

BOX 52 ASSOCIATION



THE LINE BOX

Vol. 14 No. 3

STOP THE PRESSES!!!!

Line Box Extra Revere 5 Bagga Saturday Feb 17th Sozio's Appliance Store



Photo courtesy of Member Kevin White



Photo courtesy of Stan Foreman

The April Line Box will feature more photos and stories from this fire!

Welcome to our third issue of the 2017-2018 Line Box. We hope that everyone had a good holiday season and that 2018 will be good to all of us!

The staff would like to thank everyone who took the time to either e-mail, or reach out to us on how much they enjoyed the December issue. It was the largest newsletter the Association has produced in many years. This issue will be a tad smaller, but still jammed packed with some great content.

COLD SNAP FIRE DUTY

According to the National Weather Service Office in Tauton the cold snap that saw an upkick in fire duty, not only in the Metro-District, but up and down the East Coast started on Tuesday December 26th, 2017 and lasted fourteen days and ended on Friday January 8th. Metro-Fire recorded 13 multiple alarm fires and numerous Working Fires and to make matters worse, on Jan. 4th a Nor'easter blasted up the coast and caused flooding in Boston, Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop. Here is a list of the jobs courtesy of Members Joe Hourihan, Michael Worley, Keith Flaherty. Special thanks to Somerville Dist. Chief Frank Lee and Brockton FAO Robert Myers for their help.

Date	City	Alarm /Box	Address
12/26	Quincy	2-3151	34 North Paine St.
12/26	Boston	2-	1531-1535 Hyde Park Ave
12/28	Waltham	10-75-	468 Lincoln St
12/28	Haverhill	2 nd	Deer park Road
12/30	Brookline	2-1734	55 Village Way
12/30	Leominster	2 nd	125 5 th Street
12/30	Brockton	4-4531	1 Brockton Ave
12/31	Brookline	2-	134 Babcock Street
12/31	Stoughton	2 nd	52 Pine St
12/31	Fall River	3 rd	1575 Rodman
12/31	Brockton	2 nd	12 Johnston Court
12/31	Franklin	3 rd	76 Jordon Road
01/01	Dedham	10-75-473	140 Sanderson St
01/01	Waltham	2-541	145 Willow St
01/01	Holliston	2 nd	48 North Mill St
01/01	Littleton	2 nd	315 King St
01/01	Nahant	3-	238 Wilson Rd
01/02	Cambridge	10-75-435	64 Putnam St
01/02	Lexington	10-75-4623	727 Marrett Rd.
01/02	Winchester	10-75-45	5 Sheridan Circle
01/02	Milton	2-5321	1071 Blue Hill Ave.
01/02	Framingham	2 nd	10 Greenview
01/03	Cambridge	10-75-535	11 Garden St.
01/03	Somerville	10-75-371	26 Richardson
01/05	Lynn	2-325	170-172 Essex St
01/05	Rockland	2 nd	333 Union St
01/06	Boston	2-1772	12 Drayton Ave
01/06	Boston	5-3415	7 Allston St.
01/06	Somerville	10-75-726	West Quincy St
01/07	Waltham	2-5423	36 River St.
01/08	Waltham	2-2951	333 Wyman St
01/08	Everett	2-271	42 Hillside Ave
01/08	Lynn	4-423	26 Broad Street
01/08	Gloucester	2 nd	12 Rockport Rd.



Brookline 134 Babcock St. 2nd alarm. Photo by Member Doug Boudrow



Lynn 4-434 26 Broad St. Photo by Member Peter Aloisi

Brockton, MA 4th Alarm – 1 Brockton Ave, December 30th, 2017

Story by Robert Myers Brockton F.A.O

The Brockton Fire Alarm Office received a central station alarm from American Alarm for 1 Brockton Ave. at 15:14 hours on Saturday, December 30th reporting a general alarm for New Heights Construction. The building is a 100 x 100 commercial 1 and 1 ½ story wood frame interconnected buildings.

Fire Alarm transmitted Box 4531 with Squad A, Engine 7, Ladder 1 and Car 56 (the Platoon Deputy Chief) with Capt. Jeff Marchetti in Command. While crews were enroute a 2nd call was received from the alarm company reporting a fire. Engine 2 was dispatched and Fire Alarm notified Car 56 of a second source and they were filling out the Box.

Squad A under command of Lt. Jack McDonald arrived to fire showing on the “A” side of the building and they are stretching a 2 ½ line. Car 56 arrived a minute later and reported a working fire at 15:20 hours. Engine 4 which normally would be 1st due on the box cleared an accident and responded as RIT along with Ladder 2.

A 2nd Alarm was transmitted at 15:25 hours, with Engine 5 and Car 55 (Chief of Department, Michael Williams) responding. Car 56 reported heavy fire and smoke throughout the entire building. At this time the order to evacuate the building was given.

Car 55 arrived and assumed Command and transmitted the 3rd alarm at 15:45 hours. Engine 3, Holbrook Engine 1 and Ladder 4 responded. Car 55 reported heavy fire conditions thru the roof with several 2 ½ inch handlines and 2 ladder pipes in operation.

As things started to slow down in Fire Alarm, Chief Williams transmitted a 4th Alarm at 16:20 hours. Stoughton Engine and Whitman Engine were dispatched from their cover assignments. Car 55 reported they still had heavy fire conditions throughout with 3 ladder pipes and numerous deck guns and handlines operating. A special call was made by Car 55 for an additional Ladder Company and Abington Tower 1 responded at 16:25. As the fire continued to burn a special called by Car 55 for 2 additional engine was made and were ordered to go to the south side of the building on Coolidge Ave to protect exposures. Easton and West Bridgewater engines were dispatched at 16:33.

Chief Williams reported at 18:21 hours the fire was under control and will be releasing Mutual Aid Companies shortly.

Time	Box	Engines	Ladders	Other	Comments
1514	4531	7	1	Squad A Car 56	
1515	4531	2,			Assignment filled out 2 nd source
1522	WF 4531	4 (RIT)	2		
1525	2-4531	5			
1545	3-4531	3, Holbrook	4		
1620	4-4531	Stoughton, Whitman			
1625	Sp. C 1		Abington		Special Call 1 extra ladder
1633	Sp. C 2	Easton West Bridgewater			Special Call 2 extra engines

Cover Assignments – Avon Engine Station 1, Bridgewater Engine Station 2, Randolph Engine Station 3, Whitman Ladder Station 1.



Photo courtesy of WHDH

Box Alarm running cards for the city go up to a 5th alarm

1st Alarm – 2 engines, 1 Ladder, fire is reported a 3rd Engine is dispatched

Working fire - 1st due Engine on 2nd alarm as RIT and 1 Ladder (also the Ladder due on the 2nd alarm

2nd Alarm – 2 Engines, 1 Ladder (if not assigned on the WF)

3rd Alarm - 1 Brockton Engine, 1 Mutual aid Engine and 1 Brockton Ladder

4th Alarm – 2 Mutual Aid Engines.

5th Alarm – 2 Mutual Aid Engines and 1 Mutual Aide Ladder, 1 call back Deputy Chief

6th Alarm - 2 Mutual Aid Engines

7th Alarm – 2 Mutual Aid Engines, 1 Mutual Aide Ladder

8th Alarm – 2 Mutual Aid Engines

9th Alarm – 2 Mutual Aid Engines 1 Mutual Aide Ladder

10th Alarm – 2 Mutual Aid Engines

Nahant 3rd Alarm on a Bitterly Cold New Year's Day By Member and NFD Chief Michael Feinburg

On January 1, 2018 at 1300 the Nahant Fire Department responded to call 18-0001 for a report of smoke coming from the roof a house. The first arriving apparatus called off with smoke showing and struck a second alarm. The structure appeared to be a 1 ½ story balloon frame wood construction single family home. The importance of performing a 360 degree assessment of the fire building found that the structure extended below grade by three additional levels and was built into the side of a cliff. The ambient temperature was 5 degrees and there was a 20 mph wind coming off the ocean.

A third alarm was struck and the fire was knocked down. The fire is under investigation by the Office of the State Fire Marshall. The preliminary findings from that office released to the press was that the fire was caused by attempting to thaw frozen pipes with a propane torch.

Time	Box	Engines	Ladder	Other	Comment
1300	321	31, 32	31	A-34, C-31	
1306	W.F	21		C-21	B.O. L-31
1308	2-321	Lynn E5, E7	L-1	Lynn C4. C2, C1. Rehab 5 Atlantic Amb	B.O. L-31
	Cover	Salem E5, Revere E5	Lynnfield Twr 1		
1326	3-321	Salem E5, Revere E5	Lynnfield Twr 1		B.O. C-31
	Cover	Saugus E3, Lynnfield E1	Bost. L21		
1328	Sp. C	Saugus E3			



Photo by Owen O'Rourke Lynn Item

**Fire on Skid-Row
The Hotel Roosevelt Fire Feb. 4, 1968
All photos collection of Member William Noonan**

Fifty years ago one of the worst hotel fires occurred in the South End. The fire that destroyed the century old five story Hotel Roosevelt at 1145 Washington Street killed nine persons and injured fourteen.

About 2245 hours night manager Vincent Cromwell tossed a bunch of dirty towels into the soiled linen closet on the second floor. The Roosevelt did a booming business offering rooms for \$ 2.00 per night. It was popular with "Working Girls" and catered to a transient population.

It was a typical Saturday Night in South End. Cops working out of District 4 were hoping on the Last Half. Their Brothers in red had been busy as well since coming on duty at 1800 hrs. By 0330 hours the entire City was quiet. Newspaper trucks roamed the streets dropping off the Sunday editions.

Inside the Roosevelt, Cromwell thought he smelled smoke and went to investigate and found the fire in the second floor linen closet, where some four hours before he had thrown the towels. He

attempted to put out the fire, but it had gained too much of a headway. Cromwell ran and called KENmore 6-1500 and yelled into the phone that there was a fire at the Roosevelt. He then sounded the local alarm system. The Hotel had been 'grandfathered' and did not need to meet the 1968 City fire code. It did not have any sprinklers. Each room however had access either to the fire escapes or fire balconies.

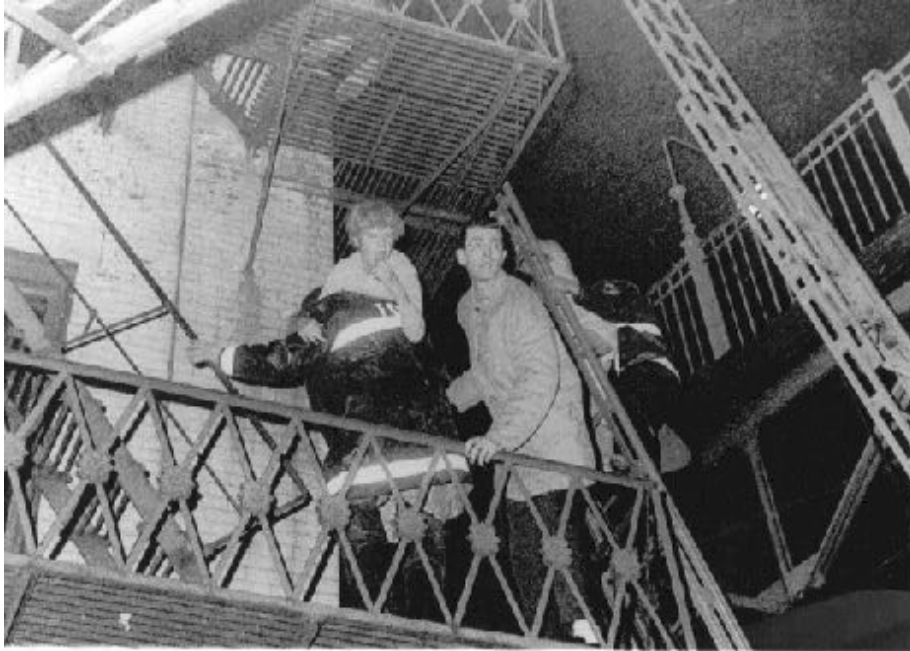
The members of both BFD and BPD Districts 4 knew the address by heart. Over the years the Hotel had been the scene of fires and crimes. The elevated segment of the Orange Line ran right in front of 1145 Wash.

At 0349 hours Fire Alarm struck box 1632 Washington & Laconia Streets. As Fire Alarm was announcing the box, Patrolmen Edward Ivanoski and his partner Ralph Reagan were cruising past the hotel and saw smoke and radioed in the fire. They were shocked to see heavy smoke and flames shooting from every window, but were stunned for a moment when they looked up and at the third floor a female with her clothes on fire was screaming "I'm going to die" over and over. The partners ran for the fire escape and pulled and forced the fire escape ladder to the ground. They could hear the wail of Ladder 17, but they couldn't wait. People on the fire escape were screaming for help and many were burning. They were able to make it to the second floor landing and both grabbed two victims and started down the fire escape. Ladder 17 came down Washington Street, the crew was shocked to see so much fire in the building! The fire was all ready through the roof. Lt Toomey ordered the Truck to jump the sidewalk and get between the Hotel and the elevated structure and get the stick up. Ladder 17 crew threw up ground ladders as fast as they could. Ladder 13 was arriving and members were off the rig before it stopped. Several buffs who were on scene pitched in to help where they could. Engine 56, who was covering Engine 3 on Harrison Ave. was the first due engine and they ran a big line into the first floor in hopes of driving the fire back and opening a rescue path.

The fire now had full possession of the old hotel. Victims crowded the fire escapes begging and screaming for rescue. Some were so badly burned that they collapsed on the fire escapes. Still more were trapped inside the burning hotel. The screams of the victims were drowning out the sirens that were blaring as multiple alarm companies, police and ambulances all converged on the Roosevelt.



Victims awaiting rescue.



Three buffs rushed inside and made it to the third floor where six people were cut off from the fire escape by a wall of flames. These buffs, Robert Walsh, Paul and his brother Joseph Davies (*The Davies brother were well known buffs. Joe was appointed to the BFD in August of 1971 and Paul was appointed to the BPD shortly after the fire.-Editor*) were able to bring the six injured victims out of the hotel to waiting ambulances. The three were treated at the scene for smoke inhalation.

Firefighters working on the fire escape and ground ladders were dealing with heavy smoke, ice forming on the metal surfaces the injured and panicked occupants. As the companies were heavily involved in rescues and trying to knock the fire down. The crowd started yelling that a man was on fire on the fifth floor. Members of Ladder 17 had seen the victim and threw a 50 ft ground ladder and two members rushed up the ladder and carried the victim down to a waiting ambulance.





Companies slowly gained the upper hand and the fire was knocked down and overhauling and interior searches began. Crews were shocked to find so many of the victims still in bed. Several

of the victims were so badly burned that the Suffolk County Medical Examiner had a difficult time identifying six of the victims, or determining their sex.

The investigation started as soon as the fire was knocked down. No evidence of arson was found. The cause of the fire is listed as undetermined. The callout on box 1642 was sent at 1006 hours.

Box 1632 Washington & Laconia
Hotel Roosevelt 1145-1147 Washington Street

Time	Box	Engines	Ladders	Other	Comment
0349	1632	56 (3), 7, 22	17, 13	Dist 4	
0352	2-1632	26, 43, 2, 10	3, 15	C6, R1, LP-1, CP-4	B.O L-17
0354	3-1642	52, 25, 37, 1	8	C2	
0356	Sp. Call		20		Additional Ladder and ambulances
0358	4-1632	42, 40, 34, 39			
0402	5-1632	51, 32, 20, 11			
0444	Sp. Call		30, 23		2 additional Ladders

Interior views



One Hundred Years Ago
As reported in Fire and Water Engineering

Apparatus News and Other Events

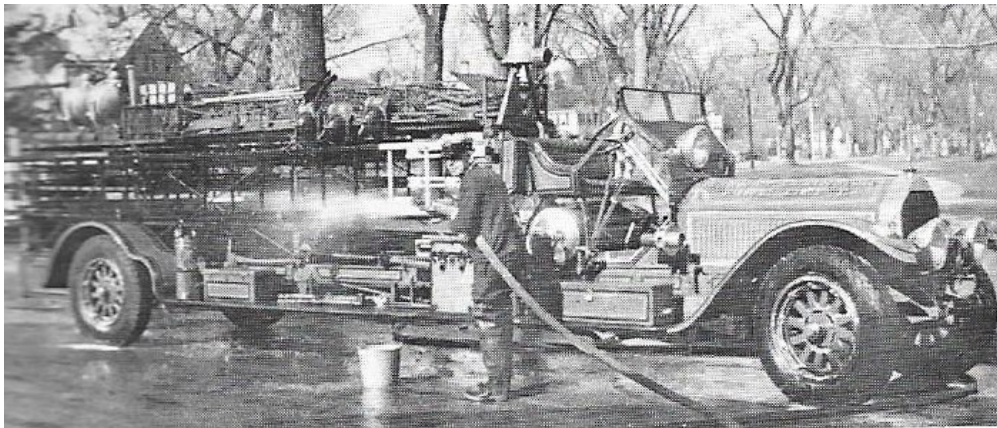
The Nahant Fire Department has purchased a Motor Triple Combination Pumper. Also in Nahant, the Massachusetts State Fireman's Association held a meeting with three days of programs from September 26th to September 28th.

Hudson Massachusetts purchased a motor combination hose and chemical car.

Nashua N.H. ordered three pieces of motor equipment including a motor pumping engine.

The towns of Framingham and Billerica in Massachusetts received new motor pumping apparatus. However, the Town of Billerica needs a station to put it in.

Lexington Mass. has received a new ALF Type #14 City Service Ladder Truck.



Lexington Ladder 1 1917 ALF. Collection Member Frank San Severino

The Three Rivers Fire District in Palmer Mass. received a Brockway chassis, motor combination wagon.

The City of Malden Mass. appropriated \$24,000 for motor fire apparatus including one Ahrens-Fox 750 GPM pumper, one Booster combination car and a Couple-Gear, Gas-Electric Drive, Double Bank Ladder truck with 373' to 501' of ladders.

Fire News

At Rockland Mass., a fire starting in the basement of a grammar school did \$6,000.00 dollars of damage. Four hundred pupils were successfully evacuated in 2 minutes.

At Stoughton Mass., the Panther Rubber Co. was destroyed by a large fire which did an estimated \$600,000.00 of damage. Mutual aid was requested from other towns to battle the blaze.

On Saturday, October 20th, Box #35, in the Town of Wellesley Mass., was transmitted at 2200 hours for a fire at the R.T. Sullivan Co. Mills in Wellesley Lower Falls. This company was making Khaki Cloth under government contract for the U.S. War Department. The fire building was a Mill Complex of 1 and 2 story, brick and wood construction. The complex covered roughly one acre of land. Responding on the box were Fire Chief John P. Doyle and his department, consisting of a GMC Motor Combination Wagon and a horse drawn Combination City Service Hook & Ladder

Truck with two 25 gal. chemical tanks. This location is a Line Box for the City of Newton. Newton sent a Knox Combination Wagon. Altogether, 27 firemen responded. The fire started on the second floor in the blowers of a dry room. The fire then extended, via the ventilation system, to the roof. Chief Doyle and the other responders stretched 2000' of 2 ½" hose from four hydrants. Hydrant spacing was about 200' apart and the pressure was 110 Psi. The estimated value of the building and contents was \$82,000.00 and the loss estimated at \$1000.00.

Although the United States had been manufacturing arms and supplies for the Allies since the beginning of The Great War, the U.S. officially became a belligerent in the Spring of 1917. The country now ramped up not only to supply the Allies but to build its own fighting machine and send it "Over There". All over the country, training camps were being built, the Army, Navy and Marines were being trained. Food and supplies, particularly arms and munitions were being shipped overseas.

At Camp Devens in Ayer, Shirley, Harvard and Lancaster Massachusetts, a serious, early October Fire, destroyed \$8,000.00 worth of soldier's personal effects. During the last week in the month a second serious fire damaged the Camp. An oil stove at the base hospital exploded around 0215 one morning and burned for 40 minutes. The Receiving Ward Building was destroyed. The building and contents, valued at \$5000.00, were a total loss but 250 patients were successfully removed. The Camp Devens Fire Department, later to be designated the 301st Fire Truck & Hose Company, put six good streams to work on the fire and protecting exposures. Brands from the structure fire started many spot fires. A serious forest fire was averted by the regular, line, "Doughboys", who made quick work of extinguishment.

New England industry was an arsenal of democracy. It is the birthplace of American arms making. The Port of Boston was an outlet for these goods to the desperate allies in Europe. All along the waterfront, the railyards, piers and wharves were overloaded with beans, blankets, bullets and Brownings shipping out.

On October 26th, Box 1241 for Constitution Wharf was received at the Boston Fire Alarm Office on Bristol St. At 2103 hours, Fire Alarm transmitted the box sending 4 engines (including a fireboat), 2 trucks, a chemical company, a district and a deputy fire chief.

Constitution Wharf was owned by the Quincy Cold Storage Company. The pier was topped by a one story wooden shed with metal cladding and doors. The pier shed covered an area of 81,000 square feet. Adjacent, on Battery Wharf, was a similar pier shed, containing a large amount of military goods and supplies for the War Department, as an exposure.

District Fire Chief Edward J. Shallow, upon arriving, found a serious fire in progress and ordered all first alarm engine companies to run 2 big lines each. He sent his aide to transmit a second alarm, received in the F.A.O. at 2106 hours. Engine #31 moved into the North Basin, operating Deck Guns, using 1 ½ "to 2 ½ " Tips, to set up a water curtain. Senior Deputy Fire Chief J.O. Taber had a third alarm transmitted at 2106 ½ hours. This sent an additional 8 land Engines, 2 H&L Trucks, 2 Water Towers and Fireboat Engines #44 & #47.

Responding companies found a pressure of 56 PSI on the hydrants, not great, but adequate. Engine Companies #44 and #47 moved into the South Basin, throwing water at the fire.

Arriving after the 3rd alarm had been struck, Chief of Department McDonough transmitted a 4th Alarm at 2121 hours. Three more Engines, one more Truck Company and four Fuel Wagons were sent to the fire. Deputy Fire Chief J. Mulligan and 5 District Fire Chiefs also attended the fire.

From the water side, Fireboats, hit the fire with streams from Deck, Stack and Pilothouse Guns. Land companies assisted by crews from Engine #44 & #47 moved in to cut off and confine the fire to the Southwest corner of the shed. Many 2 ½ " handlines were stretched and operated. As companies advanced they found the roll down metal clad doors were blocked open by the stored materials. During the fire attack, 2 Chiefs and 8 men from Engine Co.'s #7 and #39 became trapped when several bales of hemp collapsed. Some were seriously injured and had to be removed to the Haymarket Relief Station by ambulance for treatment. The operating units stopped the fire from entering exposures. The property was valued at \$2,000,000.00. Loss listed as \$100,000.00 and the to impact on the war effort. The cause of the fire was believed to be a

short circuit in the electric service going into the building. The Boston Fire Department used 5,000 ft of 2 ½ inch, 4,000' of 3 inch and 1000' of 3 ½ inch hose.

"THE COAL WHARF FIRE"
Lynn Gas & Electric Company
Thursday Feb. 10th , 1938
By John R. Pozark
Photos collection of Member Rick Conway

In 1938 Lynn was a city in its own right. An estimated 104,500 people lived in its 11 square miles. Industrial establishments numbered 459 employing 29,000 people. An important manufacturing center, Lynn had been a center for the shoe industry for many years. This was not limited to the assembly of shoes themselves. Everything necessary for shoes was made here. There were leather tanneries and wood heel manufacturers. Machine shops made and maintained the equipment for cutting and stitching. Chemical companies using flammable and hazardous materials made celluloid for heels and stains and polishes for shoes. Other manufacturers made wood and paper boxes.

In the last few years the city had diversified. On Broad Street, the Champion Lamp Co. was making incandescent lamps and vacuum tubes for radios. The General Electric Co. had built two large plants and employed 12,000 persons to manufacture electrical instruments and machinery. In all there were 297 different types of products made in Lynn.

The city was also a center for commerce. There were twelve banks, nine movie theaters, and two newspapers in business. The retail district served over 300,000 of the north shore's population. The educational and spiritual needs of the community were met by over 40 public and private schools and 62 churches. In 1938 Lynn was a city of business and industry.

The raw materials to produce were brought in both by the railroads and by ship. The Boston & Maine Railroad had a freight yard along the east side of Bennett Street from Orchard to Oakville Streets. Along Broad Street were wharves and wooden pier sheds loaded with lumber and coal.

The Lynn Gas & Electric Company

In 1938 the power to drive this city came from the Lynn Gas & Electric Company. The L.G. & E., whose motto was "At Your Service", produced most of the electricity and gas for use in Lynn. The company maintained its own distribution systems. The L.G. & E. also sold and maintained gas and electrical appliances. The business of the company was conducted in an office building downtown. The production of power was at the company's plant located on the water, opposite the end of Shepard Street near Broad Street.

The L.G. & E. property covered several acres. Along the north side were a series of one to one and a half story buildings of wood frame, ordinary and fire proof construction. These were used as garages for storage and maintenance of the autos and trucks of the service fleet. Also here was a one and a half story carpentry shop and a one story lumber shed. Both were of wood frame construction. Nearly all of these buildings were sprinklered.

On the west side of the plant were the gas tanks or "Gasometers". These were made of iron and stood from 110' to 211' high. Their capacity was 2,000,000 cubic feet for the two smaller ones and 5,000,000 cubic feet for the large tank. Also here were a couple of governor houses and a valve house.

Near the center of the property was a two story, ordinary construction, store house for gas stoves and other appliances. An office building was near the store house.

The company had spent the last dozen years upgrading it's facilities. The powerhouse located on the east side of the plant opposite a small slip, was built about 1928 and expanded in 1936. It

was 1-7 stories high and about 200' x 125', of brick construction. It contained rooms for boilers, turbines and electrical equipment. Attached to the powerhouse was a two story brick office building and a dynamo and turbine engine building about 200' x 200', one story, of brick construction. Electricity was produced by burning coal to generate steam.

In the south east corner of the plant was the gashouse and the purifying and compressor plants. Instead of natural gas the L.G. & E. manufactured gas from coal. This was done by alternately heating it with steam and blowing air through it. The gas that was produced (principally carbon monoxide) was piped to another building where it was "cracked" or heated and passed through a mist of oil to increase its fuel value. Then it was piped to another building where impurities like ammonia and hydrogen sulfide were removed. Next it was compressed and sent to one of the gas holders for storage. This product was called coal or illuminating gas.

The key commodity here was coal. Along the north east corner of the property was a coal pocket. Here was stored an average of 20,000 tons of coal for electricity and gas production. The coal was delivered by ship. A wharf built in 1926 supported two large crane elevators which would unload the ships and transfer the coal to piles. The wharf was made of 3" plank deck set on oak pilings. It was 650' long and 40' wide with tracks for the two elevators and an open rubber conveyor for moving the coal. This carried the coal to a series of enclosed conveyors which distributed it to silos for use in the gas and power houses. Wood or concrete floors with steel frame enclosures and towers supported the rubber belt conveyors. Housekeeping was reported to be good but there was an unavoidable accumulation of coal dust everywhere.

Plant fire protection consisted of a private water system of 10" and 6" mains fed from the public supply and supplemented by a gravity tank. Static pressure was 70 PSI and the supply was considered good. There were several yard hydrants including three along the wharf with hose houses using 2 1/2" hose. Other protection consisted of mounted 2 1/2" hose reels in buildings and wheeled and portable Foamite and soda & acid extinguishers. Some buildings had fire pails. There was an organized fire brigade and many buildings had automatic sprinklers.

The Fire Department

To protect the city from its high fire risk, the fire department had thirteen firehouses. Each one with a single piece engine company. Pumpers were mostly Ahrens-Fox piston, or Buffalo rotary type pumps. Two American LaFrance rotary type pumps were also in first line service. Pump capacities were 750 or 1000 GPM. All pumpers had chemical or booster tanks of 35 to 100 gal. with 200' or 250' of 3/4" chemical hose. All pumps carried 1000' to 1200' of 2 1/2" hose and two soft suctions. Four of the fire houses had ladder companies. All truck companies were equipped with wooden aerial ladders of 75' or 85' reach. Two were from Ahrens-Fox, one from the Kress Co. and the newest, an American LaFrance. Three of these trucks used compressed air hoists while the newest used a spring assist hoist to raise the stick. Between 275' and 425' of ground ladders were carried. Included in this complement were extension ladders of 35' to 50' reach, roof and Pompier ladders. Forcible entry and ventilation tools consisted of axes supplemented by Detroit Door Openers, Buster Bars and Callahan Jimmies. Battering rams were also carried by the truck companies. Salvage equipment consisted of brooms, shovels and replacement sprinkler heads. A limited number of American LaFrance and Burrell filter type gas masks were available. Apparently one mask was assigned to each company.

Also in service was a single chemical company operating a 1930 Maxim with two 60gal. tanks and two reels of 3/4" chemical hose.

In reserve were three hose wagons. These were 1913 Federal chassis' with 400' to 1000' of hose, a mounted turret pipe and minor equipment. Also in reserve were two chemical wagons, an unloaded hose wagon (which would be used as spares or utility trucks) and an old 85' aerial ladder truck. The chiefs were all using Packard automobiles. The chief of dept. and deputy had sedans. The district chiefs had coupes.

Initial fire attack was to stretch a 2 1/2" line with a 3/4" to 1 1/4" solid stream nozzle directly off a gated hydrant. A chemical line was simultaneously stretched and would be used first. If the small line was insufficient the big line would be used with hydrant pressure. Many fires were fought exclusively with hydrant lines. If long stretches or master streams were required, lines were connected to the pumps and higher pressures used. Both sides of the hydrant were gated when it was dressed. A soft suction would be connected to the unused side and then the hydrant line would be connected to the pump discharge. This minimized the time the crew had no water. After the fire was knocked down 3/4" chemical hose would be attached to the reducing tip on the 2 1/2" for overhaul.



Photo by Ray Pitts, courtesy of Firenews.org

This procedure seems strange to people today. It should be remembered that the country was still suffering the effects of the depression. Money for repairs was not always easy to come by. Anything that minimized the wear and tear on the apparatus was welcome. Another advantage was the hydrant provided an unlimited supply of water. A thing to consider when chemical and booster tanks were so small.

Ventilation and forcible entry was principally by the "Armstrong" method. When Ladder 3 was purchased there was enough money to properly equip it. It was delivered with many extra tools. These included: an electric drill and circular saw; hydraulic and elevator jacks; a fresh air hose mask and a portable deck gun. These were the only power tools in the department at the time. This equipment was later used by Rescue Co. No.1 when it was organized in 1939.

Salvage work consisted of removing standing water and debris with brooms and shovels. For removal of large amounts of water the department used siphons. These were venturi devices which were attached to hose and used hydrant pressure. One or two firemen would respond with a spare wagon and operate them as a detail. Sprinkler systems would be restored if possible. No stock covers were thrown by the fire dept. This was done by one of the two private protective companies in business at that time.

Emergency ambulance work was performed principally by the police. Records show they were using two patrol wagons and had one ambulance. The fire dept. carried inhalators on Ladders 3 and 4 and Engine 12. Ladder 4 was chosen because it's still district had the ponds, Engine Company 12 's still district included the beach.

At this time the department operated on the two platoon system. Engine companies in the high value districts ran with an officer and five men. Other engines had an officer and four men. All truck companies ran an officer and five. The chemical company carried an officer and two.

Response to fires was somewhat different back in 1938. Boxes in the congested districts received 3 to 4 Engines, 2 or 3 Ladders and the Chemical Co. Outside the congested districts the response was 3 Engines and 1-2 Ladders. Scattered residential districts were assigned only 2 Engines and 1 Ladder on the box. All on duty district chiefs respond to the first alarm. On multiple alarms 2-3 Engine's and 1 Ladder responded. Running cards had assignments for three alarms and covering. All companies would respond on the general alarm. Telephone, still and automatic alarms would receive one engine or the chemical co. and a district chief. At night a ladder company would also respond.

When a second alarm was struck all off duty firemen reported for duty. These men would report to the fire if their company was assigned or to the station and stand by. Also on the second alarm the reserve hose wagons would respond. If a company with a wagon was assigned on the second alarm they took it with them. If a company assigned a hose wagon went on the box, off duty men reporting to the station brought it. When extra help was needed it was common to pull a box adjacent to the fire instead of striking a second alarm. This brought more companies without bringing all the off duty people back.

The Night Before

At 6:00 PM on Wednesday, February 9, 1938 the second platoon stood roll call and relieved the first platoon. The night started slowly. At 6:18 PM a still alarm was received for a chimney fire at 195-197 Summer St. Engine 1 and Ladder 2 responded. One chemical tank and a 10' ladder were used in extinguishing the fire. The companies returned to quarters about a half an hour later.

During the day the electric refrigerator in the cellar of the Stop & Shop Supermarket at 227 Summer Street had been giving trouble. Sometime before half past ten o'clock that night, a defective belt on the machine started a fire. The fire ignited the wooden platform supporting the refrigerator. As the fire grew the platform collapsed causing the electric ice box to fall and the piping to break. This released the sulfur dioxide refrigerant as the fire extended to the stock in the cellar.

Charles Tobin owner of the store across the street noticed smoke coming from the building. Running to the corner of Shepard and Summer Streets he pulled City Box 531. The time was 10:28 PM. In the fire alarm office on Baker Street, the fire alarm operator on night duty walked over to the box circuit register. He confirmed the box number by reading it once then threw a switch sending the next two rounds through the repeater and over the primary alarm circuits. At the Engine Houses on Commercial, Franklin, Broad and Federal Streets the doors swung open. As Engines 1, 6, and 4 Ladders 2 & 3 and Chemical 1, along and the duty chiefs roared out into the cold night.

In the police garage the fire gong struck the box and two police officers hopped in the patrol wagon and responded. At the same time in the police signal room, the man on duty read the register on the fire alarm circuit. He then activated the lights calling the closest beat patrolmen to their police call box. Once notified they also responded to the alarm of fire.

The fire building was brick, one story in height and about 100' deep. Arriving at the fire Engine 1 stretched 300' of 2 ½ " hose off a hydrant to attack the fire. Engine 4 wet another hydrant line and followed Engine 1's crew into the fire. Engine 6 arrived and stretched 300' of hose, dry, as a back up and assisted on the other lines. Pushing through the store was punishing. A quantity of lard stored in the cellar made a hot fire with thick smoke. Fumes from the refrigerator were mixed with the smoke. Across the back of the store was a heavy curtain which was used to screen the delivery area during business. This concentrated the toxins and hampered ventilation. Reaching the cellar stairway in the rear, two streams were played down into the cellar. Men began working in reliefs but the fumes began to take their toll. After a few minutes a delivery door was located in the rear of the store. As it was opened for ventilation, firemen staggered out and began to vomit. In an effort to improve conditions firemen opened up the roof. Fifteen men were injured by the

smoke and gasses including Chief of Department Welch. Lt. Hayden of Ladder 2 was overcome and taken to Lynn Hospital for treatment. Among those injured were: Walter Miller, John Miller and Benjamin Kelley all of Chemical 1; Capt. Walter Martin and Private Joseph Daigle of Engine 6; and Captains Joe Doherty of Engine 1 and Charles Carey of Engine 4 along with District Chiefs Edwin Mills, and James O'Neil Jr. After a break Chief Welch and the district chiefs went back into the cellar with their men. Relieving members used the limited number of gas masks available for protection from the smoke and fumes.

During the fire, for some reason, Lynn Patrolman John O'Brien entered the building and was nearly overcome. He was assisted out by a brother police officer, Patrolman John Kennedy.

After a time the fire was knocked down. Fire loss was estimated at around \$1000. The recall was sounded at 12:57 AM on February 10th. Fireman Booth of Engine Co. 6 was detailed on fire watch. Lt. Hayden was released from the hospital and sent to bed at the Federal St. Engine House. He was ordered to not respond to any more alarms for the night. The apparatus was cleaned and put back in service. With aching lungs and sore eyes the tired firemen of West Lynn crawled into bed for a well-earned rest.

The Day of the Fire

At 8:00 AM on February the 10th the First Platoon relieved the night shift. The members of the Second Platoon left looking forward to ten hours off before returning for their night duty.

The morning was slow. Dist. Chief Haddock, the department drillmaster, dropped by the Federal St. Firehouse. He dropped off a new canister for Ladder 2's gas mask used at the fire the night before. At Engine 6 on Franklin St. Fireman Adrien left quarters at 11:10 AM. Four times every school day firemen acted as school crossing guards. Today it was Fireman Adrien's turn.

Down at the Lynn Gas & Electric Company a man was on one of the cranes moving coal. About 11:15 AM. from his perch 80' up he noticed smoke coming from under the wharf deck about 20' from the north end. After climbing down he notified the yard foreman Mister A. H. Waitt. Mr. Waitt sent the crane operator to transmit the alarm while he activated the plant fire brigade. A hoseline was run from a hose house at the wharf and a stream started to play onto the fire. The crane operator ran to the fire alarm box located between an office building and the appliance storehouse and pulled City Box 513.

At the Franklin St. Engine house the man on house watch logged Fireman Adrien back from crossing guard duty at 11:20 AM. Next door in the Fire Alarm Office the operator on day duty received and transmitted the box at 11:21. Responding were Engines 4, 1, Ladders 3, 2, Chemical 1 and the two District Chiefs along with Deputy Chief Joseph Scanlon Sr.

Companies arriving on the box found the L.G. & E. Fire Brigade operating one line on the fire. The fire was spreading so Lynn companies stretched two handlines, one to either side of the fire. A second alarm was ordered at 11:29 AM. and the two coal elevators were moved to the south end of the pier.

Responding to the second alarm were Engine's 6-3 and Ladder 1. On board Ladder Company 1 was Fireman Luther Campbell, a future District Chief. Also responding were additional police, a line crew from the Electrical Dept. and City Electrician Thomas Carritte. As the second alarm tapped in on the fire alarm registers in the city's newspaper offices, reporters and photographers rushed out to cover the story. The second alarm striking on the tower bells at two fire stations, two churches and the steam whistle at the gas plant called back all off duty firemen and fire alarm operators. Members responding on the call back included the tired and sore men who had fought the fire the night before.



Units arriving on the second alarm began the long stretches into the fire area. Engine #3 stretched 500' of hose for an engine line to attack the fire. It was decided to attempt an attack under the pier. Roof ladders were brought in and placed on the side of the deck. Members strapped on Pompier belts and with lifelines tied into the hooks took lines down the ladders and attempted to hit the fire. The temperature was about 5 degrees F. above zero. The wind was blowing out of the northwest at a steady 27 M.P.H. gusting to 40 M.P.H. The wind was blowing directly along the underside of the pier and driving the fire and smoke directly at the firefighters.

Long hose lays made relay pumping necessary so two additional engine companies, Engines 5-7, were special called at 11: 51 AM. The fire continued to spread and it was clear additional help was needed. Chief of Dept. Welch sent City Electrician Tom Carritte to transmit the General Alarm. The General Alarm was received and transmitted at 11:59 AM. Responding were Engines 9-8-2-10-11-12-13 and Ladder 4. The ten blows would not sound on the gas house whistle however, the fire had shorted it out.

Fireman F. Morrison was working his long day and on house watch at the Swampscott Central Station. He had logged the box and second alarm that had been received over the mutual aid circuit from Lynn. Swampscott responded automatically on all general alarms in Lynn. When the ten blows were received he transmitted Swampscott Box 721 which called back all off duty permanent men and the callmen. Swampscott Engine 1 started for Lynn with at least four men and an officer. A constant move up system was used for mutual aid at that time. When the Swampscott Engine started for Lynn, a Marblehead Engine started for Swampscott to cover on Town Box #721.

Meanwhile back at the fire it was felt not even the general alarm would bring enough help. Shortly after 12:00 PM. Additional special calls were made for: 2 Engines & 1 Truck from Revere; 1 Engine each from Saugus and Everett. Also, for the first time since the great fire of 1889, a call was made to Boston for use of a fireboat. At this time it was standard operating procedure at fires to communicate with the F.A.O. by the telephone in the fire box. City Electrician Carritte was kept busy running between Chief Welch and the box relaying orders. It was later joked that Chief Welch would have to make Carritte a deputy chief after all he had done.

Upon arrival at the fire Engine 5 stretched 700' of hose to relay to Engine 3 for pressure and volume. Engine 10 ran an engine line off Engine 3 to the fire. Additional handlines were stretched to attack the fire. The streams from the ladders on the side of the wharf were not hitting the fire so

these men were withdrawn. Tactics were changed and companies began to open up the decking with axes so cellar pipes could be operated. This was a slow process due to the thickness of the planks. Each time a hole was made the fire had already passed by.



Located next to the pier was a float or raft made of a platform on some old casks. On the platform was an old rowboat. These were used by the L.G. & E. to carry 300Lb cement blocks out to anchor buoys in the company's private channel. It was decided to attempt to hit the underside of the pier from here. District Chief O'Neil, his lungs probably still hurting from the cellar fire the night before, led a crew which took two handlines onto the raft.

Up above attempts were still underway to make holes in the deck. Years later Luther Campbell would recall this wood as the toughest he had ever faced. "I chopped and chopped and chopped and I never did get through it" he said. Engines 3, 5 and 10 had changed over to cellar pipes ready to play water as soon as access was gained.

The smoke from the burning coal and creosoted wood was making things tough. The wind drove the heat and smoke laden with hydrogen sulfide, ammonia and high concentrations of carbon monoxide right at the firemen. The fire began to take its toll. Fireman Corbett of Engine Co. 9 was overcome. Removed by brother firemen he was administered Carbogen using an H&H Inhalator and revived. Lt. Walter Evans of Engine 3 was also overcome.

On the raft Chief O'Neil and his crew were taking a beating. It was decided to relieve them. Capt. Day of Chemical 1 led the relief crew down. The crew consisted of the Captain and Firemen Burke Ladder 1, McIntyre Ladder 2, Maguire, Montibello and Adrien all of Engine 6. This crew took over the two lines and started hitting the fire. The smoke and heat were terrific and the new crew was battered right away. Atop the pier efforts to expose the fire continued.



Shortly before 1:00 PM. something happened. Suddenly the fire intensified and began to roll over the heads of the men on the raft. They were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. "It was a question of burning to death or getting into the water" Capt. Day said in an interview from his hospital bed the next day. Quickly the men pushed the small boat into the water, got in it and began to row away. As they moved away from the float the boat began to take on water. The firemen began bailing with their helmets but couldn't keep ahead of the water pouring in. The boat sank. In the swirling smoke the men began to swim in the cold February water. Fireman McIntyre spotted an overturned boat and called to the others to follow him. All of the men reached the boat but just barely. Fireman Maguire was barely conscious and was draped over the keel to keep him above water. Capt. Day, the farthest away, swam about 25 feet and grabbed onto the bow. Here he found fireman Burke clinging on. At the stern were Montibello and McIntyre. All were hanging on for dear life and didn't know where they were going. The heavy fire gear and ice cold water began to drag them down.

On the wharf the desperate situation did not go unnoticed. All the firemen turned to rescue their brothers. At first lifelines were tossed by hand from the pier deck while others went for the Lifegun. Deputy Chief Scanlon took charge of the rescue operation. A call was sent for additional ambulances from Swampscott, Saugus, Revere and Nahant. A call was also sent to the U.S. Coast Guard Lifeboat Station at Nahant for a rescue boat.

On the wharf Fireman Luther Campbell stood ready to help however he could. The Lifegun arrived and a rope was flaked out. Lt. McBrien of Ladder 3 raised the stock of the Lifegun to his shoulder, took aim, and fired. But the wind was strong and the tide was going out. The bolt arced through the air and hit the water about 20 feet short. The men were out of range.

Word of impending tragedy spread. Up Broad Street at the Reed and Costolo Coal Co. wharf the steamer Hartwell was tied up. Hearing of the trapped men a surf boat was lowered away. Eight men put their backs into it as they bent to their oars and rowed for a rescue.

In the water off the coal wharf Capt. Day and his men were losing strength and hope. The thick black smoke obscured the rescue efforts. The only thing that kept them going was the sound of Deputy Scanlon's voice. Capt. Day, who didn't think he would live, said he was reassured by the sound of Scanlon's "bellowing voice".

One attempt to rescue the men was made by Lester Pike a member of the underground crew of the L.G. & E. Mr. Pike took a rope and tried to swim out with a log to where the raft was last seen.

But the cold and smoke drained his strength. Capt Day in a selfless act ordered Pike pulled back in before he was lost. Next a fireman from Eng. #10, Peter Perreault tried to swim out. The weather and exertion began to overcome him too. A civilian, Jacob Bluestein of 66 Vine Street jumped into the water to help Perreault. He too had to be pulled in. Bluestein was taken to the hospital and Perreault was treated at the scene for immersion and exhaustion.

When the general alarm was struck, a high school student and young "spark" by the name of Joe Chatterton was running an errand for his mother. Hearing the ten blows he ran to the Federal Street Station to find out where the fire was, and then to the fire. Arriving at the fire Deputy Chief Scanlon spotted him. Scanlon knew Chatterton was a good swimmer. He asked Joe if he could take a rope out to the trapped men. He said he would try. A rope was tied around him and he entered the icy water. Joe was able to make it to the raft but when he got there he discovered the rope had slipped off. Now he too was stranded.

The men had been in the water about fifteen minutes. Hypothermia was setting in and the swirling smoke banking down onto the water made it difficult to breathe. According to a report in the Boston Globe, Deputy Scanlon turned to the crowd and asked anyone not involved in rescue to kneel down and pray for the men clinging to the overturned boat. In a desperate attempt at rescue, Arthur McDonald, Superintendent of the Jackson Fire & Police Protection Co. dived into the water. On the sand near the wharf Deputy Scanlon turned to Fireman Luther Campbell and asked him if he could swim. He said yes. Scanlon asked him if he could make it and he said he would try. A large utility pole was in the water nearby. He was directed to use that for support and try to make it out to the men. A rope was tied around him and he was about to enter the water when he looked up and saw the most beautiful sight he would ever see.

Out of the smoke came a Coast Guard Lifeboat under the command of Boatswains Mate Clarence Bryant. Also on board were Coast Guardsmen George Morrison, Arthur Ericson, Arthur Lowe, E.C. Elwain and Earl Burse. The lifeboat was finally able to reach the men clinging on for dear life. Now a new difficulty arose. The weather, toxic smoke and the exertion of rowing from Nahant was affecting the Coast Guardsmen. They were unable to pull the firemen into the boat. The best they could do was to hang on to the nearly spent firemen and drag them through the water to shore. The surf boat from the steamer Hartwell reached the scene just as the Coast Guard reached the stranded firemen. The surfboat and Supt. McDonald returned seeing that rescue was at hand.

As the lifeboat neared shore speed was essential. The fire had extended to the south end of the pier and was beginning to char the coal elevators. Ground ladders were lowered into the slip at the foot of the wharf. The tide having gone out, there was only about a foot of water in the slip. In the water here were several firemen including Luther Campbell waiting to carry the rescued men up to the waiting ambulances. The lifeboat brought the rescued men into the shallow water of the slip. It was a struggle to reach the top of the ladder. "It's not so bad carrying someone down a ladder" Campbell remembered, "but it's quite another to carry one up." "I had an unconscious man over my shoulder and another fireman was behind me" he said. Both Campbell and the man behind him managed to lift and pull the unconscious man to the top of the wharf.

On the wharf deck four Lynn Policemen from the ambulance waited for the injured to be brought to them. Standing there with blankets and stretchers were Sergeants Joe Gannon and Henry Wall with Patrolmen John Casey and Charles Henderson. These men had to run for their lives when the fire burst forth. The flames were licking at their heels.

The large number of injured had created a shortage of ambulances. Grocery delivery trucks from the J.B. Blood Co. would bring coffee and doughnuts to major fires. Now they would be commandeered for use as ambulances. These trucks had been converted from being horse drawn. They had open backs with nothing but a canvas cover for protection. When Joe Chatterton got to shore his legs were so frozen he could hardly walk. He wanted to go home but Deputy Scanlon insisted he go to the hospital. He got into one of the Blood Co. trucks with four

other men including Capt Day. As the truck driver took off, his one thought was for a speedy and life saving trip to the hospital. Concentrating on this he failed to slow down as they approached the railroad crossing. The truck hit the bump hard and all in the back were nearly thrown to the ground. Captain Day ordered the driver to take it easy before they were all killed. That would have been ironic, to have survived the chill waters, and then to be injured in a traffic accident on the way to the hospital. In the back of one of the trucks rode Father Michael J. Collins of Marblehead. He administered the last rites to Fireman Roger Maguire of Engine 6. By early afternoon twelve people had been admitted to Lynn Hospital from the fire.

At the scene Bosun's Mate Bryant who had been overcome was treated, and E.C. Elwain was transported to the Lynn Hospital where he spent the night and was released the next day. Other Coast Guardsmen received first aid treatment. Fireman Campbell and the others who had become soaked in the rescue attempts were returned to their stations for dry clothes.

During the rescue work the fire had spread. It extended from the wharf to the system of conveyors. The fire advanced to the south over the old slip where ships had formerly unloaded coal. Fire companies coming in on the multiple alarms had laid into this area. An electric cable line on the trestle hampered work until it could be turned off. Swampscott Eng. #1 had laid into here and stretched a supplemental feeder into Lynn Eng. #3. Saugus Eng. #1 was operating its deck gun over the slip onto the conveyor trying to cut off the spreading fire. Handlines were also being stretched to attack the fire in the overhead conveyor when, about 1:10 PM., a coal dust explosion occurred and the conveyor suddenly collapsed. The large structure fell within three feet of the Swampscott apparatus nearly crushing the company. A large timber which fell from the conveyor struck Swampscott Fireman William Durgin in the head. Durgin was knocked unconscious and taken to Lynn Hospital.



The reading on Lynn Engine 3's compound gauge had been running between 90 and 110 PSI. When the Swampscott Engine had to shutdown, 150' of hose was stretched to Engine 13. Engine 3's pressure remained steady at 75 PSI for the rest of the fire.

By 1:20 PM. Swampscott Engine 1 had relocated and handlines were used to knock down the fire in the wreckage of the conveyor. The collapse had actually benefited the firefighters. When the structure fell, it pulled away from the gashouse silo and prevented extension into the building.

At 1:25 PM. additional supply lines and pumper relays were still being set up. An Everett Engine Co. was hooked into a hydrant on Broad St. pumping into the relay. Both fireman and civilian

volunteers were making long stretches by hand. Engine 1 had 1100' of hose in two engine lines. One into Saugus Engine 1 and one into Lynn Engine 2.

By 1:30 PM. the south coal elevator was fully involved and the fire in the north elevator was rapidly spreading. On the west side of the fire flames were climbing up the conveyor towards the powerhouse. In the distance, hidden by smoke, the Boston fireboat was rounding the shoals heading into the harbor.

Atop the conveyor where it connected with the powerhouse was a crew from the L.G. & E. Fire Brigade. They had stretched a small handline off the standpipe. With a crew of Lynn Fireman, who had their own line, they attacked the fire advancing towards the powerhouse. The fire burning accumulated coal dust was hot. The two lines inside and two handlines playing on the outside from the ground were finally able to check the westward spread of the fire.

After the rescue of the men in the water all members had been pulled back from the wharf. Handlines had been run over and around the coal piles and were directed at the burning pier and coal elevators. These lines were not making much progress.

Shortly before 2:00PM. the south elevator collapsed with a crash that seemed to shake the world. Five minutes later Boston Engine Company 47 eased into position and started to operate.

Engine 47 was the Fireboat John P. Dowd. Built in 1909 she was a wooden hulled boat with a top speed of 12 MPH. Equipped with two Blake & Knowles pumps each rated at 3000 GPM she had five monitors. Two on the bow, one on the pilothouse, one on the stack and one aft. These used nozzle tips from 1 3/4" to 3" in size. There was a crew of nine men aboard. The fireboat also had rail pipes. These were nozzles that fit into sockets along the edge of the boat. They could be very effective on under pier fires.

When the fireboat opened up it was apparent victory was at hand. With all monitors operating the heavy fire was knocked down. The rail pipes were able to hit the under pier fire which had been so difficult. From this point on it would be a long tough job overhauling.

The world doesn't stop for firemen and neither do emergencies. To protect the city while all its own resources were committed mutual aid was used. Lynnfield Engine 1 had responded to Broad Street Engine house to cover. At 12:12 PM. Marblehead Engine 2 had backed in at Swampscott Central Station. At 1:30 PM. Nahant Engine 1 arrived at the Franklin Street Firehouse. This coverage was wise because at 1:54PM. a call was received for a fire at 98 Verona Street. Nahant Engine 1 responded and operated for half an hour returning at 2:36 PM.

By early evening outside companies were returning. Swampscott Engine 1 was back and the All-out was sounded on Town Box 721 at 5:56 PM. Nahant Engine 1 returned at 6:56 PM. The Second Platoon was released from the fire at 8:50 PM. to go to supper. At 8:55 PM. Lynn had Engine Companies 6-7-8-12 in service. Also in service was Ladder 4 running out from the Broad Street Station. At 10:45 the First Platoon was dismissed from duty at the fire. Many companies worked all through the cold night. Floodlights were set up and all chemical tanks were ordered to be discharged to prevent their freezing up.

At 10:05 PM. City Box 632 Western Av. corner of Summer St. was struck for 15 Murphy Av. A fire had started in a pile of rubbish in the cellar. A resident discovered the fire and attempted to extinguish it without success. Alerting the other residents he made his way through the smoke filled building to rescue his two children from the second floor. On the first floor a woman fought her way to her two children and removed them to safety. After making sure his children were safe the man from the second floor ran to City Box 632 and pulled the box. Arriving fire companies found the cellar a mass of flames. Handlines were advanced and the fire was knocked down. The heavy damage was confined to the cellar. Reports are incomplete but Engine 6 used one tank of chemical and stretched 450' of 2 1/2" hose dry. The recall was sounded at 10:42 PM.

During the early morning hours of February 11th many of the companies gradually came in service. The recall on City Box # 513 was sounded at 1:12 PM. on February 11th. Some firemen were held on extra duty to fill in for the injured. On February 12th a rekindle brought companies back to the scene. Engine 1 and Ladder 2 operated for more than two and a half hours wetting down hot spots.

The fire had been hard on men and machines. Fireman Montibello spent one day in the hospital. Captain Day and Firemen Adrien, Burke, and Maguire stayed two days. Fireman McIntyre spent five days in the hospital. Montibello and Maguire did not return to duty until February 21st. Adrien returned on the 27th. of February.

Many others were injured but did not require hospital stays. Dr. Worthen treated 12 men at the scene. George May of Eng. 1 injured his leg when he slipped in a hole that had been cut for the cellar pipes. He was sent home on injury leave. Chief of Dept. Welch suffered a sprained ankle. For a time he was thought dead when he fell through a hole in the deck and was overcome. He was treated for his ankle injury at the hospital and released. Fireman Carter of Engine 3 was injured and taken to the hospital. He was treated and released then sent home. Firemen Ballard and Corbett of Engine 9 were on leave the next day both with back injuries.

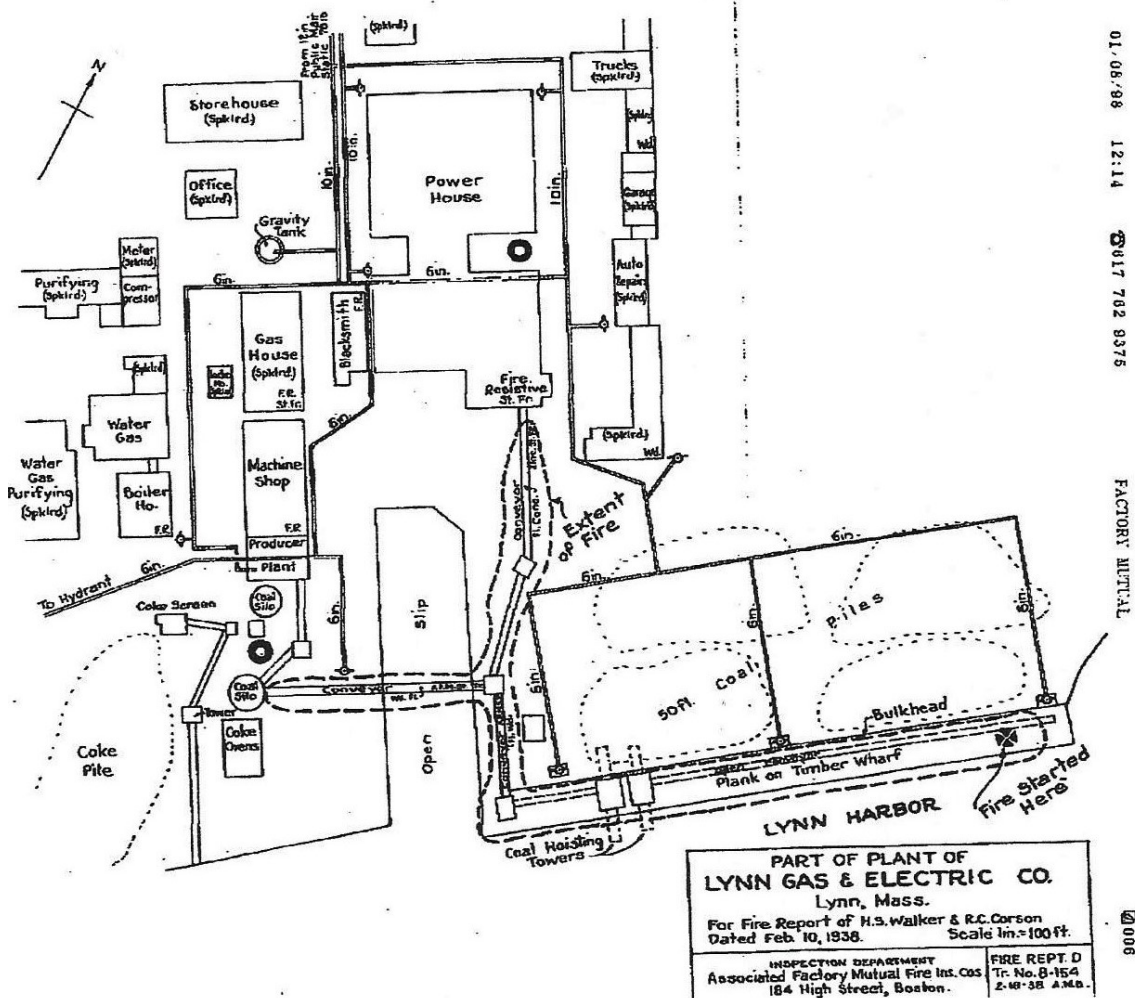
Approximately fifteen firemen were seriously injured, with many others receiving more minor injuries. Over 19,000 feet of hose was used in 24 lines including 15 handlines and 2 Eastman portable guns. It was estimated that more than two million gallons of water were used to fight the fire.

Fire loss was in excess of \$ 500,000. An investigation was conducted but conclusions were conflicting. The city felt that the fire was started by spontaneous combustion. There was a rumor that the workmen had been fighting the smoldering fire for days, although the coal temperature was supposed to be tested twice daily. The insurance investigators believed careless smoking to be the cause.

In an interview sixty years later Chief Campbell stated his belief that the sudden flare-up was caused by a section of the dock being opened for cellar pipes or someone digging an access hole at the edge of the pier where it met the land. This created the draft that fanned the fire.

In their evaluation of the fire the insurance investigators recommended complete sprinklerization. Improved access for hose streams was also a suggestion. The only criticism of the fire dept. was that it have a fireboat with a minimum pump capacity of 600 GPM.

Eighty years later much of the commercial property along the waterfront has been replaced. New marina's and expanded recreational activities have increased the fire and rescue challenges. The Coast Guard Station at Nahant is gone and help must come all the way from the Town of Hull. Eighty years later the City still has not provided the fire dept. with a fireboat!



Gulf Oil Terminal Fire Chelsea Jan. 3rd 1969

All photos by the late Member L.M. Young Courtesy of Member David Parr

It was just two days after the holiday season had ended. People had returned to work and children were back at their school desks. It was a slightly overcast day with temps in the low 30's and the wind blowing at 15/20 mph, just a typical early winter day.

At the Gulf Oil Terminal on Eastern Ave. It was business as usual, at loading bin 5 a tanker driven by Theodore Shirley had just been positioned at the loading rack. Shirley climbed atop the tanker to start to fill up. He was joined by fellow worker Emery Wessels. At the same time a tanker driven by Frank Rawson pulled up on the other side of the loading rack to fill up. Suddenly Shirley's tank ignited and he was caught in a fire ball. Wessels quickly grabbed him and smothered the flames with his jacket. Shirley was seriously burned about the legs, hips and lower body. Rawson tuned to flee but suffered burns to his legs and hands. Both men were transported to the Mass. General Burn Unit.

At the time of the fore Chelsea Fire M-10 (Fire Alarm Superintendent Asa Burke) grabbed his radio "M-10 to Fire Alarm, an explosion at the Gulf Oil, strike a box!". In Revere they had a report that the fire was at the Atlantic Oil Terminal and a full first alarm was enroute. Chelsea Fire Alarm quickly transmitted box 194 at 1014 hours. Three Engines, Two Ladders and Boston Engine 47 (Fireboat) under the command of C2 Deputy Chief Coyne and C1 Chief of Department Fothergill.



Chelsea Engine 1's American La France pump pulled into the yard and started to go to work. Many explosions were still occurring just about 24 minutes into the fire. An explosion in the alumin gas tanker blew it some 50 yards backwards crashing into Chelsea Engine 1 and igniting it. Had the engine been moved earlier the tanker would have rocketed into the crowd, possibly killing many people.



Companies went into action using what meager foam supplies they carried on the rigs in 5 gallon jugs. It was old 3% Fluro-Protein foam and was used using a foam educator and either Navy surplus All Purpose nozzles or applicator pipes.

Boston Engine 10 arriving on the third alarm drove their wagon into the yard and put their deck gun into operation to try and cool the loading rack. Deputy Chief Coyne radioed Fire Alarm "we need all the foam we can get!" Chelsea Fire Alarm notified Newton Control that the "fourth alarm has been transmitted on box 194 and request as much assistance and foam that you can send."

Arriving on the Special Call for Foam was Logan Airport Engine 2. The Crash Truck arrived pulled into the yard and with its dual roof going made short work of the fire.



The battle was far from over. Foam was still needed for the extensive overhaul operation and Logan Engine 2 had expend all of its foam attacking the main body of fire and the fire in Chelsea Engine 1.





Chelsea Engine 1 1947 ALF Delivery Photo. Collection of Member Frank San Severino



Chelsea Engine 1 after the fire, still steaming.

Chelsea Box 194 Gulf Oil Terminal 123 Eastern Ave.

Time	Box	Engines	Ladders	Other	Comments
1014	194	3, 1, 2, Boston E-47 (fireboat)	1, 2	C-2, C-1	B.O. of M-10
1019	2-194	4, 5, Bost. E-50, Rev. E-4			B.O. C-2
	Cover	Rev. E-1 to E3, Bost E56 to E2, Eve E-3 to E5, Win, E1to E4	Eve. L2 to L1		Cover
1030	3-194	Rev E1, Bost E56 & E10, Win E1	Eve. L2	BFD Dist 12	B.O. C-2
	Cover	Bost 26 to E2, Mal E6, to E1, Eve E2 to 5	Rev L1 to L1		
1033	6-6				Off Duty Shifts Recall
1036	Sp. Call	Saugus E1 & E-4			
1037	4-194	Bost E26, Eve E2, Som. E4	Rev L1	Mal R-1	B.O. C-1
1038	Sp. Call	Arl E1, Chelsea Naval Hosp, , Lex. E3, Logan E2, New E3, 13 Quincy E5, S.B. Naval Annex		Logan E2 Hanscom E11	For foam New C2