

F.A.H.P. News, September 12, 2011

The Masons of Longwood: Soon after Pierre S. du Pont developed Longwood Gardens near Kennett Square, he assembled a talented group of young men to assist him in running the massive operation. Charles H. Mason (1886-1949) of Lewes, Delaware, was in this group and became chief chauffeur for Mr. du Pont and his wife. Mason's brother-in-law, Allan L. "Skutch" Lauritsen (1894-1934), also of Lewes, was established by Mr. du Pont as one of his two major building contractors. Mason and his wife, Marguerite Lauritsen Mason (1896-1934), occupied a large stone home on the Longwood property and raised two daughters, Virginia and Ann, and a son, Charles H. Mason III. I knew them all, as well as the three Lauritsen girls, as all of them attended Wilmington Friends School. When Eleanor Marshall and I were placed in Ruth Pusey's first-grade class in 1930, Charlie Mason was seated at a tiny table with us and became a lifelong friend.

Mr. du Pont also hired two important people from the Quaker community of Sandy Spring, Maryland: Malcolm Farquhar and Douglas Gilpin. The former was his top man in estate management, and the latter supervised all the du Pont farms connected with Longwood. Farquhar built a fine home adjacent to Longwood, and Gilpin lived in one of Mr. du Pont's homes on the property. Mason, Gilpin, and Lauritsen were "tournament" (serious) trapshooters, and Farquhar enjoyed the sport on a less frequent schedule. Mr. du Pont allowed them to build the Longwood Gun Club just west of the Conservatory, which had two traps and was one of the clubs in the Penn-Del Twilight League for many years. Charles Mason and Doug Gilpin, both 90% shooters (usually Class C), never missed shooting in the 500-target "Marshall Marathon" at Yorklyn.

Both Charles Masons were very popular with trapshooters. The father became High Chief of the Atlantic Indians, a trapshooting membership organization, in the late 1930s, and his son held the same position in the 1970s. My father was High Chief in the mid-1940s. The younger Charles became a Class AA shooter and worked for Hercules Powder Company's Sporting Powder Division in the south-central part of the United States before the division was eliminated. He and I had some friendly competition before and after World War II, but he soon outpaced me in shooting ability. His sister, Ann, who married Robert Ewing and became a newspaper editor in Pinehurst, North Carolina, was one of the best woman shooters in the East.

The Masons maintained a nice beach-front property on Lewes Beach, Delaware, and family members shared many happy times there. Of all those mentioned in this article, only Virginia Mason Morgan, born in 1920, is still alive.

Recent Events: This past weekend was a busy one for the Steam Team. We participated in both the Kennett Square Mushroom Festival and Chadds Ford Days on Saturday and Sunday. Dan Citron took the Model 735 and Jerry Novak drove with Anne Cleary in the 1932 Packard to Chadds Ford Days while Jerry Lucas drove with Steve Jensen in the Mountain Wagon to the Mushroom Festival. On Sunday, Jerry and Anne returned to Chadds Ford, along with John and Robert Hopkins while Jerry Lucas made another visit to the Mushroom Festival, accompanied

by Art Wallace and Dan Citron in the Model 735. Firing Up Demonstrations were given at both locations each day, and many brochures were handed out. We thank all who represented F.A.H.P. for their dedication and commitment. As always, they met many wonderful people who expressed interest in visiting Yorklyn's little-known treasure -- Auburn Heights.

Work Nights: Last week during work sessions, volunteers readied cars for last weekend's off-site events. Jerry Lucas prepped the Mountain Wagon he drove to the Kennett Square Mushroom Festival, and Richard Bernard went over the Model 735 for Dan Citron's trip to Chadds Ford Days. Anne Cleary and Jeff Pollock, with additional helpm cleaned up the locomotives from the previous weekend's events, and Jim Personti checked and adjusted the linkage on the 401 locomotive.

Emil Christofano and Jeff Pollock continued on the Rauch & Lang project, and Ted Kamen and Bob Jordan spent the evenings inspecting and organizing Model 607 parts before starting the re-assembly of the frame. Bob Stransky and Tim Ward dropped the burner on the Model 725 to track down a boiler leak noticed during the car's last outing. After a hydro test, the offending tube was located and marked; hopefully, repairs can be completed this week. And on Thursday night, Art Wallace gave a tour and introduced the group to a new work night volunteer, Richard Zabriskie -- welcome to Auburn Heights, Richard!

Hagley Car Show, Sunday, Sept. 18

The Hagley Car Show is a must-see event each year, and this year they have some extraordinary feature cars, including our own Model K, lined up -- all with rumble seats! So come on out and join the Steam Team for a great day with an always impressive array of antique autos, great activities and good food, plus Dennis Gage, host of the My Classic Car television series! See the Hagley Car Show website for all details.