

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, August 9, 2010

**Our Model 87 and Cornell University:** In June 1956, the AACA Spring Meet was held on the campus at Cornell atop a high hill overlooking Ithaca and Cayuga Lake. My dad said I could take the 87, and Norbert Behrendt, age 39, of Washington, D.C., agreed to accompany me. The meet was on Saturday afternoon, and the dinner that evening was in a dining hall at Cornell. Most participants stayed in hotels down the hill in Ithaca. We left Yorklyn under our own steam Friday morning and planned to be back late Monday.

The first part of our journey was uneventful, and the big 87 was steaming well. At a water stop on the Susquehanna Trail across the river from Milton, Pennsylvania, a loud hiss was detected as we backed to the water hose. By this time it was late afternoon on Friday. It turned out a hole had developed in a union-L, a fitting connecting the superheater with the steam pipe just behind the burner. A union-L is a very unusual fitting today, but it was a handy way to make a sharp bend in a pipe where clearances are tight. In 1956, I had much to learn about making repairs on the road. In a tiny garage on private property, which doubled as our water stop, we “dropped” the burner (removed it from underneath the boiler), which was unnecessary. Since plumbing supply houses were closing for the weekend, there was no chance to secure a replacement for the failed union-L. The owner of the property, anxious to help, taught in a trade school in Williamsport, about 12 miles away, and since classes were taking place there on Friday evening, he said the students could weld up the hole in the defective fitting. He took us there.

About 11 P.M. the repair had been made, and our host returned us to the Model 87. He also took us across the river, and we found accommodations in an old hotel in Milton to spend a short night. It was noon on Saturday before we were put back together, with the burner in place. Traveling the 100-plus miles to Ithaca, we arrived there about 4 P.M., as the meet was concluding. We did attend the dinner and had satisfactory accommodations in our downtown Ithaca hotel. Several went in a coffee shop near the hotel for a nightcap before retiring. Norbert and I enjoyed a pleasant conversation over coffee with M. J. “Jerry” Duryea, son of the inventor of the first American automobile and a pillar in the early antique automobile movement. Before the summer was over, Jerry Duryea was dead.

Some festivities carried over into Sunday morning. We drove north to a beautiful spot along Cayuga Lake for a catered breakfast and then climbed the hill to the Cornell campus again.

As we headed for home that afternoon, Norbert thought it would be fun to stop at the Montrose Inn in a small Pennsylvania town of the same name, some 80 miles from Ithaca. Also at the inn were Henry E. “Gene” Becker, his wife, and another couple, traveling from the AACA meet in their 1916 Pierce 66, bought new by Gene Becker’s grandfather. Gene owned the Centerville & Southwestern Railroad, 9½-inch gauge, on the property of Becker’s Dairy Farms at Roseland, New Jersey. For this 2-mile railroad, Gene’s father had the Lackawanna Railroad shops build him a scale-model 4-8-4 “Pocono” steam locomotive, 1/6 actual size, in 1940. The railroad operated successfully until 1972. The Pierce “66” carried Gene and his wife on many Glidden Tours and even on a tour to the West Coast and back before they were no longer able to enjoy such things.

The last day from Montrose to Yorklyn, Norbert and I made no unplanned stops, but one of the water pumps failed to function. With mostly open running, we maintained the water level in the boiler with the one good pump, and we arrived at Auburn Heights on time Monday afternoon.