

STORY NUMBER 16 - THE BUICK BREAKER SPRING - PERKINS, CALIFORNIA
As told by William J. (Bill) Kuhrt, 1990

This is the sixteenth in the series of happenstances or episodes that occurred to me during my life. This occurred some years later after we were living in Sacramento and had our home on Ninth Avenue. It came to Labor Day and some friends of ours from Alameda had phoned and wanted to know if they could come up and bring their adopted son with them. He wanted to learn how to fish for trout. So Dorothy and I invited them to come up and stay over the Labor Day weekend. Al Eichholz was with one of the federal agencies in San Francisco. They came up, and on this particular Sunday just before Labor Day we arranged to fix up some picnic lunches and started out to go up Highway 50 to the upper reaches of the American River. Well, we had a good early start. We got out on Highway 50, and about three miles beyond Perkins my car stopped dead. It was a Buick V-8, which they weren't making anymore. This car was then 10 or 12 years old, but I knew what it was as soon as it stopped the way it did. It was a breaker spring in the distributor box that had broken and stopped the motor from receiving any ignition. Well, I got out, opened up the hood, looked to see, and sure enough the breaker spring in the distributor box had broken. It was a spring steel which would last a long time, but it finally just couldn't stand it any longer. Anyway, the question was what to do. It wasn't too hot yet although it turned out to be a very hot day. There we were about three miles from any town of any size, and that was only Perkins, which was practically just a few houses put together. We remembered seeing a house back about a mile amongst the hop fields.

So Al and I walked back to this house. The family was away but the hired man was sitting there and said, "Well, I don't know anything about cars and I don't have my own car to help you but I can take you back to Perkins and there is a garage there. However, the garage man is usually pretty well drunk over the weekend so I don't know whether he can do you any good or not." We said, "Well, we'll go back with you and see what we can do."

We got back there, found where he lived, and we aroused him. He said, "Well, I'll put on some clothes and come down." So he did. He was about half sober. He opened up his garage door and there was a bank of boxes about four by four inches and about 12 inches long. I can't tell you how many there were but they were stacked at least ten to twelve high and stretched over a distance of over ten or twelve feet. He said, "Well, I bought them from a fellow who went broke and I haven't used very many of them, but they're all parts for Ford and Chevrolet. I don't have any Buick parts at all."

We looked in the Chevrolet parts to see if they would do any good. He pulled out some boxes and we looked at them, and of course they didn't fit at all. So we couldn't get any help there. He said, "Well, you got two things that you can do. You can call for a hauling agency and pull your car back to Sacramento (it's about 14 miles)." We tried that and they wanted \$28.00 to start with right on the tap and they couldn't fix it or even think of fixing it til the next Tuesday. That wasn't going to do us any

good. So he said, "Well, I don't have anything here in the way of parts but I can go out to your car and wire it over so we can get your motor started. Then you can turn around and go back to Sacramento. At least you can get home that way." And so we said, "Well, maybe we'd better do that." But in the meantime he left the garage door open so we could look at those boxes.

I can't explain to you now or I couldn't at that time what happened. Suddenly I seemed to feel a great urge to go back to that bunch of boxes. And I did. I didn't really know what was going on but I just went back to that bank of boxes. Something impelled me to reach up to a box we hadn't touched anywhere around, right mixed in with all the rest of them. And I pulled out that box. In the front were some Chevrolet electrical pieces, and in the back of the box was an oil-stained manilla envelope. So I pulled out that envelope and looked inside, and there were two Buick breaker springs. I was just flabbergasted. I put the box back and kept out the breaker springs.

When the garage man came down I showed them to him. And he said, "Where in the hell did you get them?" I said, "I pulled a box and they were in the back of this box." And my friend took over and said, "He just seemed to be impelled to go and pull that box. He didn't pull any other boxes except that one box. And in the back of it were the breaker springs." Well, the garage man (maybe it was because he was about half shot) looked at me and said, "I don't know who you are. I don't know what your name is but you've got something that the rest of us don't have." I said, "Oh heck, that was just a happenstance, that was just extremely good luck." He said, "Good luck, hell. With a bunch of boxes like that, that isn't happenstance."

Well, he went out with us, took us back to the car, put in the breaker spring, and I bought the other one from him for \$2.00. He wouldn't take anything for his services or for driving us out or anything else. And we went on our merry way up Highway 50 and had a very, very nice day and came back in the evening.

But my friend Al Eichholz said to the two ladies, "I've never seen anything like it. Bill just seemed to be forced to go and pull that box, and he only pulled that one box and there were the breaker springs. That isn't normal." And he said this to the two women. And his wife said, "Well, there's a name for it. I can't recall just what the name is, but apparently he's got it." My wife said, "Oh heck, Bill is just one of those lucky birds that seems to be able to pull the rabbit out of the hat every now and then."

So that was the end of that. Now I forgot all about it until a few years ago and never thought anything more about it. But I thought it was a story well worth telling. So quid erat zu erzhalen. That which was to be related. Thank you.