

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, September 1, 2014

“The Last Day of Summer”: As I write this on August 31, I am reminded what a special day in steam car history this was 115 years ago. Flora Stanley called this the “Last Day of Summer,” and a gorgeous day it was in 1899, when she and her husband planned the ascent of New Hampshire’s Mount Washington. Having driven over the road from their home in Newton, Massachusetts, in a very early Locomobile steamer of Stanley design, they undertook the 4,500-foot climb up the unpaved carriage road to the summit. About two hours later, F.O. and Flora Stanley arrived at the highest peak in New England in what became the first automobile to climb Mount Washington. *August 31, 1899!*

On this date in 1940, only 74 years ago, my father honored George S. McCarty at a testimonial shoot at the Yorklyn Gun Club. In 1924, George McCarty had taken on the job of building permanent home grounds for the new Amateur Trapshooting Association of America at Vandalia, Ohio, and had almost single-handedly sold thousands of Life Memberships at \$25 each to build a two-story clubhouse and a line of 22 traps, unheard of at that time. After his major accomplishment as president of the A.T.A., he dropped out of trapshooting for 15 years, raising quail at his farm near Newfield, New Jersey. In the late 1930s, he began to compete in South Jersey league shoots, and at the Marshall tournament at Yorklyn in early August, 1940, he renewed old friendships with Forrest McNeir of Houston, Texas, and Charlie Newcomb of Philadelphia, all of them Class AA shooters of the 1910s and 1920s.

One-day shoots before World War II seldom had 100 shooters, but 125 competed at Yorklyn to honor George McCarty. I was honored to shoot in his five-man squad. The scores were high on the 100-target program. In our squad, Ralph Willis (#1) broke 98, I (at #2 position) broke 99, George McCarty (#3) broke 98, my father (#4) broke 94, and Tom Young (#5) broke 100. Mr. McCarty, quite a showman who often did the impossible even at age 72, shot with an \$11 Winchester single-barrel gun (Sears sold this same gun for \$9.95). August 31, 1940.

With World War II over but the official signing of the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay still two days away, my B-24 crew and I sat on Iwo Jima awaiting our schedule to fly a weather mission over the Japanese mainland for the first time. We visited the makeshift cemetery on Iwo, where the bodies of hundreds of brave men from the battle six months before were interred. While the graves were marked only by the official wooden crosses, family survivors back home had sent small monuments and headstones that lined the perimeter of the cemetery. One of these I noticed particularly. It read: “With love to Jimmy, killed on his 21st birthday, February 20, 1945.” That was also my 21st birthday. August 31, 1945, the last day of summer.