

# FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

## Who Take All Kinds of Chances

### A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES

#### DISTRICT CHIEF WALTER M. McLEAN

"How would you feel and what would you do if you had carried an unconscious woman from the third floor of a burning building to a lower hall way to find the flames menacing you and your escape cut off?"



WALTER M. McLEAN,  
District Chief.

"I found myself in just such a position some years ago when I was attached to Engine Company 8, Salem st, and we were called to a fire at 21 Margaret st, which was only a stone's throw from our quarters.

"When we reached the fire somebody said that there was a woman overcome on the third floor. I ran upstairs and found Mrs Josephine Levine. Picking her up, I started back to the street. The flames had spread with great rapidity and when I was between the first and second floors I saw there was no chance to get out of the building.

"I thought of the roof and retraced my steps, carrying the woman there and then making my way across to the roof of an adjoining house, from which I reached the street.

"While I have been buried under falling walls, trapped in a hot air explosion and fought to restrain an insane woman from committing suicide, the day that I was trapped with the woman in the burning building struck me as being the one which I had my most narrow escape.

"Death stalked beside me in Langdon pl. in 1897, when walls collapsed. I was rescued after being seriously injured, while my partner, Hoseman Patrick McCarthy, was killed.

"Being summoned to the third floor of a house at 12 Battery st more than 25 years ago to prevent a woman from leaping to death, I found before I had made a success of my assignment that I had to work to save my own life as well, as the demented woman was determined to kill herself and appeared eager to take along with her anybody who might try to interfere with her plans.

"In the fire service you have to be ready to cope quickly with many unusual situations and I think that I have been up against all kinds of them."

Dist Chief McLean has been in the department since 1888 and is the only member of the Board of Chiefs who has filled every grade between private and district chief, having seen service as assistant engineer and engineer, neither of which was ever filled by the other members of the board.

Dist Chief McLean saw his busiest days while he was at Engine 8, Salem st. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1896, captain in 1904, and district chief in 1914. He has been commended in general orders frequently and the business men of the North End showed their esteem for him when they presented him with a gold watch and chain.