

Sept. 5, 2005

Hello, Steam Team, and a sober Labor Day:

Today's historical tid-bit is #9 on the list: Early train trips. Then we start over with number 1 next week. I will relate some of the Marshall family's early trips by train, as gleaned from stories passed down, and from family papers found at Auburn Heights. Israel and Lizzie, on their honeymoon in October, 1877, went by train to Washington, DC, shook hands at the White House with President Hayes, and continued about 20 miles farther south to Accotink, VA, the station for Woodlawn Plantation where members of the Way family, cousins of Israel, were then living. Little more is known about this honeymoon, but they were probably gone no more than 3 or 4 days before returning home to Marshall's Bridge. In 1893, possibly celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary, Howard Mitchell and his wife, also Lizzie, went by train from Mill Creek (Hockessin) to Chicago to attend the World's Columbian Exposition. Howard was Lizzie Marshall's brother. My father, just 8 years old, perhaps by chance, was on the platform at the Yorklyn station when the train bringing his aunt and uncle home stopped briefly, and they shouted to him out the coach window what a wonderful experience they had had. By 1897, Warren and Anna Marshall, older siblings of my father, were enrolled at Wilmington Friends School, and took the morning train daily, leaving Yorklyn at 7:20, and arriving at Front & Market Streets, Wilmington, at 7:55. My father, together with his cousins Henry and Ellen Mitchell, also started using this train about 1900, and continued until 1903. The Mitchells got on at Mill Creek (Valley Road west of Hockessin), and my father at Yorklyn. One foggy morning 7:20 came and went at Yorklyn and no train. For 30 minutes or so, no one knew why. Then a messenger reported that the locomotive had run into one or more of Sammy Sharpless' cows midway between Hockessin and Yorklyn, and derailed. It was at least two hours before the engine was back on track, and some country kids were quite late for school that day. It is not known the fate of the cows, but Samuel Sharpless was Ruth's great grandfather. In 1899, Israel went on a rail trip run by the Pennsylvania Railroad through the Shenandoah Valley, Charlottesville, and other parts of Virginia, about 6 or 7 days in all. Lizzie didn't go, perhaps because she had to run Auburn Heights with its teen-age children, get them off to school, etc. A small brochure of this trip was found, and on it, in Lizzie's writing: "My husband enjoyed this trip very much". In early September, 1901, Warren and his younger brother Clarence (my father) set off by excursion train for the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo, NY. All was going well until just a few miles short of Buffalo, when the train stopped, and the passengers wondered why it could not proceed into the city. After a lengthy wait, word came back that President McKinley had been shot. (More R.R. trivia in a later edition).

With no special events to occupy our schedule, the past week has been a profitable one, with 3 work projects moving along well on

Tuesday night, and a members' meeting with 25 present taking place on Thursday evening. In addition, Joe Mosteller called a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Board, which was held at Rob and Chevonne Robison's, also on Thursday. The thrust of the membership meeting was to explain the Development Committee's ideas on membership benefits and dues categories, and to make everyone aware that the hiring of an Executive Director this winter is a real possibility. The regular basic dues would go to \$50 annually, but a "30-30 Club" idea was favored by most, which means that any volunteer with 30 hours or more the previous year would be entitled to an annual dues of \$30. There will also be a 10% discount on items from our Gift Shop, and certain complimentary tickets or annual passes, the details to be determined. It is planned to have some sort of members' picnic or activity annually. Today, Labor Day, more track work and printing was accomplished by the 3 track leaders (Steve, Bill S., and Anne) and Butch, who all spent 4 hours in a productive session. I'm also happy to report that the '13 Model 76 is put back together and is running well. Thanks to Jim, Butch, Dale and others who worked on this car. Also, Bill S. and Anne checked the valve seats on the '05 Model CX and found them good.

This should be a normal work week with our Tuesday and Thursday sessions. The wire-laying portion of the R.R. signal project has begun, more track sections are being rebuilt, and the 9 cars going to the Hagley Show on 9/18 can be gone over, polished and cleaned. The '18 Model 735 project has attracted 3 volunteers so far to finish the cosmetic restoration, and we know more are interested. The R.R., Mountain Wagon, and Popcorn machine are scheduled to operate for the Down Syndrome Association of Delaware on Saturday, the 17th, and while this is not a large group, Anne has asked for about 3 more volunteers, mainly for popcorn and parking/road crossing. If you are free, please see her and offer your help, early afternoon 9/17.

The week of Sept. 12-18 will be a busy one for us at Auburn Heights. Committee meetings of the Board will take place on the 14th, the quarterly Board meeting on the 15th, Don Davidson, Sarah Stanley, Tom Ackerman and Bill Schwoebel expect to arrive on the 17th with three "Hagley cars", and Mike May and Bob and Barb Reilly are also expected to be on hand. In addition to this entourage of possibly 12 cars going to Hagley early Sunday morning, we understand that Bob Wilhelm expects to have his newly-restored Model 735 there as well. The aggregate age of these 13 cars is 1,088 years, for an average of nearly 84 years each! Let's get them ready. Thanks to all. Tom