

Lamps and Windshields as Accessories: On most American tiller-steered cars before 1905, the lamps did not come with the car, and windshields as such were still unknown. However, every owner wanted some sort of lamp in case he (or she) was caught out after dark. Kerosene lanterns with bails to carry them also had side brackets to fit on the side of the car, usually alongside the main seat. Lamps such as this were self-contained, utilizing a wick to carry oil, usually kerosene, from the well of the lamp at the bottom to the adjustable vertical element, where the flame burned in front of a reflector. A dim light shone ahead but barely enough to light the way.

With the coming of hoods in front of the driver's seat on Stanley cars during the 1905 model year, while lamps were still not included, it was assumed that most owners who could afford a car wanted at least two kerosene lamps to light the way and maybe even a similar tail light, which would feature a red lens facing toward the rear. Catalog prints of the cars being offered sometimes showed the models with no lamps and sometimes with two kerosene lanterns mounted toward the front of the hood. It was not long, however, before night driving became popular (or necessary), and carbide lamps with larger reflectors and lenses offered a much brighter view of the road ahead. Such lamps, two in number, were mounted at the front of the frame inside the front fenders but required an outside source to fuel them, namely a carbide generator mounted on the running board. Water dripping on a carbide cake made the gas that was delivered to the lamps by tiny tubing, brass and rubber. While this was satisfactory, it was cumbersome, and small Prestolite tanks, where acetylene gas could be stored safely under pressure, immediately gained favor, and the preferred system was to carry a rechargeable Prestolite tank on the running board with a valve to open, close, and adjust the amount of gas going forward to the lamps. Acetylene gas worked equally as well as carbide gas. The gas would be turned on at the tank, the lamps lit with a match, and the gas valve adjusted to the proper brightness or height of the flame. If the gas was turned up too high, the lamps would roar, and the heat would soon crack the reflectors. By 1908 on larger cars and by 1910 or 1911 on most all cars, owners wanted acetylene headlights while retaining kerosene side lamps and a kerosene tail light.

On May 29 and 30, 1910, my father and his second cousin, Paul Way, were at the Stanley factory to take delivery of a new 10-horsepower Model 61, ordered by the latter, and the two of them planned to drive it over the road to Yorklyn or Kennett Square (home of Way) to save the freight. The 29th was a Sunday, and the 30th was Memorial Day. No one was around the factory on Sunday until F. E. Stanley appeared in a red 10-horsepower Stanley and asked what he could do for the strangers. They told him they hoped to get the new car the following morning and start for home. He reminded them that the next day was a holiday but said if they would be there at 7:00 A.M., he would make sure the car was ready. He asked what lamps they wanted with the car. From a later picture showing Paul Way and his family on a trip, we know he not only had five lamps but a windshield as well. Possibly it was installed at the factory; possibly later. F. E. said to the boys: "New York is 242 miles, and I drive it in 6½ hours." Paul Way enjoyed his steamer, but he died in 1928 at the age of 48. His brother, Frank, also owned one or two Stanleys, as did Frank's son, Robert, in the collecting years (approximately 1954 to 1990).

The bails were discontinued on side lamps about 1908. There were many makes of brass lamps, some of which were nickel-plated and even painted over. A few, but not all, the famous ones were Solar, Dietz, Gray & Davis, Edmunds & Jones, and Neverout. Lamps, windshields, and speedometers became standard equipment on 20- and 30-horsepower Stanley cars in 1912 and on all Stanleys in 1913. By 1915, there was no more gas; all lamps were electric, and Stanleys had 6-volt generators and storage batteries.