

FAHP News, September 22, 2014

Richmond P. Miller (1902-1972): Richmond Miller was a walking textbook. He was also one of the most prominent Philadelphia Quakers of the mid-20th century. I got to know him well before, during, and after the 1952 Friends World Conference at Oxford, England. Richmond's official title was Field Secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, which organization would be more easily understood by non-Quakers as a Conference of many individual Meetings (churches). With about 11,000 members, there were 68 Meetings, including Hockessin, under his jurisdiction, and he tried to visit each of these Meetings at least once a year. Almost literally, he "knew everybody." He earned \$4,500 plus expenses annually.

Before he assumed the Field Secretary position, Richmond had taught at the George School, a Quaker co-ed boarding school in Bucks County, 25 miles from Philadelphia. In addition to his visitation to the many Meetings mentioned above, he attended religious conferences and had a host of Quaker friends in Britain as well as the U.S. One such conference was the 1937 World Gathering of Friends held at Haverford and Swarthmore, both Quaker colleges near Philadelphia. The next one planned was 15 years later, with the delegates to be housed in the various colleges that comprised Oxford University in England. Richmond knew that Alex Burton and I had established a travel agency in Wilmington in 1949, and he was anxious to direct to a "Quaker" agency the over 400 Americans who planned to attend. In 1950 we made a deal, and in return for his assistance, he would have a complimentary Cabin Class passage on the Cunard Line from New York to Southampton and return.

During the period 1950-1952, Richmond visited Hockessin frequently, and he stayed with us at Auburn Heights several times. He recommended that I attend as many meetings as possible where discussions of the 1952 trip to England would be held. I attended most of the sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (this annual early-spring gathering lasted about 5 days) in 1951 and 1952, and I also visited comparable meetings at Baltimore; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Richmond, Indiana. In all cases Richmond Miller told me whom to see, and gave me a flattering letter of introduction. When I went to England and Scotland in September, 1951, I was entertained in several homes of British Quakers, and shown many of the sites connected with the founding of Quakerism in the 17th century. A slide show from this trip was used to further promote the upcoming Conference.

The Oxford Conference was from July 28 to August 6, 1952. Our agency had worked nearly 2 years on arrangements for American Quakers, and we booked 305 people for the trans-Atlantic crossing, round-trip. Over 90% traveled by ship, and less than 10% by air. From temporary offices in London and Oxford, I sold sightseeing trips up to 10 days in length to probably 50 more. All of England went on a "bank holiday" in early August each year, and making reservations was nearly impossible. Everyone in the country took a vacation during the same week. Somehow, it all worked out.

Richmond Miller loved history, and he was secretary of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. He also loved London, almost as much as Philadelphia. He told me to eat at Lyons' Corner Houses, a chain of cafeterias across the U.K. I enjoyed several meals there, where the fixed price was 49 cents in U.S. currency. When he and his wife Alice sold their home in Overbrook and moved into smaller

quarters near center-city Philadelphia, the address was a number on a “Mews,” which might well have been the address of a flat in London. I owed much to Richmond Miller.

Work Report: On Tuesday, September 16, the following eight volunteers were on hand: Dave Leon (in charge), Steve Bryce, Ted Kamen, Dennis Dragon, Bob Jordan, Bill Schwoebel, Ken Ricketts, and Mac Taylor.

More pots were brought down from the attic to the museum floor in preparation for the Invitational Car Show. Cars in the Museum were moved around and carefully placed. The ignition switch was installed on the Model T Ford, and it was tested. Six more pots were set up and cemented.

The work benches in the garage and shop were cleaned. More work was done on the Lionel electric trains, including motor rebuilding on at least one locomotive. All should be ready for their operation on September 21.

On Thursday, September 18, 17 volunteers answered the call, viz: Tim Ward (in charge), Steve Bryce, Tom Marshall, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Jared Schoenly, Kelly Williams, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Bob Wilhelm, Gary Green, Devon Hall, John Bacino, Rose Ann Hoover, and Dave Leon.

Final clean-up, dusting and polishing of the cars in preparation for Sept. 21 was completed. A.V.R.R. track leveling was done behind the museum, and the flangeways were checked and cleaned. The track was blown off. Work continued in the F.A.H.P. library.

The pilot was taken apart on the Model 607, as it was not 100% on the trip to Hagley on 9/14. It was cleaned and “buttoned up” again. The piston rods for the Model H-5’s engine were returned with the retainer pins drilled out of the crossheads to accommodate the new bronze slides.

Aside from the work sessions, a lot of staff and volunteer effort was expended during the week, getting ready for the Invitational Car Show. One section of the museum has been refinished with new display panels to feature electric cars. The grounds were manicured and laid out to accommodate the 25 visiting cars expected on September 21. Special floral displays were evident everywhere. Susan Randolph and Jesse Gagnon, assisted by Dan Citron and five graduate students from the U of D Museum Studies Program, arranged tables, descriptive signs, and all that goes into preparing for the Country Butcher, Woodside Farm Ice Cream, and our other special vendors, as well as the detailing of ticket sales, our raffles, and our Silent Auction. Steve Bryce and Jerry Novak spent all week on physical jobs required in preparation for the Invitational, as well as arrangements for trailer parking, shuttles, and all that goes with that.

Already, we had on hand Don Davidson’s 1917 Detroit electric and the Hagley Museum’s 1919 electric Custer Car, and on Friday Bill Schwoebel and Bill Rule transported Joe Van Sciver’s 1900 De Dion-Bouton and his 1909 Hupmobile to Auburn Heights, where they were temporarily stored in our museum. It was a busy week.