



NO. 7 IS 218 YEARS OLD

Engine Company Now on East St the First One Organized in Boston, With Primitive Apparatus From England—Many Changes in Name and Location.



James of Engine No. 7 for 100 Years

William Perry	1753	3	London Street	1751	6
Richard Lee	1756	7	London Street	1751	5
Stephen Hill	1753	6	St. Andrew's	1751	1
John Brown	1753	5	London Street	1753	2
London Perry	1758	5	London Street	1757	1
William Sutton	1753	25	London Street	1751	1
John Cushing	1711	1	North St.	1729	1
Edward Rogers	1711	7	North St.	1729	1
Oliver Wood	1755	13	North St.	1752	1
Richard Hill	1751	5	North St.	1751	1



James H. Elder	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
Thomas Hill	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
William Perry	1753	1	London Street	1753	1
Thomas Cushing	1756	1	London Street	1756	1
London Perry	1758	1	London Street	1758	1
Wm. J. Daniels	1753	1	London Street	1753	1
Thomas Peirce	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
Joseph B. Peirce	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
Lucas Peck	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
John Hill	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
Edw. H. Wood	1751	1	London Street	1751	1
Stephen B. Hill	1751	1	London Street	1751	1

TABLET GIVING NAMES OF CAPTAINS OF ENGINE CO NO 7 FOR 130 YEARS.

Engine Company 7 of the Boston Fire Department is the granddaddy of all Boston fire organizations. It was 218 years old this month.

John Hull, in his diary, speaks of a number of attempts at incendiaryism in Boston during 1677, and no doubt these fires moved the townspeople to send to England for their first fire engine.

An entry in the town records, Jan 27, 1678, says: "In case of fire in ye towne when there is occasion to make use of ye engine lately come from England Thomas Atkins, carpenter, is desired, and doth ingage to take care of the manageance of the sd engine in ye worke intended & secure it ye best he can from damage & hath made choyce of ye severall psons followinge to be his assistants which are approved of and are promised to be paid for their pains about the worke. The persons are Obediah Gill, John Raynsford, John Barnard, Thomas Eldridge, Arthur Smith, John Mills, Caleb Rawlings, John Wakefield, Saml Greenwood, Edward Mortimer, Thomas Barnard and George Robinson."

Thus the first engine company in Boston was organized. The location of this engine is a disputed point, but it seems likely that it was housed in a shed on the north side of the town's land in Queen st (now Court st).

The names and locations of the engines in 1733 were: No. 1 at Watch House, adjoining the old North Watch House (on North st, facing Elm st); No. 2, at Gov Hutchinson's place, near the new North Meeting House (corner of North and Clarke sts); copper engine, No. 3, by the North Meeting House, heading North sq; No. 4, the engine at the dock (Long wharf); copper engine No. 5, under the Town House (where the old State House now stands); prison engine, No. 7, West st. A large shed was built in 1642 in the prison yard, which was used for this engine. No. 9, in Summer st.

These were not all the fire apparatus in town, for the News-Letter of Jan 25, 1733, says that "Messrs John and Thomas Hill had, by the advice and direction of Mr Roland Houghton, erected a water engine at their stillhouse, which was drawn by horses, and which delivered a large quantity of water 12 feet above the ground." This engine was never owned by the town.

Engine Company 7, at this time consisted of the following men: William Young, foreman; Eben Perry, Samuel Sprague, Isaac Peirce, William Jarvis, John Peirce, Gersham Flagg, Jarvis Young, Newell, John Tootel, Bartho Sutton, Peter Row, Stephen Parker, James Dayes and Robert Bradford.

duct in Washington, near Dover st, Nov 12, 1800.

March 25, 1801, Engine No. 7 was removed to School st, near the City Hall, and was named "Extinguisher No. 7." A new engine was ordered in 1802, of the same pattern as the old one, and when tried, it threw water at a greater height than was ever thrown in Boston up to that period.

Aug 14, 1806, Engine House No 7 was moved farther back, & out on the site of the Franklin statue in front of City Hall.

On May 10, 1810, the house was ordered moved to vacant land back of the Latin School, as the new Courthouse was being built.

For several years after the City Government was formed, May 1, 1822, there were bitter quarrels between the city fathers and members of the Fire Department. The firemen surrendered the care of the engines, as they would not accept the city ordinance which gave each company \$25 per year, \$15 for the first and \$10 for the second engine at a fire.

Engines and houses were damaged, hose cut and free-for-all fights were frequent. The fire societies then formed were the only safeguard of the service.

Eventually new companies were formed and the department reorganized.

Little Better Than a Syringe.

This apparatus was given a chance to show its worth at the large fire Aug 8, 1679, which destroyed the principal part of the town. The work of the engine, little better than a large syringe, was of small value, and as the company was dismissed shortly after, their work, meagre as it was, must have been unsatisfactory.

Systematic fire-fighting was now begun by the town authorities, the first step being to dig a number of wells and appoint watchmen.

This pioneer engine company seemed to have trouble with the town authorities, but we are at a loss to know the cause of these difficulties. At any rate, on Aug 21, 1686, the company was disbanded and the engine given in care of Capt John Faireweather and Edward Willis.

On March 7, 1700, it was ordered "that the Selectmen are desired to get the water engine for the quenching of fire repaired, as also the house for keeping the same in."

Sept 9 provision was made for supplying 20 water buckets, also 20 swabs, two scoops and six axes, which were distributed among the inhabitants.

That same year, two new engines were ordered from England, but they did not arrive until 1707.

In 1703, the firemen were ordered by the Selectmen "to meet at the place where the said engine is lodged, upon the last Monday of every month at 3 of the clock in the afternoon, and to exercise themselves in the use of sd engine as the Selectmen shall from time to time determine. And also that in the case of the breaking out of fires in the town, then with all possible speed to repair unto sd engine and with their best skill and industry to manage the same for the extinguishing of the fires in the preservation of the Towne."

Two More Engines Arrive.

Henry Deering was appointed captain, making the third in line commanding this company. That he was a very religious man may be judged from his petition, "Wherein the Lord in His merciful providence hath provided this town with three engines, you may go on and be in the way of your good and pass a vote for about £40 to be laid out for such things as are necessary for to accommodate the said engines to facilitate the ends that they are provided for. And also to procure other things that will be necessary to use in the quick stopping and preventing the spreading of fire in this Town in case it should break out."

The "engine men," as they were called, were exempt from military duty and from ordinary training and watching. When the two new engines arrived they were placed in the care of Capt Thomas Hutchinson, who, together with Stephen Minot and Joseph Frowt, were given command of the fire service. Twenty-four men comprised a company. A house was built May 19, 1709, adjoining the old North Watch House, in which one or more of these engines was lodged.

After the great fire of 1711, the town was divided into fire districts, under the management of the Board of Firewards. The following January, the position of superintendent was created, the office being filled by James Peirson, who was the first chief of Boston's fire service. The firewards were granted £180 on June 7, 1715, to defray the expense of two new fire engines, which they had already ordered from England.

No Pay Until 1740.

This plate is inclosed in a frame and for years hung in the engine house on East st, but some time ago it was transferred to the headquarters of the Fire Department. The first mention of hose for the department is made April 7, 1736, when Capt Sutton of No. 7, asks for a piece of new hose for his engine, which probably referred to a short piece for the pipe, as regular hose as we know it, was not used until after Boston became a city.

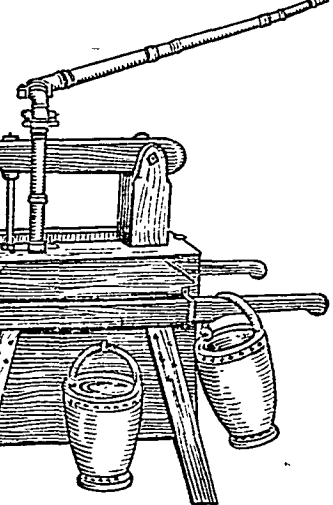
It was not until 1740 that any compensation was allowed firemen for their services; at that date the Selectmen offered rewards of £5 to the company which first put water on a fire, a custom which continued until the paid force was organized.

In 1753, Capt Booth, Sutton's son, Booth Jr, was admitted a member of No. 7, under command of his uncle William. Five years later this engine was named "New York No. 7," and was located in a shed in the rear of the Old South Meetinghouse.

Jan 6, 1762, Joel Cushing, who in 1751 was appointed foreman of No. 7, was admitted a member. This company was the largest in town, it having 16 members.

Heretofore, the Selectmen appointed foremen of the engine companies, but in 1796 they gave the members of the department the right to choose their own officers in the month of May each year.

Water was introduced into Boston from Jamaica Pond in 1796, through pitch pine logs which had a hole bored through them. The first hydrant was a suction pipe placed in the wooden aque-



ONE OF THE FIRST FIRE ENGINES IN BOSTON.

The new engine for No. 7 arrived from New York Jan 5, 1826, and the old engine was given to a new company and was located in Sea st and named Boston No. 20. The extinguisher company No. 7 was allowed its old name, New York, No. 7, and 50 men comprised the company.

The house on School st was found too small for the new apparatus, and Feb 19, 1827, the city bought a larger lot of land on the west side of the County Courthouse. A hose company was added to the engine company.

When Gen Jackson visited Boston, in 1824, the firemen formed a double line, with extended ropes, across the Common, between which the procession passed from West st to the State House. They were in full dress uniform, with the exception of No. 7, who, by unanimous vote, turned out in the battle-stained suits in which they had fought fires.

First Steamer a Failure.

Engine 7 and Cataract 14, whose quarters were near each other, were great rivals.

When a new engine for No. 7 arrived Sept 28, 1855, the name was changed from New York to Tiger, and in 1858 the old engine was stored in the old Franklin School house and kept fit for instant use.

The company in 1854 was moved to Pearl st. A new house was ordered to be built on Purchase st in 1857. The next year water from Lake Cochituate was brought into Boston. In 1852, the electric fire alarm system was installed. The first steam fire engine, called the Miles Greenwood, made its unsuccessful appearance in Boston in 1855, but they soon displaced the old hand tubs.

In 1855, the old engine, located in the South Bay land was moved to the quarters of Engine 7, and given the name of Tiger. In 1855, two small steam fire engines were built. One was called Lawrence 7, and lodged in the quarters of the hand engine on Purchase st, which later was sent elsewhere. They were worked under contract with the builders for a year, but in 1860, a regular company was appointed. The entire department was equipped with steam engines Sept 1, 1860.

In 1869 a new house was built for 7 on East st, at a cost of \$24,000, and from there the company still responds to alarms.