

FEARLESS BOSTON FIREMEN

Who Take All Kinds of Chances

A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES,

CAPT DENNIS J. DACEY ENGINE 45



CAPT DENNIS J. DACEY.

"In my 20 years as a member of the Boston Fire Department I have had many close calls. One in particular occurred at the Union Wharf fire in March, 1901.

"Late one dark night I responded to an alarm, and when we arrived at the fire we found it was in a storage warehouse filled with cotton, wool and other inflammable goods.

"We took a line around to the rear of the building. The flames were shooting out on all sides and we were unable to determine the condition of the walls. We had been playing our stream there only a short time when the walls collapsed, coming down upon us. My fire hat was crushed and my head cut open, and I was rendered unconscious, being nearly buried in the debris.

"Members of Chemical 1 came to the rescue and dug me out. I was sent to the Massachusetts General Hospital and remained there three weeks. Had it not been for a heavy beam above me that broke the fall of the wall I should not be here to tell the story.

"I had an exciting time at the Revere House fire a few years ago. When I arrived I had the ladders run up in front of the hotel. Then several persons cried out that guests were trying to escape from the rear. We abandoned our ladders in front and made for the rear, where we ran up ladders and rescued 20 persons who certainly would have been

burned to death had they remained a few moments longer.

"A sad accident occurred to one of our men. He lost his footing and fell a distance of 15 feet and was impaled on an iron fence. He was John Keppenburger of Engine 22 and was in the hospital almost a year with his injuries.

"At the time of the Chelsea fire I was with Engine 6 and that was the first company to arrive at the fire from Boston proper. Several times we were hemmed in by the flames on all sides, and it looked at times as if we were done for, but we always managed to get out of a tight place. Finally my eyes were burned so badly from the intense heat that I had to be treated by a doctor and sent home."

Capt Dennis J. Dacey joined the department April 17, 1886.