

THE HISTORY AND FEATURES OF "THE MAGIC AGE OF STEAM"

In September, 1971, the collections of the late T. Clarence Marshall (1885-1969), including the largest collection of steam-powered automobiles in the world, an imposing exhibit of miniature stationary steam engines and tiny railroad locomotives, and the 7½"-gauge coal-burning Auburn Valley Railroad, all located on the grounds of his home on Route 82 at Yorklyn, Delaware, were opened to the public as the "Magic Age of Steam". It is hoped that this facility will take its place among northern Delaware's fine tourist attractions, and in addition to providing a history of steam during its heyday in America, will also provide good, wholesome fun for all ages.

The exciting "Auburn Valley", the smallest commercial railroad in the world, will haul happy youngsters and adults around its 1/3 mile loop on week-ends and holidays from mid-April to mid-November. This line, which was originally constructed in 1960, is largely double-tracked, with new features including a steel trestle 95 feet long and a tunnel 90 feet long plus approaches. The track passes a small lake in process of completion, passes over a real operating turntable, past 3 stations and two grade crossings, and two trains operate in different directions, passing on double-tracked sections of the Line.

The Museum itself contains 15 Stanley Steam Cars from 1902 to 1922, one 1907 White Steamer, one 1901 Toledo, Jr. Steamer, two Doble Steamers built in the mid-twenties, a huge 1917 Pierce Arrow, a 1911 Model T Ford, and a 1915 Rauch & Lang Electric Car which ran on 45 cells of storage batteries. One of the Stanleys operates in place, and all the moving parts can be examined in motion. On special occasions, one of the big Stanley Mountain Wagons will be carrying passengers around the grounds. In addition to the cars, there is a display of model stationary engines, several of which are running by steam, and at least one of the small locomotives, of which there are six in the Museum, will be turning over on its own power as well. A simulated train ride on an old time steam train will be offered during the cold weather months, when the outside activities are closed down. The Museum itself will be open year-round.

"Steam rides" will be increased as time goes on. Several stationary engines of varying sizes have been acquired to power little "lake steamers", a small merry-go-'round, and a Toonerville Trolley. A big Corliss engine built in 1906 will be set up outside the Museum alongside a 1920 Buffalo-Springfield steam roller weighing 18 tons. These will also operate by steam for the enjoyment of visitors to the grounds, and you will want to sample that delicious steam-made popcorn!

For definition purposes, we consider the Age of Steam in America from the end of the Civil War until the early 1920's. T. Clarence Marshall was born into this Age, and he loved it dearly. As a young lad he worked on the steam boilers and the Corliss Engines in his father's paper mill, and at the age of 19 built his first steam automobile. From 1910 until 1920, he was the agent for Stanley Steam Cars in Chester County, Pennsylvania and the State of Delaware. He traveled to the Stanley factory in Newton, Mass., several times and met the Stanley twins. After 20 years away from steam cars (1920-1940), he bought back a 1913 Stanley Touring Car he had sold when new, and thus, just prior to World War II, Mr. Marshall started the collection which is now part of the "Magic Age of Steam".