

FEBRUARY 1, 2010 F.A.H.P. NEWS

Palmer D. “Pete” Guest (1889-1941): Everyone around Yorklyn knew Pete Guest, who definitely can qualify as a “local character”. A native of the Mount Cuba area, he loved sports, especially baseball, golf, and trapshooting. A good athlete in early life, Pete played for Mount Cuba in a local baseball league that included such places as Centerville, Yorklyn, and Hockessin. The story goes that Mount Cuba was in the play-off for the league championship, and the final game was “down to the wire”. It was the last inning and Mount Cuba led by one run, but the opposing team had two men on with two outs. Pete was playing left field and the batter hit a ball right at him which should have ended the game. Instead, however, Pete turned his back on the play and ran like mad for the woods just beyond the outfield. His teammates would have killed him if they had caught him; he had been paid off by the opposing team that cleared the bases and won the championship.

Pete married an attractive young woman named Ethel Hobson who grew up on her family’s farm which is now underneath the Hoopes Reservoir. Pete never liked work but with Ethel’s efficiency and devotion to her family, they raised four daughters and finally one son, Edgar. Edgar and I were the same age and great buddies when we were young.

Pete liked trapshooting (which he really couldn’t afford), and along with many Wilmington-area shooters like my father, took part in the shoots of the Philadelphia Trapshooters’ League that flourished in the 1910’s and early ‘20’s. The Wilmington group usually went together on the train to wherever the shoot was scheduled in the Philadelphia area. Pete had a broken leg, but he went with the group to a shoot at Lansdale with his crutches. The shooting concluded about an hour before the return train was due to leave, so the shooters enjoyed the refreshments of a saloon near the station. Finally the station agent came to the door and called out “Last call for the train!”, and all left their drinks and ran for the station, Pete among them. His crutches remained forever propped up in a corner of the saloon.

My father liked Pete Guest, who helped him run the Yorklyn tournaments. In the late 1920’s, dad had bought 18 acres from William P. Sharpless (Ruth Marshall’s grandfather) to expand the Yorklyn Gun Club, and he gave Pete $\frac{3}{4}$ acre on which a comfortable 4-bedroom house was built. In the mid-1930’s Alice, the Guests’ eldest daughter, was married at home. Pete was away attending the Atlantic Indian Trapshooting Tournament at Shawnee-on-the-Delaware near the Delaware Water Gap. Before he went, he had promised he would be home in time to give Alice away. An hour before the ceremony, however, there was no Pete. The family was much relieved when he came in the driveway in his Model A Ford coupe just before the guests arrived. In later years, Pete was quite deaf, but some of this was for convenience.

In the 1930’s Pete operated a small well-drilling business, with his drilling rig on the back of a Model A Ford truck. Several of the large estates in the area were being developed, such as those of Crawford Greenewalt, Henry Belin duPont, and Lamot duP. Copeland, and Pete drilled many of the required wells, which improved his financial condition.

In 1939 when my father was president of the Amateur Trapshooting Association of America (headquartered at Vandalia, OH), Pete accompanied him on the train (the PRR's "Spirit of St. Louis") to Dayton and return to attend a director's meeting, and the following spring in a '38 Packard to French Lick Springs to attend the annual Jenkins Brothers Shoot at Orleans, IN. About that time, the barrel on Pete's favorite trap gun, an old Marlin pump, blew out, but no one was hurt. In the early summer of 1940, Pete suffered a massive heart attack. He died in March, 1941, at the age of 52.

Of the four daughters, only one, Marguerite (Peg), stayed in Yorklyn, and married James W. Marsey. After World War II, she and her mother, Ethel Guest, were active with my mother in the Captain William McKennan Chapter, DAR. In later years, Jim Marsey told me he asked Pete for permission to marry his daughter. Pete's reply: "How big a ring are you going to give her?" Of the other daughters, Alice lived in Baltimore, Phyllis in Brack-Ex (DE), and Josephine in Owatonna, MN. Edgar (also called "Pete" after his father's death), a good athlete like his father, was the athletic director at a local high school until his untimely death in 1974 at the age of 50.

Last week Ted Kamen began removing paint from the metal parts of the Model 607 with paint stripper, and Mark Russell and Bob Stransky sanded more on the frame of this car- it looks very nice! Dan Citron had a productive meeting of the new Museum Committee, and Jonathan Rickerman chaired a Publicity Committee meeting the same evening. Jim Personti, with help from several others, finished the grill and front bumper on Stan Wilcox's "Dune Buggy", and it was polished so we can put it up for sale. Ten Stanley gauges (3 from the 607) were shipped to the Goolds in England for rebuilding, and word has been received that they are in the U.K. We are almost ready to photograph and tabulate the parts from the 607 to go for re-plating. Bill Schwoebel and I began piping up the new boiler in the Model K. We are disappointed to report that our Model H-5 has a cracked cylinder block, very difficult to repair. This is the second block that has cracked on this car in the past two or three years. We will study the situation and see what is the best course of action, as we have no more spare blocks of this early 20-H.P. size. Bill Schwoebel has called a meeting of the Auburn Valley Railroad Committee for Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 7 P.M. The Committee will meet at Tom and Ruth Marshalls' cottage at Cokesbury Village. The Events Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, Feb. 9, in the FAHP office, and the Collections Committee may meet the same evening.

We are happy to report that Steve Bryce seems to be fine again after the scare he gave us on January 21. Art Sybell has nearly recovered from his knee replacement, and is now maneuvering without a cane. Dan Citron, having battled a virus for at least two weeks, is finally feeling much better, so we are eagerly looking forward to Ground Hog's Day.

Tom