

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 15, 2005

First Lakeville, Connecticut, Steam Car Tour, 1955: Eleven of us, including family members, plan to attend the Eastern Steam Car Tour at Lakeville, Connecticut, next week. My records indicate this will be the 6th Steam Car Tour with headquarters at Lakeville. I was on the committee of five who planned the first one, June 3-4-5, 1955. It was a grand gathering of 25 cars, most driven there on their own power, but the weather did not cooperate, and it rained going to and during the tour. While there had been three steam car tours before 1955, after the 1951 tour, the idea lapsed, and it was revived again by several of us who participated in the New England Glidden Tour of September 1954. Four of the five Lakeville committee members were on that tour: Frank Gardner in his newly restored 1912 Stanley Model 74, Dr. John P. Miller in his huge Model G White of 1907, and Norbert Behrendt and I in my father's 1913 Stanley Model 76. Henry Shepard, uncle of the first astronaut Alan Shepard, was the fifth committee member.

After searching for a somewhat central location, the old Interlaken Inn at Lakeville (which burned down in the early 1960s), was selected, and an outstanding effort was undertaken to find anyone we knew of who owned or had owned a steam car so an invitation could be extended. I think about 150 announcements went out, and probably 50 acceptances were received, half of whom brought steam cars. Other than New England cars, Ed Pamphilon, Norbert Behrendt, and C. E. Simmons, all from the Washington area, started the trip, although Simmons made it only as far as Yorklyn. We took two cars, my father's 1924 Doble steamer and his Stanley Model 87, which is going again this time, 50 years later. J. Donald Gibson took his homemade roadster over the road from Media, Pennsylvania, Jim Beun from Quakertown trailered his 1902 Grout steamer, and Bob Lyon from Chicago brought his '99 Locomobile on a trailer. Bob Bohaty of Long Island also had a Locomobile that unfortunately caught fire and was nearly destroyed. Earle Eckel had two cars there, his faithful 1914 Stanley 20-horsepower roadster, and his 1903 tiller-steered Model C. The opera singer and movie star James Melton had his Model 70 Stanley sent up for the event, but when he attempted to put the top up to drive in Saturday's rain, there was no top there, only the bows!

We had a set of "official" photo prints from the 1955 event. Through the efforts of Gene Maute, who flattened and preserved these prints in a notebook, and Butch Cannard, who enlarged and copied them, we are taking a pictorial account of that first Lakeville tour to the present one, this time with headquarters at the "new" Interlaken Inn, built at the same location as the old probably in the late 1960s.