

The Hood Release

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHEAST CLASSIC CAR MUSEUM

Website: classiccarmuseum.org

FALL 2005

RED LIGHTS & SIRENS - ANTIQUE EMERGENCY VEHICLE EXHIBIT FEATURED AT THE MUSEUM

Most of the vehicles in this new exhibit are police cars and ambulances. Although they are both emergency vehicles and their uses are related, their evolution was quite different.

Police cars were regular passenger cars with lights and sirens added until 1950. In that year Ford combined all the options that police departments had been ordering into a "police package." Ford dominated the market for police cars for the next few years, installing the Thunderbird engine, rated at 160 horsepower, in the 1955 police sedan. By 1958, however, Chrysler had taken over, dominating the market until the mid-1980s. At one point, 8 out of 10 police cars in use were Dodges or Plymouths.

Ambulances, on the other hand, were purpose-built from the beginning (as were hearses). The reason that regular cars could not be used, as they were by the police, was that ambulances and hearses had to carry people in a supine position. In fact, their uses were so similar that the "combination" was popular – a vehicle designed to carry people either to the hospital or to the cemetery. In small towns, undertakers usually operated the ambulances, with the emphasis on speedy transportation rather than early treatment.

Other emergency vehicles – firetrucks and tow trucks – round out the exhibit. The evolution of warning devices – red lights and sirens – is as interesting as the evolution of the vehicles. The sound of an old "growler," a siren that took some time to attain its full sound, and an equal time to subside, is a fond memory for those of us old enough to recall it.

Joe Angelino, Norwich City Police Chief, and Phil Giltner, local car collector, both members of the Museum's exhibit committee, were instrumental in securing the loan of several rare and unusual vehicles. Featured are a Model T "paddy wagon," a 44 ft. Larrabee fire truck made in nearby Binghamton, a police car from each decade of the early 20th century, 2 Harley-Davidson police motorcycles, and several ambulances including a 1955 Studebaker Ambulet, a 1967 Willys military ambulance, and a unique (one-of-a-kind) 1941 Lincoln on loan from the AACA Museum in Hershey PA. The exhibit will be in place until May 10, 2006

1910 PULLMAN TRAVELS 8 MILES IN 95 YEARS

An antique car which has been owned by a local family for its whole life, almost 100 years, is now on exhibit at the Museum. It is a 1910 Pullman Touring Car, on loan from Mr. and Mrs. Guy Bennett of Wayland, New York. Mrs. Bennett is the grand niece of the original owner, Benjamin Haight, who lived in nearby New Berlin when the car was purchased.

When most of us think of a Pullman we think of trains and the glorious years of luxury travel over the rails. The Pullman at the Museum, however, is a luxury automobile from early in the twentieth century. The manufacturer chose the name because he thought it imparted an image of quality and elite comfort, similar to the railroad car of the same name.

The Pullman at the Museum has an interesting pedigree. Benjamin Haight, a banker in New Berlin, New York City, and Rochester, purchased it new in 1910.

Mr. Haight was born in New Berlin, and graduated from high school there. He taught school there, then enrolled in Albany Law School where he graduated in 1902. He returned to New Berlin, then moved to New York City, where he purchased his Pullman at the New York City Car Show. He married May Matteson in New Berlin in 1911. In 1912, he sold the Pullman to his sister

Continued on page 5



City of Norwich Police Chief Joe Angelino and Museum Director Kay Zaia with Bill Smith, who delivered the 1941 Lincoln ambulance on loan from the AACA Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania

From the President...

Wow! As I look back at all that's been accomplished since our last communication, it leaves me breathless. The star of the show has to be "Red Lights & Sirens," the feature exhibit which opened on Memorial Day weekend. Some great emergency vehicles were located by the Exhibit Committee, their owners' permission obtained and then arrangements made to get each transported to the Museum. Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make this great idea a reality!

A short while ago, the roof and siding on buildings 2 and 3 were completed, as well as the addition of insulation to both the walls and ceilings of those buildings. This corrected several areas of leaking in the roof and weather-sealed leaky walls. This has made a noticeable difference in comfort as well as a reduction in the energy bill. This year, the Board of Trustees decided to finish the job by re-roofing building #1 and re-siding it as well. That project was just completed. A number of roof stacks for old radiant furnaces were removed (as well as the unused furnaces) and insulation was added between the old and the new roof. The walls also were insulated and covered with new metal. Soon to be started will be the removal of the two electric furnaces heating a portion of building #1. They will be replaced by natural gas heating units that will also have energy-efficient air conditioning capability built in.

We are sorry to report that we were unable to have our booth at the New York State Fair. In the past, a location was provided by the Fair and a tent was set up to house one or two classic vehicles, as well as the raffle "car-of-the-year." Sadly, we were unable to get a sufficient number of volunteers to staff our booth. There were 21 "slots" that could not be filled. In the past, we have been able to reach many people at our Fair booth who subsequently visited the Museum. Our thanks goes out to Tom Morrone, who has been able to facilitate the Museum having a booth at the Fair. And certainly to all of you who did volunteer to take a shift at the Fair, a big thank you for your willingness to help!

**Bill Ballard, President
Board of Trustees**

FREE ADMISSION!

—WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP—

Join us today! Give a Museum membership to yourself or a friend, and enjoy unlimited admission to the exhibit galleries. Annual membership also entitles you to Gift Shop discounts, invitations to special events, our quarterly newsletter, and the satisfaction of insuring the continued existence of Chenango County's only year-round tourist attraction.

In Memoriam
Genevieve Staley
May 3, 1920 — June 14, 2005

HATS OFF TO TOURISM TRAIL!

Until April 30, 2006, admissions-paying visitors to 4 or more Tourism Trail properties can receive this attractive baseball cap bearing the Tourism Trail logo on the front PLUS a collector pin from each of the properties visited. The caps, generously provided by Tourism Trail sponsor NBT Bank, and the pins, supplied by Trail members, are of very high quality. People can choose to affix the pins to their cap, or they can elect to wear them separately.

Tourism Trail brochures are distributed at hundreds of tourist locations throughout New York State and surrounding states. Periodically, as a way to measure the effectiveness of the brochures and other marketing efforts, special promotions, like this baseball cap, are offered.

The Tourism Trail partners invite you to use the brochure included with this newsletter to visit (or revisit) each of the sites and claim your own souvenir hat.

Stu Spence



If you are already a Museum member, we thank you - Museum members are our best ambassadors. Please let your non-member friends know that you value your membership and appreciate what the Museum brings to Norwich and the surrounding area.

See the enclosed flyer for details, and —please join us today!

and brother-in-law, Fannie and Fred Brooks of Great Brook Road, South New Berlin. They drove it regularly until 1921. Their son, Mortimer, was born in 1909. He took over the family farm, where the Pullman was stored in a barn and basically ignored until 1958. Mortimer's daughter Anita and her husband Guy Bennett resurrected it and restored it to perfection over a 14-year period. When the car was taken from the barn for restoration, it had front doors, apparently added by Mr. Haight to make it look like a 1911 model. These were determined not to be original and were removed during restoration. The Pullman earned the coveted AACA Grand National Award in 1982. The Bennetts now live in Wayland, NY, where Mr. Bennett is a Buick and Chevrolet dealer. Three of Mortimer's other children, Jerry, Kay, and David, and some of their children, still live on Great Brook Road on land that has been in the Brooks family for a century.



Guy & Anita (Brooks) Bennett and the Pullman at the *Fountain Elms* in Utica in 2003

The Pullman automobile was built in York, Pennsylvania in limited numbers from 1905 to 1917. It has 35 horsepower, dual ignition, four cylinders and a 112-inch wheelbase. It came in red and black, all blue, or blue with straw running gears. Standard equipment included gas lamps, oil lamps, a generator, a horn, tools, and coat and foot rails. The option list included a top with side curtains for \$125 and a folding windshield for \$65. With its top up, the Pullman in the Museum stands 7 1/2 feet high.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE MUSEUM?

1931 V-12 Cadillac - Series 370A, 135 hp. 140" wb, weight: 5130#, Factory Price: \$5130

Webster's Dictionary defines "basket-case" as: "One that is in a completely hopeless or useless condition." In automobile terms, this car was a basket-case. Purchased through an ad in *Hemmings Motor News*, it took a year and a half at the Staley restoration facility to bring it to its present condition. Mostly a pile of auto parts, a previous owner must have decided to make it into a tow truck because the rear portion had been cut away, leaving the chassis looking somewhat like a pickup truck. A whole new rear portion, including the cover for the trunk, was fabricated for this car using a similar Cadillac sedan for a pattern.

1931 V-12 Cadillacs were similar to the V-16 models except that the hood was 4" shorter, headlights were 1" smaller in diameter, and the dual horns were also slightly smaller. The instrument panel and ball-shaped rear lights were similar to those on V-8 models. The car is owned by Jim and George Staley.

Gnome Monosoupape (one-valve) WWI Airplane Engine -French patent, type N, 9-cyl. rotary, 160 hp, 1350 maximum RPM

The crankshaft on this engine was bolted solid to the firewall of the airplane, and did not turn. The 9 cylinders rotated around the crankshaft, together with the propeller,

which was mounted on the engine crankcase. The fuel was a mixture of gasoline and castor oil, and was fed into the back end of the crankshaft.

The engine was manufactured under license by the Union Switch and Signal Co., of Swissville, PA, and shipped to France for installation into the Nieuport 28, the first plane flown by Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker (1890-1973) of the 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron, the first all-American air unit to see combat.

Rickenbacker became an "ace" with 26 German planes shot down, but he was also an early "car guy," being associated before the war with Firestone-Columbus and Fred Duesenberg, and after the war he was head of the Rickenbacker Automobile Co. He owned the Indianapolis Speedway from 1927 to 1947.

1908 Franklin 1-ton Truck - Series J Prototype, 4-cylinder, shaft drive

This may be the first truck made by Franklin, and is the only survivor. It was purchased as a "basket case" in 1969 by Harold Sharon, who completed the restoration in time for Franklin's centennial in 2003.

The Selden patent plate on the left side under the seat attests to the fact that all internal-combustion vehicles before 1911 paid a royalty to Mr. Selden. After that, the patent was ruled invalid, thanks to a lawsuit by Henry Ford.

This truck is on loan from the H. H. Franklin Foundation and is destined for the new Franklin Museum.

Casino Night 2005



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Kevin & Gretchen Walsh, Chairmen of Casino Night 2005, invite you to experience the fun, excitement, and “high-rolling” action of classic casino gambling at the Museum on October 7th from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. A donation of \$55 per person includes a fabulous dinner buffet and \$30,000 Classic Cash for gaming and for the Grand Finale Auction. Reservation deadline is Friday, September 30, 2005. Dress is semiformal.

**Holiday shopping always includes a stop at the
Museum Gift Shop.**



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