

GREAT ARROW news

The Pierce-Arrow Museum Newsletter



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Liz Horne (GA)

JUST ARRIVED 1925 SERIES 80 FOUR PASSENGER COUPE



*Donated by Muriel Harris
at the direct request of the
late Hugh Harris*

By David Coco

When the decade of the 1920's commenced, the Pierce Arrow Motor Car Company was not in a competitive position in the luxury car market. Cadillac had offered a new V-8, while reducing prices, and Packard had introduced a Single Six and Single Eight, both at attractive price points compared to their earlier Twin-Six Packard. The Single Six Packard of 1922, for example, had a base price point of \$2485, at a time when Pierce was only offering the Model 33 in the \$5000 to \$7000 range. The PAMCC had made excellent profits during World War I, in a large part due to production of heavy trucks for the war effort, but after the armistice those monies were slowly being eroded by poor sales, low profit margins, and inefficient manufacturing methods.

New leadership was being ushered in, however, which would

benefit the Company greatly. Myron Forbes had joined the Company in 1919 as Treasurer. He would be promoted to General Manager in 1921, and President a year later. He soon proposed that Pierce-Arrow offer a more moderately priced six-cylinder car, a Pierce that would be more affordable to the targeted luxury automobile market.

Late in 1924, the Model 80 was introduced, at a base price that was relatively reasonable compared to earlier offerings. Model 80 pricing started at \$2895, with the coupe being discussed here offered at \$3695. The 80 series weighed about 1,200 pounds less than the Model 33, was the first Pierce with a side-valve engine, and was very nicely appointed. Sales were good, with 5,231 cars sold in 1925, although

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\$1500 or more

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PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION

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

February, 2019

Pierce-Arrow Friends:

On behalf of the Pierce-Arrow Foundation Trustees and all Friends of the Museum, thank you for your continued support.

A lot of good things are happening at your museum!

All will agree that a major leap forward has been the production of this fine newsletter. Accolades and sincere thanks to David Coco for the continuous stream of timely news about our museum, our sister museums and the Gilmore campus in general. We are grateful that Liz Horne continues to provide her excellent skills for the layout and production. The collaboration (of these two) has provided a newsletter second to none!

The recent donations of five significant cars (two from Conrad Fletcher and three from Pat Craig) have been a great addition to our museum. These cars are at the Gilmore campus now and being enjoyed by the visiting public.

The list of reproduction parts, sold for the museum's benefit, continues to expand. Watch the "Parts for Sale" on the Museum's website as more new parts are now in the production stages and will become available soon.

Please keep in mind the many ways you can support our museum:

- 1. First and foremost, maintain your museum membership. And if possible be a member at the sustaining level or better.**
- 2. When your restoration project requires reproducing a part, make a couple extra and donate them to the museum.**
- 3. As friends continue to request the use of your car, tell them: "My insurance does not allow me to accept a gratuity for driving your daughter to her wedding reception, but it does allow you to make a donation to the Pierce-Arrow Museum".**
- 4. Most importantly, visit and enjoy your museum as often as possible. You will find that the museum displays are changing regularly, so every visit is new and interesting.**

And remember the Pierce-Arrow Society's Gathering at Gilmore every August. This is an opportunity to enjoy two days of touring the scenic, low-traffic Michigan back roads plus a day at the museum. I hope to see you there!

Cordially yours,

PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

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A very rare Model A Town Car

Gilmore Partner Museum Series

The Model A Ford Museum

By Jim Thomas, MAFFI Trustee

Gilmore Partner Museum Series
The Model A Ford Museum
The Model A Ford Foundation, Inc. (MAFFI) was founded in 1986 as a 501c3 tax exempt charitable organization. The MAFFI mission is to seek to preserve Model A Fords and related artifacts and memorabilia, encourage research, and educate present and future generations about the Model A Ford and its era. The Model A Ford was first introduced in December 1927 and was produced for only four years -- from 1928 through 1931.

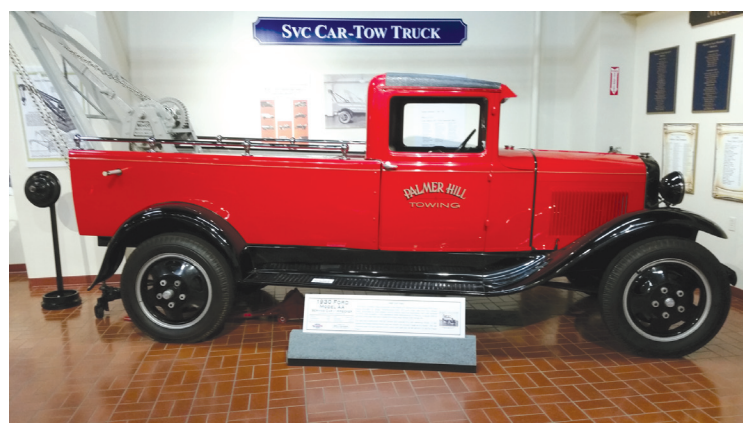
The Foundation's initial efforts were centered around sponsoring research activities related to Model A parts drawings, upholstery components, factory photographs, advertising and related activities. With nationwide support by many hundreds

of Model A enthusiasts, attention began to be focused in 2010 on finding a location suitable for the creation of a Model A Ford Museum. After years of planning and intensive fundraising, ground breaking ceremonies for the Museum at the Gilmore took place in April 2012. The Museum's grand opening ceremonies were held in May 2013.

The outside façade of the Model A Ford Museum is built as a replica of a 1929 Ford dealership – complete with two tall “visible” Gulf gas pumps. Inside, the Museum contains over 11,000 square

feet of floor space dedicated to the display of Model A passenger cars, Model AA trucks and a wide variety of Model A era exhibits. Overhead is suspended a 1929 Model A engine powered Pietenpol airplane. The Ford Service door entrance leads to a fully-outfitted Ford dealership parts department. The well-appointed 1930

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1930 Model AA Service Truck/Wrecker, Briggs body with Weaver mechanical hoist (hand-cranked)

Preserving History

Geo. N. Pierce & Co.

The Pierce Arrow Foundation Museum at Gilmore is fortunate to own and display a rare survivor and early example of a George N. Pierce product - a wooden ice box from the 1880's. This ice box was donated to the Museum by PAS member Ed Minnie of West Palm Beach, Florida.

It's well known that Geo. N. Pierce was partnered with two local Buffalo men in a company known as Heinz, Pierce and Munshauer for the manufacture of bird cages, bath tubs, and ice boxes. In 1878, he left that company to found George N. Pierce & Company, which also manufactured bird cages and ice boxes.

In 1888, tricycles (and later bicycles) were added to the product line of that company.

The first ice boxes in the United States were made by carpenters in the 1840's. Wood construction was typical and quite attractive, and their use took

advantage of the availability of blocks of ice that were available in many cities. This ice was usually "farmed", having been cut from frozen lakes or rivers and stored in cold warehouses, and insulated with hay or straw. Southern states had to rely on ice transported down the Mississippi River and other routes. Impurities in the ice made early ice boxes hard to clean, and the wood construction, while providing some insulation, also stored food odors which sometimes made the ice box unusable.

Around 1880, cork and other better insula-

tion materials came into common use. Ice boxes, while still of wood construction, were lined with tin or zinc to control odors. The Pierce ice box was lined in galvanized iron, with charcoal used as insulation. In addition, new technologies made freezing of ice possible, and clean block ice became available in many areas as "ice plants" were built. This new technology used ammonia as a refrigerant, a very hazardous substance if not handled correctly. It was not until safer refrigerants became available that home "refrigerators" would replace the ice

box. The first electric refrigerators became available around 1915, and they became extremely popular starting in the 1920's.

The one now in the Museum has a known history from new. It was originally in the 1882 J.E. Squiers home at 418 W. Pleasant Street, Maquoketa, Iowa. It

stayed in the house since new, although it was moved to the attic when an electric refrigerator replaced it. It was sold in 2009 to an antique shop outside of that town. Ed was walking through the shop, and in fact ahead of him in the shop was Mike Wolfe of American Pickers, before he was a household name (Mike, not Ed!). Mike looked at the Pierce ice box, but moved on, and Ed jumped at the chance to purchase it.

Ed's generous gift to the Museum is greatly appreciated.

"We desire to call the attention of the trade to the construction of our "POLAR" Refrigerator. It is placed upon the market, knowing that as a preserver of food it has NO SUPERIOR, and for economy of ice it has NO EQUAL."

~ Geo. N. Pierce & Co.



The Geo. N. Pierce & Company "Polar" Refrigerator on display at the Pierce-Arrow Museum



Dry Air "Polar" Refrigerator.

SOFT WOOD. OAK OR WALNUT GRAINED.

DOUBLE CIRCULATION.

Charcoal Filled, Zinc Lined, Galvanized Iron Ice Chamber and Shelves, Heavy and Strong, Porcelain Casters, Patent Locks, Best Finish, Best Goods.

This Refrigerator has never had a superior in the market.

NO.	LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT	SHIPPING WEIGHT	PRICE
No. 72	36 in.	19 in.	46 1/2 in.	200 lbs.	\$24.00 each
No. 73	39 in.	20 in.	48 in.	225 in.	27.00 "
No. 74	42 in.	22 in.	50 in.	250 in.	30.00 "
No. 75	48 in.	25 in.	52 in.	320 in.	38.00 "

A zinc partition in the Provision Chamber, giving two separate apartments.

Dry Air "Polar" Refrigerator.

LOW PRICED DOUBLE DOOR.

Charcoal Filled. Heavy Locks and Trimmings. Porcelain Casters. Overlapping Doors. Soft Wood. Oak and Walnut Grained.

SINGLE CIRCULATION.

A Perfect Dry Air, Durable, Well-made Refrigerator, Cheap.

NO.	LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT	SHIPPING WEIGHT	PRICE
No. 57	41 in.	22 in.	48 in.	240 lbs.	\$26.50 each



"Manufactured by Geo. N. Pierce & Co. Prime & Hanover St. Buffalo, N.Y."



The photos above and below show the unusual seating arrangement with folding front passenger seat to allow easy access to the rear area.



With the front seat folded forward, ample access to the rear seating compartment is afforded including room for the foot rest.



The "Sin Closet" is show above - a nice compartment for storing, uh, valuables.

outdated manufacturing methods and excess cost of manufacturing meant less profits than anticipated. With 130 inch wheelbase and a 70 Horsepower, 288.6 cubic inch engine, it was by no means a small car. However, it was a finely built car, with hand hammered aluminum coachwork over a seasoned northern white ash body frame with laminated joints. Pierce called white ash the "vanadium [steel] of woods" in their advertising.

Pierce further claimed in their advertising that all body joints were laminated, a construction method two and one-half times stronger than the mortise and tenon construction used by most automotive companies with composite body construction. They stated that roof coverings were "thick, tough, and pliable" and permanently waterproof. "Crystal-clear" plate glass of the first quality was used for windows. The "permanent beauty of Pierce-Arrow body painting" due to "extraordinary care, the innumerable painting operations, the hand rubbing and washed air drying that each coat undergoes" was touted in their advertising. To finish the rightful bragging, advertising stated that

"Pierce-Arrow craftsmen pamper each Pierce-Arrow body....they have an ideal to equal every time, [and] the full meaning of "body by Pierce-Arrow" always on their minds".

Our feature car was recently donated to the Pierce Arrow Museum by Muriel Harris. It was restored in the early 1980's by Eric Rosenau, finished right before Christmas, 1983. Then owned by Phelps and Joan Chamberlain, it was used as a tour car in California for a number of months, then entered at the August 1984 Pebble Beach Concours, where it took a third place in spite of the prior tour usage. The restoration has held up remarkably well, and current condition of the automobile belies the high quality Rosenau restoration. The car was owned for years by our Past President George Teebay, who later sold it to Hugh Harris of Belvedere, California. It was Hugh's wish that the car end up in our Museum.

While called a "Four Passenger", the unusual seating arrangement requires the two rear seat passengers to be of very slight build. The front passenger seat fold forward, so for one passenger in the rear, spreading out with expansive legroom would be possible. One interesting feature of the interior is a large rear seat "armrest" storage compartment. With the large trunk, this at first seems odd, until you realize that this car was built during the Prohibition Era. My mother, who graduated college in 1931, would have called it a "sin closet", since it probably would have held vices of the time, such as liquor and cigarettes.

The Foundation is very grateful for the generosity of Muriel Harris and her family for the donation of this exceptionally nice car that runs and drives as well as it looks.



A brace of Ford Model A 400 Convertible Sedans



1931 Model A Station Wagon

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era one-room schoolhouse display is flanked by a large Model AA school bus. A 1931 Model AA Postal Truck is part of a 1930's Post Office display setting.

The many Museum showcases display Model A era fashions and accessories, advertising, upholstery examples, license plate toppers, carburetors, miniature Ford factory assembly line and dealer showroom dioramas, and Model A tools and

equipment. A cut-away exhibit of a Model A engine and chassis and separate displays of Model A engines modified for motor boat, portable compressor and hay harvesting applications provide evidence of the versatility of Model A Ford engineering.

A favorite interactive Museum attraction features a Model A body and engine exhibit that allows the visitor to ac-

tually sit in a Model A and go through the eight separate steps necessary to start the engine. The use of lights and sound effects make this a realistic experience – complete with the slight vibration of the driver's seat as the engine is successfully started. The approximately 25 Model A and Model AA vehicles in the Museum provide examples from each of the 1928-1931 production years and a wide variety of body styles – begin-

ning with the Thomas A. Edison car, the first Model A produced. Included are examples of the basic Model A Tudor and Fordor Sedans as well as the more sporty Roadster, Cabriolet and Phaeton passenger cars. Commercial body styles include a Model AA tanker truck, a De Luxe Delivery Car, a Pick-up, a Drop Floor Panel Delivery, a Station Wagon and a Model A Taxicab. Of special interest are the many quite rare Model A's body styles on display - including the De Luxe Phaeton, the A-400 Convertible Sedan and the elegant Model A Town Car.

Each year, on the third Saturday in September, MAFFI sponsors a Model A Day celebration at the Museum. These festivities, which attract hundreds of Model A enthusiasts and their vehicles, include a swap meet, educational seminars and the annual induction of new members into the Model A Ford Hall of Fame.

**For more information visit
www.maffi.org**



It has taken the dedication of many people to get us this far. We need your help and financial support to pursue the dream of preserving the history of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company. Please complete and mail the bottom portion of this form and join your museum today.

Mail application and payment to:
Pierce-Arrow Museum Membership
P.O. Box 309
Whitehall, MI 49461