



The Signevierist

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The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

2010 CHARLESTON CONVENTION

THE CONVENTION opened Thursday evening with a tour of the American LaFrance Museum whose formal name is the North Charleston and American LaFrance Fire Museum and Education Center (Check out their site on <http://www.legacyofheros.org>). After arriving we had a sit down barbeque sandwich and tour of the museum. With 18 fully restored apparatus pieces and interactive exhibits, the 2007 museum was a wonderful experience for the members. I hope everyone took the opportunity to drive the fire truck simulator. It had all the bells and whistles, literally and figuratively. Upon return to the hotel, the hospitality room opened and we all had a chance to catch up with friends not seen since last year. The Silent Auction items were set up in an adjacent room.

After Friday's breakfast we boarded a bus with our own lovely tour guide, Linda Jones, and set off for a tour of Charleston. Our tour was in three large open air carriages each drawn by two mules. Charleston's residential center is full of lovely homes and gardens. A number of fire marks were spotted on some of the homes. We stopped to visit the Nathaniel Russell House and saw how the well-to-do lived during the cooler months of the year. It appears everyone cleared out of town during the brutal hot summer months.

Lunch was at Gullah Cuisine and consisted of low county southern soul food. Most of us skipped desert for a second helping of the best fried chicken this Yankee ever ate. The bus ride after lunch dropped us off at the Charleston Historical Museum where the curator laid out a special display of fire memorabilia and fire marks for us. Friday night was dinner on your own. (I decided to go native and had shrimp and grits. A first for this Yankee, and it was delicious.)

Linda Anderberg ran Saturday's business meeting smoothly and was followed by our guest speaker Henry Lowndes, CEO of the oldest insurance agency in South Carolina. Mr. Lowndes' fascinating account of the 160 year old insurance agency was well received. After a box lunch the auction for the 114 lots of marks and insurance/firefighting memorabilia began at 1:00pm. As usual, Gabe Laubacher moved the bidding smoothly. Sales for both auctions were \$18,535.95. See Ed Schlesinger's report on the highlights of both auctions in this issue.

Following the delightful Saturday banquet our outgoing President, Linda Anderberg, thanked Gabe Laubacher and presented him with a gavel for hosting and to use for his future auctioneer duties. Bill Evenden, Peter Faber and myself each received the Mort Werner Award for their work of enhancing and correcting the descriptions of fire marks on the New York City Fire Museum's database. Also, Jan and Tom Hardy received the Max Klein Silver Salver for meritorious service to the FMCA. The incoming President, Dave Oldham, presented Linda, the outgoing President, a plaque for her leadership for the past two years.

Bob Shea, Editor

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## A Review of the Charleston Auctions

**B**UOYED by the largest convention attendance in several years, live and absentee bidding in both auctions was brisk at our 2010 Convention in Charleston.

Almost 86% of the lots in the Live Auction sold, and 69% of the lots in the Silent Auction sold.

### The Live Auction

The Live Auction contained 114 lots [two lots were removed because the Auction Lot Verification Committee determined that they were reproductions and two more lots never reached Charleston] consisting of the following types of material:

Fire marks:

United States: 27;

British Isles [United Kingdom and Ireland]: 30;

Other countries: 14;

Signs: 12; and

Other items [paper cutters, grenades, etc.]: 31.

98 of these lots sold.

As occurred in the 2009 Live Auction, eight of the ten lots realizing the highest prices were American fire marks. The two remaining "Top Ten" lots were British fire marks. Of the "Top Ten" fire marks, seven were composed of tin, two of lead and one of cast iron.

The following is a list of the top ten Live Auction lots, ranked in the order of the price realized by each lot:

| <u>Lot No.</u> | <u>Bulau No.</u> | <u>Description</u>                                       | <u>Price Realized</u> |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4              | 157              | City Ins. Co. ["Rowing Machine"], Cincinnati, cast iron  | \$ 3,000              |
| 100            | 358              | Michigan State Ins. Co., Adrian, MI., tin                | 1,600                 |
| 9              | 391              | Detroit Fire & Marine Ins. Co., Detroit, tin             | 1,100                 |
| 29             | 299-X-1          | Germania Fire Ins. Co., NYC, tin                         | 850                   |
| 6              | 458              | Columbia Fire Ins. Co., Dayton, OH, tin                  | 650                   |
| 61             | US-RA-1          | Republic of New York, NYC, tin                           | 650                   |
| 101            | 475-X-1          | State Ins. Co. of Des Moines, tin                        | 560                   |
| 36             | 700              | Norwich Gen. Assce. Office, Norwich, UK, lead            | 550                   |
| 74             | 187              | Springfield Fire & Marine Ins. Co., Springfield, MA, tin | 500                   |
| 55             | 667              | Salop Fire Office, Shrewsbury, UK, lead                  | 375                   |

## **The Silent Auction**

There were 130 lots listed in the Silent Auction, but four of those lots did not reach Charleston. Of the 126 lots that were in Charleston, 87 lots sold.

Lot No. 102, a turquoise glass insulator with "City Fire Alarm" etched on it, realized \$125.00. Lot No. 72, a reproduction of a Sun Insurance Office fire mark [BU 550], realized \$95.00.

There was a three way tie for ninth place, so of the eleven Silent Auction lots realizing the highest prices, the remaining nine lots were:

| <u>Lot No.</u> | <u>Description</u>                                            | <u>Price Realized</u> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 12             | Framed print of the Deluge Firehouse, Newton, NH              | \$ 60                 |
| 6              | Parade or muster ribbon, Merrill Hose #2, Canandaigua, NY     | 50                    |
| 21             | Reproduction fire mark, Fireman's Fund Ins. Co., S.F., CA     | 50                    |
| 56             | Paperweight/mirror, American Nat'l. Fire Ins. Co., Dayton, OH | 50                    |
| 13             | Print, Currier & Ives, "The American Fireman, Always Ready"   | 45                    |
| 95             | Book, Edward R. Tufts, <u>Hundreds of Hunnemans</u> (1978)    | 45                    |
| 26             | Reproduction BU 766, Eagle Ins. Co., London                   | 40                    |
| 51             | Book, <u>The Historical Collection of INA</u> (1945)          | 40                    |
| 66             | Auto tag, Tokio Marine & Fire (1974)                          | 40                    |

FMCA thanks all consignors and bidders who participated in both auctions for making them as successful as they were.

Thanks to the Auction Lot Verification Committee [Bob Shea, Chair, and members Peter Faber and Tom Hardy] for its yeoman work in examining and authenticating all of the fire marks in the Live Auction.

Finally, thanks to Linda Anderberg and Tom Hewitt, our Auction Co-Chairs, Gabe Laubacher, our auctioneer, and Tom Hardy, Jan Hardy, Ted Lussem, Sherrie Lussem, Pat Hewitt, Jane Cyva and Helen Slusher [Linda Anderberg's Mother] who assisted them in staging both auctions.

Ed Schlesinger

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BOOKS WANTED

MEMBER Jim Giles is looking to purchase the following books:

The Factory Mutuals: 1835-1935, Being Primarily A History... by the Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company and *Biography of An Idea* by John Bainbridge, 1952.

If you have either one or both, and would like to sell, please Email Jim at seligknt@aol.com.

IN MEMORIUM

It IS WITH A HEAVY HEART that I inform you of the death of William Whipple on July 27, 2010. As a long time FMCA member, Bill was a frequent attendee at conventions until age slowed him down. Your editor has known Bill for many years and admired his gentleness but was not aware of his involvement in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, as a civic leader and philanthropist. Please Google "William Whipple Cedar Rapids" to learn of a Bill Whipple we never knew, but somehow suspected.

A donation in Bill's name was made to the Meth-Wick Community, Cedar Rapids, IA.

PORTUGUESE FIRE MARK BOOK

A NEW BOOK has been published on fire marks used in Portugal titled *Chapas - Heraldica das Seguradores - Heraldries of the Insurance Companies*, written by Vitor Alegria and Jose Pousinho Henriques. It is in English as well as Portuguese and all pictures are in color. The format is 8-14" by 11-3/4". It has 294 pages, and 400 high quality glossy photographs, showing not only many heretofore unknown Portuguese fire marks and those of foreign companies used in Portugal, but many insurance car badges. A short history is included for each company. The price is 29.40 Euros, about \$39.00 US, plus shipping.

To view sample pages from the book and to order it, go to the following link and then click on "Ingles":

http://www.inetese.pt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=108&Itemid=127

For those who do not have a computer, contact Bill Evenden, 6622 Paul Mar Drive, Lantana, FL 33462, Tel. 561-585-0160, for information on ordering.

(Your editor has a copy and heartily recommends it to the membership. The marks and auto tags are an aesthetic delight in full color at about 60% to scale. It is a must for your fire mark reference library.)

THIS AND THAT

Hawkeye Insurance Company

1865 ——— DES MOINES, IOWA ——— 1903

OFFICERS.
JAMES CALLANAN,
President.
W. D. SKINNER,
Vice-Pres. and Gen'l Mgr.
W. C. COLB,
Secretary.
H. R. HOWELL,
Asst. Secretary.

Capital, \$100,000.00 Assets, \$677,121.13
Surplus, \$228,841.20
THIS COMPANY INSURES PROPERTY AGAINST
Fire, Lightning, High Winds, Cyclones and Tornadoes.
Two Million Dollars
Paid to Iowa People in Losses Since Organization.
AGENTS WANTED IN IOWA.

DIRECTORS.
JAMES CALLANAN,
G. M. HIPPEE,
SIMON CASADAY,
J. A. LAWLESS,
W. D. SKINNER,
H. R. HOWELL,
W. C. COLB.

FRANKLIN INSURANCE COMPANY, BULAU 268

BULAU lists the dates of the Franklin Insurance Company as 1855 – 1878. The Franklin Insurance Company, Saint Louis, was incorporated on February 28, 1855 as a stock insurer. A supplementary act was approved on March 9, 1859 granting the company "...power to make all kinds of insurance...as are usually adopted by mutual companies..." That is, under the name of Franklin Insurance Company, the company issued both stock and mutual policies. Its stock business proved unprofitable and in 1878 reinsured the stock policies in the Home Insurance Company, NYC. The dates of 1855-1878 agree with the beginning and end dates of Bulau.

However, the company continued to operate as a mutual insurer under the name Franklin Insurance Company until 1884, when it was reorganized and changed its name to the "Franklin Mutual Insurance Company." The Franklin Mutual Insurance Company went out of business and reinsured in 1906 with the National Fire Insurance Company, Hartford.

Based on the above data, the entry for the company should be:

Franklin Insurance Company
St. Louis, Missouri

1855 – 1906, organized as a stock company in 1855; in 1859 it was authorized to write both stock and mutual policies; 1884 changed name to the 'Franklin Mutual Insurance Company'; 1906 went out of business and reinsured in the National Fire Ins. Co., Hartford.

Bob Shea

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## 2010 CHARLESTON AUCTION PRICES

### Item-sold for:

|         |               |               |         |           |          |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------|-----------|----------|
| 1-\$125 | 21-pass       | 41-10         | 61-650  | 81-155    | 101-560  |
| 2-60    | 22-20         | 42-45         | 62-100  | 82-pass   | 102-50   |
| 3-pass  | 23-pass       | 43- no show   | 63-25   | 83-200    | 103-200  |
| 4-3,000 | 24-160        | 44-140        | 64-100  | 84-pass   | 104-20   |
| 5-100   | 25-65         | 45-pass       | 65-30   | 85-30     | 105-20   |
| 6-650   | 26-125        | 46-40         | 66-190  | 86-220    | 106-30   |
| 7-35    | 27-90         | 47-50         | 67-50   | 87-125    | 107-30   |
| 8-230   | 28-120        | 48-25         | 68-40   | 88-150    | 108-40   |
| 9-1,100 | 29-850        | 49-60         | 69-25   | 89-50     | 109-275  |
| 10-55   | 30-pass       | 50-325        | 70-110  | 90-100    | 110-50   |
| 11-40   | 31-150        | 51-30         | 71-120  | 91-130    | 111-50   |
| 12-135  | 32-105        | 52-110        | 72-40   | 92-80     | 112-240  |
| 13-120  | 33-60         | 53-150        | 73-25   | 93-30     | 113-130  |
| 14-100  | 34-25         | 54- withdrawn | 74-500  | 94-170    | 114-30   |
| 15-pass | 35- withdrawn | 55-375        | 75-pass | 95-40     | 115-20   |
| 16-65   | 36-550        | 56- no show   | 76-125  | 96-pass   | 116-40   |
| 17-200  | 37-200        | 57-60         | 77-75   | 97-40     | 117-30   |
| 18-90   | 38-325        | 58-205        | 78-pass | 98-pass   | 118-pass |
| 19-30   | 39-pass       | 59-90         | 79-40   | 99-15     |          |
| 20-pass | 40-55         | 60-190        | 80-pass | 100-1,600 |          |

*Fire Marks in situ*



Philadelphia Fire Department's former Engine 11 firehouse, 1035 Lombard St.

Note the Fire Association fire marks on the firehouse and on the two adjacent buildings.

Photo courtesy of Fireman's Hall Museum, Philadelphia