SAXON
TRADE MARK REG.

CABLE ADDRESS
SAXON
DETROIT

SAXON MOTOR CAR CORPORATION

Sales Department

Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.
Replying to yours of

December 15, 1915.

Miscellaneous Rambling
Sept 1993

Can you believe that summer is about over for those of us in the Northern parts. I hope you all had your Saxons out to a parade or show somewhere. For some reason people just don't take out their Old cars any more around here. but when they do people really crowd around.

This time I am reprinting an article that several people have sent me. I surely hope everyone enjoys it. It is sort of "The history in a thimble" type article. I hope every one realizes when someone writes an article like this that they just hit the highlights as space permits and that a lot of detail has been left out and a few adjustments may be made to make the article flow in a readable manner. I hope you enjoy it. Maybe sometime I will sit down and get all my information together and write an article according to the original literature as I see it. Until that time....

I have a couple of owners trying to find parts and literature and information for their cars. You will find their adds on the back page and please help them if you can.

Thanks Walt

Saxon times
by
Walter Prichard

A registry of current Saxon Automobile owners. It is published twice a year in about March and September to distribute information about the remaining Saxon cars and their owners. Also it should help locate parts and information for these cars.

There is no charge for this service. I put out the "SAXON TIMES' because I want to return something to the hobby for all the pleasure it gives me. I work for a living like most people and the cost I can handle. However if you would like to help, my out of pocket cost are about $2.50 per year. I would like to thank all those who have helped me through the years. Contributions of Short articles, for Sale and wanted Items are welcome and encouraged. If you have articles or restoration hints and you would like to write them in a form (columns) I can copy it would be even more helpful. Please send any correspondence to Walter Prichard, 5250 N. W. Highland Dr., Corvallis, Oregon 97330

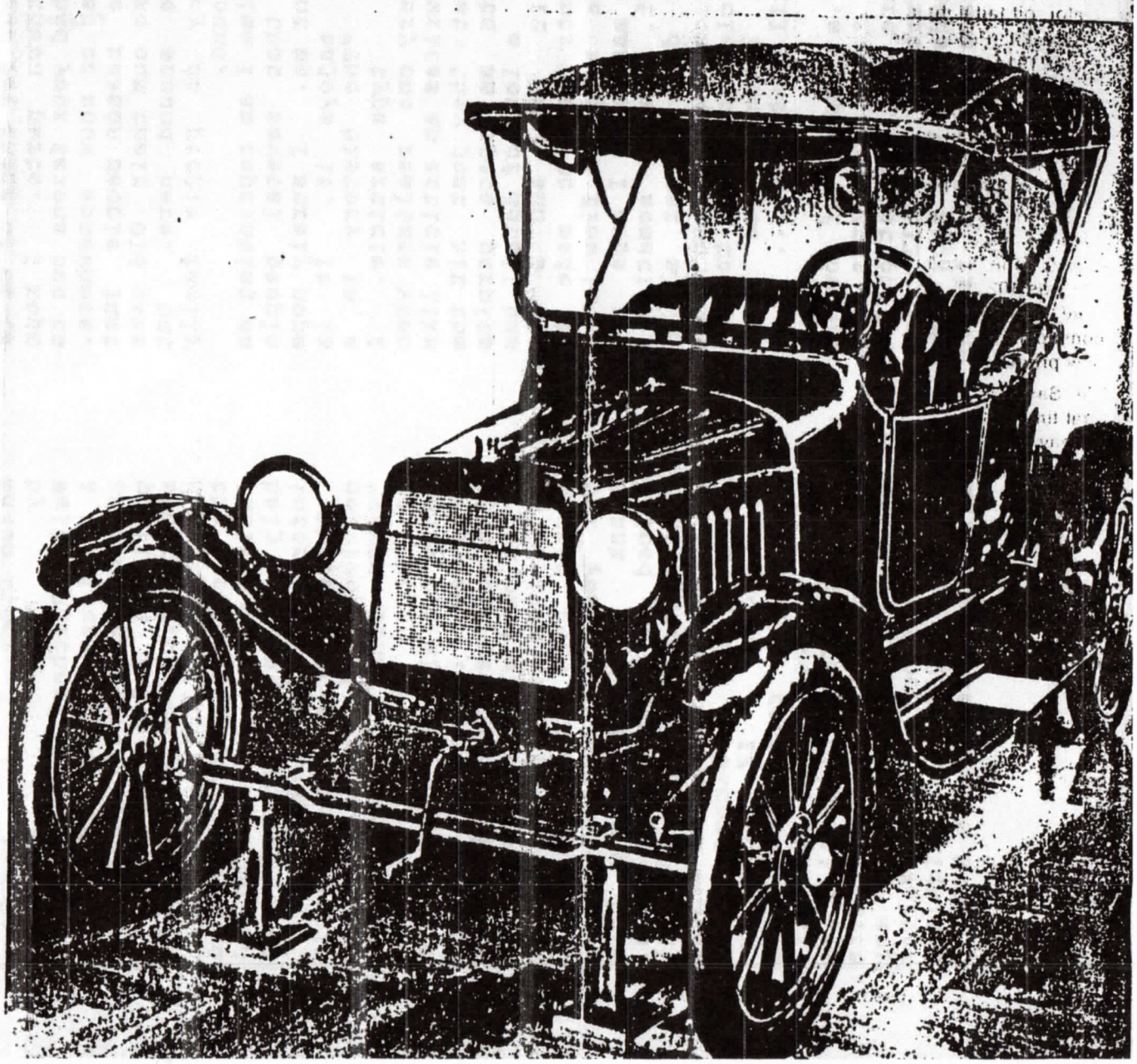
# Saxon...."A Good Low-Priced Car"

Kim M. Miller

The Saxon Motor Company of Detroit, MI, formed in November 1913, had a good start in the auto industry. Its directors were all well known in the automobile trade; men like Hugh Chalmers, Harry W. Ford, G. W. Dunham, C. A. Woodruff, H. H. Pinney and Percy Owen. Even though the Chalmers Motor Company had the largest representation on the Saxon board, the two companies remained separate corporations. The men on the Saxon board were interested in producing a "good two-passenger car at a low price." They planned to keep the price low by designing the car to effect a greater savings in the manufacturing cost.

In January 1914, the Saxon was ready to be shown at the New York Show and on February 23, 1914, the first Saxon was shipped to its new owner. The Saxon "A" runabout featured a four-cylinder Continental, water cooled en bloc motor of unit type. The four cylinders and the crankcase were one casting, including the intake and exhaust manifolds. The water-jacketed head fit over the entire cylinder block and was easily removable. The motor was of L-head design; all valves being on the left side and fully enclosed. The cylinders were 2⅞ in. bore and 4 in. stroke, developing a horsepower of 15.

A new type of lubrication was used on the 1914 Saxons. It was the vacuum splash system, whereby oil was circulated and held at a constant level without a single moving part. An Atwater-Kent distributor and six dry cells were used for the ignition, with the dry cells located under the seat. The six-gallon gravity feed gasoline tank was located under the cowl. It was claimed that the car could go 150 miles on a tank of gas.



*The Henry Ford Museum's 1915 Saxon "Four" roadster. Photo courtesy of The Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan*

The sliding gear progressive transmission, located on the rear axle, provided two forward speeds and one reverse speed.

The Saxon came equipped with 28 inch wire wheels fitted with 3 inch tires and a single step instead of a running board. The low price of $395 included a top, adjustable windshield, two gas headlights, gas generator, oil tail light, bulb horn, baggage box, tools and a tire kit. Production of the 96-inch wheelbase Saxon for 1914 was 7599 units. Several changes were instituted at Serial number 5000. Running boards were added, the hood became three-hinged, and electric starters and lighting became available.

In the August 1914 issue of AUTOMOBILE TRADE JOURNAL, a small paragraph related that the

> "Saxon Company, Detroit, Mich., broke previous records by shipping 1800 Saxons during June. The highest shipment for a single day was 102 cars on June 22. Nearly 5000 cars have been shipped in three months, a very commendable record for a new company with a new product."

The Saxon proved its durability and economy several times during the first year. On May 9, 1914, a ceremony was held in Detroit, MI to mark the finish of a 135 mile-a-day Saxon car of its run of 30 consecutive days. After this run of 4050 miles, the mechanism of the car was found to be in perfect shape and the tires showed practically no sign of wear. This same car was driven less than a month later from New York City on a 30-day transcontinental trip across the United States on the Lincoln Highway. Averaging 30 miles to the gallon, the car arrived in San Francisco on July 4, 1914. These two runs convinced the public of the Saxon's worth.

With the success of the first Saxons assured, the company expanded. A plant, formerly operated by the Abbott Motor Car Company, was taken over to increase production. In addition to the four-cylinder roadsters, which were to be built in greater numbers, a six-cylinder touring car and a four-cylinder delivery car would be added to the line.

The most notable changes in the roadster from 1914 were the running boards, a tapering hinged bonnet, cowl board in the dash, moving of the headlights from the side to the front, and a change in color to a dark blue body with black running gear. The motor was basically the same one used the previous year. The low price tag of $395 remained. However, for $70 extra, one could get electric lights and an electric starter.

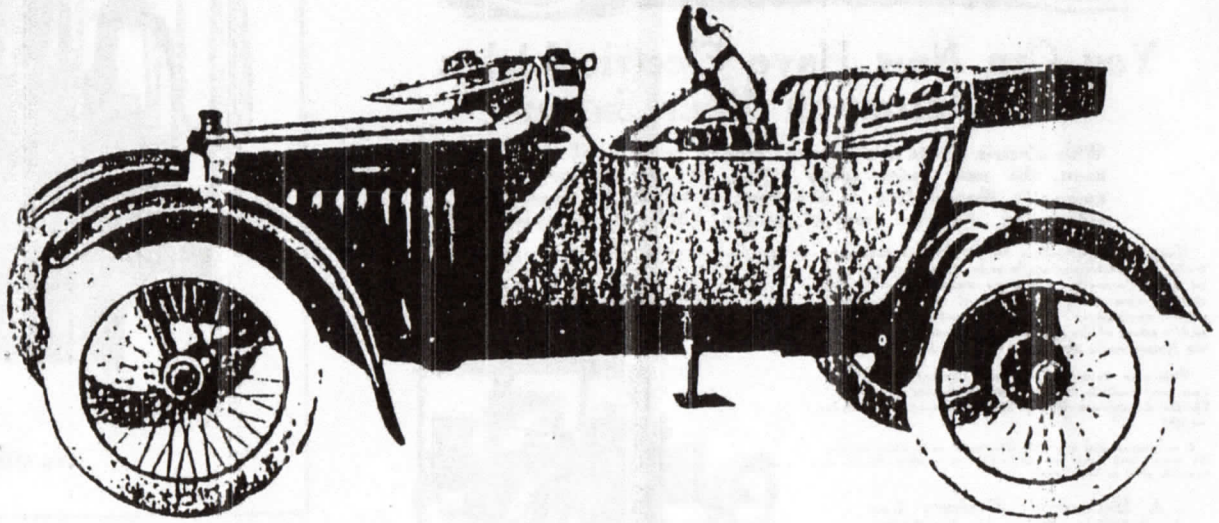
The big news at the Saxon plant in 1915 was the "Six." The six-cylinder motor, also a Continental, was of the long stroke, high speed type, developing 30 to 35 horsepower. Electric lighting and starting equipment were standard as were headlight dimmers, tail light, top, windshield, electric horn, speedometer, extra rims, tire irons and tools. The wheelbase was 112 inches with 32 in. wheels and 3½ in. tires. The six-cylinder motor was of the en bloc type, with L-head cylinders, the valves on the right side. The Saxon "Six" had an ample cooling system, using the thermo-syphon system. The radiator was of cellular type with a 4 gallon capacity. The cast aluminum one piece fan was driven off the crankshaft; the three blades shaped to provide a maximum circulation of air.

Ignition was provided by an Atwater-Kent distributor with starting and lighting by a Gray & Davis single unit system. As in the four-cylinder Saxon, a splash system was used for lubrication. The "Six" carried a 10-gallon gasoline tank located in the cowl. As before, the selective sliding gear type transmission was located on the rear axle. It had three forward and one reverse speeds. The price for the Saxon "Six" was $785, based on a production of 25,000 cars.

Saxons continued to prove their worth in various reliability runs such as the 32-day run in the spring of 1915 in Michigan. The car was driven over some of the worst roads in the state for a total of 4665 miles. The Saxon roadster averaged 37 miles to the gallon of gas and 74 miles to a quart of oil. The total expense for this trip was $25.07. Those were the days!

The 1916 Saxons were full of refinements with no increase in the price of the standard type. However, different body styles meant higher prices. A "Six" roadster was added at $785, a "Six" touring car with extra detachable limousine top at $935 and a "Four" roadster with extra detachable coupe top at $455.

One of the changes made on the 1916 Saxons was the equipping of the touring cars with a Ward-Leonard two-unit starting and lighting system instead of the Gray & Davis used previously. This system was optional on the four-cylinder cars for a price of $50.



*1914 Saxon runabout. Note the single step used instead of a running board. Catalog illustration.*

# The New SAXON $395

With Electric Starter and Lighting System, $70 Extra

## You Can Now Have Electric Lights and Starter on Your Saxon

**With electric lights and electric starter as optional equipment, the new Saxon today stands out even more pre-eminently than before as the most up-to-date 2-passenger automobile on the market within $500 of its price.**

Good and good looking, this car with its streamline body, its graceful running boards, its well-tired motor, its proven economy and many other advantages has already won the endorsement of more than 8500 owners everywhere. Now, with the added convenience and comfort of electric lights and starter ($70 extra) the Saxon leaves nothing to be desired.

This new starter is especially designed for Saxon cars and built in Detroit exclusively for the Saxon. Unlike the starters on most light cars, it adds but little weight.

It is compact and powerful, absolutely quiet when starting the motor, and makes no appreciable noise when the car is running, even at high speed.

### A Dependable Delivery Car of 400 lbs. Capacity for $395

The Saxon delivery car $395 costs less to buy than any other delivery car made; costs less to operate; costs less to maintain, and does its work as efficiently as the more expensive vehicles.

Here is a delivery car of 400 pounds capacity (besides driver's weight), with powerful four cylinder motor, sliding gear transmission, dry plate clutch, shaft drive, standard tread, and other features of standard design. It is powerful and constructed of thoroughly high grade materials. It contains no experimental features. The goodness of its theme has been demonstrated time and time again in the service of more than 8500 owners.

There is a big market for the Saxon delivery car because it fills a widespread demand for a lower priced delivery vehicle than those now on the market. For $395, the price of a good horse and wagon, it brings motor delivery within reach of thousands and thousands of merchants.

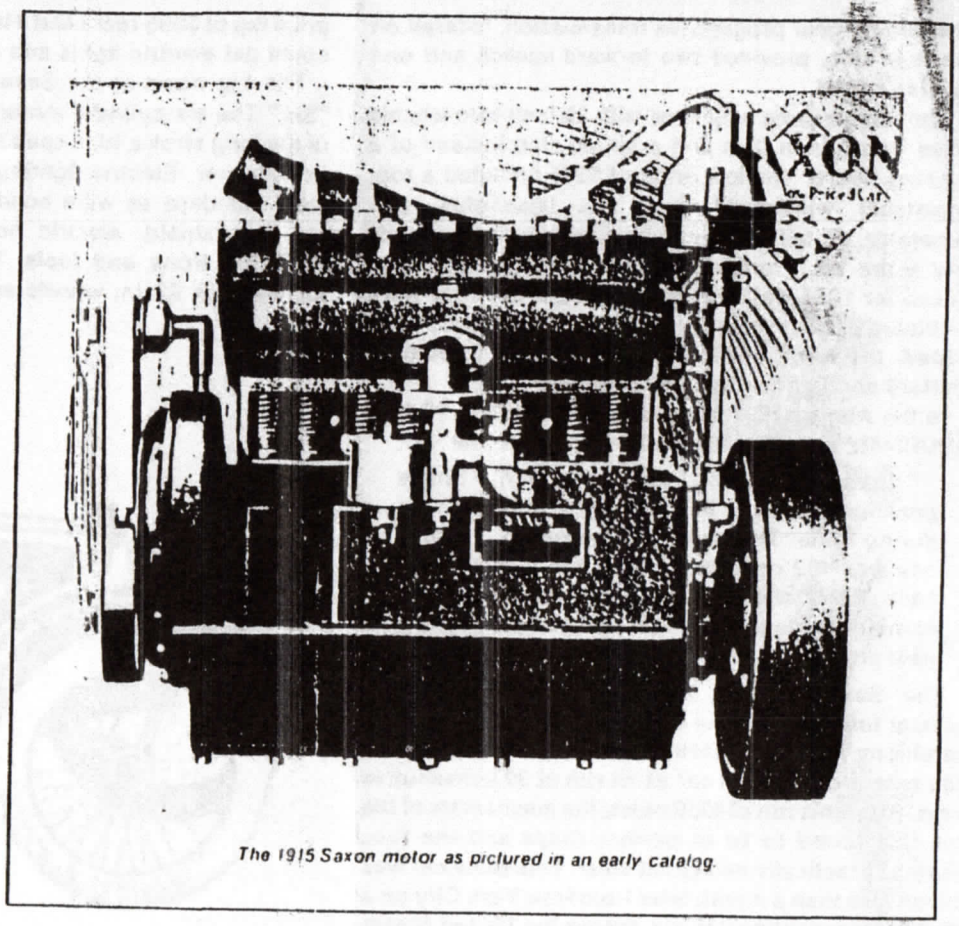


Saxon Delivery Car, 400 pounds capacity, $395

**The Saxon line has always been a desirable line for dealers to handle. It is even more desirable now than before. Just ask for literature and information about the Saxon opportunity to dealers. Address Dept. P.**

## Saxon Motor Company, Detroit

*A Saxon ad from the November 25, 1914 issue of THE HORSELESS AGE. Note the picture of the delivery car at the lower right.*

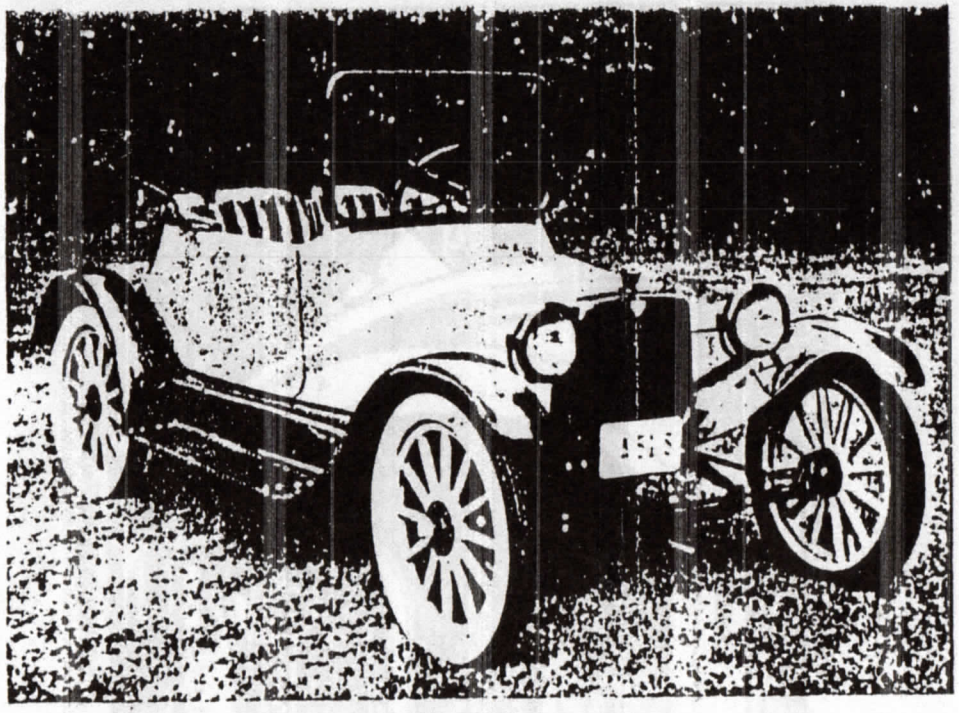



*The 1915 Saxon motor as pictured in an early catalog.*

This was a difference of $20. from the previous years' price. Changes in the appearance of the touring cars were as follows: battleship linoleum covered the aluminum-bound running boards and floor boards, a molding was added around the top, increasing the height of the car, and the standard color was green for the body and black for the molding and running gear. Previous years had seen the use of a dull finish pebble grain upholstery. In 1916, Saxon changed to DuPont's Fabrikoid, a bright finish upholstery. Mechanical improvements included Timken axles and Timken bearings throughout the chassis and silent helical bevel drive gears. The spark plugs were moved from their position over the exhaust valves to over the inlet valves, thus keeping them cleaner and insuring that they last longer. Equipment on the "Six" remained the same with the addition of a dash light and a jack.

The biggest and most important change to occur in the design of the four-cylinder Saxon was the change to a three-speed transmission. Timken axles were also used on the four. Appearance changes included a larger windshield and signal lamps. The signal lamps were located on the cowl at the side. On the four, a delivery body was furnished for $395 if requested.

On August 21, 1916, the Saxon Motor Car Corp. announced that it would share a special bonus with its employees, recognizing the part they played in the success of the company. Factory and office workers



*1917 Saxon owned by Dr. John G. McAnlis of Wadsworth, Ohio.*

who were with the company for more than 90 days received a bonus at the rate of 5 percent of their yearly salary. This included everyone except the factory workers who were paid on a piece-work basis. They received a bonus of 3 percent.

In January 1917, the Saxon Motor Car Corp. suffered a $250,000 fire. Two hundred cars were destroyed as were structures used for assembly purposes. Within one week of the fire, production was resumed in additional factory quarters which were under lease at the time.

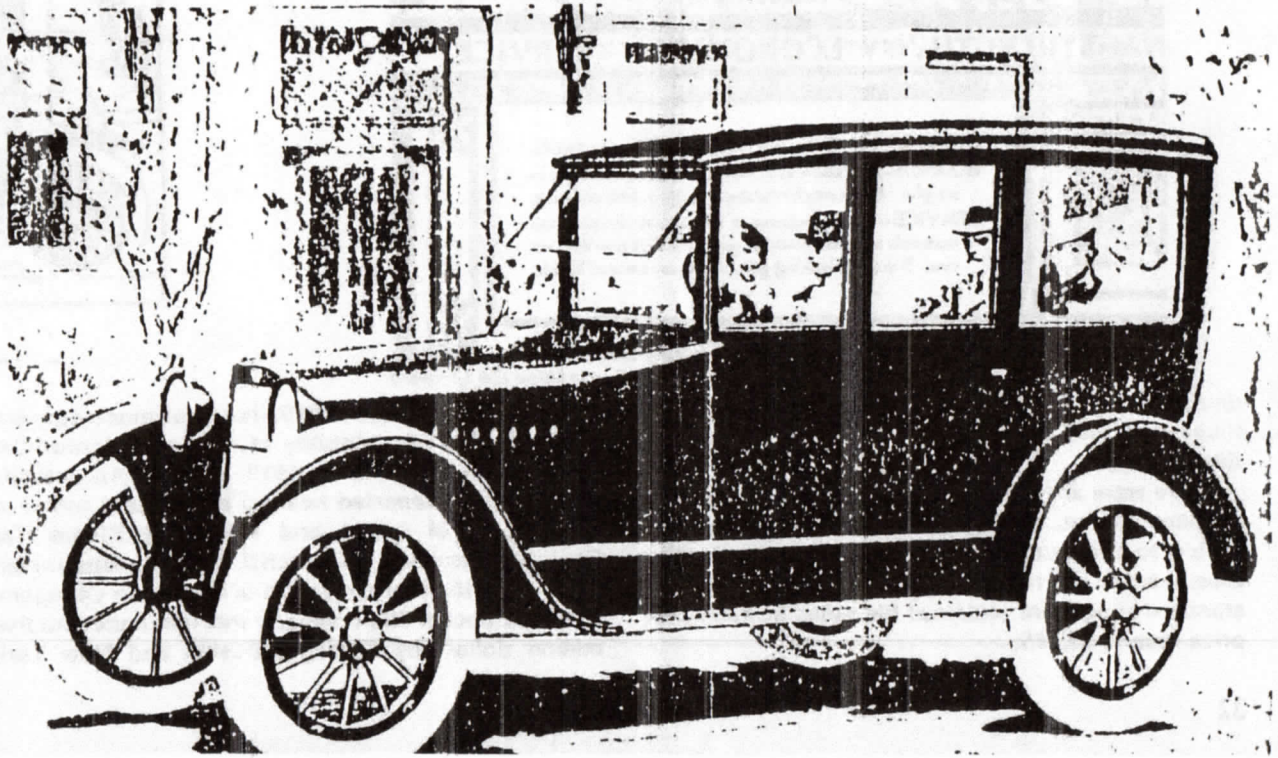
The 1917 Saxons which came out after the fire were basically a continuation of the 1916 models with some changes in the mechanics and appearance of the cars. The price on the four-cylinder models was raised $100 to $495. This price increase included a two-unit Wagner starting and lighting system, an electric horn, a speedometer, and 30 × 3 inch tires on demountable rims. A new Reichenbach atomizer type carburetor replaced the type formerly used (Mayer). Other changes on the four included elimination of the side oil lamps, and the electric lights were fitted with dimmers for city driving.

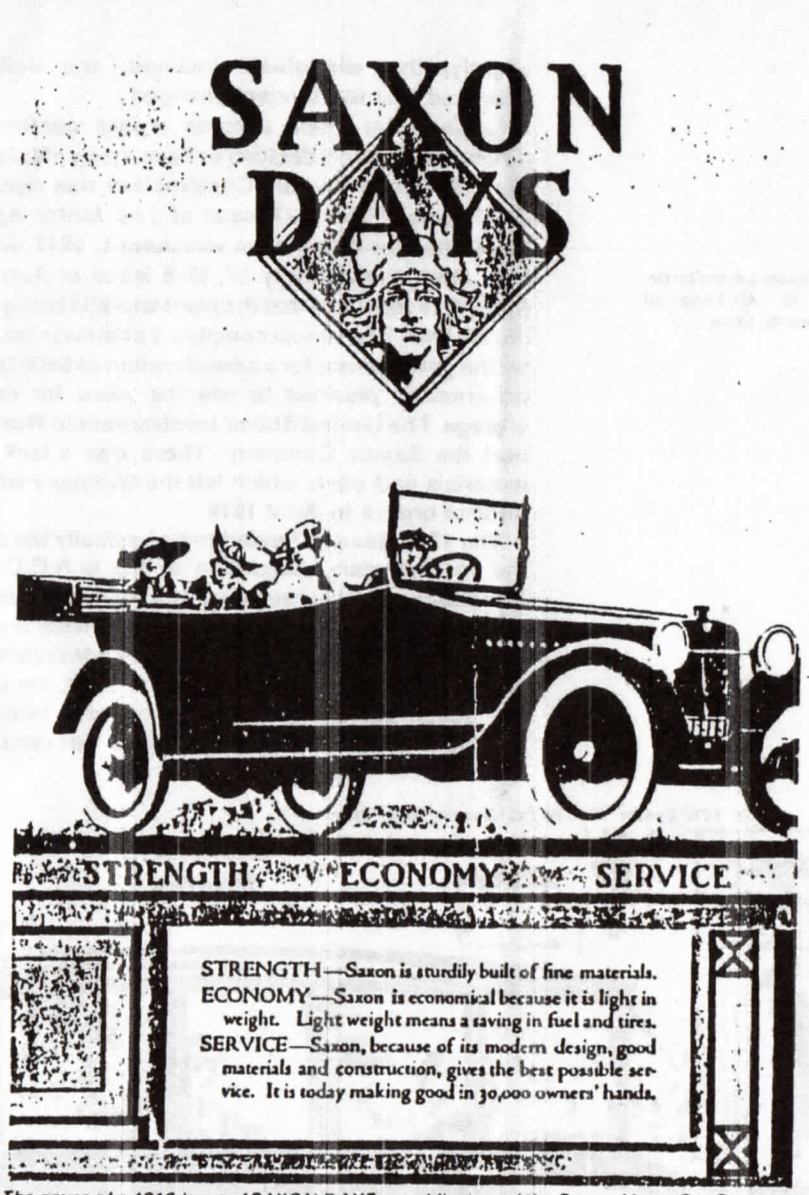
The changes on the Saxon "Six" included a new Wagner starting and lighting system, a Remy distributor, the back of the front seat was dropped slightly, the windshield inclined, the upholstery improved and the fenders changed.

Feeling that their success would continue, the directors of Saxon decided to have a new plant built on the outskirts of Detroit. Construction was reported in the February 15, 1917 issue of *The Motor Age*. The target date for completion was June 1, 1917. Almost a year later, the January 17, 1918 issue of *Automotive Industries* reported that the plant was still being built. A month later, the almost completed plant was taken over by the government for a consideration of $800,000. The government planned to use the plant for munition storage. The United States' involvement in World War I hurt the Saxon Company. There was a lack of raw materials and parts which left the company with 2300 unfilled orders in April 1918.

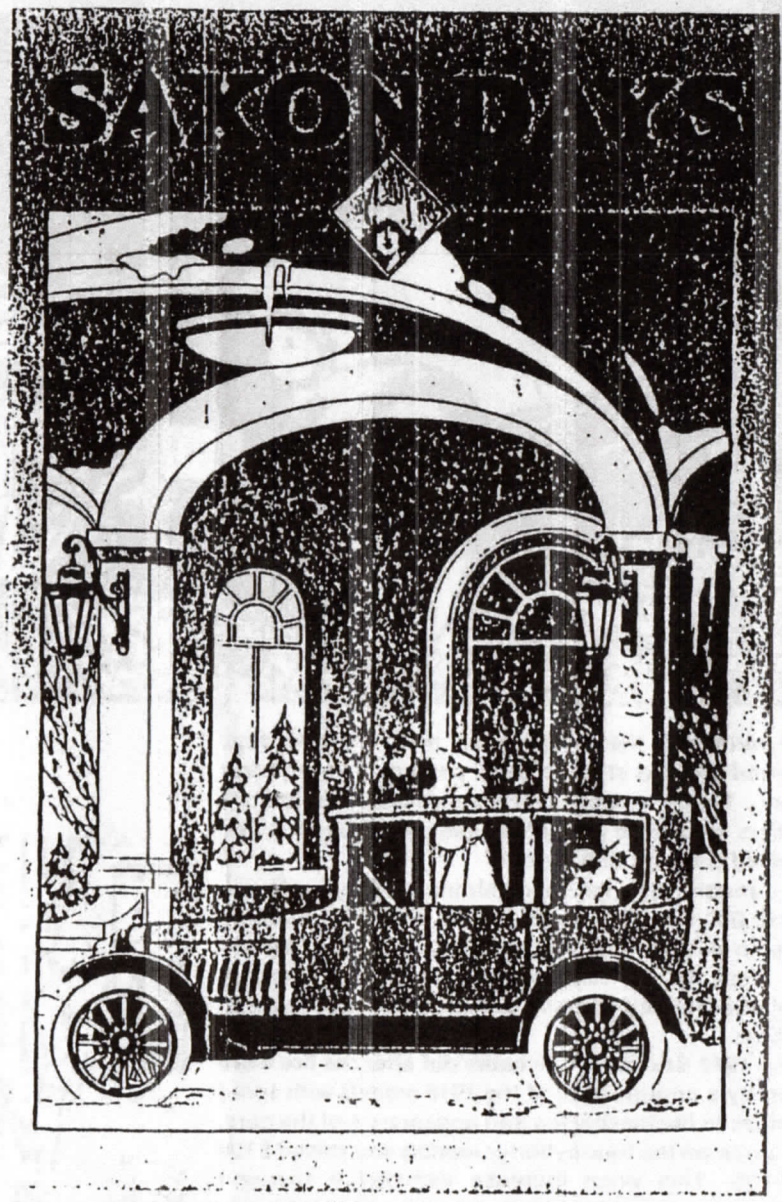
The 1918 Saxons tended to be basically the same as the 1917 models. According to the N.A.C.C.'s 1918 *Handbook of Automobiles*, the 1918 models were painted Richelieu blue with cream wheels and black running gear. All specifications and accessories were the same as 1917. On February 10, 1918, the price on the Saxon six-cylinder touring car was raised from $935 to $995. The price on this model was raised again

*The 1917 Saxon "Six" sedan. Catalog illustration.*






*The cover of a 1916 issue of SAXON DAYS, a publication of the Saxon Motor Car Company.*

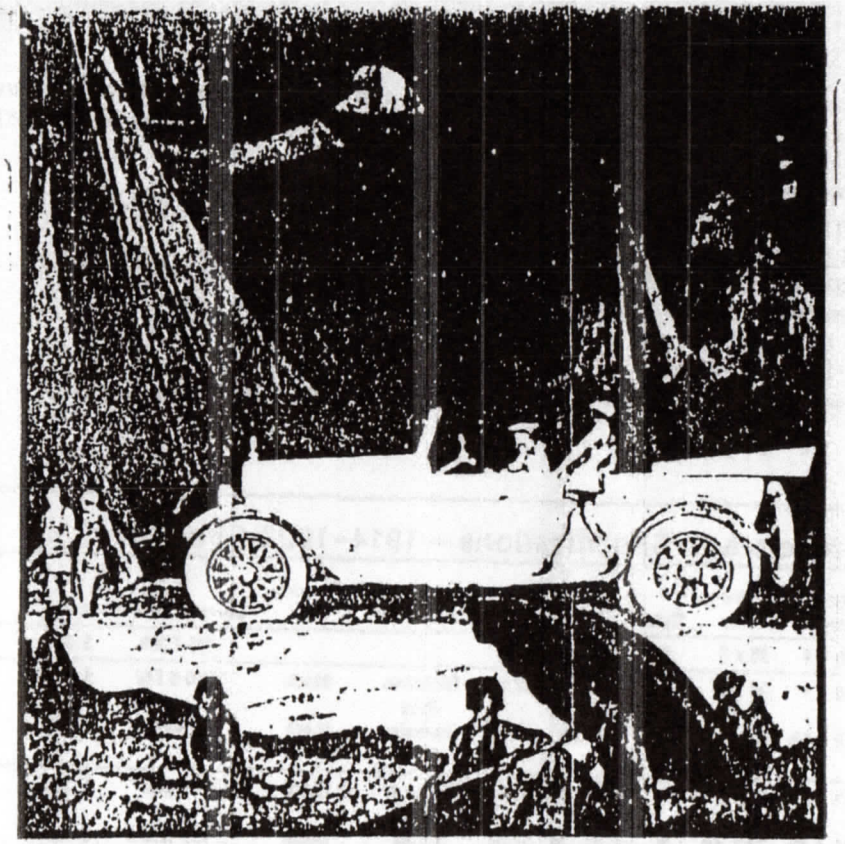



*Cover of a 1917 issue of SAXON DAYS.*

on April 9, 1918 to $1,045. It was also announced at this time that the four-cylinder models would be discontinued.

There were a few changes in the 1919 Saxons. The gasoline system was switched from a gravity feed system to a vacuum system. The colors available were blue, maroon or gray, all with black running gear. The standard equipment remained the same; however, the price rose to $1,195.

In late 1918 and early 1919, there was much concern about the financial stability of the Saxon Motor Car Corporation. The March 1919 issue of *Automobile Trade Journal* reported hearing a persistent rumor of the merger of Saxon and the Doble Steam Car Company. However, on March 3, the rumor was proven false when the reorganization of the Saxon Company was announced. The company was refinanced for five million dollars by Chicago, Boston and New York bankers. Credit for getting the company back on its feet belonged to the president of the company, Benjamin Gotfredson. Once the company was on its way again, Gotfredson resigned. He was also the president of the American Auto Trimming Co. and wanted to devote his time to that company. C. A. Pfeffer, one of the original board members and the secretary and treasurer of the company, was elected president.



Duplex engineering
—built into every unit

SAXON MOTOR CAR CORPORATION
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Saxon

*VANITY FAIR MAGAZINE always had beautiful ads. This one on the Saxon is from the August 1920 issue.*

Duplex engineering
—assures double strength and luxury

STEP onto Saxon's low-hung running boards. Notice their extra width. Love an hour's comfort in coming and leaving the car. But still more important, note their Duplex construction—not merely attached to the chassis, but built of steel as an integral part of the frame. Thus Saxon's running boards add strength, rigidity and road-shock resistance to the entire car. Throughout Saxon this established principle of Duplex engineering has produced a car at least two years ahead of present standards.

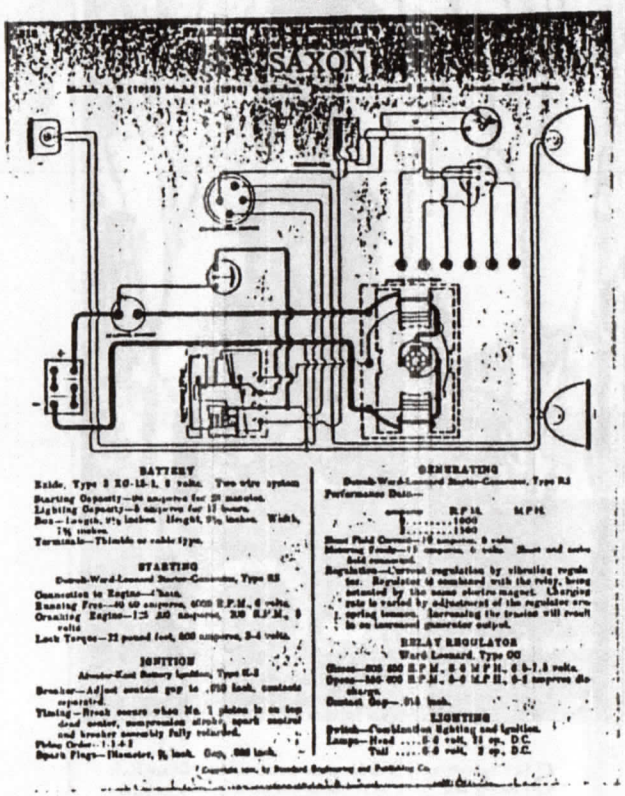
SAXON MOTOR CAR CORPORATION
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Saxon

*Another Saxon ad in VANITY FAIR, in the October 1920 issue.*

The Saxons for 1920 were totally different from their predecessors. Both four- and six-cylinder models were available. The cars were of the Brush design, incorporating the overhead valve system, deep frame construction, and double transverse, cantilever rear springs. The clutch was a dry-plate type and the transmission a standard form of three-speed design. The block-cast, four cylinders were 3⅛ in. by 5 in., with the valves mounted in the head. The six-cylinder models had a bore and stroke of 3⅛ by 5. Cooling on both models was by thermo-syphon and oiling by spray and pressure through the crankshaft. The fuel was fed from a Stewart vacuum tank to a Stromberg carburetor. An interesting feature of this fuel system was the way in which unvaporized particles of fuel were vaporized. At slow motor speeds, fuel was taken from the carburetor into an expansion chamber located in the manifold just above the throttle valve. The apex of the conical-sided expansion chamber formed a venturi tube (hour glass shaped) for the manifold. The unvaporized particles of fuel were gathered out of the main-stream of fuel and permitted to trickle back to an eddy space. This eddy space was heated by the exhaust gases, thus vaporizing the particles of fuel, which were then sent back into the main stream of fuel. The price for the 1920 Saxons was $1785.

In 1921, the new models were given the name




*Wiring diagram from the STANDARD AUTO-ELECTRICIAN'S MANUAL for the 1915 and 1916 Saxon.*

"Saxon-Duplex." Four models were offered; a five-passenger touring car at $1675; a four-passenger foursome coupe at $2475; a five passenger sedan at $2475 and the "Blackstone" touring, for which no price was given. These models were all basically the same as the 1920 models.

Five models were offered for the year 1922. They were: the "Blackstone" touring, $1495; a five passenger touring car, $1295; a roadster, $1345; and a coupe and a sedan, both offered for $1995. Again the models were similar to the 1920 models.

In February, 1922, C. A. Pfeffer, the president of the company, resigned in order to pursue his own personal business interests. During his three years as president, the company was reorganized and all its indebtedness liquidated. During the spring and summer of 1922, the company developed its new models for 1923, which were to sell for about $1000. However, financing was needed to show the cars at the winter shows. In August, 1922, arrangements were made for the sale of 200,000 shares of stock to raise money. But poor market conditions prevailed and the plan failed. The company was forced to close its plant. In December 1922, three of the company's creditors filed a bankruptcy petition in Detroit Federal Court. Officers of the company had been expecting this action due to the financial plans failing. When the 1923 edition of the N.A.C.C. *Handbook of Automobiles* came out, a picture, along with specifications of the 1923 "Blackstone" touring car, was included. However, no cars were manufactured and the company closed its doors forever. It was left to someone else to make "a *good* low priced car."


## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank the following for their contributions to this article:
Mr. Leon T. Hankins, Muscatine, IA
Dr. John G. McAnlis, Wadsworth, OH
Mr. G. Donald Adams, Greenfield Village & Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, MI


## Saxon Serial Numbers and Specifications—1914–1923 (Incomplete)

| Year | Model | Wheel-base | Bore & stroke | Tire size | Cyl. | Arr. | H.P. | Body color | Running gear | Serial numbers | Price |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1914 | A | 96" | 2⅛ x 4 | 28 x 3 | 4 | L-head | 15 | | | 100-7,599 | $ 395. |
| 1915 | A | 96" | 2⅛ x 4 | 28 x 3 | 4 | L-head | 12.1 | Richelieu Blue | Black | 7,600-9,740 | $ 395. |
| | "six" | 112" | 2⅞ x 4½ | 32 x 3½ | 6 | L-head | 30-35 | Richelieu Blue | Black | 100-4,843 | $ 795. |
| 1916 | 14 | 96" | 2⅛ x 4 | 28 x 3 | 4 | Vertically | 12.1 | Green or blue | Black | 101-9,598 | $ 395. |
| | ST2 | 112" | 2⅞ x 4½ | 32 x 3½ | 6 | Vertically | 19.84 | Green | Black | 5,101-19,543 | $ 785.<br>$ 935. w/top |
| 1917 | B5R | 96" | 2¾ x 4 | 30 x 3 | 4 | Vertically | 12.1 | Acme Cadillac Green | Black (incl. hood) | 9,601-18,399 | $ 495.<br>$ 455. w/top |
| | S4T | 112" | 2⅞ x 4½ | 32 x 3½ | 6 | Vertically | 19.84 | Acme Cadillac Green | Black | 19,201-35,594 | $ 815. |
| 1918 | Y18T | 112" | 2⅞ x 4½ | 32 x 3½ | 6 | Vertically | 19.84 | Richelieu Blue | Black | 1,201-7,180 | $ 935. |
| | Y18R | | | | 6 | | | | Black | 101-1,030 | $ 935. |
| 1919 | Y18T | 112" | 2⅞ x 4½ | 32 x 3½ | 6 | Vertically | 19.84 | Blue, Maroon or Gray | Black | 7,181- | $1195. |
| | Y18R | | | | 6 | | | | | 864- | $1195. |
| 1920 | 125 | 112" | 3⅜ x 5 | 32 x 4 | 4 | Vertically | 15.6 | Blue | Black | 90,001-90,750 (All Models) | $1785. |
| 1921 Saxon-Duplex | "Blackstone" Touring | 112" | 3⅜ x 5 | 32 x 4 | 4 | Vertically | 18.23 | Rolls-Royce Blue w/Gold striping | Black | 90,800-91,000 (All Models) | |
| 1922 Saxon-Duplex | "Blackstone" Touring | 112" | 3½ x 5 | 32 x 4 | 4 | Vertically | 19.6 | Rolls-Royce Blue | Black | 91,000- (All Models) | $1495. |
| 1923 Saxon-Duplex | "Blackstone" Touring | 112" | 3½ x 5 | 32 x 4 | 4 | Vertically | 19.6 | Maroon, Green or Blue | | same as above | |

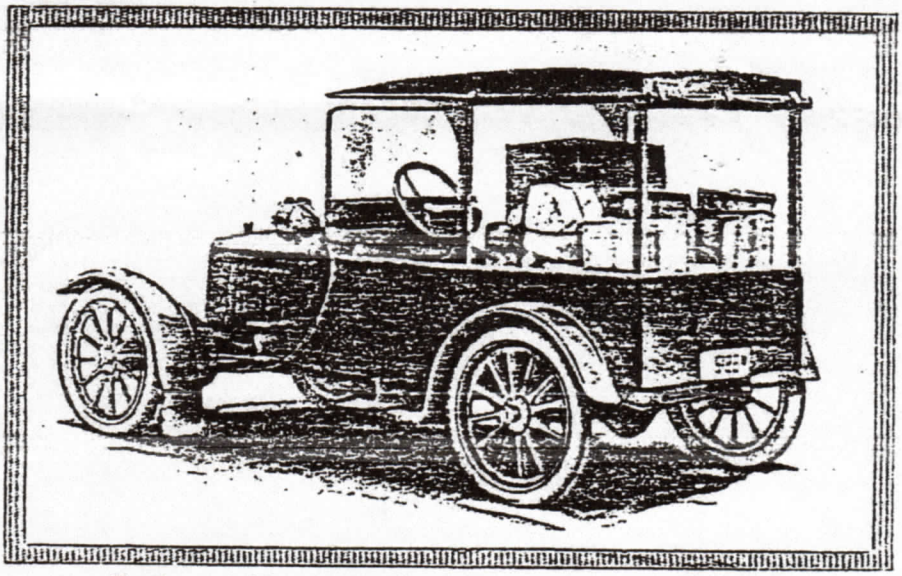
DOES ANYONE KNOW OF ANY SAXON RACING HISTORY?

I own a 1915 Saxon speedster ("homemade" in 1921) which I am preparing for racing in the 1994 Monterey Historic Vintage Car )aces (the Indy 500 of vintage racing). I would very much like to know of any Saxon racing history. I have looked through lots of old racing books but have yet to find any mention of Saxons being raced - yet in the teens and 20s, almost every marque did a bit of racing somewhere, although not necessarily factoxy sponsored. I have heard from some old time racing guys that modified Saxon engines were used for some of the earliest midget racers.

Do any of you know of any history for racing, midget engines or hop-u+ hints for the Saxon four? If so, I would appreciate your mailing it to me or call:

Tom DeMund
174 Santa Rosa Ave.
Sausalito, CA 94965


Wallace Doane bought Wes Myrichs 6 cyl Roadster in 1987 and is just now starting to work on it and the first thing he found were the fenders are in deep trouble can you help him?
Wallace Doane
5308 Circle Dr.
Belmont, Mich 49306
1-616-874-6007



The Saxon 4 delivery car sold for $395. The gas lights on the dash and absence of running boards were typical of the 1914 models.

Does Anyone have a picture of one of these Saxons? Family Photo?