

" There still remains that mysterious J in England which by inference MUST be the Murphy convertible sedan shown at Olympia in October 1929. People keep on assuring me (a) that it is still in England, and (b) that it is being restored by a character in the north-western suburbs of London. I am assured that this character actually applied in 1962 for the job of Chief Engineer to Beaulieu and that he mentioned at the time that he had lately acquired a J Duesenberg for restoration. But the trail is cold and now that I am no longer with MMM I don't think I would be allowed to search the files in the basement for a clue. (In any case this would be in the "staff" file and one would virtually have to sign the Official Secrets Act to gain access to this!). If I hear anything I will certainly pass it on." (M. S.)

POSSIBLY A LOST DUESENBERG IN GERMANY ?

Our Berlin Germany member, Gunter Simon, writes us about some interesting news and prospects of the possibility of another "lost" Duesenberg or TWO in Germany. We quote member Simon's recent letter verbatim and sincerely hope he can locate and secure either or both of these rumored J's!

"I am glad having to inform you that I hope I will be the owner of a Duesenberg SJ in the near future, on the track of which I am since almost two years. The last time it was seen in Germany was in the summer of 1963, and because of its very unknown and mysterious hiding place I hope it is still there. I am informed about almost any classic-car activities in Germany, and there is no rumor about it. It is said that the car is a convertible coupe with body by Erdmahn and Rossi of Berlin. It has pelts upholstery and the body is covered with hide of Python. Really interesting indeed. Do you have any informations about it? I think the only known Duesenberg body designed by Erdmann and Rossi is the R. Bauer car mentioned in Elbert's book, even though it became built in the USA afterwards. But it seems that there have existed at least 4 of them! This information is a very serious one, for I was lucky enough to locate the former German Duesenberg Dealer, Oscar Schmidt, who is still living.

It may be that I have a track of another SJ, but it is impossible for me to get informations about it. The car became delivered to Leipzig, and Leipzig is today in the territory of the so-called DDR. The eastern government did not answer to my subject letters, so I would have to go to Leipzig myself in order to search for it. I have relatively exact knowledge where to search, but- Berlin citizens are only allowed to cross the DDR for West Germany, no other allowance is given. You Americans may visit Leipzig, but not me! If any member is interested in this car and by chance is visiting the DDR (may be the Leipziger Messe) he may contact me. It is much too difficult to describe in a letter how to search for the car, therefore interested (sic) must visit me before going to Leipzig. Berlin is only about 100 miles off Leipzig and- it is my "price" for the tip. You will understand that foreign members like me are most interested in any contact with American members.

I was not able to identify the mentioned cars by numbers or exact body styles, for I can not start much activities without having to fear that the price of a located Duesenberg will raise too much. In the spring of this year I will go and try to buy one of them. And IF I buy it will be the greatest Duesenberg bargain you heard of in the last ten years! P. S. Not too long ago a Duesenberg became sold in France or England I think. Just now I am trying to get informations about it". (G. S.)

"D" BRIEFS

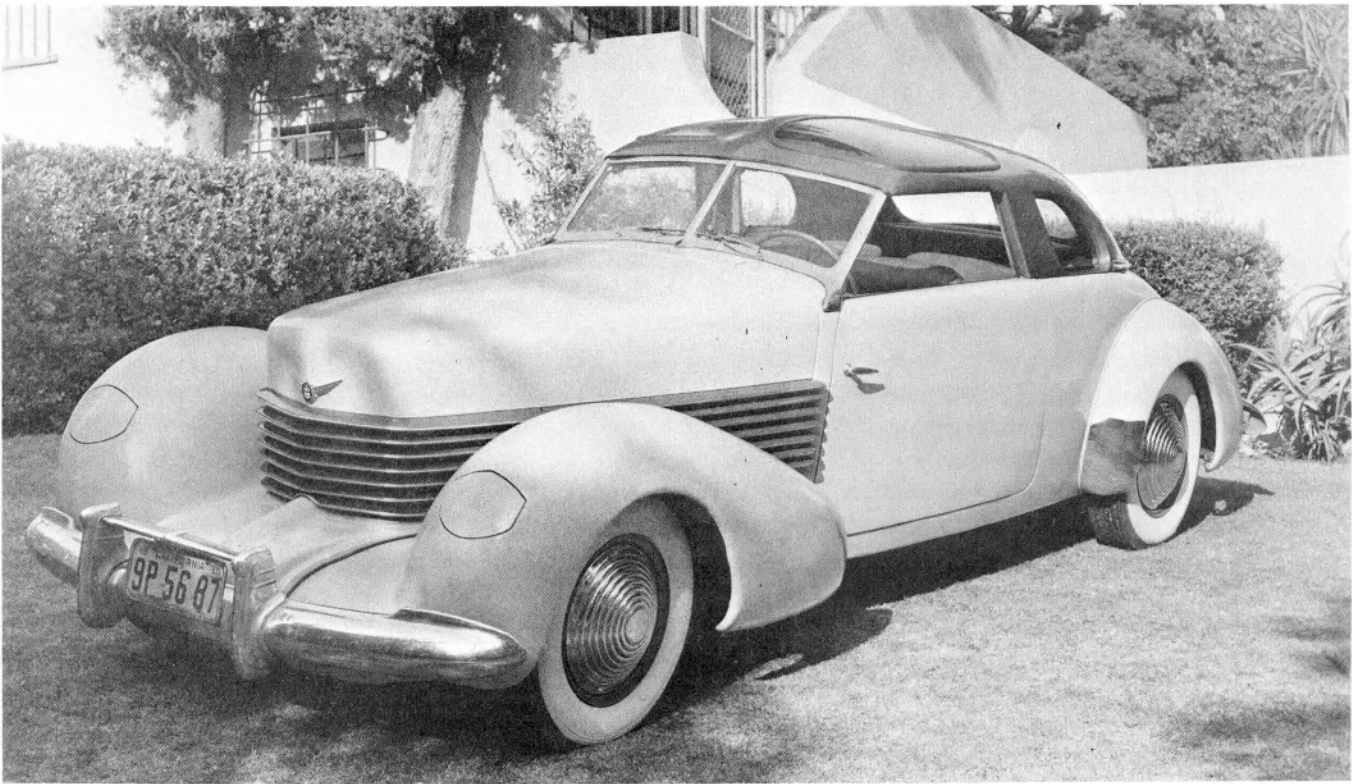
California members have been busy moving J convertible coupes. For example, J-279 Murphy (originally Howard Hughes) went from Hal Crosby to dealer Sam Bergman to singer Wayne Newton of Las Vegas. And JN-565 Rollston from George Arents to dealer Tom Barnett of Arizona, who also bought back J-468 Murphy Beverly. . . . Way out East, dealer Tiny Gould of Pennsylvania bought J-461 Murphy convertible coupe, the one altered years ago to twin rear spares, then a National Senior Car, from James Groendyk of Florida. . . . And Dr. Patrick J. Frank of Pennsylvania obtained J-119 M. C. C. from Al Bittner. . . . And due to Ray Wernsman and Bob Adams, J-355 Murphy convertible sedan is back in Wisconsin J-147 Murphy convertible coupe went the shortest distance; from Leo Gephart's suburb to James Siler's home in Dayton, Ohio. (R. W.)

Feature Section

The Barbara Stanwyck Cord

by Bruce Hanson and Lee Richardson

As a result of the articles in our January and February issues concerning this modified Cord phaeton we received some preliminary correspondence and then just recently the following comments and data concerning this car which was at first mistakenly identified as originally belonging to actress Gloria Swanson. We now have the authentic history of the Cord but no absolute confirmation as



to the present owner. Ron Irwin's deduction (see page 13 of our February issue) seems correct except for one digit in the Engine No. which Lee Richardson says is FB2447 and Ron's records indicate the number to be FB2427. More than likely the difference is due to a typographical error in one or the other's records. The last known owner (in 1968) was former ACD member Webster Whitelaw of Ventura, Cal. as Ron Irwin surmised. We quote Bruce Hanson's letters and then the history of the car from the original (after Stanwyck) owner who did the modifications.

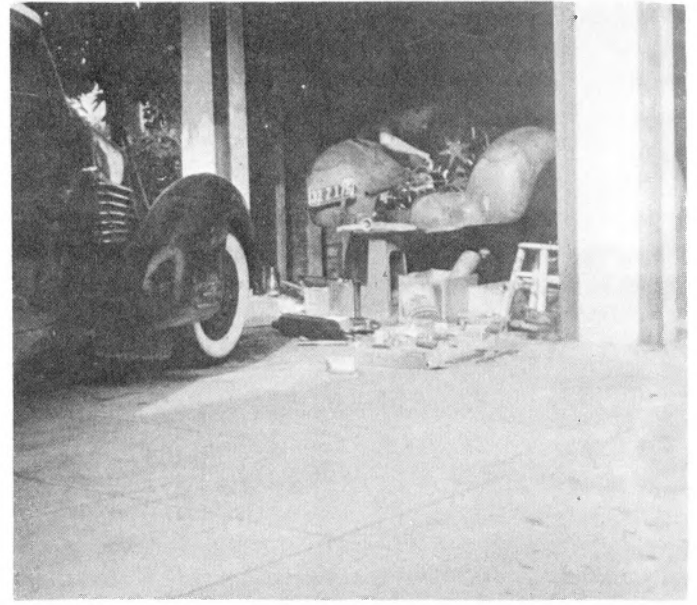
"Just a note of enlightenment concerning the articles on page 10 and 11 of the January Newsletter Mr. Sellers states in his article about the Cord Berline that there is a plate located on the lower left side of the body which reads "Custom Built Cord". This plate is standard on all 132 inch wheelbase Cords whether they are Custom Beverly or Berline. I also own a 1937 Custom Beverly sedan which is almost completely restored Mr. Sellers' car is indeed a fabulous find and a rare Machine.

Regarding the pictures sent in by Bill Hamlin of the Custom Cord Phaeton, this car belonged to Lee Richardson, who is a good friend of mine here in Pheonix, and was originally built for Barbara Stanwyck and also had the outside mounted spare as did the Tom Mix car. Mr. Richardson did the entire restoration as well as the custom hardtop and bought the car from the estate of Barbara Stanwyck. He is currently joining the Club and will send you additional pictures and an entire history of the vehicle. I believe he also has information as to the last registered owner of the car. I trust this will be of interest to our members." (B. H.)

Below is the lengthy comment of Lee Richardson who did the modifications in several separate stages. Our thanks to all concerned for the clarification and data on this special Cord.

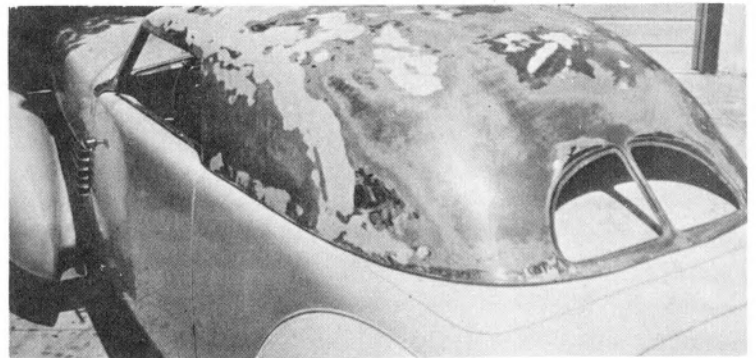
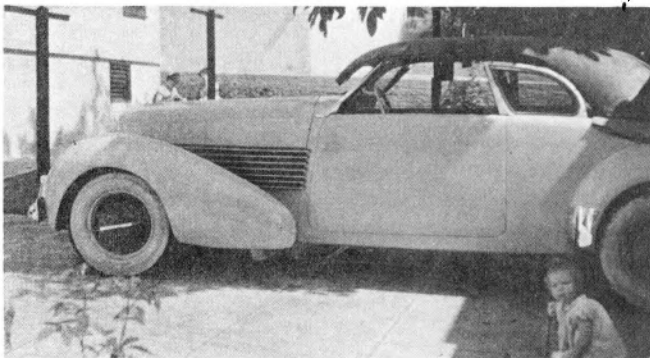


"I am sending you this information in the hope that it will clear up any confusion concerning the customized Cord phaeton pictured in the last few Newsletters. I have been an avid Cord enthusiast since the early thirties when I owned an L-29 Cabriolet, from 1934 until 1940, and drove that car well over 100,000 miles. The following resume is as accurate as I can recall from my records as to the history of the Cord, as I owned the car from 1944 to 1958. The Cord was originally built for actress Barbara Stanwyck and was a 1937 Model 812 Phaeton unsupercharged, Serial No. 1827H, Engine No. FB2447. The car was originally equipped with an outside spare tire mounted identical to the Tom Mix car. The original color was light blue with blue leather interior and steering wheel. I am enclosing several photographs of the restoration during its various stages.



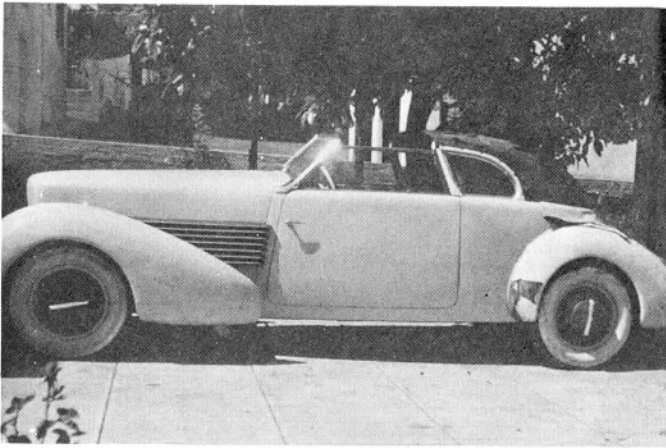
I purchased the Cord on July 4, 1944, one day before O. P. A. price ceilings went into effect. Purchase price was \$400.00. When I registered the car the following day, I was asked what I paid for it as the clerk was curious, not that anything could be done if I had paid over the ceiling price. The clerk volunteered the ceiling price on this model Cord as being around \$ 1,295.00 which was comparable to a Cadillac convertible of that year. I considered myself very fortunate as the Cord was in running condition even after sitting out in the weather for several years. I spent at least three years restoring it and then got the idea to build a removable hard top.

I went to a wrecking yard on SanFernando Road in Glendale, and had the top of a Beverly sedan cut off with a torch. The welder was drunk and careless and set fire to the headliner. I also had him cut out the rear window of a Dodge which I estimated would blend in with the contour of the Cord



top if the window was mounted upside down. The Dodge window was not fitted until several years later when I had another brainstorm to install transparent plexiglass sections in the roof over the front seat.

A very good friend of mine, Harold Bjorklund of Bjorklund Plastics, San Bernardino, Calif. whom I had met in 1934 when we each owned L-29 Cords, was in the plastics business. I interested him in the project, and he took some surplus canopies from WWII bombers and formed them over the Cord top to give them the same contour. We then cut the openings in the top with hack saw blades and files. Then the plexiglass sections were trimmed to match the openings and held in place with neoprene extrusions which were purchased from the Greyhound Bus Company. It was the same extrusion they used to mount the side windows in their buses.



At this time I fitted the Dodge rear window into the top in order to provide better visibility. Also to give better visibility I decided to fit the original Cord phaeton rear quarter windows into the top. Incidentally, the original sedan top had to have a section about 9" - 10" wide removed in order to shorten it. It was then that I discovered how much lead was used to fill in the seams ! As this was in the "old days" before it was the fad to restore old cars (100% original), I took many liberties to modify the Cord both mechanically and stylewise. As I preferred the clean "fastback" look, I removed the outside spare and hardware and gave it to my friend Ray Nelson who was restoring a Cord for another friend of mine , Len Roos. At that time I preferred the appearance of the 1941 Cadillac bumpers which I installed. I then had it upholstered in top grain cow hide. The dash was also covered with the same leather. The ribbed wheel covers were made for me by another friend of mine, George Duval, who worked for a metal spinning and plating company in Hollywood.

The original paint was removed down to the metal and countless coats of Duco laquer were applied. The color was a Pontiac "taffytan". The grille louvres and top were painted a contrasting metallic brown. The license plate light and center tail light wer pirated from a Nash of unknown year and model. Due to the spare tire and wheel mounting , the tail lights were moved out into the body section. This had evidently been done at the factory as the trunk lid openings had been welded up. (This was discovered when the paint was removed.) The license plate bracket and light were mounted on the left rear fender. These together with the original folding top frame were given to another Cord owner. I never throw anything away!

About 1954 the Cord was repainted white. The cowl vents were welded up and leaded in. Also the convertible top cover was welded and leaded in. The door handles were removed and the openings welded up. The doors were opened by reaching inside as I had abandoned the use of the removable top. A tonneau cover was made. The transparent sections had deteriorated to such an extent that I finally shaved off the neoprene extrusion and fibreglassed the plexiglass section in place and painted the top. I had tried several time s to sell the Cord and finally in 1958 I had an opportunity to fulfill a desire to acquire a Porsche Coupe by parting with my Cord. A couple of fellows came in my plant one day and inquired about the Cord. I demonstrated it to them and it was sold to, I think, a Mr. Woods for \$ 1300.00. After all, I had owned it for 14 years and enjoyed every bit of it.

Some time later I realized my mistake and tried to locate the Cord and found that it had been purchased by Irving Tushinsky. I was unable to pay his price and later I found that it had been sold to a very fine Greek who owned a hamburger stand in Van Nuys called the "Momboburger". In 1963 he wanted \$ 2,500.00 for it and again I couldn't afford to buy it. Then in 1966 I had a search made for the owner and was informed by the California Motor Vehicle Department that it was then owned by Mr. Webster B. Whitelaw, 1889 Channel Street, Ventura, California. I wrote to him in regard to the purchase of the Cord and never received an answer. At the present time I own a 1937 supercharged Model 812 Cord Sportsman." (L. R. R.) Below are "before and after" photos of the car.

