



# NJ FIRE MUSEUM & FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL NEWS



Issue 11 Volume 2

Visit the website at: [www.njfiremuseum.org](http://www.njfiremuseum.org)

Wildwood 2011

## A History of the Silsby Steamer from Clayton NY



*This picture from 1942 was taken when Ernie Day (left) first purchased the steamer.*

The Silsby pictured above served Clayton, NY, and is one of the pieces of fire apparatus donated to the state of New Jersey as part of the Ernie Day collection. Ernie Day had a folder on this piece of apparatus containing various pictures, newspaper articles, and letters. The photo shows little to no decoration on the steamer, except for the striping on the wheels.

Silsby engine #873 was received by Clayton, NY on April 6, 1887. Information found on the internet indicates it was built to be hand drawn. The engine was named "Calumet", and donated to the fire company by then to-

*(Continued on page 3)*

### *Message from the President:*

It has now come time for us to shift our focus slightly. While it is still important for us to accumulate money, we now have to deal with the logistics of construction. We are developing relationships with government agencies that can help us move ahead with development at the Allaire site. At the same time we are actively looking for alternate locations. Concepts and plans for the Memorial are in process.

We acquired a piece of steel from the World Trade

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### Coming Events

Sept 24, Boonton, Muster at the **New Jersey Firemen's Home**, Lathrop Ave and Wooton St (I 287-Exit 45)

Oct 9, Newton, Fall Foliage Muster, Truck Show & Flea Market on the grounds of the Sussex County Public Safety Training Academy

Nov 5, Readington Township, Deer Path Park, Annual Touch-A-Truck Day.

Check the 'Events' page of the website for 2012 events.

### Ways to Help the Museum and Memorial!

- Become a member. The form is available on the website.
- Make a cash donation.
- Personalized granite pavers are a tribute that will be part of the memorial plaza for future generations to appreciate. The order form is available on the website.
- Join the Volunteer Committee contact Judy at 732-446-3728 or volunteer@njfiremuseum.org
- Lapel pin, T shirts, and hats are available so you can wear the logo and show your support.
- Donations of cars, trucks, open or enclosed trailers may be of use to us. Your donation is tax deductible. Please contact Sam at 908-623-0284 or srobinson@njfiremuseum.org.
- Shop Online! When you start your online shopping at

[www.ShopforMuseums.com](http://www.ShopforMuseums.com) participating companies donate a portion of their proceeds to the museum **at no cost to you!** Select 'New Jersey Fire Engine and Equipment Museum' under Museum Partners, scroll through the list of stores, and start shopping. Please make a habit of using ShopforMuseums.com often and spread the word.

### President's message, continued.

(Continued from page 1)

Center and our experience with trying to install it at the Allaire site has shown that planning cannot start too soon. The steel is now in storage and may be on display at a temporary site soon, but approval to move it to the Allaire site is still in our plans for the future.

We are continuing to actively promote the Museum and Memorial at fire service related events throughout the state. Our mobile displays include an 1854 hose carriage from Irvington, an 1860s Rumsey hand

pumper, a 1960 Mack pumper and a 1974 Young pumper. Our fixed displays are a double decker hand pumper at the Trenton Fire Museum and a hose cart from Atlantic City at the Keyport Fire Museum. Take some time to see these examples of the many extraordinary pieces of fire apparatus in our collection.

Our website is constantly evolving but currently has a lot of good information including a short video of some of the apparatus the state has in storage.

I hope to see you in Wildwood. You can visit us in the convention center, at the Campbell Supply display area in the parking lots or at **Brian Hanlon's space** in the tents.

Sincerely,

*Bob Burns,*

President



Pictured is one of several ceramic dishes recently acquired by the NJ Fire Museum. We've decided to sell the surplus items. Look for our tent at Wildwood, or check out our listing on eBay.

### DONATIONS!

The NJ Fire Museum and Fallen Firefighter's Memorial has received several donations this year. Fire Hooks Unlimited, of Wall, generously donated \$5,000.00. Other donations include \$500.00 each from the NJ Carpenters Pension Fund, and the 200 Club of Middlesex County. *Thank You.*

### HOW TO CONTACT US!

Write to us at  
 NJ Fire Museum  
 PO Box 241  
 Piscataway NJ 08855-0241  
 Or send email via our website  
[www.njfiremuseum.org](http://www.njfiremuseum.org)

## From the Files of Ernie Day: Silsby Steamer from Clayton, New York

bacco magnate, Charles G. Emery, and owner of Calumet Island.

The engine fought its first fire just seven months later in November 1887. There was no warm place for storage, and the boiler had been drained when a fire broke out on a Sunday afternoon. In ten minutes the boiler was filled, and in another five minutes two streams of water were playing on the fire. *On the St. Lawrence, Clayton's newspaper*, printed a special fire supplement the next morning that included the following:

**“The Silsby engine is now singing the same tune it started at sun-down yesterday. Engineer Manson and Assistant Hill stood by the Silsby engine from Sunday's sunset until Monday's daylight.**

**“If there exists a man in Clayton, who will today utter one syllable against the Silsby engine, let him be chained to a good reliable telegraph pole and let the said engine play the same kind of a stream of water upon him for 18 mortal hours that it put on the fire last evening. Shame on the man who will speak a word thereafter derogatory of this most complete and magnificently appointed machine.**

**“A Lowville gentleman, who saw the Silsby perform last night declared it to be one of the finest machines he ever saw and much better that the engine in his native borough.”**

A prize of \$10 was offered for the first team to reach the engine after an alarm was sounded. By the time the team got the engine to the fire, the steam was up and the pump would be ready to work.

The pumper subsequently fought fires on islands along the St. Law-



rence River. The men and the equipment would be loaded onto scows or barges and transported to the scene, a very time-consuming task.

The Silsby fought its last fire in May 1921 at Depauville, after being towed there by truck. They had to



stop twice on the way because the wheels overheated.

In December of 1941 the Clayton Fire Department offered to sell the steamer to Ernie Day in response to an ad Ernie placed in the December issue of *Fire Engineering*. They offered to load it F. O. B. Cars Clayton for the sum of 100 dollars. Other letters indicate the fire department offered to pay any freight over \$20. The shipping bill shows a weight of 6000 lbs. at a rate of \$1.03 per lb. for a total shipping cost of \$61.80.

There was no lettering on the Silsby when Ernie Day received it, and he had ‘Clayton Fire Dept’ lettered on the boiler. In 1958 he paid \$36 to have a body shop paint the four wheels.

In 1985, when the steamer was turned over to the state, the two running lights were packed separately and will be remounted when it is put on display.

Ernie Day also used pictures of the Silsby steamer on trays he made to promote what he was calling “The Ernest N. Day State Fire Engine Museum”.



*On this page:*

*Left: Ernie Day with the steamer at his office in Dunellen.*

*Above: The manufacturing plates showing the serial number and the patent dates.*

# Museum Membership Application Form

Please circle dollar value

	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum	Other
Individual	\$20	\$40	\$60	\$75	\$_____
Family	\$25	\$50	\$75	\$100	\$_____
Company	\$75	\$150	\$300	\$500	\$_____

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email : \_\_\_\_\_

Tel Number (optional) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: We would appreciate having your email so we can send you the full-color newsletter electronically. The newsletter is sent in PDF format (up to 1MB).

*Please mail form and your check made payable to:*

*NJFM*

*P O Box 241*

*Piscataway NJ 08855-0241*

*Or: Visit the website to use a credit card!*



# Volunteer Committee Application Form

*To Join the Volunteer Committee (museum dues must be current):*

*Please fill in your name, address, and email in the box above, and return this entire page.*

- Check one of the following:
- I am already a member of the Fire Museum
  - I am joining the Fire Museum for the first time
  - I am a member of a Fire Company that is a Museum Member

Fire Co: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteering in the following areas:

Special Events     Education Services     Maintenance     Fund Raising

My previous volunteer experience is: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you enjoy most as a volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you wish to avoid? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any skills or experience you have that you feel would benefit the NJ Fire Museum and/or benefit the NJ Fallen Firefighter Memorial? \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_