

# ANTIQUE ELECTRIC VEHICLES

A Newsletter about antique electric cars for antique electric car people.

Newsletter #5

March 2003



**Philip Gardner's 1922 Detroit Electric, Model 90**

## INTRODUCTION

A Newsletter/Registry for people who want to know who else owns antique electric cars, who want to participate in antique electric car driving tours, or who have parts for sale or need parts.

The Registry lists all antique (pre-war) electric cars, of members and non-members, on which we have data. The information on member's cars should be up-to-date, but information on non-members cars may be out-of-date. We are keeping non-member's cars on the list since the list makes a good reference for those who are looking for information about cars they own or are restoring. Only paid Registry members receive the Newsletter.

## REGISTRATION FOR THE REGISTRY/NEWSLETTER

**Year 2003 subscription renewal now due!** If you have not yet sent in your 2003 dues please do so right now, so you will not miss any issues of the Newsletter. I have put a red mark at the top of this page if, according to my records, I have not yet received your 2003 dues. **This may be your last Newsletter if you have not yet paid your 2003 dues.**

The Newsletter is now one year old. The subscription cost for 2003 is \$10 per year. Costs were higher than the \$5 I asked in 2002 (as many people told me they would be). I and many people who donated more than the first year request of \$5 covered the cost of starting the Newsletter; now I need everyone to contribute to continue the Newsletter in 2003.

The Newsletter is a volunteer hobby and the requested contribution is used only to cover the cost of paper, reproduction, postage stamps, and other out-of-pocket expenses. Use the **Clip & Mail** at the end of the Newsletter to pay your dues.

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## TOURING 2003/2004

### AUGUST 28-30, 2003 – TEXAS:

**COME to the antique (pre-war) electric car tour in Texas.** The Tour Registration Form is on a separate sheet in this Newsletter.

If we are to establish a tradition of driving tours for antique electric cars we need to have good attendance at these first driving tours. Sooooo, charge your batteries (yours and the car's) or buy new batteries, and come drive quietly and with dignity (no smelly, noisy, cranking cars on this tour) in east Texas in August.

It would be appreciated if you would send in your Tour Registration Form NOW, to help us plan meals and make other final tour arrangements. We already have early commitments for seven cars from Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, Texas, and Wisconsin.

### JUNE 26-28, 2003 – PENNSYLVANIA:

The Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles in Boyertown, Pennsylvania is sponsoring an antique electric car driving tour in connection with the opening of their new display of electric vehicles at the museum. Touring will be through the beautiful Pennsylvania countryside for approximately 45 miles and will include visits to several interesting area sights.

The dates are June 26-28, 2003 (Thursday to Saturday). Thursday (June 26) starts with lunch, tour sign-in, Museum tour plus trips to Bahr's Mill and Doc Patt's, and dinner. Friday is the long tour (40-45 miles at 15-20 mph). Highlights include a tour of a battery plant, Crystal Cave, a covered bridge, lunch at C. J. Hummel's in Lenhartsville, wine tasting, and dinner in Jim Thorpe. Saturday (June 28) is a display of the cars in Jim Thorpe. Electric vehicle charging will be provided.

The tour registration fee of \$75.00 includes two meals on Thursday, two meals on Friday, wine-tasting, and admission charges. To register for the electric car driving tour contact Kenneth Wells, Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles at 610-367-2090. Please respond by June 6, 2003.

Here is a tour for all antique electric vehicles in the eastern part of the U.S. As I have emphasized before, it is important that we attend these early driving tours if we are to establish a tradition of driving tours for antique electric vehicles. So, don't be bashful or scared, just get the batteries charged and go – everyone else on the tour will be in the same shape as you are, so you will have lots of friendly company. It has been my experience that tourists always help other tourists if they have car problems.

So call **Kenneth Wells** right now – 610-367-2090 or Email: [museum@enter.net](mailto:museum@enter.net) !!!

### FALL 2003 – NEW YORK & SURROUNDING AREA:

**John Rich** of Shushan New York has said that he would organize an all-electric antique car driving tour in the area, if there is sufficient interest. So, if you would like to see a Driving Tour in the New York Area call John right now (518-677-8251). The date and itinerary will be decided based on who would like to attend the tour. If you live in the North East don't miss your chance to participate in an all-electric antique car driving tour close to home – call John now to express your interest.

### SEPTEMBER 2004 – KANSAS:

**Bernie Wray** passed away, but **Ryan Wray** has volunteered to host the antique electric car tour that Bernie wanted to do in Hutchinson, Kansas in September 2004. Do start thinking about this tour.

**Who else would like to host an antique electric car tour?** How about volunteering to host an antique electric car driving tour in your part of the country? We need to establish driving tours aimed at antique electric cars at different locations around the U.S. and Canada. This will help us enjoy our cars more and show people that electric cars are drivable and fun. We can certainly have more than one tour in a year, if they are in different parts of the country. Not many people can travel across the U.S. to attend a tour, so tours in different parts of the country are needed. I, or **Gregg Lange**, will be glad to share our tour organizational "expertise" with you.

## PARTS FOR SALE/NEEDED

This could be a valuable part of the Newsletter! Send a list of parts or literature that you have for sale, or parts or literature that you need. See the **mailing list** for the addresses of people whose names appear **bolded**. **Parts For Sale/Needed** ads will run for two issues of the Newsletter, unless requested to run longer.

### FOR SALE:

1. **Philip Gardner** has a Rauch & Lang hubcap for sale. It has a brass plate on it that has a script R & L in the center with the words "The RAUCH & LANG CARRIAGE Co. CLEVELAND, O." in a circle around the edge. The cap is about 3 5/8 inch across and 2 3/8 inch tall.
2. **Robert Johnson** has a "Silent Waverley" light switch for sale.

### WANTED:

1. **Chuck Murphy** would like to purchase an antique electric car charger, the type with a mercury vapor tube. It does not have to work – I would use it for display in my garage.
2. **A number of people are looking for electric cars.** Several people have joined the Registry even though they do not have antique electric cars. They are looking for electric cars to restore and drive on tours. If you are not doing anything with your car why not advertise it for sale here in the Newsletter? The ad is free and your sale will help get another electric car on the road and on the driving tours that are (or will soon be) happening all over the U.S. and Canada.
3. **Walt Baker** has wooden spoke wheels on his 1917 Rauch & Lang. Metal spoke wheels are shown in pictures and must have been an option. Does anyone know of anyone who has these wire spoke wheels for sale? Also, are there other cars which used these wire spoke wheels?
4. The **Buffalo Transportation/Pierce-Arrow Museum** would like to purchase an electric car made in the Buffalo New York area (Buffalo, Babcock, Centaur, etc.) Call **James T. Sandoro** at 716-855-1931.
5. **John Mulford's** 1908-09(?) Columbus has two bodies - a Stanhope and an enclosed body. He is restoring the car and needs an Elwell Parker motor, controller, and electric lights as these were removed before his uncle purchased the car in the late forties.

## CALLING ALL ANTIQUE ELECTRIC CARS

Even though we add new antique electric cars to the Registry with each issue of the Newsletter (27 new cars added since the last Newsletter) there are still many more antique electric cars out there. Please send me the names and addresses of others that you know who own antique electric cars. The car list enables members to contact owners of cars similar to their own if they need infor-

mation/help/parts. **Also, keep me informed if you buy or sell an antique electric car so I can keep the list up-to-date.** Thanks to all those who have forwarded EV owners names to me.

## READERS QUESTIONS

Successful newsletters make a heavy use of **member's questions/ answers** – this enables people to share information. I am sure that some of you have questions for which you would like answers. We can publish the questions here and see if Registry members have information of value to you. **I am glad to find out that many Registry members are contacting each other to help answer questions about their cars.** This is one of the big values of the Newsletter, and it makes it worth all of the effort I put into the Newsletter.

- Four people sent answers to the question I asked in the last Newsletter about the use of excess batteries in my car and attendant problems in the electrical system.

**Richard Lane** said that the 84 volts that I want to use in the car, versus the 80 volts originally used, should not have an adverse effect. However, when I was using 96 volts, rather than the original 80, I was generating enough extra heat due to the extra current that I could have had a negative impact on components like resistors, brushes, and coils, especially if they were old. I lost a coil when I was using 96 volts.

**Bob Ebisch** wrote that the 96 volts I was using would give the electric motor a higher speed, but should not harm it. However, the extra voltage would heat the contactor coils more than normal. He thought that my use of 84, instead of the original 80, volts was entirely satisfactory.

**Michael Hoegl** wrote that he is using 72, rather than the original 80, volts in his 1902 Buffalo. He was advised to underpower rather than overpower an antique electric car. Beside, he doesn't have room for more batteries.

**Lew Miller** says that he runs his Rauch & Lang on 96, rather than 84, volts with no problems other than sparking in the controller. He had **Eric Luebben** put something on the controller that pretty well stopped that problem.

- **Robert Gottlieb** wrote **Walt Baker** (see question in the last Newsletter) to tell how he solved his problem with garage doors that were not tall enough for electric cars. Robert dug a "U" shaped trench in the concrete below his garage door where the car's tires are located as they enter the garage. Now, as he enters the garage the wheels dip down beneath the door, but once inside the garage the car is again level. To keep out pests, he fastened to the bottom of the garage door pieces of canvas (weighted with metal) that fit into the wheel trenches.

**Robert** also (in answer to another of **Walt's** questions) said that some gas powered cars used the same wire wheels as used on Walt's Rauch & Lang. He suggested that Walt consult an early Auto Parts Interchange Manual. He said that he has owned five Rauch & Lang cars over the years, and that they all had Hawk wire wheels. Wire wheels were preferred; wood spoke wheels did not hold up well due to the weight of the batteries.

- **Steve Applebaum** reports a real **success story !!!** You may recall the troubles he was having getting curved glass windows made for his Detroit Electric (20 months, 4 attempts, and lots of money !!). Well, based on information from this Newsletter, he now has curved glass windows – made by the Calgary, Canada company (Urban Glass) recommended by **Les Schubert**. Steve has also contacted **Ray Adcock** about his success – Ray also needed curved glass for his windows.

- **Steve Applebaum** was able to confirm the date (1916) of his Detroit Electric (no vehicle number found) by talking with Robert McDaniel – a Registry member who has a 1916 Detroit Electric.
- **Michael Hoegl** sent a photo of his 1902 Buffalo Electric (Stanhope) car. He says the car will not go faster than about 12 mph, and has a range of 40 miles, maybe 50 if he goes at a very slow speed. He wants to know if anyone knows of another Buffalo Electric (we do not have another one in the Registry).
- **Roger Hastedt** sent pictures of his 1937 Detroit that has been in dry storage for the last 48 years. The car came with lots of the original paperwork, factory letters, and charger. His other car is a 1936-40(?) Detroit that he will start restoring this year. Roger would like to know if any of our readers have literature/information on this car – the front clip and rear fenders are 1936 Dodge, but who made the bodies?
- **The Buffalo Transportation / Pierce-Arrow Museum** is interested in any information on electric vehicles made in Buffalo or Western New York (Buffalo Electric, Babcock Electric, Conrad, etc.). If you have such a car, or have information on such a car, please contact the Museum.
- **Guy Davis** phoned and said he has a 1919 Detroit Electric which has a radiator on the front end. His question is WHY – was this an attempt by Detroit Electric to make a hybrid electric-gas car?
- Check out the Milburn Electric website at [www.milburn.us](http://www.milburn.us). They have some old pictures of Milburn's, but don't know where the cars are located now. Check the web-site – maybe one of the mystery cars is one you now own.

## READERS COMMENTS

- I (**Chuck Murphy**) wanted to point out that an article on the August, 2002 Michigan All-Electric Car Tour sponsored by Gregg and Martie Lange is on page 30 on the Jan/Feb issue of the Horseless Carriage Club Gazette. See what fun you can have while touring with other antique electric cars! Sign up now for one of the three (so far) all-electric antique car tours that are planned for 2003 in different parts of the U.S.
- **Bruce Chandler** sent a copy of an April 1910 article from "Cycle And Automobile Trade Journal" about Woods Motor Vehicles. Thanks Bruce.
- **Jeff Neugent** says he is building a replica of an Electric Horseless Carriage – he has good information, parts sources, and methods and plans that he can share.
- **Bob Ebisch** points out that, except for the very first electric cars, almost all battery vehicles, both passenger and truck, made for use on public roads standardized on 40 to 44 lead cells, as this allows the most efficient charging from the then common 120 volt D.C. electric service. He also pointed out that my Ohio Electric was unique in using contactors as the control method, so that the control lever just handles small pilot currents. This was and is the normal method of control in electric railroad cars and locomotives, but is unusual for battery electric road vehicles.
- **Bob Ebisch** also commented that The Walker Vehicle Co. of Chicago probably made more electric road vehicles than any other builder of electric street vehicles in the U.S. He recalls more Walker trucks on the streets of Manhattan in the 1930's than all other makes. The New York Edison electric utility gave special rates to users of electric vehicles as they wanted the

night charging as a desirable off-peak load. Walker made small delivery vans like milk trucks up to quite large dump trucks for coal or other bulk cargoes. He recalls Lever Soap Co. using Walker semi-trailer tractors to haul trailers between their plant and the truck line terminals.

- **George Milburn**, who has the Milburn Electric Car web-site, was contacted by Bill Bayley who found some electric car photos and Milburn sales organization papers in old family papers. Mr. Bayley sent copies to George Milburn and me.
- **Lew Miller** says that Jamison Handy (an officer with Detroit Electric) told him that the last electric car shipped by Detroit Electric before closing was a 1940 with a special body. The car was delivered to Pasadena, California. The remains of this car are still in California, but they are in very bad shape after being stored outside.

## LITERATURE EXCHANGE

Readers have expressed an interest in establishing a "list of resources" that would be available to members. If you have literature that you could make available (copies OK) to others, please let me know.

Due to space limitations, I will only be able to list the newest literature resources (see earlier N/Ls for prior listings). I will consolidate all of the literature resources and publish them in one Newsletter once a year.

**Dorothy Grace** sent information to up-date the list of Libraries with automotive sections that I noted in the last Newsletter. Thanks Dorothy.

- The Detroit Public Library – National Automotive Historical Collection. 5201 Woodward Ave., Detroit MI 48202-4093. [www.detroit.lib.mi.us/nahc/](http://www.detroit.lib.mi.us/nahc/). 313-833-1456. Tues-Wed, 12-8 pm; Thur-Sat, 10am-6pm; closed Sun-Mon. B & W copies - \$0.20/page + \$2.00 postage; Color - \$1.00/page + \$2.00 postage.
- Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village – Benson Ford Research Center. 20900 Oakwood Blvd., P.O.Box 1970, Dearborn MI 48121-1970. [www.hfmgv.org/research/default.asp](http://www.hfmgv.org/research/default.asp). 313-982-6070 and 313-982-6244 (fax). Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm. Detailed fee information, online catalog, and email request form available on web-site.

## SERIAL NUMBERS:

Registry members have asked for Serial Number information. I will reprint serial number information that people send to me. BUT, I WILL STATE RIGHT NOW, THAT I DO NOT KNOW THE ACCURACY OF ANY OF THIS INFORMATION! I have a book that some of you may or may not have. It is called "*The Serial Number Book For U.S. Cars 1900–1975*". The information below is from this book.

**BABCOCK ELECTRIC (1906-12).**

Babcock Electric Carriage Co., Buffalo, New York. Merged into Buffalo Electric Vehicle Co. in 1912

<u>Year</u>	<u>Model</u>		<u>Serial No's.</u>	<u>Battery</u> (cell, plate)
1910	13 Gentlemen's Roadster	5 HP	1201-1450	42 c, 13 p
1910	14 Town Car, Coupe, Victoria, Touring, Runabout	5 HP	1201-1450	36 c, 13 p
1911	Roadster	5 HP	1451-1700	42 c, 13 p
1911	Runabout, Coupe, Victoria, Town Car, Touring		1451-1700	36 c, 13 p

**BAKER ELECTRIC, BAKER-RAULANG ELECTRIC (1899-1916).**

Baker Motor Vehicle Co. of Cleveland, Ohio, 1899-1914. Company merged with Rauch & Lang in 1914; in 1915 became Baker-Raulang Co. and produced "Baker-Raulang" electrics.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Serial Numbers</u>	<u>Battery</u> (cell, plate)
1912	Y, Z Brougham	1131-9899	42 c, 11 p
	V Coupe, Victoria	ditto	28 c, 11-9 p
1913	Z Brougham	7836-12374	40 c, 11 p
	V-A Coupe	ditto	32 c, 11 p
1914	VAE Coupe	12377-13198	34 c, 11 p
	Z Brougham	ditto	42 c, 11 p
	W-A Roadster	ditto	34 c, 11 p
1915	D-A Coupe	150201-160698	36 c, 11 p
	WA-WB Roadster	ditto	34 c, 11 p
	VAE Coupe	ditto	34 c, 11 p
	BBD Brougham	ditto	42 c, 11 p
1916	DA Coupe	ditto	36 c, 11 p
	BBD Brougham	ditto	42 c, 11 p
	DB Brougham	ditto	36 c, 11 p

**OHIO ELECTRIC (1908-1918).**

Ohio Electric Carriage Co.; Ohio Electric Car Co., Toledo, Ohio. Ser. No. on plate under rear seat.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Serial number</u>	<u>Drive Position</u>	<u>Battery</u> (cell, plate)
1912	K Coupe	101-1298	rear	40 c, 13 p
	X Brougham	ditto	front & rear	41 c, 13 p
	L&M Brougham	ditto	front & rear	40 c, 13 p
1913	M Brougham	3301-3598	rear	40 c, 13 p
	O Brougham	3701-3898	rear	40 c, 13 p
	Y Brougham	3601-3698	front & rear	40 c, 13 p
1914	30 Coupe	4201-4298	rear	40 c, 13 p
	40 Brougham	4001-4198	rear	40 c, 13 p
	50 Brougham	4401-4698	front & rear	40 c, 13 p
	60 Brougham	4701-4848	front & rear	40 c, 13 p

1915	11 Coupe	5201-5298	rear	36 c, 11 p
	21 Roadster	5201-5298	rear	44 c, 11 p
	41 Brougham	5001-5049	rear	42 c, 11 p
	51 Brougham	4401-4557	front & rear	44 c, 11 p
	61 Brougham	4701-4798	front & rear	44 c, 11 p
1916	12 Coupe included with 1915 Model 11		rear	
	42 Brougham	5052-5102	rear	40 c, 13 p
	62 Brougham	4801-4898	front & rear	40 c, 13 p
	22 Roadster	4801-4898	rear	40 c, 13 p
1917	63 Brougham	4901-4998	front & rear	40 c, 13 p
	43 Brougham	5105-5198	rear	40 c, 13 p
	44 Brougham	5301-5398	rear	40 c, 13 p
1918	44 Brougham	included with	rear	40 c, 13 p
	64 Brougham	1917 numbers	front & rear	40 c, 13 p

## MEMBERS CARS

### 1922 DETROIT ELECTRIC MODEL 90 COUPE

By Philip Gardner

My car is a 1922 Detroit Electric Coupe, Model 90, Serial No. 13117. I purchased the Detroit Electric from an ad in Old Cars Weekly in 1987. It was located in Milford, Connecticut. The car was last licensed in 1944 in Westport, Connecticut. I had it moved to Yuba City, California and, after getting a key made for the speed controller, correcting a short in the control box, and installing four 12-volt batteries, I was driving it up and down the streets again. Fun. I then replaced the one right rear curved glass window that was missing and new tires, and did no more to the car but drive it occasionally for ten years.

On June 1, 1998 I started a complete restoration; ending in May 2002 when I purchased a full set of new Exide batteries from Sam's Club. I was now ready for full speed (25 mph) driving.

As to authenticity, to the best of my knowledge, the original green was a real dark olive green that almost looked black. I chose a forest green being careful to put the green in the correct places. According to a sales folder the wood wheels were the same color as the lower body panels. I am not sure if the wheel spokes were striped or not, but with the original cost of the car at \$2800, I thought it appropriate. I did do one "no-no"; I nickel-plated the head and park light rims that were originally black. The running board rims were buffed aluminum. For safety, I installed small turn signals and a center mounted stoplight. The headlight and park light lens were reproduced in plastic from original Clamert glass lenses. I had to fabricate the right front seat from pictures and measurements taken from the 1922 Detroit in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, as this seat was missing when we got the car.

I am enjoying driving the electric and have 228 miles on the odometer since restoration. I estimate the car has 25 to 30 thousand original miles. The maximum distance I have driven in one day is 45 miles, when I drove it to a neighboring country fair. I noticed little, if any, reduction in speed at the end of the 45-mile trip. I would be glad to talk to anyone who is restoring a Detroit Electric of this vintage.