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## RIVERTON FIRE COMPANY, INC. (STATION 241)

In a village of frame buildings, where fireplaces, candles, oil lamps and coal stoves were the norm, and where more than forty daily trains often belched out glowing embers that fell on roofs as they went by, fire was a constant threat. The cry of "Fire!" brought neighbors running with brooms, shovels, buckets, blankets — anything with which a fire could be brought under control and prevented from spreading.

In March 1890, a few weeks after a particularly disastrous fire at the Roberts Store on the point of Howard and Main streets, the Riverton Fire Company was organized. It incorporated on May 5, and was recognized by the Fire Commission, which placed the small "chemical engine" stored in Riverton in their care. The firemen went from door to door seeking funds with which to buy equipment and to operate, and were able to purchase a small engine shed, a hose cart, and fifty feet of hose. The following year they purchased a small lot on Howard Street above Fifth, and moved the hose house and equipment there. Just fifteen months after Riverton incorporated as a borough (in Dec. 1893) the young Council voted to rent space in the Fire Company's enlarged building for their meetings, and for elections; and space in the basement for a jail. Yearly rental: \$100.

Equipment gradually progressed from small hand-pulled and -operated carts to larger horse-pulled and steam-powered carts. In 1916 the Fire Company purchased its first motorized truck. In 1920 the fire equipment was turned over to the Borough, which from then on was responsible for the purchase and maintenance of new equipment. The Fire Company owns the property housing the equipment, and is responsible for maintaining and operating the building and grounds, as well as enlarging, strengthening, updating, insuring, and otherwise improving and adjusting the facility as needed to accommodate the ever increasingly large, and powerful equipment. Over the years abutting properties have been added to the original lot, and many renovations have taken place. In 1961, for example, a wing facing Fifth Street was added to the building for Borough Offices, which was remodeled for Police Headquarters in 1990 when the Borough erected its own municipal building.

The Company's income is realized from rental of space to the Borough for the Police facilities and for the fire fighting equipment, and through donations from Riverton residents. The Fire Company is involved in various community activities, such as safety programs, and

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responds not only to fire alarms, but also to vehicular accidents, downed power lines, water accidents and other emergencies. From 1936 to 1967 the firemen sponsored the children's games and races at the Park on July Fourth, and every child received free treats of ice cream, Cracker Jack, gum and other items such as jump ropes or cap canes. At school fairs children could have a ride on a fire truck. The Riverton Fire Company participates in parades, and always in Riverton's own Traditional Fourth.

Today's fire fighting equipment includes two Pumper trucks and a Ladder truck, as well as a walk-in Emergency truck and a rescue boat. The Company has an excellent working relationship with the companies of neighboring towns, covering for and working with each other as needed. Each volunteer fireman completes training at the Burlington County Fire School, and there are currently 66 members. This includes active, inactive and exempt members. New volunteers are always welcomed.

During the past year (1993) Riverton Fire Company answered 150 fire calls and 15 drills, with each active member averaging 250-300 hours given in response to calls and to maintaining the firehouse and its equipment.

A community's insurance rates are determined by the Board of Fire Underwriters, and reflect the quality of the fire protection there. Riverton has been awarded the highest rating.

Betty B. Hahle  
4th of July, 1994



#### **The Riverton Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary**

Standing (Left to right): Phyllis Moorhouse, Jenny Taffler, Edna McClellan, Debra Minvera  
Seated: Katherine Bishop, Ethel Hughes, Margaret Wark, Beth Reed, Ruth Yearly  
Not pictured: Linda Hollins, Michele Wittmer, Kate Roedig, Mary Odorizzi, Jackie Parkar,  
Betty Ruzyccki, Ella Zink and Fran Slawski

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## PARADE MARSHALS THE RIVERTON FIRE COMPANY LADIES AUXILIARY

Quietly working behind the scenes is a small group of women dedicated to supporting the volunteer firemen of Riverton. When there is a major fire they are there with coffee and foods for the fire fighters. They march with them in parades. And throughout the year they are busy raising funds to supplement the Fire Company's limited income. By holding hoagie sales, chicken dinners, and trips, the members of the Auxiliary furnish and maintain the kitchen in the firehouse, and contribute to the upkeep and upgrading of the Company's building.

Although early records have been lost, it is thought that not long after the Fire Company was organized in 1890, wives, sisters and daughters of the firemen formed a supportive group. In 1927, a Ladies Auxiliary was organized. In time interest dwindled, and the group disbanded.

The need was still there, however, and over the winter of 1948-1949 Mrs. Ann Carhart personally visited each fireman's family to urge their support and participation in a new group. She was successful, and was elected president of The Ladies Auxiliary of the Riverton Fire Company. Mrs. Frank Coddington served as treasurer, and Mrs. Dorothy Perkins was secretary. Thirty-five years later the Borough planted a Memorial Garden honoring Ann Carhart at the former site of the small railroad shelter above the tracks at the Broad/Main Street crossing — where she had also served as a Crossing Guard for many years. The Auxiliary marked it with a plaque recognizing her as Founder and Past President of the Auxiliary from 1948-1980.

Today Riverton recognizes and honors the members of The Ladies Auxiliary of the Riverton Fire Company: Catharine Bishop\*, Linda Hollins, Ethel Hughes, Edna McClellan, Phyllis Morehouse (treasurer), Mary Odorizzi, Jackie Parker, Dorothy Perkins\*, Catherine Roedig, Beth Reed (vice president/secretary pro tem), Betty Ruzycki, Fran Slawski, Jenny Taffler, Margaret Wark, Michelle Wittman, Ruth Yearly\* (president), Ella Zink (vice president/secretary).

Betty B. Hahle  
July 4, 1994

\*denotes Charter Member