

December 26, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

We hope you had a nice Christmas and are now looking forward to a happy and prosperous New Year.

One of the early people at Auburn Heights was Beaton S. Dennis (circa 1880-circa 1957). "Bate" was a black oysterman from St. Michaels, MD, but when he had trouble finding work, he came north shortly after 1900 and was hired as a handy man around the paper mill by Israel Marshall. He was quite humorous, had a happy disposition, and everybody who worked with him liked Bate. As was customary in those days, everyone at the mill, black or white, was called by their first name (probably with the exception of my grandfather, Israel). Bate prided himself on being able to write two messages, one with each hand, simultaneously. He used to say "I's ambidextrous". With his fine penmanship, the writing was equally good from both hands. For many years, the "mill men" used to mow the grass at Auburn Heights and do other small jobs as required. Bate seemed to acquire this job on a regular basis. When my mother came on the scene, she thought it strange that Bate would call my father "Clarence". That would not have been appropriate around Middletown, where she came from. I can remember Bate running an early gasoline-powered reel mower around the lawn. He learned to drive a Model T Ford, and my father bought one, probably about 1925, for Bate and others to use in getting the mail twice a day, the milk from cousin Albert Marshall at Marshall's Bridge once a day, and other nearby errands. One day Bate parked the "T" at the kitchen door, went in the kitchen to complete his delivery, and when he came out the car was lodged on the race bank against a tree with a smashed fender. I don't remember how they pulled the car back up the hill. I believe the new fender cost \$5.

Bate married a local widow, Ella Rector, the mother-in-law of the young Lawrence Lincoln "Link" Hazzard who worked at the mill for nearly 50 years. Bate and Ella would often baby-sit for my parents, and I remember riding in the front seat of that Model T between them. Once we traveled the dirt extension of Meeting House Road that ended at Marshall's Bridge, then a public road. This road was closed in the early 1930's, and I recall riding my bicycle over the route about 1937 with the weeds grown high. When Ella died, Bate, then in his late 50's, went back to live at St. Michaels. Many years later, in 1953, the Historical Car Club of Penna. had a weekend tour to Easton with headquarters Saturday night at the Tidewater Inn. We needed someone to watch the cars parked in an open lot. My dad and I thought of Bate, got in touch with him, and he came in from St. Michaels and kept a strict eye on our cars. Roy Bengel with his '15 Stanley, my dad in his '24 Doble steamer, and I in a '32 Packard roadster then owned by my father, all knew Bate and we had a happy reunion.

We hope all of you have another pleasant vacation week from FAHP. As mentioned last week, if any of you are in the middle of a project and want to get back to it, you are welcome to come, but there are no regular work sessions scheduled. I'm happy to report that everything is back together in the rear of the Model 71, and I touched up the paint this morning. I have the inside hubs from the 735 back from Bob Barrett, so the wheels and tires can be put back on this car and it can then be moved to the upper garage. Once in our regular working space, we can drop the burner and lift the boiler out. After the burner has been cleaned and the boiler tested, all will go back nearly asbestos-free. There is still some paint detailing to be done before the pin striping can be applied. The steam chest on the right side of Locomotive 402 is apart for further observation by our "experts", but Bill Schwoebel and I think the leak was in the flare fitting where live steam is admitted to the steam chest, not in the chest itself. This flare has been repaired.

On January 19, the Executive Committee of the Board will meet at Auburn Heights. We hope to leave with 2 Stanley cars for Ormond Beach about January 22. The Model K and the 71 should both be ready to go (except for road-testing and installing their engine cases), but will have to be winterized and "detailed", whatever that is on a steamer. We encourage more of you to go if you can work it out, and reservations may still be possible. Bill Rule, Bill Schwoebel, Butch Cannard, Ruth and I are already "signed up", in addition to our friends Lindsay and Marge Greenplate. A lot of effort has gone into this Centennial event, and it promises to be an outstanding few days with a lot of Stanley cars participating.

Rob Robison reminds us that the deadline is very close now for articles in our first official News Letter. For those who have been asked to submit, please get busy and get this information to Rob as near January 1 as you can. With less than a week to go, our Annual Appeal total stands at \$39,295, which leaves over \$10,000 still needed to reach our goal. If you have not yet given, please be as generous as you can. Many thanks. Tom