

The David Campbell Story

By Don Porth

compiled from various source materials

The man who would rise to become the Fire Chief of Portland, Oregon, David Campbell, was a popular and important personality in the city of Portland. But his story began elsewhere.

David Campbell was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on March 10, 1864. His family moved to Portland in 1878 where he would immediately begin his firefighting career as a 14 year old volunteer with the Portland Volunteer Fire Department. Over his five years of volunteer service, Campbell would serve on Columbian Engine Company #3, Protection Engine Company #4, and Couch Engine Company #6.

This was a transitional time period for the fire department. The "Black Saturday" fire of August 2, 1873 had convinced city leaders that a paid fire department would need to be formed. It would take ten years for this to develop. In January 1883, the 18 year old Campbell would find himself on the outside of the newly formed Portland Paid Fire Department. The minimum hiring age requirement of 21 would require him to wait until 1885 to be hired.

It was during this time period that David Campbell would pursue another interest... boxing. His roughneck and athletic nature was perfectly suited to wrestling and boxing matches. Campbell would become locally known for his abilities in the ring.

Early in 1885, he proved himself adept with his fists by knocking out an opponent named Jumbo Reilly. Later that year, a famous fighter named Jack Dempsey, who was the world middleweight champion, toured through Portland (this was not the more renowned Jack Dempsey of later years). Dempsey went by the moniker the "Nonpareil," meaning the "Unequaled." Because of his boxing notoriety, Campbell was suggested as an opponent.

Campbell accepted and a match was set for November 1885. The bout would be held in an improvised ring at a farm near the Lewis River, in what was then Washington Territory. The remote location was deemed advisable because prizefighting, with its attendant betting was a misdemeanor in Portland, Oregon. The time and place of the match was passed in whispered words among potential spectators. By the day of the fight, however, it was no longer a secret. Steamboats ran special excursions from



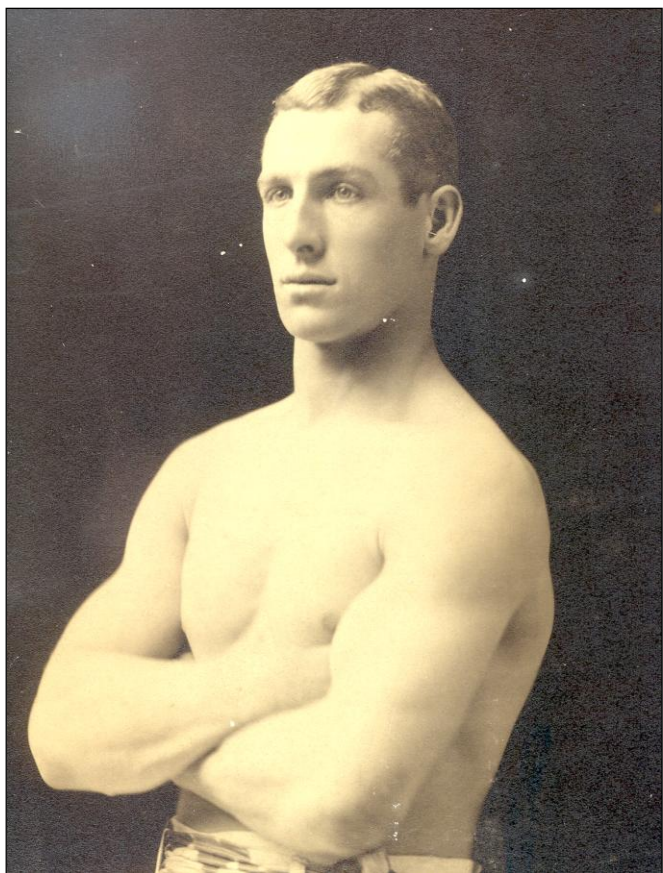
"Black Saturday" Aftermath - 1873

Portland to a landing near the site across the Columbia River from St. Helens, Oregon. About 1,000 enthusiasts found their way to the spectacle.

The match was a bare-knuckle fight, which ended in the third round when Campbell's nose was broken. Despite the outcome, Campbell impressed the fans and his opponent by his clever boxing. Jack Dempsey and David Campbell would become good friends. Dempsey had formed a traveling boxing exhibition show called the "Dempsey Combination" that would go on to feature himself and Campbell in sparring matches.

After returning to Portland, Campbell resumed his duties with the fire department. Leave had been granted and the department was proud to have the young athlete serve as their rugged, goodwill ambassador. His early assignments would include Hose Company #2 and Engine Company #1.

Dave Campbell's greatest day in the ring came in a bout with heavyweight (175 lb +) Gentleman Jim Corbett, a 23 year old from San Francisco. Jack Dempsey had long stumped for the fight believing that his strong, young friend could be victorious against the heavier Corbett (Campbell had always fought in the 160-174 lb weight class). The bout was arranged for December 28, 1889 to be held at the Portland Mechanic's Pavilion. Over 3,000 people crowded the Pavilion grounds.



When the bell rang after round ten, the referee called the fight a draw saying both men were fresh. Corbett was angry and wanted to fight another round. Police Chief Parrish refused to let the bout continue. Corbett vented his rage to the press in his dressing room:

"I shall write to San Francisco and tell them how they do things up here, it will kill sport in Portland! He didn't even give me a good sweat in the entire set."

Campbell countered:

"I think the fight was mine. The blows I gave him count for a great deal more than my nose-bleed, Mr. Corbett does not think of this."

Corbett went on to win the world heavyweight championship three years later, defeating John L. Sullivan in New Orleans in 1892 (the Corbett-Sullivan bout was the first championship contest using big gloves - before that, the weapons had been bare knuckles).

When the Multnomah Amateur Athletic Club (located in Columbia Hall on Second Street), organized in February 1891, they decided to employ an instructor in "the manly art of self-defense." Their instructor of choice was Dave Campbell. Although he had already become a Battalion Chief in the fire department, he took on the extra-curricular activity and taught boxing at the club for about five years.

As his official duties with the fire department became more demanding, he would resign from the boxing instructorship on September 16, 1904.

Meanwhile, Jack the "Nonpareil" Dempsey had made Portland his home. In 1886, he had married a Portland woman named Margaret "Maggie" Brady, who also happened to be David Campbell's cousin. Dempsey continued his boxing career but in 1891, came up against a fighter named Bob Fitzsimmons. Fitzsimmons defeated Dempsey, taking the middleweight championship and knocking Dempsey about so severely that he was permanently injured. His health deteriorated and in 1895, at age 32, he died of tuberculosis. His body was buried in Portland's Mt. Calvary Cemetery. His close friend, David Campbell, served as a pallbearer at his funeral.

David Campbell as District Engineer - 1892



In the meantime, Campbell had gained notice among senior members of Portland's fire department. Campbell learned quickly and was interested in all aspects of firefighting, from the physical to the scientific. Strong and able, he excelled in the many athletic competitions and challenges that this physical employment offered. He placed at or near the top in every firefighter's tournament. He would earn prizes in the dash at both the 100 and 400 yard distances.

Campbell rose fairly quickly through the ranks. He served as Foreman on Truck #1, then was appointed District Engineer. On February 26, 1892, David Campbell had been made 1st Assistant to Chief Robert Holman. Holman was succeeded by Joseph Buchtel and Campbell maintained his 1st Assistant position. On June 1, 1895 Campbell was appointed by Mayor George Frank to replace Buchtel as Chief Engineer. On the day Campbell is appointed, the *"Sunday Welcome"* editorializes that David Campbell will have a long and prosperous reign if, and only if, the department, *"is not used to further the schemes and ambitions of local politicians."*

Campbell was naturally gifted for the rigors of the political life of a Fire Chief. However, the 1890s were an era of "machine politics." Firefighters would see pay reductions and even a garnishing of their wages to finance political agendas of party bosses. S. R. Farrell was the Fire Commissioner who had chased out Buchtel, but was about to fall on his own sword. On January 21, 1896, a letter from Commissioner Farrell is made public in the *Oregonian*. In the letter Farrell complains of cuts made in his budget by the City Council. His request for \$101,000 has been pruned, first to \$89,000 and finally to \$85,000. This, according to Farrell, will mean a reduction of force by four companies, which will lead to a rise in insurance premiums that would wipe out the proposed cuts. By this time it appears that Mayor Frank felt confident enough in his own power to ignore Farrell's requests. Shortly after Farrell's letter appears in the *Oregonian*, Mayor Frank calls in the entire board and asks them to back both his own candidacy for re-election, plus that of a senatorial candidate named Mitchell.

On February 5, 1896, this item hits the paper:

Fire Board Is Out - *"Mayor George P. Frank yesterday morning removed the Portland Board of Fire Commissioners from office. His action is regarded as a grand coup in the interest of the political faction of which he is a leading representative, and as an effort to establish himself and his friends in office. He made a demand upon the board of commissioners that the members pledge political fealty to him, or go by the boards, and as a result their successors have been appointed...The question naturally is presented as to what effect this sudden change will have on Chief Campbell. It is likely that he will have to go, but not quite yet. He and Mayor Frank have had several closed interviews concerning the situation, the effect of which, it is believed, is a promise to throw the strength of the department vote to the support of Mayor Frank and his supporters."*

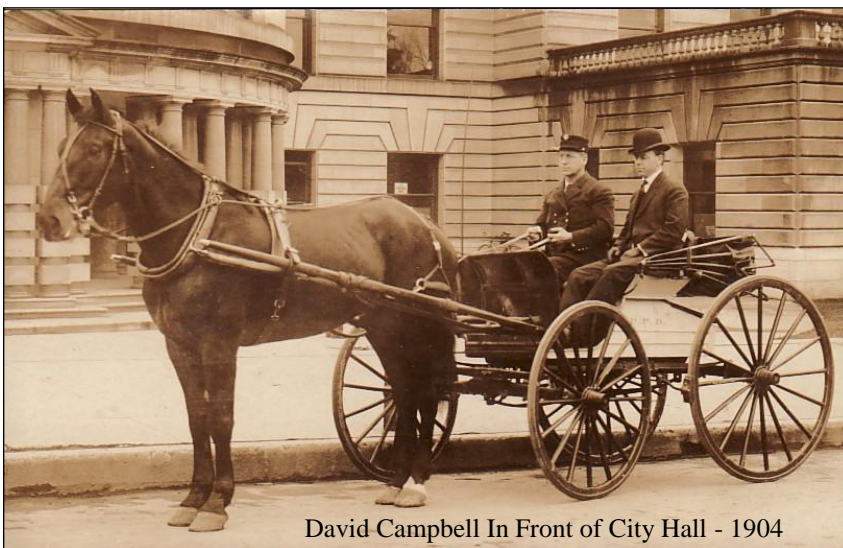
The politicization of the fire department was considered dangerous. On February 16, 1896 one of the new appointees, W.W. Terry, declined an appointment to the Board of Fire Commissioners for just that reason.

The entire matter was just another shovelful of dirt on a political grave Mayor Frank had been digging for himself. In June of 1896 he is swept out of office in the wake of a nationwide mania for political reform. Populist candidate Sylvester Pennoyer replaces him.

With the coming of Mayor Pennoyer in June of 1896, Campbell would lose his post as fire chief. The fire department and Campbell are central to much angst in city hall. On August 5, 1896, Fire Commissioner Paul Wessinger is asked by Mayor Pennoyer to resign. He is asked to resign first because he refuses to endorse the presidential aspirations of William Jennings Bryan. On top of that, Pennoyer and Wessinger are feuding over Pennoyer's reinstatement of firefighter Harry White, the Foreman of Hose Company #1.

Harry White happens to be a political hack who had leveraged votes for Mayor Pennoyer. At the time, R. D. Inman was chairman of the Fire Commission. Prior to Inman's run for office, Harry White had made insulting remarks about Inman while supporting another candidate. Wessinger suspended White for these statements. Pennoyer's reinstatement of Harry White results in Wessinger's resignation.

The same day Wessinger resigns local insurers send Pennoyer a letter denouncing the politicization of the department to which Pennoyer replies:



"I can attend to my business without their interference, and they may attend to theirs without my interference."

Support for Pennoyer would begin to fade. The citizens of Portland do not view their protection from fire as strictly Pennoyer's business. Even less popular is the replacement of experienced firefighters with "greenhorns" whose only qualification was a pledge to vote for W. J. Bryan.

The effects of politics begins to show in the performance of the Fire Department. A fire in a photography shop on Washington Street between 11th and 12th takes with it a plumbing shop, carpentry shop, steam dye works, and corset makers shop before inexperienced firefighters can effectively deploy equipment. Reports begin coming in of steamers losing their way to fires and teams of horses bolting in the hands of green drivers.

So the story began in 1895 with Chief Buchtel shaking down his men for money to defeat a proposed city charter unfavorable to Mayor Frank. By October of 1896, firefighters began noticing a reduction in their pay. After helplessly watching commissioners and chiefs come and go, their wages are again being garnished to finance a lobbying effort against another proposed charter, this time depriving Mayor Pennoyer of the power to appoint commissioners.

David Campbell, now frustrated by the performance of the greenhorn firefighters that had inhabited the department began suspending members for incompetency. While Campbell could have a quick temper, he also possessed a Scotsman's shrewd instinct for playing his cards close to the vest, which consistently earned him both respect and victory in such matters.

The politics would finally stabilize in 1898 with the election of Mayor William Mason. Mason would reinstate David Campbell as Fire Chief. Campbell began to focus his efforts on a new era and several important changes for the Fire Department.

Three main areas of fire department reform are pursued:

- The elimination of extra men in favor of a fully paid department
- The acquisition of a fireboat
- The change of administration from the political patronage system to a civil service system.

In his personal life, Campbell would wed 23 year old Wiebka Scherner on November 28, 1901 in the Calvary Presbyterian Church. The wedding was officiated by Reverend WB Gilbert. David's best man was RL Townsend and Wiebka's maid of honor was her sister, Anna Scherner. Gifts to the couple were numerous, including a silver tea service given by Engine and Truck 1. It is displayed in the Historic Belmont Firehouse of Portland Fire & Rescue. Wiebka was a popular young lady and gifted musician. Her quiet and somewhat retiring nature would contrast well with that of the fire chief and help to provide a grounded atmosphere at home after those tumultuous days at City Hall.

By 1900, Civil Service was an idea whose time had come. Since the formation of the paid fire department in 1883, it seemed a tree too ripe in votes and money for the Mayor or the Council not to shake. An initiative sent a proposal to the state legislature for a new city charter for Portland, which would provide Civil Service requirements for employees. In March of 1901, Governor Theodore Geer vetoed a bill for the new charter and its inclusion of Civil Service. In fact, most newspapers, the Police Chief, and Chief David Campbell were not favorable to Civil Service.

On January 23, 1903 a new city charter was filed in the office of the Secretary of State and on that day Portland Mayor George H. Williams appointed a Civil Service Commission. After months of research, the commissioners adopted a classification system grading all employees according to function and compensation. Rules for the administration of impartial testing of civil service applicants were outlined, as well as physical standards.

Rumors were freely released that most of the police officers and firefighters would be lost because members could not meet height or weight requirements. Some of the rumors originated with the Police Chief himself. Campbell approached the topic in a more levelheaded manner, largely by avoiding the press and pursuing his concerns on a factual basis. This was wise because fears concerning the wholesale abandonment of experienced firefighters turned out to be unfounded. In the end, the rehire rate for firefighters reapplying under civil service was 100%.

Campbell faced further controversy later in 1903. Just before midnight on December 17th, a fire at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Oak Street would break out. The headlines would read:

"SAVED FROM FIRE - Chinese Tenants Rescued from Flames - Police and Firemen do gallant work."

The paper would go on to report:

"The large three-story Sherlock and Bacon building occupied by over 150 Chinese tenants was completely gutted by fire last night. Heroic work by firemen saved many Chinamen from perishing in the flames. The celestials were struck dumb by the sight of the conflagration and many were dragged from the building, fighting all the time to return to their belongings. The mandarins are mourning the loss of four of their number. It is believed that the victims perished in one of the rank opium dens that riddled the building. The charred bodies will soon be removed from the lair where they slept in a coma-like state as the alarm was sounded and as the flames raged around the stupefied celestials. Losses on the buildings were well-covered by insurance but the Chinese tenants lost all their worldly belongings and many are now destitute. The fire originated in a Chinese restaurant owned by Kin Gin Gurr. Within a few minutes, firemen were on the scene but flames had already gained good headway and thick smoke filling the many partitions amongst innumerable bunks improvised throughout the squalid hallways."

Firefighters and police officers rushed into the building, each returning with struggling Chinese. The rescue continued until some 50 men were dragged out of the inferno. The dry partitions which stood but a few feet apart fueled the flames and complicated the efforts of the firefighters. By 1 AM the flames seemed under control and by 2 AM, the conflagration was subdued. Chief Campbell surveyed the situation,

Two days later the papers ran headlines with startling new allegations. They read:

"THIEVES AT FIRE - Trunks smashed open, Thousands of dollars in gold missing - Firemen accused."

The papers continued with:

"Serious charges are made against members of the Portland Fire Department by Chinese who were burned out by the disastrous fire on Second Street. The hapless Celestials are victims of a double misfortune with their homes being lost and the valuables taken. Trunks that withstood the raging flames were broken open and pilfered. This work they attribute to the Fire department. An investigation will be made by Chief Campbell. The followers of Confucius are also mourning the loss of four of their number whose charred remains were found in the

smoking ruins at daybreak. The dead men were thought to have been hidden in a reclusive corner of an opium den, having been stupefied by intoxicants during one of their grim rituals. All through the chilly hours of the early morning the sorrow-stricken Chinamen stood huddled in chattering groups watching fire and water ravage their effects. Inside the fireline, volunteers and regulars were kept hard at work stamping out numerous outbreaks of small fires. Finally, when the fire was out, the Mandarins were allowed to go inside. They availed themselves of this in a mad rush past the police cordon, intent upon reaching their caches. Shortly, a wail went out as the Chinamen began coming out with their trunks which had been smashed and looted. Charlie Young an influential member of the Asian community told reporters, "there is a current belief that firemen broke into their trunks and took money and jewelry. Someone did the deed and it appears that it might have been some of the firemen. I cannot say."

Chief Campbell was queried on the matter and replied with:

"I am slow to believe that any of the firemen stole the valuables. I shall make a thorough investigation. There is one thing for sure. If it should develop that the charges are true, it will be another showing of the necessity for a full-paid department. If any stealing was done, it was not the work of the regulars, for they are all honest boys. The character of the volunteers is hard to keep posted on. There is no provision for proper control."

As the origins of the fire were determined, the following story stated:

"The origin of the fire has been traced to the kitchen of a Fan Tan joint run by an individual known as Di Wah. He has been accused by his compatriots of having failed to turn in the alarm and having thus fought the inferno alone allowing the flames to take fatal hold. Indignation against him is high and rumors of assassination are rife. Total losses are valued at \$50,000. Damage to the Sherlock and Bacon estates is great and the destruction of the Dosshouse was complete."



1904 would find the implementation of Civil Service and a fully paid fire department would result. The name of Portland Paid Fire Department would change to Portland Fire Department. Substitutes would go on to supplement the firefighting forces in subsequent years, but not as it had been with extramens, who were volunteers only.

If the period from 1883

to 1904 was distinguished by the fight to adequately organize and staff a fire department, the new struggle was to put a developing technology in the hands of that department. In this David Campbell was assisted greatly both by the city fathers and his creative staff. In 1904, the first fireboat was launched and efforts to add more were underway. Cisterns and hydrants were being upgraded annually.

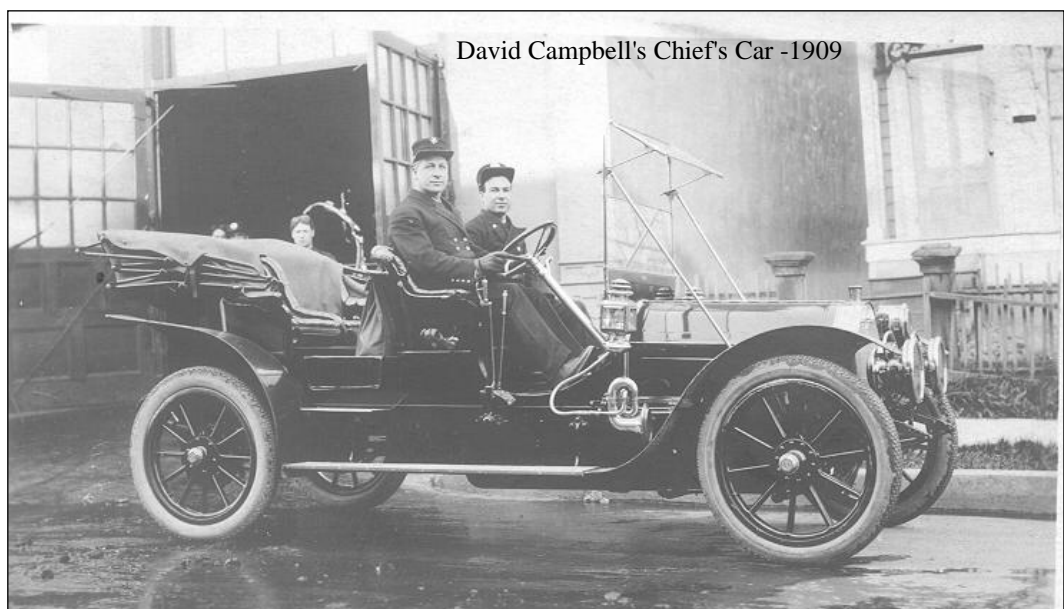
Between 1901 and 1906, the alarm system was consolidated for more efficiency under Superintendent George J. Walker. Until this time, alarms had been routed by the telephone company to one of two central switchboards on either the east or west side of the river. Walker advocated uniting these two independent stations as well as eliminating dependency on the telephone company whose operators, while willing, were not trained.

Furthermore, the noninterfering boxes (boxes installed on one of three circuits so that the signal from one was less likely to be interfered with by the signal from another) were subject to frequent short circuits, and worse, were still operated by keys held by "responsible persons" who had to be found before the box could be opened. By 1907 keyless boxes were being installed. The east side station was also eliminated and all circuits terminated at city hall central station.

By 1904 the city was growing rapidly. The discovery of gold in Alaska, and the Lewis and Clark Exposition brought adventure seekers and ordinary citizens looking for new opportunities. The population of Portland more than doubled in the four years following the census of 1900 (90,426 in 1900). The fire department as well as the rest of City Hall scrambled to keep pace.

Still, a fully paid department run by David Campbell was by-and-large a dedicated, well trained force. However, at times the outside world intruded into fire department business. In 1904, P. L. Willis led a move to have the Chief Engineer's position placed back in the hands of the Mayor for distribution as he so desired. Occasional charges of incompetence or drunkenness were made against the department. And in 1909 there was a scandal in which Campbell was charged with neglecting the upkeep of the hydrant system. Through it all, the department continued doing what it did best, fighting fires. However, the growing pains of a town becoming a city would show through the increase in the dollar losses from fire growing each year.

This was also a time in which David Campbell's reputation, not only in Portland, but across the west coast, continued to grow. In 1906 Campbell was unanimously elected by his peers as President of the Pacific Coast Fire Chiefs' Association.



A July 15, 1906 newspaper article would prove a harbinger of what would happen five years into the future. Chief Campbell and his executive staff (District Chief's Holden and Young) took a stand against the Standard Oil Company, whose plant was located on the East side of the Willamette River (not to be confused with the Union Oil Company). They claimed it was unsafe to have oil tanks within the city. They cited several examples of fires, at or near oil tanks, that presented potential for catastrophic fires. The Wolff & Zwicker Iron Works fire required more resources to protect the oil tanks on the adjacent property than could be dedicated to fighting the fire, which destroyed the Wolff & Zwicker facility. Campbell went on to acknowledge that the Standard Oil Company had done all they could to make their facility safe, but the danger of oil tanks simply did not belong within the city. History will share that Campbell's concerns were not heeded and oil tanks would remain in the city. This would be revisited later in 1911.

Automobiles were a significant and evolving technology. David Campbell was not being flashy, just practical, when he bought his first staff car in 1909. A Pierce Arrow with high wheels, right hand drive, coal oil lamps, and a rubber-bulb horn was not only faster than horses, it was cheaper to feed. At the time, a three horse team cost from \$750 to \$1,000 to maintain. David Campbell was an early and strong advocate of gasoline power. His advocacy led Portland's Fire Committee to Seattle to witness a demonstration of a horseless chemical engine in June 1910. The members were impressed by the speed and potential savings. Shortly after the demonstration the city ordered two American LaFrance chemical and hose engines capable of traveling at 45 mph. The last horse-drawn piece of fire apparatus would be purchased in 1911 and a fully motorized force would be achieved in April 1920.

In April of 1906 San Francisco was rocked by the greatest earthquake ever experienced by a U.S. city. The quake, and even more damaging fire, sent shock waves across the country. David Campbell and the entire department tried to take in the repercussions of the disaster and the lessons it brought in its wake. Increasing numbers of large oil fuel tanks were being located close in on the city's east side and these worried both east-side residents and Chief Campbell. Little did they know at the time how prophetic their concerns would prove.

On June 25, 1911, a Sunday morning, David and his wife Wiebka spent one of those rare close and quiet mornings of deep companionship at their home at 466 Jefferson Street. Wiebka would later share:

"We talked of so many things, of our life together and I cannot recall a happier day in all our married life. We visited my father, and in the evening, called on my sister who was not feeling well. We returned home late and David went over his business affairs with me. He explained a great many things and in careful detail."

On the morning of the following day, a call came in over the phone to David Campbell. He turned to his wife and said "they've turned in Box 267." He was already in uniform, and awaited his driver and car. As he left, Wiebka said, "You will be careful, won't you Dave?" Campbell smiled in an indulgent sort of way and waved his hand.

The Chief's Pierce Arrow raced east across the Hawthorne bridge as light but steady drizzle cut through the cold morning air. The driver slowed as they saw several horse-drawn fire companies making their way to East Salmon Street and Water Avenue, the site of the Union Oil facility. Crowds

of onlookers had begun to gather as the spectacle developed. Cordons were put up to keep them back. However, curious citizens driving buggies over hose lines would cut through some hoses, slowing the efforts of fire crews.

The alarm was not a routine fire. Box 267 came into the Central Alarm Station shortly after 7:45 AM. The Union Oil distribution plant utilized large petroleum tanks that were buried halfway underground. A pump used for moving oil had thrown a spark igniting gas that had accumulated in its motor pit. Experts claimed that these tanks should have been exposed for ventilation.

The Union Oil distributing plant was a huge building housing three large oil tanks and located between the Willamette River and railroad lines that paralleled the river. Engines and hose wagons were forced to maneuver through the maze of tracks in the switchyard behind the building. Shortly after the fire started the explosions began. This was not good. In previous oil tank fires the men had been blessed by full oil tanks that burned without exploding. On this day, tanks were partially full and the heat of the fire was causing the fumes inside to expand. Two full tanker cars in the switchyard were ordered dragged away. With each explosion, a new column of flame and smoke erupted, unfolding slowly against the heavy gray sky.

At approximately 8:15 AM, Campbell and his assistant Chiefs, Biddie Dowell and John Young, led a crew of firefighters to the north wall of the plant and began throwing water on it. Twenty men on the roof of the Standard Oil Company building a hundred feet away poured water onto the roof of the Union Oil building. Strung along Salmon Street, forty firefighters shot streams of water against the flames. Engine companies 7 and 13 fought the fire from the corner of Water Avenue and Salmon Street.



At 8:35 AM, the first large tank blew. The muffled roar rocked the ground under their feet. The fire was now out of control and Campbell knew it. He yelled to Dowell to cut off the suction hoses and move Engine 13 back from the flames in the event of a larger explosion. Biddie Dowell and John Young followed Campbell towards the building. Police Patrolman Evans looked at Campbell and then grabbed his arm telling him not to enter. Campbell wrenched his arm free and said "I've got to go in there, we can't fight it from outside!"

The heat was intense and at 8:39, there was an ominous rumble. The fire forced Dowell and Young toward the exit as Campbell continued inward. A tank explosion hurled a ball of flame and smoke to the sky. A second tank blew, propelling bodies across the street. John "Paddy" Bird, a stoker on an engine crew, was bending over to pick up a bag of coal to stoke the fire in his steamer. It was the last act he remembered before waking up in a pile of rubble across the street, his coal sack on his stomach.

Huge tank heads flew 200 feet into the air. Concrete chunks rained down on panicked witnesses. The west end of the roof lifted off of the north wall, which measured 20 feet by 125 feet. The wall was tossed across the street, and the roof fell back to the ground.

Biddie Dowell exited just before the explosion. John Young, behind Dowell but still in the doorway, was blown across the street. Bleeding badly from the head, he tried to issue orders until he was forced into an ambulance. Patrolman Evans was blown across the street, landing in a mud puddle yards away. His last sight before the explosion was David Campbell, silhouetted against the flames, holding up his arms to brace against the falling roof.

By 10:15 AM, when the fire was brought under control, word had passed from engine company to engine company that Chief Campbell had gone into the building and not come out. Rescue efforts began in earnest at 10:40 AM, slowly, nobody quite wanting to find what they knew was there. A body was eventually found, huddled on the ground with clothes half burned away. At first they could not be sure of the body's identity. The buttons on the coat bore the insignia "F.D." with no sign of rank. Shortly before entering the building, David Campbell had borrowed the coat of one of his men. It seemed only fitting that he would die in the borrowed coat, a coat that had served a frontline firefighter. This was how he had always seen his role and how he had been envisioned by his department since he was issued his Exempt Fireman's Certificate in 1882.

Because of his varied activities, his kindness, and his pleasant personality, David Campbell made many friends. When his funeral was held on June 28, 1911, it was attended by an estimated 150,000 mourners. The funeral procession was something to behold and of the likes Portland had never seen.



David Campbell's casket was trimmed in gray and banked with beautiful floral offerings. Many were from fire departments across the Pacific Northwest. Each company of the Portland Fire Department contributed a floral piece and the department collectively gifted a blanket of lilies and carnations which completely shrouded the casket. Hundreds of additional flower arrangements were given by friends and citizens of Portland.

The funeral procession began at SW 7th and Alder Street at the Elks Temple of which Campbell was a member. As the procession began, a signal was sent to Fire Alarm Telegraph, who in turn signaled the bell in the tower of Engine Company 1 to be tolled at intervals of 15 seconds as the procession passed. The procession was led by a platoon of Police Officers followed by the



Chief's automobile. The Pierce Arrow was draped in mourning and driven by the Chief's chauffeur, Thomas Gavin. On the seat next to Gavin lay Campbell's helmet and coat and at the place where Campbell's feet would rest was his faithful dog "Cole." Cole had been a constant companion of Campbell's for over four years. The Collie was clearly saddened by the events.

Next in line was the Musicians Union playing a funeral march, followed by the Firemen's Band with their instruments draped in mourning. Following next were 125 Portland Firefighters who were detailed to follow the Chief for one last time. The procession continued with over 100 retired firefighters, some of very advanced age. Behind them were visiting fire chiefs from across the Northwest and the Police Band with their instruments draped in mourning. Several hundred members of the Portland Elks marched next.



The procession concluded with automobiles carrying the pallbearers and relatives of David Campbell. And while not planned as such, hundreds of friends and common citizens of Portland followed behind to express their mourning.

Campbell's hearse was drawn by his three favorite fire horses, Baldy, Bob, and Bid. He had driven

them as a team in his early days as a firefighter.

The procession left SW 7th and Stark and traveled east on Stark to 4th. It then turned south and proceeded on 4th to Jefferson. From there it turned east on Jefferson to 1st Avenue. Turning south on 1st, the procession moved to Mill Street, where it opened ranks and permitted the vehicles carrying relatives to pass between the marchers. The entire group then proceeded to River View Cemetery, Campbell's final resting place.



The graveside service was conducted by Reverend J.A. Leas. He offered a simple but impressive committal service of the Evangelical English Lutheran Church. As Campbell's body was lowered into his grave, the Firemen's Band played "Nearer My God to Thee."

The pallbearers chosen to accompany Campbell for his final passage were W.W. Banks, C.J. Cook, Charles J. Ilton, A.G. Long, J.W. Sweeney,

and Robert Townsend. Honorary pallbearers were John F. O'Shea, Samuel Connell, S.C. Pier (members of the City's Fire Committee Executive Board) Richard Everding, John Montag, and Marcus Fleishner (former members of the City's Fire Committee Executive Board).

Wiebka Campbell, David's widow, was accompanied by her brother-in-law W.D. Allard, Mrs. A.G. Long, and Mrs. Charles Ilton.

The offices of the City of Portland closed from 12 noon to 3 PM to allow city employees an opportunity to attend the funeral.

In a later reminiscence (*Oregon Journal*, March 13, 1932) by Captain William Kerrigan, David Campbell's funeral was recalled:

"The chief was one of the most popular men in the city. For his funeral, the whole town turned out. It was the biggest funeral in the history of the city. Only Henry Weinhard's funeral could compare with it for floral tributes and the number of persons. They buried Dave from the Elks Club, then at Broadway and Stark. The cortege went up 4th. The sidewalks were not big enough to accommodate the people, and they swarmed into the streets."

The *Evening Telegram* suggested that a fund should be raised to pay for a memorial to Chief Campbell. The newspaper stated:

"The thousands of friends...the chief had made in his veteran service have been so ineffably shocked and sorrow stricken over his untimely taking off that they have not had time to think of what they should do to assist in handing down his name to future generations as an inspiration to heroism and self-sacrifice..."

The *Evening Telegram* went on to say it would receive contributions for such a memorial fund. One person sending in his contribution included a note with his check stating that it was a tribute to Dave's having been *"always on the square."*

The memorial fund was originally intended to serve two purposes. The first was to raise money through public subscription to create the "David Campbell Fund" for the relief of disabled and retired firefighters. The second is to erect a monument in honor of the deceased Chief.

George H. Himes, registrar of the Oregon Historical Society and a close friend of Campbell's said at the time:

"In view of the appalling death of Fire Chief David Campbell, while in the line of duty, it certainly is timely for the citizens of Portland to consider erecting a monument to his memory. The best monument to David Campbell and the one that would appeal to him more strongly than a monument of any other form, if his unrecognizable lips could speak, would be the creation of an irreducible fund, the interest on which to be used for the relief of firemen and their families. There is a strong reason why this should be done. The life of a fireman is extra hazardous and hence he cannot get any life insurance. The call should be for not less than \$250,000, an average of \$1 apiece for the present population of Portland. I would nominate the daily newspapers of this city as a commission to carry out this project."

Maurice Johnson, a ten-year-old schoolboy from Rose City Park School was quoted in a tribute that was published in the *Oregonian*:

"I loved Chief Campbell and I want everyone to know how good he was. He always had a smile and a kind word for all the school children. Whenever we were late he used to take us up to school in his auto just a-whizzing, and at noon we used to hurry back from lunch and he would let us ride with him. I think he was the best chief that ever lived...."

Campbell was buried at River View Cemetery in Southwest Portland. He rests in Section 9, Lot 173, Grave 8 with a large, but otherwise unremarkable tombstone engraved with his name. No note of his significance to Portland is mentioned.

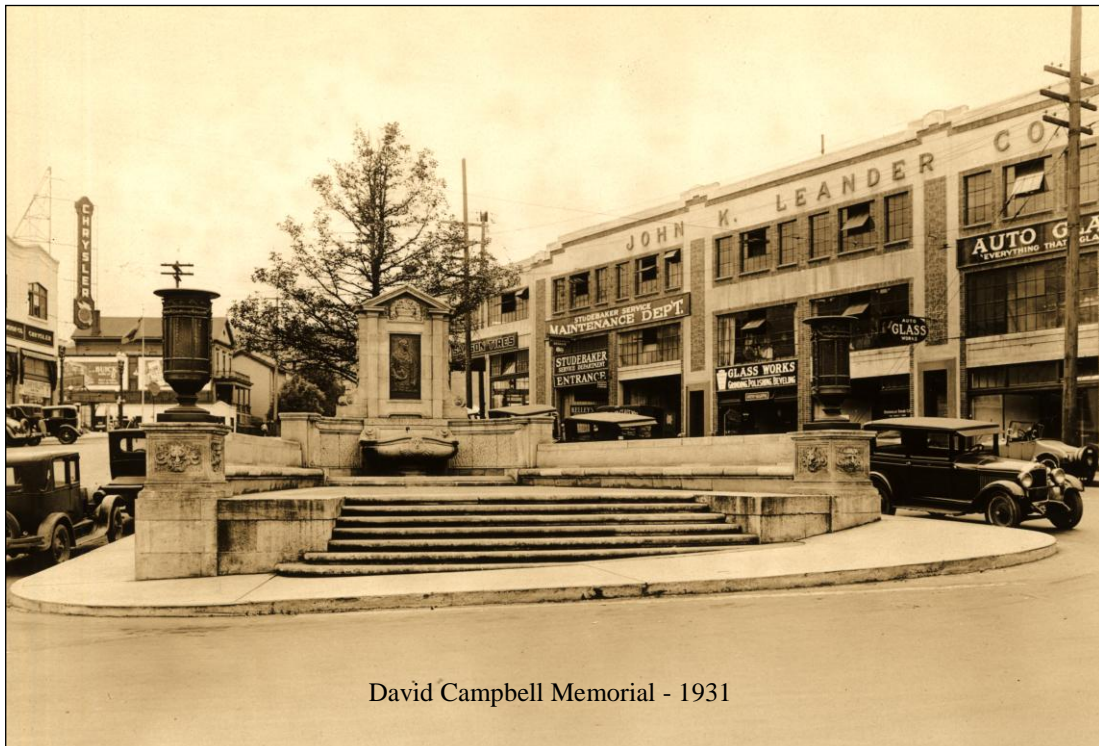
The death of Chief Campbell became a catalyst for change and tribute. Change came through increased awareness of fire prevention in Portland. Public outcry at the fatal outcome of the Union Oil Company fire in a close-in neighborhood led to zoning changes that banned new construction of fuel plants within residential areas. New building codes went into effect in an attempt to make fuel warehouse and storage buildings safer and insurance incentives were given to increase compliance with new fire codes.

One of the great tributes to Campbell came long before a memorial in his name was completed. In 1913, a new fireboat named the "David Campbell" was launched. Wiebka Campbell, his widow, would christen the boat which at the time was considered to be the ultimate in fireboat sophistication.

Another tribute to Campbell was the annual David Campbell Memorial Service. It would be held each year on the anniversary of his death, June 26th. Originally, it would be held at his grave site in Riverview Cemetery. In 1928, the service would move to the David Campbell Memorial Plaza, the tribute to Campbell's service as Fire Chief and citizen of Portland.



Seventeen years after his death, on June 28, 1928, the David Campbell Memorial was unveiled. It is located in the triangular lot formed by West Burnside Street and S.W. Chapman (today 18th) and 19th Avenues. The memorial consists of a stone terrace and a limestone cenotaph on which is a bronze bas-relief of Chief Campbell. It cost \$35,000, which was raised by private contributions, particularly through one very substantial gift by a donor who asked to remain anonymous.



David Campbell Memorial - 1931

The bas-relief, showing David Campbell in his uniform and holding his Chief's helmet in his hand, was done by Avard Tennyson Fairbanks. Mr. Fairbanks made the sculpture in 1927 while he was professor of sculpture at the University of Oregon. It was brought to Portland in 1928 and placed on the stone slab above the fountain and pool.

The David Campbell Memorial is important in purpose, but also in design. Paul Cret, a nationally-recognized architect who had a significant influence on American architecture culture of the twentieth century, created the monument. As a professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania for 34 years, Cret had a far-ranging influence on American architecture, educating generations of architects in the principles of Beaux-Arts design. His teaching methods reflected those that he learned at the École des Beaux-Arts, and under his authority, the University of Pennsylvania architecture program became one of the preeminent programs in the country. His teachings are evident in the David Campbell Memorial, which prominently demonstrates the Beaux-Arts style. He was beloved and respected by his students, as is evidenced by Ernest F. Tucker, Jr., a former student and Portland architect, who recommended Cret to design the David Campbell Memorial in Portland.

The *David Campbell Memorial* would become a tribute not only to Chief Campbell, but to all Portland Firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

Around the bas-relief is this legend:

"Erected by many friends in honor of David Campbell."

Below his portrait is this statement:

"Chief of the Portland Fire Department 1893-1911, who lost his life in the performance of his duty June 26, 1911. Greater Love Hath No Man Than This."

