

## OCTOBER 13, 2008 F.A.H.P. NEWS

**Duncan Hines:** In the past 40 years, we have thought Duncan Hines, a name far removed, sold cake mixes and the like through the supermarkets. Whoever made these mixes did indeed use his name.

Duncan Hines was a Virginia ham salesman from Bowling Green, KY, who, with his invalid wife, traveled all over the U.S., often in his '35 Ford. He liked to find nice places to stay and good places to eat, and there were few directories in the 1930's that helped travelers find such places. There was a hotel Redbook that had listings usually in the big cities, but little to describe the hotels' facilities. The Hines' kept a diary and its private list of the places and their owner/operators they liked, so they would be sure to stay there or eat there again.

In the mid-1930's the first paper-back with dark blue cover called "Lodgings for a Night" was published by Duncan Hines. Soon it was followed by a similar book with red cover called "Adventures in Good Eating". The word got around that these little books were quite helpful to travelers of like tastes, and Hines soon had to expand his operation to include several "men on the road" to cover all 48 States. The books were updated annually. Although it seemed like a lot of information, all 48 States were covered in one book for lodging and one book for places to eat. My parents started finding Duncan Hines' recommendations reliable and fun.

A place was described by name, address, rates, owner/operator, and a folksy description on why it was recommended. Everything from fancy city hotels and restaurants to little country tea rooms were included in his books. Many places hung out a sign saying "Recommended by Duncan Hines". It was an excellent endorsement.

On the 11,500-mile trip around the West in our '37 Packard in 1941, we relied on the Duncan Hines books everywhere we went, and we were never disappointed. My cousin Meta Shallcross and I joked about "Duncan". When we passed through Carrollton, MO, we saw a sign on a large mill "Marshall, Duncan and Rea". Since everything was covered except "Rea", I decided Meta was "Meta Rea", and I wrote to the Carrollton firm along those lines. Appreciating the coincidence, they wrote a nice letter back and hoped to meet the Marshalls and Miss Rea.

During World War II, there was not much need for the Duncan Hines travel books, and after that I'm not sure whether they were resumed. Many new hotels and restaurants were being built, and more elaborate travel guides were required. The AAA, Shell Oil Company, and Fodor's were some of the best known travel books of the post-war years, and Hines and his company developed cake mixes instead, probably a much more profitable venture. Although more modern travel books were quite good (I used the AAA books for many years), I missed the folksy information relayed by Duncan Hines. I wish I had one of his old books, but they were destroyed long ago.

Everyone who attended the Hershey events last week had wonderful weather, and apparently a very good time was had by all. Bill Schwoebel and Butch Cannard picked up some much-needed Stanley parts, and Kathryn May took Catherine Coin and Dan Citron around on Friday to “show them the ropes”. Several went to the Stanley Museum’s party on Friday afternoon. Also in the mail we received many “goodies” from machinist John Packard in Massachusetts. Included were throttles, new and rebuilt, needle valves, and try cocks. Thanks to everyone.

Anne Cleary has postponed the Events Committee meeting to Tuesday, October 28 at 7 P.M. (thanks, Anne). Bill Schwoebel plans another locomotive-training session for this Saturday, October 18, starting about 10 A.M., and we hope attendance will be good, as it has been for prior sessions. On Sunday, October 19, several of us hope to take Stanley cars, and possibly the Rauch & Lang and one of the Packards, to the Fall Meet of the Historical Car Club of Pennsylvania at the Delaware County Community College near Media. We should probably get away from Auburn Heights not later than 10 A.M.

Work projects this week will include getting cars ready for Sunday’s run, continuing burner work on a 20-H.P. burner started by Mark Russell, further disassembling the modified Stanley engine for installation of a standard slide-valve cylinder block, and brake work on the Model 725. It’s also very important for all of us to start promoting our October 25-26 public event. Please see Catherine about posters and flyers. Have a good week!        Tom