

# Klamath Falls Automobile Dealer Collects, Restores Old Cars For Hobby



LITTLE JILL ECCLES, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Julian Eccles, 220 Conger Avenue, turns to with the polishing cloth on one of her father's old cars. This is a 1911 White, one of a collection of nine ancient automobiles.

**BY JOE RIGERT**  
He stepped on the starter to prod the six cylinders. They immediately jumped into action. The gears meshed and three tons of machine started down the road. We pulled down our goggles and settled back in our leather bucket seats.

The tires hummed happily on the pavement as we cruised along at a phenomenal 40 miles per hour.

Yes, old Dobbin can retire. The automobile is here to stay. This particular vehicle undoubtedly has done its share in contributing to the demise of the hayburner and to the rise of the gas-eater.

It was assembled with loving care back in 1916, when Woodrow Wilson worrying about reelection, and 2nd Lt. Dwight D. Eisenhower of the infantry was thinking of proposing to Mamie Doud.

This automobile, a Pierce-Arrow, was considered the Cadillac of its day. Salesmen probably told their prospective customers of the cast aluminum body and the extra-wide four and one-half-inch tires, with their non-skid tread. And standard equipment included a folding water bag in the tool kit.

But most revolutionary of all was the electric clock on the dashboard.

The cost was about \$7,000, a tidy bundle in those days of the nickel cup of coffee.

The car has traveled 300,000 miles since that time. The motor has needed no major repairs, and the electric clock still runs. So does the automobile.

Its owner is Julian Eccles, who sells new cars for a living, but likes to keep the old ones himself.

Eccles collects old cars like some people collect stamps, or maybe old dollar bills.

It started in 1946 when he acquired the Pierce-Arrow from its original owner in Walla Walla, Washington. He hasn't been able to get over it since, and has had some 30 of the antiques in his possession since then.

At present Eccles has nine cars ranging from a 1911 White to a 1936 Ford. He keeps all of them in running condition, and recently took the Pierce-Arrow on a 900-mile trip.

He averaged 10 miles to the gallon on the nose on that junket, and not a complaint was heard from under the hood. The valves and pistons did their jobs without a murmur.

Eccles buys the cars in various states of disrepair and restores them himself, a job that sometimes takes as much as four years. He usually has to custom-tailor a majority of the parts, which sometimes means practically the entire engine.

At present he is working on a 1921 Stutz and a 1930 Packard Speedster. The latter will be his most valuable car when he is finished with it. Only five cars of this make are known to be in existence.

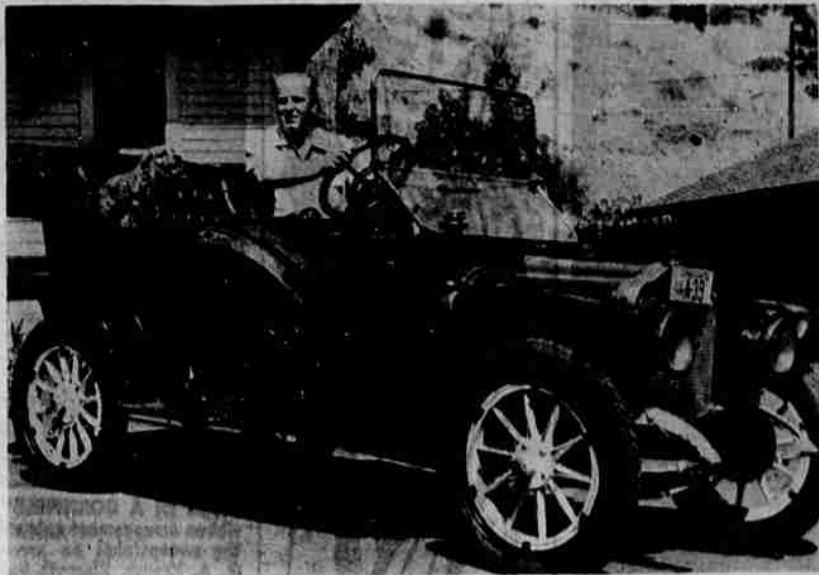
The Stutz represents the last model car to have the right-hand drive, a throwback to the horse and buggy days.

"The left-hand drive was introduced in 1907 with the Model T Ford," Eccles revealed. "But Pierce-Arrow still kept the old style because it was easier that way for a chauffeur to open the door for his passengers. Stutz kept it because they maintained that it was better for racing."

The oldest car Eccles ever owned was a 1908 Chalmers, which he has since sold. He also had a 1928 Rolls Royce at one time, worth around \$20,000. Eccles belongs to just about every old-car association in the country. He is a member of the Horseless Carriage Club of California, the Antique Auto Association of Pennsylvania, the Veteran Motor Car Club of New England, and the Historic Auto Club of Portland.

He recently drove to a meeting of the latter, which was attended by 65 old model cars and their proud owners. The Horseless Carriage Club intends to make a run to Gearheart in September, and Eccles will be chugging along with the others.

The reporter and photographer Don Kettler looked longingly at



READY TO ROLL is Julian Eccles and his dog, Taffy, in this vehicle of rather old vintage. It's a 1911 White and still has right-hand drive and a bulb horn. Eccles keeps his cars in perfect running condition and often takes them on trips. The dog likes to travel, too.

the shiny old Pierce-Arrow as Eccles told of his hobby.

"How about a ride," he asked. The invitation fell upon receptive ears.

"This engine is only rated at 58 horsepower," he explained as we cruised along the roadway. "But it actually develops about 85 horsepower by today's standards, because in those days they figured it according to displacement."

We spotted some smoke in the distance and decided to investigate.

"She needs some new timing gears," he said as we sat back to

enjoy the comfort of self-propelled transportation. "She's getting awful noisy."

He glanced at the temperature gauge on the hood and deduced that the radiator was getting thirsty.

"Yes, they even had directional signals in those days," he remarked as he flipped a lever and turned into a service station for some water.

We were soon back on the road and off to the fire. It isn't every day you cover a fire in a 1916 Pierce-Arrow.

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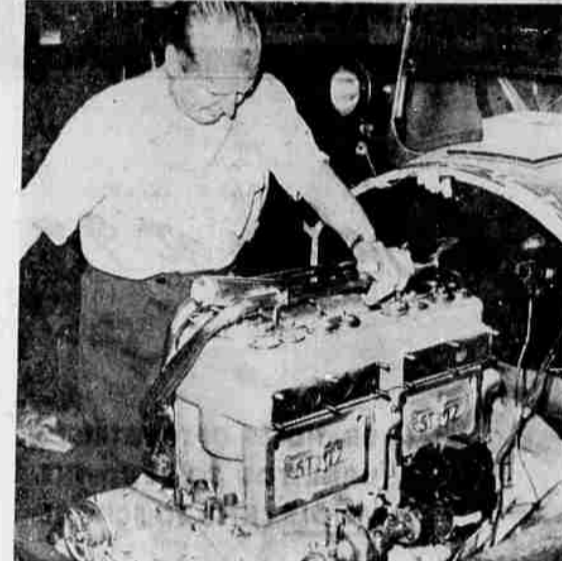
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THEY DON'T MAKE ENGINES like that anymore, a fact which Julian Eccles is well aware. His hobby is that of restoring old automobiles, which usually means tooling most of the parts which must be replaced. One car has taken him as long as four years to finish. This is the motor of a 1921 Stutz, which has only four cylinders, but 16 valves, four of them for each cylinder.



THE OLD AND THE NEW are apparent in this photograph by Herald and News photographer Don Kettler. Jill Eccles surveys the non-skid tire on her father's 1916 Pierce-Arrow, the car that started the hobby for Julian Eccles, who has since had 30 cars. He has nine in his collection now. This wheel has the old wooden spokes.

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### Helping Hand Society Meets

MALIN—Sylvia Holl and Emma Morelock were re-elected president and secretary treasurer, respectively, at Wednesday's meeting of the Helping Hand Society of Malin. Rose Bailey was named vice president.

The meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Mildred (Loyal) Lovens with 17 members and two guests present. Guests included Mrs. Maude Burgess of Eureka, California, sister of Mrs. Gert Johnson, and Mrs. J. W. Godman of Santa Rosa who is visiting at the Hubert Morelock home.

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