

Gifts Honor James C. “Robbie” Robertson

The National Fire Heritage Center has established the Robbie Robertson Building Fund to honor the legacy of NFHC Director Emeritus, James C. Robertson, who died in November 2013 at the age of 84. Robertson served as a founder of the NFHC and devoted countless hours to preserving written fire service history.

“It is only appropriate that we create this special Robbie Robertson Building Fund to honor his memory,” explains NFHC President Chief Ronny J. Coleman. “We thank all of those who have contacted us asking for this opportunity to help ensure that Robbie’s vision lives on,” Coleman said. The Board has set a goal of \$100,000 with this Memorial.

“Robbie’s passion for the fire service, fire prevention, and specifically the National Fire Heritage Center was an inspiration to all of us,” adds Wayne Powell, NFHC Executive Director. “We hope to raise a sizable amount so that Robbie’s legacy will

be preserved forever in a way that continues to grow fire service leaders.”

The Robertson estate has made a leadership gift of \$10,000 to the Building Fund, and the Robertson family invites others to join the effort to support the NFHC building fund effort.



Donations in Robbie’s memory may be made to the National Fire Heritage Center (by credit card via www.active.com/donate/RobbieRobertson) or by mail – P.O. Drawer 76, Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

Name the History Maker



Can you name this History Maker?

Pictured here in the eighth grade, this fire protection leader – and NFHC supporter – approaches his retirement after

44 years of service. He’s profiled on pages 6-7. *Editor.*

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Message from the President

Greetings and salutations.

It is time for us to produce another newsletter. No, let me revise that, it is long past due. It is not that things haven't been happening. To the contrary, a lot has gone on. I guess that is the good news. The bad news is, that over the last year, we have lost one of our founding fathers with the death of Robbie Robertson. But, we have acquired some fantastic support from people like our archivist Frank Schmearsal and our new newsletter editor Pam Powell.

One of the things we should be very proud of right now is that we are achieving our objective in preserving the perishable. We have received several personal libraries that have now been inventoried and catalogued.

We have finally established a Building Fund that has been supported by family and friends of those who have passed on. I recently had the opportunity to talk to a consultant working with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, and we are making progress on a long range plan of a permanent facility. But we are still a long way away from achieving that vision.

There are three things we need to survive in the future. The first is to stay dedicated to our vision. The second is to expand our membership base. (Frank's daughter Johanna has been working on the development of a program to do that. Your support by renewing your membership is extremely important to our future.) And, the third is to continue to find ways of improving our funding base.

Because you receive this newsletter, I would be interested in hearing your perspective on these three items. Please feel free to forward your email or correspondences to me.

I am often reminded of the seriousness of what we are doing by remembering what we have lost in the past when some of our leaders – from role models and mentors – have left us and we were unable to capture their work. Our mission, preservation of the perishable, is valid and our pursuit of it is important.

Ronny J. Coleman

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Volunteer newsletter staff for this issue include:

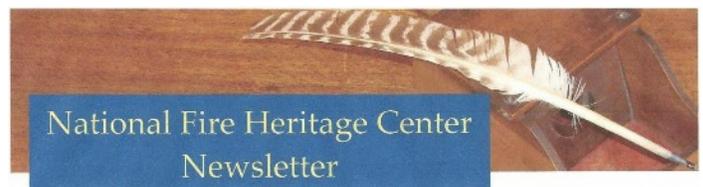
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News from the National Fire Heritage Center

***Recollections of Brannigan* Now Available**

The NFHC's first book *Recollections of Brannigan and His Navy Yarns* is now available. The book is a collection of recollections from Frank Brannigan's peers, friends, and students and also includes several of his yarns about his Navy experience during World War II. The proceeds from the sale of *Recollections of Brannigan and His Navy Yarns* will benefit the NFHC's Hall of Legends, Legacies, and Leaders.

Brannigan was one of the original inductees into the National Fire Heritage Center's Hall of Legends, Legacies, and Leaders in October 2010.

Fire Chief magazine named him one of the 20 people who contributed the most to firefighting in the 20th century. He continuously studied casualty reports to identify new or unrecognized hazards. Brannigan delivered his results and recommendations in his book *Building Construction for the Fire Service* and in countless presentations and periodicals. He developed the concept of preplanning and the study of building construction to minimize the risk of avoidable hazards. He pioneered fire loss management and improved planning and prevention techniques.

He was inducted into the Navy Fire and Emergency Services Hall of Fame in 2010. Brannigan was a Life Member of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI). He was awarded the first *Fire Engineering* Lifetime Achievement Award, the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) Service Award, the International Association of Fire Chiefs President's Award, and the International Society of Fire Service Instructors "Instructor of the Year" Award.

For more information about *Recollections of Brannigan and His Navy Yarns* and the NFHC Hall of Legends, Legacies, and Leaders, visit NFHC at nationalfireheritagecenter.org.

NFHC Newsletter Editor Appointed

NFHC President Ronny Coleman has appointed Pam Powell as editor of the *National Fire Heritage Center Newsletter*.

"Pam brings a unique combination of publishing skills and fire protection experience to her new role as our editor," according to Coleman. "We are lucky to have her be part of our volunteer crew here at NFHC," he said.

Powell has been active in fire protection since 1972, when she joined the staff of the Center for Fire Research at the National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology). Since that time, she has managed a variety of publications for the United States Fire Administration and served as editor of the National Fire Protection Association's *Fire Journal* (now the *NFPA Journal*).

She was managing editor of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers member newsletter and of the *SFPE Journal of Fire Protection Engineering*. As a senior product manager at NFPA, she was managing editor for 42 books in eight years, including two editions of the *Fire Protection Handbook*, the *SFPE Handbook of Fire Protection Engineering*, code handbooks, and other books.



An NFPA retiree, Powell lives with husband Richard Custer in northern coastal California, where they play Americana and traditional music in acoustic jams and bands

"I'm glad to help tell NFHC's story," Powell said, "and welcome suggestions, which can be sent to me at pamelaapowell@msn.com."

News from the National Fire Heritage Center

Cataloging the Collection

After years of gathering books, documents, and other objects related to America's fire heritage, the home-office staff of the National Fire Heritage Center now is cataloging these objects so that we have an accurate inventory of our collection. We are using a software database product called MusArch, which has been designed specifically to catalog the assets of a museum or archive such as ours. The basic MusArch software is extremely affordable (read "free"), although we threw caution to the wind and laid out \$21.00 to get the premium version.

Although the MusArch software is limited to thirteen fixed categories of objects, it allows the archivist to set up an unlimited number of sub-categories, as well as an unlimited number of locations to which objects can be assigned. As each object is entered into the database, a screen provides spaces to enter a description, accession number, source (donor), and so on. Then an Object Data screen, which varies according to the major category, provides spaces to enter additional information. So for example, if the object being cataloged is a book, the Object Data screen provides space for the author and information about the author; the publisher and information about the publisher; the Library of Congress catalog number and/or ISBN, etc.

As a donation is received, it is assigned a seven-digit donation number consisting of the year and a three-digit sequential number. Each box is marked with the donation number. When we begin to catalog the donation, each object is identified with a ten-digit accession number which consists of the donation number plus a three-digit sequential object number. In this way every object that is added to the collection is uniquely identified. Currently there are 52 sub-categories of objects in the collection.



Once objects are cataloged and photographed, they are moved to an appropriate location in the archives. Printed materials, videos, movies, and a limited number of other objects are shelved in the NHC library. Photographs, documents, and small printed materials are placed in file cabinets in the library. Fragile materials are stored in archival boxes for protection. Duplicates, and objects for which display space is not currently available, are carefully packed in boxes and moved to offsite storage at the Emmitsburg Community Center, immediately behind the Heritage Center.

Periodically we compile a directory of the collection to aid visitors in locating specific objects. At first this directory was printed, but its size has grown to such an extent (175 pages at present) that we now create an electronic directory on a terminal in the library. The directory also is available on www.thenfhc.org.

Our original goal was to have everything cataloged by the end of 2013. However, we received over 100 cartons of donations in 2013, so we are still working on 2008-2012! When that is done, we will have a complete catalog of our assets, including furniture and fixtures, and will know exactly where each object is located. This will allow us to fulfill our role as an information source for the history of the fire service.

Frank Schmearsal, Archivist

News from the National Fire Heritage Center

Notes from the Archives

The State of the Archive

By the end of 2013, the NFHC archive database contained nearly 5,000 objects, including books, documents, photographs, videos and movies, and other objects. Almost all of these are 2013 donations; we have only started to catalog donations from earlier years.

Because of the size of the archive, we have moved the archive directory from a loose-leaf binder on the conference table, to a PDF file on a computer terminal in the library. (Thanks to Executive Director Wayne Powell for the donation of a veteran, but still usable, desktop computer!) The last printed directory encompassed about 125 pages, producing an updated print version each month is not environmentally responsible, but no trees are sacrificed to produce a PDF!

Finally, we are working toward publishing the archive directory on the NFHC websites. It's on www.thenfhc.org now, look for it soon on www.nationalfireheritagecenter.org.

Intern

We have been fortunate to have the assistance of Nicole Michur, a senior at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, for the Spring semester. She is a history major, and hopes to build a career in archiving after graduation from MSM. She spent last semester as an intern working in the archives of the Daughters of Charity, a religious order located across the street from the NFHC. She has been helping us to add objects to our database, and also helping to arrange and display objects in the archive. She is our first intern, and has no previous exposure to the fire service, so her time with us has been a learning experience for everyone involved!

Sponsor a Bookcase

As our archive grows, we have found ourselves in need of more bookcases. Until now, we have relied on donated bookcases to hold the collection – they may be all different shapes and sizes, but they hold books! Now, having gathered in all the free bookcases we could find, we are at the point where we need to purchase some. We have identified a style that is affordable, and available locally (so we don't have to pay for shipping). We are inviting members and supporters of the NFHC to sponsor bookcases, at a cost of \$150 per unit. Sponsors will have their names engraved on brass plates that will be placed on a plaque in the Heritage Center. Please consider sending a tax-deductible donation of \$150 to the NFHC (P.O. Drawer 76, Emmitsburg MD 21727). Become a bookcase sponsor today!

Bookcase sponsors will have their names engraved on brass plates that will be placed on a plaque in the Heritage Center.

The Archivist's Wish List

Again as our archive grows, we have identified pieces of equipment that are needed to properly view and care for our accessions. Here is the current list – if you have any of these items gathering dust and can donate them to the NFHC, please contact Executive Director Wayne Powell (waynepowellnfhc@gmail.com) or archivist Frank Schmursal (accobonack@aol.com).

- 16 mm reel-to-reel movie viewer with splicer
- Fluorescent light box, 18 x 24 inches (or larger)
- Flat file or drawing file, 24 x 36 inches, 5 or 10 drawers
- VHS tape player
- Audio tape player/CD recorder (also known as a "dubber")
- U-matic tape player
- Video projector
- Copy stand with lights (to use for photographing accessions)

Frank Schmursal, Archivist

History Makers

Dr. Burton A. Clark has been in the fire service for 44 years. He was a firefighter/EMT in Washington, DC; Prince Georges, Carroll, and Frederick counties in Maryland, Assistant Fire Chief in Laurel, MD, and Instructor Trainer for the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute. Clark was Operations Chief for DHS/FEMA during Presidential emergency and disaster declarations. He is the Management Science Program Chair at the National Fire Academy and a Visiting Scholar at Johns Hopkins University Center for Injury Research and Policy.



In 2008, he received a Japan Public Health Association Foreign Scientists Fellowship to lecture on the Incident Command System as related to pandemic flu. He has worked on 13 doctoral dissertation committees. Clark has a BS in Business Administration from Strayer University, an MA in Curriculum & Instruction from Catholic University, and an Ed.D. in Adult Education from Nova Southeastern University. He studied fire science at Montgomery College with Professor Frank Brannigan, Emergency Management at the Emergency Management Institute, National Security at the National Defense University, and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. He is a nationally certified Fire Officer Four, was a Chief Fire Officer Designee for nine years, EMT-B, and Eagle Scout Mentor. Clark writes, lectures, and teaches fire service research, safety, and professional development worldwide.

He is married to Carolyn Smith-Clark. They have six children, 14 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

What first attracted you to working in fire safety?

Believe it or not...beer and softball. But I soon learned better.

How did your career path change? What was your biggest surprise?

In 1973, Laurel had seven fire fatalities in one month in three fires. All of the victims -- children and adults -- were dead before the fire trucks left the station. I had that same familiar sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. All my knowledge, all my skill, all my macho, all the men and equipment in the fire department could do nothing to save those people. There had to be a better way.

In the early 1970s, there was a new device on the market: the smoke detector. The consumer choices were limited and the units cost around \$60. But they detected smoke early in a fire and gave people time to get out of their home -- they could save lives. The Laurel Volunteer Fire Department went on a massive public education campaign to get people to buy and install smoke detectors. The program was so successful that the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration picked it as a model for its national smoke detector campaign. The DCFD learned I had helped my VFD with the program, so the city assigned me to the fire chief's office to help with DC's smoke detector program. Washington, DC, was the first metro city to have a retroactive smoke detector law and citywide campaign. In 1978, I was detailed the National Fire Academy to develop and deliver a smoke detector training program for the fire service across the

About "History Makers"

The "History Makers" feature of the *NFHC Newsletter* will profile living members of the fire protection community who have made history by making a difference. Look for it in future issues – and suggest potential subjects by contacting pamelaapowell@msn.com. *Editor*

We have accomplished so much with smoke detectors. But there is still so much to do.

Just last night Carolyn and I were at our daughter's house to take care of the dogs and cats. Our daughter and granddaughter were away for the weekend at a volleyball tournament. When I checked the smoke alarms, there were no batteries in any of them. I will put batteries in them when they get home today, before they go to bed tonight.

Who were your mentors and how did they help you?

The legendary Frank Brannigan was a mentor. Then the places that gave me the opportunity to practice and learn the fire service discipline: Kentland Co. 33 VFD, District of Columbia FD, Laurel VFD, Mt. Airy VFD, National Fire Prevention and Control Administration Public Education Office and USFA National Fire Academy and all of my universities (Strayer, Montgomery, Catholic, Nova Southeastern, Johns Hopkins) that let me apply the scholarship they were teaching me to the fire service. Finally as a writer and lecturer, I could have not communicated with the fire service without all the editors, publishers, and organizations that gave the opportunity to express my thoughts.

What are the biggest challenges in the next 5 years? 10 years?

Stopping firefighter and civilian fire deaths and injuries from fire.

Thanks to Dr. Burton Clark for donating the proceeds of his May 4, 2014, retirement dinner to the National Fire Heritage Center.

What a great and generous idea and a unique way to support the NFHC.

What is fire safety's biggest piece of unfinished business?

Admitting that smoke detectors and sprinklers can save more people than firefighters ever can.

In your view, what has been your greatest contribution to fire safety and why?

Being part of the residential smoke detector revolution, getting firefighters to use their seatbelts on and getting firefighters to call Mayday – all because these actions help save lives. Participating in the higher education, science, and research movements of the fire service to increase the professionalism of the discipline.

If you could start your career over, what would you do differently?

As a retiree, I am starting my career over again. I will be my own boss, but don't tell Carolyn.

Any regrets?

The decisions I made that resulted in people dying.

What is your advice to those who are just starting a career in fire safety?

Back in 2002, I was invited to address address DC Fire Department Recruit Class 329 on their graduation. Among other things, I said:

“From today on, you will have two families: the one you live with and the one you work with. Few disciplines share the unique camaraderie of the fire service...But the fire service cannot take the place of a loving spouse, children, and grandchildren who always want you to come home to them. Your challenge over the next 30 years will be to keep two lovers. Not an easy task, but firefighters are trained to do the impossible. You will know if the two passions have been satisfied at your retirement party if an equal number of your fire service colleagues attend, out of respect for the contributions you have made to the discipline, and family members attend, out of appreciation for your love. You will have cared for your two families well.”

Notes from Fire Protection's Colorful History

Maryland Firefighters in Peace and Soldiers in War

On the morning of October 16, 1859, Captain John Sinn probably had his breakfast with no idea of the role he was about to play in history. Before the day was over he and the members of three Frederick (Maryland) fire companies would be witness to the ignition of another type of conflagration: a Civil War. At about 10:00 a.m. that day, the alarm bell rang.

The three companies were Independent Fire Company, United Fire Company, and the Junior Guards. When serving as firefighters, the firefighters manned the brakes of hand pumpers. When required to do so, they also served as armed militia.

It was as armed militia that the crews were requested that day. The Independent Rifles who were formed in 1818 and the United Guards were made up of the towns' male citizens. They had often been called out to deal with non-fire emergencies. The Junior Guards were not quite old enough to serve in the regular fire volunteers, but were old enough to help when needed.

Soon after being assembled, the companies boarded a train in Frederick and rolled off to become among the first to deal with the opening of the hostilities that would soon tear the country apart. A firebrand of an abolitionist by the name of John Brown had attempted to seize the arsenal at Harpers Ferry in Virginia. After a 25 mile journey to Harpers Ferry, the Frederick companies assembled and prepared to take action against the insurgents.

The military officer sent to quell the rebellion in Harpers Ferry was a well-respected army colonel named Robert E. Lee. His aide was a dashing officer by the name of J.E.B Stuart. Arriving with a contingent of the United States Marines, Lee forced the insurgents to give up their defensive positions in the arsenal's firehouse. Sinn and the three fire Frederick companies played an integral part of the attack and

played a significant role in deciding the outcome on that day in October.

In fact, in the fashion to be expected from a fire officer in a leadership role, Sinn turned his attention to the wounded insurgent John Brown. Sinn sent for help from a physician in Frederick, but the aid was refused by Colonel Lee. Notwithstanding the failure, Sinn developed such a rapport with Brown that the rabble-rouser requested Sinn to be a character witnesses at his later trial. Apparently Sinn's testimony did not have much sway, because John Brown was quickly tried, sentenced, then hanged in what is now Charles Town, VA. (Not much on the appeal process in those days, I guess.)

The fire engine house where John Brown was captured is now within about 50 yards from where it was originally. The engine house was taken down in the 1890s and taken to the Columbia Exposition in Chicago where it was reconstructed. Visitors were charged 10 cents to enter the fort. Only 11 people paid to do so.

After the exposition, the building was taken down and brought back to a location near the present day KOA Kampground on the Murphy Farm near Harpers Ferry. It was later moved to the campus of Storer College.

When the Harpers Ferry National Park was designated, the engine house was moved back downtown and placed at its present day location. Through all the moving, the front of the building was reversed. The reversal was never corrected.

Another battle was to be fought at Harpers Ferry on September 12-15 as part of the Maryland Campaign. And guess who the commanding officer was? General Robert E. Lee.

For more information see
wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Brown's_Raid_on_Harper_Ferry or
<http://www.johnbrownharpersferry.com>.

Ronny J. Coleman

Notes from Fire Protection's Colorful History

Knickerbockers: Where the Fire Service and Baseball Intersect

Alexander Joy Cartwright, Jr. was born in New York City on April 17, 1820. He was a book-seller by trade and a member of Knickerbocker Engine Company 12.

While a member of Engine 12, Cartwright became involved in playing town ball (a similar game to baseball) on a vacant lot at Fourth Avenue and East 27th Street. In 1845, the lot became unavailable for use, and the group was forced to look for another location. They found a playing field, the Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey. Cartwright organized a club so that he could collect the money needed to pay for rental of the field. On September 23, 1845, the club was named the "Knickerbockers" after the fire company. In order for the game to be played in a more formal, professional manner, Cartwright devised the "Knickerbocker Rules" which form the basis of today's rules of baseball. The first clearly documented match between two baseball clubs under these rules took place on June 19, 1846, between the New York Knickerbockers and



the New York Nine. The Knickerbockers lost by a score of 23 to 1. (It is known that other games were played earlier, but this was probably the first under which the rules were accepted by both teams.) The Knickerbockers were the first team to adopt a standardized uniform.

Cartwright headed out for the California Gold Rush in 1849. But he and his family established themselves on Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands. There, he continued in both of his passions, serving as Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department from 1850 through 1863 and establishing a baseball field on the island.

Legend has it that Abner Doubleday invented the game of baseball in 1839, playing its first games in Cooperstown, New York. But on June 3, 1953, the United States Congress officially recognized Alexander Joy Cartwright, Jr. as the inventor of the modern game of baseball. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1938.

Cartwright died on July 12, 1892, in Hawaii and is interred at Oahu Cemetery.

Ronny J. Coleman

NFHC Calendar of Upcoming Events

- May 9 – CFSI – 25th Annual Fire and Emergency Services Dinner – DC
- May 10 – 11 – NVFC Annual Meeting – Alexandria, VA
- May 17 – 19 – Fire Expo – Harrisburg, PA
- June 8 – 13 – Interschutz – Hanover, Germany
- June 10 – 13 – NFPA Annual Conference – Chicago, IL
- July 23 – 27 – Firehouse Expo – Baltimore, MD
- August 1 – 3 – CVVFA Annual Convention – Shippensburg, PA
- August 7 – 9 – NASFM Annual Conference – Indianapolis, IN
- August 13 – 17 – FRI (IAFC) Chicago, IL
- August 21 – 24 – IAFF Redmond Symposium – Denver, CO
- September 20 – 21 – 2013 Fire Museum Network Seminar, New York City