

## F.A.H.P. News, May 30, 2011

**Memorial Day:** My favorite time of year, Memorial Day, originally on May 30 each year, signifies the unofficial start of my favorite season, and is also important for what it stands for. Sometimes called Decoration Day, it was established in the late 19th century in memory of those who lost their lives in the Civil War, but as late as World War II, it was not celebrated as a legal holiday in the South. Briefly, I was at Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia, on May 30, 1945.

My father used to talk about riding his bicycle and later the trolley to Brandywine Springs to celebrate Memorial Day before and after 1900. My Aunt Helen Shallcross shipped peonies to market from her home in Middletown, Delaware, and kept them in an old ice house 15 feet below ground, accessible only by a ladder. I often took my mother to decorate family graves at Hockessin Friends Burial Ground, at Union Hill Cemetery near Kennett Square, and sometimes at Old Drawyers Cemetery just north of Odessa. It was usual to visit with friends who were also decorating graves in these familiar surroundings. My memory of this solemn day is that good weather usually prevailed.

The “Weekly News” of May 25, 2009, told of Memorial Day at Mercersburg Academy in 1942. A very impressive ceremony took place in the community cemetery of the small Franklin County town in south central Pennsylvania with the entire student body of the Academy in attendance. A quiet and peaceful day just before the dreaded final exams could not foretell what was in store for the coming year. May 30, 1942, was just six months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Of the 200 students (seniors and post-grads) who would leave Mercersburg on June 8, just nine days after Memorial Day, about 90 percent would be serving in the armed forces within a year.

In 1943, May 30 was on a Sunday, so the “holiday” was considered May 29–31, to be celebrated as best it could be during wartime. On Friday after classes in Pre-Meteorology at Brown University, we were marching in formation through the streets of Providence singing mostly World War I songs, such as “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary,” “K-K-K-Katy, and “Over There.” A fellow named Mikesell from Muskegon, Michigan, changed a word to something obscene, and Sergeant Fryer heard it, but he knew not from whom it came. He asked the culprit to come forth, but no one did. Our entire squadron with its seven flights (about 150 young men) was quarantined to the barracks for the weekend, except when we marched to and from our meals. I lived with eleven others in a section of the top floor of an old Brown dormitory called Hope College, and the weather was hot. We got hold of some ginger ale and Coca Cola, but with no ice, the only place we could keep it cool was in the one toilet tank on our floor. This was the only unpleasant Memorial Day I can remember.

Over Memorial Day weekend in 1966, Wilmington & Western trains carried passengers between Greenbank and Mount Cuba for the first time since the 1920s, when the B & O Railroad abandoned passenger service from Philadelphia and Wilmington to Landenberg.

This year, exactly on May 30, volunteers of the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve will be taking several Stanley cars to the Memorial Day parade in Kennett Square, as they have done for the past several years. In celebrating this sobering but joyous day, let us be thankful for our great country and remember those who gave all to make this possible for us.

**Work Nights:** During work sessions last week, Ted Kamen sealed and primed the new Mountain Wagon wheels and hubs, and the mounting hardware has been primed and painted black, with the outside of the brake drums that show through the spokes painted with high-temperature flat black. Steve Bryce put in many hours on the Model 76, reattaching the hook-up valve linkage, the steam and exhaust lines and the pump rod; the parking brakes were reinstalled, and Steve continued to work on the hydraulic brakes. Bill Schwoebel and Dave Leon fired up the Model K for a road test to check the wrist pins, after which the engine was oiled and the cover replaced. Butch Cannard continued stripping paint from the body of the Model 607. Emil Christofano and Jeff Pollock installed the front leaf springs on the Rauch & Lang electric. Tom Marshall installed a stack blower on the Model 740 and inserted new "Blazick-style" nozzles, which worked very well. Mark and John Hopkins laid the track on the upper-level of the standard gauge layout, and Mac Taylor made the electrical connections. Bill Schwoebel's AVRR volunteers on Saturday included Butch Cannard, Dave Leon, Jeff Pollock, Brent McDougall, Mike Leister, and Jonathan Rickerman. They replaced about three dozen ties along the top of the race bank, and Butch and Dave installed four insulated joints for the new signal system. Several of the passenger cars were turned around to equalize wear, and Locomotive 402 was fired up, with several engineers having an opportunity to practice.

**Ice Cream Run:** The Steam Team will make their first Ice Cream Run on June 7, so any interested passengers should contact Susan in the FAHP office ([srandolph@auburnheights.org](mailto:srandolph@auburnheights.org) or 302-239-2385) to reserve their spot (space is limited). Never been on a Ice Cream Run? It should be on everyone's "bucket list," but only FAHP members can check this one off. Each year, our dedicated Stanley and Packard drivers take a few lucky passengers for a beautiful country drive in vehicles from our collection to Woodside Farm Creamery (departing about 5:30 from Auburn Heights). They take the long route so all enjoy the ride and the scenery, and the arrival of a fleet of Stanleys at Woodside is truly a sight to behold. Everyone then treats themselves to ice cream before being chauffeured back to Auburn Heights. There will be two more Ice Cream Runs this season (in July and August) if you can't make this one. Stay tuned for dates!

**Concert News:** We're delighted to announce that our friends at the Country Butcher will be providing great grilling fare at the Club Phred/Mark Farner concert, so we encourage everyone to come hungry! Food by Dorothy and Dan Boxler NEVER disappoints. Tickets are on sale now, and we are hatching plans sure to make it a fantastic event. For all details and to purchase your tix, please visit our website Special Events page or contact the FAHP office (302-239-2385, [admin@auburnheights.org](mailto:admin@auburnheights.org)).