

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, May 21, 2018

Famous Hotels and Antique Car Tours: Using top hotels to enhance celebrated car tours was not new to the antique hobby. At least two of the original Glidden Tours started from the Palace Hotel in New York, and one of them used the Mount Washington Hotel at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, the largest and most famous of the White Mountain resort hotels at the turn of the 20th century. The last of the original Gliddens in 1914 left from the Palmer House in Chicago and went to Glacier National Park.

When I was young, my father liked to say at top hotels, and we stayed at a lot of them. In 1934, we stayed at the Carolina in Pinehurst (NC) during the midwinter trapshooting tournament there. That summer, we spent two days at the Lake Mohonk Mountain House in the Catskills.

On our trip to Nova Scotia and the Gaspé Peninsula in 1936, we had brief stops at the Lake Placid Club in the Adirondacks, the Mountain View House at Whitefield in New Hampshire's White Mountains, the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City, and the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. The latter two, both very formal and excellent, were owned and operated by Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways, respectively. One night, while at the Chateau Frontenac, my father was supposed to meet Mary Passmore (his cousin who accompanied us on the Nova Scotia trip), my mother, and me at the door to the main dining room at an appointed time. The time came and went, but he didn't show up. After 20 minutes or so, we decided to hunt around this huge hotel. Finally, we came to an elevator stuck between floors, and he was crawling out. On the way home, we stayed at the Glen Springs on Seneca Lake above Watkins Glen, New York, and at the Inn at Buck Hill Falls in the Poconos.

On our big trip in 1941, we stayed at the Brown Palace in Denver, the Broadmoor at Colorado Springs, the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City, the Mission Inn at Riverside, California, and the Biltmore in downtown Los Angeles, where Herbert Hoover stayed when in the city. The Hotel Benson in Portland, Oregon, the Olympic in Seattle, and the Chateau Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies rounded out our top hotels for that trip.

On the early Glidden Tour Revivals, the Wentworth-by-the-Sea near Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was a favorite stop for two nights, and the tour stayed here in 1947, 1954, and 1980 (and possibly another time). On our final stay there in 1980, the owner/operator James Smith told us he was going to close the hotel, as it had not been profitable for several years. This tour, a "double hub" had also stayed at the Mount Washington at Bretton Woods, but John Miller, my companion, and I stayed at a rustic lodge opposite the long driveway into the Mount Washington and took our meals at the big hotel. One crisp, clear morning as we were moving slowly up the driveway in our Model 87, a helicopter with a photographer aboard hovered overhead. The exhaust steam from the Stanley attracted him, and he made several passes to get the shots he wanted. When we parked, we found that the helicopter had sucked out the pilot, the only time on the tour that it went out. The Pennsylvania Glidden Tour of 1948 stayed at the Hotel Hershey the first night, and in '48 and '51, the Gliddens also enjoyed Bedford Springs, President Buchanan's Summer White House. In '51, the tour ended at the Skytop Club.

Millard Newman, Director of about eleven "Trans-Con" tours between 1968 and 2000, also liked fine hotels. I attended four of these tours between 1972 and 1989. The '72 tour began at Canadian Pacific's new hotel in Montreal, the Chateau Champlain, and visited Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park (on July 4 of Yellowstone's centennial year), Sun Valley Lodge, established by Edward H. Harriman of the Union Pacific, and the new Century Plaza Hotel, built on the site of the 20th Century Fox movie studios. In 1976, the Trans-Con was from Seattle to Philadelphia, and its participants stayed at the Anaconda Inn in the Bitterroots, before the showplace of Montana's copper industry closed permanently. I think the Greenbriar at White Sulphur Springs was also used on this tour.

In 1979, the Trans-Con began at the Casa Marina in Key West. This was the last of Henry Flagler's Florida hotels, and, while he lived to see his Florida East Coast Railroad reach Key West, he died before the Casa

Marina opened about 1921. Closed in the 1950s, it was occupied by rodents until renovated and reopened as one of Marriott's resorts. On this tour we also stayed at the Grove Park Hotel in Asheville, North Carolina, opened in 1913 from profits from Grove's Cold Tablets. William Jennings Bryan was the featured speaker at the opening. We also stayed at the Inn in the Park in Ottawa, Ontario, and concluded the tour at Canadian National's Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax. The 1982 tour began at the Lodge at Pebble Beach on California's Monterey Peninsula.