

FAHP News, March 31, 2014

This Week in Time: In Senior High School, spring vacation week, both at Wilmington Friends and at Mercersburg Academy, was the last week in March, midway between mid-year exams and the end of the school year. I remember particularly spring vacations in 1939, 1941, and 1942.

In 1939, while my father and Pete Guest attended the Jenkins Brothers Trapshooting and Live Bird Tournament at Orleans, Indiana, my mother and I, together with the Mancill twins and their mother, Eleanor Marshall (Reynolds), and her mother and Sara Bowers, a close family friend, went to Bermuda. We sailed from New York on the Furness-Bermuda Line's flagship "Queen of Bermuda" on a Saturday afternoon and docked at Hamilton, Bermuda, Monday morning. The eight of us stayed at Inverurie, a small hotel directly across the harbor from Hamilton and accessible by a five-minute ferry ride. The twins and I rented bicycles, and explore we did. There were no cars in Bermuda at that time, and the tiny gasoline-powered train ran from one end of the several islands to the other, a total distance of more than 20 miles. Some adults rode bicycles; others used the train and the harbor ferries or hired horse-drawn carriages.

One day, we three cyclists rode to St. George at the eastern end of the islands, and another we rode to Ireland Island, a naval shipyard at the opposite end. On the St. George trip, the rest of our party rode in a carriage they had hired. We had refreshments on the patio of the St. George Hotel; lemonade was 40 cents (we were used to 10 cents). One day we went in the surf at Elbow Beach, but it was too cool to be enjoyable. When it was time to come home, the little train took us from Hamilton to St. George, where we boarded a Cunard Line ship, the "Lancastria," for the return to New York. The ship was old, but the food and service were very good, and we survived rather rough seas before sailing into New York Harbor past the Statue of Liberty. The "Lancastria" was sunk by a German U-boat about a year later, and the entire crew perished. This trip was the first time I had used 35 mm. Kodachrome film, and I had 75 good slides to show for it.

In 1941, my Aunt Mary Ferguson, my father, and I traveled in our big 1937 Packard to Southern Pines, North Carolina, where my parents and I had spent part of the winters of 1932 and 1935. I'm not sure why my mother didn't go. My father let me drive about half the time, which I always enjoyed, especially in his Packard Twelve (still in the FAHP collection). We covered the 450 miles in one day, both going and coming. The weather was especially nice and spring-like, and steam passenger trains were still running through and stopping at Southern Pines on the Seaboard Air Line. We stayed at the Pottles' Hollywood Hotel, which had old-fashioned accommodations but excellent meals. Aunt Mary was introduced to Southern Pines and Pinehurst, as well as to the Pottle family. Her sister Helen had first known the Pottles in the late 1920s, when she stayed at their New Hampshire Highland House each year to get away from the pollen season in Delaware. When we called on Ernest and Mildred Murrell, with whom we had shared a tiny house in 1932, Mrs. Murrell mistook Aunt Mary for my mother, whom she hadn't seen for several years. I can remember Aunt Mary, somewhat surprised, saying "I'm an older edition of Esther."

In 1942, on spring vacation from Mercersburg, a few beautiful spring days were spent at Yorklyn for the first half of it. On one of these days, my dad and I went up to the Gun Club along with Ned Touhey, then postmaster at Yorklyn, and shot 75 targets each (I broke 71).

On Wednesday morning, we started a four-day trip, again in the '37 Packard, to eastern New York State and New England. The main purpose was to call on steam car people, as by that time my dad had met some collectors and corresponded with others. Amid snow showers, we stopped at a downtown hotel in Binghamton, New York, the first night, and arose to four inches of snow on the ground. My history teacher at Mercersburg, David F. Chapman, and his wife were also guests there that night. The roads were passable as we made our way north to Earlville, home of Robert B. Chase, owner of two or three Model 740 Stanleys. My father bought one of them from Mr. Chase a few weeks later, and this car is the 740 in our

collection. Next we traveled northeastward through Utica and Fonda to the small town of Broadalbin, home of country doctor Byron E. Chapman, brother of teacher David and father of my Mercersburg roommate. After visiting briefly with my roommate k,John, we made our way to the Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, and that evening we hunted down school teacher Brooks Jones, who owned and drove a Model 740 roadster and published a little magazine entitled "Steammobile and Ye Olde Time Car." The weather had turned cold, but we were enjoying our trip nonetheless.

My father wanted to call on Murray M. Brown, a tool maker for the Starrett Company in Athol, Massachusetts, and we found him early the next afternoon. Brown owned a Model 740 roadster and had just purchased a 1909 Model O White, formerly owned by Charles Steinmetz, mastermind of the General Electric Company in Schenectady. Murray Brown learned we were on our way to the Boston area, and he asked if he could ride with us to Fred Marriott's garage in Watertown as he wanted to buy some ferrules for retubing a boiler. This accomplished, we had a nice visit with Fred Marriott and with Thomas S. Derr, about two miles away. My father had already built a water-tube boiler of Derr's design for his 1913 Model 76, and Derr had built him another for his '40 Packard conversion. Although cramped, we rode with Mr. Derr in a small '32 coupe he had converted to steam (I think it was a small Chrysler or a Plymouth). The next day, we came home after a whirlwind four-day trip. That was the last of my spring vacations. Gasoline rationing began in July '42, and by March, 1943, I was in the Armed Forces.

Work Report: During the past week, only three volunteers attended an evening work session, but a lot of other work went on in preparation for the upcoming season. On Tuesday, March 25, with Steve Bryce in charge, his only helpers were Ted Kamen and Tom Marshall. It was a wintry night, not conducive for venturing out. The problem with the leak in the exhaust line on the Model 740 was determined, and a new flexible steel line was ordered to replace the original leaking one. One of the newly mounted rear tires on the Model 750 was found to be flat, so a new valve was inserted, and it was pumped up again.

The new vaporizer and burner on our Model K was tested, and the burner was lit for a few minutes. Despite a pin-hole leak on the pilot line, the pilot was good, and the main fire lit off well. The center section seemed to be weaker than the two outside sections (on separate fire valves), and this will be checked further the next time the burner is fired. No obnoxious fumes were detected inside the garage, which was the case with the "old" 3-nozzle burner recently removed. Chairs were set up for the Volunteers Meeting on 3/27.

On Thursday, March 27, there was no work session, but the Volunteers' Meeting was attended by 51 people! Susan's cookies do it every time! Susan Randolph, Jesse Gagnon, Steve Bryce, and Dan Citron described many opportunities for volunteer participation in 2014.

Last weekend at least five volunteers worked on the roadbed for the Auburn Valley Railroad, leveling and replacing ties. I'm not sure of all who participated, but I know Brent McDougall, Gary Green, Mike Leister and Linda Herman were there. Many new ties were provided by Mike Leister. On March 27 and 28, new treated lumber was purchased, and 72 ties have been cut to length. Enough lumber is on hand to do 72 more.

The large FAHP trailer was prepared by Jerry Novak and Steve Bryce, and Steve repaired the electrical system and then took it through the Delaware Inspection Lane. It is now fully licensed in Delaware for two years, as is our smaller Wells Cargo trailer, donated by Tom Marshall.

The Model K vaporizer was again removed and repaired by Walter Higgins in his shop. Everything is back together and ready for another testing.