

An Unusual Trip with our Model H-5, 1973: In 1935 my father met Sam Packer, a professional hotel man, when he was manager of the Skytop Club, an exclusive resort hotel in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains. It is amazing what hotels with high overhead would do to attract business during the Depression. My dad arranged with Mr. Packer to have a trapshooting tournament on the front lawn of Skytop, which required the installation of three temporary trap fields and reduced rates for those who would attend. Most of the approximately 25 shooters who attended stayed only two nights for the three days of shooting. In October of 1935 and again in 1936, this tournament was held, and I have photos to prove there were, indeed, clay target traps on Skytop's front lawn.

Early in 1936, Packer got a promotion; he became manager of the prestigious Lake Placid Club on Mirror Lake in the famous Adirondacks town that had hosted the Winter Olympics in 1932. Wanting to see what that was all about, my father arranged to stop at the Lake Placid Club on our trip to Nova Scotia in June and July 1936, in his '34 Packard Twelve. I remember the numerous high-end sports cars coming and going near the entrance to the club. We climbed Whiteface Mountain in the big Packard. We stayed two nights and then moved on to the Mountain View House at Whitefield, New Hampshire, that Mr. Packer had recommended to my father. Dad liked to stay at top places!

When the progressive 1950 Glidden Tour started at Lake Placid, an old frame hotel with uneven floors across Mirror Lake was the headquarters, but a few affluent people like Jerry Duryea (see the "News" of 9/11/17) stayed at the Lake Placid Club. In 1973, with our 1908 Model H-5 Gentleman's Speedy Roadster I had a chance to go to Lake Placid again. If I had had an expense account, the trip could have been written off as a business expense.

The promotion of tourism was in its infancy in 1973, especially in our small State of Delaware. The Delaware Tourism Office, then headed by Don Mathewson, had a very small budget, not enough to support a second salary. It worked together with the Delaware Travel Council, a loosely-knit organization of hotel owners, restaurant operators, seashore promoters, and museum professionals, who enjoyed socializing at a dinner meeting six times each year but had no promotional budget. Trying to become more professional nationally, the tourism industry divided the country into several regional districts, and Delaware was in a six-state district called the "George Washington Country," which stretched from New York to Virginia. The 1973 annual convention of the George Washington Country was held at the Lake Placid Club.

It was customary to ask the state whose turn it was to present the most outstanding attraction in that state to receive an award at the convention. In 1973, it was Delaware's turn, but as time was running out, Don Mathewson still did not have anyone to recommend (presumably Winterthur, Hagley, and others had been recognized earlier). He thought of the Magic Age of Steam and asked if I could take a Stanley to Lake Placid to illustrate. I borrowed an open trailer, pulled it behind my '69 Chevy Longhorn pick-up, and invited a retired Kennett Square barber, George Rudolph, to go along for company. We stopped at the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York, en route.

The tourism convention was held at the Lake Placid Club, but George and I, who had not registered officially, stayed at the Holiday Inn, which had been built on the site of the old frame Glidden Tour hotel of 1950. The weather was cold and damp, not convenient for demonstrating the Stanley, but I met some nice people, accepted the award on behalf of Delaware and finally fired up one afternoon and gave several rides. One person I met was Marshall Murdaugh, tour director of his state, who had come up with the slogan "Virginia Is for Lovers." Delaware used the slogan "The State that Started a Nation," which I liked, but it only lasted a few years. Another V.I.P. was Governor Nelson Rockefeller's Secretary of Commerce, who enjoyed his ride in the Stanley and who told me Rockefeller never thought much about today or tomorrow but was always thinking many months or years ahead.

Unfortunately, the Lake Placid Club was on its last legs and depended on large conventions to keep going. It closed permanently before the 1970s were over. I have passed through Lake Placid one more time. In 1996, Ruth and I in our 1912 Model 87 were on a progressive steam car tour run by Don Bourdon and Brent Campbell when we passed through westbound en route to a lake resort near Tupper Lake.

Work Report: On Tuesday, September 26, 13 volunteers were on hand: Mark Bodenstab (in charge, substituting for Mark Russell and Dave Leon), Bob Koury, Mike Ciosek, Steve Bryce, John Bacino, Anne Cleary, Brent McDougall, Tom Marshall, Bob Jordan, Dennis Dragon, Ted Kamen, John Schubel, and Larry Tenny.

On the A.V.R.R., Locomotive 402 was cleaned from its runs on Sept. 24, and work progressed on the new train shed and its tracks. A switch no longer used near the turntable was removed and taken to the train shed location for installation. The sign pots and auto chocks used for the Invitational were returned to the attic above the museum.

The brass was polished on the Mountain Wagon in preparation for its use on October 1. On the '37 Packard, the cooling system drain plugs in the sides of the blocks were removed and cleaned. The mixing tubes in the burner from the Model 76 were removed for inspection of the inside burner pan and the area under the grate.

On Wednesday, September 27, Richard Bernard gave a lecture on F.A.H.P. and its activities at the Osher Learning Center of the University of Delaware. At the afternoon work session were three volunteers: Bill Schwoebel (in charge), Dave Leon, and Tom Marshall.

After cleaning the area under the grate in the Model 76's burner, the mixing tubes were re-installed. The pilot casting and its slots were cleaned. The kerosene tank and the pilot tank were filled on the Mountain Wagon in preparation for its use on October 1. The Model T Ford was also checked over for its upcoming runs.

On Thursday, September 28, six volunteers attended: Steve Bryce (in charge, substituting for Jerry Novak), Lou Mandich, Edwin Paschall, Bob Stransky, Ted Kamen and Bob Jordan.

The spare tire and tube for the Model 607 were cleaned and mounted on the running board. For the Model 76 burner, Fiberfrax "sausages" were rolled and fastened on top of the burner liner, which makes the seal to the boiler when the burner is pulled up in place. The pilot and branch forks were installed on this burner. The '37 Packard was started, the engine was heated up, and the oil was changed with a new filter. 5 gallons of gasoline was added.

On the Model T Ford, the brake bands and the drive band were adjusted. The gift shop carts were brought to the upper garage for use on October 1.

On Friday, September 29, Bob Koury and the railroad crew continued work on the new train shed.

Next Tuesday, October 3, the Evening at the Museum program at 7:00 P.M. will be on historic Delaware license plates. Many of you will want to attend, so our work session will be abbreviated. On our "Steamin' Sunday" October 1, 346 visitors were counted on a beautiful fall day.