

# EX-CHIEF MULLEN DIES IN HOSPITAL

## Was One of the Country's Greatest Firefighters in His Prime.



EX-FIRE CHIEF JOHN A. MULLEN.

### Circumstances of Retirement Preyed on Mind ----Funeral in South Boston Wednesday.

Death yesterday morning brought peace to the troubled mind of Ex-Chief John A. Mullen, for 41 years a member of the Boston Fire Department, and for more than eight years its chief. The end came suddenly, soon after he had arisen, at the Adams Nervine Hospital, Center st, Jamaica Plain, where he had been a patient almost a year, having been admitted a few months after his voluntary retirement from the fire service March 5, 1914.

His retirement then was due principally to Mayor Curley's selection of Senior Deputy Chief John Grady for Fire Commissioner. Chief Mullen was not seeking the office himself, but rather than have for a superior a subordinate whom he did not look upon as friendly, he applied for retirement.

His manner of leaving the service preyed on his mind. He had a position with a fire alarm telegraph company and travelled about New England in the hope of forgetting what had happened, but he was ever meeting firemen who tried to condole with him and he was finally obliged to give up this work.

His former home in South Boston was in view of the quarters of Engine Company 1 and every time the apparatus left quarters he could see it and he could hear practically every sound of the gong. All of this recalled memories of the years he had spent in the fire service and under the strain his mind weakened.

#### Funeral Wednesday Morning.

His family took him to his Summer home at Onset, but he showed so little improvement that finally he was placed in the hospital. In addition to grieving over his own troubles he imagined plots against his family. Loyal friends tried in vain to cheer him.

Saturday night he talked with his family over the telephone and appeared

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in the best of spirits, and when they were informed that he had passed away quietly shortly after 7 yesterday morning they were shocked.

The physicians said that heart disease killed him, his family and personal friends accepted his diagnosis, adding that his heart had been broken.

The chief was 65 years old June 2 last and was born and bred in South Boston. His family recently has been living at 87 Wellington Hill st, Mattapan, but the funeral will be held at 10 Wednesday morning from the Gate of Heaven Church, South Boston, where he had worshipped for many years. The matter of having a detail of firemen has not been settled by the family.

He is survived by his wife, who was Miss Mary Burke; one son, John A. Jr, formerly one of the best interscholastic High School basket-ball players in this city and later captain of the Dartmouth quintette, three daughters, May, a teacher in the Minot School, Neponset; Helen, a graduate of Dr Sargent's School at Cambridge, and Gertrude, who is at present a pupil there.

## Honored by Firemen.

In the light of his career Chief Mullen's name was known to firemen throughout the United States and no great convention of fire engineers was complete without him. His papers and addresses were considered a credit to the city he represented.

Before he was appointed chief of the Fire Department he was easily the most popular man in the force, but after he assumed that office he lost some of his popularity, just as others who had been placed in the same position have done. He was outspoken and said just what he thought. This hurt some persons.

As a fireman Mullen stood in a class by himself. He never sent any men in where he would not go himself, and while fighting a fire always had the welfare of his men in mind. He was big-hearted and sympathetic and quietly helped many an unfortunate.

In South Boston when his death became known there was general sadness. He commanded companies there and was for many years the district fire leader. He loved South Boston, and it seemed as if he had at least a nodding acquaintance with every man, woman and child there.

## Devoted to His Family.

Chief Mullen was a great family man. Every moment that he could get away from the fire station he spent at home. He built a handsome Summer place at Point Independence, Onset. Nine years ago his eldest son died and he was a long while recovering from that blow.

At the time that Chief Mullen left the fire service he was comfortably well off and did not need the salary of \$4500 that went with the position, but he had often expressed a wish to die in the harness.

He had considered withdrawing, however, as he was past 60 years old and his wife and children felt that he would enjoy a few years of absolute freedom at their Summer home. When the announcement came that Fire Commissioner Cole would not serve under Mayor Curley, Mullen thought perhaps he would leave with Cole. With the naming of Grady as commissioner, Mullen made up his mind. He said he would never serve under Grady and within 72 hours he had ceased to be a member of the force.

## Career in Department.

Mullen served as chief under Commissioners Wells, Parker, Carroll, Daly, Dunn and Cole. Every one of them admired and respected him.

He was quick to praise, but slow to censure. While there were times when he publicly censured men for wrong doing, more frequently it was a kind word that he uttered.

Chief Mullen began his career as a fire fighter as a substitute on Engine 15, Dorchester av, South Boston, in 1873, and the year following became a regular member of the department, succeeding

a man who had been killed at a fire. On becoming a permanent member, May 9, 1876, he was assigned to Engine 23, Northampton st, serving with that company five years in various capacities and building up a record which won him a promotion to the rank of captain Aug 8, 1881. He was sent to command Engine 15, where he demonstrated his ability as a leader. Aug 20, 1885, he was promoted to the grade of district chief and given charge of the South Boston district.

His next promotion was in 1897, when he was made second assistant chief. He continued to make his headquarters in South Boston, but left there in April, 1901, for headquarters on Mason st, when he was selected as first assistant to Chief Cheswell. He became the "big chief" Feb 23, 1906.

He was a member of the Firemen's Relief and Charitable Associations, having been president of the former association for two years, and he also was a member of the International Association of Fire Engineers, the Fire Chiefs' Club of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts State Firemen's Association, the South Boston Council, Knights of Columbus, the Heptasophs and Workmen.

Twice Chief Mullen was reported killed at fires and on many occasions he was severely injured or overcome by smoke. He contracted pneumonia at the Estes Building fire in December, 1902, and was close to death, being off duty six months.

## GRADY REGRETS DEATH.

### Fire Commissioner Takes Steps to Find Out Wishes of Family in Regard to Department Action.

Fire Commissioner John Grady said last night in regard to the death of Chief Mullen:

"We served together for eight years and our relations at all times were pleasant. I am sorry to hear of his death and I do not know in just what manner to express my deep regret. Death is indeed a sad thing.

"I had hoped that Chief Mullen would live to enjoy his pension and would live long. But like all firemen he did not live long after he became a pensioner.

"When informed of the death early Sunday morning I at once got into touch with Acting Chief John O. Taber and instructed him to have a proper representative of the department call at the home of the dead chief and ascertain the wishes of the family in regard to public expression by the department of its sorrow. The initial steps have been taken and at a later date the full arrangements will be made public."

## COLE PAYS TRIBUTE.

### Ex-Commissioner Says Mullen Had No Equal in Inside Fire Fighting—Just Disciplinarian.

In a statement given out last night, Adj Gen Charles H. Cole, who was Fire Commissioner of this city at the time Chief Mullen retired from the department, and who also resigned his office soon after, said: "I am very, very sorry to hear of the death of Chief Mullen. He was a great chief and no one in this country was his equal for inside fire fighting.

"At a fire it was an inspiration in leadership to watch him. He was a bundle of electric energy. But he was more than a fireman. He was a great but just disciplinarian, an able administrator with a natural ability. He was a public servant of the highest integrity and he commanded the esteem and admiration of all who knew him.

"He was a true and loyal citizen, a splendid husband and rather and the city of Boston can never pay the debt it owes John Mullen, not only for his leadership of the Fire Department, but for the example his life set to this and future generations."