

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 7, 2010

The Residents of Auburn Mills: The settlement called Auburn Mills was founded 200 years before I grew up, and the name was long forgotten. This was simply a section of Yorklyn known as “the houses next to Marshall Brothers” along what would later become Benge Road, where there were eight dwelling units in three large buildings. The frame house closest to Auburn Heights had three units and was torn down about 1970. The other two large stone houses with five units are still standing and are presently owned by the State of Delaware with a long-term lease to Brandywine Realty Management. During the 1930s and ‘40s, most of those who occupied these dwellings worked for National Vulcanized Fibre or its subsidiary, Marshall Brothers Paper Company. Friendships and marriages took place among many of these families.

In the end of the frame house nearest Auburn Heights lived the Thomas Peirson family, and they raised three daughters and three sons here. Starting from the eldest were Emma, who married Joseph C. “Lum” Jordan; Jack; Helen, who married Benjamin Lloyd Sr.; Jim; Myrtle, who married Otto Lloyd; and Bill. Myrtle and Otto lived with her parents until they moved into one of the snuff mill houses; Bill and his family lived with his parents; and Jack and his wife, Alice, lived next door in the middle section of this house. In the far end lived Joe Bird and his wife, who raised one son, Wilbur, and two daughters, Mildred and Josephine. The Birds’s section was very close to the paper mill office in the 1895 brick building still standing.

On the other side of the office was the “triple” three-story stone house, also standing. The one-third closest to the office has quite a history. It’s my understanding that Ed Dennison lived there in the late 19th century and operated a country store on the first floor. He was also postmaster of Yorklyn, and had the P.O. in this end of the building. He moved his home, store, and Post Office to a larger house near the railroad right after 1900. In my time, however, I think it was the dwelling of Benjamin and Helen Lloyd, who raised their sons, Benny Jr. and Eddie, here. Benny Lloyd (Sr.) became superintendent of the Marshall Brothers paper mill, following in the footsteps of John Benge, Leroy Benge Sr., and Norman Mancill. In the center section of this house lived Barney Miller and his wife, who had two sons, Lewis and Harold (who was called “Stump”). Barney kept a pony in the backyard, and Stump and his wife, Barbara, are members of FAHP.

In the far end of this house I remember Mr. and Mrs. Bill Neide, the Berry family, who had at least four sons and one daughter (Wilson, Albert, Carlton, Harvey, and “Effie”), Jake and Molly Lafferty, who moved from the Brick Row when it was torn down about 1966, and James E. and Millie Jordan. Their son Jim (Jr.) was instrumental in getting the state to buy the Auburn Heights Preserve from NVF in 2002.

Finally, in the “farmhouse” occupied by my grandparents (1890–97) before they built Auburn Heights, there have been two dwelling units for many years. When I grew up, “Lum” and Emma Jordan lived in the half closest to the other house, and John Lloyd and his family lived in the far half. The Jordans raised two sons and two daughters here, Joseph C. (Jr.), James E. (Sr.), Dorothy, who married Bill Cox of Marshalls Bridge, and Barbara. The Lloyds had come from New Market, Virginia, to work in the paper mill, and raised three sons and two daughters. Benjamin “Benny” is mentioned above; Mary, who married Harry Quinn; Dick; Dan; and Sally. Harry Quinn and Dick Lloyd worked for the snuff mill, and Sally married a man from Illinois.