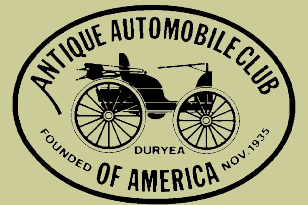


RESTORER REPORTER



November, 2008

Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 25, 2008
6:30 P.M.
Sherrod Avenue Church of Christ
Florence, Alabama

2008 Officers

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Calendar of Events

November 11, 2008
Veteran's Day Parade
Tuscumbia, Alabama

Announcements

CUSTOM PORTRAITS — If you would like a custom portrait of your classic car, contact Tal Willis. Willis, a Savannah Tennessee artist noted for his coastal fine art, has become well known for his custom portraits. His website is www.talwillis.com. You can reach him by email at tal@talwillis.com

A 100-Year-Old Dream: A Road Just for Cars

- November 1, 2008

By Phil Patton

IT survives only as segments of other highways, as a right of way for power lines and as a bike trail, but the Long Island Motor Parkway still holds a sense of magic as what some historians say is the country's first road built specifically for the automobile. It opened 100 years ago last Friday as a rich man's dream.

As detailed in a new book, "The Long Island Motor Parkway" by Howard Kroplick and Al Velocci (Arcadia Publishing), the parkway ran about 45 miles across Long Island, from Queens to Ronkonkoma, and was created by William Kissam Vanderbilt II, the great-grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt.

The younger Vanderbilt was a car enthusiast who loved to race. He had set a speed record of 92 miles an hour in 1904, the same year he created his own race, the Vanderbilt Cup.

But his race came under fire after a spectator was killed in 1906, and Vanderbilt wanted a safe road on which to hold the race and on which other car lovers could hurl their new machines free of the dust common on roads made for horses. The parkway would also be free of "interference from the authorities," he said in a speech.

So he created a toll road for high-speed automobile travel. It was built of reinforced concrete, had banked turns, guard rails and, by building bridges, he eliminated intersections that would slow a driver down. The Long Island Motor Parkway officially opened on Oct. 10, 1908, and closed in 1938.

Paul Daniel Marriott, a highway historian and consultant in Washington, said road designers began to take the car into account around 1900. Like Vanderbilt, these early car owners were mostly wealthy men; they were called "automobilists" on the model of "bicyclists."

"Cars were seen as objects for leisure, something to be used on weekends," Mr. Marriott said in an interview. "No one dreamed then of commuting to work by car." The automobile was seen as way of escaping the tyranny of the railroad schedule, Mr. Marriott added. "It was a way of interacting with nature."

To finance the parkway, according to historical accounts, Vanderbilt and his associates raised \$2 million from investors, some of whom thought the road would raise property values on the Gold Coast of Long Island. The road's cost eventually rose to more than \$6 million, and a \$2 toll (about \$45 today) was established. Regular patrons of the highway could buy a medallion good for a year's passage.

Even the toll houses were worthy of a Vanderbilt: the first six were designed by the architect John Russell Pope, who also created the Jefferson Memorial and the Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda at the Museum of Natural History in New York. The toll takers and families lived in the houses, called lodges. One of these has been moved to Garden City, where it has been preserved and houses an exhibition on the history of the highway. Other lodges became homes.

The Long Island Motor Parkway did not solve the problem it was cre-

Ronald Van Barnett

November 5, 1939—October 31, 2008

The Muscle Shoals Region, AACA wishes the pass its condolences to the family of Ron Barnett who passed away Friday, October 31, 2008. Mr. Barnett and his wife Sally presented a program on the Marmon automobile at a meeting a few years ago.

Mr. Barnett was an avid collector of vintage vehicles. He was active in the North Alabama Region, AACA, serving as president and national meet chairman. He was a member of the AACA board of directors for 15 years and served as president in 1991.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1962 to 1978. He received a Bronze Star for Vietnam War service. He served many years as a missile man on Kwajalein and at Vandenburg Air Force Base. He worked for 10 years at Science Applications International Corp. in logistics and systems analysis.

ated to address. The race was run successfully enough on the new road in 1908 and 1909, but there were two fatal crashes in 1910, pretty much ending road races on Long Island.

Soon, traffic grew light on the road. In the Great Gatsby era of the 1920s bootleggers found the parkway a convenient link between their delivery points on secluded beaches and the booming liquor market of Manhattan. The Vanderbilt Cup Race moved elsewhere, notably to Roosevelt Raceway in 1936 and 1937, when Ferdinand Porsche arrived to watch his Auto Union take first place.

By then, the public had access to cars as well. When Mr. Vanderbilt began, car owners were feared and resented in many areas, and speed limits were set as low as 5 m.p.h. Woodrow Wilson feared that popular irritation at rich motorists would be socially disruptive. "Nothing has spread Socialistic feeling in this country more than the use of automobiles," he declared in 1906 when he was president of Princeton University. "To the countryman they are a picture of arrogance of wealth with all its independence and carelessness."

But by the end of Vanderbilt's life (he died in 1944), the public had come to feel entitled to car ownership. And there was growing pressure for public highways, like the parkways that the urban planner Robert Moses was building. In 1938, Moses refused Vanderbilt's appeal to incorporate the motor parkway into his new parkway system. The motor parkway just could not compete with the public roads, even after the toll was reduced to 40 cents, and Moses eventually gained control of Vanderbilt's pioneering road for back taxes of about \$80,000. The day of public roads had come, supplanting private highways.

Today, the course of the road and a few ruined overpass bridges, guard rails and mileposts have been documented in books and Web sites, including VanderbiltCupRaces.com.

Part of the parkway and name survive as Suffolk County Road 67 (radio traffic reports still call the road the motor parkway). A small stretch was also incorporated into the Meadowbrook Parkway. But the best place to see remnants of the road is in Cunningham Park in Queens, where two of the 65 bridges that carried it over other roads remain. One is at 73rd Avenue and 99th Street. Another crosses Hollis Hills Terrace. Another original bridge crosses Springfield Boulevard. The old right of way is incorporated into the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway for bikers and walkers.

There is a certain irony that a road built for the most modern means of transportation is now being used for the oldest. The parkway marked the beginning of a process: the road was designed for the car. But in offering higher speeds, the parkway and other modern roads would push cars to their technical limits and beyond, inspiring innovation. In that sense, the first modern automobile highway helped to create the modern automobile.

October Monthly Meeting

October 28, 2008

The monthly meeting of the Muscle Shoals Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America was held at Sherrod Avenue Church of Christ on Tuesday, October 28, 2008.

Members in attendance were: Michael Blackburn, Leo Cobb, Charlie Cooper, Orvis Engelstad, Charlie Grimmitt, Bryant Hester, Willie Hickman, Richard Hunnicutt, Richard Sheridan, B.J. Thornton, and Bill Davis.

Charlie Grimmitt took the floor for the first item of business. He has been approached by a representative of the local chapter of the American Cancer Society to provide some older cars (roughly late '50's and earlier) for their annual fund raising event. This year the event is to be held at the Marriott Conference Center on Saturday, November 1, 2008. Charlie asked that those with such cars meet at the Conference Center at 5:30 p.m. that evening. The cars would be needed until about 7:00 p.m.

Also, the annual Veteran's Day parade was discussed. Richard Sheridan brought the flyers, but had to leave early, so Charlie Grimmitt asked all in attendance to participate in the parade. The parade is November 11, 2008. Line-up time is no later than 10:30 a.m. in front of Deshler High School.

Our treasurer, Charlie Cooper, presented the club's year-to-date financial statement in the form of a hand-out. The membership discussed the hand-out and the finances of the club. The treasurer brought up that we ought to be thinking about this year's Christmas dinner (where to have it, what night and what time). Also, he stated that to purchase dinner for all members and spouses would almost drain the club's bank account. With that in mind, he suggested that, for this year, we might think about paying for our own meals. There was also discussion about the location of this year's Christmas dinner. After much discussion, B.J. Thornton made a motion that we pay for our own meals this year and to reserve space at Ryan's Steakhouse for this year's dinner. Motion was seconded by Bryant Hester. Charlie Cooper will call Ryan's Steakhouse and secure a Tuesday night in December and space for us.

Other business: Bryant Hester gave a report about his trip to the Hershey show and flea market. Charlie Grimmitt gave a report on the car show at the Catfish Festival in Sheffield. Richard Hunnicutt and Charlie Grimmitt gave a report on the car show at the Fall Jubilee in Rogersville. We also heard a report from Charlie Cooper on his trip to Pickwick Pines Resort in Iuka, Mississippi, for a Ford Crown Victoria meet. Leo Cobb reported that club members are invited to participate in the 2008 Leighton

Christmas parade, to be held Saturday, December 6. You will be hearing more about this and other parades at next months club meeting.

We viewed a DVD titled "The Big Test", concerning testing, both on a race track and over dirt roads, of Chrysler Corporation cars from 1954.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Davis

Muscle Shoals Region

The Muscle Shoals Region, AACA meets each month at 6:30 PM at Sherrod Avenue Church of Christ, 1207 Sherrod Avenue, Florence, Alabama. Correspondence should be mailed to Muscle Shoals Region, AACA c/o James McCollum, 104 Lindsey Court, Tusculmbia, Alabama, 35674.

Membership Dues

Membership dues are \$10 payable at the beginning of each year.

National AACA

The Muscle Shoals Region, AACA is sanctioned by the national Antique Automobile Club of America. AACA membership is require of all its regions / chapters members.