

*Wright*

# **FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT 1941**

**CHIEF RICHARD WIDMANN  
MADISON, WIS.**

Madison, Wisconsin  
February 20, 1941

Emoryville, Ohio, James A. Lee  
J. DONALD WIDMANN

Trustees Board of Police  
& Fire Departments

Madison, Wisconsin

A. J. WIDMANN, Chief of Police, Report of the Madison Police  
Department for the year ending on December 31, 1940. The year  
passed has been one of the most successful in the history of the  
Department. The Department has been very successful in its  
work, and has been able to keep the city safe and sound. The  
Department has been able to keep the city safe and sound, and  
has been able to keep the city safe and sound.

## ANNUAL REPORT

1941

Chief Richard Widmann

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Very truly yours,  
Richard Widmann, Chief  
Madison Police Department



Madison, Wisconsin  
February 23, 1942

Honorable Mayor, James R. Law  
& Council Members:

Honorable Board of Police  
& Fire Commissioners:

Madam and Gentlemen:

I, herewith, submit the Annual Report of the Madison Fire Department for the year ending on December 31, 1941. The report includes the number of alarms to which we responded, the number of inspections made, fire prevention activities, schooling, drilling, and such other information as may be of interest and value.

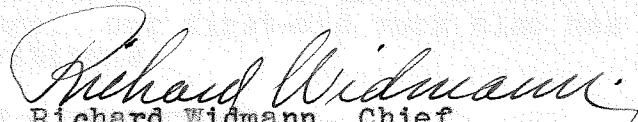
The statistical data herein contained, relative to fire losses, the value of property involved, insurance carried on property, etc., has been gathered with painstaking care as to accuracy. The figures representing fire losses have been carefully checked; they represent the aggregate loss of all fires responded to by this Department, as well as, those fires to which the Department was not called.

It affords me great pleasure to commend to you the rank and file members of the Department for the faithful manner in which they have discharged their duties. I also wish to express my thanks to all other city departments for their good will and co-operation during the past year.

To the press of the City, I wish to extend my appreciation for publishing articles relating to the work performed by the Madison Fire Department.

Respectfully submitted,

RW:JK

  
Richard Widmann, Chief  
Madison Fire Department

The Madison Fire Department ranks in efficiency of personnel and perfection of mechanical equipment with any other fire-fighting force in the country.

When fire is confined to its place of origin, this fact is usually considered a true index of a fire department's efficiency and its prompt response to each alarm. The per capita loss figure is often used as another basis of a fire department's efficiency; our per capita loss here in the City of Madison for 1941 was 45 cents, plus. When we compare this figure with the fire loss per capita of the nation as reported in the Municipal Year Book of 1941 published by the International City Managers' Association, we find that for cities of our size they list the highest per capita loss at \$3.79, the median at \$1.18, and the lowest at 17 cents; thus, we find our 45 cents per capita loss falling between the lowest and the lower quartile of per capita fire losses in the United States.

The fire inspection work co-ordinated with the intensive efforts of the Fire Department during the annual observance of Fire Prevention Week, is paying dividends in smaller insurance and tax roll losses.

The personnel of the Fire Department receives constant and thorough instructions in modern methods of fire-fighting. All fire-fighting periodicals are bound and added to a lending library which has been established for the benefit of all members of the Department who are truly interested in new methods of procedure. Discussions of problems and various technics of fire-fighting are often encouraged and stimulated through this literature. Theoretic fires as they might occur in local buildings are frequently presented to the men, and these problems are met and planned as an added means of protection to local life and property.

Citizens of Madison should be proud of their Fire Department, for the members take special pride in the appearance of their quarters and apparatus. An inspection, at any hour of the day or night, will find everything shining and in ship-shape condition.

The members of the Madison Fire Department are specially trained in first-aid and salvage work. We receive letters of commendation in which writers stress the lack of immense water damage and unnecessary breakage. Our first-aid work also has been highly praised by many citizens.

#### FIRE PREVENTION & INSPECTION

During the year our Fire Department's Inspectors made a total of 4,886 inspections; 2,063 were in the fire limits, and 1,271 were out of the fire limits. They made 1,416 special inspections, and 136 re-inspections. A total of 2,713 defects were noted in the fire limits and 1,302 were found out of the fire limits. The Fire Inspectors referred 68 defects to the Building

Commission, and 73 to the Electrical Inspector; a detailed record is on file at Headquarters.

#### FIRST-AID SQUAD

As usual this squad was busy giving training in first-aid work to Girl and Boy Scout groups, as well as, to adult classes. On numerous occasions they gave demonstrations to the public. These boys are doing a fine job, and we know that several people in our City owe their lives to some member of this squad.

#### DRILL & FIRE SCHOOL

As I have stated in previous reports, the Drill Master cannot do an efficient job without proper training equipment and training quarters; therefore, I am again calling your attention to the need of such equipment.

In the past year, Lieutenant Sime was detailed to fill officer vacancies at various engine houses during vacation periods and sick leaves. This necessarily curtails company schools and drills. I am hoping that the Police and Fire Commission will establish a panel of Lieutenants and Captains; such action would eliminate the necessity to use our Drill Master at such times, and would greatly facilitate his work and retain the high standard of firemanship training toward which we aim.

#### MASTER MECHANIC & EQUIPMENT

During the past year, the Master Mechanic serviced all the Fire Department's apparatus, making such repairs as our shop equipment was able to handle.

Under his supervision, we overhauled the American La France pumping engine, which is now held in reserve for duty in the high-value district. This unit is now equipped with a 3" hose for heavy streams.

The old Kissel Chemical and Hose Truck has been converted into a foam truck carrying 650 feet of 2½" hose, a foam generator and one-half ton of foam powder to be used for gasoline and industrial fires. This conversion into a foam unit has paid for itself at the Mautz Paint and Varnish fire.

I am of the opinion that the apparatus of our Department, considering our type of City, is on a par with any in the nation. As you know the purchase of the Pirsch Quad has placed the Department in the pump capacity that was recommended by the Underwriter's Inspection Recommendations of 1940. The American La France Service Truck formerly at Station No. 4 is now in reserve at Station No. 7.

By moving the pumping engines, we now have them so located that all heavy-duty pumps are in strategic positions in the high-value and industrial sections of our City.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

I again recommend that a drill tower, properly equipped, be erected;

That each company be brought up to full man-power;

That serious thought be given to the erection of a fire station on the north side of the city;

That a fund be established to purchase new equipment as needed in the future;

And finally, that further study be given to out-of-city charges and services. I feel our services are worth more than we charge.

It rarely occurs to our citizens that a fireman could possibly use anything ever purchased for the Fire Department for any other purpose than fighting the citizen's fires. None of them seem to know that in reality the Fire Department is the best income-producing department in the community. Take our City over any given period of time: One, five, ten or twenty years, and not mentioning the lives saved, deduct the actual fire loss from the value of the property involved; you will find that the Fire Department has consistently kept more income on the tax rolls than any other department has put on them. The average citizen and city official fail to appreciate that every time a fire is extinguished in a factory, store, theatre, school, hospital, etc., payrolls are kept going; and if there are any monetary assets of greater value than payrolls in our City, I do not know what they are.

I am satisfied that our Fire Department is on a par with the average up-and-going department, and that it is paying a dividend of from 20% to 40% on every dollar invested.

In preparation for the all-out fire defense for our City, I can only say this: We must prepare for the worst and insist on getting enough equipment on hand to handle the biggest fire that can be imagined in the most hazardous district of our City.

I, therefore, recommend that the City take advantage of S1936 which provides funds for an all-out defense program; this is also true of Title 8 of the Second War Power Act S2208.

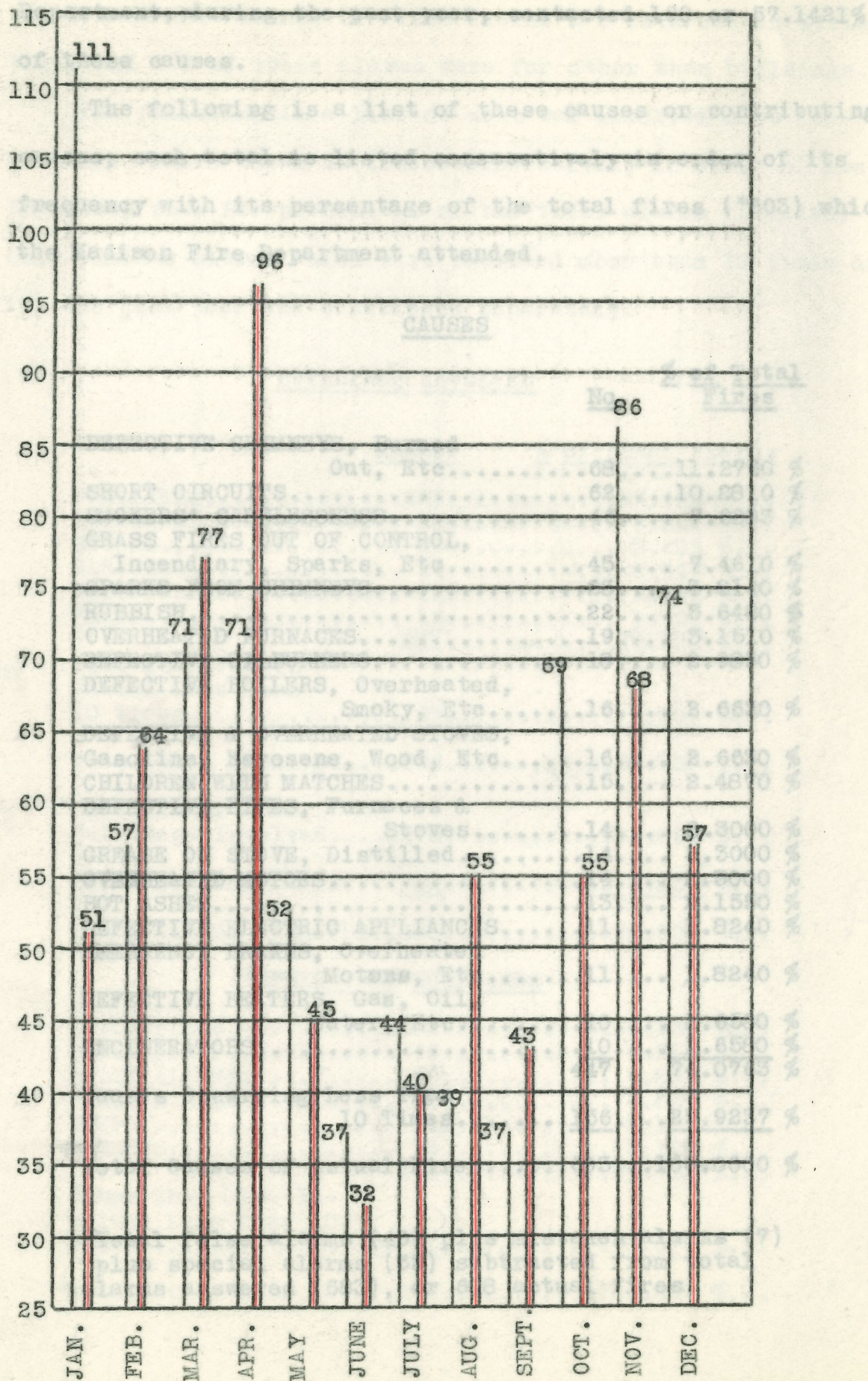
# SUMMARY OF BUILDINGS AND SITES

STATION NO.	SITE	BUILDING	TOTAL
1.	\$23,600.00	\$41,641.00	\$65,241.00
2.	10,625.00	19,610.00	30,235.00
3.	1,625.00	9,615.00	11,240.00
4.	2,200.00	21,421.00	23,621.00
5.	3,000.00	20,117.00	23,117.00
6.	775.00	21,709.00	22,484.00
7.	1,800.00	33,891.00	35,691.00
TOTALS	\$43,625.00	\$168,004.00	\$211,629.00

All the above totals are recorded as they appear in the records at the Assessor's Office.



# CHART OF ALARMS 1940 — 1941





Of the 175 potential causes of fires the Madison Fire Department, during the past year, contacted 100 or 57.1421% of these causes.

The following is a list of these causes or contributing causes; each total is listed consecutively in order of its frequency with its percentage of the total fires (\*603) which the Madison Fire Department attended.

# CAUSES

	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u> <u>Fires</u>
DEFECTIVE CHIMNEYS, Burned		
Out, Etc.....	68	11.2760 %
SHORT CIRCUITS.....	62	10.2810 %
SMOKERS' CARELESSNESS.....	46	7.6283 %
GRASS FIRES OUT OF CONTROL,		
Incendiary, Sparks, Etc.....	45	7.4610 %
SPARKS FROM CHIMNEYS.....	23	3.8140 %
RUBBISH.....	22	3.6480 %
OVERHEATED FURNACES.....	19	3.1510 %
DEFECTIVE OILBURNERS.....	18	2.9850 %
DEFECTIVE BOILERS, Overheated,		
Smoky, Etc.....	16	2.6630 %
DEFECTIVE & OVERHEATED STOVES,		
Gasoline, Kerosene, Wood, Etc.....	16	2.6630 %
CHILDREN WITH MATCHES.....	15	2.4870 %
DEFECTIVE PIPES, Furnaces &		
Stoves.....	14	2.3000 %
GREASE ON STOVE, Distilled.....	14	2.3000 %
OVERHEATED MOTORS.....	14	2.3000 %
HOT ASHES.....	13	2.1550 %
DEFECTIVE ELECTRIC APPLIANCES.....	11	1.8240 %
EMERGENCY BRAKES, Overheated		
Motors, Etc.....	11	1.8240 %
DEFECTIVE HEATERS, Gas, Oil,		
Water, Etc.....	10	1.6580 %
INCINERATORS.....	10	1.6580 %
	447	74.0763 %
Causes Occurring Less Than		
10 Times.....	156	25.9237 %
Total Causes of Actual Fires.....	603	100.0000 %

\*Total false alarms (40) plus mistaken alarms (7) plus special alarms (33) subtracted from total alarms answered (683), or 608 actual fires.

During the year of 1941 the Madison Fire Department responded to 683 alarms; of these alarms 378 occurred in buildings, and 272 of these alarms were for other than buildings.

The following is a list of what was involved most frequently. Every total is listed consecutively in order of its frequency with its percentage of the total alarms included: only similar alarms which were received more than 10 times during the past year are considered separately.

#### BUILDINGS INVOLVED

	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Alarms</u>
DWELLINGS.....	222.....	32.500 %...
APARTMENTS.....	26.....	3.806 %...
STORES.....	22.....	3.221 %...
GARAGES.....	14.....	2.049 %...
RESTAURANTS.....	14.....	2.049 %...
FLATS.....	13.....	1.903 %...
	<u>311.....</u>	<u>45.528 %...</u>
Bld. Involved in Alarms Less Than 10 Times.....	<u>67.....</u>	<u>9.809 %...</u>
Total Bld. Involved....	378.....	55.337 %...
*Total Other Than Buildings Involved....	*272.....	*39.824 %...
Total Special Calls....	<u>33.....</u>	<u>4.839 %...</u>
TOTAL ALARMS RECEIVED..	683.....	100.000 %...

683  
272  
955

#### \*OTHER THAN BUILDINGS

AUTOMOBILES.....	102.....	14.930 %...
GRASS FIRES.....	46.....	6.734 %...
FALSE ALARMS.....	40.....	5.856 %...
SPECIAL CALLS.....	33.....	4.839 %...
DUMPS.....	15.....	2.196 %...
MARSHES.....	15.....	2.196 %...
	<u>251.....</u>	<u>36.751 %...</u>
Other Than Bld. In- volved Less Than 10 Times.....	<u>21.....</u>	<u>3.073 %...</u>
*Total Other Than.....	272.....	*39.824 %...

CHART OF ALARMS--1931 to 1941 INCLUSIVE

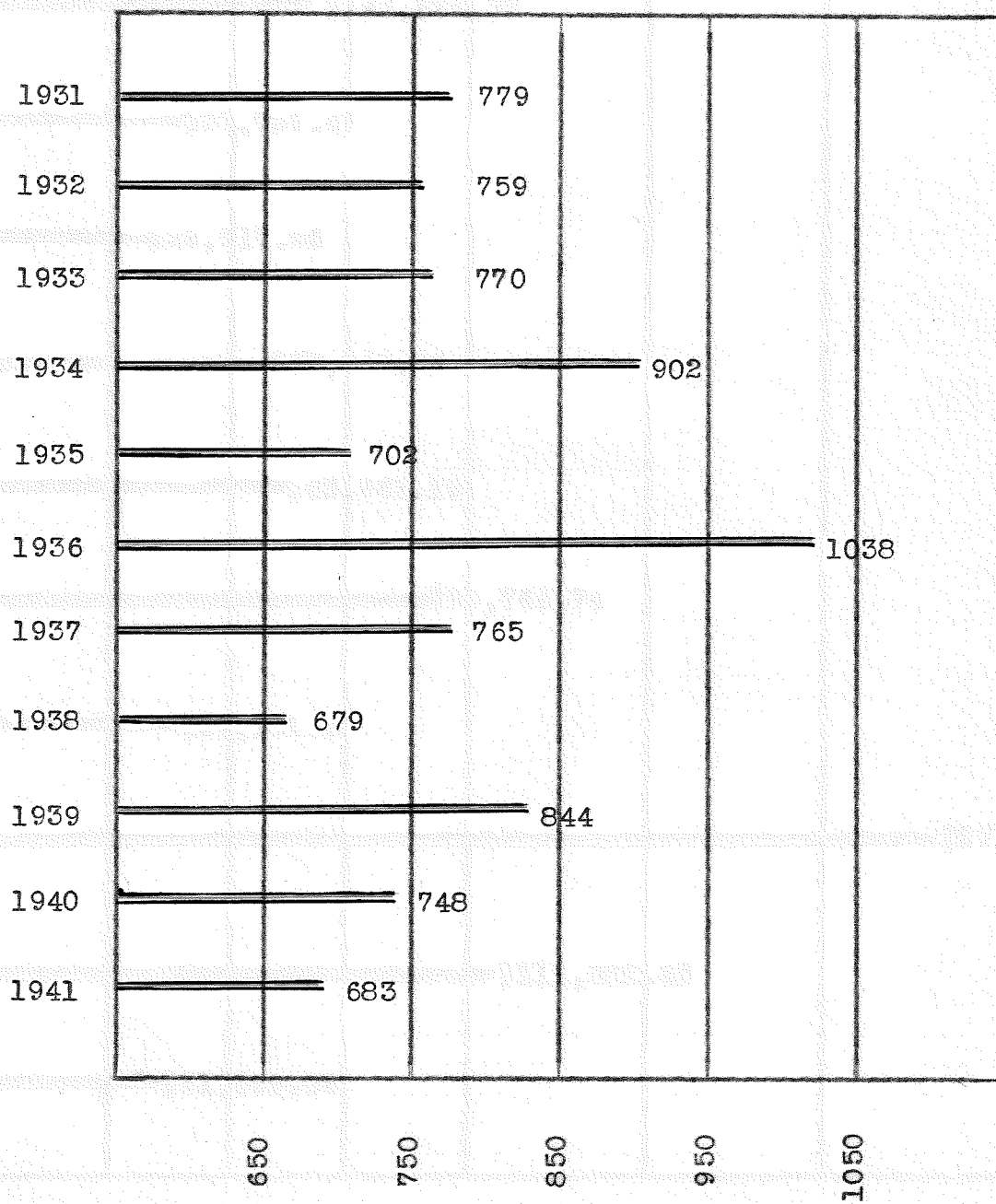
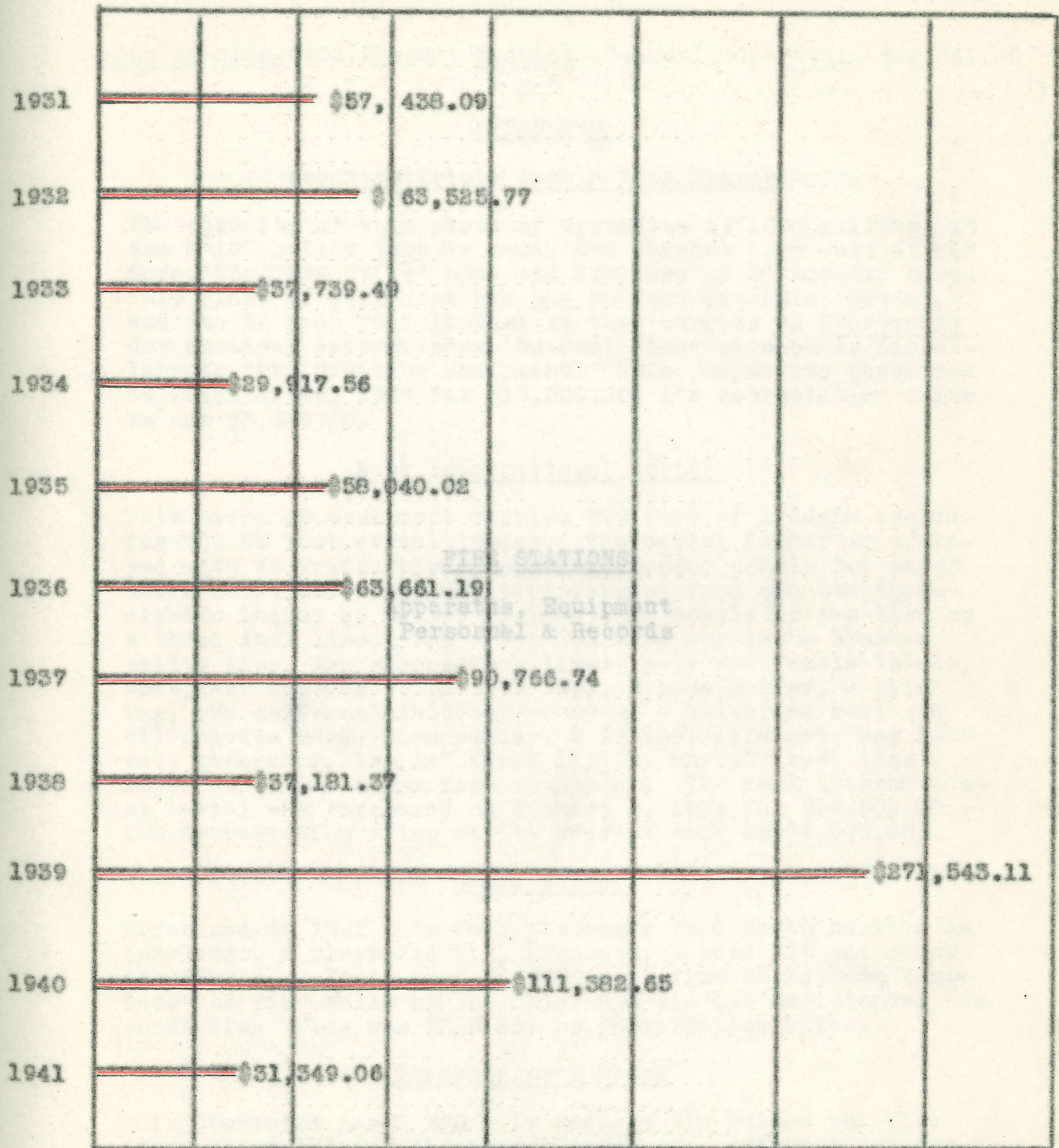




CHART OF LOSSES 1931 TO 1941 INCLUSIVE



\$ 25,000.00

\$ 50,000.00

\$ 75,000.00

\$100,000.00

\$150,000.00

\$200,000.00

\$300,000.00



FIRE STATION NO. 1.

18 South Webster Street

Value of Site--\$23,600.00; Station--\$41,641.00; Total--\$65,241.00

APPARATUS

Seagrave Triple Combination Pumper

The capacity of this piece of apparatus is 1000 gallons; it has a 100 gallon booster tank, and carries 1200 feet of 2½" hose, 250 feet of 1½" hose and 250 feet of 1" booster hose. This piece of equipment has one 20 foot extension ladder, and one 14 foot roof ladder; it also carries an Everyready dry chemical extinguisher (Du-Gas) along with other miscellaneous fire fighting equipment. This pumper was purchased on December 26, 1929 for \$13,500.00; its depreciation value is now \$5,400.00.

Mack International Aerial

This piece of equipment carries 329 feet of ladders including the 85 foot aerial ladder. The aerial ladder is equipped with an invincible type deluge ladder nozzle for which there is an assortment of tips ranging from one and three-eighths inches up to two inches; this nozzle is supplied by a three inch line. The apparatus also carries a Bresnan cellar pipe, two siamese couplings, male and female inlets, acetylene cutting torch with tips, a hose roller, a life bag, one self-contained oxygen mask, a battering ram, one all-service mask, foam powder, a 9½ foot life net, one 1250 watt generator, two 14" flood lights, one 12" spot light, ropes and other minor fire equipment. The Mack International Aerial was purchased on January 1, 1934 for \$16,500.00; its depreciation value at the present time is \$9,900.00.

Chief's Car

Purchased in 1941 this four passenger Ford Sedan carries an inhalator, a first-aid kit, blankets, a burn kit and other accessories. It is used for official fire department business and fire calls by the Chief and his two Assistants; its purchasing price was \$829.00; no depreciation value.

Electrician's Truck

This Chevrolet panel truck is used by the Police and Fire Alarm Electricians; it carries tools and equipment for the maintenance of the alarm system and traffic lights. It was purchased on June 1, 1937 for \$720.00; its depreciation value at the present time is \$381.00.



## FIRE STATION NO. 1.

18 South Webster Street

(continued)

### APPARATUS

#### American La France Triple Combination Pumper

The engine of this pumper was completely overhauled during the past year, and then this piece of apparatus was put in reserve service at Station No. 1 on July 18, 1941; it has a 750 gallon capacity and a 100 gallon booster tank. This pumper carries 900 feet of 3" hose, 200 feet of 1" booster hose, and a 24 foot extension ladder. It was purchased in 1922 for \$12,500.00, and its present depreciation value is \$625.00.

#### Kissel Combination

##### Chemical Hose & Foam Truck

This piece of equipment was converted into a reserve foam truck on November 3, 1941. It is equipped with a 40 gallon soda and acid chemical pressure tank, 250 feet of 1" chemical hose, 650 feet of 2½" hose, 14-50 pound cans of foam powder, 1 foam generator, one Universal turret nozzle with tips ranging from 1½" to 2", one 20 foot extension ladder, one 14 foot roof ladder and other minor fire fighting tools and equipment. It was purchased in 1915 for \$4,685.00 and has no present depreciation value.

#### Reo Coupe

The Reo, a two passenger coupe, is now used as a general utility car. It was purchased on November 23, 1933 for \$1050.00; its present depreciation value is \$210.00.

### PERSONNEL

The personnel consists of the Chief of the Department, Richard Widmann, and the two Assistant Chiefs--Carl J. Eichmann, First Assistant Chief, and Patrick J. Brown, Second Assistant Chief. The Master Mechanic, the two Electricians, the two Fire Inspectors and the Drill-master all work from this station.

There are 21 privates stationed here with 6 men assigned to the Pumper on one shift, and 5 men assigned to it on the other shift; four men are assigned to the Aerial Truck on each shift, and one man from each shift is assigned as the Chief's Driver. The total personnel located here is 31 including the Secretary to the Chief.

FIRE STATION NO. 1.

18 South Webster Street

(continued)

Floor watch duty is assigned to each man in his turn.

Alarms answered.....222  
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hose laid.....19 ,253 ft.  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hose laid.....850 ft.  
1" hose laid.....8,200 ft.  
Water pumped for booster.....1,668 $\frac{1}{2}$  Gal  
Ladders raised.....1,172 ft.  
Chemicals (Small).....11 gal.  
Working time at fires.....99 hrs. 3 min.

FIRE STATION NO. 2.

301 North Broom Street

Value of Site--\$10,625.00; Station--\$19,610.00; Total--\$30,235.00

APPARATUS

Seagrave Triple Combination Pumper

This pumper has a capacity of 750 gallons, and a 100 gallon booster tank; it carries 1200 feet of 2½" hose, 150 feet of 1½" hose, 200 feet of 1" booster hose, one 20 foot extension ladder and one 12 foot roof ladder. This piece of apparatus was purchased in 1923 for \$12,500.00; its present depreciation value is \$1,250.00.

PERSONNEL

The personnel consists of Captain C. R. Falkner and Lieutenant Edward P. Durkin; there are 8 privates stationed here with 4 men assigned to the Pumper on each shift. The total personnel located here is 10 men.

Alarms answered.....	180.
2½" hose laid.....	12,400 ft.
1½" hose laid.....	1,250 ft.
1" hose laid.....	7,500 ft.
Water pumped for booster.....	1,278 gal.
Ladders raised.....	70 ft.
Chemicals (Small).....	2 gal .
Working time at fires.....	70 hrs. 6 min.



### FIRE STATION NO. 3.

1217 Williamson Street

Value of Site--\$1,625.00; Station--\$9,615.00; Total--\$11,240.00

### APPARATUS

#### Seagrave Triple Combination Pumper

This piece of equipment has a 750 gallon capacity, and a 100 gallon booster tank; it carries 1200 feet of 2½" hose, 100 feet of 1½" hose, 200 feet of 1" booster hose, one 20 foot extension ladder and 12 foot roof ladder. This pumper was purchased on August 3, 1925 for \$12,500.00; its present depreciation value is \$2,500.00.

#### Seagrave Service Truck

This truck carries 260 feet of ladders and is equipped with a 40 gallon chemical soda and acid pressure tank; it has 250 feet of chemical hose, 6-50 pound cans of foam powder, one eight foot life net and other miscellaneous fire fighting equipment. This piece of equipment was purchased on November 20, 1924 for \$9,500.00, and its depreciation value at the present time is \$1,425.00.

### PERSONNEL

The personnel consist of Captain Karl O. Johnson and Lieutenant Albert E. Ragg. There are 12 privates stationed here; four men on each shift are assigned to the Pumper, and the Officer and two men on each shift are assigned to the Service Truck.

Alarms answered.....268.

2½" hose laid.....12,700 ft.

1½" hose laid.....250 ft.

1" hose laid.....7,050 ft.

Water pumped for booster.....1,765 gal.

Ladders raised.....301 ft.

Chemicals (Small).....3 gal.

Working time at fires.....120hrs. 43 min.

## FIRE STATION NO. 4.

1329 West Dayton Street

Value of Site--\$2,200.00; Station--\$21,421.00; Total--\$23,621.00

## APPARATUS

### Seagrave Service Truck

This truck was transferred from Station No. 6 on July 18, 1941; it carries 265 feet of ladders, and is equipped with a 40 gallon chemical soda and acid pressure tank with 200 feet of 1" chemical hose. It carries a deluge set with a tripod, one 9½ foot life net, 6-50 pound cans of foam powder and 1 foam generator along with other accessories. This piece of equipment was purchased on December 25, 1929 for \$9,000.00; its present depreciation value is \$3,600.00.

### General Fire Truck Triple Combination Pumper

This piece of apparatus was transferred from Station No. 7 on July 18, 1941. It has a capacity of 750 gallons and is equipped with a 100 gallon booster tank. It carries 1200 feet of 2½" hose, 100 feet of 1½" hose, 250 feet of 1" booster hose, one 20 foot extension ladder and one 12 foot roof ladder and other miscellaneous fire fighting equipment. This pumper was purchased in September of 1939 for \$9,183.00; its depreciation value is now \$8,264.70.

## PERSONNEL

Captain Emil J. Beier and Lieutenant Roy B. Herrling are the officers in charge here. There are 10 privates stationed here; the officer and 3 men are assigned to the pumper, and 2 men are assigned to the truck; this assignment is the same on both shifts.

Alarms answered.....	155.
2½" hose laid.....	15,750 ft.
1½" hose laid.....	850 ft.
1" hose laid.....	8,300 ft.
Water pumped for booster.....	6,940 gal.
Ladders raised.....	1,102 ft.
Chemicals (Small).....	7 gal.
Working time at fires.....	81 hrs. 39 min.

FIRE STATION NO. 5.

2137 Atwood Avenue

Value of Site--\$3,000.00; Station--\$20,117.00; Total--\$23,117.00

APPARATUS

Seagrave Triple Combination Pumper

This suburban type pumper has a 600 gallon capacity with a 100 gallon booster tank. It carries 1200 feet of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hose, 100 feet of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hose, 250 feet of 1" booster hose, one 24 foot extension ladder and one 12 foot roof ladder. It also carries various other miscellaneous fire fighting equipment. This piece of equipment was purchased on February 2, 1934 for \$6,200.00; its present depreciation value is now \$3,720.

PERSONNEL

Captain C. H. Chase and Lieutenant A. Lobre are in charge of 8 privates at this station; an officer and 4 men on each shift are assigned to the pumper. The total personnel located here is 10 men.

Alarms answered.....	145.
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hose laid.....	9,000 ft.
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hose laid.....	200 ft.
1" hose laid.....	9,700 ft.
Water pumped for booster.....	3,829 $\frac{1}{2}$ gal.
Ladders raised.....	86 ft.
Chemicals (Small).....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ gal.
Working time at fires.....	83 hrs. 50 min.



FIRE STATION NO. 6.

957 South Park Street

Value of Site--\$775.00; Station--\$21,709.00; Total--\$22,484.00

APPARATUS

Pirsch Quad

This piece of apparatus was purchased on June 24, 1941 and was put into service on July 14. It is equipped with a 750 gallon centrifugal pump and 240 feet of ladders. It also carries 250 feet of 1" booster hose, 200 feet of 1½" hose, 1200 feet of 2½" hose, two all-service masks, one self-contained oxygen breathing apparatus and various other miscellaneous fire-fighting tools and equipment.

PERSONNEL

Lieutenant A. Wilcox and Lieutenant L. Sime are officers in charge at this station; Lieutenant Sime is taking the place of Captain Nic. B. Behrend who is on sick leave. An officer and 4 men are assigned to each shift; the total personnel is 10 men.

Alarms answered.....135.  
2½" hose laid.....7,100 ft.  
1½" hose laid.....750 ft.  
1" hose laid.....5,050 ft.  
Water pumped for booster.....1,515 gal.  
Ladders raised.....522 ft.  
Chemicals (Small).....4 gal.  
Working time at fires.....75 hrs. 41 min.

FIRE STATION NO. 7.

2410 Monroe Street

Value of Site--\$1,800.00; Station--\$33,891.00; Total--\$35,691.00

APPARATUS

Seagrave Triple Combination Pumper

This pumper was transferred from Station No. 6 on July 18, 1941. It has a 600 gallon capacity with a 100 gallon booster tank. It carries 1200 feet of 2½" hose, 100 feet of 1½" hose, 200 feet of 1" booster hose, one 24 foot extension ladder, one 12 foot roof ladder, and various other miscellaneous accessories. This piece of equipment was purchased on April 20, 1935 for \$6,622.50; its present depreciation value is \$4,635.40.

American La France Service Truck

This piece of apparatus is in reserve and was transferred from Station No. 4 on July 18, 1941. It carries 272 feet of ladders and other minor fire-fighting equipment. It was purchased during the year of 1919 for \$7,700.00; it has no depreciation value at the present time.

PERSONNEL

Captain I. Reed and Lieutenant A. Britt are the officers in charge of 6 privates at this station; an officer and 3 men on each shift are assigned to the pumper. The total personnel here is 8 men.

Alarms answered.....	86.
2½" hose laid.....	2,850 ft.
1½" hose laid.....	700 ft.
1" hose laid.....	3,750 ft.
Water pumped for booster.....	2,621 gal.
Ladders raised.....	20 ft.
Chemicals (Small).....	7½ gal.
Working time at fires.....	47 hrs. 18 min.