

## MAY 26, 2008 MEMORIAL DAY WEEKLY NEWS

**Meta, he's beautiful!** So exclaimed the female relatives of Meta Shallcross Day (1919-1999) in the front hall of Auburn Heights on a rainy Sunday in April, 1950. She was introducing her six-week-old son, Robert B. Day, Jr., to her parents, to her sisters and their families, and to her cousins, the Marshalls. The occasion was a party my mother had planned for her eldest brother, James T. Shallcross, Jr. (1879-1972), and his wife Elizabeth (Bess) (1877-1966) to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They were invited for Sunday dinner, but the rest was a surprise. What could not have been a surprise, however, was my mother's arrangement to have me pick up Uncle Jay and Aunt Bess in front of the Marshall Brothers mill and bring them up the driveway to the porte-cochere in my 1914 Stanley Model 607 to the delight of their offspring and their families. The flaw in this plan was the steady rain that was falling. With the top up on the Stanley, the honored couple complied with my mother's plan, and they were delivered on schedule, but the other guests were inside and some of the planned excitement was lost.

Uncle Jay (his mother called him Jamie, his wife called him Jim, but to his siblings he was Jay) met Aunt Bess, a Quaker from Byberry in Northeast Philadelphia, when they both attended Friends Central School in Philadelphia. By the time he was 18 or 19 he wanted to get married, but his father told him "not until you are 21", so dutifully they waited until 1900. His father (my grandfather), James T. Shallcross (1847-1911) was a successful farmer and Democratic politician who owned three large farms and a grist mill northwest of Odessa, DE. The elder Shallcross lived with his family on the Belleview Farm north of Shallcross Lake; his father, Sereck F. Shallcross (1816-1906) lived on a farm called Oakland south of the lake. Since Sereck was 84 and widowed when Jamie was married, the young couple moved into Oakland with Jamie's grandfather. Here, 5 daughters were born spanning a period of 16 years, Meta being the youngest. My mother, who was not married until after Meta was born, was very close to her five nieces, the second of whom was named for her. Uncle Jay was an especially successful farmer and by the 1940's, he owned eight or ten farms in the Odessa-Middletown area.

Number 4 daughter, Mary Comly (who preferred to be called "Comie") (1915-1992), lived with us at Auburn Heights while attending Beacom College in Wilmington during the winter of 1933-34. That was the winter the 1-1/2 story addition, with its new kitchen and recreation room, was built onto the rear of Auburn Heights. Comie had no trouble in attracting boy friends. She usually went home to Oakland on weekends, and one of her boy friends would often bring her back here on Sunday evening. It did them no good, however, as the next summer she met a young DuPont chemist named Donald Drake Coffman, and they were married at Old Drawyers Church near Odessa in September, 1935.

Meta, number 5 of the Shallcross girls, went with my parents and me in our '37 Packard to the West Coast and the Canadian Rockies in the summer of 1941. She was just out of college and was preparing to teach in the suburbs of Philadelphia. I was just out of high school, but Meta and I had a lot of fun together. Meta married Robert B. Day in 1948, they took a flying boat

from Baltimore to Bermuda (a 6-hour trip one-way) for their honeymoon, and their only child, mentioned above, was born in February, 1950.

The Stanley Museum's Model 70, of which you have heard much, was finished by volunteers of FAHP and picked up, along with the Museum's trailer, by John Linderman, chairman of the Museum's Trustees, on Saturday afternoon. Also on Saturday, our '37 Packard and our '16 Rauch & Lang electric were displayed at Winterthur thanks to Emil Christofano and Art Sybell. Art stayed all day to hand out literature and promote FAHP. Today, Memorial Day, 5 of our cars took part in the Kennett Square parade. Thanks to our many dedicated volunteers, most of the events planned for the busy month of May are behind us, and all were successful.

This week, the Museum and the grounds of Auburn Heights must be made ready for the charter event of Stan Wilcox on Saturday, May 31. Stan has been very good to FAHP, so we want to give his group an especially enjoyable late afternoon. We also need to get the spring issue of the "Auburn Heights Herald" in the mail, and may request volunteer help for this at our work session on Tuesday or Thursday evening. This has been held up by our Annual Report, which we want to insert in this mailing. Bob Reilly has helped us complete this Report. On Friday, Jerry Novak, George Barczewski, and Emil Christofano plan to take our '32 Packard Twin Six in Rob Robison's trailer to the Burn Foundation's Concours event at Bethlehem, PA, where it will be until Sunday afternoon.

We still need volunteers for Saturday, May 31. The event is from 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. If you have not signed up but can help, please E-mail Anne Cleary or call Catherine Coin in the office, (302) 239-2385. Help in running the one train on the AVRR is the most critical. We understand that our volunteers will be fed by Stan's caterer. Thanks!

We are sad to report the passing of 7-year-old Erin Elizabeth Brennan, granddaughter of Jerry and Holly Novak. The service is on Wednesday, May 28, at 11 A.M. at the Chandler Funeral Home on Concord Pike (Route 202) north of Wilmington.

We hope you have had a pleasant Memorial Day weekend. Tom