

# SAH Journal



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## Billboard



**New Website & New SAH Journal:** The SAH website has been overhauled, redesigned, and launched, thanks to *David McGee, Robert Barr*, and their team. Please have a look by visiting [autohistory.org](http://autohistory.org). With the new site, the same design-language has been used in a re-design of the *SAH Journal*, which was initially designed to carry the design-language of the website as it was when the Editor started, with issue no. 257 (July/August 2012). The previous issue's period articles fostered positive feedback from our readers. This particular issue is 20 pages—expanded to feature another period article from the August 13, 1914, issue of *The Automobile*, with an analysis of the proliferation of the automobile on the eve of WWI.

**Front cover:** The taxi on our cover is a 1960 Ford Fairlane taxi in the opening sequence of the 1961 movie, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, with Audrey Hepburn having just stepped out of the cab. It's connected with our article on page 10, "A Taxi to Tiffany's."

**Back cover:** Recognizing the Studebaker heritage with their horse drawn carriages in the transition to motorized vehicles. It's connected with our Studebaker article on page 4.

# SAH Journal

THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.  
An Affiliate of the American Historical Association



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### Editor

Rubén L. Verdés  
340 Royal Poinciana Way, Ste. 317-305  
Palm Beach, FL 33480 U.S.A.  
[journal@autohistory.org](mailto:journal@autohistory.org)  
[sahjournal@live.com](mailto:sahjournal@live.com)  
tel: +1.561.866.5010

### Publications Committee

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## President's Perspective



Let me begin by extending my sincerest thanks to Bob Barr, our immediate past president, for his herculean efforts guiding our organization for the last two years. Everywhere I turned, Bob was at the center of activity, taking on a variety of tough issues to help prepare our Society for the many changes we face as an organization in a climate of fast-changing technology and social norms. As Bob likes to say, he's been filling the potholes and fixing the road for a smooth trip ahead.

If you haven't already done so, be sure to visit our recently remodeled website. A big "thank you" goes to our webmaster, *David McGee*, and our friend behind the scenes at Cornerstone, *Mark Wheeler*. They have

been working diligently for the past two years to update the software, redesign our site to give it a more contemporary look and feel, and switch over to a new web hosting service, all of which should make it a more appealing, usable, stable and sustainable browsing experience. You may also notice that the same new design-language is being used for the *SAH Journal* (thank you, Rubén!)

*Bob Barr* had already mentioned the new home for our SAH papers, including hard copies of the SAHJ and AHR, at the Kettering University Archives in Flint, Michigan, largely due to the efforts of Vice President *Chris Lezotte*. We are fortunate that members such as past SAH president (1999

– 2001) and dear friend, *Leroy Cole*, have been accumulating and storing SAH material for decades. These are now in the hands of the KU Archives awaiting inventorying and cataloging. If any of our members are in possession of any minutes, presentations, or publications that you feel are in need of being included in our permanent collection, please send me a note so we can discuss.

Bob used to share his "auto biography" in his messages. Since we all have different stories of how we became involved with the love of automobiles and automotive history, I thought I'd follow his lead. You might say that "I was born this way," in the city of Flint, Michigan, the same city in which General Motors was born. I came home from the hospital in a 1954 Buick Special (that's me in the photo, about a year later, with my mom and great-aunt helping me stand). My dad worked as an hourly employee at Buick Motor Division, a set-up man in the front-end assembly welding line. My mom was a secretary in the regional office of General Motors Public Relations. My older brother was the motorhead of the family, always wrenching on his or a friend's car, while I sat back and observed. Academically, I was good at math, science, and mechanical design, but I also loved history. I attended college at General Motors Institute (since then renamed Kettering University) where I studied mechanical engineering and began my career with Buick and GM as a cooperative education student. That's where I met *Richard P. Scharchburg*, Professor of Industrial History, and the honoree for the so-named SAH award for university student papers, and that's a good place to leave my own "auto biography" for now.

—Kevin Kirbitz

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NEW MEMBERS



# A Studebaker Odyssey

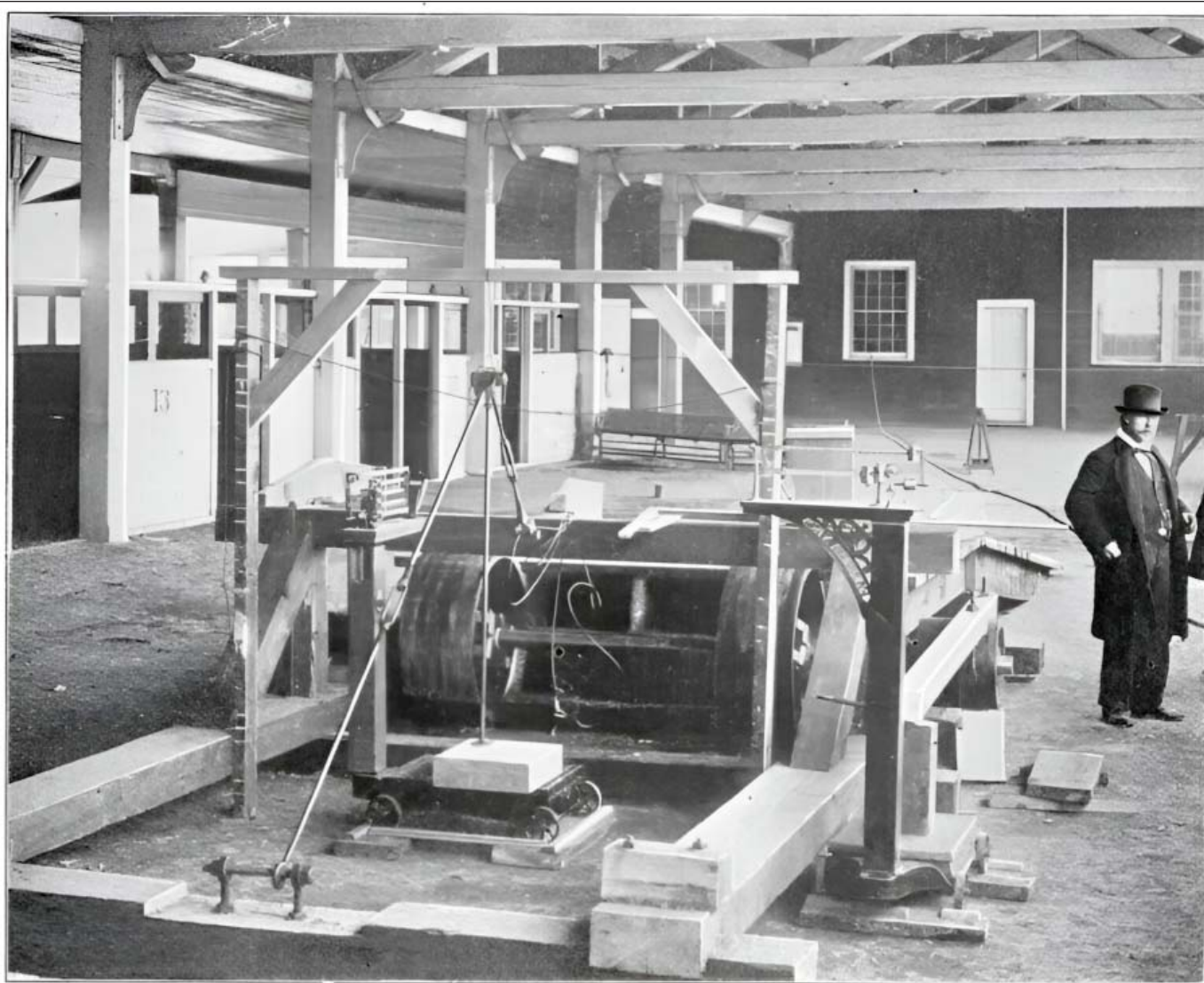
By David Schmidt

*Editor's note: This article may bring shades of recollections from the "A Picture Worth More Than a Thousand Words" article from the previous issue of the SAH Journal where author Matthew Kilkenny, while researching Le Baron, chronicled the happenstance where inquiry into a photograph led to the preservation of the surviving photo collection of photographer Irving Browning. Here is another instance where we follow the researching mindset when doing automotive history. So, along with the subject of the article, the parallel theme is the research journey itself.*

It all began simply enough. While preparing my presentation for the 2023 IMRRC/SAH Argetsinger Symposium at Watkins Glen, I was researching the "first automobile race in America." Giving context to an event is about people, places, and things. As such, with the event in question having taken place well over 100 years ago, one relies upon bits and pieces from archives, books, and periodicals

in lieu of first-person interviews. However, as is so often the case in historical research, letters serve as the voice of the departed. So, it was a letter that captivated my attention.

Peter E. Studebaker, vice president and chairman of the executive committee for the eponymous wagon maker and the fourth of five brothers, wrote a Letter to the Editor of the *Chicago Times-Herald* dated November 2, 1895. That would have been the day of the pre-race consolation contest and 26 days before "the race." The thrust of the letter was two-fold: first, horseless carriage inventors were very much in the earliest stages of experimentation and second, the *Times-Herald* was to be commended "... for transferring the manufacture of the 'motocycle' [a term applied to the horseless carriage after a naming contest sponsored by the *Times-Herald*] from Europe to America—concentrating the inventive faculties of the nation on this [horseless carriage] new departure."<sup>1</sup>



APPARATUS FOR TESTING MOTOR VEHICLES. L. L. SUMMERS & JOHN LUNDIE, CHICAGO, ILL.

THE HORSELESS AGE - DECEMBER, 1895. P. 13.

Studebaker had not entered the horseless carriage contest, but was the horseless carriage in their thinking? One of the early trade publications, *The Horseless Age*, might lead us to believe it was so. Race tests were held at 1557 Wabash Avenue in a facility said to have been made available by the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company.<sup>2</sup> Also linking Studebaker to the 1895 horseless carriage contest, Jan Young wrote, “The company was involved in the operation of the famous *Chicago Times-Herald* auto race.”<sup>3</sup>

Did Studebaker see the future? As a member of the Society of Automotive Historians, I wondered what was going on at Studebaker between 1895 (the horseless carriage contest) and 1902 (Studebaker’s first horseless carriage)?

I embarked on this odyssey driven by curiosity, aided and abetted by the very kind and generous assistance of several automotive history enthusiasts as well as various libraries, archives and museums that I will mention. My adventure sought to address two questions. First, I wanted to learn what is known about the 1557 Wabash Avenue facility as well as understand what, if any, relationship the Studebaker Brothers may have had with the location in question. This piece of history does not align with what is generally known and accepted regarding Studebaker’s presence in Chicago. Second, I wanted to piece together what we know about the history of the Studebaker Brothers and the horseless carriage prior to the 1902 electric.

On the matter of the first question, according to a variety of sources beyond *The Horseless Age* of 1895, 1557 Wabash served as the headquarters for the *Times-Herald* horseless carriage contest. 1557 Wabash Avenue is mentioned by race entrant and gold medal winner Morris & Salom in a letter to the contest judges.<sup>4</sup> Further, Charles B King, umpire in the Mueller Benz entry, referenced 1557 as the so-called *Times-Herald* Repository “... where entry cars were stored and tested.”<sup>5</sup> Also, Russell H. Anderson made reference to the testing room at 1557.<sup>6</sup> Other references to the same location include *The Autocar* as well as *The Chicago Chronicle*.<sup>7</sup>

Taking *The Horseless Age* at face value, I reached out to others more knowledgeable than myself. I had understood the initial Studebaker Building I, the Carriage Repository, was at 204 S. Michigan Avenue, built in 1886. It became the Fine Arts Building. Studebaker Building II, completed in 1896, was 378-388 Wabash Avenue, now part of Columbia College. Because parts of Chicago were a hodgepodge of irregular addresses, a 1908 – 1909 street renumbering north of Roosevelt Road resulted in Building I becoming 410 S. Michigan Avenue and Building II becoming 623-633. Clearly, neither location matched 1557 Wabash, which was not impacted by address changes because it is south of Roosevelt Road.<sup>8</sup> So, did Studebaker have another facility that was not commonly recognized?

I located another article, written by Galen Handy, suggesting the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company was connected to 1557 Wabash and the 1895 contest. The piece tracks with what was reported in *The Horseless Age* article of 1895. Handy wrote, “Then, as weather worsened, it [the testing apparatus or dynamometer] was moved [from Washington Park] into the new, yet to be occupied, Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company facility on Wabash Avenue. Starting Tuesday, November 19th, formal tests were held at the 1557 Wabash Avenue address. Arrangements were made by which the various motorcycles could be placed on exhibition there through December 4<sup>th</sup>. Studebaker moved into this new location

the following spring, and they made their former repository and showroom on Michigan Avenue into the Fine Arts Building.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, my first quandary. Studebaker did move into a new location, but it was not 1557 Wabash. So, what connection—if any—did Studebaker have with 1557 Wabash?

With curiosity aroused, I wrote to *Andrew Beckman*, Archivist at the Studebaker National Museum, about this 1557 location, asking, “... would your archives have any further information on the subject? Any ‘who, what, why’ might prove to be interesting.” I wondered, did Studebaker rent, own, or lease the facility in 1895 that is pictured in photos of the testing apparatus, one with the Duryea vehicle perched atop?<sup>10</sup> Did the Studebaker National Museum have photos of horseless carriages that were on exhibit to the public? His reply was that it is a “new one on him” but he would check as well as reach out to Richard Quinn, a noted Studebaker historian.

Andrew did check the Museum’s Chicago files and found nothing regarding the 1557 address. Richard Quinn knew of the Studebaker sales-showroom at a different address on Wabash Avenue (Studebaker Building II) as well as the older circa 1886 Fine Arts Building (Studebaker Building I), which is not on Wabash Avenue but rather on Michigan Avenue. With both Studebaker addresses being different from the 1557 location the suggestion was to reach out to The Chicago Historical Society (aka Chicago History Museum) or the Chicago Landmarks Commission. The Commission responded by indicating 1557 was not a landmark building. The Museum, through the Abakanowicz Research Center, already having addressed the 1909 address changes in Chicago, went above and beyond with my many queries.

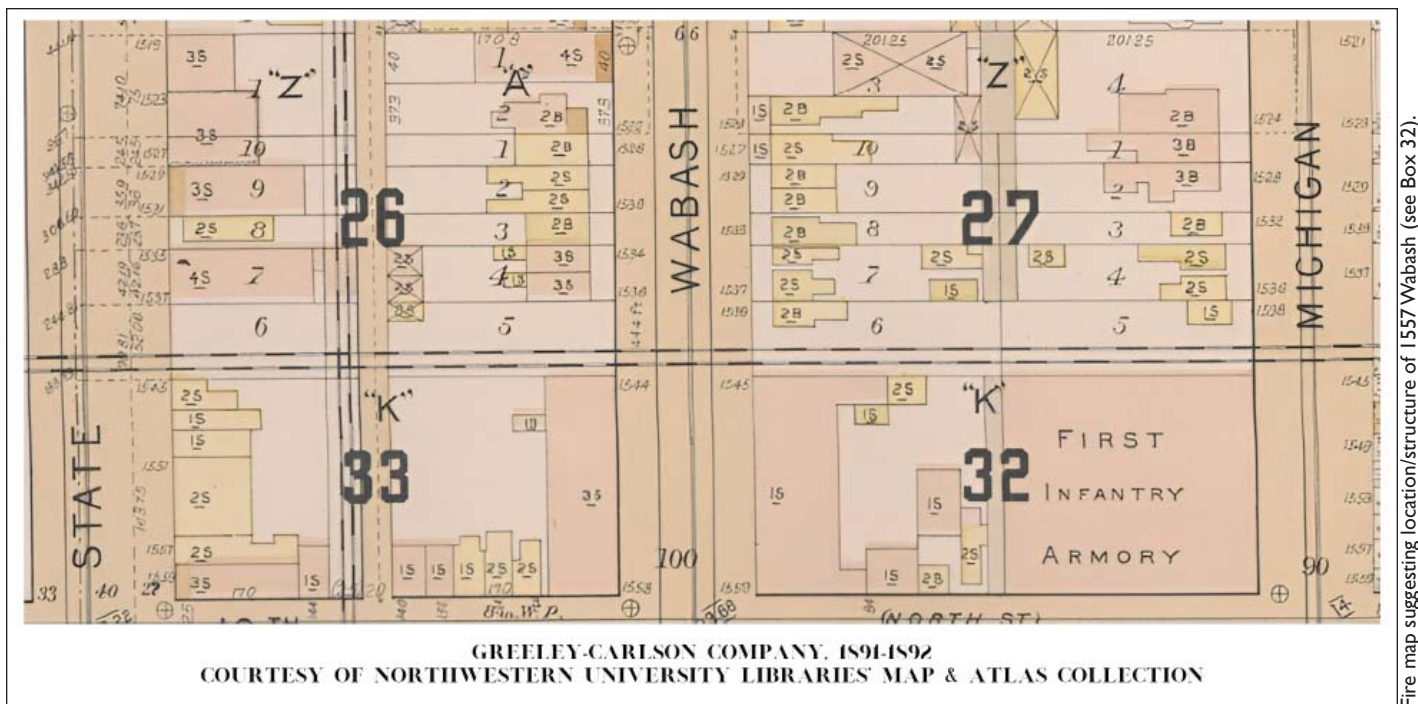
A deed search was conducted with the Recorder of Deeds at the Cook County Clerk’s office. After much time and effort, the address search and PIN search (“Parcel ID Number”) proved fruitless for 1557 Wabash in 1895 or any other odd numbered address in the 1500 block.<sup>11</sup>

In the interim I contacted *Robert (Bob) Joynt*, well known and highly regarded classic car enthusiast and auto history buff. He is better informed than most on this 1895 contest, having been a participant in the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reenactment of the original Thanksgiving Day race, not to mention conversant on Chicago’s Historic Motor Row. He noted the 1557 address was considerably south of either Studebaker Building I or II. Further, since he was conducting a private Motor Row tour for a local college design class he would scout the address. Alas, he reported the location today is a newer structure—now a multi-unit residential building.

Simultaneously, I was seeking input from others. I reached out to *Robert (Bob) Ebert*, an enthusiast who wrote two books on Studebaker, *Studebaker and Byers A. Burlingame* plus *Champion of the Lark*, and is also published in SAH’s *Automotive History Review* on the subject of Studebaker. He indicated his research concentrated on the later years of the firm, not the early days. John O’Halloran was involved with the famous Chicago’s Motor Row. When I inquired about this subject matter John wrote back promptly, saying “David, this is fascinating, a subject I’d not known to look at before. I think the 1557 address is right by the tracks, what they called the ‘Airline,’ and a brief walk from the armory so it would be within a block of the race route. Again, fascinating and I will investigate when I am in Chicago next.”

I reached out to *Robert Starinsky*—Illinois resident and SAH





member. He was not aware of a Studebaker facility on South Wabash in the late 1800s. I inquired with Alexander Utz of the Studebaker Fine Arts building if they had any history or archives about any Studebaker location on Wabash. Having none, he was kind enough to suggest Chicagology ([chicagology.com](http://chicagology.com)), an online reference which is dedicated to "... a study of Chicago history with focus on the period prior to the Second World War. The purpose of the site is to document common and *not so common stories* about the City of Chicago as they are discovered" (emphasis added). Perfect, I thought.

Because I had reviewed Chicagology and their information regarding the 1895 *Times-Herald* Horseless Race I asked them about 1557 Wabash and Studebaker. Terry Gregory of Chicagology confirmed what Richard Quinn and Robert Joynt had to say. He wrote, "Studebaker moved out of its famous carriage showroom on Michigan Avenue in 1896 when the building was converted to the Studebaker (Fine Arts) Theater. However, the carriage depository and salesroom were moved to a new building, designed by S. S. Beman in 1896. This building was located at 378 to 388 Wabash Avenue, which was changed to 623-633 S. Wabash after the 1909 Street Renumbering. The facility on Wabash was to handle its horse drawn vehicles, as Studebaker was still manufacturing its carriages in South Bend, Indiana. There never was a Studebaker facility at 1557 Wabash."<sup>12</sup>

I circled back with Terry Gregory at Chicagology. He was able to produce an article from *The Chicago Chronicle*, November 29, 1895, p. 7, confirming 1557 Wabash was used as race headquarters. Simultaneously, his correspondence included an advertisement from *The Chicago Tribune* from April 2, 1893, suggesting 1557 was a boarding house with parlors. This was puzzling because how can a parlor room accommodate testing apparatus (dynamometer) along with horseless carriage(s)?

I reached out to the Horseless Carriage Foundation ([hcfi.org](http://hcfi.org)). Chris Rini of their automotive Research Library concurred with others that the 1557 address does align with either Studebaker Building I or II. Further, he wondered if Studebaker might have

leased the building at 1557 while their other Wabash address was being readied and suggested Sanborn Fire maps might tell me more. The Chicago History Museum supplied me with links to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps at the Library of Congress as well as the University of Illinois. I set about my search for records on this 1557 Wabash location.

Terry of Chicagology emailed me again saying "The relevance of the 1895 Auto Race with Studebaker does not make sense. All that Studebaker did was allow their new Wabash location to be used for testing between November 19 and December 4. Studebaker moved into their new location at the end of December. A small office building at 1557 Wabash would not be able to accommodate testing. The 1557 Wabash location was the headquarters for the Race in which the awards were presented."<sup>13</sup>

However, if other sources say 1557 was the testing room and if the testing room accommodated a rather large apparatus (dynamometer) upon which horseless carriages were set in order to be tested, then the facility had to be of some size rather than a small office... yes? ... no?

So, back to the fire maps. These maps enabled insurance companies to evaluate the degree of hazard associated with a property by showing size, shape, construction material, number of stories, etc. Terry at Chicagology sent me the 1886 Robinson Fire Insurance Map showing the NE corner of Wabash and 16<sup>th</sup> street which appear as brick row houses with a couple individual units or smaller spaces attached to the structure.<sup>14</sup> However, that was 1886.

I was able to obtain a copy of Greeley-Carlson Company's Second Atlas for the City of Chicago 1891 – 1892 courtesy of Northwestern University Libraries. Again, 1557 is the NE corner of the intersection of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Wabash. However, the brick single story structure is no longer subdivided; rather it is wholly open space with the same smaller one- and two-story spaces (parlor rooms, perhaps?) attached. 1557 appears as open as the adjacent space on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, the site of the First Infantry Armory, which started construction in 1891. The Armory was not part of the Robinson Fire Map five years earlier. With the help of others including

the Barrington Area Library (IL), the Abraham Lincoln Museum, the Chicago Public Library, the Library of Congress and the Society of Automotive Historians, I was able to identify the same general and specific geographical area of Chicago in both Sanborn Maps of 1896 and 1911, verifying the location and type of structure (unsubdivided) at 1557 Wabash.

As a cross check, the Abakanowicz Research Center provided me with access to the 1891 and 1900 Chicago Directory of business listings from the Newberry, Chicago's independent research library. Undertaking an address and occupation match for the property on Wabash we located Ottenheimer (a grocer), Madden (a music typographer/printer), Hart (a physician) and Champin (a plumber) all at 1557 or 1559 Wabash in 1891. I found none to be at that location in the subsequent iteration of Chicago City Directories in 1900. Ottenheimer had moved to 303 35<sup>th</sup> and a Dr. Hart (with a different first name and middle initial) had moved across the street. Madden and Champin had either left Chicago, changed occupations or been missed in the July 1, 1900, publication by the Chicago Directory Company. Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest multiple small spaces could well have been aggregated forming a larger single space, a space large enough for a dynamometer and one or more horseless carriages.<sup>15</sup>

Through all this questioning about the structure, its location and verification thereof the question remains—was there a connection to Studebaker Brothers? What we do know is 1557 was not Studebaker Building I, nor Studebaker Building II. Nor was it the testing grounds at Washington Park nor the adjacent race starting point as that was located at Midway Plaisance and Jackson Park which would be 59<sup>th</sup> Street. 1557 Wabash was 43 blocks north at 16<sup>th</sup> street. Unable to corroborate or to contradict any assertions linking Studebaker Brothers to the 1557 address, I set off on a new trail.

Earlier, Chris Rini of the Horseless Carriage Foundation wondered if Studebaker perhaps leased 1557 Wabash while Studebaker Building II was being readied. I have no evidence of that. Then, Galen Handy forwarded me an article from a 1914 magazine. The author, Charles Frederick Carter, asserts he was the official photographer for the 1895 contest, and he paints an interesting picture of Frederick Upham Adams as the Father of the American automobile. This could be a story unto itself and is beyond the scope of this article. Adams is mentioned in at least two other instances in the lore of the 1895 contest and associated with the *Chicago Times-Herald* and H.H. Kohlsaat, owner/publisher of the newspaper that sponsored the contest.<sup>17</sup> So, it is with “Grizzly” (nickname) Adams that I offer a plausible explanation for Studebaker's name being associated with 1557.

First, from the 1914 article, Carter wrote that sometime after the June 1894 Paris-Rouen race: “He [Adams] convinced H. H. Kohlsaat, publisher of the *Chicago Times-Herald*, that the automobile was the coming vehicle, destined to revolutionize transportation, and persuaded him to supply the funds for prizes and expenses of an automobile road race to be held July 4, 1895.” Followed by a recognition of American interest in horseless carriages sparked by the June 1895 Paris-Bordeaux contest, he wrote “... in October Adams rented a vacant storeroom at Wabash Avenue and Fourteenth Street, where he installed the dozen ‘motocycles’ he had been able to scrape up.” He had gone down to Purdue University, where he interested the faculty in what he was doing to such an extent that he

secured the loan of apparatus for testing his exhibits. The apparatus was brought to Chicago and installed in the showroom, where tests were conducted by L. L. Summers and John Lundie, two mechanical engineers of high standing—the very same engineers referenced in *The Horseless Age* of 1895.<sup>18</sup>

Wabash Avenue and Fourteenth Street would be less than two blocks north of 1557 Wabash. Yet, numerous sources indicate Summers and Lundie did conduct their tests at 1557 Wabash. So, could the 14<sup>th</sup> street location be in error and the vacant storeroom site really be at Wabash and 16<sup>th</sup>?

According to Carter, “Among others he [Adams] visited a great bicycle manufacturer in Connecticut [Pope], to try to stir up some interest in the building of horseless carriages. But no, the manufacturer didn't believe the great army of bicycle riders would take kindly to the idea of sitting idly in machines that propelled themselves.” Could Adams have reached out to Studebaker?

Could Studebaker have absorbed some or all of the cost for the vacant storeroom rented by H.H. Kohlsaat's employee [Adams] as quid pro quo for access to and inspection of—on their own terms—the horseless carriages Adams gathered in the location known as the *Times-Herald* Repository including those of race contestants? That might assume some form of relationship between one or more Studebaker brothers and Kohlsaat.

Both Peter Studebaker and H.H. Kohlsaat most probably were acquainted... perhaps well acquainted. Peter was responsible for sales and marketing. H.H. was a publisher but also a great promoter. Both signed a petition (along with much of Chicago's upper crust) to have the 1893 World's Fair art exhibit located on the lakefront.<sup>19</sup> H.H. Kohlsaat and Peter Studebaker had adjacent boxes at the Auditorium for the opera season in 1891.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, a somewhat later fire map shows H.H. Kohlsaat's bakery, the business that facilitated his purchase of the *Times-Herald*, was just south in the 1700 block of Wabash, less than two blocks away from 1557.<sup>21</sup>

So, absent direct evidence to the contrary, circumstantial evidence allows a reader to reasonably infer there could have been a connection between the Studebaker Brothers and H.H. Kohlsaat's *Times-Herald* Repository at 1557 Wabash. As for the earlier observation about parlor rooms being for rent at 1557, fire maps of 1891 showing the larger vacant storeroom do indicate attached smaller timber rooms or structures (one- and two-story units) at the facility in question and are identified as dwellings in a later fire map.

Another of my quandaries was this, “What was Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company doing about horseless carriages between 1895 and 1902 (the first year of the Studebaker electric)? In 1896, George Strong, an electrical engineer, was working on an electric vehicle for Studebaker Brothers. The board authorized the sum of \$4,000 for horseless carriage development.<sup>22</sup> Albert Russell Erskine, Studebaker's president from WWI into the Depression, noted in minutes of the directors dated May 12 of 1897 “... we find the company building and experimenting with a horseless vehicle.”<sup>23</sup> Stephen Longstreet suggests the same—an engineer working on a motor vehicle in 1897.<sup>24</sup> However, these references are one to two years after the *Times-Herald* contest where E. P. Ingersoll of *The Horseless Age* noted Studebaker Brothers made a facility available for vehicle testing and display of motor vehicles. Surely a firm in the transportation business must have been paying attention to the vehicles on display in the Adler & Sullivan

Transportation Building during the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

On that very subject, Jan Young wrote to me quoting from his own book entitled *Studebaker History Corner*, “Also in 1893, the World’s Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago. Clement Studebaker was president of the Indiana commission for that event and was heavily involved in its organization and operation. The exposition was famous for the first appearance of Mr. Ferris’ wheel and for a dancer named Little Egypt. Although they received little press at the time, it also featured a small number of horseless carriages, most on display, but one or two may have been operated. It is quite possible that prior to 1893 the Studebaker brothers had never seen a horseless carriage, but it is hard to imagine that Clement failed to see and study one or two during the Exposition.” Jan speculates, “Thus I would imagine 1893 as being the year in which Studebaker got the idea that building an automobile might be a profitable venture.”<sup>25</sup>

Of course, the Studebaker Brothers were paying attention. While the brothers may have had differing opinions of the horseless carriage, they were very aware. From William Morrison’s electric in Iowa 1887/88 (at the *seni om sed* parade, which is Des Moines backwards) to the Duryea brothers’ 1893 vehicle in Massachusetts, the Studebaker brothers were paying attention to new developments. Clement was opposed, Peter less enthused initially, and John was ambivalent to support depending upon the time frame. Brother Henry had departed the firm, retiring to farm life while brother Jacob passed away in 1887.<sup>26</sup>

If Studebaker was paying attention to horseless developments, so it was that horseless developers were also paying attention to Studebaker. In 1892, Clyde Jay Coleman had invented an electric car at Chicago Bicycle Works with the hope of producing enough vehicles to transport visitors around the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Financing fell through and he later made an effort in 1893 to interest Studebaker in manufacturing the vehicle. Apparently, Studebaker declined.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, Coleman was issued a patent in 1903 for an electric starter which he sold to Delco Company. Charles Kettering, an engineer at Delco, refined the design and obtained his own patent with the invention appearing on the 1912 Cadillac.<sup>28</sup>

In late 1895 brother Peter was changing his tune. His Letter to the Editor of the *Chicago Times-Herald* lauding the American efforts towards the horseless carriage suggests Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company was coming around.<sup>29</sup> John’s ambivalence, if there was any, was put to rest by his son-in-law, Frederick Samuel Fish, to whom most attribute Studebaker’s foray into the horseless carriage business. Fish, an attorney and “automobilist,” married into the family and was a director and general counsel then rose to chairman of the Executive Committee in 1897 when Peter passed away. It was Fish who reorganized the firm from a family run business to a corporation with Wall Street connections which, in turn, facilitated his efforts to move the firm in the direction of the horseless carriage.<sup>30</sup> Stephen Longstreet suggests Clement’s son George contributed to the family’s nascent interest in the new mode of transportation. Yet records indicate George voted against the idea in 1900. William Cannon and Fred Fox suggest it was Clement’s other son Clement, Jr. (not George) who was enthusiastic over the horseless carriage. Either son aside, all agree Frederick Samuel Fish was the catalyst.<sup>31</sup>

Bonsall and Critchlow note that in 1897 – 1898 Studebaker was building bodies for Albert Pope’s Electric Vehicle Company, and in 1900 the Studebaker Brothers tried without success to enter into business arrangements with both Munson Electric Motor Company as well as Byron J. Carter for his steam powered vehicle.<sup>32</sup>

Clement Studebaker passed away in 1901. His biography, *The Life of Clement Studebaker*, is a manuscript said to have been written at the request of Clement’s second wife, Ann Milburn Harper Studebaker, between 1908 and 1914. The author was unknown, but it was transcribed and republished by Jan Young. In a quote from the biography sent me by Young, we can read this:

An important part of the policy followed by the brothers in their business was to avail themselves of all things applicable to their line that would increase the productiveness of their works or improve their product. To this end they kept themselves advised as to inventions in labor saving machinery and new appliances for vehicles, and anything that demonstrated its usefulness in either line, after careful tests had been made, was adopted. Very naturally they were constantly besieged by inventors and promoters to try new things, but only a small proportion of these inventions would stand the test of practical experience. The automobile early engaged Mr. Studebaker’s attention and the advisability of engaging in the manufacture of the horseless carriage was carefully considered. The policy adopted was to await the perfecting of the machines and if found practical to then take up the question of constructing them. “The first thing to be accomplished,” said Mr. Studebaker, “is to get a machine that is safe and reliable under all conditions. Those now in use (1900) are demonstrating daily that they are not. We better spend three years in experimenting before engaging in the manufacture of them.”<sup>33</sup>

With resistance to entering the automobile era removed upon Clement’s passing, Fish and his new board at the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company resolved to produce a horseless carriage. The firm introduced the Electric Runabout in 1902 with a slogan “NO EXPERT CHAUFFEUR NEEDED.”<sup>34</sup> The sales catalog read:

“As may be imagined, we have not been indifferent to the introduction of the horseless carriage. We have not, however, believed that it would be wise on our part or good faith toward the public to push upon the market an imperfect or immature product. We have expended a large of amount of time and money in experimenting and research conducted for us by experts in order that the machine of our adoption should be such that we could recommend and not discredit our standing in the vehicle world.”<sup>35</sup>

Doolittle noted that in 1902 Cadillac, Franklin, Pope and Studebaker appeared, and wrote:

“Our grandfathers used to sing:

‘We’ll wait for the wagon—the Studebaker Wagon—

We’ll wait for the wagon, and we’ll all take a ride.’

long before the automobile was conceived.”<sup>36</sup>





Stills from the 1953 film, *The Studebaker Story, Vol. 1 The First Hundred Years*, left: J.M. Studebaker and Fred Fish out for a road test; and "Father Studebaker" (as credited in the movie) played by actor John R. Hamilton, perhaps best known for his portrayal of Perry White in the '50s television series: *Adventures of Superman*. (Use the QR code or this link to see the movie: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_HU02cqjToY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HU02cqjToY))

## EPILOGUE

The Electric Runabout was sold until 1912. It is interesting to note that the Studebaker corporation sponsored the 1953 film, *The Studebaker Story, Vol. 1 The First Hundred Years*.<sup>38</sup> Viewing it, we see the actors portraying Frederick S. Fish and John Studebaker in 1899 discussing a gasoline powered buggy and taking a sixteenth road test in that year at a speed of 8 mph. Two years later, at a speed of 16 mph in the movie, the suggestion was that a gasoline powered vehicle had been in development for seven years. So, 1901 less seven years is 1894/95. John tells Frederick the gasoline powered buggy "is your [Frederick's] baby. I'm a wagon man. This is for young men. You will need to decide how and when our cars are to be built." No mention of the Electric Runabout.

### Endnotes

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# A Taxi to Tiffany's

By Rubén Verdés

The taxi seen on our cover is a 1960 Ford Fairlane in the opening sequence of the 1961 movie, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The opening sequence itself is an interesting motoring artifact because it couldn't happen today (under normal conditions). That is not a reference to the fact that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in New York City appears to be completely absent of motoring and pedestrian traffic, which was (according to one account<sup>1</sup>) apparently just good fortune on the day of the shoot. The odd thing is that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue runs one way southbound. Here, the taxi is running northbound (stopping at Tiffany's, which is on the east side of the street), and the '59 Cadillac on the other side of the street is pointing downtown (as seen in the image below). This was filmed near the end of two-way traffic on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which changed on January 14, 1966, to one-way downtown for 5<sup>th</sup>, and one-way uptown for Madison (one block east).

Ford Fairlane production ran from 1955 to 1970 in seven generations, with a version produced for Argentina and Venezuela, and the "third generation" design ran in 1960 and 1961.<sup>2</sup> Total output for 1960 was 204,700 Fairlane models and 244,275 Fairlane 500 models. In addition, there were about 900 produced for taxi and police cars.<sup>3</sup> There were three trim levels: Fairlane, Fairlane 500, and Custom 300, where the 300s were all the 900 sold as taxi or police cruiser specials. There was an eleven-page brochure detailing the features and specifications of the Ford taxicabs for 1960 (page 4 of that brochure is shown here on the facing page).

The subject of taxis is wide and deep, but further on the narrow NYC subject, *Kit Foster* offered these observations: "It was a big deal, circa 1955, when New York City authorized the use of ordinary sedans for taxi service within the city limits. Prior to that time, the regulations were such that all taxis were long-wheelbase DeSotos or Checkers, and all passengers rode in the rear compartment, some on jump seats. The space beside the driver could accommodate extra luggage." Then he added: "Further (from the often useful and frequently correct Wikipedia): '1954, New York City revised its specifications for taxicabs, eliminating the five-passenger rear compartment requirement and stipulating a wheelbase

of 127 in. (3,226 mm) or less, which effectively took Checker out of the market. A brand-new 120" wheelbase body-on-frame design was introduced in December 1956, called A8, and that basic body style would be retained for the duration of Checker production until the end, in 1982.'<sup>4</sup>" Robert Barr added these observations: "Up to the end of the Crown Vic. era, the 'Livery' and 'Pursuit' versions of the civilian passenger car were near clones." Further: "The Livery was 'de-tuned' from the Pursuit. Similarities were HD rims (visibly different from the civies), tires, brakes, suspension. The basic premise was you could travel rough pavement/potholes at speed and keep going."

We'll close with this quote (if not epitaph): "For the elderly, obese, or handicapped, new sedans from General Motors, Ford and Chrysler weren't easy to get in and out of. When equipped with a partition, modest legroom became downright skimpy. Since Detroit sunk the floors into the frame to lower the rooflines, the transmission tunnel and doorsills became higher, creating problems for the less limber. Ford's Expanded Taxi Package included the chrome door handle on the right rear door, assist straps on the center doorposts, and full rubber flooring all around. Ford persisted with the 223-ci overhead valve six cylinder motor and most cabbies ordered it. . . . The lack of a partition was a momentary phenomenon, as they would be back in a few years. No factory-built 1960 Ford Fairlane taxis are known to exist today."<sup>5</sup>

## Endnotes

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**The Best  
Taxi Buy  
in Town!**



## 60 FORD FAIRLANE

### Functional Styling

In 1960, more than ever, Ford is engineered, designed and built for people. The 60 Ford Fairlane is beautifully different yet thoroughly functional. Its simple, sleek, flowing design sets the 60 Ford apart in its field . . . provides the kind of beauty and comfort your customers will hail again and again!

But beauty is only part of the 60 Ford story. The 60 Ford is as practical as it is glamorous. It's a solid, silent, comfortable car with every passenger and driver convenience feature fully integrated into one compact design. It's the kind of car that looks like "more" all the way through. Yet, the Fairlane is the Value Leader at its traditionally low price.

Like *all* Fords, Fairlane savings only *begin* with its low price . . . savings continue every mile you drive.

### Rock-Ribbed Ruggedness

The 60 Ford is a bear for punishment . . . built to stay on the job week-in-week-out right around the clock. You get more *productive* miles out of a Ford . . . keep it on the job longer with less cost.

In addition to *basic* ruggedness, Ford furnishes longer-lasting, more durable appointments. Upholsteries, for example, are the best in Ford's field. Taxi interiors come in 3 standard nylon and vinyl upholstery and trim combinations. There are also 3 *extra-durable, all-vinyl* interiors available as special options in 1960.

You also get your choice of a wide selection of specially packaged *heavy-duty* taxi options to custom tailor your Ford Cabs to any extra or unusual local operating conditions. You need look no further than Ford for *everything* that adds up to profitable operation *every time!*





# The AUTOMOBILE

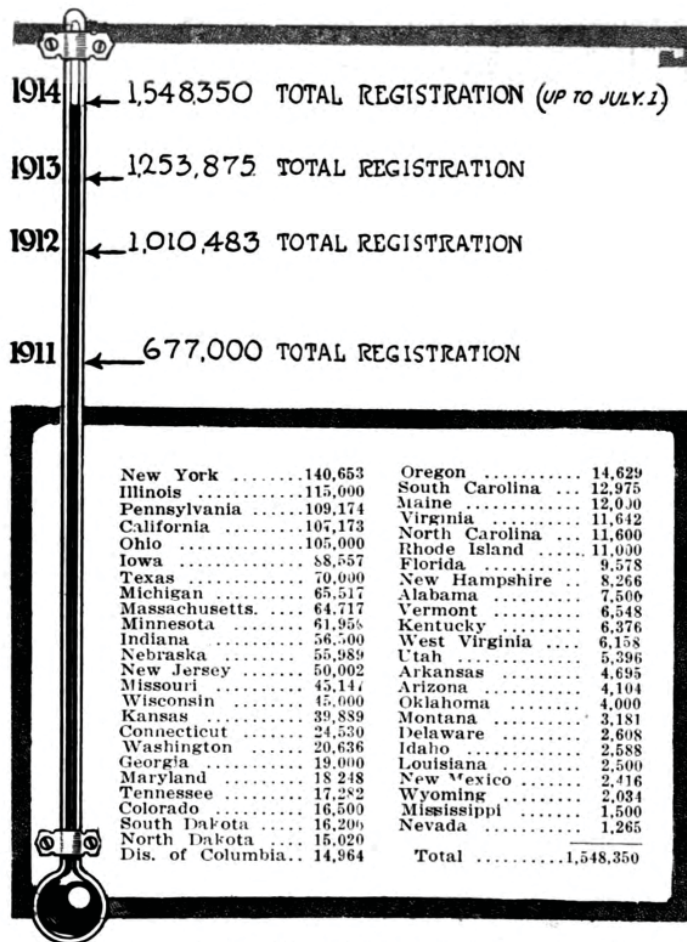
## United States Has 1,548,350 Cars

Registration to July 1 Shows Gain of  
294,485 in First 6 Months of 1914

By Donald McLeod Lay

FROM all indications, the year 1914 will be one of the greatest in the history of the automobile industry. Surprising as were the gains in other years, 1914 bids fair to surpass them all, for the registration officials of the various states report increases in nearly every instance, the total registration for the United States amounting to 1,548,350 automobiles and motor trucks up to July 1. These figures, of course, include both the gasoline and electric vehicles as well as a number of steam machines. In arriving at this total all cases of duplicate registration, due to the registration of non-residents in the various states and re-registration upon transfer of ownership, are subtracted.

On January 1, 1914, allowing for all duplicate registration, there were 1,253,875 cars and trucks in use in the United States. By July 1, there had been an increase of 294,485 over this figure, a



Registration to July 1, 1914, allowing for duplicate registration

gain which is particularly surprising and significant when all the talk of hard times, lack of prosperity, etc., is considered.

From the number of new registrations during the first half of 1914 it is apparent that the people of the United States have been buying cars in even greater quantities than ever before. The increase in the number of automobile owners is especially noticeable in the smaller communities and on the farms. In fact, the tremendous amount of money invested in automobiles and accessories in several of the states has drawn the attention of prominent business men and produced a strong impression upon the banking fraternity.

The present standing of the states in respect to the number of automobiles and motor trucks may be seen by referring to the tabulation on this page. New York still leads the van with 140,653, after all duplicate registrations have been allowed for, a

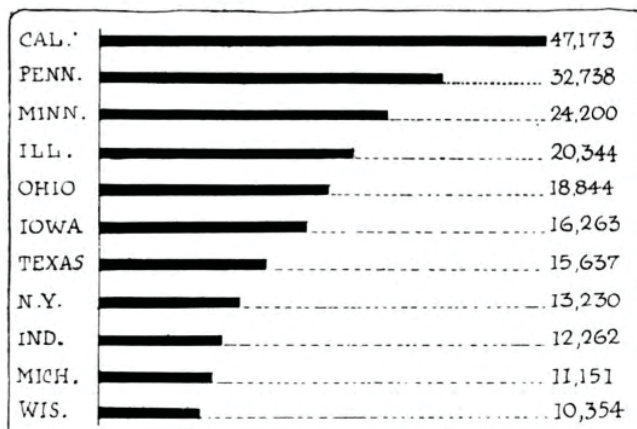




Map showing actual registration of automobiles and trucks up to July 1, 1914, excluding duplicate registrations

gain of 13,230. Illinois proudly claims second place with 115,000, an increase of 20,344. A startling change, however, has taken place after this. Pennsylvania has sprung into third place with 109,174, taking first place according to the proportion of gain among all the states with 32,738. The figures given for California up to January 1, 1914, were incomplete, owing to the fact that a new law went into effect last fall and the registration of the cars in that state had not been completed by that time, the registrations being given as only 60,000. Under the new law, however, California stands fourth in rank, the registrations amounting to 107,173, allowing for duplicate registrations. The apparent increase of 47,173 is misleading in that both the new registrations and those which had not been completed under the new law up to January 1 are included.

Ohio, which stood third at the beginning of this year is now in fifth place with 105,000 cars and trucks, an increase of 18,844 in 6 months.



Eleven states showed increases of over 10,000 cars. The California figures, however, are misleading, owing to the new law

Iowa, which was fifth on January 1, is now in sixth place with 88,557, an increase of 16,263. The farmers in this state have been buying cars in great quantities, so much so that the president of a railroad which has lines in this state made a public statement a few weeks ago to the effect that Iowa people are spending more money for automobiles and accessories than for railroad fares inside the state. He went on to say that the public is more interested in the price of rubber than in the price of steel rails and more interested in good highways than in good railroads. Such a statement as this coming from such a source may be taken as strikingly indicative of the progress which Iowa is making as an automobile state.

#### Texas Shows Big Gain

Texas is one of those states which unfortunately has no state automobile registration and consequently it is not easy to obtain statistics regarding the number of cars and trucks in use in the Lone Star commonwealth. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce, however, made a census of the state for this purpose last fall and at that time reported that there were 54,363 cars in use in Texas. In response to a letter from THE AUTOMOBILE, the Chamber reported that while no census has yet been made for the first half of 1914, it is positive that 70,000 is a very conservative figure for the number of cars and trucks in use in Texas up to July 1. This puts the state in seventh place and credits it with a gain of 15,637 cars and trucks. On January 1, Texas was credited with 54,363 cars, which gave it ninth place.

Michigan, which stood eighth on January 1, retains its old position with 65,517 cars, an increase of 11,151.

Massachusetts, which was sixth at the beginning of the year, is now ninth, but with 64,717 cars, compared with 61,746, a gain of 2,971.

Minnesota has shown an unexpected increase, jumping from fourteenth place at the beginning of the year to tenth place July 1 with 61,950 machines registered, a gain of 24,200, putting the state second in the order of gains for the



first 6 months, the abnormal figures for California not considered.

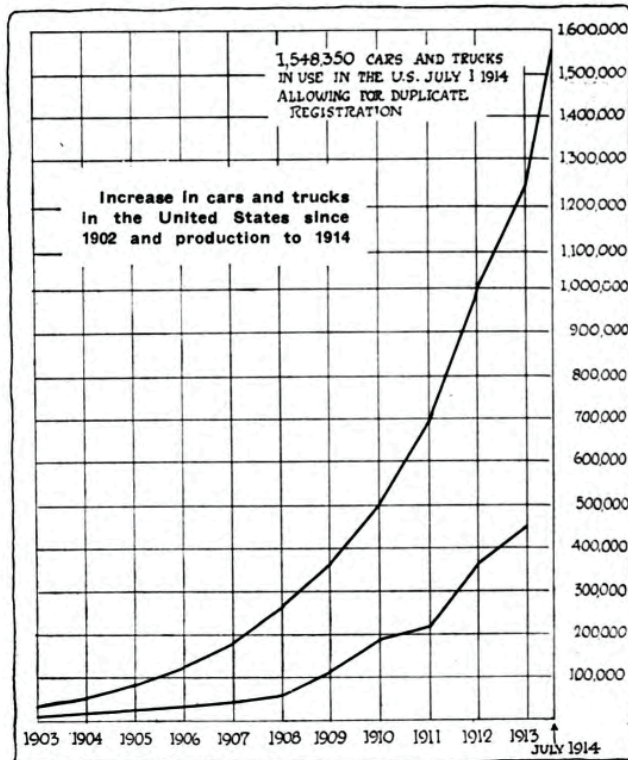
Three other states have registrations of over 50,000, Nebraska having 55,989, an increase of 8,715 over the figures for the first of the year, Indiana which is credited with 56,500, or 12,262 more than on January 1, and New Jersey, which is still barely over the mark, having 50,002, an increase of 489 for 6 months.

Three other states have over 35,000 cars, Missouri having 45,147, Wisconsin 45,000 and Kansas 39,889. The rest of the states taper down from Connecticut with 24,530 and Washington with 20,636 to Mississippi with 1,500 and Nevada with 1,265. Nevada has always had the last position in the order of registrations, but is now beginning to show some promise of mounting a little higher in the table, having gained 134 cars in the first 6 months of 1914.

#### Little Improvement in Laws

The automobile law situation is but little improved this year. Two of the states, California and Kentucky, are under new laws and several of the other states are making or are contemplating making changes in their motor vehicle legislation. Among these is Massachusetts, which has recently enacted some amendments to its statutes. The Michigan law is in the uncomfortable predicament of being declared invalid by the State Supreme Court, so a new act will have to be drawn for that state. The District of Columbia, Florida and Texas are still licensing cars perennially, that is, each car is licensed but once and not every year as is the case in most of the states. Minnesota has triennial registration, that is,

(Continued on page 330.)



#### Automobile Registration in Each State in the Union up to July 1, 1914, with Duplicate Registrations

State or Territory	Total Registration	New Registration	Registration up to July, 1914	Gasoline Passenger Cars in Use	Gasoline Commercial Cars in Use	Electric Passenger Cars in Use	Electric Commercial Cars in Use	Non-Resident Registration*	Re-Registered**	Chauffeurs Registered	Total Fees	Remarks
Alabama	7,500	2,000	5,500	***	***	***	***	None	***	1,000	\$92,000	
Arizona	4,293	710	3,583	4,027	208	16	None	None	189	1,000	30,638	
Arkansas	4,695	1,695	3,000	***	***	***	***	None	***	270	4,965	
California	107,173	47,173	60,000	***	***	***	***	None	***	15,347	***	New law
Colorado	16,500	3,500	13,000	***	***	***	***	None	***	2,200	60,833	
Connecticut	24,530	1,267	23,263	21,555	2,375	400	200	***	***	31,050	364,948	
Delaware	2,608	225	2,373	***	***	***	***	***	***	2,467	30,152	
Dist. of Col.†††	17,464	839	16,625	16,276	603	710	90	2,500	***	21,795	10,086	Perennial reg.
Florida	10,078	706	9,372	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	Perennial reg.
Georgia	19,000	***	22,000	18,335	335	315	15	***	500	***	***	New law
Idaho	2,588	415	2,173	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
Illinois	115,000	20,344	94,656	***	***	***	500	None	500	17,489	595,362	
Indiana	57,000	12,262	44,738	53,000	2,000	1,000	500	***	500	2,398	385,000	
Iowa	88,557	16,263	70,294	***	***	***	***	***	***	12,000	199,445	
Kansas	39,889	5,523	34,366	***	***	***	***	***	***	None	41,000	
Kentucky††	6,376	***	7,210	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	New law
Louisiana	2,500	Lower est.	3,200	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
Maine	12,700	2,130	10,570	12,195	498	5	2	500	200	None	166,000	
Maryland	18,248	3,994	14,254	16,558	1,440	150	100	***	***	***	***	
Massachusetts	64,717	2,971	61,746	56,990	6,209	823	695	***	***	13,935	780,364	Law invalid
Michigan	65,517	11,151	54,366	***	***	***	***	***	***	196,551	***	
Minnesota	62,000	24,200	37,800	***	***	***	***	***	50	***	***	Triennial reg.
Mississippi†	1,500	Lower est.	3,000	***	***	***	***	***	***	5,257	***	
Missouri	46,143	8,003	38,140	***	***	***	***	***	996	***	201,857	
Montana	3,181	***	5,686	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	8,000	
Nebraska	55,989	8,715	47,274	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
Nevada	1,265	134	1,131	1,201	64	***	***	***	***	None	3,840	
New Hampshire	8,766	1,330	7,436	8,651	50	45	20	500	***	2,662	146,049	
New Jersey	51,849	489	51,360	49,567	2,282	***	***	***	1,847	55,532	668,394	
New Mexico	2,436	715	1,721	***	***	***	***	***	20	***	16,764	
New York	145,894	13,230	132,664	123,722	12,180	7,000	2,992	1,630	3,611	56,042	1,351,826	
North Carolina	11,600	1,600	10,000	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	75,000	
North Dakota	15,095	2,025	13,075	15,065	15	15	None	None	75	***	48,456	
Ohio	105,000	18,844	86,156	***	***	***	***	***	***	5,000	591,596	
Oklahoma†	4,000	Lower est.	4,900	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
Oregon	14,629	672	13,957	***	***	***	***	***	***	1,351	69,111	
Pennsylvania	112,916	32,738	80,178	100,000	3,000	7,455	2,461	1,000	2,742	23,370	1,067,295	
Rhode Island	11,000	818	10,182	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
South Carolina	12,975	1,475	11,500	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	2,500	Local reg.
South Dakota	16,200	1,622	14,578	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
Tennessee	17,282	3,179	14,103	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	34,564	
Texas†	70,000	15,637	54,363	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	Local and perennial reg.
Utah	5,396	928	4,021	4,939	117	117	6	***	***	***	2,728	20 steam cars
Vermont	6,781	863	5,918	6,592	180	4	5	***	233	1,443	127,619	
Virginia	11,642	2,620	9,022	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	101,878	
Washington	20,636	***	24,178	***	***	***	***	None	None	None	41,272	
West Virginia	6,158	1,070	5,088	***	***	***	***	***	***	250	60,174	
Wisconsin	45,000	10,354	34,646	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	236,640	
Wyoming	2,034	450	1,584	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	
	1,554,300	285,879	1,279,950	508,673	31,556	18,055	7,086	6,130	10,963	271,858	\$7,812,907	

NOTE.—3,000 steam passenger cars and 250 steam trucks are included among the gasoline machines. Dots indicate that previous figures are doubtful, discrepancies indicating that the registration officials have made an error in reporting. \*The number of cars registered belonging to residents of another state. \*\*Number of cars registered owing to changes of ownership, etc. †Not listed separately by registration officials. ‡Estimated on basis of population with reference to location and sectional registration. ††New law makes registration figures low. †††Figures are high as many re-registrations are included. ‡‡Estimate furnished by Dallas Chamber of Commerce, which states that figures given are very conservative.



## United States Has 1,548,350 Cars

(Continued from page 297.)

cars are licensed once every 3 years instead of every year. Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina continue to have their automobilists register with the local authorities, there being no state registration.

### Lack of Uniformity

It is to be deeply regretted that there is so little uniformity about the automobile laws in the various states as this aspect of the situation is not only very inconvenient to tourists, but it also renders it very difficult to obtain statistics and especially so in regard to the various classes of vehicles, comparatively few of the states segregating these.

### Many Delinquent Licenses

Referring to the table of registrations on page 297, it will be seen that there is apparently a decrease in registration in Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Oklahoma and Washington. Telegrams to the respective Secretaries of State of Georgia, Montana, Oklahoma and Washington brought out the fact that the apparent decrease is due to delinquent licenses, while in Kentucky the new law is responsible for the lower registration and in Mississippi and Louisiana lower and more accurate estimates have been secured.

Owing to the incomplete registration figures, only twenty-five of the states were able to give information in regard to the number of chauffeurs in the state. Four of these stated that no chauffeurs were registered and the total number of the chauffeurs registered in the other twenty-one states was 271,858.

Thirty-four states were able to give the total in fees received, which amounted to \$7,812,907, two states having over \$1,000,000 income from this source, New York with \$1,351,826 and Pennsylvania with \$1,067,295.

Of course, the totals in the table on page 297 are very inadequate for the number of gasoline passenger cars and trucks and electric passenger cars and trucks, figures being available in comparatively few of the states. Such as are given, however, are significant.

## Pierce Offers 54 Body Types

(Continued from page 303.)

ever before. Wire wheels may be secured at an extra cost but the standard cars are fitted with wood wheels having the Johnson patent demountable rims. The extra tires and rims are carried on the running board and this year the Silvertown cord tires will be found as standard equipment. In addition to the actual constructional features of the car all models will be regularly equipped with hand inspection lamps, and a full instrument board which includes the clock, speedometer, odometer, oil and gasoline pressure gauges, voltmeter, ignition and light switches and starter button. Magnetic gasoline tank gauges are now fitted on the tanks. In addition there is the power-driven air pump for inflating tires, a bulb and electric horn, collision bumper, trunk rack, shock absorbers, a supply of oils and grease, extra valve and spring, storm curtains, mud aprons, ventilators, tonneau lamp and in enclosed cars there is an adjustable foot rest, Waltham clock, umbrella holders and everything else that makes for luxury.

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## Book R&R

*For more than ten years our "Book Reviews" section has presented full descriptions and reviews in limited space. To cover more ground, we're trying something new: "Book R&R," where the "R&R" stands for "recommendations and reviews." Recommendations means that we'll solicit and accept titles our readers submit, along with a pithy recommendation, presented with the same header of information, and a link to a review if one is available. Reviews will still be printed where a review from a historian's perspective is desired, but not available elsewhere.*

### **Raymond Henri Dietrich: Automotive Architect of the Classic Era & Beyond**

by Necah Stewart Furman

Dalton Watson Fine Books (2024)

[daltonwatson.com](http://daltonwatson.com)

640 pages, 11½" x 10" hardcover

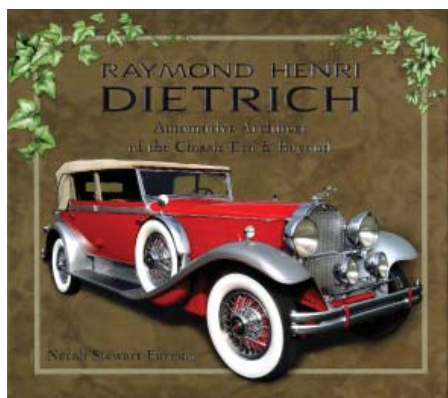
328 b/w & 114 color images, and 198 illustrations.

Bibliography and index

Price: \$225

ISBN-10: 1956309098

ISBN-13: 978-1956309096



The automobiles of the prewar era—particularly premium luxury automobiles—were characterized by having two makers: the firms that made the chassis (Duesenberg, Rolls-Royce, Hispano-Suiza, et cetera), and the firms that made the bodies (Brewster, H.J. Mulliner, Henry Binder, et cetera). Body firms came to range from enti-

ties that would design and build coachwork, to those dedicated to designing coachwork that would be built by a variety of firms so dedicated. Across all those business models, the designer was the common element. There are a number of designers—shamefully unsung—who may never be known (save, hopefully, the future endeavors of researchers and automotive historians), as their work belonged to the firms they worked for. Then there are designers that were not only known, but whose names would be attached to their work. Dietrich is at the top of that list.

Raymond Henri Dietrich (February 15, 1894 – March 19, 1980) has been the subject of endless articles in commercial and enthusiast publications to the point that it's all but certain that "all that meets the eye" has been materially covered, so the only thing left to be done was to take on a full telling of his story. (Just to mention: if you search his name, you will find "Henry" instead of "Henri," where this book discloses that it was "later anglicized to Henry.") There were various happy happenstances that brought this author, *Necah Stewart Furman, Ph.D.*, into Dietrich's circle, where he entrusted her to tell his story—giving her access to him and his records. To add further light to Dietrich's selection, it is worth disclosing more of the author's biography, as summarized by the publisher: "Necah Stewart Furman earned her doctorate at the University of New Mexico and other degrees from the University of Texas system. She is author or co-author of seven books, two of which were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize including one that received the Society for Technical Communications Award for Excellence. She has also published numerous articles, reviews, and monographs on subjects ranging from celebrities to nuclear reactors. Of all these, however, Furman claims that the most memorable was her selection by famous classic car designer Ray Dietrich and wife, Marion, to write his biography. She had already published an article on Dietrich in *The Classic Car* magazine and subsequently would publish additional articles on various aspects of his design philosophy and career in *The Dearborn Historian* and *Classic Cars Seen*. Furman recalls her interaction and resulting friendship with Dietrich as being 'a rare privilege and opportunity to preserve the legacy of one referred to as 'the automotive architect of the Classic Era.'"' This author's biography is proportionately pithy, so this reviewer will add that hers is an interdis-

ciplinary Doctorate of Philosophy degree with focus on science and technology (an historian of science and technology), and she taught at the University of New Mexico as well as with the University of Texas system, then was hired by Sandia National Laboratories as their Corporate Historian and Archivist to set up their archives and corporate history department. Later, she was moved into a management role in the Lab's Nuclear Safety Department dealing with classified projects. While there, she wrote their 858-page corporate history published in 1990, which earned the aforementioned Pulitzer nomination and selection as Alternate, in addition to other recognition. Last, but certainly not least, she is an SAH member, and an OAH member (Organization of American Historians)—both affiliations noted on the inside sleeve of this book's dustjacket.

The book tells its story in 14 chapters, all but the last three covering his life from the start and through the Classic era. All the big names and affiliations are covered: Brewster, Le Baron, Ford, Packard, Chrysler, Checker, Tucker, and more. The author does frame the work this way: "Ray and [wife] Marion agreed to grant their time, personal files and photographs, access to contacts, and the resource materials necessary to accomplish the task. We agreed that the book should not be a technical manual providing specs and line drawings of the many beautiful designs Ray produced (although some are included). Nor would it be a compilation solely of studio photographs of the timeless classics he designed; rather the book would incorporate a more eclectic and personalized approach featuring photographs of Dietrich Classics carefully restored as well as archival originals." Learning some of how this book got its start is about as fascinating as any such occurrence could be—the power of happenstance—how likely that it could have never happened. Furthermore, this book is more comprehensive than it would have been if it was published soon after Dietrich's passing. Beverly Rae Kimes alluded to its imminent publishing in her editor's introduction to the author's article in the December 1983 issue of *The Classic Car*. The author's efforts with publishers at the time suffered under the thought that Dietrich's celebrity didn't rise to invest in publishing a work like this on his life. In the intervening years the author worked on other projects while Dietrich's celebrity only grew. The author further refined



and augmented the work, and it all came together now with the current publisher for this first printing.

There are a number of added jeweled perspectives that come from the Preface written by past *SAH Journal* Editor *Walt Gosden*, Foreword by auctioneer David Gooding, and names Dietrich himself wanted “to introduce the story of his life to the public”: C.A. Leslie, Jr. (author and Packard expert), Robert A. Turnquist (author and Past President of the Classic Car Club of America), and Colonel Norman B. Hathaway (Past President, Norman B. Hathaway Associates, Toronto, Canada). The book is superbly crafted, coming as no surprise from this publisher who is well known for high quality. The hallmarks of premium content construction are evident too, with its listing of used acronyms and abbreviations and its use of chapter endnotes; and just to pick a random chapter as an example: chapter 11, “The Tucker Story: An Insider’s Perspective,” covers 36 pages and ends with 103 notes. The first appendix, “Cavalcade of Dietrich Design Work,” stretches over 70 pages of period photos and illustrations, and the second appendix features modern photos. There’s also an extensive bibliography and index.

Finally, the content does not disappoint. All of the above top-tier credentials and elements inform and feed the depth and scope of coverage that one would imagine and expect. With all the previous ink Dietrich commanded over the years, in addition to new (previously unknown) material, we now have further insights into various other matters. By way of just one example, there’s a very well-known Isotta Fraschini with a Fleetwood roadster body that was designed by Dietrich for Rudolph Valentino, featuring a bare metal jeweled (turned) hood, shown and written about on pages 91 to 93. (That design was executed on a Mercedes-Benz chassis by Fleetwood too, but that’s another story.) In the watershed 2001 book, *Fleetwood: The Company & The Coachcraft* by James J. Schild, the car is identified on pages 72 and 78 as chassis 1400, engine no. 1492, originally in medium light gray with dark red wheels and black tires. Only in passing was it mentioned that the car “... was to be fitted with a special roadster body designed for him by Ray Dietrich at LeBaron in 1923.” Much more is recorded in this new book, with Dietrich’s remembrances of his relationship with Fleetwood and working with Valentino.

Dietrich himself elaborated on this car and his relationship with Fleetwood in an article he wrote for the Spring 1959 issue of *The Classic Car*. Well, here is another example: a small excerpt of his interview with the Maharajah of Baroda for a design commission (covered over pages 96 through 99), “As it turned out, the Maharajah knew exactly what he wanted. ‘I want three automobiles,’ he said, ‘one for myself, which will be the lead car; the second for my guards and servants; and the third for the wives I choose to accompany me.’” All this—just a glimpse.

This reviewer may be accused of favorable bias, not only via an enthusiastic connection with the subject, but also via the endorsement given and appearing at the top of the back cover of the dustjacket. Your first reading may be like mine: pleasingly overwhelmed by all you take in. It is an incredible work and achievement. I’ve found myself already returning to the book several times, and taking-in more each time, particularly while perusing the photos, drawings, and illustrations. I am happy to recommend it highly.

—R. Verdés

#### **Tales of Studebaker: The Early Years**

by Jan B Young

Lulu Press (2010)

[updated, as it’s a POD publication, 2011]

Lulu.com or presys.biz

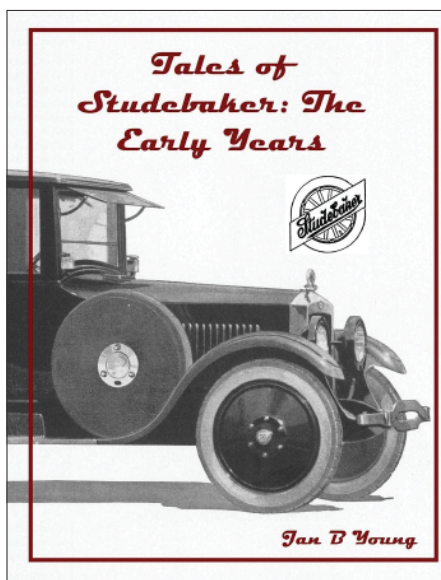
160 pages, 7½" x 9¾" softcover

90 b/w images, index, end notes of sources

Price: \$20.95 (Kindle \$9.95)

ISBN-10: 1105263711

ISBN-13: 978-1105263712



This is not a new book by any means although its author, Jan B Young who is also its publisher, is new to me. He obviously has a most inquiring mind for this *Tales of Studebaker* is but one of 59 books he’s written and published to date covering a variety of topics. Best yet, from an historian’s point of view, Young lists the various sources for each of the 38 historical vignettes he’s written so his book easily becomes a reference and research tool in addition to being a truly enjoyable read.

*Tales of Studebaker: The Early Years* is highly informative as well because as Young points out, “this is not a book about cars” but rather about “the people who founded and worked for Studebaker and the companies [1852-1930] that were connected to it and were influenced by it.” Further, “it consists of . . . short stories on subjects not extensively discussed in other histories.” Moreover, Young not only writes lucidly, but uses great care with his spelling and punctuation and has also created a thorough and complete index.

He uses POD publisher Lulu and that’s yet another plus. If you’re familiar with Lulu you know that company has presses in several locations around the globe. Thus, shipping costs remain reasonable and order fulfillment time is lessened.

The stories are interesting and varied. One left me wondering whether Studebaker might actually have planted the seed that became the Fisher Body Craftsman’s Guild because in 1927 Studebaker invited school age boys to enter its model-building contest. A scant three years later the Fisher Body Craftsman’s Guild held its first competition.

Another chapter contains extensive listings of companies; some operated directly by Studebaker or family members and others in which “the extended Studebaker family had interests other than the primary corporations and their subsidiaries.” This latter is especially interesting as those companies provided how “later generations [of the Studebaker family] earned their living.” Two-dozen of those companies have their own interesting stories and they are also told.

You can read descriptions of all of Young’s books on his website at **presys.biz** where you’ll also find a link to order any you wish from Lulu. Or you can visit Lulu’s own website to purchase too. Your reviewer is very much looking forward to exploring other Young titles.

—Helen V Hutchings

*Continued on p. 19 >*



## In Memoriam

### John A. Gunnell

(November 14, 1947 – August 24, 2023)



Who would have predicted that a guy born and raised in New York—on Staten Island no less and who majored in art at New York's Richmond College, meaning he rode public transportation for something like the first 20-plus years of his life—would become one of the most prolific chroniclers of old cars. And an unpretentious, informal, outgoing and friendly one at that as the invitation to his Celebration of Life clearly reflected with these words, "As one last memory for his family to cherish, please bring your classic car, as John never could pass up a car show, and please dress in casual attire as John would have preferred it that way."

John Gunnell (SAH #276) told the story of his beginnings as an auto writer in a July 1999 issue of *Old Cars*, writing that he and a buddy started going to New York- and New Jersey-area car shows while "dreaming and fanaticizing about becoming an auto writer." The buddy took pictures while John took notes that he later worked into show coverage stories and submitted to *Old Cars*. One day *OC*'s founder Chet Krause called saying, "I'll send you airline tickets to come here for an interview." Chet was a handshake guy and John flew home with a new job, his dream job. The year was 1978.

Once in Wisconsin, Gunner, as we all knew him then, embraced the life and lifestyle, though his speech never lost that distinctive New York twang. Eventually John joined the volunteer Iola Fire and Ambulance Squad and became a certified EMT. His first editor at *OCW* was another legend, LeRoi "Tex" Smith whose own speech patterns reflected his Oklahoma origins. Of Tex, John remembered for a 2012 article published in *OCW*, written by yours truly, that "Tex gave me a chance to run with my ideas . . . giving me the budget to do neat car things."

From there John's love of all things automotive and all the history that surrounds them, coupled with his easy way with people and his own energy and drive led to his becoming the embodiment of the word prolific. Amazon indicates he has 83—think about it—eighty-three book titles to his credit for publishers Krause Publications, Motorbooks, and the Tab imprint of McGraw-Hill. That doesn't take into account the thousands of magazine (print and online alike) articles he's written for an equally wide and numerous variety of publications. In its remembrance of John, one of those publications referred to him as "the Hemingway of Horsepower" noting "he even sported a Hemingway-esque white beard" adding that "a yellow legal pad and pen were part of his wardrobe."

Around 2016 John discovered an historic building in the Iola area that had once been known as the Yellowstone Garage. It had also once housed a dealership that sold Oldsmobiles and Oaklands. John was able to purchase it. After decorating and furnishing it with all manner of automobilia he'd collected over the years, he opened his Gunner's Great Garage. His staff worked on, restored, and maintained any number of vintage vehicles including some of those John had acquired over the years.

One of John's own collectibles is in our own Ken Nimocks' (SAH #1051) shop, as Ken was, and still is, working on restoring the interior of Gunner's 1952 MGTD. Ken is also the current head of, as well as longtime spark plug behind the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians (WSAH). His comment was, "I never thought of Gunner as a sort of celebrity, probably because to me he was simply a good friend." Can there be any higher or better tribute than that?

—Helen V Hutchings

### Patrick D. Bisson

1940 – 2023



Patrick "Pat" David Bisson, of Flushing, Michigan, and a past Officer of the SAH, passed away among family on December 15, 2023, at age 83. Pat was born in Muskegon, Michigan, on November 24, 1940. We extend condolences to his wife of sixty years, Sandra, sons Patrick Jr., Craig, Keith, and daughter Ann along with their families.

Pat readily admitted to being a poor farm boy from Aetna outside Fremont in Western Michigan. He remembers career day at Fremont High School because General Motors Institute, now Kettering University, had a table. From ninth grade onwards, he always frequented the GMI table. He gratefully remembered the registrar, Ray H. Bechtold, who advised him in his senior year to apply to the Oldsmobile Division for a sponsorship to GMI. At the time, only about 10% of sponsorship applicants were accepted and Pat always remembered the euphoria when an Oldsmobile letter arrived announcing his acceptance. He had always been a car nut, and this was a dream come true.

Starting at GMI in September 1959, Pat graduated in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering. From watching the TV series *Industry on Parade*, Pat's original interest was in plant layout and plant engineering. However, upon graduation an opening existed in Product Cost Estimating, a role in those days that required an engineering degree.

Planning vehicles far into the future, as well as current models, appealed to Pat and he had great respect for his boss, Gale Price, GMI '39. Price encouraged Pat to apply in June 1977 for the role of supervisor of Design Cost Analysis at Buick, a position that included a company car.

Two years later, Buick was looking for someone to track their tooling programs for the carryover carlines and Pat's background made him ideal for the role. This was part of Product Planning. Pat had input in changes to carryover carlines and participation in weekly and monthly Buick Product Planning meetings as well as in inter-divisional Design Staff meetings. The monthly meetings included Divisional General Managers such as David Collier, Don MacPherson (too tight fisted), Don Hackworth (with a manufacturing background), and Lloyd Reuss described as by far the best, a really inspirational product man.

Product Planning was by far Pat's favorite role because he was assigned several odd jobs or projects and he was always fascinated to be a fly on the wall of senior product meetings, observing how many important decisions were arrived at. He frequently evaluated competitive products that Buick

brought into their fleet, some of which he selected for purchase. He remembers the comfort of a Peugeot he often used for his commute. His son Craig vividly remembers a right-hand-drive Opel Manta of the mid-70s that was brought home. It puzzled Craig that the steering was on the wrong side and he, as a kid, was seated where the driver usually was. We finally concluded that this car was the Broadspeed turbocharged version, modified in the UK and advertised as being capable of 125 mph and 25 mpg at a speed of 100 mph.

A lifetime goal was achieved in September 1985 when Pat and his wife, Sandy, purchased the Chevrolet-Olds dealership in the small farming town of Eldora in Iowa. Sandy was already one of the few ladies successfully selling cars in Michigan. The first six years were great but a slump in the community prompted Pat to sell to another dealer in 1993 and return to Buick as a contract engineer. For the next dozen years, until retiring in 2005, Pat worked within a group called Cost, Quality, Productivity Improvement searching for cost efficiencies.

Despite Pat's affiliation with GM, as a boy he found the styling of postwar DeSotos particularly appealing. Pat managed to acquire two surprisingly well-preserved

unrestored 1949 and 1954 samples for his collection.

Leroy Cole, past SAH President and Friend of Automotive History, encountered Pat at the Mid-Michigan Chapter of SAE International, where Pat was secretary for over a quarter century. Leroy urged Pat to join SAH so that we could all learn from his inside knowledge of GM, as well as his experience as a dealer. Kit Foster, another past SAH President and Friend of Automotive History, often used to call Pat to get the "inside angle" for an article he was writing. Pat was Treasurer of SAH from 2009 to 2015 and was instrumental in bringing in Cornerstone Registration to SAH. He also was involved in the selection of future SAH leadership on the Nominations Committee. The SAH tent at Hershey was under Pat's name, where many SAH members enjoyed his hospitality, friendship and humor. Pat took this Canadian SAH member under his wing. I used to fly into Detroit, even from Germany and Australia, so that I could drive down to Hershey and back, cherishing the company of Pat. We never tired of topics to talk about. Like so many people who knew Pat, I will miss him dearly.

—Louis F. Fourie

> Continued from p. 17

## Volkswagen Type 4: 411 and 412: The Final Rear-Engined VW Cars

by Marc Cranswick

Veloce Publishing (2021)

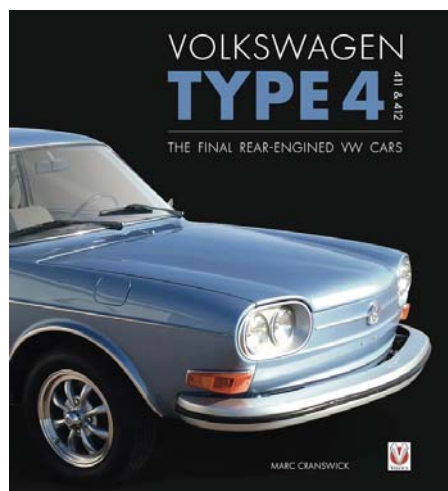
184 pages, 8.4" x 10.13" hardcover

223 illustrations

Price: \$160 / £35

ISBN-10: 1787115224

ISBN-13: 978-1787115224



This title is recommended by the editor. For the review, see: <https://speedreaders.info/24613-volkswagen-type-4-411-and-412/>

*This car was definitely an answer to a question people were asking, and it showed VW could punch way above the Beetle class—but it didn't set the world on fire, not even in its home market. It's a bigger story than this book can unravel, but it's the first and only one in English.*

*"The VW Type 4 turned out to be a transitional car, at a time when Volkswagen was itself in flux. A rear-engined air-cooled car, but with unitary construction, and strut type front and semi-trailing arm rear suspension. A company looking to the future..."*

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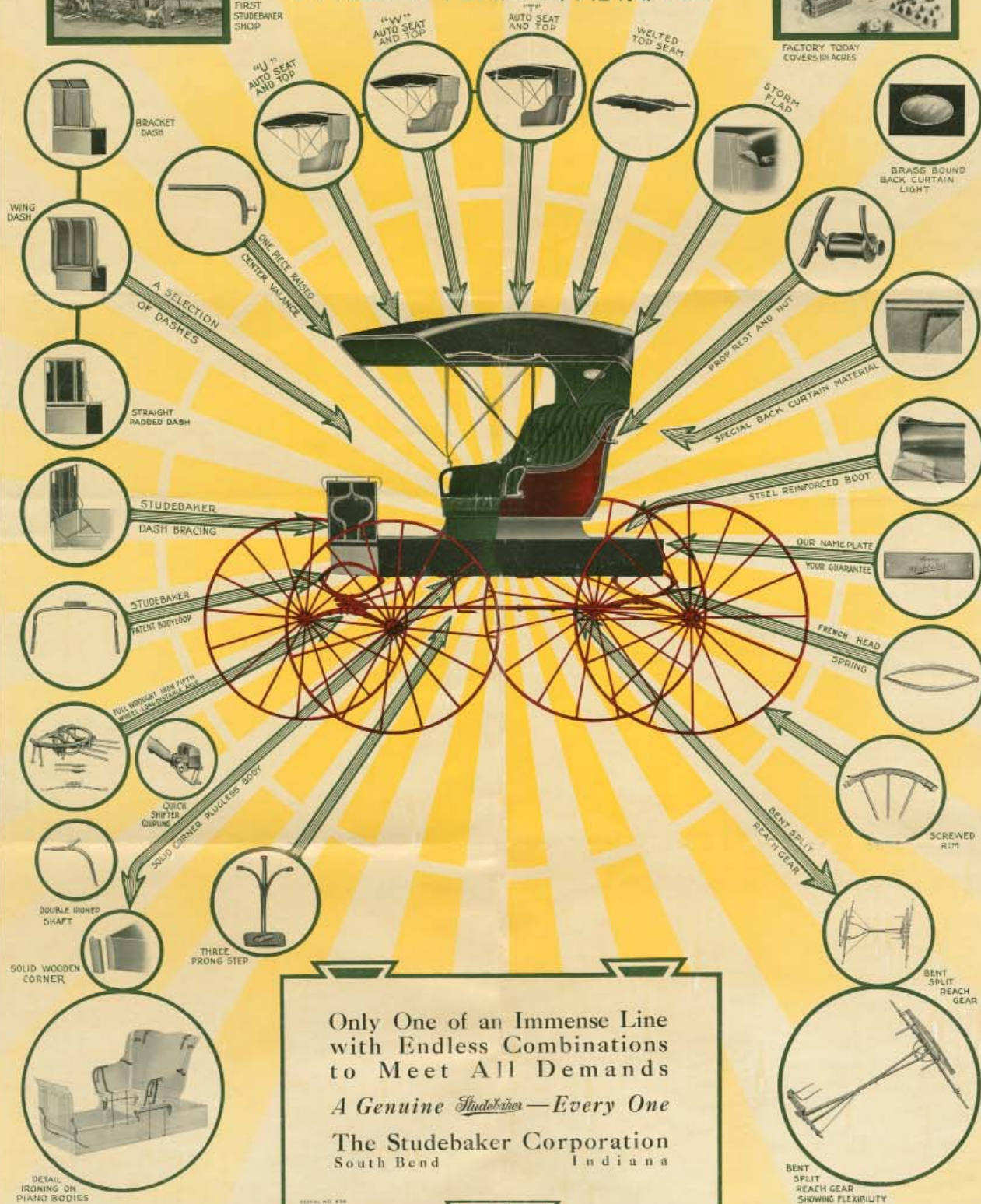
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