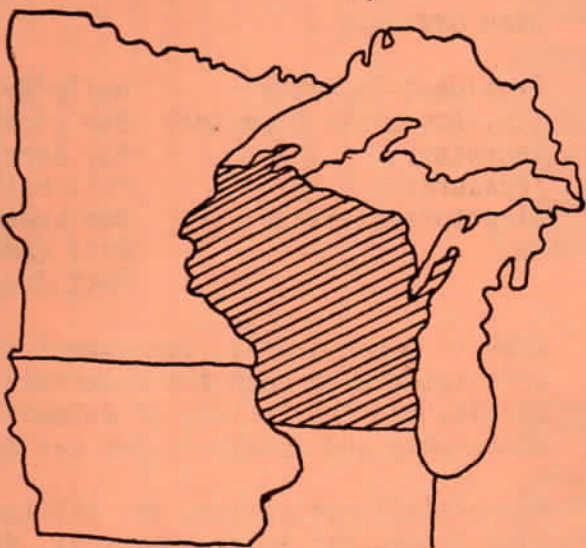
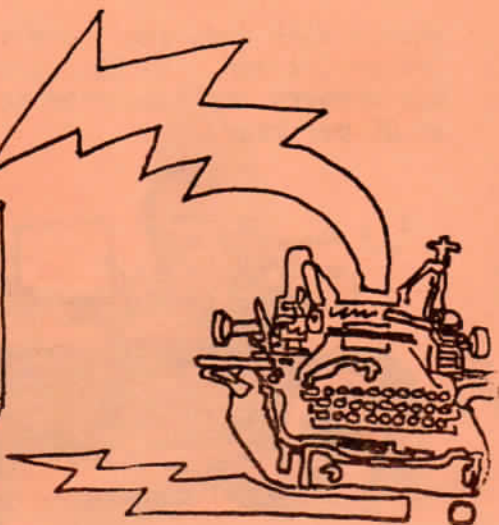
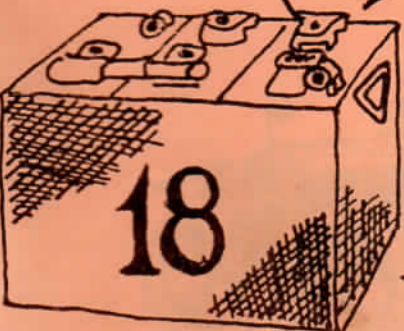
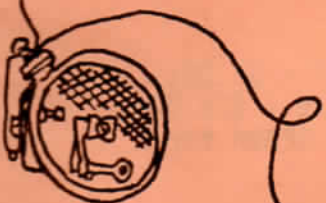


THE SPARK



The Society of Automotive Historians Wisconsin Chapter

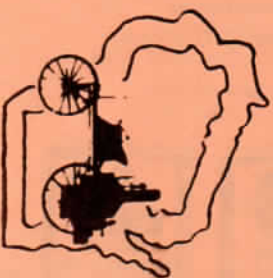


The Society of Automotive Historians — Wisconsin Chapter

Editorial Office
7495 Clearwater Road
Minocqua, Wisconsin 54548



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The Spark No.18 Spring 1984

Published by the Wisconsin Chapter of
the SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS

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WSAH Officers -

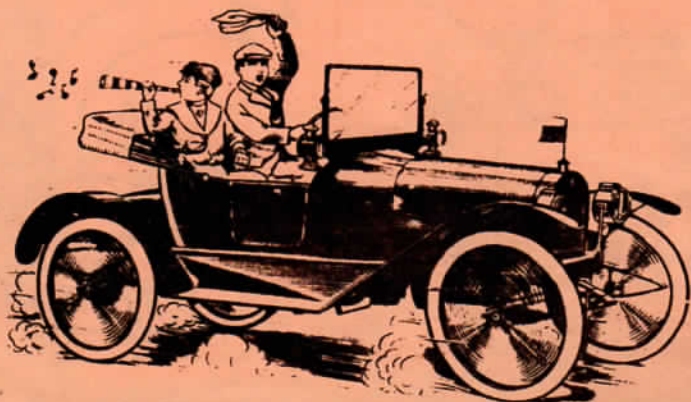
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WSAH is a non-profit, tax exempt organization affiliated with both the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Society of Automotive Historians. Membership and donations are tax deductible.

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\$5.00 per year.



MUMBLINGS AT THE TOP

-- also known as --
PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Here it is again - "Indian Winter!" So, what is more appropriate than the WSAH Mid-Winter meeting?! From out there in membership country, it may appear that we've fallen way behind in setting up a meeting program. Not so.

True, the deep-winter weather did slow us up a bit for awhile, but your Board braved terrible road conditions a while back to meet in Madison and formulated tentative plans for an outstanding program. We opted for a later than usual date due to weather considerations and also because we knew it would take time to fit all the pieces together. Final details are being completed now.

You will very soon receive a complete information package but in the meantime, this issue of SPARK contains a brief preview. Also included is a listing of area motels and we suggest reservations for overnight accommodations be arranged as soon as possible.

Further into the future, but rapidly approaching is the Iola summer meeting. That weekend's big attraction is always the annual Krause Publ/Iola Lion's Club car show and chicken BBQ but we are also entertaining ideas for the WSAH meeting. If there is something you would like to see us do, discuss, etc. please drop a line to one of the Board members and we'll see what we can do.

When you read the plans for the Mid-Winter I'm sure you'll agree that it's a program you won't want to miss. I'll be looking forward to seeing you all again, meeting new faces, and hopefully welcome some former members back into the fold. See you soon.



Your humble servant,
Wally
Walter E. Wray
President WSAH

Mid-Winter Meeting Preview

Date: April 27-28, 1984

This year we will be meeting in Janesville and in the tradition of previous Mid-Winter meetings, will tour an automobile factory. Our visit to the GMAD (General Motors Assembly Division) plant will be something more than the ordinary tour, however, as the emphasis will be on high-tech methods of modern car production and, indeed, will be looking toward the future.

The evening program will also be a bit of a departure for WSAH. We have always opened our meetings to guests and interested members of the public, but this year we are issuing an open invitation to anyone interested in the future of the domestic automobile and its economic effect on society. Press releases are being prepared at this writing.

The Friday evening meeting will kick-off with a cocktail hour and dinner, followed by a panel presentation/discussion seminar by several experts in various fields connected with or affected by the automobile industry in Wisconsin. The focus will be on the question of domestic vs. imports. Following presentations, we will be able to address questions to the panelists.

In addition to a regular BOD/Membership business meeting, Saturday morning's activities will include a discussion among ourselves of the evidence presented the previous evening. We will attempt to reach some conclusions on the future of our automobile and re-

WELCOME

TO

GMAD-JANESVILLE

Plant Tour



lated industries, and how our domestic economy will be affected in the next decade. These findings will then be collated, and made public in the form of a press release. It is felt that because of our familiarity with the history of the automobile, our findings will carry the weight of expert analysis.

This will be an extremely interesting and significant program, and we are looking for a record attendance and participation. Janesville also offers many other interesting attractions, so why not make it a family weekend? This is a rare opportunity to be a part of history in the making.



CUGNOT/BENZ Nominations

SAH President, John Conde, has appointed Matt Joseph chairman of the Cugnot/Benz committee and Matt, in turn, has asked Keith Marvin and Bill Cameron to again serve as members of his committee. All members of SAH nationally, as well as members of the Wisconsin Chapter are urged to submit nominations for these two distinguished awards which are made annually at the SAH banquet in Hershey during the October festivities. Following is the official notice that nominations are now open.

February 3, 1984

The Cugnot/Benz Awards Committee will accept nominations for these awards from now until September 1, 1984. The Cugnot Award pertains to the best book in the field of automotive history published and copyrighted in calendar 1983. The Benz Award pertains to the best periodical article, or serial article, in the field of automotive history published in the same period. Prior to last year, both book and magazine awards were called "Cugnot Awards."

The Cugnot/Benz Committee will continue the practice begun two years ago of citing particularly meritorious works that do not win the awards with the designation, "Award of Distinction."

The basis for the Cugnot and Benz Awards and for the Awards of Distinction is generally described as a significant contribution to the field of automotive history. This includes a great diversity of possible nominations from technical exposition to marque history, sociological interpretation, or biography. Because of the wide range of topics and approaches that will be considered in these awards, the selection process must, necessarily, concentrate on general criteria, such as ingenuity and thoroughness of research, soundness of interpretation, clarity and elegance of writing, etc.

The Cugnot/Benz Committee would like to encourage as many SAH members as possible to join in the nominating process. If you have strong feelings about the merit of a book or an article, please nominate it to be sure that it is considered. Duplicate nominations do no harm, but there is a real possibility of omissions in the nominating process. Do not assume that someone else will nominate the work that you like. If you choose to nominate a work that appeared in an obscure publication, please send a clear copy of it with the nomination. Authors should not be bashful about nominating their own works.

Membership of the Cugnot/Benz Committee remains the same as it has been for the last two years. The Committee is chaired by Matt Joseph, who is joined by Keith Marvin and William Cameron. Nominations should be submitted to: Matt Joseph, 7728 Martinsville Road, Route 1, Cross Plains, WI 53528.

Matt Joseph
1984 Cugnot Benz Committee



- AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS -

A LOOK AT THIS PART OF THE HOBBY
by KARL S. ZAHM

(Reprinted with permission of OLD CARS WEEKLY
April 9, 1981)

The study of automotive history is, for some, an area of extreme fascination. The story of the automobile, so recent that we have barely begun to think of it as history, touches nearly every aspect of American economy and culture in the 20th century. It is the story of expansion and depression, of accelerated technical advances and, more specifically, of the countless companies whose products, both shoddy and well conceived, contributed in large measure to the total fabric of automotive history.

The automobile has ceased to be only a vehicle of technology and has become an institution. Its history, however, has been sadly neglected in favor of more traditional subjects.

Of nearly 5000 firms worldwide that once harbored great hopes of becoming successful auto and commercial vehicle manufacturers, only a handful remain. What prompted their principals to embark upon such ventures? How were their automotive products different or better than the competition? What, if anything, made their product unique? Was it poor management, undercapitalization, lack of marketing skills or uncontrollable economic factors that led to their eventual slide into oblivion? All these questions and more dog the mind of the automotive historian.

All too frequently the fortunes of one company are inexplicably tied to another and the historian must unravel the complexities of many to isolate a single firm.

Such is the case of the Cameron car, which was built in seven different locales by as many different companies- all in some way interconnected.

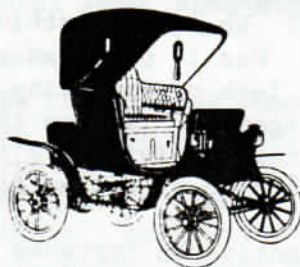
Any definitive history of the Studebaker will also encompass the Erskine, Pierce-Arrow, Rockne and Packard, all of which played an important part in the story.

Automobile names can be a highly intriguing study of itself. Automobiles have been named for practically everything imaginable, including birds, animals, presidents, cities and celestial bodies. Many had three letter names, and most likely the makers of A.A.A. sought first billing in the telephone directory. Some names, such as Aga, Lugly or Zust lacked any originality whatever and could possibly have contributed to their makers lack of success.

Then there were the confusing names. If you spoke of owning a Waltham or an Elgin, you might be asked about your watch. Heaven only knows what people might have thought had you spoken about your Heine-Velox, Wartburg, Pungs-Finch or Liver. The comfort and dependability afforded by the Orient Buckboard, Blood or Klink is open to speculation. For astrology buffs there were the Sun, Moon, Star, Mars and even Pluto. Some names, like the Eagle, were very popular as eleven different companies since 1901 so entitled their product and an Eagle can currently be found in the AMC lineup.



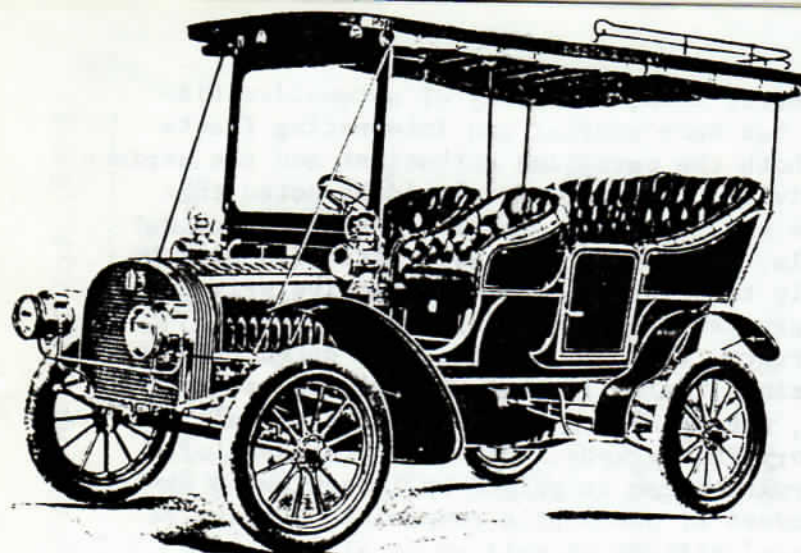
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Many early automobile manufacturers were small, regional outfits and their names were rarely as cosmopolitan as is the case for so many of today's cars. With modern communication and sophisticated advertising techniques, names such as Seville, Calais, Monte Carlo and Eldorado are promoted nationwide to suggest exotic climes. It would be difficult to picture Xanadu while discussing the ownership of a Fort Pitt, Bay State or Birmingham.



The engine of the Rambler two-cylinder twenty horsepower surrey is under the body, the gasoline and water tanks being under the hood in front of the driver. The price of this model is \$1,850, which includes the canopy top, swinging front glass, side lights, tail lights, and head lights, with generator and horn and tools

Automotive historians, because of the broad scope, tend to specialize. No one single individual could ever hope to compile a complete and accurate history of the entire automobile industry with its thousand of concerns and mind-boggling variety of products. Consequently, some historians concern themselves principally with cars and/or companies within certain time frames. Others are concerned only with a particular make or model. Some historians limit their interest to peripheral items such as nameplates, mascots, literature, hub caps or spark plugs. Specific geographical locations interest some historians. The city of Cleveland, Ohio, for example, was responsible for 82 different makes of automobiles, while the state of Wisconsin accounted for 85 others.

There are those who delight in the often fantastic mechanical oddities that emanated from some of the early day companies. Consider the unusual eight-wheeled 1912 Octoauto or the 1908 Columbia, with its electromagnetic transmission. There was rear seat steering for backseat drivers on the 1913 Duck and water-cooled brakes on the 1907 Lozier. The Carter boasted two separate engines, each operating independently of the other. For the do-it-yourselfer, the 1902 Dyke arrived in three packing crates, one of which fortunately contained an instruction manual. The 1919 Meyer appealed to those who liked a car with many options -- everything was optional except the wheels and the gear-shift.

Clearly then, the study of automotive history has many unusual and interesting facets for both the part-time enthusiast and the serious archivist. However, it should be noted that there are few large repositories of source materials. Therefore, the avid historian will be likely to develop a rather extensive private library devoted to his particular area of interest. This may include back dated trade magazines, sales literature, original advertising, specification books, owner's manuals and factory photographs. Often a great deal of information can be gained by interviewing ex-employees of automobile companies. County recorders' offices as well as local libraries can yield much information.

To assist both the serious and amateur historian membership in the Society of Automotive Historians is suggested. This organization is devoted exclusively to compiling factual information on practically every aspect of the automobile. It serves as a clearinghouse for its members and encourages the exchange of information. With a membership of some 700 persons, it is more than likely that one or more of them will share your chosen area of interest.



FLASH! WSAH SECRETARY FORMS NEW COMPANY

Scroggins Associates, LTD, a new public relations marketing and communications firm with address at 507 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee Wisconsin 53203, has been formed by Ray I. Scroggins, Secretary and Board Member of WSAH. With an associate degree in engineering, a bachelor's degree in marketing and a broad range of involvement in business-to-business communications, Ray is ready to bring his expertise to firms with marketing problems anywhere in the United States.

JANESVILLE, WI - HOUSING INFORMATION - Telephone Area Code: 608 - Zip Code: 53545 (* indicates restaurant ON premises)

AMERICAN INN *
2723 Milton Ave.
752-9411
Single: \$28
Double: \$34
Add. Person: \$3
Restaurant on premises

RAMADA INN *
3431 Milton Ave.
756-2341
Single: \$35
Double: \$42
Add. Person: \$6

REDWOOD MOTEL
Hwy 14, W. 3 mi from I-90
756-4501
Single: \$18
Double: \$24
Twin: \$20

MOTEL "6"
2422 Fulton St.
Single: \$15.95 Db1: \$19.95
Three + Four: \$22.95

ROADSTAR INN
3520 Milton Ave.
754-0251
Single: \$25.50
Double: \$31.50
Add. Person \$3.00

WEATHER VANE MOTEL
Hwy 14, 1/2 blk off Hwy 26
756-4242
Single: \$18
Double: \$25.50
Twin: \$21

COLONIAL ACRES MOTEL
Hwy 14, 1 mi E. of I-90 on Hwy 14
752-8101
Single: \$18
Double: \$24
Twin: \$21

LANNON STONE MOTEL
1524 E. Racine Street
752-7441
Single: \$19
Double: \$27
Twin: \$23

JANESVILLE MOTOR LODGE *
3900 Milton Ave.
756-4511
Single: \$35
Double: \$45
Add. Person: \$4.
(Poolside rooms add. \$5.00)

MONTEREY HOTEL *
5 So. High Street
754-4451
Single: \$16
Double: \$19

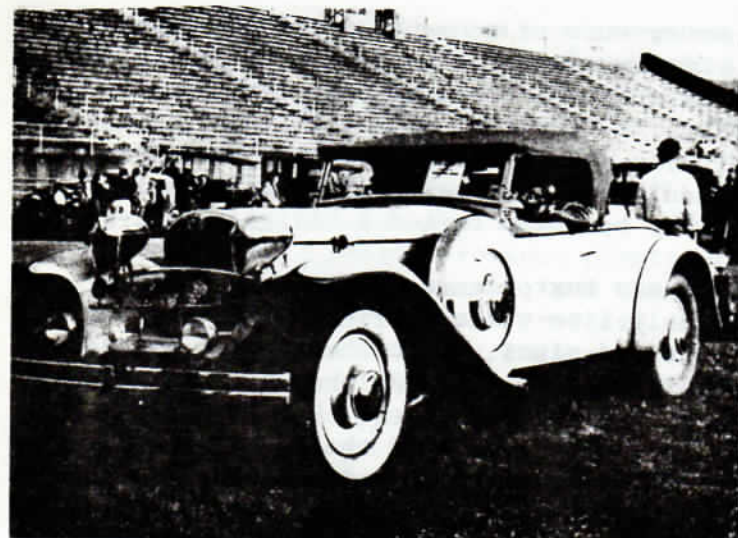
Northern Town Motel
1409 Center Ave.-754-0248
Single: \$20, Db1: \$27
Twin: \$23

RUXTON-The Kissel Connection by W. E. Wray

Over the years, Wisconsin has played host to makers of several of this country's quality vehicles in all price ranges. It has also seen production of some of the most unusual and innovative makes. One that has often been overlooked as a Wisconsin product, in part, is well known in collector circles. The front-drive Ruxton certainly qualifies in all categories.

Born in the experimental shop of Philadelphia's Edward G. Budd Co. in 1926-28, it was the outgrowth of brainstorming by William J. Muller, gifted experimental engineer, and later fed the ambitions of wheeler-dealer financier, Archie M. Andrews. The Budd prototype was built by Muller, Joseph Ledwinka, and a Col. Ragsdale, in hopes of obtaining for Budd a contract for all-steel bodies from any potential manufacturer that could be attracted to the front-drive concept. Such speculative ventures were common practice at Budd at the time. Andrews, holder of seats on both Budd and Hupp boards of directors, saw the car, loved it, and purchased exclusive rights to its manufacture and marketing. Naturally enough, he planned on Hupp to produce the new car, but didn't count on resistance from their management, who had plans of their own.

Undaunted, he formed New Era Motors, Inc., a Delaware corporation with offices in New York City, to build it. Board members included an impressive list of names, including Fred Gardner of Gardner Motor Co., metallurgist C. Harold Wills, formerly of Wills St. Clair, and stockbroker William V. C. Ruxton. During this period, the prototype sedan was being exhibited for promotional purposes without a name, just a "?" on the radiator emblem, and was referred to as the "Question Mark." At first, "Dolphin"



1929 RUXTON 4 4-litre roadster

was the name being considered for the line, but it can be assumed that the new car was named for Ruxton in hopes he and others he might attract would invest in the company. It did not come to pass, and Ruxton soon disassociated himself with any connection.

With Ruxton out of the picture and Hupp not interested, Andrews set out in best pre-depression style to attract investors and to find facilities. A number of firms showed interest; some agreed only later changing their corporate minds. While the "Question Mark" was being shown around the country, work was being completed on a handful of pre-production show cars at the Edward Board Machine Co., also in Philadelphia. Black Friday's arrival only served to complicate matters, but Andrews wasn't about to give up. He finally worked a deal with Moon Motor Car Co., of St. Louis, and the Ruxton finally had a home, inadequate for mass production though it was. He then acquired control of Moon by purchasing more stock on the open market, and installed Muller as President.

Realizing the inadequate facilities of Moon, Andrews drew another firm into the net. Kissell Motor Car Co., of Hartford, Wisconsin, had been building good cars since 1906. Their plant was quite large and modern, but the quality car they built was finding sales more and more difficult to achieve in the prevailing economic climate. In short, they

shared the money woes of so many small auto makers of the period. Andrews' resources seemed to promise new life, and George Kissel therefore agreed individually, and in writing, to have the company build transmissions and related parts, plus assemble up to 1500 Ruxton cars annually in addition to stated numbers of Kissel vehicles in what has been termed a "suicide contract."

June of 1930 saw Ruxton cars starting to roll off the Moon assembly line while a trickle also came out of the Hartford plant. Just when things started to look promising, the writing on the wall became all too apparent to George Kissel, President of the firm. According to the terms of the agreement, failure to live up to its provisions was grounds for Andrews to take over. The influx of money had not been enough; Kissel couldn't meet its obligations, eliminating any possibility of George Kissel fulfilling his agreement. Most of the Kissel stock was turned over to Andrews, but it was a gesture without effect in view of the immediate application for a receiver in September.

Attempts to continue production of Ruxton transmissions at Moon took time, although some were built there when tooling tied up in the Kissel plant were freed up by the court. Moon sustained losses, and closed its doors November 10th, then followed Kissel into receivership on the 15th. With heavy liabilities and no product, New Era filed for bankruptcy in early December. Andrews would remain active in the automotive field at Hupp for several years, but it was all over for Ruxton, his best shot at production.



In retrospect, the Ruxton car seemed to have what it took to succeed - except adequate facilities and financing. A heavy frame mounted the big straight-8 Continental 18 S of 100 horse power in "backward" fashion. The genius-inspired Muller transmission, "split" across the center to shorten the driveline and bring engine weight forward, provided plenty of traction to the front wheels, and there was no steering wheel fight. Budd provided stylish (though of rather ordinary construction) sedan bodies, based on altered Budd-built dies from the British Wolseley, while Cleveland's Baker-Raulang supplied stunning roadster bodies. Low profile and graceful, nearly hood-high fenders, enhanced the car's appearance. Holbrook, Locke, and Baker-Raulang also built a handful of long wheelbase customs, and Kissel produced two beautiful phaetons based on altered Baker-Raulang roadster panels. Large diameter Indiana headlamps were first used, but the majority utilized the highly stylish but controversial "cats-eye" Woodlites then in vogue as an accessory after-market item. Rumor has it, by the way, that Andrews specified them after it was demonstrated that a cigarette could be lit from the triangular lens.

Just how many Ruxtons were definitely built remains an unanswered question. Estimates have ranged from 62 to 500. Muller, who was in a position to know, placed the number at 325 or so out of New Era's total production of 500 cars at Moon. Of these, he said 200 were ex-Moon "Windsors", some of which were exported under the Moon name. Roughly half of production was sedans, with roadsters and the customs accounting for the remainder. Total Kissel-built Ruxton production didn't exceed 26 units, and 14 more were assembled by the receiver after the failure, and sold for as little as \$350 each, which did not cover the receiver's costs.

INTERESTED IN JOINING US? WE HOPE YOU WILL

While there is no hard evidence to indicate it is so, Kissel's contribution seems to have been limited to the transmissions, and to assembling cars from panels and other components shipped from Moon and Baker-Raulang. How many survive is better understood - to date, 19 Ruxtons have been located. Ten of these are sedans, none of which were Hartford products, 8 are roadsters, two of them built by Kissel - one of them was George Kissel's personal car - and the custom phaeton built for his brother, William. Also surviving is a supercharged Muller-built custom with an altered Briggs-built Dodge roadster body on a shortened Ruxton chassis, which bears "Muller Front Drive" on the radiator badge, that was nicknamed the "Alligator." The "Question Mark" is long gone, having ended her days in an Illinois junkyard.

Note: I would like to extend a special thanks to Gene Husting, noted Kissel historian, for his additions and corrections to this history.



GM



Mid-Winter '84: Economists have conservatively estimated that fully 50% or more of US jobs are directly dependent upon the automobile industry while the rest of us require the use of a car in occupation, recreation and the everyday business of living. Recent inroads into domestic automobile markets by imports, plus increased useage of foreign components in domestic cars, therefore, are matters that affect us all. Mid-Winter '84 offers a unique opportunity to gain insights into issues that concern each of us, our communities and our Nation.

ALASKAN

ISSN 0002-4562 Key title Alaska

THE MAGAZINE OF LIFE ON THE LAST FRONTIER®



October 1983

COURTESY OSCAR J. NOEL

This photograph was found in a Seattle "junk" shop about 15 or 20 years ago by Anchorage resident Oscar J. Noel, who surmised from the buildings and the parka style that the photo was taken in Nome. Careful study of the sled will show how the contraption worked. Noel says the gasoline engine on this early-day snowmobile appears to be a Briggs & Stratton of the type advertised in magazines around 1902. While the staff of the Carrie M. McLain Museum in Nome were not able to provide any information about the photograph, a museum spokeswoman said they were 85 percent certain the locale was Nome. Perhaps some of our readers could identify the woman in the photo and tell us more about her and this early "snowmobile."

FEBRUARY 1984

The picture on page 31 of your October 1983 issue was of Mrs. Clara Ernst, my aunt. The Smith motor wheel was adapted to the sled by my father, Joseph Ernst, and Uncle

Phil Ernst, long since deceased, in Nome, Alaska and it must have been built around 1912-14. My photo are not dated, and to the best of my memory I was about six or seven years old. My two brothers and sister and I were all born in Nome.

The snow sled went like hell on the snow-packed roads in and out of Nome. The Smith motor wheel was primarily built to be fastened to a bicycle. I have photos of my mother Arlen and father Joe Ernst driving the same sled.

Our families left Nome for Seattle in 1917. I have made many trips to Alaska in my lifetime, primarily as a radio operator on ships and in canneries. Have enjoyed your magazine for 30 or 40 years.

Your picture was taken in front of the lady's home in Nome.

Joe Ernst
Thermopolis, Wyoming



The motor pulling the sled on page 31 (October 1983 ALASKA* magazine) is a Smith Motor Wheel. It was first manufactured in 1912.

I am enclosing a picture of one that we had in 1915. It was made to clamp to a bicycle. The motor was quite powerful and would push a bicycle about 30 miles per hour — too fast for the trails and country roads in North Dakota.

In the winter we took the tire off and put on a belt and used it to pump water and also to run the washing machine. We didn't think to put it on a sled, but in later years we did make a snowmobile out of a motor-cycle that could do 50 miles per hour across country.

I lived in Anchorage for 30 years. My brothers-in-law were fishermen in Cordova for many years. They have all passed away. They were George, Arthur, and Fred Walla and their boat was the *North Wind*.

Victor E. Nielsen
Grants Pass, Oregon



Victor E. Nielsen, who lived in Anchorage for 30 years, fills the gas tank of a Smith Motor Wheel his family used to power a bicycle, pump water, and run the washing machine in North Dakota back in 1915.
(Courtesy Victor Nielsen)

I was surprised to see the picture of the snowmobile motor wheel (October 1983 ALASKA* magazine). It looks like the one we have in our Soapy Smith museum here in Skagway. They were made for bikes and would drive a bike around 25 miles at top speed.

George Rapuzzi
Skagway, Alaska



A recent photo of Skagway resident George Rapuzzi and a museum exhibit of a Smith Motor Wheel. (Courtesy Soapy Smith Museum, Skagway, Alaska)

As a member of the Society of Automotive Historians, I was interested in the photograph submitted by Oscar J. Noel picturing a motorized sled (October 1983 ALASKA*). Although I cannot identify the lady in the picture or the date on which it was taken, I can shed some light on the motive power.

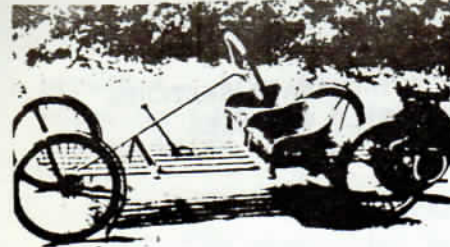
The motorized wheel was originally designed to power a bicycle and for three years, 1915-17, was manufactured by the A.O. Smith Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Judging from the way the gas tank is mounted, I would date the model in the photograph as a 1916. In 1918 the manufacture of the motor wheel was taken over by Briggs and Stratton, who marketed the device until about 1921.

The A.O. Smith people found a number of other uses for this unique wheel, the most prominent of which was to drive a miniature, four-wheeled vehicle called a Smith Flyer. Other uses for the wheel were a railroad inspection vehicle, a grocery delivery cart, and a device looking something like an old-fashioned lawn mower that was designed to pull an individual on ice skates.

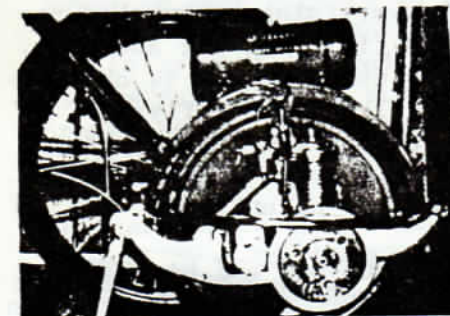
The use of a Smith Motor Wheel to power an Alaskan-type sled was, in my opinion, the result of someone's individual ingenuity in Alaska, rather than a company development.

I happen to own a Smith Flyer, a picture of which is shown

William T. Cameron
Minocqua, Wisconsin



The Smith Flyer was powered by a versatile, motorized wheel: the Smith Motor Wheel. (W.T. Cameron)



This close-up shows how the Smith Motor Wheel, clamped to the rear wheel, transformed an ordinary bicycle into a motor bike capable of attaining speeds of about 25 miles per hour.
(W.T. Cameron)

In the October issue, page 31, there is a picture that contains something interesting to me. I cannot tell anything about the person or the background, but the moto-wheel that propels the sled I remember well.

These were called moto-wheels and were made by a company of the same name, the Moto-Wheel Corporation of, I believe, Dayton, Ohio. The first of these I saw was about 1917 in northwestern Ohio where I lived.

They were designed to be attached to a bicycle frame to the right of the rear wheel, or on the rear of a small, four-wheeled cart with bicycle wheels made by the same company. A hinge mounting was used. A rod ran from the top front of the moto-wheel to a lever which was attached to the front of the bicycle frame or the cart.

When the lever was pushed forward to engage a ratchet, the wheel was raised off the ground. This, of course, shut off the propelling power, and it was then necessary to reach back and turn off the engine, as there was no clutch or accelerator. It had one speed — fast.

When you started off with these, the moto-wheel was lowered to the ground, then the bicycle was pedaled until the engine started.

With the cart, you ran alongside and pushed by grasping the steering wheel and the seat back. When the engine started, you dropped neatly into the seat and you were off, unless you missed, in which case there was quite a tuggle [sic] as the cart darted back and forth across the street several times and ended up against a hitching post.

The popularity of the moto-wheel started to decline about 1920, because Henry Ford was making one about as simple. It had four wheels and was called the Model T.

I bought one of these in 1923 for \$480, complete with starter, battery, and generator, for which I paid \$30 extra.

Needless to say, I enjoy your ALASKA* magazine very much and look forward to receiving it each month.

J.R. Waltenberger
Angola, Indiana

Regarding the photo of "motor sled and lady" on page 31, October 1983 issue, I think you may be barking up the wrong tree in thinking the town is Nome. It's far more probable it is Dawson, for the following reasons:

1 — Taking advantage of the two background buildings (of diverse construction) in this setting will narrow down the choices.

2 — A casual glance would indicate a level street; upon close inspection, several things indicate a grade of perhaps 15 to 20 percent. I cannot picture a grade of that incline in Nome, but I can in Dawson.

3 — Based strictly on percentage of probability, it is more apt to be Dawson. In the era the picture was taken, Dawson was the capital of the North.

4 — My personal studies have shown that Dawson was one of the most photo-crazed towns of the era, displaying a fervor to record and preserve a place in history. I do not sense this same fervor in most locales of the North.

5 — I feel that history shows ingenuity was rampant in Dawson. (This is not to say it was lacking in other regions.)

6 — This is excellent photography for the turn of the century. To pick up all the detail this picture contains in a winter setting would require a lot of natural cooperation. Everything indicates the picture was taken with the photographer facing the north, probably one or two hours before high noon, in the late winter or early spring season. I feel the best of equipment was used to photograph this scene, and Dawson had plenty of this caliber equipment.

Deane Cheadle
Nunica, Michigan

CONTINUING SPARK'S THUMBNAIL SKETCHES
ON WISCONSIN BUILT VEHICLES

MOHS - 1947-present
Mohs Seaplane Corp.
Madison, Wisconsin

W. E. Wray

Bruce Baldwin Mohs is an unusual man, and it can be fairly said that everything he touches reflects, more or less, his flair for the abnormal. That he's a success doing what he does is obvious - he owns a restaurant, motel, seaplane flying service, an automobile factory and museum, is a licensed automobile and motorcycle manufacturer, and is the holder of numerous patents.

It is hard to separate the man and his various enterprises. This is especially true with the automobiles he creates, for much of himself is to be found in each of the models he has built since the age of twelve. He freely admits that the automobiles are, for the most part, an outward expression of several of his patents, and that in building them he is not afraid to stretch a point to make a point. That customers have not exactly beaten a path to his door is not surprising nor, apparently, terribly upsetting to him. Indeed, of the handful of cars he has built to date, very few have found homes away from their place of birth.

Actually, Mohs has been building vehicles since the mid-forties, but his factory in the Madison suburb of Riley did not go into production of 'consumer' cars until the debut of his Ostentatiene Opera Sedan in 1967. By any standards, this one-of-a-kind is one of the most unusual vehicles ever built.

Constructed around an International Travelall chassis and drive train, the three ton, four-passenger luxury car is an eye-stopper. Four of Mohs patented pivoting, safety bucket seats adorn the interior and for added creature comfort, such niceties as deep pile shag carpets, refrigerator and cooking stove are thoughtfully

provided. Also included are the necessities of motoring - CB, 24 k Gold inlaid walnut dash, and stereo AM/FM radio.

Body design is what really sets it apart, though. The slab-sided body panels run unbroken from nose to tail, windshield panels and side windows sweep nearly uninterrupted, providing nearly unbroken 270° vision. A huge pseudo-Classic grille fronts the whole thing. One would be hard pressed to name the singlemost unusual design concept, but one might well choose the fully cantilevered roof and the swing-up single rear door it provides for. When this is opened, steps slide into place, and the effect is totally UFO-like. Of these, only the prototype was built and can be seen in Mohs Museum, although they are still available on special order.



1968 MOHS Ostentatiene Opera Sedan

The second Mohs vehicle offered to the public was the SafariKar. A hard-top convertible, this vehicle is scarcely less iconoclastic, though not so esthetically pleasing. Three of these padded-naugahyde covered vehicles were built and sold - the last bought from Mohs Seaplane Corp. by Bruce B. Mohs himself. Like its forerunner, SafariKar was based on International chassis, and carries out the same general styling themes. Triple safety bucket front seats and rear seats that fold out into beds compliment the interior of these two-door cars.

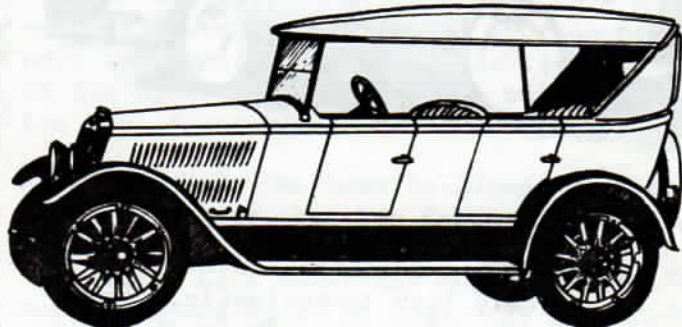
Mohs' most recent project is a more practical appearing 3-wheel commuter car utilizing aluminum frames, 16 HP Fuji-built Wisconsin engines, and variable speed Salisbury transmissions. Speed and gas mileage are both given as being in the 45-50 range. With today's uncertain fuel situation, it may yet be possible for something to come of this design on a fair-sized scale.

One may well question the wisdom of creating such avant garde vehicles in such a hard-line business as today's automobile industry. Why does Mohs do it? Besides using the vehicles as a showcase for his patents, he admits it's largely for fun. Apparently the combination of business and pleasure have achieved a happy marriage, for Mohs seems a happy and satisfied man. Few other automobile manufacturers today can claim as much!

* * * * *

1920 MITCHELL
TOURING CAR

\$1750.⁰⁰ F.O.B.



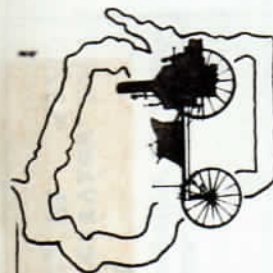
A STYLING "FLOP"

IN 1920, MITCHELL MOTORS CO., OF RACINE, WISCONSIN, OFFERED "SLANTING" DESIGN. IT WAS TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE USUAL "VERTICAL" STYLING, BUT THIS NEW MODEL, WITH SLOPING RADIATOR, ETC., WAS LAUGHINGLY REFERRED TO AS "THE DRUNKEN MITCHELL."



Come Join Us, Share, Learn

We're the WISCONSIN CHAPTER of The SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS



We are one of the most active chapters in a fine national organization, the Society of Automotive historians. While our membership includes many of the foremost historians, writers and researchers in the world, the majority of our members are everyday people with a deep interest in automotive history.

If you join the Wisconsin Chapter, you will meet many Wisconsin people who are interested in automotive history of all types. You are then required to join the national organization, which will give you access to a wealth of automotive knowledge to forward your own needs for information.

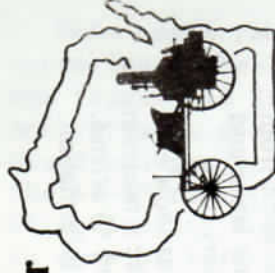
It all sounds very formal and stiff, it's not. We are a bunch of automotive enthusiasts that share one thing, an interest in automotive history. A few of us are writers and historians, but most are just interested in some facet of the automotive world. We all can learn from each other and that is why the Wisconsin Chapter was formed in 1979 by Chris Halla and John Gunnell, a pair of Badger state automotive journalists. It has flourished every since.

The Wisconsin Chapter holds quarterly meetings, with the largest at the lola car show each July. There is also a Mid-Winter meeting that tours a state automotive site, like a museum or factory. Board meetings are held quarterly with all members encouraged to attend. A newsletter, *The Spark*, is published several times a year for members to share information. Other projects are also planned.

If this sounds like something you would like to get involved in, turn this form over for membership applications to both the Wisconsin Chapter and the Society of Automotive Historians.

The Society of Automotive Historians — Wisconsin Chapter

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



The following should be filled out. PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE.

Special Interests (makes, periods, types of vehicles, etc.)

What can you contribute so other members may share your knowledge?
(Articles, research, photos, talks, recollections, etc.)

Have you ever had any of your works published? If so, where?

Occupation

Can you do research for other members?

Charge, if any, for research?

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (HOME) _____ (WORK) _____

CHECK ONE

☐ Individual Membership, \$5.

☐ Senior Citizen, \$3.

☐ Corporate Membership, \$25.

SEND TO:

ROBERT J. GARY
1316 FOURTH AVENUE
STEVENS POINT, WIS. 54481
(715) 341-1085



The Society of Automotive Historians

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

To be a member of the Wisconsin Chapter, you must join the national organization, the Society of Automotive Historians. Please fill out and forward to the address below. The fee is \$20. Please print or type.

Special Interests (makes, periods, types of vehicles, etc.)

Can you contribute so that other members may share your knowledge?

Have you ever had any of your works published? If so, where?

Can you do research for other members?

Charge, if any, for research?

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (HOME) _____ (WORK) _____

OCCUPATION _____

ENCLOSE Charles L. Betts, Jr.
\$20 2105 Stackhouse Drive
AND SEND yardley, PA 19067
TO:



GM Milestones

- 1897** Olds Motor Vehicle Company organized and first Oldsmobile produced.
- 1901** First American car to be manufactured in quantity was the famous curved-dash Oldsmobile runabout.
- 1902** Cadillac Automobile Company organized.
- 1903** Buick Motor Company organized.
- 1907** Oakland Motor Car Company (predecessor of Pontiac Motor Division) organized.
- 1908** Fisher Body Company organized.
General Motors Company organized (Sept. 16).
Cadillac won Dewar trophy in London for demonstrating interchangeability of parts, a basic element in mass production.
- 1910** Cadillac was first manufacturer to offer closed bodies as standard equipment.
- 1911** Chevrolet Motor Company and General Motors Export Company organized.
First successful electric self-starter developed by C.F. Kettering and installed in a Cadillac.
General Motors Truck Company organized to handle sales of GM's Rapid and Reliance Products.
- 1914** Cadillac was first in U.S. to produce a V-type, water-cooled, eight-cylinder engine.
- 1916** General Motors organized as a corporation under Delaware law (Oct. 13) to acquire all stock of the General Motors Company.
- 1918** Chevrolet Motor Company joined GM.
United Motors Corporation joined General Motors.
General Motors of Canada, Limited formed through merger of McLaughlin Motor Car Company, Ltd. and Chevrolet Motor Company of Canada, Ltd.
- 1919** Fisher Body became affiliated with General Motors.
General Motors Acceptance Corporation organized.
GM Building begun in Detroit.
Frigidaire Corporation joined GM.
GM Institute opened at Flint as part-time training school.
- 1920** GM Research Corporation (predecessor of GM Research Laboratories) established.
- 1923** Four-wheel brakes appeared on 1924 Buicks.
Inland Manufacturing organized to produce steering wheels for GM cars.



- 1924** General Motors Proving Ground Milford, Mich., established.
First GM vehicle assembled abroad, in Denmark.
- 1925** Yellow Truck & Coach Manufacturing Company organized, with General Motors Truck as a subsidiary and General Motors Corporation holding a large interest.
Vauxhall Motors Ltd., Luton, England, acquired by General Motors.
General Exchange Insurance Corporation (predecessor of Motors Insurance Corporation) organized by General Motors.
- 1926** Pontiac car introduced by Oakland.
Cadillac introduced shatter-resistant safety glass.
- 1928** Synchromesh transmission introduced by Cadillac.
- 1929** Frigidaire produced first room air conditioner.
Adam Opel AG, Germany, acquired by GM.
Allison Engineering Company joined General Motors.
- 1932** Pontiac Motor Division established from Oakland.
- 1933** No-Draft Ventilation, developed by Fisher Body, introduced on all GM cars.
Individual front wheel suspension, called Knee-Action, developed by GM Engineering Staff.
- 1934** Two-cycle diesel developed by GM hauled the first American diesel-powered streamlined train.
- 1935** Electro-Motive Division established.
- 1937** Detroit Diesel Engine Division organized.
- 1939** Hydra-matic, first completely automatic shift transmission, introduced by Detroit Transmission Division (now Hydra-matic Division) on Oldsmobile's 1940 models.
First turn signals in automotive industry developed by Guide Lamp Division, introduced by Buick.
- 1940** GM produced its 25,000,000th car (Jan. 11).
- 1940-45** GM delivered more than \$12,300,000,000 worth of war material, including airplane engines, airplanes and parts, trucks, tanks, marine diesels, guns, shells and miscellaneous products.
- 1948** Cadillac and Oldsmobile introduced first high compression V-8 engines.
Buick introduced first torque converter type automatic transmission offered in U.S. passenger car.
First mass-produced car to be manufactured in Australia, the Holden, introduced by GM.
- 1952** Power steering offered by Cadillac, Oldsmobile and Buick.
- 1953** 12-volt electrical systems, developed by Delco Remy Division, installed on Cadillacs, Oldsmobiles and Buicks.
First of 31 GM training centers opened in Detroit.
Power brakes offered by Buick and Oldsmobile.

