



President's Paragraphs

I'm pleased to make several happy announcements.

First, our attorney, John Martin Smith, tells me it's official - the SAH is now a registered non-profit corporation. John's efforts have laid the groundwork for the contributions we've been able to raise lately. More about those in a moment.

Second, on my way to Hershey in Oct., I stopped off in Detroit to visit Eleanor Paton. Eleanor is the daughter of Clyde Paton, who served as Packard's chief engineer for many years and who also engineered the Aero Willys. Eleanor has very generously agreed to spearhead the Society's oral history committee. She's already lined up several aides. While visiting, I dropped off one of the SAH's tape recorders plus blank tapes. So that project seems launched, and I have high hopes for it.

Hershey itself, as I'm sure you've heard, was wet and as marvelous as ever. Highlight of the Hershey meet was the SAH dinner Friday night. Before the dinner, though, three members - publishers all - very generously donated gifts of money to the Society.

These gifts came from Tom Warth of **Classic Motorbooks** (\$100), Scott Bailey of **Automobile Quarterly** (\$100), and Terry Ehrich of **Hemmings Motor News** and **Special-Interest Autos** (\$500). Mr Warth further offered to help the Society with publicity through the use of **Classic Motorbooks'** extensive mailing list. **Automobile Quarterly**, of course, already aids the Society by funding the Cugnot Awards - Scott has been generous to us for many years. And Terry Ehrich of **Hemmings** thought there would be more money forthcoming from his company - he feels the \$500 is only a beginning.

That's great news, as I'm sure you'll agree, and I think it might be well for members to thank these generous people when and where possible. I understand, by the way, that we have pledges of additional contributions from other firms and people. As those materialize, I'll pass the word along.

Part of this money will go toward paying for the new membership brochures that were laid out by John Peckham and printed by Bill Jackson. These brochures were ready in time for Hershey and were passed out there: a beautiful job that I'm proud to say was totally generated within the Society. Type was set by Haessner Publications, which also sets the type and prints this **Newsletter** - another generous contribution.

I hope also to earmark part of our new money for the Oral History Committee, particularly for tapes and transcriptions. By the way, if you or members of your family would like to help with tape transcriptions, we'll be paying \$2 an hour for typing. Anyone interested should get in touch with me. Might as well keep this in-house, too.

Our dinner at the Italian Club in Hershey went extremely well, I thought. It was a total sellout. We had room for 70 people, and about 75 showed up, which meant we pulled up some extra chairs.

Announce a good speaker and you draw a good crowd. Our speaker was Zenon C.R. Hansen, former board chairman of Mack Trucks, Inc. Mr. Hansen helicoptered in from Allentown, bringing several guests. His lively talk told us about the National Truck Museum and Library that's now aborning in Allentown. Mr. Hansen outlined his multi-million-dollar plans and feels confident that American truckmakers will add to the \$2 million he's already raised. Ground has been broken on the museum's 23-acre site.

John Conde served as the evening's emcee - a masterful job. We had brief announcements from Treasurer Fred

Zenon C.R. Hansen



Roe, Secretary Vern Vogel, and me - brief partly because we were racing the Italian Club Orchestra, which was warming up with a vengeance.

I want to mention and thank Howard Applegate for making the Cugnot awards this year. Special thanks, too, to Fred Roe and John Peckham for manning the SAH booth at Hershey (John built it - he's as much architect as artist, and that's saying quite a lot); thanks, likewise, to Rosemary and Bill Jackson, who arranged for the dinner; finally thanks to all who attended. We've got to do it again.

Michael Lamm

SOCIETY'S NEW ADDRESS

A few years ago, the Society adopted our librarian's address as a permanent address for the Society. Since that time, the librarian changed his address twice, defeating our original idea. It was then decided to try to find an address that would stay the same for the foreseeable future.

This last summer, the Society approached and received permission from the Detroit Public Library to use the National Automotive History Collection as its permanent address. It's fairly safe to assume that the library will not be moving soon.

Now we have our third (and last?) permanent address.

It is:

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
c/o National Automotive History Collection
Detroit Public Library
5201 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI. 48202

This should not effect our members in any way, but it will give outsiders an address to write to, in spite of the changes that occur when new officers are elected.

The address is not meant to indicate any formal connection between the Society and the DPL or the NAHC.

THE CUGNOT AWARDS

The Cugnot Award Committee, made up of Mary Cattie of the Philadelphia Free Library, Howard Applegate and Irving

Seltzer, have made their selections for the book and article(s) which they feel are the outstanding examples of automotive writing and research published during the calendar year of 1974. Several entries which were published during 1973 were not eligible, as were some published in 1975. The latter, however, will be considered for next year's award.

The Committee takes into consideration five primary things when selecting the Cugnot winners - 1, Historical importance of the subject; 2, Depth of research; 3, Literary merit or clarity; 4, Organization of material; 5, Quality of illustrations.

With these as a basis for selection, the Committee made the following choices for this year's awards.

Book Award

Albert R. Bochroch - **American Automobile Racing, An Illustrated History**, New York, Viking, 1974.

Article Award

R. Perry Zavitz - "The Post War Babies, 1945-1959," **Car Classics**, June-August

Article Award

R. Perry Zavitz - "The Post War Babies, 1945-1959," **Car Classics**, June-August 1974.

Stanley K. Yost - "Taxi, A Look At Checker's Past," **Car Classics**, June, August, October, 1974.

Besides a framed certificate, the book award includes \$50, and the article awards, \$25 each.

BROCHURE PHOTOS IDENTIFIED

For those who are curious about the pictures used in the new SAH brochure/application, here's what they are.

Cover: 1920 Cunningham, Style 81A, dual cowl phaeton on the V-4 chassis.

Inside: A 1904 White, rear entrance tonneau.

In the montage, across the top; 1900 Lohner-Porsche electric race car built for E.W. Hart-Lutton; George Rand's 1939 Maserati in the "pits" at Watkins Glen in 1951; Film star Jean Harlow and her 1932 Packard. Bottom row; 1919 Mack 'AC', rotary pumper prototype; 1908 Marmon on the streets of Boston; The Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant, circa late teens (from an old postcard).

On the Donations page; A 1958 Corvette.

These photos are from the collections of the Long Island Automotive Museum, John M. Peckham and Michael Lamm.

The Mail Bag

From Peter Helck, Boston Corners, RD 2, Millerton, N.Y. 12546: Your letter of October 1st brought a very unexpected surprise, the announcement of my having been made an Honorary Member of the Society of Automotive Historians. For this I thank you and the Society members most appreciatively.

I have to presume that the ideal motor historian is he whose interests also include History in the Making, as per the immediate present. If this is indeed a qualification, I would have to be rated as ineligible. My fixation is on the past, the very dim past, in fact.

However, I have no wish to decline this honor. My acceptance will probably serve to alert me to the important contemporary advances which have (or will have) historical significance. This may not be easy. The present nationwide involvement in nostalgia in so many phases of today's way of life just might anchor me more firmly to the bygone days. Well, we'll see.

Again my cordial thanks to you and the Society for this unanticipated honor.

From Strother MacMinn, 255 S. Bonnie Ave., Pasadena, Ca. 91106: Please accept these most humble thanks for the great privilege of receiving an Honorary membership in this elite and highly esteemed Society.

Your President, Mr. Michael Lamm, has been a very good friend for many years and I suspect that it may have been on his recommendation that this membership was granted. Mike has been (and always will be) one of the greatest inspirations in automotive journalism that I've ever had the privilege to meet. Both the thoroughness of his research and artfulness of communication have set new, high standards in this field and, in particular, automotive historical writing - and publishing.

It was a surprise to recently receive four back copies of the Society's "Newsletter" along with Issue No. 3 of "Automotive History Review" - both truly handsome and valuable publications. Please also accept my deep gratitude for this very thoughtful consideration.

Now there is the obligation of getting the facts straight whenever there is an opportunity to do some historical writing! It is sincerely hoped that any future efforts will be inspired to try and reach the level of expertise that this honorable Society represents.

Again, my deepest gratitude.

From John M. Peckham, 675 Pinewoods Ave. Rd., Troy, N.Y. 12180. The meeting last summer in Detroit proved to be quite a success. Not as large a crowd as attends the Hershey meeting, but big enough to accomplish a few things. This brought to mind the idea of holding regional meetings in the early part of the year, where members, especially those who can't make it to Hershey, could get together and discuss the Society's problems and goals.

With this thought in mind, I would like to propose that those members in the Northeast area get together sometime between mid-February and mid-April for a meeting in the Hartford, Connecticut area. If enough people are interested, I have an idea for what should be an inexpensive meeting place of considerable interest.

The general idea would be to start the meeting late in the morning on a Saturday and end it in the late afternoon. Then, those who wanted to, could make arrangements for an early dinner in the area (possibly as a group). This would allow most of those attending to get back home before midnight or thereabouts.

Those interested, please let me know your ideas.

Also, how about meetings in other areas; Mid-west, West, England, etc.?

From Fred Roe, 837 Winter Street, Holliston, Ma. 01746: The Newsletter pages have recently carried again some discussion of the status of passenger-carrying truck-chassis vehicles and load-carrying passenger-chassis vehicles. The problem is certainly as old as the earliest Model T Ford "pick-up" which substituted a tiny load box for the equally tiny

The Society of
Automotive
Historians

NEWSLETTER

The SAH NEWSLETTER is published 10 times a year. G. Marshall Naul, Editor. Editorial Office: Stubby Road, Route 2, Granville, Ohio 43023.

Copyright 1975. Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS' OFFICERS - 1975

<p>PRESIDENT Michael Lamm P. O. Box 7607 Stockton, California 95207</p>	<p>VICE PRESIDENT Michael Worthington-Williams 42, Woodsland Road Hassocks, Sussex, England</p>
<p>SECRETARY Vernon Vogel Box 24 Edinboro, Pennsylvania 16412</p>	<p>TREASURER Frederick D. Roe 837 Winter Street Holliston, Massachusetts 01746</p>

deck of a roadster, and so far as I know had no other differences from a roadster.

In Newsletter #20 of 1971 I created some definitions which with slight modifications appear to be acceptable to the membership. Either or both of the definitions for passenger car or for motor truck could easily be modified to include these vehicles, but I don't think it is really correct to call them all cars or all trucks, especially since there are variations between states in the way they are licensed now, and in all probability there have been changes in the way certain states have licensed them over the years. In addition the variety of such types has been increasing especially in the last - say fifteen years.

Therefore I suggest we make a category for multi-use vehicles with a sufficiently restrictive definition so that it does not become a haven for all unclassifiable oddities, but only those which are actually dual use types to the specific extent that they may carry both passengers and a load area on either a truck-type chassis or a passenger car type chassis. In this way we could then say, for example, that Chevrolet is a make of passenger cars, trucks, and dual-use vehicles. But at the same time GMC would be a make only of trucks and dual-use vehicles. Doesn't this make some sense?

DUAL-USE Vehicle: A vehicle having some characteristics of both passenger car and truck which may be employed for either passenger car use with incidental load or towing, or load carrying use with incidental passenger capacity.

From Stanley W. Liszka, Jr., St. Cloud University, Dept. of History, St. Cloud, Mn. 56301: I have had a long-standing interest in automobiles from a variety of perspectives which among them are my ownership of Hudson automobiles and a long-standing membership in the Hudson-Essex-Terraplane Club, Inc.

Added to the above interests I am also a professional historian and I am currently contemplating offering a course next year on the role of the automobile in 20th century America. I would appreciate any assistance that you might be able to offer me by putting me into contact with other Society members who might have experience in this type of thing. I intend to offer a social history approach (economic, labor, technological, society, etc.). Thus, if you have any educators who have attempted this kind of thing (or you suspect they may have) in your membership rolls I would appreciate your forwarding their names and addresses.

Book Reviews

"Life Lines of the Motor Car" - wall chart by Walter MacIvain. 40 1/2 in. x 47 in. Folded \$7.50, in tube \$9.50 from Member MacIvain, 17 Bonner Road, Manchester, Ct. 06040.

Those who have been members of the VMCCA or are familiar with their **Bulb Horn** magazine and therefore acquainted with his historical sketches will be pleasantly surprised that Walter MacIvain has put together a "genealogical" chart of all the current US makes including GLASSIC, and has traced the confusing family lines back to their respective beginnings. The chart reads from left to right in chronological sequence from 1890 to 1975 and from top to bottom in alphabetical order of the current corporate names. This is a meticulous job and a great and ready source of information. While the array of lines and illustrations may be very confusing at first glance, there is an index of makes from AEROBUS to ZIMMERMAN which allows a given make to be located with a minimum amount of hunting. This index includes about 270 different makes of passenger cars and the pertinent commercial vehicles. There are also listings of WW II activities of the auto manufacturers as well as brief notes of technical developments. This chart is an outstanding accomplishment and contains a wealth of information in an amazingly small space and is just wonderful for the browsing historian.

GMN

Title Listing

Many proposals have been made for indexing journals and other works which might assist the historian in locating data for his research. After considerable discussion at the Society's Detroit meeting this summer, it was agreed that that indexing of automotive journals would be impractical for a number of reasons. However, a project to identify important journals and locate where they have been preserved could be feasible. Several members have volunteered assistance, but suggestions and help from the membership is important. Specifically, members are asked to submit titles of journals which they believe valuable to researchers of automotive history. These are periodic journals, not books. Suggestions should be sent to Vernon W. Vogel, Box 24, Edinboro, Pa. 16412.

From these suggestions and previous work a list of titles will be compiled. This list will state the title, indicate locations where the title may be found, indicate which volumes and years are available at each location, and state the stipulations for use to qualified researchers. A sample entry in our list will look something like this:

Automotive Industries

v. 1-25 (1935-1960)	IU	-3
v. 6, 10-15, 20 (1941, 1946-1950, 1955)	DPL	-1

This entry would show what volumes of **Automotive Industries** the libraries at University of Indiana and Detroit Public Library hold. The codes (-3 and -1) would inform the reader about the user regulations for that journal at each location. The list would be supplemented with a master list of libraries and institutions and their abbreviations used in the list as well as an introduction how to use the list, suggestions for contacting libraries, and explanation of the user regulation codes.

We hope that compilation of this research aid will assist the automotive historian as he looks for an item to open new avenues in his research.

Vernon W. Vogel
October 10, 1975

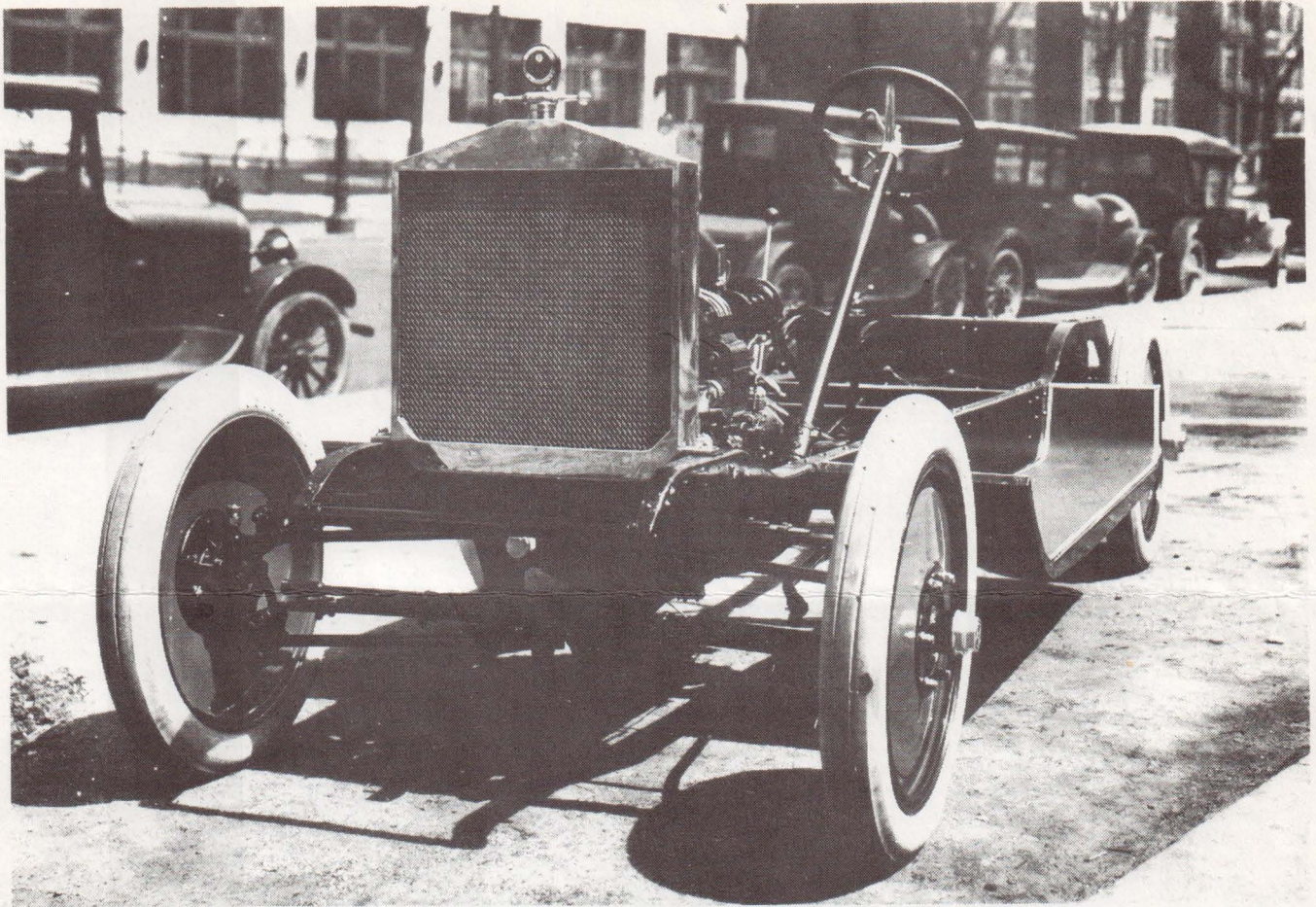
Members In Print

DON SUMMAR: Rowe Motor History, 1908-1925, by Donald J. Summar, is an attempt to write a complete history of an obscure truck manufacturer. It is published in Vol. 79, No. 2, of the **Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society**. 75 pages of text with 24 illustrations. Currently available for \$1.50 postage paid from D.J. Summar, 2111 Lansill Rd. #A-17, Lexington, Ky. 40504.

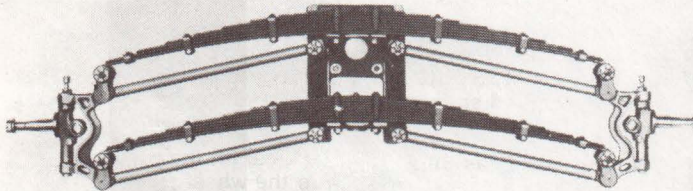
The Birmingham by Stan Yost

Some years ago I wrote a story about the Birmingham automobile. It was fairly well complete for I had some good pictures and had the man that had helped build the pilot models at hand. Since then, there have been other things written about the car but it was just recently that some mystery prints were obtained from Chrysler that throw a little more light on the effort. In the original story, there was a picture of the car getting ready to take a flying trip over a short roadway of spaced 6 x 6's. While there were a lot of words on the outcome, I had never seen any pictorial proof of the accomplishment. The Chrysler file, plus some other sources, yielded the prints to give some idea of what this car would take.

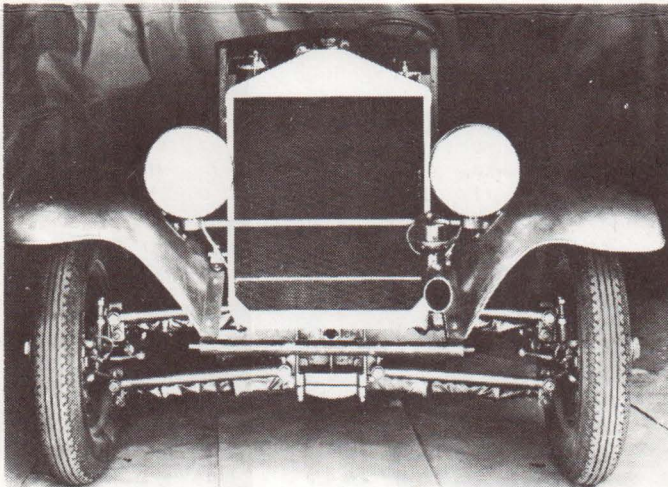
The original cars were built in Detroit and the plant was built in Falconer, New York. From the time the first models were built, the people in charge touted their ability to take an extremely rough road without causing discomfort to the passengers. They hit on the idea of this demonstration ride right after the first of the year in 1921. They then sent different cars out to sections of the country to show the people. It was found, by repeated testing, that the cars could



Initial Birmingham chassis as built by Wright-Fisher Engineering Company in Detroit. Note the transverse springing and side running board units, similar to Marmon. This photo was made in Jan. 1921.



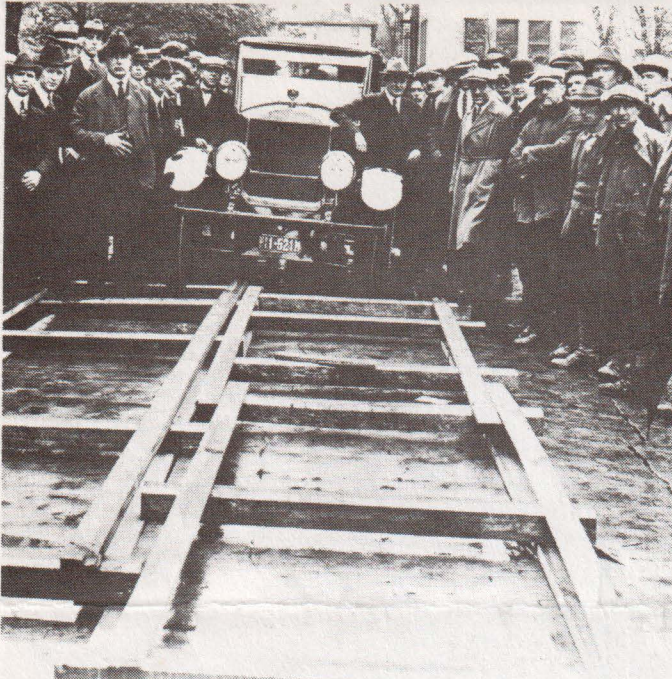
The spring detail of the Birmingham front suspension. This view is as it is unloaded.



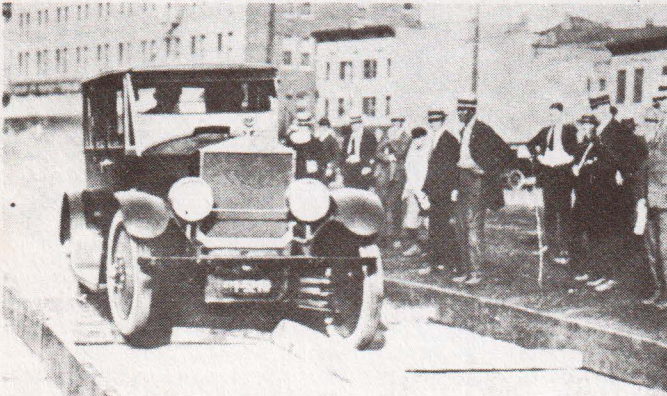
This is the front shot of the Wright for 1929. Note the difference between this photo and #1 and 2. Barely noticeable is the Wright emblem on the radiator shell.

negotiate this torture at as high as 40mph. When you consider the six by six, or sometimes just logs of six or seven inches diameter, along with the thin, hard tires of 1921, you have to consider quite a jolt, I would think. The regular publicity photos could be doctored some, I imagine, but the file prints from Chrysler were taken as is. They had blocked out the name of the car in the file, but there is no mistaking what it is. One would have to figure that these Chrysler photos were taken by someone in the engineering staff of the Willys Corp. in 1921, for Chrysler hadn't yet been formed. At this time he was developing the new Chrysler 6 for the Willys Corp. This car eventually became the basis for the Flint. The engine and technical items went with Walter P., when he decided to leave and eventually ended up with the Chrysler nameplate, afterall.

The initial testing before the public seemed to be in March of 1921. The first publicized one was in Olean, N.Y. and from there they got a little wilder as they went. The ultimate was in Jamestown, New York. In this community they offered a \$10,000.00 challenge to any car that could follow the Birmingham over the appointed course. There were a couple of takers. One was the Parenti, that was then being built in Buffalo, New York. It came about in October of 1921 and was quite a show, staged, or otherwise. Not being there at the time, it would be hard to tell, one way or another. I have tried driving my 1930 Hudson over a six inch curb and even at low speed, I lost my hat and darn near my head. At any rate, The Birmingham was driven over this course of six to seven inch logs from six miles an hour to 35 mph. with no indication of structural or glass damage. After the demonstration, the challenge was taken up by a Parenti. This car got up to around 20mph, on the third time through, when the driver lost complete control and ended up in a ditch. The visiting stockholders had great sport picking up pieces of broken glass and various nuts and bolts, that had fallen from the vehicle. The next challenger was a conventional automobile. Two drivers were on hand, when the test started, so they were called to the starting area. They had eventually gotten a bit shaken on seeing the tests, for they were nowhere to be found. A volun-



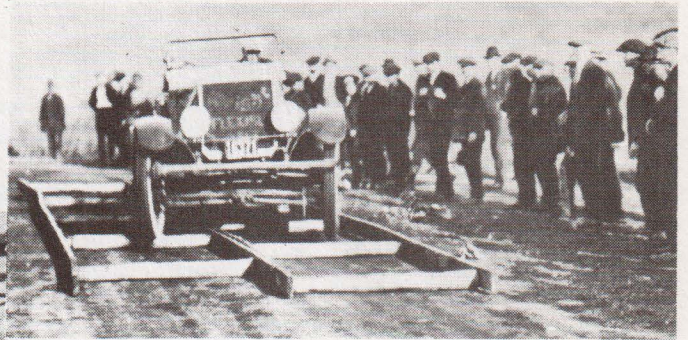
This is the photo from the Bulb Horn article. It is the start of the first publicized test in Olean, New York. It is interesting to look at the expressions on the faces lined up along the track. Some show as a scoff, some a joke, there is some apprehension, and the man on the left of the car is already holding his stomach. This is one of the cars built in Detroit. The test was in March of 1921.



This is the May, 1921 test in Schenectady, New York, the same car as #4. It is running at 30mph. Note how Chrysler files took the name of the car off the print.



This is the Jamestown headquarters of the company. You can see the \$10,000. offer. One of the sedans is shown in front of the building. This is presumably one of the Falconer models, the picture being made in February of 1922.



This Wright Flexible Axle automobile in the winter of 1922-23. It is thought this shot was taken in Canada, possibly Peterboro, Ont. This is probably the touring that he took from Falconer. There are some minor changes showing, primarily the wrapped spring leafs.

teer driver was called in and the car hit the logs at 6mph. The driver could barely hold on to the wheel but the car did get through the first leg. On the return at 12mph., he lost his hold and the rear seat came out hitting him on the back of the head. He was stunned a bit, losing complete control of the car. It jumped off the course, and the old thing landed in the same ditch. There was much jubilation in Jamestown! The ten thousand went unclaimed.

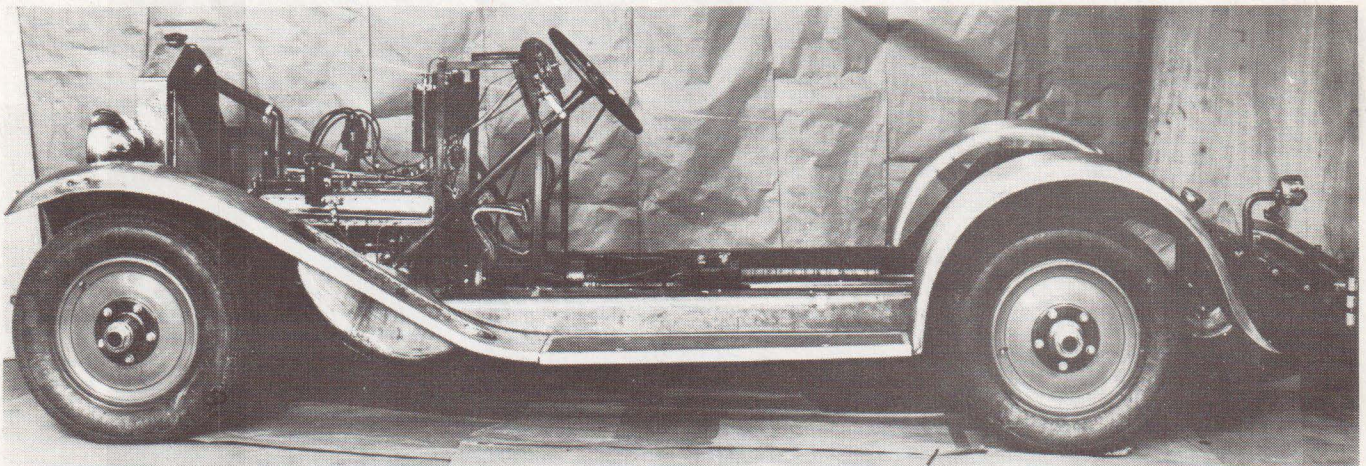
In spite of the staunchness of the car, the company did not fare well and collapsed in 1922. What of the car? Well, James A. Wright, one of the Wright-Fisher people from Detroit, knew they had a good machine and picked up the pieces. He supposedly took one of the touring cars that had been built in Falconer, all of the prints, and went in search of a sponsor. The Wright Flexible Axle automobile was what it was called and he demonstrated tirelessly for several months, a good deal of it in Canada. He got a few good inquiries and even a little cash here and there. With the available funds he went back to working on the chassis. He appeared again in 1925, this time just as the Wright. More demonstrations were given and again he obtained some working capital. Not satisfied he again went into hiding. This time, he didn't reappear until 1929. The results were a refined, very fine looking chassis. He built two, one base chassis, and the other with a touring body. The transverse spring unit was greatly improv-

This picture shows the Washington, D.C. tests in June of 1921. They also had a California touring car running the course, carrying various politicians. All were impressed at 35mph.



This June, 1921 photo shows the progress on the Birmingham plant. The unit did get built and occupied by the fall of that year.

This is the final version of the Wright car. So far, there has been no success in finding a photo of the touring car, or phaeton. It is quite a refined looking machine and seems to be quite low to the ground. From this 1929 effort, I draw a blank.



ed and the overall design was outstanding. He used a big Continental engine and the ensuing tests were impressive. Unfortunately, the interest was not great enough to provide capital to start manufacture, so the whole idea was dropped. In going through this whole effort, it seems I can't find a solid reason for this failure. The Birmingham thing in New York was supposedly the victim of greed, which is possible. The

later efforts, the cars that Wright tried so hard with, are something else. The final effort, of course, collided head on with the money problem in 1929. It is just another case of an interesting marque. If you have been wondering what and the whereof of the Wright name on your roster, this may shed a little filtered light on it. I wish there was more, and if someone has something else, I'd like to have it on these pages.

New Members

Edward C. Backus
218 Oakland St.
Springfield, MA. 01108

Lloyd A. Brown
4211 Yonge St.
Willowdale, Ontario
Canada M2P 1V6

John W. DeCampi
Sprucehaven Farm
Chester Heights, PA. 19017

Ira H. Goldman
5 E. 76th St.
New York, N.Y. 10021

Anthony Raymond Grygera
347 Tratt St., Box 341A
Whitewater, WI. 53190

Frank F. Johnson
1820 Fitch Ave.
Marquette, MI. 49855

Boyd H. Keys
2650 Winters Bank Tower
Dayton, OH. 45402

Miss Eleanor A. Paton
473 Drury Lane
Birmingham, MI. 48010

Richard P. Scharchburg
Gen. Motors Inst.
1700 W. Third Ave.
Flint, MI. 48502

Donald L. Welch
P.O. Box 35
Monroe, IN. 46772

Classified Ads

WANTED- All information on **AVAILABLE** truck 1910-ca1958, and **NELSON-LEMOON** truck 1910-27, **LEMOON** 1927-39, trucks and companies for truck history uses. Both were made in Chicago. Also, who bought **STEWART** truck in 1939 and what was its last year, 1941 or 1942? ...In the mid-1920's a certain "RFH" drew elegant scratchboard illustrations for **GMC** truck and **ESSEX** car. Who was he?
W.A. Wawrzyniak, 589 Broadway, Berlin, WI. 54923.

Wanted. Any information of the **J. Henry Mitchell Mfg. Co.**, 821-23-25 North Thirteenth Street, Philadelphia, Pa., circa 1906, and on their vehicles, the **Suburban Motor Delivery Truck**. This is believed to be a Daimler derivative. John M. Peckham, 675 Pinewoods Ave. Rd., Troy, N.Y. 12180.