

# Horse-drawn Fire Engine, 1913

*By Unknown*

In 1913, when this picture was taken, the Portland fire department was in transition. The department horses were very popular in Portland, sometimes eclipsing the firefighters in celebrity, but the department was able to respond more effectively to fires with automobiles. The department bought its first automobile in 1909 so Chief David Campbell could get to fires quickly and assess the situation before the other firefighters arrived with the horse-drawn equipment. The arrangement was so successful that the department bought the first motorized fire apparatus in 1911, and by 1915, there were twenty-six pieces of motorized equipment. The last horse retired in 1920, and the department was fully motor-powered. After forty years of working closely with the horses, firefighters no longer bunked in the stables to be ready to hitch the horses to the engines at any hour. The sound of hooves clattering through the streets, straining to get pumping equipment to the fire was replaced by the roar of engines. In the early 1920s, the first vehicle was supplied with emergency equipment and personnel trained in first aid. The emergency crew was soon the busiest squad in the department. In order to reach people faster, the department decided to commission the George Baker Emergency Car, named for Mayor George L. Baker, in 1933.

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