

FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

Who Take All Kinds of Chances

A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES

CAPT JOHN E. CASSIDY, LADDER 9

"The time I got the greatest thrill in my life was at the fire in the large preserve factory at the corner of Charles River av and Water st, Charlestown.

"This was back in 1892. I responded to the first alarm. When we arrived at the fire it had gained great headway. With Capt Titus I carried the hose in the factory to the further end, where the fire was raging near the Charles River front on the fourth floor. The smoke was so dense that we were obliged to crawl on our hands and knees.

"We were holding our own and could have stayed there some time. But something happened to the water tower. A stream was sent in where we were working and that caused a terrible hot air explosion that knocked both Capt Titus and myself unconscious. We must have remained in that state several minutes.

"When we regained our senses we both followed the line of hose, trying to escape, and had almost gained the stairway when there was another hot air explosion more severe than the first—one that laid me out for fair.

"We must have been unconscious several minutes this time. When I had collected my scattered senses I slid down to the third floor and there was met by Chief Abbott, who wanted to know what I meant by disobeying orders. He said the men had been ordered out of the building half an hour previously. Seeing my dazed condition, he realized that something serious had happened.



CAPT JOHN E. CASSIDY.

"We reached the stairs and none too quickly as the flames were right at our backs. The heat and smoke were terrible. I finally reached the street, where I was a hard-looking sight, as the preserves and cranberry sauce had literally soaked me through, and I looked as if I had been in a pickle barrel for a week. But I was happy at the thought that I had escaped a horrible death.

Capt Cassidy was born in the shadow of Bunker Hill Monument in 1852, and was a callman in Charlestown before the present Boston Fire Department was organized. He has been fighting fires 41 years. He has been with Hose 3 and 27, Charlestown 9, Engine 10 and Ladder 9.