

June 13, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

The River Steamer "REPUBLIC": 100 years ago, there was no finer holiday for working people than a day's outing on the REPUBLIC.

During the summer months, this famous excursion boat plied the Delaware River and Bay between Philadelphia and Cape May Point. She left Chestnut Street Wharf in the early morning, stopped at Chester, then Gordon Heights (near Edgemoor) for Wilmington-area passengers, and Penns Grove before the fast run to Cape May Point. I say "fast" because most of these river steamers were capable of 20-25 knots, and the REPUBLIC was no exception.

Yorklyn people took either the morning train or the trolley to Wilmington, connecting there with a trolley direct to the pier at Gordon Heights. Each year my grandmother, Elizabeth C. Marshall (1854-1930), would take a group of "mill children" to Cape May and back for a long day's outing. Their mothers would dress them up in their Sunday's finest, as they had to look their best for "Miss Lizzie". Grandmother must have had help, but somehow she packed lunches for all. It is my impression that there were usually 15 or 20 in the group. When the REPUBLIC docked at Cape May Point, a small exclusive settlement with a few large summer "cottages" one of which was owned by John Wanamaker, a connecting trolley line about 3 miles long took excursionists into Cape May proper. It's not known whether the children had time for a swim in the Atlantic surf, but we know Lizzie Marshall would not have been interested, as Victorian-era women didn't do such things. Some tired but happy souls returned to Yorklyn late the same evening. (Another "Republic" story next week).

A number of projects were completed last week at our work sessions Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Steve Jensen and a work crew replaced a track section near the tunnel, Emil, Jerry Novak and Jim repaired an electric line to the pond, and the first two installed more grounded outlets along the museum wall, Jim reworked the throttle from the Model 71, Jerry Lucas made a temporary water tank repair on the Mountain Wagon, Chuck Erikson continued his "nuts and bolts" organization in the shop, and Dan Nichols painted on the turntable. Anne Cleary held an Events Committee meeting on Tuesday that was well attended, and Dave Lumley paid us a visit Thursday night, and he, Ed, and Butch fired up the Model 740 in preparation for its use on Saturday. Butch and Rob Robison cleaned and polished on the cars that were going out for weekend events.

On Saturday, Emil drove the electric car, Jerry Novak drove his '25 Chevy, and I took the 76 to the Masonic Home for their annual summer festival. Jerry was in charge of getting cars, and there was a fine assortment of about 10 cars, mostly owned by BRAACA members. The Rauch & Lang, the 76, and Jerry's Chevy, plus our 740 with Ed and

Betty Hoffmeister and Dave Lumley, and our Model 71 with Butch Cannard, also attended the Wilhelm Gas Engine Show in mid-day and early afternoon. We enjoyed seeing Bob Wilhelm's newly restored Model 735, which is almost finished- the completion of the new top will do it, and we are sure the car will run as nice as it looks. On Sunday, 4 of our Stanleys plus Emil in the Rauch & Lang went to the New Garden Air Show, and again Jerry Novak drove his Chevy. Jerry Lucas took the '08 Model EX, Bill Schwoebel and Anne Cleary took the '05 Model CX, Butch drove the 71, and Steve Jensen drove the Model 76. Passengers included Rob and Chevonne Robison and myself. Seven of us enjoyed ice cream at Mitchells' on the return.

Alan and Butch have plenty of our DVD's available for sale now, and Alan is busy filling orders. They retail for \$20, and we are trying to work out a discount for members, which will be decided this week. Again, this is "Committee Week". On Tuesday at 7:30 P.M., Bill Schwoebel has called a meeting of his chairpersons of the Management Group (in the Museum). On Wednesday, also at 7:30 in the Museum, there is a meeting of the Development Committee of the Board. On Thursday, in addition to our normal work session, a joint meeting of the Collections and Education Committees will meet at 6:00 P.M. in the Museum, and at 7:30 also on Thursday, the Quarterly Board Meeting takes place in the Museum's Reception Room. On Friday or Saturday, we will be loading the Model 71 for its trip to the Concours d'Elegance at Lehigh University under the care of Bill Schwoebel and Butch Cannard. And on Sunday, the 19th, in addition to the "Concours", a few of us may go with our cars to the Helicopter Museum's annual Fatherfest near West Chester.

The following week, John McNamara and I will be demonstrating a small steam locomotive for the Cub Scouts at Banning Park on June 21, there is an Ice Cream Run on the 23rd, and we'll be preparing for our two big weekend events, the Rotary picnic on Saturday, June 25, and our "Steamin' Sunday" on June 26. All volunteers are needed and welcome! Tom