



SEPTEMBER, 1971

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 20

# The Society of Automotive Historians

PRINTING AND PUBLICATIONS OFFICE: P. O. Box 6465, Marietta, Georgia 30060

G. Marshall Naul, President  
5 Queen Ann Drive  
Christine Manor  
Newark, Delaware 19711

Richard B. Brigham, Vice President  
136 Park Lane, N. E.  
Marietta, Georgia 30060

R. Perry Zavitz, Secretary  
460 Ridgewood Crescent  
London 63, Ontario  
Canada

Guy P. Seeley, Jr., Treasurer  
10 Bryan Avenue  
Malvern, Pennsylvania 19355

## THE MEETING AT HERSHEY

The meeting at Hershey will be held on Saturday, October 9, 1971, at 4:30 pm, in the Oak Room of the Hershey Hotel. Enter the building from the front, down a small ramp (not up the steps) and pass straight through the lobby as far as you can go. Then turn left, and follow the hallway through its several jogs and turns until you arrive at the back of the building. The Oak Room will be on the left, at the far end of the aforementioned hallway.

The room will be open all day, beginning at about 10:00 am, and those who may wish to drop in for coffee and small-talk are invited to do so.

---

## A Small, Economy-Size Newsletter -

This is the smallest Newsletter we have published since issue No. 1 - and there are reasons for it.

In order to get the new Membership Directory to all members before the meeting at Hershey, it must be sent by First-Class Mail - 24¢ worth. A 12-page Newsletter would require another 16¢ worth of postage. However, by trimming the size of this issue to a measly four pages, it can ride along with the Directory with no additional postage cost. This will save our small treasury quite a respectable sum.

Also, because of the time required to set up and print the directory, there might have been no Newsletter until after the Hershey event if we had tried to produce a full-size issue.

A number of interesting letters, omitted from this issue, will appear in #21. Classified ads, scheduled for this time, will be in the next issue. Articles on the well-known Ford Motor Company and the not-so-well-known Balboa Motor Car Company have been rescheduled for next month's effort.

So, if your letter or other contribution is among the missing this time, just bear with us. Sooner or later we try to publish everything our members send in.

---

## The Membership Directory -

Following a suggestion made by Charles Betts, of Yardley, Pennsylvania, forms were mailed to all members for the listing of their particular interests, reference material and specialized equipment. About half of our total membership responded, which we think is an excellent response.

Even before this information was printed, suggestions for expanding and improving the 1972 edition began to arrive - and they are most welcome.

Your comment and criticism is invited, and the result will be a bigger and better directory next year.

---

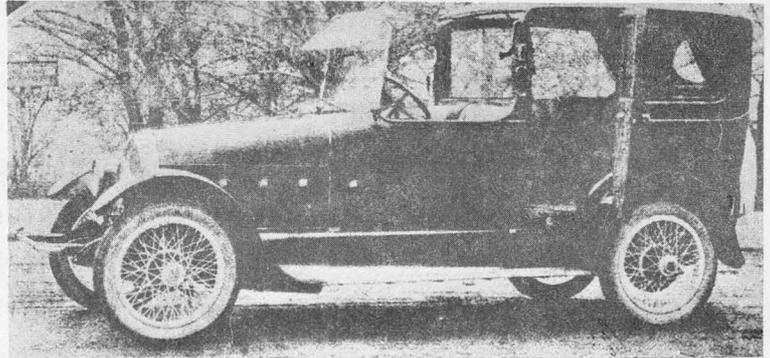
## NEW MEMBERS -

W. Louis Barmmer, 194 Huntington Road, Stratford, Conn. 06497

Jan P. Norbye, 34-35 76th Street, Jackson Heights, N. Y. 11372

## Still more on C. T. Silver

In regard to Mr. W. L. Barmmer's inquiry on C. T. Silver's boat-shaped automobile (N.L. #17) I don't believe I can throw any light on it, but am quite sure that I can add some confusion. In Motor Life magazine, April, 1917, there is a photo of a brougham (town car) in connection with an article on fancy upholstery. The car is billed as a "C. T. Silver Brougham".



The overall design shows the car to be one of the swank models of its day, if just a bit tall. A careful look at this car reveals that, basically, it looks a lot like a KISSEL. In fact, the resemblance of the radiator shell to that of the KISSEL seems to close to be coincidental. Moreover, it seems to anticipate the KISSEL, not of 1917, but of 1919-20!

The hood louvres are interesting. Four are shown in the photo, with possibly a fifth one hidden near the front. The rear one is in the side of the cowl. Quarter-spheres are set over circular openings in the side of the hood - a design not seen again until it re-appeared on the 1934-35 LaSALLE. Seems there's nothing really new under the sun!

At any rate, what is the status of this car? Is it a make in its own right, a KISSEL prototype, some other car reworked, a one-off special, or something else?

R. A. Wawrzyniak, 589 Broadway, Berlin, Wisconsin 54923.

EDITOR'S NOTE: C. T. Silver seems to have been a busy man back during the teen years. Replies to Mr. Barmmer's original inquiry seem to have pretty well established that Silver had special cars made for him by APPERSON, KISSEL and WILLYS. The boat-tailed machine was apparently based on a Willys-Knight V-8 chassis.

---

## The ROBE

*The following letter, from a non-member, was received a few days ago. It sheds considerable light on a very obscure make, the existence of which has been in doubt for years - -*

Recently I wrote to Mr. G. N. Georgano about a ROBE car built in this area. In his reply Mr. Georgano stated that your association is interested in learning of little-known makes and suggested that I write to the editor.

In the early 1920s a factory was built for the manufacture of the ROBE. It was located about 15 miles south of Portsmouth, Virginia at or near Nansemond, a small settlement in Nansemond County, Virginia, on State Route 337. You won't find it on most maps.

Stock in the company was offered for sale, and a four-cylinder engine built of Robe Metal was exhibited in Portsmouth. A demonstration with a chassis was conducted in a corn field to show how it performed in rough terrain. The car appeared to have one long leaf type spring on each side, with the axles attached to the ends of the springs. The rear axle was from a Model T FORD. From a visit to the factory on a holiday I could see two or three bodies under construction. At least one car was completed, as I saw one running on the streets of nearby Norfolk in 1925.

A ROBE draftsman told me that Robe Metal was really aluminum, that the engine had FORD valves and that the car originated in West Virginia. It ws about the size and general appearance of the STAR and GRAY cars. I left this area in 1925 for several years and never heard much about the car afterwards. Apparently it died in its infancy. No sign of the factory remains.

If as a result of the above the ROBE merits space in your Newsletter I would appreciate it if you would send me that issue.

*Robert W. Ainsworth, 134 Grayson Street, Portsmouth, Virginia 23707*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Ainsworth for his interesting and informative letter. A copy of this Newsletter will be mailed to him. A word of thanks also goes to Nick Georgano for suggesting that Mr. Ainsworth share this information with us. The existence of at least a prototype ROBE is hereby confirmed.

---

Which publications do you subscribe to?

It seems to me that it might be helpful to those of us who correspond regularly with one another to know the publications to which each person subscribes. References could be made more easily and duplication or quotation of articles might be avoided if the correspondents are taking the same publications. Discussions would be facilitated, time saved, etc.

I'll be happy to compile the information and distribute it if you members will furnish it to me. Comments on the subject would be most welcome, too.

If possible, sending the information in typewritten form would be most helpful.

*Guy P. Seeley, Jr., 10 Bryan Avenue, Malvern, Penna. 19355.*

---

The LITTLE LAD

In my nameplate collection I have a rather large script of a LITTLE LAD make of car. It was sold to me by an old-car enthusiast who is employed in one of our local junk yards. After talking with him, he assured me that the script was removed from the radiator of a car, and that it was a legitimate make. To date, after delving for several years through my old car listings, I have not been able to locate a manufacturer who ever made such a car as a LITTLE LAD. Possibly you could throw this marque out among the SAH membership for any clues as to its identity.

If this is a legitimate make, it could add another name to the Society's growing list of entries, not to mention my gratitude for nailing down another honest-to-goodness genuine entry of another marque into my list of authorized nameplates and emblems which I have been accumulating over the years.

*Gar H. Schurger, 223 East 13th Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935*

---

THE "IS OUR FACE RED" DEPARTMENT -

In spite of what we thought was careful proof-reading, the new Membership Directory which is being mailed along with this issue of the Newsletter seems to contain a few errors. Most of them aren't serious - a transposition of letters here and there - but one of these boo-boos might create a small problem.

On both page 1 and page 21 the area code for Marshall Naul's phone number is given as (301) It should be (302) Please correct your book. Right now, before you forget.

President Marshall Naul has designated me to be responsible for the development of standards and definitions to govern the work of the SAH. This is a large order, vitally necessary not only to the SAH but to the entire body of automotive enthusiasts. I will need the assistance of every member in carefully considering any material I propose as official SAH standards. For this reason there will be a period between the time when my material is published in the Newsletter and its official adoption by the SAH.

Any member desiring to offer suggestions is urged to feel free to write to me at Box 101, Holliston, Mass. 01746, or to telephone me at (617) 429-4360 evenings or Sundays.

I earnestly desire the assistance and cooperation of every member in this work, and welcome all ideas on what should be done - and with what priorities. If some of you will volunteer to serve on my committee, we may be able to have more than one area of work under way simultaneously.

However, since our communications with each other are largely monthly in nature through the medium of this Newsletter, I am taking it upon myself to designate that the first order of business is to develop terms applicable to the work of the Roster Committee. Accordingly, I am presenting here an offering of definitions which I have created and which appear to me to be both broad enough and precise enough to fill our needs.

To start at the beginning, a vehicle is defined by the dictionary as a means of transporting or carrying something.

**AUTOMOBILE:** A vehicle mounted on three or more wheels and having a self-contained source of power for moving itself over the surface of the earth while under the control of a driver who may or may not be its entire load.

This effectively eliminates trains, planes, ships, motorcycles, tracked vehicles, remotely controlled vehicles and all types of specialized machinery which can move itself, and yet allows us to base other definitions on it.

**MOTOR CAR, PASSENGER CAR, CAR:** An automobile whose load shall be one or more persons, usually not to exceed seven, so designed that it could be legally used at the time of its manufacture.

**CAB, TAXI, TAXICAB:** As above, except especially designed for commercial use in transporting passengers.

**BUS, MOTOR BUS:** An automobile designed for the transportation of a larger number of passengers than a car or a cab, either privately or for hire.

**MOTOR TRUCK, TRUCK, LORRY:** An automobile designed to carry a payload in addition to the driver and helpers.

Please consider these definitions and let me know if they need changing in any way to fill our needs. I suggest that all revisions should be cleared in time for a final official publication in the second issue of the Newsletter following this one.

Now I know that the big question bothering all of us is the formulation of a definition of a "make", and that this is the biggest job facing me. I have spent the whole summer in drawing up ideas whenever I could, and hope to be able to present some preliminary work on the problem in the next issue. Meanwhile, all of you please contribute your advice on this and any other standards to me.

---