

WHEELS of SUCCESS

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Tracing the Path of Auto Pioneers

Indiana's automotive landscape was ignited by innovation at the turn of the 20th century. Some of the most legendary manufacturers called the state home.

In 1919, Indiana housed 172 businesses that produced cars or automotive parts in 30-plus cities and towns.

We highlight a few of the manufacturers that made unforgettable contributions to the auto industry.

Marmon Company (Indianapolis)

Manufactures its first motor car (1902). The Marmon is branded "A Mechanical Masterpiece"

Ray Harroun wins the inaugural Indianapolis 500 (May 30, 1911) driving the Marmon Wasp. His average speed is 74.6 miles per hour. The vehicle features a revolutionary innovation: the rear-view mirror

Launches the Model 34 (1916). Made primarily of aluminum, it evolves into the fastest production car made in the United States

Produces 110,000-plus cars between 1903 and 1933



Marmon (then known as Nordyke and Marmon) initially gained fame as a leading producer of milling machinery. Pictured is the machine shop, circa 1890 (*Indiana Historical Society photo, M0592*).

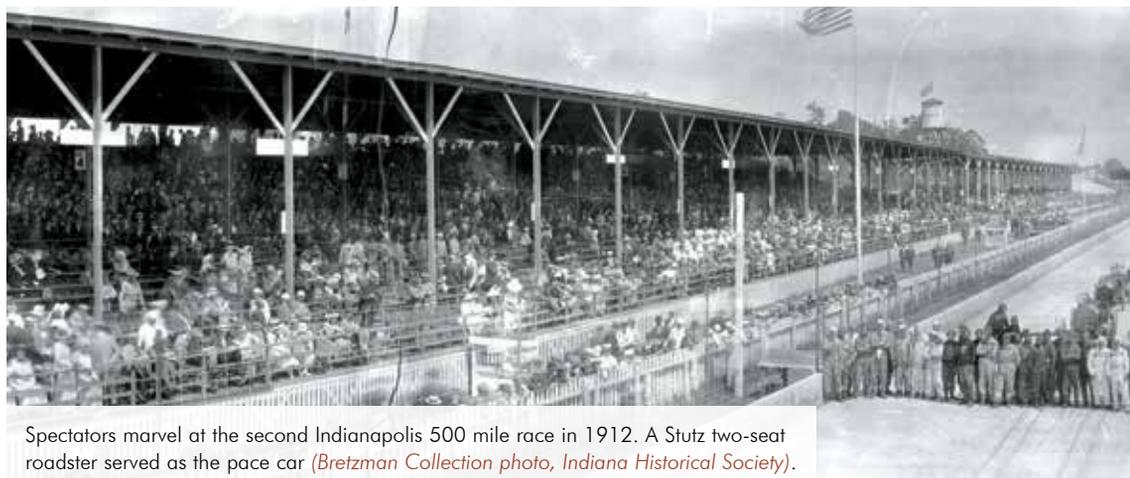
Stutz Motor Car Company of America (Indianapolis)

Production time for first car: five weeks (in preparation for the inaugural Indianapolis 500)

Stutz Bearcat speedster debuts in 1912. It features a low-slung chassis, large engine, two bucket seats, wooden spoke wheels and more. Approximate price: \$2,000

Stutz Series AA (1926) engine boasts a 92-horsepower, vertical eight-cylinder engine. Total cars sold: an estimated 3,692 to 5,000

Operations cease: 1937



Spectators marvel at the second Indianapolis 500 mile race in 1912. A Stutz two-seat roadster served as the pace car (*Bretzman Collection photo, Indiana Historical Society*).

Haynes International (Kokomo)

Founder Elwood Haynes invents (by most accounts) the first gasoline-powered automobile, dubbed the "Pioneer" (1894)

Forms a company, which produces high-end automobiles through the mid-1920s

Receives a patent for an alloy he creates (1907), which is used for applications such as cutlery, dental instruments and automobile spark plugs. He eventually names it the STELLITE® alloy

Launches Haynes International, then known as Haynes Stellite Works (1912)

Today, the company is one of the world's largest developers, manufacturers and distributors of high-performance nickel- and cobalt-based alloys for use in high-temperature and corrosion applications. Industries served include aerospace, power generation, chemical processing, pharmaceuticals and more



The first test drive of the Pioneer, invented by Elwood Haynes, was on July 4, 1894. Towed by a horse and buggy, it moved at approximately six to seven miles per hour (*Indiana Historical Society photo*).



The Studebakers lived by the motto, "Always give more than you promise" (*Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society*).

Studebaker Corporation (South Bend)

Launched as a blacksmith business (1852); eventually becomes the world's largest wagon maker

Abraham Lincoln rides in a barouche (one of several presidential carriages Studebaker designed) en route to his fateful evening at Ford's Theatre

Over half of the Studebaker plant is destroyed by a fire (1872)

Debuts electric car (1902) and gasoline-powered car (1904). No other manufacturer before it has successfully made the transition from horse-drawn to gasoline-powered vehicles

Operations cease: South Bend plant (1963)





J.J. Cole, president of the Cole Motor Car Company, proudly shows off a Series Eight Cole roadster (*Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society*).

Cole Motor Car Company (Indianapolis)

Years of operation: 1908 to 1925

Founded by former carriage maker Joseph J. Cole

Known for its quality, luxury cars

Launches the Cole Eight (1915), making it the second manufacturer after Cadillac to offer a V-8 engine

Introduces the Cole-Springfield Toursedan (1917), which maximizes comfort and convenience by providing a closed car in the winter and an open touring car in the summer

Duesenberg automobiles exuded wealth and sophistication (*Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society*).



Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg (Auburn, Indianapolis, Connersville)

Auburn Automobile Company (AAC) is founded (1900)

Errett Lobban Cord is hired as vice president and general manager (1924)

Cord purchases a facility in Connersville (1927)

Among his contributions to the industry are the Cord L-29 (the first successful mass-production front-wheel drive automobile in the United States) and the renowned luxury Duesenberg Model J (1928).

Auburn and Duesenberg cease operations: 1936

Data was gathered from a variety of sources, including the Indiana Historical Society, The History Museum, Indy Auto Blog, Cruise-IN.com and The Marmon Club.