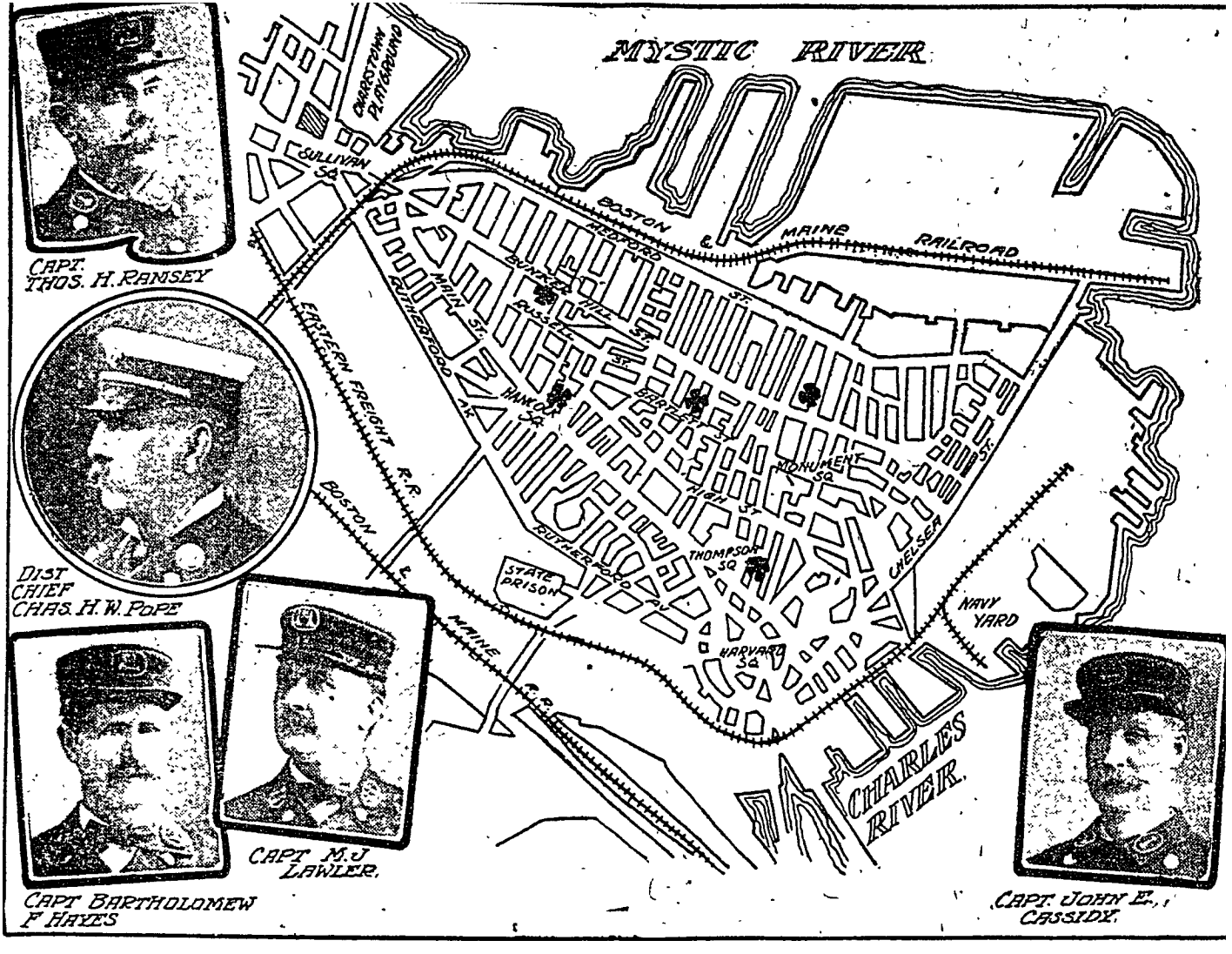


# SECOND FIRE DISTRICT OF BOSTON

Entire Peninsula of Charlestown, With Its Freight Sheds, Docks, Grain Elevators and Wooden Dwellings, Is Within Its Limits—District Chief Pope Once Buried in Ruins—His Experience With a Blazing Oil Stove—The Apparatus of the District—How Griffin Saved the Lives of a Woman and Child by Sending His Truck Smack Into an Elevated Pillar.



**CAPT. THOS. H. RAMSEY**

**DIST. CHIEF CHAS. H. W. POPE**

**CAPT. M. J. LAWLER**

**CAPT. BARTHOLOMEW F. HAYES**

**CAPT. JOHN E. CASSIDY**

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**T**HE second fire district of Boston comprises the entire peninsula of Charlestown, and is bounded by the Charles and Mystic rivers and by the harbor front. It is one of the greatest transportation centers of the city, for along Rutherford av lies the immense terminal freight and hay shed area.

The docks along the harbor front are those of Boston's busiest steamship lines. The wharves along the Mystic river constitute the greatest coal handling depot of New England, and from the piers of the Mystic docks practically all the lumber is shipped from this part of the country to South American ports.

There is a fairly well built residential section in the vicinity of the famous Bunker Hill monument, but on the whole the residential part of Charlestown has a very large percentage of wooden dwellings, which, with the many mills, factories, wharves and sheds, makes the fire hazard of this district an exceptionally high one.

Charlestown has been the scene of many of Boston's most destructive fires, for docks and grain elevators are especially risky. The explosion and destruction of the great grain elevator at the Hoosac tunnel docks and that of the elevator near the Allen sheds when struck by lightning were unusually spectacular, as was the great Hoosac tunnel dock fire of a few years ago.

Little can be done for elevators when once on fire. The explosion of the first elevator caused its instant destruction and scattered flames far and near. The second elevator was destroyed within 20 minutes after it was struck by lightning, and the immense volume of fire generated by the structure sent fire to the adjoining docks that was not extinguished for many days.

The great Hoosac tunnel dock fire afforded opportunity for one of the most scientific defenses ever conducted by the Boston firemen, who on arrival found the immense pier wrapt in flame from end to end and everything in the vicinity threatened with destruction. For some time it seemed that the entire wharfage along the harbor front of Charlestown would be destroyed, so every effort was bent on cutting off the fire. The immense pier with all its valuable freight was allowed to burn without one drop of water being wasted on the heart of the blaze, and the streams of nearly every Boston fire engine were concentrated on the narrow fire line at the head of the wharf, and though for a long time the situation was critical and several men were hurt, the point was gained and the fire cut off from the runways to the elevator as clean and sharply defined as though severed by some gigantic ax.

Fire alarms from the freight and hay shed district strike both in Charlestown and Somerville, and the fire engines of both cities frequently work side by side. The long sheds of the navy yard are not exempt from fire, nor are the lofty coal pocket towers, so the Charlestown men have all sorts of fires to contend with besides those so frequent in the residential part and the stable fires which are so numerous in this district.

The hills of the district make response to alarms very hazardous, and Charlestown has been the scene of some of the Boston fire department's worst accidents.

As with South and East Boston, Charlestown is a little city in itself, and practically all the firemen are residents of their district. It is from this fact that they derive their sobriquet of the "native sons."

District Chief Charles H. W. Pope has charge of the second fire district, and comes into Boston on all second or greater alarms. In the absence of either deputy he assumes charge of his division. His service record is an unusually long one, as he has been a fireman since Sept 1, 1870, when he joined the old volunteer Massachusetts hook and ladder company No. 1. When the department was reorganized on Oct 2, 1872, he was made assistant foreman, and foreman in 1873, and he retained this rank when Charlestown was annexed to Boston in 1874. He was promoted permanent captain Dec 20, 1884, and chief of the district May 2, 1890.

During his many years of service he has met with most of the mishaps of a fireman's life, and has several times been seriously injured. One of his most remarkable escapes from death occurred at the "Chipman fire" in 1891, when he was buried in the ruins. That of Nov 26, 1889, was one of the most extraordinary escapes that ever befell a fireman, for, while attempting the desperate feat of carrying a blazing oil stove from a dwelling, the stove exploded, scattering the burning fluid all over him. He was enveloped in flame and burnt to such an extent that he remained in the hospital for over five months.

The headquarters house of Charlestown is that of ladder 9 and chemical 9,

now the oldest Charlestown fire station. The commanding officer is Lieut Thomas F. Quigley, now away on indefinite sick leave. During his absence senior hoseman David Mead has charge. Hoseman Mead for many years drove the fastest downtown engines, and is well known throughout the department for his fondness for horses and his skill with the reins. Hosemen F. H. Gould, B. F. Farren and W. J. Mahoney make up the company. As an all-round handy man and mechanic there are few men in the department that surpass hoseman Gould.

Engine 27, located on Elm st, near High, is commanded by Capt Bartholomew F. Hayes. He became a fireman in 1857, and after service with engines 8, 9, 33 and 36, was promoted lieutenant in 1887, and captain of engine 27 in 1907, where he has since remained.

Lieut Timothy J. Feffron entered the department Sept 12, 1890, and after service with engines 3, 4, 27 and 33, was promoted lieutenant of his present company March 2, 1906. His name is on the "department roll of honor" for saving life when he was a member of engine 4. The engineers of engine 27 are J. P. Gillogly and hoseman T. M. Nary. The drivers are D. W. Towle and C. F. O'Brien. The hosemen are E. M. McDonough, son of the second deputy chief; D. F. Quinlan, J. J. Smith, a veteran of the Spanish war; F. A. Hoar, J. E. Curran and R. J. Brough.

Engine 27 is the busiest Charlestown company and comes to Boston on all second or greater alarms.

Driver Towle of this company is one of the department's best reinsmen and is well known among the firemen for his extraordinary escape from death in a collision between his engine and a car that was rounding into Bunker Hill st at full speed. Driver Towle did everything possible to avert the accident, but the difficulties of the steep hill and the speed of the car made it impossible, though he stuck to the reins till hurled from his seat in a somersault that sent him straight through the windows of the car. He received severe injuries in this his only accident, but his nerve is as good as ever and he sends his team to a fire with all his former dash and speed.

Engine 32, located on Bunker Hill st, is commanded by Capt Thomas H. Ramsey. He entered the department Feb 28, 1888, and after service with engines 4, 7, 26, 27, 29 and 36, was promoted lieutenant July 30, 1898, and captain March 2, 1906. He has been severely injured several times, in particular by receiving a terrible blow on the head while working at a fire in 1888. He was again severely injured at box 52, Nov 28, 1889, and so badly in 1902 that he was confined to the hospital for 41 days.

Lieut John E. Redman was appointed to the fire force Dec 20, 1893, and after service with ladders 1 and 8, and engine 8 was made assistant engineer. He was promoted engineer in 1900, and lieutenant April 18, 1904. He has been with his present company since Dec 23, 1904.

J. H. Meehan and P. F. McGough are the engineers of engine 32. The drivers are W. F. Thompson and W. H. Shute, and the hosemen J. A. McGee, W. J. Keely, W. H. Magner, A. McAuliffe and J. E. Griffin.

Hoseman W. H. Magner bears the medal of honor of the Massachusetts humane society for saving life at a fire on box 38 in 1897.

Though Charlestown has now no regular call men, it has some of the best "buffs" that go to fires. These men are often of great assistance to the regular firemen, and there are few fires at which some of them do not appear; in fact, they are often on the scene in time to direct the regular firemen.

A description of the second fire district would be incomplete without recognizing the fireman's friend, "Capt Dick" Quarters, whose work has more than once been of inestimable value to the men whom he admires.

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