Manayunk and Roxborough Firehouses
A SELF-GUIDED DRIVING TOUR
My thanks to Jack Wright, the Philadelphia Fire Department Historian, for supplying much of the information contained in this tour.
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Checkpoint 1
Engine 35, Ladder 25, and Medic 16
We start our tour at Ridge and Midvale Aves. Just up Ridge Ave at **4214 Ridge Ave.** is the home of Engine 35, Ladder 25, and Medic 16.

Engine 35 was organized in December of 1889 at 3360 Ridge Ave. In 1896 they moved to a new station at **4214 Ridge Ave.** On October 18, 1916 they were disbanded for station renovations. Engine 35 was re-organized in their newly renovated station on September 17, 1917, on that same day Truck 18 was organized and stationed with Engine 35. Truck 18 remained with Engine 35 until July 7, 1930 when it was relocated to Engine 59’s station (Hunting Park Ave & Schuyler St).

On June 30, 1959 Engine 35 was disbanded once again so their old station could be demolished to make way for a **new station** to be built on the same site. This is the station you see today. On August 20, 1969 Medic 16 was organized and continues to respond from Engine 35’s station.
Checkpoint 2

Engine 12
Continue the tour by going North on Ridge Ave. Continue to where Ridge Ave and Main St. split. Bear left onto Main St. (Do Not go up the hill) Continue on Main St for about 1 mile. On your right at 4545 Main St. is the present home of Engine 12.

This station was built in 1927 to replace its former station at Main and Centre Sts., which was demolished so the Reading Railroad could be elevated. In 1928, Ladder 25 was organized and stationed with Engine 12. Prior to 1928, Ladder 25 was Auxiliary Ladder 12 and was stored at Engine 12. Ladder 25 remained here until 1959 when it was relocated to Engine 35’s station at Ridge and Midvale Aves, where it remains today.

Engine 12’s history goes back to the Volunteer Manayunk Fire Co. which was founded on January 1, 1838. On March 15, 1871 the Manayunk Fire Co became Engine 12 of the new paid fire department. Engine 12 used the House of the Manayunk Fire Co. until 1875 when they moved to a station at Main & Centre Sts.
Checkpoint 3
Former Site of Engine 12
Continue by driving **North** on **Main St.** On your right along the wall (approx .1 mi) you will see a parking cutout with a hydrant. This is the location of Engine 12’s former station.

An interesting story about the horse drawn days: Since Manayunk is a very hilly area of the city, the story goes that a *trolley* had to be at the bottom of the hill in case Engine 12 had to respond to Roxborough at the top of the hill. If dispatched to Roxborough, Engine 12 would go to the trolley and unhitch the horses and hook the steamer to the trolley which would pull it and its crew to the top of the hill where they would receive a fresh team.

If one of the mills in Manayunk caught fire it was usually a multi alarm fire. Companies would come in from all over the city. The teams of horses would be worn out by the time they got close to the fire. The trolleys that ran along Main St. would tow the steamers giving the team of horses a rest.
Checkpoint 4

Engine 39
This was the sight of the original home of Engine 39, which it occupied from 1892 until 1952. Engine 39 was an auxiliary stable, meaning it housed nine extra horses. Since Roxborough was so far from anything in the 1800’s, any company responding to this area would need a fresh team of horses to get home.

Continue on to the traffic light at Leverington Ave. Turn right and travel approximately 1 mi. Just before Ridge Ave, on the right, is 473 Leverington Ave. Presently the home of JD McGallicuddy’s Bar.
Checkpoint 5
Engine 39, Ladder 30, Medic 5
Engine 39 was disbanded in 1983 to form Task Force 30. The Task Force was made up of Ladder 30, which was fully manned, and Engine 39, which ran with Ladder 30 as an extra apparatus. In 1988, Task Force 30 was disbanded and Engine 39 & Ladder 30 were re-organized. Engine 39 was once again disbanded to form Task Force 30 in 1994, then re-organized again in 1998. Engine 39 continued to serve Roxborough until January 5, 2009 when it and 7 other companies were disbanded due to budget cuts. Engine 39 was brought back to service on November 17, 2019.

At the light which is Ridge Ave. turn left, and continue on Ridge Ave. On the left, passing Lemonte St., is the current home of Engine 39, at 6630 Ridge Ave.

Built in 1952, this property is a combined usage property. It is occupied by Engine 39, Ladder 30, and Medic 5, as well as the 5th Police District. The **Fire Training School** operated in the rear of the building from 1952 until 1978 when it was relocated to a larger facility at State Rd & Pennypack St. The old **Fire School** can be accessed by turning left at Cinnaminson St. and going about 100 feet to the gate on the left. At present, the **old fire school facility** is occupied by the Facilities Maintainance Division of the City’s Public Property Department.
Checkpoint 6
Engine Company 66
This station was constructed in 1951 to replace their older station at Eva and Dearnley Sts, which is the last stop in this tour.

From Engine 39 continue North on Ridge Ave. about 1 mi. On the left at 7720 Ridge Ave. is Engine 66’s station.
Checkpoint 7

Original Engine Company 66
At the light at Ridge & Shawmont Aves turn left, and proceed to the stop sign. This is Eva St. Turn left on Eva St. and proceed two blocks. On your right, before Dearnley St., standing alone against the hill is the original station of Engine 66.

This building was not constructed as a firehouse. It was first a school house. The Fire Department had to remodel it so it could accommodate the fire equipment and the firemen. Engine 66 ran from this location from 1927, when they were organized, until 1951 when they moved to their present location. This company did not have horses because all the horses had been retired by the time Engine 66 was organized. Today this property is owned by a landscaping company.
Thank you

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