

April 23, 2007

Hello, Steam Team:

I apologize for a mistake in last week's "News". Augustus Post was born in 1873, not 1879, so he was 79 when he died in 1952.

A LITTLE ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM in this area: Although the early "William Penn" Quakers and some of the country's founding fathers believed in public education for everyone, it was about 1829 before any sort of law was passed in Delaware saying, more or less, that every child should have a chance for a public education, which was very loosely defined. We believe the Hockessin Quakers established a wooden schoolhouse in what is now a corner of the Hockessin Friends Cemetery about 1790. About 1830, an octagonal schoolhouse was built to the west of the Quaker Meeting House, and this served children in the Hockessin and Auburn (later Yorklyn) communities until 1869. William H. (Billy) Little, chief maintenance man and mechanic under Clarence Marshall when the main fiber mills were built in Yorklyn in 1911-12, recalled having attended this octagonal schoolhouse. Billy Little was born about 1860 and died in 1931.

Both Hockessin and Yorklyn got new public school buildings in 1869. Of somewhat similar design, these structures and those who taught in them provided elementary education for over 60 years. Having three floors each, they afforded advantages not available in one-room schoolhouses, which dotted the rural countryside. Both these buildings are standing and in good repair. The Hockessin School at the corner of Valley Road and Old Lancaster Pike, housed the Lamborn Library for many years with a private apartment on the third floor. It is now used as a station for the New Castle County Police. At Yorklyn, the building has been a private residence since the school closed in 1932. Ashton Buchanan, a brother-in-law of storekeeper Grover C. Gregg, was the first to live here with his family. Presently the building, on Yorklyn Road just below the home of Rob and Chevonne Robison, is owned and occupied by FAHP member Suzanne Moran. Warren, Anna, and Clarence Marshall attended school here between 1890 and 1900.

In 1932, both Hockessin and Yorklyn got new schools of similar design, but not of equally-good location. The school at Hockessin was built on the highest ground in the village, a beautiful piece of property, while the Yorklyn school was in the flood plain of Red Clay Creek on land probably donated by the George W. Helme Company, manufacturers of snuff. Both closing in the mid-1970's, one is the home of the Hockessin Baptist Church and the other of the Center for the Creative Arts.

In the early 1930's, however, the big "new school" news in this area was the building of the Kennett Consolidated School on a large tract in the south of the boro of Kennett Square facing South Broad Street. Financed by Pierre S. duPont, it boasted of 1,380 students when it opened, becoming the largest consolidated school in the country outside the large cities. Largely replacing one-room schools, it is my understanding that all 12 grades were taught in this school before newer elementary schools were built in outlying sections of the Kennett School District. Mr. duPont became to schools in this area what Andrew Carnegie was to libraries. The "flagship" P. S. duPont High School at 34<sup>th</sup> and VanBuren Streets in Wilmington, a beautiful school opened in 1934, immediately became the arch-rival of the older Wilmington High School.

Even prior to the building of Kennett Consolidated, there was no segregation in Pennsylvania schools. Such was not the case in Delaware, however, and the segregated "colored" school on Mill Creek Road in Hockessin had to suffice for blacks before a few of them could transfer to Howard High School in Wilmington, also segregated, their only chance for a high school education.

Some of our FAHP volunteers have worked here almost every day during the past week, sprucing up the many things required for a successful operating season. The beginning of this season is upon us. On Saturday, April 28, our '37 Packard will be on display at Winterthur, and we have been requested by the Kennett Land Trust, just over the Pennsylvania State Line, to carry some dignitaries from the Kennett Township Building at Rosedale to a dedication of a small nature preserve less than a mile up Route 82 from Auburn Heights. They would like the Mountain Wagon, and we may be able to do this for them. On Sunday, the 29<sup>th</sup>, Wilmington Friends School has again chartered our facilities for an annual alumni outing, and we operate much as we do for the general public but on a slightly smaller scale. Next week, on Saturday, May 5, the Stanley Models 87 and 76 are expected to go to Dover to participate in the first of the two annual Old Dover Days, on which we cooperate with the Division of Parks and Recreation. The next day, Sunday, May 6, we open Auburn Heights to the public for the first of seven "public days" in 2007. Art Wallace has made several promotional contacts for us to help promote this event, and volunteers here last Thursday were asked by Bob Reilly to take posters and flyers to promote May 6, wherever they have contacts that can help us "get out the word". Bob will be mailing to many media outlets a release on this event, and promotion for it will run on WHYI Channel 12. Pick up flyers and posters if you can use them!

Last Saturday, Walter Higgins gave a lesson on driving to Art Sybell while testing the Model 740, and to Art and Bob Reilly while testing the Rauch & Lang electric. I did likewise for Steve Bryce and Kelly Williams using the Mountain Wagon and the Model 71. We were also glad to have Walter's friend and Kelly's wife Stephanie with us. Tomorrow, April 24, in early afternoon, Bill Schwoebel plans to fire up Locomotive #402 for testing prior to its use on May 6. Jim Sank completed the striping on the Model 735, and lettered one side of a newly-painted "chair car". Volunteers moved cars around and Rose Ann Hoover and "Bucky" subsequently cleaned more of the museum floor, getting ready to place cars in their more permanent museum locations. Rose Ann plans to spruce up some of the museum's exhibits and move the gift shop into the museum proper. Art Sybell, Ron Turochy, Dan Nichols, Emil Christofano, and Jerry Novak have built a new closet with shelves and lighting to adjoin the gift shop area.

Plans for the Annual Steam Car Tour June 17-22 are progressing well, with Bob Reilly spending much of his time on this project. At present, he reports that 72 steamers and about 230 people have responded in the affirmative, not counting FAHP volunteers. Even with an expected drop-out rate of perhaps 10%, it looks like it will be a big tour. For those volunteers who have not told us whether they can participate, please think seriously about it and let us know as soon as possible, so we can plan for the cars to be used, the meals you may want to reserve, etc. The next of several meetings of the tour committee is scheduled for Auburn Heights tomorrow at 5:30 P.M. For your information, here is a preview of the week:

Sunday afternoon, June 17 (for the "early birds"): Wilmington & western R.R. and Greenbank Mill.  
Sunday evening: Firing Up Banquet, DuPont Country Club.  
Monday, June 18: Tour to Auburn Heights with a drive through the Winterthur estate. Box lunches.  
Tuesday, June 19: Tour of about 100 miles to Chesapeake City and Georgetown, MD.  
Wednesday, June 20: Hagley Museum, and a special surprise with catered lunch at a premier location.  
Thursday, June 21: Tour of about 100 miles into Pennsylvania, possibly to Hopewell Furnace.  
Friday, June 22: Southern Chester County tour of about 70 miles.  
Friday evening: Blow-Down Banquet at Delaware National Country Club.

Thanks to all.

Tom