

Hook & Ladder Company No. 1

Year Organized: 1857

Year Disbanded: Became Truck 1 of the paid department in 1916

Motto: Always Ready

Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 Photos

Hook and Ladder Fire Company Number 1, Austin's first volunteer fire company, was organized on September 25, 1857. There are other dates mentioned, most notably August of 1858, as the "birth" of the Austin Fire Department. The year 1861 is also recorded on some fire department artifacts as the date of Hook and Ladder 1's date of organization. There is no specific reason why September 25, 1857 is officially considered except for the fact that the 25th is mentioned the most times in known fire department records. The Austin Fire Museum is interested in any information leading to a definitive answer on this question.

John Bremond, Sr., a prominent Austin merchant and former New York fireman, was about the only person in Austin who knew anything about the organization, drilling, and equipping of a fire company. Naturally, he was appointed first foreman of the newly created fire company.

The first truck and ladders were built exclusively in the city by a local blacksmith. This was a hand drawn truck, pulled by ropes, with wooden fire buckets. Later, possibly 1861, they purchased Austin's first horse drawn ladder truck that consisted of a two-horse team. Years later, possibly the 1880s, Hook and Ladder Number 1 purchased a Seagrave trussed hook and ladder, with tiller, and a three horse-abreast hitch.

The quarters in which Hook and Ladder Number 1 would keep their truck and meet for meetings bounced around the area of 6th Street and Congress Avenue until 1885, when the first Central Fire Station was built at 114 West 8th Street. Colorado Fire Company Number 2 was also housed at this station. This building went through several cosmetic changes and served the fire department from 1885 to 1938, when the current Central Fire Station was built at 501 East 5th Street.

