FOR FIGHTING FIRE

Portland's Well-Disciplined Paid Fire Department.

EARLY VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR GOOD WORK

History of the Local Fire Companies Covering Nearly Half a Century—The Great Fires Described—The Low Prevailing Insurance Rates.

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

In 1853 there occurred a small fire during midsummer which awoke the people to the necessity of making arrangements which would insure adequate protection against a serious conflagration. At that time the mayor of Portland was Josiah Failing. Immediately after the fire referred to, Mr. Failing took prompt steps to obtain the protection which to him seemed necessary, and, with the view of effecting a fire organization from which satisfactory results could be expected, he appointed Stephen Coffin, Thomas J. Dryer and I. B. Smith, who were to act as fire wardens. Nearly two years after the Pioneer company was organized, a call was made for a meeting to organize a hook-and-ladder company and to perfect a system which would provide for efficient work by the fire department. This meeting took place on July 28, 1853. A resolution was passed which declared the whole city a district for the organization of the proposed hook-and-ladder company, and it was the sense of the meeting that Portland should be divided into two subdistricts, in each of which should be formed an efficient engine company. The dividing line between the two subdistricts was Washington street.

The result of the meeting was the organization of Vigilance hook-and-ladder company No. 1. The first officers of this company were: I. B. Smith, foreman; H. W. Davis, assistant; C. A. Poor, secretary; S. J. McCormick, treasurer. The company adopted its constitution and bylaws on Monday evening, August 1, 1853. The list of charter members included 36 names. The company was admitted for duty by the city council one day after its organization.

The first headquarters of this company were on Yamhill street, between First and Second, where they remained until the memorable fire of 1853 destroyed their house. The company's first truck consisted of a common wagon, with the original reach removed, and the ladder was formed of long poles, made from a tall sapling split in two parts. With its primitive apparatus this company did most effective work, however, and for many years it was one of the great companies of the Portland volunteer fire department.

At the meeting referred to above, two committees were appointed for the purpose of completing arrangements for the organization of two engine companies, one for the northern and one for the southern district of the city. The organization of the company for the northern district was effected on August 1 following, with an enrollment of 52 names. The first officers, were: C. S. Silver, foreman; B. Stark, first assistant foreman; D. C. Coleman, second assistant; Charles Hutchins, secretary; and Justus Steinberger, treasurer. The first name proposed for the company was Protection. At the meeting held on August 8 there was some little discussion over the final selection of a permanent name. Mr. Failing suggested Cascade; Mr. Barnhart thought Pike would be suggestive; and Northerner was offered by Mr. Stark. This latter designation was finally adopted. At this meeting 24 men signed their names to the roll, which made them members of the company.

The company, like its predecessor, had none of the elements of permanency in its make-up, and in less than two months after its formation it was disorganized, not in a formal way, but as an implied agreement on the part of its apathetic members.

In the southern district, Willamette engine company No. 1 was organized on August 6 of the same year, with the following officers: Neeson Ham, foreman; David Monastes, first assistant; Asa Strong, second assistant; A. M. Berry, secretary; and C. E. Williams, treasurer. This company contained among its active members many men who have since become prominent in Portland's affairs. Among these may be mentioned C. H. Lewis, William S. Ladd, Henry Failing, George H. Williams, R. B. Knapp and M. S. Burrell. These gentlemen served in the department for many years, and the aid and support they rendered the old fire department was of incalculable benefit to the city. The same interest these gentlemen have always taken in their private affairs was devoted unselfishly to the affairs of the fire department, and with the support of such men nothing could have been expected of Willamette engine company but the great degree of success it attained from the day of its first organization. Mr. Failing, one of the most prominent early members of this company, has always been interested in the matter of efficient fire protection for Portland, and he is today one of the most active members of the Exempt Firemen's Association. Willamette engine company was admitted by an act of the city council passed July 7, 1854.

On June 20, 1855, the council authorized the purchase of one of Smith's New York machines for the use of the local department. The boys then dubbed the primitive fire pumps "piano-boxes." On August 2, 1856, the council passed a resolution which awarded this engine to Willamette company. It had been shipped to Portland via Cape Horn, and it was unloaded at the town wharf eight days after it had been awarded to the Willamettes by the council. This was Portland's first fire engine owned by the city. Two engines had been brought here before this time, however, by W. B. Otway, on the bark Mary Melville, which sailed into Portland's harbor July 28, 1852. For a time after their arrival the machines were in charge of P. A. Marquam. One of the engines was subsequently purchased and was loaned by this gentleman to the Northern fire company on its organization. The other was purchased by G. W. Vaughn and was loaned to the Willamette fire company. The vicissitudes of the Vaughn engine carried it to the temporary use of the Multnomah engine company, afterward organized in Portland, and finally to the fire department of Eugene, where it did most efficient service for many years.

THOROUGHLY ORGANIZED.

The Volunteer Department Placed on a Very Strong Footing.

THE next fire company organized in Portland was Multnomah engine company No. 2. The first enrollment list of 56 names was closed August 26, 1856. Four days later the company's first meeting was held. B. F. Goodwin was made chairman of the meeting, and T. B. Trevett was appointed secretary. The proper steps were taken in the work of drafting a constitution and by-laws, and at a subsequent meeting, held on September 6, these constitution and by-laws were adopted, as was also the name of the company. At the meeting held one week later, 29 men enrolled their names as members of the company, and the following officers were elected: B. F. Goodwin, foreman; L. M. Starr, first assistant; David Monnastes, second assistant; A. M. Starr, president; A. C. Ripley, secretary; and Thomas A. Davis, treasurer. The city council passed an ordinance admitting this company on November 25 of the same year of its organization. Multnomah No. 2 was an independent company, its equipment having been purchased with money obtained by popular subscription.

The engine for this company arrived from New York in November, 1857. This company afterward owned the first steam fire engine placed in service on the coast. It was a Silsby rotary, and was purchased at Seneca Falls, N. Y., and shipped to Portland by way of the Horn. It reached Portland in 1858, just in time to be made available for the big Stitzel mill fire. It was in constant service for an entire week at that time in the endeavor made by the fire department to extinguish the smoldering fire in the sawdust, which had started from the fire in the mill.

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

On May 22, 1854, the council passed an ordinance organizing the Portland fire department. The first chief engineer of the department was H. W. Davis. Shubrick Norris was assistant. In 1855, at an election held for the chief and assistant of the Portland fire department, the first officers were re-elected. In September, 1856, Davis was again the successful candidate for the position of chief, and Orin Joynt was made assistant. At the election in the following year, the successful contestants for the respective offices of chief engineer and assistant were S. J. McCormick and Charles Hutchins. During Mr. McCormick's incumbency he was absent in the East for several months, and during his absence the council declared his office vacant and A. M. Starr was appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. Starr, however, had been elected mayor of the city, and he failed to qualify as chief engineer of the local department. On April 13, 1858, the assistant, Charles Hutchins, was elected chief. When Mr. McCormick again returned to Portland, he was elected to the office of assistant of the fire department. For many years this gentleman was a prominent bookseller and publisher here, but he afterward removed to San Francisco, where he gained considerable distinction as editor of the Catholic Monitor.

In 1857 the local fire department was reorganized as the result of a special ordinance passed by the city council on September 24 of that year. Under the terms of this ordinance Willamette engine company No. 1, Multnomah engine company No. 2 and Vigilance hook and ladder company No. 1 were included in the department. The total number of men enrolled in the department at that time was 157.

In June, 1859, the department was strengthened by the organization of Columbia engine company No. 3. This company elected the following officers: F. Carter, foreman; E. Devine, first assistant; William Cook, second assistant; George Porter, president; Thos. Neally, secretary; E. E. Kelly, treasurer. The engine used by this company was what was known as a Jeffer's side-stroke. In addition, the company owned a hose carriage, which carried nearly 1000 feet of an excellent quality of hose. The engine house and the headquarters of the company were on Washington street, between Second and Third.

Columbia engine company No. 3 was the first of the Portland fire companies to use horses. These horses were purchased by the company, who also stood the entire expense of their care. When the old department was disbanded, Columbia engine company No. 2 had a considerable sum of money in the treasury. With this money the company voted the endowment of a bed in each of Portland's large hospitals, Good Samaritan and St. Vincent's, and the remainder of the funds on hand were contributed to the Exempt Firemen' Association, to provide for the care of the Volunteer Firemen's burial plot at Lone Fir cemetery.

The rapid growth of Portland soon demanded the formation of another fire company, and on November 12, 1862, Protection engine company, No. 2, was organized, and promptly admitted to the department by the city council. The following were the first officers of this company. R. Hendry, foreman; H. Bullough, first assistant; J. Byrnes, second assistant; A. Rosenheim, president; W. T. Patterson, secretary, and John B. Miller, treasurer.

This was the last fire company organized in Portland until February 12, 1873, when Tiger engine company No. 5 was formed. The great fire of December 22, 1872, had awakened the people of Portland to the necessity of affording additional protection to the city and it was this which led to the organization of the above company. The first enrollment of Tiger company included 52 names. The last fire company organized under the old volunteer fire department was Couch engine company 6, which was formed in 1880, with a total membership of 35.

BOARD OF FIRE DELEGATES.

Under Whose Authority the Fire Department Was Conducted.

ON February 12, 1863, a board of fire delegates was organized. The duties of this body were similar to those now performed by the board of fire commissioners. The first officers of the fire delegates were Captain E. G. Randall, president; T. B. Trevett, secretary; and E. Seymour, treasurer. A short time prior to the formation of this board the legislature had passed an act exempting firemen from jury duty and fixing the salary of the chief engineer at $300 a year. This act was signed by Governor John Whittaker in 1862. In the fall election of 1858 Chief Engineer S. J. McCormick was succeeded by J. M. Van Syckle. This gentleman had reached Portland several months before that time from Stockton, Cal., where he had been connected with the local fire department, and it was through his personal efforts that the Stockton department was made one of the most efficient organizations of the kind on the coast. He long held the position of local agent of Wells, Fargo & Co., and such was his ability that he was soon recognized as the foremost man in the Portland department. At the same election Joseph Webber and F. Sherwood were also elected chief assistants. In 1859 Mr. Van Syckle was re-elected as chief, with M. Lucas and J. A. Messenger as first and second assistants, respectively. During the incumbency of Mr. Van Syckle a bell tower was erected in the city and a big steel bell, weighing over half a ton, was brought from the East and placed in this tower. The cost of this bell, including freight charges, was $518.

In 1860 Mr. Van Syckle moved to Wallula to engage in business. Joseph Webber was appointed to succeed him, and he was re-elected in 1861, with A. C. Ripley as first assistant, and J. J. Thompson, second assistant. Webber held the office of chief until December 1, 1864. At that time the mayor of Portland was Henry Failing. Owing to the increased importance of the local fire department, the salary of the chief engineer was increased from $300 a year to $500, in 1864. The immediate successor of Webber was Joseph Buchtel, the present able head of the Portland paid fire department. Mr. Buchtel was re-elected to serve until 1866, when he was succeeded by H. Weed, who held the office for two years. In 1869 T. G. Young was elected chief engineer, and he was succeeded in 1870 by Robert Holman, who remained at the head of the department until December, 1872. The next chief was Archibald Williams, and his successors in the order named were W. O. Bruen, who held the office for two years; A. B. Hallock; John Lyons, whose term expired on December 1, 1877; J. H. Morgan, who served until December 1, 1879; Thomas A. Jordan, who held the office two years, and W. A. Hart. Mr. Hart was the last chief engineer of the volunteer fire department, his term expiring when the old organization went out of existence, on the last day of 1882. On the night of December 21, of that year, the town and the entire department turned out for a big demonstration. Whistles blew, bells rang, and horns tooted, and everybody joined in bidding adieu to Portland's old volunteer fire department, which gave place the following day to the present efficient paid department.

Three local fraternal firemen's organizations contain all that is left of the surviving members of the old volunteer department. The first and most important of these is the Exempt Firemen's Association, which was organized early in 1875 as a benevolent association. The first meeting of the board of trustees was held April 8 following, and at a later meeting, held on the 22d day of the same month, the articles of incorporation of the association were adopted and signed by the following seven charter members: A. B. Hallock, president; Benjamin F. Goodwin, secretary; C. H. Lewis, Peter Taylor, T. A. Davis, A. Zieber. The present officers are Peter Taylor, president and John O'Connor, secretary.

The requirements of membership in this association are that the candidate shall have seen seven years' service in the volunteer department, except those who joined the department four years prior to the time it was disbanded, and who performed continuous service up to January 1, 1883, when it was disbanded.

After the great fire of August 2, 1873, a large sum of money was raised for the relief of the sufferers. Of this fund there remained the sum of $1781 71, which had not been used. The authorities in charge of this money decided to turn it over to the board of trustees of the fire department as an irreducible fund, the income from this fund to be used only for the relief of members of the Portland fire department who may be injured while in the active discharge of their duties. There was a further provision made in the transfer of this fund, which allows the trustees, in case any serious calamity of fire occurs which might render necessary the raising of any considerable fund for the relief of the immediate wants of the sufferers thereby, to use the whole or any part of the principal and interest of said fund for that purpose. On the organization of the exempt association this fund was placed in charge of a board of trustees composed of seven members of that organization. These members were A. B. Hallock, C. H. Lewis, H. Failing, T. A. Davis, Peter Taylor, A. Zieber and B. F. Goodwin. The association now has a fund of about $8600, which can be used for the care of injured firemen or for the assistance of sick or indigent members. The exempt association also cares for the volunteer Firemen's plot at Lone Fir cemetery, one of the best kept and most beautifully located spots in the cemetery.

The following are the names of some of the older members of the association.

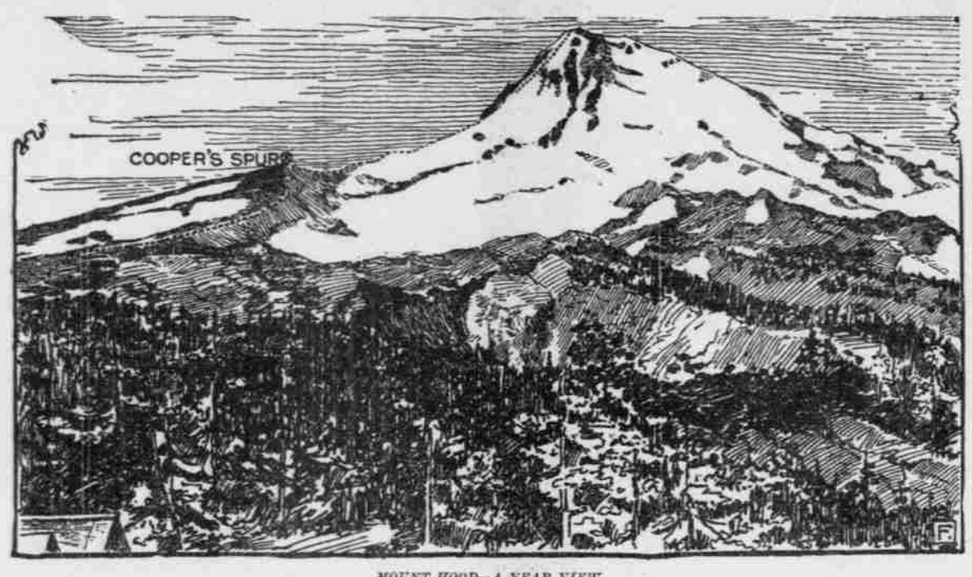
*A. B. Hallock, Henry Failing, *W. S. Ladd, *W. O. Bruen, C. H. Lewis, *Philip C. Schuyler, L. Baum, *Al Zieber, *Ed F. Albright, Peter Taylor, T. B. Trevett, *John Thompson, *Richard M. Field, Shubrick Norris, *L. C. Millard, W. H. D. Joyce, H. Sinsheimer, Blaise Labbe, *John H. Wolf, William Young, *Benjamin F. Goodwin, T. A. Davis, J. H. Lappeus, C. C. Phillips, *S. G. Skidmore, A. J. Walling, Henry Weinhard, *C. A. Burchardt, C. A. Alisky, Jacob Mayer, E. J. DeHart, Thomas A. Jordan, Henry Morgan.

*Deceased.

After the old volunteer fire department went out of existence, the surviving members of Multnomah engine company, No. 2, and the sons of the members, formed the Multnomah Engine Company, No. 2, Benevolent Association. The association now has a fund of $12,000, the income from which is devoted to aiding sick and needy members, and upon the death of any member the funeral expenses are paid out of this fund. The officers of the association are: T. B. Trevett, president; Joseph Buchtel, vice-president; Benjamin L. Norden, secretary, and Charles H. Dodd, treasurer.

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

The Portland volunteer fire department did a great work in the early history of the city, and even after Portland had attained distinction as a metropolitan center of population the department was able to insure the same protection against fire as was guaranteed at the time in any large city in the West by the best organized paid fire department. The members of the volunteer department included many representative men of the city, and while there was considerable rivalry between different companies there was none of that ill-feeling between different factions in the department which threatened the disruption of that good fellowship which always existed among the members. The fact that the city council failed to tender the old volunteer firemen a vote of thanks on the disbanding of the volunteer fire department on the last day of December, 1882, called for considerable comment from the community which had received such signal benefit from the efficient work done by the department, and while the failure of the council to officially recognize this valuable service by tendering a vote of thanks was an oversight, it was felt by the people that this lapse should not have been made, and that it was a reflection on the spirit of gratitude which Portland had always shown in attesting the city's appreciation of good work done by corporate public bodies.



MOUNT HOOD—A NEAR VIEW.

THE PAID DEPARTMENT.

Its Formation and the Causes Which Led Up to This Organization.

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

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

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

The following is the value of the property of the Portland paid fire department today:

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

Chief Engineer Jordan was succeeded January 1, 1884, by Harry Morgan, who held the position for eight years. He gave way to Robert Holman, January 1, 1892. Holman was succeeded one year later by Joseph Buchtel, the present efficient head of the department. The present assistant engineers are David Campbell, first assistant; M. Laudenklos, second assistant, and A. M. Donaldson, third assistant. The district of the first assistant engineer covers all the territory within the city limits south of Morrison street, and that of the second assistant the territory north of Morrison street, and that of the third assistant all that part of the city included within the limits of old East Portland and Albina.

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

It has been the endeavor of the new board of commissioners to operate the department on as economical a basis as is consistent with good service. They have especially aimed to keep the expenditures within the estimated cost of $143,859 for running the department during 1894, and if possible to save enough out of this appropriation to wipe out the deficiency of $9218 incurred in the previous year. In the interests of economy, the force has been somewhat reduced during the past year, the number of men now enrolled being 146, as against an enrollment of 170 during 1893. Even with this reduction, the department was never before on a more efficient footing than it is today. The department is equipped with a most modern and complete fire-alarm telegraph apparatus, which has cost over $22,000. The total value of the entire fire-alarm property is about $33,500. The superintendent in charge of the fire alarm is Captain A. J. Coffee, one of the most competent electricians on the coast.

It would be difficult to improve the water service in connection with the department. The water pressure from the new Bull Run system, in all mains throughout the lower portion of the city, is not less than 95 pounds to the square inch, and the supply is practically inexhaustible. The department owns 477 fire hydrants, 133 of which are distributed over the districts north of Morrison street, 124 south of Morrison street and 182 on the East Side. Besides these there are the 52 hydrants of the Elevator Company, distributed along Front and First streets. The department is also provided with 81 cisterns, 70 of which are distributed on the West Side and 11 on the East Side. The combined capacity of these cisterns is 1,510,000 gallons.

The department is made up of seven steam engine companies, three chemical engine companies, five hook-and-ladder companies, and four hose companies. These companies occupy 14 separate houses, of which four are double. The companies cover some remarkable distances in answering fire alarms in different parts of the city, but it would be hard to find a department of any city the size of Portland in the United States that gives quicker service in reaching fires than the department of this city.

The Portland paid fire department is under a most thorough discipline, all rules and regulations being strictly enforced. No man on the force who gets intoxicated is retained in his position, prompt dismissal following all breaches of this kind. The entire equipment is kept in the best of order. The horses are all sleek and well fed, the brass and nickel ornamentations of the engines are all kept highly polished, and the houses are all scrupulously clean. Every permanent member of the department is required to be constantly at his post, with the exception of one night a week accorded him, when his place must be filled by a substitute who is satisfactory to both the chief and the district engineer.

But few people outside of the department appreciate the discipline that it is necessary to preserve and the necessity which exists at all times for obeying promptly any order given by the chief or his assistants. The rules for the government of the department are complete, but they are thoroughly mastered by every active member. The system adopted for governing the matter of responding to alarms by the different companies shows the thorough discipline of the department. A fire alarm first calls out all the companies assigned to the district in which the alarm is sounded. An alarm for a second fire in this same district, however, while the first companies are on duty in this district, is promptly answered by the companies from another district. This system becomes very complicated when several alarms are rung in from different parts of the city before any recall has been sounded. A portion of each fire company is composed of "extra men," who are employed in the vicinity of the company's house, who serve for $30 per month. When the recall for the first alarm does not sound within 20 minutes, all the extramen belonging to the companies assigned to the district where the fire is burning, must leave their work and go to their posts and remain there until relieved by word from the officers of the department. If a second alarm is turned in, all extramen in the city must go to the houses of their companies and remain until relieved.

On September 13 last, 11 alarms were turned in within a period of six hours, and on that day six fires were burning in different parts of the city at the same time. All of these alarms were promptly answered by the department without the least confusion, and the fact that nothing serious followed from any of these fires was due, as the chief engineer remarked with pride, to the efficiency of the companies, which made a mistake or a break of any kind in answering an alarm an impossibility.

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

The following table shows the number of men enrolled in the Portland paid fire department, during each year since it was first organized:

YEAR.	No. of permanent uniformed members	Extra men (members at call)	Total
1883	18	34	52
1884	20	40	60
1885	20	50	70
1886	20	50	70
1887	20	50	70
1888	20	58	80
1889	20	58	80
1890	28	72	100
1891	32	84	100
1892	58	112	170
1893	58	112	170
1894	42	95	146

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

1883	$ 58,955 00
1884	65,880 00
1885	66,808 00
1886	66,478 00
1887	72,818 00
1888	69,469 00
1889	77,025 00
1890	124,921 00
1891	117,405 00
1892	137,745 00
1893	150,158 00
1894 (to November 30, 11 months)	124,299 17
1894 (estimate for December)	8,500 00

MEMBERS ARE CARED FOR.

The Firemen's Relief Association—Its Beneficent Aim.

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

Year—	Receipts.	Disbursements.
1883	$ 691 00	$ 368 84
1884	625 00	475 81
1885	1,381 50	685 72
1886	811 00	337 67
1887	839 00	588 76
1888	669 50	722 80
1889	934 33	855 48
1890	1,391 40	1,162 14
1891	1,510 25	969 35
1892	1,832 40	2,143 10
1893	1,748 39	1,644 32
	$12,422 82	$ 9,944 39
Balance on hand, bills receivable	$2,400 00	
Balance on hand, cash	77 83	
		2,477 83
		$12,422 82

Sources of revenue, 1883 to 1893, inclusive:

Amount received from dues and fines	$ 9,974 65
Amount received from donations	856 00
Amount received from theater benefit	757 00
Amount received for interest	799 67
Amount received from miscellaneous sources	35 50
Total	$12,422 82

The total receipts up to November 30, 1894, were $1324 25, and the disbursements up to the same date were $755 31.

The average yearly losses by fire in Portland are less than in any other large city on the coast. The credit for this exemption is due directly to the efficiency of the department. Portland, during its existence, however, has not escaped some disastrous contacts with the fiery element. One of the most serious of these conflagrations nearly wiped the city out of existence, and it entailed much subsequent suffering. There have been but extremely few fatalities from fire in the history of the city, however. This has been due, principally, to the fact that previous to the era of modern brick and stone buildings few edifices here attained a height above two stories, and few fatalities from fires ever occur in low structures.

Previous to the great fire of 1873, the only important loss Portland has ever suffered was from the conflagration of December 22 of the previous year. On that occasion it seemed at one time as though the whole town was doomed, but the high wind which prevailed during the height of the fire suddenly died away to a calm, and with the heavy rain which commenced to fall at the same time, the department was able to quickly get the flames under control. The fire started in a Chinese washhouse in the rear of the block on the east side of Front street, between Morrison and Alder. Nearly all the buildings along the city front at that time were constructed of dry, light wood and they stood on piles. The open space beneath these buildings supplied a draft which swept up through the frame structures with a force that carried embers of the burning timbers for blocks distant. The fire rapidly spread toward the north, being fanned by the wind which was blowing a gale. The heat was so intense that the buildings on the east side of Front street were soon in flames and the firemen were compelled to leave the street. Within half an hour from the time the fire had started it had consumed everything on Front street from Morrison north to Washington, as well as the blocks along the river front. The old American Exchange hotel, on Front street marked the line of the fire, this building having been providentially saved by the subsidence of the wind at a time when the structure was all but ignited. An explosion of coal oil and chemicals in the drug store of C. H. Woodard, during the height of the fire, injured several firemen. One of the exciting features of the fire was the rounding up of a lot of Chinese by the police and pressing the Celestials into service in manning the engines, as the regular firemen became exhausted. The Oregonian building at the corner of Front and Stark streets, for a long time seemed in danger, and the forms were locked up, and these, with the type and office furniture were rapidly removed to places of safety. The fire, as stated before, however, did not cross Washington street, and the paper on the following morning came out at the old stand. The loss reached over half a million, a little over one-fifth of which amount was covered by insurance.

The great fire of August 2, 1873, was far more disastrous in its effects. It swept away 21 blocks of buildings in the center of the city and destroyed a large number of saw and planing mills, furniture factories, flour mills, sash and door factories, foundries and other industrial enterprises which gave employment in the aggregate to hundreds of men. In proportion to the size of Portland at that time this fire was a more disastrous blow to this city than the great conflagrations of Boston or Chicago had been. The fire was first discovered at 4:20 A. M. in the large wooden building which stood at the corner of First and Salmon streets, and occupied by Hurgren & Shindler as a furniture factory. This building was surrounded by other wooden structures, many of which contained highly inflammable materials. There had been no rain for weeks previous, and the manner in which the flames devoured the tinder-like blocks was something apalling to observers. Everybody said that the whole city must go. Telegrams for assistance were sent to other cities in the vicinity early in the day by Mayor Henry Failing, and these were promptly responded to by the departments of Vancouver, Oregon City and Salem. The hand engine from Vancouver, with about 60 men, was brought over from Vancouver by the steamer Oncatta in the fastest time on record, 72 minutes, the steamer carrying on the entire trip of 18 miles 10 pounds more steam than her license permitted. Salem sent two engines and two hose carts, leaving only a hook and ladder truck to guard the city during the absence of the engines. Ben Holladay, who was at the head of the Oregon & California railroad at that time, gave orders that all volunteers who came to assist Portland in her extremity should be carried over his road free of charge, and hundreds of men boarded the trains over this road between Salem and Portland in answer to this call for help. The train which brought the Salem firemen to Portland made the entire run of 52 miles between the Salem depot and the station on the East Side in 52½ minutes. This knocked out all previous records for fast time over the roads of the coast. W. H. Callicott, the engineer of the lightning train, earned the lasting gratitude of Portland for driving his engine at such a frightful rate of speed over the poorly built road of the old Oregon & California railroad system.

With the valuable assistance of these outside fire companies the Portland volunteer department obtained control of the fire a little after the noon hour. The boys of the department had performed an herculean task, and they justly earned on that day all the subsequent honors which were heaped upon them by a grateful city. The record of the fire was appalling for a city as young as Portland. During the short space of eight hours 215 buildings had gone up in smoke. The burnt district extended back from the river to Second street, an average width of 800 feet, and reached from Morrison street on the north to Clay street on the south. The figures representing the total loss by this fire reached about $1,250,000. The amount of insurance carried on the property destroyed was only $245,250.

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

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

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

Year—	Total losses.	Total insurance involved	Insurance paid	Losses over insurance paid
1883	$ 219,092	$ 699,759	$ 252,721	$ 56,371
1884	405,051	752,148	340,223	62,824
1885	59,329	149,150	29,761	29,566
1886	98,146	324,514	65,662	32,484
1887	84,173	231,960	80,211	3,962
1888	54,347	114,025	30,112	24,234
1889	37,730	91,600	34,129	3,601
1890	70,987	128,900	47,145	23,842
1891	251,759	429,975	178,188	73,671
1892	575,885	1,091,004	469,719	113,165
1893	155,459	275,508	136,560	18,899
1894	869,633	1,216,436	592,405	277,228

THE EFFICIENT CHIEF ENGINEER.

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

Mr. Buchtel was born in Stark county, Ohio, November 22, 1836. In 1840 he removed with his parents to Urbana, Ill. He crossed the plains in 1852 and reached Portland on September 27 of that year. In the following year he established the first photographic gallery in the village, a business he followed successfully for 35 years, when he disposed of his interests in what was at that time the leading gallery of the Pacific Northwest to William H. Towne, founder of what is today known as the B. C. Towne Photo Company.

JOS. BUCHTEL

Photo by Davies.

All old Portlanders remember Mr. Buchtel, and the hundreds of views of primitive Portland which he still retains in his possession bring vividly to the memories of these oldtimers the remembrance of the scenes of the early '50s, when all Portland was domiciled in cheap structures and log huts. Mr. Buchtel is no novice in the business of successfully fighting fire. He was one of the charter members of the old volunteer fire department of Portland, No. 2 engine company, and as a just tribute to his recognized merit as a fireman it can be stated that he was a member of Portland's fire department, in different official capacities, from the time of its first organization until it finally gave way to the present efficient paid department.

Mr. Buchtel is a natural-born leader, but, like most men capable of assuming command, he has been extremely modest in his claims, and he has left his abilities to be recognized by his associates. On the occasion of two of the greatest fires in

A CHINESE BUILDING, PORTLAND.