

F.A.H.P. News, March 26, 2012

James T. Shallcross, Jr. (1879-1972) was Esther Marshall's eldest brother. A highly successful farmer in New Castle County, south of the C & D Canal, his mother called him "Jamie," his siblings called him "Jay," and his wife called him "Jim." To me, he was always "Uncle Jay." Born on Bellevue Farm just north of Shallcross Lake, as were all his siblings, he was sent to Friends Central School in Philadelphia, where he met and fell in love with a distant cousin, Elizabeth Shallcross of Byberry in northeast Philadelphia. She was from a prominent Quaker family, and her father, Thomas Shallcross, was president of the all-male Asparagus Club, which met for dinner once a year (about 1900) at a prominent Philadelphia hotel. Jamie and Bess became engaged, but his parents would not allow him to marry before he was 21. Young men from respectable families didn't do that in those days. In the fall of 1900, they were married, and Bess came to live with her new husband and his widowed grandfather, Sereck F. Shallcross (1816-1906), on Oakland Farm, about one mile south of Bellevue.

Farm life was new to Bess, and it must have required a major adjustment. Having a distinct knack for farming successfully, Uncle Jay began to increase his farming acreage as his family grew. Elizabeth "Betty" (1903-1999) came first, then Esther (1907-1959), Margaret "Peggy" (1909-1990), Mary Comly "Comie" (1915-1993), and Meta (1919-1999), but there were no sons to carry on the Shallcross name (his two younger brothers were both married late in life but had no children). When the first four girls were married, the receptions were planned at Oakland, although Peggy's, which occurred in February 1935, was quickly shifted to her grandmother's home in Middletown as a blizzard closed all the country roads. Betty married Harry B. Roberts in 1926, Esther married Leigh Magee in 1929, Peggy married John Aubrey Walker in 1935, Comie married D. Drake Coffman in 1935, and Meta married Robert B. Day at Esther's home in Wayne, Pennsylvania, in 1948. All had children, averaging two apiece.

Uncle Jay, like many of the Shallcrosses, had hay fever or "hay cold" as it was often called. It never slowed him down or kept him from working in the fields during harvesting season. I was invited to have midday dinner with Aunt Bess, Uncle Jay, and Meta one bright August day in the late 1930s. When he came home at noon, his nose was red and swollen and his eyes almost closed, but he paid no attention to it and enjoyed his dinner. In 1938, Uncle Jay and Aunt Bess decided to leave the farm and move into Odessa, where they had a home on Main Street. He continued to farm, however, and at that time owned about 10 farms in the Odessa-Middletown area. His grandson, Harry B. Roberts Jr., continued to work many of these farms and marshes before and after his grandfather died.

During the desegregated school controversy in the 1950s, a town meeting in Odessa was addressing the issue. It seemed there was a 50-50 split on whether the school should admit black children. Finally, Uncle Jay stood and said he had worked with black people all his life, and many were his friends. He thought black and white should be educated together. His thoughts carried the day. He and Aunt Bess enjoyed Grange tours to the West Coast and Alaska in the 1940s. My mother invited their entire family to a celebration of their 50th wedding

anniversary at Auburn Heights in 1950. I carried the honorees from the Marshall Brothers mill to the front porte cochere in my 1914 Stanley Model 607.

Aunt Bess died in 1966 after a long illness. Betty Roberts had come to live with and take care of her parents following the death of her husband in 1953. During Uncle Jay's final years, I went to Dover frequently and would stop often at Odessa for a brief visit. These visits were cherished, and I learned a lot. I was on my first "Trans-Con" tour with our Model 87 when Uncle Jay died in 1972 at the age of 92.

Work Report: On Tuesday evening, the batteries were tested on the Rauch & Lang, the on-board charger was hooked up, and the car is nearly ready for "road testing." Additional pump box work was done on the Stanley Model 607, the new brake master cylinder location was determined, and some of the copper tubing laid out for fitting (or for patterns if new tubing is used in some places). Nuts were made (11-24) for the small felloe clips, and the studs themselves tightened by the use of Quik-Poly. The large water tank on the Model 87, which has been leaking was removed from the car, and an oil leak was discovered in the gasket of the differential cover. A new leather strap was installed on the front door of this car to replace the broken one. The railroad signals were put in place and tested for the initial operation on April 7. Forested streets have appeared on the Lionel train layout, and the cosmetic appearance has been greatly improved. The "Auburn Mill" is ready to be set in position and its water wheel to become operational again. The hood is back on the Model 76 with a new relocated hinge and a repainted firewall.

On Thursday, more fitting and laying out continued on the Model 607, and the rear water tank was removed from the Model 87. The two water tanks under the back seat, not original to the car, had been tied together with heavy 1½" pipe underneath for faster equalization, but this hook-up was not ideal, and we plan to make this into one tank holding about 59 gallons (the tanks have been 41 and 18 respectively). The parts that we hope to send to the BRAACA Swap Meet on April 15 were price-tagged, and the 6v. motor on a 1930s car heater, surplus to us, was tested and found to run O.K. Some of the disheveled drawers in the shop were put in order.

Tuesday night the following volunteers took part: Steve Bryce (in charge), Bill Schwoebel, Butch Cannard, Jerry Novak, Jerry Lucas, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Emil Christofano, Jeff Pollock, Dave Leon, Bob Stransky, Dennis Dragon, Tim Ward, Mac Taylor, Jay Williams, and Tom Marshall. On Thursday, the volunteers working were: Chuck Erikson, Richard Bernard, Rose Ann Hoover, Butch Cannard, Steve Bryce, Lou Mandich, Jerry Novak, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Dave Leon, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, and Tom Marshall (in charge). On Friday, six of our Stanleys (the Models CX, EX, 87, 76, 820, and 735) were pushed and towed from the museum to the right place on the driveway for photographs featuring our flowering cherry tree in the background. Steve Bryce, Jerry Novak and Tom Marshall directed this operation with Steve's friend Fred Rosenberg being the official photographer.

Our charter member Bill Schwoebel is planning to have a knee replacement today, and all of us wish him a complete and relatively painless recovery.