**History of the Huntington Fire Department**

In April 1838, the citizens of Huntington banded together to form the “Huntington Mutual Fire Insurance Company. The rates charged were in direct correlation to the buildings distance from a water source and the type of material used in its construction. Although the buildings of the village were now insured, this did not slow the rash of fires. In 1843 several residents of the village held a meeting to discuss the matter of protecting the area from the growing threat of fire. At the meeting it was apparent that many residents were becoming fearful and it was decided to ask the villagers to volunteer for duty in a fire brigade. The residents responded wholeheartedly and Huntington’s first “fire company” was formed. In its early days the company’s equipment consisted of leather buckets and wood ladders. There was no central water supply in the village so the water used to fight fires came from wells, streams ponds and even cesspools. After a fire nearly destroyed Huntington Academy in January 1846, the existing Fire Company was still unable to raise funds for a hand pumped engine and continued to put out fires with leather buckets, bucket brigade style. In October 1858 the Protection Fire Company of Huntington reorganized as the Huntington Fire Company. The Fire Company purchased its first hand pump in 1860 from the Flatlands Fire Company of Brooklyn. It was originally built in 1845 and was nicknamed ‘Mercheen”. In 1861, a public fire well was dug on Main Street to help ensure an adequate supply of water would be available in the Village. A Hook & Ladder wagon was also purchased and it was built by the Leader Carriage & Wagon Works located on Green Street and Main Street in the Village. In 1862, the Fire Company incorporated and became known as the Protection Engine Company No. 1. A Chemical Engine Company was formed in 1878 and was an auxiliary unit of the Engine Company. In December 1887 the Hook and Ladder Company was formed with a new Hook and Ladder wagon with a single 20 and 24 foot ladders, two fire extinguishers and two dozen leather buckets.

The Huntington Fire District was formed on October 1, 1888 with the Engine Company and Hook and Ladder Company now known as the Huntington Fire Department. Installation of fire hydrants in the business area of the Village was completed in July 1893. On October 20, 1893, a third company was formed, the Protection Hose Company No.1. In 1902, the Department appointed Miss Mollie Todd the first Honorary Member of the Department. She was the daughter of Stephen Todd whose local livery stable supplied horses to the Department since 1887. In 1906 the Department received its first gasoline engine driven pump which was nicknamed ‘Little Darling’. The same year, the first telephone alarm system was installed in the Chiefs home and store which he then manually activated a gong to ring the fire bell at the firehouse to alert the Village firemen. One of the first motorized Fire Trucks on Long Island was received in 1910 with the arrival of a Grabowsky Hose Truck which could carry 1500 feet of hose and could tow the gasoline pump to a fire. In 1911, a motorized Grabowsky Hook and Ladder was received. The first motorized pumper was an American LaFrance which was received in 1922.

During the past 175 years between 1843 and 2018, the Huntington Fire Department has remained a very diverse organization. The Department is proud to currently have 102 members from all walks of life and ethnicity. We still have our original hand pumper, ‘Mercheen’, which will be pulled by members of the Protection Engine Company No. 1 during our Anniversary Parade on July 28th commencing at 4 PM from Huntington Town Hall on Main Street and ending at the Firehouse on Leverich Place with a block party for the community celebrating our 175th Anniversary.