

# *A little bit about Andy Hotton* by Leland Powels

Having a father like Tom Powels (with his long association with Lincoln people and the Lincoln Owners Club) meant the phone was ringing constantly. It seemed like every minute he was talking to a different Lincoln person. Out of the hundreds of "Lincoln Pals" my dad had, one of my favorites was Andy Hotton. He knew so much about engines, and how things should be built, yet he had the heart and soul of a young happy kid.

In the late 70's I would fly back to his shop in Michigan, in order to pick up his newly converted Convertible Capri's and drive them back to California. Once they arrived, my job was to turn them over to Lincoln Mercury dealers.

I can remember one time, my father was with me and we were staying in Michigan waiting for one of the cars to be finished, hanging out with Andy. All of a sudden, two major league Lincoln executives showed up at the shop to review a new Hotton Limousine that was under construction, only the car was being worked on a few miles away. So, Andy grabbed a brand new Lincoln Town Car that was waiting to be cut into a hearse and told the executives to climb in the backseat. Then, he motioned to my dad and me to come along too. My dad sat in the back with the executives and I was in the front seat.

It was cold that time of the year and snow was still on the ground. As we pulled up to the warehouse, there was an icy field. Andy looked at me, winked, and in a whisper said, "Put your seatbelt on, We're gonna' have some fun". All of a sudden he floored that 460 V-8, shot into the ice, locked up the brakes and did what I have never seen before. He did six donuts in one direction, then he slammed it into reverse and did six donuts in the other direction.

When he came to a stop, my dad and the executives were on the floor and a couple of them were upside down, white-faced. Andy just calmly got out of the car and walked into the building and I followed him.

Nothing was ever mentioned about it, but I assume Andy made a good deal with the executives that day because he had rattled them a little bit.

My dad laughed like hell after they left!

That's just the kind of guy Andy was. He was the best driver I have ever met, next to my fathers other good friend, Phil Hill.

## **THE HOTTON MANIFOLD**

**(AND THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GLIDDEN TOUR OF 1964)**

By Rick Zobelein and Leland Powels

Andy Hotton started his career at the Henry Ford Trade School and was directly involved with the Willow Run B-24 Bomber Plant. After the war, he started a new firm that produced aftermarket performance parts for flat-head equipped Ford vehicles. His firm, Dearborn Steel Tubing, began a long association with Ford Motor Company and was involved in many special projects with Ford, too numerous to list here. (see: <http://www.coachbuilt.com/bui/a/aha/aha.htm>).



Rick Zobelein in his Brunn Phaeton taken at the 2014 West Coast LOC Meet this August.



Andy Hotton pictured at the far right with other enthusiastic Lincoln owners on the Indianapolis track getting ready to test out the down draft conversion

It is well known that vehicle design is based on technology available at a given time. So it was with the Model L Lincoln. Due to the poor quality of gasoline available during that era, steps had to be taken to allow the car to perform under all conditions. It was difficult to get gasoline to vaporize before it arrived in the combustion chamber for ignition. Therefore,

the carburetor was placed low, between the cylinder blocks, and exhaust gas was channeled thru the intake manifold to encourage vaporization. Imagine that the fuel had to travel up thru the throat of the carburetor, across the intake manifold, down into the cylinder blocks, and finally, up thru the intake

valves into the combustion chambers. If the fuel was not properly vaporized before it arrived in the cylinder, the car would not run! Recall, the electro-fog generator on the early Lincolns. A heating coil was placed at the entrance to the carburetor air horn. On a cold start, the coil vaporized a small pool of gasoline in an effort to start the car. It also drained the battery!

By 1931, thru the efforts of the Ethyl Corporation and others, gasoline quality had improved significantly which allowed for better designs of fuel delivery. Manifold design incorporating downdraft carburetors provided more power and improved engine performance. This can be seen in the later Lincolns, starting in 1931.

Unfortunately, as the Depression wore on, many Lincolns lost value and were scrapped in order to support the War effort. By the mid 1950's, interest in Lincolns started to blossom and many were put back on the road. As it is today, some owners invested time and research to improve the performance of their old car.

To improve the performance of the Model "L", Andy set about designing and manufacturing a new intake manifold and associated carburetor.



*Up on the highest part of the track reaching record speeds.*

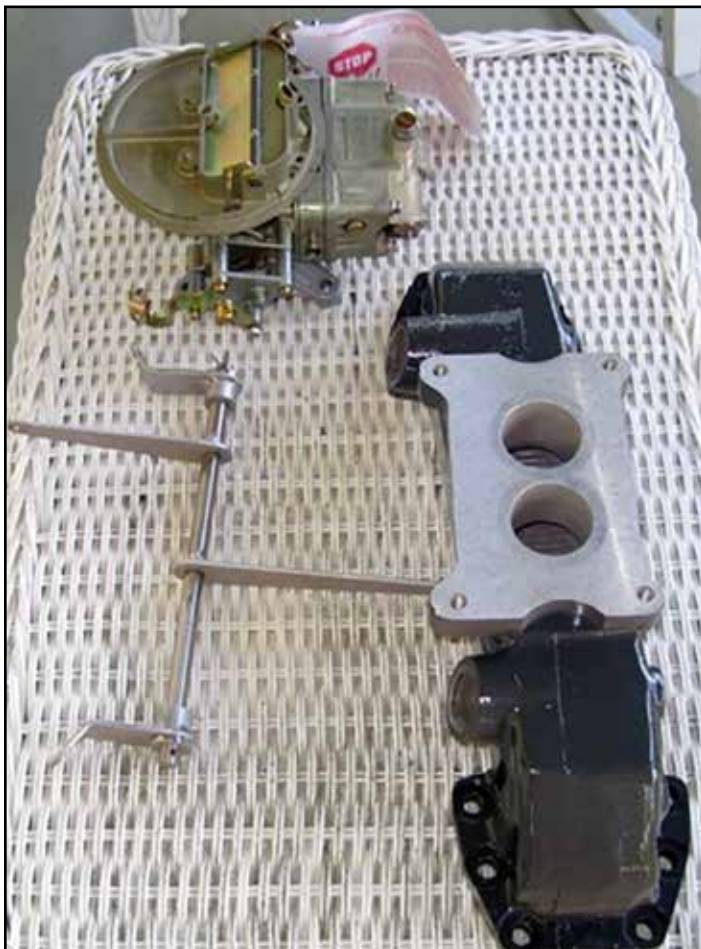
How Andy got the idea for this was by experimenting with his 1927 Lincoln Locke Roadster named "Tiger". Andy was able to retrofit 1931 Lincoln blocks, heads, exhaust and intake manifolds on to his 1927 crankcase. Then he topped it off with a 1960's Lincoln two barrel holly carburetor with electric fuel pump to feed it. He also used a heavy duty pressurized radiator for extra cooling.

The two pictures in the beginning of this article show Andy and Lincoln friends at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The picture from inside the cockpit was taken at the upper edge of the track. In order to stick to the bank of the track you have to be going near speeds of 100 miles per hour. This is where he proved the down draft carburetor would work terrific on the early L Model.

After the great success with "Tiger" and the downdraft carburetor at the Indi track, Andy realized this was the avenue to improve the performance of the "L" series by reworking the fuel delivery.

Andy got Ford to publish a Technical Service Bulletin, assigning an "L" part number for the manifold! The results are shown here, courtesy LOC member Mike Barrett. Quite a few of these kits were manufactured and sold to interested parties. LOC member Tom Powels had a few of these available years ago, but they are no longer available today.

According to past conversations with Tom Powels and Ken Pearson, around 1964, there was an interest in doing a run up Pikes Peak with Lincolns.



*The conversion kit as it looks when assembled. Makes a tight package and is not easily noticeable under the hood.*

*Downdraft manifold, carburetor and linkage ready for inspection.*

That was the year that the AACA sponsored the famous Glidden Tour titled “Pikes Peak or Bust”.

Andy was able to manufacture and supply manifolds and radiators to all the Model L Lincolns that were on that tour in 1964 courtesy of the Ford Motor Company. Sales were high that year for the new Lincolns and the company felt that having close to 18 vintage Lincolns blasting up and down Pike’s Peak would be good advertising.

Base camp was the Broadmoor Hotel with a claimed 214 cars participating including all makes ranging from the early teens to the mid- thirties. It is doubtful that all cars on the tour would have attempted the climb, as this event was quite a challenge, since the climb to the top was 14,110 feet, at a 10% grade. This would be stressful for any vehicle because all of the 19 miles up hill had a 5% power loss for every 1,000 feet of elevation it would climb!



*Car clubs race and tour up Pike’s Peak every year and have for decades. The Glidden Tour still remains to be popular.*



*Pikes peak stands tall at 14,110 feet.*

LOC members Hank Harper, Ken Pearson, and Andy Hotton ( to name a few) retrofitted their Lincolns and trailered them out to Pikes Peak in Colorado for a run up the mountain.

Tom Powels and Jack Passey decided to drive all the way to Colorado and back with Tom’s 1925 Brunn Phaeton, “Felix”. Tom purchased the car from the Felix Family and was the second owner of a very low mileage car.

Tom and Jack were so pleased with the down draft carburetor kit and the performance of Felix. They were very excited to take it on the monumental trip. The cars 23” Buffalo Wire Wheels had always been hard to get tires for. The Lester tire company had promised to have some newly manufactured 23’s ready, but they did not come in time for the trip. Off they went with six very old tires. This was quite an amazing journey for them. They got their second flat, halfway there and ended up having to borrow some tires from a Classic Car Club member. That unknown CCCA member saved the day when he loaned them the 23” spare tires off of his Minerva.

On one of the tour days, before the Pikes Peak Run, the group drove to the Royal Gorge Bridge as seen in this photo taken by Tom Powels. To this day no one knows how he got high enough to take the photo, but there are rumors that he had to climb quite a ways up to take it.

For those of you who have never heard of the Royal Gorge Bridge, it is one of the main tourist attractions in Colorado.





Seen here is Bill Harrah posing with one of the original drivers of the New York to Paris race of 1908 before its restoration.



Here is the Thomas Flyer after its extensive restoration. Mr. Harrah loved Lincolns and had many nice models in his collection.

These days, there is even a theme park surrounding it. It held the record for the highest bridge in the world from 1929 till 2001, when it was surpassed by a bridge in China. It is a suspension bridge that was constructed in only 6 months and has towers that reach 150 feet. The bridge is 1,260 feet long and 18 feet wide, with a wooden walkway with 1292 planks. To this day, it remains the highest bridge in the United States.

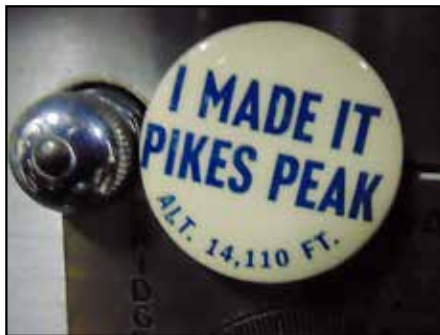
Finally the day of the big event came. Most of the foremost car collectors and restorers of the day were there. Bill Harrah had just completed the restoration of two Thomas Flyers, one of them being the 1908 Around the World Thomas Flyer. I think each person who drove their car up that mountain that day had a famous story.

The Thomas car that Bill Harrah was driving broke a gear in its transmission, but being the true car guy he was, he found a way to back the car up all the way to the top.

In Andy's case, his goal was to be first.

Andy was a long time racer and a veteran of the Mexican Road Races of the 1950's where he helped make the win for Lincoln. Andy was just a general, all around lead foot and he knew how to drive. So, with Tiger's 1931 manifold, Lincoln two barrel down draft, genuine police flyer gearing in the rear end, and with Jack Passey as his co-pilot, Andy made it to the top of Pike's Peak first.

I don't think anyone was too surprised, but what was amazing, was that Tom Powels was the second one up with



Dash plaque trophies that these rugged L Models achieved on the Glidden Tour 50 years ago. The anniversary being in September of this year.



Andy Hotton (shown on the left) and Tom Powels (shown on the right) take their souvenir photos at the summit of Pike's Peak on the Glidden Tour of 1964.



*50 Years later, "Felix" (on the left) and "Tiger" (on the right) still show up at LOC meets and are used regularly. Time does not change a Lincoln. Our cover shot features "Felix" on the return trip home at the Grand Canyon*

his 1925 Lincoln with two wheel brakes and smaller engine boar. The only modifications on his car were the newly made down draft manifold and two barrel carburetor conversion. This shows that the carburetor kit really did work well. Also, he might not have been that bad of a driver either.

Both of the cars, Andy's "Tiger" and Tom's "Felix" wear

their Pike's Peak buttons and decals of their accomplishments of those trips today and still sport their downdraft carburetors.

The editor is pleased to say he owns both of these cars today. He wonders if those cars still talk about that tour when they are parked side by side in the dark garage when no one is around.



Photo courtesy of longtime LOC member David Clement

*Pictured here from left to right are: Sig Stensland, Tom Powels, Bill Harrah, Ken Pearson, Hank Harper, Andy Hotton and Grant Lamkin. These men were once some of the heavy hitters in the LOC in the 1960's. Bill Harrah assembled this group of men to study and comment on Bill's cutaway L Model engine from the 1927 Auto Show before its restoration. The completed cutaway engine resides at the National Automobile Museum in Reno, Nevada alongside Bill Harrah's 1927 Judkins Coaching Brougham. These exhibits still draw large crowds of enthusiasts*