United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

_X_ New Submission ____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying them, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Marketing and Servicing the Automobile in St. Louis, 1900-1955 ca.

C. Form Prepared by

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organization Karen Bode Baxter, Preservation Specialist date April 4, 2005

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city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63109

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

__See continuation sheet

Mark A. Miles 06/15/05

Signature of certifying official Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register Date

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Introduction

To say that the automobile impacted St. Louis' development would be an understatement. The automobile represents one of the most significant technological developments in the world. Its introduction, development, and use have shaped almost every aspect of society and culture. Its presence in St. Louis was landmark – a pioneer effort that began as a sport for the wealthy and ended up forever changing the face of the city. During its years of early development, the automobile was strictly associated with the rich. In essence, it was a "status symbol for those with money to waste."[1] Most nineteenth-century Americans never believed that the automobile would replace the horse, let alone change nearly every aspect of their lives. Automobile ownership began to rise rapidly after 1910 as the vehicle became increasingly affordable to the average consumer. This was in large part due to mass assembly production, introduced by Ransom Olds in 1901 and perfected by Henry Ford in 1913. In 1910, Americans owned an average of 500,000 automobiles. By 1920, this number rose to eight million.[2] Most significant was the jump in ownership between 1920 and 1930 at which time (in 1930), Americans owned an estimated 23 million cars.[3] During the Great Depression, when new car sales slowed dramatically, Americans continued to purchase used vehicles. "Cowboy philosopher" Will Rogers quipped that "the United States was the only country where a person could drive himself to the poorhouse in an automobile."[4] As a result, cities and rural landscapes began to take on their modern appearances. New roads were constructed and old ones improved; and the standards to do so were placed under state and federal mandates. The ways in which automobiles were marketed and serviced passed from small tinker's shops and garages to "Big Three" (Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors) showrooms and full-service gas stations. Where and how people lived, shopped, and traveled changed dramatically; and the modern suburb was born. These national patterns were reflected in the City of St. Louis, which was an early center of automobile manufacture, sales, service, and marketing.

This document provides information that centers on the marketing and servicing of automobiles in St. Louis. To introduce such information without mentioning the city's role in manufacturing and good roads movements is impossible. St. Louis was one of the nation's earliest cities to develop the automobile, having many variations of the early car running around the city by the 1890s. The city was also one of the nation's earliest cities to promote and advocate paved thoroughfares, touted as having some of the best roads in the nation as early as 1895. The following information provides only brief information relating to the city's manufacturing and transportation developments; however much more information is available and should be developed as individual historic contexts for this document. Other areas that deserve investigation and development as historic contexts relating to this multiple property form include those associated with: the bicycle, which was an early and important link to automobile development and good road movements; road history and planning in St. Louis; post World War II automobile manufacturing and assembly in St. Louis; and roadside architecture, particularly as related to Route 66.

Early Automobile Development, 1880-1905

Charles and Frank Duryea are credited with building the first "true" American automobile, a gasoline engine two-cylinder "buggy" assembled by the Duryea brothers in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1893.[5] The Duryea gasoline powered engine was not the first. As historian Richard Scharchburg states "everybody" invented the automobile for it "was a device that is so complicated that it required years of evolution in order for it to come to a point where it could be manufactured."[6] In 1898, shortly following the success of the Duryea brothers, the first recorded sale of an "American-built, gasoline-powered automobile" took place when Robert Allison purchased a Winton for $1,000.00.[7] The Winton Motor Carriage Company was the sixth American automobile company to produce gasoline-powered automobiles. In St. Louis, the earliest known "horseless carriage" was an electric vehicle constructed by J.D. Perry. "Admittedly crude, and made up of an assortment of available parts, the car did run successfully at speeds up to 8 miles per hour."[8] In 1896, J.F. Kraft constructed a steam automobile with bicycle tires and a boiler (which burned coal) situated behind the car's seat. The vehicle was designed to imitate the city's horse-drawn fire engine. The first gasoline engine automobile in St. Louis appears to have been built in

1898 by Henry F. Borbein utilizing parts produced by his company (H.F. Borbein & Company, 1112 Cass Avenue) and an engine developed by Louis Langan and C.E. Brooks who operated the St. Louis Gas Engine Company situated at the corner of Ninth Street and Clark Avenue.[9]

Surprisingly enough, it was the bicycle - not the gas-combustion engine - that spurred the early development of the automobile.[10] The bicycle for the very first time introduced people to freedom of mobility – and served to show the possibilities of individual transportation."[11] No longer were people dependent upon how far they could walk or reliant on horses and trains. Until the introduction of the automobile, this was no better demonstrated than through the bicycle. The bicycle industry originated in Paris with the velocipede, presented at the 1867 Paris Exposition by Pierre Michaux. By 1893, there were an estimated 150,000 bicycles in France; and British bicycle production soon exceeded the French.[12] Bicycle manufacturers naturally converted their businesses to automobiles because many of the materials used to build early automobiles were also used to build bicycles.[13] Many well-known automobile manufacturers began as bicycle producers, including Opel (Germany), Peugot (France), Rover (Great Britain), and Winton (United States). The bicycle had a huge impact on society - it clearly illustrated "an enormous demand for individualized, long-distance transportation that could only be satisfied by the mass adoption of motor vehicles."[14]

The influence of the bicycle in St. Louis clearly demonstrates the city's interest in the automobile. The 1905 St. Louis city directory lists 18 bicycle dealers, at least two of which were hardware stores that sold bicycles. Compare this to the city's listings for auto businesses in 1915, including repair shops, distributors, rentals and parts/supply stores which total 25.[15] Although the city's lack of paved roads limited the bicycle's popularity and use initially, this was no longer the case by 1900. St. Louis was considered to be the region's "principal riding district" for bicycle enthusiasts and in 1895 was endorsed by the League of American Wheelmen as one of the best paved cities in the nation.[16] Hill climbs and endurance runs which were popular in St. Louis to demonstrate the automobile's capabilities were also popular with bicycles and motorcycles. In 1907, such an event was held on Kimmswick Hill and promoted in a 1907 publication entitled *Auto Review*. Like the early automobile, the bicycle was primarily associated with the upper class citizens of St. Louis and considered a sporting vehicle rather than a true means of travel. By the 1910s, the automobile's popularity far surpassed that of the bicycle in St. Louis, indicated by the number of bicycle businesses listed in the city's 1912 telephone directory – five - in comparison to the number of automobile businesses – more than 100.[17]

During the late nineteenth century, when the automobile was first being developed in America, there were essentially two types of builders, the "backyard mechanic/tinker" and the "machinist/bicycle mechanic."[18] St. Louis was no exception. Early inventors and auto manufacturers in the city were men of wealth and/or those who worked as independent bicycle and carriage dealers, mechanics, and electricians. Noteworthy bicycle mechanics in the city's early automotive development include Fred Campbell, who operated an automobile accessory business at 2806 Locust Street during the early 1900s, and Daniel J. Piskorski who constructed a "bicycle aeroplane" at his residence, 1229 North Tenth Street.[19] As mentioned previously, St. Louis witnessed its first "horseless vehicle" in 1893 when J.D. Perry converted a horse-drawn buggy into a motor powered vehicle by attaching an electric motor and connecting the motor shaft to a rear wheel sprocket and handle bar. The vehicle sparked interest among other St. Louis innovators who initiated the city's status as a major automotive manufacturing outlet. Lewis is also noteworthy because he was the first recorded person in St. Louis to purchase an automobile license in 1902.[20] One of the city's earliest automobile enthusiasts, George P. Dorris, would also become one of its most successful early manufacturers. In 1905, Dorris established the Dorris Motor Car Company in St. Louis at the site of his former business (a partnership with John L. French), the St. Louis Motor Carriage Company on North Vandeventer. The Dorris Motor Car Company produced 3,100 cars and 900 trucks between 1906-1925, surpassing the success of its predecessor, the St. Louis Motor Carriage Company which is considered by many historians to be the "first successful automobile business west of the Mississippi.[21]

From: Gould's Business Directory for 1905, Auto Advertisements, p.2184

Advertisement Saint Louis Motor Carriage Company
Dealer of Dorris Motor Cars

Early autos or "horseless carriages," as they were more commonly identified, were novelties constructed by individuals with a wealth of money, time, and curiosity. The automobile became popular very quickly because it represented individualism and "was an ideal status symbol."[22] Early manufacturers in St. Louis that operated for more than a year were those initiated by John French, George P. Dorris (as noted previously), and Joseph W. Moon – very few others survived. Competition was fierce; and only those who placed their focus "solely on automobiles" managed to do well, at least initially. These early manufacturers often had specialty designs and/or unique names for their products. Consider the A.B.C. Company of St. Louis established in 1905, the initials of which corresponded to the company's owner, Amedee B. Cole. Cole was an engineer who produced a car "as simple as you can guess to operate" which featured an "air-cooled engine, friction transmission, . . . and 36-inch tires." Cole was very successful in 1908, selling 183 automobiles; however he owed his suppliers $1,070 in 1910, which ended his career as an auto manufacturer.[23] There were many early developers like Cole in St. Louis – many did not even produce one vehicle despite financial backing. The market was too young, too competitive, and too volatile. Many early St. Louis manufacturers returned to their former production of carriages and bicycles after they failed to become successful automobile producers; many left the city to work for large manufacturers; still others remained in St. Louis and became automobile dealers. Overall, the cost and labor involved with early automobile production did not prove to be a lucrative endeavor until the advent of mass production.

In St. Louis, it was not uncommon for early auto manufacturers to assemble vehicles by using parts produced by other companies. This was most common with small manufacturers who catered to the local population, rather than those who appealed to a national market such as Dorris and Moon. For example, in 1901, Charles Zimmerman and William Jud built a two-cylinder gas-engine automobile using locally produced parts, including a Dyke carburetor (purchased from A. L. Dyke, who established the nation's first automotive supply and parts catalog business located on Olive Street in St. Louis) and a Stanhope body (produced by the Borbein Company, which manufactured the city's first automobile gasoline engine). Also located in St. Louis was the Stanwood Motor Car Company, which operated from 1920-1922 as an automobile assembly factory using parts manufactured by other companies. Even H. F. Borbein & Company, which produced automobile body parts, assembled vehicles using engines supplied by the St. Louis Gas Engine Company. Such practices were not uncommon in St. Louis or elsewhere during the automobile's early years of manufacture and development.[24]

From: A. L. Dyke and G. P. Davis,
Diseases of a Gasoline Automobile, p. 209

Advertisement for A. L. Dyke Auto Supply, c.1903
(First parts retailer in the nation)

AND HOW TO CURE THEM.

Originators

First Auto Supply Business in America.
First Auto Supply Catalogue in America.
The present largest Auto Supply Catalogue.
Manufacturer of the first American-made Running Gear without reaches.
Manufacturer of the first Float Feed Carburetter, Radiator, Wheel Steering Device, etc.
Originators of "Dyke's Outfits" for assembling your own car.
The first concern in America to build a machine with Tonneau and Top with glass front.

We are constantly getting out New Devices and Printed Matter. It will pay you to be on our Mailing List.

A. L. Dyke Auto Supply Co.

2108 Olive Street, ST. LOUIS, MO.

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The Good Roads Movement

As noted previously, the bicycle sparked the automobile revolution by introducing the world to "mobility." However the bicycle was also important for its impact on American society by initiating the "Good Roads Movement." This movement became a crucially important political issue, particularly during the 1910s as the automobile gained popularity among the middle class.

The most limiting factor to the automobile's development and manufacture during the early 1900s was the physical condition of America's roadways. By the mid-nineteenth century, the State of Missouri supported more than 400 miles of public roadways; however road conditions remained extremely poor. Not until the automobile began to obtain popularity was there any significant movement toward improving Missouri's roads. Around the turn of the century, the state mandated that funding for road improvements and construction come from the state. Prior to the state's funding authorization, local counties and cities were responsible for these improvements.

A study completed during the 1910s indicated that out of the nation's "two million miles of roads" only 150,000 miles were "paved" and most of these were covered with gravel – not concrete or macadam.[25] As noted above, the good roads movement began with proponents of the bicycle; which required good, smooth, even roadways. Good roads were highly important throughout the world but especially in America where roads were little more than muddy ditches. Organized in 1892, the "National League for Good Roads" was created by bicycle clubs such as the League of American Wheelmen (LAW) that pushed for national road improvements and resulted in Congress creating the "Office of Road Inquiry" in 1893.[26] This agency was assigned the task of conducting a "road census" in 1904, which determined that only 7% of American roads were "surfaced."[27]

In St. Louis, paved thoroughfares were virtually non-existent until the late 1800s. The impact of the good roads movement in St. Louis was spurred by the popularity of bicycles and automobiles which required paved surfaces. A guide issued by the LAW in 1895 stated that St. Louis had "changed its position from being the worst paved city to one of the best in the country." At that time, the city boasted 45 miles of streets surfaced with granite, including the downtown business district. Residential areas were primarily paved with wood blocks and asphalt, while larger streets such as boulevards featured "Telford" surfaces – or broken stones – a technique of road-building named for Thomas Telford of Scotland who introduced the method during the mid-1700s.[28]

"Good roads" conventions and associations cropped up all over the nation, following the example of New Jersey's organization which successfully lobbied Congress in 1891 and won the nation's first federally supported state aid bill to assist with road construction.[29] St. Louis followed suit, hosting a National Good Roads conference in 1903 that led to "resolutions . . . endorsing the principle of state aid to counties and municipalities and the support of the federal government for road construction."[30] The good roads movement was heavily promoted by automobile organizations including the Automobile Club of St. Louis (changed to the Automobile Club of Missouri in 1921 – predecessor of the American Automobile Association), organized in 1902. The organization played a significant role in development of the state's roadways, as well as securing the state's first motor vehicle law in 1907, creating a state road fund in which license fees paid for road improvements, and setting speed limit and safety laws.[31] Another early road improvement organization was the National Good Roads Association (NGRA), "one of the most active and aggressive grass-roots organizations promoting good roads."[32] Initiated by William H. Moore of St. Louis in 1900, the organization utilized "Good Road" trains which carried officials and highway enthusiasts to multiple cities where they actively campaigned for funding and support for road improvements.[33]

In 1916, Missouri's "modern" road planning began when the federal government funded a rural post roads bill – the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 – which issued standardized construction mandates that states were required to meet in order to obtain federal funds.[34] Not until the 1920s did the United States government become actively involved in passing legislation to improve roads nationwide; however, despite earlier movements. In 1921, the first Federal Highway Act was passed in which

the Bureau of Public Roads was authorized to "expedite the completion of an adequate and connected system of highways, interstate in character."[35] By 1920, Missouri held 346,838 registered automobiles; however less than ten percent of the state's roads (7,640 miles) were paved by that time.[36] St. Louis' roads, among the best in the nation by 1900, helped to promote the city's strong association with the automobile.

Context: Marketing and Servicing the Automobile in St. Louis, 1900-1955 ca.

Early Automobile Marketing: 1900 - 1920

Automobile associations and clubs began to emerge as the automobile became more than a passing fad. By 1909, the City of St. Louis had more than 2,000 registered automobiles.[37] Early auto associations were active in lobbying for road improvements, automobile regulations, and licensing fees. In addition, they created a network between manufacturers, dealers, and service providers, and promoted public events geared toward promoting sales. The St. Louis Automobile Manufacturers and Dealers Association was one such organization. The association lobbied for statewide road improvements and promoted the city's status as a leading automobile manufacturing and sales center.

On April 17, 1907, forty-eight men associated with the automobile and boat business gathered at the Jefferson Hotel to form the St. Louis Automobile Manufacturers and Dealers Association. This initial meeting had been advertised in *The Auto Review* and continued to be promoted by the publication afterward. Membership was open to "manufacturers and dealers in automobiles and motor boats and accessories" and the organization's initial goals were intended "to secure better freight rates and the more prompt delivery of cars, to aid in the securing of a lower automobile license for the owners of automobiles in the City of St. Louis," to demand "that dealers and manufacturers be given duplicate plates at mere cost to use on their duplicate machines for demonstration purposes," and to "annually at the most timely season . . . exhibit their products in a grand show."[38]

National auto promotional shows in which manufacturers exhibited their new models to dealers began as early as 1900 in New York City, followed shortly thereafter by Chicago (1901).[39] Although a private auto show was held in St. Louis as early as 1906, not until the following year was such an event brought to national attention when the event was sponsored by the newly formed St. Louis Automobile Manufacturers and Dealers Association. Automobile shows held in Boston and Omaha around 1906 proved to be very successful in terms of attendance and profitability. St. Louis auto manufacturers and dealers felt that the city would indeed "declare a better dividend than either of these shows," which prompted members of the newly formed Manufacturers and Dealers Association to begin planning a show as soon as possible. They did so at their following meeting, held (once again) at the Jefferson Hotel on April 24, 1907.[40] Banquet tables were "set in the shape of an automobile wheel, there being five spokes of the tables to the round table in the center, which represented the hub," and members in attendance received a menu that included the members' names, along with the name(s) of the automobiles or parts associated with each businessman. A copy of *The Auto Review*, which served as the organization's "voice" was presented to each member, and officers were elected. It was the aim of the organization to further auto production and sales not only in the Midwest, but also throughout the South and Southwest. Funds raised by the annual show were to go toward future advertising and promotions to further these goals.[41]

The auto show held in St. Louis on December 14-21, 1907 was the nation's second largest show that year, surpassed only by an earlier show in Chicago. Held at the Jai Alai Building on DeBaliviere, the show was an indoor exhibit; and predicted to be large enough so that two annexes (covering 13,330 square feet) were constructed prior to the event. Local St. Louis exhibitors included Moon Motor Car Company, Peper Automobile Company, South Side Auto Company, St. Louis Car Company, Logan Motor Dispatch, Colonial Automobile Company, Mississippi Valley Automobile Company, Park Automobile Company, Western Automobile Company, Dorris Motor Car Company, Halsey Automobile Company, and Union Electric Light & Power Company.[42] The largest exhibit was that belonging to the Mississippi Valley Automobile Company, which exhibited 19 cars, one of which was locally produced by the company itself.[43]

Automobile Races and Reliability Tours

While manufacturers and dealers met to demonstrate new models at annual shows, Americans of all classes began to gather in large numbers to witness the horseless carriage and its remarkable abilities. One of the most popular means of promoting the automobile to the general public was through the sport of racing, which had become very popular by 1900.[44] Between 1904 and 1910, a series of races sponsored on Long Island by millionaire William K. Vanderbilt drew crowds as large as 250,000. Spectators watched automobiles race by at speeds up to 100 mph. The sport was extremely dangerous, both to drivers and spectators, which increased the attraction of these early races.[45] "Reliability tours" also became quite popular, such as those sponsored by millionaire, Charles K. Glidden, who in 1905 challenged participants to complete an 870-mile trek beginning in New York and continuing throughout the northeast. The winners, of course, were those who completed the trip without experiencing an automotive breakdown.[46]

Such entertainment and showmanship was also predominant among St. Louis' early automotive manufacturers, owners, and dealers. The city's first "endurance run" was held on July 3-4, 1907, at the Old Fairgrounds race track located north of downtown St. Louis. Attendance was estimated at 5,000 and at night, the race track was lighted "with 130 large gasoline lamps, not including the innumerable Prest-o-lite gas lamps in the grandstand and enclosure." The lighting was further described as "remarkably good, and the cars were discernable at any hour of the night."[47] Also popular were hill climbing events in which cars were challenged to "climb" large hills – among the most popular being Solomon's Hill on Manchester Road and Art Hill at Forest Park.[48] Reliability races proved to be the most significant of all automobile contests, however, demonstrating the automobile's abilities, particularly in relation to Missouri's challenging and often impassable roads, most of which remained unpaved until after 1921.

Missouri's first annual "Owners Reliability Tour" took place in St. Louis during September 1907. Twenty-six "touring cars and runabouts" began the race in front of the St. Louis Club on Lindell Boulevard and consisted of an 85.5 mile run across the county. The race was sponsored by the Automobile Club of St. Louis, and upon return, its contestants returned "thickly covered with dust from head to foot, and their most intimate friends could hardly recognize them upon arriving at the finishing point."[49] The second reliability tour was held on June 7, 1908 and included a Kimmswick Hill climb and a round-trip jaunt to DeSoto. One of the second year's contestants was Miss Ida Britton, who drove

> a 50 horse-power Pope-Toledo, carrying seven passengers. The splendid showing of what a woman can do was received with much enthusiastic applause as she would let the car out after passing each control, with muffler cut out, which supplemented the applause that she received. At the finish, in front of the St. Louis Club, Miss Britton drove her car across the line at the rate of 40 miles per hour."[50]

Endurance tours scored contestants not only for completing the run, but also based on the reliability of the automobile's braking system, clutch, transmission and motor, in which a series of tasks were completed to determine the "reliability" of the automobile and the skills of its driver.[51] The third reliability run held June 28-29, 1910 was declared, for the most part, a "brilliant success, both from the standpoint of furnishing a good contest and from that of boosting St. Louis as an automobile center in the territory traversed."[52] The three-day contest was divided as follows: June 28 - from St. Louis to Hannibal; June 29 - from Hannibal to Mexico; and June 30 from Mexico to St. Louis. The entry fee was $25 - $20 of which was returned to contestants completing the first day's tour.[53]

Mass Production and Installment Plan Financing

In addition to advertising and promotional venues such as races and contests, three factors catapulted the popularity and use of the automobile: mass assembly, the good roads movement, and the closed automobile design.[54] There is no dispute that mass assembly revolutionized the automobile manufacturing process. Attributed primarily to Henry Ford who initiated a mass assembly line in 1913, it was a method used as early as 1901 by Ransom Olds.[55] In fact, most early automobile

producers ran an "assembly process" of some type, as illustrated by Hebb Motors of Nebraska which assembled Patriot trucks in 1919 by sending vehicles to different "stations" for assembly.[56] Many early manufacturers assembled automobiles using parts supplied by a variety of vendors. Ford was the first to produce and assemble all of the parts on site; "from start to finish, one car at a time."[57] Not only was Ford's method faster, it was also cheaper. The price that Ford could offer was therefore dramatically lower than his competitors, making the automobile for the first time an affordable and "realistic aspiration for almost every consumer."[58]

By the early 1910s it was clear that to survive, manufacturers and dealers must provide alternatives for consumers who wanted (but could not afford) an automobile. Banks refused to finance manufacturers because they were risky investments. During the early 1900s, most automobile companies operated one to two years, maximum, before going out of business. St. Louis mirrors this trend. Prior to 1915, only eight automobile manufacturing/assembly businesses appear to have operated for more than two years, including A.B.C., Dorris Motor Car Company, D.W. Haydock Motor Car Manufacturing Company, Moon Motors, Neustadt-Perry Company, St. Louis Motor Carriage Company, Success Auto-Buggy Manufacturing Company, and Victor Motor Car Company.[59] Most early manufacturing interests in St. Louis failed to produce more than one (if any) cars. Several manufacturers who established businesses in St. Louis after 1915, such as Russell Gardner, would become successful – in some respects more so than early innovators such as Dorris and Moon. Gardner was an exceptional businessman. He was associated prior to 1900 with Banner Buggy Company of St. Louis. Gardner wished to capitalize on automobile manufacturing and began his interest by producing auto bodies for Chevrolet. When World War I began, Gardner sold his interest to General Motors. In 1920, Gardner started to manufacture his own automobile, producing more than 40,000 Gardner automobiles from 1921-1931.[60] Overall, the number of successful independent manufacturers in comparison to those who failed was small – in St. Louis and elsewhere. Between the years of 1900-1925, St. Louis had more than 50 registered manufacturing interests, most of which did not produce a single vehicle.

As noted above, the chances for financial success in automotive manufacturing were bleak during the early 1900s. When banks refused to back early manufacturers, the independent auto dealer became the "answer" to manufacturers' financing problems. Dealers sent manufacturers large deposits for new cars which paid for their assembly and production. "In those early years, selling cars was not difficult. The automobile caught the fancy of those who could afford this new means of transportation and they were willing to give dealers large deposits for the opportunity to buy a car."[61] In turn, dealers began in 1905 to sell cars to consumers on an installment plan. It proved to be a success and sparked creation of the nation's first automobile financing company, the General Motors Acceptance Corporation (GMAC) in 1919. By 1922, more than 70% of American automobile purchases were made with some type of financing plan.[62]

The "Roaring Twenties" was a decade that richly illustrates the impact that the automobile had on American society, as ownership began to shift from "a frivolous possession of the rich to a necessity for the masses."[63] Despite lower costs resulting from mass assembly, the automobile was not an inexpensive purchase. The average American family saved money for five years to purchase an automobile.[64] Financing car sales through installment plans catapulted the middle class into the automobile market. Automobile ownership increased from 8.1 million in 1920 to 23.1 million by 1929. In 1920, one in every 13 Americans owned a car; by 1929 this statistic jumped to one automobile for every five persons.[65]

As more and more Americans began to buy automobiles, competition began to increase among car manufacturers, dealers, and service providers. The automobile industry began to suffer as consumer demand began to stagnate. "By 1927, every American who could afford a car already owned one, and the average life span of an American-made passenger car was . . . seven years."[66] In effect, advertising became an important tool that brought about changes in how cars were made, how they were sold, and how they were serviced.

Early Design of Dealerships, Garages, and Gas Stations

By the mid-to-late 1920s, when the automobile became a lifestyle improvement that extended to include the middle class, the design of the vehicle itself began to change. No longer a frivolous luxury, the open style roadster became a thing of the past,

replaced by sedans and coupes with hard-top roofs, doors, and heaters. It was a practical transition that caught on fast once technology provided the means to produce hard-top cars - people could now use their cars year-round in any climate.[67] In addition, consumers wanted more than a black Model T which lost its appeal when Walter Chrysler introduced the Plymouth Roadster – a colorful and affordable option – in 1928 followed by Chevrolet's overhead valve model introduced in 1929.[68] The marketing concept of "planned obsolescence" was born and became a mainstay of the American economy. By convincing people that what they owned was outmoded or unfashionable, automobile makers "sold the illusion of progress by convincing the consumer that he could ascend the social ladder through acquisition of material goods."[69]

Prior to the 1910s, advertising provided little more than "the facts;" automobile dealerships were converted storefronts and garages; and "filling stations" were satellite establishments that did little more than store explosive fuels. The earliest "motor carriages" in America were sold directly from the factory to owners. This method was not very successful. Factory owners attempted to increase sales through mail order, consignment, and traveling salesmen – the alternative became obvious in that an "independent-businessman-dealer was the solution" and the early dealership was born. In 1899, the first "auto showroom" opened in New York City when Percy Owen displayed Winton cars for sale. For the most part, however, early dealers continued to combine car sales with numerous activities, particularly those related to bicycle sales and service.[70]

One of St. Louis' earliest dealers was Samuel Breadon who in 1903 began to sell Ford automobiles at an establishment on Olive Street (near Boyle). Breadon's dealership moved to 618 Walton, where he also sold Pierce-Arrow and Peerless models. Breadon leased the building located across the street from his garage and built a three-story addition used as a salesroom and service center.[71] In 1907, Ford opened an "exclusive" dealership in St. Louis at 3667-3669 Olive Street, utilizing an existing building previously owned by Macintosh Automobile Company.[72] Prior to the 1920s, franchises to sell automobiles were obtained easily and inexpensively. Individuals that the manufacturer trusted or were acquainted with personally simply applied for a franchise. The only demands on the dealer were to provide "space" in which to sell the cars, and "proper signage."[73] "Most early dealerships were "converted auto repair garages."[74] As a result, sales and service became closely tied to one another. Parts and service were "the backbone of an automobile franchise."[75] Early franchise requirements imposed by manufacturers indicated that dealers must purchase ample parts and supplies to service the cars being sold. On average, about 10% of the franchise's space was devoted to parts storage and sales; whereas 70% was utilized for the service department.[76]

In 1908, the City of St. Louis issued new ordinances to regulate automobile garage construction. Automotive garages intended to house gasoline or explosive materials could be no more than one-story in height. In addition, automotive buildings constructed after 1908 had to include fire walls dividing the repair shop and the sales area. The city restricted construction of new auto repair/storage buildings after 1908 within areas east of 12th Street, south of North Market Street, and south of Franklin Avenue (the core of the city).[77] City ordnances may be one reason for the development of what became "Automotive Row" on Locust Street between Eighteenth Street and Grand Avenue. At least fifty percent of the auto dealers established in St. Louis by 1910 operated within this limited section of the city.[78] Numerous repair shops, parts stores, and service garages also established themselves within the Automotive Row area throughout the 1910s-1920s making this the city's most prominent area in terms of automotive marketing and service enterprises. Another factor that had much to do with this area's development as an early automobile-related district was its direct connection to Olive Street one block south of Locust, noted as the city's "principal retail center" by 1890. Both Olive and Locust were paved with granite prior to 1895, extending west from downtown to their intersections with Grand Boulevard.[79]

Around 1920, dealers began to demand that buildings be constructed to "fit" the automobiles they demonstrated. This trend started even earlier in St. Louis, with several such buildings along Locust Street dating to as early as 1914. Converted buildings were problematic – automobiles could not be easily moved in or out of existing doorways, and interior supports limited movement inside the building. More often than not, buildings constructed for sales and service were brick commercial style properties "with a large door facing the street, which was used as a vehicle entrance into the rear service area. Space was allotted in the front for offices and for the display of one or more new vehicles."[80] Such buildings were typically constructed with facades that reflected commercial styles popular during the early 1900s, like those that remain along Locust Street today. These particular examples feature decorative terra cotta, tile, and brick facades. Early dealerships

were designed with large open spaces in which cars could be moved around inside the buildings. Their traditional commercial storefronts were familiar to customers. Differences in the early automobile business from other commercial buildings downtown included larger glass storefronts – to provide a full view of cars inside the building to passing customers - and a large front or side garage entry bay providing access for automobiles to and from the street. The garage and showroom areas were typically located side-by-side at the first-story level, while upper spaces were used for offices and sometimes held baths and showers, particularly for businesses which offered chauffeur/automobile rental services. Multi-story dealerships provided a large freight elevator in which a car could be carried.[81] This feature can still be seen in several former Automobile Row buildings on Locust Street.

Examples of early automotive dealerships in St. Louis that were constructed specifically for the automobile include Vesper-Buick Auto Company at 3900-3912 Pine Street. Constructed in 1927, this Spanish Colonial Revival style property was one of the city's largest dealerships. The dealership's owner, Frederick W. A. Vesper was a former bicycle dealer who moved to St. Louis in 1914 to take over Buick's dealership. Vesper realized the importance of the auto showroom and was integral in demanding that the new building be set apart from the city's existing dealerships. The new dealership opened in conjunction with the city's annual auto show, with a week-long celebration. The dealership, which was one of the largest in the nation, provided space to exhibit 16 cars at one time.[82]

> Press coverage of the building's plan and design was unusually detailed, noting in particular its 'Spanish style, the treatment being applied to the interior of the retail show room and administrative offices, as well as to the outside, where tile roof, stucco finish and generally Spanish lines prevail.' The Spanish theme was given appropriate emphasis at the angled main entrance to the show room where a dramatic display of terra cotta Spanish Baroque ornament was featured, flanked by small windows covered with decorative iron grillwork. A curvilinear shaped gable marked the side (east) entrance on Vandeventer Avenue. At the cornice, bands of rich terra cotta ornament incorporated cartouches with the company's monogram, V.B. The large plate glass windows enclosing the showroom on two sides were framed with ornamental iron; bays were defined by fluted pilasters embellished with capitals.[83]

Growing increasingly appealing in its appearance, even earlier than the car dealership, was the automobile "filling station." In 1905, the American Gasoline Company of St. Louis, formerly located on Theresa Avenue, "reached an exciting new level of progress" in which business partners Harry Grenner and Clem Laessig installed a "gravity-fed tank resembling an oversized water heater" and attached a garden hose to the tank to create what is believed by many historians to be the first "drive-in" gas station. Grenner and Laessig began their business as a bulk fuel distributorship with above-ground tanks. By attaching the hose to their tanks, they were able to offer customers quick and efficient service. Their invention was so popular that they opened a chain of 40 small pumping stations throughout the city.[84] Prior to Grenner and Laessig's invention, vehicle owners obtained gasoline from "refueling outposts known as bulk depots," in which "containers" of gasoline could be purchased. These primitive fueling stations were located well outside of urban areas, and were far and few between.[85] Most of St. Louis' early filling stations appear to have been located outside of the downtown district. Several were situated in industrial areas, particularly along the riverfront in East St. Louis, Illinois.

Early gas stations were not welcome additions to any neighborhood. The associated support buildings and equipment were not pleasant to look at; they did not smell good; and they attracted noisy vehicles. Because all filling stations provided the same service – distribution of gasoline – competition was essential, impacting the design and function of the gas station immediately following its transition from a storage building to a drive-through facility. As a result, the combination of the garage/filling station began to emerge during the early 1900s as oil companies devised ways to attract more customers.[86] By the mid 1910s, filling stations began to support more attractive buildings that often included painted advertising. Many larger companies constructed identical plan stations to assist customers in visually connecting their product with a certain image. Service station owners planted shrubs, flowers, and small gardens to make their properties more attractive to the passing customer.[87] Many early service stations were quite elaborate in design, incorporating features such as terra cotta, classical columns, and glazed tile exteriors.[88]

Unlike automobile dealerships and supply shops, gasoline stations in St. Louis did not appear to be isolated to any distinct area within the city. Prior to World War II, few such businesses were even noted in the city's business and telephone directories. The classified section of the 1912 St. Louis and Suburban Telephone Directory provides less than ten gasoline stations in its "filling station" category, situated along primary automobile routes such as Grand, Washington, Pine, and Delmar. By 1934, it is evident that large oil companies were beginning to establish stations in the city, including Conoco, Shell Petroleum Co., Standard Oil Co., and Supreme Oil Co. In 1934, St. Louis' telephone directory provided information for only 24 service stations located along routes such as Chippewa, Teresa, Easton, Olive, Vandeventer, Washington, Union, Kingshighway, Jefferson, Sublette and Gravois. The distribution of service stations noted in 1934 indicates that these facilities were located throughout the city and convenient to St. Louis residents. Many of these stations still exist today, although their uses have been altered to that primarily associated with automobile repair. After World War II, St. Louis' held hundreds of service stations, owned both by large oil companies and independent businessmen and located throughout the city. It is also notable that in 1934, such businesses were described as "filling stations" or "gasoline stations" whereas after World War II, these establishments were identified "service stations" no doubt to emphasize that such businesses offered a variety of services in addition to dispensing fuel.[89]

Automobile Sales and Service: 1930 – 1949

Dealerships and service stations constructed prior to World War II reflect a number of changes to the automotive industry that would continue after the war. Successful financing plans, marketing tactics, and effective advertising became crucial for automobile manufacturers and dealers to survive. Increasingly, government regulated how cars were manufactured and sold. The Great Depression ushered in an era in which automobile production and new car sales became unavailable and unaffordable to many. Until World War II, Americans continued to purchase new automobiles, although in lesser numbers during the Depression. After the war, Americans began to demand new cars and more choices; which again changed the role of the automobile industry.

The stock-market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression which followed affected every American's way of life. Most people seldom found cash for every-day necessities, let alone for the purchase of a new automobile. Installment credit was no longer an option as the economy shattered. Overall, the automobile was good for the economy, despite problems related to overextended credit. Automobile sales stimulated the oil, rubber, glass, and steel industries. Once consumers stopped purchasing automobiles due to loss of jobs and credit, the economy fell even deeper into a pit. Despite the nation's economic woes, Americans continued to drive automobiles. Some who lost their homes, lived in their automobiles. The car became the only way that many survived as families, packing up and driving west in search of opportunity. "The mass exodus of dust bowl farmers in their dilapidated Model Ts was seen as powerful and dramatic testimony to the appeal of the automobile as a dream machine."[90]

Between the years 1929 and 1933, new automobile sales dropped 75%. Manufacturing fell to an all-time low in 1932; at its lowest since 1918. One would expect the same to be true of automobile registration but quite the contrary. Registrations fell by a mere 10% between the years 1929-1933, indicating that "the automobile was firmly rooted in American culture" by this period of time.[91]

In terms of the Great Depression's effect on individual car-dealers, this was a period of time in which many small dealers went out of business. Only individuals working for large firms, such as Ford and Chrysler, managed to survive and they did so by focusing on the sales of used cars, as well as maintenance, parts, and service.[92] Some dealers combined car sales with other business activities to stay viable. The construction of new dealerships and factories slowed dramatically during the 1930s.

In the 1940s, the loss of steel, rubber, and labor to war-time production drastically reduced the number of cars that could be manufactured. Automobile supplies such as tires, radiators, grease, and gasoline also became unavailable as production

turned toward military rather than consumer goods and services.[93] Once America entered World War II, there were no new cars to sell. "The stagnation of the auto industry during the war years was echoed in architectural development. No new designs were forthcoming, and the only new buildings being designed and built were commercial buildings for defense production" after America entered World War II.[94]

Automobile manufacturers saw a boon to business when America entered World War II and manufacturing became geared toward defense activities. Many dealerships converted their establishments to produce goods for the war effort as did manufacturing interests. Again, it was the larger auto company that reaped the benefit of this turn of events. Examples of the myriad of services/products produced by such companies included aircraft engines produced by Packard; aircraft engines, radar units, Sherman tanks, and rockets produced by Chrysler; aircraft, tanks, and armored personnel carriers produced by Ford; and General Motors which manufactured "everything from aircraft to anti-aircraft guns."[95]

A prime example of the shift in the automotive industry during World War II is demonstrated by the history of the Willys-Overland Company in the years leading up to the war. The Willys-Overland Company, which first started business in Saint Louis in 1911 as the Overland Motor Car Company, opened a new multi-state distributorship in St. Louis in 1917 that it ran until 1932 at 2300 Locust Street, prior to its connection with the Jeep (which was produced at the company's Indiana factory).. Willys-Overland was the nation's second largest automobile manufacturer by 1917, outselling every company except Ford. After many struggles and corporate changes, the company managed to survive the Panic of 1907, the Depression of 1920, and continue to reap profits during the 1930s under the financial leadership of John Willys. In 1940, the company was provided an opportunity to enter a "competition to design and build prototypes of a light four-wheel drive vehicle" for the United States Army which became known as the Jeep.[96] Although Willys-Overland failed to win the competition for the Jeep's design, it did land the Army's production contract which it later shared with Ford.[97] It was during the company's years in St. Louis, however, that Willys-Overland gained its notoriety as a leader in the automobile industry and provided the prominence for Willys-Overland to gain the Jeep contract with the Army, despite the loss of the vehicle's design competition.[98]

As men left to enlist for military service, women began to fill their roles as auto mechanics and factory workers.[99] The automobile dealer, however, remained an institution of the white male. In 1940, the first African-American owned "Big Three" dealership opened in Hamtramick, Michigan. The business was owned by Ed Davis, a former plant employee for Chrysler-Plymouth who began selling cars part-time in 1934 for the plant owner's son, Merton Lampkins.[100] There is limited documentation on the roles of women and African-Americans in the automotive industry; however without their efforts, the industry would not have fared as well as it did during the war years.

Around 1942, General Motors Company of Detroit issued an automobile owner's guide entitled *The Automobile User's Guide with Wartime Suggestions on How to Get the Most Out of Your Car*. The publication was provided as an essential and "indispensable" guide that informed owners about ways in which to conserve gasoline and provide maintenance, as well as how to clean interior and exterior surfaces.[101] Despite careful maintenance, by the time World War II ended, Americans were more than ready for new cars. The automobile industry suffered a very slow recovery despite consumer demand. This was in large part due to the industry's inability to immediately redirect goods and labor toward production of private automobiles. It would, however, open the door to small manufacturers once again; although only for a short time.

The New Vision of Automobile Dealerships and Services 1950 – 1960

Following World War II, the demand for cars and every other consumer good/service, increased dramatically. "In 1949, industry production hit a new high with 6,253,651 cars rolling off the assembly line. In 1950, 39.6 million passenger cars were on the road, an increase of 40 percent from 1941."[102] The automobile industry was unprepared for the demands, as well as the transition from producing war-time goods to private automobiles. Materials were in short supply, as were factory resources. It took a few years for the automobile economy to stabilize after World War II and when it did, economic and political factors continued to play major roles in changing how cars were made, sold, and maintained. A small window of

time after World War II and prior to the Korean conflict granted small manufacturers a competitive edge.[103] People needed and wanted new automobiles. In 1949, half of the nation's 26 million automobiles were models purchased prior to 1936. Large automobile manufacturers could not keep up with demand. The gap between production and demand allowed a few smaller companies to thrive for a short period of time.[104] Independent manufacturers that gained a hold in the market after World War II included the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation (1945-1955) and Tucker Corporation (1946-1949), both of which operated factories in Michigan. Kaiser-Frazer, which managed its own financing and used Ford's Willow Run Bomber Plant, exceeded all other independent manufacturers in both production and sales during its decade of operation.[105] Neither company was able to compete successfully against the "Big Three" corporations once they caught up with consumer post-war demands.

Americans began to make even greater demands for new cars at the onset of the Korean conflict. Consumers feared another major war was at hand, and that production would cease.[106] In an attempt to keep up with production, larger manufacturers began to reproduce their pre-war designs. This pattern was broken in 1947 when Studebaker and Packard introduced new models.[107] Ford soon followed in 1949, introducing a new model with a V-8 engine and a longer body that resembled nothing of the company's pre-war production models.[108] These events marked the beginning of the end for independent automobile companies. By the late 1950s, small auto manufacturing was pushed entirely out of the market by "the squeeze of the Big Three."[109]

The demise of the small automobile producer after 1953 is in direct relation to the loss of previous restrictions placed on the automobile industry.[110] In 1953, a "sales blitz" was introduced in which high pressure sales tactics ended up "victimizing" the buyer. Not until 1958 when Senator Mike Monroney of Oklahoma introduced the "sticker price" requirements under the Automotive Information Disclosure Act did buyers actually feel somewhat "safe" in the prices they were quoted when purchasing a vehicle. Large manufacturers in competition with each other forced dealers to accept too many cars. This, in effect, forced smaller manufacturers out of business because they were unable to effectively form their own dealer network. Cars manufactured by the "Big Three" were pushed on American society and it became the name, not the quality, of the vehicle that Americans purchased.[111]

In St. Louis, automobile manufacturing was firmly rooted in the "Big Three" by the early 1950s. St. Louis became a large automobile manufacturing city after the war and its associated factories were large assembly plants situated far from the city's downtown district that formerly served the area's automobile needs in production, sales, and service. Gone were the smaller factories along Forest Park Boulevard, Lindell Boulevard, and Olive Street. Ford, which began manufacturing in St. Louis in 1914 at 4100 Forest Park Boulevard, proved to be one of St. Louis' largest manufacturing interests, opening a new assembly plant in 1948 in the suburb of Hazelwood that continues to operate despite impending closure scheduled for 2005.[112] General Motors was also a large manufacturing interest in St. Louis after World War II, assembling more than six million cars in 1965 at its former North St. Louis factory located on Natural Bridge Road.[113] Preceding General Motor's relocation of its plant to Wentzville, Missouri in 1980, St. Louis was nation's second largest automobile assembly production center, a statistic that the city had held for many years.[114]

Manufacturers and dealers increasingly demanded larger and more spacious showrooms as well as outdoor lots, their former locations near downtown St. Louis where their older buildings were located began to be converted for other uses; they constructed and modern showrooms closer to new suburbs and shopping centers where larger lots were readily available to replaced the previous locations. Popular areas within the City of St. Louis that fostered this modern environment of the dealership were main thoroughfares such as Delmar, Kingshighway, Manchester, Gravois, Grand, and Jefferson. Both Big Bend Boulevard (St. Louis County) and Kingshighway (St. Louis City) became popularly known as "Automobile Row" in St. Louis after 1945. Following World War II, building conversion was no longer "good enough any more" for dealerships and factories. Buildings were constructed after the war not only to physically fit automobiles, but also to display the modern automobile of post-war America that could only be illustrated by an equally modern edifice. Although such ideas were initiated as early as the 1910s, it was not until after World War II when Big Three competition and corporate money initiated large-scale revamping of dealerships that offered every conceivable automobile service in one-stop shopping.

Prior to World War II, the dealership was one of many businesses along America's Main Street. It had to compete with department and furniture stores for the attention of shoppers. In fact, many dealerships in the 1920s and 1930s resembled their home furnishing counterparts. Art Deco was a popular style for auto dealerships constructed during the 1920s – it fit the automobile's fashionable image promoted through advertising and it was very modern and sleek, much like the automobile itself. By the 1940s dealers learned that to sell cars they had to merchandise better through the layout of the dealership and especially the showroom, which needed to be better planned in order to encourage car sales.[115] Although the showroom consisted of less than 11 percent of the total floor space associated with standard design dealerships/service buildings, it was nonetheless the most important space within the establishment and its success in attracting new customers was crucial to the business.[116]

By the late 1940s, manufacturers began distributing "architectural planning guides" to their dealers. "These guidebooks presented current and future dealers with ideas to keep their property and facilities functional and modern well into the future. They presented concepts to help the dealer with the effects of traffic, merchandise, and location, as well as enabled dealers to analyze space requirements and to select features that would yield a greater return on investment from remodeling or new construction. They were also used as an aid in recognizing sales opportunities through the appropriate use of property design."[117] General Motors compiled what is considered to be one of the best guides, *Planning Automobile Dealer Properties* in which their dealers were asked to name the features that they would most like to be featured in new buildings, as well as those that should be eliminated. "When published in 1948, this guide became an important tool to any franchise holder looking to build a new facility or remodel an existing building."[118] General Motors' guide to *Planning Automobile Dealer Properties* provided new and used car dealers with "ideas" or guidelines on how to select buildings and properties for maximum "operating and selling efficiency."[119] The publication provided advice about planning space for car sales, administration and personnel, service, parts and accessories, and store front details - including everything from the showroom to the janitor's closet. In addition to providing information about how best to build/design the dealership space, the guide offered useful advice in finding "highly competitive" locations for dealerships.[120]

The American car dealership and service industry evolved from small mechanics shops and converted storefronts to "moderate-sized purpose-built facilities" and ultimately "to multi-thousand square foot mega-dealers in vast auto malls. Along the way, dealers learned how to merchandise the cars and their business . . . dealerships took on a look and style all their own."[121] Automobiles on display were "surrounded by glass in smartly styled showrooms" and there was no doubt that "the new car was king."[122] This evolution is distinctively illustrated in St. Louis' historic automobile buildings constructed to display, sell, and service the automobile. The facilities that remain intact today are but a fraction of what the city held during its heyday as an early automobile retail and service center. Such resources are important because in addition to relating their specific context of marketing and servicing the automobile, they are also a direct link to the city's historic manufacturing, transportation, and roadside resources.

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[107]Bill DeWitt, "Studebaker: World War II and Beyond," *Studebaker, The First 100 Years*, 2000. <http://studebaker100.com/ stu/Pg4/index.html> (31 March 2005); Bob Johnstone, "Packard History – 1945-1984," *Bob Johnstone's Studebaker and Avanti Page*, 2005. <http://patriot.net/~jonroq/ Text/pack-hist-1945.html> (31 March 2005).

[108]Coffey and Layden, *America on Wheels*, 145.

[109]Ibid., 147.

[110]Genat, *American Car Dealership*, 11.

[111]Flink, *The Automobile Age*, 281-82.

[112]Ford Assembly Plant, St. Louis, MO, "The History of Ford Motor Company in St. Louis, Missouri," *St. Louis Assembly Plant*, 1999. < http://www.bluesarthouse.com/ford/plant.htm> (31 March 2005).

[113]Shirley Althoff, "Biggest Producer of Chevrolets," in *Sunday Magazine, Globe*-Democrat. 2 October 1966, 4.

[114]David Laslo and Donald Phares, "The St. Louis Economy in the 1990s: A Product of Decentralization and Restructuring" in *St. Louis Five Year Consolidated Plan Strategy*" (St. Louis: City of St. Louis, Community Development Agency, 1999), *City of St. Louis Community Information Network, Development*, 2005. <http://stlouis.missouri.org/5yearstrategy/essay/_econ.html> (31 March 2005)..

[115]Genat, *American Car Dealership*, 56.

[116]Ibid., 57.

[117]Ibid., 43.

[118]Ibid., 44.

[119]General Motors Corporation, *Automobile Dealer Properties* (Detroit, MI: General Motors Corporation, 1948), preface.

[120]Ibid., 123.

[121]Genat, *American Car Dealership*, 63.

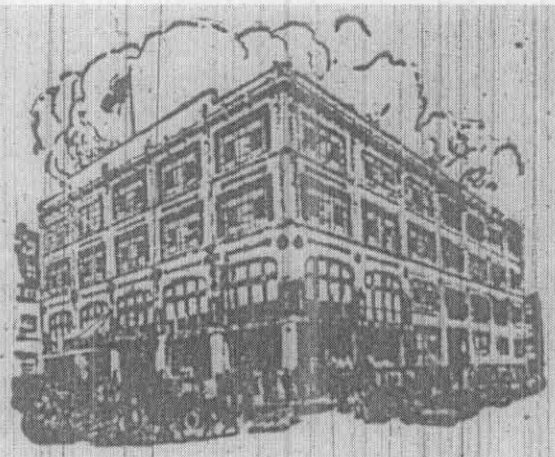
[122]Ibid.

From: Gould's Business Directory for 1906, Auto Advertisements, p1956

Advertisement Mississippi Valley Automobile Company
Dealer for Oldsmobile and ten other factories

From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*, 6 February 1916, p. 13

Advertisement for Packard Missouri Motor Company and Packard Automobiles



WE have installed a factory-paint, top and upholstery department and can now give you the same high-grade work our factory furnishes on new cars.

The department heads are experienced men, and the most modern equipment has been installed, with the result that we have the finest equipped shop in the city.

By the adoption of Packard factory practice we can refinish your car in from two to three weeks' quicker time than any other paint shop in St. Louis, and, at the same time, give much better work than can be secured elsewhere.

You are cordially invited to inspect this modern paint shop.

Estimates for work gladly furnished.

Packard Missouri Motor Co.

2201-2209 Locust Street,

ST. LOUIS, MO.

From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*, 18 February 1917, p. 6

Advertisement for Weber Implement and Auto Company and National Highway Cars

National
HIGHWAY CARS

We Chose an Uncommon Car

We have been doing a little marketing ourselves. For you. And it wasn't the easiest task in the world.

What we wanted was a real automobile—a big, sightly, competent and luxurious automobile—at a price that didn't make the check-book blench.

We visited the shows—looked them all over—peered into futures and dug into pasts. Then we found the uncommon car.

You know this car—by repute if not by use. No man who thrills to motor accomplishment on track and road, who feels the charm and fitness of perfect mechanism perfectly embodied, but knows it.

It is the National

Two cars, produced in a wide range of body styles and finishes, make up the line this year. A twelve-cylinder car, and a six-cylinder car.

The Twelve is just plain wonderful. It delivers power in an obedient torrent; it gets away like a bullet from the muzzle; it is the nimblest, ablest, sweetest-tempered traveler you ever knew.

Its price, $2150, fails utterly to convey any proper idea of its quality and its worth.

The Six is its counterpart, in line, form and general structure—identical save for the motor; such a Six as the pioneer maker of American Sixes might be expected to build.

Attempting to describe it by saying $1750, is like calling a Rembrandt mixed paint.

We have not mentioned the conspicuous beauty of these new Nationals—even pictures could not do them justice, let alone words.

Instead we are showing the complete array of National Highway Cars in our salesrooms. See them there, and you will know why we let them speak for themselves.

See them there, and you will know why we are mighty happy to handle National sales and service in this territory.

The Weber Implement and Auto Company
Nineteenth and Locust Streets, St. Louis, Mo.

From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*, 18 February 1917, p. 7

Advertisement for Weber Implement and Auto Company and Hupmobile

Prove the Hupmobile While the Show Is on

The Hupmobile Perfected Four is so revolutionary in results that we are almost justified in calling it a new type.

Actually, it is not a new type. But it is the highest development of the four, retaining all its simple reliability and economy.

This motor is literally a racer restrained. But Hupmobile engineers turn this great power-ability into pulling power.

Having done so, they found that the Hupmobile does all the things the average owner wants or expects—with greater ease, with greater economy, with fewer adjustments.

Do you wonder that Hupmobile owners—58 2-10 per cent of them—stick to the Hupmobile year after year?

Do you wonder that 24 2-10 per cent of Hupmobile owners formerly owned cars of higher price?

Or that Hupmobile owners voluntarily rate the car 99 per cent efficient?

It has climbed hills on which cars with more cylinders faltered and failed.

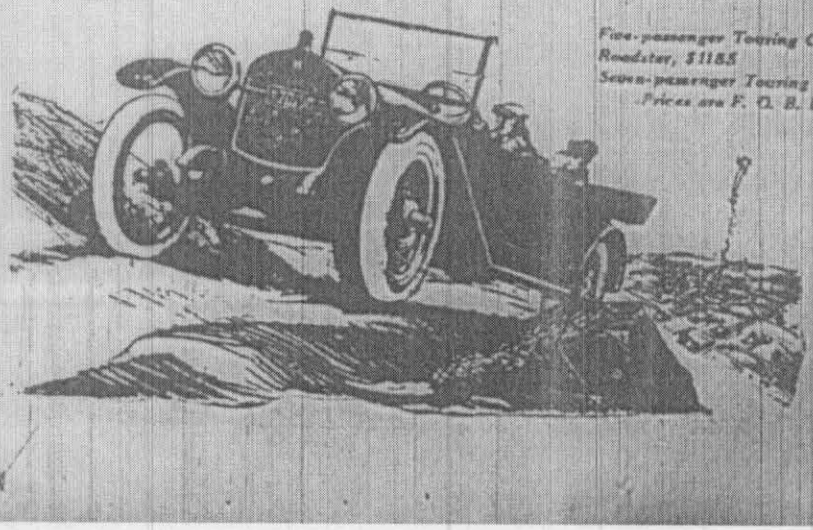
It has ploughed through sands and mud where teams were used for cars with more cylinders.

It has replaced cars with more cylinders in transportation service in mountainous country.

You can please us no better than by asking for Hupmobile proof right now, during the Show.

Weber Implement and Automobile Co.,
1900 Locust.

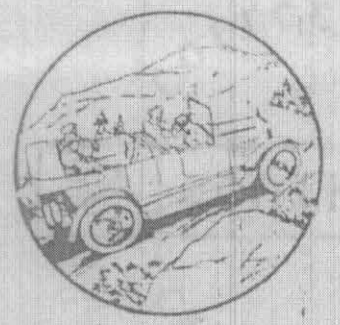
Hupmobile

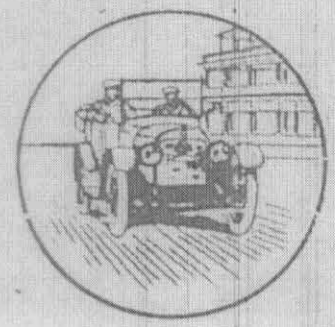


Five-passenger Touring Car, $1185
Roadster, $1185
Seven-passenger Touring Car, $1340
Prices are F. O. B. Detroit.

From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*, 18 February 1917, p. 7

Advertisement for King Motors Corporation and King Supreme "Eight"





Supreme "Eight" in the St. Louis Auto Show

The position of the eight-cylinder KING in the motor world was won only by the results of actual tests—gruelling tests they were. The year just passed has raised still higher the proud position of this car of performance, service and operation economy.

The secret of King power lies in an engine developed to a point of practical perfection; in a fine balance weight against horse-power; nicely adjusted for the vigorous passage of quick grades, deep sands, heavy roads, difficult detours.

POWER sufficient to easily climb any but the very steepest of hills without changing gear. This feature is appreciated by men, and, in greater measure, by women.

FLEXIBILITY so extreme that you may travel 2 miles an hour in traffic on high gear and instantly increase to 30 miles if desired. Experienced drivers appreciate this advantage.

EASE OF CONTROL so complete that in absolutely no detail of the car's operation are you ever embarrassed in the least. The congested traffic of metropolitan streets has no terrors for the KING owner.

LUXURY AND COMFORTS so well taken care of in the four handsome body styles that KING brilliancy is a feature of Auto Row and the Automobile Show.

7-Passenger Touring	$1,585
4-Passenger Foursome	$1,585
3-Passenger Roadster	$1,585
7-Passenger Sedan	$2,150

Wire wheels, $100 extra. All prices f. o. b. Detroit. We cannot guarantee that these prices will not change.

To prospective purchasers this pioneer eight-cylinder motor car offers records which mean nothing less than absolute satisfaction in performance, service and operation economy. See us before choosing your new car.

KING MOTORS CORPORATION

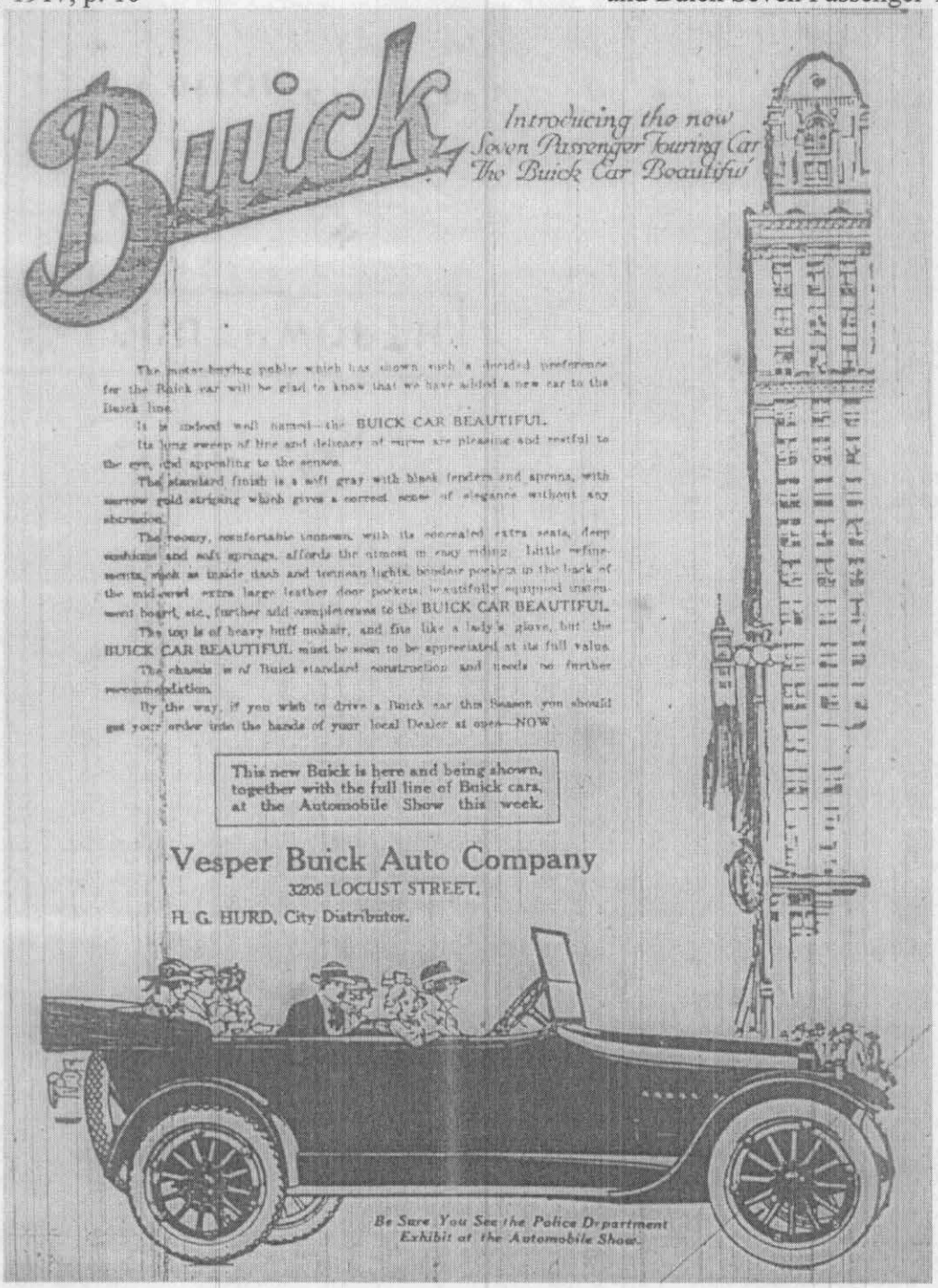
2818 Locust St. St. Louis, Mo.

Bomont 2818 Central 2818

KING EIGHT CYLINDER

From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*, 18 February 1917, p. 10

Advertisement for Vesper Buick Auto Company and Buick Seven Passenger Touring Car



Buick

Introducing the new Seven Passenger Touring Car The Buick Car Beautiful

The motor-buying public which has shown such a decided preference for the Buick car will be glad to know that we have added a new car to the Buick line.

It is indeed well named—the BUICK CAR BEAUTIFUL.

Its long sweep of line and delicacy of curve are pleasing and restful to the eye, and appealing to the senses.

The standard finish is a soft gray with black fenders and aprons, with narrow gold striping which gives a correct sense of elegance without any ostentation.

The roomy, comfortable tonneau, with its concealed extra seats, deep cushions and soft springs, affords the utmost in easy riding. Little refinements, such as inside dash and tonneau lights, boudoir pockets in the back of the mid-seat, extra large leather door pockets, beautifully equipped instrument board, etc., further add completeness to the BUICK CAR BEAUTIFUL.

The top is of heavy buff mohair, and fits like a lady's glove, but the BUICK CAR BEAUTIFUL must be seen to be appreciated at its full value.

The chassis is of Buick standard construction and needs no further recommendation.

By the way, if you wish to drive a Buick car this Season you should get your order into the hands of your local Dealer at once—NOW.

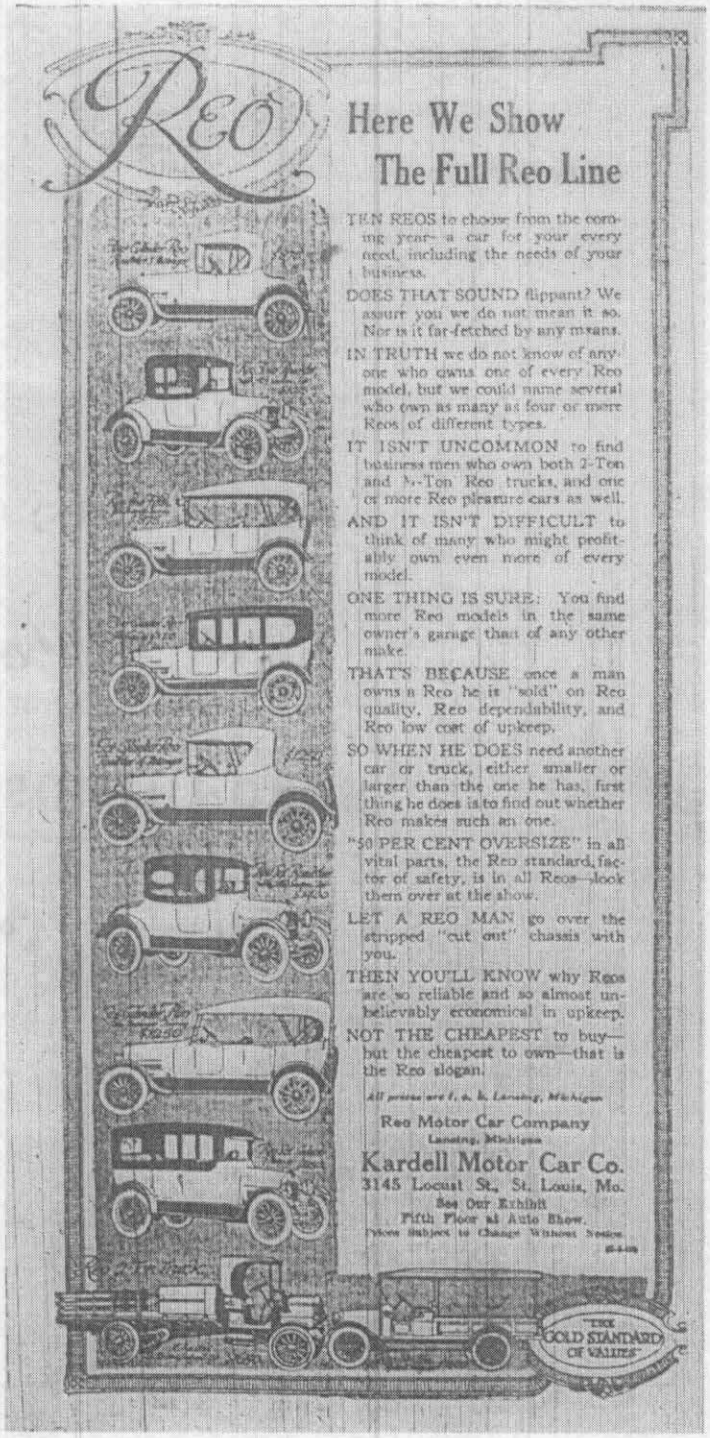
This new Buick is here and being shown, together with the full line of Buick cars, at the Automobile Show this week.

Vesper Buick Auto Company
3206 LOCUST STREET.
H. G. HURD, City Distributor.

Be Sure You See the Police Department Exhibit at the Automobile Show.

From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*,
18 February 1917, p. 13

Advertisement for Kardell Motor Car Company
and the REO Motor Car Company Line



REO

Here We Show
The Full Reo Line

TEN REOS to choose from the coming year—a car for your every need, including the needs of your business.

DOES THAT SOUND flippant? We assure you we do not mean it so. Nor is it far-fetched by any means.

IN TRUTH we do not know of anyone who owns one of every Reo model, but we could name several who own as many as four or more Reos of different types.

IT ISN'T UNCOMMON to find business men who own both 2-Ton and ½-Ton Reo trucks, and one or more Reo pleasure cars as well.

AND IT ISN'T DIFFICULT to think of many who might profitably own even more of every model.

ONE THING IS SURE: You find more Reo models in the same owner's garage than of any other make.

THAT'S BECAUSE once a man owns a Reo he is "sold" on Reo quality, Reo dependability, and Reo low cost of upkeep.

SO WHEN HE DOES need another car or truck, either smaller or larger than the one he has, first thing he does is to find out whether Reo makes such an one.

"50 PER CENT OVERSIZE" in all vital parts, the Reo standard factor of safety, is in all Reos—look them over at the show.

LET A REO MAN go over the stripped "cut out" chassis with you.

THEN YOU'LL KNOW why Reos are so reliable and so almost unbelievably economical in upkeep.

NOT THE CHEAPEST to buy—but the cheapest to own—that is the Reo slogan.

All prices are f. o. b. Lansing, Michigan

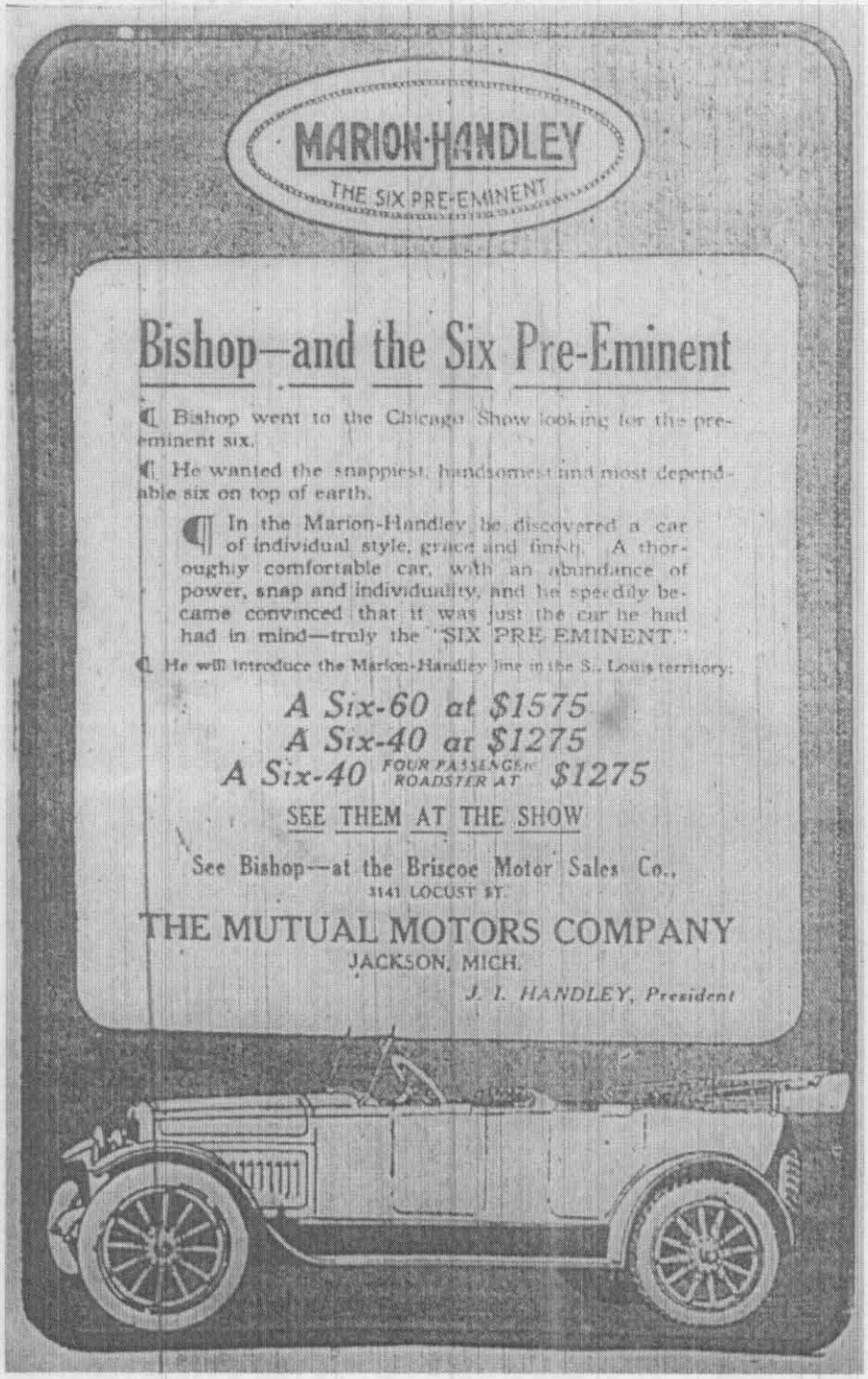
Reo Motor Car Company
Lansing, Michigan

Kardell Motor Car Co.
3145 Locust St., St. Louis, Mo.
See Our Exhibit
Fifth Floor at Auto Show.
Prices Subject to Change Without Notice.

"THE GOLD STANDARD OF VALUES"

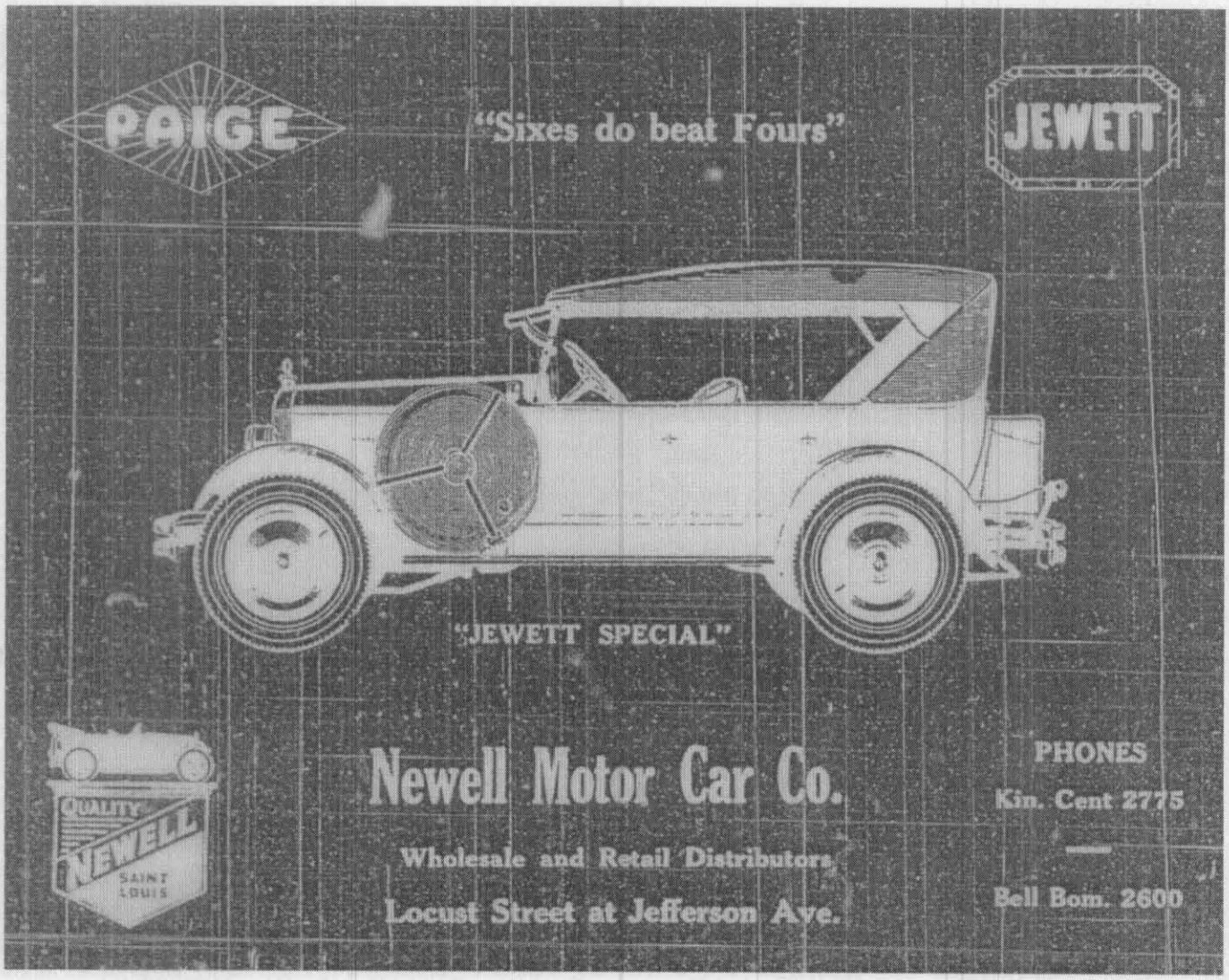
From: *Saint Louis Globe Democrat*, 18 February 1917, p. 10

Advertisement for The Mutual Motors Company and the Marion-Handley



From: Gould's Business Directory for 1923,
Auto Advertisements, p154

Advertisement Newell Motor Car Company
Dealer of Jewett and Paige automobiles



F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The following analysis evaluates the three most prevalent property types associated with the marketing and servicing of automobiles in St. Louis (automotive distributorships, automobile dealerships and retail businesses, and service stations), but it does not discuss other related resources, even though they may exist since there appear to be too few remaining historic examples left to warrant the development of a property type analysis. These property types might include: car washes, parking garages, and commercial signage for auto-related businesses.

I. Property Type: **Automotive Distributorships**

II. Description:

Automotive distributorships in St. Louis may date as early as 1910, but are more likely to have been built in the 1910s and 1920s. It is unlikely that any distributorships were built after 1929 when the marketing strategy changed. After that date most automobile manufacturers began marketing directly to a network of independent dealerships, rather than using regional distributorships for both the sale of vehicles and parts. These distributorships were primarily located along Locust Street between Eighteenth Street and Grand Avenue, with the main concentration along Locust east of Jefferson, closely packed along the sidewalks. Earlier distributorships were generally smaller, such as the Overland Automobile Company Building at 2309 Locust, a simple three story, three bay building, but successful operations had to expand and most known distributorships were usually housed in larger, three to six story buildings.

Because these buildings served both statewide and multi-state regional markets of dealerships, the importance of image is clearly evident in the architectural details used to distinguish these from simple warehouses and to distinguish them from each other. Some used simple masonry ornamentation associated with their brand, such as winged wheels incorporated into the entablature, while others used stylistic details such as the Classical Revival motifs on the Marmon distributorship (More Automobile Company Building) at 2801 Locust and the Nash distributorship at 3000 Locust. The most elaborate example of architectural detailing adorns the Cadillac distributorship at 3224 Locust, which has Second Egyptian Revival columns spanning the upper three stories.

Even so, in form they remained basically embellished warehouse buildings. These buildings are easily distinguishable from dealerships and other auto-related retail establishments by their massing and large size. Rather than utilizing the common three-part commercial storefront, the distributorships actually adapted a warehouse building form, usually a three to six story building constructed with a concrete structural frame, necessary because of the weight and quantity of automobiles being stored inside. Distinguishing these buildings from simple warehouses were features that addressed the particular needs of the automotive market. They always included a showroom with large plate glass display windows usually spanning the entire façade and often the side elevation, if the building was located at a street corner. Inside, these showrooms were often distinguished by more decorative detailing such as a ceramic tile floor or different shaped columns, and some even had wood paneled walls, but they were fairly shallow since most of the area was devoted to storage of parts and automobiles, workshops and service bays for working on automobiles. The interiors have few partitions, beyond the showroom, with the structural concrete columns usually providing the only physical barriers, and the floors and ceilings usually were exposed concrete. Other distinctive features included ramped entries into the interior, often leading to the basement as well as the main level, and in many instances, they actually allowed vehicles to be driven in one side and out the other side of the building, an important feature for a business that is distributing numerous vehicles to dealers in a statewide or multi-state regional network. Some of these buildings also had interior ramps to the upper levels, but most depended on large, automobile sized, freight elevators to transport the vehicles to the upper floor for storage, painting, or repairs. Many of these buildings, although made of what were fairly fireproof materials, had sprinkler systems designed into the buildings and most also had passenger elevators as well. The Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust (NR listed) is a good example of a distributorship with many of these features, a ceramic tile showroom that spans both street elevations, ramps through the building, two auto freight elevators, and a passenger elevator.

During the late 1920s and 1930s, most of these distributorship buildings were converted to warehousing or light manufacturing for non-automotive related businesses since the phenomenon of automobile distributorships ended at this time. The structural requirements for general warehouses (large open floor plates, concrete floors designed to support heavy loads, and large freight elevators) were not that dissimilar from the distributorships, although warehouses rarely needed showroom space. Of those distributorships identified along Locust (such as the buildings for Packard, Willys-Overland, Hudson, Nash, and Cadillac), all became warehousing or a combination of warehousing and light manufacturing. The conversion to simple warehousing meant that the showroom space was modified (usually compartmentalized into small offices for the new business), often leaving some of the original showroom features intact, especially the tile floors. Otherwise interior features changed little. On the exterior, however, the conversion to warehouses led businesses to infill the original display windows, and in some cases, to even cover upper floor window openings since lighting was not a serious concern. In some cases, city officials encouraged the infill of the lower level openings to secure the buildings. This happened to all known distributorships, especially those east of Jefferson, but most often it was accomplished by boarding over intact (or partially intact) windows. In some cases, however, masonry materials replaced the window units, within the original openings. For example, the Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust replaced the display window glass with wood panels, but the framing and transoms remain intact. The More Automobile Company went further, covering most of the exterior with steel panels and obscuring the original display windows and upper floor windows which were still intact (except for some broken glass). The Cadillac Automobile Company Building at 3224 Locust used concrete blocks to replace the display window units, but left upper windows open. Some of these alterations occurred relatively early, such as the Nash Saint Louis Motor Company Building at 3000 Locust, which carefully matched the original (and unusual) brick below glass block to infill the original window openings in 1943 for Astrup Corporation, an awning manufacturer. The interior showroom became the offices for the company, while the rear service garage and second floor became the assembly and storage areas. At the time that these alterations occurred to the Nash distributorship, much of the automotive activity still existed along Locust, but as discussed in the attached Locust Street Automotive District nomination, most buildings by then housed automotive parts and supplies businesses, not distributorships or even dealerships.

III. Significance:

Automotive distributorships are significant under National Register Criterion A: Commerce. This property type serves as evidence of the importance of St. Louis in the development of the early marketing systems for automobiles in the decades before the Great Depression. Because manufacturers that survived the competition of the first automobile industry began developing their own network of dealerships by the late 1920s, rather than depending upon independent distributorships to provide marketing for their products, the distribution system was short lived, but critical to the early success of many of these manufacturers.

In some instances, the automotive distributorships are excellent examples of architectural styles popular in the 1920s and are often some of the few remaining examples of these styles, especially the more exotic styles such as Egyptian Revival. Other distributorships are the work of some of St. Louis' leading architects or one of the few extant examples of a local architect's work. In addition, these buildings provide insight into a distinctive property type that was only built for a short period of time since it lost its attraction as the distributorship phenomenon waned, usually in less than a generation. In these cases, the automotive distributorships are significant under Criterion C.

IV. Registration Requirements:

To qualify for listing under Criterion A or C, the resource must retain both integrity of design and association. Under Criterion A the resource must have a significant association with one particular automobile company, even if only for a short period of time and should also have associations with the historical context discussed in Section E. Integrity concerns under Criterion A would not be as stringent as under Criterion C, but the basic form, exterior wall cladding and roof forms visible from the exterior (such as elevator penthouses) should be intact, although some details may have changed, such as parapet caps or loss of skylights. In addition, it must still retain enough of its unique characteristics to distinguish the building from a simple warehouse, such as automotive ramps or auto freight elevator shafts. In addition, most window openings, whether in the original showroom area or upstairs must retain their original openings, even if boarded over or the windows replaced,

providing a sense of the original fenestration patterns. On the interior, it is expected that distributorship buildings qualifying under Criterion A will at least retain much of its open floor plates, but not necessarily the showroom features.

To be eligible under Criterion C, the resource should be a good example of a particular style, or the automotive distributorships property type, or a representative example of an architect's work. In any case, to be eligible under Criterion C, it must retain the predominant elements of its original design. The resource must possess its original exterior wall cladding and roof forms (such as elevator penthouses or skylights). It also must possess the characteristics that distinguish it from a simple warehouse. those that identify its use as an automotive business. The distinction between the large showroom window openings and those for the garage areas needs to be intact and it must maintain the visual massing on the exterior, retaining at least the masonry pier divisions. Upper level windows have frequently been changed as the buildings were converted to simple warehouse uses, since the natural lighting was no longer necessary to make repairs to vehicles, but the building should retain evidence of its original fenestration pattern and the openings should be apparent. Preference under Criterion C should be given to buildings that can document important window details (such as framing features, muntin patterns, or unusual transom elements) as well as that some, if not most, of each type of window is intact, even if they are currently boarded over or the glass is missing. The auto freight elevator shafts and the automotive ramps, if they ever existed, are other features that help distinguish these buildings and they should retain the massing of their original openings, even if the mechanisms for the elevators have been replaced, the garage doors replaced, or the openings for the ramps infilled. The interior should retain the distinctive wall finish, exposed structural columns, beams, ceilings, and floors in enough areas to clearly identify the sense of volume and space, as well as finish, which originally characterized the building. Some distinctive elements of the original showroom should be evident, whether it is the original tile flooring, or distinctive wall, column or ceiling finishes that separate the showroom from the remaining spaces on the interior. Additions to the building are acceptable if they are clearly subsidiary to the original. Some alterations made to non-street elevations are also acceptable, although the original functions of openings should be apparent, even if infilled, and the original wall finish (such as exposed structural concrete framing or common brick walls) and window openings should to be intact.

Extant Distributorship Buildings

2300 Locust,
Willys-Overland Building

2309-2311 Locust
Willys-Overland Building

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

I. Property Type: **Automotive Dealerships and Retail Businesses**

II. Description:

Automotive dealerships and retail buildings in St. Louis may date as early as the 1890s (if built for that purpose), but might actually be older buildings simply adapted to that purpose. Such early examples would be difficult to differentiate from other retail businesses without historical research since they were not purpose built. Such was apparently the case for the earliest location of the first auto parts retailer in the nation, A. L. Dyke, whose building in the 2100 block of Olive obviously predated the establishment of his business in 1899, but it has since been demolished. Buildings constructed specifically for automotive dealerships and retail buildings are more likely to have been built after 1910. These businesses were scattered throughout the St. Louis business community and examples may be found in many of the existing historic districts, but the ones most closely identified with the marketing and servicing of the automobile in St. Louis prior to the Great Depression were built along Locust Street, in the area west of Eighteenth and east of Grand with most located in the area west of Jefferson since the distributorships had consumed most of the property east of Jefferson. Later examples are scattered throughout the city along commercial arteries as the automotive businesses moved out into the neighborhoods and residential areas, closer to their customer base. For example, Gravois became a popular location for auto parts and services (such as radiators and seat covers) in part because it was a major artery linking the southwest corner of the city to the downtown, and vestiges of that business legacy can still be seen today. Main thoroughfares such as Delmar, Kingshighway, Manchester, Gravois, Grand, and Jefferson became the primary locations for later dealerships, especially those built as the popularity of Locust Street's Automotive Row declined. After World War II dealerships needed larger lots to better display and service automobiles in a changing automotive market. The distributors also wanted to maintain proximity to their customer base.

Initially, both dealerships and ancillary automotive retail businesses looked similar, with the possible exception of garage door entries which were not always necessary to a retail business. The earlier examples of these buildings were usually simple commercial storefronts designed to serve as a retail outlet for either a dealership or one of the ancillary products or parts. Some of these buildings were simple one story structures, but many were at least partially two stories, and they often had a crude auto/freight elevator connecting to the second floor. The 1912 Missouri Motor Company Building at 3005 Locust had an open freight elevator platform centered in the two story storefront on either side of the showroom display window bays while the St. Louis Stearns Auto Company Building completed the next year had a wood framed, open auto elevator that extended up through the roof of the attached one story garage to open into the second floor above the showroom. Since the earliest dealerships kept few actual vehicles on display, and in some cases assembled the automobile based upon the customer's order, showrooms were not a high priority. They were small, often less than thirty feet deep across the front. These commercial buildings with a small showroom space across the front and simple display windows are virtually indistinguishable from other early twentieth century commercial storefronts, except for their use by an automotive business or dealership. Usually these small dealerships and retail outlets had service areas at the back of the building with a garage door entry, but in some cases the garage door actually entered from the street front. The 1914 Champion Auto Springs Building at 3116-3120 Locust not only had a garage door on the façade, but also had sloped floors in the garage area behind the retail showroom/service counter since installation of their product was an important part of this retailer's business. In fact, portions of this building would soon become small dealerships, showing how the buildings were still interchangeable, these earliest dealerships and retail businesses had essentially the same building requirements.

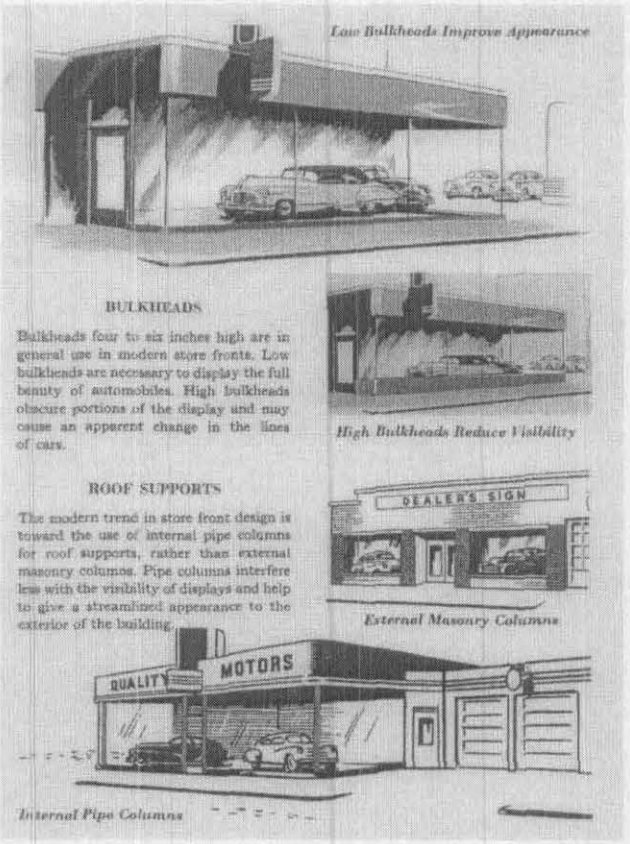
In some instances, early dealerships used flamboyant architectural detailing to distinguish their business, hoping to create a sense of grandeur and luxury that would correlate to the product. This is especially true of the buildings in the Locust Street Automotive District being nominated to the National Register, where these dealerships and retail outlets used many of the styles popular in the early twentieth century, including the Spanish Revival design of the Northern Motor Company Building at 3027 Locust and the Cadillac Building at 2920 Locust, as well as the Mission Revival details for the Leach-Brouster and Company dealership at 3037-3039 Locust and for the service garage used by the Becker Lehman Sales Company at 3043 Olive. Numerous buildings utilized Classical Revival variations, including the Missouri Motor Company Building at 3005 Locust and the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company Building at 3010 Locust. Some even tried to relate to the growing trend of evoking the English manor homes, utilizing Tudor Revival details, such as imposing design for the J. R. Owens

Company/Standard Automotive Corporation Building, which housed both a automobile lighting business and a dealership. The historic photographs also show that at least one of the non-extant buildings in the 3200 block of Locust utilized a Greek temple front, complete with columns supporting a massive pediment across the façade and that every building utilized architectural detailing to distinguish their façade from their neighbors and to draw attention to their business.

Although the use of simple commercial storefronts for auto-related retail businesses continues basically unchanged, except to change architectural details the public's taste in styles changed, later dealerships evolved from the simple designs to include much larger showrooms and large service departments, as well as large parts storage areas. In these later designs, the prominence of the showroom, with its large expanses of plate glass windows became paramount, extending the display window as close to grade as possible (for better visibility by passing drivers of entire automobiles featured inside). In addition, the location of the business at busy intersections or along major automotive thoroughfares, like Kingshighway and Gravois, became important considerations to marketing. Spanning completely across a city block and back to the alley, the streamline modern design of the 1928 Chevrolet dealership at 2400 S. Jefferson actually had eleven full bays of display windows, as well as three stories for storage and servicing automobiles, but one of its more unique features was the car elevators which actually extended to the rooftop, which provided additional automobile storage behind the tall parapets.

From: General Motors,
Planning Automobile Dealer Properties, p.15

Dealer buildings and GM suggested designs



In many cases, these later dealerships are actually located outside the city limits of St. Louis, especially after World War II, moving with the burgeoning residential population to the suburbs and to where there was more space available, but examples of post-war dealership buildings still found in the city, include the streamlined modern Roberts Chevrolet facility at 5875-5891 Delmar, which actually was an expansion and complete façade renovation designed by Preston J. Bradshaw in 1947, around what had been a 1910 auto dealership building. After World War II, the dealerships often designed their facilities to utilize prominent open lot areas to serve as outdoor showrooms, rather than continuing to increase interior showroom space and interior storage space for automobiles actually decreased in size or was eliminated, while service bays and part storage remained important features of these buildings. As a result, later dealerships were usually no more than two stories tall, often positioned back from public sidewalks (to allow for placement of cars in front of the building). The trend toward large plate glass windows with minimal framing between sections of glass continued and service and part departments often became separate building elements, defined not only by the change in fenestration, but by exterior wall height or material. These later dealerships also utilized stylistic embellishments, but because of the period of their design, after the country began recovering from the Great Depression, many of them utilized the simple, clean lines associated with the more modern styles.

Whether built early in the century or after World War II, these buildings were divided by function, with the showroom or retail space located prominently behind display windows and as a result, the plate glass windows became the dominant feature on the façade. Exterior cladding was usually executed of a masonry material, in part because of the St. Louis tradition of building in brick, but also designed to provide a visual sense of permanence to the business. Exterior cladding could be concrete or stucco, as well as brick. High ceilings, waiting rooms, decorative floors in the interior showrooms, and exposed structural members in the service areas as well as skylights and garage doors are also common features that characterize these buildings. Many of the dealerships and retail businesses also had auto/freight elevators to move cars and large parts to and from upper floor storage and work areas.

III. Significance:

Automobile dealerships and retail businesses are significant under National Register Criterion A: Commerce. This property type is the most common resource associated with the marketing and servicing of the automobile and it serves as evidence of the important role automobile sales played in St. Louis' economic growth and development, especially during the first half of the twentieth century. These resources also provide evidence of the increasing importance of the automobile to the general public as a major consumer product purchase.

In some instances, automobile dealerships and retail businesses are also excellent examples of architectural styles popular in the early to mid-twentieth century. While many of the buildings were simple vernacular commercial designs, dealerships often utilized styles such as Mission Revival, Tudor Revival, Classical Revival, and Art Deco to distinguish their buildings and are excellent examples of these styles applied to commercial designs. Designs for dealerships contained numerous elements unique to the marketing of automobiles, especially the showrooms, and designs that reflect pivotal changes in layout of automobile dealerships are significant reminders of the continued pressure to better market automobiles, which is clearly evident in manuals published for dealership design, such as General Motors, *Planning Automobile Dealer Properties*. As a result, these resources are significant under Criterion C, either as important examples of a particular style or layout concept. Some of these resources are designs by noted St. Louis architects or represent rare examples of their work.

IV. Registration Requirements:

To qualify for listing under Criterion A or C as an automobile dealership or retail business location, the resource must retain its historic integrity from the period when it served as an automobile business. While it is expected that later businesses altered the building to suit their own needs, a resource must retain the exterior wall cladding, general massing and exterior details. Since the display windows were critical elements in these businesses, the display windows should be readily apparent (even if they have been infilled or boarded over). Exterior stylistic details and the upper level fenestration should be relatively intact, even if the windows have been replaced or blocked in. Character defining features from the period of its use as an

automobile business should still be evident inside as well, such as the garage door bay (even though the door may have been replaced), the auto-freight elevator shaft, skylights, and decorative features in the display showroom. Because many of these buildings could have as easily served other retail purposes, and did later in their lives, the important standard is that the building be recognizable from its period of association with the automobile.

Under Criterion A, the resource must have an important association with an automobile dealership or automotive product and the historic context discussed in Section E, but this association does not have to have been longstanding since many early commercial buildings provide significant insight into the early retail business of selling automobiles and parts, even though these businesses did not survive long, in some cases no more than one or two years. Preference for listing should be given to buildings constructed to initially house an automotive retail business or dealership, even though they are later used by other kinds of businesses. In addition, some early bicycle, livery or carriage businesses provide important evidence of the link to these earlier forms of transportation when they were later used by automobile dealerships or parts businesses. Resources must possess sufficient stylistic and physical integrity for its period of significance to be readily identified with the important association with automobiles.

For those eligible under Criterion C, the resource should be either a good example of a particular style, an excellent example of a particular form of dealership design, or a good example of an architect's work. In any of these cases, the building should have few substantial alterations, retaining the distinctive elements both on the exterior in forms of materials and massing. The exterior walls must retain the original wall finishes and the display window openings (even if they have been boarded in). The service area garage doors (or at least the opening locations if infilled) should still be evident. The distinction between the large showroom window openings and those for the garage areas needs to be intact and it must maintain the visual massing on the exterior, retaining at least the masonry pier divisions. Decorative details and stylistic features applied to the exterior are essential as is the original roof form and features (skylights, penthouses, parapets, or canopies). Preference under Criterion C should be given to buildings that can document important window details (such as framing features, muntin patterns, or unusual transom elements) as well as that some, if not most, of each type of window is intact, even if they are currently boarded over or the glass is missing. On the interior, architecturally significant resources should also retain the location of the showroom and other distinguishing features. The sense of openness and functionality provided by the original interior wall surfaces, ceiling and floor treatments, and the exposed support elements are key elements in conveying the importance of the layout. While some alterations are expected, these resources must still convey the design elements that characterized the building during its association with the automotive dealership or business. Alterations and additions on non-street elevations are acceptable as long as they are clearly subsidiary to the original design, wall finish, and fenestration pattern.

Extant Dealership Buildings

3005 Locust
Early Marmon Dealership

3030 Locust
Stearns-Knight dealership

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Dealership Buildings

2300 Block of Locust
Early car dealership

Southeast corner of Euclid and Washington
Early car dealership

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Dealership Buildings

Mid-20th Century Dealership
Northwest corner of S. Kingshighway and Bancroft

Mid-20th Century Dealership
2400 Jefferson

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

I. Property Type: **Service Stations**

II. Description:

The earliest gas stations, or filling stations as they were originally known, were located on the curbs of streets and consisted merely of pumps or hoses to tanks. The buildings associated with these stations ranged from mere metal sheds, such as the earliest examples of the American Gasoline Company's pumping stations, to converted storefronts that stored tanks of the volatile fuel indoors with hoses strung out to the curb. There are few known recognizable examples of these earliest filling stations still standing in St. Louis since most were located far removed from residential and business districts due to the volatility of their product. One such curbside station still stands at 2936 Locust, within the proposed Locust Street Automotive District, but it has long lost its associations as a filling station since the pumps have been removed.

From: John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America,* p. 134

Garage/Service Station Types

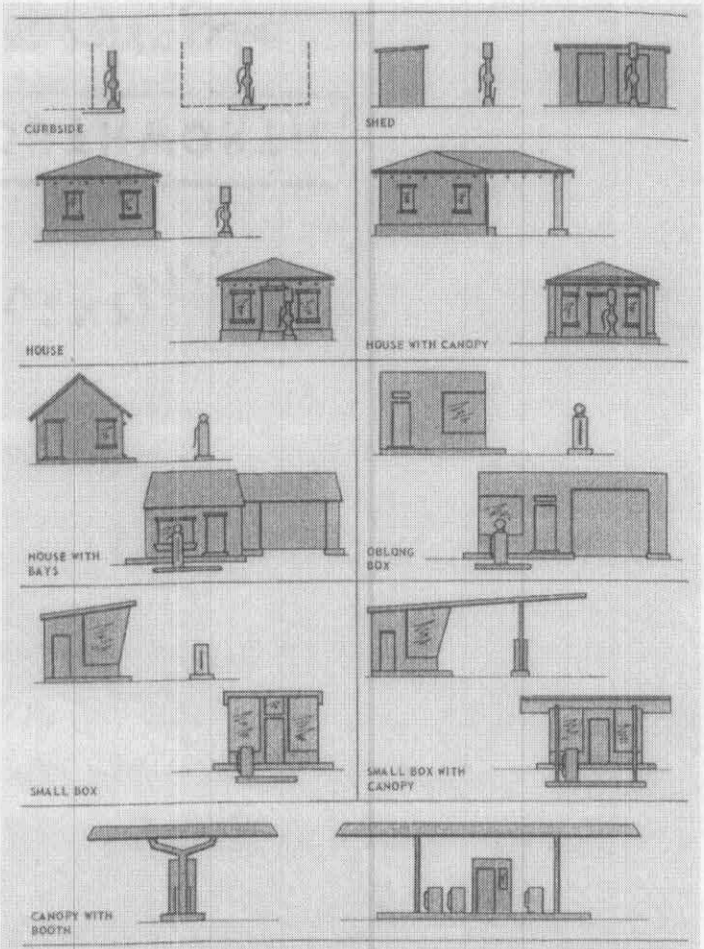


FIGURE 5.3 Gasoline station types identified in an analysis of illustrations in *National Petroleum News,* 1910 through 1990.

By the 1910s, oil companies and independent retailers began constructing actual stations, with off-street access to the pumps, which were usually housed under a canopy that connected to a small room for the attendant. As these designs evolved, these businesses began providing car maintenance and repair, and selling some parts, especially tires, belts, batteries, and wiper blades. These stations now had garage bays added to the attendant's room. Since these were viewed as a necessary evil, given the volatility of the product, its smell, and the traffic and noise it generated, the service stations often utilized stylistic features to blend the gas stations into the residential neighborhoods and in St. Louis this generally meant an adaptation of a Craftsman or Tudor Revival cottage design. Later stations built after World War II often used porcelain steel panels and more streamlined modern designs, providing a cleaner, more efficient design statement. These stations were located along arterial streets, usually at an intersection for easy access, and they were frequently angled in the lot to provide visibility from both streets. In St. Louis, most pre-1955 gasoline stations have closed and many have been demolished or adapted to new uses, sometimes associated with an automotive repair business, but often neglected or under-utilized.

In addition to the service stations that primarily existed to sell gasoline, there were service garages designed primarily to service and maintain automobiles, and they often sold gasoline as a secondary means of income, but their building designs differed drastically for the small gasoline stations. Rather than having a single or double garage bay, a small attendant's office, and a canopy over the gasoline pumps, these larger service stations were garage buildings that could accommodate ten to twenty vehicles being serviced. They had numerous garage bay openings and usually a small office or even a retail showroom in the front of the building, but the usually did not have canopies to the gasoline pumps. In some instances, these service garages specialized in particular products, such as tires, like the building at 3041 Olive, in the proposed Locust Street Automotive District. Most were built along major arteries, near residential neighborhoods, such as the South Side Automobile Company Building at 2237 S. Grand in the Shaw Historic District. Their designs varied and most were one story buildings, given the building code restrictions imposed in St. Louis, but some had second floor levels over the retail and office portions of the building. The shape of the building was usually functional, basically rectangular, although some were L-shaped plans which provided better use of their lot. These are usually masonry buildings, either with flat or barrel vault roofs, and their design is usually simple, with parapeted rooflines and few decorative embellishments. However, there are exceptions, such as the service station at 3041 Olive, which utilizes Mission Revival parapets to help distinguish its L-shaped building along the busy thoroughfare.

III. Significance:

The service stations are significant under National Register Criterion A: Commerce as examples of an important component in the marketing and servicing of automobiles in St. Louis. The increasing popularity of the automobile and the ability to increase ownership and use of the automobile was dependent on the ability to conveniently provide the gasoline to run the vehicle and the service to maintain it. In addition, these small businesses became key components in almost every neighborhood in the city, serving as one of the anchor businesses. As one of the few types of businesses found in most neighborhoods, their existence points to the importance of the automobile in the everyday life of St. Louisans.

These resources may also be significant under Criterion C as important examples of architecture used to market products. In some cases, these buildings were specifically designed for the oil companies to help brand their product. Often, smaller neighborhood service stations are architecturally significant because they were specifically designed utilizing the same stylistic details and massing as the adjacent residential buildings, helping to blend these commercial buildings into the residential neighborhoods they served. In some instances, the buildings are good examples of architectural styles popular at the time of their construction. In other instances, the resources are significant under Criterion C as excellent examples of a targeted building form, one designed specifically to accommodate the servicing of automobiles, which is very evident in the design and layout of the buildings, with the numerous garage bays that dominate the façade. As such, these resources should be eligible under Criterion C either because of their stylistic elements or as a good example of their building form, since it is one of the few building forms that is still readily identifiable even if no longer serving a filling station or service garage.

IV. Registration Requirements:

To be eligible under either Criterion A or C, the resource must be a good example of this building type and still be easily identifiable as a service station, whether or not it retains the gasoline pumps or serves in that capacity. It must retain its original exterior wall material and roof form, as well as the other identifying features on the exterior (the canopy if it had one and the garage door bays, even if modified with new doors). The location of windows and doors should be clearly identifiable, even if the original materials have been altered or the openings infilled. Interior features were never paramount with identification as a service station, but individual listing on the National Register requires that the interior retain most of its character defining features: the large open expanses with high ceilings in the service bays, most original wall surfaces, the concrete slab flooring, and the original ceiling or support structure, as well as any skylights. Because of changes in use, the loss of the grease pits and hydraulic lifts is not seen as an impediment to listing in the National Register, but overall the building must possess integrity of association and design associated with its period of significance and historic use as an automotive service station.

Extant Service Garages

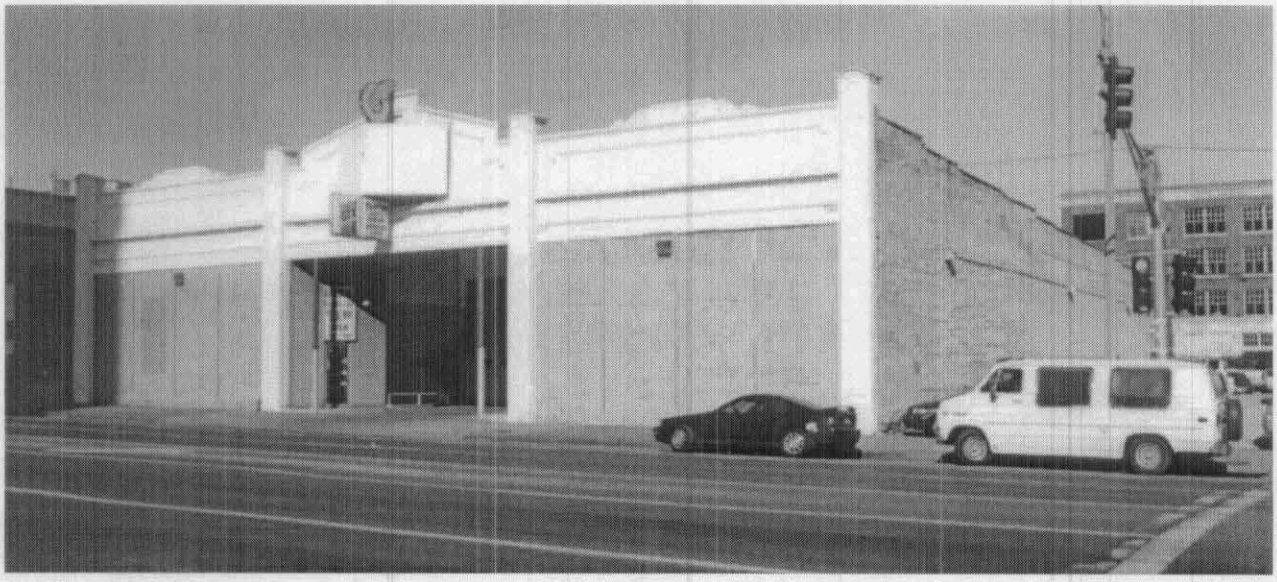
Service Garage
5208 S. Kingshighway

Service Garage
2705 Sublette

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Service Garages

Service Garage
2337-2345 S. Grand



Service Garage
2708 Olive

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Service Garages

Service Garage
2230 Gravois

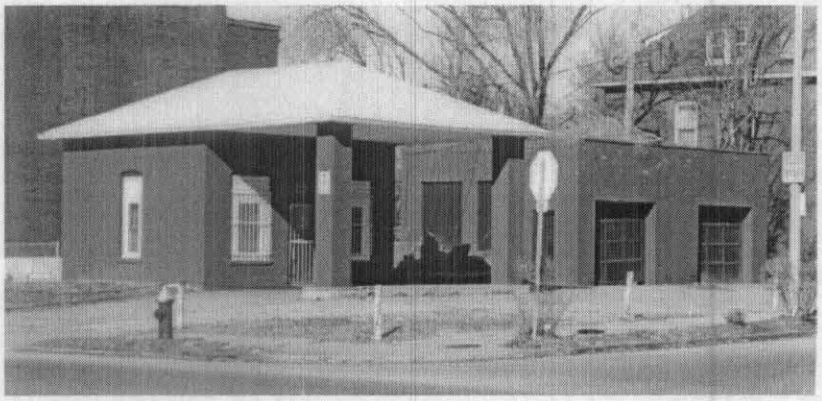
Becker-Lehman Sales Company Building, (Tire Company)
3043 Olive

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Gas Stations

Gas Station
5323 S. Kingshighway

Gas Station
2130 Macklind



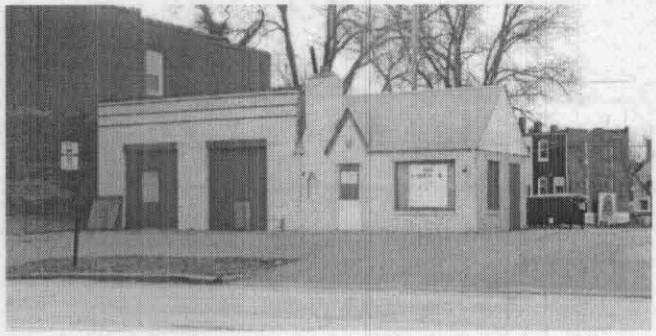
Gas Station
Northwest corner of Arsenal and Michigan

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Gas Stations

Gas Station
6300 Block of Arsenal

Gas Station
5200 Pernod



Gas Station
Chouteau east of Taylor

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

Extant Gas Stations

Gas Station
Northwest Corner of Newstead and Pine

Gas Station
3401 Watson

Photographs by Sheila Findall, 2005

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The corporate limits of the city of St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

Since the creation of the Missouri historic tax credit program in 1998, developers have shown increasing interest in evaluating and listing buildings along Locust Street on the National Register of Historic Places to enable them to use historic tax credits as part of their redevelopment plans. Building upon an historic survey of the area east of Jefferson that Landmarks Association of St. Louis conducted in 1986, early projects listed buildings individually, but without the historic context on the development of this automotive row, the nominations were limited to the largest, individually eligible buildings, such as the Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust (listed in the NR in 1999). Other projects started on similarly imposing edifices, such as the Cadillac Automobile Company Building at 3224 Locust and the More Automobile Company Building at 2801 Locust. More recently, developers began looking at smaller and less imposing buildings along Locust, still associated with the development of the automotive row, but less obviously eligible for listing individually in the National Register. Because of the increasing interest in listing individual buildings along Locust Street, the State Historic Preservation Office's National Register Coordinator, Tiffany Patterson agreed to a site visit to discuss options for most efficiently listing the buildings of the Locust Street automotive row. Early in 2004, she and Karen Bode Baxter, a private preservation consultant who had contracts with several of the area's property owners, completed a windshield survey of the entire automotive row, from Grand east to Eighteenth Street, determining that the loss of integrity in certain areas would preclude a single historic district nomination. Patterson suggested the development of a Multiple Property Documentation Form relating to the development of automotive row in St. Louis that would establish the context and make smaller districts and individual listings simpler.

After discussions with some of the property owners at the western end of Locust Street, these property owners decided to contract with Landmarks Association of St. Louis to complete a preliminary historic survey of the area west from Jefferson to Grand, to determine the potential boundaries of any proposed district. Paid by these property owners, Landmarks Association examined the building permit files in the City of St. Louis, the published permits in the *St. Louis Daily Record,* and the historic fire insurance maps for each of these buildings in this nine block linear commercial strip along Locust Street. From this research, they compiled a database with the architects and dates of construction for each building. They then completed on-site inspections to evaluate the degree of historic integrity in each of these buildings and drew a base map with their preliminary evaluations as to the date of construction and of major alterations, as well as the potential eligibility for National Register listing as contributing buildings in an historic district. By May 2004, Landmarks reported their conclusions to the property owners.

Because large sections of Locust west of Jefferson had vacant lots where once there were buildings, and other buildings had been updated with materials completely covering the original wall surfaces or drastically altering the appearance of the facades of a number of buildings and some even had roofline alterations, it still appeared to the property owners that the MPD might best serve their purposes, listing a small district that retains its integrity and providing the historic context and justifications for listing individual buildings that fell outside the proposed district boundaries. By June 2004, the property owners committed to the additional cost of developing a MPD and preparing an historic district nomination.

Because of Landmarks schedule commitments, Landmarks Association and the property owners agreed that Karen Bode Baxter and the Ruth Keenoy (nee Nichols), both architectural historians who work independently, should discuss the findings with the SHPO staff. One of the property owners, a real estate developer, Integration, provided a Power Point presentation of individual buildings to accompany the Landmarks survey map, and the consultants took streetscape slides to supplement this information, making a trip to the SHPO in Jefferson City to meet with Tiffany Patterson, Roger Maserang and Lee Gilleard to carefully review potential district boundaries and parameters for the MPD.

As a result of this meeting and research nationwide with other SHPO files to find how other automotive row nominations had been handled, the group agreed that a city-wide MPD on auto related resources should be developed, focusing on the development of the one relevant context for the Locust Street area, Marketing and Servicing the Automobile, providing the

option to later develop other auto-related contexts: Manufacturing the Automobile, Roadways and Bridges, and Businesses Influenced by the Development of the Automobile (such as drive-in restaurants or motor courts).

The process of developing this MPD required the review of previously surveyed or NR listed buildings in St. Louis based upon a search of the SHPO office archives, the St. Louis Historic Preservation Board's files, and the files at the Landmarks Association of St. Louis. In addition, extensive research was completed to compile data from the city directories, telephone books classified listings, the Red-Blue Books (which are business directories compiled similarly to the city directories), historic maps of the city, the automotive section and advertisements in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *the St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* the subject files and collections at the St. Louis Public Library, the Missouri Historical Society, the Mercantile Library, and the Western History Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. In addition, the plaques installed on many of the buildings along Locust Street by the Horseless Carriage Club and interviews with its key members, especially locally recognized, automobile enthusiastic and local historian, Ben Hilliker, have provided valuable insights into the history of automobiles in St. Louis. Historic photograph collections at the St. Louis Public Library, the Missouri Historical Society and the Western History Collection provided valuable information about the historic character of the buildings, their business occupants, and changes over the years.

This information was carefully evaluated and compiled to identify the locations of automotive businesses, their dates of operation, and the scope of the products and services provided. Windshield surveys around the city of St. Louis identified a wide variety of extant resources, and combined with the research, it became clear that many auto-related resources are included within the boundaries of existing local or National Register historic districts. However, most are not specifically documented for their significance to the automobile industry in St. Louis and the primary area associated with the development of the automotive industry, the automobile row along Locust Street, was significantly under-represented in surveys and NR listings.

As a result, this MPD is a collaborative effort, based upon work completed by Landmarks Association of St. Louis, direction provided by the SHPO staff, input from Ben Hilliker of the Horseless Carriage Club of St. Louis, and research conducted by Ruth Keenoy and research associates, Timothy P. Maloney and Mandy Ford, as well as evaluations and analysis completed by Ruth Keenoy and Karen Bode Baxter. None of this would have been possible without the financial commitment made by the individual property owners along Locust Street which was matched by aldermanic discretionary funds for the 19th Ward by Alderman Michael McMillan.

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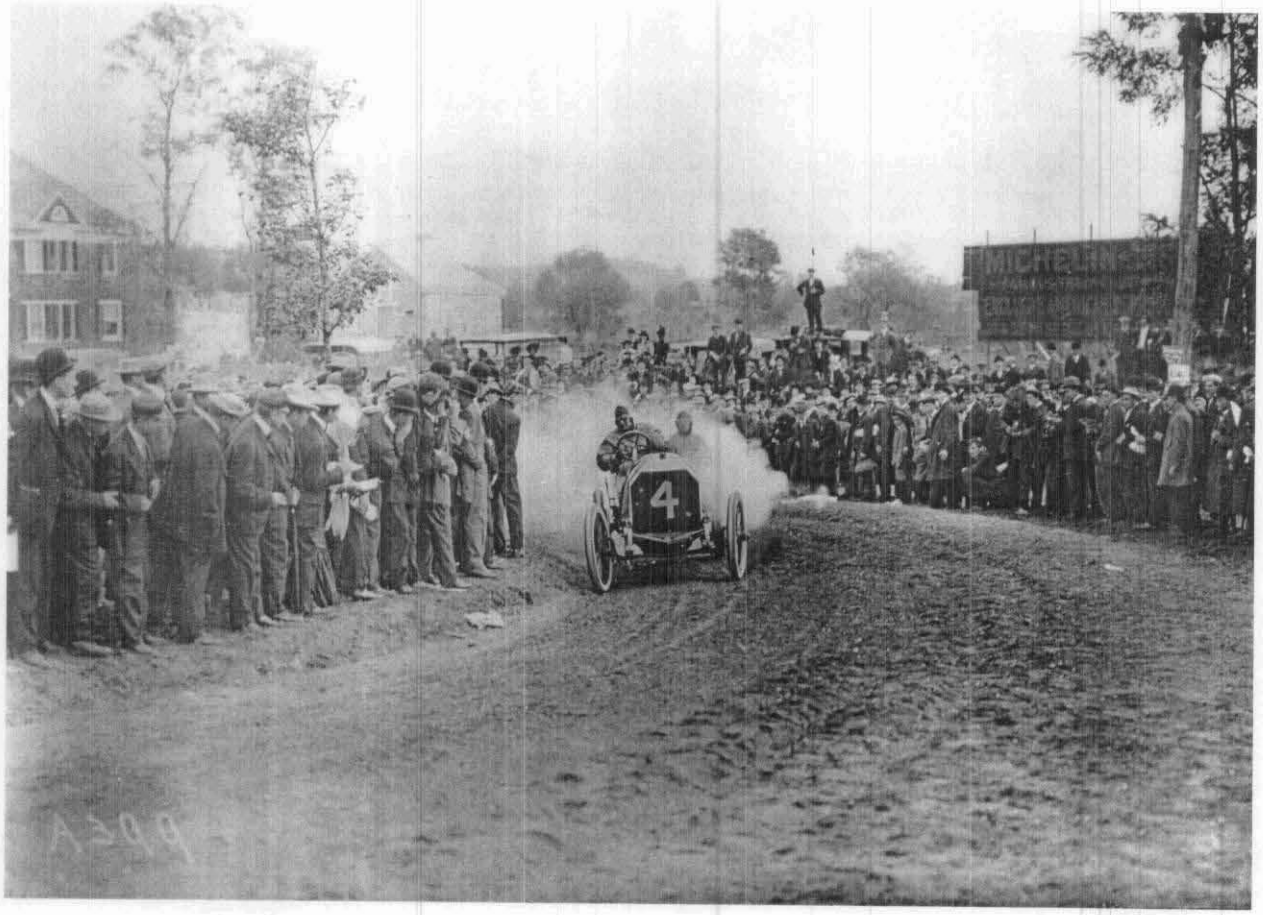
Photo of Laurea taking a turn in a racing car
No date

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society
License Number 11138



St. Louis Motor Carriage Company
1211-13 North Vandeventer Ave.
1899

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society
License Number 11138

Looking west at the 3300 block of Lindell Blvd.
Photo by W. C. Persons, c.1918-1924

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society
License Number 11138

Packard Sales Company automobile dealership
Twenty Second and Locust Streets
Photo by W. C. Persons, c.1919-1929

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society
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Tate Motor Company and Dodge Brothers Motor Vehicles automobile dealership, 3107-3111 Locust Street
Photo by W. C. Persons, c.1921-1923

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society
License Number 11138

Southwest Nash Motor Company auto dealership
Locust Street and Garrison Avenue
c.1920s

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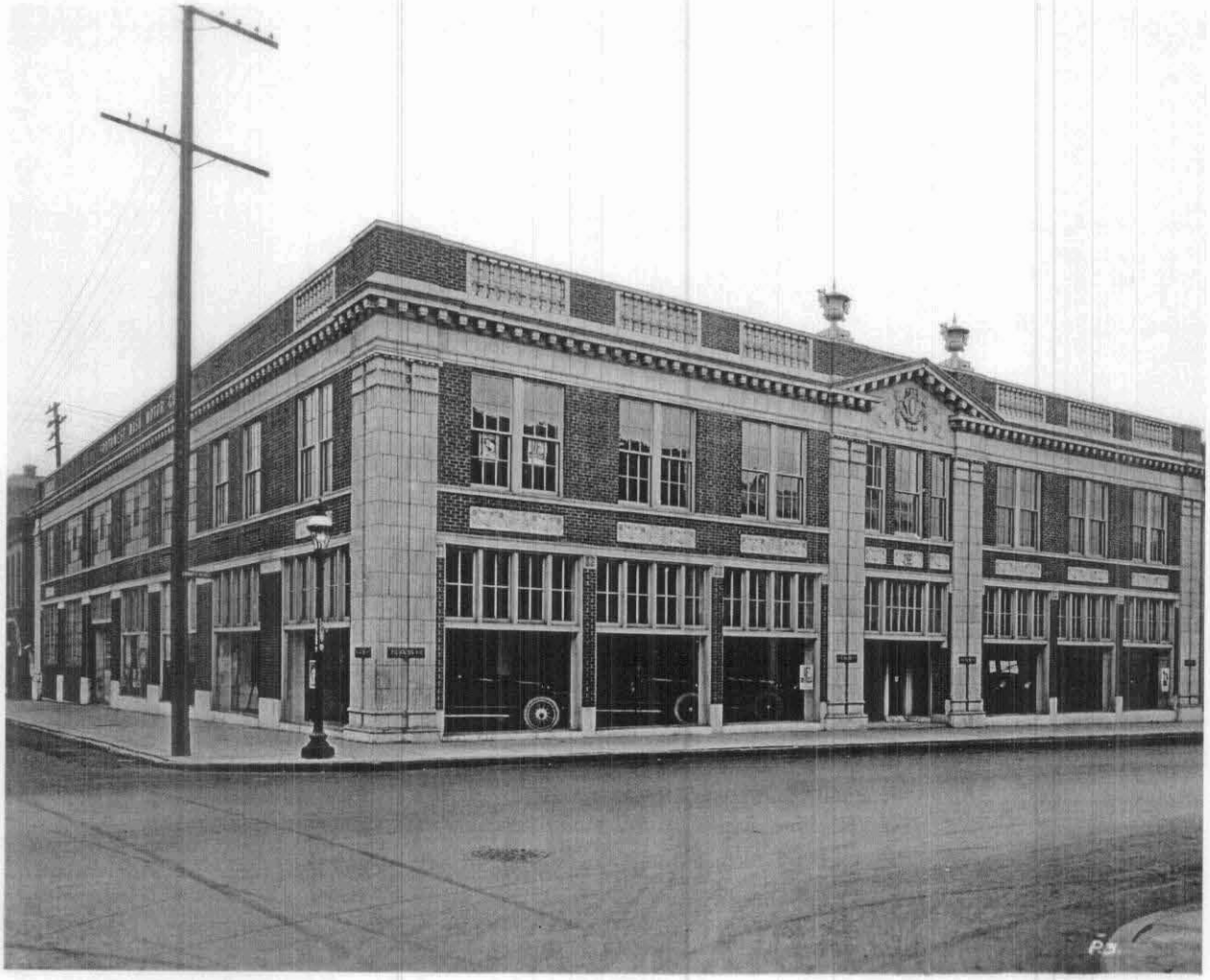
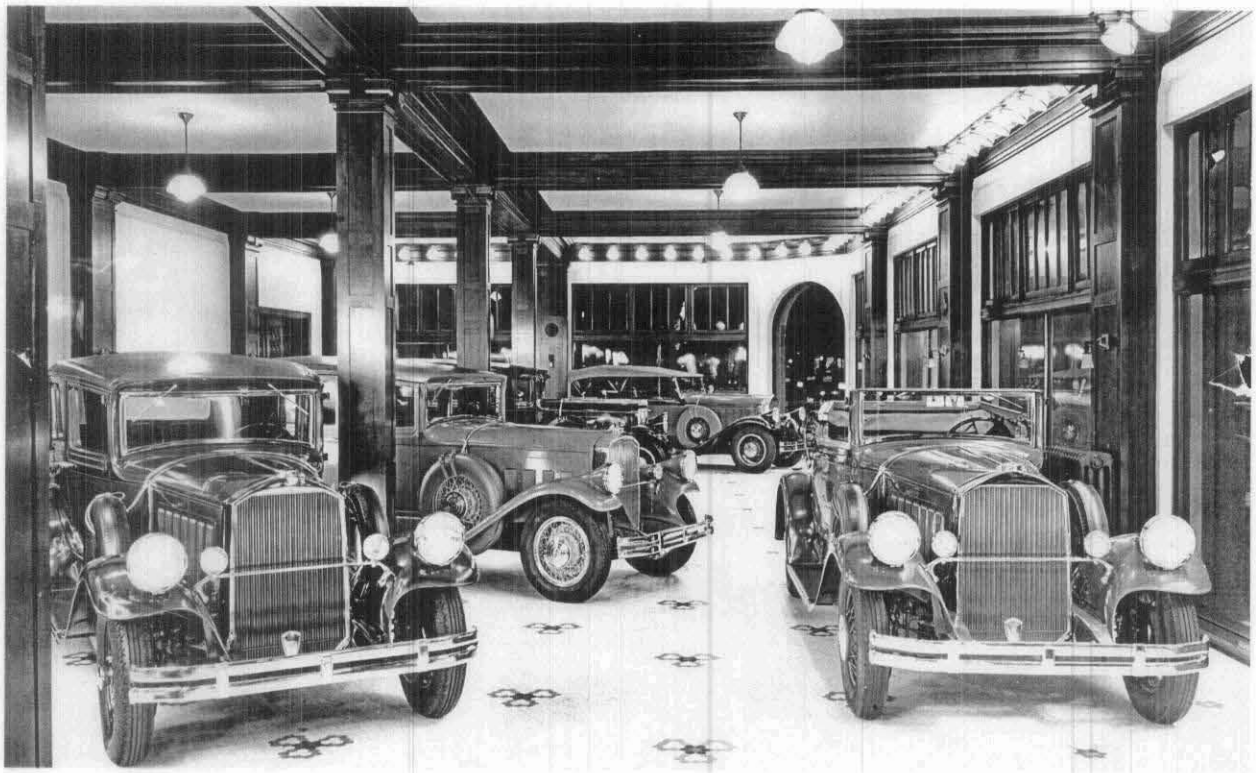
License Number 11138



Interior of a Pierce-Arrow automobile dealership c.1931

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society License Number 11138



Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company
3010-3012 Locust Street
Photo by W. C. Persons, c. 1918-1919

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Holzman Auto Supply Company
3150-3152 Locust Street
1912-1914

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Interior of Firestone Super Station auto repair shop
During "Save a Battery Week"
Photo by W. C. Persons, 1929-1932

Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society
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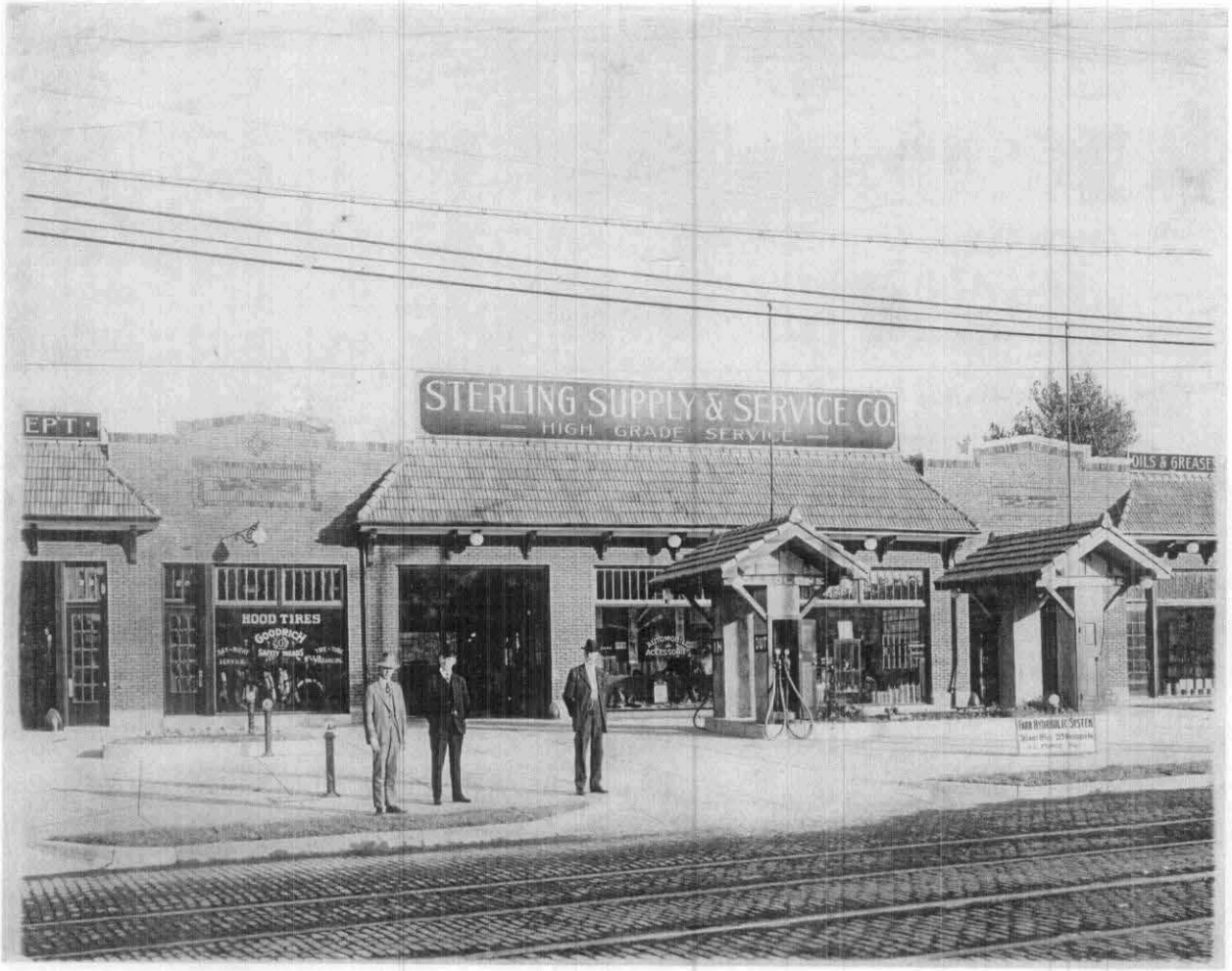
Sterling Supply and Service Comp[any
12-22 North Euclid
c. 1923

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