

FIRE WAS A STRANGER TO THESE.

Heroic Firemen, Who to Save Lives Braved Death in Friday's Horror, Tell Modest Stories of Deeds as Courageous as Ever Were Done in War.



The Critical Moment in the Bravest Rescue of the Fire. Fireman Edward Ford had climbed to the sixth floor of the hotel, taken a woman in his arms from a burning room and carried her to the window lintel on which she stood. Then at the dizzy height and at the most fearful peril he passed her over to his comrade, "Bill" Clark.

FOUND HIS CHANGE AFTER TEN YEARS. COOL THOUGH THE LADDER SWAYED.

Bartholomew McDermott Saved Mrs. Wichelmann from Certain Death.

Bartholomew McDermott, of Hook and Ladder Company No. 21, rescued Mrs. Henry Wichelmann from a window on the sixth floor of the hotel over the Forty-sixth street entrance. He was assisted by Foreman W. T. Beggin and Firemen Leonard Gebhard and Lawrence McGuire, of the same company.

McDermott is a member of the exhibition class of the Life Saving Corps. He has given exhibitions of life saving from roofs and the upper windows of high buildings, and is considered one of the most expert members of the department in climbing walls by means of the scaling ladders or ropes.

The fire at the Windsor Hotel was the first in ten years at which he was called upon to put to practical test the ability he had been acquiring for years for exhibition and drill purposes.

McDermott's company was the first hook and ladder at the fire. The truck is equipped with a Dierich aerial ladder. It was swung into position in front of the Forty-sixth street entrance, and the scaling ladder was resting against a window on the third floor.

Mrs. Wichelmann appeared at a window on the sixth floor, and started to climb out of the window.

"Get back there," shouted Foreman Beggin, and in the same breath ordered McDermott to go to the woman's rescue with a scaling ladder. McDermott bounded up the extension in a twinkling, and then used the scaling ladder to reach the window. In a few moments he had raised the window glass and the falling pieces cut the fireman over the eye and on the hand.

His eyes filled with blood McDermott continued the ascent and was soon on the window sill. Foreman Beggin and Firemen McGuire and Gebhard had followed quickly after McDermott and took a position in a window on the floor below.

The crowd in the street watched the fireman with wild interest. The woman was seen to fall and then disappear from the window. She was only a few feet from the ground, as McDermott caught her as she fell, and pulling her toward the window, held her beside her, and was preparing to jump. Captain Donohue, who was below, kept crying to them to wait just a minute longer. I think that was what saved their lives, really, for one of them was about falling, and the other was all ready to spring into the air.

"They were both fairly out of my reach," but Ford, of Hook and Ladder No. 20, went up and got Mrs. Schuchard out and passed her to me.

THE MOST DARING RESCUE OF ALL.

Fireman Ford's Modest Story of the Feat That Set the Crowd Trembling.

HIGH ON A WINDOW LINTEL Bore a Woman on His Arm and Passed Her Across to a Brother Rescuer.

This is the experience of Edward Ford, fireman, of Extension Truck No. 20, Mercer street, who was the last fireman to leave the hotel, bringing down the last person rescued alive.

Ford told his story yesterday to a Journal reporter at his station, though it was only after repeated urging that he would give the details of the heroic part he played.

Ford, who is thirty-five years old, has been a member of the Fire Department for thirteen years. He is considered one of the ablest and most cool headed men in the service. Up to five months ago he had been continuously at the Fire Headquarters of East Sixty-seventh street, with the expert corps that give instruction to the newer men in wall scaling and expert life-saving drills.

His knowledge of his duties stood him in good stead yesterday.

"I left here in the afternoon," he said, "at about 3:30 on the Elevated to go home for supper, and at Forty-second street saw the smoke of the fire. When we got to Forty-sixth street I looked east and saw that it was the Windsor Hotel. I got off at Fifty-fifth street and ran as hard as I could in that direction. When I got there the hotel was seemingly ready to fall, and smoke was pouring out of almost every window.

"I pushed my way through the crowd and was helping a horse company lay a line when two women cried out that there was an old woman in a room on the sixth story on the Fifth avenue side, near Forty-seventh street. I looked there, but could not see any one, and some one said that the firemen had just let down two women, and that the others had jumped. I saw the man up there, but he was in the room to the north of where the woman was said to be, and he could not tell whether there was anyone in the next room or not.

To the Rescue.

"Somewhat, though there was nothing to prove my belief, I felt that there was some one there, and started to go up. There was a scaling ladder from the second floor, and so I took a thirty-five foot ladder and placed it inside the hotel railing and started up.

"It seemed very dark and I reached the top of the room and found Fireman Bill Clarke there. The room was full of smoke, and I could hear the fire crackling and roaring against the door as it raged along the hall.

"Thinking to get into the next room by means of the hall, I threw myself against the hall door and forced it open. A storm of flames and smoke belched into the room, almost suffocating me. I tried to force the door closed, but the hinges and it fell into the flames. Seeing that it was impossible to get by the hall, I tried the window.

"By this time the men below had got my feet firmly on the lintel and I was standing. I jumped for the other one. I caught the sill firmly, and drawing my body up looked in. There on the wall was a woman. She turned and sprang into the room. She turned and with upturned face, grasping my knees, cried, 'Save me! Save me! Save me!'

"I seized her and dragged her to the window and called for Clarke to help. He was beside her, and we were both aware that we must do what we could quickly or not at all.

Bravest of the Heroes.



He Rescued Mrs. Leland.

Joseph Kratochvil, of Hook and Ladder Company No. 2, aided by a policeman from the Fifty-first street station whose name he does not know, brought Mrs. Warren Leland down from the sixth floor on a scaling ladder and then helped carry her through the hotel to the ambulance which took her away.



He Rescued Mrs. Leland.

Joseph Kratochvil, of Hook and Ladder Company No. 2, Fifth-street and Lexington avenue, is a compact, square-jawed chap of thirty, or thereabouts. He is married, and lives at No. 357 East Fifty-eighth street.

DARING FIREMAN SAW ONLY DUTY.

Joseph Kratochvil Alone Carried Mrs. Leland, Senseless, Down the Escape.

It will be seven years next May that Kratochvil has been following the hard line of a fireman's duty. He ranks just as a first grade man. That is, he did until Friday afternoon. Since then he has been promoted—not on the lists of the department, but in the esteem of his company mates and the gratitude of people to save whose loved ones he fought in the fierce breath of Friday's holocaust.

Kratochvil blushes when he talks about himself, although it was less apparent yesterday by reason of the scorching his face had undergone. Here is his story:

"When we got to the fire, the people were leaning from the windows, and screaming—some of them. Others were very still. It looked as if they'd given up hope. There was a lady, quite an elderly lady, leaning from a window. Captain Grady pointed her out to me, and ordered me to see if I couldn't get her down. As quick as I could I fell to work with a twenty-foot ladder, and put it up against the fire escape. I got up as far as the fourth story, and when I looked up I saw that a policeman—I don't know his name, but I think that he is from the East Fifty-first street station—was helping her out on the fire escape. It was high time, too, for the room was choked with smoke and flames. The lady was helpless, and was badly burned. The policeman supported her by the shoulders, and I crawled up under him and got my arm around her. I got her down one flight and called to the men below for a twenty-five foot ladder, as the one I had was too short. While I was waiting a gentleman put his head out of the window and said: 'Come on. Bring her in here, and I'll show you a way out through the building.'

"We passed her in and together brought her down stairs. I didn't realize before how badly off she was. She was very severely burned. We took her out to the ambulance, and after she was lifted inside the gentleman turned around and said: 'Fireman, I'll never forget you for what you've done. This is my mother, Mrs. Leland.'

"I heard she died last night."

CHIEF BONNER SAYS HE IS PROUD OF THE FIREMEN.

It is too soon for me to make any statement concerning the specific instances of heroism at the fire of yesterday. Of course, a report will be made, but it will be based on the official records as submitted by the officers in charge of the several companies engaged. It would be impossible, and in any event unwise, to give for publication any commendation of the firemen's efforts at the saving of life, or opinion as to the credit due them.

SCALING LADDERS TO SAVE TWO WOMEN.

Lieut. Burnes Climbed to the Fourth Floor and Brought Them Down.

WENT UP AFTER A THIRD. Searched for Her Vainly and Came Down Just Before the Front Wall Fell.

Lieutenant Michael A. Burnes rescued two women from a room on the fourth floor, fronting on Fifth avenue, and then went back for a third woman, but was driven back by the flames.

Lieutenant Burnes is in command of the water tower on West Thirty-sixth street, near Tenth avenue. He was returning from luncheon when he was informed that the Windsor Hotel was burning. The hotel was in his district, and Burnes started for the fire without going to his headquarters. On arriving there he found that the tower had been placed in position in front of the main entrance, on Fifth avenue. The tower was already adjusted, and Lieutenant Burnes charged along the stream into the burning building.

While doing so he saw two women at a window on the fourth floor. Further up the avenue two firemen were rescuing women from the floor above. Leaving his assistants to manage the water tower, Lieutenant Burnes seized two scaling ladders and made his way to the fourth floor by means of them. He carried one of the women down to the second floor and handed her over to other firemen, who, having seen the difficulty under which he was working, placed a long ladder in position, and then carried the first woman to the street. Burnes returned to the room and carried the second woman down.

"My niece is in the next room," said one of the women.

"I'll save her if possible," said Lieutenant Burnes, and once again he ascended the ladders. This time he entered the room and was gone a few moments, when he returned alone and made his way to the street. He had just taken his place beside the tower when the main wall crumbled and fell, not out, but in a heap. Had it fallen across the tower, the tower and the firemen working it and the horses would have been buried.

Lieutenant Burnes has been a member of the Fire Department for sixteen years. During that time he has saved several lives. He was the first fireman to use a scaling ladder in saving lives. At a fire in Thirteenth street several years ago he made the ascent from the ground to the fourth floor of a tenement and carried a woman safely down the ladders.

MAKE THE NEW LAW ROOT UP EVERY DEATH TRAP.

Assistant District-Attorney Osborne Declares That a Sweeping Measure is Required.

Editor of the Journal:

Undoubtedly a retroactive law is needed which will get at the bottom of the evil and prevent for all time a recurrence of a catastrophe like the recent Windsor Hotel fire. A mere amendment to the present laws governing the Building Department may not cover the necessities of the case.

There should be a sweeping measure adopted once by the present Legislature, which will bring to the ground, if not all hotels and public places of amusement which are known by the authorities to be unsafe.

This community cannot afford to witness a repetition of the Windsor fire, but we are informed that there are just such fire traps in this city, and that the law for their removal. There must be a remedy. The laws must be changed to enable the authorities to make the protection as far as lies in the power of man to afford.

Certainly the public, with the knowledge now that other fire traps as bad and as numerous as the Windsor Hotel are standing in this city, will not rest until legislative action is taken to make such places safe or call for their destruction.

James W. Osborne, Assistant District-Attorney.



TOOK SIX WOMEN DOWN A LADDER.

Three of Them Were Elderly, and Perfectly Calm and Collected.

Herman W. Oppé, of Engine Company No. 65, tells the following experience:

"Just as we turned around the corner on Forty-sixth street the people had begun jumping from the windows. I saw seven women crowded on a balcony at the third story on the Forty-sixth street side. Some of them were hysterical and screaming. Even while we were getting up to them, one of them jumped, and struck on a step ladder, breaking it. I didn't blame her for jumping, for the flames by this time were showing out of the windows, and there was the sound of cracking glass everywhere.

"I found that the iron ladder I had was too short, and got a scaling ladder and hooked it up under the balcony, and so got up and handed the women down. One after the other, Ed. Keegan and W. J. Harris, of our company, were at work on the scaling ladder, and took the women as I helped them down. We made out to get all six of them down in safety, but it was a close shave.

"Three of the six were elderly ladies—I should say guests of the hotel. One of them was very elaborately dressed. All these three were very plucky and had their wits about them. They made no trouble at all. Two of the younger women were servants, and the youngest I thought was going crazy. She was screaming and shrieking her prayers by turns, and waving her arms up and down. If the other women had been as rattled as she was I don't believe we could ever have got them all down. No one could have stared there long and lived."

KICK WILL COST THIS LANDLORD JUST \$20,000.

His Woman Tenant Gets a Judgment for That Amount for Injuries Inflicted on Her.

Chicago, March 18.—A verdict awarding \$20,000 to Kay Kuttner against her former landlord, Christian Scherhorn, has been entered before Judge Baker, for injuries alleged to have been received by Miss Kuttner in a quarrel with the landlord over the rent of her store, at No. 588 Milwaukee avenue, in October, 1905.

The case was heard once before when a jury in Judge Turbull's court returned a verdict of \$15,000 in favor of the plaintiff. But on account of errors in admission of certain evidence, a new trial was granted. Scherhorn went to the store and, taking a hat from the stock, said he would apply its price on the amount due him for rent and requested the immediate payment of the balance. In an altercation which ensued the plaintiff claimed the landlord struck her in the face with the hat and kicked her.

WILL LOSE \$15,000 IN CHOICE BRIC-A-BRAC.

J. Warren Nash, of the Union Club, a Sufferer by the Great Fire.

Washington, March 18.—J. Warren Nash, a member of the Union Club, who had a suite of rooms in the Windsor Hotel, is in Washington, where he has been for some time.

Mr. Nash said to-night that the collection of valuable paintings and choice bric-a-brac in his rooms was destroyed and that his loss will aggregate \$15,000, there being no insurance.



Three Heroes of Engine Company No. 65.

Herman Oppé, Edward Keegan and William J. Harris, of Engine Company No. 65, rescued seven women from the fourth story, on the Forty-sixth street side of the building. The task was finished just in time, and with the coolness of the older of the women made it possible for all to be saved.

LEAPED FROM A FALLING FLOOR.

While Almost at His Side a Mother and Child Were Engulfed.

A leap from the falling fourth floor into a window already occupied by a half-dressed young woman, while a mother and her child disappeared into the fiery abyss, is the bare outline of the experience of Benjamin L. Cook, banker and broker, of Chicago. Mr. Cook described his experience thus:

"I returned to my room at the Windsor early in the afternoon. My brother was at the Waldorf-Astoria, and we had arranged to dine there together. I had changed my clothes and was dressed, except for my trousers and shoes. Having time for a short rest, I threw myself down on the bed. I must have dozed, for presently I had the sensation of being awakened by noises in the corridor. The noise grew louder. People seemed to be running along the hall, and I could hear women calling to their children. Suddenly I dashed over me that something was wrong. I sprang to the door and opened it. Smoke puffed in, and through it I saw that the corridor was one sheet of flame.

"Seizing my trousers, I dashed into the hall and toward the Forty-sixth street corner, where, I remembered, there was a fire escape. The heat was terrible. I felt as though my clothing would burst into flame at any moment.

"As I entered the window from which the fire escape descended a form brushed by me and I heard a woman cry: 'Oh, my God! my baby!'

"In the window for which I was making was a young woman in a bath robe. I wondered if I could manage another, but as I turned to speak to the woman who had cried out the door began to give way. It was so sudden that only by leaping to the window was I able to save myself. As I reached the window the floor went down and the woman with it, sending up an awful roar and rush of flame.

"I broke through the window, whereupon the young woman clinging there began hastily to descend. Waiting only to thrust my legs into my trousers, I followed her. She reached the first story before I came up with her, was helped to the street by a fireman and immediately disappeared. I did not learn who she was, but it was a parent she was injured, though it seemed marvellous how she could bear the shock of such a violent explosion and retain strength sufficient to care for herself."

SAILORS. GET YOUR CASH!

Volunteer Seamen Can Get Extra Pay Allowed by Congress by Writing to Washington.

Washington, March 18.—The Navy Department wishes it known to all of the volunteer sailors who served with such credit during the late war and received honorable discharges, that it need not cost them more than the price of a two-cent postage stamp to receive the gratuity in the shape of extra pay, which Congress allotted to them in the closing hours of the last session. Very many applications have been pouring in upon the Navy Department for information as to how the men should proceed to collect their money. Instructions are being sent out.

V. A. S. Stick Licorice. The popular brand. Your druggist will confirm this.

Helpless to Avert Such Horrors.

Fire Marshal Peter Seery had his lieutenants at work all day yesterday toning into the causes of the fire. He says that a very full investigation will be made, and that next week will have a hearing into the cause of the loss of the lives. "We make inspections twice a month of the buildings of the city," he said, "and records are deposited in the Chief's office, and when proprietors of a building have complied with the laws should be so constructed that we can have ample power to enforce them to the smallest detail."

Grand Jury is Likely TO PROBE THE HORROR.

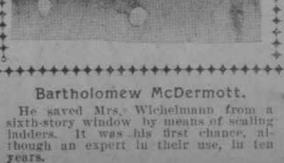
Belief That an Official Investigation Will Be Speedily Instituted.

Lieutenant Burnes.

He is one of those whose deeds at the Windsor Hotel fire earned for him a place on the list of heroes.

Mothers and Nursing Babies.

women in delicate health should drink Allport's English Stout, bottled by its makers.



Bartholomew McDermott.

He saved Mrs. Wichelmann from a sixth-story window by means of scaling ladders. It was his first chance, although an expert in their use, in ten years.