



NEWSLETTER

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The Society of Automotive Historians

HEADQUARTERS & EDITORIAL OFFICE: STUBLYN ROAD, MAPLEWOOD
RT. 2, GRANVILLE, OHIO 43023

PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

This month the normal title of this portion has been changed to "appeal". There has been some comment in the past about the Newsletter not being as interesting or as full of material as it used to be. Now I don't think that this should come as any great surprise to most of you because most of you have not sent anything of interest in to the editor to have printed. We all have to realize that one man's library cannot feed the rest of us for eternity. We all have our pet marques, or favorite pictures, most interesting catalogs and so forth. Why not sit down and write up an interesting article about one of these items and send it on to Marshall.

There are two hundred members in this Society and, to date, how many different names have you seen represented on our pages? We are a conglomerate. The dictionary says that this means we are a group of separate parts or people gathered together into one mess, or, excuse me, mass. As such, we must support each other, and among other things, that means feed each other. This society was formed not just for Marshall Naul and Dick Brigham to entertain us, but for all of us to share our findings, to share our knowledge and to broaden the scope of the hobby as a whole. When you go through our membership roster you are looking at the "Who's Who" of auto history. Pick up any auto publication on the stands today and you will find the same name under articles that appear in our roster. Granted, you may not get paid for the things that go to SAH but Wow!, what guaranteed readership.

The nice thing about SAH is that no one has to impress anyone else. We are all in it together. What we do and what we leave behind us is history for someone else to pick up and use after we are all gone. In the last two years there has been little to be left so that in that respect we are falling down on the job we undertook. I know 85% of you either in person or by written word, and I also know what you can do. Let us stop dragging our feet and get something in to the editor. Let's get it to the point where everyone will want extra copies for the file and for future reference. If you don't do your automotive "thing" for the rest of us, Naul, Peckham, Roe, Brigham, Yost will get tired of reading their own stuff. You don't want us to get a big head!

At the risk of being boring, the roster is slowly coming along. Our master sheet is being picked over and corrected here and there. When we are done we will be proud of our effort and, again, we will have a lasting record of every motor vehicle produced, or built on earth, hopefully. I think it would be of good sense at this point for those of you that

(cont'd. on pg. 2)

PRESIDENT'S APPEAL (cont'd from pg. 1):

have considered yourselves to be experts on certain marques to get started on a brief but correct history on this marque. This we will be able to file with our historical roster sheet in the master file and have it available for those wishing more than just the general information.

We are here for just the wink of an eye but collectively, we can produce a great abundance of meaningful words.

Stan Yost

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CUGNOT AWARD NOMINATIONS SHOULD BE MADE NOW

The Society asks for nominations for recognizing outstanding published works bearing on the history of the automobile, written by its members and published during the calendar year 1973. There will be two Cugnot Awards; one for the most distinguished book, and another for the outstanding magazine article.

Suggestions, recommendations and proposals may be freely made by any member on behalf of any other member. Such nominations should be received before July first so that there is time for judging before the presentation at the annual meeting in Hershey in October 1974. We are fortunate in having as Chairman of the Award Committee Mary Cattie, who is Curator of the Automobile Reference Collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia, and all suggestions should be sent to her at the Library, Logan Square, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.

The judges will evaluate the works presented on these criteria: quality of research and documentation; originality; importance and scope of the theme; literary merit; and organization of the material.

The Cugnot Awards are given by the Society to encourage research and publication by its members. These awards have already been accepted in the automotive press as a significant honor to the recipients.

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THE MAIL BAG

Letters from Members

From: Michael Lamm, c/o Special-Interest AuTos, Box 7211, Stockton, Cal.
95207

As you know, we all get lots of help from the public relations and public information officers of the major auto manufacturers. Without them, SIA (for instance) couldn't survive.

Yet the carmakers aren't in the business of selling old cars - they're doing their darndest to sell new ones. So the people who help us are sometimes under pressure not to.

One such fellow recently told me: "Well, with the cutbacks and everything, it's getting harder every day to devote time to historical topics. Besides, if I help say 200 old-car hobbyists a year, write 200 letters, and then happen to give one guy the wrong information - a wrong date - you can bet he's going to write the general manager and let him know about it. What do you think that does for the other 199 people? It simply means that word will come down not to help the old-car nuts at all. But do you think one of those 199 people is going to write the general manager and tell him we're doing a great job - fulfilling a need, performing a service? Like hell!"

This person told me that if just three or four people wrote to the

division's general manager each year and told him what a good job his public information office was doing - how much help he'd gotten - the PR man's job would be a lot easier.

I usually do write and thank the individuals who help me within the various car companies, but before this person mentioned it, I never thought to write the general manager. I'm going to start.

Enclosed is a list of names and addresses of division general managers of all major car companies. I hope you have room to print this information and I hope SAH members will take time to keep us all in business.

- Roy D. Chapin, Jr., Board Chairman, American Motors Corp.
14250 Plymouth Rd., Detroit, Mich. 48232 (including Jeep)
- George R. Elges, Gen. Mgr., Buick Motor Div., Flint, Mich. 48550
- Robert D. Lund, Gen. Mgr., Cadillac Motor Car Div., 2860 Clark Ave.
Detroit, Mich. 48232
- F. James McDonald, Gen. Mgr., Chevrolet Motor Div., General Motors Bldg.
Detroit, Mich. 48202
- R.B. McCurry, Jr., VP, Sales/Service, Chrysler-Plymouth Div., Box 857
Detroit, Mich. 48231
- (Dodge Div. same as above)
- Bennett E. Bidwell, VP/Gen. Mgr., Ford Div., Rotunda Drive & Southfield
Road, Dearborn, Mich. 48121
- Henry Ford II, Board Chairman, Ford Motor Co., The American Road,
Dearborn, Mich. 48121
- Edward N. Cole, President, General Motors Corp., General Motors Bldg.
Detroit, Mich. 48202
- Brooks McCormick, International Harvester Co., 401 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60611
- W.P. Benton, Gen. Mgr., Lincoln-Mercury Div., 3000 Schaeffer Road
Dearborn, Mich. 48121
- Robert J. Cook, Gen. Mgr., Oldsmobile Div., 920 Townsend St.
Lansing, Mich. 48921
- Martin J. Caserio, Gen. Mgr., Pontiac Motor Div., 1 Pontiac Plaza
Pontiac, Mich. 48053

(EDITOR: The above letter by Mike Lamm covers a point which has been generally overlooked by most of us. Certainly a thank you letter to persons who furnish information from the above companies is always in order, and it would not be difficult to at least send a carbon copy to a General Manager. I intend to follow his suggestion.)

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From: Fred D. Roe, 837 Winter St., Holliston, Mass. 01746

Does history repeat itself? If it does or not, sometimes it comes pretty close. Consider this quotation from the Wall Street Journal, Aug. 28, 1973: "Henry Ford II, Chairman of Ford Motor Co., said there's no Wankel-powered car in Ford's future. Asked when the company will build a Wankel-powered car, he bluntly replied: 'As long as I am around, never.' 'Why?' 'Because they're no good,' asserted the Ford Chairman. 'I don't like them.'

(cont'd. from pg. 3)

Mr. Ford called the Wankel a "novelty" adding that he has been equally blunt internally at Ford about the rotary engine. Despite his strong opinions about the Wankel, Mr. Ford said: ' I'm not saying we're going to stop working on them research-wise.' Ford has taken out a license to make and sell rotary engines in Germany."

Somehow this sounds like Mr. Ford's grandfather talking, does it not. Whether his opinions are correct or not, it is refreshing in these days of committees and corporations to see there are still strong individual opinions asserted at high levels in at least one large motor company.

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From: Frank T. Snyder, Jr., 748 Laredo St., Chandler, Arizona 85224

I would like to call to the attention of the SAH membership that there appear to be a number of issues of Cycle & Auto Trade Jour. with missing pages. The issue for Sept. 1911 is missing pages 65-80, in copies at the Philadelphia Library, Harrah's and in my copy. There are other issues which are missing pages but the full extent is not known at this time.

(EDITOR: The above pages would constitute a full signature, and would indicate a malfunction in collation rather than a printing error. Has any member a copy of this issue which includes these pages?)

* * * * *
EARLY EXPERIMENTS WITH THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE IN THE U.S.

by John M. Peckham

Now, when there is talk of doing away with the internal combustion engine, it seems appropriate to look into the origins of this infernal machine.

In France, about 1680, a gentleman named Denis Papin and the Abbé Hautefeuille used gunpowder to create motive power. A century later, an Englishman named John Barber ignited a mixture of coal gas and air in a retort. The force of the explosion was directed through an opening in the retort at a paddle wheel which was turned by the pressure. In 1794 Robert Street, another Englishman, exploded gases in a cylinder and actually drove a piston. It was about this time that a rather famous American began toying with the idea, too.

Col. John Stevens, best known for his experiments with steamboats and railways, and for his plans to tunnel under and to bridge over the Hudson River, had conceived the idea of an internal combustion engine about 1798. He had working for him at the time a young Norman who had studied to become a priest but gave up the idea and joined the French Navy instead. Forced to flee from France during the period of reprisals against the Royalists, he came to the United States and, because of his mechanical bent, found employment with Stevens. The young man's name was Marc Isambard Brunel, father of the builder of the steamship "Great Western", Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Some of the elder Brunel's letters to Col. Stevens still exist in the extensive Stevens Collection at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, N.J. If it weren't for these letters, it is doubtful that we would ever have known of Stevens' experiments with internal combustion engines. One of Brunel's letters, dated January 30, 1798 and written from

EARLY EXPERIMENTS ... (cont'd.)

New York City, starts as follows:

I do hereby certify that the machinery for propelling boats, a draft of which Mr. Stevens has put into my hands for the purpose of constructing a working model, is not in any part my invention but, as far as I know, altogether an invention of his own.

This introduction was, without doubt, requested by Stevens for his own protection, in case he should apply for a patent at a later date. It was followed by a description of the operation of the machine. Very little technical information is included, but several things can be deduced with the help of later letters.

In this internal combustion engine, a cylinder, enclosed at both ends contained a piston with piston rod which protruded through a bushing at the top of the cylinder. Below the piston, fixed in the lower end of the cylinder, was a brass cup. Through the wall of the cylinder were two holes, one small and one large one. The small hole must have been near the brass cup, but the location of the other is not given. It seems likely however, that it was about opposite the small one.

A wooden plug was removed from the small hole and a syringe was used to inject a portion of "distilled spirit" into the brass cup which was already partly filled with water. At this point, the hole was plugged and a flame placed under the cup. Before the water would come to a boil, the alcohol would vaporize and expand. The plug was removed from the small hole and a candle (lighted) held near the opening. As the gas escaped, it was ignited by the flame and flashed back into the cylinder where, in turn, it ignited the gas still inside. With the explosion, the piston was forced up and the air in the upper part of the cylinder was compressed. Thus, according to Brunel, "...the motion of the piston is gradually retarded, and must finally be arrested, without violence or injury; let the force of the explosion be what it may." Then, the compressed air above the piston, and the vacuum created below it, caused the piston to return to its original position.

This experiment could be worked twice before Brunel found the combustion chamber too full of smoke to allow a third attempt. When this happened, the large plug was removed and the tip of a bellows was applied to the small hole. After the bellows had blown the unburned fuel out of the cylinder, the process could be repeated.

Brunel said that his workmen were "... terrified when at the first explosion, Smith, who had set the candle to the aperature, was watered by the blowing out of the water."

Needless to say, the plan was crude, but the principle was right. Stevens planned to develop a better method of carburation but made no mention of any improvement in the type of ignition. He stated,

"... after mixing the (inflammable gas) with a due portion of atmospherical air, my invention consists in introducing inflammable matter ... into each end of the cylinder of a steam engine. When the piston in the cylinder shall have moved one-third of the way (or such distance as may be found most advantageous) from the top to the bottom or from the bottom to the top, I set fire to the same, (i.e., the inflammable mixture) thus causing an explosion in each end of the cylinder at each stroke of the piston, up and down."

EARLY EXPERIMENTS ... (cont'd)

Apparently, Stevens' other projects took him away from his work on the internal combustion engine. He was involved with supplying New York City with a steam engine and pump for its waterworks; steamboat experimentation with Robert Livingston, Nicholas Roosevelt and Robert Fulton; plans to build a tunnel under the Hudson River from Hoboken to New York City, or to build a bridge in the same area; and his own railroad experiments.

Brunel returned to France in the mid-1820s, but the thought of the internal combustion engine never quite left him. In spite of such diverse projects as shoemaking machines and trying to dig a tunnel under the Thames, he devoted much of his spare time to the theoretical aspects of the gas engine. Unfortunately, neither he nor Stevens seem to have done any more actual experimentation, and it was not until December 11, 1824 that Maximin Isnard received the first U.S. patent for a gas engine. However, the disastrous fire at the U.S. Patent Office in 1837 destroyed all record of Isnard's machine.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Jan Alfvag, Bendzgatan 1, S-25259 Helsingborg, Sweden
Interests: U.S. cars of the '30s, especially HUDSON, Airflow models of CHRYSLER and DE SOTO, and post-WW II cars, especially KAISER and FRAZER.

J.R. Du Gan, P.O. Box B, Southport, Conn. 06490
Interests: Primarily BUGATTI, however general interest in ALFA ROMEO, MASERATI as well as other pre-WW II vehicles of Europe and the U.S. Considerable emphasis on examples of these marques extant in the U.S.

T. M. Martin, 380 Fairmount Ave., N.E., Warren, Ohio 44483

EDITORIAL ERROR: In Issue No. 34, page 5, in the article by John Peckham entitled Roper's Ten Machines, a paragraph was inadvertently omitted. The following paragraph should have been located between the third and the second paragraphs from the bottom of page 5:

In 1894, he built another vehicle. This was constructed for William Homes of Boston and used naphtha for fuel. However, it was not completed at that time and Homes never took delivery.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

D. J. Kava, 154 E. Waring St., Waycross, Ga. 31501

G. M. Naul, Stublyn Road, Maplewood, Rt.2, Granville, Ohio 43023
(This address will be effective June 14, and will, of course apply to the S.A.H. Office. - M.N.)

BOOK REVIEWS (cont'd. from pg. 7)

Even with the errors I like the book; there are all too few of this kind. I would like to see Mr. Kuipers put out a second edition making it definitive within his chosen parameters. I wish him Good Luck.

R.A.Wawrzyniak

BOOK REVIEWS:

American Car Spotter's Guide 1940-1965 by Tad Burness. 213pp. 9½" x 8½". Profusely illustrated. Paper covers. Published by Motorbooks International, 3501 Hennepin Ave., South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55408. Price \$6.95 (see note below)

Although this book carries a \$6.95 tab, it is available to members of the S.A.H. at a 50% reduction from John R. Olsen, c/o Electronic Flea Market, 2020 Girard South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55405, and at that price the book is a bargain.

Tad Burness of San Jose, California, syndicated artist whose "Auto Album" appears in Numerous newspapers, is the author of Cars of the Early Twenties and Cars of the Early Thirties, written a few years ago and, as such, is well known in the writing field both as an historian and as an artist.

In American Car Spotter's Guide 1940-1965, Burness has pasted up hundreds of pictures of cars covering this period, which were built in the United States. It is an invaluable reference work in checking out minor points of design and detail, especially in those years when nearly all cars had an overall look of powder puffs. He has been careful to include even the obscure ones such as HUPMOBILE, GRAHAM and BANTAM, and I would recommend this as a good addition to any library at an exceedingly attractive price.

What I would like to see now, either from Tad Burness or some similarly-inclined enthusiast, would be another volume along these lines covering the 1930s. There is lots of room for expansion on this subject and let us hope that American Car Spotter's Guide 1940-1965 is but the first of more to come.

Keith Marvin

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A History of Commercial Vehicles of the World by J.F.J. Kuipers . \$8.95 198pp., 8½" x 5½" Distributed By Classic Motorbooks, Inc., Minneapolis.

What Mr. Kuipers has done is to choose some 100 of the world's most important vehicle manufacturers and describes their history, some starting in the 1850's, and brings out those details of importance to the development of commercial vehicles in general. Thirteen countries are covered in alphabetical order.

Since I am most familiar with U.S. vehicles, I read that section first to get some notion of how well the book was written, so far as accuracy is concerned. Regrettably there are numerous errors in dates: page 185 shows a 1935 Chrysler Airflow (Dodge!) but page 155 is stated "... in 1937 a Dodge truck version of the Airflow styling was introduced." The correct date is 1935. Page 186 shows a 1929 or 1930 Dodge, not as given, 1925. The Oshkosh Series E was started in 1971, not 1969. On page 180 is shown a truck identified as "1906 FWD" while FWD began in 1910. Moreover, the word Autocar is printed in the photograph, but doesn't resemble either of these makes. Just what is this truck? There are other numerous errors of commission, and one wonders what might be the track record for the other countries.

Two of the photographs deserve special mention: on page 42 is a 1929 100-ton Scammell articulated lorry hauling a large locomotive. The large 1960 Vanaja diesel truck on page 52 (index says p. 60!) has a hood design copied from the 1936-7 Cord. This makes a very handsome truck.

(cont'd.)

BEHIND THE PHOTOGRAPHS

On the next two pages are some photographs of unusual vehicles. Photographs I, II and III are from Stan Yost and the following are his comments on these:

I : "This picture, one of a series, was made in late 1919 for a 1920 production. The company was the Hawk Motor Company of Detroit, and besides this rather nice touring car, was a neat looking roadster. Any information on this effort would be appreciated."

II: "The S. Russell Company of Detroit built this small type touring for export. The year is 1921 and again, nothing is known of the car or who it was built for. I'm trying to tack down something on this but it isn't easy for the company went out of business years ago."

III: "The BLODGETT shown here was built as a prototype for a line of cars. There was also a projected coupe and sedan. They were to be for the model year 1922. The windshield is about the same as the one used on the BIRMINGHAM. Have a little tracing to do on this one with hope of something successful at the end."

IV: This one was submitted by R. A. Wawryzniak some time ago. This piece of fire apparatus was built by a well-known automobile manufacturer and is known to the submitter. He asks whether any member can identify the manufacturer.

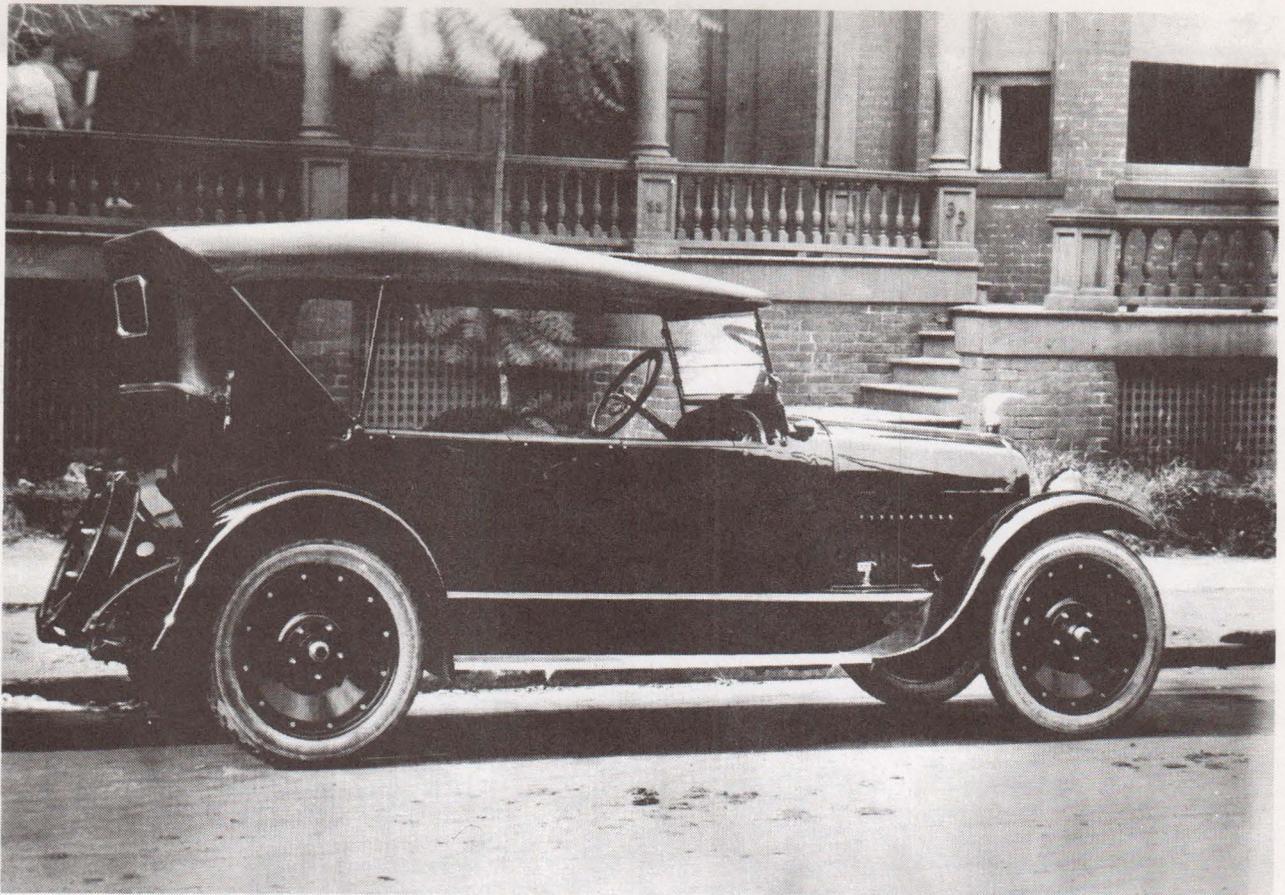
(EDITOR: The photos from Stan Yost's collection are a most welcome addition to the Newsletter. While it is hoped that these reproductions will show details, some loss is to be expected from Stan's prints. Some observations from the original prints: Photo I is a typical medium-sized touring car of the era, but this one has what seems to be a magnificent radiator ornament of a bird, probably a hawk. The BLODGETT in Photo III has a very dull paint job, despite the fact that the body is complete to the button-down studs for snap curtains. This is unusual in an age when a baked black finish was taken as standard. And back to Photo I: it would seem to have been easy to have picked a more imposing background for what could be assumed to have been a "factory photograph". Probably it was to be left to the photographer's skill to eliminate both background and foreground!)

MISCELLANY:

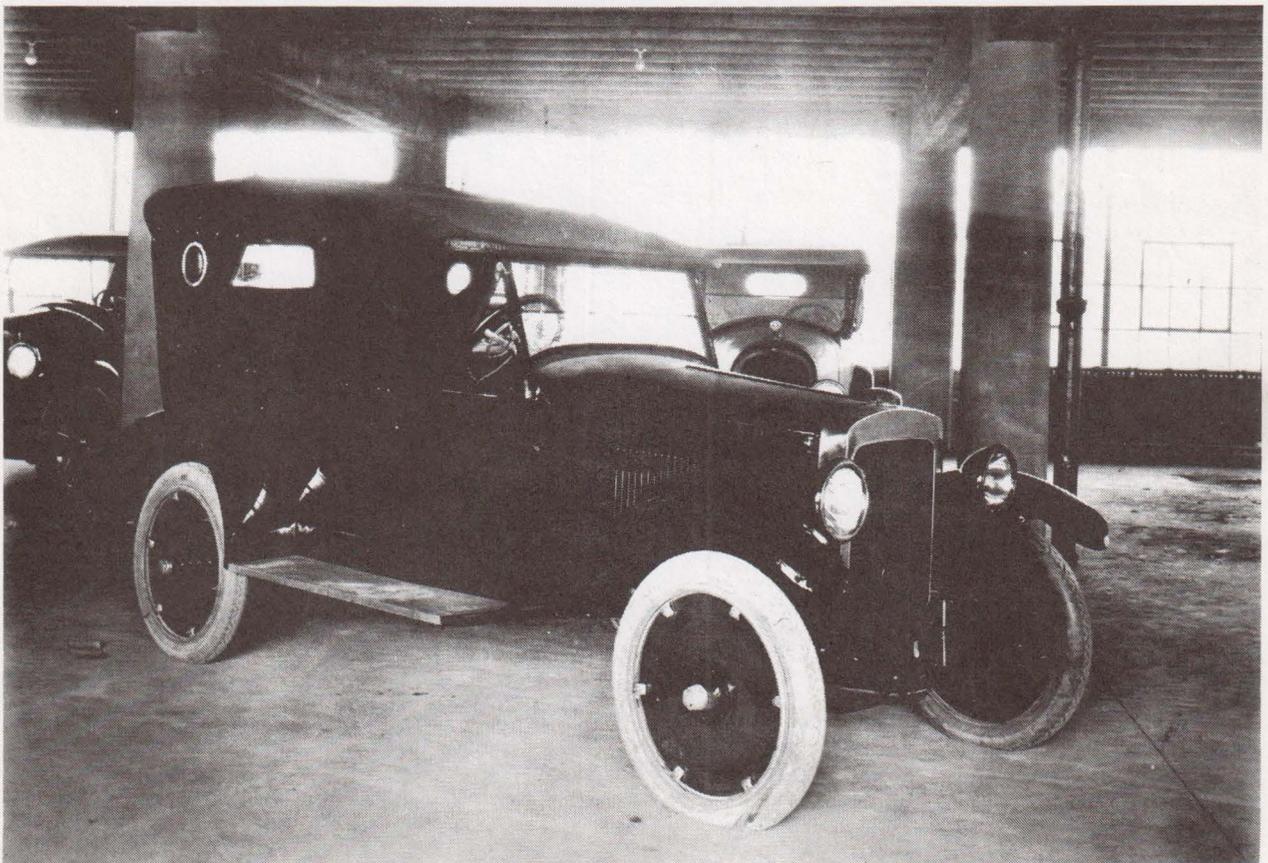
Much publicity has recently been released about the BRICKLIN automobile, a sports-type car of Canadian origin. The factories which are to produce this car are in St. John and Minto, New Brunswick. The parent company is General Vehicles, Inc. of Livonia, Mich. The official debut is to be June 25 in New York City. However, finances and costs for this which started at \$3500 as a selling price, have risen already to a figure of \$6500 with rumors going as high as \$8000. This reads like many of the "starts" of the early years of the automotive business, and it can be expected that this will be but another abortive venture.

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Sbarro of Switzerland is the latest to market a "replicar"; this one is a likeness of the BMW 328 of the 1930's.

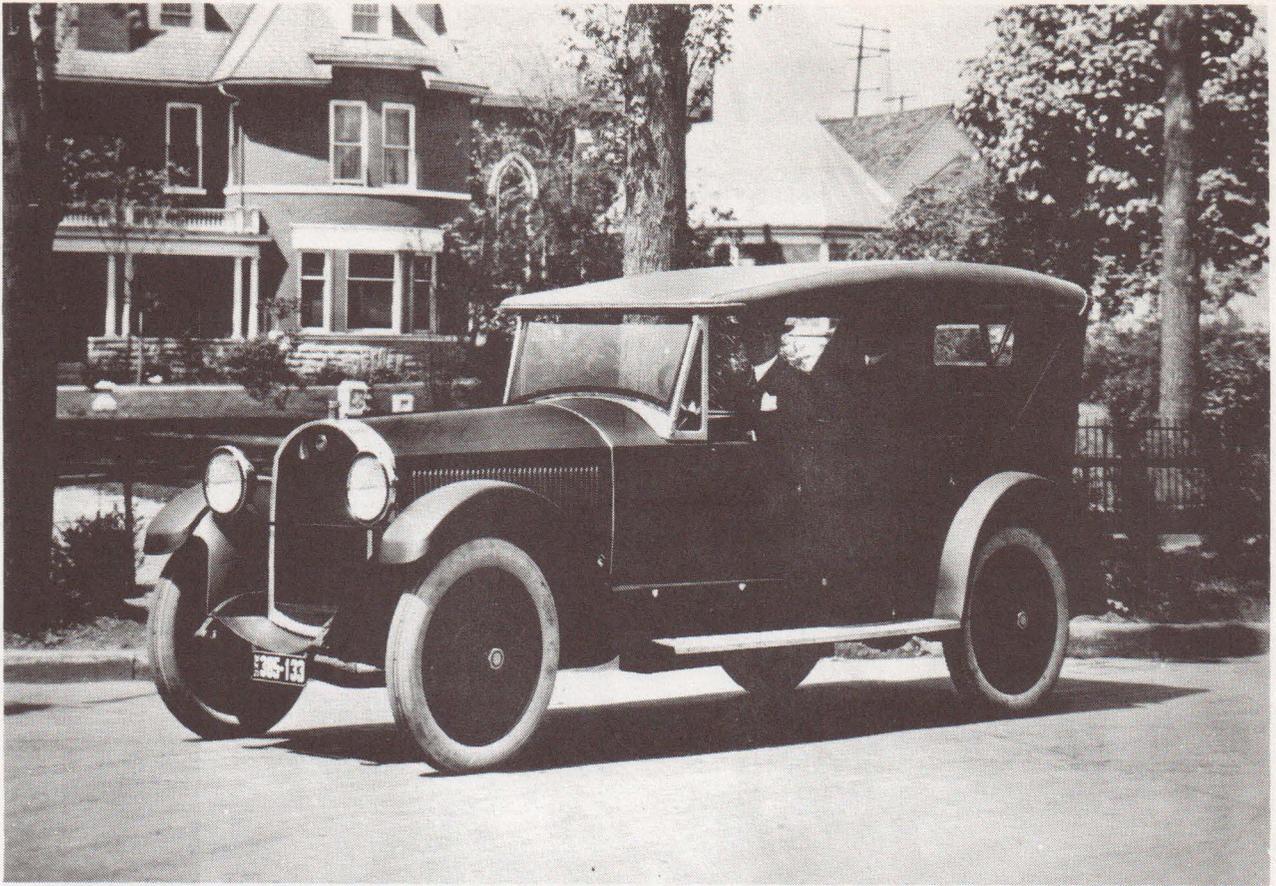
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Among the flood of battery-powered electric passenger vehicles which have been announced during the past year, the latest is the U.S.-built GILBERT, a three-wheeled auto for two passengers, with a selling price of \$2695.



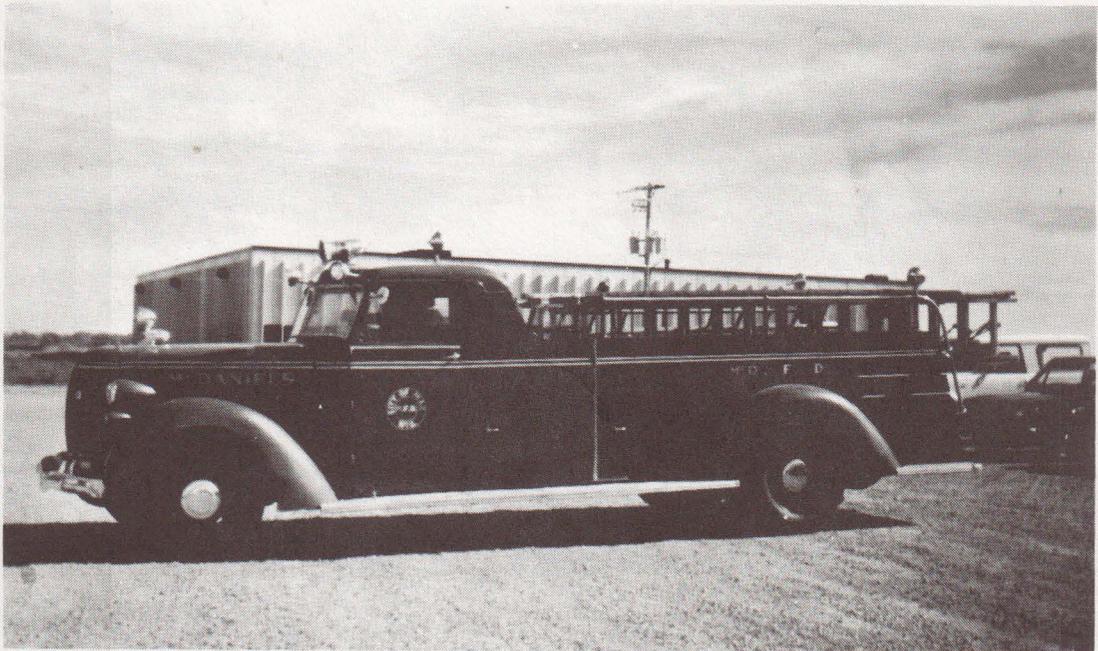
Photograph I : Hawk Motor Company



Photograph II: S. Russell Company



Photograph III : BLODGETT



Photograph IV : Whose chassis?