

Christmases Past and Present: In his famous *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens spoke of Christmases past. I thank Susan Randolph for resurrecting two “Christmas Past” stories for the Weekly News of December 6 and 13, telling of my memories of Auburn Heights in 1929 and 1934. I’m very thankful for memories of the past, but even more thankful that I’m able to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a very happy holiday season in 2010.

In past years, I have told of Christmases while growing up at Auburn Heights and those spent far away in 1944 and 1945. Less interesting and quieter Christmases took place in the post-World War II years. My grandmother Shallcross had passed away in Middletown and her home, *Flowerdale*, had been sold to the local VFW. All my cousins were married (after 1948) and had their own families, so Christmas day was spent with Aunt Mary and Uncle Bassett Ferguson in Ridley Park, or the two of them would come to Auburn Heights, usually on alternate years. My father and Uncle Bassett enjoyed their annual lengthy chats. Mince Pie was a favorite of Uncle Bassett and me, I suppose because our birthdays were one day apart. This tradition continued until about 1960; Bassett Ferguson, born in 1878, died the next year.

The 1960s were even quieter Christmases at Auburn Heights. My parents had moved to the second floor in 1956, and in 1966 my mother came down with shingles behind her eyes, from which she never recovered. Early in 1968, my father became ill, and he was bedfast at Auburn Heights for much of the time thereafter until his death in October 1969. One of my cousins, Eugene S. Ferguson (1916-2004), had landed a job teaching at the University of Delaware and the Hagley Library (he helped establish the History of Technology fellowship program) and was moving his family to Newark. His mother, my Aunt Mary, sold her home, *Whitehall*, in Ridley Park and moved to a small house a few doors from her son and his family. For the next several years, my mother and I joined the Fergusons for Christmas dinner at 54 Winslow Road in Newark. Aunt Mary died in 1976 and my mother in 1979, but Gene and Jo Ferguson continued to invite me for Christmas dinner. I accepted until Ruth and I were married in 1985, and she had Christmas at Auburn Heights again for many members of her family. Since many in the family are dairy farmers, however, Christmas each year since about 1990 has been spent at the home of her brother, Phil Pierson, now a widower, near Clayton, Delaware.

May each of you have a most joyous holiday season. Ruth and I send our very best wishes. Tom

Work Nights: We had an abbreviated work week with activities cancelled on Thursday due to weather. On Tuesday night, Anne Cleary, Dave Leon and Jeff Pollack cleaned the locomotives after their run on the last Steamin' Day event. Bob Jordon, Art Wallace, and Ted Kamen cleaned and treated the leather on cars in the museum in preparation for winter. Kelly Williams and Jerry Lucus checked for a problematic leak in the feed water heater on the Mountain Wagon, but the leak could not be replicated; and Emil Christofano continued working on the rear suspension of the Rauch & Lang. Dave Walls also stopped by to take a look at the Model 607. The body will be taken to his shop on January 5 so he can begin work on the upholstery.

Final Calendar Quantities: Thanks to everyone who has picked up a copy of the Marshall Steam Museum calendar! I have a handful of remaining copies and am happy to mail them to those at a distance. You can order by contacting Susan (302-239-2385) if you'd like one. Copies are \$15 each, and shipping is \$5 for the first 2 copies, plus \$1 for each additional copy.

Davis Godfrey Durham: We extend our sincere condolences to Board Member Dee Durham and her family on the loss of her father, Davis Godfrey Durham, on December 4, 2010, in La Paila, Playa Carrillo, Costa Rica. Dr. Durham was born in Warren, Pennsylvania, and interned at the Delaware Hospital before serving as a Battalion Aid Surgeon in WWII in the 63rd Infantry Division, Company C 363rd Medical Battalion. He was awarded the European Theatre Ribbon with two battle stars, the Bronze Medal and the Combat Medical Badge. After the war, Dr. Durham returned to Wilmington to practice ophthalmology. He was the first Delawarean ever to be elected to the prestigious American Ophthalmological Society. He was past president of the Delaware Academy of Medicine and the first medical director of the Ophthalmology Department of the Wilmington Medical Center. Often assisted by his wife, Harriet, an orthoptic technician, he was the first head of the Eye Department of Project Hope, serving in Indonesia, Peru, Guinea and Colombia. Other overseas assignments included Alaska, Samoa, Haiti, South Africa, Nigeria, China and Thailand. He was vice-president of Aid for International Medicine.

Dr. Durham was a member of the Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends, as well as the Rotary Club of Wilmington, Greenville Country Club, and The Explorers Club. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 8, at 11 am, at Wilmington Friends Meeting, 401 North West St., Wilmington.

Jean Terrell Bryce: We extend belated condolences as well to Board President Steve Bryce, whose mother, Jean Terrell Bryce, passed away on November 29 in Kennett Square. She was born in Beaverdam, Virginia, and attended Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia. Moving to Kennett Square in 1950, Jean was active as a Cub Scout Den Mother and Girl Scout Leader. She supported the Chester County Hospital by volunteering with the Red Cross Blood Mobile, Encore Resale Shop and the Hospital Auxiliary.

She was active in the Church of the Advent, singing in the choir and serving as a member of the Women's Auxiliary and the Altar Guild. She and John were longtime members of the Kennett Square Golf and Country Club, where she was an avid tennis player, a passion shared by her son Steve.

Board Member Nominations: All active members should have received the Nominating Committee letter last Friday. If you did not, please contact Susan (302-239-2385), and she will be happy to resend it to you. Background briefs on the Board candidates who will be presented at the Annual Meeting in February have been uploaded online (as a Word doc that can be downloaded). If you need a copy mailed to you, please contact Susan.