



*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**

Summer 2016



*Main Street [Iola, Wisconsin] – 1930's*

**A {Not So} Few Words from the President**

Our annual WSAH summer meeting will be held at the Iola Car Show on Friday, July 8. Please see the details elsewhere in this issue. We have several volunteers lined up for helping at Iola and it would be good if you can let me know which days and hours you are available and willing.

Starting Wednesday (July 6), we can always use help for set-up from about noon to about 5 p.m. On Thursday, we need help from as early as 6 a.m. (when the gates open at such an inhumane hour) for parking vehicles in the tent, around and across from the tent, and in the Dodge Charger exhibit. Veterans know what this entails, but if you are new and would like to help, we will have you work with someone who can show you what to do. We will need some help at the table, selling items for the Car Show and fielding questions, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Of course, we can break up the days into 3-5 hour shifts, or even less when things are settled in for the day.



*Determining the "Chosen Few" for the Iola Car Show*

Friday and Saturday will be much the same as Thursday, except that many of the participants will already know where to park, so the workload subsides quite a bit. However, there is usually more sales activity at the table. Sunday is not a show day, but some help is usually needed for final takedown and putting away materials. A lot of this can be done later Saturday. Please contact me at [knimocks@netnet.net](mailto:knimocks@netnet.net) or (920) 655-2740 to confirm that you can help. Thanks!

Jessica Z has come through again with a design for a WSAH brochure, with information about us and a membership form. We will try to have it available for Iola. She and Jim Morris are starting work on a short YouTube clip of the Gene Grengs video to promote sales.

The SAH ("The National") contact with whom I have worked the past few years, Tom Jakups, has stepped down after his tenure on the SAH Board and our new SAH Chapter Chair is Bob Barr. For many years we were like "birds in the wilderness" when it came to any SAH contact, but that changed with Tom and, I believe, Susan Davis as SAH President. Bob Barr now lives in a Chicago suburb, has officially joined our WSAH, and is planning to attend meetings with us when he can. I had a long phone conversation with him and feel he will work out very well for our link to SAH. He has an automotive background, from truck dealership service manager to advanced positions with other related businesses.

*I hope to see you all at Iola!*

Ken (PFL\*) Nimocks

\*President For Life

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## Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians

### Minutes from Spring Meeting (April 16, 2016)

Our first meeting of the 2016 season took place in Hartford, Wisconsin, with the Wisconsin Automotive Museum being our headquarters for the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians. The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m. and was attended by the following individuals: President Ken Nimocks, News/Letter Editor David Tesch, Treasurer Gary Koehnke, Directors Don Chandler and Jim Morris, Secretary Dan Manola, Webmaster Jessica Zdanowicz, and the following members: Randy Nimocks, Wally Heil, Phil Hall and friend Carol Keifert, Dawn Bondhus Mueller, Don Gullikson, Gene Steinfeldt, Randy Vollmer, Dan Sharpee, John Gunnell, Al Six, Joseph Stawicki, Tom McMahon, Gene Knutson, Mitch Swenson, and guest Pete Rabideau.

There was no reading of minutes of fall meeting at Hill & Valley in September as they were previously published in the December News/Letter.

**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 15 membership renewals at \$5.00@ \$75.00 and one new membership at \$5.00. Our Iola Old Car Show contribution to us was \$1400.00. There was one DVD sale for \$20.00 for a total income of \$1,500.00. Expenses incurred for this period were \$211.95 for printing and mailing of News/Letter, a donation of \$500.00 to the Milwaukee Public Museum, \$15.00 to the Wisconsin Council for Local History, payment of National dues for Ken Nimocks of \$50.00, and \$155.80 for a new banner and hardware for display of our organization. This brought total expenses to \$932.75. A motion to accept treasurer's report was made by Randy Vollmer and seconded by Dan Manola.

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

**New Business** - - It was discussed that perhaps we should solicit a sponsor for our newsletter. Another choice being an increase in our annual dues which would help offset new expenses for our group. The Society of Automotive Historians which held a National Spring meeting was attended by member George Tesar, who will report on the event.

Ken Nimocks had sent Jessica Zdanowicz a rendering of what he thought our banner might look like. Jessica came back with what amounted to a fantastic, beyond Ken's expectations, banner. Ken said Jessica did a great job. A motion was made by Gary Koehnke to award Jessica a \$500.00 stipend for her fine work for our group of both the website and banner layout construction. This was seconded by David Tesch.

It was brought to our attention that perhaps we would send our Newsletter to a select few of known auto enthusiasts to encourage them to join our group. Our group should promote the desire on the part of people we may know or meet to join the WSAH. John Gunnell made a motion to mail out the newsletters and Jim Morris seconded.

**Iola Car Show** -- Changes are again taking place at the Iola Car Show. The word "Old" is being dropped from the title. Planned invites at the show include: The Ring Brothers (SEMA award winners), Jo Coddington of Boyd Coddington's American Hot Rod fame, Courtney Hansen of Overhulin', and Mike and Ryan Evans of Count's Customs (Counting Cars). This year's theme is "Trucks and 50 years of Dodge Chargers". The participation of our WSAH group has become somewhat limited as of late. John Gunnell brought to our attention that we may recruit students from the Freedom High School automotive class volunteers to assist us at the show. This will certainly be pursued as a solution to some of our manpower shortages. Iola has hired nine buses to now move attendees from parking lots to gates. A snowmobile group may also be invited to assist us. New shirts are coming! It was requested they be cool wearing and have a pocket.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:20 with a motion by Dan Sharpee and seconded by Wally Heil. Next News/Letter will have information for our July meeting at Iola.

*Respectfully Submitted, Secretary Dan Manola*



## **AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY CONFERENCE**

**SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS (CLEVELAND, OHIO) MAY 14-16, 2016**



by

George Tesar  
Madison, Wisconsin  
May 22, 2016  
[gtesar@chorus.net](mailto:gtesar@chorus.net)

This year the Automotive History Conference, organized by SAH and held every two years, took place in Cleveland, Ohio from April 14 to 16. Approximately fifty members, and some nonmembers, even from abroad, attended. Several individuals from the Cleveland area helped promote Cleveland as the original automotive manufacturing center in the United States—years before Detroit claimed that honor. According to one of the presenters even Indianapolis competed in the automotive industry at one time. The Saturday afternoon tour of Cleveland along with the visit to the Crawford Auto Aviation Collection at the Western Reserve Historical Society made the conference complete. Any automotive historian that visits Cleveland needs to see this collection.

The one-and-a-half-day program was full of interesting papers, presentations, and even a video. Notable presentations were made by Carla Rose Lesh on "What a Women Can Do with an Auto: American Women in the Early Automotive Era," Robert Ebert talked about "The Historic Electric Vehicle Industry: The Case of Baker, Rauch & Lang," and Roger Sherman reviewed the early patent war in his paper titled "The Colonel and the Kardo Company: How a Buffalo Auto Executive Helped to End the Auto Patent Wars." Listening to the presentations it became obvious how deeply and professionally the papers were researched and how seriously each presenter considered his or her topic. These were great presentations!

Tom Barret and Bob Ebert organized a booklet for the conference titled "Cleveland Automotive History Tour," in which they listed all the automobile manufacturers that built cars and trucks in Cleveland between 1897 and 1932. Eighty-three manufacturers built cars and trucks in the Cleveland area! Stearns and Winton were the earliest builders of passenger cars, while Peerless started building passenger cars and trucks in 1900; some were powered by steam but most used gasoline engines. Peerless stopped all production in 1932.

Though some of the buildings where manufacturers built or assembled their cars or trucks are still standing, most were demolished. The fortunate ones were converted into lofts, artists' workshops, warehouses or expanded into large non-auto related manufacturing facilities. The original building of Templar Motors Corporation survived a number of technological changes and recently was converted into the great official Templar brand museum housing several models of Templar cars along with a variety of related materials. The rest of the building provides cubicles for local artists and craftsmen. This is a great building to visit. It still has a car elevator that during its golden age moved partially completed cars between floors and finally on the short test track in the back of the building. To see all this was a great opportunity.

On the way back to Madison I reflected on this great conference. However, driving back on the Ohio and Indiana toll ways I was passed by F-150s, Lincoln Navigators, and occasionally by Nissan Quests among other vehicles much larger than my GS-350. Even though I drove home on a Sunday morning, I had to pass a number of triple-bottom trucks carrying loads across America. I wonder what future historians will write about this period of automotive history? Surprisingly, the worst part of the trip came when I crossed from Illinois to Wisconsin—Sunday afternoon the traffic going north was one of the heaviest I ever experienced. But the conference was great.



### **DVD Promotion/Sales:**

Promotion continues for the Gene Grengs Collection DVD project. WSAH members are strongly encouraged to promote this unique/historic WSAH publication/production within their personal communities (libraries, museums, educational institutions, etc).

# WISCONSIN SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS SPRING MEETING 2016



While Membership of the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians gathered for the Spring Meeting 'Ready & Eager to Jump Right In'



Some on the Board continuously 'Toasted to the Success of the Proceedings'  
(photography courtesy of Jim (Paparazzi) Morris)

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Dodge Truck Serial Numbers 1917-1980*

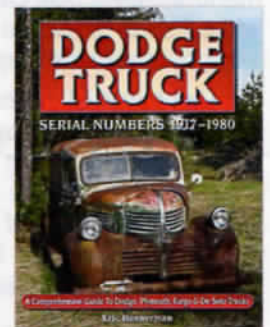
*A Comprehensive Guide to Dodge, Plymouth, Fargo & De Soto Trucks*

{by Eric Bannerman} Banneshire Publications [Madison, Wisconsin] \$39.99

reviewed by

George Tesar

May 26, 2016



An increasing number of books are published about restoration, rebuilding, and recommissioning of cars, trucks, and more recently motorcycles. Most of these books are full of pictures describing specific idiosyncrasies of special models, uniqueness of limited production models, or procedures to take apart and reassemble components of cars, trucks, or motorcycles. One seldom comes across a book that lists facts frequently sought after by specialists who need accurate information about specific models, year of manufacture, and engine and chassis numbers. Such information is sometimes very hard to get. The information collected by Mr. Bannerman about Dodge Truck serial numbers is unique. In addition to Dodge trucks, the book also contains detailed information about serial numbers of Plymouth, Fargo, and De Soto Trucks. It lists serial numbers from 1917 to 1980, which the author collected and verified by examining actual serial number plates located somewhere on each truck. He visited salvage yards all over the United States to collect this information. The book is a valuable guide for any collector, automotive specialist, or historian interested in the Dodge family of trucks. The book is a true marvel in the field of automotive literature.

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

## What happened

# 'On the Same Day as the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians Meeting' in Automotive History?

July 8<sup>th</sup>

1907 **George Wilcken Romney was Born**

George Wilcken Romney was born on this date in Colonia Dublán, Galeana, in the Mexican state of Chihuahua in a Mormon community. He entered the car industry as a salesman and eventually became one of the most powerful men in the business, leading AMC in becoming the largest independent car company in the country. As managing director of the Automobile Manufacturers Association, Romney became good friends with then-president **George W. Mason**. Mason had long sought a merger of Nash-Kelvinator with one or more other companies, and on May 1, 1954, it merged with Hudson Motor Car to become the

American Motors Corporation (AMC). It was the largest merger in the history of the industry, and Romney became an executive vice president of the new firm. As Mason's protégé, Romney assumed executive assignment for the development of the *Rambler*. Mason suddenly died of acute pancreatitis and pneumonia. Romney was named AMC's president and chairman of the board the same month. He reorganized upper management, brought in younger executives, and pruned and rebuilt AMC's dealer network. Romney believed that the only way to compete with the "Big Three" (General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler) was to stake the future of AMC on a new smaller-sized car line. Together with chief engineer Meade Moore, by the end of 1957 Romney had completely phased out the Nash and Hudson brands, whose sales had been lagging. The *Rambler* brand was selected for development and promotion, as AMC pursued an innovative strategy: manufacturing only compact cars. The company struggled badly at first, losing money in 1956, more in 1957, and experiencing defections from its dealer network. Romney instituted company-wide savings and efficiency measures, and he and other executives reduced their salaries by up to 35 percent. Though AMC was on the verge of being taken over by corporate raider Louis Wolfson in 1957, Romney fended him off. Then sales of the *Rambler* finally took off, leading to unexpected financial success for AMC. He then served as the 43rd governor of Michigan from 1963 to 1969 and then the 3rd United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development from 1969 to 1973. Romney was a candidate for President in 1968, ultimately losing the Republican nomination to Richard M. Nixon.



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## Strange But True

Testing/Display/Demonstration of Strength, Stamina, & Endurance when Testing was in its Infancy  
{Climbing Capabilities}



A 1907 Rambler climbs a wooden varying percent grade ramp in Kenosha, Wisconsin, during Engine Performance Testing



