

ALL REGRETTED THE TUBS.

How Steam Fire Engines First Came Into Use in Boston.

The exhibition trials of the new steam fire engines purchased by the city, which will take place as fast as the machines arrive, carries back the minds of older citizens and veteran firemen to the trials of steam fire engines when they were first introduced some 30 odd years ago.

At that time there was a most intense prejudice against their introduction by the firemen, who loved the old hand engine and the pleasures they enjoyed therewith, which they knew would be gone forever when steam superseded muscle.

In 1859 and '60 Boston discarded all its hand engines for steam, as did all the principal cities of the country. In fact Boston was one of the very first to adopt steam engines, Cincinnati being the first and Boston probably the second.

In 1854 Boston appointed a committee to go to Cincinnati to inspect an engine, which they did, and made a most favorable report, recommending the immediate purchase of one for this city, and on April 17 of that year the City Council appropriated \$9000 for that purpose.

In due time the famous "Miles Greenwood" steam fire engine, named in honor of the then chief of the Cincinnati fire department, and the first steam fire engine in this city, arrived, and after a satisfactory test was put into active service.

It was a most heavy, cumbersome machine, too much so to be practicable for the ordinary run of fire duty, it weighing some eight tons. It was first located in temporary quarters in Haymarket square and afterwards at the South City stables.

Its first fire of importance, and in fact the only fire at which it did satisfactory duty, was at the burning of Gerrish Market, April 12, 1856. It was altered and repaired the same year, but it never was successful, and soon afterwards was sold and ultimately went to the junk heap.

The board of engineers for 1858, consisting of George W. Bird, chief; John S. Damrell, W. A. Green, N. W. Pratt, D. C. Maloon, David Chamberlin, Zenas E. Smith, George F. Hibbard, Joseph Dunbar and C. C. Henry, were, with but a few exceptions, in favor of steam engines, and in compliance with their desires the City Council authorized a committee, of which Alderman and afterwards Mayor J. H. Wightman was chairman, to arrange for a public competitive test of the different patterns of engines, open to all builders who desired to enter.

Three prizes were offered—the first \$500, second \$300, and third \$200, to be awarded to the three engines possessing the most merits.

The day of trials came, and with it hundreds of firemen and thousands of citizens who were greatly interested in the trials. Firemen from all sections who were favorable or opposed to the new-fangled notion, were present, and hesitated not to express their minds.

The Lawrence, which took second prize and was bought by the city, was built in Lawrence. This engine weighed 7300 pounds, had 9-inch steam cylinders and 6-inch pumps.

The Philadelphia, which took first prize, was built in the Quaker City. This engine weighed 7455 pounds, had 10½-inch steam cylinders and 6-inch pumps.

The Lawrence, 7, located in Purchase street.

The first organized company to have a steam fire engine was Northern Liberty, No. 8, J. Stover Jacobs, foreman, which then lay in North Bennet street; now in Salem street.

Eagle, No. 3, company, Samuel Abbott, Sr., foreman, Washington street, near Dover, in the station now occupied by Hayes aerial truck, 13, was the second steamer company organized, and went into service Dec. 1, 1858.

Dec. 19, Mazeppa, S. F. E., No. 1, went into commission on Broadway, South Boston, with W. H. Cunningham, late district chief of the Fort Hill district, foreman.

Maverick, S. F. E., 9, went into service, Dec. 26, 1858, at East Boston, with J. P. Somerby, foreman.

During the next two years the entire department was provided with steam fire engines and its old hand engines were sold, some going as far as South America.