

EAST BOSTON FIRES ARE DANGEROUS.

It is Difficult for Apparatus From Boston to Respond to Calls Quickly—The Island Section is Included in the First Fire District, and Has a Complete Equipment for Ordinary Fires. Personnel of the Men Who Defend Property From Destruction.

THE first fire district of Boston comprises the entire island of East Boston. It is the most isolated, and the least accessible to fire apparatus from outside, of the districts of Boston. In fact, a town with a fire department of its own which handles all ordinary fires.

With fires of great magnitude the firemen of East Boston must do the best they can until the arrival of the city apparatus, facilities for which are afforded by holding the ferry boats for the exclusive use of fire apparatus as soon as the gongs at the ferry houses announce a second or greater alarm in East Boston.

East Boston is one of the great waterfront districts of Boston, and the long piers, docks and marine railways on all sides except the east present the firemen the hardest problems of all the

Darragh procured a 40-foot ladder and with great difficulty brought it across the icy roof as Chief Fox directed.

Minutes seemed hours, for by this time Chief Godbold's position was perilous in the extreme, and despite the steady stream which hoseman Dacey kept playing just above him, he was forced to leave the window sill and attempt an escape.

Just below the line of window sills ran a narrow ledge not more than three inches wide, and so caked with ice as scarcely to afford a foothold. With the fire roaring behind him, and the stream directed so as to protect him as much as possible without striking him, Chief Godbold worked his way along the ledge until the ladder could be thrown across to save him.

Those who watched the thrilling escape were unable to imagine how

1873, and for 33 years served continuously with engine 11.

Driver "Barney" Atwood is one of Boston's mostly widely known firemen, and has been a member of the department for 34 years. For nine years he drove the well-known "William Woolley hose company," where he was known far and wide as the "lone fireman of hose 6," he being the only permanent man.

Hoseman Katwick suffered severely in an accident shortly after he entered the department and was a member of engine 10. While responding to a second alarm in Charlestown the hose wagon was compelled to go between an oncoming car and an electric light pole.

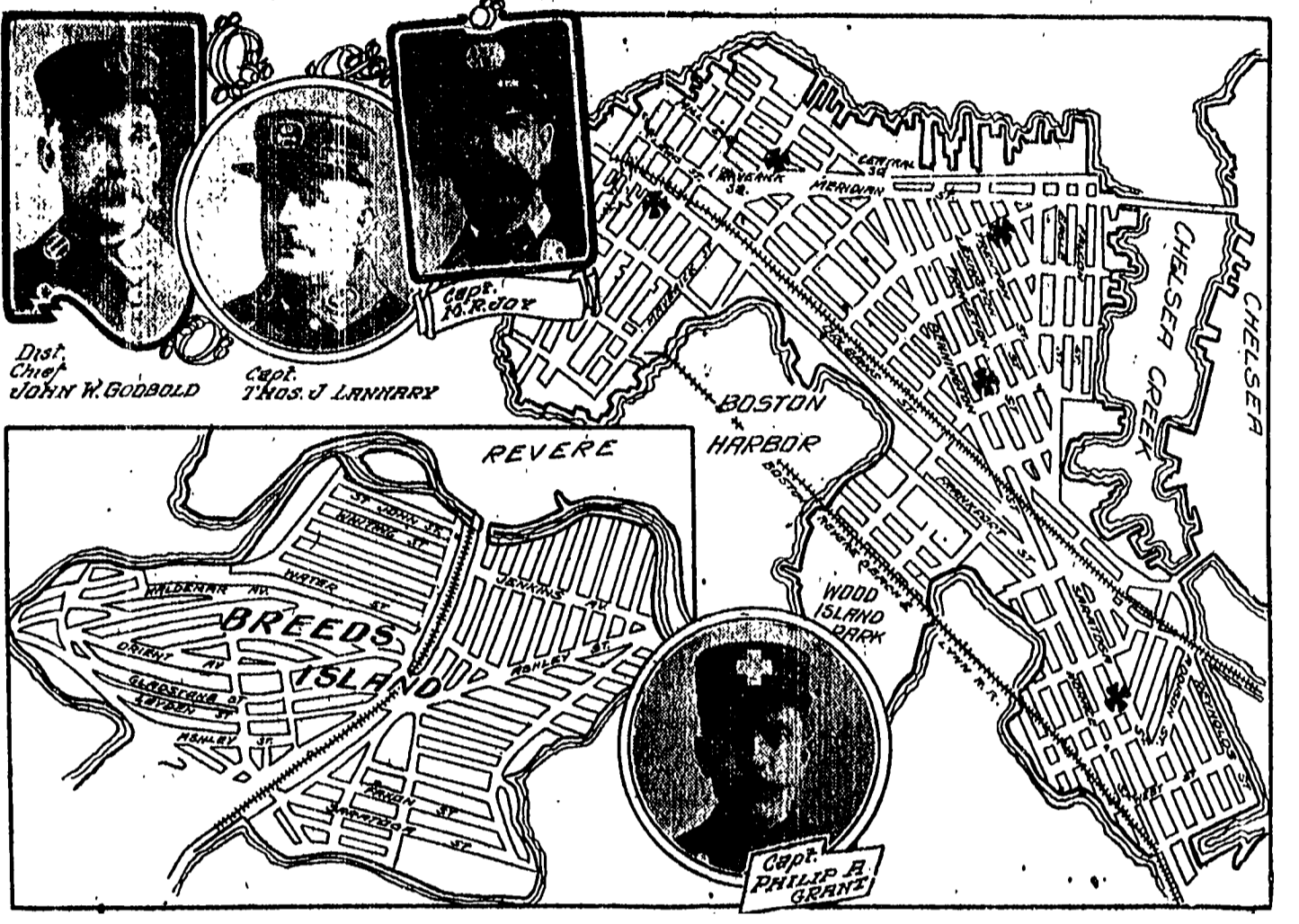
The wagon would have passed safely, but a projecting iron box high on the pole caught the driver's seat, nearly demolished the wagon and hurled all

William F. Holdt. The hosemen are James E. Downey, Peter J. Dunn, Patrick F. Toohig, Frank J. Sullivan and Edward J. Haley.

Hoseman James E. Downey is a very widely known fireman, having driven engine 6 in the West End for many years, and is remembered as one of the greatest reinmen the department has. He has met with many adventures, and at the burning of the Masonic temple received a fearful blow on the head from a falling block of granite which incapacitated him for a long time.

His name is on the "department roll of Merit," and he wears a medal of honor for saving life at the risk of his own. He has also received much commendation for stopping runaway horses.

Engine 11 and ladder 21 are stationed at the corner of Saratoga and Byron



hard problems which they are called upon to solve. The rapidity with which dock fires spread, and the extent of area which is so quickly involved, combine with the difficulty of getting within striking distance to render these fires the most serious menace to any city.

A typical dock fire was that at the Grand Junction piers at East Boston a few years ago, for before the city fire apparatus could reach the scene the fire had leaped from shed to shed along the docks and the huge elevator was already blazing like one tremendous torch.

Deputy Chief Grady recalled District Chief Fox and the men of engine 6 not five seconds before fire swept through the shed where a few moments before there had been no sign of fire, but could not recall the men of engine 26 at the end of this pier between whom and safety rolled an impassible barrier of flame.

They were reported lost, but were either rescued by the fire boat or escaped along the outside of the shed to leeward. It is for these fires that the fireboats are relied upon, and they not infrequently pick up men from the land companies whose escape is barred elsewhere.

East Boston has been the scene of many big dock fires, but the worst fires are those on the great oil wharves at the northern end of the island which, when once on fire, are practically inextinguishable until the oil burns out.

While fighting these fires the fire boats have several times been endangered by the burning oil floating on top of the water, and this was especially the case when the oil works were on fire during the Chelsea conflagration of April 12, 1906, when the exploding tanks and barrels scattered blazing fluid in all directions.

Fifty other buildings were on fire at the same time, and East Boston narrowly escaped the fate of Chelsea. The defence of East Boston at this fire has been declared the most notable achievement of the present chief of the Boston department, John A. Mullen.

The first fire district includes all the territory of wards 1, 2, and Breeds Island, and is guarded by engines 5, 9, 11 and 40. Ladders 2 and 21, chemical 7, and, when accepted, the new auto chemical, which is now on trial.

The chief of the first fire district is John W. Godbold. He entered the fire department June 21, 1881, and has served with ladders 2, 8 and 8, chemical engine 7 and engine company 5. He was made acting chief of the same district Jan 24, 1908.

He is an East Boston man and is familiar with every inch of the "island district." During his 30 years of fire fighting he has attended many of Boston's most disastrous fires, and has encountered most of the vicissitudes of a fireman's life.

One of Chief Godbold's most thrilling experiences since he became a fire fighter, occurred a few years ago at an early morning blaze at the Webster Hall building in East Boston.

The morning was bitterly cold and there was much snow on the ground, so that by the time the apparatus arrived from the city in response to a second alarm the fire was sweeping through the upper floors of the building.

Chief Godbold and several men were working on the upper floor, when part of the roof fell in and the fire, finding free vent leaped high into the air and spread rapidly through the building. Chief Godbold ran across the floor and threw himself upon the window sill just as a gust of flame swept out of the same window and continued to stream out above him, lighting the vicinity and revealing his fearful predicament to the men who were directing streams from the roofs of other buildings.

Chief Fox, then captain of engine 6, had just brought a stream to bear from a roof opposite to the window where Chief Godbold lay. Telling hoseman Dacey to keep the stream playing over Chief Godbold, Chief Fox called to hosemen Webber and Darragh to bring a short ladder. In the confined space on that side of the building a long ladder would have been useless. With all the haste they could make Webber and

Chief Godbold managed to cling to the perpendicular side of the building as he made his way to safety. The feat was accomplished by Chief Godbold's discovery that the clapboards were old, and that he could force his fingers up between them sufficiently to enable him to hold himself against the wall—one of the best ideas that ever struck a man in time of need.

Chief Godbold and his rescuers were highly complimented for their clever work, though the chief could hardly be consoled for the coat that was fairly burned off his back.

The headquarters house of the first district is that of ladder 2 on Parla st. This house is under the command of Capt J. F. McMahon. Capt McMahon entered the fire service June 17, 1892, and served most of his time in the West End, where for many years he had charge of ladder 24. He has a medal, and is on the "department roll of merit" for saving life.

A few years ago he almost lost his life at a fire on Sudbury st, where he was overcome by smoke and the fumes of ammonia. He was promoted captain, and assigned to his present company, Feb 21, 1910.

Lieut P. F. McLeavey of ladder 8 entered the department Sept 19, 1894, and served for many years on engine 4. He was promoted and assigned to his present company Jan 4, 1907.

Ladder 2 is of the heavy city service type and carries a full complement of ladders, ranging from the light pomper scaling ladder up to the heavy 66-foot ladder.

The laddermen are J. J. McCarthy, F. P. Walsh, F. Wagner, F. McArdle, A. W. DeLeskey, J. J. Blakeley, E. J. Donelan, T. F. Maguire Jr, J. J. Brotherson, A. D. Gramer and chief's driver and telegrapher E. L. Jewett.

Stationed in the same quarters as ladder 2 is engine 9, under the command of Capt Phillip A. Grant, well known to the Boston fire fighters for his work when in command of the hustling company of engine 8 in the North End. Capt Grant has been a fireman since April 11, 1894, and has been in command of a company since Jan 4, 1907. He and Capt McMahon of ladder 2 were recently the recipients of letters of commendation for saving life at a fire from Fire Commissioner Daly.

Lieut Thomas J. Flynn of engine 9 has been a fireman since Feb 1, 1896, and was promoted on the same day his captain was advanced.

The engineers of engine 9 are Francis W. Sweeney and Joseph H. Barry. The hosemen are Frank Coyle, John J. Sullivan, Richard W. Brown, Thomas F. Timmins, Joseph A. Moran, James A. Sheffield Jr, William F. McDermott and James H. Rowe.

Engine 5, quartered on Marlon st just on the summit of the rather steep hill in that section, is under the command of Capt Melvin R. Joy. He has been a fireman since Feb 24, 1893, when he entered the call service and was assigned to ladder 12. He received a permanent appointment July 4, 1890, after serving with ladder 5, and after service with ladder 17 he was promoted lieutenant of engine 33. He then served with ladder 14 and engines 6 and 22, until promoted captain of engine 32, Jan 5, 1907.

He has since served with the double company of engines 38 and 39 and with engine 41, and has been in command of his present company since April 9, 1909. He has several times been injured, the most serious being those received a few years ago at the "Hosmer, Coddling fire" on Congress st.

Lieut Patrick F. Goggin of this company has been a fireman since May 17, 1893, and received his promotion on Nov 1, 1901.

The engineers of this company are John Blackford and Frank H. Laakey. The drivers are Henry Woodbury and George B. Atwood. The hosemen are John J. Katwick, Dennis A. Connelly, William A. Keen and Thomas F. Conley.

This company was first formed in 1858, and a clock in the company, then volunteer, in 1863, still marks time with as much regularity as it did on the day of its presentation. Some of the senior men of the Boston fire department are in this house. Engineer John Blackford has been a fireman since

the men into the street. Hoseman Katwick's leg was smashed to splinters, and for many months amputation seemed unavoidable.

Engine 5 responds to all alarms in East Boston, and remains to guard it even on a "general alarm." It responds to Chelsea on box 693, and to Winthrop on box 696, and after covering other houses on intermediate alarms, responds to Revere on a third alarm on box 697.

Chemical company 7 is stationed on Saratoga st, and is under the command of Lieut John J. Sullivan. Lieut Sullivan is a veteran of the fire service, having been a fireman since Feb 10, 1893. He was promoted to the command of his present company on Sept 16, 1910. His hosemen are Edward J. Crowley, Julius Brandt and Thomas J. Hynes.

Engine 40, quartered on Sumner st, is under the command of Capt Thomas J. Lannery, who has been a fireman since Oct 15, 1893. He has had command of a company since April 10, 1903, and is now acting chief of the first district, of which he assumes charge in the absence of the district chief.

Lieut Philip F. Leahy entered the fire force March 28, 1890, and was promoted April 10, 1903. The engineers are Daniel M. Cranitch and Francis H. Boudreau. The drivers are Charles H. Ames and

sist. Engine 11 is under the command of Capt Cornelius H. Leahy, who has been a fireman since Sept 3, 1884, and has had command of a company since Feb 10, 1893.

Lieut Frederick W. Batts has also very long service to his credit, having been a fireman since March 1, 1886, and a lieutenant since March 12, 1897.

The engineers are John B. Sheridan and Isaac B. Noble. The drivers and hosemen are Andrew R. Hines, William Pease, John H. Callahan, Thomas J. Flynn Jr, Dennis A. Walsh, James Wall and Phillip G. Ferrin.

The light, fast-moving combination ladder 21, stationed in this house, is under the command of Lieut Edward J. McKendrow, who has been a fireman since Oct 18, 1887, and a lieutenant since March 12, 1897. Lieut McKendrow was an engineer and is one of the few who have gained higher rank.

His laddermen are Dennis J. Hedington, Bernard E. Plunkett, Joseph T. Smith, Michael L. Dorgan, George L. Gilles and Robert H. Webber.

This house is so near to Chelsea and the towns included in the "mutual all system" that response to big out-of-town fires is not at all infrequent and nearly all the men here went over to Chelsea to its biggest fire and have worked at the sweeping fires that have so frequently threatened Revere and Winthrop.