

MARCH 15, 2010 F.A.H.P. NEWS

The Last Leg – Toronto to Halifax (and home) 1979: It was an easy 90-mile run to Peterborough, Ontario, and I had planned a nice, long afternoon nap to “catch up”. Checking on the Stanley after lunch, however, proved to be my undoing, as a large crowd of local people surrounded the car and continued a flood of questions, the answers to which were interrupted only by some dignitaries asking if I would give their friends rides around town. In appreciation for our efforts, we were given a tour of one of the hydraulic lift locks on the Trent Canal, a very interesting operation. Built in 1904, this canal with its seven such locks connects Lake Ontario at Trenton (Ont.) to Georgian Bay, a part of Lake Huron. About to traverse this canal we were told excitedly “The Steamboats are Coming!” Indeed, the steamboats did come and tied up at Peterborough overnight. For the most part they were tiny boats, some not much larger than rowboats and some more fancy launches. We enjoyed talking to the owners, and they to us steam car people, all of us belonging to a strange branch of the human race.

We stayed in Canada for nearly two weeks. The next night we were in Ottawa, and the following two nights in Montreal. The separatist movement in the Province of Quebec was at its height and especially around Quebec City those who spoke only English were not treated well. We were purposely directed to the wrong place for kerosene, and were almost denied access to the ferry across the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Levis. After a scenic ride, however, we spent the next night at Edmundston, New Brunswick, on the upper reaches of the St. John River, and we were back in English-speaking territory. The ride along the river to Fredericton the next day was through beautiful farming country, and we stayed in a hotel along the St. John River in New Brunswick’s capital city. Brent Campbell was having trouble with the copper-nickel tubes in the boiler of his Model 76, and he had dropped the burner in an attempt to swage the leaking tubes. Like a big shot, I said I would help, and immediately got a piece of rust in my eye, so I was no help to him at all. A nurse from Bathurst, NB, had come to Fredericton with her husband to see the cars, and she expertly removed the annoying foreign material.

Our last night on the road with the tour was spent at Amherst, Nova Scotia. We found kerosene in Truro, and were behind most of the cars for the final 66 miles to the Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax, our final destination. Including the last two miles in the city itself, we ran off the 66 miles in 90 minutes. We had made it, but certainly without a perfect score this time around.

Planning to drive home, the route took us around the south coast of Nova Scotia to Yarmouth, and then across to Portland, ME, on a cruise ship in service that summer for the 10-hour ride across the Bay of Fundy. Brent and his car were on the ferry but his Stanley was on his trailer, so our Model 87 was the only car under steam when the cars were loaded in the hold of the ship. Passengers were not allowed in the hold while the ship was enroute, yet the cars had to be driven off immediately after docking. Against all nautical regulations, I decided to leave the pilot burning, and I faked an excuse to go to the car half way across the Bay. The pilot was burning fine. As the ship docked, all drivers were instructed to go below to their cars and start them up. With the deafening roar it was impossible to hear the burner, but I fired up and had 250 pounds pressure when it was time to drive onto the wharf. Jules Reiver and I drove home from Portland in two days. Three years later, I tried another “Trans-Con”.

A productive week has been completed. At least three committee meetings were held (maybe more, as I don't always know about them), the Events Committee on March 9, the Executive Committee on March 11, and the "Mansion" docents on March 13. Susan Randolph attended all three and is fast settling into her new job as Executive Director. In addition, a step forward was taken with the Stanley Model 607 project when several regular volunteers agreed to take responsibility for completion of cosmetic preparation and mechanical jobs on a suggested time schedule. Butch Cannard, Chuck Erikson, Ted Kamen, Jerry Lucas, Lou Mandich, Jim Personti, Jeff Pollock, Mark Russell, Bob Stransky, and our newest volunteer Tim Ward have all stepped up to the plate to complete this important restoration in a timely manner. What a great group of volunteers!

The Rauch & Lang project is also moving along well. Emil Christofano, Jim Personti, and Walter Higgins got the rear apart to inspect and replace some differential gears. Completion of the rear will be a substantial job and will require expert thought and innovation. Bill Schwoebel reports that this coming weekend our diesel locomotive, never used on the Auburn Valley, will be swapped for us by its owner, Jim Sank, for one he has just purchased, the correct scale for our railroad. We are anxious to determine whether this new "diesel" (gasoline-powered) locomotive will work well for pulling Auburn Valley trains. Jim Personti is making new pistons for our steam locomotive #402.

The Membership renewal letters should be in the mail this week. Please consider a higher membership category, as your financial support, both with your membership and with your support of the Annual Appeal in the fall, makes it possible for us to grow and enlarge upon our educational and many other programs. We are grateful for your continuing support.

We are saddened to report the passing of Leland C. Jennings, Jr. on March 4. "Lee" was the historian for the Division of Parks and was very helpful to us in the first years of the Auburn Heights Preserve. He was 57. A Memorial Service will be held at Fort Miles on April 24.

We hope you will consider this of great importance: The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDot) has proposed to remove the Route 82 designation from Creek Road through Yorklyn that passes Auburn Heights, as part of their plan to designate it as a scenic by-way. The Executive Committee of FAHP unanimously opposes the removal of a route number from this road. It is hard enough now to tell visitors from some distance where we are, and with no route number to reference our location it will be nearly impossible. The idea of numbering roads 80 years ago was implemented to help visitors find where they were going, and Delaware had the good judgment to continue Pennsylvania 82 from Kennett Square to its dead-end at Route 52. We have heard that keeping large trucks off this road is the purpose behind the idea of removing the route number. There are more effective ways to do that, and there is no reason why a scenic by-way can't have a route number. If you want to help us with this effort, click on the following link to view the presentation and make your feelings known via the link for comments provided to the right:

http://deldot.gov/information/projects/misc_virtual_workshops/rt82/index.shtml Please remember, the TIME IS SHORT. Many thanks! Tom