

Memories of Yesteryear: Where Is It?

Story by Bob Hughes

I am going to write a few short stories about some of my experiences during my 84 years of life. Here is the second, ~Bob Hughes

Where Is It?

Many moons ago when I was just a young buck—much better than being an old dude today—I saw a 1950 Oldsmobile convertible on a car lot in Pasadena, California. I wanted that car so I traded in my '41 Chevy with some cash—or at least a promise to pay—and was the new proud owner of a very nice pink Olds convertible. My dad was not pleased but there was no foul language and I kept the car—he was a great dad and I sure miss him. It ran well, started very easy and was very clean with a minimum of warts and pimples. It was a great car and I was glad that I bought it.

My uncle Roy asked me to go with him on a deer hunting trip in the high Sierra Nevada mountains. We drove to some place like Bishop, California and then flew as passengers in a single engine World War II type trainer or fighter into Monache Meadows. It was a small landing strip so we landed going uphill and therefore we must take off going downhill when it was time to leave—quite a thrill for a young snoot nose buck. During the trip I did not fire a shot but my uncle fired at least once. We finally left empty handed but I still had a great time. I had driven my Olds to my uncle's place in west LA so I said goodbye to my uncle as he went in the house and I started the pink Olds. It ran horrible and shook. I shut the engine off and went to get my uncle who was a service advisor for a local Olds dealer. He listened to it and was probably thinking 'Kid, I am tired—just go home'. At the time I was working at a rental yard so I drove there and went to work. Then I drove home later in the poorly running Olds. When I shut it off, I heard a loud clunk—the engine would not restart. I had very little mechanical experience but decided I must try and fix my pink Olds convertible. I proceeded to take things apart and when I took off the intake manifold and valve cover I noticed that the cam had a piece missing. I thought where is it. It was just lying there and was 2 or 3 inches long.

This is what I believe happened. The engine always started very quick. The head leaked and put water into one cylinder. When the engine started, it came up on a compression stroke on a cylinder that had water in it and bent the rod or broke it. The rod finally broke and by chance came up under the cam and pushed a section out of it. When installing a junkyard head, I was tightening the head bolts—I hope with a torque wrench (but I don't remember), a head bolt broke ---Oh #\$\$^& I was very unhappy I stuck the broken bolt back in the hole and fortunately the broken piece turned but was left in the hole Oh #\$\$%^& again. I finally got the broken piece out maybe with a long magnet—just don't remember but I got it all back together. A month or two later when I went to start the engine it turned over a little but did not turn over completely and did not start. I found that another head had leaked and a cylinder was full of water. Well, I had had enough of the pink Olds and sold it—wish I had it back, it would be worth a lot today and would be fun to have!

Oh well—I must accept the unacceptable.

~Bob Hughes (remembering the pink Olds)

