

\$1,250,000 Taxi Business!

There are 250 P.&H. Taxicabs in this Picture; Can You Count Them All?



This photo was taken at 5:30 p.m., at 145th Street and Fifth Avenue, as 250 drivers of the day shift bring in their cabs and make their reports. The vehicles are greased, oiled, gassed and then turned over to the 250 men working the night shift.

By D. A. MURPHY

NEW YORK—William H. Peters and Samuel Hamilton started in their partnership of the P. and H. Taxicab Company with three cabs.



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WILLIAM H. PETERS
He's a "tight" young man.

Today they are operating 250 cabs and are proprietors of their own garage.

Originally the partners were chauffeurs but they saw a future in the taxicab business, and jumped into it.

Their first location was at 66th and Amsterdam Streets at the Hudson River Garage. In 1923 they moved to 15 West 140th Street and purchased their own garage with 20 cabs. In 1925 they moved to 143rd Street and increased the number of cabs to 50.

In 1930 they moved to their present location at 140th Street and Fifth Avenue.

In 1931 they became a unit of the Parmalee System operating all over the country with 5,000 cars in New York alone. They had 450 cabs in their unit when with Parmalee.

In June, 1931, they pulled out with their original 250 cabs.

All P. and H. cars are made by the Auburn Company, of Auburn, Indiana, powered by Lycoming engines and represent an investment of \$1,890 per cab.

P. and H. cabs painted yellow trimmed in red are seen moving about the entire city looking for business. New York has no smarter looking taxis. Both colored and white men are employed as drivers.

Tires for these taxicabs cost \$43,000 a year. The General Tire Company rents tires to the partners at 40 cents a cab per day and keeps all tires in repair and renews them when they are worn out.

Gasoline is purchased from the Standard Oil Company. The gas bill last year was \$161,000. The average price is ten cents per gallon. This means that the company used 16,100 gallons during last year.

The company's best year was in

1930 when their gross business amounted to \$1,250,000 in ten months.

They employed two shifts, day and night, of 250 drivers each, with nearly 100 extra men always available. Mechanics, repair men and office force make up an additional 40 employees with a payroll of \$1,400 a week.

\$670,000 in Commissions

Last year over \$670,000 was paid in commissions and salaries to chauffeurs. At 140th Street and Fifth Avenue the company maintains its offices, garage and repair shops. There, automobile parts are replaced and taxis cleaned, painted, greased, polished and checked. There are gas and oil tanks there with a capacity of 6,000 gallons.

Accident insurance carried by the partners which includes liability and



SAMUEL HAMILTON
Employees think him lenient.

repainted and sent out looking like new.

The painter is a former employee of the Ford plant in Detroit, and a large part of the smart appearance of the P. and H. taxis is due to the skill of him and his assistants.

Asked to what they contributed their success, the partners said, "Hard work and sticking to the job."

Like all New York companies, the P. and H. Taxi Company employs supervisors, who, driving Ford cars, travel up and down the streets of New York day and night to see that the cabs are kept moving and that the drivers obey the rules.

If a P. and H. taxicab is seen parked in the street at night with its lights out, as infrequently happens, it is evident that the driver is not on the job or, perhaps, is taking a snooze.

Riding the Family

Also it infrequently happens that taxis are seen on the streets in the daytime with the flag down. This means that the meter is not registering and an investigation will show that the driver has a member of his own family or, perhaps, his sweetheart, inside for a jaunt or a joy ride.

Mr. Peters is a widower and lives with his two daughters, Mary A. and Elizabeth, and his step-son, Forest Grant, at 319 W. 139th Street.

Mr. Hamilton married Miss Martha Coleman, of Virginia, 22 years ago and has two sons, Lloyd, 21, and William, 15, and a daughter, Marjorie, 13.

Lloyd is now working with his father.

property damage costs them, \$10,000 a month.

Accidents vary from one to three a day, for the most part trivial, such as damage of fenders, or smashing a bumper. The insurance companies give the P. and H. drivers the highest rating for efficiency and maintain a special man at P. and H. offices twice a day to take reports of accidents.

Peters Tight

Employees say that Mr. Peters, a little smaller in stature than his partner, is a tight young man and takes no foolishness. An employee who has been dismissed or laid off for some infraction of the company's rule, however, will take his tale of woe to Mr. Hamilton, whom they say, is more lenient and is likely to give him a second chance.

Another joke on the partners is that visitors are shown the Peters car which he uses for private purposes. It's a Lincoln. Standing near it is a small Ford roadster which they say Mr. Hamilton uses for his private purposes. Both partners are kept busy during the time when shifts change and can be seen outside in the office or in the streets in front of the company's building supervising and directing the traffic.

Incoming taxi drivers report to a checker and mark down on their reports the number of gallons of gas consumed, mileage covered and amount taken in.

Bullet-Proof Glass

This report is placed in a drawer and pushed through a bullet-proof glass window into a steel cubical where sits the bookkeeper.

The average driver may cover from 20 to 80 miles a day. His reports to the company vary from \$3 to \$20 to \$25. The driver then turns in the jack and the wrench, tools which he is allotted when he goes out, receives an okay on his work and commission on his receipts and is free to go until the next shift.

Repair Shop

Proudest are the partners of their repair shop where a badly smashed taxicab is provided with new parts,

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