

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, August 18, 2014

“Stanley” Trip to Lakeville, September 1976: As mentioned in the *Weekly News* of August 20, 2012, for several years, secondary steam car tours were held, in addition to the “main tour” in the East that attracted about 40 cars. These secondary tours usually attracted from 10 to 20 cars and their occupants. One such tour was held at Lakeville, Connecticut, with headquarters at the Iron Masters Motel in September 1976, hosted by Stu and Barbara Herman, assisted by Morris and Dolly Paley. I decided to drive my newly rebuilt 1912 Stanley Model 87 and invited my old friend Marvin Klair to accompany me.

It was the “maiden trip” for the 87 after its steel frame, relocated pump box, and high-capacity tanks had considerably modified the car for long-distance touring. Many of the changes had not had serious road-testing. Marvin Klair was recuperating from an accident at his saw mill but was glad to go one way, with the understanding that his good friend Mel Johnson would pick him up at Lakeville at the conclusion of the tour, and they would go to a flea market in New Hampshire before returning home. Soon after our departure from Auburn Heights, we turned around at West Chester, 15 miles into our trip, and came back. Some little thing needed fixing (I don't remember what it was). The next time, we made out well to our first water stop at Hyde Ballard's home near Barto, Pennsylvania, about 50 miles from Yorklyn. The open vent from a new water tank under the front seat caused Marvin and I to receive a heavy shower as we pulled away from Hyde's with a full tank. Hyde was not one to laugh much or even smile, but he broke up at our predicament. We dried out and moved on to the northeast. I think we stopped at Port Jervis before moving on to Lakeville the next day.

The “tour” was either a three-day or a four-day hub tour from the Iron Masters Motel. The first day we visited the estate of Ted Jamison at Sharon, Connecticut, and saw his growing antique car and fire engine collection. Dolly Paley treated us to homemade pies at their home on Millerton Road. We also went to the former Colgate estate outside Sharon, then owned by a man who wanted to sell it. There was an animal cemetery near the front door. One of the entrances to this estate was through the woods on the property, and Paul Bourdon had a tire blow off the rim of his Model K while in these woods. I had Ted Jamison (and Marvin) in the 87, but Jamison would not get out of the Stanley at the Colgate estate. He didn't want to be seen there.

Joe and Rhoda Green rode with Marvin and me for at least two of the days. On one rainy day, we drove to Lou Biondi's home and car collection near Woodbury. On another, we went to Great Barrington and Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Barbara Herman always made arrangements for a gourmet dinner at a different restaurant each night. Marvin Klair started the tour with several egg sandwiches in a paper bag and drank warm ice tea for breakfast (he hated to buy a meal unless it was absolutely necessary). He was a good sport about the fancy dinners, however, and was able to find to his liking the most reasonable thing on the menu.

I'm sure I have forgotten some who were on the tour, but I remember these: Paul Bourdon (modified Model K), Jim and Judy Hancock (Model 740 roadster), Brent Campbell (Model 76), Stu and Barbara Herman (Model 62, I think), Morris and Dolly Paley (Model 725), Jim and Eleanor Weidenhammer (Model L White), Ernie and Angie Davignon (Model 76), and Louis and Helen Biondi (Model CX). It's likely that Ole Vikre, Frank Gardner, Stanley Ellis, and Bob Mead were there, but I really can't recall.

The final banquet was held at the Ragamont Inn in Salisbury. It was a good meal topped off with rum ice cream. Marvin Klair, who wanted nothing to do with alcohol (a sign in his barn read “Don't Drink Beer in Here”), enjoyed his dessert. Someone offered him a second one, and he accepted, exclaiming how good it was. Jim Hancock cracked up, and the rest of us at the table joined in.

I drove home alone with minimal trouble. When I stopped for lunch at a family restaurant in Port Jervis and parked on the street at the front door, it soon became necessary to deliver a lecture on Stanleys for the curious and increasing crowd. That night I stayed in Ravell Eckel's trailer in his backyard at Washington, New Jersey, and the next morning visited with his father, Earle, who never tired of seeing a Stanley on the road. It was the final time I saw Earle Eckel, the last of the Stanley dealers, as he died about 18 months later. Moving toward

home, the “winker” stopped working to my satisfaction when I was near the Barto (Pennsylvania) home of Hyde Ballard, and I discovered the reservoir was nearly out of cylinder oil. Hyde was not home, but Mary Ballard told me to help myself to oil in Hyde’s shop if I could find it. That I did and made it home in good shape. The trial run of the modified Stanley had been a success. It was ready for three more “Trans-Con” tours in 1979, 1982, and 1989.