

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 30, 2018

Another Long Steamer Tour, 1996: Following in the success of their 12-day tour in 1991, Brent Campbell and Don Bourdon planned another one, slightly shorter, in Vermont and New York's Adirondacks. This tour started and ended at Chestertown, New York, west of Lake George. Ruth and I used our 1912 Model 87, which we towed to and from Chestertown.

The two reliable White steamers owned by Jim Weidenhammer and Dick Wells were joined by approximately 10 Stanleys. These included Charlie Johnson and Sandy Heefner in their 1907 Model F, Bob and Barb Reilly in their 1913 Model 65, Brent and Martha Campbell in their 1911 Model 85 (Big Green), and two Bourdon cars, Don's 1911 Model 85 and one of the Bourdon wire-wheeled condensing cars, with passengers Paul, Connie, Curtis, and Don, with other Bourdon relatives coming and going. I'm sure I have overlooked two or three other cars.

Our first day's run was a loop to the east, returning to Chestertown for the night. We went eastward to Lake George, where we rode on the one remaining steamboat on the lake. Following that, we proceeded north along the west shore of the lake on a very hilly but scenic road to the vicinity of Silver Bay, thence westward to our starting point.

The second day, we proceeded northeastward into Vermont and stayed at a nice bed and breakfast inn at Manchester, less than one mile up the hill from the huge Equinox House, then undergoing a complete restoration. Our good friends Frank and Weezie Gardner joined us in Manchester (Frank had sold his Model 74 Stanley to Brent Campbell two years before) and invited Ruth and me to dinner at a large pink frame house on a side street that had been turned into a gourmet restaurant. I don't recall any other guests in the place for dinner, but it was a fabulous meal.

The next day, the tour moved north on Route 7 to the south side of Vergennes, where we stayed two nights at two small places, about 5 miles apart. The main place on the south side of Vergennes had about 10 rooms and a restaurant; the other, where we stayed, was a farmhouse in the country with about four guests rooms, no restaurant (except breakfast), but indoor storage for our cars. The proprietor tried so hard to please us that we hated to leave after two nights. There was a banquet for everyone on the tour at the "other" lodging place, and those of us not staying there returned the 5 miles to our lodging using our gas lights on a cool Vermont evening. We probably went to the Shelbourne Museum on our free day near Vergennes.

Leaving Vergennes, we crossed one of two remaining ferries on Lake Champlain, from Basin Harbor to Westport, and then we proceeded westward through Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. We had reservations for two nights at the Wawbeek Resort on a lake in the Adirondacks, 10 miles east of Tupper Lake. This was a large resort with a central building containing the restaurant, with most of the accommodations in rustic cabins spread through the woods over several acres. The Weidenhammers had a nice cabin on high ground but had a half-mile walk for breakfast and dinner. Charlie and Sandy (Johnson and Heefner) had a room adjoining the main building with a view across the lake. I liked the cabin where Ruth and I were lodged, but Ruth did not. I could blow down and keep the 87 in the woods right by the front door, and the accommodations were spacious for two. The problem was the sewage system was choked up.

The last day we traveled south to our starting point at Chestertown but not before we had a sumptuous breakfast at a private Adirondack camp owned by John Hovey's brother. These "camps" are large summer cabins or group of cabins usually on a large lake. John and Rosa Hovey, whom I had known from "Trans-Con" tours, were on hand along with his brother's family. We hated to leave but soon arrived at the Adirondack Museum, a great place to visit. We took a short cut at the end of the day and by-passed Speculator, which was on the tour route.