

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, October 7, 2006

**Building the Shop in 1937:** Loving to work on mechanical things all his life, my father lost the use of the machine shop at National Vulcanized Fibre when he retired in 1926 and attempted to use the carriage house for most of what he built and repaired. With Packard cars filling the garage, however, there was not much room, and some of the small machinery spilled over to the unfinished end of the second floor above. I recall a large band saw located there, on which he cut out the pieces for the “O” gauge circular railway, now in the museum, in 1931. His work bench and cupboards were at the end of the garage now closest to the shop, remnants of which are still here. When he bought the large 15-inch South Bend lathe (built in 1928) in 1935, it was set up in a rear corner of the garage, near the present air compressor.

Dad wanted a more spacious shop with a wood floor, always complaining that a concrete floor was too hard on his feet. Early in 1937, he engaged his second cousin, Paul Hannum, a Kennett Square builder, to draw up plans and build onto the end of the garage away from the big house. The final size was 24 x 30 feet, outside dimensions. Since the natural contour of the ground fell away in that direction, a basement under this shop could be possible with an outside door at ground level. From this basement, it would be possible to work under a car through a pit in the wood floor above. With a minimum of grading, construction took place during the summer of '37. The family quarry just above the state line off Route 82 was opened up and used again to build the stone walls, which matched exactly the stone in the older buildings. Being off from school in the summer, this 13-year-old watched the workmen intently, and as completion neared, the cupboard just above the sink was an excellent vantage point. I remember Sam Massey of West Grove, Hannum's master carpenter, at work, with Joe Stabler doing the electrical and Sharp Thompson plastering the interior walls. My father wanted a lot of cupboards, drawers, and bins, most of which are still in the shop today.

Until it became too full of machinery, a car could be serviced in the shop, with removable planks opening the pit underneath. However, the first project I can remember was the invention of a clay target trap in the winter of 1937–38. To test this trap, the big door was opened, and clay targets were thrown over the rose arbor to land on the lawn beyond. Paul Buxton of the Western Cartridge Company of East Alton, Illinois, came on January 20, 1938, to inspect this invention, and he was favorably impressed. By late June that year, Western began marketing its new “White Flyer Trap” with very few modifications—the deal was: my father wanted no money but 10 new traps for his Yorklyn Gun Club, which were installed by August of 1938. Late in 1941, my father's '40 Packard 180 with 13,000 miles was parked in the shop, and before it came out, it had been converted to a steam car, using many Stanley parts and a Derr water-tube boiler with a Quiet May atomizing burner. Bill Rule owns this car today.

A new drill press was installed upon the shop's completion, and a 9-inch bench lathe, which was soon replaced with a 10-inch South Bend, still on the bench today. There was also a shaper, and in the early 1960s, a Rockwell milling machine was added. In 1943-45, my father machined and built his ¾-inch-scale 4-8-4 steam locomotive, now on display in the museum. By the mid 1950s, he was building the Auburn Valley's #401, and when it was ready for testing on its new trackage around the grounds, the “engine house” was established in the basement and a turntable built just outside the building for easy access to the track. The removable planks in the floor above were made permanent, and there has not been room for an automobile in the shop since the late 1940s.

In 1981, with apartment renovations, the deck above the shop was made into an entrance porch for said apartment, now the office for the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve. In 1993, an elevator was built from ground to apartment, its shaft robbing one window and occupying one corner of the shop itself. Almost all the Stanleys were restored in the adjoining garage, not in the shop but very convenient to it.