

## **MARCH 9, 2009 F.A.H.P. NEWS**

**Robert Shackne and our Model H-5:** Shackne was a reporter for CBS News in the days when Walter Cronkite held forth in grand style. The former had a good voice, but was not pleasant to look at. Nevertheless, Cronkite's team gave him assignments from time to time and he would report on them during the news hour about once a week. Seldom did the viewers look at him; they only heard his voice. In 1968, he did a piece on the future of steam cars, and this time he was on camera for at least a part of his segment.

The twin brothers Calvin and Charles Williams of Huntingdon Valley near Philadelphia had developed a very good modern steam car. Shackne wanted to compare it with a Stanley, a name many people could relate to and certainly the most famous steam car made in the distant past. He heard of the Williams brothers, and of my father who had a collection of Stanleys. He visited the Williams' first, and filmed a demonstration of their modern steamer. Snappy-looking it was, a 2-passenger small sport car with fiberglass body painted red. A few years before, I had ridden in it with Calvin Williams from Auburn Heights to Clifton Mills and back.

In 1968, we were not open to the public at Auburn Heights and my father was not well, but he rather liked publicity for his collection, and it was arranged for Shackne and his crew to come. They arrived on time and selected our 1908 Model H-5, the "Gentleman's Speedy Roadster", as the car they wanted to use for comparison with the Williams steamer. I fired it up and they spent some time deciding where they wanted to photograph it in action. Shackne was not nice to my father, which I did not like. He was quite ill at the time, but it was his collection.

It was decided to film on Old Public Road near Anne Cleary's parents' home. I drove the H-5 to that location, and Shackne and his crew followed. As they got set up to film, Shackne told me that he was going to drive. That did not set well with me; I thought "no way!". He insisted and said he had driven the Williams steamer in the segment filmed there. I relented, shut the fire valve and told him not to touch any of the valves. He took off with steam flying and cameras rolling while trying to describe the Stanley to his future audience, turned around (somehow), and returned with about 250# of steam. He and the crew said good-bye and I never saw them again.

When the segment appeared on the CBS Evening News a few days later, the Williams brothers were shown driving their car; Shackne was not driving it. They knew better, but I didn't.

In working out the details of our new locks and security systems at Auburn Heights, Dan Citron provides the following information. This is an update from last week's "News": "The gate across the driveway will be closing at 8:30 P.M. on work nights. On non-work nights, it will close between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M. It will remain closed on weekends unless there is an on-site event or preparations for an off-site event. If you are leaving Auburn Heights when the gate is closed, it will open automatically. There is a sensor loop (like for a traffic light) on the uphill side of the R.R. crossing. You have to get close to the track and the gate to activate this sensor. The new padlocks are now on the sliding doors to the carriage house (garage). They are part of the property-wide master key system. Along with this, the alarms in the Carriage House and the Museum are now completely installed. The plan is to have them in service some time this week. If you have questions as to how this system or how the gate works, please feel free to call me (Dan) at (302) 239-5687, or E-mail [Daniel.Citron@state.de.us](mailto:Daniel.Citron@state.de.us)."

Today at 2 P.M. several of our members are going to Hagley where John McCoy will show them how Hagley handles its special displays and hands-on exhibits. We know a number of good ideas for improving our museum will come from this visit. Immediately following, a short Museum Committee meeting will be held at Auburn Heights. On March 10, at 6:30 P.M., the Events and Scheduling Committee will meet in the F.A.H.P. office. On Thursday, March 12, at 5:00 P.M. the Executive Committee of the Board will meet at the same place.

Last week, progress was made in further dismantling the Model 607, in installing the new shelving along the back wall of the garage, and in building the third track in the basement for the Diesel locomotive. Bill Rule is expected to bring us the lumber for the building of a new work bench near the water spigots which will be a nice convenience. On the invitation of Bill Schwoebel, Terry Bookheimer and his friend visited last Thursday, making final arrangements for the loan of Ross Myers' Autocar bus to F.A.H.P. Steve Bryce and his photographer friend pushed about 8 of our cars outside the museum on Saturday and photographed them from various angles for our accession records and for Kelly Williams' Stanley Register.

On Tuesday evenings for the remainder of March, Bill Schwoebel has arranged lectures for those interested in becoming qualified Stanley driver/operators. These are intended for those volunteers who are seriously interested in "going all the way" toward full qualification. For those who have attended the series of similar lectures in prior years, there is very little new that will be presented this time. These are intended, therefore, for new members (or those who want a "refresher") excited about learning to operate Stanleys, and who intend to follow through and help us drive the cars at on-site and to off-site events. As in prior years, the lectures will be followed by driving lessons when the weather permits. On March 10 at 7:30 in the Museum (we are sorry for short notice), I will open the series with a brief history of the Stanley twins, how they got interested in building steam cars, and the models they built for 25 years. On March 17, Bob Wilhelm will describe the generating system- boilers, burners, controls, etc., and we hope Bill Rule will do his 3-tube indicator demonstration. On March 24, Bill Schwoebel will talk about engines and pumps, and on March 31 Steve Bryce will conclude with the "complete car" and how the components work together. Exact times beyond this week will be announced next week.

Tom

