

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, October 6, 2014

John and Leroy Bengé, Father and Son: John Bengé Sr. (1864–1936) and his youngest son, Leroy Bengé Sr. (1903–1982), were closely associated with three generations of Marshalls, Israel, Clarence (and Warren), and Tom. John was mentioned in the *Weekly News* of June 20, 2005 and June 27, 2005, first for his pick-pocket activities on the river steamboat *Republic* and second for the disappearance of his Stanley car on a trip to Tolchester Beach, Maryland. Roy's biography appeared on October 22, 2007. In turn, both Bengés were superintendents of the Marshall Brothers paper mill, and both owned Stanley "steamers."

John had learned his trade as a millwright and came to work for the Marshalls at Marshall's Bridge in 1888, shortly after Israel and Elwood had taken over the paper business from their father, Thomas S. Marshall. When Israel and Elwood, along with S. Franklin Ewart, bought the Yorklyn mill in 1890, he and his growing family moved to that location, as did Israel Marshall and his growing family. John and his wife, Fanny, had at least six children, born between 1884 and 1903. The eldest, Mae, married Bert Guest, who was the tower operator at Chadds Ford Junction, where the Octoraro Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad crossed the Wilmington & Northern Branch of the Reading. The second, Frank, was my father's age. Roy was the youngest, and all his life he followed closely in his father's footsteps, liking the same things, having the same excellent mechanical ability, and getting along well with the Marshalls. He remembered well when his father owned and drove three Stanley cars (one at a time), an early Model E or EX of about 1906, a Model 70 or 71 of about 1911, and a Model 720 of 1915. John bought these cars used from a young Stanley dealer named Clarence Marshall.

By 1900, John and his family were living in a large house owned by the mill company just across Red Clay Creek, and he was superintendent of the Yorklyn mill. By the time young Roy was in his 'teens, he was working in the mill, and he soon married a Yorklyn girl, Emma Watson, and they had a daughter, Bette, and two sons, John II and Leroy Jr. Upon the retirement of his father in the 1930s, Roy (Sr) became superintendent of the mill and soon moved from Kennett Square into his parents' old home at Yorklyn. In the mid-1950s, National Vulcanized Fibre Company, the parent of the Marshall Brothers Paper Company, wanted to sell the property and offered it to Roy and Emma. They declined the offer, built a new home up the hill on Springhouse Lane, and Roy Jr. and his wife, Margie, bought the old home.

About 1910, seven-year-old Roy was coming down the dirt road from Kennett Square with his father in the Model EX. These cars had numerous ball bearings in the engine and the rear axle. John knew something was wrong as things began to clatter and the engine got rough. When they stopped, they could see spots of oil behind, and John said they had lost many balls from the bearings. It was never clear to me whether these were from the engine or the rear; if they were from the engine, they must have been running with the engine case off, not a good idea on dirt roads. In any event, John said they must find the missing balls and sent Roy behind to hunt. Some were found in the soft dirt but was like hunting for a needle in a haystack. As you can usually do with a Stanley, they limped home.

During World War II, Roy was interested in what my father was doing with his growing collection of Stanley cars, and almost daily he would walk up from the mill office to my dad's shop to help. By 1946, Roy said he would like to own a Stanley such as the last one his father had owned, a 1915 Model 720, one of the first condensing cars. Mervin Allatt of Three Bridges, New Jersey, who dealt in Stanley cars and parts, found him one; Roy was delighted and started its restoration (it has turned out that this 720 may be the only one in existence today; it has been owned by Allen Blazick in California for many years). Roy had his "new" 720 running well for the 1949 season, after retubing the steel-tube boiler and doing a lot of tuning up and cosmetic work to a very original car. In addition to attending several steam car tours, he and Emma enjoyed their Stanley on the Glidden Tours of 1949, 1950, and 1952 and, like my father, never seemed to have any trouble. Once Roy advised me: "Fix everything you know about before you leave home, enough will happen (to be fixed) that you don't know about."

Roy and Emma loved the old car hobby, they were members of AACA, and they joined the Historical Car Club of Pennsylvania when it was founded in 1949. They were charter members of the Brandywine Region AACA when it was formed in 1956.