

March 5, 2007

Hello, Steam Team: Societies and Customs 100 years ago: In the 1890's people were excited about the coming of the 20th century, which they called the "new century". Possibly as a growth of the Woman's Suffrage movement. Women's clubs began to flourish, in cities and small towns alike, and many bore the name "New Century Club". Both my grandmothers were enthusiastic members, one in Kennett Square and one in Middletown. As these clubs grew, new club houses were built, in Kennett Square a beautiful stone building on the corner of Center and Cypress Streets in the late 1920's (built by Paul Hannum, the husband of one of the members), and in Middletown on North Broad Street, also in the 1920's, almost across the street from my grandmother Shallcross' home. For many years, Kennett members served the meals at the Yorklyn Gun Club during the trapshooting tournaments to help pay off the mortgage on their club house. My mother was the driving force behind this effort.

Wilmington had a large New Century Club on Delaware Avenue, which was rented out for various purposes, in addition to their members' programs. I had to take dancing lessons there in the mid '30's, not one of my favorite pastimes. I had taken my mother and Aunt Bertha (Mrs. J. Warren) Marshall to a program there (in the '37 Packard still in our collection) on the evening of March 15, 1943, and upon our return home the telegram was received calling me to active duty in the Army Air Corps (mentioned in the "News" of 2/19/07). Hockessin did not have a New Century Club, but it did have a Waverly Club and a Hockessin Community Club, to which prominent women of the community belonged. Many of these women's clubs, whether "New Century" or otherwise, were affiliated with the National Federation of Women's Clubs, in which my mother's sister, Aunt Mary Ferguson, was active.

Men had their social clubs as well, many of which were secret societies. The Masonic order was started as early as 1800, and there were Free Masons in all parts of the world. Other secret groups were the Knights of Columbus, the Odd Fellows, the Red Men, and one very bad one, the Ku Klux Klan. I can remember a public billboard advertising the Klan on Old Lancaster Pike near Sanford School. The Odd Fellows had lodges in Hockessin and Centerville. There were many other special men's groups like the Asparagus Club in Philadelphia, which met at least once a year over a lavish dinner where asparagus was always on the menu. The wave of service clubs soon followed. In most places Rotary clubs led the way, followed by Lions, Optimist, Kiwanis, and so on. These clubs grew into international organizations, all doing good and sharing some of the knowledge and wealth of their members to those less fortunate.

In "society", men smoked cigars and respectable women did not smoke (at least not publicly). Cigar smoking seemed to be one symbol of success, especially 100 years ago. In the Marshall family, I don't know whether Israel or his brother Elwood smoked cigars, but I wouldn't be surprised if they did. Their four sons were all cigar smokers, even though 3 of the 4 were active in their local Quaker Meetings, and Quakers did not approve of the practice. My father once told me how much he spent on

cigars during his lifetime. It was not as much as on his Packard cars, but it was a lot. The Shallcross men, my mother's father and her brothers, wanted nothing to do with tobacco. Some men, like storekeepers Grover Gregg and Joe Lake, chewed on a cigar but seldom lit it. While smoking had become popular among men in the mid-19th century, I was surprised to learn that John Adams smoked cigars while working on his farm about 1800. A good many of our presidents have been smokers, but it has been political suicide to be photographed that way, or so they thought. FDR was often pictured with a cigarette attached to a holder held between his teeth. Although men had enjoyed cigarettes since well before World War I (they were often called "fags"), Hollywood films changed it all for women in the 1930's. By the time my cousin Lorraine Marshall was married in 1935, several of her bridesmaids were seen smoking during the reception.

Bob and Barb Reilly attended the Small Museums Conference in Ocean City, MD, last Sunday and Monday, and found the seminars especially interesting and appropriate. Over 200 people were in attendance. Bob will report in more detail soon. A proof copy of the winter "Herald" has been received and we expect this edition to be off the press and in the mail to you in a very few days. Thanks to Rob Robison and Bob Reilly for this professional effort. March is also our membership renewal month, and information will be forthcoming in the next few days. We hope you will want to stay with us, as you are the reason for our being and your support is invaluable.

A number of important events are coming along in the next few weeks. Tomorrow night, March 6, the Events Committee will meet at 7:30 P.M., either in the FAHP office or in the front hall. On Thursday, March 8, the first meeting of the Steam Car Tour Planning Committee will take place in the front hall of Auburn Heights at 5:30 P.M. and will terminate by 7:00. We plan to snack during the meeting, so please let us know by Thursday morning whether you will be here, and if so, your "sub" and condiments choice. On Saturday morning, March 10, at 9:00 A.M., Anne Cleary has planned a work session to sand, clean, and prepare the wooden railroad cars of the A.V.R.R. These four cars will be under the shed or in the garage. Art Sybell and Ron Turochy made good progress on one of these cars last Saturday. On Wednesday, March 21, the Friends Forum will be held at the new Blue Ball Barn starting with tours at 4 P.M., followed by dinner and a program, and is expected to terminate by 8:00. This is the annual event for Friends groups in the many State Parks, sponsored by the Division of Parks and Recreation. Mark Hopkins and Steve Bryce are hoping to attend, but we can have up to five, and it is very worth-while if others can make it. Please let Bob Reilly or myself know by March 15 if you are interested in attending. Finally, on Sunday, March 25, between 11:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. I have promised a car of the 'Roarin' Twenties' period for a Delaware Hospice benefit at Harry's Savoy Grille on Naaman's Road. The '32 Packard would be ideal, but it may not be back together from its exhaust system repair, so the '22 Stanley or the '37 Packard can be substituted. The working groups remain focused, with the 3 Stanley teams, the railroad locomotive team, the Grounds team, and the Museum team all zeroing in on numerous projects for the next several weeks. To get most things done by late April will take careful scheduling and coordination, but we can do it.