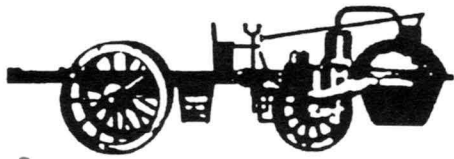


SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 224
September–October 2006



www.autohistory.org

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Cyclecars in South Africa, 1913–21

By Michael C. McGowan

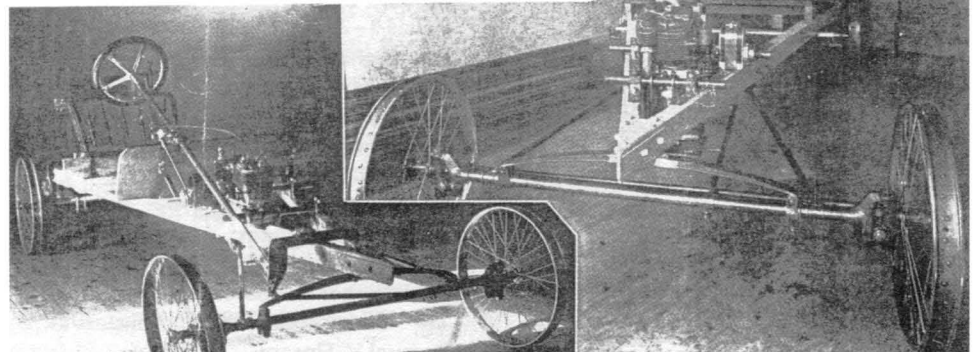
Prior to and during the period being considered, South Africa had no motor industry of its own; cars were all imports coming predominantly from England, America and Canada. The American "invasion" commenced around 1909 and by 1913 the British share of the market dropped from almost 85 percent in 1909 to 39.7 percent.

The South Africans viewed the entry of the cyclecar into European markets in 1910–11 as an opportunity to form their own motorcar companies, and the detailed construction and sourcing of parts and components for these vehicles was widely discussed in the motoring press of the time. Nevertheless, nothing happened and by the middle of 1913 the press was decrying the fact that the "real" cyclecar was "no more," having become a sophisticated vehicle with a four-cylinder water-cooled engine, shaft drive and differential, hood, screens and luxurious bodies. Basically they had become "nothing more or less than a replica of a modern motor car on a small scale." The price of such cars in South Africa was in the £200 to £240 range and it was estimated that perhaps six cars in the £100 to £120 price range could be sold for each one in the higher price bracket. Local car dealers noted that to sell an import at £100 would mean a factory gate price in Europe of around £70.

Enter Mr. Smith and Mr. Streeter. They each set about building a cyclecar. Of the two machines built by these gentlemen, Smith's was the simpler and he reckoned that if the cars could be assembled in batches of 20 to 30 then a £100 price tag was feasible. His specification comprised a triangular armored wooden frame with a V-twin eight-horsepower air-cooled engine fitted with a carburetor and Bosch magneto, all mounted between the chassis members near the front.

The drive is described as "at the side of the engine, and on the engine shaft is a multi-plate type of clutch, from which a belt drive is taken to a countershaft on which are mounted two large wooden belt pulleys suitable for a one-inch rubber belt."

continued on page 5



Chassis for the Smith car on the left and the Streeter car on the right. From *Motoring in South Africa*, August 1, 1913



Thomas S. Jakups, Editor

The September–October issue of the *Journal* is the second of the summer issues—and always a challenge for me. All is quiet on the SAH news front while members are busy with car events or enjoying their vacations. While every issue is dependent on member contributions, whether they be articles, letters or book reviews, the summer issues rely on them to the greatest degree. So I want to thank the members who stepped up and filled the pages of this issue.

Come to the Aid of Your *Journal*

Michael C. McGowan's article on cyclecars in South Africa offers a glimpse into a little-known area of automotive history. It is also an invitation for members to complete the story. Michael has uncovered fragments of information. Are there members out there who can add to his findings?

Members should think of the *Journal* as not only an outlet for their finished articles but also a sounding board for works in progress. Do you have such an article? Send it to the *Journal*. Those members with a similar interest will be interested in the approach you take and can be a valuable source of information.

And it need not be only articles. Frequent contributors *Bev Kimes* and *George Green* sent me a photograph and a news article, which they thought the members would enjoy (see "In the Mailbag" on page 11). Also on page 11 is the first install-

ment in a wonderful series that *Pete Whittier* will be contributing to the *Journal*.

There is so much historical knowledge and writing talent in our Society. I hope that more of you will take the time to share your expertise with the membership.

Beginning with issue 222 I have made some typeface changes in the *Journal*. This was in response to some readers' complaints about the legibility of the newsletter. Issue 222 was also stapled, an experiment that was successful. All future *Journals* that do not contain an insert will be stapled.

Finally, Issue 222 contained the front-page article on Daimler automobiles submitted by *Jerry McDermott* and the back-page "mystery car" submitted by *Bev Kimes* which happened to be an Austro-Daimler (identified by *Bryan Goodman* in issue 223). Pure coincidence . . . and spooky!

—Tom Jakups

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SAH Journal

Thomas S. Jakups, Editor, Adv. Mgr.
37 Wyndwood Road
West Hartford, CT 06107 USA
860-233-5973 Fax 860-232-0468
journal@autohistory.org
tjakups@mac.com

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**Copy Deadline for *Journal* 225
October 31st**

Cars, Careers and Cooperation



Michael L. Berger, President

One of the advantages of being SAH President has been the contact with members and non-members. I have received responses (both favorable and critical) to each of my first five columns, and have been impressed by the in-depth nature of the comments. In addition, as the first e-mail contact listed for questions and comments on our www.autohistory.org website, I am often the person that non-members contact when they have auto history questions.

One of the more intriguing inquiries came from a person who had just graduated from college with a degree in business administration, who really wanted, in his words, to “study cars.” His question was how does one become gainfully employed as an auto historian? Or, to put it differently, how does one make automotive history a career?

As it is for many of you, automotive history for me is necessarily an avocation, something I do in addition to my “daytime job.” Other members include it as part of their retirement. But for some, a lucky few, it truly is their career. The email from the recent college graduate started me thinking about what jobs one could recommend to someone who wanted to pursue auto history as a career. I do not view this as simply a theoretical exercise, because I believe it is related in several ways to the future of SAH and related automotive organi-

zations. If we expect the Society to continue to grow and prosper, we have to expand our membership base, and a significant part of that expanding base needs to be young adults.

In responding to the writer, I was able to come up with three ways that one could “study cars” for a living. First, I mentioned the career route with which I am most familiar, namely to pursue a doctoral degree in history or business and then teach in a college or university department that offers a major in technological history or the broader field of science, technology and society. (I know of no university with a major in automotive history *per se*—a topic to which I hope to return in a future column.)

The second option that occurred to me is to enter the museum world. As most of us know, in addition to major facilities like the Smithsonian and The Henry Ford, there are hundreds of smaller, more specialized automotive museums throughout the United States and the world.

A third possibility is to become a successful freelance writer specializing in automotive history. This can take the form of writing a regular column and/or authoring a series of historical articles or books with broad, commercial appeal. (While it is technically possible to make a living as a freelance writer, very few people are able to rely on such work as their sole source of income.)

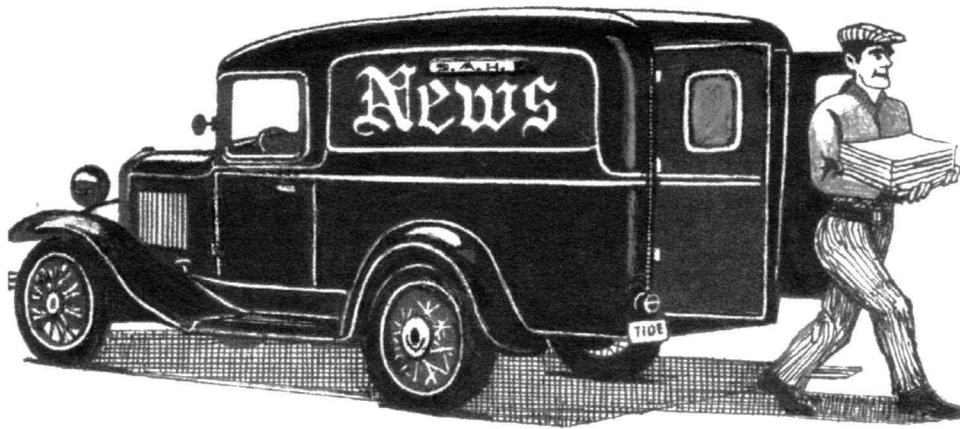
Interestingly, my correspondent replied that of the three choices presented, the one in museums was the most attractive to him, although he added the qualification that it had to be “an interactive one.” I found his response to be particularly noteworthy in light of my experiences last fall at the IX World Forum of Motor Museums in Detroit. My primary purpose for being there was to deliver a paper entitled “Auto Museums as Educational Partners with Colleges and Universities.” Following the pres-

entation, I was approached by a number of forum attendees who had questions and comments. I was struck by the similarities between their interests and ours, and by the abundant opportunities for cooperative projects they presented.

One has only to look at our Society’s recent history to see that motor museums and automotive historians are clearly kindred spirits. In 2005, the Society’s officers and Board of Directors held their spring meeting at the Toyota USA Museum in Torrance, California. Last spring’s Sixth Biennial Conference on Automotive History in South Bend, Indiana, was held in conjunction with the National Association of Automotive Museums, and we have committed to the same arrangement in 2008 in Nashville. There were two candidates on this year’s Board of Directors ballot whose primary automotive affiliation is with museums. We annually deposit Cugnot Award nominated books in a special collection that we have established at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, Indiana, and the SAH recently purchased the Ralph Dunwoodie collection of historical articles and arranged to have them housed in the AACA Library & Research Center in Hershey.

Motor museums want to preserve and interpret cars and automotive artifacts, research their development and explore the motivations and business history of the companies that brought them into being. In short, they “study cars.” In that respect, museum staffs and their patrons have much in common with our membership. Therefore, it would seem logical to pursue additional areas of cooperation, such as joint research projects, so that we can combine the relatively limited resources that we each have to our mutual benefit, irrespective of whether we as individuals view automotive history as our career or as our avocation.

—Mike Berger



Election Results SAH Board of Directors 2006–2009 Term

The following members were elected to the SAH Board of Directors for the term 2006–2009: *Robert R. Ebert, J. Douglas Leighton* and *Steve Wilson.*

Leroy D. Cole, Joseph S. Freeman
Co-Chairs, Nominating Committee

Hershey 2006 Reminders

This year's Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet will once again be held at the newly renovated Hershey Country Club. Reservation forms were mailed with *Journal 223*. **Also note the new location of the SAH tent on Green Field, spaces GBF 33-35.**

Menno Duerksen (1916-2005)

The Society has received word that long-time member *Menno Duerksen*, of Germantown, Tennessee, died on June 20, 2005 at his home. His passing came three days before his 89th birthday.

Born June 23, 1916, in Oklahoma, Menno was the eldest son of a Mennonite farming family. He became a reporter for the United Press syndicate, and covered the Nuremburg trials after World War II, as well as the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Later, he reported from St. Joseph Hospital for the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* the futile attempts to save the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., after he was shot in Memphis.

Menno joined SAH early in 1970, just missing the Founder designa-

tion of those who were involved in the formation of the Society. An exacting and thorough historian, he was justifiably proud of his early membership number 47. For many years he wrote a series titled "Free Wheeling" in *Cars & Parts* magazine, relating the histories of automobile makes and manufacturers, particularly the nearly-forgotten ones. One of these, "GM Turns 75," received the Carl Benz Award in 1984.

He is survived by his wife, Theresa, three stepsons and a step-daughter, 17 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Eulogist Stephen Price, writing in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, summed up Menno's later career in a single sentence: "More recently, Mr. Duerksen wrote for an antique car restoration magazine." Devotees of "Free Wheeling" will recognize that as the understatement of the year.

—Kit Foster

James Hoggatt, Jr. (1916-2006)

Hoosier Heritage Chapter founder *Sir James Hoggatt, Jr.*, of Indianapolis, Indiana, passed away on August 22, 2006. He was 90.

Jim was born in Herbst, Indiana. After serving in the Navy in the Pacific Theater in World War II he worked as a public accountant for 30 years. He was employed as a bookkeeper for the Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music and was closely associated with

restoration of the President Benjamin Harrison Home. He also worked for the Indianapolis Speedway Museum.

Like his father and brother, he had a lifelong interest in antique, classic and racing automobiles. He was a member of the Society of Automotive Historians, Classic Car Club, Stutz Club, American Bugatti Club and Cole Auto Club. Jim was also active in the Hoosier Swap Meet, Indiana Association of Museums, National Association of Automobile Museums and various archivist and hobby related groups.

He is survived by his wife, Norma.

As for the "Sir" before his name, this goes back to the early 1980s when the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum twice participated in the famed annual London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. While utilizing the restoration shop facilities at Beaulieu to prepare its 1903 Premier for the second time the conversation turned to personnel in attendance and the desire of Beaulieu to recognize the contributions beyond the call. The prize was to be a knighting as conferred by the Queen of the mother country but without the complete sanction and royal fanfare. It was immediately decided that Jim Hoggatt exceeded the criteria for this award and was to be known as Sir James for his outstanding efforts in assisting the IMS contingency with his superb knowledge and keen wit at the two Beaulieu events.

Editor's Note: Thank you to *Robert Barnard* for sending in Jim's obituary from the *Indianapolis Star* and the *Hoosier Heritage Chapter Newsletter*. Via e-mail, *Leroy Cole* shared his thoughts on Jim: "Jim was one of those members who made SAH work. Back in the '80s I was trying to find information on the Cole Motor Car and some one directed me to Jim Hoggatt. What a wealth of information and encouragement he was. That developed into a mutual admiration society, the Cole being the object of admiration.

"*Richard Scharzburg* and I sat down with the Hoosier Chapter in January 2000 and listened to Jim give

continued on page 11

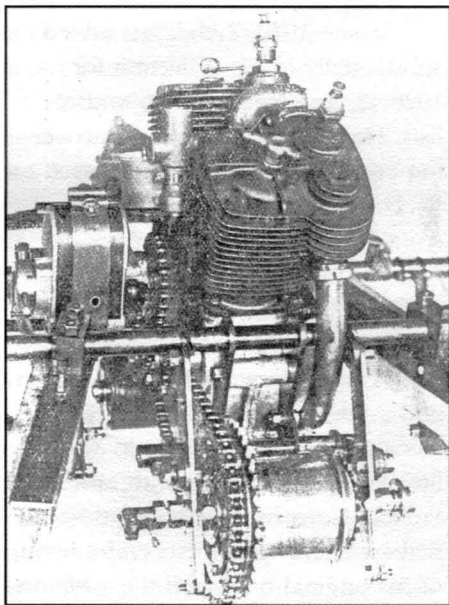
Cyclecars continued from page 1

The rubber belt was the final drive to the rear wheels.

The front suspension was by transverse leaf spring and the rear suspension was cantilever with half-elliptic springs. The 26-inch wire wheels were fitted with two-and-one-half-inch pneumatic tires. Steering was by means of stub axles; the triangular frame permitted a large steering lock.

In all, the car was very simple. It had mudguards and, given the poor condition of the roads, 12 inches of ground clearance. There was only a single speed and the gear ratio was around 5.5 to 6.0:1. Total weight including two passengers was assessed as 650 pounds.

Streeter's car was built to a "more pretentious specification." The car featured the same triangular type chassis but was fitted with a heavy Armstrong-type eight-horsepower engine and three-speed gearbox. The drive from the engine to the first countershaft was by roller chain and from the gearbox a second chain to a simple countershaft with rubber belts taking the final drive to the rear wheels. While Smith's car had a 97-inch wheelbase and 52-inch track, Streeter's car had an 87-inch wheelbase with the same 52-inch track.



Gear box on Streeter car. From *Motoring in South Africa*, August 1, 1913

Another locally-built car was reported in August 1915; this was by a Mr. Olive, a member of the Cape Peninsula Motor Club. His car featured a hickory frame reinforced by steel plates and a Buckingham 90° V-twin 1500cc engine which was claimed to develop "16 to 18 horsepower without being all out." The engine was complete with a Senspray carburetor and Bosch magneto. Like Smith's car, there was considerable road clearance thus allowing the car "easy passage through deep drifts." The wheelbase was 90 inches with a track of 48 inches. Suspension was by half-elliptic springs at the front and three-quarter-elliptic springs at the rear. Wheels were 700x80 with 1-gauge wire spokes. The car was registered in Cape Town, number CA 1927.

A look through *The Beaulieu Encyclopædia of the Automobile* will produce only one company in South Africa that built cars prior to 1925. This is Streeter & Smith, which in Cape Town in 1913 reputedly built some cyclecars. I would maintain this is an error. The error could have occurred due to an incorrect interpretation of the use of the word "Messrs." in a magazine quote. From the August 1, 1913 edition of *Motoring in South Africa*, ". . . a talk with two of Cape-town's (sic) pioneer cyclecar builders, Messrs. Streeter and Smith, . . ." The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers for Messrs.: plural of Mr. prefix to name of firm or to list of men's names." I maintain the second of the two options is the correct one. *Motoring in South Africa*, in its August 1, 1915 edition, reports, "from time to time there have been rumours that a motor factory or something of the sort was to be established near Cape Town, but so far no development of this nature has materialised." In my research I have been unable to find any company registered as Streeter & Smith in Cape Town. The article continued and noted that Olive's car is the third to be built, thus Smith and Streeter only produced one car each.

The article also alluded to a fourth car in the course of construction by a well-known member of the Model Engineering Society. The car was delayed as the member was at the war front in South West (South Africa was British; South West Africa [now Namibia] was German).

Material for further research: Around 1913 W.B. Crofton built two cyclecars. Both were registered in Johannesburg, but further detail is lacking.

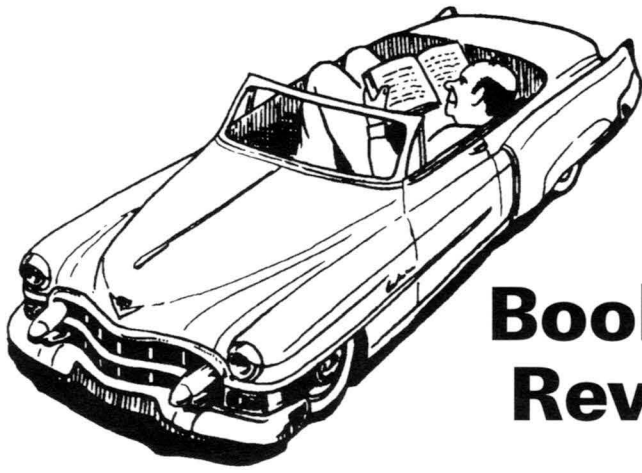
In 1920 J.Q. Donovan, of the Kroonstad district, Orange Free State, built a two-seater cyclecar. The car had wire spoke wheels and was capable of 45 km/h. Donovan covered several hundred miles in the car into 1921.

"Tinsnips" in Aliwal North, Cape Province built a two-seater cyclecar with an Enfield motorcycle engine and two-speed transmission. It utilized a chain to countershaft and double belts to the rear wire spoke wheels and was completed around October 1920.

In 1919 a so-called "Late SA Model" was built by a farmer from Hermon in the Worcester district, Cape Province. The vehicle had a marine-type twin vertically opposed engine and magneto ignition with friction disc and chain transmission. A Ford differential was incorporated in the rear axle. Suspension was by transverse leaf spring at the front and full-elliptic springs at the rear. A speed of 24km/h was said to be attainable. There were no brakes; braking was effected by slipping the driving disc while in reverse. The car had large wood cart-type wheels.

In 1921 a car was built in Johannesburg that sported a two-seater roadster body on a Chevrolet chassis. The car was "quite elaborate" and featured disc wheels.

As reference for this article I used *Motoring in South Africa* (The Official Journal of the Royal Automobile Club in South Africa), *The Motor Weekly* and *The South African Motorist*. Finally, many thanks to the helpful staff at the South Africa National Library in Cape Town. ■



Book Reviews

• The Complete U.S. Automobile Sales Literature Checklist

1946–2000, by Kenneth N. Eisbrener 2005, ISBN 13: 978-1-58388-155-2; ISBN 10: 1-58388-155-7. Softbound, 168 pages, Iconographix, P.O. Box 466, Hudson, WI 54016 USA, \$24.95

To properly appreciate Kenneth Eisbrener's book on automotive sales literature, a brief discussion of the subject matter would be appropriate as well as the place of the new book among earlier such checklists.

To begin with, the automotive sales literature included in such lists comprise manufacturer-issued printed materials depicting a brand's range of vehicles or single models such as convertibles and station wagons. These materials comprise catalogs (stapled items), folders (non-stapled items) and items on accessories, colors, upholstery and special features (such as Oldsmobile's early Hydra-Matic booklets). Sales literature also includes reprints of magazine articles, generally test reports. These materials are available at point-of-purchase, that is to say, a dealer's new-car showroom. Sales materials also include factory-prepared direct-mail pieces sent under the dealer's name. Finally, the term also includes materials intended for salesmen's exclusive use, such as showroom albums. Service manuals, non-manufacturer-issued paint charts, wiring diagrams and dealer mailer service reminders are most emphatically not sales literature in this reviewer's opinion.

There are two bases on which checklists of automotive sales literature should be judged: information (accuracy, completeness) and utility

Here's the historical overview of earlier lists, all out of print. *The Autoenthusiasts International List* (model years 1934-42; 1946-61) The first attempt to compile a list of U.S. automotive sales literature of which I am aware was the effort by Autoenthusiasts International (AEI) during the 1970s. AEI, which began life as Auto Maniacs, was a Detroit-based group from the late 1940s through the late 1970s, a number of whose members, such as Stan Yost and Jeff Godshall, became members of SAH. Periodically, AEI would send its members lists of known literature issued by U.S. manufacturers for a single model year plus occasional supplements as further items for that model year became known. Before ceasing in 1979, the project covered the nine model years immediately preceding World War II and the first 16 years following, 25 model years in all.

A sample entry for the 1952 Ford station wagon: "Fldr., 9x7, Wagons, clr., 7736, Rev. 5-52." This compact entry describes the nature of the piece, its size, subject, color rather than black and white, the factory form number and the fact that it is a May 1952 revision of the original folder.

American Automobile Sales Literature Checklist, 1928-42 This 1979 work by Robert N. Tuthill is the seminal checklist. It is based on his collection

and while comprehensive is necessarily incomplete. Tuthill carried the AEI concept further by numbering individual items, stating their titles and listing them in hierarchical order: color catalogs, non-color catalogs, color folders, non-color folders, commercial vehicle material and accessories. Tuthill interpreted the term "automobile" to include commercial vehicles built on passenger car chassis. He did not include any sales literature that did not depict at least one automobile. In that sense, the list is incomplete. Published by Bookman Dan! of Baltimore, the book became an instant success. Its handy, pocket-fitting, user-friendly size (4" x 9") endeared it to collectors, and its nomenclature of items was a boon to dealers.

Here's how Tuthill describes the April 1938 revised version of the 1938 Dodge color catalog: "38-2 Large colored catalog, 'It's Here to Save You Money,' front of blue car & woman with roses on cover, 11x11, 24 pages incl. covers, 10 models on scenic backgrounds, revised text Form 303 4-38." Thus, if you see a dealer's reference to "Dodge Tuthill 38-2," that is a reference to the Tuthill checklist where a full description of the item may be found. Sometimes a dealer will describe an item as "Not in Tuthill," and you may consider that a comparatively rare item.

Since 1979, Tuthill has added substantially to his collection for 1928-42, and maintains up-to-date-lists. He has also added items covering years before 1928, again based on his collection. He has not, however, compiled lists of literature for cars whose manufacture ceased before 1928, such as Haynes or Winton. Some of the 1928-42 makes have been carried forward through 1966 and a few others through 1980. He has also compiled pre-World War II literature lists of some of the principal French, German, Italian and British makes. There was no second edition of his original book and the additional lists have not been published,

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The Mitte Special

Most oval track race car builders are copycats. Ted and Earl Mitte of Detroit were not and they built a remarkable big car (sprint car) in the mid-1930s. The car's unusual appearance had led to speculation that the car was a European factory built machine for road racing. Not so, it was totally home grown.

It is not known what inspired the Mitte Brothers to build something so different from the normal and proven dirt track race cars. The car had independent four-wheel suspension. The power plant was the somewhat common Riley four-port Model B Ford conversion—this was later replaced by a more powerful Hal engine. As evidenced in the photos the workmanship was immaculate. That beautiful body was professionally built by Speedway Engineering in Indianapolis.

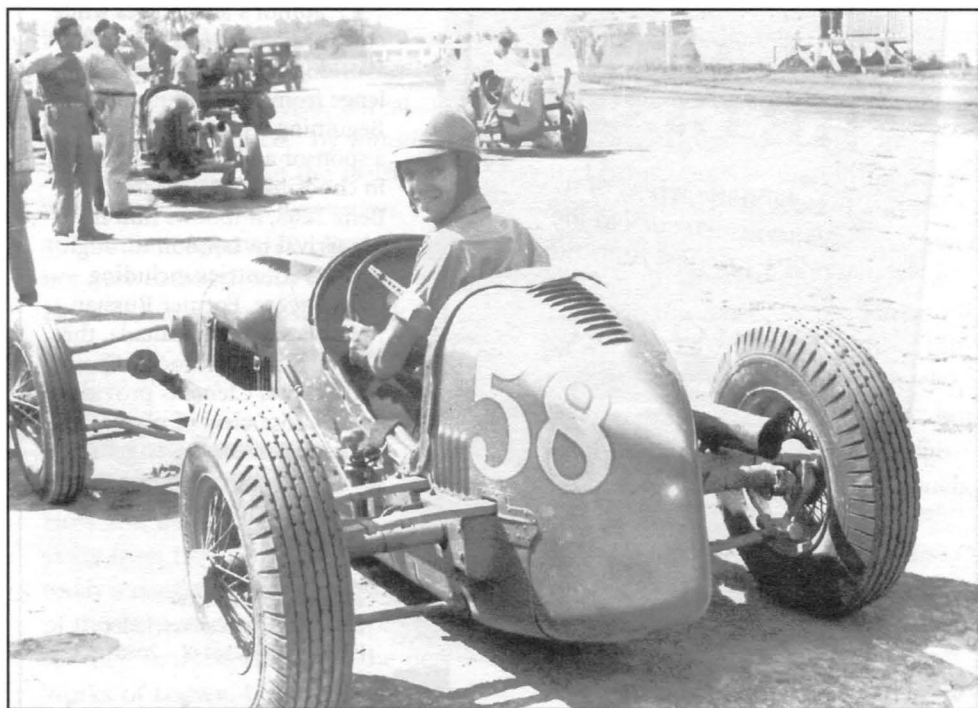
The car was raced in the Michigan–Indiana area both before and after World War II. The Mittes experimented with several different suspension combinations but retained the four-wheel independent setup. The photos also indicate that there are no radius rods, and it looks like the suspension would twist under acceleration and braking forces. Nonetheless, the Mittes put a lot of work and, obviously, a lot of money into their unique race car.

It would be nice to say that the car was a huge success and a race winner. Things didn't exactly work out that way as the Mittes seemed more interested in experimentation than in winning. The car was known, perhaps somewhat less than affectionately, as "Wobble Wheels." Duke Nalon called the car, "Rubber Legs." Even if winning wasn't a part of the Mitte Brothers' experiment they are to be hugely admired for trying something different and not going along with the flow. They don't make them like that anymore—neither the Mitte Brothers nor the Mitte Special. ■

By Don Radbruch



The beautiful Mitte Special in about 1940. The photo was probably taken at Jackson, Michigan—Chuck Rice is the driver. (Saal-Brownie Collection)



The Mitte car with the four-port Riley engine in place. That is Ted Mitte at the right. It is believed that both Mitte Brothers were crippled by disease but they still built this remarkable machine. (Saal-Brownie Collection)

Reviews continued from page 6

though they have been made available through Bob's generosity to dealers and friends.

"Single-marque List" Others have opted not to be comprehensive but to concentrate on individual marques. Perhaps the two best known books of this genre are *Ferrari: Brochures and Sales Literature—A Source Book 1946-1967*, by Richard F. Merritt (1976), and a similar book he co-authored with Susann C. Miller, *Porsche: Brochures and Sales Literature—A Source Book 1948-1965* (1978).

Another interesting effort, now long out of print, is Thomas T. Solley's 1991 work *Rolls-Royce and Bentley (1931) Sales Literature 1905-1965*, with the collaboration of Jack Triplett. This comprehensive 40-page book with color and black-and-white illustrations adopted a complicated numbering system reflecting its author's career as a curator of an art museum.

Occasionally one finds a marque

book with an appendix of known sales literature such as *Richard M. Langworth's Kaiser-Frazer: The Last Onslaught on Detroit*. A few collectors have compiled their own lists on individual marques, such as Lincoln and Graham, which have not been published.

American Automobile Literature Checklist 1946-1979 This was Ken Eisenbrener's initial effort, published in 1995. It was based not on a single collection but on a number of sources. To the extent that it filled a need not met elsewhere, it was to carry forward the listing of postwar sales literature beyond the years covered by AEI, that is to say, from 1962 through 1979. Entries were arranged chronologically/alphabetically, that is to say, by years with makes listed alphabetically under them. There was no table of contents and no page numbers (years were indicated) so that if, for example, one wanted to access Chrysler for 1965, one would first have to find one of the pages marked "1965" and hunt

up "Chrysler" under it. Though recognizing its informative value, readers universally abhorred the layout.

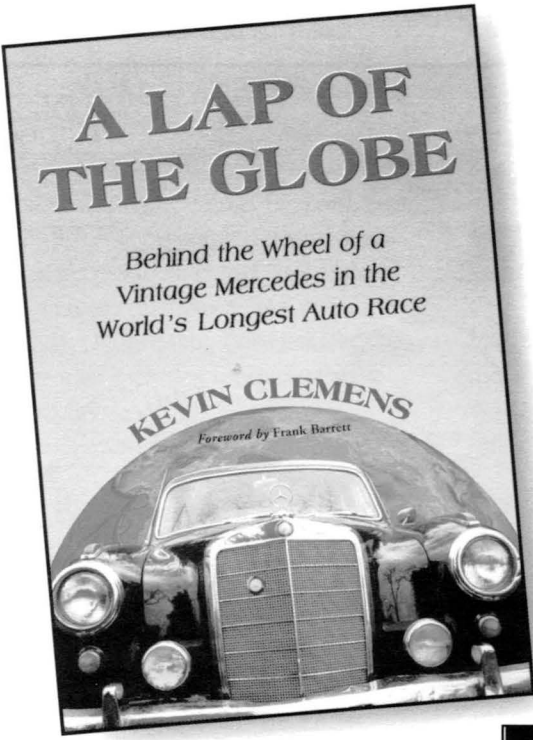
The Complete U.S. Automobile Literature Checklist 1946-2000 This is the book under review and it is a vast improvement over its predecessor. A proper Table of Contents precedes an informative Foreword on sales literature by SAH member Byron Olson. The typeface and layout are generally easier on the eyes, and tick-off boxes are provided. But in one important sense the old book was more user-friendly: it was spiral-bound and it required only one hand to hold it open, and no hands if it were laid flat. The new book is perfect bound and requires two hands to read.

Entries are reminiscent of the simpler AEI style, rather than Tuthill. For example, the third entry under Chevrolet for 1950 is "full line cf, 12"x7.5", 12pgs, 14 models, car on cover ('Printed in USA')." The fourth entry notes a variant in the color folder; the description is identical but ends "(Litho in USA')." Titles would have been helpful as collectors generally do not troll flea markets with tape measure in hand.

In content, the book appears to consist of the 1979 book unchanged plus the 1980-2000 updates. This split is indicated by the separate entries on Ford, Chevrolet, and Dodge (light) truck literature which begin in 1980 but make no such division in the 1979 models. The GMC truck list does not begin until 1989. Separate sections on corporate literature begin on varying dates: 1991 for GM, 1994 for Chrysler and 1996 for Ford. These dates appear arbitrary and give the book a feeling of incompleteness, in spite of its title. These comments are meant to be helpful as I understand that Eisenbrener intends periodic updates. It would be most informative to see the list extended to cover light trucks and corporate literature for all the postwar years.

Eisenbrener deserves support, appreciation and thanks for taking on this monumental task. In spite of an


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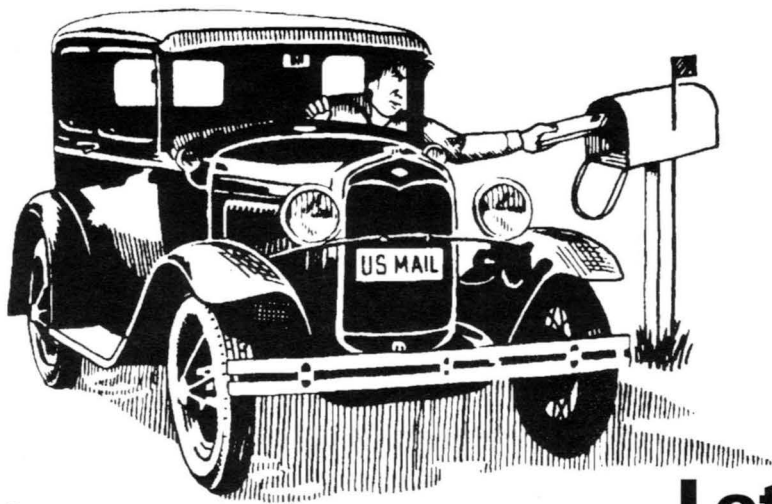
A LAP OF THE GLOBE
Behind the Wheel of a
Vintage Mercedes in the
World's Longest Auto Race
KEVIN CLEMENS
Foreword by Frank Barrett

This memoir recounts the author's adventures while competing in the Around the World in 80 Days Motor Challenge from May to July 2000. Beginning with his search for a sponsor and his deliberations in choosing a 1959 Mercedes-Benz 220S, it follows him from his arrival in London through various countries including Italy, Greece, Former Russian Republics, China, Canada, the United States, Morocco, Spain and France. Clemens provides an up-close view of places most westerners never get to see and of the rigors of competition over varying terrain in an old car.

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Letters

Royce's First Love a Decauville

The "Three Henrys" article in the current *SAH Journal* interested me; I recall a similar piece in *Old Motor* magazine back in the early '70s but can't remember the author, possibly *Paul Woudenberg*?

I would take issue, however with *Jim Schild's* saying that the car Henry Royce acquired which stimulated him to build his own was a De Dion Bouton.

All the Rolls-Royce writings I have read over the years agree that the vehicle was a Decauville, itself a French car of good repute at the time. Something the Rolls-Royce accounts tend to leave out is that Royce's car was a design heavily based upon the French car, both, for instance, being of similar size and with four-stroke parallel twin engines incorporating crank throws spaced 180 degrees apart.

This arrangement, common in early French light cars gives excellent primary balance at the expense of a slight rocking couple and very unevenly spaced firing intervals. In every 720 degree four-stroke cycle the firing intervals are spaced at 180 and 540 degrees. Some readers may recall this arrangement being common on early American two-cylinder tractors with John Deere persevering with such a configuration successful-

ly until 1960. Such engines have a very distinctive "skipping" exhaust note.

Anyway, the point is that whilst Royce's first car undoubtedly incorporated the superb workmanship and attention to detail for which he became famous, it also represented the first example of his lifelong practice of always copying a good idea or design for incorporation into his own cars, and the prototype in this case was not a De Dion Bouton.

—*Nigel Stennett-Cox*

[Editor's Note: In response to Nigel's letter *Jim Schild* wrote that after he re-checked his reference, "Great Marques, Rolls-Royce," by *Jonathan Wood*, he agreed that the Decauville was indeed Royce's inspiration. He added that "Apparently, Royce was not very satisfied with the new vehicle as it had to be pushed back to Cooke Street and was then left in a shed to await repairs.]

Changing Tastes in Automobile Design

How will automobile enthusiasts 50 years from now view the styling of today's passenger vehicles? Will some of the current crop be as appreciated for their timeless beauty as the best works of Loewy, Darrin, Earl, Exner, Mitchell and Walker? Will one or two even make it into the Museum of Modern Art?

Or will the last decade or so be considered a Dark Ages, when styling considerations gave way to the requirements of streamlining to enhance fuel economy, and thick pillars for structural rigidity? Will "cab forward" design and New Beetles and PT Cruisers be considered aberrations or evolutions? In other words, is our whole styling aesthetic changing?

I'm moved to these questions after viewing pictures of the Chrysler 300C and Dodge Magnum. I was not a fan of the nose-heavy styling of Chrysler Concordes and Dodge Intrepids of recent years and had hoped that their replacements would embody in some way the gracefulness of Virgil Exner's '55, '56, '57 and '58 designs. Yet the new models seem at first look to move in another direction entirely, back to the chopped-top look of so many 50s customs. The step-down Hudson reborn, perhaps?

Is this squat, hunkered-down look, shared also with the various Hummers and the next Cadillac Seville, the new paradigm? Whether or not you consider this an attractive evolution, a lot of auto company executives are betting that it has commercial appeal.

Not having to worry about such concerns, I wish automobile design had been frozen in time in model year 1953. That year, three of the most beautiful automobiles ever made were on sale in America: the Studebaker Starliner, the Kaiser Manhattan and the Jaguar XK-120M coupe (without the fender skirts, with the wire wheels). They represented no one "look," but three distinct approaches to design. Are we ever to see the likes of such artistry again, or of such elegant details as the '61-'62 GM A-pillars? Or, with the largest selling passenger carriers in 2003 being trucks, will it even matter?

Remember that *Twilight Zone* episode on the subject of "human" beauty?

—*Pete Whittier*

SAH on the Right Track

Tom Jakups's comments about the "lack of interest" in the Society of Automotive Historians [among hobbyists] in his Editorial Comment (*Journal* 223) rang a bell loud and clear for me.

Exhibiting my paintings of antique cars and trucks for 15 years at the AACA Fall Meet in Hershey has been a valuable experience. It didn't matter how good my work might be; the frequent comment would be, "That's interesting, but THIS IS WHAT I WANT." With thousands of people coming to Hershey with a common interest in old vehicles, automotive history should be a welcomed part of the experience. But it isn't. Most everyone is looking for "WHAT THEY WANT," whether it be finding parts, showing or selling their antique treasures or having a good time with their buddies swapping tales. We make our own choices and all too often automotive history is not a top priority.

Furthermore, most of us are driven by the news media. Among the news of the troubles in Detroit, the endless marketing of new vehicles, and the ongoing coverage of NASCAR there is rarely heard or read something of historical automotive significance, and then only a reference of fact.

Therefore, relatively few people interested in cars and trucks raise the periscope above the overwhelming sea of media information to discover historical information—to learn more about the people who made it happen throughout the 20th century . . . and into the 21st. In my opinion, once a person gets beyond "car subjects" it is the fascinating *people* and how they found ways to improve the product—people like Charles Kettering, Ferdinand and Ferry Porsche, Henry B. Joy and Henry Ford—that are the most interesting. Automotive history is so huge that no one will ever learn it all.

People who know me know that I've been a genuine "car guy" for

more than seven decades. It has been a great pleasure for me to meet and talk with so many fascinating and knowledgeable people at SAH banquets. The Society is the place for anyone truly interested in automobiles to discuss and learn more about our common interest in the worldwide automotive field. Our members continue to be pleasantly helpful with high standards for authenticity. SAH encouragement of young people to tackle and write about automotive history is very good. The formation of a motor sport historical section provides a way to connect with auto racing fans.

So we are growing and we are on the right track—and open to anyone who chooses to rise above the media blitz. As a not-for-profit enterprise we may lack the visibility of other media. No matter, it's the people who make the difference and SAH has that in spades.

—John B. Satterthwaite

[Editor's Note: John, who presented a show of 62 of his paintings at the AACA Museum in 2004, is retiring and will be exhibiting his work for the last time this fall at Hershey, Red Field, NC27–28.]

Any Takers?

I wonder whether, one day, someone—or perhaps several people in a collaborative project—might be able to write an international history of car advertising of the last 100 years. If SAH members worldwide could contribute duplicates or good copies of their home-country and travel finds, old and new, to a central "pot" over time, might there eventually be enough ads to illustrate a stand-alone publication? Now that motoring is established almost everywhere and people travel so widely, I feel that there must be potential for an interesting history, even if in some countries agency-created car advertising only took off after World War II or more recently. I'd be happy to contribute British ads.

—Heon Stevenson

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occasional error and the omissions noted, this is the only game in town and if you collect postwar U.S. literature, it should be a must for you. It would be a tribute if the book inspired our European members to record the literature heritage of their countries' marques.

—Taylor Vinson

El Garaje Nacional 1930–1950 de los Dorados Años del Automóvil en España a su Época Negra

by César Oliver y Monteso, 2006, ISBN 609-9145-8, Softbound in Spanish, 153 pages, profusely illustrated with 150 photos of the era including 17 in color and 8 drawings, Imprenta Castilla, 22 euros plus mailing fees. Contact the author cesaroliver@wanadoo.es or by mail to 31540 Buñuel, Navarra, Spain.

This milestone work is the logical sequel to Mr. Oliver's first book which I reviewed in these pages in 1998. Beautifully illustrated with photos and advertisements of the time period covered, this work paints a vivid picture of motoring in Spain in the years 1930 to 1950. Subjects covered include accidents and the introduction of car insurance by the Guardian company as early as 1925, the first road signs and the commercial invasion of gas stations. Space is also devoted to racing and tourism including tourist buses as well as the companies which manufactured them in Spain. Mr. Oliver states that it was his intention to show, from an automotive perspective, the social life of the Spanish people and automobiles in general and he has done this with a great balance of photos and text.

In recent years it has become permissible to write about the dark period in Spanish history which began with the rise of militarism under General Franco in 1936 and the Spanish civil war, and this book is no exception. Mr. Oliver deals with the period and the effects of the war on the auto

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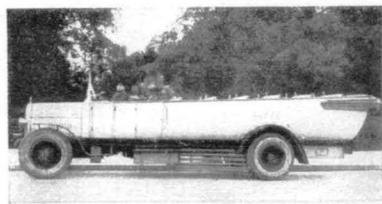
a summary of where the SAH had been and where it was heading. Names flowed from his mind and heart and the conclusion was that we were on the right road, in the right vehicle and going in the right direction. Jim's voice and archives now are quiet as he has gone from researcher to being researched.

"We have extended our sympathy to his widow, Norma, along with the appreciation of SAH for sharing Jim with us."

In the Mailbag

Beverly Rae Kimes forwarded a Deutsche Berfehrsbücher, or German travel booklet, that had been sent to her by William Ulrich.

The booklet contains a number of landmarks in what appears to be Berlin between the two world wars along with some route maps and period advertising. Bev took particular delight in the Ausflugswagen pictured below.



Ausflugswagen (offen und geschlossen) für Besichtigungs- und Überlandfahrten

sowie
Omnibusse für Stadtfahrten

vermietet

Allgemeine Berliner
Omnibus-Aktien-Gesellschaft

Zentralbüro: Krausenstr. 9-10
Fernsprecher: Zentrum 70 34.

George Green sent in a *Detroit Free Press* article about a reworking of Henry Ford's Quadricycle.

Drafting and shop students at Roseville High School built a vehicle that is part Quadricycle with two nine-foot-long bicycle chains propelling the rear wheels and part hybrid car with battery-powered front-wheel drive and a roof made of

solar panels to recharge the batteries. To get the car moving, students pump the pedals; at 10 mph the batteries kick in and run the engine.

The Prototype Hybrid Quadricycle is one 170 entries in the 2006 Closing the Technology Gap in Education Awards sponsored by Daimler/Chrysler in conjunction with the Detroit Science Center.

64 Years Ago—in *Popular Science Monthly*

In the eleventh month since America's entry into World War II, the November 1942 issue of this then 70-year-old magazine featured the debut of the Jeep's "Big Brother," the luxurious (compared to the Jeep) and long-lived Dodge three-quarter-ton truck. On the home front, gasoline was rationed—by regulation then, today by price; and at least part of the response was the same.

"What happens," *P-S* asked, "when you cut your motor in half?" The answer, on a 359-mile run along New York's Hudson River valley (average speed, 32 mph), was a mileage improvement of over 20 percent—far more than any increase that has been shown using today's computer-controlled cylinder deactivation technology.

The test vehicles were '38 Ford V-8 sedans. The changes involved "... cutting out half the cylinders by stopping their valve action, reducing the gas reaching the others by one half and short-circuiting the unneeded spark plugs."

The power loss was noticeable—more than half—and of course the changes couldn't be switched off from behind the wheel. But "harmful vibration" it was asserted, "is a myth." Time Marches On!

—Pete Whittier

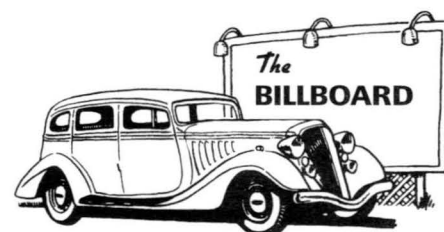
Editor's Note: Pete Whittier has an extensive collection of automobile magazines and considers them "interesting and insightful first rough drafts of history." Pete will be contributing more interesting items from the pages of these magazines in upcoming issues of the *Journal*.

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mobile industry when factories including those of GM, Ford and Chrysler were taken over and most vehicles were taken for military use. There are even photos of the documents used to expropriate his father's last car, a 1930 Chrysler 70. Also included are details of the law of 1939 regulating the registration and use of motor vehicles.

This work is a must have for those with an interest in Spanish history of the era, European automobile history of the period or the the automotive assembly plants and advertising of those years.

—Tom Krill



Swappers Wanted Any U.S. member interested in swapping local Ford performance brochures for the current Mustang and performance Fords from the US for all the main brochures for the Mustang with the exception of the following: 2002 Mustang and 2002 Cobra SVT, 2004 Mustang, 2005 Cobra SVT and the 2006 Mustang and 2006 Cobra SVT? **Barry Kirkpatrick**
11 Glamis Street, Mt. Martha, Victoria 3934 Australia,
barjill@bigpond.com

Material Wanted For an in-depth study on the Macauley's, Vincent Brothers and other Packard employees during the Classic Era, especially for the period 1934-1936. **David Edyvean, P.O. Box 363, Rotterdam Junction, NY 12150,**
dkvean@capital.net

Information Wanted Whereabouts of books on 4- and 8-cyl Ford flat-head racing, such as Louis Chevrolet-Frontenac, Zora Arkus-Duntov-Ardun and other such conversions.

Rusty Hubble 557 N. Columbia St., Frankfort, IN 46041 765-654-9663

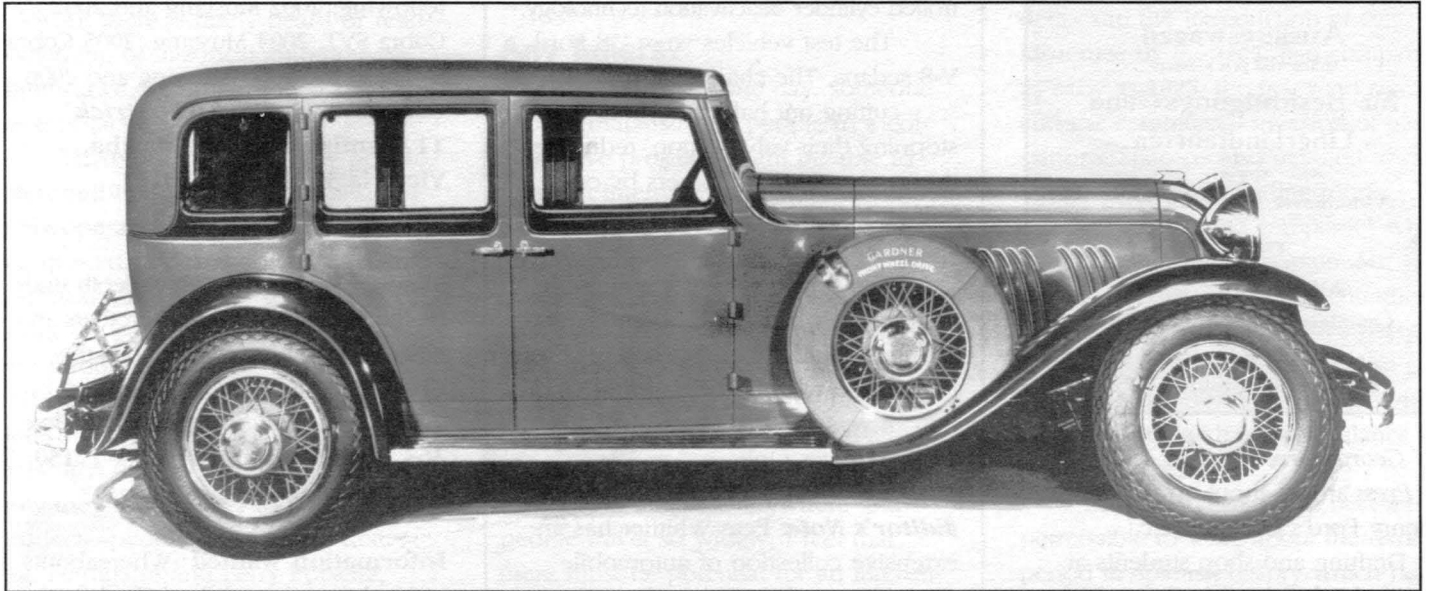
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FOR THE 1930 NEW YORK AUTOMOBILE SHOW the Gardner Motor Car Company, of St. Louis, provided a front-wheel drive prototype with, for the era, quite radical exterior departures from the then-normal designs. This car had a raked windshield devoid of exterior sunshade and a similarly-raked metal shell hiding the honeycomb radiator. The long stretch between the windshield and the front bumper was somewhat relieved by the addition of fender-mounted spare wheels. The headlights were mounted very high with the tops of the chromed light housings level with the top of the hood. Louvers in the sides of the hood were slightly curved rather than straight, presumably inspired by the Duesenberg Model J. The wire wheels were impressive and an improvement over the wooden-spoked ones then so common. *G. Marshall Naul collection*