

FAHP News, July 7, 2014

Packard Twin Six Clover Leaf Roadster: Cadillac pioneered the V-8 engine with its 1914 models, and the next year Packard came out with its famous V-12, which was called a “Twin Six.” Although available in 1915, this “First Series Twin Six” was billed as a 1916 model. The race was on for multi-cylindere high-end cars, and no less than ½ dozen additional manufacturers offered V-8s or V-12s by 1918. In 1915, Buick built some V-12s, and in 1918 you could buy a V-8 Chevrolet. Packard improved its Twin Six for the 1917 model year, offering removable aluminum cylinder heads as standard equipment.

A Clover Leaf body was unusual, as it was a two-door car that looked like a roadster but offered seating inside the body for four. The back seat was accessed by walking between the front bucket seats. Such a second series Packard Twin Six of 1917 was sold by AACA pioneer Sam Baily of Philadelphia to George Gerenbeck at the end of World War II. Gerenbeck’s interest in the antique car hobby was short-lived, but in his active 2 or 3 years, he served as president of AACA for one of those years. My father bought his Packard Clover Leaf early in 1947.

My dad owned this car for about 10 years, and we had many pleasant experiences with it. It may have had its original paint, and very little had been done mechanically, but it always ran well. I often remarked that I had never driven a car of that age that handled more like a modern car (of course, a “modern car” was made in the 1940s). It had a left-hand gear shift handle, next to the parking brake, but it shifted easily and well. In the late 1940s, old cars were cause for amusement among the general public, and they were sought after for local parades. Parade organizers would pay owners to bring their cars and participate (we took three Stanleys to Media on one such occasion and got paid \$15 for each car). There was a parade down North Broad Street in Philadelphia on July 5, 1947, for which either \$15 or \$25 was offered, and my father and I, along with our passenger Norris Woodward of Mendenhall, drove into the city and participated. Although stopped much of the time on a very hot day, the water in the big Packard engine never boiled over. We were dressed in Halloween-type costumes; an old car and anyone who rode in it was supposed to be funny.

The AACA National Fall Meet was at the Devon Horse Show grounds in early October, immediately following the Glidden Tour of 1949 through Virginia. Along with five other Stanleys, and a Doble steamer for one day, I was driving my 1914 Model 607 on the tour with its new blue-and-red paint scheme. When I broke up the engine (a wrist pin broke) near Tappahannock, Virginia, and my car was no longer operational, my father told me I could take the Packard Clover Leaf to the Devon Show, which I did. On the way home, I took part in an evening parade at West Chester, celebrating some sort of anniversary for the borough. I enjoyed driving this Packard, but it was not challenging like a Stanley.

In the 1950s, my father began serious trading, back and forth, with James Melton, the well-known opera singer who was the Jay Leno of his day in his love for antique cars. A model carousel, a cigar-store Indian, the 15”-gauge Cagney locomotive, a smaller 9-inch gauge locomotive and train, a Model 71 Stanley (now owned by Jim Keith), and other things came our way. Two of the things that went to Melton were a big Model G White steamer racing car and the Twin Six Clover Leaf. The transaction for the Packard was consummated in mid-winter about 1957.

Melton told my father he would like to drive the Packard home to New York over the brand new New Jersey Turnpike, and he would come to Wilmington by train to take delivery. He asked if my father could get it to the station so he could begin his return trip immediately. I drove it to Wilmington with “Cliffey” following to bring me home. Melton’s train was right on time, and I turned over the Packard to him. He was alone and dressed in a heavy coat resembling a bear rug, with an Eskimo hat and heavy driving gloves. It was a clear afternoon, but the temperature must have been well below freezing. Undaunted, he pulled away, headed for the Delaware Memorial Bridge and the New Jersey Turnpike. He was in touch with my

father the next day and reported that he had a perfect trip. I never saw the Clover Leaf again (or another like it), but I'm sure Tim Martin knows where it is. It was a great car.

Work Report: On Tuesday, July 1, 11 volunteers were on hand, as follows: Dave Leon (in charge), Ted Kamen, Bill Schwoebel, Steve Bryce, Tom Marshall, Jerry Lucas, Gary Green, Paul Kratunis, Bob Stransky, Bob Jordan, and Dennis Dragon.

Track work was completed near the front driveway, which involved replacing one rail length and the necessary leveling and tamping. The original rail section was bent from a derailment of Locomotive 401 on the adjacent switch. The damaged rail was straightened and placed in our rail-storage yard for future use. Loco. 401 was thoroughly cleaned following its runs on June 30 for the Studebaker Club.

The Mountain Wagon was cleaned, polished, and prepped for its appearance in the July Fourth Hockessin parade. The recently moved parts bins received two coats of grey paint and are ready for re-stocking. An inventory of parts and tools was gathered for the upcoming Steam Car Tour in Lakeville, Connecticut. The Models 76 and 725 were made ready for loading in our two trailers.

On Thursday, July 3, with very threatening weather and many roads closed from downed trees and limbs, nine volunteers made it to the work session, viz: Ted Kamen, Mark Russell, Tim Ward, Jim Personti, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Bob Jordan, Gary Green, and Tom Marshall (in charge). Bob and Gary left early to attend to personal matters, including storm property damage. Dave Leon attempted to come, but too many roads were blocked.

A first attempt was made to clean up our side of the back building. The big, yellow container was unbolted and made ready for a nearby dumpster. Less than one quart of heavy oil was added to the engine case of the Model 607, in preparation for its use on July Fourth. The car was further checked out and pushed to the door of the museum for easy removal.

A limb that had fallen over the track near "Little Toot" was cut up and pulled to an out-of-the-way place behind the museum. A smaller limb that fell near the big house was added to this pile. The museum floor was cleaned, especially inside the rear door.

On Wednesday, Steve Bryce brought both trailers to the parking lot, and with the help of Susan and Tom, both cars going to the tour were loaded. On Thursday afternoon, Steve and Bill Schwoebel assembled and loaded more supplies for the Steam Car Tour, and Bill adjusted the clutch and tested our Model T Ford for its use on 7/6.

On Friday, July 4, three cars participated in Hockessin's Independence Day parade. On an unusually cool and pleasant afternoon, Jerry and Carla Lucas took the Mountain Wagon with Jerry's nephew and his wife as passengers. Mark and Lynette Russell drove the Rauch & Lang electric, and Ruth and Tom Marshall took our 1914 Model 607, celebrating its 100th birthday.

Steve Jensen also participated in the parade in his 1911 Model 62 and unexpectedly had as his passenger Miss Newark 2014. Both Steve and Bob Wilhelm put their Stanleys in our museum late Friday to replace our cars that will be on their way to Connecticut on our Steamin' Sunday.