

2019

# History of Gray Maine - Fire and Rescue

Town of Gray

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# Town of Gray, Maine



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## HISTORY OF GRAY FIRE RESCUE

## Other Resources

# Contact Info & Hours

### Phone:

(207) 657-3931

(207) 893-2810 - Dispatch

### Emergency Numbers:

911

### Address:

Public Safety Headquarters

125 Shaker Road

Gray, ME 04039

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#)



The beginnings of the Gray Fire Department are recorded in George T. Hill's History, records and recollections of Gray Maine. It reports that in the 1880's a group of men organized a group of volunteers to fight fires. They called themselves the Gray Fire Company, and the town appropriated some money to buy equipment; buckets, axes and ladders. George F. Cobb, the town's hardware dealer at the time, bought the equipment for the town and, in order to keep the buckets from being lost, he had them painted red with GFC painted in bold letters in white. At the next town meeting one of the volunteers was asked to comment on the condition of the company's equipment. He said everything

requested had been delivered all right but that George F. Cobb had painted his initials all over the buckets. The equipment was stored in Hancock's Stable and this plus some hand held chemical extinguishers that would squirt their three gallons or so of mixture fifteen or twenty feet after being inverted, is all that was provided for the Gray firefighters prior to 1900.

In a newspaper article in the Narragansett Sun, dated Thursday April 16, 1914 it states that in 1909 a large number of hand fire extinguishers were purchased by individuals and were frequently called into use and proved to be of great value. Soon after that a piece of equipment known as "the chemical" was purchased. This consisted of an oblong copper tank, with a hose attached, mounted vertically by means of trunions to a two-wheeled carriage. The tank which was rounded at both ends, had a capacity of about 50 gallons.

Some years later a piece of equipment with two of these large tanks was bought and kept in the Town Hall. This piece had two cans the same size arranged so that while the fluid was being pumped out, the first one could be replenished from the barrel supply kept in reserve.

Town reports indicate monies were paid out to individuals for "fighting forest fires and for watching fires". A sum of \$100 was regularly raised each year and turned over to the Gray Fire Company.

By the fiscal year ending February 1915 the organization was called the Gray Fire Department.

### **Fire of 1921**

Fire broke out in the Steven's Hardware Store on December 30, 1921, and Gray's firefighting equipment, and that sent from neighboring cities and towns proved entirely inadequate, and seven structures burned to the ground. The buildings that were lost included, the Cole Marsden Building, Antonio's , the Cobb Building, and Steven's Hardware. Although the day was bitter cold, the men of the town of all ages appeared and organized themselves to fight the fire as best they could. Bucket Brigades were formed to bring water from wells and homes that were supplied by springs, and two of the younger men, Byron Hanson and Guy Prince, stationed themselves on the roof of the Archie Harris house where, exposed to severe injury from heat and smoke, they kept the roof wet and succeeded in putting out fires that started there. It was the opinion of many that if the Harris house had not been saved; the greater part of Gray Village east of Main Street would have gone up in flames.



*At the Heart of it All!*

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