

October 24, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

Traveling by Train, 1910: Israel Marshall fell off a scaffold at the paper mill at Marshall's Bridge when he was 18 (about 1869), and injured his kidney. He fought kidney problems the rest of his life and finally succumbed to this illness in 1911 at the age of 60. In the summer of 1910, he thought he'd try Poland Spring, Maine, as the spring water from there was supposed to be the world's best, especially recommended for kidney sufferers. He probably changed trains in New York and Boston, and possibly Portland, ME, but his luggage (probably including a large "steamer" trunk) could be checked through on his railroad ticket. Danville Junction on the Maine Central R.R. was the station for Poland Spring, 6 miles distant. Here he was met by one of the Spring's Stanley Mountain Wagons, and taken to the Mansion House, one of three hotels owned by the Poland Spring company (Hiram Ricker and Sons). It is almost certain that this would have been a 3-seat 9-passenger "Wagon", as the larger ones did not appear until 1911 or '12. It's not known just how long he stayed, but some time in August he wrote to the "dear folks" at home saying that he thought he'd return soon.

Israel's younger son Clarence (my father) went by train that summer to visit his father at Poland Spring. Again, we don't know how long he stayed, but I believe it was over a long weekend. He related that he, too, was met by a Stanley Mountain Wagon at Danville Junction, and rode in the front seat with the driver for the 6-mile trip. He told me that the driver kept the water "down in the glass" for the whole trip- Stanley operators will understand what this means. About two months before his Maine trip, my father made a similar trip by train as far as Boston, one way. However, a very pleasant diversion in traveling between New York and Boston in those days was to take the overnight "steamer" with good food and a pleasant stateroom. There were at least two if not more coastal steamship companies plying the waters of Long Island Sound and usually Narragansett Bay. The most famous of these was the Fall River Line. Leaving its East River Pier in Manhattan, it would proceed up L.I. Sound and into Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, terminating at Fall River, MA, or Providence. Here a boat train would be waiting to take passengers on the 40-plus mile sprint to Boston. Over Memorial Day weekend in 1910, my father and his second cousin, Paul Way of Kennett Square, made this trip. Their destination: the Stanley Motor Carriage Company in Newton, MA, about 10 miles west of downtown Boston. Their purpose: to take delivery of a new Model 61 and drive it home. Way had ordered this car from his dealer-cousin, and it may have been the very first car the young Stanley dealer had sold. It was fun for young people to drive "over the road", but the train was the way people of those days were expected to travel.

Jerry Novak and Emil Christofano, chairmen for our October 30 Halloween opening, seem to have the situation well in hand. Volunteers have offered to cover all the necessary jobs, and already 3 strange-looking characters are gracing the grounds and the museum. In addition to the Halloween theme where those in costume receive a 10% discount, the British Car Club expects to exhibit 10 or 12 of their members' cars on our grounds, and Arlie Lane plans to show us his nearly-completed full-sized carousel horse, carved from scratch during a period of over 5 years. Ruth and her domestic crew are manicuring the house for our visitors on Sunday. Pumpkins and 'mums abound. We thank the Kennett Paper and its reporter Pru Osborne for a front-page article on our October event, and also Phil Toman, father of Jean, for his complete stories in the Newark Post and Jumpstart Magazine (Chesapeake Publication's equivalent to 55 hours). We've had good publicity this time, so let's hope the weather is conducive to good attendance. Thanks to all who have taken flyers and helped us promote our fall events.

Steve Jensen and I have completed the track work on the "upper line" between the turntable and the pond spillway, and 5 insulated track sections are completed for our future signals. Our little booklet "Stanley Steamers and the Twins Who Built Them" is finally ready for sale in our gift shop, thanks to Butch Cannard (\$2.00). Work has progressed well on our part of the restoration of the Model 735-Brent McDougall and I removed most of the asbestos from under the hood with the goal of making this our first asbestos-free Stanley. The wheels, cleaned and sanded by Dale Simpkins and Willard Robinson, are back from the paint shop and look very nice. Rob Robison has the windshield, and has glass-beaded the frame- it looks better than new! We still have the rims to paint, and we are anxious to have Jim Sank stripe the wheels, hood, and body. On the Model H-5, we are having trouble mounting the right rear tire, but we'll make it soon. Jim Personti, Emil Christofano, Jerry Lucas, Brent McDougall and Bill Schwoebel have been working on this. Teddy Simpkins and Rose Ann made some insulated splice bars for the R.R. signal project. On Thursday night, Emil presented an excellent talk and demonstration on the Rauch & Lang electric which attracted 21 members.

Bill Schwoebel and Butch had planned to take a Stanley to Newtown Square last Saturday for the dedication of the N. S. Historical Society's new museum. Steady rain in the morning ruled this out, and we have learned that it has been postponed again (first from Oct. 15 to the 22nd, and now to the 29th). We may be too busy getting ready for Sunday to do it this week, but we'll see. Yesterday, 10 of us accepted the Woodcocks' invitation for an outdoor picnic which they have annually at their home in Yorklyn. Brian and Linda honored the Steam Team for its contribution to the history of the Yorklyn community. We thank them for asking us to come and for honoring F.A.H.P.

I've talked by phone with Herman Feissner and Bill Rule. Herman is having some lingering health problems and is very reluctant to drive at night, but he hopes to see us soon. Bill is "stretching at the bit" to get out of the house and start driving. He had his stitches removed on Friday, but had to help the surgeon with some difficult ones. He assures us he will be on hand on October 30, and hopes to be driving shortly after that if he gets the O.K. Congratulations, Bill, on your excellent progress. Thanks to all. Tom