

# SCHULTE & ASSOCIATES

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## FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 39: THE NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NFPA-1905 (THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS)

By Richard Schulte

The ninth annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in New York on May 23, 24 and 25, 1905. As was typical, the meeting commenced with an address by the president of the Association. The following is the text of the president's address:

### **“ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT C. A. HEXAMER.**

*Gentlemen—The annual convention of this Association, now in session, marks an epoch in the history of the National Fire Protection Association. The amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws, providing for an extended scope of the work of the Association and for an enlarged and more representative active membership, has had the desired result. An increase of twelve in the number of active members and of 175 in the number of associate members, and a subscribing membership list of 150 are directly traceable to amendments of the Constitution. The Association can now be considered truly a “National” Association and the Standards prepared by the Association should be known as “National Standards”.*

*The report of the Executive Committee, as has been the custom, will give you a summary of the Association work during the past year.*

*The report of the Committee on Devices and Materials will contain a synopsis of the work of that important committee. Tests and examination of the Underwriters' Laboratories have continued and results of same are now made available to the entire active membership by the card system introduced during the year.*

*Under the authority of the National Board of Fire Underwriters Rules, Regulations and Standards of new subjects have been promulgated. The pleasant relations with the National Board have continued and I am assured that the work of the Association continues to meet the approval of that body. The compiling of the Sprinkler Fire Record continues under the supervision of the Committee on Special Hazards. This Committee has also inaugurated a system of reports of fires in unsprinklered manufacturing risks. Fully recognizing the truth of the saying that the first step in the study of fire prevention is a study of fires and their causes, the value of comprehensive reports on fire cannot be overestimated. I trust that the membership, both active and associate, will take an interest in the matter and send in reports to the Committee as freely as possible. I am pleased to report that no great calamity or extensive conflagration, such as was prominently before us as our last annual convention, occurred during the year.*

*The present convention is the ninth in the history of the National Fire Protection Association. When nine years ago the first convention was held in this very room, the proceedings consisted in the reading of the report of the Executive Committee and the Secretary, which latter report at that time and for some years later contained the compilation of sprinkler fires. Five papers on various subjects completed the proceedings which were subsequently published in a pamphlet of about fifty pages. Last year's convention, also held in this room, extended over a period of three days, and the proceedings published filled a book of nearly three hundred pages. This year's convention cannot fail to be of equal importance and will most likely, due to the increased active membership list, greatly exceed in importance our last year's work. The importance of the work of the Association in the line of good practice in construction and protection, with the thought of safe guarding of life and property, always in view, cannot be overestimated. All of you are giving your best thought unreservedly to this work in the interest of the public toward the ultimate end of reducing the enormous annual fire waste of the country.*

*"Pro bono public" would be very fitting motto for this Association.*

*Owing to his illness and absence from the country, the Chairman of Committee cannot present to this meeting as complete a report on Factory Standards as is desired. I would ask the members of this Committee, and of the Sub-Committee to whom special subjects have been referred, to endeavor to present to the convention a year hence some practical results. When I consider how valuable the co-operation of manufacturers of special devices was to the Committee preparing standards for devices, I am led to believe that equally valuable results should be forthcoming if the Sub-committee having in charge the formulation of a specific factory standard would enlist the co-operation of a special Committee of the manufacturers or trade organizations interested. So, for instance, a Committee of this Association co-operating with a Committee of the Breweries' Association, should be able to prepare a Brewery Standard which would be of the greatest value to all concerned. Uniformity in requirements for construction and protection has proved of such great help that those of you who like myself are specially interested in schedule rating, will readily agree to the proposition that factory standards prepared as suggest above, should also prove of great value to all concerned.*

*In closing, I wish to extend to you all a hearty welcome to this our ninth convention. I trust the official delegates of our new active members will feel themselves at home and will freely give us the benefit of their knowledge and advice during our deliberations.*

*The work of the Association is proceeding smoothly and effectively. As your presiding officer, I have no recommendations to bring before you.*

*On motion of Mr. Fiske the address was received and ordered to be printed in the proceedings.*

*The President. Before we take up the actual business of the session, it give me great pleasure, gentlemen, to present to you our former President and now our honorary member, Mr. Uberto C. Crosby. (Applause.)*

*Mr. Crosby. Mr. President and Gentlemen: A few moments ago your President asked me if I would speak just a word of welcome to the members of the Association, and of course I told him I would be very glad to do it. The President has referred to the past and to the very early history of this Association. As one of the Committee that originated the idea of a National Association, and as one who attended the first meeting, which has been referred to, I am delighted and astonished at the number of gentlemen here to-day. At the first meeting there were, I think, 25 or 30 gentlemen sitting in the center of the room, and to-day practically ever chair here is filled. It has not been my pleasure to attend meetings of the Association during the past few years, and consequently the magnificent attendance is a surprise to me. I feel that you are at work along the very best lines for the best interests not only of the insuring public but of the Associations and Societies which you represent. Surely everything that is done intelligently along the lines in which you are working, to reduce the great loss by fire in this country, must be for the interest of all. I wish you all God-speed, and the highest possible success in the future. (Applause.)*

What is of particular interest in the President's address at the annual meeting held in 1905 is the statement that the National Fire Protection Association is "*truly a "National" Association and the Standards prepared by the Association should be known as "National Standards"*". In other words, the President is basically saying that, after 9 years, the Association has "come of age".

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