

By Ruth Muse

JOHN ROBINSON
 REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER
 Benton County Resident

John Robinson was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina on March 7, 1759. As to who his parents were can not be established. He married Abigail Moore at the Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church in three miles of Charlotte, North Carolina by the Rev. David McCall Feb. 3, 1784. Abigail was born October 20, 1766 the daughter of Moses and Ann Moore. Moses More came to Hecklenburg County, for Lancaster, Pa. He and Ann died and are buried in the Hopewell Church Cemetery near Charlotte, N.C. He died October 30, 1785 and Ann died March 3, 1802.

John Robinson was allowed a pension on certificate No. 25096 which was issued November 19, 1833, at the rate of \$65.00 per annum, according to the act of June 7, 1832 at the West Tennessee Agency and transfered to Arkansas Agency.

John Robinson stated that he enlisted in August of 1780 and served as a Private in Captain William Alexanders Company, Colonel William Polk's North Carolina Regiment; his length of service was 7 months. In April of 1781 he renlisted as a Dragoon in Colonel Wade Hamptons Regiment and served for 10 months.

In 1790 John and Abigail Robinson were living in Mecklingburg County, North Carolina. In 1802 they moved to Tennessee, and in 1806 he was living in Wilson County. In 1817 he was living in Bedford County, where on September 18, 1817 he bought 198 acres of land on Sugar Creek, a south branch of Duck River, from Elisha Hall paying \$1600.00 for it. On October 23, 1818 he bought 150 acres more in the same location. He later deeded this land to his sons Moses Moore'Robinson, John Brown Robinson and Robert Amzi Robinson. John was still living in Bedford County. In the 1820 Census he was living in McNary County, Tennessee, where he applied for and received a pension for his services in the Revolutionary War.

In 1836 he noved to Benton County, Arkansas settling where the town of Robinson now is. His son John Brown Robinson came with him. The other sons staying in Tenn.

In 1840 John Robinson was 81 years old, and was living with his daughter Jan Harris Robinson Morrison, the widow of Andrew Morrison. They were married in Wilson Co. Tennessee in 1806. He died in 1832 in Bedford County, Tennessee.

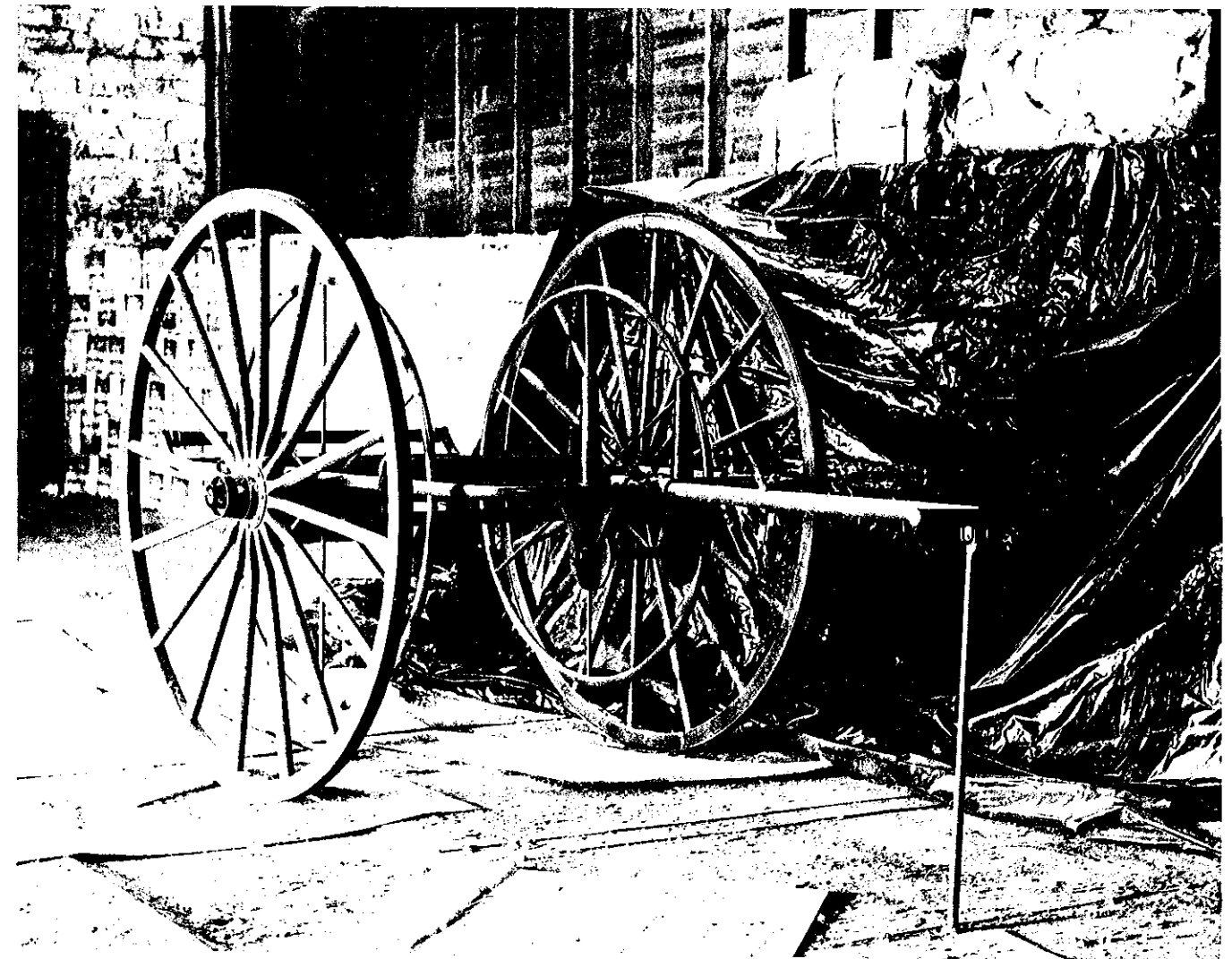
John Robinson died September 7, 1842 in Benton County, Arkansas and is buried at Thornsbery Cemetery, Washington County, Arkansas. His wife Abigail died July 26, 1846 and is buried by his side.

John and Abigail (Moore) Robinson's Children:

1. Jane Harrieson Robinson b. 1787, m. Andrew Morrison
2. Moses Moore Robinson b. Jan 20, 1789, m. Martha Morrison
3. Mary Scott Robinosn b. Dec. 17, 1791, died young
4. Robert Amzi Robinson b. Jan. 13, 1794, m. Malinda Bledsoe
5. Margaret W. Robinson b. Dec. 11, 1796, m. David McKissick
6. Ann Harriet Robinson b. Jan. 11, 1799, m. George Lowe
7. John Brown Robinsen b. Sept. 15, 1801, m. Jane McKissick Dickson
8. Abigail Addeline Robinson b. Feb. 22, 1804, m. David Patton
9. Mary Scott Robinson b. FEB. 28, 1806, m William Washington Dickson
10. James Asbert Robinson b. Sept. 5, 1808
11. William Robinson b. July 17, 1812

It is impossible to dig out facts and figures without hearing memories. The following is a combination of both.

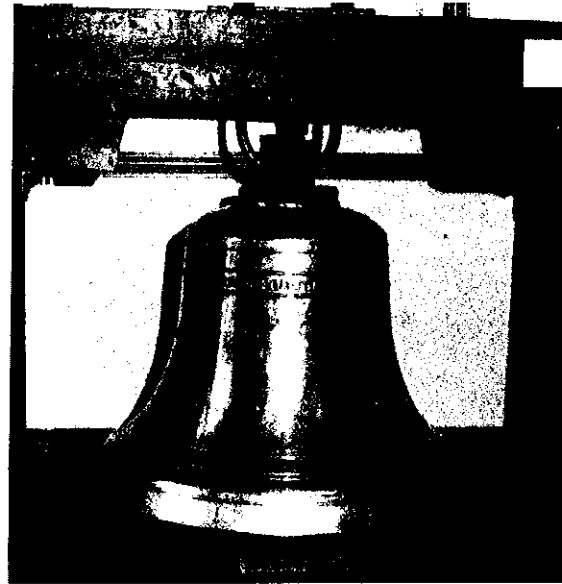
On December 19, 1976, Rogers Fire Department celebrated its 88th birthday. From the time it was formed in 1888 until it was reorganized in 1922, it was called Rogers Hose Company No. 1. The present name, Rogers Fire Department, was adopted



1888 FIRE HOSE CART, Photo by Gordon Freyder

The original equipment consisted mainly of a cart and several hundred feet of hose. The cart was pulled by volunteer firemen. However, there was a dray wagon (a low cart without sides) which was pulled by a team of horses. There were few fire

hydrants in Rogers during those early days. When the hose was hooked to the hydrant and the and the hose reeled out as far as it would reach, the men formed a bucket brigade to douse the flames.



Another early purchase by the fire department in 1889 was a Vanduzen and Taft fire bell, cast in brass at the Buckeye Bell Foundry in Cincinnati, Ohio. The fire department donated this old bell to the Rogers Historical Museum in 1975. When received by the museum, it had been sprayed with aluminum paint. Shortly after the museum opened, Vera Key, Chairman of the Rogers Museum, had a conversation with one of our retired firemen, Urie Colville. She asked if the bell could be

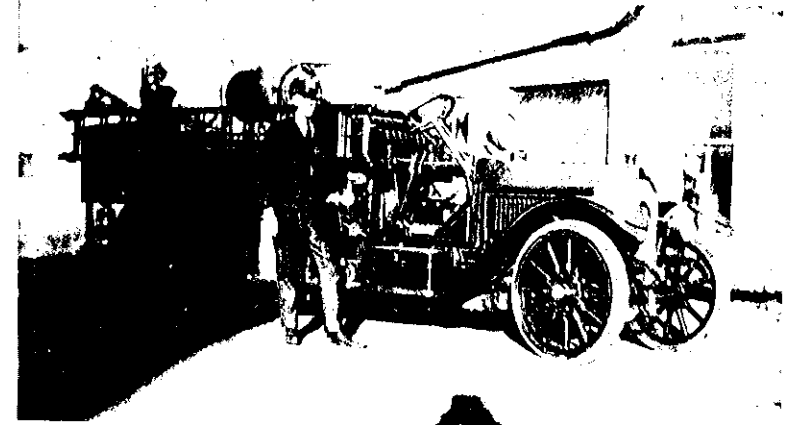
sprayed black. Colville scraped a small section. The original bell was solid brass and he suggested it be restored. You will see it in its original condition when you visit the museum. Colville explained how the bell worked. The bell itself doesn't move. Rings are installed in the clapper and a rope suspended from each side. The firemen took a rope in each hand and rapidly pulled first one and then the other. The clapper did the swinging from side to side.

Volunteer firemen were excused from paying their poll tax during those years it was in effect. Arkansas levied this tax in 1892. It was abolished by Amendment 24 to the Constitution of the United States, which went into effect in February of 1964.

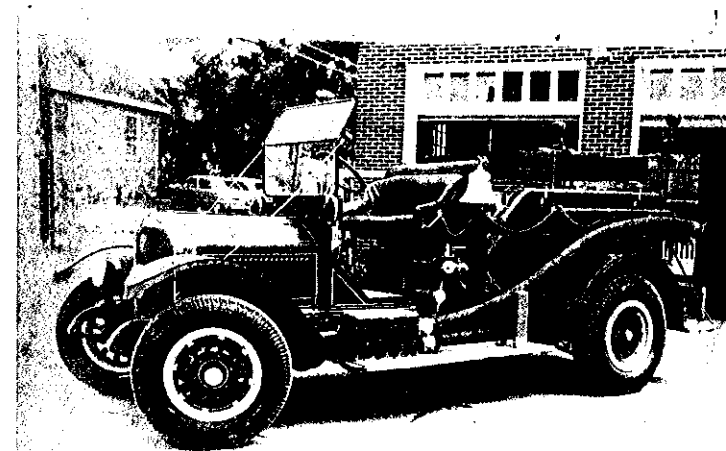
In February of 1915, Rogers voters approved a proposal to issue \$10,000 in bonds to purchase a power truck and hose. The Supreme Court later held that the act under which the election was held was unconstitutional.

On June 18, 1915, the City Council completed details for the purchase of a combination chemical and hose truck. The cost, \$5,000. It was purchased from the American LaFrance

Fire Engine Company of Elmira, New York. The 4-cylinder, 60 horsepower machine had a 40 gallon chemical tank and 200 feet of fire hose, on 20 foot ladder, one 12 foot later and 2 Babcock hand extinguishers. The new power truck was placed in service July 19, 1915.



FRANK (Jake) JACOBS & 1st. Fire Truck
s



OLD HULDA, Photo by Rogers Daily News

The 1915 fire truck was purchased with the understanding it could be converted to a pump truck but the cost of conversion was so near the cost of a new one, it was decided to trade the 1915 model in on a 1919 model. The city council approved \$8,500 for the purchase of a new American LaFrance truck called a Junior Pumper. It was capable of pumping 350 gallons of water per minute. This pumper, now known as "OLD HULDA", was retired in 1955. The fire department donated it to the Rogers museum and it is in storage until such time as space is available for it to be displayed.

Frank (Jake) Jacobs joined the fire department in 1923 as their first full time paid employee. His salary was \$70.00 a month to drive the fire engine. Jacobs was on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Red Reddick's mother cooked his lunch each day. Either Red or Otis Finn would carry it to him on foot or by bicycle. On his rare day off, Rube Reddick or John Wilson would relieve him.

In 1935, another truck was acquired for fighting fires. Constructed on a Dodge frame, it was capable of pumping 500 gallons of water per minute.

It burned in 1954 and the chassis was replaced by a GMC. The equipment from the burned truck was installed in the new one. Much of the work was done by the volunteer firemen.

A successful bond issue in 1954 allowed the fire department to purchase two additional trucks. One was a Mack triple combination pumper capable of pumping 750 gallons of water per minute. The other was a Mack Quad Pumper which was capable of pumping the same amount as well as carrying 250' of ladders. That same year, the department expanded its facilities on the east side of the City Hall building.

In 1960, a rescue truck was added. The volunteer firemen purchased it. Originally, it was an old Harris Baking Company truck used in Ft. Smith. A small amount was deducted from their pay checks and it took three months to pay for it. At this point I called retired fire chief Richard Graves. If they were volunteers, why did they receive a check? School sessions were held to teach basic fire fighting techniques. The volunteers received \$1.00 for each class he attended. Each time he helped fight a fire, he received \$2.00, whether it took five minutes or five hours. As of February 1, 1977, there are eleven volunteer firemen who are paid \$3.00 for each monthly class they attend and \$4.00 for each fire alarm they answer. The firemen installed most of the following equipment: resuscitator, chain saw, steel saw, 150, 500 and 1,000 watt lamps, generators, block and tackle, megaphone, stretchers, blankets, first aid kits, shovels, pick axes, crow bars, and sledge hammers. It was also equipped with flares, rope, two radios, set of climbers and safety belts, hydraulic jacks, a five pound powder extinguisher and other rescue equipment.

When it came time to insure the truck, the firemen found they couldn't obtain insurance. It was given to the City so insurance could be purchased.

In 1963, a Boston Whaler boat was acquired, powered by a 10 H.P. motor. It replaced an old wooden boat. The 1963 equipment consisted of six life jackets, five drag hooks, three grappling hooks and a fire extinguisher.

In 1967, the fire department took over the ambulance service from the funeral homes, thus acquiring two station wagons which the homes had used. In 1968, this service was transferred to a private contractor with the equipment still owned by the City.

In 1968, a new International fire truck with a 750 g.p.m. pump was purchased. It was sold in 1971 and replaced by a 1250 g.p.m. Mack diesel.

In 1969, the fire chief was furnished a car for the first time. It was a used police car. In 1970 it was traded for a used station wagon, which was traded in 1973 for a used 1972 model. This in turn was traded for a 1975

GMC Suburban truck. It wasn't until 1976 that the assistant chief was furnished with a pickup.

In 1973, two substations were built. No. 2 is located at 1907 South 17th Street. No. 3 is at 405 Highway 102, West.

In 1974, the department accepted three ambulances, a 1969 Ford van, a 1973 GMC van with a raised roof and a 1974 Dodge, also with a raised roof. These had been purchased by the City for private contractors. When the contractors went out of business, the fire department took over the ambulance service.

In 1974, a Dodge medium duty, four wheel drive, 1-ton chassis rescue unit was purchased. That same year, a new Chevrolet ambulance was bought. In 1976, the 1974 model was wrecked and replaced with a 1976 model. In 1977, the fire department took delivery of a 1977 Chevrolet ambulance to replace the 1969 Ford van.

At this writing, the fire department is installing equipment on a 1-1/4 ton pickup with a military surplus chassis to be used to fight brush fires.

There have been eight fire chiefs since the department was organized in 1888. John H. Rebholtz, 1888; J. W. Frey, 1889; W. D. Baker, 1892; J. A. C. Blackburn, 1896; Dr. George M. Love, 1922; Frank Jacobs, 1953; Richard Graves, 1965; Robert Whitley, 1974.

In early years, departmental elections were held to determine who would be the new chief. The name was then submitted to the Mayor and City Council for approval. The fire department is now under Civil Service.

At the fire station are lists of volunteers, starting with the 1888 roster. That first list is in Palmer script. Each man signed his own name after that year.

In its 88 year history, the fire department has, to my knowledge, moved just once. Originally located on First Street just north of Walnut, it moved in 1929 to its present location, 212 W. Elm.

In November, 1974, the fire department hired their first secretary-clerk who does general office work.

At the present time there are 26 full time paid firemen. 18 have retired and are receiving pensions.

1976 statistics show that of all occupations, fire fighting is the most dangerous. The following figures show deaths per 100,000 employees: Firemen, 90; policemen, 40; industrial, 32; agriculture, 19.