

EARLY AUTOS

Dick Goldsmith

As early as 1895 "Horseless Carriages" were making an appearance on the American scene. It was in the very early 1900's that Waupaca's first garage was founded by A. M. Hanson where the A. M. Hanson machine shop now stands. The first cars sold by Mr. Hanson were the old Ramblers which were made in Kenosha, Wisconsin by what is now the Nash Automobile Company.

It is believed the first owner of one of these cars in Waupaca was a Mr. Slater. Another early owner was Dr. P. J. Christofferson

The first gas pump in Waupaca was at a small brick building near A. M. Hanson's garage. This building was recently torn down. Gas sold for 16 or 17 cents a gallon and oil was 8 cents a quart.

By 1910 the number of cars on the market was staggering-- 580 had been registered. A book put out by the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers of America listed 44 companies with 178 models. The price range was from \$600 for a car with 10 horse power and 1 cylinder, to a huge metal monster with 72 horse power and 6 cylinders for \$7500.

The old cars used generous amounts of gas and large volumes of oil, and the small hard tires wore out frequently. An old record kept by a grocery man in South Dakota listed in 1515 miles traveled he used 111 gallons of gas, 7 gallons of oil, and 22 dry cells.

On April 26, 1913 an Auto Show was held at A. M. Hanson's garage. Cadillac, Reo, Overland, Hupmobile, Krit, Oakland, Rambler Buick, Maxwell, Ford, and Studebaker were all represented. The show made quite a stir.

What roads there were in those days were very poor in general. The person who could get to Chicago from Waupaca in 36 hours had to be lucky, persevering and a good mechanic, in that order. P. J. Christofferson made a trip to Chicago from Waupaca in 24 hours and got a lot of publicity for it, as a trip that far in such a short time was almost unheard of in those days.