

F.A.H.P. News, April 22, 2013

The Tragedy in Boston: The disastrous bombings near the finish line of the world-renowned Boston Marathon brought back many remembrances. Not only did I live in close proximity during World War II, but my several visits to the Stanley factory and to Fred Marriott's garage in Watertown were less than a mile from the boat in which the 19-year-old brother was captured. The national news does not tell us, but I have deduced that the finish line was on Boylston Street just west of Copley Square, and the backyard boat was across the Charles River from the Stanley sites.

F. E. Stanley loved the Boston Marathon. Quite an athlete in his early years, he and Augusta would ride in one of his cars from their home in Newton to the starting line, somewhere in the vicinity of Framingham. After the runners got started, they would return home for lunch and then drive to the finish line in downtown Boston to watch the contestants come in. After F. E. was killed in 1918, Augusta continued this practice with a driver of her choice as long as she was able.

When a freshman at M.I.T. in 1942, I lived at 329 Commonwealth Avenue, just east of Massachusetts Avenue. An 18-year-old, and especially one who loved geography, soon became familiar with places in downtown Boston and the surrounding area. On the Saturday after Thanksgiving in 1942, the Cocoon Grove Night Club fire took the lives of more than 600 revelers because the doors were hinged in, and the patrons piled up inside with no means of escape. That location was less than one mile southeast of the finish line for the marathon.

During the fall, winter, and early spring of 1943-44, I lived in the dormitories on the M.I.T. campus as a member of the Army Air Force's Meteorology School. The assassins shot and killed an M.I.T. security guard "near some shops on the campus," which must have been along Massachusetts Avenue on the west side of the main campus, as that is where the shops are.

Most of Watertown is on the north side of the Charles River, and I think Franklin Street passes through this populated area. That is where the noose was tightened, and the culprit was found hiding in a boat in someone's back yard. A small part of Watertown is south of the Charles, and that is where F. O. Stanley built Fred Marriott his garage on Galen Street after the Stanley factory closed in 1924 or 1925. The factory itself, originally consisting of at least 10 buildings, was one block distant, also in Watertown, but since the line with the more prestigious city of Newton was barely three blocks away, the Stanleys called their factory location "Newton" (for both photographic dry plates and for steam cars).

In 1986, I joined three others for a meeting in one of the two factory buildings still standing. I also visited Fred Marriott three times in his garage, the first time with my father in 1938. I liked Boston and have often said that if I had to live in a city, Boston and San Francisco are the only two I would consider. Boston has had its tragedies starting with the Massacre (1770) and most recently the marathon bombings, but it is still a great place to live and to visit.

Work Report: On Tuesday, April 16, 12 volunteers were on hand as follows: Steve Bryce (in charge), Jeff Pollock, Mark Russell, Tom Marshall, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Tim Nolan, Bob Stransky, Jerry Lucas, Art Wallace, Brent McDougall, and Emil Christofano.

The new boots were installed on the master cylinder of the 1937 Packard (no easy job), and on the Model 735, the mounting brackets were re-configured for proper alignment of the condenser and shell.

After this successful operation, the hood was placed on the car, and the fit of all these parts is much better than it has been since 1946. The fairing piece under the condenser still needs to be painted and installed and the hoses hooked up. On the Model 607, perch pole bolts were tightened, all steering linkage was tightened, grease fittings were filled, and the brakes adjusted, both hydraulic and hand (mechanical) brakes. The car was made ready for its first road testing on Thursday, 4/18. Two wooden seats from the Auburn Valley Railroad cars were removed for repair, and brackets were fabricated to make them stronger.

On Thursday, April 18, 14 volunteers answered the call during the work session, with Emil Christofano delivering parts during the afternoon. On hand were Steve Bryce, Bob Jordan, Tim Ward, Art Wallace, Paul Kratunis, Jerry Koss, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Bill Schwoebel, Ted Kamen, Bob Stransky, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

All were interested in the first road test of the 607 chassis since the car's disassembly in 2008. After the oil pump was set up to pump more cylinder oil and the readjusting of the rear gears, the test was carried out as planned, with several trips around the driveway and one down Route 82 to the Snuff Mill and back being made successfully. Riding on boxes atop the fuel tank, Tom Marshall, Bill Schwoebel, and Steve Bryce were the operators with Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan (manager of the restoration project), Bob Stransky, Paul Kratunis, and Tim Ward enjoying rides. Bob Jordan and Gene Maute were busy with their cameras and several others as well. At the conclusion of these runs, the car was run again on the jack with Jim Personti and Geoff Fallows making final adjustments to the moving parts of the pump drive. A few minor leaks need to be taken care of (these were addressed on 4/20), and soon the body can be dropped onto the chassis.

A window air conditioner was moved from the museum's attic to be installed in place in the main museum. Everything was cleaned up for our "Open House Tours" on Saturday, 4/20. Backfilling has begun on the new abutment at one end of the A.V.R.R. trestle, and this will be completed and the ballast and track replaced before our May 5 event.

On Tuesday, April 30, a Spring "Fire-Up" is planned. The object is twofold: to prepare the cars for the driving season and to give those in the learning process a chance for some practice. We hope as many teachers as possible can be on hand to lead the effort, and those wanting to qualify at a higher level can also be with us to take part. We would like to use as many of the following cars as possible: the Models 87, 76, 78, 725, 735, and 740. If some of you can come as early as 5 P.M., that will help get ahead of darkness. (The Mountain Wagon will be checked out earlier, and it is planned to use it on April 24).

We were happy to have Bill Schwoebel back with us, following his successful knee replacement on February 25. Both his knees are new, and he is ready to go! Dave Leon continues to improve each day, and he is anxious to get back to Auburn Heights soon. There is no late word from Dennis Dragon, who was suffering from blood clots in his legs, as well as some eye problems. We wish everyone full recovery and our best wishes.