

GONE INTO HISTORY

90 YEARS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ARCHIVES

MINNESOTA COMMISSION OF PUBLIC SAFETY

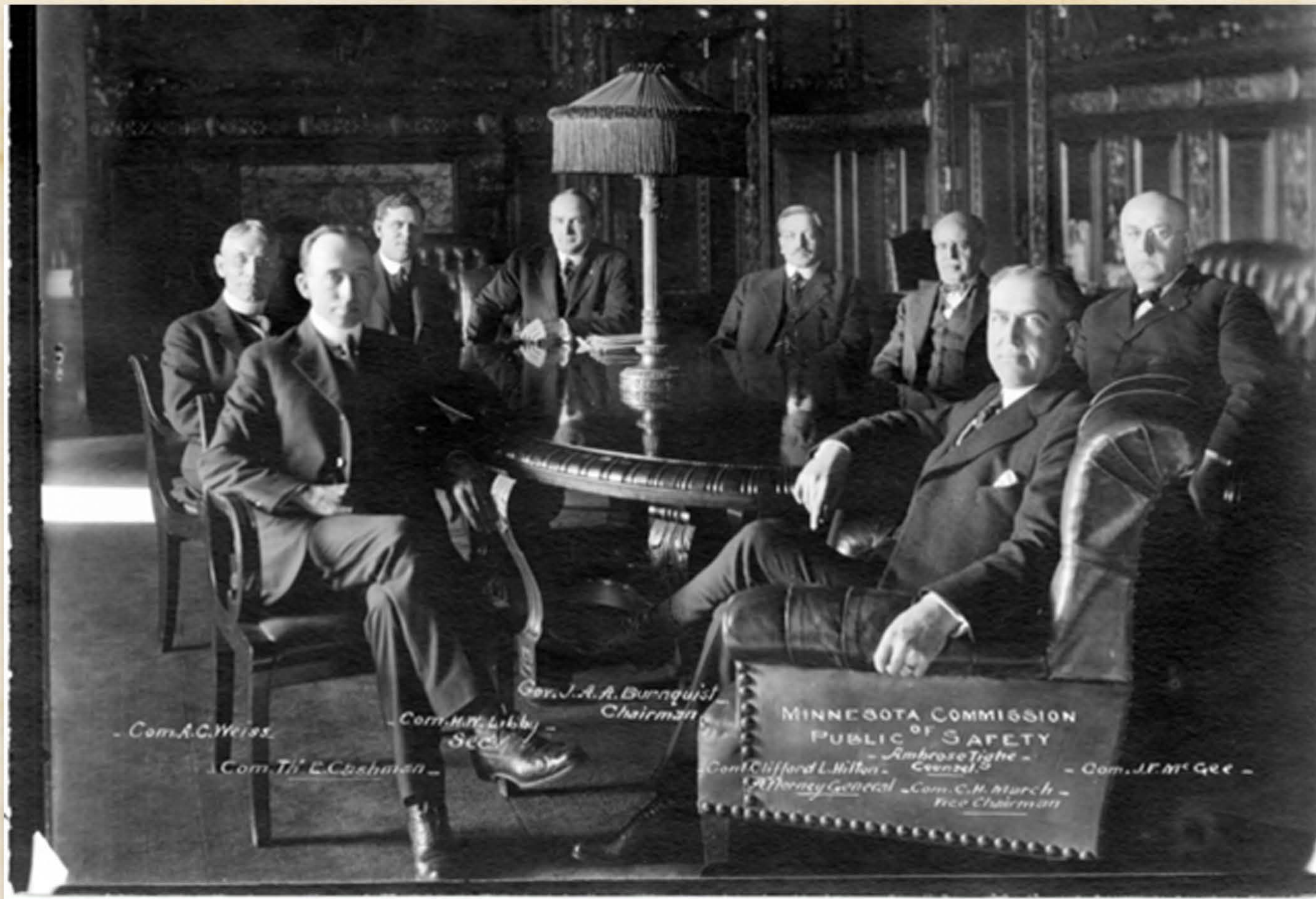


Image courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

“The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety was a watchdog group created in 1917...to mobilize the state's resources during World War I. During a two-year reign, its members enacted policies intended to protect the state from foreign threats. They also used broad political power and a sweeping definition of disloyalty to thwart those who disagreed with them.”

-- “Minnesota Commission of Public Safety” by Matt Reicher for MNopedia,
<http://www.mnopedia.org/group/minnesota-commission-public-safety>

In a 2005 Minnesota Public Radio article, retired University Professor Hy Berman described the Commission as a “reign of terror that wiped out civil liberties, wiped out freedom of expression, wiped out freedom of association -- that created a kind of climate where, in fact, (the Commission) ruled by force.” The article notes that “some 70 percent of the state's residents were immigrants or first-generation Americans in 1917. German-Americans were the largest ethnic group. Officials worried the immigrants would violently oppose the U.S.’s entry into World War I and a military draft to raise troops.”

-- “In another time of war, Minnesota suspended civil liberties” by Dan Olson, Minnesota Public Radio,
July 4, 2005 http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2005/07/04_olsond_safety/