

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 2, 2008

Our Stanleys in Important Places: In the process of driving Stanley cars all over the country for the past 60 years, it is only natural that these cars and their driver would have visited some national shrines and famous old hotels. I know you have heard of many of them.

The big 1912 Model 87, taking part in four "Trans-Con" tours between 1972 and 1989, visited both Disneyland in California (1972) and Walt Disney World in Florida (1979). On these trips, this car was also at Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park on July 4, 1972, to celebrate our first National Park's 100th birthday. On this same 1972 trip, it was also at the Sun Valley Lodge built by Edward H. Harriman to help promote his Union Pacific Railroad, and at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado, built by F. O. Stanley in 1909. The original big Stanley Mountain Wagons were built to service this hotel from the rail heads at Loveland and Lyons, Colorado. On the Trans-Con of 1979, an overnight stop at the old Grove Park Hotel in Asheville, North Carolina, built from the profits of Grove Cold Tablets and dedicated in 1913 by William Jennings Bryan, was a highlight. In 1982, the Trans-Con began at the world-renowned Pebble Beach Lodge on California's Monterey Peninsula, soon to become the location of the premier Concours d'Elegance in the United States.

Other famous hotel visits were made to the Bedford Springs Hotel when the Glidden Tour visited this historic property in south central Pennsylvania in 1948 and 1951. It was the summer White House for President Buchanan (late 1850s) and was also used as a retreat for Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton. Also on the 1951 Glidden Tour, my father in the Model 87 visited the exclusive Skytop Club in the Poconos to conclude the tour that year. Four times (1980, 1994, 1999, and 2004), we had cars at the Mount Washington Hotel at Bretton Woods in New Hampshire's White Mountains, where the International Monetary Conference was held in 1944. Traveling in the Model 71, we had lunch at the hotel in '99 and '04, and with the Model 87, I stayed across the road on the Glidden Tour of 1980. That time we took our meals at the big hotel, and a helicopter hovering overhead while photographing the Glidden Tour cars sucked the pilot out as we moved across the grounds going to breakfast.

My 1912 Model 88 Mountain Wagon, subsequently owned by Bob Reilly and Allen Blazick, visited Lawrence Rockefeller's new Woodstock Inn on a Brass & Gas Tour of 1970, and the Model 76 paid a return visit, also on a Brass & Gas Tour headquartered in the Vermont town in 1973. On a third Brass & Gas Tour in 1979, the Model 87 and its occupants stayed again at the Woodstock Inn. In 1973, I took the Model H-5 to the Lake Placid Club in the Adirondacks, where its occupant received a travel promotion award for the Magic Age of Steam, then operating at Auburn Heights.

At special shrines of American history, we stopped with the 87 at Springfield, Illinois, on our return from the '72 Trans-Con, hoping to photograph it in front of Abraham Lincoln's home. We were a year or two too late, however, as the area around 8th and Jackson Streets had become a historic walking area with no motor vehicles. On the 1957 Glidden Tour, however, the Model 76 made history. Climbing Thomas Jefferson's old lane from Charlottesville to his home at Monticello, I was low on water and inquired of a groundskeeper if there was a place near the historic house where a hose might be available. He directed me to Monticello's front lawn, where several hose bibs were flush with the ground. Seeing the Stanley there taking on water, all the gas car owners on the tour wanted to drive onto the lawn for a photo in front of the historic shrine. The groundskeeper did not have this in mind, but it was permitted. How different Monticello is today; a new driveway comes in from the other side, and the parking lots are ½ mile away and out of sight from Monticello. Three days later, I took water again at the entrance to Mount Vernon, 160 years after our first president retired to his beloved plantation for the last time in 1797. Between the Monticello and Mount Vernon visits, Queen Elizabeth II, celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Jamestown Colony, visited Williamsburg and Jamestown while the Glidden Tour was there.