

FAHP News October 4, 2010

Clarence L. Walker (1875-1964): Clarence Walker was born to a farm family on Limestone Road near present-day Mendenhall Village in a house that was later occupied by the Jarrell family (it was razed to widen Delaware Route 7). In 1905, he tired of farming and bought a livery stable in Wilmington at 906 North Jackson Street (the building of I-95 eventually condemned this property). As buggies and carriages disappeared from common use, he converted the stable into a city storage garage for automobiles, with three floors and wooden ramps to drive up and down. He was married, and he and his wife raised two daughters and two sons.

A spare man about 6 feet tall, Clarence Walker was a prominent trapshooter and became a close friend of my father. A good "Class B" shot (average 91% to 94%), he never won the Delaware State Singles Championship but won or was close to the top in many shooting events. In 1932, he suffered a massive heart attack and was advised by his physician that if he were to live very long, he must pace himself and rest between times of strenuous activity. He heeded the advice well, continued to operate his garage with his son Jimmy, and pursued his love of trapshooting.

As I came on the scene as a 12-year-old shooter in 1936, I accompanied my father and Clarence Walker to the Grand American Trapshooting Championships in late August that year. We stayed at the Dayton Biltmore Hotel in downtown Dayton, Ohio, 10 miles from the shooting grounds at Vandalia. On that trip, we saw our first trackless trolleys and experienced our first air-conditioned room. The restaurant in the hotel had a four-piece band, a female singer dressed like Frances Langford, a five-course prime rib dinner for \$1.25, and it was air conditioned! That was the first of many fun trips I enjoyed in Walker's company. My father and I kidded him mercilessly, and he seemed to thrive on that. We made five more Grand American trips with him from then until World War II curtailed shooting.

At the shooting grounds, Clarence Walker would usually shoot every second day, pacing himself as mentioned above. On many of the days, the program called for 200 targets, and there would be a two- or three-hour break between hundreds. A few of the Dayton hotels would have courtesy tents on the grounds with many cots where shooters could rest if they needed to. He made liberal use of these cots between his more strenuous activity while shooting. On August 22, 1939, he won Class B in the North American Clay Target Championship with 198 out of 200 and 49 out of 50 in the shoot-off with Dr. D. H. Stewart of Hamilton, Ontario.

Clarence Walker's second daughter, Anna Blest, was widowed early, and her father moved in with her and her young son Dawson. She was the head dietitian at the new Pierre S. duPont High School in Wilmington. Many years later, Anna became one of the first residents of Cokesbury Village, where Ruth and I reside.

Walker's youngest child, John Aubrey Walker (1910-ca.1994), married my first cousin, Peggy Shallcross, in 1935, and they moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he worked for the Remington Arms Company. "Aub" continued to work for Remington until retirement, and he managed plants in Findlay, Ohio, and Toronto, Ontario. Like his father, he was a great duck

shooter and would seldom miss a season on the Delaware marshes. Clarence had a summer cottage on Shallcross Lake, northwest of Odessa, and a duck blind in the marsh east of Taylor's Bridge. I was treated to a visit to the "marsh" in 1947, but we saw more crows than ducks.

In my first remembrance, Clarence Walker had a 1929 7-passenger Packard Standard Eight sedan and a 1925 Dodge coupe. Later he bought a 1936 Packard 120 club sedan and finally a 1947 Packard Clipper sedan. His license number was 38100. He never lost his love of trapshooting and continued to make good scores almost until his death at age 88, many years after my father and I had dropped out of the sport.

Last week folks were busy prepping for several events at Auburn Heights -- a birthday party on Saturday and Steamin' Sunday. Other projects included replacing the boiler in the EX to make ready for its trip to the AACA Eastern Division Fall Meet in Hershey, PA. After repeated attempts to repair the current boiler, Tom decided to use a boiler from the museum attic, making minor modifications to the car to facilitate a good fit. Help for this project was supplied by Jerry Lucas, Bill Schwoebel, Art Wallace and Jeff Pollock.

New front hubs for the Rauch & Lang were machined by member Bob Hargraves from Arkansas, who did this for us pro bono and delivered them during Steamin' Sunday. They will be taken to Hershey this week along with the existing rear hubs and given to Bill Calimer of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, so the construction of a complete set of new wheels can begin. Walter Higgins will be machining the front axle of the Rauch & Lang to accommodate the new bearings. The 607 project continued with Ted Kamen applying a sealant to the frame and wheels and Bob Stransky completing the application of graphite primer to the leaf springs. Jim Personti and Jeff Fallows continued reassembling the Model K engine, installing the cylinder on the frame and beginning the alignment process.

Steamin' Day Oct. 3 — We are still crunching numbers for yesterday's Steamin' Day, but without question it was a BIG day. We welcomed 554 visitors (428 adults and 126 children), including 100 or more "Friends of Joseph Boxler" who, at the invitation of his family, chose to remember and honor Joe on the third anniversary of his passing with a visit to Auburn Heights. We are honored that they chose to spend this special day with us and pleased that so many spent time at the hands-on display "Under the Hood: How a Stanley Steamer Works," funded in part by the Joseph Boxler Education Fund, with equipment donations from Don Bourdon and Jay Williams. This exhibit has been a true community effort that is now captivating a larger community of visitors.

Mansion tours also continued to be popular with the Steamin' Day crowd -- 85 tickets were sold for the day. Our sincere thanks go to all the volunteers and visitors who made the day such a success! Only 34 days til our next big public event!

Hershey-Bound

Volunteers led by Bill Schwoebel will be taking the Model EX to Hershey for this year's Eastern Division AACA National Fall Meet, Oct. 6-9. Again this year, they'll be offering Firing Up Demonstrations each day.