

Denver Firefighters Museum

Welcome to Historic Station One



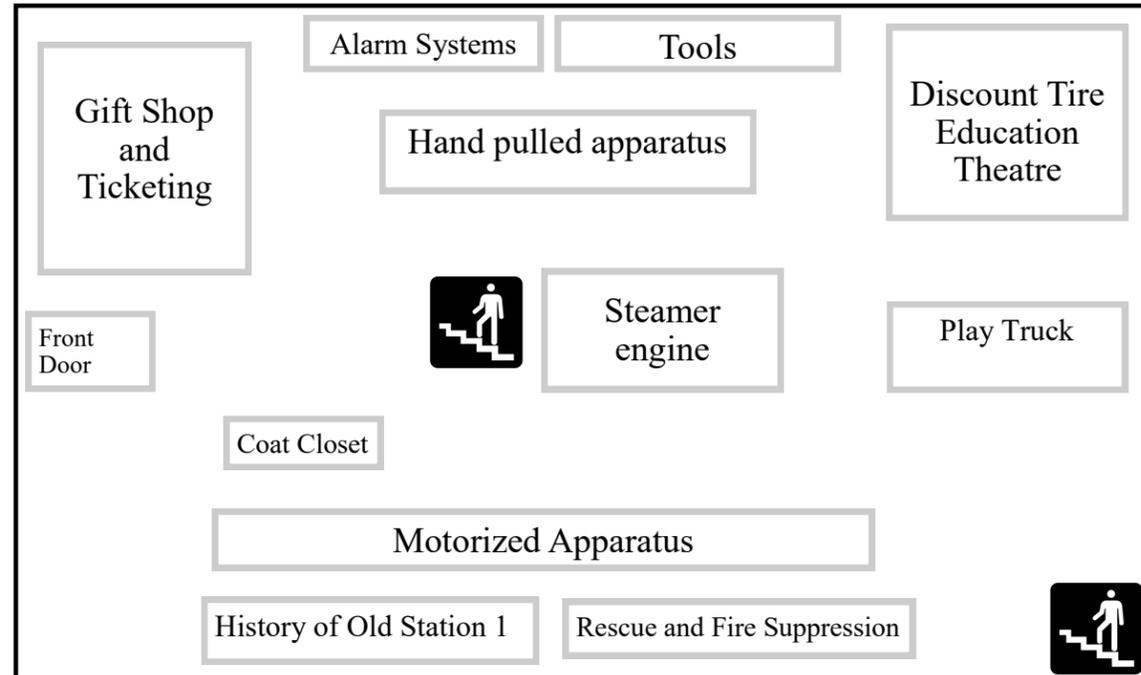
Denver Firefighters Museum

Denver, Colorado

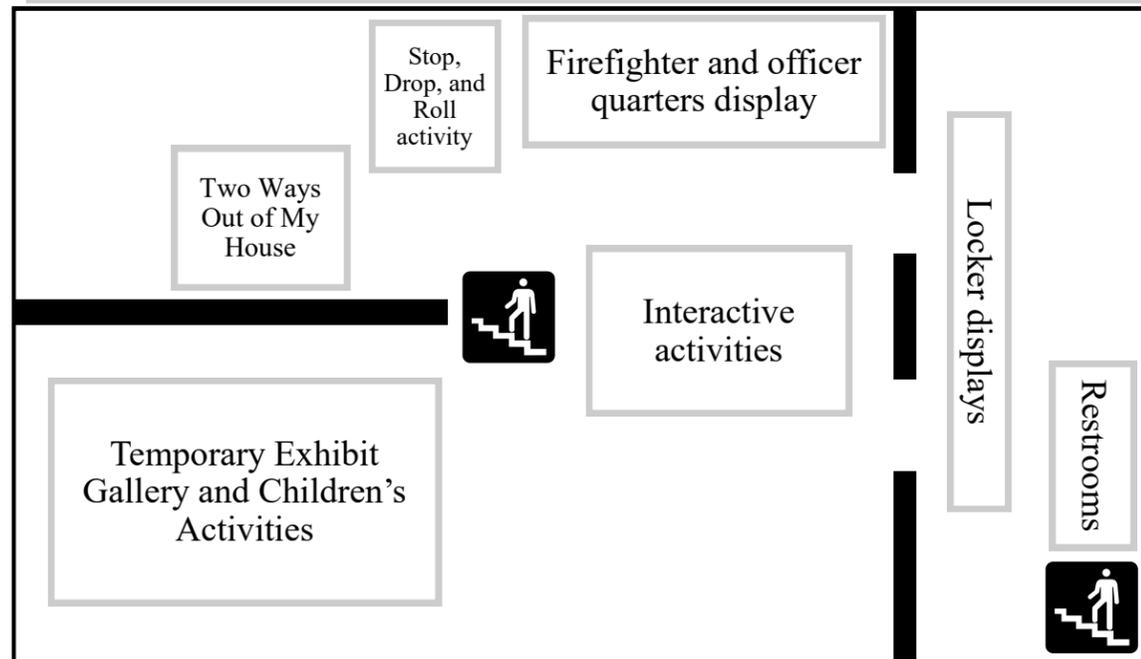
The Mission of the DFM is to preserve the history of the DFD and firefighting through the collection and preservation of artifacts, documents, and photographs. Its purpose is to educate the public about fire safety and the history of firefighting in Denver.



1st Floor



2nd Floor



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This building was built in 1909 to replace the first Station One, which was located at the corner of 15th Street and Broadway. It was torn down in 1909 to make room for a monument honoring the pioneers who came to Colorado on the Smoky Hill Trail. 1326 Tremont Place was built by noted Denver architect Glen W. Huntington at a cost of \$20,000.

A Brief History of The Denver Fire Department

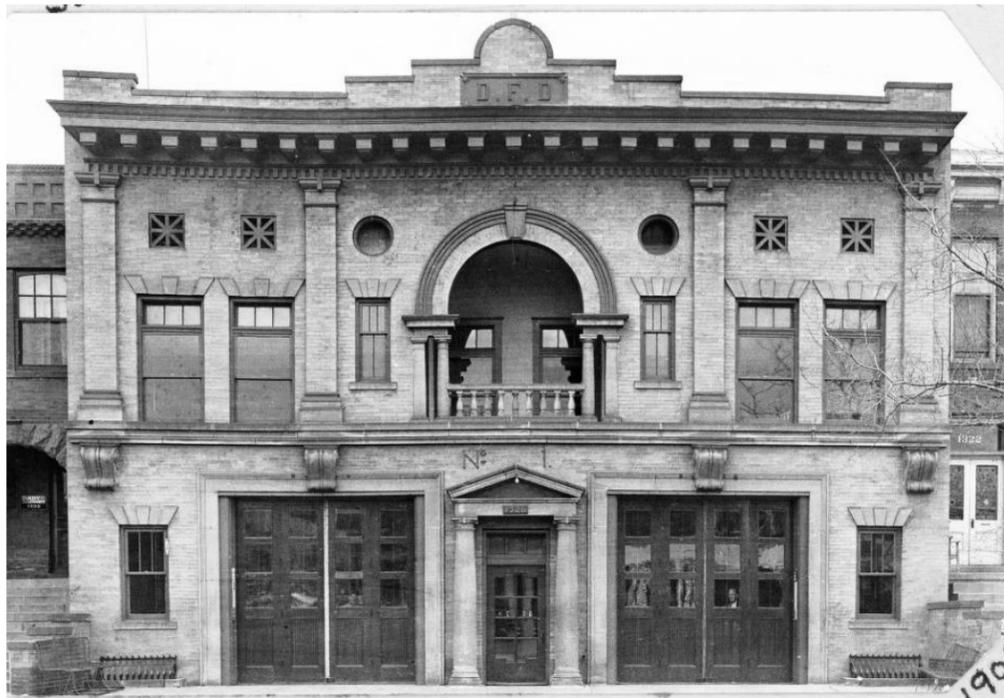
On March 25, 1866 Hook and Ladder Company One was organized with George McClure as Foreman. This was the first firefighting company in the Colorado Territory. The company bought a truck from A. Jacobs of Cincinnati at a cost of \$1,685. Their uniforms cost \$13.00 each. In July 26, Denver's first firehouse was to begin construction at the cost of \$1,800.

In 1880, a fire ordinance was passed which provided for the appointment of one Fire Marshal, two Engineers, two Stokers, two Captains, six Drivers, six Horsemen, four Laddermen, and seven Janitors. Each position earned a salary. This action ushered in the era of paid firefighters in Denver.

Black firefighters were integral members of the DFD from its early days, as well as Hispanic firefighters. The department remained segregated until the 1950s, with black firefighters working out of Station 3 in the Five Points neighborhood.

The first female firefighter on the department was Heather Larson, who joined the DFD in 1985. Women now work at all levels of the department, including captain and chief.

Modern DFD staff, including firefighters and support personnel, is over 900 people. There are now over **30** Fire Stations with an additional **5** airport stations. They are comprised of **28** Engine companies, **14** Truck companies. The DFD also owns **1** Rescue truck, **1** Hazmat Truck, **1** Underwater Rescue, and **1** Collapse Rescue truck.



Old Station 1, c. 1909. This building was an operating fire station until 1974. It opened as the Denver Firefighters Museum in 1980.

History of Denver Firefighting Technology

Fire Alarms

With the volunteer fire department, an alarm system was devised using a large bell mounted in a tower. The rings indicated the general type and location of the fire. In 1876, lamppost alarm boxes were located at every other corner. Each box had its own unique 4 digit number. The dispatcher receiving the alarm would send the alarm to the responding fire house.

Switchboards

The switchboard at the red watch desk was used from 1945 to 1976. The large grey switchboard was built by the department line shop and put into service in 1963. It cost the city \$4000 and used military salvaged electronics. When it was built, it was the most sophisticated dispatch board in the United States. It was retired in 1989 in favor of more modern systems.

Pumpers

From 1866 to 1880, volunteer firefighters would pull fire apparatus by hand to the fire. The 1867 pumper was purchased on October 1, 1867 for \$1,300. The large handles were operated by ten men on each side who pumped the handles up and down. It pumped 300 gallons of water per minute. More firefighters would arrive at the scene of the fire with ladder and hose carts, also pulled by hand.

Steamers

Steamers could pump up to 500 gallons of water per minute. As the steamer traveled to the fire, the wind would continue to stoke the fire already burning in the boiler. Boiling water inside would create steam pressure to pump water.

Motorized Apparatus

In 1925, Station One was remodeled to accommodate motorized apparatus. A concrete floor replaced the old wood floor, while the hayloft became locker rooms and kitchen facilities. This era brought the American La France 1924 Pumper and 1942 Squad. These motorized apparatus could pump up to 1000 gallons of water per minute.

Animals at the Fire Station

Horses

In 1880, the first horse drawn ladder truck arrived in Denver. The horses were trained for two years to learn the commands necessary to respond quickly to fires. At the sound of an alarm, the horses were trained to push open their stall doors, trot to the rig they pulled and wait for the firefighters to harness them. The firefighters would pull a lever which released the harness hanging from the ceiling. You can still see the marks where the metal buckles flew up and hit the ceiling. The harness fell on the back of the horses and the men hooked it up and had them out the door in 17 seconds!

Dogs

A fire dog's job was to bark at the horses and nip at their heels to encourage them to go faster. Once at the fire, the dogs herded the horses away from the fire and kept them under control until they were ready to return to the fire house.

Dalmatians became synonymous with fire houses because they were known to have a calming effect on the horses. Considering the horses were required to stay in their stalls when at the house, the dalmatians provided excellent company. After horses were no longer used, firefighters continued to use dalmatians as mascots and pets.