



AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY *Review*

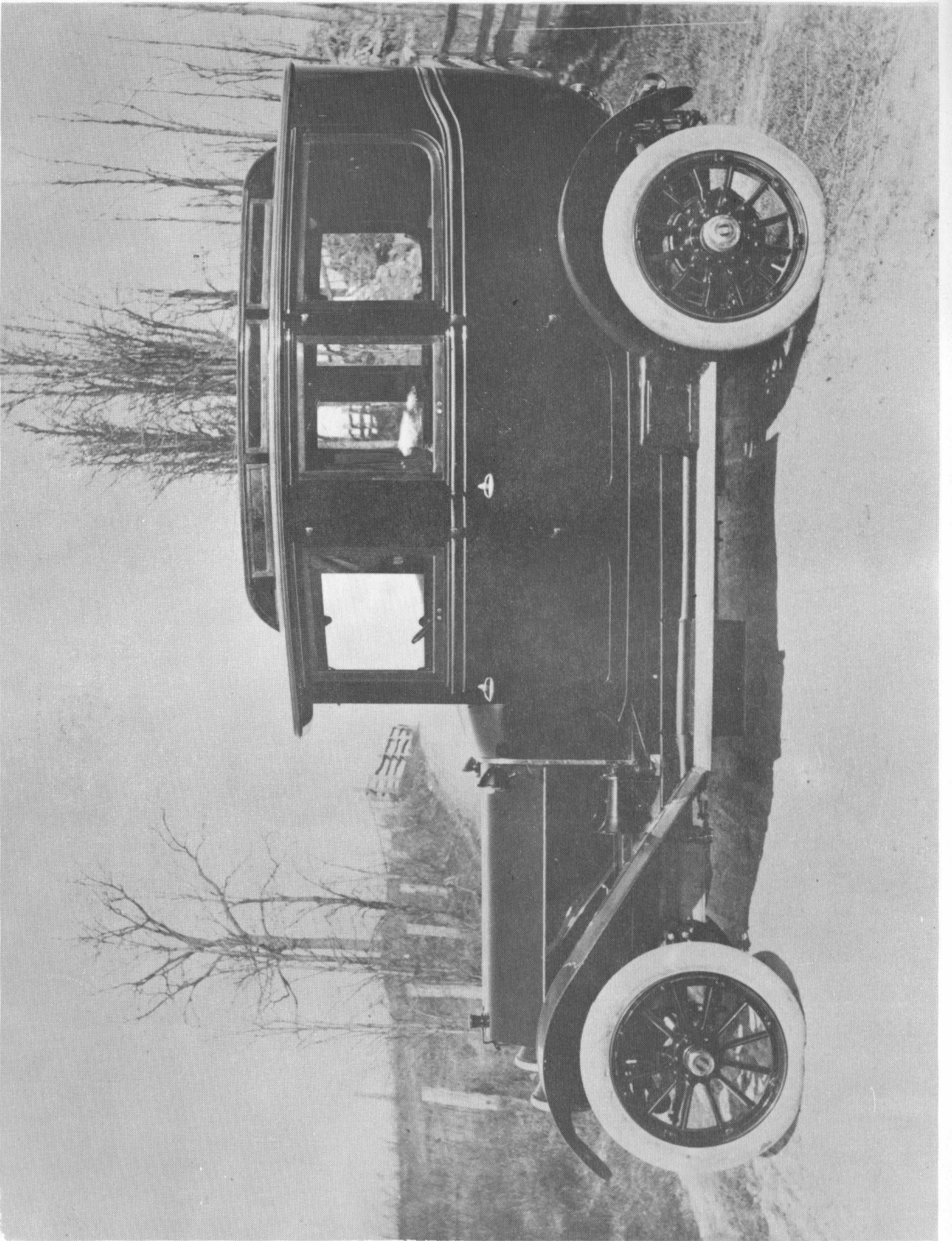
SUMMER 1974

ISSUE NO. 2



WILLIAM WALTER

The Society of Automotive Historians





AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY *Review*

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS
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OFFICERS, 1974

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL PAGE.....	2
WILLIAM WALTER - A FOLLOW-UP.....	3
VIEWPOINT.....	4
THE REDWING.....	6
SOME OTHER GRANTS.....	7
THE BOWEN.....	12
THE STEEL SWALLOW.....	13
CARS TO BE IDENTIFIED.....	14
THE ARMAC.....	17
VETERAN TWO-STROKES.....	18
THE M.G.....	24
THE PETERS.....	28

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The Society of Automotive Historians

THE COVERS -

FRONT - Mr. William Walter, founder of the Walter Automobile Company. This photograph was sent to us by Mr. Maurice Walter, son of William Walter.

BACK - 1907 advertisement for the WALTER car. An excellent glossy reproduction of this ad was supplied by the Walter Motor Truck Company for use in this issue.

INSIDE FRONT - 1913 ALCO Limousine. Picture loaned by SAH member Charlie Weaver.

INSIDE BACK - 1911 ALCO Roadster. Picture loaned by SAH member Charlie Weaver.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

ONE IF BY LAND, *or, whatever happened to Dr. Porsche?*

Although the Society of Automotive Historians is an international organization, the majority of its present membership resides in the United States. Both the Newsletter and this magazine are edited and published in the U. S. A. Thus our editors and many of our members are a great deal more familiar with the American products than with the cars made in other parts of the world. It is understandable, then, that articles contributed by the members or written by the editors might be largely concerned with the American products.

Therefore, even before Issue No. 1 was in the mail, it was decided that this second issue of Automotive History Review would feature some prominent European designer and builder of automobiles. The man selected was Dr. Ferdinand Porsche. His picture was prepared for the cover. Books telling of this man's life and accomplishments were studied, and an article to match the cover picture was in preparation. And, since Dr. Porsche's best known design is the Volkswagen, the famous VW advertisement "Think Small" was made ready for the back cover. Surely such an issue would please our European members, and would also be of interest to those of us on this side of the ocean.

President Stan Yost and several other members were told of this plan for Issue No. 2, and everyone seemed to approve.

And then it happened!

As editor and publisher of this magazine, I went to bed one night thinking of Porsche and the forthcoming issue. Before long I was sound asleep. Sometime during the night I was awakened by the sound of horse's hoofs in the street, and I rose from my bed to look out of the window. There in the moonlight I could plainly see a horse and rider dashing up the street. The man was dressed in what appeared to be colonial garb, complete with three-cornered hat. He was waving a lantern, and calling at the top of his lungs, "The British are coming!". He was soon out of sight, and I went back to bed thinking I had never had a dream more strange than this.

But then things began to happen. Articles about English products and articles by English authors began to arrive in the mail. Maurice Harrison, of Southall, Middlesex, contributed an article about the Bowen, an early British car, along with what is believed to be the only existing picture of this make. SAH Vice President Michael Worthington-Williams, of Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, sent an article on veteran two-stroke engines and the cars in which they were used, including many interesting pictures. Nick Georgano, of Beaulieu, Hampshire, sent a number of interesting (and maddening) pictures of unidentified cars. A lengthy article on the well known British sports car, the MG, was submitted by Dick Knudson of Oneonta, New York.

And so, with all this wealth of English material, there is no room for Dr. Porsche, or for a couple of other articles which had been planned.

The British aren't only coming - they are here!

And that fellow on the horse - I wonder

WILLIAM WALTER - A FOLLOW-UP

The first issue of Automotive History Review included several pictures of Walter automobiles, and also raised some questions concerning the history of this make. At least some of these questions have now been answered, thanks to member Randy Ledermann of Salida, Colorado, and to the Walter Motor Truck Company at Voorheesville, New York.

A telephone call to the Walter factory resulted in a conversation with a competent and courteous secretary, who promised to send what information she could - a promise which was kept promptly and in full measure. Further, she supplied the address of Mr. Maurice Walter who is the son of William Walter, and who managed the company for many years. A letter to him brought the reply reproduced on this page, and the picture which appears on the cover of this issue.

Both Mr. Ledermann and the Walter factory sent reprints of an article concerning the Walter car which were published in "Old Timers News" back in the summer of 1955, and they each sent a considerable amount of information about the later operations and products of the Walter Motor Truck Company. Space does not permit the publication of all of this material in this issue, so it will be saved for a future issue to be devoted

mostly to trucks (and here is a chance for all of our truck historians to break into print).

However, we can now state with a high degree of confidence the following facts:

William Walter built his first cars in 1898, and made them continuously until 1909, when the Walter became the Mercer. Walter continued as a maker of trucks, and that business exists to this day.

Before 1902 the cars seem to have been produced in very small numbers on an irregular schedule. The 1902 models were highly advanced for their day, and marked the beginning of full scale manufacture.

The name "Waltomobile" or "Waltermobile" was the cable address of the company, and not the name of a car.

Still unclear is the part that the Roebing company of Trenton, New Jersey, played in the affairs of the Walter Automobile Company during its transition to the Mercer. The names of such cars as Planche and Roebing-Planche turn up in accounts of the last days of the Walter passenger cars, but information about these cars (if there actually were some) is scarce. Advertisements or pictures of Planche or Roebing-Planche cars will be joyfully received.

2 August 1974

Mr. Richard B. Brigham
Society of Automotive Historians
P. O. Box 1306
Marietta, Georgia 30061

Dear Mr. Brigham:

Thank you for your letter of July 17th enclosing a copy of Automotive History, Issue No. 1.

I am pleased to enclose a photograph of my father, William Walter, one of the pioneers of Automobiles. I will be pleased to have you use this photograph on the cover of your next issue.

I do not recall any of the cars marketed as Waltermobile, and believe that was a cable address.

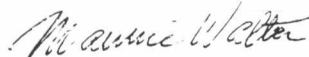
The original factory at 49-51 West 66th Street in New York City was most interesting in that there my father built complete cars, engines, clutches, transmissions, axles, steering, frames, radiators, and even the bodies, sheet metal and upholstery.

This building was next to New York Garage No. 1 where most of the leading makes of foreign cars were stored.

I would appreciate having three (3) copies of your new issue of Automobile History.

If there are any further facts you desire please let me know.

Yours truly,



Maurice Walter

MW/agw



MAURICE WALTER, son of William Walter. His experience with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War I convinced him of the shortcomings of conventional motor trucks when faced with poor road conditions or off-road travel, and he became an advocate of the 4-Point positive drive used in the vehicles made by the Walter Motor Truck Company.

VIEWPOINT

COMMENTS OF OUR READERS

PACKARD - THE MAKE OR MODEL QUESTION AGAIN

Frank T. Snyder, Jr., 748 W. Laredo, Chandler, Arizona 85224

On pages 4 and 5 of the first issue of AHR, Charles H. Hebb has once again raised the question "Is it a Packard or is it a Clipper?". For 1956 there is no question that the proper make name is Clipper, and not Packard Clipper. It is not a model, but a separate make.

I have enclosed two Xerox copies from a 1956 Clipper sales folder. You will note that the word "Packard" is not used, and while the ship's wheel crest does have the Packard diamond center it is a new and different crest. Also, nowhere on the car is the Packard name used. A write-up of the Clipper which appeared in Motor Trend (July, 1956, page 40) does not include the Packard name.

I know that many people consider the 1956 Clipper as a continuation of the Packard Clipper and, therefore, a model of Packard. Documentation, however, indicates that the Studebaker-Packard Corporation had set this up (1956) as a separate make rather than a model.

Editor's note: The reproductions from the Clipper brochure mentioned in the above letter were made not from the Xerox copies supplied, but from an original brochure loaned to us by none other than Charlie Hebb, whose letter on the subject brought this reply.



THE NEW

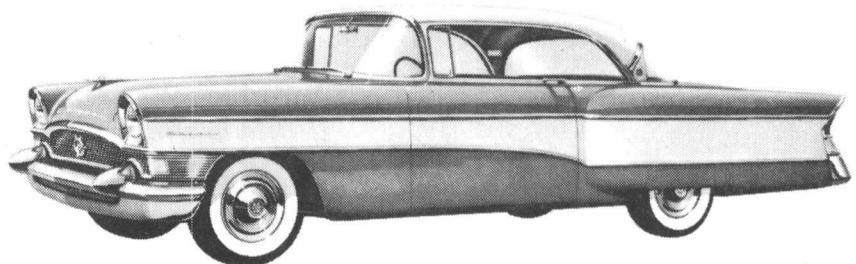
'56 Clipper

WITH TORSION-LEVEL RIDE

The NEW

'56 Clipper

Now the Greatest Engineering Advancement in Two Decades
— Torsion-Level Ride — Helps Make This Car the Most
Outstanding Value in the Medium-Price Field!



'56 Clipper THE CAR THAT MAKES IT SMART TO BE DIFFERENT!

M.G. SPECIALIST

Richard L. Knudson, P.O. Drawer 220, Oneonta, New York 13820

I am a recent member of SAH and read about the proposed Automotive History Review magazine you are editing. I am serious about researching and writing and would like to submit a piece for consideration.

My specialty is the M.G. sports car. I would guess that my library is the most extensive on this marque in the country. I have several articles to my credit, a book last year and another coming out shortly. Presently I am working on a history of the M.G.'s in this country which will be called M.G.: THE SPORTS CAR AMERICA LOVED FIRST. This should be completed and published by the end of summer if all goes well.

1974 is the fiftieth anniversary of the M.G. It seems appropriate that your journal publish a piece on the car that really started the sports car interest in this country after WWII. The first chapter of the book I'm working on now is entitled "How It All Began". It will tell about the beginnings of M.G. and address the debate about what was the first M.G. I would be pleased to submit this to you for prepublication use.

Editor's note: This letter was received just prior to the mailing of the first issue of AHR. Dick Knudson's article appears in this issue with more to follow.

WALTER and WALTOMOBILE

Frank T. Snyder, Jr., 748 W. Laredo, Chandler, Arizona 85224

I have received my first copy of Automotive History Review and would like you to know that I think you did a good job on it. I was sorry that you did not have room to run the two pictures I sent with requests for information. I feel that you should reserve one page for photos on which answers to questions are requested.

The Walter photos supplied by Jan Eyerman are of much interest as I have copies of the same three photos. It is evident that our copies are from the same originals, as my copies have the same flaws as his. Mine came from Holland, and I think it would be interesting to know the source of his.

I would doubt the dating on the Walter on page 3 of the first issue of AHR (1898). While I have a good number of references on the Walter and the American Chocolate Machinery Company, the earliest reference I have is CATJ 2-03, P89-90.

This company became the Walter Automobile Company and was moved from New York City to Trenton, New Jersey, in 1906 when the Roebing family bought control.

Both the Roebing-Planche and the Mercer were built in Walter's Trenton plant. The Walter was discontinued with the introduction of the Mercer (see Automobile, 5-27-09, P880).

William Walter did not stop when he sold the Walter passenger car. In 1911 he introduced the four-wheel-drive Walter truck which is still with us today.

While I have nothing firm on the Waltobile I do have a note that there is an item in Automobile Topics for 11-22-02. The note reports that it sold for \$3000. This reference pre-dates my first Walter reference. If someone can look this up I would like to have a Xerox of the item.

.....
Editor's note: As to the two pictures with requests for information, both are printed elsewhere in this issue. The Red Wing item was set up at the last minute before the issue went to press. For mechanical reasons, we would have had to come up with three more pages to go with it, and we didn't want to further delay an already long overdue issue. As to reserving a page for pictures and requests for information, we plan to devote as many pages as are necessary in every issue. And if anyone comes up with a Xerox of the Waltobile item, send it to this publication. We will reproduce it in print and then send the copy along to Frank. That way everybody will have it.
.....

COMMENTS ON THE FIRST ISSUE

For which your editor is most humbly grateful.

Received the initial issue of Automotive History review and was very impressed. I am particularly interested in (1) obtaining another copy so that I might have the opportunity of having the photographs on either inside cover of the Walter automobiles, (2) that I might have the address of Jan Eyerman in hopes that I will be able to obtain the use of the negatives of these photographs and, (3) an advertisement on the back cover relative to a Packard and perhaps the copy of the first publication of "Ask The Man Who Owns One". Very best wishes in all future publications for the sake of each and all of us.

William F. Northrup, Jr., M.D., Bonita, Calif.

(Extra copy has been sent along with J. Eyerman's address. As for "Ask The Man Who Owns One", does anyone have any idea when and where this slogan was first printed in an advertisement? - Ed.)

The new issue of Automotive History Review is spectacular! It's a great start. Let's hope we can get original stuff in here and not re-hash. I'd like to contribute.

L. Scott Bailey, New York, N.Y.

(Scott Bailey is the Publisher and President of the magnificent and prestigious "Automobile Quarterly", and his letter is indeed flattering. And his offer of contributions to AHR is most welcome. - Ed.)

Just received my first copy of the Review, have read it from cover to cover, and am very pleased with it. I've always thought the idea of the Review was a splendid one, and your initial effort certainly reinforces that belief. Congratulations on a job well done.

David L. Lewis, Ann Arbor, Michigan

May I say how much I enjoyed the first issue of the magazine, and look forward to seeing the next as soon as you can bring it out.

G. N. Georgano, Beaulieu, Hampshire, England

The Review looks good, although I was somewhat disappointed at the brevity of the articles. I suppose you have to use what you get. The Grant piece was very good, but, as I said, I would have liked to have seen it expanded. There certainly must be more information.

John Peckham, Troy, New York

Got my copy of the initial issue of AHR, and I think you are off to a good start. I think that the membership should be pleased, and I hope they begin to flood you with useable articles.

G. Marshall Naul, Granville, Ohio

Congrats on your first issue of Automotive History Review, and best wishes for a great future.

Ervin Seltzer, Melrose Park, Pennsylvania

I received the Automotive History Review and I wonder if you could send copies to the Elwood Haynes Museum, 1915 S. Webster Street, Kokomo, and to the Howard County Historical Museum, 1200 W. Sycamore Street, Kokomo. I would like both of these museums to have a copy of the Review with the article about Mr. Haynes.

Wallace S. Huffman, Kokomo, Indiana

(Copies have been sent. -Ed.)

Your Haynes and Grant material was good, and I also likes Mr. Hebb's Clipper presentation. We must be alert to use our limited and valuable pages for distinctive material not available elsewhere so that we have something of unique value to offer.

Frederick D. Roe, Holliston, Mass.

The Automotive History Review arrived today, and you should be pleased with it. I think it accomplishes the objective of publishing authoritative pieces; layout is good, and the overall picture is attractive. I wish you continued success.

Richard L. Knudson, Oneonta, New York

Allow me to congratulate you on the excellent Automotive History Review, which I have read with interest. This is the kind of publication automotive history has needed for a long time but has had to do without for all these years.

Maurice A. Harrison, Southall, Middlesex, England

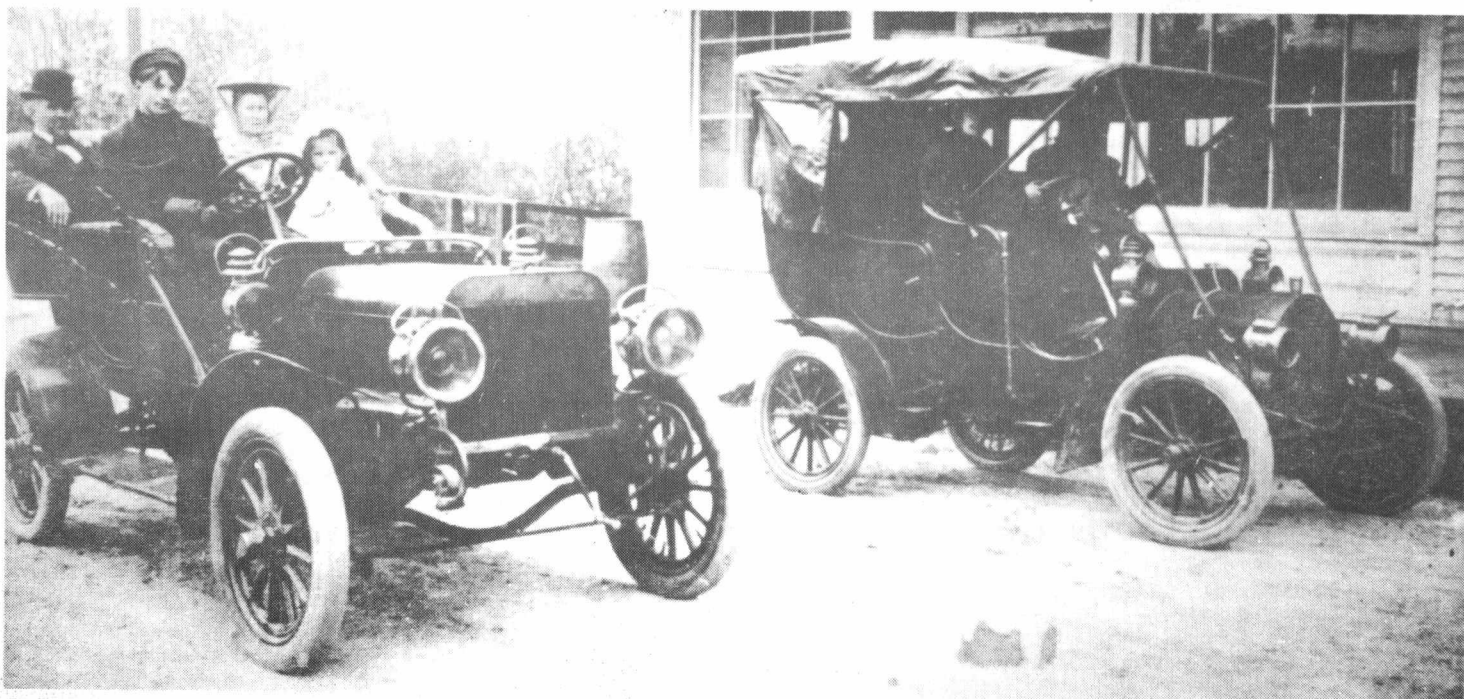
◆◆◆◆◆
STUDEBAKER TO SELL AUTOMOBILES ON TIME

An innovation that is fraught with great significance and which may revolutionize selling methods in the automobile business, has just been announced by The Studebaker Corporation, manufacturers of E-M-F "30" and Flanders "20" automobiles. This is, in a word, that hereafter The Studebaker Corporation will sell automobiles on time - will accept notes from farmers and other responsible buyers for its product.

◆◆◆◆◆

This item, reprinted in its entirety, appeared in Cycle and Automobile Trade Journal, January 1, 1912. The expression "fraught with great significance" was probably the understatement of that year.

The RED WING - *a request for information*



The photograph shown here was received from S.A.H. member Frank T. Snyder, of Chandler, Arizona, along with a letter which says, in part:

"The enclosed negative was sent to me by S.A.H. member Willard J. Prentice. The car at the curb is reported to be a 1907 or earlier "Red Wing". Information as to specifications, builder and city of manufacture of the "red Wing" has not been found. Perhaps you can find room in the S.A.H. magazine to run a picture of this car, with a request for information".

In the photo, the car at the left is unquestionably a 1905 Winton. The general design of the Red Wing would seem to date it as having been made between 1904 and 1906.

A most unusual feature of this car seems to be a sort of yoke which goes completely over the hood, with a T-handle at its center. This yoke seems to lean back against the dashboard, and it appears to extend downward to a possible pivot point near the base of the radiator. This suggests - and this is pure speculation - that the hood is made in one piece and that the yoke serves to hold it down. It could also serve as a hold-down device if the hood were hinged.

The single control lever, obviously un-gated and apparently non-latching, suggests a planetary transmission. The small size of the hood may indicate that the car was equipped with a small engine or that the engine was located elsewhere, probably under the seat, in which case it was probably a 2-cylinder affair. All this, of course, is merely conjecture - but note that no starting crank is visible.

The American Car Since 1775 lists the Red Wing as an unsubstantiated entry, and includes the date 1906. *The World's Automobiles* mentions the Red Wing under "Additions", and gives a date of 1910. Neither listing mentions the location of the manufacturer.

A great many American automobiles have been named for the city in which they were built. There are two communities in the United States with the name of Red Wing. One is in Colorado, the other in Minnesota. Of the two, Red Wing, Minnesota, seems the more likely. Perhaps some S.A.H. members living in that part of the country could explore this possibility.

SOME OTHER GRANTS

by Stanley K. Yost

This is a follow-up on Dick Brigham's dissertation in the first issue of *Automotive History Review*. The most famous of all the Grants on American soil was the one known as "U.S.". He, for a time, led the Grand Army of the Potomac and later sat in the White House in Washington, D.C. Since he was a driver and could not be driven, we will not delve into this particular Grant any further.

The next one in line would have to be W. Wallace Grant. He was an automotive pioneer in the true sense and constructed a self-propelled vehicle in 1896-1897. This was quite an advanced type of machine with a steering wheel, three-quarter elliptic springs in front and canted half-elliptics in back. It was a gasoline machine and did run. For an instant there was thought of building more of these vehicles, but then the idea was dropped, for who would want such a contraption anyway?

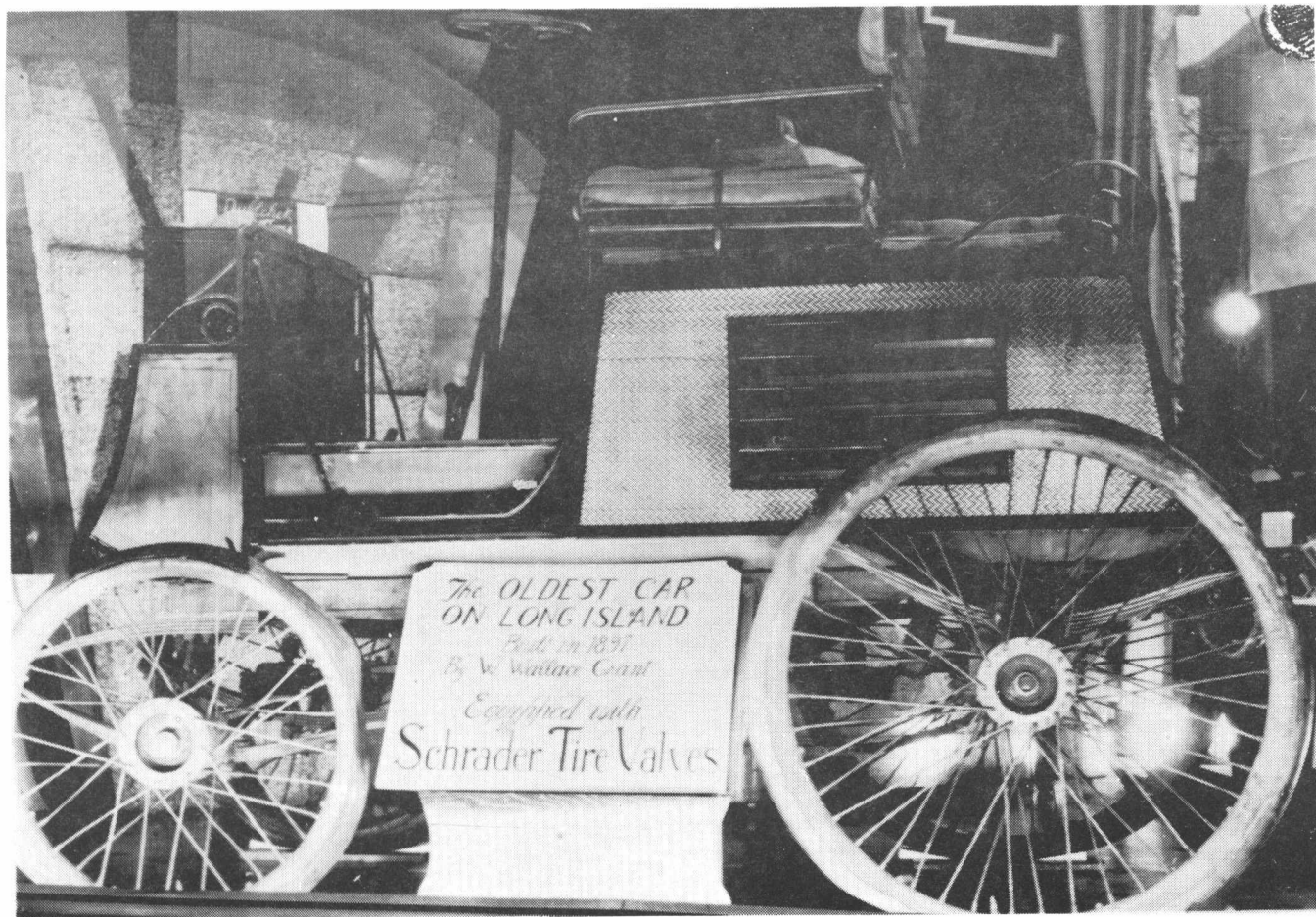
The next in line of Grants was one that came about in a weird sort of way. This car started out as the Sterling, built in Elkhart, Indiana, by the Elkhart Motor Car Company. The company was formed in 1908 and the first cars were shown for the 1909 model year. They were good-looking automobiles and sold well in the local area.

In an effort to increase their scope, which is only natural, they brought out a much expanded line for 1910. This brought about a malady called "fund depletion", one that was to be the downfall of numerous car companies and assorted other manufacturers. By the fall of 1910 the Elkhart boys were out looking for someplace to settle out of the high rent district. They said they were going to build a branch plant but they barely had enough fuel to stoke the furnace in the one they had.

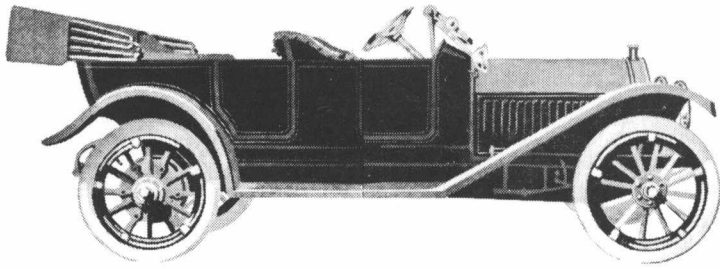
The way things went in those days, groups of people in different cities would send out feelers and offers of great wealth to small manufacturers to come and set up business in their locale. This is why the Sterling people went out to Oklahoma to start with. Two towns, Muskogee and Oklahoma City, had made offers and they went out to investigate. The word got around that the enterprise was on shaky ground, and a sharp lawyer from Chicago put in an appearance. As time passed and announcement time came for the 1911 models, the Sterling was in dire need of help. Lawyer O'Shaugnessy had a solution and they wouldn't lose a dime.

Spring came to northern Indiana as it usually did, with rain, dreary days, and a sprinkling of bad news out of Kokomo. It seems that a large portion of the Haynes manufacturing team was leaving the home nest. There were no explanations, but Harry Elmer, H. H. Murden, C. E. Lohr, J. S. Worthington and E. L. Lawrence left the Haynes company. The announcement was received by the trade in April and it was a bit of a shock, for some of these men had been building Haynes cars for ten years.

Within two weeks the answers were at hand. John R. O'Shaugnessy, the lawyer we spoke of, had set



No. 1 - 1897 Grant horseless carriage built by W. Wallace Grant of Brooklyn, New York. Note the steering wheel and front springs.



No. 2 - This was the car as it looked handbuilt in Elkhart, Indiana. It was the Elmer Six, and looked the same as the first Grant Six.

things up so that this group could go right in and take over the ailing Elkhart Motor Car Company. A new company, the Elmer Automobile Corporation, was formed. Elmer was the president, treasurer and general manager and the lawyer was secretary. The incorporation was for \$700,000, with \$300,000 of it in preferred stock. The new Elmer car was to be built from the ground up, so new facilities were laid out and construction commenced.

By June of 1911 the building was about finished when some former Sterling creditors became a bit disgruntled at the proceedings. Among them was the well known Sheldon Axle Company and, with four others, they had a total of \$1125 in claims against the old company. They claimed that the Elkhart company had received more than \$12,000 for the real estate and not a cent had been paid on their claims. Well, this little mess was something that Elmer hadn't known about. Supposedly this whole deal was a clean package, and he had taken it over with this in mind. The Elmer 6 was completely designed and several pilot models had been built with full production in mind. This would have put them in fine shape for the fall showing of 1912.

Fall came once again and the outlook was not good. It seems the good lawyer had overlooked a few skeletons in the Sterling closet and they were now haunting him. Elmer was an honorable man and, with no production facilities, he started casting around in desperation. There would now be little chance for a 1912 announcement.

A savior came to the forefront in the form of the Grant-Lees Machine Company of Cleveland, Ohio. The management of this company was very susceptible to this fine new six and in December Elmer removed the whole outfit, with the exception of the lawyer, to Cleveland. A new department was formed in Grant-Lees as the Grant Motor Car Company. It was incorporated as a separate entity. A new large building was built to house the assembly operation and deliveries were to start in April of 1912. So - the birth of the new Grant 6.

It is doubtful at this time that they had ever heard of the Grant Brothers Garage up in Detroit. After all, Grant-Lees was known around the world for its gears and gear boxes. Harry Elmer was made a director and also general manager of the motor car division. Murden was made general superintendent, Lohr was the new chief engineer, Worthington was head of design and Lawrence was one of the head mechanical engineers. All the old guys were together again.

The new car did come out in April, just as planned. The new plant was not completely ready so some of the cars were built in other facilities as "semi-assembled" units. They were on the road that same month. Their price was \$2750, and they were rated at 50 hp. The regular production cars came out of the plant in June, the same month that the Elkhart Motor Car Company was adjudged bankrupt. It now carried the name of Elmer Automobile Corporation, but down it went. The Chicago lawyer may still be there trying to figure the whole thing out.

The Grant 6 seemed to be a good enough car, but it was nothing out of the ordinary, nor was it the fireball they had expected. Whether it was disagreement or disenchantment, Elmer resigned from grant in November of 1912 to take up other interests. The Grant-Lees Company was left with the car which it continued to produce, unchanged, into the summer of 1913.

It was July of that year when representatives of the Benton Motor Car Company of Benton, Illinois, came on the scene. this company had been incorporated in October of the previous year and had been limping along with a loser and were now in the market for a ready-made product to sell, and possibly produce. You can believe that Mr. Grant was happy to see them, and it turned out to be bargain day in Cleveland. It was never stated what the Benton people paid, but by the time they had finished they had also bought out the Stuyvesant company at the same time. This company had been floundering for months with a fairly good product. The whole works of the two companies was moved to Illinois. The Grant 6 became the Benton and the Stuyvesant remained such into the 1914 year. That about did it for the Grant name, until those people up in Detroit came out with their little beauty - but then you've already heard about that one.



WANTED—

Any part for a motor car that is built better than the corresponding part in the

Grant Six

"Every part built in one shop" is a pretty phrase—looks good in print—but it doesn't mean a thing. Can the man who claims to build the entire car in one factory (even if he has 87½ acres of floor space) turn out 1,000 gears per year for 1,000 cars and have these gears as perfect and noiseless as the factory that specializes in gears and turns out 100,000. Every part that goes into the GRANT-SIX is selected on this principle.

You don't want a car made of a "Home-made" engine, a "Home-made" radiator, "Home-made" axles, a "Home-made" magneto, and "Home-made" quality throughout? You do want a car with a "Wisconsin T-Head" motor, a "Feddler's" radiator, "Timken" full-floating axles, an "Eisenmann" German-made magneto and every other part the best that is made by the specialist in each industry. The first method makes the ordinary car—the second makes the GRANT-SIX—the highest quality popular-priced car on the market. The GRANT-SIX is the new ideal in automobile construction.

It's the result of the combined brains and experiences, not of a mere handful of so-called "all-around" automobile men, but of the acknowledged leaders in every branch of automobile building—the specialists whose whole effort is devoted to the production of one particular part of the highest quality.

Send for our new folder. It isn't filled with atomosphere—

DEALERS. We have a special territorial proposition that will interest you. Write for it to-day.

THE GRANT MOTOR CAR CO.

2852 EAST 69th STREET

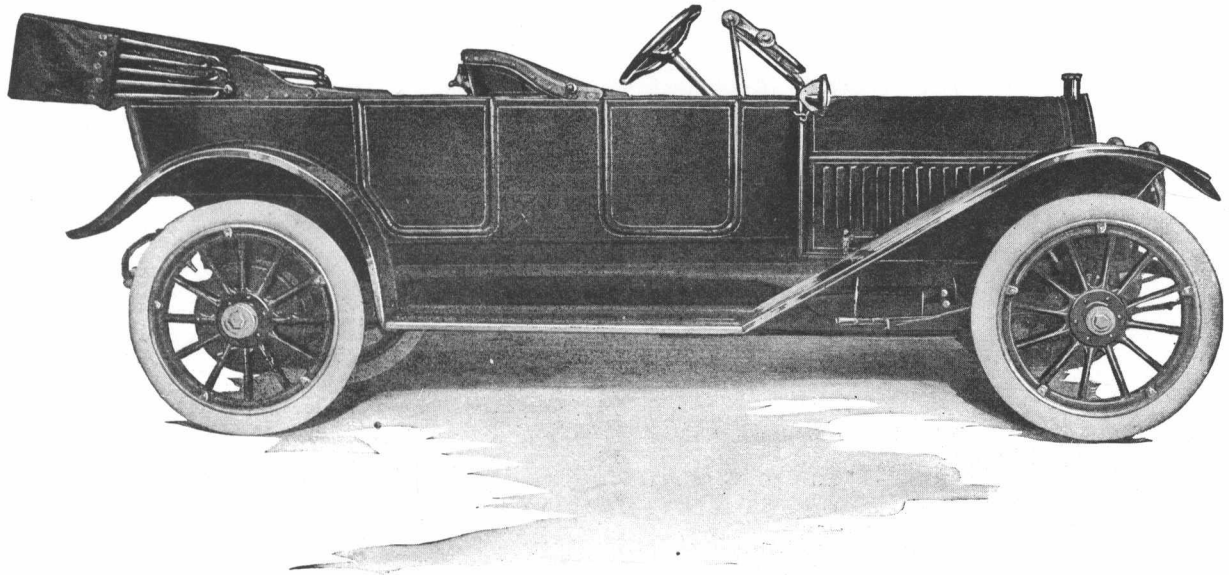


Cleveland
Ohio 1912

No. 3 - The ad that announced the new car appeared in all of the trade magazines for April, 1912. Note the similarity to No. 2.

Grant Six

Remember the Grant Six slogan. "Watch the others follow"



The most imitated car on the market

On April 18, 1912, the Grant Six announced its policy of Standardization—the policy of assembling a car from parts made only by recognized specialists. That was only three months ago. Today not only is our policy of Standardization being generally copied, but even our advertising is being used as a model for imitation. Such imitation proves us right. But remember this—no other car is yet standardized *throughout*, and no other car has yet attempted to imitate us in the quality of parts used in the

Grant Six

The Pioneer Semi-Assembled Car

The Only Standardized Car in the World

Have you read our folder? It names each and every specialist who contributes a part to the Grant Six. Their names are more convincing than the most enthusiastic statements of the manufacturer who attempts to build a complete car in one plant.

After reading this folder a western dealer came six hundred miles to visit our plant and see the car—he did not believe that it was possible to give such quality for \$2,750. He was told to take the folder and check up

each statement for himself against the actual car. When he had finished he placed an order for three cars for immediate delivery and left a contract for cars to follow. HE SOLD HIMSELF THE CARS.

Read this folder for yourself. It's not technical and it's not merely pretty language, but it gives the straight facts that interest the owner and dealer. Sent you by return mail.

DEALERS. Get in right by getting the Pioneer Semi-Assembled Car to meet the Semi-Assembled demand. We still have some choice open territory.

The Grant Motor Car Co.

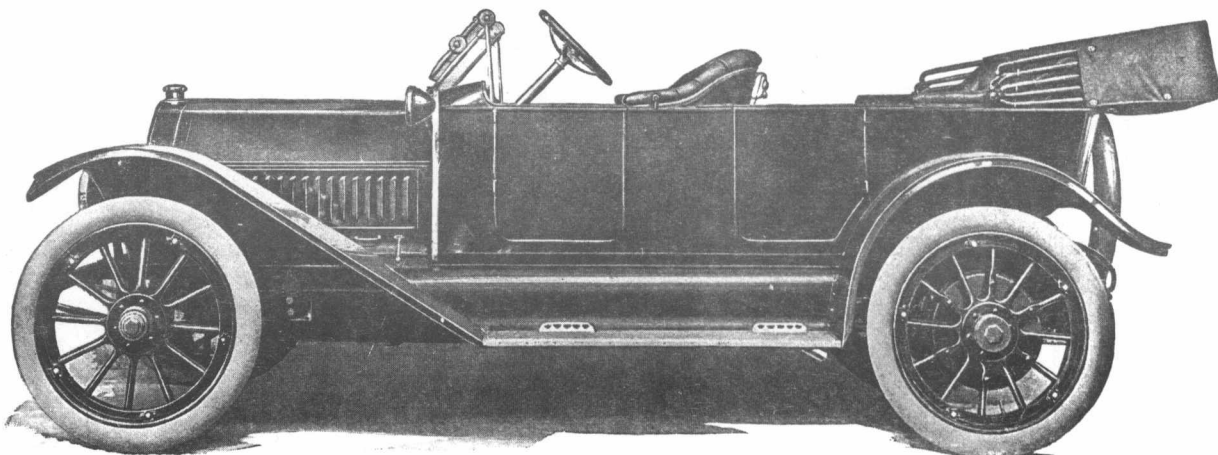
New Plant—East 152nd St.

Post Office Address—Collinwood Station

Cleveland
Sixth City

No. 4 - This is the car as it was built in temporary facilities in Cleveland. Note the different cowl lines and the broader sweep of the front fender, still the basic Elmer design.

Grant Six



The People Who Purchase the Grant Six

It is a remarkable fact that the present owners of Grant cars are almost without exception men who have owned two or more cars in the past—men whose automobile experience makes them quick to recognize that the right manufacturing policy is behind the

Grant Six

**The Only Standardized Car in the World
The Pioneer Semi-Assembled Car**

The Grant Policy makes use of the products of the *man who knows how*—the Part-Specialist—and the man who has used automobiles appreciates what that means in quality. Our

illustrated folder backs up every statement made in our advertising in convincing style without pretty language or fanciful pictures but with straightforward facts.

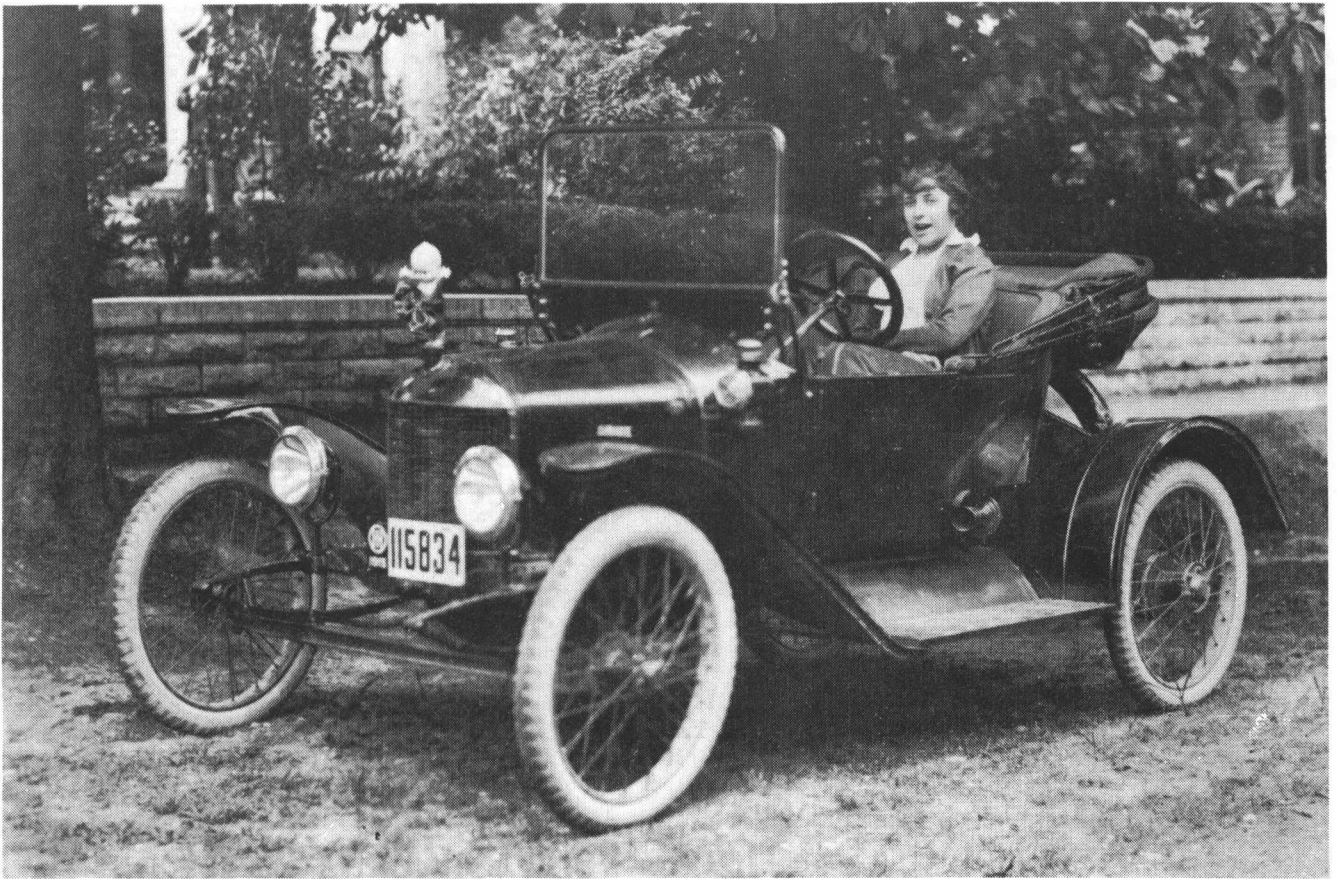
DEALERS—When old automobile owners buy the Grant Six of you it means that their example will be followed by people who look to them for advice. Find out from us whether your territory is taken.

The Grant Motor Car Co.

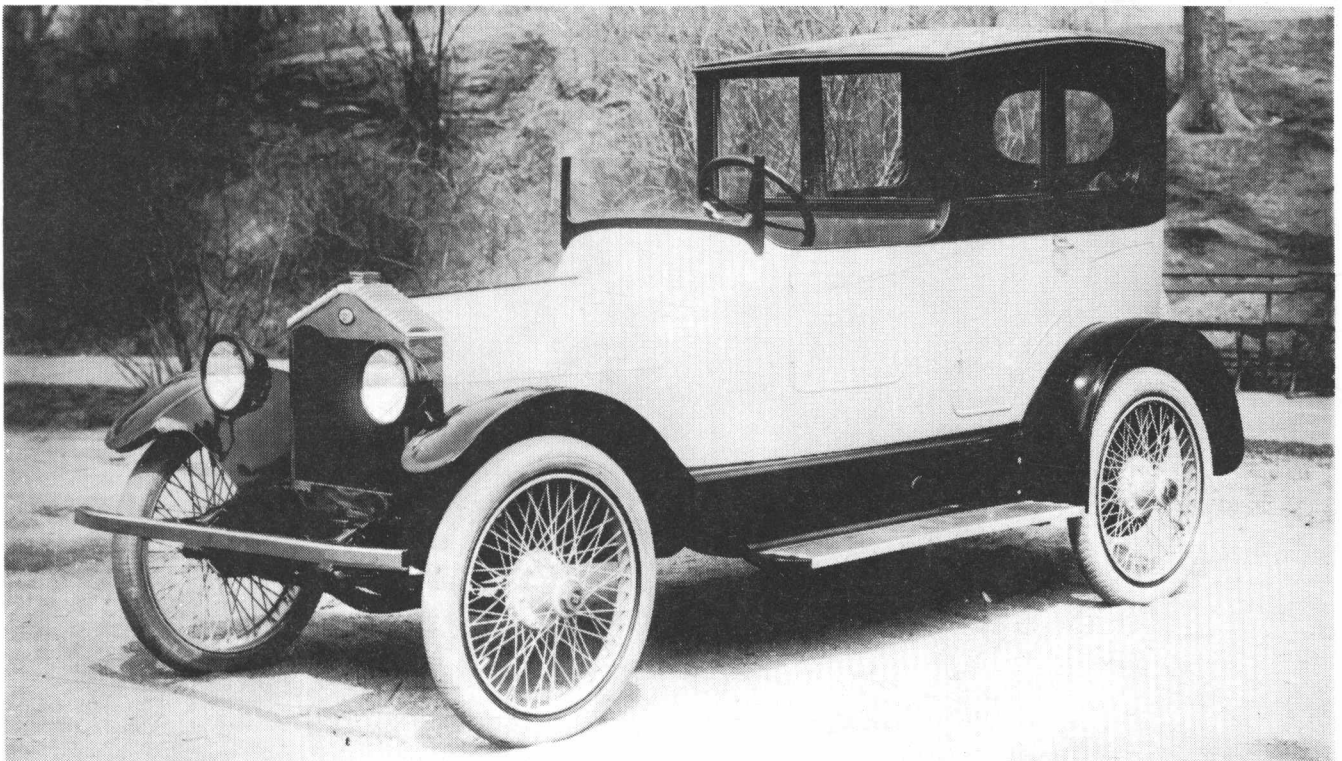
East 152d Street, Collinwood, Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland
Since 1906

No. 5 - The final copy was as shown here. There are a number of obvious differences: the lowered and broader hood, the changed cowl, the differently styled hood louvres, lowered head lamps, and step plates on the running boards. This is the way she moved to Illinois as the new Benton for 1913.



No. 6 - One of the first small Grants off the line, this little machine was over one year old when the picture was taken. The lovely young thing sitting in the car came to Detroit from Toledo to wed a young automotive advertising man. The car was always parked under that same tree, and the Kewpie Doll was a constant companion.



No. 7 - This was a 1917 Grant Special, which I believe is quite obvious. The truck radiator doesn't do a great deal for the car but I thought it might be interesting to see what the young Grant executive drove on his day off.

BOWEN - a name from the past

by Maurice A. Harrison

During the first few years of this century, when automobiles were becoming popular and the industry was commencing to grow rapidly, many new makes came into being. Some are with us still. Of the newcomers, some were put on the market by old established engineering firms, some by mushroom companies, some by firms which had been building horse-drawn vehicles for decades (as was the case with Studebaker and similar companies) and others by establishments in no way connected with road transport. This sort of activity was international, and as the industry grew, various makes (some quite good) came on the scene in many countries only to disappear and be forgotten; all of these merit a place in the history of the motor car.

In London, England, Bowen & Company, which had been established in 1808 as brass founders, was a thriving firm when the self-propelled vehicle was invented, and the company is still in business to this day. This concern, which had started producing aluminum castings shortly after the turn of the century, was turning out general products including kitchen-ware. The company is proud of the fact that practically every Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company ship since 1903 has been equipped with Bowen cooking utensils.

Bowen & Company had been purchased over 90 years ago and run by the late Sir Alexander Glegg who pioneered the manufacture of sand-cast aluminum kitchen-ware in England. In 1906 the company decided to enter the automobile industry and build the Bowen car. It remained in production for some years.

The Bowen was a small car with a vertical twin-cylinder engine of 85mm x 115mm bore and stroke (1.3 litres = 79.5 cu. in.) which, because automobile design was more or less stabilized with a front engine driving the rear wheels, was quite orthodox in design and construction. It had mechanically operated side valves which were interchangeable; it had adjustable tappets with fibre inserts (for silent operation) and it had accumulator and trembler coil ignition. Cooling was on the thermosyphon system with a radiator almost identical to that carried by Rolls-Royce cars. The Bowen had an automatic carburetor with an adjustable extra air inlet which was brought into use when the engine had warmed up. Lubrication was from an oil tank on the dash, with a pump to supply lubricant to the engine.

*Photograph of Bowen car outside
Phoenix Brass Foundry, 1906.*



Drive from the engine was through a cone clutch and selective gearbox with three forward and one reverse speeds to a live axle. The front axle was tubular. It carried wide swivel jaws and large diameter king pins. Irreversible worm and sector steering was provided, the steering column carrying the spark timing and throttle levers. Wheels were of wood, of the artillery type, and were fitted with 700mm x 85mm tyres. The wheel-base was only 78 inches and the track 48 inches, thus, for its size it carried a fairly large engine which undoubtedly accounted for the lively performance that was claimed. It was said the Bowen was capable of running from 4 to 30 miles per hour in top gear, and this was probably true.

It was priced at £ 175 (\$ 700 at the rate of exchange prevailing at that time) and, in addition to the standard 2-seater body, other styles, including a light delivery van, were also available. The price included side and tail lamps (oil-burning) and a comprehensive kit of tools.

Bowen & Company must be regarded as manufacturers, for they did not assemble their cars from bought out parts and, as aluminum founders, they

cast engine and gearbox components and also body panels; they also did their own machining in their Phoenix Brass Foundry at Mount Pleasant, London, which had a machine shop.

Bowen cars were not altered in any way during the few years they remained in production, for the company did not fall under the charm of producing new models every year. As it was, the company saw the red light of warning quite early in their automobile enterprise and dropped production, thus saving themselves from extinction.

This was an interesting car, but not much is known about it now. Only one catalogue is known to exist and only one photograph (of which I have the negative) appears to have been taken. In preparing this note I now hope some reader, somewhere, has further information and photographs, in which case I will be delighted to hear from him.

In conclusion, I will mention that there was a second Bowen built in England, but it was in no way connected with Bowen & Company of London, and its story must be written later.

STEEL SWALLOW - This item was sent by SAH member Harry Pulfer. It is a reproduction of the front and back covers of a Steel Swallow brochure. Note the fancy beveled glass side windows of this delivery vehicle. The Steel Swallow Auto Company also produced a 2-cylinder high wheel runabout with friction transmission. These cars were made from about 1906 to about 1909. Some lists give the dates as 1907-1908. Confirmation would be appreciated.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	Two-cylinder opposed.
Horse Power	10-12.
Bore and Stroke	4 x 4.
Cooling	Air.
Ignition	Jump Spark.
Carburetor	Schebler.
Lubrication	Force Feed.
Motor Control	Spark and Throttle.
Transmission	Planetary. Double. Case Hardened. High ' Grade.
Speeds	2 forward and reverse.
Drive	Drop forged, case hardened bevel and pinion.
Gears	Strictly highest grade.
Weight	1000-1200.
Wheel Base	96 inches.
Tread	56-inch Standard.
Tires	Cushion.
Steer	Powerful, worm, back locked.
Brake	Transmission shaft 6 to 1, strong and efficient.

REMARKS:—The highest grade automobile ever produced under \$1,000 embracing strength, perfect flexibility, high efficiency and durability. Chassis construction: Frame, steel throughout; three point suspension, one piece steel engine and transmission; hanger bed; steel rear arch; steel cross members and all steel parts.

The Steel Swallow Auto Company, also build an open Body Meat and General Utility Car, a Runabout, and Mail Pick-up and Delivery Cars.

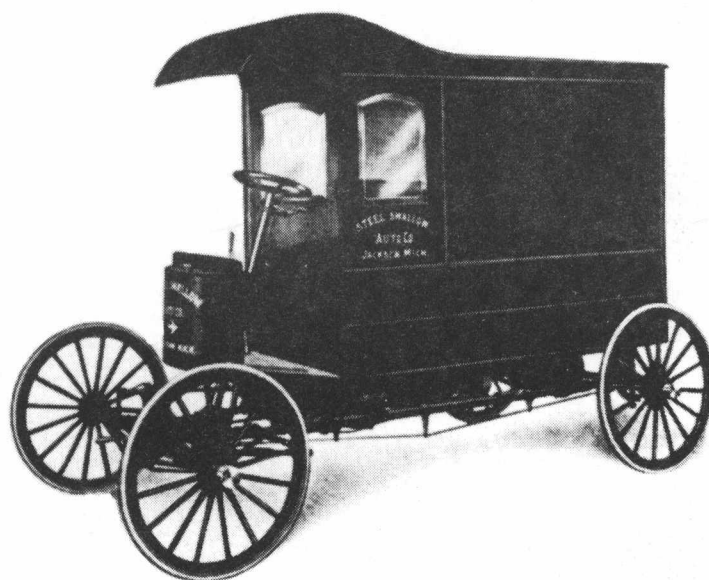
PRICES

Open Body	\$750.00
Covered Body	\$900.00

DELIVERY CAR

(Covered)
DRY GOODS GROCERY LAUNDRY MEAT

Price, \$800.00

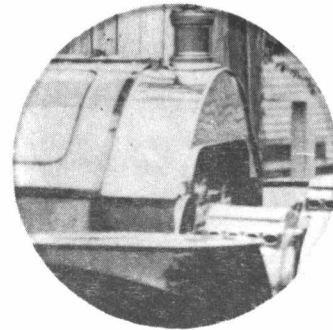
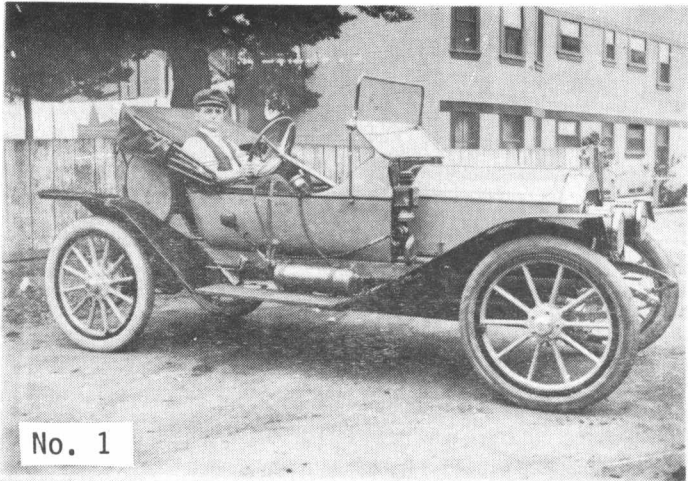


Steel Swallow Auto Company
Jackson, Michigan

Identification Requested

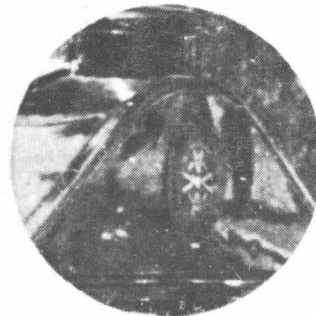
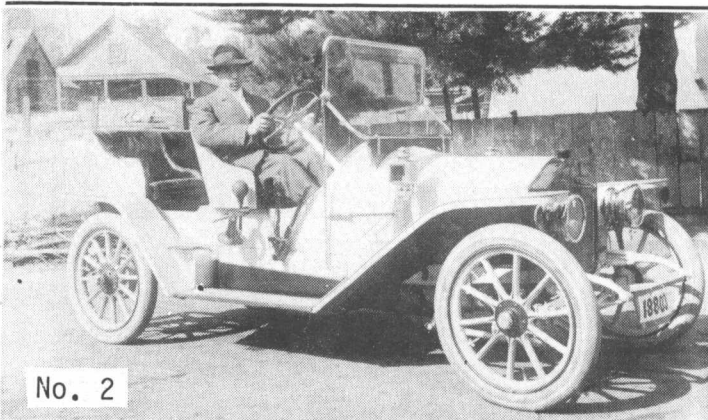
From G. N. Georgano, of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, Hampshire, England, we have received a package of photographs along with a letter which says, in part - *I am enclosing eight photographs of U.S. cars which we have not been able to identify, and wonder if you would be interested in running them in Automotive History Review.*

And here they are, along with what few hints we have been able to provide. If you can shed some light as to the identity of these cars, please send the information to Automotive Review, P.O. Box 1306, Marietta, Georgia 30061. In this way the information will be shared with all members, and we'll also pass it along to member Nick Georgano as it is received.

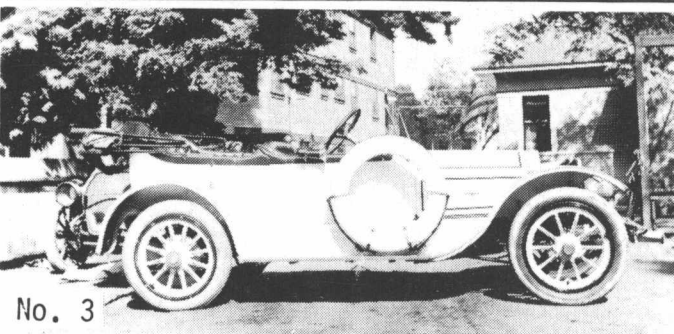


Enlarged, the script on the radiator can be recognized. It says: *Lexington*

This car appears to be a 1909 or 1910 Lexington, made at Lexington, Kentucky. Later models were built at Connersville, Indiana, until 1926.

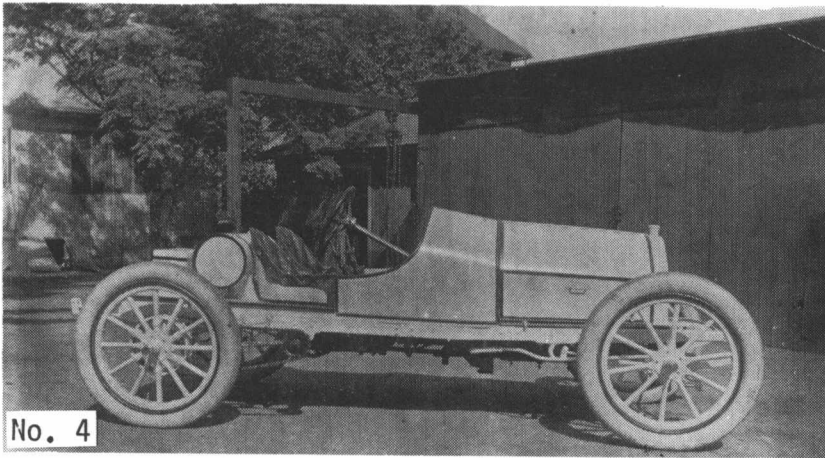


Can any of our emblem experts tell us what this one is? The enlarged detail is not too clear, so a sketch of what the nameplate seems to look like is included. Also, the space between the outer circles is filled with small lettering.

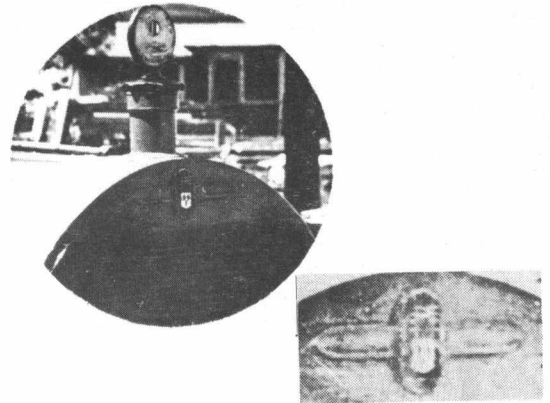
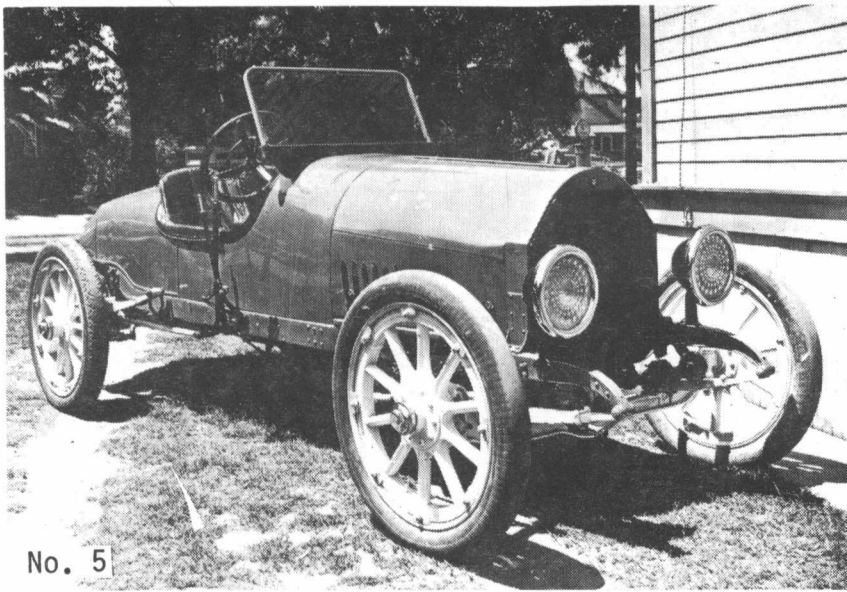


Body design suggests that this one may have been built between 1914 and 1918, but the right hand drive favors the earlier date. The radiator cap carries an ornament similar to the one on Car No. 6. Hood is plain with no louvres. Rear door is shaped to fit the back of the front seat.

And what's that other old job with the gas lamps, over by the fence?

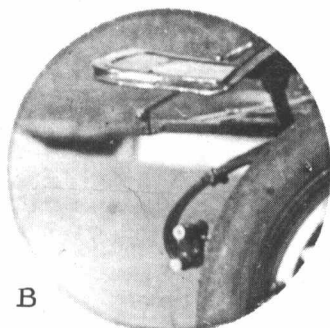
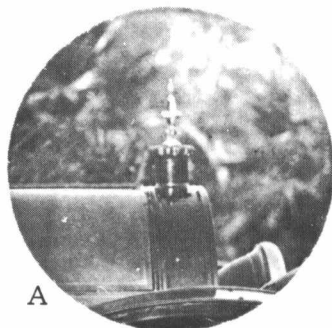
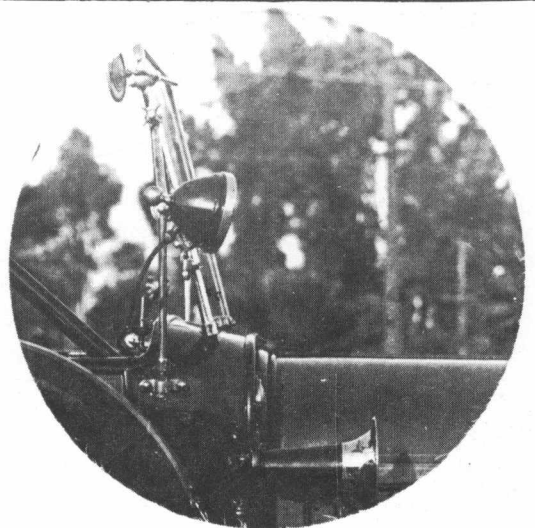
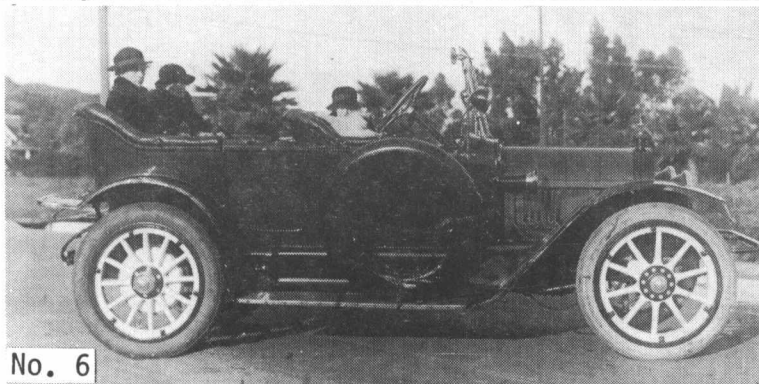


Examination of the original photo under a magnifying glass shows a few obvious (and a few not so obvious) details: Chain drive, with internal brakes on rear wheels inside the sprockets; external brakes on jackshaft; transmission case also contains differential; no throttle or spark control levers on steering wheel; 3 petcocks are visible on the crankcase, and it is probable that there is a fourth one not visible; steering tie-rod is ahead of the front axle.



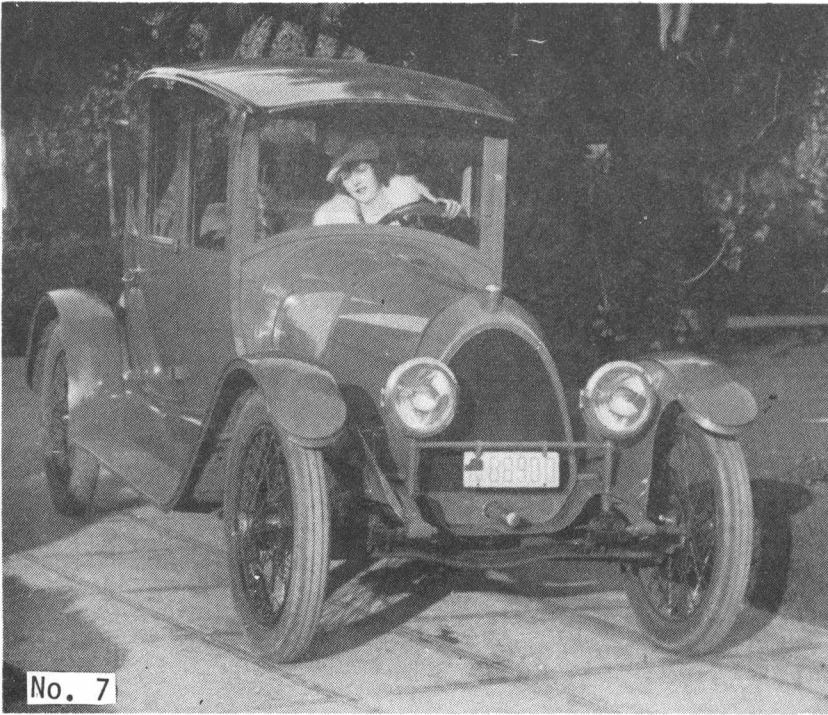
Monogram with shield in center, large but illegible words in the "wings" on either side. Surely this should look familiar to some of our nameplate collectors.

Other details: radius rods for rear axle alignment; 33 x 4" tires; Hartford shock absorbers.



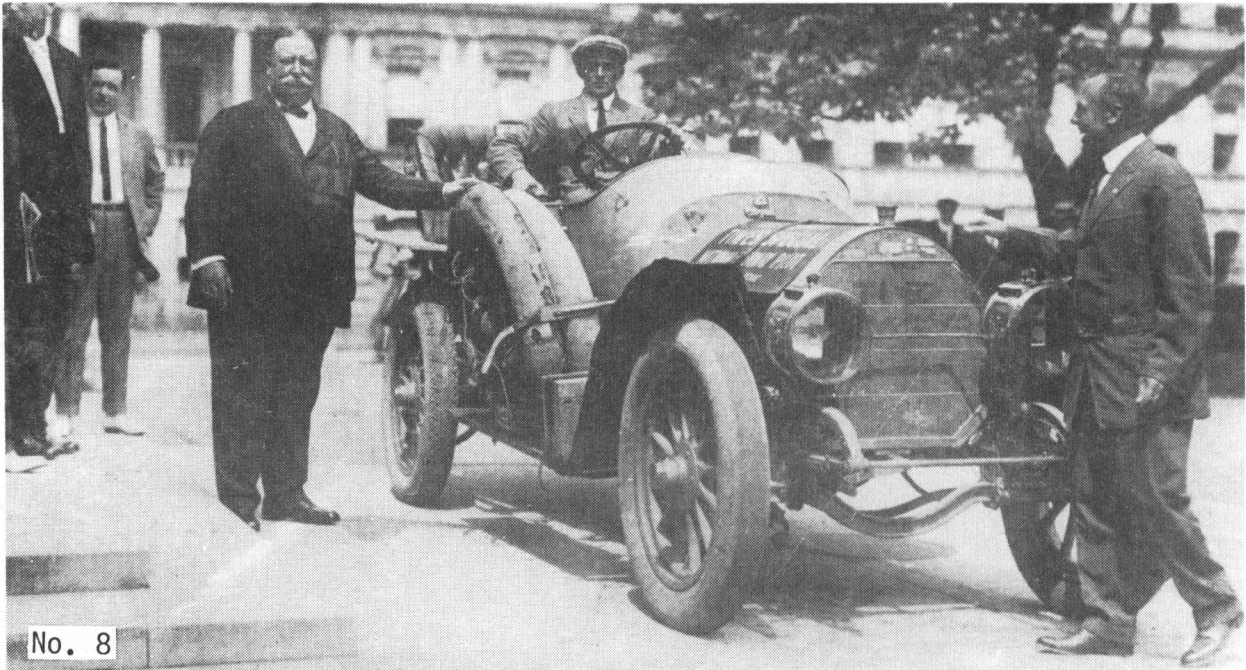
Detail of windshield and cowl. Note flush-mounted cowl light.

- A - Unusual radiator ornament; not a Motometer.
- B - Rear fender design, little used after 1913. Note small trunk rack, 3/4 elliptic spring.



A lightly pencilled notation on the back of the original photo says that the young lady at the wheel of this pretty little car is Ruth Roland, a popular movie star of the teens and twenties. The car itself is not so easily identified. The graceful center-door body is reminiscent of the electric cars of the period.

This same picture appears in a Floyd Clymer publication, "Cars of the Stars", but the name of the car is not mentioned. Apparently Clymer didn't know what it was, either.



This large car, shown here with President William Howard Taft, has the words "Los Angeles Times Special National Highway Pilot" painted on the hood. The car's massive size and the chain drive immediately suggest Simplex, but closer examination shows that the radiator is the wrong shape. The Simplex radiator was square at the bottom corners. The car also looks like a Locomobile, but no Locomobile pictures in our files show the tie-bar between the front spring horns. What ever it is, this car must have had an adventurous trip. Perhaps one of our southern California members could check with the Los Angeles Times and maybe come up with a story about this car and its travels.

NOTES AND COMMENT ON THE PICTURES

The pictures on the preceding pages are, as a group, an interesting set of puzzles. Each of the cars has a familiar look, and at first glance one is inclined to think that to identify them will be easy. This is definitely not the case. It must be borne in mind that the staff of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, with vast experience and access to large quantities of reference material, has not been able to determine just what these cars are.

It is unfortunate that the printing process requires that these pictures be screened, for this process destroys much of the fine detail. Examination of the original photos reveals many details, but more often than not the details themselves simply add more mystery, such as a name on a hubcap which can almost but not quite be deciphered, or a nameplate which should be familiar but which isn't.

Identification of car No. 1 turned out to be easy, but only because the radiator script was recognizable under a magnifying glass. Without that one detail the car would remain a mystery - at least to this writer.

Car No. 2 carries a temporary cardboard California license tag, but no date is visible. Cars No. 4 and No. 6 have names on the hubcaps which are unreadable. The same is true of the nameplates on No. 2 and No. 5, and this condition is both tantalizing and maddening.

No. 7 has the look of a Baby Fiat, but Michael Sedgwick, the Fiat expert, says that (1) the plant at Poughkeepsie never made such a small model, (2) they never made a left hand drive car, and (3) the front axle is wrong.

No. 8, which at first glance appears to be the easiest of the lot, may well be as puzzling as the rest of them.

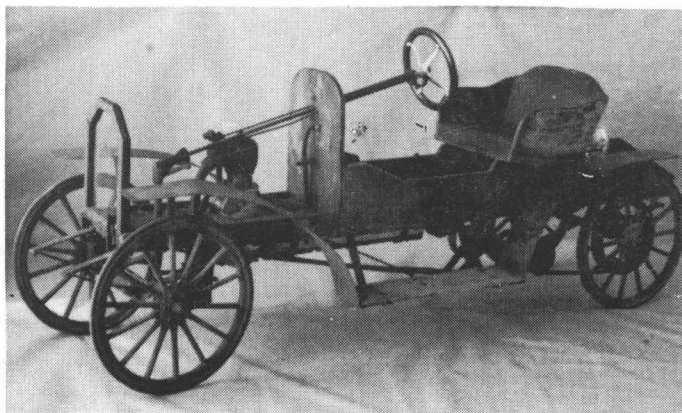
Not that it lends anything to the identification of these cars, it is interesting to note that pictures 1 through 4 were all made in the same locality, and probably No. 5 was, too. The engine hoist, visible in No. 3 and No. 4 suggests a repair establishment.

We hope that the publication of these pictures will lead to the identification of the cars - and if you don't know, guess!

INFORMATION REQUESTED

From Frank Snyder, Chandler, Arizona, the following letter has been received:

David Faegre has written me in regard to an ARMAC roadster which he owns. This car has a 74" wheelbase and a 25-1/2" tread, wheels with tires 21-3/4 inches. Height from ground to top of steering wheel is 41-1/2 inches. Drive is by two leather belts. The main belt is 1-1/2" x 5/16" sewn double leather, and the rear belts 1-1/2" x 1/8" single leather. Length is not given. Mr. Faegre states "The queer through-the-dash foot lever and catch mechanism which shows on the front of the firewall is part of a device to hold the main belt loose when the car is at rest and idling".



ARMAC, Armac Motor Co., 472 Carroll Street, Chicago, Ill., was reported (1908 Year Book: P. 28) as a builder of motors and motorcycles. Horseless Age: 10/18/05: P. 461, reported that they were to bring out a roadster. The question is - was this a company-built vehicle or a home made job?



DOLPHIN MASCOT

VETERAN TWO-STROKES, an exercise in comparison

by Mike Worthington-Williams

Bearing in mind the fact that the two-stroke engine, as we now know it, has been developed to its present level of sophistication largely as a result of its successful application to the propulsion of motorcycles and small cars, it is perhaps not generally realised that the genesis of the two-cycle principle pre-dates the motor-car era.

Just as the conventional four-stroke internal combustion engine can trace its lineage back to the early stationary engines of the late 19th Century, so also do we find that it was the stationary engine manufacturers who first successfully applied the two-stroke principle.

Of course, by virtue of the limited duties which they had to perform, the early engines neither merited (nor received) much research and development to improve their performance, and their biggest shortcoming — an inability to idle or run smoothly at slow speeds — was largely overcome by the simple expedient of fitting an enormous flywheel. Hardly scientific, but practical nonetheless.

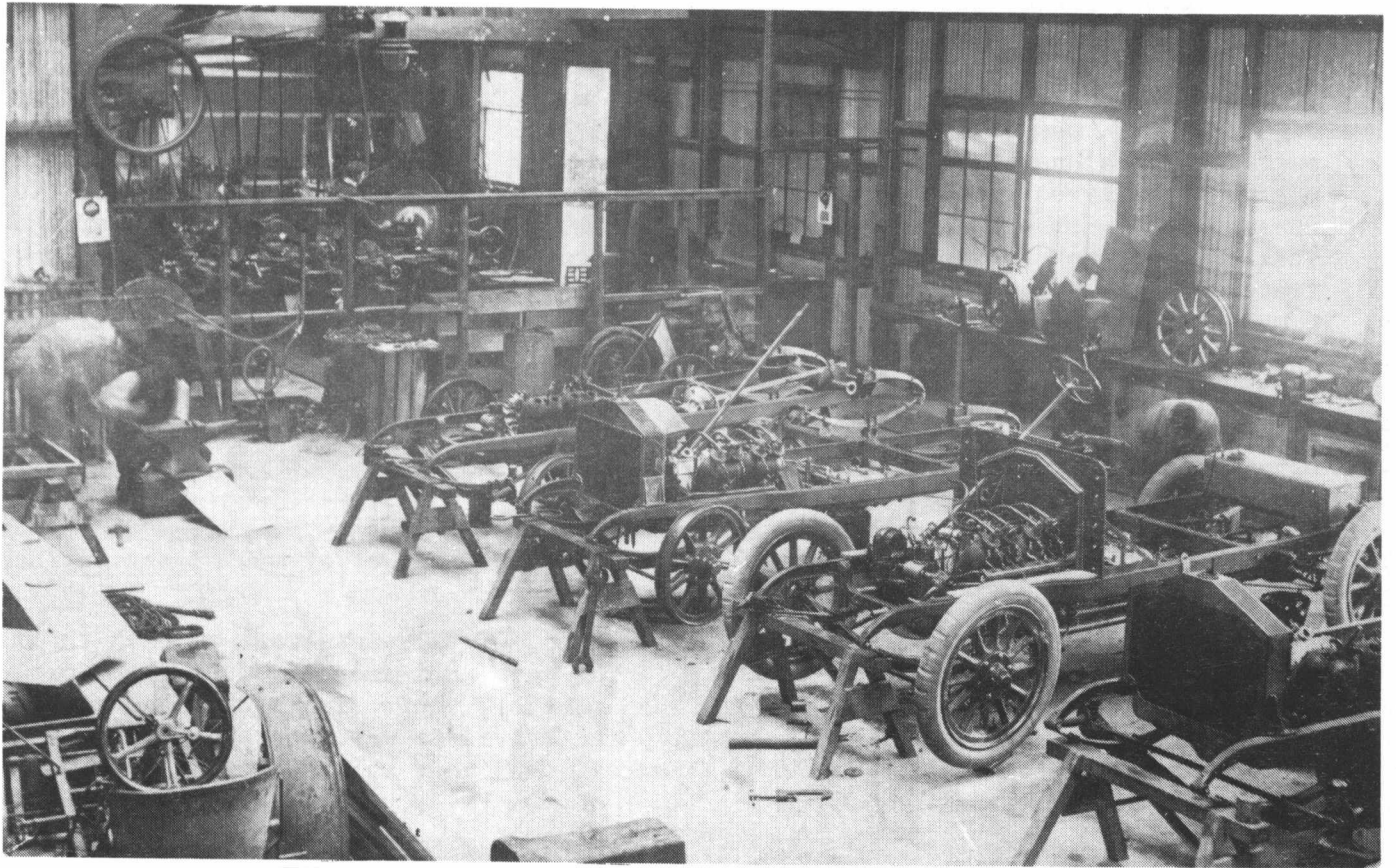
Because of the crude and inefficient ignition systems in use during this very early period, which tended to accentuate the failings of the two-stroke engine, later and more sophisticated designs, intended for use in motorcars, met with an inherited prejudice from stationary engine operators of an earlier era, although the principle was not without its distinguished advocates.

Possibly the most famous of these was Dugald Clerk (later Sir Dugald Clerk, F.R.S.) who expounded his theories in his (now) classic book, *The Gas and Oil Engine*. Clerk was a patent agent and internal combustion expert at a time when very few people knew anything at all about such matters, and his advice was both sought and revered by students. Clerk was, however, a theorist, and it was not until 1905 that his pre-1900 ideas were put to the practical test by a young undergraduate named Harry Ricardo (later Sir Harry Ricardo F.R.S.).

He was not the only protagonist in the field, however; although Ralph Lucas did not follow Clerk's suggested pattern of development, his early experimental cars built at Blackheath employed a two-stroke engine, and whilst these did not go into production until 1907 (the same year that Ricardo's Dolphin cars went into production at Shoreham, Sussex) there must have been some merit in their design because in 1908 production was taken over by David Brown, Ltd., of Huddersfield, (later of Aston Martin and Lagonda fame).

Whilst it cannot be said that the cars were an unqualified success, the David Brown cars — known appropriately as the Valveless — sold in appreciable numbers, particularly in South Africa and Australia, where they were also marketed as the Dodson Valveless.

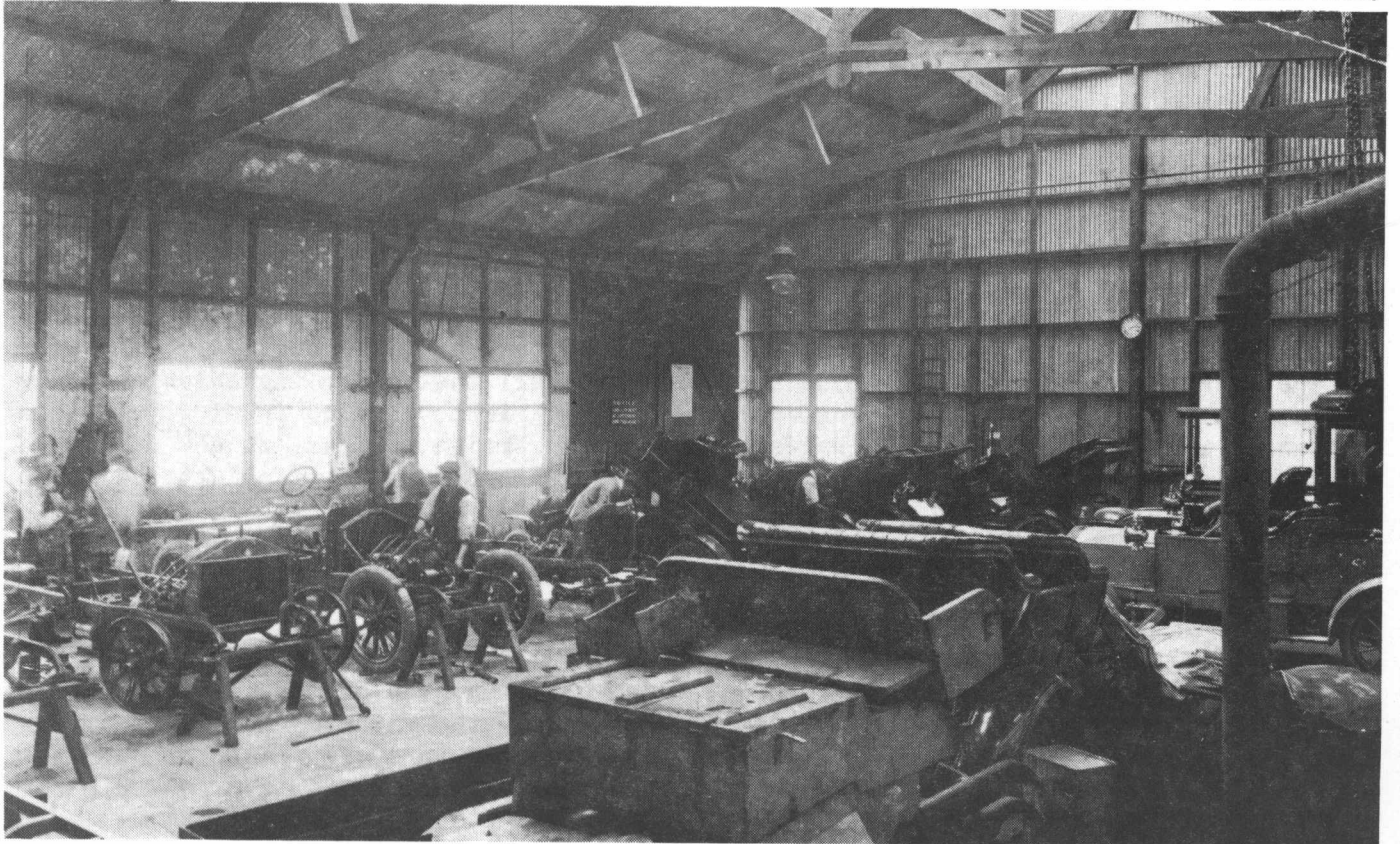
Ricardo's Dolphins by comparison sold very few — probably only a dozen — but the evidence is that the commercial failure of this marque was due more to lack of working capital and business acumen than to any real shortcomings in the design of the engine and transmission.



TWO VIEWS OF THE SHOREHAM WORKS, c. 1909

(Above) On the bench by the window is a small single-cylinder Dolphin engine, and leaning against the partition is an early motorcycle. The car in the lower left corner of the picture is probably the 15 h.p. prototype.

(Below) The car at the far right seems to be complete. The closed car behind it is not a Dolphin. Note that the radiators on two of the cars under construction are different.



A common factor surrounding these early two-stroke designs, and one which cannot be ignored in any critical examination, is the ratio of power to weight. The accompanying illustration of a Dolphin car shows clearly the type of heavy touring bodywork which the veteran two-stroke was expected to propel — with a full complement of passengers and luggage — on the basis of horse-power calculated on swept volume alone. Whether or not it was generally understood that the two-stroke engine normally only developed maximum power at high revolutions is now of little consequence. Certainly in those days it was more often the wealthy customer who "called the tune" so far as bodywork was concerned, and this point is amply illustrated by the case of the Dolphin ordered by Ricardo's uncle, Herbert Rendel. The number of cylinders had to be doubled in a re-designed engine to accommodate the coachwork specified by that worthy.

Little wonder therefore that the two-stroke was not given a fair chance to show what it could do. Ricardo had the right idea when he originally conceived the Dolphin light car of about 15 h.p. with two cylinders only (one working cylinder, one pumping) and his prototype lasted him faithfully until 1919. But his wealthy relatives wooed him away from this concept and into the "heavy brigade" where he was competing with conventional cars developing their power at much lower engine speeds.

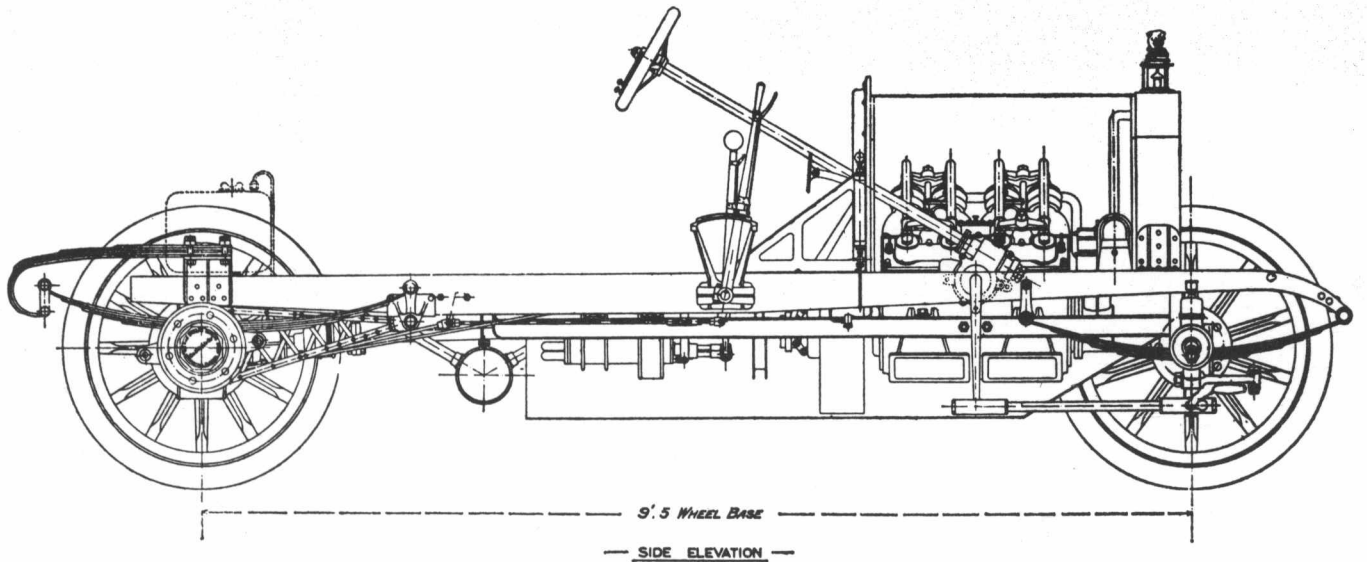
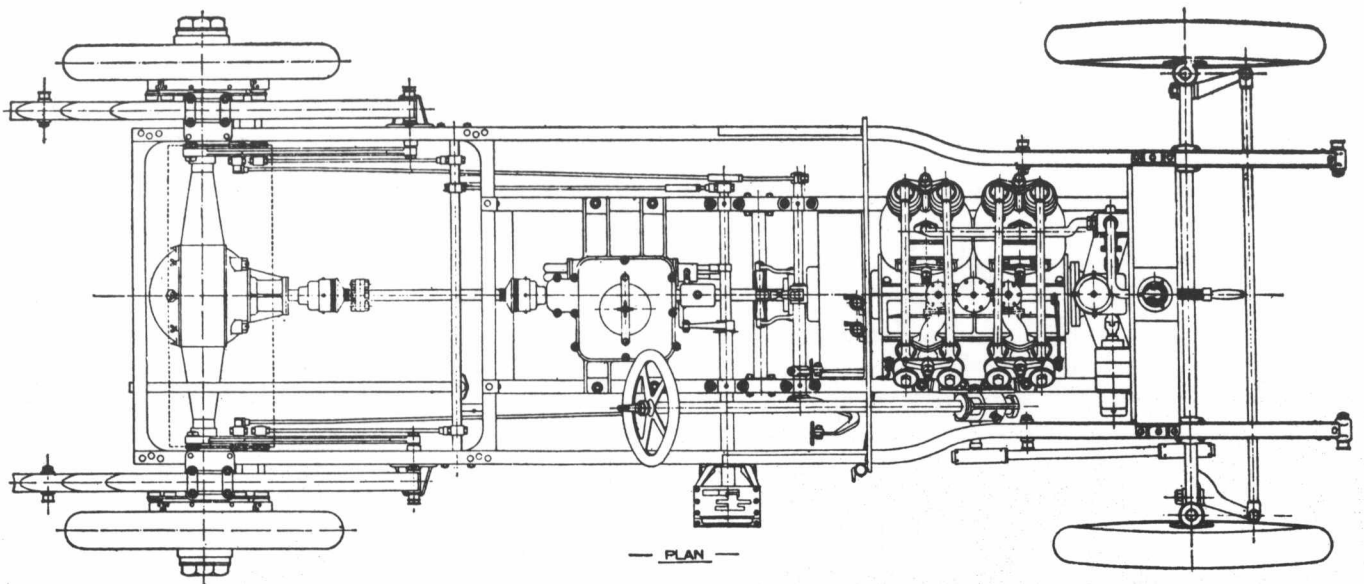
Had David Brown relied solely on their output of Valveless cars to earn their daily bread, they may have persevered a little more determinedly with their promotion than was the case. Gear-cutting was, however, their staple diet and proved more remunerative than cars, and eventually the Valveless was dropped. It had had an effective working life of 14 years, however, and that raises another interesting point to which we will revert.

Still on the question of weight, Valveless and Dolphin were not alone in their approach to this problem: the sole surviving Cooper car, built by the Cooper Steam Digger Company of Kings Lynn as one of six for their directors, employs a unique two-stroke engine of 22 h.p. and is endowed with a full touring body, whilst photographs which exist show at least one of its brothers to have laboured under the handicap of a heavy limousine body.

In America, the picture was no different, and one of the best-known American designs — the Amplex built in Mishawaka, Indiana, from 1910-1915 — boasted six and seven-seater bodywork and 40/50 h.p. two-stroke engines. It, too, was unsuccessful commercially, as had been its predecessor, the American Simplex, which dated from 1906.

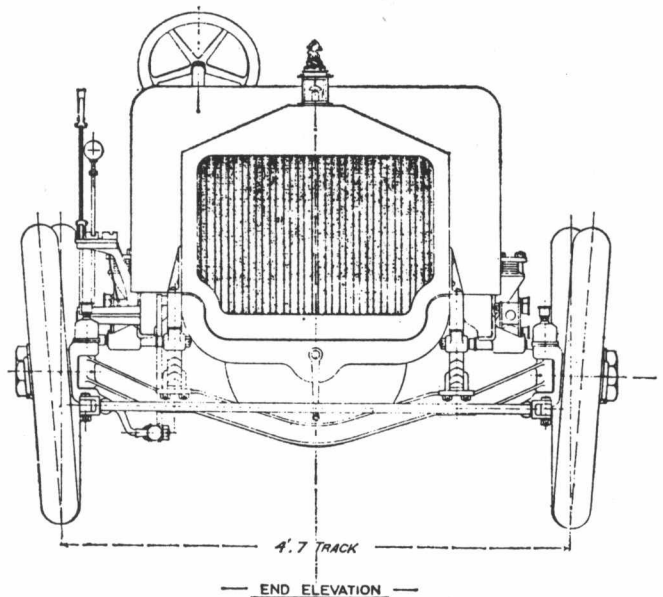
Although the purists may criticise the inclusion of the Trojan in this discourse, there can be no denying that this uncompromisingly spartan vehicle was, even in 1939 commercial guise, a veteran design. Which probably explains why disenchanted garages, displaying none of the affection with which their present-day successors endow the survivors, decorated their premises with signs boldly proclaiming, "NO TROJANS". The fact is that Leslie Hounsfield designed the Trojan in 1910 (the prototype still exists) and apart from banishing the engine from between the front seats to a position under the floor, all the basic ingredients of the later production models were incorporated in that first vehicle. What is significant, when looking at the Valveless, Dolphin and Trojan designs, is the period of gestation which preceded the successful commercial application of all three.

As we have seen, Ralph Lucas designed the Valveless in 1901, but no production took place until 1907, and David Brown did not enter the picture until 1908. The Dolphin was designed in 1905 based on Clerk's theories which dated from 1896 and possibly earlier, and was only successful commercially when applied in very small two-cylinder form to the propulsion of the Vox light car in 1914. This promising little car (like the Weston and Stroud-built Hampton of the same year which employed Dolphin-type engines) became the victim of the infanticide which extinguished so many young designs following the events in Sarajevo. And then we have the Trojan, 12 years a-borning, and Leylands the unlikely midwife. Why did the only car advertised in the *Church Times* succeed where others failed?



The 4 cylinder Dolphin chassis. Note the separate massive gearbox and its flexible mounting which allowed the transmission to negotiate uneven ground without undue stress on the propellor shaft.

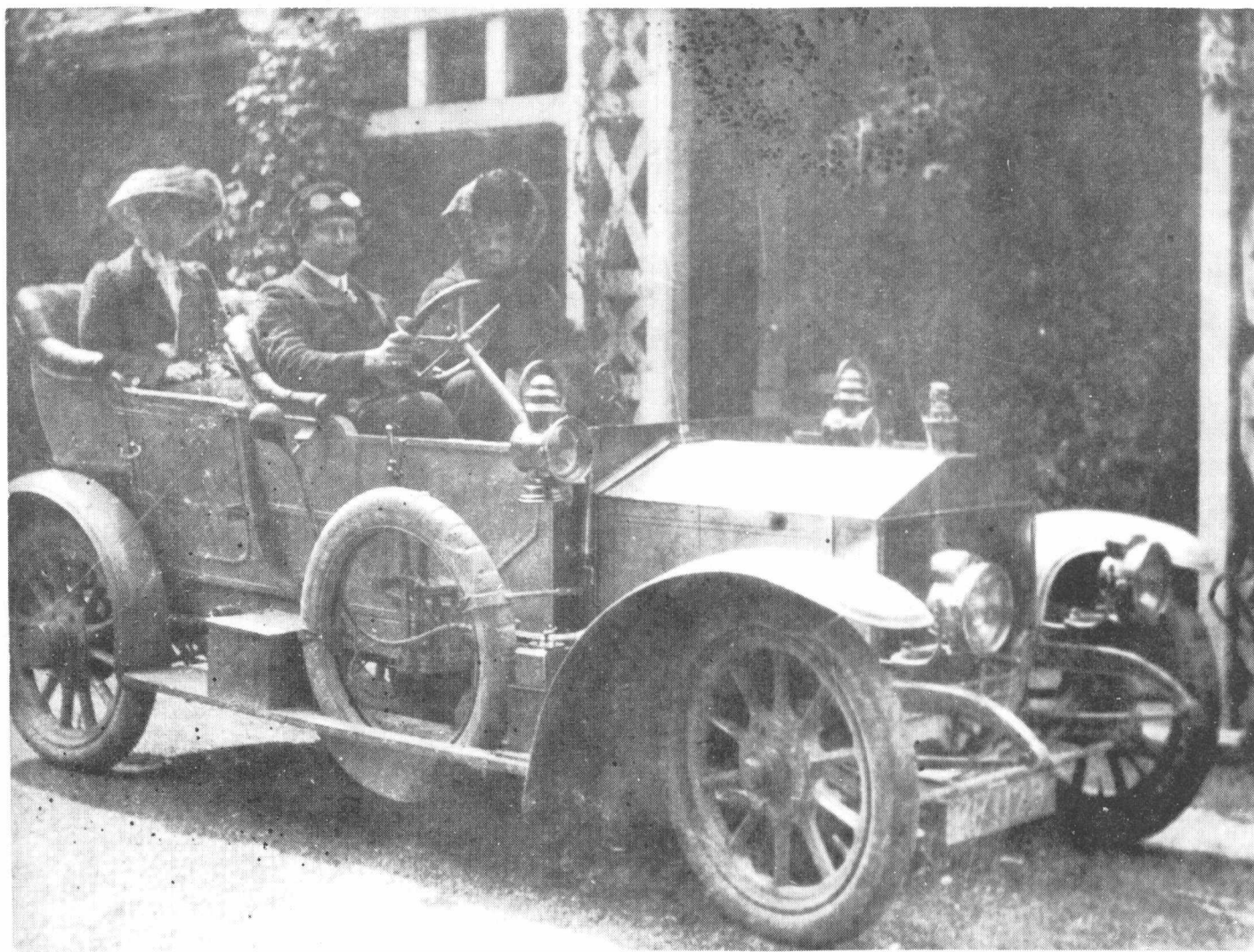
Frontal view (works drawing) of the four cylinder Dolphin chassis. Note the "sight feed" window in the radiator cap and Dolphin mascot.



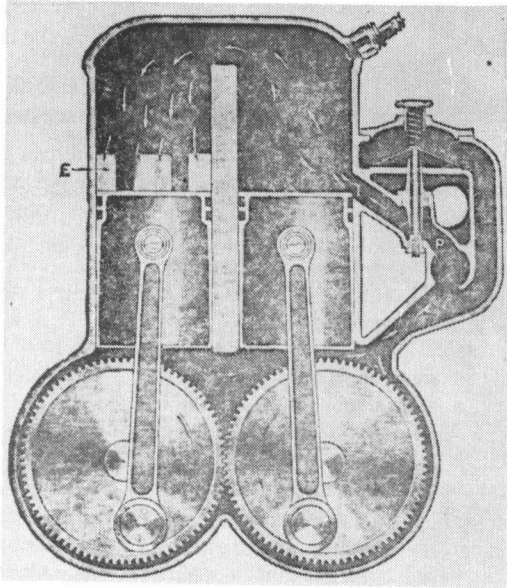
There is probably no single answer to this, but let us first examine the design of the Trojan engine. It is immediately apparent that either by accident or design, Hounsfield had contrived to incorporate the crankcase compression (eschewed by Dolphin) of the Valveless, with the pumping cylinder principle of the Dolphin, whilst managing to ensure that the pistons performed both the pumping and the working action (which in the Dolphin were performed by separate pistons). We have, therefore, the best of both worlds, but the genius of the design was, that unlike other two-strokes, the Trojan developed what power it had at extremely low engine revolutions, its 1½ litre engine producing only 10 b.h.p. This low b.h.p. eliminated from the start any tendency toward over-pretentious bodywork.

Without wishing in any way to detract from Hounsfield's talent, it must be said, however, that it was extremely fortunate that he was able to persuade a firm of Leyland's stature to undertake production. They were, however, desperate at the time for something new to sell, having suffered from the ministrations of none other than infamous financier Clarence Hatry, and their financially disastrous policy of reconditioning ex-War Department vehicles following the Armistice.

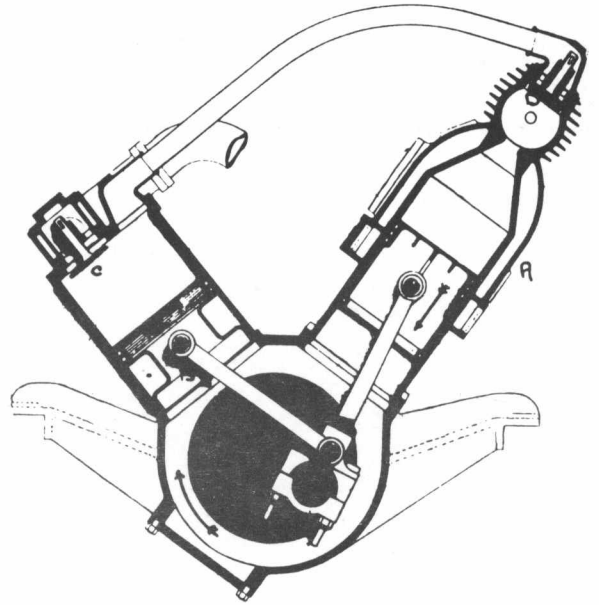
The financial impetus of Leyland overcame the inertia forces of initial customer resistance to a design which — engine apart — was unorthodox even by the standards of the 1920's, and thereafter the car (which never pretended to be more than it was) sold on its own very individual merits. When, in the 1930's its manufacturers endeavoured to dress it up and tried to compete on an equal footing with conventional vehicles, they, too, learned to their cost, what Dolphin, Valveless, Cooper and Amplex manufacturers had learned two decades earlier.



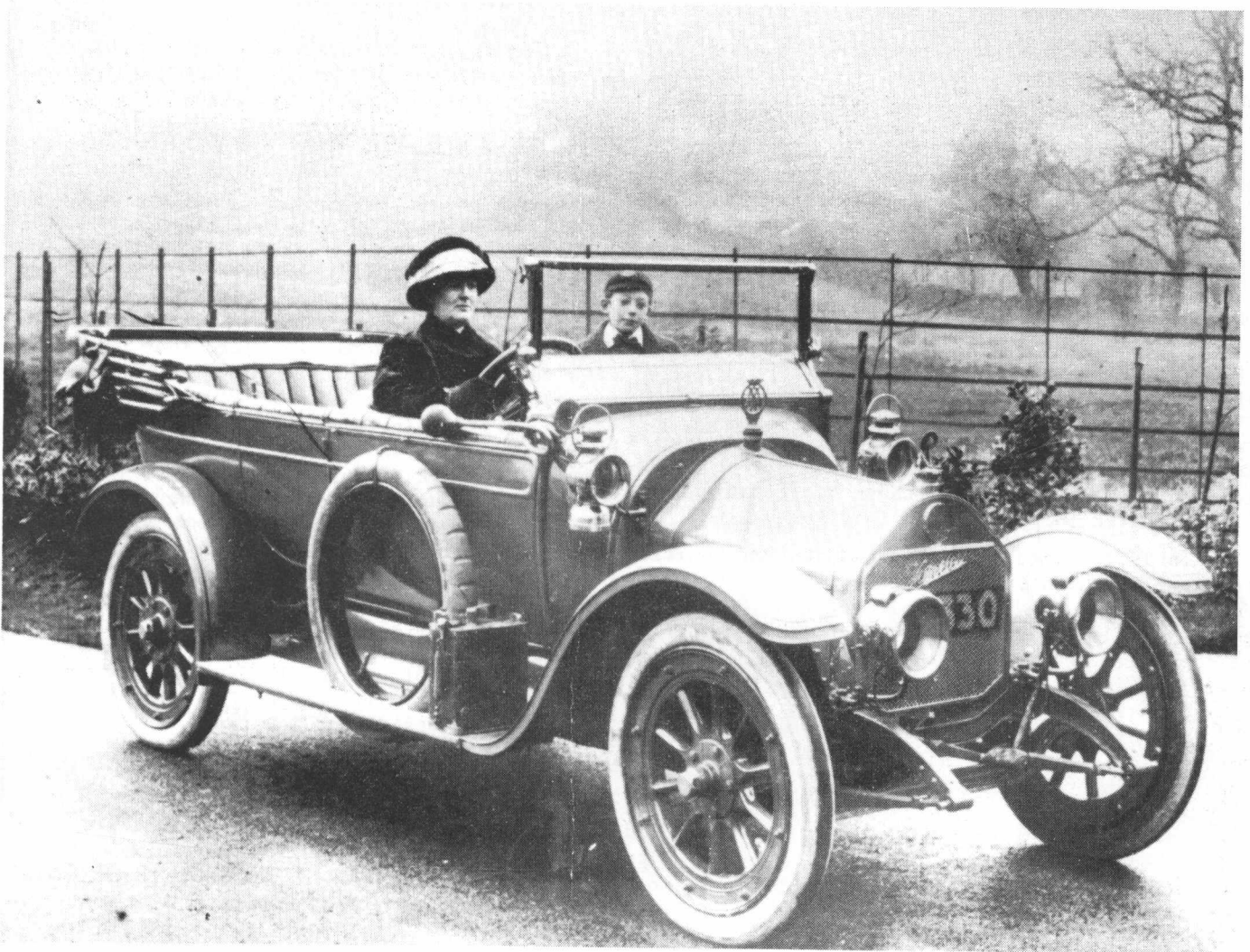
1909 Dolphin Two-Stroke, 28 h.p., 4/8 cylinder; Ralph Ricardo at the wheel.



Section through the engine of the Valveless car.



Section through the four cylinder Dolphin engine showing the pumping (left) and working cylinders. (From The Motor Car Journal)



Picture shows Sir David Brown as a schoolboy being driven in a 1914 Valveless car by his mother.

- how it all began

by RICHARD L. KNUDSON

To determine which was the first M.G., it seems appropriate to turn to the acknowledged father of the M.G., Cecil Kimber. Although Kimber was ironically killed in a train accident in 1945, he documented his feelings about what was his first M.G. in an inscription on a gift book in 1933. At Christmas that year, Kimber gave his old friend Wilfred Matthews a copy of Lyndon's *Combat*, a delightful history of early M.G. racing. On the flyleaf he wrote the following:

To "Wilf"
my first passenger in
my first MG
from Kim
Christmas 1933¹

The car Kimber refers to was registered on 27 March 1925 as "FC 7900". Within a few days of that date Kimber and Matthews piloted it to a gold medal in the London to Land's End Trial. It is indeed unfortunate that the historians cannot agree with Kimber that FC 7900, "Old Number One", is the first M.G. because the confusion is not all that insurmountable.

Everyone agrees that the M.G. was the brain-child of Cecil Kimber. Kimber went to work as the sales manager of Morris Garages in 1921 at the age of thirty-three. To the job he brought a keen organizational mind, a love for the mechanical, and a creative ability which was far from maturation. In March of the following year he was named general manager when the position opened.

Kimber was not on the job very long when he decided to try his hand at offering the customer something in addition to the standard Morris fare. He soon contracted for some Chummy bodies; that is, a two seater with a rumble seat. It looked considerably sportier than did the standard four seater Cowley and sold quite well. These bodies were added at the garage on Longwall Street in Oxford, but the workshop for these modifications was later located in Alfred Lane (now Pusey Lane).

In 1923 Kimber had his own Chummy modified further, then entered it in the London to Land's End Trial. He was successful and qualified for a gold award in this famous event. Historically, this particular car and event have caused a great deal of confusion about what was the first M.G. John Thornley in his classic *Maintaining the Breed* made use of some erroneous factory publicity material and said on page nine, "...there seems to be but one place to begin and that is at the beginning - with M.G. No. 1 built in 1923." The use of that date by the factory for several years coupled with Thornley's further use of it, gave rise to considerable misinformation over the years. More of this later.

The standard M.G. reference work was published in 1972 and is entitled *The Story of the M.G. Sports Car*, by F. Wilson McComb. It is a complete and well documented book. McComb makes a great deal of the various specials Kimber had built on the Cowley chassis during 1922, 1923 and 1924. In addition to the above mentioned Chummy bodied cars, he tells us of six cars which carried Raworth bodies. These bodies were built in Oxford by Charles Raworth and were a two-seater sports design. The first of these was delivered sometime in the summer of 1923. McComb seems to go along with Cecil Cousins in calling these first M.G.'s. Cousins was one of the men who built these cars and later went on to become an important figure in the company. In early 1924 Kimber marketed a saloon on the 14/28 Oxford chassis and this car was advertised by Morris Garages in the March issue of *The Morris Owner*. In 1924 and early 1925 there were other cars from Morris Garages all following the same general formula; that is, take a stock Morris chassis, add a special body, and change little else. One cannot deny that these cars existed and that they came from Morris Garages under the direction of Cecil Kimber, the man who is acknowledged as the father of the M.G. Yet, for all these specials, the historians have trouble in agreeing on which was the first M.G.

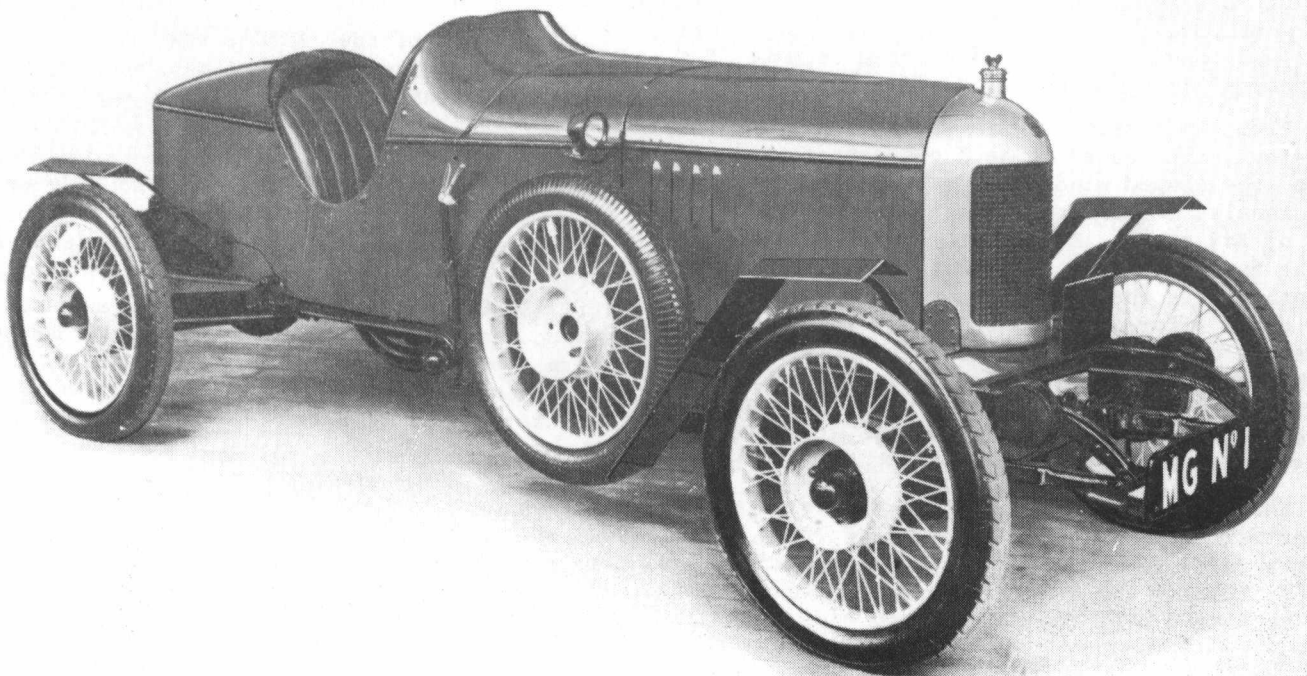
Mike Allison's *The Magic of MG* also appeared in 1972 and is a lavish pictorial history of the M.G. On page 11 he says, "The first M.G. was not "Old Number One". M.G.'s identifiable as such were built for some two years before that famous car was built. It might, however, be true to say that Old Number One was the first M.G. built specifically for sporting purposes." Within this statement is the solution to the problem. What has to be done is to define just what an M.G. is; then it might be possible to decide which was first.

To start, an M.G. is a sports car. Automotive writers have been trying for a long time to define what a sports car is. A sports car is designed to take its occupants over the highway at an optimum speed in safety. The cars are safe and fast because they are well engineered. Sports cars are more than a production chassis with a special body, and Cecil Kimber himself never considered any other car than Old Number One as being the first M.G.

Cecil Kimber had received a taste of competition and victory in the 1923 Land's End Trial, and wanted to try it again. For the 1925 event he decided to design and construct a real sports car. He had it built during the latter part of 1924 and work on it was not completed until just before the running of the event in April.

As usual, the starting point was a Morris Cowley chassis, but extensive modifications were made to it. New side rails to the rear allowed the rear suspension to be modified. Kimber found a push rod ohv engine which displaced 1547 c.c. and pushed the car along at a good clip. It carried the larger brakes from the late 1924 Morris cars. A stark, but functional, two seater body with a

1. McComb, F. Wilson, "Idling," *Safety Fast*, July/September 1959, Volume I, Number 4, Abingdon-on-Thames, page 5.



Old Number One was completed on 27 March, 1925 and was the first true M.G. sports car. This interesting car was designed by the father of the M.G., Cecil Kimber, will tour the United States in 1975 when the company officially celebrates its birthday.

minimum of passenger comfort was produced by Carbodies of Coventry and installed in late March. It was painted gray and registered on 27 March 1925 with the registration number FC 7900.

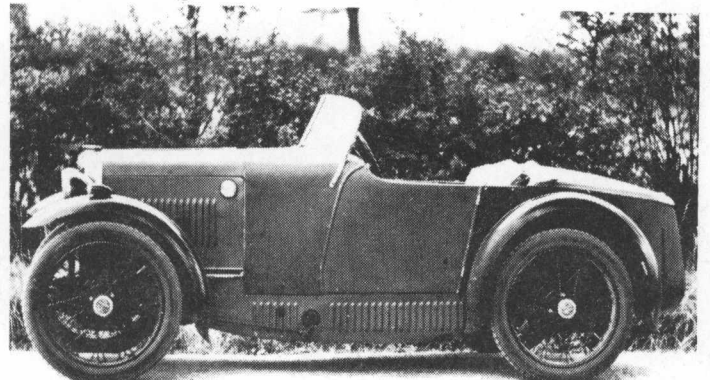
In the following few days of road testing, the modified frame cracked. In fact, it was discovered on Good Friday evening, was repaired, and Kimber drove out of the garage and on to a win in the Land's End Trial which was held over Easter. This particular trial needed a competitive car, as there were several tough climbs to make. FC 7900 lived up to Kimber's expectations and qualified for a gold medal. Kimber's navigator on this event was his friend Wilfred Matthews of Oxford. In 1933 Kimber gave Matthews the book with the inscription mentioned at the opening of this chapter. And, there you have it. It really does not seem logical to argue with Kimber about it. When was the first M.G. built? It was completed on 27 March 1925 and is lovingly called "Old Number One" by many.

Kimber sold FC 7900 shortly after the Land's End Trial, but he built at least two other trial specials during the next year. The word of the potential of these cars was getting around, and enthusiasts wanted them. From this beginning developed the world's largest producer of sports cars.

The M.G. Car Company, however, was not established until the spring of 1928. It was the direct off-shoot of The Morris Garages which had been registered in July of 1927. The establishment of this separate company by the parent group of The Morris Garages Ltd. gave a certain amount of inde-

pendence. All designs up to this point were very much Morris based, but things now began to change.

The 18/80 was M.G.'s first production chassis which could be said to have an original design. It was powered by a very fine six cylinder engine, sported wire wheels, and was very much a sports/racing car. Various versions of the 18/80 were produced between 1928 and 1933, and the car had numerous competition successes, but its comparatively high price kept it out of the hands of the not-so-wealthy enthusiast. It was, of course, with the average man that M.G. was to establish its reputation and go on to become the world's largest manufacturer of sports cars. They did it with the introduction of the greatest little car ever made, the M.G. Midget.



The M Type was the first M.G. Midget. It was produced from 1928 to 1932.

The first M.G. Midget was the M type which was introduced to an eager public in late 1928 at the Olympia Motor Show (M.G.'s first ever motor show — McComb, p. 51). This car said "sports car" to all who saw it, and it continued to make M.G. and sports car synonymous for all time.

From its classic square radiator to the racy boat-tail, it looked to be a gutsy performer. It had a vee shaped windshield, cycle fenders, and wire wheels. Power came from a four cylinder engine of 847 c.c.'s. At almost a third of the price of the fancier 18/80, the M type really appealed to enthusiasts who had hungered for a sports car they could afford. In the next year the M type won its share of awards in the Land's End Trial and at Brooklands, and these competition successes further insured its popularity. In testimony of this success on and off the track, the very appropriate "Safety Fast" slogan was adopted about this time.

The first M.G. Midget possessed many styling characteristics which came to mean "M.G." and "sports car" to the world over the years. The M type's radiator and bonnet arrangement went virtually unchanged over the next twenty five years.

The next significant model was the J series; of these, the most prevalent was the J-2. Styling additions made to this car were very important and lasted until 1955. The J-2 came out in the middle of 1932. It bore the now familiar cutaway door which had been hinted at on the Double Twelve M-types. Here too were the double humped scuttle of the C type along with the slab fuel tank with rear mounted spare. The car was still small with a 7'2" wheel base. Cycle fenders were used until late in 1933 when the swept wings and running boards were

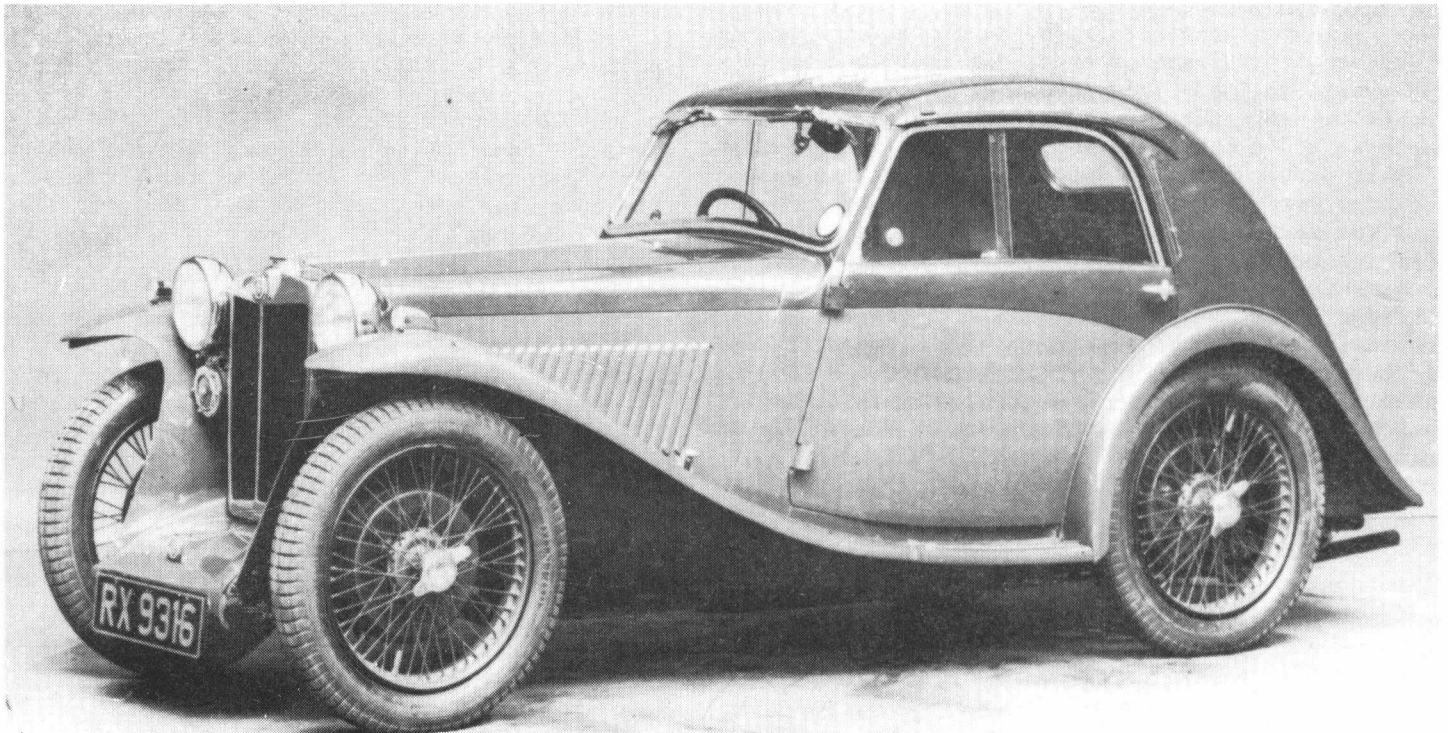
adopted. The later J-2's, then, became the complete model for M.G. styling until the MGA was introduced in 1955.

The rest of the 1930's saw improvements in chassis and engine design but the basic body style remained constant. The P type replaced the J type in early 1934. The car was a bit bigger and more powerful. It was also offered with the very attractive Airline Coupe body which was one of the first GT designs.

The TA Midget, in 1936, introduced the first of the T series cars which remained in production until 1955. Again, the basic J-2 shape was retained; however, the ohc engine was replaced with a more dependable pushrod unit. In addition to the two seater, the car was offered as an Airline Coupe as well as with the handsome drophead coupe body by Tickford.

The TB had a short production life due to the outbreak of World War II. The car was powered by a very successful XPAG engine. Only 379 of these cars were made.

Much has been written about the TC. It is, of course, the car which means "M.G." to many people. The car started the post-war sports car revolution which has changed the basic philosophy of many automobile manufacturers. Car makers now know that many buyers look for more than mere transportation when they choose a car. The TC, too, is responsible for the interest collectors are showing in post-war sports cars. It does have that basic J-2 shape and is a beautiful thing; indeed, one was chosen for the 1951 exhibit of classic design at the New York Museum of Modern Art. The MG TC was a delightful combination of the classic look and



The elegant Airline Coupe body was offered on several models and was the envy of designers everywhere.

modern performance. The production run on this car equaled the entire output of the factory since its beginning. The TC, of course, is the car which caused the American sports car revolution.

Howls of anguish went up when the TD appeared in 1950. Gone were the delicate fenders and gone were the beautiful 19" wire wheels; yet, it did look like an M.G., and it grew on one. It especially grew on one when driven; technical improvements to the suspension and steering caused it to be acknowledged to be a terrific road car. The TD remains a popular example.

R. Wilson McComb recently said someone defined an M.G. as a car with a radiator cap you could pour water through. TF lovers would argue with that definition. True, the radiator cap in a TF is fake. Yet the car does have much of the classic style of earlier models and helped make the transition from square line to smooth curve in M.G. design. For the first time that plucky radiator shell tilted backwards. Headlamps were molded into the front wings; in general, the classic line was tastefully modernized.

The complete break from the J-2 inspired designs came with the appearance of the MGA. This design was based on the Le Mans cars of the early 1950's. The M.G. designers again proved they knew their public, for this model (not a Midget, by the way, but included along with its successor to trace the line of M.G. styling to the present) sold over 100,000 examples. Available as a coupe and also with a twin-cam engine, it was a true member of the breed.

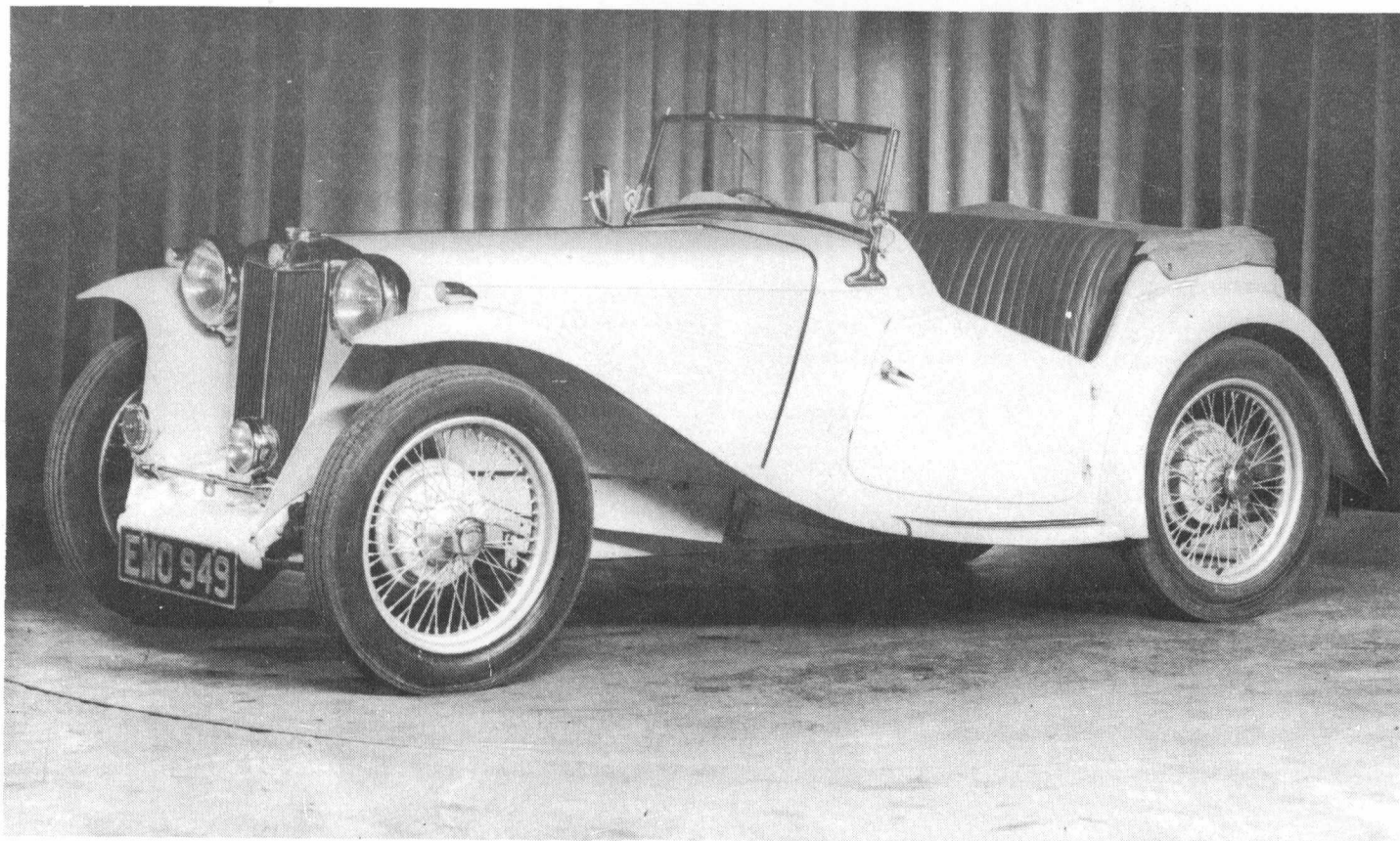
Late in 1962 the MGB was introduced, and this model has the distinction of having the longest production run. It is available as a GT coupe and as a roadster. The grill shows a hint of what its ancestors wore. The overall styling is a bit more utilitarian than any of its predecessors; yet, it has proved popular.

Through 1955, all M.G.'s are collector's items. Only time will tell if the MGA and MGB become prized pieces also. Knowing the desirability of M.G.'s and the fierce enthusiasm of M.G. owners I would be surprised if the MGA's and MGB's do not find a spot in the hearts of future collectors.

The M.G. has been called the greatest little car ever made. That probably is not far from the truth. Always recognizable as a sports car and always saying "M.G." to the public, the car has been a model for the industry and a credit to the styling department at Abingdon.

Prior to World War II there were about 22,500 M.G.'s produced in Oxford and Abingdon. Since the war there have been 750,000 of these sports cars manufactured in Abingdon, with at least seventy-five per cent of them being exported to the United States. The cars which have come to America have caused a dramatic shift in the American automobile industry. M.G.'s once again taught Americans that driving can be fun, that there is more to owning a car than merely satisfying a need for basic transportation.

The popularity of the M.G. caused American manufacturers to take notice, and the influence on

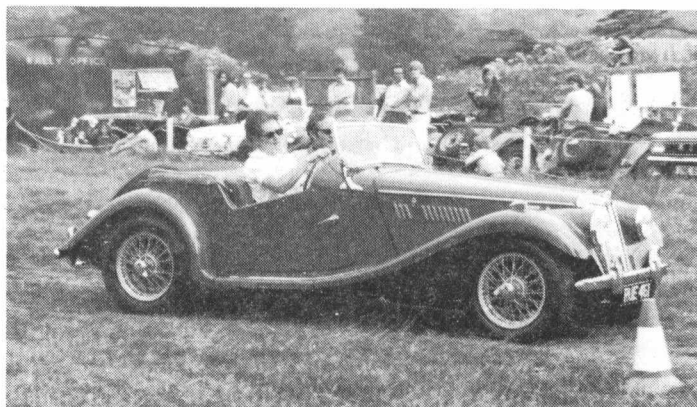


The M.G. TC was produced between 1945 and 1949. This was the car which brought sports car interest to America after the war.

their design was great. Most obvious, of course, was the appearance of Corvette and Thunderbird; however, there were several other models which were specifically designed with the enthusiasts in mind. As the interest in sports cars grew, other manufacturers around the world adjusted their offerings and the production for the enthusiast market grew to major proportions. All this because of a man named Kimber and his concept of a sports car for every man.



All photos are from the files
of Richard L. Knudson.



The M.G. TF of 1954/55 was the first big change in M.G. design in twenty-five years.

1c a mile to operate

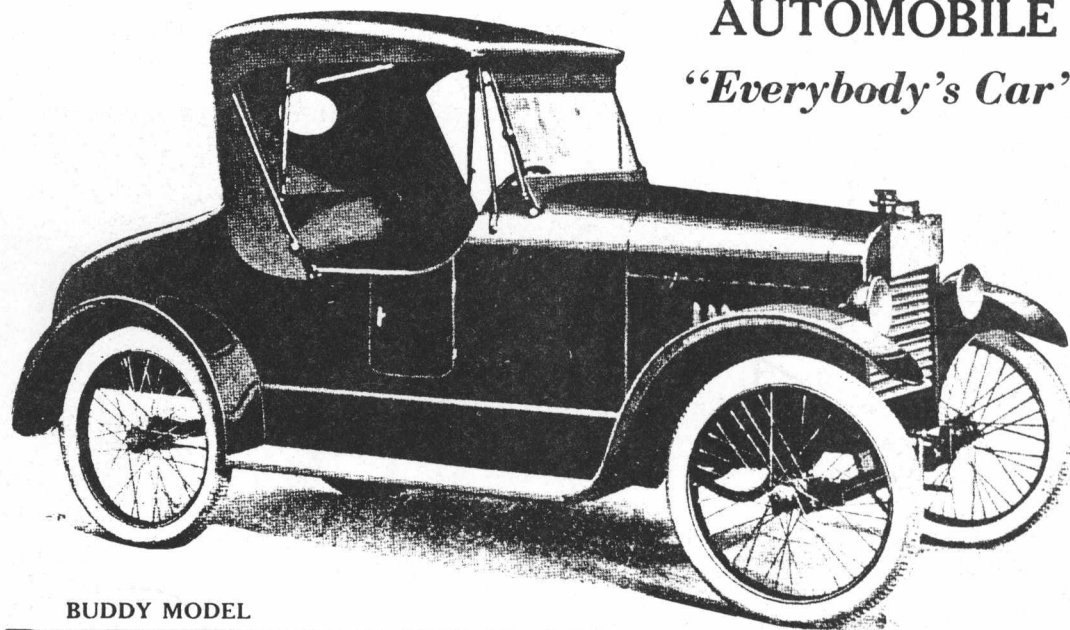
Everybody's car because it's the last word in economy—40 to 50 miles per gallon of gas—500 miles on one pint of oil. Yet it is sturdy, well built and beautifully designed—simple—with useless parts eliminated—read the specifications. Everybody's car.

Dealerships to be allotted.

Peters Motor Corporation
Trenton New Jersey

Ask for details about

The PETERS AUTOMOBILE "Everybody's Car"



Outline in Specifications

- Length over all, 120 inches;
 - Wheelbase 90 inches.
 - Engine—Twin cylinder, air cooled, 9-13 H. P. special.
 - Bore and Stroke— $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in.
 - Piston Displacement—70.62 cubic in.
 - Lubrication—Plunger pump and splash.
 - Carbureter—Own.
 - Radiator—Skeleton containing gasoline tank.
 - Ignition—Atwater Kent with hand control on steering post.
 - Gasoline Feed—Gravity with foot acceleration and hand control.
 - Gear Set—Two speeds forward and one reverse.
 - Rear Axle—Bevel Drive, $\frac{3}{4}$ Floating.
 - Service Brake—Foot controlled—operating contracting band on drum attached to ring gear spider.
 - Emergency Brake—Hand controlled, operating contracting band on drum mounted on behind transmission.
 - Frame—Pressed steel channel.
 - Wheels—Wire, demountable.
 - Tires—Size 28x3-inch.
 - Bearings—Annular-Ball.
 - Body—Snappy Roadster—easily converted into light delivery car.
 - Color—Black—other colors extra.
 - Lights—Electric.
 - Storage Battery—Prest-O-Lite.
 - Speed—3 to 45 miles.
 - Miles per gallon—40 to 50.
 - Weight—775 pounds.
- Price—\$385 F.O.B. Factory,
Trenton, N. J.

BUDDY MODEL

This 1921 advertisement is from the collection of the late Alexander Telatco. The Peters, which was similar in design to the cyclecars of a few years earlier, was powered by a two-cylinder air cooled engine. What appears to be a conventional radiator was actually the gasoline tank - an obviously hazardous arrangement.

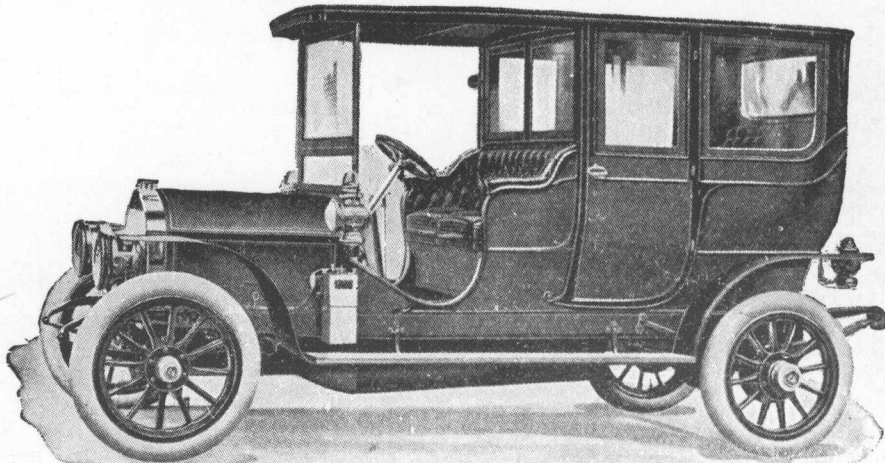
Peters cars were built in 1921 and 1922, but at some point in its brief life span the company became the Peters Motor Car Division of the Romer Motors Corp., which was an equally short lived venture listed at various addresses in Danvers, Taunton and Boston, Mass. Romer made larger cars with 6-cylinder Continental engines.

References to the Peters include these company names: Peters Motor Car Co., Pleasantville, New York; Peters Motor Corp., Trenton, N. J.; Peters Autocar Co., Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Additional information would be most welcome.



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