

GREAT ARROW news

The Pierce-Arrow Museum Newsletter



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"Sweep the floor issue"
...to round up miscellaneous items in files!



PIERCE-ARROW FACTORY FLOOR

One of the interesting items in the Pierce-Arrow Foundation Museum is a brick from the factory floor.

Brick, however, may be a misnomer in this instance, as usually a "brick" is made of dried clay. This particular item, though, is actually a block of wood in the shape of a brick.

The question then becomes, where in the factory would such a wood "brick" be located? The factory floor itself was mainly reinforced concrete, as is emphasized in the 1908 factory book *"The Factory Behind the Great Arrow Car"*:

"Reinforced concrete floors are very much more rigid than those of wood or of steel. Being built monolithic in large sections and with granolithic

top, they are both germ and waterproof. There is no decay as with wood, but instead the cement becomes stronger with age. These floors are also very poor conductors of heat, thus reducing condensation when there is heat and moisture on one side and cold on the other side of either floor, wall, or roof."

The sanitary benefits of a floor easily cleaned are also touted, and a guiding expectation for the facility, as quoted in above book and attributed to a Mr. H.F.L. Orcutt in *Engineering Magazine*, states that: "It is economy well as humanity to plan factories in which human life is of more account than machinery; into which human beings will...[be]... attracted by su-

continued on page 4

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 Pierce-Arrow Enthusiasts:

With every endeavor, the time comes when old workers must step aside and allow fresh ideas and new enthusiasm to move the mission forward.

Since that time has arrived for me, I want to thank all whose support and assistance have been so vital for the success the museum has enjoyed in recent years.

Please join me with wholehearted support for the new Pierce-Arrow Foundation Chairman, Rich Lange, the Executive Committee and all Foundation Trustees as they work to promote the legacy of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company for generations to come.

Jane and I look forward to seeing everyone at future Pierce-Arrow events!

With kindest regards for all, I remain

Very cordially yours,

Merlin B. Smith

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MBS:s

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PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP

For more than a century, *Pierce-Arrow*, America's Finest Built Car, has represented the absolute highest quality automobile produced. *For more than a quarter-century*, the Pierce-Arrow Foundation, through its Gilmore Museum, has preserved and promoted this extraordinary legacy.

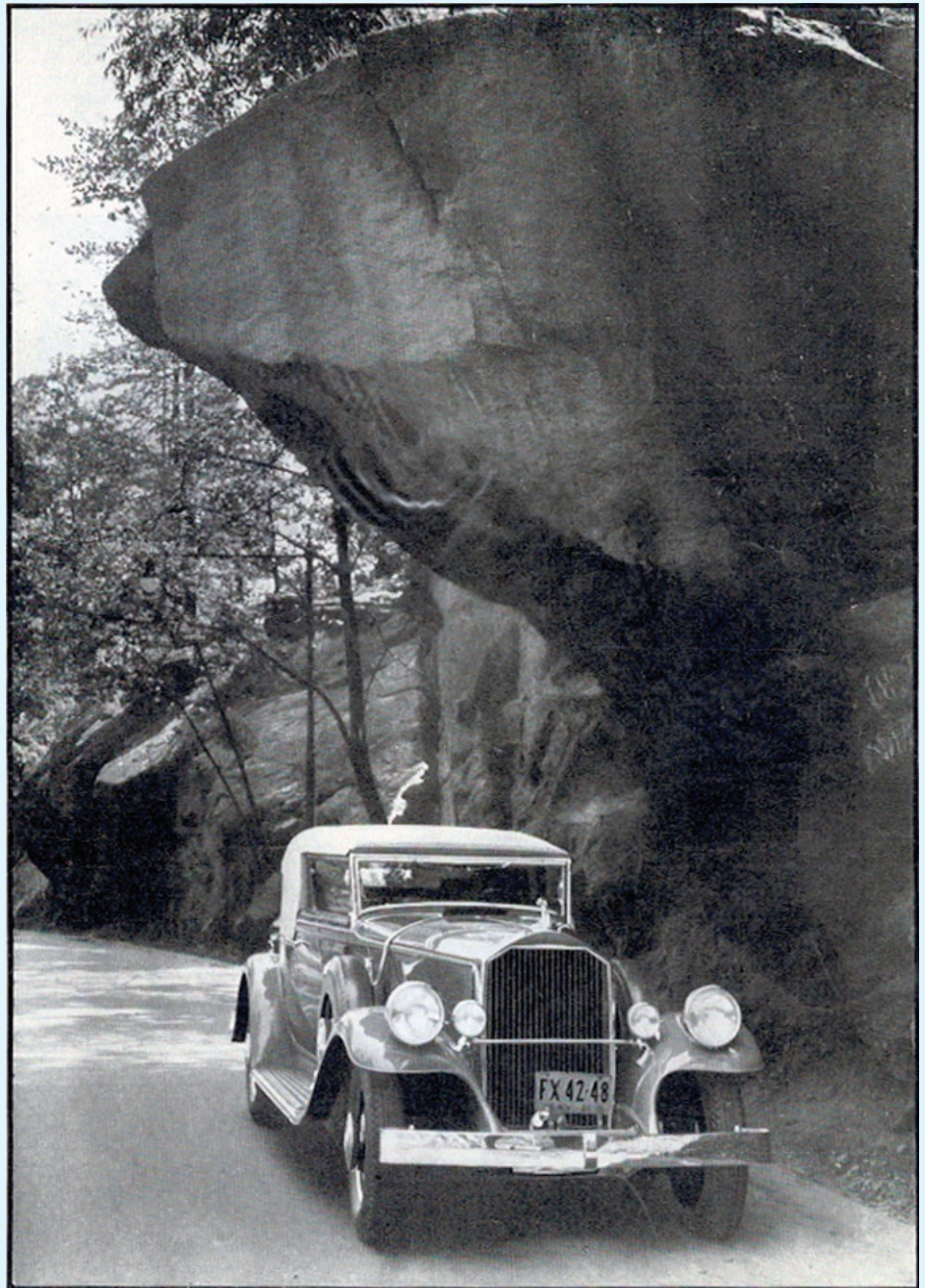
Our Museum's outreach now favorably impacts more than 150,000 annual Gilmore visitors; and many are motivated to learn more about The Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company.

PIERCE ARROW

★
AMERICA'S
FINEST
MOTOR CAR
★

Partner with us to support this legacy and continued positive impact on current and future Pierce-Arrow enthusiasts.

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



Please contact Richard Lange or Dave Stevens to discuss your opportunity to support our Pierce-Arrow Museum as a Legacy Partner.

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Pierce-Arrow factory Machine Shop

perior hygienic surroundings – air, light, comfort – raising the standard of workmanship and wages.”

So, back to our wood brick or block, what was it’s purpose and use? One clue is that this particular block of wood is saturated with oil. In all probability, this wood block comes from one of the machine shop areas in the plant. It was common practice in a machine shop to have wood floors for a variety of reasons:

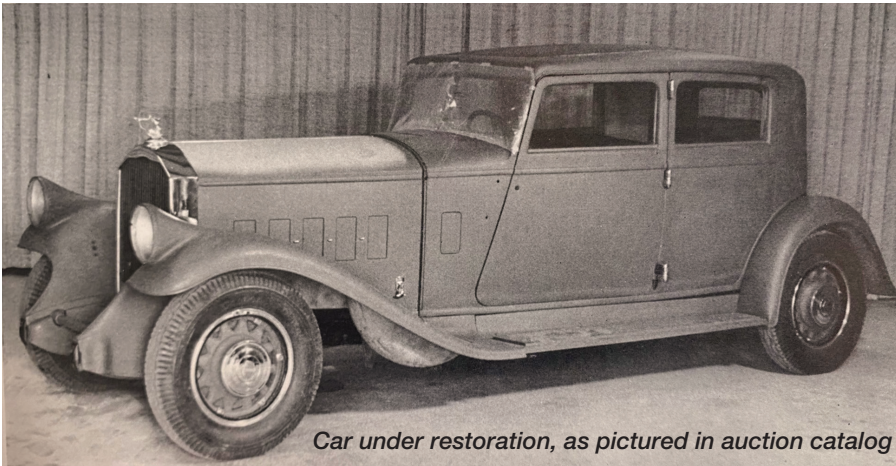
- *If a part either machined or in process is dropped on wood, there’s no damage to part or floor.*
- *Many claim wood is much easier on the feet and legs of operators, standing for a day’s work.*
- *If a wood block does get damaged, it’s easy to lift out of the floor and replace.*
- *Wood soaks up spilled cutting oil, without becoming a slipping hazard.*
- *Wood blocks can be easily repositioned to move machinery to different locations*

The picture (shown above) of a section of the Pierce factory machine shop shows wooden blocks under the machinery, though they appear larger than our artifact.

There is, however, another brick in the Museum collection, this one an architectural brick, removed in the recent past during renovations of the Administration Building. Having dimensions of 250 by 67 feet, it’s easily seen that a large amount of brick was used during construction. At one time, Buffalo had dozens of brick manufacturers in operation, though by the time the Pierce factory was built it was down to 5 or 6 businesses still in operation. Conversation with Frank Clement, owner of the *Frank and Jane Clement Brick Museum* in Buffalo, failed to determine exactly which operation supplied brick for the Administration building construction. In fact, it could have been spread among surviving operations a the time.



1931 Pierce-Arrow Model 41 LeBaron Club Sedan~ The only Berline (redux)



Car under restoration, as pictured in auction catalog

In the last issue of the *Great Arrow News*, PAS member Allen Strong's Berlin (chassis 3050240) was featured with a stated history beginning with Harrah's ownership in the 1960s. It is believed that the complete history of this car is now known.

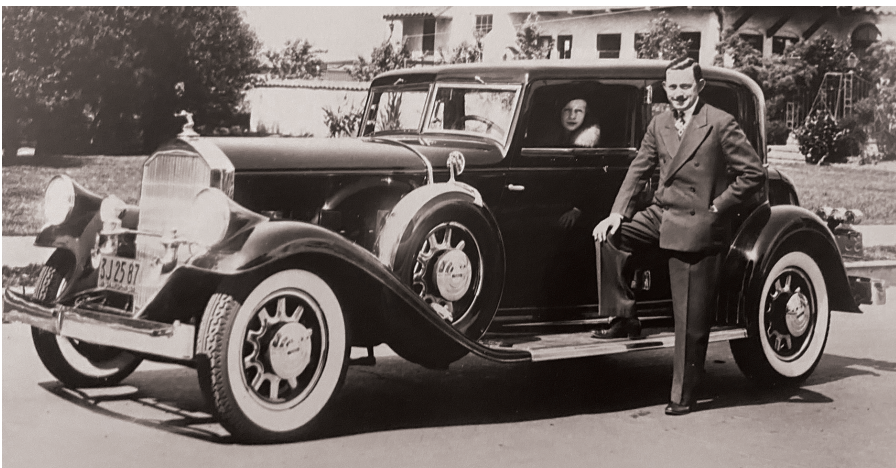
Agnes Reid Tammen of Denver, Colorado bought the car new in 1931. Agnes was the widow of Harry H. Tammen, co-owner of the Denver post. Although Harry died in 1924, Agnes lived until 1942.

In 1931, she was living in luxury in a mansion in Denver when she purchased this Pierce-Arrow. Comparing facial features she is surely pictured sitting in the car in the photo below, though with the divider window one would assume she employed a chauffeur for daily trips.

With no children, Agnes left her estate to her great-niece, Helen Crabbs Rippey. Helen was the wife of Arthur Rippey, a successful advertising executive in Denver. As fortune would have it, the couple collected antique cars, and later built and owned the Veteran Car Museum of Denver. The 1931 LeBaron was in the museum collection and a restoration started in the early 1960s.

Many museums are closed for various reasons and so it was with this one, with cars being dispersed even as the LeBaron was, if not under restoration, at least partially disassembled as the catalog picture shows. The only assumption in this story is that Harrah's bought it at the auction of the collection, as it last appears in the museum in 1964 and soon after in Harrah's collection.

Editor's note: Special thanks to Roger Sherman for providing some of the missing link information.



1931 PIERCE-ARROW CLUB SEDAN MODEL 41 CUSTOM

Straight 8 cylinder engine with 3 1/2" bore and 5" stroke. A custom LeBaron close coupled club sedan, with partition between front and rear seats, on a 147" wheelbase chassis with trunk on the rear. Spare tires mounted on each side in fender wells. Artillery type wood spoke wheel, only rims demountable. Recently re-upholstered; rear in light blue broadcloth, front in black leather. The car is just out of the paint shop with the chrome work re-done. The windshield frames, a few pieces of the side mount spare tire brackets, and some other miscellaneous small parts are missing. If you want to participate in old car events in luxurious style and not have to worry about the weather; this is the car to do it in.

Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc.
Veteran, Vintage and
Classic Automobiles
Auction Catalog

"Give Me Something, Mister!" ...or

Pierce-Arrow was always a prestigious marque, and many companies used that good name to promote their business. A good way to get one's name in front of potential customers is, of course, to give them something free.

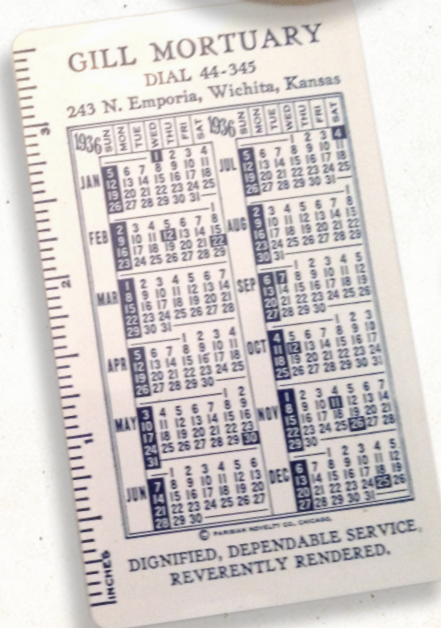
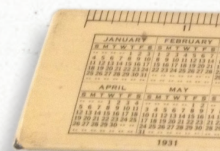
Presented here are a few such freebies, with a short history if known of the businesses represented.

Gill Mortuary was located at 243 North Emporia Avenue, Wichita, Kansas. It was owned and operated by the Gill family from 1890 until it's closing in 1980. It was an important business in Wichita, and is commemorated by a replica building of the I.W. Gill Undertaking Parlor.

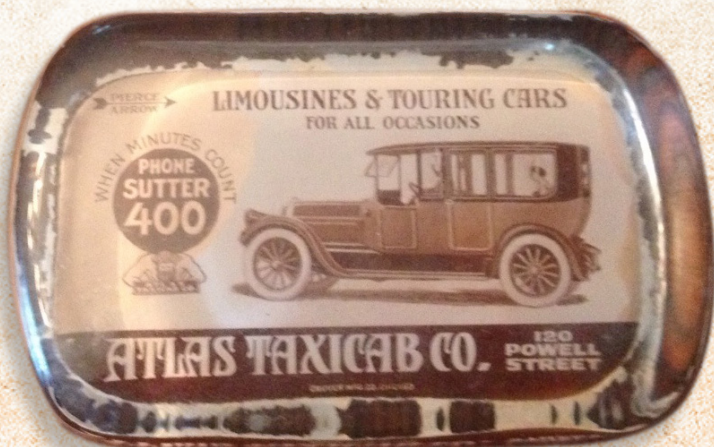
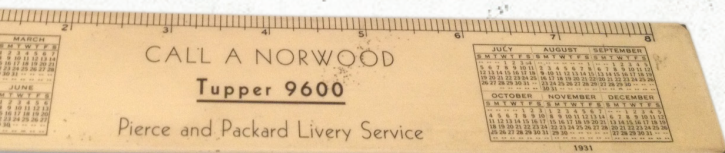
This building is now in the Old Cowtown Museum area, just off the Chisholm Trail as it passes by Wichita. The celluloid calendar advertising the Gill Ambulance Service is dated 1936, and the tape measure has mention of the Ambulance on one side, and the Mortuary on the other.... they had you coming and going.

Another nice item from a funeral home, A. Maiorano, Funeral Director, wanted you to think of him every time you used this brush. There is still a Maiorano Funeral Home operating in Waterbury, Connecticut, but that is not the source of this brush. Seems a relative of the founder of that funeral home got mad at owner, left the firm, and started their own operation in New Haven.

The Atlas Taxicab Company (heavy glass paper-



how to ride Pierce-Arrow coattails.



weights) was located at 120 Powell Street in San Francisco. In 1921, an enthusiastic Atlas limousine driver took a curve too fast, sliding on wet pavement and turning the Pierce limousine on its side. Its two wealthy passengers, proving that litigation is nothing new, sued the taxi company for injury and suffering. They won a settlement in lower court, but lost the appeal. I'm sure the overturned limo lost some appeal, also.

The "Call A Norwood" 1931 calendar and blotter is somewhat of a mystery. There's a Norwood, Massachusetts, or is Norwood the name of the owner of the livery service? Where was the "Tupper 9600" phone exchange? Not enough clues, one would think, but wait!

Ah, the last to be discussed, a stand up thermometer and a fun little piece. By gosh, you can rent a new car, and by the owner's estimation, the bottom end to the top end was defined by Ford and Pierce-Arrow! And look, the number to call is Tupper 6572, and the address is 250 Franklin Street! Well, there are a lot of Franklin Streets here and there, but the only one which intersects Chippewa is in our very own city of Buffalo, New York.

And finally, a pinback that's a complete mystery. You could apparently call J.D. Corbit anytime, including nights and holidays, and he'd do something with either or Nash or Pierce-Arrow, all the while including you in the fun. Good to know.... but that's all we know at this point.

THE 1931 LEBARON PIERCE-ARROW OWNED BY ANHEUSER-BUSCH

August Busch, Sr., President of Anheuser-Busch, is shown standing with the Pierce-Arrow in 1931 when this picture was taken. The LeBaron bodied Pierce-Arrow, in all probability a limousine, is in front of the old schoolhouse building in St. Louis, Missouri.

Originally constructed as the Lyon School in 1868 at a cost of \$42,000, this building was intended to serve educational needs of the entire far southern and western portions of St. Louis. It was named in honor of Captain Nathaniel Lyon, the commander of the Union Forces in Missouri during the early days of the Civil War. It was to this school Adolphus Busch sent each of his children including August A. Busch Sr., who when he later became President of the brewery had his office in the same room where he once attended class.

By 1907, the city no longer needed the Lyon School and sold it to Adolphus Busch, who converted it into the brewery's main office building while maintaining its exterior charm and grace. For 75 years, it housed the offices of each succeeding president of Anheuser-Busch until 1982.

Pictures courtesy Anheuser-Busch Marketing Communications Department



Above: August Busch, Sr., President of Anheuser-Busch with the company car ~ 1931 Pierce-Arrow by LeBaron ~ in front of the company's office. Below: Today the building serves as a museum about the original school and the brewer's history.



PIERCE-ARROW TESTING AT FACTORY



Various sources over the years have stated that newly manufactured Pierce-Arrows were tested before being delivered to a dealer. This testing might include putting miles on the engine and running gear, dynamometer results, and even some engine inspection after run time accumulated.

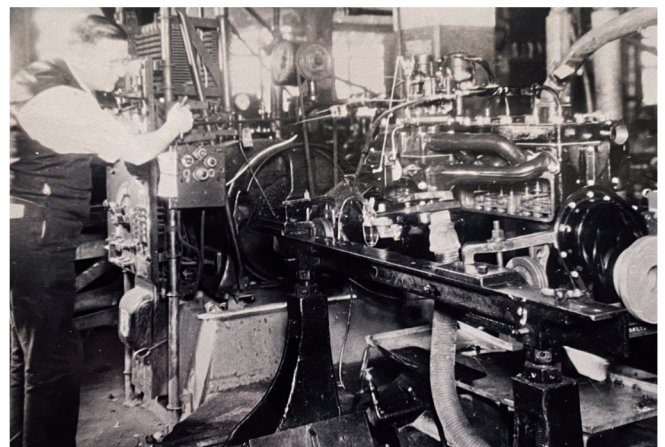
One often pictures in their mind a hundred miles of testing, with a jaunty driver, well dressed in pristine Pierce-labeled coveralls, driving merrily down country lanes and listening for odd or unusual noises.

The reality seems a bit more mundane, as these 1934 factory pictures show. Cars were strapped or chained for immobility and placed on rollers for run-in. The rollers may or may not have been collecting speed or power information.

One might think that this seems like a time consuming operation, and it is, as the aforementioned hundred miles would easily take a couple of hours per car. With production rates well off of record years, however, this may not have been a big consideration.



Above: Pierce factory testing



Above: 1934 8 cylinder engine in factory on test stand (dynamometer)



PIERCE-ARROW AVIATION MYSTERY

Pierce-Arrow began building and selling trucks in 1911, and these heavy duty trucks had a good reputation both in the United States and abroad for performance and reliability. Many trucks of this era were chain drive, but Pierce trucks featured a shaft worm-drive rear axle. It is not hard to understand that when the war to end all wars, World War One, was raging, the military powers appreciated this reliability. By the end of the war, over 14,000 Pierce-Arrow trucks would be sold to the British and the French armed forces.

Having had experience with the military, it is not beyond reason that the management of Pierce investigated other areas of production and sales.

While there is little record of such activity at the factory, this interesting badge does raise some question. It is not unique, as there are a few other examples in collections, but the questions are what does it represent and when was it made. A similar employee badge is also known. These appear to be period pieces, though it's not out of the question that someone in more recent times made them. Little if any mention of a Pierce-Arrow "Aircraft Division" can be found.

The Air Force symbol on the badge holder is similar to the one used from 1919 to 1941, as the center circle was eliminated in 1942. Holders look newer than the 20's, possibly late 1930's, and the maker, Bastian Bros., has been in business continually since 1895, so that's no clue. While the United States wasn't in World War Two in the late 30's, war supplies were being produced in the U.S. starting in 1938. These supplies were sold to Canada, which in turn sold goods to Great Britain, as the U.S. was prohibited by treaty from selling war supplies directly to a European country involved in the conflict. There may have been some thought of producing war goods in the Pierce factory, and thus the badges.

The logical conclusion would be that Pierce toyed with the idea of producing aircraft engines for the late 1930s war effort. The production of Rolls Royce Merlin V-1650 aircraft engines by Packard enabled that company to survive into the 1950s. Packard also produced the V-12 engines used in Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats during the war, a liquid cooled version of the Liberty engine designed for aircraft.

These simple badges remain a mystery to this editor. If anyone has any further information please contact me.



When The Photos
are as
Beautiful
As The Subject...



It is a rare thing when photographs are available which are as beautiful as the subject itself. These photos capture the elegance of the 1931 Pierce-Arrow Model 41 LeBaron club sedan, Body #156-1, Serial #3050212, Engine #325676, one of the cars featured in the previous issue of The Great Arrow. Previously owned by Harrah's and now in a private collection in California, these photographs are by Michael Furman, used here with permission courtesy of him and current owner. As his website states, "Michael's style is to present the car from the perspective of the designers and engineers who created it".



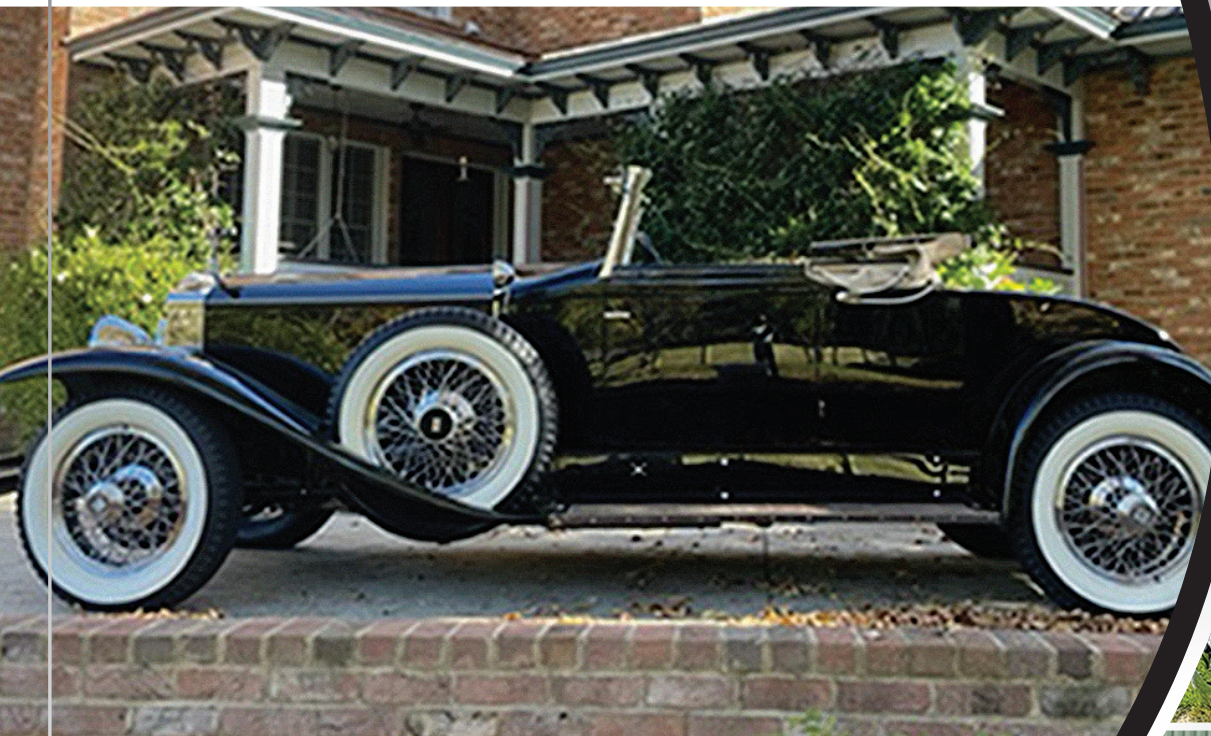
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