

SALES TO WEALTHY IS DEALER'S HOBBY

A. S. Robinson Recalls Making Deals With World-Renowned Celebrities.

RECORD IS REVIEWED

W. K. Vanderbilt and Percy Rockefeller Are Among Men to Whom Automobiles Were Sold in Early Days by Portlander.

BY CHESTER A. MOORES.

During a full one evening at the National Automobile Show in Madison Square Garden, New York, in 1907, William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., millionaire extraordinary and donor of the famous Vanderbilt automobile race cup, stepped quietly into the booth conducted by the Harry A. Haupt Company, of New York.

HERE IS ROAD INFORMATION TO GUIDE YOU ON THAT DRIVE TODAY.

Except for the Columbia River Highway, which is still under construction beyond the end of the Base Line road, the flooded Foster road and the Sandy road, which is blocked by snowdrifts on the side of Foster and the Sandy roads, the officials in the county roadmaster's office report that virtually all of the roads leading out of Portland are open for travel today.

Those who were stricken with the touring bug by yesterday's Spring-like weather, and the pleasant travel over the Terwilliger boulevard leading to the Capitol Highway, which is open, and over the Powell Valley and Base Line roads, the Canyon road is open all the way. Unless additional slides come the Linnton road will be open today, as will the lower part of the Sandy road in fair condition only.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl C. Latourais drove down from Oregon City in their Studebaker last Friday and found the West Side road in fair condition. The East Side road is flooded at Park-

side and some noticed the little gentleman with the silk hat and the admirable mustache as he peeped curiously in and at the "Thomas town car." Finally, however, the chauffeur of the sales crew, copying the Honorable Master Vanderbilt and recognizing him from the pictures, leaped to his side in one bound.

The man had a few words as the more dapper of the two looked the car over carefully and, actually within the space of a few minutes "Willie K." said, in words spoken as calmly as though he were picking out a head of lettuce, "I'll take it," and thereupon he became owner of his first American-built automobile.

New Sales Are Made. About a week later William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., called up the man who had sold him the Thomas and ordered a similar rig delivered to William K. Vanderbilt, Sr., with the proviso that the top be made a trifle higher, so that the father, who was considerably taller than the son, would not suffer the embarrassment of having his high-top hat knocked off every time he stepped into his car.

Another week passed and a beautiful enclosed car had arrived at the Thomas agency of New York. Flushed with his success in making the two previous sales, the wide-awake sales manager called Mr. Vanderbilt on 241-4th street and apprised him of the fact that the newest thing in Winter cars had arrived. A few hours later both Mr. and Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., stepped into the Haupt store and before leaving a check had been written to purchase the beautiful enclosed car for Mrs. Vanderbilt.

A. S. Robinson is Salesman. The man who made these three sales to three world-famous people in three short weeks of time was Andrew Sisen Robinson. At that time Mr. Robinson was sales manager of the Haupt Company agents in New York for the Thomas Flyer. Today this salesman, Mr. Robinson, manager of the Portland office of the Pacific KesselKar branch at 58 North Twenty-third street. The foregoing tale was related by Mr. Robinson last Wednesday in response to the request that he tell about the most unusual sale he had participated in during the 17 years that he has been merchandising automobiles. It farms but one of many yarns that Mr. Robinson could unravel as his memory ponders over interesting incidents that have transpired since he entered the automobile business in New York in 1898 as purchasing agent for the Searchmont automobile concern.

Mr. Robinson was present when the automobile industry was born and he has for more than a half generation been attending it in one capacity or another as the healthy youngster has grown to alarming stature. Car Sold to W. K. Rockefeller. Mr. Robinson also sold a car one year to Percy Rockefeller, a son of William Rockefeller, and continually since that time Mr. Rockefeller has been buying that same make of car, Chalmers.

It was his privilege at one of the New York shows to introduce his overland, 40-horse power, Thomas, the famous automobile manufacturer, to E. Russell Thomas, the eminent New York banker and horseman. For years E. R. Thomas, automobile king, had been receiving letters that were meant for E. R. Thomas, banker and horseman, and vice versa, until finally they commenced spelling out their initials. They really weren't much alike, for the automobile Thomas was unusually short and the banker unusually tall, a thing Mr. Robinson marveled at as he brought their hands together at the New York show. Incidental to this paragraph Mr. Robinson sold the banker and horseman a new automobile before he got away.

Moral: If you must avoid buying a KesselKar or a Briscoe automobile, you had better steer clear of Mr. Robinson's present stronghold up on North Twenty-third street.

Once upon a time—this happened in Los Angeles—a woman informed Mr. Robinson that she had \$700 worth of rabbits and asked if he would accept the same in payment on a new automobile. That was the funniest trade proposition ever put up to the veteran automobile man. All of which reminds us of the Portland young woman who laid a nice little plan at the recent Portland show of trading in her sewing machine as first down payment on a car, which we dare not mention by name because of the dealer's persistent aversion to publicity.

In a modest looking scrap book Mr. Robinson has traced his movements from New York automobile offices across to California and then north to Portland, where he arrived a little over a month ago. One of these cards bears the address of William K. Vanderbilt, Sr., as Idle Hour, Oakland, Long Island, and one of the Thomas cars was delivered during the historic "Three weeks" of 1907.

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Pictures Are Kept Also. Other scrap books containing stacks of interesting pictures and articles pertaining to Mr. Robinson's career in the automobile business are still stored away in a Los Angeles warehouse. A proud son is blamed by Mr. Robinson for the presence of the single scrap book now in Portland.

At some later date, perhaps, Mr. Robinson will loosen up for another 15 minutes and tell the people of Portland how he used to perform as a race driver, how he sold the first Ford car in New York City and thereby opened the way to the famous litigation over the safety patent rights, how the three rickety cars withstood, or rather failed to withstand, the 1901 endurance run from New York to Buffalo, and how he felt when he learned that the Thomas car had won the famous New York to Paris run in 1907, when the entire world, including these Pacific Northwest states, was aflame with enthusiasm over the chase around the globe.

Mr. Robinson had charge of all the arrangements for that trip insofar as the Thomas Company was concerned.

Gossip Along the Row. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the association of Charles F. Wright and R. B. Ballou in business, Mrs. Wright entertained the 43 employees of the Portland branch of the big wholesale accessory house at her residence, 4345 North Commercial street, last Monday night. Mr. Wright and Mr. Ballou were in business together in Great Falls, Mont., seven years before they came to Portland. Following an elaborately appointed dinner the employees presented Mr. Wright and Mr. Ballou with gold watch fobs handsomely engraved.

News that the largest shipment of utility motor trucks ever sent to the Pacific Coast was on its way to various depots of the White Company along the Coast was received "last week" by R. S. Hurd, manager of the Portland branch company. Mr. Hurd does not know the exact number of utility trucks that are in the present shipment but he feels certain that he will receive at least 35 or 40 trucks for distribution in the Portland territory. The record shipment is due to arrive in about two weeks.

A three-quarter-ton White truck driven by Carl Brenner of the Lund Auto Sales, was the only vehicle that managed to reach Lentz during the recent snow storm and the driver as well as the automobile branch have been receiving congratulations upon the feat, which was performed by Mr. Brenner day after day.

The important question of the hour around the premises of the Oregon Motor Car Company at Chapman and Alder streets is "Who will be the one to go to Detroit to get the terms of a salesmanship contest now under way the man on the Studebaker retail force who sells the most cars before the end of this month will be given a trip to Detroit, the seat of the automobile industry and the home of the Studebaker car, with all expenses paid by the company. At least according to Frederick R. Leonard-Smith, W. S. Miller and R. R. Coater were pretty well lunched as leaders. There are eight salesmen entered in the race.

William M. Webster, official commissioner of the National Association of Automobile Accessory Jobbers, visited the prominent Portland jobbing houses last Tuesday. He came to investigate membership applications and study the Portland situation.

F. W. Vogler, president of the Northwest Auto Company, left Monday night on a ten-day trip through territory over which he exercises selling privileges on the Reo and Cole pleasure cars. He was bound primarily for Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and Walla Walla.

Despite the fact that George W. Howe showed apparently adequate proof that he had driven his Ford car a total distance of 27,186 miles he was ignored by the judges who picked the winners in the service record contest conducted by the Great Eastern Bearing Company. The first of 16 prizes was awarded to J. E. Slason, of Plainville, Kansas, who proved that he had driven his 1915 Ford car over 241,454 miles on 18 different bearings. The 16th prize was won by an accredited total of 112,041 miles.

C. A. Collins, secretary of the Tacoma Automobile Club, who announced recently that he would manage the automobile show proposed for the last week of this month, has changed his mind and announced that he cannot act in that capacity. The show, however, may be promoted by others.

WRITER ON SALES FORCE

L. G. NICOLAI, AUTO EDITOR, IS WITH J. W. LEAVITT & CO.

Headquarters Are at San Francisco, but Advertising for Northwest Branches to Be Handled.

Lawrence G. Nicolai, well known in automobile and newspaper circles on the Coast for several years, has just become identified with the organization of J. W. Leavitt & Co., Pacific Coast distributors for Overland and Willys-Knight motor cars. Mr. Nicolai will have charge of the advertising of this concern and Overland publicity and promotion work in this territory.

Mr. Nicolai was formerly in charge of the automobile department of Los Angeles, Seattle and other Pacific Coast papers. Prior to that time he held similar positions in the East, having charge of both the editorial and advertising departments.

He is one of the pioneer automobile editors in the country, starting in with the Washington (D. C.) Post, the year that John Willys started to manufacture the Overland car. He has been in close touch with the organization of the Overland factory during the past 17 years. In leaving the newspaper field and affiliating himself with the Overland distributors, Mr. Nicolai was largely prompted by his confidence in the factory behind the car and J. W. Leavitt & Co., Pacific Coast distributors.

While Mr. Nicolai will make his headquarters in San Francisco he will spend much of his time traveling the territory and visiting the various Overland and branches from Seattle to San Diego.

UNITED STATES HAS BY FAR MOST AUTOS

Oregon Alone Outdoes Russia, China, Japan, Turkey and Few Other Countries.

WORLD FIGURE 3,114,000

Statistics Prove That Americans Lead All Others Not Only in Manufacture but in General Use of Gasoline Machines.

The state of Oregon, with less than 2,000,000 people, has more automobiles than the vast Russian Empire, with 171,000,000 people, plus China, with a population of 225,000,000, plus Turkey, with a population of 21,000,000, and a few other countries, like Norway, Greece and Egypt.

Even the great countries of Germany and France, long famous for excellent automobiles, do not far outshadow Oregon in the matter of automobile ownership, according to an interesting batch of statistics compiled by the Horless Age, one of the leading automobile trade journals of the United States, which has made an honest effort to arrive at substantially correct figures in estimating the motor census of all countries in the world.

Horless Age says there are about 3,114,000 automobiles in use in the world and that 1,450,000, or 47 per cent, of the entire number are operated in the United States.

Europe's Cars Are Speediest. Alongside the 2,000,000 cars in Uncle Sam's territory, the 276,590 accredited Great Britain, the 30,400 and the 71,455 given Germany seem paltry indeed, when we consider the standing the three latter named countries have been giving in the popular minds of many who thought they were following the pulse of the automobile industry. The greatest speed cars have come from Europe to capture precious American trophies year after year, and the idea was general, no doubt, that the Continent stabled the most automobiles.

Now comes along a set of cold and definite statistics which places these United States far at the head of the procession, with all others limping in the rear.

According to the "dope," France has four times as many automobiles as Oregon, with its 24,000 registered vehicles, while Germany has less than three times as many as our own commonwealth.

The wise ones of the trade have recognized for many years that the United States is the foremost manufacturer and consumer of automobiles, but the extent of this supremacy has never before been appreciated, apparently.

Yast Lead Is Held. For instance, do anyone realize that the states of New York, Ohio, California and Iowa contained more autos than all the rest of the world outside of the United States combined? Yet it is true that these four states, located in a Union of more than two score other states, are accredited with more than the 714,000 shown on the estimates for all foreign countries.

Meanwhile bear in mind that the nations now involved in the great war include the countries that are the foremost automobile builders and users in Europe, in Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Russia and Italy virtually all of the privately owned motor vehicles have been requisitioned for military service in which their period of usefulness is decidedly limited. Many of the cars now in use in the war zone were made in the United States and of American-built cars is apt to increase because extensive automobile manufacture is now next to impossible on the Continent.

Some Statistics Not Official. Many of the countries listed in the census do not officially enumerate the number of automobiles within their borders and in these instances reports from consular officers and United States Government statistics have been employed.

The "first five" countries rank in the following order: United States, Great Britain, France, Germany and Canada. Undoubtedly the good roads factor has been decidedly in favor of the countries of Europe where old-established highways have been becoming tourist traps for a long time, but the varying American quotations in the price of gasoline serve to offset this factor. The average price of gasoline in the United States today is about 22 cents, considerably more than it was about a year ago, but even before the war the motorists of Great Britain were paying about 28 cents a gallon and the car owners of Continental Europe between 40 and 50 cents a gallon.

Motor Population Table.

Table showing motor population for 21 countries: Afghanistan 63, Albania 3,900, Argentina 12,229, Australia 20,400, Austria 3,840, Belgium 9,400, Brazil 3,000, British N. Rhodes 8,249, Bulgaria 2,000, Canada 53,000, China 2,100, Ceylon 1,000, Cuba 1,114, Denmark 1,140, Czechoslovakia 1,140, Denmark 1,140, Dutch East Indies 1,113, Egypt 873, France 28,100, Germany 71,455, Great Britain 276,590, Greece 210, Guatemala 210, Haiti 270, Honduras 9, Hungary 6,200, India 7,732, Italy 10,000, Japan 1,300, Latvia 1,300, Lithuania 1,300, Mexico 4,250, Monaco 1,300, New Zealand 10,000, Nicaragua 973, Panama 127, Paraguay 127, Peru 210, Philippines 2,350, Portugal 2,000, Romania 2,000, Russia 17,000, Salvador 210, Serbia 120, Siam 120, Spain 9,000, Straits Settlements 6,000, Switzerland 2,000, Sweden 1,300, Syria 1,300, Turkey 2,400,000, Uruguay 1,300, Venezuela 1,300, Zanzibar 60.

Greenheart wood from British Guiana is said to outlast iron or steel when used under water.



Lets You Forget Your Gear Shift

A six cylinder motor is superior to a four only in that it is possible in a six to have greater range of speed on direct drive—requiring less gear shifting. It has great reserve power. Its range of speed on direct drive or "high" is therefore coupled with reserve power which enables you to accelerate with lightning rapidity from the slowest to the highest speeds. Our enormous output enables us to offer the Overland Six equipped with our vastly superior six motor at a price hundreds of dollars less than you must pay for equal performance in any other car. We are the world's largest builders of sixes and fours, producing virtually two cars for every one of any other concern building similar types and sizes of cars. Obviously, the Overland Six is underpriced—is dominant Six value—comparable only with very much higher priced cars. The rush of spring buying naturally centers upon such excess value, taxing even our unequalled production capacity. See us at once and order your Six now.

J. W. LEAVITT & CO., Broadway at Davis St. PHONE BROADWAY 3335 The Willys-Overland Company, Toledo, Ohio

Advertisement for the Overland Six automobile, featuring the price \$1145 and the slogan 'SIX \$1145'. Includes the text 'Model 66', 'f o b. Toledo', and 'Made in U.S.A.'.

MOTOR FUEL SOUGHT

Steady Increase in Gasoline Price Hits Autoist.

SUBSTITUTE IS PROBLEM

Recent Raise in Portland Is Sixth Since Last Summer—Chemists Are Looked To for Relief Where Engineers Stop.

Advertisement for BRISCOE a REAL \$850 Automobile HERE. Includes text: 'Pacific KesselKar Branch', 'A radiator so scientifically suspended that wrenching is quite avoided and leaking overcome is a feature of the new Briscoe.', 'Three-Passenger Roadsters \$850 Five-Passenger Touring', 'The Pacific KesselKar Branch 55-60 Twenty-third St., Portland, Phone Main 6214.', 'SERVICE FIRST' logo.

MOTOR FUEL SOUGHT

In mileage per gallon is offset by the greater uses we have for motorcars and the increased cost of the fuel itself. "One reason after another has been offered for this advance in price, the oil companies finally getting down to the statement that it is now a matter of supplying the demand, and pointing to the fact that five years ago we used approximately 2,500,000 gallons of gasoline per year in motorcars, while during the last year the consumption was not far short of 1,000,000,000 gallons.

"What is the solution of the problem? If there continues to be a shortage in gasoline and the price increases, we must look for some new fuel. Its ar-

who will deliver us from the need of gasoline in motorcars. Just think of the time when chemists will furnish us with tablets, one of which in a gallon of water will provide fuel for your motor."

AUTO DIRECTORY

Advertisement for SPLITDORF HIGH TENSION DIXIE MAGNETOS. Includes text: 'Bring your car up to date by equipping it with modern ignition. High tension is the system. Splitdorf Dixie is the magneto. Forty dollars is the price.', 'ARCHER & WIGGINS Distributors of High-Grade Motor-Car Accessories. SIXTH STREET AT OAK.'

WATCH YOUR STORAGE BATTERY!

Let us test and examine it. Expert consultation free.

Advertisement for Ballou & Wright. Includes text: 'Broadway at Oak A 6638, Broadway 307'

Advertisement for DIAMOND TIRES. Includes text: 'Vulcanizing and Retreading R. E. BLODGETT, 29-31 North 14th, Near VATE GARAGE, S. A. Standard District Supt. Sales, 415 Corbett Bldg. Main 1476.'

Advertisement for BOWSER GASOLINE and OIL TANKS. Includes text: 'STORAGE SYSTEMS FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GARAGES, S. A. Standard District Supt. Sales, 415 Corbett Bldg. Main 1476.'