

**HISTORY OF THE OLD DOMINION MEET**

**THE WAYNESBORO-STAUNTON REGION AND THE  
OLD DOMINION MEET**

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I suppose that the Old Dominion Meet is a little like Topsy in "Uncle Tom's Cabin", it just "grow'd". In order to trace the origin of our meet, we must go back to a little guest room in the old Webster Hall Hotel in Pittsburgh. As I remember it, there was a group of men which included Hyde Kerr, Miles Amick, A.H. Amick, Edgar Rohr, and John Brown.

The late Hyde Kerr and I had driven up to Pittsburgh on a weekend in late September 1951. We wanted to attend the kick-off banquet of the Glidden Tour and then watch the beautiful old cars leave in the morning of the following day. I had met William Swigart, Les Henry, Jerry Duryea, and several other AACA officers at the Mimslyn Hotel in Luray when the 1949 Glidden Tour came to Virginia and was looking forward to seeing them again. So it came to pass that after the banquet, a group of us assembled in that room.

We soon realized that we represented three different regions of AACA—National Capitol, Allegheny Mountain, and Waynesboro/Staunton. After swapping a few stories about cars we found or restored, the talk drifted around the idea of holding a Spring Meet which would include all three regions. Winchester was suggested as a centrally located meet site and in a short time, the rough plans had been formulated and committees organized. The name "Tri-Region Meet" was proposed and agreed upon by all present.

During the winter, all the details were finalized and in May 1952 we gathered at Winchester to show and judge our cars. I don't have any idea how many vehicles were there or who won prizes, but it was an exciting event and everyone had a good time. We had our banquet and awards at the George Washington Hotel. I still have the letter sent to me by Edgar Rohr telling me that he had made all the "arrangements" for the dinner and rooms reserved for our group.

Before we left for home on Sunday, tentative plans were made to hold another Tri-Region Meet next year. These plans, however, never came to fruition since several members of the Allegheny Mountain Region were unlucky about some of the judging and this region dropped out. This might have spelled "finis" to regional meets in our area, but a number of things happened that moved things closer to our first meet.

At this time, we had several club members who drove up from Richmond each month to our meetings. One member, Dave Garriques, had been instrumental in starting a new region in Richmond along with Frantz Hershey, a Mr. King, and several others.

I remember writing to Dave and suggesting that the Richmond Region join us and National Capitol to form a new Tri-Region Meet. Dave was enthusiastic and invited us to come to Richmond for the Tobacco Festival and the Gold Jubilee of the American Automobile Association. Many of our club members and fellows from DC area came for the event which included a football game, a car parade, and a car show at Parker Field.

It was at this Festival that representatives from National Capitol, Edgar Rohr: Richmond Region: Dave Garriques and Frantz Hershey: and Waynesboro/Staunton, Jeff Diffie and John Brown got their heads together and decided to hold a meet of Virginia Regions the following spring. One of us (I don't remember who) suggested that "Old Dominion" would be a good name and was a distinctive name that no other AACA regions would use.

The Richmond Region offered to host the meet and it took place the following May. It marked the beginning of a great Virginia tradition and will be forever known as the first Old Dominion Meet. The following year, Waynesboro/Staunton was the host on May 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1954. I believe that the National Capitol Region hosted the Old Dominion in 1955, but I might be in error. I will welcome comments by anyone with a better memory than mine. Some events, locations and names become a bit hazy after thirty-four years, but the memories of excitement, fun and friendships I made are clear in my mind and will bring a warm feeling in my hear for as long as I live.

Editor's Note: This month's column (May 1988) details the early history of the Old Dominion Meet as well as some early history of the Waynesboro-Staunton Region. Since John Brown was not only a founding member of the Waynesboro-Staunton Region, but also, the Old Dominion Meet, we thought it appropriate to print this early history in conjunction with the 35<sup>th</sup> Old Dominion Meet to be sponsored by our region in Timberville on May 21.....

## **THE WAYNESBORO-STAUNTON REGION AND THE OLD DOMINION MEET**

In the fall of 1949, the Antique Automobile Club of America brought the Glidden Tour to Virginia. The write-ups in the newspapers kindled the interest of John A. Brown who drove to Luray to see the cars arrive at the Mimslyn Hotel. It was here that he met William Swigart, Leslie Henry, and M.J. Duryea. Mr. Brown applied for membership in the National organization at that time.

In late December of 1949, Mr. Brown recruited new members by personal calls and letters throughout the state. By April 14, 1950, other enthusiasts had registered so that a new region could be formed.

The first organizational meeting was held at a dinner meeting in a small dining room at the General Wayne Hotel on April 18, 1950. John Brown was elected Regional Director at that meeting.

During the summer months, the new region grew in size and was at that time, the only Antique Automobile Region in Virginia and in the entire South. In the fall of 1951, the National Club held its Glidden Tour in Pennsylvania. Club members John Brown and the late Hyde Kerr drove to Pittsburgh for the kick-off banquet held at the Webster Hall Hotel. At this dinner, Miles Amich of the Allegheny Mountain Region and John Brown discussed the possibility of holding an inter-regional meet the next spring. The plans for such a meet took shape and in May 1952, the Tri-Region Meet was held at the airport racetrack in Winchester, Virginia. The three regions represented were: Alleghany Mountain, National Capitol, and Waynesboro-Staunton.

During the summer, the Waynesboro-Staunton Region had a number of outings to various sites in and near Waynesboro and Staunton. Hamilton Crockford, special feature writer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, covered the activities and published an article with pictures in the paper. This article created interest in Richmond and in 1953; the newly formed Richmond Region was invited to join the Tri- Region planning group. The Alleghany Mountain Region withdrew from the organization and the Richmond Region offered to host the Tri-Region meet in May as had been previously held in 1952. It was at this meeting in Richmond that the name "Old Dominion Meet" was suggested by club presidents, Dave Garriques and John Brown. The name was adopted as the official name of the meet and all future meetings held in rotation by existing clubs or newly formed regions within the state were to carry this name. The second Old Dominion Meet was held in Waynesboro in May of 1954 with about 80 cars registered.

So here we are---35 years later—nearly a dozen regions joining together in a great Virginia tradition. Tri-county is proud to be the host of the 35<sup>th</sup> Old Dominion Meet in Timberville, continuing this proud tradition and, most of all, appreciative of John A. Brown , who has made so many significant contributions to the antique car hobby and to the Old Dominion Meet.