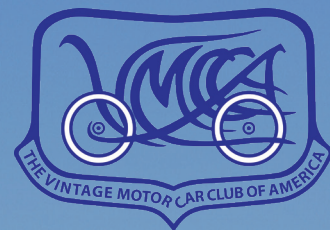


# *The* **BULB HORN**

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THE PURPOSE OF THE VMCCA IS TO PROMOTE TOURING AND ENJOYMENT OF VINTAGE VEHICLES THROUGH  
THE ACQUISITION, PRESERVATION, AND EXHIBITION OF ALL VINTAGE AND HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT  
VEHICLES AND ASSOCIATED MATERIALS.



# Old Spanish Trails Tour Part II

By Greg Bruny

After I attended the Old Spanish Trails Part One progressive tour a year ago, I looked forward to Part Two. On May 12, I met Mountain and Plains Regional Director Randy Carlson at his home in Loveland, Colorado, for the five-hour drive to Grand Junction, where the tour started. We arrived there about 2:00 p.m., just as a small group was leaving for a pre-tour of the Grand Mesa National Monument. Randy and I did not join the pre-tour since we had visited the monument last year. There were already several vehicles at the host hotel. Tour host Steve Fitzgerald gave us a hearty welcome.

There were about 16 vehicles registered, but after a few cancellations, we ended up with 13 cars and 26 people. Some lone drivers hosted passengers, such as myself. Two national officers were on tour: VMCCA Membership Vice President Clare Oestericher and VMCCA Technical Vice President (and tour host) Steve Fitzgerald. There were also two regional directors on the tour, Randy Carlson (Mountain and Plains) and Dion Stams (Western). Mike and Joan Huffman drove the furthest to attend the tour in their 1964 Buick Riviera. This was a 1,400-mile drive from Michigan to Colorado! Participants aged from under 50 to 87 years old traveled from California, Michigan, Ohio, New Mexico, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. The Northern Colorado Chapter had the highest chapter attendance, with eight people on the tour.

The opening banquet fell on Mother's Day, so we gave moms a special recognition during the meal. After dinner Steve Fitzgerald dressed up as one of the Spanish explorers, offered welcoming remarks, and presented us with an overview of the tour. Steve thanked Lyle Schultz for making the tour booklet and name badges.

There was a trio of '50s era Fords in the parking lot: Frank and Mary Kauffman's black 1957 Ford hardtop, Lloyd and Shirley



Top to bottom: At the Douglas Pass rest stop. Lloyd and Shirley Reed's 1957 Ford 500. Steve and Sheryl Fitzgerald's 1956 Ford Victoria.





Reed's red and white 1957 Ford hardtop, and Steve and Sheryl Fitzgerald's red and white 1956 Victoria hardtop.

Not to be outdone, there were three Chevrolet trucks on the tour owned by Bob and Cheryl Clifton, Dion Stams, and Bob and Holly Crawley. Other notable vehicles included a couple of very lovely early 1960s cars on the tour, a light tan 1962 Chrysler Newport and a maroon 1964 Buick Riviera, either, or both, of which I would love to own. There were also a couple of more unique cars on tour, a 2005 Chrysler Crossfire Roadster and a 1994 Benzillac (a combination of a Mercedes Benz and a Cadillac blended into a unique small coupe).

Day Two began as we left the Ramada for a scenic drive north to Rangely, Colorado, about 100 miles north of Grand Junction. After a refreshment stop at Douglas Pass, the downward trek had some tight turns, but everyone made it safely. When Steve mentioned we would be seeing a car collection in Rangely, given that it is a fairly isolated location, I was picturing a dozen or so cars in a tin building. Boy, was I wrong! The Rangely Auto Museum is one of the finest car collections I have ever seen in terms of quality, rarity, and presentation of cars. The facility itself was absolutely over the top with marble floors and a feeling of elegance throughout.

Museum owner and longtime Rangely resident Bud Streigel is a car enthusiast extraordinaire. He and one of his young associates answered many questions about the collection and individual cars. When asked which is Bud's favorite car, he replied, "The next one."

After lunch, some of us had the opportunity to visit his shop, on the other side of town from the museum, which had some works in process, including a combination of a Bullet Nose Studebaker and 1958 Oldsmobile. It will be interesting to see the result of this creation. This car museum is worth a visit.



About 60 cars and trucks were on display, as well as a couple dozen vintage motorcycles.

Next, we drove to Dinosaur, Colorado, and to Dinosaur National Park in Utah. There we saw the fantastic indoor exhibit with the large excavation wall of bones as the backdrop.

We ended at the Days Inn in Vernal, Utah, after about 165 miles of driving and some great stops.

Day 3 began in Vernal, Utah, for a 175-mile drive to Springville, Utah. We drove west through the towns of Roosevelt and Duschene, then headed south to Helper. Helper is a fascinating former mining town that is turning into a tourist destination. The local museum has an incredible collection of area history, including mining and American life from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. The museum was once an old hotel. The smaller rooms housed many exhibits, including a dentist's office, doctor's office, general store, laundry, etc., along with the larger mining and railroad displays.

The second stop in Helper was at a collection of vintage motorcycles, old signs, and four Corvettes, all passions of the owner who was there to greet and interact with us. Following afternoon ice cream treats, some of us also walked several blocks to see a very nicely restored old Conoco gas station with all the gas station accessories of the times (likely 1950s) as there was an early 1950s Buick convertible in one of the two service bays.

After leaving Helper, we made one more rest stop (snacks and drinks provided as usual) at an area of railroad display items before completing the journey to Springville, Utah.

Day 4 was the longest day of the tour and covered 255 miles. The group started out in Springville, and the drive included views of farms as we traveled west. The group separated for a



*Left to right: Part of the Rangely Auto Museum's Collection. The group lunch in Helper, Utah.*





*A group of Old Spanish Trails Part Two tour participants.*



*Frank and Mary Kauffman stop for a photo along a garden path.*

time, but everyone eventually reunited at a rest stop at Old Fort Deseret.

Next we began a 60+ mile drive on Utah Highway 257. It's often described as the "Loneliest Road in America." Only one vehicle passed our little caravan during the hour-or-so-long drive. While there was little traffic, there were many miles and many acres

of solar windmills and collector and storage panels. It was an impressive investment in wind energy.

We left the mostly deserted highway to travel about ten miles each way to see Parowin Gap Petroglyphs, which has fascinating rock carvings. After a half hour or so, we were back on the road to our final destination of the day, Cedar City, Utah.

In Cedar City, we stopped at a well-known buffet, which saved both time and money. The group was pretty hungry after a long day! We checked into the Ramada Inn. Some were ready for a good night's sleep, while others decided to take an after-dinner 30-mile mini-tour to Kolob Canyon, a part of Zion National Park. Viewing the spectacular canyon at sunset was a special treat.

Day Five began in Cedar City as we headed 80 miles to our final destination, St. George, Utah. On the way there, we passed another massive area of solar panels. The group made about a 40-mile drive to Enterprise, Utah, for a rest stop and a walk around a park with old farm equipment.

Our next stop evoked many emotions. We visited the three 1857 Mountain Meadow Massacre sites, where a local Mormon-led militia murdered a wagon train of emigrants from Arkansas (heading to Southern California) during the Utah Wars. There were three groups of victims: older children, women, and men. Seventeen younger children were spared. Before our visit, we had a chance to read about this horrifying event in our tour book. The emotion of seeing the sites, reading the history, and seeing the memorials brought some somberness to this part of the trip.

Our tour book noted that, "The events of this other 9/11 will never be fully explained or understood, but they will always be remembered as a dark time in history." This referred to the 9/11/1999 date when Latter Day Saints President Hinkley dedicated a memorial and accepted responsibility for the Mormon church's role in this tragedy.

On a happier note, we made a short drive to Vejo and enjoyed some delicious homemade pies, before heading to St. George to visit a picturesque park.

After another bountiful meal, some checked in at the Day's Inn (for a two-night stay). Others had the opportunity to view fellow VMCCA member Dennis Rutkoskie's car collection. He was also one of our tour members who lives in St. George. While not on the official tour schedule, it was undoubtedly worthwhile. Dennis' warehouse has a varied collection of 24 cars and trucks, plus some motorcycles and a tractor. What an excellent addition to our agenda!







*A visit to Silver Reef Mining Camp in Leeds, Utah.*

Despite Day Six's shorter mileage, it was action-packed. A few group members did their own thing that day as they may have already seen some of the attractions on Friday's agenda. Our first stop was at the Silver Reef mining camp, a 16-mile drive from the hotel. Silver Reef includes a historical representation of the silver mining that took place there in the late 1800s. After a drop in silver prices in 1884, the mining operation stopped, and the town faded away. Today the area also has many expensive new homes, drawn by the incredible views and seclusion from greater St. George. Road construction disrupted some of the planned routes, but everyone ended up where they wanted to be.

The mid-day stop allowed us to see Utah State Senator Don Ipson's car collection. A man of self-made means, he has a fantastic car collection. Don has an affinity for late-model Chevys with high-performance engines. This was another opportunity to see another fantastic car collection.

Our afternoon stop was at the Western Sky Aviation Warbird Museum at the St. George Airport. This volunteer-run museum has an excellent indoor hangar museum and a couple dozen outdoor planes on display.

There were several hours before the banquet. Some continued to visit other attractions. I chose to work on this writing while it was still fresh in my mind.

After our closing banquet meal, Steve Fitzgerald expressed his appreciation to the tour attendees,

and we had the opportunity to thank him for putting together the tour. He organized a reasonably priced tour by selecting mid-range hotels. Steve included many meals and venue costs in the registration fee. Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do about gas prices.

Steve also brought some auto memorabilia for a silent auction to benefit the VMCCA Scholarship Fund and all the items sold.

Thanks to Dion Stams and Clare Oestreicher for driving lead much of the time and helping keep our group together, especially during some of the unplanned construction detours.

There is so much history underlying this tour, and Steve did an outstanding job highlighting that in conversation and the tour book. I hope this encourages you to consider attending Parts Three (November 2024) and Four (May 2025).



*Left: At Don Ipson's collection.*

*Below: Part of the outside display at the Western Sky Aviation Warbird Museum.*



*(Photos by Greg Bruny)*

