

SAH JOURNAL

THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

May - June 1992

Issue Number 138

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Our members are a helpful lot. Last issue I asked some poignant questions about your priorities for *SAH Journal*. While opinions are still coming in, there are a few common threads in all the responses received to date, and these thoughts are converging to the extent that your officers and I can start to draw some conclusions.

To begin, *no one* wants to see any less content in the *Journal*. One member points out that we publish far fewer pages per year than many organizations which charge dues no higher than ours. I like to think that the quality of the material we publish somewhat compensates for this, that there is no "fluff" in the *Journal* or *Review*, no reprints of old ads and very few reprints of articles you can find elsewhere, for example. But the point is understood: you want *more* content, not less.

Respondents are about evenly divided on the question of legibility. About half find it satisfactory as it is; the rest would like larger type. They feel that Times Roman is about as legible a typeface as you can find, which I'm glad to learn, as that was my conclusion, too.

No one is enthusiastic about a dues increase, for any reason, but some express the willingness to pay about ten per cent more, if it were required to maintain and upgrade the quality and content of the publications.

You'll note that this issue breaks no traditions with the last, for we have made no firm decisions yet. One proposal that we're checking out is a twelve-page *Journal* on lighter paper that would mail at the same rates as at present. This would cost a bit more for setup and printing of each issue, but would allow considerably more material in each issue even with a larger type size. The drawback is the less substantial "feel" of the issue, and the decreased opacity, which will allow a bit more "see through," especially if you read your *Journal* on the patio on bright days.

The publications and executive committees and I will be debating the merits and demerits of this and other proposals in the next couple of months. In the mean time, if you have definite thoughts on the desirability (or undesirability) of 20 pound (photocopy weight) paper in your *Journal* we'd like to hear from you.

-Kit Foster

BISHOP GRACES AHOF NEWS

We are grateful to founder member Charles Betts for sending extracts from the April-June 1992 issue of *Automotive Hall of Fame News*, published by the Automotive Hall of Fame of Midland, Michigan. The cover of the issue carries a photo of SAH founder member Charles W. Bishop, of New Haven, Connecticut, and contains an extensive interview with him. Much of the interview covers his recollections of motoring in the first three decades of this century and the four cars built by him while a student at Yale in the 1920s. Bishop is a regular contributor to SAH publications, and his book *La France et l'Automobile*, a major work on the motoring history of that country, was published in Paris in 1971.

Members interested in copies of the issue should contact *Automotive Hall of Fame News*, P.O. Box 1727, Midland, MI 48641.

NAHC LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN 100

The Detroit Public Library's National Automotive History Collection, the largest public automotive archive in the world, has launched a multi-year development campaign aimed at increasing services to the public. Achievement of the Collection's fund-raising goal will enable opening on a full-time basis, versus the present twenty hour per week schedule. Additional staff will also be added to deal with mail and telephone inquiries. Funds are also needed for additional acquisitions, especially private collections which may become available to the public domain.

The campaign is timed to conclude with the centennial of the American automobile industry observances in 1996. Automotive organizations and individuals are asked to pledge toward Campaign 100, contributions to which may be paid over a period of five years. Further details on Campaign 100 may be obtained from the NAHC at 5201 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48202, by telephone at (313) 833-4048, or FAX at (313) 833-1429.

CRESTLINE PUBLISHING ACQUIRED BY MOTORBOOKS

Motorbooks International of Osceola, Wisconsin, has announced the acquisition of Crestline Publishing of Sarasota, Florida, well-known publishers of motoring history books. Motorbooks will assume responsibility for all new Crestline titles, as well as the firm's extensive backlist. The operations will move to Motorbooks' editorial, distribution, and publishing facilities in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and Crestline founder and SAH member George Dammann will remain associated with the firm.

Crestline Publishing was established by Dammann and his wife Gloria in 1969, initially to publish their book *Illustrated History of Ford*, after the book's intended publisher went into bankruptcy. The Ford book was such a success (it is still in print and selling as well as it did in 1969) that the Dammanns brought out another title, *50 Years of Lincoln Mercury*, the following year, and expanded into other marque-specific books. Many, like *60 Years of Chevrolet*, are still regarded as the "bibles" of their specialty.

Over the years, Crestline has published nearly thirty titles, a number of them written by well-known SAH members, such as Jim Wagner, Fred Crismon, John Gunnell, Walter McCall, and the late Don Butler. The Duesenberg volume on which Butler was working at the time of his death is being completed by Dammann, Jim Wagner, Jeff Godshall, and William Bailey.

A number of new titles are planned under the Crestline/MBI banner, the first of which will be Fred Crismon's *US Military Tracked Vehicles*.



LAST CALL FOR AUCTION ITEMS

This will be your last opportunity to contribute items to the 1992 SAH silent auction, our major annual fund raiser. Please take one last look in your library for any duplicate or unwanted books, magazines, automotive literature, or memorabilia, and send them, before the July first deadline to:

Paul N. Lashbrook
SAH Silent Auction
315 SE Seventh Street, Suite 200
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301



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CHRISTOPHER G. FOSTER, EDITOR
1102 Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry, CT 06335 USA

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

It is a pleasure to notify you of the appointment and acceptance by Howard L. Applegate of the chairmanship of the coveted Cugnot and Benz Awards, and the Awards of Distinction for 1992. Some of you have already submitted your recommendations, which have been sent along to Howard for consideration. If you have a worthy nomination or two in mind, please be sure to quickly share them with him at Valley Road, P.O. Box 514, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

Long time distinguished SAH member David L. Lewis has graciously agreed to chair the Friend of Automotive History Award this year. David will also attend the Hershey dinner and personally present the award. Kit Foster, editor of *SAH Journal*, has accepted the chair of the Richard and Grace Brigham Award. And director Jim Wren has been invited to chair the James J. Bradley and E.P. Ingersoll Awards. The Motor Vehicle Manufacturers' Association of the United States, jointly with SAH, sponsors the Ingersoll award for excellence in presenting automotive history in other than print media.

Planning for the winter meeting next year is in the early stages, and the site selected is Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A letter has been sent to Kenneth Nimocks, President of the Wisconsin Chapter, requesting their capable assistance in helping to organize and host the winter meeting during the weekend of April 16, 1993. Further information will be available as the details are resolved. The winter meeting in 1994 will likely be held in or near Washington, DC, and Taylor Vinson has volunteered to do some of the preliminary ground work, reporting his findings during the Hershey meeting in October.

The silent auction is in need of your thoughtful consideration and is anxiously awaiting the extra copies of the many books and automotive literature occupying your book shelves. Why not free up this valuable space? Share these items with the membership by shipping them to the attention of Paul Lashbrook, Chairman, SAH Silent Auction, 315 SE Seventh Street, Suite 200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301.

Please help your Society grow by taking time to secure a new member or two from the ranks of your many friends and business associates. Thank you.

Jack L. Martin

TOURIST FACTORY BURNS

Those of us who value the industrial archeology aspect of automotive history have been blessed by the fact that many former auto factories and facilities have endured far longer than the people and companies that once inhabited them. Valuable clues are often found in the chattels left behind for later generations. Little of this is forever, for few auto facilities have ever been designated historic landmarks, and owners of the buildings are usually free to demolish them at will.

And once in a while we get caught really off guard. Jim Valentine, who did such a great job in chronicling the Tourist automobile and its constructor, the Auto Vehicle Company of Los Angeles, in his 1990 book *The Tourist from California*, recently sent this photo. In it we see what is left of the Auto Vehicle Company's early facility at 943-7 North Main Street in Los Angeles after a major fire on Easter night, April 19, 1992. The building dated from 1899, part of what was then called the Baker Block, owned by Fred L. Baker, a minority stockholder in the Auto Vehicle firm.

SAH member Richard Burnham of Pasadena, grandson of the company president, supplied the likeness of the factory in its heyday, which appeared on the company letterhead. Don't delay, archeologists. The building you meant to visit yesterday may not be there tomorrow.



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REESE MONUMENT DEDICATED

On May 31st, the borough of Plymouth, Pennsylvania, dedicated a state historical marker in honor of automotive pioneer Sephaniah Reese, Sr. Reese, a resident of Plymouth and a machinist and bicycle constructor, built an automobile there in 1887.

Reese's three-wheeled auto was constructed on a tubular, bicycle-type frame, and reportedly welded with gas tapped from the borough's gas mains. The tiller-steered, wooden-bodied vehicle remained on display in the window of the Reese machine shop until 1970, when it was purchased from Reese's grandson by a New Jersey collector.

The historical marker came about as a result of the efforts of Jeffrey J. Selingo, a student of journalism at Ithaca (New York) College, while a student at Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley West High School. Selingo selected Reese as a research project for the nationwide History Day competition in 1990. His report was selected as a national winner, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission approved the placement of the historical marker on May 8, 1991. Dedicating the marker were Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey, Congressman Paul Kanjorski, Plymouth Mayor Edward Burns, Jeffrey Selingo, and other notable dignitaries.

UK CHAPTER MEETS

United Kingdom Chapter secretary Peter Card reports that the Chapter met on March 8th at the library of member Karl Ludvigsen in London. Fourteen members attended. Members were given a thorough tour of Ludvigsen's library and photographic archive, and were allowed to browse extensively. Peter expresses the thanks of the Chapter and the Society to Karl and his staff, with wishes for continued success of the venture, which serves the motor and publishing industries on a commercial basis.



UK Chapter meeting at Ludvigsen Library, London. Left to right: Robin Barraclough, Chris Balfour, Peter Richley, Malcolm Green, Gordon Brooks, Graham Orme-Bannister, Mrs. Green, Karl Ludvigsen.



THE MYSTERY CAR

Regarding the unidentified mystery vehicle in *SAH Journal* No. 137, I am convinced that it is a 1904 Model X Autocar, produced in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. There is little question of its identity, as there are many, many unique Autocar features evident. **Thos. Hespeneide, 410 Darby Road, Havertown, PA 19083**

This mystery proved not to be difficult at all. In addition to Tom's identification, Elliott Kahn, Ralph Dunwoodie, Cornelius Hauck, and Bob Gary pegged it as an Autocar Model X, one of the more popular runabouts of its day.

- Editor

THE PACKARD CABLE SPECIAL

Regarding the Smithsonian release concerning recent acquisition of the Miller "91," A few details are inexact, as follows:

- 1 - Piston displacement of the "91" was not 91.5 cubic inches, but 90.2 c.i./1478 cc.
- 2 - Packard Electric Division of General Motors Corporation entered the story *after* the car was built, I believe.
- 3 - Bugatti adopted the Miller cylinder block and valve gear design, adapting them to his own existing lower ends. Adapting his sohc camshaft drive to the Miller dohc top end resulted in a curious and unique gearing solution.
- 4 - The release says that I found the cars in the Bugatti factory after World War II, period. There is more to it than that. I became aware of the cars' existence there in 1954, negotiated for their purchase until 1958, and brought them back to Los Angeles in 1959. I promptly donated the Duray car to the Indianapolis Speedway Museum. I offered the so-called Hepburn car to the Smithsonian, which was not collecting historic racing cars at that time. I restored the car personally. Damage to the front-drive unit made me abandon the idea of restoring the car to operating condition, that being beyond my means. I exhibited the car at the Los Angeles County Museum, the New York Auto Show (with *Car and Driver* magazine), the Briggs Cunningham Museum, and sold it to Bill Harrah in 1969. At Harrah's, operational restoration was attempted. Bob Rubin received the car with its front-drive unit badly damaged internally. Chris Leydon rebuilt it for him, permitting crowds to thrill to it in action at Bridgehampton, Bagatelle, and Laguna Seca last year. In ceding the car to the Smithsonian, Rubin added a \$100,000 grant, with the strongly expressed hope that some of it be applied to future public demonstrations of this diadem of American racing machinery of the twenties.

It seems to me that the really big story here for SAH is that the national museum of the United States, and the greatest museum complex in the world, has at last - as of 1991 - adopted a collection plan for historic American racing vehicles. This has been done under the direction of William Withun, of the Transportation Division of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, with the very capable expertise of SAH member Gordon E. White. A good number of significant cars already are on display, to be seen by five to six million visitors per year. I propose some act of recognition by SAH of this turning point in our history. **Griffith Borgeson, Mirail, La Motte d'Aigues, 84240 La Tour d'Aigues, FRANCE**

DODGE PRODUCTION AND SCHACHT

I have a question which may be a simple one. I have a book containing lists of US auto production figures by Jerry Heasley (*The Production Figure Book for U.S. Cars*, Motorbooks International, 1977 - Editor). The problem is that it does not contain much information about Dodge production from 1955 on, only the yearly totals. I thought perhaps someone could help guide me to a source.

The second question is whether or not any member is working on the history of Schacht cars and trucks. I have an acquaintance in Walla Walla, Washington, who has a few and is somehow related to the former owners. **Roland L. Skala, 402 E. Yakima Ave., Suite 220, Yakima, WA 98901**

There are a few reference works that give a little more information on Dodge production, particularly for recent years. Richard Langworth's Encyclopedia of American Cars 1940-1970 has the same dearth of production totals for Dodge (and all Chrysler marques, for that matter) by model and body style after 1955. The Standard Catalog of American Cars series (Krause) has a bit more information, including fairly thorough listings for 1976-86. 1956-60 and 1962-69 show series production totals only, while 1961 compiles solely by body style. 1970-73 shows most individual production numbers, while 1974 and 1975 have limited data. Presumably, this is because the manufacturer didn't maintain records to the detail now desired. Does any member know more? And who's researching Schacht?

-Editor

THE 1929 MURPHY ELECTRIC DELIVERY

by J.H. Valentine

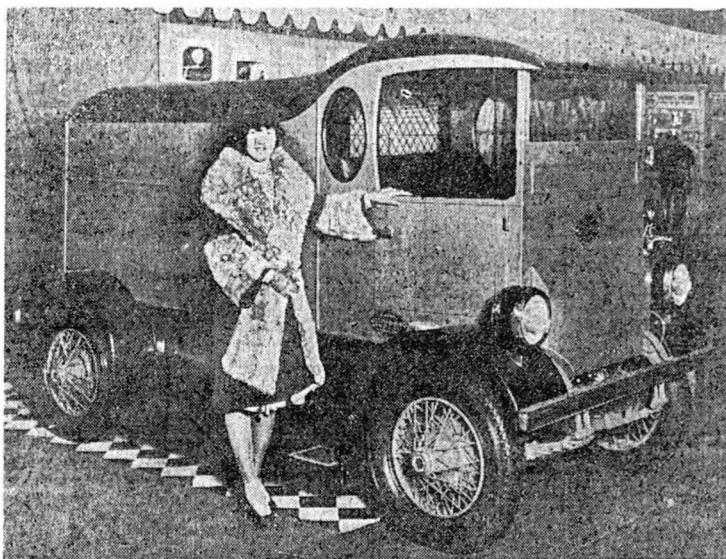
SAH members may be aware of the disastrous fire at the 1929 automobile show at Los Angeles, which was held in a cluster of four long, parallel tents. There were approximately 325 passenger cars and 37 trucks destroyed, plus 17 chassis, as well as some aircraft, bicycles, boats, motorcycles, and accessory exhibits. We have heard of the Auburn Cabin Speedster which was lost, but much else of interest was destroyed as well.

The Walter M. Murphy Company had a large passenger car display representing their Los Angeles and Hollywood showrooms. This included eleven Hudsons, six Essexes, and two bare chassis (Murphy was a Hudson-Essex distributor during this period). Murphy also built custom bodies at their plant in Pasadena on most any chassis, including all Doble steam cars and some very tasteful Lincoln, Cord, and Duesenberg renditions.

The show's commercial vehicle section was in the tent just south of Murphy's Hudson display. It included a second display site for the firm, labelled on the show plan as "Murphy Electric," next to the Autocar (truck) display and just down from the Dodge Brothers and Chevrolet commercial exhibits. A published list of exhibit vehicles failed to include the Murphy Electric or the Autocar, Dodge, or Reo commercials. Based on the size and proportions of these exhibit spaces, and comparing with the vehicles listed in other commercial spaces, the Murphy Electric space had room for but one vehicle without crowding.

The nine-day Pacific Southwest Automobile Show, as it was formally called, opened on the northwest corner of Hill and Washington Streets on Saturday, March 2, 1929, and closed suddenly on Tuesday afternoon, March 5th, due to the fire. Thought to be the result of defective wiring in a display, the wind-whipped blaze destroyed the tents and contents in about 30 minutes, luckily without any serious injuries. Working to overcome this tragedy, the Los Angeles Motor Car Dealers' Association found another site and some more vehicles from stock and reopened the show a day later at the Shrine Civic Auditorium.

The *Los Angeles Times* of March 10th had good coverage of the renewed show, including a photograph of the Murphy Electric delivery truck on display at the new site. The truck is the first known instance of a Murphy-bodied vehicle which was electric, commercial, or which bore the Murphy name as the vehicle's brand name. If such a vehicle was indeed on display in the original show, this photograph is of a second unit. It was a small, high-style delivery of the sort popular in the 1929-30 era, a fad unfortunately ruined by the depression.



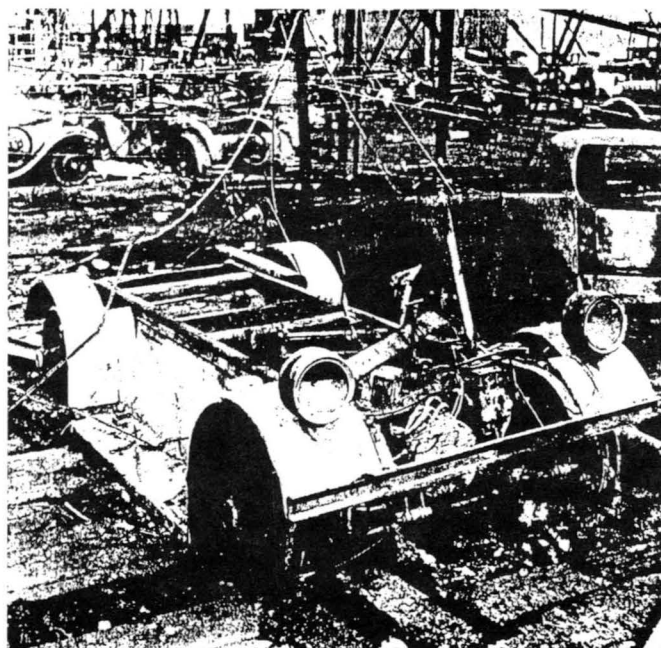
Above, the Murphy delivery on display at the renewed show, as seen in the *Los Angeles Times*. Right, unmistakably a sister vehicle destroyed in the fire.

The *Times* photograph shows a flat-faced body, probably of wood, with its cab above the front wheels and windshield positioned rather high, as in many electric trucks. The cab had oval opera windows behind the doors, and a curved cloth-covered roof which swooped onto the rear, closed cargo body. The cargo body was divided from the cab by a grilled screen above the seat back. The entire narrow body fitted within the wheel positions, and did not extend behind the rear wheels. The body sat rather high above the running board level, allowing space for the batteries below. The metal fenders, running boards, and lower side panels were all without compound curves. Its headlights were perched on the front fenders, with a straight bumper attached to the leading edges of these fenders. The small cargo space indicates the truck likely had but a 1/4 or 3/8 ton rating.

Heavy wire wheels were used, and heavy semi-elliptical leaf springs were visible at the front. A nameplate or emblem is visible on the front as well as below the door on the side. The words are not clearly legible, but possibly say "Murphy" in a stylized manner, the appearance of which is not that of the known Murphy trademark. The body was presumably constructed at the Murphy coach plant at 55 North Vernon Avenue, Pasadena.

Old Car Illustrated magazine, in its July 1976 issue, retold the fire's aftermath, and included some photographs of the scene. One photo shows in the foreground a destroyed commercial vehicle with similar flat-curve fenders, lower side sheet metal, headlight mounting, and front bumper position. A rectangular step position at the front of the running board is just as visible in the *Los Angeles Times* photograph. It had a channel steel cross-braced frame high above the running board level, as an electric vehicle would have above its batteries. An electric motor and differential appear to drive the front axle. The nearly-vertical steering column is at about the correct location. This may indeed show the destroyed Murphy Electric, and, if so, reveal a great deal regarding its construction.

The firm did not ordinarily construct chassis, and most likely purchased this one. Member Bill Lewis suggests the possible use of a 112-inch wheelbase Model 99S Detroit Electric chassis. This is not unlikely, as the Detroit was the most common brand of electric in the Los Angeles area for many years. Murphy historian Strother MacMinn was unaware of the vehicle, but said that the company did visualize other activities besides the building of custom passenger car bodies. Whether one or two units were built, the plan most likely died with the fire and the onset of the depression which killed the market for luxury delivery vehicles.



MYSTERY CAR

Members were quick to identify the Autocar Model X that was the mystery vehicle in SAH Journal No. 137. What can you do with this tourer (right), ostensibly a car of the 'teens. Jim Cox submits the photo on behalf of William Davey of Monticello, New York. Davey discovered a number of glass plate negatives while moving into a house in Monticello, and would like to know just what this car is. It bears 1917 New Jersey license plates, but even under a glass the radiator badge is unreadable. Members?

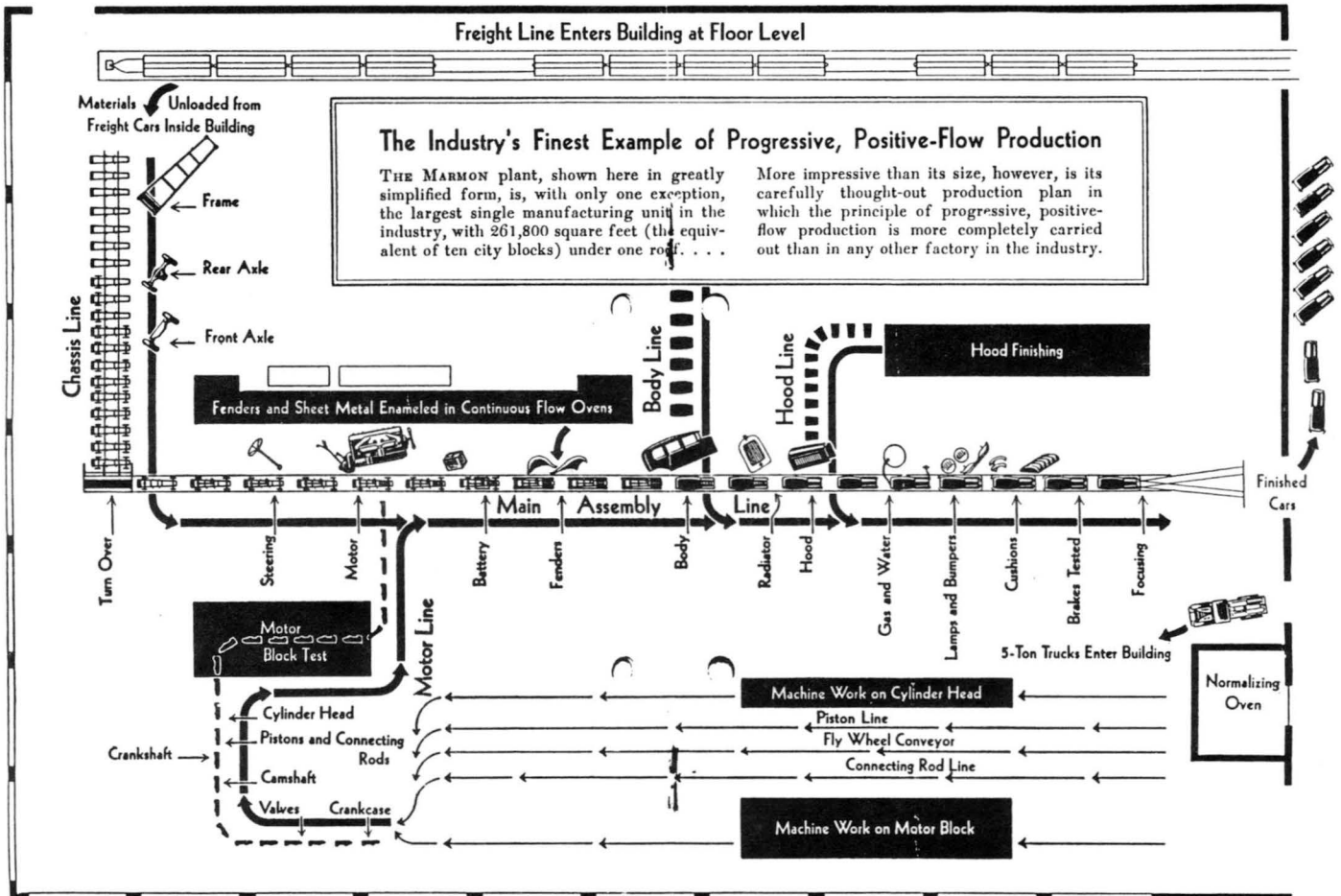


JUST IN TIME, I FOUND YOU.....

Recent popular legend would have you believe that the Japanese invented the concept of "just in time" manufacturing, whereby each component is delivered to the assembly line just in time for it to be installed on a nascent vehicle. No costly, space-wasting inventories, just a lean and efficient supplier network. As with most such "revolutionary" notions, the historian can point to earlier examples which prove that our ancestors understood the principles, even if they had not refined them fully.

In their Cugnot Award-winning book *The Marmon Heritage*, George and Stacey Hanley point out that the Marmon Motor Car Company had a form of "just in time" manufacturing in the 1920s, and Taylor Vinson has furnished this later evidence below touting what Marmon called "Pro-

gressive, Positive-Flow Production." It's from a 1929 brochure, and shows how components moved from freight cars directly to the assembly line: just in time in 1929. So it wasn't the Japanese after all, nor even Frank Sinatra.





A HISTORY OF MAINE BUILT AUTOMOBILES, 1834-1934, by Richard and Nancy Fraser. 292 pages, 130 black-and-white illustrations. Softbound, 10 x 8 1/2 inches. ISBN 0-9630025-0-X. Richard A. Fraser, P.O. Box 39, East Poland, ME 04230. \$24.95. Hardbound edition available at \$34.95. Please add \$4.00 shipping; Maine residents add 6 per cent sales tax.

This book is a labor of love, and an invaluable contribution to the more specialized material concerning regional motor vehicle construction and production. Although Maine doesn't immediately come to mind as a center of such activity, over 135 companies took a shot at the field, few of them getting farther than one or two prototypes. Yet, a number of them went further, producing a variety of gasoline, steam, and electric vehicles, one make using compressed air for motivation. Actually, the book's title is a bit inaccurate, since the first actual engine remained a stationary one, and it also covers, in addition to automobiles, a trickle of trucks, fire apparatus, and log haulers produced at one time or another in the Pine Tree State.

The most ambitious of them all was the Lombard, which managed to produce some 83 log haulers: steamers, gasoline-powered, and one final diesel. The Lombards were half-track vehicles, related to the Linn half-tracks, the first two of which were also built in Maine.

The contents of the book include cars which actually appeared, abortive plans which never hatched, plus material on roads, early motor vehicle laws, and a 33-page segment on Maine license plate history. The latter includes a list of several hundred of the first numbers assigned in 1905, their assignees, and the city or town of residence.

I can truthfully say that with this book the Frasers have made an important and highly significant inroad into automotive history.

-Keith Marvin

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE AUTOMOBILE: Skulduggery at the Crossroads, by David Beasley, 192 pages, 11 black-and-white illustrations, 11 tables. Hardbound 6 1/4 x 9 1/2 inches, ISBN 0-313-26144-X. Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, \$39.95

The author confesses in a foreword that this "detective story winds through a maze of clues over the span of a century." In reality, he tells the story of the battle between the railway and the steam carriage in the 1830s and 1840s in Great Britain, and the battle between the steam and petroleum automobiles in France and Germany in the 1880s and 1890s. Actually, of course, steam had been outlawed in Germany, but the contributions of Benz and Daimler had been nurtured in France. Beasley accomplishes his mission most engagingly. He thinks most people would date the invention of the automobile "in the early years of the twentieth century," while in fact it was developed "to perfection" by 1829, only to be suppressed by the British government. I think most SAH members would come closer to the mark, although dividing into two camps, one of which would hesitate to label the 1830s steam coaches as automobiles. For them, the detailed examination of the feverish railway building contemporaneously with the exploitation of steam power on the highways might be of marginal interest, but the chapters which look into the emergence of the petroleum-extractive industries, their tycoons, and their investments in the automotive industry should surprise them.

The opening chapter is a vivid account of an important trial run from London to Bath of a mixed convoy of three horse-drawn vehicles and a steam tug. The lead was taken by a two-horse phaeton carrying William Hanning, Sir

Charles Dance, Will Bulnois, and a man named Davis. Dance will be familiar, as his enterprise in steam is recorded by many historians, but Beasley has probed a little deeper. Hanning had committed £700 in 1827 towards a London-Exeter route, and with a Lord Heathfield had built a new road and set up a steam stagecoach operation on it. The other two were friends of Dance, prospective investors. Next was Gurney's steam car, towing an elegant carriage. Last was a post chaise carrying the factory manager, David Dady, Thomas Martin, an assistant engineer, and two postboys. It also carried a load of coke in case fuel was lacking at any way station. The steamer itself carried enough fuel and water for six to eight miles. Gurney had been building steam carriages for six years, and this model was quite reliable. Space does not permit even a skimpy outline of their journey, but the story is superbly spun by the author.

Beasley tells how Goldsworthy Gurney had seen Trevithick's steam vehicle in operation in Cornwall as a child, had entered into correspondence with the Cornish inventor, how his fascination with the subject was so compelling that he quit his medical practice, and, in 1823 lectures on chemical science, he laid the groundwork for an analytical study of the properties of steam. A chapter is devoted to the formation of his company, its financing, and its construction of steamers. His first buyer, in 1825, was laying out a line from London to Liverpool. William Augustus Dobbyn contracted for eight carriages for a route from London to Bristol, and Hanning's contract has been spoken of.

A quirk in English law made wealthy men reluctant to invest in novel enterprises, as the idea of limited liability was unknown and if a venture failed the investor not only lost his investment but might also be liable to the full extent of his fortune. Ingenious ways of avoiding risk were proposed, most of which left Gurney as the one fully accountable. Another drawback lay in British patent law. Gurney's work was protected by several patents, but as further improvements developed while operating on public roads such changes were unprotected, and any keen observer could make use of them. In other words, research and development were a free-for-all. Despite these handicaps, the growing operation reached surprising proportions, which alarmed the railway interests and others who saw their livelihoods threatened: horse traders, fodder dealers, and so on.

Another chapter explores the actual balance sheet of the enterprise, and its mounting losses. Was there a market? Beasley asks and answers the question, introducing facts which showed that services already in place were popular, with sufficient patronage to show a profit.

Another of the endless succession of stories tells how Sir Henry Parnell, great uncle of the famous Irish successionist, became interested in the steam carriage, and fathered a visionary project in two stages. He began with sponsoring a granite road from Holyhead to Birmingham, and organized the Holyhead-Birmingham Steam Carriage Company to operate on it. The second stage involved the Anderson and Rogers Steam Carriage Company, which proposed to operate steam cars on the mail coach roads of Ireland.

Moving on to the advent of the internal combustion-engined car, the author looks at the emergence of the petroleum-extractive industries, with familiar tycoons John D. Rockefeller and Cornelius Vanderbilt, and the surprise information that the Nobels were an important presence. The story of the symbiosis between oil and automobiles is too complex for this review, but suffice it to say that only Deutsche de la Meurtha's connection to fuels is noted by the sporting press covering the rise of the French automobile industry. As a long-time student of that activity, I cannot but be impressed with the thoroughness of Beasley's research, and envious of some of the contacts he made in the course of his work, listed in his excellent bibliography.

The ardor with which oil men moved in on the automobile world is obvious, but the author has drawn a long bow when he feels they killed the steam car. The old American canard, that Standard Oil killed the Stanley, comes to mind. If one troubles to compare the consumption of gasoline by the steamer with that of the internal combustion car, the fable goes up in smoke: the steamer is the gas-guzzler. Only one major road race was won by a steamer, DeDion's 1898 victory, Marseilles-to-Nice. Steam held most mile and flying kilometer records for many years, but could not compete in the longer events. There are a few minor errors, and Beasley persists in giving Benz's first name the modern German spelling. Most have now accepted the fact that Benz used "Carl" in his autobiography, and even Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft does (most of the time).

Only automobile enthusiasts whose interests begin after World War II will not find this an engrossing book. It is excellent, and does not suffer from what appears to be a quaint loyalty to Marxist economics.

-Charles W. Bishop

500 DREAM CARS - THE COMPLETE COLLECTIONS OF THE MULHOUSE NATIONAL MUSEUM (THE SCHLUMPF COLLECTION), by Jacques Rousseau with Jean-Claude Delerm and Patrick Garnier, translation by David Waldron. In English, French edition available. 319 pages, 569 color photographs, 98 in black and white. Hardbound, 10 1/2 x 13 1/4 inches (25.4 x 33.2 cm.). ISBN 2-9501158-9-6. Published by Editions d'Art J.P. Barthelemy, BP 125, 25014 Besancon Cedex, France. Clothbound 940 FF, leather and 22 carat gold 3000 FF. Add 35FF for overseas shipping.

This, in its French and English editions, is the official catalog of what is easily the greatest car museum in the world. The volume is a large and sumptuous art book which is fully worthy of what historian Paul Berliet has termed "the Versailles of the automobile." It contains fine color photographs of each car in the overwhelmingly vast collection, and each is identified with meticulous care. This graphic wealth is complemented by a massive text which is devoted chiefly to the stories of the more outstanding marques which adorn the collection. The principal author of the work is the late Jacques Rousseau, one of the finest automotive historians France has produced. David Waldron's rendering of the text in English is ably and smoothly done. There is the occasional error, but they are minuscule and few.

The book opens with a floor plan of the museum and a guide to the exact location of each car within it. The preface is by automotive luminary Jean Panhard, who defines the role of each contributor and states that "It was Jean-Pierre Barthelemy's idea to create this work of art." The work is, in fact, the first of a series which is being devoted to great car museums of the world. The main body of the "Mulhouse" text begins with a concise summary of the all-important history of the automobile in France. While the Schlumpf brothers were interested in and collected a great variety of makes, from ancient to modern, Bugatti was their passion. With over 120 specimens, ranging from the beginning to the end of the line, they amassed the world's largest collection of that marque, to which the book devotes 67 opening pages. But all the great French marques are represented and described, as well as such foreign nobility as Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Mercedes, and Porsche.

The book's price reflects its quality, which, in turn, matches its subject. For those who have visited this incredible museum it makes easy reliving the experience. For those who have not been there it captures the reality of the place and constitutes a precious reference work.

-Griffith Borgeson

OF SINGULAR FANCY (The Romance of the License Plate), by Keith Marvin. 30 pages, 62 black and white photocopy illustrations of license plates. Softbound, 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 92-090901. Limited Edition. Published by Keith Marvin, P.O. Box 839, Troy, NY 12181. \$10.00 postpaid (\$12.50 in Canada, \$13.50 elsewhere - US funds please)

While articles by Keith Marvin appear with amazing regularity in all regions of the motoring press, books by him occur only once every decade or two, so this effort is worthy of notice. It's only fitting that it be about license plates, Keith's particular fancy.

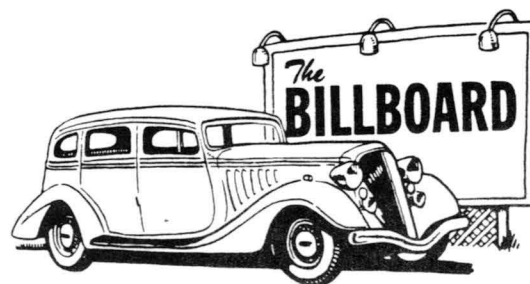
This is no catalog of license plates, so thorough students of the theory and practice of worldwide platerly would be advised to look instead to the standard reference work on the subject, *Registration Plates of the World* (1987) by Neil Parker, John Weeks, and Reg Wilson. A reader who enjoys dipping

into vignettes of Keith's once-extensive license plate collection, however, will find this volume a pleasure. It is the illustrated story of over six score plates of Keith's own and singular fancy.

The sagas begin with the all-but-forgotten Allied Forces in Southern Europe plates of the 1950s and 1960s, and meander through such delicacies as Delaware's current (and unique) applied, non-embossed plates; some Mexican delicacies; Canadian, European, and Antipodean examples; and the 1963-69 plates of Saba in the Netherlands West Indies, which were designed and supplied by the author himself. Each story is packed with Marvin's particular poignancy, and written in his own inimitable, Gilbertian style. There are forewords and appendices galore, with more associated information than most laymen will ever need.

If there's a downside to this book, it's the uneven quality of the illustrations, due mostly to the fact that photocopy "originals" were necessary. This is understandable, since some of these plates were in the original Marvin collection dispersed in 1949. But this is a romance volume, not an encyclopedia, and any shortcomings in presentation do not detract from the enjoyment itself. If this sort of thing strikes *your* fancy, order yours now.

-Kit Foster



SAH Journal welcomes advertisements from members. Ads are free, and should concern items of interest to historians: books, literature, photographs, illustrations, memorabilia, information; for sale, wanted, or to trade. Ads for vehicles or parts are not accepted.

WANTED: Any Nyberg literature, memorabilia, or references to serial numbers of vehicles manufactured in the USA up to the late teens. Any information you may have tucked away will be appreciated. Please call collect. **Bob Youngberg, The Henry Nyberg Society, 17822 Chicago, Lansing, IL 60438 (708) 474-3416**

WANTED: Copy of 1974 or 75 *Car Classics* magazine containing Stanley Yost's article "Taxi: A Look at Checker's Past." For research purposes, loan or photocopy OK. **Kit Foster, 1102 Long Cove Rd. Gales Ferry, CT 06335**

AINSWORTH/LEVEGH: For a commissioned article, any information or comment gratefully received on the following: Henry Ainsworth (of Hotchkiss) and his escape from Paris to USA in 1940. Concerning Pierre Levegh's solo drive in the Talbot at LeMans in 1952, was he responsible for the crankshaft breakage after 23 hours through carelessness because overtired (contemporary reports), or was he continuing solo in order to nurse an engine in which a crankshaft bearing bolt had fractured sixteen hours earlier (W.F. Bradley's obituary of Levegh, *Autocar*, June 17, 1955)? **Christopher Balfour, 25 Clausentum Road, St. Cross, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9QE ENGLAND**

OBITUARY

BRUCE R. LEDINGHAM

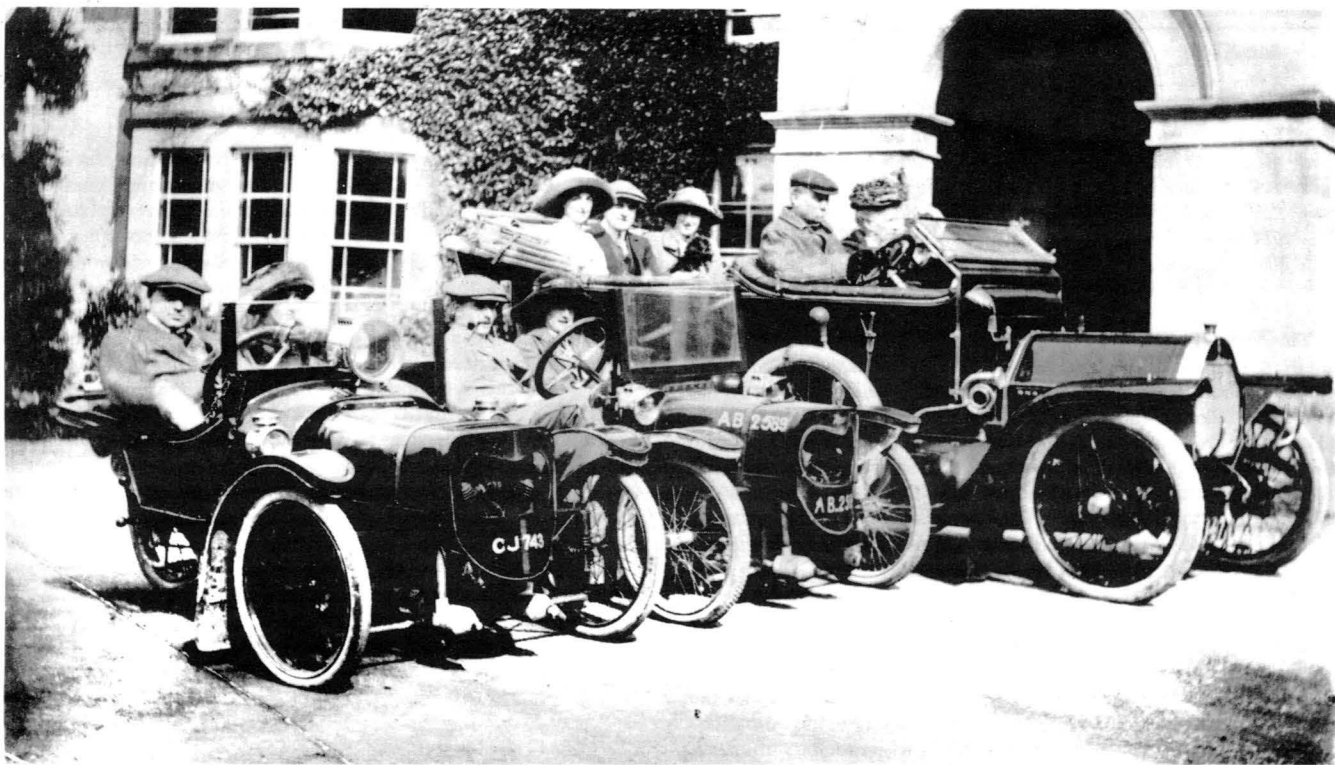
Bruce R. Ledingham, member number 238, of Delta, British Columbia, passed away a few months ago. A longtime SAH member, he had a particular interest in screw-on hub caps, emblems, and serial number plates, and frequently attended the annual meeting at Hershey. He was a member also of the Canadian Automotive Historians.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

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CANADA



THE MORGANS go out for a drive. H.F.S. Morgan, founder of the Morgan Motor Co., with his family at the Morgan home, The Rectory (now the Old Rectory), Stoke Lacy, Herefordshire, England. Left to right: H.F.S., his wife Ruth, Ruth's broyher Geoffrey Day, H.F.S.'s sister Ethel, his sister Freida, Freida's future husband George Hinings, sister Dorothy, and his father and mother, the Rev'd. Preb. and Mrs. H.G. Morgan, he the rector of Stoke Lacy. The trikes are Morgans, of course, circa 1912, but what is the Reverend Mr. Morgan's car? From the editor's collection, courtesy of Morgan Motor Company and Madge Hooper.



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