

The Volunteers: Firefighting in Philadelphia

As you watch the webisode, fill in the T-chart and timeline below.

Protectors	Provokers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based • Seen as public service • Protected the city—Philadelphia never had a major fire unlike other big cities • Many died doing their job • Sponsored parties and dances for neighborhood • Place of refuge or to get a meal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No black companies • Some joined street gangs with names like the Blood Tubs, the Bullies, and the Killers • Pitch battles with "alley apples" (bricks), brickbats, and guns • Partied and ran around night even when no fire

1752	Franklin forms first insurance company
1838	Pennsylvania Hall, an abolitionist meeting hall, was allowed to burn to the ground by volunteer fire companies
1844	Riots between Catholics and Protestants shake the city; fires set on purpose to draw rival fire companies to the scene

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1854	Philadelphia consolidated to unify police force; order restored to fire companies—but remained independent, neighborhood institutions.
1865	Large city-wide "Grand Parade" of volunteer firefighters at end of Civil War
1871	City shuts down volunteer fire companies and opens city fire department

In the opening of the webisode, the narrator states, "For two centuries, Philadelphia's volunteer fire companies reflected the city at its best and at its worst." What do you think are the strongest examples of best and worst of the volunteer fire companies?

Answers will vary.