

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, March 30, 2009

Floyd Clymer (1895–1978?): No one did more for the Antique Automobile hobby in its early years than Floyd Clymer. His father was a family doctor in Berthoud, Colorado, as the 20th century began, and Floyd became a dealer to sell two makes of cars in 1906 when he was 11 years old! He collected everything he could about automobile development in those early years and soon had an overflowing collection of ads, shop manuals, photos, and the like, which he kept for most of his life. About 1909, when F. O. Stanley opened his big, new hotel at Estes Park, Dr. Clymer moved 7 miles north to Loveland. The three Osburn brothers and their father owned a fleet of Model F Stanley touring cars, and they were kept busy during the summer transporting visitors from the railhead at Loveland to Estes Park, 34 miles away through the Big Thompson Canyon.

Young Clymer first met F. O. Stanley about the time the first Mountain Wagons arrived in 1909. F. O. was 60, and Floyd was 14. During the summer when there was an empty seat in a Mountain Wagon, the teenager would ride to Estes Park and back. The wagons usually left Loveland about 11 A.M., stopped for lunch about halfway up, discharged their passengers at the Stanley Hotel or other lodges in early afternoon, and left the Park about 3 P.M. for the trip back to Loveland. Sometimes Floyd was lucky enough to ride with Mr. Stanley himself and found the older gentleman to be kindly and very informative, explaining all about the Mountain Wagons and why they were better than gas cars for service such as that required in the Rockies.

In his adult life, Clymer moved to Los Angeles and set up a successful publishing business. During World War II, he gathered together some of his old auto literature and published the first of his several Motor Scrapbooks in March 1944. Loaded with interesting material from before World War I, this first paperback sold for \$1.50 and was an instant success. Soon he published another and then another. About 1946 Clymer published his first Steam Car Edition, which I think was Scrapbook #6. By this time, it cost \$2.00, but what a wealth of information it contained! He dedicated this book to the Stanley twins, but in it was a lot of information on many makes of steam cars, including White, Doble, Locomobile and many others, and the races they won. My father's conversion to steam of his '40 Packard, now owned by Bill Rule, is even included. The recent steam car books, also very well written, would do well to impart as much information as that provided in Floyd Clymer's Motor Scrapbooks.

Mr. and Mrs. Clymer came east at least twice to participate in the Glidden Tour Revivals. On the very first Glidden the Marshalls enjoyed in 1947, we stayed for three nights at the same guest house with the Clymers at Intervale, New Hampshire. The six or eight who were there sat around an open fire in the evening, swapping stories of the old days. One was Rod Blood of West Newton, Massachusetts, who had a prime collection of early Packards, and one was Jimmy Kile, who worked for the Stanley Motor Carriage Company during its final years. If you like old cars and those who knew them, it doesn't get any better than that. For one year about 20 years after our "fireside chats" in New Hampshire, Floyd Clymer was president of the Horseless Carriage Club of America (HCCA), one of the three national clubs. HCCA still restricts its tours to cars of 1915 and older.