

NEW ENGLAND CLASSIC QUARTERLY & BULLETIN



Historic Gathering of Kissel Speedsters at Greenfield Village, Michigan September 11-12, 2010.



CLASSIC CAR CLUB
OF AMERICA

NEW ENGLAND REGION

THIRD QUARTER 2020



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Director's Message:

On July 24, 2020 the car world changed for that is the day we lost Bob Bahre. He was known to many as the owner of Oxford Plains Speedway, Oxford, Maine and the man who built New Hampshire International Speedway in Loudon, NH. To our Region it was Home to "The Vintage Celebration" and "The Elegance". For 17 years, members from our Region gathered for "Vintage". Some raced and others who attended were judges for "The Elegance" an invitation only Concours that took place at NHIS. Bob and his family were perfect hosts to all in attendance with their famous welcome Turkey Dinner with all the fixings the night before the Concours to the show day in which they shared their private sky box for attendees to watch the vintage racing and enjoy the fabulous lunch and beverages. And for those who were showing their cars, who could forget that Bob had allowed them to take a parade lap around the "Magic Mile" the cars stopped on the finish line to be presented an Award by his wife Sandy Bahre. These were not the only time we were their guests. Several Classic Car Club of America CARavans visited his Car Barn on Paris Hill and were hosted for lunches and personal tours of his collection. The most recent for our New England Region was in 2016 and many of our members still recount their visit as one of the best.

Several members of our Region gathered at Oxford Plains Speedway for his funeral and we were hosted again to a very personal remembrance of Bob not only by the slide show of photos throughout his life and achievements but we were invited to hear about the man Bob was as told by the Catholic Bishop, Deeley, Mike Helton, Vice Chairman of NASCAR, New England Race Car Driver, Ricky Craven and Ken Squire, National NASCAR Announcer. All of these people recounted the consistent theme that Bob used his success to for the good of those around him and for years to come that success will continue to benefit many.

As the hearse took Bob for his final lap around the track we waved our small checkered flags and the Brad Paisley/Dolly Parton song played:

*When I get where I'm going
On the far side of the sky
The first thing that I'm gonna do
Is spread my wings and fly...
Yeah, when I get where I'm going
There'll be only happy tears
I will shed the sins and struggles
I have carried all these years
And I'll leave my heart wide open
I will love and have no fear
Yeah, when I get where I'm going
Don't cry for me down here
But when I get where I'm going
And I see my Maker's face
I'll stand forever in the light
Of His amazing grace
Yeah when I get where I'm going
Oh when I get where I'm going
There'll be only happy tears
Hallelujah
I will love and have no fear
When I get where I'm going
Yeah, when I get where I'm going*

Rest in Peace,
— Jeff

Editor's Notes:



Staying Positive has its advantages. Your mind thinks it's sunny and warm every day and there is always wine in our glasses.

— Heidi Ann



TECHNICAL NOTES

Of all the “how to deal with the pandemic” advice so far, no one has recommended that we periodically start our collector cars.

If people aren’t going out at all, the first time they try to start their cars, there will be a lot of dead batteries -- and no one to jump them.

So plan to take your car for a ride once a week until the COVID-19 crisis is over.

There are several good reasons for this.

1. It will keep the battery charged up.
2. When you drive it you keep the moving parts lubricated.
3. By moving the car you will avoid creating flat spots on your tires
4. It will deter rodents from taking up residence in your engine compartment or interior.
5. Taking a ride is good for your health and even better chance you will get an ice cream for the ride home.
6. Finally, taking a ride gives us a much needed break and reminds us there is more to life than our four walls and the garage.

Adapted from Internet Car Talk Weekly blog



2020 Events

September 27, 2020

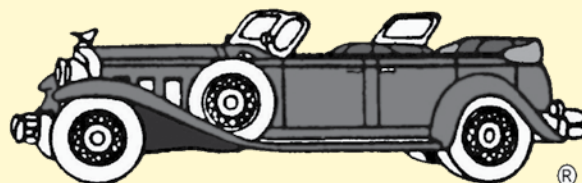
The Boston Cup Boston Commons, MA

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BUYING MY FIRST CLASSIC

By Ryan Brown



Heading North

Aug 18, 2017 three days after I turned 28 on an extremely hot day in Virginia, I bought my first full classic. The journey began about a month prior on a random night of the week texting a friend of mine from upstate NY. He owns a small restoration shop that specializes in early brass cars and I had been telling him how I would like to buy a car pre 1930. I have always loved the simple nature of cars built in the nickel era there is something about a wooden steering wheel that just pulls you back in time. So, my friend texts me back saying he is going to be driving down to Virginia the next week to look at a car he wanted to buy. But there is also what he describes as a Kissel Kar up for sale as well. Now at that point I haven't even heard of a Kissel Kar so out came google to give me some insight. A few seconds later he sends me a picture of a rust colored primed car torn apart with stuff stacked on top of it. So, I ask him what is the deal with it? He tells me it's a 1917 four passenger roadster which was in the middle of a restoration before the owner had to sell all his cars off. My friend ends up going down there to look at both cars and I'm delighted to hear that the Kissel is actually in pretty good shape considering.

At this point I'm pretty excited about the car but a price hasn't been set so I'm not even sure if I can afford it. Lucky for me we decide to try to package buy the cars with one offer, the owner puts out a number and it seemed very

fair so we agree. Ultimately my friend decides he doesn't want the other car and I agree to still buy the Kissel at what I consider well below market value. Now all there was left is wait until I had spare time to go buy it and was fortunate the owner was fine with holding the car for me.

The week of the 2017 Pebble Beach Concours D'Elegance was my start to my journey south from Maine to Virginia. The long drive went smoothly and that Friday morning I found myself at a small warehouse on

what the locals had said was the hottest day of the year so far. As I made my way to the very back of the warehouse, I finally see the Kissel for the first time. At 100 years old it definitely was a full-blown project car. But the Kissel had many positives, it had recently had all the structural wood redone it still retained its original sheet metal the engine was rebuilt and even had new wood wheels. So, to say the least I wasn't disappointed of my purchase. Then came the hard part of the day, dragging it from the very back of this building out to the trailer. I came prepared with a floor jack and wooden dollies since I knew the tires were not good enough to roll easily. With a lot of effort, I finally got it close enough to winch it into the trailer and load up all its parts. I must say at this point in time with the temp in the high 90's and the humidity probably about the same I was drenched and tired. Good thing for the AC in the truck and some spare clothes I survived. After a quick drive to North Carolina to visit a good friend from college for lunch and a beer I was headed back North. About 100 miles in during a checkup on the car I realized I had a few issues to deal with. Turns out the car was just thrown together to look complete and nothing was bolted in or down. The body had shifted about a foot to one side since there were no bolts holding it to the frame. Also, the rear axles shafts would walk out of the housing since the retainers at the brake drums were not on the car. So,

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I can almost hear the engine come to life

all this meant every time I would stop for fuel, I would have to pick the body up and set it back over a little bit and jack the car up and slide an axle shaft back in. Which wasn't too bad and ultimately the rest of the trip went great, though I probably should have taken more time to enjoy the drive. But the feeling of seeing the Welcome to Maine sign knowing I had my very own Kissel Kar in the trailer felt pretty good.

Now that the Kissel was home I had to start reaching out to other owners and make some connections. Kissel's are considered a very rare car with very few remaining, out of all years from 1906-1931 only 200 survive and only about 120 are complete cars with only two four passenger roadsters. My Kissel was a west coast car and had bounced from WA, and OR over the years before being sold and landing in Virginia.

About a year after I bought mine, I had contacted the owner of the other car which was in Montana. After a long conversation with him I learned that the two cars over the last 10 years had almost become one car. Both cars were missing a few things but the two owners could never reach an agreement. He had also told me that the body damage to the rear

of mine was caused by a building that fell partially down which actually lead to the beginning of its restoration. We had ended our conversation with him saying his car was for sale but I didn't have the means to buy it nor really needed two of them. My car when I bought it was about 95% complete and only missing a few hard to find parts.

At this point in time I had made a good contact with collector that owns 9 complete cars and I knew he is always looking for parts or cars. I sent him the info on the Montana car and he ended up buying it. Unfortunately, the Montana car which was in far worse shape is no longer and has since been used for parts for other restorations. But some good has come from that and some of that car will help me complete mine in the future. As of right now the parts search has been in full swing and hopefully in the very near future, I will begin the process of getting this Kissel Kar back to its former glory and adding to its history.



The rear view



THE KISSEL MOTOR CAR: KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

by Lynn Kissel

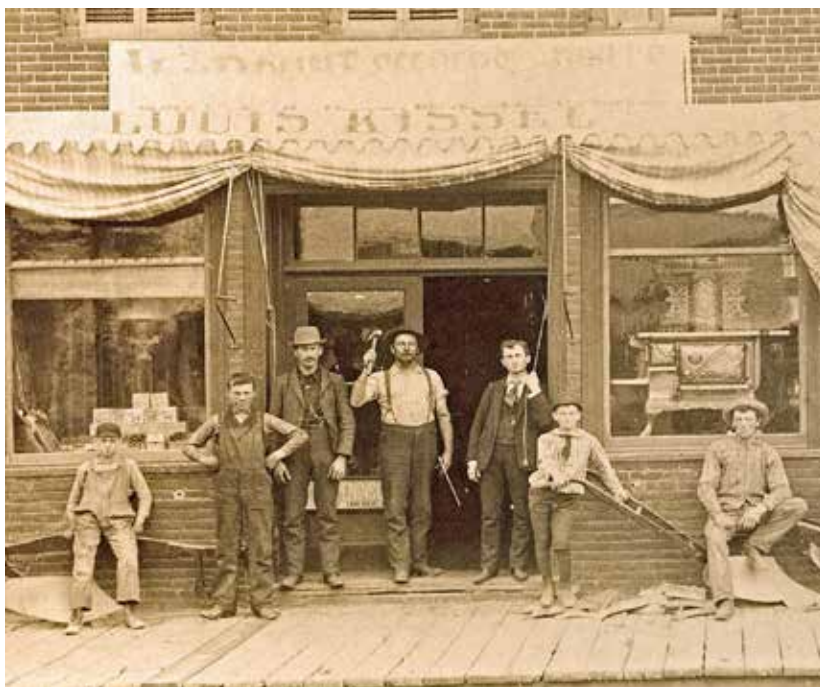
At a recent concours at which I was exhibiting my 1924 Kissel Speedster, a spectator walked up to me and said that he thought Kissel cars were like unicorns, written about, fabled to exist but never actually seen. I guess that the individual was in his 50s and clearly knowledgeable of collector cars. This, the man told me, was the first Kissel he had ever seen!

At least he had heard of Kissel cars. Based on my interactions with a more general audience, I suspect that fewer than one in 50 has ever even heard of the marque. When driving one of my two Kissels on public roads, I am invariably asked, "What is it?" I come to expect the question but have not developed a good, concise response. I typically say, "It's a Kissel!" But from the puzzled looks, frowns or blank stares I'm sure that my answer isn't satisfying or understood. I often follow this with a question of my own, "What's a Kissel?" If they stick around after this, it gives me an opening for a longer discussion; depending on their interest and my energy level, my lecture is of variable length. As many of my friends will tell you, when it comes to Kissels, I'm full of it!

Thanks to automobile organizations like the Classic Car Club of America, the Horseless Carriage Club of America and others, and a small but passionate group of Kissel owners, we manage to keep the memory of Kissel alive. The KisselKar Klub is a loose-knit organization of Kissel owners with about 200 names on its roster. With the active support of the Wisconsin Automotive Museum, the Klub publishes a newsletter called the Kisselgraph and has a meeting once every several years. Our next meeting is scheduled for June 19, 2011 at the museum to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

The following paragraphs are a modest expansion of my usual "What's a Kissel" sermon. It provides a brief sketch of the founding and history of the Kissel Motor Car Company. If you are interested in more depth, please consult the Kissel histories of Husting, Duerksen, Zahm⁶ and Quandt.⁷ (Please see the sidebar accompanying this article for more information on the Kissel Speedster, the focus of a recent historic gathering in Michigan.)

Part of a wave of German immigrants who came to the U.S. starting in 1848, Conrad Kissel (b.1812, d. 1872) and family emigrated from Alsace to Addison Township in Washington County, Wisconsin in 1857. His son Ludwig "Louis" Kissel



Louis Kissel's hardware store c1890. From the left: William L. Kissel, Wilber Myear, Adolph P. Kissel, Louis Holce, Otto P. Kissel, George A. Kissel and Peter Melius. In about sixteen years, these four Kissel brothers will form the Kissel Motor Car Company with their father, Louis. (Lynn Kissel)

moved to Hartford, Wisconsin, in 1883 where he owned a hardware store and farm implement business.

In 1890, Louis created a partnership with his four sons (Adolph P., Otto P., William L. and George A.) and subsequently purchased the Hartford Plow Works with four large buildings involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm machinery. In addition to distributing engines from other manufacturers, the Kissels developed their own gasoline engine. By 1906, the Louis Kissel family was also involved in home building and sales, with a stone quarry and sand pit and facilities for milling their own finished lumber.

In 1906, Louis, his four sons and U.S. District Attorney H. K. Butterfield incorporated the Kissel Motor Car Company.⁹ The new auto company planned to spend the rest of 1906 perfecting its car and gearing up for full-scale production in 1907. It was reported in a local newspaper account that Mr. E. A. Savage of Milwaukee, a well-known traveling salesman for the Robert Rohn Company, bought the first runabout produced by Kissel. He must have been impressed. He later quit his traveling-salesman job to become the Kissel representative in Milwaukee.

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Kissel soon landed a contract with the McDuffee Automobile Company of Chicago. Under the terms of the agreement, McDuffee would take the entire output of Kissel for 1907 (to be 100 cars or more) and serve as the sole sales agent. McDuffee made no changes to the mechanicals of the car, but the body was manufactured from designs supplied by McDuffee. The first cars (probably demonstrators) were delivered in late December of 1906,¹⁰ with volume deliveries starting in March of 1907.¹¹

The 1907 KisselKar Model "C" sold for \$1,850 f.o.b. Hartford. For an amount claimed to be two-thirds of what other manufactures charged for a vehicle of similar equipment you could acquire a 2,250-lb, 98"-wheelbase, five-passenger touring car with a 30 hp four-cylinder engine. The 4-1/2" x 4-3/4" cylinders were cast in pairs. The car had a three-speed-forward/one-speed-reverse sliding-gear transmission, an open driveshaft and full-floating rear axle with internal and external brakes at the rear wheels. These were reasonably aggressive features for a first offering from the young automobile company.

Production for Kissel model-year 1908 started in July 1907 when the McDuffee contract was being completed, setting a pattern for future years. This large half-year offset between calendar year and model year is a source of constant confusion for students¹² of the Kissel Motor Car Company.

Kissel was fortunate to have two key personnel in place early in the life of the company. Herman Palmer joined the company as an ordinary laborer in 1906. Trained as an engineer at the University Of Cologne, Germany, his talents and inventive



The Louis Kissel family circa 1895. Louis (1839-1908) and Catherine (1852-1943) are seated. Standing behind them are their six children, from the left, William L. (1879-1972), Louis (1870-1901), Emma (1873-1973), Adolph P. (1869-1946), Pauline (1875-1960), Otto P. (1872-1959) and George A. (1881-1943).



The 1907 KisselKar Model "C." For \$1850 f.o.b. Hartford, you could acquire this 30 H.P., four-cylinder (cast in pairs, 4-1/2" x 4-3/4" bore x stroke), 98" W.B., three-speed, open drive shaft, 2250 lb, 5-passenger motor car with internal and external rear brakes. McDuffee Auto Company, Chicago and Milwaukee, was the sole sales agent. (From a 1907 Kissel sales brochure)

semi-touring, semi-racer, coupe and limousine). The Stewart vacuum fuel pump, destined to become ubiquitous in automobiles through the 1920s, was developed by Webb Jay in Kissel shops.

Up until the Great War (World War I) each year's production was generally an increase from that a year before, peaking at about 1,600 cars per year in 1917.¹³

While Kissel produced its first trucks as early as 1908, these initial offerings were special bodies on car chassis. By 1912, Kissel had expanded to a full line of dedicated truck chassis

genius quickly became evident and he soon became head of engineering.

Of equal importance were the services of J. Frederick "Fritz" Werner, son of a master carriage maker. Fritz trained for seven years as a coachbuilder in Germany. After working at the Opel works in Russelsheim, Germany, then with Studebaker in the U.S., Werner joined the Kissel staff in 1908.

The fortunes and offerings from Kissel quickly expanded. A 60 hp six-cylinder engine was introduced in 1909 and body styles on multiple wheelbases proliferated. A double-drop frame (bump-up over axles) in 1911 allowed for lowering the body. In 1912 Kissel offered cars with 30-, 40- and 50 hp four-cylinder and 60 hp six-cylinder engines on four wheelbases ranging from 116-132" in six body styles (5- and 7-passenger touring,

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of up to 156" with ratings of 1,500 lb., 1½, 2, 3, 4 and 5 tons. For the Great War, Kissel was awarded two separate contracts to build 2,000 and 1,500 FWD trucks¹⁴ for the U.S. Army. The 1,500-truck contract was cancelled before it could be completed due to the end of the War.

Electric starters were introduced in 1913, one year after the pioneering introduction by Cadillac. In 1914 Kissel converted to left-hand drive and all electric lights. Kissel's early engines were all square (bore equals stroke) or nearly square, with cylinders cast in pairs. This basic design changed in 1914 when Kissel perfected en-bloc casting (cylinder block cast as a single piece) and moved to long-stroke designs. This new six would be refined in subsequent years and was used through 1930.

In 1915, Kissel introduced a practical design for a car with a removable hardtop. Dubbed "The All-Year Car", Kissel would eventually be awarded a patent for this innovation. At a reasonable additional cost, the removable hardtop allowed an owner to combine the desirable attributes of a touring car and sedan in a single vehicle.

Several important changes came with the end of the Great War. In 1918 the company dropped the "Kar" from its brand name and became known simply as "Kissel" as the in-your-face Germanic spelling did not set well with the mood of the public. The company logo and trademark radiator emblems now featured the new, simplified brand name over a background featuring the fleet-footed Roman god, Mercury.

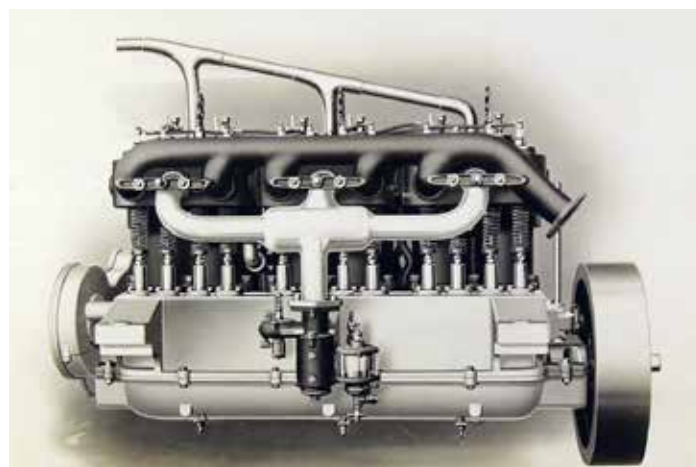
An important redesign of the cars would take the company stylistically through 1928. The new styling (horse-collar radiator shell, hood line straight to base of windshield, rolled bicycle-style fenders) was Kissel's interpretation of designs brought to the firm by New York dealer Conover T. Silver. These changes resulted in very stylish vehicles destined to become Full Classics®.

Kissel introduced optional four-wheel hydraulic brakes in 1924, relatively early compared with many other automotive manufacturers. These brakes became standard equipment on their cars in 1925.

In the mid 1920s the automotive industry was moving to eight-cylinder engines. Kissel responded by introducing eights to its line starting in 1925. While called a Kissel engine, the eight-cylinder engine was created from a Lycoming block and crankshaft to which Kissel added its own head, Lynite pistons and rods, an oversized oil pump and 12-quart aluminum oil pan. Kissel took great pains to balance the moving components to create smooth-running engines.



*The Kissel factory in Hartford, Wisconsin, circa 1909.
(Wisconsin Automotive Museum)*



Kissel introduced a 60-H.P., six-cylinder engine in 1909. Cylinders were cast in pairs and the engine was square with a bore equal to its stroke of 4-3/4". (From a 1910 Kissel salesman book)



The 1910 KisselKar Delivery Wagon. Kissel first trucks appeared in 1908 with specialized bodies on a car chassis. In 1910 Kissel introduced its first trucks on specialized chassis. By 1912 the Kissel truck line extended up to a 5-ton, 156" chassis. (Wisconsin Automotive Museum.)

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3 Ton Truck with Packers Body



3 Ton Truck with Express Body



3 Ton Brewers Truck



3 Ton Truck with closed Body



3 Ton Truck with Special Stake Body



3 Ton Truck with Furniture Body



3 Ton Brewers Truck



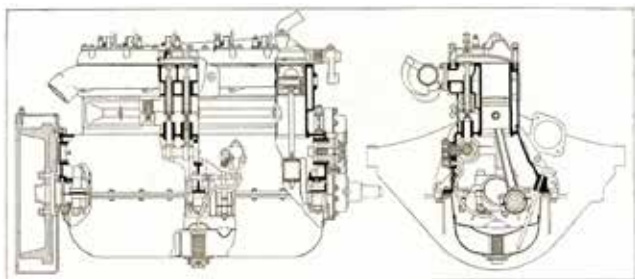
3 Ton Truck with Furniture Body

The 1912 KisselKar 3-Ton Trucks. These trucks had a 50 H.P., four-cylinder engine (cylinders cast in pairs, 4-7/8" x 5" bore x stroke) and a 4-speed transmission on a 144" wheelbase. (From a 1912 Kissel sales brochure)

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Kissel adopted en-bloc casting and a long-stroke design for the new 4-48 engine introduced in 1914. With refinements over the years, this basic design was used by Kissel through 1928. Pictured is a 3-1/2" x 5" (bore x stroke) 52 H.P. engine used in the 1917 Kissel "Hundred Point Six." (*The Automobile*, June 22, 1916, p. 1128)



In 1915, Kissel introduced the "All-Year Car." The optional glass encased hardtop converted a touring car to a sedan. (From a 1915 Kissel sales brochure)



The 1918 Kissel Silver Special Speedster. Popularly known as a "Gold Bug," the bicycle fenders, straight hood to base of windshield and horse-collar radiator shell would be major Kissel design elements through 1928. (Wisconsin Automotive Museum)



Powered with a 71 H.P. eight, this 1927 Kissel limousine ambulance listed at \$4650, f.o.b. Hartford. (From a 1927 Kissel sales brochure)



A 1926 Kissel 8-75 Brougham Sedan. With a 139" wheelbase and 7-passenger seating, this handsome sedan is a Full Classic.™ (From a 1907 Kissel sales brochure)



From 1910-1928, Kissel used 3" round emblems, artistically placed off center on the radiators, to help identify their vehicles. The winged emblem on the left was used c1910-c1912. The emblem in the center was used c1912-1918. The emblem on the right was used for 1918-1928. (Lynn Kissel)

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Kissel had been using the advertising slogan “custom built” since at least 1918 and would continue to use it through to the end, and explained this by arguing that its cars were out of the ordinary and were built as if one had acquired them from a custom chassis, motor and body builder. No doubt that Kissel was manufacturing exceptional and quite attractive vehicles and that the company was willing to do various customizations as might be requested by a customer. Yet the cars were produced from a standard catalog. Hugo Pfau has written an article arguing that the efforts of Kissel’s body shop was indeed comparable to some of the larger custom body shops of the 1920s.¹⁵

While the period from 1906 to 1918 was one of expansion for Kissel, the 1920s were a continuing struggle. Kissel, like other manufacturers, experienced trouble returning to civilian manufacturing after the War. Severe recessions devastated Kissel production in 1921 (793), 1922 (561) and in 1924 (898). Production was up again in 1925 (1,406) and peaked in 1926 (1,972) than began a continuing and relentless slide toward oblivion.

Along the way Kissel tried to stem the slide in sales in several ways. One was an increased emphasis on professional vehicles. With a focus in 1927 on a series of quite beautiful and elegant hearses, limousine ambulances, buses and trucks, the company tried in vain to survive. In 1928 Kissel would build elegant National-Kissel funeral cars; in 1929 the firm began building taxicabs, buses and trucks for Bradfield Motors.

In 1929, Kissel passenger cars were redesigned and a 126 hp eight was introduced. Now called White Eagles, using a name that Kissel used for a 1928 special trim line, the still-lower year-over-year sales of 701 cars and 198 professional cars and trucks must have been a great disappointment.

By 1930, Kissel was also involved in a deal with Moon and New Era Motors to build front-wheel-drive Ruxton cars of which Kissel completed 26. Funding problems for all three companies soon led each to collapse. For Kissel the end came September 19, 1930 when Kissel ceased production and went into voluntary receivership.

From our vantage point in the early part of the 21st Century, it’s clear how difficult it would have been for Kissel to survive as producer of fine automobiles. The Great Depression would kill many a car company as the public bought fewer vehicles and demanded better value from those they did buy. Kissel was being squeezed from below by mass-produced vehicles and squeezed from above by other luxury makes, some of which would soon be out of business themselves.

While Kissel could not survive the tsunami that was overtaking the hand-built automotive industry, it still seems sad to me that

these craftsmen disappeared from the scene. Recently, I was standing next to my 1924 Kissel and discussing it with some admiring passersby. They wondered aloud why they didn’t build cars like this anymore. Paraphrasing something I heard elsewhere, “They didn’t stop making them,” I said. “We stopped buying them, unwilling to pay for the labor-intensive efforts.”

References:

You should try saying “Kissel” across traffic at a light or in a parking lot; it’s difficult to enunciate the relatively soft “K” so that it is understood. Many people shout back “Tissel?” or some other variation.

2 Dale Anderson is executive director of the KisselKar Klub and of the Wisconsin Automotive Museum, 262-673-7999, <http://wisconsinautomuseum.com>, info@wisconsinautomuseum.com, 147 North Rural Street, Hartford, Wisconsin 53027-1407.

3 The KisselKar Klub’s newsletter has been published since 1961, adopting its current name from a Great War (World War I) newsletter. The original Kisselgraph was published in seven issues in 1918. Between the flag and folio of the front page was this dedication, “Edited and printed in Hartford by Hartford Boys in the Kissel Factory for Hartford Boys in cantonments and overseas, fighting the righteous fight for God and Country.”

4 E. E. Hustung, “25 year history Kissel,” *Antique Automobile* 25, No.5 (1961) 308-24, 354; Gene Hustung, “The Kissel Kaper,” *Automobile Quarterly* 9, No.3 (1971) 318-41.

5 Menno Duerksen, “Free Wheeling,” *Cars & Parts* 15, No.2 (1971) 71-75; *ibid.* No.3 (1971) 65-77.

6 Karl S. Zahm, “A History of the Classic Kissel,” *The Classic Car* 37, No.2 (1989) 36-47.

7 Val V Quandt, *The Classic Kissel Automobile* (Hartford, WI: Kissel Graph Press, 1990)

8 My great-great-grandfather Joseph Henry Kissel (b. 1822, d. 1892) emigrated from Alsace to Western New York in 1850. I’m told that a modern Alsatian phone book lists eight families with the Kissel surname, making it likely that I’m a distant relative of the Hartford Kissels. On the other hand, if we go back far enough, you and I are related, too, assuming your family originates on this planet!

9 “New Incorporations,” *The Horseless Age* (June 20, 1906) p. 940.

10 “Minor Mention,” *The Horseless Age* (Dec. 26, 1906) p. 941.

11 “Kissel Motor Car Co.,—Kissel Kar,” *Motor Age* (Feb. 7, 2007) p. 58.

12 Me!

13 *Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805-1942*, Beverly Rae Kimes, Henry Austin Clark, Jr., 3rd ed. (Kruse: Iola, 1996)

14 Trucks designed by the Four Wheel Drive Auto Company, Clintonville, Wisconsin.

15 “Custom Built Kissel,” Hugo Pfau, *Cars & Parts* 18, No.5 (Apr., 1975) p. 122-126.



GOLD RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN MICHIGAN!

By Lynn Kissel, Ronald L. Hausmann & Ken MacKinnon, Jr.

Of the fewer than 40 cars known to still exist, no less than ten Kissel Speedsters gathered at Greenfield Village, Michigan September 11-12, 2010. Popularly known as “Gold Bugs” this was the largest gathering of these rare and unique cars since the 1920s, an event that likely will not be repeated in our lifetimes or perhaps ever again.

Our historic gathering grew from the plans of Michigan residents Ronald Hausmann and Ken MacKinnon, Jr. to participate with their Gold Bugs at the 2010 Old Car Festival. Ron took the lead in organizing our meeting and contacted other Speedster owners around the world. While several additional cars and owners had hoped to participate, the following ten cars were proudly exhibited at the show.



The Owners

- 1920 Model 6-45 owned by Hyman Ltd. Classic Cars, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1921 Model 6-45 owned by Peter Heller, Chagrin Falls, Ohio
- 1923 Model 6-45 owned by Ronald Hausmann, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
- 1923 Model 6-55 owned by Albert Nippert, Schohaire, New York
- 1924 Model 6-55 owned by Lynn Kissel, Livermore, California
- 1925 Model 6-55 owned by DeWayne Ashmead, Fruit Heights, Utah
- 1925 Model 8-75 owned by John Quam, Montara, California
- 1925 Model 8-75 owned by Ted Stahl, Gross Pointe Woods, Michigan
(represented at the show by Bill Sherwood, curator at the Stahl Automotive Foundation)
- 1927 Model 8-75 owned by Ken MacKinnon, Jr., Freeland, Michigan
- 1927 Model 8-65 owned by Mark Thomas, Birmingham, Michigan

Cars are pictured on Front Cover of this publication

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Held on the grounds of the Henry Ford museum, Greenfield Village, Michigan, the Old Car Festival is annually filled with the sights, sounds and smells of hundreds of authentic vehicles from the 1890s through 1932. Billed as America's longest-running antique car show, this year the festival celebrated its 60th anniversary with 620 vehicles (520 cars plus 100 trucks) being displayed. The event organizers honored the Kissel Speedster owners with preferred parking beside the Town Hall adjoining the Village Green.

The show started strong Saturday but the crowds thinned when a gentle but steady rain settled over the village later in the afternoon. It was hard to dampen spirits Sunday as the Kissel Speedster owners moved to the Village Green for a group photo. Their efforts were further rewarded when Al Nippert, Lynn Kissel and Ron Hausmann were awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards, respectively, in the 1919-1924 class, and DeWayne Ashmead was awarded a 1st place in the 1925-1929 class. Entrants were evaluated in five-year bins across all the vehicles being judged at the show.

The following paragraphs provide some historical perspective on our historic gathering.

The most famous Kissel model is undoubtedly the Speedster, a sporty roadster featuring "racer cut" sides and a bumble-bee or turtle-back rear deck. This car was the result of Kissel's engineering and interpretation of a design suggested by C. T. Silver.

Conover T. Silver was a New York City auto dealer with a flair for style. In 1914 he rebodied a Willys-Knight which later became a production model called the Silver

Knight. In 1917 he took a new design to Kissel that was introduced in 1918 as the Silver Special series. Kissel produced three models bearing Silver's name and styling, a Speedster, a Tourster and a seven-passenger Touring car. Styling elements of the Silver Specials were a new "Fiat-type" radiator, low-placed headlights, a hood line that ran straight to the base of the windshield and close-fit bicycle-style fenders. Making a big splash at the New York auto show, the designs were a great success and Silver's styling touches would influence Kissel vehicles through the 1920s.

"Gold Bug" is a popular name coined in 1919 for the Kissel Speedster, a production model that was manufactured for model years 1918-1931. William W. "Brownie" Rowland, an automotive writer for the Milwaukee Journal, devised a promotion that featured the car. Driving a chrome-yellow Kissel Speedster around Wisconsin for a month, he sought to call attention for the need to improve the poor roads, inviting his readers to name the car he used. A young girl allegedly coined the name Gold Bug referring to the car's color and shape. The Kissel Motor Car Company never used this name as an official designation for the car but the moniker has stuck in the imagination of the motoring public and is associated with the car to this day.

Popular with movie stars and other celebrities, the earliest Speedsters had pull-out seats built into the body in front of the rear fenders. Later models replaced these outrigger seats with fittings to strap a golf bag to each rear fender. Starting in 1925, four-passenger Speedster models were offered with a rumble seat in place of the storage compartment in the rear deck.



Lynn Kissel



1927 Model 8-75 owned by Ken MacKinnon, Jr., Freeland, Michigan

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*1923 Model 6-45
owned by Ronald Hausmann, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan*



Kissel Pedal Kars

Famous Kissel Speedsters owners included Fatty Arbuckle (comedian), Bebe Daniels (actress), Ralph DePalma (racecar champion), Eddie Duchin (band leader), Amelia Earhart (aviator), Douglas Fairbanks (actor), Greta Garbo (actress), Gladys George (actress), Ruby Keeler (actress), William S. Hart (actor), Al Jolson (singer), Mabel Normand (actress), Mary Pickford (actress) and Rudy Vallee (singer). Amelia Earhart's car is part of the collection at the Forney Museum of Transportation in Denver, Colorado. In 1925, Amelia drove from San Francisco to Boston with her mother in her Speedster which she called the "Yellow Peril." Fatty Arbuckle's car is currently being restored in Virginia. Point Six." (The Automobile, June 22, 1916, p. 1128)

Note: "The Kissel Motor Car and Gold Recently Discovered in Michigan" were previously published in: The Classic Car, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Winter 2010), published quarterly by the Classic Car Club of America, Inc., "Used with permission.



The rain didn't dampen our spirits



CLASSIC CAR CLUB
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THE NOR'EASTER

— MEMBERSHIP NEWS —

By Joe Gildea

Remembering Bob Bahre Racing Pioneer and Family Man



Recently, the New Hampshire and Maine communities lost a man who was a pioneer in the world of motorsport, a leader and a visionary. That man was Bob Bahre.

Bob Bahre was truly a self-made man. He was a welder who later became a developer, building homes. His property development business flourished, allowing him to invest in his passion for automobiles, buying Maine's Oxford Speedway in the 1960's. This raceway not only paved the way for him to build what we now know as New Hampshire Motor Speedway, but the track's marquee race in Oxford, Maine featured leading race car drivers like Ricky Craven and Kevin Harvick. Bob would go on to sell Oxford Speedway and together with his son Gary and brother Richard, they would build the Magic Mile in Loudon, New Hampshire and bring NASCAR's premier racing division to New England, a feat no one thought was possible.

People might think Gillette Stadium, home to our beloved New England Patriots is the largest sporting venue in New England. However, in fact, it's New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, New Hampshire which can hold over 100,000 people. When NASCAR comes to New Hampshire, the town of Loudon temporarily becomes

the largest community in the state. What the Track does for the economy and for the region wouldn't be possible without Bob Bahre and his family.

To successfully execute building a NASCAR track is a massive undertaking and its success in New Hampshire was the result of this family-oriented business. Not just his immediate family but the families that worked at the track and the families in the community Bob worked with. Even as the track grew to what we know it as today, prior to selling the speedway in 2008, Bob would send 10,000 hand signed cards year after year thanking families of the Speedway. When something needed to be done, he rallied the racing family together to see that it got done. He was a pioneer on so many fronts, a true man of the people, who so many could rely on and families could look up to.

Through his vision that championed working with families, Bob became a household name in New England and an icon in the motor sports community. As someone involved in family business myself as so many granite families are, I know that together with passion, commitment, and positivity, you can build a vision and accomplish dreams. Bob Bahre serves as a shining and inspirational example for us all.



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A DAY DRIVING IN MAINE

By Brownie Carson



*Rob Porter's 1954 Ford which is identical
to the one he learned to drive in*



Here are a few photos of our Sunday excursion from Brunswick to Sebasco and Popham a couple of weeks ago. Jon and Sandy Lee planned a route of about 50 miles round trip, on back roads via West Bath and scenic farmland along the lower Kennebec River. We had lunch at a beautiful spot, Anna's seaside takeout. Really fun, with old cars including Bob Bailey's 1909 Maxwell and the Lee's 1910 Buick to a few "new" models from the 50s and 60s.



Jon and Sandy Lee's 1910 Buick

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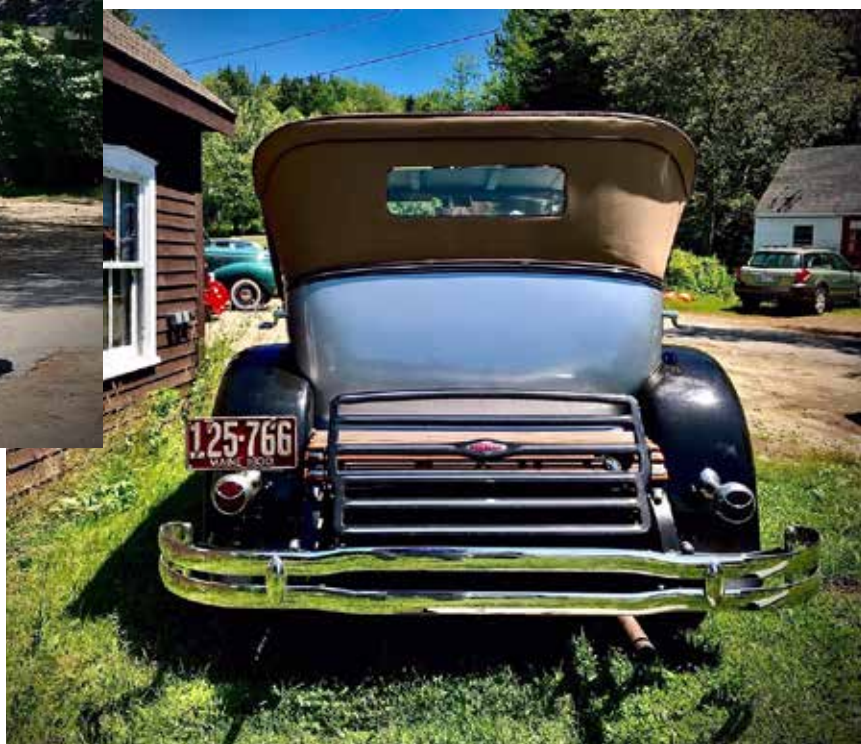


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Dana and I drove the '30 Lincoln phaeton, and I had to relearn double clutching all over again—lots of hills and curves! Jon and Sandy expected about a dozen cars, but More than 25 showed up. Guess a summer version of cabin fever brought folks out.



Bob Bailey and Wife in 1909 Maxwell



*1930 Lincoln 8, Model L, Sport Phaeton owned by Brownie and Dana Carson
Rob Porter Photo*