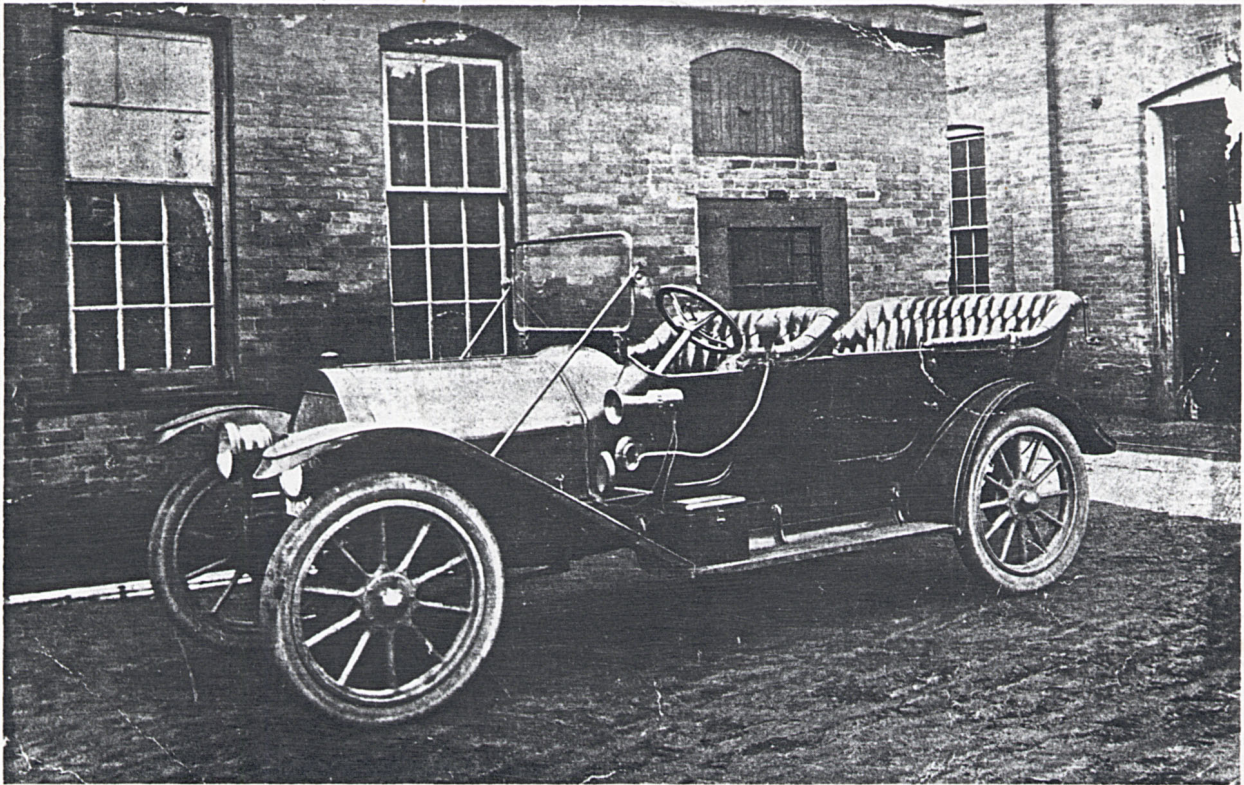


The 8 Cylinder 1903 Mayer Automobile

By Allie Mayer



The (1903) Mayer 8-cylinder car as it appeared in 1910 after many modifications.

In 1903 there was a remarkable car being assembled in the Mayer Brothers (Louis and Lawrence) machine shop at Mankato, Minnesota. The auto was far beyond what anyone else at that time had ever dreamed. In 1903, most of the auto industry was satisfied with building one or two cylinder engines cars, a few were dreaming of as many as four cylinders — but eight cylinders was unbelievable!

The idea, as conceived by my father Louis Mayer was to build an eight cylinder engine car, and more fantastic a V-bank with four cylinders on each side (bank of 2 split) made of cast iron. It would be able to seat seven passengers with jump seats. Dad decided for the rough roads at that time, to use coil springs. He would use gears, instead of a chain drive, to get the car moving on its wheels. People told Dad his ideas were not practical. But Dad did not let the people distract him from his project. Whenever time permitted from the machine shop, he had his workmen turn their talents to his car.

Joe Marka helped design the car, Hank Guth assembled it. Mr. Bennett helped in designing and making the carburetor and ignition. George Huettl and Ole Dedrickson also remember the year the car was built. The crankcase and transmission were made of aluminum. It had a Bosch swiveling magneto. The steel body was made in

Detroit, according to Dad's design. The radiator was built in North Milwaukee. These were the only two parts of the car that were manufactured outside the Mankato plant. The engine was four feet long, and had a covered gear box, and hand shift system. The rear end universal was almost like those in our cars of today. The wheels had 37 x 5 tires. The frame was riveted. The horsepower was about 100.

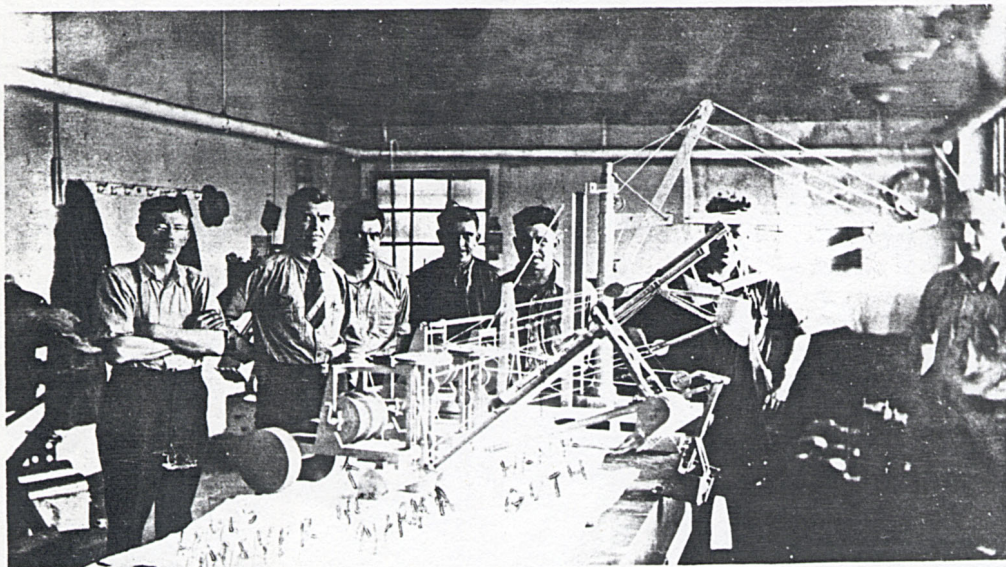
Dad called on his old friend John Theissen to paint the car black with yellow wheels. Now the people who thought Dad was impractical, were convinced it could run.

In 1907, Dad took it for a test run and the car soared through Main Street of Mankato with grandeur. Proven to himself that he could invent such a thing, Dad turned his talents to the invention of a tractor. He also built two more V-type engines. He hooked the two V-type engines together and installed them in a motorboat to be used on Lake Minnehaha at 65 mph — which everyone again thought was something that was unheard of.

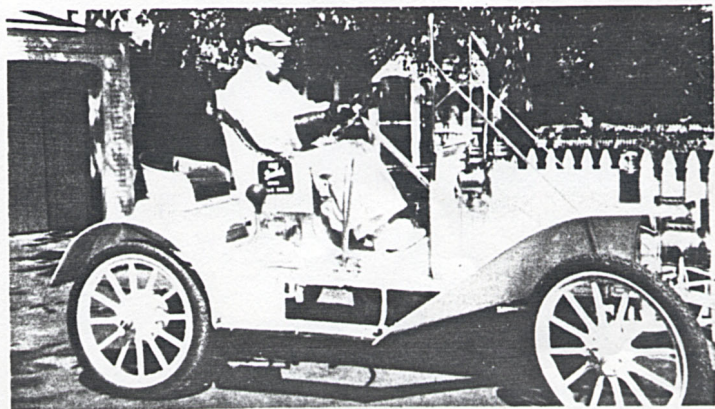
In 1915, Dad and his brother Lawrence left Mankato for Wisconsin and they took the 1903 Mayer car with them. In 1922, Mother insisted Dad junk the car and it was done . . . The only remnant I have of Dad's car is the four cylinder tire pump.



Author Allie Mayer as a child, seated alongside his father Louie Mayer in the latter's first car in the fall of 1907, a Model S Ford.



Louie Mayer, at left, with coworkers and the model of a giant digging machine, 1907.



Author and Member Allie Mayer in his 1908 Model 10 Buick.