

F.A.H.P. News, April 9, 2012

1989 “Trans-Con” Tour, Galveston to Bar Harbor: The “News” editions of early 2006, February and March 2010, and May-July 2010 reported on three of the four long tours or “Trans-Cons” I made in our 1912 Stanley Model 87. Herewith is the story of the first portion of the last one Ruth and I made in June 1989. To be accepted on a Trans-Con, cars were supposed to be made in 1914 or earlier. Among the 40 plus cars that “came and went,” three steamers made the complete trip successfully, the other two being Brent and Martha Campbell in their Model 85 and Alex Joyce in his Model 85 (these Model 85s were described in Kelly Williams’s lead article in the *Herald*, Fall 2011 edition).

Along with two Packards owned by Howard Henry and Ernie Gill and a Pierce Arrow (or a Mercedes) owned by Whitney Snyder, our Stanley was shipped from Aiken, Maryland, to Galveston, where we picked it up after flying to Houston to begin our trip. We began in high spirits from our beachfront hotel for the first day’s uneventful run to Beaumont. Uneventful for us but not for the tour director, Millard Newman, who broke his arm while changing a tire on his 1911 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost. He continued the tour to the end but had to rely on friends to drive his car the entire distance. The second day’s run was to Alexandria, Louisiana, where we stayed at the historic Hotel Bentley, used by General Eisenhower and his staff when they were planning the invasion of North Africa in 1942. Again, this day was uneventful for us but not for the Campbells, whose motor home and trailer, operated by Martha, broke down, requiring a 36-hour repair, while Brent was far ahead in their Stanley until Martha caught up one and one-half days later. Late the third day, we crossed the Mississippi and settled in for the night at Natchez, where we had an excellent catfish dinner on the riverfront.

Traveling northeastward on the historic Natchez Trace, it was raining steadily as we stopped along the side of the road to see why the water pumps had failed temporarily. The tour marshal, Bill Davis of Charleston, West Virginia, stopped to help and got the biggest “kick” out of our water problem when it was raining so hard around us. We spent the afternoon in our motel room in Jackson, Mississippi, with the Stanley, top up, immediately outside. The next day, we continued up the Chase to Tupelo and the following day through the northwest corner of Alabama to the huge Opryland Hotel on the east side of Nashville, where we stayed two nights. Our dinner cruise on the “General Jackson” was shortened as high water on the Cumberland River prevented our boat from going under Nashville’s bridges. We saw Roy Acuff sing “Wabash Cannonball” at the Grand Ole Opry. Our next day’s trip took us to Louisville, which was uneventful except for a brief traffic tie-up near Lincoln’s Birthplace at Hodgenville, Kentucky. The Stanley was running flawlessly. As we picked up Tennessee and Kentucky in the travels of the 1912 Model 87, the car had been driven in 44 U.S. States (all but Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Missouri, and Rhode Island) and in four Canadian Provinces. (To be continued in an upcoming edition.)

Work Report: Including those who attended the Collections Committee meeting on Tuesday night, there were 23 volunteers that evening, and 14 on Thursday evening. As it turned out this was leading up to a major event on Saturday (more on this).

On Tuesday, the Rauch & Lang electric underwent its final testing prior to its road test, and all appeared “go.” The body of the 607, beautiful when it came from the paint shop and the striper, looks even better now after the meticulous sanding and hand painting around the doors, sills, under-body, and seats. The tank consolidation project on the Model 87 continued, with new aluminum cross braces fabricated and fastened in place and plywood obtained, on which the new tank will rest. The kingpins were given a final adjustment on the 87 as well, and the sealing of the aluminum case in the rear appears to be oil-tight. The Lionel exhibit was cleaned and primed for its use at the end of the week. The Model 725 was moved to the museum for display for the weekend, and the Cretors popcorn machine was brought to the upper garage. Time was spent readying the Auburn Valley Railroad for its Saturday runs.

Thursday evening, the museum received its final “going over,” the locomotives and cars of the A.V.R.R. were deemed ready, and the new filler cap for the 725’s water tank was completed (this to allow for an absorbent oil “sock” to be inserted and removed from the tank). The 87’s two water tanks, to be made into one, were checked for proper fit under the rear seat and the tanks taken to Jim Personti’s for soldering together. The two steam gauge bezels that were damaged on their return from England were repaired, plated, and returned to us gratis by Todd Librandi. The *big news* of the evening was the operation of the Rauch & Lang, to the delight of all who had witnessed this car out of service for so long. Our thanks to those dedicated volunteers who moved this project along and to Susan and her mother, Fran Randolph, for installing the temporary seat covers, which look fine.

On Tuesday, the following volunteers were on hand: Steve Bryce (in charge), Richard Bernard, Jerry Lucas, Jerry Novak, Tim Nolan, Tim Ward, Mark Hopkins, Mark Russell, Emil Christofano, Jeff Pollock, Ted Kamen, Jay Williams, Rose Ann Hoover, Anne Cleary, Dennis Dragon, Butch Cannard, Jay Koss (friend of Mark Russell), Beth Parker-Miller (Collections), Greg Landrey (Collections), Dan Citron (Collections), Susan Randolph (Collections), Paula DeStefano (Collections), and Tom Marshall.

On Thursday, those who came were Tim Nolan, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Steve Bryce, Dave Leon, Ted Kamen, Jerry Novak, Brent McDougall, Lou Mandich, Emil Christofano, Dan Citron, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, and Tom Marshall (in charge).

The Great Auburn Heights Easter Egg Hunt of 2012: Without question, our inaugural event of the year is one for the record books. The weather was beautiful, so we were hoping for a good crowd... but we never expected the deluge of 901 visitors! The cars and strollers just kept coming and coming and coming... Despite the long lines (at entry, at West Yorklyn Station and at the popcorn machine), most had a grand time. While there were a few tears when some of the littlest hunters came up “eggless” due to the extraordinary turnout, we had a secret stash of extra eggs set aside for such emergencies and tried to make up for the disappointments. The best secret weapon turned out to be the Easter Bunny, who really entertained all ages and is probably the most photographed rabbit in the region. The volunteers were beyond amazing. Each and every one worked nonstop (and well past the planned closing time) to make the day special. I hope they all enjoyed a day of rest on Easter Sunday—they more than earned it!