

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, October 3, 2005

**Preparations Made for Cross-Country Stanley Trip, 1972:** In the spring of 1972, after deciding to try to fulfill a lifetime dream of driving a Stanley to the West Coast and back, we (Weldin Stumpf and I) had only two months to prepare the car, our 1912 Model 87, and to decide what supplies, tools, and extra parts we needed to assemble and take along. This was to be a trip of more than 8,000 miles (it turned out to be 8,328) and was to be made without an accompanying vehicle of any kind. At that time, the car was cosmetically much as it had been when my father bought it in 1950, and it had been used a lot during the ensuing 20-plus years, but we knew it was the right car and the only one suitable for such a long trip. We reviewed what we needed to do to the car and then what parts we should take along that we hoped would never be used.

The boiler was fairly new, and we were satisfied it could make the trip. The burner was rebuilt, as we found the old grate cracked. The balls in the engine cross-heads were replaced with slides, and new wrist pins were installed. New sealed rear wheel bearings were substituted for the originals. A large cubical water tank holding about 55 gallons was hung under the car as a supplement, for the purpose of increasing the range on water from 40 to 85 miles. A tall, thin tonneau tank was located just behind the front seat, which held an additional 22 gallons of kerosene. We hung a spare superheater and a spare vaporizer under the car, tying it to something underneath. On the running boards, we had alligator racks, behind which was some luggage but mostly cans of pilot fuel (in those days, Atlantic Solvent 36 was the best pilot fuel) and steam cylinder oil. The "jump" seats were removed, and the back of the car was full of luggage, cleaning supplies and sometimes people. We knew our route and schedule in advance. The 4,100-mile tour we were joining started in Montreal and ended at San Diego, after a brief visit to Tijuana, Mexico. We were joined by 20 other cars, all 1914 and older, for the second-ever Transcontinental Reliability Tour, run by Millard Newman and sponsored by the Veteran Car Club of America. We were the only steamer and the first to make such a trip. Our schedule while not with the tour was also planned in advance (Yorklyn to Montreal and San Diego to Yorklyn). The car left Yorklyn in the rain on June 13 and returned on August 9.

In advance, we shipped pilot fuel in five-gallon cans to eight points along our route and cylinder oil to three or four of these points. We were never disappointed; when we arrived, the needed supplies were there. We gave away some good empty cans, as we had no room to carry them. In the 8,328 miles, we had only two major mechanical problems. Westbound near Aberdeen, South Dakota, a very light click near the right rear wheel was audible, and this gradually worsened until it was decided something had to be done 500 miles farther along, west of Miles City, Montana. I pulled the wheel and found the wheel bearing "shot." Limping into Billings at 20 M.P.H., we found a machinist who opened his shop and worked all night over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend so we could be back in business the next morning. He built up the axle shaft and turned and fitted a new bearing to it, and the next afternoon we made our checkpoint at Livingston, Montana, on time.

The second problem we corrected at Disneyland, California, just after the end of the tour at San Diego. The burner had started to backfire occasionally before the official tour had ended, but we knew we could make it through, and we completed the 4,100 miles with a perfect score. Before starting east, however, we dropped the burner, found the inside pan rusted through (even though it was new two months before), fabricated a new one, installed the burner in the car, and no more trouble of any consequence occurred on our homeward trip.