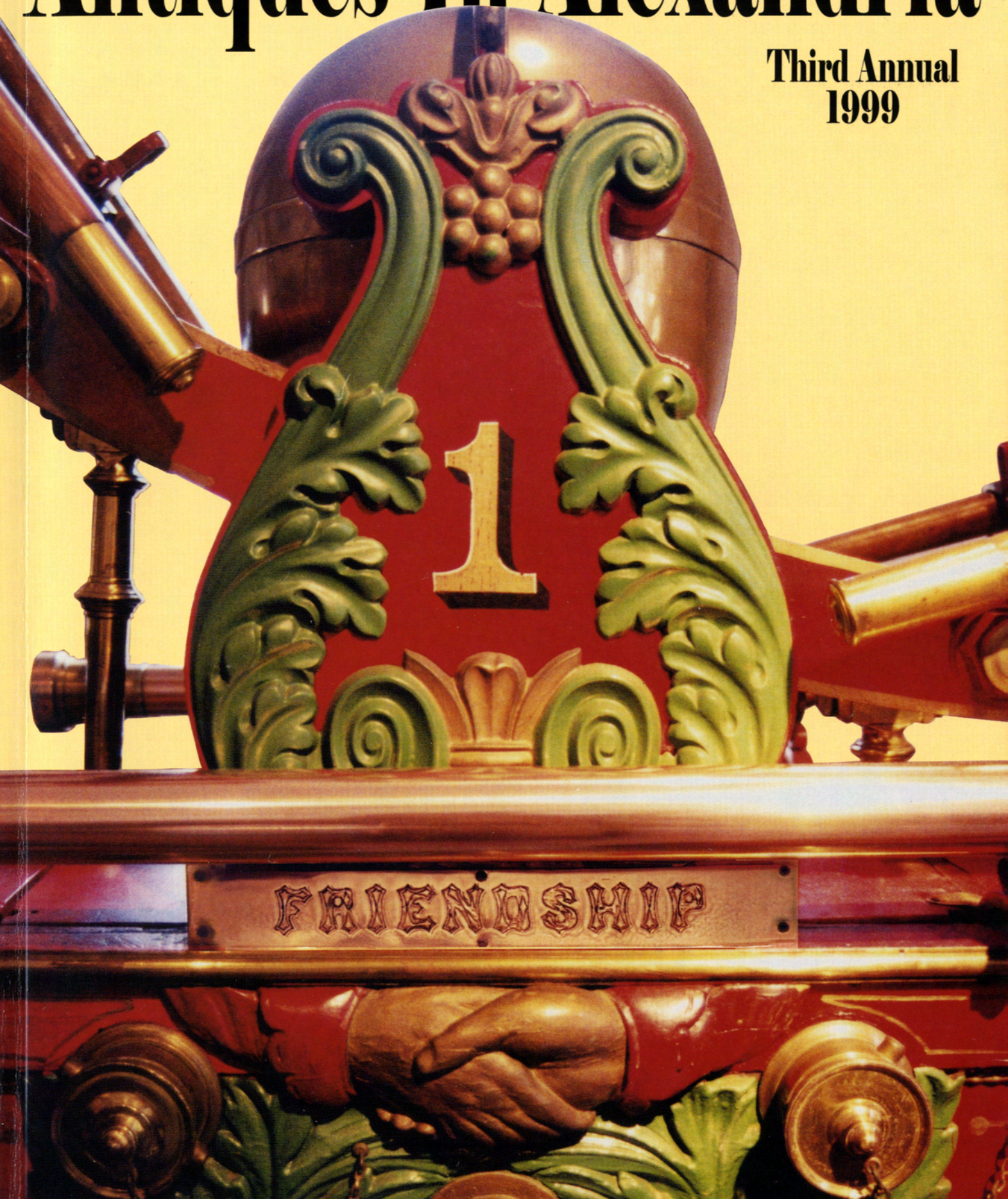
Antiques In Alexandria

Third Annual
1999



WELCOME TO THE THIRD ANNUAL

SPRING SHOW

GALA PREVIEW PARTY
Thursday, March 11, 1999 ~ 6:30pm - 9:30 pm
Catering by Ridgewells / Music by The Wright Touch

ANTIQUES SHOW HOURS
Friday, March 12, 1999 ~ 11:00am - 8:00 pm
Saturday, March 13, 1999 ~ 11:00am - 7:00 pm
Sunday, March 14, 1999 ~ 11:00am - 5:00 pm

LOAN EXHIBITION
"Turn of the Century Toys: Antique Mechanical Banks and Toy Fire Engines"
Janet Stewart Moffitt, Chairman, Exhibit Committee

The cast-iron mechanical banks and antique toy fire engines displayed alongside the historic Friendship Fire Company's "Suction Engine" are exhibited courtesy of a private Alexandria collector. These objects represent an important segment of the American toy industry in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Changing attitudes toward children and playthings combined with advances in manufacturing techniques in the late Victorian period led to the invention of mechanical banks, brightly painted cast-iron toys that perform a special action or movement when depositing a coin into the bank. Between 1870 and 1900 hundreds of different banks were patented in the United States. The various designs of the banks reflected social, racial and political attitudes of the period, favorite sports and pastimes as well as scenes from the circus and everyday life. The banks were meant to be entertaining yet educational in an effort to teach children about the importance of saving their pennies.

Toy fire engines also were popular in the late 19th and early 20th century and reflected changes in fire fighting equipment during the period. The earliest fire toys depicted horse-drawn steam engines and carts while later examples represented the automotive era with combustion engines and radiators. These miniature replicas with their bright colors and attention to detail appealed to children and adults at the turn of the century and continue to do so today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME LETTER 7
GUESTS/COMMITTEES 12
PROFILE: The Unsinkable Margaret Mourot 17
BENEFICIARIES:
- Twig/Arlandria Health Center for Women and Children 18
- The Athenaeum 20
- The Alexandria Association 21
- The Lyceum Company 22

COVER STORY:
- The Friendship Pumper *by Kris Lloyd* 28

FEATURES:
- Antique Toy Fire Engines *by Pat Garthoeffner* 31
- Antique Mechanical Banks *by Oliver Clark* 34

ALEXANDRIA CELEBRATES 250 YEARS *by Emily Coleman* 44
FLOOR PLAN & LIST OF EXHIBITORS 54
THE EPISCOPAL HIGH SCHOOL *by Caroll T. Johnson* 76
INDEX OF ADVERTISERS 79

Catalog Design: ***Elisabeth Squire of Mac 'N Me, Inc.***

Photo by Louise Krafft
Photo Manipulation by ADgraphics

COVER PHOTO

The Friendship Fire Company's ***"Suction Engine"*** or Pumper was manufactured by John Rodgers in Baltimore, circa 1851. The image of clasped hands carved on the side of the engine is the symbol of the Friendship Fire Company, Alexandria's first volunteer fire fighting company, which was organized in 1774.

Café by Jeffery's. *(Open during show hours.)*
Door prize courtesy of ***Tiffany & Co.***

COVER

The Friendship Pumper

Photo By Louise Krafft.

The Friendship Fire Company's "suction engine" is a tangible symbol of Alexandria's first firefighting company; a group of volunteers who were dedicated to serving their community by protecting the lives and property of their fellow citizens. This pumper and the firefighting equipment exhibited in the historic Friendship Firehouse are a testament to America's proud volunteer firefighting heritage.

In urban areas, fire poses a threat to the prosperity of the entire community. A prime example is Alexandria's devastating fire in 1827. When a fire broke out at the Green Furniture Company, it consumed fifty-three structures as well as the furniture factory. As cities developed in the American colonies, fire companies were founded by citizens motivated by a concern for property and community. They volunteered to pool their resources for fighting fires. Alexandrians organized the Friendship Fire Company in 1774, the first such company in the city.

Friendship's early firefighting techniques were typical of the time. Flames were doused with buckets of water in an effort to prevent fire from spreading. Firemen organized townspeople into double lines, called bucket brigades, to pass water from the water source to the fire. The first fire engines also depended on bucket brigades; buckets were emptied into the engine's reservoir and the water was pumped onto the flames through a nozzle. Friendship acquired its first engine in 1775.

The mid-nineteenth century marked the height of volunteer firefighting in the United States. Bucket brigades gave way to more sophisticated firefighting apparatus made possible by technological developments. New large hand-pumped engines came on the scene that required more manpower for operation. Fire companies grew larger and became increasing-

by KRIS LLOYD

ly regimented, with each firefighter assigned specific duties. This helped to create a strong sense of identity and unity within each organization, which in turn encouraged intense competition between companies. When an alarm was sounded rival companies would race to the conflagration in hopes to be first on the scene.

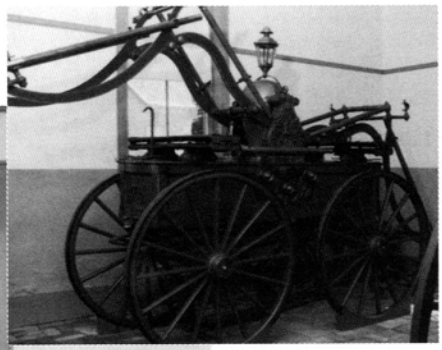
Friendship's suction engine was purchased in 1851 and exemplifies this period in the Company's history. Adorned with ornate Victorian-style ornamentation, including the image of clasped hands—Friendship's emblem—the pumper was manufactured by John Rodgers in Baltimore. Long-time Friendship member and secretary John Muir described the suction engine as being of "the most substantial construction, having a mahogany box, balloon shaped air vessel, levers and arms of best style, and wheels of unusual strength, as best suited to a rapid movement over our rough streets—the whole constituting an engine of decided beauty and efficiency." Friendship's minute books state the apparatus cost $1,008, although a history of the company by Muir, which appeared in the Alexandria Gazette on November 21 and 23, 1857, cites the price at $1,100. John Rodgers manufactured this type of engine from 1822 to 1856.

"Suction," as it was always referred to in the Company's minute books, operated with a hose that was coupled to each side of the engine's water reservoir. On one side, suction pressure drew water through the hose into the reservoir and in turn water was forced on to the fire through the hose on the other side. The manpower required to operate this engine created a need for a fire company to have dozens of members. The machine required sixteen to twenty operators, with four to six men on the ground on either side and four men on each of four fold-out platforms. The men pumped the arms, creating suction pressure in the domed condenser case, which pushed the water out through the hose. Every two or three minutes, the engine operators would need to rest, so replacements stood ready to jump up and take their place. Firemen pulled the engine and a hose carriage to fires; horses were not yet used for this duty.

The development of increased water power made more powerful fire engines like "Suction" possible. The Alexandria Water Company began operation in 1852 and a water main, pipes, and hydrants were laid throughout the city. Firemen carried spanner wrenches, a special tool that opened nearby hydrants when needed.

Volunteer companies were involved in far more than fighting fires. They were important fraternal organizations, providing members the opportunity for social exchange as well as public service. Companies organized parades, picnics, excursions to other cities, and performed ceremonial duties for civic events. As early as 1839, Friendship marched in Alexandria's annual George Washington birthday parade. Members also provided a support network. Upon the death of a fireman, whether in the line of duty or not, his company would participate in the funeral and assist in looking after his family.

The latest in firefighting technology was introduced in Alexandria during the Civil War. Two steam-powered fire engines were brought in by the Union forces who occupied the city throughout the conflict. A steamer was much less labor intensive than a hand-pumper, generally needing no more than four men to operate. Steam engines were more costly to purchase however, and required horses to pull them.



OVERALL VIEW OF ENGINE

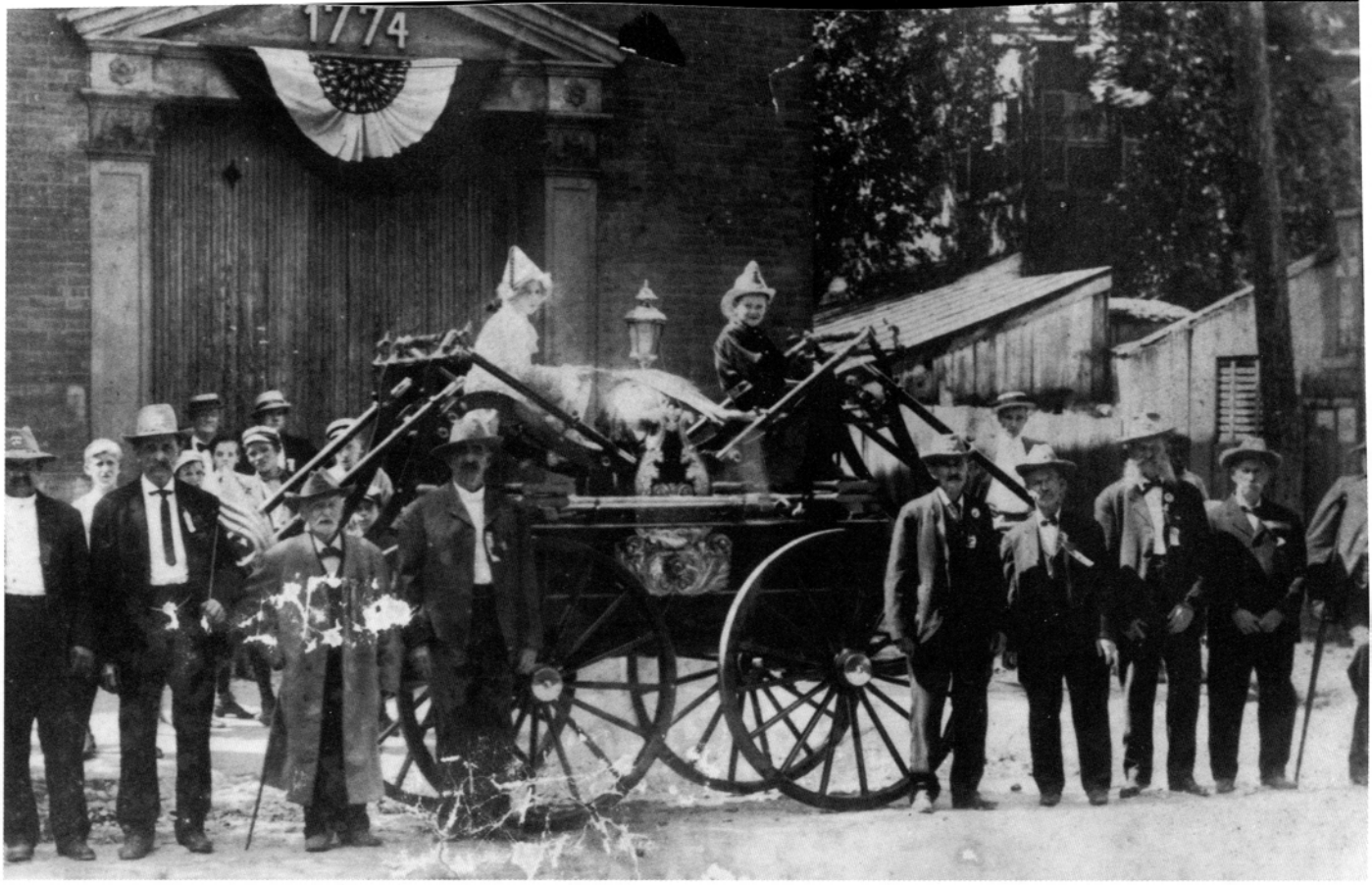
The Friendship Fire Comany's suction engine was manufactured in Baltimore by John Rodgers. Known as a Philadelphia-style engine, its design was based on the pumpers built by Pat Lyon of Philadelphia circa 1794-1824.

DETAIL OF ENGINE

The brass balloon-shaped vessel, located in the center of the engine, is the air chamber. .

Photographs by TISARA, INC.; courtesy of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Assocation.

This page sponsored by ***Brigadier General & Mrs. Robert C. Richardson, III***



Before the George Washington Birthday Parade in 1904, Friendship Fire Company members posed with the suction engine in front of their firehouse. *Photographer unknown; courtesy of the Office of Historic Alexandria.*

Friendship purchased a steam engine in 1867, but was never satisfied with its performance and was unable to keep up with the payments for the apparatus. In 1871, the City of Alexandria acquired a steamer from Philadelphia and tried to convince Alexandria's fire companies to merge into one steam company. Most of Friendship's members thought it was more important to retain the identity associated with the name of Friendship, and the company continued to fight fires into the 1880's. Throughout the United States, old independent volunteer fire companies became less and less active as the more advanced and expensive equipment came into use and more municipally-run fire departments were created.

The Company had contemplated selling "Suction" when it was acquiring the steam engine, but then retained the pumper. In 1884, they again considered disposing of the apparatus but, fortunately for future generations, decided against it.

The historic suction engine is on view at the Friendship Firehouse Museum, located at 107 South Alfred Street in Alexandria. The Firehouse is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. *Photographs by TISARA, INC.; courtesy of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Assocation.*

After Friendship stopped fighting fires, the membership continued their social and ceremonial activities. In 1952, Alexandria mayor Marshall Beverley took steps to revitalize the organization and in 1954, the Company officially dedicated their firehouse as a "shrine to George Washington," Alexandria's favorite son. They operated the historic building as a museum, showing Washington memorabilia as well as fire fighting equipage.

The firehouse was built in 1855, substantially remodeled in 1871, and restored by the City of Alexandria in 1992. Today, the colorful suction engine is on display with buckets, axes, hose and other equipment in the first floor Engine Room. On the second floor, the Company's Meeting Room is furnished with Victorian-style furniture and ceremonial objects including parade uniforms, capes and banners. Individuals have the opportunity to visit the firehouse and learn about the Friendship Fire Company and America's volunteer firefighting tradition. ■

This page sponsored by ***Rober Brent*** *in commemoration of Margaret Brent (1601-1671), America's First Woman Lawyer & landholder in Alexandria, VA.*