



The Signevierist

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The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

2018 FMCA CONVENTION IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

I've had my fix for barbeque while at the convention in Austin. The early arrivals on Wednesday night went to Hoover's for great Southern food; I had barbequed pork ribs and three sides. Thursday night at Ironwork's I had barbequed beef ribs and a bottle of Lone Star beer. It doesn't get any better. Friday's dinner was fried chicken steak at Threadgill's. Thank you Linda Anderberg and Elaine Schlesinger for putting together a great selection of restaurants and for arranging the car pools.

Friday's tour of Austin started with the Bullock Texas State History Museum. This is a must for understanding the Texas experience. Now I know the historical meaning behind the name of the amusement park Six Flags Over Texas. My favorite at the museum was "Rodeo! The Exhibition." Friday's lunch where you made your own tacos was a hit with everyone.

Thanks again to Linda Anderberg and Linda Borgstrom for transporting the many Silent Auction and Live Auction items to the convention. Carol Smith, Tom Hewitt and I had fun unloading the car. Thanks to the many helpers that set out the 180 Silent Auction items for preview in the hospitality room, which we reviewed on Thursday and Friday nights, while catching up with friends, and chatting about fire marks and such.

Saturday morning's business meeting was followed by Mr. Galen Greaser of the Texas General Land Office who reviewed for us the fascinating complex system of Texas land grants beginning with the Spanish crown. The afternoon's Live Auction contained a varied offering that was bid on by both those in attendance and by mail. Linda Anderberg's report of the Live and Silent Auctions follows.

At the closing banquet, Tom Hewitt and Tom Hardy were each presented a plaque of appreciation for their work as 2018 Convention Hosts. Logan Smith was awarded the Max Klein Silver Salver, and Michael Brankowitz was presented the Marilyn and Morton Werner President's Award. Our president, Jack Brunson, wished everyone a safe home journey and a hope that all would join us for next year's convention, which is planned for Washington, DC.

Bob Shea

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## LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS AT AUSTIN - UPDATE

My thanks to all who consigned items for the Auctions. And I very much appreciated the Bidders. But the helpers with the Auctions deserve an especially large THANKS.

Many people assisted but I want to recognize some of the people that gave a very large assist. The Silent Auction always runs smoothly because of Jeanette Graham, Linda Borgstrom, Pat Hewitt and Tom Hewitt. The Live Auction starts during the year with the Auction Lot Verification Committee of Bob Shea, Tom Hardy, Bill Evenden and Mike Brankowitz reviewing each mark for authenticity or corrections from the website. Even though Bill Evenden was not able to join us this year, the other three members were able to finish the eyes on review during the convention.

Thanks to Gabe Laubacher, Jan Hardy, Dave Oldham, Logan Smith, Mike Brankowitz and Tom Hardy for assisting during the Live Auction.

The FMCA received donations for this year's auction from Charlean Alexander, Howard Alper, Martha Girdlestone and Nick Jennings.

### TOP SELLERS:

#### Live Auction

Lot 1 – Fire Department Insurance Company, fire mark, B138, \$2000

Lot 21 – Firemen's Insurance Company, fire mark, B293VA, \$1210

Lot 53 – Fire Association, brass fire mark, B91, after sale, \$900

Lot 12 – Baltimore Equitable Society, fire mark, B58/59, \$725

Lot 56 – Fire Helmet, \$475

The Total Sales for the Live Auction was \$17,508. 78% of the items sold this year.

#### Silent Auction

Lot 1 – Texas Fire Paperweight, \$55

Lot 30 – Gamewell Turtle Gong, \$50

The Total Sales for the Silent Auction was \$1,474

Please note that I can still do after sales for both the Live and Silent Auctions. Just contact me. And, I am already starting to think about next year's auctions. So, if you want to consign items, let me know as soon as you can.

Happy Holidays and Wonderful 2019 to all of you.

Linda Anderberg

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ONLINE LIBRARY OF FIRE MARKS

Have you ever been out and wished you had a handy copy of Bulau's *Footprints of Assurance* to look something up? Well, if you have a mobile device with you that can access the internet, you can now. That's right, *Footprints of Assurance* is online.

Here's how to download it:

1) Go to Google and enter hathitrust digital library

2) Click on [hathitrust digital library](#)

3) Enter [footprints of assurance](#) and select [Search](#)

You can also download of copy of INA's 1933 *American Fire Marks* using the same directions.

For those of you who are a little more adventurous, all the marks in *Footprints of Assurance* may be found on the website of the New York City Fire Museum (New York City Fire Museum / Visit Us / Exhibitions / Online Catalog). The marks in INA's *American Fire Marks* and more may be found on the website of the Smithsonian Institution (Smithsonian Institution / Collections / Collections Search Center).

Happy reading and viewing!

Bob Shea

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### KEEP AN EYE OUT

Presently, there are eight insurance companies that have issued fire mark whose fire marks have not been found:

Farmers' Insurance Company, Jelloway/Howell, Ohio  
Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Wadsworth, Ohio  
Fire Association of Harrisburg, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Hope Insurance Company, Louisville, Kentucky  
Lykens Valley Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Elizabethville, Pennsylvania  
Monroe Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Woodsfield, Ohio  
Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Providence, Rhode Island  
Security Insurance Company, Louisville, Kentucky

I believe that I may have found a ninth. I recently came across the following in *The United States Insurance Gazette and Magazine*, Volume XXXIIL, May 1, 1871 – 1871, page 162:

“...a tin plate about eight by four inches in dimension,  
with the abbreviated and scarcely visible announcement,  
“Robt. Morris Ins. Co.””

This small Philadelphia insurer had a dubious past; organized in 1856, it ceased writing in 1859. The company resumed writing business on a small scale around 1871. Little is known about the company except that it did not write insurance in Philadelphia and confined its writings to out of town risks.

Because the early 1870s was the “heyday” for tin fire marks and other Philadelphia insurers also issued tin fire marks, I like to think that this is an undiscovered fire mark waiting to be discovered. Keep an eye out for it.

Bob Shea

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THIS AND THAT

Included with this issue is a monograph, "Obsolete Currency of the Insurance Companies." While not fire mark centric, the bank notes issued by the companies are colorful and, like fire marks, are another reminder of the role of the insurance industry on the economic growth of the country.

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Mike Brankowitz's eagle eye has found another fire mark that was issued by an insurance company not listed in Bulau or previous Addenda. Addendum page US-FJ-1 for the Fidelity Fire Insurance Company of Delphos, Ohio is also included.

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### Fire Marks *in situ*

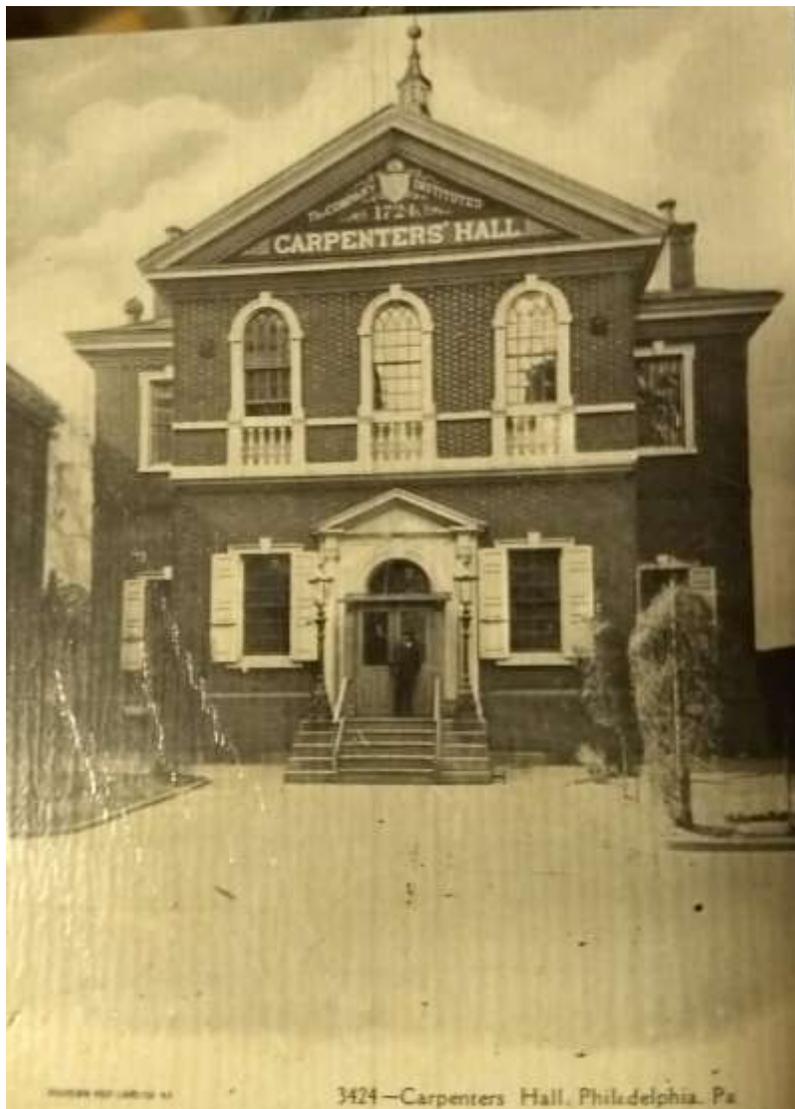


Photo courtesy of Logan Smith

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