

## Fire

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units came. There was a total of 20 to 25 fire people being used."

No firemen were injured fighting the fire. Manhattan does not investigate fires on University property, Smith said.

"Here in the city, we investigate every fire fully, no matter what the size. But we never investigate fires at the University," Smith said. "Since they are a state agency, they have the services of the state fire marshal's office available."

He said he had never seen the investigative file on the Nichols fire.

Officials of the state fire marshal's office worked with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation on an inquiry of the Nichols fire. According to George Rogge, state fire marshal, the investigative file on the Nichols fire has been destroyed.

"I didn't work on it (the investigation) and neither did anyone presently working

here," Rogge said. He has a card in his files indicating the fire had been investigated but the file had been destroyed.

"I have a sneaking hunch that after 10 years the file was destroyed. We don't throw them away anymore," Rogge said.

Rogge was appointed state fire marshal in 1972.

Lt. James Tubach, Security and Traffic Investigator, participated in the investigation of the Nichols fire. Tubach was sheriff with about two weeks left in his term, at the time of the fire.

"I don't have any of the actual investigation reports on the fire," Tubach said. "I don't know anyone who has a copy."

Tubach said the investigation, led by the state fire marshal's office and KBI, showed the fire was the result of arson.

"Samples from the fire are collected and tested in the lab to see whether an accelerant was used," Tubach said.

"Although the investigation determined it was arson, there was never enough evidence for an arrest or conviction."

It was hard to tell what type of an accelerant was used because the old gym floor had lots of oil or varnish on it, Tubach said. The fire began on the north side of the building near the doors, he noted.

Several people were questioned as part of the investigation, Tubach said.

"People who were at the scene of the fire, or who had been seen at previous fires, or who had been seen around the scene of the fire previously were questioned," Tubach said. "Professors were asked to identify disgruntled students who may have possibly been connected with the fire." He said mainly people from the University — not from the community — were questioned.

"The only conclusion the investigation reached was that the fire was the result of arson," Tubach said. "There were eventual-

ly some suspects, but there was never enough proof for a charge or conviction."

Most of the investigation was completed when Tubach left office in January 1969.

The University Fire Department has undergone several changes since the Nichols fire, according to Mike Bodelson, senior in architecture and business, who is crew captain.

"The students who worked at that time only worked at night and weren't trained," he said. "Now we go through four hours of fire school every week. We learn fire-fighting techniques and first aid."

He said the new water mains are a big improvement. Part of the reason the fire departments lost Nichols was the lack of sufficient water supply, he added.

Although the equipment is basically the same, Bodelson said it has been overhauled and upgraded and would be better able to fight a large fire.

## Mood

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Drive-in was showing a horror movie marathon.

Those who opted to stay home had a full evening of TV viewing in front of them. They could choose from "Wild, Wild West," "Gomer Pyle," "High Chaparral," "Judd" or "Star Trek." After the news, "The Tonight Show" and the "Joey Bishop Show" were scheduled.

## Architect

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have been working on the plans for about a year.

"I've done quite a bit of prowling around the building, taking measurements and looking at the foundation and the masonry. I've even spoken a couple of times on campus to special interest groups," Singleton

assistant manager of campus extension radio KSAC, said.

"I was home sick in bed. I got a call about 10 or 10:30" from a student at the radio station saying there was a small fire in Nichols Gymnasium. But the student told Titus not to worry about it because "it's not very big."

Fifteen minutes later, Titus said, the student called back with an updated account. Titus walked from his home at Eighth and Bluemont and said, "I could feel the heat by the time I got halfway there."

IT WAS SPECULATED that the fire was the work of an arsonist. According to the 1969 Royal Purple, wooden tables "doused with a flammable liquid" had been stacked at one entrance to Nichols Gymnasium.

The Collegian's Dec. 14 extra reported the wind caused some concern as it blew burning cinders onto houses and even presented a chance for danger to bystanders.

## Protest

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money. All those students — were they out there protesting because they hated to see Nichols razed or because they thought it might be fun to tell Mom they participated?"

A "Nichols Gym Picnic" took place in front of the gym in April. It featured live music and entertainment as well as a photo display.

As stated in a Collegian editorial, the picnic was an "outward display of concern on the part of those who have watched the Nichols Gym controversy drag out for too many years."

ANOTHER PERSON who took part in the protest is Michael Zorn, now a special student in business. He said he made an effort to go to it (the rally in front of Anderson). The campus "never did anything" and students seemed apathetic, he said.

Nichols raised student interest, Zorn said.