

FAHP News, February 2, 2015

Traveling by Steam with the Gardners (PART 3): Frank Gardner helped the Bourdons run several steam car tours at Woodstock, Vermont, where he and Weezie bought a small house in town in the early 1970s and later a property called Sky Farm a few miles to the southeast. In the back yard of the Woodstock house, Frank built a two-floor garage-shop that could accommodate at least a dozen cars, very handy for his Franklins, Packards, and his Model A Ford phaeton, in which he and Weezie once toured the British Isles. He let me use this facility as a garage for one of our Stanleys on several occasions.

In November 1980, I drove our '37 Packard Twelve to West Newton, stayed a few days with the Gardners, and the three of us visited Ray Stanley at his home in York, Maine. The next summer, the first steam car tour to Kingfield, Maine, was held, with Frank, Jim Hancock, and I leading the effort to visit the remote town where the Stanley twins were born. We started and ended at the Hancock home in Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, the total trip taking about a week. Frank drove his motor home with trailer behind, providing back-up service. From the excitement created by our visit, Sue Davis of Kingfield founded the Stanley Museum.

In 1994, after completing the Gorham-Kingfield steam car tour, Frank sold his beloved Model 74 to Brent Campbell. After 40 years of great pleasure, it was becoming too hard for him to climb in and out. In Frank's later years, the Gardners and Ruth and I visited many times back and forth. On one visit to Auburn Heights, we took them to Cape May. They also enjoyed the Amish country. In 1996, they took us to a special restaurant in Manchester, Vermont, when we were on a progressive steam car tour that passed through there. When we went to Newton with the Mountain Wagon in June 1997 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Stanley, we stayed with them, and they took us out for dinner to celebrate Ruth's birthday. They joined us at Cooperstown, New York, when Ruth and I ran a Finger Lakes steam car tour. In November the same year, we were at their home again and visited the Adams homes in Quincy. In September, 2003, we stayed with them at their farm (named Sky Farm) near Woodstock. Frank insisted on preparing dinner for us. It was our last visit. He died the next March at the age of 83.

Number two daughter, Nancy Powlison, is a member of FAHP, and visits us at least once annually from her home in Glenside, Pennsylvania. Very mechanical herself, she enjoyed her father's steamer more than her sisters and her brother. In the spring of 2013, Weezie came with Nancy to visit us, and they both had a ride on the new trail in our Model 71, which brought back many memories. Weezie sold her home in West Newton and resides in a retirement community in Lexington, Massachusetts. She still retains Sky Farm in Vermont and enjoys three or four months there each year with various members of her family.

Frank Gardner was about six feet one inch in height and had a deep baritone voice, making him an excellent public speaker. About 1941 at a bachelors' ball or something of the sort in the Boston area, Frank and M.I.T. student Irene du Pont Jr. found they had much in common as they both liked old cars. I'm sorry I didn't know Irene better when Frank visited Delaware, as

both would have enjoyed renewing friendships. Frank occasionally mentioned this 1941 event, and in recent years Irene says he remembers Frank quite well.

Work Report: On Tuesday, January 27, the following 10 volunteers answered the call: Ted Kamen (in charge), Steve Bryce, Bob Jordan, Dennis Dragon, Tom Marshall, John Bacino, Mark Russell, Jerry Lucas, Brent McDougall, and Tim Nolan.

Work was done on the railroad bench in the shop's basement, which now has A.V.R.R. passenger coach #885 on it for required maintenance (this is the car that derailed several times during its fall runs). A template was made for pre-drilling our new cypress R.R. ties for 7-3/4" gauge for our sharpest curves. The undercarriage of our Stanley Model 740 was cleaned.

On the Cretors project, more paint was stripped from the framework around the machine, and an old decal was discovered picturing some sort of flower. The steam engine was taken apart and certain parts made ready for new nickel plating. Steve Bryce, working off-hours, spent a lot of time on the museum's sprinkler system, which is now functional (a persistent air leak has indicated that a new air compressor is needed).

We were happy to welcome back Tim Nolan, who plans to spend a couple of months in nearby Maryland before returning to his new home in Littleton, Colorado.

On Thursday, January 29, 11 volunteers were on hand, viz: Tim Nolan, Tim Ward, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Bob Jordan, Bill Schwoebel, Devon Hall, Paul Kratunis, Mark Russell, Ted Kamen, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

The flywheel was pressed off the shaft on the Cretors engine, and it can be re-plated if desirable to do so. The water pump on this unit is attached to the tank, and the drive mechanism from the engine through an eccentric on the sprocket was located. A lot more old paint was removed from the unit's frame, turning up earlier colors and original paint designs. Mark Russell has a prospect for our surplus Packard trunk rack, so it was slightly straightened and the hinging bars correctly aligned. The interested party is restoring a '33 Packard Eight and needs the correct trunk rack, and while ours was from a Packard Twelve of about 1937, the medallion is the only thing that would need changing to make it correct for his model.

More 2 x 4 cypress was cut-to-length for R.R. ties, and a good number of ties were pre-drilled for 7-3/4" gauge (which we need on our sharpest curves). An old connecting rod from our H-5 engine was sent to Rempco (an excellent machine shop in Cadillac, MI) for a quote on manufacture of new 2-piece rods for this engine. We have also asked Rempco for a quote on making new wrist pins. More was ground off the new bronze crosshead guides on the end facing the crankshaft, to allow clearance for the connecting rods.