



OCTOBER, 1971

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 21

The Society of Automotive Historians

PRINTING AND PUBLICATIONS OFFICE: P. O. Box 6465, Marietta, Georgia 30060

John M. Peckham
President
675 Pinewoods Ave. Rd.
Troy, New York 12180

Richard B. Brigham
Vice-President
136 Park Lane
Marietta, Ga. 30060

R. Perry Zavitz
Secretary
460 Ridgewood Crescent
London 63, Ont. Canada

Guy P. Seeley, Jr.
Treasurer
10 Bryan Avenue
Malvern, Pa. 19355

G. Marshall Naul
Librarian
5 Queen Ann Drive
Newark, Del. 19711

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

I would like to start these paragraphs by thanking Marshall Naul for all he has done for us, in founding the SAH, and acting as its chief officer for the last two years. Needless to say, those years were the most difficult, as are the formative years of any organization. We have survived, thanks to Marshall, and I hope we will continue to survive and grow in the years to come.

* * * * *

A large and very vocal segment of our group has voiced varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the almost complete dominance of the Newsletter by the Roster of Makes. Even those who feel the Roster is our most important project were stunned by issue Number 18. Well, I think we have all been made aware of our mistake, but it is unfortunate that it took something like that to get the membership to say what they wanted to see in the Newsletter. We cannot know what your interests are unless you let us know. In this regard, I was particularly disappointed in the fact that 50% of our members did not fill in the Membership Roster questionnaire, even to the point of just letting us know their interests.

As far as the Roster of Makes is concerned, it is going to be removed from the Newsletter and published separately, as a Research Supplement. This Supplement is to be made up of single sheets, 8½ x 11", and will be punched with three holes, so as to fit the standard three-ring binders. This will allow those interested in it to continue doing what they wish, while others will have the space to do their thing. Roster corrections will be discussed in the Newsletter, but that will be the extent of it.

Another project which will appear in the Research Supplement form will be a listing of all automotive periodicals, with pertinent information, that have been published in the United States from 1895 to the present. This will be based on work done by Bill Jackson, and should be a valuable research tool.

Now that there has been more space made available in the Newsletter, let's make the most of it. Contribute. Your letters and articles are needed. There is no way that our editor can fill all the space himself, in every issue. We have had a great deal of success with articles such as those on the C. T. Silver cars, the Galloway, and the Stork-Kar. Let's continue with more of this type of thing, and add some pieces on other related subjects. If you can't think of anything to do research on, or to write about, ask somebody. No one has done anything on the American cars which were built for export only. Nor has the import segment been covered to any degree. What about doing something on the automotive accessory trade? There are hundreds of such items, and they are all worthwhile. They are as important to Automotive History as any study of an obscure make of car.

There are several other things in the works, including the possibility of some outside financial help for publishing research papers of our members. However, more on this at a later date. There have also been several excellent suggestions concerning the contents of the Newsletter, and it is hoped that some of these will be implemented by the next issue.

I would like to thank SAH member David Brownell for running a brief article on our elections and organization in the second issue of Old Cars, of which Dave is editor. This little piece has netted us six prospective members so far.

So much for now. Please feel free to let us know of your complaints and suggestions. This is the only way the Society of Automotive Historians can be shaped to suit all of the members.

John M. Peckham

The Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Society of Automotive Historians on Saturday, October 9, 1971, marked the beginning of this organization's third year. About one-fifth of our members were present, plus several visitors. For an organization with world-wide membership, this was a remarkably well-attended meeting.

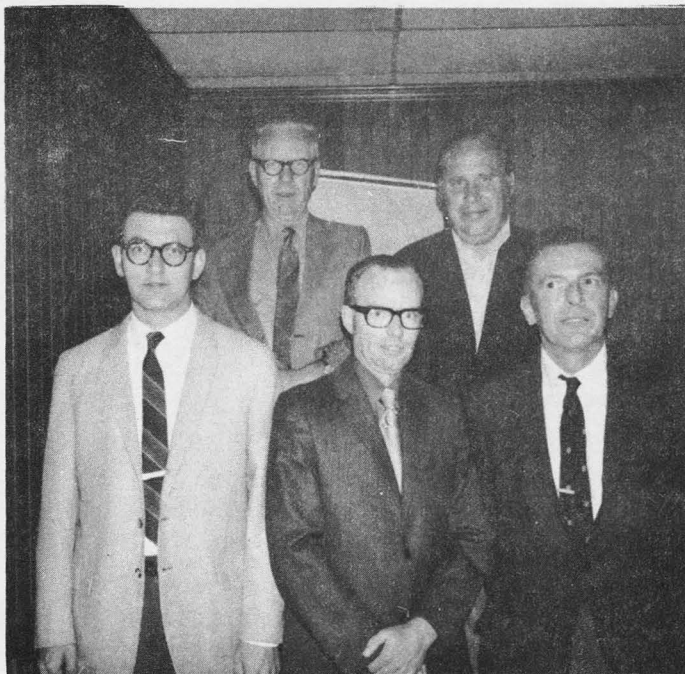
This year's meeting was held in the Oak Room of the Hotel Hershey, at Hershey, Pennsylvania, as was the 1970 session. Following last year's pattern, the room was opened at 10 in the morning so that members and visitors could drop in for coffee and conversation.

President G. Marshall Naul called the meeting to order right on schedule at 4:30 p.m. with comments on our accomplishments during the past two years, and some suggestions for the future of the organization.

A major subject of discussion was the Roster of Automobiles. Many of those present were of the opinion that the Roster has been given too much space in the Newsletter, to the exclusion of many items of equal or greater importance. John Peckham presented a plan calling for the publication of Research Supplements, separately from the Newsletter, in which research projects of all sorts (including the Roster) could be mailed to the members as issued. This plan was approved by those present, and will be implemented at once.

Stan Yost suggested that in addition to an alphabetical listing of makes there should be more research conducted on a geographical basis, with members of a specific area tracking down the detailed history of makes produced in that locality. This suggestion also met with the approval of the members, and several of them volunteered to devote some time to a study of automobile manufacturing in their own parts of the country. Stan will edit and coordinate this material, and it will eventually be published in the research supplements.

Election of officers for the coming year was an important part of the meeting. John M. Peckham succeeds Marshall Naul as President; Richard Brigham, R. Perry Zavitz and Guy P. Seeley, Jr. are retained in their posts of Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively. Marshall Naul, our retiring President, has agreed to assume the post of Librarian.



OFFICERS FOR 1972 - Left to right: Guy P. Seeley, Jr., Treasurer; Richard B. Brigham, Vice-President; R. Perry Zavitz, Secretary; John M. Peckham, President; G. Marshall Naul, retiring President and current Librarian.



John Peckham (left), newly elected President, congratulates Marshall Naul for his two years of service as President of our organization.

Photos by member Willard J. Prentice, Timonium, Maryland

Drifting, eh?

After reading the editorial in Newsletter #19 I feel impelled to come up with a few comments on it and a bit of a rebuttal.

The use of the word "drifting" in the title of that editorial is distressing after all the work the committee has put into the roster. Of course, I am not conceited to think that there is no room for improvement, but I certainly think the choice of the word "drifting" is most unfortunate. The whopping roster issue (No. 18) can hardly be called drifting. It has been pushed harder than ever before.

No start was made on the foreign department with the single exception of initially integrating the Canadian cars into the U.S. list. "Our roster lists have excluded even the Canadian makes. If I were a non-U.S. member I'd be inclined to think twice about renewing my membership". (SAH #19 quote). I should like to point out that the idea was originated by a CANADIAN member in objecting to combining the U.S.-Canadian list. Continued insistence on separation resulted in an informal poll, as it were, on this question. As it turned out, your chairman stood alone while the others all wanted a separate Canadian list. This is the reason Canadian cars were dropped from the U.S. list in favor of a separate Canadian list later. Subsequent developments revealed reasons to me later which were convincing that this was a proper change, after all.

In regard to the suggestions on page 7 of SAH #19 - I'd like to see the sheets punched to fit a 2-ring binder. I have used these always. Some sheets had 5 holes to fit either a 2 or 3 ring binder. In the foreign department, the cars and trucks ought to be done country by country.

As for the truck list, I mentioned to Mr. Naul some time ago about my handling this, and in a longer view towards that end, placed a * or ** before cars that also made trucks by the same or different names respectively. I had originally estimated about 4-5 years work to cover U.S. passenger cars, and then we could start on U.S. trucks.

If the Society approves of that program, well and good. If however it is in a hurry to start on trucks also shortly, that is another matter. Recently the demands have been arising to quote a reference for each entry in the roster, and publish it. For a single man to do all this for both car and truck lists simultaneously is simply prohibitive. After all there are only 24 hours in a day and I could use about 50-60 hours a day already. (Our editor has that same problem).

I feel it is better to do a certain amount and do it well than to spread ones ability too thin in too many ways. I say this even though I have a truck interest much over the apparent interest level of most auto buffs and historians.

I am willing to be active chairman of the truck list with the understanding that it be in tandem after the auto list, and this is what I recommend.

R. A. Wawrzyniak, 589 Broadway, Berlin, Wisconsin 54923

FURTHER EDITORIAL COMMENT - At the end of the editorial in Issue No. 19, referred to in the above letter, six suggestions were offered. Suggestion #3 was that we ask for volunteers among our overseas members to do a bit of research on the cars of their own or neighboring countries. Suggestion #4 was to find someone in our organization who will start a list of trucks and commercial cars. No suggestion was made to the effect that any one person should attempt to take on the whole job.

The Membership Directory

I was very pleased with the 1971 Members Directory. I was somewhat surprised to see that everything I had included in my form was included in the Directory - I had not expected it to be so extensive. I greatly enjoyed reading the paragraphs on historians I knew only slightly or by name only. It was very informative, and a splendid improvement from the usual membership directory.

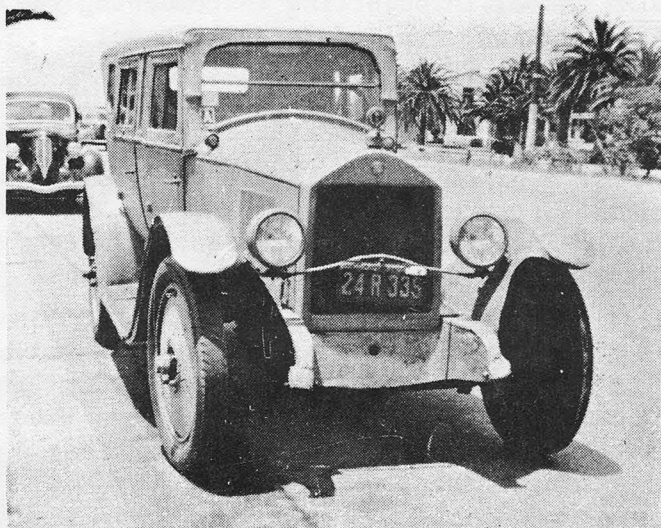
Suggestion - why not include the names, addresses and purposes of the various automotive clubs in the next issue of the Directory?

Excellent job - the best effort of the SAH yet.

Jeffrey I. Godshall, 406 Oakland, Apt. 5, Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

EDITOR'S NOTE: Material for the next (1972) edition of the Membership Directory is already being accumulated. Suggestions for the improvement and enlargement of this Directory will be gratefully received.

Identification Requested



This picture was sent to me several years ago by the late Alexander Telatco. Neither he nor I could identify the make. The photo was published in Road to Yesterday, in the hope that someone of our readers might recognize it.

There were only a few replies to this request for information, and none of them were in agreement. The names MOON, SCRIPPS-BOOTH and DORT were suggested, but I doubt that any of these names are correct.

The general design of the car suggests that it was built in the early or middle twenties, but it was obviously in use in the forties, as is indicated by the "A" sticker on

the windshield, which had to do with gasoline rationing during World War II.

Note the forward opening doors, both front and rear.

Richard B. Brigham, 136 Park Lane, Marietta, Georgia 30060

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE MEMBERSHIP LIST

Tad Burness
2150 South 1st Street
San Jose, Calif. 95112

Robert R. Ebert
5825 West 224th St.
Fairview Park, Ohio 44126

Charles W. Proctor
1912 Teresita Lane
Newport Beach, Calif. 92600

NEW CANADIAN POSTAL CODE NUMBER

William Watson
115 Lipton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 2G6
Canada

(Was Winnipeg 10, Manitoba)

William Murray (Bill) Gray died at the Public General Hospital in Chatham, Ontario, October 27, 1971, after a lengthy illness. He was in his 81st year.

Bill Gray was the last surviving member of the executive staff of Gray-Dort Motors, Limited. The Gray-Dort, a Canadian version of the Dort, was built by the Gray family from 1915 to 1921 in Chatham, Ontario, 55 miles from Detroit. At its peak, the Gray-Dort accounted for about 10% of Canadian car production. It was Canada's most successful orphan.

When Josiah Dort decided to stop making cars, the Grays were left without a partner. They sought some other company with which to associate, and made such arrangements with the Gray Motor Corporation of Detroit (no relation). Before that agreement became a reality, the Gray company folded. Gray-Dort Motors reluctantly sold their remaining cars, parts and assets - taking until 1924 to do so.

Mr. Gray's grandfather, also William, formed a company to build wagons in 1855. This was very successful, possibly rivaling Studebaker's output volume at the time. Robert Gray, the founder's son, bought his son Bill an Oldsmobile in 1903. Bill was keenly interested in cars and built one of his own in 1905.

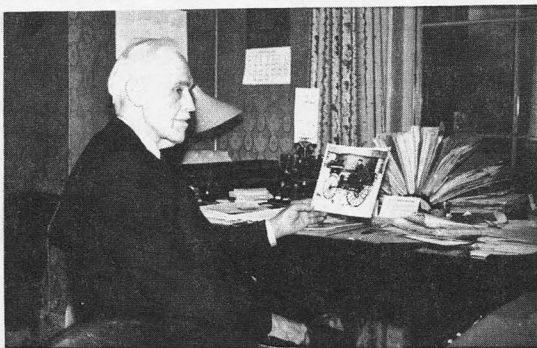
The Grays had the first Ford agency in Chatham, and at one time or another sold Nyberg, Gardner, Mitchell and McLaughlin-Buick cars as well. In front of their garage was the area's first curb-side gasoline pump. Many years later that garage was occupied by a young Dodge dealer, Ron Todgham. Mr. Todgham is now president of Chrysler of Canada.

The Gray's wagon business was expanded to include carriages, and they also made bodies for Ford and some other Canadian built cars. They earned an excellent reputation.

Bill Gray was a most amiable person. He had a wide variety of interests, and enjoyed entertaining. When I first became acquainted with him in the early 1940s he had a huge travel trailer pulled by an unusual custom built car - a 9 passenger International coupe! Nothing pleased Bill more than to take this converted truck, with or without the lavishly furnished trailer, on field trips with the local nature club, and serve hot coffee and sandwiches.

In recent years his health did not permit him to go far from home. However, one afternoon in 1965 he did drive to London for a TV interview. His engaging personality made him an instant hit - not only with the viewing audience, but also with the studio crew. After the interview, and between phone calls (some long distance), he chatted with the enthusiastic TV staff. The phone calls were from excited former Gray-Dort owners. With all this attention, he remarked that he would have to get a larger hat.

An interesting and important link between the automotive past and the present has been broken, sadly.



Bill Gray at his desk in 1965, perusing some of the automotive history he helped to make.



Bill Gray, age 14, and the car he built in 1905. It was powered by a steam engine converted to gasoline.

The Balboa

by William J. Lewis

I have in hand copies of all incorporation papers dealing with the Balboa Motor Corporation. These were obtained from the California State Archives in Sacramento.

The first document (#102568) was filed on February 10, 1923, by the law firm of Carnahan and Clark, 501 Charles C. Chapman Building, Los Angeles. It consists of 13 pages. Items 6 and 7 of this document are of interest.

Number 6 states that the company was authorized a one million dollar stock sale of 50,000 shares of preferred and common stock at \$10 each.

Item 7 states the actual amount of stock subscribed on this date to be \$50 or one common share each for the five officers and directors. These were: Edward H. Mitchell, President, J. S. Wilson, Secretary, Wilbur C. Curtis, Phillip Dupree and Walker R. Flint - all of Los Angeles.

A second document was filed on April 4, 1923, increasing the number of directors from five to seven. Thereafter, the names of the original five were deleted from the records.

The third document, filed February 28, 1924, amended the previous articles of incorporation, and its nine pages loosely defined what the company could do with the investors' money. The new officers were: Otto William Heinz, President and Director; George A. Raymer, Secretary; W. H. Radford, Vice-President and Production Manager; Fred G. Mott, Jr., Vice-President and Sales Manager; J. C. Bliss; George A. Lathrop; Robert E. Corcoran; Clarence D. Leshner.

The final document of six pages was filed on March 3, 1924. This was notification of the removal of the corporation from the City and County of Los Angeles to the city of Fullerton in the County of Orange, to be effective by March 22, 1924. Legal notices of this move were published in the Los Angeles County newspaper, California Independent on February 28 and March 6, 13 and 20.

Newspaper morgues of the area prove the existence of BALBOA cars. One Brougham, one Touring car and one chassis were publicly displayed on three occasions. The cars were shown on March 17, 1924, at the California Hotel in Fullerton. They were again on display August 24 through 31, 1924, at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. In 1925 they were shown March 21 through 28 at the Orange County Auto Show in Santa Ana, California.

The touring car was reworked and modified into a "1925 BALBOA Superline Eight, Model F", reportedly fitted with a Continental engine and Cutler-Hammer electric gearshift. The Brougham carried a Continental engine and standard transmission. The fate of the third chassis is unknown.

Heinz and Radford resigned from the company on November 19, 1925. The Orange County directory for 1925 lists Heinz as President, but Charles L. Leslie as Vice-President. Court records covering several suits against the company list Virgil O. Lewis as Secretary of the Corporation. There is no State record of these changes. The Balboa Motor Corporation was dissolved by order of the Secretary of State, of California, on February 27, 1926.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Raymer, Secretary of Balboa, was also the President of the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce, and about \$60,000 worth of stock was sold through the C of C.

Mr. Leslie acquired the cars and drove the Brougham-Sedan until his death in 1934. Rumor has it that the cars were stolen from the Leslie estate sometime just before or during World War II, but no proof of this rumor has been found. I am convinced that the cars (or at least the sedan) do still exist, and the original Kessler-based supercharged engines are in fact in Lakewood, California, to this day.

This article, sent to the Newsletter by Bill Lewis, was originally published in the Fullerton (Calif.) Daily News Tribune on August 4, 1965.

What Happened to The Balboa?

Auto Built in Fullerton Faded Away Into History

Investors Cause End Of Venture

By RAY MAST

Whatever happened to the Balboa?

It came into Fullerton with a big to-do and caused a lot of commotion in 1924, but slipped quietly from the scenes with the designer, the promoter and the president of the firm in 1926.

A great many prominent citizens with money felt they were "taken" by the officials of the Balboa Motor Co.

"There are certain people who would like to have history state that the Balboa car was a promotional gimmick," said William J. Lewis, 601 Kiama St., Anaheim. "But I don't think it was. It was a fine looking car with good possibilities."

STUDIED SUBJECT

Lewis, who has researched the subject for the past three and one-half years, has a simpler answer for the rise and fall of the Balboa.

"There were just too many people who wanted a piece of it before it could become a reality," he said. "People put their money into the project expecting an immediate and high return, but they weren't willing to wait long enough for it to happen."

As far as Lewis can deter-

mine, and he's chased various leads throughout three counties, only two Balboas ever were produced. And these were assembled in another city, possibly Midway City.

WAS COMPLETE CAR

"The Balboa was a complete car when it arrived in Fullerton," he said.

But much work was done behind closed doors at the Bastanchury Ranch Warehouse, which stood where the Santa Fe Railroad depot now is located. This is where mechanics attempted to perfect the Kessler engine, which was built in Detroit.

What an engine it must have been — especially in 1924. Advertisements promoted the fact that here was a beautiful car with a light, high-powered engine.

For all practical purposes, the Balboa was more or less like any other assembled car with standard components. The selling point was its eight cylinder supercharged engine, which was extremely rare in 1924. The 100-horsepower motor was advertised to have a top speed of 80 miles per hour and travel for 25 miles on one gallon of gasoline.

The car was an expensive one, listed "in the \$3,000 class" by its promoters, Lewis said. Other automobiles of the day in this class included the Franklin, Hudson, Packard, Stearns-Knight and Willis-Knight.

COST \$1 A POUND

The car weighed from 2,900 to 3,200 pounds, said Lewis, who even knows the dealers'

license plate numbers of the sedan and touring car that were known to have existed. In 1924, the going price of a car was \$1 a pound, he said.

Despite all the good things one might have to say in defense of the car, the Balboa can't deny its stormy past.

"There were tremendous court actions over this," said Lewis. "People now are so resentful of the fact that the car existed they want to erase its memory."

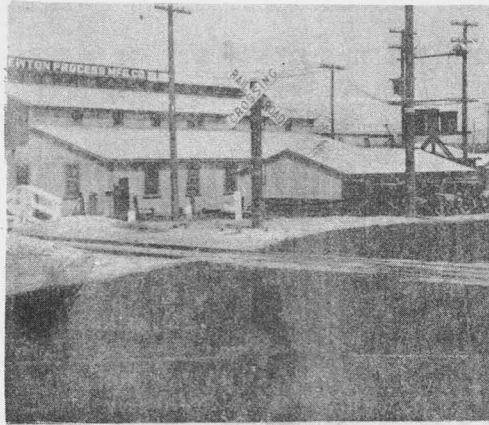
"But the fluke or the fraud wasn't in the car or its designs," Lewis maintains. "It was in the people who were involved with it."

The three major administrators in the company were President Otto Heinz, promoter Fred Mott Jr., and designer William Radford.

WORKED ON ENGINE

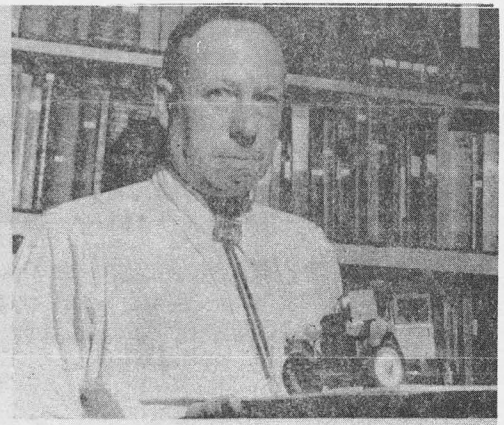
"They tried to make the engine work properly in the Bastanchury warehouse," Lewis said, "and they succeeded to a point. It worked well when it performed. The design had some faults that could have been eliminated in time. But the Balboa investors just wanted their money back too soon for the car to materialize."

Lewis said his findings have shown there was a given amount of money for the Balboa Motor Co. to work with. The prevalent thought among the promoters was to make the car known and to gain response from people other than those in the home area. So the available cash was spent on na-



PREDICTED SITE — Those heading up the Balboa Motor Co. in 1924 had plans already drawn for a manufacturing plant. The plans, which were circulated publicly, indicate that the plant would be locat-

ed in an area, now a part of Hunt Foods and Industries, Inc., near Brookhurst Ave. The land at that time was occupied by Newton Process Manufacturing Co.



SCALE MODEL — William Lewis, 601 Kiama St., Anaheim, displays his prize-winning model of the Balboa motorcar. Lewis has researched

the mysterious Balboa for the past three and one-half years. As far as he can determine, Lewis said, only two of the cars ever were assembled. (News Tribune Photo)

tional advertising.

There was a week-long exhibit in the Los Angeles Ambassador Hotel. And there was another exhibit in Long Beach. Then there was the exhibit in the California Hotel in March 1924 that failed miserably.

FRICION DEVELOPED

But there were other reasons for its failure. For one, the political situation was quite unfortunate at the time. For another, there were a great many promotions underway during this post-war period and frictions developed between the promoters — frictions that unbelievably still exist.

"The period of 1917-26 was a troubled one," said Lewis, "what with the Ku Klux Klan activities, bootlegging and political fraud."

And the friction between Orange County cities was so great the Balboa, which was named for the man and not the city, scarcely received mention in newspapers outside Fullerton.

Of course at the time there were 19 other cars being promoted in the Los Angeles Basin.

Despite the fact the Balboa's history remains shrouded in mystery, Lewis said he'll continue to search out the facts until he has a complete history.

"I've talked to some people who swear they know where one of the two cars is," he said.

Until Lewis discovers something, though, the Balboa motor car will probably remain as hidden as its three promoters became in 1926 when their company fell apart.

An up to date edition of the INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF AUTOMOTIVE LITERATURE COLLECTORS will shortly be issued. Collectors of automobile sales catalogs and associated material should send their name, address, interests and full information as to their collection by air-mail for free insertion to the Editor: H.T.C. Angel, 2754 Fairmont Avenue, Dayton, Ohio 45419 U.S.A.

LITERATURE WANTED: Anything on the 1915 HARDING, built by Samuel B. Harding, Chicago, Illinois. The car used a 60 h.p. Wisconsin T-head engine.
Ralph Dunwoodie, 809 Thoma Street, Reno, Nevada 89502

NEEDED: 1963 new copy of WORLD CAR CATALOG, printed in American print only, to complete my library of these books. I use these for my car cover business for measures of the overall cars.
Edward E. Watson, Jr., 5511 Remmell Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21206

WANTED: Material on PLYMOUTH CRICKET (1971).
Jan Eyerman, 87-16 Sutter Avenue, Ozone Park, New York 11417

WANTED: Any information on the Peerless Motor Car Company, of Cleveland, Ohio (1900-1932) and/or its products.
Jeff Caplan, 1845 F Street, Apartment 7, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

WANTED: Automobile sales catalogs on the following: 1930 DE SOTO, 1931 LA SALLE, 1930 STUDEBAKER, 1920 ESSEX, 1928, '29, '30 PLYMOUTH, 1932, '33, '34 WILLYS, 1933, '35 CHRYSLER. Will purchase or have pre-war catalogs to trade.
H.T.C. Angel, 2754 Fairmont Avenue, Dayton, Ohio 45419

WANTED: Any information on molded camshaft gears, commonly called "fiber" gears. These early auto plastic parts were used extensively in the early 1920s and were molded by some of the best-known producers of plastic materials, including Formica, General Electric, Westinghouse, Continental-Diamond, and Taylor. A search of the literature of 1915-1920 has failed to uncover any mention of these in the auto magazines, including Motor Age and Horseless Age. Would be particularly interested in any early articles dealing with the subject.
G. M. Naul, 5 Queen Ann Drive, Christine Manor, Newark, Delaware 19711.

WANTED: Photos and information on the 1939 CHRYSLER used in the Royal Tour of that year - not the McLAUGHLIN-BUICK or the LINCOLN, but the CHRYSLER.
WANTED to buy, borrow or acquire a photocopy of Chrysler Corporation of Canada, Ltd.'s 1957 edition of the model chart and serial number guide, #WM4371. This was the last time this guide was issued.
William Watson, 115 Lipton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 2G6.
