

GREAT ARROW news

The Pierce-Arrow Museum Newsletter



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*The Building
Edition*



THE ORIGIN of the Pierce-Arrow Museum

By Dave Stevens, Executive Director

In 1997, I was attending my first Pierce-Arrow Society annual meet in Superior, Wisconsin, when I learned there was talk of building a Pierce-Arrow Museum. The President of the Society at the time was Dave Harris, and I overheard him talking about setting up a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Foundation for the sole purpose of establishing such a museum. No specific location had been decided upon at that time, but I still thought of it as a positive step in the right direction for preserving the history of Pierce-Arrow automobiles. His reasoning for setting up the Foundation separate from the Pierce-Arrow Society was to avoid any issues with the IRS, and that decision has proved itself over the last two decades to be an excellent one. The Society and the Foundation, separate yet with similar goals, has proven to be a very productive symbiotic relationship.

In 1999, the Classic Car Club Museum "Experience" at the Gilmore featured Pierce-Arrows, so I attended with our 1936 1601 sedan. About three dozen Pierces showed up for the event. While at the show, Dave Harris informed me that the plans were moving forward for the Pierce-Arrow Museum, and in fact, it would be located on the Gilmore grounds. The committee

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Photo L-R: Mac Waldorf - Gilmore Board of Trustees, Art Kollin - Gilmore Operations Manager, Paul Johnson (OR), Dave Harris - PAF Chairman, Dave Stevens (MI) - PAF Executive Director, David Barclay (IL), Michael Spezia - Gilmore Executive Director



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Great Lakes Region
New England Region
Pierce-Arrow Society

PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION

Operating the Pierce-Arrow Museum on the Campus of the Gilmore Car Museum

January 2022

Greetings Pierce-Arrow Enthusiasts!

Unfortunately, Covid and its variants continue to dampen our fun. However, after serious consideration of this problem, I have a solution. To avoid probable contact with these potentially deadly variants, I promise not to take Jane shopping anymore. Instead I will take her on long driving tours where she will be Covid-safe in her Pierce-Arrow.

And with regard to driving our cars, we must remember that our fondness for this results from historic Pierce-Arrow tradition. The big early cars built their reputation upon dependable road runs. And to their credit the founders of the Pierce-Arrow Society developed and fostered the driving culture that we enjoy today. I am very happy that touring is an important part of our Society events. As you would expect, a lot of planning and work goes into developing scenic, low traffic tour routes with interesting stops along the way. I am so very grateful for the Pierce-Arrow Society members who plan the tours that make our club events so very memorable.

On a sad note, several months ago the Pierce-Arrow family lost a great friend and a generous supporter of our museum. Conrad Fletcher will be fondly remembered by all who had the good fortune to know him. A special museum memorial fund has been established in his honor. Please join me in supporting this fund.

If you have not paid your annual museum membership dues, please go to www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org to donate online or print a form to mail. Also please review the Pierce-Arrow Legacy Partner Program to see how your estate planning can preserve Pierce-Arrow history.

Enjoy your museum at every opportunity. It is open April through November. Mark your calendar for the August 25-28 Gathering at Gilmore. This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy the museum as well as the relaxed country road driving available in Southern Michigan.

Very cordially yours,

Merlin B. Smith

SUPPORT YOUR PIERCE-ARROW MUSEUM! BECOME A MUSEUM MEMBER!

www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org

Join Online Today!

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

\$40 - Annual Basic membership

\$100 - Contributing Membership

\$500 - Supporting Membership

With your Pierce-Arrow Museum membership, you will receive free admission to the Gilmore Car Museum campus with over 400 vehicles including the museums of our neighbors - CCCA, Franklin, Model A Ford, Lincoln and Cadillac-LaSalle.

The Pierce-Arrow Foundation is a 501(c)3 Educational Non-profit Corp.



In 2004, the Pierce-Arrow Museum at Gilmore opened to the public - it was the first single marque museum on the Gilmore Campus pioneering the way for Franklin, Model A Ford, Cadillac-LaSalle, and Lincoln.

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of Dave Harris, Paul Johnson, Ernie Follis and John Newberry had selected the Gilmore as the prime location for our museum. I was quite happy that this decision had been made, being a Michigan resident and already enamored of the location.

In 2000, several Pierce-Arrows were brought to the Gilmore for a display in the Carriage House building. The CCCA Museum (Classic Car Club of America) had been there since the 1980's, but ours was to be the first single marque Museum. In 2002, fund raising efforts were in high gear, with the concept presented at the annual meet in Kalamazoo that year. I was asked to join the Pierce-Arrow Foundation Board of Trustees, and a year after the Museum opened in 2004, I was asked to be the "Executive Director". I've managed the Museum and all displays since that time.

The first vehicles to be displayed were a few loaned cars and four donated cars. The donations came from Rex Gosnell, John Newberry, Greg Long, and Howard Ehmann. The Foundation collection now consists of over 20 owned vehicles, and with occasional loaned cars, the public is treated



to a constantly rotating display.

The foresight to locate the Museum at the Gilmore complex has been proven to be an excellent decision. The Gilmore's 90-acre campus now hosts 150,000 visitors annually. Other marque museums have opened there since our Museum opened, including Franklin, Model A Ford, Lincoln, and Cadillac/LaSalle. In addition, the HCCA (Horseless Carriage Club of America) will open a museum on the grounds in 2024. The HCCA now has a temporary exhibit in the Steam Barn.

We owe a great debt to Dave Harris and other current and past leaders of the Society and the Foundation who put forth the effort to make our Museum a reality. The Pierce-Arrow Museum at Gilmore is driving interest in both the marque and membership in the Society. Donor support will be required to maintain and possibly expand the building, and to grow an endowment fund to ensure that future generations can enjoy this significant and growing historical collection.

22 HANOVER STREET – THE ORIGINAL PIERCE FACTORY BUILDING

George N. Pierce & Company was started in 1878, with main product lines being iceboxes, birdcages, and squirrel cages, along with other wire products. This ability to form wire led to the manufacture of bicycle spokes and, in 1888, a line of children's tricycles was added. Shortly thereafter Pierce offered a full line of adult bicycles. In 1895, the ice box and wire product lines were discontinued, and Pierce built only bicycles until branching into motor vehicles in 1901.

Though Pierce was one of, if not the, highest quality bicycles produced in the late 1800s, it was far from the only bicycle company in Buffalo. By 1891, there were 336 businesses in that city producing either bicycles or bicycle related products. One reason for the tremendous two-wheel interest in the area was that Buffalo, by 1890, had ninety-one miles of asphalt roads, with thirty more miles under construction. Smooth asphalt was very kind to bike riders, compared to brick or cobblestone paving, or no paving at all.

The original Pierce factory building was located at the corner of Hanover and Prime Streets, on the waterfront of the Buffalo River. It was an imposing five story building and encompassed 75,000 square feet. In a time when most manufacturing was done by small companies in small buildings, this huge plant was a marvel to both Buffalo residents and visitors. It was the centerpiece in what was then an extremely busy area of Buffalo. The factory was located adjacent to tracks of the DL&W (Delaware Lackawanna and Western) Railroad, where it was convenient to load crates of bicycles, beginning their journey to homes all over the United States and the world.

The building is now gone, with the area now being revitalized and known as Canalside, in honor of it having been the western terminus of the Erie Canal.

This Pierce factory building was adequate for supplying bicycles to the trade, but after a few years of manufacturing fine automobiles (beginning in 1901) which were in high demand, that facility soon became too small for the company. While Pierce bicycles - and, for a few years, Pierce motorcycles - would continue to be made in that building for a number of years, in 1906 construction was begun on a much larger dedicated automobile factory.



The original 75,000 square foot George N. Pierce factory -
22 Hanover Street, Buffalo



Above: Invoices and letterhead from
22 Hanover Street offices.

PIERCE-ARROW FACTORY AND WORLD WAR ONE

The Great War, also referred to as "the war to end all wars", began in 1914. It was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The United States would not officially enter the war until April of 1917.

At that time, the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company, well known for high quality automobiles, also was producing a commercial line of heavy-duty trucks. Two and five-ton Pierce-Arrow trucks were turned out by the hundreds to support the war effort. In fact, as early as April of 1915, Vickers Naval two pounder cannons mounted on five-ton Pierce armored trucks were shooting down German planes.

When the war started for the United States, there were a mere 133,000 men in the Army. At that point, the National Army (a group of forces later simply renamed the United States Army) was created, a combined force of volunteer and conscripted men, which would grow to be a force of more than six million men.

At the time, the Pierce-Arrow factory employed over 3000 men, and many of these either volunteered or were drafted into the Army. Many did not return, and those lost and those who did return were honored by the company. The company also pushed Liberty Bonds, allowing employees to set up plans for such purchases.

At the end of the war, a massive bronze plaque was attached to the front of the Pierce-Arrow Administration Building, honoring the brave workers who went to war.



This silk ribbon was given to all Pierce employees returning from "The Great War". Below: Bronze plaque honoring the sacrifices of Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company workers in WWI.



Fourth Liberty Loan 1918
BEARS INTEREST AT $4\frac{1}{4}\%$

The Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company will assist any employee to buy one or more bonds on the following plan:-
\$1.00 a week for 50 weeks for a \$ 50.00 bond
\$2.00 a week for 50 weeks for a \$100.00 bond

Any number of bonds may be purchased if desired on the above basis.

First payment is due October 26, 1918. Bonds will be delivered when final payment is made.

It will be necessary for the Company to retain the first two coupons falling due April 15, 1919 and October 18, 1919, respectfully to reimburse itself for interest payable on money advanced to buy the bonds.

An employee leaving the Company before the expiration of the fifty weeks will be allowed to continue his payments until his subscription is fully paid, and he is urged to do so.

An employee leaving the Company, not wishing to complete his subscription, will have refunded to him at the end of fifty weeks from October 26, 1918, the net proceeds from the sale of his bond, less the sum unpaid by him on his subscription.

Subscription blanks will be handed you by your Department Committee during the week of October 7th and collected the next day.

These Pierce-Arrow Men DIED for Freedom's Cause

WINFELD W. WHEADRICK ADAM J. BUCHBINDER
LEONARD BECK ELTON W. HELMER

How Far Will YOU Help?
The Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Co.

BUY LIBERTY BONDS THAT THEY MAY NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN.

PIERCE-ARROW GOLD STARS	
LIEUTENANT ELTON W. HELMER	PRIVATE ADAM BUCHBINDER
PILOT W. A. WHEADRICK	PRIVATE LEONARD BECK
PRIVATE JOSEPH BUCHOLZ	PRIVATE PETER VAN HANEGAN
PRIVATE LEO STYPECZYNSKI	

For Freedom's Cause these Seven Pierce-Arrow men have made the supreme sacrifice. Undoubtedly there are others of whom we know not. More must follow. This is a grim fact of war.

With the rejoicing that will follow victorious peace must always mingle the grief that it has been gained at the price of the flower of our young manhood.

More Pierce-Arrow men are going into the service. More must risk life that Liberty may survive.

Their deeds impose on us an impressive obligation. It is our high duty to support them in two ways:

FIRST—By exerting the last ounce of energy in getting all possible war production in the briefest possible time.

SECOND—By buying Liberty Bonds to finance the great struggle.

Buy these Bonds, as many as you can, in order to overwhelm the enemy in the shortest possible time, and to save all we can of the precious lives of our comrades now in France or preparing to go.

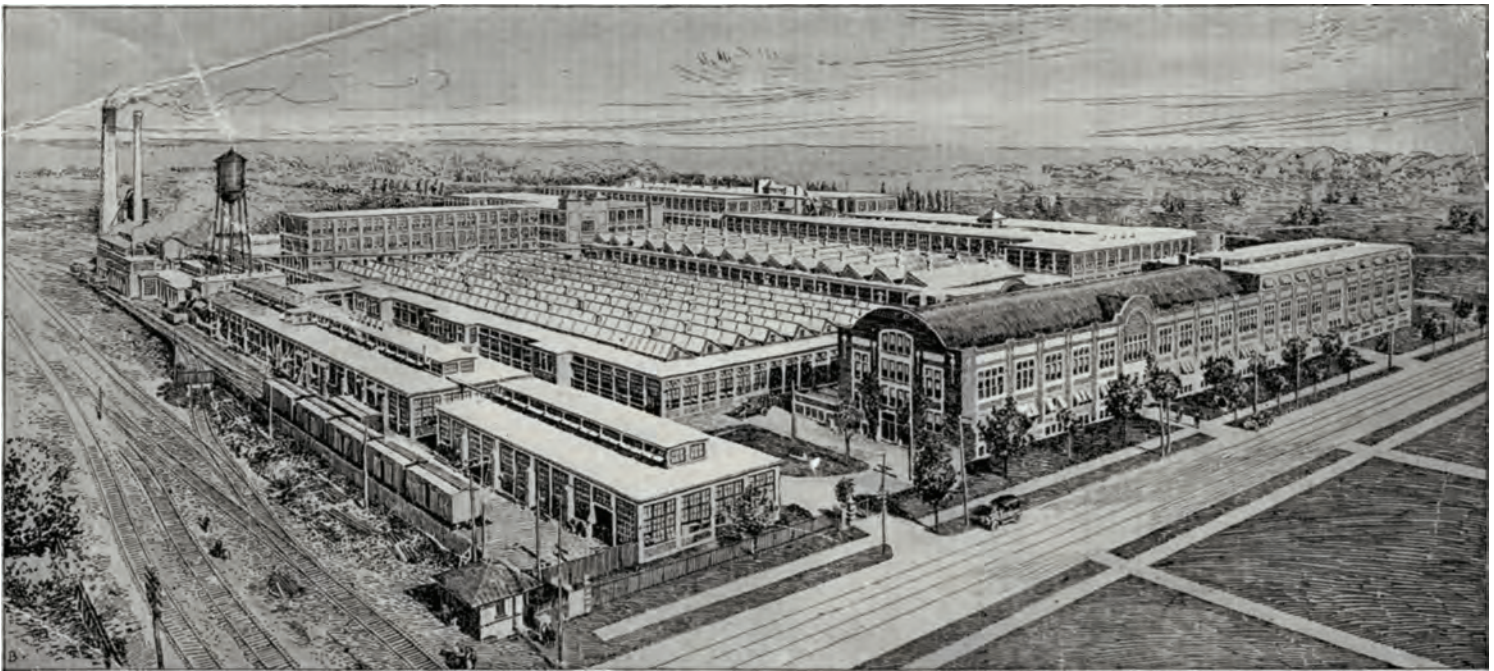
The plaque reads...

**LIBERTY JUSTICE EQUALITY
AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE
PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE
PEOPLE SHALL NOT PERISH FROM
THE EARTH**

~ ~ ~

**DEDICATED TO OUR BROTHER
WORKERS WHO HAVE OFFERED
THEMSELVES IN THE CAUSE OF
LIBERTY**

**ANNO DOMINI ONE THOUSAND
NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN**



Pierce-Arrow Administration and Factory Buildings - over one million square feet under roof on thirty-four acres of land

1695 ELMWOOD AVENUE

On April 26th, 1906, George N. Pierce broke ground for the new Pierce-Arrow plant on Elmwood. Construction was fast and furious, with two main buildings and numerous other buildings soon completed. By late 1906, automobiles were being built at the location, while construction on other outbuildings continued. The entire plant could not be put under one roof, as the factory would soon encompass 1,015,054 square feet.

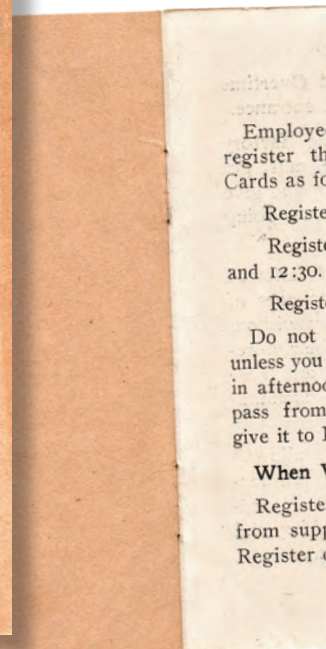
A majority of the factory buildings were designed by Albert Kahn, a highly respected industrial architect. Most architects of the time would not stoop to factory design, thinking it below their talents. As Kahn himself stated, "When I began, the real architects would design only museums, cathedrals, capitols, monuments. The office boy was considered good enough to do factory buildings. I'm still that office boy designing factories. I have no dignity to be impaired".

The factory was designed to make maximum use of natural light, and as such had a "zig-zag" roof structure. The buildings were made almost entirely of reinforced concrete, a concept that Kahn pioneered. Kahn was not only an architect, but an inventor, and he developed the "Kahn System of Reinforced Concrete". His brother Julius, a structural engineer who had a degree from the University of Michigan, helped Albert perfect what was to be called "Kahn-Crete".

Utilizing this reinforced concrete in the zig-zag roof structure allowed Kahn to not only add strength to the structure, but to have very large windows in the vertical portion of the construction. This allowed the main portion of the factory, called Machinery Hall, to be quite well illuminated by natural light.



Factory Building under construction showing saw-tooth roof with large glass panes for lighting



Hundreds of thousands of square feet of glass were used in the construction of the facility.

Machinery Hall was a single story building 214 feet wide and 480 feet long, and alongside that area was the storage area for supplies and raw materials. Adjacent to Machinery Hall was a four-story building where motors, transmissions, rear axles, and other chassis components were built.

The Body Construction Building was composed of two wings, each four stories high, 60 feet wide and 751.5 feet long. Total body building area of the 8 floors was thus 360,720 square feet. One floor of one wing was for (cast aluminum in the teens) body filing and preparation. One floor was dedicated to each of the following: woodworking, blacksmith work, upholstery, body erection, and final fitting and inspection. Two floors were required for painting, as paint was slow drying at the time and was labor intensive.

Central to all the buildings was the 122 feet wide and 401 feet long final assembly area, where all the components came together into completed cars. By 1915, over 3000 men were employed at the factory, though the rules of conduct were simple and straight forward. The company treated employees well, knowing that good treatment meant a satisfied workforce and a high-quality product.



An area of Machinery Hall



Final Assembly Area for Pierce-Arrows

RULES
Employees are expected to arrive on time on Clock follows:
Arrive before 7.10 A. M.
Arrive in between 12.20
Arrive out at 5.30 P. M.
Arrive out at 12 noon,
are not going to work
on, in that case, get a
your Foreman, and
Doorman at entrance.
Working Overtime.
Arrive in when returning
before 5.50 P. M.
out at night when go-

ing home and hand Overtime Pass to Doorman at entrance.

Employees leaving factory before quitting time, must get a pass from Foreman and give pass to Doorman when going out.

Employees are not allowed to take Tools or Packages of any kind from factory without a pass signed by their Foreman. All Packages and Parcels are subject to examination by Doorman.

Employees are not allowed to take street clothing into factory. Each Employee is provided with a locker and key and requested to use them.

Employees will be provided with a Factory Pass, which must be shown to Doorman when entering factory.

Employees are prohibited from smoking in factory.

Employees are prohibited from spitting on floors or walls of factory.

Employees are prohibited from running or acting in disorderly manner in factory.

When an Employee quits, is laid off, or discharged, he must check up Company tools before leaving factory.

When an Employee is laid off, he leaves all personal property in factory at his own risk.

When absent, phone to Employment Bureau. Notify Employment Bureau of any change of address.

The Company will appreciate the observance of these rules by Employees.

THE PIERCE-ARROW
MOTOR CAR CO.

Good for an Inspection Tour Through
The PIERCE-ARROW MOTOR CO.
Factories — 1695 Elmwood Avenue

Where the famous Pierce-Arrow
pleasure cars and motor trucks
are manufactured

Admit Noble and Ladies
Daily from 9 to 11 a. m. only Take Elmwood Avenue Car



Administration Building - note barrel roof and central entrance

PIERCE-ARROW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

A World's Fair was held in Buffalo from May 1st through November 2nd, 1901. Occupying 350 acres of land and with a theme of "Commercial Well-being and Good Understanding Among the American Republics", many aspects of the Pan-American Exposition would influence Pierce-Arrow history from that point.

Pierce had a display at the Exposition of chain and shaft drive bicycles, and even supplied bicycles for the event's policemen to ride around the grounds. In addition, on the opening day George Pierce himself drove a newly designed one-cylinder Motorette to the event. He made a grand entrance, driving it past the Machinery Building where other automobiles were displayed, and adding it to the bicycle display. A high-end model Pierce bicycle was also displayed, the "Pierce Pan-American Special", a shaft drive model with full cushion frame and a hub coaster brake.

The Exposition would end, and the George N. Pierce Company would initially purchase 15 acres of land which had been a portion of the Exposition Midway. On April 26th, 1906, George N. Pierce dug the first shovel full of dirt from the site, and construction of a magnificent new Administration Building and Factory began.

George Cary, a local architect, was selected to design the Administration Building. Cary had been one of the three local architects on the Pan-Am Board of Architects. He designed the only building at the Exposition which was meant to be a permanent structure, the New York State Building, which now houses the Buffalo History Museum.

The Administration Building was designed and built as a three story, 132,970 square foot structure, with large windows for natural light. The windows were "of a size that is limited only by the margin of safety necessary in construction". Located on the third floor was a large room which was utilized as the cafeteria, with a barrel shaped ceiling adding both light and spaciousness to that area. This room would accommodate 850 workers at one sitting and the kitchen employed sixty-eight cooks, waiters, and dishwashers. Supporting the cafeteria was a refrigerating plant, a meat shop, a complete laundry, and a bakery.

Stairways had railings supported with arrow shaped castings, and one stairway had a small ramp down its center for those employees riding bicycles to work and storing them on a lower floor inside the building. To further support the employees, full length lockers with each man having his own key was assigned. A vast washroom with porcelain washbowls was also in the Administration Building. Towels, soap, and hot and cold running water at each allowed workers to wash at the end their workday and head home clean.

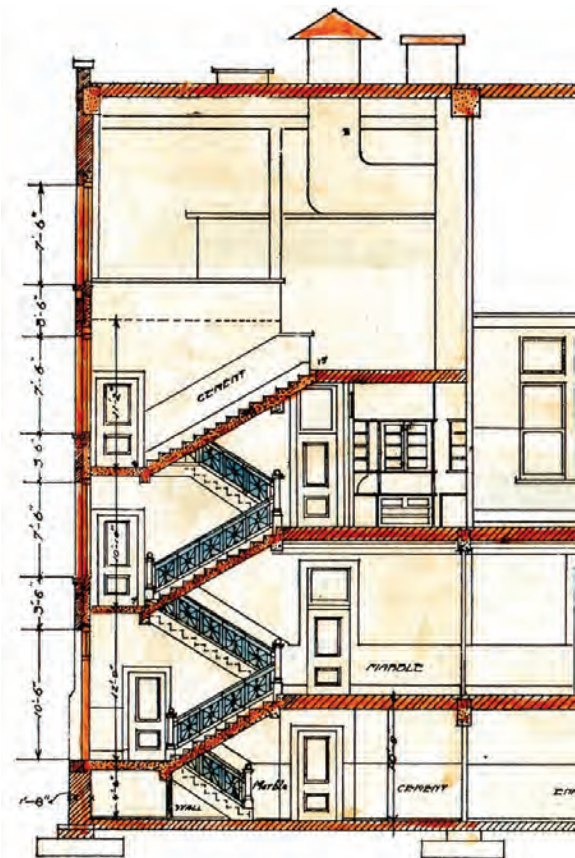
The management of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company realized that, to produce a quality car, the organization would need quality people in a quality factory. In their words, "Given poor surroundings and poor conditions to work under, no amount of spirit the men might summon up could enable them to do good work". This philosophy was evident in the design of the Administration Building and Factory Buildings, which still stand.

J.A. Morse Company - "Pierce-Arrow Caterer"
supplied coffee cream for workers



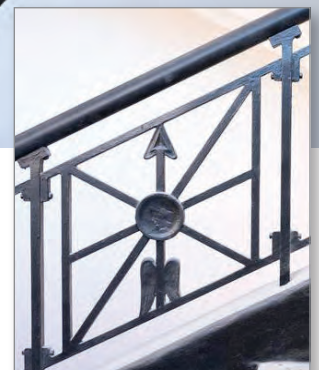


The Men's Dining Room seated eight hundred - the spacious and lofty central hall of the administration building



Photos courtesy of David White (CA)

Blueprint specification and picture showing Arrow-style railing for the Administration Building's stairway.





GEORGE CARY

George Cary (1859-1945) was already a well-established Buffalo architect when he was commissioned to design the Pierce-Arrow Administration Building. He had been prominent in building designs for the Pan American Exposition in 1901. One of seven children in a socially prominent family, his father was Dr. Walter Cary, and he was the grandson of both a New York State Senator and U.S. Congressman.

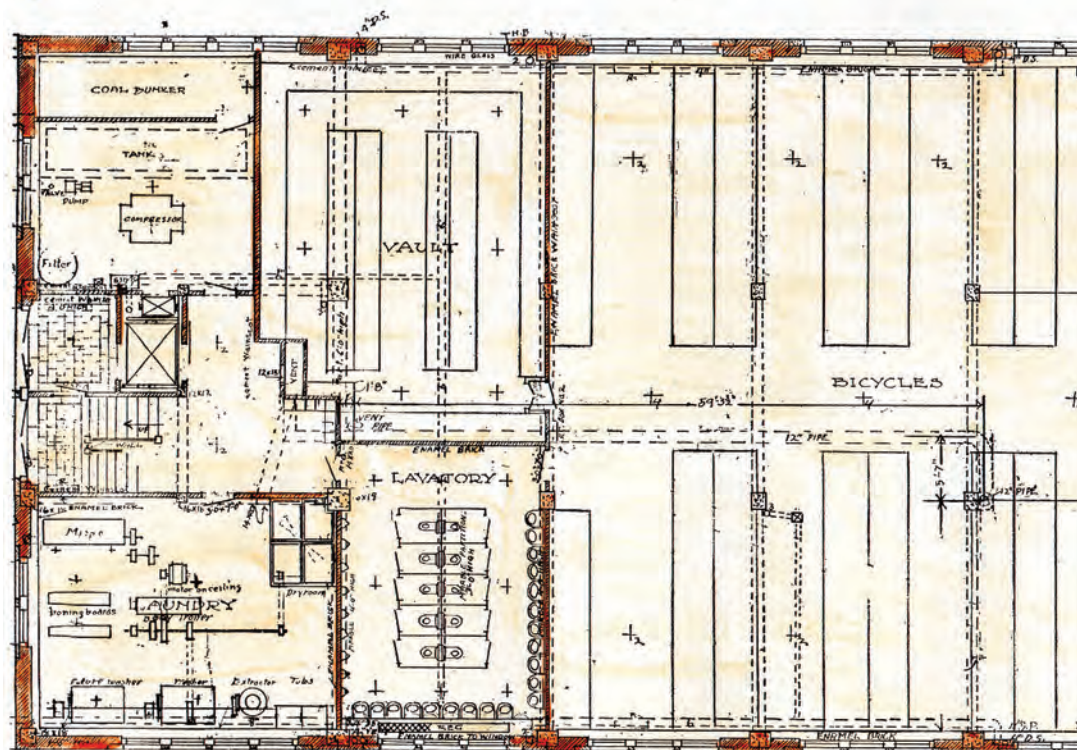
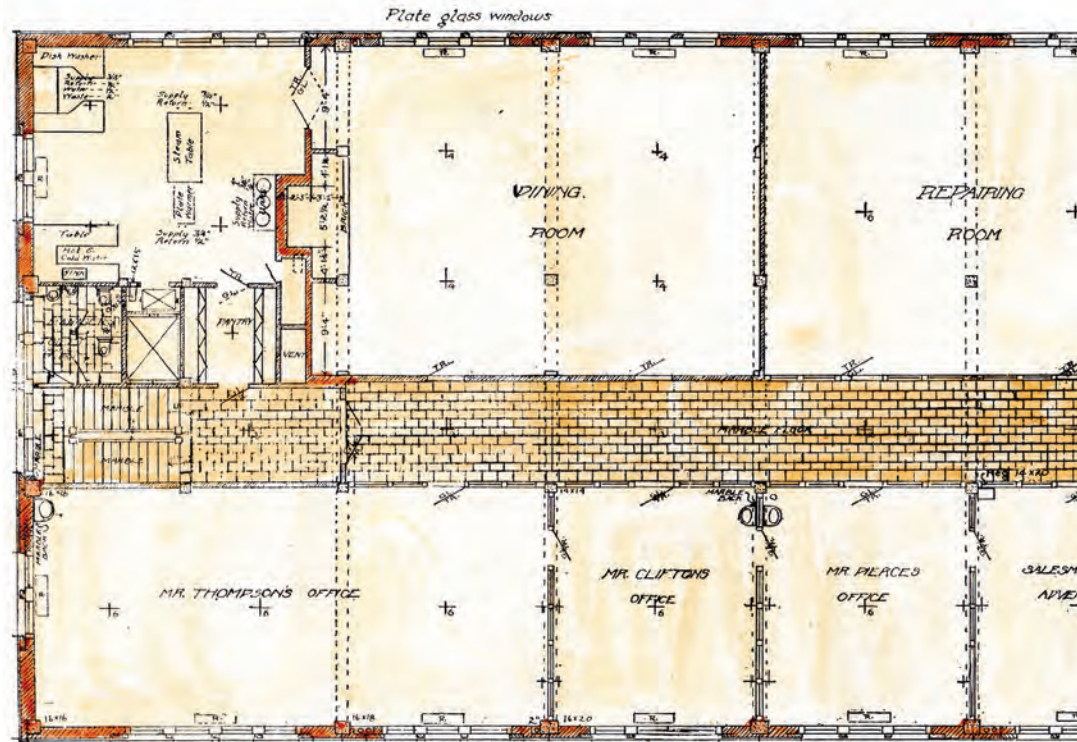
Cary completed his undergraduate work at Harvard, and went on to receive a Masters of Philosophy degree at Columbia, graduating that school in 1885. He then spent a brief apprenticeship with the prestigious New York City architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White before going to Paris to further his studies.

The first Buffalonian to do so, he attended L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris from 1886 to 1889. In 1891 he returned to Buffalo and set up practice. His attending L'Ecole explains the fact that frequent guests to his home at 184 Delaware Avenue in Buffalo included H.H. Richardson (the second American to attend L'Ecole) and Stanford White. Those two architects, along with Louis Sullivan, were considered at the time to be the "recognized trinity of American architecture".

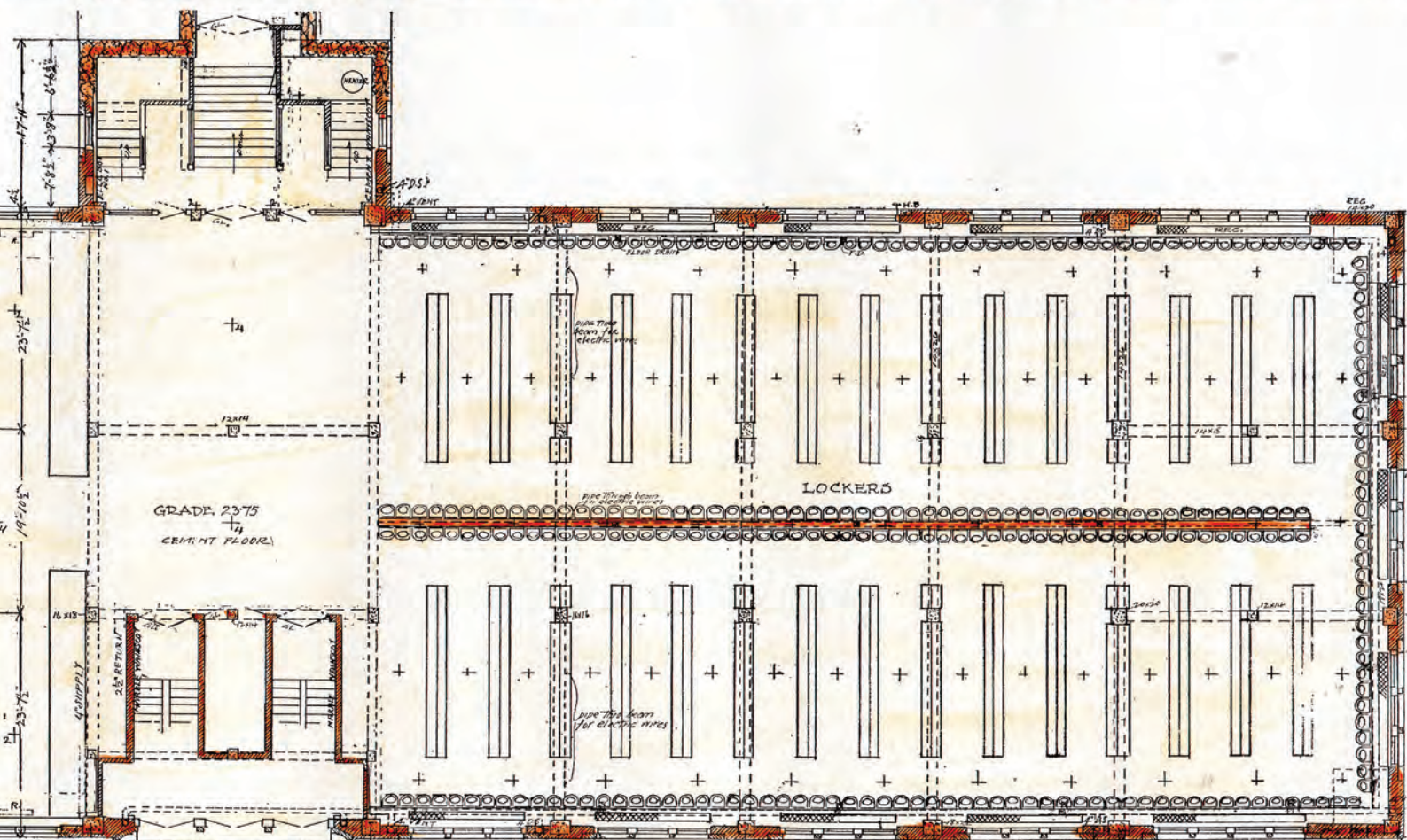
Cary married Allitheia Birge in 1908, at which time he was fifty years old. She was half his age, having been born in 1883. Allitheia was the daughter of George K. and Carrie Birge. Birge was not only president of his family-owned wallpaper business, but also president of the George N. Pierce Company for a while. At the turn of the century, he was responsible for hiring a Scottish engineer, David Fergusson, who would become a major player in moving Pierce from bicycles to self-propelled vehicles. Birge would also serve as a director for the 1901 Pan American Exposition.

After marrying, George and Allitheia moved to 460 Franklin Street, in a house which Cary did not design (as it had been built in 1869) but did alter somewhat. He went on to design the Buffalo General Hospital along with other structures. He would also design the Forest Lawn's Delaware Avenue gate and Administration Building, both in the Neoclassical style.

He died in 1945, at the age of eight-six, and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo. Allitheia had died young at the age of thirty-five in 1918. George Cary was survived by one child, Charles Cary, 1916-1985.



PLANS: ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



George Cary, Architect.

Pierce-Arrow Museum *at Gilmore*

Please join us as a

PIERCE- ARROW LEGACY PARTNER

- ✓ Preserves and promotes the legacy of Pierce-Arrow.
- ✓ 150,000+ visitors each year are favorably impacted by the museum's outreach.
- ✓ Generates important new awareness & interest

ABOUT US

For more than a century, Pierce-Arrow has represented highest quality automobile ever produced in America.

For more than a quarter-century, the Pierce-Arrow Foundation has preserved and promoted this extraordinary legacy through its museum at Gilmore.

Our museum's outreach now impacts more than 150,000 annual visitors to Gilmore – many of whom are motivated to learn more about the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company.

HOW TO HELP

As a Legacy Partner, your support can be provided in many ways – through contributions of cash or appreciated stock, by naming the Pierce-Arrow Foundation as a beneficiary in your will, trust, annuity or insurance policy, or through the donation of automobiles, including Pierce-Arrows and other makes.

Our Museum needs your support now!
Please help us to strengthen its positive impact on future generations!

**For more information on how
you can help contact us!**

MERLIN SMITH
Chairman,
Pierce-Arrow Foundation
(318) 366-5112
merlin.smith.la@gmail.com

OR

DAVE STEVENS
Museum Director
Pierce-Arrow Foundation
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Visit America's finest public exhibit of
Pierce-Arrow vehicles in the only museum
devoted exclusively to Pierce-Arrow motor
cars, motorcycles, bicycles and history.

www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org