

June 5, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

Ruth and I say June is our favorite month, but it never lasts long enough. It is a time for graduations, strawberry festivals, and wonderful long days. Last year at this time I wrote of June 6 (1944) as the "Longest Day", which of course it missed by two weeks.

In the Marshall household, June was the time many great trips took place or began. On June 20, 1936, 4 of us left Auburn Heights in my father's 1934 Packard Twelve 7-passenger limousine for a six-week motor trip to the northeast. My parents and I were joined by my father's cousin, Mary Passmore, who taught fourth grade at Wilmington Friends School for over 30 years. We stopped at Lake Mohonk and Lake Placid, NY, at Whitefield, NH, and at Bangor, ME, before crossing into the Maritime Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec. Some memorable moments were the breaking of tie rods between the firewall and the radiator on the washboardy roads of Nova Scotia, the trip around Cape Breton Island on the dusty unpaved road called the Cabot Trail, lodgings without electricity on the Gaspé Peninsula, and a blow-out 200 miles east of Quebec where goats and cattle roaming wild watched my father change the tire with great curiosity.

Before we left Nova Scotia we crossed the Minas Basin (at the head of the Bay of Fundy) from Wolfville to Parrsboro, where they had 50-foot tides. The steam ferry trip took two hours, and the little boat carried 5 automobiles and up to 50 passengers. Ferry slips or ramps as we knew them were impossible with this variation in water level, so the cars were lifted on and off with a boom and cables that swung them over the boat rail and onto the open deck. The other four cars were loaded first, and then came the big Packard. The loading rig was not designed for 6,000 pounds, and as the car was being lowered onto the deck, the boom broke and the car bounced on the deck a few times, barely missing the other cars and the boat's attendants. The old captain had no choice but to pull away from the dock immediately, as the tide was going out, and 15 minutes later there would be nothing but mud flats. Feverishly he and his crew worked to repair the boom as we sped across the Minas Basin. Half way across we were supposed to stop to pick up passengers at a pier at the end of a small peninsula, but the captain had no thought of stopping and steamed on by, with the stranded ferry prospects waving feverishly from the dock. When we arrived at Parrsboro in early evening, the dock was high above the boat's deck, and as the captain tied up, the hull began to settle on the mud bottom.

The passengers were unloaded first, and all held their breaths to see if the repaired boom would hold as the cars were raised about 20 feet to the dock. Again, the lighter cars came off first, and all went well. Finally came the Packard and everything held together as it was lifted high in the air and safely lowered to the dock to be driven away. My father crawled under the car to inspect the axles, as he

feared they might be bent. Finding everything in apparent good shape, we drove away toward Monkton and the rest of our trip, with no stories to tell from the 6-week adventure to equal that one.

I loved that Packard and was saddened when my father sold it in the fall of 1937 to buy the Packard Twelve still in our collection. He and I must have liked the '37 quite well, also.

Another great volunteer effort provided an outstanding weekend on June 3 and 4. Committee Chairs Dale and Teddy Simpkins and Chuck Erikson are to be thanked and congratulated on an outstanding job planned and executed for the immense enjoyment of our visitors. In addition, special thanks are in order for the Promotion Team who got the word out in more ways and to more places than ever before. Those who man the parking area, those who sell tickets, and those who handle the gift shop and ice cream sales are equally important with those who operate our many machines from popcorn to electric trains to antique autos to the biggest draw of all, the Auburn Valley R.R. The museum seemed especially popular, and this time the special old-time games, lent to us by the Hagley Museum and so ably managed by Mary Hopkins and Dan Nichols, were a special feature. 172 tickets were sold on Saturday (drenching rain Friday night and drizzle Saturday morning did not help) and 363 on Sunday, with many visitors coming from some distance away, for which we can thank the nice article in AAA World magazine. Now we have a chance to evaluate, and plan for our early evening events on August 18 and 19. Thank you, one and all!

Next weekend, June 10-11, Wilhelm's Gas Engine Show is on Saturday and Sunday (we often take cars on Saturday), and the New Garden Air Show is on Sunday. Following that, on Friday, June 16, a few attendees at the AACA Grand National event at Dover Downs will be visiting Auburn Heights, on Saturday, the 17th, two of our cars (the Stanley Models 76 and 87) are entered for the "big day" at the Grand National, and on Sunday, the 18th, four Stanleys and their families will be leaving for the Eastern Steam Car Tour at Berlin, OH. Thanks to Walt Hopkins, Bill Schwoebel, and Bob Wilhelm, we have the equipment available to get the cars there and back. It is probable that the Models 725, 87, 76 and either the 607 or the 78 will be in Ohio. There is a lot to do to some of these cars before they are shown and operated. After these events we will be zeroing in on the July 4 Hockessin parade, training and operating sessions for our automobiles and trains, ice cream runs, and final completion of our brake installations on the Models 735 and EX. The Management Group will work out details and advise as soon as possible.

Finally, please think about a 2-day on-site operation for November 24-25, the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving, in the afternoon both days. Bob Reilly and I believe it would work well for high attendance with minimum decorations and milder weather than at Christmas time. We need feedback from you active volunteers. Best

wishes to all.      Tom