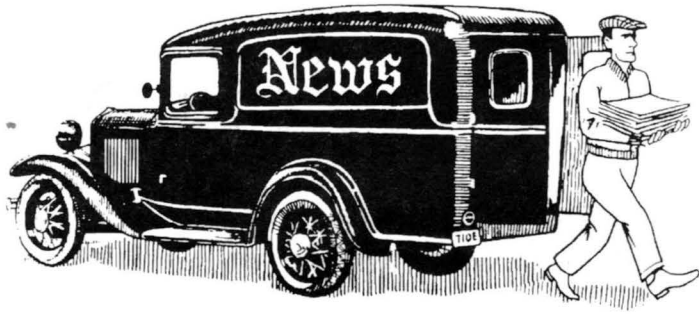


# SAH JOURNAL

The Newsletter of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

July–August 2001

Issue Number 193



## The Price of Progress

The SAH recruiting brochure says that dues are “subject to infrequent adjustment.” Detail-oriented members will have noticed from the minutes of the April directors’ meeting, published in *SAH Journal* No. 192, that such an “adjustment” has been voted by the board. Since the dues were last raised eight years ago, it’s accurate to describe the coming increase as “infrequent,” but some will argue that since it represents a sixty percent hike it’s hardly an “adjustment,” but rather more like a usurious levy. The \$15 rise works out to 7.5 percent per year, far above the prevailing rate of inflation.

At our October 2000 meeting the directors charged me with reviewing our recent expenditure levels, comparing them with income, and asked for a recommendation on whether a dues increase was necessary. I found that although our net worth had increased over the last few years, this was primarily due to underspending with respect to budgeted figures. For instance, we published the membership directories less often than promised, and other publications were also on a somewhat relaxed schedule. In addition, some bills for expenses, such as postage, were submitted months after the fact, delaying payment into a following fiscal year and thus making our “margin” appear better than it actually was.

Projections for ongoing operations, at the current level of “member benefit,” show a deficit of about \$7,000 annually. While it may seem that we could sustain this erosion of capital for a few years, the directors concurred with my feeling that doing so would be unwise. Having capital reserves has enabled us to add new programs from time to time, without putting them on hold while we raised the necessary money. The biennial automotive history conferences and the projects of SAH Press are examples of member benefits that have been possible only because we had money available for immediate use.

In fact, our increased expenditures result mostly from

increases in the level of service we provide to our members, and to automotive history in general. During the last eight years we’ve increased the page count of *SAH Journal* by fifty percent, and upgraded *Automotive History Review* by an even greater margin, both in quantity and in quality. We’ve instituted the automotive history conferences, added awards for recognition of excellence in our field, and moved into the digital age with [autohistory.org](http://autohistory.org) and the popular online forum SAH MotorMail.

Having accepted the fact that an increase was necessary, the directors then pondered the magnitude of the hike. On a per-member basis, our operating costs break down as follows:

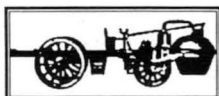
Publications (including website and MotorMail)	\$26.03
Awards	3.16
Administrative Operations	6.42
History Conference	.53
Total	\$36.14

The directors voted to “round” this up to \$40.00, in order to provide a cushion against more frequent increases. As President *Leroy Cole* notes in his “Perspective,” this is not out of line with dues charged by other groups our size. Whether or not this seems like a bargain depends a lot on where you sit. I know, however, that it’s an essential ingredient in my lifestyle, and that, at eleven cents per day, I get a good return on my investment.

-Kit Foster, Treasurer  
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**SAH JOURNAL**  
The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

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Kit Foster	Issues 118-157	Jan./Feb. 1989-July/Aug. 1995

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## It's Nice to Be Here

**H**i, my name is Tom Jakups. This fall I will be assuming the editorship of our *Journal*. Until then I will continue to help *Sam Fiorani* and *Kit Foster* get the newsletter back on schedule. And learn more about the Society of Automotive Historians.

You see, I'm a new member, having joined SAH only last year. I had seen the Society mentioned in an article and I had to check it out. I have long been fascinated with old cars, particularly those that were produced in the 25 years after World War II. I have two of my own and belong to a number of clubs. My car appraisal service has brought me into contact with still other hobbyists. Yet, for all my interest and research into old cars, I've many times felt ill at ease with other owners, like a pretender among legitimate hobbyists. I was never a gearhead and my only experience with shop classes was one truly undistinguished year in woodshop. I was awed by those who could confidently rip into an engine, who could take rusting hulks and restore them to better-than-new condition. And I was envious of them, and their talent. But I was also a realist; I wasn't going to go out and get a project car, tools, welding equipment and assorted other things and then transform myself into Joe Fixit. As one very smart cartoon character once said, "I am what I am." With that resolved I then wondered, "Could I still continue to enjoy what is a very "hands-on" hobby?" The Society of Automotive Historians offered me hope that I could.

I joined SAH just in time to learn about the Third Automotive History Conference at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. My wife I and flew out there and while Judy toured the city I was treated to two days of speakers who addressed an astoundingly wide array of automobile topics. I also met some very nice and friendly people, knowledgeable, yet very approachable. I learned that you find your greatest enjoyment from a hobby when you can contribute to it as well as take from it.

When the *Journal* advertised for an Associate Editor I jumped at the chance because it presented me with an opportunity to contribute to the hobby by doing what I do best. In the course of my career I have produced publications for the construction and trucking industries, electrical contractors and the Rhode Island tourism industry. Finally, I would be able to work on material and with people I really enjoy! I look forward to tapping the rich veins of research and writing talent that run through our Society.

The *Journal* has a tradition of talented and dedicated editors. I intend to carry on that tradition. I thank Sam, Kit and Leroy for helping me make the transition from outsider to insider. I look forward to meeting many of you at Hershey in October and at the Fourth Automotive History Conference in April, 2002 in Auburn, Indiana. To paraphrase a line from an ad for a local institution, the Society is great; I just want to make it better.

—Tom Jakups

# The Cost of Curiosity

I have an animal around the house again and I am amazed at its curiosity. From a mere handful of a kitten it began “mapping” its surroundings, and having done the floor level survey it began looking up at higher things. Each exploration was bought at a cost to pride and body. “Curiosity killed the cat” is true, but it would not be a cat without it.

Human beings are more curious than any animal. We are the species who do research and development, and history. We explore the physical and spiritual and the past, present and future. We are multi-dimensionally curious; “3D!” We take trips to see for “ourselves”; we read the newspapers and watch the TV news, out of curiosity (we can’t really change it!). Men love the TV remote because they are curious as to what else is on.

Automotive historians have focused their curiosity on basically a mechanism of the 20th Century. We cannot find all we need to know about that self-propelled vehicle in one place, so we spread out our search. That is where the cost begins. Then as we find lots of things, we need file cabinets and book shelves and computers and more trips and more money and more contacts. That is where the SAH comes in, as it is made up of the curious. It’s like the cats getting together and sharing what they have learned. They can’t, but we can and do.

Your Board of Directors, meeting in Cleveland, debated the financial needs of our Society and the long-term development of enhancing our service. Income from dues has lagged behind our outlay on benefits. As you know, the Board of Directors and the officers of SAH serve the Society without any financial gain and, in fact, spend hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars to correspond and attend its business meetings. This they do out of loving duty and the privilege of serving the membership. Realizing that dues increases are not popular but are necessary for the growth and quality of our Society they voted to increase the dues to \$40. This increase is well in line with dues of other organizations and should be sufficient for the foreseeable future.

Our yearly dues come to less than a nice supper at a good restaurant, are less than the price of a good piece of auto literature and are about the same as a tank of gas to get us to a library or archives for research. You get the point.

My concern is for that historian whose only income is social security and is struggling with the \$25 dues. To that member I say, “Send your membership and old dues to me and I will supplement the raise in dues and discreetly send all to the membership chair. Don’t let financial pride deprive us of the strength of your fellowship, as every member is an important personal resource to the whole society.”

I guess I am trying to say that our Society is a researcher’s bargain. Even with a dues increase it is packed with value. *Automotive History Review*, *SAH Journal*, the Web-site and Motor Mail, the Directory, the Silent Auction, the connections are all

available and expanding, and the camaraderie is priceless.

I am glad that over ten years ago *Richard Scharchburg* explained to me the benefits of the Society. I’m glad that there were historians willing to serve as board members and officers and on committees so I had a place to send my dues and from which to receive all the benefits. We have all purchased a “special find,” a “must have” historical piece that our curiosity led us to. We may not want anyone to know how much we spent, especially our mate, but we had to have it and we proudly added it to our collection. That’s the cost of curiosity, and the price of finding treasures.

I was curious as to how many “curiosity clubs” I am a member of and the cost. I list only the selfish benefits. Being one of their many subscribers helps keep them alive, which makes it a cooperative benefit. Most of you probably have a longer list. My list follows:

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
ACD Museum	\$45.00	Free admission, Newsletter
NATMUS	25.00	Free admis., Letter of Events
Horseless Carriage Foundation	35.00	Some free research, Letter of Events
AACA	26.00	6 issues <i>Antique Automobile</i>
HCCA	35.00	6 issues <i>Horseless Carriage Gazette</i>
VMCCA	35.00	6 issues <i>The Bulb Horn</i>
Buick Club of America	35.00	12 issues <i>Buick Bugle</i>
Healey Marque	40.00	Magazine—11 issues/year
Cole Motor Car Club	12.00	2 issues <i>Cole Bulletin</i>
<i>Special Interest Autos</i>	20.00	6 issues
<i>Hemmings Motor News</i>	29.00	12 issues
<i>Cars and Parts</i>	27.00	12 issues
<i>Old Cars</i>	40.00	Weekly
<i>Automotive News</i>	120.00	Weekly
<i>AutoWeek</i>	59.00	Weekly
SAE	85.00	12 issues <i>Engineer</i>
<i>Motor Trend</i>	18.00	12 issues
<i>Automobile</i>	20.00	12 issues
<i>Michigan History</i>	18.00	6 issues
<i>Automobile Quarterly</i>	90.00	5 issues
<i>Car &amp; Driver</i>	18.00	12 issues

On an emergency trip to Daytona Beach in June I joined the Historical Society there in order to research their archives—\$25.

Society of Automotive Historians	\$40.00	6 issues <i>SAH Journal</i> 1-2 <i>AH Review Magazine</i> Membership Directory SAH Web-site Motor Mail The Silent Auction Hospitality Tent Fall Banquet at Hershey
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My problem is that I keep all of the magazines. Let’s see: 1 x 8 pine shelving @ \$1.38 per foot, bricks @ 47 cents each...

—Leroy D. Cole

## Taking the Wheel

At their April meeting, the directors appointed *Thomas Jakups* of West Hartford, Connecticut, as Associate Editor of *SAH Journal*. This issue has been prepared mostly by Tom and produced by a new printing and mailing team in the central Connecticut area.

Tom brings to SAH over 25 years of editorial and publishing experience, and was the unanimous choice of the Publications Committee to succeed *Sam Fiorani*. A graduate of Syracuse University with degrees in Journalism and History, he served as an editor with Houghton Mifflin Company, in Boston, and later ran his own video production and editing company. More recently he was senior editor for McHugh Publishing and Design Corporation in West Hartford, Connecticut, where he was responsible for the editorial content of a number of trade and tourism magazines.

The owner of a 1963 Chevrolet Impala and a 1963 Buick Riviera (the latter his daily transportation), Tom is active in the Constitution State Late Great Chevs and also a member of the Yankee Chapter, Buick Club of America and the Riviera Owners Association. He edits and produces a newsletter for his Chevy club, runs a car appraisal business and is starting a website devoted to American cars of the 1940s through 1960s. Tom has previewed to the Publications Committee his ideas for design changes to the *Journal*, which you will start to see over the next several issues. It is a pleasure to welcome him to the masthead.

To retiring editor Sam Fiorani we owe a Class 8-sized vote of thanks for his work over the last six years and 36 issues. In that time he has brought the *Journal* from twelve to sixteen (and occasionally more) pages, given it a more up-to-date look, taken the layout "in-house" and launched us into digitally-based publishing. As an auto industry analyst, he has reminded us that history begins now, or five seconds ago, not sometime before World War II, while at the same time he has energized us to recall the most notable parts of our history from the past century. The transfer of the *SAH Journal* payload to Tom's shoulders will not take Sam from our midst, and we look forward to his continued work for SAH on other projects and in other positions.

-Kit Foster,

Chair, Publications Committee

## Fourth Automotive History Conference Will Be in April 2002

SAH and the National Association of Automobile Museums have scheduled their fourth biennial automotive history conference for April 10th–13th, 2002 at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, Indiana, USA. Entitled "Knowledge of the Automobile—Creation, Competition, Evolution," the conference will be a symposium exploring the development and impact of the automobile in the world and the directions in which it might be headed.

—Kit Foster

## Call for Papers

Proposals are invited on topics pertaining to the development of automobiles, refinement by their designers and manufacturers, and the changing nature of the automobile market. Potential topics of interest might be automobile manufacturing, directed marketing, design evolution, motor sports, or the future of the self-propelled vehicle. The key museum topic for this conference will be education.

The Society of Automotive Historians is a worldwide organization of people with a common interest in the history of the automobile and its industry. Founded in 1969, the Society's purposes are to encourage research, preservation, recording, compilation and publication of historical facts concerning the development of the automobile and related items.

The National Association of Automobile Museums is an organization for the institutions and people dedicated to the automobile and its history. The Association's mission is to link auto museums, enabling them to foster education, share exhibits and exchange vital data about collections.

The Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum is dedicated to interpreting to the international public the world's most significant automobiles, with an emphasis on Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg motorcars of the classic era.

Proposals should include the title of the submission, names and affiliations of presenters, chairs, participants etc., together with addresses, phone/fax numbers, e-mail addresses of contact personnel, proposed format (paper, panel, workshop, etc.) and a one-page abstract describing the content of the presentation. The deadline for proposals is September 30th, 2001; notification of preliminary acceptance will be made by October 31st. Proposals should be submitted to

Christopher G. Foster, Program Chair

1102 Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA

Telephone (860)464-6466, Fax (860)464-2614

email <foster@netbox.com>

## Annual Meeting and Banquet October 12th

The Society's Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet will be held on the Friday evening of Hershey weekend, October 12th, at the Country Club of Hershey, 1000 East Derry Road, Hershey, Pennsylvania. Members and guests will gather for cocktails at 6:30 PM and dine at 7:15. A short program for presentation of publication and service awards will follow the dinner.

Menu for the evening will be the traditional three-entree All-American Six Buffet, which, due to favorable economic trends, is offered at the historic price of \$38.50 per person. Reservations with payment should be made by September 30th to

Kit Foster

SAH Banquet

1102 Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA

Telephone (860)464-6466



## History Tent at WAY 11-12

The History Tent will again offer respite, shelter and good company for weary bargain-seekers at Hershey. Stop by White Field spaces WAY 11-12 for light refreshments, relaxation and conversation. As always, volunteers are needed to staff the tent on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Please contact hospitality chair *Paul Lashbrook* at (954)587-5785 or email <lashbrook@mind-spring.com> to sign up for a two-hour shift. With many hands it will be light work. See you in Chocolatown!

—Kit Foster

## California Lit Faire Report

The Southern California Chapter of the SAH held its 19th Annual Literature Faire on June 24, 2001. By the time the 7 AM starting time arrived some customers had been shopping for an hour.

Joan Denver, Editor of *Miss Information's Automotive Calendar of Events*, was working the host tent and the chapter director, *Harold Osmer*, was overseeing the crew. Most of the vendors were veterans of the Faire and found their sites without problem.

This Faire is unique in nature as it only sells automotive literature. There are a combination of literature dealers and individuals who are cleaning out their libraries. The location is ideal—easy to get to—which is true of only two such places in the LA area! There is a food concession stand, the necessary restrooms and as always, warm and sunny weather.

Our good friend *Bobbie'dine Rodda* had to leave right after she arrived because of illness. We all missed her. *Jay Leno*, blue jeanned and driving a black Bentley, was spied again this year adding to his automotive archives. Several car clubs, automotive foundations, etc. were there promoting their causes. SAH Board member *Darwyn Lumley* was representing the AACA and the newest Friend of Automotive History, *Tom Warth*, had come from Minnesota by train with *Byron Olsen*. Overall, the laid-back attitude of So Cal. gives time for everyone to talk history as well as buy literature.

I have become quite a fan of So. Cal. automotive activity both past and present. We built the cars in the Midwest and they customized, raced and improved them for their climate and terrain.

While visiting So. Cal. we took advantage of some of the multitudes of automotive opportunities there. We dropped in on Skip Marketti at the new Museum at the Nethercutt Collection. A tour of this library was breath taking. Byron Matson personally expounded to us some of the history of the cars in the collection. Roberta Watkins hosted us at the Horseless Carriage Foundation's library near San Diego where we also visited the San Diego Automotive Museum.

Another highlight of our trip was attending the finish of the Great American Race in Pasadena. This is an automotive museum which moves 4000 miles over the face of the USA.

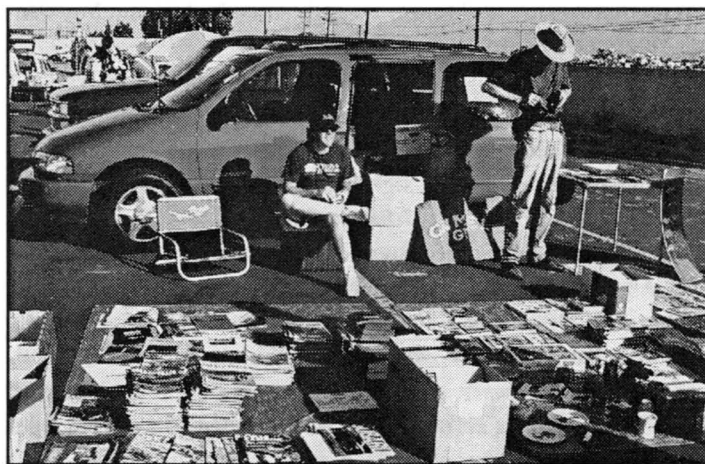
We are happy to report that the 1919 Cole V-8 finished for the second year.

Plan to attend the SAH Lit Faire on June 30, 2002 at the Irwindale Speedway.

—Leroy Cole



SAH SoCal Chapter director, *Harold Osmer* and *Leroy Cole*, SAH President. Harold was set up to "vend" his latest book, *Where They Raced Lap 2*.



*Dean Case* was selling off some of his duplicates.

## Where's Skinner's de Dion?

*Gordon Brooks'* "De Dion Motorette Company and Kenneth A. Skinner" (*Journal* No. 191) interested *Rene Ville*, who has written SAH wondering if anyone knows the whereabouts of the Paris-Madrid type de Dion that Skinner bought in 1903. The Amicale de Dion Bouton, which has one of these cars, is interested in contacting the owner of Skinner's car.

*M. Ville* has also offered SAH members and owners of de Dion vehicles the services of Amicale in research projects, for which we are grateful. *Rene Ville's* address is Amicale de Dion Bouton, le Combaud, 33490 St. Martin-de-Sescas, France. His e-mail address is DeDion-Bouton@wanadoo.fr.

—Taylor Vinson

## “Arrows” Come Home to Buffalo

It was the automobile of choice for presidents, princes, potentates, movie stars and magnates. From its distinctive headlights atop the front fenders to its work-of-art hood ornament, the Pierce-Arrow was the royalty of the early automobile industry.

From its humble beginnings in Buffalo, New York, in 1901 to its demise in 1938, the Pierce-Arrow set the standards for luxury that many say has never been duplicated.

One hundred and seventy of the venerable and beautiful machines from throughout the United States gathered in Buffalo July 10th through July 15th to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the automaker. The event, Pierce-Arrow Week, was held in conjunction with with a celebration of the Pan American Expo-sition of 1901.

The highlight of the week was the display of all the Pierce-Arrows around the McKinley Monument in front of the Art Deco style City Hall. (This monument honors President William McKinley, who was assassinated at the Pan American Exposition.)

“It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see such a magnificent display of Pierce-Arrows in one place,” said *James T. Sandoro*, a noted Pierce-Arrow collector and organizer of the event. “There are original Pierce-Arrows of all types and rare models from every year from 1901 to 1938, including a 1901 Pierce-Arrow on loan from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History.

Sandoro is also president of the non-profit Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum that opened this past May. “Our mission is to educate the public about the Pierce, the Thomas-Flyer and all the significant contributions Buffalo has made to the auto industry,” Sandoro said.

One of the scheduled attendees at the anniversary celebration was Albert J. Gonas, the man who modeled for the Pierce-Arrow archer in 1930. He was an apprentice stylist for GM’s Ternstedt Division that made trim parts for many auto manufacturers.

During the week the Pierce-Arrow owners toured western New York, Niagara Falls and the facility where the automobiles were built. The structure, which still stands today in Buffalo, was at the time one of the biggest (1.2 million square feet) and most modern in the country. It is on the national registry of historic places.

*For more information about this celebration or the museum, contact James Sandoro at (716)853-0084 or (716)855-1931 or on the web at [www.pierce-arrow.com](http://www.pierce-arrow.com).*

## Last Plymouth Rolls Off Assembly Line

The final Plymouth rolled off the Belvidere, Illinois, assembly line at 10 A.M. on Thursday, June 28. It was a silver Neon LX (5-speed manual, but every other option) and was delivered to a Plymouth collector in Florida. Darrell Davis is the executive vice president of service for the Chrysler Group.

Plymouth (June 14, 1928–June 28, 2001) RIP

—Sam Fiorani

## Obituaries

### John M. Peckham (1931-2001)

*John M. Peckham*, 69, a founding member and past president of the Society, and former editor of both *SAH Journal* and *Automotive History Review*, died May 23, 2001. He had been seriously injured in a one-car auto accident near his home in Arlington, Vermont, the month before. John, who would have observed his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in December, was noted as a talented artist and an authority on fire apparatus. He served as historian for American LaFrance.

Among his pastel drawings was a set of six for Mercedes-Benz, printed as wood engravings by European engraver Willi Seidel in 1962. Three years later he drew a set of 24 prints commissioned by the Behr-Manning Division of the Norton Company, several sets published by *Automobile Quarterly*—including “The Real Chittys,” a set of three—and seven pastels of engines illustrating the article “Survey of the Gasoline Engine,” by Jan P. Norbye. Examples of his art had appeared in *Esquire* and *True* magazines and in a number of books and articles, and may be seen in several private collections.

John, who studied art in his senior year in high school and a half-year at Syracuse University, was largely self-taught. He drew his first automotive sketches for the former *UHV Automobilst*, the publication of the Automobilsts of the Upper Hudson Valley, which he joined in 1951 at age 19.

For the last several years he had focused his attention on fire apparatus and its history. In this regard he published a magazine, *The Phoenix*, for the American LaFrance Phoenix Society, and was the author of a book, *Fighting Fire with Fire*. He was also interested in the history of early self-propelled vehicles. His last article on that subject, “Joseph Renshaw Brown: Prototype Pioneer,” was published in *Automotive History Review* No. 29.

For a number of years he owned a 1900 Benz, a 1927 Austro-Daimler and a 1921 International truck, among a small but choice collection.

He served in the U.S. Army in the early 1950s, stationed in Germany. A native and former resident of Troy, New York, he had lived for several years in Arlington, Vermont. He is survived by two brothers, Stewart Peckham of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and William Peckham of Hoosick Falls, New York, a niece and two nephews.

—Keith Marvin

# Nuremberg: A Sunday 30 Years Ago

by Carlos Eduardo Jalife-Villalón

In Nuremberg, the second Sunday in July is race day, just like Memorial Day weekend at Indy or mid-June weekend at Le Mans. It is a long-held tradition and although nowadays we see the DTM Touring cars, there were times when faster cars would run there.

Thirty years ago, July 11, 1971, the Nuremberg 200 Miles was run, a race belonging to the Interseries Championship for Group 7 cars, the continental equivalent to Can-Am. The organizers tried to get Pedro Rodríguez to race—he was a box office magnet—but could not get him to agree until Herbert Müller, a Swiss driver who owned two Ferrari 512 prototypes—bought from Steve McQueen after he finished filming his Le Mans movie—said he would try.

The Mexican driver, 31 years old and running for the John Wyer Automotive team, had been recently crowned as driver champion for a second consecutive year in the World Makes Championship. Using the brutal five-liter Porsche 917K, he had vanquished Ferrari and Alfa completely.

Pedro had scheduled a Can-Am race for BRM, but his car wasn't ready and when Herb called he was looking at a rare free weekend. Herb, who for a time ran the Sicilian Targa Florio with Pedro, offered one of his Ferraris. Pedro agreed but asked for a retainer because he knew his name would strengthen the box office take enormously. The organizers agreed to give him a payment of over \$5,000 and Pedro simply announced to his teams he would race at Nuremberg. Nobody really objected because they had nothing planned for him and they knew Pedro considered a non-racing weekend as something akin to torture.

Pedro went alone to Paris, left his Porsche 911 at a friend's house and went to Germany, arriving Friday night at the hotel Müller reserved for him.

In Nuremberg he checked the circuit, the Norisring, during Saturday practice. It's an easy track, good for high top speed since it resembles an inverted "L" with hairpins on either end, one very wide and the other extremely narrow, measuring 3,940 meters (2.455 miles). Probably its most interesting feature is the old, slowly decaying concrete stands—where Hitler would supervise the marching Nazi youths a few decades earlier. The track runs in front of these stands and behind too, making a small "S" turn which has a bridge allowing access to the stands right at the "S" corner. It is an extreme track with high speed in the straights and heavy braking in the hairpins, medium speed average, no problems.

After his first practice in his 512M, Pedro was delighted with the car and said, "With this one, let's see someone dare to beat me," and his old love for Ferrari shone again. Among the drivers, there were some famous names and some drivers he had lapped time and again in sport car races: one was his former teammate Leo Kinnunen with a Porsche 917 Spyder—who

would say before practice began that "the 'S' turn with the bridge was stupidly dangerous"; Müller in his 512M; Peter Gethin, who had lost his Can-Am seat to Peter Revson but had a McLaren run by Sid Taylor for Castrol; Chris Craft with a McLaren M8E from Ecurie Evergreen of Alain de Cadenet; Jo Bonnier in his Lola T220; George Loos in another M8E with an 8.1 liter engine; Teddy Pilette in another M8E belonging to team VDS, a new mount after crashing an M8C at Zolder; and some other minor drivers.

When word got out that Pedro was there and he would start in the front row, ticket sales boomed and the extra money taken easily covered Pedro's retainer. That night at dinner with some drivers, Müller among them, Pedro would say, "It is a pity there's no rain. Rain makes driving more fun and more dangerous too." And he knew that in the rain nobody in the world came close to him.

Early Sunday morning, Pedro sent a telegram to Mexico, to his dad—Don Pedro—in which he said, "Run today at Nuremberg; call after the race." He arrived at the Norisring, signed many autographs and spent time watching the ambiance and checking his rivals. The race was to be run in two 100-mile heats so there would be no need to stop for refuelling in the heats. He was sure he would win, the Ferrari 512M was very fast, and when the time of the start drew near he met with Müller to talk tactics. A real simple plan: take the lead and win. He also met Kinnunen; time had mellowed the rough relationship left when Leo left JWA, and after wishing each other luck and predicting their own victory, they agreed on dinner after the race with the loser paying the bill. Pedro was happy. It was a minor race he should win easily, unlike the hard racing he usually had in his schedule, and this could be a well paid racing holiday.

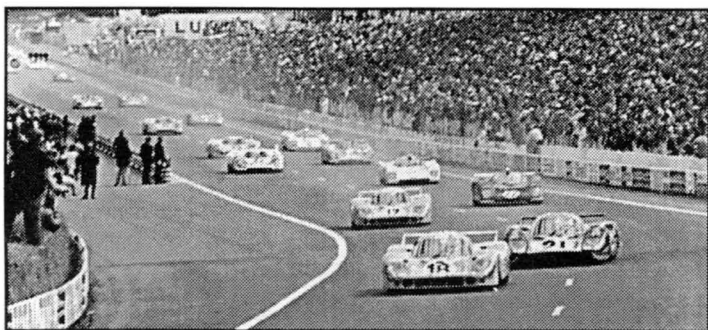
The cars lined up for the start and when Pedro got the flag he immediately took the lead. No trouble staying in front and each lap his margin over second place was larger. On this track 41 laps make 100 miles and by lap five Pedro was already passing backmarkers. On lap 11 Pedro went right in front of the finish line followed by Kinnunen and Craft, got to the narrow hairpin and caught German driver Kurt Hild on the way to the "S". Suddenly his car ran wild and crashed against the wall at great speed. Twisting and spinning, it hit the concrete stand before coming back to the side of the track and catching fire in a couple of seconds.

There were several versions of why the crash took place.



**The 1970 picture is Pedro Rodríguez in his deerstalker before the BOAC 1000K which he won in heavy rain by over five laps. Photo credit to Scuderia Rodriguez (o SHRAC) MEXICO**





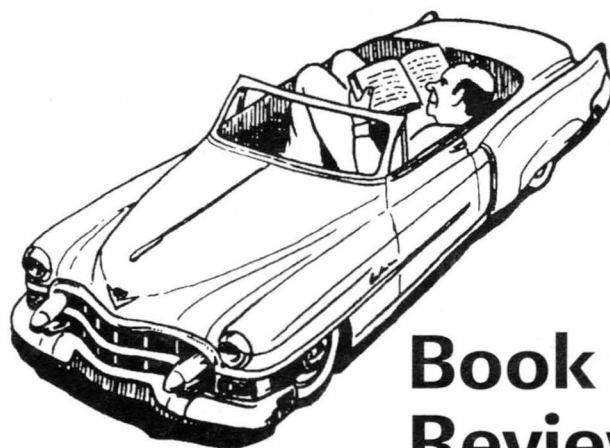
Pedro Rodríguez in June 1971 starts Le Mans for the last time in the amazing Porsche 917LH. He is in the inside with car #18 followed by Vic Elford in the outside (right) in a similar car. His lap record there still stands under 3 minutes and 14 seconds, with technology from 1971.

Some people suggested the Ferrari lost a wheel due to poor maintenance, a theory supported when they found the wheel about 250 meters from the crash, too far to get there just by the impact. Others suggested that while Pedro was lapping the backmarker, the driver didn't watch his mirrors and involuntarily cut across him, sending him to the barrier. Hild's white Porsche certainly touched Pedro's car when he was spinning but it was a minor contact after the initial crash. Hild would later say, "I saw Rodríguez approaching and ran to the right so he could pass (on the left). It was a normal passing situation happening about 400 meters (1/4 mile) from the crash. I was doing about 220 kilometers per hour (138 mph) and when the accident happened I was about 120 meters behind the Mexican." And in his car there were no other signs of action, although it was possible Pedro swerved to miss him and lost control when the wheel broke due to material fatigue. Or maybe the wheel got loose after the impact, but nobody remembers seeing it bounce afterwards, so there's no way to tell the cause of the accident.

Once the Ferrari caught fire, a brave marshall—Helmut Schlosser—got close to fight the fire while the cars went by at racing speed a few meters from him. The marshall put out the fire helped by some other track marshalls. He and two of them suffered burns, one of them serious ones. Two minutes elapsed before the rescue team opened the car, and they had to carry Pedro because he had lost consciousness. He was burned all over, wet with fire-fighting foam and with various fractures all over the body. The first doctor to take care of him tried to keep him alive and in the rush to the hospital would bring him back three times when Pedro's heart stopped. A bit after they arrived, his heart stopped for the fourth time and there was no way to bring him back, although the medical team tried for a long time.

Pedro was dead and the news slowly ran around the world. People cried for him everywhere and his body was received in Mexico by a crowd of hundreds of thousands who took him to his resting place where he would meet brother Ricardo after almost nine years. He was gone, leading until the last second of his race. Thirty years later, his place rests empty, his shoes have not been filled.

*The preceding article was taken from the biography The Rodriguez Brothers, soon to be published.*



## Book Reviews

**Fleetwood: The Company & the Coachcraft**, by James J. Schild. 441 pages, 986 black and white photos and illustrations. Hardbound, 10-3/4 x 8-1/4. ISBN 0-962-4958. Auto Review, 5 Rowan Oak Lane, Columbia, IL 62236-4148. \$49.95 plus \$5.00 s&h

This is a detailed overview of one of America's most prominent builders of custom coachwork. During its glory days, which spanned the 'teens to the mid 1920's, Fleetwood provided the coachwork for a considerable number of American and foreign chassis. These included Packard, Cadillac, Lincoln and Stutz and such lesser known cars as Porter, Richelieu and even the one-off rear-engined Julian in 1925. In 1926 Fleetwood was acquired by General Motors and set up for the exclusive use of its Cadillac Division for Cadillac and its companion car, the LaSalle, which was introduced a year later.

Jim Schild has labored for ten years gathering the necessary information and illustrative material to make this volume a reality. Nearly 90,000 words tell the story, chronicling every aspect of Fleetwood's meticulous emphasis on detail, which was apparent in each body the company mounted on a chassis.

Fleetwood's clientele was large. It has always been my understanding that the Daniels car became a Fleetwood customer in 1918 and that Fleetwood built a number of its formal closed cars, but I may be in error. In any event, Daniels doesn't appear in the pages of Schild's book. Of course, in such a business as custom coachbuilding, a number of other chassis might have been Fleetwood-equipped now and then and any records might well be missing today.

A few photos show Fleetwood bodies on "unidentified" or "unknown" chassis, and two cars identified as American Fiats are imported Fiats. By and large, though, accuracy is excellent. And lest anyone associate the company with expensive cars exclusively, a Fleetwood sedan body graces a Model T in one photo.

The volume is an excellent study of what custom coachbuilding was (and still is) all about.

*Fleetwood: The Company & the Coachcraft* is a fine addition to existing histories of custom coachbuilding, once popular with the affluent car fanciers who wanted their own cars "different" and had the money to make them so.

—Keith Marvin



**Battle for the Beetle**, by Karl Ludvigsen. 472 pages, 219 black-and-white photographs. Hardbound, 6-1/2 x 9-1/2 inches, ISBN 0-8376-0071-5. Bentley Publishers, Cambridge, MA USA, \$39.95

Does the world need more Volkswagen books? Despite being overshadowed in publishing by so-called prestige marques, among them sibling Porsche, VW has not exactly been under-represented in the book lists. What, then, does Karl Ludvigsen bring to the bazaar?

In contrast to some other titles that have concentrated on the development of the immortal Beetle, *Battle* probes what happened after its design was more or less complete. Adolph Hitler's plans for his "people's car" were derailed by war, of course, and the postwar political shakeout exposed the Beetle to a whole series of examinations and analyses, by political, military and technical authorities of many nations. The conventional wisdom has most of them, particularly the British, showing disdain for this unconventional vehicle, and a whole world taken by surprise with its wunderkind status a couple of decades later. But, to paraphrase *George Hamlin's* eloquent observation on other historic mantras, just because everyone knows it doesn't make it true.

Ludvigsen has conducted countless interviews and reviewed historic archives in five countries to conclude there was far more appreciation for the technical and commercial merits of the Beetle than is commonly acknowledged. Therein lies the basis of his title, for various governments and companies actually vied for the privilege of producing it. The book explores each of the many considerations that led to the formation of Volkswagenwerk AG, and explains why legendary New York auto importer Max Hoffman ended up with virtually no piece of the action.

Karl Ludvigsen is both a trained engineer and a veteran journalist, the author of a number of award-winning books and magazine articles. He is well qualified to pursue the book's comparative analysis of VW with other rear-engined cars and concepts, and to contrast the Beetle with conventional, and to that time more successful, designs. The account continues right up to the 1998 launch of the New Beetle.

Quibbles with *Battle for the Beetle* are fairly minuscule. Its production quality is quite modest, which is usually adequate for the historian. But in this case the small size and uncoated paper limit the enjoyment of the 219 historic photographs—poring over the book with a magnifier will not tell the historian much more than an initial glance. Ludvigsen provides copious endnotes, but the text is devoid of references to them, no doubt in aid of readability. But the research-oriented reader has to use a kind of "reverse reference" technique, scanning large sections of the unannotated text, in order to use them, which is cumbersome.

Neither of these annoyances detracts from the contribution that this book makes to the world of automotive histo-

ry. *Battle for the Beetle* should be of interest and utility not only to the Volkswagen specialist, but to anyone with an eye on worldwide automotive politics and markets during and after World War II.

The publisher has available limited stocks of signed copies, available through the website [www.bentleypublishers.com](http://www.bentleypublishers.com). *Battle for the Beetle* may be ordered direct, and is also listed by the major dot-com booksellers.

—Kit Foster

## 25 Years Ago at SAH

President *Mike Lamm* discussed the second SAH business meeting in Newsletter No. 49, dated July–August 1976. The meeting, held in the Explorer Room of the Detroit Public Library, featured SAH members representing the American "Big 3" (well, the biggest three of the "Big 4"). *John Conde*, of AMC, hoped to round out the group but was unable to attend.

Themes seem to flow constantly through SAH meetings over the past quarter century. *Jeff Godshall* discussed the topic of "documenting current car product history," stating that "today's cars make tomorrow's research and restorations." While it would be tough to make the argument for restoring a Chevrolet Metro, it will have historical significance to someone, someday.

SAH member *Mike Davis* (from Ford) expressed the need to identify and preserve historic buildings, primarily those in the Dearborn and Detroit areas. Hardly a year passes without some significant building meeting the wrecking ball. While *Dave Lewis* offered to help Mike out with his efforts in research in 1976, this may be a project that could be revived today.

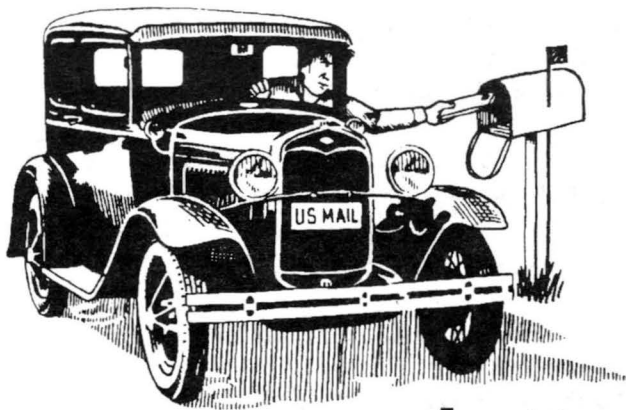
The Society started a campaign to preserve factory files. "Public service" advertisements were to be introduced into various industry publications requesting that industry executives put their files into the SAH archives.

Among the members celebrating 25 years with the Society are *Carl Burst III*, *Fred Crismon*, *Nick Fintzelberg*, *George Hanley*, *Edward Johnson*, *Lee Kollins*, and *James Petersen*.

## Upcoming Events

**September 7-9, 2001**—Beaulieu Autojumble, National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, Hampshire, England. Visit the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain, our UK Chapter; on the fields; consult show guide for space number. Autojumble info at [www.beaulieu.co.uk](http://www.beaulieu.co.uk).

**September 23, 2001**—The Seventh Annual Castle Hill Concours d'Elegance & Antique Car Show—an exhibition of classic cars, vintage sports cars and racing cars will be held on Sunday September 23, 2001, in Ipswich, Massachusetts, from 9 AM through 3 PM on the Crane Estate (rain or shine). Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. For tickets, phone Castle Hill at (978)356-4351. Website: [castlehill.com](http://castlehill.com).



## Letters

### Young People and History

This is in response to Sam's Editorial Column in the *Journal* number 192.

On the subject of attracting younger members to SAH, i.e. high school and college age, I respectfully submit to the Board that charging \$40 per year membership may drive said audience away. Perhaps a two-tiered membership fee structure featuring a "student" level membership would be in order, as done by the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Now to the notion that younger people are usually interested in new cars rather than older ones. Of course! That idea is what the marketing departments of car companies count on to build interest in their products by future customers.

My own experience in this area comes from something as simple as an annual car show, as we see in Los Angeles, Detroit, New York, etc. I began attending these shows at age 9 thanks to my very patient parents. When I would pick up one catalog for every car in the show, the purpose wasn't always to study the specs and options with a future idea to buy; it was merely because the new cars were "cool." The makers of Corgi and Dinky scale model cars should be grateful for this halo effect, which resulted in several Saturday model-car purchases. In my childish mind, "older" cars meant the ones in the parking lot of the Auto Show, not the ones on display. Oddly enough, I am still surprised when examples of new cars from my childhood show up as "collector cars" at shows. Do the years really pass that quickly?

Later, a trip to the Nethercutt Museum in Sylmar, California, and Harrah's in Reno, Nevada, revealed a world of fascinating cars, especially the unrestored ones at Harrah's. The problem for a young person was that in huge private collections or even very large museums, there is not too much interpretive history—the very scale requires only the most basic facts. Naturally, a live presentation that brings the cars, the people and the era to life without condescension, would be a good idea. Very costly also. . . .

In public school I quite clearly remember doing some of my best car doodling during history and social studies (politi-

cal science/citizenship) due to the dry, rote nature of the pedagogy. It wasn't until junior college that an art history teacher I had was able to draw together the art, the history, the political science, the economics and the cultural anthropology into a living whole. I learned more during those two art history classes than in several years of public school.

Perhaps the very word "history" provokes groans and tuning-out among younger people. I was fortunate to have an auto shop teacher who kept a flat-twin washing machine powerplant in both working and cutaway model form. He was fond of saying that X number of decades later it was still going and the same could be said for a Model T.

Finally, I would like to mention that history is a continuum which stretches into the future as well as the past. At this moment there is on a drawing board (CAD/CAM screen) somewhere in the world a car which will never reach the showroom. Now, perhaps the car is taken to the running prototype stage and even displayed at a car show, but some economic or political event kills the project. This would be a "new" car that goes directly to the museum, so to speak. Obviously, we historians would not find out about it right away—the information would still be a trade secret of a sort. We would have to wait for the retirement or job change of someone involved in the project. One may be assured that the staff who worked on the project consider it history, even if it is not shared with the public until years later. **Allan Meyer P.O. Box 6695 Woodland Hills, CA 91365-6695 allan\_g\_y\_meyer@yahoo.com**

### It Happened Years Ago

#### One hundred years ago. . .

**August 22, 1901** The Cadillac Automobile Company was founded.

#### Ninety years ago. . .

**July 1, 1911** Charles F. Kettering debuted his self-starter.

#### Eighty-five years ago. . .

**July 11, 1916** President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Aid Road Act into law, establishing an interstate highway system in the United States.

#### Seventy years ago. . .

**August 31, 1931** The Ford Model A ended production.

#### Sixty years ago. . .

**August 3, 1941** The eastern United States began gasoline rationing.

#### Forty years ago. . .

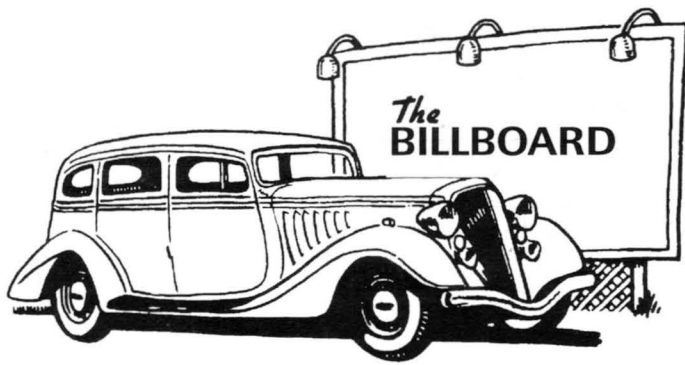
**July 1, 1961** Volkswagen hosted its first annual stockholders meeting.

#### Fifteen years ago. . .

**July 14, 1986** Raymond Lowey died in Monte Carlo. He was 92.

#### Ten years ago. . .

**July 1, 1991** Volkswagen formed the partnership with SMH, maker of the Swatch Watch, to build a small city car. In January of 1993, claiming lack of resources, Volkswagen bowed out,



**Wanted** People with first-hand knowledge and/or photographs on the history of automotive manufacturing in Indiana. The authors of *Cruise IN: A Guide to Indiana's Automotive Past and Present* seek information and materials from people who helped build the state's legacy in the automotive industry. Their research is for an upcoming book. More than 40 Indiana cities and towns have had automobiles either manufactured or assembled within their borders. Names like Auburn, Cord, Duesenberg and Studebaker have lent distinction to Indiana's automotive past and present. Anyone interested in participating in the project should contact **Dennis E. Horvath, 9220 N. College Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46240, (317) 844-6869 e-mail IndianaCars@Cruise-IN.com**

**Wanted** Ads, pictures, etc. relating to Wilson Bros., 14 Linden Avenue, Flushing, New York, a Pierce-Arrow, Hudson-Essex dealer 1926-1932, for a personal project. Beg, borrow, reward. Thanks, **F.D. Wilson, 5475 Ferseyna Way, Valley Springs, CA 95252 (209) 772-1488**

**Information Wanted** The expression "simplicate and add lightness" is well known and often quoted, but who said it first? I had thought it was Colin Chapman with his lightweight Lotus racing cars, but somebody last week said they thought it was Ettore Bugatti. An internet search brings up hundreds of references but mainly as an unattributed quotation. Some mention Henry Ford back in his aviation days. I have looked at the usual biographies of Chapman, Bugatti and Ford but can find no mention of these words, although their known engineering philosophies are all consistent with the principle. I am inclined to discount Bugatti as I think it would need an English speaking person to mangle the language in this way. I have also heard it said that Bugatti was "illiterate in four languages." Can anybody identify the original source of this automotive mantra? **Graham Orme-Bannister, Hillcroft, Bighton Lane, Bishops Sutton, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 0AU, UK. Email gjormeb@aol.com**

**Attention Asian and Australian SAH members** I'm currently seeking any printed material, preferably factory press or sales literature, on the Timor car. Information on this company/car is scarce in the United States in any form. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. **Sam Fiorani 307 Kingston Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518 e-mail SVFiorani@aol.com fax (610)277-2505**

# The American Highway

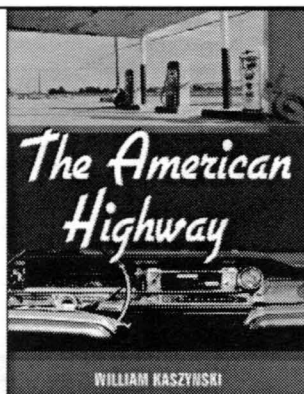
*The History and Culture of Roads in the United States*

William Kaszynski

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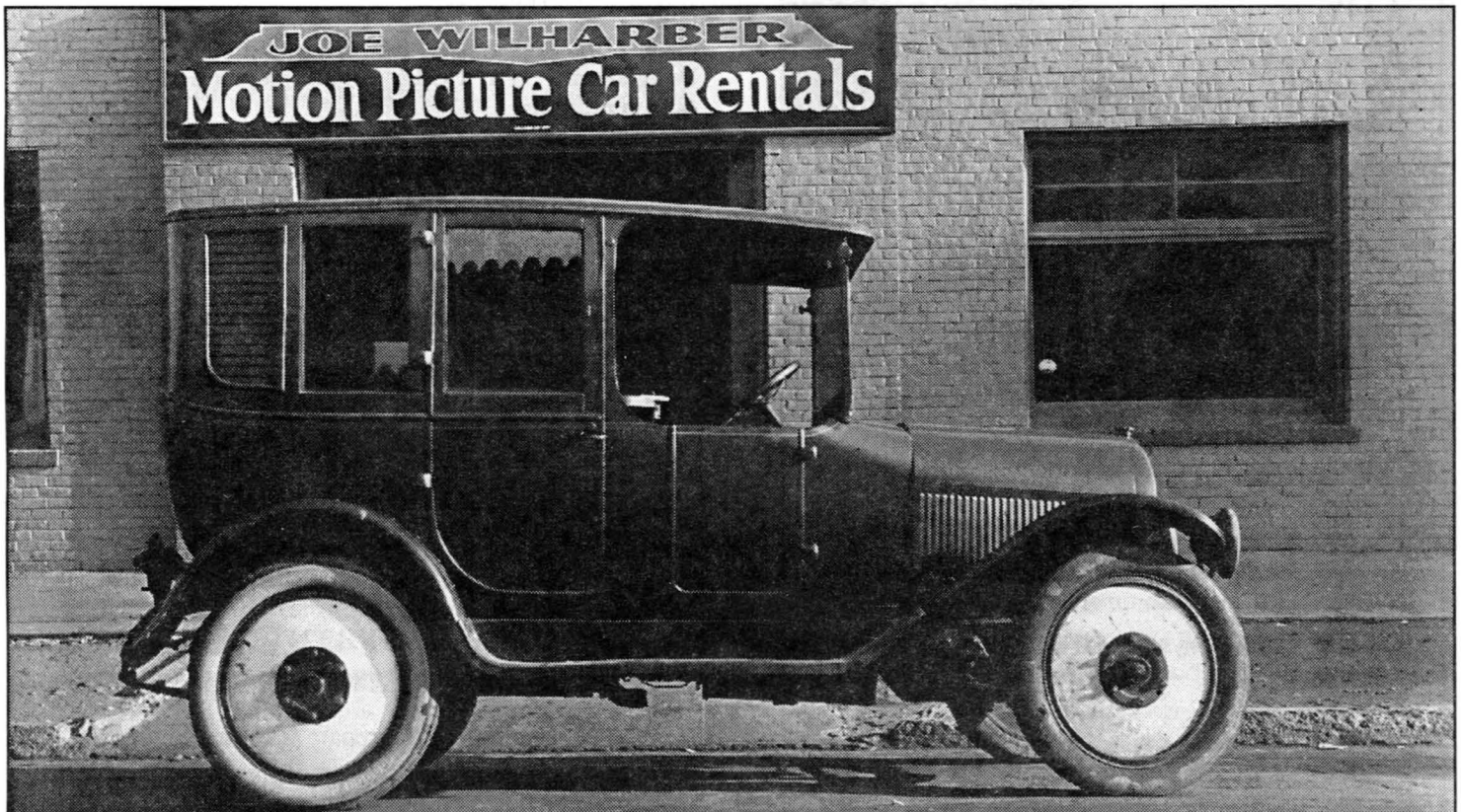
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"OLD TAXI CAB," shouts the legend on the back of this photo, apparently a page from a catalog of cars available from Joe Wilharber's Motion Picture Car Rentals. Today's enthusiasts will blanch at the rest of the notation: "Can be used for running shots, skids, to wreck or any rough work. \$25.00 per day with driver." Not identified further, it is almost certainly an early Checker, probably Model C of circa 1921. Kit Foster collection.