

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, January 23, 2012

**More Operator Errors with Stanley Cars** (*continued from Jan. 16*): In the spring of 1949, my “new” 1914 Model 607 was repainted in Bill Allaband’s shop in Kennett Square. I did much of the work, and it was ready for the road by late April. It was a beauty (I thought) with its light blue body and red wheels and undercarriage. On a Saturday less than a month later, I had been to some sort of gathering around Media in the car while my father was exhibiting his miniature 4-8-4 locomotive at a hobby show in the basement of the American Legion Building in Kennett. I stopped there on the way home and parked next to the exhibit room down a steep ramp from the street. Upon leaving with wet steam, I backed onto South Broad Street and started up the hill toward the traffic light at State Street. Something gave out in the engine with a bang, and I moved nowhere. Raymond Noznesky came with his tow truck from the Royal Garage and took the 607 there. One of the wrist pins, perhaps cracked from age for some time, broke off from the stress, and the cylinder head on one side of the block blew out.

In those days, my dad was collecting Stanley parts as fast as he was cars, and he gave me another engine (valued at \$100 or less) as a replacement. I was back in business, cocky as ever, and used the car heavily through the summer and then entered it on the 1949 Glidden Tour through Virginia. The tour started at Gettysburg in late September, and I invited Bill Carr, a former Air Transport Command pilot who lived with his wife on the third floor at Auburn Heights during World War II, to be my passenger. My father took the Mountain Wagon on this tour and had no trouble (he never did). As I built a head of steam in firing up to go to Gettysburg with the 607, the fusible plug in the boiler (we have these plugs in only two of our cars today) was leaking, so I thought I should repair it before starting the journey. In taking it out with pressure on the boiler, steam blew everywhere, but I paid little attention, replaced the faulty plug, fired up again, and we started our trip. The car did not steam well that day, and Bill Carr and I both had headaches when we reached Gettysburg. After the starting banquet for the tour, we dropped the burner and found most of the tiny holes in the grate choked with asbestos (removal of the plug under pressure at Yorklyn had blown the insulation all through the firebox). We poked out the holes and put the burner back up before we retired for the night. For the rest of the tour, the car steamed very well. The tour route took us to Luray, Richmond, and Williamsburg, and Annapolis, before it ended at the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington.

I liked to show off, and I passed several other tour cars while ascending the Blue Ridge between Elkton and Charlottesville. About three days later, then with Charlie Dougherty as my passenger, this chauvinism backfired while rolling along on level road at 35 M.P.H. south of Tappahannock. A wrist pin broke again, and the rapid bangs inside the engine case brought us to an unscheduled stop. I blocked the engine out of gear, and a truck towed us into Tappahannock, where I found a garage to leave the car for a few days. Ed Pamphilon, with his passenger Mervin Allatt, came along in Ed’s 1919 Model 735 Stanley, and we rode with them until we caught up with my father, waiting many miles ahead with his Mountain Wagon on the Potomac River Bridge. Charlie and I rode on the Mountain Wagon for the rest of the tour.

With two “ruined” cylinder blocks and other engine damage, my father made new wrist pins for my 10-horsepower engine, and we attempted to have the cylinders repaired by a welder near Village Green, Pennsylvania, who seemingly did a good job in gas-welding the blown heads back in without warping the blocks. Unfortunately, however, one of the welded blocks lasted only 300 miles, when the valve seat on one side scored badly, probably because the seat was softened in the welding process. Another good cylinder block lasted until the car was dismantled for a new restoration in 2008, probably because it was operated by someone who finally understood the value of preserving old things. These stories describe only a few of the mistakes I have made while operating Stanley cars. Undoubtedly, you will hear more in the near future.