

# New Berlin Gazette

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## History of the MORRIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

The following article was researched and prepared by Ted Johnston, former chief of the Morris Fire Department.  
The history of the Morris Fire Department can be traced back prior to the year 1880 and earlier. During this year of 1880 the "Engine & Townhouse" was constructed and besides housing the total fire fighting equipment, a hose cart and a hand drawn and operated pumper, the Townhouse is very similar to the way it appeared in the 1880's except for a vehicle door being added in the early 1900's. The Engine & Townhouse is located directly across from the present Morris Fire Station. The original fire bell still hangs in the bell tower of the Engine & Townhouse. It is said that this bell has a tone very distinct and unlike any other bell in the village.  
Unfortunately on September 8, 1883 this bell tolled to alert the village of fire. This fire destroyed the entire side of Main Street taking with its flames some 20 businesses. This happened of the present site of the Kenyon House, the post office and the H. W. Naylor Co. This fire was probably the largest fire to hit the village of Morris.  
Up to this time in history the fire fighting was left up to whom ever was willing to respond to the fire bell and willing to help. On September 7, 1885 the formal organization and the first 13 by-laws of the original "Active Hose Company of Morris" were written and adopted. This is the date we use as our official beginning.  
During the beginning, the village was actually protected by two fire companies, the first being the Active Hose Co. of Morris and the other being the "Rescue Engine Co. of Morris". History or records of the "Rescue Engine Co." are apparently nonexistent, however, mention is made of it in the bylaws of the "Active Hose Co." bylaws and again in 1898 in a promotional flyer presented by Morris Bank. The flyer stated, "The Village of Morris is very secure from the ravages of fire by the existence of two fire companies, the Active Hose Co. of Morris and the Rescue Engine Co. of Morris".  
The usual fire department business such as fires, parades, drills and social events took place during the early 1900's. One such event was an invitation from the "Eagle Hose Company" (Gilbertsville Fire Department) to attend their 30th anniversary celebration.  
During the years 1915 through 1922 the organizational structure of the Active Hose Co. was rather lacking, with mention made in the minutes of the fires fought but no formal meetings during this time. In 1922 a meeting was held to reorganize the Active Hose Co. One year later in 1923 Mr. Ralph Aplin joined the Active Hose Co. Ralph is one of the oldest members of the fire department and the oldest living ex-chief.  
It was during this same meeting that Ralph joined that a very involved discussion ensued regarding raising money to purchase a "Motorized Fire Engine". In 1928 a "Republic" was purchased and this was the first piece of motorized equipment in the village. It was also in this year that the name of the fire department was changed from the "Active Hose Company of Morris" to the present day name of the "Morris Fire Department". During the early 1930's the need for a rural fire truck was apparent and one was acquired. The fire department was also in need of trained personnel in first aid. The purchase of an inhalator by the fire department and the attendance of several members at numerous first aid classes from the year

1933 up to the formal organization of the Morris Emergency Squad in 1963 demonstrated the continuing need for this valuable service in the community.

After World War II in 1945 the original fire bell was replaced by the present electric siren which is still serving the fire district faithfully. In 1946 the Morris Fire Department was instrumental in the establishment of the Fireman's day at the Otsego County Fair. This is a tradition that has continued to date. 1948 was the year that the rural fire protection district was established to provide more adequate fire protection to rural residents of the Town of Morris and in 1957 a fire numbering system was implemented to better identify these residents in the event of an emergency. This system is still in operation today and is updated each year on a regular basis.

1963 heralded the organization of the Fire Police squad and the Emergency Squad. The Morris Emergency Squad took over the operation of the village ambulance and has provided excellent professional service to the fire district on a 24-hour-a-day basis since that time. Two of the Emergency Squad's oldest members, William Pickens (a charter member) and his wife Jackie Pickens just recently retired after giving 22 and 21 years respectively of devoted service to the emergency squad.

The former locker plant which was directly across the street from the original Engine & Townhouse was purchased by the fire district in 1965. The necessary modifications were made to the building and this became the new and present home of the Morris Fire Department. The following year the Morris Fire Department hosted the last Fireman's Convention until now. This was also the year that the fire reporting system was changed to have 10 "fire phones" installed in various residents and businesses in the village. Prior to the system the telephone operators at the Dimock Hollow Telephone Office would receive all emergency calls and either blow the siren or call the necessary people to man the ambulance.  
A new addition was added to the rear of the fire station in 1978. The purpose of this addition was to provide a meeting and dining room and also a complete kitchen. The entire fire station was torn down in 1980 with exception of the front brick face, the bathrooms and addition of two years prior. The fire station was enlarged to almost twice the area of the original capacity. Both of these projects were done through private contributions of many generous individuals and the fund-raising efforts of the men and women of the Fire Department. Prior to this enlargement of the fire station, 6 vehicles had to exit through two doors which created a very hazardous situation.  
Pagets came to the Morris Fire District in 1982. These devices are worn on the belts of all active members of the Fire department and emergency squad and coupled with the answering of all emergency calls, by trained, professional dispatchers at the Control Center in Cooperstown, have greatly reduced our response time and have proved to be a vast improvement in the emergency services of Morris.

A new 1984 American LaFrance 1000GPM pumper was recently added to the arsenal of the fire fighting equipment of the Morris Fire Department. At present, equipment housed in the Morris Fire Station consists of a Chevy advanced life support ambulance; a four-wheel drive Dodge brush truck with a 10-ton winch and pumping capabilities; a four-wheel drive International 500GPM front mounted pumper; a Ford rescue van equipped with special rescue, fire fighting and lighting equipment; an International 750GPM midship tanker; and a Ford 1500 gallon Tanker.  
This year, 1985 marks the 100 plus years of the fire protection to the residents of Morris. In reviewing the history of the Morris Fire Department, one can only hope that the second hundred years will be as aggressive and successful as the first hundred have been. Using the quote from the flyer mentioned earlier in this history, "The Village of Morris very secure from the ravages of fire..."

**Chiefs of the Morris Fire Department**  
1885-1886 — J. McNitt  
1887-1896 — Unknown  
1897-1902 — William Southern  
1903-1904 — H. Hoag  
1904-1907 — G. Bedell  
1907-1908 — Howard Sloan  
1908-1910 — George Strait  
1910-1914 — George Wood  
1914-1922 — George Strait  
1922-1923 — Lee Colburn  
1923-1924 — Scott Gage  
1924-1926 — George Mansfield  
1926-1927 — Dean L. Davis  
1927-1928 — Lewis K. Myers  
1928-1929 — Viggo Klindt  
1929-1937 — Bert Leska  
1937-1946 — Ralph Aplin  
1946-1953 — Charles Miller  
1953-1958 — Dan Gassler  
1958-1961 — Bert Birdsall  
1961-1967 — Ralph Goodier  
1967-1971 — Art Sherman  
1971-1982 — Henry Rehrmann  
1982-1985 Ted Johnston  
1985 — Stan Leonard

**MORRIS**  
Leta Goodier Car.  
Phone 263-5175  
Ralph Emmerson has moved into Fred Johnson house on South Broad Street, Morris. This is the former George Mansfield home.  
Arthur Pickens was a dinner guest of Mr. and Mrs. David McCall to celebrate Arthur's birthday recently.  
Herbert Wagner of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, is visiting family and friends.  
John Pickens and friend Barbara O'Meara from St. Augustine, Florida, are visiting family and friends.  
Mr. and Mrs. Fay Wilcox attended the Colburn reunion held at Bemis Grove, Sunday. About 69 family members attended. Mrs. Wilcox's mother, Inez Hoag was the oldest member present.  
Robert Andrews of Southwick, Massachusetts; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schuster and daughter Amy of Bucyrus, Ohio; Leroy Perry, Oneonta were weekend guests of Ethel Andrews and Edna Perry. Mrs. Schuster was the former Marilyn Andrews, daughter of Ethel Andrews.  
Don and Joyce Foote and Don's sister, Dorothy and husband, Marvin Johnston of Hamilton, Ohio. They took a months vacation touring the western states. While on their vacation they stopped in to see Madeline and William Wells of Missoula, Montana.

Janice and Don Patten, Sterling, Massachusetts; Keith and Ellen Costello, Rutland, Massachusetts; and Barbara and Robert Costello were camping for a few days last week Center Harbor, Winnisquam, New Hampshire. While there they toured the lake area. Later they spent time with their children at Rutland and Sterling, in Massachusetts.  
Jan Marie Costello and children Casey and Tyler are spending a week with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hoyt of Maple Grove.  
James Carr came home Wednesday on a 10 day leave from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He has been reassigned and will report August 4 to academy Prep School in Fort Monmouth New Jersey. Jim is enjoying seeing his friends.  
Karl Bandvad is enjoying his sister and brother and sister-in-law from Denmark. They will be spending a few weeks here.  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Milliken's nephew, Tom Kilpatrick and son Craig of Richmond, Virginia were guests over last weekend.  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Eccleston of Frankfort were guests of Kenneth and Ruth Eccleston, Saturday July 20 at their home in Morris.  
Helen Douglas was supper guest of her son and wife, Ronald and Louise Douglas West Exeter last Friday night.  
Larry and Carlet Brownell and daughters Tanya and Melinda of Frankfort were guests of their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Eccleston in New Berlin, Sunday.  
Tuesday Archie and Harriet Sawyer of Unadilla and Florida called on Charles and Mabel Fay. The Sawyers are former Morris residents.  
Charles and Mabel Fay and Cindy Miller and daughter, Tiffany called on Clayton and Ellen Bellows at their camp in Sylvan Beach, Sunday.  
Naylor Company employees are vacationing for two weeks.  
Jesse and Nancy Rozell and daughter Lori spent last week at Sylvan Beach on vacation.  
Wednesday, Sophie Dixon and son Neal attended a luncheon bridal shower held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Lavman on Otsego Lake, Cooperstown, in honor of their future

daughter-in-law, Susan Numann.  
The annual Elliott and Lull reunion was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Elliott, Sunday, July 20.  
Gregory and Dorothy Cooke of Delphi Falls were guests of Kenneth's their parents, Kenneth and Lucy Cooke, Sunday.  
Mr. and Mrs. Roland (Skip) Gassler of Elbridge spent the weekend with his parents, Daniel and Dorothy Gassler. Saturday they all attended the Gassler reunion held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hoover of Binghamton.  
Wednesday Lyle and Vera Hoag went to their camp at Beaver river and Friday Vera's sister and husband, Lura and Howard Todd joined them. They all came home Sunday and report a nice weather and good relaxing time was enjoyed.  
Friday Sunday, July 19 to 21 William and Betty Hoag of Lowville visited their mother, Madge Hoag. Their daughter, Tracie (Hoag) Allen and her daughter Heather came and visited her cousin, Dara Tracy of New Lisbon, Sunday they all went to dinner at the DeerPath. Mr. and Mrs. Shane Hoag and family, Mr. and Mrs. Royal Blanchard of Crieda, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart and Irene Green of Oneonta, Leonard Green of Schenectady and Elizabeth Blanchard of Utica joined the rest of family for dinner to celebrate Stuart and Irene Green tenth wedding anniversary.  
Mr. and Mrs. Earl Pickens hosted Phyllis family Thursday. Present through Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. Howard Moore and son David and friend, son, James and wife and his son, Jonathan. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Luft of Fonda and sons Paul and Jacob and daughter, Janice, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Fendick of Afton, Calvin Moore of Binghamton, Mr. and Mrs. William Sylvia of Rosendale of Norton, Virginia, and son, Joshua and a daughter, Emily, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Piquet of Dublin, New Hampshire and Mrs. Alice Griggs of Franklin Mountain, Oneonta, who is Phyllis aunt. Five generations were present.  
Mrs. Deborah Card, Mrs. Raymond Card accompanied by Mrs. Clark George of Garrattsville, attended the opera, "Cosi Fan Tutte", Sunday afternoon, held

in the Cooperstown School Auditorium.

### B V. SENIOR CITIZENS

For the first time, the Morris Senior Citizens held their annual picnic in the Morris Community Park, with forty-five present. Three guests, William and Lucille Anderson, who are visiting in the Morris area and Harlow Pickens.  
When the group arrived, the tables were all decorated with oil-cloth covers of different colors making it very colorful, blending in with the area foliage. Stanley Davis and Kenneth Cooke did all the planning for that part. A smogboard dinner was offered, with many different varieties of food.  
There wasn't any monthly meeting, but a collection was taken to build up the bank account. A small program took place with Kenneth Cooke and his organ with a "Happy Birthday" song for Ava Sprague, whose 85th birthday fell on Wednesday. Bingo was played, prizes were canned goods with several people being lucky. Harlow Pickens joined the Club.  
The group left early as the weather was on the chilly side. Next meeting August 27. Mabel Card publicity chairman.

### MORRIS UNICORNS 4-H

The Morris Unicorns 4-H Club members have been busy with two craft projects.  
The members made fluffy bales with wreaths with the help of Dan Hammond, teen reader. These were decorated for different holidays and seasons through the year and are used on walls or doors.  
Mrs. Linda Kay, as a project leader, helped several members make piggybanks topped with soft sculpture pigheads.  
The last two Club presentations were given by Julie Page

who did a table topic about her trip to Syracuse to see "Prince" concert and by Dan Hammond, who gave the club picture tour of Washington, D.C. The pictures were taken during the 4-H citizenship; Washington Focus award trip which he and three other county 4-H'er's participated in.  
The club horse show planned for late July had to be cancelled. Club members who participated in this two day 4-H Horse Camp were Ann Yurenka, Kelly Baker, Kelly Clarke Julie and Dawn Page and Dan and Eric Hammond, Eric Hammond, reporter.

According to a recent survey, most Americans prefer shrimp cocktail as their favorite appetizer.



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ANY STUDENT THAT HAS BOWLED IN AN ADULT LEAGUE OR AN ADULT TOURNAMENT IS NOT ELIGIBLE  
AGES 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10 — 6:30 P. M.  
AGES 11-13 AND 14-18 — 8:00 P. M.

NAME	ADDRESS
AGE	PHONE

MAIL ENTRY TO:  
**ROGER CHASE**  
61 So. Main St., New Berlin, NY 13411