

FAHP News, December 5, 2016

The Emmerts of Delaware: Ruth Cowgill Emmert (ca. 1898-ca. 1990) was a Delaware restaurateur. Originally from the Dover area, she was a member of Camden Friends Meeting, and although she seldom lived near a Quaker meetinghouse, she retained her interest in the Religious Society of Friends all her life. In the early 1930s, she was operating a family restaurant in an old home on South State Street in Dover called the Duval Tea Room. One of her specialties was delicious homemade dinner rolls. By the late 1930s, she had built a new Duval on State Street just north of the Richardson Hotel, and her old restaurant became known as the Pleasant Inn. I think she still had a hand in operating it, as the food was very good at both locations. Before World War II, the name of the newer place was changed to the Dinner Bell Inn.

Mrs. Cowgill (pronounced “Cogle”), Ruth Emmert’s mother, was a respected real estate agent in Rehoboth Beach, and Ruth and her family moved back and forth between Dover and Rehoboth. It was not long before she opened a Dinner Bell Inn on Christian Street in the resort town which was open about six months each year. She and her elder son Lockwood continued to operate and expand the Dover operation, and she soon built a small motel that was attached to the Rehoboth property. Her younger son David assisted with the Rehoboth operation. Both Dinner Bells were highly successful from World War II until the 1980s.

Ruth spent most of her time in Rehoboth, while her son “Lock” and his wife continued a highly successful Dinner Bell restaurant in Dover. When Delaware’s General Assembly was in session, the Dinner Bell was a favorite early-evening watering hole. When I was active in the Delaware Travel Council in the 1960s, we had most of our Kent County meetings over cocktails and dinner at the Dinner Bell.

Ruth retained her interest in Quakerism, but there was no Friends Meeting near Rehoboth, so she had one in her home, usually attended by about six people. When our “Game Group,” half of whom were Quakers, gathered at my parents’ home over Labor Day Weekend, we would sometimes double the attendance at Ruth Emmert’s Friends Meeting on Sunday morning.

Dave Emmert, her younger son, had a son, “Butch,” a well-known auctioneer in the Rehoboth area. Butch auctioned off the furnishings of our Rehoboth house in 1983, but he is best known for his dealing in low-numbered Delaware license registrations, of which he has auctioned many. I think Delaware License #6 brought over \$600,000 a few years ago! Ruth’s daughter Edwina (“Win”) married Richard Macadam, whose father was an NVF executive and eventually sales manager for the company in California. Dick Macadam was an automotive designer and had top jobs in this field, first with Packard and then with Chrysler Corporation. He was a first cousin of Kathyne Schulz Mitchell of Woodside Farm.

When Ruth Emmert sold the Dinner Bell and retired, she intended to live in a Quaker retirement community. Her former employees, most of whom were black, tried their best to get her to stay in Rehoboth, promising to take turns in caring for her at no cost. Generous as this was, she thought better of it and moved to Penn’s Woods, a Friends Retirement Community in Newtown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where she died.

Work Report: On Tuesday, November 29, 12 volunteers attended, viz: Mark Bodenstab (in charge), Steve Bryce, Mike Ciosek, Ken Hilbeck, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Dave Leon, Jerry Lucas, Brent McDougall, Mark Russell, Neal Sobocinski, and Kelly Williams.

The burner was dropped on the Model H-5, and a circumferencial crack was discovered in the superheater. It may be practical to weld this; otherwise, a new superheater will be made. Fine tuning the electrical system on the ’37 Packard continued. Locomotive 402 was cleaned following its November 26 runs, trash was thrown away, and the area cleaned.

On the Model 87, a hydrostatic test was applied to the new boiler, and a few leaking fittings were identified for repair. The steel workbench was sand-blasted and is now ready for priming. The remainder of the drawer faces above the main bench in the shop were sanded and painted.

On Wednesday, November 30, four volunteers answered the call, but the eldest didn't do much. They were Dave Leon (in charge), Jeff Kennard, Gary Fitch and Tom Marshall.

More sorting was done to tools and fasteners in the garage and shop. Many towels were cut up for shop rags. New member Mark Herman and his three friends from Connecticut were given a complete tour of the museum, and they took photos and measurements from our Models 87, 820, and H-5.

On Thursday, December 1, six volunteers were on hand: Ted Kamen (in charge), Steve Bryce, Tom Marshall, Jim Personti, Tim Ward, and Bob Jordan.

Heavy oil was added to the steering gear box on the Mountain Wagon, but the mesh of the gears in this box should be checked before the car is used again. A round of packing was inserted in the gland of the front water pump. A leak in the small plug on the 3-tube indicator on this car was addressed, but it is not completely repaired.

Several fittings were tightened in the new boiler in the Model 87. Believing that a loose joint on the left end of the steering tie rod was causing shimmying, the tapers on this joint were tightened to remove most of the slack. The large piston of the lift in the grease rack room was partially cut off, but we ran out of oxygen, so completion of this was delayed. Once this is out of the way, the floor can be concreted over and the room prepared for an auxiliary shop.

A new flasher was installed in the '37 Packard, and the direction signals are working properly. The brake light switch tends to stick from disuse over a long period of time. The air filter on this car was removed and cleaned. Some switches still need labeling. The defective superheater from the Model H-5 was taken by Jim Personti, and he will attempt to weld the crack in his shop.

On Thursday, December 8, the third chapter of the Shop Course, this time on flare fittings, tubing, and pipe, will be held in the shop from 7:00 to 7:30. This will be repeated on December 13 at the same time, prior to Rose Ann Hoover's Volunteers' Chocolate Party.