

**FIRE MARK
REPRODUCTIONS**

or

FIRE MARKS I HAVE SEEN ON eBay

by

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FIRE MARK REPRODUCTIONS

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Things to Look For

Metals— Many reproductions have been made since the late 1920's and are of cast iron or aluminum. Some cast brass repros were made. Look for the wrong metals.

Brass — There are no cast brass fire marks, only impressed sheet brass. Examples: Fire Association, BU# 91 & Eagle # 240 (Bulau shows copper).

Old brass is yellow colored. Modern brass is yellow with a red tint.

Aluminum — Light weight. Not used extensively until after the 1890's. No old marks were made of aluminum. Note that BU# 420, Hicksville, L.I., is not a fire mark. It's a fire chief's car emblem.

Cast iron

Mounting Holes; more than the originals; drilled or not properly aligned; in the wrong location. Drilled holes may show gray iron or even threading. Examples: Green Tree, BU# 40 should have two holes; Associated Firemen, # 166 should only have one hole; Union Fire, # 428 holes are on the sides.

Size — smaller or larger.

Shape — sometimes flat instead of convex. Example. Fire Association with water should be flat not convex; Union Fire, #429 should be slightly convex not flat.

Weight — usually too thick and heavy.

Edges — look for grinder marks on repros — this is where the molten iron entered the mold on modern castings.

Iron — Old iron is a dark brown. New iron has a brighter orange rust color. If rust comes off on your hands, then it is probably new iron. New iron may even look gray. Glossy paint will mask the nature of the iron. Be especially careful if the back is painted.

Rear of the Mark — Look for casting numbers, symbols or initials on the rear. They may have been ground off, so look for inappropriate rubbings on the rear.

Repros of the Virginia Metal Crafters may show the following casting numbers: Fireman's of Baltimore, BU# 117, casting no. 377; United Firemen's, BU# 310, casting no. 22-4. Repros without a casting number have a "V" and "M" with a "Betty Lamp" symbol in the center. Wilton repros have their name spelled out.

Sprue or Gate Mark — At the point in the mold where the molten iron enters and fills the cavity, a sprue or gate mark may be seen in the form of a small indentation or raised spot. Not all marks have an identifiable sprue. Check if the original has an identified sprue.

Texture — Look for simulated rust that is cast in the repro itself; especially if back is painted.

Wood Boards — Look for cracks from nail holes on old wood boards. Wood cracks when bolted on walls due to expansion.

Use a Magnet — Only iron is magnetic. Aluminum, brass, copper, lead and zinc are non-magnetic.

Reproduced Fire Marks Sold As Originals

(All marks are cast iron unless indicated)

Associated Firemen's Ins. Co., Baltimore, BU# 166: repros in cast iron and aluminum. Original has only one cast hole on top and recessed figure on rear. Repros have simulated rust and grinder marks on edges. Look for casting numbers on rear. Original: app. 6 lbs., 2 oz.; sprue on rear at right of recess.



Associated Firemen's Ins. Co., Pittsburgh, BU# 191: Repros made of brass, aluminum and cast iron. Look for grinder marks on edges. Original: approx. 1 lb., 2 oz.; 3 small recess holes & good definition on front. Two variants- either a flat back or recess on top half of mark.



Baltimore Equitable Society, BU# 61: Repros made of cast iron or aluminum. Repros are usually smaller than the 10 3/8" x 9 3/4" originals. Original has only one hole at top. This is a modern mark, issued since 1927, that is made in cast iron or aluminum. Originals have a raised issue number on rear:

cast iron; 1-537, 850-2304
aluminum; 538-849, 2305-



Charleston Fire Ins. Co., BU# 81. Original: approx. 3 lbs., 15 oz.; 3 holes; sprue mark at about seven o'clock on rear.

Mutual Ins. Co., of Charleston, BU# 62. Original: 4 + lbs.

Both of these marks are reproduced and have engraved on the rear "Historic Charleston Reproductions by Wright."



Eagle Hose No. 2: This is not a fire mark even though it is sold as one.



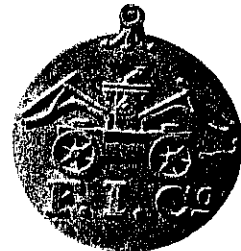
Fire Association of Philadelphia, BU#s 83 & 93: FA marks are the most commonly reproduced and are of cast iron, cast brass and aluminum. The repro with water coming from the hose looks like a BU# 93 – convex and a flat letter "A." Only a BU# 83 has water coming from the hose – it is a hollow flat back with a pointed letter "A." BU# 93 repros without water are usually too heavy. Originals are approximately 3 lbs., 9 oz. Also, watch for grinder marks, modern iron, simulated rust and casting marks or names on back.



Fire Department Ins. Co., Cincinnati, BU# 137: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Cast iron originals (8 3/4" x 6 7/8") are smaller than repros (9 1/2" x 9"). Repros have one hole on top; originals have left and right holes. The repro pumper is different than the original; the condenser case is taller and the brakes are more pronounced.



Firemen's Ins. Co., Baltimore, BU#s 114-117: Repros are cast iron and aluminum, and usually a smaller size. BU# 117, with six spokes and the fluted loop at the top, is the most reproduced. There must be a rear tab that extends past the mounting hole. Some repros have short tabs. Originals also have sprue marks on the rear



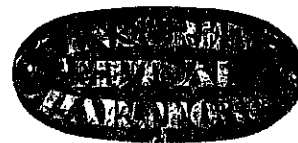
Firemen's Ins. Co. of D. C., BU# 139: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Originals are somewhat dished (warped) due to improper cooling after casting; size, 13 5/16" x 13 7/16"



Germantown Mutual Fire Ins. Co., Philadelphia, BU# 153: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Original has three cast holes (3, 9 & 12 o'clock) and simulated wood grain background. Also, has a 3 1/2" horizontal sprue mark on the rear. Original mark was issued in 1926. (Notes: BU# 153-V-A has copper plated hands and lettering. BU# 153-V-B is aluminum and issued by the company in 1962 after the company name was changed to "Germantown Insurance Company".) Cast iron repros may be heavier than the original, which is app. 4 lbs., 2 oz. Repros may eliminate or smooth out the sprue.



The Hartford County Mutual Fire Ins. Co., BU# 120-121: Repros are slightly larger (10" x 5") than the originals. Company may have issued the repros.



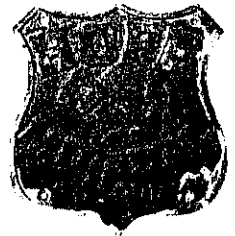
Hartford Fire Ins. Co., BU# 71: Original is tin. Modern company reproductions are marked on the rear, "An authentic reproduction of Hartford Fire Mark – First issued 1840".



Home Mutual Fire and Marine Ins. Co., St. Louis, BU# 159-162: Repros are cast iron and aluminum, and larger than the originals. Original is zinc and has four mounting holes.

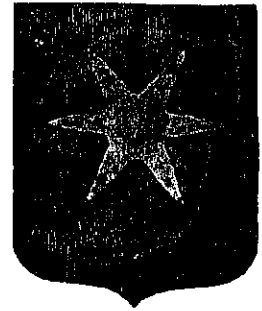


Hope Mutual Ins. Co., St. Louis, BU#s 285-26 – Repros are cast iron and aluminum, and larger than the 6" x 6 3/4" originals. Original is zinc and has four mounting holes.



Insurance Company of North America, Philadelphia:

BU# 44: Story in the 1933 I.N.A. book is in error. The mark in Bulau is a fake. The board was torched and wire brushed to simulate weathering. The wood also does not wear evenly.



BU# 46 (copper) Repro has "INA" and "1792", which were not on the original. (Do not confuse with the modern copper replica issued by the company, BU# 51.)



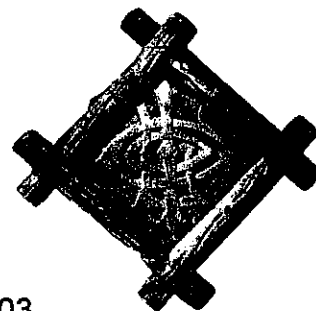
BU# 47 (cast iron): Repros are cast iron and copper. Cast iron repro has rolled edge; original has a beaded edge. Repro may have a trumpet in the eagle's claws. Cast iron repros may also have "INA" and "1972". This was, no doubt, cast from the copper BU# 51. Original: app. 8 lbs.; 3/4" circular sprue in center; blurring of beads on upper right edge; small smooth holes top and bottom. (INA's only cast iron mark is BU# 47. Cast iron issues starting in 1920 have raised letters on the back, "Facsimile of Ins. Co. of N. A. Fire Mark issued in 1830".)



Lorillard Fire Ins. Co., NYC, BU# 211: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Originals were sheet brass. (Bulau says cast brass.)



Lumbermen's Ins. Co., Philadelphia, BU# 442: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Originals have stipple finish background. Some originals have zinc coating on the rear.



Mutual Assurance Company (Green Tree), Philadelphia,
BU#s 36-39: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Repros are usually smaller with a raised edge on the rear and may have a casting number. Originals have sprue marks at 5 & 7 o'clock.



BU# 40: Look for grinder marks on the edge and obviously drilled holes on repros. Original has cast holes on top and bottom; size, 8 1/2 x 8 3/4"; weight, 5 lbs., 9 oz. to 6 lbs., 5 oz.



New Castle Mutual Ins. Co., Wilmington, Del., BU# US-NA-1: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Original mark was issued in 1949 for the 100th anniversary of the company.



Penn Fire Ins. Co., Pittsburgh, BU# 149: Repros in cast iron, aluminum and brass. Look for grinder mark on edges. Original has 1 1/4" sprue on edge of left shoulder; 2 lbs., 2 oz. to 3 lbs.



Pennsylvania Ins. Co., Pittsburgh, BU# 218: Original is tin; repros are aluminum.

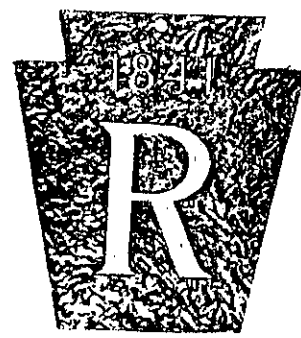


Philadelphia Contributionship, BU#s 1-21: Repros are cast iron, aluminum and brass. Originals are lead hands on a wood board. The company never issued cast iron hands. The most common cast iron repro is BU# 6, with the policy number 906. (Wish I had a nickel for every time a dealer swore it was good.)



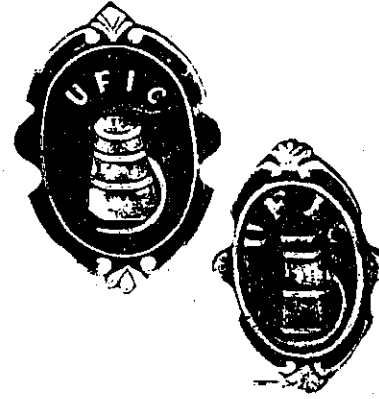
Philadelphia Ins. Co., BU# 65: Repros are cast iron and aluminum. Only known original is in CIGNA's collection. Original is lead on a wood board.





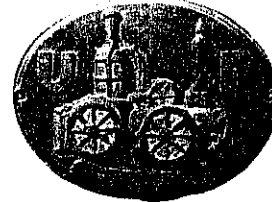
Reliance Ins. Co., Philadelphia: This is not a fire mark. It is a reproduction of a paperweight.

Union Fire Ins. Co., Nashville, BU# 429: There are two types of repros – One is too large and flat; holes top to bottom, rather than on the tabbed sides; and the lettering is wrong. The other looks good except that it does not have a 2 1/4" diagonal sprue mark at 5 o'clock. Original size is 6 7/8" x 10 1/4"; weight, approx. 3 lbs.; mounting holes are cast not drilled; back should be somewhat concave.

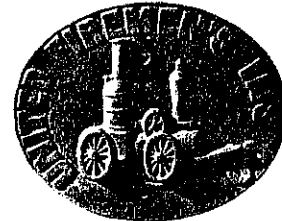


United Firemen's Ins. Co., Philadelphia, (UFs generally weigh between three to four pounds.)

BU# 310: Repros may weigh up to seven pounds; have simulated rust; and grinder marks on the edges. The originals have good definition of engine areas on the back and one hole on each side.

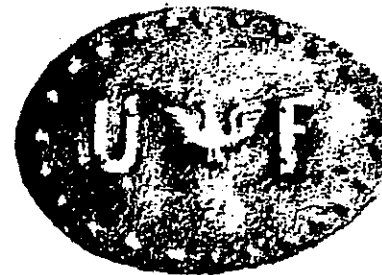


BU# 312: Repros have grinder marks on the edges. Original has holes at top/bottom away from the edge; name does not show through on the rear.



Spurious United Firemen's

A convex cast iron mark with a hollow center. Has raised "U" "F" and eagle in center with rivet heads around the border. Possible boiler plate. 200 were seen in the surf rusting (aging) at Ocean City about 1960. Seen a few months ago for \$360.



Valiant Hose No. 2: This is not a fire mark even though it is sold as one.



REMEMBER BEN FRANKLIN'S SAYING

"The cautious man examines all three legs of the stool."

In the case of fire marks, **REMEMBER WILLS' SAYING,**

"Examine all four "legs" of the fire mark."

THE FRONT

Drilled holes
Sharp features
Correct lettering

THE BACK

Simulated rust
Orange rust
Sprue mark

THE EDGES

Grinder marks

THE WEIGHT

Thickness and size