

## History of 1909 "Ruby" Reo

From my perspective, the history of Ruby started in early September 1994. Joe Whitney and I had taken a trailer load of 1912 Reo parts to swap for a 1914 Reo body and parts in Salt Lake City, Utah. The swap was concluded on a Sunday and we were loading the parts for a quick return that day to Tucson, Arizona. Dave Angel (the guy we were getting the parts from) casually mentioned that it was too bad that it was Sunday and that we were in such a hurry to leave. We asked him why. He said that there was a cute little Reo in Logan, Utah (near the Idaho border) that he really wanted, so he was reluctant to let us know about it. We ran for the phone. The owner was about to take off on a trip and would only show it to us if we could get there in one hour. We dropped everything and raced to Logan. Surprisingly, we got no speeding tickets! The little Reo was in an antique store with theater stantions around it, and a woman manekin dressed in vintage clothes was part of the scene.

Roger Jeffs, the owner of Finders Keepers, told us all that he knew about the car. It was shipped out from New Jersey to Utah to an elderly couple named Troutman. Mr. and Mrs. Troutman wanted to restore an early car so they had an agent search for one for them. Shortly after getting the car Mr. Troutman unfortunately died. Mrs. Troutman kept the car for about two years and then sold it to Mr. Jeffs. Supposedly, the car had been stored in New Jersey in an upstairs apartment for 50 years.

My wife, Sandy, and Joe's wife, Leanne, went with us back up to Logan to pick up the car in late September. Utah was beautiful with wildflowers and the trip was enchanting as possible with a huge trailer in tow. Sandy, the lightest, steered the car into the trailer while the rest pushed her in. We gleefully headed back to Arizona. The car was obviously a gem. And a lady. And needed a name that started with "R" for Reo. Thus, "Ruby" was named by Sandy. Ruby was a bit cramped in our garage. Her companions were a 1909 Cameron six and 2-1914 Reos in serious need of restoration. Later the two 1914 Reos were sold to buy a 1913 Reo the Fifth in much better condition. After considerable work, Ruby is still unrestored (although feeling much better).

In September of 1994 I contacted Ray Wood, who had worked in the Reo Factory, and told him the details of the car including the serial number. He researched it and found that the car was a 1909 Model G. Mr. Wood has since died.

I attempted to find out the location of Mrs. Troutman in Logan to get more of the vehicle's history. I met with utter failure after calling several Troutmans listed in the phone book. I tried to find the man that had found the car in New Jersey to get more history. No luck. I have not tried really, really hard to find the registration information indicated by the numbers on the side lamps. These must show the license number issued somewhere in the East. Probably New York or New Jersey. Early on they issued numbers, later plates. There are listings of the numbers by state and by car and owner for some states. Most are not computerized!

When Sandy and I got Ruby she looked pretty good but had been driven hard over rough roads and put up badly abused. I replaced the wheel bearings, had an axle made, replaced rear bearings in the axle tubes, welded a spring perch, and hard-chromed most of the front end parts that were badly worn. She was missing her drip oiler and crank handle -- eventually I found correct replacement ones. I made up brass acorn nuts that were missing on each side and put in the cross body rod to keep the body from spreading. I also drilled out a broken brass water fitting into the cylinder and made a new one similar to the fitting to the water pump. I did NOT clean out the water system and make it water tight. This is needed, of course.

I have not had the engine apart. I did add some oil in the transmission. The rear end was greased and oiled when put back together. I cleaned and oiled the chain, too. It should be re-oiled and maybe soaked in hot oil before running. The sprockets are a bit worn at the transmission and rear but usable.

She has never come when I called her so I guess you can change her name if another suits her better. I hope she isn't sea-sick or hurt on the trip over. Good luck to you and your family with the restoration.

Ron Franklin