

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 29, 2009

Springtime in the Rockies: In the early 1930s, the lyrics to this song were on everyone's lips. When Hollywood made a technicolor movie with this title many years later, the supposed location was Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies, although most of it was filmed in Hollywood. I think it starred Esther Williams, but it might have been the skater Sonja Henie.

In any event, nine of us left the Colorado Rockies on the last full day of spring, 2009, for our four-day return to Yorklyn. The Rockies during this last week of spring were spectacular! Surrounding Estes Park, our headquarters, snow-capped peaks greeted us in all directions. We had climbed part-way up many of these mountains with our steam cars, reaching an elevation of 9,200 feet on two separate days. All of the driving was up or down, sometimes with grades of 12%, and although our speed was sometimes down to 10 M.P.H. with stops to cool the brakes, both our Mountain Wagon and our 1913 Model 76 did themselves proud with no breakdowns. I must credit qualified operators of FAHP, Bill Schwoebel, Butch Cannard and Steve Bryce, with expert assistance from Jerry Novak, for their exemplary achievement, which reminds me of a compliment I received in 1970 in response to a comment that my 1912 Mountain Wagon was performing very well over the Green Mountains of Vermont: "It has something to do with the Management." We hope the women, Ann Bryce, Holly Novak, Jane Cannard and Ruth Marshall enjoyed the trip as much as we did.

A Colorado "park" is usually a huge meadow between snow-capped mountain peaks, sometimes as large as 50 by 100 miles (in the case of South Park, southwest of Denver). Estes is a park possibly 20 miles in diameter in which the town of Estes Park has grown into a major tourist attraction. F. O. Stanley went here for his health in 1903 and opened the grand resort hotel that bears his name in 1909. The very first Mountain Wagons coincided with the opening of the hotel in June of that year, and with four Mountain Wagons (from Delaware, Michigan, Idaho, and Washington) and 16 other Stanley cars, we celebrated the hotel's 100th birthday. All four Mountain Wagon owners are members of FAHP, one of whom is our immediate past president Mike May.

Colorado members of the Stanley Museum bore the responsibility for the planning and operating of the tour, and they did a great job. Especially attentive to our needs were Linda Henry and her husband, Lou Becker, the latter treasurer of the Stanley Museum. Several photo opportunities and a small show at the Estes Park Visitors Center (very well attended by the general public) were included in the week's program. It was great to have our cars photographed at the Loveland railroad station at the same location where the original Mountain Wagons met F. O. Stanley's hotel guests in 1909. The trip from there through the Big Thompson Canyon, climbing 2,500 feet in about 20 miles (the total distance to the hotel is 30 miles), was indeed spectacular, especially with the top down. Two days we toured briefly in Rocky Mountain National Park, adjacent to Estes, and one day we took the second Mountain Wagon route to the other railhead at Lyons, 25 miles from the Stanley Hotel. We plan to illustrate this trip in an upcoming edition of the *Herald*.