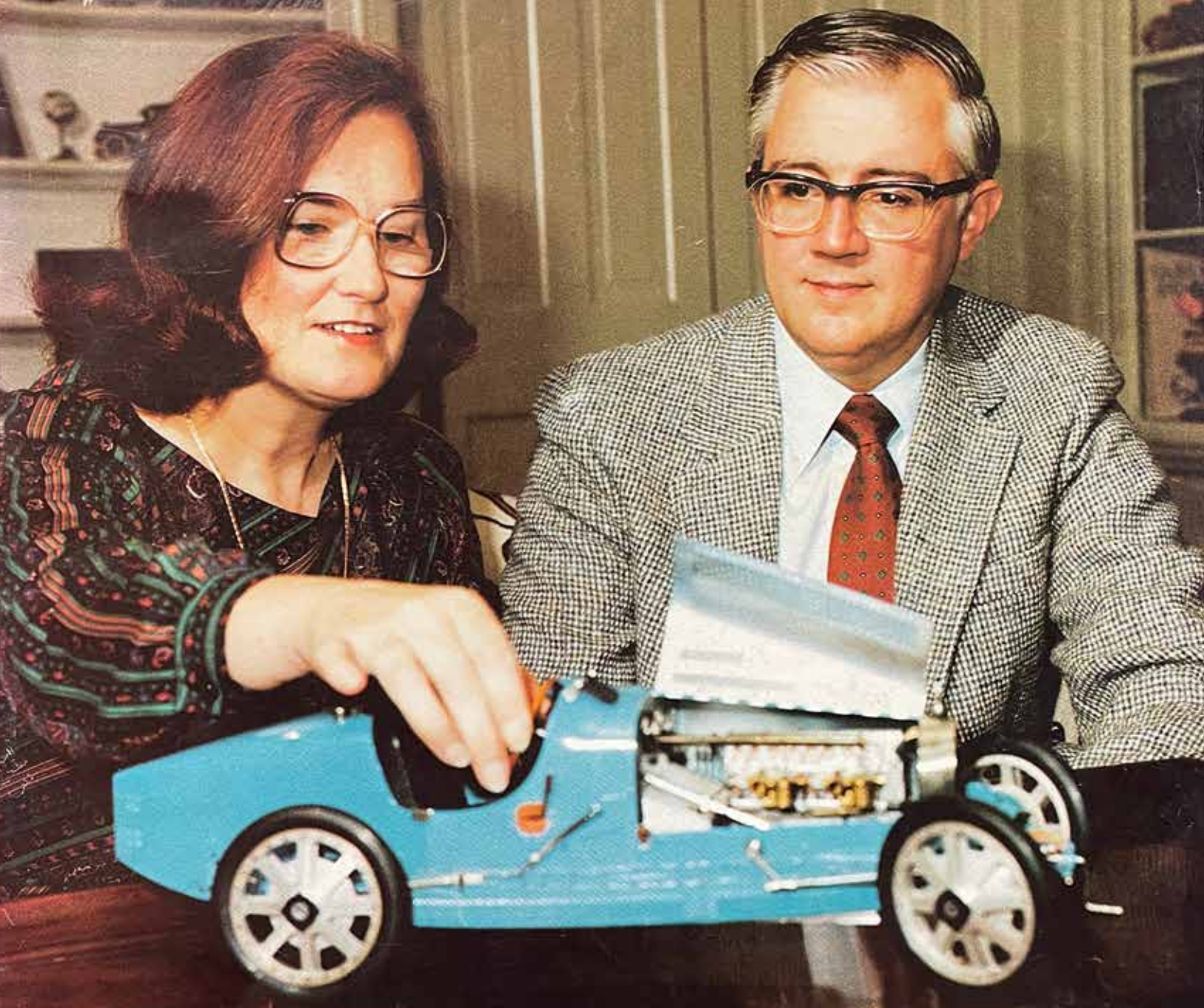


# ANTIQUe TOY WORLD

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## BILL AND STEVIE WEART *Building a Collection*

REPRINT

Photography by Howard Andrews

# BILL AND STEVIE WEART *Building a Collection*



*Fig. 1. Stevie is holding a Harris cart made around 1895 which is unique because it is pulled by a goat.*



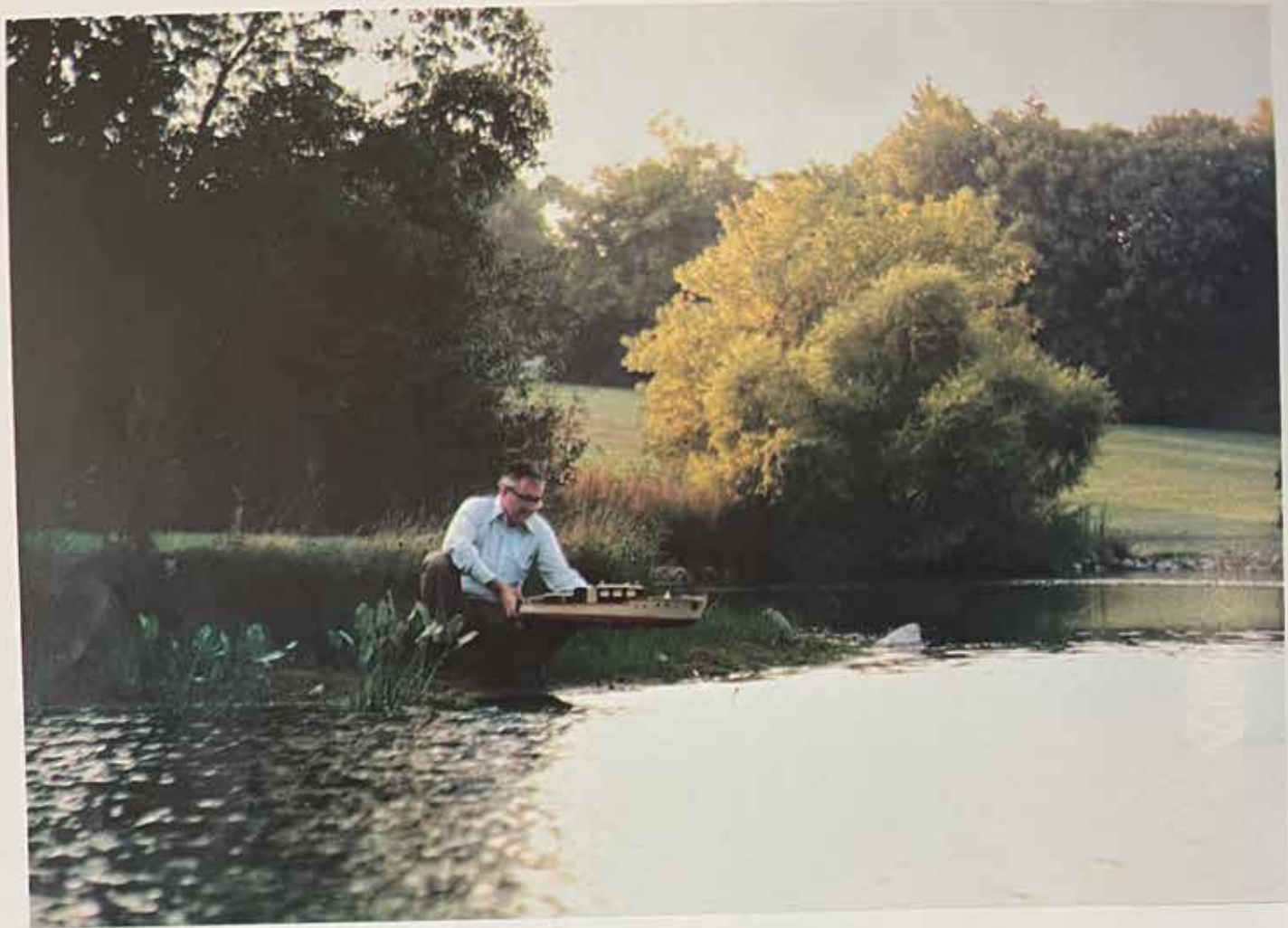
*Fig. 3. Ives made all four of these toys before the turn of the century. The legs of the horses move in a realistic manner as the toys are moved along the floor.*



*Fig. 2. Hubley made two versions of the Auto Express. Both are 9½ inches long and were made from about 1910 to 1928.*

*Fig. 4. Bill is standing next to shelves in the library displaying an Ives horse-drawn ladder wagon, a CIJ Alfa Romeo, and several mechanical banks. The diversity of the collection is apparent in this photograph.*



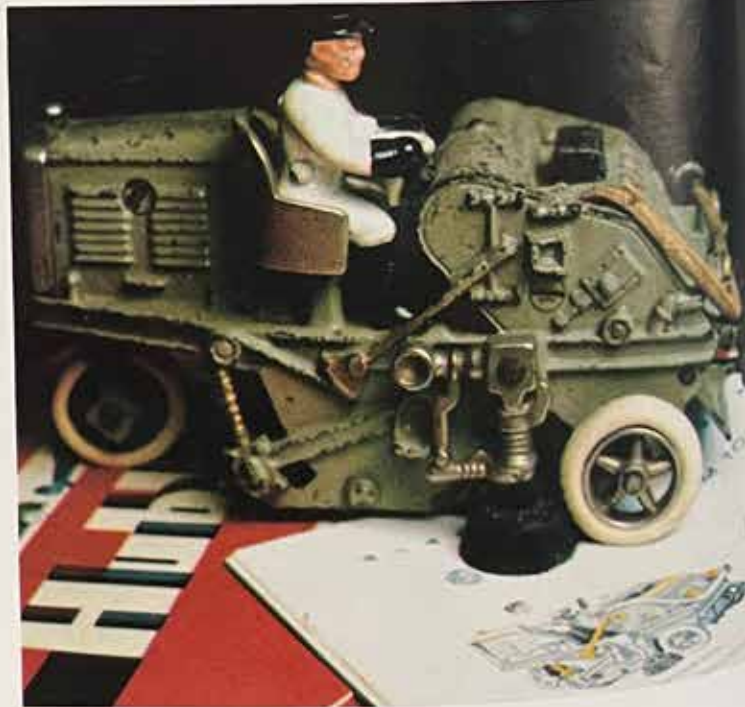


*Fig. 5. Evenings are the best time to sail toy boats undisturbed by youthful onlookers. Bill is launching his Orkin cabin cruiser in the lake just down the road from the house.*

*Fig. 6. Collectors are always in need of reference material. Stevie is researching a Hubley Elgin streetsweeper in an original Hubley catalog.*



*Fig. 7. Hubley's Elgin streetsweeper is perhaps the most complex of the automotive cast iron toys. It consists of numerous delicate cast pieces. The toy actually works, and a young sanitation engineer could spend hours cleaning an imaginary street.*



It would have been hard to imagine that day in January of 1972 when Stevie and I bought our first old toy that twelve years later we would own a collection consisting of over a thousand antique toys. For several years we had been stopping occasionally at antique shows and flea markets – not looking for anything in particular, but once in a while picking up some unusual piece from the past. That day, having nothing better to do, we drove to the Walled Lake Flea Market with another couple. It was a dreary place. During the '30s and '40s it had been the main building – probably a dance hall – at the since-torn-down Walled Lake Amusement Park. The vendors offered a variety of what could only be generously termed as antiques; most of it was pure junk.

In one of the dust-covered cases I discovered a gray tractor which I recognized as a fairly good likeness of an old Fordson. I don't know when I came to realize that it was made of cast iron, but it probably wasn't that day. Well, anyway, I bought it for ten dollars and took it home and placed it on the TV set in our den. We noticed after getting it home that it had once probably had a driver and that it had the initials "W & K" on the outside of the rear wheels.

I must admit that I have always had a weakness for toys. When I was a child of five, my father bought me a small Triang jeep and a Dinkytoy Oldsmobile, and those two pieces started me on my first toy collection. I played with those by the hour on the floor in my bedroom. By the time I was eighteen, I had a collection of four hundred. When I went to college, I packed them into a large cedar chest and didn't look at them again for years.

I remember pulling them out of a chest a week or so after buying the Fordson tractor and thinking that they were nice, but not nearly as intriguing as that old cast iron toy. Stevie felt the same way, so we packed them up again. Within a month, we found ourselves driving to every type of antiques and antique car flea market within a hundred miles. We didn't find much on those initial treks. As I think about it, I really wonder how we managed not to lose interest, because we would spend all day looking and come back with some inconsequential toy. But we kept looking, and eventually we started finding some toys. At first we wondered whether anybody else was looking for them, and at least for the first few months I think we believed we were the only ones.

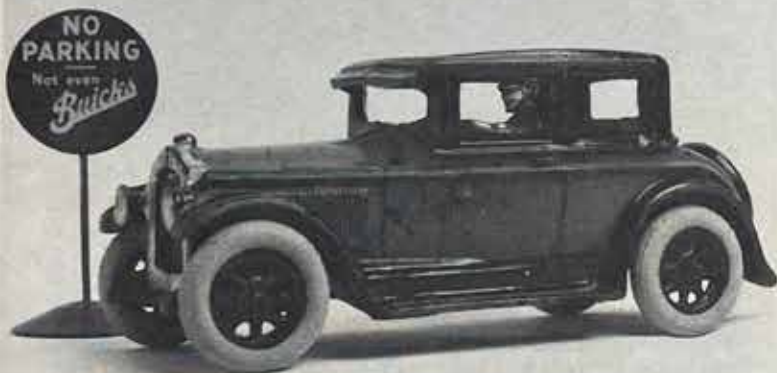
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## OUR FIRST YEAR AS COLLECTORS

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In April of 1972 we went on a weekend trip to Chicago with friends. The first thing we did once we checked into the hotel was to search the phone book for antique shop listings. Were we ever surprised to find a listing for Antique Toys Wanted. Hamilton Stern, a well-known and long-established Chicago collector, became the first antique toy collector we met, and I can recall the rows of horse-drawn toys lined up on the floor in his office. After talking to Ham for an hour or so, we realized that there were many antique toy collectors located all over the country.

A week or so later we met Bob Lyons set up at the Ann Arbor Antiques Market. Bob had a variety of cast iron automotive toys for sale, and I remember buying five or six and being thrilled at the opportunity to choose from several dozen pieces all in pretty good condition. A few months later we were invited to see Bob's outstanding collection and had the chance for the first time to see many of the better cast iron automotive toys made during the 1920s and '30s.



*Fig. 8. The Arcade Buick coupe is considered by automotive cast iron toy collectors to be rare and highly desirable.*

*Fig. 9. From about 1932 to 1941, Hubley produced an Ahrens-Fox pumper that today is considered one of the finest cast iron fire engines made. Bill and Stevie like them so much, they have a pair.*





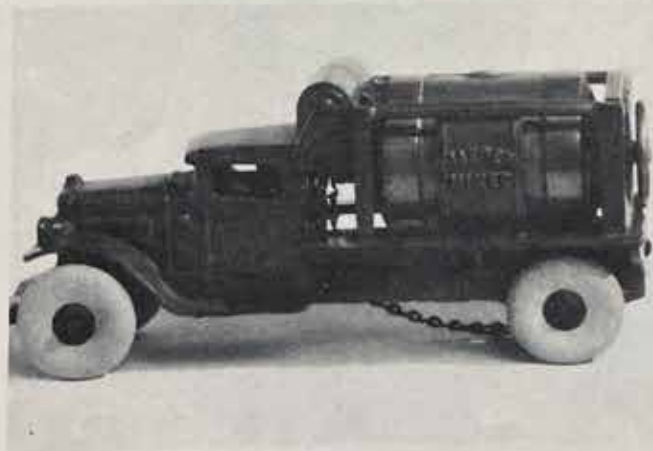
*Fig. 10. Four Arcade stake bodied International trucks offered during the 1930s.*



*Fig. 11. Vindex made this 8-inch 1928 Oldsmobile sedan for only a few years.*



*Fig. 12. This bulldozer was probably made by Arcade for some special event. It is a production toy painted yellow with "Caterpillar" stamped on the sides of the radiator shell and "Diesel" stamped on the front of it.*



*Fig. 13. Produced during the 1930s, these two Kenton cast iron trucks contain drivers that are so short that they can barely see over the hoods.*



*Fig. 14. What every child always wanted — but few got — a 12-inch long cast iron grasshopper whose legs move as he is pulled along and who utters a chirping sound — no doubt to scare off the family cat. Hubley made grasshoppers in several sizes.*

That was one of the key events during the first years of our collecting. More than anything else, it showed us what had been produced and convinced us that many beautiful pieces had been made. They had the shape and charisma of the vehicles of transportation of years gone by. This, more than anything else, made us decide that we should become antique toy collectors in earnest. However, our enthusiasm was dampened somewhat by a concern that it may no longer be possible to find toys like these. Those that existed may now be locked up in collections and unavailable. We certainly hadn't seen any like the ones in Bob's collection. So, where could they be found? Bob mentioned that he had been to several antique toy shows; there was one in Hartford, Connecticut, and one in California. He indicated that most of his toys had been found at auctions, antique shops, and flea markets.

A month or so later I was in New York City conducting an engineering evaluation trip for Ford Motor Company and, "lo and behold," found a listing in the yellow pages for an antique toy shop — Second Childhood — in Greenwich Village. I was there in an hour, and I couldn't believe my eyes. A whole shop full of antique toys for sale. Although by today's standards the prices were low, they sure seemed expensive then. I think I purchased a half-dozen small cast iron vehicles there. I recall that they were all in excellent condition.

After seven months of collecting, we still had never been to an antique toy show. Back in 1972 there just weren't that many, and, until we got our first copy of *Antique Toy World* in July of '72, we had no way of knowing where the shows

were. Today there are toy shows every weekend all over the U.S., and at times we feel we just don't have the time or the inclination to go to another. But in the early to mid-'70s, toy shows were few and months apart.

I'll never forget the excitement of going to our first toy show. It was also the first one in the Midwest of any consequence and was held at the Rolling Meadows Holiday Inn. Rolling Meadows is a few miles outside Chicago, and the Holiday Inn there was an ideal location for a 100-table show. Don Srenaski was the show promoter, and he did a tremendous job of bringing in antique toy collectors from all over the country. The unique room arrangement of the Holiday Inn, the 75-degree temperature, and the fact that this was the first toy show that many of the collectors had ever been to resulted in night-before room activity that lasted until 3:00 a.m. Some of the rooms (most opened out onto a central courtyard) were jammed with buyers, and thousands of dollars changed hands that evening. Stevie and I watched with amazement at some of the high rollers who would come into a room, price a bunch of great cast iron or tin toys, pull out a roll of hundred dollar bills, and buy the lot. Some terrific toys changed hands for what seemed to us novice collectors big sums of money, but what in retrospect was really not. We liked everything we saw, but were conservative in our purchases. I remember not sleeping that night. Never in my wildest dreams could I have envisioned so many wonderful old toys in one place — and all for sale.

Charlie Myers was there from Toledo, and we met for the first time. He brought several boxes with large cast iron



*Fig. 15. This Arcade gas station is the busiest place in town on Saturday evenings. A solitary Arcade Model A coupe waits to fuel up surrounded by seven Model T's. A boy and his dog stand watching.*

*Fig. 16. Known as a three-seat depot wagon, this colorful Carpenter toy was patented during the 1880s and has patent dates in several locations on the castings. Five Hubley dogs watch as the entourage passes by.*



cars and trucks – mostly large Arcades. I think that Charlie was sold out within an hour of opening those boxes. Most of the major collectors from the east coast as well as the west coast were there. We met Dick and Marian Teague for the first time at Rolling Meadows, yet they live only a couple of miles from us – Dick has a superior collection of early large automotive toys, and Marian has a collection of quality antique dolls.

The toy show was almost as exciting as the room hopping the night before. It has been a long time since I have seen as much excitement at a show. Back then, as those who were going to toy shows at the time remember, if you found a good toy on a table and the price was within reason, you either bought it on the spot or risked that within a minute or so it would be gone. On several occasions a seller would unpack a toy and several collectors or dealer would want it and an auction would ensue, generally to the amazement of the seller who wanted one price and wound up getting several times that amount.

We had heard that you could find lots of toys at the antique car flea markets, so in October 1972 we made a second trek to Hershey, Pennsylvania. (We had gone once seven years earlier in search of parts for an antique car we were restoring.) We found toys all over the Hershey flea market and have since gotten many nice ones there. If you had the endurance to walk for miles back and forth across the field and had a little luck, you could go home with some tremendous buys, since back in the early seventies most people didn't know how to price old toys, especially if they weren't collectors. It seems that today enough price guides are available that everyone is an expert at pricing, or so they think. At least it's rare today to find a good old toy priced way under the established market value.



*Fig. 17. The Pratt and Letchworth horse-drawn pumper Bill is holding was made during the 1890s. Several other Pratt and Letchworth, Wilkins, and Hubley fire toys are on the shelves behind.*

Fig. 18. Three comic toys – The Toonerville Trolley, Tut-Tut, and the Amos and Andy Fresh Air Taxi.



In November, Stevie and I went to Nassau for a week – the week preceding the second (and last, unfortunately) Chicagoland Toy Show at Rolling Meadows. The weather was lovely. The food was great, and there were lots of things to see and do, but I couldn't wait for Friday to come. Have you ever tried to find an old toy in Nassau? Good luck! We got home on Friday evening and roared off for Chicago early the next morning. God, it was wonderful to be going to a toy show. We weren't disappointed. The room action and the show were both great. This time we had more confidence and bought lots of pieces.

Although the bulk of the toys that we purchased in 1972 were mediocre – at least by our standards today – we did come by a few quality ones. Certainly, one of the best was unearthed by my father in Philadelphia sitting in the window, as it had been for months, of an antique shop on Chestnut Street where hundreds of people passed by every day. It wasn't for some time after he called me about it and I told him to buy it for us that we determined that it was made by Ives. It is shown in Figure 3. The horse is painted orange and is made of cast iron. It has legs that move in walking motion as it pulls the wagon. The wagon is made of wood and tin.

Probably one of the best "finds" was a collection of Tootsietoys and nice slush cast cars and trucks of the thirties. Can you imagine finding 120 die cast and slush toys in unplayed-with condition at an antique show that

had been going on for five hours? All were priced at less than \$5.00 each, and that included the ten Grahams and three LaSalles. Beginner's luck.

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## BUILDING THE COLLECTION

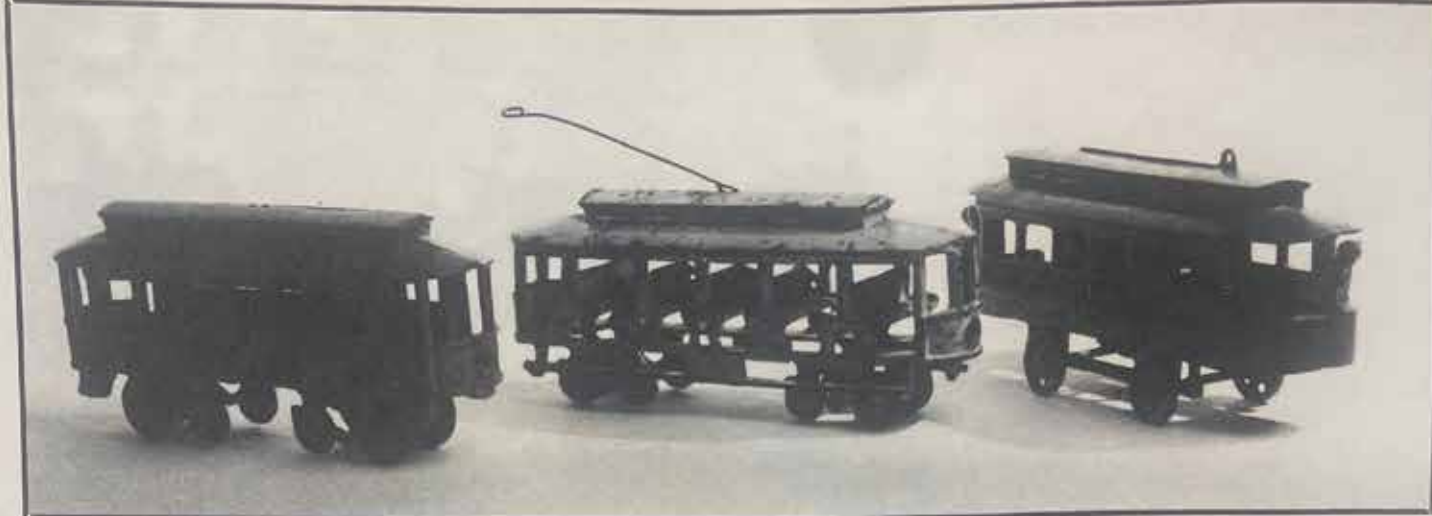
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By the end of the first year we had acquired a lot of toys, and shelf space for displaying them was starting to become a problem. I had twice built shelves in our den, a rather small room, and still there never seemed to be a location to attractively display a new acquisition. Furthermore, it was becoming apparent that the house that we lived in did not really lend itself to displaying more than a small collection of anything. The basement had one large room, converted several years before into an English Tudor pub – certainly, no place to display automotive toys – and utility rooms. We didn't think the living room was a suitable place to display a toy collection, either, so the house had to go. Besides that, my avocation of designer/carpenter was frustrated by that house which I could no longer justify further remodeling. We needed a house that contained a large room suitable for displaying lots of toys. Further, we needed one that offered the opportunity for expansion, with a parcel of ground sufficiently large that additions could be made if warranted.



Fig. 19. A team of horses slowly pull this Wilkins "Panama" bottom dump wagon. This toy still has its original leather reins.





*Fig. 20. These three 8-inch cast iron trolleys are reminiscent of a bygone age. The trolley on the left was made by Kenton during the 1920s. The unusual open "summer trolley," also by Kenton, is similar to real ones used in the east around the turn of the century. On the right is a Harris trolley shown in their 1903 catalog complete with cast-in motorman and conductor.*



*Fig. 21. This 20-inch barrel dray was made by Wilkins around 1895.*

As luck would have it, we found such a house and moved into it in May of 1973. It was badly in need of updating, since it still had the look of the '50s when it had been built. However, it was situated on two acres, was shaped like the letter Y, and had real potential. During the remainder of 1973, Stevie and I spent most evenings rebuilding portions of the inside. When we were finished with that first phase, we had our new toy room, complete with about 300 feet of shelving built in.

Proper display has always been of major importance to us. We felt that if a toy was worth owning, then it should be worth displaying. A lovely old toy is just like a piece of sculpture and comes to life when properly lighted and positioned so that its details can be seen. I believe that toys show off best when they are placed either in a diorama or on a shelf with a plain monochromatic background.

Dioramas require a great deal of space, however, and should be glass enclosed to prevent dust buildup. When done as Patsy Powers and Joe Daole have in their Atlanta Toy Museum, the effect is charming. Patsy and Joe, however, have a collection of Bliss dolls' houses that has enabled turn-of-the-century street scenes to be made. Most toy collectors, even if they had the room for a diorama, wouldn't have the necessary buildings, lamp posts, and miniature people to make an effective display. We didn't then and still don't, so our collection is displayed on shelves.

For a toy to show off best, it needs to be seen in profile or within about 30 degrees of a side/profile view. It also needs to be placed on a shelf whose depth is appropriate for the size of the toy. In other words, the background should be in close proximity to the toy, so that it makes the toy stand out



*Fig. 22. Four passengers enjoy the view from the top of a rare Fifth Avenue double-deck bus. Made by Kenton and pictured in their 1923 catalog, the bus is 8½ inches long.*

— much like a still life painting. Lighting is critical to proper display. A toy that is not adequately lighted tends to look drab, and its details don't stand out. Vertical spacing between shelves is also important. Small toys should be placed on shelves that are relatively close together; larger toys should be placed on shelves further apart.

Most of the banks of shelves in our toy display room are designed so that vertical spacing is greatest nearest the floor, and the spacing gradually is reduced the further up you go. At a point above eye level, approximately 6½ feet above the floor, the spacing is increased. This enables large toys (10 to 15 inches long and 4 to 6 inches high) to be placed on the bottom two shelves. Medium-sized pieces go on the next 5 shelves as well as the top shelf. Small toys (3 to 5 inches long and 1 to 2 inches high) go on the remaining shelves. This places the smallest pieces closest to your eyes and the largest the furthest away. I have located the bottom shelf 18 inches from the floor and generally have eleven rows of shelves.

It is important not only to analyze the size of the toys collected before building shelves, but to project what the requirements will be several years into the future if the shelves are built-in and non-adjustable. Adjustable shelving,

while generally not having as refined a look as built-in, has the benefit that it can easily be moved to accommodate the collection's changing requirements. So much for the digression into displaying the collection.

The years 1973 through 1976 we generally view as the period when the nucleus of our collection was formed. During those few years, we saw the hobby literally blossom, as toy shows and auctions began to be held every month and thousands of new collectors joined the ranks. We started that period as collectors of automotive cast iron toys. By the end of 1976, our horizons had expanded into mechanical banks, tin boats and cars, large steel trucks, and cast iron horse-drawn vehicles.

I can remember several events in 1973 that seem worthy of note. The first just happened to be the first toy auction that I attended. However, its significance was in the record price that was set there for an automotive cast iron toy. It was at that auction, in June 1973 at Garth's Auction Barn in Delaware, Ohio, that a lot of us came to realize that toy collecting was a serious hobby and one that, if pursued to its limits, could quickly get very expensive. An Arcade Buick coupe (looked like just another nice cast iron toy car to me) was opened at 50 dollars and, to the amazement of



*Fig. 23. Harris, of Toledo, Ohio, manufactured this "City Truck" pulled by two mules.*



*Fig. 24. Harris made this unusual 15¼-inch horse-drawn delivery van around 1895.*

everyone in attendance, moved in 10-dollar increments to the then unheard-of price of \$1,410. A great cheer arose from the room as John Deyoe won the prize. Two lots later, for a seventh of the cost of the Buick coupe, I obtained an 8-inch Kenton REO sedan (Figure 85). The bidding on the Kenton sedan just seemed to slip by everyone as the excitement over the Buick coupe ensued. It wasn't for some time that I came to realize that I had made a lucky buy.

We attended our first toy show at Macungie, Pennsylvania, in August 1973. What a show! The first toy I bought there was a Hubley Bell Telephone truck (Figure 57) complete with all the accessories. It even had the pull cord and an original coil of rope that fits in the tray above the roof of the cab. The toy was brand new in appearance. We bought several other nice toys there, including a pair of Kenton fire engines from Frank Whitson. Back then, the show was held in a small building on the fairgrounds, and without air conditioning it was mighty warm. I always liked the atmosphere in that old building; I guess that I'll always remember the thrill of getting that telephone truck there. We haven't missed a Macungie show since then.

There was one Chicagoland Toy Show in 1973, and it was held at the O'Hare Holiday Inn in August. I know there was a lot of room action, but I can't remember it, so I must not have gotten anything much. The show stands out because of the spontaneous auctions that erupted on the floor. Some of them were quite wild as collectors vied for a rare toy. I recall a figure around \$1800 having been offered for a Hubley cast iron water skier. I don't remember whether or not it sold, but you wouldn't expect to pay that much today.

*Fig. 25. Kenton made this 16-inch horse-drawn ambulance. An army toy, it is identified as belonging to the 2nd Regiment.*



In October we made our annual trek to Hershey. In one day we found three Buddy L's: an ice truck, a bus, and a Model T roadster pickup – all in great condition. Along with many nice cast iron and tin toys, we got a large two-story Reed stable. The stable, which now resides in the Toy Museum of Atlanta, was just being unloaded from a truck as we passed by on our way out at the end of the day.

On the way back home from Hershey, we attended an auction in Duncansville, Pennsylvania. This was an auction of the contents of the late L.C. Hagarty's toy storage room in his garage. It was apparently the duplicates and less desirable pieces from his outstanding collection. Stevie and I bought several toys there and particularly prize a Dent two-horse transfer wagon (Figure 71) which still has its original stockroom tag and is in unplayed-with condition. There were some nice toys at that auction, and it seemed like most of the collectors and dealers we had met during the past year were there.

Toy shows, auctions, and flea markets probably were our best sources of old toys, but we also spent many a weekend searching through out-of-the-way antique shops. During the 1970s, when we went to our cottage in Traverse City, Michigan, we would spend hours riding our motorcycles into the little resort towns and villages in the area. Each hamlet seemed to have one antique shop, and we got to know them all. One, located in Mesick and long since gone out of business, produced two good toys. The first was a Gunthermann touring car with rubber tires and two passengers (it was missing the driver and one other passenger). I think it cost about ten dollars, and a more



*Fig. 26. Bill and friend Dick Teague review the merits of a Guntermann Vis-a-Vis. Dick, Vice President of Styling for American Motors, has long been a collector of antique and toy autos. He has a beautiful collection of early automotive tin toys to complement his house full of automobilia.*



*Fig. 27. Carette made these two limousines around 1910. The one in the foreground is 8½ inches long, and the other is 12½ inches.*

*Fig. 43. One wall in the Toy Room contains many of Bill and Stevie's Arcade toys. Beneath the shelves of cast iron toys is a case filled mostly with tin boats from the 1920s.*





*Fig. 30. Known as the Toy Room, this large room contains wall-to-wall toys. It provides a striking visual impact as one enters.*



*Fig. 31. A couple of birds wait in front of their house as the taxi arrives. The taxi is a Lincoln Zephyr made by Hubley (1939-1941).*

*Fig. 32. Stevie and Marian Teague are seen discussing the selection of photographs to be included in this article.*





Fig. 46. Hubley made a variety of bulldog M trucks in several sizes. Shown here is a 13-i Panama steam shovel on a Mack chassis, a 9-i tanker, and a 8 1/2-inch dump truck. Hubley made the tank and dump trucks in an 11-inch size a

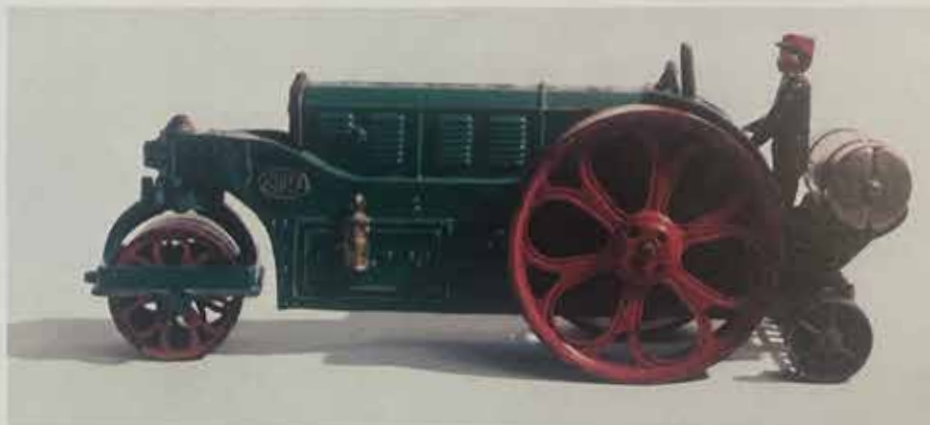


Fig. 47. One of Hubley's largest (15 inches long) cast iron toys was this Huber roller which steers, has an operating scarifier, and removable nickel-plated tank. Made only for two years during the early '30s, the toy was too expensive to warrant further production. Few have survived intact, because, once dropped, this heavy but delicate toy would easily break.



Fig. 48. Hubley made these two horse-drawn pieces.

Fig. 49. The City Service and Auto Express trucks were made by Kenton. The City Service was made in two sizes, the one shown being the larger at 10 inches. Bill and Stevie are not aware of any others this size. The Auto Express is more common and was made in only one size - 9 inches long.



Fig. 50. Indicative of dump wagons used during the late 1800s, this Ives toy is pulled by two mules that can be unhitched and placed in a toy stable.



Fig. 51. Toys and books intermingle along one wall of the library.



Fig. 52. This Arcade taxi was never equipped with a spare tire, but has a small separate license plate and nickel-plated parking lamps.



Fig. 53. Dent, of Fullerton, Pennsylvania, made these two cage-bodied delivery vans during the late 1920s. The large one, 15½ inches long, is complete with its pull cord with cast iron ring and still has the sample room tag indicating that it has been used for display at the factory. The toy says "New York/Philadelphia - Junior Supply Company" and has opening rear doors so miniature cargo could be transported. The small version is 5 inches long.



Fig. 54. Hubley made three sizes of milk trucks, but only the two largest have the Borden's logo. Bill and Stevie's mid-size milk truck made its way into a collection in the twin cities several years ago, leaving its big and little brother behind.



Fig. 55. The Nu Car Transport depicts a car carrier of the 1930s. The Nu Car Transport logo can still be seen on car carriers today around Detroit. This cast iron toy is 16 inches long and is carrying four fat-tired vehicles.



Fig. 56. Four Arcade Mack dump trucks wait to be used by their youthful owner. The gray one in the foreground is the oldest and does not have Mack in raised letters on the side, but instead can be identified by a Mack decal on the hood as well as behind each door.



Fig. 57. The Hubley Bell Telephone truck was a highly successful automotive toy and was produced for years in five sizes. Shown here is the largest version which came with a pair of steel ladders, two long-handled shovels, a pike, a coil of rope, a winch and boom, an auger, and a pole on the trailer. The caution flag is an Arcade accessory.



Fig. 59. The "Friendship" by Hubley has a 13-inch wingspan and was made for only a year or two.



Fig. 58. One of Kenton's largest automotive toys is this REO Speedwagon. It measures 15 1/4 inches long and has a fold-down tailgate and separate nickel-plated bumper.



Fig. 60. Hubley "America" tri-motor found hanging over a table as part of the decor in a restaurant in Orlando, Florida.

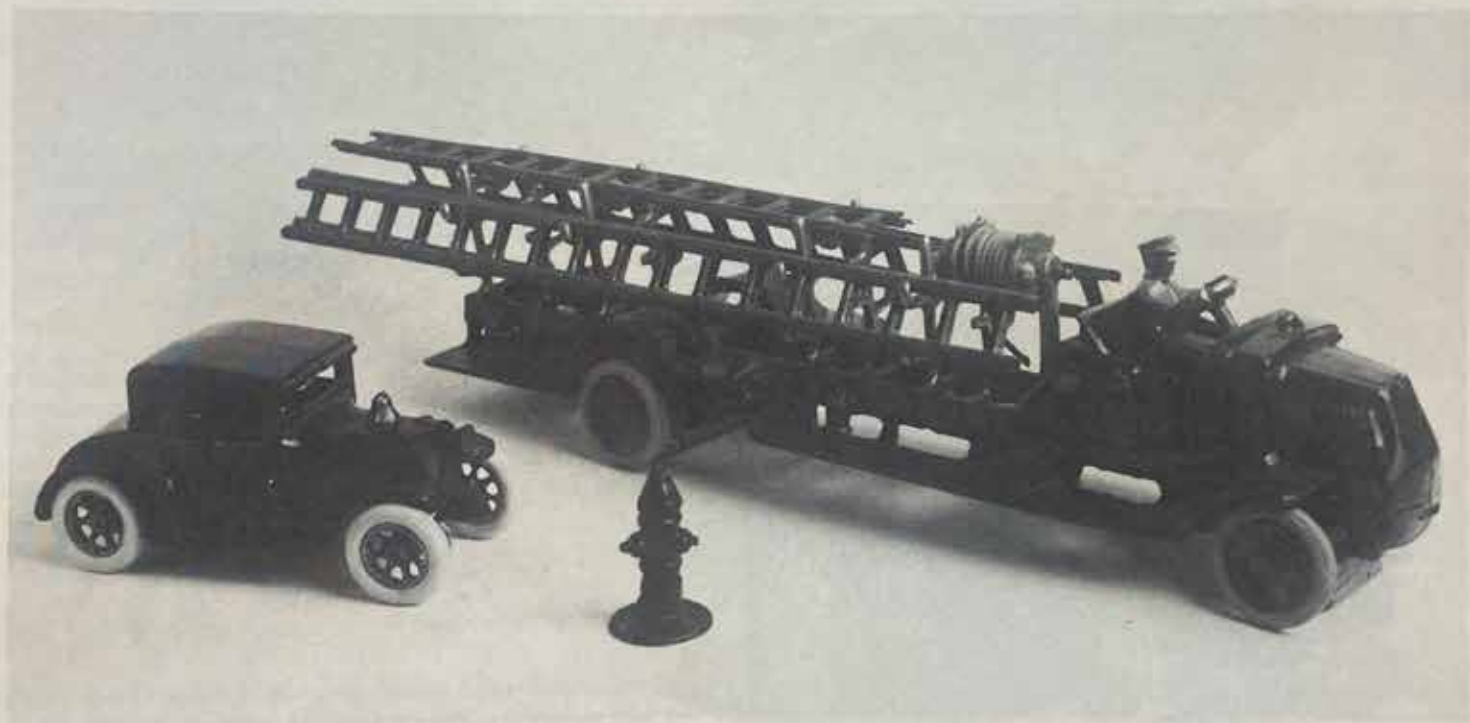


Fig. 61. Sometimes Bill just can't resist playing with the Buddy L's. A lovely carousel horse gallops proudly by as Herbie tries to get his master's attention. The Buddy L Sand and Gravel Truck and the Sand Loader - a pair in brand new condition were purchased at the auto flea market at Macungie, Pennsylvania, the day before the 1976 toy show there.





*Fig. 62. The Indian Crash Car motorcycle was made by Hubley and, at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, is the largest they made.*



*Fig. 63. The 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch Fire Chief's car and the 21-inch Mack ladder truck are both Arcade pieces.*

knowledgeable collector than I, at the time, wangled it out of me for a couple of nondescript cast iron cars. The second toy from the Mesick Antique Shop was an Arcade "Brown and White" taxicab. The shop owner, aware that we liked old toys and knowing of the whereabouts of this taxi, obtained it from its original owner. It was an awfully nice taxi, but it got traded one month later to Larry Sieber, who had heard of its existence through the toy grapevine. Larry, at the time, was on one of his sweeps through the U.S. with fellow collector Dave Boyle. Figure 54 shows the Bordens truck I received in trade for the taxi.

In February 1974, Dale Kelley and Jack Regan put on

their first toy show at the Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles, Illinois. The ten inches of snow sure didn't deter anyone from attending. The St. Charles shows have always been the largest toy shows in the country, and Stevie and I have found that over the years they have offered the greatest opportunity available for buying and trading toys.

We attended our first Brimfield, Massachusetts, antiques market in May 1974. For those who have never gone to Brimfield, it certainly has something for every antique collector. There are three or four major markets that open on different days during Brimfield week, plus there are a variety of smaller markets. Among other things, we pur-



*Fig. 64. The Hubley 5 Ton Truck is a large cast iron toy - 17 inches overall. It has a fold-down tailgate and was produced for about 20 years, but is difficult to find today in good original condition.*



*Fig. 65. Three officers and their prisoner drive past an Ives Fire House in their Kenton Police Patrol.*



*Fig. 66. A fireman polishes his Converse fire engine.*



*Fig. 67. One of the most desirable pieces of cast iron fire equipment is the Hubley transitional pumper. This is actually representative of equipment used during the early part of the century which was comprised of a motorized unit attached to a steam-operated pumper unit made to be drawn by a team of horses. The toy is 15 inches long, is articulated, and was made up to the mid-1920s. It is quite rare today.*

chased our first Kingsbury toy: a nice fire truck at Gordon Reid's market. Brimfield can be a real experience and an opportunity to find old toys if you can spend three or four days there. Shorter stays may prove to be worthwhile, although, to obtain maximum exposure, it's best to be at each market at the time it opens. This means you need to spend the better part of the week there, which, for most people, is more time than they can spare.

One year we were at Gordon Reid's the evening it opened, and the dealers were scurrying to get their booths set up. It was dark out, and Stevie and I each were searching with flashlights when she came upon a Hubley clockwork Columbian Wheel. This was a representation of the first Ferris wheel used at the Columbian Exposition. The dealer had just unpacked it, and it was sitting on a chest of drawers, just barely visible under wrinkled newspapers. The toy was complete, and its brass clockwork mechanism worked. The dealer explained that he had retrieved it from an attic in Pennsylvania and didn't know

much about it. After careful scrutiny, we determined that under a thick layer of dust it had most of its paint. We negotiated and went away with a nice old toy from the late 1890s. If you're an avid collector, there's no telling where the search will take you.

On a sightseeing trip to California in 1975, we went into an antique mall across from the parking lot of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis. Typical of most small "antique malls," there were few antiques and lots of junk. The last little booth that I peered into had three or four tables covered with glasses and dishes. Right in the middle of one table was a 9-inch cast iron Arcade Dodge coupe with a 15 dollar price tag. I'll probably always remember that trip to St. Louis.

Another occasion that I'll always remember was having dinner in Mac Miners Restaurant in Orlando. Stevie's mother had recommended that, when in Orlando, we should stop there for dinner, as it had good food and was



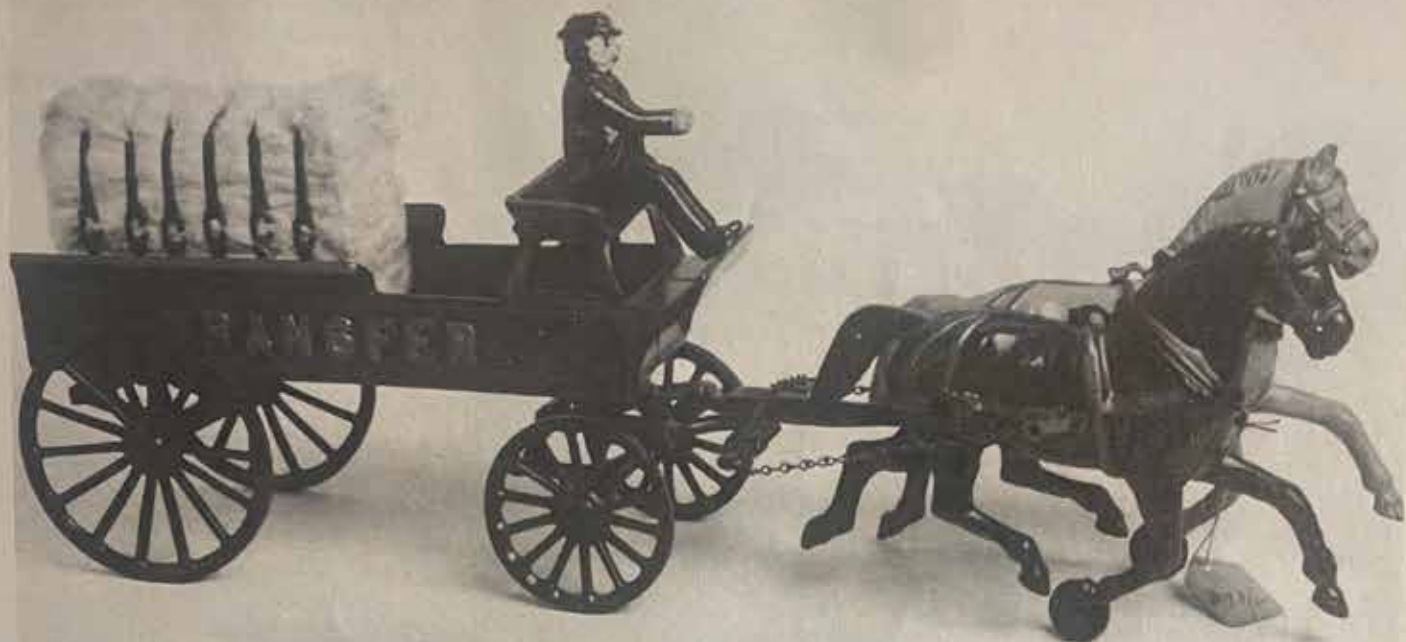
*Fig. 68. Wilkins made this 13 1/4-inch dray. A distinguishing feature of Wilkins horse-drawn toys is the stripe around the wheel rims.*



*Fig. 69. Welker and Crosby made this one-horse dray. The horse is demountable as shown in this figure.*



*Fig. 70. Santa has been known to use a Model T one-ton Delivery Truck to make deliveries when his reindeer go on strike. This one was made by Buddy L and not Ford.*



*Fig. 71. This large 19-inch "Transfer" wagon was made by Dent. This particular piece was purchased by Bill and Stevie in 1973 at an auction in Duncansville, Pennsylvania, of the contents of L. C. Hagerty's garage. This toy was new in its box and still has its original tag.*

decorated with antique advertising and filled with turn-of-the-century furniture. While we were sitting at a table, reading the menu, Stevie spotted what she thought was a toy airplane hanging over a table across the room. I got up and walked over to get a better view. I couldn't believe it, but there, hanging by a string, was a cast iron Hubley "America" tri-motor airplane (Figure 60). The next day, after some negotiating, I found myself standing on a chair cutting the string. As I left, Mac said that he had bought the plane for 7 dollars from a junk dealer who stopped by every so often to sell him chairs and tables for the restaurant.

By 1976, the "Toy Room" shelves were filled to capacity, and it was clear that something had to be done. We decided

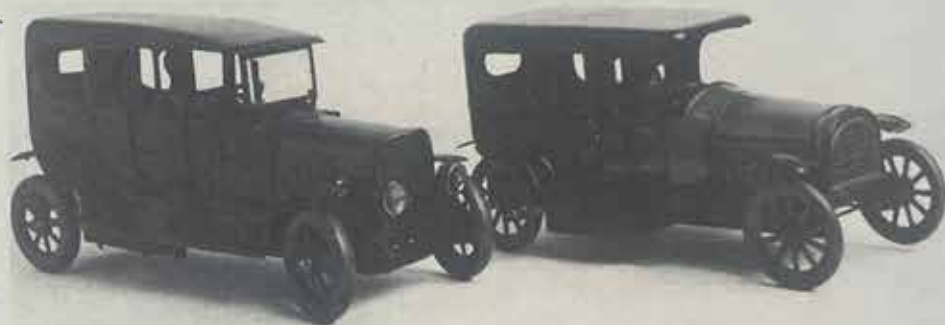


*Fig. 72. Santa has just placed a doll, an automobile, and a boat under this Christmas tree and is riding off in his sleigh pulled by two reindeer. The sleigh is by Hubley.*



*Fig. 73. A Lehmann Luxus sedan passes by an Ebo touring car.*

*Fig. 74. Two chauffeurs patiently wait in their limousines for their owners to arrive.*



*Fig. 75. In 1978 the American Silversmith's Guild produced a limited number of these silver and gold 1903 Model A's to commemorate Ford Motor Company's 75th Anniversary.*



there was only one solution, so the screened-in porch that adjoined the Toy Room yielded to the need for more display area. After a few months work, the old Toy Room doubled in size and shelf space increased accordingly. What a relief; we could now continue collecting.

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## PRODUCING A TOY

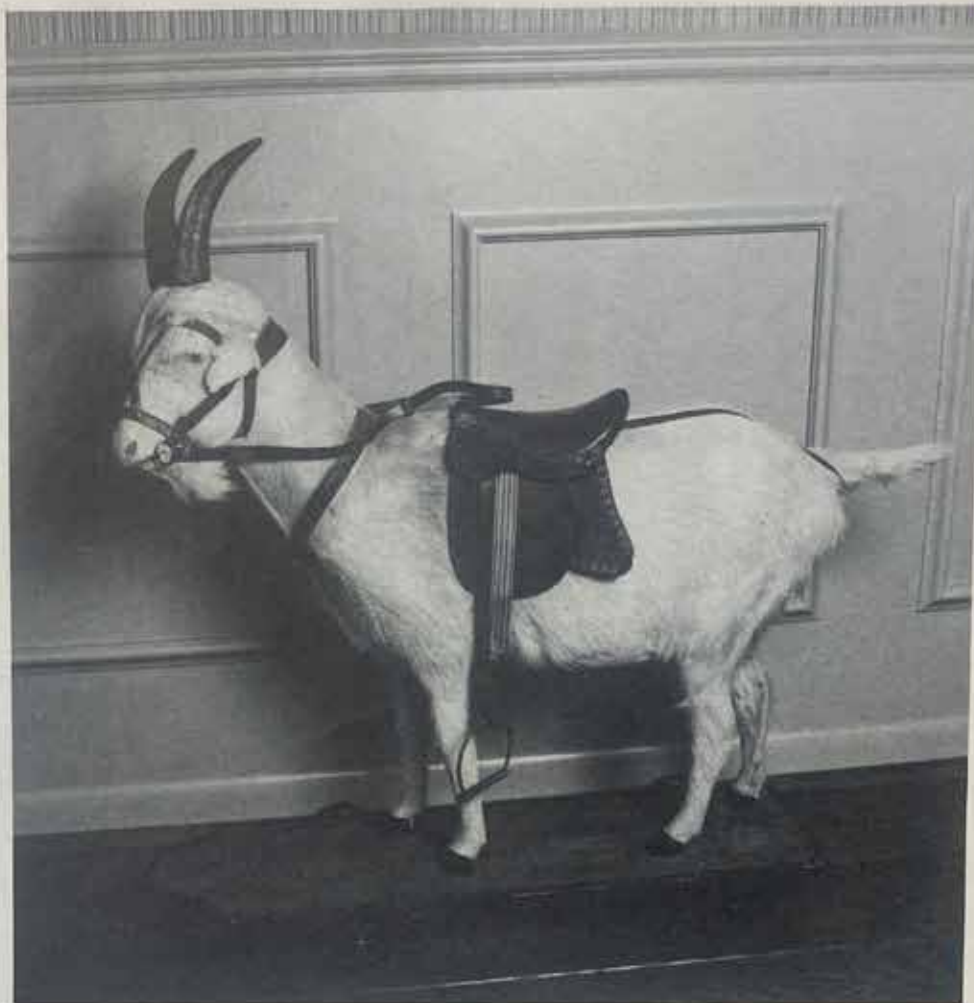
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Early in 1975, Larry Sieber and I discussed making a cast iron toy vehicle. To our knowledge, nobody had attempted producing an original cast iron car or truck from their own patterns. There were then, and still are, companies that make rather crude reproductions using an old toy as the pattern. Today you can even find newly-made cast iron toys that are not copies of old toys, but they are generally very poorly cast. Typically, these toys are found at flea markets and are usually marked Taiwan.

We wanted to produce a toy vehicle in a limited quantity of around 100, and we wanted them to be similar in quality to an Arcade or Hubley toy from the 1930s. I had also discussed this venture with Tom Pasche, a toy collector and pattern maker at the Buick foundry in Flint, Michigan.

Around July, Larry decided to go ahead on his own, and Tom and I got together and started work on one ourselves.

*Fig. 76. Bill and Stevie purchased this perfectly preserved goat at an auction of one of the grand estates in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. The toy had been found just a day before the auction still wrapped in its original paper in a storage room in the mansion's third floor. It has a label under the platform from F.A.O. Schwarz, New York City.*



Larry produced the Model T Ford Arctic Ice Cream Truck and sold and shipped his by mid-1976.

Tom and I selected a 1923 Buick Special Delivery Van to pattern our toy after. After a few sketches were drawn and some minor modifications were made to give the truck the desired toy-like appearance, Tom went to work on the pattern. I contacted the J.L. Hudson Company, Detroit's leading department store, and obtained their permission to produce a limited number of trucks with their name on the side. A rubber molding company was contacted, and, after several different prototype tire designs were made up, one was chosen, and a mold was made to produce the white rubber tires. Meanwhile, boxes, decals, labels, and rubber stamps were designed and contracted for.

Around the Detroit metropolitan area one can find outfits that can produce anything, but like the automotive industry, to which most cater, they are only interested in producing in large quantities. Because only 125 of these 8-inch toy trucks were to be made, it was difficult to find companies willing to produce such a limited number of special order boxes, decals, and tires.

By the end of January of 1976 the pattern was completed, and the foundry cast a couple of prototype trucks. These verified that the pattern would work and that a production match plate could be made.

Once the match plate was made, the foundry started experimenting with various types of sand, binders, and mold coatings to obtain the desired finish on the castings. This became quite an ordeal, but eventually the proper combination was arrived at.

When the castings came from the foundry they had to be deflashed and the body sides riveted together. The roof had to be finished on a belt sander. The driver halves were then riveted together with the separate steering wheel clamped between the driver's hands and then nickel plated.

Once the body and wheels had been cleaned up and the necessary machining operations had taken place, they were dip-painted green – two coats – and black was hand brushed on the fenders, hood, and grill. The raised J.L. Hudson letters were painted gold, as were the body stripe, headlights, and radiator cap.

We found that the project was far more involved than we had originally imagined. It wasn't until 1981 that I briefly got back into making a toy. Then it was to make forty companion pieces with a "Classic Cast" logo on the side. Sales were slow, and a few of these still remain unsold.

I am currently working on a 1930 Lincoln (Figure 84) and hope to produce a run of fifty. Unfortunately, the foundry that Tom and I had used has recently closed, and I don't expect to have castings for some time.

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## FORMING GOALS

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Collectors, it seems, gravitate into one of several modes of collecting. Some become specialists in one particular segment, while others find delights in a broader spectrum of items and become generalists. Stevie and I initially were mainly interested in automotive toys made of cast iron, but



*Fig. 77. Stevie admires her Ernst Plank live steam boat that she found at the Burton, Ohio, flea market in 1974 complete with its original box.*

as time passed we couldn't resist branching out into other areas. While there are still many types of toys that we do not collect, we consider ourselves to be generalists when it comes to acquiring old toys. On the other hand, we believe in the need for a collection to be structured with well-defined boundaries and directed towards specific goals.

One goal, which we set years ago, is to obtain the best pieces within each category of toys that we collect. That's a goal which, although difficult to achieve, certainly has presented us with a challenge. Part of the challenge is just determining what items are the most desirable. A great deal has to do with the standards that you, as the collector, set for "being the best." Certainly, items included in the list of the best toys in a particular category will be strongly influenced by the thinking of the recognized experts in the field. In any event, it is important to set goals and to set ones that, while they may not be attainable, do offer considered direction.

We have also been careful to buy toys in excellent condition. Not only are they more pleasing to look at when they have most of their original paint and are devoid of breaks and repairs, but over the long-run represent better value.

We also want to have representative pieces from each decade since 1870, so that the collection will show not only the changes in manufacturing processes used to make the toys over the past 100 years, but also the evolution in fashions and modes of transportation.

It wasn't long after we found our first old toys that we started looking for books and old toy manufacturers'

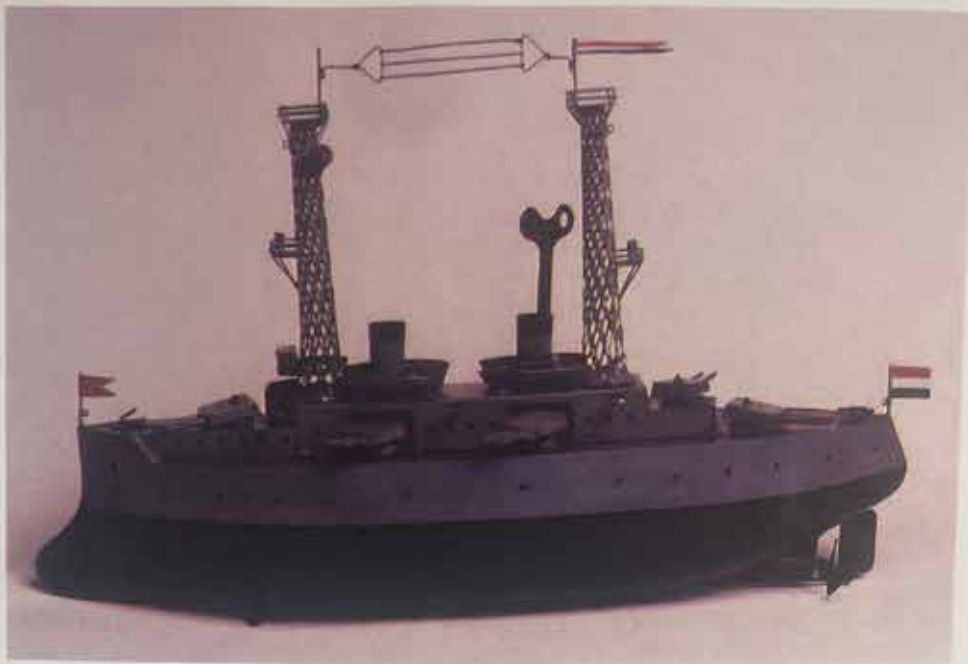
catalog reprints in order to identify what we had found. Our library keeps growing and is invaluable as an aid in tracing the origin of an unidentified toy. It also has helped us in determining what toys we should be looking for to fill out the collection.

To those of you who are just starting to collect antique toys, you really haven't started too late. You may think that the prices are too high now and that not much is still available, but take heart—we felt that way when we started collecting twelve years ago. It's true that prices of old toys continue to climb, but so have the prices of everything we buy. As far as availability is concerned, old toys are more readily available today than a decade ago because of the number of auctions, flea markets, and toy shows that are now being held every month. So, set some goals, be selective in your purchases, and go to it.



*Fig. 78. Two cars await service at the local Gibbs Service Station one day in 1954.*





*Fig. 79. This 20-inch Bing battleship with cage masts was obtained from the original owner who supplied a letter with it explaining that it had been bought for him at F.A.O. Schwarz in New York City on a trip there with his parents around 1925.*



*Fig. 80. Bill started purchasing Japanese tin autos and trucks made during the 1950s and '60s when it became difficult to find good older toys at flea markets. This wall of shelves represents part of his collection.*



*Fig. 81. Four Hubley 8-inch taxi cabs. The major difference between the Hubley taxis and those by Arcade is that the Hubleys have headlights. Apparently, relatively few Hubleys were sold as very few show up today.*



***The Bill & Stevie Weart Collection***  
Co-Authors of Cast Iron Automotive Toys  
Thursday & Friday | September 8-9, 2022

