

## F.A.H.P. News, April 29, 2013

**A 1939 Trip in Our 1937 Packard:** Those who have driven our 1937 Packard Twelve in recent years have had intensifying problems with the brakes grabbing. Two months ago, the problem was tackled in earnest, and it was decided to check the brake cylinders and anything else that needed attention. It was found that not only did the wheel cylinders need to be rebuilt but also the master cylinder and the brake lines. After a lot of serious work by several, led by Jerry Novak, Jeff Pollock, and Lou Mandich, the cylinders have been rebuilt, the brake lines replaced, and the job is nearing completion. The injured parts lasted only 75 years.

The car was a joy to drive when it was new and for a long time thereafter. At the end of June 1939, five trapshooters, all born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century except this writer, rode to Maplewood, New Hampshire, and return to attend the annual White Mountain Championships held there. My father did all the driving as I was 15 and did not yet have a license. The other three who went along were Henry Winchester of Wilmington, Joseph W. Strode of West Chester, and John L. Flagg of Hackensack, New Jersey. Winchester was a well-known and very popular Hercules man who cashiered many of the Eastern shoots as a representative of the Sporting Powder Division of his company. At age 48, however, he had had what was then called a “nervous breakdown” and was not supposed to shoot until he had completely recovered. His son, Henry Jr., then 16, brought his father to Auburn Heights to begin the trip.

Our first stop was at 312 Price Street in West Chester, where we picked up Joe Strode. His business was the manufacture of sausage and scrapple at Strode’s Mill just southwest of West Chester. The four of us then aboard followed Route 202 about 100 miles to Mountain View, New Jersey, where John Flagg met us and climbed aboard. Flagg owned a manufacturing business in Hackensack. From that time on, he rode on the front seat with my father, and I rode between Strode and Winchester on the back seat. As we passed through Newtown and Sandy Hook, Connecticut, and along the Housatonic River just beyond, Henry Winchester remarked about how beautiful it was. Nearly 74 years later, the terrible massacre occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary, but four in the Packard the day we passed were dead by 1975.

We stayed at the Hotel Bond in Hartford that night, and the next day made the remainder of the trip up the Connecticut River and on to the White Mountains. The Maplewood Club, with its Gun Club that hosted the tournament, was an old frame hotel, with three excellent meals per day included in the room rate of about \$8 per person. In the large dining room with its picture windows, many of the tables seated six, so my father invited Neaf Apgar of Plainfield, New Jersey, to join the five of us. Apgar was a retired “trade man” who had shot for the Parker Gun Company and was employed by Maplewood that summer to teach some of its guests how to shoot. We had a good time for the four full days of the tournament, and I thought I was an adult, at least a generation older than my actual years. Since Neaf Apgar and Henry Winchester did not shoot that week, we invited William C. Labombarde of Nashua, New Hampshire to shoot with the other four of us to complete our five-man squad. I had improved a lot from a year earlier, but I feared I would not shoot well in this atmosphere, with most shooters a lot older and better than I. Although I didn’t win any events, I was highly pleased, however, as I broke three 97s and a 96 out of 400 16-yard targets, was runner-up in the Doubles with 89 out of 100, and broke 140 out of 150 in the final day’s Handicap from 21 yards. Joe Strode won the Handicap with 146, also from 21 yards. Millard Reeves of Salem, New Jersey, was high on all targets with 715 out of 750 (I broke 696).

On the last day, we packed our guns and some luggage in the Packard’s trunk and with the rest of our luggage behind the front seat, we headed south. Irving Wortman, a shooter from Morristown, New Jersey, had told us an excellent place to eat was the Weldon Hotel in Greenfield, Massachusetts, so we stopped there for dinner. A delicious plank steak with all the trimmings was \$1.75. The next day, after dropping off our passengers where we had picked them up, we arrived home from one of our many great trips in the big Packard.

**Work Report:** On Tuesday evening, April 23, the following 12 volunteers were on hand: Jerry Novak (in charge), Steve Bryce, Bill Rule, Jeff Pollock, Art Wallace, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Mark Russell, Emil Christofano, Mac Taylor, Jerry Koss, and Tom Marshall.

The window air conditioner in the museum was installed and adjusted so that condensate will not run onto the museum's floor. The two car seats for the Auburn Valley Railroad were braced and repaired. The missing brake line for the '37 Packard was received and installed, and another line which had to be fit into a very tough place was also completed. More towels were cut up to make shop rags. The hoist in the museum from the main floor to the attic was checked out and the sling completed for lifting the body onto the frame of the Model 607.

All lines were hooked up to the condenser on the Model 735. The shelf under the condenser was returned to us professionally repainted, and it was installed, and a blow-down line was fastened to it with a small bracket. The lamps were returned to their correct position to make the condenser repair complete. The Model 607 was fired up and the chassis operated again, partly on the jack, and partly on the road for ½ mile and around the driveway. All adjustments seemed good except the mesh of the rear gears, and this was adjusted, giving these gears more clearance. The problem with the speedometer drive on the Model 607 was identified. A few fixtures on the dash of this car plus the hand brake lever and the siphon at the water tank were removed for attaching the body to the frame. We were delighted to have a brief visit from Dave Leon, who is recuperating from a very serious illness. He looked well and is hoping to get back to working with us soon.

On Thursday, April 25, the following 15 were on hand: Tim Ward (in charge), Steve Bryce, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Bill Schwoebel, Art Wallace, Ed Paschall, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Dennis Dragon, Lou Mandich, Paul Kratunis, and Bob Stransky.

The main activity was placing the body on the frame of our Model 607. Preparations had been made in advance, and all went well. The body was hand-carried the length of the museum where it was placed in its specially made sling attached to our upstairs hoist. The chassis was pushed under it, and it was lowered in place. This writer did not see the operation, but it must have gone perfectly as planned. Then a much more complete car was towed back to its spot in our working garage for attaching the remaining parts and moving toward completion. The holes for the stack blower valve stem and the firing up valve do not line up, so these minor problems will be addressed this week. The hand brake and the siphon were put back in place. The speedometer-drive problem was repaired. It was good to have Dennis Dragon with us again after his bout with blood clots in his legs.

On Sunday, April 28, a work crew consisting of Jonathan Rickerman, Brent McDougall, and Anne K. H. Cleary completed our Auburn Valley track project at one end of the railroad trestle. The ballast is spread and tamped, the track sections connected, and the surface swept off to make a professional job. It is ready for trains to pass on May 5.

Our Spring Firing-Up event for the cars, combined with on-hands driving lessons, are scheduled for Tuesday evening, April 30, starting at 5 P.M.

Toward the end of the week, we must get the museum in order again, as we have an "Open House" tour day on Friday, May 3, the Model 78 goes to Winterthur on Saturday, May 4, and our Steamin' Day for the general public is on Sunday, May 5.