

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, December 3, 2018

Thomas Elwood Marshall (1855-1929): Following up on the article about my grandfather, Bob Wilhelm advises me that he has almost no information on Israel's younger brother, Elwood. Here is what I know.

Elwood was 4½ years younger than his older brother and certainly the junior partner in the Marshall Brothers Paper Company. The brothers always worked well together, however, and they divided responsibility when Israel moved to their new Yorklyn property in 1890. Elwood stayed behind at Marshall's Bridge to operate the Homestead Mill. When the brothers and Dr. Mitchell (their brother-in-law) bought the former Alan Wood rolling mill at Wooddale in 1894, Elwood took that under his wing as well, although we know Israel used to visit Wooddale frequently. Sometime after Elwood's eldest son, Albert, was graduated from Wilmington Friends School in 1900 (in the same class as his cousin Warren), he became superintendent of the Wooddale operation.

A postcard from about 1904 shows a trolley siding at the Homestead Mill, alongside the main line of the Kennett-to-Brandywine Springs electric railway. That same year, as the Marshalls were beginning the construction of their first fiber mill near the railroad in Yorklyn, a freak storm blew down the stone walls of what became #1 fiber mill, and nothing remained but a pile of rubble. Learning of this disaster first, Israel rode on horseback to Marshall's Bridge early in the morning and got Elwood out of bed to come and help. Elwood had married Sarah Ella Good in 1880, and they were living with their two sons and one daughter in a fine frame Victorian home within sight of the Homestead Mill.

The paper mill at Marshall's Bridge ceased operations about 1910, and six Marshalls of two generations focused on the construction of its massive vulcanized fiber mills near the railroad in Yorklyn. Israel died in 1911, and soon thereafter Elwood's wife, Ella, passed away. With their two sons, Albert and Henry, married, Elwood moved from Marshall's Bridge and built a large home facing the corner of Lincoln and Linden Streets in Kennett Square. His son Albert took over the original Marshall farm property at Marshall's Bridge that had been in the family since 1759. With the death of his father, Israel, a special bond developed between my father, Clarence, and his Uncle Elwood, in many ways closer than Elwood's relationship with his two sons.

As responsibilities in the paper and fiber business were being taken over by the next generation, Elwood got into banking, and soon became president of the Kennett Trust Company. He got my father interested, and my dad went on the Board in the early 1920s. In 1929, the Kennett Trust Company was merged with the National Bank of Kennett Square, and my dad was the first president of the merged National Bank & Trust Company of Kennett Square, a position he held until 1938.

Before 1920, Elwood married Bertha Cleaver of Kennett Square, and in 1922, a daughter, Florence, was born when Elwood was 67 and Bertha was 45. Most of Florence's nieces and nephews were older than she was. I played with Florence on many occasions, and we walked together in Kennett's "Baby Parade" in 1927. Elwood was losing his eyesight, and for several years before his death, he was blind. He had a cane, and Bertha led him around. I remember a visit they made to Auburn Heights a few weeks before he died in 1929.

When Bertha Cleaver Marshall died in the mid-1930s, Florence went to live with her step-sister Estelle, who had married Frank Palmer of Reading. The Palmers had two sons about Florence's age, and it was a nice environment for Florence. She went on to Medical School and became a well-known surgeon on Long Island. She never married.

Under Elwood's leadership, the Kennett Trust Company building was erected on the northeast corner of State and Union streets. The bank was on the first floor, the Masonic Hall was on the second, and an auditorium for community events was on the third floor. Elwood was a Mason. With the bank's consolidation in 1929, banking operations were incorporated into one location, the modern National Bank of Kennett Square building on the

southwest corner of State and Broad Streets. American Stores (forerunner of Acme Markets) had a grocery store in the old Trust Company bank, and after a few years, John H. Voorhees bought the building and operated a retail hardware store on the first floor. The building that Elwood Marshall had helped build about 1915 was razed about 30 years ago.