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OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

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ISSUE NUMBER 82

Editorial

Everyone enjoyed the Sensaud de Lavaud item in the last edition of the Journal, although a few members wrote of their extreme displeasure at your editors poor performance in proof reading that issue. I will make every effort to keep the level of our Journal at its highest in the future.

Walt Gosden

FYI by CB

Out of the 400-odd dues renewal notices issued October 27, 1982, only 47.5% have been returned. If you want to be listed in our 1983 Membership Directory, it will be necessary that your dues for 1983 are paid no later than February 1, 1983. Checks or money orders in the amount of \$20.00 U.S. currency, payable to the Society of Automotive Historians Inc., are to be sent to Charles Betts, Secretary, 2105 Stackhouse Drive, Yardley, PA 19067, U.S.A.

* * * * *

SAH member, Frank Barrett, proprietor of Toad Hall Motorbooks, Denver, Colorado, has been named editor/publisher of *The Mercedes-Benz Star*, national magazine of the Mercedes-Benz Club of America. This bi-monthly 60-page magazine has a circulation of over 13,000 and is known as one of the finest automotive club publications. Barrett also serves as Classic Porsche Editor of *Porsche Panorama*, the magazine of the Porsche Club of America, edited by SAH member, Betty Jo Turner, Atlanta, Georgia. He edited a new 500-page book, *Porsche Panorama: The First 25 Years*, published in November by the Porsche Club, featuring the finest articles from 25 years of that club's magazine.

To receive *The Mercedes-Benz Star*, write Mercedes-Benz Club of America, P.O. Box 9985, Colorado Springs, CO 80932; to receive *Porsche Panorama*, write Porsche Club of America, P.O. Box 10402, Alexandria, VA 22310.

From: *Detroit Library NAHC News*. After serving a little more than a year as curator of the National Automotive History Collection at the Detroit Public Library, economic hard times in the area forced massive layoffs, and the downgrading in the position of Sandy Sandula. While she is still working at the library, she is no longer in the auto history section. She was replaced by veteran librarian Gloria Francis, who was head of the famed rare book room of the Detroit Library, which has been ordered closed for a lack of funds to keep it operating.

MR. DURANT'S WHITE ELEPHANT AND THE BLUE BOOK

By Keith Marvin

In 1922, the automotive press carried the news that the Locomobile motor car had been purchased by William C. Durant who was just then struggling to line up a stable of different makes of car in virtually every price range. Readers looked askance. Somehow the name and reputation of the high-pressure businessman and promoter didn't quite jibe with the staid image of the Locomobile, one of arch-conservatism generally associated with an exclusive clientele of affluence and position.

Yet, it was so. Durant had latched onto the luxury car. The big question was what he intended to do with it.

To William C. Durant must go the lion's share of the credit in keeping the hallowed name of Locomobile exclusive and somewhat aloof from its nearest competitors in the high-priced field — such as they were — when the magnate purchased the make from Hare's Motors. Regardless of what Durant had done and would do in the automobile business, the big Model "48" car — the only one to carry the Locomobile insignia at that time — would not be cheapened in any matter.

Among his first releases regarding future policy for the make, it was announced that "The Locomobile Company of America, organized in 1899, desires that all users of Fine Cars and the motorizing public generally shall know through this announcement the aims and the policy of the Company, as re-organized in 1922.

"The identity of the Locomobile as a car of the finest quality will be preserved. No changes in design are contemplated. No change will be authorized except such as the most careful engineering may dictate for the further refinement and improvement of the car, and the greater elevation of Locomobile standards.

"The Locomobile will continue to be built in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and nowhere else. It will be produced in quantities commensurate with its quality and price."

That was laying it right on the line and, as far as the Model "48" was concerned, there was adherence to the policy right up to the day Locomobile closed its doors for good, some seven years in the future.

Durant, of course, knew what he was doing and had a purpose in this policy of what would many years later be known as quality control. Dismissed from the presidency of General Motors for the second time, two scant years earlier, he had opted to go it alone as a direct competitor with that conglomerate and had already worked out plans for what would become known in the trade as his "Third Empire." It would also be his last.

Durant visualized another mammoth corporation in the land offering a complete line of automobiles covering all price ranges and going from the cheapest car which could be built to the ultra-luxury range. And that ultra-luxury offering turned out to be the Locomobile.

Locomobile itself had fallen on hard times following World War I and, along with Simplex and Mercer, had been acquired by Emlen S. Hare, formerly vice president of Packard, who had dreams of marketing the three quality cars in increased numbers. He had picked up Locomobile in October 1919 but by 1922, with his plans still on the drawing board, was delighted to divest himself of what had turned out to be a white elephant. Durant's plans were thus tailor-made to those of Hare and the company changed hands.

In 1921, the Durant Four had been introduced. In 1922, along with his acquisition of Locomobile, Durant brought out the Star, and about the same time purchased the Muncie, Ind., plant of GM's moribund Sheridan car, in which very shortly the Durant Six would be produced. The Flint would be added to the overall line the following year. Two other Durant-inspired offerings, the Eagle and the Princeton, were abandoned at the prototype stage.

By the time the Flint was introduced, the battle lines were drawn between General Motors and Durant for the big competitive war. GM, with its lineup of Chevrolet, Oakland, Oldsmobile, Buick, Cadillac and GMC truck faced its challenger's line comprising Durant Four and Six, Star, Flint, Locomobile, Rugby (actually a Star for the export market), and Mason truck.

Although Star sales would reach seventh place in American automobile sales in 1923, the battle was never evenly pitched, Durant's hoped-for production never achieved its goal, and he ultimately lost the war by default. By 1932, the Durant Third Empire had drawn to an inglorious close.

Although as far as competition between GM and Durant Motors went, the big Locomobile vied against the Cadillac was GM's most expensive offering, true, but it was a no nonsense sort of quality car, stodgy in design, and with a price range between \$3100 and \$4600.

Locomobile, on the other hand, wasn't stodgy in any way, was longer by ten inches than its Detroit compatriot which allowed for ethereal coachwork, among other things. The price differential was the most marked difference between them. With prices set at \$7600 to \$11,000, Locomobile's cheapest offering cost some \$3,000 more than Cadillac's most expensive.

There was an iota of truth, too, in the feeling that Locomobile people simply weren't Cadillac people and vice-versa.

Having acquired the Locomobile, lock, stock and barrel, Durant got to work in the promotion of his new baby, and he doubtless gave this considerable thought. Locomobile had always been extremely elaborate in its advertising and put a great deal of money into the medium, it's hardbound catalogues, comprising some 210 pages, being the most elaborate at the time. At the same time, the sachems at Locomobile had never feel it need apologize in any way whatsoever in wooing the very rich, prominent and socially acceptable as its desired clientele. It was a luxury car, pure and simple, and unashamedly tailored to those who could appreciate and afford it. It wasn't a flashy car in a cheap sense but rather exuded an aura of good breeding. And whereas Loco dealers didn't exactly screen potential purchasers, it is a matter of record that the late Al Capone and his ilk were not clients of the make. There was a quiet aristocracy in Locomobile design. Locomobile people — the dealers as well as the owners — took the product seriously. What other company could have said, with a straight face, what Locomobile had a few years earlier, that in its cars "no stock parts or ready made units are permitted."

Durant decided that if he expected to keep the Locomobile on the social plain it had achieved over the years, the conservative approach would best serve its destiny and by 'conservative', this meant what we today would term snob appeal. Forthwith, some

very pretty small brochures, expensively printed on laid paper, were distributed for the enlightenment of all comers and the satisfaction of owners who had already 'arrived'.

One of the first of these was entitled, "A Rich Heritage" and regaled its readers with its credo on Page 1:

"To honor the past," it ran, "but to look upon heritage as an obligation to strive for greater triumphs in the future, is the LOCOMOBILE creed."

In the next dozen page, similar homilies were sprinkled among such reminders referring to the car's past triumphs on the race track, the fact that a Locomobile had been the first car to ascend Mt. Washington and, incidentally, that it was the personal car of the President of the United States.

The most significant bit of information contained in its pages was a reference to its "Blue Book", or more explicitly, "The Blue Book of Locomobile Owners."

"The Blue Book of the Locomobile (sic) contains hundreds of names which immediately identify Locomobile owners as the leaders of thought and service in America", it said.*

The Blue Book was, of course, a direct reference and a sort of plagerizing of the existing and ubiquitous series of publications of that name which served virtually every community in the land in those days with a population above 50,000 or so listing its citizens, their clubs and so on. It was a sort of catchall of who was in a given community, a sort of a scaled down, small time Social Register.

But like "blue blood", "blue chip" and other references to the color and its connotation, the effect was nicely achieved. Consequently the Locomobile Blue Book was worked out, pasted up and sent to the printer.

It is a very rare item these days for three salient reasons. First, it was small, measuring but 2½ x 3½ inches and containing only 18 pages, this making it readily "loseable". Secondly, the number of copies made was strictly limited. Finally, its very exclusivity limited its distribution. Locomobile dealers carried it along with other brochures, but it wasn't given to all comers willy-nilly. It must have been relatively expensive to produce in any case. Bound in blue leather and adorned with goldleaf filigree work and the title on its cover, its pages comprised expensive laid paper. It was obviously printed for effect — but effects can be expensive and the Blue Book was.

The contents were largely based on a scattering of names of Locomobile owners in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and California. It was a sort of WHO'S WHO, SOCIAL REGISTER and ALMANACH DE GOTHA, all bound up together with genteel overtones.

"To those who have chosen the LOCOMOBILE to serve them," caroled the foreword, "and to the hundreds of Americans who have sincere admiration for the LOCOMOBILE as expressive of the finer ideals of American craftsmanship, this little volume is dedicated."

The facing page was equally fascinating: The Personal Car of Warren G. Harding is a Locomobile", it said.

Then followed a 'select listing' of the names of representative owners residing in four cities and the State of California and since only a handful of names could be fitted in for each, the choice of the names, presumably printed after permission had been granted by those listed, must have been a difficult task for the Bridgeport promotion team.

Among the august few residing in Boston which were selected were Governor Channing Cox, L.K. Liggett and Charles D. Russell. Locomobile owners in New York City included Mrs. Oliver H.P. Belmont, Mrs. Ogden Mills Reid and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt.

In the City of Brotherly Love, Loco owners were Gouverneur Cadwallader, His Eminence Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, the Countess Santa Eulalia and Rodman Wanamaker 2nd, and in Chicago there were J. Ogden Armour, Mrs. Lolita Armour and William Wrigley Jr.

Mrs. Anita Baldwin and Hiram Johnson Jr. shared California ownership honors with Cecil B. DeMille, Charlie Chaplin and Tom Mix.



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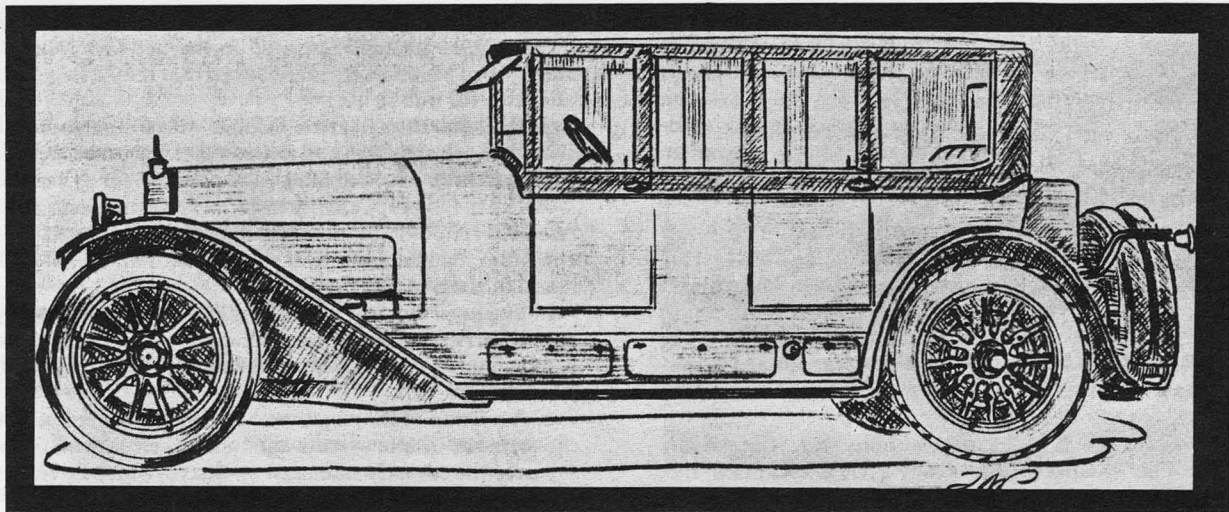
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Whether this approach to sales paid off in the long run or didn't I have no idea. I have wondered, though, whether there were any other editions of "The Blue Book of Locomobile Owners" perhaps, listing some other cities' clientele. Surely, Locomobiles abounded in such places as Cincinnati, Detroit, Palm Beach and Washington.

At the end of the little volume, a sort of epilogue was included, presumably for anyone who hadn't gotten the message by then.

"Locomobile has been described as 'an exclusive car for exclusive people'", it explain. "It will always remain so true to its ideals that this phrase will retain its eloquence.

"Locomobile is essentially a motor car to be enjoyed by those who love the finer products of any art. It is essentially a car of individual character — a car which, often times, becomes expressive of the personality of those who choose it."

I have no idea how long the "Blue Book" was distributed to promote the Locomobile but I suspect it wasn't very long and that when the supply of the tiny books was exhausted, that was it, at least the edition which so proudly announced that the car had been the personal preference of the President.

At the time the "Blue Book" was printed, President Warren G. Harding was enormously popular and though none knew it, Teapot Dome was just around the corner. A year later Harding himself would be fatally stricken in a San Francisco hotel room and five years hence, Nan Britton would publish her novel, "The President's Daughter" revealing the story of her daughter by the chief executive.

Locomobile continued on through the 1920s, but it did not do well. In 1925, its Junior Eight was announced, a medium-priced car which aimed at Chrysler for competition. The Junior Eight was a good car but its Locomobile parentage was played down more or less and it was generally known as a Junior Eight and that was that. It was not a financial success, however, and it was phased out a couple of years later. In 1926, the Model "90" appeared. This was a slightly scaled-down Model "48" at less money (the touring car listed at \$5500 to the "48"'s \$7460) but the cars DID look similar and could be mistaken for one another.

Later on, all sorts of models appeared — a conglomeration of types, some of which had in-house engines, others carrying Lycoming and Continentals under their hoods. These were called Locomobiles, too, and that did not help the image, theretofore made immortal by the mighty "48" and, in a sense, by its kid sister, the "90".

And despite the fact that the cheaper models were not the advertised available cars by Locomobile, the "90" and the "48" were generally cited in the ads as being available' as such they were, the '90' carrying a price range of from \$5500 to \$7500 and the "48" from \$7400 to \$12,500. There were few takers for either by the late 1920's. Both had become dinosaurs.

On March 31st 1929, Locomobile 'suspended' production, the implication being that in time, production would resume. It never did.

And yet, despite the fact it had been introduced 14 years earlier, and updated by such niceties (and necessities) as balloon tires, four-wheel brakes and safety glass, the "48" was available to all until the fateful moment when the key was turned in the door at the Bridgeport works for the last time that chilly day in 1929 and Locomobile came to an end forever.

Although it still may have been a mechanical marvel and a revelation in craftsmanship and quality, it was also an anachronism with its cast bronze gearbox, four-speed transmission and cylinders reminiscent of small ice cream cans. And if it was truly the epitome of what a great car could be, it illustrated the purchasing habits and preferences of the public in general. The old may retain its quality but modern design will ever have the edge. It always have and it probably always will.

*1 - As to the "hundreds of names" which were ostensibly listed, this was a bit generous. My copy contains 135.

Letters

From: Mike Worthington-Williams, *Glaspant Manor, Capel Ifan, Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed; South Wales*: Enjoyed the Sensaud de Lavaud piece, the only thing I have to add to the story is that the late twenties S de L's operations were carried out in a corner of the La Buire factory in Lyon (France).

La Buire themselves were dying but I don't know whether any of this money was in the S de L venture or not. It was possibly just a case of renting out a corner of the semi-moribund works to earn a little cash!

For the record I would like to correct the captions of the pictures I sent that were printed in #77. Bottom of page 4 - Royal Tolosa; top of page 5 - Royal Boscombe motorcycle; beneath this - Suffolk - Royal and beneath this Forgeolt-Transsac, the Vattel-Mortier and Corona were not illustrated.

From: Karl S. Zahm, 3111 Burrmont Road, Rockford, IL 61107. Re the "Mystery" Packard Super 8 on page 7 of the Nov-Dec '82 issue of THE JOURNAL, I believe this to be a Franay body circa 1937, possibly early 1938.

I have a photo taken at the Paris Auto Show showing a very similar Packard town car. The major difference being that yours is right hand drive, while mine is left hand drive. The small rectangular body builder's tag on the lower side of the front door, identifies both as Franay bodies. Other differences between the two include white wall tires, chromed headlight bodies and a black center "treadcover" portion of the sidemount cover on my photo. Other than this, the two cars are visually identical.

From: W.O. MacIlvain, 17 Bonner Rd., Manchester, Conn. 06040. The mystery car in the Sept.-Oct. Journal is a Garford-built Studebaker suburban of 1908. It was convertible to a runabout, to a baggage car or to a four-pass touring car. On page 2 the name should be Gormully & Jeffery, as you will probably be reminded. Great Journal!

From: *Peter Helck, Boston Corners, R.D. 2, Millerton, N.Y.* Just to keep the records valid, the Simplex racer in your October number is the winner of the 3rd Brighton Beach - 24 hours, Oct. 2 and 3, 1908, was driven by George Robertson and Frank Lescault to a new record of 1177 miles. The mechanic shown beside Lescault might be Doug Coote. The next page shows an unspecified "Event". This is the 1908 Vanderbilt and shows Haupt's Chadwick in action.

From: *Jim Petrik, 7275 Berwood Drive, Madeira, Ohio 45243.* I am writing to help you solve the Packard mystery car in Journal #81. First let me say that you must have some picture collection. got some odd stuff in it, for darn sure. The year of the car is 1936, the model is the Eight — the smallest of the Senior Packards. The carrossier is Franay of Paris.

From: *Cornelius W. Hanck, 8400 Summerhouse Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45243.* The enclosed item from AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRIES of March 13, 1924, is the kind of thing that turns out to be either (a) an historic "find" or (b) the source of a big fat argument. In any event, it seems like an interesting item — if not this, when *did* they start using a clay model for body design? Surely not much before this.

Cole Makes Clay Model of New Body Design

J.J. COLE, president of the Cole Motor Car Co., used a novel method in body design in connection with the latest Cole bodies. Instead of laying out the job on a drafting board, a clay model was molded over an old design. In this way it was possible to visualize clearly and at relatively low expense just what the body lines would be. Later the job was laid out in the drafting room, of course, and exact details were filled in. Mr. Cole, who is an expert molder in clay, is said to have donned overalls and assisted materially in the working out of this new idea.

From: *R.P. Spangler, 305 E. Young Ave., Temple, Texas 76501.* Can someone give me the address of Mr. Owen R. Goodrich? A letter from him appeared in Newsletter #52 of March 1977, but without his address. I am doing research for a history of Glide automobiles and The Bartholomew Co., as was Mr. Goodrich and would like to contact him. I was born and raised in Peoria, and before her marriage my mother was secretary to Mr. O.Y. Bartholomew.

From: *Max Gregory "Beltana", Korumburra Road, Drouin South, Victoria, 3818, Australia.* Issue No. 80 has just come to hand and I have noted the remarks about the pre-history of Rambler by Ralph Dunwoodie.

He states that the correct spelling of the original partnership name is Gormull & Jeffrey but I would seek his assurance that this is really the case and that we are not looking at another typo because I have noticed some references to it in contemporary Australian cycle journals when it was always rendered as Gormully & Jeffrey.

In 1896 the Western District Reporter & Wheelman gave space to the legal case then in progress between Gormully & Jeffrey of Chicago and the North British Rubber Co. over some patent matter relating to pneumatic tires.

In 1897 the Austral Wheel magazine reported on the Chicago Cycle Show and made mention of the Rambler cycle by Gormully & Jeffrey, Chicago. In another article the Rambler cycle was reported as having been displayed at the Melbourne Cycle Show, its makers then being given as the G. & J. Tire Co. of Chicago.

Although I cannot now locate the further reference I have a recollection of another in which the same names were used and the snippet of information proffered that Thomas B. Jeffrey was the son-in-law of Gormully.

It would appear that the original line of business lay with rubber working and the production of cycle tires to which was added the making of complete bicycles as the 'ninties cycle boom took fire.

Did Gormully have a "y" or Gormull not. If not, why not?

From: *Fred W. Crismon, 321 Godfrey Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky 40206.* I recently noticed in the Sep-Oct Journal that the Henry Ford Museum had announced that the Autocar archives are available for public use.

Several months ago I had dealings with the personnel there concerning those archives, and as a result, I wrote to the Volvo-White firm to inquire whether something positive which existed. To wit:

a. The files were primarily negatives, which means your average researcher should not have his hands on them due to their age and condition. Much of the film was nitrite, i.e. not safety film, and many of the negatives are glass.

b. The negatives were piled horizontally in boxes, many with no paper barrier between them, and many of them were already deteriorating badly and in some cases obviously affecting the adjoining negative.

c. A portion of the negatives had been destroyed in a fire *within the archives* (!) a few years ago, and no effort had been made to separate the severely damaged or destroyed negatives from those which could be salvaged. Unfortunately military vehicles (1941-1945) were among those destroyed, and they were the only ones I was seriously interested in.

d. The management was not at all enthusiastic about even allowing anyone to look at the negatives, and seemed to have no real interest in the Autocar files.

e. The price which the Henry Ford Museum wants to charge for an 8x10 copy of any negative or photograph (around \$15) is outrageous, and will be a barrier to all but the most affluent researcher. Furthermore, they no longer allow personal camera copying because it gives them no cash income.

I really believe the Autocar archives should be somewhere where researchers can expect to have reasonable access to usable prints, and where the staff is concerned about both the welfare of the archives and the needs of legitimate researchers. Incidentally, the Autocar archives after the merger with White (c. 1953) are very logically located with the extremely well-cataloged and maintained White archives in Cleveland.

From: *Max Gregory, "Beltana", Korumburra Road, Drouin South, Victoria, 3818, Australia.* Your remarks of commendation in respect of Bill Lewis' Sensaud de Lavaud piece are well worthy of being heartily supported.

His commentary on automatic transmission systems development in general should serve as a thought prompter on the subject as did the survey of sleeve and rotary valve systems by Dick Brigham in AHR 9.

His speculation about the acceptance of the Sensaud de Lavaud system if it had been attached to a much more powerful engine lines up quite well with the opinion expressed about it by J.A. Gregoire who spoke of power losses of 20 to 30% which led to boiling of the oil when used in hilly country. He pointed out that a similar unit such as the Buick Dyanaflo gave satisfaction because its powerful engine allowed it to run most of the time in direct drive.

However I believe that Bill has erred in his passing reference to other transmissions when he speaks of the "Hobbs unit as used by Austin". In the pre-WW2 period Austin used a Hayes system which suffered from the wearing of tracks on the most used faces of the roller paths, resulting in it staying in the same ratio. I am of the opinion that this now goes under the name of Perbury and has found a place in the ancillary drives from gas turbine engines where it is better suited to the high speed low torque application.

The Hobbs unit of which he speaks is that which was the work of the Australian H.F. Hobbs who took it to the U.K. in the 1930's. It was a twin-clutch epicyclic automatic without a torque converter which gave it a great advantage, when applied to smaller cars, of only having the minimum power loss of the driving of the hydraulic actuating pump. It seemed set for production when it was selected for the 1.6 litre Lanchester Sprite car in 1954, which, for various reasons, never made it. The inherent low fuel consumption of this automatic gave them what designers have been actively seeking since the upsurge in world fuel price. Howard Hobbs was the father of David Hobbs who came to notice as a racing driver in the 'sixties.

FRONT WHEEL DRIVE PIONEER

By Jan P. Norbye

It wasn't Issigonis and the Austin Mini that started the trend towards front wheel drive with transversely mounted engines. Nor was it DKW in Germany, who began production of two-cylinder two-stroke cars in 1931, along the same installation principle. The most important pioneer of that layout was certainly John Walter Christie, who built a number of prototypes from 1904 to 1911. But he was not the very first.

Who was first? The Graf & Stift now on exhibit in the Technical Museum of Vienna was built between 1895 and 1898, according to existing sources.

The French also have a candidate, and a car from 1899 has been preserved and can be seen in the auto museum at Le Mans. Its name: Latil.

The engine is a water-cooled single-cylinder Aster, installed vertically, ahead of the front wheel axis, offset to the right. Two pulleys on the output shaft, next to the flywheel, carried belts for taking the drive to the axle-shafts. Releasing one pulley or the other provided a two-speed transmission.

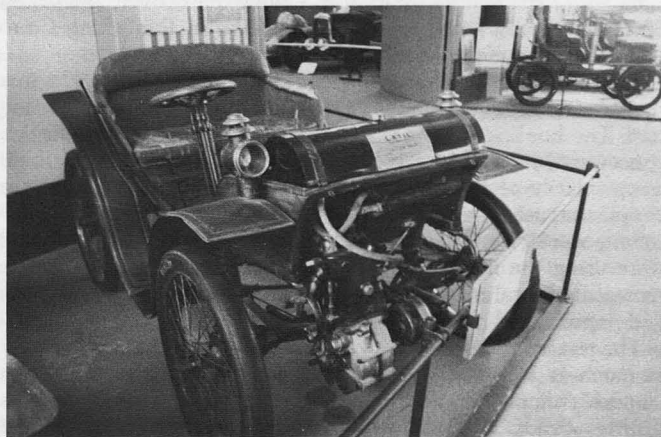
The front axle was split, but not in the form of swing axles. Instead, here we see open shafts with universal joints at both inboard and hub ends. "Essieu brisé" Latil called it. In translation, that comes out as 'broken axle' but 'split axle' would be a more accurate description.

Long semi-elliptic springs were clamped to the hub carriers, which were linked by a bent tube running across the car behind the power train. Thus we see that Latil was able to draw advantages from the de Dion-Bouton type of suspension (which the originators used for the rear wheels) to solve the basic problem of driving the wheels that also steer.

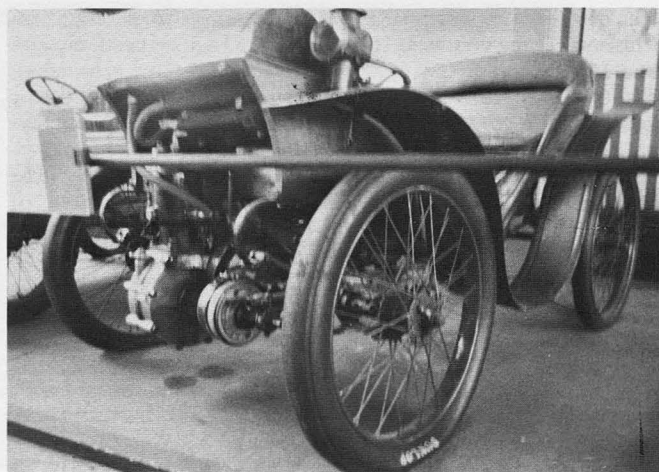
It is interesting that Graf & Stift had quite independently arrived at the same solution, which—many years later—was favored by Ben F. Gregory, Harry Miller, and used on the Cord L-29.

The Latil was advanced in various other ways, too. Its low build gave a low seating position, low center of gravity, and easy entry. It had a steering wheel on a backwards-slanted column, and equal-size wire wheels front and rear, shod with Dunlop pneumatic tires.

This car was the work of Auguste Georges Latil, born in Marseille in 1878 as the son of a notary. The father liked to tinker and had a small workshop, where young Georges (as he was called) could develop his mechanical sense and skills. He was about 16 years old when he went to Paris and found a partner, Alois Korn, with whom he started a mechanical workshop at Levallois, a western suburb brimming with small factories.



It is almost certain that young Latil already had made up his front-wheel-drive layout for cars, though they were not yet in the car business. It is on record that his father and a brother named Lazare assisted in drawing up the patent application—quite natural for a notary. It also appears that Lazare came to Paris and assisted in the construction of the first car, reputedly completed in 1898. It was a converted horse-drawn farm-wagon. A second one was similar, but had bench seating for four persons.



The light car may have been the third Latil prototype. But no production resulted. In fact, Korn and Latil were running out of money. Fortunately a businessman with a diploma from the Ecole Polytechnique, Charles Blum, had seen the Latil cars and pumped new funds into the business. Aided by Blum, they moved into new and larger premises at Suresnes, on the banks of the Seine, a little way upstream from Levallois. Here, Korn & Latil began production of front-wheel-drive trucks. By 1906 it had a steady clientele and the future seemed assured. About 1911 Latil went into the four-wheel-drive truck field, and during World War I Latil turned the factory completely over to the production of four-wheel-drive artillery tractors.

During the 1920s, the Latil factory concentrated on truck production for the civilian market, mainly with conventional chassis. But four-wheel-drive models were always available. Georges Latil assumed the title of sales director about 1930 and retired in 1939 to a villa at La Colle near Vence in the south of France. Charles Blum fled to America in 1940 and died there during the war, but his son took over the leadership of Latil.

In 1955 Renault acquired control of the Latil company and merged it with another firm recently taken over, Somua, which had started as the truck-building subsidiary of the schneider-Creusot armaments group in 1915, into Renault's own truck division. That was the birth of the make SAVIEM (which was used until 1980, after the merger with Berliet, and the revival of the Renault name for trucks and buses). Georges Latil was given the Legion of Honor for his work in the industry and lived quietly in his retirement home until his death in May, 1961.

Research Column

Wanted: Information on the following gentlemen who were associated at one time or another with the Cameron Car Company located in various New England cities including Brockton and Beverly, Massachusetts and New Haven, Connecticut. H.R. Averill, *prior* to his association with the Pullman and sphinx cars; H.R. Doherty *following* his connection with the Corbin car; E.A. Sheu "formerly general manager Invader Oil Company"; Charles S. Kellom "founder of Invader Oil Company; Frank S. Corlew "well known to the trade"; E. Howard Perley receiver following bankruptcy in 1912 and, finally, A.B. Emerson "treasurer", with Cameron during several reorganizations. William T. Cameron, 7495 Clearwater Road, Minocqua, WI 54548.

Book Reviews

THE BIRTH OF THE BRITISH MOTOR CAR, by T.R. Nicholson. Three volumes, 163, 170 and 173 pp. respectively. 10, 9 and 13 illust., respectively. Hard covers, 9 11/16 x 6 1/2 inches. ISBN 0 333 32717 9 (for the set). Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 07716. \$40.00 per volume less 30 percent prepayment with order. Postage 88 cents per volume.

The name of British automotive historian Tim Nicholson will be immediately recognized by members of The Society of Automotive Historians as one of the top researcher-writers in the field today and in this series, what we have basically is exactly what Dr. Nicholson wrote for his Ph.D thesis for Leicester University, an accomplishment which was achieved in full. The subject matter, properly done, has been long overdue and at last we have it.

It is not everyone's cup of tea and, excepting for the last bit of it, the material hardly applies to the motor car in its proper significance in the overall pattern of things.

There is, however, ample and full coverage on the early attempts by the British in road transportation away back when. We have all seen those gorgeous prints of yesteryear — primarily the early and mid years of the Nineteenth Century — of the steam stages which plied between various English cities, exuding progress and with merry people inside and on the roof. Oddly enough, most of these depict the vehicles in black and yellow, undoubtedly a concession to accepted coaching colors (and livery) in those early Victorian days.

Of course, many of these 'runs' never left the drawing board and, in other cases, others failed quickly, either due to imperfect steam principles or lack of interest. Also; there was the road tax. In those halcyon days, there was talk that the road steam stages might give the railroads serious competition. That competition never came. Yet, as these experiments withered and died on the vine, so to speak, the internal combustion engineers were beginning to come into their own — Daimler in Germany, Panhard in France — subsequent importation into the UK and, viola, the motor car arrived.

It has been with us ever since, of course. We take it for granted as we well might.

Yet, like everything else, there had to be an origin — a basic seed which would set the place in the progressive wheel which must be a part of anything which develops into a fulfillment, regardless of the subject.

This describes the birth of horseless transportation and whether we term these earlier attempts at road locomotion divorced from the modern automobile, this is wrong. And we can thank Dr. Nicholson for setting the story down at long last for all to see and many to understand.

Keith Marvin

HISTOIRE DE L'AUTOMOBILE EN FRANCE, by Pierre Saka, Jean Menu and Jean-Pierre Dauliac. 190 pp., 264 illus., 8 x 11 3/4 inches. Hard covers. ISBN 2.09.284.902.6. Editions Fernand Nathan, Alain Thiebaut, 9 Rue Mechain, 75676, Paris Cedix 14, France. 200 Francs.

This is a magnificent piece of publishing and is exactly what it purports to be, a history of the automobile in France from the Cugnot days to the present time. Exotically illustrated, its biggest psychological ploy is the exquisite balance between the color pictures (photos, posters, magazine ads, etc.), and the others, these nicely balanced between black-and-white and sepia tone work.

The color work is very, very good, ranging from such things as an ad for Lincoln c. 1930 as it originally appeared in L'ILLUSTRATION, to a particularly gruesome and realistic poster of 1902 depicting what must have been one of the first major automobile accidents in La Belle France and showing a battered car, unconscious gentleman, injured damsel thrown into the fork of a tree, and the driver, who appears to be beyond help.

I am not a linguist, but I am able to pick my way through a French text and, as far as I can see, this is fairly well-covered and nicely-written.

The book is one of the luxury-type, with heavy coated stock and stiff (a bit too stiff for my liking) pages. The pictorial content is its most appealing point.

My own feeling is that if HISTOIRE DE L'AUTOMOBILE EN FRANCE might eventually make its appearance in an English translation, it would probably enjoy a successful sale both in the British Isles and stateside. And perhaps this will happen, although I doubt it.

Meanwhile, I'd advise anyone interested either in the subject, or in a beautiful book on automotive history, to look into this one. It is the sort of thing that, if it doesn't appear in a translated version, COULD very easily disappear from the scene of availability and then, you just might be sorry you didn't get it while you could.

Keith Marvin

THE AUTOMOBILE REVOLUTION: THE IMPACT OF AN INDUSTRY, by Jean-Pierre Bardou, Jean-Jacques Chanaron, Patrick Fridenson and James M. Laux; translated from the French by James M. Laux. 335 pp., 16 photos. 9 1/4 x 5 3/4 inches. Hard covers. ISBN 0.8078.1496.2. University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27514. \$20.00.

Initially published in Paris some five years ago, this work is a fine study and insight into what it purports to be "the first serious world history of the most significant industry of the twentieth century — automobile manufacturing — and its profound impact on world society." Having been through this book twice to date, I say Amen to that.

Like any other study of its type, it is dry reading now and then. On the other hand, a study of this scope can scarcely be set down in coffee table book turns and I think that anyone who really looks into its pages and into its overall coverage will soon realize that what effort has been expended is akin to bread cast upon the waters. After all, the subject is unbelievably complex and Messrs. Bardou, Chanaron, Fridenson and Laux have done themselves proud in the burden of their collective talent.

There should be more books on more automotive subjects written of this type. Unfortunately, the trend has been toward an overabundance of writing and illustrative material, coated paper and flashy covers. The meat is what is important here and as far as I'm concerned, the four gentlemen who have tackled this monumental subject have done right well with it. As such, I recommend to my peers and anyone interested in automotive history without reservation.

Keith Marvin

Cars with Personalities by John A. Conde. hardcover, 256 pages, 500 plus photographs. \$21.95. Arnold-Porter Publishing Company, Box 646, Keego Harbor, Michigan 48033.

This latest book by John Conde (he was the author of "The cars that Hudson Built" in 1980) is a unique blend of photographs and text. The book spans the era from 1886 to 1982, with the major concentration on the pre 1942 vehicles. The automobiles pictured are primarily of U.S. manufacture, and are posed with famous people that used the particular car as their own personal transportation, were promoting the sale of the car or in some instances were using the machine in the filming of a movie. The makes represented total over 120 different ones, with both the common and popular and rare and obscure present.

The text is interesting and informative, trivia buffs will enjoy it as much as automobile enthusiasts. I particularly enjoyed John Conde's commentary on his experiences with automotive pioneer Charles Brady King. The photographs are well chosen and reproduction is clear and sharp, the type face is perfectly suited for the subject.

There are a few errors in the captions, mostly in body style nomenclature (i.e. a convertible is noted as a roadster). It is a very interesting book, well produced, and at a very affordable price. Do yourself a favor and add this one to your library, you will be happy you did.

W.E. Gosden

Classified Ad

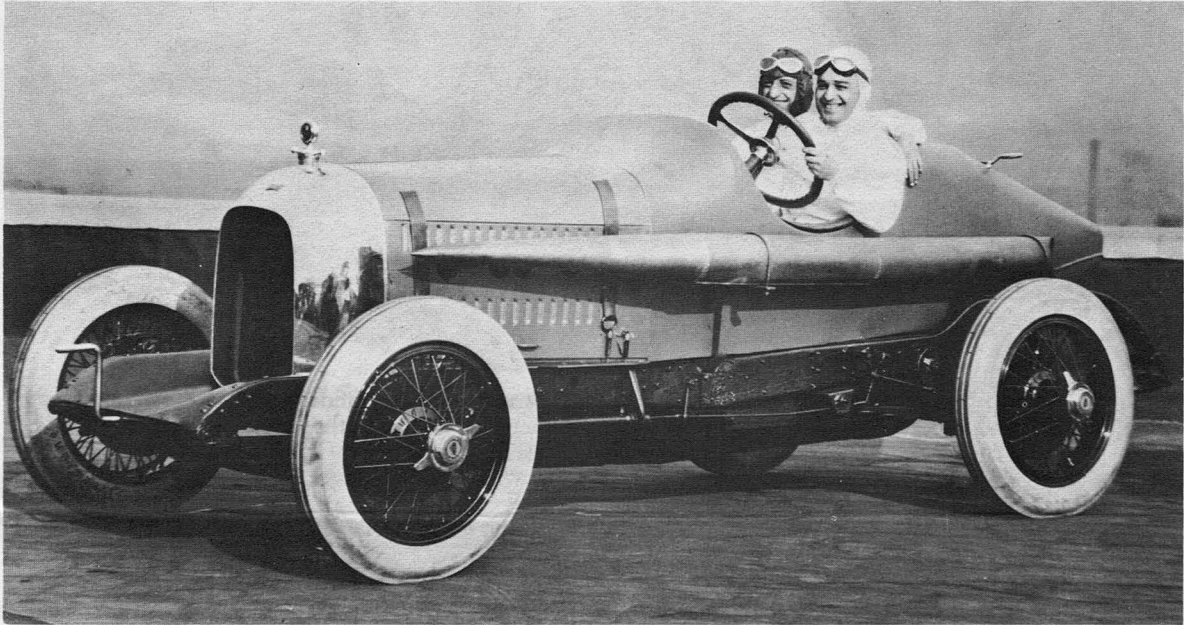
FOR SALE: Autocar (British) magazines, misc. from 1943 to 1953, virtually complete run 1954-Feb. 1977. Probably 1100+ issues. Sell all for \$900. You pick up. Also, Autosport (British), Vol. 1 No. 2 (1950) through 1967. Some missing. Over 800 issues. \$800. You pick up. Bernie Weis, 135 Edgerton St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

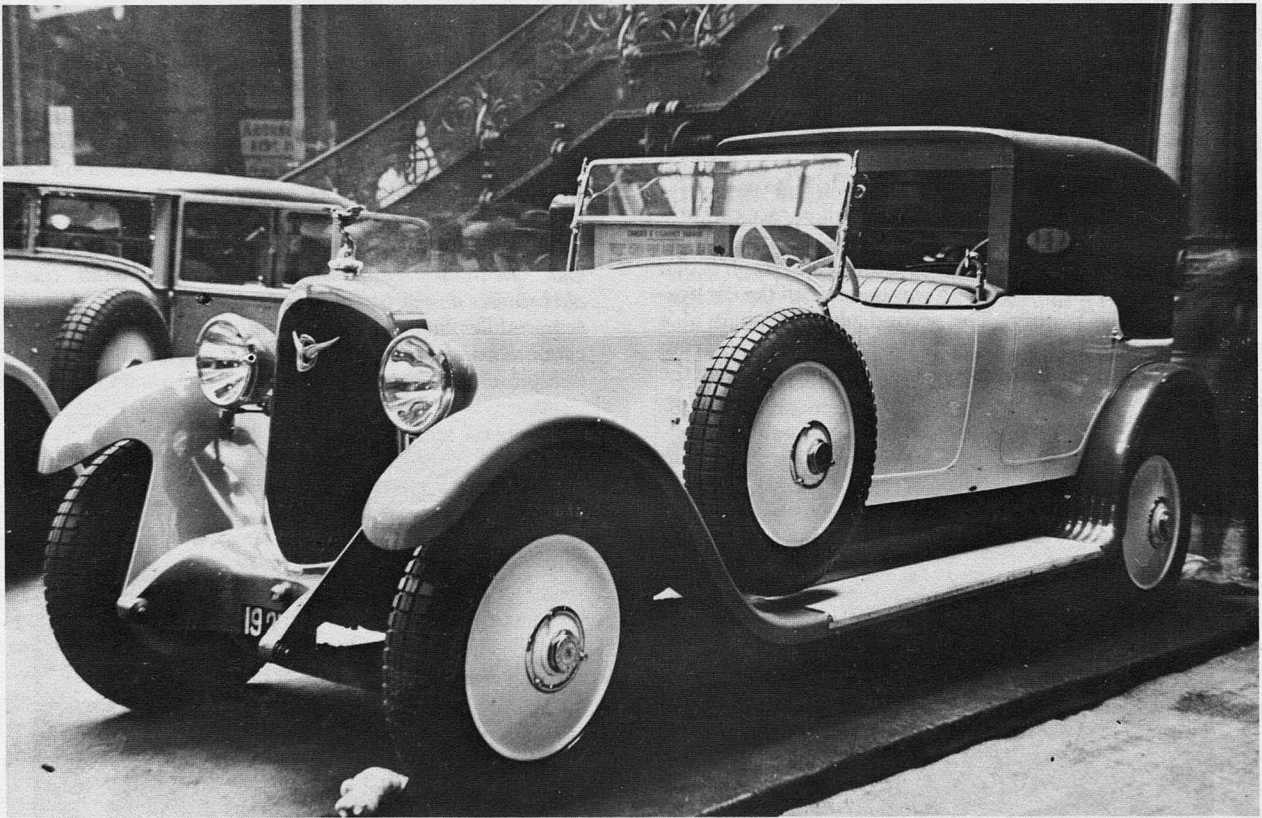
Mystery Photographs: This issues photos are both of race cars and the makes are known; question is what years are they, what model, for what race were they made? The top photograph is of a Chandler race car, and the photograph was taken with the car posed on the roof of the factory. The second photograph is of a Peugeot at a European auto show, note the hooks emerging from either side of the grille beneath the headlamps. Comments from the membership are welcomed.

Issue #80 Mystery cars.

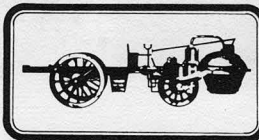
There weren't too many guesses from the membership on this one. John Peckam sent the photos in and relates:

The make is American-LaFrance, the date is 1909. The motor was their Type "B", which they had developed as early as 1905, and had been used in an automobile in 1906. It was a four cylinder affair, rated at 24 hp. While a notation on the negative envelopes says "Chiefs Car", it is believed that the cars were used by Company officials. No one has yet been able to find any community that ever had a legitimate, American-LaFrance "Chiefs Car". At the same time these two cars were built, the Company also built a shaftdrive roadster. Out of fifteen to twenty automobiles built by the Company from 1902 to 1911, only one genuine article is known to exist. It is a shaftdrive roadster, probably built in 1911.





Period Photograph: This circa 1925 Farman A6B, 6 cylinder was photographed as it sat at the manufacturers exhibit at the Paris Salon. From the collection of the editor.



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