

FALL 2014

Meadow Brook



The Innovators

The Dodge Brothers
and their cars

INSIDE: Automotive Heiress | Road Trip | A Remarkable Find



TAKE OAKLAND WITH YOU

By carrying the Oakland University Credit Union Platinum Visa Credit Card, you carry an iconic piece of Oakland University wherever you go. Also, using your card helps OU Credit Union give back to numerous OU programs! See why the official credit card of Oakland University is right for you.



Meadow Brook Hall
Platinum Visa

Platinum Visa Features

- No application or annual fees
- Rates as low as 8.9% APR¹
- 0% balance transfers² (After six (6) months, rate will revert to standard rate between 8.9% and 17.9% APR.)
- Credit limit up to \$50,000
- 24/7 account access
- \$0 fraud liability

Apply Today!

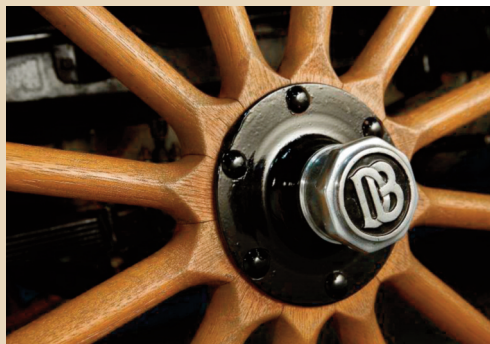
Get your OU Credit Union Platinum Visa Credit Card today online, over the phone, or at one of our branch locations.

oucreditunion.org • 248-364-4708 • 800-766-6828

¹APR is Annual Percentage Rate. ²Annual Percentage Rate (APR) of 0% is valid for the first six (6) months from the date the Visa Credit Card account is opened, and applies to only balance transfers from another financial institution's credit card. After six (6) months, rate will revert to your standard rate (between 8.9% and 16.9% for Platinum Visa and 12.9% and 17.9% for Platinum Plus Visa). Accounts 60 days late revert to penalty rate of 17.9%. Introductory APR does not apply to purchases, cash advances, or delinquent loans.

**OAKLAND
UNIVERSITY™**

Credit Union



8

2 | Editor's Column

All that glitters . . .

4 | Around the Estate

With a little help . . .

Holiday Walk preview

Volunteer spotlight

Dodge Sportsman Award

28 | Last Page

A remarkable find

BC | Museum Store

Own a piece of Dodge



14

6 | Dodge Days

Meadow Brook celebrates the 100-year anniversary of the Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company with a car rally and a good old community shindig.

8 | The Innovators

The Dodge Brothers took automotive engineering and functional design to new heights in just six short years.

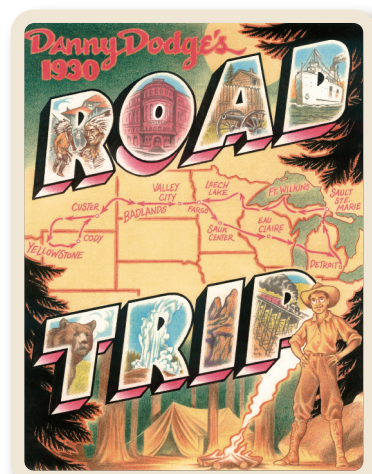
14 | Automotive Heiress

The pleasure and pain of being Frances Matilda Dodge.

A 100th-birthday retrospective.

20 | Road Trip!

Pack your knapsack and travel the roads, rails and waterways with young Daniel Dodge as he explores the natural wonders of the Midwest and West during a 1930 vacation.



20

On the Cover:

The front end of a 1927 Dodge Brothers depot hack, recently donated to Meadow Brook by Christopher and Peter Van Zandt to become part of The Hall's interpretation of the Dodge Brothers' legacy. *Photo by Rick Smith.*

Meadow Brook

MAGAZINE

Editor & Publisher
Geoffrey C. Upward

Associate Editor
Kimberly Zelinski

Art Direction
Lynn Metzker
Graphic Design

Photography
Rick Smith

Contributing Writers
Lisa Drummond
Madelyn Rzadkowolski

Business Manager
Robin Gardner

MEADOW BROOK MAGAZINE

is published twice a year for friends of Meadow Brook Hall. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. ISSN 2161-2358

EDITORIAL OFFICES

are located at Meadow Brook Hall
480 S. Adams Road
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

HOW TO REACH US

Email: zelinski@oakland.edu
Phone: 248-364-6204
Fax: 248-364-6201

ADDRESS CHANGES

Email: glaza@oakland.edu
Mail: Kelly Lenda
Meadow Brook Hall
480 S. Adams Road
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

MEADOW BROOK

ONE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST
ESTATE HOMES, AN ICON OF THE
AUTOMOTIVE ARISTOCRACY, AND
A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The former home of Alfred and Matilda Dodge Wilson, founders of Oakland University, Meadow Brook Hall is located on Oakland's 1,400-acre campus. The self-supporting auxiliary of the university serves as an internationally renowned historic house museum and cultural center.

| Editor's Column

All that glitters ...

The architectural and artistic renown of Meadow Brook Hall make it a first-class destination for tours, events and exhibits. But beyond the soaring plaster ceilings and the Tiffany glass is a steady hum of conservation and preservation projects intended to maintain The Hall and its 75,000 collection items. Continual assessments of the building and its contents classify the structural elements, building systems and artifacts that are in most need of preservation and conservation, either because of condition or because of their historical importance. Just as important as identifying the candidates, however, is securing the funding.

Meadow Brook is fortunate to have, among many supporters, several groups that have gone above and beyond expectations in order to help preserve the building and the objects within – groups such as the Rochester Junior Woman's Club and MotorCities National Heritage Area whose contributions we reported on in the Spring issue.

You will read about recent contributions of two more groups in this issue. The first, the Stoney Creek Questers chapter, recently contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to clean original china and glassware for future exhibition. And, the second, the organizing committee of The Hall's annual Wild Game Dinner & Auction, in September helped put on an outstanding event that now ranks behind Holiday Walk as Meadow Brook's second largest fundraiser. These are only two of numerous initiatives these two committed groups have assisted with over the years.

Last year, The Hall formed a committee of women to help plan and implement new fundraising events. The first of these, the 2013 Decades of Dress fashion show, raised three times its monetary goal. The funds went directly to the conservation of two 1920s dresses worn by Matilda Dodge Wilson . . . and enough funding remained to replicate the Breakfast Room curtains.

In October of this year, the committee helped facilitate another fundraising event . . . the display of Matilda Dodge Wilson's precious jewelry to an assemblage of Meadow Brook supporters at a gala dinner. The evening was co-hosted by The Hall and the iconic Ahee Jewelers of Detroit, owners of some of the finest of Matilda's jewelry since the early 1970s.

Pursuit of our mission to preserve and interpret the Meadow Brook estate is aided immeasurably by support from our community of friends, and for that we are most appreciative.



Matilda Dodge Wilson, c. 1925.

Sapphire and diamond bar pin, a gift from John Dodge to Matilda on their wedding day.

Meadow Brook Hall presents its 43rd annual
HOLIDAY WALK

November 28-December 23

*The sparkling life of an heiress
comes alive at*
THE GREAT ESTATE



TOURS DAILY 11-5. FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TICKET PRICES VISIT

meadowbrookhall.org

Presenting Sponsor: OAKLAND UNIVERSITY CREDIT UNION

With a little help...

For the past four years, Stoney Creek Questers #203 chapter has facilitated grant support for specific projects at The Hall.

Along with sponsoring a conservation project each year, the Questers volunteer their time to complete an additional project chosen by the Curator. Some of their projects have included conserving the Huldah painting in the Morning Room, researching and re-housing Matilda's jewelry collection, rewiring

floor lamps along the bedroom level and, currently, restoring the China Vault.

The China Vault was converted into an exhibit space in 1976 but has not been open for viewing in years. The Questers have contributed nearly 200 hours to washing the 300 settings of Lenox Mansfield china and hundreds of pieces of glassware, as well as setting a number of them to be part of an exhibit. The exhibit will be fully on display during the 2015 Downton Abbey tours and experiences.



The china team: standing, left to right, Sue Hoft, Annie Williams, Sharon Harris; seated, Jan Caloia.



Meadow Brook's heiress

This Holiday Walk, The Hall will saddle up with stories of the most glamorous woman in its history, Frances Dodge. In celebration of her 100th birthday, every room at The Hall will be filled with diamonds and jazz, sparkle and glitz. Born just two weeks after her father and uncle started Dodge Brothers Motor Company, Frances enjoyed a charmed life filled with ponies, trips abroad and parties attended by nearly every debutante in Detroit.

Visitors will learn about the glamour girl who brought life to The Great

Estate, from construction of the world-renowned Dodge Stables to her 800-guest wedding to the swimsuits she imported from Europe for her pool party guests. A tea party will be set in Knole Cottage and a display of sleighs and horse carts in Danny's Cabin.

Just as Frances drove a sleigh filled with presents to Meadow Brook's front gate every Christmas, guests will have the opportunity to leave their own presents at The Hall through December 19 for the Salvation Army's Christmas Toy Drive.

Beyond her beauty and wealth, Frances Dodge possessed generosity, intelligence and supreme talent in the equestrian world. Learn about all this and more as we say "Happy Birthday" to Frances.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

A love of The Great Estate

This year, two of our volunteers reached incredible milestones. Rita Shaughnessy, whom former volunteer coordinator Irene Connors

refers to as “The smile of Meadow Brook,” received her Gold Castle for giving Meadow Brook 50 hours a year of her time

for a period of 20 years. Rita’s journey began with a postcard from Oakland University describing classes, events and volunteer opportunities at the university and the mansion. For many years she was the docent for the Thursday public tours. She has also worked in the



Rita Shaughnessy

Museum Shop. Active in the community, Rita volunteers at the library and is a Eucharist minister for her church.

Celebrating her 25-year milestone, Roberta “Robbie” Kowalski was presented with an emerald to add to her Gold Castle. Robbie was the president of the Shelby Gardeners when the group was invited to come and help out with Holiday Walk.

Enthralled with The Hall, Robbie became a certified docent the next year and has been active ever since.



Robbie Kowalski

Over the years she’s been the Sunday receptionist, a captain and president of the now-lapsed Guild.



Geoff Upward, Bob Eastman and 2013 recipient Charlie Mann.

Sportsman Award

Meadow Brook presented its second annual Dodge Sportsman Award to Robert “Bob” Eastman at the 7th annual Wild Game Dinner & Auction in September.

The award honors a man, woman or organization who, in the spirit of entrepreneurial American sportsmen John, Horace and Danny Dodge, has demonstrated outstanding contributions to Michigan’s outdoor heritage, wildlife and habitat conservation and the promotion of hunting and fishing activities, ethics and education.

As he pursued a career in business, Eastman combined his entrepreneurial inclinations with a love of the outdoors, founding such iconic brands as Gorilla Tree Stands, Game Tracker, Eastman Outdoors, Eastman Outfitters and Carbon Express.

A 30-year member of Safari Club International, Eastman continues to support Michigan’s outdoor life by assisting the state’s Department of Natural Resources with the management of whitetail deer. He holds more than 30 big-game records.

The Wild Game Dinner & Auction, planned and executed each year with the assistance of a volunteer committee, has become Meadow Brook’s second largest fundraiser. **MB**



Randy Walker

he is also half of the team that trims all the hedges on the Estate.

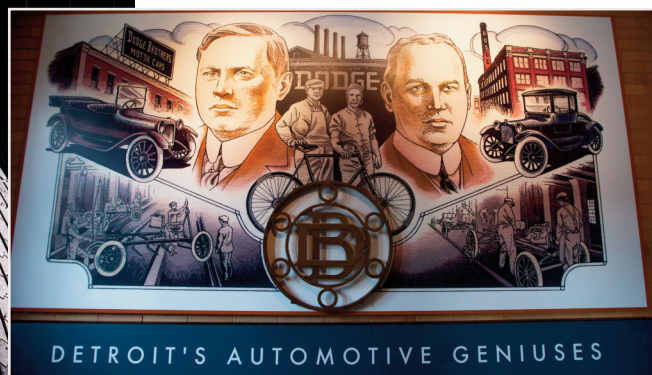
“It’s a large honor based on the number of people who volunteer and do so much there,” Walker said.

Man for all seasons

The Barbara Thorpe Memorial award recognizes an individual or couple who demonstrate an exemplary call to Meadow Brook Hall service. This year’s recipient, Randy Walker, is a triple threat – docent, a member of the garden club, and a Squire. Embodying Barb’s spirit, boundless enthusiasm and dedication to The Hall, Randy is a member of the Wild Game Committee, Vice President of the Squires and captain of the Garden Club Musclemen. Often seen hanging holiday roping, wielding a chain saw to help keep the woods presentable or even driving one of the The Hall’s vintage Dodges,

DODGE DAYS

Celebrating Two Remarkable Brothers



Tinkering, improving and manufacturing were embedded in the genes of John and Horace Dodge. Their innovation, vision and dynamic partnership created their Dodge Motor Car Company in 1914. In celebration of 100 remarkable years, Meadow Brook hosted a community event in June that highlighted the Dodge brothers' personal lives, their automotive legacy and their connection to The Great Estate.

A unique fusion of vintage car show, entertainment, demonstrations, touring and children's activities, "Dodge Days" featured 90 Dodge Brothers Club cars from around the world as the focal point of their week-long Centennial rally in the Detroit area. Automotive

historian Charles Hyde spoke about the Dodge Brothers and signed his most recent book, published in June by the Meadow Brook Press, *The Dodge Brothers: Detroit's Automotive Geniuses*.

The crowning jewel of the day was the opening of a new Dodge Brothers exhibit in the Family Garage and Danny's Cabin. The exhibit, which ran through October, interpreted both the

working and leisure lives of John and Horace Dodge.

Attending the ribbon-cutting for the exhibit were some 30 Dodge descendants from around the country. "We were honored to have so many representatives of the Dodge family with

us," said Kim Zelinski, Director of Museum Operations.

"We anticipated that the event would be a success," added Marketing and Communications Manager Shannon O'Berski, "but it exceeded our expectations with nearly 2,000 visitors. Many





Opposite: scenes from the Dodge Brothers exhibit. Middle, left to right: Robert Petz, Jr., Mary Ann Petz and Ann Fitzgerald with the late Robert Petz's 1915 touring car, donated to Meadow Brook by the family.

Top: Dodge Brothers Club rally.

Middle: club members Dale Emmett and Stephanie Kuxdorf with a 1934 Dodge coupe.

Lower right: Dodge Brothers exhibit ribbon-cutting ceremony; left to right, Geoff Upward, MBH executive director, Dodge family members Rikki Caldwell, Diana Dodge, Judy Johnson and John Van Lennep, and MotorCities National Heritage Area managing director Shawn Pomaville.



thanks to full- and part-time staff and dozens of our volunteers for making sure things came off without a hitch.”

Favorites with families included the vintage car rides and children's activities, including a scavenger hunt and the “Dodge Challenge” kid's zone agility course. Arts and Scraps was on hand with a special car craft made from recycled materials. The Classic Fit barbershop quartet and the Sheila Landis trio provided musical entertainment.

Much-needed support was generously provided by The Detroit Historical Society, Dodge Brothers Club, Chrysler Historic Resources, EEI Global and sponsor Motor Cities National Heritage Area. **MB**



THE INNOVATORS

BY KIM ZELINSKI

John and Horace Dodge were not just two brothers with a dream of starting their own motor car company; they also had a vision to be innovators within the industry.



In the earliest days of the 20th Century, Detroit's precocious industrial child chugged uncertainly along the bumpy streets of the city, not yet the dominant force on American life. The innovators who first laid the foundation for this unimaginable future worked from alley shops and home garages, perfecting their hand-built horseless carriages in hopes of putting them into production.

The early automobile, essentially assemblages of mechanical parts – engine, transmission, suspensions, steering and braking systems – were functional machines whose form was secondary to their purpose. Of greatest concern was their reliability in getting passengers to their destinations. Design was merely the cloaking of those mechanical components that were directly involved in the motion of the vehicle. Body technology, less fundamental to the primary function, was taken directly from horse-drawn carriages and coaches.

Over the next decade, the automobile transitioned from novelty to something approaching necessity in certain segments of the population. No longer resembling its predecessor, the horse-drawn carriage, notable changes occurred: the engine was moved from beneath the seat to beneath a hood, oil lamps were replaced by headlamps, the wheel base was lengthened to incorporate larger-cylinder engines, seating was roomier and more comfortable, and most importantly, mass-production made the automobile more affordable for the average American.

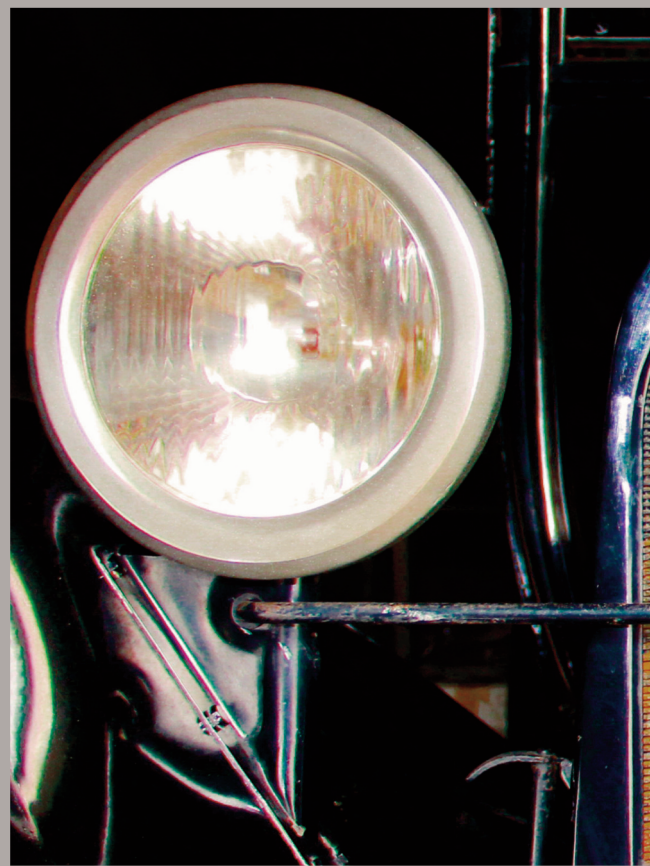
John and Horace Dodge were among the early innovators who, from their alley shop located in Detroit's Boydell Building, established a reputation as precision mechanics. Their break into the automotive industry occurred in 1902 when the brothers were subcontracted by Olds to produce transmissions for his curved-dash Oldsmobile. And, from 1903 to 1914, the brothers partnered with Henry Ford to manufacture the mechanical



*Opposite and top: 1927 Dodge Brothers "woody."
Above: 1915 touring car.*



Design details from John Dodge's 1919 sedan.



components for the various Ford models, including the famous Model T. Dodge Brothers manufactured, in their factory, the mechanical components that equated to 60% of the Ford automobile. Their quality production was the almost silent, yet compelling factor, behind the record-breaking sales of Ford.

By 1914, John and Horace Dodge were not just two brothers with a dream of starting their own motor car company; they also had a vision to be innovators within the industry. The vulnerability of Dodge Brothers exclusive dependence on Ford Motor Company contracts, along with Henry Ford's reluctance to upgrade the Model T, compelled them to break away and manufacture their own automobiles. Their engineering and mechanical acumen was readily apparent in the first lot that rolled off of the assembly line in November of 1914.

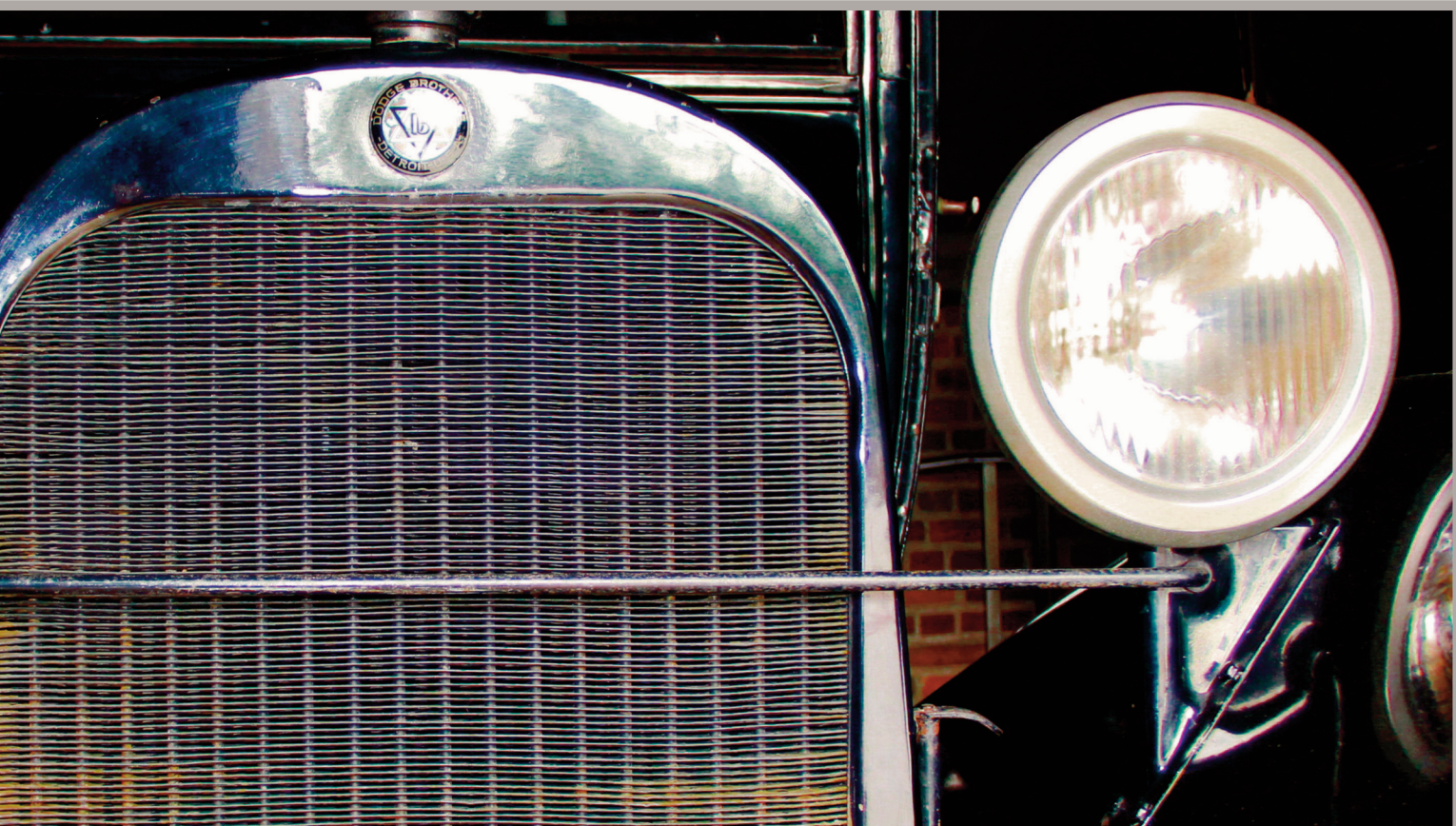
Their new automobile was better than the Model T in every way and included all of the improvements they had urged Ford to make.

The first Dodge Brothers motor car, Dodge Model 30, a touring car built for the middle class, was priced at a moderately low price of \$785, a few hundred dollars more than the Ford Model T. Although an immediate success, it wasn't just the high quality of manufacturing, durability and toughness that brought consumers over to the Dodge Brothers brand. The technical breakthroughs they pioneered, or made standard on their models, positioned the company near the top in automobile sales and output over the short seven years John and Horace operated the company.

From 1914 through 1920, Dodge Brothers developed a strategy for selling their motor cars that was distinct from other automakers. While they continued to make mechanical im-

provements, they did not engage in annual styling changes for each model, upholding their philosophy of "constantly improving, but no new yearly model." Over time, they did introduce additional models including commercial vehicles. Following the inaugural touring model, the brothers introduced a roadster in 1915, added a coupe, two-door sedan and screenside delivery car in 1917, a closed-panel commercial/business car in 1918 and a four-door sedan and three-passenger coupe in the last year of their lives.

The Dodge Brothers innovative methods were not only carried out in the motor car they produced and the equipment they designed to build them, they were also central to the operation of their company. Having themselves worked the machine shop trade, the brothers provided an amiable workplace and imparted a cooperative spirit among employees. The company provided many benefits






Horace and John Dodge's last personal vehicles – a 1919 coupe and 1919 sedan.

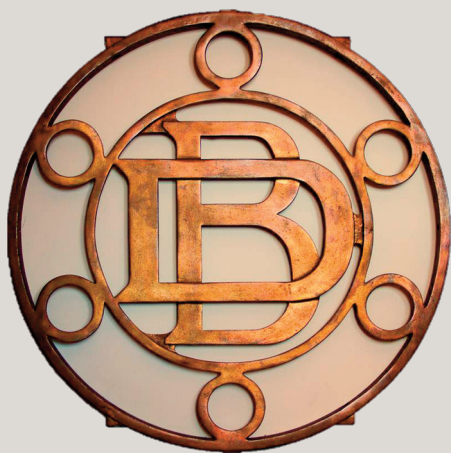
other auto manufactures at the time did not, such as life insurance, recreational activities and a workshop area set aside for retirees to pursue crafts and hobbies.

In 1920, the year both brothers died, a great crowd of workmen assembled within the gates of the Dodge Brothers factory. The crowd let loose a mighty cheer as a glistening new roadster was swung into position on a platform adorned with flowers and the American flag. Written across the motor car in bold white letters was: "Car Number 500,000." Above the car a banner also hung:

500,000 in 67 Months

**This unparalleled achievement
was made possible because of the
splendid work of Dodge Brothers
Organization, which means
Every Man in the Plant**

In seven years, the Dodge Brothers had built a remarkable company that distinguished them not only as successful businessmen, but also as pivotal innovators in the early automotive industry. In 1914, the same year Dodge Brothers debuted Dodge Model 30, 146 new auto company nameplates went into production. Only one survives to this day: "Dodge." 



AND THEIR INNOVATIONS

- ◆ The Dodge Brothers 1915 touring car offered a 35-horsepower four-cylinder engine; the Model T's was 20 hp. It was so well designed, it would be the only engine Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company would make until 1928.
- ◆ Dodge Brothers models featured a robust 12-volt electrical start rather than the clumsy crank start of the day, making it easier for women to drive. Other manufacturers used a 6-volt system, which would remain the norm until the 1950s.
- ◆ The Dodge Brothers motor car, at 2,200 pounds, was heavier than their competitors', due to the fact that the car featured the first mass-produced, all-steel body. The brothers adopted the all-steel body for two reasons: it was stronger and cheaper to produce than the more common wood-framing under steel panels, and because the steel body allowed the use of baked enamel, which could be rapidly dried in ovens, decreasing the drying time by 5 days.
- ◆ Also characteristic of the Dodge Brothers desire to build sturdy automobiles, they reinforced the welded steel body with rivets on each car, a precaution that while unnecessary, provided extra body strength when exposed to great trauma.
- ◆ In the early years, Dodge Brothers models sported a set of six hexagonal windows in the back of each passenger cabin. Called cathedral lights, they became the first trademark features that made Dodge vehicles stand out from the rest.
- ◆ The Brothers marketed their "strong and hardy" theme by being the first car to drive to the depths of the Grand Canyon and back up again.
- ◆ The Dodge car had a hand-controlled fuel pump that made it possible for the Dodge car to climb a steep hill without forcing the driver to put his car into reverse gear and to ascend the hill backwards, as drivers of some Model T Fords had to do.
- ◆ The Dodge Main facility was the first domestic manufacturing plant to have its own test track on the property.
- ◆ Unlike most other manufacturers, Dodge Brothers produced most of their own components at their own factory.
- ◆ Dodge Main included a hospital, laundry services, post office, fire department, print shop, photographic department, restaurant, barbershop, police force and even a weather bureau. The bureau was used to monitor specific weather conditions to assist in the proper drying of the enamel paint used on Dodge Brothers vehicles.



FM Dodge

FRANCES MATILDA
DODGE

AUTOMOTIVE

Heiress

BY KAREL BOND LUCANDER

The two redheaded mechanical geniuses gently maneuver their ‘wheeled opus’ through the doors of their factory. Giving it a little throttle, they break onto the open road for a test drive. Starting slowly on the snow-dusted early morning streets of Hamtramck, John and Horace Dodge wind their way into Detroit, stopping for a photograph in front of John’s mansion at 33 East Boston Boulevard. It is November 14, 1914. This would be the first of many automobiles to roll out of their Dodge Main factory. Others, like this new touring prototype they dubbed “Old Betsy,” would that day be selling at dealerships throughout the country.

This was a memorable day for these hardscrabble siblings who had paid their dues to forge their names in the emerging world of the automotive aristocracy. But there would soon be an even bigger occasion to celebrate.

On November 27, John and his wife Matilda would welcome a daughter, Frances Matilda Dodge, into their loving arms. After seven years of marriage, they had patiently anticipated the arrival of a child – and finally this grand day had come.

Tiny Frances made her appearance many years after her father and uncle had been making headlines and garnering financial clout, both in the Motor City and beyond. This sprouting twig on the Dodge family tree was born into a world that would present few monetary constraints. Although she did not yet know it, her future would offer opportunities few could fathom.

Matilda Dodge, who had been long-ing for a child, spent her days doting over Frances. As John continued leading and promoting the automotive brand he and his brother had created, he and Matilda would add two more children to their family, Daniel and Anna Margaret.

In January 1920 during the National Automobile Show in New York City, Horace Dodge contracted the Spanish Influenza – the worldwide pandemic that started in 1918. John stayed by Horace’s side as he battled this virus. But John, whose lungs were already weakened from childhood illness, then contracted the flu and died from pneumonia on January 14. Horace would die later that year.

The family would return to Detroit, shocked by John’s death and also weakened themselves by the flu. Two years later, mourning Matilda took her three children to Europe for a year abroad. When they returned home, they moved to Grosse Pointe,

Opposite: Frances Dodge, 1933.



Frances and her father, John Dodge c. 1916.

near Horace's widow, Anna Thomson Dodge.

Yet health problems would again plague the young family. Anna Margaret, now 4, contracted the measles and died from a subsequent intestinal infection in April 1924. This weighed heavily upon a grieving Matilda, Frances and Danny. 10-year-old Frances also caught her hand in a washing machine ringer the same year. To help the damaged muscles heal, the doctor recommended horseback riding. As it happened, her older half-sister, Isabel Dodge Sloane, had established a successful thoroughbred horseracing stable in New York, Brookmeade Stable (later moved to Virginia). Frances, who loved riding horses, dreamed of someday starting a stable of her own.

In May 1925, the Dodge widows (Matilda and Anna) sold Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company to Dil-

lon, Read & Company for \$146 million – at the time, the largest cash sale of an American company. This single transaction made Matilda one of the wealthiest women in the world.

Matilda had also begun growing closer with a friend from First Presbyterian Church, Alfred Gaston Wilson. Alfred consoled her through the loss of Anna Margaret. After a short courtship, they married in June 1925. When they returned from their honeymoon, they moved into a farmhouse on the 1,300-acre Rochester, Michigan, farmland Matilda and John had purchased years before. There, in 1926, the Wilsons began building their 88,000-square-foot Tudor Revival-style residence, Meadow Brook Hall, which

would eventually take three years and \$4 million to complete, in Matilda's words "for the sake of the children."

Frances and her brother Danny Dodge were experiencing many changes. Within six years, they had lost their father and younger sister, had a new stepfather and moved to the countryside. Frances was now becoming a young lady, and for her 12th birthday, her parents surprised her with her own playhouse, Knole Cottage. This ex-orbitant six-room

brick retreat was the first all-electric-powered home of any type in the greater Detroit area.

At age 12, Frances also received her first pony, Lassie, and her interest in horses only intensified. As a family, they began competing in horse shows and bringing home many trophies. When they were not in equestrian arenas, Frances and Danny were at East Coast boarding schools. Frances studied at the rigorous Mount Vernon Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Back in Rochester, Matilda and Alfred would grow their family through adoption, and Frances and Danny would have young siblings to love. In 1930, they brought home a toddler son, Richard, from The Cradle adoption agency in Chicago. The next year, they would return there to adopt a baby girl, Barbara. These little ones added a new energy to the Dodge-Wilson clan.

In November 1932, Frances and two of her prized horses, Rosalie Bonheur and Pendennis, made their first appearance at the crème de la crème of competitions: the National Horse Show at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan.

In June 1933, she graduated from Mount Vernon Seminary and contin-

ued full force showing her horses from New York to Chicago to Philadelphia. She already had more than 100 blue ribbons hanging in the tack room.

Now 19, Frances put down the reins for her debutante ball on December 27, 1933. More than 600 well-heeled guests entered the ultra chic Book-Cadillac Hotel for her extravagant party. They all enjoyed a sumptuous buffet and dancing to the latest Jazz



Frances with her younger siblings Danny and Anna Margaret and their mother, Matilda Dodge, c. 1920.



*Top: Frances at The Hall, c. 1930.
Middle: Dodge Stables, c. 1940.
Left: Matilda and Frances at a
horse show, c. 1926.*



*Left: Frances with her parents, Matilda and Alfred Wilson, at her debutante ball in Detroit's Book-Cadillac Hotel, 1933.
Below: Frances on her wedding day, July 1, 1938.*



and Swing sounds. Her \$25,000 event (about \$438,000 in today's dollars) was the season's most lavish party.

With that soiree over, Frances had world touring on her mind. Knowing she would soon receive her Dodge inheritance, she treated her parents to a spectacular cross-continental journey. On January 20, 1934, they boarded the *Conte Di Savoia*, gliding along for stops in Morocco, Africa, Egypt, India and Europe. During their six-month excursion, they would visit 58 cities and cover 33,048 miles. They also returned with 36 new horses, four donkeys, one zebra, two tortoises and seven Pekingese purebreds.

In the fall of 1934, she studied interior design at Marion Coats Graves School in New York City. But once Frances returned home, she was again singularly focused on equestrian competitions. By age 21, she owned 80 horses. Her recently established "Dodge Stables" boasted state-of-the-

art barns, paddocks and a stellar trainer, Wallace Bailey. Her champion horses included Etta Kett, As Thousands Cheer and Society Barrymore.

Horses were Frances' passion, but they also ignited a new love – equine journalist James B. Johnson, Jr. About this time, her brother Danny met someone who caught hold of his heart, Laurine MacDonald. In 1938, they simultaneously announced their engagements.

On July 1, 1938, nearly 900 guests, including Henry and Clara Ford, made their way to Meadow Brook Hall to witness Frances Dodge exchanging vows with James Johnson. After the ceremony, they feasted on a sumptuous buffet and danced under the stars. The newlyweds set sail for a honeymoon through the United Kingdom.

Shortly after the Johnsons returned, Danny and Laurine wed on August 2. They headed to Danny's 600-acre property on Canada's Manitoulin Is-

land in Lake Huron to honeymoon. They were settling in when on August 15 their trip went awry. Danny and two others were injured when handling old sticks of dynamite. Though accounts are sketchy, when they left by speedboat for medical assistance, Danny fell overboard. His new wife and the others searched for him, but his remains were not discovered until 23 days later. His death devastated those who loved him, especially Frances and Matilda.

Although Frances was still mourning her brother, on November 27, 1939, she inherited nearly \$10 million from John Dodge's estate. To mark her 25th birthday, husband James threw a spectacular party at Meadow Brook Hall, with entertainment featuring the Tommy Dorsey Band and Frank Sinatra.

The rumblings of World War II were now impacting horse shows. Although some shows were cancelled, the Johnsons continued acquiring champions and Frances continued riding. On September 28, 1940, she set a world record at The Red Mile racetrack in Kentucky, riding Greyhound, the nation's leading Standardbred horse.

On July 1, 1941, James and Frances welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Judith Frances Johnson. James entered the Army Air Corps, but they continued appearing in as many horse shows as possible. 1942 was a good year for the stable, with star performers Highland Cora, Love Affair and Anacacho Shamrock. Yet as solid as this year proved to be, 1943 would hold even more promise.

On April 23, 1943, Dodge Stables delivered Wing Commander to the world, a foal that would become one of the finest show horses ever. Wing Commander would eventually be crowned the six-time five-gaited world champion, featured on the cover of LIFE magazine, and considered the number-one sire of champions for many years. The young stallion was just coming up when trainer Wallace Bailey died abruptly. Earl Teater, one

of the nation's most successful trainers, was hired and would take Wing Commander all the way to the top.

In 1945, the Johnsons bought Castleton Farms, one of the finest estates in Lexington, Kentucky, and within a few years had moved the Dodge Stables operation there. This legendary property served the Johnsons well, but it required major renovations to restore it to its former glory.

As Frances and her horses continued to win accolades, 1948 marked a year of many blue ribbons but also a season of unraveling. In April, after nearly a decade together, Frances and James divorced.

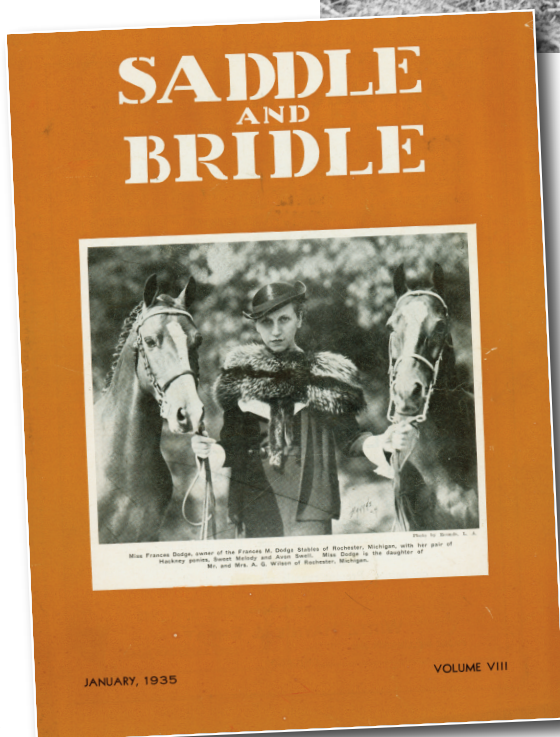
In January 1949, Frances remarried Frederick Van Lennep, an advertising executive from Philadelphia. With one child each from their former marriages, they would have two children together, Fredericka and John.

By now, Dodge Stables was considered the foremost facility in the country for Saddlebreds, but the Van Lenneps were also making strides in the Standardbred world. They added many to their champion brood, also buying the Wolverine Raceway in Michigan and becoming major stake owners in The Red Mile racetrack. By the early 1960s, they also opened Pompano Park Racetrack in Florida.

In addition to accomplishing her goals in the Saddlebred arena, Frances was now a major player with Standardbreds. All her years of astutely weaving together the finest team of horses and



Above: Frances with her children Judy Johnson and (inset) Fredericka (Rikki) and John (Johnny) Van Lennep, c. 1955. Below: Frances showing her friend O.T. Thompson the Hambletonian Cup she had won, 1959.



trainers were finally coming into full fruition.

In January 1971, Frances and Frederick were at Pompano Park, celebrating 22 years of marriage. The next day, Frances was fatally stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage. She passed away

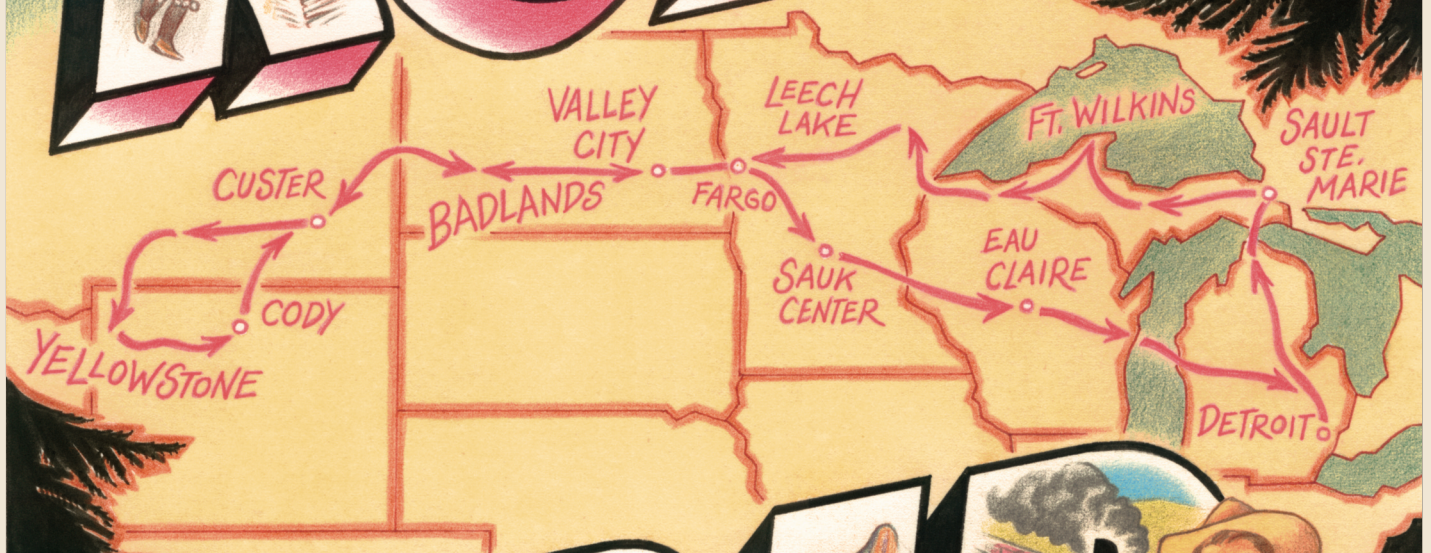
January 24, slipping out of this life just two months after turning 56.

Her legacy will live on through her children, her children's children, and the contributions she made to the future bloodlines of the horses she loved so dearly. This automotive heiress, whose life was marked with many peaks and valleys, built an unprecedented world-class equestrian empire. **MB**



Karel Bond Lucander is a freelance writer from Davidson, North Carolina.

Danny Dodge's
1930



Vacation Trip of June 10th-July 12, 1930

June 10th

Departed from Meadowbrook Hall, June 10th, passing thru' Flint, Saginaw, Midland, Roscommon, Grayling, and then to Camp Romeo on the Au Sable River.

June 11th

Departed from Camp Romeo passing thru' Grayling, Gaylord, Wolverine, Indian River, between Burt and Mullet Lakes, Cheboygan, and then to Mackinac; took ferry to St Ignace, passed Castle Rock, Rabbit Run, and Pickford then to camp in Munuscong State Park.

June 12th

Mosquitoes so terrible at Munuscong left there at 6:00 A.M., having breakfast at Sault Ste Maria. Inspected the wonderful locks watching the boats pass thru'. Passed thru' Newberry, a most beautiful village, then to Germfask, Seny, midway between Seney and Munising went in the

ditch. Needed help to remove the car, no damage. Staid in cabin on the Au Train River for the night.

June 13th

Went in camp on Lake Au Train.

June 14th

At 1:30 a.m., car was discovered to be on fire due to a shorted wire.

June 15th to 19th

Camped on Lake Au Train, taking side trips from there to Au Train Fall, Wagner Fall, Munising Bridal Veil Fall, and Picture Rocks, also to charcoal kilns. Made an attempt to see Red Head Rocks, but the road was impassable.

June 20th

Departed from Au Train going thru' Marquette visiting the Prison, hence the Michigamme, L'anse, thru' the

Ford Motor Co., forest, and camped at Houghton in the copper country.

June 21th

Passed thru' Hancock, Calumet, Mohawk, Eagle River, Copper Bay, then to Fort Wilkins the farthest point north in Michigan. Returning to Houghton

His own man...

While Alfred and Matilda Wilson and their daughter, Frances, enjoyed the luxuries of Europe, Danny Dodge's adventures were typically rustic explorations of the good old U.S.A. During the summer of 1929, 1930 and 1931, Danny planned his vacations to destinations where the marvels of nature and his love of the great outdoors could be enjoyed. In keeping with Matilda's decree that family vacations and travels were also educational opportunities, Danny was instructed to, along with sending postcards, keep a log of his 1930 trip out west. This diary, titled "Vacation Trip of June 10th to July 12, 1930," was typed by 13-year-old Danny and includes the occasional misspelled word. — ed.





stopped
at the
Quincy

Mine No.2 claimed to 9000 feet in depth, and there saw the largest hoisting engine in the world, drum of same 30 feet in diameter. Thru' Houghton, Twin Lakes, Greenland, Mass, Rockland, and camped on Lake Superior at Ontonagon.

June 22nd

Took trip to the Victoria Mine near Rockland. The mine was operated by a peculiar water power system, the water is drawn into the mine by large pipes (or wells), and as the water compresses the air to a certain point the water is expelled thru' a ten inch pipe with a great roar in a geyser formation and shooting water fully 300 feet in the air.

June 23rd

Departed from Ontonagon at 1:00 p.m., passing near to the Porcupine Mts., Bergland, Wakefield, Bessemer, and then Ironwood, with its many open iron mines, camped at Ashland, Wi.

June 24th

Passed thru' Iron River, Brule, and Superior, Wis., then to Duluth, Minn., and camped there, also June 25th, taking a short trip along the shore line of Lake Superior.

June 26th

Passing thru' the great north Range of Minn., the land of iron and of mammoth school buildings by far larger than found in any part of the world. Passed thru' Virginia, and Hibbins where an open iron mine one mile deep is located and from there camped at Grand Rapids, Minn.

June 27th,

Crossed the Mississippi River near its headwaters, passed the beautiful Leech Lake, the towns of Walker, Park Rapids, and the Detroit Lakes. Detroit Lake an important City in the lake park region of Minn., In 1844 the Hudson Bay fur traders going from St. Paul to Winnipeg, Canada, were compelled to establish thru' Detroit then known as Lake No. 44. Ice for the Great Northern is harvested there. From there to Fargo N.D.

June 28th

Fargo on the Red River which runs north to the Hudson Bay, and the Red River Valley is "the world's bread basket", due to the great wheat crop and its fertile soil.

Made arrangements for continuation of trip to the Yellowstone Park via train. Stored car and stayed at the Waldorf Hotel.

June 29th

Departed by train at 6:00 A.M., At Valley City, N.D., train crosses a viaduct 3737 feet long and 148 above the Cheyenne River. Bismark the capital city of N.B., named for Prince Bismark of Germany. Two miles from there the train crosses the Missouri River,

Mandan, where Sioux Indians dance for the people at the station in all their tribal regalia. The first white man to there was Sieur de la Verendrye in 1738 the place was called "the village of the crying hill". The Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804 wintered there and procured the services of the Indian woman Sacagawea to guide them overland to the Columbia River. Just below Mandan was Fort A. Lincoln from this point the famous Seventh Cavalry went on its ill-fated expedition up the Heart River [then onto] the Little Big Horn. under Gen. Custer.

Dickson on the Heart River in Pyramid Park, or Dakota bad lands. Medora in the valley of the little Missouri noted for its burnout lignite beds and painted rock, buttes and mounds, and the petrified forests and was the home of ex-president Roosevelt.

Sentinel Butte rises 620 feet above the town

Glendive, Mont., here the Yellowstone River is first seen. Lewis and Clark passed this site in 1806, on their return from the Columbia River. Miles City, Mont., Gen. N.A. Miles gave the city its name. A great cattle and horse market.

Forsyth, Mont., the Cheyenne Indian reservation is near.





10142. TWIN CUB BEARS, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Big Horn, Mont., a historic place being occupied since Lewis and Clark passed in 1806, also an important post during the indian wars.

Custer, Mont., a stopping place for people going to Fort Custer at the mouth of the Little Big Horn. Several years ago the skeleton of a Triceratops was found in the river bluff.

Billings, Mont., center of the sugar beet industry.

Columbus, Mont., where the first view of the

Rockies are seen 100 miles in the distance.

Livingstone, Mont., where the train leaves the main line to go to Gardiner for the Yellowstone. Here we saw the author trapper in his store.

June 30th,

Arrive at Gardiner taking Yellowstone busses thru' entrance arch, over bridge passed Eagle nest, over Montana-Wyoming state line; Boiling River, Devils Slide, Electric mt., to Mammoth Spring. Hiked over the springs. Swimming in pool from hot springs water.

July 1st,

Departed from Mammoth Lodge, passing Jupiter Terrace, Silver Gate, Golden Gate, Beaver Dam, saw elk feeding, Appollinaris Spring, Crystal Spring, Big Gesyer of 1922. Roaring Mt., Frying Pan, hence to Old Faithful Lodge, for lunch. In afternoon hike over the geyser basin taking pictures. In evening took auto trip to see the feeding of black and grizzle bears.

July 2nd,

Took departure from Old Faithful Lodge at 2:00 P.M., passing Kepler Cascades, Continental Divide, altitude 8261 feet; West thumb of the Yellowstone Lake, various hot springs, paint pots, and on the Lake Lodge.

July 3rd,

Took early morning trip to lake then speed-boat trip, rather cold, snow-capped mountains surround the lake, passed -on busses—Mud Volcano, Dragon Mouth, North Pacific trade mark,, then to Chittenden Bridge just above the upper Falls, then Inspiration Point, Glacier Boulder, then to Grand Canyon Lodge. After lunch hiked to Upper Falls, then along the Grand Canyon to Artist Point, then down Uncle Toms' Trail to the floor of the canyon near the Lower Falls.

July 4th,

Took departure at 9:00 a.m., Cody passed Osprey nest on top of high tree, Sylvan Lake, Sylvan pass altitude 8650, Corkscrew turn over bridge, Eastern Entrance of the Yellowstone Park, where lunch was served, then on pass Pahaska Teppe,; Chimney Rock; Elephants Head; Palisdes Thor's Anvil; Holly City; Wooden Shoe; The Goose; Overhanging Rock; Shoshone River Bridge; various tunnels, Shoshone Dam 380 feet in height, thru' Shoshone Canyon, Buffalo Bills' statue at Cody City, where we entrained for Fargo N.D.

July 5th on train

July 6th,

Arrived at Fargo at 12:30 A.M., went to hotel and slept until 10:00 Obtained car from storage and depart from Fargo passed

Moorhead, and Fergus Fall, Minn., Camped for the night at Sauk Center, Minn.

July 7th,

Passed St. Cloud, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Hudson, Menomonie, Eau Claire, and camped at Augusta, Wis.

July 8th.

Passed Nellsville, then to Marshfield, Wis

July 9th,

Passed Stevens Point, Waupaca, Appleton, then to Manitowoc, where took ferry for Ludington, Mich.

July 10th,

Departed from Ludington at 10:30, a.m., passed the Paris Fish Hatchery, Reed City, and passed the night at Freeland, Mich.

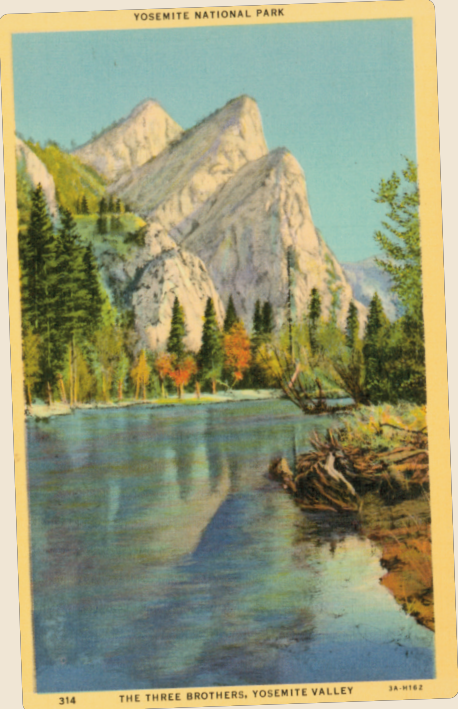
July 11th,

Passed Saginaw, Flint, Pontiac, and then arrived HOME.



22661 SPEEDBOAT ADELAIDE, YELLOWSTONE LAKE, YELLOWSTONE PARK.

HAYNES-Photo.



RESUME

The most impressive of the tour was Yellowstone Park, with its boiling springs and might geysers; its cold rivers and lakes; its great timber tracts; its thousands acres of Blue-bells; its snow-capped mountains; its Grand Canyon the greatest of the Yellowstone with its upper and lower falls and painted rocks. Yellowstone the incomparable, its wonderful beauty touched by the hand of man, and may it remain so, and may the only changes that take place be only of nature; so that future generations may enjoy it as it is.

Coming from the Park of the over the Sylvan Pass to the Eastern Gate of the Yellowstone, the pass with huge piles of broken rock, as if a stone chrusher had been at work there and placed the chrushed rock in piles according to size.

The road with its hair-pin turns, running over its self in a corkscrew turn, down the canyon the road winds; at places

the canyon appears to be bottomless. This road causes one to thrill what man has accomplished in defiance to nature. In the Shoshone Park with its sculptured rocks, showing nature in an artistic mode, and farther down the small level places of desert soil with sage and cactus in bloom.

Continueing down one sees how precious water is. There it is stored in a large Lake, backed by the Shoshone Dam. The water is released as needed on the farms below the dam.

Shoshone Canyon below the dam, of granite rocks, its road tunnels, providing how small is mans' effort in accordance to natures handiwork.

The Dokatos Bad Lands worn by erosion leaving the hard material in shapes to natures fancies. Then the wheat belt of N.D. and the western edge of Minn., a sea of land, level as far as the eye can see, broken only the wind breaks planted around the farm buildings.

Minn. With its great farms, its iron mines, and wooded lakes; not equal in any other section.

Wis., farming more the order of Mich., with a great amount of cheese manufactured.

Crossing Lake Michigan on a slow ferry, rather beautiful but cold.

Traveled by auto. 2783 miles

“ “ train. 1564

“ “ buss (apx) 300

“ “ ferry 80

Total . . . 4727

D.G.D

The good old days...



are back.

Join the Friends of Meadow Brook and experience the best of Americana. Check out all of our membership benefits and activities at

meadowbrookhall.org


A remarkable find

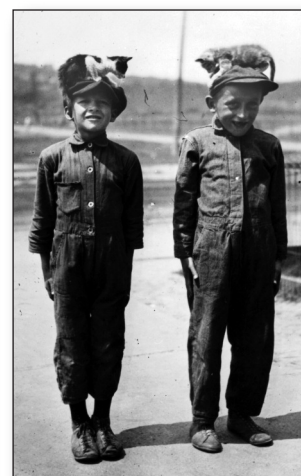
By MADELYN RZADKOWOLSKI, CURATOR

Since 2012, Meadow Brook's curatorial team has engaged in an extensive project to inventory and rehouse the thousands of original magazines in Matilda Wilson's collection. While some mention the Wilson family or Meadow Brook Farms, others – like 528 *Presbyterian Banner* newsletters and 483 *Blood Horse* magazines – do not necessarily have a direct connection to the family.

After Mrs. Wilson's estate was settled in 1971, these magazines were stored in boxes in a vault . . . for 40 years . . . and infrequently worked on. The Stoney Creek Questers' restoration of the China Vault (*see related article, page 4*) forced the project to move more quickly to make room for the china exhibit. In the bottom of the final box, a remarkable treasure – some 200 glass lantern slides and negatives – was discovered.

Photographic glass negatives and lantern slides, though fragile, were a revolutionary way to make and view photos more than 150 years ago. They largely fell out of fashion in the early 20th century but Matilda Wilson continued to use that early technology through the family's 1934 world tour.

The images that were discovered show different views of the family, their travels and even their philanthropy. A large number of the glass negatives reveal that Matilda had a cherished and charitable relationship with children in Caspian, Michigan, sending them presents and visiting the community. Plans are under way for an exhibit of these wonderful and heretofore unseen images. 



Clockwise from top left: Danny Dodge, c. 1922; Danny, Frances, Matilda and unknown person, c. 1922; two unidentified boys, c. 1924; Caspian (city in Michigan's Upper Peninsula) Community House Christmas program, c. 1924; Caspian Community House.

Weddings at The Great Estate



Theresa Finck Photography

TIMELESS ♦ ELEGANT ♦ PERFECT



www.meadowbrookhall.org

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Kosher catering available



Meadow Brook

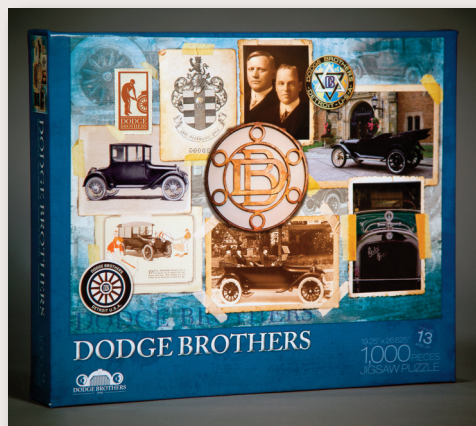
480 South Adams Road
Rochester, MI 48309-4401

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rochester, Mich
Permit No. 17

Own a piece of Dodge

Few people are aware of the important role that John and Horace Dodge played in shaping Detroit's early auto industry, and of the story of John Dodge buying and developing Meadow Brook Farms before his death in 1920. Check out our new line of Dodge Brothers merchandise, which celebrates these two extraordinary men.

Museum Store



NEW! Tudor Rose Tea



For Matilda Dodge Wilson, afternoon tea was a community bonding opportunity, an excuse to get together to discuss life and business. It was about the art of serving tea which included the best tea sets and linens and serving a whole experience to her guests. We invite you to enjoy our new Tudor Rose Tea in the same spirit Matilda once did. Ingredients include organic chamomile, organic lavender, organic spearmint and organic rose petals. Specially blended for Meadow Brook Hall by Chartreuse Organic Tea in Trenton, Michigan.

Puzzle / \$22.95 / \$20.65 members

Beer Mug / \$16.95 / \$15.25 members

Refrigerator Magnet / \$4.95 / \$4.45 members



Tea Tin / \$11.95 / \$10.75 members

Visit the Museum Store for holiday gift ideas, order online at
www.meadowbrookhall.org/shop or call (248) 364-6206.