

April 2, 2007

Hello, Steam Team:

The "Weekly News" of September 11, 2006, touched on the trolley line that passed Auburn Heights. The official name was "The West Chester, Kennett, and Wilmington Electric Railway Company", but it touched neither West Chester nor Wilmington, and through these parts was known simply as "the Kennett Trolley". The company actually operated trolleys from West Grove, Avondale, Kennett Square, Yorklyn, and Hockessin enroute to Brandywine Springs. There was a connection at Kennett Square with the line to Unionville Junction, Lenape and West Chester, and at Brandywine Springs with the Peoples' Railway into Wilmington. Mel Schoenbeck, an active member of the Friends of Brandywine Springs, wrote a monograph in loose-leaf notebook form entitled "The Kennett Trolley in Delaware", which was of great interest. The trolley line opened in 1903 and closed for the last time in 1923.

A copy of a 1903 promotional brochure, published at the time of the line's opening, has come to light. Here is what it said about Hockessin and Yorklyn (I have abridged the full text in a few places):

"It is known that some people travel many miles at great expense and fatiguing travel to get near nature, when they could find all they were seeking not far from their own doors. At Hockessin, the rudiments of a neat country village are apparent on all sides; the country store, the village blacksmith, and the small post office all add a striking effect to the scene. Hockessin is the center of the kaolin industry, a product that closely resembles common clay, but which is a very valuable commodity. Most of the kaolin mined here is shipped to the vast potteries at Trenton, NJ, where it is used in the manufacture of fine chinaware. Hundreds of men are employed in this work, many of whom command excellent salaries".

"Leaving Hockessin, the line parallels the Landenberg Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, passes one of the largest kaolin mines, and soon comes upon the small but industrious village of Yorklyn, a village of interesting history. Possessing, as it does, the foundations of a thriving town, Yorklyn will undoubtedly experience vast changes within the next few years; its pleasing scenery and delightful location being bound to attract the home-seeker and the investor. The extensive mills of the American Snuff Trust are located at Yorklyn, employing hundreds of persons. The products of these mills are shipped to all parts of the world and are well-known for their excellent qualities".

"The large paper mills of the Marshall Brothers are also located at this point, where tons and tons of seemingly worthless rags are converted into various kinds of paper. The greater portion of the rags used for this purpose are imported from Germany and other European countries. The handsome residence of the Marshalls commands a view of the surrounding territory for miles (we know this as "Auburn Heights", but we can't see "for miles"), being situated on an exceedingly high bluff. The building is of pleasing architectural design and looms in the distance like a mighty castle of ancient fame. The culture of the mushroom is also

carried on at Yorklyn on quite an extensive scale. Hundreds of pounds of these highly palatable plants are shipped annually to nearby markets".

"Passing Yorklyn, the line passes a small but beautiful stream, shaded with massive weeping willows, affording a delightful spot for a day's outing. Soon we cross the "State Line" separating Delaware from Pennsylvania. On and on we travel, every inch of the way adding enchantment to the tour- beautiful woodlands, shady lanes, winding streams- in fact, everything that goes to make a perfectly delightful journey".

Paint, PAINT, P A I N T! A lot of volunteers have been painting during the past week. Rose Ann's crew, including Rob and Chevonne Robison, Art Wallace, Dale Simpkins and Art Sybell painted the museum floor (1/3 of the total) and the rest room floors on Saturday. Rose Ann fed everyone delicious hamburgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings. Unfortunately, the floor is going to need a second coat, so drying time probably dictates that we can't do the second 1/3 until our "window" in July and August between public events. The two Arts continued painting the R.R. cars and they are just about completed. Jim Sank will pick up the first car next week for lettering. A temporary flat "coach" has been brought from the back building and it can be spruced up for use in the train when one regular car is away being lettered. Bucky and I took the doors off the tunnel last Friday. Members of the Steam Car Tour Committee have been active, and several have run the routes for the days of their responsibility. A meeting of this committee was held last Tuesday and the next one is scheduled for April 9, 5:30 P.M. Anne Cleary has called a meeting of the Events Committee for tomorrow night, April 3, at 7:30. The locomotives and the passenger cars are just about ready to go, so attention can now be concentrated on track work when the weather is good.

The Stanleys, too, are nearing testing for the coming season. Rob Robison and Jim Personti have almost completed the new wiring including installation of a brake light on the 735. The 740 is ready for a good road test; Walter Higgins' paint expert has matched the paint, so the hood will soon be finished. The new water tank on the 71, filled by Kelly Williams on Tuesday, seems to be good. The Model K is ready to go unless we want to experiment more with the burner. When Butch returns this week, we'll finalize the burner work on the Model 87. Dale Simpkins and Steve Bryce finished the plumbing on the Mountain Wagon, and Dale and Kelly put the hood on. The new insulation, thanks to Dale and Ted Simpkins, looks very nice. Jim Personti soldered the water tank from the 76 last Thursday; we believe it to be tight, and it should be installed tomorrow so we can fire up the car Tuesday night. The 607 is about ready to go. Richard Bernard and Art Wallace have the 78 roadster on the grease rack, they made and installed new baffle gaskets for the engine case, and after we check the engine over, the case will go back on. We think the 725 is O.K. except for the squeaky wheels and we plan to address this in the next couple of weeks. The H-5 should be ready to use, under the care of Jerry Lucas. The burner is still off the CX, but we are hoping to get the new pattern any day now, and it will be sent immediately to a foundry for castings. I have offered Art Hart the use of the '02 stick seat runabout during the week of the steam car tour; I hope he will want to run it, at least on the shorter runs. So, as of

this date, it appears we should have enough cars running in mid-June to accommodate our needs.

We've had requests for many of our cars for special events. I turned down two weddings. Fred Dawson wants our 2 Packards at Archmere Academy for an H.I.V. benefit on Saturday, May 19 in the early evening, the same day as a charter event here for Tom Fairchild. I told him we'd try to supply one. On Saturday, April 28, I've entered the '37 Packard for the special car event at Winterthur (the day before the Wilmington Friends School charter at A.H.). On May 12, also a Saturday, I registered the Model 71 Stanley at Winterthur. On the weekend of June 9-10, Jerry Novak plans to take the '32 Packard to the Burn Foundation Concours at Bethlehem (or Allentown). George Barczewski says he will tow it for us, using Rob Robison's trailer. On Saturday, May 5, we are planning to have two Stanleys in Dover, the day before our first public opening here. This is a long but enjoyable day and the Division of Parks makes a nice contribution to F.A.H.P. All the above are in addition to the shows and parades we like to attend each spring. Thank you, one and all! Tom