

THE JOURNAL

OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

July-August 1983

ISSUE NUMBER 85

Editorial

Please note the automotive fair and exchange that our Southern California Chapter will be having on October 16th. If you will be in the area on this date, do plan to attend, and if you are a newer member and live in the area, offer your assistance and urge your friends to attend. I do hope it is successful and can become an annual event. SAH Director Bill Lewis once again graces these pages as author of an excellent account of the Bucciali.

Walt Gosden

Cugnot Award Nominations

Nominations for the annual Cugnot Awards are now being accepted according to chairman Matt Joseph. The awards for best book and best article written during the year 1982 will be presented to the winners at the annual meeting in Harrisburg, Pa. in October. Please submit all nominations (if possible with a copy of the book, magazine etc. it appeared in) to the chairman at 7728 Martinsville Road, Cross Plains, WI. 53528.

The Educated Speculation Syndrome

by Bill Lewis

It must be said that there is a distinct difference between guesswork speculation and the condition which I refer to as "educated speculation." In automotive history, the research of puzzles containing the most missing pieces can often leave one with no other alternative but educated speculation from which to form valid and connectable connections.

My first fascination with the subject of French Bucciali front-drive automobiles took place over thirty-five years ago. Dedicated research since then has filled binders and files with marvelous data, but all too many questions remain unanswered to my satisfaction.

One might ask why I didn't pick a subject closer to home instead of one halfway around the globe. A fair question. Actually, close proximity to a subject origin is of little or no consequence. A fascinating interest must be devoid of any deadlines. Very serious and extremely detailed research cannot be rushed if every scrap of information is to be learned and proof gained.

Direct correspondence with the late Paul Albert Bucciali proved most valuable in both fact and fact-fragments. But fragments are not enough in themselves. With my colleague in Paris, a total of 151 cars were outlined over the phone, with thirty-eight being of front-drive form. Those thirty-eight examples are, and for over three decades have been, the key to my interest in the marque.

The motor periodical coverage of Bucciali, in several languages, is very confusing, as are sales catalogues of the company itself. Photographs and published pictures of the cars added filler to fact-fragments.

Mountains of other correspondence, however, brought conflicting claims in varying degrees. Such remarks as "only two or three cars were built, then repainted for salon show," or "they were all-nonfunctioning models that never ran," or "none were ever sold," et cetera, et cetera, confounded logic.

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Southern California Chapter
Automotive Literature Fair And Exchange
Scheduled For Costa Mesa, California

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc., Southern California Chapter, announces that it will sponsor a Fair and Exchange restricted to automotive literature, memorabilia and small collectables. The event has been set for October 16th, 1983, with October 23 as the rain date, and will be held at The Briggs Cunningham Museum, at 250 East Baker Street, Costa Mesa, California. The SoCal S.A.H. Chapter pledges proceeds from their sponsorship of the event to the Briggs Cunningham Museum Foundation. The Club will offer display spaces approximately 18' x 18' at \$10 per space and requests that no parts or other items not within the scope of the event and no non-automotive items be offered by exhibitors. Hours will be from 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Reservations are recommended for exhibitors. Inquiries may be made to: S.A.H. Literature Fair, 601 Newton Street, San Fernando, Ca., 91340, phone (213) 361-3625.

This event marks the first of its kind to be held in the west. Collectors are encouraged to attend as it will be a unique opportunity to browse among the west's largest inventories at one convenient location. The SoCal S.A.H. Chapter is pleased to support the Cunningham Foundation and expresses the hope that the event can be repeated annually.

Ross MacLean
Publicity Chairman

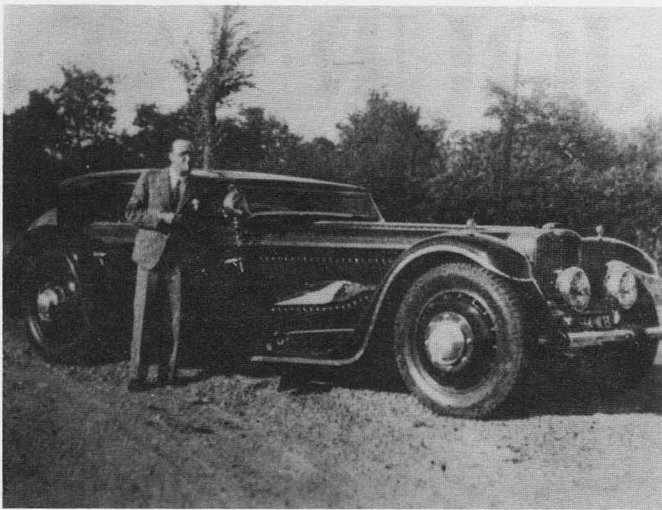
Careful study of illustrations, their background, date and place soon dispelled such remarks as being the relatively uninformed opinion of relatively disinterested observers. One or two could be chalked up to being an almost derogatory viewpoint by contemporary FWD competitors.

Paul Albert Bucciali stated the following in a letter to this writer dated December 10th, 1963: "Coachwork other than Labourdette and Saoutchik used on Bucciali TAV (traction avant) chassis included — Etablissements Guillet et Cie, Les Carrosseries Modernes, La Carrosserie Bonnet, Etablissements Sarkis, Carrosserie Çazauran and Carrosier Valery. Some chassis were shipped to customers overseas sans coachwork so I do now know what coachwork was fitted to them.

"Two cars were powered with V-12 Voisin engines. * One was a black Saoutchik sedan with maroon window reveals and interior, and the other a Labourdette-bodied cabriolet in ivory. These were identified by separate gold and silver plated stork emblems (Cigognes) attached to the sides of their enginehood metal (Capot). All others had the stork shape pressed into the metal."

That emblem was derived from Bucciali's World War I flying group.

The sixteen-cylinder Bucciali, promoted between 1929 and 1932, used a rework of the six-cylinder mock-up chassis displayed at the firm's first Paris Salon exhibit. Close inspection of its bones during restoration at the Harrah Collection proved the point. Welded-up holes in the frame marked the exact location of the earlier rear suspension system attachment. Initially serving as a mock-up for the ideas projected for 1927, it proposed the use of electric brakes, Sensaud de Lavaud transmission, piston-between-rubber-biscuits-in-tubes independent rear suspension, and a six-cylinder engine.



"This is the Double Huit, I am standing beside it. It was a marvelously smooth automobile" (Paul Albert Bucciali Dec. 1963).

(Photo: Lewis Automotive History Collection.)

An eight-page promotional catalogue was issued picturing the chassis in the condition it was shown at the Paris Salon. Although its proprietary C.I.M.E. engine appears to be a real engine, it was not installed to be functional. No electrical wiring, carburetor linkages, nor any hose connections to the radiator were fitted. Being a model maker myself, I find such laxities inexcusable, particularly when one is trying to convince viewers of a proposed new product's merit. Neither display model technology nor viewer reception to it was that primitive by the late Twenties.

The first TAV Bucciali sat adjacent to that six-cylinder mock-up during the marque's first salon appearance. It was a one-of-a-kind, dark green, Bonnel-bodied faux cabriolet sporting polished aluminum enginehood and cycle-type fenders. The front suspension and drivetrain of that particular car was never again duplicated by Bucciali.

When the early mock-up, full-sized chassis appeared later as the Double Huit model, it still missed all the finer details which could have made it completely believable.

A main design feature of a number of front-drive cars was ease of removal of the entire power/drivetrain for service, repair or replacement. The Bucciali brothers carried that theme a bit further by including radiator, grille, entire front suspension system and wheels in their package. Moreover, they detailed easy exchange of engine size and type in a given series of Bucciali chassis. Their actual exercise of this feature led to much contemporary motor press confusion about the cylinder number in various cars. Somewhat fluid reference to the model year of cars didn't help much either.

To quote Bucciali's 1963 letter to me: "We built ten six-cylinder traction avant cars 1928/29 and another ten in 1930. The first were called TAV-6 models and the later ones TAV-30. Both used Continental engines. We built twelve TAV-Huit (eight-cylinder Continental engined) chassis in 1931/32, and they were larger chassis than earlier models. Two Voisin twelve-cylinder engined cars, called the TAV-12, were our largest and most luxurious cars built in 1932/33."

In reply to my questions regarding a sixteen-cylinder car, apart from the mock-up chassis mentioned earlier, he supplied me with an ambered 8x10 photograph, kindly scribed, dated and signed on its reverse side. Accompanying letter text said of the photo: "This is the Double Huit, I am standing beside it, it was a marvelously smooth running automobile." A transplant!... this hit me immediately because the picture was of the gold-and-silver-plated-stork, ex?Saoutchik-bodied sedan. BUT — whose sixteen-cylinder engine was used? All Bucciali cars used proprietary engines, from the very first rear-drive experiments to the last car made. The factory at 8 avenue Gambetta in Courbevoie (an industrial suburb of Paris from whence came many marques) contained absolutely no facilities for major component manufacture.

Hotchkiss produced American Continental engines under license in France. Bucciali used them, as did many others including Hotchkiss itself. To my question of what makes of engines were used in his FWD cars, Paul Albert Bucciali answered: "Continental, Lycoming, Voisin, Mercedes and C.I.M.E."

It is more than mere "educated speculation" that both Voisin-engined twelves underwent engine changes during their lives. At the last auto show appearance of a TAV Bucciali, just one car appeared on the stand, for the first time since 1926. The car itself is identifiable as being the Voisin twelve-cylinder Labourdette cabriolet, gold and silver storks included.

Various motor press references to this car indicated it to be an eight-, twelve- and sixteen-cylinder. Most reliable sources, including persons on hand at the time, hold with eight cylinders. The first showing of this car, in company with the sedan, seems to agree with P.A. Bucciali's identification of the twelve. No license plates appeared on either car at that time.

Another display of the two cars (and it was "another" as identified by different background car displays) finds license plate 710BA3 on the sedan. The car identified in this photograph as "this is the Double Huit" wears license plate 534 W8. Perhaps a license plate expert can identify area of origin of these plates.

Madame Yvonne Bucciali (Paul's lovely wife) wowed spectators at the 1931 Nice Concours d'Elegance with the world's largest front-drive two-passenger roadster ever manufactured. Whether or not the car possessed a rumble-seat is moot, but it wore license plate 534 W8 for the occasion. It was an eight-cylinder Bucciali possessing the radiator design of the twelve-cylinder cars.

Pictorially, I can account for seven uses of that radiator form, albeit two had minor additions to the upper left panel of their cooling shutters. Raised letters, "Double Huit," remain on Harrah's chassis, and were fitted to a partially cut-away drive assembly display for auto salon use. A modification of that basic display reappeared later without the lettered grille.

The sixteen model chassis displays left-hand drive, while the remaining four examples were fitted to operable cars as follows: RHD Saoutchik twelve (nee sixteen?) sedan, LHD for the twelve cabriolet and Madame's eight-cylinder roadster, RHD on a salon chassis sporting racing-type cowling around its steering wheel, bonnet and fenders. This last-named was fitted with seats for two on a bodyless frame, in the manner in which Bucciali chassis were supplied to coachbuilders; the engine is unknown, but probably another eight-cylinder version.

Although Mr. Bucciali did not specifically clarify the origin of his lone sixteen's engine, his letters left little doubt in my mind.



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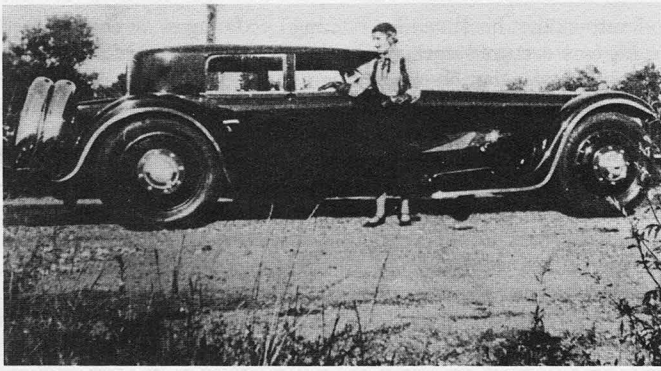
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Madame, Yvonne Bucciali with the largest front wheel drive sedan ever built.

Its tire size of 36 x 6.75 was shared by Bugatti Royale and the low chassis Daimler double-Six 50 of the same period.

The wheel cover design was also used for the Patented Bucciali wheels fitted to the lone V-16 Peerless sedan.

(Photo: The Lewis Automotive History Collection.)

One of his eight-cylinder cars, brought to the U.S. in 1930, was purchased by the Peerless Motor Car Company. The motor press reported that Peerless had acquired "exclusive rights" to Bucciali's U.S. patents issued in December of 1931. Patents covered front-wheel drivetrain, suspension, steering and vehicle wheel designs.

It seems very plausible that the boys in the back room at Peerless played with ideas of a front-drive Peerless. Any experiments would have centered upon and around the eight-cylinder Bucciali car acquired by the company. Apparently, neither Peerless finances nor management inclination permitted realization of a Peerless-badged prototype before the focus was diverted to another theme. Incidentally, both Bucciali and Peerless were heavily exploring new automotive uses of aluminum which the former had championed well before certain techniques became a usable reality.

Bucciali's association with E. Sensaud de Lavaud (1925-1928) had promoted both men's automobiles as being equipped with large cast-aluminum chassis. Bucciali, at the Paris Salon of '26, and Sensaud de Lavaud in 1927, projected upcoming model year cars, however, with both marques being built on steel chassis, despite promotion fodder to the contrary in their sales catalogues.

Meanwhile, the theme switch at Peerless, obviously tied to last-chance refinancing, produced a single sixteen-cylinder aluminum rear-drive Peerless sedan. This most handsome automobile, surviving in the Crawford Museum, rolled on cleanly-styled wheels of Bucciali patented design. Their deeply concaved profile, extending inward from a large-diameter flat hub surface, closely duplicates the wheels fitted to the last eight- and twelve-cylinder Bucciali cars. Regardless of who penned, directed of executed the gigantic blackness of the Peerless Sixteen, the car itself reflects even further Bucciali influence.

Its Murphy coachwork's cribbing of Saoutchik's polished fender edging hallmark broke that blackness in full complement to the Bucciali wheel design, much as Saoutchik had addressed the additional spoke and rim brightwork on the huge wheels of Bucciali's own black twelve sedan with broader fender edging.

Moreover, the Peerless Sixteen's radiator features reflect several Bucciali characteristics in less exaggerated form — namely, the extreme fore-and-aft length of its centerline crown. Its shallow vee with shallow front panel extended rather flatly to its broad-shouldered bellline radii, with the distinctive narrowing from shoulder width to bottom when viewed face-on. Lastly, the extreme vertical depth extending well below frame level at centerline completes a subtle image of features Bucciali carried to extreme on his own car.

Peerless closed its automotive doors forever while, in all logical probability, still owing Bucciali on the patent deal. Possibly the arrangement had been a trade-off of patents in exchange for supplying sixteen-cylinder engines to France, but we may never know. Company records of both firms have, unfortunately, been either lost or destroyed in the passage of time. There are many more connecting-fact-fragments on this subject than even summarizing space here permits.

Sufficient fragments strongly suggest that Peerless receivership paid off its debts at legal cents on the dollar value. A sixteen-cylinder engine or two, out of unfinished Peerless chassis, shipped to Courbevoie would have served that purpose.

P.A. Bucciali wrote: "I am very distressed by what happened to some of my cars later on." My early assumption that Nazi Occupation scrapdrives had probably destroyed them proved not entirely true. French enthusiasts appear to have taken a lesson from *Le Patron* Bugatti's earlier hide-and-protect theme.

After decades of, literally, existing oceans apart, the original chassis, body and Voisin-powered drivetrain of Bucciali's Saoutchik twelve sedan are back together and being restored. What happened to the interim sixteen-cylinder drivetrain?

Perhaps it was sacrificed to appease metal scrap demands, thus diverting attention away from other hidden cars. This is quite possible inasmuch as seven, out of the thirty-eight TAV Buccialis built, presently exist. An eighth was still in use in South America during World War II and may still survive in restorable condition. It was (or is) a 1929/30 six-cylinder sedan of unknown coachwork.

RESEARCH NOTE: A booklet in itself would be required to list every person who has corresponded Bucciali information to me during the past twenty-plus years. Yet another booklet would be required to list every published item thus far discovered and examined in which subjects Bucciali made print. My deepest appreciation to all whose puzzle pieces proved that the educated speculation syndrome isn't a serious affliction. My sincere condolences to fellow historians who have not yet explored its alternative in print. A reader may prove one's speculation right or wrong. Proof alone adds fact to automotive archaeological history. Pieces of my puzzle indicate that I am on the right track, and I hope that someone can prove the point.

**Sans soupapes, or sleeve-valve, or without valves of the poppet type. All Voisin engines were double-sleeve of the Knight-Kilbourne type.*



THE LAST BUCCIALI A hybrid, rear drive cabriolet built in 1952 as a demonstrator testbed for Bucciali transmission Patents.

Basically, a Mathis chassis fitted with upper section of a pre-war FWD Bucciali radiator, headlamps and large ornate wheels of the type used between 1927 and 1930.

Front fenders also appear to be crudely re-worked from pre-war parts stock. Paul Albert Bucciali is seen, facing the camera, in the left background.

(Photo: Lewis Automotive History Collection.)

Letters

From: William J. Lewis, 600 Kiama St., Anaheim, Ca. 92802. Inasmuch as the Sensaud de Lavaud bit dragged out a quip or two, I thought that I would give you some other fodder for the mag. Have had a bit of interesting correspondence with 84-year-old Maurice Platt in England.

He "recalled" that when he met E. Sensaud de Lavaud, after the Paris salon of '28, and drove the car, it was colored a medium gray. I have always wondered what color the beast was and had supposed it to be some shade of French racing blue.

It seems that when Sensaud de Lavaud gave up on the car bit, he made a name for himself in developing centrifugal casting methods for aluminum and other light alloys. That appears to be a whole story unto itself, which reflected results back into the auto industry.

Obviously, his car was only a trial balloon of combined technologies designed to promote existing patents and promote new ones not yet developed. I would be willing to gamble that his "casting patents" later made possible the success of J.A. Gregoire's Dyna Panhard, Amilcar, etc.

Now to the manuscript enclosed. Condensing twenty-plus years of research fact without losing the message is one helluva task. If I were to take what I know as fact, plus time reference point known, about each of the thirty-eight front-drive Buccialis, in chronological order, I would have to do a limited edition booklet. Perhaps I will when I retire in the near future.

There are still lots of questions to be answered with proof-positive. I am absolutely convinced that P.A. Bucciali realized his dream of a sixteen-cylinder front-drive car with a Peerless Sixteen installed in his own personal vehicle. He may even have publicly displayed such a car at auto shows. The motor press of the period describes a sixteen over and above the fake chassis now at Harrah's. He may well have received every one of the Peerless sixteens, including prototypes when Peerless paid off its creditors.

I have another guess-type speculation but didn't mention it in the manuscript itself because I do not have sufficient lead-in fact. Voisin was rather eccentric, as we know, but he and Bucciali did engage in a business proposal and exchanged goodies. In Bucciali's letter to me, he mentioned a Lycoming engine as one he used. No car nor any spec sheets have turned up showing Lycoming engine specs.

I think that Bucciali and Voisin came to a parting of the ways over Voisin's change of mind at going FWD. He had tried it and liked it with his own V-8 FWD Voisin. I am absolutely convinced that Voisin designed his underslung V-12 car (twelve were built and one is known to survive) to be FWD using Bucciali's transmission.

He supplied Bucciali with two (known) V-12 engines which Buc used. Bucciali mentioned that he wasn't pleased with sleeve-valved engine exhaust, in a passing remark, which didn't set well with Voisin.

I think that Bucciali had a chat with Bollack who was importing Auburn 8 chassis (Lycoming 8's) as the basis for his new program. He too favored larger American engines and frames fitted with French coachwork. Bollack made his bucks as the "B" of the French BNC sports cars.

Auburn was exporting complete chassis to anyone who would buy, in hope of expanding their own business. Perhaps Bollack suggested to Bucciali that he might be able to get an Auburn Twelve for him via his established contact with Auburn. I doubt that such actually went beyond conversation since Bollack never got into production with his Auburn-chassised car. One Paris Salon model is all I have ever seen any proof of actual existence.

Now, supposing Gabriel Voisin got wind of Bucciali's "possible intention" to switch makes of V-12's. Voisin was a genius, as historical proof dictates, and as such was eccentric as hell. For example, Ettore Bugatti (another genius) would refuse to accept an order to build a car for someone he disliked; his reasoning protected his marque's good name in racing, if nothing else. Voisin, on the other hand, would lecture a person for an hour upon why (to his thinking) that person was unworthy to own a Voisin. He would tell such people, to their faces, that he would not make an automobile to their request.

If you have ever read one of Voisin's factory newspapers (I have two editions), you know my point. If any of this theory has more than suggestion of base, I feel that Bucciali and Voisin broke connection over Bucciali's opinion. Voisin is known to have been more than unwilling to condone anyone else's ideas regarding aircraft or cars.

Bucciali was working with Peerless to get his FWD patents into paying royalty. At the same time he was working to get his big-engined FWD car onto the French (and world) market. My Voisin contacts, most of whom own from two to a dozen of the cars themselves, tell me that Voisin would not sell his engines to anyone. Anyone, that is, unless they proved ownership of a Voisin by current registration (in name), engine, chassis and body numbers of the car. Bucciali never owned a Voisin automobile. His acquisition of two brand-new Voisin twelves had to be via business proposal trade-off.

Let's look at another aspect of the picture. Twelve-, sixteen- or twenty-four-cylinder engines in the early Thirties were being "promotedly" visualized by European automobile thinking, quite obviously picking up on the multi-cylinder race of the American industry.

I suspect that his statement naming Lycoming as *an* engine fitted to his cars occurred during other company experimental bits with the two chassis that he brought here in 1930. Ruxton, supposedly, got one, and Peerless the other. Peerless is confirmed, but Ruxton remains hanging for want of absolute proof.

I am convinced that Ruxton, per se, did acquire the other Buc and cribbed some of its design. Bucciali split his gearbox gearing side by side across the front. That was too costly a production for one trying to get into mass production but it sparked ideas. Ruxton's gearbox, therefore, was split fore and aft, thus upstaging Cord's overlong L-29 mechanics.

Interesting thoughts with a lot of "fact-fragments" in their favor. Name, if you will, *any* motorcar of 1930 possessing interior passenger elbowroom governed by windshield posts forty-eight or more inches apart; passenger seating lower than period frame-top level with overall body height less than sixty-two inches (Bucciali's and Voisin's were fifty-eight inches from road to rooftop); step-down into coachwork (later rediscovered by Hudson); "Wide-Track" (later, two decades later, touted by Pontiac). Bucciali and Voisin had these features, plus many more, in their cars of 1930.

The other aspect was picking up on the huge c.i.d. common to the American market versus the larger of Europe's best. Obviously both Bucciali and Voisin set their sights on a piece of Europe's low volume, very high price bracket. Cars which were big, costly status symbols of the very elite and extremely wealthy: Farman, Hispano-Suiza, Maybach, Minerva and Isotta-Fraschini, etc. These cars offered one other feature, aside from their comparable quality, in the form of style and proportion way in advance of their time. One might say too advanced for the period.

Bugatti planned thirty-two "super cars" aimed at crowned heads of the world. None purchased so he only completed the six Royales. Voisin planned twenty-five underslung twelve-cylinder exotics but built twelve or less. I have illustrations of only five and I personally doubt that any more than that were built.

Bucciali planned six V-12's but only built the two. He had much bigger ideas on the sixteen-cylinder level with a less costly version (in exactly the same body and chassis) as a straight-eight. Despite his American connections (unheld and unwanted by Voisin), I doubt that he ever acquired an Auburn V-12 engine.

From: Mark L. Dees, Box 670, Santa Paula, Ca. 93060. I'm gratified to have Jerry Gebby's support for my opinions on Miller front drive chronology; but rather resent his implication that because "he was there" and Griff Borgeson and I weren't, that he is entitled to disseminate misinformation. Contrary to his statements, which I find hard to believe came from so reknowned an authority:

Leon Duray's Miller 91 front-drive won at least two board track races in 1926, a 25 miler at Salem and a 100 mile event at Charlotte. In 1927 he used it to win a National Championship 250 Mile race at Culver City.

Harry Miller was not impressed by inboard brakes (primarily HIS idea, not Murphy's, as was the entire front-drive layout), and he virtually abandoned them after the 122/91 front drive design. He used inboard brakes only on one car thereafter, his Miller-Cord passenger job, and that because he was trying to use as many Cord components as possible.

For any number of reasons, including my own experience over 200 mph in cars with solid disc wheels and/or "Moon" discs, I reject the notion that the handling of the "outboard brake" front drive was impaired by the effect of cross winds on the large front hubs.

It might seem to the casual student that new "Millers" appeared in the '30s with inboard front brakes, but in every case they were either remodeled 122/91 front drives or cars with which Miller had no personal connection, such as the Pirrung FD car of 1935.

Incidentally, I have seen photos recently of the first FD Miller, nearly completed, with Murphy sitting in the cockpit. It is fitted with four dual downdraft carbs rather than the supercharger with which it was later raced (no surprise, for Miller's superchargers weren't ready until very late in 1924). These pictures will appear in a new supplement to my book *The Miller Dynasty* to be issued soon.

From: Keith Marvin, P.O. Box 839, Troy, N.Y. 12181. In the March-April issue Dave Brownell's point regarding the rivalry between the Locomobile and the Cadillac is well taken. In my article (Jan.-Feb issue), I referred to the Cadillac as "GM's competition" to the Loco. Dave adds that Packard, Pierce-Arrow, and the Springfield Rolls-Royce should also be considered. And he's quite correct. For the time under consideration there were others as well including the Stevens-Duryea, McFarlan, Duesenberg "A" and Brewster, to name a few. My only purpose in naming the Cadillac was to cite GM competition — SUCH AS IT WAS — I use caps here because very few Locomobile "48" owners would have considered such a car as Cadillac at the time, even as a second car.

I didn't mention the others because I felt this would go without saying and there is a problem. In reviewing the text as it appeared in the January-February issue, I notice that a sentence was deleted from my manuscript as originally submitted and in which I stated that "there was little competition (between Locomobile and Cadillac) in the real sense here." I think had this been left intact, there wouldn't have been an implication that Locomobile and Cadillac could have been considered on equal footing prestige wise.

I also think that Dave is right in his assumption that the Locomobile remained basically the same because there was simply no money to revise the basic design. Even so, for a time following Durant's acquisition of the monster, prices went up. The "Sportif" went from \$7650 in 1921 to \$7900 three years later.

From: Jerry E. Gebby, 310 Appalachian Drive, The Highlands, Route 6, Tucson, Arizona 85704. Mr. Mark Dees sent me a copy of his letter to you of June 2nd. First, I must apologize for failing to make clear that my comments referred only to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and events there. I'm aware of Duray's wins, none were at Indy, where he finished once in 9 starts. Relative to the FWD car that Miller built for himself, in addition to Bennett Hill, it was also offered to Ora Haibe, a competent driver of the times. I have a photo of Haibe in the car, but when he agreed with Hill that the car handled poorly, Miller withdrew the entry. This new item was closely watched in engineering circles, and it was generally believed that deflection by wind and an excessive amount of unsprung weight was the cause of bad steering by the Miller-owned car. But by the time that 4-wheel brakes became mandatory, there may have been some revised thinking relative to steering geometry in front-wheel driven cars.

The un-named driver in the top photo on page 4 of Journal #83 is Albert Karnatz, who drove the car 50 laps in 1929 before going out with a leaking gasoline tank. The car then was two times second-hand from Miller. The front wheel brakes show very plainly in the photo. I wonder if Mr. Dees knows where those brakes are today. The present owner of the car would like to find them. They were removed years ago by a well-known racing car builder and driver.

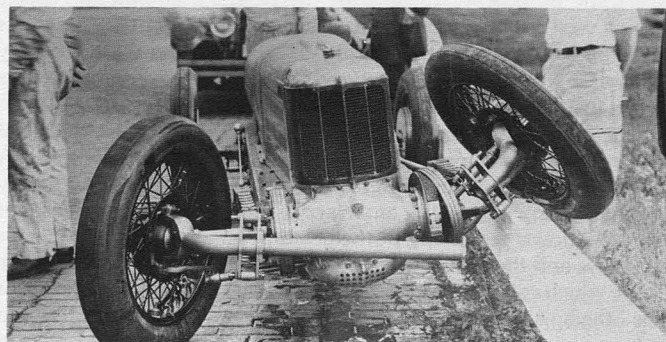
Enclosed is a photo of a Miller built, Miller entered car that also was withdrawn by Miller after the crash. It is NOT the ONE car built this way as stated by Mr. Dees, the inboard brake rigging is mostly in sight. Mr. Dees states that Harry Miller was not impressed with inboard brakes — if true he certainly built a lot of things he didn't like! He even made improvements in them. The Cooper, Marmon, Packard Cable and Duray cars had wider brakes, giving more lining area and providing space for a couple more cooling ribs on the outside of drums.

Mr. Dees mentions carburetors on the Murphy car because Miller superchargers were not ready until late in 1924. Were Miller blowers ever "ready?" They blew up all over the place. Miller superchargers and drive mechanisms had an Indianapolis fatality rate of 5 or 6 per year and the clockworks transmissions were almost as bad, until the Ruckstell conversion unit arrived.

In the 1930's there was a half-hearted revival of road racing at Elgin, Mines Field, Los Angeles Airport, etc., and in that time AAA racing regulations made 4-wheel brakes mandatory. Some cars added brakes manufactured by Green Engineering, a few were hand-made one-offs, the Pirrung mentioned by Mr. Dees being an example of the last group. It was built by Wilbur Shaw with the assistance of Roscoe Dunning and Myron Stevens, both well-known car builders. Stevens had a plant fully equal to the Miller shop, and both turned out about the same number of Indy type cars. The cars built

by Shaw were said to have brakes made from Stutz passenger car components. Another factor was Riley Brett, who worked on some of the Shaw machinery. Earlier he had built a few front wheel brakes, a light, simple component that could be added to some axles already in use.

Basically, I stand by what I wrote!



Research Column

Apparently in 1902 there was a Rambler motorcycle made. Was this part of the American Bicycle Combine or not? I believe the Jefferys may have experimented with motorcycles before turning to automobiles as I have seen reference to the effect along this line. Does any one have specifications for the 1916 and 1917 Jeffery cars? I am interested in the differences in the 1917-18 Nash and Jeffery cars, with particular regard to engine etc. Larry Daum, RR 1, Box 50, Brimfield, Il. 61517.

Want any information on the Lehr Motor Company. Where was its factory in Saginaw, Michigan? All help will be deeply appreciated. Ronald J. Putz, 201 Salzburg Ave. Bay City, Michigan 48706-5317.

Classified Ads

For Sale: Comprehensive collection of Auto pages and ads; 1890's-1950's inclusive, 18" x 24" approximately 10,000 pages. Price \$1,500. Gary Silver, Box 33841, San Diego, Ca. 92103.

For Sale: Special Interest Automobile, issues #1 through #61. Excellent condition except one issue. \$60. Robert B. Myers, 116 River St. Mattapan, Mass. 02126.

Book Review

PORSCHE: A TRADITION OF GREATNESS, by the Editors of CONSUMER GUIDE and Richard M. Langworth. 256 pp., 443 illus., 140 in color. 9-1/4" x 11-1/8". Hard covers. ISBN 0-88176-078-1. Beekman House/Crown Publishers, One Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. \$9.95.

This is a fine history of a popular make from any angle, not the least of which is its price. I don't like to talk about costs in publishing because with the current economic picture, high prices are to be expected nearly everywhere. When anything as elaborate (and, incidentally, well-written and otherwise most worthwhile) comes along at \$9.95, I feel like firing off rockets (or at least Roman candles). This, my friends, is a winner.

Porsche has been on the automotive scene for a relatively short time — 35 years to be exact, but in that time it has made a name for itself which could make hares of many a larger and more ambitious producer. In this CONSUMER GUIDE — Langworth production, the story is told — from the start to the present time — with fact rather than furbelow and with a complete coverage of all the Porsche types and models which have been made during those relatively few years since Dr. Ferdinand Porsche created the idea of the Porsche automobile in the first place.

I like this and — unless you're a Porsche-hater — so will you. Look into this because it's one book which is at once worthwhile, fun to read, has nice pictures and won't pinch your pocketbook in the outlay, no matter who you are!

Keith Marvin

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PICTURE OF YOUR CAR USE SOMEBODY ELSE'S

- by Keith Marvin -

To anyone who feels that he or she might have encountered the foregoing title somewhere earlier, there is no mystery. It has been used twice previously in this journal and, like this story, for exactly the same purpose — to describe the fledgling automobile makes which used the product of some other manufacturer to promote its own proposed products. And if this sort of thing wasn't exactly ethical, it sure must have confused the unwary back in those days when just about anything went in trying to sell cars.

The decade spanning 1915 and 1924 saw a prodigious number of different makes appear on the collective automotive rosters. A goodly number of them were the tried-and-true garden variety known by any Tom, Dick and Harry. There were other makes, not as well known personally but which at least appeared in magazine ads now and then. Yet perhaps the greatest variety of names were those which collectively produced fewer cars than almost any one of the others. As all sorts of ambitious tinkerers, stock promoters and others were getting into the automobile business, by hook — and sometimes by crook — it was little wonder that strange radiator badges began cropping up like alfalfa after a thunder storm, names which were frequently little more than that — names — and which would at once fascinate and frustrate automotive historians generations later.

This is the story of an early promotion flyer prepared by the ReVere Motor Car Company of Logansport, Ind., a concern organized to produce a quality car and of which a good deal of authentic history has already been written. Of those seriously interested in the field — then or now — only a dumbbell would be oblivious of the ReVere and its checkered history. This, however, is not a further account of the car itself but rather a prehistoric incident surrounding the make itself.

It was the plan of those in back of the ReVere to produce a high-powered sporting-type motor car which would at once exude breeding, speed and power and using the Rochester-Duesenberg engine. Toward these goals the flyer was aimed.

The only problem was that in spite of such grandiose plans as ReVere had, the x-factor was missing, this being a prototype or pilot model to illustrate the product to potential investors.

The late P.T. Barnum achieved near immortality when he said that there was a sucker born every minute. Barnum was right. That automotive stock was subscribed to in those days was almost unbelievable and the deal was generally in the favor of the promoter rather than the subscriber. Yet, few will chance buying a pig in a poke and ReVere had no product to show. Despite the galaxy of names on its board of directors such as Adolph Monson, August S. Duesenberg and Gil Anderson, a car for promotion was needed and needed badly. The time was late 1917.

Earlier that same year, the Shadburne Brothers Company of Chicago decided to enter the automobile business and market a car of their own. They had a sort of factory in Frankfort, Ind., and this is where they planned to produce their Shad-Wyck Six. It appears, according to Dick Brigham who has carefully researched this maneuver, that the Shadburnes were hard put to come up with a pilot model with which to oil their promotion.

They did the next best thing. That April, the Barley Manufacturing Company of Kalamazoo, Mich., ran an ad for its new Roamer automobile in THE AUTOMOBILE TRADE JOURNAL. This was a time of transition for Albert C. Barley who since 1913 had been building Halladay automobiles. He was still in the Halladay business, true, but was preparing to divorce himself from that make in order to concentrate on the Roamer, so the ad in question promoted both makes. It also included a photo of the Roamer touring car.

This ad apparently turned the Shadburnes on and some three months later, they lifted the same photo from the Roamer ad and ran the untouched Roamer picture in their OWN ad implying — without actually saying — that the car shown was actually a Shad-Wyck. The ad appeared in the July number of CHILTON'S AUTOMOBILE DIRECTORY.

I have often marvelled at this act which was nothing more than pure nerve if not outright theft. How well known was the Roamer by July, 1917, I wonder, its having been introduced barely a year

earlier? And if it was well known, how many readers of the trade publications noticed the similarity? As Dick Brigham has explained in his study of the subject, such Shad-Wyck cars as were completed wound up wearing the Bour-Davis badge on their radiators. Both makes continued into the early 1920s, Bour-Davis moving to Shreveport, La., and eking out a bare existence with a limited production assembled car, and Shad-Wyck listed as producing a Rochester-Duesenberg-powered line of automobile, none of which presumably were ever made at all! The Brigham study and pictures of the two ads may be found in the October 1969 issue of this publication.

Getting back to Logansport, a decision had to be made and made quickly if the stock promotion ploy was going to bear fruit and either some car had to be brought up in haste or, failing that, a picture of one had to be brought into play.

A picture it turned out to be and a sharp-looking car it was, too. Those in charge of promotion, consciously or unconsciously, taking a page from the Shadburne book, embellished the flyer with a line drawing of a Biddle sports type roadster which had been built a year or so earlier. Biddle was a relatively new name on the docket and perhaps they felt that this newness could afford that obscurity which, understandably, was advisable. On the other hand, this particular Biddle HAD been photographed and shown in the automotive press. There were many cars, their appearance as remote and uninteresting as ships that pass in the night. All of these plain Janes could be viewed by the reader quickly and as rapidly forgotten. But the Biddle — ah, this was a horse of a different color!

The roadster featured cycle fenders, wire wheels and a pointed radiator a la Mercedes. Its sides tapered down toward the rear deck and the spare wheels were side-mounted and placed to the REAR of the doors. No one could have possibly overlooked this machine. It must have been that Biddle — in limited production for less than two years — suggested the flash plus the obscurity which ReVere presumably wanted at the time.

But...the big question: Did it sell the necessary stock needed at the time? I wonder? Could be, though as, by early 1918, ReVere was in production — sort of — and despite a stormy nine years in business plus an overall production of approximately 2,500 cars or an average of about 275 units per year, the company did get off the ground and it did produce some nice automobiles.

Like the Shad-Wyck plagerism, I've never heard any repercussions concerning this blatant act of promoting another's product to market one's non-existent one.

As an afterthought (coup de grace might be a better term), I know of one other case of this sort of shenanigans. This occurred in 1922 when Halladay, now long since out of the Barley soup — issued a flyer to promote its new proposed Falcon car. (See IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PICTURE OF YOUR CAR USE SOMEBODY ELSE'S — NO. 2 — in the July, 1975 issue of THE SAH NEWSLETTER.)

Halladay business was bad, bad, bad by then and it would seem that those in charge of Falcon promotion were very close to Cloud Cuckoo Land. A McFarlan catalogue was used here, its photo of the enormous phaeton being slightly altered and retouched and duly released to the public as the 1922 Falcon by Halladay. Alchemy is all very well for those few who understand it but one simply cannot sell a \$6,300 automobile for \$2,485 — asking price for the Falcon — or even make it look right by tampering with the pictures.

It is understood that a lone Falcon prototype was built — a most Un-McFarlanish appearing car, really, and that was that. Meanwhile, over in Lewistown, Pa., the Moller Automobile Company, probably oblivious of what Halladay was up to out in Newark, Ohio, introduced its OWN Falcon — and these Falcons really did get on the road for a time both stateside and abroad. (See A CONFUSION OF FALCONS, by Keith Marvin, AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY REVIEW, Fall, 1981).

In 1878, Gilbert & Sullivan's operetta, "H.M.S. Pinafore" brought down the house in London and continues to do so wherever great light music is treasured for its own sake. One of its patter songs was entitled, "Things Are Seldom What They Seem". Although that might be taking a bit too much for granted, there is more than an iota of truth in it, isn't there?

(The author would like to express his appreciation to Richard B. Brigham, Fred Roe and Karl S. Zahm for their help in preparation of this article.)

REVERE CAR

With the World Renowned Duesenberg Motor

Identify yourself in the Motor Industry by joining some of the best men in the business and help make the Revere Motor Car Company one of the most successful automobile companies in the United States

The Revere Company will be a success from the fact that it uses the world-renowned Duesenberg Motor, by far the most powerful and best motor made. It develops 125 horsepower at 2000 revolutions a minute, and while the Revere Car will develop speed of 85 miles per hour, it is so mechanically perfect that it can travel smoothly at 4 miles per hour. The Revere is a company with a powerful, beautiful, flexible product for those who demand the best, with strong, capable men behind it, with a fine factory, and with a real demand for the car. It is modestly capitalized. The stock offered you we feel sure will advance soon in price. This is inevitable, because there is not another class car on the market at the price, or any other price, that equals the Revere Car. The trend today is to higher-priced, better cars. Antislots begin by buying a cheap car. Then they buy one a little better and they end by buying the best car they can get. The Revere Car is the best and biggest value in the automobile field. It is sure of a tremendous market. DUESENBERG MOTORS will be used in all Revere Cars.

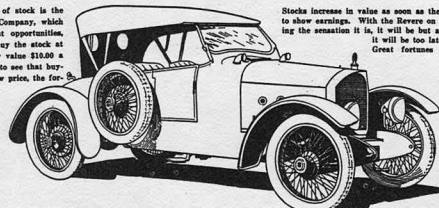
World-renowned automobile men who will make the Revere Car the Masterpiece of America's Cars. All are active Directors of the Revere Motor Car Company

Adolph Messen, recognized as one of the greatest automobile engineers in the country, will have charge of the mechanical construction and will be assisted by Gil Anderson, who was formerly superintendent of the Stutz Company. A. S. Duesenberg, acknowledged all over the world as the only American builder of motors who really competes with and exceeds the finest and best European designers and builders; holding the world's record in motor boat, airplane and automobile engines in the most hotly contested races ever run, will actively assist in designing and building motors for Revere Cars. William Gauschow, manufacturer of high-grade automobile gears, and other strong directors in the business world, as Newton Van Zandt, formerly second vice-president of the Hiram M. Cahle Company; C. H. Wilson, president and general manager of the Wilson Lumber Company, assures the Revere Motor Car Company a phenomenal success.

The Most Sought-After and Wanted Car Ever Built

In lines, in power, in luxurious equipment, in novel ideas and those details which distinguish the class car from the mass car, it is supreme. Study the Revere specifications, they will give you an idea what a luxuriously appointed car is. Study the picture of the car. It has all the graceful and powerful lines of the finest imported cars that sell from \$1,000 to \$10,000. It is like the powerful English Rolls-Royce, and has all the grace and elegance of the beautiful Italian Lancia. There isn't an American car made that compares with the Revere's success with the Duesenberg motor and Mr. Duesenberg as an active director is so well established that the announcement of this new car has drawn hundreds of letters and requests for agencies from all over the world.

The present offer of stock is the utmost of the Company, which offers the greatest opportunity, because you can buy the stock at \$100 a share, per value \$10.00 a share. It is easy to see that buying now at this low price, the future is a foregone conclusion. You will get all the increases in value and the dividends which this Company should earn. We believe this stock will prove a veritable bonanza to all who buy NOW.



Subscribe Now—Don't Delay

SPECIFICATIONS

MOTOR USED—Duesenberg, either 125 or 150 h.p. motor, which over the customer's desire.

CRANK CASE—One special development, all-steel crank case. Very finest and lightest design.

VALVES—Incomparably entirely enclosed, 2 1/2" diameter, 1 1/2" stroke, 1000 rpm.

CARBURETOR—Miller high-speed carburetor, made as used on all racing cars.

SUPERCHARGER—Three-point.

CRUISE AND TRANSMISSION—Unit, with motor enclosed in aluminum alloy case. Clutch in multiple disc, dry plate type. Gearbox—Directly driven, having top speeds forward. All gears are made of special alloy steel.

IGNITION—High tension, E. H. Bosch magneto, 1200 rpm, 4 spark.

SEATING AND INTERIOR—Rushmore, shock system—highest priced and best made.

AXLES—Front: Elliott type, drop frame, treated steel ball bearings and hub caps. Rear: Elliott type, drop frame, treated steel ball bearings and hub caps. Two-speed axle shafts with full floating axle ends.

WHEELS—All are best-treated nickel steel, double flange.

DRIVE—Hookless, two propeller shafts with double universal joints; Kennedy 50 type.

FRAMES—Channel section of press steel, heat-treated, narrow in front to permit short turning radius. Arch construction to take the weight of suspension and rear motor gravity.

SPRINGS—Electrically treated silicon manganese steel, extra provided with shock absorbers. Front springs are semi-coilover.

CONTRAILS—Spring columns on left side; vertically placed.

WHEELS—Elliott-Whitworth, triple spoke type, wheel base 115 inches, tread 32 inches, wheel base 115 inches, tread 32 inches.

REARVIEW—Rear wheel wheel wheel, five finger-whitworth wire wheels, Hartford shock absorbers, four motor electric power steering system, the top boot for certain Claxton horn, suspension bars with coil, rear motor, antenna, foot rest, provisions for two extra seats on either side, wheel wrench.

SALES—Wheel base on all models 115 in.

NOTE—We will build:

Four-Door Sedan—Chummy Roadster Type.

Four-Door Sedan—Chummy Roadster Type.

Four and Five-Door Sedan—Young Models.

Division of Profits

All stockholders will share equally in all profits. The Revere Motor Car Company is capitalized for \$1,000,000—all common stock, fully paid and non-assessable. There is no preferred stock, and no bonds to absorb the earnings ahead of the common stock. You get the same kind of stock for your money as those who planned and organized the Company, and you will always get your proportionate share of dividends according to the amount of stock you own.

Small Allotment of Treasury Stock to be Sold. Owing to the limited amount of this stock, to take advantage of this offer, we would suggest you act today. We cannot guarantee the price of \$8.00 a share for any length of time. We will reserve the amount you want if you pay 50 per cent down and the balance in monthly payments of 10 per cent of the full amount.

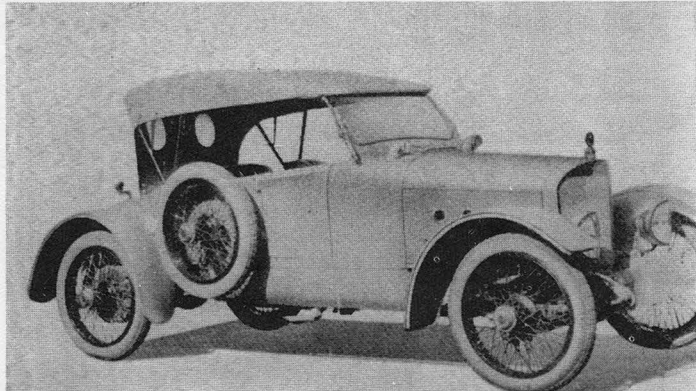
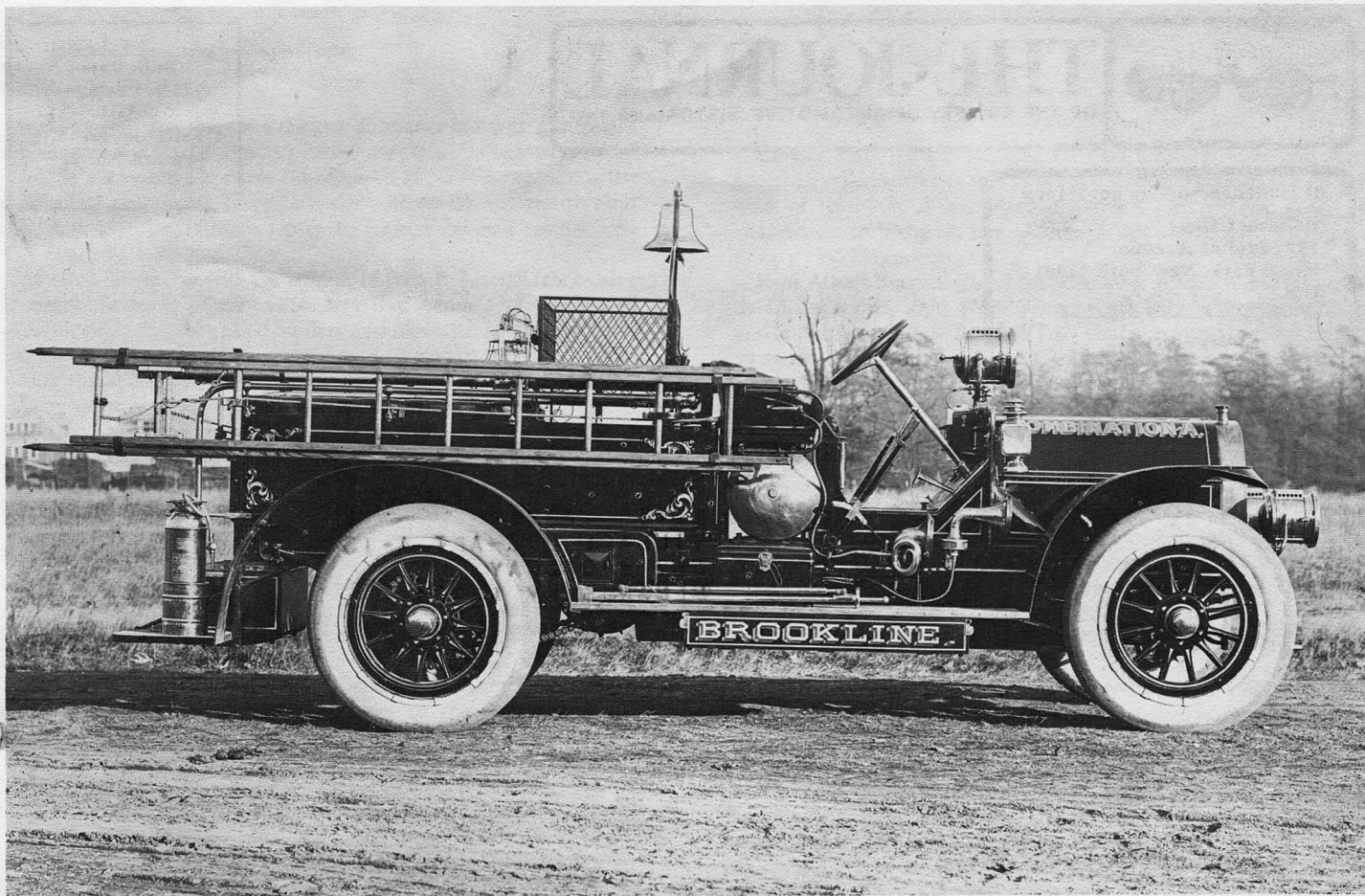
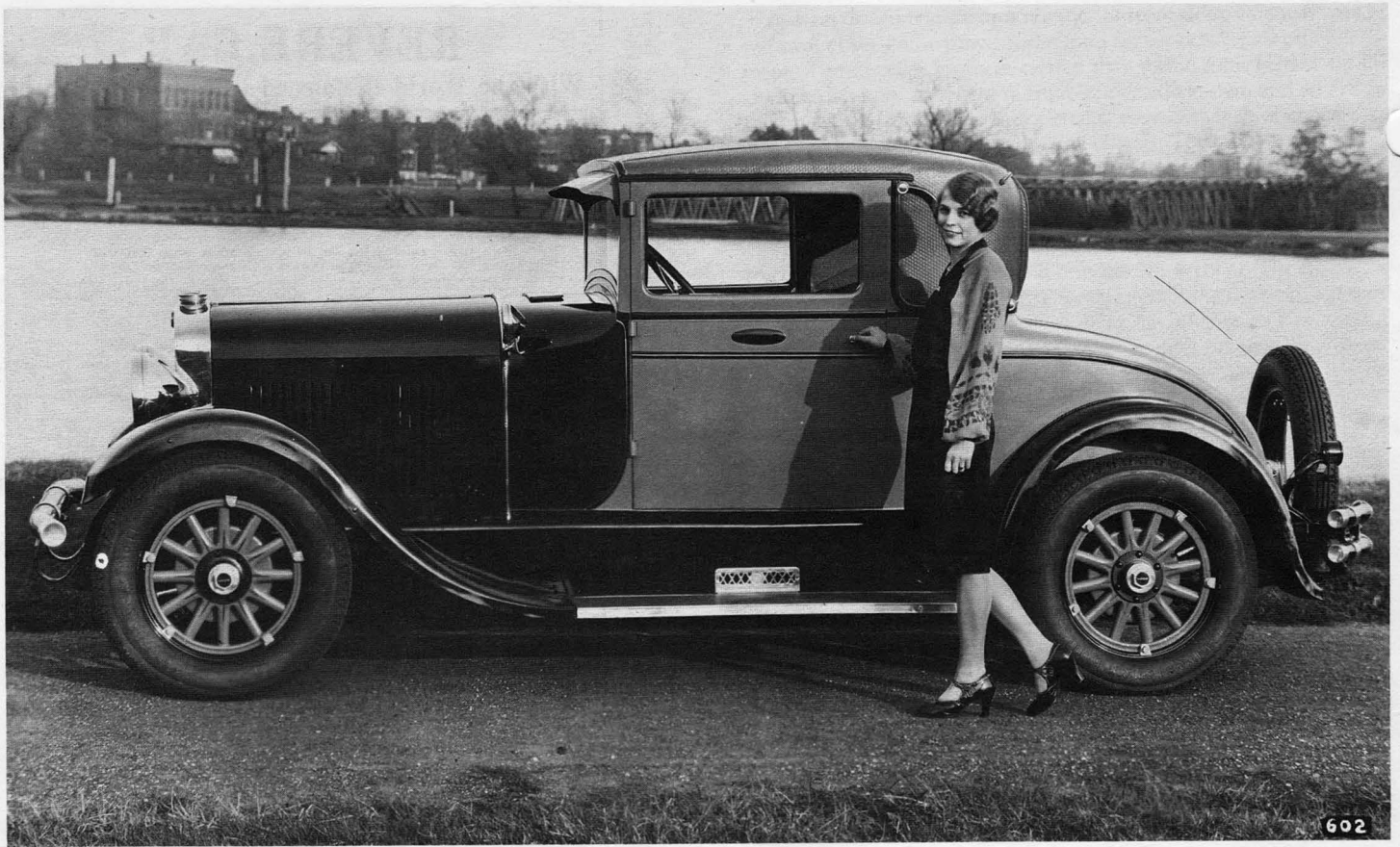


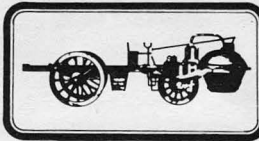
Photo courtesy of Jerry E. Gebby

Mystery Photograph: What make of fire engine is this? It was bought new by the Brookline (Mass.?) fire department. From the collection of the editor.





Factory Photograph: 1928 Moon 6-72 Royal Cabriolet, photo from the collection of the editor.



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