

January 15, 2007

Hello, Steam Team:

Although there was a picture of my father's new 1913 Mountain Wagon with a load of passengers at Gettysburg on the back cover of our first "Herald", the story of this enterprise has not been described in the Weekly News. To commemorate the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, the summer of 1913 was very special there, as all veterans of the battle, north and south alike, were invited to come to a reunion encampment sponsored by the U.S. government and headed by the retired General Leonard Wood, hero of the Spanish American War. The effort was very successful in that nearly all who were still alive and well wanted to attend, even though most were in their 70's and 80's. The event was supposed to attract tourists from all parts of the country, which it did, and the main feature was to be a chance to tour the Battlefield. 28-year-old T. Clarence Marshall, already a Stanley dealer in this area, became an active entrepreneur that summer and took delivery of a new Model 810 12-passenger Mountain Wagon in late spring.

Since my father was actively involved with the paper mills and the new fiber mill in Yorklyn and could not leave for an extended period, he hired two local men to spend the summer in Gettysburg with the Mountain Wagon. Thomas S. Dennison, son of Yorklyn's oldest storekeeper, was to be the business manager and P.R. man, and Bill Palmer was to be the mechanic and driver. In addition, they hired Warren Gilbert, a lecturer and guide at Gettysburg, to be in their employ during the 10 weeks or so the Mountain Wagon would be there. Gilbert would ride along on each tour of the Battlefield, explaining the details of the battle to the customers. He was born on November 23, 1863, four days after President Lincoln's "few appropriate remarks" which soon became known as the Gettysburg Address, one of the greatest short speeches in the English language. Gilbert contended he was present, as his mother, nearly nine months pregnant, was on the same platform as the president and sang in the church choir which was a part of the cemetery dedication at which Lincoln spoke.

The Mountain Wagon operation was a huge success. It was one of a very few mechanized vehicles touring the Battlefield, as horse-drawn carriages and hacks were widely used. Demand was so great that on busy days the whole tour took only 40 minutes, so another load could be accommodated. Attracting the attention of the top brass, Tom Dennison was contacted by General Wood's office, and arrangements were made to take him and his general staff from their headquarters to and from dinner across town on special occasions.

Soon after Labor Day, the Mountain Wagon returned to Yorklyn. In what was left of 1913 and again in 1914, it transported the Yorklyn baseball team to games as far away as Middletown. Since, for many mill

workers, the work week ended at noon on Saturday, the "Wagon" was also used as a bus, making a couple of round-trips from Yorklyn to Wilmington during the afternoon and evening. Although competing with the train and trolley, the over-the-road trip was shorter and faster, and some historians have said this was the first bus line in Delaware. Toward the end of 1914, my father sold his Mountain Wagon to Bill Palmer, who established a more frequent bus service with it from Kennett Square to Wilmington and return. This ran for a couple of years before its final demise. The fate of that "Wagon" is unknown; it is assumed it was scrapped.

Two minor foot notes: A syndicated Christmas card appeared in the late 1940's showing Santa Claus and eleven of his helpers in THIS Mountain Wagon. How do I know? By comparing an actual photograph with the Christmas card, both of which showed a retrofitted bumper and Delaware front license plate, neither of which would have been on another Mountain Wagon. And as to Warren Gilbert: In 1951, I had the pleasure of driving around the Gettysburg Battlefield with him in the front seat of my 1914 Model 607, while I listened to his lecture on the Battle of Gettysburg. The car is now owned by the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve.

Many of you know Bill Schwoebel's back operation last Wednesday appears to have been a complete success, and he is home recuperating after only two nights in the hospital. He tells us the pain is gone. We are so happy for you, Bill. His efforts in getting the Volunteer Working Groups off the ground are much appreciated, and I am so pleased with progress so far. The ten group leaders have all demonstrated activity and much of the work planned for the next three or four months is underway. In several cases, it will be necessary to work together and coordinate some major jobs, such as painting the museum floor. I appreciate the leaders stepping forth and assuming responsibility, as this demonstrates that we can fulfill our long-term goals.

Last week, there was activity on several fronts, and much of this can continue on our work nights this week. Steve Jensen, with help from Jim Personti and new member Jeff Farrows, replaced a gauge-glass gasket on one of our locomotives and they are planning to replace the steam injector valves with ball valves. Ron Turochy and Art Sybell are making plans to repair or replace and then paint the wooden seats on one of the Auburn Valley trains. They would like to have a heated "paint booth" for spray-painting, but that will not be easy this winter because of limited space. Emil and Jerry Novak obtained a new safety-glass windshield for the Rauch & Lang, yet to be installed. Art Sybell and Ted Simpkins helped Walter Higgins with final brake adjustments on the Model 740, and Rob Robison and Butch Cannard pulled out the remainder of the old wiring harness on the Model

735. Jim Personti brazed an adapter coupling on the steam pipe loop on this car, so we can use a union instead of the troublesome flare fitting on the hot end of the superheater. Kelly Williams and Art Wallace had worked hard trying to make this flare satisfactory, as had I. I reconfigured the superheater, and this project is now completed, with the burner back in place, requiring only "plastering up". Jerry Lucas tested the vaporizer from the Model CX and reported it to be tight with no leaks showing anywhere. Steve Bryce took the burner apart and found two cracks in the grate casting, both of which are repairable. The boiler should have another layer of insulation before the water tank, re-soldered by Jim Personti, is put back in the car. On the Model 76, the new boiler is setting in the car, needing to be rotated slightly for alignment with openings in the burner pan and liner. Rose Ann, Jerry Novak and Emil were here Friday and discussed plans for floor painting and possible changes and improvements in the museum. There is thought that we may wish to move the gift shop to the museum, possibly locating it in the reception room.

Unlike most weeks, there is not a lot going on except our work sessions. Attendance at such has been very good of late, and we hope the diversity of mechanical projects will keep you interested and active. I hope to see you on Tuesday or Thursday (or both) so we can get closer to moving the 3 Stanleys now in the garage back to the museum, and bring others up, before the floor painting begins. Happy mid-winter! Tom