

APRIL 26, 2010 F.A.H.P. NEWS

The First Trip in our '37 Packard: Our “top of the line” ’37 Packard Twelve arrived at Auburn Heights in November, 1937. It was a “left-over” new car, as the ‘38’s had been on the market for several months. I’m sure there were short trips in the winter of ’37-’38, but the first I really remember was in June and July, 1938.

At age 14, there was nothing I’d rather do than follow my father in his pursuit of the sport of trapshooting. With my mother aboard, we began a trip shortly after June 20 which would take us to eastern New York and the New England states, and take in two major trapshooting events. The primary goals of this writer were 1) to shoot well, and 2) to enjoy the trip. The former, he did not; the latter he long remembered. We made our way to the Hendrik Hudson Hotel in Troy, NY, about 12 miles from the location of the New York State Shoot at Howard Akin’s shooting grounds at Johnsonville. The Packard was like “riding in a sleeping car”.

We spent two days at the New York State Championships. Fletcher H. Woodcock of Ithaca, a representative of the Western Cartridge Company, was showing off the first clay target trap built by his company on my father’s design, inspected the January before, and demonstrated to Woodcock and other Western officials at Yorklyn in early May. Eight such new traps were shipped to the Yorklyn Gun Club in time for the August tournament in 1938.

On a rainy day, we drove from Troy to Poland Spring, ME. My father was anxious to show my mother and me the old resort of the Ricker family, built on profits from selling spring water. My dad had visited his father, who was there for his health in 1910, and he had his first Mountain Wagon ride from the station at Danville Junction to Poland Spring on one of these large Stanley vehicles owned by the resort. In late June, 1938, the huge Poland Spring House was just opening for the season (in 1910 my grandfather had stayed at the more modest Mansion House), and there were very few guests. With the weather still cool and wet, we stayed two days before heading northwest to the Maplewood Club in New Hampshire’s White Mountains to attend the annual Maplewood Trapshooting Tournament, sponsored by the hotel to encourage early-season business.

The trapshooting program lasted four days, and the weather remained very cool and wet. Trapshooting friends from Lancaster, PA, Harry B. Hostetter and his wife, planned to stay in the White Mountains a few days following the Maplewood “shoot”, and they moved over to Peckett’s on Sugar Hill, a very attractive sprawling inn with excellent food. They invited us for a delicious lunch before we left the White Mountains.

On the way home, we did sightseeing in the Boston area and had dinner at Longfellow’s Wayside Inn, recently bought and restored by Henry Ford. Then we went through Plymouth and westward to Narragansett Bay, stopping in Newport and having lunch at a bayside restaurant near Bristol called the Lobster Pot. Two months later, this restaurant and hundreds of buildings up and down the Bay were washed away in the New England Hurricane of 1938.

My dad wanted to visit the headquarters of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in New Haven, and the Remington Arms Company in Bridgeport, where he had friends in both places. My mother's niece, Margaret (Peggy) Shallcross, was married to John Aubrey Walker, a young Remington executive, so we visited them at their home outside Bridgeport in Nichols, CT. The big talk was of the new Merritt Parkway, the construction of which was pushing its way from the New York State Line northeastward, and was expected to open as far as Bridgeport that summer. Our trip home was circuitous, as my dad wanted to have a repair made to his gun by Elmer Miller of Millersburg, PA. The big Packard ran flawlessly. Come see it, 72 years later!

Cars were tested last week for the Point-to-Point event on May 2, and we expect to have most of our cars there. Steve Bryce reports that, as of latest count, we have 33 members committed to go, and he and Susan secured 39 arm bands, so we have room for 6 more. You need to travel with us in our cars in order to get in free with an arm band, and we will be leaving Auburn Heights by 9:00 A.M. Sunday morning. Please get in touch with Steve or Susan Randolph in the office by tomorrow night, April 27, if you have not yet signed up but would like to go. 24 people have committed to buy our special lunch at \$15, so if you would like lunch, we need to know almost immediately. For those who need "proper dress", there are 12 men's dusters, 22 FAHP red caps, and 3 ladies' hats in the FAHP office which can be borrowed for the day. Two Stanleys with their trailers and tow vehicles are planning to take part in "Old Dover Days" on Saturday, May 1. It's a busy time.

Track work continued this past week. Jerry Novak and Dale Simpkins worked all day Saturday on new exhibit space in the museum. We think we have Stan Wilcox's gift of his Maxi-Taxi sold for the asking price, a very nice contribution to FAHP. The prospective buyer hopes to take delivery before the end of the week. Lou Mandich, Bill Schwoebel, Jim Personti, Steve Bryce, Susan Randolph, and several others helped with this gift opportunity. Thank you, Stan!

Dan Citron is planning a meeting of the Museum Committee for tomorrow night, April 27, at 7:00 P.M. in the FAHP office. Matt Chessner, Chazz Salkin and Dan hosted a hike from the NVF mills across Gun Club Hill to Red Clay Creek and the Oversee property last Thursday. The leaders of DNS, Delaware Greenways, CCS Investors, and DCF participated, as did our Executive Director, Susan Randolph. Steve Bryce drove the group from Auburn Heights to the Mill and up Gun Club Hill in our Mountain Wagon.

We are delighted to report that 160 members from last year have renewed their memberships, and there are 87 to go. If you are in the 87, please let us hear from you very soon. We are dependent on your support, and we don't want to lose you! Thanks.

With regret, we read of the passing of Bob Stransky's father last Friday. Bob is an active volunteer, as was his brother David for a short time before moving to California. Our condolences go to Bob, David, and their families.

Tom