

The Silver Anniversary Glidden Tour

by Henry Austin Clark, Jr.



Twenty-five years ago the Clarks headed off Long Island towards Albany for the start of the FIRST Glidden Tour Revival in a thirty-four old Renault berline, wondering what it would be like, and how much trouble we would encounter. This October we again started off, this time to Mobile, Alabama in a forty-one year old Lincoln sport phaeton. The respective years of the cars were 1912 and 1929, incidentally, reflecting a significant change in the cars going on the Tours since the beginning. Oddly enough the 1912 Renault ran like a watch with no brakes, while the 1929 Lincoln gave lots of trouble on the way south, until helping friends made it right.

In between the years 1946 and 1970 we have been to lots of places from Maine to the Rockies, and from Canada to Florida on the Tours. We have met many fine people, and have made many good



Nelson Deedle of Belleville, Ill, had a French car to go with the French name of his hometown, a 1927 Bugatti Right, 1931 Cadillac

friends, a surprising number of whom we see again and again. Every Tour has had its outstanding scenery and its memorable experiences, including finding a new old car on almost every tour from 1946 on. To tell half of them would take a book. One thing is for sure — there is no such thing as a bad Glidden, just good and better.

Therefore when the plans for the 1970 Tour came out there was never a question about whether we would go. New Orleans being one of our favorite cities (I even have a gold key to it!), we looked forward with pleasure to our visit there. What we did not realize was that the most fascinating parts would be around Mobile and the Gulf Coast.

Having effected a rendezvous with our Cleveland friends, the Donzes and Hannafords, at Birmingham, we limped into Mobile in what acted like a four

cylinder Lincolin. Our route took us under the harbor in a tunnel and right into town to the Admiral Semmes Hotel and Motor Inn, two related establishments across the street from one another. The older Hotel was Tour Headquarters, but there was an immediate rush to exchange rooms in the former for newer and larger ones in the latter. The Clarks and Hannafords remained in the Hotel, while the Donzes moved, thereby splitting our party which had been together (unlike 1964 in Colorado Springs when the Broadmoor people broke up our group as if we were anarchists.)

We had arrived on Thursday, one day early, to leave time to get settled and work on the cars, which was a good thing in our case at least. Many other Tourists had the same idea, it seemed. The Tour Committee was there to greet us and give us our



1922 Marmon '34' Speedster, Egbert J. Beney

Tour Packets. These included a spiral-bound Tour Book, patterned after the 1969 Book of the Great Smokies Tour — one of the best ever. All of the information anyone could want plus maps and route instructions was included.

Safety inspection was conducted on the block-square reserved and guarded parking lot two blocks from the Hotel on both Thursday and Friday. We put in time working on the Lincoln and watching for requested ignition parts to arrive by air mail. By Saturday morning they had come, were installed, and with adjustments completed, the Lincoln was once more its powerful eight cylinder self, ready for any challenge. This miracle was mainly due to the efforts of Bob Hannaford, Andy Hotton, and Oakley Sumpter. Needless to say, we breathed much easier from then on. We had limped from New Jersey to Mobile, which was 90% of the way down.

Friday night was the opening banquet where our hosts were introduced officially. They included the Tour Chairman and Vice-Director of the Region, Rudy Hearn; The Director of the Deep South Region, Bill Owen; Pierre Fontana, who was to herd us in the Duesenberg; Ed and Marion Rothenburg, in charge of Judging and Trophies respectively; Buddy Walton, in charge of the New Orleans segment; Ann Eady, editor of the "Daily News" which was to appear each day of the Tour; and a number of others whom we came to know well during the next week.

Saturday was the first day of touring and we had a delightful run in sunny weather west and south to Dauphin Island and Fort Gaines, which is both a modern and antique military establishment. The opening ceremony involved the firing of an early cannon by our Committee. A chicken and fish buffet luncheon was served to the Tourists by the old Fort. This was a fine spot for photos and many were taken.

On the way back many of the Tourists made a stop at the Bellingrath Gardens, a few miles out of Mobile. The cars parked under trees hanging with Spanish moss, and made a handsome tableau.

Saturday night was reserved for the Mardi Gras Ball at the Municipal Auditorium a huge new structure in Mobile. The Committee had made costumes available for the adventurous extroverts in the crowd, and the costumed group participated in the Tableau, which also featured a number of beautiful Mobile Belles. The less enterprising Tourists wore formal dresses or tuxedos, making this the second official black tie VMCCA function in history, the first being the founding dinner in Boston many years ago. (Of course the Rolls-Royce Club does it all the time, but no matter.) In any event, the Mardi Gras Ball was a fine spectacle and was enjoyed by all.

Sunday was dark and rainy, which worked out well because it was the day for the bus tour of Old Mobile and vicinity. We first visited a grand Ante-Bellum (and they don't mean World War II) mansion in the



1912 Ford Roadster, Arthur R. Bergstrom

DeTonti Square section of town. It had belonged to a Confederate Colonel, and miraculously escaped sacking at the end of the unpleasantness. To some of us the most striking features were the four Southern Belles in full costume on the front veranda.

The next stop on the tour was at the new Art Gallery where they had a fine new collection of paintings and free champagne for us. The Director of the Gallery is from Boston, oddly enough. The final halt was at "Oakleigh", another pre-Civil War mansion operated by the Historic Mobile Preservation Society. Here it was noted that two portraits were hanging side by side, of William Kissam Vanderbilt and his bride, a Mobile girl. The ladies seemed unaware that the son of this gentleman, Willie K., Jr., had left an indelible mark on the history of automobile competition in America and the world.

There were also paintings of the famous Confederate raider Alabama, newspapers decrying Yankee atrocities during the Civil War, and many more interesting mementos of bygone days. Each of the stops was manned, or should we say womaned, by the ladies of the Society, and they were worth the trip alone. Everyone had a great day.

One could say that Monday morning dawned bright and shining for our run to Pensacola, but one would be an unmitigated liar. The heavens had taken offense and a near hurricane was blasting in on the Gulf Coast. Steady rain and constant winds off the water made the ordinarily delightful drive along the shore into a torment for the drivers of open cars and a mystery

trip for those in closed vehicles. We had no trouble seeing where we were going except for blown wet sand in our eyes and teeth.

To begin with, it should be explained that experience is no help on a Glidden, as far as finding your way is concerned. I can state with complete accuracy that the 1929 Lincoln was lost every day of the Tour at least once. Monday was no exception. Our excuse (and usually we had one) was that a route turn sign had been removed for construction. In any case, when we reached the shoreline we went the wrong way out a dead-end to the west instead of east. Marty Forer in the Universal Tire truck followed us to tell us we were lost. After stopping, we decided to have a "pit stop", involving maintenance of both the equipment and the personnel. Standing in the rain with glass in hand we agreed to turn back and seek the correct route.

Marty had rescued the Lowenthals, whose 1908 Brush had self-destructed in one magnificent leap, leaving pieces of engine all over the road. Shelly had hopped available transportation back to Mobile for his trailer, leaving his sodden bride to ride with the load of new Universal tires and Marty. She was saved from P-neumonia by an infusion — just in time.

Eventually our group made it into Pensacola, where Martine's Restaurant had just about given up waiting, but nevertheless produced a fine luncheon. Bill Donze and I decided to ride together in his 1927 Whippet at this point, being followed by the Lincoln. Within a mile we were separated, and never saw each other again until Mobile. The little Whippet toured the Naval Air Station all alone, as not another old car was left there. The weather was still horrible and stayed that way all day.

Tuesday dawned nice and sunny for our run to New Orleans. The Lincoln got off to a good start by getting off course in the first two blocks. When we could not find the Whippet (its puppy, which had pulled out of the lot two minutes ahead) we became worried. Stopping to help diagnose a busted overdrive on the Stephens, we were advised that the pup was by the side of the road some ten miles back. So back we went only to pass the Whippet on the divided highway. They hollered and blew the horn while we pretended not to notice them. After a quick reversal at the next exit we were together again for the ride past the wreckage of Hurricane Camille, much of which was still plainly visible. Many beautiful homes, both old and new, which faced the Gulf across the coast highway were just empty shells or bare foundations. The lunch stop was at Biloxi, Mississippi, where much of the populace turned out to see the cars, and tell us about the ones they used to have.

The run into New Orleans was uneventful, despite the traffic of the large city. Arrangements at the Fontainebleu Motor Hotel (which Ann Eady later said she had spelled three ways in the Newsletter)



Rudy Hearn and his 1931 Ford A Sedan



Dick Hovey's 1914 Fiat



1930 Stutz owned by Thomas and Lucy Dallman



Dr. William Donze's 1927 Whippet

William N. Owen in his 1932 Peerless Sedan





1927 Whippet Roadster of Wm. E. Donze, M.D. at Fort Gaines

Everett Dickinson and Mrs. Ridell beside his 'J' Duesenberg Phaeton



were excellent, with the entire rear parking area reserved for the old cars, with an officer and a rope to enforce the rules. This was the first time all of the cars were together in one place, as in Mobile they had been in at least three locations.

The event of the evening was the Hawaiian Luau-type cocktail party at the Fontainebleu in the area by the pool. Following this affair various groups made their way to Bourbon Street to enjoy French food, expensive drinks, Go-Go girls and Dixieland jazz. Change as it will over the years, there is still nothing anywhere like the French Quarter of New Orleans. You have to see and hear it to believe it.

There was a short trip south into the interesting bayou country on Wednesday, ending at Barataria. It was a new experience for many to cross the Mississippi

River toll free. This was even true of the ferries, to our amazement. On the route was an automotive flea market, set up by the local New Orleans club. Several of us found bits and pieces we could use. (My purchases were an AC Mack radiator cap and a huge brass bell for my hook and ladder.) Another night of fun and games on Bourbon Street followed. We found that the great clarinetist, Pete Fountain, was back in town, to our satisfaction.

The next morning we packed up and departed for Mobile, after watching Marty Forer change a flat on Tour Chairman Rudy Hearn's Model A Ford. The Lester Tire van had made the trip from Mobile with a load of luggage which would not fit in the Tour cars. It had carried two participating cars from Ohio, as well as a supply of new tires and tubes.

We had a picnic lunch on the beach of the Gulf near Biloxi, having maintained our record of getting lost every day on the road by missing an important turn on the way out of Louisiana. It was a nice sunny day, and we went wading in the warm waters of the Gulf.

A most interesting stop was made at the "Old Place" Plantation of the Gautier family. The Plantation dates from before the Civil War and is a typical country place of those days, surrounded by trees hung with Spanish moss. Some of the Gautier daughters and their friends were there in beautiful costumes, and Mrs. Gautier gave a fascinating tour of the home.

Mobile was reached safely and early, and this time the rest of our group was located in the new Motor Inn, in large connecting rooms, ideal for a party, which of course took place later that evening after the final banquet.

This was the end of the Tour, and the judges had a frantic time trying to decide who would be given the prizes at the Awards Banquet. Somehow they managed to accomplish this task, ruling out cars that had not driven each day's run in full. Bill Swigart was the most decorated driver, with four major awards. The run to Pensacola alone made him deserve them. (Have you ever driven a Curved-Dash Olds in a hurricane?) Bill is also the Champion Tourist, having been on Twenty-five Tours in all. All of the awards seemed to meet with the approval of the gang, and the Committee is to be commended for a fine job. Various members took the mike to make awards or to thank those who had helped make the Tour the great success it was. (The Tour Chairman was the funniest speaker by far, reading a statement prepared by his wife.)

The hardest part of a Glidden is the going home. Saturday morning we loaded up, put the hauled cars on their trailers (but not the old Lincoln), and sadly headed north, promising to see each other next year in Ottawa, when the AACA takes its turn in organizing the expedition.

1970 GULF COAST GLIDDEN TOUR AWARDS

GLIDDEN RELIABILITY TROPHY

Awarded by The American Automobile Association
For the car with the closest to average running time (cars through 1913)
To Ken and Louise Pearson of Crystal Lake, Ill. 1911 Lozier Touring

RESERVE GLIDDEN RELIABILITY TROPHY

Awarded by AAA for the car with the closest to average running time (cars 1914 thru 1922)
To Philip and Sonia Wichard of Halesite, N.Y. 1931 Cadillac Phaeton

AMERICAN MOTORS TROPHY Awarded by American Motors Corporation to:
Merrill and Marlene Maxfield, Salt Lake City, Utah 1913 Hudson Touring

BEST BRASS AGE CAR Trophy Awarded by the Frederick C. Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum to Ken and Louise Pearson of Crystal Lake, Ill. 1911 Lozier Touring

DAVIS BOWL FOR BEST BRIGHTON CLASS CAR

Donated by Frank and Eileen Davis of Sussex, England to
William and Helen Swigart, Huntingdon, Pa. 1903 Oldsmobile

CAR DRIVEN ON MOST GLIDDEN TOURS

Donated by the Antique Auto Museum, Stone Mountain, Georgia to
Robert and Mabel Haverstick, Dauphin, Pa. 1921 Ford Roadster

CHRYSLER CORPORATION AWARD Donated by the Chrysler-Plymouth
Division, Chrysler Motors to Joseph and Emily Fisher, Media, Pa. 1931 Chrysler Phaeton

COKER TIRE COMPANY AWARD Presented to the most popular car on the tour
as determined by the Tourists to Ken and Louise Pearson, Crystal Lake, Ill. 1911 Lozier Touring

DUNLOP TIRE AND RUBBER CORPORATION TROPHY

Donated by Mrs. Ann Klein, Dunlop Distributor to
Mr. and Mrs. William F. Crossett, Warren, Pa. 1913 Locomobile Sportif

FIRESTONE TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY TROPHY

Donated by Firestone Tire and Rubber Company to
LeRoy and Gladys Brady, Dayton, Ohio 1930 Packard Coupe

FORD MOTOR COMPANY, FORD DIVISION AWARDS

Best 1909-1916 Model T Ford to Arthur R. Bergstrom, Rockford, Ill. 1912 Ford Roadster
Best 1916-1927 Model T Ford to John C. Copes, Baton Rouge, La. 1924 Ford Touring
Best 1928-1932 Open Ford to Charles and Imogene Miller, Chattanooga, Tenn. 1931 Ford Roadster
Best 1928-1932 Closed Ford to Howard and Madru Clay, Gadsden, Ala. 1931 Ford Victoria
Oldest Ford completing the tour: C. and Mary Kirwan, Baltimore, Md. 1910 Ford Touring

H.H. FRANKLIN MEMORIAL AWARD

Donated by the H.H. Franklin Club to Julian and Ann Eady, Decatur, Ga. 1929 Franklin Phaeton

GENERAL MOTORS AWARD

Presented to the best car on the tour restored by owner to:
James and Clara Hurst, Sevierville, Tenn. 1924 Star Touring

HENRY FORD MUSEUM AWARD

Presented to the oldest car on the tour to:
William and Helen Swigart, Jr., Huntingdon, Pa. 1903 Oldsmobile

LESTER TIRE AWARDS

Donated by Mr. B. Scott Isquick for cars mounted on Lester or Lincoln Highway Tires:
Best 4 cylinder car to Henry and Rosella Harper, Crystal Lake, Ill. 1912 Ford Torpedo
Best 6 cylinder car to J. & Mildred Beers, Bangor, Pa. 1928 Packard Phaeton
Best more than 6 cylinder car to Harrison and Mildred Manning, Ft. Wayne, Ind. 1932 Buick Sedan

FORD MOTOR COMPANY, LINCOLN-MERCURY DIVISION AWARDS

Best Open Lincoln to Vernon & Trudy Hagenbring, Barrington, Ill. 1929 Lincoln Phaeton
Best Closed Lincoln to Howard and Gladys Salley, Plymouth, Mich. 1929 Lincoln Coupe
Oldest Lincoln to Leslie R. Henry, Dearborn, Mich. 1921 Lincoln Touring

MERCER PLAQUE

Donated by Jerry S. Foley, III to Richard and Ann Staadt, Ft. Wayne, Ind. 1916 Mercer Touring

OLDSMOBILE AWARDS Donated by the Oldsmobile Division of General Motors Corp.
Best Oldsmobile and Oldest Oldsmobile to William and Helen Swigart, Jr., Huntingdon, Pa.
1903 Oldsmobile Runabout

ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER GHOST TROPHY Donated by Millard Newman to
Mitchell and Madeline Magid, Nashville, Tenn. 1926 Rolls Royce Tourer

SWIGART MUSEUM AWARD Donated by William E. Swigart, Jr. to the one who best displays
the "Tour Spirit" of helpfulness and good humor of the original Glidden Tours to
J.R. Smith, Jr. - Chibbie and Gloria Smith, Mobile, Ala. 1924 Dodge Touring

UNIVERSAL TIRE COMPANY AWARDS Donated by Mrs. E. Ann Klein, Universal Tire Company
Best 1900-1914 to Marion and Alice Apple, Marion, Ohio 1911 Cadillac Touring
Best 1915-1932 to Jean and Betty Hecht, Toms River, N.J. 1914 Fiat Touring

CAR DRIVEN THE LONGEST DISTANCE TO MOBILE UNDER ITS OWN POWER -
1970- 2470 miles Donated by the Mobile Auto Agencies to
Edward B. French, San Ysidro, California 1913 Stevens Duryea

YOUNGEST DRIVER - 1970 - 17 years old. Donated by the 1970 Glidden Tour Committee to
Edward Cobb, Washington C.H., Ohio 1920 Essex Touring

OLDEST DRIVER Donated by the West Florida Region AACA to
Everett M. Dickinson, Hingham, Mass. 1929 Duesenberg Phaeton

HARD LUCK TROPHY Donated by the 1970 Glidden Tour Committee to
Sheldon and Reva Loewenthal, Chesterland, Ohio 1908 Brush Runabout