

Forney

MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

Newsletter December 2024

"Moving Forward"

Go SAAB!

The new "Go Swift! Go Safe! Go SAAB!" exhibit, running through February 3rd, 2025 has proven to be a big hit with guests. And with over two dozen SAABs on display from their first year of production in 1950 into the 2000's, it's not hard to see why! Come see cars like this yellow 1973 Sonett III, seen to the right, on display courtesy of Bob and Jill Buck of Westminster, Colorado. The Verona Green 1972 SAAB 95 wagon, bottom right, comes with bear claw marks and a story to tell, and is on display thanks to the generosity of Philip Drury of Wheat Ridge, Colorado. A particular highlight is the Toreador Red 1966 SAAB Monte Carlo 850, bottom left, contributed to the exhibit by Tim Lepar of Parker, Colorado. With all this and so much more, you don't want to miss this exhibit!



SAAB Heritage Museum

The SAAB Heritage Museum in Sturgis, South Dakota has very graciously contributed three historic SAABs to our exhibit. The largest SAAB collection in the United States, The SAAB Heritage Museum has many historic SAAB models, such as this gorgeous red 1956 Sonett I, one of only three



in the United States!



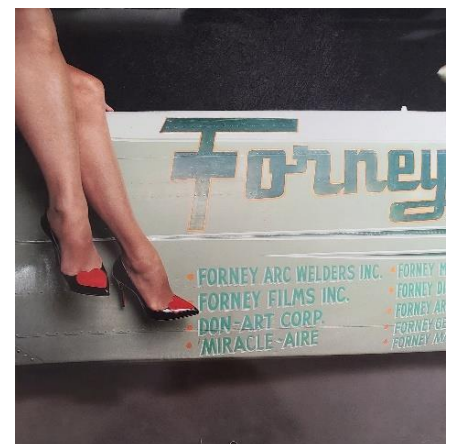
Another standout is this sleek green 1950 SAAB 92 Deluxe. This model was the first car produced by the Swedish aircraft manufacturer, although SAABs were not for sale in the USA until 1956. One of only 700 Model 92s produced in that first year, this car is a fantastic example of the year one SAAB.

With these and more on display, come to the Forney Museum for the "Go Swift! Go Safe! Go SAAB!" exhibit, and a chance to see these cars before they return home to South Dakota in February.



Forney Museum Calendar

A great Christmas gift; get yours today! In addition to many other wonderful items in the gift shop, the Forney Museum now has an exclusive 2025-26 Pinup Calendar. Only \$20, calendars can be purchased in the Museum Gift Shop or online at forneymuseum.org, and all proceeds benefit the Museum. Fun, flirty and for a great cause, get your calendar today and help out the Forney Museum! Special thanks to all the wonderful volunteer models who helped make the calendar possible.



Membership Discount

Become a Forney Museum Member TODAY! From now until December 31st the Forney Museum is running a special sale on membership. We have memberships in many different levels to fit your particular needs, and any purchased by December 31st will be 20% off regular price! With many different options available for as little as \$40, the right membership for you can be purchased in the museum gift shop or online at forneymuseum.org. Memberships are good for one year and also make great gifts and stocking stuffers. So help support the Forney this holiday season by buying a membership, and save money while doing it!

This Month in Transportation History

December 6, 1492 - Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola. Divided today between the nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the island is where one of the expedition's ships, the ship Santa Maria, ran aground on December 25, 1492 and had to be abandoned and destroyed. The expedition left 39 men to found the settlement of La Navidad, in present day Haiti.

December 21, 1829 - The first stone arch railroad bridge in the United States was constructed in Baltimore, Maryland. Designed by James Lloyd and constructed by Caspar Weaver, the Carrollton Viaduct measures 312 feet long and played a pivotal part of making Baltimore a major hub in the nation's transportation network. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1971, the Carrollton Viaduct is owned by CSX Transportation, and also has the distinction of being the oldest railroad bridge in continuous use in the United States.

December 22, 1937 - The Lincoln Tunnel connecting New Jersey with Manhattan Island was officially opened to traffic. The tube was used by 3,700 vehicles within the first 12 hours of its opening, and by 7,661 vehicles within the first 24 hours. Along with the Holland Tunnel, in operation since 1927, the approximately 1.5 mile long tunnel is one of only two automobile tunnels constructed under the Hudson River.

December 1, 1941 - The American Civil Air Patrol (CAP), a U.S. Air Force auxiliary, was founded as the Director of Civilian Defense, former New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, signed the formal order. The CAP currently provides aerospace education, a CAP cadet program, and emergency services such as locating missing aircraft.

December 20, 1956 - The Montgomery bus boycott ended after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling integrating the Montgomery bus system was implemented. The boycott by African Americans had begun on December 5, 1955, after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white man.

December 15, 1965 - Gemini 6A became the first spacecraft to make a crewed rendezvous with another spacecraft, Gemini 7 which had been launched December 4. The two craft came to within a foot of each other, maintaining radio communications, but no docking was attempted. The next day before reentry the crew played the song Jingle Bells for mission control on a harmonica and some

small bells. The first musical instruments used in space, they are now housed at the Smithsonian Institution.

December 21, 1968 - Apollo 8 was launched, the first crewed flight of the Saturn V rocket. The first flight to reach the moon, Apollo 8 orbited the moon 10 times before returning to Earth, with splashdown on December 27. The crew were in lunar orbit for over 20 hours, during which time they recorded a Christmas Eve television broadcast. At the time the broadcast was the most watched TV program ever.

Forney Vehicle Spotlight

1934 Pierce-Arrow Model 1248A Limousine

When the company of Heinz, Pierce and Munschauer was established in Buffalo, New York in 1865 they were best known for a variety of home goods including ice boxes and elaborately gilded birdcages. From such unexpected beginnings was born one of the top luxury automobile brands in the United States in the early 20th Century. In 1872 partner George N. Pierce bought out his other partners,



taking control of the company and changing the name to the George N. Pierce Company. As part of Pierce's plan the company began to diversify its offerings, and had introduced bicycles to the product line in 1896.

The Pierce bicycle was well positioned to take part of the huge boom in popularity in the 1890s. Many innovative features in bicycles began to appear at this time in order to appeal to the

expanding market, such as chainless drives, cushion frames and coaster brakes. One Pierce innovation was the front spring fork for a smoother ride. These bicycles were relatively inexpensive and popular, and eventually the company would split off bicycle production into the Pierce Cycle Company in 1906.

George Pierce's plan to diversify the company's offerings was proving a sound instinct.





The first attempt to build an automobile was a steam-powered design built under license, in 1900. This vehicle was not a success, but pushed the company to focus on internal combustion engine designs, and by 1901 the Pierce Motorette, a single-cylinder two-speed vehicle was built. In 1903 Pierce introduced a new 2-cylinder design they named the Arrow.

In 1904 Pierce decided to focus on making a larger, more luxurious vehicle, the Great Arrow. This solidly-built 4-cylinder car would prove to be Pierce's best-seller, especially after a Great Arrow won the Glidden Tour in 1905. This gave the company a reputation not just for luxury, but for solid craftsmanship and rugged endurance as well.

The company's fortunes were on the upswing, and in 1906 the new Albert Kahn-designed Pierce Arrow Factory Complex was opened in Buffalo. Today the factory building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

George Pierce at this time cashed out his stake in the company, selling all his shares in 1907, and in 1908 the Pierce Motor Company became the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company. From the 453 cubic inch 4-cylinder engine of the original Great Arrow, the company began to experiment with larger offerings, eventually producing an 825 cubic inch engine that was considered the largest



internal-combustion automobile engine in the world at the time. This trend towards bigger engines with ever-more cylinders would continue through the next decades.

1912 saw a new body designer, Herbert Dawley, join the company who would go on to design every model until 1938.

Pierce-Arrow adopted their most distinctive styling hallmark in 1914 when the headlights were moved from a traditional position on either side of the radiator into flared housings molded into the



fenders. This “fender headlamp” made the Pierce-Arrow visually distinctive from any other vehicle on the road, and would continue until the end of production of Pierce-Arrow automobiles.

The Pierce-Arrow became a status symbol, driven by US Presidents, Hollywood celebrities, world royalty and industry tycoons. Along with fellow luxury vehicle manufacturers Packard

and Peerless, they were commonly referred to as the “Three P’s of Motors.”

The company also made a name for itself from its advertising campaigns, noted for artistry and understatement. Often the car itself would be in the background, or only partially visible, surrounded by elegance and luxury, high fashion settings or even natural vistas such as the American West or rural scenes.

The company’s large vehicles were also popular with fire departments, due to their large size and lengthy wheelbases, who would then strip the vehicle down to the engine and chassis and rebuild them back up as fire engines.

Pierce-Arrow’s success and prestige led the Studebaker Corporation, of South Bend, Indiana, to acquire the company in 1928. Although both companies operated as separate entities, Pierce-Arrow gained access to the Studebaker national dealership network. Under the new ownership the company retired their well-regarded 6-



cylinder engine and introduced a new 366 cubic inch L-head straight-eight engine.

There was a trend after the stock market crash by the luxury marques to build ever bigger engines with more cylinders, prompting Pierce-Arrow to release its first V12, designed by chief engineer Karl Wise. A Pierce-Arrow 12 was driven at Bonneville, breaking 14 international speed records. However, 1933 marked a turning



point as Studebaker found itself struggling financially and sold off its stake in the Pierce-Arrow company.



The Great Depression also took a toll on Pierce-Arrow's fortunes, as it did many other automobile manufacturers. In 1933, the new radically redesigned Pierce-Arrow Silver Arrow was introduced at the New York Auto Show. Although well received, the car sold only a few examples. Priced at \$10,000, which is equivalent to over \$235,000 today, the Silver Arrow was doomed from the start.

Other attempts to right the company's fortunes included a new V12 sedan, considered the safest and most luxurious of its day, and the Pierce-Arrow Travelodge line of travel trailers. Again, despite warm reception, the company failed to sell enough and the end was near. As the only luxury brand not to offer a lower-priced model, and without sufficient sales or funding, the company declared insolvency in 1938. The final vehicles were completed and then all of the company's assets were sold at auction on May 13, 1938. Notably, the equipment used to manufacture Pierce-Arrow V12 engines was purchased by Seagrave Fire Apparatus, which used the big engine in their fire engines, into the 1950s.

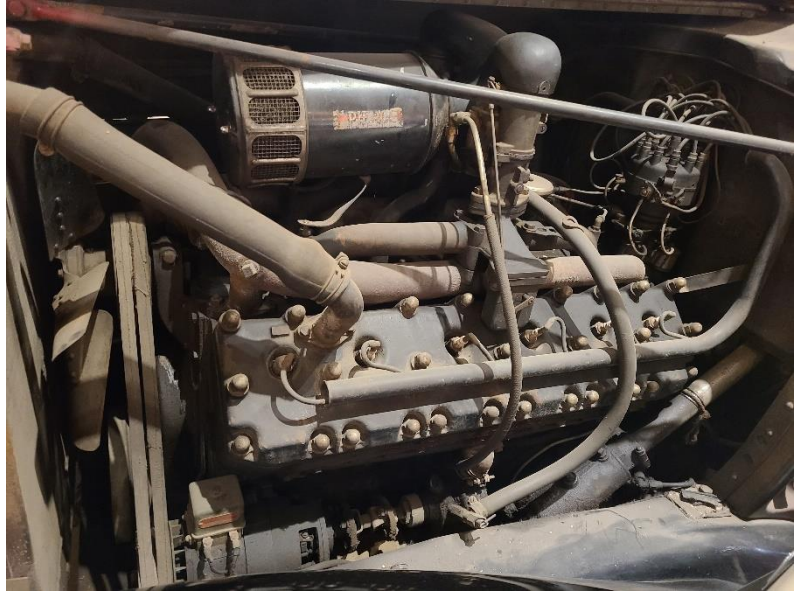


This 1934 Pierce-Arrow Model 1248A is a limousine with an enclosed chauffeur's compartment. The distinctive fender headlamps, along with the elongated 147 inch wheelbase, dual side-mounted spare tires with metal covers and the imposing grille, helped the car to stand out on the street and as a prime example of luxury vehicle design of the pre-war era. The artillery-style wheels and white wall tires add to the air of elegance. The driver's compartment is upholstered in leather with a divider window.

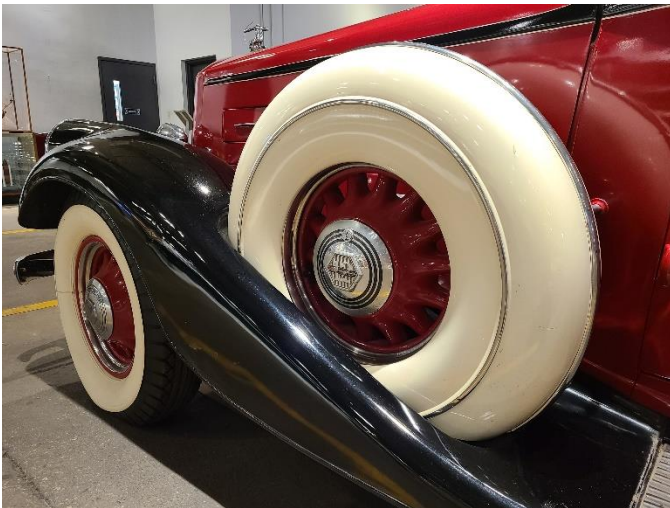


The passenger compartment featured privacy shades and folding jump seats to accommodate extra passengers, finished in fine broadcloth and polished wood accents.

The engine is a 462 cubic inch, water-cooled V12, with a 2 barrel Stromberg carburetor, producing 175 horsepower. All that power translates to a top speed of about 90 MPH. The transmission is a floor-shifting manual 3-speed powering the rear wheels. One early luxury innovation was the power-assisted drum brakes, to help bring the nearly 5,000 pound vehicle to a stop.



This is the 5th of only 58 V12 limousines built in 1934, with total production for all five model lines of only 1,740 cars! Priced at \$4,495, equivalent to over \$105,000 in 2024, it is easy to see why only small number of these high end Depression-era cars were sold. As sales continued to decline, in just four years Pierce-Arrow would be out of business entirely. It has been suggested that the Pierce-Arrow company culture of adherence to tradition and high craftsmanship doomed it at a time when manufacturers were finding it necessary to be



quicker to respond to the needs of the ever changing market. Ultimately one of the most distinctive luxury automotive brands in history was defeated by the economic toll of the Depression, and the company's own unwillingness to change.

Highly prized by collectors today, this 1934 Pierce Arrow Model 1248A was acquired by the Museum in 1959, and can be seen on display at the Forney Museum of

Transportation.

Volunteer of the Month

Our featured volunteer for December is Bruce Stover. Bruce spent his childhood in Labrador and Quebec in Canada, before moving between California and Montana. Eventually he came from Montana to CU in Boulder, and has been a full-time



Colorado resident since 1975. While pursuing his career as a mining geologist, Bruce worked a number of jobs in between as a pipe fitter-welder, an apprentice heavy equipment mechanic and a GM line mechanic for an Oldsmobile dealership, as well as a seasonal race car mechanic for over 25 years.

A lifelong fan of motorcycles and sports cars he raced motocross when he was younger, which led to motorcycle road racing. While he shared a 1967 Mustang 289 V8 with his brother in high school, Bruce says his very own first car was a 1971 MGB GT. This love of things mechanical

brought him to the Forney after a friend of his had visited the museum on a tour and heard about the volunteer opportunities for mechanics to work on and refurbish old vehicles. Bruce now finds himself working with our team in the shop.

When asked what keeps him volunteering, Bruce told me “[it] is the staff and other volunteers who are as passionate about vintage cars and motorcycles as I am. It’s a fun bunch. I love the motorcycles and European cars in the Forney collection, and I really enjoy the morning coffee & bench racing sessions with other volunteers and staff before we get to work. Most rewarding... solving mechanical problems.” He told me he is looking forward to finishing the restoration of the museum’s BMW Isetta, and his long-term goal of working on some of the other European cars in the collection—Saab, Citroen, Rolls-Royce, and Mercedes to name just a few.

Thank you, Bruce, for everything you do for the museum. We couldn’t do what we do without you!

Volunteer Birthdays

12/3 – Ed Danser

12/8 – Rick Nelson

12/26 – Joel Klassen

12/3 – Lori Melamedas

12/13 – Carl Enger

12/28 – Rex Osborn

12/3 – Michael Murphy

12/15 – Gordon Johnson

The Museum needs YOU!

Anyone interested in volunteering or donating please reach out to us at the museum or email volunteer@forneymuseum.org

General Museum Needs

We are putting out the call for several items that are needed here at the museum. If you see anything in this section that you think you would be able to donate to the museum to help us with our operations please reach out to our Assistant Director, Dan at asstdirector@forneymuseum.org, or call the museum at (303) 297-1113.

- 1) Enclosed trailer (20-foot or longer) to transport Forney Museum vehicles safely & securely
- 2) Modern tire changing machine
- 3) Modern wheel balancing machine

Thank you to everyone who has already donated!

The Forney Newsletter team is:

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Special Thanks to all of our readers!