

guards against fire, and among the earliest ordinances of the Town Council were those fixing severe penalties for carelessness in the use of fire. About 1850 the first effort was made to provide means for fighting fires in the town. Wells were dug at street intersections, namely Forsyth and Washington, Forsyth and Newnan, and Newnan and Adams. The town fire bell hung from a tower built over the well at Newnan and Adams Streets. Ladders were kept under sheds near the wells. Upon the discovery of fire the citizen rushed to the middle of the street and headed for the fire bell, yelling "Fire" at the top of his voice at every jump. The clanging of the fire bell brought out the entire male population of the town and a line was formed to pass buckets of water from the nearest well to the burning building; Bay Street received its supply from the river. Usually one man assumed the role of director and gave the orders, which amounted to "Water, water; hurry up there, more water". Not long after the wells were provided, the first fire apparatus was acquired; it was a water pump worked by handles on each side, negroes furnishing the power. In the big fire of April 1854, quoting from a local newspaper of the time, the "fire apparatus unfortunately fell into a situation which brought it into contact with the flames, and it was lost". So ended the history of Jacksonville's first fire "engine". There was no organized fire-fighting force in Jacksonville before the War Between the States.

On January 10, 1868, a volunteer company, called the Friendship Hook and Ladder Company, was organized to afford protection to the town in case of fire. This was Jacksonville's first organized fire company. The Mechanics Steam Fire Engine Company was organized February 3, 1870, and soon afterward the Aetna Steam Fire Engine Company supplanted the old Friendship Company. Four other companies were organized in 1870, making six in all, and these composed the Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department, which early in 1871 was officered as follows:

Chief Engineer, A. J. Russell.

First Assistant, Theo. H. Willard.

Aetna Steam Fire Engine Company, J. J. Holland, Foreman.

Mechanics Steam Fire Engine Company, T. E. Buckman, Foreman.

Alert Hose Company, Byron Oak, Foreman.

Phoenix Hose Company, H. A. L'Engle, Foreman.

Americus Hook and Ladder Company, J. Marzyck, Foreman.

Mechanics Hose Company, William Marzyck, Foreman.