Volume 23 Number 4

BUMPER TO BUMPER

MARQUES GONE BY

Studebaker

1927 Studebaker Big Six President Model ES-7

John and Rebecca Studebaker had ten children. John taught his five sons, Henry (1826-1895), Clement (1831-1901), John Mohler (1833-1917), Peter Everst (1836-1897), and Jacob Franklin (1844-1887), to make wagons. In February 1852 Clement and Henry became blacksmiths and foundrymen in South Bend, Indiana. They first made metal parts for freight wagons and later expanded into the manufacture of complete wagons. At this time John Mohler was making wheelbarrows in Placerville, California.

H & C Studebaker was in the right place to meet the needs of the California Gold Rush that began in 1849. From his wheelbarrow enterprise, John M. had amassed $8,000. In 1858 he quit and applied the money to financing the vehicle manufacturing of H & C Studebaker, which was already booming because of a

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May 19th, 2012 Meeting

Larry and Pat Pugh have arrange the May meeting at Blue Mist BAR-B-Q Restaurant, 3409 Hwy 64 E, Asheboro. Meeting time is 5:00PM. The previously announced picnic will be rescheduled.

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large order to build wagons for the US Army. In 1857, they had also built their first carriage, advertised as "Fancy, hand-worked iron trim, the kind of courting buggy any boy and girl would be proud to be seen in".

Left to Right - Clem, Peter, Henry, Jacob, and John M.

At about this same time, John M. bought out Henry's share of the business. Henry was a deeply religious German Baptist and viewed war as evil and was not comfortable with building military equipment.

Expansion continued from the manufacture of wagons for the western migration as well as for farming and general transportation. At the height of the migration, half of the wagons were Studebakers.

The forth brother, Peter, was running a general store at Goshen, about twenty five miles from South Bend. In 1860 the store was expanded to include a wagon distribution outlet. A major leap forward for H & C Studebaker came from supplying wagons to the Union Army during the Civil War and by 1868 annual sales had reached $350,000. That is when the three older brothers formed the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company.

Following a fire in 1874, which destroyed two-thirds of the works, the Studebakers rebuilt in brick, covering twenty acres and were now "the largest vehicle house in the world". In 1875, the youngest brother, Jacob, was brought into the company to take charge of the carriage factory, making sulkies and five-glass landaus.

In the 1880s, roads started to be surfaced with tar, gravel, and wooden blocks. In 1884, when times were hard, Jacob opened a carriage sales and service operation in a fine new Studebaker Building on Michigan Avenue, Chicago. Three years later, Jacob died.

In 1889, incoming President Harrison ordered a full set of Studebaker carriages and harnesses for the White House. As the twentieth century approached, the South Bend plant had grown to cover nearly 100 acres.

Thomas Edison on his 1903 Electric Studebaker

The five Studebaker brothers died between 1887 and 1917 however, their sons and sons-in-law remained active in the management of the company. Fred fish, John M.'s son-in-law, became chairman of the executive committee in1897 and urged the development of a practical horseless carriage. Studebaker opted to manufacture battery powered electric vehicles because they were clean, easily recharged, and worked well in urban centers without need of refueling depots. The Studebaker Electric was produced by the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company from 1902 until 1912. They were offered in a variety of body styles, many mimicking the passenger carriage line. Fish realized early that the future of Studebaker did not rest in electric but gasoline - powered vehicles. This led to the creation of the Studebaker-Garford automobile in 1904. The joint venture used Studebaker coaches and Garford engines and worked well until 1909-1910 when Garford attempted to divert chassis to its own brand of automobile.

1929 Studebaker President

Studebaker then entered an agreement with the Everitt-Metzger-Flanders(E-M-F) Company, in which E-M-F would build the entire car, which would be distributed through Studebaker wagon dealers. The E-M-F powered cars proved to be disastrously unreliable and there

was infighting between the principle partners. In 1909 Everitt and Metzger left to start Metzger Motor Car Company and in 1912 Flanders joined them and the company was renamed the Flanders Motor Company. In 1908 Fred Fish purchased one third of the E-M-F stock and in 1910 Studebaker had completed the process of seizing control of E-M-F, including it's manufacturing plants at Walkerville, Ontario, Canada and Detriot. Studebaker sought to remedy the customer dissatisfaction problem by paying mechanics to visit each disgruntled owner and replacing defective parts, at a cost of 1 million dollars. In 1911 they refinanced the business, using financing from Lehman Brothers and Goldman Sachs, and reincorporated as the Studebaker Corporation.

1908 Studebaker-Garford B Limousine

By 1912, it became conventional wisdom that the future lay in gasoline-powered engines rather than heavy, sluggish electrics, and the Studebaker Corporation released the following official announcement; "The production of electric automobiles at South Bend has ended...It has been conducted for nine years without much success, ultimately the superiority of the gasoline car (is) apparent".

John M. Studebaker had always viewed the automobile as complimentary to the horse-drawn wagon, pointing out that the expense of maintaining a car might be beyond the resources of a small farmer. Albert Russel Erskine replaced Fish as president in July 1915 and ordered the removal of the last wagon gear in 1919. To the cars, Studebaker added a truck line, which replaced the horse-drawn wagons, buses, fire engines, and even small rail locomotives, all using the same powerful six-cylinder engines.

1912 Studebaker Bus

In 1926, Studebaker became the first US Auto manufacturer to open a controlled outdoor proving ground. By 1929, the sales list had expanded to 50 models and 90 percent of earnings were paid out as dividends to shareholders. Studebaker's total plant area in the 1920s had grown to 225 acres, spread over three locations, with buildings occupying seven-and-a -half million square feet of floor space Annual production capacity was 180,000 cars, requiring 23,000 employees.

When the crash of October 1929 hit, the market collapsed and Erskine laid plans for a new, small, low-cost car-the Rockne. However, times were to bad to even sell inexpensive cars. Within a year, the firm was cutting wages and laying off workers, but not quickly enough. Erskine also pushed the directors to declare huge dividends in 1930 and 1931. He also acquired 95% of the White Motor Company's stock, at an inflated

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ZOOLAND REGION NOTES

Larry and Pat Pugh would like to announce the addition of a new member to their family. Nova SS was produced in 1966, weighting in at 3010 pounds and 183 inches long.

price and in cash. By 1933, the banks were owed $6 million. Instead of reorganizing in receivership, Erskine committed suicide, leaving the problems to his successors, Harold Vance and Paul Hoffman. By December 1933, the company was back in profit with 224 new Studebaker dealers. With the aid of Lehman Brothers, full refinancing and reorganization was achieved on March 9, 1935. A new car was put on the drawing boards and when the Champion was introduced in 1939 it doubled the previous years sales.

During WW II, Studebaker produced the US6 truck and M29 Weasel cargo and personnel carrier. Studebaker was also licensed to build the Wright R-1820 aircraft engine. Studebaker prepared well in advance for the post war market and launched the slogan "First by far with a post-war car". The 1947 Starlight Coupe introduced many innovative styling features, including the flatback trunk and a wrap-around rear window. The new trunk design prompted running jokes that one could not tell if the car was coming or going and next year Studebaker is coming out with a model that you won't be able to tell if it is going sideways.

1947 Studebaker Champion Starlight Coupe

In the early 1950s, Studebaker would meet a new challenge, the new car sales war between Ford and General Motors. The massive price discounting could not be equalled by the independent carmakers. The only hope was seen as a merger between Studebaker, Packard, Hudson, and Nash into a third giant combine. The attempt was unsuccessful, in part because Studebaker had some of the highest labor cost in the industry, with the highest paid workers and retirees. By 1954 the company was losing money. It negotiated a takeover by Packard, a smaller but less financially troubled company. The cash position was worse than had been thought and by 1956, the Studebaker-Packard Corporation was nearly bankrupt, though it continued to make and market both Studebaker and Packard cars until 1958. In 1962 the name reverted to the Studebaker Corporation. The company became the American importer of Mercedes-Benz, Auto Union, and DKW automobiles and many Studebaker dealers sold those brands as well.

The later cars, including the Lark and the Avanti were based on old chassis and engine designs. The Lark was based on existing parts to the degree that it even utilized the central body section of the 1953-58 cars, but was a clever enough design to be popular. Sales rose from 56,920 units in 1958 to 153,844 units in 1959. The Lark provided temporary relief, however when the big three manufactures introduced there own compact model in 1960 sales began to drop. There was a labor strike at the South Bend plant beginning January 1, 1962 and lasting 38 days. Despite a sales increase in 1962, continuing media reports that Studebaker was about to leave the automobile business became a self fulfilling prophecy. NBC's Chet Huntley aired a program on May 18, 1962 entitled "Studebaker-Fight For Survival". By 1963, all the company's cars and trucks were selling poorly. After continued poor sales of the 1964 models, on December 9, 1963 the company announced the closure of the South Bend plant. The last South Bend car was produced on December 20, 1963. The Avanti model name, tooling, and plant space were sold to Leo Newman and Nate Altman, who owned a Studebaker dealership in South Bend. They revived the car in 1965 under the name of Avanti II. They also bought the rights and tooling for Studebaker trucks, along with the company's vast stock of parts and accessories.

1963 Studebaker Lark

Studebaker continued limited production at the company's last remaining plant in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada until March 1966. The directors decided that the small profits were not enough to justify continued investment and rejected the request for funds to tool up for the 1967 models. On March 16, 1966 the last of fewer than 9,000 1966 models, a turquoise and white Cruiser sedan, was manufactured.

1953 Studebaker Starliner "Hard-Top" Convertible

Many of the Studebaker dealers closed or converted to Mercedes-Benz. Studebaker's General Products Division, which built vehicles to fulfill defense contracts, was acquired by Kaiser Industries. In 1970, American Motors acquired the division, which then became AM General.

1963 Studebaker Avanti

By the early 1960s, Studebaker had begun to diversify away from automobiles. The company's 1963 annual report listed the following divisions:

Clarke - Floor Machine Division
CLT - Missile/Space Technology Division
Franklin - Appliance Division
Gravely Tractor
International - Handled overseas matters
Onan - Engine/Generator Division
Paxton Automotive - Superchargers
STP - Scientifically Treated Products Division
Schaefer - Commercial Refrigeration Division
Studebaker of Canada
SASCO - Studebaker Automotive Sales Corp
Studegrip - Tire Stud Division
Trans International Airlines

In 1967 Wagner Electric acquired Studebaker and its diversified units. Subsequently, Studebaker was then merged with the Worthington Corporation to form Studebaker-Worthington. The Studebaker name disappeared from the American business scene in 1979, when McGraw-Edison acquired Studebaker-Worthington. McGraw-Edison was purchased by Cooper Industries in 1985, which sold off its auto parts divisions to Federal-Mogul.

M29 Weasel

Wright R-1820 G

In 2008, a Colorado small business man named Ric Reed purchased the Studebaker Motor Company from Tom Raines. He moved the headquarters from Mesa, Texas to Arvada, Colorado and has a goal of creating vehicles that are reminiscent of classic Studebakers yet brought into the 21st Century. So far all he sells is golf shirts with the Studebaker logo.

Automotive History

On May 11, 1947, the B.F. Goodrich Company announced it had developed a tubeless tire, a technological innovation that would make automobiles safer and more efficient.

Pneumatic tires--or tires filled with pressurized air--were used on motor vehicles beginning in the late 1800s, when the French rubber manufacturer Michelin & Cie became the first company to develop them. For the first 60 years of their use, pneumatic tires generally relied on an inner tube containing the compressed air and an outer casing that protected the tube and provided traction. The disadvantage of this design was that if the inner tube failed--which was always a risk due to excess heat generated by friction between the tube and the tire wall--the tire would blow out immediately, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle.

The culmination of more than three years of engineering, Goodrich's tubeless tire effectively eliminated the inner tube, trapping the pressurized air within the tire walls themselves. By reinforcing those walls, the company claimed, they were able to combine the puncture-sealing features of inner tubes with an improved ease of riding, high resistance to bruising and superior retention of air pressure. While Goodrich awaited approval from the U.S. Patent Office, the tubeless tires underwent high-speed road testing, were put in service on a fleet of taxis and were used by Ohio state police cars and a number of privately owned passenger cars.

The testing proved successful, and in 1952, Goodrich won patents for the tire's various features. Within three years, the tubeless tire came standard on most new automobiles. According to an article published in The New York Times in December 1954, "If the results of tests...prove valid in general use, the owner of a 1955 automobile can count on at least 25 per cent more mileage, easier tire changing if he gets caught on a lonely road with a leaky tire, and almost no blowouts." The article quoted Howard N. Hawkes, vice president and general manager of the tire division of theUnited States Rubber Company, as calling the general adoption of the tubeless tire "one of the most far-reaching changes ever to take place in the tire industry." The radial-ply tire, a tubeless model with walls made of alternating layers--also called plies--of tough rubber cord, was created by Michelin later that decade and is now considered the standard for automobiles in all developed countries.

Calendar

May 15th, 2012
Douglas & Susan Geubtner - Anniversary

May 26th, 2012
"Cruis'n Asheboro"

June 23rd, 2012
"Cruis'n Asheboro"

July 28th, 2012
"Cruis'n Asheboro"

August 11th, 2012
Zooland Region 22nd Annual Car Show

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