

0. FIRE! - Story Preface

1. FIRE!

2. 19TH CENTURY FIREFIGHTING

3. WAS IT REALLY THE COW?

4. FIRE IN PESHTIGO: A COINCIDENCE?

5. DEATH IN PESHTIGO

6. PESHTIGO SURVIVORS

7. CHICAGO IN 1871

8. CAUSE AND ORIGIN

9. CHICAGO BURNS

10. A DEVASTATED CITY

11. SHOCKED CITIZENS

12. CIVIL RESTRICTIONS

13. HOLLAND BURNS



Early firefighters had inefficient and primitive equipment. This image depicts an illustration from *Industrial History of the United States, from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time; being a Complete Survey of American Industries ... together with a Description of Canadian Industries*, an 1879 book by Albert Sidney Bolles.

Long before Mrs. O'Leary lived in Chicago, prehistoric man learned how to produce fire. Life on earth changed at that moment. Without fire, civilization wasn't possible. With it, people could live better lives.

But fire - especially man-created firestorms - can produce disasters of monumental proportions. When a wildfire burns completely out of control, even today, the best firefighters can do is hope for low wind and lots of rain.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, before fire engines were invented, firefighters used buckets and shovels to combat encroaching flames. This image, from [Boston Fire Historical Society](#), depicts the personal bucket which John Rowe (a Boston firefighter) used in 1760.



Early versions of American fire engines were imported from London (a city devastated by the Great Fire of 1666). Boston, prompted by a disastrous 1679 fire, formed the first paid fire-fighting department and imported the colonies' initial engine. New York City had the new equipment by 1731.

Fire steam engines, a huge help for New York, were available in 1841. But early equipment broke down. Precious time was wasted just trying to set it up. Early steamers were pulled by horses who couldn't travel as fast as they were needed.

During the 1860s, Civil War fire engines (follow the link to view an 1865 version) were primitive. By 1870, the year before the Great Fires, a "good steam fire-engine" could throw 1200 gallons of water 200 feet in one minute. (*Manufacturer and Builder*; Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 1870. Scroll down to pages 305-306.)

But even along the shore of a great lake, water wasn't enough for 19th century firefighters to stop a spreading conflagration pushed along by cyclonic winds.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FIRE-Great-Fire-of-1871>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FIRE-Great-Fire-of-1871>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Do Unintended Consequences and Technological Breakthroughs Have in Common?

When mankind learned how to produce fire, unintended consequences - like massive man-caused conflagrations - followed. One such massive fire occurred in Chicago during the early fall of 1871.

Technological achievements are similar. They help to make our lives better, but sometimes they produce unexpected consequences. What are some of the recent technology achievements which have caused unexpected consequences?

Were the consequences predictable? Why, or why not?

Media Stream



1760 Fire Bucket

Boston Fire Historical Society.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/1760-Fire-Bucket>



Fire Engine - 1865 Version

Photo online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Fire-Engine-1865-Version>

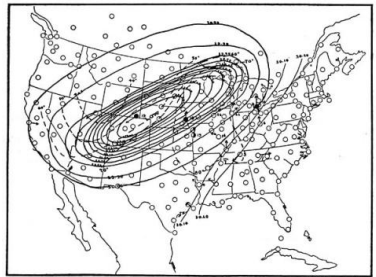


Fire Steamers - Early Equipment

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Fire-Steamers-Early-Equipment>



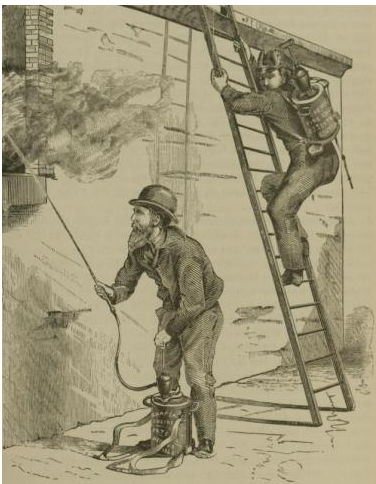
Cyclonic Winds - Chicago's Great Fire of 1871

Map of wind velocity, during the Great Fire of 1871, online courtesy Chicago Historical Society.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Cyclonic-Winds-Chicago-s-Great-Fire-of-1871>

This U.S. Weather Bureau map, prepared from reports made by U.S. Army Signal Service observers at 5:30 p.m. Central Standard time, October 3, 1871, shows the course of the cyclonic storm that prevailed on the day of the Chicago and Peabody fires.



FIRE!

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/FIRE->



London's Great Fire of 1666 - Pt 2

Clip from "Peter Ackroyd's London," online courtesy BBC's WorldWide Channel at YouTube. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/London-s-Great-Fire-of-1666-Pt-2>