



*Wisconsin Society of
Automotive Historians*
WSAH

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Carhart Chronicle

Winter 2017



1915 Jeffery Truck (manufactured in Kenosha) complete with 'Christmas Dinner' [Somewhere in Wisconsin] - 1915

A Few Words from the President

Wintertime in the north. Maybe you use the time to get all those shop projects done, from polishing or maintenance and minor repairs to an overhaul on your collector car engine or transmission. Or, maybe you just pack up and head for the tropics. If neither of those scenarios applies to you, you can always read about, write about, and research automotive history. The great thing about reading, writing, and researching is that it can be less expensive than an oil change and it makes no difference whether you love or hate snow and cold.

That brings me to this: If you have ever wanted to try writing something for publication, writing an article for the Carhart Chronicle could be a good way get started. The content and organization might be something you have to think through, but don't worry much about the spelling, punctuation, and using the proper form of to/too/two or your/you're. It's better if you do, but that's something that editor and publisher Dave Tesch and his proofreader (me) will polish up for you.

A few days after our autumn meeting, Don Gullikson, Jim Morris, and I met with some of the Iola Car Show staff to discuss the 2016 show as well as future shows. Our purpose was to make suggestions for improvements to the show and comment on any negatives. We felt the 2016 show went very well and didn't really have any negative comments. Some of the topics we discussed included use of the former tennis court, a system to move illegally parked vehicles, announcements as to where and when celebrities would be appearing, more and smaller recycling containers, and the way we will park the single row of vehicles under the tent. We can discuss details at the annual spring meeting in April.

Elsewhere in this issue is a re-run of a recent (Autumn 2015) article on The Yellowstone Trail. Because 2017 is the 100 year anniversary of the Trail and we have several new members since the article was originally published, we felt it would be good for members to see it again. There are links for those who wish to read more about it. Furthermore, our member John "Gunner" Gunnell took his 1917 Oakland on the tour across Wisconsin, and he now owns a building in Waupaca that was intended to be an Oakland dealership and was a Yellowstone Garage on the route of the Trail. *Ken Nimocks -- President*

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Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians **Minutes from Autumn Meeting (September 16, 2017)**

As is typical of the fine weather provided by the Hill & Valley Car Show and Tour, the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians met for their Annual Fall Meeting at a designated covered tent on the grounds of the show. Members present for the meeting were President Ken Nimocks, Vice-president Michael Keller, Treasurer Gary Koehnke, Secretary Dan Manola, Newsletter Editor Dave Tesch, Director Jim Morris, Webmaster Jessica Zdanowicz, Director Don Gullikson, and members Dan Sharpee, George Tesar, Randy Nimocks, and Wally Heil.

President Ken Nimocks called the meeting to order promptly at 1:00 p.m. A round table of introductions and area of residence was made by each member. With formalities past, Ken asked if any business from the minutes was needed for discussion. The July meeting minutes were put to acceptance and Mike Keller made a motion to accept with Dan Sharpee seconding the motion. The Treasurer's report was then read by Gary Koehnke with income, expenses, and final balance stated and a mention of having recruited three new members. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Randy Nimocks and seconded by Dan Sharpee.

Old Business -- Webmaster Jessica Zdanowicz has begun scanning our past published issues of "Spark." A time after the meeting would be allocated for members to see the layout she has done and suggest any changes or approval. She will also scan our present publication which Newsletter Editor Dave Tesch has so successfully put together, "The Carhart Chronicle." A list of present Wisconsin residents who are now members of the national Society of Automotive Historians was printed and a solicitation was decided to be made to see if they would like to join the WSAH. It was thought a letter of invitation accompanied by a present Carhart Chronicle issue would be sent to each of those on the list.

New Business -- Dan Sharpee had copied some information posted by the Wisconsin Historical Society which mentions certain historical items of interest and listed as "On this Date" with a year this event had taken place. On August 1, 1900 the first car race had been run in Racine, Wisconsin. This and other significant items are posted on their site. Many of the dates are not necessarily auto related events however.

Iola Car Show -- Discussion of the occurrences or issues with the Iola Car Show were addressed. Ken Nimocks, Jim Morris, and Don Gullikson will attend a post show meeting in Iola to discuss these items. An addition of pylons placed in the fire lanes of the theme tent and F+W publishing building was mentioned as well as a larger, laminated map of the grounds and gate numbers for use at our table was thought an idea of note. The possibility of past poster cars or theme cars to be shown at the 50th anniversary show was also noted. It was also thought that can cozies would be an item of interest to be sold at our table. President Ken Nimocks adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m. *Respectfully Submitted, Secretary Dan Manola*

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Strange But True

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



The First Tucker Torpedo Prototype

The first *Tucker Torpedo* prototype was even more radical than the final car. More flamboyant too, with its Sting Ray-like rear window treatment and wrap-around windshield. It hardly needed taillamps with all that chrome in the back, but with those enclosed front fenders the turning circle must have been about three acres.

(from April 1947 Consumers' Research Bulletin)

Who was George Ellis?

Last spring a fifth grade girl from Utah, Elizabeth, contacted me looking for information about the first successful automobile (I assumed American) for her school report. She had read about the Schloemer Motor Wagon on our WSAH website and asked if that was the first successful automobile. She had also read on another website about George Ellis and that he ran his automobile on February 28th 1892. It said that the vehicle is in the McCormick Museum, but she couldn't find any information for that museum.

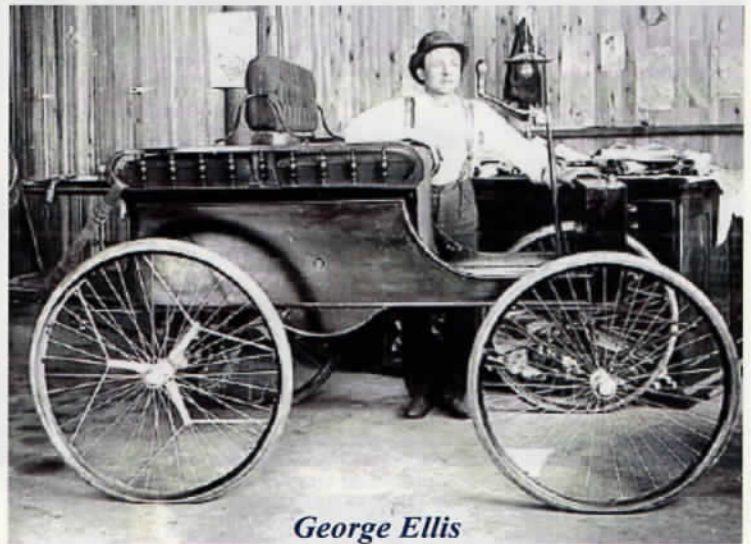
I did a brief internet search and found only one reference to George Ellis which, as I later found out, was on the same website where Elizabeth got her information. That website has a clear photo from the Wisconsin Historical Society of "George Ellis with his 1892 automobile in Wisconsin." I also searched for the McCormick Museum and found websites for various museums and historical sites related to

Robert R. McCormick, the Chicago Tribune publisher, in Illinois. I wondered if there might be a connection to Cyrus McCormick, farm machinery inventor, and found there is a Cyrus McCormick Farm and Workshop historic site in Virginia. Neither of these places seemed to be possibilities according to the many photos and information on their websites, but I have not contacted them.

I explained to Elizabeth how I often caution people on the use of the term "first" because it is rarely documented, especially prior to modern times. Examples I gave of "firsts" were the Schloemer, the Green Bay and Oshkosh first race, and Dr. Carhart's Spark steam vehicle. I then said that as far as the first *successful* American automobile, most automotive historians agree that it was the Duryea, built in 1893 with mass production as early as 1895 and continuing for several years. There are lists of nearly 2500 American automobile manufacturers over the years with only Ford, Buick, and Cadillac remaining.

Whether Elizabeth has a true interest or this was just randomly assigned to her, I hope that it might inspire her or some of her classmates to pursue automotive history. She obviously did her share of research on George Ellis and the McCormick Museum, but when she found only one reference she wrote, "This is so weird."

Ken Nimocks



George Ellis

The Yellowstone Trail

An extremely interesting/historic/"interactive" website is the '**Yellowstone Trail**'. The Yellowstone Trail was the first transcontinental automobile highway in the United States through the northern tier of states from Washington through Massachusetts. Yet too few people are

aware of its existence or its social, political and economic effects on either the local communities or the nation. The Yellowstone Trail began in South Dakota in 1912.

It quickly expanded to run from the Twin Cities (Minnesota) to the Yellowstone National Park in Montana. While the intent of the founders was to create a highway from coast to coast the marking of the whole route took considerable time. In 1914 it was formally extended to the Idaho border in the west and to Chicago in 1915. By 1917 the entire route was firmly established. **In 1918, Wisconsin was the first state (actually, the first government in the world) to establish long-distance highway routes, identify them by number, and then use the numbers to mark the state system of roads.** By 1926 most states and

many countries had implemented the idea. This type of marking was so well received that, on November 11, 1926, the American Association of State Highway Officials, in conjunction with the Bureau of Public Roads of the United States Department of Agriculture implemented a plan to identify interstate routes and use the same type of numeric identification as Wisconsin had created. These "U.S. routes" traveled on state highways then and now, not on a non-existent federal road system. Many years later, the state highways which constitute the Interstate Highway System were identified with a similar numeric system. **This site includes interactive maps of 'all' counties in the state of Wisconsin that the route passed through including alterations/changes/dates.**

This extremely historical informative/detailed/interactive web-site is:

<http://www.yellowstonetrail.org/>



WISCONSIN SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS AUTUMN MEETING 2017



During the annual 'I'm Happier Than You Are Contest' some Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians noticeably 'Cracked' under Pressure



With competition 'Thinning the Ranks' Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians once again created methods to promote Automotive History
(photography courtesy of Jim (Paparazzi) Morris)

★★★★ *Merry Christmas* ★★★★★



1912 Kissel Kar Semi-Racer (manufactured in Hartford, Wisconsin)

Print by the famous illustrator-Harry Anderson titled "Holiday Spirit" was produced by the old *Humble Oil & Refining Company* as part of their "Great Moments in Early American Motoring" series

What happened 'On Christmas Eve' in Automotive History?

December 24th

1898 **Louis Renault drove his A-type Voiturette up steep (13% slope) Rue Lepic in Montmartre, Paris, France**

Louis Renault, then just 21 years old, drove his A-type *Voiturette*, with first direct-drive variable-ratio transmission (3-speed gearbox allowed more power in lower gears, more speed in higher gears vs. chain - drive system), up steep (13% slope) Rue Lepic in Montmartre, Paris. In 1897, nineteen-year-old Louis Renault was working as a draughtsman with Delaunay-Belleville. This keen amateur mechanic, fascinated by the emergence of motor transport, set up a little workshop in a garden shed at the family home in Boulogne-Billancourt, and set about building a simple little car, of his own design, for his own personal use. By Christmas 1898 the *Voiturette* was finished, and Louis invited a few friends round to see how it would tackle the steep Rue Lepic in the Montmartre district of Paris. It resulted in the first 12 orders. Impressed by how easy it was to drive the car, several of his friends were keen to get one for themselves, and some even made a down payment on the spot. Two months later, the automobile manufacturing company Renault Frères was founded, marking the start of a great adventure. The lightweight, well-designed *Voiturette* already showed many of the features of modern automobile engineering, with a front-mounted engine, transmission by shaft with universal joint, and a direct-drive gearbox patented by Louis Renault. It was unveiled to the public in June 1899. Then on 27 August, Louis and his brother Marcel took part in the Amateur Drivers' Cup event from Paris to Trouville, finishing first and second. Though it became the foundation stone for a huge industrial empire, the very first *Voiturette*, designed and built by Louis Renault in person, was not originally intended for sale.



A-type Voiturette

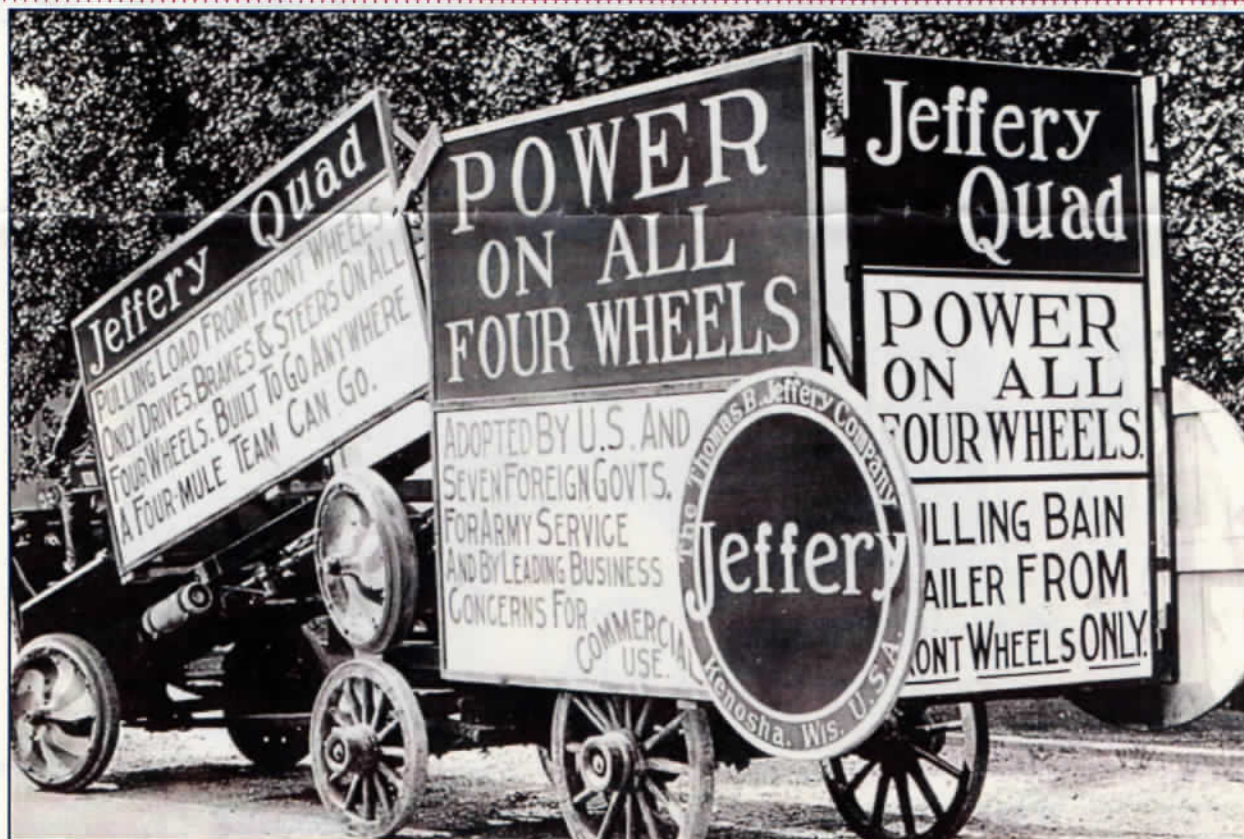
On April 4, 2016 the original A-type *Voiturette* built by Louis Renault was driven. This was its first run since 1956 and its first run in Australia at Gippsland Vehicle Collection, Maffra [southeastern Australia].

If interested in seeing this historic occurrence/vehicle in operation *It May Be Viewed* at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRmgiNjKrbI>



Louis Renault



Promotional Demonstration/Photo of the 1915 Jeffery Quad (manufactured by The Thomas B. Jeffery Company in Kenosha, Wisconsin)



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}.

Happy New Year { 1907 }



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