



THE CHESAPEAKE BULLETIN

Vol. 44 Nr. 10 October 2004
Visit our website www.aaca.org/chesapeake



Published Monthly by the Chesapeake Region
of the Antique Automobile Club of America

Reliability Tour 2004 Report

By Lou Fritz

Many thanks to Wayne Coffman of Tiffin, OH for picking up the leadership of this year's tour on short notice in December 2003. Wayne is a life collector of early cars, memorabilia, and merry-go-round player organs. He believes that all these early relics can and should be used, particularly the brass era cars.

The five day tour in northeast Ohio, August 1st to 6th, was well organized and enjoyable. Ohio is one big region with many chapters. Their members seem to know everyone throughout the region. From this perspective, I would guess it helped in getting together a short notice tour. Thanks to all the chapters and members that gave a hand.

Monday 114 miles. We drove *our 1915 Overland touring* >> 21 miles to the coffee stop, where Whitey and Sandy Best were our hosts and featured homemade goodies. Their garage was filled with Model T's and an Offy Midget Racer that was so clean you could have sat on the floor and eaten your donut off of it. We encountered about 15 stop signs (no lack of shifting here). If your town doesn't have enough back roads, go to Ohio, they have more than their share. Lunch was a buffet with real tablecloths and linen napkins at the Mon Ami Vineyards.

Next was a unique Model RR layout, layered themes, every gauge known to exist, and then an afternoon Ice Cream stop. But--wait! That is not all. We drove about 30 minutes more, when we looked off too our right at a roadside rest and saw Wayne Funk opening the trunk on his 1912 Winton touring. It was filled with ice-cold watermelon for our enjoyment.

Tuesday 95 miles. We traveled 46 miles before the coffee break at Haughawout Music restoration shop. This was a treat and a surprise! We were ready for our coffee, but we had a caffeine free stop; matter of fact it was void of any beverages. Our host thought the tour visit was the next day. It didn't really matter though, because the place was so interesting. The owner restores player pianos, carnival merry-go-round music boxes, and mechanical violins synchronized with the pianos - all National First quality.

After lunch, it was on to an antique mall. We bought a drop leaf table with the leaves and four chairs. We got most of it in the back of our Overland.

Two of our companions: Dick Taylor in a '13 Stevens Duyrea touring, and Sam High in a '15 Hudson touring carried the leaves and the chairs.

A cookout was scheduled at the Tour Chairman's house. He said, "come over for hotdogs and a walk through my collection." Well, he used part of his collection, a stationary steam engine, to cook corn and

hot dogs. While we were there he looked at my badge and said; "I know where Reisterstown is." In 1963 he bought his 1910 Pullman touring that he saw in *Antique Automobile* from former Chesapeake member John Basler.



Cooking with Steam

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Reliability Tour Report continued:

Wednesday 96 miles. It was very cloudy as we departed, and the forecast was for rain. Half way through the day we visited one of the oldest sulky manufacturers, Houghton Sulky Co. They build the



entire unit, except for steam bent parts. They even have a chrome shop. And yes we did detect some old chrome auto parts being squeezed in.

Then it started to rain, even rained sideways. We had the Overland's top up, but the side curtains needed to be installed.

Pictured above, Wm. Ballreich's 1908 Overland.

The lunch stop was only two miles away at the Huber Tractor Museum, but we probably went five miles because the side curtains cut visibility 75%, and we missed one turn. Then we went through the Popcorn Museum. They have a time line on the evolution of popcorn. The first machine known was made in 1892. Cracker Jacks was introduced in 1912.

Thursday 119 miles. We left at 7:30 AM with breakfast in our belly. Antique touring is a lot of work. Only difference between us and the chickens is we have the eggs going into our body.

The coffee stop at Ed Rowland's house had a very large barn full of Hit & Miss engines. We are sure he had an equally good time cranking up a bunch of the engines and explaining the history. One of his



rolling stock pieces was an early farm tractor with friction drive. The motor slid back and forth in the frame against the rub

wheel to give it the different ratios. It worked well, but the only problem is you have to plan way ahead for stopping. The momentum could carry you through a fence or a barn.

Above, one of Rowland's Hit & Miss engines

We were caravanning with our Mansfield friends, Dick and Mary Lou Taylor. They invited us to stop by their house to see Dick's restored Gulf gas station.



Gulf station with a pair of Stevens Duryeas.

A lot was packed into this day. In the afternoon we got invited to Vernon Burks Model A collection. He was featured in *Cars and Parts* magazine a few months back. He has at least one of every Model A ever built. This stop also had something for the ladies, a collection of Campbell Kids. It had every promo from Campbell soup. I used up all my time absorbing the A's. We weren't done for the day. The closing banquet was Thursday evening, which gave those who came from far away a chance to leave early on Friday.



Pictured above, rare Model A factory chauffer setup.

Friday 91 miles. Coffee was at Fatheads Restaurant featuring the best baked goods of the week. Then on to the Mad River RR Museum and the Merry-Go-Round Museum, a must see if you are in the area. The last stop of the day was the Maritime Museum in Sandusky. We omitted this stop and headed back so as to get the jump on the traffic. We arrived home early enough Saturday to clean and put away our toys.



Above, the lead horse always has its head in the air.