

## F.A.H.P. News, February 4, 2013

**Two Trips to the Sunshine State, 1928 and 1986:** Since I never liked cold weather, it would seem I should have spent a lot of time in Florida during my lifetime, but that's not so. I have counted a total of 10 times that I've been there, but only twice was I "all over" the state in a modern car, once with my parents in 1928 and once with Ruth in 1986.

I remember very little about the 1928 trip. My father had a new Model 443 Packard Straight Eight 7-passenger sedan, the first of several big closed Packards he owned over the next decade. Since he was recently retired from National Vulcanized Fibre Company, my parents decided they would take a long trip to Florida. My aunt Helen Shallcross went along to help care for this four-year-old. I remember crossing the double-decker bridge between Perryville and Havre de Grace, Maryland, which had been an earlier railroad bridge. We stopped at Southern Pines, North Carolina, where Aunt Helen knew the Pottle family, who owned and operated the Hollywood Hotel. It was very hot when we reached Miami, and we soon headed northwest to Sebring, where there was a new hotel with ostriches racing around. At St. Petersburg, huge pelicans lined the dock, and there was an early morning fire in the old Huntington Hotel where we stayed. My father carried me down the fire escape from the burning building. From that time on, whenever we stayed at a multistoried hotel, he would ask for a room on one of the lower floors, even though it was often noisy with open windows and city traffic. In his earlier Packards, he had used Atlantic gasoline (this was before "White Flash" and "Ethyl," with their lead additives), but on the Florida trip, he started using Texaco and found it very good.

I remember a lot about the 1986 trip, a few months after Ruth and I were married. I had a 1972 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham with a 472 cu. in. engine that I had bought from Ellice McDonald in 1978. With overnight stops at Washington, D.C.; Mineral, Virginia; and Florence, South Carolina, I wanted to enter Florida the hard way, so we took a ferry across the St. Johns River east of Jacksonville en-route to a bed-and-breakfast at St. Augustine, and then we went to Daytona Beach, where the temperature plummeted to 20 degrees. As we left there and headed west toward Silver Springs, the space shuttle Challenger blew up behind us at Cape Canaveral. We stayed at the Contemporary Hotel at Walt Disney World for three nights and then spent one or two nights at Winter Haven, where we visited Cypress Gardens. When we reached the west coast at Sarasota, we visited old friends there and stayed about three nights on Longboat Key. We enjoyed the Ringling home and museum and the Bellm Museum of antique cars and an excellent display of operating music machines. Ruth was not feeling well at Punta Gorda, so I visited the Edison home and institute (near Fort Myers) alone. As she recovered, we enjoyed a night on Marco Island, before heading east through the Everglades.

After a boat trip to look at alligators and other flora and fauna, we skirted Miami and went through a teen-infested Fort Lauderdale on a Sunday afternoon. Before dark, we took the last room (a suite) at an old-fashioned motel on the beach between wall-to-wall condominiums about six miles south of Palm Beach, where we stayed two or three nights before heading north again. Traveling toward home, there must have been one or two nights before we crossed the James River on a ferry en-route to Jamestown and Williamsburg, where we awoke the next morning with 4 inches of snow on the ground. After visiting the Williamsburg potteries in the mud, the final day of our 3½-week trip was easy and uneventful.

**Work Report:** On Tuesday, January 29, 17 volunteers attended, as follows: Jerry Lucas (in charge), Robert Hopkins, Mark Hopkins, Mark Russell, Jerry Novak, Tim Nolan, Tim Ward, Steve Bryce, Bob

Jordan, Ted Kamen, Jeff Pollock, Emil Christofano, Bill Schwoebel, Dennis Dragon, Jay Williams, Lou Mandich, and Tom Marshall.

On the Model 607, a small leak in the thread at the glass bowl fuel filter was repaired by Tim Ward. The new hydraulic brakes on this car were bled and the star wheels adjusted by Ted Kamen and Jeff Pollock, and they appear to be 100% functional. Another layer of Fiberfrax insulation was applied to the bonnet by Steve Bryce and Tim Nolan. On the condenser project from the Model 735, the oil-soaked covering was removed from the feed water heater, and a new covering was wrapped around it. With the tanks, top and bottom, removed from the condenser core, the core tubes were tested for leaks, and all were found tight and in good condition. It is believed that the noticeable oil leak near the top was coming through the gasket that seals the tank to the core. Robert Hopkins began cleaning both the top and bottom condenser tanks after years of heavy oil deposits. Emil Christofano, Jerry Novak, Mark Russell, and Lou Mandich removed and disassembled the wheel cylinders on the '37 Packard for probable rebuilding. Mark Hopkins and Jay Williams measured the Lionel layout, so insulating material can be ordered for the plywood base to deaden the sound. Bill Schwoebel and Jeff Pollock, after studying locomotive drawings, found the spacer above the front truck of Locomotive #402 to be out of place, and this was corrected.

On Thursday, January 31, 14 volunteers were on hand, viz: Jerry Novak, Emil Christofano, Lou Mandich, Robert Hopkins, Paul Kratunis, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Gene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Chuck Erikson, Bill Schwoebel, Tim Nolan, Kelly Williams, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

On the Model 607, Paul Kratunis applied Diplag to portions of the bonnet (the remainder will be covered after the bonnet is attached atop the boiler). Bob Jordan and Ted Kamen hunted and prepared springs for the hook-up pedal, and Bob spot-painted some of the flue under this car. The Tuesday night job that Tim Ward did on the glass-bowl filter fixed the leak, so the car was prepared for its first firing up, even without its engine. Tim Nolan checked all fire extinguishers in our cars and made a list of their condition, and also helped prepare the condenser tank surfaces for new gaskets. Bill Schwoebel and Robert Hopkins led this effort, and Lou Mandich took the condenser core for a thorough cleaning. Bill brought some gasket material, but it was slightly too small and plenty thick, so he will continue to hunt for the proper size and thickness. The "Packard crew" continued to work on the brake system and finally got the master cylinder out from its very inconvenient location. They would like to replace all the brake lines and have located a very reasonably priced source to have this done. A final decision on whether to rebuild or replace the master cylinder and wheel cylinders is unknown to me.

As an update, the 607 was fired up on Saturday by Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Steve Bryce, and Tom. The burner backfired at first, but some vapor leaks were detected, and overall it was a very positive exercise, and pressure was raised to 500#, after which the whistle valve and the siphon were tested. The usual small leaks will be addressed before it is fired again.

We have heard from Dave Leon that his pesky infection bordering on pneumonia persists, and he spent an additional night in the hospital. He appreciated our "get well" card, and is feeling somewhat better. He hopes to attend our annual meeting on February 12 if we don't see him sooner. Speed up the recovery, Dave! We're pulling for you.