

JUNE 14, 2010 F.A.H.P. NEWS

Durango to Tulsa, 1982: Yesterday, I had a call from Mike May, who, along with Don Bourdon and their wives Kathryn and Nancy, is on the “Red Rock Tour”, 3 weeks in duration, for cars built in 1914 and earlier, with Don’s Model 85 Stanley. They were in Rawlins, WY, experiencing a cold and wet day while traveling with the top up. Having averaged about 200 miles per day from their start at Estes Park, they have been in Yellowstone and are now headed for western Colorado. It reminds me of the “Trans-Cons” which we made in our Model 87; the “News” of May 10, 2010, covered the western portion of the 1982 trip from Pebble Beach, CA, to Durango, CO.

When we headed east from Durango, we were nursing a weak boiler, but we thought we could make it to Tulsa, OK, where a new one would be awaiting us. Unfortunately, however, before we were out of Colorado, another serious problem befell us. After crossing Wolf Creek Pass at 11,000 feet, we stayed at Alamosa and then crossed 9,400-foot high North LaVeta Pass before descending to the Great Plains at Walsenburg. In holding back on the long downgrades, I had been reversing the engine, a process that had been used previously without apparent engine damage. The two engine “D” valves, and more importantly the flat seats they ride on were worn badly, but the car ran on for about 200 miles before it was apparent anything was wrong. At Pueblo, Art Hart, who was on the tour for about two days as a guest of Brent Campbell, rode around the parking lot with me, but neither of us heard anything alarming. Francis E. Stanley, II, and his wife Suzanne (parents of Sarah) had come from their home in Santa Fe, NM, to ride along with me for one day from Pueblo to Lamar, CO. Fortunately, the car performed as well as it was expected to on that day’s run.

Our next day was to be from Lamar to Dodge City, KS. Bob Reilly and I got only about 25 miles when I noticed the 3-tube indicator was showing low water in the boiler, even though I was pumping water into it. I thought the indicator was fooling me, but within a short distance, I realized the boiler was out of water! A local farmer towed us about 5 miles into the tiny town on Holly, CO, on the Arkansas River. It was Saturday just before noon when we arrived at the only garage in town. The owner, a young widow, had planned to close at noon, but she said she had nothing to do that afternoon and would stay around so we could use her shop to work on our Stanley. I had planned to drop the burner, lie on my back, and swage tubes all afternoon with the hope of making the boiler tight enough to take us to Tulsa, about 500 miles away. Something told me to check the steam chest of the engine instead, and when this was inspected, the badly-worn valves and their seats were apparent. We were out of business. We hired another young farmer and his wife who loaded our Stanley on their flat-bed truck and drove us and the car 150 miles to Dodge City where we caught up with the Tour.

Brent Campbell was on the tour with his Model 80 Stanley, followed by his Motor Home pulling his trailer, and he took charge. Brent also had invited various Steam Car people to join for a few days each: Art Hart (mentioned above), Fred Hoch, Bob Sprague, Don Bourdon, Steve Cook, Martha Lang (soon to become Martha Campbell), and Brent’s Uncle Mel are those who come to mind. On the 340-mile trip to Tulsa made in one day, Brent drove his Stanley and

Mel and Don drove the Motor Home, towing the trailer with our Stanley. We arrived one day ahead of the tour, and since the itinerary allowed for a free day in Tulsa anyway, this gave us two days to make our Model 87 operable again. It was humid and about 100 degrees, but aside from the heat we had a nice place to work in a garage about 10 miles from the Williams Plaza Hotel, headquarters for our tour. Weldin and Dorothy Stumpf were on their way from Yorklyn with a good boiler, but they had no knowledge of our engine trouble (no cell phones in 1982).

Don Bourdon offered us the use of a 30-H.P. cylinder block he had picked up in Colorado on his trip west- he said he could not vouch for its condition. Although the cylinders had been bored oversize, it was welcome indeed, and we bought oversize rings at a Caterpillar Tractor supply house. With much help from Stumpf, Reilly, Campbell, Bourdon, and Cook, we rebuilt the engine and changed it and the boiler in the two days, and left Tulsa along with everyone else back on schedule. (The third and final story on this trip will appear in the "News" very soon.)

Last Monday, about twelve women from a Hockessin garden club toured the mansion and the museum and enjoyed a light lunch on the grounds. There was an Events and Scheduling Committee meeting last Tuesday night, and Matt Chesser of the Division of Parks and Recreation in Dover had meetings with staff people and the developers involved in the Yorklyn rehabilitation project in the FAHP Conference Room at Auburn Heights on Tuesday and Thursday. Susan Randolph attended the Tuesday session. Bob Wilhelm is helping Butch Cannard and Steve Jensen on our railroad signal project, and once a little more circuit work is done, Bob will program the signals themselves, made several years ago by Ed Hoffmeister. The goal is to get the rear signals near the museum working first, then tackling the front ones near the tunnel and pond. Jeff Fallows did the necessary wiring for a phone connecting our ticket booth with the rest of the property.

Six steamers and about 25 people went on our first Ice Cream Run of the season last Thursday. We were privileged to have with us Dan and Dorothy Boxler and several of their friends and relatives who have supported the Joe Boxler Memorial Fund, set up by the Boxlers and F.A.H.P. to promote steam education among young people. It was a perfect late-spring evening, and a good time was had by all.

From the Model 607, rear fenders, axles, perch poles, steering arms, and various brackets have been delivered to the auto paint shop for priming and final painting. Charlie Johnson has the leather out of the Model 78, and thinks he has determined why the aluminum body has cracked at the rear. A few of us plan to visit with Charlie again this week. A final decision on paint colors for both the 78 and the 607 needs to be made soon.

Steve and Ann Bryce and Jerry Novak took our Model 76 and our '32 Packard to the New Garden Air Show yesterday. It was hot but enjoyable. Next Sunday, June 20, Father's Day, the annual Fatherfest show takes place at the American Helicopter Museum at the West Chester (PA) Airport off Paoli Road. In connection therewith, they have a nice antique auto show, and I hope a few of us will want to attend, as we have done in the past. Tom