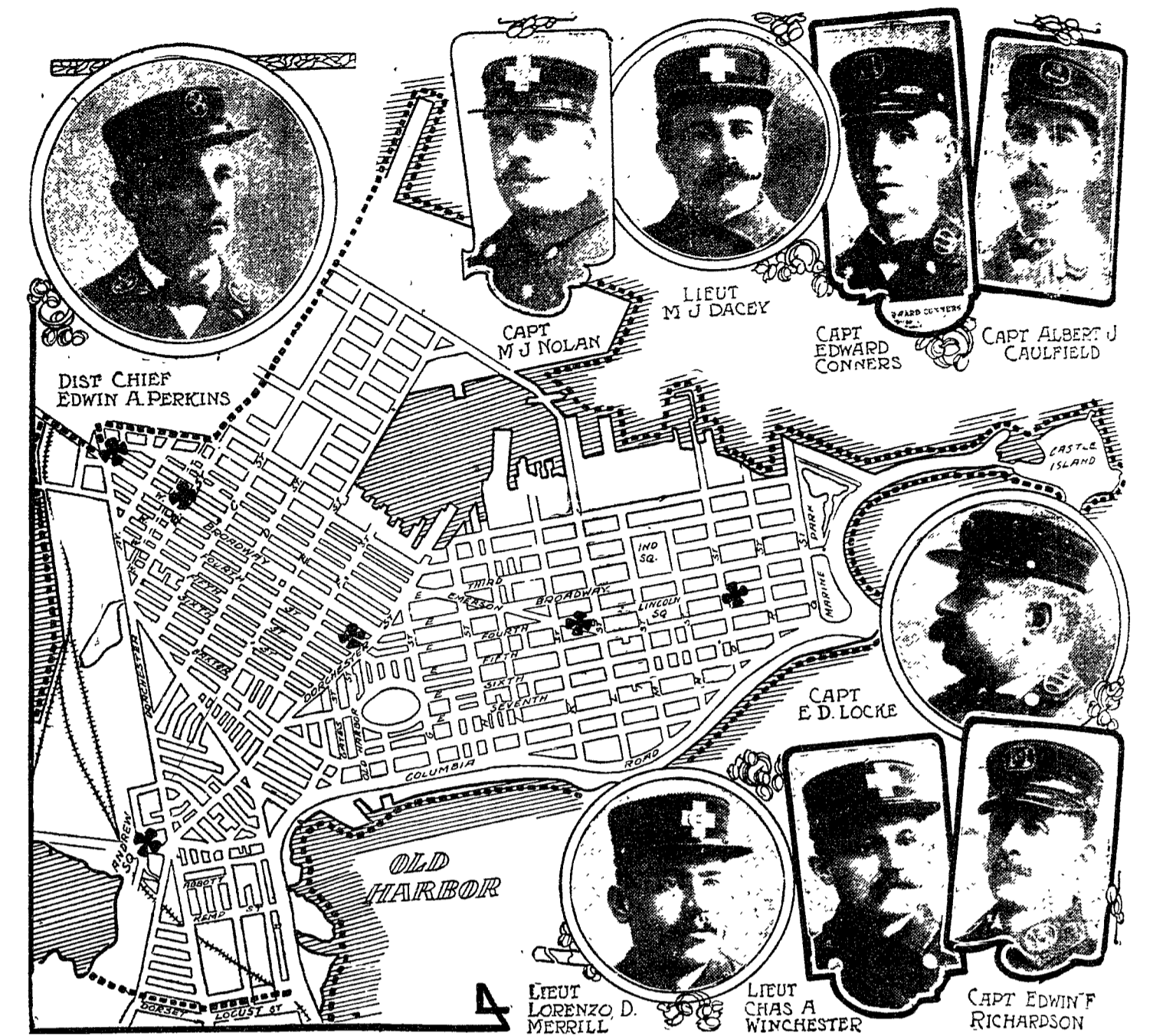


SIXTH FIRE DISTRICT—SOUTH BOSTON.

The District Chief, Edwin A. Perkins, Has Been a Boston Fireman Since 1876—His Systematization of Building Inspection Reports—The Boundaries and Apparatus of the District—Industrial Establishments and Homes—Rescues and Other Notable Feats of the Firemen.



SOUTH BOSTON, the sixth fire district, is practically a community by itself. Separated from the city proper by long runs for other fire apparatus, the firemen of South Boston have apparatus enough and are relied upon to handle most of their fires and to put up a stiff fight to hold in check anything like a conflagration until the distant apparatus of other sections of the city can arrive.

The command of this rather isolated district devolves upon District Chief Edwin A. Perkins, who is widely known among firemen for his systematization of building inspection reports, and the card system connected therewith. "The Perkins system," particularly in the springtime, is an everyday phrase in the mouths of Boston firemen.

Chief Perkins has been a Boston fireman since 1876, when he was appointed as a call man to engine 10 in 1882, promoted lieutenant of engine 10 in 1882, captain of ladder 5 in 1887, and chief of the sixth district in 1901, and with this district he has since remained.

Fire Commissioner Daly has recently given him a proof of the esteem in which he holds his powers for organization by appointing him a member of the Board of Metropolitan Aid Commissioners.

The district which he commands is a great industrial center, having vast establishments of cordage, car wheels, elevator and oil works, machine shops, sugar refineries and breweries. These establishments are mostly along the water fronts of the northern and southern sides, where the huge elevators, warehouses, stores, wharves and terminal piers present the greatest fire hazards. The 2½ square miles of South Boston also enclose a large, thickly settled, residential section, with many schoolhouses, hospitals and asylums. On the harbor front are some of Boston's most popular summer resorts, yacht clubs, parks, boulevards and promenades.

The sixth fire district includes the territory bounded on the north by Broadway extension across Fort Point channel and Dorchester av to First st, through First st to B st, on the east by B st to harbor line by harbor line to Locust st, on the south by Locust and Dorset sts to the South bay, on the west by South bay to Broadway extension bridge.

It is guarded by four fire engines, three ladder trucks and one chemical engine, and has the usual equipment of fuel wagons.

In addition to looking after his own district Chief Perkins responds to fires in the lumber district on a second alarm and to the city proper on a third alarm. His headquarters are at the corner of engine 1 and ladder 5 on Dorchester, near 4th st.

Engine company 1 is commanded by Capt M J. Nolan. He entered the fire department May 20, 1880, was promoted lieutenant of ladder 17 Feb 8, 1893, and captain of his present company Dec 18, 1910. He bears the medal of the Massachusetts humane society for saving the life of a boy who was drowning in Fort Point channel, near the Dorchester bridge, and has made other rescues for which he received no credit.

Lieut J. J. Burke of engine 1 was born on Fort Hill Boston, as was his captain. He entered the department Oct 17, 1889 and served with ladder 1 and engine 43 until promoted lieutenant on Sept 15, 1905. He has been with his present company since Sept 1, 1905.

The engineers of engine 1 are W. P. Gowen and W. C. Baile. The drivers are E. J. Hartigan and R. J. McDonald. The names of the hosemen are C. E. Whitney, senior hoseman, and J. A. Saunders, M. F. Quirk, J. H. Boyd and F. Roycroft.

Ladder 5, also quartered in this house, is a heavy truck carrying the high complement of 17 ladders. It is commanded by Capt Locke, who has been a member of the fire department since May 20, 1883. He served with hose 6 of East Boston, and also with ladder 4. He was promoted lieutenant of ladder 3 July 26, 1895, captain of ladder 5 March 29, 1901, and acting chief of the 6th district Dec 18, 1909.

The lieutenant of ladder 5, M. J. Conley, entered the department Jan 4, 1885, served with engines 37, 43, 24 and ladder 20. He was promoted lieutenant of his present company April 14, 1909.

The senior ladderman of truck 5 is D. J. Calden. The drivers are G. H. Hendrickson and C. Hohmann. The names of the laddermen are S. A. Dwight, J. F. Fitzgerald, D. J. Coughlin, J. M. Flynn, J. A. Hackett, E. E. Gunnill, who drives

Chief Perkins, M. A. Murphy and F. P. Chapman.

This truck responds to every fire in South Boston.

The lighter combination ladder truck 19 is located at 715 4th st. It is commanded by Lieut Charles A. Winchester. He entered the department May 16, 1894, and served with engine 23 and chemical companies 1 and 5 until promoted lieutenant of ladder 5 March 20, 1908. He came to his present command on Dec 18, 1909.

The senior ladderman of ladder 19 is John E. Donoghue, and the names of the laddermen are F. J. Haggerty, W. O. Cushing, R. H. Brown, and J. J. Degan. Ladder 19 is one of the home guards, and is seldom allowed to leave the territory which it protects.

Ladder 20 of this district is also a light truck intended for quick work in the tenement section. It is stationed in Andrew sq with engine 43. It is commanded by Lieut M. J. Dacey, whose name is on the "Department Roll of Merit" for saving life at a fire on Dec 8, 1905. For this deed he also received the silver medal of the Massachusetts humane society, and he has twice been awarded extra "days off" for meritorious conduct. He has served with engines 25, 3, 12, and ladder 13. He was promoted lieutenant March 2, 1905, and has been in command of ladder 20 since June 26, 1908.

The senior ladderman of truck 20 is W. A. Baldwin, and the driver P. Hart. The names of the laddermen are A. S. Penney, C. J. Murphy, A. T. Cunningham and D. A. Crowley.

Engine 43, quartered in the same house, is commanded by Capt Albert J. Caulfield. He entered the department May 18, 1891, was promoted lieutenant Feb 18, 1898, and captain June 26, 1908. Capt Caulfield has made several res-

cues for which he received no credit, and one in particular for which some one else received the praise. By far the most remarkable piece of work in which he has been engaged as a fireman was on Nov 29, 1905, when he with Dennis F. Daly of ladder 19 and Napoleon Boutillier, now chauffeur to Deputy Chief Grady, ascended the pole of the De Forest wireless telegraph system at South Boston to extinguish a fire that had long baffled previous efforts. The top of the pole was 208 feet above the ground, far beyond the reach of the longest ladder.

The feat was accomplished by first raising a 65-foot ladder to its utmost extent, and then lashing it to the pole. The men then ascended with pomper scaling ladders, but five scaling ladders found the men still far below their objective point, and by orders of Chief Mullen the lower ladders were "fletched" up one over the other until the top was reached, thus leaving a wide gap between the big ladder and the lowest of the scaling ladders. Hose was then dragged up, but so great were the difficulties encountered that it took them 3½ hours to extinguish the fire.

The weather was bitterly cold and the ladders soon became coated with ice, but no relief could be given the men nor assistance in their perilous descent. For this truly hazardous feat the men received an additional day off and commendation in "general orders."

Lieut John A. Noonan of engine 43 entered the department as a call man in 1888, and was made permanent in 1890. Promoted lieutenant Nov 2, 1902, and has been with his present company since Aug 26, 1910.

The engineers are E. J. Lynch and E. C. Verkampen; the drivers T. A. McLaughlin and D. J. Cadigan, the senior hoseman F. J. Martin, and the rest of

the hosemen F. C. Shannon, J. F. Heilmann, C. A. Cardani, M. M. Flavin and W. J. Griffin. This company responds to all boxes in South Boston as far as Savin Hill.

Engine 2, quartered at the corner of 4th and O sts, is another piece of apparatus specially charged with the protection of this district, and never leaves it except upon a special call.

The captain of engine 2 is Edward Conners. He was appointed to the fire force May 12, 1890, and served for many years with "Tiger 7." He was promoted lieutenant Aug 23, 1896, captain Sept 1, 1905, and has been in command of his present company since Jan 4, 1907.

Capt Conners has had some terrible experiences at the many fires he has attended in his long service, but the scenes he most dreads to recall were those at the "Brown Durell fire," when with many Boston firemen he was compelled to witness the occupants of the "Horace Partridge" building leap from the windows to the nets held by the firemen in the street below.

The engineers of engine 2 are E. R. Stern and C. J. Twomey. The drivers are D. J. Looney and J. J. Murphy. The senior man is M. F. Flavin, and the hosemen are J. T. Flavin, J. Morone, R. L. Quilty and J. Mann. Engineer Stern of this company ranks as one of the senior engineers of the department, and has had much experience, having served many years as a machinist before joining the fire force.

Engine company 15, quartered at the corner of Broadway and Dorchester st, is an engine company with a deservedly high reputation. Chief Mullen served for many years with this company, and promotions from it have been plentiful. It responds to fires in all directions and has several times been specially called to be sent out of town. It was loaded on the cars for the Portland, Me. fire, and was specially commended for good work when sent to the big fire at Brockton.

Thrilling experiences of all kinds have fallen to the lot of this company, but perhaps none more so than at the Chelsea conflagration of April 12, 1895, when the company was so driven by the storm of fire that they were compelled to abandon their engine, and barely escaped with their lives. The engine was destroyed but another engine was given to Boston by the city of Chelsea. Notwithstanding their misfortune the company was warmly praised for their good work as they went to their work at the Albany st fire on Aug 5, 1910.

In their own district they have made some notable rescues, in particular the rescue of two boys on Jan 20, 1907, and that of a woman and five children on Dec 5, 1907. One of their most exciting fires was on Dec 31, 1908, when they rescued 18 persons who were trapped in a building on Dorchester st. At this time they saved two persons from their life net, but on subsequently used from the burns received.

This busy company is under the command of Capt Edwin F. Richardson. Born in the South End he early became a fire fighter and served as a volunteer with old Eagle 1. He was appointed to the fire force Aug 2, 1887, when yet within a year of his age requirement. Was made permanent Jan 9, 1888, promoted lieutenant Aug 2, 1890, and captain March 2, 1905. He has served with engines 17, 13, 11, 13 and 26, and ladder 11. He is a very good reason proud of his present appointment.

The lieutenant of engine 2 is M. J. Twomey, one of the well-known Twomey family of fire fighters, many of whom have served in the Boston department. He became a call man of hose company 2, Dec 29, 1881, with company 2, May 1, 1882, promoted assistant engineer in 1893, engineer in 1898 and lieutenant in 1904. He has been with his present company since June of 1908.

The engineers of engine 2 are J. E. Mulhern and W. J. Thompson. The drivers are W. M. Conners and L. L. Donovan. The senior hoseman is J. P. Reynolds, and the names of the hosemen are W. I. Johnson, W. Hart, D. L. Galvin, A. D. Leclan, W. O'Connor and T. I. Carey.

Chemical engine 8, quartered on B st, is under the command of Lieut Lorenzo D. Merrill. He was appointed Feb 10, 1890, promoted assistant engineer June 16, 1896, engineer Aug 19, 1898, and lieutenant of engine 7, Dec 1, 1902, and has been in command of his present company since June 24, 1908.

The senior man of this company is James H. Stout, one of the boys of John M. Devine. Hoseman James H. McManis and master painter David J. Fitzgerald make the roster of this company.