

September 25, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

In October, 1946, we took delivery of my father's Mountain Wagon at George Monreau's home in Cochranton, MA, and I drove it home with my dad following in the '37 Packard, tutoring me all the way, which I needed badly. The trip established two "firsts" for me: the first of 20 times I drove a Stanley from or to New England (most of the trips were round-trip), and the first Stanley I had ever purchased, as I bought the Model 607 from Donald H. Randall of Randolph, MA (it was driven home in December that year).

With my father as master mechanic, I drove my 607 a lot in the first years I owned it. Probably the longest trip was to the Steam Car Meet headquartered at Wellesley, MA, in late July, 1951. Elwood Wilkins, Jr. of Strickersville, PA, and I left here early Friday morning, we met Bob Ostwald of Staten Island and Mr. and Mrs. Earle Eckel, Sr. of Washington, NJ, for lunch at a restaurant near Pine Brook, NJ, and proceeded from there with Ostwald in my car and the Eckels in Earle's 1914 Model 712 roadster. We crossed the George Washington Bridge and the Hendrik Hudson Bridge across the Harlem River, then swung east toward the Hutchinson River Parkway and onto Connecticut's Merritt Parkway, the fastest way to New England in those days. Both cars were going strong but somewhere around New Haven Earle discovered his feed water heater was leaking, and he shouldn't go very far before by-passing or repairing it. We stopped for the night at a tourist home in Meriden, CT.

We wanted to help Earle make his repair the next morning but before we arose he had the job done, even though he had to disassemble a lot of things on his roadster to get at the trouble spot. Again we took off in the two cars, meeting a contingent of antique gas cars on the west side of the Charter Oak Bridge. This caravan traveled the 40 plus miles to the newly-opened Old Sturbridge Village, where about 30 antique cars were parked on the green in the village while their occupants had lunch. Three Stanleys had come from the Boston area to meet us there, so we had a 5-car tour from Sturbridge to Wellesley, the headquarters for our steam meet. We were glad to see (and they glad to see us) Stanley Ellis driving his 740, Frank Gardner driving Stanley's Model 607 (like mine), and Ed Pamphilon driving his 1919 Model 735. These three were the sponsors of the Wellesley meet. As we passed through the square in one of the small towns, the burner on Ellis' 740 let go with a loud bang, commanding the attention of most onlookers, but it never fazed the driver who looked straight ahead and kept going as if nothing had happened.

The Meet consisted of arriving and having a group dinner

Saturday evening, a run of about 35-40 miles on Sunday, stopping at a few places of interest around Concord and Lexington, and Sunday dinner in early afternoon at a country restaurant. Joining us for Sunday's run was the chassis of Frank Gardner's newly operational Model 74 (in which Frank "cleaned up" everyone), George Monreau, grandfather of Brent Campbell, in his 1913 Model 65 named "Magee", and George Woodbury, author of "The Story of a Stanley Steamer", in his 1917 Model 730, which he had driven from his home in Bedford, NH. Possibly Ralph VanDine and Calvin Holmes were also present with their Stanleys.

Monday morning the two cars of us from outside New England headed for home, stopping to see Earle Eckel's old friend, Al Garganigo of Princeton, MA, who had amassed a fantastic collection of fine, early cars, bought mostly from junk yards. Stopping that night at a tourist home in Westport, CT, the next morning we visited James Melton's first museum on Route 7 north of Norwalk (his second was in Florida a few years later). We said good-bye to the Eckels and to Bob Ostwald near where we had met them, stopped to ride on a roadside steam train not far from there, and then Elwood and I headed for Yorklyn, arriving well before dark on Tuesday. In 5 days, the little 607 had covered nearly 850 miles, most of the time with 3 passengers, luggage, spare parts and tools. Oh, to be young again!

Thanks are due to our FAHP volunteers who made our Longwood visit worth-while this past weekend. Rob Robison, Jim Personti, Bob Wilhelm, and the Simpkins' (Dale and Ted), completed final preparations for the 735 to make the trip and be on display there, and Bill Schwoebel fired up and checked out the '05 Model CX for its trip over the road. Assisted by Rob Robison, Art Sybell, and Dale Simpkins, I drove the 735 and Bill the CX to their parking spaces in front of the Longwood Conservatory. Bill fought the CX all the way, but he didn't give up and arrived before most of the spectators did. Dale Simpkins performed the PR chores until Joyce Sybell relieved him at noon, and Richard Bernard relieved Joyce at 3 P.M. and prepared the cars for the night before he left at 6:00. On Sunday, Jerry Novak, Anne Cleary and Bill Schwoebel took the "first shift", with Mark Hopkins and John McNamara taking charge about 1:30 for the rest of the busy afternoon. Bill Schwoebel and I brought the 2 cars home at 6 P.M., but this time the trailer was used for the little CX.

On Saturday afternoon, Bill Schwoebel, not having enough to do with the Longwood event, conducted another locomotive training class which was attended by Dale Simpkins and John McNamara. A few flaws were found on Locomotive 401 but not with the "students". After a few minor repairs, this locomotive will be fired one more time before our October public weekend. Both locomotives passed their annual inspections by the Division of Boiler Safety on September 20.

Bob Reilly is back from his week's vacation and he and I met today in Dover with Chazz Salkin, Matt Chesser and their key people to

finalize the agreement between the Division of Parks and myself for the transfer of ownership of Auburn Heights at the end of 2008. Many other things were discussed as well, and we felt the 3-1/2 hour meeting was worth-while. A lot of time was spent discussing the future lease from the State to the Friends, but this will be refined in 2008 closer to the time of actual transfer. This week, Bob will be working with Emil Christofano and Cam Yorkston to finalize the 2007 budget and to set a goal for the Annual Appeal. Also, he will be preparing an invitation to a special event for our high-end donors (as promised on the membership application form), which possibly may be on Saturday, October 28 off-site. Details are to be worked out.

There will be a number of ongoing work projects this week, and an Events Committee meeting in the Museum's reception room at 7:30 on Tuesday, 9/26. A strong effort will be made to zero in on the things that need mechanical and structural attention and find volunteers to carry them out. Also, we will need volunteers for one more Longwood weekend, Sept. 30-Oct. 1, so if you have some free time Saturday or Sunday, please let Bob Reilly know. Finally, Ed Hoffmeister's shoulder operation is scheduled for tomorrow, so please pray for its success and the end to Ed's severe pain. Happy October. Tom