

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 23, 2014

Visits to Kingfield, Maine: The Stanley twins were born at Kingfield, on the Carrabassett River deep in central Maine, on June 1, 1849. Their family was prominent in the community for most of the 19th century. The twins never forgot their origins, and after their phenomenal success in the photographic dry plate business in Lewiston, Maine, and later in the suburbs of Boston, they supported many things in the town of Kingfield. F. E. Stanley drew plans for a new home built for his friend Winter, owner of the rolling pin factory, almost an exact duplicate of his own home in Newton, Massachusetts. The twins gave the town the money for a new school just after 1900, which building served as the Stanley School for nearly 80 years before becoming headquarters for the Stanley Museum. F. O. Stanley, who built the Stanley Hotel at Estes Park, Colorado, and his wife, Flora, are buried at Kingfield.

For many years, I had wanted to drive a Stanley car to Kingfield. In 1981, other steam car owners got excited with the same idea, and about eight cars were driven from and to Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, on a total pilgrimage of about seven days. Accompanied by Bob Reilly in our Model 607, I was part of this tour. Mike and Kathryn May drove our Model 78. Frank Gardner followed with his motor home for back-up assistance, and David Ault of Wayne, Maine, joined us at Kingfield (I fear I have forgotten one or two, but here are most of those who traveled in their steamers: the Weidenhammers, Carl Amsley, Bob Garlock, the Hancocks, and the Davignons). Raymond W. Stanley, son of F. E. who was then 87 years of age, was the star of the show. We stayed at the Winters' Inn, the same home designed by Ray's father 80 years before. Within a few months Sue Davis, who lived with her family at One Stanley Avenue and helped us promote this 1981 tour, started the Stanley Museum, and was able to acquire the old Stanley School for its headquarters.

As it has turned out, I have been to Kingfield five times, and on every trip I was traveling by steam power in a Stanley. After 1981, a larger "Kingfield" tour was planned in 1984, this time starting and terminating at Concord, New Hampshire. About 20 cars and their drivers took part. This time the Mays, Bob Reilly and I stayed at #3 Stanley Avenue, a bed and breakfast operated by Dan and Sue Davis. Other occupants there were Ray Stanley, the Hancocks, and Richard Paine, owner of the Seal Cove Museum near Bar Harbor. We were in our 1910 Model 71. In 1989, Ruth and I were on Millard Newman's "Trans-Con" Tour from Galveston to Bar Harbor, and the tour route passed near Kingfield en route from Quebec City to its destination. Traveling in our 1912 Model 87, we stayed again at Winters' Inn, along with another participant on the long tour (not in a steam car). Ruth said her dinner at Dan Davis's One Stanley Avenue was the best meal on our four-week trip. Most of the tour cars spent that night at Skowhegan.

In 1991, Brent Campbell and Don Bourdon planned a 12-day steam car tour around northern New England, starting and ending at Quechee, Vermont. We made the trip in our 1913 Model 76. While an overnight at Kingfield was not planned, a stop at the Stanley Museum was made by all en route from Rangeley Lakes to Skowhegan. Finally, in 1994 (20 years ago!), a double-hub steam car tour was centered on Gorham, New Hampshire, and Kingfield. We had our 1912 Model 87 and enjoyed our passengers, Joe and Rhoda Green, who often rode with us on steam car tours. Rhoda was the daughter of famed Stanley racing car driver Fred Marriott. With our trailers at the Town and Country Motel in Gorham, we made the trip of 90 miles each way to Kingfield and return and spent one or two nights, again at the Winters' Inn. This turned out to be Joe Green's last tour (Rhoda and her daughter, Virginia Landry, rode with us in the Model 87 at South Lee, Massachusetts, in 1997). It was also the last tour on which Frank Gardner drove his well-known 1912 Model 74. Following the 1994 tour, Brent Campbell took delivery, and 20 years later he still prizes it as one of his choicest cars.