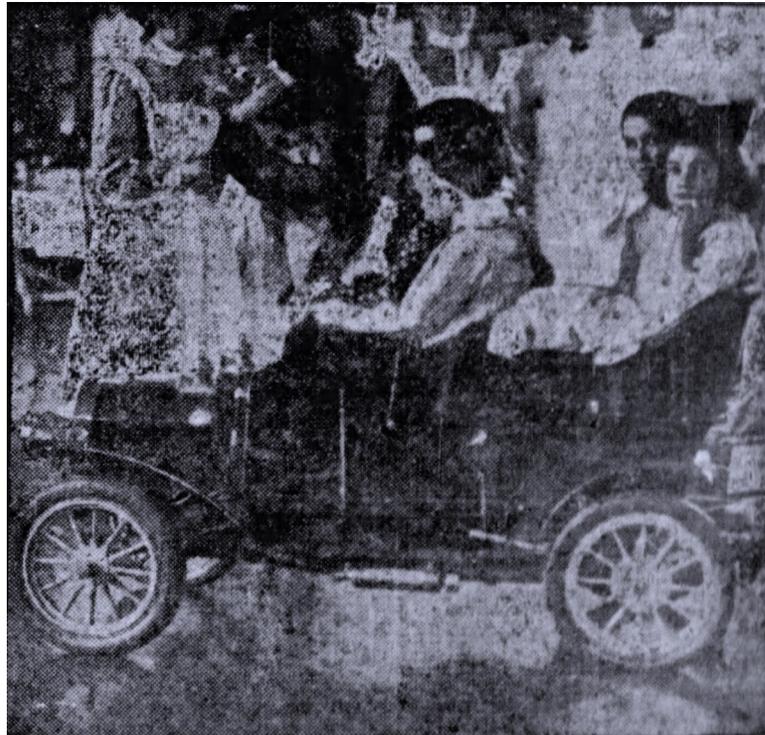


# THE SPIRIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
R.E. OLDS TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Jan Feb  
2022



## **Patients At Children's Hospital Enjoying Ride In Motor Car**

The inmates of the Children's hospital on Huntington Ave had a rare treat yesterday morning in the visit of a miniature motor car that toured its way slowly through the larger wards. The management of the Baby Reo car, which is being exhibited here this week, thought the children would like the entertainment, and the offer was gladly accepted by the officers of the hospital.

Accordingly about 11:30 yesterday morning the Baby Reo, which is a perfect auto car exactly one-eighth the size of an ordinary touring car, was taken into the hospital and placed first in the Boy's ward. The children in their little beds, and who were able, raised themselves to sitting posture and gazed with delight at the tiny auto. It is so tiresome looking at white ceilings that anything out of the ordinary is welcomed and is talked about for weeks afterward. Yesterday morning the children had much to interest them for an hour.

When the car was gotten inside the ward it was decided that it would not be wise to turn on the power, though the car is perfectly equipped and will run at the rate of eight miles an hour. The children accordingly were placed in the car and the manager, Charles G Percival, and some of the hospital nurses pushed the car about. It was almost as good as having a real chauffeur.

240 Museum Drive  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517)372-0529

**Mission Statement**

The purpose of the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum is to collect, preserve, study, and exhibit those objects that will serve to illustrate the part Lansing played in the development of transportation with emphasis on the automobile and its effect on this community and its people.

**Museum Hours of Operation**

Tuesday through Saturday: 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.  
Sundays: (call for hours)  
Closed major Holidays & Mondays

**Admission**

Adults: \$10, Seniors & Students: \$7  
Members: Free  
Special group rates and tours available

The R.E. Olds Transportation Museum is a 501(c)(3), non profit organization and all donations may be tax deductible.

**Email:**

[autos@reoldsmuseum.org](mailto:autos@reoldsmuseum.org)

**Website:**

[www.reoldsmuseum.org](http://www.reoldsmuseum.org)

**Executive Director**

Scott Mrdeza

**Operations Manager**

Rick Kaiser

**Office Manager**

Dani Schneider

**Board of Trustees**

Donald Baron, Gary Doty, Ron Horowitz,  
Dick Roth, Justin King, Henry Green,  
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Debbie Stephens, Peter Stephens,

## Director's Corner

I have had the privilege of being the Executive Director at the RE Olds Transportation Museum for over a year now and it has been a fun and busy time with the many projects, events and donations the last 12 months. While I may wave around my little "conductor's baton", most of the real work comes from our volunteer staff and, for 2021, I think we may have broken a record with over 6840 volunteer hours. I can't thank them all enough!

Happenings since the last newsletter.....

It was great to have the winner of our 1967 Cutlass raffle car in the room when her name was drawn at the Annual Meeting – congratulations to Jacquie Graham, one of our hard-working volunteers. I appreciated Trevor Badgley taking out our 1966 F85 with 442 and W30 options to the MCACN Show in Chicago back in November. These activities are important and help to promote the Museum beyond just the Lansing area.

We have our new CCTV surveillance system up and running, providing high-resolution video coverage both inside and outside the Museum for enhanced safety and security. Our ADA compliant restroom project is in full swing with all the framing, rough plumbing and electrical completed. We should have the drywall up and painted in the next couple of weeks. You may have seen our plans to decorate the restrooms in the form of a gas station, which was an idea from our Museum Operations Manager, Rick Kaiser. So far, we have managed to stay open all but two days during the restroom construction.

Speaking of staying open, we kept the Museum open between Christmas and New Year's Day in 2021 and were quite busy with visitors, so that decision paid off. We also continue to have interest in Museum rentals for 2022. Another good news story is that new donations continue to keep our archives staff quite busy.

As mentioned, it's our volunteers and supporters that keep this Museum open, along with all your generous donations. Please continue to consider the Museum in your giving plans and estate planning. Thank you for a great year.

Best Regards,

# Patients At Children's Hospital Enjoying Ride In Motor Car

(Cont. from page 1)

A boy with a broken ankle that is now nearly healed jumped out of his bed with delight when it was suggested that as one of the convalescents he might take a turn in the car. He placed himself in and so did Maitland Pierson with a bandaged head and Willie O'Brien with sundry bandages. Then tiny Marguerite Knight, about 1 ½ years old, was placed in the back seat and the car was given a start. Then there were stops to give opportunities for photographs, and one of the nurses hastened to get her camera and took some snapshots.

It was decided that a huge Teddy Bear must complete the party, and the bear accordingly was placed in the car until the fun in that ward came to an end. The tiny auto was then taken into the medical ward, where there was a bevy of nurses about and the children had a glorious time.

The car was next placed in the elevator and taken up to the girls' ward, where the girls had a chance to ride. It was fun even for those patients who were too ill to get into the car. As one of the nurses said, the children will be talking about the experience for a month.

The car weights only 243 pounds, but it will hold five youngsters of an average weight of 80 pounds. The hospital nurses had as good a time as anybody as the monotony of their work was broken. Everybody appreciated the thoughtfulness of the management in giving the children the treat.



## *Meet our new Office Manager—Dani Schneider!*

Dani was born and raised in a small, rural village called Botkins in Ohio. She moved to Lansing in October and that is when she became a part of the Museum's family. She made this move with her boyfriend, Jake, and her rescue pup, Otto, when they purchased their first house. Dani has been exploring Michigan and makes sure to root for the Cleveland Browns on Sundays. Her favorite part about working at the Museum is meeting new and different visitors every day!



the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

**A WONDERFUL INVENTION.**  
*For the Democrat:*

There has recently been a carriage invented, which is propelled by steam. This is an invention of Mr. Ransom E. Olds, of Lansing, Mich. The present carriage has only room enough for two passengers and the operator, but it will be so arranged as to attach as many other carriages as needed. The levers, by which it is guided, are placed in a position as to cause no more inconvenience to the operator than it would to a man who drives a horse to a buggy.

The steam from the engines is entirely done away with by

From the "Watauga Democrat"— June 1, 1892

Boone NC

**A NEW CARRIAGE.**

Ransom E. Olds of Lansing, Michigan has invented a steam carriage to traverse the country roads by the use of gasoline. The rig has much the appearance of a Surry, it runs as quietly as an ordinary carriage and will make fifteen or more miles an hour, and Mr. Olds says, it does not kick, bite or get tired. It weighs only 1200 pounds and costs one cent a mile to run it.

From "The Evening Visitor"

Raleigh NC — May 25 1892

an ingenious contrivance of the inventor, and there is no smoke. The boiler and engines are shut in at the rear end by curtains, which obscure all view of the machinery. It being done this way there will be no danger of a horse becoming frightened at sight of it.

There will be no need of horses when this invention comes into use, as it will be used in preference to horses, and will be a great labor saving machine, to both man and beast.

This invention will be a great convenience to people who live in the mountains, as it has the capacity of drawing a large load up most any grade. The mechanism is so simple that a child may use it without danger to itself or machine.

The vehicle as a whole includes many new merits. Mr. Olds states that its great advantages are, that it never kicks or bites, never tires out on long runs, and during hot weather he can ride fast enough to make a breeze without sweating the horse. It does not require care in the stable, and only eats while on the road, which is no more than at the rate of one cent per mile. Weight one thousand and two hundred pounds. The average velocity of this grand invention is about fifteen miles per hour.

The time has nearly come when the poor horse may lay down at night in peaceful rest without any dread of the coming day. C. C. L.

Boone, N. C. June 1, '92

If you desire a beautiful com



**Thirty Days  
Hath September  
April  
June And The  
Speed Offender**



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*A quick history of REO Lawnmower Production*

REO began production of lawnmowers in late 1945- and first-year sales were about \$1,000,000. While no accurate records were kept, 1946 sales have been estimated at near \$2,000,000. It was reported in August of 1950 that the previous sales year record, from 1949 when production was at a rate of 8,000 mowers a month, of just over \$6,760,000 had already been surpassed. With still a month to, the third quarter report was expected to show sales of \$8,240,000.

“Orders and production schedules indicate another banner year for the 1951 models, now being assembled. Plans are for sales around \$10,000,000 by July 31, 1951.”

1954 – “REO’s lawnmower division had a highly successful year, coming back after a 1952 sales drop resulting from severe, nationwide, draughts that cut sharply into lawnmower activities. The division’s regular line of rotary and reel-type power-mowers was enlarged and improved, and an entirely new economy line of ‘Holiday’ was introduced. Leaf mulching attachments were offered for rotary models. And the Company completed engineering on a self-propelled snow removal machine, dubbed the ‘Snow-Throw’, for homes and institutions.”

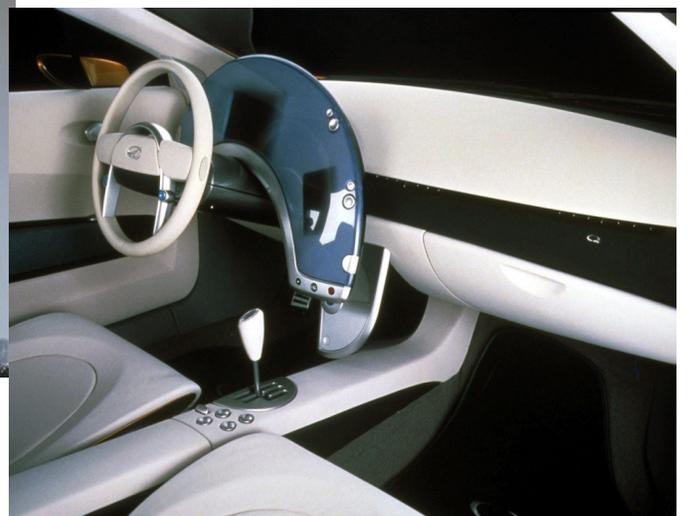
In October of 1954, REO’s lawnmower production was sold to Henney Motors as part of their purchase of REO Motors. Even before that sale was completed, Henney sold the lawnmower operation to Motor Wheel Corp. for more than \$3,000,00 and it became part of their Duo-Therm division. In 1963 Motor Wheel Corp sold the assets of that division to Wheel Horse. Under the terms of that sale, Motor Wheel would continue to manufacture many of the components for final assembly by Wheel Horse.

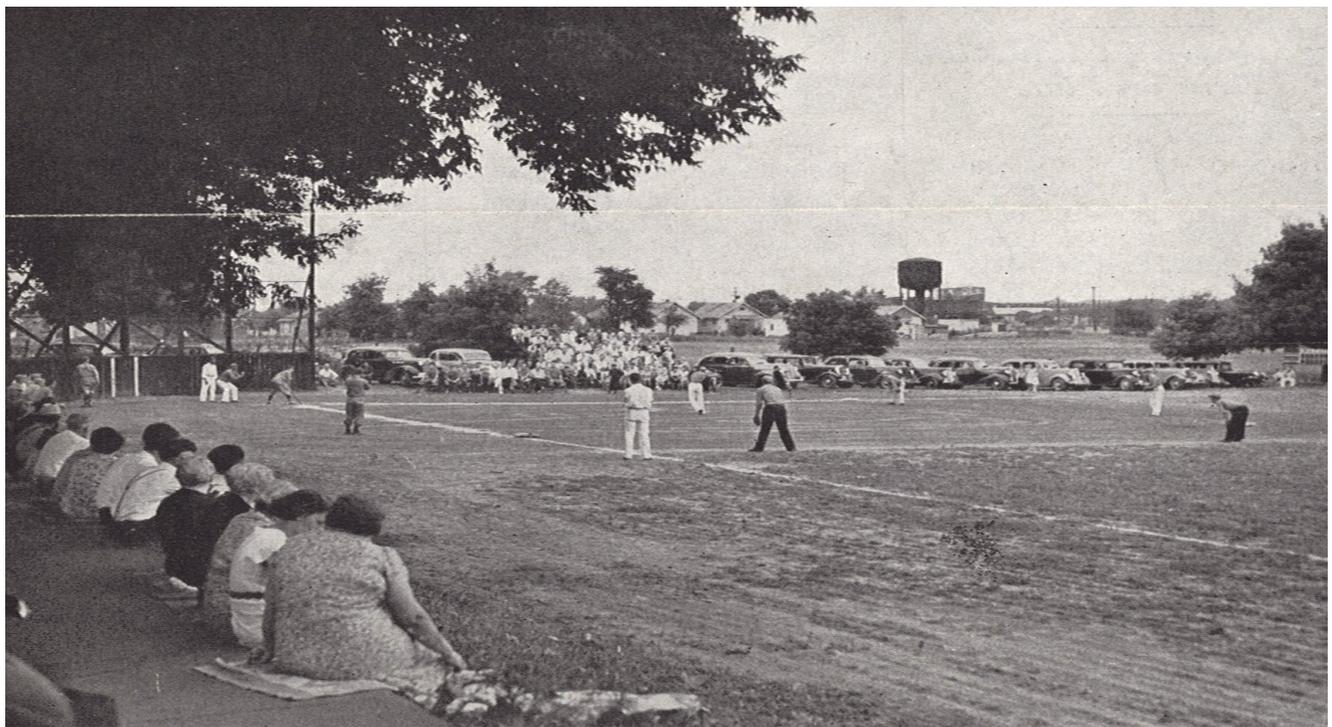
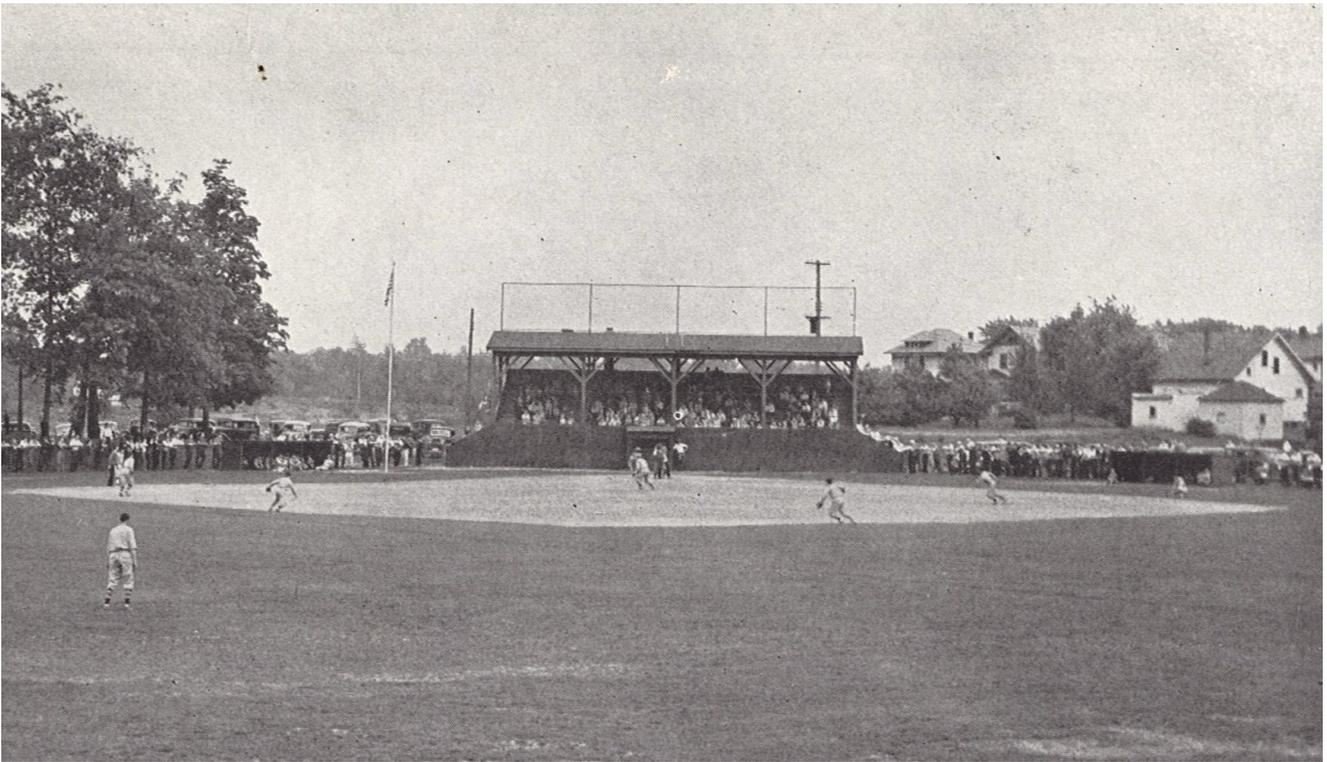
## Oldsmobile O4

Slated to be a concept version of the next-gen Alero, the O4 (which stood for Oxygen—4 passenger) was equipped with a Turbo DOHC 4 valve inline 4-cylinder engine mated to a 5-speed manual transmission. While called a convertible it had twin removeable Targa tops and retractable rear window. Interesting to note are the small suicide rear doors and the very unique “Information Ring” dashboard.

One week before the car was to be revealed, GM announced the end of Oldsmobile and the car was rebadged as the GM O4.

**If They Had Built  
It—Would You  
Have Bought It?**





At one time both Inter and Intra Plant ball games were very popular. Several teams from different companies even formed statewide leagues. In order to handle the large number of teams REO, Oldsmobile and Motor Wheel each build their own "home field". The top photo is REO Park which was located in what is now known as Sycamore Park at Baker and Pennsylvania. The other photo is of Motor Wheel's field. The location of it and Oldsmobile Park is not known to us at this time. If you can help provide other photos or information please contact the Museum.

# Five Carburetors: Why Not?

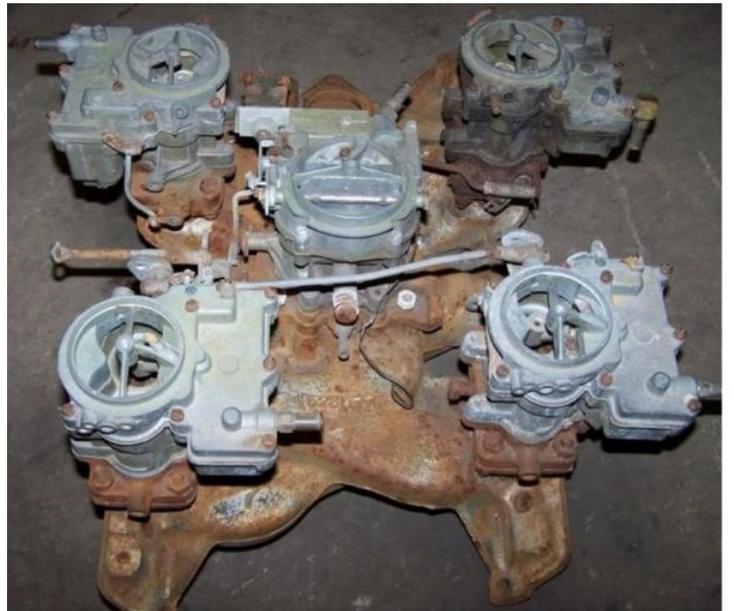
by MCG

One V8 hot-rodding trick of the '50s that never quite caught on was the 5x2 carburetor setup. But you know, it's not such a terrible idea.

The photos we're sharing here have made a few laps around the hot-rodding message boards across the internet, where they never fail to stimulate interest and discussion. The images depict an idea that originated in the early-to-mid-50s for souping up American V8s: the 5x2 carburetor setup, with an intake manifold specially cast (or modified from a production component) to accept five two-barrel carburetors. While the configuration never really caught on, it's not as strange as it may look today.



The system above, apparently built up from a production Pontiac V8 intake manifold, uses five Rochester 2GC two-barrel carburetors laid out in an X pattern, with the center carb in the original stock location. The early Oldsmobile (1949-64) manifold in the lead photo is of similar configuration, and also includes Rochester-style carburetor mounting flanges. Another noteworthy example not pictured here was the Cadillac V8 in the 1950 Cadillac Le Monstre of Briggs Cunningham, which ran in the 24 Hours of Le Mans.



So what were they thinking? In theory at least, the stock center carburetor would provide good idle characteristics and decent low-speed drivability, while the four outboard carbs provided the high-speed breathing and fuel capacity. As a bonus, each two-barrel outboard carb was ideally located right on top of an intake port pair for good air/fuel distribution.

Drawbacks? Balancing five separate carbs can't be fun, but much of that hassle can be avoided by eliminating the idle and low-speed circuits in all but the center carb. Next, this setup demands a

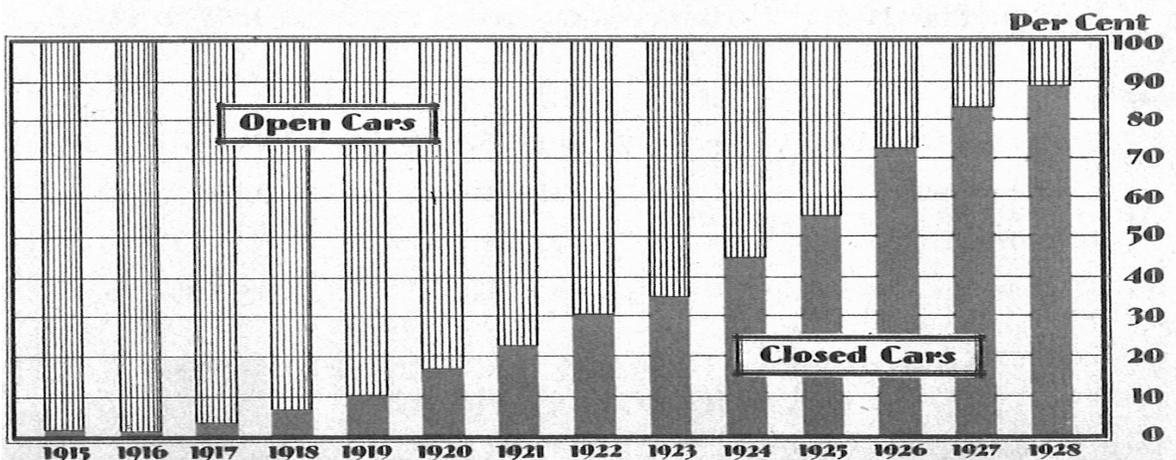
throttle linkage that operates in two planes—bulky and complicated. The more conventional 3×2 and 2×4 carburetor setups weren't nearly so fussy in that regard, and they were more than adequate for the needs of most hot rodders.

The idea wasn't confined to hot rodding, though. The automakers played around with it as well, for example on the 1953 Ford X-100 dream car. (Read about the X-100 here.) This Ford experimental setup (below) used a Holley "teapot" carburetor in the central location with four 94-style two-barrels in the outboard positions. Of course, here in the 21st century we have no need for carburetors at all—they've gone the way of breaker points and wood-spoke wheels.

Here's another angle of the Olds V8 manifold, above.



Number and Percentage of Closed and Open Cars—1919-1928



	Open	Closed	% Closed		Open	Closed	% Closed
1919*..	1,496,652	161,000	10.3%	1924..	1,897,024	1,430,746	43.0%
1920*..	1,581,610	323,950	17.0%	1925..	1,698,808	2,205,758	56.5%
1921...	1,191,220	337,945	22.1%	1926..	1,115,380	2,868,638	72.0%
1922...	1,675,037	722,790	30.0%	1927..	532,305	2,561,123	82.8%
1923...	2,495,058	1,285,300	34.0%	1928..	460,128	3,564,462	88.5%

\*United States only.

# AUTO ADOPTION PROGRAM

We have several vintage automobiles that need help with providing for their care. You can help by taking part in our **Auto Adoption Program**. Your tax-deductible support will aid the Museum in its mission to preserve examples of automotive history for future generations.

The Program offer three levels of support, each with its own set of rewards.

## Become a Foster Parent –

For a \$60 gift you can meet the needs of an automobile of your choice for six months. In return a small sign will be placed in the window of the car announcing your “Foster Parent” status. You will also receive two FREE passes that will allow you and a friend to visit your fostered vehicle. Foster care is renewable at a rate of \$50 for a six-month period.

## Adopt a Car of Your Own –

For a one-time \$100 donation you can select a car to become part of you extended family for a period of one year. A sign will be placed near the car that will explain how you have taken it in and are providing for its care. Your chosen vehicle and its adoption will get special coverage in the Museum newsletter as well as on our website. You will receive 4 FREE passes so you can spend time together. A 10% off coupon will allow you to pick up a memento of your visit from our gift shop. Yearly extensions are only \$90.

## Be a Long Term Benefactor –

\$300 will allow you to provide for a favorite automobile for 4 years. When you become a Benefactor your gift will be commemorated with a plaque. Additionally, 4 FREE passes will be issued to you. A list of all Benefactors will be published in every newsletter and on the website. Your long term generosity will also be recognized at the Annual Membership meeting. You can use your 10% gift shop discount whenever you visit. Renewals and longer term support options can be arranged.

For more information or to sign up to be part of our **Auto Adoption Program** contact the Museum office at 517-372-0529 or email [autos@reoldsmuseum.org](mailto:autos@reoldsmuseum.org)

## Current Auto Adoption

### Benefactors

Don Barron—1950 Oldsmobile Coupe

Olds Club of Florida— 1906 “Baby” REO

Olds Club of Florida—1921 Olds 46T

Chuck and Judy Wooderson—1938 Firetruck —1999 Alero Pace Car

And 1950 Woody Wagon

Aaron & Nichole Toth —1966 Toronado

## Lansing's First Car Dealership

Just after the turn of the century W. K. Prudden and Company, one of Lansing's early manufacturing concerns - which in later years became a part of what we know as the Motor Wheel Corporation, established the first automobile distributing business in the city. The company was located at 408-412 East Michigan Avenue (those buildings, located just north of the Museum, still stand today) and was headed by W. K. Prudden himself. H. F. Harper, who was the president of the Motor Wheel Corporation in the 1930's, was then secretary and treasurer of the company and was, at the time, the only officer then connected with Motor Wheel who was also employed by the predecessor firm.

In 1903 Prudden decided to expand his business activities, so he took on an agency for the Curved Dash Oldsmobile. The following year they expanded operations again and acquired an agency for Cadillac. In 1905 Reo was added to the car distributing business. Shortly after the Reo agency was started W. K. Prudden and Company moved from the East Michigan Avenue location to a building on May Street which housed the general offices of the Duo-Therm division of the Motor Wheel Corporation. About that same time the automobile distributing business was sold to George Bohnet.



Did you know that you can also help support the Museum when you make purchases on Amazon? Go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and select **Re Olds Museum Assoc Inc** as your charity of choice; .5% of every purchase you make on [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) will be donated back to the Museum! Don't worry! Item prices are exactly the same in [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) as on normal Amazon (but make sure to sign in through Amazon Smile)!





## 4th Qtr. Donors

Olds Club of America Members

Sue Pashukewich

REO Olds Chapter

Penny & Erik Sathers

New England Oldsmobile Club

David Schwind

Mark Santos

William Carey

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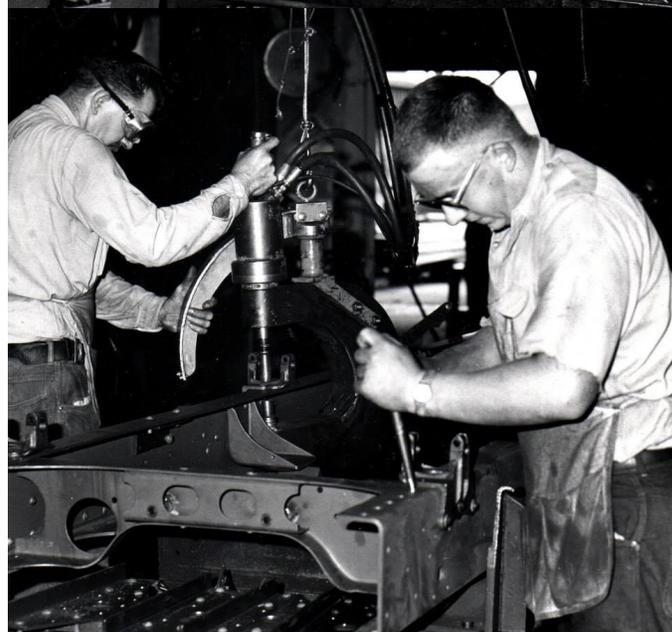
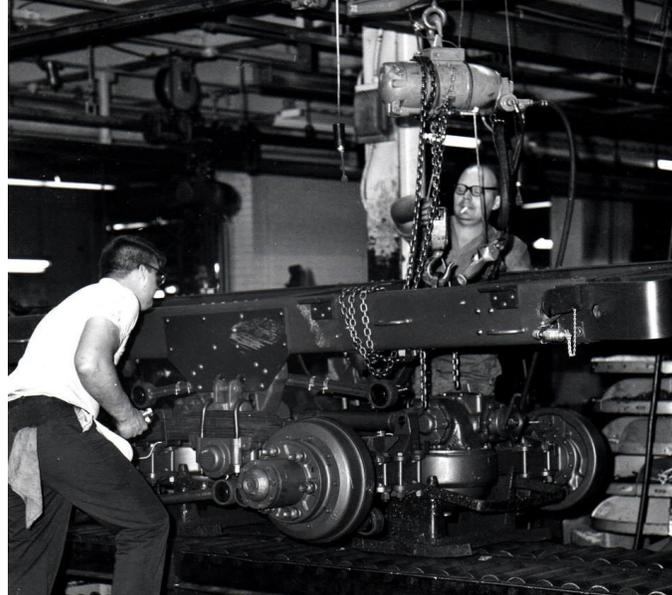
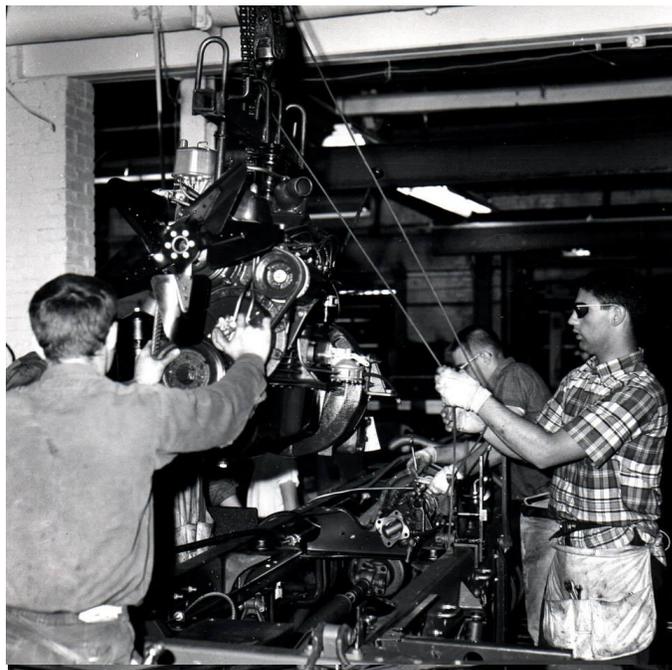
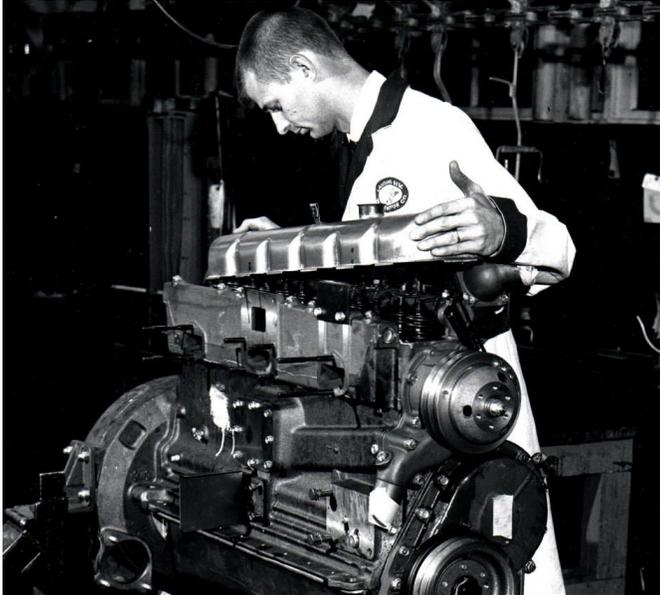
Dixie Olds Club

Murphy & Darla Walker

Carl Eidsness

**Thank you for your support!**

**We also wish to thank the many people who donated items in support of the Archives and to the Museum's car collection in the year 2021**



## TWO SMALL AUTO COMPANIES USE AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO BATTLE THE GIANTS

By: Sinclair Powell

In the late summer of 1932 economic conditions nationwide in America were grim indeed. The country was in the grip of a horrendous depression, with unemployment reaching the 25% level. The auto industry in particular was hit very hard – the production of motor vehicles was only one quarter of what it had been three years earlier. While the “Big Three” were surviving reasonably well, many of the small automobile manufacturing companies were struggling desperately to keep afloat, with a number of them closing their doors each year.

An old line company based in Syracuse, New York, was among the struggling auto firms. The H.H. Franklin Company had been producing a high quality air-cooled car since 1902. Its output never had been large – throughout the 1920s it had built 8,000 to 10,000 cars per year. Since 1929 it had struggled desperately to keep afloat, burdened by heavy indebtedness to a consortium of Eastern and Midwestern banks.

In 1932 the Franklin firm offered only quite expensive cars. Its six cylinder sedan, mounted on a 132-wheelbase, sold for \$2,345. In the spring of 1932 it introduced a second vehicle, a huge V-12 carrying a price tag of just under \$4,000.

With these stiff prices in a depression period sales of Franklin cars reached a pitifully low level. Many dealers ceased ordering cars, feeling that there was no market for costly Franklin vehicles. It was clear that a lower priced car was desperately needed.

Unfortunately, the firm lacked funds to design and build a lower cost automobile, thus some other approach would have to be utilized. What the company did then was decidedly ingenious.

Franklin entered into an agreement with the REO Motor Car Company for purchase, beginning in October, 1932, of a number of REO “Flying Cloud” automobiles, minus engine, grill and radiator. The REO cars then would be shipped to the Franklin firm’s factory in Syracuse, where Franklin’s air-cooled motor would be dropped in the chassis, a grill plus a few identification items added, and the vehicles emerging as fresh Franklin “Olympic” models. Only three body styles would be offered, a four door sedan, a quite stylish coupe with a rumble seat and a convertible coupe. The total cost of development work and tooling to mate the Franklin and REO cars was only a few thousand dollars.

It is interesting to note that neither company chose to mention to the automobile buying public the nature of this transaction. It was never considered, apparently, that the new vehicle might be named “Franklin-REO” or “REO-Franklin”. The Franklin Olympic would sell for several hundred dollars more than the REO Flying Cloud.

Sales of the new Franklin Olympic were quite good for a number of months, and probably saved the company from immediate bankruptcy in late 1932. The REO-Franklin arrangement continued the following year, 1933. Each time the REO firm modified its Flying Cloud model, the Olympic followed suit. Unfortunately, overall Franklin sales of all models fell off in 1933, and the firm continued experiencing financial difficulties. At the beginning of 1934 Franklin sales dropped again to no more than 120 per month. The company carried out some styling and engine modifications on its cars, including the Olympic, but this did not help sales appreciably. Franklin could not pay the various firms, probably including REO, that supplied it with parts. In addition, several banks to which Franklin owed money constantly threatened to enforce payment of their loans. The Franklin firm thus was compelled to file a voluntary petition in bankruptcy in early April of 1934. It never emerged from bankruptcy as an auto manufacturing firm. This of course ended the unique relationship between Franklin and REO.

## *Star Poem*

**TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR,  
YOU'RE A LITTLE WONDER CAR,  
FAR ABOVE ALL OTHER MAKES,  
YOU SHINE FROM RED SEAL POWER TO BRAKES.  
IN ALL THE FEATURES THAT ONE FINDS,  
IN HIGH GRADE CARS OF OTHER KINDS,  
THREE SPEEDS FORWARD AND REVERSE,  
A CAR TO FIT THE POOR MAN'S PURSE.  
LIKE YOUR NAMESAKE IN THE SKY,  
YOU SHINE ON EARTH TO PLEASE THE EYE,  
DESIGNED FOR COMFORT, WORK OR SPEED,  
THE GUIDING STAR FOR EVERY NEED.  
AS YOU TWINKLE TO SUCCESS,  
GIVING MORE AND COSTING LESS,  
IN ARCTIC LANDS OR TROPICS SUNNY,  
LITTLE CAR, YOU'RE "WORTH THE MONEY!"**

We uncovered this really cute little Star car poem from 1923. It was in a bunch of papers from a 1920's Star dealership Georgia - Florida Motor Company, distributors of Durant and Star cars 430-32 West Adams Street Jacksonville, Florida. It is typed on a very old yellowing 8.5" by 11" piece of paper. So enjoy. Lance Haynes