

*The New England*

Winter 2023



# *Fireguard*

The Official Bulletin of the New England Museum of Firefighting

## MADE IN NEW ENGLAND



New England was the home to several builders of fire apparatus including Maxim, Farrar, Woods, Ranger, Continental, Kress, Moody, Robinson and Knox. New England also was the home to many companies that supplied and outfitted the fire service. In this issue several of these companies are explored. Among the most significant of these firms was the Rockwood Sprinkler Company of Worcester, Massachusetts.

The classic 1961 Maxim F Model pumper seen above served as Engine 5 in East Providence, Rhode Island. It was equipped with a Rockwood remote manual control roof mounted foam turret. This could flow foam or water in a solid stream or fog pattern. Engine 5 had a 1000 gpm pump, a 300 gallon water tank and a 300 gallon foam tank. It also had a traditional deck pipe that flowed water only.



# ***The New England Fireguard***

Winter 2023

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New England Museum of Firefighting

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The New England Museum of Firefighting  
is a Massachusetts not-for-profit  
corporation and is a 501(c)(3) entity.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The New England Museum of Firefighting is a nonprofit educational organization that preserves, promotes, researches and shares the significant historical contributions of the people of New England to the American fire service. The Museum aspires to provide the public with engaging and interactive experiences that are relevant, accessible and meaningful to all people, through the preservation of fire apparatus and artifacts that illustrate the rich history of firefighting and the fire service in New England.

**[www.NEMOFF.org](http://www.NEMOFF.org)**

## **President's Message**

Dear Friends,


Welcome to the second instalment of our newsletter. The Board of Trustees and our volunteers have been busy working behind the scenes to continue to develop the Museum. As we do this, we keep in mind the Museum's Mission Statement, which appears in the left column of this page. The Museum is a museum of firefighting and not just a fire truck museum. In this issue of the *Fireguard* this point is illustrated very well.

New England industry played an important role in supplying the fire service. The main theme of this issue is Made in New England. This is the subject one of the permanent exhibits being developed. Made in New England also was featured in our Mobile Museum, which premiered successfully at the Berkshire SPAAMFAA show this past October.

The second part of this issue is "Two Fires." This recounts the 1942 Maverick Square Fire and the Cocanut Grove Fire, which happened just 13 days later. As we observe the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of those two tragedies, we cannot and should not forget the 100 people who died on February 20, 2003, in the Station Nightclub Fire in West Warwick, Rhode Island. The Station Fire was a sobering reminder of the ever present dangers presented by fires, the importance of fire code enforcement and the value of the fire service.

Currently we are working through the permit process on the Museum building to enhance and expand the Museum to provide more display area with upgrades to the infrastructure and maybe add an annex building to store our expanding fleet of working apparatus. The Museum is work in progress.....stay tuned.

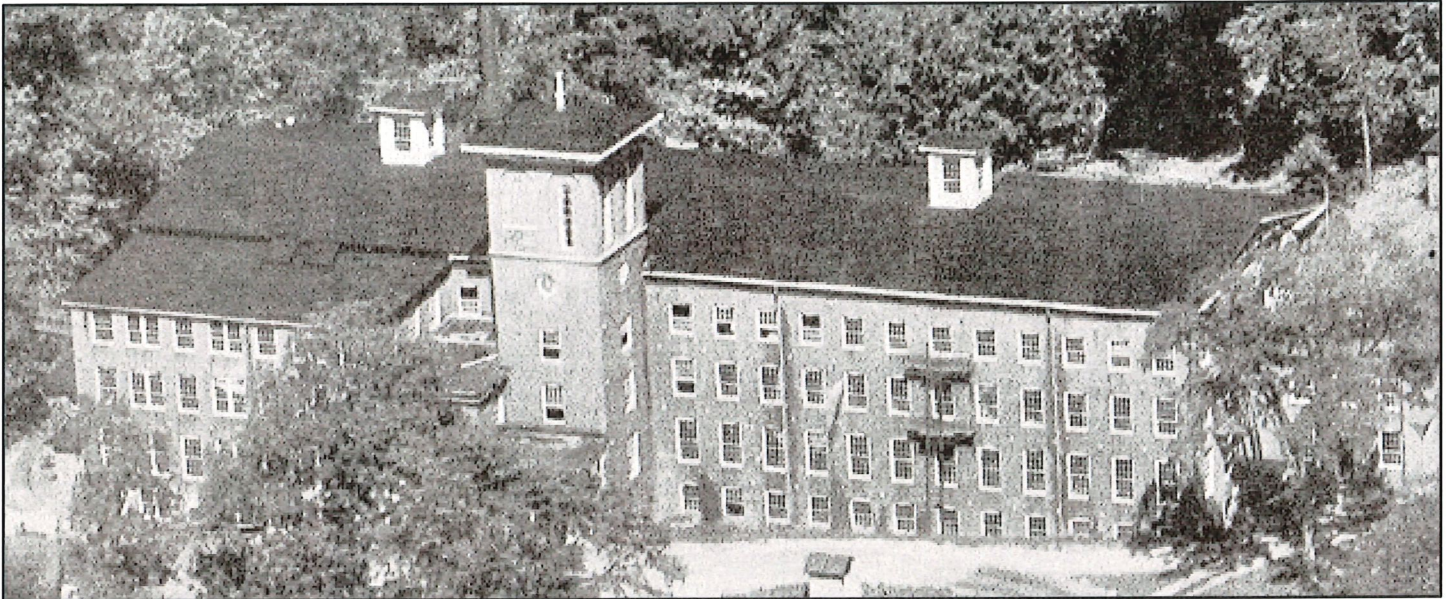
Best Wishes,



Michael Nugai



# Made in New England



*This aerial photo shows the mill that was the factory of the Fabric Fire Hose Company in Sandy Hook, Connecticut, in 1939. This was just one of the many mills and factories in New England that outfitted the American fire service.*

New England was the first industrialized section of America. From the 1790s until the 1950s, the region's economy was more manufacturing oriented than most of the rest of the nation. New England was home to countless mills and factories. Among the diverse manufacturing industries that flourished in New England there were many that supported the fire service. The best known of these are the firms that manufactured fire apparatus. They, however, are just a small piece of the story.

The New England Museum of Firefighting works to preserve, promote and share the significant historical contributions of the people of New England to the American fire service. New England's industrial history includes some very important contributions to the American fire service.

This interesting and often overlooked history is explored in the Museum's new permanent exhibit entitled "Made in New England." This features more than a dozen companies and their products that were made in New England. A condensed version of this exhibit made its premiere as part of the "Mobile Museum" that was presented at Berkshire SPAAMFAA's annual muster on October 9, 2022, in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

Dozens of New England companies manufactured the many types of tools and equipment that firefighters needed. Between the 1850s and 1970s, almost all the equipment that a modern fire department needed could be purchased from New England manufacturers. These firms sold goods not just in New England, but all over America.



# Two Fires

November 2022 was the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of two of the most tragic fires in the history of New England. On November 15, 1942, six Boston firefighters were killed in a major collapse while operating at multiple alarm fire in East Boston. Less than two weeks later, Boston and the nation were shocked by the appalling loss of life at the infamous Cocoanut Grove Fire.

These fires and their lessons are among the most important in New England and American history. These two tragedies remind us that firefighting is inherently dangerous and that without the brave men and women, who go in while everyone else is coming out, the world would be an even more dangerous place.

WEATHER

Forecast  
SUNDAY—Warmer.  
Full Report, Page 24.

# The Boston Sunday Globe

EXTRA!

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READ THE PHOTOGRAPHY—  
MAGAZINE AND COLOR SECTIONS (6)

COURTESY, INC.  
The Globe Newspaper Co.

PRICE 10 CENTS

# 400 DEAD IN HUB NIGHT CLUB FIRE



CATHOLIC PRIEST, AT RIGHT, GIVES LAST RITES OF CHURCH TO VICTIM  
CARRIED OUT BY FIREMAN

## Hundreds Hurt in Panic as the Cocoanut Grove Becomes Wild Inferno

By SAMUEL B. CUTLER

The worst disaster in Boston's history last night

List of Known Dead

COCOANUT GROVE  
FIRE—FIRE

Where Bodies  
Can Be Found

Number of dead as compiled by  
Police at 7:30 a.m. this morning



# The Cocoanut Grove Fire



*The fire in the Cocoanut Grove was quickly knocked down by Boston firefighters. This photo shows the chaos that ensued as rescuers tried to find survivors among the bodies piled inside.*

The Cocoanut Grove was a popular nightclub in the Bay Village section of Boston. It opened in 1927 in a building that formerly was a garage and a warehouse. It was a speakeasy during Prohibition.

In 1942 the Cocoanut Grove was owned by Barney Welansky, a lawyer with ties to the mafia. The Grove had a restaurant, dance floor and a bandstand in its main section. In its basement, it had the Melody Lounge,

which featured its own entertainment, as well as the kitchen.

Welansky operated the Cocoanut Grove in violation of several local ordinances. He did not have a liquor license. He lacked building permits for several major renovations. More significantly, he had several exits locked and others concealed behind draperies. One exit even was bricked over. With his connections, Welansky was able to avoid legal problems with code enforcement.



# The Virtual Fire Museum

The Virtual Fire Museum has been an online success. The Museum's "exhibits" are photo essays that explore much more than just fire apparatus. Recent additions to the Museum

include "The Great Fires of 1947," which told the story of the worst fire fires in the history of New England, and the Maverick Square Fire, in which six Boston firefighters died.

## Welcome to the Virtual Fire Museum



### The Great Fires of 1947

In the Summer of 1947, Maine experienced the worst forest fires in the history of New England.



### The Knox Type 8 Motor Pumping Engine

(Photo courtesy of Walt McCall)  
Early motor fire apparatus came in a variety of configurations. ...



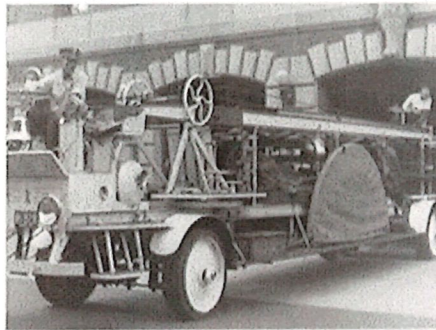
### Built in New England: ALCO Fire trucks American Locomotive Company...

The American Locomotive Company is better known by the acronym of "ALCO" or simply...



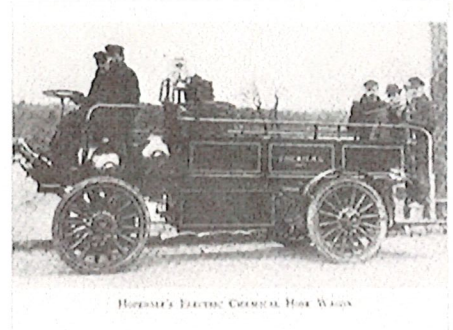
### The Continuous Duty System

A century ago, almost all paid firefighters worked in what is known as the continuous duty...



### New Bedford's Electric Aerial Ladder Trucks

New Bedford, Massachusetts, operated four of these straight-frame aerial ladder trucks that...



### The First Electric-Powered Fire Engine

This combination chemical and hose wagon was built by the Pope Manufacturing Company ...