

# NEWARK FIRE DEATHS CHARGED TO VICTIM

Factory Owner Says His Fore-  
woman Was Responsible for  
the Great Loss of Life.

## SHE TRIED TO SAVE OTHERS

One Witness Thinks a Locked Door  
Was the Real Obstacle to Es-  
cape from the Factory.

Coroner Steiner began his official inquiry before a jury yesterday to determine the cause of the disaster in the factory building at High and Orange Streets, Newark, on Nov. 26, as a result of which twenty-five of the women and girls employed by the Wolf Muslin Undergarment Company lost their lives. Several witnesses were called, among them W. Irving Wolf of Far Rockaway, Vice President of the Wolf Company.

When questioned by the Prosecutor, Wolf said that Miss Anna Haag, forewoman of the factory, who was killed in the fire, was in charge of the plant and was entirely responsible for its proper physical condition and the comfort of the employes. He said that she had reported to him every time there was an inspection by Health or Building Inspectors, but that she had never made known to him any request of the inspectors for alterations. It was part of her business, he said, to take the inspectors through the plant and ascertain if the conditions were satisfactory.

The witness said he knew little or nothing about the physical condition of the building, but that Miss Haag was under strict orders to report promptly to some member of the firm any request made by the inspectors. He admitted that there had never been any fire drill, and that the door at the foot of the stairs leading from his plant to the third floor was sometimes kept locked.

Eugene McQuat, Superintendent of the Anchor Lamp Factory, where the fire started, was a witness.

"I found the door at the foot of the stairway leading to the top floor locked," he said, "and I pounded on it. Finally the door was opened by Miss Haag, who at once rushed back up stairs." A few moments later, he said, escape from the Wolf factory by the stairs was cut off. He said he believed that all the employes in the Wolf factory could have escaped if the door had not been locked.

"In your judgment, if there had been a fire escape at the south end of the building, could not all have got out?" asked Prosecutor Mott.

"I think they could," replied the witness.

The death of Carrie Robrecht, one of the employes in the Wolf factory, was made the basis of the inquiry, and County Physician McKenzie said that it had been caused by her jumping from a window.