



# The Signevierist

Issue Number 2005 - 2

The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

## CLEANING CAST IRON MARKS

### Cleaning materials:

TSP

Hair Dryer

WD 40

Clean absorbent cloths

Wax

Toothbrush

Chalk

I GOT TIRED of looking at my dull and rusty cast iron mark that was hanging on the wall at home and decided to clean it. First, I cleaned it with TSP (Tri-sodium phosphate). "TSP" is distributed by SAVOGRAN and is available at Lowe's. Following the directions on the box for heavy duty cleaning, I used a scrubbing brush to clean the front and back of the mark. I then rinsed off the TSP.

You can either let the mark dry for a day or use a hair dryer. I prefer the hair dryer so that I can move right on to the next step. Next, I sprayed WD 40 on a soft cloth and wiped the front and back of the mark. Hopefully, the thin coating of WD 40 will inhibit rust from developing. I let the WD 40 soak in for a day. Next I put paste wax on a soft cloth and rubbed it on the front of the mark. While the wax on the cloth worked fine on the flat areas, I had to use an old toothbrush to get into the crevices. Be sure to rub the wax on vigorously. The wax will pick up additional loose dirt. Note that I did not put wax on the back of the mark. Wait a day or two and then brush the waxed surface with a shoe brush. The mark will shine like a shoe.

Before putting the mark back on the wall, take the chalk and mark the Bulau number on the back. This will save a lot of guesswork later on.

Do you have another method for cleaning cast iron marks? Share your technique by including the

materials needed and description of the process. Your editor will be happy to pass on this information.

Bob Shea

## BALTIMORE EQUITABLE SOCIETY MARKS

THE SOCIETY issued its first mark in April 1794, and continued to do so until 1849. There were four different types during this period. The use of a fire mark was optional, and the cost was \$1.50. A numbered fifth type of mark was issued in 1927 at no cost to the policyholder. The fifth type is still available to new policyholders.

[Source: Stephen J. Bernhardt, Secretary, December 9, 1974]

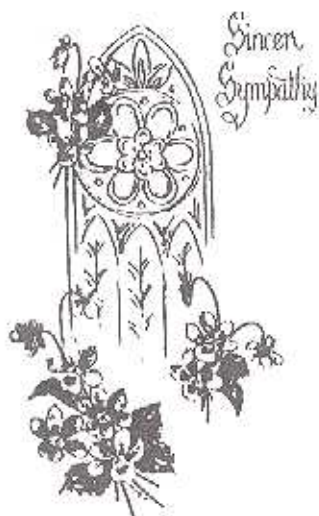


## PRIMER UPDATE

ALWAYS A GOOD DEAL and always up-to-date. We have just updated the "An American Fire Mark Primer" with the 1-28-2005 version of "Fire Marks of the Fire Association of Philadelphia" and the 2-29-2004 release of "Beveled Fire Marks of the United Firemen's Insurance Company, Philadelphia." Most members have these useful reference tools, but not in a handy one volume packet to carry with you on your antique trips.

The Primer is available to members at \$20.00, which includes shipping and handling. Just make your check payable to "FMCA" and mail to Ted Lussem, 2919 John Patterson Road, Des Moines, Iowa 50317-3136.

## IN MEMORIUM



IT IS WITH SADNESS that I inform you of the death, on April 11, 2005, of Patricia Thomas. Pat and her husband, Bill, attended many of our conventions together. They always did things together and many times I ran into them at local antique shows.

She was a warm person and will be missed by her friends. A donation in memory of Pat was sent to the American Cancer Society.

## MY MOST ENJOYABLE COLLECTIBLE

MY MOST ENJOYABLE collectible is the Waterman's arm badge of the Insurance Cos. fire brigades.

When in England in the 80s several of them came up in auction. The bidding was very active and soon beyond what I could afford but I was sure impressed with the item and I was determined to learn more about them.

My interest expanded to the point that I purchased the beautiful book "Badges of Extinction" by Brian Henham and Brian Sharp. When I found out that reproductions were being made, I contacted Brian Sharp as to their availability. He responded that they were available but were fast becoming as valuable as the originals and were "pricey." I did buy two at the next FMC meeting and just this past year obtained two more reproductions. They are absolutely beautiful and add much to my collection. I now have the London Assurance, West of England, Protector and Royal Exchange. According to the book, there were about 140 badges struck, but very few exist today.

If you are interested in Waterman's badges, I strongly recommend the book by the two Brians. It is an outstanding research document.

Ed Tufts



## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE "HOME"

THIS issue's "Home" insurance company is the "Utah Home Fire Insurance Company," Salt Lake City, Utah. Founded in 1886 under the name of the Home Fire Insurance Company of Utah, the present name was adopted in 1918. The Wasatch Crest Group, Inc. purchased the company in 1998 and the name was changed to the Wasatch Crest Insurance Company.



## FIRE MARK QUIZZ

ED TUFTS submitted a copy of the following mark with the question, "Can you identify the company and its dates?"



Please send your answer to the editor. The answer will be in the next issue. [Hint: There are at least four different sources for the answer.]

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PLEASE EXCUSE my climbing on a soapbox, but there are two issues I would like to address. The first is the issue of "real or not", and the second is the practice of the FMCA adding US and foreign marks to the Bulau Addenda simply at the request of anyone.

With the first, in the past several years we have lost several individuals that held huge stores of knowledge in their heads. They passed with no organized attempt to gather and document this vital knowledge. How many marks do we see authenticated with the statement that one of these long time collectors said it was "good", with no one really having a handle on what makes it a good one or a bad one? This problem needs to be addressed at our soonest.

As to the second issue, there are at least two other FMC's (UK & DE), I believe that the FMCA should not add any mark or plate to the addenda from those countries at all. Both of those countries have publications pertaining to their marks and deference should be given to those organizations. Furthermore, if there are any marks that are in the Bulau Addenda that are not shown in those countries publications, they should be removed from ours.

With respect to those countries of origin where there is no organized association, unless the exact name of the company, including the years of operation, can be provided, and the subject mark presented for examination at our annual meeting, we should not list it. The same should apply for US marks. Agree or not, by listing such items the FMCA grants a good measure of authenticity, all too often with little information.

Peter R. L. Faber

## THIS AND THAT

We are indebted to Peter Faber for the attached two reviews of "British Fire Marks" by Roy Addis. As you can see, Peter takes his fire mark collecting very seriously.

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A special thank you goes to Ed Tufts for two articles in this issue.

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Anyone wishing to attend the English FMC Autumn Meeting to be held in the Cotswolds on October 14-16, 2005 should contact our Secretary, Dave Oldham for information.

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Your editor has been asked to inform you that the Max Klein Memorial Salver was presented to Bob Shea at the Atlanta convention. The English Fire Mark Circle gave the engraved antique silver salver in perpetuity to the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas in memory of Max Klein, the first President of the FMCA. The award is for a FMCA member who has given meritorious and dedicated service to the FMCA. Your editor joins a distinguished list of former recipients, Tom Hopkins, Carol Smith, Jim Giles, Ed Tufts, Glenn Hartley and Al Wills.

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The following is a footnote for you're your copy of Bulau. Nick Jennings reports that a BU# 405, Rockford Insurance Company, has surfaced with the name of the manufacturer on the bottom right; "C. W. Shonk, Sign Mfr, Chicago, Ill." Good eye, Nick!

**FMCA 2005 CONVENTION**

**SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

**November 3-6, 2005**

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**COME ENJOY ALL THAT AMERICA'S FINEST CITY HAS TO OFFER.**

**The historic GASLAMP QUARTER**

**SEAPORT VILLAGE and BALBOA PARK**

**THE MIDWAY aircraft carrier**

**Coronado Island and the HOTEL DEL CORONADO**

**WORLD FAMOUS SAN DIEGO ZOO**

**SEA WORLD and OLD TOWN**

**Our venue will be the RED LION HANAIEI HOTEL**

**Conveniently located ten minutes from the airport and downtown**

**One mile to FASHION VALLEY SHOPPING CENTER**

**And the SAN DIEGO TROLLEY**

**Blaise and I look forward to hosting a great convention and hope to--**

**SEE YOU THERE!**

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