

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, April 3, 2017

Charles W. Jenkins (1893-1977): Charlie Jenkins, an avid trapshooter in his earlier years, was a very comical man who never married. His birthday was the same as mine, 31 years before. He was one of several natives of Lewes, Delaware, who came to this area as young men to seek more profitable careers. Two others were Charles H. Mason, and Allan L. "Skutch" Lauritsen. All of them soon had direct or indirect employment from Pierre S. du Pont. Mason married Lauritsen's sister, became du Pont's head chauffeur, and was furnished a beautiful home near Longwood Gardens. They had two daughters and one son, all of whom I knew as students at Wilmington Friends School. Lauritsen was a building contractor who built the residential development of Brandywine Hills and had the inside track for much of Mr. du Pont's work. He and his wife had three blonde daughters, all of whom attended "Friends" when I did. Charlie Jenkins was treasurer and the chief financial man for Lauritsen Construction Co. Mason and Lauritsen were active trapshooters, in addition to Jenkins.

"Skutch" Lauritsen was killed in his private plane in 1934 at the age of 40, and his sister Marguerite Mason died the same year when she was 38. Charlie Jenkins was drawn closer to both families, especially the Masons. He was like an uncle to the Mason children. When the Mason family went trapshooting, "Jenky" was usually with them. When Lauritsen's company was closed out, he went to work for Benjamin F. Shaw Co. and was transferred to the South (I think it was Birmingham, Alabama) before and during World War II. Coming home to Wilmington at war's end, he had an apartment over the flower shop of George Carson Boyd on West 10th Street next to the Warner Theatre. In 1937, he had won the Delaware State Trapshooting Tournament with 195 out of 200, breaking 99 out of his last 100. He seldom shot well after that, however, and after World War II his shooting tapered off, but not his attendance at shoots. He knew and liked everyone and the feeling was mutual.

In 1948, I wanted to start a travel agency in Wilmington, and "Jenky" said he was interested to be a partner. We investigated what was involved and made several trips to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., meeting with steamship and travel agency officials. Unfortunately, that effort did not work out, and it was about a year later when I joined with Alexander M. Burton to form Marshall & Burton.

In 1958, it had been eight years since I had done any serious trapshooting, but I wanted to attend three days of the Grand American tournament at Vandalia, Ohio, to see if it would still be fun, so I invited Charlie Jenkins to accompany me. He did not plan to shoot but was glad to go along. Traveling in my '55 Chrysler Windsor, after three days at Vandalia, we moved north to Dearborn, Michigan, where Jenkins's niece was the wife of the manager of the Dearborn Inn. We were complimented for lodging and dinner and enjoyed a day at the Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. Then we continued north to Port Huron and on to Mackinac Island, where we had a formal dinner at the Grand Hotel. Returning home through Canada, we visited the Soo Locks, and took in a day at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto.

In the years that followed, I seldom saw Jenky except when I attended the Atlantic Indians tournament at Shawnee-on-the-Delaware. While he didn't shoot much in those years, he never missed attending, and took special care of me when I did go. He had been president of the "Indians" in the 1950s. When at home, he and John B. "Cap" Grier of Rockland, another bachelor (and expert trapshooter) eight years younger than Jenky, usually went to dinner at least one night each week. One such night he dropped Jenky off in front of his apartment. The next day, the latter was found dead on the stairway. He was 84.