

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, March 28, 2016

Traveling through Yosemite National Park in a 60-Year-Old Stanley: I have written in the *Weekly News* and in the *Herald* of my 8,300-mile-trip in 1972 in our 1912 Stanley Model 87. Always with at least one passenger, the car was driven on its own power without an accompanying vehicle from Yorklyn to Yorklyn (Delaware), via Montreal, Minneapolis, Yellowstone, Yosemite, San Diego, Utah Parks, Salt Lake City, and Estes Park, Colorado. I was the primary operator for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the trip; Weldin Stumpf had this chore for the remainder. This is an excerpt of our two days and one night in Yosemite.

The 21 cars on the "Trans-Con" tour, all made before 1915, were vying for a perfect score on the points system (all for fun). A car lost points if it was late arriving at a check point, of which there were about 20 in the 28 days of the westbound tour. We had a checkpoint at Reno, Nevada, and then two days to make our next one at Fresno, California. The route between took us over Tioga Pass at 9,945 feet elevation entering Yosemite National Park. With three members of the Stumpf family as my passengers, we planned to make it from Reno to Yosemite Valley one day and on to Fresno in California's Central Valley the next.

The main challenge was Tioga Pass, not only the climb from Lee Vining on the east with a climb of 6,000 feet in 12 miles but also the descent from the Pass to Yosemite Valley, again about 6,000 feet in 40 miles. The Stanley, with water, fuel, tools, spare parts, luggage, and four people weighed well over 6,000 pounds, and at that time it had nothing more than two-wheel mechanical brakes, with no water-cooling to the brakes. It was a challenge, but I always liked challenges.

We left Reno at 5:00 a.m., and by 11:20 we were at Lee Vining, 140 miles to the south. We filled with water and immediately hit the steep grade to Tioga Pass. All systems were working well, and with both water pumps doing their full duty, we kept climbing at about 10 m.p.h. Operating with only a three-tube indicator to show water level in the boiler, we stopped more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way to the top, as I feared the water level might be getting low, so we jacked a wheel and pumped water for 10 minutes before proceeding on to the top. After a few level miles to Tuolumne Meadows, we began the descent toward Yosemite Valley, which took all afternoon at 10 m.p.h. Had we gone faster, our brakes would have overheated to the point of no control.

We stayed at Yosemite Lodge in the height of the tourist season. The people in Yosemite were not sympathetic to the needs of those crazy enough to be traveling through in a 1912 car, and we had difficulty finding water and kerosene. Despite this, we were on our way the next morning, climbed to about 8,000 feet near the Winona Tunnel Tree in Mariposa Grove and then descended into the valley. By mid-afternoon we arrived at Fresno at an elevation of 300 feet and an afternoon temperature of 106 degrees. We still had a perfect score! In four more days after a brief visit to Tijuana, Mexico, the 1972 "Trans-Con" Tour would be over, and we would begin the eastbound trip on our own.