

SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 212
September–October 2004



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Silent Auction Catalog—Deadline for receiving bids is November 15th

The Motor Bandits: Cars, Crimes and Philosophy

by Michael Bromley

Claiming a first is a dangerous business, especially with automobiles. You never really know. So get out your pen and correct me on this one: the first time an automobile was used for non-automotive crime was in New York City in 1910. Speeding, manslaughter, stealing cars . . . these thrills were earlier perfected. It wasn't until 1910 that professional criminals and gangs took to the automobile. My collection of *New York Times* articles gives the first as September 29, 1910 with "Fight Pistol Battle in Speeding Autos." These were not chauffeurs of rival steel magnates. Okay, before the dedicated refuters out there find some 1903 Kalamazoo bank heist with a getaway in a curved dash Olds (calling Keith Marvin! calling Keith Marvin!), allow me a few thoughts on why 1910 marks the meeting of automobiles and professional crime.

Anything before was isolated, and not generally happening, for the simple reason that before 1910 thugs in cars would have been conspicuous. Thanks to the motoring President—my man William Howard Taft—automobiles in 1910 were normal, politically-correct and socially-acceptable objects of what Alexis de Tocqueville called every American's glance of hope and envy on the enjoyments of the rich. Before Taft, automobiles were hateful envy—and anger and calls for the income tax and six m.p.h. speed limits, two around curves if one listened to Congressman Sims of Tennessee.

If only the rich ran automobiles, only the rich could use them to commit crimes. Following the logic, since the rich owned the banks, automobilists didn't rob them, at least not through the front door. With more and more, and more common, people taking to automobiles in 1910, your average criminal could get away with being seen in a motor car without violating the social lists. All one needed now was a driver's license, not a membership card to the Four Hundred. General licensing, in fact, was the states' endorsement of automobiling for all. When only chauffeurs required licenses, automobile owners were a distinct class in law, a privilege that was erased by universal licensing, which itself followed the general acceptance of automobiles.

The various drive-by shootings and getaways by car that appeared in 1910 became commonplace in 1912, so much so that the *Times* announced on February 22, "200 Ex-Convicts Run Taxicabs Here: 'They have licenses which can aid them in committing crime,' the police say." The horror wasn't so much the crimes or the criminals, but their empowerment by the automobile: ". . . the taxicab, as a means of getting away, has made the detection of crimes . . . more difficult than ever before. . . ." Automotive exclusivity gone, so with it conspicuousness.

Americans have always loved a good crime story. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid had not too long before scared the country with their wild and desperate train hold-ups. But Americans don't like criminals for the crimes. The Hole in the Wall Gang members are not remembered for their crimes. This story struck the American heart for its rebellion against the closing frontier and, most importantly, for the fun of it all. They

continued on page 6



Thomas S. Jakups, Editor

Last month at a car show in Stowe, Vermont, I picked up a window sticker that said, "Take a Kid to a Car Show." A much-publicized concern of old-car hobbyists has been attracting younger people. It is perfectly understandable that we would like others to take up and enjoy our great hobby, and there is the added incentive of having future buyers for our prized possessions.

Auto historians have the same concerns as automobile owners. "Take a Kid to an Auto History Conference" doesn't have the same ring to it, but with the

Protecting Our Prized Possession

spread of DVD's, cable programs and Powerpoint presentations maybe a better sticker would be "Not Your Father's Auto History." This might intrigue lovers of history and even snag a few curious historyphobes. The fact is auto history has a lot to offer: the beginnings and development of a technology that many today consider to have had the greatest impact on our society, colorful entrepreneurs and their success stories, the thrills of the racing circuits. And that is all from the previous century. What history is being written now in design studios and engineering labs, company boardrooms, race-tracks around the world?

So we have a good product but one that won't sell itself. We need to increase our visibility among hobbyists and historians. Our affiliation with the American Historical Association, our loaning the Dunwoodie Archives to the AACA Library and Reseach Center and our yearly presence at Hershey are all steps in the right direction.

As stewards of automotive history we can enhance our role and further our cause by maintaining high standards of accuracy. It is mere coincidence that President Joe Freeman's column on page 3 and Aldo Zana's letter on page 9 appear in the same issue of the *Journal*. Together, they reinforce the importance of accuracy in reporting (Aldo, quite pointedly).

Our membership is made up of individuals with a wide range and breadth of expertise. This expertise is our reason for being, a large part of our mission. As editor of the *Journal* I thank those who contribute articles and I encourage more members to do so. I also thank those who lend their expertise by pointing our errors and correcting the record. When irregularities are noted I hope that members will take it as a challenge to provide more information about a particular subject, to make it more complete and accurate. In the end it will increase the value of our prized possession.

—Tom Jakups

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Copy Deadline for *Journal* 213
October 31st



Joseph S. Freeman, President

Once again, greetings to you all from your frazzled President! Every year, once the auto show, touring and vintage racing season gets started, I am swamped with conflicts for events that I would like to attend. I'm sure it is the same for most of you, and I guess all we can say is that such a wide range of choice offers a rather nice way to be conflicted.

However, in this lovely summertime of gleaming metal and nice noises, my thoughts continue to be focused on the real reason why SAH exists: the retelling of automotive history. I would postulate that our goal is not just the promotion of any auto history, but a dedication to the absolute highest quality of our product. This is why we have a fine set of awards in the Cugnot, Benz, Brigham and other honors to bestow upon those who have offered us books, articles, periodicals and other information with a superb level of accuracy and scholarship.

In some ways, of course, this commitment to quality goes without saying: "improvement of the breed" is what we're all about. Yet it is important for other reasons, too. As our field continues to move into the mainstream of American social and economic history, we need to garner the respect and trust of our academic colleagues. If we are to support our contention that the history of the automobile industry and the people who made it are essential parts of social and economic development during the twentieth century, we need to do so in a way that meets

Going to the Source

the highest standard of historical investigation.

Am I getting too highfalutin' here? Well, maybe, but to bring things back down to earth, I would like to make a few comments about what I perceive to be some failures in the way many of us do business, myself included. Certainly number one is the way we deal with the sources of our historical material. I would ask, how many times have we picked up a book on an important automotive subject, only to find that the facts therein are either poorly documented or not sourced at all. How many authors fail to take the time to offer a footnote or two as to the provenance of a crucial piece of information? How many of us rely on secondary sources—compilations of history written by others—without taking the time seek out the original documentation? The old academic rule is that every fact should be corroborated by at least two reliable primary sources, in the form of a direct quote from a contemporary authority, publication or record such as a letter or a dated photograph. Everything else should be regarded as an assertion or a fact in question and presented as such.

Now I know that there are many whose eyes will gloss over at this suggestion as too academic. After all, we have all seen historical texts where the actual writing takes up four lines on a page with the rest devoted to endless footnotes in tiny print. Others will say that double corroboration is often times impossible when tracing the history of a fast-moving business such as the automotive industry in the twentieth century. To be sure, many records have been destroyed and key figures are no longer alive. Also, we know that important information was suppressed or distorted for any number of good or bad reasons at the time. Nonetheless, a serious historian's tenacious effort to track down the truth and

document it correctly is a crucial part of the "treasure hunt."

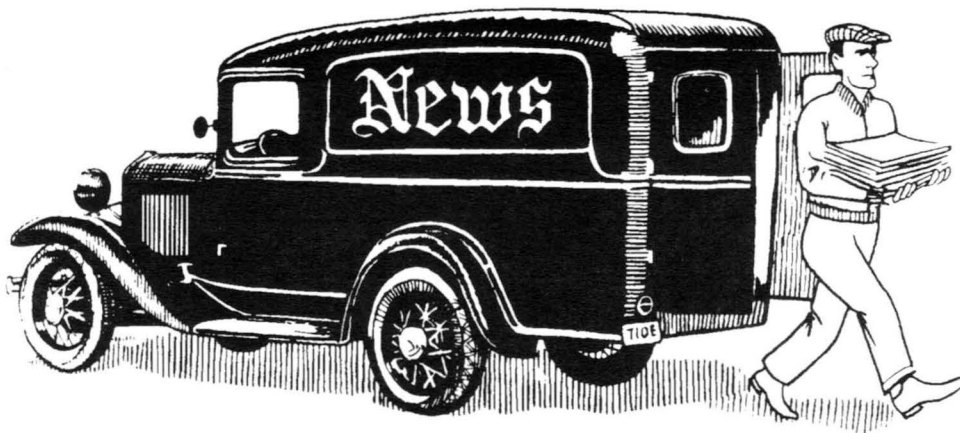
Another particular problem in our field, closely related to the lack of effort to document facts, is the perpetuation of myth. I know I am not alone in picking up a new periodical or book only to find that some completely discredited story or fact has reappeared once again as the gospel truth. As we all know, the more these errors are repeated, the more they become "fact."

Of course, in the pursuit of historical truth there will always be some potential for debate. Differing perceptions and reports of what went on decades ago will inevitably offer the opportunity for conflicting interpretations. On the other hand, the more we can root out the obvious falsehoods and mistakes by using primary sources, the more honor we will bring to our hobby and profession.

One other aspect of this issue comes to mind: the documentation of the histories of individual automobiles. With rising values and owners' prestige on the line, the authentication of originality of particular vehicles has often become a hornets' nest of claims and counter-claims. Shading of the truth and outright fraud are always potential problems. Once again, however, reliance on the old rules of proper sourcing and documentation can go a long way toward maintaining the integrity of the field.

So I suppose what all of this amounts to is another sermon from Parson Freeman. I feel strongly that we should insist that our hobby cum profession maintain a true standard of quality in the demand for accuracy and proper documentation. Thankfully our resources are in most cases more than adequate to accomplish this goal. We just need to take the time to use them effectively and to record clearly that we have done so.

—Joe Freeman



Annual Meeting and Banquet at Hershey on October 8th

The 36th SAH annual meeting and awards banquet will be held on the Friday evening of Hershey weekend, October 8, 2004, at the Hershey Golf Club, 1000 East Derry Road, Hershey, Pennsylvania. Members and guests will gather for the Fluid Drive social hour at 6:30 P.M. and dine at 7:15. The Society's annual publication and service awards will be presented after dinner.

Menu for the evening will be the traditional three-entrée Imperial Buffet, with beef, chicken and salmon entrées and all the fixings at the all-in-one price of \$42.00 per person. **Reservations with payment should be made by September 30th to SAH Banquet—Attn: Kit Foster 1102 Long Cove Road Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA. Banquet hot line 860-464-6466 (until October 4th)**

To reach the Golf Club from the flea market fields, take Hersheypark Drive east to the end. Turn right, cross over the railroad overpass and turn left at the next stop sign. The Golf Club is the next driveway on the right. Enter via the upper doorway and walk straight in to the SAH registration table.

Rest Your Feet, Meet a Friend, Recruit a New Member at the History Tent WAY 11-12

The History Tent will again offer respite, shelter and good company at White Field spaces WAY 11-12. Light refreshments will also be available. Volunteers are needed to staff the tent on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. **Please contact Hospital-**

ity Chair Paul Lashbrook at 954-587-5785 or lashbrook@mindspring.com to sign up for a two-hour shift.

Wisconsin Chapter Activities

Val V. "Doc" Quandt, M.D. (ret.) was honored for his many years of service to the Wisconsin Chapter at our annual spring meeting, May 1, 2004. Doc served as an officer and took charge of production of the Chapter's book, *Wisconsin Cars and Trucks*, which is still being sold and is bringing in funds for the Chapter. Doc was presented with a plaque, an automotive history book and a cake before the meeting was adjourned for the annual spring dinner at the nearby Mineshaft.

The spring meeting is held at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford, Wisconsin, just north of Milwaukee. Hartford is home to the Kissel, as documented in Doc Quandt's 1990 book, *The Classic Kissel Automobile*.

The Chapter's most recent project is a video recording, *A Walk Through Automotive History with Chet Krause*. When informed in November that Chet Krause would be selling his collection of



Ken Nimocks, WSAH President, (l) presents a plaque to Val V. "Doc" Quandt as part of a ceremony celebrating his years of service to WSAH.

cars, trucks, tractors and more, a few WSAH members arranged to record Chet's casual and unscripted comments on the vehicles and his life. Chet is the founder of Krause Publications and the Iola Old Car Show. He is a long-time member of the Wisconsin Chapter and our only Honorary Member. The final editing of the VHS and DVD recordings was completed in time to be available for purchase at the auction of Chet's collection in June and at the Iola Old Car Show in July. [See "Just Out" on page 6.]

The Iola Old Car Show and Swap Meet is the site of our annual summer meeting. If any SAH members would like to join us next year, the meeting is held at 5:00 P.M. on the Saturday of the car show in the historic Thorsen House adjacent to the show grounds. Members are also invited to stop at our table in the main Theme Exhibit tent—look for our banner near the center of the tent. For the fourteenth year, the Wisconsin Chapter has volunteered to staff the Theme Exhibit area, including parking cars, selling merchandise for the car show along with WSAH books and videos, and determining the theme for future shows.

Our annual fall meeting is held on the grounds of the Hill and Valley Tour and Field Day in Cross Plains, Wisconsin, just west of Madison. This year's event is Saturday, September 18th, and as always includes the morning tour of the beautiful "driftless" (un-glaciated) area of southwest Wisconsin, arts and crafts, historical displays such as blacksmithing and a show which includes large numbers of Ford Model T's and A's, trucks, tractors and small engines.

—Ken Nimocks, President
Wisconsin Chapter—SAH

Radebaugh Exhibition at NAHC/Detroit Library

The Palace of Culture and the Friends of the National Automotive History Collection are presenting a major exhibition of mid-twentieth century illustrator Arthur Radebaugh.

Radebaugh was a top-notch commercial illustrator based in Detroit from the 1930s to the 1960s. His work antici-

pated design revolutions in the automotive and other industries. From flying cars to glamorous Art Deco skyscrapers, his renderings were both pragmatic and fantastical, showing possibilities unimagined, derived from the technology of the day.

The exhibition will feature the collections of the Palace of Culture and Lost Highways Archive. The NAHC will contribute rare prints, photographs and ephemera, making this by far the most comprehensive overview of the artist's work yet. The exhibition opened to the public on July 19th and will run through October 22, 2004.

For more information, call 313-628-2851 or go to www.detroit.lib.mi.us/nahc. You can also check out the exhibition online at www.palaceofculture.org.

New Arrival at Studebaker Museum Has Oriental Twist

The Studebaker National Museum has announced the arrival of a new vehicle to the collection, a 1924 Studebaker Light Six. This coupe was manufactured by the Shanghai Horse Bazaar & Motor Company, Ltd. of Shanghai, China, and was donated to the museum by the estate of George Goodrich of San Carlos, California.

In the second decade of the 20th century American automobile manufacturers began to turn their attention to markets in the Far East. This growing Western determination to "motorize" Asia brought Coy Goodrich to Shanghai in 1916. Mr. Goodrich was sent by Studebaker to the Shanghai Horse Bazaar Company to manage the plant and to promote Studebaker automobiles. When he returned to the United States seven years later he brought with him a memento of his years in Shanghai. He shipped to San Francisco a special coupe body, which was mounted on a Light Six chassis. Only five others of this style were built at the Shanghai Horse Bazaar.

The car remained in the Goodrich family until the death of George Goodrich. This coupe was driven daily until its retirement in 1937 with over 100,000



1924 Studebaker Light Six manufactured by the Shanghai Horse Bazaar & Motor Company of Shanghai, China, now on exhibit at the Studebaker National Museum

miles on the odometer. The Light Six Demi-Coupe has a one-piece metal roof, hardtop-type fold-down window, one-shot lubrication and a V windshield with sun visor. All these features were well in advance of the industry.

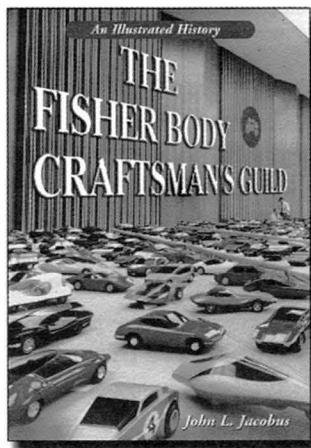
The Light Six was Studebaker's

entry-level offering for 1924. It featured a 40-horsepower inline six-cylinder engine, genuine leather upholstery, a "theftlock" locking transmission, all for just over \$1,000. Custom bodywork on Light Six models is exceptionally rare. If one desired a custom body, an expen-

The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild: *An Illustrated History* • by John L. Jacobus

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The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild was a national auto design competition sponsored by the Fisher Body Div. of General Motors for teenagers to compete for college scholarships by designing and building scale model "dream" cars. Held from the 1930s through the 1960s, it helped identify and nurture a whole generation of designers and executives.



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EXPECTED FALL 2004

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Motor Bandits *continued from page 1*

wanted money, yes, but what they really wanted was what the money brought by way of excitement, parties and girls.

Criminals who displayed no glamor or adventure, such as the extremists of the labor movement, used a violence too purposeful for romance and Hollywood. Anarchists shooting the President and blowing up capitalists' offices were going too far. Americans have little taste for philosophy, especially to rationalize murder. As Tuco said in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, "If you're gonna shoot, shoot. Don't bother us with all that talk."

From Paris in the spring of 1912 came a magnificent and a deliciously slow-revealing story of a vile and dangerous band of Motor Bandits. The previous December, this loose gang of anarchist thieves, criminals who rationalized their crimes as protest against property, became known in the press as the Motor Bandits after their theft of a Delaunay-Belleville limousine which they used for cover and getaway in the holdup of a bank messenger. The crime shocked Paris, but not for the daylight hit and near murder of a clerk. That happened all the time. It was the automobile that did it—what a story! (And who could miss that gorgeous curved radiator?)

A sympathetic biographer of the gang wrote, "The theft alone of such a car was, for the illegalists, a radically-conscious gesture." He also bragged that the robbery was the first of its kind. Your author disagrees. New Yorkers beat 'em to it, as, likely, did Chicago gangs, although that's mere speculation, however solidly grounded in logic and knowledge of Chicago. Yes, stealing the limousine was a supremely conscious gesture. It was damned useful.

The Motor Bandits went on to swipe more cars, including a Peugeot limousine, an unknown make that they stole in Holland and that broke down in Belgium, another Delaunay-Belleville, this time a double phaeton (from which they shot dead a policeman who jumped on the running board), and a brand new DeDion Bouton limousine driven by the Marquis De Dion's chauffeur and car-

jacked en route from the Champs-Élysées showroom to a customer. The gang used the car to hold up a bank western-style, complete with a guns-a-blazing getaway.

The Motor Bandits' demise was classic: first the girlfriends were taken in, then, one or two at a time, the gang, the last of whom went down in hours-long shoot-outs against hundreds of gendarmes and Republican Guards, to the crowd's chants of *À mort! À mort!* The leader of the gang, Jules Bonnot, a chauffeur, mechanic and car fence, had the good sense of irony to stage his final stand in a garage. Their story soon faded to such things as world war, and it has survived only in anarchist lore. We know of the Motor Bandits only because for a very few months in 1912 they terrorized good society with stolen automobiles. It was not the crimes or the anarchist philosophy that so outraged, so intrigued and made such good news print. Gone the outrage of the automobile, gone the outrage of the Motor Bandits, and we never heard of them.

Back in America, home to the purist of egalitarianism, universal envy trumped outrage. Cars? Crime? Whatever. Where the Motor Bandits stole it for a wild, brief protest of a ride, American popular culture seized the automobile from its exclusive hold by the rich and gave it to all. Here, the joy ride was in happy contrast to anarchist discontent. Americans would have better enjoyed the Motor Bandits if they were in it for the fun, not the philosophy.

Imagine, Butch and Sundance missed the automobile by just a few years! That window closed quickly. Soon enough, automobiles were so prevalent that it didn't seem odd that Bonnie and Clyde delighted in fast getaway cars. ■

SAH News *continued from page 5*

sive undertaking, one would usually opt for the more expensive and luxurious Special Six or Big Six models.

The Studebaker National Museum is located at 535 South Main Street in South Bend, Indiana. For further information call 888-391-5600 or check its website www.studebakermuseum.org.

Obituary

Merle "Mickey" Mishne

(1931–2004)

Mickey Mishne told me more than once, "I never met a Bugatti owner I didn't like. Bugatti owners are special people. Always interesting"

Mickey was one of those special and most interesting people. He owned, among other classic cars, a Bugatti T37, which had been delivered from Molsheim to Joseph Zigrand, the Luxembourg Bugatti dealer and racer, as a T35B (2.3 liter, 8 cylinder, SOHC, supercharged chassis #4955). Mickey purchased the car in 1974 and was finally having it restored to its original condition when his life ended tragically—and ironically—as the victim of a homicide on May 31st. Mickey's seventeen-year-old daughter, JoLynn, had been the victim of a homicide in 2002, and Mickey had been spending the intervening eighteen months financing his crusade against violent video games, which he believed had contributed to the fatal assault on his daughter.

Most auto historians do not have the luxury of combining auto history and livelihood. Mickey was no different. Since 1962, he had been in the business of selling "synthetic paper," what he called "printable plastic." But at home in Ohio he had assembled a wonderful, if eclectic, auto historian's life. He is most well-known as a regular contributor to the sports pages of regional newspapers, especially the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The easy, enjoyable style of his classic cars essays, many to be found under the rubric "Cleveland's Most Interesting Cars," belies the wealth of information contained in those essays. He had completed perhaps his last contribution, an article on a 1950 Healey Silverstone, in April, 2004. Mickey was also a former editor of *Pur Sang*, the journal of the American Bugatti Club. In 1999, his essay, "Ettore and Jean Bugatti," was included in the substantial catalog accompanying the Bugatti exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art (Henry H. Hawley, ed. *Bugatti*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art [Dist. University of Washington Press, Seattle], 1999, pp. 80–118).

Often Mickey invited friends to his “big old horse barn,” a museum in Medina, Ohio, open to the public on request, called “Portholes into the Past Museum,” where his true eclecticism was on display. Classic autos, scale models, all forms of transportation art including paintings, posters, lithographs and original photographic images and a 4000-plus volume library of magazines and books on cars, planes, World War II fighter aircraft and auto and plane racing constituted the majority of the collection. Unfortunately, Mickey had to sell a number of the cars, including his 1926 T40 Bugatti, his 1928 ALTA, his 1950 Maserati AGC 1500 Pinin Farina and his 1965 Alfa Romeo Giulia Veloce 1600 roadster.

Mickey was generous, and he loved to surprise his friends with some gift he thought suitable to their pursuits—personalized stationery with the image of a favorite marque, a book, a journal, a poster. I was in Prague, when Mickey died, searching diligently for a “Zlahta Praga” poster reproduction he wanted—to thank him for the Walt Herip poster honoring the golden anniversary of Rene Dreyfus’ 1930 victory at Monaco in a Bugatti.

—Patricia Lee Yongue

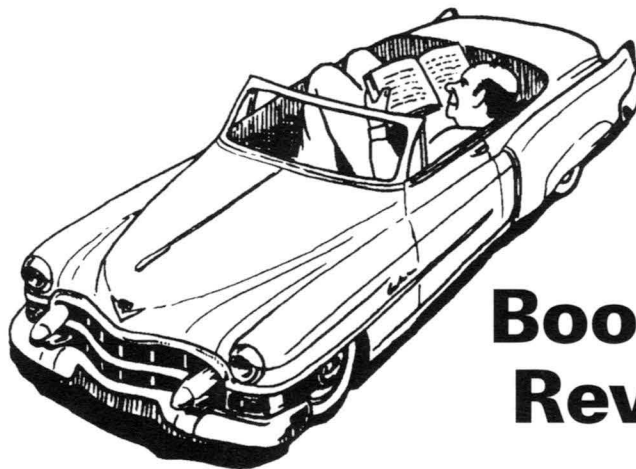
Just Out

The Wisconsin chapter of the Society of Automotive Historians is offering *A Walk Through Automotive History with Chet Krause* in both DVD and video formats.

In the first part of this video history *Chet Krause* takes the viewer on a tour of the Krause Auto Collection, which includes a Sternberg truck, the predecessor of the Sterling, a 1918 White dump body, a USA “Liberty” truck, a 1945 Dodge gasoline delivery truck, a 1912 Case automobile and several original and low-mileage Model T’s.

In the second half Chet talks about how he began collecting and the origins of Krause Publications and the Iola Car Show.

The DVD’s and videos cost \$15 plus \$2.50 s&h. Checks, payable to WSAH, can be mailed to *Ken Nimocks*, 3765 Spring Green Road, Green Bay, WI 54313-7565.



Book Reviews

The Graham Legacy: Graham-Paige from 1932, by *Michael Keller, Karl Zahm* and *Bill McCall*. 2003 ISBN 0-9324-3909-9. Hard-bound, 280 pages, 181 illustrations. M.T. Publishing Company, P.O. Box 6802, Evansville, IN 47719-6802, www.mtpublishing.com, 1-888-263-4702 \$39.95 plus \$6.50 s&h.

This is the second book in a two-volume set. I wrote the first volume, *The Graham Legacy: Graham Paige to 1932*, that “it was one of the finest chronicles in automotive history that has ever come across this desk.” That sentiment applies in every way to the current volume.

This volume takes the company and cars of the three Graham Brothers, Joseph, Robert and Ray, from the nadir of the Depression to the company’s final days and, as we see, Graham fought for its exist-

tence and remained in the picture for an unusually long time for an independent.

Graham had a varied existence during the 1932–41 period, starting with its “Blue Streak” series of cars of 1932, the first American production cars to feature fender skirting. Two years later it introduced a supercharged “Custom Eight” series for 1934 at a reasonable price. In 1938 came its “sharknosed” series, entitled the “Spirit of Motion,” which by 1939 could be had in closed models domestically while some stunning open cars were built by noted European coachbuilders on Graham’s export cars.

Its last production cars took the form of the Cords of 1936 and 1937, which were initially made available to Hupmobile in its last ditch effort to remain in active production with its Skylark series in 1938. Hupp agreed to

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share the body style provided it could have its cars built at the Graham plant. These last Grahams were manufactured as “Hollywoods.” Hupp closed down in early 1940 and Graham soldiered on for few more months before ending its automobile manufacturing with its final cars listed as 1941 models.

Graham-Paige produced “alligators,” or amphibious landing vehicles, during World War II and after the war it made among other things Rototiller garden machinery.

The final volume of the *The Graham Legacy* is an educated study of a company that, despite its relatively short life, accomplished a great deal. Its pages include the Graham family geneology, year-to-year production figures, engine data, serial numbers, sales literature and advertisements.

—Keith Marvin

Porsche: Excellence Was Expected The Comprehensive History of the Company, its Cars and its Racing Heritage, by Karl Ludvigsen. 2003 ISBN 0-8376-0235-1. Hardcover, three volumes, 1,566 pages, 1,480 black and white and 140 color photos and illustrations. Bentley Publishers, 1734 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, www.bentleypublishers.com, 800-423-4595. \$239.95

This book had to come back sooner or later. *Karl Ludvigsen's* first edition of *Excellence Was Expected* was published in 1977 and instantly became THE reference book for Porsche enthusiasts the world over. It has been out of print for years, and clean used copies began selling for three figures practically as soon as the last new copy left the bookstores. But a lot has happened in the Porsche world since then, and author Ludvigsen has not only brought his classic text up to date, but he has revisited some of his previous entries in light of recent investigations.

Obviously, with three volumes totaling 1,566 pages, this book is aimed at dedicated Porscheophiles. However, it should also be required reading for any

serious student of endurance racing, where Porsche has had a central role since the early 1950s. It isn't possible to accurately evaluate classics like the Ford GT or the Dino 206SP without an in-depth understanding of their rivals from Stuttgart.

Ludvigsen lays the book out in chapters that cover specific models or types, rather than in a strictly chronological order. This makes it easier to research a given model, at the expense of a clearly delineated timeline. No problem. This book is a researcher's dream.

Volume One takes off with Ferdinand Porsche's adventures in the German automotive industry at the dawn of the 1900s. Although there is a brief mention of his time spent at Mercedes and Auto Union, the gist of the story are the cars built by the Porsche company.

This volume takes the reader through the birth and development of the 356 street cars and the Spyder and Formula One racing cars of the 1950s and 1960s, leading to the landmark 911 series and the 904 to 908 racers.

Volume Two kicks off with the LeMans-winning 917, then describes the development of the bewildering variety of street and race models built in the 1970s to the early 1990s. This is not a coffee-table rah-rah book written by a one-marque wonder (there are plenty of those on the market already). Ludvigsen also takes an unflinching look at Porsche's failures, like the attempted 1984 reorganization of its North American sales operations, the aborted Indy car project and the difficulties it had marketing the 928.

The final volume brings the Porsche story up to date, including the “new” 911, the Boxster that saved Porsche from extinction and even the Cayenne SUV. Once again every Porsche racing and street car is given a thorough technical examination, but more than that, the cars are put in perspective with observations on the times they were built in and the personalities who designed and manufactured them. The descriptions of the infighting between various factions of the Porsche and Piëch families

must be difficult reading for insiders.

Although most of the text from the first edition remains intact, Ludvigsen has revised some information. The history of the early Gläser roadsters differs from his first edition, and there has been a major rewrite of the Abarth Carrera section. A welcome change is the use of boldface subheads to make it easier to find what you are looking for. Another nice touch is the inclusion of a complete index in the back of each volume.

Excellence Was Expected is a landmark book in the automotive category. It is one of the most in-depth histories of a single manufacturer and its cars that has ever been written. Full of the minutiae that fascinate historians, it never loses track of telling an interesting story as well. A must-have tome for Porsche fans.

—Harold Pace

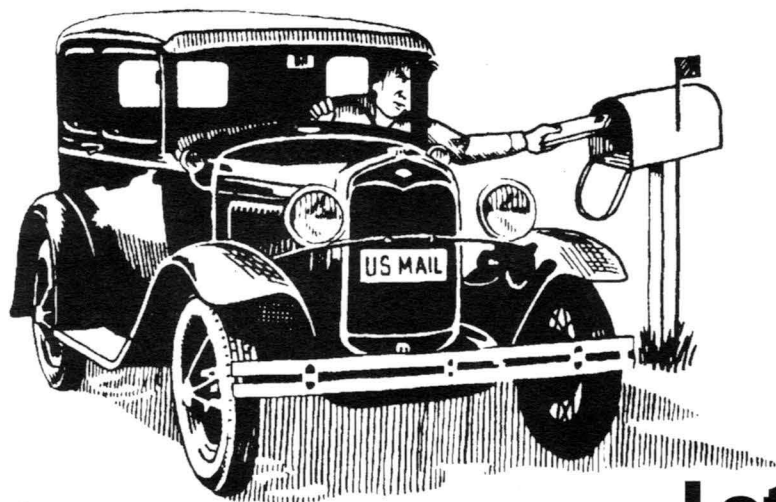
Album Smochodow FSO, by Jerzy Dembinski. 2004 ISBN 83-920912-0-5 Softcover, 112 pages, 198 photographs mainly in black and white, text in Polish. Published by Wydawcy Klub Pracownikow i Przejaciel FSO, ul. Nowy Swiat 35, PL-00-029 Warszawa, Poland. For price contact publisher directly.

It has to be admitted, this is hardly a book with a great selling potential in America, but it is covering new ground and therefore most interesting for automobile historians and specialized collectors.

For many, many years hardly anybody in the Western world knew anything about the many various models of passenger cars produced in Poland. Yet there was a big variety and some of them were rather pretty. This new book covers them all and is illustrated with good black and white period photographs and some color pictures as well. It shows not only the more popular models but also prototypes and special bodied versions. Included are the Warszawa and Syrena models of their own design but also the Polski-Fiat and Polonez based on Fiat License.

Not mastering the Polish language is a handicap, of course, but some techni-

continued on page 10, column 3



Letters

A Fine Work of Fiction

Receiving the *SAH Journal* is always a pleasure and good reading. Many thanks for keeping it going. And so well.

I found the cover story by the late C.W. Bishop (*Journal* 211) a good piece of writing, nice to read. I can imagine the amount of hard work to edit it. The key issue to have been edited or, at least, be given a warning by the editor, is that it's a fictional story, based on fantasy, mistakes and some facts, yet out of context and randomly amassed.

From the text it appears that the author was in Sicily after the U.S. landing on July 10, 1943, while the Cameron C. Earl report was first published by HMSO (His Majesty Stationery Office) on October 18, 1948 as BIOS Final Report No. 1755. Item No. 19. Its author went to Germany on April 22, 1947 and stayed there until May 20, 1947. Nowhere in the report are the words quoted by CWB. The report is solely the work of Cameron C. Earl, who at the time of the Sicily landing was a 21-year-old recruit working in the Army Tank Design Dept. He was so clever to become a captain before 1945. He never had any link with Vauxhall Motor Company. Cameron C. Earl wrote only the above mentioned report on German cars.

I didn't have the chance to meet CWB, who, unfortunately, cannot answer anymore, yet I doubt that he had such powerful divinatorial resources, unless he writes about something different from the above mentioned Cameron C. Earl

report, which is on German racing cars only. Yes, the headline of the report he mentions is different from the Cameron C. Earl one, yet, how could a report on 1939–1945 items have been published in 1943? And, again, Cameron C. Earl wrote only one report on German cars.

I can hardly imagine that in 1943 someone on the Allies side could have toured Nazi Germany, meeting people and visiting companies to write a report on the German car industry, while no U.S. soldier, least of all General Patton, was still in Sicily in 1948–1949, when someone could have had some faint chance to read the Cameron C. Earl report.

I also doubt that CWB was so fortunate to get ahold of sets of the so-eagerly sought *Rapiditas* magazine, even if he was one of the winners of the war. Also the presence of Gordon Crosby paintings in the Palermo Automobile Club HQ is hard to swallow because in Fascist Italy no public agency would have even dared to buy art from the “enemy.”

Maybe, due to my scarce knowledge of the subtleties of the English language, I don't understand the point: “Only Bernd Rosemeyer escaped, and he only for a time.” As is well known, Rosemeyer was killed in an Auto Union on January 28, 1938. Only one other AU driver died while racing: Ernst von Delius after crashing at the Ring in the German GP on July 25, 1937. Others died in war, yet this is another story. And, anyhow, it ran quite differently from what CWB's words seems to deliver.

Despite being a collection of items only loosely linked, I confirm that the article is nice to read, yet only as fiction without any historical value and significance. I do think that, in a publication aimed at motor historians and wanting to honor a prominent member who passed away, some additional words on the huge collection of factual, historical and technical mistakes and fantasies in the article should have been a must to warn readers.

—Aldo Zana

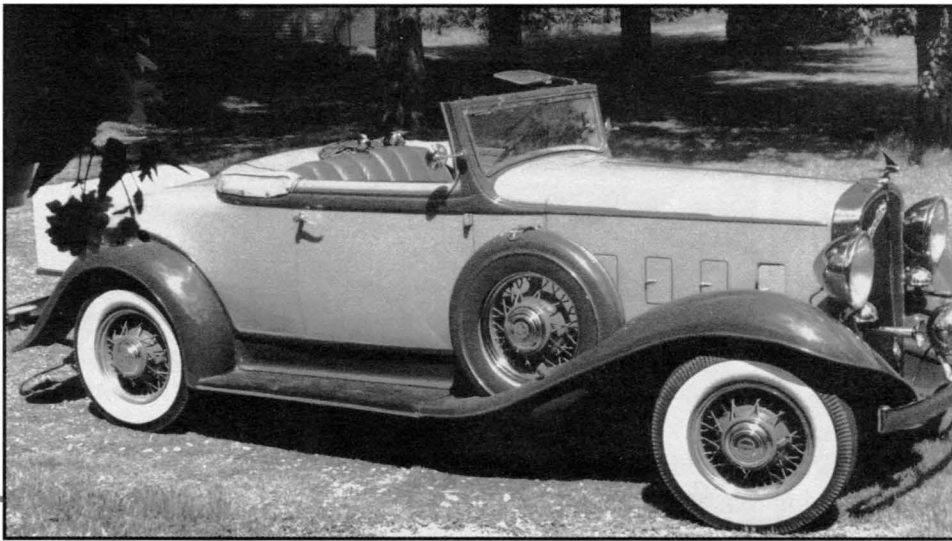
One Company's Demise; Another's Stumble

More on the Franklin Olympic (*Letters, Journal* 209), adding a bit to contributors Bolan, Woudenberg and Loysen's comments. A search of both my memory bank and of my photo archives brings to the surface several Olympic four-door sedans.

My inquiries brought a response from Canada in the form of a photo of a beautiful 1933 Franklin Olympic convertible coupe owned by Richard Coulombe. [See page 10.] The car was restored over a decade ago and has been used regularly since. During the restoration Mr. Coulombe did considerable research on these cars. Of the 1500 Olympics built, only 50 were convertible coupes. Of these 50 units, there are eight survivors that are either serviceable or restorable. Percentage-wise their survival rate was better than that for the sedans and coupes. The Olympics far outsold the regular Franklin range of cars. But volume doesn't help if you are losing money on every unit you sell.

Franklin geared up to sell 5,000 Olympics in 1934. They needed to buy the bodies for \$500 to \$600 per unit rather than the \$800 they were paying Reo. At \$1,500 retail per unit with volume of 5,000 plus the small volume but profitable markup on the big Franklins, the company hoped to move into a favorable profit structure. But it was not to be. For different reasons neither Reo nor Hayes Body would make these bodies available to Franklin. Franklin's one chance for survival had disappeared.

The surviving upper-end marques weren't necessarily smarter. Packard's first



1933 Franklin Olympic convertible coupe owned by Richard Coulombe

attempt to go down-market, the 1932 series 900 shovel nose car, was a disaster. It was too good of a deal to be believed. Why? Packard didn't understand how to make a medium-priced car. After losing \$400 to \$600 on each 900 series sold, they learned quickly enough. In 1935 Packard offered the 120 series car, which allowed the company to live another 20-plus years.

The GM/LaSalle down-market mistakes were on a grander scale. The 1933 LaSalle failed for the same reasons as the Packard 900. GM's response was a completely new avante garde design for the 1934-36 model years. It was a gorgeous art-deco styled car that was right for Paris but wrong for Peoria. Sales were disappointing. Development costs were high. The cars had all new mechanicals, not to mention bodies that were constructed in GM's underutilized Fleetwood custom body plant with high unit build costs. It flopped. But not to worry. GM/LaSalle gets a third chance with the 1937 LaSalle, and they finally get it right. The car was nothing special, a GM B-body with a Cadillac V-8 engine and a new front clip.

With Buick moving relentlessly up-market, Cadillac's companion car fell in the middle of the Buick lineup, but nobody seemed to notice. LaSalle survived until 1941, when it was morphed into Cadillac as the 61 series.

So Franklin, along with Pierce-Arrow, Marmon, Stutz and other players, just needed another crack at survival, but

their financial situation ruled this out. They drove down the road to oblivion instead and the American automotive scene would never be as interesting again.

—Fred Summers

More on Limos

I am sending you an illustration[see ad below] of what is undoubtedly the Hess & Eisenhardt limousine mentioned by Phil Campbell (Letters, Journal 210).

In 1934 the New Era Co. built a

seven-passenger Ford. One was at Ford's 100th anniversary show in June 2003 (very close to my 1936 English Ford 10 Tudor phaeton).

—Hayden Shepley

Editor's Note: In the text below the ten-passenger Cadillac it says these cars are used, in operation only a few months with low mileage. Would someone venture to explain the reason for the unusually quick turnaround on these cars.

Book Reviews continued from page 8

cal specifications, the year of production and the clear language of the good pictures still give fairly impressive information on the history of the works. To the best of our knowledge it is the first time these cars are presented in a chronological manner with all the details.

The book was compiled with the help of the club and had the full support of the FSO-factory. It is nicely produced and well printed with clear and informative pictures. For any member interested in the production of the Eastern European passenger cars, this book is a mine of information and definitely recommended.

—Ferdinand Hediger

FOR SALE

10—TEN-PASSENGER CADILLACS

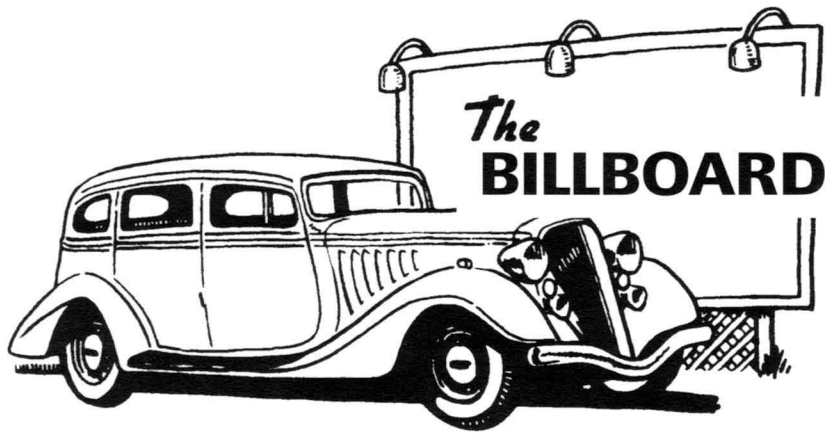


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For further information write or wire

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Material Wanted On the concepts of aerodynamics and streamlining in '30s American Automobile design; their evolution, development and embodiment of European characteristics. **David Edyvean, P.O. Box 363, Rotterdam Jct, NY 12150. dkvean@capital.net**

Material Wanted Originals or copies of automobile registration books from most states for the years 1904 to 1928. If you would like to swap vehicle registration information I have over 60 registration books. Also wanted: Smith & Mabley and Simplex Automobile Co. literature, pictures, information, etc. **Bill Bell, 2602 East Hill, Marcellus, NY 13108, 315-673-3605, belsimplex@hotmail.com**

Material Wanted On the motor car racing of Briggs S. Cunningham. My current project is compiling a complete motor history for which we now have over 680 race entries including event, date, car, driver, results, etc. Any info, articles, photos would be greatly appreciated. A website is in the process of being created at www.briggscunningham.com to honor Mr. Cunningham and his huge contributions to automotive history. **Lawrence W. Berman, 1155 Walnut Street Newton, MA 02461-1242, 617-964-0000 larry@bermanadjusters.com**

Information Wanted Does anyone have a copy of *Motor Life* for October 11, 1924? I'd like a decent copy of page 25, on which is an article entitled "Road Impressions of the 14-50 Sports Sunbeam."

Michael Worthington-Williams, Glaspant Farmhouse, Capel Iwan, Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire SA38 9LS, Wales-UK, +44 (0)1559 370928, worthycomments@btconnect.com

Information Wanted I am currently searching for information on the Loreley car that was manufactured in Germany from 1905 to 1928 by Rudolph Ley. I am particularly interested in the performance in the Russian Reliability Trials of the 1910-1912 period. There is evidence that a Loreley was competing and


received a major award. A search of period English journals has uncovered no evidence that such an award was actually presented to a Loreley car. German publications give details of the events and, once again, I have drawn a blank. The Loreley cars were described a number of times, but the descriptions only relate to the car and not the events it competed in. **Gordon Brooks, 22 Cinques Road, Gamlingay, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 3NW England**

Information Wanted I am currently writing a history of automobile lighting 1895-1955, and while European manufacturing history is reasonably available, American-manufactured automobile head, side and rear lamp information is harder to come by. I would appreciate originals or photocopies of appropriate manufacturers' or retailers' brochures, articles about factories, anecdotal stories and personalities. **Peter W. Card, 351 Sutton Common Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM3 9HZ England edwiniansmith@aol.com**

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Edited by Jane Lancaster

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Inside

Silent Auction Catalog—**Deadline for receiving bids is November 15th.**



ELECTRIK SLIDE: The nose of this Volkswagen pickup says “Elektro-Transporter,” and the Varta logo on the door belongs to the battery company supplying most auto manufacturers in Europe. An electric vehicle history page at www.econogics.com says that VW “produced about 70 electric vans for fleet research purposes.” This must be one of them. Does anyone know more? *Kit Foster collection*