

"SMOKE CHEWERS" FIGHT FOR HONORS.

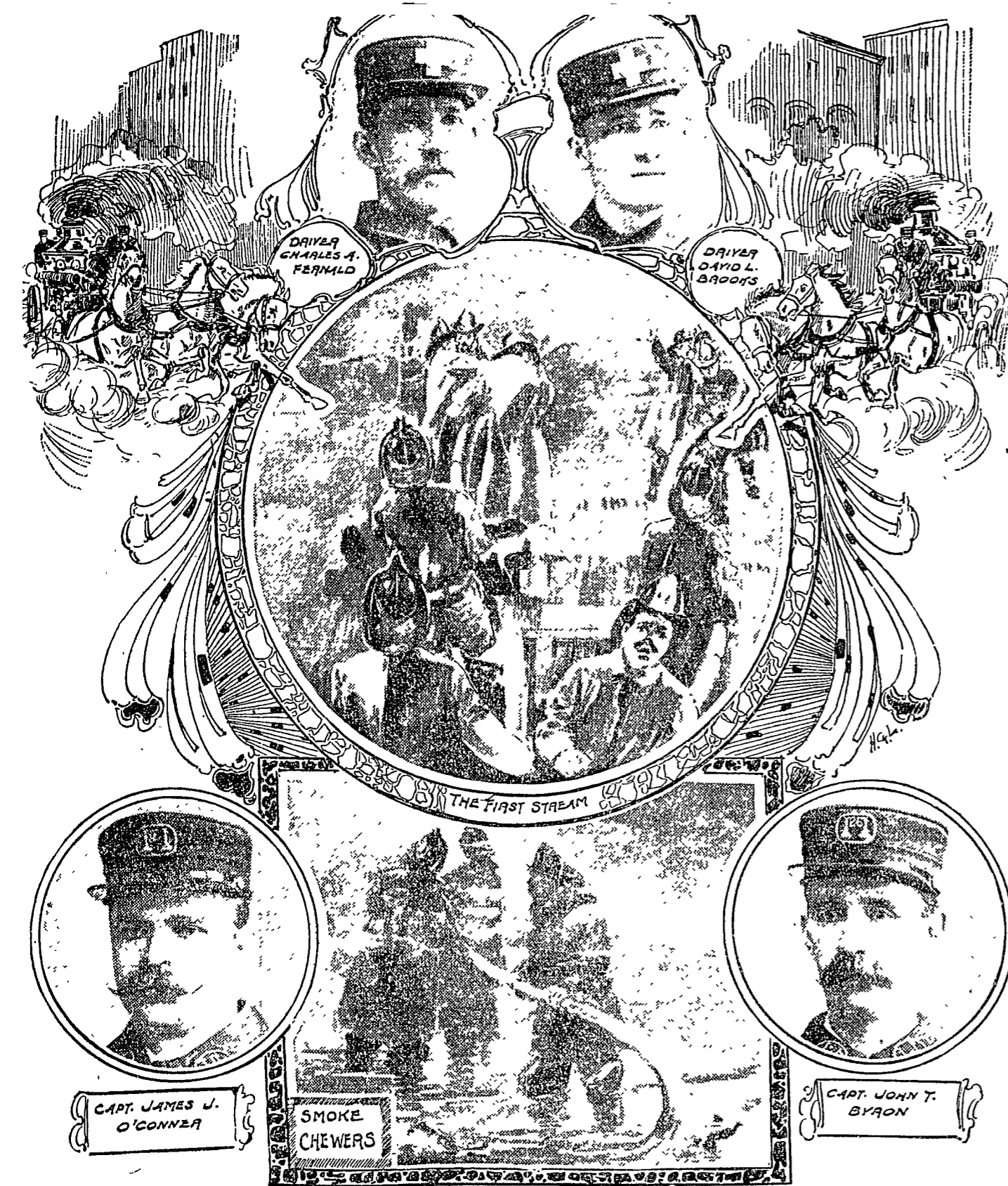
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pg. 37

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traffic, very few persons are about, and unusually good time can be made to the scene of the fire.

About 1 in the morning, say, an alarm is received from box 52, the "firemen's terror," which is located at the corner of Bedford and Lincoln sts. When that box comes in on the tapper the firemen are positive that there will be something doing, as in almost every past occasion the sounding of the box has meant a pretty stubborn blaze for the ladders to fight.

Even the intelligent fire horses know what the sounding of box 52 means, and as it is received on the little silent tapper in the houses of engine 7, East st. and engine 26, Mason st., the trained steeds stationed in those houses jump to their feet and paw the floor, impatiently awaiting the opening of the stall doors.

The man at the patrol desk pulls the house gong and in about 10 seconds the members of the company are on the main floor. Then the man at the desk pulls the other switch, releasing the horses. The animals at the above mentioned companies are so well trained that they back into their places without any assistance from the firemen. The drivers jump to their seats and grasp the reins before the horses are hitched and are ready to start the animals on a word from the captain. To see a quick hitch, such as are made in engine 7 and engine 26 is more than interesting.

While all this going on, the men on duty at steamer 7 are thinking of but one thing, and that is to beat engine 26 to the fire and get first water. The boys on duty at Mason st. are right on edge and their desire is to give the boys at "Tiger 7" a good trimming. As the company leaves quarters the driver and many of the hosemen are without coats. The donning of coats before leaving quarters is a practice that members of city proper fire companies never indulge in. If they find time to put a coat on while on the way to the fire well and good, but to take the time to put one on before leaving quarters is something that intown captains do not believe in.

The races to the fire are always interesting. Engine 7 is driven by David L. Brocks, while Charles A. Fernald, recognized as the premier driver of the service, drives 26. Both companies have to go about an equal distance to box 52, and as they reach the scene of the blaze the fight is for the best hydrant.

If the fire is a good one, the driver, engineers and hosemen will lose no time in making connections, while the officers and the hosemen will start to pull off the lines of hose. Every member of both companies, 7 and 26, are at work, and the speed with which they go through the various maneuvers is wonderful. The companies are at the fire less than a minute when four or five men pulling a line of hose may be seen making for the stairway of the burning building, if it is possible to direct a stream from that place.

In a few seconds the second company will make for the stairway, with their line of hose, and persons watching the blaze know when they hear the following cry, "Water, water," that the battle is on. Again the cry is repeated and a few seconds later the sound of water splashing in the interior of the building will tell that the battle has been won by one of the companies.

As a means of consolation the beaten company will endeavor to pass the victors, and get a better stream on the blaze, while the victors will do their best to hold them back. Hosemen have been known to hold the line of hose while standing in water up to their knees for more than six hours. Clouds of smoke, flying sparks, falling plaster and torrents of water coming from above in no way affect them, and they hold their perilous position calmly and with pride until they receive word from their commanders to make up and return to quarters.

To hold their positions on the stairway and put up such a stiff fight a fire company must be well provided with a force of "smoke chews." Smoke chews are more than essential to a fire company. Engine 7, East st., has always had a full supply of smoke chews, which accounts for their long string of victories at fires during the past 20 years. "Old Tiger 7" was never behind at getting in and making good at a fire, and up to the present day its reputation shines out as the best.

By many firefighting is now considered an art, while others treat it as a science. Companies can easily get along without the science and the art while fighting fires, but at all times they require the assistance of the "smoke chews."

Many persons who take but little in-

terest in firefighting will ask what a smoke chewer is? In fire department circles a "smoke chewer" is a man who can inhale a good amount of smoke and can hold the fire line in a smoky place without giving out.

There are many of these men in the fire service, and they are always a welcome addition to a city proper company. The "smoke chews" have but one means of relief. By applying a wet sponge to the nose frequently temporary relief is afforded, and with the use of the sponge the fireman can hold his own a lengthy period.

In a stairway battle the good-natured rivalry that exists between the members of the two companies is commendable. The men fight for the glory, and fight hard, too, but the minute that a brother fireman falls, overcome by smoke, there are many willing hands ready to assist him to a place of safety. These battles have been in existence for some time and have been the means of drawing more than one fire crank from a warm bed to the scene of a fire on a cold winter's morning. The same questions are asked by all cranks on reaching the fire: What company was first on? Who got first water?

Recently engine 7 has been trimming 26 time and time to fire, and that they would get first water was looked upon as a certainty. The excuse offered at 26 was that steamer 7 had a full supply of full fledged fire fighters, who could boast of several years of experience. Engine 26 up to a few weeks ago has been the starting point of the career of many firemen.

Many of the probation men were sent to the house and as they were green in the business, their lack of experience did not help 26 a bit in the battles with engine 7. About two weeks ago three probation men, James J. Hourihan, John J. Murphy and Charles J. Fleming were transferred from engine 26 and in their places were secured three star men who have always made good at fire fighting. The new acquisitions were Dennis Driscoll of engine 7, Joseph M. Wood of engine 5 and Michael E. McCarthy of ladder 17. Since the company has been strengthened no opportunity for a battle has arrived.

Box 52 was sounded on Tuesday evening while both the companies were at box 54. The boys at 26 are now quite confident of victory and are awaiting the call of the tapper, and the next battle with "Tiger 7" they say will be a real test of speed and endurance.

Among the captains of the department who always were known for their smoke-chewing ability and who can be counted upon to deliver the goods on all occasions is Capt. Charles P. Smith of engine 1, South Boston. As a member of the South Boston company he has scarcely any opportunity to show what he is capable of, but his past record is brilliant and throughout the country he is known as a fearless fire fighter.

Another captain who has always done his bit is Capt. James J. O'Connor of engine 7, East st. As the commander of "Tiger 7," he has an unusually good opportunity to show his knowledge of fire fighting, and the victories of his company speak for his good work.

Capt. Peter Callahan of engine 4, Bulfinch st.; Capt. Henry A. Fox of engine 6, Leverett st.; Capt. Michael J. Kennedy of engine 25, Fort Hill sq.; Capt. John T. Byron of engines 26-28, Mason st.; Capt. Stephen J. Ryder of engines 38-39, Congress st.; Capt. Edward J. Shallow of ladder 1, Warren sq.; Capt. Henry Webster of ladder 3, Harrison av.; Capt. Edward L. Locke of ladder 5, West 4th st., South Boston; Capt. Joseph H. Kennedy of ladder 2, Fort Hill sq.; Capt. Charles T. Adams of ladder 17, Harrison av.; and Capt. Allan MacDonald of ladder 18, Pittsburg st. Capts. John W. Murphy (engine 3), Albert R. Johnson (engine 12) and Michael Mulligan (engine 22), are other commanders who have gained reputations as leaders, and who can chew the smoke in good style.

Among the lieutenants of the fire service who are regarded as good smoke chews are William F. Field of engine 3, Harrison av.; Frank A. Sweeney of engine 4, Bulfinch st.; John J. Gavin of engine 6, Leverett st.; Walter M. McLean of engine 8, Salem st.; Thomas H. Conroy of engine 13, Cabot st.; Martin Mulligan of engine 15, Dorchester av.; James J. Cairns of engine 25, Fort Hill sq.; George N. Dunn and George B. Norton of the Mason-st double company; Michael D. Greene of engine 33, Boylston st.; William M. Lynch of engines 38-39, Congress st.; James F. Ryan of ladder 3, Harrison av.; Mortimer M. Cronin of ladder 4, Dudley st.; Edward J. Conners of ladder 5, West 4th st., South Boston; Joseph Dolan of ladder 8, Fort Hill sq.; Charles W. Conway of ladder 12, Warren av.; Patrick M. Lanergan of ladder 14, Fort Hill sq.; Michael J. Nolan of ladder 17, Harrison av.; Alfred J. Caulfield of combination ladder 3, East 4th st., South Boston, and Peter E. Walsh of combination ladder 4, Grove Hall.

Among the star hosemen of the city in Water B. Matthews of engine 4, Des-

combination ladder 11, Daniel J. Barrus of engine 37, Joseph Smith chemical 4 and Joseph F. McManus chemical 6.

South Boston. During his 10 years of service he has always delivered the goods. The way he can swallow the smoke amazes all. For many years he was stationed at ladder 1 in the city proper, and he is looked upon as one of the star hosemen of the city.

Michael J. Teehan of engine 4 is another hoseman who can eat the smoke in good style. His record as a life saver is well known, and his name adorns the department roll of merit. When Teehan quit the fire service three years ago to join the police force, the regret was general. While in the performance of his duties as a "copper" he was frequently detailed to big fires. There he heard the old, familiar cry for water and witnessed the struggle on the stairway. The sight was too much for Michael, so he discarded his helmet and returned to the fire department.

For more than 10 years senior hoseman George A. Carney of engine 6 has been stationed down in the West End, and to him it is not an unusual sight to see the "red stuff" coming pouring out of buildings. Firemen of the Carney stamp are right at home with the "red stuff," and by all Carney is considered a first-class hoseman.

At engine 7, the home of the brave, there are several star men. Hoseman Martin Kennedy in particular has distinguished himself on several occasions, and for his brave acts his name was placed on the department roll of merit.

"Jake" Reynolds of engine 15, Dorchester av., is another ladder who chews the smoke with a vigor. Many fire captains have said that Reynolds can hold a line of hose in the thickest of the smoke, and some of his recent performances at big fires bear their statements out.

Michael F. O'Brien of engine 25, Fort Hill sq., is also a star performer in the smoke eating line. As senior hoseman of the Fort Hill sq. steamer, he is always in the thick of the battle and is said to be one of the best in the business.

At the Mason st double company is stationed Denis Driscoll, recently transferred from engine 7. His brave acts have won for him commendation and honor, and his loss was a severe blow to the members of "Tiger 7." He occupies a position in the foremost rank as a fireman, and is right at home in the heat of the fray.

Over in Charlestown may be found "Tim" Heffron, now attached to engine 27, Elm st. For many years he was on duty with engine 4, Bulfinch st., and his great work while a member of that company will long be remembered. Two years ago he was said to be one of the best hosemen in the city, and as a member of the Charlestown company he continues to render efficient service.

Ladderman Hamilton McClay of ladder 1, Friend st., is another good fireman who loses no time in getting right into his work on reaching the fire. At the Bowdoin-sq hotel fire and at other fires he has shown himself to be a clever fireman.

Ladderman James D. Fitzgerald of ladder 5, West 4th st., South Boston was in his day one of the best hosemen in the city. While at engine 10 and engine 3, he could eat the smoke with the best of them and as a member of ladder 5 he continues to deliver the goods.

In William H. Manner and Florence Donoghue, ladder 8 has two star laddermen who are always right there with the goods. Both men have distinguished themselves and are among Col. Russell's most capable fire fighters.

Michael F. Sylvia of ladder 17, during his eight years' stay in the service, has proven himself a hero on more than one occasion. Sylvia, however, is not a believer in individual work, but goes right in on a line to put the fire out. Joseph P. Hanton of the same company is another good man.

Other good smoke-chewers are hosemen Charles Whiting of engine 1, Daniel I. Bell and George C. Dowling of engine 3, Patrick F. McLeavey of engine 4, James E. Nolan and Joseph A. Webber of engine 6, George A. Waggett and John F. McBride of engine 7, Florence J. Sullivan of engine 8, George C. Crafts of engine 9, John Hogan of engine 10, John E. Donoghue of engine 15, John J. Kippeberg of 22, James W. Gardner of engine 25, Daniel J. O'Brien and Joseph M. Wood of engine 26, Richard J. McLaughlin and Cornelius J. Crowley of engine 36, Michael J. Sullivan, William Hart and Frank L. Lyons, engines 38-39; Edward F. Featherston of engine 43; John S. Carney, ladder 1; John J. Sullivan, ladder 2; Fred Adams, Frank McArdle, Charles A. Donahue and Michael F. Hayes, ladder 3; Daniel J. Colden, ladder 5; John F. Mooney, ladder 6; Patrick J. Norton, ladder 7; Henry Krake, ladder 8; George F. Doyle, ladder 13; Michael J. Dacey, ladder 13; Charles A. Wolfe, ladder 15; Eugene C. McCarthy, ladder 17; Michael C. Gillman, ladder 12, and John A. Neenan,

combination ladder 11, Daniel J. Barrus of engine 37, Joseph Smith chemical 4 and Joseph F. McManus chemical 6.

E. F. Martin.

Stairway battles at big fires are not an uncommon occurrence nowadays among the members of fire companies in the Boston department. To achieve

the distinction of being the first company to get water on the fire is considered a great honor in the fire department and the fights between the

members of the city proper companies to gain this great honor are always thrilling and interesting to witnesses. It is in the early hours of the morning,

when the city sleeps, that the banner fire companies of the city may be seen at their best at a big fire. At that time the streets are practically deserted by