A Lewiston Maine
SKENE (1900)

by Wallace S. Phinney, Sr.

As the result of the BULB HORN story of the
Springfield, Mass., Skene which appeared in the
July-August 1977 issue, I received a phone call from
Ed Lake of Ludlow, Mass. stating that he thought an
unidentified steam car owned by Paul Walker of New
Brantree, Mass., seemed to fit the description of a
Springfield or possibly a Lewiston, Maine, Skene.

A follow-up of this lead paid off with the pictures
shown herewith. The previously unidentified steamer
was indeed a 1900 Lewiston Skene steamer, number
13, which was probably built during the summer of
1900 for it fitted perfectly the description as quoted
from the Cycle and Automobile Trade Journal of
April 1900.

This steamer was not always in the condition
pictured for it was acquired by Mr. Walker during the
winter of 1971 when he saw it in a U-Haul high-sided
trailer in the yard of Frank Cooke of North Brook-
field, Mass. There it was, a true basket case, the
chassis standing upright and the rest of the steamer
parts thrown haphazardly into the body of the trailer.
A barn was being emptied and the steamer and
steamer parts were gathered up to be carted away. (In
the distant past it had lain out in the weather in an
apple orchard for many years before being put in a
barn.)

In 1973 Mr. Walker started restoration with some
two years of steady work ahead. Without any
identification or means of identification or pictures
to go by, this was a tremendous task. Finally the
Skene was restored and running. (Space does not
permit a complete account of the restoration but
needless to say it was a major undertaking.)

According to Mr. Walker, the Skene is a real jewel,
especially for parades where the going is slow; it is
light and peppy but not suited for fast driving as it
soon runs out of steam if driven too fast. But in
1900, roads were not that good so the Skene would
have been the ideal car to be driven.

Words of thanks go to Ed Lake for the tip and to
Paul Walker for his courtesy and kindness in making
his Skene available for this sequel to the Springfield
Skene story.
Left side of the Skene. Note the clean, graceful lines of the car.

In the "engine room" from left to right are the water column with "try-cocks" and the two vertical cylinders.

Right side of the Skene. Note the water glass and hand controls.

The steamer's chain-driven rear axle has a differential and brake band. The base of the boiler is barely visible. No effort was made to enclose the differential gears or chain to protect them from dirt or mud.

A close-up view of the under side showing the gasoline tank under the footboard, the crankshaft with connecting rods and the base of the vertical boiler.