

AMONG THE FIREMEN.

History of the Hunneman Firm of Engine Builders—Some of its Noted Tubs—The Workings of Framingham's Fire Alarm—Notes.

The press notices of the death of Joseph H. Hunneman, which occurred last Monday, contained several errors, and left out considerable of interest to the firemen of the country with whom for almost a century the name of Hunneman has been very familiar. Some of the real facts of the history of that far-famed firm may appropriately be recalled at this time. The manufacture of Hunneman fire engines originated with William C. Hunneman, who began business in 1794 as a copersmith and brass founder, and about 1801 bought a patent on fire engines of Perkins & Pollock for \$715, and at once began manufacturing under this patent. All fire engines in use at that time were copied mainly from English or German engines. The peculiar and distinctive features of the Hunneman engines were the slanting cylinders, which gave a longer stroke, and the use of composition for all inside work, in those days two great improvements. In February, 1833, William C. Hunneman took his two sons, Samuel H. and William C. Hunneman, Jr., into the business under the firm name of William C. Hunneman & Co. William C. Hunneman, Jr., died April 17, 1846, and the following May his father retired, leaving Samuel H. Hunneman to carry on the business. The firm of Hunneman & Co. was then formed, Samuel H. being the senior partner and his brother Joseph H., who was brought up in the dry goods business and at that time was a salesman in that trade in New York city, being the junior member. In February, 1809, another change occurred, through the death of Samuel H. Hunneman, his son John C. assuming the junior partnership. The latter entered the works May 2, 1846, and had spent 24 years in a thorough mastery of the business, working in every department of the establishment. Perhaps none of the 800 engines built by this firm attracted more notice than the following: No. 175, built January, 1837, for the Boston department, and called Lafayette, No. 18, nicknamed "Old Silver Hinges," and now No. 7 of Southbridge; the crane neck, branch work, acorns, hinges and all iron work except the beam are silver-plated; this engine took the place of the Philadelphia engines, "Hydraulion," Nos. 18 and 19, situated in Court street, which ran to fires together, one being a suction and the other a "tub" engine; No. 288, built May, 1846, went to Tepic, Mexico, and was so constructed that it could be easily taken to pieces for transportation over the mountains on the backs of mules; No. 578, built July, 1856, went to San Francisco, and was probably the handsomest fire engine ever built, all the metal work on the engine was heavily silver plated, the silver alone costing more than \$900, and the engine all complete costing \$7000, one Sam Branan of San Francisco paying the bill out of his own pocket. The reputation of the Hunneman "tubs" has extended beyond the limits of this country and almost all over the world, China buying 6 engines, Cuba, 13, Chili 8, Australia, the East Indies and Sandwich Islands 17, and the West Indies, Egypt and Turkey securing one or two each. Boston and the cities and towns now annexed owned 58, and 21 went to the United States government. It might be of interest to add that of the 800 names given their engines, Hunneman & Co. found Deluge, Neptune, Niagara and Torrent popular among the "fire sharps," while Boxer, Experiment, Water Sout, Butcher Boy, Sucker and Syphon were names used but once.