

THE JOURNAL

OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

May-June 1988

Issue Number 114

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A story and a commercial--that's my communique this issue. In the belief that setting the mood is intrinsic to effective salesmanship, I'll go with the story before hitting you with the advertising message.

Admittedly, the story is not mine--but it's a good one and serves to point out again how close sources of automobile history can be to us. Herewith SAH board director Kit Foster relates a source he found virtually next door.

"Oral history: I'm always on the lookout for new angles on automotive history, things previously unknown, forgotten, or something I might weave into an article somewhere, even if it's real specialist knowledge. It pays to be nosy, too. I live in what was a rural Connecticut neighborhood, one that is now almost suburban but retains enough of its earlier charm to satisfy my nostalgia for a country upbringing. When one of our elderly neighbors entered a nursing home, we wondered just who would buy her modest but very desirable waterfront property (which was also just beyond the means of ordinary people like us). The new owners, who professed to be refugees from overdevelopment in Westchester County, New York, were clearly of more substantial means than any of the rest of us, but also had a certain independence that none of us could place. It did little to satisfy our curiosity to learn that their names were John and Eleanor de Aguirre, until I noticed his full name on an envelope: John Willys de Aguirre, Sr. I couldn't resist asking the question, "Excuse my curiosity, but are you related to John North Willys?" "Sure," came the answer, "he was my grandfather. What would you like to know about him?" I don't know yet all about John North Willys; I'm still learning the right questions to ask. And I don't have great hopes of learning any new details about the Willys-Overland firm or their cars. But, armed with the right questions and a tape recorder, I hope to get a new dimension on John North Willys the man.

"One final note: is John Willys de Aguirre a car enthusiast? No! He dotes on model trains and drives a Chrysler K-car."

Now to the commercial message. The response to our request for Silent Auction contributions which appeared in the last issue of the *Journal* has been terrific! This is a reminder to check your automotive shelves and files for books or pieces of literature that you might like to donate to the worthy SAH cause. Just pack your contribution up and send it to me c/o SMCW, 107 Avenue L, Matamoras, PA 18336. Since the auction itself will take place at our Annual Dinner Meeting at the Harrisburg Marriott on Friday evening of Hershey week, you might prefer to bring your contribution with you and drop it off at our Hershey tent, which is just fine too. But please do let me know what you are contributing so that we can include it on our auction list.

And do check your neighborhood as Kit Foster did...
Beverly Rae Kimes

PETER HELCK (1893-1988)

Peter Helck, the undisputed dean of American automotive art and illustration and an honorary member of the Society of Automotive Historians, died at his home in Boston Corners, New York, on Friday, April 22nd, 1988. He was in his 95th year.

Helck, whose name in automotive art and history has been a household word for more than two generations, was born in New York City on June 17, 1893, son of the late Henry Philip and Clara Brand Helck, studied under George Bridgeman in 1915; Sir Frank Brangwyn 1920-23; Henry Wickey, 1923-28; and Lewis Daniel, 1940-45. He served as artist and illustrator for numerous publications both in this country and abroad. While in England, he illustrated contemporary automobile racing for such magazines as *Autocar* as well as illustrating advertisements for Benz, Morris and Napier automobiles.

In 1922 he married Priscilla Smith, formerly of Belfast, Ireland, and they became parents of a son, Jerry P. Helck, now of Lakewood, New Jersey.

Helck's work had an originality which brought him worldwide attention, whether in commercial advertising or in art surrounding famous automobile racing events and other subjects relating to the motor car. This talent went back to his early youth when he developed a passion for automobiles and railroad locomotives, among other subjects, although he also exhibited great talent in sculpture and as a landscape artist.

Helck had two tremendous advantages--the opportunity to attend many of the earlier automobile racing events and a total-recall memory in which those events were indelibly recorded, to surface later on the drawing board. He ultimately became the owner of one of the most famous automobiles in racing history, the 1906 Locomobile racing car, "Old No. 16," which won the Vanderbilt Cup Race in 1908.

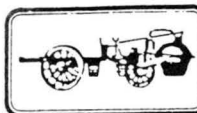
Among those clients in this country to which he contributed his art work were Mack truck, Chevrolet, Kelly-Springfield tires, and many others.

Although relatively prolific in his artistic output, original Helck paintings, sketches, sculpture and other media are highly prized by their owners today, and are seldom found for sale on the open market, art gallery or auction.

Many of his paintings hang in permanent collections, including the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, The Congressional Library in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the Detroit Public Library, the Indianapolis Speedway Museum, the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, England and others, as well as private collections.

A founding faculty member of the Famous Artist Schools in Westport, Connecticut in 1948, he was the

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author-illustrator of two books on racing, *The Checkered Flag*, published in 1961, and *Great Auto Races*, published 14 years later.

In addition to his honorary membership in the Society of Automotive Historians, Peter Helck was an honorary member of the Antique Automobile Club of America, Automobilists of the Upper Hudson Valley, Connecticut Automobile Historical Society, H. H. Franklin Club, The Horseless Carriage Club of America, Veteran Motor Car Club of America, and the Vintage Sports Car Club of America.

Besides his wife and son, he is survived by seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

ORAL HISTORY I: THE INTERVIEW

Issue No. 12 of *Spark*, the publication of the Wisconsin Chapter SAH, included an informal "how-to" article on the subject of oral history. Dale Treleven was the author, and the feature is reproduced here with the permission of *Spark* editor Bill Cameron. The details provided will be of enormous help to first-time interviewers, and will be a super "refresher course" for those who have conducted oral history reviews in the past. It should be noted that since the original publication of this article, cassette recording technology has improved immeasurably. And prices have gone down. If you don't have a cassette recorder now, hie to your nearest Radio Shack, Crazy Eddie or other discount house and see how inexpensively you can join the ranks of oral history aces. In our next issue this feature will conclude with tips on what to do after the interview.

By the day of an actual interview, careful research, planning and preparation will have reduced much interviewer anxiety. Not only will the interviewer have written or telephoned the interviewee several days in advance to confirm the date and time of the taping session, but he/she will have practiced setting up and operating the tape recorder to reduce the likelihood of problems later. Besides the tape recorder itself, such items as tapes, extension cord, note pad, legal agreement forms, and question lists should be gathered together for the inevitable

last-minute rush before heading for the interviewee's home. An earlier-prepared and duplicated check-list of all items needed is a simple yet helpful memory aid to refer to before departure.

On the average, a single taping session will last for a **maximum** of two hours because of possible interviewee and probable interviewer fatigue. Interviewing is a demanding task. Simultaneously, the interviewer must make sure the tape recorder is working properly, listen attentively as the interviewee responds to a question, formulate the next question or line of interrogation, and jot down reminders of additional probes or areas of questioning to return to later.

Nevertheless, take along an extra hour's worth of tape in the event that you and the interviewee agree to extend the discussion a bit longer than two hours. If at the end of several hours of taping a substantial number of subjects remain to be discussed, it is probably best to schedule a second session in the near future instead of attempting to cram everything into one long sitting.

An interviewer may assume that a two-hour taping session will actually consume a half-day at the respondent's home. In addition to initial greetings and early chatter, more time than expected will usually pass while setting up the recorder, pausing to change the tape every half hour (often a time for coffee and cookies!), halting for telephone calls or other unanticipated interruptions, packing up after taping, and departing with good wishes.

Morning, when minds are apt to be fresher as contrasted with early-afternoon post-lunch sluggishness, is usually the best time to conduct the interview. Scheduling a taping session for early afternoon may also interfere with an interviewee's regular nap. All in all, of course, interviewee preference should be the deciding factor in setting the best time of day for the interview.

The tape recorder should be set up in the quietest place--usually the living room--of the interviewee's home. If possible, power the recorder with electrical current rather than batteries (worry about nearly-spent batteries will be eliminated) and use an external microphone to ensure recordings that have minimal extraneous noise. Tape recorders today are so sophisticated that very good results can be obtained from a simple microcassette type. But always be sure to have new batteries in the recorder--and to take along an extra set, just in case.

After setting up the machine, insert Side 1 (or A) of the tape. Press the recorder's forward button and, without recording, run off at least a minute's worth of tape before starting the interview. That procedure will ensure later that the taped discussion will fit neatly onto a master tape and will allow the interviewer sufficient room to add audible introductions. For each side of each tape during the interview session, repeat the procedure of running off about a minute's worth of tape before resuming the discussion.

The interviewer, while setting up the recorder in the interviewee's home, may wish to explain that an earphone or headphone set may be used occasionally to monitor sound levels, and that notes will be taken during the discussion. Once the recorder is ready, and interviewer and interviewee are seated, the interviewer may suggest that the interview will begin with some general questions as to background, personal experience (for a splendid example, see letter from Whitman C. Daly, "letters" column, this issue) or other reliable sources. Ask easy questions which are non-controversial, and save the controversial ones for later on when rapport has been established and recorder shyness will have eased.

Most of the "how-to-do-oral-history" publications include many "dos" and "don'ts" for holding an oral history

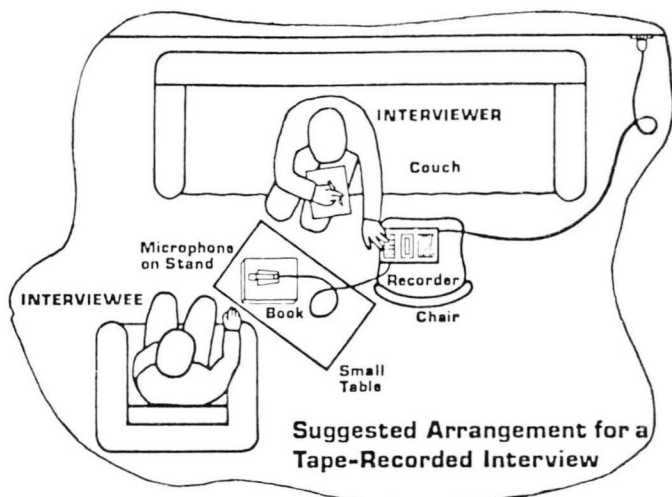
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interview. Among the more common hints are: (1) Do ask short questions; ask just one at a time. (2) Don't, as a rule, ask questions that elicit simple yes or no responses; (3) Do phrase questions so they begin with such words as Who, Why, How, When or What; (4) Don't lead the interviewee; keep yourself and your opinions out of the interview; (5) Do encourage the interviewee with constant attentiveness; employ facial expressions and occasional short verbal responses; (6) Don't turn off the recorder except for such necessities as changing tape, telephone calls, etc; don't stop the machine in order to go "off the record;" (7) Do give the interviewee time to think; avoid prematurely interrupting interviewee response; (8) Don't fret over seemingly endless pauses during a response, for such "long" pauses usually last no more than a few seconds. (9) Do probe constantly; always ask why and how and ask for opinions and feelings; (10) Do, in concluding the interview, ask an obvious wrap-up question to allow the interviewee an opportunity to reveal anything that questioning may have missed, and to add whatever he/she thinks is important.

It is sometimes difficult to keep an interviewee "on the track." If a respondent begins to wander in an undesirable or irrelevant direction, the interviewer has little choice except to listen interestedly until the end of the story. As soon as possible, however, the interviewer should tactfully but firmly return to the desired line of questioning. That may be accomplished by such a rejoinder as, "Well, that's a very interesting story and I'd like to hear more later, but right now could you tell me more about ...?"

These suggestions only begin to steer towards conducting a successful interview. The results of a first session are often disappointing. Employ healthy self-criticism in reviewing your early tapes. Find out what you've done well and what you've done poorly; determine how successful you were in obtaining the desired information in the first place. Typically, the next session will be a vast improvement, the next one even more so, and so on. It won't be long before you'll be proud--and justifiably so--that you're consistently making clear recordings which contain a fascinating and valuable array of remembrances.

NOTE: What to do after the interview will follow in the next issue of the Journal.



Reproduced from issue No. 12 of The Spark



Letters from our readers

COMMENT ON THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

I was very enthused by Beverly Rae Kimes' "desire to launch an SAH oral history project." Re-activate it, actually, as in 1975, Mike Lamm, then president of the SAH, encouraged me to head up such a project.

We had become acquainted by phone and through letters at the time he was writing an article for *Special Interest Autos* about the new post-war Willys Aero line of cars which my father, Clyde R. Paton, had been directly involved in creating and taking to Willys-Overland. Fortunately, I was able to furnish Mike with additional information more accurate than that which he had previously been provided. Mike came to believe that I could be a good source for reaching other auto pioneers, and tape-recording their reminiscences.

My first interview was with Charles Klingensmith, younger of two sons of Frank L. Klingensmith who had risen in the Ford Motor Company to become treasurer, vice president and board member, and mentor to Edsel Ford. After resigning in 1921 he purchased the Gray Marine Engine Company and formed the Gray Motor Car Company.

A second interview with Owen Goodrich, who had worked for the Packard Motor Car Company from 1933 to 1954, appeared in *The Packard Cormorant* issues of Autumn 1979 and Winter 1979-80.

A third interview was with John Slater, retired from Eastman Kodak, who helped pioneer the use of plastics in automobiles.

I soon realized that I needed to do much more research myself in order to be able to ask the right questions, and though these first efforts were fascinating, other responsibilities forced me to give up this almost full-time project. In 1979, SAH president Walter Robinson appointed Marshall Naul to chair the Oral History Committee.

Beverly is right in that all of us are needed to find and record these personal histories.

Though most of the early major participants are no longer living, the stories of the men and women who are carrying on the industry need to be recorded, too. ?

To have in useful form for the automotive history collections in the public libraries, the tape recordings need to be transcribed, and that is expensive; all the more reason to be well prepared before interviewing to insure, as far as possible, both the accuracy and the importance of the story to be obtained.

During my years of observing the auto industry through the eyes of my father and many friends, what has been of deep concern to me is the absence of credit accurately given to individuals. My mother, Bernice McRoy Paton, working for her PHD, conducted extensive interviews with men in positions throughout the auto industry, and the one common complaint about their

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working conditions was not about salary but was about other men taking credit for their ideas and their work.

So, I stress again the emphasis on accuracy. If inaccurate information goes into the archives, it is the only material used and repeated by future writers.

Machines are wonderful inventions, but most wonderful are the creative human beings who have brought them into production.

Eleanor A. Paton, 473 Drury Lane, Birmingham, Michigan 48010.

THE LAST(?) WORD ON THE HUPP 417 BODIES

Editor: The following letter from member Whitman C. Daly came in the mail, but it is a fine example of the kind of information that could have been taped via the oral history program, from an old timer "who was there."

The article in the SAH Journal No. 112 in regard to David L. Knowles comment about the 1934 Hupmobile Model 417 is indeed interesting, as it brings to mind memories of my employment at the Hupp Motor Car Company more than 55 years ago. I obtained employment with Hupp in February 1927 in the plant on Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit, after working in the Rickenbacker Motor Car Company's body division from 1922 to 1927. I had worked on the first factory-built body in 1922 to the last body produced in January 1927. When I began work at Hupp, their car bodies were built, painted and trimmed (upholstered) by the Murray Body Company in Detroit, and transported to the Hupmobile plant in huge body trailers. In the spring of 1928 I was promoted to foreman of the hood painting department. In early 1929, Hupp management decided to produce bodies for both six and eight cylinder models in their own Milwaukee Avenue plant. An extensive floor plan was drawn up by the Plant Engineering Department which involved closing in two open courts of the plant to provide additional building space for the body-building operations. Hupp management announced to the employees its intention to produce a light eight-cylinder car in the Milwaukee Avenue plant in conjunction with the current six and eight cylinder production.

At this time the company was building 525 cars per day on a 5-1/2 day weekly output. Employees' attitudes, however, certainly changed after the board of directors turned down the project.

Unknown to Hupp's top management was the fact that the board of directors of the Chandler-Cleveland Motors Corporation in Cleveland, Ohio, along with other associates, had gained control of Hupmobile stock issues. As a result, the coming light eight-cylinder car would be built in Cleveland.

After profiting from this venture, the Chandler-Cleveland directors disposed of their stock holdings at a good profit, allowing Hupp management to regain control of the company.

In late 1930, management made a decision to purchase car bodies from the Hayes Body Corporation which made bodies in its plants in Ionia and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Such bodies would be shipped to the Hupp plant in Detroit in primer-surfaced condition, to be sanded, lacquer-coated, polished and upholstered in the Hupp plant in Detroit.

Now, being general foreman, I was assigned to the Plant Engineering Department to assist in the layout of the conveyor system in regard to the position of spray-booths, wet sanding and polishing decks, etc., prior to the upholstering (trim) operations. The plant superintendent,

James Quinlan, had obtained permission for me to remain on company property each day until the contractors finished their daily routine of installation--working until 10 or 11 p.m. was about par for the course, it seemed. Incidentally, after checking some of my past records involving my years at the Hupp plant, I found that I had worked 594-1/2 hours in a period of six weeks of July and August of 1931.

I was promoted to Assistant Paint Superintendent, and the process of finish-painting these Hayes-built bodies began in September 1931. A number of new employees were hired--both male and female--and I enjoyed working with a paint system in which I had taken part. It was indeed interesting. Aside from the above facts, however, I was apprehensive about the financial situation of the Hupp Motor Car Company. Too many changes in management and too much money was being lost in each quarterly period to encourage continued employment at Hupp. During a production recess around Christmastime in 1931, I applied for employment at the Dodge Main Plant in Hamtramck. I was accepted on January 22, 1932, as a paint department foreman of the dry sanding operations. In November 1934 I transferred to the Dodge Truck Division, where I remained for 29-1/2 years--from line foreman to 18 years as Division Superintendent of paint and enamel, retiring in 1963 at age 60.

Until late 1935 I had remained in contact with many employees at Hupmobile. A number of these men were persuaded to hire in at the Dodge truck plant under my supervision.

This story has, no doubt, taken up too much space in telling fellow SAH member David L. Knowles that the car body on the 1934 Hupmobile was built by the Hayes Body Corporation.

Whitman C. Daly, 1610 Harvard Road, Berkley, Michigan 48072

- BUT YET ANOTHER OPINION

I must disagree with Mr. Knowles of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, who contends that these Hupmobiles used Hudson-built bodies. My research indicates that these cars used modified 1934 Ford bodies with common doors, roof stampings, etc., but with unique quarter panel and back panel parts. These bodies were built by Murray. Styling for the 417/517W Hupps was the work of Amos Northrup, Murray's chief body designer who was responsible for cars like the 1929 Willys-Knight and the 1938 Graham sharknose.

Bodies for Hupp's streamlined six and eight cylinder larger cars for 1934-36 were built either in Hupp's Cleveland body plant or by Hayes in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Hayes built nearly all Hupp bodies after 1934, but in the late 1920's Murray was Hupp's principal body builder.

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

A READER WHO LIKES OUR STUFF--AND RADIOS

I want to send my thanks for a nice newsletter. I enjoy all the stories about cars, especially the old and odd ones. I'm sure that some of our members know a lot about cars from their areas, and they should send this information to you. (*Ed: They do, and we couldn't have these publications without them*). The time is past when we can get first-hand history, but we can still get information from the relatives

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and descendents of the early automobile people.

I recently went to an estate sale where there were some older things. I bought a 1928 radio (Silvertone). There was a phonograph cabinet that was made by Meteor in Piqua, Ohio. Years ago I had a Meteor hearse that was actually a Marmon. I did not know that they made cabinets. Radio is also my hobby.

Vic Johnson, 630 Valley Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504.

Editor: Maurice Wolfe's Meteor Motor Car Company began, in 1913, to assemble a six-cylinder passenger automobile, and progressed to the building of hearses and ambulances on other makers' chassis. Oddly, the company also made phonographs in the 1920's.

DID YOU FORGET YOUR 1988 DUES?

Every year about this time we reluctantly remove a sizable number of names from our mailing list--names of the people who have allowed their SAH membership to lapse. Most of them are the names of procrastinators who will renew later, but not until their names have been taken off the list. This means there will be additional record-keeping and more chances of error when these members are reinstated.

Past experience tells us that more than 80 percent of them will, in time, renew their memberships. However, this will be the last issue of the *Journal* that we can send unless 1988 dues are received promptly.

Why not write that check right now while you're thinking about it?

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS ITEMS NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Jack L. Martin, Z. Taylor Vinson and Charles L. Betts, Jr., is now in the process of nominating members to serve as officers and directors for terms beginning January 1, 1989. Kindly note that other nominations may be made by writing to the committee by petition signed by not less than ten (10) of the voting members. Such petition must be postmarked not later than June 30, 1988, and addressed to Charles Betts, Chairman, 2105 Stackhouse Drive, Yardley, PA 19067, in order to be included on the official ballot.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER PRESENTS SIXTH ANNUAL LITERATURE FAIR & EXCHANGE

The Southern California Chapter of the Society of Automotive Historians will present its Sixth Annual Literature Fair and exchange on Sunday, June 26, 1988, from 6 a.m. until 3 p.m.

As in the previous several years, this event will be held at the Pasadena City College, Colorado Boulevard at Hill Avenue, Pasadena.

There is no admission charge, and parking is free.

Vendors' spaces are available for \$15.00 per 20' x 20' space, payable at the gate or by advance reservation. Sales are restricted to automotive literature, memorabilia

and small collectibles, but no parts or non-automotive materials.

This is the only event of its kind on the west coast.

For further information or space reservation, call or write to Bill Lewis, 600 Kiama Street, Anaheim, California - 714/776-8472.

CAR HISTORIANS MEET

The tenth plenary meeting of the Commission Historique Internationale of the FIA took place in Turin, Italy, on March 24 and 25, 1988. The group, under the presidency of Count Giovanni Lurani, enjoyed the quite remarkable hospitality of the Automobile Club di Torino, the Museo dell'Automobile Biscaretti, the Italian automobile manufacturers' association (ANFIA), Fiat and Pinninfarina.

Guest observers at the working sessions were Sture Agvald, Vice President of the FIA, and Carl Henrik Stormer, Secretary General of the Federation Internationale de Vehicules Anciens (FIVA). Deputy CHI member from the United Kingdom, Michael Bowler, was a highly authoritative source of information in his capacity as President of the Historical Racing Commission of the FIA's Federation Internationale du Sport Automobile (FISA). Considerable progress was made on the many current projects of the CHI, which include a census of the world's automobile museums, and a study of the influence of motor sport upon automotive technique in general.

Submitted by Griffith Borgeson



Advertising in this column is offered free to SAH members on a space available basis. Ads for information, historical automotive books and literature, photographs, drawings, etc., are acceptable, both for sale and wanted. Ads for automobiles or parts are not acceptable.

WANTED: AUTOMOBILE TRADE JOURNAL, any before 1913. Also December 1916; January 1919; October, December 1916; SPEED AGE, May 1947; March, April 1948; ROAD & TRACK, June 1947; May, August 1948. \$50.00 plus offered for each of last two titles. P. B. RICHLEY, 14 QUEENS ROAD, ASHFORD TN24 8HF, KENT, ENGLAND. Telephone 0233-20552.

NEW SUMMER LIST of 2,000 items, foreign and domestic sales literature, books and magazines, pre-WWI to present, sports cars, classics, antiques, race cars, hotrods and customs. Free list. ROB McLELLAN, 9111 LONGSTAFF DRIVE, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77031, U.S.A. Phone (713)772-3285.

WANTED: Am writing a book on Ford Pickup trucks (Rancheros, Broncos, etc.) and am in need of any material pertaining to these trucks including factory photographs. Also interested in material on competing makes (Chevrolet, Dodge, GMC, etc.) PAUL McLAUGHLIN, 2720 TENNESSEE, NE, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110. Phone (505)296-2554.

INFORMATION WANTED. Does anyone out there have a good stockpile of information on the Columbia Body Company? I'm particularly interested in the years 1924-1927, and a list of the designers who worked there during this time period. Any other information would be most welcomed as well. Thank you. LEE BECK, AUBURN AUTOMOTIVE HERITAGE, INC. P.O. BOX 271. AUBURN, INDIANA 46706.

HOLLE is the name of the designer of an innovative four-wheel-drive automobile during the first half of the 1920's, presumably British or American. The writer will be grateful for any further information. GRIFFITH BORGESON, MIRAIL, LA MOTTE D'AIGUES, 84240 LA TOUR D'AIGUES, FRANCE.

WHO'S ON FIRST ?

The two following items and illustrations are from *Scientific American*, March 10, 1900, and were contributed by SAH member Henry C. Hopkins, Northampton, United Kingdom.

THE FIRST AUTOMOBILE PATROL WAGON?

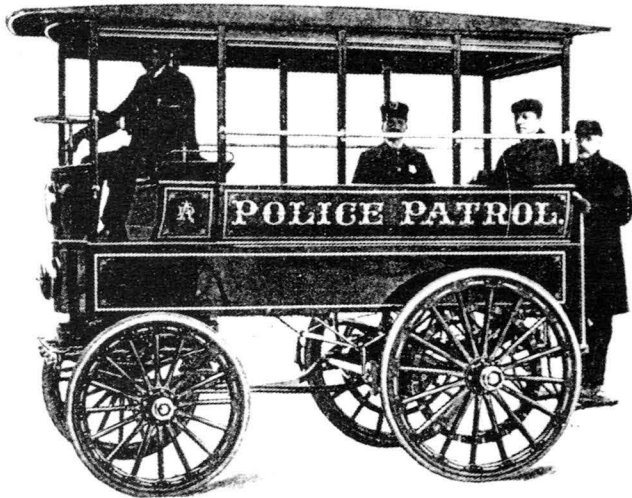
The town of Akron, Ohio, lays claim to the distinction of having constructed the first automobile patrol wagon ever used. The wagon in question was not made by a horseless carriage manufacturer, but was designed and built by a local mechanical engineer, Mr. Frank P. Loomis.

The vehicle is driven by two four-horsepower electric motors, geared in the usual manner with the rear wheels. Current is supplied by an accumulator of 40 cells, stowed beneath the seats of the vehicle in four sets of ten cells each, and grouped as the driver may desire by means of a controller within reach of his left hand. A meter at his right hand indicates the amount of current at his disposal.

The steering mechanism consists of a hand-wheel, the vertical shaft of which is connected by a segmental gear with a fifth-wheel provided with roller bearings.

The braking devices comprise two sets of friction rollers forced into engagement with the tires of the rear wheels by means of a foot-lever, and a band-brake connected with the gearing of the rear wheels and controlled by a hand-lever beneath the steering wheel in front of the driver.

The wagon body is 10 feet long, 4 feet 4 inches wide, and is supported on rubber-tired wooden wheels carried on roller bearing axles. The vehicle has a maximum speed of twenty miles an hour, weighs 5,500 pounds, and cost the city of Akron about \$3,000.



THE FIRST ELECTRIC AMBULANCE?

The ambulance service in our American cities is the model one of the world, so that there is little wonder that we are to have what is probably the first electric ambulance, certainly the one we illustrate is the first ever built in the United States. There are many reasons why an automobile ambulance has marked advantages over the horse vehicles. It is capable of greater sustained speed, and when the destination is reached no care has to be paid to the

steaming horse, and both surgeon and driver can devote their attention to the injured person. Accidents to ambulances are of frequent occurrence, owing to their speed and right of way, but electric vehicles can be stopped in their length. Every second is of importance to an injured person, and speed and ease of riding will undoubtedly soon make them a great favorite among hospital authorities. Another feature of interest is the lower cost of maintenance. An ambulance is usually idle twenty or more hours out of the twenty-four, and this gives ample time for charging the batteries. There is no time lost in hitching up, and the stable may be in the hospital proper, without the dangers of stable odors.

The electric ambulance shown in our engraving was built by F. R. Wood & Son, of New York City, for St. Vincent's Hospital. It is handsome in appearance, being well finished. The openings are all inclosed with beveled plate glass windows which open or close with ease. The vehicle is steered from the front wheels and is propelled by two 2-horsepower motors, which are suspended on the rear axle. The current for the motors is supplied by 44 cells of storage batteries and is managed by a controller placed under the seat entirely out of view. This controller permits speeds of three speeds ahead, 6, 9 and 13 miles per hour, and two speeds to the rear, 3 and 6 miles per hour. The radius of action of the ambulance is 25 to 30 miles.

The Wood pedestal gear is used, making it possible to have the body low, which is essential in an ambulance, and adds to its appearance. All the fore and aft bending strain on the springs is relieved by the pedestals sliding vertically up and down on the pedestal box. The driver is in immediate communication with the surgeon by the aid of a speaking-tube. The inside trimming is of leather, and the bed slides out, being caught by irons, stands out parallel with the sidewalk, thus enabling a patient to be placed upon the bed without the necessity of being jolted, which is inseparable to the use of stationary beds. The inside and outside electric lights are of ten candle power each. The mountings are all of brass.



The MILAC

BY J. H. VALENTINE

I have frequently been questioned about the Los Angeles-built Milac automobiles, so thought it about time to put some of the information together.

Milac engines and automobiles were built by the Linthwaite-Hussey Motor Company, a firm which was in Los Angeles during 1915 and 1916. The company was formed by an engineer, Owen C. Linthwaite, and an investor, presumably named Hussey, whose identity so far eludes me. Their street address did not appear in their advertising — only the city (Los Angeles; the Postal Service was a bit more lenient regarding addresses in those days. Lawrence Nelson indicated that the factory was located on Santa Fe Avenue (South) near 55th Street, which would actually be in Vernon, California.

A press release dated August 12, 1916, stated that the derivation of the name Milac is from the initials of the words in the slogan of the car, "Made in Los Angeles, Cal." I have heard some say that the "C" stood for "County," not "Cal." This press release puts that rumor to rest.

Owen Linthwaite worked for Volney Beardsley's California Automobile Company during 1910 as a sales engineer and racing driver. The firm sold Warren-Detroit and Firestone Columbus autos, and Beardsley won at least once for Beardsley in one of his Firestone Columbus cars at a local race track. The factory management liked what it saw, and he soon became an engineer for Columbus. He returned to Los Angeles at about the time the Columbus Buggy Company failed.

The firm's advertising implied that the engines were for sale by themselves, though there is no indication of their use in any chassis but their own. "L & H Motors" came in two sizes: the Model C of 199.1 cubic inches and the Model D of 298.2 cubic inches. Both were overhead valve fours with four valves per cylinder (shades of 1987!) The smaller was rated at 90 hp at 4,000 rpm from its 3.25 x 6.00 cylinders; the larger at 110 hp at 3,800 rpm from its 3.75 x 6.75 cylinders. They were said to have a "wonderful power range" though "not necessarily racing motors" and had "fine workmanship and the very best of materials."

Both engine sizes were advertised in late 1915, but the first complete car constructed had the smaller, and it was several more months before one with the larger engine appeared. Beverly Rae Kimes has indicated that eight cars were assembled in all. The first racer completed was seen at the newly-opened Ascot one-mile paved track in Los Angeles. Owned by oil executive Roscoe Sweet and driven by "Terrible Teddy" Tetzlaff, the 199-inch engined purple Milac, smallest car in its race, started tenth and finished sixth in a fourteen-car field in the track's 100-mile inaugural event, running smoothly at an average a bit over 60 mph, on March 5th.

Back at Ascot on March 19, after a fast time trial lap at 69.5 mph, the 12-car non-stock light car race (161-230 cubic inches) was won by the little Milac wire-to-wire over a variety of other brands, doing ten laps at a 61.56 mph average. Tetzlaff also won over five cars in a ten-lap Australian Pursuit race.

On the following Saturday, March 25, they ran the car in a "boulevard race" laid out in the streets of the San Diego Exposition grounds. On this narrow, twisting course, the winning speed by Bob Burman in his Peugeot was but a 52.14 average. In second place, ahead of Barney Oldfield in his Delage and Cliff Durant in his Durant Special was the tiny Milac.

The car was next scheduled to compete at Corona, California, in a 300-miler on April 8, but on April 7 the car was excused by the referee after "a broken engine part" was reported. A new 298-inch-engined Milac had also been entered, but failed to show up by the cutoff date. This was not surprising, as it was still under construction only a few days earlier. Dominick Basso was to be the driver.

The 298-inch, again to be driven by Basso, was scheduled to run at Ascot on Saturday, May 6, but failed to show again by the Tuesday cutoff date. Also entered in the events at Bakersfield, California, on May 7, Basso was excused by the referee when he reported the "car had been attached in Los Angeles." presumably the cause of the no-show at Ascot as well as the day before. By this time Teddy Tetzlaff was driving for Cliff Durant, so there may have been financial problems in the Milac camp. The 199-incher had also been expected to run in Indianapolis on Memorial Day, but was never shipped there.

Early in August the manufacturer announced that "the first of the new 300-inch Milacs is now under construction" and was being built for Frederick Robinson (presumably the foreman at the Moreland Motor Truck Company.) They intended this car to make its first appearance at the Santa Monica races on November 16 and 18. As Dominick Basso had earlier been entered in a large-engined Milac, and yet this was to be "the first," it is possible that Basso's was really an outside-built chassis with only its engine being an L & H.

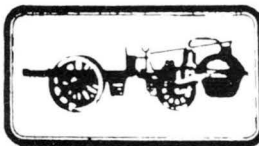
The first 199-incher was later re-sold to George Sargenti of Guadalupe, California, probably early in 1917. He entered this car in a 100-mile race at nearby Santa Maria on July 4, 1917, where driver Arthur Felts of Santa Maria was the winner. A week later (on a Wednesday, strangely) the same car came in third in a 148-mile event in the same city, with a local favorite, Monte Huyck, first and a Santa Barbaran named Loughead in a modified Oakland having experimental four-wheel hydraulic brakes. Elmer Boeseke of Santa Barbara was driving the Milac this time.

The next season (1918), Frank "Spider" Campbell of Santa Barbara drove and won for Sargenti in a May 1 race at Santa Maria. On July 4, owner George Sargenti decided to drive it himself, coming in second to Loughead in the first race, and going out on lap 52 of the second race with a broken piston.

 I would like to thank David Cole of Santa Maria, California, and SAH members Bill Lewis and Claud Neal for their assistance in the preparation of this article.
 J. H. Valentine



Although we can find no reference to this event in the trade publications of the time, the crew of this 1917 Chalmers seems to have made--or at least attempted--a non-stop round trip from Cleveland, Ohio, to Buffalo, New York. The 1916 Blue Book describes the road from Cleveland to Erie, Pennsylvania, as 102 miles of "Good gravel or stone roads all the way," and from Erie to Buffalo, 89.2 miles of "Macadam and good gravelly dirt,"--quite a contrast to today's fine Interstate Highways. The gentleman in the back seat wearing a business suit but no cap is presumably a factory or dealership executive who wanted to be included in the photo. Can any of our members tell us more about this venture? (Photo contributed by John Conde).



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