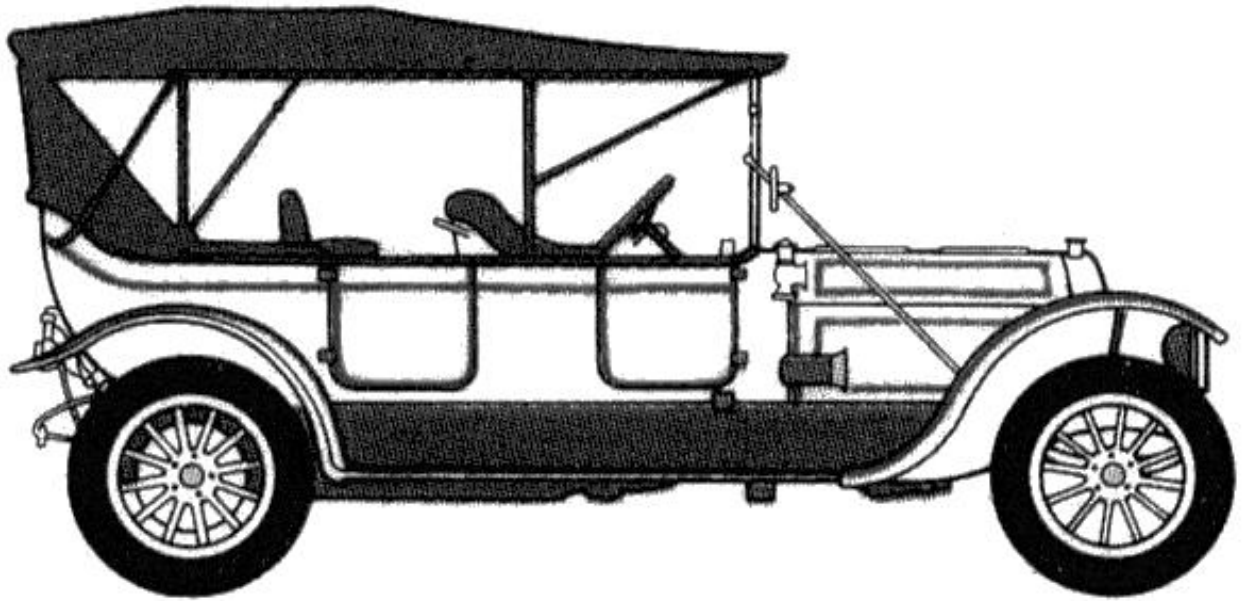


Adolfo's Autos



*Thank you Camarillo Family,
Camarillo Ranch Families and Friends*

Research Team:

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Adolfo's Autos

by

Beth Miller

Adolfo Camarillo's adult life encompassed the early years of automobile history. When he was 92 years old, Adolfo spoke at St. John's Seminary. He told the story of a boyhood journey to Los Angeles with his father. It took them seven days by horse and buggy. But as an adult, Adolfo would make countless day trips to the City of Angels. The automobile played an essential role in his life.

By the time he was 33 years old in 1897, the general consensus was that the era of the horse was over. The New York Sun predicted that the "new craze for the horseless carriage would expand until the vehicles were in common use in every part of the civilized world."

The New York Times complained about the adoption of the word 'automobile' into the general usage, calling it "a dreadful word." Those with some formal education understood the origin of the combined word. It was the Greek word "auto" meaning "self" united with the Latin word "mobils" meaning "moving." Or "self-moving" vehicle.

Today customers make inquiries or even purchase a car online. At the turn of the 20th century, the consumer also did pre-purchase research. Adolfo may have read ads in newspapers and magazines. He could write to the auto manufacture to obtain information. As a perspective buyer, he may have also used the Handbook of Gasoline Automobiles, which included detailed specifications on the makes and models. And in some cases, depending on the make, there may have been an auto dealer in Los Angeles that Adolfo could visit.

One of the earliest photos of Adolfo in an automobile is in a circa 1902 Oldsmobile. It did not have a steering wheel. It was controlled by a tiller. Depending on the make and model of the vehicle, it could be located left, right or center. By 1908 the steering wheel was available on most models. The gas powered Olds was introduced in 1901. It was nicknamed the "Merry Olds" from the song "In My Merry Oldsmobile." Like today, advertising played an important part in the success of the early automobile.

Here is a link to the song “In My merry Oldsmobile” recorded by vaudeville performer Billy Murray in 1909.

<https://youtu.be/hUqGD3oYM08>



1902 Oldsmobile: Adolfo (driver) and Fred Tico (back seat) taken at Juan E. Camarillo's home.

In 1901 425 Oldsmobiles were produced. By 1902 production increased to 2,500. In 1903 an Olds was driven from San Francisco to Boston. It took 74 days.



Very quickly Adolfo moved into another category of automobile when he ordered the Pierce Arrow. The Oxnard Courier reported Adolfo's order and noted “it

certainly is a magnificent one.” Follow up news accounts relayed the information on April 23, 1909 that “Supervisor A. Camarillo, with his family, had been touring Southern California in his monster 7 passenger, 6-cylinder Pierce-Arrow.” He returned in time to attend the Board of Supervisors meeting.

The Pierce Arrow was located in Buffalo, New York, but Adolfo had written to the Los Angeles office for information about the luxury car. For twenty years Pierce Arrow supplied cars to the White House to be used by the president. It was the automobile of choice for royal families, U.S. governors, movie stars, prominent businesspeople and VIPs.

September 29, 1908 - Pierce Arrow material mailed to Adolfo Camarillo [1 of 4]



September 29, 1908 - Pierce Arrow material mailed to Adolfo Camarillo [4 of 4]

SPECIFICATION SHEET D.

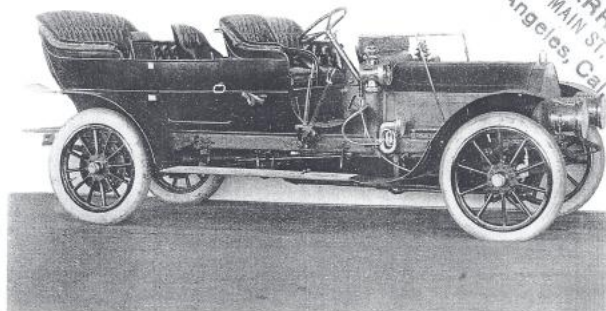
THE GEORGE N. PIERCE CO.

MAKERS OF

Pierce Arrow Motor Cars

MODEL 48-T

Seven-Passenger Touring Car.



Price, \$5,000, F. O. B. Buffalo.

NUMBER OF CYLINDERS,	Six—cast in pairs.
BORE,	4½ inches.
STROKE,	4¾ inches.
WHEEL BASE,	130 inches.
GAUGE,	56 inches.
TIRES,	{ 2, 3 or 4 passengers, Front, 36 x 4 inches; Rear, 36 x 4½ inches. 7 passengers, Front, 36 x 4 inches; Rear, 36 x 5 inches.
IGNITION,	Storage Battery and High Tension Magneto.
TRANSMISSION,	Selective; Sliding Gears; Side Lever Control; Four Speeds Forward and one Reverse; Bevel Gear Drive.
SEATING CAPACITY,	Seven Persons.
COLOR,	Optional.
REGULAR EQUIPMENT,	Two Gas Headlights and Generator; Two Side Oil Lamps; One Tail Oil Lamp; Horn; Gasoline Tank Gauge; Veeder Odometer; Truffault-Hartford Shock Absorbers; Extra Tire Carrier; Full Set of Tools.

THIS CHASSIS CAN BE FITTED WITH OTHER BODIES AS FOLLOWS:

Touring, seating capacity 2 persons, . . . \$4,700	Touring, seating capacity 4 persons, . . . \$4,800
Touring, seating capacity 3 persons, . . . 4,750	Suburban, seating capacity 7 persons, . . . 6,100
Landau, seating capacity 7 persons, \$6,200	

ALL PRICES F. O. B. BUFFALO.

It was difficult to drive and demanded constant focus and a fair amount to strength to shift gears. Pre-owned Pierce Arrows were purchased by fire departments and rebuilt into fire engines. Some of these fire engines were in service for up to twenty years.

In June 1909, the newspaper reported once again that Adolfo and his wife Isabel were touring in the Pierce Arrow. This time they traveled to Northern California with their son Frank to pick up their daughters, Rosa and Ave, from Notre Dame Academy in San Jose. They would visit San Francisco before returning home.

November 24, 1910 – “*On Thanksgiving Day – 1910 – at the ranch.*” The Camarillo family in Adolfo Camarillo’s Pierce Arrow automobile: daughter Rosa (at the wheel) – Adolfo Camarillo - daughter Ave (in white blouse) and wife Isabel.



*From: Rosa's photo album 1908
Courtesy of the Marvel Family*

A few years later, in 1913, Adolfo’s brother, Juan, purchased “a fine new Pierce Arrow. It was a six-cylinder car with all the most up-to-date equipment,” reported the Oxnard Courier.

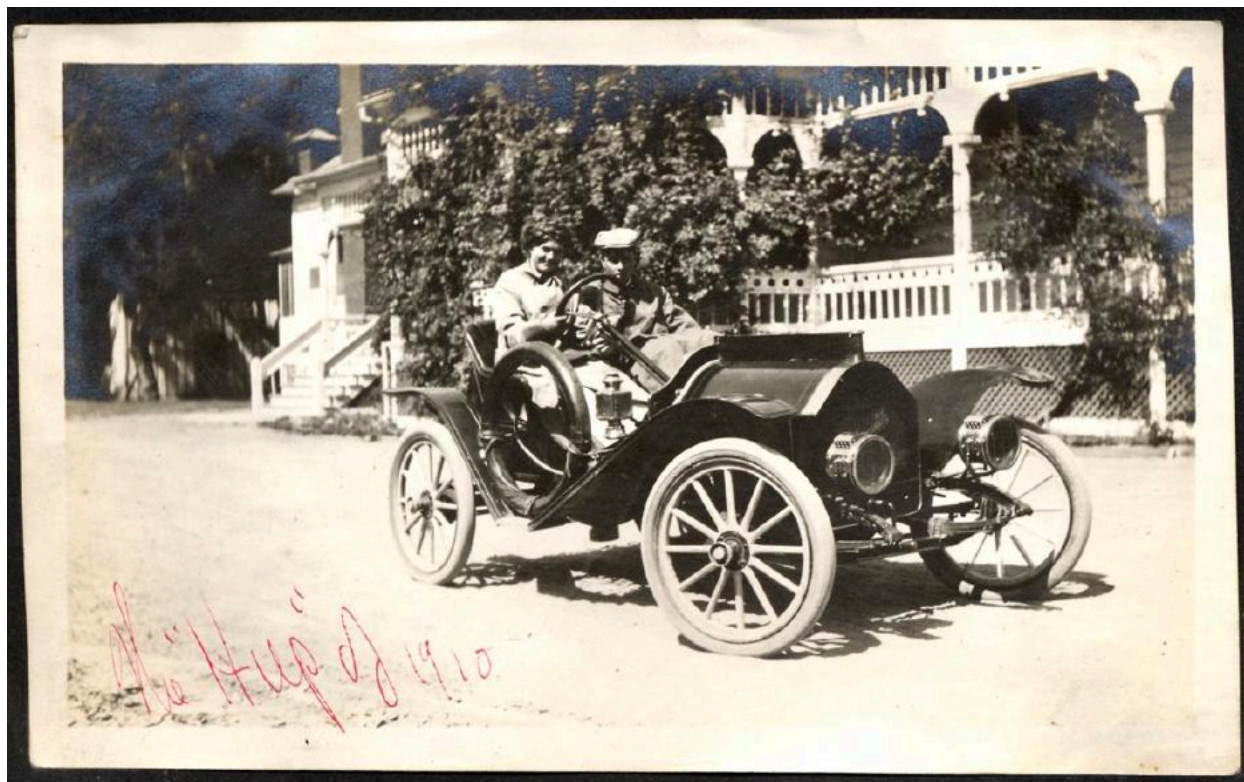
In 1910, Adolfo bought a Pope-Hartford. The Pierce Arrow was being repaired and repainted in Oxnard. So Adolfo and the family went to Los Angeles in the Pope-Hartford. They were going to watch the automobile races at the Motordrome in Playa del Rey. The Motordrome, the first U.S. auto speedway, held its first race in March 1910.



*"Auto Race at Ascot Park-Aug. 10'09. L.A.
 Stearns and Locomobile-winner"
 From Rosa's 1908 photo album-courtesy of the Marvel Family*

The Pope-Hartford was fast! By 1910 it had a three-speed selective sliding transmission that allowed the vehicle to cruise comfortably at 50 miles per hour. The company entered a major race that celebrated the renewal of San Francisco after the devastating 1906 earthquake. The Pope-Hartford was victorious. It won again in 1911.

Also in 1910, we have a photo of eighteen year old Ave Camarillo at the wheel of the Hupmobile. It was light, sporty and fast, but was unable to climb steep hills, earning the name "Up No Hill." It's a wonder if the Hupmobile could manage the Conejo Grade.



*Ave Camarillo at the wheel of a Hupmobile. Passenger unknown. Camarillo Ranch
From: Rosa's 1908 photo album- courtesy of the Marvel Family*

The May 26, 1911 Oxnard Courier reported that Adolfo had recently purchased a Maxwell roadster. The Maxwell was manufactured in the United States from 1904-1925. The present-day successor to the Maxwell Company is Fiat-Chrysler.

In 1906 Maxwell won a survey conducted in the Journal of the American Medical Association. It was deemed the car of choice for doctors, resulting in Maxwell adding a “doctor’s model” based on specifications requested by physicians making house calls. Maxwell was the first car company to explicitly market to women. In 1909 Maxwell sponsored Alice Huyler Ramsey, an advocate of women drivers, as the first woman to drive coast-to-coast in the United States. She, along with three female friends, made the journey, but Alice was the only driver on the 59-day trip.

Only 152 of the 3,600 miles they traveled were paved. They followed The Blue Book, a series of automotive guides that gave directions using landmarks. The group often navigated by using telephone poles in the hopes that they would lead to a town.

The company strongly aligned itself with the women’s rights movement and announced plans in 1914 to hire as many female as male sales personnel. In its

Manhattan dealership, women were featured in the showroom window assembling a Maxwell engine.

Comedian Jack Benny was famous for driving a Maxwell decades after it had stopped being produced. The running joke was that Benny was too stingy to buy himself a new car—or even a newer car. He kept Maxwell in the public eye long after the brand went out of business.

By 1918, Adolfo had moved onto the Marmon 34 as reported in the Oxnard Courier. The model 34 had an advanced design with its use of aluminum. The cylinder block, transmission housing, differential, fenders and hood were made of aluminum.

On October 9, 1922 the Oxnard Courier reported another of Adolfo's cars. It was the Hudson. The paper reported: "Officials of the theft bureau of the Automobile Club located the stolen Hudson speedster belonging to A. Camarillo, which was taken from the Camarillo Ranch last Wednesday."

The Hudson Motor Car Company began in 1909 when eight Detroit businessmen pooled their resources, among them retailing magnate Joseph L. Hudson. The Hudson cars were advanced for their time. Their early cars were mainly closed models, sealing out the weather. Hudson quickly put the steering wheel on the left and hand levers in the center, which are their modern positions, and adopted the General Motors self-starter making the cars easier and safer to start.

Auto manufactures had decided it was more practical to have the driver seated near the centerline of the road to both judge the space available when passing oncoming cars and to allow the front seat passenger to get out of the car onto the pavement rather than the street. Ford had changed to this position in 1908.

As the role of women increased in the car-purchased decisions, automakers began to hire female designers. In 1939 Hudson hired Elizabeth Ann Thatcher, one of America's first female automotive designers.

Cars and trucks were making changes at the Camarillo Ranch. There was a Model A truck that was especially important for the walnut harvest. It had dual wheels on the back, no doors and wooden rails along the bed that could be easily removed to allow stacking the walnut sacks.

The Ranch had a One-and-one-half ton Ford truck (1942) that could haul six Camarillo White Horses. The truck and horse van(*what the trailer was called at the time*) were specially order from Dingman Ford in Oxnard. The silver saddles were hauled in a trailer pulled by another truck.

Meliton Ortiz (our guardian of the Camarillo White Horses) rode around the Ranch in a late 1930s model International pick up. He also used a Jeep. There was even a car that was used to lead the horses to the Camarillo Springs pasture. It was a 1931 Model A Woodie station wagon. Adolfo's son-in-law, Alfred Petit, also drove his grandchildren in the Woodie to visit with great-grandfather Adolfo. One of the Petit grandchildren, Tom Marvel, remembered that he and his siblings also romped in the orchards, delighted in the horses, and enjoyed the day doing whatever fun they could dream up.

It's very likely that Adolfo knew just about everything concerning the Ranch fields, orchards and pastures because every day he made an inspection of an area. He might do part on foot, or horseback and even by car.

He had a small car for touring the Ranch. It was a Chevy Coupé. Adolfo drove his secretary around the Eucalyptus trees with speeds up to 60 miles per hour. Audrey Young, his secretary noted in her memoir, "the small car was like a toy to him." In his 1936 diary, Adolfo mention that he and son-in-law, Alfred, took the Chevy Coupé into Oxnard to be repaired and painted.

Leonard Cruz, who lived and worked on the Camarillo Ranch for many years, remembered when he was 9 years old that "Mr. Camarillo came (in the Chevy Coupé) to visit the families who picked the walnuts. He was very kind."

As Don Latham walked the five or six miles down Santa Rosa Road in 1949 on his way to see his fiancée, Camarillo cousin, Raquel Hernandez, he was given a ride in a Chevy Coupé by a driver he did not know. The car was dark gray and "had not seen wax or polish," said Don. Don's then future mother-in-law explained that he had been given a ride by Tio Adolfo.

Another of Adolfo's cars in the 1930s was the LaSalle. LaSalle was the brainchild of Alfred P. Sloan, who was the long-time chairman and CEO of General Motors. LaSalles were manufactured by Cadillac but were lower priced than the Cadillac-brand automobiles. At the same time that Adolfo had a LaSalle, he also had a Lincoln. It is believed to have been named after President Abraham Lincoln.

The Lincoln Motor Company was purchased by Henry Ford after his son Edsel, convinced his father that the Ford Motor Company needed a luxury division.

Adolfo took the Lincoln on many camping adventures. With the help of his friend A.J. Dingman, who owned the Dingman Ford dealership in Oxnard, Adolfo found the right trailer that he purchased in Los Angeles for camping trips to Boulder Dam (*today known as Hoover Dam*), Yosemite and Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico.

Dingman, other friends, and several members of the Camarillo family went on the trips. Adolfo also attended Dingman's daughter's wedding. The Lincoln was used on a Los Rancheros Visitadores trip and there was a problem. He had to drop the trailer. In his diary, Adolfo did not elaborate on the type of mechanical problems.

When most people remember Adolfo's automobiles, it is the Cadillac that is the most frequently mentioned. Over the years, Adolfo owned several. The automobile was named after the French explorer and settler of Detroit. The hood ornament crest is based on the Cadillac coat of arms. Cadillac marketed itself as "a better made vehicle than its competitors." By 1909 it was established as one of the premier luxury automakers.

There were at least four colors of Adolfo's Cadillacs: white, midnight blue, dark green and black. Tom Marvel, Adolfo's great-grandson, recalled that the black Cadillac was used only on Sundays for Mass and a drive. He said Meliton Ortiz kept the cars cleaned and polished. The Sunday black Cadillac was the most difficult to polish, but Meliton always got it right. In Adolfo's later years, Meliton and Eduardo Escobedo were his drivers.

Eduardo, son of bunkhouse cook Manuela Escobedo and great nephew of Tia Nati, remembered seeing "four to five cars in a garage near the walnut barn. There was a Chevy Coupé, and two Cadillacs. There was also a LaSalle. The Ranch had gas pumps. "There were two locations," recalled Eduardo. "One was next to the garage where Mr. Camarillo kept his cars, and another was in front of the sheep pens."

Rey Ortiz, Meliton's son, remembered that his father told him that after a film shoot, one of the gas pumps had disappeared.

Along with the LaSalle, Adolfo moved up to the Cadillac Series 62 in 1940. Friends, Edward ("Hap") and Mary McLoughlin Maxwell, had picked him up for the races at Santa Anita in their new midnight blue Cadillac 62. (Adolfo and Hap

rode in Los Rancheros Visitadores.) He was so impressed with their automobile that he ordered one just like it. It was during this time that Cadillac introduced models with full-automatic transmission.

Adolfo had seen the complete evolution of the automobile industry through its development, growth and change. From the tiller steering in the 1902 Oldsmobile all the way to the Cadillac early automatic transmission, Adolfo fully experienced automotive history. His cars are truly time machines that help us cruise through the past.



Driver: Rosa Camarillo Petit, her sister Carmen Camarillo is holding baby Inez Petit circa 1916.
Throughout her life Rosa favored Oldsmobiles. Her father and sister Carmen preferred Cadillacs.

Photos courtesy of the Marvel Family Rosa's after 1914 album

Sadly, little Inez died in 1917. Below: Rosa is pregnant with son Johnny and is wearing a stylish maternity dress.



Rosa (in maternity dress), Inez and Alfred Petit

Rosa's Photo Album 1908

Courtesy of the Marvel Family

The following pages contain photos from the albums of Adolfo's daughter, Rosa Camarillo Petit. The photos from the 1908 album were taken while she was a Notre Dame student in San Jose, California. There are also photos that were taken after her marriage to Alfred Petit and include photos of their son, Johnny.



*In Golden Gate Park.
6/26-09*

"In Golden Gate Park 6/26/09"



Close up: Adolfo



"Off for a spin"

Camarillo Siblings:

Front passenger: Pancho

Middle row seat: Rosa

Back seat: Ave



Ave Camarillo in front seat Possibly Isabel Camarillo in back seat from 1908 album

Rosa's Photo Album after 1914

Photos courtesy of the Marvel Family



*Driver is Alfred Petit, Rosa Camarillo Petit's husband
Back seat: Right: Isabel Camarillo. Behind driver: Possibly: Frances Petit (Alfred's mother)*

Children: Possibly: Carmelita FitzGerald (daughter of Ave Camarillo) and Johnny Petit



***John Camarillo Petit
Born May 3, 1917***

***Son of Alfred and Rosa Camarillo Petit
Grandson of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo***

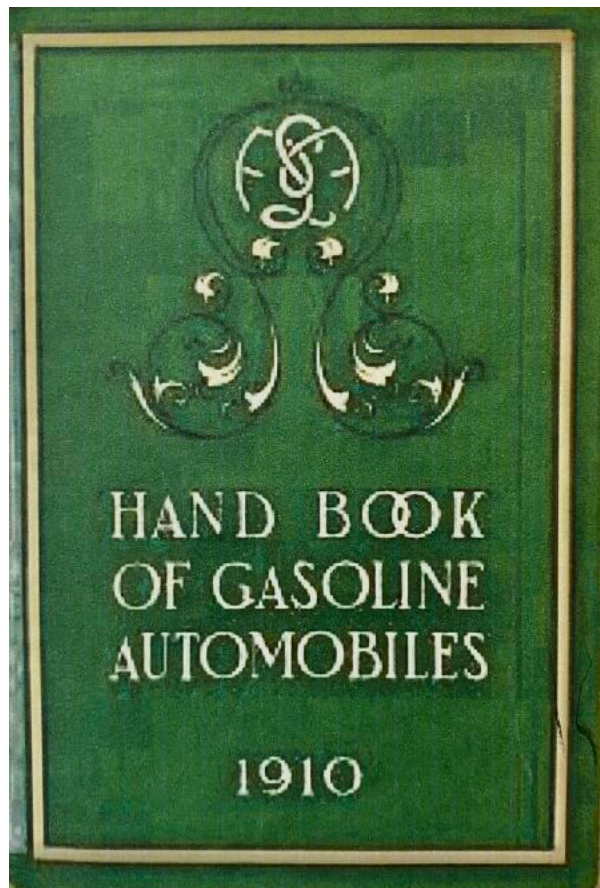
Grandson of Justin and Frances Petit



John "Johnny" Camarillo Petit



Camarillo Ranch 1966: location of 4 car garage in red rectangle



Buyers' Guide to Automobiles 1910

License Expires **10-22-57** OPERATOR'S No. **W 876197**
 Unless otherwise noted this license was issued four years prior to date of expiration shown above.

LICENSE CALIFORNIA
 DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Full name **Adolfo Camarillo** Restrictions **MUST WEAR CORRECTIVE LENSES**
 Street No. **P O Box 57**
 City **Camarillo Calif**

SEX (M-F)	HEIGHT	DATE OF BIRTH		ALTERNATE ADDRESS XXXXXXXXXX 101 Hwy.
M	5-4	Oct 29 1864		
WEIGHT	COLOR EYES	COLOR HAIR	AGE	
145	Brown	Black	88	
PREVIOUS LICENSE NUMBER		YEAR OF EXPIRATION	MARRIED	RIGHT THUMB PRINT
W876197		1953	Widower	

I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT THE PERSON DESCRIBED HEREIN HAS BEEN GRANTED THE PRIVILEGE OF OPERATING MOTOR VEHICLES SUBJECT TO ANY RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED HEREIN. DIVISION OF VEHICLES LICENSES.

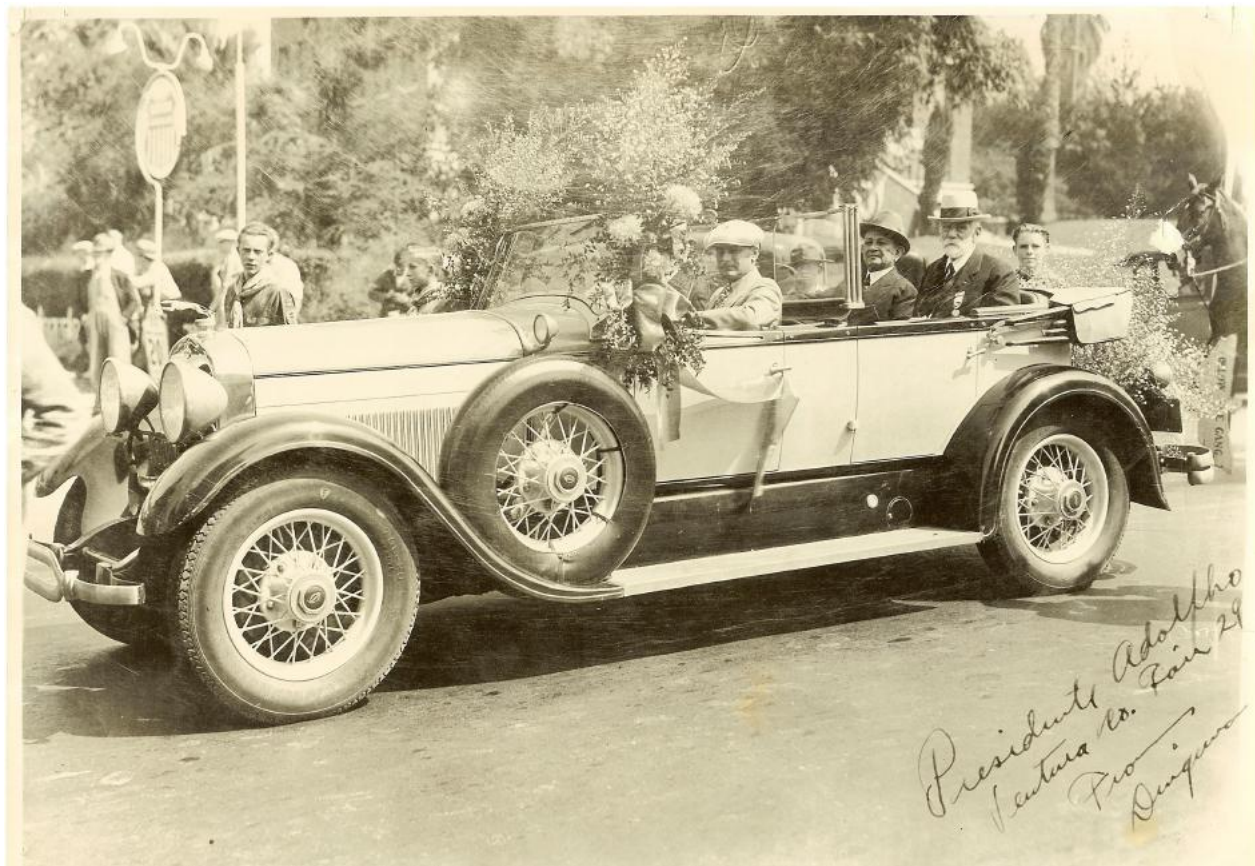
Adolfo Camarillo SIGNATURE OF LICENSEE *Paul Jensen* CHIEF CLERK

Must Be Carried When Operating a Motor Vehicle. Present When Applying For Renewal.

Note: Thumb print not photo was used on the license.



Adolfo had been a member of AAA for 48 years. Since 1906 the organization has promoted road safety standards, travel information and driver safety programs.



*1929 Ventura County Fair
Back seat left: President Adolfo Camarillo with E.P. Foster*

Why Do We Call It a Car?

“Car” is actually a very old word, first appearing in English around 1300. The root of “car” is the Latin “carrus,” meaning a two-wheeled wagon, but the Latin word itself has Celtic roots, and “car” arrived in English by a roundabout route through Old French and Anglo-Norman. In English, “car” was first used to mean a horse-drawn cart or wagon. The origin of “cart” is, incidentally, a bit unclear. Old English had the word “craet,” meaning “cart,” but there’s some evidence that the Old Norse “kartr” might be the source. Any connection between “cart” and “car” is fairly remote.

Over the next few centuries, “car” was also used to mean the passenger compartment of a balloon, the gondola of a cableway (i.e., a “cable car”), an elevator “car,” and a railway carriage (“carriage” is from the same “carrus” source, as is our verb “to carry”). It wasn’t until 1896 that “car” was first used for what we now also call an “automobile” (“The latter drove with a daring which may have been dangerous to himself, but which never affected his car.”). This is now the usual sense of “car,” and almost every other use requires a clarifying modifier (“railway car,” etc.)

From: The Word Detective: <http://www.word-detective.com/2014/12/car/>