



Old City Firehouses

A SELF-GUIDED WALKING
TOUR BY PHILADELPHIA
NEIGHBORHOOD



30 — minute Walk

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[UNION FIRE COMPANY](#)

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[OLD BUILDING OF
PERSEVERANCE HOSE COMPANY](#)

3

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[PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT](#)

Checkpoint 1

Union Fire Company Marker



UNION FIRE COMPANY,
(1736-1843)

This first truly volunteer fire company in the US served as a model for others across the nation. Members, including Ben Franklin, purchased tools stored here in Grindstone Alley, helped provide a fire bell, buckets, and an engine for the city, and developed the idea of fire insurance.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION 2011



Starting on the North side of **Market Street** between **2nd & 3rd Streets**, you'll see the blue and gold Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission marker for the Union Fire Company.

The Union Fire Company, Philadelphia's first volunteer fire company, stored its equipment - ladders and pikes - on Grindstone Alley. When formed in 1736, this was a critical area of the city with the Court House, market place, churches and meeting house all clustered nearby.

Checkpoint 2

Old Building of Perseverance Hose Company





Head West on Market Street and turn right on **3rd Street**. Turn right at **Quarry Street** before **Café Ole** and just the back of the Cafe is the home of the Perseverance Hose Company.

According to the Sunday Dispatch of 1850 the Perseverance Hose purchased this building in 1830 and in 1832 added a two story kitchen addition to help pay off the mortgage. The company occupied the front of the building. Around 1850, they moved to new quarters on Race Street between 3rd & 4th. Notice the [headstone](#) on the building with the company's original information. This building is now a private residence.

Checkpoint 3

House for Truck 2





Head back to 3rd Street and turn right. Then turn left on **Race Street** and just past the **Wireworks** on the north side was the home of Truck 2.

This house was originally built by the *Perseverance Hose Company* and was one of the houses acquired by the city in 1871. In 1920, **Truck 2** was moved into this station. With the construction of the *Benjamin Franklin Bridge* on [Florist Street](#) in 1925, they moved the apparatus door to Race Street. The department then began using the Race Street address for Truck 2. In 1952 the terminology changed and Truck 2 became **Ladder 2**.

Ladder companies carry ladders to fires.

Checkpoint 4

High Pressure Pumping Station





Head East on Race Street to **Columbus Boulevard** and on the south west corner you'll see the original High Pressure Pumping station.

The station was built in 1902 to meet the city's increased needs for water and water pressure as the downtown areas grew taller and more dense by pumping untreated river water throughout the high pressure water system mains. Before the construction was completed in 1903, [fireboats](#) charged the high pressure system via a [bulkhead connection](#) at the foot of Race Street. The bulkhead was left in case the pumping system broke down. The station is now the home of *Fringe Arts* and *Le Peg* restaurant.

Checkpoint 5

Fireman's Hall Museum





Retrace your steps on Race Street and turn left on **2rd Street**. At the corner of Second and Quarry Streets you'll see Fireman's Hall Museum.

The museum was originally built as a fire station for **Engine 8**, in 1902. The museum houses apparatus used by the Philadelphia Fire Department including the [Canon Wagon](#) designed to work with the new high pressure system. A horse trough in front of the museum recalls the days when horses pulled engines and is today used by horses pulling carriages and neighborhood dogs. In front of the museum are inset bronze plaques memorializing the 8 firefighters who died in the *Gulf Refinery* fire of 1975.

Engine companies provide tools and hose and pump water at fires.

Checkpoint 6

Philadelphia Fire Department





Head South on **2nd** and turn right on Arch Street. At the corner of **4th & Arch Streets** is the Philadelphia Fire Department.

This is the current station for **Engine 8** and **Ladder 2** and in the garden next door is a wonderful [Mural Arts](#) mural depicting the history of the Philadelphia Fire Department.

Thank you

Help us enhance your next walking tour by filling out 5-minute online survey
shorturl.at/gvJKY

For more walking tours, visit our website:
<https://www.firemanshallmuseum.org/philadelphia-fire-resources/>



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