

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, October 8, 2007

**The Summer of 1930:** We are told this has been the second driest summer in Delaware since records began in 1895. The year 1964 was the driest (which did not make a lasting impression on me). My recollection is that 1930 was an extremely hot and dry summer as well. It was an unhappy summer for many Americans, as the effect of the previous fall's stock market crash was developing into a decade-long depression. The lower Midwest had dried up, and many from Oklahoma and Kansas emigrated to California.

Clarestom-by-the-Sea (better known as #1 Queen Street) in Rehoboth was less than three years old, and we spent most of the summer there. My maternal grandmother, Mary E. Shallcross from Middletown, and her favorite cousin, Gertrude Whittock, were with us for most of the time. Each July day seemed to be hotter than the previous one, with no breeze off the ocean. The temperature seemed to reach 100 degrees day after day. Some of the furniture was moved to the basement, and even though the coal furnace with its summer-winter hook-up to provide domestic hot water was there, that was still the coolest place to sit during the hottest part of each day. Old folks minded the heat the most; my grandmother's generation wore basically the same clothing summer and winter, and it exposed nothing below the neck.

My father came to Yorklyn and Kennett Square two days a week to chair the bank meetings at the National Bank and Trust Co. The worst was yet to come as the banking industry weathered the depression. He would travel the 100 miles early in the morning and late in the afternoon, avoiding the hottest time of the day. The flat concrete road in downstate Delaware was hot enough to fry an egg, or so it was said. Blow-outs on tires of 1930 were common, so speed was reduced.

During the hottest period, there was an estate sale in Milford, 25 miles from Rehoboth. The 18-foot-wide concrete road from Five Points to Milford was only three or four years old, and it buckled a few places under the extreme heat. At the south end of Milford's main north-south street and directly facing it was a large home with a spacious lawn surrounding it. The sale lasted three days, and house furnishings were spread out all over the lawn for inspection prior to the several auctions. My parents went all three days, as they were buying antiques to furnish the Rehoboth house. I tagged along at least two of the days and this six-year-old thought it was neat (cool) to race around this maze of sale items spread out under the trees. Although north-south travelers seldom go through downtown Milford any more, as we did then, I have often looked up at this property in more recent times. I think the house is still there, possibly used for offices today.