



# The Signevierist

Issue Number 2002 - 3

The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas



## FMCA's 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

THE FIRE MARK CIRCLE OF THE AMERICAS will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Atlanta and over 100 delegates are expected for the Annual Convention and Auction. The convention will be held October 3-6 at the Doubletree Hotel in Atlanta-Buckhead, Georgia.

Planned activities include visiting many attractions related to the world renowned book, *Gone With The Wind*. These include:

- Margaret Mitchell House & Museum
- The Atlanta Cyclorama
- The Road to Tara Museum
- Stately Oaks Plantation
- Ashley Oaks Antebellum Plantation

A "VIP Tour" of CNN Studios and attendance at a "Talk Back Live" television show will also be offered.

There will be a "swap and sell" hospitality room each evening. A banquet Saturday night follows a day of seminars, business meeting and an auction of 200 fire marks, fire insurance advertising, signs, fire department items and other memorabilia. Six meals are also included.

To obtain further information, contact me at (770) 451-2651 or email (GHartleySr@aol.com).

Glenn Hartley

IT IS WITH REGRET that I must make the belated announcement that my very good friend and long-time FMC & FMCA member, William E. Swigart, Jr., 85, of Huntingdon, PA, died on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Bill was the son of W. Emmert Swigart, who was one of the original American members of the old pre-War FMC, and a well-known collector of fire marks in his time. Some FMCA members will be familiar with the booklet W. Emmert wrote in 1946, titled *Old Fire Marks*.

Bill and I shared our primary hobby of collection antique automobiles. However the fire mark collection, which Bill's father assembled and was prominently on display at the offices of Swigart Associates, Inc., the insurance company his father founded in 1907, made me first aware of the existence of fire marks. It was through the search of fire marks in England for him that Lore and I became enthralled with this hobby.

Bill was a born collector hobbyist. Although most of his active hobby time was spent with antique car club activities and the management of his own Swigart Museum of antique cars outside Huntingdon, he loved and collected antique toys, automobilia, license plates, car literature, horse harness buttons, model trains, and fire marks. He always regretted that he was never able to attend the FMCA Conventions. Every year the Convention took place at the same time as the Revival Glidden Tour of antique cars, an event which he attended 52 of the 53 times it was held, missing one year while he was in the service during W.W.II. Because of this, few of our FMCA members knew him, but he was a fine gentleman who is missed by all those who knew him well.

His first wife Helen preceded him in death on May 11, 1991. He is survived by his second wife Patricia: two sons, William E. Swigart, III of North Providence, RI and Jeffrey F. Swigart of Malvern, PA; two daughters, Anne E. Seegar of Arlington, VA, and Susan S. Porter of Plymouth, MI; a stepson Stephen R. Hall and a step daughter, Patricia E. Hall Wilsbach Krow, both of Hummelstown, PA; a sister, Naomi S. Miller of Huntingdon; eight grandchildren; three step-granddaughters; and one step-great-granddaughter.

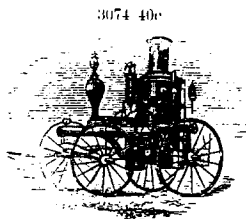
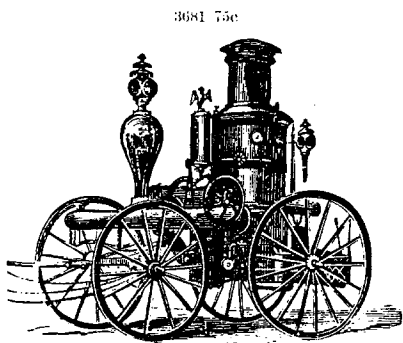
Bill Evenden

## READY-TO-USE ILLUSTRATIONS

WHILE REVIEWING a number of newly acquired fire insurance policies, I noticed that three different companies used the same illustration of a steam fire engine – two used a large rendition on the policy mast-head and one used a smaller version on the back of the policy. The use of fire apparatus on fire insurance policies was quite common. It was an image that the fireman's insurance companies used successfully to market their insurance.

It's not likely that the same printer was used by all three companies, since two different states were involved – Pennsylvania and Ohio. Having dealt with insurance trade cards, I realized that the steam fire engine illustration was a stock item for a printer. I recalled that a few years ago I obtained a large book of type specimens. The policy images were identical to those in my copy of *James Conner's Sons: Electrotype Specimens, 1888*. The 1972 book is a facsimile copy of a specimen book of electrotype cuts manufactured by James Connor's Sons, also known as the United States Type Foundry. In it are 4,419 specimens that illustrate the daily life and commerce of the 1860s and 1870s.

More than likely, the three different policy printers purchased the following illustrations, known as "stock electros," from the United States Type Foundry.



The large illustration also appears in the 1870 Boston City Directory for the "Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, Manufacturers of Steam Fire Engines, Manchester, N.H."

Bob Shea

## MAX KLEIN, the "PACK RAT," STRIKES AGAIN

MOST OF YOU KNOW that Max collected *anything insurance*. When I handled the sale of his over 1,500 pieces, some did not sell. There were two scraps of paper that I took to be penciled file notations by an attorney employed by the United Railroads. As they are literally falling apart, I have copied them as best I can for your entertainment.

Nov. 7, 1966

Thomas Lillus, laborer, about 40 years Age. Deformed – abnormal chest. Appears heavy compared to size. Has collected a claim from United Railroads & one from Frankfort. United refused one. He sued Thomson Bridge Co. Defended by us & verdict ordered for defendant. Attorney [left blank] had represented him on several occasions.

June 3, 1907

W.B. Corday, Pasadena, Calif. Fake claimant against railroads. Reddish eye. Scar from appendix in right groin. About 24-25 years of age. Mr. Geo. K. Ford, former adjuster of United Railroad reported.

Apparently, this attorney was his own Index Bureau. Some years later, casualty companies formed an independent organization, whose function was to record in a central file the names of all injury claimants. The file became a cross-reference center so as to "weed out" fraudulent claimants. It even noted legitimate persons who had more than the usual number of claims; what we would call *accident-prone individuals*. As an adjuster myself, I am glad to see the "old timers" were "on the ball."

Jim Giles

## GRAND FIREMAN'S MUSTER

ONE OF THE PLEASURES of research is the finding of the unexpected. While at the Filson Historical Society here in Louisville, I was perusing material relating to the Veteran Volunteer Fireman's Association, and found a folder I had never before seen. It contained a single document, inviting the Veteran Volunteer Fireman's Association of Louisville to a muster of hand pumped fire engines. The muster was to held in Springfield, Mass. on June 20, 1901.

Please enjoy this special attachment of Americana, reproduced here in its entirety.

Dave Wings

## MORE TRIBUTES TO AL WILLS

"THE ALBERT E. WILLS FIRE MARK GALLERY" was dedicated on Sunday afternoon, April 21, 2002 at Philadelphia's Fireman's Hall Museum. Al's family and many friends, including the Commissioner of the Philadelphia Fire Department and his wife attended the dedication. Among the attendees, who munched sandwiches and sipped wine, were a number of local FMCA members: Jim Giles, L. J. Hedges, Melissa Hough, Ralph Jennings, Lee Ryan, Carol Smith and myself.

The first showing of the complete set of Fire Association of Philadelphia fire marks that Al donated to the museum highlighted the event. "You've got to see them together to appreciate the subtle differences," remarked one observer.

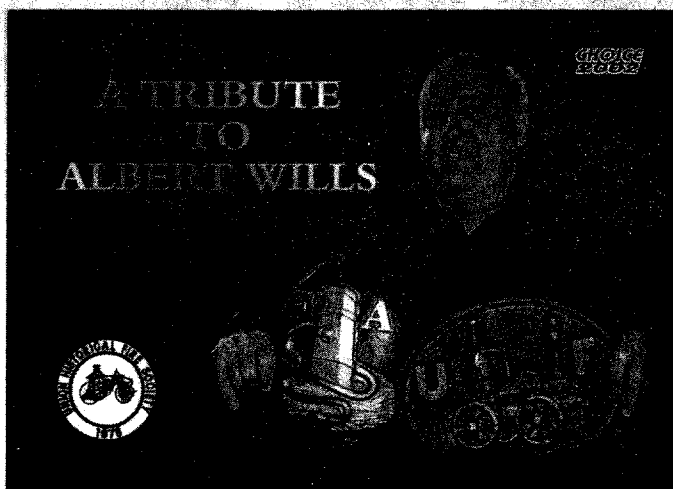
To commemorate the affair, the Union Historical Fire Society passed out a "baseball card" picturing Al holding the first two fire marks he acquired many years ago. I hope that the following colorful card reproduces well.

After living in the same house in Cornwells Heights/Bensalem, PA for 45 years, Al and Adele just moved into a beautiful retirement village in Chambersburg, PA. With the old "firehouse" getting a bit too much for them to take care of and with Al's recent health conditions and diagnosis of Alzheimer's, they decided it was time to pack up the fire gear, marks and all. They are settling in nicely and are happy in their new surroundings. Al's going to be right at home there since he has one of only two known Chambersburg fire marks.

Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. They would love to hear from the members at:

740D Menno Village  
Chambersburg, PA 17201  
(717) 264-5571

Bob Shea



## ALBERT WILLS CORNWELLS HEIGHTS, PA

A dedicated person to his family and a special person and friend to all.

- Past Chief Cornwells Heights Volunteer Fire Department & Historian
- Charter member of fire mark circle of the Americas
- Honorary Chief of PFD - Official Historian PFD
- Director - Philadelphia Fire Department Historical Corporation
- Member of Fireman's Hall Museum
- Member SPAAMFAA

### UNION HISTORICAL FIRE SOCIETY.

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## THIS AND THAT

GLENN HARTLEY also advises that the FMCA Atlanta Convention hopes to honor members who are or have been officially involved with firefighting. If you qualify and have not responded to Glenn's letter, or did not receive a letter, please contact Glenn.

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YOUR NEWSLETTER requires articles to continue. Now that I'm getting the hang of Publisher 98, I am looking for material to include in your newsletter. With summer here and FMCA members attending antique shows and scouring flea markets, why not drop me a line on what you acquired.

Does the new acquisition enhance your collection? Did you get the item at a great price? Is it something that you've been searching for, for years?

Why not share your happiness and good fortune with the membership? Bragging and sharp dealing are encouraged.

Bob Shea, *Your Editor*

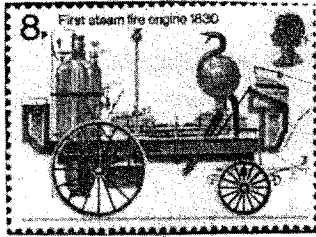
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FOLLOWING IS THE SECOND installment of Ed Tufts' monograph on fire stamps, "The Age of Steam." I'm sure you'll be as fascinated as I am about this artful and educational tour of fire apparatus.

## THE AGE OF STEAM

Edward R. Tufts

Braithwaite & Ericsson made four engines but the prejudices were so strong that no more engines were built until after 1852.



Some of the hand engine builders, both in England and the United States, turned to the building of the steam fire engine and soon the hand pump was relegated to the small villages or countries that could not afford a steamer.

A number of the hand engine builders in the United States and in England tried their hand at building steamers. Among the more popular on the continent was the Shand Mason Co., a successor to the Tilly Co, and of course, Merryweather & Co.

In the United States, the Hunneman Co. and Button & Blake went into the steam fire engine business. The Hunneman Co. only made 29 steam engines before going out of business. The Button Co. continued for a few years and made 229 engines. The other large hand engine builders, Clapp & Jones, Silsby, A.B. & E. Latta, Lane & Bodley, and C. Ahrens Cos. consolidated in 1865 to form the American Fire Engine Co. and they became a major factor along with The Amoskeag Co. in producing the Steam Fire Engine.

It was not long before the hand engine was replaced on the postage stamp, and soon new issues appeared with the "Fire demon" known as the steamer.

Once more, the question arose, "Why did so many remote countries utilize the steam fire engine on their stamps when there seems to be no record of a steamer sold to that country"? For instance, in 1998 the Republic of Sahara issued a stamp showing a P. K. Hodge type steamer. constructed in New York in 1840. This engine was pictured in a very old catalogue of the Metropolitan Fire Engine Co. .



Bear in mind, the first successful steamer made in America, the "Uncle Joe Ross" was not until 1853.

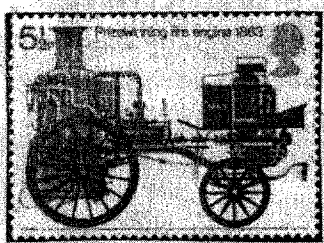
This company was later sold to Lane & Bodley, a pioneer builder in the Cincinnati, Ohio area and from 1863 to 1868 they only built 21 engines before being absorbed by the Metropolitan combine. Most of the engines made by this company were for the city of Cincinnati and other Mid-Western cities.

Speaking of these early engines, it is interesting to note that the famous and successful engine made by Reaney & Neafie of Philadelphia does not appear on any stamps. Although the last engine constructed was delivered to Cuba in 1870.

In any case it became obvious the evolution of the Steam Fire Engine set into motion a plethora of manufacturers seeking to "cash - in" on the new invention. As mentioned before, some of the hand engine builder entered the field, but their heart was not in it, and they soon gave it up as impractical.

In Europe, the leading builders were Shand Mason & Co., the successor to the Tilley Company and they built engines prior to 1858 and in 1861, Merryweather & Sons, who claimed the sale of over 500 steam engines, continues in business today.

The first Shand Mason appears on Scott # 717 issued from Great Britain in 1977 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Fire Service.



From 1860 to the turn of the century, Shand Mason Steamers appear on stamps from New Zealand, Australia, Cambodia, Cuba and the Falkland Islands.

A Merryweather engine on a stamp from Chile, Scott number #1111 dated 1869 is one of the early issues.

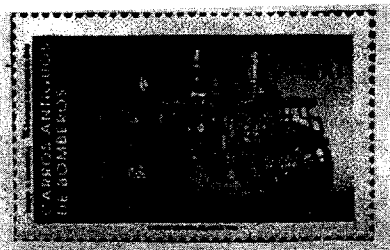


Others appear on stamps of Cuba, Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile and Uruguay.

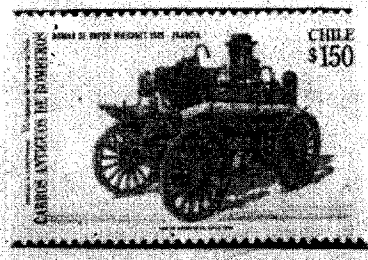
Speaking of Chile, it issued a stamp in 1963 showing a J. B. Johnson engine made by the Portland Co. in 1864. This was engine #19 and was delivered to Santiago, Chile. (Scott # C250).



I only call attention to these engine companies as they made a limited number for local use. The Portland Co. originated at the McKay & Gallagher shipyard in East Boston, Ma. and later moved to Portland, Maine. The records show they made 29 engines, the first in 1858 at the McKay & Gallagher shipyard in East Boston was a demonstrator call the "Antelope" and was sold to Salem, Mass. It is interesting to note that various countries selected steam fire engines built by the smaller, less recognized builders. Such was (Scott # 1048) Chile which shows a Waterous Engine, first buit in Canada and later in the United States.



Chile also utilized the talents of a French builder and displayed a Miesuset Steamer, made on Lyon, France in 1886.



It was not unusual for stamps to portray the engines of little known builders as there were some 20 major builders in the United States and about 50 small builders who made less than 25 engines.

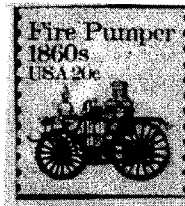
The engine shown on the previous page, issued by Chile in 1963, is a 1902 Waterous Engine. The company was located in Brantford, Canada with a manufacturing plant in St. Paul, Minn. They built about 100 engines.

The Metropolitan shown on the Cambodian S/S issued in 2001. made about 150 engines.



The Metropolitan Engine Co., eventually became a division of the American LaFrance Co. All told, these companies produced thousands of engines in the United States, from 1853 to the early 1900's.

In 1981 the U.S.P.S. issued Scott number 1908, a 20c stamp showing an Amoskeag Steamer. This engine of the 1860's could well be #13 made for Manchester, New Hampshire.



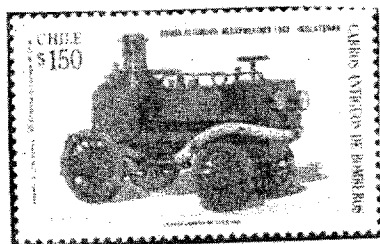
Amoskeag was a popular engine for the fire service The company made over 900 engines, mostly at their Manchester, N. H. plant and later at the Manchester Locomotive Works . it went out of business in 1913.

Gambia probably produced one of the more attractive issues when in 1996 it issued a single stamp mini-sheet depicting a 1865 Steamer,



After several years of fire fighting service, progress around the globe was expanding at a fast pace. Large fires in major cities like Chicago and Boston brought out the draw backs of the steamers. As in Boston the horses were stricken with a major sickness and during the Great fire of 1872, engines had to be pulled by hand to the scene. The large cumbersome engines were slow, and if the coal wagon was delayed the engine shut down.

Soon the self-propelled engine made its appearance, Scott number 1114 shows a 1903 Merryweather Automovil .

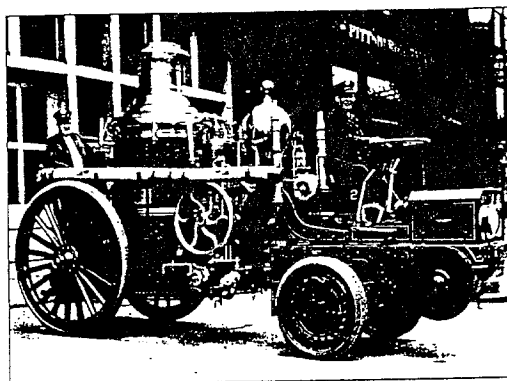


One of the German stamps issued in 1987, Scott Number 2614 has a 1903 "Dampfspritze" a self propelled engine.



It didn't take a long time for the progressive Fire Chiefs to figure that the gasoline engine could replace the horses, indeed they would replace the steamer. About 1912 the demand was building to replace the engines but what about the millions invested in these machines, and would it be practical to junk four to five thousand dependable engines?

A solution was conceived by Mr. Walter Christie, a designer of race cars. He manufactured two-wheeled gas powered tractors to pull the engines to the fire.



Thus the door was opened to another phase of the Fire Department, the modern fire apparatus.

Part Three will cover the development of this phase of firefighting as seen on stamps

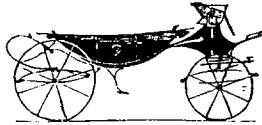
**WE DON'T CARE HOW YOU GET THERE!**



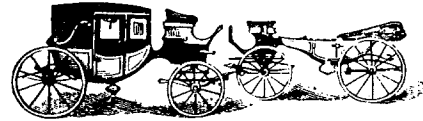
3640 40c



3641 25c



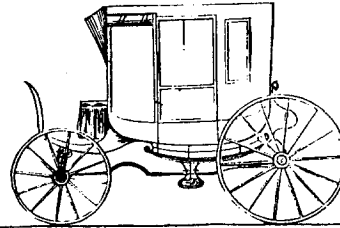
3642 40c



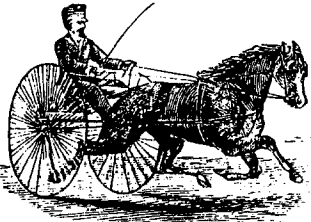
3644 50c



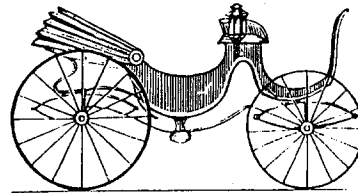
3645 25c



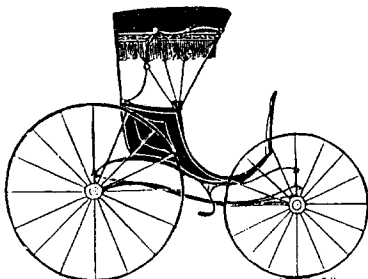
3647 75c



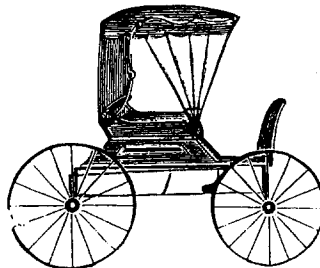
3648 75c



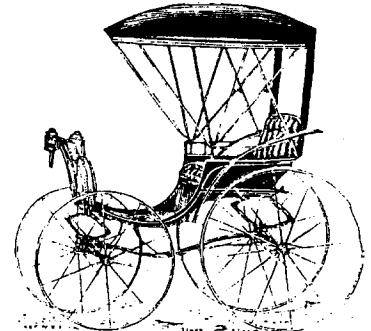
3660 75c



3661 75c



6920 75c



**JUST GET THERE!**

**SEE YOU IN ATLANTA!!!!**