

## AUGUST 10, 2009 F.A.H.P. NEWS

**The Piersons of Southwood Road:** On the old farmhouse standing close to Southwood Road about one mile west of Hockessin is a date stone “Thomas Pierson, 1782”. The Pierson family owned and occupied the 100-plus-acre farm that surrounded it for over 200 years. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the road on which it stands was the only way into what is now the village of Hockessin from the south and west. In early September, 1777, British troops under Generals Howe and Cornwallis pushed toward Philadelphia over this road, before settling for the night in and around Hockessin Friends Meeting House. Fresh from landing at the head of the Elk (near Elkton, MD) and a skirmish at Cooch’s Bridge, they were trying to circumvent Washington’s army, which was keeping between the British and Philadelphia. Valley Road did not exist in 1777. Neither did the Lancaster Pike nor the Newport-Gap Turnpike. The British had to defeat Washington and Lafayette at Chadds Ford in the Battle of the Brandywine before the way was clear for them to enter Philadelphia, capital of the rebellious colonies.

Several generations of Piersons farmed on Southwood Road in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Philip Pierson (c. 1850-1928) had three daughters and a son, Wilson T. Pierson (1891-1979). When Wilson married Sarah Emma Sharpless of Yorklyn (1896-1985) in 1922, his new bride moved into the farmhouse with her husband and in-laws. They raised three children, William Sharpless Pierson (1926- ), Philip Wilson Pierson (1928- ), and Ruth Laura Pierson (1931- ). William married Katherine Frazee (1927- ) in 1948, eventually they built a small home on one side of the farm, and raised two children, Gerald Pierson (1949- ) and Nancy Pierson (1951- ). Philip married Romaine Jordan (1929-2002) in 1950. They lived in the farmhouse with his parents and farmed the old place with Philip’s father, before removing to a farm near Clayton, DE, in 1968. They had two children, Charmayne Pierson Busker (1955- ), and Wayne Philip Pierson (1957- ). For many years before her father’s death, Ruth lived with her parents while teaching in several local elementary schools.

Wilson Pierson died in 1979 after a lengthy illness. His widow Emma, and their daughter Ruth continued to live in the farmhouse, with Emma’s son William and his wife Katherine “next door”. In 1985, Ruth married this writer (Tom Marshall), and Emma Pierson died less than three months later. The remaining farm, including the 1782 Thomas Pierson house, was sold to settle the estate. Some years earlier, Wilson Pierson had sold a portion of his farm that became the western part of Wellington Hills. What was sold after Emma’s death was around and across the road from the farmhouse, and this is known as “Pierson’s Ridge”. Settlement was finally completed in 1988, and the old place passed out of the family. The house is presently owned and occupied by James Reinhard. Two of our Auburn Valley Railroad cars are named “Laura R. Sharpless” and “Emma S. Pierson”, in memory of Ruth’s maternal grandmother and her mother respectively.

Last week saw good activity at our two work sessions, Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Jim Personti returned the fuel tank from the Model EX Stanley, and it can be installed this week. The car, having had a considerable amount of rear-end adjusting, done mostly by Jerry Lucas and Kelly Williams, will then be ready to test on the road. Work continues on the new Diesel locomotive lent to us by Jim Sank. Hopefully it will be ready for testing soon. Steve Bryce did some work on the Model 87, finding the fuel filter on the dash completely choked. He and Jerry Novak had taken this car to Tri-State Mall for a Ronald McDonald House benefit last Tuesday, and it steamed poorly on their return. On Thursday night, I gave driving lessons to Art Wallace and Ted Kamen in the Model 725. Both “students” are doing well.

On Tuesday, August 11, the Events and Scheduling Committee will hold its monthly meeting in the FAHP office at 7:00 P.M. This Thursday, August 13, several cars and their occupants plan to go to the annual Threshermen’s Reunion at Kinzers, PA, about 30 miles one-way. Cars presently scheduled to go are Stanley Models 87, 76, 78, 725, and 735, and the ’32 Packard. Drivers, some not completely qualified as yet, are Steve Bryce, Kelly Williams, Butch Cannard, Richard Bernard, Art Wallace, Mark Russell, Dan Citron, Walter Higgins, Jerry Novak, Anne Cleary, Lou Mandich and myself. Several passengers plan to go along as well. The cars need to be prepped on Tuesday night by those planning to use them.

Next Sunday, August 16, our annual Volunteers’ Picnic will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 at Auburn Heights. As mentioned last week, please bring a covered dish or dessert. The committee, chaired by Rose Ann Hoover, will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, drinks, and condiments. It will be helpful if we know who is coming. For those who are at Auburn Heights beforehand, please let me know if you plan to come (I’ll try to leave a sign-up sheet on the bench in the garage) and the number in your party. For others, please call the office (302) 239-2385 and leave word if the phone is not answered. We need more items for the fun auction. Look around and see what you can spare, either “good stuff” or junk. Proceeds benefit FAHP.

Next week is Board Meeting week, with several committee meetings taking place before the Board Meeting on Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7 P.M. Bob Reilly and Mike May, our “long distance” Board members, both plan to attend. Rob Robison hopes to have the summer edition of the “Herald” off the press in time for this meeting. On Sunday, August 30, the annual “Day on the Farm” at Worcester, PA, takes place and we have agreed to have our Mountain Wagon there to give rides, in return for the loan of the Autocar bus to F.A.H.P. for most of our monthly “Steamin’ Days”. Our thanks go to Ross Myers and Terry Bookheimer for this loan.

We congratulate Steve Jensen on his purchase of a 1911 Model 62 Stanley which is now in Delaware. Today we were pleased to see Brad Austin and his friend from Seattle, WA, at Auburn Heights, thanks to Lou Mandich. Brad has been a member of FAHP since our Steam Car Tour here in 2007. Also, we want to wish Bill Schwoebel well with his knee operation scheduled to take place this coming Friday.

It is with some sadness that I must announce that Catherine Coin has resigned as our Executive Director, effective immediately. We will miss her, and we wish her well. Tom