

F.A.H.P. News, May 16, 2011

Henry McComb Winchester (1891-1966): Colonel Henry McComb was a railroad magnate who held forth in the 1880s and 1890s. Perhaps he had been a colonel in the Civil War, or even in the Mexican War 15 years earlier. His estate occupied a city block between Market, King, 11th, and 12th streets in Wilmington, later occupied by the Wilmington Post Office and finally by Wilmington Trust Company. Because of his prominent position, he held railroad passes for most of the major railroads in the United States in the late nineteenth century.

The colonel's daughter married James P. Winchester of Delaware City. They had 3 sons: James Jr., Henry, and George, the last a prominent Wilmington banker. The Winchester estate was along the Delaware River, and part of it was later the home of Kings College, before the campus plus all of the remaining Winchester land was bought by the Tidewater Oil Company for a new refinery in the late 1940s. This is the Valero Refinery that has made the news in recent years. Winchester, Senior, owned a 1910 Pierce Arrow 48, a 7-passenger touring car, that was rolled over by his teenage son George, destroying the top and wheels and damaging the rear of the aluminum body. The damaged car was rescued from scrap by Frank V. du Pont, then owned for a few years by my father, and finally owned by the Ball family of Whitford, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Whitman Ball, the present owner, has had it magnificently restored, and it often appears at Winterthur and Hagley car shows.

Henry Winchester, a handsome man who was an excellent shotgun marksman, went to work for Hercules Powder Company in its sporting powder division soon after the company was formed before World War I. Serving briefly in the army during the war, he returned to Hercules, where he worked for the rest of his career, retiring about 1956. During his time with the company, Hercules was big in the world of trapshooting, and to many shooters, Henry Winchester *was* Hercules, as he cashiered shoots all over the East and was one of several cashiers each year at the Grand American Tournament at Vandalia, Ohio. This was one of the services, and perhaps the most important, that Hercules provided to gun clubs at their major shoots. Henry was a fixture at Yorklyn. He and Jack Guenveur of the DuPont Company handled the office until the mid 1930s, after which Norman Wright, also of Hercules, was Henry's assistant. Five long days in a row were put in. On the two days where night shoots were also scheduled, Henry and Norman would start about 9 A.M., go home to clean up (if time permitted) in late afternoon, and come back to the Gun Club with their wives for dinner before opening the office for signing up shooters for the night program. It was between 11 P.M. and midnight when the winners were tabulated, and the prizes awarded.

Henry and his wife, Anne, lived in Brandywine Hills off Washington Street Extension in Wilmington and raised a daughter and three sons. The Winchesters were stalwarts in Delaware's Democratic party, and in 1950, Henry Winchester ran against J. Caleb Boggs for a seat in the U.S. Congress. Boggs won re-election, and went on to two terms as Delaware's Governor and two in the U.S. Senate, before being taken down in 1972 by a political upstart named Joe Biden.

Work Nights: During last week's work sessions, Ted Kamen and Dennis Dragon sanded and began applying the finish coat of black paint to the frame of the Model 607. It was learned last week that the A-9 Paint Shop will be unable to finish painting the 607 due to the illness of its proprietor, Keith Ferrence. A new body shop will need to be found to keep the project moving. Mark Hopkins finished securing the upper-level track bed on the museum's train layout. Butch Cannard continued work on programming the signal system for the AVRR and began hooking up the wiring, and Tom Marshall installed 17 new ties on the outside track near the turntable. Bill Schwoebel fired up the Model K and tested it on the jack; it is ready for a road test this week. Steve Bryce, Bob Jordan, and others got the perch poles and braces back in place on the Model 76, and Lou Mandich and Jimmy Groome finished the hydraulic brake improvement on this car. The Events and Scheduling Committee met on Tuesday evening, and the Board of Directors on Thursday evening. Insurance inspectors spent some time at Auburn Heights on Friday, and while they will file a written report, they didn't object to the way we are doing things. And after long hours of hard work on the part of Mike Scott, Bob Reilly, Steve Bryce, and Susan, our IRS Form 990 was filed on Friday.

Memorial Day Parade

Memorial Day is just around the corner, and the FAHP collection will once again be participating in the Kennett Square parade. Any drivers interested in taking the wheel should check in with the Operations Review Board, and any passengers who'd like to hitch a ride should e-mail Susan Randolph in the FAHP office (srandolph@auburnheights.org). The parade kicks off at 10am, so please mark your calendars to join us in honoring local veterans.

Concert Fundraiser Tickets Available NOW

In case you missed the announcement in the May Auburn Heights Herald, a benefit concert featuring Club Phred, with special appearance by Mark Farner (of Grand Funk Railroad fame) will take place at Auburn Heights on Saturday, July 23 (rain date July 24). See our website for full details. Tickets may be purchased now at AuburnHeights.org or by calling the FAHP office. Please note that advance ticket sales are nonrefundable, but all proceeds support FAHP. We'll begin mailing advance tickets May 20.

Volunteers Needed

The first Steamin' Event of the season is approaching: June 4. Volunteers are still needed in all areas. If you can help, please contact Susan in the FAHP office. This Steamin' Evenin' Ice Cream Social is sponsored in honor of Clarence and Esther Marshall, who married on June 4, 1921! The event runs 6 to 9 pm and includes all the fun of a regular Steamin' Day, plus Woodside Farm sundaes!