

ST. LOUIS VISITED BY MANY FIRES

For more than a month past St. Louis has gone through one of the most severe fire epidemics in the history of that city. Unfortunately the fires were accompanied by loss of life, and the members of the department subjected to the most trying ordeal in fighting the flames that they had experienced in many a day. The holocaust that swept the Missouri Athletic Club out of existence proved the climax of the series and it will long be remembered by the people of that city as one of its great disasters. Chief Swingley knew the poor character of the building and placed himself on record as condemning it for hotel purposes so that no blame could be attached to anyone but those immediately interested in managing the place. Below is given an illustration of part of the structure showing a network of electric overhead wires that must have made the work of the firemen not only difficult but very dangerous. It is a remarkable picture in that it points out how much behind other and smaller cities it is in placing such wires underground. The sectional view of the third floor of the Club building is given as corroboration of Chief Swingley's opinion.

CASUALTIES.

While Truck Company 13, of St. Louis, was at work at the Day Rubber Company fire, where Captain Martin Lynch was killed, Feb.

and held in the grasp of the current for a short time and was knocked down by it, but returned to his duties soon after.

Captain Martin Lynch, of Engine 18, St. Louis, was killed at a fire which destroyed the plant of the Day Rubber Company, Saturday, February 28. He was pinned under a falling floor and his neck broken. The fire started about 7.30 P. M., on the third floor of the four-story brick building. Captain Lynch led his company up the stairs to the

lantern slides. So interesting and instructive have these lectures become that all of his leisure evenings Eagan has an engagement in some part of the city. He is a great admirer of Chief Swingley, and is reckoned among the most popular members of the St. Louis fire department.

One of the largest of several recent fires at St. Louis, Mo., was that which destroyed the interior of the A. S. Oloe Optical Company's building in Olive street, March 2, with an estimated loss of \$150,000. The night watchman discovered the fire early in the morning and telephoned an alarm. An explosion soon after the alarm was sent in caused the three



VIEWS OF ALOE OPTICAL CO. BUILDING, ST. LOUIS, AFTER FIRE.



JOHN P. EAGAN, ST. LOUIS.

28, a short circuited trolley wire fell across the track and severely shocked all who were close to it. J. P. Eagan, one of its members, in descending the aerial ladder was caught

second floor to attack the ceiling, which was ablaze. Assistant Chief O'Donnell felt the floor sagging and ordered the company and the salvage corps to get out. Engine Company 18 was caught by the falling floor before they had a chance to escape. Two members got out with slight injuries. Firemen searched for hours for the body of Captain Lynch and were several times driven back by smoke. When found, a number of girders were across his legs and he was holding the end of the pipe.

John P. Eagan of Truck Company No. 13, St. Louis, Mo., a photograph of whom is presented on this page, is one of the most strenuous members of that fire department. He not only attends all the fires his company is called to, but usually brings back to the station a snap-shot of the fire scene. These he develops for the local news-

upper stories of the five story building to collapse and fall into an alley. The cause of the fire is unknown. The department rescued the watchman from a fourth story window.

A short time ago the Southern Store Works was badly damaged. Three alarms were sent in, and owing to the excellent work done by

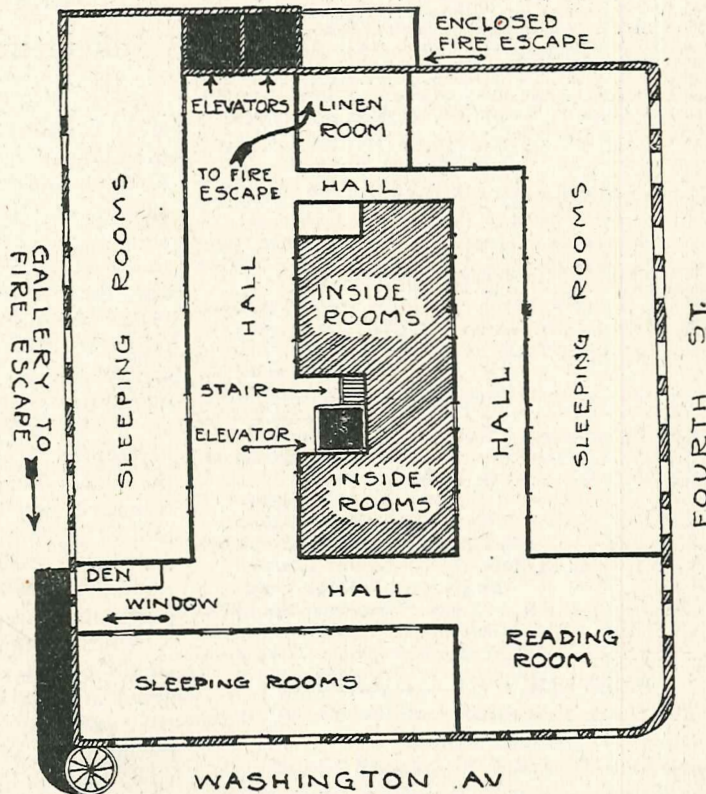
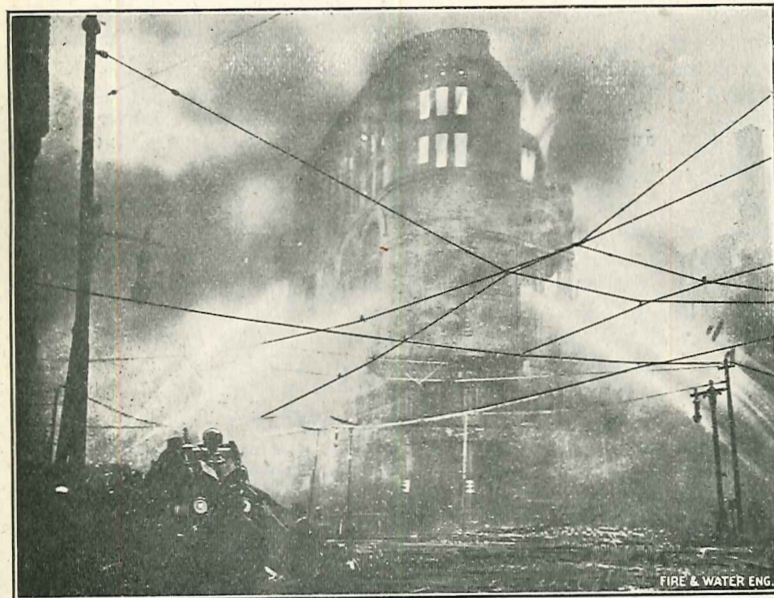


DIAGRAM OF THIRD FLOOR, MISSOURI ATHLETIC CLUB, WHERE FIRE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE STARTED.



ATHLETIC CLUB FIRE, SHOWING NETWORK OF OVERHEAD WIRES AND ROBINSON MOTOR ENGINE THROWING 1,000 GALLONS PER MINUTE.

papers. and FIRE AND WATER ENGINEERING. Not content with this diversion, Eagan, having made a study of fire prevention, delivers lectures on the subject before church and society organizations, together with

the firemen, a portion of the plant was saved. The illustration shows firemen throwing a stream of water from the roof of an adjoining building.

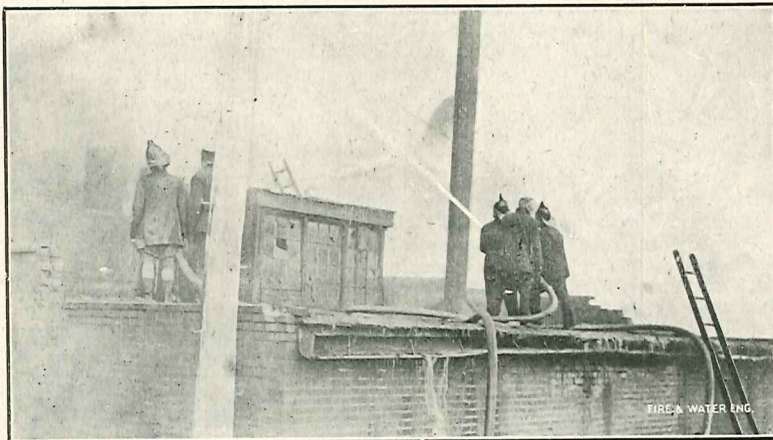
PUBLIC PRAISES FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Following closely upon the fire in the Missouri Athletic Club building the Board of Freeholders of St. Louis, have, in the new city charter, which they are writing, placed responsibility for fire

prevention and for strict enforcement of laws for protection of life and property against loss by fire upon the Building Commissioner. Under the proposed charter, as approved by the Freeholders, the Building Commissioner will have ample authority to close such buildings as the Missouri Athletic Club and prevent their use for any purpose until the building and fire protection laws have been complied with. The Freeholders did not attempt to write any fire-protection laws into the charter, agreeing that it was the duty of the Assembly under the charter to enact the necessary legislation. Their object was to make provision in the charter for legislation of the most stringent character, and then to require some city official to enforce the laws. The attention of the Freeholders was called to the fact that

the Missouri Athletic Club obtained a permit for only 48 sleeping rooms and then put in twice that number. After the law already had been violated and the rooms had been installed, it was said the Building Department was powerless, under present conditions, to prevent the use of the building. Chief Swingley has been receiving the first reports from captains and lieutenants of the department on unsafe buildings throughout the city used as hotels, clubs or lodging houses. The first report turned in referred to the St. Louis Club building and said there were 12 sleeping rooms on the third floor, partitioned off by wood construction. This character of construction is unlawful in a building used for lodging purposes, the fire captain of the district pointed out. One result of the M. A. C. fire is the favorable comment of the St. Louis public and property owners on the efficiency of the city's fire department. St. Louis has had only a few disastrous fires, and insurance men attribute this to the fire-fighting organization which has been built up by Chief Charles E. Swingley during his long term of chief. In twenty-nine years St. Louis has had only two fire chiefs, the late John Lindsey, from 1885 to 1895, and Chief Swingley from 1895 to date, nineteen years May 16, next. Chief Swingley has been on the fire department forty-five years and has seen the city race away from the equipment of the department as its limits were extended and the business section has been reconstructed. The city has grown to respect the opinion of its fire chief and take his word for it when he makes requisition for more and better apparatus. The department is always asking for more and these requests are based on facts as to the needs of the city. The request of the department for this year totals \$40,000 for new equipment, and in making this request the chief has shown where he can save to within \$3,500 of the amount asked for. The M. A. C. fire gave the new motor apparatus a thorough test, proving conclusively its thorough reliability and superiority over the steamers. The big Robinson pumping engine operating directly in front of the M. A. C., is credited to have pumped 1,000 gallons per minute throughout the entire fire, carrying 230 pounds pressure on the pump. There was no adjustment of any sort made during or after the fire. A leading insurance man of St. Louis, in speaking of Chief Swingley, said: "His management of the fire department is an excellent example of what a fire chief can do if the politicians will attend to their own business and give the chief a chance to attend to his. During the nineteen years Swingley has been chief, he has been bothered very little, and during that period the police department has been shaken up many times. A good example of letting a fire chief alone occurred in Chicago, and I think St. Louis got the idea from that occurrence. A bunch of politicians who couldn't get Chief Dennis Sweeney interested in some of their schemes asked the mayor to make a change and relieve the old man. A small committee of very prominent property owners and leading insurance men

called on the mayor and said they understood Chief Sweeney was to be relieved. 'Yes,' said the mayor, 'I have decided to make a change.' 'Don't said the spokesman of the committee. Nothing further was said on the subject, and Chief Sweeney was not disturbed. One fire after another in St. Louis in the last ten days has shown us that our fire department is efficient. Take the fire at 415 North Fourth street. That was confined to the Day Rubber Company's place, although it had a good start before it was discovered. The fire at the northwest corner of Third and Locust streets also was well handled, and the one in the Aloe store was kept inside that building, although it gave the firemen a hard fight for hours. We think we have a good fire department, headed by a good chief, and we hope



SOUTHERN STRAW WORKS, ST. LOUIS, THROWING STREAM FROM ROOF OF ADJOINING BUILDING.

that no political faction will ever try to interfere with the way the department is handled," Chief Swingley was born in Ogle County, Ill., 65 years ago and spent his boyhood days in Olathe, Kan. He came to St. Louis 53 years ago and has lived here ever since.

Boston Fire Service

Chief P. E. McDonough had his first large fire as chief of the department just before midnight Saturday, March 21, eleven days after his appointment, a four-alarm, \$50,000 fire in Niles business block, adjoining City Hall in School street. The five-story granite block was erected about seventy years ago. Commissioner Grady was also present and complimented the chief on his management of the fire.

Commissioner Grady and the mayor have held conferences relative to motorizing the department and it is probable that considerable motor apparatus will be purchased at once as both favor such apparatus.

Instead of providing a new underground headquarters for the fire alarm telegraph system in Charles street, to cost \$225,000, as recommended by former administrations, the fire department headquarters building in Bristol street, where it is now located, will be provided with a water curtain for its protection from fire.

The Protective Department will soon be completely motorized. This was the second underwriters salvage brigade to obtain a motor car which went into service Dec. 6, 1907. The Cincinnati corps was the first to have one which, with the exception of the chassis, was constructed entirely by its members.

The Boston Veteran Firemen's Association, organized in 1879, went out of existence March 24. It was the second oldest in the country.

Chief J. P. Quigley Third in Examination

Chief John P. Quigley of Syracuse, N. Y., recently took the examination for expert in fire prevention in the State Department of Labor. Without having made any special preparation Chief Quigley stood third highest in the examination. His main reason for taking the examination was to determine his own fitness to organize and direct the efforts of a local fire prevention bureau. He had long been considering the problem of fire prevention and thought trying the examination would give him a sure test of his knowledge of the subject.

Ex-Chief J. A. Mullen at Chiefs Club

At the March meeting of the Massachusetts Chiefs' Club, held at Boston on the 18th, Ex-Chief John A. Mullen, of Boston, was the principal speaker. Chiefs W. N. Avery of Worcester, and George Boardman of Lee, were elected members. In reference to his resignation, Ex-Chief Mullen in part, said: "I gave forty years of my life to the city that I was born in, the city I love. I worked to bring the department where it stands today. I must say I appreciate the kindly messages that I received. They came from all over the country. Some contained expressions of sympathy, others of congratulation. The latter were from persons who felt it was better for me that it was all over, that the anxiety was at an end. Personally it was with regret that I stepped out. It was the only thing I could do. I can honestly say that while a member of the department, I never consciously committed an act that injured anybody. Always I tried to be square and on the level. I judged my men solely on their ability." A committee consisting of Ex-Chief Hopkins of Somerville, Chief Davol of Fall River, and William Brophy presented resolutions that were adopted on the death of Ex-Chief Charles T. Symmes of Winchester, one of the oldest members of the club.

Detroit Fire Commissioner at Toronto

T. J. Bosquete, one of the three fire commissioners in Detroit, Mich., recently inspected the fire department at Toronto, Canada, at the request of Chief John Thompson. In reply to questions as to his opinion of the Toronto department Commissioner Bosquete said: "I am very much pleased with it, and the thing which struck me most was the manner in which you house your men. Your single room idea is miles ahead of our dormitory scheme, and altogether your system is in splendid shape. There are two things, however, which I would draw attention to. The first is that Toronto appears to be backward in motorizing its department, and the second is I consider the force much undermanned. I fully understand the idea of Chief Thompson in holding back from installing motors in the outlying districts, as the roads look as if they could be slightly improved, but at the same time I think it would be a good idea to get all the motor apparatus in place as soon as possible. But the number of men should be increased, as if several were killed, or if several men were off duty the department would be greatly crippled."

New York Fire Service

Fire drills were held in schools and factories in all parts of the city March 25 to commemorate the third anniversary of the Triangle fire in which 147 persons lost their lives. Mayor Mitchell, Commissioner Adamson, Chief Kenlon and others witnessed a fire drill at the American Tobacco Company factory in the Williamsburg section in the afternoon.

Hugh Burns, the oldest member of the department in years of service, was retired on a pension March 27 at the age of 73 years. He entered the department May 1, 1869, and was an engineer of an engine for many years. The oldest member of the department in years of service now is Deputy Chief Thomas Lally, in charge of the Brooklyn section, who became a fireman August 15, 1870. The last one of the original members of the paid department in 1865 to be retired was Captain J. J. Eagan, March 1, 1912.

Eight new motor paid companies will probably supersede several volunteer companies in the Woodhaven section on May 1. Several new stations have just been completed in that section.

Samuel Campbell, who was a battalion chief from 1875 to 1893 and one of the veterans of the volunteer and paid departments, died the past week.

The Boston Protective Department has appropriated \$10,000 for motor apparatus which will completely motorize the department. It already has several motor vehicles.