

GREAT ARROW news

www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org



Helen Wills Moody (1905-1990) with her Pierce-Arrow, pictured above

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Famous Owners of Pierce-Arrow Cars

As will be noted later in this issue, the Pierce-Arrow Museum at the Gilmore in Kalamazoo is undergoing many renovations and updates.

One such update will be a series of story boards about the cars and company, one of which will be “Notable Owners of Pierce-Arrows”.

A few notable people of the female persuasion, and their association with Pierce-Arrow automobiles, will be discussed in this newsletter,

It’s interesting to note that, as Brooks Brierley noted in his book, *There’s No Mistaking a Pierce-Arrow*, that “entertainment personalities rarely owned Pierce-Arrows.” Stating that possibly Fatty Arbuckle’s design and ownership of a \$25,000 somewhat garish late teens Pierce-Arrow may have influenced potential purchasers, he further noted that “Pierce’s Hollywood buyers were few.”

Hollywood aside, the first woman to be a global sports celebrity owned a 1930 Pierce convertible coupe. Helen Wills (Moody) (1905-1990) was a tennis great who won 161 straight matches and 14 of her 19 major Women’s Singles Championships from 1927 to 1933. She was not a media darling, however, and was nicknamed “Little Miss Poker Face” for her stoic disposition and dispassionate demeanor on the court. She was a power hitter on the court, but rather than develop a likable persona, she stated “I’ll let my racquet do the talking.” Winner of the U.S. Nationals Singles in 1923-24-25-27-28-29-31, and Wimbledon Singles 1927-28-29-30-32-33-35-39, her racquet spoke volumes.

(Photo: “There is no Mistaking a Pierce-Arrow” by Brooks Brierley, courtesy Harrah’s Automobile Collection)

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Pierce-Arrow Museum

at Gilmore

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PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION

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

Dear fellow Pierce-Arrow Enthusiasts:

During 2024 the Pierce-Arrow Society Annual Meet, the Museum will be celebrating 20 years on the Gilmore Campus located in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

Starting first with birdcages, iceboxes and bicycles, the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company evolved into manufacturing luxury cars with a world-wide reputation for quality and innovation.

Last summer, a dedicated group of volunteers from the Pierce community gathered in the Pierce-Arrow Museum and decided it was time to freshen up the paint on the walls and update the exhibits that tell the story of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company.

After much discussion, and with the help of the well-qualified museum consultant, Mary Seelhorst, whose clients include the Henry Ford, Studebaker National Museum, Brumos Collection, and CCA Museum, a comprehensive plan was created. At a meeting of the PAF Board of Trustees in January, all of the plan's details were reviewed and approved, together with the necessary funding.

The week of August 20-25, the 2024 Annual Meet of the Pierce-Arrow Society coincides with the Pierce-Arrow Museum Gathering at Gilmore weekend. Please join us in the sparkling new interior of the Pierce-Arrow Museum with its new exhibits that tell the inspiring Pierce-Arrow story.

While the overall financial position of PAF remains good, there are some one-time expenses this year. If you are able to donate additional funds to the museum at this time, please consider a donation to the Foundation for this worthwhile project.

Sincerely,

Richard Lange
Chairman

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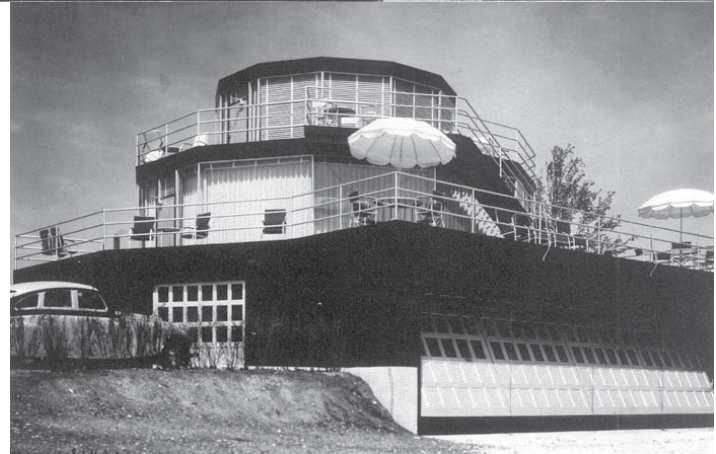
1933 Silver Arrow

Much has been written about the 1933 Pierce-Arrow show car which debuted at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

The futuristic design of this car would make it notable even years after, as evidenced by this publicity shot in 1936 of Ginger Rogers with one of the five cars made. While Rogers was not a known owner of a Pierce, she was well known as Fred Astaire's dancing partner. The phrase attributed to cartoonist Bob Thaves was "sure, he [Astaire] was great, but don't forget that Ginger Rogers did everything he did...but backwards and in high heels!"

The car was a hit at the World's Fair, and at one point featured with the House of Tomorrow, a five sided structure with all outside walls of plate glass. The House of Tomorrow was featured among the model homes in the *Century of Progress* exposition. Designed by George F. Keck, Architect, the house featured three decks and six rooms, and included not only a car garage, but an airplane hanger on the lower floor. Also, novel for the time, the house had not only central heating, but also central air conditioning. It was soon found, though, that the air conditioning system was not up to the task of keeping up with the sun's heat coming through the glass.

After the 1933-34 World's Fair, five of the houses displayed were purchased by a local real estate developer and moved across Lake Michigan to Beverly Shore, Indiana, where the House of Tomorrow survives, and is now



The House of Tomorrow - The Pierce Silver Arrow parked above was one of the five made.

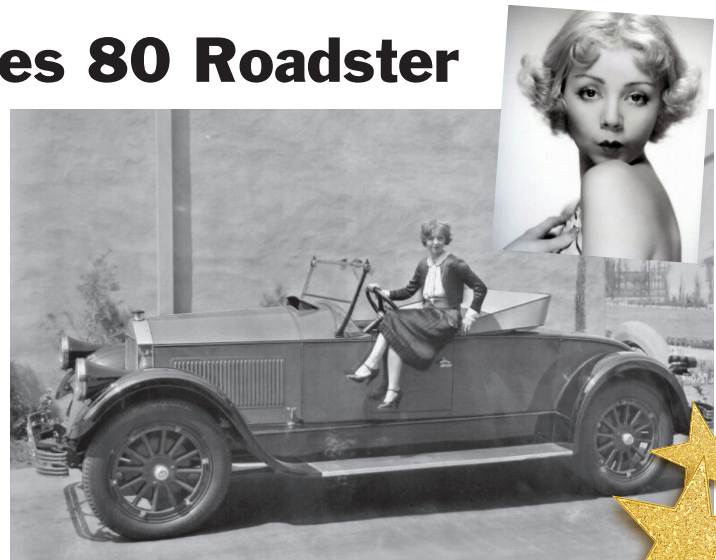
under restoration. The *Century of Progress Homes* are now part of the Indiana Dunes National Park, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Alice White and her Series 80 Roadster

Alice White (1904-1983), born Alva White in Paterson, New Jersey, was a film actress whose career started in late silent films and continued into early "talkies".

She was described as a bubbly, vivacious blonde. Following a couple of menial jobs in Hollywood, she went to work for Charlie Chaplin, who soon had her in front of a camera.

After a successful transition to talking pictures, she was featured in the 1929 film "The Girl from Woolworth's." She had many personal issues after that point, appeared in a few films in the late 1930s and 1940s, and eventually ended up doing secretarial work for a living.



The Texas Traveler

Mrs. Henry J. Lutcher's amazing 10,000 mile trip to see America



***Editor's note:** Many thanks to both Curtiss for the fascinating story of Mrs. Lutcher and Liz for her great job of layout and researching photographs. It should be noted that Mrs. Lutcher was in her 70s when she seriously began touring, at a time when the average life expectancy (1910s) was only 58 years of age. Quite the adventurer to do so, not only considering age, but road and traveling conditions of the time.*

By Curtiss Pool (MI)

As administrator for the Pierce-Arrow Museum at Gilmore Facebook page, I like to spend some of my free time digging into the resources available online, trying to find stories and photos of Pierce-Arrow and it's history.

One such find happened by pure coincidence. While digging into an online public library in Texas, I came upon a series of Pierce-Arrow photos of a trip taken from Orange, Texas around the turn of the last century. I bookmarked the link, posted one of the photos on the museum's Facebook page, and then thought nothing of it again. Months later, I found an article in the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company's self-

published magazine, *The Pierce-Arrow Salesman*, in which there was a story of a trip taken by a Mrs. Henry Jacob Lutcher of Orange, Texas ... and a light went off in my head! Where have I heard of Orange, Texas and a Pierce-Arrow before? I rechecked the Facebook photo I had posted weeks before and there it was ... an exact match. The digital photo collection from Texas were the same photos detailing the trip taken by Mrs. Lutcher in 1915 as described in the brief article in the magazine. Now I was completely hooked on Mrs. Lutcher and her Pierce-Arrow. I started digging deeper and this is what I found...

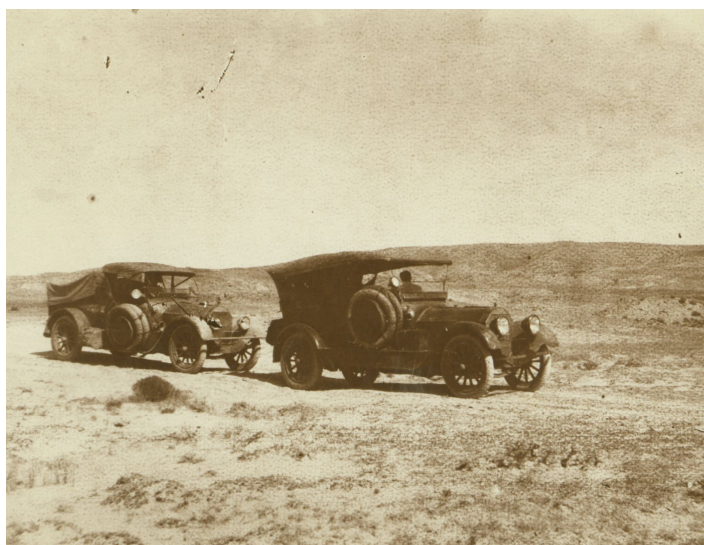
Henry Jacob Lutcher was born on November 4, 1836 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, the son of German immigrants. Frances Ann Robinson was born on October 17, 1841. She married her hometown sweetheart in Pennsylvania on January 23, 1858 - she was 16 years old. The Lutcher-Robinson marriage produced two daughters, Miriam, and Carrie.

According to her husband, Frances Ann Lutcher's sound business judgment was the key to his many economic successes. In 1862, Henry began his career in the lumber industry establishing the Lutcher and Moore Lumber Company. Realizing the profit potential of lumber sales and cattle-buying, the two partners

moved to Texas in 1877 and expanded their business onto the banks of the Sabine River. The city of Orange was chosen primarily due to the proximity to the nearby tracts of land with enormous pine trees, and the ability to use the river to transport the lumber to the markets. Henry diversified his industrial investments and helped finance the construction of both the Orange and Northwestern and the Gulf, Sabine and Red River Railroads as well as banking and real estate. He died in October of 1912.

Frances Ann Lutcher had a passion for travel and she became an avid motorist in her later years. In her seventieth year of age, she took receipt of her first Pierce-Arrow - a 1910 Model 48 seven passenger touring and an accompanying enclosed body of a Limousine design "with very rich upholstery," and "accessories complete in every detail." The *Houston Post* reported that she had ordered it from the Houston Motor Car Co. and it was regarded at the time as "the finest car that has ever been brought into the State."

Shortly after the delivery of the car, she and a party of friends drove from Austin to Houston in the remarkable time of 10 hours in spite of being misdirected and getting off the main road. In October of 1910, she placed the first 1912 automobile order in Texas with the Houston Motor Car Company for a second Pierce-Arrow - a 1912 Model 66. This specially designed car "suitable for European touring" was delivered in October 1911. It featured folding steps for the tonneau entrances, pigskin upholstery, electric lights, leather protected brass parts instead of the customary nickel finish and a brown exterior finish.



Frances Ann Lutcher's 1912 Series 66 leading the way. Her Model 48 was used exclusively for carrying supplies and roadside assistance equipment since roads in America were more for wagons than for automobiles.



The tonneau cover on the Pierce Model 48 reads "ORANGE, TEXAS TO SAN FRANCISCO AND RETURNING. THE TEXAS TRAVELER SEEING AMERICA FIRST."

Yearly road trips were a favorite of Mrs. Lutcher as she roamed the world in her Pierce-Arrow with an American flag proudly flying from the car. One such trip began in June of 1917 just before Frances Lutcher's seventy-seventh birthday. Mrs. Lutcher with Mrs. Ida Auchenback, accompanied by her chauffeur, Herbert Fielder and his mechanic brother Albert, started out on a 10,000 mile journey from Orange, Texas to New York criss-crossing across America. The Pierce-Arrow Model 66 and a Pierce Model 48 were chosen for this voyage. The big 66 carried Mrs. Lutcher and her companions. The second Pierce, driven by Albert Fiedler, carried sticks, shovels, poles, extra tires, 100 feet of wire cable, and other incidentals which proved to be necessary for such journeys. The cars could be setup as tents if necessary, but they always seemed to succeed in making it to a town to lodge for the night. The big Pierces were equipped with all the conveniences of a long trip, including attachments to the axles which made it possible to pull the car out of a hole by its own power.

On the seventh of June, they started out from Orange, Texas and soon encountered seven miles of sand between Houston and Waco with fourteen cars stuck in it along the way waiting for a team of horses to pull them out. Between Mineral Wells and Aberline, where a storm had turned the country into a sea of mud, they "Pierced one river, and 14 washouts," in some places burying the Pierces in mud up to the hubs. The party then proceeded to Denver, Cheyenne, Salt Lake, over Mount Shasta, to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland then Seattle. At Seattle, Mrs. Lutcher left the cars and boarded a boat to Nome, Alaska where they stayed for 20 days. Upon their return south, the party visited the



The big Model 66 mired in the mud up to its axles. Over the years and journeys, Albert Fiedler's photos show an evolution of the Pierce-Arrows even to a closed body with fender lights in the 1920s (see page 9).

Colorado canyon and Crater Lake, driving for miles along the brink of the canyon. Mrs. Lutcher said that she had seen nothing in Europe to equal the majesty of that canyon.

Herbert Fiedler had the responsibility for choosing the run each day. They recorded that the most dreary stretch was across the Mojave Desert where the settle-

ments were far apart and few. Each day's run averaged from 100 to 250 miles.

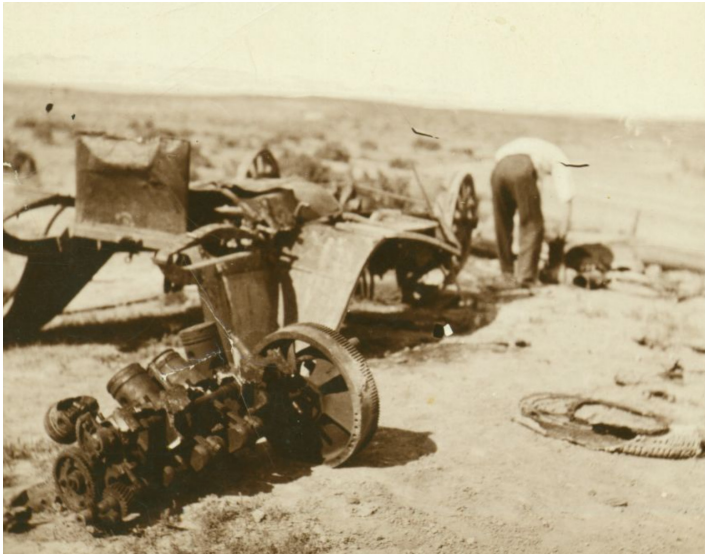
At one point in the trip, the big 66 fell down an embankment. No one was hurt and the car was undamaged and back on the road in thirty minutes. One long stretch in Oregon they encountered roads obstructed with rocks and many crippled abandoned cars. A good many people were surprised they got through the wild terrain without breaking down. "It's a Pierce," Herbert Fiedler would tell them.

Upon reaching Buffalo, New York, Mr. Fiedler wrote to Mr. Gydeson of the Houston Motor Car Company the following correspondence published in the *Houston Post* on August 20, 1911:

"I arrived Buffalo August 6, at 12 noon, after making the run from Denver through Colorado desert, over heavy sands and steep mountains. We left Denver July 5 at 2 p.m., making Buffalo in less than ten days. The roads through Nebraska were particularly bad. The people in the towns through which we passed would crowd around the machine and marvel at its ability to negotiate the heavy going, and the fact that the car bore the signs of having come from created much interest. After leaving Omaha I crossed the Missouri river into Iowa, where I found the roads fine, but nothing but hills,



Herbert Fiedler (L) and Albert Fiedler (R) spent more than a decade on adventures with Mrs. H. J. Lutcher and her Pierce-Arrows covering more than 300,000 miles of the USA and Europe.



One of the Fiedler brothers examining abandoned automobiles and parts in desert near Hell's Half Acre in Wyoming.

down one and up the other; but the Pierce would shoot up them with perfect ease. In one town in Iowa where I stopped for dinner, I had to work my way through the crowd to get to my car. One man, who had a car coming from California, remarked on the smooth, easy running of my engine. The only trouble I had on the entire trip were a few punctures and blowouts - had absolutely no trouble with engine or working parts. From Des Moines a Pope-Hartford tried to follow me and to pass me, but not for a moment did the Pierce fail, and they gave it up.

In Illinois we encountered considerable rain. At DeKalb I had to lay over a whole afternoon and night on account of being sick. As I would pass along the road the people would wave at me and yell 'Hello, Texas!' When I reached Chicago the Pierce was covered with mud all over, the banner flying, 'Texas to New York by Denver' was about the only thing that was not muddy. I estimate there was a whole block of people around the car in Chicago, and I had a hard job answering questions as to how the car made the trip.

From Chicago through Indiana the roads (sic) were fine. I ran from South Bend, Ind., to Toledo, Ohio, 175 miles in five hours and forty-five minutes. From Cleveland to Buffalo, a distance of 210 miles, we wheeled off in short time. From Buffalo I drive to New York city, 475 miles, and I will see what time I can do this in. We completed 1800 miles without a breakdown of any kind and with little tire trouble, over hill, and roads that would test the best of machines; but the Pierce has maintained its reputation for touring. I am sending you a picture of the car."

Further travels found Mrs. Lutcher exploring Alaska, the West Coast, Midwest, New York, New England, Canada - even Western Europe and Great Britain.



Mountainous roads were easy driving for a Pierce-Arrow.



France Ann Lutcher's 48HP Pierce-Arrow equipment vehicle fording a flooded road somewhere in the American West.



Frances Ann Lutcher leans forward in her 1912 Pierce-Arrow 66 to view the “Colorado canyon” from its rim. She journeyed over 10,000 miles on this trip leaving from her home in Orange, Texas on June 7, 1917. She later said that nothing in Europe equalled the “majesty” of that canyon.

You can only imagine how poor road conditions were during that era, often requiring creative solutions by the Brothers Fiedler to make it from one stop to another. Frances Ann Lutcher had a lust for life and seeing the world – particularly America. Despite being an octogenarian, she was always the liveliest member of the group. The big Pierces would roll into town for a short rest and a light meal. When she was ready to get back on the road, she simply drew her veil across her face, stepped into the tonneau and settled back comfortably beneath a huge canopy. “All right boys, Let’s go!” she would call out to the Fiedler brothers. And “go” was good - the big cars would shoot down the street raising a cloud of dust behind them.

In her travels, Mrs. Lutcher visited 43 of the 48 states in the Union, and drove her Pierce-Arrows through 5 countries of Europe crossing the Alps three times. It is estimated she had traveled well over 300,000 miles in her motoring career. Mrs. Lutcher died on October 21, 1924 just a few days after her eighty-third birthday. She was in New York on vacation.

Sources: Houston Post, Illustrated Buffalo Express, Tyrrell Historical Library - Herbert Fiedler Photograph Collection, Eunice R. Benckenstein Library, The Pierce-Arrow Salesman



One of the photos Albert Fiedler sent back to the Houston Motor Car Company that the Pierce-Arrow Salesman magazine used with his report on the stellar performance of both motor cars on the 10,000 mile journey and its road conditions.

October 7, 1920
THE BUFFALO COMMERCIAL

Octogenarian Is Enthusiastic On Her Motor Trips

Mrs. H. J. Lutcher of Texas, in passing through Buffalo in one of her Pierce-Arrow cars, declares the closed car is ideal for touring.

In her eightieth year, Mrs. H. J. Lutcher, of Orange, Texas, who for many months of the year virtually "lives" in a Pierce-Arrow, motored through Buffalo on a trip which will complete more than 300,000 miles of touring. Her present trip, started in June, ends in New York.

"My only regret is that I must take a train back to Texas," she said, "but I must be back in time to celebrate my 80th birthday anniversary in my own home.

"I just love to tour. I have been in all but five states of the Union besides traveling by motor through five countries of Europe.

"And next year I plan to tour again in Europe with my grandson who plans to attend the International Rotary conference at Edinburgh Scotland."

On her next European trip Mrs. Lutcher intends to take her largest Pierce-Arrow, which has traveled 375,000 miles and which recently was equipped with a new Sedan body.

"I used to say I never would tour in a closed car," said Mrs. Lutcher, "but during the last two or three years I have had such delightful and pleasant trips in my closed car that I much prefer it for touring. And I notice an increasing number of closed automobiles on the road. With this type of car I can have it as warm or as cool as I desire and I also have protection from dust and rain."

Mrs. Lutcher's touring record is the more remarkable when it is realized that few men have traveled as far as this woman of advanced years.



Above: This photo shows Frances Ann's "largest Pierce-Arrow", her Model 66, with its new sedan body which she enjoyed into her eighties after more than a decade touring in it with an open body style (see article clipping).

Below: Frances Ann Lutcher had no qualms about taking the wheel of her big Pierce-Arrows or this little Model T Ford.

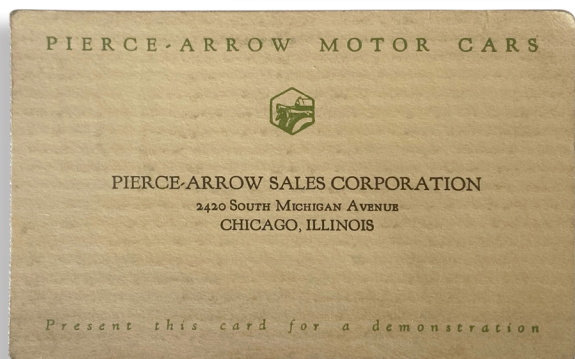


Pierce-Arrow Business Cards

The printing press was invented circa 1450, and at some point thereafter Visite Bilettes, or “Visiting Cards”, grew popular in Europe. These were simple cards with just a name, or a title and a name, and a tray in the entrance hall of most houses showed off the cards and thus who had visited.

In 1854, the Carte de Visite was patented, and it differed from the Visite Bilettes in that it also had a picture of the named person on it. At about the same time as the Carte de Visite was becoming popular, so were Trade Cards. These were similar printed cards, but showed businesses and products available from a company, and the location of said company. The Pierce Cycle trade card from F. Berenbroick & Co. shown is an example of a trade card.

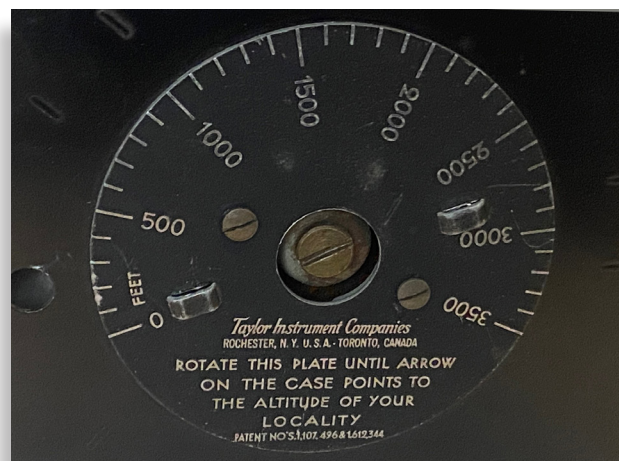
Sometime late in the 1890s or early in the 1900s, these two ideas were combined, and the “business card” was created. These showed not only products a company was trying to sell, but also the specific person who could sell the product. Even if a sale wasn’t consummated immediately, the business card could be kept by the potential customer as a reminder of whom to contact for the goods



Pierce-Arrow Master Salesman Award

Pictured is a November 1932 Pierce-Arrow Master Salesman award, a Taylor Stormoguide. Taylor Instrument Company began in 1904, and in 1922 received a copyright on the term Stormoguide. This was sold as a simplified barometer which indicated weather probabilities for the next 12 to 24 hours. On the reverse is an altitude scale which had to be set to local conditions, as pressure varies with elevation.

Although Pierce automobiles were still being built to a higher standard, this award seems, shall we say, cheap and cheaply made for what would seem to be a prestigious award. It might be considered that Studebaker could see the end of the road for the ownership of Pierce by the end of 1932, and subsequent cost cutting possibly affected even awards.





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