

**50<sup>Th</sup>**  
*Annual Ball*



STOUGHTON  
FIRE-FIGHTERS  
relief association

Feb. 10, 1956

## **Fireman's Prayer**

**When I am called to duty, God –  
Wherever flames may rage  
Give me the strength to save some life  
Whatever be its age.**

**Help me embrace a little child  
Before it is too late;  
Or save an older person from  
The horror of that fate.**

**Enable me to be alert  
And hear the weakest shout –  
And quickly and efficiently  
To put the fire out.**

**I want to fill my calling and  
To give the best in me –  
To guard my every neighbor and  
Protect his property.**

**And if according to my fate,  
I am to lose my life –  
Please bless with Your protecting hand  
My children and my wife.**

**Courtesy of the Boston Globe**



**On this, the occasion of our fiftieth Annual Ball, we extend to our advertisers our heartiest thanks for their support in making the 1956 Program our biggest and best.**

**And, to those of you who are here in person tonight to enjoy the entertainment and take part in the dancing, each and every member of the Stoughton Firefighters Relief Association says, "Thank You!—we hope you will have a wonderful evening."**

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- 129—Bond-Rite Combining Co.
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- 134—Shawmut Woolen Mill, Porter St.
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- \*235—West School
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- \*237—Capen School
- 238—St. Mary School

- \* 21—Capen and Walnut Sts.
- 22—No School
- \* 23—Park and Ninth Sts.
- \* 24—Sumner St., at Bridge
- \* 25—Park and Fifth Sts.
- \* 26—Park and Sumner Sts.
- \* 27—Walnut St. and Walnut Ave.
- \* 28—Park and Prospect Sts.
- 29—Park and Turnpike Sts.
- \*211—Park St. opp. Crimmins, Inc.
- \*212—Sumner and Cedar Sts.
- 213—Sumner and Birch Sts.
- 214—Park St., Brockton Line
- \*215—Park St. and Broadway
- \*216—Prospect St. and Broadway
- \*217—Leach and Belcher Sts.
- \*221—Ash St.
- 223—Sumner St., Brockton Line
- \*224—Sumner and Brickel Rd.
- \*225—Sumner and Atkinson Ave.
- \* 31—Clapp and Adams Sts.
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- \* 33—School and Water Sts.
- \* 34—Canton and French Sts.
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- 36—Chemung and Bay Sts.
- \* 37—School and Elm Sts.
- \* 38—Plain and West Sts.
- \* 39—Plain and Bay Sts.
- 311—Bay St., Easton Line
- 312—West and School Sts.
- 313—Shore Lake
- 314—West St., at McNamaras
- 315—Bay and Highland Sts.
- 316—West and Highland Sts.
- \* 41—Seaver and Chestnut Sts.
- \* 42—Walnut and Prospect Sts.
- \* 43—Pleasant and Central Sts.
- \* 44—Pleasant and Pine Sts.
- \* 45—Porter and Grove Sts.
- \* 46—Pleasant and Lincoln Sts.
- \* 47—Lincoln and Walnut Sts.
- \* 48—Lincoln and Central Sts.
- \* 49—Washington and Lincoln Sts.
- 411—Pleasant St., and Glen Echo Blvd.
- \*412—North Stoughton Square
- 413—Page and Maple Sts.
- \*414—Central and Turnpike Sts.
- \*415—Pleasant and Turnpike Sts.
- \*416—Turnpike and Willow Sts.
- \*417—Page and Willow Sts.
- \*421—Pleasant St. and Edgewood Ave.
- 422—Central St., Avon Line
- 423—Turnpike St., at Crusher
- 424—Willow St., Randolph Line
- 451—Lincoln and Rockland Sts.
- \* 51—Washington and Monk Sts.
- \* 52—Washington and Freeman Sts.
- \* 53—Pleasant St. opp. Methodist Church
- 55—Station Call
- \*511—Town Hall
- \* 58—Porter St., Town Hall
- \* 61—Central St., at Railroad
- 62—Central and Simpson Sts.
- \* 63—Central and Canton Sts.
- 64—Canton and Simpson Sts.
- \* 65—Canton and Brook Sts.
- \* 66—Central and West Sts.
- 611—Central and Island Sts.
- \*612—Central St. and Lakewood Drive
- 613—Island and Mill Sts.
- 614—Sharon and Bay Sts.
- 615—Bay St. and Lakewood Drive
- \*616—Drake Ave. and Memorial Drive

- 621—Lakewood Pines East
- 622—Lakewood Pines West
- \*623—Greenwood Ave. and Central St.
- \*624—Central St. and Robbin Circle
- 71—Washington St., Easton Line
- \* 72—Morton and Brock Sts.
- \* 73—Morton Square
- \* 75—Washington and Kinsley Sts.
- \* 76—Washington and Plain Sts.
- \* 77—Morton and Plain Sts.
- 711—Water and Bradford Sts.
- \*712—Morton and Bird Sts.
- \*713—Plain St. and Walker Road
- 81—Indian Lane and Dale St.
- 82—Pine and York Sts.
- 83—Washington and York Sts.
- \* 84—Washington and Charles Ave.
- \* 85—Ewing Dr. and Charles Ave. Ext.
- \* 89—Washington and Central Sts.
- \*811—Central St. and Central Drive
- 812—Britton Ave. and Warren Ave.
- \* 91—Pearl and School Sts.
- 92—Pearl and Adams Sts.
- \* 93—Pearl and Columbia Sts.
- 94—Pearl St., Canton Line
- \* 97—Pearl and Central Sts.
- \*911—Mann Drive and Rayburn Road
- \*912—Laarhoven Tr. and Rayburn Rd.
- 913—Stoughton St. and Doty Dr.
- 914—Rayburn Rd. and Mann Dr.
- \*915—Woodbine and Wellesley Rd.
- 916—Stoughton St. and Royal Rd.
- 921—Kenmore and Wellesley Rd.
- \*922—Stoughton St. and Amherst Rd.
- \*923—Carey Circle and Janice Rd.
- \*924—Marjorie and Carey Circle

**SPECIAL CALLS**

- 2—All Out
- 4—Off Platoon Call
- 10—Woods Fire Call
- 10-2-2—Woods Call Welch Preserve
- 13—Boy Scout Assembly
- 14—Auxiliary Fire
- 15—Auxiliary Police
- 17—P. W. D.
- 333—Aid Call (out of town)
- 3—Test 12:05 P. M.

Boxes marked with (\*) are at location;  
others are sounded at Fire Headquarters

**DIRECTIONS IN CASE OF FIRE**

1. Never open a Fire Alarm Box except in case of fire.
2. Never sound an alarm for a fire seen in the distance. Be reasonably sure there is a fire before sounding an alarm.
3. Never sound an alarm for a brush or grass fire unless some building is in danger. Dial Fire Headquarters FI 4-3131 or dial operator and give information.
4. Any person tampering with the fire alarm system or sounding a false alarm will be liable to a fine or imprisonment.

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# History of the Stoughton Fire Department

This year, 1956, Stoughton will celebrate its one hundred and eightieth birthday as an incorporated town. On December 26, 1726 the former domain of Chief Chicataubut and the territory known as South Dorchester was incorporated by the General Court of Massachusetts. The man from whom Stoughton took its name was William Stoughton, a former governor and Colonial leader. Its territory in 1726 encompassed what is now Canton, Sharon, Foxboro, Avon and a small portion of Dedham.

From the date of the town's incorporation until 1848 only little is known of what measures were taken by the town's fathers to insure fire protection for the inhabitants. A devastating fire, in the early summer of 1848, destroyed the town house and along with it most of the early records of the town. There being no organized fire department in Stoughton, the Canton and Randolph departments were called as every local effort seemed futile. The discovery of a half barrel of beer in a neighborhood cellar called the firemen off the job, thus the town house burned to the ground.

The conduct of the firemen and the disastrous results caused the ladies of the town to rise up in indignation and they set out to raise money to purchase a hand fire fighting engine. So great was the response that they raised enough money for two fire engines. Two Howard and Davis handtubs of the Hunneman type were purchased in 1852. The first was named Pacific No. 1 and the second Atlantic No. 2. Henry A. Drake, Sr. and James Capen were chosen Captains.

The first engine house was erected where Porter Street (East) enters the square. As more new apparatus was added another engine house was built on the same site by Elisha Hawes giving Stoughton its first fire station. The burning of the town house and the coming of the new engines with their engine house marked the early beginnings of Stoughton's present day fire department.

The companies for the first year or two were made up of volunteers and about 1857 there were forty members in the Pacific Co. No. 1 and thirty-seven members in the Atlantic Co. No. 2. A third handtub known as Bay State No. 3 was bought for East Stoughton and a company of thirty-seven men was organized. Their pay was two dollars a year.

From the start there developed a keen competition as to which company hit the road first and the first one to make the grade usually refused to let another pass. Often the late arrivals would lower their suction in the well and pull out the other, putting them to flight. There were tricks to the trade even in those pioneer days.

In the year 1860 the original Washington Hook and Ladder Truck was built at Jabez Talbot's Wagon shop on Railroad Avenue. Calvin Howland was its first Captain and a company of ten men was organized to man the new apparatus at a salary of two dollars per year. On April 29, 1862 the first board of fire engineers was appointed to supervise all of Stoughton's companies. They were: James Mears, Chief, Jabez Talbot, Clerk, Elisha Hawes and Samuel Littlefield.

The first uniform the members of the department wore consisted of light drab pants, blue blouses, black and white belts on which was inscribed **STOUGHTON** and red crowned blue caps with visors. One can imagine the spectacular sight of firemen answering an alarm in such regalia today.

The members of the ladder company were Calvin Howland, Captain George H. Goward, Alden Skinner, Alvin Colburn, James E. Stevens, A. L. Holmes, Elbridge Ross and Andrew Nevins.

Between 1870 and 1907 several pieces of equipment were purchased for the department. In 1870 a hand engine, Ocean No. 4 from Providence, R. I. was bought to take the place of the disabled Atlantic No. 2. This engine was renamed Ocean No. 2 taking its place with Company No. 2. Charles Waugh was its first foreman. Steamer Company No. 1 was organized in 1880 upon the arrival of the Silsby Steam Fire Engine. At this time its mate was also purchased and placed in East Stoughton, now Avon. Steamer Company No. 1 was comprised of fourteen men from the old Ocean and Pacific companies which were disbanded at this time. The handtub which belonged to Ocean Co. 2 was sold in 1884 to the Protector Company of Brockton "for sporting purposes." To accompany the newly bought Steamer a hose wagon was purchased in 1882 from the builder, a Mr. Brown of Randolph. This hose wagon was used until 1907. In that year a new wagon was purchased and the old wagon was used by the forest fire department until 1914.

In 1875 a one horse ladder truck had been built at Harper's carriage shop in Sharon for the town and was in service for about twenty-five years. However, in 1896 the Engineers felt this old ladder truck was unsafe for the men to ride on (some oldtimers living today can vouch for that fact) and they purchased a new two horse drawn ladder truck from the Combination Ladder Company of Providence, R. I. Because of its solid white color, and the fact that there were no horses provided to draw it, the truck was dubbed the "White Angel." As soon as horses could be provided it was put into use.

In the early days of the department available fire horses were a problem to procure because of the meager price paid by the town to the stables. It was sometimes necessary to commandeer from any source, such as delivery wagons, in order to move the apparatus. Later funds were appropriated to keep a pair of horses in Atwood's Stable and subsequently at Morey's Stable. Old "Tom" the trained veteran horse, from Reilly's Stable answered the alarms with the one horse ladder truck for many years.

In 1906 the town bought its first pair of horses (the gray pair) which were named "Dick" and "Jim" after the retiring Chief Vanston and the incoming Chief James J. Pye. These horses were used on the hose wagon with Charles F. Adams as their driver. The second pair of horses (the sorrels) was purchased in 1910. There were names "Charlie" and "Fred" after Charlie Adams, their driver and Fred H. Pye, who became driver of the gray pair.

Drivers between the years 1911 and 1922 included Charles F. Adams, Fred H. Pye, G. Lester Gay and Everett S. Winship.

In 1912, Charles W. Welch, an ardent friend of the fire department, together with Chief James J. Pye and James Lehan raised by popular subscription \$5,750 to purchase a Pope-Hartford Chemical and Hose fire truck. The truck was presented to the town and accepted by George W. Pratt, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. It arrived in town July 22, 1912 and was commissioned August 7th, with Fred H. Pye, as driver. At this time the pair of gray horses were sold.

In 1917 the town voted to purchase a Ford truck for forest fire service. The body of the first hose wagon was fitted on the Ford chassis and was used for many years in forest fire service as well as in the fire alarm service.

At the March Town Meeting, 1921, the town voted to buy an Ahrens-Fox fire pumper for \$13,400. The completely modern piece of equipment was placed in service in June 1921 with Fred H. Pye as its driver. As no money was appropriated for an extra driver that year Everett S. Winship, H. Elliot Willis and Chester C. Smith were chosen to fill in as extra drivers. The old Silsby Steam fire engine was sold.

In 1923 the horse drawn ladder truck was replaced by a Maxim City Service ladder truck and Everett S. Winship was appointed permanent driver. During this period of motorization, 1928 a second pumper, a Maxim, was added to the department.

The growth of the fire alarm system has paralleled the growth of the fire department in its efficiency. Beginning with the ringing of church bells to summon the firemen down through the years to the modern compressed air whistle and over fifty-five alarm boxes at strategic locations throughout the town, a steady growth in efficient protection has come about. At about the turn of the twentieth century a steam whistle was installed on the roof of the gas house on Rose Street. In 1916 a compressed air alarm system was purchased and the whistle was transferred to the top of the Town Hall where it remained until 1927. At that time the whistle and a modern alarm system was installed at the newly erected fire station on Freeman Street.

As it became apparent that the space set aside for the fire department in the basement of the Town Hall could not adequately house the growing department, the town voted to erect a modern fire station. The new brick station was built and accepted by the town in 1927.

During the twenty-two years that James J. Pye served as Chief great strides were made in the growth of the department. It was during his tenure that the first horses were purchased for the sole use of the department, the first modern alarm system was installed and the whole complexion of the department changed from horse drawn apparatus to motorized equipment. It was through his efforts that the new fire station was made possible, realizing the need for around the clock protection, he prevailed upon the town to begin hiring firemen on a permanent basis. At the time of his death in January, 1928 there were four full time firemen. It was through Chief's efforts that the Fireman's Relief Association was organized in 1916. Through this organization many of the department's members have been helped and their families made comfortable in times of sickness and distress.

Through an act of the legislature in 1908, the Forest Warden Department was established. Jesse E. Smith, then Captain of Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 was appointed as Stoughton's first warden. Along with Jesse Smith, James D. Curley was appointed Deputy Forest Warden. In 1912 he succeeded Capt. Smith and held the appointment as warden until 1915. In that year the present warden, Chief Fred H. Pye was appointed.

From one permanent man in 1906, the department has grown until there are now ten permanent men. In addition to the full time personnel there are twenty-two call men. During the years between the motorization of the depart-

ment and the end of World War II, four men served as the nucleus of the present force. They were Chief Fred H. Pye, Assistant Chief Chester C. Smith, Lieutenant Everett S. Winship and Lieutenant Charles L. Wade. Since World War II, Lieutenant Arthur N. Corbett, Lieutenant John E. Noonan, Jr., Wallace S. Billings, Clyde R. Holmes, Leo F. Roche, Paul J. Roach, Joseph F. Kelley and James M. Haron have joined the permanent force.

With the advent of the second world war and during the subsequent year of the cold war the fire department has been augmented by volunteer Auxiliary Firefighters. This Auxiliary force is a part of the town's participation in Civilian Defense activities. The Board of Selectmen has assigned a piece of fire apparatus to the force and they conduct regular meetings and drills.

The Fire Department has kept pace with the growing needs of the town. Since its complete motorization in 1925, new equipment and apparatus has been added until today there are three pumping engines, two combination hose and pumping engines and an aerial ladder truck. In addition to this, the department has a fully equipped emergency truck and a boat, mounted on a trailer, is available for water rescue work.

Some of the most important fires were:

The old Town House, June 1848, one year before the fire department was organized; Steam Mill, July 16, 1870; N. S. Atwood block and stables, with the business section threatened; February 27, 1880; Mystic Rubber Factory, Oct. 8, 1880; French & Ward's lower mills, Oct. 9, 1880; French & Ward's storehouse, April 22, 1871, Dr. W. E. C. Swan's block and contents destroyed in the square, April 28, 1892; Clapp Schoolhouse Destroyed Jan. 7, 1896; William H. White's market, Oct. 5, 1897; Almshouse destroyed Oct. 7, 1898; Plymouth Rubber factory, Monk Street, July 23, 1898; Stoughton Gas and Electric Company, July 24, 1902, Fire Engineer Henry M. Bird, Fireman Ernest G. Holmes, and Berthier W. Holmes, Jr. were seriously burned at this fire; Stoughton House, Railroad Avenue, Jan. 13, 1903; Car Barns of the Bristol & Norfolk St. Ry. Co., at North Stoughton, Jan. 12, 1905; Golf Ball factory, Cushing St., Jan. 19, 1905; Golf Ball factory, Cushing St., Feb. 19, 1907; Golf Ball factory, Cushing St., April 20, 1907; Charles Stretton & Son factory, Jan. 6, 1909; W. R. Swan block, May 11, 1906; Elwell Rubber Company, Monk St., Nov. 23, 1906; Press Hotel, North Stoughton, May 19, 1914, so spectacular that several communities sounded their alarms, believing it to be in their towns; Panther Rubber Company factory, Monk St., Oct. 8, 1917; French & Ward's mill, Aug. 16, 1918; Swan's Block, May 11, 1919; Panther Rubber Storehouse, June 2, 1920; Dr. Swan's Block, May 28, 1922; Atwood's Market and Stable, March 4, 1927; Norfolk Lumber Company, Dec. 15, 1932; Congregational Church steeple, fired by lightning, July 9, 1937 (eight other places struck by lightning that same day); Congregational Church totally destroyed, March 9, 1942; Town House store room and stage, June 18, 1945; Stoughton Garnetting Company, Oct. 28, 1949; Rock Mfg. Co., Dec. 19, 1949; Whispering Pines School, Dec. 19, 1952; Peerless Cement, Nov. 5, 1954, five people narrowly escaped death; John Kucinskis house on Lincoln Street, March 28, 1955, Assistant Chief Chester C. Smith was seriously injured; William Duzan house on Park Street, gas explosion and fire, Nov. 9, 1955, three people narrowly escaped death.

Compiled by G. Lester Gay

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**AUCTIONEERS**

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## IN MEMORIAM



## DECEASED MEMBERS

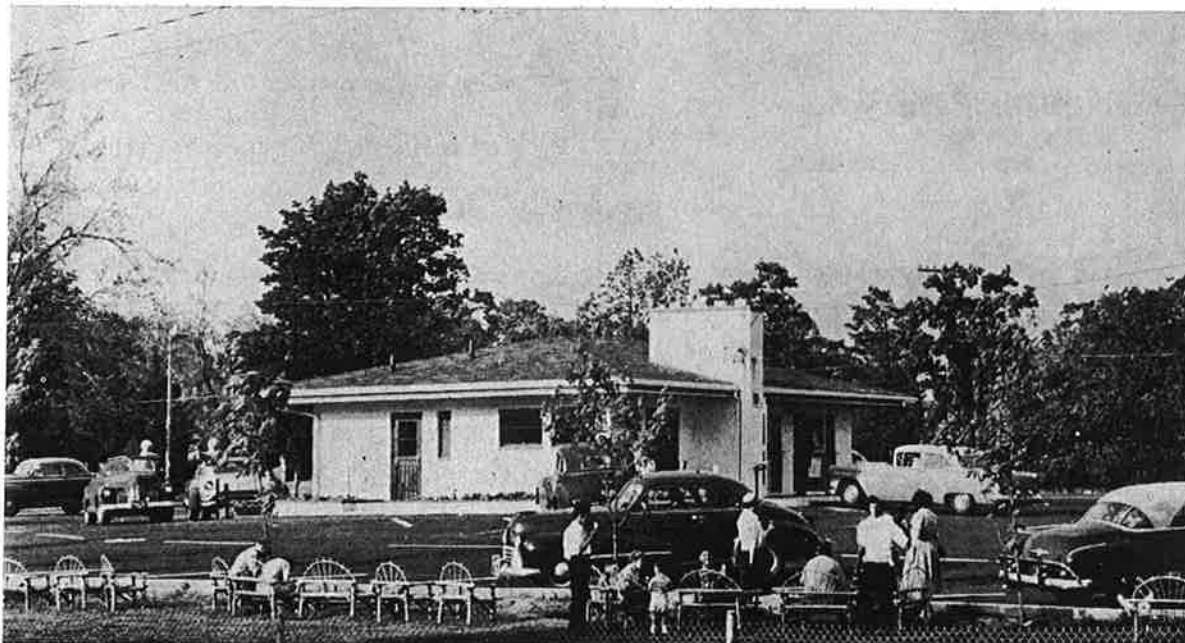
Levi Staples  
Elisha Hawes  
Arthur Howard  
James Condon  
Charles Adams  
George Morse  
James Conners  
William Horan  
Henry Drake  
H. Eliot Willis  
Hiram Clark  
Berthier Holmes, Jr.  
Abner Corbett  
Joseph Murphy  
James Curley  
Cornelius Healy  
William Russell  
Patrick Powers  
William Kelley, 2nd  
Peter Smith  
Patrick Flynn  
Arthur Chase  
Louis LaBombard  
Dr. James Murphy

Joseph Buck  
William Callahan  
John H. Vanston  
Tobias F. Vanston  
Richard Vanston  
William Sullivan  
John Mead  
William Sly  
John Cotter  
James Reilly  
George Pratt  
Jesse Smith  
Alvah Gould  
Horace Mann  
Thomas Vanston  
George Belcher  
Ralph Mann  
James J. Pye  
Walter Holbrook  
Oliver Curtis  
Simon Olson  
Harry Weston  
James May

Jedidiah Bird  
Alton Sherman  
Andrew Nevins  
Frank Norwell  
William Corbett  
Albert Walker  
Alphonse Mead  
Joseph Blanchard  
Frank Hussey  
Francis Carr  
Issac Capen  
Henry Bird  
George Whitney  
Clarence Mead  
William Graham  
Edward Norton  
Edward Walker  
William DeCosta  
Horace Woodward  
David Forsaith  
James Graham  
John McGarvey  
Irwin Daby

Warren Bird  
George Curtis  
Henry Burrill  
L. Frank Gay  
Messina Ballou  
Wilfred Clark  
George Hussey  
Ernest Kinsley  
Conrad Bryant  
J. Freeman Ellis  
Walter Swan  
William Flander  
Hannibal Folsom  
Alvin Colburn  
A. Perry Curtis  
Fred Johnson  
Frank Phillips  
Spencer Billings  
Joseph West  
Hiram Belcher  
Frank W. Pye  
Charles Wade  
Charles Johnson

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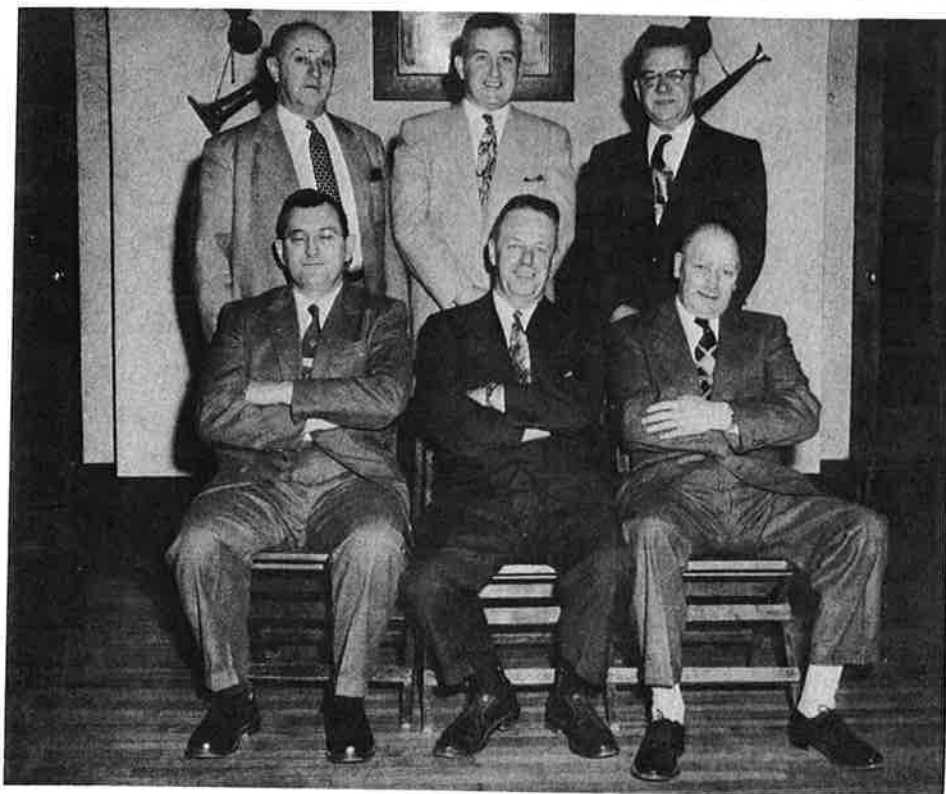
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