

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, August 21, 2017

The Glidden Tours in Delaware: The original Glidden Tours were named for Charles J. Glidden, an early telephone inventor who owned a phone company in southern New Hampshire before he sold out to his friend Alexander Graham Bell in 1906. He was not associated with the Glidden Paint Company. Glidden loved automobile travel at the dawn of the automotive age, and he and his wife drove an early car around the world in 1902, which they repeated in 1908. The story goes that Augustus Post, an early actor, balloonist, aviator, and White steam car driver, convinced Mr. Glidden, on top of Mount Washington in 1904, to sponsor reliability tours to prove that the automobile was more than a toy but rather a modern means of transportation. The first of these tours began in 1905 in front of the Palace Hotel in New York with its destination the Mount Washington Hotel at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. The original Glidden Tours were run annually thereafter for 10 years, the last being from Chicago to Glacier Park, Montana, in 1914. Car manufacturers would enter their latest products, with White steamers and Pierce Arrows winning many of the early awards.

With the antique automobile hobby taking hold at the end of World War II, the first Glidden Tour Revival was held for old cars (then privately owned) in 1946 from the East Coast cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to Detroit and return. Driving over the road to Buffalo, a ship of the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company was used to haul cars and passengers across Lake Erie and up to Detroit. The cars returned over the road with a memorable stop at Columbiana, Ohio, where the participants had lunch at the ancestral home of Harvey Firestone. Augustus Post, then in his 70s, attended every Revival until his death in October 1952. On his final one, he rode with me in our Stanley Model 71.

For many years, the Glidden Tour revivals were sponsored one year by the Antique Automobile Club of America and the alternate year by the Veteran Motor Car Club of America, with headquarters in Philadelphia and Boston respectively. In 1949 and again in 1961, these tours came through Delaware, and they were progressive tours (staying at different places each night). On the first, I was in charge of hotel reservations for the participants; on the second, I was in charge of their day in Delaware, including overnight accommodations. In 1949, there were just under 100 cars; in 1961, there were probably about 150.

In 1949, the tour started at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and ended in Wilmington, Delaware, with overnights between at Luray, Richmond, and Williamsburg, Virginia, and Annapolis, Maryland. AACA had no local regions in 1949. Before we knew better, the club took responsibility for overnight accommodations for everyone on the tour and guaranteed to the lodging places that the participants would show up. In places with limited accommodations like Gettysburg (it was different in those days!), Luray, and Annapolis, that was not an easy task. However, the Hotel Gettysburg on the Square treated us well and found rooms in guest houses to accommodate the overflow. In Luray, the Mimslyn was the only hotel in town, and everyone else stayed in guest houses. We used two hotels in Richmond, two in Annapolis, and the Williamsburg Lodge (for two nights). In Wilmington, the attendees stayed at the Hotel DuPont, and the final banquet was held in its Gold Ballroom. George M. Hughes (father of the present George) was Tour Chairman, and George C. Corson, a judge in the Montgomery County Courts at Norristown (PA) was the featured speaker. He kept us laughing. Bill Luke, whose Delaware Oldsmobile agency was just down the street, housed many of the cars overnight; the remainder were in an open parking lot with off-duty police hired to keep them safe. With the tour over, the next day most of the participants drove 30 plus miles to Devon (PA) to attend the annual Fall Meet of AACA at the Horse Show Grounds.

The 1961 Glidden Tour Revival began at Hershey the day after the AACA Fall Meet. The first day it went to Reading via several stops in Lancaster County. The Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Reading was large enough to accommodate us all, but the cars had to climb ramps to the second and third floors of its parking garage for overnight storage. Walter Hopkins, father of Mark and John, broke the driveshaft in his '14 Overland climbing the ramp. Within an hour or so, a replacement was found near Hagerstown, Maryland; it was secured, and the

next day the Overland was back on the tour. The second day we drove up Mount Penn and continued on to Scranton (PA), where our headquarters for two nights was the Hotel Casey. The next day on the road brought the tour to the Bethlehem-Allentown area, and it arrived in Delaware in time for lunch the following day. My responsibility began there.

I had to find a nice place that could feed 300 people or so and was exploring various country clubs. The DuPont Country Club was tried but was cool to the idea, as I had no direct connection to the DuPont Company. The second time I went back to them, however, their attitude had changed, and they welcomed the opportunity to serve our tour. It turned out that Henry Belin du Pont had heard about the tour coming to Delaware and sent word to the club to take very good care of us. That they did, and Mr. du Pont made sure Delaware celebrities were there to welcome us. As participants walked in the door, they were welcomed by Belin himself, Governor Elbert N. Carvel, and U. S. Senator J. Caleb Boggs. After a nice lunch with short remarks, participants had the choice of going to the Hagley Museum or to Auburn Heights, where my father made them welcome. Mahlon Patton, then president of AACA, transported Governor Carvel in his 1913 touring car from the Club to Yorklyn. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu (near Southampton in the U.K.) was present that afternoon.

Overnight accommodations were spread out between the city hotels and the new motor lodges around the city. Our Holiday Inn near Talleyville had been open just two months, and Glidden tourists filled more than half our rooms. The last day of the tour the route took participants to Harrisburg, where the final banquet was held.

In 1949, my father was a hit with his 15-passenger Stanley Mountain Wagon, and I drove my 1914 Model 607 until I broke a wrist pin near Tappahannock, Virginia. There were four more Stanleys on that tour, the most on a Glidden Tour before or since. Earle Eckel drove his reliable 1914 Model 712 roadster, Roy Bengel drove his 1915 Model 720, Ed Pamphilon had his 1919 Model 735, and C. E. Simmons drove his 1922 Model 740. In 1961, Weldin Stumpf accompanied me in my father's 1913 Model 76. It was his first trip in a Stanley, and he soon wanted one. We came through from Scranton to Delaware in a day, so I would have the next morning to make last-minute arrangements. We did not go to Harrisburg the last day to complete the tour.