

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.

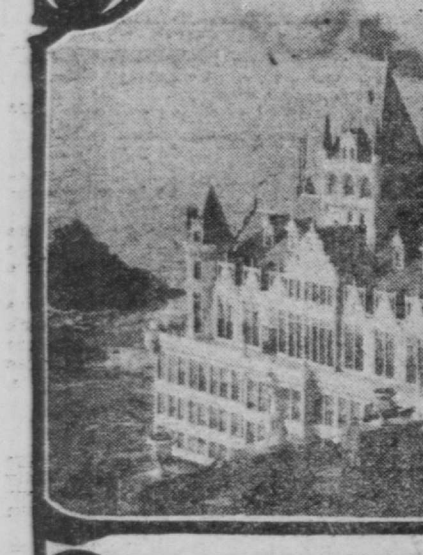
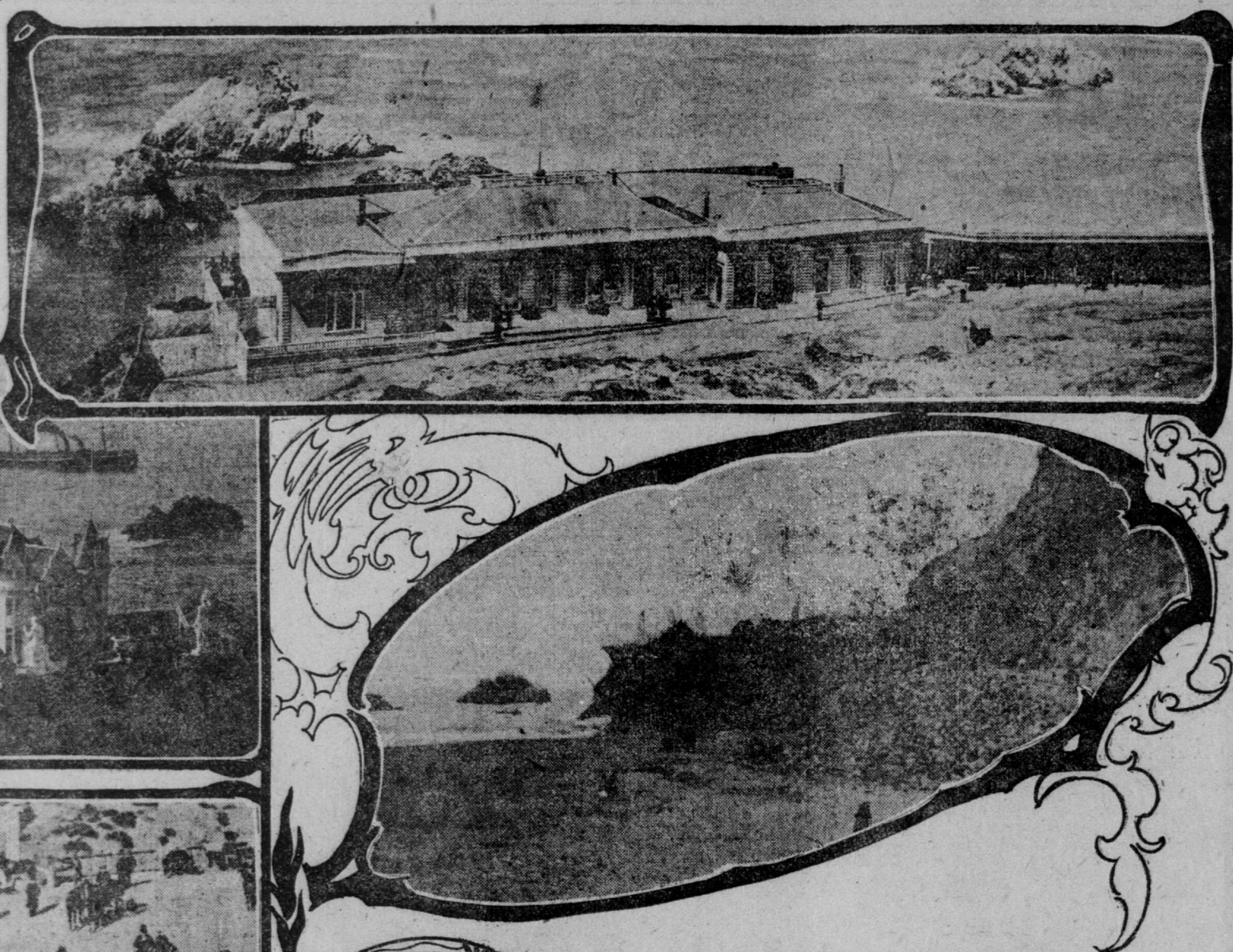
The beach is there yet and the ocean and the seals. People will go out as usual Sundays and gay automobile parties will journey out at night. To all the promontory will look barren without the familiar white structure.

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

S. 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.



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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. He 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, 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 4, 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.

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 he 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.

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.

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.

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."

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 has come to California to complete his education. Foster was proprietor of the old hostelry almost from the time it was built. The building that was destroyed yesterday was built in 1895.

Mrs. Emma J. Merritt, one of the Suto heirs, who owned the Cliff house, said last night that it was too early for her to decide whether or not the old resort would be rebuilt.

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.

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