

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 12, 1010

Final Third of 1982 "Trans-Con" Tour: (The *Weekly News* of May 10 and June 14, 2010, carried the first 2/3 of this trip in our Stanley Model 87 from Pebble Beach to Jekyll Island.) After we left Tulsa and the major repairs we made there, the weather was hot, but our mechanical troubles were over. Our route was southeast: overnight stops were at Fort Smith, Little Rock, and Lake Village, Arkansas. One water stop was in a tiny country town where "down-homers" loafed in front of the country store with their feet up and wads of tobacco permanently lodged in their cheeks; another was at a laundromat where Bob Reilly did his laundry while the Stanley took on water, and a half-dozen little black boys wanted their picture taken in front of our car. I obliged, but they never saw the picture as they had no mailing address.

We crossed the Mississippi River over the long bridge at Vicksburg and had lunch amid all the wrought iron railings and balconies that grace that city. At Natchez the next morning, as we sought water for the steamer, a "good ol' boy" who controlled his section of town approached us and said he would get us anything we wanted. Traffic increased as we approached New Orleans, and we easily hit 50 M.P.H. to keep up. We stayed in the French Quarter, took a hot afternoon ride on a paddle-wheel steamboat, and headed east the next day along the Gulf Coast. During the day, the beaches were empty; it was too hot for sun worshipers. The Stanley seemed to enjoy the heat more than its occupants did.

At Mobile, Alabama, we paid for our motel room twice at the Ramada Inn, as they claimed they had not received the deposit sent through our friend Whitney Snyder (we did not use credit cards to secure our reservations, and Whitney was not around when we checked out). The next night we stayed at Marianna, Florida. A member of the 1979 "Trans-Con," Milford Barker, invited all on the tour to stop at his home and antique auto garage near Havana, Florida, where refreshments were most welcome. That night at Valdosta, Georgia, John Grundy asked about 12 of us to join him in search for spare ribs. A search it was, as his 1912 Packard hit numerous pot holes at high speed with seven or eight passengers aboard. At one place, the 12 of us were seated at a long table, the water was poured, and we found they had no spare ribs. So, off it was to another place, then another. We returned to the motel hungry, but we slept it off.

The next day, we reached Jekyll Island on Georgia's Atlantic coast, received our completion plaques (although we certainly did not have a perfect score), and enjoyed our final banquet before all dispersed the next morning. Most had made arrangements to truck or trailer their cars home, but I had planned to drive north, and Bob Reilly wanted to accompany me. At that time, Bob was living with his mother on Hilton Head Island, so that was our destination the first night. At a water stop between Brunswick and Savannah, Georgia, the proprietor of the store where we stopped told us that Henry Ford had had a bamboo plantation a few miles off the main highway. It seems he had been down there in a big Lincoln and got stuck in the mud. A team of mules was called to pull him out. The teamster told him: "Mister, if you had a Model T Ford, you wouldn't have gotten stuck." Ford went home and sent the native a new Model T.

The Reillys had a nice home on one of the golf courses on Hilton Head. North from there, the heat wave continued as we spent nights at Lumberton, North Carolina, and Petersburg, Virginia. Coming up Maryland's Eastern Shore from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, I had to make a minor repair at Price, Maryland, to call Weldin Stumpf and alert him that we should be home in about two hours. He was waiting at Auburn Heights when we pulled in. The total mileage driven on that trip with the Stanley was about 4,000. Seven years later, Ruth made her first (and my last) "Trans-Con." What great experiences they were!