

F.A.H.P. News, October 15, 2012

A Fast Trip to Rehoboth in a Stanley: During the post-war years (after 1945) when my parents still had a property at Rehoboth, I made several trips to the beach in Stanleys and at least two in the 1932 Packard. The Model 87 was there more than any of the steam cars, probably about five times between 1959 and 1980. Once I took the Model 78 for my father to use while he was there, and the Mountain Wagon was there in 1966. The trip described here, however, was in my 1914 Model 607 in July 1947, the first summer that I owned it. At that time, the car was still painted black (body, fenders, and undercarriage) with grey wheels, probably the original colors.

In those days, I was known to run a Stanley as fast as it would go (but our cars were not “souped up” with stronger burners and higher fuel and steam pressures). We liked to brag that we could run away from modern cars at a traffic light, which was probably true when compared with cars of the 1940s. Fortunately, I seldom tried this, as it was not good for the preservation of automobile technology. I did enjoy passing other antique cars, especially on tours, but these heroics caught up with me with frequent damage to the 10-horsepower engine in my Model 607. Roy Benge told a friend of his that he wished I would learn to drive more conservatively, but I did not learn of this conversation until 40 years later. On the 1949 Glidden Tour, I passed several cars going up the western slope of the Blue Ridge range between Elkton and Charlottesville, Virginia, and I paid for it about three days later when a wrist pin in the engine broke near Tappahannock, Virginia, destroying the cylinder block.

My parents were in Rehoboth in July 1947, and I wanted to join them for the weekend. I was using my 607 regularly and decided to make the trip in this great little car. My cousin Bob Mancill, then a student at Lehigh University who was taking a summer course at the University of Delaware, said he could go with me if he could be back in Newark for class at 11:00 Monday morning. My father, then collecting old cars at a rapid pace, had heard of a White steamer in an estate near Woodside, Delaware, and asked if I would try to find the owner and the car on my southbound trip. It was owned by an elderly man named Louis A. Drexler, who had spent several terms in Delaware’s General Assembly.

Bob Mancill and I found the place on the west side of Route 13 a mile or so north of Canterbury. It was an old estate with a large house and a nice carriage house, but the property was overgrown with weeds and small trees. Mr. Drexler was in the house, and he agreed to come out and show us the car, then under an overhang on the front of the carriage house. Indeed, it WAS a White steamer and a very nice original one, a 1906 Model F 20-H.P. touring car. I inquired as to whether it was for sale. The owner said that it had been, but it was sold the day before. We soon learned that it had been bought by George Barker, a dealer from the D.C. area, who probably paid about \$100 for it. I don’t know who bought it from Barker, but there was a White of similar description in Ocean City, Maryland, in the 1960s. I asked Mr. Drexler the best route to Rehoboth, and he said: “Go down the road to Canterbury Church and bear left, and it will take you into Milford.” From there, I knew the way.

We spent an enjoyable Sunday with my parents and left about 8:00 A.M. on Monday. Even with one or two water stops, I delivered Bob in Newark about 10:45 and then returned to Yorklyn.

Work Report: On Tuesday night with Jerry Lucas in charge, 14 volunteers worked on at least five projects. A “reporter” was not on hand Thursday night, but several things got attention as well. During the week, the following projects were accomplished.

The rear wheels were “pulled” on the Mountain Wagon and the hub bolts tightened, especially on the right side. The accumulated oil was cleaned from inside the brake drums. The boiler try-cock was removed and a new bushing installed, as the old one was leaking at the thread. The burner was dropped, and the superheater was removed from the Model 740 in order to re-thread and make a good repair at the bottom of the loop on the steam pipe. Progress on this can be reported, as at least three of the four needed threads have been cut, and new heavy-duty unions, elbows, and nipples are on hand to complete the job.

The superheater was fastened in place on the Model 607 with new U-bolts secured by Bob Jordan. The wood trim strips for the top of the doors are still in the refinishing stage, and the flue, its separate top, and the feed water heater have been fitted and are ready for installation. The steam line and siphon fitting have been installed in the water tank. The bonnet over the boiler has been roughly fit, and the floor and running boards have been taken by Mark Russell to cut and fasten the linoleum covering, as well as the aluminum molding trim strips. Locomotive 402 was thoroughly cleaned after its runs on October 7. While the engine did not derail during the afternoon, the stability of the spring hangers is still an issue to be resolved.

On the Model 87, which gave trouble on its way to the Delaware Auto Show on October 3, the car was brought back on Monday in our blue trailer behind Bill Schwoebel’s truck. The down pipe into the boiler was completely choked (as it was on the Model 76 about a month earlier), and this blockage had caused the water line from the three-tube indicator to the feed water heater to rupture. The pumps did not appear to be damaged, but a rebuilt rear pump was installed to replace the older-style “short pump” that had been in the car. Finding nothing else wrong, it is assumed that the excess pressure on the water system caused by the choked line before it ruptured caused the “thump” or “bang” that was heard 2/3 the way to the car’s destination at the auto show. The hanger strap connections, top and bottom, have been checked out and lubricated and the valve “hook-up” also checked. Hopefully, to reduce some burner odors, a newly configured copper line was installed from the steam automatic to the vaporizer. The car is ready for checking under steam.