



S P R I N G 2 0 2 5



# SAXON TIMES

## HISTORY

*The Horseless Age* was America's first automotive magazine, running from 1895 to 1918. Only about 800 copies of each issue were printed and sent to the upper crust of American readers. In December 1913 an article, uncredited, appeared about a new car that the "Chalmers men" were about to launch. In this issue of the *Saxon Times* we present a transcript of that article because it gives you, definitively, the origins of the Saxon motor car, a list of the founders, all from the Chalmers organization: Harry Ford, Saxon's first and great president; designer, George Dunham; and other executives. The period of the popularity of the cycle car, about two years, ended with the realization that the cycle car was not adequate for daily transportation. The author of *The Horseless Age* article made it clear that Saxon did not want to be thought of as a cycle car. What is written in this article really outlines just what the vision for the Saxon was and we think it is an absolute must read for Saxon owners today. Though reprinted in the March 1998 *Saxon Times*, we think it is worth repeating.

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THE HORSELESS AGE  
December 3, 1913.

### **Chalmers' Men in New Small Car Concern.**

Announcement has just been made of the organization in Detroit of the Saxon Motor Co. for the purpose of building and marketing a two-passenger automobile to sell under \$400. The organizers make it a point that this is a small automobile of standard design and standard tread—not a cyclecar. In the words of H. W. Ford, president of the company, "It is a well-designed, thoroughly up-to-date small automobile with simple but standard design, light weight, low upkeep, oval fenders, streamline body, and other standard motor car features."

The new Saxon company is a Michigan corporation capitalized for \$350,000, \$250,000 of which is common stock and \$100,000 7 per cent. first preferred. The officers of the company are: H. W. Ford, president and general manager; G. W. Dunham, vice-president; L. R. Scafe, secretary and treasurer.

Other executives of the operating staff are: H. M. Wirth, purchasing agent; C. C. Cross, factory manager; C. F. Jamison, sales manager; R. E. Cole, chief engineer.

Mr. Ford, president and general manager of the Saxon company, has been connected with the Chalmers Motor Co. almost from his organization. Starting in as advertising manager, he was elected a director and secretary of the company. During the last two years he has also occupied the position of assistant general manager. He will still retain his directorship with the Chalmers company, serving in an advisory capacity in connection with the sales and advertising departments.

Mr. Dunham, the vice-president, has for the last three years been second vice-president and consulting engineer of the Chalmers Motor Co. He is one of the pioneer engineers of the automobile industry, having been connected with it from the time when it really became a manufacturing industry. Mr. Dunham will still devote his whole time to the Chalmers company.

Although the majority of the stock in the new company is held by men connected with the Chalmers company, the two corporations are entirely distinct.

While the final organization of the Saxon company has just taken place, preliminary organization was affected sometime ago, the engineering and other preliminary work having been carried on in offices especially secured for the purpose. The organization of the company is chiefly the result of the efforts of H. W. Ford. Mr. Ford has been convinced for a long time of the possibilities for a good two-passenger car at a low price—a car designed strictly as a two-passenger car and bodying the main features of standard automobiles and not the features commonly associated with the cyclecar. He succeeded in interesting Hugh Chalmers and other associates in the project, with the result that the company has got under full swing with the minimum amount of preliminary effort.

The general design of the car was laid out under the direction of Geo. W. Dunham, assisted by C. C. Hinckley. The actual detail work was under the direction of R. E. Cole, the Saxon company's chief engineer.

"It is the aim of the Saxon motor company," said Mr. Ford, "to concentrate on the production of a two-passenger automobile. This car is not in any sense a cyclecar. It is equipped with a four-cylinder engine, a two-speed transmission, shaft drive, standard steering gear mechanism, 96-inch wheelbase, standard thread, and other features that have become accepted practice in the building of automobiles. While we have directed our efforts toward making this car as light as possible, we have no way followed the practice of cyclecar designers. In a word, the Saxon car is a small automobile, but a real automobile.

"Our designers have studied the small car problem for a long time. We have followed the development of the small car in Europe, and we have also studied the development of the cyclecar, and we have felt that the greatest opportunity lies in the small car field.

"We have no intention at present of branching out with a touring car line or any large line of small cars. We aim to stick to one thing and do it well. In our factory on Bellevue avenue we have capacity for 10,000 cars this year. We will begin making deliveries March 1."

The main features of the Saxon car are as follows: the four-cylinder motor is of the L head type, with cylinders  $2\frac{5}{8}$  x 4", all four cylinders and the crank being cast integral. Valves are of generous size, with steel

stems and cast iron heads. The crankshaft of drop forged steel is carried on two large bronze bearings, babbitt-lined. The camshaft is of drop forged steel, 1 inch in diameter, with integral cams, and is driven by helical gears. The motor is lubricated by a vacuum feed oiling system with splash distribution. The cooling system is of the thermo-siphon type with tubular radiator and fan. Ignition is furnished by the Atwater Kent system, using six dry cells.

The transmission, which is carried on the rear axle, is of the sliding gear progressive type, giving two speeds forward and one reverse. The drive is by shaft through a concentric torque tube, the driving shaft having one universal joint. The clutch is of the dry plate type, three plates, steel on raybestos. The axles of the Saxon car are of standard type, the front axle being of the usual I-beam section. The rear axle is semi-floating with pressed steel housing. The outer end of the drive shaft is carried on Hyatt roller bearings.

There are two sets of brakes on the rear wheels. The service brake is 8 inches in diameter, lined with heat-proof material. The emergency break is of the internal expanding type, steel on steel. Both brakes have  $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch face. The Saxon is a left-hand drive car with control levers in the centre. The throttle is controlled by a foot accelerator, while a spark control is located on the dash. The steering mechanism is of the double gear type with drop forged steering connections. A 16-inch wheel carried upon a  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch steel tube steering post is provided.

In body design the new car said to be exceptionally attractive. The two-passenger body is of the streamline type. There is plenty of room for two good-sized people, the seat being 40 inches wide and 16 inches deep with 30 inches of space between the heel board and the dash. The door is 18 inches wide. Other details announced by the manufacturers are: Channel selection, pressed steel frame; standard tread; 96-inch wheelbase; 28-inch x 3-inch clincher tires; wire wheels. The equipment includes top, wind shield, two head lights, tail lights, gas generator and bulb horn. The weight of the car is about 900 pounds.

# EMBLEMS

By permission, we reproduce an article by Mike Shears (murraysbadges@gmail.com) from his American Auto Emblem website that chronicles the designs and change in designs of the Saxon motor car company's logo, from the days of the roadster to the Duplex. As far as we can tell, it is complete and accurate. <http://www.americanautoemblems.com/search/label/SAXON>

There is much trading of emblems these days. There have been reproductions and there have been a lot of copying. I have been fooled particularly by reproduction signs and that has cost me a few bucks. The article doesn't go into hubcap dust covers, but its treatment of the emblem is comprehensive and worth reading.

As a sidenote, I once called the company, still in existence, that made all of Saxon's logos to see if they still have the dies. A woman answered and said she would go look that up. It turns out that in the last months of Saxon production the company evidently did not pay its bills and those dies were destroyed.

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*From the website:*

The first Saxon radiator emblem was beautifully designed with a translucent image of a Saxon warrior wearing a horned helmet and was finished in blue and white enamel (see example above). This emblem is highly regarded by emblem collectors.

There is a variation of this Saxon emblem with a different design of the Saxon warrior head and helmet (see example right).

Both of these Saxon radiator emblems are scarce.



Saxon radiator emblem  
(1914-c1917) *mjs*  
Size: 54mm wide 51mm  
high MM: Bastian Bros



Saxon radiator emblem  
(1914-c1917) *jbec*  
Size: 54mm wide 51mm  
high MM: Bastian Bros



The photos to the right show in detail the different Warrior head and helmet designs used in the blue and white enamel Saxon radiator emblem, both of which were made by Bastian Bros.

There is also a Pulfer reproduction of the blue and white Saxon radiator emblem. It has a flat back, no maker's mark and a less detailed Saxon head design. There are two versions of this emblem without the translucent Saxon warrior. One is finished in opaque white and blue enamel and the other in opaque white enamel only, see examples below. These Saxon radiator emblems are both scarce.



Radiator emblem  
(1915-1917) *mjs*  
Size: 54mm wide 51mm  
high MM: Bastian Bros



Radiator emblem  
(c1916) Size: 54mm wide  
51mm high *sam*  
MM: Unknown



Radiator emblem  
(c1917) Size: 54mm wide  
51mm high *mjs*  
MM: Bastian Bros



A variation of the blue and white Saxon radiator emblem shown at above displays a translucent green Saxon warrior. This Saxon emblem is believed to be an original radiator emblem and may have been used in 1916, when the Saxon car body was finished in green paint. This Saxon radiator emblem is rare. There is also a version of the Saxon radiator emblem with a red Saxon warrior from the Smithsonian emblem collection, but, in view of the fact that several emblems in this collection have been restored in strange colors, I suspect that this emblem has also been restored in the wrong color.





Saxon hub emblem (c1916) tcc  
Size: 45mm diameter



This is the changed Saxon radiator emblem (1920) Size: 56mm high 50mm wide MM: Bastian Bros. Below: Saxon-Duplex radiator emblem (1921-1922) Size: 56mm high 50mm wide MM: Bastian Bros



*Duplex*  
engineering  
—built into every unit

OFTEN a single feature of Duplex engineering dominates the desire to own Saxon. The motor, for instance. Here Saxon's Duplex Manifold introduces a new principle of Double Carburetion. This wrings full power from gasoline of any grade, ending a chief cause of carbon. Saxon's Duplex system of vacuum oil-control eliminates the other cause of carbon—over-lubrication. The full scope of Saxon's Duplex engineering is seldom realized at purchase time. Only continued ownership reveals Saxon's two-fold power, comfort and economy.

**Saxon**

SAXON MOTOR CAR CORPORATION  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The Saxon motor car and the radiator emblem were completely redesigned for the new Duplex engineered models appearing in 1920, see example advertisement and emblem shown below. The new Saxon radiator emblem is scarce.



## Saxon Times issues

With the help of Dr. Brad Smith and Dave Neuhaus, we have been gathering back issues of the *Saxon Times* newsletters. They will be available on the Saxon Motor Cars website soon. To protect privacy, the membership lists will be deleted from the issues that are posted on the website, [www.saxonmotorcars.com](http://www.saxonmotorcars.com). If you have any back issues that are not on the list, we would love to have a scan to add to the collection. Thank you.

To date we have scanned:

1985 - September	2006 - March
1986 - March	2006 - September
1986 - October	2007 - March
1987 - March	2007 - September
1987 - October	2008 - March
1989 - September	2009 - March
1990 - March	2010 - September
1991 - October	2011 - March
1992 - November	2013 - March
1993 - September	2013 - September
1995 - March	2014 - March
1995 - September	2014 - August
1996 - September	2015 - January
1997 - March	2015 - April
1997 - September	2016 - January
1998 - March	2016 - September
1998 - September	2017 - February
2003 - September	2021 - April
2004 - September	2021 - October
2005 - March	2022 - December
	2024 - February
	2024 - November

## Other notes

George Albright of Ocala, Florida, having spent much of the year collecting Saxon parts and cars for two projects, has turned his attention to a Velie roadster. He has decided to sell his collection of parts, more than enough to complete one roadster. Call George at 352-843-1624 to find out more details about the Saxon he has collected.

Andrew Prichard, the son of famed Saxoneer Walter Prichard, wrote to remind me that his father's wonderful 1914 roadster was still available in Corvallis, Washington. The price is reasonable: in the low 20s, for such a complete and original car. You can reach Andrew at (509)528-2252 or [Andrewwprichard@gmail.com](mailto:Andrewwprichard@gmail.com).

George and Theresa Cole drove their recently acquired 1915 Saxon to the HCCA Florida tour in St. Augustine this March. The car was looking splendid with all its brass and its wire wheels. This was a trial run as the car really hasn't been driven in years. True to trial runs, a few issues popped that that will be sorted out this year. The car's body has been fabricated largely out of aluminum.

