

"ALL OUT" FOR CHIEF CHESWELL

Gallant Fire Fighter for 47 Years Dies in Harness While Directing Men.



CHIEF WILLIAM T. CHESWELL,
Boston's Brave Fire Fighter, Stricken Fatally While Performing Duty.

Chief Engineer William T. Cheswell of the fire department died yesterday morning at 5:26 at the relief station, to which place he had been brought in his automobile from a small fire at 70-72 Commercial st. He had responded to an alarm from box 15 at 5 o'clock and had been directing the work of his men but a short time when he collapsed. His death was due to heart disease.

It was settled late yesterday afternoon that the funeral will take place Sunday afternoon at 2, from his home, 24 Chambers st, and services will be held in the Tremont temple auditorium. The body will be placed in the receiving tomb at Forest Hills cemetery.

The committee consisting of Fire Commissioner Wells, Acting Chief John A. Mullen, Dist Chief Hiram D. Smith, Supt Brown S. Flanders of the fire alarm system, Henry M. Hawkins of the repair shop and Supt Samuel Abbott of the protective department, acting in conjunction with the family of the deceased, made the arrangements.

It is expected the detail of firemen assigned to perform escort duty will number about 60 and will include several superior officers. Every man slated to be off duty that day will be requested to assist in the exercises, as by so doing he will help prevent the necessity of drafting "on duty" men for the detail.

my appointment as commissioner. I only hoped that he might have lived to enjoy the pension he had so richly earned."

Although there is throughout the fire department a deep feeling of sorrow, it was thought best that the department's annual ball be held last night as planned. A precedent was established last year when Commissioner Russell died. This was on the morning of the night of the ball, but it was decided to hold the affair, as it was too late to alter the arrangements. This established a precedent.

Strange coincidences of death have been noted in the Boston fire department which cover a period of three years. Lewis P. Webber, retired chief, died Feb 13, 1904; Henry S. Russell, fire commissioner, died Feb 16, 1905, and Chief Cheswell's death occurred Feb 15, 1906.

Fine Record of Service.

Chief Cheswell was for 47 years a member of the fire department and for nearly five years its chief. He was born in Boston Jan 7, 1843, and his life was passed in this city. As a boy he learned the trade of a tinsmith and when 16 years old rendered his first service as a fireman, running with extinguisher 5, which was located in East st.

The installation of the first steam fire engine in Boston in 1861 inspired Chief Cheswell to take the position of substitute on Lawrence 7, then located on Purchase st. On April 1, 1863, he was made a permanent fireman. He re-

STRANGE COINCIDENCES OF DEATH.

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| | DIED |
| Lewis P. Webber, retired chief of the dept. | Feb 13, 1904 |
| Henry S. Russell, fire commissioner | Feb 16, 1905 |
| William T. Cheswell, chief of the dept. | Feb 15, 1906 |

Telegrams from all parts of the country were received by the bereaved family yesterday afternoon. Chief Stagg of Paterson, N J, expressed his sympathy and said that he would attend the funeral, while Chief Horton of Baltimore, a close personal friend of Chief Cheswell, was notified of his death and may come here for the services.

Lantern Out for Dying Chief.

The circumstances of the chief's death were tragic. He was giving orders from the street when he suddenly turned and started toward ladder 8. He sat on the step, while at his side stood William H. Hathaway, a newspaper reporter and a life-long friend of the chief. The latter had asked, "What's the matter, Bill?" and the chief replied, "I'm going."

Just then Lieut Webber, the chief's aid, ran past and the chief, looking up, said to him, "Get the auto, Joe, I'm going."

Lieut Webber took from the chief's hand his lantern and extinguished the light, a custom with firemen when their lanterns are no longer to be used. There was no particular reason for Lieut Webber's act, nor was it unusual. It seemed, however, that it bore a significance which now, rather than then, is better understood.

The automobile was pulled to the side of the truck and the chief lifted into the back seat. Here he sat supported by Mr Hathaway's arms until the relief station was reached.

Dr Stickney, who had been notified by telephone, was ready when the chief was carried from the auto to the operating table. The doctor caught the chief's wrist. There was no pulsation. He placed his ear close to the chief's left side to hear a heart-beat. The heart was silent. Chief Cheswell was dead.

Lieut Webber and Frank Shay, the chief's chauffeur, drove to the Cheswell home at 24 Chambers st and brought Mrs Cheswell to the relief station. They had told her that her husband was seriously ill. Mr Hathaway, whom she knew very well, told Mrs Cheswell that her husband was dead. It was a great shock to her, but Mrs Cheswell showed great fortitude and returned in the auto to tell the children.

remained with the Lawrence company a year and was then transferred to Barnicoat company 4, to which he was assigned as driver. In 1870 he was promoted to the position of engineer of the company and later was made engineer-man. This position he had held but four days when he was chosen to succeed Samuel Abbott Jr as captain.

Until July, 1880, he occupied this post, when he was made chief of the 4th district. The position of second assistant chief was created for him in July, 1894. When Chief Webber retired in March, 1901, Chief Cheswell was appointed to fill the vacancy and had since been at the head of the department.

The record of Chief Cheswell's service to the city of Boston is the record of a brave man. There are notable incidents where his courage and spirit of self-sacrifice were officially recognized and there are, without doubt, many times where his manly character showed itself and of which nothing was ever heard.

While responding to an alarm from box 68 on Dec 20, 1905, Chief Cheswell was thrown from his wagon and so severely injured that he was unable to perform duty for several weeks. He was highly regarded by all his associates, superior officers and insurance commissioners, his reputation as a brave and scientific fire fighter being thoroughly established. Though a strict disciplinarian and gruff at times, he was regarded as a friend by the men of the department.

Chief Cheswell was a member of Franklin lodge 23, I. O. O. F., which he joined in 1867, Joseph Warren lodge, A. F. and A. M., having passed the 32d degree; Royal Rank chapter and Boston commandery, K. T.

He is survived by a wife, a daughter and two sons. The daughter is Miss Hannah Cheswell, who was born to his first wife. She will be 21 years old Saturday.

Fitting recognition of the death of the chief was shown at a meeting of the department chiefs held yesterday morning. Suitable action will be taken by a committee appointed at that time. The headquarters houses were ordered draped by the commissioner.

Immediately following the announcement of the chief's death Asst Chief John A. Mullen, for 33 years a member of the department, assumed charge and is at present acting chief.

Associates Voice Grief.

While it is part of a firemen's duty to conceal emotion under all circumstances, the voice of Asst Chief Mullen was choked with sobs. His few words when told of his chief's death were a tribute to the latter. "He was always attentive to the interests of the people of Boston," he said. "His first thought was always to go to their aid."