

F.A.H.P. News, June 13, 2011

The L. D. Caulk Company of Milford: Milford, Delaware, historians will know when the L. D. Caulk Company, a well-known pharmaceutical manufacturer in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, was founded. Its best-known product was MERCITAN, a red, pleasant-tasting mouthwash used by many dentists of the time. Going to the dentist has never been pleasant, but my annual visit suffered a setback when MERCITAN was no longer in a small cup with which to rinse alongside the reclining dentist's chair. Today, the nearest thing in taste is Cepacol, but it is yellow in color instead of red.

The Grier family of Milford seemed to own the Caulk Company. The "Grier cottage" in Rehoboth was designed by the prominent New York architect Stanford White and was built about 1905 just north of the Henlopen Hotel. (White's career ended abruptly in 1906 when he was shot and killed by Harry K. Thaw, the husband of actress Evelyn Nesbitt. The story is told in the theatrical production and late 1970s movie *Ragtime*.) The Grier cottage washed into the sea in the big storm of March 1962. One of the Griers owned a 1932 Packard Twin Six, 7-passenger sedan with Delaware license number 98. An outstanding car, it was spotted up and down the state from Rehoboth to Madison Street in Wilmington. In the 1960s, a member of the family represented a district including part of Milford in Delaware's General Assembly.

The Caulk Company also manufactured MER toothpaste. Although pleasant-tasting and seemingly competitive, it proved no match for Pepsodent, Ipana, Colgate, and others. There was also a woman's skin ointment called MERCIREX. On the jar was a picture of a woman's head with her appropriate 1930s hairdo and a list of some of the salve's ingredients, including mercury. For an obscure reason a jar was saved from 75 years ago, it was opened, and the contents seemed in new condition with the texture and aroma just as I had remembered it. I used some last week.

Doctor Nelson seemed to be the head physician at the Caulk Company. He must have had a summer place in Rehoboth, as my mother called him when I had trench mouth there about 1934. He came to our house on Queen Street, prescribed something, and I was better very soon. As I got older, our paths crossed a few times, and there was a fondness on both sides.

Work Nights: During last week at Auburn Heights, The first ice cream run of the season took place on Tuesday with seven cars making the trip to Woodside Farm Creamery. Jerry Novak and Rose Ann drove the '32 and '37 Packards with Susan Randolph and Bit Serge as passengers; Steve Bryce drove the Model 71 with Ann Bryce and Ruth Marshall along for the ride; and Butch Cannard took the Model 87 with his sister, Fran, and Art Wallace. The ice cream run was also used for Stanley driving lessons for students: Ted Kamen drove the Model 740 accompanied by Richard Bernard and Ed Paschall. Tom Marshall as well as Bob & Marilyn Stransky drove with Tim Ward and Kelly Williams in the Model 725, and Mark & Lynette Russell in the 735 with Lou Mandich and Jerry Lucas. The weather was pleasant, the ice cream delicious and an enjoyable time was had by all the drivers and their passengers. Also on Tuesday, Emil Christofano and Jeff Pollock worked on reassembling the front axle of the Rauch

& Lang. Jeff also started cleaning up locomotives from their weekend run, and Brent McDougall continued the work on Wednesday night.

On Thursday, Ted Kamen applied another coat of red paint to the Mountain Wagon wheels, and Tom Marshall continued painting the mounting hardware and began installing it on the wheels. Steve Bryce gave a driving lesson with Dave Leon and the Model 735. Bill Schwoebel and Tom worked on the Model K, fine tuning the adjustment of the rear gears. Bill also tried the Model K again and readjusted the rear gears. The noise there is better, but the gears still need refinement. Bill and Tom also made several perch-pole brace adjustments under the Model 87, as Tom noticed it had not been tracking properly; they road tested the car on Saturday, and it tracked very well. They also worked on the screeching noise in the pump box and made a minor modification but did not fix the problem.