

## *Box 52 Association*



## *The Line Box*



*I.F.B.A. Member club since 1955!*

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Vol. 17 No. 3

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Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Line Box. We have a jam packed issue full of some great articles and photos for your enjoyment.





## Multiple Alarms December 1, 2020 – January 31, 2021

### Second Alarms

Date	Time	Box	City	Address	Building
12/02	0802	2-1671	Boston	68 West Newton St	4 story brick OMD
12/02	2354	2-4632	Waltham	200 Trapelo Rd	Vacant Admin bldg. of old Walter E. Fernald School
12/09	0057	2-2133	Boston	4 Forest St.	4 story brick occupied OMD
12/11	0349	2-641	Lynn	93 Warren St	2 story wdfm dwelling
12/18	2004	2-35	Wakefield	12 Chestnut St	2.5 wdfm dwelling
12/18	2257	2-3268	Boston	757 Galivan Blvd	1 sty commercial
12/20	0015	2-313	Wellesley	21 Riverdale St	2.5 story wdfm dwelling
12/26	0355	2-254	Boston	24 Union Ave.	Rescues over lad
12/27	1826	2-5237	Quincy	40 Hancock St	6 story Elderly Highrise
12/28	1631 1623	2-274 2-5144	Brookline Boston	16 Hamilton Rd 1122 Comm Ave.	3 story OMD. Back bldg. Boston front is in Brookline
12/31	1418	2-24	Stoneham	13 Bow St	1.5 stry wdfm
01/01	0020	2-1744	Boston	693 Dudley St	3 story apts over mercantile
01/05	0916	2-7823	Boston	26 Crescent Ave	3 story wdfm OMD
01/24	1907	2-55	Woburn	15 Vinning Court	2.5 story wdfm
01/29	2328	2-1864	Boston	9 Roach St	3 story wdfm
01/30	0411	2-3211	Wakefield	360 Water St.	1 story wdfm ranch dwelling

### Third Alarms or Higher

December 8<sup>th</sup> Revere 54 Thornton Street Box 316

Box	1 <sup>st</sup> alarm	Working Fire	2 <sup>nd</sup> Alarm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Alarm	4 <sup>th</sup> Alarm
316	0231	0238	0240	0327	0418

Fire in a 3 story wdfm OMD 50x150. Persons reported trapped. E1 rpts fs bravo side persons reported trapped 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. C3 on arrival WF heavy fire 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and heavy fire heavy fire Bravo side 2<sup>nd</sup> floor extending to C side. One life was lost in this fire. Arriving crews found two occupants had jumped to escape the fast moving flames.



Deck guns and big lines working on Revere's 4 bagga on Thornton Street. Photo by member Peter Aloisi.

December 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 **Braintree** 79 Pleasant Valley Rd.

Fire in a 1.5 story house. Police first on scene report all residents out, heavy fire out all windows and fire also involving a propane tank.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Chief	Comments
0840	Box	3, 1, 2	<b>Twr, L2</b>	Car 2	E2 special called ion the box.
0844	2 <sup>nd</sup> alarm	Weymouth Eng	<b>Quincy L1</b>	Car 1	Orders Car 2
0949	3 <sup>rd</sup> alarm	Randolph E1 Holbrook E1	<b>Bos. L6</b>	Bos D8	Orders Car 1

December 30<sup>th</sup> 2020 **Somerville** 20 Kennsington Avenue 3-161

Fire was in a large 2.5 story wood frame two family dwelling. First arriving Engine 2 reported smoke showing and a report of persons trapped. A second alarm was quickly transmitted and Tower 1 was assigned to from RIT role to do a search. Firefighters found an elderly couple trapped by fire of the second floor rear porch. A ground ladder was quickly thrown and the crew lead by Lt. Danielle O'Hearn brought the elderly female down the ladder. The fire conditions were worsening and the crew needed to break the spindles out to make the rescue of the elderly male party. Lt. O'Heran and a firefighter were able to get him onto the ladder where he got stuck. With fire conditions worsening and out of options they jumped with the victim landing on a shed and rolling to the ground. All three were injured and transported.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue & Special	Chief
0202	161	2, 3, 7	<b>2, Twr 1 RIT</b>	<b>R1</b>	C2
0204	2-161	1, 6, Camb. E5, Eve. E1	<b>3</b>	Camb Sq. 4	C3 Camb. D1
0210	3-161	Bost. E32, Med. E1, Camb. E4	<b>Camb. L1 Med. L1</b>		

Jan. 12, 2021 Cambridge 4<sup>th</sup> alarm box 64 14 Concord Avenue 7 story High Rise class 2 building 100x60 Apartment building



Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue & Special	Chief
2350	64	8, 1, 9	4, 1	R1, Squad 4	Div. 1
2358	2-64	4, 5, 6	3, 2		Div. 2
0003	3-64	3, 2, Som. E3	Som. L1		
0027	4-64	Bel. E2, Brkl. E1, Wal. E-2	Bos. L15		

Jan. 13, 2021 **Boston** 3<sup>rd</sup> alarm box 1842 53 Sudan Street District 7. 3 story wood frame. Rear porches extending to 'B' exposure. Lt. O'Brien of Ladder 7 ordered the second alarm.

Box	1 <sup>st</sup> alarm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Alarm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Alarm
1842	0305	0309	0311

Jan. 29, 2021 **Lexington** 3<sup>rd</sup> alarm box 283 90 Maple Street large two story wood frame single family dwelling. Fire started at the rear of the attached garage and extended. \*Bedford Ladder 1 is the Working Fire Truck was unable to respond, Waltham Ladder 1 moved up as did Cambridge Ladder 1 on the second alarm. Police got residents out prior to arrival of LFD.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue & Special	Chief	Comments
0402	283	4, 1	1	Medic1, Medic 2	C3	
0404	W.F. 283	2	Wal. L1		C1, C2, C4	
0408	2-283	Burl. E1, Win. E4 Conc. E3	Camb L1	2	Camb Div 1	Armstrong ALS & BLS unit
0517	3-283	Wob. E 2, Bel E2, Wal E8	Bed L1*			





Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 **Boston** box 3483 110 Fuller Street District 8. 3 story wood frame dwelling heavy fire on the rear porches extending inside and to exposures. Three alarms were sounded within six minutes of the box being transmitted.

Box	1 <sup>st</sup> alarm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Alarm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Alarm
3483	1318	1320	1323



Going through the archives, I come across all sorts of interesting information on fires of the past looking for stories. One of the interesting things that I have found is that two bordering towns transmitting multiple alarms for the same building. The most famous of these was the J.P. Squires fire in East Cambridge on Easter Sunday 1963. Cambridge and Somerville both transmitted third alarms for the fire. Entering the 70's and 80's the war years started to slow and these types of fire became fewer and fewer.

#### **Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> Boston 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm box 5114 Brookline 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm box 274 16 Hamilton Road Brookline**

On December 28<sup>th</sup> Boston and Brookline decided to revive the tradition as each struck a second alarm for a building at 16 Hamilton Road in Brookline at the rear of 1122 Commonwealth Ave.

16 Hamilton Road Brookline was an occupied three story wood frame occupied multiple dwelling, which had a stucco exterior. Boston Fire Alarm received a call for a building fire at 1122 Commonwealth Ave. Box 5114 was transmitted and Brookline Engine 5 responded on the Line Box. Arriving companies found that the fire was in a building in the rear and quickly responded around the corner and went to work. Brookline Fire transmitted by 274 for the fire. Both Departments transmitted second alarms on their box for this address. This was the equivalent of a fourth alarm fire. Thirty residents were left homeless by the blaze. No injuries were reported and all residents were able to self-evacuate. Special thanks to member Joseph Hourihan for sending along the times and response information.

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Rescue & Special	Chief	Comments
1621	5114	41, 29, 51, Bkl. E5	14,11, TL-3	1, W-25	D11	RIT D4, E37, L26
1629	Sp. Call		4			D11 additional RIT Ladder

1631	274	1, 3, RIT E4	1, 2		C3	
1635	2-5114	33, 22, 42	23, 17		C6 D9, 3	
1637	2-274	6	Camb. L1	Camb. Sq. 2	Camb Div. 1	
1639	Sp. Call	7				Additional RIT Eng.
1640						C6 OIC, D11 Ops
1711	Sp. Call	New. 7				Extra engine
1727						C6 rpts cmd transferred to Brookline OIC
1803	5114	29, 51			D11	Allout, holding E29, 51 & D11
1927						All BFD comps ret.
2322	274					Allout

Brookline response in italic





**Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup> 1978**  
**400 Massachusetts Ave Box 31 2 Alarms @ 1000 hrs.**  
**18 Hillside Avenue Box 84 2 Alarms @ 1226 hrs.**  
**By Editor Frank San Severino**

I remember a long, long time ago an old buff told me that the best fires are in bad weather or right next door to a fire station. So, on Sunday February 5<sup>th</sup> 1978, the day before the Blizzard of '78 started, a house literally opposite Engine 4's bay was on fire.

The day had dawned cold with temps only rising to the low 20's, the sun was out, but it was getting overcast. Inside Arlington HQ station, the shifts had changed at 8 AM and the members of Group 2 were settled in. Breakfast was just hitting the plates, when the warning blow clanged and the Fire Alarm Operator announced a reported building fire at 400 Massachusetts Avenue. In the Captains Office that faced Broadway, Captains Louis Paragona of Engine Co. 4 and Acting Deputy, Captain Donal "Stubby" Corbett looked at each other and said "that's right across the street"! As the doors went up on the Mass. Avenue side, smoke could already be seen pushing out of the building which housed a dental office on the first floor and an apartment above.

Just a few minutes before 1000 hours, Arlington Police Lt. Arthur Guarente and High School Custodian John Fitzgerald saw smoke pushing out of the first floor. They jumped out of the cruiser rushed to the front door and kicked it in. It lead to a second floor apartment. A woman's voice started screaming and the men yelled 'fire get out'. They were driven back by flames and smoke. Guarente radioed in the alarm to the Police Station and they hit the ring down line. Fire Alarm Operator grabbed the phone was given the address, looked over his shoulder and could see smoke coming out of the house.

The first alarm companies literally rolled down the ramp and were on scene. Ladder 1 threw the stick to the roof and the tillerman headed up the aerial. Guarente grabbed Capt. Paragona and told him a woman was still in the house on the second floor. The crew of Engine 4 raced for the rear exterior stairway as Engine 1's crew started to push a line in the front door. Rescue 1 coming from their Highland station quarters dressed the hydrant and charged the supply line that Engine 1 had dropped into Engine 4.



The crew found tenant Margaret Grieve still screaming on the second floor and lead her to safety. She was turned over unhurt to APD officers on the scene. Meanwhile, Engine 4's crew had pulled the second inch and a half pre-connect off and was advancing it to the rear of the house. Acting Deputy Capt. Corbett ordered the second alarm on box 31 at 1003, 3 minutes after the first alarm.



At Highland, the crews of Engine 2 and Ladder 2 didn't wait. They were out the door and flying down the Avenue before the first round of the box had even finished sounding. The second alarm also summoned Somerville Engine 6 and Medford Engine 2 to the fire.

The fire was gaining the upper hand as it spread into the walls of this 100 year old, two and a half story wood frame with a stucco exterior building that housed the office of Dr. Robert Publicover DMD and the second floor apartment. Publicover, had just purchased the building and was renovating the first floor. His offices had been in this house for a number of years prior to the fire (*and he was the editor's dentist!*).

Fire Service Director Warren French and Public Safety Director and former Fire Chief Robert Blomquist arrived on the scene at 1014 hours. French was supervising the interior attack and Blomquist was in command outside in those pre-ICS days.

Ladder 2 arrived and pulled past Engines 1 and 4 and nosed into Avon Place and threw the stick to the left side of the building and started to open up. The crew was greeted with fire rolling out from the roof and eaves.



Companies continued with an aggressive interior attack. They now had located the seat of the fire in the basement and two companies with inch and half's were hitting it. However, the building was not giving in to the attack and fire was being found behind every horsehair plaster wall and it was lighting up all throughout the building! At 1017 hours a special call went out for two additional engine companies to respond. Engine 3 from Park Circle was dispatched. Engine 3 never responded to a box on Mass. Ave. below the railroad crossing in the Center, until a third alarm had been sounded. They mounted up on their rebuilt 1954 B Mack, the former Engine 4 and started for the 'Center'. Belmont Engine 1 who was just arriving to cover HQ was waved down and put to work. They grabbed the hydrant in front of Ladder 1's bay and laid a supply line into Engine 1. They were then directed to take a line into the first floor dental office. This was to be the first line into that area. The office occupied the entire fire floor,

The crew from Engine 3 was used as additional manpower and their rig, parked beside Medford Engine 2 B Mack both rigs had no lines off and their crews headed into battle as extra manpower, which was sorely needed.

Engine 1's MPO FF John "Jocko" Mahoney pulled off a three inch line, connected it as a second supply line into Engine 4 and dragged it back to the hydrant at the top of Whittemore Street (*This is the street where your editor grew up at # 26 – Editor*) tied into one of the gates and charged the line. This was the hydrant that Engine 1 had tied into and dropped the first supply line into Engine 4.

Somerville Engine 6 and Medford Engine 2 crews were ordered to pull lines into the first floor and start working. Arlington Engine 2 brought a line in the front door and followed Engine 1's line to the second floor. Meanwhile Engine 4 was ordered to reposition their line to the basement entering from the rear doorway under the exterior stairwell. Engine 6 grabbed a hydrant opposite Pond Lane and laid in. Medford's crew reported and was directed to take another line into the rear of the building. Somerville E6 pulled a line off their pump and took it up over Ladder 2's aerial to the attic and attempted to knock down the fire and enter the attic.



Fire scene, Ladder 1 and Engine 4 and Fire HQ

As the fire attack was under way Winchester Engine 1 and Somerville Ladder 3 picked their way through the fire scene and managed to back into Fire Headquarters. Cambridge Engine 4's pump and wagon were directed up Broadway past the fire and back onto the Avenue in route to cover Highland at 1007 Mass. Ave.

The clock ticked towards noon time. Companies had gained the upper hand and the main body of fire was knocked down. Companies started to rotate out of the building for a break before going back in. Companies were still heavily engaged chasing down pockets of fire and overhauling. Companies working in the basement found the remains of a metal flue pipe that had overheated and ignited a beam several inches away. The fire found its way into the chimney chase and took off to attic in this classic balloon frame constructed house. It was estimated that the fire had been burning for at least 25-30 minutes undetected.

Just about 1230 hours crews at the front of fire building were startled to see the doors at Headquarters going up and the covering crews pulling on their gear. Someone asked of nobody in particular "where the hell are they going?" The answer came immediately over the radio, as a terse radio message that box 84 was being set up and transmitted for a house fire at 18 Hillside Avenue. Cambridge Engine 4 with their Pilot on board riding the Wagon, turned right coming out of Highland and went Mass. Ave. to Appleton St, quick left onto Park Ave. and a quick right into Hillside. As they turned into Hillside Avenue, they were greeted with heavy smoke pushing from the front of a large 2.5 story wood frame house. The officer reported 'heavy smoke showing'. Director French left box 31 and with siren wailing responded to Highland Ave. Upon his arrival he found Somerville Ladder 3 had their stick to the roof and the crew opening the roof and forcing the front door. He saw that Cambridge Engine 4 had fire showing at the rear of the building from the basement to the roof line. They dragged a big line into the rear yard and started to hit the fire. Winchester Engine 1 was preparing to advance a line in the front door. French knew with the exception of Lexington E1 he had no one close to help fast. He grabbed the radio in Somerville Ladder 3 and transmitted the second alarm.



Box 52 Assox. Collection of member F. San Severino  
Photo by the late Donald Pring

The only Ladder Company at the fire, Somerville Ladder 3 has the front of the building.



The local running card was already a mess with box 31 having seven engines and two ladders working, just "one and one" short of a 3<sup>rd</sup> alarm. A normal response for box 31 would have been:

1<sup>st</sup> alarm: Engine 1, 4 Ladder 1, Rescue 1 and C2

2<sup>nd</sup> alarm: Engine 2, Som. 6, Med. 2, Ladder 2

3<sup>rd</sup> alarm: Engine 3, Bel. 2, Camb. 4 and Somerville L3

#### Box 84

1<sup>st</sup> alarm: Engine 3, 2, Ladder 2, Rescue 1 and C2

2<sup>nd</sup> alarm: Engines 1, 4, Lexington E1, Ladder 1

3<sup>rd</sup> alarm: Bel 2, Som. 6, Med. 2. Som. L3

So, basically with the exception of Lexington Engine 1 and Somerville L3, all the other companies are still tied up at box 31 400 Mass. Ave!

Everyone knew they must have a good worker going on Hillside Ave if the second alarm has been transmitted with a second alarm fire already in progress. Arlington was equipped to fight two box alarm fires at the same time, but never two multiples.

Director Blomquist looked around the fire scene and saw firefighters taking a break and said pointing "you three get on Engine 3 and respond to the fire. I'll find you an officer". At that point Lt. Joseph Aleso appeared around the corner and he was told "take Engine 3 to Hillside Ave." Aleso climbed aboard check the back step men and told his MPO to move it. No one on Engine 3 was assigned to this company! As they flew up the Avenue to the Heights, they blew past a vacant Highland Station and the Federal Q siren was screaming as they approached Appleton Street. C1 Director French ordered them to grab the hydrant at the corner of Park Avenue and drop two dual supply lines coming in. This was an order rarely given.



Having arrived a good eight minutes before Engine 3, Lexington Engine 1 under the command of Lt. Edward Gilman had come in from the other side of Hillside and dropped their own supply line. Director French told Gilman to get a line to the second floor over a ground ladder at the front left side and have enough line to make the attic. Gilman and Firefighter Spellman advanced the line with their MPO Firefighter Kelley feeding the line until help arrived and he ran back to the pump ready to charge the line. They made it to the attic stairs. According to FF Spellman "Ya needed a traffic cop in the hallway, ya had so many guys trying to make the attic with charged lines".

Along with Lexington, Winchester was operating the rear of the attic. Lexington was trying to make the front attic rooms and the grab bag crew from Engine 3 was trying to push their line up the stairs. In the meantime, Somerville Ladder 3's crew was working on the roof trying to open it up more.

Director French was inside the building at the top of the stairs in the second floor hallway, given orders. He would yell down for more men to come up and now start to vent the second floor, which had a light to medium smoke condition. Several Arlington Auxiliary CD Firefighters were sent in with hand tools to start to open windows on the right side and see if any walls were hot.

A few minutes later Engine 2 arrived from the first fire with its crew intact. They relived Cambridge Engine 4 on the second floor, who were then sent down to the first floor to start overhaul.

After a good solid 45 minutes of everyone doing three things at once the fire was knocked down and by that time overhaul was started. The crews were beat, cold and smoked up. Five Engine Companies and one Ladder Company operated at this fire. Being shorthanded, they worked extremely hard to bring this fire under control. The companies had managed to stretched one big line and four inch and half lines and get them into operation.

Coverage was found and Belmont Engine 4 (spare pump) was sent to cover Highland. While Cambridge Engine 1 and Medford Ladder 1 covered Headquarters. These two companies had backed into the apparatus bays on the Broadway side of the station to get out easier if they picked up a run.

Once again the crews at Mass. Ave. heard the warning blow hit and box 241 was announced for a garage fire on Pond Lane at 1326 hours. Covering companies left Headquarters for Pond Lane, one street over from the fire they turned right down Broadway up Palmer and back onto the Avenue and left into Pond Lane. Cambridge Engine 1 reported light smoke showing from a garage. Belmont Engine 4 was directed to come in from Wellington Street and into Pond Lane. Cambridge laid and charged a line while Medford Ladder 1 forced the garage door. A pall of smoke washed over them and they could see it was a mattress burning along with some trash and other debris. Cambridge made quick work of the fire and all companies were back in quarters by 1350 hours.

Mutual aid companies had started to make up their lines on Mass Ave and some Arlington crews were being rotated into Fire Headquarters to warm up. And yet again the warning blow struck and this time the fire was on Mill Street and was reported to be a rubbish fire near the vacant, one story wood frame Zwicker's Sporting Goods building. Box 512 was transmitted and again the covering companies headed out into the cold. Belmont Engine 4 arrived and reported an outside fire and they could handle it. They sent the allout. Medford and Cambridge returned to Headquarters.

Quiet now prevailed. On Mass Avenue, Director Blomquist had cleared the mutual aid pumps but was still holding all Headquarters Companies who continued overhauling the building. At both fire scene investigations were on going. On Hillside Avenue, the fire had started in the basement went up the exterior rear wall to the roofline, went in and mushroomed into the attic and cockloft. It had also worked its way in between the first floor ceiling, and the second floor. The house was owned by the Park Avenue Congregational Church and used as a Parsonage. At the time of the fire, it was un-occupied, pending the arrival of a new Minister.

On Hillside Avenue, Lexington Engine 1 had been released back to quarters. All other companies were being held.

At 1535 Belmont transmitted box 122 for a house fire at 605 Pleasant St. the house right behind Fire HQ. Companies turned out from Belmont Headquarters in the Center and made for the address.

First arriving companies reported heavy fire showing from the old Victorian era 2.5 story wood frame dwelling. A second alarm was ordered at 1543 hours, summoning aid from Waltham, Watertown and Cambridge. A fast telephone call was made to Arlington and Belmont E4 was requested to respond to the fire. Once again, the Voc. Alarm announced the call and the crew climbed aboard and headed home to the fire! Arlington Fire Alarm then called Lexington and requested Engine 1 to cover Highland.

By 1600 hours with the exception of the detail companies, Engine 4 on Mass. Ave. and Engine 2 on Hillside Avenue, all companies were back in their stations trying to get the rigs back into service. The covering Companies were still being held and they pitched in to help.

At 1630 hours Director Blomquist requested that the Auxiliary CD Lighting Plant be sent to Mass. Ave. The Lighting Plant arrived at 1730 hours and stayed on scene with Engine 4 until the allout was transmitted at 2117 hours on box 31. The allout on box 84 had been sent at 1830. Three Arlington firefighters suffered minor injuries, all at box 31. There were no injuries to any personnel at box 84.

The day crew was relieved, they went home to hot showers and warm beds. They were due back on duty at 0800 hours on Monday morning! Yup Group 2 caught the first day of the Blizzard, they were lucky so they thought for they would be out at 1800 hours! At 1600 hours with the storm ramping up the order came down; Group 2 was to be held over for the start of a very long week for not only Arlington Firefighters but all firefighters in eastern Massachusetts!

The last time that Arlington had faced so many fires in such a short span of time was 60 years and one month ago on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1918. When they had three building fires between 1141 and 1411 hours:

- 1.) Box 214 @ 1141 68 Marathon Street fire in a closet. Recall @ 1210
- 2.) Box 413 @ 1323 41-43 Gray Street Chimney fire from sparks. Recall @ 1352
- 3.) Box 42 @ 1411 913 Mass. Ave. Barn fully involved. Recall @ 1734. Both Combination A and Ladder 1 had passed this address returning from Gray St. just a few minutes before the alarm.

Sunday February 5<sup>th</sup> was busy with the following multiple alarms 0630 until 1830 hours. They are presented here in order:

Time	Box	City	Address
0630	2-6215	Boston	525 Bennington St. Dist. 1
1000	2- 31	Arlington	400 Mass. Avenue
1226	2- 84	Arlington	18 Hillside Avenue
1535	2- 122	Belmont	605 Pleasant Street
1630	2- 332	Lynn	25 Sheridan St
1827	3-7222	Boston	185, 187, 189 Silver St. Dist. 6

*Special thanks to the following for their assistance in the preparation of this article. Retired Belmont Chief David Frizzell, Honorary Box 52 Member and retired BFD Fire Comm. Paul Christian. Late Lexington Firefighters Walter Spellman and Kenneth P. Kelley Jr. And the member of the 1978 Group 2 Arlington Fire Department who would tell me their memories of these two jobs over the years. I am indebted to them for the years of putting up with a kid who loved the AFD and the Fire Service and that this turned into lasting friendships for many, many years.*

*Anyone interested in the history of the Arlington Fire Dept. and has a Twitter account can follow the author for a day by day account of the AFD. Follow @franksansev.*





## From the Box 52 Newsletter Archives for February 1961

Article content as it appeared in the Newsletter. Late

Member Paul L. Nelson was the editor.

### NORTHFIELD

January 22, 1961

Ed. note: A rather unique fire in that involved mutual aid from three states, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Fire destroyed most of a large ell shaped barn (45' x 105') at Podlenski's Farm on Main Street about 200 yards from the Northfield Headquarters. Chief Floyd Dunnell Jr. estimated the loss at \$ 100,000.00 to one of the largest barns in this part of the state. Lost in the fire were 100 tons of hay, farm machinery and 50 head of cattle, while another 50 head were lead to safety. A number of the cows were afire and had to be shot. With the temperature at -30 degrees more than 110 frostbitten firefighters took part in fighting the fire. Late in the afternoon one of the pumps froze up and Winchester, NH Engine 1 was recalled to take its place. Warwick Engine 1 responded to a house fire on Main Street at 2.30 pm Monday January 23 and finally was returned to quarters at 4.30 pm. In the course of operations more than 14,00 feet of hose was stretched.



The assistance brought in for this fire was handled by the Tri-State Mutual Aid System with headquarters in Greenfield, Massachusetts. This system includes 43 towns covering an area of 1,700 square miles and includes about 1,650 firefighters and 160 pieces of fire apparatus available to any town and at any time.

In 1955 under the direction of Deputy Chief Edmund Tetreault of Greenfield, a radio communications network was set up. Today 40 towns are radio equipped with a total of 27 base stations and over 100 mobile units. This indeed is an excellent example of a mutual aid system of firefighting

Time	Alarm	Companies	Comments
0748	1st	Northfield Engs 3, 2, 1	Report of a barn fire on Main St
0754			Mutual Aid Call
0756		Winchester, NH E1	To the fire
0757		Vernon, VT E2, Tank 1 Gill, MA E1	To the fire To the fire
0758		Bernardstown, MA E2	To the fire
0800		Warwick, MA E1	Cover Northfield Headquarters
0816		Brattleboro, VT E3 Hinsdale, NH E3	To the fire
0817		Millers Falls, MA E1	To the fire
0819		Greenfield, MA E5	To the fire
1027		Greenfield, MA E3	Cover Bernadstown Headquarters

This information was obtained from the Northfield FD's website.

Article on the fire from the Record-Gazette Newspaper Monday Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> 1961

"A fire starting in a milking room oil stove swept through Podlenski's Brothers barn on Main Street here yesterday, causing the death of about 50 cattle and damage of \$ 100,000.

Lack of easy access to water hampered the firemen, as did the temperatures around 30 degrees below zero.

The blaze spread quickly after discovery, flames shooting to heights of 50 feet.

Milking chores had been completed and the men had gone in for breakfast when Bill Podlenski happened to glance out of an upstairs window and noticed smoke coming from the milk room.

The apparent cause was an oil stove in the milk room. Flames spread rapidly though the wooden structure, approximately 105 by 45 feet.

A half a dozen cows had to be shot because they were so badly burned. A few were on fire as they left the barn. The rescued animals were taken to Elmer Johnson's barn in Winchester and Howard Jackson's in Gill.

Fourteen thousand feet of hose were used, two lines running out School Street to Warwick Brook and two lines from the East Northfield Water Co. hydrant in front of the Unitarian Congregational Church to the last hydrant of the Northfield Water Co, to tie the two systems together."



The NFD in 1961 responded to a total of 54 calls. Apparatus in service at the time of the fire, in order of response: Engine 3 1955 Maxim 750/500. Engine 2 1941 International tanker, Engine 3 1931 Buffalo 600 gpm. This rig was located brought back and restored by members on the NFFD.

## **HUGE FIRE THREATENS DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT OF GLOUCESTER DURING A BLIZZARD; ONE DEAD**

By David Parr

Line Box Staff Member

All photos by late member L. Murray Young collection of David Parr

February 4<sup>th</sup> marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a huge fire in the heart of downtown Gloucester, Massachusetts, that resulted in one fatality, occurred during a northeaster blizzard, and for a time threatened to spread to the entire business and waterfront district of the Fish City.

Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1961, marked the end of a record breaking 17-day cold wave, with temperatures rising to 32 degrees and a forecast that called for a snowstorm. The wind was from the northeast and rising rapidly. Two hours after the first alarm the wind reached gale force with snow starting as moderate, rapidly changing to heavy snow. The temperature dropped from 32 degrees to 20 degrees during the fire. It was the fourth major snowstorm of the 1960 – 1961 winter season!

The fire, believed to be one of the very worst in Gloucester's history, originated in the Bradford Building, a two-story brick building at 211 Main Street at Water Street, that housed three stores on the first floor and sixteen apartments on the second floor. The building dropped off to four stories in the rear or Rogers Street side. One of the Main Street stores was a shoe repair shop, and the other two stores were vacant. A lobster processing shop was in the basement, and there was a sub-basement that contained the boiler room. The fire spread to the 3-story brick building (exposure 4) at 205 Main Street known as the Masonic Building housing the Almy, Bigelow, and Washburn Department Store on the first floor with offices located on the second floor and a large open hall on the third floor.

Just about 1:00 AM, an oil delivery was made to the Bradford Building. The oil delivery inadvertently resulted in the basement oil tank being overfilled, with oil flooding the basement floor and collecting in the boiler pit. Shortly thereafter, the boiler fired, immediately igniting a raging flammable liquid fire in the basement.

The building quickly filled with a black, oily smoke. There were 11 tenants sleeping on the second floor. Mrs. Sadie Thompson was up late, making herself a cup of coffee when her apartment filled with black smoke. She went to a front window and started screaming for help. Police Officers Edward Rowe and Walter Johnson happened to be in a cruiser right out front on Main Street, heard Sadie's screaming, and noticed black smoke pushing from the basement.

Officer Johnson ran to Box 31 at Main and Duncan Streets, Post Office Square, and pulled the hook. The first alarm registered at Headquarters at 1:19 AM. Officer Rowe ran up the stairs to the second floor and started banging on doors to awaken the sleeping tenants.

Arriving firefighters were directed to the Bradford Building by Officer Johnson, and found a heavy smoke condition, a cauldron of fire filling the basement, and the second floor full of tenants. Captain Albert Noble sized up the situation and ordered a second alarm transmitted at 1:22 AM. The second alarm brought Gloucester's outskirt station engines to the fire downtown and recalling all off duty, call, and auxiliary firefighters.

The firefighters from Combination A joined police in evacuating the tenants. Six tenants made it to the street, but five tenants had to escape to the roof of the building. Ladder 1 set up their Pirsch 86-foot metal aerial ladder at the rear of the building and gingerly but successfully removed the frightened tenants from the roof. However, one tenant, Hjalmar Johnson, age 73 and a retired fisherman, returned into the building to retrieve possessions from his room. Firefighter Hugh Curley, a former Gloucester High School football star, along with Firefighter Jack Day donned all service masks, and with lifelines tied to their waists, made their way into the second floor to search for Johnson. They had not traveled far into the black smoke when Firefighter Norman Garland pulled them back, as fire was rapidly engulfing the area just below them.





Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L. M. Young, Collection of member David Parr

Fire showing from the Water Street side of the Bradford Building

Firefighters launched an interior fire attack that was hampered by the two closest hydrants that were frozen but were quickly driven out by the intense fire conditions. Deputy Chief Henry B. Lowe ordered a third alarm transmitted at 1:34 AM. Fire Chief Willard Goldthwaite arrived on the scene and made a special call for 3 additional engines at 2:00 AM. The Gloucester Ladder 1 ladder pipe was operated in the rear, Rockport Ladder 1 ladder pipe operated at the corner of Main and Water Street, along with numerous hand lines and deluge guns as water became available.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young  
Collection of member David Parr

Gloucester Ladder 1 operating ladder pipe at rear.



Rockport Ladder 1 a 1954 American La France 700 Series 75 foot aerial operating its ladder pipe at Main & Water Streets

The fire then extended into the Almy's Department Store (exposure 4) and soon took full possession of the large three-story building. This was a surprise to firefighters as the Almy's Building was sprinklered, but it was later discovered that the main sprinkler supply line was frozen. In addition, unknown to firefighters, the basement of the Bradford Building was connected to the basement of the Almy's building.



Fire showing from sides 2 and 3 of the Bradford Building

With the Bradford Building fully involved with the danger of collapse, Chief Goldthwaite ordered the attack to concentrate on the Almy's building to stop the spread of the fire into exposure 4A, the Hub Building, another three-story brick commercial building. Gloucester Ladder 1 and Beverly Ladder 1 worked together in the rear, and Rockport's Ladder 1 was relocated to protect the exposure from the Main Street side. Chief Goldthwaite, fearing that the fire, pushed by northeast gales, could spread westerly right down the central business district along Main Street, ordered deluge guns, ladder pipes, and hand lines to be concentrated on the Almy's building to stop the spread.



Beverly Ladder 1 and Gloucester Ladder 1 at the rear of the building.

Other exposures threatened by the fire included the Fisherman's Institute on Duncan Street, where 35 occupants were evacuated, and the Gloucester Police Station – District Court at Duncan and Rogers Street. Although the Police Station was not evacuated, records, guns, and the one prisoner in custody were placed in the guard room ready to be moved at a moment's notice.

At 3:40 AM and again at 5:40 AM, the Chief ordered additional engines and ladders from as far away as Malden, Wakefield, and Reading, to provide a force in place in order to stop the spread of the fire further along Main Street. But fortunately, the refocused attack prevented the fire from spreading into the 3-story Hub Building at 195 Main Street, (exposure 4A) although it did receive heavy damage. The sparks and embers from the fire were a concern and started a roof fire 3 blocks away that was quickly controlled by a crew from Combination A's 300-gallon booster truck and Ladder 3's city service truck. It was felt at the time that the heavy snow falling prevented many other fires.





Main St. side - Bradford Building in foreground, Almy building fully involved in background.

This was a long, dangerous, and punishing fire fight. Chief Goldthwaite said that the fire burned out-of-control spreading for 5-hours and continued to burn out-of-control but not spreading for another 8-hours! In addition to the intensity of the fire and blizzard conditions, falling walls presented another hazard as daylight arrived Saturday morning. Firefighter Norman Garland was thrown some ten feet from the concussion of the rear wall collapsing, sustaining shoulder, leg and elbow injuries.

Nineteen other firefighters were injured including Deputy Chief W. Elliot O'Hearn – leg injury; Captain Carlton McKay – chest injury; Captain James Cooney – strained groin; Firefighter Harold MacArthur – hernia; Callman Charles Lowe – leg injury and smoke inhalation; Callman Larry Colby – back injury; Firefighter Robert Zager – back injury; Firefighter Francis Clark – hip injury; Callman Charles Anderson – back injury; Firefighter Howard Cusick – knee injury; Firefighter Edwin Lowe – gasoline in eyes; Firefighter Robert Clark – gasoline in eyes; Firefighter Hugh Curley – smoke inhalation; Firefighter Adam Maliski – foot injury; Firefighter Dana Blatchford – ankle injury; Firefighter Albert Frost – strained right side; Captain Edmund Marble – strained leg; Captain Albert Noble – knee injury, and Reading Lieutenant Van Horn – leg injury.

Gloucester Fire Captain Carlton McKay was in command at fire headquarters, only three blocks away, coordinating the response to the fire and managing the covering companies. When transmitting the third or general alarm, the steam whistle failed to operate, so many off duty firefighters were recalled by tapper or telephone. Gloucester's water department was notified to boost the pressure in the system and responded to address the issue of frozen hydrants.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young  
collection of member David Parr

Gloucester Water Dept. crew works to thaw a frozen hydrant at height of blaze.

Mr. Johnson, who returned into the building to retrieve his possessions, could not be located after the fire and a search was started. Firefighters carefully combed the rubble for several days but never located Johnson's body. He is presumed to have died in the fire.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young  
collection of member David Parr

Rockport Ladder 1 relocated in front of the fully involved Almy building

The sixteen mutual aid companies responding to the fire made the trip in the early portion of the snowstorm but returning to their respective cities in a blizzard Saturday was another factor! Peabody Engine 1 broke down and had to limp to the Gloucester DPW garage. Reading Engine 2 made it as far as Beverly and had to seek shelter. Wakefield Engine 1's 1956 Mack B-85 pumper got stuck on Route 128 at Essex Avenue in Gloucester, freed themselves, but got stuck again on Route 128 at the North Shore Shopping Center in Peabody. Low on gasoline and the pump in danger of freezing up, the crew was

rescued just in time by a state highway plow who pulled the engine out of the snow and then led them back home.

The total loss of the fire was estimated at 1.8 million in 1961 dollars. Both buildings were demolished in the days following the fire. Today the site of one of Gloucester's biggest fires is the home to the Gloucester Police Station and the Veteran's Administration Health Clinic. Water Street is now a parking lot for a Walgreens Drug Store.

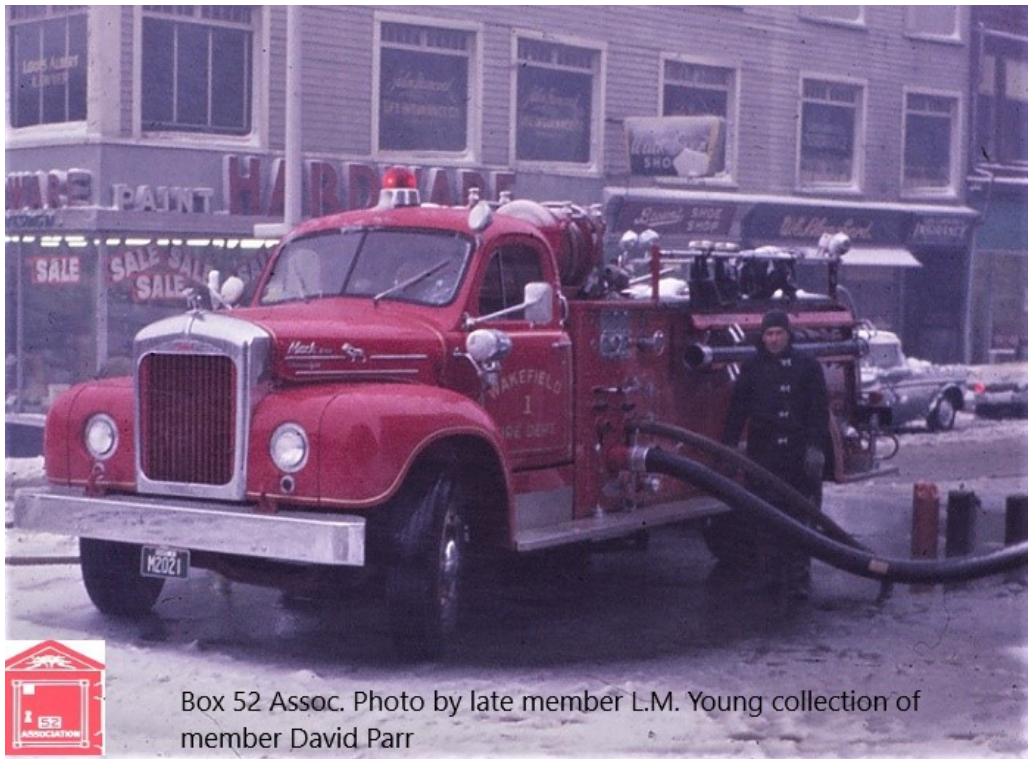


Daylight-Looking west on Main St. from Water St. Bradford Building in foreground, 3 story Almy building in background



Gloucester reserve Engine 1 a 1934 Maxim operating at the front on Main St.





Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young collection of member David Parr

Wakefield Engine 1's 1956 Mack pumping at Main & Hancock Sts. FF. Melvin "Huck" King operating the pump.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young collection member David Parr

Wakefield Firefighters Roger Wenzel (L) and Roy Little operate a big line on Main St.





Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young  
collection of member David Parr

Reading Engine 2's 1967 American La France pumping at Main & Pleasant Sts. Note the use of the suction intake.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by late member L.M. Young  
collection of David Parr

Peabody Engine 1's 1952 Ward La France pumping on Elm. St, Hamilton Eng. 2's 1947 Seagrave in background.

### TIME LINE

Time	Alarm	Engines	Ladders	Other	Comments
0119	31	3, 6,	<b>1</b>	Combination A	
0122	2-31	5, 4, 3, 2, 1	<b>3</b>	Rescue	
0122	Sp. C	Rockport E3	<b>Beverly L1 Rockport L1</b>	<b>Forest Fire 1</b>	To the fire
	Cover	CD Aux. Engine Manchester E3			Cover GFD Headquarters Cover Magnolia Station
0134	3-31	Manchester E3			Relocate to HQ Station
0200	Sp. C	Beverly E8 Danvers E1 Salem E6			To the fire
0205	Sp. C	Cd Aux. Engine Manchester E3			To the fire
0255				Combination A	From fire to brand patrol downtown area
0340	Sp. C	Lynn E2 Peabody E1			To the fire
0540	Sp. C	Essex E3, Hamilton E3, Reading E2, Wakefield E1 Ipswich E2	<b>Lynn L4 Malden L2</b>		To the fire
0800		5			Cover GFD Headquarters To HQ to reload an cover. Starting to release mutual aid companies
1827	Still			Combination A	To fire scene for rekindle
1915	Still	3			To fire assist Comb. A
2200	Allout 31				

A fire detail was maintained at the site until 2000 on Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>



Ladder 1 1937 85 foot metal tiller aerial. Note – A new aerial ladder was installed in 1965 to replace the original aerial that was damaged at a fire, and in 1966 a Mack B-85 tractor replaced the original Pirsch tractor.



## GLOUCESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT 2-4-1961

Chief – Willard C. Goldthwaite Permanent Men – 56, Call Men – 12

Population – 25,500

Fire Alarm Headquarters: Headquarters Station, Gamewell Class B System

### **HEADQUARTERS – School Street at Procter Street**

Engine 3 – 1959 Maxim, 750 GPM

Engine 6 – 1949 Mack, 750 GPM

Combination A – 1953 International Booster Truck

Ladder 1 – 1937 Pirsch, 86' Metal TT Aerial

Ladder 3 – 1942 Dodge Tractor with a  
1884 Gleason and Bailey City Service Trailer

Rescue – Cadillac Ambulance

### **MAGNOLIA STATION – Fuller Street near Shore Road**

Engine 2 – 1953 Maxim, 750 GPM

Forest Fire 1 – 1955 Ford

### **EAST GLOUCESTER STATION – Mt. Pleasant Ave and Chapel Street**

Engine 5 – 1939 Diamond T – Local Build, 500 GPM

Auxiliary Engine – 1942 Seagrave Quad, 750 GPM

### **BAYVIEW STATION – Washington Street and South Kilby Street**

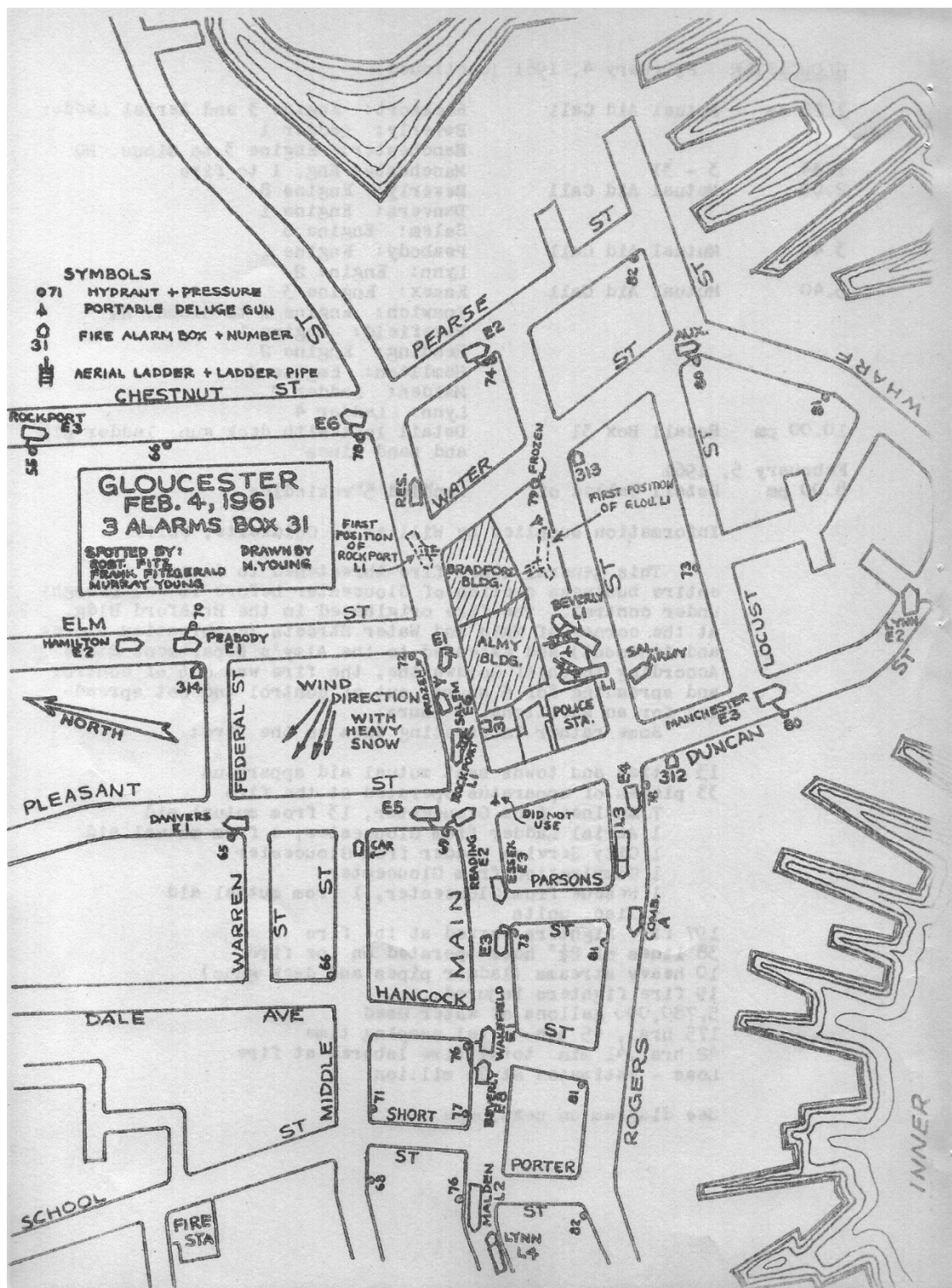
Engine 4 – 1953 Maxim, 750 GPM

Engine 1 – 1934 Maxim, 750 GPM (Reserve)

***NOTE: The West Gloucester Fire Station was not opened until 1967***



Gloucester Ladder 3 1942 Dodge tractor pulling an 1884 Gleason & Bailey city service trailer. This truck was mainly used to respond to fires in the outlying rural sections of the city and served until 1972.



Special thanks to the following for their assistance in this article.

All photos are from the collection of the late L. Murray Young; Frank San Severino; Chief Eric Smith, Gloucester Fire Dept; Retired Chief Barry McKay, Gloucester Fire Dept; Retired Firefighter Hugh Curley and Retired Firefighter Gene McDonald, Gloucester Fire Department; Jacklyn Linsky, Local History Librarian, Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library; A Pictorial History of the Gloucester Fire Dept. by the late Gloucester Firefighter Larry Colby.



## Epiphany on Sheridan Street, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1981

By John Pozark Jr. Line Box Staff

The year 1981 would be one of the busiest in the history of the City of Lynn Fire Department. There would be 51 Multiple Alarm fires during the year culminating in the Conflagration of November and a tragic industrial fire in December. This is multiple alarm fires, it does not include the everyday, bread and butter, working fires. To make things worse, the tax limiting Proposition 2 ½ would begin implementation in 1981 reducing the thinly stretched resources even more.

The second major fire in 1981, the group fire in Central Square that occurred in February, was covered in a two-part article last year. This year I hope to cover more of the major Lynn fires of 1981.

It began with a prelude in December of 1980. Christmas Eve Morn would start with a comfortable, for December, day. In the late afternoon as the sun went down a Working Fire in the City of Melrose on Box 312 Main St. and Faulkner Pl. would displace two families from their home. Always a heartbreaking event when it occurs on Christmas Eve. During the fire, the temperature began to drop.

By 1930 hours the temperature was hovering at the freezing mark and a light wind was blowing. A phone call came into the Lynn Electrical Dept. Fire Alarm Office on Baker St. reporting a fire in the rooming house at 20 High St.



Box 46, McGloin Sq. was transmitted sending Engines 5-1-6 Ladders 1-3 Rescue 2 and the East Lynn District Chief in Car C-3. First arriving units found a heavy smoke condition showing from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor front of a 3 story, wood frame, brick veneer building. Most of the 15 rooms were occupied. District Chief Kondroski ordered a Working Fire just 4 minutes after the Box was struck. Engine 10 and Ladder 4 responded as the Working Fire assignment.

Ladder 1 commanded by Lt. Hudson threw their stick to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor window of the fire apartment and opened-up. Other members of Ladder 1 went into the building to remove occupants. Ladder 3, with Lt. Howland in charge, spotted in front of the building on High St., threw their stick to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor windows above the fire apartment and used the stick to take out the glass and sash for ventilation. The building sat on the side of a hill and was almost 4 stories in the rear. Small lots on either side limited the access further. The trucks also threw a 28' ground ladder to the window of the fire apartment.

Engine 5 commanded by Lt. Gautreau took a 1 ½" handline through the front door and stretched to the second floor assisted by Lt. Delahanty and the crew from Engine 1. Heat and smoke were pushing into the hallway. The sprinkler head at the top of the stairway had fused and was operating. (Note: For a time, sprinklers were only required in public areas of some buildings.) The door to the fire room, Room #7, had been kicked open by someone. Lt. Gautreau and Firefighter John Miles opened the pipe and hit the fire with water. Rescue 2, commanded by Lt. J. Powers beached their apparatus at the intersection of Liberty & High St's. Donning their trademark Scott Sling-Paks, the company went to the fire floor for primary search. A 75-year-old man suffering from smoke inhalation was found in Room #8 on floor 2. Rescue 2's crew placed a facepiece on him, carried him from the building, and placed him in Rescue 2 where he was transported to Lynn Hospital for treatment. Rescue 2 also found another tenant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rear and assisted that person to the stairway and out of the building. Arriving at the fire, Engine 6 commanded by Firefighter Ed Vickers O.O.G. (Meaning Out of Grade, Acting Officer.), back stretched two 3" lines from Engine 5 to a hydrant for feeders. As the crews from Engine 5 and 1 pushed into the apartment knocking down the fire, they made a grim discovery. A man with third degree burns all over his body was found in the bed. He was beyond help. Rescue 1, commanded by Lt. J. Murphy, was Special Called to the Box.

Arriving at the fire, Engine 10 commanded, by Lt. Slepoy, and Ladder 4 commanded by Capt. McMurray, assisted searching the building.

With the fire knocked down the grim task of recovery began. The remains were placed in a Body Bag and removed to the apparatus of Rescue 1 to be transported to Lynn Hospital. With the victim removed the overhauling began. Using hooks, axes, shovels and brooms, the walls were opened, the remains of the bed and mattress were taken outside. Ladder 4 replaced the sprinkler head at the second-floor landing to temporarily restore service. The Police-Fire Arson Squad was called and L.P.D. Lt. Coppinger, Fire Capt. Numberg and Firefighter Mike Barry responded. Fire companies turned the fire scene over to the investigators, made up and returned to quarters, cold and wet. With fire coats and gloves thoroughly soaked, the members hoped for a quiet time to dry out and warm up.

***But wait!***

***There's more...***

By Midnight, the temperature had dropped to 10 degrees Fahrenheit. About quarter after the hour, an automobile pulled up to the Western Ave. Firehouse, the driver got out and banged on the door. The man on patrol, Firefighter W. Middleton answered the knock. The driver, an employee of the Harbor House Hotel, was reporting a fire in the hotel.

The verbal alarm was reported to Fire Alarm and City Box 674 was struck at 0018 hours sending Engines 3-6, a Revere Engine (Probably Revere Engine 2 as this was a Line Box for Revere and the Point of Pines Fire Station was still open.) Ladders 2 and 3, Rescue 1 and West Lynn District Fire Chief Peter Zetes in the C-4 Car.

The Harbor House was a hotel and lounge located at 830 Lynnway, on the northbound side, just before the General Edwards Bridge. Originally built as the Chart House Hotel, it would later be owned and operated as a Day's Inn. The 2-story building of ordinary construction had a large restaurant and lounge area across the front of the building with guestrooms running back towards the waterfront and an outdoor pool in the interior court yard. Exposures were a parking area in front, the Building 19 & Bowling Alley complex on the left side and water to the rear and right side of the building. The restaurant was located on the first floor with a balcony like mezzanine located around the room at the second-floor level. This room was open floor to ceiling in the center and there was a stage area where music groups would perform. In the later, Day's Inn, years this would become known as the Club Morgan.

When fire companies arrived, smoke was showing from the front left corner of the building at the roof level.

Arriving on scene, Engine 3, commanded by Firefighter DeLuca OOG, spotted at the front corner of the building where fire was becoming visible and set up the Squirt boom. The Revere Engine coming in on the Line Box put a feeder into Engine 3's pump. Ladder 2 operating with the Mack CF Aerialscope and commanded by Lt. Raimo, put the bucket up to open the roof.



Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1980 Lynn Ladder 2 operating its gun at 4-674

Engine 6 spotted in front of the hotel. A 1 ½' line was stretched to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Engine 6's Pump Operator, Ff. Bob Kerns, was kept busy that night as additional lines were stretched off 6's pump by incoming companies. A second 1 ½' line was taken to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the lounge area. A 2 ½" line was taken to the

1<sup>st</sup> floor to back up the first 1 ½" line. Another 2 ½" line was taken off Engine 6 to the rear of the building and up the back stairs.

Ladder 3 arrived and parked in front of the hotel. The building was laddered by use of the aerial and 30' & 28' ground ladders. Ladder 3's crew went to the roof and opened up over the fire area with hooks and axes.

Lt. J. Murphy and the members of Rescue 1 made entry and went through the guestrooms making a primary search. After the primary was completed, Rescue 1 assisted on handlines. The 3-man crew would use a total of 7 air bottles fighting the fire.

A Working Fire was ordered at 0023 hours. Sending Engine 9, commanded by Lt. Drew, to the fire. Engine 9 laid two 3" supply lines, 300' long into Engine 6's piece. Engine 9 then took a 1 ½" line over a fence to the lower roof on the north side of the fire building.

At 0032 hours, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm was ordered followed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> Alarm at 0049 hours.

2-674, Engines 11 & 7 with Ladder 4. 3-674, Engines 5-1 and Ladder 1. The wet fire clothes would not dry tonight. Also responding were District Chief Kondroski in C-3, Deputy Fire Chief William Conway C-2, and Chief of Department Joseph Scanlon with the radio callsign C-1.

Engine 11, commanded by Capt. Doherty, went to the left side of the fire building, and set up the deck gun. A 2 ½" line was run to the rear of the building and a 1 ½" line was taken to the rear of the building and up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Engine 7, commanded by Lt. R. Powers, took a hydrant by the Lynnway Bowling Alley and laid a 900' supply line using 3" and 2 ½" hose into Engine 11. The pump went back to the hydrant and Ff. Carmody, the pump operator, hooked into the Keystone valve and pumped into Engine 11's deck gun. Engine 7's crew took a 1 ½" handline off Engine 3 to the side roof of the fire building.

Arriving at the fire, Ladder 4 donned masks and went into the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to pull ceilings.

Engine 5 took a hydrant on the Lynnway and laid two hydrant lines to the fire. One line was put into Engine 6 and one line into Engine 5 which pumped into Engine 3.

Engine 1 took a hydrant in front of Jack Gould's Cycles on the Lynnway and laid two supplemental feeders into Engine 11. Then the pump went back to the hydrant and pumped the two supply lines. Engine 1's crew took one of the 1 ½" 's off Engine 6 and operated on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor knocking down fire in the lounge and stage area.

Ladder 1 located their piece on the right side of the fire building. The crew made entry to the building and performed a primary search on floors 1 and 2 of the hotel removing the occupants. With their primary search complete, the company donned masks and assisted engine companies operating handlines.

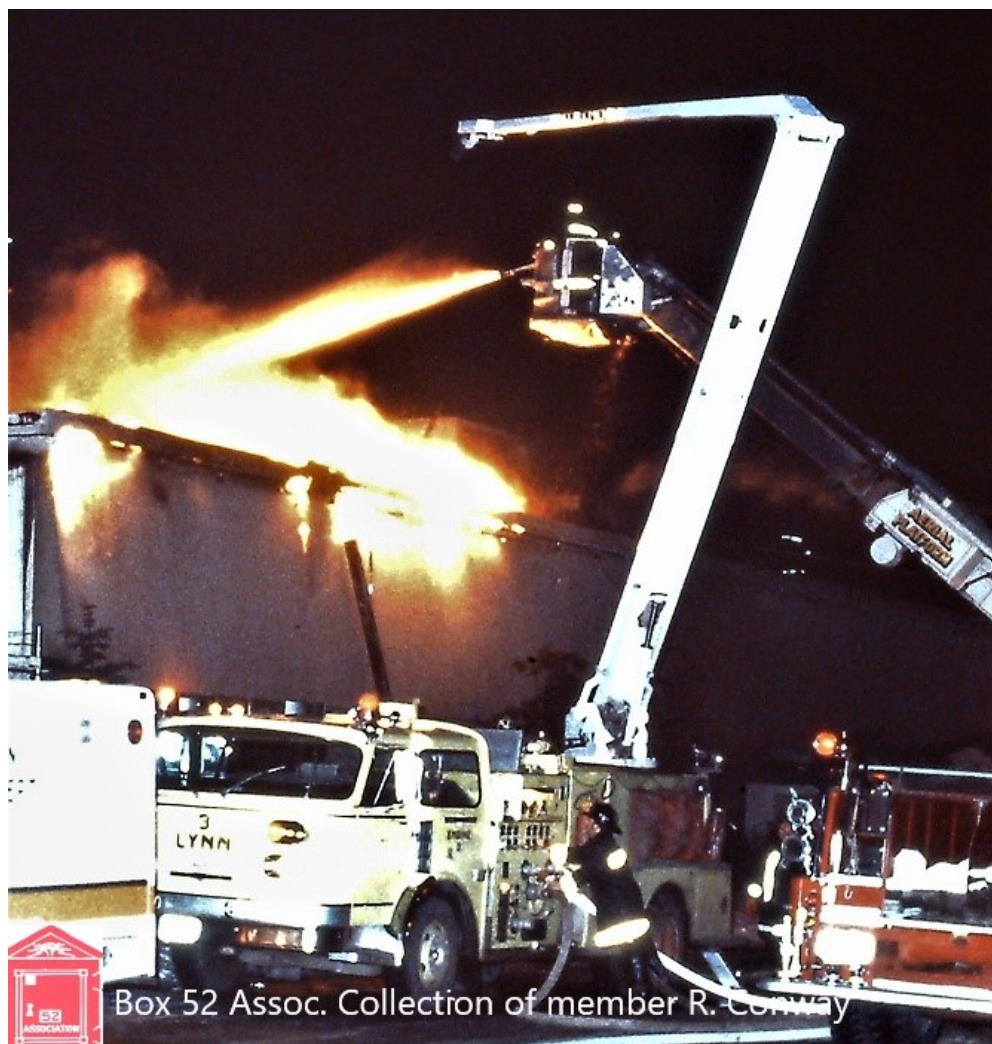
The 4<sup>th</sup> Alarm was struck at 0104 hours. Responding were Engines 10 and 8.

Engine 10 took the 2 ½" line off Engine 6 and operated in the front of the lounge.

Engine 8 laid a single 900' line using 3" and 2 ½" hose from a hydrant on the Lynnway and put it into Engine 6. Engine 8's crew assisted on handlines.

With the roof opened and roof stability deteriorating, the "Shepherds" came down. And so did the roof over the lounge area. Ladder 2's crew worked with Rescue 1 on handlines. Rescue 1 also ventilated. Ladder 3's crew repositioned the stick, set up the bed and fly ladder pipes and put water on the fire coming out of the roof. Ladder 3 was fed by a line from Engine 6. Ladder 2 also used their bucket gun to hit the fire.





Lynn Engine 3's SQURT getting setup Revere E2 Seagrave on right. Left side rear of Rescue Co. 1

Inside fire crews made a two-pronged attack with some companies fighting to prevent extension into the guestroom area and others hitting the main body of fire in the restaurant and lounge.

As time went by the fire was knocked down and all hands were heavily engaged in overhauling.

The intense cold, aggravated by a moderate but waterfront wind, caused severe icing conditions and played havoc on men and machines. Engine 7 Firefighter Foley and Engine 1 Firefighter Angelone slipped and fell on the ice. Lt Gautreau and Firefighter John Miles of Engine 5 suffered from severe wetting and cold weather exposure. All remained on duty.

Subsequently the investigation discovered the point of origin on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor mezzanine area of the lounge where a door had been forced open.

The pump on Engine 5 froze requiring the attendance of Fire Department Mechanic Greely, the application of a torch for thawing and some time before the apparatus would return to Fayette St. to finish the thaw. The glass on Engine 5's pump panel compound gauge was broken too.

The author can attest to the severe cold. After several hours of work as an American Red Cross Disaster Volunteer assisting the displaced families in Melrose, he attended the Harbor House Fire as a spark.

It would remain seriously frigid, for weeks to come with average low temperatures in the low 20's often dropping to zero. It was cold.

### Happy New Year!

The continuing cold weather was having a major impact on the buildings and people living in the area. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1980, the City of Lynn Building Dept. condemned the six family, three-decker at 11 Sheridan St. due to a lack of domestic water service caused by broken pipes. However, the building remained occupied until the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1981.

It was early in the morning of January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1981 when a passerby reported an outside fire on Sheridan St. to the Fire Alarm Office on Baker St. F.A.O. Stilled out Engine 5 from Fayette St. Then Fire Alarm began receiving calls reporting a fire along with the pulling of a City Fire Box.



The P.A. squawked, sending members to the apparatus floor and Engine 5, their American LaFrance 1000 Series pumper equipped with a 54' Squirt boom device. As Engine 5 rolled onto the apron, a citizen approached them and reported a house fire on Sheridan St. The good citizen did his duty but there was fire visible in the sky from the ramp. Engine 5 transmitted the Box by radio and headed up the street and round the corner. Upon arrival there was heavy fire in the first and second floors of a vacant six family three decker with the rear porches fully involved. Fire had already extended to a vacant building on Connolly Terr. Engine 5 Lt. Gautreau pulled a 1 ½" Pre-Connect to the rear of the original fire building to hit the overlapping fire. Firefighters Tony Diaz and John Miles stretched a 2 ½" line and the crew changed to the big line to hit fire in the exposure building at the rear of the original fire building.

At the time fire company officers were not issued portable radios. Only Chief Officers and their Aides were so equipped. All orders by company officers had to be relayed via the mobile unit on the pump or the truck and the only microphone was in the cab. As the pump operator, Firefighter Larry Godbout reached in and keyed the mic to pass on the order for a Working Fire, Firefighter Miles came running up relaying an "emphatic" order for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm.

Engine "Two Gun" 1, second due on Box 32, under the command of Lt. Delahanty, took the hydrant in front of 27 Sheridan St. and dropped two lines, one 3" and one 2 ½", into Engine 5 taking a length of 2 ½" off Engine 5 to complete one of the feeders. Engine 1's crew then pulled a 2 ½" pre-connect off their own piece to the left rear of 11 Sheridan St. The Pump Operator, FF. R. Kane, put the deck gun into operation for a water curtain on the left side of the fire building.



Engine 1 in front of 11 Sheridan St

Now with a continuous water supply, Engine 5's pump operator, Firefighter Larry Godbout, put the Squirt boom into operation playing a stream onto the front of 11 Sheridan St.

Ladder 1 under the command of Lt. Hudson, came into the front right side of the fire building. Due to extreme fire conditions the Ladder crew was put to work on a handline pulling a 2 ½" line into the alleyway to cover exposures.

Engine 8 commanded by Lt. Regan rolled into the fire scene from their Eastern Ave. firehouse Essex St. to Sheridan St. taking the hydrant on the corner. They laid two feeders into their own pump and stretched a 2 ½" handline to the fire. A second 2 ½" line was stretched to feed Ladder 1. The stick on Ladder 1 was thrown, and the tip gun was put into operation. Another handline, 1 ½" size, was stretched to a house on Essex St. to protect the roof.





Fire conditions shortly after arrival.

Rescue 2 also assigned on the Box, was commanded by Lt. J. Powers. The crew went to work evacuating buildings on either side of the original fire building also removing cartons and combustibles from exposed window and porch areas. Then they went to work assisting on handlines.

District Fire Chief Kondroski was in the C-3, East Lynn District Chief's car that night. With heavy fire conditions and multiple buildings involved with more threatened Chief Kondroski struck 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Alarms at 0322 and 0329 respectively. A minute later, the 5<sup>th</sup> Alarm was transmitted at 0330. (Author's Note: The rapid transmission of multiple alarms resulted in some inconsistencies recording who and when companies went to and arrived on what alarm.)

Engine 10 commanded by Lt. Slepoy took the hydrant in front of 207 Chestnut St. and laid into Connolly Terr. The crew pulled two 2 ½" handlines, one 1 ½" handline and set up their deck gun to hit the burning structures. But the hydrant was frozen.



Engine 11 with Capt. Doherty in command, coming in on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm, tried to hook into the hydrant at 207 Chestnut St. with their soft suction for a hot changeover but the stem was broken. So, Engine 11's operator, Ff. Landry backed the piece up to Ashton Square and two lines were laid to the hydrant at 207 Chestnut St. Engine 10's lines were broken from the hydrant and Engine 11's lines were made onto

Engine 10's lines. Engine 7 was now arriving on the fireground and they were ordered to pump into Engine 10 from the hydrant at Ashton Sq.

With more than one building burning the fire was a maelstrom. Large hot embers were lifted into the night sky by the whirlwind, dancing like fireflies as they rose. The neighborhood was threatened by the raging inferno. A 6<sup>th</sup> Alarm was ordered at 0340 hours.



Dist. Chief Zetes and his Aide FF 'Soapy' Waters on Sheridan St. Note the heavy ember conditions.

The fire was visible for blocks. Someone pulled the hook on City Box 336, Mariana St. and Fiske Ave. With all Lynn companies committed, Swampscott Engine 3 and Ladder 1 responded.

With no duty at the Box, Swampscott Ladder 1 continued on to cover at Fayette St. Engine 3 returned to Swampscott Headquarters and Marblehead Ladder 1 covered Swampscott from their own quarters in Marblehead.

Engine 9, commanded by Lt. Drew, reported to Chief Scanlon and were sent to a hydrant at Essex and Chestnut St.'s. Taking that hydrant the company laid two lines into Connolly Terr. to the rear of the original fire building and for two hours worked the stream onto the fire at 9 Connolly Terr. with their deck gun.

Ladder 2, commanded by Lt. Raimo, drove down the driveway to the rear of the Carleton Beef Company. A 30' ground ladder was thrown so members could check the beef company roof for fire extension. Ff. J. Barry set the jacks and the bucket went up. The serious water supply problem delayed water getting to the bucket until a Peabody Engine assigned on the 5<sup>th</sup> Alarm arrived with water and put two lines into the Siamese and Ladder 2 put a stream onto the building at 9 Connolly Terr.

Ladder 3, commanded by Ff. Monteith OOG, came into the fire scene through the vacant lot at the corner of Sheridan and Essex St.'s and put their piece next to the rear of the original fire building. The stick was thrown, and both the bed and fly pipes were put up with 1 1/8' tips to operate onto the building at 9 Connolly Terr.



Looking up Sheridan St. from Essex St. Lynn E8's Seagrave lower left. Lynn L3 Mack C-95/Maxim on the far right. Fire building to the left is number 11 Sheridan St. Fire center right is 9 Connolly Terr. The one story building on the far right is Carlton Beef. Note the heavy fire conditions.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo collection of member R. Conway

Lynn Ladder 3 operating both its bed ladder pipe and the fly ladder pipe operating at 9 Connolly Terrace.

After helping Engine 7 and finally getting water for Engine 10, Engine 11 proceeded to the hydrant at Essex St. corner of Lincoln St. and put two lines into Ladder 3's ladder pipe. But this hydrant also had a broken stem. Engine 11's crew, once again, broke lines from the bad hydrant and moved down Lincoln Street using the last of their hose, until they found a hydrant that would work. The lines were put into 11's pump. The soft suction connection was made to the hydrant and finally, Engine 11 was putting water into Ladder 3. Engine 8 also had a line into Ladder 3.

Ladder 4, commanded by Capt. Milotte, came into the fire on Sheridan St., threw the stick and operated their ladder pipe fed by Engine 3.

Engine 6, commanded by Ff. Karsis OOG, took a hydrant on Sheridan St., and connected the soft suction, then put two lines into Engine 1 as feeders. Engine 6's crew then stretched a 1 ½" line off Engine 5 to the side of the original fire building, A hunk of soffit falling from the fire building struck Ff. Karsis injuring his arm, but he remained on duty.

Engine 7, commanded by Lt. R. Powers, was pumping away at their hydrant supplying Engine 10 when a Revere Engine Company showed up needing water. Engine 7 took another line off and fed the Revere Pump.

Engine 3, Commanded by Capt. Curran, took a hydrant on Sheridan St. up from Chestnut Ave. and laid two lines into Ladder 4 to feed their ladder pipe. The long hose lay and low residual hydrant pressure, only 5 PSI was showing on the compound gauge, meant Engine 3 was only able to charge one line. After the 6<sup>th</sup> Alarm companies arrived and went to work, an Everett Engine Company brought in a supplemental feeder and the second line was charged.

Engine 8 needed more water. A Chelsea Engine equipped with the state of the art, 4" large diameter hose, brought the big water to supplement Engine 8's supply and an additional 2 ½" line was stretched to the fire





God (and Godbout) was with them on Sheridan Street.

Other mutual aid engine companies relay pumped to the scene to augment the water supply. Mutual aid trucks, evacuated exposures, checked for extension and assisted stretching and operating hose lines.

Engine 11's 1964 Mack "C" Model apparatus would pump for 2 hours and 15 minutes. The company used 300' of 3" hose, and 1150' of 2 1/2" hose in four lines. While making up all this hose they noticed another fire. Bags of trash were burning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rear porch at 303 Essex St. With Ladder 2 providing a ladder for access, used the Booster and passed water 5 minutes to extinguish that fire. So much for Engine 11 being a slow retirement home.

Ultimately the fire destroyed the buildings at 11 Sheridan St, 9 and 7 Connolly Terr. along with damaging 7 Sheridan St, 303 Essex St, and Carleton Beef Co, at 212 Rear Chestnut St. A motor truck parked next to one of the buildings was also destroyed.

It was the start of what would turn out to be a long and busy year for the Lynn Fire Department and its mutual aid neighbors.



## Times of Alarms

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1981

0309 Still Alarm for Outside Fire: Engine 5

0309 City Box 32 by radio on orders of Engine 5: E1-8 L1 R2 C3

0312 Working Fire by radio on orders of Engine 5: E10

0313 2-32 by radio on orders of Engine 5: E6 L2

0322 3-32 E11-7 L3

0329 4-32 E9-3 L4

0330 5-32 Rev-E Pea-E Sau-E Rev-L

0340 6-32 Che-E Mal-E Eve-E Eve-L

You might ask why I included the fire on Christmas Eve.

Well, including that fire makes **52** Multiple Alarms.

Okay, January 24<sup>th</sup> might be a little late for Epiphany, but it was cold.



## **APPARATUS UPDATE**

**By Michael Boynton Line Box Staff**

**All photos by the author.**

The winter of 2020-2021 is now in full swing, but that hasn't stopped the apparatus deliveries or the pictures of the new rigs. Now, I would much rather be taking pictures in 60 or 70 degree weather, but the show must go on....albeit with a bit of frostbite.

In Metro, Malden and Newton both received new E-One Typhoons for their respective Engine 2's. Malden is also expecting delivery in the near future of an E-One Cyclone Metro 100' aerial. In Newton, the former Engine 2 (2008 Pierce) has become reserve Engine 5.

Outside of Metro, Billerica has received a 2020 E-One Typhoon for Engine 1. This is the first "rescue pumper" configuration for Billerica. The current Engine 1 is being reassigned as Engine 3. In Freetown, a new KME Severe Service pumper has been delivered. This rig is Engine 1 and will serve the Assonet section of town. Also "down south", Onset Fire has received a new KME Panther for Engine 1 replacing yet another Maxim. However, one Maxim S pumper has new life! The former Engine 2 for the Palmer Fire District was acquired by the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy in 2020 and now serves as Engine 9. It is currently in Stow but is expected to be relocated to Bridgewater this Spring. On the Cape, Joint Base Cape Cod Fire has received the first of two new Oshkosh Striker crash trucks. Designated as Foam 404, the first arrival is a Striker 1500. Sometime this Spring the base expects the arrival of a Striker 3000. Finally, the Massachusetts Forest Fire Control team has received a 2019 Mack Granite/Fouts Brothers 2,200-gallon tanker for Tanker 1.











Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member Michael Boynton



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member Michael Boynton





Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member Michael Boynton



Box 52 Assoc. Photo by member Michael Boynton

## A FIFTY YEAR LOOK BACK AT JANUARY AND FEBURARY 1971

### BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT ACTION

Submitted by Honorary Member & Retired BFD Commissioner Paul Christian

DATE	DAY	A...	P...	BOX_...	ADD...	STREET	_1ST	W.F.	_2ND	_3RD	_4TH	_5TH
Jan 2, 1971	Saturday	2		2113	18	Reed St-20	2:26 AM	2:42 AM	3:01 AM			
Jan 3, 1971	Sunday	3		2196	27	Schuyler St	2:20 AM		2:23 AM	2:34 AM		
Jan 6, 1971	Wednesday	2		3215	7	King St	1:42 AM	1:51 AM	2:01 AM			
Jan 12, 1971	Tuesday	1		6168	116	Brooks St	12:00 AM	12:07 AM				
Jan 12, 1971	Tuesday	2		3526	162	Woodrow Av	3:03 PM	3:14 PM	3:16 PM			
Jan 14, 1971	Thursday	1		4112		B & M RR Yard 20 nr Prison	11:29 AM	11:29 AM				
Jan 14, 1971	Thursday	1		3113	202	Columbia Rd-204	2:45 PM	2:52 PM				
Jan 14, 1971	Thursday	2		7423	64	G St	4:15 PM		4:46 PM			
Jan 16, 1971	Saturday	1		3153	417	Geneva Av	5:59 PM	6:06 PM				
Jan 19, 1971	Tuesday	1		2246	4	John Ct-6-8	7:55 PM	7:56 PM				
Jan 20, 1971	Wednesday	4		6136	25	Lewis St	12:57 AM	12:59 AM	12:59 AM	1:06 AM	1:37 AM	
Jan 23, 1971	Saturday	3		3831	1580	River St-1582	7:59 PM	8:11 PM	8:14 PM	8:27 PM		
Jan 24, 1971	Sunday	2		1245	1	Eastern Av-59	2:47 PM		2:54 PM			
Jan 24, 1971	Sunday	1		5126	52	Ashford St	8:29 PM					
Jan 25, 1971	Monday	1		1652	1585	Washington St	5:07 AM					
Jan 25, 1971	Monday	1		3611	226	Harvard St-228	6:19 AM					
Jan 25, 1971	Monday	3		7415	60	Gates St-62	11:40 PM		11:50 PM	12:02 AM		
Jan 28, 1971	Thursday	2		3412	1800	Dorchester Av-1810	3:31 AM	3:37 AM	3:58 AM			
Jan 28, 1971	Thursday	2		7417	314	East Eighth St-75 Gates St	3:43 AM	3:49 AM	3:52 AM			
Jan 28, 1971	Thursday	1		7265	58	Clapp St-60	5:31 PM					
Jan 31, 1971	Sunday	2		3658	500	River St-512	12:22 PM	12:29 PM	12:31 PM			
Feb 1, 1971	Monday	3		6151	22	Paris St, 24	2:16 AM	2:24 AM	2:28 AM	2:36 AM		
Feb 1, 1971	Monday	5		1224	120	Salem St, 122, 124, 126,	7:37 PM		7:39 PM	7:42 PM	7:44 PM	8:00 PM
Feb 4, 1971	Thursday	1		2172	52	Brunswick St	7:38 PM					
Feb 5, 1971	Friday	1		6172	102	Marion St, 104	1:24 AM					
Feb 5, 1971	Friday	1		186	379	Savin Hill Av	9:12 AM	9:21 AM				
Feb 7, 1971	Sunday	2		1221	57	Salem St	2:05 AM	2:23 AM	2:29 AM			
Feb 8, 1971	Monday	1		3162	89	Freeport St	1:06 AM					
Feb 8, 1971	Monday	3		1334	9	Bowdoin St-11	12:22 PM	12:27 PM	12:30 PM	12:36 PM		
Feb 9, 1971	Tuesday	2		7441	721	East Seventh St, 723	3:34 PM	3:39 PM	3:40 PM			
Feb 9, 1971	Tuesday	1		3611	226	Harvard St-228	5:30 PM					
Feb 11, 1971	Thursday	2		5334	17	Lothian Rd	6:44 PM	6:56 PM	7:14 PM			
Feb 12, 1971	Friday	2		6154	65	Border St-67	1:17 AM		1:29 AM			
Feb 16, 1971	Tuesday	2		3191	246	Park St	8:03 PM	8:15 PM	8:24 PM			
Feb 18, 1971	Thursday	2		7617		Thompson Island	3:42 PM	4:45 PM	4:49 PM			
Feb 20, 1971	Saturday	3		1539	45	Commonwealth Av-47	11:00 AM		11:12 AM	11:25 AM		
Feb 20, 1971	Saturday	1		3618	1019	Blue Hill Av	12:37 PM					
Feb 21, 1971	Sunday	2		2313	264	Bay State Rd-270	12:04 AM	12:42 AM	12:49 AM			
Feb 25, 1971	Thursday	2		136	15	Garden St	4:06 AM	4:08 AM	4:09 AM			
Feb 25, 1971	Thursday	2		7421	3a	Douglas St	7:49 AM	7:54 AM	8:05 AM			
Feb 26, 1971	Friday	1		1451	170	Tremont St	7:22 PM					
Feb 27, 1971	Saturday	1		1551	669	Tremont St	6:39 AM					
Feb 28, 1971	Sunday	1		3633	41	Goodale Rd	7:01 PM					



**The Unknown Conflagration at West Concord**  
**March 16<sup>th</sup> 1932**  
**By Frank San Severino**

It was a cold few days in March of 1932 as the calendar ticked down to St Patrick's Day. The Ides of March saw temperatures in several Middlesex County communities hovering near the single digits and a stiff wind from the north/northwest had been blowing for a few days. Weather report in the Boston Globe stated that the cold spell and wind would continue into St. Patrick's Day.

A few minutes after noontime a house fire was reported in the town of Lincoln. The house was well involved and an engine was requested from Concord. Engine 1 was dispatched to the scene. Leaving Ladder 1 and the chemical car in the Walden St Headquarters.

As the afternoon wore on at the West Concord Station at Main and Church Streets all was quiet. Two 'permanent men' were on duty Harry Carroll and Gerald Finan. The house work and daily chores had been completed and the two men were relaxing on the second floor of the station. On the apparatus floor, it was cold, so the town had purchased space heaters. This would prove a costly mistake.

During the winter of 1932, it was still the height of the Great Depression and many families had turned to the use of space heaters to save money on buying coal. Not a day went by when the Boston papers didn't carry a story of a fire, sometimes claiming a life caused by these space heaters.

Just about 1500 hours a burst of smoke came up the stairs and pole holes, quickly filling the second floor. This was followed almost immediately by flames working their way up into the second floor. Firefighter Carroll went down a rear set of stairs in the choking smoke and groped his way to a piece of apparatus to get it started and out of the house. Meanwhile Firefighter Finan dove out a second floor window into a large snow bank, uninjured he fought his way inside the blazing apparatus floor and tried to get another piece started and out of the station. An explosion occurred intensifying the fire and both men retreated. Both men received burns about the face, but stayed on duty. The firehouse was now fully involved and the wind was pushing the flames towards several exposures.

The West Concord beat cop saw the fire and smoke ran to a box and pulled the hook. Fire Alarm received one blow. The crew of Ladder 1 remained oblivious to what was happening to their brothers at the substation. A phone call was made from one of the stores in the business district reporting the fire. Ladder 1 was dispatched and the box was sounding on the air horns for all permanent and callmen to respond.

At the time of the fire, West Concord was a thriving section of the Town of Concord. Here were located many two and a half story wood frame two family dwellings, a church, 2 grammar schools with over 500 students between them and several shops of various businesses. Also much of Concord's industrial operations were located here along the Boston and Maine Railroads Fitchburg Division.

Concord Fire Chief Silas A. Bean was a resident of West Concord. His home tapper received the one blow and as he exited his house to go and see what was happening, he was shocked to see the station fully involved. He ran back into his house called the H.Q. station and told the man on watch to sound a General Alarm for West Concord Center!

Lexington was the first call and Engine 2's 1925 ALF 750 gpm pump turned out of the Meriam St quarters and headed out state route 2A to Concord and on into West Concord Center. As they pulled in, Lexington Chief Edward Taylor who had proceeded them in his automobile gave orders, to get two lines into operation to try and protect what exposures they could until more help arrived.

Mutual aid was coming from Acton, Bedford, Maynard and Hudson. Bedford and Acton companies were quick to arrive and set to work. By this time, the wooden fire station was doomed and the fire had spread

to the large 2.5 story rooming house at 14 Church Street, separated by a 15 foot alley from the station. This rooming house was soon fully involved and despite the efforts of the lone pump operating, it to was soon destroyed.



Lexington E2 1925 ALF in the foreground. Photo courtesy of the Boston Globe Archives

As mutual aid started to arrive and set to work under Chief Bean's orders, Lincoln was called by phone and it was requested that Engine 1 return to Concord with all haste. By now the fire, being pushed by the stiff northwest wind had ignited the wooden block of stores that was beside the rooming house. This involved at numbers 4, 6 and 8 Church Street. The end of the building at # 8 was heavily damaged. But a gallant stop was made to keep the fire from extending. Number 6 housed the Wright Cleansers and at number 4 was the Lambardo's Barber Shop. Even though crews managed to stop the fire here, brands and sparks borne on the wind were falling like snow all over the area. The fire swept past now entering the roof and upper floors of a large three story wood frame structure that housed Hogan's Spa on the first floor and the family lived on the upper floors. The roof was burned off and the upper floors heavily damaged. The fire was stopped here by the help of a brick building and several big lines.

The fight now turned to the rear exposures of the firehouse. This was the Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church. The roof started to ignite from the falling embers and sparks. Chief Taylor of Lexington noticed that the roof was starting to burn and he directed the Acton pump and its crew into action. They were able to get the fire before it burned through to the roof. Thus the Church was saved.

Next in line were two grammar schools with about 500 pupils inside at the time of the fire. The Principals held the children for an hour during the height of the blaze. The schools were protected by several big lines played on the roofs.

At 340 Main Street, the Conant Machine Company, the embers were fiercely falling. Some workers got onto the roof with soaked canvas tarps. Other workers formed a bucket brigade passing up pails of water keeping the tarps wet. The fire never took hold.

It was not the same story on Derby Street located a third of a mile away from the fire station which was directly in the path of the rain of embers and sparks. Houses on both sides of the street had roof fires and companies were working to try and get these fires extinguished before the homes could be lost. At the time of the fire, all the houses on the street were two and a half story wood frame single and two family dwellings.

By the time fire companies got into Derby Street the house at number 20 was already destroyed. The two family next door at 14 & 16 Derby Street, already had a heavy fire in the second floor and attic. The house on the other side at number 22 & 24 had already lost its roof and the attic was well involved. At # 26 crews caught a break and were able to knock down the roof fire with the house only suffering moderate damage.

On the odd numbered side of Derby Street, # 3 and # 9 suffered roof damage but the fire never entered the structures. Around the corner on Central Street, the house at # 5 suffered damage to the roof and attic area before the fire was extinguished.



Damaged house on Derby Street. Photo courtesy of the Boston Globe Archives

About this time with all the mutual aid pumps trying to get on hydrants, water pressure became an issue. Several engines were sent to draft from the Assabet River that was located very close to the scene. Soon the pumps were at work and were relaying desperately needed water into pumps at the fire.

Trains on the Boston & Maine's Fitchburg Division were halted for over 2 hours during the height of the blaze.

Damage was estimated at \$ 100,000.00. The West Concord Fire Station was rebuilt and re-opened later in 1932 at a cost of \$ 46,540.00. All new apparatus was purchased for the new station.



In 1932 the Concord Fire Department operated by two stations

**Headquarters on Walden Street**

Engine 1 1928 American La France 750 gpm pump

Ladder 1 1916 American La France City Service

**West Concord Main & Church Streets**

Engine 2 1917 American La France 750 gpm pump

Forest Fire 2 1922 Ford/Dept. built body

Ladder 2 1917 American La France City Service with Chemical Tanks.

### History Repeated 85 Years Later

On January 4 2017 at approximately 0047 hours Concord Dispatch received a box alarm from the West Concord Fire Station. At Headquarters, Shift Commander Captain Jay Redmond attempted to call via radio to Engine 400 several times after about 90 seconds of no response, C3, Engine 3 and Ladder 1 turned out and headed for West Concord.

Enroute E400 Lt. Ferrie radioed in that he and his crew were out of the building. He reported a Working fire at 0048 hours and advised C3 of a heavy smoke condition in the apparatus bay and several explosions and that the sprinklers were working.

On the report of the Working Fire, a callback for off duty personnel was toned out and an engine company from Lincoln and Maynard responded along with a Medic Unit from Lexington.

Concord Engine 3 pushed a line in through the rear door of the station and found the fire was around Engine 4's 2010 E-One Typhoon 1250/500 pump. The fire was quickly knocked down, but heavy damage was done to Engine 4 along with the entire apparatus floor, equipment and turnout gear. Engine 6, a 2005 Ford F-550 125/300 brush unit and A3 a 2014 Ford F-550 Horton 4x4 ambulance were inspected and totaled.

The crews moved into a trailer a few blocks away and the station was re-built and new apparatus purchased. Crews moved back in during the first week of July 2017.

Today the station is home to Engine 4 operates a 2017 E-One Typhoon 1250/510/20 class A foam. A3 2017 Ford F-450 4x4 Horton ambulance and Squad 6 a 2018 Ford F-250 sedan cab/Kimtek 4x4 125/160/5 class A foam.



Box 52 Assoc. Photo courtesy of WJAR TV