

# BOSTON'S VERSATILE FIREMEN.

### Many of the Fire Laddies Can Do All Sorts of Interesting Things Besides Fighting Flames—During Their Spare Hours Different Members of the Department Engage in Carpentering, Carving, Painting, Embroidery and Decoration of All Kinds.



It is a common saying in the fire department that a fireman's work is never done. When the fire laddie isn't actually fighting the flames he is supposed to be cleaning the engine, readjusting the hose or making the engine house apparatus ready for a response to the next alarm.

#### John Galvin of Engine 11.

John Galvin of engine 11, East Boston, has a hobby to which he devotes every minute of his spare time, and this is the decoration of his home. He is never tired of making ornamental furniture for it, planning some useful cabinet for his wife's housekeeping or making some new plaything for his children. Before he was married he spent his spare time in making small articles for his friends, but after he possessed a home of his own, all his energies in his spare hours were directed toward the betterment of this home.

The surprising part of it all is that Mr Galvin never was taught anything about carpentry, but just "picked it up by himself," as he says. He does the greater part of the work with an ordinary jack-knife.

Best of these things he has also made two large, comfortable Morris chairs and a child's Morris chair, which is faintly carved and beautifully finished, an artistically carved Mexican table, a large sideboard and a china closet. Before joining the fire department, Mr Galvin was a first-class plumber and a carpenter, cabinet maker or upholsterer, as one might judge from the results of his handiwork.

Mr Galvin is a very quiet man and does not care to talk about himself. He entered the fire department June 30, 1889, and has always been in East Boston stations. His first station was engine 10, then he was transferred to engine 9, where he worked under Chief Egan. While stationed there he was one of the hosemen who fought the fire in Tremont temple, and he was also acting as hoseman at the fire in Merrimac st., where Chief Egan was killed. Later on he was sent to engine 11, where he is now located. He has been in all the great fires since 1893, but could not mention any special experiences.

#### Skilful Capt Godbold.

Capt John W. Godbold of engine 5, East Boston, is considered one of the most "handy" men in the department. There is almost nothing at which he has not tried his skill. Carpentry work, bird stuffing, painting, carving, sewing are all among his accomplishments. He was the one who introduced taborets, or pedestals, into the fire department, and Mr Godbold was the first fireman's wife to have such in her house.

The large bay window in their house, at 148 Prichard st., East Boston, is filled with them. They are all shapes and sizes. Some are carved and some are turned, some are large, with a massive foundation, while others are slender and tall. He has made several clock cases which he has jig-sawed out of cigar boxes. A bric-a-brac mantel shelf, a sideboard, bookcases, medicine cabinets, chairs, china closets, picture frames, screens and ice chests were all made in

Capt Godbold's spare time. Before he came to engine 5 he had plenty of spare time to make things for his own house, but on coming to this station he found that there were plenty of things about the engine house which required his energies.

Engine 5, where he is now stationed, was the first house which was built for a steam engine. It was built in 1884 and therefore lacked a great many modern conveniences. The walls and ceiling were of plaster, and instead of one large dormitory for the men there were several small rooms.

The captain determined to change all this, and with the aid of his men he has worked a complete renovation. The plaster walls and ceilings gave way to sheathing. One large dormitory replaced the small, stuffy rooms which the firemen formerly occupied, and many other changes were made. The hayloft is used as a workshop and there is a chest completely fitted out with tools. This work naturally took up a great part of the men's free time, but they are fully repaid by the comfort of their present quarters.

At present Capt Godbold is making a china closet out of an ordinary cupboard. He has gone about the work in a most ingenious manner. The door of the closet has been taken off and shelves have been put in the upper part of it. Halfway down a small addition has been made, so that the lower part of the cupboard has been made to project beyond the upper part. Into this lower part drawers are being put. The shelves, drawers and glass doors for the upper part are made at the engine house during his spare moments and are carried home and fitted into place.

The greater part of the captain's work is of a solid, heavy kind. His taborets, however, are very ornamental, the tops being painted with gold. The picture frames are made of oak, and he has just completed a very handsome one. His work shows the master hand, as it can be seen at a glance that no amateur's hand fashioned the effects. This is a fact, for before entering the fire department Capt Godbold was a skilful carpenter.

After graduating from the Chapman school in East Boston he served his apprenticeship in a shipbuilding yard in Charlestown. For several years he worked in shipbuilding yards in New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. But he was not destined to remain a carpenter. Coming to Boston, he visited a friend who was a fireman in laddie 3. He found his friend reclining very comfortably in the smoking room reading. "Are you allowed to lie around like this during the day?" he asked in astonishment. His friend smiled and assured him that such was the fact.

Godbold mentally compared this easy life with his own long hours of hard work in the shipbuilding yards—from 6 in the morning until 8 at night, and decided that a fireman's life was the life for him. So he applied and was accepted. He soon found out that he had very long street patrols in those days, and he was assigned to be a night patrol.

He entered laddie 3 on Bristol st. in June, 1881, and in 1885 was appointed lieutenant; in 1889 he was made captain, and in January, 1901, he was made acting district chief. He has been in laddie 3, station 7, laddie 12, laddie 2 and engine 5, where he is now.

Capt Godbold came prominently before the public recently in the big fire in Webster's block, East Boston, where he had a very narrow escape. He stood in a window filled with flames and waited patiently for a ladder to be raised to the roof of an adjoining building. He ran across the roof almost burned off, above the ground. He was working near the top floor when the roof fell in and shut off all escape by the stairway.

#### Engineer Crowley Enjoys Variety.

The work of engineer W. F. Crowley of engine 33 and 39, Congress st., is of that varied cosmopolitan kind that one usually finds among sailors, and his early training is responsible for this. He has charge of one of the two horseless engines in Boston. He is very proud of his engine, and every part susceptible of polish is polished as if it had been intended for ornament instead of use.

Mr Crowley's home, at 72 Dorchester st., South Boston, contains many signs of his tireless activity during his spare time. There is noted throughout the fire department for his dainty tastes. These are given to his friends and are of varied and delicate design. Lately he has not made any clocks, but he has often called upon to repair the big timekeepers in the department, as he has gained considerable reputation as a clock expert.

He has four children, and when they were small he used to make all their toys. They never lacked the latest novelty, for after seeing a toy in a window, Mr Crowley could go back to the station and make one similar to that which he had seen.

was things about the place that require making, mending and fixing.

This work also taught him to sew, and he does a great deal of the patching and tailoring of the men's clothes. Each fireman is supposed to look after his own "fire" clothes. His sailmaking apprenticeship also taught him something which makes him valuable in the department, and that is rope work and splicing.

Mr Crowley was always considered very strong and he once outlifted 50 men, being able to lift 300 pounds dead weight. Someone suggested that he enter the fire department, and in October, 1883, he entered engine 3, under Chief Webber. In 1885, he was promoted to be assistant engineer of engine 6. In this capacity he served three years, and was then transferred to engine 25.

In 1891 he was promoted to be engineer of engine 33 and 39, Congress st., where he is at the present day. This station has one of the two horseless engines in Boston, and Engineer Crowley is very proud of his charge. He may often be seen guiding it through the streets on silk-kattee tires.

Since 1883, Mr Crowley has been in all the great fires. He took part in the Roxbury fire, which burned out a great portion of that part of the city, near the ball grounds. He was also in the Merrimac-st. fire, when five members of the company were killed. He was assistant engineer on engine 6 at the Thanksgiving fire, when six firemen were killed in Bedford st. He has also been in several lumber fires.

Mr Crowley has a son who will graduate from a high school this year. He possesses his father's skill with his hands, and his father intends to send him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has three other children at school in South Boston.

#### Globe's Hint to Ladderman Silva.

There is one man in the department who has the patience and skill to copy and work out the intricacies of Mexican work and learn the delicate stitches and colors of embroidery. This is how Ladderman J. H. Silva, now stationed at combination 2, has filled in his spare time.

Mr Silva first got his idea while reading the woman's page of the Globe. A sari on a canvas was presented and different cross stitches were shown; having nothing else to do at the time Mr Silva got a piece of canvas, to see what he could do. He found the work a piece of felt which he himself had made. He was very reluctant at first to do the work, but he began to make all sorts of things.

Sofa cushions, pillow shams, letters, ladies' collars; there was nothing in the line of needlework which he did not try. It was very reluctantly that Mr Silva spoke of his work. "They will think that I am an old woman," he said apologetically when asked about his work, but his work as a fireman frees him from any such description. He has done a great deal of the "sari" work, which is so popular at present. Not only has he made stocks out of this, but large collars and sofa cushion covers beautifully worked are the outcome of his patience. He has also made a great many silk-kattee singes.

Mr Silva has received many offers of orders for these dainty covers, but he has always refused. Although the men are allowed to make anything they wish for themselves, it is strictly against the rules to make things for outsiders. Mr Silva is beginning to get tired of this pastime now, but he has a large assortment of articles which show his industry in the past. He expects to take up carving next. Embroidery, however, is not the only kind of work which he has done in recent years. He has also painted on cloth. This work shows the same careful, patient work as his sewing.

When the writer called Mr Silva was making a footstool for his little girl, which is very small, but good to school. It seems that there was some difficulty because her feet did not reach the ground, and the teacher had told her to bring a footstool to school next day; so her father was busy covering one with a piece of felt, and since then he has painted. He is planning to make a large, comfortable window seat or cozy corner out of a child's crib.

Mr Silva is also very skilful in making little pieces of furniture and useful articles for his home at 7 Bertram st., Neponset. The station in Neponset is a quieter one than any to which Mr Silva has been accustomed, and consequently he has now more time at his disposal. As his name indicates, he is of Portuguese extraction, but he was born in East Boston, where he attended school. On leaving there he worked as a clerk in a wholesale store in Boston. He found this life too monotonous, however, and changed it for the more exciting one of a fireman. He entered combination 2 in 1891, and since then he has moved about considerably. He was transferred to engine 25, and later was in chemical 2, laddie 2, engine 5, East Boston, engine 22, engine 17, and now he is at combination 11, Neponset. He has been present at a great many of the big fires since 1891. He has twice been severely injured at fires.

#### Ladderman Mahan's Success.

A companion of Mr Silva, who is also at combination 2, Neponset, is Ladderman P. J. Mahan, who, before entering the department was an upholsterer. It has often been noted that carpenters and upholsterers never seem to have any spare time for adding to the comforts of their home, for on returning from work they are too weary.

Mr Mahan is at present engaged in making an elaborate inlaid shoe box. It stands 38 inches high, and is made of inlaid white holly and black walnut in five-eighth inch strips. The legs are of the same inlaid material. Inside is an iron shoe, and a plush upholstered cover tops the whole. These are only two of numerous things which this fireman has made for his house. He has only to see a thing in a shop window or in a magazine, and he can go back to the engine house and make it without any trouble. He has all the necessary tools required for the work, having the set he used before entering the department.

Ladderman P. J. Mahan entered the fire department Feb. 1, 1896. He, like Mr Silva, was attracted to it as a relief from monotonous work. He entered engine 38 and 39, Congress st., where he served two years when he was transferred to engine 4 in Bulfinch st. in 1898. Thence he went to stations 22, 27 and now he is situated at combination 2, Neponset.

Here he has a good deal of spare time. Nevertheless, during the time he has been in the service, Mr Mahan has seen a great deal of active firefighting. He has been in all the great fires since 1895. He was with engineer Crowley in the Old Colony depot fire. Later on he took part in the big fire at Charles town, when the hay sheds were burned. While acting as hoseman in the Shafer fire he had a very narrow escape from being blown to pieces.

Mr Mahan is very fond of athletics. Baseball was a favorite pastime and horizontal bar practice used to fill up his recreation hours.

#### Walsh's Clock a Beauty.

"Have you seen Walsh's clock? It's an elegant affair. You should see it." These statements made the writer anxious to see the clock which had made its maker so well known among his brothers of the fire department. Some of them had never seen M. J. Walsh, but they had evidently heard about this clock which he had made.

The accompanying photograph, which represents the clock, does not by any means do it justice, for it does not show the cutting. The clock, which is about one foot high, is of polished Tennessee marble; it has white onyx columns with carved caps. It is made from one block of marble, the work being done from the back and bottom. It is backed with wood. The dial is made on the stone, and the figures are cut into the marble. The hands are set outside without any glass covering, thus giving a town clock effect.

Another very dainty piece of work executed in onyx by Mr Walsh is a jewel tray made in the conventional form of a tortoise. There is a head at each end with the mouth open. Holes are dug out for the eyes and colored stones are going to fill these. This piece of work is not yet finished. Several marble smoking sets have also been made by this fireman.

Mr Walsh is also very skilful at carpentry and has made several useful things for his home at 11 Henry st., Dorchester. He has charge of the horses and takes great pride in grooming them. He is a good horseback rider. Mr Walsh entered the fire department four years ago. He is a native of Boston, and received his education in Jamaica Plain schools. He was a mar-

ble cutter, and this accounts for his skill in working with this material. On entering the department he was first stationed at engine 30 and thence was transferred to laddie 7, Dorchester, where he is now. Not long ago Mr Walsh was called upon to give an exhibition of drilling to some visitors to the city.

There is another "handy" man at this station, and that is ladderman C. P. Moakley, who lives at 74 Topliff st., Dorchester. He is like Capt Godbold in this respect, that there is almost nothing to which he cannot put his hand. Although he has a good deal of skill with his hands, Mr Moakley describes himself as a "wood butcher." Among the things made during his spare time are the following: Embroidery, pillow shams, "tildes," bird cages, fancy handkerchief boxes, double-runner sled and a mahogany ice chest. This is a cosmopolitan variety of work.

He learned the sewing part of the work when he and Mr Silva were stationed together at laddie 7. Since then he has made progress. The bird cage is a very handsome affair made out of fancy brass wire, and it took all his spare time for a month to make it. The handkerchief boxes are made out of plain wood, but he has given them a mahogany finish, and the result is very pretty. The ice chest is a handsome one. It is made of mahogany.

In addition to his other occupations that of cobbling. Mr Moakley never was taught how to make any of these articles. He has the knack naturally. Before entering the department he was a confectioner. The work of a fireman, however, is very much more to his taste. He comes of an athletic family. His brother is a trainer for the students of Cornell university at the present time. Ladderman Moakley had gained a good reputation as a high jumper, sprinter and baseball player, and as a devotee of all kinds of popular sports. He is known throughout the department as a very useful all-round man.

He entered the fire department in October, 1895, and was first at station 7, Dorchester. Thence he was sent to engine 4, from there he went to laddie 8. Leaving there he saw some service in engine 4, and now he is at laddie 7 again.

Thus it can be seen that hours which would otherwise be dreary for the fireman are turned to useful account.