

State of Iowa
1928

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL
Des Moines, Iowa, January 31, 1928.
STATE FIRE MARSHAL
FOR THE YEAR 1927

JOHN W. STROHM
State Fire Marshal

Published by
THE STATE OF IOWA
Des Moines

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Des Moines, Iowa, January 31, 1928.

HON. JOHN HAMMILL, *Governor of Iowa.*

SIR: In compliance with the provisions of law I have the honor to submit herewith the Seventeenth Annual Report of the affairs of this office covering the period beginning January 1, 1927, and ending December 31, 1927, both dates included.

The first six months of this year were under the supervision of Mr. J. A. Tracy, then State Fire Marshal.

JOHN W. STROHM,
State Fire Marshal.

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State Fire Marshal

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ANNUAL REPORT OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL
FOR YEAR 1927

NUMBER OF FIRES REPORTED AND TOTALING A LOSS OF \$2,112,176 OVER THE YEAR 1926, A REDUCTION OF 921 FIRES AND \$4,312,241 OVER 1925.

The very considerable reduction in the number of fires and the loss of property is due to the fact that the fire department has been more successful in its efforts to prevent fires than in the past. This is due to the fact that the fire department has been more successful in its efforts to prevent fires than in the past.

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Appointed by the Governor. Term, Four Years. Expires July 1, 1931.

Office	Name	Legal Residence	Birthplace
Fire Marshal	John W. Strohm	Clinton	Iowa
Deputy	Wm. R. Blake	Clermont	Illinois
Assistant Deputy	Sam R. Starr	Dubuque	Illinois
Assistant Deputy	G. G. Shanafelt	Sigourney	Iowa
Stenographer and Clerk	Margaret E. Wing	Des Moines	Iowa

The entire expense of the State Fire Marshal's office is paid out of the general revenues of the state.

ANNUAL REPORT OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

FOR YEAR 1927

NUMBER OF FIRES REPORTED 5,197, TOTALING A LOSS OF \$7,211,831; A REDUCTION OF 468 FIRES AND \$722,176 OVER THE YEAR 1926; A REDUCTION OF 921 FIRES AND \$2,512,651 OVER 1925.

This very commendable reduction in the number of fires and loss was the result of several contributing factors: Inspections have removed many fire hazards and investigations have diminished the number of suspicious fires; education in fire prevention has taught people that fire loss is a total waste that can not be replaced; publicity of fire prevention is mentioned elsewhere in this report. Our progress in fire prevention can be measured by the reduction of fires and losses. It can be safely stated that fully 85 per cent of all fires are preventable, caused by carelessness or indifference, so it appears that the only hope of cutting down this criminal ash heap is through a continuous campaign of education by application and publicity. Too much publicity can not be had in keeping before the public the necessity of daily fire prevention activities.

A large per cent, or 377 of the 468 less fires in 1927 came from the eighteen largest cities of the state. The loss in these cities was \$1,029,778 less than in 1926. As the loss was only \$722,176 less throughout the entire state, the loss outside the eighteen cities during 1927 was \$307,602 more than it was in 1926, with 91 fewer fires. In the eighteen cities the average loss for each fire in 1926 was \$1,000.17 while in 1927 it was reduced to \$757.80.

As in former years sparks from flues lead in the causes of fires with a total of 1,683 and a loss of \$806,798 as compared with 1,859 and a loss of \$731,664 in 1926. The greatest loss of property was farm dwellings at \$1,403,078 with town dwellings a close second at \$1,331,875. Defective flues caused a property loss of \$445,231 as compared with \$503,391 in 1926.

Attention is again called to the great number of fires caused by match and smokers carelessness. Smokers carelessness cost \$78,480, match carelessness \$31,452, children playing with matches \$17,413, a total of \$127,345.

Losses on the farm were again heavy in 1927. The largest were: dwellings \$1,403,078, barns \$625,452, corn cribs and granaries

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Reported by the Governor, Term Four Years, Expires July 1, 1931

Division	Loss	Name	Address
Fire	1,234,567	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	987,654	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	876,543	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	765,432	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	654,321	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	543,210	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	432,109	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	321,098	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	210,987	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	109,876	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	98,765	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	87,654	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	76,543	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	65,432	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	54,321	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	43,210	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	32,109	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	21,098	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	10,987	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	9,876	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	8,765	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	7,654	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	6,543	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	5,432	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	4,321	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	3,210	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	2,109	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	1,098	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	987	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	876	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	765	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	654	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	543	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	432	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	321	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	210	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	109	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	98	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	87	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	76	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	65	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	54	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	43	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	32	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	21	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	10	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	9	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	8	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	7	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	6	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	5	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	4	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	3	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	2	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.
Fire	1	John W. Smith	123 Main St., Chicago, Ill.

The entire expense of the State Fire Marshal's office is paid out of the general revenues of the state.

\$27,015. Spontaneous combustion in hay and straw totaled a loss of \$228,108.

Lightning fire losses reported were as follows: Property not rodded \$152,652, rodded \$44,900. Included in the latter amount is one dwelling valued at \$29,000.

During 1927 there was an average of a few more than fourteen fires for every day of the year causing an average daily loss of nearly \$1,978—quite a large invisible tax assessed to the people of Iowa.

We ask you to read this report carefully, especially Tables II and III.

STRUCTURES IN WHICH THE MOST DISASTROUS FIRES OCCURRED

Dwellings—Farm	481	\$1,403,078
Dwellings—Town	2,698	1,331,875
Stores	263	1,047,210
Barns—Farm	287	625,452
Factories, various kinds	34	359,608
Warehouses and storage	60	320,120
Elevator and seed houses	14	241,990
Lumber yards	9	233,042
Mills—feed, flour, planing, etc.	6	230,760
Houses, apartments	103	147,057
Barns—Town	125	143,889
Garages—Public	50	122,631
Schools	29	117,469
Churches	23	108,680
Garages—Private	189	73,844
Banks	7	64,085

CAUSES SHOWING THE GREATEST LOSS BY FIRES

Unknown	877	\$2,964,126
Sparks from flues on wooden shingles	1,683	806,798
Defective flues	342	445,231
Defective electric wiring	155	410,730
Defective and overheated heating plants	216	363,202
Adjoining	293	318,090
Defective oil and gasoline stoves	150	233,287
Spontaneous combustion—hay	58	228,108
Spontaneous combustion—coal, dust, etc.	18	208,745
Lightning—no rods	81	152,652
Ashes and coals against wood	47	117,504
Miscellaneous	81	107,297

LARGEST FIRES OCCURRING DURING 1927, LOSS \$75,000 OR OVER

Mason City—January	\$ 200,000
Malvern—August	150,000
Cedar Rapids—	
January	144,664
December	124,214
Moravia—March	115,000
Marshalltown—December	90,000
Fonda—January	77,000

DEATHS FROM FIRES

In 1927 there were 74 deaths reported as a direct result of fire. Of this number 31 were men, 26 were women and 17 were children. The Registrar of Vital Statistics of the State Board of Health rendered very valuable assistance in compiling this list.

A COMPARISON OF FIRE LOSSES BY MONTHS FOR 1926 AND 1927

	1926		1927	
	No. Fires	Loss	No. Fires	Loss
January	727	\$ 945,791	768	\$ 978,753
February	573	1,511,959	600	775,341
March	744	893,690	509	710,692
April	818	650,189	342	431,034
May	454	580,639	328	439,932
June	300	332,883	218	315,278
July	328	784,592	364	496,427
August	244	383,729	284	743,214
September	225	352,113	275	404,920
October	298	353,369	324	396,706
November	365	380,799	435	409,206
December	589	814,254	750	1,110,328
Total	5,665	\$ 7,984,007	5,197	\$ 7,211,831

A COMPARISON OF THE LOSSES IN EIGHTEEN LARGEST CITIES IN IOWA IN 1926 AND 1927

	1926		1927	
	No. Fires	Loss	No. Fires	Loss
Burlington	34	\$ 16,488	59	\$ 17,613
Cedar Rapids	187	141,804	144	313,663
Clinton	160	33,850	122	43,866
Council Bluffs	202	1,003,422	211	142,332
Davenport	221	476,443	186	92,534
Des Moines	670	387,597	599	255,592
Dubuque	120	55,744	100	43,448
Fort Madison	42	75,411	44	37,748
Fort Dodge	116	108,516	82	41,817
Iowa City	58	102,941	39	18,276
Keokuk	79	14,766	106	91,690
Marshalltown	120	24,201	78	113,141
Mason City	66	87,474	65	308,152
Muscatine	59	31,033	64	15,139
Oskaloosa	32	76,703	17	43,339
Ottumwa	156	84,419	109	81,415
Sioux City	451	172,774	405	227,722
Waterloo	223	120,881	189	97,202
Total	2,996	\$ 3,014,467	2,619	\$ 1,984,689

FIRE PREVENTION VERY EFFECTIVE

Fire Prevention Week in Iowa this year was most successful and undoubtedly surpassed all previous prevention weeks in effectiveness. This was due largely to the splendid and efficient cooperation rendered by fire departments, the press, pulpit, schools,

civic organizations, the radio, etc. Individually and collectively these all worked untiringly and placed no limit upon their activities in helping to make life and property safe from fire.

Fire is a friend and foe alike. For every fire that is uncontrollable and destructive there are a thousand fires subservient to man, his demands and wishes. Fire creates energy and destroys that which energy creates; it works for man and destroys the works of man. Thereby is a vicious cycle established, and as long as man needs fire he must suffer from its destructive ravages. The servant often turns master and the master becomes slave. Fire prevention should be the self-imposed task of every citizen in order to save life and conserve our material wealth. This is not an obligation that we should observe merely for a single, specified week but it should be among our foremost activities throughout the entire year.

It has been wisely said that:

Fire prevention is not a science; it is sense.

There is no mystery about it; no difficult rules or restrictions.

If there are no fires, there are no fires—that is all there is to it.

Fires are gluttons and need food. If the food is taken away the fires starve.

Dirt, debris, junk, cobwebs, dust, old papers, rags, oily waste, etc., are all in the bill of fare for the Red Demon. If these are taken from the menu there is but a blank page left.

Eighty-five per cent of all fires (and this is a very conservative estimate) can be prevented by eliminating the unnecessary fire causes.

Then why not remove them?

No one unless he be an arsonist, wants a fire; and material burned is gone forever.

If 85 per cent or more of all fires can be prevented, why not prevent them and save over \$500,000,000 per annum?

Slovenliness breeds carelessness, and carelessness breeds fire.

Why then be slovenly?

Carelessness is the most costly habit we have, and there is no sense or reason for it.

As a result, hundreds of precious lives and millions in property are lost, and the cure for these awful ills lies in preventing fires.

Think it over!

IOWA STATE FIRE PREVENTION ASSOCIATION

One of the most potential and noticeable influences instrumental in making fire prevention a pronounced reality throughout the state

the past year was the Iowa State Fire Prevention Association. The benefits derived from the work of this association cannot be correctly estimated; constantly on the job, with specific drives in certain localities they have done much towards making Iowa safe from fire.

HERE IS THE ASSOCIATION'S INSPECTION REPORT FOR 1927

(Note the large number of defects and the recommendations made.)

Town	No. Inspections	No. Defects	No. Recommendations	People Addressed
Muscatine	414	358	1,293	3,240
Columbus Junction	92	81	377	552
Emmetsburg	127	122	595	1,240
Belmond	99	96	506	910
Council Bluffs	584	509	2,224	7,872
Keokuk	441	400	2,124	2,630
Newton	164	156	821	1,507
Totals	1,921	1,724	7,940	17,951

Of the 1,921 places inspected nearly 90 per cent were found to be defective, requiring a total of 7,940 recommendations.

Add to the 17,951 addressed during the above inspections the thousands reached through the mediums of the press, pulpit, radio and schools of the state and you can readily get some idea of the full scope of fire prevention activity. The publicity was greatly augmented this year by Iowa radio stations by adding something regarding fire prevention to their programs during the week of October 9th to 15th. We greatly appreciate the enthusiastic co-operation extended, not only during the Fire Prevention Week, but during all the year.

FIRE DRILLS IN SCHOOLS

There is absolutely no criterion from which to calculate the priceless value of fire drills in our schools. Children well trained to meet fire emergencies may prevent many heartbreaking tragedies. Our school children cannot be too efficiently trained—order means safety, panic means danger. Panic alone is oftentimes responsible for deaths, the fire itself proves to be of slight proportions. Let's keep Iowa free from any loss of children in our schools.

In addition to fire drills, fire prevention should be taught regularly in every private and public school.

Fire loss is one of the greatest problems we have to contend with in America today. To prevent fires, the co-operation of the American people is needed, and, as school children are our citizens of tomorrow, they, first of all, should be taught how to prevent fire.

One reason why fire prevention should be taught in our schools

is because of the help the school children can give now, and another reason is the help they will give later when they have become citizens. School children, after they have been taught of the danger of fire, and its loss, can help to prevent it by keeping waste paper, wood, etc., cleared up. Also, the older boys will learn of the risk in throwing matches down along their way.

ONE PLACE WHERE THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT LEAD

Here are some figures that should open our eyes. The average fire loss for each man, woman and child in France is 49c; in England 33c; in Germany 28c; in Austria 25c; in Italy 25c; in Switzerland 15c; and in Holland only 11c.

In 1926 the fire loss in the United States ran close to \$561,000,000—a fire loss greater than any nation ever had suffered before in the history of the world. Today, therefore, the share of this loss borne by every inhabitant of the United States is \$4.75 annually. Compare this with the loss in England of 33c or in France of 49c and you will have some idea of the fast growing American fire loss.

Vienna and Chicago are cities of about the same size. Vienna's fire loss for one year was \$303,200; Chicago's was \$5,513,237, or more than eighteen times as great. Can we be proud of such figures?

OUR DUTY AS AMERICAN CITIZENS

"Who Killed Cock Robin?" is a nursery rhyme we all learned in childhood. It will be remembered that it was quickly discovered that the sparrow with his bow and arrow was guilty. Each figure in the little story willingly undertook a share in the work and considered it his duty to do so.

No such response is made in connection with Fire Prevention. With some self-satisfaction we usually put the blame for a disastrous fire loss on a vague figure called "Carelessness" and then each of us go our well-ordered way without the slightest change in our personal habits or thinking.

We have a duty! A man who has endangered the lives of our friends or relations would be dealt with as a criminal. A man who robbed our country of millions of dollars, impoverishing the country and increasing the tax rate, would meet with deserving punishment.

The man who starts a fire through a heedless acts endangers lives. Fire actually retards the progress of all American life. Our duty as American citizens is not only to treat the "careless" person as an arch-enemy of civilization but to build and design our struc-

tures so that no fires can reach proportions impossible to handle by fire fighting forces. Our duty is more than to give fire prevention a respectful hearing but to think, act and live fire prevention ALL the time.

IOWA FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION AND SHORT COURSE FOR FIREMEN AT AMES COLLEGE

The general public of the state has received a most decided benefit from the harmonious work of the Iowa Firemen's Association and the Short Course for Firemen, by the Iowa State College at Ames.

The coming Fifty-first Annual Convention of the Iowa Firemen's Association will be held at Cresco this year. A program abounding with instruction and entertainment is assured.

The 1927 Short Course for Firemen, at Ames, surpassed all its predecessors in attendance and general benefit derived. There probably is no other short course at Iowa State College as far reaching with so much property directly and indirectly involved as this one for Firemen. Every city and town in the state should by all means send at least one alderman and member of the fire department to above meetings as both feature modern fire fighting and fire prevention methods.

STATISTICAL WORK

The State Fire Marshal's office is the only department or agency in the state engaged in securing and publishing certain data pertaining to fires and fire losses.

During the year 1927 this office made inspections and investigations in practically every county in the state. The investigations resulted in a number of prosecutions, convictions and confessions. The moral effect of all of the investigations has been indeed far reaching and highly beneficial. The inspections have been very general throughout the state and hundreds of fire hazards were removed by reason of these inspections.

All fire chiefs, mayors and township clerks should read the state law as found on another page of this report. Read most especially Sections 1624, 1625 and 1626. All fires should be reported promptly by carefully filling in all blank spaces in report blanks furnished by the State Fire Marshal's office, thus saving unnecessary correspondence. When reports are delayed or not properly made it interferes with the office record work. Co-operation is urged in securing the information the law requires and the transmitting of it to

this office without unnecessary delay. Read the report blank carefully and do not fail to fill in all blank spaces.

ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS

BLACK HAWK COUNTY—Waterloo. About 11:04 P. M. February 13, 1927, fire broke out in a grocery store owned by J. E. Kirkhart at Waterloo, Iowa. On April 13, 1927, Kirkhart was indicted, charged with setting fire to collect heavy insurance. Case is still pending in district court.

BOONE COUNTY—Boone. About 8:45 P. M. May 25, 1927, a fire broke out in a dwelling occupied by Mrs. Effie Lena Cornmesser, 816 Eleventh Street, Boone, Iowa. This building is two stories, two rooms upstairs and four down. In each of these rooms was a banana crate filled with hay and oil soaked. There were also other arson plants. The evidence showed that Mrs. Cornmesser left the premises about 8:15 P. M. and the fire was discovered at 8:45 P. M. and must have been burning for fifteen or twenty minutes. The fire was in the cellarway and did not communicate to any of the dwelling rooms and the plants were found intact. Mrs. Cornmesser had \$1,500 insurance on household goods which was twice or more what they were worth. Mrs. Cornmesser was arrested and waived to the grand jury and gave bonds of \$1,500. The case was tried in district court and Mrs. Cornmesser was convicted.

CRAWFORD COUNTY—Denison. About 10:30 P. M. February 3, 1927, a fire destroyed a barn on the fair grounds containing ten stallions. These horses were insured for \$10,000 in favor of E. Metz of Corning, Iowa. The evidence showed that one Earl Sandiland had been hired by Metz to burn the horses. Sandiland made a written confession and plead guilty in open court and testified against Metz, who was convicted at the May term of court and sentenced to the penitentiary for a period of ten years. Sandiland's case was continued until the September term of court. The case was investigated by the sheriff's office, State Agent H. V. Yackey, fire marshal and insurance agent. Sandiland plead guilty and was sentenced to five years at Fort Madison.

JACKSON COUNTY—Maquoketa. About 11:00 P. M. June 30, 1926, a fire destroyed a garage occupied by A. E. Sprank. It appears that Sprank had four insurance policies on same goods and collected all four policies. During the investigation Sprank admitted that he collected on all four policies covering some of the same goods. Sprank was indicted, plead guilty and was fined \$100. After the fine was paid Sprank returned 65 per cent of the money collected back to the insurance companies.

JEFFERSON COUNTY—Fairfield. About 5:00 P. M. February 27, 1927, a fire destroyed a brick and tile plant at Fairfield, Iowa, owned by A. J. Boyd. The evidence was of such a nature to warrant the same being sent to the County Attorney. The owner was in the penitentiary at Ft. Madison but his son, Roy, had the opportunity to set the fire which would benefit him personally. The owner had no insurance.

LEE COUNTY—Ft. Madison. About 2:30 A. M. January 15, 1927, a fire broke out in a dwelling occupied by Mrs. Nora Perry. There was

plenty of evidence tending to show that the fire was set. There was also heavy overinsurance. The evidence was sent to the County Attorney and the grand jury failed to indict.

MARSHALL COUNTY—Marshalltown. On December 17, 1927, the Sheriff of Marshall County asked this office to help them with an investigation of a fire which occurred December 14, 1927, at about 2:00 A. M. in the garage on the H. A. Lundstrum farm in Saylor Township, Marshall County, Iowa. Our investigation led to a confession from Dale Lundstrum, an adopted son, that he set the fire but that it was done accidentally.

O'BRIEN COUNTY—Sanborn. About 3:20 A. M. May 1, 1927, a fire destroyed the Princess Theatre occupied by Walter Lynch. The evidence was such that it was sent to the County Attorney for prosecution, Lynch being suspected of setting the fire. Motive, insurance.

POWESHIEK COUNTY—Searsboro. About 5:00 A. M. February 16, 1927, a fire destroyed several buildings at Searsboro, Iowa, the fire having started in a butcher shop owned by Ernest Burrows. During the investigation Burrows was arrested, charged with setting the fire. Burrows waived and the grand jury failed to indict.

RINGGOLD COUNTY—Mt. Ayr. About 9:30 P. M. May 15, 1927, fire destroyed a barn owned by Homer Case and a short time later a fire destroyed two barns owned by Mike McGraw. Baley Morss was picked up and suspected of setting the fire for revenge. He was held to the grand jury, the county attorney filing a county attorney indictment later and on June 21, 1927, Morss was adjudged insane and sent to Anamosa as a criminally insane person.

SAC COUNTY—Odebolt. About 7:00 A. M. December 30, 1926, a fire broke out in a dwelling at Odebolt, Iowa, where W. J. Ahlberg had household goods in store. This house was set on fire with gasoline in great quantities. Ahlberg had \$2,050 insurance on goods. The evidence obtained was very strong against Ahlberg and he admitted that he had perjured himself in this case. On January 27, 1927, H. B. Carlson, Deputy Sheriff of Polk County, also a son-in-law of Ahlberg, filed information in Sac County against Ahlberg for insanity. He was adjudged insane and sent to Cherokee and was soon thereafter released.

WAPELLO COUNTY—Ottumwa. On April 24, 1927, about 8:20 P. M. a fire occurred in a dwelling occupied by H. H. Winchell at 316 South College Street, Ottumwa, Iowa. Winchell had \$1,800 insurance on household goods which was a thousand to twelve hundred dollars more than the goods were worth. The fire was started with coal oil and when the firemen arrived the coal oil was dripping from the attic down on the first floor. The evidence warranted us in sending it to the County Attorney for prosecution. The grand jury failed to indict. The same Winchell was tried in 1923 for setting a store on fire at Bucknell, Iowa. After a hard trial Winchell was acquitted.

WOODBURY COUNTY—Sioux City. About 10:40 P. M. February 1, 1927, fire broke out in a refrigerator car and a box car in the Sioux City

yards. During the investigation by this department and the Sioux City police, Frank Beckner and Roy Grover admitted setting the fire. Beckner plead guilty and was sent to Anamosa for ten years. Grover plead guilty and was sent to Eldora until of age.

TABLE NO. I

Showing the Total Number of Fires reported by Counties. Cities of more than 10,000 are set out separately. Damage to Buildings and Contents is combined.

Counties and Cities of 10,000 and Over	No. of Fires	Loss
Adair	23	\$ 38,595
Adams	11	29,670
Allamakee	24	39,501
Appanoose	44	189,760
Audubon	13	52,863
Benton	28	51,271
Black Hawk—Waterloo	189	97,202
Bal. Black Hawk Co.	32	77,220
Boone	57	122,470
Bremer	16	17,555
Buchanan	29	45,791
Buena Vista	15	15,862
Butler	19	45,059
Calhoun	18	16,513
Carroll	33	23,964
Cass	37	67,539
Cedar	25	40,227
Cerro Gordo—Mason City	65	308,152
Bal. Cerro Gordo Co.	9	6,989
Cherokee	27	33,154
Chickasaw	18	67,782
Clarke	19	53,255
Clay	21	49,760
Clayton	22	59,179
Clinton—Clinton	122	43,866
Bal. Clinton Co.	25	66,300
Crawford	19	31,409
Dallas	23	61,711
Davis	17	25,780
Decatur	55	96,621
Delaware	19	22,778
Des Moines—Burlington	59	17,613
Bal. Des Moines Co.	20	52,080
Dickinson	14	63,805
Dubuque—Dubuque	100	43,448
Bal. Dubuque Co.	16	47,910
Emmet	7	7,544
Fayette	42	62,477
Floyd	36	18,832
Franklin	19	21,545
Fremont	25	43,998
Greene	29	25,087
Grundy	20	34,813
Guthrie	28	51,595
Hamilton	22	39,288
Hancock	23	33,358
Hardin	45	47,134
Harrison	54	51,712
Henry	19	87,001

Counties and Cities of 10,000 and Over	No. of Fires	Loss
Howard	37	86,930
Humboldt	10	20,229
Ida	7	14,535
Iowa	27	38,494
Jackson	20	47,816
Jasper	50	69,656
Jefferson	41	44,869
Johnson—Iowa City	39	18,276
Bal. Johnson Co.	23	49,927
Jones	11	29,757
Keokuk	41	70,556
Kossuth	22	19,852
Lee—Ft. Madison	44	37,748
Keokuk	106	91,690
Bal. Lee Co.	6	11,400
Linn—Cedar Rapids	144	313,663
Bal. Linn Co.	11	17,189
Louisa	23	92,388
Lucas	31	33,260
Lyon	16	19,813
Madison	20	47,773
Mahaska—Oskaloosa	17	43,339
Bal. Mahaska Co.	32	101,790
Marion	34	83,225
Marshall—Marshalltown	78	113,141
Bal. Marshall Co.	17	34,868
Mills	14	174,390
Mitchell	18	19,754
Monona	22	25,063
Monroe	35	89,160
Montgomery	45	38,366
Muscatine—Muscatine	64	15,139
Bal. Muscatine Co.	23	28,605
O'Brien	28	50,976
Osceola	8	6,211
Page	66	26,098
Palo Alto	16	25,289
Plymouth	36	62,865
Pocahontas	13	137,294
Polk—Des Moines	599	255,592
Bal. Polk Co.	40	75,114
Pottawattamie—Council Bluffs	211	142,332
Bal. Pottawattamie Co.	25	81,341
Poweshiek	47	50,950
Ringgold	25	41,797
Scott—Davenport	186	92,534
Bal. Scott Co.	16	45,345
Sac	22	44,385
Shelby	27	79,433
Sioux	26	143,387
Story	79	50,252
Tama	32	141,851
Taylor	24	37,509
Union	38	125,594
Van Buren	29	44,577
Wapello—Ottumwa	109	81,415
Bal. Wapello Co.	31	91,640
Warren	30	34,352
Washington	21	73,729
Wayne	26	91,402
Webster—Ft. Dodge	82	41,817

Counties and Cities of 10,000 and Over	No. of Fires	Loss
Bal. Webster Co.....	10	31,665
Winnebago	12	11,847
Winneshiek	25	50,335
Woodbury—Sioux City	405	227,722
Bal. Woodbury Co.....	35	55,142
Worth	10	31,270
Wright	28	39,070
Total	5,197	\$ 7,211,831

TABLE II

Showing the kind of property destroyed. Damage to buildings and contents set out separately.

	No. of Fires	Damage to Buildings	Damage to Contents
Auto top and tire shops.....	12	\$ 2,490	\$ 11,813
Autos and trucks.....	136	23,468	675
Awnings	14	658	0
Bakeries	15	6,603	7,571
Banks	7	43,835	20,250
Barns—Farms	287	440,355	185,097
Town	125	93,420	50,469
Battery stations	3	17,050	7,150
Railway box cars, etc.....	24	6,213	5,493
Chicken brooders and poultry houses..	48	13,914	10,240
Churches	23	97,060	11,620
Cleaning and dyeing.....	25	5,624	14,801
Corn cribs and granaries.....	18	13,857	13,158
Dance halls	4	14,300	121
Dwellings—Farm	481	981,290	421,788
Town	2,698	1,004,669	327,206
Elevators and seed houses.....	14	145,458	96,532
Engine and boiler rooms.....	8	1,675	500
Factories, various kinds.....	34	89,440	270,168
Filling stations and oil storage.....	22	6,653	8,400
Foundries	6	1,783	1,625
Funeral homes	8	330	538
Garages—Private	169	37,575	36,269
Public	50	59,638	62,993
Hog houses	4	2,300	1,133
Hospitals	4	3,169	750
Hotels	41	52,463	9,538
Houses, apartments	103	94,862	52,195
Ice houses	10	20,315	8,100
Junk yards	6	1,965	4,725
Laundries	11	1,194	1,084
Lodge halls	17	12,568	9,123
Lumber yards	9	78,294	154,748
Mills, feed, flour, planing, etc.....	6	87,712	143,048
Old peoples' homes.....	3	1,405	285
Office and office buildings.....	44	13,747	5,148
Packing plants and stock yards.....	10	2,985	1,135
Pool halls	16	12,920	18,985
Post offices	3	2,180	0
Printing plants	7	2,158	1,010
Restaurants	53	16,030	18,621
Schools	29	110,823	6,646
Sheds—Coal and wood.....	52	9,555	2,382
Machine	24	8,654	25,523
Shops various kinds.....	96	25,184	24,744

	No. of Fires	Damage to Buildings	Damage to Contents
Stores	263	448,428	598,782
Summer kitchens	19	2,403	1,917
Theatres	25	58,755	32,242
Warehouses and storage.....	60	196,672	123,448
Miscellaneous	51	23,158	4,785
Total	5,197	\$ 4,397,257	\$ 2,814,574
Grand total			\$ 7,211,831

TABLE NO. III

Containing a summary of the origin of the various fires reported, the number of each, and the total damage to the buildings and contents, for the year 1927.

Causes	No. of Fires	Loss
Adjoining	293	\$ 318,090
Ashes and coals against wood.....	47	117,504
Automobile backfire	50	12,277
Blow and oil torches.....	28	20,249
Bonfires and rubbish.....	101	45,563
Brooder lamps and stoves.....	46	17,588
Candle, lamp and lantern carelessness.....	32	35,117
Children playing with matches.....	82	17,413
Cleaning with gasoline	27	9,302
Clothing and bedding near stoves and pipes.....	21	3,608
Curtains blowing into flames.....	7	364
Defective auto wiring.....	81	36,713
Defective electric wiring.....	155	410,730
Defective electric appliances.....	40	30,712
Defective fireplaces	7	1,865
Defective flues	342	445,231
Defective and overheated heating plants.....	216	363,202
Defective oil burners (domestic).....	39	65,772
Defective oil and gasoline stoves.....	150	233,287
Defective pipes to stoves.....	87	20,878
Electric iron with current left on.....	26	3,767
Films	10	6,265
Fireworks	19	22,089
Friction	4	56,010
Fumigation	3	100
Gasoline and volatile oil explosion.....	56	76,707
Grease, paint, tar, boiling over.....	29	11,008
Incendiary	45	47,603
Lightning—no rods	81	152,652
Lightning—rodded	6	44,900
Lightning running in on radio wires.....	1	15
Match carelessness	73	31,452
Smokers' Carelessness	154	78,480
Smoking meat	4	388
Sparks from engine and locomotives.....	21	86,643
Sparks from flues on wooden shingles.....	1,683	806,798
Spontaneous combustion:		
Coal, dust, etc.....	18	208,745
Hay and straw.....	58	228,108
Rags and rubbish.....	57	57,224
Shavings and sawdust	5	1,710
Static electricity	2	1,665

Thawing water pipes.....	20	6,099
Unknown	877	2,964,126
Using gasoline and kerosene to start fires.....	13	6,515
Miscellaneous	81	107,297
Total	5,197	\$ 7,211,831

Law Relating to the Duties and Powers of the State Fire Marshal

BEING CHAPTER 80 OF THE CODE OF IOWA 1927

1619. **Appointment—term—vacancy.** The governor shall, with the approval of the senate, appoint every four years a state fire marshal, whose term of office shall be four years and begin on the first day of July following the appointment. If any appointment, original or to fill a vacancy, is made when the senate is not in session, it shall be acted upon at the next session thereof, and in such case the appointee shall perform the duties of the office till such appointment is acted upon by the senate. His office shall be at the seat of government and he shall devote his entire time to the duties thereof.

1620. **Removal.** The governor may remove the fire marshal at any time for cause, and appoint another for the unexpired term.

1621. **Appointment of deputy.** The fire marshal may appoint, with the approval of the executive council, one deputy who shall have the same qualifications as the marshal.

1622. **Duties of deputy.** During the absence or inability of the fire marshal or a vacancy in that office, the deputy shall perform the duties of the fire marshal.

1623. **Expenses.** The fire marshal and his deputy and assistants shall be entitled to their necessary traveling and hotel expenses while away from the city of Des Moines. The fire marshal may contract other necessary expenses in the performance of his official duties, but shall not exceed the amount appropriated for the support of his department.

1624. **Investigation of causes of fires—duties of city and other officers.** The state fire marshal, his deputy or inspectors, shall immediately investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of every fire occurring within the state, when so requested by any official mentioned in this section, or the sheriff, deputy sheriff, or county attorney of any county. The chief of the fire department of every city, town, or village in which a fire department is established, the mayor of every town or city in which no fire department exists, and the township clerk of every township, outside the limits of any city, town, or village, shall investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of every fire occurring in such city, town, village, or township by which property has been destroyed or damaged, and whether such fire was the result of carelessness or design.

1625. **Time for investigation—report.** The state fire marshal shall have the right to supervise and direct such investigation when notified as above provided. The officer making investigation of fires occurring in cities, villages, towns, or townships, shall forthwith notify said fire marshal, and shall within one week of the occurrence of the fire furnish to the said fire marshal a written statement of all facts relating to the

cause and origin of the fire and such other information as may be called for by the blanks provided by said fire marshal.

1626. Refusal of officer to investigate—penalty. Any chief of a fire department, mayor, or township clerk who fails or refuses to make the investigation and report required of him, shall be fined in a sum not less than five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars.

1627. Record of fires. The fire marshal shall keep in his office a record of all fires occurring in the state, showing the name of the owners, name or names of occupants of the property at the time of the fire, the sound value of the property, the amount of insurance thereon, the total amount of insurance collected, the total amount of loss to the property owner, together with all the facts, statistics, and circumstances, including the origin of the fire, which may be determined by the investigation. Such record shall at all times be open to public inspection.

1628. Testimony under oath. The fire marshal or his deputy or inspectors shall, when in their opinion further investigation is necessary, take or cause to be taken the testimony under oath of all persons supposed to have knowledge of any facts, or to have means of knowledge in relation to the matter in which an examination is herein required to be made, and shall cause the same to be reduced to writing.

1629. Oaths—attendance of witnesses—books and papers. The fire marshal and his deputy or inspectors shall each have power in any county in the state to administer an oath and compel the attendance of witnesses before them, or either of them, to testify in relation to any matter which is by the provisions of this chapter a subject of inquiry and investigation, and may require the production of any books, papers, or documents necessary for such investigation.

1630. Refusal to testify or produce books or papers. Any witness who refuses to be sworn, or refuses to testify, except as otherwise provided by law, or who disobeys any lawful order of said fire marshal, his deputy or inspectors, or who fails to produce any books, papers, or documents touching any matter under examination, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be fined not exceeding one hundred dollars or imprisoned in the county jail not exceeding thirty days.

1631. Crimes in connection with fires—arrest. If the fire marshal or his deputy shall be of the opinion that there is evidence sufficient to charge any person with the crime of arson, or with attempt to commit the crime of arson, or of conspiracy to defraud, or criminal conduct in connection with such fire, he or they shall cause such person to be arrested and charged with the offense, or either of them, and shall furnish to the proper county attorney all such evidence, together with the names of witnesses and all of the information obtained, including a copy of all matter and testimony taken in the case.

1632. Authority to enter and inspect buildings. The state fire marshal and his deputy or inspectors and all officers upon whom the duty of inspection is enjoined by this chapter, or either of them, shall have authority in the performance of the duties imposed by the provisions

of this chapter, to enter upon, or examine any buildings, or premises adjoining or near the same, for the purpose of inspecting the same and the contents thereof.

1633. Removal or repair. When the fire marshal or his deputy shall find any building or structure, which for want of proper repair or by reason of age and dilapidated condition, is especially liable to fire, and is so situated as to endanger other buildings or property therein, or when any such official shall find in any building or upon any premises combustible or explosive matter or inflammable materials dangerous to the safety of any buildings or premises, he shall in writing order the same to be removed or remedied and such order shall be complied with by the owner or occupant of said building or premises, within such reasonable time as the fire marshal shall specify.

1634. Review of order by fire marshal. Any owner, lessee, or occupant of a building may, within five days after an order is issued for the removal, destruction, or repair thereof, or the removal of the contents thereof or the change of any other conditions, file with the fire marshal a petition for a review of such order. Thereupon the marshal shall fix a place which shall be within the county where the property is situated, and a time, for such review, which shall be not less than three nor more than ten days after the filing of such petition, and notify the petitioner thereof.

1635. Hearing on review. The marshal shall hear the evidence both for and against said order and may affirm, modify, or revoke such order according to the facts presented at such hearing, and make record of his findings and final order.

1636. Appeal to district court. Any owner, lessee, or occupant of a building may appeal to the district court of the county where such building is located from a final order of the fire marshal requiring the removal, destruction, or repair of such building, or the removal of any of its contents, or changing of its condition in any other respect, within thirty days from the delivery to such person of a copy of such final order.

1637. How appeal taken. Such appeal shall be taken by filing in the office of the fire marshal notice of such appeal, specifying the order appealed from and the court and term thereof to which the appeal is taken, accompanied by a bond in the penal sum of one hundred dollars with sureties approved by the clerk of said court, conditioned to pay all costs that shall be adjudged against appellant and abide the decree, judgment, and order of the court.

1638. How tried—trial term. Said appeal shall be tried in equity and the first term shall be the trial term, and if filed in term time shall be triable at any time after the filing of the transcript. The court may affirm, modify, or revoke the order from which the appeal is taken.

1639. Transcript—how appeal entitled. Forthwith after notice of appeal is filed in the office of the fire marshal, he shall make or cause to be made a certified transcript of the proceedings on review before him, including the order appealed from, notice of appeal, bond and all

documentary evidence filed in the proceeding and transmit the same to the clerk of said court who shall docket said appeal and entitle it in the name of the appellant against the state of Iowa.

1640. **County attorney to represent state.** The county attorney shall represent the state and the fire marshal, but not to the exclusion of any other attorney who may be engaged in said cause.

1641. **Appeal to supreme court.** Either party may appeal from a judgment or order of the district court within the time and in the manner provided by law for appeals in ordinary actions.

1642. **Suspension of order.** Any order of the fire marshal from which an appeal has been taken to the district or supreme court, shall remain suspended during the pendency of such appeal.

1643. **Costs.** If the appellant fails in the appeal the costs shall be taxed against him, but if the order is revoked or annulled the costs shall be taxed to the state. If the order shall be modified, the court may in its discretion apportion the costs.

1644. **Enforcing decree and judgment.** The court shall issue such mandatory and other writs as shall be necessary to enforce its decree, judgment, or any final order in any such case, and may punish as for contempt of court any refusal to obey the same.

1645. **Appeal exclusive remedy.** Unless appealed from as in this chapter provided, any order made by the fire marshal or his deputy shall be final, and the right of appeal as herein provided shall be the exclusive remedy against the enforcement of such orders.

1646. **Time for compliance with order—penalty.** When no petition of review has been filed or when the fire marshal on review or the court on appeal has affirmed or modified an order for the removal, destruction, or repair of a building, or the removal of any of its contents, or the change of any of its conditions, the owner, lessee, or occupant shall comply with such order within thirty days after the delivery of the same or a copy thereof to him, either personally or by registered letter to his last known address, or by service upon his duly appointed agent. If such owner, lessee, or occupant shall fail to comply with such order he shall be subject to a penalty of ten dollars for each day of failure or neglect after the expiration of said period, which shall be recovered in the name of the state and paid into the treasury of the county where collected.

1647. **Refusal to obey orders—duty of marshal—expense.** If any person fails to comply with a final order of the marshal or his deputy or of a court on appeal and within the time fixed, then such officers are empowered and authorized to cause such building or premises to be repaired, torn down, demolished, materials and all dangerous conditions removed, as the case may be, and at the expense of such person, and if such person within thirty days thereafter fails, neglects, or refuses to repay said officers the expense thereby incurred by them, such officers shall certify said expenses, together with twenty-five per cent penalty thereon, to the auditor of the county in which said property is situated.

1648. **Notice.** Notice of the reasonableness and amount of assessment shall be given in a manner as provided for giving notice in ordinary actions by the marshal or his deputy to the property owner, also notifying the property owner that a hearing thereon shall be had before the auditor of said county on a day not less than ten or more than fifteen days from the date of completed service of notice upon the property owner and if no appeal is taken therefrom to the district court at the time fixed in said notice the auditor shall hear and determine the matter. Any person aggrieved by the order and determination of the auditor may appeal therefrom to the district court of the county by serving notice within twenty days thereafter upon said auditor; and such appeal shall be heard and determined by the court as in cases of appeals from the order of the fire marshal as provided in this chapter.

1649. **Entry of tax.** Said auditor shall enter said expense on the tax records of said county as a special charge against the real estate on which said building is or was situated, if in the name of such person, otherwise as a personal tax against such person, and the same shall be collected as other taxes and, when collected, shall, together with the penalty thereon, be refunded to the fire marshal, and by him paid into the state treasury where it shall be credited to the appropriation for expenses of the fire marshal's office.

1650. **Investigation may be private.** Investigation by or under the direction of the state fire marshal or his deputy or inspectors may in their discretion be private. They may exclude from the place where such investigation is held all persons other than those required to be present, and witnesses may be kept separate from each other and not allowed to communicate with each other until they have been examined.

1651. **Fire drills in public schools—exists unlocked.** It shall be the duty of the state fire marshal and his deputy to require teachers of public and private schools, in all buildings of more than one story, to have at least one fire drill each month, and to require all teachers of such schools, whether occupying buildings of one or more stories, to keep all doors and exists of their respective rooms and buildings unlocked during school hours.

1652. **Bulletin.** The state fire marshal shall prepare a bulletin upon the causes and dangers of fires, arranged in not less than four divisions or chapters, and under the direction of the executive council shall publish and deliver the same to the public schools throughout the state.

1653. **Annual report—publication—distribution.** The state fire marshal shall file with the governor annually, at the time provided by law, a detailed report of his official acts and of the affairs of his office which report shall be published and distributed as the reports of other state officers.

1654. **Fees for fires reported—payment.** There shall be paid to the chief of the fire department, and to mayors of incorporated towns, and to the township clerk of every township, who are by this chapter required to report fires to the state fire marshal, the sum of fifty cents for each fire so reported to the satisfaction of the state fire marshal and in addition

thereto there shall be paid to township clerks mileage at the rate of ten cents per mile for each mile traveled to and from the place of fire. Said allowances shall be paid by the state fire marshal out of any funds appropriated for the use of the office of said state fire marshal.

1655. Annual appropriation for expenses and fees. There is hereby appropriated out of any money in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of seven thousand five hundred dollars annually, or so much thereof as may be necessary for the purpose of paying the expenses and fees authorized by this chapter. The said fire marshal shall keep on file in the office an itemized statement of all expenses incurred by his department.

Every county shall collect and remit to the state fire marshal on the first day of each month the amount of the tax on the value of the real estate owned in such county as is provided in this chapter. The amount of such tax shall be collected as other taxes and when collected shall be paid into the state treasury where it shall be credited to the appropriation for the fire marshal's office.

Investigation may be private investigation by or under the direction of the state fire marshal or his deputy or inspectors may be conducted by private persons. They may exclude from the place where an investigation is held all persons other than those required to be present and witnesses may be kept separate from each other and not allowed to communicate with each other until they have been examined.

It shall be the duty of the state fire marshal and his deputy to require teachers of public schools in all buildings of more than one story to have at least one fire drill each month, and to require all teachers of such schools to keep a record of the names of the pupils who were present at such drills and of the results of the drills.

The state fire marshal shall prepare a biennial report on the condition of the fire service in this state and shall submit the same to the governor. The report shall contain a statement of the number of fires, the amount of property destroyed, the amount of damage done, and the amount of money expended for fire fighting.

The annual report of the state fire marshal shall be published by the state printer at the expense of the state. The report shall be printed in the form of a book and shall be distributed to the several counties of the state.

There shall be a board of fire commissioners in each county, composed of the township clerks and such other persons as may be appointed by the board. The board shall have the duty of supervising the fire service in the county and of reporting to the state fire marshal on the condition of the same.

State of Iowa

1929

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK PROCLAMATION

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

FOR THE YEAR 1928

JOHN W. STROHM

State Fire Marshal

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