



FROM
Coast to Coast
IN A
Motor-Car
BY
L. L. WHITMAN



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L. L. Whitman and C. S. Carris

FROM San Francisco to New York is what the novelists call "a far cry." As one stands on the shining sands of the blue Pacific at the Golden Gate and looks with the mind's eye away to the east over the snow-capped Sierra Nevadas, across the blazing deserts, over the rugged Rockies and the fertile Middle West and sees the metropolis of the Western Continent on the shores of the Atlantic, he has no definite conception of the distance.

The liveliest imagination cannot begin to picture it; no map can show it; even the actual experience of an ordinary traveller, gliding in a fast and luxurious Pullman day and night smoothly over the perfect rail, brings no realizing sense of what is included in that stupendous stretch of country.

To really comprehend the size, immensity and distance across the American Continent from Atlantic to Pacific, one must follow in detail the staggering ups and downs and baffling ins and

outs of its magnificent topography and inscrutable climate.

And it is equally true that only such an intimate hand to hand contact, so to speak, with the country's distances and difficulties, will reward one with a full measure of delight in its beauty and grandeur.



The start in front of the Cliff House, San Francisco, Cal.

The car was of ten horsepower and light construction, weighing about twelve hundred pounds.

Some two hundred pounds of baggage of all kinds was stored away in an ample hamper. This consisted of a good camera outfit, a limited amount of extra clothing, one extra tire, three inner tubes, a can of engine oil, a kit of tools and a few small extra parts and spark plugs. Also to the side of the machine was strapped an ax and shovel, and last, but not least, was added a good-sized canteen to carry drinking water on the hot and dusty deserts.

My companion, C. S. Carris of Syracuse, N. Y., had never been in the far West before, and the

conditions we met, being so different from those in New York State, were new and interesting to him. But I had been over the country more or less; and was prepared for the actual experiences we encountered.

Noon of the second day after our start found us at Sacramento, in the great inland valley of California—one of the largest in America, an empire in itself; extending north and south nearly five hundred miles and east and west fifty to one hundred; and bounded on all sides by lofty mountain ranges.



Along Crystal Lake, California

Here we passed the finest wheat fields in the world. Huge traction engines were cutting, thrashing and sacking the golden grain at one operation, cutting a thirty-foot swath as they slowly filed across the immense fields. At night a powerful search light attached to the machines enables a night crew to accomplish as much as by day, and seventy-five to one hundred acres can be harvested in twenty-four hours.

Leaving Sacramento after lunch, with the Sierra Nevada range dimly showing on the horizon, the Franklin, with full tanks of gasoline, headed for



A stop at Carpenter's Hotel,
Emigrant Gap, California

the mountain pass known as Emigrant Gap. In a few hours we reached the foothills and began an easy ascent. On those western slopes the celebrated California peaches, pears and other fruits are raised in great quantities. Packing

houses are at every railroad station and long trains of cars loaded with fruit slowly pull up the grade on their way to eastern markets.

We made frequent stops to sample these tempting fruits, presented to us with true Californian liberality. If we had taken all that was offered, we would have stuck the Franklin on the first day's run.

At Colfax we stopped for the night.

Our next day's work was to reach the summit of the lofty range before us. We had been repeatedly told that we should never be able to get the machine over the Sierras by this route; but as the best and most frequently traveled road was some fifty to seventy-five miles south over

the Old Virginia City Pass, we resolved to attempt the shorter, even if more difficult route.

When we left early in the morning, the summit was over fifty miles away, and as we neared that point, the road gradually grew worse. Large boulders had rolled into the road and streams trickling across the trail had cut deep ruts. Snow-capped peaks were occasionally seen. The scenery in places was magnificent.

Our road lay through forests of big pine. Giant trees towered hundreds of feet beside the road. Ice-cold streams dashed down the rocky canons. The road wound along dizzy precipices, where a slight turn of the steering wheel, a moment of indecision, or a broken axle would have hurled us and the machine hundreds of feet below.

Ever up we climbed on the low-speed gear for hours. Snow appeared at the roadside, although it was August. By Dutch Flat, Gold

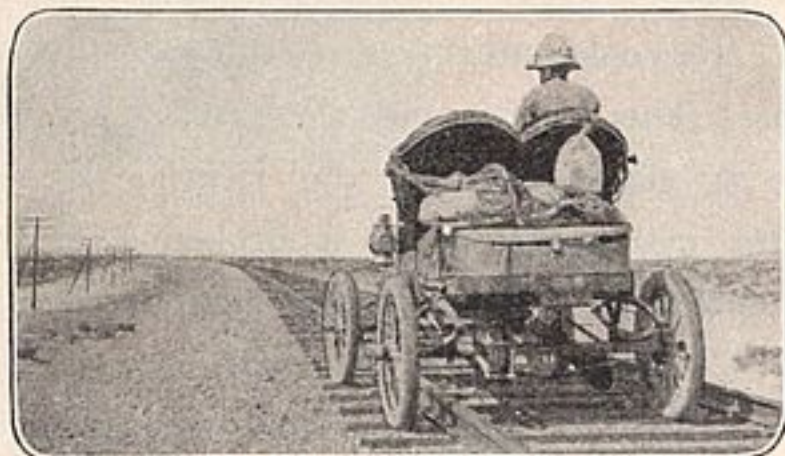


Getting on gasoline at railroad station,
Elko, Nevada

Run and other old-time mining centers we climbed. The streams, the banks, the hills themselves show the fierce onslaught of hydraulic mining of early days.

At five P. M. the last grade was mounted and the Franklin stood 7,256 feet above sea level, surrounded by almost perpetual snow.

We stopped to take a picture and look far away to the east where the dreaded deserts lay spread out like a panorama at our feet. We



Compelled by bad roads to run on railroad ties in Nevada

drank from the cold snow-fed stream and wished we could take it along to those waterless scorching sands ahead. I knew from experience how the remembrance of these snowy heights would rise up before us in the scorching days to come.

Beautiful Donner Lake lay at our feet. The snow sheds of the Southern Pacific Railroad stretched away around the mountain sides like a huge serpent.

We looked over the brakes and tightened the reverse, and then down over ledges and a rock-strewn trail, from which all dirt had seemingly been washed away into the valley below, we cautiously descended. Again we wound along dizzy heights, ever downward; in one mile making a descent of 1,200 feet.

In a few minutes, although it seemed much longer, we were at the shore of the lake. After a six-mile

spin along its shores through the sweet pine forests, we pulled up for the night at Truckee.



At the bottom of one of the deep canons in the Sierra Nevadas

And we knew that these were easy miles. They hardly believed at the hotel that we left Colfax in the morning and came over the mountains.

Next forenoon we ran down to Reno—easy miles compared to the trip up to the summit. Here the forests and mountains were left behind and the open desert was before us.

After lunch we pulled out for Wadsworth, sixty-five miles away. This town has been "cut out" by a change in the Southern Pacific within the last

year and is rapidly disappearing. Little of it now remains. All property owners were given a house lot in a new town on the railroad and have put their houses on flat cars and moved them away.

We reached Clark, a desert station six miles west of Wadsworth, a little after dark. We had found deep sand in places and the road so bad that we were rather behind our expectations, and when we reached Clark, our lamps had been lighted some time.

Stopping for information at the station, the only building there, the agent told us that we had better get out of the country mighty lively, or stop at the station with him. He said we would very likely be held up by "road agents" if we

camped or tarried in that vicinity. We learned at Wadsworth next day that twenty murders had been committed within two miles of that place in the two weeks past.

A large force of laborers employed by the government, were constructing a big irrigating ditch to reclaim some of this desert.



Highest point on the route,
7256 feet above sea level

The scum of all nations, and a tough lot of lawless tramps amounting to some six or eight hundred, were gathered there. They are the

only class that will accept the wages and desert heat.

The saloon gets all their money, and pay day is followed by drinking and carousal. Five dollars in your pocket might be the price of your life; and in broad day they had been seen car-



A tough piece of "going"

rying murdered men out into the sage brush to be left for the coyotes.

We were warned not to stay. We were also warned not to leave. We chose to leave. We pulled out into the open desert and were going up a stiff grade about a mile from town, with the engine on low gear almost to the limit, when a gruff voice from the darkness said:

"Put out those lights, and damned quick, too!"

Instantly stopping the car, cutting off the gas from the bright acetylene headlight and clapping our caps over the oil lamps, we jumped from the car, and in less time than it takes to tell it, I

grabbed the ax from the socket, and Carris had the shovel. After a moment's suspense, three men driving a pair of horses hitched to a light wagon and leading a third, saddled, rushed by.

It looked like "one on us;" but we were mighty glad to see them go, and we wasted no time in getting away at high speed into Wadsworth.

Next morning after buying desert helmet-hats from the only store left in the place, we filled our canteen and got what information we could about the roads.

The people in Wadsworth told us a terrible

tale of woe

that was waiting for us ahead.

They said there was a big sand hill about a mile and a half east of the town where a railroad gang were at work chang-



A strange desert sight

ing the grade, and the road was all cut to pieces by heavy supply teams so that we would never be able to get over this ugly spot without help.

They drew such an awful picture of the place, that to be on the safe side, we sent a mule team ahead of us in the morning to go out to this sand hill and wait to pull us over.

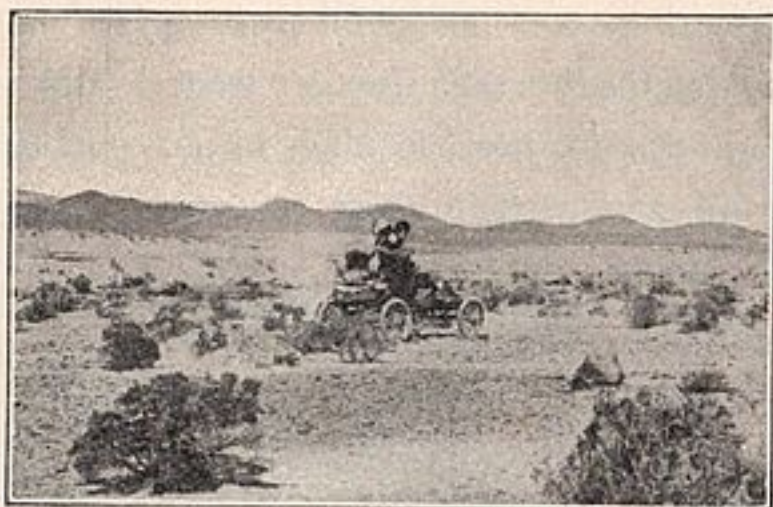
We pulled out into the dazzling expanse of alkaline sand at about seven o'clock in the morning and soon came to our sand hill and the waiting mule team.



In Weber Canon, Utah

The place was as bad as it had been described. We might have got around it by taking to the railroad track, but as the team was there we had them pull us through. The sand was nearly to our axle, and the grade was very steep up over the railroad track—a distance of several hundred yards. In places the differential and sprocket dragged in the sand. We cheerfully paid the driver \$2.00 for the job, and I think his mules earned it.

Seventy-five miles away was the town of Lovelock, and no sign of life between except the rail-



Drinking from the canteen in Utah desert

road. While in general our route lay along this line, it was often necessary to be out of sight of it for hours.

On this desolate waste where not a blade of green grass, not a tree, not a drop of water are to be found, the sun blazes down with relentless fury. Only a few patches of stunted sage brush here and there, and the hot sands burn almost through one's shoes.

The Sierra Nevada Mountains, at first plainly visible, sunk from sight later in the day, and we were out on that great arid tract that extends over six hundred miles to Salt Lake. Many a prospector, traveler and explorer has become lost among the bare hills that stretch away to Mexico, wandered for days without water and then left his bones to bleach on the sands,—a warning to those who follow. On this waste are scattered watering holes and boiling springs, some poisonous, others nauseous from sulphur or alkalis.

In the winter months, water from the mountain snows flows down and sinks into the sands. None of the many streams from the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevadas has an outlet to the sea, all being licked up by the hot sands.

The Humboldt River flowing from the north—a mighty stream three hundred miles in length—disappears in what is known as the Humboldt Sink. This Sink marks the spot where a great lake has gone dry, and for thirty miles we drove the car over its parched bed. Much of the surface is hard and coated with a deposit of alkali dust, which the winds take up into spiral columns fifty to a hundred feet high. Sometimes many of these can be seen at a time and they present a weird sight.

The sun heats the land like a furnace, and as the hot air rises, it gives place to a current of air



Hundreds of these washes were encountered across the roads in the deserts

from the Pacific and causes a light breeze. As we were traveling with the wind on our backs, the conditions were the worst possible for our

air-cooled motor. The cylinders got hot, but not hot enough to cause trouble.

Over this desert to Ogden, we made almost double the distance each day that I did last year with a water-jacketed engine.

Just before dark and after an awful day of heat, dust and sand, we sighted Lovelock far across the Sink. We pushed on hopefully, but were doomed to disappointment. To get off the Sink and find a road into the town was a hard question.

We chased all the trails and wheel tracks that gave any promise of a road, and after a lot of scout-duty, on foot and otherwise, we reached the town at one-thirty in the morning, where we had



On the brink of a deep chasm near
Red Desert, Wyoming

supper
and
passed
the night.

From
this point
to Ogden
we made
daily runs
between

the railroad towns, sometimes over bare hills and valleys, again over the alkali deserts. In many places the country is cut up by deep channels, dry when we were there; but in winter taking down the water to the lower sands.

In some places the banks were steep ; heavy sand filled the river bed, and crossing was difficult.



Fixing a bad spot in a road out of a canon near
Point of Rocks, Wyoming

Sometimes we had to follow the banks long distances to find a possible crossing, and at times, we were obliged to get the car up on the railroad track and bump over the sleepers to get past some bad ravine.

Many times a day we had to use ax and shovel. The machine would flounder in a hole ; or catch on a stump or high ridge in the road between the tracks. Then again, we would come upon long stretches of good road, laid out by Nature, not by man.

Five hundred miles of these desert roads were opened by a man driving his team where Nature offered the least resistance. The next team fol-



Carris posing on top of one of the Church Buttes, Wyoming

lowed the tracks of the first, and so after a time, some sort of a road was made, no part being improved that was passable by a wagon.

The washes, ruts, brush, stones and sand were a test for any automobile, but **the FRANKLIN** crossed this entire six hundred miles of Sahara in seven days.

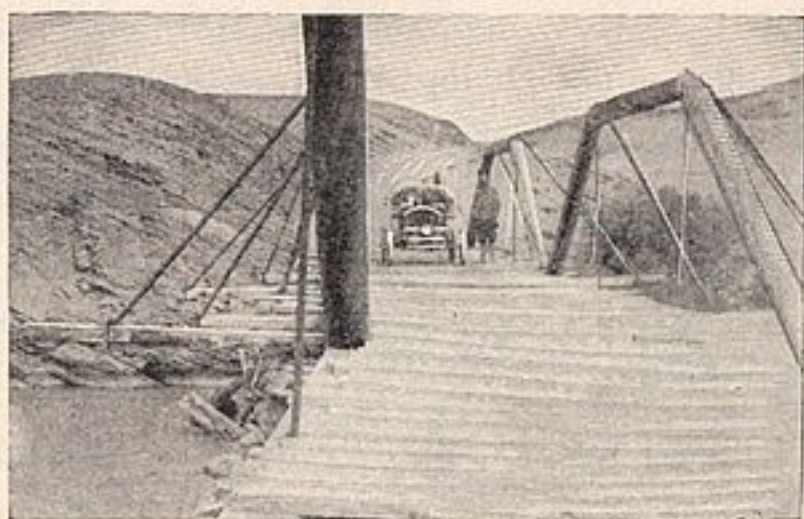
East of Lovelock, night stops were made at Mill City, Battle Mountain, Carlin, Wells and Terrace. The tenth day we reached Ogden at five P. M., the last day's run out of the desert being one hundred thirty-seven miles, part of the way along the north shore of the Great Salt Lake.

Green alfalfa fields, streams of pure water, orchards and shade trees never looked so good

before. After a day of rest and cleaning up the car, we "hit the trail" again.

We lay our route through Wyoming, following the towns along the Northern Pacific Railroad. The first day we saw some beautiful scenery as we followed the Weber River, Utah, went up Weber Canon, Echo Canon, passed the Devil's Slide and climbed over the mountains to Evanston, where another barren country begins.

This is not as hot as the desert left behind, as the elevation is five thousand feet and at Laramie, nearly eight thousand. Coyotes were often seen skulking in the road ahead or on some hillside; rabbits were numerous, doves flocked by the hundreds and sage hens and quail scurried into the sage brush along the road.



A dangerous bridge at Fort Steele, Wyoming

We stopped one night at Fort Bridger, an old stockade, where but few of the barracks remain to tell of the days when it was necessary to keep the Indians in check.

We saw many Indians around the towns and settlements, and sometimes when they saw our car coming down the street, they would run and hide



Passing a herd of 10,000 sheep in Wyoming

behind a corner of a building, a telegraph pole, or other place of refuge and peek out at us as we went by.

One Chinaman was much interested in our automobile, never having seen one before. While we were eating dinner, he examined it closely, even crawling under the car to get a more complete view. When we started, he snapped his fingers and said, "Fisth ! fisth ! fisth ! Getee there allee samee."

We had to ford many streams in Wyoming, but none of them were deep enough to stop our engine, the larger ones being bridged. In this State we lost our road several times and had to wander about for a few miles before finding it.

Changes in the road bed of the Northern Pacific and wire fences built along their tracks

cut out miles of good roads; and obliged us to take some very rough places. We had to cross the railroad in many places where no crossing has been made and climb steep grades at the same time.

One shower caught us near Rawlins while we were on an alkali desert, which was soon converted into a mass of slippery mud. The car refused to go except in lurches and in every direction but the right one; sometimes standing still with the rear wheels spinning. Ropes wound around the tires improved matters, and after traveling a few miles in this fashion, we reached the edge of the desert.

Between Rock Springs and Rawlins near Spring Valley, while running fifteen miles an hour, our rear axle caught on a telegraph pole that had been cut off about a foot above the ground, and was hidden by tall grass growing between the wheel tracks.

We brought up good and solid, and both of us flew out over the car in regular circus fashion. I struck the ground about twenty feet directly in front of



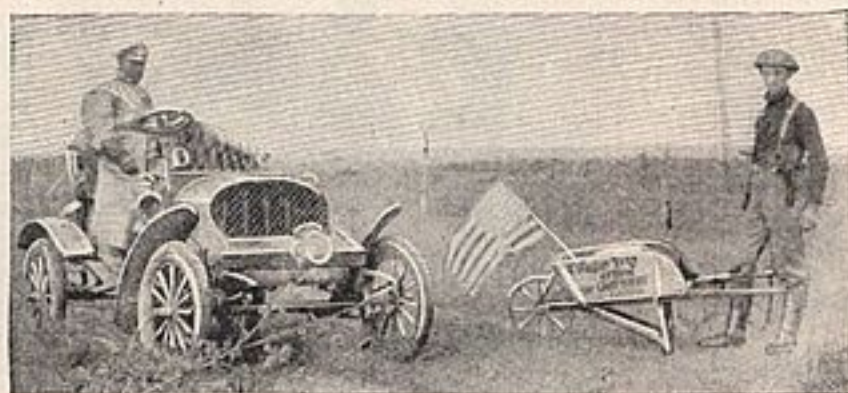
Mr. Felker bidding the tourists "God-speed"
outside of Denver, Colorado

the car, and Carris at the wheel was thrown out at the side. We rolled over on the grass and looked at each other. Finding we were uninjured, except for a few bruises, we looked over the machine, which was still hanging fast to the post; and discovered *only a bent truss rod*.

We backed off the stump and got away with never even a hint of further trouble or damage on that score.

Down across the Laramie plains, over which thousands of cattle roam, we found some fine roads—the road-bed being a natural formation which packs to a smooth hard surface. The good roads and bracing air of this high altitude made this part of the trip very pleasant.

One day in Wyoming we fell in with a party of two men and a woman who were making the run from Salt Lake City to Denver in an auto-



Paying an election bet by wheeling a barrow around the continent. Met on the prairie in western Nebraska

mobile. We stayed over night at a small place called Rock River in their company, and they told us of some of their experiences.

On one occasion they broke their rear axle while crossing a bad washout many miles from any habitation when night was coming on. They had to stay out all night and walk thirteen miles next day to the railroad, and get a section crew to take them on a hand-car to the nearest town. It took them several days to repair the axle.



From Rock Buffalo Bill's ranch, North Platte, Nebraska River we sped on, all the morning until the smoke of Laramie could be discerned twenty-five miles away. We had dinner there, and then started for Denver.

Out over the plains some thirty miles, we dropped down over the "Rockies," through North Park where we wound our way through dark canons and over rushing streams shaded by welcome pines.

Near Fort Collins we got in a bad washout. A cloud-burst some time before had taken the entire road-bed out of Owl Canon, and for half a mile, we had to run in the bottom of the creek.

About twenty-five emigrant wagons were trying to get through this pass when we arrived. They

were "doubling up," that is, putting two teams to a single wagon, and having a bad time at that. After a hasty survey of the situation, we plunged the



Cutting away a stump that caught in the axle, near Carlin, Nebraska

Franklin into the foaming water, and down the stream we went.

Rocks were piled everywhere, but

a rough path had been cleared, and we managed very well until dropping down over one steep ledge into deep sand and gravel the car refused to budge.

A team of horses stood within ten feet, the driver waiting to help up the next team. Water was up to the floor of our car, and rather than get out into the cold water and shovel out the rear wheels which had sunk into the deep gravel, I said:

"Fifty cents for fifty feet!"

The teamster waded in, dropped a chain over the axle, said "Get up," and in five minutes we were off again. This time, and that one bad spot outside of Wadsworth are the only instances when we had a team hitched to the car, and then it was more a matter of convenience than necessity.

The last hundred miles into Denver were over fine roads; and at noon of the sixteenth day, we entered this beautiful city. A large escort of auto-

mobiles met us and gave us a pleasant reception. We spent one day here and at noon of the following day left Denver and steered for Omaha.

We ran over to Julesburgh on the Platte River, and rode down this fertile valley, which for three hundred miles is as level as a floor. Thousands of acres of waving grain and rustling corn extended as far as the eye could reach.

How we flew! And so did the dust, but in a long cloud behind us like the tail of a comet.

Through Kearney, Grand Isle and Tremont we sped; and at noon of the fourth day from Denver, we rolled into Omaha. Last year I was thirteen days making this same distance, but it is fair to say that the rain and floods were very heavy.

Our next point was Chicago, some six hundred miles away. The following morning we crossed the Missouri on a high bridge; made Des Moines that evening, and Cedar Rapids the next day at noon.

When we crossed the Mississippi that evening, we had covered more than four hundred of the six hundred miles to Chicago, in a day and a half.

The next day we crossed the State of Illinois, arriving at Chicago about five P. M.

At Wheaton, twenty miles from the city, the first enthusiastic escort car met us. From there on our ranks increased and when we got to Michigan Avenue we found a long row of cars tooting horns lined up to receive us. We were taken to the Chicago Automobile Club, "watered," fed and put to bed.

The next day at eight A. M.; we left the Windy City and were off by way of Edgerton for Toledo, which we reached the following day about three P. M. Good roads all the way—via South Bend, Elkhart, Bryan, etc. The next night found us at Cleveland and the next at Buffalo.

Fine weather and good roads along the lake shore made this part of the journey very enjoyable. Grapes, peaches and pears were ripening on every hand. Well-kept prosperous-looking farm houses with the blue lake and the dimly-seen Canadian shore as a background made this two-hundred-mile run one never to be forgotten. After supper we ran to Rochester.

Early the next morning, we were off again, being due at Syracuse in the afternoon. At Lyons the first car waiting for us was a big twenty-four horsepower Franklin, to give his smaller brother a welcome. Nearer Syracuse a big bunch of machines had been waiting in the grass by the roadside for our arrival.

The reception, the bouquets, the banquet, at Syracuse while ostensibly for the travelers, were in reality for the little car that stood by the curb outside impatiently waiting to finish its run, and place at the top of the slate a new ocean to ocean record for motor-car history.

An early start next morning, and we reached Albany before sunset. The route was down the beautiful Mohawk Valley on a perfect summer day. We took the east bank of the Hudson from Albany, and before the car stopped for the night, we had made Peekskill, only fifty miles from New York, and

nearly three hundred miles for the day. Only once did we make a longer run in one day, and that was when we made three hundred twenty-five miles over much better roads.

The next morning dawned clear and fine,—our last day. Before Yonkers was reached, we saw our pilot car with flags flying, speeding to meet us. On Jerome Avenue outside the city, a long line of machines lay in wait. Streamers, flags and mottoes fluttered in the breeze.



Disputing the right of way with a thresher in Iowa

Borne along by this cheering throng, we arrived at the New York Automobile Club's palatial building at one - twenty P. M.; delivered a letter we had brought from President Sherwin of the California Club to President Scarritt of the New York Club, and the long journey was ended.

Thirty - two days, twenty - three hours and twenty minutes, or, for convenience, "thirty-three days" had passed since leaving San Francisco. The previous record of sixty - one days was nearly cut in half.

To say that the public was amazed is putting it mildly. Photographers, press agents and reporters were so vociferous in their welcome that we finally took refuge inside the Club House.

One hundred and fifty-five miles a day was our average, start to finish, over all kinds of roads and in some places no road at all.

Carris and myself took turns in running the car, 25 to 50 miles or so, each at the wheel. At night, when cold, the one not operating the car would wrap up in a blanket and try to get a little sleep.

In climbing the Sierra Nevada mountains we had a twelve-mile grade, traveling one-half the distance on the low gear. Here, as well as in all hard climbs, long stretches of sand, etc., we put two to six charges of oil with the oil gun into the engine base in addition to what the pump supplied.

At Ogden, Denver, Omaha, Chicago and Toledo we opened the engine base, drew off the old oil,



Along the Mohawk River, New York

tightened the connecting rods when necessary, and put in new supply of oil. In operating the car on hills and grades, we did nothing unusual: simply

used reverse, hub brakes, spark off and clutch in on the steepest places.

Once *only* did we get out of gasoline, and this was in Ohio. A boy and bicycle took can and went a mile and a half for a gallon to put us into the near-by next town.

During the entire journey there were



Mr. Whitman delivering to President Scarritt of the Automobile Club of America, in front of the Club House in New York, the letter from President Schwerin of the Automobile Club of California

no break-downs of any consequence, nothing except of the most trivial nature, which was easily and quickly set right. There were no serious accidents. A few chickens that met their end, a turkey, a skunk and a dog or two, slightly run over, constitute the entire casualty list.

Although I have driven motor cars for several years, I was surprised at the wonderful performance of the Franklin. As the car was driven into the garage on West Sixtieth Street, it showed no evidence of the long journey, hard knocks and unmerciful driving it had undergone in the greatest long distance automobile run the world has ever known.

L. L. WHITMAN.

Franklin Cars for 1905

The Franklin cars for this year are fully described and illustrated in our 1905 Announcement which will be sent on request.

THE 6 MODELS ARE :

GENTLEMEN'S ROADSTER—Type E, 12 H. P., very light and speedy, two passengers only. \$1400.

LIGHT CAR—Type A, 12 H. P., (same as last year with improvements and higher horse-power). \$1500. With large and roomy detachable tonneau, \$1650.

LIGHT TONNEAU—Type B, 12 H. P., four passengers, \$1650.

LIGHT TONNEAU—Type F, 12 H. P., five passengers. Solid-back tonneau with exit through tilting front seat. \$1700.

20 H. P. TOURING CAR—Type D, with side doors. \$2500.

30 H. P. TOURING CAR—Type C, with side doors. \$3500.

This Announcement explains the remarkable features of *Franklin* construction which made Mr. Whitman's great run possible in a light 10-horse-power car, and shows how we have applied them on a larger scale in our new high-power touring cars.

The most wonderful advance in motor engineering this year, is our discovery of a way to get more power out of our engines without increasing the weight of engine or car. If interested, write for the Announcement.

H. H. FRANKLIN MFG. CO.,
316 Geddes Street, Syracuse, N. Y.

Member Association Licensed Automobile Manufacturers.

THE
FRANKLIN
MOTOR - CAR