

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, Sept. 3, 2018

**Who Really Did It First?** When the first horseless carriages appeared in America about 1900, wagers were prevalent daring an early owner to attempt a trip from coast to coast. One such couple set out from New York and made it to Detroit, but on the next leg of their trip, they disappeared forever. In 1903, however, a doctor from Vermont, Horatio Nelson Jackson, accompanied by Swell K. Coker, made a successful 63-day trip from San Francisco to New York in a 2-cylinder Winton. Before 1903 was over, a factory-sponsored Packard and a tiny curved-dash Olds had successfully completed the trip. In 1909, Alice Ramsey was the first woman to complete the trip, driving a Maxwell.

What about steam cars? Stanleys, because of their limited range, were never very practical where a strong water supply was not available. When the last of the original Glidden Tours went to Glacier National Park in 1914, there were no White steamers registered, as White had not built a steam car since 1910. It is possible that Abner Doble, beginning to build his famous steamers in California about 1920, drove across the country, but there is no record of that. A retired Hercules man named Dwight Hollingsworth told me his uncle, who lived in Indiana, drove his Stanley condensing car to California "two or three times" in the 1920s, but that was never confirmed, and it wouldn't have been coast-to-coast, anyway.

So, when Carl Amsley, accompanied by Bob Garlock and their wives drove Carl's 1906 Model F Stanley from Atlantic City to San Diego in 1966, that was the first for a steamer, and they made about 3,200 miles in 15 days! A feature story about this trip appeared in our *Auburn Heights Herald* earlier this year. The car had been slightly modified for the trip, and it was followed by an accompanying truck and trailer that carried many tools, extra tanks of fuel and water, and a spare engine and boiler, both of which were needed.

Bill Besler, of the family who took over the Doble interests in Emeryville, California, owned two or three Dobles and understood them well. During World War II, one of his cars was in Washington, D.C., and, during wartime, it was not easy to get it home. Eugene Goodwin of Bethesda had worked with Besler on the Doble, and Besler asked Goodwin to keep the car, run it sparingly, and in general treat it as if it were his own until it was convenient for Besler to retrieve it. Gene Goodwin had the car for 25 years! He used it at local meets around Washington and drove it to Gettysburg in 1949 to join the Glidden Tour for one day (that day, there were 7 steamers on the Glidden Tour, by far the most ever). In the late 1960s, Besler finally wanted his Doble back home, and he flew in and drove it across the country to Emeryville on San Francisco Bay. Reports indicated that he had no trouble.

Fulfilling a life-long dream, I drove our 1912 Model 87, with its original frame and body parts, *round-trip* from Auburn Heights in 1972, 8,328 miles in 58 days. Technically, we did not touch the Atlantic Ocean, but the wheels were in the water at San Diego, and we traveled through three countries. For 4,100 miles, we were a part of Millard Newman's Transcontinental Reliability Tour, four weeks of running from Montreal to Tijuana (Mexico). Twenty-one cars completed that tour, but we were the only steamer. When the tour ended in San Diego, between Weldin Stumpf and I, the car was driven 3,700 miles eastbound, stopping briefly at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park. Our greatest claim to fame was that we had no accompanying vehicle: tools, spare parts, extra water, fuel and the like were carried in the car or strapped to the running boards and underneath. We made claims such as "the longest trip ever made in a steam car," the "most water evaporated on any car on any trip, 12,500 gallons," and the "most fuel used by an automobile on a single trip, 1,250 gallons (kerosene)." We had advance reservations every night for the 58 days, and we made them all. (This tour has been written up in the *Weekly News* and in the *Herald*.)

Finally, the late Ray Carr of Chester Springs, Pennsylvania, holds the record for the longest one-way crossing of the continent in a steamer. In 1996, accompanied by a mechanic, a tow vehicle, and a trailer, he completed a pre-planned trip of 5,041 miles from Anchorage, Alaska to Bar Harbor, Maine, in his modified 1909 Model R Stanley. Having purchased the car from Carl Amsley just weeks before, he learned the operation rapidly, and

with help from his mechanic they made it through on a schedule that required his attendance at specific functions at numerous times along the way. I had told him his chances for success were minimal.

Starting in 1979, Brent Campbell began long tours crossing the continent in one of his Stanleys, and he made many of them, usually accompanied by his motor home and trailer. Alex Joyce and Norm Shanklin also enjoyed long-distant touring in Stanley steamers. Don Bourdon and Mike May have made more Red Rock Tours than anyone else in a Stanley, and while these tours are usually 3 weeks in length, they are not coast-to-coast.