

Three Fires In Five Years Struck Houlton In Early Eighties

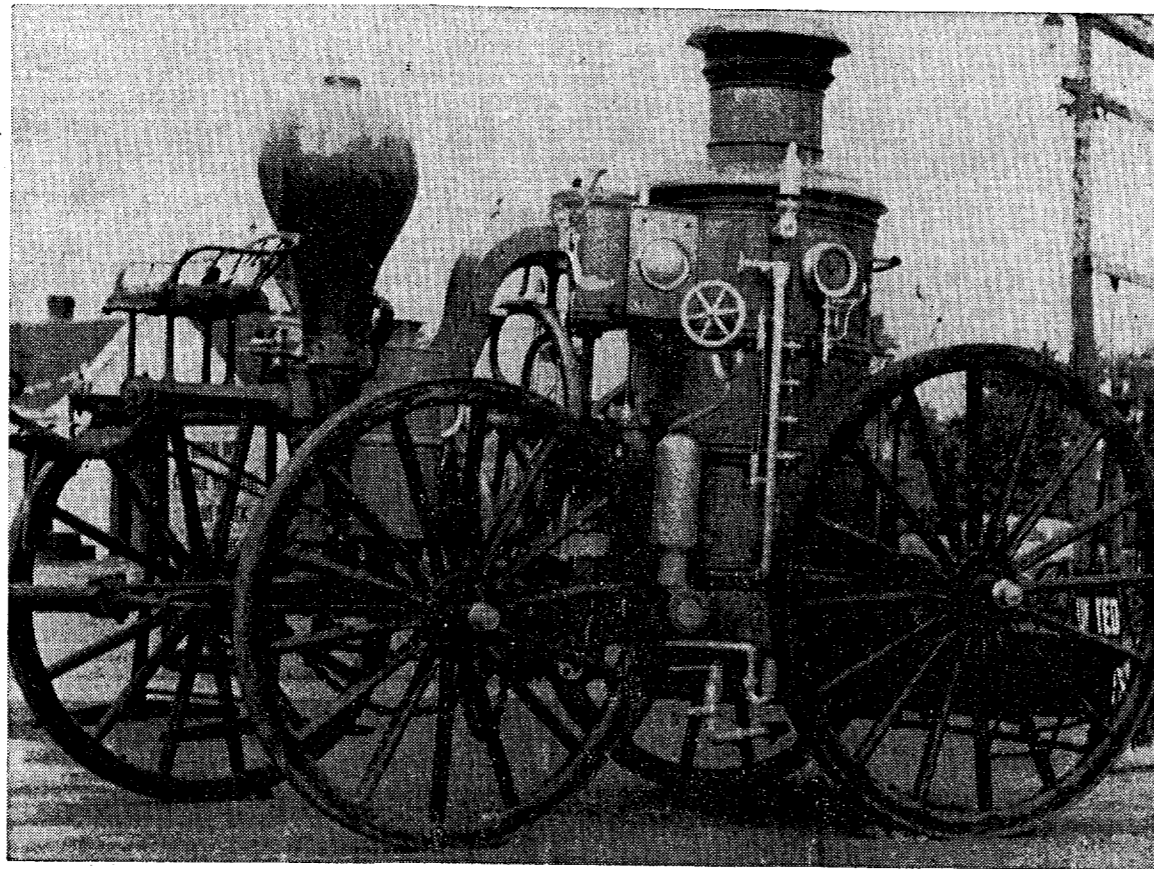
Young Village Suffered \$200,000 Damage, Lost Many of Its Buildings

The dread of fire hung constantly over the heads of the citizens of the growing young town of Houlton in the late nineteenth century. It had grown to become a community of respectable size to which flames could cause a great havoc.

Fire fighting equipment, while perhaps as good as was then

available in the area, was hardly adequate to cope with a blaze of any size. The town owned a fire engine that was called "worthless," had a small chemical engine that could "render good service part of the time" and an inadequate water supply. The fears of the people were understandable.

A Hose Company Was Named After It



This is the famous old "Sockanosset" 22 horsepower steam fire engine that was bought by public subscription for \$2300 after the town was the victim of its second severe fire loss in two years, in 1880. It arrived here on November 11 of that year and it is still here, having performed major service in fighting fires before it was supplanted by more modern equipment.

SPARED FOR 20 YEARS

Yet, prior to three fires which came within a period of five years, between 1879 and 1884, providence had watched over this struggling young village. They had been spared a serious fire for nearly 20 years.

The trio of conflagrations that struck without warning made up for the long period of security. Altogether they caused property

damage that was estimated at almost \$200,000, wiped out as many as 26 buildings at one time and, on three separate occasions, drove scores of families into the streets as their homes were destroyed.

It was in the early morning hours of Sunday, August 3, 1879 that the two decades of immunity came to an abrupt and disastrous end.

The townspeople were awakened from their Sabbath slumbers by the ringing of bells and the shouts and cry of fire that arose in the vicinity of the business section of the town.

FIRE IN A STABLE

It was six and the sun had long since been above the horizon when William Harrington espied the smoke and flames that were rolling heavenward from a stable attached to the southwest corner

Smith, to the double tenement building owned and occupied by Thomas Kennedy, tailor and Robert Gallagher, shoemaker and the Harrington building which housed the post office and a dwelling.

The townspeople made a valiant fight to stem the tide. Men and women joined in a bucket brigade against a key position after the "worthless" fire engine had failed to respond to all efforts to make it function.

The weather proved wholly uncooperative. At the start of the blaze, there had been a barely perceptible breeze. But, as the fire progressed, the wind grew in force, spurring its progress to fierce proportions.

The path of the fire then veered to the west with the rise and shift

of the wind and headed toward the Exchange Hotel and the heavier settled portion of the town. Heroic measures were called for to avert the calamity that would result if this course were to run unchecked.

BUILDING TORN DOWN

The Madigan and Donworth law office was torn down and the fight was made at this key point. For more than an hour men and women fought the blaze with water from their bucket brigade. They battled stubbornly to contain the flames to the razed building. The valiant fight was won by the people and the fire was stopped from spreading beyond this point.

In the meantime the flames had been moving easterly, finding an easy path through the dry wooden structures. A row of buildings owned by Dr. Lewis B. Johnson was a quick victim. Burned out here were a livery stable owned and occupied by H. B. Black, a tenement occupied by E. Ingraham, an old bakery, and McMaster's stable.

Quickly consumed without a struggle was the new two-story

house, with stable connected, owned by Dr. G. F. Walker, a large two-story house owned by Zaddock Johnson and occupied by James K. Osgood, and by Edwin Doyle, a tenement and a carriage shop and Eben Woodbury's fine residence at the corner of Kelleran street.

ANOTHER STUBBORN FIGHT

Here was staged another stubborn fight to stem the blaze. The fire was contained west of Kelleran street by a large force of men who kept the roof of the house and stable of Almon H. Fogg, wet down enough to protect it from igniting. It was with the utmost difficulty that the residence of Albert Lovejoy, 2nd, further south on Kelleran street, was saved from destruction as was also the case of the Congregational vestry across the street. This was another key because, had any of these buildings burned, the spread to thickly settled dwellings would have been impossible to stop.

The north side of Main street, east of Mechanic street did not escape damage although a vigorous fight did manage to save some

structures. Swept away was a row of buildings owned by Charles P. Tenney, consisting of a Marble Shop occupied by Henry Collins, a two story building occupied by Nathaniel Churchill's harness shop on the first floor and A. D. Huntley's shop and tenement and on the second floor, the Custom House, and the tenement house occupied by Alonzo Rackliff. Also the bakery erected and occupied by David Edwards, and the building owned by G. S. Plummer, occupied by C. E. Lovering as a tenement.

OLDEST HOMESTEAD GOES

The two story residence of Charles P. Tenney, one of the oldest homesteads in the town and some 20 rods northeast, was the victim of burning wood which was blown on to it. In the short space of half an hour, the buildings, in the center of extensive grounds, lay in ashes. This was as far as the fire went in this direction.

The Almon H. Fogg Hardware store, a large two story building across the street from the post office caught fire several times but the flare-ups were extinguish-

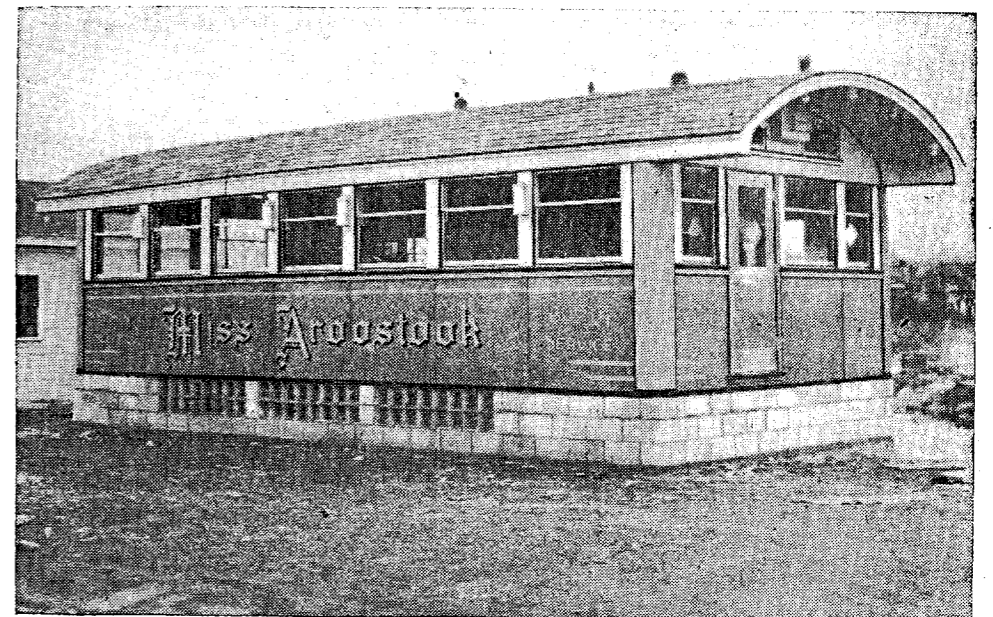


Congratulations from

JERRY WEST'S
MOBIL GAS

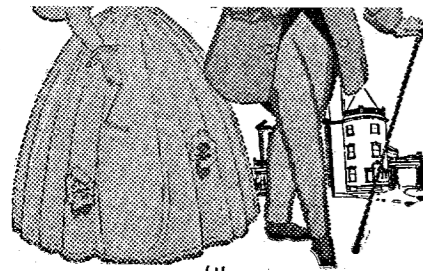
Service Station
UNION SQUARE
HOULTON

GREETINGS...HOULTON...ON YOUR
150th BIRTHDAY



Serving **HOULTON**
Residents . . .

SINCE 1888



— SINCE 1893 —

.... Our Best Wishes
to HOULTON on its
150th BIRTHDAY.

It has been our pleasure to be part of
the Houlton progress and growth since we
first opened our doors in 1893 . . . we have
made many . . . many friends during that
time . . . and have seen many . . . many
changes too.

We sincerely wish to pause at this time
and give thanks to the people who have
made our stay here a happy one over these
past 64 years.



.... and to the
HOULTON PIONEER
TIMES . . . on its
100th BIRTHDAY

We say a good job well done for the
community and southern Aroostook county
in bringing to the people of this area . . .
the news of its progress . . . its trials and
tribulations . . . good times . . . may you
continue to be the voice of the people for
another 100 years.

PERRY'S
MARKET SQUARE

JEWELRY STORE

— — HOULTON

the smoke and flames that were
rolling heavenward from a stable
attached to the southwest corner
of the Swanton building. The
source of the fire was situated
also near and in the rear of the
post office, Kennedy's store and
other buildings.

Before fire fighters could get to
the scene and the feeble fire
equipment brought into action, it
became apparent the buildings
near the scene could not be saved.

The Swanton store location was
occupied by Estabrooke Brothers
as a stove store and tin shop. They
were able to haul some of their
stock to safety. The Garrison
family, occupying the tenement
on the second floor were not so
fortunate. They were all asleep
when the fire had gained some
headway and were barely able to
escape with their lives. Their en-
tire household goods were de-
stroyed.

FLAMES SPREAD RAPIDLY

It took only a short time for
the flames to spread to buildings
owned by Mrs. M. Brown on the
west, occupied as a millinery
store and tenement by Mrs. I. A.

**New Fire Engine
Follows Losses**

The new steam fire engine, pur-
chased by individual subscriptions
of our citizens, has arrived. It ap-
pears to, be a first class machine,
built by the Amoskeag Manufac-
turing Company of Manchester, N. H.
— twenty-two horse power and
cost \$2300. It is named the "Sock-
anosset". On Monday afternoon a
trial test of its working capacities
was made under the charge of Mr.
Munroe, an engineer of the Wood-
stock fire department. The engine
was stationed at the reservoir in
the square and it threw two
streams of water quite lively but
it did not quite meet the expecta-
tions of those interested in the
purchase.

After the trial an examination of
the machine was made and it was
found there was something out of
order with one of the valves; this
remedied, another trial was made
Tuesday morning with more satis-
factory results. The engine was
placed at the bridge and took
water from the mill pond. Hose
was laid from there to Court street
and water was thrown upon the
top of Buzzell's new hotel, a four
story building, wetting the roof as
in a heavy shower. — Aroostook
Times, Nov. 11, 1880.

the path of the fire then veered
to the west with the rise and shift

**TIMBER AND GAME—
TWIN CROPS**

- more trees
- more jobs
- more wild life



PREVENT
FOREST FIRES
KEEP OUR
STATE GREEN

TREE FARMING IS GOOD FOR GAME

EASTERN CORPORATION
Manufacturers of Fine Business Papers and Purocell Pulp
MILLS AT BREWER AND LINCOLN, MAINE