

F.A.H.P News, February 25, 2013

Local Baseball: For well over 100 years, baseball has been a favorite pastime and competitive sport at all levels. The local area of Hockessin, Yorklyn, Mount Cuba, Centerville, Hamorton, and Kennett Square was no exception. Starting about 1900, leagues of one kind or another came and went. Sometimes the leagues were among teams that consisted of young men from these communities themselves; at other times, a local team might compete against or be in a league with teams some distance away.

In late summer of 1913, my father brought his Mountain Wagon home from a very successful season carrying tourists over the battlefield at Gettysburg. Yorklyn, with its new storekeeper, Grover C. Gregg, had a ball team that played teams as far away as Middletown. On more than one occasion, my dad carried the Yorklyn team, or most of it, in his 12-passenger Stanley "Wagon" to its "away" games. My father had alluded to this, but it was confirmed by Margaret Brennan Jordan of Yorklyn in the late 1980s, as her late husband "Buck" was on the Yorklyn team (he was a great uncle of James E. Jordan Jr., Executive Director of the Red Clay Valley Association and the Brandywine Valley Association, who was instrumental in arranging the sale of former the NVF property to the State of Delaware for Auburn Heights Preserve).

When I was about 10 years old, Yorklyn was in a league with about five other teams, some of which were Hockessin, Centerville, and Mount Cuba. Yorklyn's home field was in the meadow next to the new Yorklyn School (now the Center for the Creative Arts), Hockessin played next to the Hockessin School (now Hockessin's Baptist Church), and Centerville played in a small field opposite where Snuff Mill Road dead ends at Kennett Pike. The players were young men, some single and some married, and most all had paying jobs. Most of the Yorklyn boys worked in one of the mills in their village. Their games were on summer evenings, usually during the week.

The Gregg family, especially Grover Sr. and Grover Jr., the latter called "June," were leaders in the Yorklyn ball teams for two generations. In 1939, Senior established a much better team that joined a league that extended southward to Newark and Glasgow. Most of these league games were on Saturday or Sunday. This improved Yorklyn team recruited players from Kennett Square and other communities. Merritt Bernard of Kennett was one of the pitchers, and the catcher was a clerk in the new Acme market in that borough. The home field was on top of "Snuff Mill Hill" (opposite the entrance to Oversee Farm), which was a good place to play except that left field was in a depression. The schedule was set up with a break halfway through the season, and the team that won the first half would play the team that won the second half to decide the final league champion. Yorklyn won the first half, and Glasgow won the second. The playoff game was held at Yorklyn. With Merritt Bernard on the mound, it was a tight game, but Glasgow prevailed. June Gregg, then 20 years of age and coming into his prime, played for many years after World War II, but I don't think the Yorklyn team was

involved again in such a fancy league as in 1939. After the war, the home field was again on the school grounds. I was often an observer.

Work Report: On Tuesday, February 19, with Steve Bryce in charge, about eight volunteers attended the work session, with another 10 attending the Auburn Valley Railroad meeting at the same time.

The curtain fasteners were screwed to the body of the 607, the steering column of this car was spray-primed after being thoroughly "taped off," and new leather splash boots were made for the pump drive rocker. The batteries were checked on the Rauch & Lang and found to be in satisfactory condition.

On Thursday, February 21, with Tim Ward in charge, the following things were accomplished: On the Model 607, the steering column was sprayed black, other paint was touched up and several bolts and nuts were tightened on the steering linkage, and the new leather boots dyed black and fit to their copper cases. The cases themselves were painted black. The fairing under the condenser on the 735 was cleaned and primed.

On Saturday, February 23, the Model 607 was fired up again, and the burner, pilot, and steam automatic appear to be 100%. The only leaks remaining were in a defective 1/8-inch cross, used to feed the stack blower, the siphon, and the whistle, and the whistle valve itself, which will be rebuilt or replaced. The defective cross was replaced on February 24.

The Little Tikes Library Grows!

The books keep rolling in for our Little Tikes Library! Thank you for all your generous donations! We have added more books to our list and have even added a bookshelf to our wish list so that we have a designated space to store the books in the museum.

Thanks too to those who have made purchases from Amazon.com using our referral link (available on the home page of our website). We've earned almost \$40 to date -- and every dollar counts!

Auburn Heights Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 30, 12 noon to 3 pm

The first big event of the year is fast approaching, and the Easter Bunny is already hard at work. To ensure there is plenty of fun (and eggs) for everyone, we will be limiting the number of kids to 200 this year. Advance tickets will go on sale Friday, March 1.

Members still receive free admission (based on their membership level), but in order for us to maintain attendance levels and ensure fun fall all, they **MUST** register to reserve their space. This can be done online, beginning March 1. Member status will be confirmed upon order. Thanks to everyone for making this event one of our most popular!