

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, September 7, 2009

Raymond Walker Stanley (1894–1985): When my father became interested in Stanleys again in the early 1940s, there were two Stanleys of his generation alive: Carlton F. Stanley, the twins' nephew, and Raymond W. Stanley, F. E.'s son. Both were living in the Boston area. Carlton was still making violins, and Ray worked for one of the large banks in Boston. My father never met either of them, but he knew who they were and often talked of them. Neither attended the early steam car tours, although I met Carlton in 1954 near the end of his life.

F. E. and Augusta Stanley were 45 when Ray was born in 1894. Living in a large home in Newton, Massachusetts, Ray grew up with a golden spoon in his mouth, thanks to his affluent parents and the success of the Stanley Dry Plate Company. When he was 12, the Stanley "Rocket" achieved the land speed record at Ormond Beach, Florida, of 127+ M.P.H. When he became a 'teenager, it was natural that Ray would want a steam racer, and over a period of four or five years, his father built him three such very fast cars, roughly following Ray's designs. Brent Campbell has restored the second of these cars built about 1911, and its performance has dazzled many of us who have had the opportunity to ride with him. Brent is presently resurrecting the 3rd of Ray's "racers," probably built originally about 1913, at his home in Florida.

Ray Stanley attended the 1972 steam car tour at Woodstock, Vermont, and he was well received indeed by those in attendance, but I was not there. I thought I would never meet him, as he did not come to subsequent tours during the 1970s. However, at the conclusion of the 1980 Glidden Tour, I met him near Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and we had a nice talk while he sat in the front seat of our Model 87. I asked if I could come to his home for a more lengthy visit, and Frank Gardner and I took him up on his affirmative invitation in early November of 1980. We spent much of a day and interviewed him on tape while he showed us his many scrapbooks of Stanley steam car history. That same fall, his son, Francis E. Stanley II, stopped at Yorklyn on his way from his father's home in Maine to his own home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Sarah W. Stanley, one of Francis's daughters, is an FAHP advisor, and helped us design our logo.

I saw Ray twice after that. In 1981, when Frank Gardner, Jim Hancock, and Sue Davis organized the first steam car tour to Kingfield, Maine (birthplace of the Stanley twins in 1849), Ray Stanley was the star attraction, and he, his daughter Joan, and his 13-year-old granddaughter rode with me in our Model 607 into Kingfield to lead the parade. We spent a very pleasant three or four days in the presence of interested Kingfield folks and eight or 10 steam cars and their owners. Ray was at Kingfield again in 1984 at what many of us call the "second Kingfield tour." This time it was a larger group, and about 25 steamers and their occupants were in attendance. Brent Campbell and I interviewed Ray Stanley on tape, arranged by Dan Davis at #1 Stanley Avenue. Ray died the next year at the age of 91.