



Greetings,

Very few occupations have as colorful history as the fire service. Granted, there are probably individuals who collect the memorabilia of any number of professions that feel equally strong about their legacy. But, the fire service has a unique setting for its historical review. Fighting fire has been a function of civilization long before the Roman Empire came into existence. It has changed drastically with the introduction of technology. Yet, it is considered to be one of the most tradition bound professions. What is it that makes the fire services history such a contradiction?

The answer could possibly be found in the fact that the fire service is a very simple and yet complex industry that is constantly changing, and simultaneously looking backwards into its past in order to understand its future.

As chairman of the National Fire Heritage Center, I have frequent opportunity to visit local museums as well as nationally and internationally recognized ones. I get ample opportunity to witness both our success and failures in keeping track of the history of the fire service. The NFHC motto is "preservation of the perishable." This focus allows me to make the observation that the current efforts to develop a Marin County fire history is significant because it has become a depository of some of those perishable components. Those who sponsored and implemented this project are to be commended for their foresight in celebrating the contributions of those from the past.

Many years from today someone will visit the display and be grateful that it was assembled before it was destroyed by the passage of time and lost due to apathy. Please accept my congratulations for the extraordinary effort that has been undertaken to preserve the history of the Marin County fire service.

Ronny J Coleman
President
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CC: Wayne Powell, Executive Director, NFHC