



# THE HOUSEWATCH

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## CURATOR'S CORNER

by Sean Britton

While most of our visitors are aware that our collection spans centuries of firefighting apparatus and equipment, as well as photographs and artwork of notable fires and individuals instrumental in the advancement of firefighting and fire safety, there are many artifacts that can be an unexpected surprise. We will highlight one such piece in this edition of the Curator's Corner.

The New York City Fire Museum's collection came from two main sources- The FDNY and the Home Insurance Company. The Home Insurance Company donated thousands of objects, but one stands out as being tied to one of the most infamous events in history, especially in the tri-state area. On May 6th, 1937, the LZ-129 Hindenburg was destroyed by fire while attempting to land at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station in Manchester Township, New Jersey. Of the 97 souls aboard, 35 were killed, as well as one member of the ground crew. Herbert Morrison's commentary of the incident, with his iconic statement "Oh, the humanity", is a classic piece of audio history.

The New York City Fire Museum is proud to have in its collection the insurance policy for this airship. The policy is in fact not just for this iconic vessel, but also for two other zeppelins in the fleet- LZ-127 "Graf Zeppelin", and LZ-130, which was unnamed at the time the policy was issued, but later named "Graf Zeppelin II". While the Graf Zeppelin was insured for a value of 1.5 Million RM (Reichsmark- the currency of Germany from 1924-1948), the Hindenburg and LZ-130 were insured for 6 Million RM.

The document, which is 20 inches long and 9 inches high when opened, is not currently on display in the museum, but plans are being made for it to be included in a future display.

