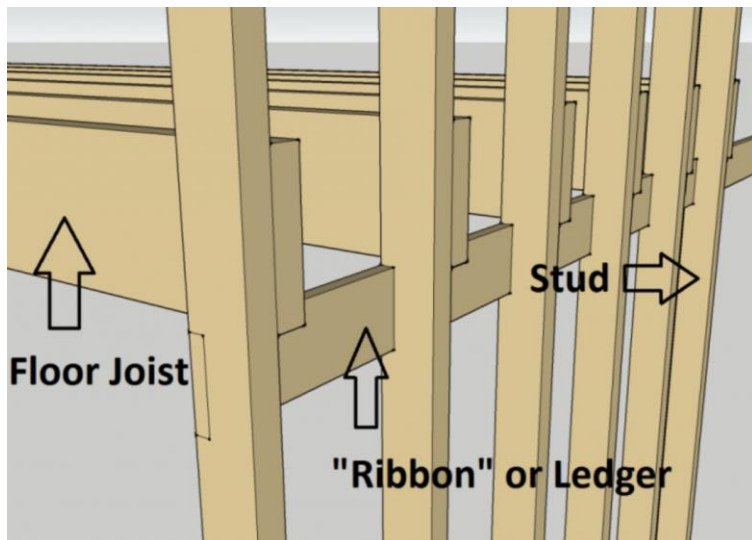




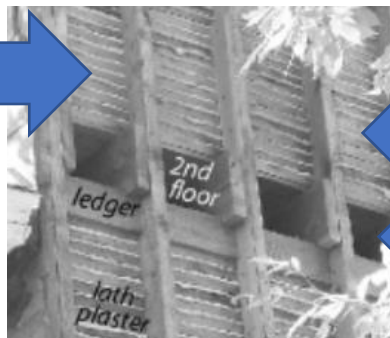
# Training Bulletin

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TB 2023-14

## Balloon frame building construction



Unobstructed vertical void space



Wood lath & plaster walls

Large horizontal void space

- Balloon frame construction (1830 – 1920) is the majority of Cambridge housing stock.
- Open structural void from cellar to attic results in rapid vertical fire spread. Fire can travel up as well as drop down.
- Fire above the ceiling can spread horizontally into an outside wall and then spread rapidly vertically.
- Uses full dimensional lumber, thereby can normally sustain a lot of fire damage prior to failing.
- Brick or stone foundation is an indicator of balloon frame construction.

Contributing source - Chief Kenneth Galligan retired Brockton FD/Instructor Mass Fire Academy  
Submit a potential Training Bulletin topic via email to: [Training@cambridgefire.org](mailto:Training@cambridgefire.org)