

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, October 23, 2006

Two Wonderful Years: In my case, I've picked 1941 and 1972. All of us have either had or may wish to have a "trip of a lifetime," and I had two that stand out above the others. We'll talk about 1972 in a future "News."

In 1941, having just graduated from Wilmington Friends School, my parents, my cousin Meta Shallcross, and I embarked on a trip though the West in my dad's '37 Packard Twelve, still in our collection. We left Yorklyn on June 18 and returned about August 25. The Packard had 19,000 miles on its odometer when we left and 31,000 at the end of the trip. As it turned out, 1941 was the last year such a trip was possible until well after World War II, as the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor three months after our trip ended, and 1942 brought gasoline rationing and curtailment of almost every other luxury.

Being an ardent trapshooter along with my father, we took our trap guns and planned to use them at several tournaments along the way. We shot one day at the Pennsylvania State Shoot at Bradford, one day at the Okoboji Indians Tournament at Cedar Point, Ohio, one day at the Utah State Shoot at Ogden, and one day at a new gun club in Santa Monica, California, where we shot alongside the movie actor Charles Winninger (Abel Frake in the 1945 version of *State Fair*). For two days we had a great time at the Pacific International Tournament in Portland, Oregon and near the end of the trip competed in the Grand American Tournament at Vandalia, Ohio. All this was great fun for a 17-year-old who had won the Delaware State Championship in May and broke 200 straight at Yorklyn to win the "Brandywine" on September 4.

The Packard performed flawlessly, and except for changing a tire in Sandusky, Ohio, and buying two new U.S. Royal Master tires in Kansas City, we had no trouble. Dad let me drive about 1/3 of the time, and he did the rest. We visited Lincoln's home in Springfield, Illinois, Mark Twain's boyhood home in Hannibal, Missouri, and then Denver, Estes Park and Colorado Springs in Colorado, having lunch one day at the Stanley Hotel. Following July 4 in Salt Lake City, we went to Bryce Canyon, the North Rim of Grand Canyon, and Zion National Park en-route to southern California. With stops in Los Angeles (where we met Martin S. Lewis, founder of Little Engines, from whom came the makings of our Auburn Valley locomotives), San Francisco, and Yosemite National Park, we went north to Portland and Seattle, and crossed the Canadian border north of Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

Canada had been at war for nearly two years, and we had to check our guns at the border, making arrangements to pick them up again at Glacier Park, Montana, after visiting the Canadian Rockies. Starting east, we enjoyed Yellowstone National Park and the Black Hills, eventually passing through Chicago and heading toward home. Meta dropped off near Milwaukee to visit her uncle there, and my mother took the train home from Dayton as she was not particularly interested in our trapshooting activities at nearby Vandalia. Bringing two shooters home from the Grand American (many in those days either went by train or begged rides), it was my dad's very first trip on the new Pennsylvania Turnpike, the original section of which had opened on Labor Day 1940. The Packard averaged 9.75 miles per gallon for the trip, and once we put \$7 worth of gasoline in the tank at once! Rates at the best hotels, where my father liked to stay, averaged about \$7.50 double, per night. Breakfasts were usually 25 to 30 cents, lunches 40 to 50 cents, and five-course dinners never more than \$1.50. It turned out this was the only trip my parents made west of Oklahoma-Texas during their lifetimes, but it was a good one.