

Mount Vernon Fire Department

A Brief History





1870s

- The origins of the Mount Vernon Fire Department (hereafter referred to as MVFD) can be traced to 1877.
- On March 7, 1877, Mount Vernon passed a civil ordinance which established a fire district including property in the town of Mount Vernon.
- In August of 1879, the town purchased a fire engine.



1890s

- A large fire on Main Street in 1893 caused many businesses to be destroyed, and led to the construction of a city water system and attention towards fire protection.
- However, firefighting at this time was considered amateur, and consisted of citizens throwing buckets of water upon the flames. Talk soon began of organizing a fire department.

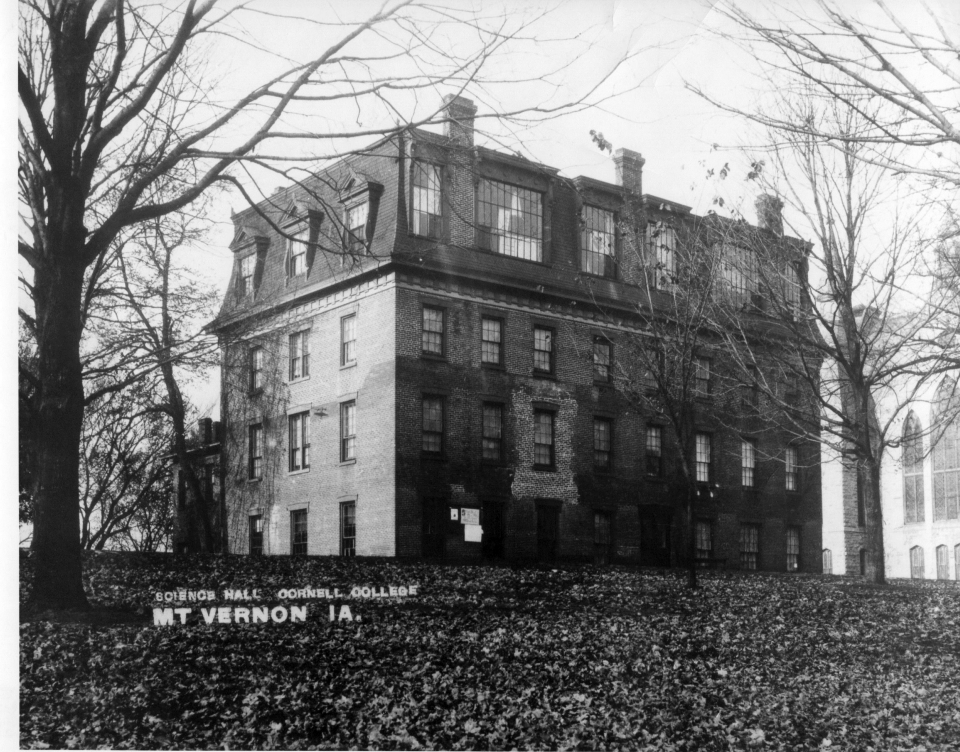


The Fire Station / City Hall as of 1916. Inside the garage is the Franklin township fire truck. A fire siren is located on top of the building, it was blown every day at noon.



1920s and '30s

- In 1924, the top floor of Old Sem, the oldest building on Cornell's campus, was destroyed in a fire.
- There were 20 members of the MVFD in 1930
- A major fire in a Mount Vernon lumber yard in 1931 caused citizens to approve a tax increase to pay for new fire equipment.



Cornell College's Old Sem

Left: Old Sem with its fourth floor before the fire.
Right: Old Sem without fourth floor after the fire.



MVFD crew as of
1927.

Mount Vernon, Iowa 1927

Metcalf



1940s

- Over the course of 1941, the number of fires that the MVFD responded to decreased.
- In September of 1948, the city council passed a bond to pay for new equipment totaling \$8,000 in cost. The bond was paid off in 1965.

1950s

- In early 1956, the MVFD began to carry a resuscitator along with the rest of their gear.
- There were 20 members of the MVFD in 1959.

MEMBERS OF THE MOUNT VERNON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Manard Barrett	Jim Gaines	Paul Kautz	Bob Niederhauser	Don Siggins
Reynold Brown	Paul Gaines	Don Krumm	Ken Peterson	Ivan Simonds
Darwin Cook	Leon Gardeman	Ray Krumm	Ed Petrick	Harry Suhomei
Bob Gaines	Dick Johnson	Joe Murphy	Roger Reyhons	Don Walden



1960s

- MVFD and Linn County Fire District №1 join the Civil Defense Fire Network in 1964, and updated their radio system.
- A fire station is constructed in 1967 to move out of the previous city hall location.

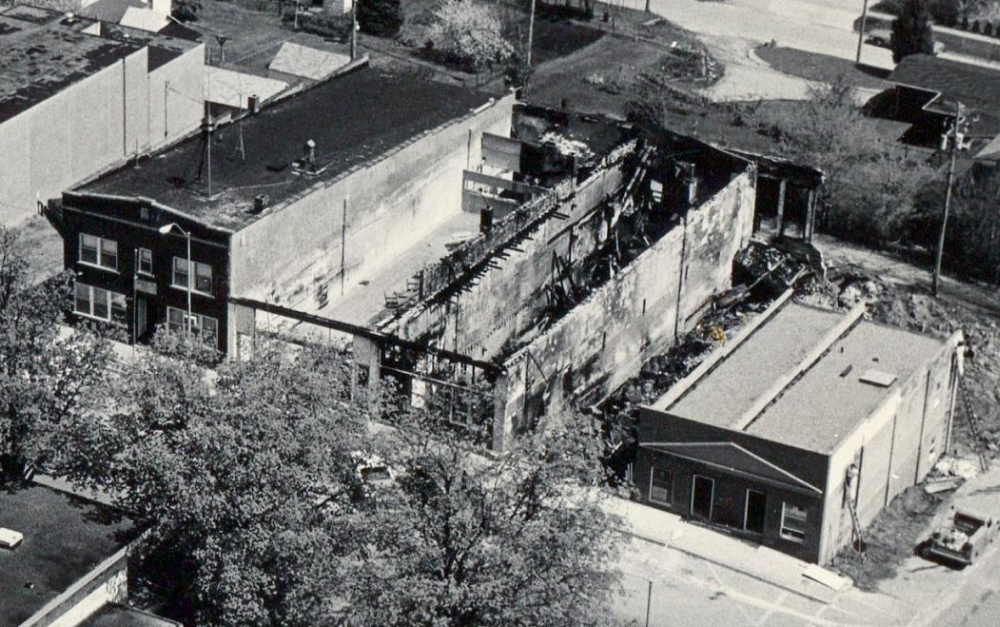


Left: The Previous Fire Station / City Hall.
Right: The replacement Fire Station built in 1967.



1970s

- On February 1, 1975, the worst fire in MV history broke out. Nine fire departments were called upon to fight the blaze, a large portion of Main Street was burned down, including the Strand Movie Theatre.



Top Left: Remains of fire.

Top Right: The fire viewed from outskirts of town.

Bottom: Firefighters fighting the massive blaze.





1980s and '90s

- In early 1981, MVFD received a compressor which allows them to refill air tanks, updated the fire trucks at no cost to the city with the help of Civil Defence.
- In 1994, the first Cornell student joined the MVFD
- The first “jaws of life” were purchased in 1994



2010s

- In March of 2012, the Volunteer Fire Department was founded.
- On May 28, 2012, the Brand New Fire Station opened.
- On August 10, 2015, DonMar Lanes burnt to the ground. It took 14 fire departments 5½ hours to extinguish.



The new Fire Station.

"Biggest Story of the Year: FIRE!" *The Sun* [Mount Vernon, IA] 31 Dec. 1975: 1. *The Digital Archive of the Mount Vernon Public Library*. Web. 26 Oct. 2016.

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