

# GREAT ARROW news

The Pierce-Arrow Museum Newsletter



*This 1931 Pierce-Arrow Model 41 is on loan from John Gamba (IN)*

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## My 1931 Pierce-Arrow MODEL 41 *Body by Willoughby*

By Frank Beebe ~ August 1931

I would like to introduce myself, although it is hard to think you haven't heard of me, Frank Huntington Beebe. I am, after all, one of the wealthiest men in the Cape Cod area, and well known in the community.

I know I have been criticized as a do-nothing, but I see no shame in tending the fortune left me by my father. I do not feel that I spend extravagantly, in fact I am very frugal with my money, a trait honored here in New England. I do not mind giving money to charity, but when workers expect a tip, it is just a shakedown tactic. One of my gardeners once asked me for a raise, as his wife was pregnant. The nerve of the man, I told him he had the pleasure, why should I pay for it? I did relent later and give him a modest sum.

Of course, even being frugal, a man must have the necessities in life. Our Pullman train car, of course, to get to Boston and back from

*continued on page 3*

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# PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION

*Operating the Pierce-Arrow Museum on the Campus of the Gilmore Car Museum*

January 2021

Dear Pierce-Arrow Friends:

What a year of challenges just completed! Many of you, as Jane and I, have lost friends or family members to the terrible pandemic. We have begun to wonder if our lives will ever return to what we once considered normal.

But please join me in an attempt to look at the glass as half full. How lucky are we to have such a wholesome hobby and to enjoy the friendships that have developed from our hobby. We can look forward to socializing at the Pierce-Arrow Society Winter Mini-Meet in Tennessee. We can look forward to driving our cars to see new places at the Annual Meet in Pennsylvania. We can look forward to the Gathering at Gilmore and touring in south-central Michigan. We can look forward to the return of the Hershey Swap Meet. And as we wait for these events, we can plan and promote activities with our local regions.

You'll notice we are now accepting a few advertisements in each edition of this Newsletter to offset production cost. Support these sponsors if you can!

Last and certainly not least, we can continue to visit and enjoy our Pierce-Arrow Museum. Contact me, Museum Director Dave Stevens or any Pierce-Arrow Foundation Trustee, with ideas for fund-raising or any way to benefit, support and promote our museum.

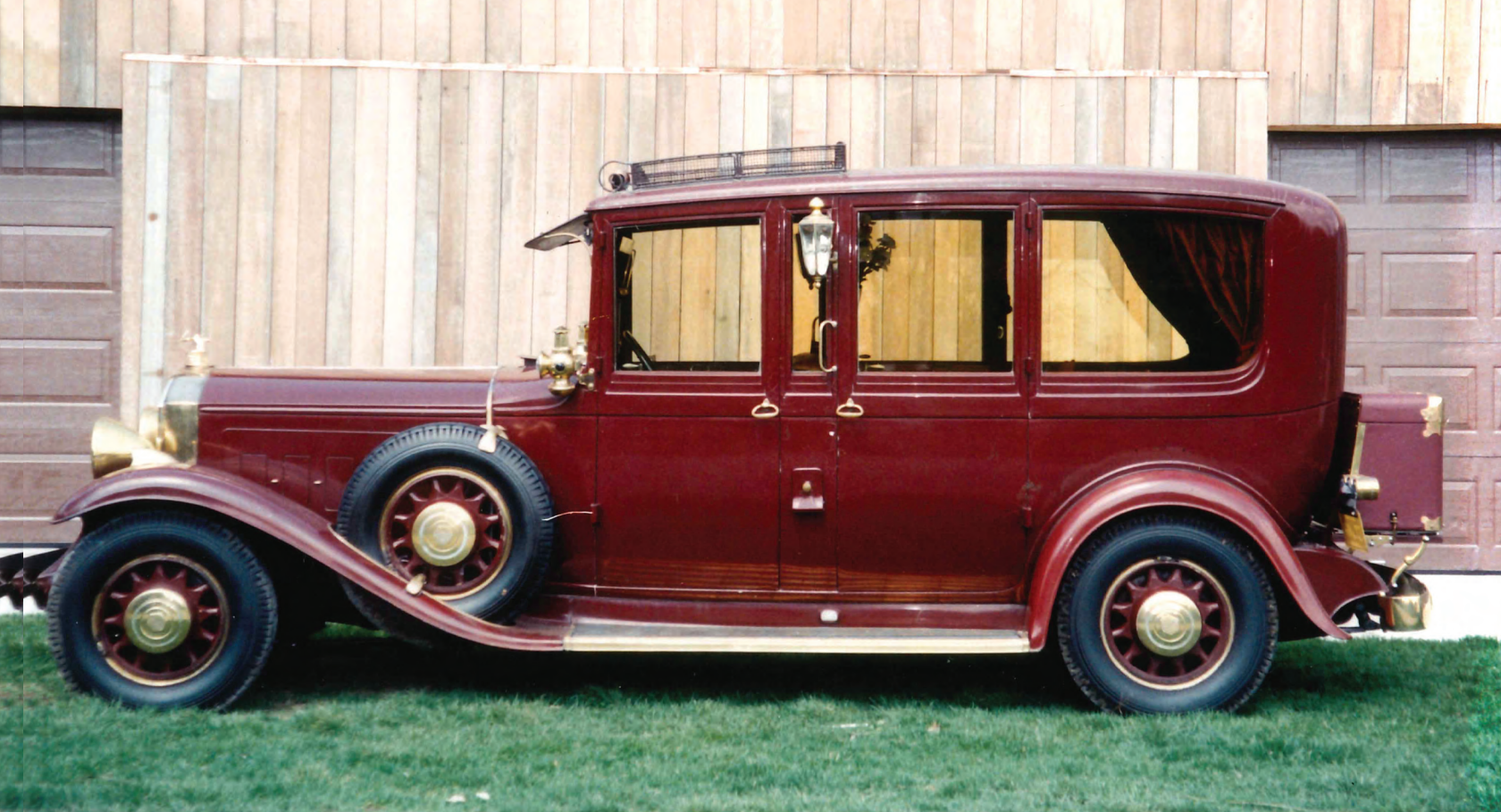
With confident plans for returning to a more satisfactory volume of Pierce-Arrow motoring, I am

Very cordially yours,



PIERCE

*Compliments of  
Ed Minnie*



*The high roof specified by Beebe is evident, note the early style lights as a nod to the earlier Pierce-Arrows owned by them.*

Cape Cod, along with a second rail car to carry luggage and my sister Emily's hats. As to automobiles, I have always considered Pierce-Arrows the finest car built. My brother and I bought a pair of them right before The War to End All Wars, World War I, and I just ordered two more custom bodied ones from a dealer in Brookline.

I would have much preferred to have bought the Pierce-Arrows in Boston, since I have two houses there on Beacon Street. However, C.H.G. Cederborg in Brookline gave us a much better deal than the larger Pierce dealer in Boston. Each of the two cars were quoted at over ten thousand dollars, but I was able to get him down eight hundred dollars each on his price. One just cannot let these people take advantage of you or there is no end to it.

I do like the arts and serve as a trustee of the New England Conservatory of Music. My real passion is planting rare trees and plants to enhance the natural beauty of our property. I consider myself an Arboriculturist, and I spend a lot of time in Beebe Woods here in Cape Cod. I have never considered marriage, and my brother Pierson and sister Emily felt the same. We all lived here in Highland Hall on Cape Cod, our main residence, though we did venture to Boston quite often.

Not long ago, my Teahouse gardener came to me and asked if I would be willing to help his son. Fearing the worst, I let him continue, and was pleasantly surprised to learn that his son wanted to attend college and major in horticulture. My word, a man who knows what he wants and is not afraid of having his



*While the Model 41 now sports an Archer, originally Frank Beebe had a custom made dog mascot adorning the radiator*



*The rear view shows the odd proportions of the car, reflecting the power of money in 1931 and the eccentricities of the purchaser rather than the conservative styling associated with Willoughby*

father ask for it! Any other profession request would have elicited a no, but horticulture...an absolute yes, I will pay for his education. Living things, humans excluded, are my passion.

But enough about me, even though it really is not, you want to know about Redbird and Bluebird. Before the Great War, as mentioned, Pierson and I bought two Pierce-Arrows with custom coachwork. We each wanted high headroom in the cars, such that we really did not have to stoop to enter the back seat. Both cars were identical, except for paint. Pierson had his painted robin's egg blue, and used a bluebird as a radiator mascot. Mine was red, and my love of dogs necessitated a sculpture of a dog as an ornament, of course. Those who have walked my Woods know of the fine headstones I have commissioned for my beloved dog companions.

It is now 1931, and though both Pierson and Emily have met their maker, I am buying two similar cars and

will call them the same names. I still want the high headroom, though I am told the running gear will be much superior to the older cars. They will be delivered in November of this year, 1931, and that's only a couple of months away. I am very excited about seeing them finished!

*Editor's Note: The two cars were delivered November of 1931. Frank Beebe would enjoy the cars, but only for a year. He died November 21, 1932 at the age of seventy nine. Redbird remained in the family for decades, until it was purchased by the current owner, John Gambs of Lafayette, Indiana, who has graciously loaned it to our Museum. Bluebird was converted at some point to a tow truck, and though it was displayed a few years ago in the International Towing Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee, its whereabouts now are unknown. ~ David Coco*

**About The Willoughby's Paint:** It is unfortunate that the original 81 year old paint is flaking off of this original unrestored car. That the bad news. The good news? Now revealed in the bare spots you see is the CAST ALUMINUM body that was used by Pierce-Arrow from 1904 until 1921. When this special order was built in 1931, they still retained the knowledge to reproduce this most remarkable luxury body. So you get to see a part of history that is usually covered by paint.



*Frank Huntington Beebe (1853 - 1932)*

## The Big Sale to Mr. Beebe

Although Frank Beebe was a multimillionaire, he apparently was tight at times with his money. Even though spending enough money on a car to buy a house or two at the time, he still was wanting discounts. The letters pictured show some of the negotiation needed to make the sale. Times were tough, and the dealership was desperate to have money flowing.

Carl Hjalmar Gustav Cederborg was a Swedish immigrant, part of a huge influx of Swedes in the late 1800's and early 1900's. During this period about 1.3 million Swedes emigrated to the United States. Reasons for leaving Sweden included religious repression by the Swedish Lutheran State Church, class snobbery of the Swedish monarchy, and effects of crop failures made worse by population growth. The lure of the United States as a paradise with religious and political freedom was too strong to ignore by many Swedes.

Mr. Cederborg had an automobile repair business in Brookline, Massachusetts, during the oughts and teens. He died in 1917, and his

son, C.H.G. Cederborg, Jr., took over the repair business. It was at this time that a garage was built at 20 Webster Street in Brookline, and Mr. Cederborg Jr. moved his repair business into the new garage.

At some point in the 1920's, an addition was added to the garage to house a dealership. By 1931, the C.H.G. Cederborg Company was an official dealer and repair site for both Studebaker and Pierce-Arrow.

By 1932, sales were poor and the business closed, though the building still stands.

# FROM ARCHERS TO PAWS



It is human nature to want to personalize objects one owns, and the automobile is no exception. From the very first cars running the roads at the turn of the century circa 1901, owners were putting “lucky” mascots on their cars.

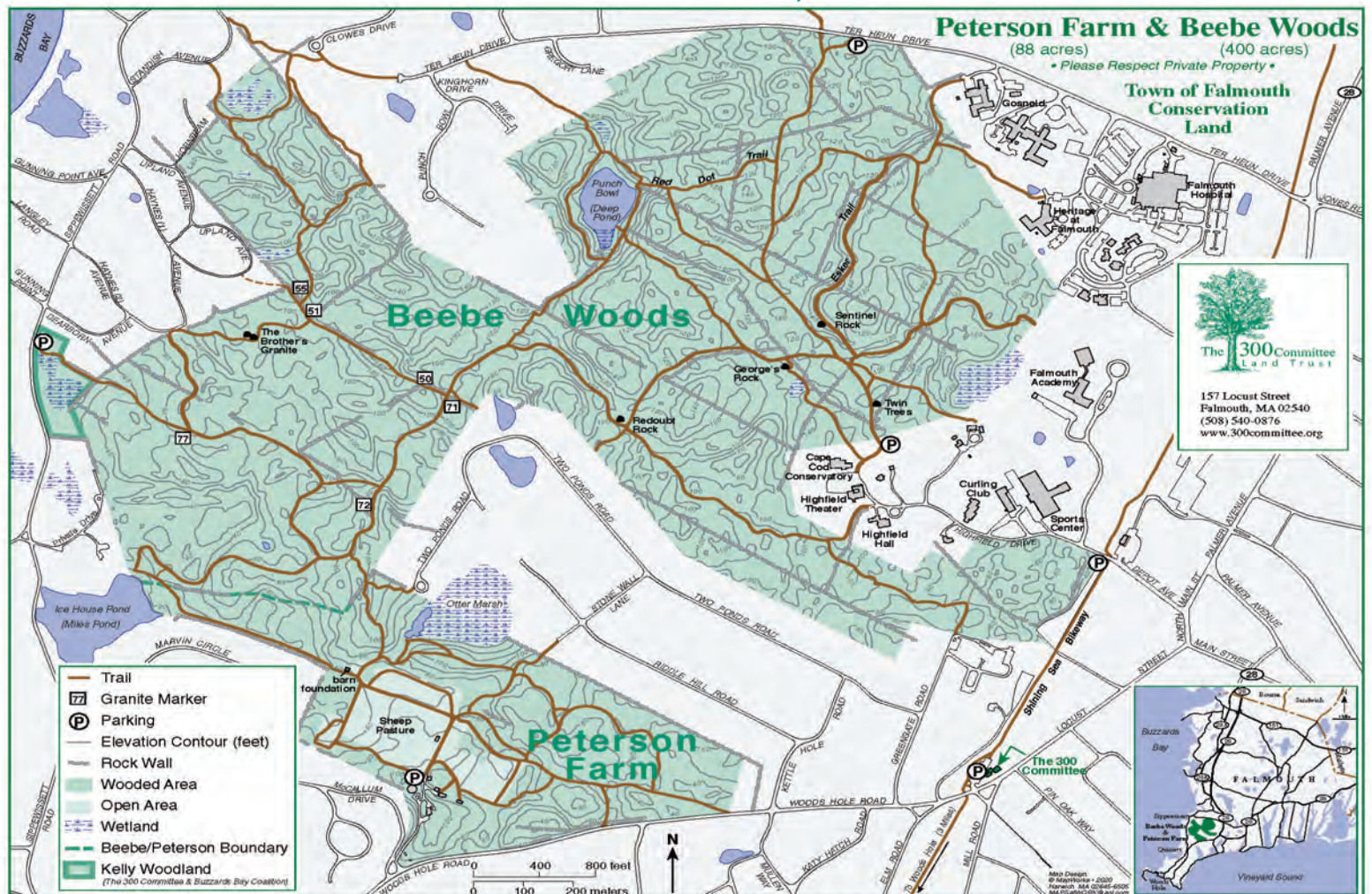
One of the first official mascots placed on automobiles was the Rolls Royce “Spirit of Ecstasy”, sculpted by Charles Sykes and appearing on this marque in 1910. Hundreds of other radiator ornaments would be put on different make cars, including our own Pierce-Arrows, from Pierce Motometers to the arrowed wheel and the kneeling archer. While factories were putting mascots on their production which were associated with their particular cars, there was a large aftermarket supply of replacement mascots, everything from crystal birds to airplanes to various representations of the devil himself.

Frank Beebe loved dogs, and that personality trait is reflected in his choice for a hood ornament on the Model 41 Willoughby featured in this publication.

While the car now sports the more common Archer, while in possession of Mr. Beebe it featured a dog mascot on the radiator cap. Depicted sitting up on his hind legs, this could be any one of the many beloved dogs kept by Beebe prior to the car being delivered in 1931.

Frank Beebe so loved his dogs that, when they departed the earthly realm, he buried them within the 400 acres of Beebe Woods and erected ornate granite headstones at their graves. Granite was in ample supply in the Woods, as were many trees and shrubs that were “foreign” to the local soil. Beebe labeled himself a “arboriculturist” as documented on his death certificate, and imported much of the flora that even now grows in the Woods bought by his father in 1872.

## BEEBE WOODS ~ Falmouth, Massachusetts



# FRANK BEEBE AUTOMOBILE SPECIFICATION

- Two front windows divided in center to go down entire length
- Back seat - no arm rests at sides; no movable arm rest in center
- Back seat not sunk at the back, a level seat
- Back well stuffed out at the bottom
- Side windows to open down half way
- Three hangers from ceiling, middle one for hats
- Rear clock and robe bar
- Front seats to have good springs and one arm rest to each chair
- Two corner lights and one center light
- All inside hardware to be smooth finish and no design
- All outside hardware to be plain brass, round in form, no an
- Opera light in green
- Head lights as now, not on fenders
- Top trunk rack rail as no, five inches high
- Trunk rack on rear
- All enclosed limousine

C. H. G. CEDERBORG CO., INC.

PIERCE ARROW AND STUDEBAKER CARS  
AUTHORIZED SALES AND SERVICE  
20 WEBSTER PLACE, BROOKLINE, MASS.



BEACON 3327-3328-3329

June 26. 1931

*\$8750*

F. H. Beebe, Esq.,  
Falmouth, Mass.

Dear Sir:

I wish to thank you for your letter of June 24. I will try to give you full details of the different costs of the car

The cost of the car that we have here and about which I wrote you is \$8250 complete as it stands. This car is a custom made car. It has a Willoughby body made by the Willoughby Auto Body Works of Utica, N. Y., and is entirely custom made.

The cost of a custom made car similar to your blue Pierce-Arrow car would be as follows:

The chassis complete without body would cost \$4128

The body, as I think you would like to have it made and mounted on the chassis, will be 5372 complete, making a grand total of \$9500.

Less upholstery cost, as you asked me, of \$725 would then make the cost of the car \$8775.

The body without the upholstery will have all the electrical wiring and hardware for both lights, handles, roberail and seats, the two spare seats not upholstered. The springs for the cushions will be included.

Of course the body will be complete and painted and everything mounted on the chassis for \$9500, less \$750 for no upholstery.

*\$ 9500*

C. H. G. CEDERBORG CO., INC.

PIERCE ARROW AND STUDEBAKER CARS  
AUTHORIZED SALES AND SERVICE  
20 WEBSTER PLACE, BROOKLINE, MASS.



BEACON 3327-3328-3329

F. H. Beebe, Esq.,

These figures are made especially for this particular time of the year when business is quiet at the body factories.

I called Mr. Willoughby on the telephone and had him reduce the cost as much as he possibly could, thereby trying to save almost \$800 on the total cost of \$10,300, as it otherwise would cost for absolutely the same material and workmanship.

The time required to make this body will be from three to three and one-half months, but not over that time.

Now, Mr. Beebe, I have been trying to sell you a car for some time, and I am trying to reduce the cost for you so that you can save approximately \$800 at this particular time.

I wish you would grant me an interview as I could explain much in detail that is almost impossible to write about. You may rest assured that I will do everything possible to meet with your requirements and to your approval. As I have said before I think that I know very nearly what you would like to have.

Hoping to hear from you, I am

JRM/B

Very truly yours,

# ONS - JULY 14, 1931

- Two spare tires, one in each front fender
- Folding seats to be as at present in blue car, good springs
- Foot warmer
- Left hand drive
- Color, Car No. 1, blue all over with red band on door as at present, blue slightly darker than at present and red band a purple red and not a yellow nor tomato red. Wheels to match body unless otherwise desired.





Interior appointments were of the finest quality, a well known trait of Willoughby body construction.



Ah, finally, what appears to be a normal Model 41 interior, but remember, the eccentric sat in the back of the car!



Original to car, tinted glass and earlier style side lights

 **C. H. G. CEDERBORG CO., INC.**   
PIERCE ARROW AND STUDEBAKER CARS  
AUTHORIZED SALES AND SERVICE  
20 WEBSTER PLACE, BROOKLINE, MASS.  
BEACON 3327-3328-3329

F. H. Beebe, Esq.,  
Falmouth, Mass.

Dear Sir:

We wish to thank you for the check and signed orders which we received in this morning's mail.

As by your request the following items have been incorporated in the specifications for your two new cars:

**Interior Equipment**  
12. Foot rests to be in one piece instead of two.

Telephones to be installed on each side of rear seat.

Also the contracts have been corrected in order that the allowances on your old cars shall read as \$250.00 each instead of \$200.00 each.

The lace and color samples will be forwarded to you the moment we receive them from Mr. Willoughby.

We sincerely appreciate the confidence which you have placed in us, and assure you that we will do everything in our power to have these bodies built to your entire satisfaction.

Very truly yours,  
C. H. G. CEDERBORG CO., INC.  
By *John P. Mattson*

JRM/B

# Wills Sainte Claire Automobile Museum

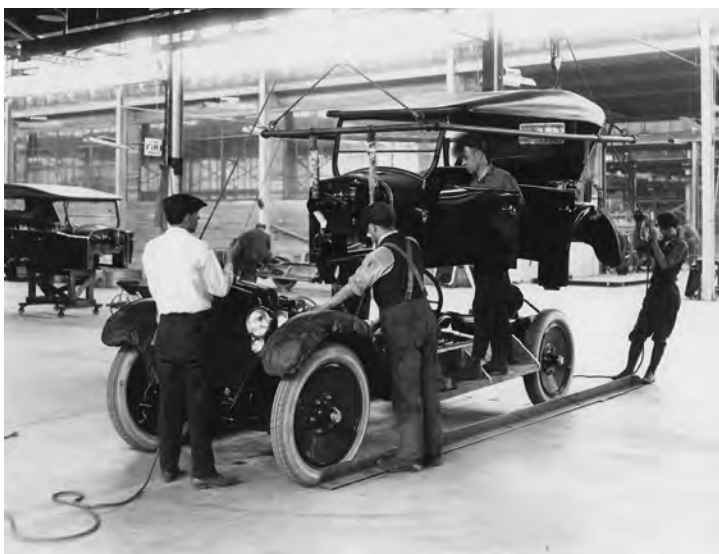
By Terry Ernest (MI), Executive Director



Henry Ford sits with Ford Motor Company's chief designer, metallurgist and first employee, C. Harold Wills (right).

C. Harold Wills worked closely with Henry Ford early in both men's careers, beginning as Ford's draftsman in 1902. Wills is credited with the design of many engineering components of the Ford Model "T". When the Ford Motor Company was organized in 1903, Wills was its chief designer, metallurgist, and first employee. In fact, the *Ford* script logo still in use today, was designed by Wills.

By 1919, Wills had become restless in his job. He desperately wanted to update the Model T, but Ford refused. Wills decided to leave Ford Motor Company and with his \$1.5 million dollar severance pay, announced that he would build a car in Marysville, Michigan along the banks of the St. Clair River.



Early Wills body being mated to chassis

In 1921, the C.H. Wills Company produced their first overhead-cam V-8 (model A-68) Wills Sainte Claire. Wills autos were lightweight and strong thanks to the use of Molybdenum steel, though for a luxury car they were considered small. Many different types of bodies were available including roadsters, touring, 5 and 7 passenger sedans.

On August 17, 1921, C. Harold Wills made a record run from Detroit to New York City, a distance of 689 miles, in 20 hours, 26 minutes.

On June 5, 1922, 80 cars were assembled in a single day - a company record! By November of 1922, The C. H. Wills Company entered into friendly receivership due to nationwide poor economic conditions and being \$8 million dollars in debt.

In July 1923 the C. H. Wills Company was reorganized with the help of Boston bankers into Wills Sainte Claire, Inc. In 1925, Wills introduced the revolutionary six-cylinder overhead cam engine called the T-6. On August 28, 1926, driver L. B. Miller set a transcontinental record from San Francisco to New York City of 83 hours, 12 minutes using a stock T-6 roadster. But endurance records were not enough to keep the company in business, and on November 23, 1926, after producing more than 12,000 cars, auto production was halted and the company was liquidated. In 1933, C. Harold Wills joined Chrysler as a metallurgical consultant, and in August of the same year, Chrysler purchased the former Wills Sainte Claire factory which is still in use today. On December 30, 1940, C. Harold Wills, auto engineer and visionary, passed away.

In 2001, dedicated auto enthusiasts established the Wills Sainte Claire Museum.

On display in the Museum are 20 Wills Sainte Claire Automobiles - the largest collection anywhere in the world! Most are restored, but some are in original unrestored condition. You will also see original photos, color ads from the 1920's, owner's manuals of the cars, and more! Special exhibits include a replica of Henry Ford's Quadricycle, a scale model of the Buhl Aircraft made in Marysville and other interesting and unique displays.

The Wills Auto Museum building, located at 2408 Wills Street, Marysville, Michigan, is the repository for all items and history relating to C. Harold Wills and the Wills Sainte Claire Automobile. In 1919, Mr. Wills Purchased 4400 acres of Marysville City property and set out to build the highest quality automobile possible and create the "City of Contented Living" for his employees. The Wills Museum is dedicated to this amazing slice of automotive history.

The building was graciously donated by Richard and Patricia Donahey of Belleville, Michigan. The Donahey's were antique auto enthusiasts who enjoyed showing and touring in their vintage automobiles.



They wish to share their joy of old cars with other members of the hobby. Thus, they have given the Wills Sainte Claire Club this building to help promote the antique car hobby and educate the public about the history of C. Harold Wills and the Wills Sainte Claire automobile.

The Wills Club thanks the Donahey Foundation for their generosity extended and also thanks all of the car club members and others who have devoted their time, talent, and donations in order to make the Wills Sainte Claire Museum possible.

I find it interesting that people who collect Pierce-Arrow cars also may collect Wills Sainte Claire automobiles. Why you wonder? Perhaps it is the engineering that went into the cars or maybe the quality of construction. I suppose it makes sense as both cars' brands, manufactured in the 1920's, were expensive, high end autos. The early Wills cars had an overhead cam V-8 engine, making them a fascinating engine for people of a mechanically minded persuasion. Offhand I know of at least 4 car collectors that own both brands: Steve Rossi (CT), Karl Krouch (PA), Jay

Leno (CA) and myself. *I'll bet there are more!*

2021 will be the year that celebrates 100 years since the first Wills Sainte Claire rolled off the assembly line in 1921! We here at the Museum are planning a celebration and National Wills meet.



*Terry & Rita Ernest's 1926 Wills Sainte Claire T6 Roadster*



*An overview of the Wills Sainte Claire Museum, note the "Flying Goose" right center of photo, Wills chose a Northern Gray Goose as a mascot, calling them the "wisest, freest traveler of the sky"*

*At this level of restoration there cease to be details*

*Everything is important.*



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**\$150** pair



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**[www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org](http://www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org)**

All proceeds benefit the on-going operation of the Pierce-Arrow Museum at Gilmore

\*Prices do not include shipping

# BEEBE FAMILY

## ENGLISH COAT OF ARMS



The Beebe family crest has roots in a village named Beebe, six miles from Leicester in England. The name stems from the Old English for bee (beo) and the Old Norse for a settlement (byr), thus together a “bee settlement” producing honey for the area. The family name varied through the years, including Beebee, Bebe, and Beebey. The spelling finally settled into Beebe, with John Beebe immigrating to America in 1650.

The Battle Cry, “Se Defendendo,” translates to “defending oneself.” The precise definition is that when two people quarrel, and fight upon equal terms, before a mortal blow is given one combatant retreats and kills the other from a distance, thus preventing his or her own death.

### THE BEEBE SHIELD

- ◆ Crest atop ~ a Bee Hive
- ◆ Central Coat of Arms being the Chevron Ordinaire with three symbols (bees), the bees symbolizing industriousness
- ◆ Wreath of six parts using the two main colors of crest, used as a “supporter” for Coat of Arms
- ◆ Mantling (blue above Coat of Arms) on each side of helmet symbolizing a Knight’s cape
- ◆ Azure (blue) symbolizing strength and loyalty
- ◆ Gold symbolizing generosity



## Pierce-Arrow Society's Southern Delta Region Supports the Pierce-Arrow Museum at Gilmore



SOUTHERN DELTA REGION ~ LOUISIANA • ARKANSAS • MISSISSIPPI • W. TENNESSEE

Merlin Smith, Region Director • Randy Roberson, Secretary

# Stimulus Tax Bill Continues Special Opportunity for Museum Gifts



Please join us in

## PROJECT 2021

**Take fast advantage of short-term tax law changes  
and raise funds for the Pierce-Arrow Museum  
with tax deductible contributions.**

It's an easy way to support the Museum and help preserve the vehicles and the history of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company.

This COVID Stimulus Bill was signed into law on December 27, 2020. It extends many provisions of the March 27, 2020 CARES Act into 2021, including two special opportunities for charitable giving.

### ***Special opportunities for charitable giving:***

1. Even if you *do not* itemize deductions on Schedule A, all married filing jointly taxpayers can continue to deduct up to \$600 in charitable contributions during the 2021 calendar year; or \$300 if you file as single or file separately.
2. For those who do itemize deductions, the extended law maintains the charitable deduction limitation at 100% of adjusted gross income during 2021 - up from 60% in 2019.

## Pierce-Arrow Museum *at Gilmore*

*If you are planning on taking advantage of this opportunity to support the  
Pierce-Arrow Museum at Gilmore, please send your check payable to:*

**PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION**

*c/o Stu Blair, Treasurer*

**321 Miami Valley Drive • Loveland, OH 45140**

*To discuss ongoing  
gift planning for  
the Museum,  
please contact:*

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