

# OLD AND NEW ENGINES.

## Facts About the Fire Service of the Past.

### Running with the "Masheens" Before Steam Was Introduced.

#### Locations and Names of the Engines of Early Times.

There is no period in the annals of the Boston fire department which has a more interesting history than that of its hand-engine days, which ended in 1868-9 and '60, when steam superseded muscle and business methods took the place of pleasure.

The most exciting period of the department's history, and that which has the fondest recollections of the veterans who used to run with the "old masheen," embraces that period between 1830 and 1860.

In those days the firemen belonged to the department for the pleasure there was in it, although it might be anything but an easy task to convince those of today, who were not then born, that there was any pleasure in running with a hand engine from Lincoln's wharf, at the North End, where old Boston 15 was located, to Northampton street, and then for hours, perhaps all night, work the brakes in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, rain or shine—it made no difference which, as it was the old firemen's pride to get there and do their duty, regardless of physical consequences.

The firemen of those days were different than those of today. The working classes were in the majority, and the hardy drayman, butcher, carpenter, etc., composed a major portion of the fire service.

Societies, clubs and lodges did not then exist so numerous as now, and the pleasures and privileges, now obtained by being a lodge or club member, were in those days better obtained in the fire service than anywhere else. The engine stations were their club rooms, and the company meetings their lodge nights, as is now the monthly meetings of the veterans to

#### Many of the Old-Timers

who belong to no other organization.

The old company record books would furnish a most interesting story of good times, interesting fire duty, hard work which was to the firemen pleasure; contests, both at racing, in responding to alarms and tub contests, in working engines at fires, washings and suckings, disagreements with the engineers, disbandment and the placing of a padlock on the engine house door by the chief, naming of engines and many such events, interesting alike to the old-timer who participated in them and the fireman of today, who love to read and hear how they ran the department and put out fires in the olden times.

The old-time fire sharp used to take great interest and pride in the name of their engine, and it is of the numerous company names, location of apparatus, etc., that this sketch treats.

According to A. W. Brayley's history of the department, the first engine was purchased in London and arrived in Boston some time prior to 1678, probably the year before. This was undoubtedly the first engine in America. It was in service nearly a half century before New York city purchased its first new Newsham in 1732.

This engine was a very crude affair, and was filled with buckets, as were all the engines until about 1830, when suction engines were first introduced.

The oldest description of engines to be found is that of Newsham's famous engine, built in 1730 or thereabouts, which is described as being able to go through a passage three feet wide, and hauled by one man. It is credited with playing a stream "65 yards high," which would stand a fair chance with the "Gaspee," "Hay Cart," "Melville," "Yale," and others of today at perpendicular play. This first Boston engine was located in Court street, and had a company of 12 men, of which

#### Thomas Atkins Was Captain.

Two more engines arrived from London in 1705, and thereafter they were purchased as the town grew and their need became apparent.

The first engine to receive a name was No. 5, which lay in Marlboro street and was named "Marlboro" in 1742. Subsequently the others were named, which previously were known either by their numbers or by the locality in which they were stationed, such as the North meeting house engine, the prison engine, the dock engine, etc.

These engines were English mostly, until about 1800 or later, when the Thayer engines manufactured at Newburyport, and the Hunneman engines built at Roxbury, were purchased.

The introduction of the Cochituate water caused a reorganization of the department in 1852. The names of the companies, their locations, etc., prior to that date were as follows:

No. 1, Old North—Suffolk—In 1758 Old North, No. 1, was located in Northsquare, in 1781 in Hanover street, and in 1825 in Summer street, and disbanded some years afterwards. Suffolk, No. 1, was organized in 1845, and located in the house now occupied by hose 5 on Shawmut avenue, which was built for that engine, as the large figure 1 now in front of that house indicates.

No. 2, Congress—Located in 1755 near the new North meeting house in 1802 in Bennet street, and in 1813 transferred to the glass works, South Boston.

No. 3, Old Copper—Washington—Located in 1758 in North Bennet street, in 1781 in Salem street. It was subsequently named Washington.

No. 4, Endeavor—Quincy—Protective—Located in 1758 in Dock square, in 1781 in Ann street, in 1829 in Cambridge street. In 1836 its name was changed to Quincy, in honor of ex-Mayor Quincy. In 1847, the company then being out of service, a new company was organized at East Boston, and given their number, with the name "Protection."

No. 5, Marlboro—Lyman—Located in 1758 in the town house, Marlboro street, subsequently in Market square. In 1838 the name was changed to Lyman, in honor of Mayor Theodore Lyman.

No. 6, Hero—Otis—Located in Hancock square and Derne streets; name changed in 1835 to Otis, in honor of Harrison Gray Otis.

No. 7, New York—Extinguisher—Tiger—Howard—Located in 1758 near the Old South church, subsequently in School street, and afterwards in Purchase street. In 1806 name was changed to Extinguisher. In 1835 name was again changed to Tiger, and again in 1838 to Howard. This company is the only one which never changed its number, and is the engine company No. 7 of East street of today, as it came down from 1733. There is now a

#### Brass Plate at No. 7

station which gives the names of all the foremen of that company from 1733 to date.

No. 8, Cumberland—Tremont, located in 1785 in Newberry street, in 1830 near Franklin schoolhouse, Tremont street, and in 1837 in Warren, now Warrenton, street. Name changed in 1837 to Tremont.

No. 9, Despatch, located in 1756 in Mason street, in 1847 in old City Hall, in 1848 in Hudson street.

No. 10, Hancock—Amory, organized 1772 and located on Hancock wharf, and later on in Hanover street. In 1835 name changed to Amory in honor of Chief T. C. Amory.

No. 11, Brooks—Purchase—Maverick, organized 1766 as Green, No. 10, and changed to Brooks, and in 1800 again changed to Purchase, and in 1835 transferred to East Boston and named Maverick. It was located in Bedford and Franklin streets.

No. 12, Eagle, organized 1796, located on Orange street, what is now Washington street, near Common, and afterwards to the house now occupied by Hayes truck, 13, near Dover street.

No. 13, President Adams—Rapid—Melville, organized 1798 and stationed at the West End, in Leverett street. Name changed in 1816 to Rapid and again in 1831 to Melville, in honor of Mayor Melville, for many years chief fire ward of the old department prior to 1825.

No. 14, Cataract—Lion, organized in 1800. This engine was presented to the city by several wealthy citizens, and stationed in State street until 1828, when it was transferred to Water street, and in 1847 to Mt. Vernon street, near Charles. The name was changed in 1835 to Lion, which it retained but a short time, when the old name of Cataract was again taken.

No. 15, Boston—Ellet, organized February, 1822, and located on Lincoln's wharf. There was another engine, 15, named Ellet, which was used for a time by this company.

No. 16, Torrent—Ellet—Perkins, organized 1823 and located in Purchase street. Name changed in 1838 to Ellet, and in 1846 the engine was transferred to South Boston and

#### Named "Perkins."

No. 17, Liberator—Mazzeppa, organized in 1823 and located in South Boston, and in 1837 transferred to Fort Hill.

No. 18, Philadelphia—Lafayette, organized in 1825 and located on what is now Tremont row, at the head of Hanover street. In 1838 its name was changed to Lafayette, and known as "Old Silver Ringes." Ex-Chief William Barnicoat was the first foreman of this company.

No. 19, Hydrallon—Old North, organized in 1825 and located in Ellet street. In

1847, the Hydrallon being out of service, a company was organized at East Boston and given that number and the engine Old North, No. 1, which name it retained.

No. 20, Boston—Extinguisher, organized in 1826 and located in Sea street, now Harrison avenue, and in 1830 relocated at the foot of Essex street. It bore the name "Boston" but a short time, when "Extinguisher" was substituted.

Hook and Ladder No. 1 was organized Feb. 7, 1821, and has always had the same location as now in Friend street, or in that immediate vicinity. It was first called Hancock and afterwards Warren.

Cochituate water was introduced in 1848, and in 1852 the department was reorganized to meet the new requirements. The engine companies were reduced in number, and hose, or hydrant companies as they were then called, were organized.

The old names of engines were mostly retained, but new numbers were given the companies retained in the service and located as follows.

Mazzeppa, 1, South Boston, formerly Mazzeppa, 17.

Perkins, 2, South Boston, formerly Perkins, 16.

Eagle, 3, Washington street near Dover, formerly Eagle, 12.

Cataract, 4, Mt. Vernon street, formerly Cataract, 14.

Extinguisher, 5, East street.

Formerly Extinguisher, 20.

Melville, 6, Leverett street, formerly Melville, 13.

Howard, 7, Purchase street, which was the only company to retain its old number.

Boston, 8, Commercial street, formerly Boston, 15.

Maverick, 9, East Boston, formerly Maverick, 11.

Old North, 10, East Boston, formerly Old North, 19. The name of this company was changed in 1853 to "Dunbar," in honor of Assistant Engineer Joseph Dunbar, who was retired on a pension in 1889.

In 1853 Despatch, No. 11, was organized, and located in Court square, in place of old Hero, 6. In 1854 the name was changed to Barnicoat.

Tremont, 12, was organized the same year and located in Warner street. It was formerly Tremont, 8, and, in 1852, Tremont Hydrant Company, 4.

In 1854 Webster, 13, was organized, and located on Paris street, East Boston.

In 1857 S. R. Spinney, 14, was organized, and located on 4th street, South Boston.

The hydrant companies organized in 1852 were: Washington, 1, Salem street; formerly Washington engine, 3.

Despatch 2, Hudson street, formerly Despatch engine 7.

Franklin 3, Friend street, afterwards Wall street; new company.

Tremont 4, Tremont street, formerly Tremont engine, 8, and in 1857 transferred to Northampton street and named Chester.

Suffolk 5, Shawmut avenue, formerly Suffolk engine 1. This company retains its organization to the present time.

Protection 6, East Boston, formerly Protection engine 4. In 1855 name changed to Deluge and later to William Wooley. It is still in existence.

The hook and ladder trucks in 1852 were: Warren, 1, Friend street; Tiger, 2, Paris street, East Boston; Franklin, 3, Harrison avenue, which are the same at the present time except that their names have been dropped.

All apparatus was run by hand, and the above was the organization of Boston's fire department as it existed when

#### Steam Was Introduced.

in 1859 and '60, and was the last of the old hand department.

In 1854 a committee went to Cincinnati, O., to inspect the new steam fire engine made by A. B. Latta, which was the first successful steam fire engine built. The present Ahrens' engine used almost exclusively in Western cities is the improved Latta engine of 1854. The report of this committee was so favorable that an engine was ordered and \$9000 appropriated therefor. This engine was named "Miles Greenwood" in honor of Chief Miles Greenwood of Cincinnati. It never proved to be serviceable, being very heavy and cumbersome. It was located at the city stable. The only time this engine ever performed satisfactory service was at the Gerish Market fire, on April 12, 1856. Its company consisted of seven men, of which H. H. Drayton was captain. It was disbanded Aug. 1, 1856, and the engine, when used, was operated by details from other companies, until July, 1857, when it was sold.

The first steam fire engines to be put into regular service were: Eclipse 6 and Lawrence 7, which Dec. 19, 1858, took the place of Melville hand engine 6, Wall street, and Howard 7, Purchase street.

The Eclipse was built by what is now the Silsby Manufacturing Company, and was one of the first of the present build of Silsby engines. Lawrence 7 was built at Lawrence, Mass., from which city it took its name, by Scott and Bean. Mr. Bean being its inventor, John Ray, now engineer of engine 1, was its stoker when it went into service.

During 1859 and 1860 all the hand engines were put out of service and steam fire substituted therefor, and all the apparatus drawn by horse, Roxbury and Dorchester were annexed to Boston in 1858, and Charlestown and Brighton in 1874.

The names and numbers of their companies and their locations in 1874, when

#### The Fire Commissioners

took possession of the department and discontinued the names, were as follows:

Steam fire engines—Mazzeppa, 1, South Boston; S. R. Spinney, 2, South Boston; Eagle, 3, Washington street; Barnicoat, 4, Bulfinch street; Elisha Smith, 5, East Boston; Melville, 6, Wall street;

T. C. Amory, 7, East street; Northern Liberty, 8, Salem street; Maverick, 9, East Boston; Cataract, 10, Mt. Vernon street; John S. Damrell, 11, East Boston; Warren, 12, Dudley street; Tremont, 13, Cabot street; Dearborn, 13, Centre street; Walter E. Hawes, 15, South Boston; S. H. Hibbard, 16, Dorchester Mills; Protection, 17, Meeting House Hill; Torrent, 18, Harvard street; Alert, 19, Mattapan; Independence, 20, Neponset; J. H. Upham, 21, Upham's Corner; Nathaniel Seaver, 22, Parker street; Chester, 23, Northampton street; engine 24, Warren street; engine 25, Fort Hill square, and engine 26, Mason street, no names.

Horse companies—Union, 2, Hudson street; Franklin, 3, North Grove street; Suffolk, 5, Shawmut avenue; William Wooley, 6, East Boston; Ehot, 7, Tremont street; Lawrence, 8, South Boston; Bradley, 10, Washington Village, and Gaston, 12, South Boston.

Hook and ladder trucks—Warren, 1, Friend street; Washington, 2, East Boston; Franklin, 3, Harrison avenue; Washington, 4, Dudley street; Hancock, 5, South Boston; George L. Burt, 6, Dorchester; Everett, 7, Meeting House Hill.

The hand engines of the old Roxbury department before West Roxbury was set off were: Warren, 1, Dudley street; America, 2, Centre street; Jamaica, 3, Jamaica Plain; Elliot, 4, Centre street; Salamander, 5, West Roxbury; Torrent, 6, Eastis street; Tremont, 7, Tremont street. The engines in the section set off retained their names but not numbers. Wash agton hook and ladder, 1, and Cochituate hose, 1, were subsequently added.

The Dorchester hand engines were: Fountain, 1; Protector, 2; Torrent, 3; Alert, 5; Independence, 6, and Tiger, 7.

The Charlestown hand engines: Hancock, 1, Main street; Bunker Hill, 2, on the Neck; Howard, 3, Elm street; Warren, 4, Common street; Washington, 5, Harvard street; Franklin, 7, Bunker Hill street; Red Jacket hose, 1, Winthrop street; Harvard, afterwards Massachusetts hook and ladder, 1, Main street.

Brighton: Butcher Boy, 1; Charles River, 2, and Wilson hose, 1.