

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, February 15, 2010

The Great Stanley Tours: Actually the completion of tours that gave me the most satisfaction were those chaired by the late Millard Newman under the auspices of the Veteran Motor Car Club of America. They were for *all* cars of 1914 and earlier and because of their nature were nick-named "Trans-Cons." Millard ran about 10 such tours between 1968 and 2000; I went on four of them in our 1912 Stanley Model 87 30-horsepower touring car. On the 1972 tour, I had the only steamer; in 1979 there were two (Brent Campbell owned and operated the other), in 1982, there were the same two (although Brent had a different steamer), and in 1989, when Ruth accompanied me, there were three of us, as Alex Joyce with his Model 85 made the third. The total number of cars ranged from 21 to 50 on these three- to four-week cross-continent tours.

Newman's first "long tour" was from New York to San Francisco in 1968. The idea was to offer one every four years, so there was one from Montreal to Tijuana in 1972 and Seattle to Philadelphia in 1976. The participants enjoyed them so much that they asked if they could be held more frequently, so the years became 1979, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1989, etc. The '87 tour was the most ambitious, when the cars were shipped on the *Q.E. II* to the U.K., driven around the British Isles for nearly four weeks, then returned on the same ship to New York. Ruth and I had planned to go but gave up at the last minute. Brent and Alex both took their Stanleys, however.

In the *Weekly News*, I have written of our participation in these tours before. The editions of 1/28/08 and 2/4/08 told of our breakdowns and hard luck in '79 and '82. The "Trip of a Lifetime" in 1972, when we drove 8,328 miles, was described on 1/2/06, 3/20/06, and 5/8/06, as well as in the *Auburn Heights Herald*. In this, and probably at least two continuing articles, I would like to relate many of the good times and lifelong experiences we had with this unusual type of travel. It is impossible to meet as many people from all walks of life in as many places as you can when traveling in an aging steam car of 1912.

In 1979, the second trip on which I participated, the tour began in Key West and terminated in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with the route taking us up the Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive en route to Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, and eastward to Halifax. My passengers were Jerry Brady from the start to Roanoke and Jules Reiver from there to the end, with Weldin Stumpf driving the steamer for the last day into Roanoke. Two serious problems, described on 1/28/08, have already been covered. Weldin and Dorothy Stumpf towed an open trailer with the big Model 87 to South Miami, where Jim Thomas, who drove a Knox with a huge 6-cylinder engine on the tour, allowed us to store the steamer in his garage for about 10 days. Jerry and I flew to Miami, picked up the car, and drove the 150 miles to Key West for the start. Key West was hot in the middle of June.

On the tour's first day, we drove to Fort Lauderdale, where we stayed two nights. I remember how hot the sun was as we came off the Keys south of Homestead. We were entertained for cocktails at a beautiful home on one of Fort Lauderdale's lush waterways. Our next day's run was to Vero Beach, but unfortunately our overnight stop was at a motel on the interstate, not a particularly attractive spot. We arrived safely at Walt Disney World the next day and stayed at the Contemporary Hotel for two nights. The cars on the tour were invited to participate in a parade through the Magic Kingdom, which all of us looked forward to. As Brent Campbell and I were starting to fire up our Stanleys, however, word came that no steamers would be allowed in the parade. At first we were puzzled and then realized this was backlash from the propane accident with a Stanley at Knott's Berry Farm in California that had killed the owner and his wife and injured some children riding in the car. Brent protested the decision more than I did. In a few minutes, a fire marshal appeared, and when we told him we had no propane and that Stanleys did not burn propane, he said we could participate, so we continued to fire up. About the time the cars were lining up, however, the marshal appeared again, apologized, and said he had been overruled by the top man. So, we walked into the Magic Kingdom and watched the parade from the sidewalk. A Disney parade is more fun to watch, anyway. (To be continued).