



1926 Series 80 Runabout; Robert Bork, MI

photo: Stevens

THE ARROW



MUSEUM PIECE

The little car seen to the right occupies an important place in the Pierce-Arrow Museum at the Gilmore automobile Museum complex. It is a one-of-a-kind prototype built in Detroit during 1920. There were great hopes for this prototype. It was developed by Sidney D. Waldon and E.H. Sherbondy during the optimistic climate of the automobile industry right after the World War (the one “to end all wars”) ended. Sidney Waldon was an important figure in the early days at the Packard Motor Car Co., enthusiastically testing its improved models over terrible roads. He then worked for the Cadillac division of Genral Motors, and, during the war, helped develop the twelve-cylinder Liberty aircraft engine.

He envisioned his new car incorporating advanced engineering in four and six-cylinder versions. His vision was impressive enough to induce the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company to lay out \$91,468.16 over two years in addition to \$175 a week salary to Mr. Sherbondy and reimbursement to Waldon of development costs. Following a December 22, 1919 meeting between Mr. Waldon and Col. George W. Mixer, Pierce-Arrow vice-president and general manager, a contract had been agreed to, and work began. The plan was to finish the development by April 21, 1921. Whereupon Pierce-Arrow would put some form of the car into production, paying a royalty to Mr. Waldon.

Pierce-Arrow was flush with accumulated funds from years of profitable operation, and was aware that things were changing in the industry. This was the remedy Col. Mixer and the board financed. The spring of 1920 found Pierce-Arrow unsatisfied with progress, and the contract was renewed until April of 1922. Then it was abandoned. By that time Col. Mixer had risen to be president of Pierce-Arrow



but then was driven to resign in late 1921 when the firm was hit with heavy losses during the economic downturn.

The single car, built during this period, was all that Waldon apparently accomplished, and it is an interesting car, if not exactly what one would have expected Pierce-Arrow to develop. It had a four-cylinder, overhead-cam engine, built along the lines of aircraft motors, except for its cast iron cylinder bloc. It also had an unusual rear suspension system.

The car survived somehow until Michigan collector Barney Pollard acquired both it and the documentation surrounding the Pierce-Arrow financing of its development. After the passage of several decades, it is now on display as seen above.



Liz Horne demonstrates the PAS computer in the Gilmore Pierce-Arrow Museum

LIZ HORNE AND THE KLAUSMEYER AWARD

The late Otto H. Klausmeyer (1899-1985) was a Studebaker engineer who owned Pierce-Arrows. He tirelessly drew on his 40 year career to help other Pierce-Arrow owners maintain and restore their cars.

In memorium for his years of service to the PAS, an award was established in 1987 to honor members who have made outstanding contributions to the Pierce-Arrow Society.

The Klausmeyer Award was presented to Liz Horne (*above, center*) at the 61st PAS Annual Meet in Rohnert Park for her outstanding work. Her many contributions range from mounting and executing PAS meets, organizing several new regional PAS chapters, being at once PAS Publisher, Secretary and Administrator of the PAS Facebook page. Her efforts have benefitted PAS services in many ways, particularly by upgrading publications.

The Arrow staff congratulates Liz on her well-deserved honor.

THE ARROW

Series 18 -- Model 4

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WINDING DOWN THE YEAR

This final issue of *The Arrow* for 2018 will focus on the much-anticipated Gathering at Gilmore last August. This traditional event has been staged at the splendid Gilmore Automobile Museum Campus, and included wonderful tours around the scenic areas of western Michigan and its Lake Michigan waters.

The event has been organized and managed by Dave and Diana Stevens for fifteen years now, and at the event they received an engraved plaque of appreciation for their efforts. Coverage of the Gathering in this issue, with accompanying photographs was furnished by Dave as well. We are most grateful.

Among the Studebaker engineers who enlarged and strengthened Pierce-Arrow after 1928 was Maurice Thorne, who was honorary member of the Pierce-Arrow Society, as well. Mr. Thorne's recollections of his days at Pierce-Arrow and the challenges he faced are reprinted in the issue.

The advertisement on the back cover appeared in *Life* magazine, January 1920.

As we reflect on this year, we thank all our contributors and wish all PAS members a fine holiday season and a bounteous 2019.

PAS GATHERING AT GILMORE 2018

Story and Photos by Dave Stevens



Pierce-Arrows gather in front of the Pierce-Arrow Museum at the Gilmore on Sunday after the fog burned off (*above*). The “Earlybird” event on Thursday evening found a convivial gathering enjoying food and drink at the Mahan home (*below*).

This Fifteenth Gathering, August 23 to 26, 2018, was attended by over 80 people, including a number of “first timers,” who came from the East, West and South coasts to enjoy the Other West Coast and West Michigan. The “Earlybird” event began Thursday evening at the Mahan home near our headquarters hotel. About 65 people and ten Pierce-Arrows attended, dining on the deck in beautiful weather. As usual, the food was delicious, the wine flowed and a variety of Plainwell Ice Cream was served.

Friday’s tour began with a stop at a coffee shop in Bloomingdale for fabulous, fresh Amish donuts. Then we headed toward the Lake Michigan village of South Haven by a relaxing, scenic route over good back roads, past lakes and farms well away from any hustle and bustle. Our morning stop was at Chrysler dealer Red McFadden’s car collection, naturally weighted toward Chrysler products. Red always has some new and interesting vintage vehicles at his beautiful home and attractive grounds. While we enjoyed





the collection, a slow leak developed on the Stevens 1247 Limo. driven by John Wozney. John pitched right in changing the tire, and later Red's shop repaired the leaking tube. This chafing failure would have been prevented by taping the wheel inside with high temp PVC tape, as recommended by Greg Long. Meanwhile, one participant fell in love with and purchased a vehicle from Red's collection on the spot.

On we drove to lunch on the lakeshore at the South Haven Yacht Club, where the ambience and vistas were superb until the clouds began to roll in as the afternoon wore on. Before continuing our travels, some members enjoyed the shops and sights of historic South Haven. Most stopped for a taste of another local purveyor of ice cream, Sherman's, just east of downtown.

Rain arrived at the Flywheelers (*continued pg. 4*)





Museum, with displays of farm history and equipment. They are assembling a “village” of historic buildings they have placed on the grounds, including a “Pierce Print Shop,” (no relation as far as we know). Our tour continued back to Bloomingdale, where we visited their Depot Museum, whose extensive and well-presented historic displays belied the size of the village. Along the low trafficked roads back to the hotel many stopped at a large Antique Mall. As the rain passed on the way, this was a pleasant drive.

The evening meal was at the local favorite Four Roses Cafe, a short drive north of downtown, where we relaxed, socialized and networked with new and old PAS friends. This wonderful meal was capped by cake and another popular flavor of Plainfield Ice Cream.

Saturday morning started bright as we headed north-



west to Saugatuck, the popular art center on the lake shore. As we arrived, a light mist dampened spirits, but dissipated as we began boarding the *Star of Saugatuck* for a cruise on the river out to Lake Michigan. The boat ride was beautiful. Debarking from the *Star*, we walked down the street to the historic Coral Gables on the water, a lunch that involved good food, a good view and good company. Our next stop was at member Jon Reus' Macatawa Bay Boat Works to look over his wooden boat projects and enjoy more (Who would have guessed?) Plainwell Ice Cream. There were still more options for enjoyment in Saugatuck, but most elected to drive north to the car collection of Al and Carol Scholten. This eclectic diaplay of memorabilia and cars was made even better by the Scholten's hospitality. A lovely drive along the Lake Michigan shore marked our return trip to Plainwell.





The excellent “Wine & Dine” buffet at the Comfort Inn offered a chance for more relaxed socializing along with cake and Plainwell Ice Cream among a great group of friends.

The Sunday Show Day at Gilmore began with fog so thick that driving was a challenge. Fortunately, everybody made the trip safely, helped by the scant traffic. However, fewer cars than anticipated were on the show field. Some of the older cars did not attempt the trip. Even after the sun burned off the fog around mid-day the public was slow to show. We still had a nice display of vehicles for those who did come to admire. Byron Matson presented Dave and Diana Stevens an appropriate commemorative plaque for their fifteen years of staging these memorable events.





The catered lunch at the Museum after the Awards Ceremony was followed by driving opportunities for Pierce-Arrow cars on the expansive Gilmore grounds. Most participants took time to look over the other car museums on the Gilmore campus. Our neighbor marque museums include CCCA, Cadillac-LaSalle, Lincoln, Franklin and Model A Ford. More than 400 vehicles are on display in the many Gilmore buildings This is heaven for vintage car enthusiasts.

Will 2019 be your year to join the PAS Gathering at Gilmore? The dates are August 23-25. Our hotel is the Holiday Inn Express in Hastings, Michigan (269)-945-0000. (Honestly!). Registration and event information will follow early next spring. Come enjoy the quiet scenic roads, rivers and lakes of West Michigan and visit the most spectacular automotive museum campus in the world. Ask anyone who has attended and you will find out that we always have lots of fun!





AMONG CARS SEEN AT THE MEET

Page 8, top row:

1931 Mod. 41 EDL,

1932 Mod. 53 Convertible Sedan,

bottom: 1934 Mod. 836A 4-door Sedan

Page 9: top row:

1930 Victoria,

1932 Sport Touring,

bottom: 1937 Model C Travelodge,

1926 Ser. 80 Town Car (Derham custom body)

Page 10: top row:

1928 Ser. 81 Runabout,

1936 Mod. 1601 5-pass.Sedan

bottom: 1932 Mod. 54 Convertible Coupe

Page 11:

left: 1931 Mod. 41 Club Sedan (LeBaron)

Page 10





2018 GATHERING AWARD WINNERS

The Harris Award
Class 1: 1901-1929

- 1st:
- 2nd:

Class 2: 1930-1933

- 1st:
- 2nd:
- 3rd:

Class 3 1934-1937

- 1st:
- 2nd:
- 3rd:

Director's Choice

Greg Long

George Quay
Greg Long

Terry and Rita Ernest
Greg Long
Tom and Joan Barrett

Will Pugsley
Merlin and Jane Smith
Mark and Patty Kehoe

Mark and Patty Kehoe

1932 Mod. 54 Conv. Coupe

1928 Ser. 81 Runabout
1926 Ser. 80 Town Car (Derham)

1932 Mod. 54 Sport Touring
1932 Mod. 54 Conv. Coupe
1930 Mod. B Victoria

1934 Mod. 836A Sedan
1936 Mod. 1601 Sedan
1937 Travelodge Model C

1937 Travelodge Model C



GATHERING AT TWILIGHT



INSIDE THE PIERCE-ARROW MUSEUM AT GILMORE

1903 Stanhope (*below*) has a largely wood body

1930 Model B Convertible Coupe (with steel body panels) and art from PAS Annual Meets on the wall (*right, above*)

1916 38-C-4 Brougham (*right, below*) with the standard cast-aluminum body of the time





1917 R-2 Stake Truck (above)

4-cy. Pierce motorcycle (Pierce Cycle Co.)

A display of Pierce bicycles made, variously, by G.N. Pierce Co, Pierce Cycle Co. and Emblem of Angola, New York.

The vehicles on these two pages give an idea of the range of Pierce vehicles. The George N. Pierce Co. began tricycle production in the 1880s, growing gradually into bicycles, and expanded into automobiles in 1901. When the new 1906 factory was built on Elmwood Avenue, the two divisions separated: the Pierce Cycle Co. in the old Hanover St. plant and the Pierce-Arrow company in the new buildings.





A selection of six-cylinder Pierce-Arrows appears on this page. The company developed a successful six early, and improved the basic design for over twenty years. While the cars were durable and satisfying to owners, by the late 1920s the smaller series 80s were no longer stylish and the T-head models were far behind the times.

To the left, a 1911 48SS 7-pass. touring was a leading six in its day.

By the time the Series 31 touring car (*above left*) was made, Pierce-Arrows were a popular luxury car with solid sales.

The blue five-passenger Series 80 sedan (*above*), was made in 1927, and the six-cylinder format was no longer popular in the higher price market. Pierce was losing money.

The big Dual-Valve Six (*upper left page 17*) was made in 1928 its big T-head engine was expensive and nearly obsolete.



The three Pierce-Arrows pictured on the right side of this page were very competitive in their day, with up to date mechanical features, well-designed and carefully made. Bodies on them were of the highest quality with many custom features, but the economic collapse of the early 1930s undermined their market. The company gave up in early 1938.

The big, red limousine (*upper right*) had a custom body devised by Willoughby Co. of Utica, New York to meet the demands of an unconventional thinking client on a 1931 Model 41 Pierce-Arrow with a 147 in. wheelbase. Its straight eight engine of 385 ci. displacement had plenty of power to move it briskly.

The two Pierce-Arrows to the right both carry twelve-cylinder powerplants like the ones in the Pierce-Arrows that set world speed records on the Salt Flats in the early 1930's. The blue, Convertible Coupe Roadster on the left was made in 1934. The 7-passenger sedan next to it was one of the last: made in 1937.





There are in this photograph close to a dozen men gathered aboard this new 1932 Pierce-Arrow Model 53 Roadster as it climbs some local incline. They are all probably with Pierce-Arrow as salesmen or, perhaps, executives. The Utah license plates reveal that this is no ordinary demonstration run. It is, apparently, the car equipped by the factory to run on the Utah Salt Flats for 24 hours at high speed. The driver of the car (wearing the sunglasses) is none other than Ab Jenkins, designated driver and promoter of that run. Ab also figures in the story that begins on the next page.

MAURICE A. THORNE RECALLS HIS DAYS AT PIERCE-ARROW

At the Pierce-Arrow Society 1974 Annual Meet Banquet, guests were honored to be addressed by Maurice Thorne, an experienced engineer who joined the Pierce-Arrow company in 1929. His remarks were transcribed by Bernie Weis and appeared in Arrow 74-2.

For those who are interested in Pierce-Arrow recollections by a man who knew the organization from the inside during an exciting time, and who do not have that issue, we reprint Mr. Thorne's speech here.--Ed.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is an incredible gathering! I can't get over it--to think that all of you people in this room are here to honor the old-time Pierce-Arrow car. It's very encouraging to me. I've been away from Pierce-Arrow for 40 years now, but Pierce-Arrow is still very close to my heart. I regret that Mr. Otto Klausmeyer could not be here tonight.

Since, unhappily, I do not have the happy faculty of instant recall, I am going to read my notes. It is quite possible that you will feel that I need, also, a course in remedial reading as well as instant recall...

No one in this room can know how much I enjoyed my tour at Pierce-Arrow and my continuing love affair with the automobile industry. It is my wish to bring a little of the romance and joy of being a part of that great industry before it fell prey to the commisars in Washington and the supreme arrogance of uninformed bureaucracy. That's a little political stuff there (laughter).

Frankly, what I have to say will be a mishmash of cars and people. You cannot separate the two. They are equally interesting and loveable--and only occasionally un-

loveable--*people*, I mean. My comments this evening will really come out of the long ago almost completely. But, lest someone may think I live only in the past, I want it known that I peruse with pleasure publications that keep me abreast of the times (holds up a *Playboy* magazine to laughter).

My first introduction to a Pierce-Arrow product was in France during World War I, when among other vehicles assigned to my artillery battery, I became well acquainted with the 4-cylinder, dual-valve Pierce-Arrow truck. (Mr. Thorne's memory slips here, as dual-valves came to Pierce-Arrow trucks a couple of years after the war.--Ed.)

It was a good, solid work horse. It was one of many good, solid, honest vehicles made by Pierce-Arrow over its long and honorable life.

I might interject another item here, I was next introduced to Pierce-Arrow again in 1921 when a Pierce-Arrow dealer from Newark, New Jersey came to our SAE meeting in White Sulphur Springs. He had apple brandy in the trunk. It was very good! (At the time Prohibition was in effect nationwide.--Ed.)

Following World War I Pierce-Arrow was in splendid financial position with something over ten million dollars in cash. That is not much wealth by today's standards, but bear in mind that those dollars were good, solid "coin of the realm."

The Pierce-Arrow management felt that their products should be updated, reborn or something, and decided to hire an efficiency person to do the job. The Goethals company was employed. Why I do not know because they had no

experience in the industry and nearly wrecked the company in a couple of years before the relationship was terminated. Subsequently the efficiency experts were fondly referred to as the "Goethals Gang." George Mixter was there at that time. I knew him. He accompanied my father-in-law on a trip to the Arctic. His parents paid the way. My father-in-law said he was a very fine man, but he had a very bad time at Pierce-Arrow.

Shortly after that [Goethals] episode I made my first step toward my association with Pierce-Arrow. I was employed by Studebaker to be Superintendent of their Proving Ground. Incidentally, I reported to the then Studebaker headquarters in the old E.M.F. plant on Piquette Street in Detroit. This was just a short time before Studebaker moved to South Bend. Now, for those of you who don't know what E.M.F. was, it stood for Everett, Metzger and Flanders, three men who joined together to build a motor car. The car was eventually referred to as the car with "Every Mechanical Fault" (laughter).

The Studebaker Proving Ground was located about nine miles outside of South Bend and was an excellent facility. I was happy to be superintendent.

In 1928 Studebaker took control of Pierce-Arrow. I say "took control" but not "possession." Something misfired. Mr. Russell Erskine, President of Studebaker, was a very fine man but was also something of a gambler. It is my understanding that he thought he had the sure promise of a considerable block of stock which was eventually denied to him. The final result was that Studebaker was thrown into bankruptcy and Pierce-Arrow again became an independent [in 1933].

Pierce-Arrow bought a lot of parts from Studebaker--mostly grey iron castings. When Pierce-Arrow became independent again Studebaker managed to get \$400,000

Albert Russel Erskine, right, was a vice-president of the Underwood Typewriter Co. when he was hired by Studebaker Corp. in 1911 as treasurer. In late 1913 Erskine was elevated to first vice-president. Fredrick Fish resigned as president of Studebaker in 1915 to become chairman, and Erskine was chosen to replace him as president. Studebaker was very successful well into the 1920s, climbing into the front rank of independent producers. When Pierce-Arrow slid toward bankruptcy in 1928, Studebaker purchased control.



from them as sort of an "advanced payment" for items that Pierce-Arrow might purchase from them. This is not generally known.

I went with Pierce-Arrow in 1929. Pierce-Arrow was always a great car. I consider it was a great car during my association with the company. And right now I wish to pay tribute to the sound policy that was spelled out by our able Chief Engineer, Mr. Karl Wise. To make a pun, it was, and could be properly called a "wise policy." Mr. Wise was convinced that we could not afford the endless experimentation and development required for the sole purpose of penny saving on elements on the design. That, of course, is an economic necessity in any mass-produced product. Mr. Wise stated that we must use our experience and good judgment in the design and development of the most dependable units possible and not expend our energies and time on small econo-



Karl Wise, at left, graduated from the University of Michigan in engineering and joined E.M.F. as a metallurgical engineer. He rose in the Studebaker organization after it absorbed E.M.F. When Studebaker bought control of Pierce-Arrow in 1928, Wise was dispatched to Buffalo to head the crash program that developed the Pierce-Arrow straight eights for 1929. Wise was also the one who supervised the development of the Pierce-Arrow twelve-cylinder models for 1932. At the time, both these engines were known as good examples of advanced and powerful production car powerplants.

mies. This policy was appropriate to our resources and production quantities, and certainly was in the best interests of providing dependable products.

I'm going to drop one thing. Karl Wise was a wonderful man and we were very close. I think the only time I ever "fell from grace" with Karl Wise was when the head of the manufacturing staff decided that he was going to do a little engineering. He said that we were going to cut down on the frame. So, as soon as as I could get a frame (made to his specifications) under a car, I did so. It was limber as a whip! I came back in and told my story to Karl Wise, Bert Warner and Roy Maurer. They said the manufacturing department was going to do the engineering.

So I began building *another* frame--one that I felt was better. One with the front section boxed in with a 4 in. tubular cross member. I put that under a car, and it worked perfectly. I didn't tell anyone.

When the cars with the manufacturing department's

frame design came off the [assembly] line they were limber as a whip. You couldn't steer them. You couldn't keep them on the road! So we had a meeting on a Sunday morning, I remember, with A.J. Chanter, Karl Wise, Roy Maurer and others present. They said, "What are we going to do?"

I said, "Why not come out and try this car that I have?"

So they did, and they said, "This is fine. What did you do?" I told them, and they decided to put my design into production. The line was shut down for about three weeks to change over.

After the meeting Karl Wise wanted to know why in the name of common sense I hadn't told him of this situation. I replied that I *had* told him a couple of times what was happening (with no response) and decided that I would just go ahead and have a [better] design ready for production. And I said, "America's most beautiful car is saved again."

We both got along very well after that.

Pierce-Arrow engineering and facilities were on a limited scale in comparison with other great companies of that time, but many fine engineering features and innovations were developed and are still in use today.

Pierce-Arrow cars were not only very well engineered, but were beautiful and distinctive. They were preferred by the White House, and were the only cars used by the Broadmoor Hotel of Colorado Springs for touring the area, particularly Pike's Peak. The personal Pierce-Arrow belonging to Woodrow Wilson is now enshrined in his one-time home in Staunton, Virginia. I recently had a book of photographs by Margaret Bourke-White. The only specific detail of any car was a masterful portrait showing the first Pierce-Arrow headlights. Those lights and the "opera lights" were design gems. I understood that a gentleman from Alabama had a beautiful arched-door brougham here today with

those lights. I regret I did not get to see the car.

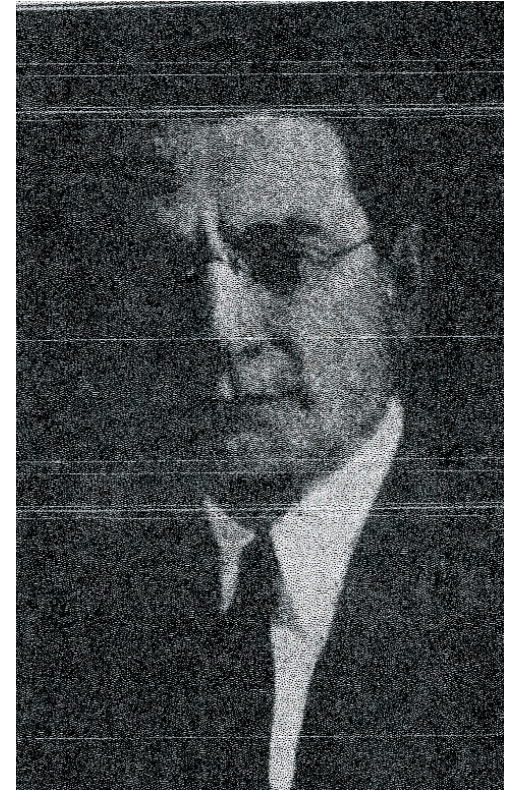
I understand that two of the Silver Arrows have been fully restored and are in the hands of thoughtful owners. Many of the more recent special “show cars” did not have equal flair. A friend of mine and of Roy Faulkner (the Pierce-Arrow v.p. in charge of sales) described the Silver Arrow as appearing to be going 60 miles per hour when it was standing still.

Frequently, selling a development to our management was something that required thought and strategy. The torque arm attached to the axle and trunnioned at the front end was discarded because it had the effect of restraining and increasing the spring rate on bumps to the detriment of ride comfort. This brought on a flush of interest in further improving ride. We had been working with the Dunlop Rubber Company on full depth foam rubber cushions and found that they had a profound effect on improved ride since they did not recoil and throw, as do springs after compression and unrestrained rebounds. I had a half rear seat cushion made up in our production-type cushion and a half cushion made up in full depth foam rubber which had proved to have the most suitable density. I then invited several of our top executives to make a test ride on Sheridan Drive. For any of you who know Buffalo, it had a number of bumps along it. They could move from one side to the other and be driven over the same stretch of the road. The improvement was so apparent that, despite considerable increase in cost, the full depth foam rubber cushion was approved for production. I do not know of any car, even today, that uses a full depth foam rubber cushion.

I'm not sure, but I believe that power brakes were first used on Pierce-Arrows. I was very much sold on their effectiveness and asked Roy Faulkner to take a ride with me and try them out. After making some high-speed stops on the

Roy H. Faulkner, right, was once described as a “temperamental sales genius.” He went to work for the Auburn Automobile Co. of Auburn, Indiana in the mid 1920s. When Errett Lobban Cord became general manager, he found Faulkner's talents very useful in pulling the failing marque to success with his inventive sales approaches. When the Great Depression hit, Auburn unexpectedly doubled its sales in 1931 by means of the flashy, medium-priced 8-98 model. For reasons that are not entirely explained, Faulkner left Auburn that year to take important sales positions with Studebaker and Pierce-Arrow. As part of his forceful sales efforts he envisioned the Silver Arrow show car of 1933.

Faulkner returned to Auburn in 1934.



open road, I got him to drive on a thoroughfare that had numerous cars parked on each side of the street. Then I asked Roy to visualize a child darting out between two parked cars into the path of our car. Roy jumped the brake and stopped faster, I am sure, than at any time in his life. The power brakes were put into production. Roy Faulkner was a great person and a great salesman, and, incidentally, he had one of the cutest wives I ever saw (*laughter*).

One morning I found Karl Wise in a turmoil. I would say that his consternation indicated serious crisis. You are all familiar with the archer radiator emblem. Mr. Erskine had been to the plant and had rather forcefully indicated that he

was displeased with the anatomical conformation of the posterior of the archer. I did not enter into the solution of the problem. As a matter of fact, I do not know what change was made, but I always referred to the episode as the “Affair of the Crack in the Ass of the Archer” (laughter).

I can’t remember what emblem the White House cars used, but I believe it was different.

Many prominent people who bought Pierce-Arrows used to come to the plant to take delivery of their cars. Orville Wright bought a new Pierce-Arrow every year, and it became my privilege to have little special things done to his cars and then hear his suggestions on features that seemed desirable and improvements that should be made. He usually spent quite a little time telling us how they should be made... It was really a thrill to have that great man sit in my office and talk Pierce-Arrows!

Richard Bunn, better known as Dick Bonelli, the great Metropolitan Opera singer, bought a new Pierce-Arrow each year. We always gave his cars a little special attention. Dick Bonelli was a graduate of Cornell University. He was a fine person, lots of fun, and a close friend of Ab Jenkins.

Which naturally leads to Ab. I knew Ab when I was with Studebaker. Ab was quite a character. A good Mormon, he kept in perfect physical condition, never smoked or drank, but, as he said, always drove a car with fast pick-up! Some time after I came on the scene Ab came to Buffalo to try to interest the PierceArrow management in furnishing him with a car and help in making timed runs on the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. Up to that time no one had made timed runs there except on motorcycles.

Ab’s first run on the Flats was made, as I recall, in 1932. A ten-mile circular course was surveyed on the Flats. The last time I flew over the Bonneville Flats the marks were still visible. He drove 24 hours without leaving the car

even at pit stops and averaged 112 miles per hour. In 1933 he made another run and averaged over 117 miles per hour. In 1934 he made a final run with a Pierce-Arrow and averaged over 127 miles per hour, including a 33-minute stop to change a valve lifter. Ab really was an “Iron Man.” After one 24-hour run he broiled steaks for the entire group of mechanics, newsmen and officials. Eventually he was elected mayor of Salt Lake City on a safe driving platform, and, still later, did timed runs for Pontiac. Ab always promised me the key to Salt Lake City if I would come for a visit.

I’ll tell another story. In 1935 I was with Oldsmobile, and I knew that Duesenberg was trying to make a run at Bonneville. They were having trouble. Primarily they were throwing rods at high speed. Roy Faulkner asked me to come down, so Marge and I went out to see him. He got me aside and said, “Now, Maurie, get together with this guy,” (An engineer at Duesenberg. I forget his name.) “and tell him what’s wrong.” That was a rather difficult call to make! At any rate, the chap who was making the run commented, “Well you know Roy: he’s excited and emotional. We’ll make the runs O.K.” And they did. I forget what speeds they made, but they exceeded the speeds made by Pierce-Arrow.

As you may have guessed, I could go on and on, but you must be tired of words by now.

In closing, I am going to paraphrase a suggestion made by Will Rogers many years ago. He said, “If you have any funds to invest, buy real estate. It’s not being made any more.” I say, “Buy a Pierce-Arrow. They, unfortunately, are not being made any more. Thank you” (*applause*).





Touring the countryside in a big Pierce-Arrow ca.1908
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Courtesy University of Michigan Libraries

SCENES ALONG THE WAY

The Pierce-Arrow Society was set up by people who drove their Pierce-Arrows long after others had taken to more modern production cars. The cars seem always to have been a rewarding drive. PAS members have upheld the objective of driving on roads suitable for relaxed touring. Even non-Pierce vehicles are welcome. Along the way stops for diversion and enjoyment offer the chance to look over the other Pierce-Arrows and trade experiences that make further touring even more satisfying. The three photos on this page show the informal aspects of the tours that participants enjoy quite as much as the ride through the country. The hoods raised are indicators of on the road adjustments or closer inspection of features on unfamiliar cars. The Auburn (*left*), the 1601 (*below left*) and the Model 143 Cabriolet (*below*) are all being enjoyed.



photos: Stevens



· LIFE ·

PIERCE-ARROW

