



*Wisconsin Society of  
Automotive Historians*  
**WSAH**

**President:** Kenneth E. Nimocks  
[knimocks@netnet.net](mailto:knimocks@netnet.net)

**Secretary:** Daniel W. Manola  
[sponge19501924@yahoo.com](mailto:sponge19501924@yahoo.com)

**Director:** James F. Morris  
[jim@jetfire.com](mailto:jim@jetfire.com)

**Director:** Donald R. Luebke  
(920) 375-2804

**Vice President:** Michael E. Keller  
[mk612gp@gmail.com](mailto:mk612gp@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Gary L. Koehnke  
[gary7140@att.net](mailto:gary7140@att.net)

**Director:** Donald E. Chandler  
[lrchandler@tds.net](mailto:lrchandler@tds.net)

**News Editor:** David G. Tesch  
[dgtesch49@gmail.com](mailto:dgtesch49@gmail.com)



**Carhart Chronicle**

Autumn 2016



*Downtown [Cross Plains, Wisconsin] – June 1929*

**A Few Words from the President**

For those who weren't able to be there, we had good attendance at our annual Iola Car Show meeting on Friday, July 8. Several other members who couldn't be at the meeting helped out the other days. We had some great help for setup on Wednesday and I specifically commend Wally Heil (knowing he would not want accolades) for engineering the banner display on "The Coffin" – even driving to Waupaca for more hardware. Jim and Jessica had a plan that seemed foolproof until the banner didn't cooperate, but with lots of perspiration along with trial and error it looked just fine. Wrapping up on Saturday evening also went well and our SAH Chapters Chair, Bob Barr from the Chicago area, pitched right in and helped just like other long time members. Don Gullikson, our local Iola member, followed up on Sunday morning since most of us pulled out Saturday night. Don also does a lot of work before we ever get started on Wednesday setup.



As I'm sure everyone knows, with a large group whenever a few specific individuals are mentioned by name, many will not be. Please know that I greatly appreciate everyone's help – a sincere "Thank You!" to all.

If you have added or changed your email address, or any other contact information, please be certain that we have your latest. You may contact me, or Jim Morris, Gary Koehnke, Dan Manola, Dave Tesch – or better yet, all of us in the same email message as we are trying to coordinate our current member info.

When I began this never-ending term as WSAH president (or PFL, president for life), I was embarrassed when I asked one of the founding members something about our logo, or the name of our then-publication "The Spark" – I just don't remember exactly what. There I was, supposedly the Grand Poohbah of our group and I didn't know poo about a very important part of Wisconsin automotive history. I have found that several of our members, especially if they are newer, could probably benefit from some background too. An article appears in this issue about The Spark and its creator, the Rev. Dr. J.W. Carhart, whose photo, if your curiosity hasn't caused you to research it, is on our Carhart Chronicle masthead.

I hope to see you all at our autumn meeting in Cross Plains on September 17. Details are elsewhere in this issue.

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## Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians

### Minutes from Summer Meeting (July 8, 2016)

Our group had the good fortune of being able to utilize the meeting room of the community center adjacent to the food building on the Iola Car Show grounds. It afforded us a chance to share a quiet and cool surrounding to conduct the meeting. President Ken Nimocks called the meeting to order at 2:00. Members present were President Ken Nimocks; Vice President Michael Keller; Newsletter Editor David Tesch; Director Jim Morris; Treasurer Gary Koehnke; Secretary Dan Manola; Gene Steinfeldt, George Tesar, and Don Gullikson.

**Old Business** -- President Ken Nimocks opened the subject of our standing with our affiliation with the National Society of Automotive Historians. Ken had spoken with both Tom Jakups and Robert Barr. Robert Barr is now on the Board of Directors with the National and the Chapters Chair. He resides in Riverside, Illinois and we can expect good representation of our concerns with the National. The new president of the National Society of Automotive Historians is Andrew Beckman who is the archivist in South Bend, Indiana at the Studebaker Museum. He is a native of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Ken said he had voiced his concern about National dues with Bob Barr when he spoke to him. Bob Barr is expected to arrive at Iola Saturday morning the 9th of July and spend some of the day with our group.

Member George Tesar gave our group a recap of what his trip to the National meeting entailed. It met in Cleveland, Ohio and included several presentations and various tours of some of the significant places relating to automotive history. The group consisted of approximately 150 members. Many buildings were visited and points of interest were discussed.

**Treasurer's Report** -- The Treasurer's report was given by Gary Koehnke with the following being expressed: Beginning and current standing checking balances were expressed with 10 membership renewals which amounted to \$50.00, 8 new memberships at an amount of \$40.00 and DVD sales of \$30.00, which brought our income to \$120.00. Expenses entailed \$1000.00 for our donation to the Wisconsin Auto Museum, \$500.00 to Jessica Zdanowicz for her work in creating our website and WSAH banner, and \$456.02 to David Tesch for newsletter printing and postage. Total expenses being \$1,956.02. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Dan Manola and seconded by Michael Keller.

*Note:* Detailed Treasurer's report available from Gary or Ken. Copy of the full minutes is available from Ken or Dan Manola.

**New Business** -- Some discussion was given again as to whether to raise our dues and also to the process of having new members signed up. A member signed up in June would get an actual 1½ years of membership for the price of a year. The procedure would come through Gary Koehnke, treasurer and then given a new member packet.

Discussion was brought to light on the naming of our group's newsletter to the "Carhart Chronicle." A motion was made by Jim Morris and seconded by Gary Koehnke to accept the new name. David Tesch gave some background history of the Racine, Wisconsin shop where Carhart's "Spark" was built. Michael Keller expressed kudos to David Tesch on his work with the newsletter.

**Iola Car Show** -- Items of mention and some feedback from vendors and attendees was discussed. The manner in which the Dodge Chargers area was roped off was thought to be somewhat confusing and didn't afford the easiest viewing. Some trailer unloading and removal of the trailers needed attention, but was handled without incidence. Vendors who had been attending Iola for decades felt a better drive in and park procedure could be initiated. New vendors spent too much time finding their spots whereas the veterans could easily drive into theirs, conserving setup time.

A motion was made by Gary Koehnke to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by David Tesch.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted, Secretary Dan Manola*

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## In Honor – Chester Lee “Chet” Krause

Chester Lee “Chet” Krause, founder of *Old Cars Weekly* and iconic figure in the old car community and many other hobby circles, passed away June 25, 2016 in Iola, Wisconsin at age 92.

Chet built a hobby publishing empire, Krause Publications, that started in 1952 with his first installment of *Numismatic News* — a one-page bulletin for coin collectors. His company later grew to include publications for old cars, stamps, guns and outdoors, sports cards, comics and games and other hobby areas to make it the world’s largest hobby publisher.



Krause’s legacy also includes the Iola Car Show, which he began in 1972 with a small gathering of old cars at a fundraising pig roast put on by the Iola Lions Club in central Wisconsin. The event blossomed into one of the largest collector car gatherings in the world and this July again welcomed more than 125,000 people and almost 2,500 collector cars to the small community of Iola.

Beyond his business accomplishments and enduring contributions to many different hobby areas, Krause will be remembered for his many years of community involvement and philanthropy, which included funding and support for countless civic and charity groups, medical research facilities, hospitals, assisted living housing and athletic organizations.

The affable and popular Krause built a multi-million-dollar publishing empire and was known globally in many hobby areas, but to locals in his hometown of Iola, he was just “Chet” — a local farm kid who made it big but never left home.

Chester Lee “Chet” Krause was born December 16, 1923 in Helvetia Township (six miles east of Iola in rural Waupaca County) and worked on the family farm. He graduated from high school in 1941 and was soon drafted into the U.S. Army where he worked as an auto mechanic with the 565th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion, serving in Patton’s 3rd Army in Europe. After military discharge in 1946 Krause returned home and began working as a carpenter and home builder. His fortunes began to change drastically in 1952 after he decided to start a newsletter to network with other hobbyists in the numismatics hobby. In 1971, he started *Old Cars Weekly* with a similar plan of connecting car enthusiasts. A year later, the Iola Old Car Show began. Over the years, the event has raised millions of dollars for the charities/civic groups that help staff the show, which has become a staple on the summer old car calendar for auto enthusiasts around the world.

Beyond his business acumen, Krause was successful because he was a people person with a drive to succeed, but also enable and motivate those who worked for him. In addition, he had his own fabulous car collection, which eventually numbered more than 100 vehicles, many of which made annual appearances at the Iola Old Car Show.

Chet was a long time member of the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians and after his retirement was named a Lifetime Honorary Member.

## WISCONSIN SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS SUMMER MEETING 2016



The WSAH Judicial Tribunal Cynically Listened Smugly with Pleasure

As the Lone Defendant 'Desperately Pleaded His Case to a Salivating Jury'

(photography courtesy of Jim (Paparazzi) Morris)

WSAH Website: <http://wisconsin-auto-historians.org>





# CARHART and THE SPARK



by

Ken Nimocks

Do you know what that vehicle is in the silhouette of our logo? Do you know who the bearded gentleman is and why our publication is called the Carhart Chronicle? Please read on ...

Those who are inclined to research will find numerous articles relating to the Rev. Dr. John Wesley (J.W.) Carhart and the Spark. As I have mentioned other times, I hope that this brief article will give each member enough basic information to pique their curiosity and encourage them to research more. As always, caution should be taken to check various sources as an abundance of errors and misinformation abounds. For example, one website identifies Carhart as "Wisconsin State University Professor" possibly confusing him with his brother who was a professor, but not in Wisconsin, and evidently mixes history by saying his vehicle won a 200 mile race, which of course was the race between the Green Bay and Oshkosh machines for the Wisconsin legislature prize. (That race, by the way, is sometimes called the "first" American auto race which, like many "firsts" is questionable).



"The Spark"



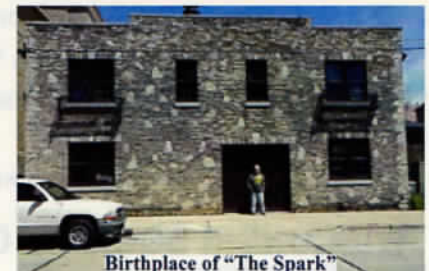
Still, there are articles which are much more accurate, so searches for both the car and the person will give a variety of data to compare. (I was surprised when searching to find that there is now a Chevrolet Spark. I just don't keep up with new cars, as it will take more than a lifetime to learn everything I want to know about the old ones!).

For a quick overview, the following is the exact wording from Wisconsin Historical Marker 72, located inside Pritchard Park in Racine, erected in 1957 by Wisconsin State Historical Society (as it was then known):

## - THE SPARK -

*In 1873 the Rev. Dr. J.W. Carhart of Racine designed and operated the first light self-propelled highway vehicle in the United States, and probably the first in the world. He named it the Spark. It was driven by a two cylinder steam engine, steered by a lever, and had a speed of five miles per hour. When his "infernal machine" first appeared, the hideous noise created by its operation caused the people of Racine to threaten to run Carhart out of town. Carhart seems to have agreed with the general opinion of his invention but added, "It must be remembered that at the time there were no liquid fuel, ball bearings or rubber tires." At the 1908 International Automobile Exposition held in Paris, France, Carhart was addressed as the "Father of Automobiles" and received a cash award and a certificate of honor for his invention.*

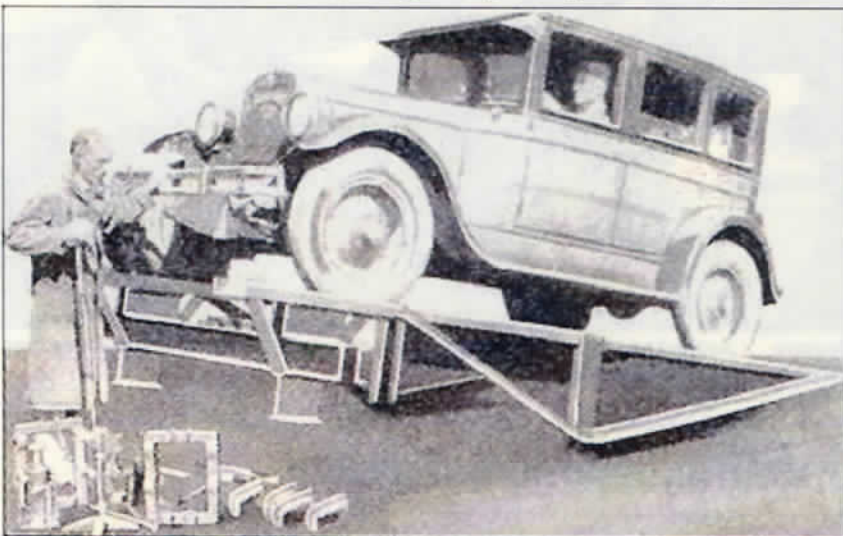
Again, the use of "first" might be dubious, but much is well documented. Carhart was born in Albany County, New York in 1834 and died in San Antonio, Texas in 1914. He was a Methodist minister when in Racine and was also a physician and, of course, an inventor. He also wrote his autobiography, "Four Years on Wheels." Our WSAH Carhart Chronicle Editor David Tesch, a Racine area native who now resides in Eau Claire, recently went to the shop where The Spark was built and photographed the exterior. The shop, at 1023 Wisconsin Avenue is preserved as a historic building.



Birthplace of "The Spark"

## Strange But True

Concepts/Ingenuity/Design/Creativity/Inventiveness in the Automotive Field



### Rack and Roll

This innovative development from the early 1920's was meant to save garages the trouble of digging the traditional grease pit prevalent back then. It worked on the principle of a seesaw, so both the front and rear of the car could be serviced. The car could also remain horizontal if driven to the exact center balance point. We wonder how many nervous mechanics got bopped on the noggin -- or worse -- by a car which moved a bit one way or the other.

{from March 17, 1921 Motor Age}







# CARS WITH PRESIDENT'S NAMES

{for Presidents with Names of Cars}

With Presidential Elections looming on the horizon now is a good time to review American presidents who had or have the same names as the cars we have heard of or been associated with. I'm sure you all remember the names of the autos so we'll now match them up with those of our former top-level politicians and a capsulation of the cars of the same names:

---in chronological order of presidency---

**WASHINGTON** - The car that bore the name of The Father of His Country didn't last any longer than his term in office. Made in Middleton and Easton, Ohio from 1921 to 1924, it was an "assembled" car (put together from parts made by other companies) and only 35 Washingtons were built.

**ADAMS** - There were two presidents named Adams (#2, John and #6, John Quincy - father and son) and two Adams cars. The Adams Model C was built in Findlay, Ohio only in 1911 by the Adams brothers, but the Adams-Farwell was made in Dubuque, Iowa for nine years, from 1904 to 1913.

**MADISON** - James Madison was Number 4 and The Father of the Constitution, we're told. His namesake, another assembled car, came from Anderson, Indiana circa 1915 to 1918 and the 1916 version packed a V8. There was even a two-seater with a cutesy name, the "Dolly" Madison.

**MONROE** - Surely you remember the doctrine put forth by our fifth president, James Monroe, in 1823. No? Oh well. His name was put on cars built by several different succeeding outfits in Flint, Michigan and Indianapolis (corporate takeovers were common then too). It lasted ten years until the Monroe passed into history in 1924.

**JACKSON** - Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson was Number Seven and as an interesting historical side note, married a lady while she was still technically married to someone else. The Jackson was built in Jackson, Michigan and lasted a relatively long period - from 1903 to 1923 - and its last model could have been a musical group. It was The Jackson Six.

**HARRISON** - There were two Harrison presidents, too. William was Number Nine and died of pneumonia after a month in office. His grandson, Benjamin, was Number 23 and lasted longer. Made in Grand Rapids, Michigan from '05 to '07, the Harrison auto's claim to fame was that its self-starter consisted of acetylene shot into the cylinders and ignited by a jiggled spark control lever.

**TAYLOR** - Zackery Taylor became our 12th chief executive in 1849 while the Taylor-Dunn electric shopper was made 100 years later in Anaheim, California.

**PIERCE** - Franklin Pierce was our forgettable 14th president but who can forget the majestic Pierce-Arrow of the turbulent '30s. It rivaled Rolls-Royce and lasted 37 years until 1938, killed by The Depression. In its shadow was the Pierce-Racine built in Racine, Wisconsin from 1904 to 1909.

**LINCOLN** - It's still around and was so named by its originator, Henry Leland, because he voted for Honest Abe (#16) in the election of 1861. Leland was an elderly individual when he started the Lincoln line in 1920.

**JOHNSON** - There were two Johnsons: Andrew was Number 17 and we all remember Lyndon who was number 36. The Johnson was built in Milwaukee from 1905 to 1907 as a steamer, then to 1912 as a gas-fueled commercial vehicle.

**CLEVELAND** - Grover Cleveland was President Numbers 22 and 24, and the only man ever elected to non-consecutive terms. There were four different Cleveland cars (made in Cleveland, of course) from 1902 to 1926.

**ROOSEVELT** - Theodore and Franklin were second cousins and Presidents Number 26 and 32. The Roosevelt car was really a cheap Marmon, made from 1929 to 1931 in Indianapolis and named after Teddy, the old Rough Rider.

**HARDING** - Warren Harding (#29) died after three years in office, just in time to avoid the infamous Teapot Dome Scandal. Only one Harding was ever made in Cleveland, a 1915 seven-seater, 12 cylinder monster.

**KENNEDY** - Jack Kennedy of Camelot fame, was the 35th man in the White House and the details are still painful. The Kennedy car was a tiny coupe built in Los Angeles from 1915 to 1918.

**FORD** - As President Number 38, Gerald Ford once said "...I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln." Truer words were never spoken.

**CARTER** - Peanut Farmer Jimmy Carter sat in the Oval Office as head man #39. The Carter Twin-Engine was made in Hyattsville, Maryland from 1907 to 1909 and in an attempt at utter reliability, featured two entirely separate engines that could be run independently. It flopped.

**BUSH** - George Bush, was Number 41 (and George W. - Number 43) in the presidential lineup. The Bush automobile was actually made by several other car makers from 1916 to 1925 and sold by mail order out of an office in Chicago.

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**NIMOCKS - Our Fearless Leader.** All research indicates that *if* the infamous **Nimocks Phaeton Brougham Deluxe Classic** did indeed exist {as some Hard-Core enthusiasts wish the public to believe} then it was entirely designed, developed, constructed, and produced in total secretive obscurity.

**KELLER - Our Vice Fearless Leader. The Keller Motors Corp.** (Huntsville, Alabama) [1948-1950] acquired the design, engineering, manufacturing and merchandising rights from the Dixie Motor Car Corp. which purchased the assets of the Bobbi Motor Car Co. in 1947. The Bobbi Kar was renamed the **Keller** in 1948. The two body styles, convertible and a station wagon were reported to be followed by a four door sedan and a package delivery car all as a late 1940s early 1950s style of light car. Only eighteen Kellers were produced in Huntsville before the death of George D. Keller ended production.



1948 Keller Convertible