

New Albany Fire Department
Division of Fire & Rescue Services
107 Cleveland Street
New Albany, Mississippi 38652
662-534-1000

Fire Chief
Mark Whiteside

Deputy Chief
Mark Sides

History of our fire department as we have found it.

In the early years there were many disastrous fires in New Albany

Between the years of 1880 and 1890 there were 8 fires that destroyed an immense amount of property in New Albany.

October 28, 1881-A fire destroyed the courthouse which was said to be arson. Fire was set by a person attempting to destroy his criminal records. New courthouse was built within one year.

1888-Early Government formed.

1888-New Albany had a Marshall and a Night Watchman. The night watch would walk the streets of the town from 8pm until 4am looking for any danger.

1892-Granted charter as a town (previously incorporated).

August 2, 1906-Two fire companies (volunteers) known as Number 1 and Number 2 was organized and this day approved by board. Each company will have a foreman, 1st assistant, 2nd assistant, and crews. Co1 Foreman Geo Phillips, 1st Asst. Guy Robbins, 2nd Asst. Tom last name is unreadable. Co2 Foreman Edgar Stephens, 1st Asst. J.W. King, 2nd Asst. JL last name unreadable. Member's names of each company are listed in board minutes.

August 6, 1907-New Albany was issued a proclamation from Governor Vardaman declaring New Albany a city (no longer a town).

1908-Current courthouse too small and it was torn down and the current one is built in its place.

March 31, 1908-First fire hose was purchased for city. Purchased from Eureka Fire Hose for one dollar a foot. City purchased one thousand feet of two and half inch ID "paragon"

Hose with couplings, two "shut off" nozzles for fifteen dollars each, six "spanners", and two "gates" for ten dollars each. Purchased on terms, one and two years at six percent interest from date of.

July 4, 1911-Ordered by the board that the question of buying rubber capes and boots for the fire department be passed. (questionable writing)

1914-Seeing approvals of hydrants (note that unsure of what is considered hydrant. Normal usage for personal use, or fire).

1914-Purchase of 500 feet of standard fire hose from Eureka Fire Hose Company for one dollar a foot. Terms were six percent interest payable April 1, 1915.

1923-Approval of fire plugs on the west side of the Tallahatchie River.

July 1, 1924-Approval for city water and light plant to order an electric siren. Same to be used as fire alarm for said city (note that reports are siren would be sound, and horn would blow amount of times which ward the fire was in).

January 8, 1925-The Mayor and Board discussed in length the advisability of the purchase of a more adequate firefighting apparatus for the city, but took no definite action, postponing the matter until the regular February meeting unless called together sooner by the Mayor of the city of New Albany.

February 4, 1925-Motion and second that the matter of buying new firefighting equipment be postponed for the present time, and that J.H. Thompson and C.L. Martin be empowered to employ a man to sleep at the water and light plant at night if can be had reasonable, whose duty it will be to look after the truck we now have, and to keep same in running order and be ready to answer all fire alarms at night. All members voting yea.

February 4, 1925-Fire Safety discussed. Motion and second made that the city Marshall see to it without delay that there is a safer way of getting onto and out of the picture show house. That in case of fire, the people could escape without injury to themselves, that there should be doors opening on the outside, or swinging doors that will open either way, also convenient way of escape at the rear of the building. All members voting for same.

March 3, 1925-The matter of matter of a firefighting apparatus was discussed, and new terms made by salesman for such trucks, but no definite action taken.

March 2, 1926-An ordinance for fire protection. Sec.1. Be it ordained by the Mayor and Aldermen of the city of New Albany, Mississippi. That hereafter it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to erect a building or structure of any kind except brick, concrete, or stone on the following territory in said city, described as all the land lying on

and adjacent to Main street from the east line of lot 10, east to Gulf Mobile and Northern Rail-Road track, all in the Collins survey of the city of New Albany, Mississippi

Sec.2. any person violating this ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars, and imprisonment not more than thirty days, or both in the discretion of the court.

Sec.3. that this ordinance for good cause shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

Sec.4. this ordinance was reduced to writing, read and considered by section, and adopted as whole, in regular session this March 2nd, 1926.

July 5, 1927-Reorganization and change to Volunteer Fire Department Edgar. Be it ordained by the Board of Aldermen that the City Marshall be and he is hereby authorized and directed to equip and organize a volunteer fire department, to consist of not more than 15 and not less than 12 members, which shall have a Captain, and a Vice Captain, it is further ordered by the board that the City Marshall shall require the members of said volunteer department to respond to all fire alarms, unless excused excuse by the Captain thereof or by the City Marshall, the details of the organization and equipment of said volunteer fire department to be left to the discretion of the City Marshall, it is further ordered by the Board of Aldermen that all members thereof responding to the fire alarm, where it is necessary to use water hose, on approval of the Captain and City Marshall, be paid the sum of two dollars; that on all alarms responded to where it is not necessary to use water hose, be allowed the sum of one dollar, in the discretion of the City Marshall, all members voting YEA. Edgar J. Stephens first Fire Chief of restructured fire department.

July 5, 1927-New Firehouse. The matter of building offices for city officers and fire truck house, was discussed at length by this board, and the following committee was appointed to go to the ground, (the lot proposed to be built on is the vacant lot east of the water and light plant) and look the matter over with a view of the building, Varda Smith, E.J. Stephens, and T.H. Hamilton, this committee to meet on the ground tomorrow morning the 6th of July, at 8 O'clock A.M. look over the situation and report to this board immediately upon their decision in the matter,, all members voting YEA.

July 11, 1927-New Firehouse. Motion and a second that W.L. Robertson, of Blue Mountain, MS. Be and is hereby employed to furnish plans and specifications for the building of the Mayors office building and fire truck house in the city of New Albany, MS. And to also determine the cost of same, said cost of said building not to exceed the sum of seven thousand dollars. Voting YEA? E.J. Stephens, Varda Smith, S.W. Bevill, voting nay, T.H.Hamilton and B.F. Kitchens.

October 4, 1927-Willie Huffstickler hired to sleep at water and light plant at night and drive fire apparatus for fifteen dollars per month.

June 5, 1928-Motion and second decided to buy an American LaFrance five hundred gallon per minute rotary pump fire engine, mayor and clerk hereby authorized to execute on contract for same.

June 6, 1928-Contract for "Type 99" pumper and hose motor car signed at the cost of six thousand five hundred dollars.

Listed Fire Chiefs:

Mark Whiteside 2020-Current

Steve Coker 2011-2020

Jeffery Hale 2008-2011

Richard Hamric 2001-2008

William Douell (first paid full time chief) 1988-2001

Bill McGill 1983-1988 (during this time, position became appointed by board)

Charles Browning 1981-1983

Bobby Howe 1979-1981

Charles Browning 1978-1979

Bobby Joe Giles 1973-

The following is not in order

Bobby Banks

Sam Tom Barkley

Richard Ford

Carl Stephens

Edgar J. Stephens 1927-? (first volunteer fire chief)

Mark K. Whiteside

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Fire Chief; City of New Albany



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