

F.A.H.P. News, May 6, 2013 Story

Aberdeen, Maryland: A Sportsmen's Town: Cal Ripken Sr. and Jr., came from Aberdeen. Cal Jr. was one of my baseball heroes, as was Stan Musial. Like Musial, he played for only one team, his "hometown" Baltimore Orioles, only 30 miles from his home. I remember well his passing Lou Gehrig's record of 2,130 consecutive games at the new ballpark called Camden Yards. Built on the site of Camden Station, this was the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's oldest and largest station in its headquarters city. The only time I followed the Orioles, I watched or checked on Ripken's continuing streak that culminated with his 2,632nd consecutive game in 1998. In retirement, he has made Aberdeen even better known with his sports complexes and incentives for young athletes.

The Ripleys, while certainly the most famous, were not the only outstanding sports figures who called Aberdeen home. When my father became a serious trapshooter in 1914, one of the most outstanding marksmen in that sport was Lester S. German. German worked for one of the ammunition companies and shot as a "professional," teaching people to shoot and promoting his company's products. My father attended his first "Westy Hogan" tournament at Atlantic City in 1915, and there were 450 16-yard targets on the program, shot over a three-day period. Les German broke 449, making news throughout the trapshooting world with his near-perfect score. He was bigger-than-life in other ways and could eat four wild ducks at a single meal. He shot through the 1920s, and we have captured on 16 mm movie film Les German in action at Betterton, Maryland, in 1925. About 1932, he suffered a paralyzing stroke, after which he lived about two years. During this time, however, some friends brought him to the "Old Timers' Shoot," staged by my father at Yorklyn on June 30, 1933.

J. Smith Michael and Charles B. Osborn, both of Aberdeen, were young men German taught to shoot clay targets. Both were considered Class A shooters, and Michael won several championships in the 1920s. Charlie Osborn, who owned a large cannery along the railroad in Aberdeen, stopped shooting for several years but got his second wind at the end of World War II. He won the Maryland State Championship at the Oriole Gun Club in Baltimore in 1947 with a score of 195 out of 200.

J. Calvin Michael was Smith's son who married Osborn's daughter, Edna. Coached by his father, Calvin became good as a teenager, and he scored high in the Marshall Marathon at Yorklyn and in the Maryland championships in the years before World War II. In 1942, he lost the Maryland championship to D. Frank Beck of Havre de Grace by a single target. At the conclusion of the war, Calvin Michael came into his own. For many years he seemed to win the Maryland State Championship about two years out of three, at least twice with 200 straight. On one of these occasions, a young farm boy from the Eastern Shore named Casper Clough had practiced with his father "behind the barn," and they thought he was ready for the Maryland State contest. Casper was at the top of his form and finished with 199. The trouble was, Calvin Michael broke 200.

To become the official high-average trapshooter in the country, the average had to be on a minimum of 2,000 registered targets. In October 1948, with the end of the shooting season fast approaching, Calvin had missed 24 targets that year, but he had shot at only 1700. Ray Loring, Manager of the Amateur Trapshooting Association, told him that he had a chance to be the high-average trapshooter, if he could shoot another 300 registered targets to bring his total to 2,000. He found three nearby clubs that each had 100-target races scheduled in October and November, not a time of year noted for high scores. He entered all of them and broke 100 straight each time, finishing the year with 1,976 out of 2,000, for an average of 98.80%. Vic Reinders of Waukesha, Wisconsin, a perennial winner, was second in 1948 with 98.68%.

Calvin and Edna's son, J. Smith Michael II, also of Aberdeen, became a top trapshooter, but I never knew him as it was after my time in the sport of trapshooting.

Work Report: On Tuesday, the last day of April, the weather cleared nicely for our evening activities that started about 5 P.M with 24 volunteers on hand: Jerry Novak (in charge), Steve Bryce, Tim Nolan, Paul

Kratunis, Ed Paschall, Bill Schwoebel, Mac Taylor, Ted Kamen, Jerry Lucas, Art Wallace, Mark Russell, Bob Wilhelm, Robert Hopkins, Richard Gregg, Sam Gregg, Bob Jordan, Jeff Pollock, Emil Christofano, Gary Green, Lou Mandich, Anne Cleary, Tim Ward, Bob Stransky, and Tom Marshall. Five Stanleys were fired up in preparation for the driving and hands-on training season.

Steve Bryce with the Model 76 had Tim Nolan and Paul Kratunis as his students. Bill Schwoebel with the Model 87 had Mac Taylor, Ted Kamen, and Ed Paschall. Jerry Lucas with the Model 740 had Art Wallace and Mark Russell. Bob Wilhelm and Robert Hopkins with the 725 had Rich Gregg and his son Sam. Tim Ward and Bob Stransky were a team of two intermediates with the Model 735, but it was obvious that the newly reworked condenser was still leaking, so a maximum of 300 lbs. pressure was raised before putting the car away for further condenser work.

On the 1937 Packard, the vacuum tank was installed, and the new brake lines were tested. The four Auburn Valley "captain's chairs" with split seat bottoms were repaired with small channel brackets screwed to the seats' bottoms. It was discovered that these new brackets interfered with the locking holes for turning the chairs 180 degrees. On the Model 607, holes in the dash were enlarged to properly accommodate the stem for the stack blower and the correct location for the firing-up valve. The fuel pressure retaining valve was adjusted to give proper clearance from the front seat. The locomotives were greased and everything readied for their runs on May 5.

On Thursday, May 2, 14 volunteers were on hand: Bob McGovern, Steve Bryce, Jerry Koss, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Art Wallace, Paul Kratunis, Geoff Fallows, Bill Schwoebel, Jim Personti, Rose Ann Hoover, Gerhard Maute, Eugene Maute, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

During the afternoon, Steve Bryce fired up the newly restored Model 78, and he and Tom tested it out on the driveway and for a brief run on the road. With a few adjustments the car ran very well, as expected from a Charlie Johnson job. It was used on May 4, traveling to Winterthur and back to participate in one of the "Antique Autos at Winterthur" Saturdays during May.

The condenser was removed from the Model 735 and again taken apart. It is believed that the gasket was leaking where the top tank bolts to the core. The Model 820 (Mountain Wagon) was prepped for its use at Auburn Heights on May 5. A new by-pass line was installed on the Model 87, as it is believed the old line was leaking. The spring hangers on both A.V.R.R. locomotives were checked and found to be in good alignment. The parking stripes were repainted in the parking lot, and the cars were dusted and cleaned for the upcoming public day on May 5.

On the Model 607, the enlarged hole in the firewall was covered with a brass plate, and all screwed together to make a good job. It was discovered that the location of the new master cylinder for the hydraulic brakes interferes with the mounting of the bottom bracket for the gauge glass on the water tank, so this problem was studied. The tank itself was adjusted slightly to allow for a proper fit of the fill spout.

On Saturday, the Model 78, with Steve and Ann Bryce aboard, made a successful round-trip to Winterthur and was appreciated by those in attendance. Susan Randolph gave a talk on F.A.H.P. in the small auditorium there at 1:00 P.M. The bracket for the water glass on the Model 607 was successfully mounted in a slightly modified location, after a bracket on the truss rod was moved ahead about ½" (which was needed anyway to line it up).