

Day 4: 208 miles for the day, 967 miles from home.

Well this was a very fascinating day. I will just have to take it in chronological order. First let me report another day with no problems with the car.

I knew this was a short day of driving, so I took my time in the morning setting out at about 9:00. It was 57 degrees and mostly sunny. I head south to the town of Antonito, Colorado. This is one of the terminus points for the Cumbres and Toltec Railway. This is a steam train that operates daily between there and Chama, NM. Well, I had been a little too leisurely in getting on the road because the steam train was leaving the station just as I was pulling up to the rail yard. I tried to get a picture, but it did not turn out well.

Since I had missed the train I continued on west from there over the Cumbres Pass toward Chama. When I got to the summit of Cumbres Pass, the steam train coming the other direction from Chama was there at the station. I was able to pull in there in time to get the car positioned for a good picture this time with the car and train together.



At Cumbres Pass summit



I crossed the continental divide today, so it is all downhill from here. Well, maybe not all downhill, but at least on average. The above picture shows the Cumbres Pass at 10,022 feet, but the La Manga Pass, just earlier was a little bit higher at 10,230 feet. It is not the 14,000 foot plus of some of Colorado's mountains, but fairly high none the less.

After getting the picture with the train, I was figuring "it doesn't get any better than this". I headed on down into Chama, and got into town just in time for lunch. I found the Box Car Cafe just across the street from the Chama rail yard so found a parking place and went in. I ordered, and another gentleman came in and took a table near mine. Then a couple came in and the man went right over to that other gentleman's table and started talking to him. I could tell they didn't know each other, but that he knew who the guy was. I started talking to the man from the couple, mostly about the Model T, then the other guy got up and left the restaurant. I asked the man who he was and he said Al Unser. Well I saw that he had gone across the street and was checking out my car, so I quickly told the waitress I would be right back to pay my bill. I went over and introduced myself and we had a nice conversation. He told me that he has just purchased a (if I remember right) 1915 Model T touring in well preserved un-restored condition. I think it will end up in his museum in Albuquerque.



Al Unser with my car.

Wow, what a day. How could anything more happen? I got back into the restaurant and got my bill paid, got myself together and headed out of Chama toward Farmington, NM.

I was just leaving town when there were sirens and lights behind me. I pulled as far over on the narrow shoulder as I could and the Sheriff's vehicle passes me and on down the road. Later I came to the point where the highways 84 and 64 divide, and there are barricades and various officers there. Highway 64 was closed. This is the route I was to take. I pulled off the road and went to one of the officers and asked how I was to get to Farmington. He tried to route me all the way to Durango and then south. That would have been a rather long detour. I let him know I was OK with back roads, and after a little convincing that it was OK with this car, he gave me a route that was unpaved and was a much shorter detour. Before I left I asked why the road is closed. He said that there was a man hunt. A guy had been shooting at officers and had gotten into the forest and they didn't want to take any chance on him getting up on a cliff and shooting at passing cars.



The Detour

The detour did get a little rough in places, but nothing a Model T can't handle. It took me back to highway 64 at the other end of where they had it blocked off.

The rest of the drive to Farmington was uneventful. I got into town at about 5:15. It was 90 degrees, hot, but not really too bad. I was planning on camping here and had found a place on the internet called "Mom and Pop's RV Park" They had tent camping spots as well. It sounded good to me. I found the place with no trouble. I looked it over and the tent camping was literally a gravel parking lot. No trees, not even a blade of grass in sight. I decided this was not for me and went to the Motel 6 just down the road.

Somehow, I just don't think tomorrow will be quite as eventful as today. But, who knows?