

A Winter Trip in 1981: When an antique driver writes about a trip taken in a 9-year-old Cadillac 30 years ago, it becomes a “trip in an antique car.” I made such a trip in a 1972 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham (472 cu. in. displacement) to and from New Mexico in February and early March 1981. The car averaged 12.5 m.p.g., and gasoline prices ranged from \$1.18 to \$1.35 per gallon. I was alone for 6 days from home to Albuquerque, then had at least one passenger for the remainder of the trip. From Albuquerque, I flew to Los Angeles and return for a 6-day sojourn with an old army friend, Anthony E. Rippo of Los Alamitos, California.

We had had a very cold January, but the weather moderated as I left home in mid-February. I had chosen a motor route, much of which was new to me. The first day I drove to Charleston, West Virginia, and the second to the Land-between-the-Lakes in western Kentucky after a visit to Stephen Foster’s “Old Kentucky Home” at Bardstown. I was impressed with the State Park between the lakes, built on land between the dammed-up Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, just before they dump into the Ohio. The next morning, I spent time on the “point” near Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio joins the mighty Mississippi. A small park had an observation platform where traffic could be observed on both rivers. The Ohio was mostly clear of ice, but large flows on the Mississippi were just breaking loose and moving downstream at a high rate of speed, making way for backed-up barge traffic to enter the upper river. First an ice breaker headed north from Cairo, and within an hour, barges were pushed around the point by their able towboats from their refuge on the Illinois bank of the Ohio and began their trips northward. An hour later, I was in the small park at Jonesboro, Illinois, where Lincoln debated Stephen A. Douglas in the southernmost of their seven debates of 1858. That night I stopped at Springfield, Missouri, where I had said good-bye to my parents from a troop train on the Frisco Railroad in 1945, before being deployed to the Pacific.

At Claremore, Oklahoma, the next day, I enjoyed the Will Rogers Museum, built on land where he had planned to retire (he was killed in a plane crash near Barrow, Alaska, in 1935). Later that day, I drove around Will Rogers Field outside Oklahoma City, where I had spent 3 months in 1945. The longtime commercial airport for Oklahoma City, nothing from Army Air Force days was recognizable 36 years later.

Having spent my fourth night at Oklahoma City, the fifth was at Amarillo in the Texas panhandle, and at the end of the sixth day, after climbing Sandia Ridge as I had done with my 1940 Packard Six in 1944, I was in Albuquerque. The above-named Anthony Rippo flew from California the next morning, and we headed for Roswell, where we had worked together for eight months in 1944 and early 1945. When we were there, the AAF base was a B-17 training school; in the years after World War II, it was greatly expanded by the Air Force to accommodate the first jet fighters and bombers. The economy of Roswell flourished during these years, but before our visit, the base had been closed, and only a few of the buildings, rented out to others, were occupied. The only building we recognized was the old movie theatre, long boarded up. Bob Hope and his troop broadcast his weekly radio show from here in August, 1944.

Before we left New Mexico, Rippo and I visited Santa Fe and called on Francis E. Stanley II and his wife, Suzanne (parents of Sarah Stanley), who lived in a small adobe home there. The Cadillac stayed at Albuquerque as I flew with my friend to southern California. (The return trip, much less interesting, may or may not be covered in a future edition.)

Work Nights

On Tuesday night, with the 607 body back in the shop, Jeff Pollock, Dave Leon and Ted Kamen began stripping the old paint from the front half of the body. Steve Bryce and Kelly Williams cleaned sediment from the fuel tank of the Model 87, and Jerry Lucas reinstalled the previously cleaned oil tank back into the Model 71. Another winter project involves the rehab of the Orchestrion. Sal Gioia and Kelly Williams started with the removal of a locked lower access door; on Thursday the project was continued with Jim Personti and Jeff Fallows starting to track down and repair air leaks. Shop organization continued as Bill Schwoebel and Chuck Erikson sorted through more items in the workshop, and Mark Russell, with help, cleaned the main floor of the carriage house. The new rims for the Mountain Wagon have arrived so Bob Jordan, Dave Leon and Ted Kaman prepped the rims and locking rings and began applying primer to them. Steve Bryce and Tom picked up the Rauch & Lang wheels on Friday from Bill Calimer as planned, and one of the wheels from the Model 78 was taken to Bill for a safety inspection. It was decided that a new felloe would be fit onto the existing wheel. Bill had one of the right size partly finished, and both Steve and Tom decided that was the way to go.

Annual Meeting, Feb. 8

Please join us for the FAHP Annual Meeting on February 8 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Kennett Township Building, 801 Burrows Run Road, Chadds Ford, PA 19317. No R.S.V.P. is needed, but should Old Man Winter rear his troublesome head, please call the F.A.H.P. office at 302-239-2385 for a recorded message indicating whether the meeting has been affected. We'll have light libations and perhaps a few surprises.

Events Committee Meeting

The Events Committee meeting postponed due to snow will take place Tuesday, Jan. 25, at 7 pm in the F.A.H.P. office.