

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, January 18, 2010

Spring Steam Trips to Virginia: Over long weekends in late April 1951 and 1954, respectively, my father and I drove from home to the Shenandoah Valley, with two cars each time, to participate in a Spring Meet of the Waynesboro-Staunton Region, AACA. I believe the second one was called the Old Dominion Meet. We were treated royally, and my father spoke there on at least one occasion, which he loved to do if the subject was Stanley cars.

The first time (1951) my father drove his 1912 Model 87, accompanied by either Norris Woodward or Homer Kratz. I drove my 1914 Model 607, possibly alone as I don't recall a passenger. We had very nice weather, and I don't remember trouble of significance with either car. One of our favorite hostelrys in the valley was the Mimslyn Hotel in Luray, Virginia. On Friday, we easily made the 220 miles from Yorklyn to Luray in good order. Saturday morning we continued on to Waynesboro, where we spent the afternoon at a car gathering with our Shenandoah Valley friends, and had a banquet that night in a local hotel. After assembling again on Sunday, a caravan made its way from Waynesboro to Staunton, and all of us enjoyed a pre-arranged Sunday dinner at a country club on Route 11 just north of Staunton, and I suppose some prizes were awarded, before we headed back to Luray for the night.

On Monday afternoon, we were only about 10 miles from home when the only mechanical stop occurred that I can remember. Coming south on the new Route 41, after cresting the hill south of Atglen, it is all downhill to Chatham and Avondale. My dad was rolling right along in the 87 and I was following probably a mile behind. I came upon him stopped on the shoulder having lifted out the front floorboard. Apparently, a spray of water had hit him in the face as a result of the packing nut working off the front water pump under his feet. Quickly fixed, at least temporarily, we went on home after a great four-day trip.

The 1954 trip was more eventful, though less satisfactory for me. After the 1952 Glidden Tour through eastern Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., my dad had laid up the Model 87 to concentrate on his newly acquired Doble E-11. The 87 was not used at all during the 1953 season (I wanted him to take it on the Glidden Tour to Cleveland and Detroit that year, but he wanted to take the 735, so that we did). I always liked big cars, and I asked him if I could prepare the 87 and take it to Virginia in April 1954, and he consented. I found the boiler empty, so I filled it and fired up the car; all seemed good to this inexperienced Stanley operator. There was not time to fire it again and drive it a few miles; I did not think that necessary.

The day was cool and damp when we were to leave and my father said he would go in his closed '40 Packard 180, which was still his everyday car. He and Homer Kratz were going to ride in comfort while following the Model 87 with its new operator, his cousin Bob Mancill, and Bob's best friend. As we left Yorklyn and headed north on Route 82, the 3-tube indicator showed "high water" in the boiler, which it should. I kept bypassing water, rather than pumping into the boiler. Reasoning (incorrectly) that a 30-horsepower car needed to run a lot farther before the water level came down to normal, I kept bypassing through Kennett Square and on north. Just about where Unionville High School is today, my trip was over. In six miles, largely uphill, I had used up the water in the boiler and had scorched it—just like that.

We must have pulled the Stanley back to Yorklyn with a rope tied to the back of my dad's Packard. It turned out that from leaving the boiler empty for nearly two years, corrosion had completely clogged the blow-down fitting below the water column, and there was no circulation to allow the 3-tube indicator to work correctly.

Knowing my passengers and I had arranged for a long weekend, my dad said we could go in a First Series Packard Twin Six (1916) that he had recently acquired, and that the trip would do the car good. In short order, we prepped the car and took off as he had suggested, but this time he and Homer went on ahead, wanting to reach their destination at the Mimslyn Hotel in time for dinner. We made good time and had no trouble with the '16 Packard, except that it used a lot of oil. Before the trip ended 600 miles later, we had used 8 gallons—not 8

quarts, but 8 gallons! At Luray on the return trip, I took out the spark plugs to inspect, and they didn't seem to be fouled. Both Packards got us there and back, but it would have been a lot more fun with the Stanley. Scorching boilers is no fun, however. I did it one other time with the same car near Holly, Colorado, in 1982. Then, the 3-tube indicator worked perfectly, but I didn't believe it. If it happens once every 28 years, this is the year!