

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 13, 2005

Elizabeth C. Marshall and Excursions on the *Republic*, Early 1900s: One hundred years ago, there was no finer holiday for working people than a day's outing on the *Republic*. During the summer months, this famous excursion boat plied the Delaware River and Bay between Philadelphia and Cape May Point. She left Chestnut Street Wharf in the early morning, stopped at Chester, then Gordon Heights (near Edgemoor) for Wilmington-area passengers, and Penns Grove before the fast run to Cape May Point. I say "fast" because most of these river steamers were capable of 20–25 knots, and the *Republic* was no exception.

Yorklyn people took either the morning train or the trolley to Wilmington, connecting there with a trolley direct to the pier at Gordon Heights. Each year my grandmother Elizabeth C. Marshall (1854–1930) would take a group of "mill children" to Cape May and back for a long day's outing. Their mothers would dress them up in their Sunday's finest, as they had to look their best for "Miss Lizzie." Grandmother must have had help, but somehow she packed lunches for all. It is my impression that there were usually 15 or 20 in the group. When the *Republic* docked at Cape May Point, a small exclusive settlement with a few large summer "cottages" one of which was owned by John Wanamaker, a connecting trolley line about 3 miles long took excursionists into Cape May proper. It's not known whether the children had time for a swim in the Atlantic surf, but we know Lizzie Marshall would not have been interested, as Victorian-era women didn't do such things. Some tired but happy souls returned to Yorklyn late the same evening. (Another *Republic* story next week.)