

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, December 10, 2012

Mountain Wagons: To my knowledge, the name *Mountain Wagon* was first applied to large horse-drawn wagons with seats that carried venturesome passengers up the carriage road to the summit of Mount Washington starting soon after the Civil War. The Stanleys were not the only automobile manufacturers to adopt this name, but they were the most famous. Just under 300 Stanley Mountain Wagons were built between 1908 and 1916.

With the Stanley Hotel at Estes Park, Colorado, under construction, F. O. Stanley convinced his brother that larger passenger-carrying vehicles would be needed to supplant the Model F Stanley touring cars used by the Osborn family to transport tourists from the railheads at Lyons and Loveland to Estes Park. The very first "Wagons" were called Model Z's, had three seats for nine passengers, and utilized the early 30-horsepower engines designed for the Florida racer of 1906 and 1907 and also used in Model K semi-racers advertised in the 1907 catalog and the 1908 and 1909 30-horsepower touring cars. The first two or three "Wagons" were shipped to Colorado late in 1908, and by the time the Stanley Hotel opened in June 1909, 25 or 30 such vehicles were on hand to carry the expected influx of guests. It is entirely possible that there were well over 50 of these vehicles operating successfully in this part of Colorado in the years immediately after 1909. The Model Z was made at least through the 1910 model year.

Hearing of the success of Stanley Mountain Wagons in the Rockies, many resort hotels in the northeastern United States placed orders for Model Z's. Although we know there were many more, places I know of were the Poland Spring properties in Maine operated by the Ricker family; the Buckwood Inn at Shawnee-on-Delaware in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, owned by the Remington family; and the Glenwood Hotel at the Delaware Water Gap. There was also a Stanley Mountain Wagon that ran between Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and Harvey's Lake, a resort community some 15 miles away. We know the Rickers had several Model Z's, as my father rode on one from Danville Junction to Poland Spring in 1910 when my grandfather was staying a few weeks at the Mansion House there.

The Pennsylvania-owned "Wagons" may have been Z's, or possibly the later versions, which were larger and longer, with four seats designed to carry 12 passengers. These first appeared in the preliminary catalog for 1912, where they were called Models 86, employing the heavier-framed "oil-running" 30-horsepower engines. A lot of these 12-passenger versions were sold, still with a wooden frame and right-hand drive, through the 1914 model year. My father ordered a new one in the spring of 1913 and operated it successfully on the Battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, during the 50th anniversary veterans' encampment that summer. Starting that fall and into 1914, this car operated as a bus line from Yorklyn to Wilmington, becoming the first registered bus line in Delaware. A man named Motter from Biglerville near Gettysburg operated another Mountain Wagon on the Battlefield for three or four years thereafter.

We know there was at least one Stanley Mountain Wagon in Yellowstone Park, as there is a photo of Buffalo Bill standing alongside a 1913 or 1914 model at Cody, Wyoming. Pat Farrell discovered that the Sol Duc Hot Springs on Washington's Olympic Peninsula had a fleet of five or six during the 1913–16 period. The last Mountain Wagons the Stanleys built in 1915 and 1916 were basically 30-horsepower condensing cars without a condenser, having left-hand drives, steel frames, and "long stroke" slow-running pumps. At least one was built with a condenser and a closed body, and a larger Mountain Wagon for 20 passengers (presumably 5 seats for 4 passengers each) on a 144-inch wheelbase was briefly advertised, but it is doubtful one was ever built. The 1915 Mountain Wagon we have operated at and from Auburn Heights since 1946 is possibly the only "standard" version built with five seats for 15 passengers, as it has the standard 136-inch wheelbase of the normal 12-passenger wagons.