

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, January 2, 2006

First Third of 1972 Trip in Steamer, Yorklyn to Yellowstone: Jules Reiver, Weldin Stumpf and I left here in the rain in early afternoon of June 13 for our 500-mile trip to Montreal to begin the second-ever Transcontinental Reliability Tour run by Millard Newman for the Veteran Motor Car Club of America. To be eligible, all cars had to be made prior to 1915. Stopping at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, Latham, New York, and Plattsburgh, New York, we arrived in the French-speaking city on the St. Lawrence at noon on the 16th. Thirty-two cars were signed up to participate, but only 20 showed up (the 21st joined us in Ottawa, missing only one day). We headed west out of Montreal on a bright and sunny Sunday morning (June 18), staying in Canada for the first five days of the tour, with overnight stops at Ottawa, Callander, Sudbury, and Sault Ste. Marie, all in Ontario. Our first “free” day was on the Canadian side of the Soo Locks. All kinds of weather prevailed during this initial stretch. It became very hot and humid on the second day, followed on the third by a violent thunderstorm, and cold, damp weather for several days thereafter. At home during this time, Hurricane Agnes was taking its severe toll.

Crossing Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the rain, it finally cleared the next day as we passed through northern Wisconsin and stopped at Rhinelander overnight. Beautiful weather followed us into Minneapolis, and by this time we had already experienced water stops at a hospital, a commercial steam laundry, and a state-run fish hatchery. We had also visited with several postmasters and taken on water from farmers who had collected rain water in advance. The free day in Minneapolis was a beautiful one, climaxed by an evening tour through several of the city parks with their many lakes and an ice cream social at Minnehaha Falls. I changed passengers here, with Jules Reiver flying home and Jim Johnson from the Chicago area joining (Weldin Stumpf had come home from Montreal on June 16, his 50th birthday, and his first time in an airplane).

Every car that had started in Montreal was still with us, but there had been two or three driver changes. We were getting to know everyone very well, and even though we had the only steamer, there was great camaraderie among our small group, each pulling for everyone else to complete the trip to Tijuana and San Diego. As we “raced” west, we stopped overnight at Milbank, South Dakota, Baker and Miles City, Montana, and were en route from the latter point to Billings when a rear-wheel bearing went out— Friday afternoon of the long July 4th weekend. Limping into Billings at 20 m.p.h., we found a machinist who opened his shop and worked most of the night helping us make the repair. Getting to bed at 4:30 a.m., we were on our way the next morning at 9:30, en route to Livingston and Yellowstone National Park, where we enjoyed Old Faithful Inn on July 4, and I changed passengers again. The Stumpfs—Weldin, Dorothy and their 13-year-old daughter Joan—joined at Yellowstone, and Jim Johnson moved over to ride with Millard Newman in the latter's 1911 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost. Twenty-two days of the total 58 were successfully behind us.