

SAH Journal



Contents

President's Perspective	3
LETTERS	4
The Pacesetter: Carl Graham Fisher and his Packard Dominant Six	6
Men of Means: VMCCA Founders George H. Waterman, Jr. and Kirkland H. Gibson	18
Book R&R	28

Billboard

Wanted: Seeking information on 1938 Berlin to Rome reliability and speed run. Contact David Schmidt: dtdimhcs@gmail.com

Call For Presentations: The International Motor Racing Research Center and the Society of Automotive Historians present the Eighth Annual Michael R. Argetsinger Symposium on International Motor Racing History on Friday and Saturday, November 1 & 2, 2024, in the Media Center of the world-famous Watkins Glen International racing circuit in Watkins Glen, New York. The Symposium is a unique gathering geared to independent scholars and historians, enthusiasts and the enthusiast media, motor sport participants and fans, and interested members of the general public. Independent motor sport scholars and historians, independent researchers, and undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit abstracts, not exceeding 200 words, to the Symposium Administrators by August 2, 2024. For more information, go to our website (autohistory.org), select "Society" from the menu, then under "News" select "Meetings & Events" then select "2024 Argetsinger Symposium – Call For Papers."

Wanted: Contributors! The *SAH Journal* invites contributors for articles and book reviews. With your help, we can continue to feature a steady and consistent stream of material. Please contact the editor directly. *Thank you!*

Front cover: This is a 1907 Renault 35/45hp Runabout, owned by Kirkland H. Gibson, and appearing on p. 18 with the Waterman & Gibson story. The chassis plate on the cover image reads: "RENAULT FRÈRES: Licensed For the United States and Cuba by RENAULT FRÈRES SELLING BRANCH of NEW YORK, sole representative for the United States and Cuba, under agreement with RENAULT FRÈRES of BILLANCOURT, FRANCE. Owners of Automobiles of this make without this license plate and without license certificate are liable to Prosecution according to law. LICENSE No 997 CHASSIS No 64895." It was exhibited at The Elegance at Hershey in 2014, and this was the event program description (written by SAH member *William Rothermel*): "At a time when most cars looked similar, the Renault was most noteworthy for its very sleek sloping nose. The radiator, so prominent on all other cars, was positioned behind the engine and immediately ahead of the driver giving the Renault a unique and instantly identifiable look. This car was inspired by William K. Vanderbilt, Jr. after he was so impressed with the larger 11-litre Renault he drove while in Europe. The New York Sales Agency kept one car; Vanderbilt purchased another, and convinced ten of his wealthy friends to purchase one, too. Powered by a 35/45hp 7.4-litre 4-cylinder engine, the runabout cost a whopping \$8,500.00 new! Of the 12 originally produced, 5 are known to exist today including this car which is alleged to be the New York Sales Agency car. When restored in the early 1950s, beneath its rough black paint job, was found the original French Racing Blue, much of which was preserved as it remains today."

Back cover: William K. Vanderbilt, Jr. and his wife Virginia driving to the 1908 Vanderbilt Cup Race in his Renault. Source: vanderbiltcupraces.com/blog/article/willie_ks_cars_6_the_1907_renault_vanderbilt_racer.

SAH Journal

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



Officers

Kevin Kirbitz	President
Chris Lezotte	Vice President
Robert Casey	Secretary
Rubén L. Verdés	Treasurer

Board of Directors

Robert G. Barr (ex-officio)
Matt Anderson †
Bob Elton †
Carla R. Lesh †
David McGee Δ
John Mohr #
Dean Nelson #
Steve Purdy Δ
David Schmidt Δ
Mary Seelhorst #

Terms through October (†) 2024, (Δ) 2025, and (#) 2026

Editor

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

Publications Committee

Thomas S. Jakups, Chair
Kit Foster
John Heitmann
Mark Howell
David McGee
Rubén L. Verdés
Steve Wilson

SAH Journal (ISSN 1057-1973)
is published six times a year by The
Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Subscription is by membership in the Society.

Membership dues are \$50 per year (\$60
per year outside North America & Mexico);
digital membership dues are \$20.
Dues and changes of address go to:
Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
c/o Cornerstone Registration Ltd.
P.O. Box 1715
Maple Grove, MN 55311-6715 U.S.A.

©2024
The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

www.autohistory.org

Join, renew and more right online!

President's Perspective



"Drivers . . . START . . . YOUR . . . ENGINES!!!!"

If you've ever heard those words in person, you understand the exhilaration that follows, especially when it's on Memorial Day weekend and you're in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Indy 500 is about to begin. Even when I'm watching from the comfort of my living room, I frequently turn on the surround-sound and crank up the volume, just for that moment.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) represents a treasure trove of automotive history. The first major race held at the track took place in August 1909, two years before the now famous bricks paved the 2½ mile oval. Contested on a surface of crushed stone and tar, the 250-mile Prest-O-Lite Trophy race was won by "Wild Bob" Burman in his factory sponsored Buick. Burman's Buick teammates, Louis Chevrolet and Lewis Strang, finished eighth and ninth, respectively. Since I'm an unabashed Buick enthusiast, I'll point out that, of all the marques entered in that race, only Buick survives to this day.

A friend and colleague, the late Terry Dunham, conducted extensive research into the exploits of the Buick racing team, published in *Antique Automobile* in 2002 with the title, "Something Wicked This Way Comes" (2002 Benz Award winner). Dunham wrote that, for the 1910 season at Indianapolis, "Buick dominated the competition." Buick is said to have broken nine speed records, most of them having been previously held by the Marmon team,

during the various IMS events. This set the stage for a showdown of different sorts for the running of the first Indy 500 in 1911. The Buick team wasn't officially entered due to the managerial shake-up at BM that occurred in late 1910. The new management at the company had disbanded the factory sponsored team, but Chevrolet took his Buick to Indy with the hopes of earning a "post entry." Chevrolet needed only to achieve a qualifying speed of 75 mph and be "approved" to race by all of the other drivers and manufacturers entered. True to form, Louis Chevrolet not only met the qualifying speed, but posted the fastest qualifying time in the process. While the drivers were enthusiastic to have Chevrolet compete and even started a petition, some of the manufacturers were not so keen on the idea. One of them, still stinging from the 1910 season, was the Marmon team. Louis Chevrolet's Marquette-Buick was withdrawn prior to the start of the first Indy 500. Ray Haroun driving the Marmon Wasp went on to take the checkered flag. Just think, if he had just held back a bit during qualification, we might be talking about Chevrolet, driving a Buick, as the winner of the first Indy 500.

To the collector, myriad artifacts from the 115-year history of the IMS can be found in private hands, museums, and on eBay. Ticket stubs, programs, postcards, posters, and pit passes adorn many displays. The Sloan Museum of Discovery in Flint, Michigan, not only houses Bob Burman's Buick Sixty-Special "Bug" race car, but also has the checkered flag presented to him after the race in 1909.

The first time I attended a running of the Indy 500 was in 1981 with my college fraternity brothers. One of our brothers lived close to Speedway, just west of town, which served as a convenient spot to . . . gather for the weekend. We made our way to the track well before dawn. When the cannons fired announcing the opening of the general admission gates, the fast guys were up front with the blankets to stake out territory in the famed Snake Pit right along the infield fence, and the big guys followed behind with the ice chests. It goes without saying that my first Indy 500 was a memorable experience. Then again, so was attending time trials the next year, when my real brother and I had pit passes to watch qualifications. That's where my "auto biography" photo comes in this month—not a car in sight, but there I am—a mere two-thirds of the man I am today, but always with camera in hand. There would be several other trips to the Brickyard for one reason or another, including the 100th running in 2016, and plenty of miscellaneous memorabilia added to my collection. Isn't automotive history great?

—Kevin Kirbitz

Editorial



Please let me present this special issue of the *SAH Journal*. It's "special" because it's two issues combined into one (32 pages vs. 16 pages). The two featured articles were of a length that would have usually caused them to be spread in parts over more than one issue. The

aim was to make this a more reader-friendly presentation for two deserving stories. This issue also includes many QR codes that will take the reader to related and supplementary information, please take advantage of examining that extra content.

—R. Verdes

LETTERS

Chain Reaction

Editor Rubén's essay on the 1960 Ford taxis (*Journal* #325) struck a chord (and not just because he quoted me therein). Rather, a 1960 Ford played a part in an important rite of passage for an adolescent boy, the acquisition of my first driver's license. In September 1960, I was very much looking forward to my 16th birthday, after which I would be eligible for a license. I was green with envy of my classmates with birthdays earlier than my September 9th date, many of whom were already licensed. Not long before my September day, though, the state came through with a new regulation, requiring 16-year-olds to complete a Driver Education program in order to take the driving test. Fortunately, my high school offered the course and the fall semester still had vacancies.

The instructor, Mr. Gregory, worked under contract to the school district and had, in the past, also supplied the cars. Typically, they were upmarket models; the 1957 car had been a Ford Fairlane 500 Victoria hardtop with V8 engine and three-speed manual transmission. In that time, everyone was expected to be able to "drive a stick." When I inquired why he did not use entry-level Custom or Custom 300 cars he told me that as a contract supplier the higher resale value of the upscale car outweighed the lower cost of a Custom.

By autumn of 1960, though, the local Ford dealer, Morgan Motors, supplied the Driver Ed car, whether leased or as a loaner I'm not sure. It was a white four-door 1960 Fairlane sedan (I remembered it as a Custom 300, but in checking production figures I think that's unlikely—just 572 Custom 300 four-doors were built for 1960). It had the 232 cid six-cylinder engine and three-speed manual transmission. Stick-shift Fords did not have a synchronized first gear in 1960. Earlier in the year one or more students had done some gear grinding, so on deceleration in first there was a "ding-ding-ding" noise.

From the first lesson, Mr. Gregory noticed that I had plenty of driving experience, legitimate or not, so usually I was the last of the four students to drive in our 40-minute lessons, to ensure that we



The Housatonic Valley Regional High School driving instructor Robert Gregory with the 1960 Ford Fairlane Driver Ed car.

returned to school on time. Driver Ed was my favorite class of the day, despite the fact that the actual driving was pretty mundane.

At the end of the semester, we all had sufficient credits to apply for a license. On the appointed day in February, the DMV sent two inspectors to administer the written test and take us out on the road, one at a time. Just as school began, it started to snow. There was a pause as the administration and the inspectors debated whether to go ahead with on-the-road testing. After about half an hour, we were told that a compromise had been agreed upon. If tire chains were put on the car, the testing could commence. After about an hour, the Fairlane sedan was ready and the first student left the school in the Ford, chains mounted and inspector aboard. I was one of the first five, as I recall, and I could tell that my inspector was nervous. He directed me to a very short course on adjacent roads, which included three right turns and one left, before returning to school and parallel parking in front. I exited the car with license in hand. Half an hour later testing was suspended for the day, as the snow continued to fall.

The following year, the local Chevrolet dealer provided the Driver Ed car, a Chevy Biscayne with Powerglide. Apparently, the

state had revised the regulations such that Driver Education programs used only automatic transmission cars. The rationale was greater efficiency in educating safe drivers, as stick shift cars were becoming obsolete.

Many times I have caused to wonder: How many aspiring drivers have taken a driving test in a snow storm with chains on the car? Of course, this may have been common in more northern climes like upper Michigan or Minnesota. Not too long ago, when I traveled to Flint in April for an SAH function my rental car came with a Hertz-logo snow brush. I appreciated the effort, as I had reason to use it. As for chains, I suspect the current crop of all-wheel-drive cars has made them obsolete.

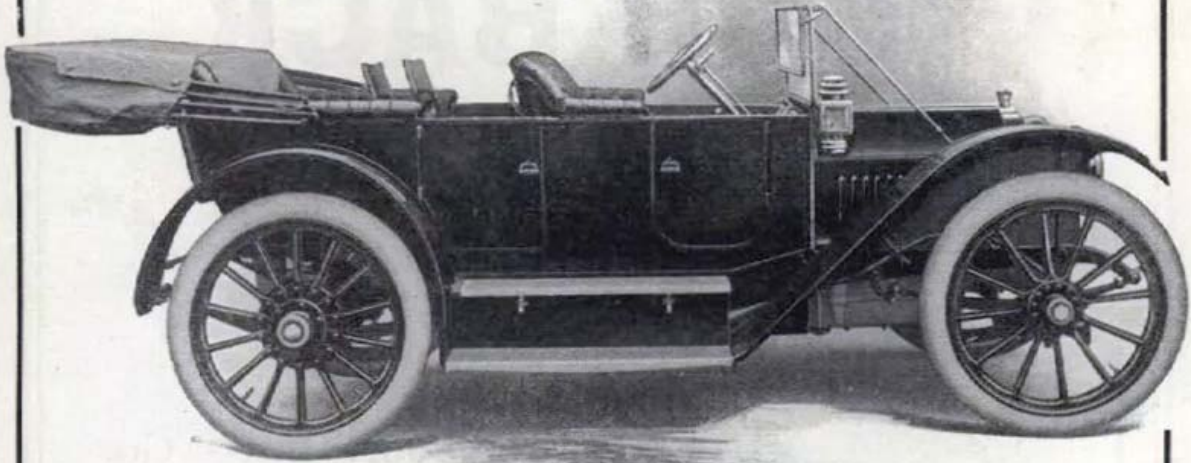
As for taxis, it's been a few years since I've visited New York City. When I was last there I noticed that most of the cabs were either Toyotas or Fords, the former being Camrys, while the latter were yellow Escape SUVs.

Ford's 1960 models don't seem to be popular as collector cars. To my eyes they have more aesthetic appeal than 1959s or '61s and I wouldn't mind owning one. Make it an Orchid Grey Galaxie Starliner hardtop, please, FE 352 powered, but I wouldn't mind a six if such a combination exists!

—Kit Foster



Reprise from #325 (p. 11), this is page 4 of the eleven-page 1960 Ford Fairlane Brochure for taxis.



THE OWEN *Designed for Touring Comfort*

A 1911 MODEL

Bristling with features that will be in vogue in 1911 and 1912. For example:

LEFT SIDE DRIVE

Some cars will have the steering gear on the left side in 1911, many more will have it in 1912, because it's the logical place for it. The operator can better gauge the road in passing other vehicles and in driving up to the curb on the right side, as usually required by law. The front seat passenger alights on the walk instead of in the mud, as is necessary with right-side-driven cars.

On the 1911 OWEN the gear shifting lever is in the center of the foot boards at the driver's right, giving left side drive with right hand control and allowing entrance from either side of the car. No levers on the outside of the body.

LARGE WHEELS—42 Inch

The history of the Automobile industry shows a constant increase in the size of wheels. And why not? They ride easier, increase tire mileage, reduce road shocks and prolong the life of the whole automobile.

HIGH FRONT DOOR BODY

Not a freakish torpedo, but a classy, roomy, luxurious, touring body.

LONG STROKE MOTOR—4 cyl., 43½" x 6"

This means quietness, long life, lack of vibration, great power at slow speed, hill climbing ability.

FULL TOURING EQUIPMENT

Why should the purchaser get only part of an automobile when he buys a car? That's what it amounts to when he buys a stripped car, as is now customary.

The 1911 OWEN is not only "designed for touring comfort," but is **equipped** for it in the most liberal way.

The purchaser has nothing extra to buy but the fuel.

Regular equipment includes—finest quality of mohair top with side curtains and top slip cover; folding wind shield; speedometer; clock; electric horn; combination electric and gas headlights; combination electric and oil side and tail lamps; Prest-O-Lite tank; muffler cut-out; foot accelerator; gasoline and oil gauge; robe rail; foot rest; trunk rack; tire carrier irons; tire chains; full set of tools and one extra inner tube.

PRICE, \$4000, F. O. B. DETROIT

High-grade dealers interested in the 1911 OWEN should write us at once.

Owen Motor Car Company, Detroit, Michigan

Of all the features of the 1911 Owen automobile, the company put "Left Side Drive" on the top of the list. Note: not "left hand drive."



The Pacesetter: Carl Graham Fisher and his Packard Dominant Six

By Allen & Nancy Strong

Editor's note: At the center of this article is the Packard Carl Fisher owned, modified, and ran as the pace car for the 1915 Indianapolis 500 (a 1914 model 2-38, chassis 53576, body 51990), and the research and stewardship its owners (our authors) have undertaken, which has grown to include Carl Fisher and his impact. It has been an evolving journey—our readers may recognize this car from the cover of our Nov/Dec 2017 issue (No. 289), similar to our image above taken seconds after that cover image at Pebble Beach when winning the “Tony Hulman Trophy.” In fact, this article is further evolved from a version that appeared in The Classic Car (publication of the Classic Car Club of America, Vol. 67, No. 3, Fall 2019). As this largely unrestored car continues its journey into the future, this (and perhaps subsequent) accounts from its owner's historical research journey become an integral part of its story, and its place and its time in automotive history. For additional reading, see: I Love to Make the Dirt Fly: A Biography of Carl G. Fisher, 1874-1939 by Carl Hungness (ISBN: 978-0915088867, see the review in SAH Journal No. 292, May/June 2018, p. 12).

Carl Graham Fisher is a forgotten American hero. He was a visionary entrepreneur and promotional genius who came of age during the dawn of the automobile revolution. His impact upon the development of America and the lifestyle of the average citizen has gone unheralded.

Born in 1874 in the poor, rural community of Greensburg, Indiana, Fisher overcame the strains of a broken family and poor eyesight. He quit school in sixth grade at the age of 12 to help support his mother and his two younger brothers when his father abandoned them. They moved to Indianapolis, where he worked

in a bookstore, in a grocery store, in a bank as a messenger and as a “news butcher” riding the rails to hawk newspapers, cigars, and candy. While in Indianapolis, he began racing bicycles and became a real enthusiast. Fisher and his brothers opened a modest bicycle shop where he learned how to run a business.

Early on, he realized that in order to achieve success, he needed to get his name known by the public and began a long series of highly publicized events that eventually earned him the nickname “Crazy Carl.” In one stunt, to demonstrate the durability of his bicycles, he threw a bicycle from the roof of the tallest building in Indianapolis, then picked it up and rode away on it. More outrageous promotions would follow. Fisher was a gifted mechanic, had a head for business, and soon became very successful.

Fisher developed an interest in automobiles and in 1898 he bought a three-wheel De Dion Bouton and became one of the first to drive an automobile on the streets of Indianapolis. He recognized that the future was with the automobile and along with his bicycle racing friends—Barney Oldfield and Arthur Newby—he developed a passion for auto racing and this new technology.

By 1900, Fisher had converted his bicycle shop into an automobile dealership, the first in Indianapolis, selling Packard, REO, Stutz, Stoddard-Dayton and Oldsmobile.

By 1901, he was barnstorming the Midwest at many of the county fair oval horse tracks in a one-cylinder Winton with his buddies, together: “The Big Four” (Barney Oldfield, Webb Jay, Al Webb, and Carl Fisher). Racing led to the rapid innovation of the automobile and encouraged sales. Racing popularized cars and racers and led to the adage: “Win on Sunday, sell on Monday,” where they were able to monetize a winning performance.

SECTION TWO,
SPORTING NEWS,
MARKETS, WANT ADS.

The Chicago Daily Tribune

TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 1915.

CIRCULATION
OVER 500,000 SUNDAY
OVER 300,000 DAILY

* 17

DE PALMA WINS 500 MILE AUTO RACE IN RECORD TIME

TIGERS WIN, 4-3,
BUT SOX L.A. AND
P.M. CLASH, 3-1

Russell Comes Back After
Losing in Morning;
32,000 at Games.

Cars Lined Up for the Start of Indianapolis 500 Mile Race.



RESTAURANT WITH ANDERSON THIRD

Average Speed of Victor
Is 89.84 Miles Despite
Mishap at Finish.

DERBY DRAWS \$5,000.

BY JAMES CRUSHER.

It was a big day for the Sox yesterday, but the best of the day was the 500-mile race at Indianapolis. The Sox won, 4-3, but the Tigers won, 4-3, and the Sox lost, 3-1.

With the weather and the two best teams of the American League as the contestants, the match was a masterpiece of the game. The Sox won, 4-3, but the Tigers won, 4-3, and the Sox lost, 3-1.

Baseball Standings.

NATIONAL LEAGUE.

CHICAGO 18 1/2, PITTSBURGH 18 1/2, ST. LOUIS 18 1/2, CINCINNATI 18 1/2, BOSTON 18 1/2, PHILADELPHIA 18 1/2, CLEVELAND 18 1/2, DETROIT 18 1/2, NEW YORK 18 1/2, WASHINGTON 18 1/2.

YANKEES UPSET
SENATORS TWICE

Donovans Break Losing Streak,
Winning by 11 to 4 and
4 to 1 Scores.

Washington, D. C., May 31.—New York Yankees broke their losing streak by winning both games of the National League program with the Senators, 11 to 4 and 4 to 1.

Baseball Standings.

NATIONAL LEAGUE.

CHICAGO 18 1/2, PITTSBURGH 18 1/2, ST. LOUIS 18 1/2, CINCINNATI 18 1/2, BOSTON 18 1/2, PHILADELPHIA 18 1/2, CLEVELAND 18 1/2, DETROIT 18 1/2, NEW YORK 18 1/2, WASHINGTON 18 1/2.

BY J. J. ALCOCK.

Whites and Keweenaw sailed through the twenty-one straight at Washington, D. C., yesterday, and won the first game of the day, 11 to 4.

ONE TO KAWFEDS,
OTHER TO LOCALS

Visitors Win Opener in Tenth,
3-2, and Whales Second
in Eleventh, 2-1.

BY J. J. ALCOCK.

Whites and Keweenaw sailed through the twenty-one straight at Washington, D. C., yesterday, and won the first game of the day, 11 to 4.

IN THE WAKE OF THE NEWS

By RING W. LARDNER

LOVE LETTERS.

IF you know how to write a love letter or if you have one in your pocket, please send it to me at once. The whole lot will be published.

DE MEETS A RIVAL.

IN FOLK TALK.

SECOND MAN HURLED DUEL.

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

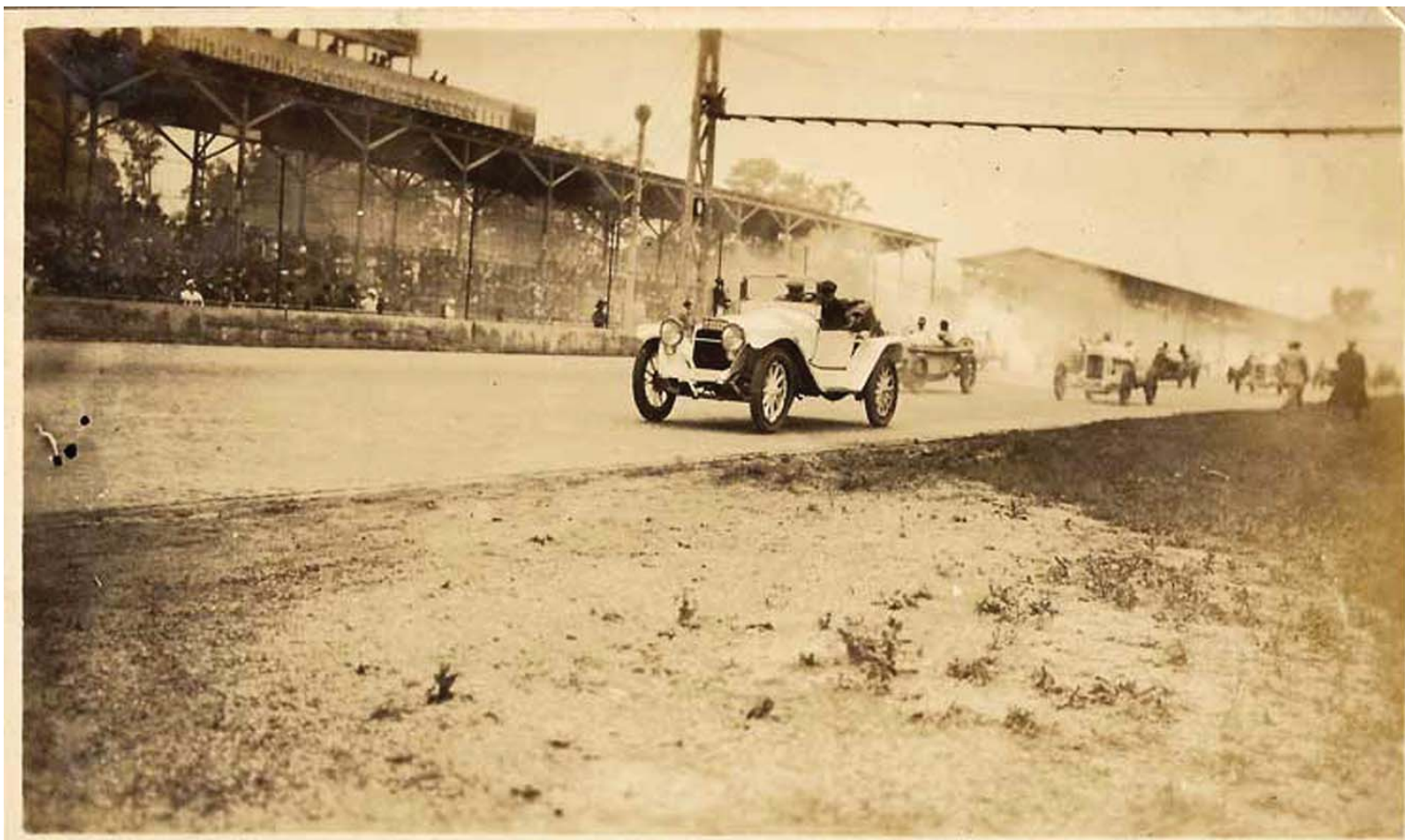
WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL

WAGNER DEFEATS KETCHEL



Perhaps the clearest picture of Carl Fisher pacing the 1915 Indy 500 in his Packard 2-38.

Brilliant Success

Fisher set what was considered a world record in 1904 with a speed of about 60 miles per hour (two miles in 2:02 minutes) at Chicago's Harlem track in an eight-cylinder Premier Comet racer.

Luck was smiling on him later that same year. One day while leaving his auto dealership late for a lunch appointment, he encountered Fred Avery, who had developed a portable lighting system that involved compressed acetylene gas that was piped to a burner element in a light fixture with a reflector, providing a bright white light, greatly improving night driving. A collaboration formed that included Avery and his best friend, James Allison (his closest old bicycle racing buddy), forming the Prest-O-Lite Company. Avery was later bought out. After a few years of promoting the product and developing an efficient daily delivery system, it became exceedingly popular and made Fisher a wealthy man. Packard was an early adopter of this technology.

After being fitted with glasses at age 31, Fisher could finally see and really compete with others. In 1905, he got the opportunity to go to France as a reserve driver for the Gordon Bennett races. The European autos dominated the industry in speed and endurance and Fisher was stunned by their superiority. He said, "their cars go uphill faster than American cars go downhill." He attributed this to Europe's better road system and racetracks, where cars could be tested and improved. When he returned to the USA, he was determined to create a proving ground, where car manufacturers could test and improve their equipment.

In the meantime, he continued with his ingenious promotional ideas. One of his best-known publicity stunts involved a hot air balloon in October 1908. He was an avid balloonist and held the #17 balloon pilot's license in America. He replaced the basket of a 110-foot hot air balloon with a brand-new Stoddard-Dayton Model H and flew it over the heart of the city at the peak of the business day. Thousands of people, along with local and national news, witnessed the spectacle of Fisher sitting in a car suspended from the balloon as it slowly passed over. Once the balloon set down, he drove the car back into the city with triumphant flair. The public did not realize that the only way this stunt could have "gotten off the ground" was to remove the car's drivetrain to reduce weight. He had hidden an identical fully functional car in a barn near the landing site to make his trip back to the city.

The Birth of the Brickyard

In 1909, Fisher and Allison sold the Prest-O-Lite Company to Union Carbide for \$9 million (\$285 million in today's dollars). Then, along with two other friends, they invested \$250,000 each and bought the 240-acre Pressley Farm located five miles northwest of downtown Indianapolis, where they built a 2½-mile oval track, which was finished in August 1909. It was to become the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, a name synonymous with racing. The track was initially paved with a mixture of crushed stone and asphalt on top of a clay base. However, this surface proved to be disastrous for tires of that era and did not hold up to the pounding of the heavy race cars.

The Speedway opened with a motorcycle race, then a 300-mile auto race one week later. Fisher stopped the race after 235 miles, because of several deaths (racers and spectators) due to the poor track conditions.

He called in a team of engineers to resolve the problem. They determined that an overlay of ten-pound bricks would be the best solution, but it would be expensive. Contracts were drawn up for several Indiana brick manufacturers to provide 3.5 million bricks. After 63 days of 24-hour work, the new track, "the Brickyard," was done at the cost of \$700,000.

On Memorial Day 1911, the track hosted its inaugural 500-mile race, which was won by Ray Harroun driving the Marmon Wasp, at the average speed of 74.59 mph. Concerned with safety, Fisher developed the concept of using a "rolling start," guided by a "pace car." He personally drove the pace car for the first several years of the race, beginning in 1911 with a Stoddard-Dayton. The recreated car is in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) Museum.

By 1913, American autos were competing well against their European counterparts, helped along by improvements arising from lessons learned on the test tracks and the proving grounds.

Fisher then turned his focus to a bigger problem. Though vehicles overall were becoming reliable, the country's roads were poor or nonexistent. Trips between towns as close as 100 miles could take days to traverse. In 1912, Fisher proposed building the first coast-to-coast rock highway across America. He said, "Let's build it before we are too old to enjoy it."

His ideas were well-received by a group of prominent automotive and political figures at a dinner at the German House (still extant and now named "The Athenaeum") in downtown Indy. The Lincoln Highway Association was soon founded and Fisher's good friend, Henry Joy, president of Packard Motor Car Company, was appointed President.

In July 1913, the "Hoosier Tour"—a caravan of autos—left Indy for San Francisco, California, to rally support and enthusiasm for the first coast-to-coast transcontinental road.

With progress on the Lincoln Highway well in hand, Fisher proposed a North-South "Dixie Highway" to connect the "gasoline aristocracy" to Florida and facilitate tourism.

In 1912, Fisher started developing a seven-mile strip of snake-infested mangrove swamp into a city, now known as Miami Beach, affectionately known as the billion-dollar sandbar. He followed this success by creating a 9,600-acre summer resort on the eastern end of Long Island in Montauk, New York.

Despite his tireless efforts and numerous achievements, he could not insulate himself from the ravages of the 1926 hurricane that devastated Miami Beach. He used his personal fortune to rebuild Miami Beach, but when the Wall Street Crash of 1929 hit, he nearly went bankrupt.

In his wake, Fisher's fingerprints were all over the place, but since he never wanted his name on his buildings, roads, or developments, his role has been largely forgotten in history.

The Packard Dominant Six Special Roadster

Packard Motor Car Company routinely sent their new models to the track at Indy for American Automobile Association sanctioned speed time trials and testing. Packard was revered for its precision engineering and the Model 30 was considered one of the



Above: Here is the Stoddard Dayton Model H that Fisher flew attached to a hot air balloon as a publicity stunt. Below: Inside Fisher's dealership premises.



finest cars built in America. Its four-cylinder, 50 horsepower engines had an established reputation for rugged reliability and became known and successful worldwide. Packard's President, Henry Joy, used a Model 30 in multiple cross-country trips.

When Packard introduced the Dominant Six in 1912, it was because the company knew it had to build an even better car to maintain its reputation.

Two six-cylinder models were brought to market that year: the 525-cubic-inch 74 horsepower model 48, and the 415-cubic-inch

60 horsepower model 38. Both featured extensive use of aluminum for crank and gear cases. They were among the first cars to use spiral bevel worm-drive gears and featured an electric starter and force-fed oiling systems.

It is well known that Carl Fisher was a good friend of Henry Joy, the President of Packard Motor Company, and that Packard was routinely sending cars to the Indy track for performance runs. Carl owned the local Packard dealership in Indianapolis, so it would be fun to imagine that Henry Joy had some input on how to build Carl's hot rod, though we will never know. What we know is this: the car was assembled from different cars. The car was inspected by the now deceased Packard and Indy 500 historian, Bradley Skinner, and he had information that Carl took a 1912 or 1913 2-48 139" chassis and shortened it to 125". This allowed the motor to be moved back in the chassis 21" for better weight distribution. Into this shortened chassis, he installed a 415 cubic inch 6-cylinder 2-38 engine that was rated at 65 hp giving the car a top speed of 78 mph. More than enough to set the pace for the race to start. The 2-38 engine had two blocks of three cylinders each. The earlier engine had three sets of two cylinders. Moving the engine and radiator back in the chassis created the 21" space from the radiator to the frame horns and made the front splash pan equally long. This feature along with the shape of its rear fenders are unique to the car, and make the car easy to identify in the few early photographs that exist.

Always concerned about safety and planning for this car to be used at high speeds as a pace car, he engineered horn and brake light buttons within the steering wheel, both of which could be operated with his thumbs, reducing the need to release control of the steering wheel. This is one of the earliest applications of controls integrated into the steering wheel. He also reduced the road wheel diameter by two inches for better cornering and handling. He mounted a special aluminum roadster body with a lowered windshield, custom fenders and racing-style staggered seats to prevent heads & elbows from bumping.

Fisher drove this car as the pace car in the 1915 Indianapolis Motor Speedway's 500-mile race. A photograph of the start of the race appeared on the front page of the *Chicago Tribune*, clearly depicting the Packard special roadster. The moment is also captured from a different angle in the May 1915 issue of *Automobile* magazine. In our research, we discovered the best photograph of Fisher at the start of the race in Ivan Wheaton's personal photo album. Wheaton was a fellow car racer, amateur photographer and later became one of Glenn Curtiss's first aviation test pilots. Other photographs show this car as the pace car driven by Fisher during the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Fall Classic Race in September of 1916 (see p. 15).

In the past, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway identified the 1915 pace car as being a Packard 5-48 black four-door touring car. Their confusion can be attributed to the well-known fact that Packard sent a 5-48 touring to the track for endurance and speed tests on June 14, 1914, a year earlier than the 1915 Memorial Day 500-mile race. Robert J. Neal, in his wonderful book—*Packards at Speed* (1995, ISBN: 978-0964748309)—tells the story of those tests, illustrated with photographs and includes a letter from Carl Fisher congratulating Packard Motor Car Company on their accomplishments. A fully-equipped four-door touring car on the heaviest Packard chassis would have been a poor choice for a pace

Leader in Local Auto Race Circle



CARL G. FISHER.

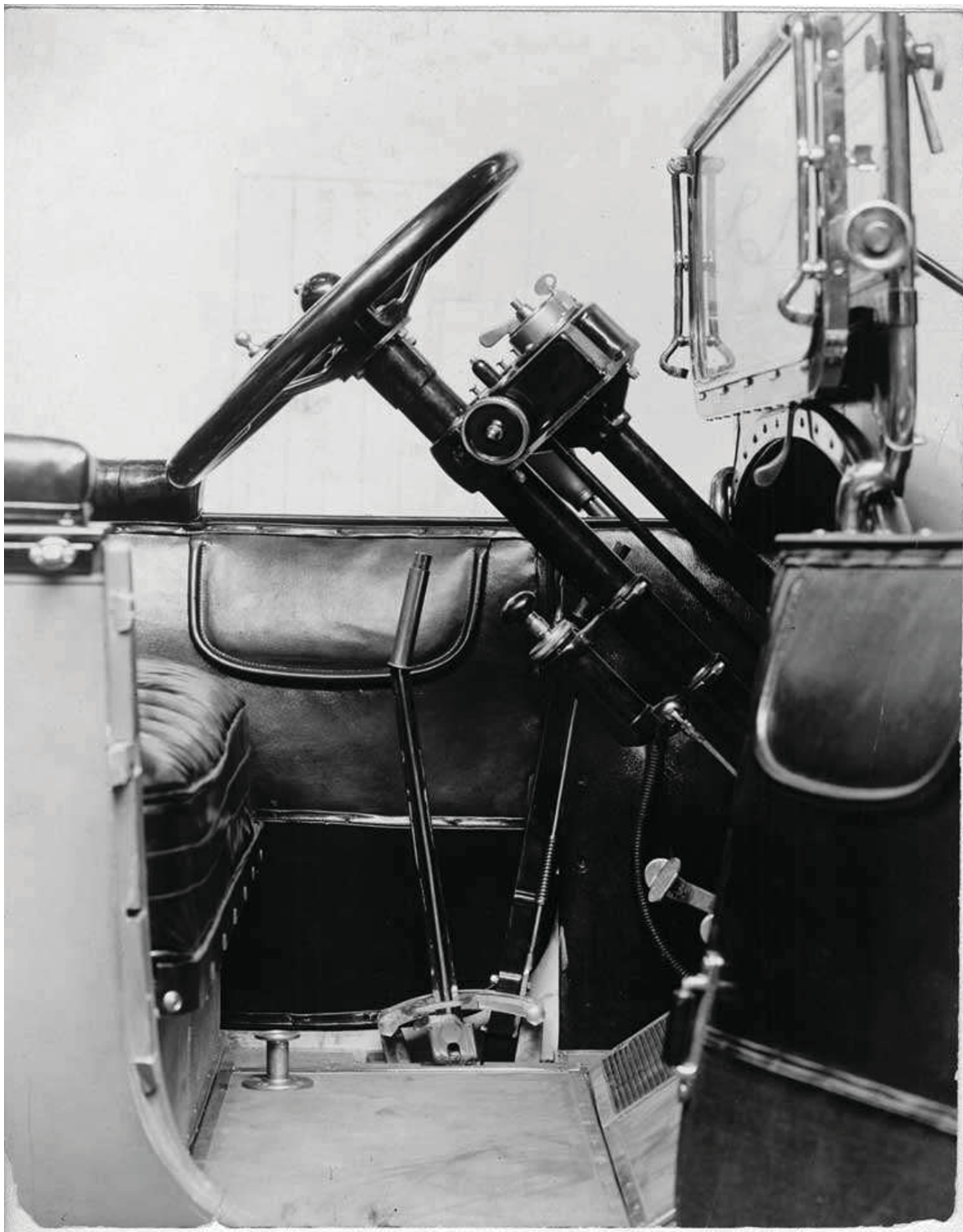
Carl G. Fisher is president of the Motor Speedway organization and a recognized leader in all kinds of motor activities. He is also a qualified balloon pilot.

This image appeared in the August 15, 1909 *Indianapolis Star* as the Indianapolis Motor Speedway prepared for its first automobile races.

Source for the image and caption: firstsuperspeedway.com/photo-gallery/carl-fisher

car. It was known that the 1915 Indy pace car was indeed a Packard but a paucity of photographs available to the author of an early "pace" car book would explain the error. It was the photograph of that 5-48 that, unfortunately, was passed off as being the 1915 Indy pace car, even though the grandstands are empty and there is nary a race car in sight.

It is known that the pace car was also Fisher's personal car. The History Miami Museum in Miami, Florida, has all of Carl Fisher's personal photo albums in its archives. There is one photograph of Fisher sitting on the running board of the car, while surveying the



This period image of a Packard 2-38 interior shows the position of the controls near the steering wheel.

Lincoln Highway in August 1915 at Elkhart, Indiana. The initials “CGF” (Carl Graham Fisher) appear on the driver’s door. This car, like all Fisher’s pace cars, was painted white. The original white paint is still evident in many areas on the car now, but it was painted over with green after Fisher sold the Speedway to Eddie Rickenbacker in 1927. Due to the 1926 hurricane, Fisher quickly liquidated his assets to rebuild Miami Beach.

The car was probably still parked in one of the buildings in Gasoline Alley when Eddie Rickenbacker sold the track to Tony Hulman in 1945. The car was later sold to the CEO of the Bendix Corporation of South Bend, Indiana, as part of a collection of significant cars. When Studebaker’s fortunes collapsed, the closely affiliated Bendix Corporation sold off its collection. At that time, the Fisher special roadster was sold to Homer Fitterling, who had one of the country’s largest Duesenberg collections.

In 1989, I visited a private collection in Cincinnati and was smitten with this car without knowing any of its history. The owner told how he had acquired the car from Mr. Fitterling. I was already fully enthralled with Packard’s legacy and owned several. Its style, original condition and magnificent presence bowled me over. I expressed my appreciation for the car and asked to be placed on (what I imagined) was a long list of names of others interested in the car. I took a photograph of it that day and it remained on my desk for more than 20 years. Every year at Hershey, when I ran into the owner, I reminded him of my interest in that car.

At Hershey in 2012, I bumped into the owner and was shocked to hear him say he was going to sell the car. The only catch was that there was one guy on this list ahead of me. He then handed me a manila folder and allowed me to review the known history of the car, which merely alluded to the possibility that it might have been the Indy 500 pace car. After learning of the car’s history for the first time, I was more anxious than ever to hear the outcome of the other party’s decision about purchasing the car. Fate stepped in when the first-offered gentleman had a medical emergency and declined the car. I became the next owner of the Fisher special roadster and set upon a research journey. Fortunately, the other gentleman recovered—but as for me, I never have.

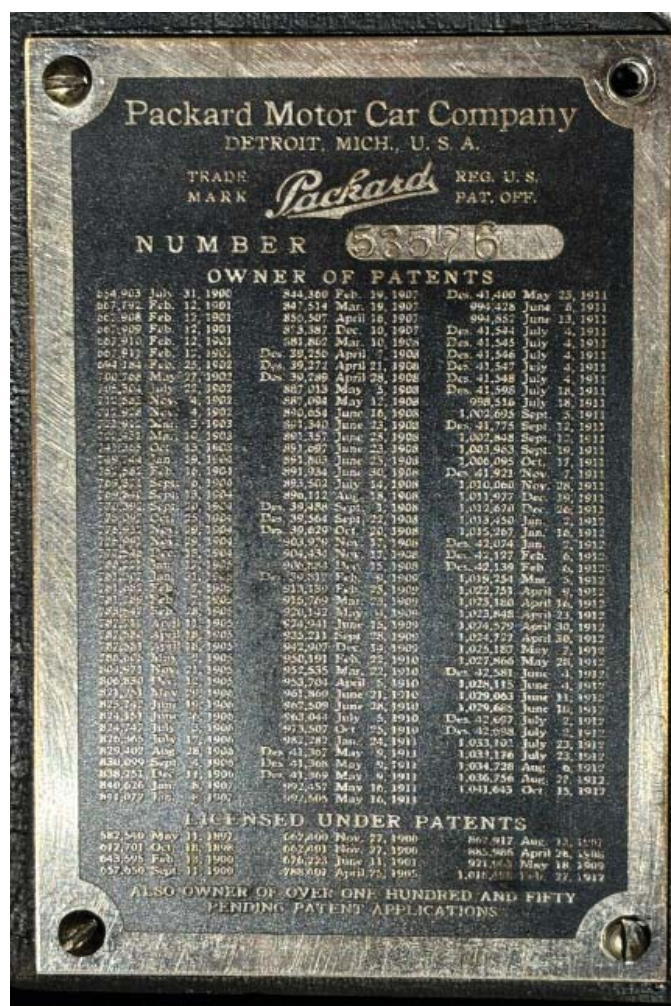
The car’s true history was confirmed by the discovery of the front-page *Chicago Tribune* photograph, the Ivan Wheaton Photographs, and the photo archive of the History Miami Museum.

The Awakening

We spent the first few years researching the fascinating history of Carl Graham Fisher. This included his birthplace in Greensburg, Indiana, and the Greensburg History Museum, IMS Museum, HistoryMiami Museum and sites of his Florida developments, homes and offices, and Long Island, New York, land development, Montauk History Museum, his Montauk home and office.

We loaned the pace car to the Speedway Museum for the Summer of 2015 for the Celebration of Automobiles.

There seemed to be something missing with the car—it had to be pushed on and off the trailer and into locations. As best as I could figure, the car had not been running in at least 80 years. Then, in February of 2016, we received an invitation from the IMS to bring the car to a “pace car Reunion” to celebrate the 100th running of the race. Races were canceled during the war years of 1917 and 1918.



These two plates on the car identify its chassis number (53576), and its body number (51990).



This would mean that this special Packard would be returning to the Indy track 101 years since it was last there! So, this was February, and the reunion was in May. It became apparent that if there ever was a time to get the car in running condition, the moment was here! I cleared my shop, erected shelves, and dedicated the space to get this car running. The first order of business was to begin carefully removing 100 years of grunge-buildup from the engine and chassis.

My mantra during this process was “Do No Harm.” My friend, Mark Plottner, of Decatur, Illinois, had some experience working



The BEST PLACE to STOP
WHEN IN
INDIANAPOLIS

Never Closed

Fisher's Garage

330 NORTH ILLINOIS STREET

Three Squares North of Claypool Hotel

Carl not only put together a proper automobile dealership but had to be one of the first to offer 24 hour service. ⁽²⁾

These two ads of Carl Fisher's dealership business, and the caption, are sourced from p. 27 of the book: *I Love to Make the Dirt Fly: A Biography of Carl G. Fisher, 1874-1939* by Carl Hungness (ISBN: 978-0915088867, see the review in *SAH Journal* No. 292, May/Jun 2018, p. 12).

on early Packards with Jack Tallman and was integral in assisting me in meticulously disassembling every moving part on the car for inspection, cleaning, and maintenance as needed. It was very fortunate that the car had remained so unmolested and was incredibly complete, with original parts and hardware. It even retained the original segmented leather fan belt. Whatever parts were broken or missing, we fabricated exactly as the original. I dropped the oil pan and inspected the rod bearings and main bearings, which looked to be within their service specs. The oil pan and inside of the crankcase were carefully cleaned. The oil pump was removed and inspected, and new gaskets were handmade for all the mating surfaces.

The Packard 2-38 utilized an interesting feature: a hydraulically-operated throttle governor, which was one of the bigger challenges to overcome. A large brass enclosure contains a leather-rubber diaphragm. This operates on water pressure, circulating through the coolant system to actuate the throttle on the big Packard-made brass carburetor. After discovering how this system worked, and a thorough rebuilding of the gas tank, the fuel delivery system was ready. The next challenge was the electrical system. Every wire was fully traced and checked for frayed or shorted conditions, then repaired or replaced accordingly. The spark plugs are connected to the ignition circuit through a knife switch at each plug, which is operated by a Bakelite handle. Several of the switch components, made of an early die-cast material, were broken, so those had to be

The Fisher Automobile Co.

400 North Capitol Boulevard



Packard

Present for your consideration this unequalled line of Automobiles and Motor Trucks.

Motor Trucks

PACKARD
5 ton, \$4500

PACKARD
3 ton, \$3400

PACKARD
2 ton, \$2800

REO 1½ ton, \$1800

REO ¾-1 ton, \$750



Stutz



Reo

Passenger Cars

PACKARD 48
\$4850

PACKARD 38
\$4150

STUTZ Six
\$2300

STUTZ Four
\$2000

REO the Fifth
\$1195



Packard



Reo

The success of this company has been due to:

A line of cars unsurpassed.

Unequalled organization and equipment.

A business policy that makes and keeps customers.

reproduced as well as three of the Bakelite handles.

The next challenge was to figure out how the Bosch Duplex ignition system worked. It combines a magneto/battery system assisted by a coil enclosed in the steering column control box. After going through the magneto and timing the engine, we were ready to give it a start.

The starting procedure for the Packard is as follows:

1. Turn the petcock on the tank to the "FUEL" position;
2. Place the gear shift in "NEUTRAL";
3. Apply the hand brake;
4. Retard the ignition;
5. Advance the throttle;
6. Adjust the fuel/air mixture to "RICH";
7. Pump the hand fuel pump to pressurize the tank to 2½ pounds;
8. Move the ignition switch to the "BATTERY" position;
9. Place your heel of your left foot on the "START" plunger, then depress it;
10. The engine should start in two turns of the crank.

You can imagine our excitement when the engine roared to life and belched smoke from the exhaust for the first couple of minutes; it then settled into a smokeless growl with the factory "cut-out"

open. Even more rewarding was when I coaxed the progressive transmission into first gear and gently let the clutch catch hold. This amazing machine then moved under its own power for the first time since the early days of Eddie Rickenbacker! The more we drove it, the better it ran. We were now ready to return it to the Indianapolis 500 track, where it had paced the race 101 years earlier.

The day finally arrived, and we returned Fisher's "hot rod" to the IMS. We were placed on display in the #1 position along with 350 other pace cars. Most of these cars were tribute cars; only four had been actual pace cars in the 500-mile races. We proudly displayed the car, repeatedly starting it up for the crowds and telling of the car's history during the day, waiting for our chance to lead the pace car procession around the track. When the racing qualifications were completed at sunset, the track was cleared, we led the parade of pace cars around the track. The car performed flawlessly. See the **YouTube video:** <[tinyurl.com/1915-packard-pace-car](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2a7XltP8KFM)>

Our next trip with this Packard was to the 2016 PAC National Meet in Traverse City, Michigan, where we were pleased to take many people for rides around the show field—for Packard lovers, it was much better than pony rides at a county fair.

Pebble Beach Concours

In 2017, the car was invited to Pebble Beach. I had never dreamed of this incredible honor. When we arrived, the car received multiple requests for videos and interviews.

We drove the car on the Thursday Tour, then displayed it along Ocean Avenue in Carmel, returned the car to the Equestrian Center, then early Sunday morning we drove it onto the show field.

Imagine my humiliation when I ran out of gas as I backed it into my designated space on the Fairway. We had to rely on the kindness of strangers to push us into place. I could not fathom that I had used up a full tank of gas on Thursday's outings. Fuel was quickly sourced, and the tank refilled.

I had previously decided not to have the car judged, but be "Display Only," so I was overwhelmed with surprise when we were asked to proceed to the staging area to accept an award. The car received the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's "Tony Hulman Memorial Award" for the most significant race car. We proudly opened the "cut-out" and drove Fisher's "hot rod" over the ramp.

Afterthoughts

This car is the only tangible connection to Carl Fisher and the great era of early racing. With that in mind, I always encourage people to grasp the same unrestored steering wheel that Carl did as he led the racers around the track in 1915.



Above: This is the cover of a 1914 Packard Model 2-38 brochure featuring the body style on Fisher's car, except for the shape of the rear fenders, pointing to Fisher's customization. Below: Pebble Beach video from 2017 (featuring Alain de Cadenet) where original white paint can still be seen. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2a7XltP8KFM> (with QR code).



Equipment Used in Indianapolis Harvest Racing Classic

Car	Driver	No. Cyl.	Tires										Pistons	Oil	
			Bore	Stroke	Distance	Carb.	Plugs	No. Plugs	No. Valves	Valve Open	Make	Size			WB.
Peugeot.....	de Palma.....	4	3.70	6.65	274.0	Zenith	K L G	4	16	Over	Silvertown	35x5	106	Aluminum	Oilzum
Premier.....	Wilcox.....	4	3.65	6.63	274.5	Miller	K L G	4	16	Over	Goodyear	35x5	105	Magnallum	Oilzum
Omar.....	Toft.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	Rajah	8	16	Side	Silvertown	35x5	106	Magnallum	Oilzum
Peugeot.....	Aitken.....	4	3.65	6.65	274.0	Zenith	K L G	4	16	Over	Silvertown	35x5	106	Aluminum	Oilzum
Maxwell.....	Rickenbacher.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	K L G	4	16	Over	Silvertown	35x5	106	Aluminum	Castor
Duesenberg.....	D'Alene.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	Rajah	8	16	Side	Silvertown	35x5	106	Magnallum	Oilzum
Maxwell.....	Henderson.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	K L G	4	16	Over	Goodyear	35x5	106	Aluminum	Castor
Sunbeam.....	Chevrolet.....	6	3.28	6.14	294.2	Miller	K L G	6	24	Over	Silvertown	35x5	113	Alum. Al.	Castor
Duesenberg.....	Milton.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	Rajah	8	16	Side	Silvertown	33x5	106	Magnallum	Oilzum
Duesenberg.....	Buzane.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	Rajah	8	8	Side	Silvertown	33x5	106	Aluminum	Oilzum
Duesenberg.....	Klein.....	4	3.75	6.75	298.2	Miller	Answer	8	16	Side	Silvertown	33x5	106	Magnallum	Mobilol
Hoskins.....	Hughes.....	4	3.65	6.75	298.2	Miller	Rajah	8	16	Side	Silvertown	35x5	106	Aluminum	Monog'm
Premier.....	Lewis.....	4	3.65	6.63	274.5	Miller	K L G	4	16	Over	Silvertown	35x5	105	Magnallum	Oilzum
Ostewig.....	McNey.....	4	3.34	5.00	295.2	Miller	Rajah	8	16	Side	Silvertown	33x5	102	Magnallum	Oilzum

All used Moto-Meters and all cars were equipped with Hartford shock absorbers. All used Bosch ignition, except Chevrolet, who was Thomson equipped. R-W. wheels for all except Ostewig, Rickenbacher and Henderson, who used Houk.

these conditions. His car careened first right, then left, then right again, and just when four cars seemed about to hit him broadside, for he was directly across the track, Maxwell began sliding backwards and just in the nick o' time gave the right of way to the cars bearing down upon it. Rick and his mechanic, George Henderson, were in their seats when the car came to a standstill and the cheers that greeted them as they walked to the pits was equal to that usually accorded any winner. Aitken drove the last 8 miles with only one front wheel attached to his steering apparatus.

Indianapolis appeared to have been surfeited with entertainment, the state fair having closed yesterday, for there did not seem to be over 10,000 to 12,000 present at the races, which were the fastest ever seen on the Indianapolis track up to the time Aitken broke his steering arm and had to slow down. At that the 100-mile dash was considerably faster than the 300-mile event last Memorial day and nearly equaled de Palma's speed when he won last year. The 20- and 50-mile events were won at 95.08 and 91.83 miles per hour, respectively.

The 100-mile race was characterized by two battles, that of Rickenbacher and Aitken and one between D'Alene and Hughes. From the thirtieth to the ninetieth mile Hughes had been fighting D'Alene for third place and when Rickenbacher wrecked, Hughes jumped into Rick's place, passing D'Alene in the home stretch.

Buzane Moves Up

George Buzane, one of the surprises of the Cincinnati derby, where he won fourth place, repeated today in the 100-mile event. He had the pole position at the start, having drawn No. 1, but was soon in eighth place after the race started. However, at the end of 20 miles Milton doctored his Duesenberg with ignition trouble and Buzane jumped into seventh place just inside the prize money. De Palma's and Lewis' stops for tires at the 72-mile point gave Buzane fifth position and the falling of Rickenbacher put him in fourth where he finished.

In the 20-mile event Aitken took the lead from the start and won at 95.08 miles per hour, although Wilcox gave him a hard battle, finishing only .33 second behind.

Chevrolet drove the Sunbeam that Galvin took third money in at Cincinnati last Monday and finished third.

In the 50-mile dash Wilcox in a Premier led the field for six laps, then gave way to Aitken. Hughes led the field in the fifteenth lap but relinquished it to Aitken after one circuit of the track but crowded the Peugeot close and finished .27 second behind Aitken.

It was an afternoon of spectacular finishes for each race. Not more than a car length decided between first and second places in the 20- and 50-mile events and then in the 100-mile race Aitken stopped at the first pit on his last lap, coasting across the line as he got the checkered flag. Ralph de Palma, who drove Merz's Peugeot, kept running, but said after the race that the

cars seemed to want to climb over the outside rail all the time. It seemed odd to see de Palma in the Peugeot blue; it made one lonesome for the Mercedes, which was too badly broken at Cincinnati last Monday to participate here. Christiaens did not start, his Sunbeam having broken the crankshaft in practice. All finishing inside the money made no tire changes except Lewis who put on a left rear and left front in the 100-mile race.

Tom Rooney, who was injured in the Indianapolis race last Memorial Day when his Premier overturned, watched the race from a car immediately back of Aitken's pit. It was his first day out of the hospital. He has had his left leg rebroken twice in an effort to get the bones to knit properly.

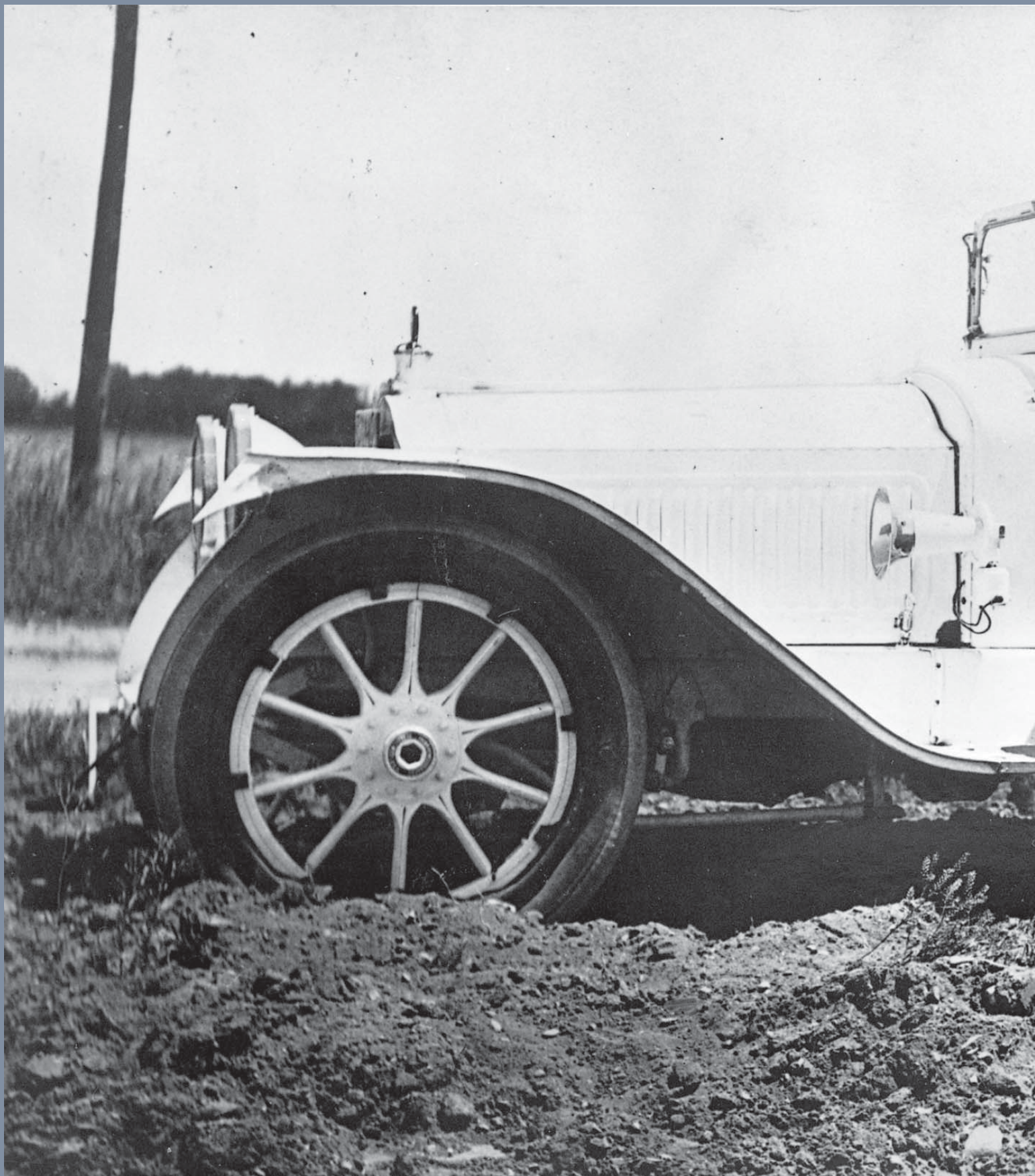
TIMES FOR 50-MILE EVENT

Car	Driver	10	20	30	40	50	Speed	Prize
Peugeot.....	Aitken	6:36.92	13:11.19	19:42.45	26:12.91	32:40.33	91.83	\$700
Hoskins.....	Hughes	6:37.50	13:11.95	19:44.42	26:14.60	32:40.61	91.81	500
Sunbeam.....	Chevrolet	6:37.26	13:12.58	19:44.95	26:15.03	32:41.10	91.79	400
Duesenberg.....	D'Alene	6:38.38	13:19.33	20:00.40	26:38.57	33:25.85	89.75	300
Premier.....	Lewis	6:57.92	13:43.96	20:31.52	27:12.70	34:05.46	87.99	100
Duesenberg.....	Wilcox	6:36.55	13:11.19	20:05.98	26:44.00	35:24.59	85.12	
Duesenberg.....	Buzane	7:14.60	14:15.67	21:25.55	28:25.68	35:32.87	84.44	
Peugeot.....	De Palma	Out—Dirty plugs—7th lap.						
Duesenberg.....	Klein	Out—Dirty plugs—7th lap.						



Start of the 100-mile race. Carl G. Fisher paced the field for one lap

As mentioned on p. 10, here is the pace car driven by Fisher (pictured bottom right) during the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Fall Classic Race, as reported on p. 17 of the September 14, 1916, edition of *MOTOR AGE*.



Carl Fisher in Elkhart, Indiana, takes a break and smokes a cigar during the "Hoosier Tour"—which aimed to establish possible routes for the Lincoln Highway. (For more, see "A Brief History of The Lincoln Highway" at: <https://lincolnhighwayassoc.org/history/>)





Kirkland Gibson in his 1907 Renault 35/45hp Runabout

Men of Means: VMCCA Founders George H. Waterman, Jr. and Kirkland H. Gibson

By Kirkland H. Gibson, III

Editor's note: This story's origin came about by happenstance. Kirk Gibson showed me a booklet titled Time Drives On—a program for the “Noyes-Buick Annual Travel Exposition” of 1933. On page 11, Kirk's father (also Kirkland) and George Waterman are mentioned with thanks for their contributions. The QR code shown above next to the image of the booklet will link the reader to a PDF of the entire booklet (and you can download it if you wish). The engaging conversation inspired by that booklet ended with a plea asking Kirk to write an article. Despite that rich conversation by the SAH tent last year at Hershey, what follows is far more than I imagined I would receive. Also, it is—from the perspective of documenting automotive history—an account from a source that is high on the list for any telling of the George H. Waterman, Jr., and Kirkland H. Gibson story.

A 1909 buggy-top Maxwell sold by Alan Bemis was later credited by him as being the “Founding Car of VMCCA” (Vintage Motor Car Club of America). The first-time car buyer was 13-year-old George H. Waterman, Jr., and the car was just 16 years old. The auto industry had already advanced so rapidly that in 1926 a car of that vintage was “junk.” Those “junk” cars appealed to very few, but two kids from an affluent Boston neighborhood—George and school chum Kirkland H. Gibson—would acquire those cars so rapidly that they soon were referred to as the “Waterman-Gibson Duo” and spent a lifetime buying and selling some of the country's most rare and historic cars. They would also play an important part in the founding of VMCCA.

George's two sisters did not share their brother's early love of “junk” cars, or he would not have felt the need to write this in a letter to them in November 1926:

“I will agree not to keep the Metz in the garage, will dispose of it by June 10th, and will do my best not to get in a temper if things don't go write [*sic*] . . . I will not crank it without the permission of my parents. I will dispose of the old Ford engine, and unnecessary parts at once.”
Source: *The Devil's Mercedes*, p. 91.

Waterman's interest centered on early race cars and cars of famous people. His chum, Kirk Gibson, was learning the mechanical skills necessary to put the “invalids”—as he called them—back in operating order. The “invalids” moniker may have been the result of Kirk's having developed polio as a young man and then being involved in a serious boat accident.

Polio had shortened one leg by two inches. Then a tragic boating accident shattered the other, shortening it also by two inches. Having been bedridden for so long in the 1930s—when there was no physical therapy—his back and stomach muscles atrophied so much that he could not stand without a large body cast. So, the tibia was removed from his “good” (polio) leg and was spliced to his back to enable him to stand erect and walk. During his long recovery cycles, he read just about everything that had ever been written about automobiles.

Waterman and Gibson not only had passion for the hobby, but they also came up with a marketing plan that was very successful. They printed up penny postcards. Each showed a picture of an old car and requested information on the location of antique cars. The cards were given to rural mail carriers who were asked to leave one in the mailbox of any property with a barn.

It was a lot of work to dig out the cars they found, but the older folks took a liking to the kids and often let them have those old clunkers for nothing.

One helpful friend turned out to be Mr. Noyes of the Noyes Buick Company. Just as the boys were about to enter Harvard, Noyes relocated his dealership from Waltham to Arlington (Boston), Massachusetts, and the duo was given permission to use his empty showroom for their collection.

They first named the showroom Musée des Invalides, (a name that was soon abandoned because of its depressing connotation) and later called it Musée des Vénérables. The cars put there were very old but deserving of respect. Some of those cars were deserving of respect as seen in quotes in *The Boston Herald*, "Boston Personalities" by Mason Ham, April 13, 1931:

There were cars such as the imported 1897/98 DeDion Bouton "... with a basket for picnic lunches, substituted for the dashboard ..."

"A marvelous three-wheeled, three-cylinder, three passenger old Duryea, whose three controls for steering, acceleration and gear changing are all embodied in a single upright lever. You twist the lever to give her the gas; move it from side to side to steer and raise or lower it to shift."

"The No. 1 Velie, presented to them by Mrs. W. J. Velie, wife of the inventor."

Records from January 1, 1933, show the two young men—now just 21—had set themselves up on Hammond St. in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, as "The Boston Museum of Automotive Conveyance." Handwritten notations on an expense list for 40 of their cars put their entire cost at just \$1,559, including transportation.

Several locations around Massachusetts and Rhode Island were known to hold additional cars. One VMCCA member recalls his trip to view some of Waterman's acquisitions. They were stored in an old cotton warehouse in West Warwick, Rhode Island. He described it as having "columns that must have been 36" square. It had been used for unloading bales of cotton from ships." (*The author kept the quote but does not have the source. —Ed.*)

Boston Men Collect Cars of Old Vintage

**Foreign and U. S. Makes Represented in Collection of
Kirkland Gibson and George Waterman — Have
First Car to Climb Pike's Peak — Springfield Automobiles Among Types Collected in "Museum"**

A TWO-CYLINDER Maxwell runabout, 1906 model, which the Harvard class of 1880 gave to President Elliot, and which two boys from Chestnut Hill bought 10 years ago to drive around the neighborhood, has become the nucleus of one of the largest private collections of automobiles in the country.

A brace of 1914 Fords preceded the exhibited at an automobile show in 1908 as an antique.

Another of the ancients is a chain-drive Stanley steamer, constructed at Newton in 1898, the year that the Stanley brothers started building cars for the trade. Blue ribbon holder among the early steamers, however, is Locomobile No 261, made in 1890, and in spite of its 60-inch wheelbase the first car to climb Pike's Peak.

George and Kirland became frequent visitors to the Larz Anderson Carriage House in Brookline, Massachusetts. Larz, who spent a long career in the diplomatic service, was married to Isabel Weld Perkins. She was the wealthy granddaughter of shipping merchant William Fletcher Weld, who left her an inheritance of 17 million dollars. This made Isabel the wealthiest female in the country—at the age of five!

THE BOSTON HERALD, MONDAY, APRIL 13, 1931

BOSTON PERSONALITIES

By MASON HAM



Ah, this seemliness. This propriety.

A lady from Manhattan who doesn't quite understand the Boston viewpoint has been in town this week.

Since she's furnishing a summer house in Rhode Island, and since a window display in a certain Boston store struck her fancy, she went in to make inquiries.

"How much," she asked, "does that double bed cost?"

The smooth, pink cheeks of the clerk turned a shade pinker. He raised his hands in horror, his eyebrows in shocked surprise.

"I suppose, madam," he answered, "that you mean the full-size bed." We don't recognize double beds any more.

We've just heard about Alfred Batson, who is red-headed and lives up to it. He was born in Vancouver and brought up in Boston—or, to be exact, in Medford, where, at the Belmont school, if it makes any difference, he sat in the seat once occupied by Alvan T. Fuller.

At 15 he enlisted in the Canadian army and after the war became successively a "sand hog," working on the Holland tube, a captain of the Nicaraguan rebels, a lone wanderer in Central America, the slayer of a boa constrictor, the captive of Mexican bandits, a seaman on the Pacific ocean, a reporter on the North China News.

Most of that you can learn inside or on the jacket of "Vagabond's Paradise," a book he's just written, but here is our exclusive story:

Mr. Batson, happy-go-lucky, rough-and-ready, fighting man and soldier of fortune, has two initials that don't show on the title page. He is A. B. C. Batson, and the B. C. stands for Byron Cadwalader.

together next fall. It is their own "Musée des Invalides"—a name slightly unjust since most of its items will go and none of them has been given up as hopeless. It includes:

An old Winton, No. 71, made in 1898, the first car to make the run from Putnam to Providence. It was bought new by Whitman Danielson who gave it to them. It started right up when supplied with oil, gas and water a year ago.

A marvelous three-wheeled, three-cylinder, three-passenger old Duryea, whose three controls for steering, acceleration and gear changing are all embodied in a single upright lever. You twist the lever to give her the gas; move it from side to side to steer; and raise or lower it to shift.

The No. 1 Velie, presented to them by Mrs. W. J. Velie, wife of the inventor.

An old White steamer of Ralph Forbes.

The first car (they were told) on Martha's Vineyard.

The first truck (they were told) in Westerly, R. I.

A 1903 one-cylinder Knox, once owned by Levi H. Greenwood, one of the oldest four-passenger cars, driven from the back seat, which is raised a foot or two above the front. It still has its original tires which still hold air. Its gasoline tank is air tight and contained, when the boys got it, some 20-year-old gasoline. The engine started firing on it right away.

The horseless carriage, it is our impression after talking with the Messrs. Waterman and Gibson, has been grossly maligned. Such fancy lies about their never running more than five miles without a breakdown! The boys have actually registered three of them, and for a while used one rare antique as a reliable means of transportation between their homes at Chestnut Hill and their school in Cambridge. It never failed. Most of the cars will run comfortably from 20 to 30 miles an hour.

Another story which it pains us to disbelieve is the one about the early automobiles being equipped with whip sockets, as if their makers could not quite forget old Dobbin. The boys have never seen a car thus fitted.

The sources of the collection are chiefly two—the people, like Mrs. Safe and Mr. Forbes, who have preserved their old machines, and the residents of small towns in northern New England who have simply never gotten rid of them. The collectors' first step was to write all the New England postmasters, asking information about old cars in their respective towns.

Only five of the specimens are now at Chestnut Hill. Some are at the Watermans' summer home at East Greenwich; some are at Milton; and several, actually owned by the boys who are paying storage on them, are still in their last natural resting places, at least one each in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York.




There are a couple of young men out at Chestnut Hill who collect automobiles. Not, you understand, fast roadsters and elegant convertibles, but museum pieces. They have 24 cars in all and the youngest of them is nearly a quarter of a century old.

Distinguished vehicles are among them. There is an old DeDion, once owned by Mrs. T. Shaw Safe of Newport, with a basket for picnic lunches, substituted for the dashboard, and an iron prop that could be lowered on hills to prevent the car from sliding backward, if it went just so far and no further. It was made in 1897 or 1898, and Mrs. Safe believes it was the first car imported from abroad.

The owners of the collection are George H. Waterman, Jr., and Kirkland H. Gibson, who plan to enter college



Harry Knight Noyes, President of the Noyes Buick Company, gave Gibson and Waterman permission to use his empty Waltham showroom for their collection. The sign says: "please do not handle the antique cars."

The great cars purchased by the Andersons were always "retired" to a carriage house on "Weld"—their 64,000-acre estate. Even after Mr. Anderson died, Mrs. Anderson continued to welcome the men to assemble there to talk and work on cars. It was here at the carriage house that John (W.H.) Leathers, who was new to the area, was attempting to find a few enthusiasts who would join him in forming an association to preserve early motorcars. The answer was always the same: "call George Waterman."

Leathers would later describe his September 17, 1938, meeting with George Waterman:

"The owner of a 100-vehicle collection and another collector possessing two antiques met at luncheon in Boston and agreed to convoke the clan for the organization of a Veteran Car Club" The "lunch" continued until

5:30 p.m. Between Leathers and Waterman, a list of candidates was drawn up . . . and invitations went out. (*The Bulb Horn*, Vol. X, No. 1)

On December 2, 1938, a meeting was held at The Vintage and Veteran Car Club (today known as The Vintage Motor Car Club of America), which was actually in the Hancock Room at the Statler Hotel. Alan Bemis—who sold George his 1909 Maxwell that he referred to as the "Founding Car of VMCCA"—was among the invited guests.

The room was decorated with posters, and all but two attendees came in tuxedos reflecting how serious they were. Leathers later remembered it:

"... a room to impress the Molders-of-the-Public Mind . . . and the combined concepts and commentary spawned



on this occasion would have sufficed to found another League of Nations. At 2:00 a.m., twelve exhausted enthusiasts adjourned several paying unconscionable taxi fares to reach their homes in the suburbs. No organization was attempted, but when the meeting adjourned, the ultimate emergence of a Veteran car club was assured.” (W.H. Leathers, *The Bulb Horn*, Vol No.1)

A minor hobby was about to spawn a major nationwide fanatical interest. Waterman’s wife Helen joined the VMCCA that year and became the club’s first woman member. Early *Bulb Horn* issues showed pictures of Helen at their frequent meets selling programs and participating in car games.

Although founders, Waterman and Gibson are seldom mentioned as officers of the VMCCA, they are credited with being the men who supplied the majority of the cars for the early meets. They

also provided leads where other members could find cars; probably ones they had passed over!

Some newspapers were reporting that the Waterman-Gibson duo now had 117 vehicles, while other reports mentioned a number past 200. Some were bought jointly. Others were acquired individually, and they were being stored in a warehouse in Milton, Massachusetts, with plans to open a new museum there.

“There were cars that required stepladders to reach and cars with gold fittings—windshields as large as shop windows, with bells instead of horns, candles instead of kerosene headlights—and race cars capable of going 100 miles an hour.” (Dame, L “New Museum in Milton to House Unique Group of Ancient Cars,” *The Boston Herald*, September 3, 1939.)

In 1940, one of the Gilded Age “cottages” in Newport, Rhode

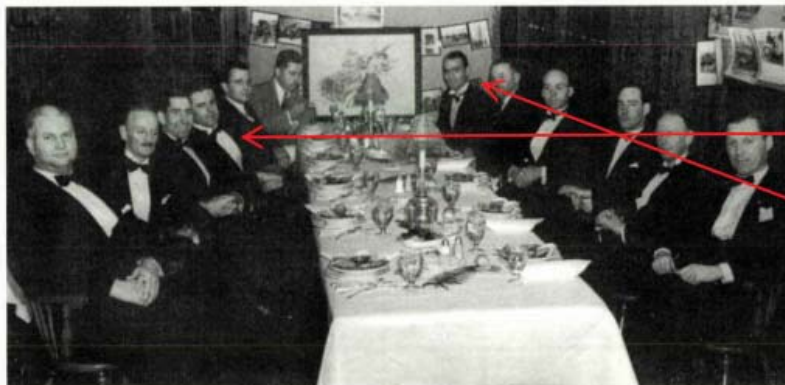
THE VETERAN MOTOR CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

Veteran Automobiles, Tours and Traditions

And a Look Into the Future

by David O. Lyon

*Founding Dinner,
December 2, 1938
Hotel Statler, Boston*



M.J. Duryea
W. Harold Leathers
Richard Heath
George Waterman
Cameron Bradley
Benjamin Drisko
Kirk Gibson
Dean Fales
Paul Cadwell
Thomas McKean
Vassar Pierce
John Marshall

The VMCCA Founding

Island, "Belcourt," was in serious decay. It was the exquisite 60-room property that in 1899 had been host to the nation's first automobile parade. Waterman, Gibson, and race-driver and fellow VMCCA founder Tom McKean bought the property for just \$1,000. The agreement was that they would restore it to its former glory. This museum, when completed, "can hardly fail to be the world's outstanding veteran car exhibit, and V. M. C. C. A. members may well be proud of this achievement." (*The author kept the quote but does not have the source. —Ed.*)

The planned museum would display the pre-1910 cars owned by Waterman, Gibson and McKean and also contain a 6,000-book library. Among the cars shown on the plan would have been the two-cylinder 1903 Winton that was the first to cross the U.S., the two Crane-Simplexes for which the Rockefellers paid \$17,000 each, and even Daniel Webster's buggy. It was not to be. After the papers were signed, Waterman learned that an auto museum would not be allowed at that location in Newport. The property was resold in 1943.

It was around this time that Gibson's attention was drawn to an unusual vehicle at the 1939-40 World's Fair in New York City. It was the 1866 Dudgeon wood or coal fired steam car. It was a "steam boiler on wheels," "the granddaddy of automobiles" and possibly the first operating vehicle designed to carry multiple passengers. (*The author kept the quote but does not have the source. —Ed.*) The builder, Richard Dudgeon, claimed he designed it because he wanted to end horse abuse.

In 1942, Gibson was able to buy the massive vehicle from the builder's grandson. It required two men to operate it—one to steer and one to stoke the fire. It could hold eight passengers who were seated over the water tanks with their feet resting on the boiler. Gibson sometimes drove the Dudgeon around the area, but its open

grate fire box generated so much heat it was impossible to drive on modern macadam roads—it melted the road surface!

The Dudgeon was an American-built and American owned vehicle—the forerunner of the transport industry. Gibson took the steam car around on exhibit to various museums. He even had it on television, on *The Gary Moore Show* and *I've Got a Secret*. Gibson later donated the Dudgeon to the Smithsonian.

Cars that made racing history and cars of famous people were often desired additions to the duo's growing collection. Waterman was fascinated by the powerful, durable 12-cylinder engine in FDR's 1939 Packard. It had been retrofitted with bullet-proof glass to become the first armored car to be used by an American president.

It was likely that Waterman's social network provided him with the means to reach Eleanor Roosevelt after the President's death. Waterman's son, George III, recalled: "He said, 'What are you going to do with FDR's armored Packard?' And she said, 'You can have it if you let the public see it.'" (*The Devil's Mercedes*, p. 92)

Waterman and Gibson both chose to own mahogany-bodied Mercedes 28/95s, evidence of the quality, style, and innate appeal of these pieces of German automotive artistry. However, it was one German car in particular that fascinated Waterman: a 1944 Mercedes 770K that had been on tour around the country as "Hitler's Personal Armored Car."

The current then-owner of the "Nazi-limo" was Christopher Janus. He had been touring the country exhibiting the big Mercedes since 1950; and he was anxious to have something different to show. He was focused on FDR's Packard V12 for that purpose too, so Waterman and Janus simply made a swap, FDR's Packard for Hitler's Mercedes.

Waterman enjoyed the addition of the 770K Mercedes. Its 235 hp was produced by a Kompressor (supercharger) engine of

Source: *The Bulb Horn*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 6 (2007), p. 12.



Above: Kirkland Gibson with the 1897 Waverly (shown right).

7.7-liter capacity. It was capable of 135 mph despite carrying a ½" of steel armor, 1¼" bullet proof glass, at a weight of 10,000 lbs.

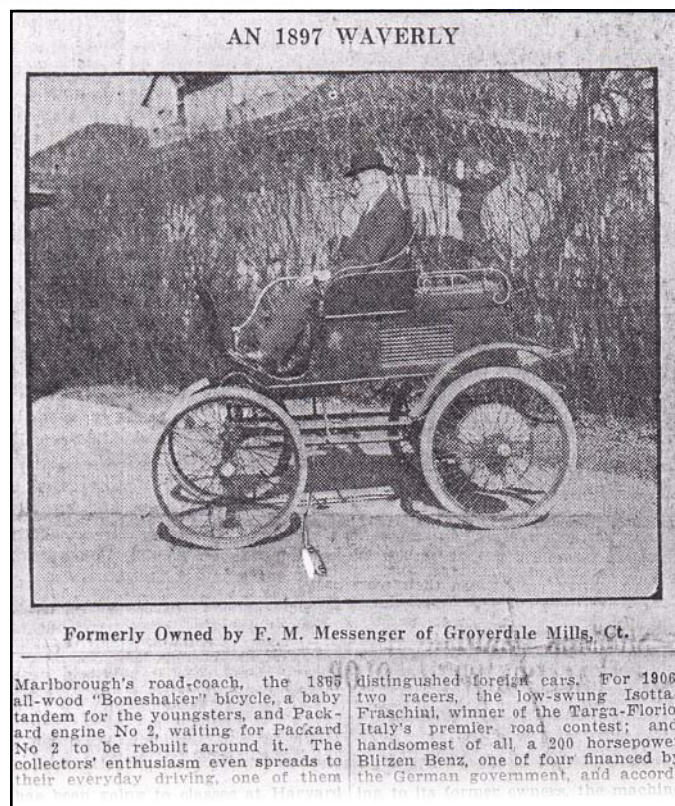
The 140 square feet of space taken up by this monster car soon became a problem, but Gibson saw it as a chance for some financial gain. With Waterman's concurrence, Gibson had a custom semitrailer made for the huge Mercedes, and off he it went on tour showing the Hitler car at carnivals and country fairs for the next year.

The proceeds of the tour were set up to benefit worthy local causes. This way the Hitler car continued to draw a big crowd even though eight years had passed since the end of the war. It would be sometime much later that the provenance of this car and Hitler's connection to it would be called into question. Was it really Hitler's personal car?

After touring with the Mercedes 770K for a year, it became apparent they would need a place to keep it. Collectors just never have enough cars or enough space.

The VMCCA had continued to hold their meetings and rallies at the Larz Anderson estate since their formation in 1939. After the death of Mrs. Anderson, in 1948, the estate was bequeathed to the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts, and the grounds became Larz Anderson Park.

The VMCCA quickly approached the Town of Brookline



and offered to run the carriage house in the museum style that the Andersons had developed. The Town of Brookline agreed, and the VMCCA made their headquarters there.

On October 15, 1949, VMCCA held a grand opening for the "Antique Auto Museum - Larz Anderson Collection." It was there at the Anderson carriage house that The Waterman-Gibson Duo "stashed" the Mercedes 770K "Hitler Car."

A "Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Meet" was held at Larz Anderson Park in August 1963 to celebrate the founding of The Veteran Motor Car Club of America. On entering the museum, guests were greeted by President Roosevelt's '39 Packard V12 on the left, the Mercedes-Benz of Adolf Hitler on the right, as well as the 1913 Delage that won the 1914 Indianapolis Race and the one and only 1866 Dudgeon. These are just a few of the many cars and the one great organization, the VMCCA, that might never have survived if it weren't for George H. Waterman, Jr., and Kirkland H. Gibson.

Probably end it there? But...

Another interesting story is how Dad got the oldest Duryea (logo of the AACA) out of a farm field in Reading, Pennsylvania. It was transported on a Model A Ford stake-bodied truck by a local man who did all sorts of jobs for the neighbors. Amazingly, Charles B. King intercepted it en route to Rhode Island and asked where it was going. The next day he and none other than Charles Duryea arrived in our driveway. Duryea said he had the original drawings, and asked if he could rebuild it and run it in the 1945 re-enactment of the first race in Chicago. Dad felt this was manna from Heaven! It made the race, and Dad eventually donated it to the Henry Ford Museum.

Today many of the Waterman and Gibson cars are in private
(Continued on p. 27)

INVENTORY OF COLLECTION OF EARLY AUTOMOBILES
OWNED JOINTLY AND SEPARATELY BY
KIRKLAND H. GIBSON AND GEORGE H. WATERMAN, JR.
AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 1948

I. AMERICAN CARS

A. Propelled by Gasoline - Manufactured prior to 1911.

1. Haynes Surrey c. 1898
2. Bartel Roadster c. 1899
3. Winton Roadster #71 - delivered June 1899
4. Haynes Roadster - 1899
5. Winton Surrey - 1900
6. Winton Roadster - 1901
7. Packard Roadster - 1901
8. Cameron Roadster - 1904
9. Thomas Touring, rear-entrance - 1904
10. Orient Buckboard - 1904
11. Searchmont Touring, rear-entrance - 1904
12. Rambler Touring, rear-entrance - 1904
13. Napier (Am.) Touring - 1904
14. Knox Touring, rear-entrance - 1904
15. Knox Roadster - 1904
16. Stevens Duryea Roadster (2 cyl.) - 1905
17. Ford Touring, Model F (2 cyl.) - 1905
18. Franklin Touring, rear-entrance - 1905
19. Pierce Town car - 1905
20. Oldsmobile Roadster - 1905
21. Stevens Duryea Touring (6 cyl.) - 1906
22. Franklin Town Car - 1906
23. Pope Toledo Touring - 1906
24. Locomobile Touring - 1906
25. Duryea Roadster, 3-wheeler - 1906
26. Franklin Touring - 1906
27. Ford Roadster, Model N - 1906
28. B.L.M. Raceabout - 1906
29. Pope Hartford Touring - 1906
30. Northern Touring - 1907
31. Ford Touring, Model K (8 cyl.) - 1907
32. Alco Touring - 1908
33. Schacht Roadster - 1908
34. Velie Touring (Car #1) - 1908
35. Peerless Touring - 1908
36. Lozier Touring - 1909
37. Reo Touring - 1909
38. Maxwell Roadster - 1910
39. Hudson Roadster - 1910
40. Simplex Touring, 50 h.p. - 1910
41. Simplex Touring, 90 h.p. - 1910
42. Cadillac Touring - 1910
43. Packard Limousine, Model 30 - 1910

Kirkland H. Gibson *George H. Waterman, Jr.*

The first of a seven-page list of Gibson and Waterman's inventory (each page was signed).

INFORMATION REGARDING LOCATION OF ANTIQUE CARS
WANTED. PLEASE WRITE:
WATERMAN & GIBSON, CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

CORRESPONDENCE

ADDRESS

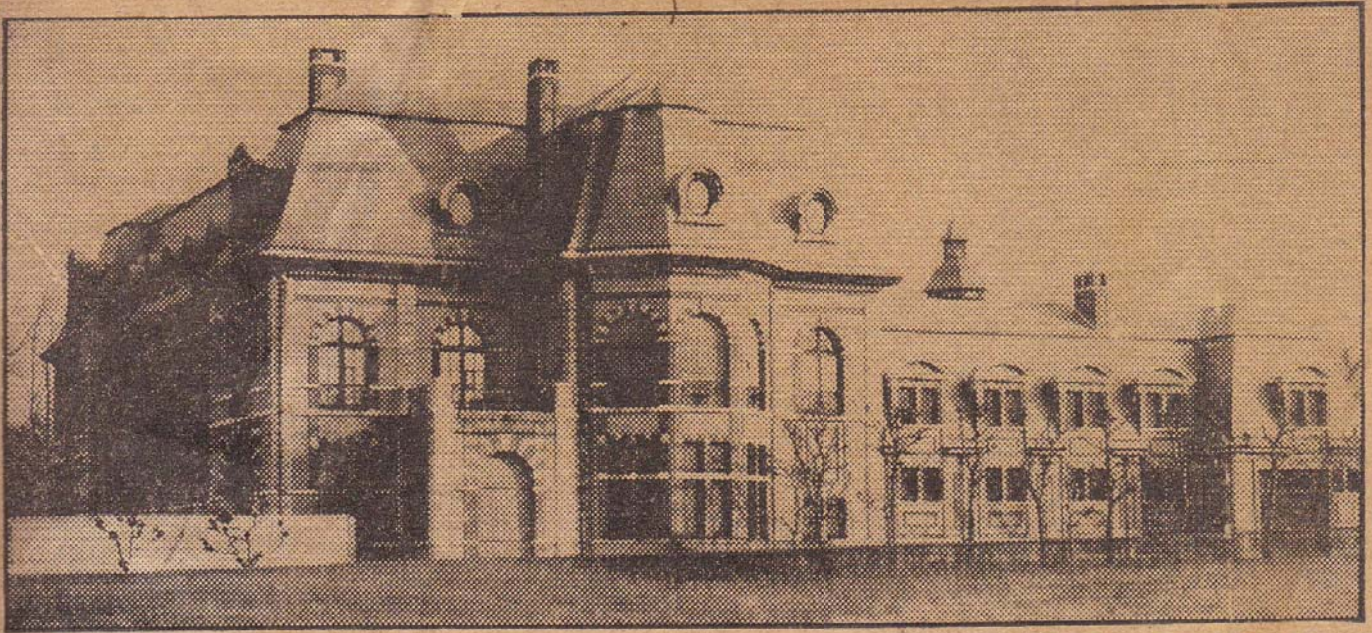
STAMP



THREE CYLINDER DURYEA 1900

This is an example of the postcards that were used to request information on the location of antique cars.

WHERE OLD VEHICLES WILL RETIRE TO CLOVER



This Is "Belcourt," Mansion and Carriage House Built By the Late O. H. P. Belmont Back in the 80's as His Newport Summer Home. Now It's Destined to Become a Museum for Old Horsedrawn and Horseless Buggies and Extensive Libraries on the Subject.

Famous "Belcourt" to Become Museum for Ancient Vehicles

Perry Belmont Sells Newport Estate, Built in 80's for O. H. P. Belmont to G. H. Waterman, Jr., Kirkland Gibson and Thomas McKean

"Belcourt," the handsome brick-and-stone structure along the lines of a French chateau which the late O. H. P. Belmont had built for himself back in the '80's, to be his Newport summer home and carriage house, is to become a museum for ancient vehicles.

Perry Belmont, brother of the original owner, announced yesterday that he had sold the huge residence to George H. Waterman, Jr., and Kirkland Gibson of East Greenwich and Thomas McKean of Ithaca, Pa., who plan to make it a museum.

Mr. Gibson said last night that all three of the new owners have extensive collections of old automobiles, carriages, coaches, buggies, the accessories and costumes to go with them, and sizeable libraries on the subject.

They plan to pool these, install them in the stables and carriage houses, put the books in the library

several years ago and in recent years has not been occupied.

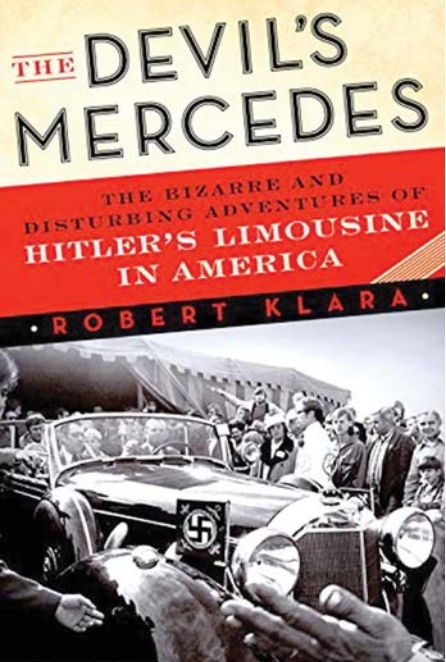
In its hey-day, however, it was the scene of many gala functions. Viscount Ichi, then Japanese Ambassador to the United States, was a guest there, and so was Gen. Henri Gouraud, the French World War hero.

Of brick, with red and white stone trim and iron grillework here and there, it was designed by the late Richard Hunt, Newport and New York architect. A huge structure, its stables are built around an open courtyard.

Mr. Belmont said last night he was pleased to dispose of the place for the purpose to which the new owners intend to put it. He said he believed that the future use of his former home would be most interesting for Newport.

The name Belcourt would be retained, he said, and no changes in

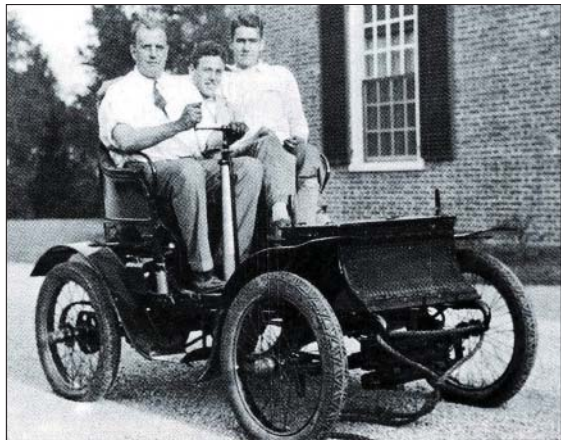
The author notes: A well-researched documentary of the mystery and confusion surrounding the Hitler cars was published in 2017 by historian Robert Klara titled *The Devil's Mercedes*. It is through his research, and discussions with the sons of George Waterman and Kirkland Gibson, that much of this information has come to light. It is a fascinating story and anyone who has ever tried to trace the provenance of a car will enjoy and appreciate the results. (A review of this book appears in SAH Journal #285, p. 13. —Ed.)



(Continued from p. 24)

collections, cars like the Mercedes 770K. (In the General William Lyon collection, in Coto de Caza, California. —Ed.) The 1907 Vanderbilt Racer that Gibson bought in 1928 has recently been donated to the Simeone Museum in Philadelphia by his son. The 1886 Dudgeon was donated much earlier to the Smithsonian. The FDR V12 Packard is at the Toyota Museum in Japan.

The founders of VMCCA were mostly fun-loving young men from well-to-do families, well educated—many Harvard and MIT graduates. They were race car drivers, home movie makers, inventors, military men, and museum curators. They were men you would have loved to have accompanied on their search for “old junkers.”



A young George Waterman (center) and Kirkland Gibson (right), the pioneering Yankee car collectors who'd later add the Mannerheim Mercedes to their automotive caboodle. (At the wheel of the DeDion Bouton is Samuel Eliot, who'd go on to invent the Cricket III, a car that ran on compressed air.) (Reprinted with permission from *The Bulb Horn Magazine*, published by the Veteran Motor Car Club of America)

Source: The Devil's Mercedes by Robert Klara

Editor's note: There were many exhibits sent for this article from Mr. Gibson, too numerous to include, some being unsourced articles too long to print. So a supplementary e-booklet has been prepared for them all, accessible through this QR code:



THE BOSTON

mobile — Real Estate
ed Ads — Auctions

Sept 3, 1929 BOSTON, SUNDAY, 5



MIGHT BE THE GAY NINETIES in this picture of a Waterman-Gibson collector's item, an 1897 Haynes-Apperson as it used to burn up dirt roads. Left to right—Alice Emmons of East Greenwich, R. I.; Mrs. George H. Waterman, Sr., of Chestnut Hill; Louise Carey, Mrs. M. Anthony Morris Carey, Jr., and Anthony Carey, 3d.



Cadillac, as told by Gibson, was a typical collecting adventure. "We were towing the thing away from a barn and all of a sudden the mice came pouring out of their nest under the upholstery. They went round the fenders trying to find an escape. Finally they got down to the road, formed a ring round the car and scampered into the fields."

"And under some hay in the seat of that 90-horsepower Simplex over there, a 1910 car, we found an ased egg, when we got it into our storehouse. Often the cars are covered with farmyard debris, or are used to hang all sorts of tools and discarded furniture and objects on. Here like them for roads."

In many instances, wealthy persons have given their old cars to the collectors, preferring to have them preserved in a museum. More than once, such people have learned from Waterman and Gibson, after a search of garages and forgotten hiding places, that the machines still existed. Junkyards have often had their prey snatched away at the last minute by the avid young men.

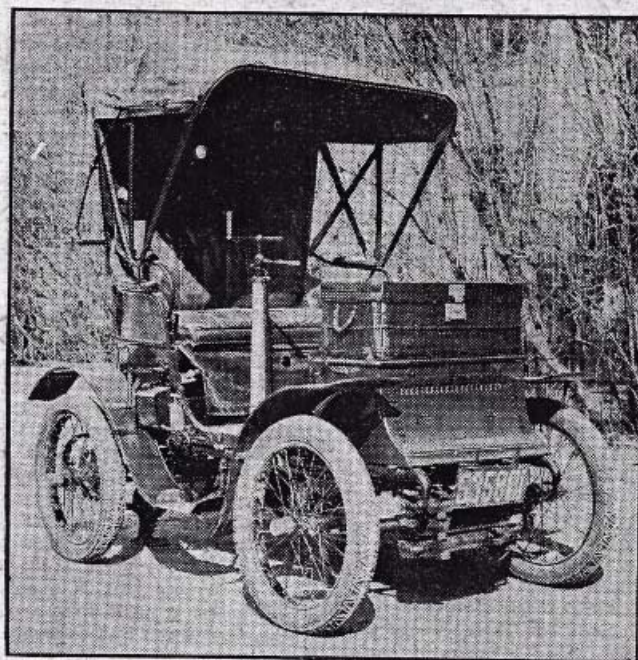
UNFAMILIAR NAMES
Names rarely heard these days, indicative of the times when manufacturers of bird cages, locomotives, screws, nuts, cycles, sewing

crowded with the glittering nickel trimmings and Duco-finish bodies of 1934, time turns back a quarter of a century. No car younger than 1919 is in sight, and as dated as the styles are the names of many of the makers: Grout, Pope-Hartford, Stevens, Dur-

hood, a colossal engine, with eight and one-half-inch stroke and bore two foot brakes, one for each rear wheel, a glass plate in the floor through which the crouching mechanic could watch the motor during a race.

A red Renault with a long ornate

DE DION BOUTON MOTORETTE



Formerly Owned by Mrs T. Shaw Sale of Newport, R. I.

vea, Knox, Winton, DeDion-Bouton, Waverley.

Most ancient is a Waverley, exact age uncertain, but probably 1896.

Winton No. 71, also in the collection, picked it in a race in 1899. The Waverley resembles a reversible buggy on bicycle wheels, the type named dos-ados by modish designers at the century's turn, hard on backseat drivers, who have to sit with their faces toward the road behind. There are leather fenders and dash, and, most fascinating, a short handle projecting at the left of the front seat, by which five forward speeds can be attained. The original tires still cling to the wheels and royals, made by the E. & J. Tire company, forerunners of

hood set up the American nonstop endurance record in 1909, at Brighton beach by covering 1050 miles in 24 hours. The car is still in good running order.

The foreign representation among the antiques is completed by a Rolls-Royce, a Fiat, and a DeLaunay-Belleville. The Rolls-Royce, a blue-green 1908 touring car of surprisingly modern lines, was built for Mrs John Wanamaker, and is still used. Two years younger is the Fiat, the ne plus ultra of roominess and thoughtful elegance, not too cramped for built-in dressing tables and writing desks. The plushy DeLaunay-Belleville, with its Vanderbilt-owned sister car, used to be one of the sights of Newport.



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.

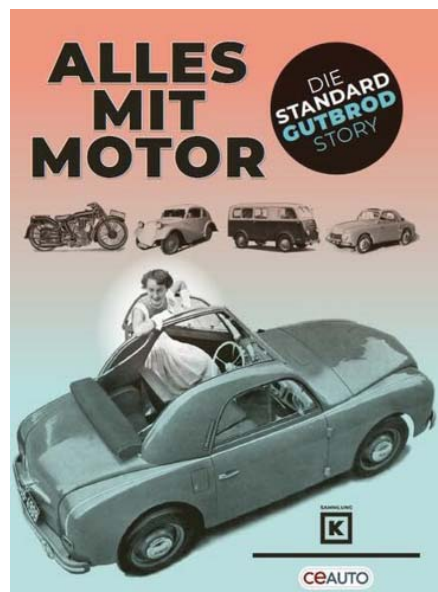
Alles Mit Motor: Die Standard/Gutbrod Story (Winner of the 2023 Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot Award Language other than English.) [Everything with an Engine: The Standard Gutbrod Story]

by Otfried Jaus, Andy Schwietzer, and Paul Schilperoord

CeAuto GmbH & Sammlung K (2022)
rareandunique.media/product/alles-mit-motor-die-standard-gutbrod-story/
272 pages, 8.66" x 11" German, hardcover
Numerous b/w and color images, no index
Price: \$54.37

ISBN-10: 3200082844

ISBN-13: 978-3200082847



This book offers a definitive story of the rise and fall of the relatively unknown German motor vehicle company known simply as "Gutbrod." Founded in Ludwigsberg in 1926 by Wilhelm Gutbrod (1890-1948), the company started producing "Standard" branded motorcycles which gradually expanded to automobiles, three wheelers, and agricultural equipment. The authors trace the company's evolution through the experiences of the company's founder, beginning with his childhood and formative years as an engineer-turned-soldier in WWI, where he learned about aircraft motors.

Following the war, Gutbrod served in various engineering and technical jobs around Stuttgart before forming his own company in 1926 (Standard Fahrzeug Fabrik GmbH) to build motorcycles. Gutbrod was not the only motorcycle manufacturer to transition to 4 wheels but his decision to partner with the leading German advocate for a people's car that would "cost no more than a good motorcycle" led to a contested role in Hitler's effort to motorize Germany. Josef Ganz, born in Budapest, studied engineering in Germany, but gained notoriety as the outspoken editor of *Motor Kritik*. Ganz's solution represented a departure in that he combined a central tube platform and independent front suspension with swing axles and a rear mounted air-cooled two-stroke. He shopped his design to a variety of manufacturers in the 1920s, built a diminutive topless two-seater prototype in 1930, but found no takers until he met Gutbrod. The author does not question that the newly-elected Reich Chancellor selected Ferdinand Porsche to head his effort but reminds the reader that Gutbrod was marketing a Ganz based people's car before Porsche built the first of his three prototypes. The Gutbrod Standard was well received by the motoring press, but enhancements needed to transform Ganz's prototype, best described as a four-wheeled motorcycle, into a marketable family car not only tripled the cost of a "good motorcycle" but brought the price into the DKW, Opel range. Poor sales led the company to abandon passenger cars in 1935 but the Ganz chassis layout was continued as the basis of Gutbrod commercial vehicles. The influence of the failed Gutbrod/Ganz people's car on Porsche's Volkswagen can be debated, but not the fact that Ganz's name was erased from the German press

making him a nonperson forced to flee to Switzerland because he was Jewish.

Gutbrod's recognition that Hitler's plan to rationalize the fragmented German auto industry threatened independents led him to diversify by licensing a Swiss patented motorized mowing machine that came to dominate the market as a result of Gutbrod's improvements. Wartime regulations forced the company to end even commercial vehicle production in favor of airplane parts but of note was the fact that mowers were continued. After 1945 Wilhelm Gutbrod was barred from his plant despite his reluctance to engage in arms manufacturing but maintained control via his younger son Wolfgang. The older brother continued the company's postwar shift to agricultural machinery by expanding to the Saarland in order to supply French farmers. But father Wilhelm remained committed to his roots as an engine builder and his determination to improve performance and efficiency of internal combustion led to another contested footnote in automotive history.

Mechanical fuel injection became standard for piston driven aircraft during WW II in large part because of the Bosch pump, and even though automakers eventually took note, Gutbrod had a fuel injected motor running on a test stand as early as 1947. Road testing followed but not on roads because the fuel injected 2 stroke was propelling the company's mower. The sudden death of their father in 1948 led the brothers to resume automobile production at a time when Bosch wanted to expand their injection technology. They surveyed a number of car companies but chose Gutbrod because of the previous mower collaboration. The Gutbrod Superior debuted in 1950. Fuel injection was available on the Superior as an option in 1951 but the author admits that it was "kopf am kopf" (neck and neck) with Goliath/Borgward. These initial efforts required extensive refinement prior to mainstream acceptance which is why the prevailing view credits the 1954 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL with first using fuel injection in a production car.

None of the company's automotive ventures turned a profit leading the firm to declare bankruptcy in 1953. Its demise has been ascribed to financially reckless over expansion—but it was son Walter's mistaken belief: "Since there was formerly space for many small car companies there

will be space for us in the present” that proved to be fatal. He made these remarks in a 1950 interview at which time the big five, VW, Opel, Mercedes-Benz, Ford, and the Borgward Group, controlled 93% of the market. Unfortunately, “in the present” mass production trumped even innovative engineering—small manufacturers were no longer competitive.

By advancing our understanding of the history of this relatively unknown yet remarkable German brand, including its connection to what came to be known as the German People’s Car, *Alles mit Motor* deservedly earned the annual Cugnot Award. We recommend its reading to anyone interested in mid-twentieth century European and German automotive history.

—Kevin M. McDonald
and Frank E. Gump

Le Mans is the theme for these next two reviews. While the *Le Mans 100* book appeared as a recommendation in issue 322-4, it is here to complete this presentation.

Le Mans 100: A Century at the World’s Greatest Endurance Race

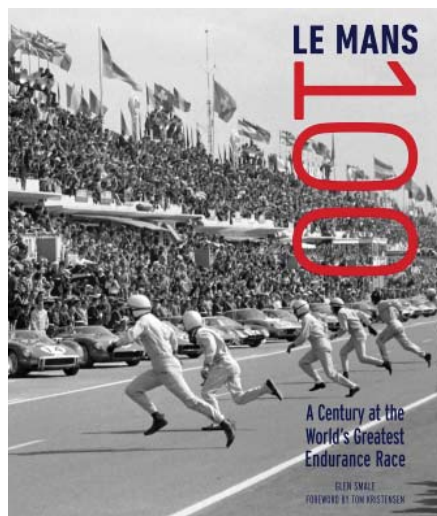
by Glen Smale

Motorbooks (2023) [Imprint of The Quarto Group] Quarto.com

240 pages, 9.5" x 11" hardcover in box case
106 b/w & 192 color images, two-gatefolds, bibliography, index

Price: \$75

ISBN: 978-0760376171



Upon achieving historic milestones, events are frequently celebrated in book form. Such is the case with the 24 Hours of Le Mans as two fine books have been written and are being offered by two

different publishers. An added plus: both are very reasonably priced too.

The Quarto-published book is written by experienced photo-journalist Glen Smale who disciplines himself admirably by writing but a half dozen or so paragraphs regarding the salient on-track events for each year. He does make certain to indicate each year’s top three finishers. This book will please Le Mans cognoscenti with its fine photography, some of which is Smale’s, permitting close study of details as all images are published large.

100 Years of Legends, 1923 – 2023: The Official Celebration of the Le Mans 24 Hours

by Denis Bernard, Basil Davoine, Julien Holtz, Gérard Holtz

Evro Publishing (2023)

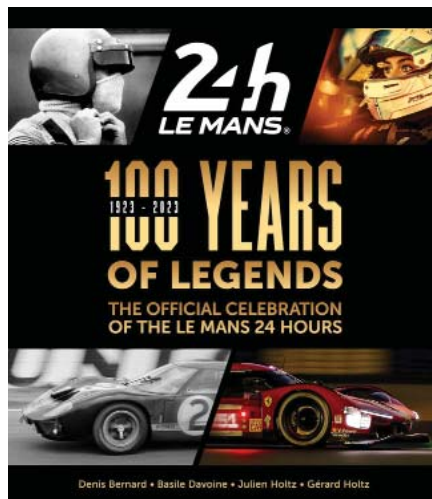
EvroPublishings.com

336 pages, 10.25" x 11.75" hardcover

Over 600 b/w & color images

Price: \$85

ISBN: 978-1910505885



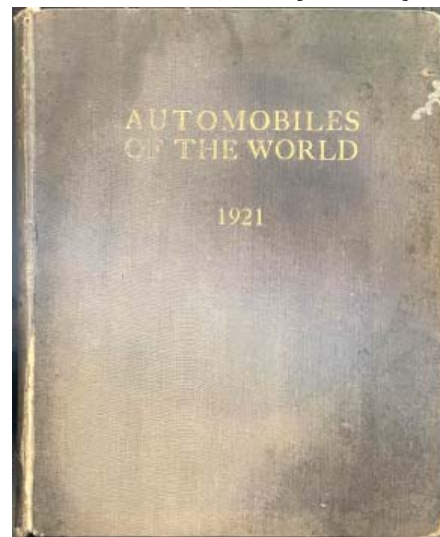
The working or interested motorsports historian will find the Evro-published book the one they’ll pull from the shelf repeatedly for it is like an encyclopedia as attested to by its 125 chapters. The table of contents is so detailed that an index would only be a redundancy. Unlike most books that are read front to back, this one volume truly is more like a set of encyclopedias where one nips in and out at random, or as a subject or topic entices, or as raises curiosity. Also, like encyclopedias, the topics are virtually limitless: engineering, aerodynamics, fuel, people, starters, timing and scoring, drivers, teams, manufacturers, celebrities, et cetera.

—Helen V Hutchings

Automobiles of the World 1921

Edited by W.E. DeB. Whittaker & Capt. P.A. Barron

Aeroplane & General Publishing Co. Ltd.
(Harrison and Sons Ltd. Printers, London)
10" x 12" hardcover, index [No ISBN]

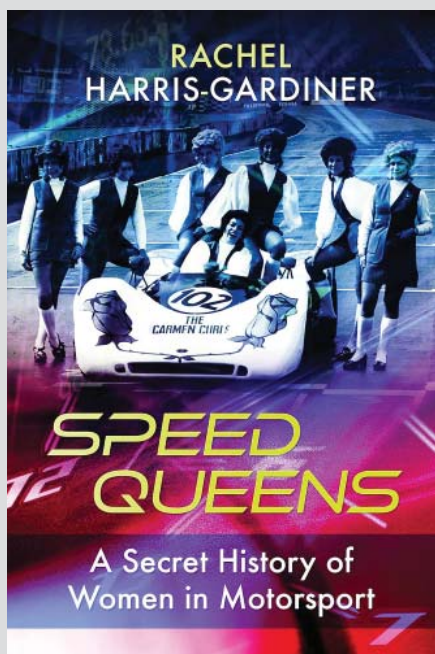


While this is a “review” of a book published in 1921, I thought it worthy of mentioning to make our readers aware that it even exists and the amazing content and information between its covers. It is printed on coated stock paper so the images that are there (and are numerous) are very clear. It is a book somewhat like an encyclopedia but of its own nature and design. It was the first of a series, but it may have been the only year it was published.

The volume has a listing for “the pleasure cars of: Belgium, France, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and the USA.” It also lists commercial vehicles and farm tractors. The images include a profile of the chassis in some cases, and some images of what the vehicle described looks like. The information provided was supplied by the manufacturers of the vehicles at that time, but there are no listings for Brewster, Fergus, Duesenberg, Kenworthy, Stevens-Duryea, Lincoln, Pierce Arrow, Marmon, Stutz Revere, Stanley, Winton Meteor, Ogren Ace. These companies were contacted but did not reply or replied too late to be included when the book was in production.

I was made aware of this book 50 years ago when I worked for Henry Austin Clark Jr. as his librarian for several years. When I saw it in Austin’s library his comment to me was “Crazy isn’t it!” I managed to get a copy with the help of a friend who had a motor book auction catalog service in England.

—Walt Gosden



Speed Queens: A Secret History of Women in Motorsports

by Rachel Harris-Gardner

Pen & Sword Books, Ltd. (2023)

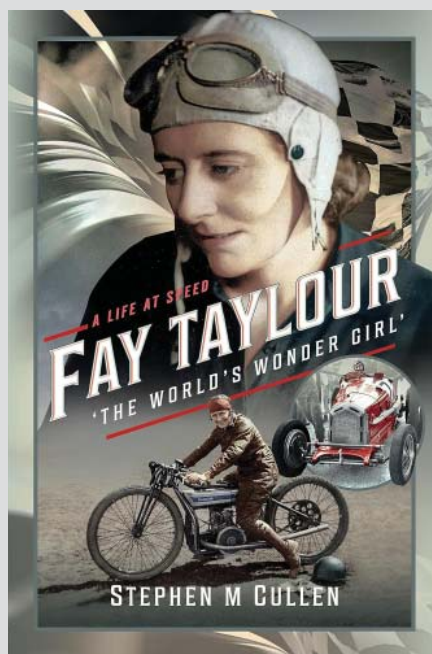
pen-and-sword.co.uk or penandsword-books.com

214 pages, 6.25" x 9.5" hardcover, dust jacket

13 b/w images, index

Price: £22 \$36.95

ISBN: 978-1399065217



Fay Tylour, 'The World's Wonder Girl': A life at Speed

by Stephen M. Cullen

Pen & Sword Books Ltd. (2023)

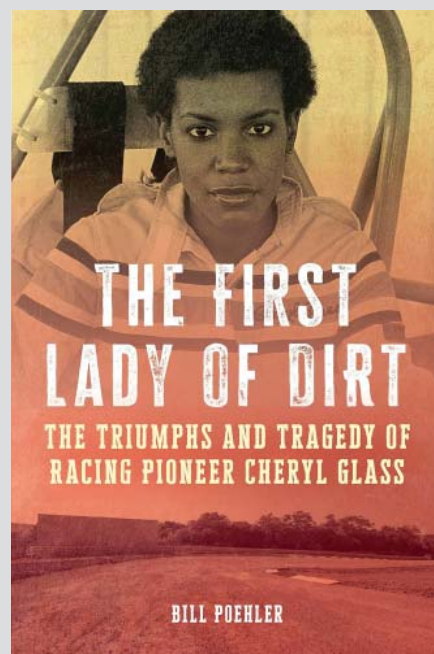
Pen-And-Sword.co.uk

238 pages, 6.25" x 9.5" hardcover, dust jacket

30 b/w images, end notes, bibliography and index

Price: \$49.95 £25

ISBN: 978-1399099384



The First Lady of Dirt: The Triumphs and Tragedy of Racing Pioneer Cheryl Glass

by Bill Poehler

Rowman & Littlefield (2024)

BillPoehler.com

239 pages, 6.25" x 9.25" softcover

20 b/w images, end notes, bibliography, index

Price: \$32

ISBN: 978-1538184059



Seven Reviews Through the Lens of a Theme:

On March 8, 2024, the world observed International Women's Day with more ink given to it than in previous years to wit. (The day was designated in the early 20th century, and the designation of March as International Women's Month came in the late 1980s.) Whether it was all carefully pre-orchestrated or a chance confluence, suddenly there were multiple titles regarding women in the motoring world. What follows is an overview to help you determine which titles best align with your interests, and full reviews either are or soon will be on [SpeedReaders.info](https://www.speedreaders.info).

Of these seven books, three are biographies. Each woman lived in a different era and participated in a different area of motorsports. Another book provides

an overview of an astounding number of women engaged in racing starting in 1897. Another is a fine work of historical fiction with the remaining two explorations of the cultural impacts of women as automobile owners/drivers.

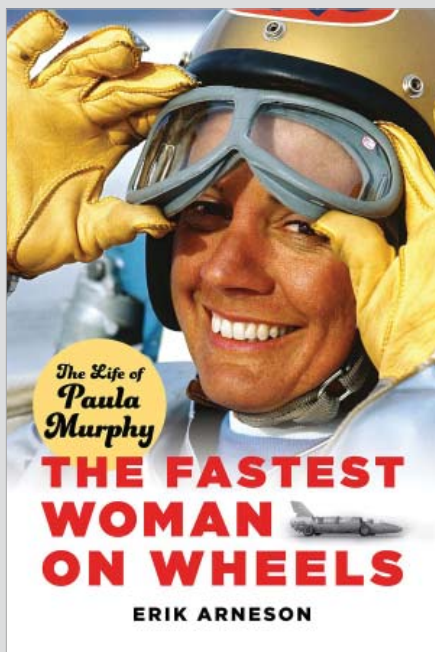
Speed Queens is that overview of an incredible number of ladies who raced. Due to the sheer number of women Rachel Harris-Gardiner identifies by name, she doesn't have page space to write in any detail about these truly pioneering women. So her book is really an introduction to each and hopefully intrigue readers to learn more. Do not overlook exploring Harris-Gardiner's blog as she has posted more information on the all the ladies in her book—and others too—at: [speedqueens.blogspot.com](https://www.speedqueens.blogspot.com).

Fay Tylour is the wonderfully- and fully-written biography about the lady and her entire life 1904-1983. During

her competitive years she was an international sensation first on two-, then in four-wheeled go fasts; but there were more facets to the lady as this fascinating book reveals.

Although Cheryl Glass' lifespan as told in *The First Lady of Dirt* overlapped with Tylour's, the two never crossed paths either personally or professionally. Glass' story is part celebration and part pathos as its subtitle, *The Triumphs and Tragedy of Racing Pioneer Cheryl Glass*, indicates. Her biographer, Bill Poehler, doesn't shy away from relating her story fully, its ups and its downs.

The Fastest Woman on Wheels biography of Paula Murphy is the enigma only because it took so long for her story to be fully told. Every race car she ever sat in she mastered from the get-go with no prior training or instruction. Why no prior



The Fastest Woman on Wheels: The Life of Paula Murphy

by Erik Arneson

Octane Press (2023)

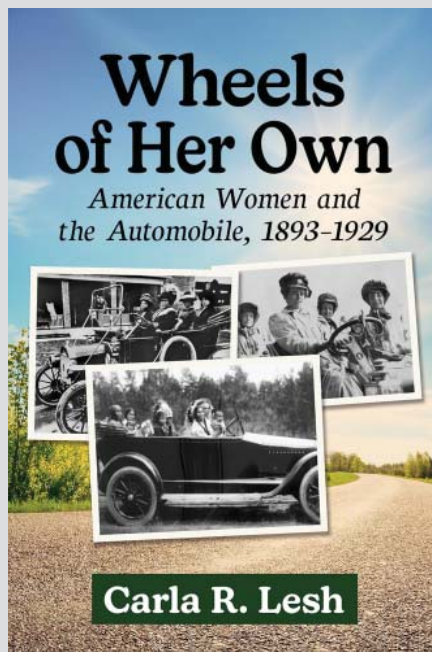
OctanePress.com

280 pages, 6" x 9" softcover

70 b/w images, bibliography, index

Price: \$19.95

ISBN: 978-1642341454



Wheels of Her Own: American Women and the Automobile, 1892-1929

by Carla R. Lesh

McFarland & Company Inc. (2024)

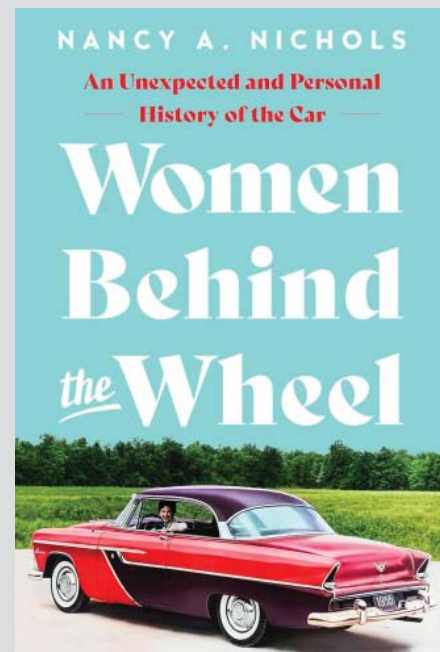
McFarlandPub.com

236 pages, 5.75+ x 8.75" softcover

19 b/w images, end notes, bibliography, index

Price: \$39.95

ISBN: 978-1476672779



Women Behind the Wheel: An Unexpected and Personal History of the Car

by Nancy A. Nichols

Pegasus Books Ltd. (2024)

PegasusBooks.com

240 pages, 6" x 9" hardcover, dust jacket

1 b/w & 7 color images, bibliography, end notes, index

Price: \$28.95

ISBN: 978-1639365593



hoopla? Simple. The lady didn't require, nor did she seek, publicity. She totally enjoyed each "go-fast" opportunity as her biographer Erik Arneson explains.

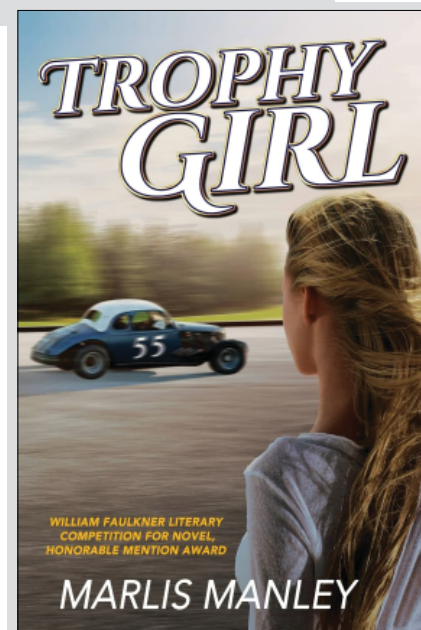
Two books discuss cultural aspects of the automobile on women's lives during different timeframes. SAH board member and working archivist and historian *Carla Lesh* writes of three groups of women—White, Black and Indigenous—describing how the automobile affected their lives in *Wheels of Her Own: American Women and the Automobile 1893-1929*. The other book, while not its author Nancy Nichols' first book, is her first to be transportation oriented. Her *Women Behind the Wheel* explores the influences owning and driving cars had on women's lives from the 1950s to present day.

These latter two do share in common citing research papers attributed to our own current SAH Vice-President *Chris Lezotte* as

she's obviously been busily engaged in research and publishing. Nancy Nichols also incorporates direct quotations from some of Chris' published papers in her book.

Trophy Girl is the historical novel earning its author, Marlis Manley, an Honorable Mention Award in the William Faulkner Literary Competition and rightly so for it is well and engagingly written. Set in the American Midwest during the latter part of the 1950s, it features a young girl seeking to find and meet the man she believes to be her father. The man in question is totally unaware he may have a daughter. He's a seasoned dirt track racer so the pace of the story is as quick as that on the track. Don't deny yourself this pleasurable read culminating in the first Grand National Championship for there's nary a misplaced word nor a fudged fact.

—Helen V Hutchings



Trophy Girl

by Marlis Manley

Black Rose Writing (2021)

BlackRoseWriting.com

342 pages, 6" x 9" softcover

Price: \$20.95

ISBN: 978-1684337736

