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ISSUE NO. 22

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The Society of Automotive Historians

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PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Those members who are interested in writing monographs on subjects which may be too lengthy for the Newsletter, and not long enough for a book, or possibly without enough general interest to be published in book form, now have the opportunity to get their work into print. Interest has been expressed by several organizations in regard to furnishing the SAH with financial assistance in publishing such pieces. The money would be used for printing and distribution of the monographs and the Society would make some additional money by selling copies to the members and the general public, for a nominal fee. Any members interested in such a project are encouraged to submit their work to the President of the Society who will, in turn, get it to a committee which will decide upon the advisability of publishing the piece. This is an excellent opportunity for our members, and I hope we will make good use of it. There is no restriction on the subject, as long as it is automotive oriented.

Scott Bailey informs me that The American Car Since 1775 will be available for \$14.95 until May. After that time it will be \$19.95. This is a valuable book, and worth either price. Also from the hallowed halls of the Automobile Quarterly comes the word of the release, on March 15th, of The 75 Year History of Oldsmobile. This will be available, hard-bound, from A-Q for \$5.95, and soft-bound editions will be sold for about \$3.00 at Oldsmobile dealers. Scott promises that a bare minimum of the book will be used for current models.

Speaking of books and prices, the prices are getting way out of hand. There are more and more books being priced in the \$19.95, \$25 and \$50 range, and except for the encyclopedia type, \$25 or more seems excessive. I'm not saying that they are not good books, but I have yet to see one in that category that measures up to the standard that the price should demand. It seems silly that a book, good in all respects (writing, illustration, layout, printing, etc.), should exceed \$15. There is, in fact, a new series of books on transportation in the works, which are expected to sell for \$9.95 for a volume of approximately 240 pages, and 8 1/2 x 11" in size. I can safely say that quality and accuracy are not being sacrificed in this series. Careful thought and good sense have been the reasons behind being able to maintain a reasonable price. If and when we write a book, let's take a little more consideration of the advisability of going the route of the big, flashy and overpriced book that tries to hide its shortcomings by dazzling the reader with unnecessary gaud, or doing a book that is well written, attractive, practical to use, and priced in a reasonable range.

An interesting note concerning books and our members is that the SAH has at least 20 members who are professional publishers, editors, authors, ghostwriters, researchers and indexers. In a forthcoming issue, I will try to give the rest of the members a guide on how to make use of these people.

I would appreciate it if anyone who is willing to do ghostwriting, on either an amateur or professional basis, would let me know.

Best wishes for a happy and successful New Year.

John Peckham

Some Notes From Australia

In Issue No. 19 there seemed to be some heart-searching about the role of the non-U.S. members and about the vehicles built outside the U.S. As one of the more distant members might I just say that it is not a problem, in my view. As the bulk of members are in the United States, and the United States has far more makes than any other country, it seems natural that there will be a preponderance of American content, and I don't think it can be avoided. So long as the welcome mat is always there for other member's contributions and queries, I feel that they will derive benefit from the Society.

Speaking for myself, I have been very pleased with the responses I have had to matters I have raised during my membership of the organization. As a number of Australian made cars over the years have made great use of U.S. engines, transmissions, axles, etc., I will be seeking data on these eventually.

Also, the mention of an export-only make called INNES grabs my attention because there is an Australian INNES of 1905 which could have been an import with the agent's name on it. There were two models, of one and four cylinders of common dimensions - 3 15/16 bore and 4 3/4 inch stroke - giving 9 and 20 horsepower respectively. Transmissions were 3-speed, and weights were 1680 and 2000 pounds. Anything connecting these two INNES vehicles would be of great interest and value to me.

If there is a connection it will be very similar to the COTTON listed in Georgano's Encyclopedia. This was a specialized vehicle built in Scotland to the order of the Cotton Motor Car Co., Ltd., which was formed to exploit the invention of Mr. A. J. Cotton, who wanted a machine capable of mastering the difficult country in the pastoral regions of Australia.

Another perplexing example with strong U.S. ties is the GRANDE which was probably never built, although advance publicity material was released. Judging from the body styles, this could have been a mid-to-later twenties venture, of which they said "Coming, the amazing new model GRANDE, by the designers of America's first automobile". The highlight of this car was the design of the engine, which was an opposed-piston two-stroke in which the top piston was in fact a sleeve with a closed end, the lower piston operating within it. The motion of the sleeve uncovered ports for inlet and transfer as well as for the spark plug at their respective times. In the layout of crankshaft motion and piston action there were similarities to the Gobron-Brillie, while the system of opposed-piston two-strokes is nowadays used by the COMMER diesel truck engine.

In all a rather unique design, and other features mentioned were rotary spring suspension, shock absorber seat mountings, enclosed four-wheel drum brakes, and there was a definite trend against wood for either wheels or body frames. The body was stated to be of laminated construction, the steering gear was Ross cam and lever, and the headlamps were said to have an Ilco-nickle finish.

Do any of the features, or the allusion to the "designers of America's first automobile" ring any bells?

In recent months I have noted two areas in the field of automobile history which seem to be rather grey. One is the listing of motor quadricycles and tricyles, which have apparently been disowned by both motorcar and motorcycle lists. I have recently seen a photo of a motor tricycle which was taken in Melbourne in 1903. It has a wickerwork chair between the two front wheels, and the driver has pedals to help the engine which drives directly by belt. The name can be seen on

the tank, but it is difficult to make out if it is HEILIENT or HEILEIRT. Another in this category is the Canadian MASSEY-HARRIS from Toronto. When I first saw a reference to a MASSEY-HARRIS Quadricycle I presumed it was an error, but in recent months I have found several references to it, commencing in 1901. At the Melbourne Show in that year the Canada Cycle and Motor Company displayed 25 examples of wheels (cycles) and two motors. One was a 2½ HP motor quad, and the other was a mail delivery motor of 3½ HP. Apparently the Canada Motor and Cycle Company was formed by the fusion of the bicycle making interests of Massey-Harris, Red Bird, Imperial (I think) and one other, and went on to produce some motorised machines as well. A photograph of the factory in 1904 reveals the legend "Bicycles and Motor Vehicles". Their IVANHOE electric was introduced in 1903, and it would be interesting to learn whether the Massey-Harris cycle was in any way related to the Massey-Harris farm machinery. Perhaps some Canadian members can fill in the gaps.

As an aside, the Canada Bicycle and Motor Company in Melbourne operated up until the early 1960s, having held the DODGE franchise through the years and also PEUGEOT since the war. Chrysler Australia brought in a unified dealership system and another firm got the job.

The other grey area is in regard to vehicles made in Asia, and Southeast Asia in particular. For example, on a radio news program on S.E. Asia recently I heard about a vehicle which is being built in South Vietnam. It has Citroen 2 CV mechanical parts but is otherwise original. Does anyone know who builds the motor Tri-shaws used in the cities of this region? In the Phillipines there is a unique vehicle called the JEEPNEY which is derived from army Jeeps but with Mercedes Diesel engines and eight-seater bodies. With open sides and gay colored surrey tops they look like a cross between a Jeep and an oversized beach buggy. One company producing them is Larao Motors, Inc., who commenced operations in 1962. Also in the August issue of Motor Trend (p95) there is a reference to a Bob Rice who manufactured electric cars in Taiwan. Is this the same as the Formosan entry in the chart compiled by G. M. Naul in Newsletter No. 19?

This chart, extracted from The Complete Encyclopedia of Motorcars, reflects the number of omissions from the Australian scene found in this book. For example, the pre-1900 figure is three, when it is at least six, actually, and the 1900-1909 tally is shown as seven, whereas it would be more like 27 if a number of one-off vehicles were included. While there could be some objection to one-off makes, one of the seven listed, the Puckridge-Kinmont, was such a specimen. In the last grouping, 1960-68, there are some notable omissions such as Elfin, Australia's most prolific builder of competition cars, Bolwell, who now produce a world class G.T. coupe with a 302 in. Ford V-8 engine, and others.

A. M. Gregory, "Beltana", Korumburra Road, Drouin South, Victoria 3818, Australia

Number Eighteen

So the membership was stunned by SAH 18? And Mr. Peckham calls it a "mistake"? I do not think so, and I'm distressed by that statement because a lot of work went into it. However, if he wants a Research Supplement (with 5 holes, please, to fit my 2-ring binders) that is all right with me, but include the corrections there, too. Let's keep the roster in one place. The next roster section will be another big one. Maybe the committee can stun them again!

No one, absolutely no one, complained to me about SAH 18.

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

The Directory

The membership directory for SAH is a good job and should be most useful. I was disappointed nevertheless to see that the information sheet mailed to you some time ago apparently had gone astray since no mention of our publishing activities was made. Perhaps you would wish to take note now that I am the publisher of the Automobile Almanac, an annual fact dictionary and reference on automobiles in general, including all facets of their competitions.

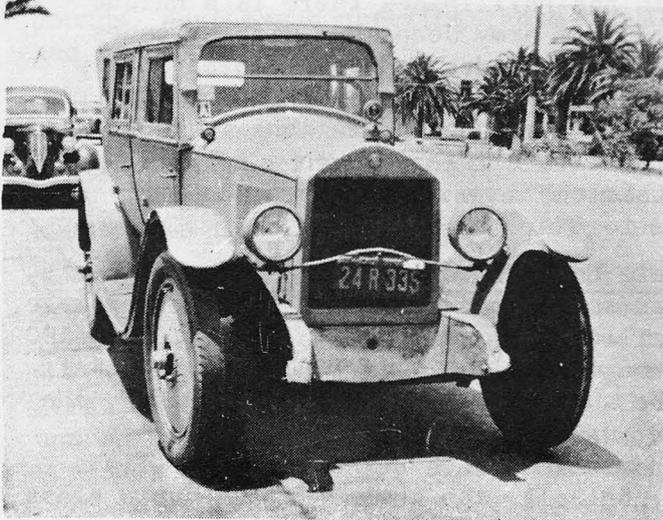
I am also a respected contributor to national media on the subject of automobiles. To this end, I enclose biographical sheet and letter from Andy Granatelli announcing my recent selection as winner of the annual American Auto Racing Writers & Broadcasters Association contest.

I thought it might be helpful to you if you had this information in hand now so that when the time came for the preparation of the next directory, my listing could be more complete.

David Ash, 40 North Greenbush Road, West Nyack, New York 10994

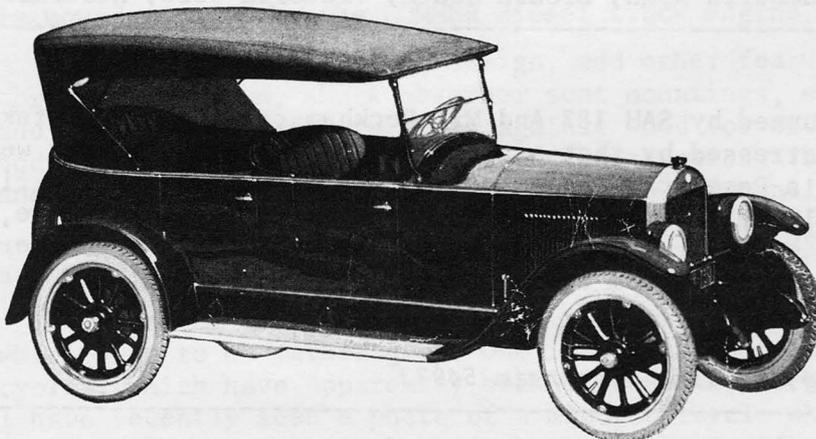
Editor's Note: Apparently Mr. Ash's directory information never reached us. All forms were filed in one place as received, and when they were set up for printing we went through the pile from top to bottom. The original forms have all been kept together, and a search through them has not turned up this missing item.

Identification Received



In issue No. 21 we printed this photo, and asked for identification of the make. Several replies were received, and there now seems little room for doubt that the car is either a DORT or a GRAY-DORT. The two makes were almost, if not exactly, identical.

The picture at the bottom of the page was taken from an advertisement in Motor World, November 1, 1922, in which the new DORT Six was announced. Disc wheels were an available option, according to the ad. The price of this car was \$990, F.O.B. Flint, Michigan.



The DORT Six Touring Car

The new DORT Six is a worthy companion to the famous DORT Four. Wheel base, 115 inches; semi-elliptical front springs; cantilever rear springs with bronze bushings throughout; sturdy 5-inch deep channel steel frame; 31 x 4 cord tires; barrel-type headlamps; spiral bevel-gear rear axle; artillery-type wheels; disc wheels optional, but extra; spare tire extra; Timken and Hyatt bearings; Bosch ignition; multiple-disc clutch; slanting windshield; nicked radiator; full crown fenders; nicked door handles; and foot rest. Price, \$990, f. o. b. Flint. The DORT Four Touring car reduced from \$885 to \$865 and other Four models accordingly.

It's a Dort

The car on page 4 of SAH Newsletter No. 21 is positively a DORT. The drum headlights identify it as a 1923. It looks like a touring with a California top. It could be a GRAY-DORT, as their appearance was similar. Many of the DORTS had disc wheels, all had forward opening doors.

Walter O. MacIlvain, 17 Bonner Road, Manchester, Connecticut 06040

Although the peculiar top enclosure tends to confuse the issue, the mystery car in SAH No. 21 is a 1920 or 1921 GRAY-DORT, the Canadian version of the U.S. DORT. Both versions had all doors open from the front, a rare item in a touring car body of any era. Neither SCRIPPS-BOOTH nor MOON had this feature.

Of course, the coincidental juxtaposition across the double page of the obituary of Mr. William M. Gray, who manufactured the GRAY-DORT, is quite ironic.

Georgano's Encyclopedia, incidentally, gives the GRAY-DORT a somewhat longer life than Mr. Zavitz: "The company....continued selling 1924 GRAY-DORTS into 1925 while winding up operations".

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

THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY - ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Error: G. Marshall Naul, telephone area code incorrect. Should be 302, not 301.

Address Changes:

Dr. Vicente Alvarez, new address Avda Caseros 751 - 30 G, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Kenneth H. Stauffer, new address 905 N. Franklin St., Pottstown, Penna. 19464
Miss Mary M. Cattie, new address, The Blythewood, S33W, Philadelphia, Pa. 19144

Additions:

Jan P. Norbye, 34-35 76th St., Jackson Heights, N. Y. 11372
Robert R. Ebert, 5825 West 224th St., Fairview Park, Ohio 44126
Lewis M. Burdette, M.D., 7 Manito Drive, Cambridge, Md. 21613
Tad Burness, 2150 South 1st Street, San Jose, Calif. 95112
Charles W. Proctor, 1912 Teresita Lane, Newport Beach, Calif. 92600
Dr. Robert F. Croll, 1224 Glenwood Drive, Mt. Pleasant, Mich. 48858
Nathaniel Adelstein, 1776 Calhoun St., Trenton, N. J. 08638
Fred K. Fox, 13150 El Capitan Way, Delhi, Calif. 95315
Robert A. Zimmerman, 365 St. Leger Ave., Akron, Ohio 44305
James E. Harrigan, 4036 55th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50310
Peter E. Bickford, P.O. Box 328, Morris, N.Y. 13808
Walter R. Haessner, P.O. Box 89, Newfoundland, N.J. 07435
Harry J. Mann, 15436 Lakeshore Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44110

Who Doesn't Have a Membership Directory?

Membership Directories were mailed to all members last October, and as new members join the Society copies of this booklet are sent to them.

However, in the general confusion, it is not only possible but probable that we have missed someone. If you don't have yours, please notify us and a copy will be on its way to you. Write to:

Society of Automotive Historians
P. O. Box 6465
Marietta, Georgia 30060

The ARGONNE »Power and Speed With Economy«

(1) THE HISTORY OF THE ARGONNE FOUR

by G. Marshall Naul

In the period immediately following World War I there were a number of new makes of automobiles launched with high hopes of immediate acceptance. Many of these makes are virtually unknown, as their life-span was too short to have produced more than a very few chassis. A typical example is the ARGONNE, named after the French forest in which U.S. troops fought their greatest battle in World War I. The ARGONNE, as a produced make, existed for less than two years, during which time only 24 cars were constructed. In many technical details the ARGONNE was unusual. The very few which reached the road made it a very rare automobile, even during its short life.

The earliest press release on this auto gave the name of Otto R. Bieler as the designer (ref. 1). It is claimed that Harold E. Porter was actually the spark-plug behind the launching of this car (ref. 2). The ARGONNE was to have been manufactured by the Automotive & Machinery Engineering Company, of Long Island City, N. Y. (ref. 1). Apparently the prototype car was built by or for this company, and this is shown in photographs 1 and 2. This particular car shows cycle fenders, the front ones turning with the steering as described in the initial press information. Three months later it was announced in the automotive press (ref. 3) that the ARGONNE would be built by the Jersey City Machine Company, 113-115 Plymouth Street, Jersey City, N.J. It was still to be marketed by the former company. The first full description was in a press release in June, 1919 (ref. 4), and this was followed by a full page advertisement in Motor World of June 11, 1919 (page 162). This ad was straight from Madison Avenue:

ANNOUNCEMENT - A new car designed by a master automobile engineer of recognized accomplishments and ability in the motor-car world. He has embodied his progressive and practical ideas in the 'Argonne Four', which marks a distinct forward step in automobile construction and represents

THE HIGHEST TYPE OF MODERN ENGINEERING SKILL

The 'Argonne Four' is of foreign design throughout with a sweet-running four-cylinder motor of tremendous power. The chassis is sturdy but light and well balanced. And the graceful flowing body-lines "suggest" its high speed.

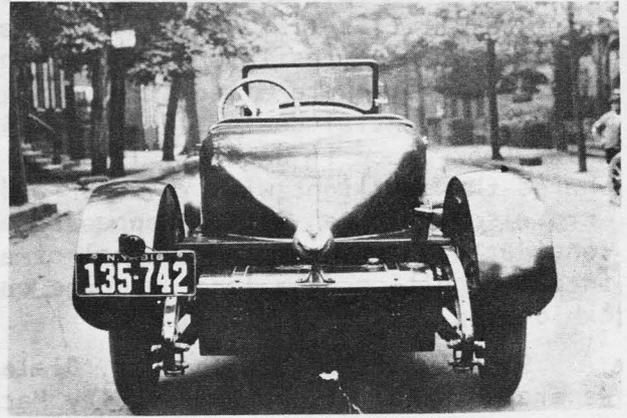
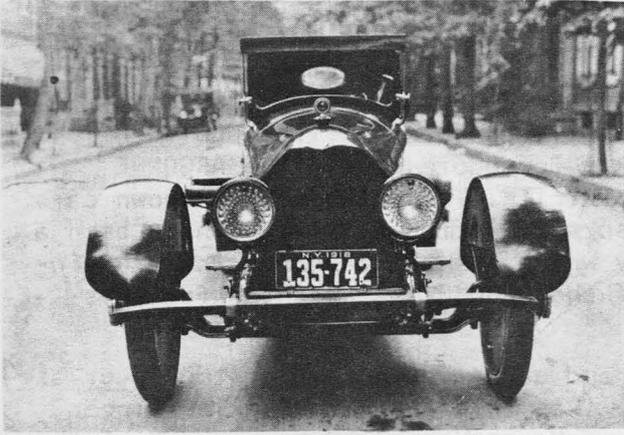
The "Argonne Four" has many improvements over present-day motor-car construction, which make for great Power with Economy, Strength with Simplicity, Speed without Vibration, and Long Life without Excessive Weight.

OVER 20 MILES ON A GALLON OF GASOLINE AND A SPEED OF
70 MILES PER HOUR - GUARANTEED.

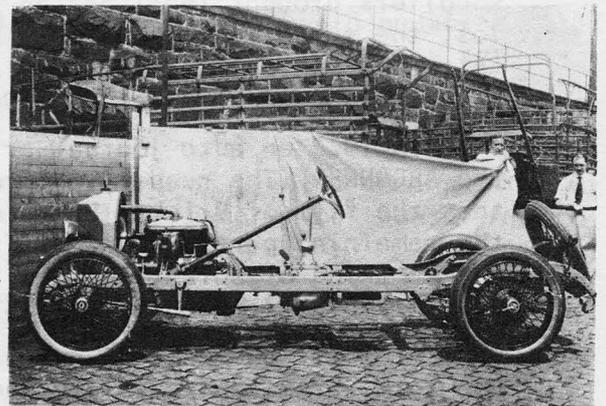
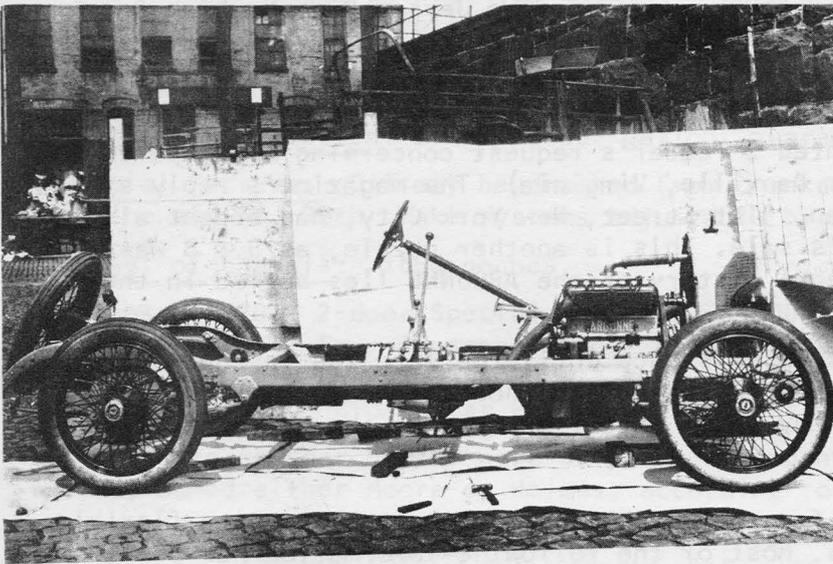
A Solid, well-financed organization is in back of the Argonne Four. They know how to build cars and how to sell them by broad-gauge methods. They are producing a carefully and painstakingly built car - a car which will sell readily and easily to those who can afford to pay the price which superiority demands. Essentially a gentleman's car in appearance, detail, construction and performance.

The ARGONNE Four \$4000
"Sells Without Demonstration"
The Argonne Motor Car Co., Jersey City, N.J.

(Just when the Argonne Motor Car Co. was formed is not known. Apparently the Argonne Motor Car Co. was the marketing portion, while the Jersey City Machine Co., Automobile Department, remained the manufacturing part of the organization.)

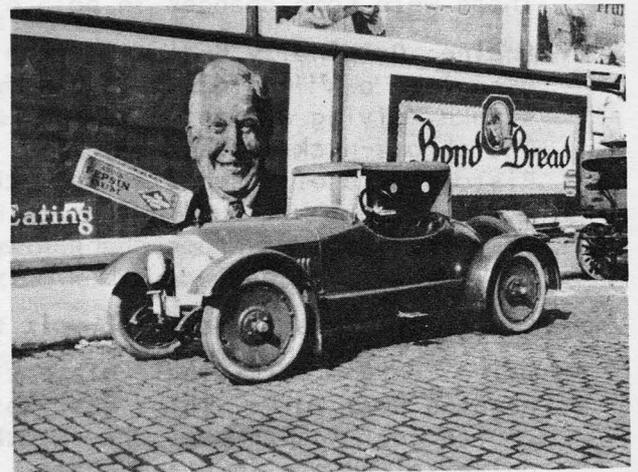
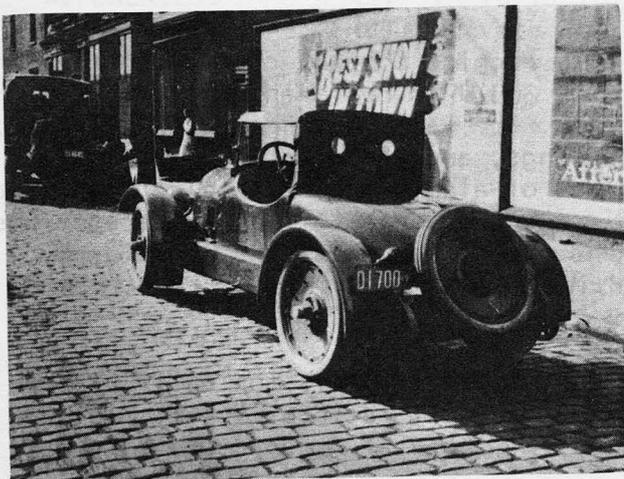


The prototype ARGONNE as initially described with front cycle fenders mounted on the wheels to turn with steering. Head lamps differ from later versions. This particular car has a sliding mother-in-law seat seen at the left between headlight and fender.



Left side of chassis. Unfortunately the two persons at the right are unidentified. Chassis photos used in the two-page catalog, and were taken at least as early as late 1919.

Right side of chassis, probably in plant yard in Jersey City.



Completed car fitted with disc wheels. Year and State of license not legible, but type would indicate New Jersey and D is then a dealer's license. -3 after number shows three plates with that number. Cobblestones tie in with other photos of the chassis, and this was taken in the vicinity of Plymouth Street in Jersey City.

Later, in July and August, others of the automotive journals ran short descriptive articles (ref. 4). The full advertising of the ARGONNE was built by full-page ads in the prestigious (and expensive) Vanity Fair of September and October, 1919. These ads were aimed at buyers, while the above quoted one was obviously aimed at potential dealers. All of this was a build-up for the first public display which took place in January, 1920, at New York's Commodore Hotel. The ARGONNE shared the spotlight with the WASP and the LA FAYETTE. These two better-known cars were also making an initial appearance. This sort of introduction must have been a considerable drain on the capital of a company which was probably not in lush financial condition. The lone two-page catalog of the ARGONNE was printed for this exhibition.

Shortly after this show Mr. Bieler died, and a Charles S. Singer took over as General Manager of the Jersey City Machine Co. (Was this the same Charles Singer who had been head of the Singer Motor Car Co. of Mount Vernon, N.Y., makers of the SINGER?) The new manager apparently did not have a liking for the existing design of the ARGONNE, and thought the car should be revamped to take the larger Duesenberg four-cylinder engine. This required changes in the chassis and resulted in the cancellation of a number of existing contracts with suppliers. In turn, the suppliers brought legal action to recover damages. The Jersey City Machine Co. lost the suits, and, unable to sustain these losses, went into involuntary receivership in July, 1920. The last ARGONNE was assembled in March, 1920, and the last two chassis did have the Duesenberg engine.

In 1922 an auto journal printed a reader's request concerning spare parts for the ARGONNE. (The reader was from Danville, Virginia). The magazine's reply stated that the firm of Brisk & Beckelman, 31st Street, New York City, had bought all of the remaining parts at a sheriff's sale. This is another puzzle, as B & B was a dress-making organization. The legal history of the ARGONNE lies buried in the New York District Court (ref. 5).

At least one ARGONNE car was in existence until the late 20s in the Albany, New York, area, and possibly one was in the neighborhood of Norfolk, Virginia, at a later date. Somewhere there may be an extant example of the uncommon ARGONNE.

(2) TECHNICAL

The recorded specifications for the ARGONNE seem to have been quite flexible and show considerable differences. Most of the following information has been taken from the only available ARGONNE catalog, a two-page display, which was probably the only literature issued on this car. By a rare coincidence it is possible to compare this catalog with the typed original write-up and with the proof sheets. There were some changes in both of the preliminaries.

Engine: Originally Buda, although the Jersey City Machine Company claimed that it used its "own" engine. This had four cylinders of 3 3/4 in. bore and 5 1/8 in. stroke, giving a displacement of 226 cubic inches. The valve arrangement was L-head. The chrome-nickle crankshaft had three main bearings, and was counter balanced. Pistons were of "Magnalite" and the crankcase was of aluminum. This engine was rated at 50 HP, but without indication of RPM. At first an "Argonne-Gillis" carburetor was used, but this was soon changed to Rayfield, and was variously stated as being by Zenith or Stromberg.

Electrical: Westinghouse 12-volt system with Exide battery and Eisemann magneto.

Drive: Borg & Beck single plate clutch with a four-speed transmission built by the Reading Gear Works. Third gear was direct with an over-all ratio of 4.41:1, while fourth gear was an over-drive with a ratio of 3.41:1. Special Argonne-designed universal joints in drive shaft.

Brakes: Foot brake operated a single expanding drum at the rear of the transmission housing. Emergency brakes operated the drums on the rear wheels. Brake and clutch pedals adjustable.

Steering: Worm and segment by Gemmer.

Tread was 56 inches; wheelbase given variously as 118 and 119 inches for the two-passenger model, 128 inches for the four-passenger model.

Radiator mounted on ball bearings.

Standard Equipment: Hartford shock absorbers; Waltham combination clock and 80 MPH speedometer; Complete set of tools, tire pump, inspection light with cord, two lights in engine compartment, dashboard gasoline meter "showing season and trip consumption".

Tires: 32 x 4 Silverstone; wheels, disc or wire.

Headlights have two bulbs. Muffler cut-out standard.

Colors: Gun metal body, satin finish. Fenders and wire wheels, black; disc wheels gray with black rims and hubs. Other colors optional. Upholstery of Spanish leather, any standard color.

Speed: 70 MPH, guaranteed. (V. Sivertsen says that the ARGONNE attained 90 MPH on the Long Island Vanderbilt Raceway. Based on a calculation of gear ratio and tire diameter, this would mean an engine speed of 2540 RPM in fourth gear. This is not an unreasonable value).

Gasoline Consumption: 20 miles per gallon, guaranteed.

Special Features: Oil may be drained from crankcase by means of a valve on the side of the engine. Both brake systems adjustable by knurled nuts under floor board.

Weight of Chassis: 1850 pounds.

Prices: (1920) 2-door Special Roadster, \$4500
Four-Passenger Sport Model, \$4700
Chassis, \$4000
"Closed Car Prices on Application"

(The two-passenger bodies were built by a company on West 50th Street, New York City, named either Moore or Holmes, according to V. Sivertsen).

A letter to Motor Age signed by H. E. Porter states that the closing serial number for ARGONNE 1919 models was No. 110, and the beginning number for the 1920 model was No. 2011.

REFERENCES: (1) TA 10-10-18, p654
(2) Private letters from Mrs. Steele; V. Sivertsen
(3) MW 7-16-19, p11
(4) ATJ Jly 19, p237-8; MoToR Aug 19, p75
(5) Private letter, Al Arnheim

(3) ARGONNE Personnel:

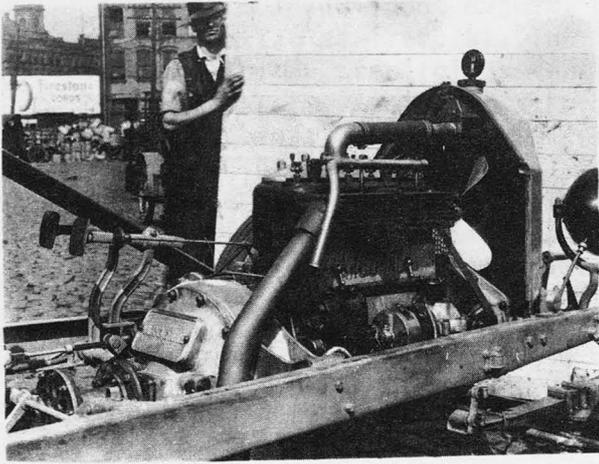
Otto R. Bieler - Formed Automotive & Machinery Engineering Co. in 1918. Had previously been a designer with BIDDLE, which probably accounts for some external similarities of the two makes. With Harold Porter designed the ARGONNE.

Harold E. Porter - Designer with Bieler of the ARGONNE. Had, in 1905, been the designer of the BLISS automobile. Was vice-president of Jersey City Machine Co., 1920. One of the partners of the Argonne Motor Car Co.

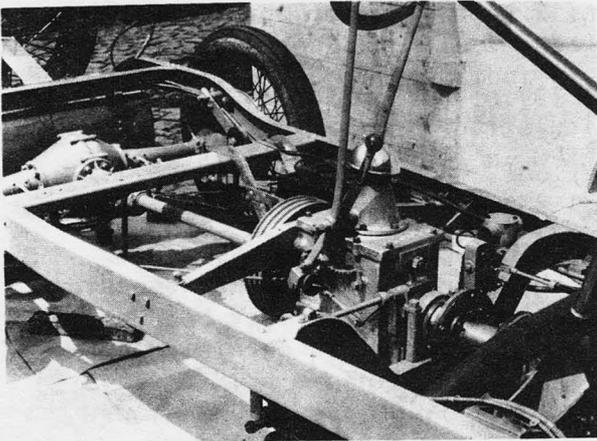
Howard Parker - President of Jersey City Machine Co., 1918-1919.

Charles S. Singer - General Manager of Jersey City Machine Co. in 1920.

Volmer Sivertsen - One of the partners of the Argonne Motor Car Co.



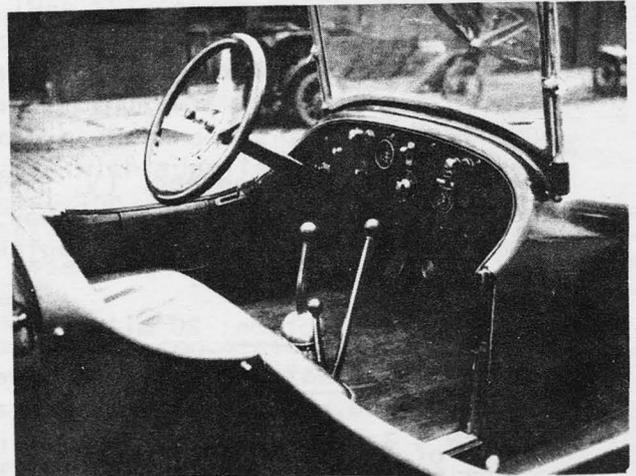
The 4-cylinder Buda engine with Argonne identification on valve plate and on clutch housing. Seen behind the clutch housing is one of the special universal joints mentioned in the technical description. Low on the side of the engine is the Eisemann magneto and the Westinghouse generator, connected in tandem. Fan was a casting. On manifold is the firing order, 1,3,4,2.



Behind engine - large drum behind transmission is the service brake. lever nearest camera is the emergency brake which worked on the rear wheels. The short lever between the gear-shift lever and the brake lever is a mystery. It seems to operate a dog-like mechanism in front of the transmission. This possibly may have been for the fourth gear.



Nameplate of the Argonne. The same design was used on the hubcaps.



Interior of the ARGONNE showing simple and neat dash. Doors on this car have hidden hinges and this hints at above-average quality. The levers for the transmission and emergency brakes are shorter than shown on the bare chassis. Examination of all of these photos shows considerably more attention to detail than for most assembled cars of this period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Even an account as short as this requires the willing assistance of many individuals to make a complete story. For this I would like to thank the following:

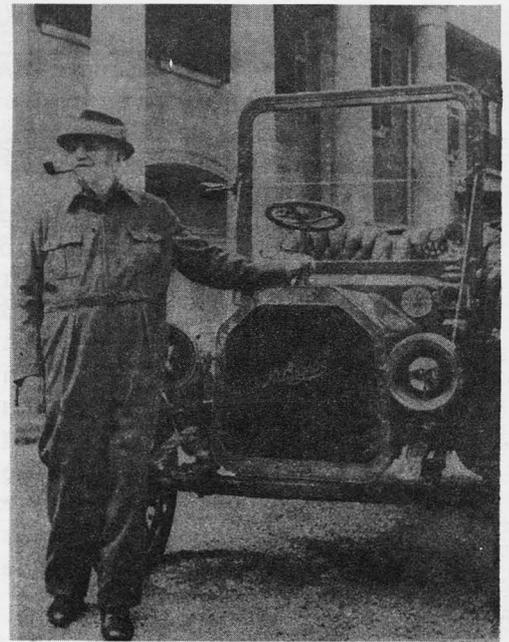
- Mrs. Austin Steele, Cambridge, Maryland. (Mrs. Steele is the daughter of Harold Porter.
- Volmer Siversten, Virginia Beach, Virginia
- Dale Price, Cambridge, Maryland
- Mary M. Cattie, Free Library of Philadelphia
- James J. Bradley, Detroit Public Library
- Alvin J. Arnheim, New York City
- Donald Berkebile, Smithsonian Institution
- Keith Marvin, Troy, New York

Robert Samuel McLaughlin



Auto Pioneer Dies in Canada

OSHAWA, Ontario—Robert S. McLaughlin, a pioneer automobile maker who grew up with the industry, died Thursday at the age of 100. Up until last year, he spent an hour daily at the plant of General Motors of Canada, Ltd., that he founded in Oshawa in 1907. (Associated Press Wirephoto)



Col. R. S. McLaughlin, the grand old man of auto-making, celebrates his 100th birthday today. Col. Sam is shown in this recent photograph standing in front of a McLaughlin Model F in front of his home near Oshawa. (CP Wirephoto)

Photo from London (Ont.) Free Press, Sept. 8, 1971.
Sent by R. Perry Zavitz

Col. R. S. McLaughlin, founder of the McLaughlin Motor Car Company, died on Thursday, January 6, 1972, at Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, at the age of 100.

Robert Samuel McLaughlin, better known as Colonel Sam (the title is honorary) was born on September 8, 1871. When he was five years old, he once told a reporter, a wheel swinging from the ceiling of his father's carriage shop hit him on the head, "and I've had wheels in my head ever since".

At the age of 26, Sam convinced his father that the horse-and-buggy days were coming to an end, and made a deal to import engines from the United States. The McLaughlin Carriage Company, founded in 1867, soon became the McLaughlin Motor Car Company.

The first McLaughlin car was produced in 1908, and was similar to the four-cylinder Buick of that time. From 1910 until the early 1920s McLaughlin produced a full line of cars under the McLaughlin name, including a light Six based on the American Oakland. Beginning in 1915, McLaughlin built Chevrolets under license, and in 1918 the entire McLaughlin business was sold to General Motors. The name McLaughlin was used alone until 1923, when the name was changed to McLaughlin-Buick. The McLaughlin name was dropped after 1942.

As a result of the sale of the McLaughlin business to General Motors, Col. Sam became president of General Motors of Canada, and vice-president of the American parent company. He retired from a directorship of the U.S. firm in 1967, but remained chairman of the board of the Canadian company. At the age of 100, he still spent an hour or more at his desk each day.

Starting at a salary of \$3.00 per week in his father's carriage business, he built a fortune estimated at \$275 million. No one knows the full extent of his benefactions. He financed more than 400 young Canadian doctors and their families to go abroad for a year of study. His contributions to Canadian universities ran into the millions of dollars. His \$2 million grant started the McLaughlin Science Planetarium in Toronto, and he contributed another \$1 million to expand and equip Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

Confusion over the status of the Packard Clipper as a model or a make in its own right stems largely from the efforts of Packard President James Nance (1952-55) to aim the Packard marque at the luxury class, making more of a distinction between it and the medium-priced Packard Clipper which, though sharing body shell and chassis, was detrimmed and offered at a substantially lower price.

There is no doubt that the Clipper was a Packard model in its two prewar years, 1941 and 1942. Packard advertising and dealer documents constantly refer to the "Clipper Series" and "Senior Series", the latter being classic-styled Packards at the top of the line. With the 1946-47 Twenty-First Series the Clipper name was ubiquitous on all models, but was at times separated from the name "Packard" by the individual model designation, hence: Packard Custom Super Clipper, Packard Super Clipper, etc. It would seem a logical assumption that the company still used the word "Clipper" to represent the streamlined envelope body designed largely by Dutch Darrin and applied to most Packards beginning in 1941. Thus, through 1947 the Clipper is undoubtedly a model of Packard; that it was in some years the only model is incidental.

In 1953 the Clipper name reappeared, having been replaced in the interim by the "Packard Eight" (1948-50) and the "Packard 200" (1951-52). Still the name was used only as a supplement to the name "Packard". The Nance policy came into sight in 1954, however, with all brochures announcing the "1954 PACKARD and packard (small letters) CLIPPER". Nevertheless, the name "Packard" - some feel unfortunately - was never omitted from major logos or brochures, merely captions under illustrations of the various Clipper models. It is a matter of semantics to some extent, but given these facts plus the sharing of the same basic body, chassis and engine, I submit that we can extend the designation of "Clipper" as a model through the 1954 model year.

The year 1955 is another situation. Nance's policy of line separation now resulted in further minimization of the "Packard" name: Clippers carried their designation in script on their hoods for the first time, though the tiny, traditional "Packard" script was still carried on deck lids as it was in 1953 and 1954. Though the basic body shell and (detuned) V-8 engine were still shared with the Packard, the torsion bar suspension made famous by the latter was not - except for the very top line Clipper Custom. The volume Clippers - the Super and the Deluxe - employed conventional coil/leaf spring suspension. Brochures walked a center line, the deluxe versions announcing the "packard CLIPPER" on the front cover, but only "CLIPPER...Precision-built by Packard Craftsmen" on the rear. Similar nomenclature is found when examining the 1956 models.

None of the above contrasts between the Clipper and regular Packard are, in the writer's opinion, sufficient to warrant S.A.H. to name the 1955-56 Clippers as makes. History is replete with suspension variations offered on different models of the same make, and similar examples exist where a model is advertised as "a product of" the make under which it falls. But a company's psychological attempt to make a model seem like a make doesn't necessarily make it so in fact. Although obvious changes were made to produce the Clipper, and though the Packard Division of Studebaker-Packard exploited them to the fullest in a last-ditch effort to make the Packard name synonymous only with the best, the Clipper remained in every sense a Packard model.

During the 1957 model year, when it appeared only as a gussied-up Studebaker President, the name "Clipper" was applied again as in 1946-47 - next to the name "Packard" on each model in the line, i.e., the town sedan and country sedan or station wagon. Again, there is no evidence to suggest that the Clipper was a make in its own right. And, for 1958, the Clipper label disappeared entirely, to be followed, tragically, by Packard itself a few months later.

On this basis I respectfully submit that the Society designate the Clipper as a model of Packard, along the lines of its entry in Automobile Quarterly's American Car Since 1775:

CLIPPER (model) 1941-47; 1953-57
See "Packard"
Packard Motor Car Company, Detroit, 1941-7
Studebaker-Packard Corp., Detroit, 1953-7

REFERENCES:

The American Car Since 1775 by the editors of Automobile Quarterly
E. P. Dutton, New York, 1971

NADA Blue Books (1950, 1955) National Automobile Dealers Association
Detroit, Michigan, 1950 and 1955

Sales Brochures:

Unnumbered: 1946 Packard Packard Motor Car Co.
Unnumbered: 1946 Packard Clipper Detroit, Michigan
Unnumbered: 1954 Packard and Packard
Clipper (red cover magazine)
Unnumbered: 1954 Packard Clipper dexule brochure

#C-101, 9/55: Clipper by Packard Packard Division
#PC-110 9/55: Packard and Clipper Studebaker-Packard Corp.
#PD-1056 1956: Packard Clipper for 1957 Detroit, Michigan

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Book Reviews

by G. Marshall Naul

History of the Motorcar - Marco Matteucci
Crown Publishers, Inc., New York. 392 pp. \$17.50

The author is Motoring Correspondent for Corriere della Sera, Milan, and this book is printed in Italy. The treatment is heavily European and slanted toward the Italian aspects of the automobile. The illustrations, 707 altogether (with 485 in color), are outstanding in general. However, the captions give minimal information and frequently the photos bear no relation to the accompanying text.

For the text, it is non-technical and the historical coverage follows in chronological though confusing order. This is interspersed with very interesting but distracting pages on diverse topics related to the automobile. The author has misunderstood the term "orphan car" as used in the United States, and uses it in place of "assembled car". There are other minor matters and at least one photograph is used twice (pg. 97 and pg. 244). Some of the illustrations are of model cars although they are not so labelled. Althgether this is a lavish book, but if one is pressed to spend \$17.50 on an auto book, there are better choices.

The Custom Body Era - Hugo Pfau
A. S. Barnes & Co., New York. 232 pp. \$25.00

Hugo Pfau has done an excellent job of relating the story of the U.S. custom body builders, who produced the unequalled quality automobiles of the classic era. Hugo speaks of his subject from personal experience an with an appealing informality. The products of the by-gone names of Willoughby, Derham, et al, in conjunction with the private designers will probably never be equalled, but now we have a thorough account of the exciting happenings of a memorable era by one who was a part of it. Our thanks go to Hugo Pfau for undertaking this task of love.

This concluding installment on the variations made by Canadian subsidiaries of the Big Three deals with the Ford section. This has been checked by Herman L. Smith, Historical Consultant for Ford of Canada. His corrections and suggested changes have been incorporated. I thank Herm for his enthusiastic assistance.

He had a number of "better ideas".

Shortly after World War II, Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited, expanded its dealer network to compete with Chrysler and General Motors. This was done, in most cases, by taking Mercury from existing Ford-Mercury dealers to establish new Mercury-Lincoln agencies. (Lincoln has always been imported into Canada).

The loss of the Mercury class car was only temporary for the Ford dealers. A new car, the Monarch, was made for them to sell in that size and price class. The Monarch was basically a Mercury with horizontal bars across a Mercury-like grille frame. Ford type tail lights were used, but unique trim decorated the fenders and trunk.

Mercury dealers soon got a car comparable to the Ford to sell. This was called the Mercury 114. That number referred to wheelbase length, which was the same as Ford. The regular Mercury, therefore, was called the Mercury 118 - indicating its wheelbase. There were few outward changes for the Mercury 114 or the Monarch till the 1949 models appeared. First, let's follow the Monarch.

Like Mercury, the 1949 to '51 Monarchs used a body style similar in appearance to the smaller Lincoln. To this was fitted a unique grille unlike that on any other car. This grille was completely changed for 1951, again resembling no other car. In that year, Monarch tail light lenses resembled those of Lincoln.

The 1950 and '51 Ford Crestliner and Mercury Monterey would-be hardtops offered in the United States were not available in Canada, so far as I have determined. There were no Canadian versions of them, either.

The new Mercury styling of 1952 was closely matched by Monarch. A hardtop, the Monarch Monterey, was included in the model line-up. Mercury expanded the Monterey into a series for 1953, but Monarch did not do this until the 1954 season. When it was done, the upper line was called Lucerne and included the Sun Valley, the hardtop with the see-through roof. The lower Monarch series was nameless. Mercury's new OHV V-8 engine was used.

A third Mercury series, Montclair, introduced for 1955, was paralleled by Monarch in a series called Richelieu. The lowest line was given the Mercury name of Custom. Four-door Monarch hardtops, introduced in 1956, also used the Mercury name Phaeton.

Monarch perhaps came closest to looking like Mercury in the 1957 models. The grille was similar but with horizontal bars. In step with Mercury, Monarch dropped the Custom series at the bottom and added the Turnpike Cruiser line at the top.

There were no 1958 Monarchs. Ford dealers sold the new Edsels which spanned the Monarch range, making the latter superfluous. Because the Edsel failed to meet sales expectations, the popular Monarch was revived for 1959. Ford dealers then sold Fords, Monarchs and Edsels. The 1959 Monarch was offered in three series. The top, comparable to Mercury's Park Lane, was called Sceptre. All 1959 Monarchs were referred to as Mark II's.

New styling for the 1960 Mercurys meant the same for Monarch. All three Monarch lines had grille and tail light assemblies which differed from Mercury. The last Monarch was the 1961 edition. It came in only one line, the Richelieu.

In the early 1960s, both Ford and Mercury were expanding into several distinct size and price ranges. This approach eliminated the need for a separate car in the Monarch class. Ford's Galaxie met that need.

Now back to the Mercury 114. The original concept of Ford-style body with Mercury-style grille-work was continued when the new 1949 design appeared. However, the name was changed to Meteor. The 1951 Meteor was the first to have its own distinctive grille.

The fresh styling and new model names of the 1952 Ford were used by Meteor. In addition to grille and trim differences, the Customline and Crestline Meteors deviated from comparable Ford models by using a Mercury-style instrument panel and a 6.8:1 compression 120 HP version of the Mercury motor. (The standard Mercury engine had 7.2:1 compression and 125 HP.

Canadian model names were begun with the 1954 Meteors. Although the former Mainline series had no name, The Customline became the Niagra and the Crestline became Rideau.

The 1954 OHV V-8 engine did not appear in Canadian Fords as it did in the U.S. The former flat head 110 HP V-8 powered all Canadian Mainline Fords and bottom series Meteors. Customline and Crestline Fords used a 120 HP engine like the previous comparable Meteor lines. The 1954 Niagara and Rideau Meteors used the former 125 HP former flat head Mercury V-8.

In mid-1954 a new Meteor sub-series, Niagara Special, was offered. It featured a Ford type instrument panel and a lower price.

The OHV V-8 was used in all 1955 Fords and Meteors. All Meteors were fitted with a Ford-style dash. Optional in 1956 was the six-cylinder motor, never before available in Ford of Canada. At first this motor was imported from Dearborn. Even in Meoeors, these Dearborn-built sixes had "FORD" in large letters on the valve cover.

Beginning on the 1951 Meteors, chrome side trim differed from most Ford models. The 1955 to '57 Meteor trim reached a peak of distinctiveness, and facilitated the various two and three tone paint arrangements popular at the time.

Like Ford, 1957 and '58 Meteors came in two lengths. The shorter models were Niagara and Niagara 300, and the longer ones Rideau and Rideau 500. Meteor used some unique paint color in 1957, but Ford-like side trim on 1958 models.

When Ford introduced the Galaxie line in 1959, a similar Meteor series, Montcalm, was introduced. Ford side trim was approximated on the 1959 Meteor lines.

Unique side trim and tail lights were used on the 1960 Meteor. Completely different tail lights and rear styling gave the back of the 1961 Meteor an appearance unlike any other car.

As mentioned earlier, Ford and Mercury in the early 1960s were each moving into different sizes. The compact Ford Falcon had a Canadian equivalent called Frontenac, neither a Ford nor a Meteor. It was sold by Mercury-Lincoln-Meteor dealers for 1960. Styling was similar to the Falcon but with unique grille and trim. The Mercury Comet was not made in Canada until the 1961 model year, when it supplanted the Frontenac.

It seems the 1961 U.S. Mercury Meteor 600 and 800 models were not offered in Canada, nor were there any Canadian versions thereof.

For 1962 and '63 the Mercury Comet, Meteor and Monterey were all made in Canada and similar to those of the United States. Technically then, there were no Meteors in those years, only Mercury Meteors.

When the Mercury Meteor was discontinued after the 1963 production, Ford of Canada used the Meteor name for a whole marque which was basically the Mercury Monterey. The 1964 Meteor offered seven models in two series. There was a nameless lower line and a deluxe series called Custom. Outwardly, the 1964 Meteor appeared similar to the Mercury Monterey, except for the nameplates. The cars were mechanically similar in most respects.

For 1965, the middle third of the Mercury grille was different for the Meteor. Eleven models in three series were offered. Former Meteor model names were reactivated, Rideau, Rideau 500 and Montcalm.

The 1966 Meteor, as well as the '67 and '68 models, had grilles unlike Mercury's. New luxury hardtop and convertible models were added for 1967. They bore the name Montego. Since that name was used the following year for Mercury's smallest series, Meteor's Montego became the LeMoyne.

Each year since 1968, Meteor styling has been similar to the U.S. Mercury Monterey. Meteor nameplates are used, naturally, and Meteor model names have continued unchanged.

As the Comet grew in size and price into the Montego, a void was created in the lower end of the Mercury dealers' product range. To bolster this area, Ford Falcons were sold by them in 1968, '69 and early '70.

When the Maverick was introduced in the spring of 1969, Mercury dealers sold it too. With the introduction of the 1971 Mercury Comet (a version of the Maverick), Mercury dealers switched from Maverick to Comet.

Back in 1946, when the Ford-Monarch and Mercury-Lincoln dealer networks were established and the new cars introduced, Mercury trucks were offered by Mercury agencies. For 1946 and '47 these trucks had unique grilles featuring many horizontal chrome bars. The 1948 to '50 Mercury truck grilles approximated those on Ford trucks. From the 1951 to 1967 models, Mercury trucks appeared similar except for nameplates. In 1968 this token difference was dropped and Mercury trucks came to an end. No Mercury dealers sell Ford trucks.

The styling of Ford's Canadian versions is done in Dearborn, in close consultation with Ford of Canada executives. Ford of Canada is a subsidiary of the Dearborn parent. It has its own subsidiaries in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Singapore.

If this series on Canadian cars has left you with any questions, feel free to write to me. I will be glad to answer you - or at least try.

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A REINCARNATED MILBURN?

The Milburn Wagon Company, Toledo, Ohio, abandoned the business of making electric automobiles in 1922, and by mid-1923 had disposed of its remaining stock of cars.

However, the Milburn name reappears in a Chilton Directory of 1925. Under the heading: AUTOMOBILES, Electric Passenger, the MILBURN is listed as a product of the Fashion Automobile Station, 740 East 51st Street, Chicago. This listing is also to be found in the 1926 and 1927 Chilton Directories.

In the 1925 edition under: AUTOMOBILES, Electric Commercial, the MILBURN is also listed as offered by Fashion Automobile Station. Then, in the 1926 and 1927 editions, MILBURN electric commercial cars are listed as made by the Nelson-LeMoon Truck Company, 849-55 North Kedzie Ave., Chicago.

Do any of our members have any scraps of information on this latter-day MILBURN electric?

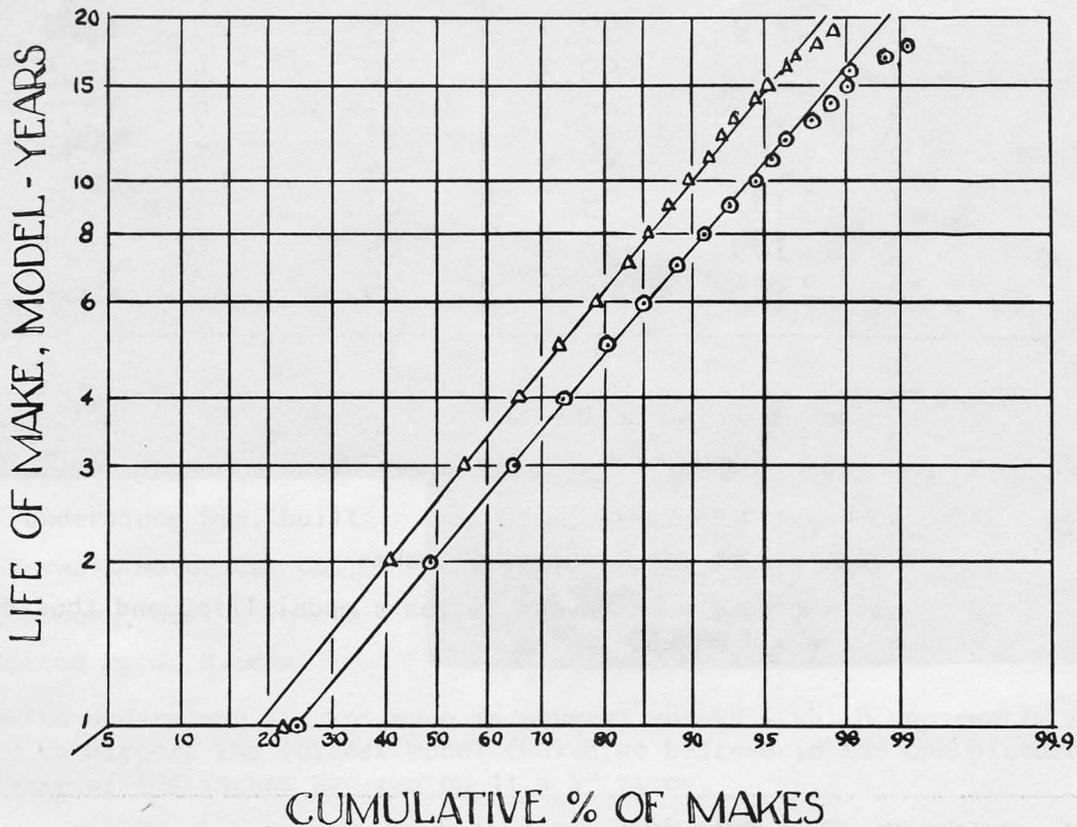
The above title should convey some feeling of incongruity, as one would normally consider that there should be no relationship between the two disparate subjects. In actuality, the underlying relationships are a relatively new study. Aside from the annual auto statistics, which are mathematically trivial, there has been some effort to apply mathematics to the study of accidents, traffic flow, and a number of more subtle relationships. Some of this information will be presented as it becomes available.

The use of probability and statistical methods can be of considerable value in economic analysis, mechanical tolerances, and diverse subjects such as the rate of disappearance of a given make or model of automobile, production figures from available serial numbers, and possibly to analysis of racing records.

The data shown here was taken from Nick Georgano's Complete Encyclopedia of Motorcars. A count was made of all U.S. entries with the length of life as recorded, in model-years. Examples: A.B.C. (i) gives the years 1906-1910, or 5 model years; ACADIA, 1904, had a life of one model year. All makes "to date" were ignored, as it is not possible to treat these numerically. The total of these U.S. makes was 1391, so, for comparison, an equal number (nearly) of all non-U.S. cars were classified in the same manner. It has been found that a logarithmic probability plot of the cumulative data yielded a surprisingly straight line in both cases. In the plot, circles indicate U.S. makes, and triangles the non-U.S. makes.

The two straight lines show that a relationship exists except for the extreme end of the percentage, above 95%. From this plot it is seen that 50% of defunct U.S. makes had a model-life of just two years, while non-U.S. makes lasted, on the average, more than 2 1/2 years. There seems to be a significant difference between the life of U.S. makes and those built elsewhere.

Further conclusions from these data must await assistance from a friend who is a professional statistician.



DATA ON MODEL-LIFE OF DEFUNCT MAKES

U.S. MAKES				NON-U.S. MAKES			
L	N	ΣN	%	L	N	ΣN	%
1	352	352	25.3	1	316	316	22.6
2	335	687	49.3	2	253	569	40.7
3	218	905	65.0	3	214	783	56.0
4	119	1024	73.5	4	144	927	66.4
5	93	1117	80.3	5	94	1021	73.2
6	65	1182	85.0	6	85	1106	79.3
7	49	1231	88.5	7	53	1159	83.0
8	36	1267	91.1	8	38	1197	85.8
9	26	1293	93.0	9	26	1223	87.7
10	20	1313	94.5	10	27	1250	89.6
11	11	1324	95.3	11	25	1275	91.4
12	10	1334	96.0	12	13	1288	92.3
13	7	1341	96.5	13	12	1300	93.3
14	9	1350	97.0	14	18	1318	94.5
15	5	1355	97.5	15	8	1326	95.1
16	7	1362	98.0	16	11	1337	96.0
17	5	1367	98.2	17	9	1346	96.5
18	7	1374	98.8	18	8	1354	97.2
19	5	1379	99.1	19	7	1361	97.6
20	2	1381	99.3	20	4	1365	97.9
21	3	1384	99.4	21	7	1372	98.4
22	2	1386	99.6	22	6	1378	98.8
23	1	1387	99.7	23	7	1385	99.3
24	2	1389	99.8	24	6	1391	99.7
25	2	1391	100.0	25	3	1394	100.0

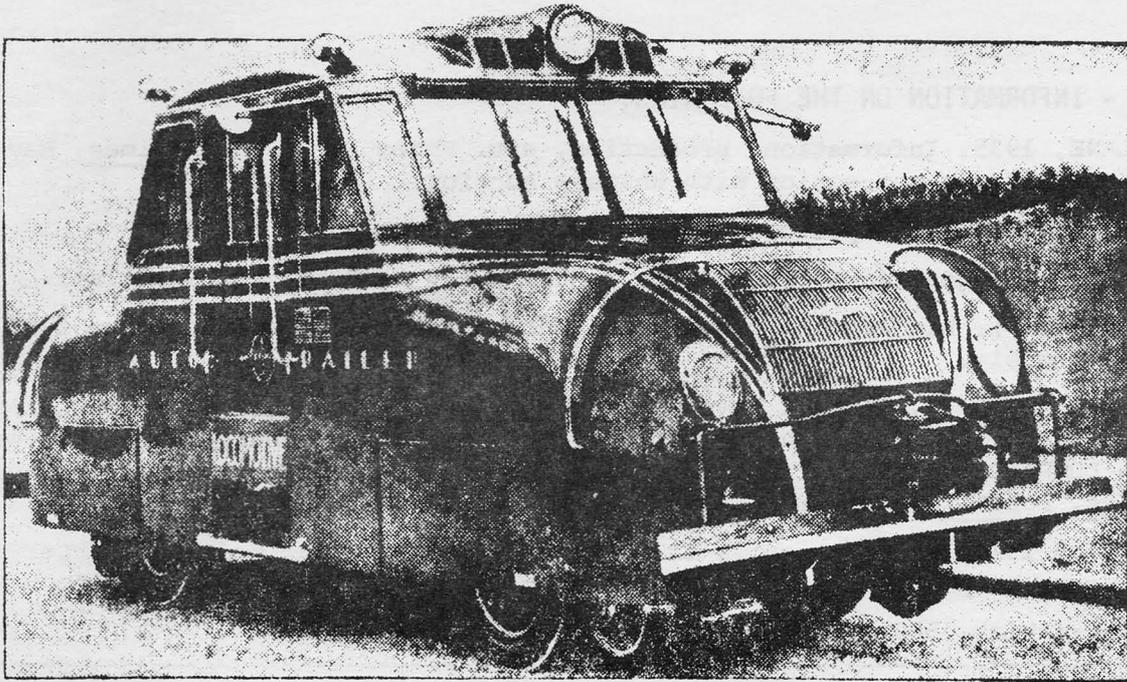
L = Life of make in model-years

N = Number of makes

ΣN = Cumulative number of makes

% = Percentage of total number of makes

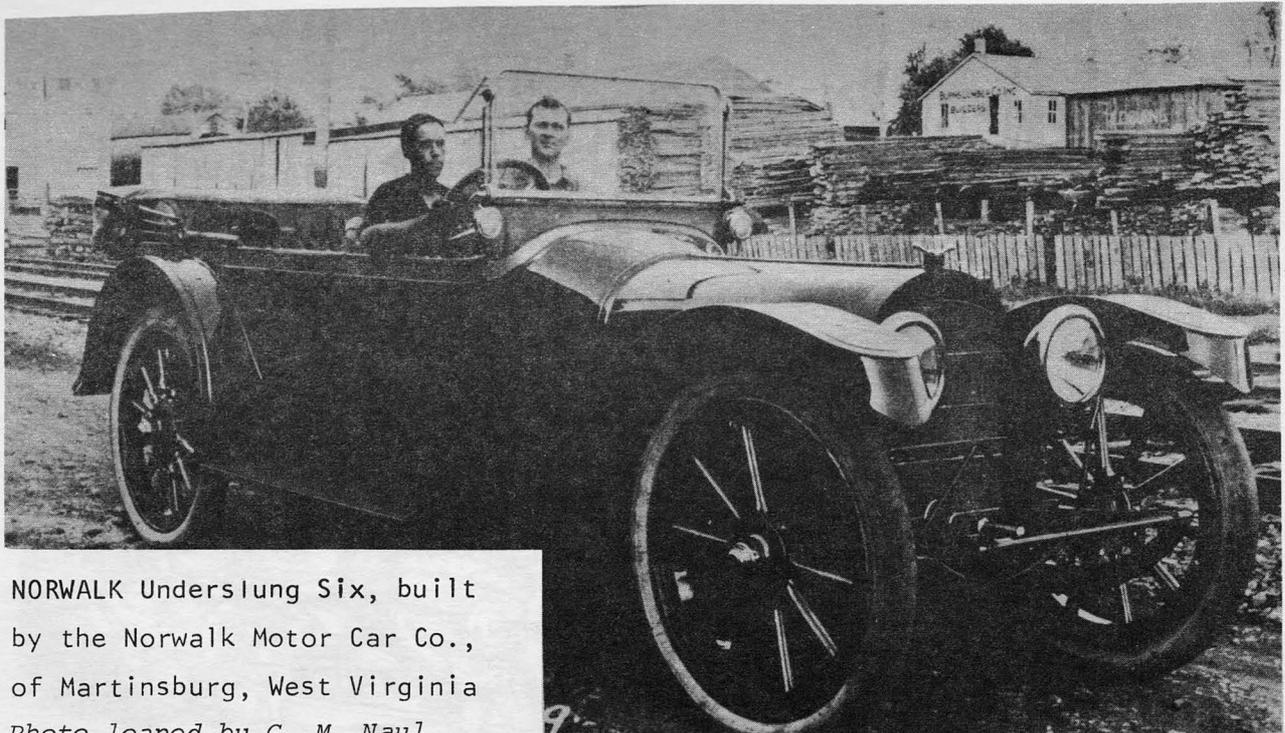
Data was not continued beyond 25 years model-life, and thus does not include all makes.



This Vehicle Recently Made Its Debut in Cleveland. It is a Combination Switch Engine and Automobile, Motivated by a Gas Engine, and Equipped to Roll on Roads or Rails. Its Interior Is Roomy and as Neat and Luxurious as a Trailer.

The above picture was sent by R. A. Wawrzyniak, 589 Broadway, Berlin, Wisc. 54923. It is an AUTORAILER, circa 1936, designed to run on rails or highways. The designer of this vehicle was Rachel de Wolf Raseman, of Detroit.

Mr. Wawrzyniak is looking for more information about this dual-purpose machine.



NORWALK Underslung Six, built by the Norwalk Motor Car Co., of Martinsburg, West Virginia
Photo loaned by G. M. Naul

The NORWALK Underslung Six was made in several models - which apparently ranged from big to bigger. The largest model (which we believe is the one pictured) had a wheelbase of 144 inches and ran on 41 x 5" tires.

Can anyone verify the year in which this car shown above was manufactured?

WANTED - INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING:

ARROWPLANE, 1935. Information, production, etc. Photo in New York Times, May 2, 1971. page 28S, in connection with White's Auction.

AUTORAILER, 1936. (See picture on page 19, this issue).

GRICO, 1928, 6-wheel dump truck. Have contemporary want ad, nothing else.

HAYES, 1970 (?). Big logging truck. Have photo, front view, of it being used in British Columbia.

LOMBARD, ca 1916-21. Photo I have shows steam logging tractor built like a locomotive, except that it has half-tracks (rear) and seligh runners (front). Suspect it is a LOMBARD. Scientific American might be a good place to look. Also Popular Mechanics, Popular Science?

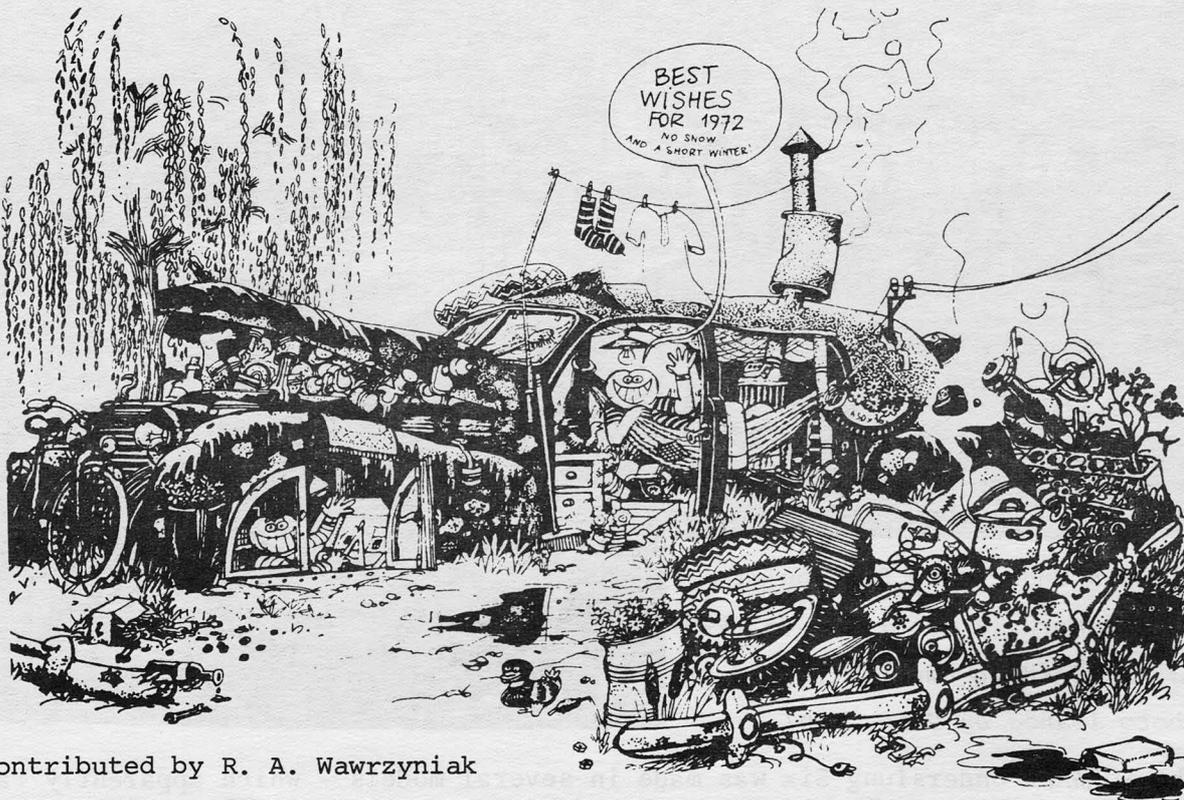
REMENYI, ca 1911-12. Photo shows it to be an unorthodox car made for winter use, with a screw propulsion ground contact. Probably Central European origin.

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

WANTED -

Information, sales literature, comments, history, etc., on 1941 Ford ½ ton 4-cylinder pickup truck. The model is #LNC and the chassis is #9C-2644. Trying to re-search this rather unusual vehicle which is and has been in regular occasional use since new. Information I have has been furnished by SAH members, but more confirmed details would be helpful.

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



Contributed by R. A. Wawrzyniak

FROM Patrick Van der Sticht