Fire Department completed a merger of all the stations, following the lead of Tacoma and Helping Hand Fire Companies. During this time the Deptford Fire Department went from eight separate fire stations with their own set of line officers to one Department, four Battalions, and seven Fire Houses. Tacoma Fire Company Station 95 and Helping Hand Fire Company Station 97 became Battalion Two and will be served by one Battalion Chief, a Fire Captain for each house, and Fire Lieutenants for each house and the company's fire apparatus will be numbered starting with 92. The fire station designations were now to go by their address. The Tacoma Fire Company became the Tacoma Boulevard Station and Helping Hand Fire Company became the Fisher Street Station.

During the year of 2005, the BOFC made another purchase of multiple engines to replace the aging fleet. Three (3) 2005 Spartan/Elite Engines were purchased and assigned to Tacoma Engine 923, Oak Valley Engine 912, and Almonesson Engine 934.

During 2011, the BOFC purchased a new rescue engine for Tacoma and the new Engine 921 was delivered. This Rescue Engine came equipped with New Hurst Rescue Tools including a Hurst MOC combination tool for the front bumper. The older Hurst Tools were kept on the truck, doubling the rescue capabilities. Paratec struts, airbags and other rescue tools along with new fire suppression equipment was purchased. Engine 921 later received a new designation as Squad 921 when the Squad Company concept was adopted.

2013 brought the purchase of a Chevrolet Tahoe as a new command vehicle for Battalion Two. This replaced the 1995 GMC Suburban that has been used by the Chiefs of Battalion Two.

During the year of 2015 brought the re-assignment of Brush Truck 925 to the Tacoma Station.

May of 2020, the Deptford Fire Department took delivery of a 2020 E-One 95' mid-mount tower ladder. This replaced the 1999 American LaFrance Tower Ladder.

If our founding members could have looked that far ahead, who knows how many more years the Tacoma Fire Company of Westville Grove would be able to provide the quality service that has been provided for the past 100 years.







