

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, September 27, 2010

**Clarence Marshall and Small Business:** My father, like many in his generation, had an enterprising spirit. All his life, he liked small business, whether he was directly involved or not. He partnered in several efforts, as well as assisting other aspiring business owners struggling to get started.

While he cannot take credit for the financial successes of Jacob Noznesky in Kennett Square, he trusted him when he did not have the money to pay for scrap from the fibre mill, when others there were insisting on cash. The friendship resulting from this trust paid off many times over for my father. When Samuel E. Cooper, an employee of the fibre company, wanted to buy a country store at Hamorton, and then another one at Yorklyn, he looked to Clarence for advice and probably financial assistance. Sam went on to finance Grover C. Gregg, who operated the country store at Yorklyn from 1913 until 1976, and also to buy, along with two others, the struggling trolley line from Kennett to Brandywine Springs (this venture was not successful and lasted only a few months before the trolley was permanently discontinued in 1923). Cooper also bought a farm along Duncan Road in Mill Creek Hundred; the development called "Cooper Farm" occupies this property.

The M & M Chemical Company (Marshall & McClellan) was established by my father and "Doc" McClellan, a chemist for National Fibre, to manufacture skin cream and other hand soaps and lotions. It lasted only a short time, and its success was limited. In 1925, Henry W. Conant of Rehoboth Beach was interested in developing 30 blocks of land near the ocean south of the town of Rehoboth, and my father became heavily involved with him in promoting the Rehoboth Heights Development Association, in the process buying at a bargain price two choice ocean-front blocks for his use and for speculation. The investment turned out well, and all the lots were sold before the Depression hit in 1929. My father built four houses, three of which were sold by 1937, with the fourth and largest remaining in our family until 1983.

In 1922, Clarence joined Frank W. Diver to form the Packard Motor Company of Wilmington and remained in the firm until 1940. Diver Chevrolet on Pennsylvania Avenue is still run by the Diver family. As the Depression took its toll, Thomas S. Smith, owner of Smith & Strevig Pharmacy at Delaware Avenue and Adams Street next to Loew's Theatre (later the Ritz) got into trouble, and my father helped him through the tough times. When a man named Collison wanted to give up a Natural Food Store in Wilmington, Clarence helped a young man named Judson Ryon take it over, and Ryon ran not only the store but a successful health-food restaurant on King Street in the 1930s and '40s.

Evans R. Jackson was a wholesale florist in Kennett Square who almost lost his luxury business during the Depression. My father took a mortgage, which was paid off as the business prospered again just before World War II. At the end of the war, "Chick" Edler, who owned and operated one school bus, had to give up, and S. Cooper Gregg (named for Sam Cooper, above) wanted to take over his business. With the help of my father and the National Bank and Trust Company of Kennett Square, Gregg not only bought the bus but soon had a fleet of them. Later he got into coaches, and Gregg's Bus Service of Yorklyn was well known for tours ranging from one day to over a week. It was bought by Krapf Bus Company of West Chester about 1999. Eugene Reese, a pharmacist, and his brother Bill who worked for NVF, were encouraged in their plan to establish Reese's Drug Store in Kennett Square. First located on an alley between South Union and South Broad Streets, a new store with its soda fountain was built and soon enlarged on South Union near the Kennett Consolidated School. Finally, William M. Eichbaum, a professional model builder who lived for a time with his family on the third floor at Auburn Heights, wanted to build a new home and shop on Burnt Mill Road, and my father helped finance the successful operation.

In addition to the above, he held many personal mortgages from those who could not get satisfactory financing in hard times. Based mostly on trust, these were all paid off before my father died in 1969.