

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

TIM CONNER

INTERVIEW 1701.2

This is John Phaup representing the Memories of New Bern Committee.

My number is 1700. I am interviewing Tim Conner, curator and guide of the New Bern Fireman's Museum. Our interview number is 1701.2.

This interview is being conducted on September 29, 1992. We are at the museum which is located on Hancock Street in downtown New Bern. This is my second interview with Tim Conner. Tim has agreed to give me the walking tour as if I were one of his guests. I will be using information from the first interview to ask questions as we do the tour.

Mr. Phaup: I'm looking forward to this Tim. I feel like I ought to be paying admission, I've been down here three or four times. Tell me the first thing you do. Give me the first part of one of your tours as a guest comes in and gets ready for a walking tour.

Mr. Conner: We'll start here. Tim Conner is my name. If you have any questions, I'll be glad to answer them. I'm a fireman right on right here in the New Bern Fire Department. I've got fifty-one years in the New Bern Fire Department. I'm still a fireman in the New Bern Fire Department and I'm sixty-nine years old. This is New Bern's first motor truck, 1914. This replaced the horse drawn steam engine.

It's right hand drive as you can see. It was chain driven. It would pump 750 gallons of water a minute from the fire hydrant. That's three lines of hose. It had a crank.

Mr. Phaup: So, that's a crank at the front to start the motor like an old Model T.

Mr. Conner: But the crank did not have to be used very often.

It also had an electric starter. Electric starters came out in 1911, so this had an electric starter. The crank was on there just in case the starter wouldn't work.

Mr. Phaup: And what year was this acquired by the Department?

Mr. Conner: 1914. It had solid tires originally.

Mr. Phaup: Tell me what Fred thought about this. Can you imagine what Fred thought when he saw a motorized truck being pulled in here?

Mr. Conner: Fred was in the service quite a few years after we got our first motor truck just to carry additional hose in another wagon. So, it didn't bother Fred. (laughter)

Mr. Phaup: Fred is the horse that we met on our first interview. He's in a case down here and he's been looking out through his case since 1925. He's New Bern's most famous fire horse. Tell me about this next truck.

Mr. Conner: This is a ladder truck and pumper combination, 1927. It had a fifty foot ladder on the bottom. We had to raise the ladder by hand. We had to pull the ladder out and raise it by hand. That's really heavy wood. I know. I've helped put it many times. It took six of us to raise it. This truck would pump a thousand gallons of water a minute from the hydrant. That was four lines of hose. This is what put the pump in gear. This is a gear shift and that's an emergency break.

Mr. Phaup: Tim's pointing to levers that were right by the driver's compartment. I'm fascinated by a wood ladder on a fire truck. Did the ladder ever get close enough to start smoking or actually

catch on fire?

Mr. Conner: No. We wouldn't put the ladder against the building if there was fire visible coming out the window. We wouldn't do that. Just to reach the window with a line of hose to put the water inside of the building.

Mr. Phaup: Was the ladder in segments that you could join and make it longer as you needed it?

Mr. Conner: Yes. Each ladder was in two segments. We had to pull it out and then raise it by the rope. There was a 50 foot ladder, 45, 35, 25, 16, and a 10.

Mr. Phaup: So, there's several ladders on there?

Mr. Conner: Yes.

Mr. Phaup: Not just part of one long ladder.

Mr. Conner: That's right.

Mr. Phaup: A fifty foot ladder is quite a ladder. I've dealt with a forty foot aluminum ladder, so I can imagine how heavy a fifty foot wooden ladder would be.

Mr. Conner: Very heavy.

Mr. Phaup: That's a very handsome truck.

Mr. Conner: It really is a handsome truck. This truck operates so smoothly that we could set a coin or a pen or anything on the fender of this truck while it was pumping, and it would stay. No vibration at all. That's how smooth it operated.

Mr. Phaup: Were the pumps operated by the motor that drove the truck?

Mr. Conner: Right. The motor of the truck is where the pump got its power.

Mr. Phaup: We're looking at the motor compartment where the side panel is raised. It reminds me of a Model T. I'm counting twelve cylinders, is that right?

Mr. Conner: Actually six, but this truck had dual ignition, so that made the different.

Mr. Phaup: In other words, each cylinder had two spark plugs.

Mr. Conner: Yes sir. And that's a powerful motor. It could really drink the gas. We'd have a big downtown fire you know, we'd have to continue to haul gas for this truck in a pick-up truck in a fifty gallon drum.

Mr. Phaup: While it was pumping water?

Mr. Conner: That's exactly right. Yes sir. Sometimes we figure we didn't know whether we'd get back to gas up in time enough or not.
(laughter)

Mr. Phaup: That's a lot of gas.

Mr. Conner: Yeah. That is no joke. That's how much gas it would burn.

Mr. Phaup: You said this was brought in in the early 1920's.

Mr. Conner: 1927.

Mr. Phaup: When was the last year of active service?

Mr. Conner: In the mid sixties. Our first motor truck, we used that til the forties. I've been to many alarm on both of them.

Mr. Phaup: Where were the trucks kept until the museum was open?

Mr. Conner: Different places in storage. Now this first motor truck, 1914, we were lucky on that. It shouldn't have happened, but it did. The city sold it to Saluda, South Carolina, to an antique dealer. The antique dealer went out of the antique business and he wrote us a letter and told us we could have the truck back if we wanted it. Naturally, we did. So, we got the city to buy it back for a thousand dollars. Now when it was sold, we didn't know we were ever going to have a museum. We established our museum later, so luckily we got it back.

Mr. Phaup: What year did you buy it back? Was this when the museum was in the planning stages?

Mr. Conner: It was just a few years after our museum opened is when he went out of the antique business. Luckily, we have it back. We were very lucky on that deal.

Mr. Phaup: There's quite a difference in size between the two units. The first unit was probably two thirds the size of the second. You say the pumping capacity of the second truck was almost twice.

Mr. Conner: The first motor truck, 750 a minute, and that's a thousand gallons a minute. A thousand gallons is still our most popular number today; however, there's 1,200's and 1,500's. But the thousand is still the most popular. This is a steam fire engine as you can see. It was pulled by two horses. This is a furnace. This is a boiler. The furnace on the bottom and the boiler up top. The steam is what ran the pump. It didn't carry no water to fight the fire. It just carried enough water to generate steam to run the pump. So many people

think it carried water to fight the fire, but of course it didn't.

This had the draft from wells. We had city wells on the street corners here before we had hydrants and you had to draft the water from the wells. It would pump two lines of hose 500 gallons a minute. And this is a fifteen pump.

Mr. Phaup: So, this could handle two hoses at 500 gallons per minute, is that right?

Mr. Conner: Right.

Mr. Phaup: For how long?

Mr. Conner: Just as long as you kept the steam going, feed the coal, she'd keep right on. Now, we've had hydrants here in New Bern since 1894. After we got hydrants, these steamers pumped from the hydrants just like our trucks do today; but before that, they had to draft from the wells. This can almost throw water over the Episcopal church steeple here with one line of hose. Because that's a piston pump and a piston pump does produce high pressure.

Mr. Phaup: Is this a Button?

Mr. Conner: This is a Button steamer.

Mr. Phaup: What do you know about the famous fire of 1870 as it burned in Christ Episcopal Church? I understand that there was a bakery across the street that caught fire and the sparks from the bakery ignited the wooden cedar roof of Christ Church. Is that right?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir.

Mr. Phaup: Now, the fire department had one steamer, but it wasn't a Button. You told me the name of it and I mispronounced it.

Mr. Conner: It was an Amoskeag Steamer. That was swapped for this one in 1884.

Mr. Phaup: So when the firemen went out to fight the fire, they were confronted with two fires across the street from each other.

Mr. Conner: Yes sir.

Mr. Phaup: So, you can see the value of a steamer that can pump water in two directions at once. Now, I understand that when Christ Church was rebuilt after that, about four or five years later, that they took a new Button engine down and shot water over the steeple. Is that correct?

Mr. Conner: That is true, yes sir. That's the steamer you're looking at right here.

Mr. Phaup: Oh, that was actually this steamer?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir.

Mr. Phaup: What was the purpose of demonstrating that?

Mr. Conner: Just carrying it through a test more or less. The Amoskeag steamer was swapped for this one in 1884. The company that made the Amoskeag wanted it back for some reason, so the trade in was an even trade in. No money to boot, which was a good deal. So, that's what happened.

Mr. Phaup: Whatever happened to these companies; the Button Company and the Amoskeag, do you have any idea?

Mr. Conner: I imagine they went out of business many years ago. The fire wasn't started in this steamer until it rolled out the house to answer the alarm. It didn't take anytime to get the steam up.

Mr. Phaup: Have you ever seen this in operation?

Mr. Conner: No sir.

Mr. Phaup: I imagine burning coal, that thing put out a pretty good fire itself, didn't it?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir. Quite a bit. Shavings and oil were used to start the fire. Coal was used after it got going. Now, some departments kept a little fire going at all times. We didn't. As you'd roll out the house was when the fire was started in the furnace and the time you'd get to the fire, it'd be ready to pump.

Mr. Phaup: How many gallons of water are in that pump?

Mr. Conner: In the boiler, several gallons. It's a pretty good size boiler.

Mr. Phaup: I would estimate about three hundred gallons?

Mr. Conner: Close to that, yes. Maybe not that much. It wouldn't hold three hundred gallons, but it's a pretty good size boiler.

Mr. Phaup: Was it designed so you could continuously keep it filled as the steam was generated?

Mr. Conner: Oh yes.

Mr. Phaup: So once you got to the fire, then you had to divert some of the water into the boiler.

Mr. Conner: That's true. There was a connection there for that purpose. I just told you earlier that shavings and oil were used to start the fire. The old wooden matches, I think they still make them, they were on a hinge here by the fire door. As it rolled out the house, all those matches would go off at one time, which got right much fire

going to start with. Like I say, time they'd get to the fire, it would be ready to pump. We hold the world record with this steamer in contest.

Mr. Phaup: That was a contest for?

Mr. Conner: Getting up steam from a completely cold boiler -having water out of the nozzle. Standing quick steam - no running time.

Mr. Phaup: Were pumps ever operated by hand?

Mr. Conner: Yes, way back they were operated by hand. Old hand pumpers.

Mr. Phaup: Before these steam pumps that we're looking at here, how was water pumped?

Mr. Conner: By hand. The old hand pump.

Mr. Phaup: I feel like I'm looking at an old locomotive here; very large wheels, steam chimney, fittings that look massive compared with today's equipment that you see on cars and trucks.

Mr. Conner: This is the original seat belt with this steamer. So, seat belts aren't anything new. As I always said, the driver couldn't be too much overweight there.

Mr. Phaup: We're looking at the size of the seat which is rather narrow which would not accommodate what we would call a couch potato now-a-days. Is this a one horse steamer?

Mr. Conner: Two horses. Two horses pull the steamer and one horse pull the hose wagons.

Mr. Phaup: Fred was a hose wagon horse. Now, we're looking at, it looks like a white buckboard from western movies here. It's got the name Atlantic on the side and it's rigged up for, it looks like,

a one horse pull. Now, is this what you would call a hose wagon?

Mr. Conner: That's what it is. It carried the hose. The steamer did the pumping.

Mr. Phaup: Was this Fred's wagon?

Mr. Conner: Yes, it was. This is the wagon that Fred pulled.

Mr. Phaup: You say you belong to the Button Company. Was the Atlantic another company?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir. We had two companies. Still do right on; The Button and The Atlantic. I belong to the Button. We're both right here at the main station on Broad Street and we still operate under our original charter. We're right downtown.

Mr. Phaup: Which is the largest company?

Mr. Conner: About the same size membership wise.

Mr. Phaup: How many is that?

Mr. Conner: Approximately thirty-five in each company.

Mr. Phaup: They weren't always under the same roof, were they?

Mr. Conner: No.

Mr. Phaup: Do you know when they were merged into one building?

Mr. Conner: Yes. When this present fire station was built in 1928.

Mr. Phaup: Are these the original colors?

Mr. Conner: The Button Company colors are blue and white. The Atlantic Company colors are pink and white.

Mr. Phaup: So, that was the color that it was originally?

Mr. Conner: Yes.

Mr. Phaup: I assume it's been repainted since it's been brought in for a museum piece.

Mr. Conner: Right.

Mr. Phaup: I notice this wagon has springs like a buggy springs on the carriage; where the Button steamer, it looks like it's rock solid; although, I see what looks like large shock absorbers back at the wheels. Tell me about the suspension on these wagons.

Mr. Conner: Both hose wagons were made right in New Bern around the turn of the century by the Water's Buggy Company. It used to be right pretty close to where our fire station is located now. He made both hose wagons, the Atlantic and the Button, around the turn of the century. And that's the way he made them.

Mr. Phaup: So, this was fairly standard for a buggy construction?

Mr. Conner: Yes.

Mr. Phaup: Leaf springs like you'd find on a modern car actually. They haven't changed too much, have they?

Mr. Conner: That's right.

Mr. Phaup: But the old Button over here doesn't have the leaf springs. It's looks like a much heavier construction, but I'm not sure it would be quite as soft a ride. Have you ever ridden this?

Mr. Conner: Not by any means it wouldn't. No, I've never been on this one. (laughter)

Mr. Phaup: I can imagine on a city street with the cobblestones what this would feel like to be in the driver's seat.

Mr. Conner: That is correct. That's a drop harness you know.

Mr. Phaup: We're looking at a harness for a horse that, right now, it's held up by a rope, but apparently it was designed for a horse to be backed under rather quickly and slipped over the horse and strapped in place for a quick exit to the fire. You told me that Fred had other duties besides pulling the hose wagon. He worked during the day for the city. Tell me his other duties.

Mr. Conner: He pulled the trash wagon in the day time hours for the city right downtown. He didn't get too far away from the fire station. When the alarm would sound, he would have to be unhooked from the trash wagon, run to the fire station and get hooked to the hose wagons. A lot of times the driver just would have time to be on his back. Those horses were very sensible. They knew just what to do when the alarm sound.

Mr. Phaup: Fred died answering a false alarm in 1925, correct?

Mr. Conner: Yes.

Mr. Phaup: How many years did he serve the fire department?

Mr. Conner: About seventeen years.

Mr. Phaup: So, he goes back to 1908. What's next Tim?

Mr. Conner: This is the Atlantic steamer. It was used from 1879 to 1915. Both of them will pump the same capacity of water; 500 gallons a minute. The Button steamer has a piston pump. This has a rotary gear pump. Our first motor truck, 1914, had a rotary gear. Our ladder truck had a centrifugal pump. We use centrifugal pumps today entirely.

Mr. Phaup: Now, this was the Atlantic Company's pumper, right?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir.

Mr. Phaup: Now, the Button Company's pumper was made by the Button Manufacturing Company, right?

Mr. Conner: Waterford, New York, yes.

Mr. Phaup: Was the Atlantic's pumper made by the Atlantic pumping?

Mr. Conner: No. Silby's the name of the company that made this.

Mr. Phaup: Why did they elect the name Atlantic instead of naming it after the pumper?

Mr. Conner: I suppose the word Atlantic goes back to 1845.

Mr. Phaup: So, the Silby Company and the Button Company were once competitors for making steam fire engines.

Mr. Conner: Yes sir, they were.

Mr. Phaup: Were these American companies?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir, both of them.

Mr. Phaup: I notice a lot of fire equipment, fire extinguishers are made by a company called American LaFrance. Is that an American company or is that a French company?

Mr. Conner: No, that's an American company. Our first motor truck, 1914, was American LaFrance. They used to be in () New York. They're in Blue Field, Virginia now. Not West Virginia, but Virginia. But they're still in business.

Mr. Phaup: They still make fire trucks?

Mr. Conner: They still make fire trucks. Yes sir. Our ladder truck, 1000 gallon a minute pumper, was a Seagrave here. But they're in Columbus, Ohio. I understand they're still in business. But the

American LaFrance, that doesn't have anything to do with the nation of France. It's just the name of the fire company. At one time, seventy-five percent of the fire fighters sold American LaFrance. That doesn't hold true today, but it used to be that way.

Mr. Phaup: What about the old Button and Silby companies? Did they just not keep up with the changing technology?

Mr. Conner: Well, they were in service for many years, but they finally faded away. They made a fine steam engine for quite a while.

Mr. Phaup: We tend to rate cars in certain price ranges, certain quality we associate with a certain brand name, now was the Button considered a superior pumper to the Silby or vice-versa?

Mr. Conner: I'd say about even-steven. One was a rotary gear pump, the other was a piston pump. So, I'd say even-steven more or less. I wouldn't say one was superior to the other.

Mr. Phaup: You had a little more room on the Silby seat I see.

Mr. Conner: Yes.

Mr. Phaup: Is that designed for two people?

Mr. Conner: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Phaup: And was this a one horse or a two horse?

Mr. Conner: Two horse. You had about eight horses altogether.

This is a Button hose wagon.

Mr. Phaup: And this would go out with a Button pumper?

Mr. Conner: Oh yeah. All four of these ()

Mr. Phaup: This looks like another wooden buckboard. Was this made by the same New Bern company?

Mr. Conner: The same one. Yes sir. Gib Waters Buggy Co.

Mr. Phaup: He was right near here.

Mr. Conner: Right close to where our fire station is located now. Right downtown.

Mr. Phaup: I see the number 26 and two fifths printed in gold letters on the side of this hose wagon. Tell me what that signifies.

Mr. Conner: That signifies our time. We hold two world records here. Both are by the Button Company. Racing used to be an annual event on a state-wide basis. Each town would see who'd get water the fastest with the steam engines and with the hose wagons. Well, we hold the world record with the Button steamer, 26 and two fifth seconds.

That's a horse running a hundred yards, jumping off the back of the wagon, laying 250 feet of hose, connecting the hydrant and having the water out of the nozzle in that many seconds. So, that's what the 26 and two fifth seconds means. Our world record time the Button steamer is one minute and forty-six seconds with it standing still, no running time. The steamer had gotten up from a completely cold boiler and water out of the nozzle in that length of time. Of course, it was doctored up a little. It left the ground about a foot, there was so much steam pressure on it.

Mr. Phaup: (laughter) You say doctored up. What do you mean, they were using fuel they weren't suppose to be using?

Mr. Conner: Yeah, that's exactly right. The one firing the boiler, the fire went out the fire door and caught his clothes on fire and he had to jump in the river to put his clothes out. That actually

happened. But the official time on that is one minute and forty-six seconds which is a world record. And the 26 and two fifth seconds is a world record. So, both our world records are by the Button company.

Mr. Phaup: Tell me, where were these contest held?

Mr. Conner: Wherever our state convention was being held, that's where the contest took place.

Mr. Phaup: So, these were state contests.

Mr. Conner: State contests.

Mr. Phaup: How does the 26 and two fifths stand up to other states on a national level?

Mr. Conner: Well, it's the world's record.

Mr. Phaup: Oh, it's a world's record. Okay. I put it in perspective now. That's quite an achievement.

Mr. Conner: It's never been surpassed. And it won't now of course.

Mr. Phaup: How much training went into these contest? Is it something the firemen look forward to every year?

Mr. Conner: Very much so. It used to be very popular statewide.

Mr. Phaup: Looking at what looks to be, it's not a clock.

Mr. Conner: That's called an indicator. It was at the fire station. They were installed when we first got an electric alarm system here which was in 1899. When someone would pull a box on the corner, the red box for fire, this would indicate the box number. If it was 27 for instance, this bell would ring two, a pause, and seven. Two would be in the first slot, seven would be in the second. That would tell us that Box 27 was coming in. This one would clear it and make

it right the next time. It was installed in 1899. We have three digits in our numbers now, then, we didn't have but two. That was upstairs. We had one about three times this size downstairs in the truck stall, which was really loud.

Mr. Phaup: So, the firemen could listen to the bells and tell where the fire was?

Mr. Conner: Yes, which they did. A driver was at the station. Then the whistle would blow and the big bell. We still have a bell right on. The steeple of city hall, it's still there but we don't use it anymore because we have our beepers now. And we use to have an old steam whistle. The engineer on duty would blow the whistle by hand. He had a bell indicator at the steam plant. You had a man on duty twenty-four hours a day and he would blow the whistle right with bell, whatever the box number was. Of course that was a real loud whistle.

Mr. Phaup: So, the man who operated the public bells at the steam plant would take the number from this indicator.

Mr. Conner: And he'd blow the whistle accordingly.

Mr. Phaup: He would blow the whistle twice for twenty and then seven for the seven? In other words, the same system.

Mr. Conner: He'd blow it two and then seven, yes. He'd blow it four times.

Mr. Phaup: And that was used to summon the volunteers.

Mr. Conner: Right. Plus the big bell in the steeple of city hall, which as I just said, is still there.

Mr. Phaup: Approximately, when was the last time firemen were summoned by the bells?

Mr. Conner: We depended on bells and the whistle entirely until the late fifties, then we got our beeper system and we've had our beeper system ever since.

Mr. Phaup: Going on down on our tour here.

Mr. Conner: We still used a bell and whistle quite a few years after that, but our main system after that was our beepers. Then and now, of course, too.

Mr. Phaup: Beepers would be the pocket system which are operated electronically like radios.

Mr. Conner: Right.

Mr. Phaup: We're looking at two large wheels. The wheels are at least five feet high and one is almost six feet high. There's a section in the middle where a hose is wrapped around a spindle.

Mr. Conner: These are called hose reels. They were pulled by hand. Some would pull and some would push and the more the better. The wagon replaced these.

Mr. Phaup: So, these pre-dated the wagons?

Mr. Conner: Yes they did.

Mr. Phaup: What did firemen do that lived in hilly country?

Mr. Conner: They had a job no doubt. (laughter)

Mr. Phaup: I came here from Asheville. I can imagine pulling one of these things up a hill. I guess the firemen would pray at night for a downhill fire.

Mr. Conner: Well, of course, we're flat here. The wagon was a big improvement over the hose reels.

Mr. Phaup: So, the hose reels would go back to around the Civil War period.

Mr. Conner: Yes they would. Right on up to the turn of the century, 1900. That's when we got our hose wagons.

Mr. Phaup: Tim we're looking at photographic cases with many, many old photographs in here. Have these been gradually accumulated through the years or were most of them in place when the museum was opened?

Mr. Conner: They were in place when the museum was opened. They were donated to us.

Mr. Phaup: Are most of them in New Bern?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir. That's correct.

Mr. Phaup: I see a picture of what looks like the old train station with what I would say was an early hotel across the street.

Mr. Conner: That's the old depot right down Hancock Street.

Mr. Phaup: Did you hear that that's going to be restored?

Mr. Conner: Yes, and I hope that happens. I really do. I remember when we had four passenger trains in and out of here a day. I also remember when we had trolley cars.

Mr. Phaup: Were trolleys popular?

Mr. Conner: Yes. Came right by my house on Pollock Street. I well remember them. Luckily, I have a picture of them.

Mr. Phaup: We're looking at the trolleys now. They had been

abandoned by the time this photograph was taken. You can see at least three trolleys. What was the name of the company that operated the trolleys?

Mr. Conner: It was called the Ghent Trolley Company.

Mr. Phaup: Was it a private company?

Mr. Conner: The street cars were owned by Callie McCarthy. He actually owned the street cars. He ran a grocery store here years ago. They were in service for quite a few years.

Mr. Phaup: Looks like a very famous person has died in one of these photographs; comrade Edgar Elliott.

Mr. Conner: Yes. Edgar drowned fighting a warehouse fire at the foot of Craven Street. The warehouse over the river just about where the Sheraton Hotel is located now and it caught fire between midnight and day. During the hustle and bustle, he wasn't missing until next morning. He was found the next morning with his arm around a piling out in Trent River. We figured it got too hot for him and he had to jump overboard, and by him having his protective clothing on, that prevented him from swimming. So, he drowned fighting the warehouse fire.

Mr. Phaup: It looks like it was quite a public occasion for his funeral.

Mr. Conner: Yes.

Mr. Phaup: We have a flower draped coffin being loaded onto...

Mr. Conner: That's the same truck I have in here, our first motor truck.

Mr. Phaup: I see. Onto the first motor truck.

Mr. Conner: He was a Button member.

Mr. Phaup: That's being taken from the First Baptist Church which, of course, is still in place downtown.

Mr. Conner: Yes sir.

Mr. Phaup: Tell me about the early days of the museum. I understand this addition was put on in 1982 approximately.

Mr. Conner: 1983.

Mr. Phaup: Plans were drawn in '82. I can look through the corridor. Was that the original section in there?

Mr. Conner: Yes. That's our old museum. That's our original museum.

Mr. Phaup: That was about the size of a large mechanic's garage, is that right?

Mr. Conner: Yes sir. It used to be the city garage and it moved. When they moved, that's when we started our museum. Then years later, we got our new building.

Mr. Phaup: Is that still on the tour or is that used by the fire department now?

Mr. Conner: We have some storage, but if anybody wants to see it, I'll carry them back there. We have a 1933 truck stored there that we use for parades.

Mr. Phaup: Tim, I certainly have enjoyed the tour and I feel like I've gotten to know you a little bit here in the last few weeks. (Tim wants to add something about himself and his years of service.)

Mr. Conner: Well, I just want to say that I've got fifty-one years in the New Bern Steam Fire Engine Company Number 1, which is known as the Button Company of the New Bern Fire Department. I'm still a fireman in the New Bern Steam Fire Engine Company Number 1 known as the Button Company of the New Bern Fire Department. I was born right here in downtown New Bern and I've never lived over a block from where I was born and I love that.

Mr. Phaup: New Bern has a lot of residents who love the downtown section and who love living downtown. I'm one of them, and I'm pleased to meet you Tim.

Mr. Conner: The same to you.

Mr. Phaup: Maybe we can do this again sometime, and I appreciate you taking part in the Memories of New Bern collection.

END OF INTERVIEW