

OCTAVIUS DONNELL DIES AT AGE OF 67

Old Boston Fireman Who Invented "Drop Hitch."

Harness Device Adopted by Fire Departments of the World.

Special Dispatch to the Globe.

BRYANTVILLE, Oct 2—Octavius Donnell, a pensioner of the Boston Fire Department and the inventor of the "drop hitch" harness now in use in Fire Departments throughout the world, is dead at his home here, aged 67. His funeral will take place Tuesday at 1 p m. He is survived by his wife and two sons, one of the latter being local fire chief. Fred Donnell, the other son, is a Boston newspaperman.

Mr Donnell was a member of Monticello Lodge, A. O. U. W., Co K; 1st New Hampshire Heavy Artillery and Post 119, G. A. R., of Charlestown. He was a member of the Boston Fire Department 26 years, serving the entire time in the Charlestown district. He was first appointed to Engine Company 27, but most of his service was with Engine Company 32.

He was appointed engineer of the latter company on June 17, 1892, and served in that capacity until he was pensioned on Feb 21, 1908. He was forced to retire because of his injuries when crushed between the apparatus and the door of the enginehouse.

It was while he was a fireman on Engine Company 32 that he invented the "drop hitch" for harnesses. He had received permission from his captain to tinker with some old harnesses about to be discarded, as he hoped to invent some way of saving time in hitching horses in responding to an alarm.

His efforts finally resulted in the "drop hitch," so-called, by which the harness is suspended from the ceiling and then dropped on a horse's back and fastened in place almost instantly by means of snap catches. It resulted in the saving of many minutes in the apparatus getting to a fire.

The "drop hitch" was first put in use in the quarters of Engine Company 32. Shortly afterward a commission from London was in Boston inspecting the Fire Department, and its members were shown the new invention. On their return to London they reported what a wonderful time-saver the "drop hitch" was, and as a result London officially adopted it in its Fire Department.

It was not until London had adopted it, however, that the city of Boston adopted it in all its fire houses. It is now in use in every civilized country where horses are used in a fire department. It was never patented by Mr Donnell, however, and he never received any profits from its use.