

JULY 5, 2010 F.A.H.P. News

The Glorious Fourth: Although the founding fathers of the second Continental Congress worked long and hard, and placed on the line “their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor” toward a cause that had little chance of success on July 4, 1776, it was several weeks before many in the thirteen colonies got the word. The Declaration of Independence was read in New York on July 9, and in Charleston, SC, by late July. While news was slow to spread in those days, very few events have inspired people around the world to seek freedom from oppression as did our Declaration signed on the Fourth of July.

How do we celebrate today? Do we even think about what we are supposed to be celebrating? Do we revere those who staked everything they had so we can have parades, eat hot dogs, and enjoy fireworks? Occasionally I reflect on the great contributions of our early American forefathers, but my record and that of my immediate family is the same as most families I know: a vacation day in early summer to have a good time. My experiences do not deserve attention, but I’ll mention those I can recall anyway.

In the early 1930’s, I spent July 4 at my parents’ Queen Street house in Rehoboth with my family. My grandmother Shallcross and her cousin Gertrude Whittock (“Cousin Gertie”) would usually be with us. In the evening, limited fireworks would take place “up town” and there would usually be a Merry-Go-’Round ride on Masten’s carousel on Rehoboth Avenue. There was a more modern carousel at Playland on the Boardwalk, but Masten’s was faster, jerkier, and the music was louder- much preferred. From 1937 through 1940, I was at Maplewood, NH, on July 4 as the annual Maplewood trapshooting tournament took place the first week in July. My dad took an interest in going, and I was lucky enough to accompany him and take part. My mother went only once; she enjoyed Rehoboth too much. In 1940, I was lucky enough to win the Dunspaugh Memorial Trophy at Maplewood (high on all targets for the four days).

On July 4, 1941, we were going westbound through Salt Lake City on our long western trip in our ‘37 Packard. In ‘42 and for several years after World War II, we were guests, along with about 25 others, at the Woodward Farm at Mendenhall, PA. A few times I took our Mountain Wagon and gave rides after dinner. We would arrive before 6 P.M., the men would pitch horse shoes until called to eat, at which time we would sit down at one or more long tables on the lawn for a delicious feast. Then we would pitch again until dark- none of us beat the Woodwards: Norris (our host) and his two sons, Horace and Jimmy. As darkness fell, we could look to the southeast to observe Irene duPont, Sr.’s private fireworks at Granogue. A few would stay for card games in the house, completing another glorious Fourth.

On July 4, 1971, the “Game Group” (eight couples plus this writer, who was not married until 1985) was in Rehoboth, and all piled into the bed of my ‘69 Chevy Longhorn pick-up truck to observe the fireworks at Cape Henlopen. On July 4, 1972, I was in Yellowstone National Park, along with our Stanley Model 87 and Weldin, Dorothy, and Joan Stumpf, as we enjoyed a day off from the “Trans-Con” tour to observe the marvels of Yellowstone. This was a special day to be there, as the oldest of all our national parks was celebrating its 100th birthday that year.

The first July 4th parade in Hockessin (in recent times at least) was part of a 3-day celebration in our Bicentennial year of 1976. In my newly-acquired 1905 Stanley Model CX, I led the parade with New Castle County Councilman Francis J. Swift and his granddaughter aboard. It was such a success that the parade was held again in '77 and '78, then dropped for a few years when interest waned. Starting again by the early '80's, it has continued uninterrupted each July 4th for nearly 30 years. Cars from the Auburn Heights collection have taken part almost every time, and we had six from our collection plus members Bob Wilhelm ('18 Stanley), Steve Jensen ('11 Stanley), Jerry Novak ('31 Chevrolet), and Lou Mandich ('18 Buick and '25 Dodge) taking part this year. Each car was loaded with drivers' relatives and FAHP members and friends.

Obituary: Robert C. Jensen, Sr., age 80, father of Steve Jensen and grandfather of Steven, II, passed away July 2 after a long illness. He had five sons, of whom four volunteered at the Wilmington & Western R.R. and three worked for the Magic Age of Steam in the 1970's. Bob was a steam engineer on the W & W, and was also active with the Greenbank Mill Associates. Our sympathies go to both Steve Jensens and to their families.

Jim Personti has assembled three of the four pumps on a mounting board and installed it on the Stanley engine display in the museum. A correct oil pump, needed to complete the display, has been promised by one of our many supporters in the steam car hobby. Bill Schwoebel engineered the removal of the Model K engine, with help from Butch Cannard, Lou Mandich, and Tom, to facilitate correction of looseness in the crosshead guides and to inspect for other wear. Ted Kamen, Art Wallace, Tim Ward, and Bob Stransky continued to work on paint stripping and parts cleaning for the Model 607 restoration. Emil Christofano worked on reassembly of the worm gear drive for the Rauch and Lang electric car. Steve Bryce replaced the throttle and added another layer of insulation to the boiler of the Model 76.

We received word last week that the State and F.A.H.P. have received funding from the Delaware Humanities Forum for an important documentary and oral history project. Coupled with a grant from the Delaware Tourism Office, we will be capturing on video the memories and moments from Marshall family history to prepare an orientation/documentary film. Our thanks to Dan Citron for securing the support and leading this effort!

Temps were in the 90s for the Hockessin Parade, but the heat never deterred what appeared to be a record crowd, and the Auburn Heights made up more than 50% of the antique vehicles in the parade. Our lineup included 6 of the museum's Stanleys plus vehicles owned by four members (with Uncle Sam at the wheel of Lou Mandich's Dodge). Everyone needed ice cream to cool off after the event!

Several cars from the museum collection will be headed out for the Maine Steam Car Tour next weekend. We'll be sure to report on all the details. In the week ahead, work will continue in the museum as we prepare for our next public day on August 1. The entry exhibit panels will be replaced with materials designed to hold up better to the humid conditions (the images and labels will be reinstalled), and a generous dehumidifier donation will help regulate the conditions inside the museum.