



MOTOR TRANSPORT MUSEUM NEWS

Volume XVII No. 3

31949 Highway 94, Campo, CA, 91906 - Ph. (619) 478-2492

Fall 2015

Web Site: www.motortransportmuseum.org ♦ E-mail: motortransportmuseum@gmail.com

This quarter's feature story is about Gotfredson tucks, a brand that almost no one has heard about but which enjoyed some success in the 1920s. MTM is helping two great grandsons of the founder, Benjamin Gotfredson to restore one of the Company's 1926 farm trucks. MTM also received an outstanding donation of a fully restored 1949 Ford COE from the estate of Gill Buxton. This truck will be an outstanding addition to our collection.

The Gotfredson Truck By Bryan Butler



Lawrence and Benjamin's parents emigrated from Langeland, Denmark to North America in 1848 who became pioneer settlers of New Denmark Township, Wisconsin. The brothers engaged in business under the name of Gotfredson Brothers, opening a hardware and implement store in Cooperstown, Wisconsin during 1878 which expanded to a second store in Seymour, two year later. Buggies were added to the mix of agricultural implements and hardware and in the spring of 1888 they opened up a third Green Bay branch.

Gotfredson Brothers' wholesale operations were eventually sold off to the Wisconsin Hardware Company in September 15, 1904. The Gotfredson brothers retained all of their Wisconsin retail operations which for many years involved the buying and selling horses, Benjamin having charge of the retail department of the store and the horse business.

Benjamin married the daughter of a Detroit, Michigan stable and livery operator named Jacob Kolb in 1904 and became a partner in his new father-in-law's livery and stables (Kolb-Gotfredson Horse Co.) a few months later. During that same year (1905) the Gotfredsons constructed a 5,390 sq. ft. brick flagship hardware store in downtown Green Bay that included all of the latest conveniences; elevators, central heating, electric lights and telephone.

At the beginning of 1909 the Gotfredsons branched out into retail automobile sales. Their automobile sales experiment was short-lived and the Gotfredsons' sold their retail automobile

operations to Zimmer & Malchow. Shortly thereafter they sold off their retail hardware business to two employees. Shortly thereafter they sold off their retail hardware business to two employees and started the American Automobile Trimming Co. in Detroit, which was formed by the Gotfredson Brothers and a group of investors all associated with the Kolb-Gotfredson Horse Co.

The American Auto Trimming Co. was a successful company that painted and trimmed the majority of Ford Model T and Studebaker bodies produced by coach builders during the teens and early twenties. Although personally unfamiliar with the automobile body and trimming business, the Gotfredsons hired experienced men to oversee American Auto Trimming's operations. B. M. Diver, a former body engineer and designer with the New Haven Carriage Co., Sievers & Erdman, the Columbus Buggy Co. and Woods Motor Vehicle Co., served as superintendents.

With American Auto Trimming doing well, Benjamin Gotfredson found time for other business opportunities. In January 1918, as a share holder and member of the board, he was elected President of the Saxon Motor Car Co. replacing Harry W. Ford. Gotfredson was called to the presidency when the life of the company was threatened as the result of a series of misfortunes a few years earlier.

The company could not meet its current obligations, a condition produced by the destruction of its main plant, mismanagement and a large plant expansion to meet war conditions. Gotfredson reorganized Saxon by the end of 1919 bringing it safely back into production then resigned as President to concentrate on his heavily expanding American Auto Trimming Co.

The success of American Auto Trimming created problems for the firm due to their having to collect and deliver thousands of automobile bodies on a weekly basis. Increasingly larger numbers of trucks became involved in collecting the bodies 'in-the-white' from the bodybuilders, transporting them to American Auto Trimming's plant, then returning them for mounting on finished chassis at the automobile manufacturers' assembly plant.

The firm's success resulted in a need for a substantial number of new trucks for its Canadian operations. New trucks were very expensive in Canada with the high import duty, so they

employed a very good master mechanic who had no problem in assembling half a dozen or so trucks to meet the company's needs. He just went across the river to Detroit and picked up his engines from Hinkley, a few axles from Timken, and whatever else he needed. The firm trucks were assembled in a disused portion of American Auto Trimming's plant in Walkerville.



Gotfredson truck built specifically to transport auto bodies to and from the American Auto Trimming plant in Canada.

In 1920 Benjamin Gotfredson and Frank J. Joyce, secretary and treasurer of the American Auto Trimming Co., formed the Gotfredson-Joyce Corp., Ltd., to manufacture trucks. They took over the Gramm plant at Walkerville and with a capitol of \$100,000 started production of 2 ½ -ton trucks, for Canadian domestic and export trade.

The first batch of 2 ½ ton trucks called the G & J, were constructed in the early summer of 1920 with Benjamin's son Robert B. Gotfredson placed in charge as president. Placed on the market in 1921 was a 3½-ton model. This model had a four-cylinder Hinkley engine, worm-drive Timken-Detroit axle, Brown-Lipe sliding gear, Timken roller bearings and nickel steel gears throughout, Spicer propeller shafts and other standard fittings. Placed on the market shortly after was a 5-ton model as well as a 1-ton light truck.

In the Fall of 1922 Frank H. Joyce parted ways with the Gotfredson Brothers, simultaneously 'retiring' from the American and Canadian branches of American Auto Trimming and the Gotfredson-Joyce Corp. Ltd. In collaboration with his son William A. Joyce and Hugh Chalmers, the founder of the Chalmers Motor Co., Joyce formed an auto finishing firm positioned to compete directly against his former partners. Christened the Joyce Manufacturing Co. after its president, the new enterprise acquired space in a disused Fisher Body plant.

The Gotfredson Truck Corp. Ltd.'s chief engineer, N.S. Reed, left and Nelson R. Brownier replaced him. While he had worked at the Paige-Detroit Motor Car Company before joining Gotfredson, and had some familiarity with trucks, he didn't know much about designing them. Not only was he made chief engineer, but he was also told that he had to design a new 5-ton Gotfredson in a matter of weeks so it could be shipped to England for the war.

Brownier delivered the vehicle just in time for its passage to Great Britain aboard the USS George Washington which sailed from Montreal with Gotfredson's very first RHD (right hand drive) Gotfredson export model. At the time the Gotfredson Truck Corp. Ltd. offered a truck for everyone with 9 distinct

models with capacities ranging between ¾- to 6-tons, priced between \$1,700 and \$5,000.

One of Brownier's contributions to the Gotfredson truck was the introduction of an external contracting drum brake placed directly on the final drive worm-shaft at the rear axle in lieu of the traditional transmission brake commonly used at the time. At that time air brakes had yet to be adapted for motor trucks. Without air or vacuum assistance, the only braking effort you got was what the driver could develop with his foot, so applying the brakes took a lot of effort and it was tiring for drivers.

The Timken-Detroit Axle Co., Gotfredson's supplier, was not initially happy with Brownier's system, fearing the increased demand and fatigue it placed on its components. However its displeasure was short-lived as the setup worked so well that customers began to specify it on other makes of trucks.

Two factors distinguished Gotfredson trucks from the competition, the most obvious being its distinctive cast aluminum radiator. Cast in four parts, Gotfredson's signature logo appeared at the top over a red surround, an expensive radiator to produce. Gotfredson frame rails were constructed using nickel steel ship channel (structural steel used in ship-building) instead of the pressed-steel units found on the competition.

Canadian production proved so successful that the firm decided to produce trucks in the United States as well. They also had factory branches in London, England and Sydney, Australia. In the United States Gotfredson established factory branches in Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and Los Angeles.

By 1924 most of the country's production automobile manufacturers and production body builders had begun to paint and trim their vehicles in-house and Gotfredson's painting and trimming business began to suffer. The demand for production bodies remained strong however, so Gotfredson purchased the former Harroun Motors Corporation factory, located 20 miles west of Detroit in Wayne, Michigan and after the construction of a 40,000 sq. ft addition, commenced production of coachwork for Paige automobiles.

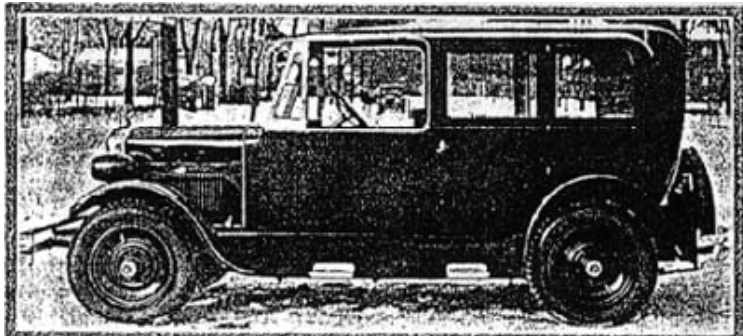
Gotfredson installed C.S. Briggs, the former president of the Briggs-Detroit Co. (manufactured automobiles from 1912-1917), as plant manager and organized a new firm, Gotfredson Body Corp., to handle its Wayne, Michigan operations.

In 1924 20-year-old Gordon Buehrig, one of the Classic-era's best-known automobile designers, began his automotive career as a body draftsman at the Gotfredson Body Corp.'s Wayne, Michigan plant, serving under Walter L. Jones, Gotfredson's chief body engineer. During his 2 years with the firm he assisted Jones with shoring up closed body designs for Wills Ste. Claire, Jewett, Paige-Detroit and Peerless. It's known that Gotfredson supplied the coachwork for the 1926 Wills Sainte Claire Gray Goose Traveler and 1924-25 Jewett 6 Brougham.

Although Gotfredson trucks never caught on in the US as well as they had in Canada, production at the Detroit branch slowly increased during 1925 and 1926 looked to be a banner year with orders on the books for a number of Detroit-based companies such as Detroit Edison Co., Michigan Bell

Telephone Co., Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Michigan, Detroit Taxicab & Transfer Co., United Fuel & Supply Co., and Film Truck Service Co.

Gotfredson's continued their business ventures including the manufacturing of busses, taxi cabs and auto bodies at its Walkerville, Ontario plant starting in late 1924. Brownier was placed in charge of the vehicle's engineering and a fair number of Canadian-produced taxicabs were constructed.



Gotfredson's Canadian-produced taxicab. 1924-1929

The Gotfredson bus chassis came about in 1925 in response to the conversion of the Detroit Street Railway's rolling stock from streetcars into buses. Gotfredson hoped to gain a contract and set Brownier on designing two purpose-built drop-framed chassis, a tandem axle for high-capacity double-decker coachwork, and a single axle for conventional use. Although the Detroit Street Railway ended up purchasing bus chassis from Philadelphia's Safeway Six-Wheel Co., Gotfredson bus chassis proved popular in Canada and were manufactured in small numbers at Gotfredson Corp. Ltd.'s Walkerville assembly plant. Most attractive were the parlor coaches built for a handful of Canadian /American operators.



A Gotfredson parlor coach built for the "St. Clair Country Club"

Gotfredson built fire engine chassis were supplied to Woodstock, Ontario's Bickle Fire Engines Ltd. who offered them as a low-cost alternative to their premium Ahrens-Fox sourced chassis from 1925-1929. In 1927 the city of Toronto's Fire Dept. purchased 5 Gotfredson-Bickle triple combination pumpers, the largest single order of Gotfredson-Bickle apparatus known to have been delivered.

Things were so bad that back in July of 1927, property owned by Gotfredson's Canadian Corporations were put up as



Gotfredson-Bickle triple combination pumper, the largest single order of Gotfredson-Bickle apparatus known to have been delivered to the city of Toronto, Canada in 1927

collateral for loans and/or credit that was extended to the U.S. Corporation. To make matters worse profits from Gotfredson's Canadian operations were being funneled into the bank accounts of his US-based operations to keep it afloat.

Benjamin Gotfredson suffered the greatest losses, and despite the influx of cash and credit his Detroit-based truck operations failed to turn a profit and within the year, his house of cards came crashing around him. Gotfredson's Canadian operations were declared bankrupt in 1929. However, the bankruptcy proceedings didn't prevent Gotfredson's son from forming a new truck manufacturing outfit whose organization was announced in the April 23, 1929.

Owned by the Kolb-Gotfredson Realty Co., a firm unaffected by the bankruptcy, the former Kolb-Gotfredson Horse Co. facility served as the home of the Robert Gotfredson Truck Corp. which was founded shortly after his father's firm entered into bankruptcy. The Robert Gotfredson Truck Corp. has the distinction of being one of the first American truck manufacturers to offer a Cummins Diesel engine as standard equipment.

Shortly after he organized his truck manufacturing concern Robert B. Gotfredson purchased the assets of a small Toledo, Ohio freight carrier named Triangle Freight Forwarding Co. When the firm's business tanked during the early Depression it filed for bankruptcy and Robert Gotfredson personally purchased its assets in a bid to protect his investment, and in the process became the owner of its rolling stock and its Chicago, Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit and Toledo terminals. He relocated its main office from Toledo to Detroit and reorganized the firm as Transamerican Freight Lines Inc., slowly building up the firm until it became the 11th largest freight operator in the country, with divisions devoted to hauling steel, perishable goods and LTL (less-than-truckload) freight.

Not surprisingly Transamerican utilized large numbers of Cummins-equipped Gotfredson trucks during its very early years, later turning to conventional and COE units built by Mack, GMC, Ford, International, Kenworth, Diamond-Reo, and White. Its steel hauling division employed heavy duty conventional tractors supplied by Henderson, Sterling, Autocar, Diamond-T, Mack and International.

In 1973 the Gotfredsons sold Transamerican to a group of investors formally associated with Interstate Motor Freight. Heavily in debt at the time, the new management made many attempts to turn it around, but couldn't overcome the long-lasting effects of the Arab Oil Embargo of 1976 and went bankrupt in 1976. The bulk of its assets were purchased at auction by Campbell "66" Express of Springfield, Missouri which went out of business in 1986.

Both Winross and First Gear made small scale replicas of Transamerican Freight Lines rigs, and both are highly prized by collectors today.

For more information and to see this articles source, go to: www.CoachBuilt.Com

The 1926 Gotfredson Model 20B Truck Restoration

By Paul and David Gotfredson

It is estimated that fewer than 20 restored or semi-restored Gotfredson trucks currently exist. Several restored Gotfredson Bickel fire engines also remain.

A 1926 Gotfredson Model 20B farm truck currently is being restored at the Motor Transport Museum in Campo. The one-ton flatbed truck has a 4-cylinder, 266 cubic inch Buda WTU engine at 22.5 horsepower. Top speed at time of production was 35 MPH. It also features a 3-speed Brown & Lipe transmission, Clark rear axle and Zenith carburetor.

Benjamin Gotfredson is the great grandfather Paul and David Gotfredson, the current owners of the Model 20B truck being restored in Campo. Campo's Gotfredson truck was purchased in the mid-1970s from an unknown owner in Wisconsin by the Sum family of Illinois. It was driven from Wisconsin to Calumet City near Chicago. It was then towed to Carlyle, Illinois where it was stored in a garage for 40 years.



Paul and David Gotfredson, whose great grandfather was Benjamin Gotfredson and their 1926 model 20B Gotfredson truck in Illinois prior to transport to Campo.

The farm truck had not been started for three decades when Paul and David Gotfredson first viewed the vehicle in October 2014. The brothers traveled to Illinois again in July 2015 and arranged for the vehicle's transport to Campo.

The Gotfredson truck currently starts up and drives. It is being restored with the assistance of the Motor Transport Museum. The Gotfredson brothers are doing most of the restoration work themselves and they are looking forward to displaying the vehicle in parades and local antique vehicle shows.

A news documentary video about the restoration can be viewed on the web at this link: [Channel 8 News](#)

The 1949 Ford COE By Carl Calvert



Andy Andrews, Brian Elmore and John Macmonagle getting ready to unload the Ford COE

This 1949 Ford Cab-Over-Engine (COE) truck was originally purchased by the Palomar Observatory to maintain the roads around Palomar Mountain area. The truck was built with a Marmon Herrington All-Wheel-Drive System by Ford to keep the winter roads open. Gill Buxton purchased the truck in 1998 and performed a complete body-off restoration in his shops to bring back the truck back to its original new condition.

Gill also owned the Santee Buxton Manufacturing Company and had numerous contacts and resources for the pristine restoration that was completed in 2001. After Gil passed away in 2012, the family donated the truck to the Motor Transport Museum who continues to maintain and take the truck to various shows and events.

Ford began building the COE design in 1937 for the military and public sales began in 1938. In 1939 the trucks were equipped with hydraulic brakes and a new 95 horsepower engine. In 1940 the horsepower was increased to 100 hp. In 1945 the COE design was discontinued and in 1946 the design was reintroduced and these trucks continued to be very popular.

In July 2015 Brian Elmore transported the truck to Campo

where it can be seen today. Andy Andrews, John Macmonagle, and Brian unloaded the truck for its move inside the building. The MTM would like to thank the Buxton estate for its generosity in donating this outstanding truck to our collection.

Recent Donations

- **Don Hawley** has donated an automotive car hoist.
- **Tim McLaughlan** donated A Ford 292 Motor and Transmission
- **Reliable Pipe & Supply** donated an International Crane
- **Paula Mendell** donated a 2001 Infinity Car
- **Buxton Family** has donated 1949 Ford Dump Truck, a Parts Washer, Pressure Washer, Generator & other parts
- **Janice Nelson** has donated a 1920 Autocar Dump Truck from the Nelson/Sloan Sand Company
- **Steve LePage** has donated a 1998 Chevrolet Lumina
- **Chuck Koether** has donated a Bridgeport Mill, Model 3180
- **Alan Gobel** has donated (4) 20 x 60' Tarps, (2) Military Shade Nets, & 'A' Frame
- **Al Stanbaugh** has donated Auto Repair Manuals
- **Dan Shea** has donated Model T Ford Parts
- **Ross Brock** has donated an Operators Manual for Superior Diesel Engine
- **Tom Miller** has donated A 2000 Ford Expedition
- **Rick Gores** has donated (2) Portable Welders on trailers
- **Neil Hicks** has donated 3 Dozen Auto Light Bulbs
- **Sandra Suter** has donated a 1998 Chev Malibu
- **John Lewis** has donated Two 2:25 x 75 x 16 Tires, Tube & Mounting for Tractor

Sid & Jean Fox gave A Cash Donation of \$100, **Jim Estes** gave A Cash Donation of \$100 and **Bill Leuer** gave a \$2,500 Cash Donation.

The MTM thanks these donors for their generosity in helping the Museum attain its goals.



1920 Autocar Dump Truck donated by Janice Nelson from the Nelson/Sloan Sand Company

New Members

Dave Slater of San Diego has upgraded his General membership in the Motor Transport Museum to a Life time membership since publication of our last newsletter. Also,

David Parrish of San Diego has enrolled as a new Life member. Thank you for your support of the Museum.

In addition, **Bob Cyman** of Jamul, CA, **Jesse Morphew** of San Diego, **Rex Peters** of Campo, **Larry Grange** of Campo, **Peter Stankowsk** of San Diego, and **Terry Cook** of Lakeside, CA have enrolled as new General members. We welcome these new members to our Museum and thank you for your support.

Upcoming Events

The Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum will hold its fall Antique Engine & Tractor Show at its facility in Vista, CA on the weekends of October 17th-18th and 24th-25th. Exhibits and activities include Antique Equipment & Tractor Parade, Grist Mill, Weaving & Spinning, Blacksmithing, Wheelwright Demo, School of Times Past, Wagon Rides & Train Rides Arts & Crafts, and Food Booths. For more information visit <http://agsem.com/events.php>.

The Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) will hold its fall meet on October 7 thru 10 at Hershey, PA. This is one of the largest antique automobile shows and flea markets in the United States with over 9,000 flea market spaces, 1000 car corral spaces and approximately 1500 show cars. For more information visit aaca.org

Hours of Operation

The Museum facility at 31949 Highway 94 in Campo, CA is open to the public every Saturday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Admission is free, donations are accepted.

Wednesdays and Fridays are work days and members are working on projects. Visitors are welcome to come in if the gate is open.

Get Your Newsletter by email

You can donate towards MTM's cause without spending a dime by simply receiving these quarterly issues of the Motor Transport Museum News by e-mail. This way MTM can save mailing costs and use the savings towards operating expenses. You will get an instantaneous PDF copy of the newsletter without the Museum spending money on printing and postage. Email us at motortransportmuseum@gmail.com and subscribe.

Remember- All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.

- Arthur Schopenhauer

MTM Officers and Directors

The officers and directors of the Motor Transport Museum are as follows:

Officers: Greg Long, President
Bill Fields, Vice President
John Thomas, Secretary
Carl E. Calvert, Chief Financial Officer

Directors: Jim Jensen,, Bill Jellyman,
John Thomas, Sherman George, Carl Calvert, Bryan Butler,
Bill Fields, Mike Anderson and Mark Scudder.



Motor Transport Museum

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New Renewal

Name _____ Spouse _____
Street Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ E-Mail _____

General Membership	1Yr \$20 _____	2Yr \$40 _____	3Yr \$60 _____
General - International Membership (Non USA Mailing Address)			1Yr \$25 _____
Corporate Membership			1Yr \$75 _____
Life Membership			\$250 _____
Endowing Life Membership			\$1000 _____
Associate Membership - Non Profit organization			1Yr \$35 _____
Jounior Membership - Children under 18 (non-voting)			1Yr \$1 _____
Student Membership - Full time students, 18 - 25			1Yr \$6 _____

I agree to comply strictly with the By Laws of the Motor Transport Museum; to conduct myself at all times in a manner which will support and promote the best interest of the Motor Transport Museum

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

MOTOR TRANSPORT MUSEUM
31949 HIGHWAY 94
CAMPO, CA 91906