

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, November 16, 2015

Clarence Marshall as a Stanley Agent, 1910–20: As I grew up from the late 1920s on, my father would often refer to Stanley steamers and how smooth, quiet, and powerful they were, but I had never seen one. He told me later that he held the dealership for the State of Delaware and Chester County, Pennsylvania, from 1910 until 1920, although it appeared to me that he was losing interest by the end of this 10-year period. He was a bachelor living with his widowed mother at Auburn Heights for most of this time and serviced new and used Stanleys in the large stone building we presently call the Carriage House. There was no show room or organized sales promotion. His main job was director of manufacturing for the growing family business, the National Fibre and Insulation Company.

My dad had bought his first used Stanley in 1908, after having built a little steam car in 1904 and subsequently owning an Elmore and two Wintons, all second-hand (used) cars. D. Walter Harper, the Philadelphia agent for Stanleys, sold him a 1906 Model H with left-hand drive, indicating that it must have been used for track racing. Apparently it was easy to become an agent, as my father, not yet 25 years of age, acquired the franchise in the spring of 1910. Possibly his first sale was a 10-horsepower Model 61, purchased by his second cousin Paul Way (1880–1928). At the end of May, the purchaser and his agent went to Newton, took delivery of Way's car, met F. E. Stanley, and drove it home. Paul Way drove this Stanley for at least four years, including a trip to the Poconos. His brother, Frank T. Way (1878–1942), soon bought a Stanley for his use, and Frank's son Robert (1921–1998) owned and operated a Model 735 from about 1955 until 1975. In July 1910, my dad bought for his own use a 1908 Model K Semi-Racer from Harper, with which he raced and toured for about two years. We know his father, Israel W. Marshall (1850–1911), rode in the Model K, as did his grandmother, Mary Way Marshall (1821–1917).

From the sketchy records of work done on Stanley cars, it appears that Clarence was selling and servicing between 10 and 15 cars per year in the pre-1914 period. The charges for knowledgeable mechanics such as my father was \$1 per hour. The Auburn Heights carriage house was a heavy stone building built in 1902 behind the five-year-old residence. It was of interior frame construction with a dirt floor, partitioned down the middle with a stable on one side and storage for buggies, a sleigh, and carriages on the other. Although Clarence's mother still had a buggy, most of the carriage side was occupied by Stanley steamers. While some work was done in the shop at the fibre mill, most of it was done in the old carriage house. Some of Clarence's early customers were Sam Cooper, Homer Kratz, and John Benge, all employees of the fibre mills, John Becker of Kennett Township, and Wilmingtonians Carlton Bryan and "Cooper, the Ice Cream Man" (not related to Sam), who bought a 10-horsepower panel truck. My father soon learned, however, that many "prospects" had no intention of buying a car, even though they had enjoyed a lengthy demonstration ride.

In 1914, a mechanic working on a Stanley accidentally set the carriage house on fire, and the interior was destroyed. It was rebuilt much as it is today with a steel deck suspended on heavy I-beams supported by the stone walls with no posts. Soon thereafter, a portion of the loft above was converted into a primitive apartment.

The servicing of Stanleys there gradually gave way to a garage for Packards, as my father sold only a few condensing cars after 1915. While he retained the dealership, owned a 1918 Model 735 as a personal car, and sold a new 1919 model, which was driven from the dealership in Richmond, Virginia, he liked the early Twin Six Packards and owned two or three of these fine cars before his marriage in 1921.

Francis I. du Pont, a chemist and older brother of E. Paul du Pont who built the DuPont automobile, took over the Delaware dealership from my father in 1920. He was more interested in acquiring Stanleys for experimentation than in selling cars. Mr. du Pont built a Spanish-style laboratory and shop on Miller Road in Wilmington, which was probably the location of the dealership. In early 1942, as my father was becoming much interested in the steamers again, he went to see if Mr. du Pont had saved any of his Stanleys. Unfortunately, the scrap drive had claimed them only a few months before, but du Pont told my father there were several engines

in the adjoining yard that he was welcome to take. About three complete condensing engines there helped get our parts department started. Francis I. du Pont died before 1942 had ended.