

FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 101: 1915 (FIRE-RESISTIVE CONSTRUCTION AND LIFE SAFETY)

By Richard Schulte

Among the resolutions put forth at the nineteenth Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (held in 1915) was a resolution which addressed the issue of fire-resistive construction and life safety. The following is the text of this resolution:

*“(1) The encouragement of fire-resistive building construction through the adoption of improved building codes by all States, Cities and Towns; **the inclusion in such codes of adequate rules for exit facilities based on the occupancy for all buildings, and the general recognition of the fact that although fire-resistive construction is of the greatest possible importance, it is of itself not sufficient.** The lesson of the greatest factory fire of the year is that large industrial buildings, even if built of cement and steel, must be sub-divided by fire walls and must have adequate means of stopping fires in their incipiency.”*

Here we seen the beginning of the realization that occupant fire safety is much more than simply fire resistive-construction. While this seems obvious to us now, it was not so obvious back in the early days of fire protection. In the early days of fire protection, buildings constructed using fire-resistive construction and provided with unenclosed stairs for exits were quite common.

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