

F.A.H.P. News, October 14, 2013

Steam Car Tour to Rehoboth and the Eastern Shore, 1969: Under the auspices of the Steam Automobile Club of America, I ran a three-day tour for steamers from our Holiday Inn near Newark, Delaware, in September 1969. It featured some long straight runs with light traffic, ideal for Stanley speedsters such as Carl Amsley (Model H-5), Brent Campbell (Model 76), and George Hughes (Model H-5, now owned by Bill Schwoebel). Several informal races took place between these three in the course of the tour.

I don't recall all who took part, but Frank and Weezie Gardner brought their 1912 Model 74 from near Boston, Abner Devilbiss of Union Bridge, Maryland, took part (and entertained) with his 1917 Model 730, Marvin and Olive Klair had their 1918 Model 735 (now owned by Bob Wilhelm), Bob and Kay Way had their 1919 Model 735, and Weldin and Dorothy Stumpf had their 1913 Model 77. I drove my father's 1912 Model 87. Including the three racing cars mentioned in the first paragraph, there were about 11 cars on the tour, a few of which I can't remember. Brent's grandfather George Monreau was with his grandson, Sterling Walsh was with Abner, and Pownall and Peggy Jones were with the Ways.

The tour route took us to Delaware City and then down Route 9 to Leipsic and west into Dover. After lunch, we stopped near Woodside, where a man from New York had bought some property and established a small amusement park, including a 15"-gauge steam railroad. He had invited us to stop and gave us a complete tour, including a train ride. During the afternoon, we covered the additional 45 miles to Rehoboth and stayed at the Atlantic Sands Motel and ate at the Avenue Restaurant, very popular in those days.

As we arose in Rehoboth the second day, the weather was cold and windy. Abner Devilbiss had everyone in stitches as he tried to light his burner by burning newspapers on the ground immediately under it. Somehow, he and everyone else got fired up, and we made our way westward toward Easton, Maryland. In late afternoon, we were entertained near St. Michaels at the estate of a man named West who had built a 7-1/2" gauge railroad around his grounds. He entertained us royally, and free drinks were available to all. Carl Amsley carried a few too many to Abner Devilbiss, before we started the 10-mile trip back to our Easton motel. Sterling Walsh tried to take the wheel of Abner's Stanley, but the owner would have none of that. I had stopped for kerosene at a country store as they drove by. Abner was singing at the top of his lungs, and his Stanley was weaving all over the road. Fortunately, there was no traffic, and he made it back.

On our third and final day, we were invited to stop at the estate of Bill Willock along the Chester River downstream from Chestertown. Bill had moved from Long Island a few years before and brought with him his vast collection, including a full-sized (narrow gauge) steam locomotive, a 1906 Model E Stanley (now owned by "Kinzers"), a steam power plant to generate electricity for his estate, traction engines and steam rollers, and a coal-fired steam-powered tug boat on which he gave us a ride on the river. On our way back to the starting point near Newark, we stopped for a seafood dinner at the Granary at Fredericktown, Maryland.

Although small, the tour was a success, and Bob Lyon, president of SACA, asked us to do one again the next year. Marvin Klair, Weldin Stumpf, Sterling Walsh, and I cooperated on a tour that included Strasburg, Pennsylvania, and Westminster and Edgewood, Maryland, in September 1970.

Work Report: The following correction is made: The Lionel track WAS NOT OILED! Our volunteer attendance during Hershey week was down, but a number of things were accomplished.

On Tuesday, October 8, seven answered the call, as follows: Bob Jordan, Bob Stransky, Richard Bernard, Emil Christofano, Dennis Dragon, Brent McDougall, and Tom Marshall (in charge). The piping had been disconnected, and everyone worked on removing the 750-gallon water tank from one end of the garage (in the Carriage House). With floor jacks, two “car movers,” and blocking, it was swung from under the old stairway and rolled to the open shed for pick-up. This tank was 10 feet long and estimated to weigh several hundred pounds. The area was cleaned up the next day. On Tuesday evening, the monthly Events Committee was also held with about six in attendance.

On Thursday, October 10, again seven volunteers were on hand, viz: Jim Personti, Bob Jordan, Steve Bryce, Geoff Fallows, Richard Bernard, Tim Ward, and Tom Marshall (in charge). The first arrivals watched Bruce Wilhelm and his son-in-law winch the tank onto their roll-back truck and remove it from our premises. While Bruce did not think it suitable for waste oil, he planned some use for the tank. We hope to cut away the remaining portion of the unused stairway and to move the storage bins, now in the Snack Bar building, to this location.

The antique cast iron Gauge Set was moved about 6” to the right, to enable the removal of the old steps. A burglar alarm sensor was also moved slightly, and the air connection to one of the big gauges was made in its new location. Jim Personti brought back two things he had worked on at home: the pilot down-pipe for the Model 71 and the steering tie rod for the 607. The pilot was lit, and it tested out to be 100%, and the tie rod was attached for checking the correct toe-in. Having achieved a toe-in of about 1/8,” Jim took the rod home again to braze the end for the correct adjustment. The truss rod under the rear axle of the 607 was removed for straightening.

We were sorry to miss Ted Kamen at our work sessions, as he had a major hand operation on Tuesday. Good luck, Ted, and get well soon!