FIRST PATENT FOR GAS AUTOMOBILE SOUGHT IN 1879

George B. Selden Finally Secured Recognition in 1895; Problem Long Being Solved.

From a model looking very much like an overgrown baby carriage with propelling motor to a mighty truck that today is one of the top-notch carriers on the modern commercial market, the history of the modern automobile, and especially of the Selden truck, in this particular instance, is told with all the romantic detail found in the pages of the most thrilling tales of fiction.

As early as 1830 and 1835, and even long before that, if industrial history is to be believed, men were trying to solve the problem of successful road travel without the aid of horses. But it was not until 1877 that things came to a head and all that had been done before that date seemed to accumulate in the brain of George B. Selden of Rochester, N. Y., with the result that a successful motor carriage made its appearance to scare the inhabitants of the peaceful countryside out of a few years of growth.

"Strange as it may seem," says the San Francisco Wasp, "and with a touch of the ludicrous, the first combustion engine was operated by explosive vapor supplied by a combination of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and kerosene, mixed by an atomizing jet. Very high power was developed in proportion to weight, but as the explosion took place in an external chamber and the expanding gas had to be introduced into the cylinder proper through a valve, the heat of the explosion invariably fused this valve after a short time and stopped the engine."

FIRST MACHINE RIDICULED

Selden worked out a lubricating system for the engine and also a cooling system. His oil was manufactured from petroleum. The engine alone operated that year of 1877—the gears, steering wheel, clutch, and the rest of the things that really make the car move, being still on paper, though patented from models. And capital was uninterested in such a crazy thing.

Today the Selden truck is a power in commercial work throughout the country. Developing from a puny, smoky carriage, laughed at by a skeptical people, there are today included in its make-up the highest grade units used in truck manufacture in the United States.

The Selden patent was United States patent No. 549160, issued November 5, 1895, covering the gasoline automobile. It expired in 1912, 17 years after date of issue.

Selden filed application for this patent May 8, 1879. The issuance was delayed because Selden was not able to interest anyone in his plan, although he was convinced that the automobile built in accordance with his plan would come into general use.

The Selden patent covered a road vehicle driven by a liquid hydrocarbon gas engine of the compression type in combination with suitable steering gear, propelling wheels, fuel receptacle, clutch or disconnecting device between the power shaft and the propelling wheels, also a carriage body adapted to the conveyance of persons or goods.

SUIT LONG IN COURTS

The patent rights were purchased by the Electric Vehicle company of Hartford, Conn., and they commenced an action against the Winton company, who, after an adverse decision, settled. Following this a suit was brought against the Ford company and Panhard-Levassor.

Owing to delays permitted by the patent law system, the suit dragged through the courts for years, 19,000 pages of testimony and hundreds of exhibits being piled up. The circuit court finally sustained the patent; the defendants appealed and the court of appeals, when the patent was nearly expired, held it valid as the first gasoline automobile—but not infringed.

Selden was held by the courts to be the inventor of the gasoline automobile. The final decision being to the effect that the defendant's automobile used a four cycle type of engine, whereas the patent showed a two cycle. It was held valid only as to the invention and the type of engine used.

The patent had a lasting effect on the motor industry. It resulted in the formation of the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers, comprising practically all of the prominent makers, who established mechanical standards, definite policies and placed the industry on a sound basis.

Petite Maid Uses Side of Car When She Has No Mirror

It happened at Broadway and Morrison, said by some to be the windiest corner in the Rose city. She was just one of the hundreds of the town's prettiest.

She wasn't quite big enough for a vanity case. As she tripped along a large blot of soot floated down the breeze and rested on her nose, paused a moment and spread out like a drop of ink on a piece of blotting paper. The big smoke stack on the Pittock block had committed an unpardonable crime.

A number three shoe came in violent contact with the pavement, and she looked around for a mirror. There wasn't any. Then she smiled, stepped up to a car parked at the curb and rearranged her face by the reflection in the brilliantly polished side. The car chanced to be an Apperson.

Just then the owner came up to the car, saw what was going on, stopped and chuckled to himself, saying in an aside, "I see what they meant when they told me the cars this year have a mirror-like finish."

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U. S. Motor Trucks Soon to Be Shown At New Home Here

A new and permanent location for the salesrooms of U. S. motor trucks has been obtained by E. L. King, local distributor for the carrier for Oregon and Southwest Washington, in the building occupied for some time by Rydman Brothers, bicycle dealers, who are moving to their new building at Williams avenue and East Broadway as soon as their building there can be completed.

The location is not far away from where the company has been making its temporary quarters and is well located for trading purposes on Broadway near Ankeny. The interior of the building will be remodeled, and made suitable for the handling of the big trucks that have recently made their debut here.

E. L. King has been working for the past few days with J. W. Bayard, western representative from the U. S. truck factory at Cincinnati, getting the plans for the new location fully laid out and a sales campaign for putting the truck over in this territory completely lined up. Bayard has left for other points in his big territory, and King is awaiting with some eagerness the departure of Rydman Bros. for their new stamping ground on the east side.

Buntzel Company to Distribute Marvels

L. H. Buntzel & Co., a new firm recently organized here on the row, announces that it will handle the local distribution of Marvel carburetors, in addition to their main line of Buick repairing.

The new firm is composed of Louis Buntzel, president; P. F. Finzer, and F. V. Forbes, who have arranged quarters at 110 Thirteenth street. All are men thoroughly familiar with automobile repairing and have had considerable experience in automobile affairs here in this city.

The Johnson gear shift lock will also be an article of distribution, and the shop will contain equipment for expert Delco work and carbon burning.

Two Vancouver Auto Firms Are Combined

M. L. Kurtzhal, who is well known in the city across the river, and who has been operating a garage and repair shop at 309 Washington street, Vancouver, has joined hands with John J. Edwards, another automobile man in that city. They have formed a partnership, and will operate in the same location under the name of the Dixie Sales company. They will represent the Dixie Flyer in Clarke county and have already received their first carload. Mr. Kurtzhal and Edwards were convinced that the Dixie was a real automobile after driving one from Pendleton to Portland, and in fact theirs was the only car that navigated the Mosier hill at that time.

Breaking Records

Current sales of Fisk tires are breaking all records, the total for January reaching $6,800,000 or at the rate of over $80,000,000 per annum, the turnover projected for this year. To keep pace with sales, production has been pushed up to 11,000 casings a day, exclusive of solid tires, tubes or bicycle business.

SCOUTS FIND NORTH BANK ROAD ROUGH

(Continued From Page One, This Section.)

handy, and running through Vancouver in the early morning hours is no traffic dodging feat, so in good time the members of the party found themselves passing the great high school that is a pride of the city across the river and well on the way out the highway and toward the open country. On beyond the last houses the road takes a dip toward the stream where the fish are born and bred by the state of Washington and where the road commissioners have been lavish with their warning signs of danger ahead if the curves be taken at more than a moderate speed, and then rises again up the hill that used to be a favorite spot for the commandin ogfficer of the irist provisional regiment at Vancouver during the war days to call for double time from the safe security of his horse's back.

AND TROUBLE BEGINS

The stretch of paving reaches to Salmon creek, where the iron bridge spans the stream, and then the trouble begins. The hill is not so bad and for a short distance beyond the road is in fair condition. But at the intersection of the road from Sara the eye is cast along the tangent head where a profuse succession of ruts and old mudholes have been built by winter travel. A turn to the left will lead on to Sara, and there is a long stretch of paving to be enjoyed. If the motorist has no particular end in view other than a day of driving under as pleasant circumstances as possible, it is advised that this route be seized upon without delay. But no such luck for the scouts. Their's was to do or die, and events have proved that they did. But that road! Words known to Noah Webster in his more high-brew moments fail to give an accurate description thereof.

But the country surrounding the road amply made up for any little roughness of travel. There are farm houses scattered along the route and all of them bore the signs of Sunday and activity prior to going to church. In one place a quartet of boys, safely behind the barn and out of sight and earshot of their parental guardians, indulged in an early game of baseball, with the odds for enjoying the game being heavily in favor of the batter, who was giving the two fielders all the exercise they wanted.

FULL OF SUGGESTION

On beyond a man with an axe and a predatory gleam in his eye was approaching the chopping block with a young but exceedingly lively chicken in one hand, his movements full of suggestion and his intentions all too obvious. That family undoubtedly dined on succulent fowl that day and perhaps the preacher of their faith graced the feast.

In another district a farmer with an apparent plan of starting the spring plowing on the morrow was in the implement shed, oil can in hand, busily greasing what machinery he needed for the process and anxiously examining a half-dozen plow shares left over from last year. A dog of uncertain ancestry played the part of an active assistant. Crocusses there were along a path or two, and jonquils and daffodils, braving the frosts of early March and willing to risk their necks to help scare winter away, rose with their yellow and green blossoms and tines here and there. In a fence corner a calf was daintly sampling an old shoe, one eye on the house door and the other on the road, and a mind wrestling with the problem of what distant relative had gone to help make the footwear being thus cast away.

SCENERY IS ATTRACTIVE

As the car nears the brow of the hill above La Center the road changes somewhat in appearance, being patently of last fall's newness, and becomes a trifle smoother. There is a real "S" curve that one takes down the hill toward the town, probably one of the best figures of that sort to be found on the highways in this part of the country. The engineer ran true to form, and the curves are well constructed, the grade is easy, and the surface of a sort that may be subject to argument on both sides as to its smoothness. The long bridge into the town is next reached, and the car runs past the old shingle mill and over the stream where the good ship La Center lies at anchor, nearly wide enough to fill the stream; or else the stream is of such narrowness as to be almost filled by the craft. Visitors may say one thing, the natives of the place another.

ROAD IS BETTER

A glimpse at some new and highly painted farm machinery in front of a store and a run down a lane of curious eyes and La Center is in the rear, the car is climbing the hill road beyond, and one remembers Woodland is the next town. From La Center to Woodland the road is better, consisting of well-packed gravel and clay that makes a good surface and permits a faster and pleasanter pace. The Dort had navigated the bad stretches with credit and on the smooth miles toward Woodland fairly ate up the distance.

Between La Center and Woodland some of the best bits of scenery along the trip may be seen. The road rises up toward the heights and off to the left one may see the Oregon side of the river, separated from the low pond land nearer the road by a fringe of trees bordering the Washington bank. There are coves and sandy beaches in abundance, places to tie up a boat and camp or have a quiet fish far from the maddening crowd's scrambling effort and so forth. The valley seemed to be getting its green cloak on again after the winter of discontent, or perhaps the eyes of the party were a little bit too optimistic. This is new road through here, but the old way may be seen rambling about among the hills and gulleys to the left and right like a tramp very much down at heel and out at elbow.

NEW ROAD REBELS

In one place even the new road had decided that the burden of travel was too great and had started its slide toward the river. A temporary bridge spanned the washout and afforded safe though cautious passage.

A long bridge spans the stream separating Woodland from the rest of that part of the world, and the road swings to the left, over the high viaduct, and so on into the town. The river stretches away to the left and right, the rocks in some cases covered with logs, and one long piece of timber perched rakishly on a permanent boom, a relict of the times of high water. Giving a cold shoulder to the village, for the way does not go through its center, a stretch of concrete leads away to the right, only to be forsaken before a chance to be enjoyed as the highway swings once more to the left and the final lap toward Kalama is under the wheels of the car. The road for a portion of the way is surfaced by creek gravel, taken from the river near Woodland by the insatiable steam shovel, operating on ropes from the steam plant at the point where the traveler leaves the concrete road. This affords dry travel and will perhaps be quite smooth and enjoyable in the course of time. Farther on is the end of this gravel and the real road construction going on for some time in the region of Martin's Bluff is felt beneath the car.

WORD USED ADVISEDLY

The word "felt" is used advisedly, for the highway becomes a succession of bumps, generous in size and making up in height what they lack in depth. The going is soft and rather unpleasant in time of rainy weather, such as we have been having lately. It is easy to see the amount of work that has been done on the stretch. In one place a fill across the low ground has cut off some thousands of yards of travel, and in another half a hill has been moved to give easier access to the wheels of motor cars. Along the railroad a cement wall prohibits too great familiarity with the Union Pacific tracks which parallel the way for a few miles.

After the point of last construction is past, the road becomes slightly better and from about the 40-mile mark on into Kalama shows some improvement. Taking everything into consideration, however, this ruote is not the one advised. When Kalama is reached, the best way to get back is to ferry across the river and take the road from Goble. Of the two, the Oregon route to Goble is the one recommended. North of Kalama the road is undergoing construction to Toledo, at which point the paving begins and the way is in excellent shape from that town to Seattle.

The log is appended:

LOG OF TRIP

0.0	Journal building. Go over Broadway bridge, turn left at Union avenue. Follow travel straight to Interstate bridge.
7.2	Interstate bridge.
8.2	Sixth street, Vancouver. Turn right one block to Main street. Left on Main street.
8.3	Vancouver. Out Main street onto Pacific highway.
14.9	Salmon creek. Follow travel and Pacific highway signs and poles.
27.1	La Center. Through town.
33.0	Woodland. Right.
38.4	Martin's Bluff.
42.9	Kalama. Straight through the town to Carrollton and the north.

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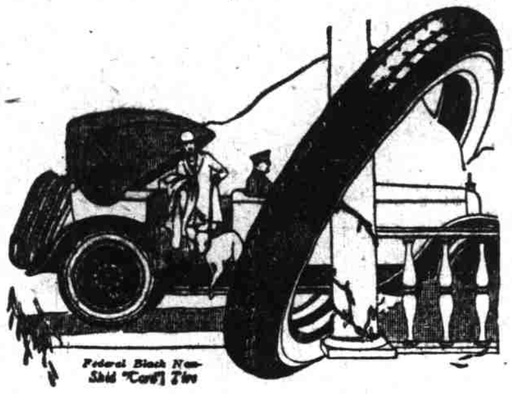

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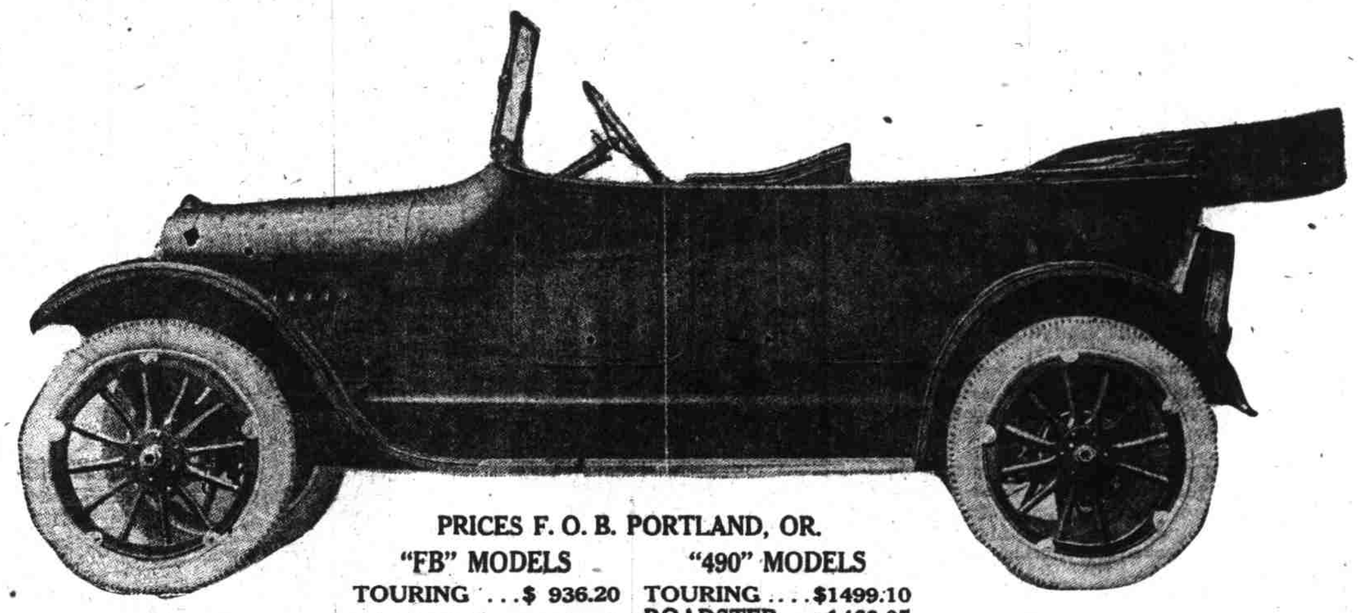

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