

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 26, 2010

Our First Trip West with a Trailer: In late September 1990, several of our Colorado friends had planned a five-day steam car tour starting and ending in Colorado Springs. Since it was the 25th wedding anniversary of our friends, Bob and Aileen Krewatch, we invited them to accompany us in our 30-horsepower 1912 Stanley Model 87. It was planned that Ruth and Aileen would fly out, spend two or three extra days with their longtime friend Ellen Eisenhour, who lived in Woodland Park near the springs, and that Bob and I would take charge of the towing rig consisting of my 1985 GMC Suburban and my JAC trailer with its contents. Along with supplies and tools in the trailer and in the Suburban, there was clothing for the four of us, sufficient for the varying conditions of such a trip.

The women flew to Colorado Springs the day Bob and I left, and their trip was on schedule. We stopped the first night at Springfield, Ohio, and the second at Independence, Missouri, as Bob had an old army buddy who lived there. Our rig was parked outside our motel room, with I-70 in view up an embankment. When we arose the next morning, everything was gone! We called, and the local police came around to take down the details. They said to stick around (we had no choice), and they would call if and when they learned anything. Bob's friend and his wife were very helpful in providing us with necessary transportation. The next night at 3:00 A.M., a phone call informed us that the Suburban had been found with all its wheels removed, as well as the radiator. There was no word on the trailer. About 7 A.M., however, a second call informed us to go to a compound along the river in Kansas City, claim our Suburban and trailer, and make arrangements to remove them. We were not informed as to the trailer's contents.

Finding the place, initial inspection indicated that the Suburban was damaged the most, and the Stanley was basically undisturbed inside the trailer. A nearby repair shop kept its pick-up truck circulating within the compound, and upon positive recommendation, we arranged for that outfit to tow everything to its shop, less than one mile away. The insurance adjuster came promptly and authorized a complete repair. The shop had to furnish a new radiator, five wheels and tires, and do cosmetic work on the dash, where the radio had been torn loose. Although we postponed some cosmetic work to the Suburban, the repair shop had us ready to go about 30 hours after they brought in the wreck. Bob and I bought temporary clothing and called Ruth and Aileen, telling them to do the same. So, 3½ days later than planned, Bob and I headed west across Kansas, stopping overnight at Hays and arriving at Golden, just west of Denver, in mid-afternoon the next day. The girls were there to meet us, and we dropped our trailer in Con Fletcher's yard, then drove to Estes Park, where we stayed one night at the Stanley Hotel.

Two days later, the steam car tour began at Colorado Springs. It was the largest progressive steam car tour held in the Rockies, with about 25 steamers taking part, including six or seven Whites and one Doble. Before the tour, Brent Campbell and Art Hart both climbed Pike's Peak in their Stanleys. The first night we stayed at Canon City, the second and third at Mount Princeton Hot Springs, and the fourth at Cripple Creek, before returning to our starting point for the blow-down banquet and our fifth night. We drove over the Royal Gorge, had lunch in Leadville, and experienced Cripple Creek before the gambling came. On Wilkerson Pass overlooking Colorado's South Park, where a catered lunch had been arranged, three 30-horsepower Stanley touring cars and their occupants were photographed together. Brent Campbell had his famous "Big Green," and we had our faithful Model 87, veteran of four "Trans-Con" tours. Don Bourdon had his Model 85 on its first trip to Colorado. This same car carried the Bourdons and the Mays safely over much of Colorado (and Wyoming) just one month ago.