

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 15, 2013

**YMCA Trip to Washington, 1936:** For several years, Dave Creighton, a young but very dependable and intelligent employee of the Wilmington YMCA, would take a group of about 16 sixth- and seventh-graders from Wilmington to the nation's capital during spring vacation. I was fortunate to be in the group in 1936, along with my twin cousins, Alan and Bob Mancill. I think we were in Washington for three days and two nights, although it seemed longer.

Electrification of the Pennsylvania Railroad from New York to Washington had been completed in 1935 (some commuter lines preceded that), and the Standard Railroad of the World (as the "Pennsy" advertised itself) was very proud of its brand new GG-1 electric locomotives. No longer did fast passenger trains have to stop at Manhattan Transfer in the Jersey meadows west of the Hudson River tunnel to cut off the coal-burning steam locomotives and replace them with low-g geared electrics to pull the trains into and out of Penn Station in New York. So, we had a fast trip to Washington on the "Pennsy," our train being pulled by a GG-1. Neat! (Cool).

Washington was a very clean city and a great place to visit in those days, and of course it was an eye-opener for a 12-year-old. The trolley cars had a third rail in the street between the other two and no overhead catenary. We stayed in connecting rooms at the new Shoreham Hotel on Connecticut Avenue (and had nightly pillow fights) and took our meals at a nearby cafeteria. Of course, we visited the Capitol, where Delaware's Senator Dan Hastings welcomed us; we toured the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Smithsonian Institution and went to the top of the Washington Monument. We also visited Rock Creek Park and the National Zoo, Fort Myer, and Arlington National Cemetery with its Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I think we went to Mount Vernon on this trip, but I'm not sure. We had a great time

We returned to Wilmington on the Baltimore & Ohio's "Royal Blue." It was still steam-powered in 1936 and was pulled by one of the B&O's Pacific Class 5300s, which were named for U.S. Presidents from Washington to Cleveland. The train was painted blue, and a club car was available to coach passengers. A very friendly porter in a white coat served us boys ice cream while we sat at a counter across from him. I had cherry vanilla. It was a great ending to a great trip.