



*Wisconsin Society of
Automotive Historians
WSAH*

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Carhart Chronicle

Spring 2017



Green Bay's Finest Garage, Green Bay, Wis.
Badger Motor Company [201 W. Walnut Street - Green Bay, Wisconsin] - 1929

A Few Words from the President

Our WSAH Annual Spring Meeting will be held Saturday April 8, 2017 at The Automobile Gallery in Green Bay. This is likely a one-time opportunity, thanks to the generous offer by Red Lewis to sponsor one of our meetings. Please look for details elsewhere in this issue. For many years we have held our Annual Spring Meeting at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford and have provided them with some monetary support. I hope we will continue to do that.

An item that was mentioned previously is whether we should consider raising our annual dues from \$5 to \$15. I cannot remember when our dues were not \$5 and, other than the expense of publishing our Wisconsin Cars and Trucks book, we have had no treasury concerns thanks to our income from volunteering for the Iola Car Show. However, as an ever more active and growing organization, our expenses have greatly increased, including: The creation of our website, brochures, updated banner, various donations (as I believe we should), and the greatly increased expense of printing and mailing our outstanding multi-page color newsletter. We will discuss raising dues and studying expenses, then act upon any motions.

The Great Wisconsin Race of 1878

America's First Road Race

The steam traction engine was, for all practical purposes, still in its infancy in 1878. That year, the J.I. Case Threshing Machine Co., Racine, Wisconsin, manufactured its first steam traction engine, a rudimentary, horse-steered machine. Indeed, six more years would pass before Case introduced a self-steering traction engine. Yet, that same year a seemingly unknown event occurred in Case's home state, an event that Case whether directly or indirectly inspired: America's first road race. Not only was it the first road race before automobiles, it was a race between two steam traction engines.

In 1871, John Wesley Carhart [a Methodist minister in Racine, a physician and, of course, an inventor] designed and built a steam-powered buggy. Powered by a two-cylinder steam engine, Carhart's buggy was the first self-propelled vehicle to come from the Badger State, and according to at least one source, Carhart's vehicle (nicknamed 'Spark') was the result of collaboration between Carhart and J.I. Case. If true, Case assumedly supplied the engine for Carhart's machine.

Inspired by Carhart's machine, the Wisconsin legislature passed an 1875 act authorizing the payment of a \$10,000 bounty to 'any citizen of Wisconsin, who shall invent, and after five years continued trial and use, shall produce a machine propelled by steam or other motive agent, which shall be a cheap and practical substitute for the use of horses, and other animals on the highway and farm.'

The act was amended in 1876 and again in 1877, with the final version removing the 'five years continued trial and use' requirement. In place of this ambiguous clause, requirements for a successful trial were spelled out. Specifically, the act required contestants to complete a 200-mile route at 'not less than five miles per hour working time,' and it required that any machine competing be able to function in both forward and reverse. Competing machines would be put through a series of trials (including plowing and pulling loaded wagons), with appointed state representatives in attendance to verify performance. The act called for trials to commence in July 1878 and to end 10 days thereafter.

On July 16, 1878, the contesting engines lined up in Green Bay for the start of the highly anticipated race. A 200-mile course had been laid out, running south from Green Bay to Appleton, Oshkosh, Waupun, Watertown, Fort Atkinson and Janesville, then turning north/ending in Madison.

Six machines originally registered for the race, but only two actually competed: the 'Oshkosh' and the 'Green Bay' (machines were referred to by their town of origin). A third machine, the 'Madison', supposedly started for Green Bay but got stuck in mud along the way. A fourth, the 'Milwaukee', simply failed to work, and a fifth, the 'Fond du Lac', was never completed. The origin of the supposed 'Sixth' entry is unknown.

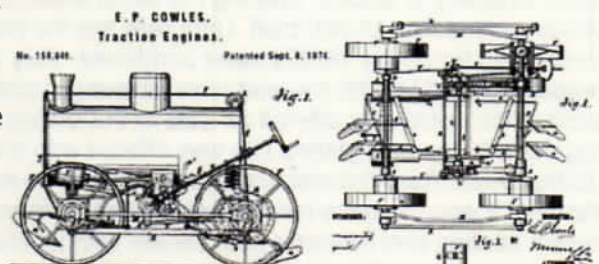


The 'Oshkosh' in front of John Morse's shop (Oshkosh, Wisconsin) ["Smoke" hand-painted onto photo]

The 'Green Bay' is credited to one person, inventor **Edward P. Cowles** of **Wequiock, Wisconsin** (a town northeast of Green Bay), who in 1874 was awarded patent no. 154,846 for his traction engine design. Cowles' engine was at least in concept quite advanced, featuring four-wheel drive, four-wheel steering and a three-speed transmission. Cowles' two-cylinder machine was said to weigh in excess of 14,000 pounds. The machine's horsepower output is unknown.

Cowles' 'Green Bay' suffered numerous mechanical failures inhibiting it from making it out of Green Bay on the first day. It ended up traveling by rail to Oshkosh. The 'Oshkosh', on the other hand, performed flawlessly finishing the race/covering the 201 miles in 33 hours 27 minutes with an average speed of 6 mph.

The creative talent behind the 'Oshkosh' lay in the minds of at least six men: **Martin T. Battis**, **Anson Farrand**, **Alexander Gallinger**, **John F. Morse**, **John Owens**, and **Frank Schomer**. The six were residents of Oshkosh, and their professional occupations perhaps provide a clue to their interest in a successful steam-powered machine. Battis and Morse ran their own boiler shops (the Union Steam Boiler Works and the Union Iron Works, respectively); Farrand was the steam engineer for the Oshkosh fire department; Gallinger ran a successful lumber operation; Schomer contracted wood sawing; and Gallinger and Schomer were also partners in an enterprise selling McCormick reapers and mowers. Owens' occupation is unknown.



What happened

'On the Same Day as the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians Meeting'

in Automotive History?

April 8th

1910 **The Los Angeles Motordome opened near Playa Del Rey, California**



The Los Angeles Motordome, the first speedway with a board track, opened near Playa Del Rey, California, under the direction of Fred Moskovich and Jack Prince. The track was made of wood and ran a circumference of 5,281 feet. Board tracks used the same engineering technology as the smaller wood velodromes used in France for bicycle racing. The tracks were paved with 2x4's and were steeply banked at angles as high as 45 degrees. On such a track, a car-racing daredevil could reach speeds up to



Frederick E. Moskovich

100mph with his hands off the steering wheel. The L.A. Motordome, affectionately known as "The Boards," was a huge success. By 1915, nearly a half-dozen board tracks had popped up around the country. By 1931, there were 24 board tracks in operation including tracks in Beverly Hills, Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, and Atlantic City.



Jack Prince

Incidentally, the Beverly Hills track stood approximately where the prime-time shopping blocks of Rodeo Drive are located now. No tracks have ever approximated the speeds allowed on the heavily banked boards. Board tracks began to fade from existence during the Depression. The lifetime for 2x4's exposed to racing tires is approximately five years after which deadly splinters and potholes begin to dot the track's smooth surface. During the Depression, the expensive upkeep of the board



tracks made them impractical. The last decade of board racing was a sight to behold. Cars tore down straightaways at 120mph while carpenter's patched the tracks from beneath. It wasn't unheard of for mischievous children to peek their heads up through holes in the board tracks to watch their favorite racers with a squirrel's eye view.

Strange But True

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



1960 Dodge Matador

The Matador nameplate is likely most well remembered as belonging to AMC's Ambassador-based line of 1971-78. However, long before AMC did its bit of badge engineering with its full-size line with this sporting name, Dodge had used it for a single year of production a decade earlier. The 1960 Dodge Matador was the low-cost offering from Dodge's Polara line, intended as the base-level, full-size model with which to bridge the gap between the carmaker's newly introduced and highly successful 118-inch wheelbase Dart series. With a price tag of just over \$2,200, over 300,000 Darts sold that year. The Polara on the other hand, was a fully decked-out luxury model, built on a 122-inch-wheelbase chassis that featured Chrysler's new Unibody construction. Priced well over \$3,000, some 16,000 were built in 1960, and the Polara name continued all the way through to the 1973 model year. When it comes to the Matador though, such longevity is absent. Sharing the same sheet metal as the Polara, the Matador was most popular as a four-door sedan model, with some 14,000 built. Ultra rare are the pair of two-door sedans produced, while two-and four-door hardtops accounted for nearly 10,000 sales combined. Very attractive compared to its contemporaries was the Matador four-door wagon, offered in both six- and nine-passenger configurations. Over 4,000 Matador wagons were built and, like all of Matador production, were only offered for sale in the United States. Altogether, Matador production totaled nearly 28,000 units. The big car with the bullfighter's title was offered with the 295hp Super Red Ram 361-cu.in. V-8 as its standard powerplant, with a 320hp D-500 Ram Induction version available as an option, as was the Polara's 325hp Ram Fire 383-cu.in. V-8. Despite the fact that it was the base-level full-size offering, there was nothing stripped down about the interior. From its cloth and vinyl bench seating and two-tone door panels with plastic chrome accents, to its space-age-styled dash with a bridged-over, top-mounted, sweep-style speedometer flanked by gauge pods with a revolving turret clock at center and the X-within-an-X four-spoke steering wheel, it was a lot of car for the \$2,900 price tag Dodge put on it. By 1961, the compact Lancer was the hot new ticket coming out of the Dodge dealerships, pushing the Dart series into the intermediate price range while the Polara soldiered on alone as the full-size model. The Matador had taken its bow and left the ring.

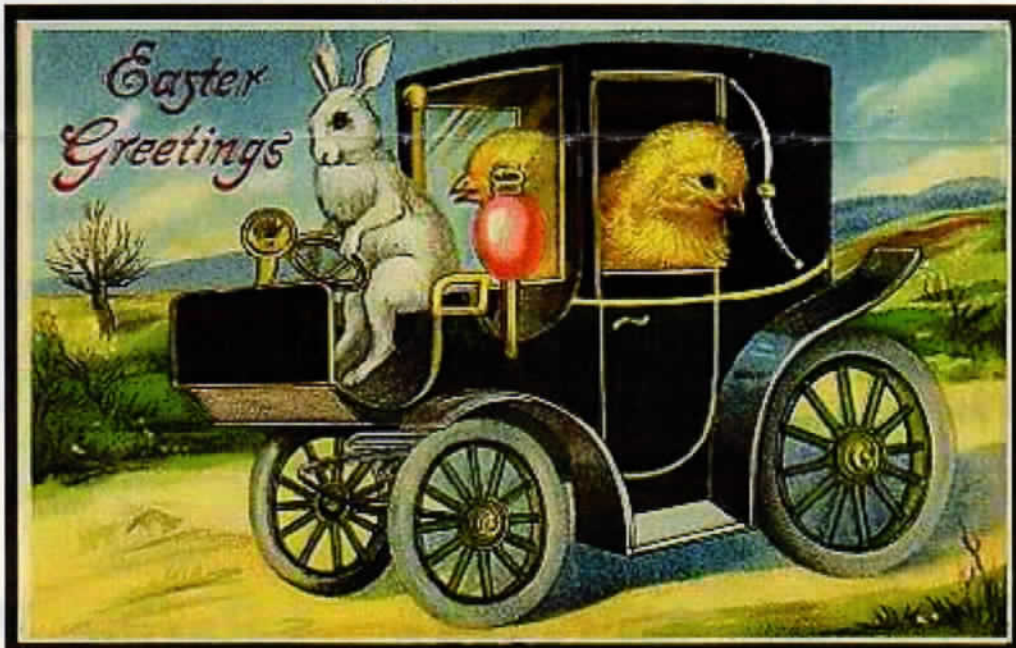
(note: this was David Tesch's first car)



{ 1900s }

-- WHAT IS IT ?!?!? --

Happy Easter { 1912 }



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

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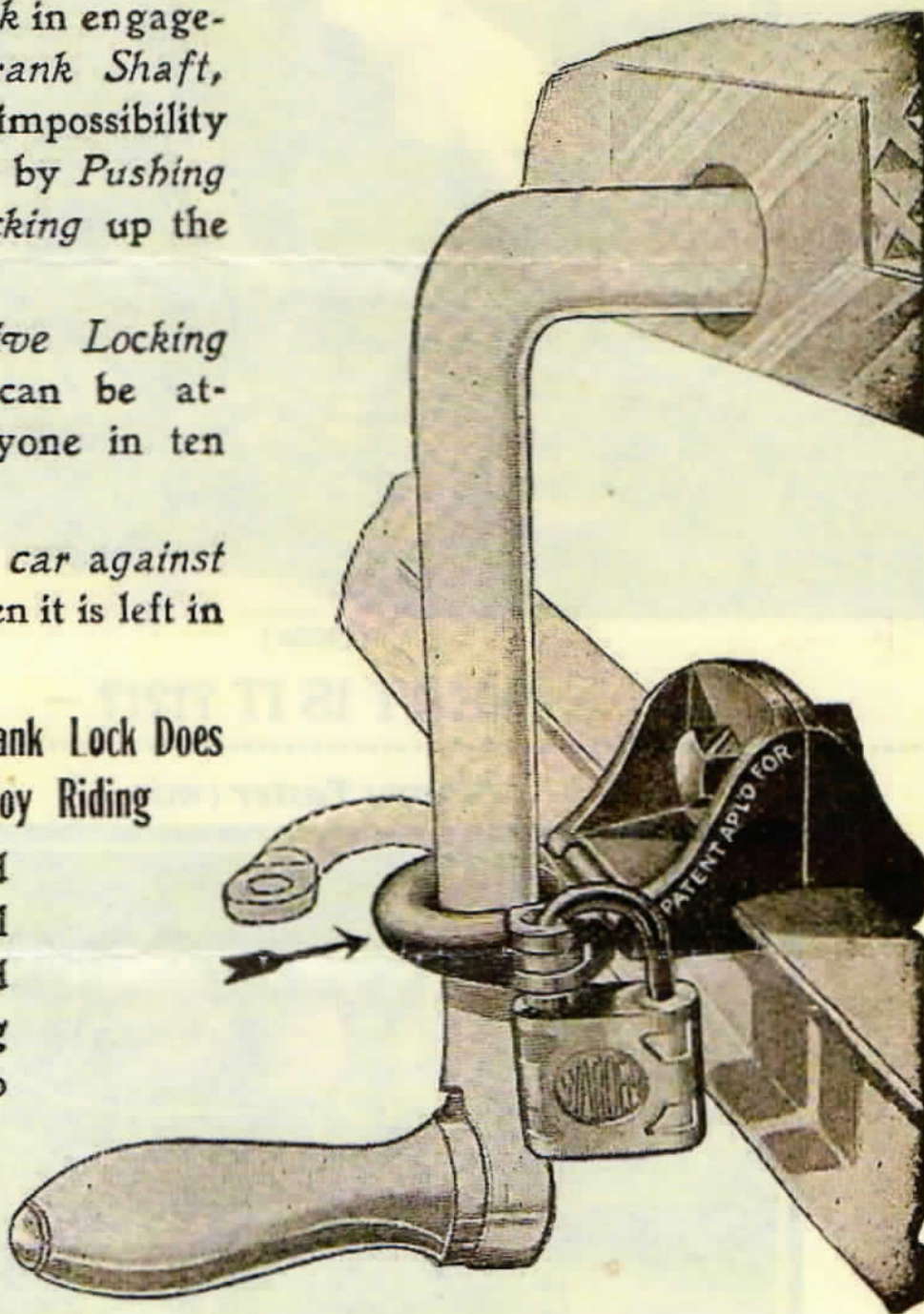
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