

# **BAY RIDGE AND ENGINE 241, 100 YEARS OF SERVICE**

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Bay Ridge, along with what would become the town of New Utrecht was bought from the Nyack Indians in 1647. Because of the color of the clay, Bay Ridge was first called Yellow Hook and then changed its name to Bay Ridge in 1853. Bay Ridge was a village in the town of New Utrecht, which was one of the six towns to make up the City of Brooklyn. The City of Brooklyn annexed the town of New Utrecht on May 3, 1894 along with the towns of Gravesend, Flatbush and Flatlands.

Fire protection in New Utrecht's dates back to 1827. Bay Ridge had three volunteer fire companies when the City of Brooklyn annexed the area. Bay Ridge Engine 1 was placed in service in a one story wood frame building on Bay Ridge Avenue near Third Avenue. In the rear was a bell tower to sound the alarms for a fire. Neptune Engine 2 was located on Sixty Seventh Street near Third Avenue. It was also a one story wood frame shed. Bay Ridge Ladder location remains a mystery to this day. It might have been located in with Engine 1 on Bay Ridge Avenue. New Utrecht volunteer fire department had grown to four steam fire engines, one hose company and five ladder companies.

The City of Brooklyn would provide fire protection into the newly annexed area once firehouses were built, equipment bought and manpower hired. Until this was done, the City was responsible for keeping the volunteers active. The volunteers would respond to fires and receive \$1000.00 a year for their service from the City of Brooklyn until being replaced. The last fire the Bay Ridge volunteers attended was on Cowenhoven Lane and Stewart Avenue. The saloon and home of John Stoltz burned to the ground after a fierce early morning fire.

On February 1, 1896, the volunteer fire department of the late town of New Utrecht was replaced with a paid department. Bay Ridge's first paid fire companies were Engine 41 and Ladder 13. Both companies were placed in service on the same day, along with Engines 42, 43, 47, 53, and Ladders 14, 15, 19, and 24, all in the former town of New Utrecht.

In the law annexing the new area, Brooklyn could hire forty-three members from New Utrecht's volunteer fire companies. The members picked for Engine 41 and Ladder 13 were John R. Hanson, J. H. Van Pelt, Harry Martin, Albert Lyons, Michael Johnston, James Hennessy, John R. McIntosh, Ruppert Werner, Fred

Wardell, John Erickson, and Elmore H. Wardell. The Foreman and Assistant Foreman came from other Brooklyn fire companies.

A new firehouse was built for Engine 41 and Ladder 13 on Bay Ridge Avenue near Ridge Boulevard. The lot was bought from the heirs of Joseph A. Perry for \$1,800.00 on March 27, 1895. The lot measured 30 feet in the front and 100 feet deep. A beautiful two story, two bay firehouse, measuring 27 feet by 87 feet was built by the Leonard Brothers for \$14,792.00. On the first floor was room for the steam fire engine, hose wagon and ladder truck, in the rear were the stalls for six horses and hay bins. The second floor had offices for the foreman and assistant foreman, a bunkroom, sitting room and a bathroom

In all of the annual reports put out by Brooklyn since 1869 it is always mention that the fireman had the latest and most modern convinces for their comfort. In the 1896 report a new item was added to every firehouse in the City, "... a water heater, which supplies hot water for bathtub and wash basins. This improvement was a great boon to the fireman, particularly upon returning from fires tired and covered with smoke and dust, to have the convenience of taking a refreshing bath, without the risk or danger of taking cold, which was the case in former years, when only cold water was obtainable".

The firemen of 1896 did not have to worry about "do I go to work today" or finding a mutual partner. The work chart for the Brooklyn Fire Department was simple, 24 hours a day, six days on and the seventh day off. Twice a day, a fireman could go home for a two-hour meal period. The paid was around \$1,000.00 a year. Members were detailed to other companies to relieve for a day off or meal break. In Manhattan, the work chart was ten days on and one day off.

One of Engine 41 and Ladder 13 first fire did not go well for them. On May 25, 1896, a fire was discovered in a shed on 67th Street and 3rd Avenue. The chemical tank of Ladder 13 was placed in service which had little effect on the fire. By this time, the fire had spread to the former quarters of Neptune Engine 2, next door of the fire building, before water could be found in a cistern. The second due engine hooked up to the closest hydrant at 59th Street and 3rd Avenue only to run short of hose and had to make a trip to back to the firehouse for more hose. The third due engine from Fort Hamilton arrived with a line of hose from Bay Ridge Avenue and these two hose lines put the fire out. A total of four buildings were burnt with a loss of \$10,000.00.

The Cities of New York, Brooklyn, Long Island City, the Bronx, the western part of Queens county, and Staten Island merged into the five boroughs of New York on January 1, 1898. The Fire Departments of New York City, Brooklyn, and Long Island City merged on January 28, 1898, along with all the volunteer companies in the area. After twenty-three months in Brooklyn, Engine 41 and Ladder 13 became Engine 41 & Ladder 13 of the Brooklyn & Queens Fire

Division of the New York City Fire Department. On April 15, 1898, Ladder 13 was disbanded as a separate fire company and the ladder truck assigned to Engine 41 to make it a combination company of an engine, hose wagon, and ladder truck. All the members were assigned to the engine company.

To avoid the confusion of two Engine 41s, one in Brooklyn and the other in the Bronx, the companies in Brooklyn and Queens were renumbered on October 1, 1899. Brooklyn Engine 41 became Engine 141. The ladder companies were given 50 to the number, thus Ladder 1 became Ladder 51. The companies were renumbered again on January 1, 1913, Engine 141 became Engine 241.

Combination Engine 241 was disbanded along with five other Combination Companies on May 15, 1914 and reorganized as a single engine company. Three new motorized ladder truck companies were placed in service, replacing the five horse drawn units. Ladder 147 was placed between Engines 240, 248, and 250, Ladder 148 between Engine 247 and 250, and Ladder 149 between Engines 241, 242, & 247.

The fire horse would be given a high place in fire service history. They were treated better than the men. The department had an ambulance to take the horses to the horse hospital when hurt or sick. Some say that the horses could count the bells and knew which ones they responded on. After a fire on a cold snowy winter's night the horses would come back to the firehouse and the firemen would dry the horses, feed them and brush them down, then the men would take a hot bath, change clothes and warm up. The upkeep on the horse for one year was around \$800.00 a year, a new motor operated apparatus cost \$64.00 for fuel. Engine 241 lost its horses in 1922 when they received a new American LaFrance 700 gpm-pumping engine.

The need for a ladder company in Bay Ridge had been felt since the ladder truck was placed out of service in 1914. On February 1, 1939 Ladder 109 was moved from 4th Avenue and 19th Street to Engine 241's quarters. The City of Brooklyn had put Ladder 109 in service, as Ladder 9, on August 20, 1891 in the former quarters of Engine 1, 4th Avenue and 19th Street, with Engine 1 was moved further south.

The firehouse on Bay Ridge Avenue was starting to show its age by the mid 1960's. The house was altered in the 1920's by removing the two apparatus doors and replacing them with one door. A kitchen was placed on the first floor where the stalls and hay bins had been. With Ladder 109 in quarters, the living conditions were cramped. A new two story, single bay, house was built on 3rd Avenue between Wakeman Place and 67th Street. The back corner of this new house would be touching the back corner of Neptune Engine 2's quarters if it were still standing today. The new house opened on March 22, 1971 with an address of 6630 3rd Avenue.

Lieutenant William P. Berry of Engine 241 received the Emily Trevor - Mary B. Warren Medal for rescuing Richard Pugh from a basement fire at 7123 4th Avenue on February 14, 1927. A lighted match or cigarette was thrown into a bucket of shellac, which exploded, trapping Pugh and his cousin Clarence E. Dennison, age 19 in the basement.

Lieutenant Berry and his crew pulled in front of the fire and was told of two men trapped in the basement. He crawled on his hands and knees until he found Pugh unconscious and carried him to safety. Dennison body was not found until the fire was out. Richard Pugh would later die at the Norwegian Hospital. Lieutenant Berry entered the burning basement without the backup of a hose line and at extreme personal risk, was awarded the Trevor & Warren Medal for 1927.

Fire fighting is the most dangerous job in New York City. Every year hundreds are injured while fighting the "Red Devil". Over the past 100 years many members of Engine 241 have injured, some to the point of not returning to work. Two members of Engine 241 have paid the supreme price with their lives.

Fireman Christopher Boines died as a result of a building collapse. The fire was discovered in the early morning of March 21, 1901. The large car barn, located at the foot of 65th Street belonged to the New York & Sea Beach Railroad Company. The building had been vacant for some three years and was in dilapidated condition. The men were ordered into the building and shortly afterwards the roof came down on them, trapping them. Fireman Boines and two members from Engine 201 and one from Engine 243 were taken to the Norwegian Hospital where Fireman Boines died several hours later of burns and broken bones.

Fireman Thomas Barragry died while fighting a fire in a freight car of the Long Island Railroad at 2nd Avenue and 65th Street on December 24, 1938. The fire was reported at 9:51 P.M. and Fireman Barragry collapsed and died at 10:05 P.M. from a heart attack caused by the overexertion. He was 51 years old and a member of the Fire Department since 1920. Fireman Barragry left a wife and three children.

Engine 241 has been serving the citizens of Bay Ridge since 1896. No matter what the call is, a fire, an EMS run, water leaks, explosions or just putting air in a child's bicycle, Engine 241, the 3rd Avenue Express, is ready, willing and able.

# THE APPARATUS OF ENGINE 241

## HORSE DRAWN

1895 LaFrance	4th size steamer	#332	Feb. 1, 1896 - Nov. 29, 1922
1896 P. J. Barrett	hose wagon	#49B	Feb. 1, 1896 - 1905
1905 C. N. Perkins	hose wagon	#100B	1905- Nov. 29, 1922
1896 Holloway	50' city service ladder truck with a 40 gallon chemical tank	#1B	Feb. 1, 1896 - May 15, 1914

## MOTORIZED

1922 American LaFrance		700 gpm	#3955	Nov. 29, 1922 - June 25, 1938
1938 Ahrens Fox	1000 gpm	#3440		June 25, 1938 - April 8, 1958
1958 Mack	750 gpm	#1028D		April 8, 1958 - Dec. 10, 1971
1971 Mack	1000 gpm	#MP7123		Dec. 10, 1971 - Feb. 9, 1981
1980 American LaFrance		1000 gpm	#AP8010	Feb. 9, 1981 - April 10, 1986
1979 Mack	1000 gpm	#MP7960		April 10, 1986 - Dec. 30, 1992
1993 Seagrave	1000 gpm	#SP9302		Dec. 30, 1992 - present

# THE HOMES OF ENGINE 241

## 240 BAY RIDGE AVENUE

BETWEEN: 3rd Avenue and Bay Ridge Pl.

## HISTORY

### BROOKLYN FIRE DEPARTMENT

ENGINE 41	Feb. 1, 1896 - Jan. 28, 1898
LADDER 13	Feb. 1, 1896 - Jan. 28, 1898

### NEW YORK CITY

ENGINE 41	Jan. 28, 1898 - April 15, 1898
LADDER 13	Jan. 28, 1898 - Apr. 15, 1898
COMB. ENGINE 41	Apr. 15, 1898 - Oct. 1, 1899
COMB. ENGINE 141	Oct. 1, 1899 - Jan. 1, 1913
COMB. ENGINE 241	Jan. 1, 1913 - May 15, 1914
ENGINE 241	May 15, 1914 - Mar. 22, 1971
LADDER 109	Jan. 27, 1939 - Mar. 22, 1971

**6630 3rd AVENUE**

BETWEEN: 67th St. and Wakeman Place

**HISTORY**

**NEW YORK CITY**

ENGINE 241 Mar. 22, 1971 - Present

LADDER 109 Mar. 22, 1971 - Present

# 100 HUNDRED YEARS AGO

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1896

In New York City, the Parks Department will lay off 75 workers, ranging from the Superintendent of the Zoo at the top and gardeners on the bottom. The reason, the bad economy and too many workers.

In Long Island City, the Commissioners of the Police, Fire, and Water Department fired 24 policemen, 9 water workers and one fireman. The Mayor Sanford who was defeated in the last election appointed all. The policemen and water workers were fired for no reason other than they were "Anti Gleasonite", the new mayor. The fireman was fired for fighting in the firehouse.

In Brooklyn, the Kings County Board of Pharmacy intends to prosecute the green grocers who are selling drugs without a registered Pharmacy License. The 470 drug stores in Brooklyn all have a good record. The grocery stores, which are breaking the law, can be fine from \$50.00 to \$500.00 or three months in jail or both.

In the Village of Whitestone, Queens County, the streetlights will be shut off in the village because of the lack of funds. The contract for the new year will not be renewed and taxes will not be raised to pay the gas to run the lights. The gas companies rates were raise just before the contract expired.

In Brooklyn, a new grain elevator is to be built at the foot of 42nd Street and the New York Harbor. The Bush Grain Company says the elevator and associated building will hold 2 million bushels of grain. The complex will be completed in six months.

In Pittsburgh, PA., Higher prices are in store for coal. The anthracite coal carrying railroads have agreed to end the coal war that has been going on for three years. The price of coal will climb an extra fifty cents a ton for the wholesaler. A ton of coal now cost between \$3.25 to \$3.75 a ton, delivered. The sale agents agree to mine 2,500,000 tons for February. A year ago 3,133,246 tons were mined.

Tokyo Japan, a new cure for cancer is announced. The cure is to inject the tumor with carbolic acid. Doctors in this country say the treatment was tried twenty years ago with no proof of curing cancer.

In Manhattan, a new sub Post Office will open today at 1722 Amsterdam Avenue.

In Pittsburgh, Pa. the Standard Oil Company is to be reorganized from a trust to a corporation. The capital for the new company is \$200,000,000.00.

The New York Times cost \$10.00, a year which includes the Sunday edition. Weekday cost is 3 cents.

Other 1896 happenings; Utah admitted into the Union as the 45th state after the Mormons agreed to give up polygamous marriages. The worlds first public golf course opened in Van Cortlandt Park in New York City, Eggs sold 19 cents a dozen, a 5 pound bag of flour cost 13 cents, Hit songs "Sweet Rosie O'Grady" and "A Hot Time in the Old Town". George Burns & Raymond Massey were born.



# THE ROLL OF HONOR

HEADQUARTERS  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

CITY OF NEW YORK

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SPECIAL ORDER

New York, December 27, 1938

No. 246

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1 With regret, the death of Fireman 1st grade *Thomas Barragy*, of Engine Co. 241, which occurred at about 10:05 P. M., December 24, 1938, in the performance of duty, from over exertion while operating at Station 5-7-2653, fire at premises Long Island Railroad Cut 2nd Avenue at 66th Street, Borough of Brooklyn, on December 24, 1938, is hereby announced to the Department.

The heartfelt sympathy of the entire Department goes out to the family, relatives and friends of the of the deceased in the midst of the great loss which they and the Department have sustained.

The funeral will take place from his late residence, 460 Sixty-second Street, Borough of Brooklyn, at 9.30 A. M., Wednesday, December 28, 1938. Interment at Holy Cross Cemetery.

## **EMILY TREVOR - MARY B. WARREN MEDAL AND DEPARTMENT MEDAL**

Award to Lieutenant William P. Berry, of Engine Company No. 241, for the heroic performance of duty, at extreme personal risk, in the rescue of Richard Pugh, seventeen years of age, from the cellar of the premises, No. 7123 4th Avenue, Brooklyn, signal station 2649, at 3.54 p.m., February 14th, 1927. Fire in the cellar of the four story apartment house had trapped Mr. Pugh to the point of unconsciousness from fire and smoke, his clothing having been partly burned. The fire had gained possession of a store room and a passage way to the boiler room. Lieutenant Berry, with reckless abandon for his own safety, crawled on his hands and knees searching for the young man whose presence was reported to him. He carried him through the intense smoke and

heat to the outside of the building just as the first engine company on the scene was about to start water to extinguish the flames in the cellar.

Emily Trevor and Mary B. Warren, sisters, in their deed of gift, wrote "... for the purpose of encouraging the members of the force in the exercise ... of heroic endeavor under circumstances of special danger." The medal was first awarded in 1899.