

AUGUST 25, 2008 F.A.H.P. NEWS

Buena Vista: Once I asked Leon deValinger, Delaware's longtime archivist in the mid-twentieth century, who was Delaware's most outstanding citizen. Somewhat to my surprise, he snapped back "John M. Clayton". Clayton was born near Dagsboro in southeastern Sussex County about 1800, and is buried in the churchyard on Governors Avenue in Dover, now a part of the Delaware State Museum. He became Secretary of State in the administration of President Zachary Taylor in 1849, and served until just after Taylor's death in July, 1850, being succeeded in the Fillmore administration by the aging Daniel Webster. His claim to fame seems to be the signing of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Great Britain, giving the U.S. the right to build a canal across Central America. President Taylor, "Old Rough and Ready", was the hero of Buena Vista, the 1847 battle which effectively ended the Mexican War, making vast areas of the southwest including California part of the United States.

Clayton must have considered Taylor his personal hero, as he was, indeed, an American hero. The Delawarean named his estate in New Castle County "Buena Vista" in honor of his hero's crowning victory. Here he built a spacious country house, which was passed down through later generations of his family. A direct descendant, Clayton Douglass Buck and his wife, the daughter of T. Coleman duPont, made this their permanent residence and enlarged and improved the home for 20th-century living. Mr. Buck was president of the Equitable Trust Company in Wilmington and served two terms as Delaware's governor (1929-1937), and one term in the U. S. Senate (1943-1949). His son, C. Douglass Buck, Jr., was an architect by profession, was active in local theatrical productions, and served as the first president of the New Castle County Council which came into being in 1966. A very young Joseph R. Biden, Jr., became a member of that Council about three years later, and jumped from the County Council to the U.S. Senate in 1972, upsetting the incumbent J. Caleb Boggs.

My father knew Governor Buck through banking, and he and Walter Jefferis, as representatives of the Kennett bank, were invited to an evening dinner at Buena Vista in the late 1930's when Buck entertained banking leaders from the greater Wilmington area. The Bucks also rented our property at #1 Queen Street in Rehoboth on at least two occasions. When Buck's Secretary of State, Mr. Grantland, wanted to get the first ten auto license numbers assigned to State officials, my father called on the Governor in his office. He did not want to lose #8, as he had been the only motorist to have that number (since 1909). Fortunately, the secretary's plan died, and only the first 3 numbers are designated for government officials.

Late in their lives, the Bucks donated their estate, **Buena Vista**, to the State of Delaware, and by the late 1960's it was being used as a Conference Center and an entertainment site for use by Delaware's governors. When I was active in the Delaware Travel Council, we had our annual meeting there on several occasions. The Bicentennial Reliability Tour, for cars 1914 and older, stopped for lunch at Buena Vista on the last day of their Seattle-to-Philadelphia trek in early July, 1976 (I went down in the H-5 to see them). Perhaps it will be possible for F.A.H.P. to have a special event some day at this beautiful property on the duPont Highway just south of State Road (where U.S. 40 diverges from U.S. 13).

On Tuesday past, Chazz Salkin, Matt Chesser, James Wagner and Dan Citron of the State Division of Parks met with Steve Bryce, Jerry Novak, Catherine Coin, Ruth and me to get one step closer to a legal agreement between the *Friends* and the State, and to discuss several issues that were on our collective minds. It was a positive and very friendly meeting, and things look good for an orderly transition when Ruth and I move out of Auburn Heights. Dan Citron will be helping me in the coming weeks in sorting through and cataloguing the collectables that should stay here. I was asked to put in writing our feelings as to what we'd like to see here in the future, and what our thoughts would be for disposition of assets should the *Friends* fail. A rough draft of this has been prepared.

On Thursday, Catherine and I met with Peter Morrow, Director of the Longwood and Welfare Foundations, for the purpose of becoming acquainted. We had a relaxed and friendly meeting, and he wants to visit Auburn Heights at one of our events this fall. On Friday, I met with Bill Campbell of NVF and his attorney to discuss the NVF water tower which provides sprinkler protection for our Museum. We also discussed future use of the old Marshall Brothers office, presently tied up in a 20-year lease between the State and NVF. Bill offered to provide us with samples of some of NVF's modern products for our Museum display, and to conduct a tour of the old paper mill on Benge Road for interested members of F.A.H.P. We'll try to arrange the latter in the near future.

Emil finished the installation of the spare electric motor in our Rauch & Lang, and since considerable brake work has also been completed, we believe this car can be used successfully on our Steamin' Sunday, August 31. Several of the steamers have undergone minor repairs, such as throttle and needle valve refurbishing, tank cleaning, and a rear wheel bearing replacement on the Model K. Steve Bryce and Mark Russell have the burner about ready to go back under the boiler on our Model 76, and we are pleased to report the attendance at several of our work sessions new member Jeary Vogt and the return of Bob Jordan and Dave Lumley. They are all pitching in to continue a strong mechanical team.

On Sunday, August 24, 3 of our Stanleys and 9 F.A.H.P. members made the 90-mile round-trip to Worcester, PA, for the annual "Day on the Farm", sponsored by Ross Myers at his home for the benefit of the Montgomery County Community College. They had a near-perfect day, with the Models 87, 78, and 735 performing well. Steve and Ann Bryce, Bill Schwoebel, Butch Cannard, Anne Cleary, Kelly Williams, Art Wallace, Catherine Coin and Dan Citron made the trip, and all were back at Auburn Heights around 6:30 P.M.

This week we will be getting ready for our "Steamin' Sunday" on the 31st. Art Sybell is chair of the event, and needs your help to cover all volunteer jobs. There will be a sign-up sheet in the garage on Tuesday and Thursday during our work sessions, and we will appreciate your support. Thank you! Again, we will be celebrating the 100th birthdays of our Models H-5 and K. We now have 6 cars in the collection made at least 100 years ago. Tom