

Today in Columbus History:

On May 5, 1875, the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* reported on the "Programme of the Annual Parade and Inspection of Columbus Fire Department, May 5, 1875." The story told of the events taking place that day for the thirty-second annual parade and inspection of the Columbus Fire Department. The *Enquirer* also reported the results of the gathering the next day.

The Columbus Fire Department was first organized on a volunteer basis in 1831. The annual parade and inspection dates to the Fire Department's reorganization in 1843. This followed what John Martin called Columbus' "First Great Fire" of 1842 in his book *Columbus, Geo. from its Selection as a Trading Town in 1827 to its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865*. At the time of this inspection, the Fire Department was staffed on a volunteer basis. The firemen all had regular day jobs until the city disbanded the all-volunteer fire department in favor of a paid model in 1898.

The parade included a band, a contingent of police, Chief Engineer William Henry Williams and his assistants Charles A. Etheridge and Albert K. Francis and finally, the five fire companies: Columbus No. 1; Young America No. 5; Rescue Hook and Ladder Co.; Central Mechanics No. 6; and Washington No. 2 (colored). The companies included men from all walks of life. Chief Engineer Williams' day job was ticket master for the South Western Railroad. George R. Flournoy was not only a city alderman and bookkeeper for Boatrite and Clapp Dry Goods but also the secretary of the Board of Control over the Fire Department and a member of Young America No. 5. Central Mechanics No.6 was comprised of Mechanics of the Central Railroad, including Albert K. Francis, the foreman of that fire company and assistant to the Chief.

Each company wore a different uniform, but all were lively combinations of different colored shirts, pants, belts, and hats. Each company's engine was polished and decorated with flowers. The parade took the companies up Troup (3rd Ave.) to Bryan (13th St.) then to and down Broad where they stopped in front of James Ennis' hardware store at 95 and 97 Broad (between 12th St. and 11th St.). There, the officers reported on their commands and Mayor John McIlhenny (also standing committee member of Columbus No. 1) addressed the assembly.

Next, the men of the different companies competed for prizes in a test of their abilities. A group of between 10 and 16 men of each company ran from Preer & Illges' corner (the corner of St. Clair and Broad) to the cistern in front of Ennis' store, detach two sections of 100-foot hose from a reel, connect them to their engine and pump water through the hose. The Hook and Ladder Co. returned to their post and did not participate while two squads of Washington No. 2 competed against each other in the contest.

Afterwards, the gathering retired to the Light Guards Armory where they enjoyed food, entertainment and learned the results of the judging on the day's contest. A "supper" consisting of ice cream, lemonade, cakes fruit and confections served by businessmen of the city and provided by confectioner Ignatius G. Strupper (also a member of Columbus No. 1). A stag dance followed the supper. Judging by the name, the dance did not include partners. The only dancer mentioned by name was fireman Jake Burrus, also the city Wharfinger, who "displayed much agility."

After the festivities, the judges reported on the facts of the competition but said they did not have sufficient rules to establish a winner. With that, Chief Engineer Williams then decided to award Columbus

No.1 the first prize and Central No. 6 the second. Various speeches followed, along with another dance before "the firemen disbanded in the best of spirits."

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

PROGRAMME
—OF THE—
ANNUAL PARADE AND INSPECTION
OF THE
Columbus Fire Department, May 5, 1875.

The various Fire Companies will assemble on Troup, between St. Clair and Randolph streets, punctually at 3 o'clock, P. M.

The line will be formed by the Assistant Engineers at 3:30 P. M., in the following order:

Detachment of Police, Chief and Assistants, Columbus No. 1, Young America No. 5, Rescue Hook and Ladder No. 1, Central Mechanics No. 6, Washington No. 2.

The procession will, as soon as formed, countermarch up Troup to Bryan street, through Bryan to Broad and down west side of Broad to St. Clair street, where the companies will halt, facing to the east. At the lowering of flag near cistern in front of J. Ennis' store, the officers of companies will come to the front and centre of line, where reports will be read, after which the contest for prizes will take place.

Story about the plans for the thirty-second annual Firemen's Parade and Inspection in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* on May 5, 1875, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



William Henry Williams (1841-1931), Chief Engineer of the Columbus Fire Department in 1875 had a long history with both the railroad and fire department. When he died in 1931 in Monroe, Georgia, at age 89, he received an honorary escort by the fire department from the train station to Linwood Cemetery, (from FindAGrave.com)

Young America Fire Company No. 5.
MEMBERS of Young America Fire Company No. 5 are requested to meet at their Room this (Tuesday) evening, 4th instant, at 8 o'clock, for regular monthly meeting.

 GEO. R. FLOURNOY, Sec'y.

Columbus Fire Company No. 1.
MEMBERS of Columbus Fire Co. No. 1 are requested to meet at their Room this (Tuesday) evening, 4th instant, at 8 o'clock, for regular monthly meeting.
 A full attendance is requested.
 Come prepared to pay fines and dues.

 T. O. DOUGLASS, Sec'y.

Mechanics' Fire Company No. 6.
MEMBERS of Mechanics' Fire Co. No. 6 are requested to meet at their Room this (Tuesday) evening, 4th instant, at 8 o'clock, for regular monthly meeting.

 C. A. MILLER, Sec'y.

Washington Fire Company No. 2.
MEMBERS Washington Fire Co. No. 2 are requested to meet at their Room this (Tuesday) evening, 4th instant, at 8 o'clock, for regular monthly meeting.

 JOHN TARVER, Sec'y.

Rescue Hook and Ladder Company No. 1.
THIS Company also has a regular meeting this (Tuesday) evening, 4th instant.

Meeting notices of all the fire companies prior to the parade and inspection in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* on May 4, 1875, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

COLUMBUS FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Thirty-Second Anniversary-Grand Parade and Review.

**CONTEST OF THE COMPANIES—NO. 1 WINS—
SUPPER AND SPEECHES.**

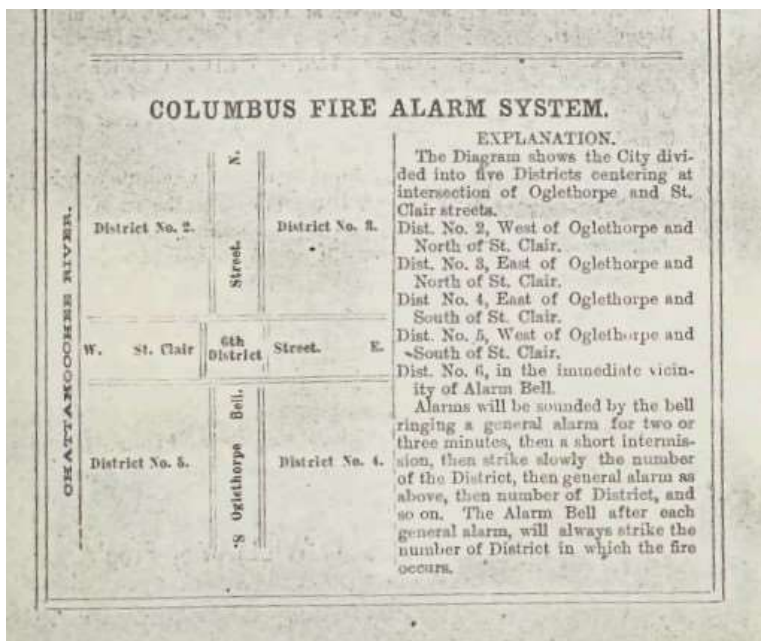
The day was bright and charming, the temperature just right. No dust.

The parade was formed on the street west of the St. Luke (Methodist) and Baptist churches.

FORMATION OF LINE.

First came a band of field music. We can dub fifes and drums by that style now-a-days. Then came ten policemen, commanded by Deputy Marshal Robinson, who was mounted on horseback. Then Chief Engineer W. H. Williams; C. A. Etheridge, Second Assistant; A. K. Francis, Third Assistant. Alderman G. B. Flournoy, who is Secretary of the Board of Control, was with his company—No. 5. Then followed the companies in the following order :

Story on the results of the thirty-second annual Firemen's Parade and Inspection in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* on May 6, 1875, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Fire Alarm System in Columbus from the Haddock's City Directory 1873-74, [dir-columbus1873-74.pdf](#) ([usg.edu](#)). Oglethorpe is 1st Ave. and St. Clair is 11th St.