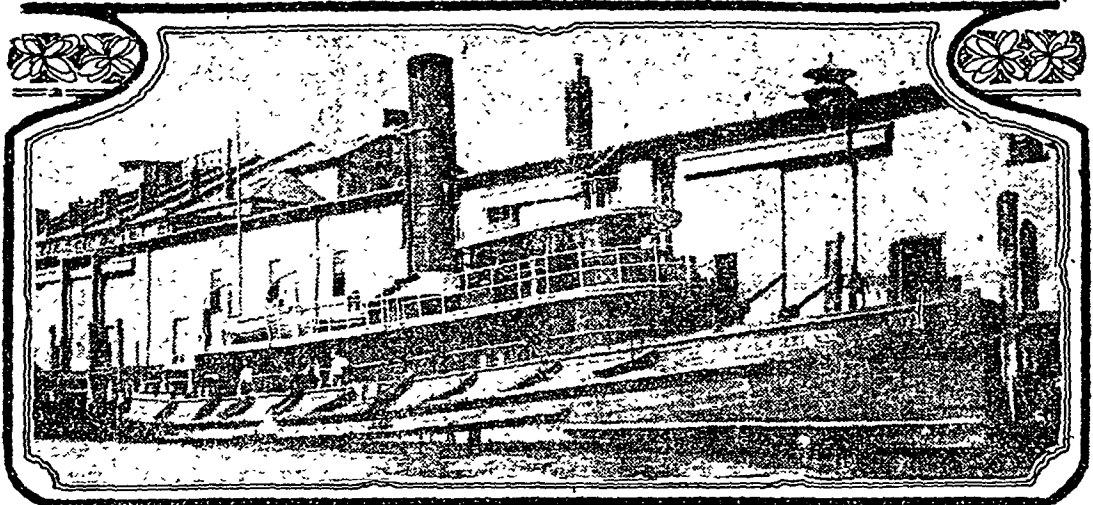
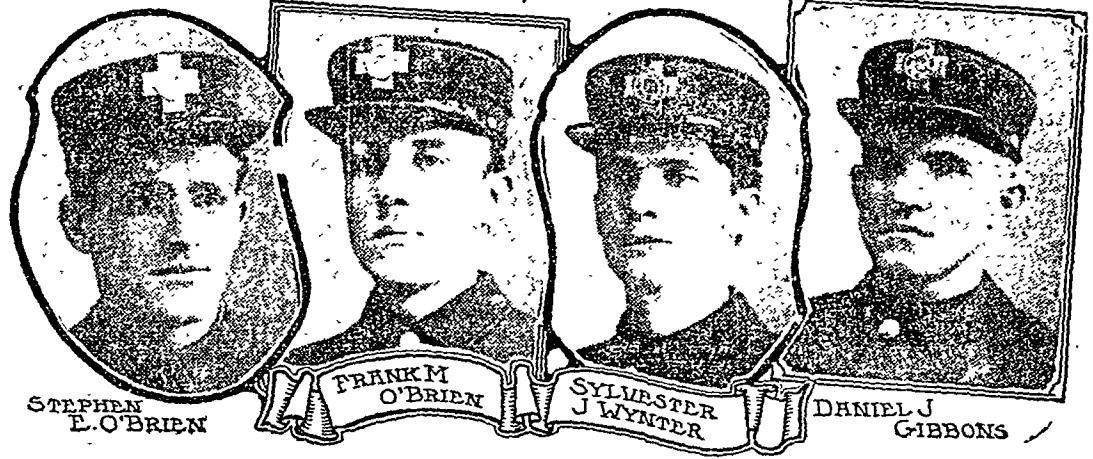


FIREBOAT TO MOVE TO CENTRAL WHARF

Old Berth Used for 34 Years Will Have to be Vacated, but Crew Will Like the Change.



ENGINE 44 AND ITS BERTH AT INDIA WHARF FROM WHICH IT WILL REMOVE AFTER 34 YEARS AT THAT STATION



Engine 44, the fireboat, will on May 15 vacate the berth on India wharf which was given over to the fire department 34 years ago last January, when the William M. Flanders, the first fireboat the city ever had, was placed in commission. The department recently received notice to vacate the India wharf berth from its new lessees, and by May 15 it is expected that new quarters on Central wharf will be in readiness for the boat and crew.

It was not until yesterday that the old salts who frequent the water front learned that the fireboat was to remove from India wharf. As they chatted in the sun at the head of India wharf they revived old memories, recalling the days when George Scott and Seth Low, both deceased, were in charge of the fireboat and the stiff battles they had with flames.

On New Year's day in 1873 the William M. Flanders, named in honor of a man then representing the city in the common council, was placed in commission. It was the city's first fireboat. There have been four built since and two are in commission at present, old engine 31 being in readiness at Central wharf should its services be required.

In the 34 years that the city has berthed its fireboat at India wharf rental was never required. Property owners in that section felt that the boat was a protection to them and in return felt it a sense of duty to allow the property to be used as a berth.

When Fire Commissioner Wells learned from the new lessees of the India wharf property that the fireboat must go, he began to arrange for improving the acquired property at Central wharf where engine 31 is moored. The men will be given quarters there

that will excel anything in the fireboat line that the other big coast cities can offer.

Some day Fire Commissioner Wells says he expects to get money enough to have a brand new fireboat. Another fireboat is absolutely necessary and if that "some day" ever should arrive he hopes to be able to build a plant for the fireboat in some other section of the water front that will be along the line of the makeup of the life saving station quartered in the Dorchester bay. His idea is to have the fireboat sheltered under a floating firehouse, so that the men can board it without sliding down ladders and wet ropes and taking chances of sustaining injuries.

Those who have visited Central wharf say that the fireboat boys will never regret leaving India wharf. Their new quarters will surpass those on India wharf and they will not have to perform the unpleasant tasks which have marred the fireboat job for many years. Whenever the Portland boat left its wharf or docked it was necessary for the fireboat to be pulled out into the stream from its berth in order that the passenger craft might pass out. Every evening at 7 the boat is pulled out and again at an early hour of the morning it has to be removed. An engineer and a pilot are called each morning and to them this duty is not a pleasant one.

According to Dan Quinn, secretary to Chief Mullen, an expert on fire department history, there have been five fireboats in service since the department was reorganized in 1873. Old engine 31 replaced the Flanders and then another, engine 31, was built. In March, 1898, Col Russell placed engine 41 in commission and later another fireboat was fitted out and given the engines formerly used by the second 31. That boat is now at Central wharf.

The old salts tell many interesting stories of the India wharf berth. There were strenuous times in the days of George Scott and Seth Low, but when "Ben" Healey, happy and bighearted, took charge, the fireboat really became prominent. Healey was the first man

to have charge of engine 44 and he remained in charge until supplanted by Irving Sparks in 1899.

Capt Robert A. Ritchie took charge of the boat Aug 7, 1903, and with Lieut W. S. Eaton has labored to make a successful record. In every big water front fire the fireboat has done excellent work. Commissioner Wells visits the fireboat frequently and since he assumed office two years ago has made many improvements in both the new and old fireboats.

Incidental to the removal of the fireboat is announced four promotions and a complete change in the personnel of the engineers' staff. First grade engineer John B. Wickins resigned, causing a vacancy that made promotion all along the line necessary. Stephen E. O'Brien secured Wickins' position, while Sylvester J. Wynter, Daniel J. Gibbons and Frank M. O'Brien were respectively named second, third and fourth grade engineers.

O'Brien has been a member of the fire department about six years and thoroughly understands engines. As marine engineers he and the others are highly rated. Wynter was appointed April 10, 1903; Gibbons, April 6, 1904, and O'Brien, Sept 1, 1905.

The other firemen who comprise Capt Ritchie's squad are Charles S. Moran, pilot, and senior hoseman; Herbert E. Smith, Robert A. Nugent, Henry J. Marsh, William S. Slauenwhite, James M. Harrington, James F. Murphy, Joseph A. Verkamper, William J. Marshall and Daniel J. Mahoney.

The new location places the fireboat in close proximity to the salt water system, and taking everything into consideration Commissioner Wells and Chief Mullen figure that the change will be an advance in water front fire fighting.

The fireboat mascot, the monkey, which has been at the boat for nearly a year, was not consulted about moving, but when he lands in his new home at Central wharf he will probably like the place quite well.