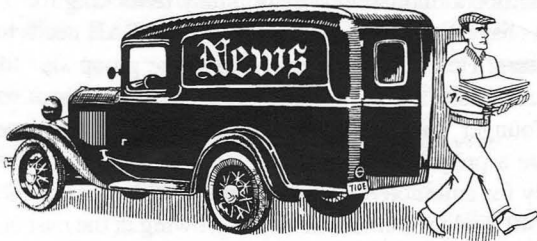


SAH JOURNAL

The Newsletter of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

May-June 2001

Issue Number 192



FIRST WOMAN TO LEAD THE PACK AT INDY

In the 85 Indianapolis 500 races, only four women have driven around the 2.5-mile oval. Janet Guthrie competed in the race from 1977 to 1979. Lyn St. James first ran the race in 1992 and as recently as last year. Sarah Fisher became the youngest woman to drive at the Indianapolis 500 last year at the age of 19 (she also ran this year, starting on the fifth row). This year's fourth woman also wins the title of the slowest woman at Indy ever.



Okay, so her car was the limiting factor here, but she turned lap times of about 100 miles per hour (with the pole sitter qualifying at over 220). Her name is Elaine Irwin-Mellencamp and she became the first woman to drive the pace car at the Indianapolis 500 this Memorial Day weekend. Since none of the first three women ever led a lap of the race, Irwin-Mellencamp also becomes the first woman to lead the race, since that was her job.

The model and wife of singer John Mellencamp proudly drove the Oldsmobile Bravada around the track before the green flag fell. It's assumed that she will not be the last woman to accomplish such a feat, but she was the last to do so driving an Oldsmobile.

LAST EVER OLDSMOBILE TO WIN THE INDY 500

With the demise of the 103-year old Oldsmobile brand comes the end of a number of traditions; many much shorter-lived than the brand itself.

When the Indianapolis 500 was reorganized in January 1997, two engine manufacturers were given exclusive rights to provide powerplants to the racers. Nissan's Infiniti brand and GM's Oldsmobile brand both developed 4.0L DOHC V8 engines for the Indy Racing League (IRL) series. Next year, Oldsmobile's "Aurora V8" will not power any cars.

The engine will remain in the series, but instead of Oldsmobile brand and logo, the familiar Chevrolet red bowtie will grace the cam covers. Chevrolet engines powered the winners of the Indianapolis 500 a number of times including six straight years from 1988 to 1993.

Oldsmobile's engine has powered the winning car in 41 of the 42 IRL races since 1997. Chevrolet has every intention to keep this tradition going in 2002 by not changing the engine.

An all-new engine has been promised for the 2003 season. General Motors is committed to providing engines through the 2005 season.

Louis Chevrolet scored a seventh place finish in the race in 1919 while his brother Gaston won the race the following year.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE DIRECTION OF THE SOCIETY

SAH Journal (ISSN 1057-1973) is published six times a year by the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

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PAST EDITORS

| | Issues | Dates |
|--------------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Richard B. Brigham | 1-29 | September 1969-(undated) 1973 |
| G. Marshall Naul | 30-50 | July 1973-December 1976 |
| John Peckham | 51-59 | Feb 1977-July 1978 |
| Walter Gosden | 60-87 | Nov 1978-Dec 1983 |
| Richard B. Brigham | 88-117 | Jan/Feb 1983-Nov/Dec 1988 |
| Kit Foster | 118-157 | Jan/Feb 1989-July/Aug 1995 |

Subscription to *SAH Journal* is by membership in the Society of Automotive Historians. Dues \$25.00 US per year.

Find the Society on the web at www.autohistory.org

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It is the purpose of the Society of Automotive Historians to preserve, promote, and correct automotive history. Since joining the group, I have noticed this being done admirably by many members. As the editor of this periodical, I have had the joy and honor of discussing a great number of topics with many members as well as assisting members and non-members find the information they're looking for.

As has been said here and other places, SAH needs help for the future. Here are three areas where the group should focus some attention.

Younger members are needed. The Society needs to provide a program to encourage young people to cultivate an affinity for automotive history. We have a number of members under 40 (and the number has been growing in the past decade), but we need to find ways to reach high school age (and younger) children. Kids love cars, but usually new cars. Finding a way for them to learn about the cars that led up to today's cars should be a goal of the Society. Building a curriculum that could become part of a social studies program (or an automotive mechanics program) might be one such avenue to take.

Getting the Society's name out to the public could help everyone. Accessing the growing number of television and radio programs (and websites) that focus on cars and trucks should be fairly high on the priority list for our PR committee. And how many times have you seen people referred to as "automotive historian" and can't find their names among our membership rolls? It happens to me more times than I care to recall.

Increasing membership would come out of the other two items. By having more members, we would have more places to turn to find a person with a similar interest. I was recently quite surprised to find that nobody among our membership lists Rickenbacker as one of their areas of interest. While I have an interest in the car, I do not have enough knowledge to list it (not that this should prevent anyone from listing any brand). But if I were to need an expert in this field, where would I turn. It's not some obscure company from a small Asian country (one of the many global regions we should actively expand into), it was a brand named for a famous World War I pilot.

I've had great luck researching any number of obscure brands including CF motorcycles, Vector, and Dale (with the Indonesian brand Timor being among the few that has stumped everyone). I hope that SAH continues to grow and branches out into new directions. There are so many things we, as a group, have not tried.

SAH is still the best "car club" in the world. But even the best can get better. As I step down from my position as editor, I plan on continuing to offer my services as an officer of this group. Just because I'm no longer in such a high-profile position, don't feel like I'm less accessible to help SAH continue to grow and evolve. Take care and let's talk soon!

- Sam Fiorani, Editor

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

May-June 2001

SPRING BOARD MEETING REPORT

The Spring Board Meeting took place in Cleveland, Ohio and was centered around the Crawford Museum and its Macedonia Annex. Robert Ebert acted as host to his city and even published a booklet to guide us through the "scenario."



SAH directors admire the last Peerless, the one-off V16, in the Crawford Museum lobby, under the watchful eye of "Chief Wahoo."

- photo by Leroy Cole

Thursday found us at the Crawford Museum with our informative guided tour through the "iron." After lunch we spent time in the Archives and each one of us was able to do some research. On the way back to the hotel, we were given a driving tour past several of the old automobile plant sites, buildings and show rooms.



On a tour of Cleveland factory sites, the board members were on hand to watch the demolition of the former Stearns plant.

- photo by Leroy Cole

Friday morning we met at the Macedonia Storage Facility of the Crawford. Collection manager Allan Unrein gave us a guided tour and then we were left to wander through before our meeting. At noon we sat down in the meeting room and began our meeting over lunch. Deliberations and discussion took place for about five hours with one short break. The attendance was 100 % of both directors and officers! That evening we held a banquet at the Clarion Hotel. Robert Zimmerman and Gerald Vinaicek brought a slide presentation on "A History of Packard Through Its Advertising," with ample time for discussion.



At the Crawford Macedonia storage facility, board members contemplate the enormous Minerva custom-built for cult leader Oom the Omnipotent.

- photo by Leroy Cole

Saturday morning the group left for Warren, Ohio and the National Packard Museum. Those staying over until Sunday were invited to an evening dinner at the home of Bob and Marcia Ebert.

The Spring Board Meeting is a labor of love on the part of the officers and directors. We try to make it a time of fellowship and exploration. It is special in its own way, a separate experience from Hershey, and probably is the most productive from the stand point of business done. Some pictures will be found in this *Journal* as space allows.

- Leroy D. Cole

IT HAPPENED YEARS AGO

One-hundred and five years ago...

June 4, 1896 Henry Ford drove his "Quadricycle", for the first time, down the road of Detroit.

Ninety years ago...

May 30, 1911 The 500-mile Indianapolis Speedway Race was run for the first time. Ray Harroun won the race driving a six-cylinder Marmon "Wasp" in 6 hours, 42 minutes and 8 second.

Eighty years ago...

May 28, 1921 Ford builds its five millionth car.

Sixty-five years ago...

May 24, 1936 Buick built its three millionth car.

Sixty years ago...

June 6, 1941 Louis Chevrolet died.

BOARD MEETING

Macedonia, Ohio - April 6, 2001

State of the Society

1. Membership: We have added 135 new people in the past year, 89 of them in the past six months. Total membership on March 31, 2001 was 994, although this number includes some who are delinquent in their membership dues. Of special interest is the fact that 184 of the current members are from countries other than the United States, testifying to the fact that we are a true international organization.

2. Finances: *Kit Foster* distributed and explained the Society's financial balance sheet as of March 31st. Kit had noted previously that the SAH operates at a small deficit each year to accomplish its many goals, and the Board returned to a discussion of this issue and the related one of membership dues. After debating the pros and cons of increasing dues and of possible amounts, it was moved to raise the dues to \$40, effective with the 2002 membership year. The motion passed with one dissenting vote. In addition, a new membership category, that of "Patron," was approved for those individuals who contribute \$20 or more in addition to their annual dues.

3. Nominations Committee Report: The terms of three directors will expire at the end of 2001. The Board discussed possible nominees for the fall ballot, and each will be contacted regarding his or her interest in such a position. *Dale Wells* has been nominated to succeed *Leroy Cole* as President, and *Joe Freeman*, *Kit Foster*, and *Mike Berger* indicated their willingness to continue to serve an additional 2-year term in their respective roles as Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

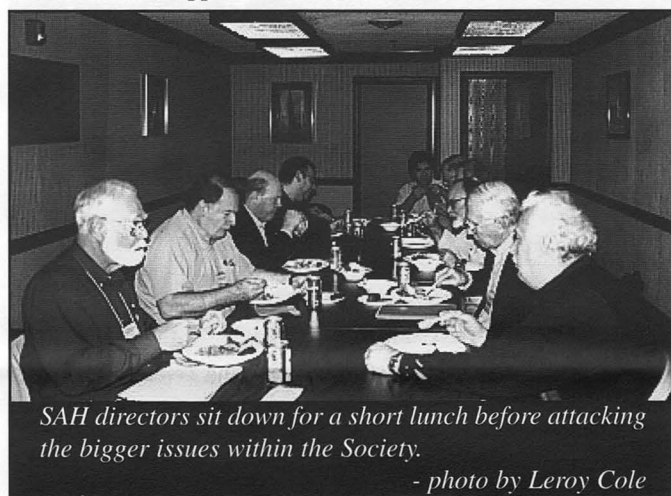
4. Secretarial Matters: It was decided that henceforth the SAH Secretary would have the responsibility of maintaining an ongoing archive of minutes from the bi-annual Board meetings. *Mike Berger* will assemble and organize his minutes and those of his predecessors in a set of sourcebooks.

Ongoing Activities

5. Awards: The Board discussed the advantages of having a common, well-publicized deadline for all award nominations. It was moved and unanimously approved to make that date April 15th, effective next year. It also was agreed that henceforth an announcement regarding the awards and the nomination deadline would appear in all issues of the SAH Journal. A call for nominations for the new student paper award, to be named in honor of the late Griffith Borgeson, has been sent to colleges and universities with graduate programs in history. Finally, the Board received a communication from *William Jackson* regarding a proposed award to recognize preservation of automotive history through creation of a collection, archive or museum. The award would be in memory of founder *William Swigart*, who died last year. A complete proposal will be presented at a later date

6. Periodicals: *Taylor Vinson* reported on future issues of the *Automotive History Review*. Issue #37 will be an eclectic one, but with extremely interesting and timely articles. Cars of pre-war Central and Eastern Europe will be the focus of issue #38, due out in late fall or early winter. Issue #39 will be written largely by writers under 40 years of age, and is scheduled for the spring of 2002.

Between Board meetings, *Sam Fiorani* had indicated his desire to transition out as editor of the *SAH Journal*. The Publications Committee solicited applications for his successor. From the five candidates who applied, the Committee recommended *Tom Jakups* to the Board, which unanimously approved his appointment. Tom initially will serve as Assistant Editor, gradually take on more responsibility, and become editor-in-chief with the November-December issue. *Leroy* thanked Sam for his service as editor, with which Board Members concurred with a round of applause and individual tributes.



SAH directors sit down for a short lunch before attacking the bigger issues within the Society.

- photo by Leroy Cole

7. Other Publications and Media: The first consignment of the *Beaulieu Encyclopaedia of the Automobile*, edited by *Nick Georgano*, sold out quickly. Another, smaller consignment has been ordered to fill unmet requests and in anticipation of additional orders. The Board unanimously approved an offer from The Olde Milford [CT] Press to purchase the remaining copies of the *Mister Javelin* book and the related printing flats for \$1,825. It was noted that while this initial publishing venture of the SAH Press had turned a small profit, we ought to engage in further analysis before commissioning a second work. The Society's website (www.autohistory.org) has begun to offer a new service-"motormail," which is an on-line discussion group for the membership. To date, 117 members have participated. *Dave Duricy*, our webmaster, reports the site had 10,000 hits in its first 13 months of existence, an average of 27 per day. *Kit Foster* noted that the site was having multiple positive impacts in terms of increasing membership and providing answers to queries from members and non-members alike. The latest membership directory was mailed out in December of 2000. *Leroy* suggested that in the future we might consider placing it on a CD-ROM disc or the website.

8. Silent Auction: The members of the Board discussed the possibility of holding the auction every other year rather than annually. The time and effort that goes into the process compared to the small financial gain that the Society realizes was discussed,

but that was balanced against the obvious advantage of providing a way for members to exchange books, sales literature, and automobilia. No resolution on the issue was reached.

9. 2001 European Meeting: Taylor Vinson reported on the very successful 6th annual meeting of automotive historians in Europe, held this past February at the Automobile-Club de France (ACF). There were a record total of 41 people in attendance, despite some publicity snags. Representatives were present from England, France, Germany, Spain, and the United States (Taylor, Kit, and *Chuck Houser*). Taylor presented the 2000 Friend of Automotive History Award to *Paul Berliet*, (who had been unable to attend the October annual meeting in Hershey). Plans are moving forward for the 2002 event.

10. Chapter Relations: Darwyn reported that the new president of the Southern California chapter is *Harold Osmer*. The chapter continues to give the James Valentine Award for the best article on the automobile in the West or California, and will have its annual Automotive Literature Fair on June 24th.

New Initiatives and Proposals

11. Affiliation with the American Historical Association (AHA): Joe Freeman reported that we are still in the process of being considered for affiliate membership status in the AHA. Apparently, only a small number can be considered for such status each year. He expects to hear back from the AHA in June.

12. Joe Freeman reported that the Auto Racing Historical Association is still considering affiliation as a chapter of the Society. They are currently affiliated with the Veteran Motor Car Club of America (VMCCA). There was general consensus among Board members that incorporating this special interest group was a good idea, and their members will be encouraged to submit an application for chapter status.

13. Fourth Automotive History Conference: The SAH will join forces with the National Association of Automobile Museums (NAAM) to sponsor another conference on automotive history, scheduled for April 10-13, 2002 at the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, Indiana. (It was noted that the closest airports are Ft. Wayne, South Bend, and Indianapolis.) The spring Board meeting that year will be held on April 10th, in conjunction with the conference.

14. The possible need to expand the management structure of the SAH, first broached at the October 2000 meeting, was discussed in more detail. The activities of the Board and the committees have increased and become more diversified in recent years. Therefore, the Board believes it makes sense to review the current organizational structure to determine whether it is the most effective and efficient one that we can devise. Further discussion on this topic is scheduled for October.

15. Finally, the Board discussed the possibility of creating an Advisory Committee that would link people who have collections of automobilia they wish to donate with possible repositories for their collections. No decision was made on this proposal, but it will be discussed further at the next Board meeting in Hershey.

There was no *SAH Journal* issue between March-April 1976 and July-August 1976.

However, issue No.5 of the *Automotive History Review* was released in the Spring of 1976. Editor Richard B. Brigham put together another fine issue.

On the cover of this particular volume was Charles Nash. The editor gave a brief history of the man and a continued history of his company. From Nash Motors Company to Nash Kelvinator to American Motors Corporation, each stage of the company's history is touched upon accompanied by 13 photographs of cars from the 1917 Nash Model 671 to the 1957 Nash Ambassador Model 5785-2. Included were a 1923 LaFayette and a 1925 Ajax. As was reported, "the company that Charles Nash built lives on as the only major independent auto maker to survive the attrition" that took Studebaker, Packard, and a plethora of others from the American scene. American Motors, the final iteration of Nash's car company, was finally absorbed into Chrysler Corporation in August of 1987.

Harlan Appelquist reported on "The American Motor Car Industry, 1909" in a one-page report. Also included were two pages of statistics from 1909 with the top 19 brands and a breakdown of production by price range or horsepower. By the way, the top five brands in production in 1909 were Buick (14,606), Ford (10,660), Maxwell (9,050), Cadillac (7,868), and Reo (6,592); comparing this to 2001, Buick produces as many cars in three weeks and Ford makes more vehicles in one day.

Harry Pulfer put together an article covering "Highlights of the Development of Moto Meters and Heat Indicators." This year-by-year account gave points in the history of the radiator-top engine gauges. *Grace Brigham* provided some wonderful advertisements and photographs as "supplementary information" to the article. Covering 13 of the magazine's 32 pages, this piece was only part one of a two-part series.

Fred Roe, in a letter to the magazine, provided a picture of "the Duesenberg-Willys-Durant plant at North and Newark Avenue in Elizabeth, NJ, as it appears today." Standing along Route 27 North, can anyone report if this building is still standing twenty-five years later?

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Submitted by,

Mike Berger, SAH Secretary

THE PASSING OF A LEGEND

Racing Great Smokey Yunick Passes Away at 77

by Don Keefe

The automotive world is mourning the loss of racing legend Henry "Smokey" Yunick, whose trademark cowboy hat and inimitable personality were as well known as his winning Indianapolis and NASCAR racers. Mr. Yunick died on May 9th after a year-long battle with leukemia. He was 77.

Smokey acquired his nickname as a result of his earliest racing activities. As a 16-year-old motorcycle racer, his bike had a habit of pouring large clouds of smoke onto track. The nickname stuck and he's been known as "Smokey" ever since.

Born in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, Mr. Yunick joined the Air Force and became a bomber pilot during World War II. His first experience with Daytona Beach was flying over it as a B-17 pilot. After his first glimpse, he decided he was going to move there after the war. He did just that in 1946 and the following year opened his world-famous "Best Damn Garage in Town."

Though lacking a formal education, Smokey developed an almost instinctive understanding of the internal combustion engine and how to extract more power from it. His reputation for racing success was fostered on the original Daytona Beach race course. Mr. Yunick became the chief mechanic for Hudson racer Herb Thomas, who chalked up 49 victories, as well as the NASCAR Strictly Stock Championship in 1951 and 1953. Detroit manufacturers began seeking him out to help develop racing engines. Mr. Yunick came to Pontiac at the urging of General Manager Semon E. "Bunkie" Knudsen to field a NASCAR team.

When Smokey came to Pontiac, success followed. His trademark black and gold Catalina stock cars won the Daytona 500 twice, in 1961 with Marvin Panch and again in 1962 with the late great Glenn "Fireball" Roberts behind the wheel. He also worked with such legendary drivers as Mario Andretti, A.J. Foyt, Curtis Turner, Tim Flock, Buck Baker, Paul Goldsmith and Bobby Unser. Goldsmith won the last race on the original Daytona Beach and Road course in 1958.

Smokey also experienced success in open wheel racing, fielding an Indy 500 entry 10 times between 1958 and 1975. He won the Indy 500 in 1960 as an owner, with Jim Rathman driving.

Mr. Yunick continued to field NASCAR entries, but was becoming tired of what he considered to be politics in that sanctioning body. He was famous for his "creative interpretation" of various NASCAR rules, which frequently put him in the hot seat with race officials.

After a major argument with NASCAR President Bill France, Sr., Smokey left NASCAR racing in 1970. He continued building racecars for several years after that,

subsequently closing his shop to the public in 1987. He still conducted a huge amount of research into engine and racing technology. His "Hot Vapor" engine received quite a lot of interest in the 1980s, as he claimed it would achieve a whopping 100 miles per gallon.

In addition to his racing pursuits, Smokey also became a renowned automotive writer. His 1983 book, *Power Secrets*, is still in print and he also penned a tech column in *Circle Track Magazine*. He will also have a three-volume autobiography and race history due out on July 6th.

Smokey made a rare appearance in Denver at the 1997 POCI convention, where he and former Pontiac General Manager John Z. DeLorean were featured speakers. This author had a chance to spend quite a bit of time there with him and his wife Margie. We spoke about a variety of topics and, I must say, I learned more from him in those few days than I ever expected. It was a very rare and satisfying experience to meet a lifelong hero and actually be uplifted rather than disappointed.

Though he had lost his hearing, he was gracious, friendly and very energetic, signing literally hundreds of autographs for fans and communicating with them by way of a marker and an erasable board. He also gave what was without a doubt, the most animated and lively question and answer session in POCI history. We caught up with him again at the SEMA convention in Las Vegas a few months later and like POCI, he was signing autographs and chatting with fans, obviously enjoying himself.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by three sons, Smokey, Jr., Sam and Steve, daughter Trish and sister Renee Walker. Donations in his memory can be made to the Stewart Marchman Treatment Center in Daytona Beach.

NEWS FLASH! A CANADIAN INVENTED THE AUTOMOBILE

History Books All to be Re-Written
by Len Haffenden

We are talking here of Henry Seth Taylor, of Stanstead, Quebec, Canada, who was seen by hundreds of witnesses driving a car of his own design in public places, on several occasions, as early as 1867, a full eighteen years before Karl Benz was operating his three-wheeler in Germany. We will get back to Mr. Taylor in a minute, but first, some historic perspective.

Now Karl Benz is generally honored as the inventor of the automobile (by automotive historians, anyway), but this status relies on a series of definitions, such as defining "invented," "automobile," and "first," among other terms.

Benz was the first to take a clean sheet of paper and design a vehicle, which incorporated a gasoline engine, a chassis, and a body into one harmonious and complimentary unit; in short,

the first gasoline-powered car. In this, he was first; the car was built and running in 1885 and he received a patent for it in January 1886.

This car, which Benz called a "Dreirad," had a single cylinder four-stroke motor (3/4 hp @ 250rpm), electric ignition, a carburetor, and was water cooled. It had a steering wheel, not a tiller bar, and had rack-and-pinion steering.

He sold one of these cars in 1887, had a 2hp version ready by 1888, and had one on display at the Paris Exhibition of 1889. His wife learned to operate this machine in 1886; hence, Berta Benz became the world's first woman driver, and without a driver's license at that. Shocking!

I have seen references in some books (not well researched) which give credit for inventing the gasoline-powered car to another German, Gottlieb Daimler, but they are wrong on two counts. First, Daimler's car was not ready until six months after the Benz car. Second, Daimler installed a gas engine into an existing horse-drawn buggy, dropping the horse and modifying the wagon. This early Daimler had a single cylinder engine, was air-cooled, and relied on hot-tube ignition; so Daimler is second, based on timing and technology.

Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler never met, although by today's standards, they were almost neighbors, but late 19th Century communications and transport left something to be desired. In the corporate sense they met later, as the two companies merged in 1926 to form Daimler-Benz AG.

The Austrians pooh-poohed both the Benz and Daimler claims, as they are convinced a mechanical-electrical engineer named Siegfried Marcus should get the credit with his "Strassengwagen," seen running on the streets of Vienna in 1875, ten years before the Benz car. Marcus made up to three of these "cars," one of which survives and can be seen today in Vienna's Technische Museum.

Like Daimler after him, Marcus installed a gas engine of his own design (developed during 1860-1863) in a modified wooden wagon. The engine was one cylinder (3/4hp), cone clutch, belt drive, and there were block brakes on the rear wheels. Because of tough city regulations and some police harassment, Marcus lost interest and turned his active mind to other things.

So convinced were the Austrians that they should be recorded as "first" in automobiles, that in 1950, as a 75th anniversary gesture, the museum officials overhauled the "Marcus Mk I," and drove it once again on Vienna's streets. They are not the only ones who think Marcus should be first. There was a set of Franklin Mint silver ingots (100 small ingots) issued in 1975 as a centenary project, and the first three ingots in the set, in order, are: Marcus, Benz, then Daimler.

Now back to our Canadian, Henry Seth Taylor. During the second half of the nineteenth century, steam engines were common and generally understood by most men. They were used extensively as stationary engines in agriculture, and, of course, the railroads.

A lot of the earlier credit, or glory, for being first with an automobile is based on internal combustion gasoline engines, but this is not a given, only a convenient term for those who equate automobiles with gasoline engines.

In the first thirty-five years of the automobile's development (1885 to 1920), steam and electric-powered cars played a prominent role, occasionally outnumbering their gasoline-powered cousins in certain situations.

So, if an "automobile" is defined as a personal vehicle, for two or more passengers, which can be operated on the streets, and can be powered by electricity (batteries), by internal combustion (gasoline, petrol, benzene), or a gas (propane, natural gas, compressed air), or by external combustion (steam), then Henry Seth Taylor invented the automobile.

His was not an engine installed into a modified wagon, but, like Benz's car, a complete design owing nothing to previous vehicles. Taylor was a jeweller and well-known watchmaker, and a very precise machinist working primarily with brass.

Taylor, born in 1831 (the same year as Marcus), exhibited his car at fairgrounds in both Canada and the US (New York) during 1867 and 1868. Fortunately, there is one surviving photo of it in operation. He adapted his car to run on compressed air for short drives, and steam for longer trips.

Taylor was ahead of his times; his little steam car was looked upon as a novelty, and no one took him seriously. Once, when out for a drive, while negotiating a downgrade, he lost control and had a slight smash-up, partly due to a lack of braking. He then put the damaged car in a barn attic where it stayed, out of sight and out of mind for many years. Just as well, too, as this helped it survive two different world war scrap drives!

In 1931, a freelance journalist by the name of Lee Quimby was nosing around the Stanstead area and heard of Taylor's car from some surviving very senior citizens who remembered seeing it in operation at local fairgrounds. Quimby made careful inquiries and was able to verify the whole story, which he typed up and sold to a weekly newspaper supplement sold across Canada.

Moving ahead now to 1960, the old Taylor farm and buildings were finally sold off to a Mrs. Sowden, who, upon investigating the barn attic noticed what appeared to be a lot of "old stuff." She knew a bit about antiques and had the brains and perception to realize this was not just "junk," but the remains of a very early automobile.

Sadly, she could not arouse any Canadian interest (typical, eh) and the saving of the "Taylormobile" as we will now call it, fell to an American auto enthusiast, Richard Stewart. He bought the remains and, after some research, did a full restoration, this time adding a set of good brakes, something Taylor was not as concerned with.

At the personal level, on a sunny day in June 1949, our family sailed from Southampton, England, for Halifax, Canada. I have now lived in Vancouver, B.C., on the west coast, for over fifty years. So, I would like to declare, in a surge of latent Canadian nationalism, that if an automobile is a personal transport vehicle, powered by one or more of several means, as listed above, then Henry Seth Taylor, a Canadian, invented the automobile. There is no doubt about this.

Let us proclaim it from every Canadian rooftop!

ALFA ROMEO: THE REAL HISTORY OF ITS BEGINNINGS

by Dott. Ing. Stuart Schaller

May-June 2001

Giuseppe Merosi was born in 1872 and was trained as a surveyor. After doing military service, he became one of the founders of a cycle firm called Bassi and Merosi, located in Piacenza, his home town.

In 1895, Merosi, working for the firm Orio & Marchand, designed a car with a 36-degree V-2 motor of 770cc, which competed in the first race in Italy. Prior to this time, the cars built by this firm, founded in 1890, used motors supplied by DeDion Bouton of France. In 1904, Merosi moved on to Fiat in Turin, and was involved in the design of sporting and racing cars. In 1905, he moved on to another firm; Lentz of Milan. He must not have been very happy there, or received an excellent offer, because within a few months, he moved on yet again, to Bianchi.

In 1906, Societa Italiana Automobili Darracq was founded in Napoli to assemble and sell the French cars in the Italian marketplace. It's not known exactly when, but during this period, they moved to the Portello section of Milan. The managing director of this firm was Cav. Stella.

In 1907, a company named A.L.F.A. (Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili) was founded in Novara by two engineers named Pedretti and Guldner. They built a 4-cylinder, 2-stroke prototype car with a 2-headed piston (there was a combustion chamber at the top and the bottom of each cylinder). As it was a 2-stroke, it didn't matter that the bottom combustion chamber was connected to the crankcase. The car also had a transaxle using worm gears with steeper pitch for each gear, and the worm was skewed in the opposite direction for reverse. The car was actually built at the shops of Olivari and Duse in Milan. Only one car was built, and the company folded in 1909.

By this time, Societa Italiana Darracq was in financial trouble. In autumn of 1909, a new company was formed out of its remnants. What appears to have happened was that Cav. Stella bought the corporation ALFA (or just its shell) with a loan from the Banca Agricola di Milano, and a new organization was formed.

About this time, Stella gave the job of creating a new car, suitable for both touring and sporting purposes, to Merosi, his head engineer, who had come over to this firm from Bianchi. The new car was to be made entirely in Italy, unlike previous models, which were, for all intents and purposes, nothing more than French Darracqs assembled in Italy. By the end of the year, the company had radically changed. An all Italian staff was formed to initiate production of the new Merosi design, a 24 horsepower model. In June of 1911, it was decided that a new badge would be used to differentiate the new product from what had been constructed previously.

The youngest member of Merosi's staff was Romano Cattaneo, the brother of Giustino Cattaneo, who was one of the founders of Isotta-Fraschini. Romano, while waiting for a tram at the Piazza Castello, looked at the emblem on the wall of the ancient Castello Sforzesco, and it flashed through his mind that the Visconti snake should be a part of the badge.

Merosi thought it was a good idea and together they produced a sketch. The red cross of Milan was added to the Visconti snake and they were surrounded by the inscription "Alfa Milano" and the two figure-eight savoy knots in a dark blue field.

Merosi's automotive design showed features that were atypical for 1910, the most important of which were a single-block motor and a driveshaft. At that time, most cars still had paired cylinders, and some were still using chain drive. The prototype was ready by the fall and had its racing debut at the 6th Targa Florio in 1911, where the car retired after leading the race for two of the three laps of the Madonie Circuit.

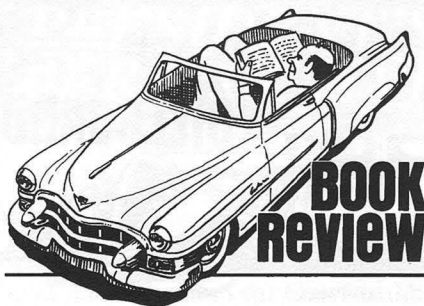
The car remained unchanged until 1913 when the valve timing system, which was driven by gears, was replaced with silent chains. The car would now be called the Tipo 20/30. A larger model, the 40/60, and a smaller model, the 15/20, were also built in very small quantities. When the first World War began in 1915, a large cache of parts was stored away, to be assembled at a later date.

Back in 1902, the astute Neapolitan, Nicola Romeo had obtained the Italian franchise for the American Ingersol, a company that produced earth working equipment, compressors, and pneumatic drills; the type of machinery needed to conduct war, which was still an earth bound affair. This was a prosperous venture, and by 1910, Romeo was also producing mining machinery and equipment. During the war, shipments from America were being sunk by German submarines (it must be remembered in WWI, Italy was on the side of the Allies), and it was decided that the equipment would be produced in Italy under license. Rather than just acting as an agent for the American firm, a company was founded and called Accomandita Ingegner Nicola Romeo & Co. By early 1915, the company had grown from having around 100 employees to over 1,200.

A bigger factory was needed, so Romeo took over the remnants of ALFA, with the help of the Banca di Sconto. The Merosi car must not have been very successful initially, as by the time Romeo took over ALFA, it was virtually out of business. In fact, when Romeo took over, the plant was actually dormant. During the war and for a number of years thereafter, the Portello works functioned as a production facility for machinery rather than as an automotive establishment. Additional engineering firms were added to the mix, but everything was really under the control of the bank.

It wasn't until February of 1918 that Romeo's name was included in the title of the firm, now to be called Societa Anonima Italiana Ing. Nicola Romeo & Co. By June of that year, three more companies were added including Construzione Meccaniche of Sarrono, Officine Meccaniche Tabanelli of Rome, and Officien Meridionali of Naples.

The war ended in November of that year and within a short period of time, there was little need for the type of equipment that was being produced. Romeo was not a car enthusiast, but as there were parts sitting in storage, and a staff of skilled workers, he was talked into producing automobiles. It was at that moment that Alfa Romeo was really born; and that is how the "new" cars would be badged.



THE CLASSIC ERA by Beverly Rae Kimes. 720 pages, more than 1,600 photos plus 96 pages in color. Hardcover, clothbound with dust jacket, 8 1/2 x 11 inches. ISBN 0-9627868-1-0. Published by the Classic Car Club of America, 1645 Des Plaines River Road, Suite 7, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018. Price: \$99 (plus \$10 shipping, \$15 in Canada, and \$25 for overseas delivery).

This is a magnificent book by any standard! For anyone doubting what a classic car really is, look no further than this more than ample collection of photos covering the ground of what classic cars are according to the CCCA listing—built between 1925 and 1948. The photos cover the ground beautifully giving the reader a complete understanding of the various makes both with factory coachwork and that of the custom body builders that proliferated during those years. Most of these examples are stunning and those that aren't altogether stunning are interesting.

Beverly Rae Kimes needs no introduction. As executive editor of the Classic Car Club of America for nearly twenty years, she has won numerous writing awards including four Cugnot (for best book) and three Benz (for best article) awards by the SAH in past years. A past president of the SAH, she was given the Friend of Automotive History award by the SAH a number of years ago and was the first historian to receive the Citation of Distinguished Service from the Automotive Hall of Fame.

In her book, she organizes the cars by year, starting with 1925, prefacing each year with the events of that year to give the reader a glimpse of how the cars of a given year fit into society of the world around them. Styles, concepts, and designs of fine cars change, of course, as everything does. Regardless, in automotive design, a classic car may readily be identified by both make and quality of the time. I feel that this year-by-year rundown points this out as well as telling us some things perhaps we didn't know or had forgotten. This may be considered an expensive volume. Yet, for what you get it is it is cheap at this price.

And lest we forget, thanks are due to Beverly Rae Kimes for creating a superb book, to the CCCA for publishing it, and to the many contributors of the photographs which make it the winner it is.

In no way can *The Classic Era* be faulted.

- Keith Marvin

THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TRUCKS by Peter J. Davies. 256 pages, well illustrated, 9 3/8 x 12 1/8 inches. ISBN 0-754805182. Price: \$35.00 (£19.95 in England). Published by Lorenz Books/Anness Publishing, Inc.

This is an attractive book with over 250 pages and numerous photos, most in color, throughout the book. The *Encyclopedia* covers a wide variety of larger trucks including construction trucks, fire trucks, garbage trucks, tankers, tractor-trailer rigs, dump trucks and tippers, moving vans, mining trucks, and flatbed units.

If your interest is only small pickups or panel trucks, there is not much in this book for you. A few are pictured and mentioned, but most are not. Recovery trucks, wreckers to most of us, are here; even truck cranes are included in coverage.

If you want some information on Automeisse or American LaFrance or RFW (from Australia) or Spangler, this is your book. Brands like Chevrolet are included, but only some early and older models.

Another little-known firm, the Zwicky makers of fire trucks, aircraft refuelers, road sweepers, and airport service trucks, is even pictured.

There are some errors and omissions. A photo of a Diamond Reo is captioned as a Mexican Dina. Additionally, long-running brands like Hahn, CCC, and Pierce are missing while newer brands like Bering can be found here.

Many of the brands listed do not appear in other encyclopedias. Magirus-Deutz, Shefflex, Simca trucks, Somua, and DAF are all here. It is a very attractive book and doesn't cost a huge amount of money.

- Elliott Kahn

AUTOMOBILES TATRA by Miroslav Gomola, Gavin Farmer and Jan Tulis. 128 pages, profusely illustrated. Hardcover, 8 1/2 x 12 inches. ISBN 80-85991-16-0. Published by AGM CZ ltd, Tihonova Street 18, CZ-627 00 Brno, Czech Republic. Phone/fax: +420 5 4821 7606. Price: (including surface mail postage) US\$ 35.

The subtitle of this slim, nicely produced book, "Aerodynamic cars from Koprivnice" makes it clear that it is devoted exclusively to the streamliners of the 1931 through 1974 period of the great Czech marque. It is a very thorough study of the development of these highly advanced automobiles with many hitherto unknown details. Quite obviously, it is also setting a monument to the outstanding engineer and father of the line, Hans Ledwinka, his small team, and his pupils and admirers.

The author team's continued research has added to the original Czech booklet "Automobily Tatra" by Miroslav Gomola of 1998 by 50 pages. *Jan Tulis* is a longtime member of the Society of Automotive Historians and has contributed information especially on marques of this country to the *SAH Journal*. *Gavin Farmer* has done the translation of the admirably short but to the point text.

The book has five distinct sections. The first gives a rather surprising insight into the prototype development of 1931 to 1933 with the small, rear-engined V570 (this is said to predate the famous Volkswagen Beetle of Professor Porsche, who established the first drawings in the winter of 1931/32 upon which three prototypes were built by NSU). More important than the small people's car was, however, the Tatra 77 of which a first prototype was already completed in 1932. Detailed drawings and photographs of the axles, the chassis, the air-cooled V8 engine, and the revolutionary body are included. Only 95 Tatra 77s were built when the model was replaced by the improved Type 77A with an enlarged engine, of which 154 were produced.

The next chapter deals with the more successful Tatra 87 (1936-1950), of which some 3,000 were made. It was, at the time, perhaps the most technically advanced automobile in the world in regular production. It carried the name of Tatra into the Western

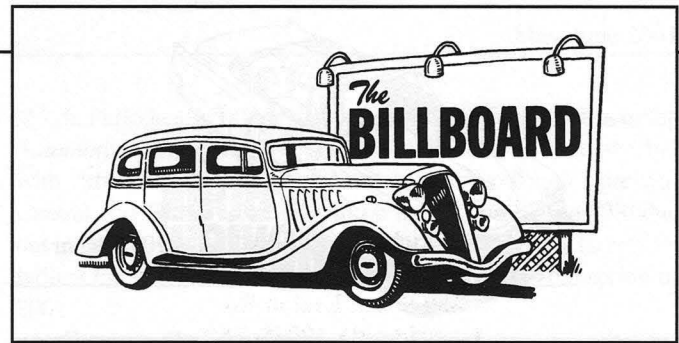
world. Parallel to the Type 87 with the V8-engine the smaller Type 97 with flat-four was developed but only about 500 were made when the Second World War began.

The postwar development of the Tatra Type 600 (1947-1952) is described in detail in the next chapter. There are previously unpublished pictures of prototypes and special editions such as the Monte Carlo coupe and sports cars serving as test-beds for further improvements.

The final chapter offers not only an interesting history of the development of the last big aerodynamic Tatra, the Type 603 (1955-1974), but also gives insights into the difficulties the engineers and the production people faced in the communist governed country. At the end of the book, there are all the technical specifications of the various Tatra streamline cars including their production figures, and a picture story of one (the only?) Tatra 77 of 1934 surviving in the Swiss Transport Museum of Lucerne. There is also a list of prominent owners or drivers of Tatra cars (including Edmund Rumpler, Felix Wankel, John Steinbeck, King Farouk of Egypt, General Erwin Rommel, and many others). Throughout the book, there are nice reprints of advertisements and sales literature and many black and white and color photographs of Tatra cars.

For the dedicated lover of exotic and advanced automobiles this book is a must. It is much more detailed on the aerodynamic models than the book *Tatra* by Ivan Margolius and John G. Henry of 1990, which to the best of our knowledge, was thus far the only book on the marque in English. The new book is carefully produced, solidly bound, and offers a wealth of information and illustrations. Highly specialized and strongly recommended.

- Ferdy Hediger



INFORMATION WANTED: on 1940 Lincoln Continental Club Coupe that was exhibited by Ford Motor Company at the 1940 World's Fair in New York City. The car was painted a custom color--Salon Pink. When the fair closed, it was purchased by Pennsylvania Governor George Earle. **David Schultz, 1221 Providence N. E., Massillon, OH 44646-4105 dwsjos@ameritech.net**

INFORMATION WANTED: For a book I am writing, I would appreciate any information on the history of the Renault 40 CV in the United States (there was a dealer in New York City c. 1922-1927), as well as the later pre-war large cars Reinastella and Nervastella. **Claude Rouxel, Résidence Lamolinerie, 9A rue Lamolinerie, 33200 Bordeaux, France.**

INFORMATION WANTED: For ongoing research into car body structures I would appreciate any historical information on E.G. Budd, the Budd company and his introduction of the all-steel body. **Paul Nieuwenhuis, 193 Caerphilly Road, Cardiff, Wales, CF14 4QD, UK, Email: paul.nieuwenhuis@ntlworld.com**

WANTED: Leads regarding a three-wheeled open vehicle, which was to be operated by a "tiller." The tiller was both to steer and provide acceleration and braking. I believe such a vehicle was shown in an issue of one of the following publications: *Popular Mechanics*; *Popular Science*; or *Mechanics Illustrated*; in the period approximately 1947-1948. **Darwyn Lumley 1911 Goodwin Drive Vista, CA 92084. E Mail: CARevent@aol.com**

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5930 Glen Eagles Drive
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406 Oakland, Apt. 5
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The **Friend of Automotive History Award** recognizes exceptional contributions to the cause of automotive history by an individual. Nominations can be made to:

David L. Lewis
2588 Hawthorn Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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5930 Glen Eagles Drive
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

The new **Student Writing Award** recognizes the best treatment of automotive history by a student. Nominations can be made to:

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All award deadlines are April 15, 2002.



Glenn Miller (at the wheel), development engineer at Ford Special Vehicle Engineering, and Dale Jarrett (1999 NASCAR Winston Cup Champion) cruise around the activities field at Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Mich., in a newly replicated Ford 1901 "Sweepstakes" restored vehicle June 7, 2001. Miller headed the Sweepstakes restoration and replica building project.

- photo courtesy of Ford/Wieck

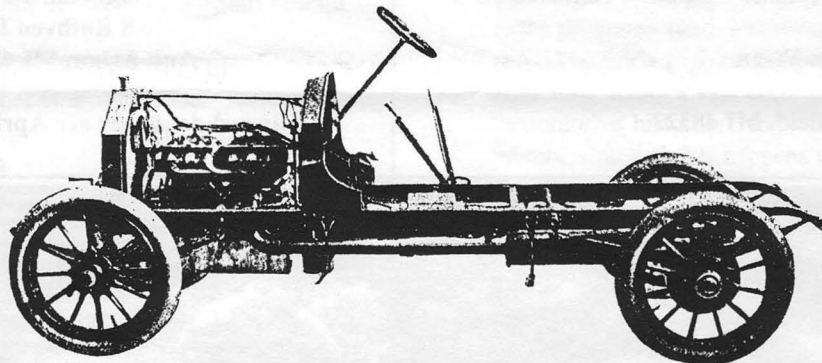
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Actively researching CF (Catelli-Fiorani, Italy) motorcycles, I was very interested when I came across this advertisement (among others) for CF (Cornish-Friedberg, United States) cars. This has been reprinted from the December 5, 1907, issue of Motor Age.

- advertisement courtesy of Ralph Dunwoodie