

F.A.H.P. News, April 23, 2012

Galveston to Bar Harbor (Part 3): The first 2/3 of this “Trans-Con” trip we made in our 1912 Stanley Model 87 has been covered in the “News” editions of April 9 and April 16, 2012. We pick up the story at Ascutney, Vermont, on June 26, 1989.

There will never be another event for cars earlier than 1915 to compare with the Brass & Gas hub tour held at the ski resort at Ascutney, where well over 200 brass-era cars were already on hand when the 40-plus cars of similar period on “our tour” joined them for three special days. We participated on their tours for these days, visiting special places in the area. One day we were treated to lunch at Curtis Blake’s mountaintop retreat north of Woodstock, and Ruth and I rode up the steep driveway in Frank Gardner’s reliable 1929 Packard 7-passenger touring, along with Frank (always driving) and Eloise Gardner and their son Cleve, while we rested the Stanley at Frank’s garage in Woodstock.

As our tour left Ascutney, most on the “Trans-Con” detoured via Bob Bahre’s Classic Car Museum at South Paris, Maine, while one of the Rolls Royces and our Stanley took a more direct route to Montreal, our next checkpoint, stopping on the Hero Islands in Lake Champlain for an overnight. This was the third Trans-Con on which I had stayed at the Chateau Champlain Hotel in Montreal, where the cars used the hotel’s garage as a great convenience to their occupants. The next day we moved down-river to Quebec, staying southwest of the city near the Plains of Abraham and the highway bridge over the St. Lawrence River.

I have said little about things relating to the operation of the Stanley. There seems little to say, as the car was operating much as the Stanley twins had advertised but on a much more ambitious journey than they could have envisioned. Leaving Quebec, we crossed the ferry to Levis and headed south by southeast following in reverse direction the 1775 Benedict Arnold route prior to the disastrous winter attempt to capture Quebec’s citadel from the British. At day’s end, we arrived at Kingfield, Maine, birthplace of the Stanley twins, stayed at the Stanley-designed Winter’s Inn, and enjoyed a gourmet dinner at Dan Davis’s restaurant called One Stanley Avenue. After a brief visit to the Stanley Museum, we headed east toward Bangor and on down to the Holiday Inn at Ellsworth, our final destination. Since Ellsworth is on the mainland directly opposite Mount Desert Island, we were probably supposed to drive to and from Bar Harbor, but almost no one did. We had completed nearly 4,000 miles in the 77-year-old steamer “without incident.”

To receive the completion plaque, the cars had to be driven through the porte cochere at the inn, where the tour chairman, Millard Newman, made the presentations. When it came time to do this, neither Brent Campbell nor Alex Joyce, owners of the other two steam cars, were anywhere to be found. I assisted two of Alex’s “boys” (students at Woodberry Forest School in Virginia whom Alex had invited for a portion of the trip) to get their car fired up, and Martha Campbell was making a start to fire up Brent’s car. She came to me and said “I think the pilot is out of fuel.” I doubted this diagnosis but upon checking it out, I knew she was right. Fortunately, just before the drive-through ceremony concluded, Brent and Alex returned and

drove their cars through to receive their plaques. They had been visiting the Seal Cove Museum, about 20 miles away.

We had planned to ship our car home in a large trailer with the cars of Ernie Gill, Whitney Snyder, and Howard Henry, but the trailer arrived with room for only three cars, so Ruth and I decided to drive home, another 600 miles. As I tried to fire up, the fire was weak, and I knew something was choked. I tried to pull the vaporizer cable, but it was really stuck. I conferred with Brent Campbell, who was still around (many had already left, most having their cars shipped back home). Brent asked if I had enough fire to get the vaporizer very hot, and I told him I did. He said to leave the fire on until the steam automatic shut it off, then try again to pull the cable. It worked! The Stanley never steamed better than on the way home. We left Ellsworth after lunch and drove to Portland, 160 miles, where we spent the night. As we passed through Hartford, Connecticut, during rush hour the next day, the Stanley kept up with 55 m.p.h. traffic en route to Fishkill, New York, 240 miles from Portland, for our final night on the road. The last 200 miles to Auburn Heights were covered the third day. Ruth was tired and glad to be home, and I must have been as well, as it turned out to be the last of my four “Trans-Cons.” I thought it was time to stop while still ahead. We are celebrating the 100th birthday of our famed Model 87 this summer. Come join us!

Work Report: A total of 16 volunteers were working Tuesday night and 16 on Thursday, with two more working off-site. A number of projects were continued or completed. On Tuesday, a lot of painting was done on the electric train display, including the “O”-gauge circular railway after all the track had been removed. A new leg was installed to support the A.V.R.R. water tower, and the horn for the Model 607 was re-assembled and tested. More missing pieces were found for the assembling of this car, the cylinder oil tank was examined, and an attempt was made to straighten it from a serious ding. The steering was adjusted on the Rauch & Lang electric, as looseness caused a shimmy under certain conditions. The front end was lubricated on the Model 71, after an adapter fitting was made to fit a standard grease gun. The front pivot bolts were greased on the 740, and the brakes were adjusted. The hand bypass valve on the Model 735 was re-worked, and it was repacked. A side plate was added to the railroad trestle to hold the ties in alignment and prevent kinking of the rails.

Thursday some of the work mentioned above was refined further, bracing was attached to the legs of the railroad water tower, and the rear flue extension was re-fit on the Model 87. Work continued on the Model 607, and final refinements to the mechanical and electrical systems on the Rauch & Lang were completed. A bolt was replaced on one of the brackets of the Model 76. The Model 71 was fired up and road tested. Special photos were taken of the Model EX for use in a “blow-up” to better illustrate our hands-on display in the museum.

On Tuesday night, the following were on hand: Steve Bryce (in charge), Bob Jordan (in charge of 607 project), Jerry Lucas, Jeff Pollock, Emil Christofano, Mark Russell, Dave Leon, Bob Stransky, Dennis Dragon, Ted Kamen, Mark Hopkins, Jay Williams, Tim Ward, Alan Deike, Richard Bernard, and Tom Marshall.

On Thursday, those working were Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Bob Jordan, Susan Randolph, Mark Russell, Tim Nolan, Richard Bernard, Butch Cannard, Jerry Novak, Steve Bryce, Ted Kamen, Dave Leon, Chuck Erikson, Brent McDougall, Mike Ciosek, and Tom Marshall (in charge), with Jim Personti and Geoff Fallows working off-site on the 87’s water tank.