

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 8, 2015

June Is Bustin' Out All Over: So are the roses on the arbor at Auburn Heights. June, with its long days, has always been the favorite month of the year for Ruth and me. It's a wonderful time to take a trip, especially to the "north country," where the days are even longer. It goes by all too quickly -- why does January last so long? On June 6, 2005, I wrote about the "Longest Day" (the D-Day Invasion of June 6, 1944) and on June 5, 2006, about my family's long Nova Scotia trip that began on June 20, 1936. On June 27, 2011, the news article was titled "The Long Days of June," and on June 4, 2012, it was called "A Week Sealed in Time."

In the trapshooting world before and after World War II, June was a month of many eastern championship events. The Delaware State Shoot was often held in May or early June, followed by similar tournaments in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. My father and I had our share of fun at all of them. Many of the eastern Steam Car Tours were held in June, starting in 1955, often at Woodstock, Vermont, or Lakeville, Connecticut, and this year it will be from June 21st through the 26th at Canandaigua, New York. I always wanted to see the Midnight Sun north of the Arctic Circle. Ruth and I just missed the "Circle" north of Fairbanks, Alaska, in 1988 and spent several days north of it on our trip to Norway's North Cape in 1990. It was in July both times, but in Norway, especially, it didn't get dark for two nights, although the weather was cool and cloudy.

As mentioned above, our Nova Scotia trip began on June 20, 1936, and we traveled in my dad's 1934 Packard Twelve limousine for nearly six weeks. It was an eventful trip over many miles of dusty and rough gravel roads, climaxed when a boom broke while lifting our car onto the deck of a ferry across the Minas Basin (Bay of Fundy), dropping the car about four feet onto the deck. Repair of the boom was required before we could be lifted off, but otherwise no damage was done.

On June 18, 1941, one week after my graduation from Wilmington Friends School, we started from home again, this time in the '37 Packard still in our collection, with plans to visit the West from California to the Canadian Rockies. After about 10 weeks and nearly 12,000 miles, we returned safely, buying two new tires at Kansas City but with no other car trouble. My father and I attended trapshooting tournaments at Bradford, Pennsylvania; Cedar Point, Ohio; Ogden, Utah; Santa Monica, California; Portland, Oregon; and Vandalia, Ohio, along the way. We visited the Colorado Rockies, had a swim in Great Salt Lake, saw the southern Utah Parks and the Grand Canyon, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Yosemite, Seattle, Lake Louise and Banff, Glacier National Park, Yellowstone, and finally the newly carved sculptures at Mount Rushmore. Until 1972, this was my "trip of a lifetime."

On June 17, 1944, a trip of necessity began after 11 days at home that the army called "delay en route." Cliff Ham and I left Auburn Heights in my '40 Packard 110 sedan for a one-way trip to Roswell, New Mexico, following the southern route. Overnight stops were at Lexington, Virginia; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Memphis, Tennessee; Greenville, Texas; Abilene, Texas; and Sweetwater, Texas, and after 2,300 miles the trip was completed on June 23. Ham, who had been commissioned with me at M.I.T. early in the month, had left at Abilene and took a bus to his destination in Arizona. Going across west Texas, the southerly winds were HOT.

On June 20, 1957, Albert Harvey and I in my father's Model 76 and Bob and Kay Way from Kennett Square in their Model 735 left for a five-day trip to and from Roxbury, New York, on the west side of the Catskills. Tom Porter, an old car collector, owned a small hotel there, and Frank Gardner and Frank Johnson, both from the Boston area, joined us there traveling over the road in the Gardner's 1912 Model 74. Also joining were Curt Blake, co-founder of Friendly Ice Cream Company, and his father, Herb, traveling from Springfield, Massachusetts, in their '36 Ford cabriolet. Following our two nights at Roxbury, we traveled east to the Berkshires and stayed overnight at Lenox, after which we said good bye to the New Englanders and all headed for home.

All four long “Trans-Con” tours that I made with the Model 87 began in June. In 1972, we left on a rainy June 13 headed for Montreal, where we joined the tour that ended in San Diego. We started the 1979 tour at Key West in very hot June weather (it was much nicer when we ended at Halifax, Nova Scotia). In 1982, we left Pebble Beach, California, on June 19 on a tour that ended at Jekyll Island, Georgia. And in 1989 after flying to Houston, Ruth and I started from Galveston about June 10 headed for Bar Harbor, Maine.

We enjoyed the Boston area twice in mid-June. In 1995, the 50th and only reunion of our World War II weather forecasting class (it was actually our 51st) descended on M.I.T. for two days of reminiscing, and in 1997 we celebrated Ruth’s birthday with the Gardners just before the 100th anniversary celebrations of the first car built by the Stanley twins. This was the only time the Mountain Wagon let me down. Having been towed to West Newton (Massachussetts), the rear axle broke after running only about eight miles as the festivities got under way. After its immediate return to Auburn Heights, Herb Kephart made a new axle out of the very best materials, and that axle has served us well for the 18 years since.