

The Glidden Tour

In Allegany and
Garrett Counties



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Antique automobiles are coming to the area! The Queen City Region of the Antique Automobile Club of American (AACA) will be hosting the most prestigious antique touring event in the world—the 66th American Automobile Association Revival Glidden Tour. Hundreds of antique car owners will be arriving from across the United States in September 2011 to enjoy a week of events that will generate excitement across the Tri-State region when unusual and rare pre 1943 cars enjoy the spotlight.

The automobile tours began in 1902 when the newly organized American Automobile Association (AAA) sought to host an event that would draw attention to the possibility of cross country motoring. Automobile travel beyond a driver's immediate area was difficult at the time, and organizers thought that a tour would not only generate publicity for the horseless carriages but also highlight the need for better roads.

During the 1905 tour one of the participants, Charles J. Glidden, a wealthy industrialist and automobile enthusiast, offered a \$2,000 prize to the AAA as a winning trophy. Subsequent tours were also sponsored by Glidden, and eventually the events were named after him. The AAA tours were discontinued following the 1913 event because many of the initial objectives were met as the states began to build and pave roadways.

In 1946 the tours were revived by the Veteran Motor Car Club of America (VMCCA) and have been continued ever since with the purpose of showcasing antique cars; the VMCCA now co-sponsors the tours with the AACA. A decision was made to name the new tour series in honor of Charles Glidden. While there are a variety of annual AACA events around the country, the Glidden Tour is the premier one.

The tour is not a race that begins with a starter's pistol and squealing tires. Instead, the drivers travel along a predetermined route and stop frequently to allow residents to admire their vehicles—more like a grand parade than speed race. Owners take great pride in the appearance and authenticity of their vehicles which are not to be modified except for safety reasons.

How are winners of the Glidden Tour determined? One vehicle drives the predetermined

course to establish an ideal time between destinations. Drivers of touring vehicles may start whenever they wish and are required to keep their own times on a report card. At the end of the weeklong tour, the driver who comes closest to the established time is declared the winner. Additional trophies will be awarded by the Queen City club, including “Best Orphan Car,” meaning a vehicle whose manufacturer is no longer in business.

Drivers will begin arriving at Rocky Gap Lodge on Sunday afternoon, September 18th for safety checks, registration, and receipt of a banner. The weeklong program will feature approximately 250 vehicles that will travel throughout the Tri-State area including Flintstone, Oldtown, Rawlings, Swallow Falls, Oakland, the Flight 93 Memorial, the Quecreek Mine site, Fallingwater, Penn Alps, Frostburg, Dr. Mike McCagh's Farm and Corvette collection, downtown Cumberland, and the Shrine Club for a total of more than 500 miles.

Don Reid, president of the Queen City Chapter of the AACA and tour chairman, will accept applications beginning June 1, 2011, and expects that a number of unusual vehicles will be entered. “Two drivers called to say they are attending and bringing a 1910 Detroit Chalmers. This is really interesting because there were Chalmers entered in the 1910 tour more than a hundred years ago.”

For additional information, see **queencityaaca.org** on the web.



A 1911 Ford Model T Runabout (facing page) and a 1914 International Harvester truck (right), are owned by Neil Furlow of Cumberland.