



Receipt for Firefighting Equipment

Date

c. 1883

Primary Maker

A. F. Spawn

Medium

Paper and ink

Description

This is a paper receipt issued by A.F. Spawn of San Francisco to the unincorporated city of Santa Ana, dated December 8, 1883. It covers the purchase of firefighting equipment to be used by company No.1, which was

organized November 1, 1883. In 1869, William H. Spurgeon decided to purchase 76 acres of land from the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana and founded the city of Santa Ana. The very first Santa Ana volunteer fire department was formed on November 1, 1883, just three years before the city officially incorporated. William H. Spurgeon himself was a signee of the certificate and an honorary member of the crew. Wanting to ensure that the very first firefighting team was fully equipped, Spurgeon and the City of Santa Ana paid the modern-day equivalent of \$36,000.00 to A.F. Spawn, Climax Fire Extinguisher, Fire Apparatus and Fire Department Supplies in San Francisco to procure all the basic supplies required to fight fires. At this point the method used in Santa Ana was still a relatively manual one, with water hand-pulled from private wells and cisterns in buckets. Ultimately though, a lack of fires led to the abolition of this first iteration of the department in 1885. The introduction of the Santa Ana gas company in 1886 that first re-sparked concerns about a lack of firefighters. By 1888 a new crew was formed using the same equipment as the old team, but now with the added development of the precursor to hydrants placed across the city. This meant that the on-foot teams only needed to wheel hoses and later use horse-drawn carts to wheel hoses to these water access points. This new method relied on the grid's water pressure to meet certain minimums. Sources vary on the actual first vehicles owned by the Santa Ana Fire Department (SAFD), either 1921 Seagrave fire engine or the White Motor Company firetruck. This above hose nozzle is one of the original pieces of SAFD equipment. Used between 1888 and 1932, this nozzle could be attached to a longer hose to help direct the flow of water to where it was most needed. The 28-inch nozzle has a detachable tip made of brass as are the hand grips and female union. We can see that even in 1915, when the photograph of the SAFD and their two fire trucks were taken that the nozzle was in use, secured in place at the rear of one of the city's two fire engines.