

FAHP News, July 16, 2018

Twelve-Day Progressive Steam Car Tour, 1991: The Eastern Steam Car Tour in 1991 was at Charlottesville, Virginia, and later that summer Don Bourdon and Brent Campbell invited about 15 steam car owners who liked long trips to join them on a trip they had arranged around northern New England that lasted 12 days! I think 10 or 11 cars took part (the total mileage was probably 1,200). Jerry Farnsworth gave up after a few days, Con and Lynne Fletcher from Colorado missed the first day, and Chris Greaves and his son Will did the last few days. All other cars made the entire trip on their own power, as I recall.

We left our trailers at the Marshland Farm Inn at Quechee, Vermont, and had our opening and closing banquets there. From this place, the tour made a wide clockwise circle, covering northern Vermont, the White Mountains, across Maine to Mount Desert Island, down the Maine coast to New Castle, and westward across New Hampshire back to the starting point. Our overnight stops were at a Vermont farm that accepted tourists south of Barre, then on the Hero Islands in Lake Champlain, then at Lake Willoughby in Vermont's northeast kingdom. Moving into New Hampshire's White Mountains, we stayed two nights at Jackson, then overnight on Rangeley Lakes in Maine, and on to Skowhegan with a brief stop at the Stanley Museum. The next day we arrived at Southwest Harbor on Maine's Mount Desert Island, where we spent two nights at a traditional New England inn where a professional croquet tournament was going on (no noise, please), so we couldn't blow down our boilers. While at Southwest Harbor, Curt Blake took us on his deluxe yacht to an off-shore uninhabited island, where we built a fire from driftwood and enjoyed a real Maine lobster bake.

We visited Richard Paine's Seal Cove Museum before moving down the coast to visit the Owl's Head Museum, and finally on to New Castle, where we left the coast and stopped for the night near Moultonborough on New Hampshire's Lake Winnepesaukee. The last day, our tour ended with the trip westward to Quechee. We enjoyed some very nice inns and fine scenery.

I will try to recall the cars and their owners who participated: Con and Lynne Fletcher from Golden, (CO), with a 1907 Model H-K Stanley, Eric Haartz and a friend with a 1914 Model 712 Stanley, Jerry and Barbara Farnsworth with a 1910 Model 70, Chris Greaves and his son Will with his 1910 Model 70, Bob Reilly and Marion Biehn (a friend of the Marshalls -- I bought our '32 Packard from her late husband, Gordon, in 1956)) with his 1913 Model 65, Tom and Ruth Marshall with the 1913 Model 76, Jim and Eleanor Weidenhammer with his 1910 White Model OO, Dick and Judy Wells with his 1910 White Model OO, Brent and Martha Campbell with his 1911 Model 85 "Big Green," and Don Bourdon with his '11 Stanley Model 85 (or one of his '16 Stanley condensing cars). I'm sure Don had other Bourdons as passengers.

I know the participants had minor trouble, but, with the exception of the Farnsworths, all others completed the tour on their own power. I had a flat tire on the Model 76 as it started to rain between Rangeley Lakes and Kingfield, and Farnsworth stopped with his trailer to help. The old Gehrig 37 x 4½ tire was so stiff I ended up taking off the wheel and working on it in Farnsworth's trailer out of the rain. By the time we reached Kingfield, all the other cars had

departed, and Sue Davis was closing up the Stanley Museum. A couple of days before that, when we reached Jackson, New Hampshire, Con Fletcher had lost some balls out of the crank bearings in his engine, and no one on the tour had spare balls the right size. I phoned Ed Gallant of Gilmanton Iron Works (NH); he had some, and he offered to bring them to Wolfeboro if we would meet him there. I rode with Con in his bus that he had turned into a deluxe motor home from Jackson to Wolfeboro; the balls were obtained, and Con was soon back on the road with his steamer. I don't recall who drove his motor home on the tour, but it was obviously with us, and Don or Brent may have furnished a driver if it was used as a trouble vehicle. His trailer was back at the farm where he had joined us one day into the tour.

Here are some highlights: The second day, we visited Ben and Jerry's (ice cream) at Waterbury, Vermont, and then drove through Stowe and over Smuggler's Notch. The Hero Islands were new to us; they got their names from Ethan Allen and his brother who successfully defended Vermont from British troops during the early years of the American Revolution. As a token of thanks, the new state (1791) gave the islands to these heroes. At Lake Willoughby, we stayed in a new inn that faced the long, narrow lake close to the Canadian border. The inn where we stayed at Jackson (NH) lost at least one room of regular customers when we blew down our boilers nearby. The old-fashioned inn where we stayed at Southwest Harbor could have been very nice if the manager had been as interested in running his inn as he was in participating in the croquet tournament. It was raining when we arrived back at Marshland Farm, our starting point. Bob Reilly went with Con Fletcher to fetch his trailer from the farm where he had left it, about 90 miles away. In the Model 76 with the top up and the curtains on, I took Ruth, Marion Biehn, and Lynne Fletcher to the Simon Pearce shop in Quechee, less than 2 miles away, always a treat.

Other than possibly a tour run by Norm Shanklin or Alex Joyce, this was the longest progressive tour ever operated exclusively for steam cars. Brent and Don ran a sequel in 1996, but it was reduced to about eight days.

Work Report: Due to the Steam Car Tour, there were no regular work sessions for the cars last week.

AVRR Report: Volunteers: Anne Cleary, Bob Koury, Dave Moorhead, Jeff Morrison

Accomplishments: (1) Worked on two sections of track between the turntable and maintenance shed. Pulled the sections out, replace all ties, and reinstalled. (2) Continued painting trim on the maintenance shed. (3) Finished back filling the retaining wall with soil. State has seeded the area with grass.