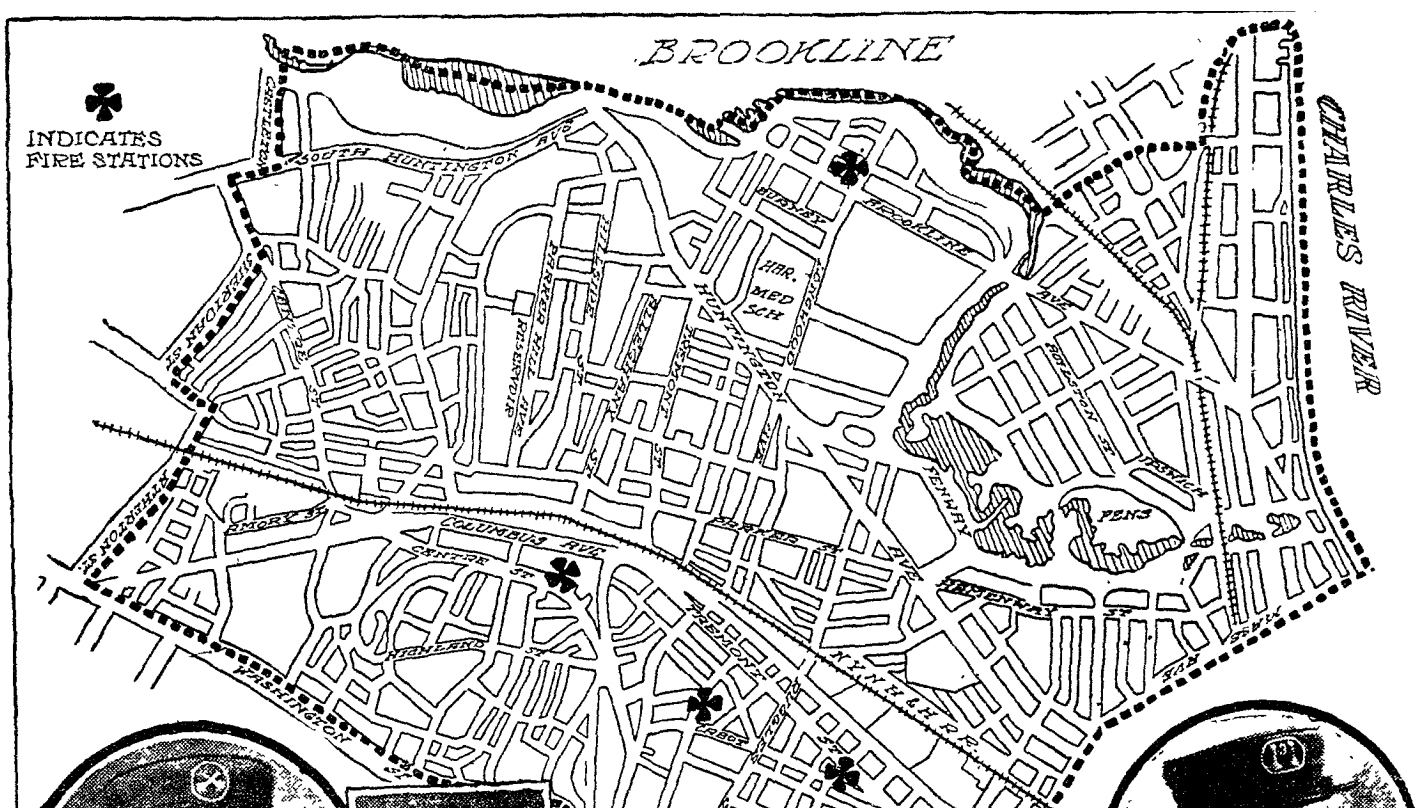


EIGHTH FIRE DISTRICT OF BOSTON

District Chief Ryder Has Won the Affection of Every Man Who Ever Served Under Him—The Captains and Lieutenants and Their Thrilling Experiences in the Course of Duty—This Immense District Contains a Fine Residential Section, Breweries and Warehouses, Factories, Hospitals and the Opera House—Medals for Life Saving.



DISTRICT CHIEF
STEPHEN J. RYDER



CAPT CHAS W
CONWAY



CAPT
GEO B NORTON



CAPT JOSEPH H.
KENNEY



ACT. DISTRICT CHIEF
W. J. GAFFEY

THE immense territory constituting the eighth fire district of Boston is bounded on the north by the Charles river and Massachusetts av on the east by Washington st, on the south by Atherton and Mozart sts, Chestnut av, Sheridan and Center sts, Hyde sq, Perkins st, South Huntington av and Castleton st, across Jamaica way to the Brookline line; on the west by the Brookline line to Cottage Farm bridge.

This district contains the fine residential section along the Charles river and about the park system of Jamaica, why and the Back Bay Fens, a large tenement house tract; the brewery and storage warehouse district, Boston's largest piano, carpet, chair and oil cloth factories, many hospitals and public buildings, Harvard college property, the opera house, Symphony hall and the conservatory of Music.

This territory is guarded by three steam fire engines, two ladder trucks and one chemical engine.

The fire protection is under the supervision of District Chief Stephen J. Ryder, one of the most popular men in the Boston fire department. "Steve" Ryder, as the boys always refer to him, has won the affection of every man who has served under him.

He has had long experience in the busiest downtown houses. He was born in the North End of Boston and entered the fire department Feb 13, 1888. After serving with the crack companies of engine 5 and ladder 8 in Fort Hill sq and with engine 8 in the North End he was promoted lieutenant of engine 15 in 1891. Feb 16, 1896, he was promoted captain of the double companies of en-

gines 38 and 39, chief of the 7th fire district March 3, 1906, and assigned to his present position June 9, 1909. During his long service he has met with most of the experiences and injuries of a fireman's life and had the distinction of being the first of the chiefs to be pitched out of an auto. The great territory which he has to cover causes him to do much traveling in addition to his yearly average of response to nearly 500 fires.

The headquarters house of the eighth fire district is that of the double company of ladder 12 and chemical engine No. 12 on Tremont st, Roxbury. This house is under the command of Capt Joseph H. Kenney. He entered the fire department Nov 23, 1888, and after serving with ladder companies 3 and 7 was promoted lieutenant June 28, 1895. After long service with ladder company 3 he was assigned to water tower No. 2, to have charge of the tower and to act as department drill master. Promoted captain of ladder 8, Dec 6, 1906, he saw much service in Fort Hill sq, and was assigned to the command of his present company June 26, 1906.

During his long service Capt Kenney has been repeatedly injured. His worst injuries were received at the great fire on Thanksgiving day, Nov 28, 1889; at the "horrid explosion," where he was badly burned, and at the big lumber yard fire July 1, 1903, at which he was so severely injured that he did not report back for several months. He is in possession of a personal letter of commendation from Robert G. Fitch, chairman of the old board of fire commissioners, for saving the life of a woman at a fire on box 65, Jan 4, 1890.

Lieut. Hamilton A. McClay of this

company joined the fire force in 1896, and after much hard service with ladder 1 and engine 26 was promoted lieutenant of ladder 12. At the Merrimac-st fire he was especially fortunate, for one of the beams that killed and maimed so many, barely missed killing him, as it tore the sleeve from his coat. Not always so fortunate, he was partly buried by falling walls at the Union wharf fire, and was injured at the grain elevator and Hoosac tunnel dock fires in Charlestown, and again at the big organ factory fire on box 92. His narrowest escape occurred at the Bigelow-Dowse fire, when he was cut off by flames on the roof and barely escaped with his life.

Driver George Whalen handles the ribbons of this truck, and the laddersmen are G. F. Doyle, R. H. Webber, D. J. Crowley, D. O'Leary, J. H. Wall, J. F. Good, W. J. Leonard, C. Willett, J. L. Chandler, and J. J. Doolan, a regular army man, who saw much active service. Laddersmen Willett and Good are the chief's drivers and telegraphers.

Ladder 12 is a heavy truck, carrying 15 ladders. It responds to 89 boxes on a first alarm, covering the territory enclosed between Hyde sq, Jamaica Plain, Norfolk av, Roxbury, and the bounds of Boston on the Brookline line.

Chemical engine 12, also in this house, is under the command of Lieut P. H. Kenney. His hosemen are T. H. O'Neil, E. Graham and W. T. Wall. This company covers all Roxbury on a first alarm.

Lieut. Kenney entered the department in 1886, and after service with engines 6, 29, 14 and ladder 12, was promoted lieutenant in 1910. His experiences have been severe. After the Fort Hill-sq explosion he was confined to the hospital for 10 weeks, and on return to duty was again badly hurt at a freight shed fire on Lowell st. He was one of Deputy Chief Grady's picked men when the deputy was drillmaster, and he has been commended in "general orders" for saving life.

Engine 13, quartered on Cabot, near W. Utter st, is under the command of Acting Dist. Chief Wm. J. Gaffey. He entered the department in 1881, and drove engines 10 and 3, and ladder 13 until promoted lieutenant of engines 26 and 35 in 1890. He was promoted captain of engine 3 in 1896, and has been in command of his present company since 1902.

Engine 13 has the record of having experienced one of the most unusual accidents that has ever occurred in the fire service. When responding to an alarm a few years ago the momentum became so great on one of the steep and slippery hills so numerous in this locality that the driver lost control, the engine slipped, pitched over an embankment with a clear drop of 15 feet, and turned completely over. The jet black horse "Banjo," that has been the pet of the neighborhood for over 25 years is the only survivor of the three horses that went over with the engine.

Lieut. Thomas E. Conroy of this company has had some thrilling experiences. He entered the department Sept 12, 1890, and served with engines 7 and 2, until promoted lieutenant of his present company, Feb 8, 1901.

While serving as a hoseman on engine 7 he went down with the falling floors of the building on Merrimac st. Feb 7, 1890, and was only dug out with the greatest difficulty. Six others less fortunate were brought out dead. Witnesses of the incident never fail to recall the remarkable presence of mind shown by Lieut. Conroy. As he was carried from the ruins and borne past Fire Commissioner Russell the battered and barely conscious man remembered to raise his hand in salute to his superior officer.

The engineers of engine 13 are C. A. Thompson and M. J. Fallon. The drivers are W. S. Hughes and F. A. Nicholson. The hosemen are J. E. Nickerson, M. J. Devin, J. T. Lynch, T. F. Ryder, H. A. Kane and J. J. Kelly.

The double companies of engine 37 and ladder 5 occupy quarters at the corner of Longwood and Brookline avs.

Engine 27 is commanded by Capt. Chas. W. Conway. He entered the department May 24, 1889, was promoted lieutenant July 29, 1890, and captain March 2, 1906. He bears the silver medal of the Massachusetts humane society for saving the life of a child from a burning building on Harvard st, Dec 8, 1903. When presented the medals Fire Commissioner Henry S. Russell warmly commended Capt. Conway and Lieut. Dacey of truck 20, and enrolled their names on the "Department Roll of Merit." Capt. Conway was long known as one of Boston's best drivers, and was selected for the distinction of being the man to drive the first tar-horse hitch used in the fire service of this city.

The lieutenant of engine 24, Thomas

Wyllie, entered the service in 1894. He was promoted Sept 1, 1910. He is well known in fire circles as a weaver of life nets, and has made many that have saved lives at fires. The engineers are P. W. Lynch and E. M. Quigley. The driver of the engine is Florence O'Regan, amateur champion lightweight of New England. John J. Smith drives the wagon. The hosemen are T. O. Littlehale, J. Whooley, M. J. McGonagle, F. A. Martin, J. J. Devine and J. D. Allen. It is probable that Fire Commissioner Daly will in the near future put an automobile combination wagon in an annex to this house.

Combination ladder 26 is regarded as the lightest and fastest moving truck in the service. It is specially designed for fast work around the apartment hotels so numerous in this district.

Lieut. Ernest B. Chittick commands ladder 26. He entered the department April 17, 1896, and was promoted lieutenant April 9, 1910. The senior laddersman of truck 26 is Frank Meleedy. The laddersmen are J. M. Fitzgerald, who served in the U. S. navy, and is well known in Boston as the manager of the Mission church band, James J. Doyle, Dennis J. Lane, one of the men blown down with Chief Mullen and Fox in the Arch-st explosion, William H. O'Dea, a veteran of the Spanish war, and Thomas T. Ring, who before entering the fire service was one of the best gunners in the American navy served through the Spanish war, and was aboard the USS Baltimore at the battle of Manila bay.

Engine 14, Center st, Roxbury, is under the command of Capt. Geo. B. Norton, a fireman since May 21, 1887. After service with ladder 1, he was promoted lieutenant of ladder 3 in August, 1890. He was lieutenant of the crack companies of engines 26 and 35, until promoted captain of his present company, in 1905.

Lieut. Dennis Driscoll of this company is another fireman with remarkable experiences. In early life a sailor and fisherman, he entered the fire service April 17, 1896, and after service with engines 1, 7, 26 and 35, was promoted lieutenant of engine 14, March 4, 1909.

The name of Lieut. Driscoll is on the "Department Roll of Merit," and he is a medal of honor man of the Massachusetts humane society for the rescue of a woman and child from the fifth floor of the building at the corner of State and Devonshire sts. When a member of engines 29 and 35, he with hoseman Kelley was thrown from a ladder and in addition to other injuries sustained a fractured skull and several broken ribs. After this accident he was off duty for a year, and after the Merrimac-st fire, where he went down with the wreck and was dug out unconscious, he was again laid off on the injured list for a long time.

The engineers of engine 11 are W. H. Wright and D. J. Mahoney. The drivers are J. J. Devine and J. J. O'Connell. The hosemen are W. H. Wells, J. J. McDonald, B. L. Brook, G. S. Gormley, H. J. McNeale and T. E. Cuddihy. This company responds to 37 boxes on a first alarm, and through Roxbury and Jamaica Plain has some of the longest runs in the department.

The hills in this district make much trouble for the fire apparatus and Fire Commissioner Daly has had to give much study to the protection of Parker Hill. He solved the problem by securing higher pressure on the hill, a macadamized well-graded road to the top and a special automobile combination wagon that can be relied upon to negotiate the steepest grades.