

1912

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On April 29, 1912 Capt. A. F. Coggins was appointed to the position of Acting Chief of Dept. at a salary of \$ 1,337.57 per. year. This was the first time in the Town's history that a permanent member held a chief officer position.

Effective at mid night May 13, 1912, personnel re-assignments took place on Chem. 1 and Comb. 2 at the Central Sta. and on Comb. 1 and Eng. 1 at the Beach Station. Hose 3 at Point Shirley was <sup>also</sup> re-organized with Lieut. R. W. Patch in command. Mr. E. Lozger had been in command of this company in its hand-drawn days and held the rank of Capt. One of the reasons for Mr. Patch's appointment was the fact that he owned the necessary horse.

In an order issued in July it was stated that under the new wage scale, permanent members of the dept. shall consider themselves on call on their days off at no additional pay.

On Thurs. morning July 11, a severe electrical storm was severely felt in Winthrop. A bolt of lightning crashed through an open window of the Central fire station and struck Chief Coggins while he was tending to the fire alarm board.

The storm swept in from the west in all its fury at about 11:30 and another bolt of lightning hit the E. B. Newton School starting a lively fire.

ABOUT 1912

The above picture of the Shirley St fire house and the horse drawn equipment is of the era when the Town was changing over to motorized facilities.

The fire house is still there, over fifty years later, but horses have not seen the inside of this building since then.

The fireman farthest to the right of the single white horse is R. Elden Crosby -- the others at present not identified.

1912

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Arthur Teeksbury, Janitor of the school, ran to the Central station to report a fire on the second floor. In a matter of minutes, heavy smoke was pouring from the cupola. It was a difficult fire to fight as the lightning caused at least four fires between the second floor and attic.

The bolt apparently entered through the cupola as no holes could be found in the roof. The damage was set by school officials at \$8,500.-. The dept. used at this fire 2,000 feet of hose and 400 feet of ladders. The all-out was at 5:10 P.M.

Fireman Sanford Eldridge was suspended from duty on Sept. 30 after being accused of causing injuries to the two horses of Eng. one's team while returning from box 26. After a lengthy investigation, Eldridge was returned to duty on Oct. 4 with no loss of pay.

During the year the dept. purchased its first Chief's car from Harry A. Smith. It was a 1912 Buick model 10 roadster with a price tag of \$400.00. It was equipped with a brass bell, several fire extinguishers and other small tools. This vehicle proved invaluable in answering many minor calls for assistance thereby relieving other apparatus.

\* \$200.00?

1913

75

Starting from an overheated furnace, a fire broke out in a house at 36 Plummer Ave. occupied by John McNaught and burned with intense fury shortly after 11:00 A.M. on Feb. 10, 1913. At about 10:50 Mr. McNaught's daughter smelled smoke and after investigating from the attic down, she discovered it was coming from the cellar. When she foolishly opened the cellar door she was nearly overcome by the tremendous blast of heat and smoke.

She quickly mustered the family together and instead of calling for help, a bucket brigade was formed. Not reaching the flames with any effectiveness, they frantically fought the fire for over five minutes. Finally one member of the family ran to the corner of Buchanan and Pleasant Sts. and pulled box 61.

The delayed alarm allowed the blaze to spread beyond control of the local dept. and on his arrival, Chief Coggins ordered a second alarm. Firemen made a daring rescue of Mr. McNaught's 90 year old mother who, in the confusion, was forgotten in her upper floor bedroom. The fire was brought under control after an hour's battle, but the dwelling was destroyed.

1913

(76)

Four days later on Feb. 14, three more rescues were made over ladders in a fire at 25 Teakshury St. at an early hour.

At 6:31 A.M. box 16 was received and first arriving apparatus found the three family house heavily charged with smoke.

It was reported that John Walsh, his wife and sister were still in the building. The Wheeler and Melven families, occupying the first and second floors had safely escaped the fire. Ladder one's crew quickly laddered the third floor and after taking much punishment, located and removed the three victims.

This fire, caused by a defective flue in the cellar, extended up through the roof.

Walled in by flames and prostrated by heat, smoke and shock, Daniel McReery of Winthrop St. was rescued ~~by~~ from a blazing houseboat moored near the Pleasant Park Y.C. by occupants of a nearby vessel on March 7, 1913. ~~He and~~ McReery and two other owners of the boat, Capt. W.E. Clark and Robert McLean, were melting tar on a stove in preparing to seal some leaks in the craft. Carelessly, they

1913

(77)

allowed the tar to boil over turning the cabin into an inferno. Clark and McLean dove through windows to safety, but McRury was overcome and fell back into the fire. The rescuers, Richard Green and Louis Seach, rowed the three victims ashore where first aid was applied by firemen.

McRury, with third degree burns of the face, neck, arms and hands was rushed to the hospital by Chief Coggins in the Chief's car. Firemen were able to reach the burning craft before the hull was totally destroyed.

In 1913, Win. firemen enjoyed a form of entertainment still seen today at firemen's Musters. It was the tug-of-~~war~~<sup>war</sup> held at the old Dream Theatre across from the present Beach fire station. The competition for the Woolcott Cup provided some close contests between teams from both stations.

Three contests were held on Nov. 21, 28 and Dec. 5. The Central station team won the cup with Charlie Berrill as team captain. Other members of the team were: Bill McLaughlin, Simon Rock, Ellis Floyd and Jim Sheerin. Tim McCarthy coached and Tim Mahoney was the referee.

1914

78

On Monday afternoon Jan. 26, 1914, Winthrop's new \$5700.00 Robinson ladder truck was delivered from St. Louis, Mo. Equipment included a full compliment of ground ladders, forcible entry tools and chemical tanks and hose. This truck was placed in service <sup>as Ladder one</sup> at the Central station replacing the horse-drawn truck on Jan. 29.

Old Ladder 1 was re-furbished to a degree and later in the year was placed in service as Ladder 2 at the Beach station with ~~two~~<sup>3</sup> horses.

On Feb. 9 E. H. Wyman was appointed mechanic in charge of motor apparatus with Leon Woods his assistant.

Also on Feb. 9 the new Ladder one had its first run. An alarm from box 26 was received at 10:15 P.M. for a fire in the Lighter House on Cliff Ave. ~~The large rooming house was heavily involved in fire in the attic.~~ All of the fifteen guests managed to escape to the street unharmed. <sup>before the</sup> arrival of the apparatus. The fire, confined to the attic and roof was brought under control quickly and the all out was sounded at 11:20 P.M.

~~July 19, 24 (Win Rev.)~~

June 25, 1914 - Salem conflagration 1:30 P.M.

1,376 beds. lost over 253 acres  
fire  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mi. wide,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile long

20,000 homeless

10,000 out of work

\$15,000,000.00 est. loss



Oct. 1915

79

There were, in the past, many times when the exhausted condition of the <sup>fire</sup> houses caused some serious situations. The increased running combined with old age was now taking a noticeable effect on the animals. On Oct. 12, 1915, while responding to box 45 at 9:30 A.M., Ladder ~~one~~ <sup>two's</sup> houses "Don" and "Dan" acted up and caused an accident to the truck on Hermon St. Don, a veteran fire house was simply unable to keep up the pace of his younger partner Dan. Dr. Harris tended to both houses and recommended that Don ~~they~~ be retired.

On Sun. Oct. 17, old "Della", one of the department's finest houses, became exhausted while responding to two back to back false alarms from box 32 and 29. She collapsed in the shafts and put Hose one temporarily out of service. Hose 3 covered Hose 1 until a replacement for "Della" arrived.

The retirement of the two houses was sorrowful news to those who thrilled at the sight of the animals racing to an alarm giving their complete performance.

Later in the year an alarm was given for a house fire on Cottage Hill. When the motorized apparatus reached the scene at the same time as the house-drawn apparatus

Oct. 1915

(80)

From the Beach station, it was clearly evident that the time had come for greater motorization.

There was now no question that auto fire engines were faster than the finest horses had been. The new motor driven apparatus did not need oats and hay, nor the services of a veterinarian. They did not require constant exercising or shoeing and few firemen really missed stable duty. The motor fire engine had by now proved itself more efficient, and in the long run cheaper to operate.

At the end of 1915 the total mileage of all apparatus was 702. The motor driven apparatus used 1,560 gal. chem., threw 881 ft. of ladders and laid 13,000 ft. of hose. The horse drawn apparatus used 408 gal. of chem., threw 502 ft. of ladders and laid 4,950 ft. of hose.

There were 160 alarms during the year of which 26 were working fires.

1916

81

A conflagration of undetermined <sup>origin</sup> ~~cause~~ raged through the Ocean Spray section on Sat. Jan 22, 1916, destroying seven buildings and heavily damaging six others. At 11:25 P.M. box 24 was sounded for a building fire at 37 Mermaid Ave. and when the apparatus arrived, this building, the "Waverly" cottage, was fully involved and had extended to the entire east side of the four story "Monarch" at 35 Mermaid Ave.

Chief Woolcott immediately ordered a second and third alarm bringing Winthrop's Engine one and Hose 3, Revere's Motor Combination B, Chelsea Eng. 2 and Boston's Engines 5 and 11. To the fire. An off shore wind blew a gale from the south-west driving the flames before it in a zig-zag pattern. The fire, discovered by Peter Nelson of Bartlett Parkway, was totally out of control before Engine one had up sufficient steam and the "Monarch" was a tower of seething flames. So erratic was the spread of the fire, placement of apparatus became nearly impossible but assignments were as follows: Winthrop Eng. 1 was hooked up at Trident Ave. and Shore Drive and pumped two lines. Comb. 2 and Sod. 1 under command of Assist. Chief Bangs threw up a water curtain on Mermaid Ave. in a vain attempt to protect the

1916

Originating from an undetermined cause at 11:25 PM on Sat. Jan 22, 1906 the four story apartment house Monarch and thirteen other buildings were either totally or partially destroyed.

1916

Boulevard Hotel. Reeve Comb. B under command of Capt. William Pratt, took much punishment at Shore Drive and Mermaid Ave. but saved the "Lincoln" cottage. Chelsea Eng. 2, under the command of Chief David Hudson, took a hydrant on Shirley St. and ran two lines up Coral Ave. Being driven from their position many times, they won a hard battle and saved 30 Coral Ave.

Boston Eng. 5 with Capt. M. F. Jay was spotted on a hydrant on Shirley St. and ran two lines to their hose wagon on Mermaid Ave. opposite Win. Comb. 2. Eng five's wagon had a deck gun which was very effective at this location. Win. Hose 1 and "Boston Eng. 11", commanded by Capt. Cornelius Seary made their stand at Shore Dr. and Coral Ave. where they defended the 3 story "Billows."

This fire totally consumed the "Monarch", the "Waverly", the "Olympus" at 39 Mermaid, the "Columbian" at 41 Mermaid, the "Sealand" at 191 Shore Dr., a dwelling at 190 Shore Dr., a two-family house at 187 Shore Dr. and a single family house at 44 Coral Ave.

This \$100,000.00 fire was <sup>probably</sup> ~~possibly~~ caused by vandals in the unoccupied "Waverly" cottage but the possibility of an undetected cellar fire in the "Monarch" was not ruled out.

ABOUT 1918

Group of thirty firemen, standing, and eight of the old-timers, sitting, in front of Center (Pauline Street) fire house -- occasion not stated. Of those sitting the third from the left is a Mr Walton and the third from the right is W<sup>m</sup> C. Ham. Among the identified firemen are: -

Howrie Woods	R. Eldon Crosby	Charlie Burrell
Frank Floyd	Clarence Collins	George Floyd
Millard Smith jr	Tim Mc Carthy	Howard Perkins
Elie Floyd	Sam Brown	Harry Newton

June 12, 17

1917

new Chandler Chief's car. \$420.00

del. and

On July<sup>17</sup>, the dept's 2<sup>nd</sup> motorized ladder truck was placed<sup>1</sup> in service at the Beach Station. This truck, similar to the one bought in 1914, <sup>as L-2</sup> was built by Maxim Fire App. in Middleboro, MA at a cost of \$5,100.00. It was fully equipped with ground ladders, tools, and a chem. tank.

Later in July, 3 horses, no longer needed, were sold for \$500.00

On 7/30, ~~Harold Perkins~~ fire fighters Harold Perkins, Charles Burrell & James Sheehan<sup>R</sup> were granted a leave of absence with pay because of their call to duty with the Winthrop Machine Beer Co. of the

\* because of ~~the~~ <sup>Mass. State</sup> over involvement in W.W.I. (went to France with Amer. Expeditionary forces)

On<sup>a</sup> Mon. ~~Sept~~ morning in Sept., a family of 3 barely escaped flames when they became trapped on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a house on Cottage Ave. A neighbor, George Harris, discovered the fire at 0200 and notified the fire dept. As flames broke through the roof of the 2 1/2 ~~7~~ bld, Harris forced the front door and rescued Mrs. SCATES. Husband Hollis and his daughter managed to follow safely. Damage was set at \$5,000.00.

1918

Eng. 2 Ahrens - Fox triple comb.  
(\$8,539.00) 750 GPM. 1<sup>st</sup> motorized  
engine 4/18 - (\$12,500. - ?)  
triple comb.

In April, the towns first motorized pumping engine arrived and after acceptance + tracking, was placed in service as Engine 2 at Pauline St. Built by Ahrens Fox in CINCINNATI, OHIO, it carried 600? ft. of 2½" hose and had a pumping capacity of 750 GPM. The price for this engine was \$8,539.00 (\$12,500. - ?)

Later in April, Combination 2 went to the Beach Sta. and with some modifications, ~~to both~~ was able to tow Eng 1's steamer. This move eliminated the need for 2 horses which went to the Park and Street Depts.

On Wed. May 22 at 0230, the city of Revere called for help at a three alarm fire on Beach Street Ave in the Beachmont section. Eng. 2 and Ladder 1 resp. to the fire which involved a large wooden warehouse and an HALL'S stable. Eng. 2 pumped for many hours helping to prevent a potential conflagration atop the hill.



1918 Chandler  
Chief's buggy

1919

On Sept. 25 at 1:40 AM, firefighters were summoned to a reported building fire at the "McNeil Block" which was located at 199 Winthrop St. Upon arrival of Eng. 2 and Ladder 1, heavy smoke was showing from all floors of the three story wood frame building.

Ladderman Wm. A. Floyd and others entered the upper floors and woke all occupants. Several rescues were also made. The fire, in the cellar of the "Sweeney and Rich Grocery Store" had spread to the cellar of an adjacent vacant store on Madison Ave.

Because of the immediate life hazard, a second alarm was struck for box 68 bringing help from Boston and Revere. No loss of life occurred but several minor injuries to firefighters were reported.

1920

"General alarm" was the excited cry spreading rapidly throughout town shortly after 10:45 on Saturday, Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>. Box 34 at Almont and Cross Sts. had been pulled for a fire in the Almont St. School.

First to arrive at the scene, Chief John Tewksbury ordered the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> alarms as he feared the fire would extend to several nearby structures.

As the large 2½ story wood frame school burned, a fierce hot air explosion occurred severely burning the eyes of fire lieutenant John McMichael.

Mutual aid responded from Dover, Chelsea and Boston. The Fort Banks fire Dept. responded immediately when a soldier spotted the fire and reported it to the base fire station.

The 32 year old building was built at a cost of \$100,000.00 and was now a total loss. Thankfully, the fire occurred on a Saturday instead of a school day when the school's 9 rooms would have been occupied with 325 pupils.

The cause was very difficult to determine due to the total destruction, but a defective furnace was suspected.

1920

One of the most spectacular fires in many years occurred at 1:00 A.M. on Friday, July 31, when the buildings of the "Wulthrop Pure Ice Co." were destroyed. at the end of Argyle St.

Chief Felcher quickly ordered the 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm when he realized the distance from the fire to available hydrants would require long lines of hose. Also, there had been a delayed response causing the fire to gain terrific headway. The delay was caused by a motorist who saw the fire in the distance and pulled box 26 which was at least a half mile away. Mr. Young of 3 Bayard St. reported the fire location after the pulling of box 26, but the damage was done.

Chief Kimbal with Devere Eng. 3 along with the Port Banks F.D. did a commendable job supplying much needed water to the fire. At the height of the fire, Chief Kimbal barely escaped death when a falling wall grazed him.

Covering companies were sent to several locations in the Highlands to extinguish roof and glass fires caused by fire brands which landed on the area far over an hour.

The cause of the fire, if not arson, was probably sparks from a passing train.

1921

On Jan. 31, the permanent men started working the "Two platoon system." This required the hiring of two more men bringing the permanent force to ten. Under this system the men worked 5 shifts of 24 hrs. each with 1 hour off for each of 3 meals. The salaries were \$31.00 a week for first year, \$33.00 wk. for 2nd year and \$35.00 wk. for 3rd yr. The men were compensated for responding to alarms when off duty.

Shortly before noon on April 12, large volumes of smoke were seen rising over the Court Park area. Mr. E. Montgomery, a Boston fireman assigned to Engine 5 in E.B. was off duty and at his father's home at 137 Court Rd. He was working on his car in the driveway when a man unknown to him stopped to question him about the Army building. Shortly after the man left, the smoke was noticed and the alarm was given.

Chief Belcher, just to arrive, quickly sized up the situation and ordered a second alarm bringing Revere Eng. 3, Easton Eng. 5 and 11 to the fire. The smoke was the worst ever encountered by many of the men and the fire was fought in relays.

Lawrence Burns of Ladder 2 suffered a severe cut to a ~~the~~ hand and was sent to the hospital. Henry Keough of Eng. 2 received a severe cut to a hand and burned eyes. Willard F. Smith and Al Teer'sbury were overcome and removed from the roof. Also Capt Loggins and the off duty Boston fireman Montgomery were also suffering burns and smoke inhalation. All but a few were transported to the hospital.

This building, originally at Lynn Beach, was brought to Wm. by barge and was used as a dwelling and club house. Later it was used as the Armory for the Whittois Machine & Gun Co.

- OVER -

1922

~~The most recent~~  
~~fire of any~~

A near disaster was averted ~~at~~ at 2:44 A.M. on Apr. 19<sup>22?</sup> when box 68 was pulled off for a build. fire at Wm. / Jeff. Sts. by Police Officer <sup>Biel</sup> Wells

The 3 story build. housed the store of Andrew Verdi with apts. above. Officer Wells with Officer <sup>DAN</sup> Beckley entered the smoke filled build. and barely managed to evacuate the tenants safely.

The fire, believed to have originated in the \_\_\_\_\_ raced up the walls and partitions causing over \$10,000 in damage. No injuries were reported.

1923

A new hose wagon with chemical tanks was built by the members of the department. ~~The~~ <sup>NEW</sup> 1923 Ford "T" ~~was~~ <sup>chassis</sup> purchased from Wuthrop Motor Sales ~~at~~ on Woodside Ave. for \$500.00. This apparatus went in service in June as "CHEM. 1" at the Central station.

The "Kelley" Combination 2 at the Central station is 13 yrs. old and getting tired. The town appointed a committee to study the need for new apparatus. As a result of the study, Town Meeting approved funds for a new engine. ~~The~~ Athens-fox was awarded the contract for a new pumper to be delivered next year.

\* <sup>THURS.</sup> At 11:00 P.M. on a cold night in late December, a fire near Bennett's Ledge (Belle Isle) was spotted by Wuthrop Police Officer Walter George ~~and the Barry brothers of Island St. who were on Main St.~~ who pulled box #5 at the corner of Marshall + Main Sts.

The building, a boat building shop, was fully involved. ~~The~~ Another building close by was used for winter storage of many boats + yachts. In the yard near the beach were another 50 to 100 ~~boats~~ various other sailing craft.

Chief Belcher directed his men to protect the exposures since the original fire building ~~was gone~~ and four boats were lost. This fire was next to Walter Baker's Gas Station approximately opposite #42 Main St. The loss was over \$10,000.

7/20 Box 133 11:12A to 6:00A ?

→ 12/27 Box 45 11:22 P.M.

According to records, the dept. owns 3,250' of 2½" hose — the most in dept's history

\*

1924

triple  
comb.

On Sept. 11, Eng. one's new Ahrens-Fox<sup>1</sup> sampler went in service at the Beach station. The cost to the Town was \$12,600.00 fully equipped. It had a four cyl. eng. developing 80 H.P. and had a pumping capacity of 1,000 G.P.M. It carried 1200 feet of 2½" hose and a 40 gallon chemical tank. \* No longer needed, the old steamer was sold on November 25. It is unknown what became of the old "Kelly."

Also during Sept., Capt. Alonzo Coggins requested his pension. He had put in 37 yrs. of service, 28 of them as Supt. of Fire Alarm. His pension was granted and was to take effect on 1/1/25.

\* with 200' of 1" chem. hose.

\*



1925

In April the dept. purchased a used roadster from Wm. Motor Sales for \$148.50. The perm. members of the department modified this car into a light-duty truck for use by Fire Alarm men.

\* On Feb. 3, Joseph H. Deal Jr. was appointed to Supt. of Fire Alarm to fill the vacancy created by Capt. Loggins retirement. Capt. Loggins died on April 11 at age 61.

On Nov. 15 at 1:25 AM, Box 24 was struck by a car for 189 Shirley St. first due Eng. 1 found Goldberg's Garage behind 189 Shirley St. fully involved with extension to another garage at 10 Shirley Park. Minor extension to 189 Shirley and to the Community Garage at 203 Shirley St. the house at the rear of

was quickly controlled.

uninsured

There was a large loss to 18 to 20 cars stored in Goldberg's Gar. On his arrival, Chief Belcher ordered a second alarm bringing help from Boston, Chelsea and Revere

Total fire loss for the year was \$57,613.21 and claims paid was \$41,615.71. Total responses for the dept. during the year was 201

1926

On July 7 at 6:35 P.M., box 59 was pulled for a roaring fire at the Cottage Park Yacht Club. The fire was discovered by Commodore Roy Pagan. Upon his arrival Chief Belcher called for second and third alarms being assistance from Boston, Rouse and Chelsea.

Several exposure buildings caught fire from flying brands, but were quickly extinguished. Some club members, thinking they had time to save personal items from their lockers, barely escaped through windows when the ~~flaming~~ ceilings above them collapsed.

The building was a total loss and the cause was determined to be

Ch. 2-4-26 Shuley St.  
mult. bldg. ?

Ch. 4-24 277 Bowdoin St.

Ch. cause at C.P.Y.C.