

F.A.H.P. News, February 11, 2013

The Residents of Gun Club Hill, 1930s: The public road alongside the long #2 Fibre Mill from Yorklyn Road to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad station, and then a private road over National Fibre property up the 200-foot-high hill to the Yorklyn Gun Club at the top, gave access to eight homes, seven of which were connected to the fibre company. This road is known today as Gun Club Road, but the Gun Club has been inactive since 1950.

The oldest home was a brick farmhouse dating from the 19th century that was straight up the lower portion of the hill, less than halfway to the top. This was the only home on the hill when the Marshalls bought the farm about 1903 to expand their vulcanized fibre business. Owned by the company thereafter, it was occupied in the 1930s by Vince Lamborn, an elderly tenant farmer, and by John M. McGovern and his family. McGovern worked for J. Warren Marshall as a chauffeur and handyman. It is not clear whether the house was divided or whether Lamborn took his meals with the McGoverns. At the end of the decade, Lamborn died, and the McGoverns moved to their own property on Route 41 north of Hockessin. Jack and Alice Peirson moved into the old farmhouse from one of the row houses along Bengel Road.

Warren and Bertha Marshall, married just a year, built a new bungalow about 500 feet east of the farmhouse in 1908, and they named the property "Woodcrest." Here they lived out their lives, greatly expanding the bungalow in 1931 and rebuilding the enlarged frame house after a disastrous fire in 1952. Here their two daughters were raised, the elder of whom married S. John Pyle on the lawn in 1935. A large barn, still standing, was on the property, somewhat between the old farmhouse and Woodcrest. The road to the railroad station and up the hill to the barn was paved with concrete in the late 1920s.

In 1922, three houses were erected south of and at a higher elevation than the barn, being accessed by a cinder lane perpendicular to the concrete road. The first home was moved by mule team and block-and-fall from alongside the railroad, where it had served as Edward H. Dennison's home and country store. This became the home of J. Burtwell White, one of several mill superintendents. The second home was a Sears Roebuck "Pre-Fab," built for efficiency expert Manley P. Northam, and the third, a stuccoed frame dwelling, was built for Frank Cronin, another mill superintendent. All occupants lived in these dwellings until World War II. With the Gun Club moving to the very top of the hill in 1922, the cinder road was extended past these houses and by a circuitous route to the top.

Clarence Marshall bought an additional 18 acres from Ruth Marshall's grandfather, William P. Sharpless, to allow more room for his gun club and the parking required. From this parcel, accessed by the same cinder road, he sold $\frac{3}{4}$ acre to his friend Palmer D. "Pete" Guest, who erected a new home there in 1929. About the same time, John P. Eckles, purchasing agent for National Fibre, bought a large hillside tract beyond the gun club and built a Spanish-style stucco home overlooking the Red Clay Valley between Yorklyn and Ashland. For most of the time, access to this property was over the same cinder road past the gun club.

In 1936 or 1937, a fourth home was built, this one of Avondale stone, next to the original three built for mill managers. William D. Marsey, another manager, moved into this new home, where he lived until he retired. Either in 1937 or 1938, the cinder road was finally paved to the Gun Club and a few years later to the Eckles property. All the properties have changed hands in recent years, but Woodcrest, the barn, and the old brick farmhouse are owned by Warren Marshall's grandson, Warren E. Reynolds.

Work Report: On Tuesday, February 5, the following 15 volunteers took part: Jerry Lucas (in charge), Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Jerry Novak, Jeff Pollock, Richard Bernard, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Mark Hopkins, Jay Williams, Mark Russell, and Mac Taylor, with Bill Schwoebel, Steve Bryce, and Tom Marshall working briefly after the meeting of the Collections Committee. Mark Russell brought the beautifully finished jacking blocks of the Rolly Evans design, one for each car, that he had fabricated and finished.

On the 607 project, the springs for the hook-up and reverse pedals were painted and installed, high-temperature iron cement was plastered around the mixing tubes of the burner to seal some leaks, and the steering column was sanded for partial spray-painting to correct some nicks. The few steam leaks that were detected when the car was fired up on February 2 were addressed, including an “improvement” to the branch forks that will allow the big nut to screw on farther for a better hold. The car is ready to be fired again. On the ’37 Packard brakes, Walter Higgins offered to check all the drums and turn them if required at no cost to us. New stainless tubing, properly conformed for a Model 1508, was ordered for the brake lines. The wheel cylinders and the master cylinder will be sent away for rebuilding.

The Model 735 received additional cleaning work on its condenser “tanks,” and a few other items were addressed on this car while it is in the upper garage and somewhat apart. Lou Mandich returned the water tank, which he had thoroughly cleaned. Four volunteers did further measuring for the new cushioning material to be installed under the track of the Lionel electric train layout in the museum. The Maute boys continued to catalog materials in our FAHP library.

On Thursday, February 7, 15 volunteers were on hand, including those who attended the Events and Scheduling Committee meeting, viz: Emil Christofano, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Paul Kratunis, Robert Hopkins, Tim Nolan, Steve Bryce, Lou Mandich, Jerry Novak, Rose Ann Hoover, Anne Cleary (committee chair), and Tom Marshall (in charge).

On the 607 project, a new pad was made and installed to keep the reverse pedal from bearing on and wearing the wooden cross-member at the front end of the pump box, and the steering column was further prepared for repainting. The iron cement, affixed two days before, was sanded on the front of the burner, and a new boiler hold-down bracket was made, as the old one was cracked where it had been welded. The speedometer cable-and-housing was located, cleaned, and temporarily installed in the car. Insulation was packed around the forks and the pilot on the front of the burner.

Lou Mandich brought some new gasket material, and Robert Hopkins made two gaskets for the Model 735’s condenser. The Packard wheel bearings and spindles were thoroughly cleaned while the wheels are off. The wooden storage bins in the garage, moved away from the wall on Wednesday to repair a steam pipe, were put back in place.