

FEBRUARY 4, 2008 F.A.H.P. NEWS

Hard Luck on Stanley Trips (continued): In June, 1982, I shipped the 1912 Model 87 to Pacific Grove, CA, for the beginning of another “Trans-Con” tour from Pebble Beach to Jekyll Island, GA. Lindsay Greenplate and I flew to California, found the car unloaded, and drove the first day to San Francisco without incident. Heading east across the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, we stopped for water in the vicinity of Alameda. Steam was coming up around the hood. Investigation showed the boiler shell to be leaking under the wire winding near the top. In those days, we were using old boiler shells with new tubes and piano wire winding to make the shell safe for high pressure (Stanley’s patented idea). How could we fix it? Ahead of us, we had the whole continent to cross! Reducing boiler pressure to 400#, we limped across the San Joaquin Valley to Sonora in the south of the Gold Rush country, our night’s destination.

Nearly impossible to make a plausible patch under the 3 or 4 layers of piano wire, I band-aided the leak with epoxy, a sheet metal patch, and a long section of hose clamp material around the circumference of the boiler. This reduced the leak, but did not correct it, and we headed undaunted into one of the hardest climbs on the tour the next day. With only 400# pressure and a very heavy car (140 gallons of water, 43 gallons of fuel, tools, parts and luggage) we climbed into Yosemite National Park, and followed the Tuolumne Meadows route to the eastern exit of the Park at Tioga Pass, elevation 9,945 feet! Descending the east side into Lee Vining, we spent the night at Bridgeport, CA. We had crossed the great Sierras. The next day was an easy run to Reno, NV.

Now with Bob Reilly as my passenger we headed east from Reno across the vast deserts of Nevada and Utah, band-aiding the leaky boiler shell all the way. When we headed south from Grand Junction, CO, toward Ouray and Silverton, we had to contend with crossing the Rocky Mountains at their highest. The climb out of Ouray was steep and difficult with only 400# pressure, but we crested the first summit at 11,000 feet. That night at Durango, we band-aided some more. Some distance east of Durango, we went over Wolf Creek Pass, and finally reached the Great Plains at Pueblo. Despite our luck in conquering the mountains, I phoned Weldin Stumpf at Yorklyn and suggested he bring a replacement boiler to Tulsa, OK, saying I thought I could make it that far. What I didn’t know then was that in descending the long grades of the Rockies, I had damaged the valve seats in the engine by reversing to create compression and save brakes. The second morning out of Pueblo, in the tiny town of Holly, CO, we were broken down for good; both boiler and engine had failed. We had to be towed, through the kindness of Brent Campbell, from there to Tulsa, where Stumpf was to arrive with a good boiler. He had left Yorklyn and didn’t know of the engine problem.

Don Bourdon was accompanying Brent for part of the tour, and on his way west he had picked up a 30-H.P. cylinder block for future use on one of his cars. He allowed us to modify and use it for the balance of the tour! Finding a good (but very hot) place to work in Tulsa for 2 days, and with the help of several on the tour, we replaced boiler and engine cylinders and were ready to head east again. We had no more trouble and finished at Jekyll Island with the others. Then Bob and I drove back to Yorklyn, stopping one night to visit his mother, then living on Hilton Head Island, SC. Good luck always follows bad!

In September, 2000, Mike and Kathryn May hosted a progressive steam car tour which started and ended near Northport, MI. We trailered the Model 87 to Northport. The first day was to be local touring around Northport, with a visit to the Mays' new car barn and home overlooking Lake Michigan. Unloading the car in an adjacent parking area, I drove to the Conference Center reserved for our use to pick up Ruth. As I opened the throttle to pull a slight grade, a hiss alerted me that the superheater was leaking. And the tour had not yet started! While the others were touring locally, Jim Hancock took me to a welding shop in Traverse City and they made a temporary superheater, good enough to complete a week of touring. They had no stainless tubing of the right size, so it was made out of black pipe, and the craftsman didn't know how to make gentle bends, so it was made square with right angles and small enough to fit under the boiler. Working into the night to re-assemble, we had to stop because a neighbor complained of the noise. The next morning, as the tour headed south for Ludington and the *Badger* steam ferry across Lake Michigan, we had two hours work to do, but we soon caught up, and the rest of the tour was outstanding in every way. We visited Manitowoc and Green Bay, WI, then traveled east across Michigan's Upper Peninsula to Mackinac Island and the Grand Hotel, then Petoskey, MI, and back to the starting point. Good luck always follows bad!

Our Model 71 is now at the Philadelphia Auto Show, the antique section being a Concours d'Elegance to benefit charity. Bill Schwoebel, Steve Bryce, Jerry Novak and Butch Cannard took it in to the Convention Center on January 31, where it will stay until February 10. F.A.H.P. is to receive an award at the AACA banquet next Saturday night which concludes its Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Catherine Coin or Bill Schwoebel will be on hand to accept the award. We thank one of our advisors, Mike Jones, for making these two Philadelphia events possible for us.

Ballots are being returned for the election of Directors at our Annual Meeting February 26. Please mail yours in, or bring it with you when you attend the meeting.

The Division of Parks has started the process of filming me describing the various buildings and collections at Auburn Heights. The first session was last Thursday, and this is expected to continue on Thursdays until completed. Dan Citron and George Contant are doing the filming. Catherine Coin was with us, took notes, and found it helpful.

Tom