

# Firemen Make Desperate but Vain Effort to Save Cliff House

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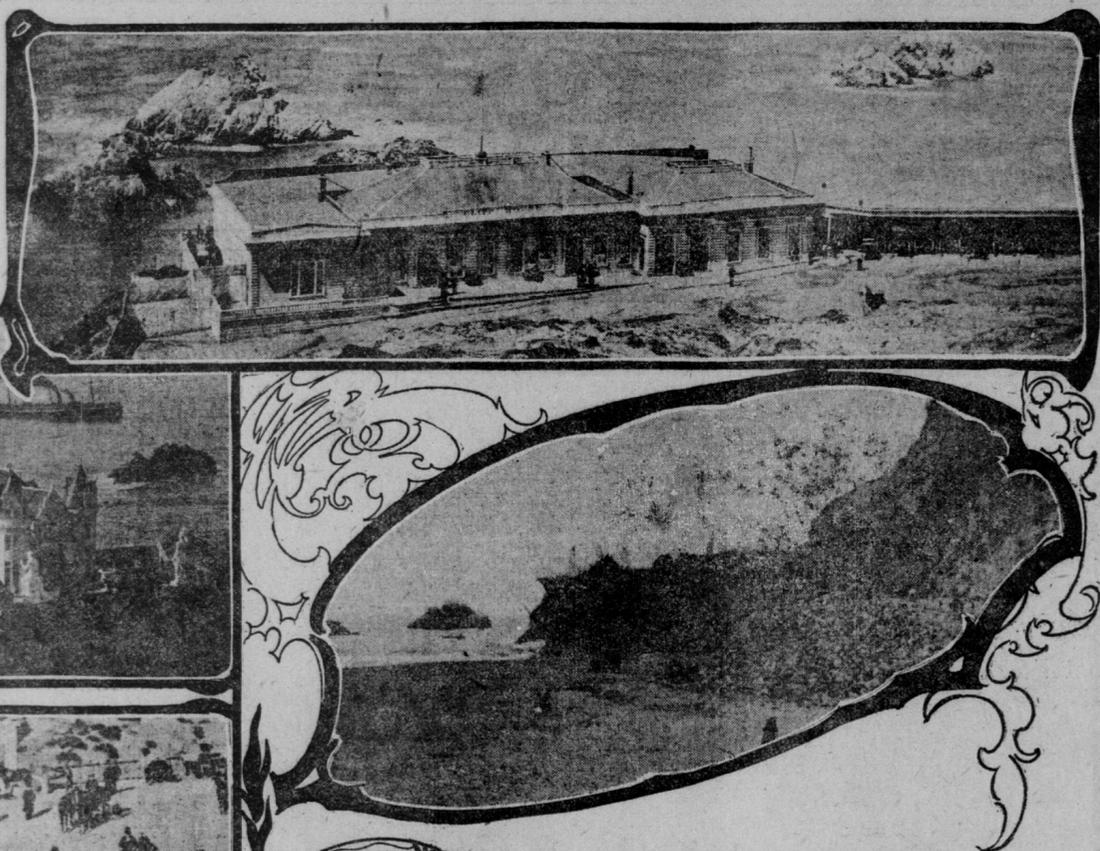
San Francisco has had a Cliff House almost since its earliest days. The one destroyed yesterday was the second that marked the site, and both of them went up in flames.

The beach is there yet and the ocean and the seals. People will go out as usual Sundays and gay automobile parties will journey out at night. To all the promontory will look barren without the familiar white structure. It was not a thing of beauty architecturally, but it was San Franciscan, and the different buildings that occupied the site were prominent in the history of the town.

### WILKINS HAS NARROW ESCAPE

J. M. Wilkins, who only a few months ago gave up the proprietorship of the world famed roadhouse after 21 years' continuous occupancy, was the discoverer of the fire. The new proprietor,

The upper picture shows the old Cliff House, which was destroyed by fire on December 25, 1894. Directly under that is the bluff after the fire yesterday, and to the left of that the scene just before yesterday's fire, taken from Suto heights. In the lower left hand corner is shown the road by which omnibuses went out to the Cliff in early days. The portrait is of J. M. Wilkins, manager of the Cliff House, who came near losing his life in yesterday's fire.



John Tait, had been out looking over the work of the renovators and Wilkins, after walking with him to the top of the hill, from which point Tait started on his automobile trip back to town, strolled down to the house. This was about 4:30 o'clock. Entering the south porch along with O. Mulvaney, the watchman and caretaker, Wilkins noticed a thin wreath of smoke coming through a small hole in the floor made by the electricians.

"Mulvaney, there's a fire," he said to the watchman. "Turn in the alarm alarm—quick!" The watchman at once gave the alarm through the auxiliary service, which was installed throughout the house. Wilkins meanwhile ran around the porch to the office on the north side in telephone the police. He managed to secure connection with some one and had just shouted "Cliff house is burning" when, to quote his own words, "there was a loud explosion, the whole side of the house burst into flames and smoke and I was unable to see a foot ahead."

Wilkins groped up and down the office, but lost his bearings entirely. Where he thought there should be a door he bumped against the wall. Finally he found his way to a small cash window, leading from the office to the barroom and located about breast high in the wall. Thinking he might have a better chance to save himself if he got into the barroom, he shoved his hand through the small pane of glass and then scrambled through. How he did it is not easy to explain. Wilkins weighs 250 pounds and the cash window was to all appearances too small to admit a man of his girth. But he was nerved to unusual effort by the feeling of desperation that was gripping him and managed to force his way through. But his position was a hundredfold worse than before. He said last night:

"I was trapped, though. There were three doors in that barroom. It didn't take me long to try the handle of each of them. Judge of my horror to find that each was locked. I had gone to no end of trouble to force my way into the barroom only to find myself caged. I couldn't go back because the flames had come through that side in a blast. I was quite convinced that was my end. The smoke suffocated me. I felt my strength going. I thought of my wife, I thought of my children, I thought of my friends, and that was the last I remembered until I found myself lying on the ground outside, choking and out, with some one undoing my shirt.

### WILKINS IS RESCUED

Wilkins' shouts had been heard by the men of chemical station A, who had just arrived from their headquarters on the hill in response to the alarm turned in by Mulvaney. Captain Kelly and Lieutenant Landtomb and substitute fireman Fred Klatz dashed into the front door, while Driver Bernard Donnelly, the fourth member of the team, drove the outfit so close to the burning building that the right shoulder of the horse was burned.

Klatz and his captain were the two who rescued Wilkins. They found him faintly calling for help and staggering about the barroom, into which they broke their way. Klatz, who is a lightweight, seized Wilkins and started him out along the track of the chemical hose, which he and Kelly had pulled in. Wilkins, however, according to Klatz, wandered back in a dazed way. Klatz then shouldered him and carried him to fresh air, where the brave young fireman himself collapsed. Others lifted Wilkins across the road to safety and he was revived.

tenant Landtomb says it appeared to him that the fire started on the south side in the upper basement and that the flames swept across to the north side, near the automobile garage, and then burned up the side of the house. The fire was far too big to be handled by the chemical apparatus. All the contents of the two tanks were poured in by Kelly and Landtomb, without any result further than to temporarily check the march of the smoke and flames. Superintendent Harrison of the Suto baths supplemented the efforts of the firemen, throwing in water from a hose, but to no avail.

The little body of fire fighters knew that engines were on the way, but the time that elapsed before the arrival of the first seemed never ending. At last, after the chemical company had been on the scene about 8 or 10 minutes, engine 36, from Twenty-sixth and Point Lobos avenues, appeared. Up to this time the Cliff House had been hidden in a thick column of black smoke. Little fire was apparent. Just as engine 36 arrived, however, the structure seemed to burst into one mass of flames. The big blaze, simultaneously enveloping every part of the building, swirled heavenward in a great column, twisting and roaring. The firemen all agreed that there had been nothing so spectacular in this city since the great fire. The men of engine 36 saw at once that they had little chance of saving the house. Engine Driver H. Temple showed himself a man of pluck by remaining by his engine and keeping it running even although the fire was so close to him that his fellows had to pump water on him to keep him from catching fire.

### PREVENT SPREAD OF FLAMES

Other engine companies began to reach the scene soon after and Chief Shaughnessy took charge. As soon as it was found that there was absolutely no hope of saving the famous hostelry the work of the department was concentrated on preventing the spread of the fire to the Suto baths. In this the firemen were successful. The garage connected with the Cliff house shared the fate of the place.

Several loud explosions occurred before the blaze died down. These are believed to have been caused by the ignition of a quantity of painting materials and turpentine stored in the basement. A theory was advanced last night that the fire originated in this paint, but nobody was able to explain how that could have happened.

At the time the fire was discovered there were, besides Wilkins and Mulvaney, a Japanese laundryman and his wife and baby in the building. The Japanese were in the lower basement and narrowly escaped with their lives, losing all their personal possessions. Wilkins, in whose employ the Japanese was for 10 years, says the man is a thoroughly reliable and careful servant. The Japanese cooked their meals every day by a wood fire in the basement, and it was suggested that the conflagration, but the laundryman last night denied that he and his wife were in any way responsible.

People were attracted to the vicinity in large numbers when the flames were seen. In a little while the hill was covered with onlookers. The news quickly spread about the city that the Cliff House was burning and many automobile parties rushed out to the beach at breakneck pace, disregarding the speed ordinances.

Soldiers from Fort Miley also hurried to the scene and did what they could to aid the firemen and police. The falling clouds during the height of the fire ignited Cliff cottage, on the side of

the hill, which is occupied by Wilkins, but Miss Ross, who was there alone, climbed up to the roof and put out the flames. Suto house also caught, and the incident fire was quenched by the attaches.

### FIREMEN SLIGHTLY HURT

No serious injury was sustained by any of the firemen. Lieutenant M. F. Drury of engine 28 was caught under falling walls, by the worst that happened to him was a cut through the upper lip, although he was unconscious when he awoke. When his comrades reached him they found former Mayor Phelan, who was the first to see Drury's predicament, dragging him out. Phelan has rushed through a strong current of water to the rescue of the fireman and was almost suffocated by the stream. Drury was treated at the park emergency hospital.

For the last three months Cliff house had been in process of renovation. The old, which was estimated at about \$100,000, had been lavishly expended on the expenditure of money in refitting the house. As many as 100 men have been employed there at one time. The new structure, which was to be very fine, fortunately had not been put in, but a great deal of work had been done in rewiring the place throughout, installing a complete new system of plumbing and in decorating. Tait's actual loss was \$55,000, covered by \$25,000 insurance. Cliff house when it was erected cost in the neighborhood of \$60,000. The monetary loss may therefore be estimated at about \$100,000. It had been planned to reopen the place November 10. Associated with Tait in the venture were Harry Goodall, Captain John Bennett and others. They were paying \$1,000 a month in rent and planned to expend \$80,000 in fitting up the place. Tait said last night that if he could obtain a 25 years' lease he would rebuild the house himself.

### FRED KLATZ'S STORY

Fred Klatz told the following story last night: "We heard a man shouting inside as soon as we got there. I went in the front door with Captain Kelly and Lieutenant Landtomb, but the lieutenant was sent back to attend to the chemical truck. Captain Kelly took the hose and I held on behind to lighten it, following him. Then I saw Mr. Wilkins, who was staggering about. I told him to follow the line of the hose out. He started out, but came back, dazed. Then I picked him up and carried him to the door, where I dropped him. I was all in myself and could do no more. He's a heavy man, besides my lungs were full of smoke."

The old Cliff house was built in the early '60's. It was not an imposing structure, being a long, low building, with no pretense to architectural beauty. It was not the resort of the general public in the early days, as there were no car lines running to the beach. Omnibuses went out, but they were expensive and a trip in a hack cost \$15. Drinks on the balcony cost 50 cents and wine was at a correspondingly high figure. Those who could afford to take the trip were able to spend money after they got there, so the old Cliff was often the scene of money burning contests that old timers still delight to discuss.

The old Cliff house was destroyed by fire December 25, 1894. Twenty-two years ago a structure on the same site was partially demolished by an explosion of giant powder on the schooner Parallel. The boat, beating her way out of harbor, ran on to the rocky shore to the north of the Cliff house. With the first impact against the rocks the cargo blew up, badly wrecking the building and also damaging the Suto residence on the heights above. John

## TANSEY IS REPORTED TO BE FUGITIVE OUTLAW

### Police Hear That He Flew From Ireland Under Murder Charge

Startling information was received by the police and every effort was made to suppress the alleged facts reported to the sleuths yesterday concerning John T. Tansey, accused of murdering Patrolman E. T. McCartney last Tuesday morning. It was reported to the detectives that Tansey was one of three brothers who had fled from Roscommon, Ireland, several years ago, after having been accused of murdering a man there. Two of the three made their escape, it was stated, and that the third is now serving a 10 year sentence in an Irish prison. The police confronted Tansey with this statement and at first he denied ever having been in Roscommon. Eventually, however, under rigid questioning, he admitted that he had been in that place, but would not talk further. When pressed to tell what he had been doing in Roscommon Tansey relapsed into sullen silence.

The police are striving vigorously to uncover the record of the arrested man, and will learn positively within a day or two whether he is the fugitive from justice and the Irish outlaw that he has been reported to be.

The inquest concerning the murder of John Tait, which was held at the morgue Wednesday. The preliminary examination of John J. Tansey, who had known Tansey in Wilkesbarre, Pa., before coming to this state. He declined to say anything about Tansey except that he had no relatives in this country. Moser said that he was employed in the Southern Pacific company's shops in Sacramento. He and his wife conversed with the prisoner for some time.

Tansey was a member of the coast artillery stationed at Honolulu during the Spanish-American war and then he entered the service of the United Railroads here in October, 1901. Inquiries will be made of the police in Wilkesbarre, Pa., to ascertain what is known about him there.

It was remarked as a singular thing yesterday that Tansey's enmity toward the police should have resulted in the killing of a union man. Before joining the force four months ago McCartney was secretary of the millmen's union and was a member of the union at the time he was murdered. It was looked upon also by the police as somewhat singular that no member of the millmen's union attended his funeral on Friday. At least if any member of the union was present he did not make himself known to the police officials in charge of the obsequies.

When the police reported the address of Frank Manning, bar tender, who identified Tansey as having come to his establishment on the morning of the murder, they said that Manning was employed in a saloon at the corner of Twenty-fourth and Shotwell streets. The address was incorrect. Manning worked as bar tender at Twenty-fourth and Howard streets. The proprietor of the saloon on the corner of Shotwell and Twenty-fourth said yesterday that Manning never was employed by him.

Young Corral to study here. Ramon Corral Jr., son of the vice president of Mexico, and a party of six arrived here last night from the southern republic in a special car. Young Corral had come to California to complete his education.

## EXPLODING GASOLINE ENDS TOUR OF PARK

### A. Belknap and Companions Blown From Auto Which Is Destroyed

Alden Belknap and two women occupants were blown out of a large Pope-Toledo automobile in which they had been making a wild tour of Golden Gate park, early yesterday morning. The gasoline tank apparently could not stand the high pressure to which it was subjected and burst with a terrific roar. The machine was immediately enveloped in flames and within a few minutes was reduced to a heap of scrap iron and kinders.

The accident happened at 3 o'clock in the south drive and the discomfited revelers were forced to watch the machine disintegrate before their bespattered eyes. The women screamed partly from hysterical fright and partly from the bruises they sustained in the accident. Stragglers were attracted to the spot and rendered such assistance as was possible.

The party was taken away by other autoists and left the smoldering Pope-Toledo to its fate. Belknap, who lives at 2872 California street, says the destruction of his machine was due to leaking gasoline and a defective gas lamp.

Foreigners Formally Asked to Bid on Warships' Coal

President Determined Hitch Shall Not Delay Flotilla

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7.—President Roosevelt is determined that there shall be no hitch in the preliminary arrangements to send the Atlantic battleship fleet to the Pacific. The navy department, unable to make binding contracts with American fuel dealers and coal contractors to supply the ships with coal, has decided to adopt drastic measures. Instead of leaving the business entirely in the hands of American companies, as has been the policy of the navy department heretofore, bids are to be opened with American and foreign contractors placed as competitors.

Sealed proposals in duplicate, indorsed "Proposals for Coaling the Atlantic Fleet," will be received at the bureau of equipment department until 11 o'clock Tuesday, September 24. When the bids are opened September 24 prices of American and foreign contractors can be compared and the navy department will be at liberty to make contracts without feeling that American fuel brokers and coal contractors have been slighted.



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We are displaying many new ideas in Costumes, Street Suits, Wraps, Coats, Opera Coats, Automobile and Rain Coats. They are arriving daily, and every one an individual model.

**For \$25.00**  
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We have some of the prettiest models it has been our pleasure to see. One of them is a tight fitting 28 inch Cutaway Jacket, lined throughout with Skinner's Satin. The coat and cuffs are outlined with braid and particularly mannish. The skirt is cluster pleated with one bias fold, the material is Redfern mixture, and as pretty as the name.

**Then at \$45.00**  
And We Have an Extensive Variety at This Price.

You will find a graceful skirted tight fitting Coat, 48 inches in length, with nine buttons; it is cleverly modeled of mannish cloth, and lined throughout with mesaline; there is one outside breast pocket. The skirt is extra full box pleated, with bias fold.

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PROMOTION: The act of promoting; advancement; ENCOURAGEMENT.—Century Dictionary.

The California Promotion committee has for its object the PROMOTING of California as a whole. It has nothing to sell. Its energies are devoted to fostering all things that have the ADVANCEMENT of California as their object. It gives reliable information on every subject connected with the Industries of California. It gives ENCOURAGEMENT to the establishment of new industries and invites desirable immigration. It is not an employment agency, although it gives information regarding labor conditions. The committee is supported by popular subscription and makes no charge for any service rendered. It is affiliated with the committee as 100 commercial organizations of the state, with a membership of over 20,000. Meetings are held semiannually in different parts of California, where matters of state interest are discussed. Headquarters of the committee are maintained in San Francisco in California building, Union square. CORRESPONDENCE INVITED