

Marshall Steam Museum  
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## **Collection Overview**

Creator: Marshall Steam Museum  
Title: Building of the Auburn Valley Railroad  
Dates: 1950s-1960s  
Call Number: Collection 10  
Accession Number: Unrecorded  
Quantity: 131 online photographs and 1 loose-leaf binder containing 81 photos and 2 newspaper clippings  
Location: Archives Storage and online

## **Biographical/ Corporate Statement**

The Marshall Steam Museum at Auburn Heights, in Yorklyn, Del., offers visitors the opportunity to step back in time and experience life at the dawn of the automotive age. The museum was built by T. Clarence Marshall in 1947 to house his growing collection of antique automobiles. Today, visitors see the many treasures at Auburn Heights thanks to the generosity and vision of Clarence's son, Thomas, and his wife, Ruth. In 2008, they gifted to Delaware State Parks their estate land and buildings, including an 1897 Queen Anne mansion that was the family home, while donating to the Friends of Auburn Heights the vehicles in the Marshall collection. The museum features the world's largest operating collection of Stanley steam cars, a 1916 electric car, a 1914 Model T, and two 1930s Packards, in addition to the Auburn Valley Railroad with its 1/8th-size coal-fired steam trains that circle the property.

## **Scope and Content**

This collection of photographs visually documents the development of the Auburn Valley Railroad.

In the mid-1950s, T. Clarence Marshall, founder of the Marshall Steam Museum at Auburn Heights, began building a 1/8 actual size Union Pacific 4-8-4 "Northern-type" steam locomotive using castings and drawings from Little Engines, a California company. Constructed entirely in his shop, the project was completed in 1959. The locomotive was named the "401". At the urging of his son, Thomas C. Marshall, Jr., a 1/3 mile track was designed for the locomotive that looped around the Auburn Heights property. The railroad was built in the late spring of 1960 and featured a turntable, road crossings, trestles, and a wooden water tank. Eventually Clarence added several six-foot cars, each capable of accommodating two or three passengers. The railroad was named the Auburn Valley Railroad (AVRR).

By July 1960, the railroad was fully operational. Its inaugural run coincided with the celebration of Clarence Marshall's 75th birthday on August 5, 1960. Then the AVRR was opened to the public. Also in 1960, Clarence expanded the railroad by purchasing a partially-completed identical locomotive which was to become the "402". He finished construction of that locomotive in the winter of 1960-1961. For the next season, two passing tracks and the West Yorklyn Station area were added which allowed the two trains to run in opposite directions.

Upon Clarence's death in 1969, Tom Marshall embarked upon a project to memorialize his late father by expanding the railroad. In the 1990s, Tom added cars that resembled actual passenger trains of bygone days. A total of five "Pullman" cars were added.

## **Imagery**

Much of the collection has been digitized. For online access see <https://hub.catalogit.app/8331/folder/c0ef9870-f99e-11ed-91f5-496eba9f2b0b>.

## **Organization**

Photographs are organized to document the construction of the Auburn Valley Railroad.

## **Language**

The collection is in English.

## **Restriction on Access**

There are no restrictions on access.

## **Provenance**

This collection consists of black-and-white photographs that form the basis of the Auburn Valley Railroad (AVRR) collection as well as digital images from other Marshall Steam Museum holdings that are relevant to the creation and operation of the AVRR.

## **Related Material**

Records documenting the Marshall Steam Museum, its activities and collections, including artifacts, research archives, and photographs, are available online at <https://auburnheights.org>.

## **Access Points**

Auburn Valley Railroad (Yorklyn, Del.)  
Trains  
Miniature trains  
Steam trains  
Railroads  
Miniature railroads

Steam railroads

Locomotives

Miniature locomotives

Steam locomotives

Vehicles

Marshall, Thomas C., Jr., 1924-2019

Marshall, T. Clarence, 1885-1969

Marshall Steam Museum at Auburn Heights (Yorklyn, Del.)

Auburn Heights (Yorklyn, Del.)