

October 7, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

The "Weekly News" is 2 days early this week, as Ruth and I will be away next Monday.

The "story" is about my father's building of the shop in 1937. Loving to work on mechanical things all his life, he lost the use of the machine shop at National Vulcanized Fibre when he retired in 1926, and attempted to use the carriage house for most of what he built and repaired. With Packard cars filling the garage, however, there was not much room, and some of the small machinery spilled over to the unfinished end of the second floor above. I recall a large band saw located there, on which he cut out the pieces for the "O" gauge circular railway, now in the Museum, in 1931. His work bench and cupboards were at the end of the garage now closest to the shop, remnants of which are still here. When he bought the large 15" South Bend lathe (built in 1928) in 1935, it was set up in a rear corner of the garage, near the present air compressor.

Dad wanted a more spacious shop with a wood floor, always complaining that a concrete floor was too hard on his feet. Early in 1937, he engaged his second cousin, Paul Hannum, a Kennett Square builder, to draw up plans and build onto the end of the garage away from the big house. The final size was 24 x 30 feet, outside dimensions. Since the natural contour of the ground fell away in that direction, a basement under this shop could be possible with an outside door at ground level. From this basement it would be possible to work under a car through a pit in the wood floor above. With a minimum of grading, construction took place during the summer of '37. The family quarry just above the State Line off Route 82 was opened up and used again to build the stone walls, which matched exactly the stone in the older buildings. Being off from school in the summer, this 13-year-old watched the workmen intently, and as completion neared, the cupboard just above the sink (where we keep paper supplies) was an excellent vantage point. I remember Sam Massey of West Grove, Hannum's master carpenter, at work, with Joe Stabler doing the electrical and Sharp Thompson plastering the interior walls. My father wanted a lot of cupboards, drawers, and bins, most of which are still in the shop today.

Until it became too full of machinery, a car could be serviced in the shop, with removable planks opening the pit underneath. However, the first project I can remember was the invention of a clay target trap in the winter of '37-'38. To test this trap, the big door was opened and clay targets were thrown over the rose arbor to land on the lawn beyond. Paul Buxton of the Western Cartridge Company of East Alton, IL, came on January 20, '38, to inspect this invention and he was favorably impressed. By late June that year, Western began

marketing its new "White Flyer Trap" with very few modifications- the deal was: my father wanted no money, but 10 new traps for his Yorklyn Gun Club, which were installed by August of 1938.

Late in 1941, my father's '40 Packard 180 with 13,000 miles was parked in the shop, and before it came out, it had been converted to a steam car, using many Stanley parts and a Derr water-tube boiler with a Quiet May atomizing burner. Bill Rule owns this car today.

A new drill press was installed upon the shop's completion, and a 9" bench lathe, which was soon replaced with a 10" South Bend, still on the bench today. There was also a shaper, and in the early 1960's a Rockwell milling machine was added. In 1943-45, my father machined and built his 3/4"-scale 4-8-4 steam locomotive, now on display in the Museum. By the mid 1950's he was building the Auburn Valley's #401, and when it was ready for testing on its new trackage around the grounds, the "engine house" was established in the basement and a turntable built just outside the building for easy access to the track.

The removable planks in the floor above were made permanent and there has not been room for an automobile in the shop since the late 1940's.

In 1981 with apartment renovations, the deck above the shop was made into an entrance porch for said apartment, now the office and living quarters of our Executive Director. In 1993, an elevator was built from ground to apartment, its shaft robbing one window and occupying one corner of the shop itself. Almost all the Stanleys were restored in the adjoining garage, not in the shop but very convenient to it.

The work sessions this week attracted fewer than normal attendees. as many of our volunteers were at Hershey for all or some of the 5 days of that annual event. Despite 8 workers on Tuesday and 10 on Thursday, several projects were completed or moved along. Dale cleaned up the 401 from last Sunday's test-firing, Ted made tie straps for our R.R. signal project on the Auburn Valley, 16 new ties were installed near the "trestle switch", and one insulated joint is completed. Rob Robison surveyed the wiring requirements for the Model 735 with the thought of picking up what he needs at Hershey to complete the electrical circuits on this car. Walter and Emil removed the Model H-5's throttle, found what is most certainly the reason it did not close properly, and re-installed it. Jerry Lucas, with help from Joe Boxler and Art Sybell, found the bottom hanger strap nut loose on the Model 87 and remedied it. Jerry and Bill Rule found why there is a loud knock in the Model EX's engine, and adjustments can eliminate this, but it still may be caused by a loose piston. Emil, Joe and Ted re-bushed some of the throttle linkage on the Model 607 and there should be an improvement in the throttle operation on this car. Joyce Sybell, Dan Nichols, and Betty Hoffmeister are helping Bob Reilly in the office, as their time permits. And a great example of a responsible working group is the crew completing the "Little Toot" train under the leadership of Ron Turochy. Dale and Ted built the

locomotive and had it here in time for our June event, Ron followed through with the Division of Parks and got 3 cars donated, and then got the B. Frank Shinn Company to give us the paint we need to completely paint the train. Then he and Art scheduled several work sessions to finish the job in time for our October weekend. Although rained out today, there is no doubt they will have this new attraction finished on time. Congratulations!

Emil, Brent McDougall, Art, and Bob Reilly have volunteered to make popcorn with our popper at the Delaware Nature Society's Harvest Festival tomorrow. It is a long day but they have assured me they can handle it. Many thanks. Several volunteers are planning to take cars to the Fall Meet of HCCP at the Delaware County Community College next Sunday, October 15, and these cars will need to undergo final preparations. Bob has printed posters advertising our public weekend 10/21-22, and these are available for distribution. Please pick up one or more if you can place them in appropriate locations. Again, we will need volunteers to distribute flyers as well as posters. In preparation for our House Tour on these dates, Ruth has suggested that any of her docents who would like additional familiarization might like to stop by next Saturday, October 14, between 3 and 5 P.M., or just call her at other times that may suit. Also, she knows that many volunteers in the "Steam Team" (and their wives) have said "When can we see the house?", so a dry run or dress rehearsal is planned for Tuesday evening, October 17, with one group starting at 7:00 and the other about 7:30. We hope those who would like to see 5 first-floor and 2 second-floor rooms will be able to make it. Tours will start on the porch on the east side of the house near the sun porch. Ruth and I plan to return from our 2-day vacation Tuesday and will then be back on the job. Best wishes to all. Tom