

Early Volunteers and Their Good Work

The history of the local fire companies covering nearly half a century.

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The first attempt to organize a fire company in Portland was made in the spring of 1851. On the 6th day of May of that year the old Pioneer Engine Company was formed. Among the 37 charter members of this company were A. B. Hallock, J. M. Breck, George H. Flanders, A. Dodge, Shubrick Norris, Robert Thompson, and Dr. R. B. Wilson. This company enjoyed but a transitory existence, for in the annals of this city, no record of its existence after 1852 has ever been found.

In 1853 there occurred a small fire during midsummer which awoke the people to the necessity of making arrangements which would insure adequate protection against a serious conflagration. At that time the mayor of Portland was Josiah Failing. Immediately after the fire referred to, Mr. Failing took prompt steps to obtain the protection which to him seemed necessary, and, with the view of effecting a fire organization from which satisfactory results could be expected, he appointed Stephen Coffin, Thomas J. Dryer, and I. B. Smith, who were to act as fire wardens.

Nearly two years after the Pioneer Company was organized, a call was made for a meeting to organize a hook and ladder company and to perfect a system which would provide for efficient work by the fire department. This meeting took place on July 28, 1853.

A resolution was passed which declared the whole city a district for the organization of the proposed hook and ladder company, and it was the sense of the meeting that Portland should be divided into two sub-districts. In each of which should be formed an efficient engine company. The dividing line between the two sub-districts was Washington street.

The result of the meeting was the organization of Vigilance Hook & Ladder Company No. 1. The first officers of this company were: I.B. Smith, Foreman; H.W. Davis, Assistant; C.A. Poor, Secretary; and S.J. McCormick, Treasurer. The company adopted its constitution and bylaws on Monday evening, August 1, 1853. The list of charter members included 36 names. The company was admitted for duty by the city council one day after its organization.

The first headquarters of this company were on Yamhill street, between First and Second, where they remained until the memorable fire of 1873 destroyed their house. The company's first truck consisted of a common wagon, with the original reach removed, and the ladder was formed of long poles, made from a tall sapling split in two parts. With its primitive apparatus this company did most effective work, however, and for many years it was one of the great companies of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department.

At the meeting referred to above, two committees were appointed for the purpose of completing arrangements for the organization of two engine companies, one for the northern and one for the southern district of the city. The organization of the company for the northern district was effected on August 1 following, with an enrollment of 52 names. The first officers, were: C.S. Silver, Foreman; B. Stark, First Assistant Foreman; D.C. Coleman, Second Assistant; Charles Hutchins, Secretary; and Justus Steinberger, Treasurer.

The first name proposed for the company was Protection. At the meeting held on August 8 there was some little discussion over the final selection of a permanent name. Mr. Failing suggested Cascade, Mr. Barnhart thought Pike would be suggestive, and Northerner was offered by Mr. Stark. This latter designation was finally adopted. At this meeting, 21 men signed their names to the roll, which made them members of the company. The company, like its predecessor, had none of the elements of permanency in its make-up, and in less than two months after its formation it was disorganized, not in a formal way, but as an implied agreement on the part of its apathetic members.

In the southern district, Willamette Engine Company No. 1 was organized on August 6, 1853, with the following officers: Neeson Ham, Foreman; David Monastes, First Assistant; Asa Strong, Second Assistant; A.M. Berry, Secretary; and C.E. Williams, Treasurer. This company contained among its active members many men who have since become prominent in Portland's affairs. Among these may be mentioned C.H. Lewis, William S. Ladd, Henry Failing, George H. Williams, R.B. Knapp, and M.S. Burrell. These gentlemen served in the department for many years, and the support they rendered the old fire department was of incalculable benefit to the city.

The same interest these gentle men have always taken in their private affairs was devoted unselfishly to the affairs of the fire department, and with the support of such men, nothing could have been expected of Willamette Engine Company No. 1 but the great degree of success it attained from the day of its first organization.

Mr. Failing, one of the most prominent early members of this company, has always been interested in the matter of efficient fire protection for Portland, and he is today, one of the most active members of the Exempt Firemen's Association. Willamette Engine Company was admitted by an act of the city council passed July 7, 1854.

On June 20, 1853, the Council authorized the purchase of one of Smith's New York machines for the local department. The boys then dubbed the primitive fire pumps "piano boxes." On August 2, 1854, the council passed a resolution which awarded this engine to Willamette Engine Company. It had been shipped to Portland via Cape Horn and it was unloaded at the town wharf eight days after it had been awarded to the Willamettes by the Council. This was Portland's first fire engine owned by the city. Two engines had been brought here before this time, however, by W.R. Otway, on the boat *Mary Melville*, which sailed into Portland's harbor July 28, 1852.

For a time after their arrival, the machines were in the charge of P.A. Marquam. One of the engines was subsequently purchased and was loaned by this gentleman to the Northerner Fire Company on its organization. The other was purchased by G.W. Vaughn and was loaned to the Willamette Fire Company. The vicissitudes of the Vaughn engine carried it to the temporary use of the Multnomah Engine Company, afterward organized in Portland, and finally to the fire department of Eugene, where it did most efficient service for many years.

THOROUGHLY ORGANIZED The Volunteer Department Placed On A Very Strong Footing

The next fire company organized in Portland was Multnomah Engine Company No. 2. The first enrollment list of 56 names was closed August 26, 1856. Four days later the company's first meeting was held. B.F. Goodwin was made Chairman of the meeting, and T.B. Trevett was appointed Secretary. The proper steps were taken in the work of drafting a constitution and bylaws, and at a

subsequent meeting, held on September 6, these constitution and bylaws were adopted, as was also the name of the company.

At the meeting held one week later, 29 men enrolled their names as members of the company, and the following officers were elected: B.F. Goodwin, Foreman; L.M. Starr, First Assistant; David Monastes, Second Assistant; A.M. Starr, President; A.C. Ripley, Secretary; and Thomas A. Davis, Treasurer. The city council passed an ordinance admitting this company on November 25, 1856. Multnomah Engine Company No. 2 was an independent company, its equipment having been purchased with money obtained by popular subscription.

The engine for this company arrived from New York in November, 1857. This company afterward owned the first steam fire engine placed in service on the coast. It was a Silsby rotary, and was purchased at Seneca Falls, New York, and shipped to Portland by way of the Horn. It reached Portland in 1868, just in time to be made available for the big Stitzel Mill fire. It was in constant service for an entire week at that time in the endeavor made by the fire department to extinguish the smoldering fire in the sawdust, which had started from the fire in the mill.

One of the early Presidents of Multnomah Engine Company No. 2 was Josiah Failing. Among the other prominent members were A.B. Hallock, Thomas A. Davis, Archie Williams, and T.B. Trevett. Mr. Trevett was the last of the charter members of this company on the company's rolls when the present efficient paid department was organized. He had seen 26 years and three months' continuous service with the company, and his valuable services during that time entitled him to the lasting gratitude of the Portland people.

On May 22, 1854, the council passed an ordinance organizing the Portland Fire Department. The first Chief Engineer of the department was H.W. Davis. Shubrick Norris was Assistant. In 1855, at an election held for the Chief and Assistant of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, the first officers were re-elected. In September, 1856, Davis was again the successful candidate for the position of Chief, and Orin Joynt was made Assistant. At the election in the following year, the successful contestants for the respective offices of Chief Engineer and Assistant were S.J. McCormick and Charles Hutchins. During Mr. McCormick's incumbency he was absent in the east for several months, and during his absence the council declared his office vacant and A.M. Starr was appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. Starr, however, had been elected mayor of the city, and he failed to qualify as Chief Engineer of the local department.

On April 12, 1858, the Assistant, Charles Hutchins, was elected chief. When Mr. McCormick again returned to Portland, he was elected to the office of Assistant of the fire department. For many years this gentleman was a prominent bookseller and publisher here, but he afterward removed to San Francisco, where he gained considerable distinction as editor of the Catholic Monitor.

In 1857 the local fire department was reorganized as the result of a special ordinance passed by the city council on September 21, 1857. Under the terms of this ordinance Willamette Engine Company No. 1, Multnomah Engine Company No. 2, and Vigilance Hook & Ladder Company No. 1 were included in the department. The total number of men enrolled in the department at that time was 157.

In June, 1859, the department was strengthened by the organization of Columbian Engine Company No. 3. This company elected the following officers: F. Carter, Foreman; E. Devine, First Assistant; William Cook, Second Assistant; George Porter, President; Thos. Neally, Secretary; E.E. Kelly, Treasurer. The engine used by this company was what was known as a Jeffers sidestroke. In addition,

the company owned a hose carriage, which carried nearly 1,000 feet of an excellent quality hose. The engine house and the headquarters of the company were on Washington Street, between Second and Third.

Columbian Engine Company No. 3 was the first of the Portland fire companies to use horses. These horses were purchased by the company, who also stood the entire expense of their care. When the old department was disbanded, Columbian Engine Company No. 3 had a considerable sum of money in the treasury. With this money, the Company voted the endowment of a bed in each of Portland's large hospitals, Good Samaritan and St. Vincent's, and the remainder of the funds on hand were contributed to the Exempt Fireman's Association to provide for the care of the Volunteer Firemen's burial plot (Firefighter's Section) at Lone Fir Cemetery.

The rapid growth of Portland soon demanded the formation of another fire company, and on November 12, 1862, Protection Engine Company No. 4 was organized and promptly admitted to the department by the city council. The following were the first officers of the company: R. Hendry, Foreman; H. Bullough, First Assistant; J. Byrnes, Second Assistant; A. Rosenhelm, President; W.T. Patterson, Secretary; and John B. Miller, Treasurer.

This was the last fire company organized in Portland until February 13, 1873, when Tiger Engine Company No. 5 was formed. The great fire of December 22, 1872, had awakened the people of Portland to the necessity of affording additional protection to the city and it was this which led to the organization of the above company. The first enrollment of Tiger Company included 52 names.

The last fire company organized under the old volunteer fire department was Couch Engine Company No. 6, which was formed in 1880, with a total membership of 35.

BOARD OF FIRE DELEGATES -Under Whose Authority the Fire Department Was Conducted

On February 12, 1863, a board of fire delegates was organized. The duties of this body were similar to those now performed by the board of fire commissioners. The first officers of the fire delegates were Captain E.G. Randall, President; T.B. Trevett, Secretary; and E. Seymour, Treasurer. A short time prior to the formation of this board the legislature had passed an act exempting firemen from jury duty and fixing the salary of the Chief Engineer at \$300 a year. This act was signed by Governor John Whittaker in 1862.

In the fall election of 1858, Chief Engineer S.J. McCormick was succeeded by J.M. VanSyckle. This gentleman had reached Portland several months before that time from Stockton, California where he had been connected with the local fire department, and it was through his personal efforts that the Stockton department was made one of the most efficient organizations of the kind on the coast. He long held the position of local agent of Wells Fargo & Company, and such was his ability that he was soon recognized as the foremost man in the Portland department. At the same election Joseph Webber and F. Sherwood were also elected Chief Assistants. In 1859 Mr. VanSyckle was re-elected as Chief, with M. Lucas and J. A. Messenger as First and Second Assistants respectively. During the incumbency of Mr. VanSycle, a bell tower was erected in the city and a big, steel bell weighing over a half a ton was brought from the east and placed in this tower. The cost of this bell, including freight charges, was \$518.

In 1860, Mr. VanSycle moved to Wallula to engage in business. Joseph Webber was appointed to succeed him, and was re-elected in 1863, with A.C. Ripley as First Assistant and J.J. Thompson as

Second Assistant. Webber held the office of Chief until December 1, 1864. At that time, the mayor of Portland was Henry Failing. Owing to the increased importance of the local fire department, the salary of the Chief Engineer was increased from \$300 a year to \$500, in 1864.

The immediate successor of Webber was Joseph Buchtel. Mr. Buchtel was re-elected to serve until 1866, when he was succeeded by H. Weed, who held the office for two years. In 1869, T.G. Young was elected Chief Engineer, and was succeeded in 1870 by Robert Homan, who remained at the head of the department until December 1872.

The next Chief was Archibald Williams, and his successors in the order named were W.O. Bruen, who held the office for two years; A.B. Hallock; John Lyons, whose term expired on December 1, 1877; H.K. Morgan; who served until December 1, 1879; Thomas S. Jordan, who held the office two years; and W. A. Hart. Mr. Hart was the last Chief Engineer of the volunteer fire department, his term expiring when the old organization went out of existence on the last day of 1882.

On the night of December 21, 1882, the town and the entire department turned out for the big demonstration. Whistles blew, bells rang, and horns tooted, and everybody joined in bidding adieu to Portland's old volunteer fire department, which gave place the following day to the present, efficient paid fire department.

Three local fraternal firemen's organizations contain all that is left of the surviving members of the old volunteer fire department. The first and most important of these is the Exempt Firemen's Association, which was organized November 15, 1874, as a benevolent association. The first meeting of the board of trustees was held April 8, 1875, and at a later meeting, held on the 22nd day of April, the articles of incorporation of the association were adopted and signed by the following seven charter members: A.B. Hallock, President; Benjamin F. Goodwin, Secretary; C.H. Lewis; Peter Taylor; T.A. Davis; A. Zieber. The present officers (1895) are Peter Taylor, President; and John O'Connor, Secretary. The requirements of membership in this association are that the candidate shall have seen seven years of service in the volunteer fire department, except those who joined the department four years prior to the time it was disbanded, and who performed continuous service up to January 1, 1883, when it was disbanded.

After the great fire of August 2, 1873, a large sum of money was raised for the relief of the sufferers. Of this fund, there remained the sum of \$1,781.74, which had not been used. The authorities in charge of this money decided to turn it over to the board of trustees of the fire department as an irreducible fund, the income from this fund to be used only for the relief of members of the Portland Fire Department who may be injured while in the active discharge of their duties. There was a further provision made in the transfer of this fund, which allows the trustees, in case any serious calamity of fire occurs which might render necessary the raising of any considerable fund for the relief of the immediate wants of the sufferers thereby, to use the whole or any part of the principal and interest of the said fund for that purpose. On the organization of the exempt association this fund was placed in charge of a board of trustees composed of seven members of that organization. These members were A.B. Hallock, C.H. Lewis, H. Failing, T.A. Davis, Peter Taylor, A. Zieber, and B.F. Goodwin. The association now has a fund about \$8,600.00 which can be used for the care of injured firemen or for the assistance of sick or indigent members. The exempt association also cares for the volunteer firemen's plot (Firefighter's Section) at Lone Fir Cemetery, one of the best kept and most beautifully located spots in the cemetery.

The following are names of some of the older members of the association: A.B. Hallock, Henry Failing, W.S. Ladd, W.O. Bruen, C.H. Lewis, Phillip C. Schuyler, L. Baum, A. Zieber, Ed F. Albright, Peter Taylor, T.B. Trevett, John Thompson, Richard M. Field, Shubrick Norris, L.C. Millard, W.H.D. Joyce, H. Sinsheimer, Blaise Labbe, John H. Wolf, William Young, Benjamin F. Goodwin. T.A. Davis, J.H. Lappeus, C.C. Phillips, S.G. Skidmore, A.J. Walling, Henry Weinhard, C.A. Burchardt, C.A. Alisky, Jacob Mayer, E.J. DeHart, Thomas A. Jordan, and Henry Morgan.

After the old volunteer fire department went out of existence, the surviving members of Multnomah Engine Company No. 2, and the sons of the members, formed the Multnomah Engine Company No. 2 Benevolent Association. The association now has a fund of \$12,090, the income from which is devoted to aiding sick and needy members, and upon the death of any member, the funeral expenses are paid out of this fund. The officers of the association are: T.B. Trevett, President; Joseph Buchtel, Vice President; Benjamin L. Norden, Secretary; and Charles H. Dodd, Treasurer.

The other local firemen's association is known as the Veteran Volunteers. This is not strictly a benevolent society. It is made up of ex-volunteer firemen from all parts of the United States in addition to its many members made up from those who were connected with the old volunteer organization in Portland.

The Portland Volunteer Fire Department did great work in the early history of the city, and even after Portland had attained distinction as a metropolitan center of population the department was able to insure the same protection against fire as was guaranteed at the time in any large city in the West by the best organized paid fire department. The members of the volunteer department included many representative men of the city, and while there was considerable rivalry between different companies, there was none of that ill-feeling between different factions in the department which threatened the disruption of that good fellowship which always existed among the members.

The fact that the city council failed to tender the old volunteer firemen a vote of thanks on the disbanding of the volunteer fire department on that last day of December, 1882, called for considerable comment from the community which had received such signal benefit from the efficient work done by the department, and while the failure of the council to officially recognize this valuable service by tendering a vote of thanks was an oversight, it was felt by the people that this lapse should not have been made and that it was a reflection on spirit of gratitude which Portland had always shown in attesting the city's appreciation of good work done by corporate public bodies.

THE PAID DEPARTMENT - Its Formation and the Causes Which Led Up to This Organization

The Portland people realized even before the city had attained a population of 30,000 that there must be every provision made for affording adequate protection against fire within the municipal limits. The old volunteer department had done most efficient work, but it could not be expected that men who were devoting what time they could spare from their business to the onerous duties performed by firemen should be able to render as efficient service as salaried men of a paid department. The discipline of a volunteer organization, too, could not be quite so strict as the discipline of a paid department. The day of the primitive hand engine and the later steam engine pulled by men tugging at a long rope, was passed. New and tall buildings were being erected here, the territory covered by the city was rapidly being extended, and the rates of insurance as well as the safety of the city demanded the formation of a paid department.

The legislature of 1882 passed an act which authorized the formation of the present paid department. By the terms of this act, a board of three fire commissioners was appointed. The first members of this commission were Henry Ackerman, George L. Story, and James Lotan. William Eppinger was Secretary of the board. Thomas A. Jordan was appointed Chief of the department, and C.C. Dobelbower and James Klernan First and Second Assistants respectively. During the first year of its organization \$11,000 was expended in the purchase of new materials, horses, etc., for the department. The total value of the property of the department held in trust by the Commission on December 31, 1883, was as follows:

- Real estate (estimated) \$110,000
- Equipment \$66,142
- Total \$177,142

The following is the value of the property of the Portland Paid Fire Department today (1895):

- Real estate \$205,500
- Equipment \$132,478
- Total \$337,978

Chief Engineer Jordan was succeeded January 1, 1884 by Harry Morgan, who held the position for eight years. He gave way to Robert Holman on January 1, 1892. Holman was succeeded one year later by Joseph Buchtel, the present efficient head of the department. The present Assistant Engineers are David Campbell, First assistant; Mike Laudenklos, Second Assistant, and A.M. Donaldson, Third Assistant.

The district of the First Assistant Engineer covers all the territory within the city limits south of Morrison Street, and that of the Second Assistant the territory north of Morrison Street, and that of the Third Assistant all that part of the city included within the limits of old East Portland and Albina.

There was no change made in the board of fire commissioners until July 1, 1887, when Henry Ackerman was succeeded by T.B. Trevett, and George L. Story by J.H. Steffen. On July 1, 1891. Theo. Wygant succeeded James Lotan, the last member of the original commission. The board composed of Trevett, Steffen, and Wygant was succeeded on July 1, last, by the present commissioners, Sylvester Farrell, who is President of the board, H.S. Rowe, and William Fliedner. The Secretary of the commission is H.H. Holmes.

It has been the endeavor of the new board of commissioners to operate the department on as economical a basis as is consistent with good service. They have especially aimed to keep the expenditures within the estimated cost of \$143,859 for running the department during 1894, and if possible to save enough out of this appropriation to wipe out the deficiency of \$8,215 incurred in the previous year.

In the interests of economy, the force has been somewhat reduced during the past year, the number of men now enrolled being 146, as against an enrollment of 170 during 1883. Even with this reduction, the department was never before on a more efficient footing than it is today. The department is equipped with a most modern and complete fire alarm telegraph apparatus, which has cost over

\$23,000. The total value of the entire fire alarm property is about \$33,500. The Superintendent in charge of the fire alarm is Captain A. J. Coffee, one of the most competent electricians on the coast.

It would be difficult to improve the water service in connection with the department. The water pressure from the new Bull Run system, in all mains throughout the lower portion of the city is not less than 95 pounds to the square inch, and the supply is practically inexhaustible. The department owns 477 fire hydrants, 138 of which are distributed over the districts north of Morrison Street, 124 south of Morrison Street and 163 on the east side. Besides these there are the 52 hydrants of the Elevator Company, distributed along Front and First Streets. The department is also provided with 81 cisterns, 70 of which are distributed on the west side and 11 on the east side. The combined capacity of these cisterns is 1,510,000 gallons. The department is made up of seven steam engine companies, three chemical engine companies, five hook and ladder companies, and four hose companies. These companies occupy 14 separate houses, of which four are double. The companies cover some remarkable distances in answering fire alarms in different parts of the city, but it would be hard to find a department of any city the size of Portland in the United States that gives quicker service in reaching fires than the department of this city.

The Portland Paid Fire Department is under a most thorough discipline, all rules and regulations being strictly enforced. No man on the force who gets intoxicated is retained in his position, prompt dismissal following all breaches of this kind.

The entire equipment is kept in the best of order. The horses are all sleek and well fed, the brass and nickel ornamentalations of the engines are all kept highly polished, and the houses are all scrupulously clean. Every permanent member of the department is required to be constantly at his post, with the exception of one night a week accorded him, when his place must be filled by a substitute who is satisfactory to both the Chief and the District Engineer.

But few people outside of the department appreciate the discipline that it is necessary to preserve and the necessity which exists at all times for obeying promptly any order, given by the Chief or his Assistants. The rules for the government of the department are complete, but they are thoroughly mastered by every active member.

The system adopted for governing the matter of responding to alarms by the different companies shows the thorough discipline of the department. A fire alarm first calls out all the companies assigned to the district in which the alarm is sounded. An alarm for a second fire in this same district, however, while the first companies are on duty in this district, is promptly answered by the companies from another district. This system becomes very complicated when several alarms are rung in from different parts of the city before any recall has been sounded.

A portion of each fire company is composed of "extramen," who are employed in the vicinity of the company's house, who serve for \$20 per month. When the recall for the first alarm does not sound within 20 minutes, all the extramen belonging to the companies assigned to the district where the fire is burning, must leave their work and go to their posts and remain there until relieved by word from the officers of the department. If a second alarm is turned in, all extramen in the city must go to the houses of their companies and remain until relieved.

On September 13, 1894, 11 alarms were turned in within a period of six hours, and on that day, six fires were burning in different parts of the city at the same time. All of these alarms were promptly answered by the department without the least confusion, and the fact that nothing serious followed

from any of these fires was due, as the Chief Engineer remarked with pride, to the efficiency of the companies, which made a mistake or a break of any kind in answering an alarm an impossibility.

During the past year Chief Buchtel has inaugurated a system of extinguishing fires which is something of an innovation in the Portland department. In place of the wholesale use of water on nearly all occasions, whereby more damage is often done to the contents of buildings than by the fire extinguished, the plan now is to use chemicals whenever possible. Instead of closing all doors and windows and other outlets for smoke in a burning building, the improved method of procedure is to open everything, so that the firemen can get at the fire. As the chief expressed it, it is better to tear out the fire than to drown it out. For instance, when a fire is ever in a store full of valuable goods, if water is used, the goods are sure to be badly damaged. Consequently, the chiefs orders are to hurry the chemical engines in advance of all other apparatus, and as a result these engines, together with the use of the Babcock fire extinguishers, hooks, axes, etc., have extinguished about 90 percent of all fires within the prescribed distances covered by the chemical apparatus.

The following table shows the number of men enrolled in the Portland Paid Fire Department, during each year since it was first organized:

YEAR	Permanent Members	Extramen	Total
1883	18	34	52
1884	20	40	60
1885	20	50	70
1886	20	50	70
1887	20	50	70
1888	22	58	80
1889	22	58	80
1890	28	72	100
1891	32	84	136
1892	58	112	170
1893	58	112	170
1894	62	73	145

The cost of maintaining the department during each year since its organization is shown below:

YEAR	BUDGET
1883	\$58,955.00
1884	\$66,880.00
1885	\$66,800.00
1886	\$66,478.00
1887	\$72,818.00
1888	\$69,449.00
1889	\$77,625.00
1890	\$124,921.00
1891	\$117,405.00
1892	\$157,745.00
1893	\$130,158.00
1894	\$124,299.17

MEMBERS ARE CARED FOR - The Firemen's Relief Association - Its Beneficent Aim

The first Board of Fire Commissioners organized a relief association, composed entirely of members of the department. On May 9, 1883, a set of rules and bylaws for the government of the Association were adopted. These rules provided that each member of the department should pay into the relief fund the sum of 50 cents on the 1st day of each month. This fund was to be specially set aside for the care of sick or injured members of the department. The rules provided that any member who either through sickness or accident should become incapacitated for duty as a fireman, and who was not able to work at his accustomed calling, shall receive from the fund of the association the sum of \$40 a month, said payments to continue during the time of his disability. On the death of any member in good standing, the sum of \$1 is levied on each member of the department to defray the funeral expenses of the deceased. The rules further provide that the officers of the Fireman's Mutual Benefit Association shall be members of the Fire Commission, with a Board of Directors, including the three members of the Commission, together with the Secretary and Chief Engineer. This Association is one of the many excellent features of the department, and it has rendered most valuable assistance to the individual members. The following table shows the total receipts and disbursements of the association from May 9, 1883 to December 31, 1894:

YEAR	RECEIPTS	DISBURSEMENTS
1883	\$691.00	\$368.84
1884	\$623.00	\$475.81
1885	\$1,381.50	\$685.72
1886	\$811.00	\$337.67
1887	\$830.00	\$558.76
1888	\$669.50	\$722.80
1889	\$934.38	\$855.48
1890	\$1,391.40	\$1,162.14
1891	\$1,510.25	\$960.35
1892	\$1,832.40	\$2,143.10
1893	\$1,748.29	\$1,614.32
TOTAL	\$12,422.82	\$9,944.99

Sources of revenue, 1883 to 1893 inclusive:

- Dues and Fines \$9,974.65
- Donations \$856.00
- Theater Benefit \$737.00
- Interest \$799.67
- Misc. Sources \$25.50
- Total \$12,422.82

The average yearly losses by fire in Portland are less than in any other large city on the coast. The credit for this exemption is due directly to the efficiency of the department. Portland, during its existence, however, has not escaped some disastrous contacts with the fiery element. One of the most serious of these conflagrations nearly wiped the city out of existence, and it entailed much subsequent

suffering. There have been but extremely few fatalities from fire in the history of the city, however, this has been due, principally, to the fact that previous to the era of modern brick and stone buildings few edifices here attained a height above two stories, and few fatalities from fires ever occur in low structures. Previous to the great fire of 1873 the only important loss Portland has ever suffered was from the conflagration of December 22, 1872. On that occasion it seemed at one time as though the whole town was doomed, but the high wind which prevailed during the height of the fire suddenly died away to a calm, and with the heavy rain which commenced to fall at the same time, the department was able to quickly get the flames under control.

The fire started in a Chinese washhouse in the rear of the block on the east side of Front Street, between Morrison and Alder. Nearly all the buildings along the city front at that time were constructed of dry, light wood and they stood on piles. The open space beneath these buildings supplied a draft which swept up through the frame structures with a force that carried embers of the burning timbers for blocks distant. The fire rapidly spread toward the north, being fanned by the wind which was blowing a gale. The heat was so intense that the buildings on the east side of Front Street were soon in flames and the firemen were compelled to leave the street. Within half an hour from the time the fire had started it had consumed everything on Front Street from Morrison north to Washington, as well as the blocks along the river front.

The old American Exchange Hotel, on Front Street marked the line of the fire, this building having been providentially saved by the subsidence of the wind at a time when the structure was all but ignited. An explosion of coal oil and chemicals in the drug store of C.H. Woodard, during the height of the fire, injured several firemen.

One of the exciting features of the fire was the rounding up of a lot of Chinese by the police and pressing the Celestials into service in manning the engines, as the regular firemen became exhausted.

The Oregonian building at the corner of Front and Stark Streets, for a long time seemed in danger, and the forms were locked up and these, with the type and office furniture were rapidly removed to places of safety. The fire, as stated before, however, did not cross Washington Street, and the paper on the following morning came out at the old stand. The loss reached over half a million dollars, a little over one-fifth of which amount was covered by insurance.

The great fire of August 2, 1873, was far more disastrous in its effects. It swept away 21 blocks of buildings in the center of the city and destroyed a large number of saw and planing mills, furniture factories, flour mills, sash and door factories, foundries, and other industrial enterprises which gave employment in the aggregate to hundreds of men. In proportion to the size of Portland at that time this fire was a more disastrous blow to this city than the great conflagrations of Boston or Chicago had been.

The fire was first discovered at 4:20 AM in the large wooden building which stood at the corner of First and Salmon Streets, and occupied by Hurgren & Shindier as a furniture factory. This building was surrounded by other wooden structures, many of which contained highly inflammable materials. There had been no rain for weeks previous, and the manner in which the flames devoured the tinder like blocks was something appalling to observers. Everybody said that the whole city must go.

Telegrams for assistance were sent to other cities in the vicinity early in the day by Mayor Henry Failing, and these were promptly responded to by the departments of Vancouver, Oregon City, and Salem. The hand engine from Vancouver, with about 60 men, was brought over from Vancouver by

the steamer Oneatta in the fastest time on record, 72 minutes, the steamer carrying on the entire trip of 18 miles at 10 pounds more steam than her license permitted.

Salem sent two engines and two hose carts, leaving only a hook and ladder truck to guard the city during the absence of the engines. Ben Holladay, who was at the head of the Oregon & California Railroad at that time, gave orders that all volunteers who came to assist Portland in her extremity should be carried over his road free of charge, and hundreds of men boarded the trains over this road between Salem and Portland in answer to the call for help. The train which brought the Salem firemen to Portland made the entire run of 52 miles between the Salem depot and the station on the East Side in 52 minutes. This knocked out all previous records for fast time over the roads of the coast. W.H. Callcott, the Engineer of the lightning train, earned the lasting gratitude of Portland for driving his engine at such a frightful rate of speed over the poorly built road of the old Oregon & California Railroad system.

With the valuable assistance of these outside fire companies the Portland Volunteer Fire Department obtained control of the fire a little after the noon hour. The boys of the department had performed an herculean task, and they justly earned on that day all the subsequent honors which were heaped upon them by a grateful city.

The record of the fire was appalling for a city as young as Portland. During the short space of eight hours, 215 buildings had gone up in smoke. The burnt district extended back from the river to Second Street, an average width of 800 feet, and reached from Morrison Street on the north to Clay Street on the south. The figures representing the total loss by fire reached about \$1,250,000. The amount of insurance carried on the property destroyed was only \$245,290. During the afternoon of the day of the fire, Mayor Failing sent out notices to the effect that food and lodging would be provided for the homeless and destitute on application at certain designated places.

The Council Chamber, Ankeny hall, the Methodist Church, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, as well as the homes of many of Portland's people, were opened for the shelter of the homeless. A relief committee was promptly appointed, and a fund to aid the destitute sufferers was contributed by those able to assist, with a spirit of generosity which practically opened their pocketbooks. Other cities of the coast promptly offered contributions. The generous people of San Francisco alone subscribing over \$12,000 as a relief fund for Portland. Telegrams offering assistance were received from all parts of the United States. Portland, however, was able to care for all its destitute unaided. The total amount of money expended for relief immediately following the fire was \$13,000. Hardly had the embers of the great conflagration cooled before plans were being drawn for commodious brick buildings to occupy the sites formerly occupied by the less pretentious frame structures, and a year after the fire there was but little evidence to show that any disaster had ever visited the city.

The only great fire that has occurred since the memorable 2nd day of August, 1873, was the one on September 23, 1894, which destroyed a lot of valuable property situated in that part of Portland, known as Albina. This fire consumed the Pacific Coast Wheat Elevator, warehouse and contents, the railroad coalbunkers and contents, all the wharves in that vicinity, 60 freight cars with contents, a number of cars containing valuable electrical machinery for the Portland General Electric Company, the river steamer Willamette Chief, and four miles of railroad tracks. The loss at this fire was nearly two-thirds as great as that of the fire of 1873, it having amounted to about \$750,000, but so rich had Portland grown in the 22 years between the two fires that this loss, divided among a few great corporations, was not felt in the least by the general public, nor was it anything of a setback to Portland's prosperity. This loss, too, was principally covered by insurance, and the money which has since been paid out in

rebuilding the destroyed property was of some considerable benefit to the working population of the city during the late fall and early winter months of 1894.

The following valuable table will show the losses by fire and the amount of insurance paid for each year from 1883 to 1894, inclusive:

YEAR	TOTAL LOSSES	INSURANCE INVOLVED	INSURANCE PAID	LOSSES NOT COVERED
1883	\$319,092	\$639,750	\$252,731	\$56,371
1884	\$403,051	\$752,148	\$340,223	\$62,824
1885	\$59,329	\$149,150	\$29,761	\$29,566
1886	\$98,146	\$224,514	\$65,662	\$32,481
1887	\$84,173	\$331,960	\$80,211	\$3,962
1888	\$54,347	\$114,035	\$30,112	\$24,234
1889	\$37,730	\$91,600	\$34,120	\$3,601
1890	\$70,987	\$128,900	\$47,145	\$23,832
1891	\$251,759	\$429,975	\$178,188	\$73,671
1892	\$573,885	\$1,091,004	\$460,719	\$112,165
1893	\$155,450	\$275,608	\$136,560	\$18,803
1894	\$869,633	\$1,316,436	\$592,405	\$277,228

THE EFFICIENT CHIEF ENGINEER

For nearly half a century Mr. Joseph Buchtel, the present popular and efficient chief engineer of the Portland Paid Fire Department, has been one of the recognized figures of the city's history. Mr. Buchtel was long prominent in business here. He has always taken an active interest in public matters, and the high esteem in which he is held in the estimation of fellow citizens is attested by the hearty support which has been accorded him in his honest attempts to place the fire department under his control on the most efficient working basis.

Mr. Buchtel was born in Stark County, Ohio on November 22, 1830. In 1840 he removed with his parents to Urbana, Illinois. He crossed the plains in 1852 and reached Portland on September 27 of that year. In the following year he established the first photographic gallery in the village, a business he followed successfully for 33 years, when he disposed of his interests in what was at that time the leading gallery of the Pacific Northwest to William H. Towne, founder of what is today known as the B.C. Towne Photo Company.

All old Portlanders remember Mr. Buchtel, and the hundreds of views of primitive Portland which he still retains in his possession bring vividly to the memories of these old timers the remembrance of the scenes of the early 1830s, when all Portland was domiciled in cheap structures and log huts.

Mr. Buchtel is no novice in the business of successfully fighting fire. He was one of the charter members of the old volunteer fire department of Portland, No. 2 engine company, and as a just tribute to his recognized merit as a fireman it can be stated that he was a member of Portland's volunteer fire department, in different official capacities, from the time of its first organization until it finally gave way to the present efficient paid department.

Mr. Buchtel is a natural-born leader, but, like most men capable of assuming command, he has been extremely modest in his claims, and he has left his abilities to be recognized by his associates. On the occasion of two of the greatest fires in Portland's history, he was called from his position as foreman of an engine to take full charge of the department with all the authority of the Chief Engineer. One of these fires was that which destroyed Harbaugh & Stitzel's Mill during the height of the fire, Chief T.G. Young was disabled by being badly burned. Chief Young immediately selected Mr. Buchtel to act in his place, and it was under the able management of the latter gentleman that the conflagration was quickly brought under control.

The next time Mr. Buchtel was called upon to fill the same office was at the great levee fire, which leveled three entire blocks to the ground. On this occasion he relieved Archie Williams as Chief at the latter's request, and again, under the prompt action of Mr. Buchtel and his Assistants, control was finally gained over the fire, which at one time threatened to wipe out the entire city.

Mr. Buchtel has the record of having twice filled the office of Chief Engineer of the old volunteer department. He performed the responsible duties of the position with signal credit to himself and with the greatest degree of satisfaction to the people. He was chosen to represent Portland in the great national convention of chief fire engineers, held at St. Louis in that year. He also represented the Portland Paid Fire Department in the convention of chief engineers recently held in San Francisco.

The only gift ever voted by the old volunteer fire department as a body was a handsome gold watch and chain presented to Chief Buchtel in acknowledgment of his valuable services, and which is still carried by the chief.

While Mr. Buchtel has given much attention and considerable study to the subject of fighting fire, he has also been prominent in other important positions of trust. He was sheriff of Multnomah County, of which Portland is the seat, for two years, and he was accorded the honor of having been the best officer who was ever elected to that office. He is a prominent Odd Fellow, and he was made the Grand Representative from this state to the Grand Lodge of this order held in Atlanta.

Mr. Buchtel never lost his interest in matters pertaining to the success of the fire department of the city. A number of years since he invented the telegraph fire hose and electric hose coupling, which he has had patented. This invention is of such great practical value that it will yet be used by every fire department in the United States. He did not solicit the appointment to his present important position, realizing as he did the responsibilities and great labor incident to filling this office as it should be filled. His fitness especially commended him to the people, however, and, at the earnest solicitation of the Mayor and other prominent citizens, he at last consented to accept the appointment, and it is the general feeling that the city is fortunate in being able to call itself of the services of as competent a Chief Engineer of the local fire department as Mr. Buchtel has proved to be.

He received his appointment as Chief about one year since, and it is the hope of his friends that he may long be spared to serve the city in that capacity. Perhaps the most unique and distinguished service Mr. Buchtel rendered the city was the task imposed on him in fighting the fire along the river front during the unprecedented flood of last year. During the time that Portland's principal streets were under water, it was impossible to get any of the fire engines into the business district along Front or First street. With wise forethought, Mr. Buchtel had mounted a number of engines on barges, which he kept moored at convenient points throughout the submerged district, ready for instant use. The time came for the aid of the floating fire-destroyers in the conflagration on the river front in the most thickly

built district of the city, and it was due to the wisdom of Portland's able Chief in having these engines mounted on barges, which could easily be towed to any part of the city that was under water, that saved Portland from, one of the most disastrous fires in her history.

During the crisis of the flood Mr. Buchtel arranged a canvas suit for attaching hose to submerged connections that has been termed one of the most remarkable devices ever invented by a Chief Engineer. This, with the other numerous inventions made by Mr. Buchtel, will soon be exhibited here, so that the people of Portland may have the opportunity to gain a just appreciation of their merits.

DAVID CAMPBELL

One of the ablest men on the present force of Portland Paid Fire Department is David Campbell, the popular Assistant Chief Engineer immediately under the head of the department, Joseph Buchtel. Mr. Campbell dates his connection with the city fire department from 1880, three years before the old volunteer fire organization was succeeded by the present efficient paid department. He holds an Exempt Certificate as a fireman, and he has reached his present position as the direct result of the valuable experience he has gained by long years of service in the department, which has enabled him to win promotion by steady but successive steps to his present office, which, with the exception of that of Chief Engineer, is the most important office in the Portland Paid Fire Department today.

In this connection a word of the old Portland volunteer fire department may not be amiss. Every old Portlander will remember distinctly the rivalry which existed between the different companies composing the old department, and they also realize that it was this rivalry which resulted in the volunteer department attaining a degree of proficiency never reached by any other volunteer department of the coast.

Mr. Campbell, like most every highly successful fireman who ever tugged at a rope in Portland, was educated in the best of schools this old volunteer organization, made up of some of the best men of the city. Dave's fire-red buggy dashing down the streets immediately following the first tap of the fire bell today is a reminder of the halcyon days of the old volunteer department, when he responded with the same promptness to the alarm of fire and took a hand at the rope with the same degree of earnestness that he shows today in his attempt to get to the seat of the conflagration with all possible dispatch behind the heels of one of the best nags on the street.

Mr. Campbell was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. He lived in his native place until 1868. when he removed with his parents to Youngstown, Ohio. He dates his residence in Portland from 1872. He early became connected with the city department, as stated above, and on February 25, 1892, he was appointed to his present important position. Mr. Campbell has the respect and confidence of the entire working force of the department, and he has the endorsement of the property owner as one of the most efficient officers ever connected with the local fire department.

CAPTAIN A.J. COFFEE

The position of Superintendent of the Fire Alarm System of Portland is not secure, as was demonstrated by the reinstatement of Captain A.J. Coffee, the present incumbent of this office, by the Fire Commissioners in 1893. On political grounds Captain Coffee had been dismissed by the Commissioners to make room for a man whose views on politics were in harmony with those of the board. Three months' trial with the new electrician was enough to convince the people that Captain Coffee, who had brought the fire alarm system to a high state of efficiency, could get along easier

without the aid of municipal office than the city could get along without him, and in consequence the Fire Commissioners at the end of three months offered him the very position which they had thought could be easily filled by one of their numerous following.

Captain Coffee was appointed Superintendent of the Portland Fire Alarm Telegraph on August 1, 1884. Under his able management this system has attained a degree of efficiency second to that of no fire alarm system in the United States. Not only is Captain Coffee a general electrician of recognized ability, but he is an inventor of considerable reputation. He invented many of the practical electrical devices now in use in the fire alarm and police telegraph systems of the city, on most of which he has been granted patents. He invented the electrical devices for unhitching horses which are now used in all the engine houses. He also invented a recorder of fire alarms.

In a suit brought against the city of Portland by Robert Bragg on this as an infringement of his patent, the city was victorious. As a consequence, Portland today is using this and other devices patented by Captain Coffee, saving much expense in royalties, and it is worthy of note that Portland is the only city in the United States in which Mr. Bragg was not successful in his suits for infringement of patent on recorders of fire alarm. Captain Coffee has made the gratuitous offering of all his patents to the municipality here, a gift of great practical value to the city.

In addition to his important work on the fire alarm system, Captain Coffee also installed the police telegraph system. It is directly due to the practical knowledge of Captain Coffee that this branch of the city service has proved such a signal success, especially in its telephone connections, which are indispensable to a complete system of police telegraph. The difficulty of connecting the telephone with this system can be appreciated when it is stated that all the city's wires are stretched on the poles of the Portland General Electric Company, whose wires carry high potential alternating currents. Running telephone wires in close proximity to wires thus charged is an application few electricians have successfully solved.

Captain Coffee also installed the fire alarm telegraph system at Tacoma. His advice has also been widely solicited by the management of other fire alarm and police telegraph manipulation, which he has always freely given. He has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the workings of various fire departments, not only here where he is directly associated with fire business, but also abroad, and he has made an especial study of recent applications in this branch of the service. In addition to his highly successful work as a general electrician, Captain Coffee has devoted considerable attention to drill tactics. He is, in addition to being Superintendent of Fire Alarm, Drillmaster of the city police, and he has brought this branch of the service to its present high state of efficiency.

He is also Captain of Company 1, First Regiment Infantry, Oregon National Guard, which is recognized as especially proficient in drill and discipline. Under Captain Coffee, who has been Captain of the company for seven years past, it has enjoyed with its competent officer the respect and esteem of both the officers and the men of the Oregon National Guard.

Captain Coffee had much valuable experience as a practical electrician before he came to Portland. He is a native of Oakland, California. He was educated in the public schools of that city and San Francisco, supplemented by courses at the Urban Academy and in the telegraph department of Heald's Business College, both educational institutions of the latter city. His first work was with the California Electrical Construction & Maintenance Company, as apprentice in electrical construction and as salesman. He next entered the employ of the Cleveland Supply Company, of San Francisco, as apprentice in electrical construction. While in the employ of that company he assisted in putting into

use the first electric arc lamps used on the Pacific coast. From this company he went to the American District Telegraph Company and the Golden Stock Telegraph Company of San Francisco.

He was in turn lineman, teacher of telegraphy and electrician, after which he was appointed assistant inspector of the American Speaking Telephone Company, afterward the Pacific Bell Telephone Company of San Francisco. It was while he was with the telephone company that he assisted in putting into practical use the first telephones on the Pacific coast. He was promoted to the responsible position of assistant electrician of the company immediately under John I. Sabin, an office he filled until his appointment to the more responsible trust of electrician of the Portland Telephone Telegraph & Electric Light Company, October 28, 1850.

After coming to Portland, Captain Coffee retained this position until the latter part of 1883, when he entered the employ of the United States Electric Lighting Company of Newark, New Jersey, with head quarters in this city. He was placed in charge of installing the plant of the first commercial electric lighting company of Portland, of which Mr. P.F. Morey was general manager. It was at the time of the completion of this plant, on August 1, 1884. that he was appointed Superintendent of the Portland Fire Alarm Telegraph System, an office he has filled with such advantage to the city since that time.

MICHAEL LAUDENKLOS

The people of Portland entertain something more than a kindly feeling for the men who attained distinction in the old volunteer fire department. It is doubtful if any department of the coast ever attained a greater degree of proficiency than did Portland's volunteer fire department and as a training school for successfully fighting fire, its graduates carry a better endorsement than they could have hoped to secure from any other source.

One of the old time fireboys in the efficient Portland Paid Fire Department today is Mr. Michael Laudenklos. the present competent District Engineer. This is one of the most important trusts connected with the department. Its responsibility can be appreciated when it is stated it is made obligatory on the District Engineer to see that all the apparatus and everything connected with the different engine houses are in perfect working order, he is held responsible for the inspection of all hydrants and cisterns north of Morrison Street, and he must report at every fire that occurs in his district.

A man to fill this position acceptably must have a thorough knowledge of every detail connected with the practical working of the fire department he must have the confidence of his superiors and the individual members of the department, and the general public must be assured that he is both competent and is worthy of the important trust reposed in him. From his long and successful connection with the department, Mr. Laudenklos has the full confidence of the public and the department alike, and he has the hearty support of everybody with whom his official duties bring him in contact.

Mr. Laudenklos first joined the old Portland Volunteer Fire Department in 1878. He served three years with the volunteer department, two years of which he served as Second Assistant Foreman of Engine Company No. 5. He accepted a position with the paid department March 5, 1883. He held the responsible position of Foreman of Engine Company No. 1 for seven and a half years. He was appointed to his present position on July 5, 1893 and he has been in continuous service in this office since that time.

Mr. Laudenklos is a native of Rock Island, Illinois. He came to Portland early in 1864, and he has attested his faith in the permanency of the city by making it his constant residence since that time. He is thoroughly wedded to Portland and the institutions of the city, and he feels, as every enthusiastic Portlander feels, that he would not be content to live anywhere else.

A.M. DONALDSON

The duties of District Engineer of the east side district are particularly onerous. The east side is more sparsely settled than is the business district on the west side, while the territory covered by the fire department east of the Willamette is of a much larger area than that part of the city on the other side of the river. The streets, too, on the west side are paved and are kept in much better condition than are the streets on the east side. Many of the streets of old east Portland and Albina, included in the east side district, are impassable for the heavy fire engines and trucks during the winter months. All of these difficulties add greatly to the responsibilities of the District Engineer on the east side, and the fact that so little damage has resulted from fire in that part of Portland east of the Willamette recently is a recommendation of the fitness of the present east side District Engineer for the responsible duties he is called upon to perform.

Mr. A.M. Donaldson, who so ably fills this office, first came to Oregon in 1850. He became a member of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department in 1882. and he successively filled the important positions of Foreman of the hose company of the Grant Engine Company and Chief Engineer of the fire department of East Portland. He was also a member of the board of East Portland Fire Delegates. He became connected with the paid fire department when it was extended to cover the east side districts, and was appointed to his present important position in July last.

Mr. Donaldson is a native of Scotland and first came to Boston, Massachusetts in 1872. His record as a successful fireman is such that the people feel safe in any business that is entrusted to his charge in connection with the department.

#End#