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FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 2: THE ORIGINAL SPRINKLER STANDARD COMMITTEE (1897/1898)

By Richard Schulte

The 1897-1900 volume of *NFPA Proceedings* provides a list of the first sprinkler standard committee. The list of the members of this committee is as follows:

“Automatic Sprinklers (Regulations and Devices).

William A. Anderson, Superintendent, New York Board Fire Underwriters, 32 Nassau St., New York City.

S. F. Lawton, Inspector, South Eastern Tariff Association, Atlanta, Ga.

Albert Blauvelt, Inspector, Western Factory Insurance Association, Room 626, Rialto Building, Chicago, Ill.

E. U. Crosby, Underwriters’ Bureau of New England, 93 Water St., Boston, Mass.

W. H. Stratton, Assistant Manager, Factory Insurance Association, Hartford, Conn.”

While the names of these five men are not familiar names, even to those involved in the fire protection field, what is of particular interest is the organizations that employed all five. Each of the members of the original NFPA sprinkler standard committee was involved in the fire insurance industry, in particular organizations formed by stock insurers (*i.e.*, insurance corporations with private investors, as opposed to mutual insurers).

According to the *NFPA Proceedings* (1897-1900 volume), the Articles of Association adopted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) dated Nov. 6, 1896, and amended on May 19, 1897 included the following:

“Active membership shall consist of Stock Fire Insurance Organizations and representatives of such organizations having charge of the improvements and inspection of risks. Annual dues shall be \$10.”

“Associates membership shall consist of individual engaged in the fire insurance business. Annual dues shall be \$5.”

Clearly, the pioneers in the development of modern sprinkler protection for buildings were all from the fire insurance industry-both stock insurers and mutual insurers.

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