

SPARK

WISCONSIN
LORE and LEGENDS

THE WORLD'S FIRST AUTOMOBILE RACE

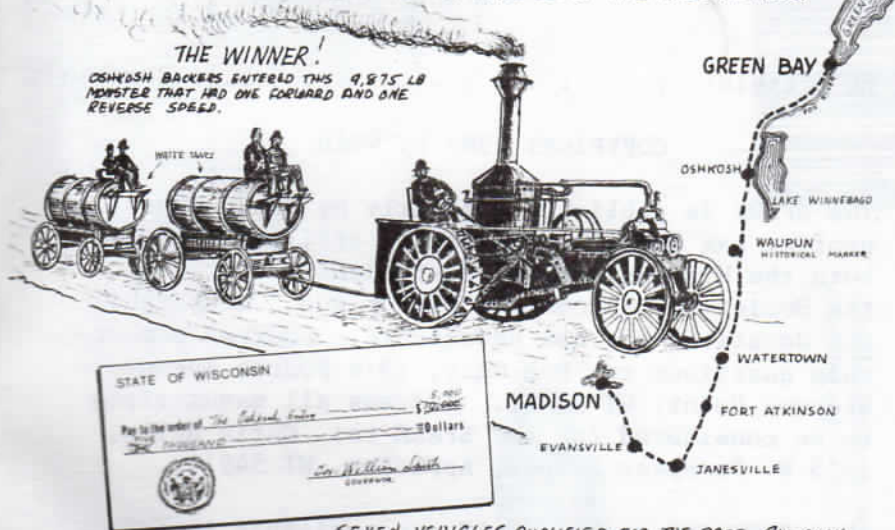
IN THE MID-1870'S THE WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE OFFERED A PRIZE OF \$10,000 TO ANYONE WHO COULD DESIGN A STEAM-POWERED VEHICLE ABLE TO TRAVEL ON THE STATE'S SAND AND GRAVEL WAGON ROADS FOR 200 MILES.

THIS CONVEYANCE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO RUN BACKWARD OR TURN OUT OF THE ROAD TO ACCOMMODATE OTHER VEHICLES IN PASSING, AND BE ABLE TO ASCEND OR DESCEND A GRADE OF AT LEAST 200 FEET TO THE MILE."

RULES OF THE CONTEST CALLED FOR AN AVERAGE OF FIVE MILES AN HOUR.

THE WINNER!

OSHKOSH BACKS ENTERED THIS 9,875 LB MONSTER THAT HAD ONE FORWARD AND ONE REVERSE SPEED.



SEVEN VEHICLES QUALIFIED FOR THE RACE, BUT ONLY TWO, ENTRIES FROM OSHKOSH AND GREEN BAY, WERE ON THE STARTING LINE WHEN THE RACE BEGAN ON JULY 16, 1878. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING THE OSHKOSH ENTRY TOOK THE LEAD AND THE TROUBLED GREEN BAY VEHICLE HAD FREQUENT BREAKDOWNS THAT KEPT IT FROM CATCHING UP WITH THE LEADER.

ONE WEEK LATER, ON JULY 23, THE TRIUMPHANT OSHKOSH ENTRY STEAMED INTO MADISON, COMPLETING THE 201 MILE COURSE IN 33 HOURS AND 27 MINUTES (LAPSED TIME) AT AN AVERAGE SPEED OF 6 MILES PER HOUR!

WHEN THE TIME CAME TO AWARD THE PRIZE, THE LEGISLATURE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS AND DECIDED THE WINNER WAS TOO EXPENSIVE TO BUILD & OPERATE TO BE CONSIDERED AS A CHEAP SUBSTITUTE FOR HORSES & CUT THE PRIZE MONEY IN HALF!

Editor R. Chris Halla

WSAH Officers/Office Term

Director/President Ken Nimocks

Associate Director/Vice President Ken Knauf

Secretary Bob Hall

Treasurer Bob Gary

Directors-at-Large Gene Wendt
 Phil Hall
 Roger Lalk

Ex Officio: Bill Cameron

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The SPARK is published quarterly by WSAH, a non-profit, tax exempt organization affiliated with both the Wisconsin State Historical Society and the Society of Automotive Historians. Membership and donations are tax deductible. Address membership questions to: Bob Gary, 1316 Fourth Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Address all manuscripts to be considered for the SPARK to: Chris Halla, 1455 W. Prospect Avenue, Appleton, WI 54914.

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CELEBRATING OUR 10th YEAR

ANNUAL REPORT

The following (with the exception of the "Treasurer's Report" material) was submitted to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in accordance with section 44.03(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

1. Date of last annual meeting and election of officers: March 18, 1989

2. Current officers:

President: Ken Nimocks
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Vice-President: Kenneth Knauf
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4. Current Newsletter Editor:

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5. Archivist/Librarian/Historian:

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(608) 798-4317

6. Paid staff: None

TREASURER'S REPORT (Current on 2/24/89)

Individual Memberships of which 4 are Seniors: 35

Corporate Memberships which equals 10 members: 2

Honorary Membership for Brooks Stevens: 1

January 1, 1989 Account Balance \$1010.89

Revenues

'88-'89 Membership Dues 36.00

Contributions 5.00

Iola Sales of books, maps, etc. 180.00

PLUS Total Revenue \$ 221.00

TOTAL Available Cash \$1231.89

Expenses

Spark No. 32, 33, 34 and 35 \$525.00

President's Office & Mailing Expenses 48.22

Maintenance Fee of .30¢ per check
(M&I First Nat'l. Bank of Stevens Point) 3.10

Stevens Point Tent Rental for Iola 76.75

Contribution to Hartford Heritage Museum,
Inc. 35.00

Wisconsin, Secretary of State, Non-stock
Corporation Report 10.00

Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Annual Dues for Chris Halla 20.00

MINUS Total Expenses \$720.07

December 13, 1988 Account Balance 511.82

Note: This day our checking account balance is
\$669.42

EDITORIAL NOTES

TEN YEARS. Ten Years. Amazing. Here I am 40 years old, married 20 years this summer, kids nine and 14, getting gray and still learning. Ten years is a long time. In the last 10 years I've lived in five different towns/cities, held four jobs (one of them freelancing, working for I forget how many clients and publishers) and been to Hell. In the past 10 years, I've written books on cars, motorcycles, hand bookbinding, canoeing and one volume of poetry, and more articles, essays, reviews and poems than I have any interest in remembering.

I've found some new friends and lost some old ones. In the past 10 years my point of view has changed completely; several times over.

And, in retrospect it seems such a small thing, I've been a member of the Society of Automotive Historians (since 1977) and a founding member of the Wisconsin Chapter, aka the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians. During which time I acted as Acting Director for the first few months until we could have an election and hold a regular election, and Editor of SPARK (issues 1-12 and 20-37, so far). I've served on committees and attended meetings. I've begged for money for the organization and the newsletter and, for that matter, spent more than a fair share of my own green dollars. During these past 10 years I've pissed off almost everyone once or twice. It's been a hoot.

Now it's time to move on. I will be editing my last issue of the SPARK with #38; the next issue. Consider this then prelude to a fond so-long. Our next issue will be my last, hopefully my best. Some excellent material is already in hand. This could be your last chance to have me as an editor. So, if you have anything to say to me or for me, do it now. Your contributions and comments are more than welcome. I'll be waiting to hear from you.

And waiting. And waiting

Chris Halla

P.S. One member wrote recently suggesting that perhaps it was time we publish an INDEX to SPARKS past. Great idea! Could I please be so bold as to refer any member who would like to see a comprehensive SPARK INDEX to issue #31? It includes an INDEX for issues 1-30.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As I sat looking out of the window this morning thinking vague and random thoughts, it occurred to me that perhaps HE ALSO SERVES WHO ONLY SITS, LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AND THINKS! If, perchance HE can now move to his desk and jot down the thoughts that this activity often engenders we perhaps have the beginning of a significant service to whatever field of activity HE was thinking/dreaming about.

If, HE is not satisfied with the results of his jotting (as is almost always the case) hopefully he will pass along his "jots" to some other person who perhaps can say, or tell, more expertly what he wanted/intended to say. If this action is taken we perform a fine service to the cause.

Consider how many of the memoirs of important persons have been preserved in "autobiographies" followed by such qualifying phrases as "as told to," "co-authored by," "with." Witness My Two Lives by Rene Dryfus "with" Beverly Rae Kimes.

The Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historian's reason for being is the recording and preserving of every conceivable facet of automotive history, and, presumably, that includes all of us who are dedicated to advancing that cause. If this is the case, here are a few suggestions on ways we might each of us discharge that obligation.

- 1: Sit and look out of the window while (a) wondering (b) speculating (c) thinking (d) questioning (e) dreaming.
2. Do something. (a) Jot it down (b) go to the library (c) write a letter (d) make a phone call.

3. Carry the project through to its very end.
 (a) Draft an article (b) take a photograph
 (c) prepare a lecture (d) phone a fellow SAH member (e) pass your ideas along to SPARK editor Chris Halla or (f) address a letter to the Reader Forum column of Cars and Parts or the Sound Your Horn column of Old Cars Weekly.
4. If you feel hesitant about doing any of the above, just pass your thoughts, questions, ideas along to any of the writers and researchers we have in our organization. It only takes a spark or two to ignite something big and important so remember: You too can serve if in addition to just sitting there looking out of the window you DO something about it!

Bill Cameron

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS: In Search of the Little Known

Every Saturday the Post-Crescent of Appleton and, I believe, a number of other Wisconsin newspapers run a little art and copy feature titled "Wisconsin Lore and Legends." I'm sure many of you have seen it. Subjects touched on are often auto related, from bits on the cars themselves to interesting facts about Wisconsin roads.

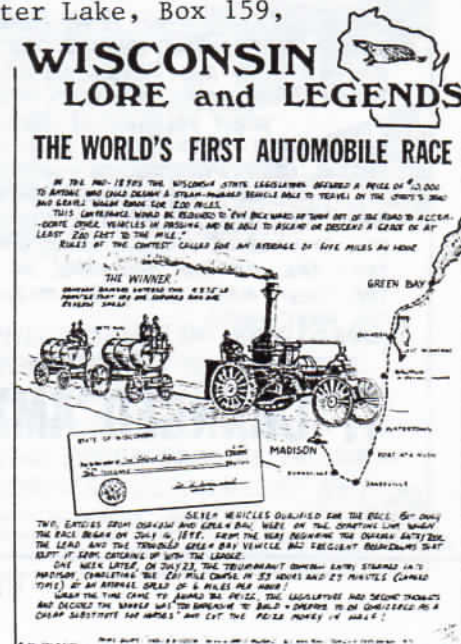
Two recent installments were of particular interest to "highway historians." One tells of a "Chicago to Milwaukee Photo-Auto Guide of 1909." Seems that an interesting predecessor to the road maps we're familiar with today was a guide that used photos of major intersections, with directional arrows drawn on and captions to assist travellers.

Another "Lore and Legends" features an example of

an early detour. Shown and described is a detour on Highway 17, between Manitowoc and Sheboygan circa 1925. Instead of using simple directional arrows and the word "DETOUR," a large sign was erected that both described and mapped not one but two alternate routes. The sign was so detailed that drivers had to stop traffic to read the signs.

"Wisconsin Lore and Legends" is the work of Lou and John Russell. WSAH members will be pleased to learn that Lou and John have been kind enough to both grant permission for us to run a number of their "Wisconsin Lore and Legends" features and to provide us with the artwork to do so properly. A selection appears on the pages that follow. More will be featured in future issues of SPARK.

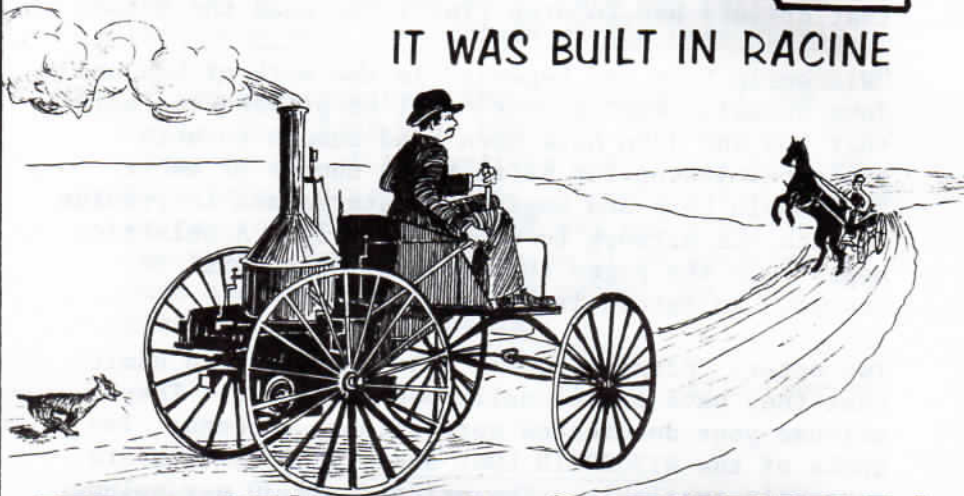
Two notes: First, Lou and John are quick to admit that they have occasionally been in error. They welcome your documented corrections. Second: Two books of the WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS series are currently available. The price is \$7.30 per volume (\$14.60 for both). Orders for the books and comments on the series should be sent directly to: Lou and John Russell, Route 7 Tainter Lake, Box 159, Menomonie, WI 54751.



WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



IT WAS BUILT IN RACINE



AMERICA'S FIRST AUTOMOBILE!

IN 1893 (SOME SOURCES SAY 1871) DR. J.W. CARHART ROLLED A PECULIAR-LOOKING MACHINE OUT OF HIS WORKSHOP IN RACINE. TO HIS NEIGHBORS IT LOOKED LIKE A BUGGY WITH A POTBELLIED STOVE MOUNTED OVER THE REAR AXLE.

WHEN THE VEHICLE BEGAN TO MOVE UNDER ITS OWN POWER IT BECAME THE FIRST LIGHT SELF-PROPELLED CAR EVER TO TRAVEL A PUBLIC ROAD IN AMERICA - AND PERHAPS THE WORLD.

THIS FIRST STEAM-DRIVEN CAR PRE-DATED HENRY FORD'S FIRST CAR BY TWENTY-TWO YEARS, BUT CARHART NEVER ENTERED THE AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING BUSINESS, AND IT WASN'T UNTIL 1893 THAT THE DURYEA BROTHERS OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS INTRODUCED THE FIRST MARKETABLE AUTOMOBILE IN AMERICA, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE FIRST FORD.

IT CHANGED AMERICA'S LIFESTYLE!

SOURCE: "TREASURY OF EARLY AMERICAN AUTOMOBILES - 1873-1925" BY FLOYD CLYMER, BOAZZA BOOKS, NEW YORK, N.Y., 1980

© 1981 JOHN M. RUSSELL

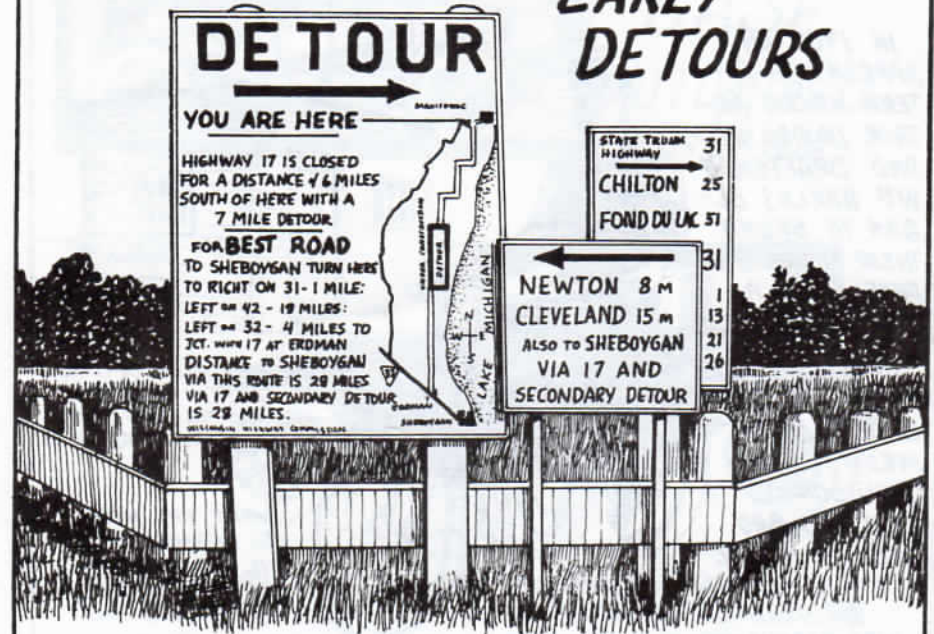
LOU & JOHN
RUSSELL
81

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



IT TOOK A LITTLE TIME TO READ THE SIGNS!

EARLY DETOURS



IN 1925 HIGHWAY 17, SIX MILES SOUTH OF MANITOWOC, WAS CLOSED FOR REPAIRS. DRIVERS HEADING SOUTH TO SHEBOYGAN HAD THE CHOICE OF TWO ALTERNATE ROUTES AND THE WISCONSIN HIGHWAY COMMISSION ERECTED THESE SIGNS ON THE SOUTHWEST EDGE OF MANITOWOC THAT DESCRIBED THE DETOUR IN DETAIL. TRAFFIC STOPPED WHILE DRIVERS READ THE SIGNS!

SOURCE: DRAWING BASED ON PHOTOGRAPH IN STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN COLLECTION

LOU & JOHN
RUSSELL
88

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS

MILWAUKEE'S

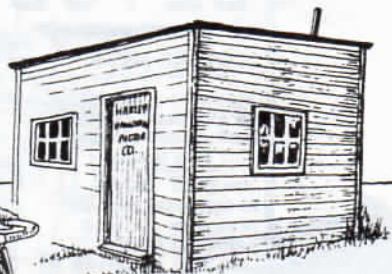
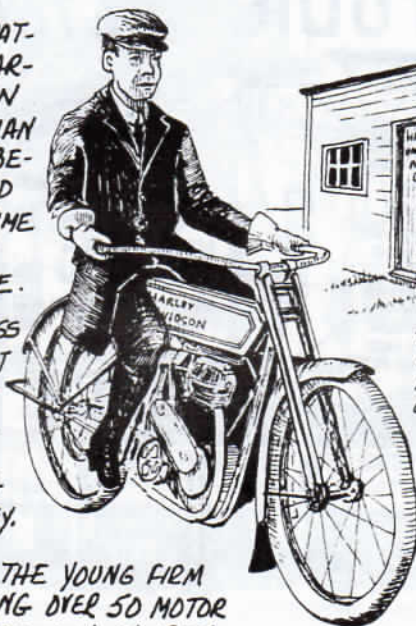
Harley-Davidson Co.

IN 1901 AN APPRENTICE PATTERN MAKER ARTHUR DAVIDSON AND DRAFTSMAN WM HARLEY BEGAN TO SPEND THEIR SPARE TIME DEVELOPING A MOTOR BICYCLE.

EARLY SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT ENTICED MACHINE INVEST WALTER DAVIDSON TO JOIN HIS BROTHER AND HARLEY.

BY 1906 THE YOUNG FIRM WAS PRODUCING OVER 50 MOTOR CYCLES A YEAR, 154 IN 1907, 450 IN 1908! THEIR WELL-BUILT CYCLES WERE WINNING THE MAJOR RACES AND ENDURANCE RUNS, A FACT THAT INCREASED DEMAND FOR THE MILWAUKEE PRODUCT. IN RECENT YEARS FOREIGN COMPETITION HAS CUT INTO THE U.S. MARKET BUT HARLEY-DAVIDSON HAS SURVIVED AND THRIVED WITH TOP QUALITY.

SOURCE: EARLYRIDERS-MOTORCYCLES THROUGH THE YEARS, KIMZEY, PENSAND PUB. CO. MALIBU, CA. 1977

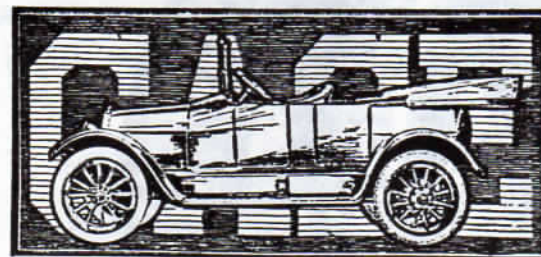


THIS TINY 10'x15' BUILDING AT 38TH ST. & HIGHLAND AVE. WAS THE FIRST HOME OF THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON CO.

WHEN THIS MODEL WAS INTRODUCED IN 1912 THE COMPANY EMPLOYED 1,076 PEOPLE.

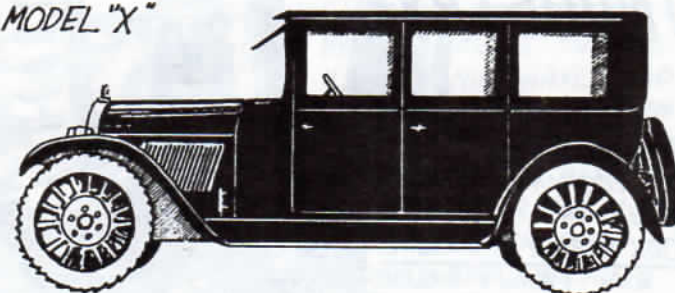
LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL
'86

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



The
CASE
AUTOMOBILE
1910 - 1926

The CASE MODEL "X"



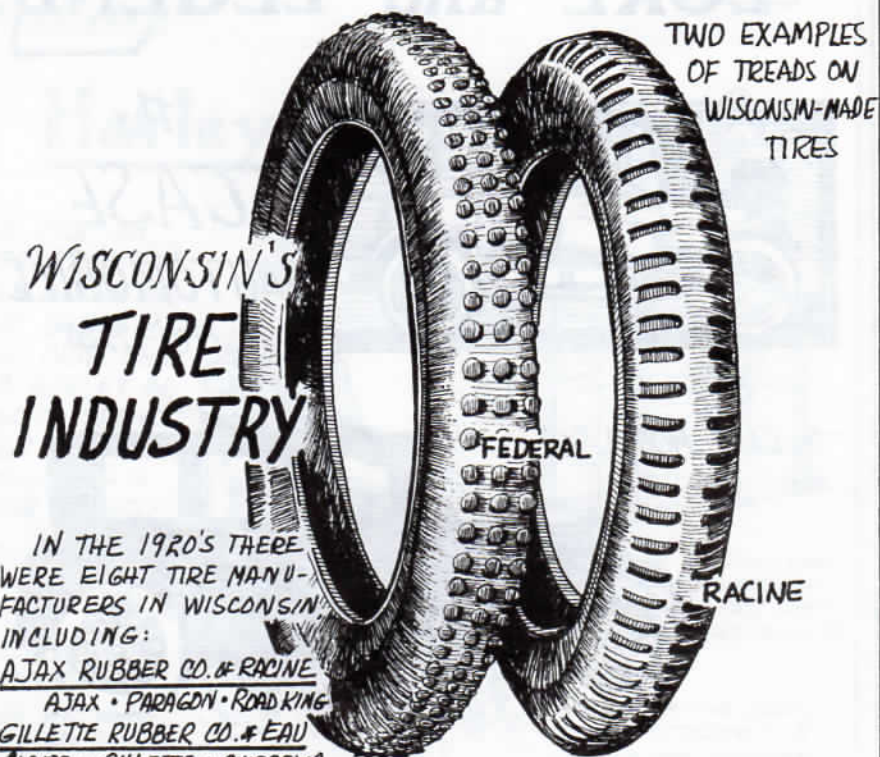
LONG KNOWN AS A FARM MACHINERY MANUFACTURER, THE J.I. CASE THRESHING MACHINE COMPANY OF RACINE ALSO PRODUCED AUTOMOBILES FROM 1910 UNTIL 1926.

THEY PRODUCED THE "CASE" IN SEVERAL MODELS, INCLUDING THE 1922 MODEL "X" ABOVE. IT HAD A SPEED RANGE OF FROM 2 TO 70 MPH IN HIGH GEAR. AVAILABLE AS A SEDAN (ABOVE) AT \$2,790 OR A TOURING CAR AT \$1,890, THE "X" CARRIED 5 PASSENGERS AND COULD TRAVEL 22 MILES ON A GALLON OF GAS.

LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL
'86

SOURCE: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF AUTOMOBILES, SCHROEDER, DBI BOOKS, NORTHFIELD, ILL. 1971

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



TWO EXAMPLES
OF TREADS ON
WISCONSIN-MADE
TIRES

IN THE 1920'S THERE
WERE EIGHT TIRE MANU-
FACTURERS IN WISCONSIN
INCLUDING:

AJAX RUBBER CO. of RACINE

AJAX • PARAGON • ROAD KING

GILLETTE RUBBER CO. of EAU

CLARE • GILLETTE • CHIPPEWA

LATEX TIRE CO. of FOND DU LAC: LATEX • RANGER • CONQUEROR • WINNEBAGO TIRES

BADGER RUBBER WORKS of MILWAUKEE: BADGER RACINE HORSESHOE TIRE CO. of

RACINE: HORSESHOE • COOP TIRES - RACINE RUBBER CO. of RACINE: RACINE

MULTI-MILE • RACINE MULTI-MILE HEAVY DUTY • RACINE MULTI-MILE BALCON TIRES

FEDERAL RUBBER CO. of CUDAHY: FEDERAL • DEFENDER • WISCONO • DOUBLE BLUE

PENNANT • STANDARD DOUBLE BLUE TIRES GOPHER-WENSTONE of CHIPPEWA

FALLS - FAIRFAX TIRE

LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL '84

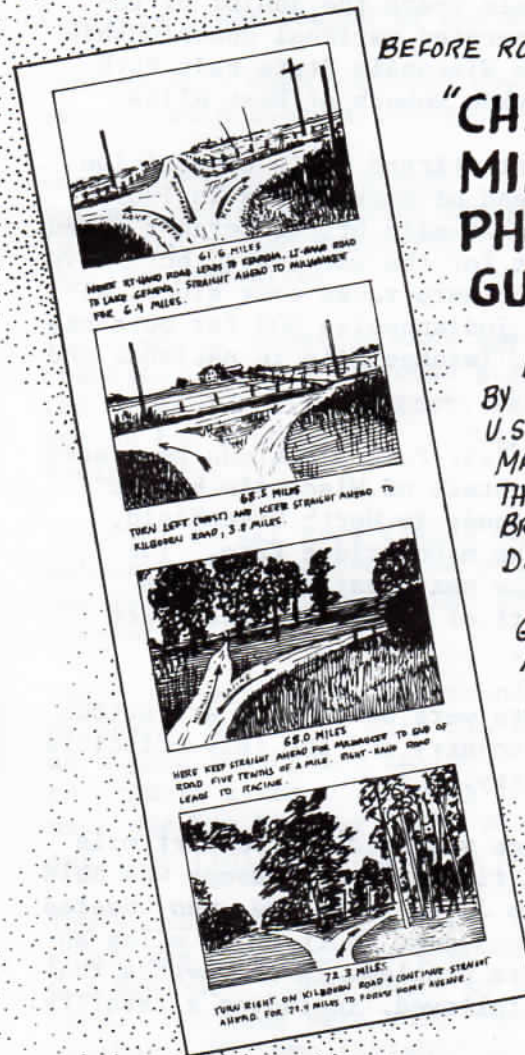
SOURCE: TIRE RATE BOOK, PUBLISHED IN JANUARY, 1927 ©1984 - JOHN M. RUSSELL

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



BEFORE ROAD MAPS - RAND McNALLY'S

"CHICAGO TO MILWAUKEE PHOTO-AUTO GUIDE of 1909"



EARLY TRAVELERS
BY AUTOMOBILE IN THE
U.S. DID NOT HAVE ROAD
MAPS TO GUIDE THEM IN
THEIR TRAVELS UNTIL JOHN
BRINK of RAND McNALLY
DEVELOPED A MAP IN 1914.

THIS UNIQUE PHOTO AUTO
GUIDE WAS AN EARLY
ATTEMPT TO AID DRIV-
ERS IN THEIR TRAVELS.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAJOR
INTERSECTIONS WITH DI-
RECTIONAL ARROWS
DRAWN ON THEM WERE
ACCOMPANIED BY
ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS
IN BRIEF CAPTIONS.

©1988 JOHN M. RUSSELL

SOURCE: AMERICAN HERITAGE, APRIL, 1988 - PHOTO GUIDE FROM RAND McNALLY

LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL '88

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR PARK: There and Back Again

By Phil Hall

While the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is looked at as the grandfather of auto racing tradition in the United States, it is six years the junior of the oldest continuously operated national championship auto racing track, the Wisconsin State Fair Park Speedway in the Milwaukee suburb of West Allis.

The mile oval was first stirred up in competition by powered tires instead of horse hoofs in 1903, while the Indianapolis 2½-mile bricks weren't raced on until 1909. Except for the war years, both have been the scene of major auto races ever since, although admittedly the Indianapolis 500 far outranks the offerings at the Milwaukee Mile in national and world importance.

The beginnings of the Fair Park track can be traced back to 1891 when the State of Wisconsin bought land for a new fairgrounds in North Greenfield, taking 120 acres of the McPhetridge Farm. The track was completed the next year and harness racing events were part of the state fair slate into the 20th century.

Motorized racing events were being held at various locations across the country and the fair officials decided to give it a try.

The first official race was held on the dirt mile on Sept. 11, 1903. A five mile open event was held and was won by William Jones of Racine, who wheeled a Mitchell. He averaged just short of 36 miles an hour. While there were problems in the events that day and the day that followed, including a fatality,

officials saw the attraction of racing and decided to continue it along with horse racing. However, for the cars, it was determined that the name drivers of the day would be needed to draw good crowds.

Among those attracted early in the century were the legendary Barney Oldfield, who brought the famed Peerless Green Dragon to the track for a 1905 event.

The schedule even included round the clock endurance events, with 24-hour contests held in 1907 and 1908.

Racing continued to prosper into the Teens, but a tornado caused extensive damage to the grounds in 1914, and a fire destroyed the main grandstand shortly thereafter.

There was no question that the facilities would be rebuilt. The new improved grandstand was used for the first 100-mile contest, was held in 1915 and won by Lou Disbrow in the July Case entry out of Racine.

In order to get good fields of cars, various promoters were tried over the years from the Teens into the Twenties. Some did the job, some ran off with the purse.

Stability was sought and found in 1929. Tom Marchese, who along with his brothers, had built up a good reputation in local business, was hired to promote a race. Helping in choosing the Marchese name was his brother Carl, who was a race driver and just finished fourth in the 1929 Indy 500.

Tom promoted his first event on July 21, 1929, which was headlined by a 50-mile contest, won by Gus Schrader. Just short of 6,000 fans were on hand. The fans were busy cheering for Tom's brother Carl, who finished second.

Tom Marchese continued to promote races in the depression years, but did not have exclusive rights until September, 1946. Tom's Wisconsin Auto Racing Association promoted events on the mile, as well as midget events on the inner quarter-mile dirt oval.

After WW II, stock cars grew in popularity with the fans. They showed up as jalopies on the short track and as late models on the mile. The first race was on August 22, 1948. After a protest, the event was awarded to Paul Bjork, who drove a 1948 Kaiser from a thrill show.

Stock car racing has been part of the schedule ever since. The AAA Contest Board started sanctioning the races in 1951 and the United States Auto Club (USAC) took over in 1956 and continued into the early Eighties.

A tough decision was made in 1953 when it was decided the horses, which still ran at the track, had to go. The track was paved for the 1954 schedule. The inner quarter-mile was re-contoured. A paved road course was also mapped out in 1954 and eventually used for many smaller class sports car events over the years.

The quarter-mile continued to host modified and sportsman stock car events on week nights through the 1966 season. The paving of the mile's pit area eliminated the front stretch of the short track.

At the end of the 1967 season, Tom Marchese sold Wisconsin Auto Racing to John Kaishian, who promoted short track events in the Milwaukee area. The schedule of USAC Indy Car and stock car events continued unchanged until the 1978 season, when the American Speed Association Circuit of Champions stock cars were added.

ASA and USAC stock cars ran their own events during the next few years, but the decline of the USAC stock car division and declining attendance caused problems. Races were dropped from the schedule during the fair and other events like midgets were added to the schedule, but problems continued.

Wisconsin Auto Racing lost its bid to get the promoting contract renewed after the 1983 season and the new promoter Go Racing Limited, took over starting with the 1984 season.

NASCAR made its first appearance at the track with a sportsman race to start the 1984 season, but problems that would plague Fair Park and its new promoters surfaced early with a poor crowd. The problems continue to this day with the Fair Board and Go Racing fighting among themselves over many things, including promotional rights.

With the state's new pari-mutual betting laws going into effect, proposals have been made to return the mile to the horses. While the state constitution would have to be changed to do so, with continuing auto racing problems, there is some danger that the nation's oldest continuous use national championship race track could return to its original use, just like in the 1890s.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

By Jeff Gillis

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Over the years we have made many pleas for SPARK contributions. Usually such requests fall upon voluntarily deaf ears. Every

once in a while someone comes through with flying colors. Such is the case with Jeff Gillis of Green Bay and the Durant Family Registry who has been kind enough to provide a number of old Green Bay photos with appropriate captions. Jeff's photos and copy appear here and will appear in future issues. Thanks Jeff from all of us for helping to make SPARK more interesting and informative! CH.)



This 1925 photo shows the Green Bay Police squad. These guys bought their own motorcycles and hand guns, and rode the bikes all year long according to Oran Wall, one of the drivers pictured. The picture is taken in front of the court house which still stands on south Adams.



Green Bay Box fleet taken in late Thirties. Now Green Bay Packaging. This was the total fleet, and the company has an outside carrier pulling the only semi trailer. Today there are over 50 trailers leased from Schneider Transport bearing the GBP logo.



Two pictures illustrate the same Seymour machine shop about 1906. A cadillac is readily visible in one of the photos as are a couple more unusual cars.



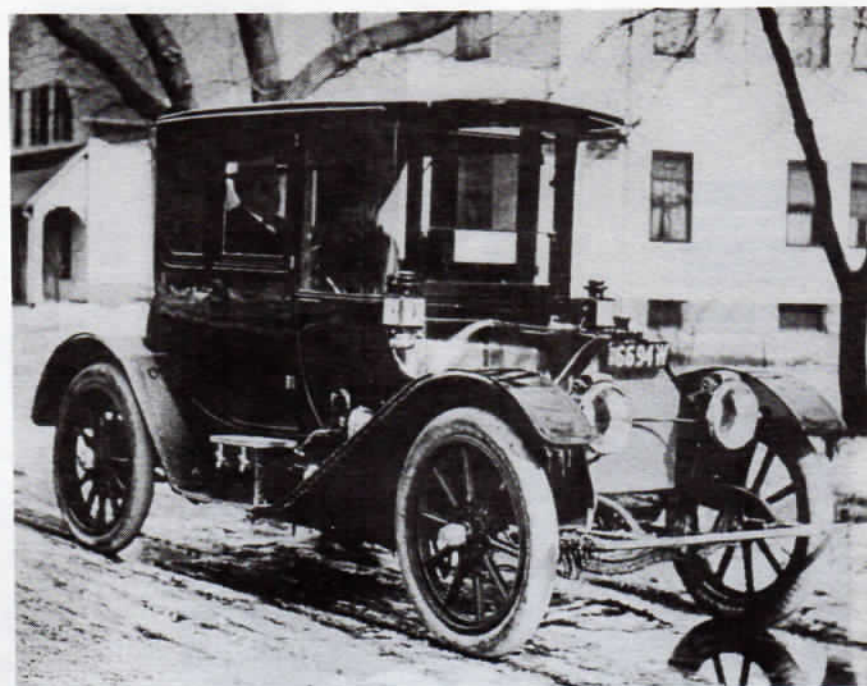


1921 photo of the Oneida fire truck owned by the Green Bay Fire Dept. The picture is taken in front of the Main Street station which was torn down a few years ago to make way for a car wash. Note two-sided white wall tires; on a truck!



The corner of Walnut and Monroe, looking southeast, was the site of this fire truck/car accident. The site is now occupied by a Super American gas station. The man laying next to the car appears to be an injured fire fighter. The fire truck by this time was quite old, and I do not know if it was repaired or scrapped.

Coupe of unknown make bears 1912 license plates. Gas powered right hand drive and obviously taken in early spring. Little else known, need ID.



The House of Ryan, now located on the east side of Green Bay, was once found right on Main Street near the current location of the Greyhound Bus terminal. This 1956 photo has a rag top and several equally rare station wagons.

Editor R. Chris Halla

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(608) 798-4317

6. Paid staff: None

TREASURER'S REPORT (Current on 2/24/89)

Individual Memberships of which 4 are Seniors: 35

Corporate Memberships which equals 10 members: 2

Honorary Membership for Brooks Stevens: 1

January 1, 1989 Account Balance \$1010.89

Revenues

'88-'89 Membership Dues 36.00

Contributions 5.00

Iola Sales of books, maps, etc. 180.00

PLUS Total Revenue \$ 221.00

TOTAL Available Cash \$1231.89

Expenses

Spark No. 32, 33, 34 and 35 \$525.00

President's Office & Mailing Expenses 48.22

Maintenance Fee of .30¢ per check
(M&I First Nat'l. Bank of Stevens Point) 3.10

Stevens Point Tent Rental for Iola 76.75

Contribution to Hartford Heritage Museum,
Inc. 35.00

Wisconsin, Secretary of State, Non-stock
Corporation Report 10.00

Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Annual Dues for Chris Halla 20.00

MINUS Total Expenses \$720.07

December 13, 1988 Account Balance 511.82

Note: This day our checking account balance is
\$669.42

EDITORIAL NOTES

TEN YEARS. Ten Years. Amazing. Here I am 40 years old, married 20 years this summer, kids nine and 14, getting gray and still learning. Ten years is a long time. In the last 10 years I've lived in five different towns/cities, held four jobs (one of them freelancing, working for I forget how many clients and publishers) and been to Hell. In the past 10 years, I've written books on cars, motorcycles, hand bookbinding, canoeing and one volume of poetry, and more articles, essays, reviews and poems than I have any interest in remembering.

I've found some new friends and lost some old ones. In the past 10 years my point of view has changed completely; several times over.

And, in retrospect it seems such a small thing, I've been a member of the Society of Automotive Historians (since 1977) and a founding member of the Wisconsin Chapter, aka the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians. During which time I acted as Acting Director for the first few months until we could have an election and hold a regular election, and Editor of SPARK (issues 1-12 and 20-37, so far). I've served on committees and attended meetings. I've begged for money for the organization and the newsletter and, for that matter, spent more than a fair share of my own green dollars. During these past 10 years I've pissed off almost everyone once or twice. It's been a hoot.

Now it's time to move on. I will be editing my last issue of the SPARK with #38; the next issue. Consider this then prelude to a fond so-long. Our next issue will be my last, hopefully my best. Some excellent material is already in hand. This could be your last chance to have me as an editor. So, if you have anything to say to me or for me, do it now. Your contributions and comments are more than welcome. I'll be waiting to hear from you.

And waiting. And waiting

Chris Halla

P.S. One member wrote recently suggesting that perhaps it was time we publish an INDEX to SPARKS past. Great idea! Could I please be so bold as to refer any member who would like to see a comprehensive SPARK INDEX to issue #31? It includes an INDEX for issues 1-30.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As I sat looking out of the window this morning thinking vague and random thoughts, it occurred to me that perhaps HE ALSO SERVES WHO ONLY SITS, LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AND THINKS! If, perchance HE can now move to his desk and jot down the thoughts that this activity often engenders we perhaps have the beginning of a significant service to whatever field of activity HE was thinking/dreaming about.

If, HE is not satisfied with the results of his jotting (as is almost always the case) hopefully he will pass along his "jots" to some other person who perhaps can say, or tell, more expertly what he wanted/intended to say. If this action is taken we perform a fine service to the cause.

Consider how many of the memoirs of important persons have been preserved in "autobiographies" followed by such qualifying phrases as "as told to," "co-authored by," "with." Witness My Two Lives by Rene Dryfus "with" Beverly Rae Kimes.

The Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historian's reason for being is the recording and preserving of every conceivable facet of automotive history, and, presumably, that includes all of us who are dedicated to advancing that cause. If this is the case, here are a few suggestions on ways we might each of us discharge that obligation.

- 1: Sit and look out of the window while (a) wondering (b) speculating (c) thinking (d) questioning (e) dreaming.
2. Do something. (a) Jot it down (b) go to the library (c) write a letter (d) make a phone call.

3. Carry the project through to its very end.
 (a) Draft an article (b) take a photograph
 (c) prepare a lecture (d) phone a fellow SAH member (e) pass your ideas along to SPARK editor Chris Halla or (f) address a letter to the Reader Forum column of Cars and Parts or the Sound Your Horn column of Old Cars Weekly.
4. If you feel hesitant about doing any of the above, just pass your thoughts, questions, ideas along to any of the writers and researchers we have in our organization. It only takes a spark or two to ignite something big and important so remember: You too can serve if in addition to just sitting there looking out of the window you DO something about it!

Bill Cameron

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS: In Search of the Little Known

Every Saturday the Post-Crescent of Appleton and, I believe, a number of other Wisconsin newspapers run a little art and copy feature titled "Wisconsin Lore and Legends." I'm sure many of you have seen it. Subjects touched on are often auto related, from bits on the cars themselves to interesting facts about Wisconsin roads.

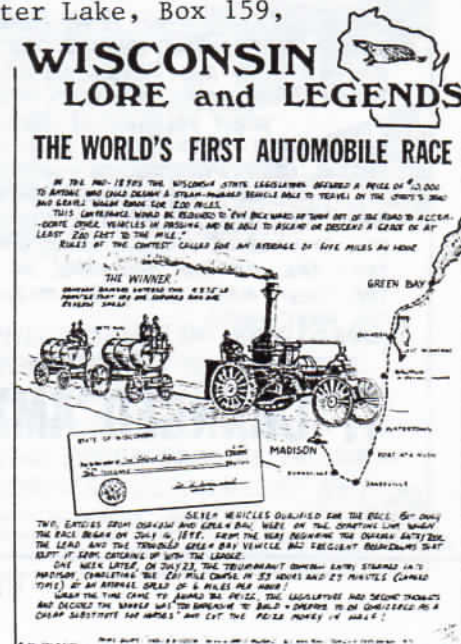
Two recent installments were of particular interest to "highway historians." One tells of a "Chicago to Milwaukee Photo-Auto Guide of 1909." Seems that an interesting predecessor to the road maps we're familiar with today was a guide that used photos of major intersections, with directional arrows drawn on and captions to assist travellers.

Another "Lore and Legends" features an example of

an early detour. Shown and described is a detour on Highway 17, between Manitowoc and Sheboygan circa 1925. Instead of using simple directional arrows and the word "DETOUR," a large sign was erected that both described and mapped not one but two alternate routes. The sign was so detailed that drivers had to stop traffic to read the signs.

"Wisconsin Lore and Legends" is the work of Lou and John Russell. WSAH members will be pleased to learn that Lou and John have been kind enough to both grant permission for us to run a number of their "Wisconsin Lore and Legends" features and to provide us with the artwork to do so properly. A selection appears on the pages that follow. More will be featured in future issues of SPARK.

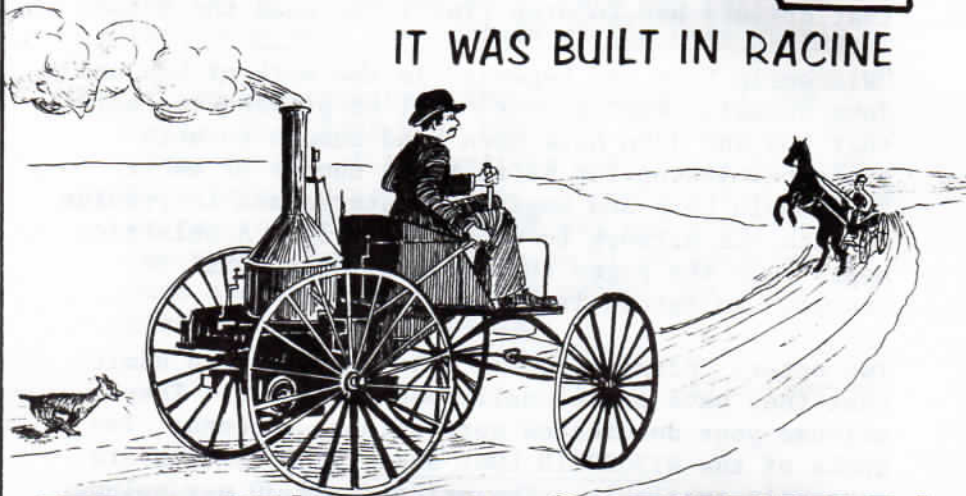
Two notes: First, Lou and John are quick to admit that they have occasionally been in error. They welcome your documented corrections. Second: Two books of the WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS series are currently available. The price is \$7.30 per volume (\$14.60 for both). Orders for the books and comments on the series should be sent directly to: Lou and John Russell, Route 7 Tainter Lake, Box 159, Menomonie, WI 54751.



WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



IT WAS BUILT IN RACINE



AMERICA'S FIRST AUTOMOBILE!

IN 1893 (SOME SOURCES SAY 1871) DR. J.W. CARHART ROLLED A PECULIAR-LOOKING MACHINE OUT OF HIS WORKSHOP IN RACINE. TO HIS NEIGHBORS IT LOOKED LIKE A BUGGY WITH A POTBELLIED STOVE MOUNTED OVER THE REAR AXLE.

WHEN THE VEHICLE BEGAN TO MOVE UNDER ITS OWN POWER IT BECAME THE FIRST LIGHT SELF-PROPELLED CAR EVER TO TRAVEL A PUBLIC ROAD IN AMERICA - AND PERHAPS THE WORLD.

THIS FIRST STEAM-DRIVEN CAR PRE-DATED HENRY FORD'S FIRST CAR BY TWENTY-TWO YEARS, BUT CARHART NEVER ENTERED THE AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING BUSINESS, AND IT WASN'T UNTIL 1893 THAT THE DURYEA BROTHERS OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS INTRODUCED THE FIRST MARKETABLE AUTOMOBILE IN AMERICA, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE FIRST FORD.

IT CHANGED AMERICA'S LIFESTYLE!

LOU & JOHN
RUSSELL
8/81

SOURCE: "TREASURY OF EARLY AMERICAN AUTOMOBILES - 1873-1925" BY FLOYD CLYMER, BOAZA BOOKS, NEW YORK, N.Y., 1980

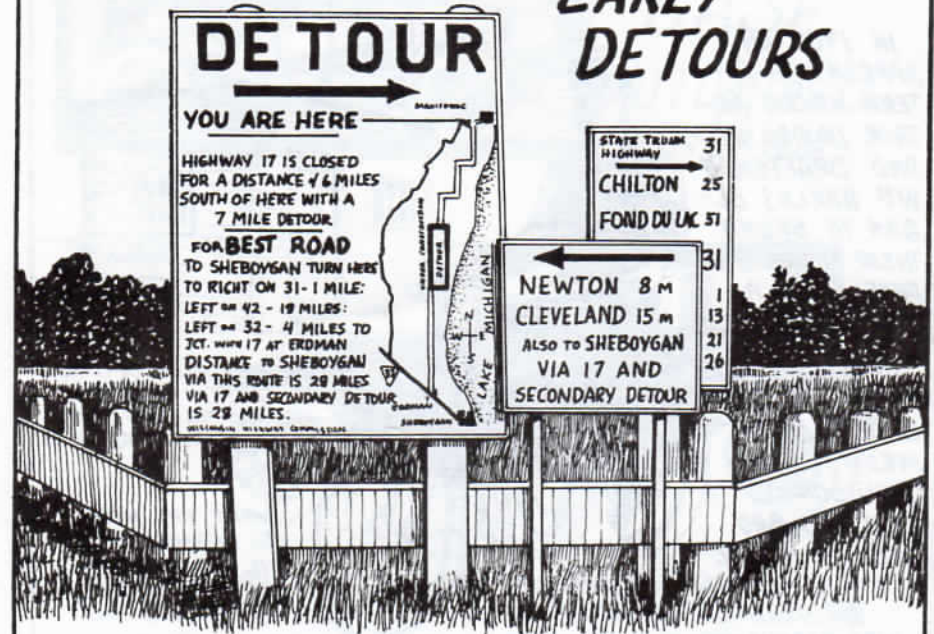
© 1981 JOHN M. RUSSELL

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



IT TOOK A LITTLE TIME TO READ THE SIGNS!

EARLY DETOURS



IN 1925 HIGHWAY 17, SIX MILES SOUTH OF MANITOWOC, WAS CLOSED FOR REPAIRS. DRIVERS HEADING SOUTH TO SHEBOYGAN HAD THE CHOICE OF TWO ALTERNATE ROUTES AND THE WISCONSIN HIGHWAY COMMISSION ERECTED THESE SIGNS ON THE SOUTHWEST EDGE OF MANITOWOC THAT DESCRIBED THE DETOUR IN DETAIL. TRAFFIC STOPPED WHILE DRIVERS READ THE SIGNS!

SOURCE: DRAWING BASED ON PHOTOGRAPH IN STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN COLLECTION

LOU & JOHN
RUSSELL
8/81

© 1988 JOHN M. RUSSELL

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS

MILWAUKEE'S

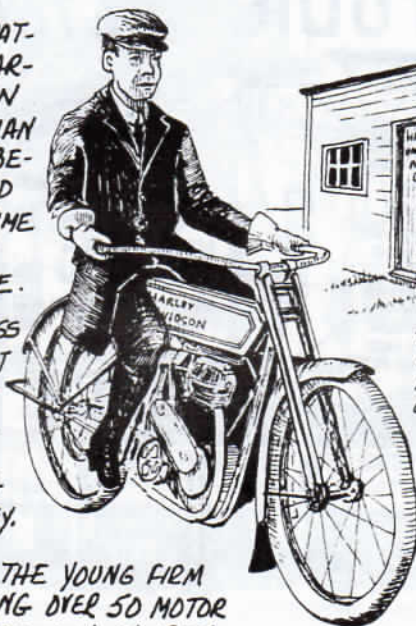
Harley-Davidson Co.

IN 1901 AN APPRENTICE PATTERN MAKER ARTHUR DAVIDSON AND DRAFTSMAN WM HARLEY BEGAN TO SPEND THEIR SPARE TIME DEVELOPING A MOTOR BICYCLE.

EARLY SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT ENTICED MACHINE INVEST WALTER DAVIDSON TO JOIN HIS BROTHER AND HARLEY.

BY 1906 THE YOUNG FIRM WAS PRODUCING OVER 50 MOTOR CYCLES A YEAR, 154 IN 1907, 450 IN 1908! THEIR WELL-BUILT CYCLES WERE WINNING THE MAJOR RACES AND ENDURANCE RUNS, A FACT THAT INCREASED DEMAND FOR THE MILWAUKEE PRODUCT. IN RECENT YEARS FOREIGN COMPETITION HAS CUT INTO THE U.S. MARKET BUT HARLEY-DAVIDSON HAS SURVIVED AND THRIVED WITH TOP QUALITY.

SOURCE: EARLYRIDERS-MOTORCYCLES THROUGH THE YEARS, KIMZEY, PMSAND PUB. CO. MALIBU, CA. 1977

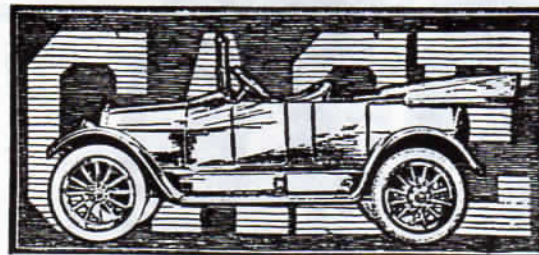


THIS TINY 10'x15' BUILDING AT 38TH ST. & HIGHLAND AVE. WAS THE FIRST HOME OF THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON CO.

WHEN THIS MODEL WAS INTRODUCED IN 1912 THE COMPANY EMPLOYED 1,076 PEOPLE.

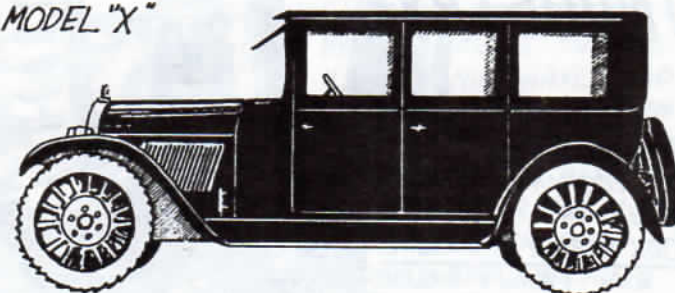
LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL
'86

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



The
CASE
AUTOMOBILE
1910 - 1926

The CASE MODEL "X"



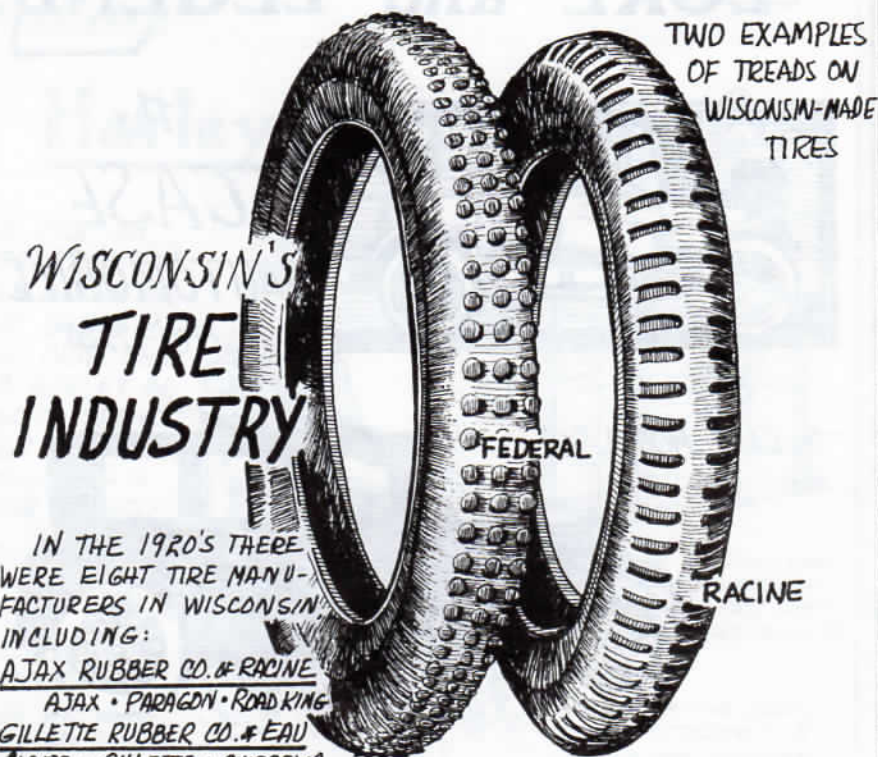
LONG KNOWN AS A FARM MACHINERY MANUFACTURER, THE J.I. CASE THRESHING MACHINE COMPANY OF RACINE ALSO PRODUCED AUTOMOBILES FROM 1910 UNTIL 1926.

THEY PRODUCED THE "CASE" IN SEVERAL MODELS, INCLUDING THE 1922 MODEL "X" ABOVE. IT HAD A SPEED RANGE OF FROM 2 TO 70 MPH IN HIGH GEAR. AVAILABLE AS A SEDAN (ABOVE) AT \$2,790 OR A TOURING CAR AT \$1,890, THE "X" CARRIED 5 PASSENGERS AND COULD TRAVEL 22 MILES ON A GALLON OF GAS.

LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL
'86

SOURCE: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF AUTOMOBILES, SCHROEDER, DBI BOOKS, NORTHFIELD, ILL. 1971

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



TWO EXAMPLES
OF TREADS ON
WISCONSIN-MADE
TIRES

WISCONSIN'S TIRE INDUSTRY

IN THE 1920'S THERE
WERE EIGHT TIRE MANU-
FACTURERS IN WISCONSIN
INCLUDING:

AJAX RUBBER CO. OF RACINE

AJAX • PARAGON • ROAD KING

GILLETTE RUBBER CO. OF EAU

CLARE • GILLETTE • CHIPPEWA

LATEX TIRE CO. OF FOND DU LAC: LATEX • RANGER • CONQUEROR • WINNEBAGO TIRES

BADGER RUBBER WORKS OF MILWAUKEE: BADGER RACINE HORSESHOE TIRE CO. OF

RACINE: HORSESHOE • COOP TIRES - RACINE RUBBER CO. OF RACINE: RACINE

MULTI-MILE • RACINE MULTI-MILE HEAVY DUTY • RACINE MULTI-MILE BALCON TIRES

FEDERAL RUBBER CO. OF CUDAHY: FEDERAL • DEFENDER • WISCONO • DOUBLE BLUE

PENNANT • STANDARD DOUBLE BLUE TIRES GOPHER-WENSTONE OF CHIPPEWA

FALLS - FAIRFAX TIRE

LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL '84

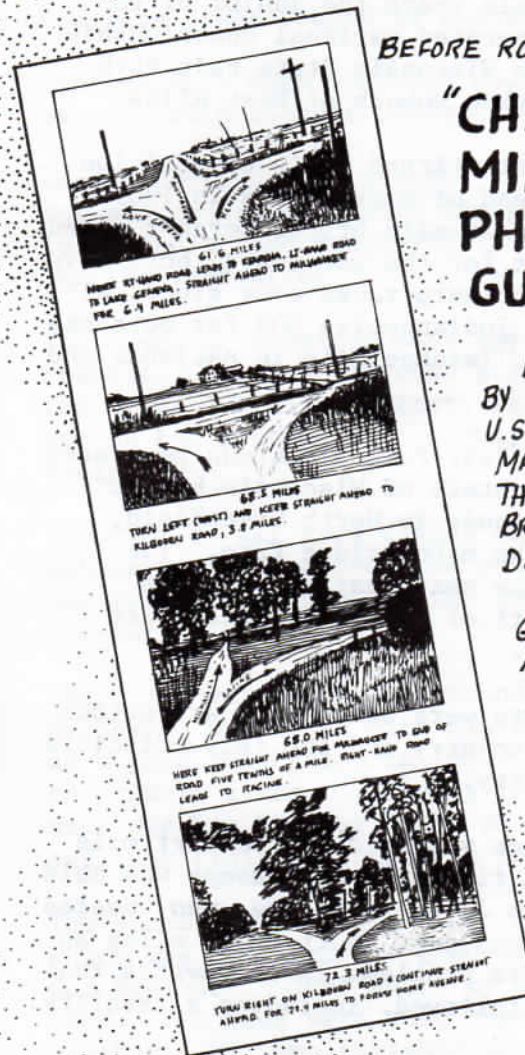
SOURCE: TIRE RATE BOOK, PUBLISHED IN JANUARY, 1927 ©1984 - JOHN M. RUSSELL

WISCONSIN LORE and LEGENDS



BEFORE ROAD MAPS - RAND McNALLY'S

"CHICAGO TO MILWAUKEE PHOTO-AUTO GUIDE of 1909"



EARLY TRAVELERS
BY AUTOMOBILE IN THE
U.S. DID NOT HAVE ROAD
MAPS TO GUIDE THEM IN
THEIR TRAVELS UNTIL JOHN
BRINK OF RAND McNALLY
DEVELOPED A MAP IN 1914.

THIS UNIQUE PHOTO AUTO
GUIDE WAS AN EARLY
ATTEMPT TO AID DRIV-
ERS IN THEIR TRAVELS.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAJOR
INTERSECTIONS WITH DI-
RECTIONAL ARROWS
DRAWN ON THEM WERE
ACCOMPANIED BY
ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS
IN BRIEF CAPTIONS.

©1988 JOHN M. RUSSELL

SOURCE: AMERICAN HERITAGE, APRIL, 1988 - PHOTO GUIDE FROM RAND McNALLY

LOU + JOHN
RUSSELL '88

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR PARK: There and Back Again

By Phil Hall

While the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is looked at as the grandfather of auto racing tradition in the United States, it is six years the junior of the oldest continuously operated national championship auto racing track, the Wisconsin State Fair Park Speedway in the Milwaukee suburb of West Allis.

The mile oval was first stirred up in competition by powered tires instead of horse hoofs in 1903, while the Indianapolis 2½-mile bricks weren't raced on until 1909. Except for the war years, both have been the scene of major auto races ever since, although admittedly the Indianapolis 500 far outranks the offerings at the Milwaukee Mile in national and world importance.

The beginnings of the Fair Park track can be traced back to 1891 when the State of Wisconsin bought land for a new fairgrounds in North Greenfield, taking 120 acres of the McPhetridge Farm. The track was completed the next year and harness racing events were part of the state fair slate into the 20th century.

Motorized racing events were being held at various locations across the country and the fair officials decided to give it a try.

The first official race was held on the dirt mile on Sept. 11, 1903. A five mile open event was held and was won by William Jones of Racine, who wheeled a Mitchell. He averaged just short of 36 miles an hour. While there were problems in the events that day and the day that followed, including a fatality,

officials saw the attraction of racing and decided to continue it along with horse racing. However, for the cars, it was determined that the name drivers of the day would be needed to draw good crowds.

Among those attracted early in the century were the legendary Barney Oldfield, who brought the famed Peerless Green Dragon to the track for a 1905 event.

The schedule even included round the clock endurance events, with 24-hour contests held in 1907 and 1908.

Racing continued to prosper into the Teens, but a tornado caused extensive damage to the grounds in 1914, and a fire destroyed the main grandstand shortly thereafter.

There was no question that the facilities would be rebuilt. The new improved grandstand was used for the first 100-mile contest, was held in 1915 and won by Lou Disbrow in the July Case entry out of Racine.

In order to get good fields of cars, various promoters were tried over the years from the Teens into the Twenties. Some did the job, some ran off with the purse.

Stability was sought and found in 1929. Tom Marchese, who along with his brothers, had built up a good reputation in local business, was hired to promote a race. Helping in choosing the Marchese name was his brother Carl, who was a race driver and just finished fourth in the 1929 Indy 500.

Tom promoted his first event on July 21, 1929, which was headlined by a 50-mile contest, won by Gus Schrader. Just short of 6,000 fans were on hand. The fans were busy cheering for Tom's brother Carl, who finished second.

Tom Marchese continued to promote races in the depression years, but did not have exclusive rights until September, 1946. Tom's Wisconsin Auto Racing Association promoted events on the mile, as well as midget events on the inner quarter-mile dirt oval.

After WW II, stock cars grew in popularity with the fans. They showed up as jalopies on the short track and as late models on the mile. The first race was on August 22, 1948. After a protest, the event was awarded to Paul Bjork, who drove a 1948 Kaiser from a thrill show.

Stock car racing has been part of the schedule ever since. The AAA Contest Board started sanctioning the races in 1951 and the United States Auto Club (USAC) took over in 1956 and continued into the early Eighties.

A tough decision was made in 1953 when it was decided the horses, which still ran at the track, had to go. The track was paved for the 1954 schedule. The inner quarter-mile was re-contoured. A paved road course was also mapped out in 1954 and eventually used for many smaller class sports car events over the years.

The quarter-mile continued to host modified and sportsman stock car events on week nights through the 1966 season. The paving of the mile's pit area eliminated the front stretch of the short track.

At the end of the 1967 season, Tom Marchese sold Wisconsin Auto Racing to John Kaishian, who promoted short track events in the Milwaukee area. The schedule of USAC Indy Car and stock car events continued unchanged until the 1978 season, when the American Speed Association Circuit of Champions stock cars were added.

ASA and USAC stock cars ran their own events during the next few years, but the decline of the USAC stock car division and declining attendance caused problems. Races were dropped from the schedule during the fair and other events like midgets were added to the schedule, but problems continued.

Wisconsin Auto Racing lost its bid to get the promoting contract renewed after the 1983 season and the new promoter Go Racing Limited, took over starting with the 1984 season.

NASCAR made its first appearance at the track with a sportsman race to start the 1984 season, but problems that would plague Fair Park and its new promoters surfaced early with a poor crowd. The problems continue to this day with the Fair Board and Go Racing fighting among themselves over many things, including promotional rights.

With the state's new pari-mutual betting laws going into effect, proposals have been made to return the mile to the horses. While the state constitution would have to be changed to do so, with continuing auto racing problems, there is some danger that the nation's oldest continuous use national championship race track could return to its original use, just like in the 1890s.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

By Jeff Gillis

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Over the years we have made many pleas for SPARK contributions. Usually such requests fall upon voluntarily deaf ears. Every

once in a while someone comes through with flying colors. Such is the case with Jeff Gillis of Green Bay and the Durant Family Registry who has been kind enough to provide a number of old Green Bay photos with appropriate captions. Jeff's photos and copy appear here and will appear in future issues. Thanks Jeff from all of us for helping to make SPARK more interesting and informative! CH.)



This 1925 photo shows the Green Bay Police squad. These guys bought their own motorcycles and hand guns, and rode the bikes all year long according to Oran Wall, one of the drivers pictured. The picture is taken in front of the court house which still stands on south Adams.



Green Bay Box fleet taken in late Thirties. Now Green Bay Packaging. This was the total fleet, and the company has an outside carrier pulling the only semi trailer. Today there are over 50 trailers leased from Schneider Transport bearing the GBP logo.



Two pictures illustrate the same Seymour machine shop about 1906. A cadillac is readily visible in one of the photos as are a couple more unusual cars.



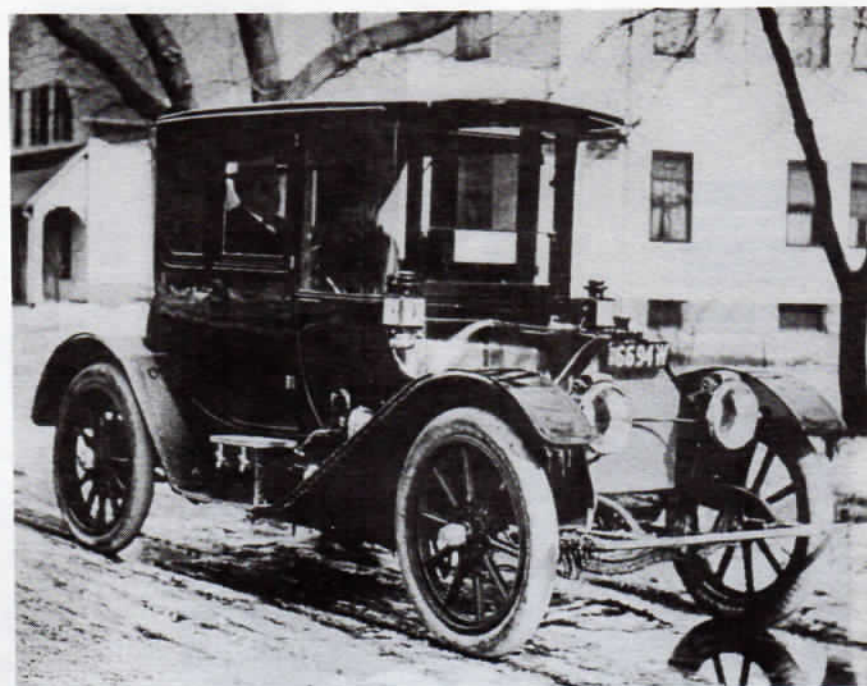


1921 photo of the Oneida fire truck owned by the Green Bay Fire Dept. The picture is taken in front of the Main Street station which was torn down a few years ago to make way for a car wash. Note two-sided white wall tires; on a truck!



The corner of Walnut and Monroe, looking southeast, was the site of this fire truck/car accident. The site is now occupied by a Super American gas station. The man laying next to the car appears to be an injured fire fighter. The fire truck by this time was quite old, and I do not know if it was repaired or scrapped.

Coupe of unknown make bears 1912 license plates. Gas powered right hand drive and obviously taken in early spring. Little else known, need ID.



The House of Ryan, now located on the east side of Green Bay, was once found right on Main Street near the current location of the Greyhound Bus terminal. This 1956 photo has a rag top and several equally rare station wagons.



Harley Davidson of about 1915 vintage. No other details known.
