

# SAH Journal



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# Contents

- 3 PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE
- 4 HISTORY ON THE FIELD:  
THE AMELIA ISLAND CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE
- 8 A TRIBUTE TO GRIFFITH BORGESON
- 11 BOOK REVIEWS

## Billboard

**Wanted:** I am currently working on an extensive article about the **Hoffman X-8**, which will be published in *Oldtimer Markt*, Europe's leading classic car magazine. So I am very interested in everything about and around this mysterious, extremely interesting car.

All I have is the five-page article in *Special Interest Autos*, Sept.-Oct. 1974 issue, written by *Michael Lamm*. It would make me happy if there can be something more unearthed – pictures, articles, specs, knowledge etc. First of all, there is information needed about whom Hoffman made the car for: Studebaker, Mathis, Fisher Bros., GM, Ford?

In this context I am also interested in everything about Ford's rear engine projects of the '30s and the "Sterkenburg Dream Car" styled by John Tjaarda. There seem to be close connections between those developments

and the Hoffman X-8, especially since Ford made some serious exercises with engines in X configuration. Please contact:

*Wolfgang Blaube*  
Hamburg, Germany  
[wolfgang@blaube.com](mailto:wolfgang@blaube.com)

(To see the car, search "1935 Hoffman X-8 - Jay Leno's Garage" and see it on YouTube.)

### SAH Annual Meeting of Members & Gala Awards Banquet:

The annual meeting and gala awards banquet will take place on **Friday, October 6th**, in the Traditions Dining Room at the Hershey Country Club in Hershey, Pennsylvania (that's during the annual AACA "Hershey" Fall Meet). For details and how to register, please go to the SAH website: [autohistory.org](http://autohistory.org).

*continued on page 3*

**Front cover:** This is a 1900 De Dion Bouton et Trépardoux Vis-à-Vis, owned by Michael and Diane Seidemann of Kenner, LA, pictured at the Amelia Island Concours d'Élégance (AIC). It is in egress from the podium where it was awarded The Sandra Alford Fashion Trophy (for the best presentation of fashion and the automobile). This picture ties in with our *History on the Field* article; a look at vehicles with automotive history appeal. In addition to an extensive show program, the AIC also displays the cars with descriptive placards; here's the description of the Vis-à-Vis: "De Dion Bouton Trépardoux began producing steam-driven vehicles in the 1890s. A decision was made to design and produce gasoline engines, at which time Trépardoux (a steam engineer) left the company. Thereafter De Dion Bouton began producing gasoline-powered tricycles and quadricycles with air-cooled engines, then this model car which has a water-cooled engine. The historical significance of this car cannot be understated. At the time of manufacture (1900), De Dion Bouton was the world's largest manufacturer of internal combustion engines. The engines were used by dozens of early car manufacturers and many were made in bicycle shops. Engineering innovations included an atmospheric intake valve (not cam driven), exhaust valve decompression (for speed regulation) and independent rear suspension. Engineer Bouton intended the car to be driven by adjusting spark advance and throttle for optimum running and for speed over the road to be regulated by decompressing the exhaust valve."

**Back cover:** Also from our History on the Field article, the detailed radiator badge and matching Motometer of the 1915 Simplex Crane Model 5 Brewster 2-door convertible.

### Submission Deadlines:

Deadline:	12/1	2/1	4/1	6/1	8/1	10/1
Issue:	Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec
Mailed:	1/31	3/31	5/31	7/31	9/30	11/30

**Note:** the SAH Journal is a bimonthly publication (printed 6 times a year) and there is a two-month horizon for submitted material before it is mailed (e.g., material submitted by February 1st appears in the Mar/Apr issue and is mailed on or before 3/31.) All letters, manuscripts, and advertisement submissions and inquiries go to the editor.

# SAH Journal

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An Affiliate of the American Historical Association



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## President's Perspective

Our annual October get-together in Hershey will be here before we know it. For those of us in northern climates, Hershey marks the start of autumn and the official twilight of the vintage vehicle driving season.

The SAH will again have a strong presence at Hershey. Be sure to drop by the SAH tent in the Orange Field for some hospitality and conversation and you won't want to miss the SAH's Awards Banquet on Friday, October 6 at the Hershey Country Club—details can be found elsewhere in this issue and also on



the SAH's website: [autohistory.org](http://autohistory.org).

Hershey will also mark the end of my term as president of this fine organization. The two years have flown past, as it seems

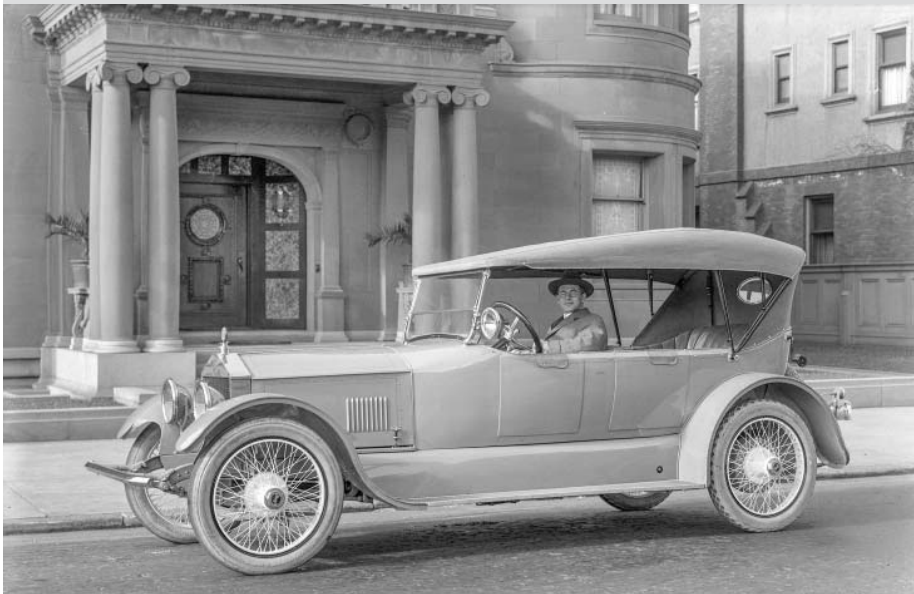
like just yesterday I unsuccessfully rebuffed Nominating Committee chairperson *Susan Davis*' recruitment efforts. It has been a rewarding job, and I can't extend enough thanks to the SAH Board of Directors for their hard work during my term. Everyone freely gave of their time and talents and went the extra mile without complaint. In the words of the Studebaker brothers, this board has truly given more than it promised.

To close my final President's message, I would be remiss if I did not thank our loyal members. Please continue your enthusiastic pursuit of automotive history and help grow and nurture the next generation of automotive historians.

See you in Hershey!

—Andrew Beckman

## Wheels in Time



This photo of a 1918 Roamer Model C-6-54 4-passenger tourer is sourced from: [en.wheelsage.org/roamer/model\\_c-6-54\\_4-passenger\\_touring/pictures/r7cd7r/](http://en.wheelsage.org/roamer/model_c-6-54_4-passenger_touring/pictures/r7cd7r/)

"The Roamer was the result of a collaboration between Cloyd Y. Kenworthy, New York City distributor of the Rauch & Lang electric car and Albert C. Barley, manufacturer of the Halladay at Streator, Illinois, an assembled car with a radiator closely resembling that of the Rolls-Royce. . . Total Roamer production is estimated as 11,850 cars built during its 14 years of activity."

[Source: *The Beaulieu Encyclopaedia of the Automobile: Volume 3*, ISBN: 978-1579582937]

This Roamer resonates with the one photographed at Amelia Island as seen on page 6.

**Billboard** continued from page 2

**SAH Tent & Authors' Book Signing at Hershey:** *Vince Wright*, Book Signing Event Committee Coordinator, is pleased to announce an authors' book signing, artists and publishers event on Thursday, October 5th, 2017, from

SAH Journal No. 285 • March / April 2017

12:30 P.M., until 3:00 P.M., in the SAH Hospitality Tent, which will be located on the Orange Field at OBB 17- 19 during the Annual Fall Meet of the Antique Automobile Club of America in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

You are welcome to bring any titles, recent or not. Each author will be provided a name place card and table space

to exhibit and sign his or her books.

The Society will provide credit card customer purchases processing to you at no charge. For any questions, please contact me at: [wrightfilms@me.com](mailto:wrightfilms@me.com). To participate, please send me a short description of the books, along with website, and social media links.

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1

## HISTORY ON THE FIELD: THE AMELIA ISLAND CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

*From Rétromobile to Pebble Beach, there's History on the Field. This and future articles will look to highlight certain examples at shows and concours—vehicles with automotive history appeal.*

Here are examples seen at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elégance. The concours listed 326 vehicles in 40 classes in its show program; and it was to take place on March 12th, but a dire weather forecast caused a move to Saturday, March 11th. Perhaps all the cars couldn't make it—but the rain did come the following day.

Our first example comes from the **Tampa Bay Automobile Museum** (see: [tbauto.org](http://tbauto.org)). If it looks familiar, it appeared in March-April 2012 *SAH Journal* #255 in the Rétromobile coverage by *Kit Foster*. The car was auctioned then by Bonhams and now will reside at this museum in Florida. Museum representative Olivier Cerf was with the car and information sheets were available to

spectators. Here's the text of the flyer for the car, the 1925 Gérim Aérodyne Berline prototype (slightly edited):

"Jacques Gérim designed two cars while enlisted in the army in 1919, the first one driven by a propeller and the second one with a mid-engine and many unique features. This second car was the "Aérodyne." The body, made of pieces of wood laminated between cast aluminum, is a space frame. There is no chassis.

"The shape is aerodynamic. The body was never finished and it is now being made by our shop following the drawings and patent from Jacques Gérim. Sheets of aluminum will be formed to follow the contour of the frame. The car was patented in the early twenties. Manufacturing of the prototype was done by Ratier (Ratier-Figeac today) in the suburbs of Paris in 1925-26.

"The 2-liter overhead valve engine is

mounted in front of the rear axle. As with everything else in the Gérim, it was a very modern engine for the twenties. Valve springs are tronconic (tapering) to suppress the vibrations, the rockers pivot on ball bearings and there is no oil needed on the top of the engine. Chevron gears were selected for distribution. There is a dual ignition with one magneto and one distributor.

"It has independent suspension on all four wheels with hydraulic shock absorbers. The suspension works through articulating arms. The front wheels have hydraulic brakes with four shoes per wheel. The drums of the brakes are the rims of the wheels themselves. Steering is a rack and pinion design, and the steering wheel is adjustable in height.

"The transmission is also original; the rear shafts, with inboard brakes, use a small diameter gear to drive the main gear in the wheel. The rear wheels oscillate around the transmission shaft."

Our next example [2] is the 1938 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (Mercedes-Benz Classic, Stuttgart). Here's the description:

"The 1938 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner was developed by the 'Sonderwagenbau' department in Sindelfingen under the leadership of Hermann Ahrens. It perfectly illustrates the innovative power of the Mercedes-Benz brand and its expertise in the development of one-off vehicles capable of satisfying the most stringent standards of design comfort, quality and customer experience. The 540 K Streamliner was systematically designed to optimize aerodynamic performance for long distance driving at continuously high speeds. It was sculpted from front to rear to allow for minimum air drag. It has a curved windshield and low roofline tapering to a point in the middle of the back and merging from there into the horizontal line of the softly curved rear section. It features fully integrated headlights. In 2014, following a restoration by Mercedes-Benz Classic, it produced the incredible drag coefficient of 0.36 in the wind tunnel, a significantly lower value than the approximate 0.57 associated with a standard 540 K Coupe body."



Our next example [3] is the 1918 Roamer C-6-54 Sport Touring (Jeff and Rebecca Schreiner – Mondovi, WI). The Roamer (Continental Motors Corp., Detroit & Muskegon, MI) fits the historical profile of many early 20th century manufacturers. Built from 1916 to 1929 they were quality cars (ranging from \$2,750 to \$4,500) and were marketed as "America's Smartest Car." They were offered in a wide range of colors and options. Their most recognizable feature, perhaps then as now, is the nearly identical appearance of their radiator to the Rolls-Royce radiator. Fewer than 12,000 cars were produced and only a comparatively few are thought to survive. This car (No. 9N49786) was offered in the RM auction at Hershey in 2009.



Our next example [4] is the 1930 Minerva Hibbard and Darrin convertible sedan (Wayne Carini and Ralph Marano – Portland, CT). The car's placard gave a history of Minerva, but this car's specific history makes it all the more interesting. This unrestored car was literally a "barn find." Its first owner (Webster Woodmansee) was a Wisconsin attorney. Its second owner, Edwin Winter





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Mead (Norfolk, CT), carried on a correspondence with Tom Hibbard. Its third owner was a recluse. John W. “Hawkeye” Hawkinson, descendent of Amos Whitney (of Pratt & Whitney fame), shunned a life of privilege to live life in a scenic farm in upstate New York, but retained his taste for automobiles. The car was the subject of the season 9 opening episode of *Chasing Classic Cars*, Road to Minerva(na). After Amelia, the car (chassis 57804) will be seen next at the Gooding auction in Pebble Beach.

Our last car [5] is the 1915 Simplex Crane Model 5 Brewster 2-door convertible (Michael and Joannie Rich – Orwigsburg, PA).

The Simplex Crane is often overlooked, as it sits in relative obscurity. *Jay Leno* has one, and once described the company’s aim as having been to build an American Rolls-Royce. Echoes of that are in the description (slightly edited):

“The Simplex Crane Model 5 was one of the most expensive cars available at the time. With the chassis costing \$5,000, fitting custom coachwork would have run another \$3,500-\$5,000. There was a standard turn-key touring car body that was available for \$1,500 but for the clientele of a Simplex price wasn’t an issue. Production was quite limited. This Brewster bodied Simplex was

built for Philadelphia department store tycoon John Wanamaker. He ordered it to be painted in Princeton University’s colors, orange and black, as his son was a graduate of the university. The Simplex Crane Model 5 owes its incredible 110 horsepower L-head powerplant to Henry Crane, whose luxury automobile company was purchased by Simplex in 1914. While the car was built in 1915, records indicate the Crane Model 5 was capable of 80 mph. Stopping at this speed would be an issue as there are no front brakes. Pedal operation is through the driveshaft while the rear brakes are operated using a hand lever.”

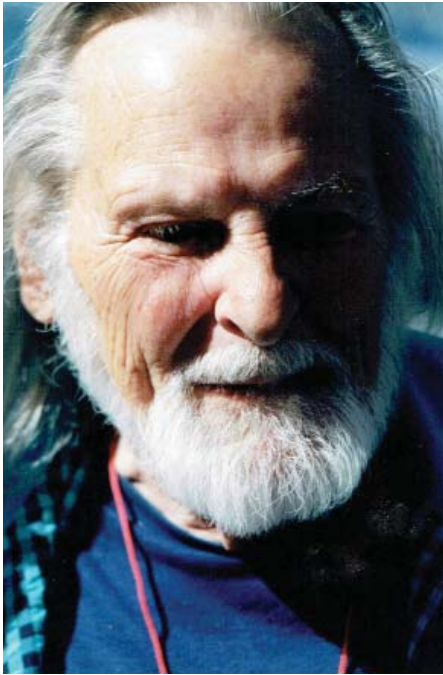
—R. Verdés



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## A TRIBUTE TO GRIFFITH BORGESON

DECEMBER 21, 1918 - JUNE 29, 1997

*As a “society of automotive historians” it is fitting and proper to continually delineate and examine what an automotive historian is—from the pursuits of enthusiasts of auto-history to the disciplines of scholarly research and writing. With that backdrop we come to this tribute to Griffith Borgeson twenty years after his passing—further inspired by his wife Jasmine—to commemorate his body of work as a champion of automotive history. Lists of his works are always a simple internet search away; and for an overview of the man, please see the two pieces written by David Brownell and Taylor Vinson in the September-October 1997 issue #170 of the SAH Journal. What follows is a set of perspectives that give both a glimpse of some of the characteristics of what an automotive historian should be as well as the by-product of that skill: to inspire others to pursue that standard of excellence; to be a skilled champion of automotive history—to be an automotive historian. —Ed.*

After many months of intensive correspondence—especially on Siegfried Marcus and his forerunners of the motorcar—I decided to pay him a visit. For years I regularly had spent vacations with my family in Southern France and was looking forward to another trip to this great sun-blessed part of a neighboring country.

By phone I arranged my visit with Griff for Thursday April 10, 1997. In two days, driving on Freeways, then the famous Route Nationale 7 (RN 7) and then small secondary roads I reached “Mirail” near the village “La Motte-d’Aigues.” The old *mas* is an impressive stone-built farmhouse in the middle

of a hilly countryside, far from noise and trouble. “A paradise at the end of the world” I wrote in my diary. When I turned up, Griff was already in front of his home waving his hand. He was a frail elderly man with long white hair and a beard, with a very friendly tanned face and lively eyes. We both were beaming with pleasure to meet in person after our long correspondence. His wife Jasmine was waiting for us inside the house and gave me a most friendly welcome. Griff explained that they had found and purchased the farmhouse and surrounding fields in the 1960s on the recommendation of Roland Bugatti, who lived in the area.

Griff’s working den was filled to the brim with books, magazines, paper, posters, pictures, photographs, drawings and automobilia. He had cleared a small space with a table and two chairs and we started talking various car matters. We began to discuss the Siegfried Marcus history. As is well known there were and are two controversial versions



Left: Carlos Diniz, Frederick A. Usher, GB, and Laurent Rondoni of Ventoux Moteurs Engineering (Monte Carlo, May 1997).

with respect to the year of completing the second forerunner of the motorcar. It became very obvious that Griff was always looking for the truth and had a very strict obsession to avoid repeating errors or unfounded information. He was supporting my efforts to clear the mist surrounding the history. Very kind and helpful, he gave me further information he collected and the advice to contact several persons in Austria and other institutions to find clear evidence for one or the other published and spread opinion. (To my regret I must admit that all further research, continued well into the present century, has not brought them to light.)

For lunch we drove in his old Peugeot 204 convertible a few miles to the village restaurant. During the meal he gave me some insight into his family history and his youth in Berkeley. He talked about various leading persons in the automobile world whom he knew personally and also about his work and writing for *Automobile Quarterly* and



Griff Borgeson, Bernard Faure, Paul Berliet at the Berliet Foundation circa 1990.

Photo courtesy of the Berliet Foundation Archives, Lyon, France



Photo courtesy of the Berliet Foundation Archives, Lyon, France

Left to right: Adolfo Orsi, Griff Borgeson, Raffaele Gazzi, May 1993, at AUTOPROMOTECA (Bologna, Italy).

other magazines as well as his fine books. He always insisted on serious work and research. He would never accept laziness or worse: “twisted truth” for profit of any kind as an excuse for faulty information or errors. Perhaps his book *The Classic Twin-Cam Engine* is a superb example of his obstinacy to look for and find the truth. Griff, therefore, impressed me very much and I shall always remember him, not only as a very kind and competent man, but also as a model to follow.

—Ferdinand Hediger (1795)

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When I started to dedicate myself to classic cars and historical research, I read with attention some of Griff’s books, such as *The Golden Age* and *The Classic Twin-Cam Engine*. In February 1992 I was lucky to have been introduced to him at *Rétromobile* by a friend we had in common, Angelo Tito Anselmi. He was planning to write a book (*The Ferrari Edifice*) on Enzo Ferrari’s life and he had arranged for a series of interviews in the Modena area. As the study of Enzo Ferrari was also one of my own interests, I offered to help schedule the meetings and to host him during his stay in Modena. He accepted and that encounter had a fundamental effect on my future. I learned how to do historical research and go directly to the witnesses of the facts—to confront them to try to arrive at the most accurate reconstruction of the facts—dividing the legends from the facts and putting them

in the proper period perspective. At the time we met with most of the first collaborators of Enzo’s first years, such as Nello (Maestro) Ugolini, Federico Giberti, Carla Bazzi (Luigi Bazzi’s daughter), Sergio Scaglietti, today deceased. Griff was as old as my father, and I regarded him as my teacher. I enjoyed very much every minute spent with him; he was a mine of knowledge in many human interests, from music to sex. I also had the honor to co-curate an exhibition with him called “La tecnica automobilistica dagli inizi del secolo ad oggi: Bugatti” in Bologna in 1995.

A lot of good memories.

In 1997 automotive history lost its champion, and I lost an unforgettable friend.

—Adolfo Orsi (2684)

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In 1984/1985, when they met for the first time, Paul Berliet (industrialist and president of the emerging Berliet Foundation, which was created in 1982 to promote the history of French trucks and the cars manufactured in Lyons) was struck not only by the extent of Griffith Borgeson’s knowledge of the history of the automobile, but also by his ease of manner, his friendliness, and his graciousness.

In addition to his immense erudition of the automotive industry, Paul Berliet noted Griff’s esteem for the artisans of the automotive sphere, be they bold promoters, renowned inventors, or very simply, the

unrecognized mechanics.

With a certain emotion, I remember our conversations concerning a wide range of subjects, from the immense innovations which have marked the adventures of the human race to the rigorous ethics of the Protestant founders of Germany’s and Britain’s industrial dynasties.

Each year, in Provence, it was a joy to visit Griff—humanist and artist—in company with Jasmine.

—Monique Chapelle (2521)

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Griffith Borgeson, “Griffo” as he preferred to be called, was a Renaissance man. In addition to his encyclopedic knowledge of locomotion—be it terrestrial, aerial or maritime—he possessed an almost unlimited store of information on a multitude of subjects. A quick glance at his library attests to the extensive range of that which interested him: archaeology, geology, astronomy, history of art and of music, architecture, the origins of technology of many fields such as clocks, firearms, and many other fields. His curiosity was limitless.

In addition to his intellectual endowments, Griffo was highly competent in manual skills. His paternal grandfather, a cabinet maker, taught Griffo how to handle tools with respect. Tools of any sort held no mystery for him. It was he who took the Hepburn 91cid Miller apart, and it was he who put it back together with his own hands. I will not swear that he took it apart, but I will swear that he put it back together because I was present in the shop, which Scott Fenn kindly put at Griff’s disposition on Sundays. The car had to be ready for exhibition at the L.A. County Museum. And, it was ready.

From his paternal line, Griffo also inherited an innate sense of precision. A millimeter was a millimeter; there was no approximation. Before the advent of electronic calculators he would spend hours, slide rule in hand, calculating bore, stroke, engine displacement and other necessary specifications for his articles.

He was equally precise concerning his writing, his choice of words, punctuation; all had to be as perfect as possible. He was—no doubt—very difficult for the editors of the books and magazines with whom he worked. He demanded the galley proofs, he read them carefully; and woe to he who would have changed a word or forgotten a





With *Monique Chappelle*, October 1995, at the Berliet Foundation Collection.

comma. “How do they expect the reader to understand what I am trying to say if they delete a comma?” he once asked.

A true Renaissance man, he loved life. His enthusiasm for “une belle soirée”—a lovely party—was, and still is, legendary. A gourmet dinner, good wine and lively conversation until the wee hours, yes, Griffó was a Renaissance man in all aspects of his life.

—*Jasmine Borgeson* (0277)

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I never knew Borgeson but bought his book *Sports and Classic Cars* (Prentice-Hall, 1955) when I was in college and have read it dozens of times. He is surely the greatest automotive historian America has produced.

—*Arthur W. Jones* (2347)

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I guess I am probably the only one writing here who never knew Griffith Borgeson. Let me confess right away: I never met the man; I never shook hands with him. As a matter of fact, I did not have any idea of what he looked like until I saw the images that were recently emailed to SAH members by the editor. Yet Griffith Borgeson has been my guiding light for the past many years; especially after I decided to write a book

*SAH Journal* No. 285 • March / April 2017

about Talbot-Lago in 2008.

Let me explain. I began collecting car books as a student sometime around 1970. Money was short, and I went without other things to buy books. I devoured them while others partied. But back then, most books were not very well printed and were full of smudgy photos, tall tales and not a lot of research. In the mid-1980s, I found my way to a car book dealer somewhere in Midtown Manhattan. Sitting in a glass case was this huge brown book with a gold coat of arms embossed on the front. It was the first really large and luxurious car book I had ever seen. I asked what it was about. Duesenberg was the answer. Bull’s-eye. I had been a Duesenberg fan ever since my father bought me the Monogram kit in 1962 of the SJ Dual Cowl Torpedo Phaeton, molded in light brown polystyrene.

Broke, I asked to see the book—well knowing that I could never afford it. With a shark-like grin, the seller had already told me it cost \$350. He might as well have said \$3,500. With a sinking feeling, I saw that this book was an amazing mixture of hundreds of rare period images in black and white, spiced with large crystal clear color plates. Not just of Duesenbergs, but also Cords and Auburns. Even more fascinating, I could see that it was really about Errett Lobban Cord and the empires he built: first cars, then aviation, and then radio, until he finally became senator for the state of Nevada in the late 1950s. How he rose from nothing by selling leftover Moon and Auburn cars to become a business tycoon, how he played the stock market in ways that probably would put him behind bars today, how he ruthlessly cut his losses and let others take the fall. In other words, a fascinating look into not just the cars and their engine rooms, but also into the remarkable man who made it all happen, what made him tick.....

I was totally fascinated and left the store depressed with no book under my arm.

The book was by Griffith Borgeson of course. Its title was: *Errett Lobban Cord: His Empire, His Motor Cars* (978-0971146877 —*Ed.*) and it was published by the publishers of the late, great *Automobile Quarterly*. Years later I managed to get a copy. Fascinated, I read it from cover to cover. I left it on the last page feeling that I had truly learned about things that I did not know before and was therefore in some sense a wiser person. Or at least if not wiser, I left Griffith’s book

knowing more than I did when I first picked it up and started reading. I still regard it as one of the best car books ever written.

I have since published two books. I have just delivered a third to my publisher and am already working on a fourth. All combine knowledge and information about cars with a deep interest in the man or men behind them, the world they lived in, the hardships they faced, the politics, world events, and their sometimes dirty dealings. Precisely what Griffith did in his magnificent Cord book.

So like I said, I never met the man. I wish I had. But he has been with me every step of the way. It is a deep debt and one I can never repay.

—*Peter M. Larsen* (3828)

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**K**arl Ludvigsen (0092H) shared his reply to an early 1960s funding fellowship referral request for Griffó to complete research on what would become *The Golden Age of the American Racing Car* (978-0768000238)—here’s an edited excerpt:

Griffó is one of the top American writers on the subject of the automobile. He is a very independent individual, willing to examine any area without hesitation and able to absorb a great deal of information in a short time. His researching techniques, aided by tape recording, are up-to-date and efficient. He uses his time with great care. His acquaintances in the field he proposes to explore are manifold and authoritative. He is certain to produce a book that’s readable and interesting . . . I’m sure he can do a well-balanced job . . . Speaking about this project in particular, I can say that Borgeson is without doubt the world’s leading authority on the subject of record breaking. He has made something of a specialty of it, particularly the very exciting World Record: the fastest speed on land. In brief, I think the project is sound, and Borgeson is the man best equipped to do it.

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**A**s an enthusiastic bibliophile I was familiar with the celebrated work of Griffith Borgeson, but it was beyond my wildest imagining that I could eventually meet my professor of trustworthy historical facts. His name was familiar through most of my reading life and appeared on the spines of some

of my most treasured volumes. And it was he who introduced me to the intimate details of early race-engine technologies and their creators, but of greatest consequence was his description of the rigors of research required to advance knowledge of our shared curiosity in each of those volumes and many others.

In the early 1950s Griff collaborated with Wayne Thoms on a series of primers on creating and racing hot rods—home made high performance cars. The two were masters in the craft of complex systems described in everyman prose. They were powerful voices in the creation of an industry and helped develop a curriculum for creating enthusiasm in thousands of high school shop classes.

As his research on the subject took him deeper into the beginnings of internal combustion science his devotion to “the complete story” created *The Golden Age of the American Racing Car* in 1966. As he described his work on the cover: “The complete story of the men, the machines, the tracks, the engineering, and the feats of the great years between the wars when American racing cars achieved classical perfection,” it immediately gained global respect as a vital third volume next to Laurence Pomeroy’s Eurocentric *The Grand Prix Car Volumes I and II*.

Europe was the ignition point of the advancing science and a move there in the mid-Sixties did, as intended, bring him in contact with the men who created the fundamental details of what has become the 21<sup>st</sup>-century engine—before 1920. Many of those contacts became long-standing friendships and drew a cadre of like-minded searchers and scholars around him. Their correspondence, conversations, debates and tangential support research resulted in *The Classic Twin-Cam Engine*, published in 1981. That historic volume stands as his masterwork on the subject and engraved his name in the pantheon of great engineering historians of the last century.

It was during my challenge of producing *Vintage Racer* magazine for Steve Earle in Santa Barbara that my friend Jack Brady (a fine photographic contributor to racing history) introduced me to his housemate and collaborator in constructing a fine archive of the first racing century, Fred Usher. Within a few months of our first meeting Fred brought his friend Mr. Borgeson to my little Santa Barbara apartment, it was February 7, 1982 (he signed my copy of *The Classic Twin-Cam Engine* on that date) and inspired me to take a more deliberate course in research—and prose.

The following year, on a return visit to Los Angeles, Griff asked that Fred include me in his RSVP to an invitation for a dinner at his friend Carlos Diniz’s home on the mountain just below the Hollywood sign. The table included Jasmine and Griff, Pat and Dean Batchelor, *Strother MacMinn*, Wayne Thoms and several others of the upper echelon of L.A.’s automotive and racing history zealots—gurus. I was dazzled in that company and felt honored beyond what I could bring to the conversation; though they all made me feel welcome, without hesitation. My ears were open and my mind even further as I eavesdropped on conversations through the evening.

My only visit with Jasmine and Griff at their historic farm was too brief again, but left me with a rich memory of home as an intellectual resource, and of its fabulous table stacked with volumes of history on a broad range of subjects—all current projects in support of planned interviews with primary sources.

Our last meeting was at the Monterey Historics where he introduced his Miller book. I got my copy and read it through that night and spent the next two days trying to find Griff. We made contact in the paddock as all the cars were being loaded for departure and he told me he had spent the same two days trying to find me and was not going to leave until he did. Even today this remains an emotional moment.

Griff often credited historian William F. Bradley as leading the way, but even he could lose his way with an ax to grind. Yet he would write the most touching and sincere biography of Bradley ever published (see *Automobile Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2,



With Shotaro and Mariko Kobayashi (Monte Carlo, May 1997).

pp.162-179). It was respect for what Bradley did accomplish that remained the basis of all research into our subject. Griff dedicated *The Classic Twin-Cam Engine* to both his wife Jasmine, and “to the memory of William F. Bradley, chronicler extraordinaire, whose role in the automotive history was more important than we shall ever know.”

The dedication could also be applied to Griffith Borgeson. *The Classic Twin Cam-Engine* stands the test of time; there are no serious challenges to its depth on the subject and it remains essential automotive science for anyone interested in its beginning—and in those fundamental design elements that still control internal combustion as it survives in our next century.

—Lawrence C. Crane (0767)



Griffith and Jasmine Borgeson at home, March 30, 1997.

# Book Reviews

## Rolls-Royce and Bentley Coachbuilt Specials in the Modern Era

by Richard Vaughan

363 Insights LLC (2017)

[lulu.com/shop](http://lulu.com/shop)

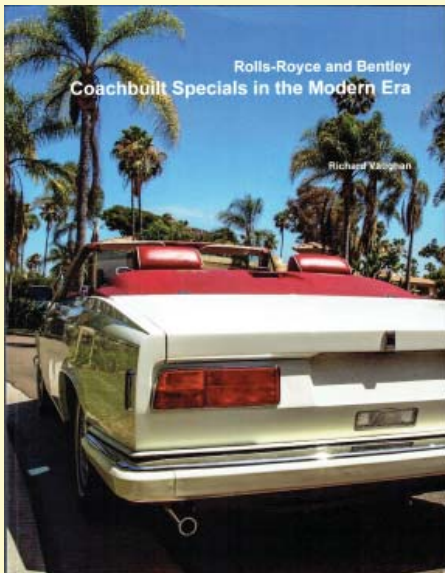
294 pages, 8.5" x 11"

526 color, 9 b/w photos, and 95 illustrations

Price: \$98 (hardcover), \$115 (softcover)

ISBN-10: 1365782204

ISBN-13: 978-1365782206



These days, the word “bespoke” is heard more often than the word “coachbuilt” to describe a customized automobile. This is proper given the history. Before WWII most of the finest automobile manufacturers produced only the chassis—one would have to employ the services of a coachbuilder to manufacture the body and finish the car. This was the case for Rolls-Royce and Bentley (before and after Rolls-Royce acquisition in 1931). After the war, production and engineering evolved to produce complete cars right off the line. The most dramatic shift came when the traditional design of a separate chassis and body gave way to the monocoque body (also called “unibody construction”), which married the body and the component chassis elements into one unit. Without a chassis to mount a body

on, traditional coachbuilding disappeared along with the firms that strictly specialized in that approach. For Rolls-Royce and Bentley, that shift came with the Silver Shadow and Bentley T in 1965, which featured monocoque construction; and in enthusiast nomenclature, the Rolls-Royce and Bentley “modern era” began. In the modern era, what is “coachbuilt” or “bespoke” could be in the eye of the beholder—insofar as their dramatic difference from their production kin, or their complete deviation from any production car. Here, the term “coachbuilt” is a far better description than “bespoke” for most of the cars in this book.

The book is broken down into 33 brief chapters highlighting the coupe, sedan, wagon, etc, variants of series production cars, followed by chapters of simply unique cars, e.g., the Bentley Silverstone, Bentley Buccaneer, Rolls-Royce Majestic, Rolls-Royce Cloudesque, et al. It is largely a photographic journey, as it should be, since you will not see much of the contents of this book anywhere—just bits of it scattered around here and there. This point is underscored heavily by the focus on (and number of pictures of) cars commissioned by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and his brother, Prince Jefri Bolkiah, of Brunei. The timing was perfect for the production of unique cars in the early 1990s, where Rolls-Royce needed the business of this highly unusual revenue stream to bridge a slump in production due to a general global economic downturn. These cars were not only visually different, they were all but complete small batches of fully unique cars; and they carried doorsill plates that read (all in caps): “Designed and built exclusively for the Royal Family of Brunei Darussalam by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.” Also, the book covers other producers, like the 1980s revival of the Hooper company (one of the most respected names from the coachbuilding era), which set out to produce (and did) highly variant versions of production examples.

The author is a professional car designer by trade. He is also a (hopeless) Rolls-Royce and Bentley enthusiast, and editor of *The Modern Car*, the publication of the Modern Car Society of the Rolls-Royce Owners’ Club. Those three pillars triangulated to cause a motivated and passive flow of information and images to accumulate in his archives, along with sources coming from fellow enthusiasts (e.g., your reviewer supplied various revival-Hooper images and documents to the author).

The book’s layout presentation gets right down to business—the cars are the stars—no distracting graphics and nicely legible page numbering. (It’s amazing how often graphics in modern publications obscure page numbers.) The author recognizes that some of the images are not so good. “Many are poor composition and quality due to the fact that they were almost always taken surreptitiously by somebody who probably should not have had a camera with them.” Yet some are of compelling quality, such as digital renderings clearly generated to “show the customer exactly what the finished cars would look like in the real world, in different lighting situations and from different views.” Additionally, note that the book is self published—there are various methods to going about doing this; here [lulu.com](http://lulu.com) is the conduit. (And the pricing is correct; the hardcover costs less than the softcover.)

It stands to reason that there would be a date horizon where many of these cars that are squirreled away (particularly the Brunei cars) will become available, or otherwise become known and accessible to historians, and one hopes, to the admiring public. But for now, this is it. In addition, for that future time, this book may well be the “checklist” starting point of ascertaining if any of these cars are then lost. Thankfully, at least there’s no need to wait to see these cars—this book could be ordered today.

—R. Verdés

## More Than Automobiles: The Packards of Warren, Ohio

by A. J. Balfour

MT Publishing Company, Inc (2016)

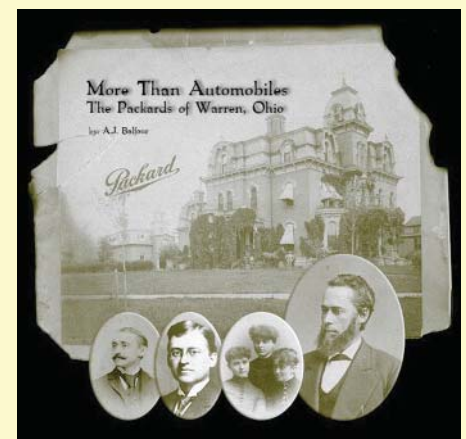
[mtpublishing.com/](http://mtpublishing.com/) 888-263-4702

112 pages, 9" square, hardcover

20 color and 86 b/w images, 2 charted family trees, 6 maps, index, and appendices

Price: \$34.95

ISBN: 978-1945306112



Books presented on the pages of this publication usually focus on vehicles. As the title suggests, this book by A.J. (Jim) Balfour focuses on *More Than Automobiles*, for *The Packards of Warren, Ohio* is about the family behind the motorcar with the nameplate that carries the family surname.

Sometimes we can find ourselves so caught up in the statistics and facts of “automobiledom” that we forget or lose sight of the people involved. And although this volume is modest in overall size and page count, it conveys a tremendous amount of information between its hard covers—and does so with style and grace befitting the individual members of the Packard family to whom readers are introduced.

It quickly becomes apparent that the Packard motorcar creators, brothers Ward and Will, were well endowed by their shared heritage, education and examples set by their elders to successfully accomplish the various tasks they set before themselves. Their father Warren was self made, succeeding in numerous fields: retailer, manufacturer, lumber supplier to railroads, and resort owner/operator.

Both sons displayed natural talents. Refined and enhanced by schooling, the eldest, Will, began a technical and physics education but found his calling in accounting and management. Ward’s degree in Mechanical Engineering did fit like a glove both his interests and skills. Their first success capitalized on the nascent electricity industry. In 1890, they founded Packard Electric, later sold to General Motors now spun off as a part of Delphi Industries. In 1899, in one of the Packard Electric buildings they created the first Packard motor car, answering a challenge from Alexander Winton to create a better motoring car than that which bore his own name.

Today we know Ward and Will met that challenge and then exceeded it for 1.6 million motorcars carrying the Packard nameplate were ultimately produced. Today all of those cars extant are highly respected, desired and valued. But this book only mentions the cars. It talks about and shows the other aspects of life that were equally important to Ward and Will and other members of the Packard family. These included building beautiful homes and an elegant apartment building in hometown Warren, and other homes on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in New York State, on the other end of the Erie rail line (more or less parallel to the Erie Canal).

The concluding pair of chapters share, in words and images, the various hobbies and other interests of Packard family members as well as their extensive philanthropic activities. They were truly an exemplary family in all facets of work and play and great fun to become acquainted with on the pages of Balfour’s *More Than Automobiles*, *The Packards of Warren, Ohio*. The book is truly any automotive historian’s dream book for it rounds out the automotive with an understanding of the people behind the nameplate.

—Helen V Hutchings

### Alfonso XIII y El Automóvil

by Emilio Polo Garcia

CIE DOSSAT 2000 (1996)

Spanish | Out of print

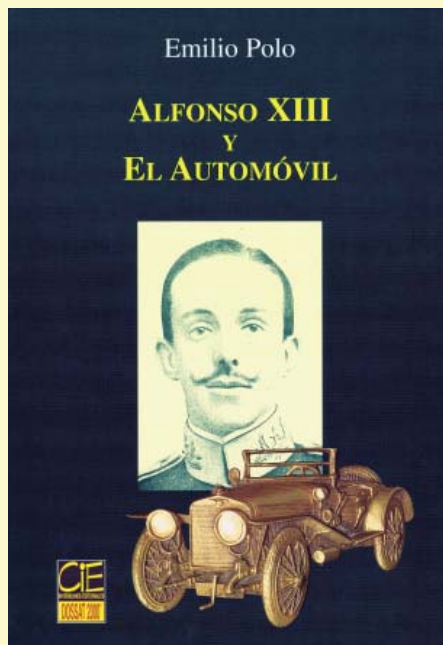
182 pages, 8.3" x 11.7"

167 b/w photos, and 32 illustrations

Price: avg. used \$100 (+/-)

ISBN-10: 8489656118

ISBN-13: 978-8489656116

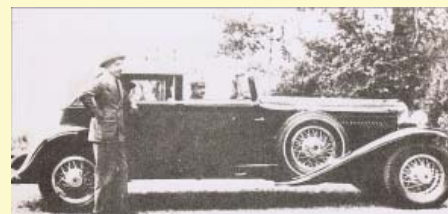


It is well known that the automobile was not universally embraced in its early days. This perspective from W.O. Bentley’s 1967 autobiography, *My Life and My Cars* (978-0090841509), captured the sentiment: “The motor car seemed to me a disagreeable vehicle. Perhaps I should have realised the vast potentialities of internal combustion and recognised from my nursery days that it was to be the impelling force in my life. But the fact must be recorded that the motor car struck my young, literal mind as a slow, inefficient, draughty and anti-social

means of transport. Motor cars splashed people with mud, frightened horses, irritated dogs and were a frightful nuisance to everybody.” The motorcar needed champions. In America it was President Taft (see the review by Beverly Rae Kimes of *William Howard Taft and the First Motoring Presidency, 1909-1913* by Michael L. Bromley [2003][McFarland]978-0-7864-2952-3) in *SAH Journal* #207). In Italy it was King Victor Emmanuel III (1869-1947); and in Spain it was King Alfonso VIII (1886-1941).

This Spanish language out of print book is recorded here for two basic reasons: to elaborate (as promised) on a reference to the king’s Duesenberg on page 14 of *SAH Journal* #283, and as a reminder—as noted in the Enzo Ferrari article on page 4 of *SAH Journal* #273—“...this is a humbling reminder that there’s a whole world out there beyond what is recorded in English.” Here’s the elaboration, the actual details of the car: the book’s appendix shows King Alfonso’s Duesenberg was recorded in his 1930 inventory of automobiles acquired as: “DUESENBERG 33 HP. 8 cilindros tipo J. Descapotable. N° chasis 2.303. N° motor J.282.” The appendix goes on to similarly document another 96 cars acquired between 1904 and 1930. The book also shows a couple of rare pictures of the Duesie as well as the one that is regularly seen of him standing next to the car.

The author covers the arc of the subject in twelve chapters starting with the new king’s ascent to the throne and the arrival of the automobile in Spain, the king in his time and his automotive life, ending with the fall of the monarchy and his remaining years in exile. Naturally, it helps to be able to read Spanish, but the book is so richly illustrated that it’s a pleasure to peruse the pages and take in an early motoring perspective and history captured in the illustrations and pictures of the day. Surely the appendix listing of the king’s cars transcends a language barrier; and it is a delightful nugget to have survived (guessing, of course, that it was originated from an intact reference—but it could have also been a painfully researched amalgamation; the author doesn’t elaborate



The book included this most frequently seen picture of Alfonso and his Duesenberg.

about the sourcing, and there is no index or bibliography to help clarify that point). The book does appear from time-to-time in Amazon searches (or other similar sites), but for a premium cost reflecting the rarity of that occasional appearance.

—R. Verdés

**The Devil's Mercedes: The Bizarre and Disturbing Adventures of Hitler's Limousine in America**  
by Robert Klara

St Martin's Press (2017)

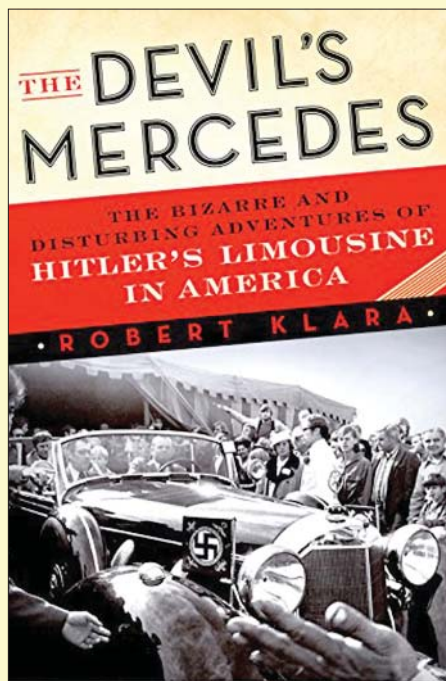
macmillan.com/books/9781466878587

336 pages, 9.3" x 6.1" hardcover

16-page b/w photo insert, end notes and index

Price: \$26.99

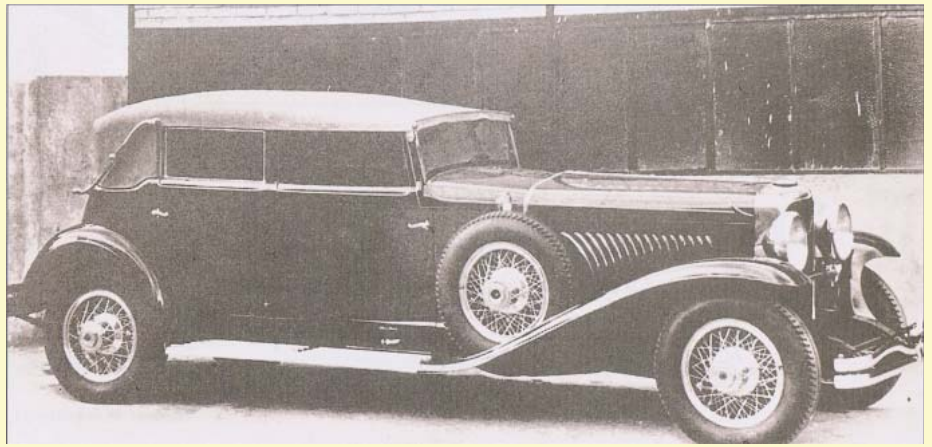
ISBN: 978-1466878587



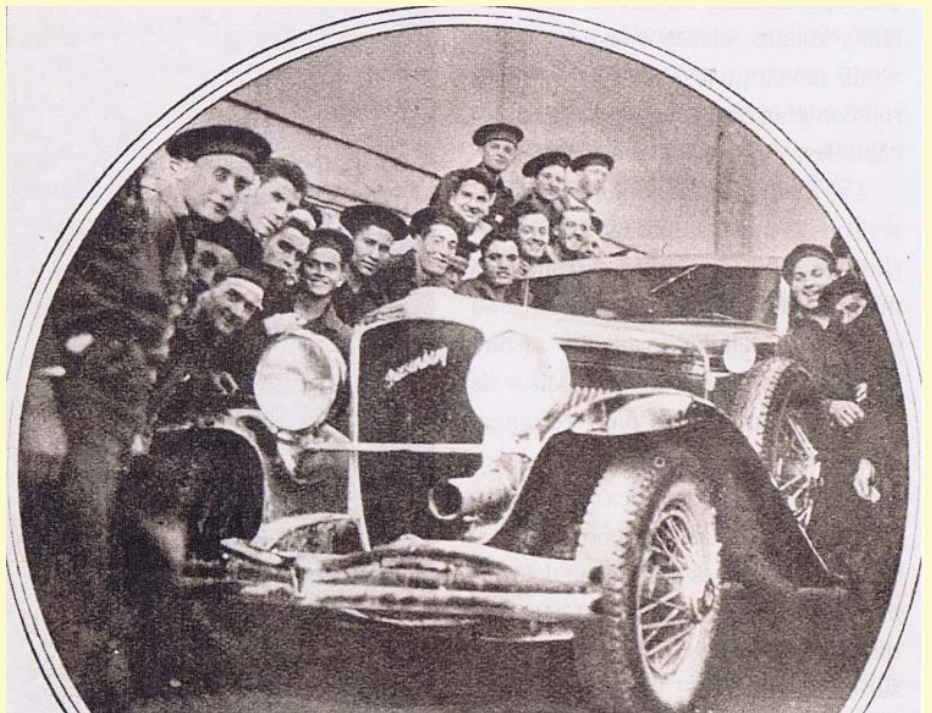
When is the last time—if ever?—that you read a book in which a trained researcher-librarian employed by a museum is *the* undeniable hero? Moreover that that ability to be a hero directly stemmed from his training and learned skills, coupled with a personal determination to find and sort the facts from all the fiction.

In his epilogue author Robert Klara describes himself as “a storyteller, nothing more or less.” The pages of *The Devil's Mercedes*, his third book, attest that he is indeed a storyteller, weaving words to tell the convoluted social history surrounding what turned out to be not one, but several monstrous cars—each weighing some five tons—the Mercedes-Benz Type 770 model W150 Grossers or, more commonly, 770Ks.

Klara's self description is, however, too



Above: the caption translation reads: “Another view of Alfonso XIII's Duesenberg.” Below: the caption translation reads: “Historical photograph of the king's Duesenberg in the port of Cartagena surrounded by sailors.” (The Port of Cartagena is located on the Mediterranean.)



modest in your reviewer's opinion because relating the story between this book's covers requires an author to be more than merely skilled at his craft. His words must show sensitivity too, due to the identity of “the Devil” of the title, Adolf Hitler. Before writing, Robert Klara conducted years-long careful research to find the facts hidden in many false claims and stories. Klara proves himself not merely able on all counts. He excels! The story he weaves in *The Devil's Mercedes* will leave you contemplating humankind's behaviors as you read the compelling story he discovered.

The book is not the usual type reviewed on these pages for it is not an automotive history per se. It is a “people” history with those 770Ks key because they were part of the Third Reich's motorpool and therefore

associated with Hitler. And that makes the research-librarian hero all the more remarkable, for Ludwig Kosche was not merely born in Germany but had nearly been killed by Hitler's Nazi forces. Kosche escaped, fleeing to Canada where eventually he found his calling in the library at the Canadian War Museum where ultimately, “working alone and at his own expense, he cracked the case of the mystery Mercedes whose presence had utterly stymied his Canadian War Museum superiors” thus making it possible for this book relating *The Bizarre and Disturbing Adventures of Hitler's Limousine in America* to be written, albeit thirty-plus years later.

If you don't already know of that history, you'll perhaps be surprised at the identities of several who fell under the thrall.

—Helen V Hutchings

## Illustrated Dictionary of Automobile Body Styles (Second Edition)

by Lennart W. Haajanen

McFarland & Company (May 2017)

McFarlandpub.com/ 800-253-2187

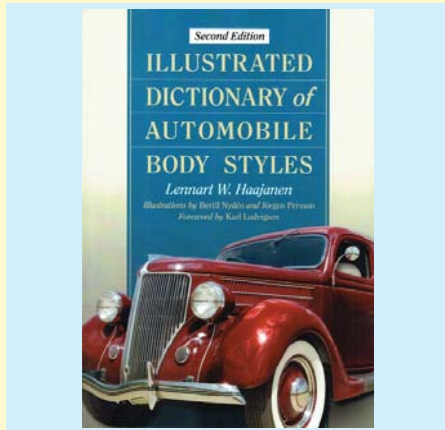
185 pages, 7" x 10"

152 illustrations, appendix, bibliography

Price: \$ 39.95

ISBN-10: 0786499184

ISBN-13: 978-0786499182



This book's title says it all. It is clearly set up as a reference book for looking up all those archaic words (and the simple ones too) that name and describe the look of any given car. It is possible that one may

question if there are legitimately as many terms to warrant a dictionary presentation; but any such thoughts disappear as soon as one pages through this book.

The author describes this aspect to his approach: "Greatest in number and importance are the coachbuilding and bodywork designs and terms stemming from France, Italy, the United States, Great Britain and Germany. This dictionary includes terms and expressions in the languages of these countries. However, a number of terms exist only in some of these four languages—or in effect five, as British and American automotive terminology differs markedly. Wherever possible, nationally specific terms have been pointed out." The Foreword by *Karl Ludvigsen* primes the reader's pump for what will follow; as the more "juicy" terms carry sections to elaborate on "origins and history," "variations," and "language varieties" while some entries are justifiably pithy, e.g., "Barquette: French for Barchetta"—and, of course, there's an elaborate entry for Barchetta.

At times the manufacturers (particularly in the postwar era) helped to confuse things further by selecting body style names more for their marketing appeal, with less regard

for the meaning of the words. In this dictionary, there are four legitimate entries for "Brougham" with extensive qualifications for each; and there are likely a good many "Brougham" models actually made that would fail to fit within any of the four. To expand on an earlier assertion in this review, for those that spend time sorting through the nomenclature applied over a century of automobile styling, the thought of making a reference dictionary like this would sound like a most formidable project. The author's easy to follow organizing approach is supplemented by the line-drawn illustrations of Bertil Nydén and Jörgen Persson.

Going forward, the variations in styles continue to evolve the terminology; so the author reflected on producing the second edition: "In the period since the first edition appeared in 2003 very few new internationally accepted body styles have emerged. They have been included in this second edition. In addition, some of the more significant bodywork component and fixture names, including clarifications, have been added." For the enthusiast, and particularly for the historian, this reference book is highly recommended.

—R. Verdés



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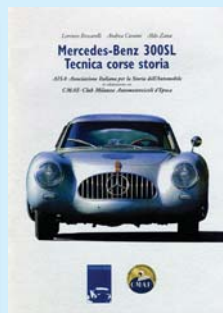
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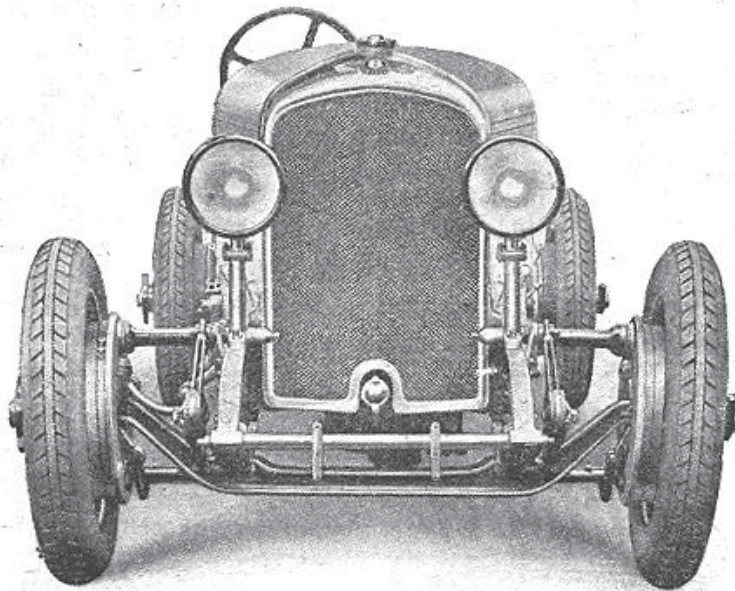
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*A compelling example to support the old saying "Race on Sunday, Sell on Monday." Bentley would go on to win Le Mans for the next three years, but they couldn't outrace the depression; they went into receivership in 1931 and were clandestinely purchased by Rolls-Royce Limited that same year.*

