

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 27, 2005

The Adventures of John Bengé (continued from last week): One summer Saturday morning about 1915, John Bengé and his daughter Mabel left Yorklyn in John's 1910 or 1911 20-horsepower Stanley for a weekend outing at Tolchester Beach on Maryland's Eastern Shore, about 60 miles away. It's not clear whether they planned to return that night or not until Sunday. Late Sunday afternoon, John and Mabel returned home on the trolley. Neither ever breathed a word about what happened to the Stanley. (Within a year, John bought another one from my father, a 1915 Model 720, very similar to our 725.)

Forty years later, my father went to Tolchester to look at a Cagney park locomotive and some tiny cars that had not been used since the closing of the amusement park a few years before. He was able to buy them (in rather poor condition), but in discussing the purchase he happened to mention to the seller that he had a collection of Stanley steamers. The man said, "I remember when a Stanley came to Tolchester. You see that pier there? The fellow was getting ready to go home, the car caught on fire, he headed it straight toward the end of the pier, jumped off, and let 'er go! She ran off the end of the pier and sank in the bay." Draw your own conclusion. We did.