

CAMDEN MERCHANT

ON TRIAL FOR ARSON

Store Found Soaked in Oil;
Man Tells Judge He Was
Away From Home

Gas House Employee Tells
Court "Fumes" Not Whis-
ky Made Him Drunk

Accused of being responsible for a fire which damaged his shoe store on the night of July 23 last, Charles Morris, 50 years old, a merchant at 1203 Haddon avenue, was placed on trial in the Camden Criminal Court yesterday on three indictments. One charges arson, another conspiracy to commit the crime and the third with aiding in the crime. Morris pledged not guilty to all three charges.

When fire was discovered in the store a few minutes before midnight on July 23 the firemen found a heavy shoe rack against the front door and on the floors were rags, stockings and a carpet runner soaked in oil. The flames were checked before making much headway. None of the members of the Morris family was at home when the fire broke out. They were at the seashore and did not return until the following morning when Morris was placed under arrest. He states that he went away early on the morning of the day of the fire and that he has no knowledge of the cause of the blaze. He also denies the presence of the oil-soaked rags in the store. The rags and other articles which had been bathed in kerosene were shown to the jury, on which there are five women. Fire Chief Carter, Police Chief Hyde and several firemen testified to the oil fumes in the store. The State also contended that Morris carried \$10,000 insurance on a \$7000 stock.

In session in Camden the Quadrennial Conference of the Union American Methodist Church, colored, yesterday adopted a rule imposing a fine of \$1 on each member of the conference not present at roll call. The suggestion came from the committee on revision of law and met with considerable objection. Bishop J. F. Ramsey, who was presiding, told the objectors that they did not know their discipline. The rule was put in force at the afternoon session and fines were imposed on several tardy members.

Pleading guilty to a charge of selling liquor at their home at 824 Sycamore street, Joseph Samuel and his wife, Victoria, were fined \$100 by Judge Porch in Camden yesterday. They told the court that they had borrowed money with which to pay the fine and when the Judge was further advised that they had managed to get \$100 he fixed the penalty at that figure. Charged with selling liquor on March 22 and August 8, the couple told the court they only accommodated a few friends.

As an aide to John Welch, the Camden agent, whose office is taxed to meet the demands of new motorists for registration and driving licenses, State Commissioner Dill yesterday named Charles L. Stafford as a motor vehicle agent. He will open offices at 3. Tanner street, Haddonfield. An average of over 200 persons seeking drivers' permits are examined weekly in Camden. The ad-

ditional agent will lighten the burden of the Camden office.

"I was not drunk, but was merely full of gas," was the excuse given by Peter Behrens, 46 years old, of Locust and Division streets, when he was arraigned in Camden Police Court yesterday on a charge of being under the influence of liquor. Behrens explained that he is employed in the gas house and that through inhalation of fumes he got in a condition which caused a policeman to believe he was drunk. In imposing a fine of \$10 the court said he recognized Behrens as a man who had previously been before him for intoxication.

Death from natural causes was the findings of Dr. David Bentley, Jr., after he performed an autopsy on the body of Joseph Weede, who died in Cooper Hospital a few hours after being taken ill in his room at Third and Division streets. Philadelphia relatives asked that the autopsy be performed.