

F.A.H.P. News, June 20, 2011

Cities vs. Country, 1900: Today it's hard for us to see why anyone would seek the country in the inland Delaware-Pennsylvania area during the hot and humid days of summer. Why not seek out the seashore or the nearby mountains, where natural breezes made it much more comfortable most of the time? There were two main reasons: cost of room and board and cost of getting there. The country air, even though hot, was highly preferable to the stench and stagnant air in many cities such as Philadelphia.

If a city dweller was lucky, he or she had a friend who lived in the country and who would issue an invitation to come and visit for a week or two, or more. A number of city women had such a friend in Elizabeth (Lizzie) Marshall, who lived in a big new house called Auburn Heights. I don't know who they were, but many such guests were entertained in that way during the first 20 years of the mansion's existence. We have photos of some, but they are unidentified.

If someone with limited means sought a reasonably priced vacation, there were country boarding houses, often near a railroad, to fill the bill at \$2 or \$3 per day for room and board. One such place was Woodward's Boarding House on Hillendale Road near Rosedale in southern Chester County, Pennsylvania, about 4 miles from Yorklyn. It was in the edge of the woods up a slight grade from Norway Station on the Philadelphia and Baltimore Central Railroad, 30 miles by train from the big city (Norway became Rosedale about 1905, and the railroad became the Octoraro Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad). The building was two or three stories tall and resembled a small hotel with a total capacity of 30 to 40 guests. There may have been one bathroom on each floor, but more likely one for the whole place. A station hack would meet the trains for the convenience of the guests. Woodward's probably went out of business about 1930, and the building stood vacant for many years. It was finally razed in the 1960s.

On a small lake about eight miles south of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, was developed a religious community of tiny cottages called Mount Gretna. This, too, was served by a small railroad that connected with the Reading Company's main line at Lebanon. On June 22, 1889, a new locomotive for this line was ordered from the Baldwin Locomotive Works, with the request that they needed it before July 4. It was delivered on June 28. Mount Gretna is still a thriving community, mostly of very modest 100-year-old cottages, but the railroad is long gone.

The mountain ridge west of Reading, Pennsylvania, was another early resort area that began with a sanatorium and several reasonably priced boarding houses, such as Sunset Hall, up the hill from Wernersville, also on the Reading Railroad. However, about 1900, on the other side of the ridge there was developed a fancy hotel with a dozen or more large cottages called Galen Hall. A one-mile walk through the woods connected Galen Hall to Sunset Hall. For several summers in the 1920s, Lizzie Marshall rented one of the cottages for a month. Adlai E. Stevenson, Grover Cleveland's Secretary of State and grandfather of the 1952 and 1956 presidential candidate of the same name, had a summer home called Binden Wood about a mile from Galen Hall. In the 1930s, it was operated as a high-class guesthouse with beautiful antique

furnishings. Ruth and I visited the ridge about six years ago. Sunset Hall looked like a corporate recreational center (with new buildings); Galen Hall, which tried for a revival in the 1950s (the Historical Car Club of Pennsylvania had a weekend outing there in 1955), had burned to the ground; and Binden Wood looked like a somewhat rundown private residence.

Work Nights: Tom Marshall and Steve Bryce installed the hubs and mounting hardware on the wheels and mounted the wheels and new tires on the Mountain Wagon last week while Emil Christofano and Jeff Pollock continued reassembling the front axle of the Rauch & Lang. On the AVRR, Butch Cannard installed the test/run switch on the signal controller, Tom rebuilt the switch near the front gate and Dave Leon attached new stairs and tool boxes to Observation railcar #870. Mac Taylor and Tim Ward continued to update the Lionel train layout, adding Plexiglas to the upper-level guardrail. Work on the Model 87 included Jim Personti machining a new pilot “H” casting and installing it on the car with help from Geoff Fallows; and Bill, Tom and Lou Mandich replacing the pump drive bearings.

Steamin’ Father’s Day at Auburn Heights: It was a beautiful day for our Steamin’ Father’s Day event on Sunday. A total of 240 visitors came out to celebrate dad, enjoy the rides & tours, and enjoy the tasty fare from Centreville Cafe and Woodside Farm Creamery. We even welcomed our first service dog to the property -- Guinness was a very well-behaved pup on his mansion tour! Thanks to one and all who made it a successful day!

In Memorium: *Anita Ruth Webers* — We are saddened to report the passing of Anita Ruth Webers, mother of longtime, loyal volunteer Kathy Beck. The wife of Vincent Joseph Webers, with whom she shared 62 years of marriage, Anita was 86 years old and a dedicated volunteer at the DE Lung Association, the Food Pantry, and the Emmanuel Dining Room. She was also a pianist and organist and sang in church choirs. A member of Grace Lutheran Church in Hockessin, Anita loved the game of cribbage and her two cats, and she was an avid Phillies fan.

Born in Cass Lake Minnesota, Anita served our country in the Navy during WWII. A graduate of the University of Minnesota, she worked for many years as a librarian assistant at Lancashire Elementary and Brandywine High School. Contributions in her memory may be made to Grace Lutheran Church, 2033 Graves Road, Hockessin DE, 19707. We send our deepest sympathies to Kathy and her family.

Help Needed to Spread the Word: We are working hard to make our first major fundraiser a super-special event, but we need your help to make it a true success. If you can help by posting one of our posters or a small stack of postcards at your workplace or favorite coffeeshop, please let me know (srandolph@auburnheights.org), and I'll be happy to send or deliver a small supply. With YOUR help, we can help an enthusiastic new crowd discover an amazing place called Auburn Heights.