

Women Drivers

by Lynne Belluscio

It dawned on me two weeks ago while I was taking a group of students through the transportation exhibit that the Cadillac is 100 years old this year. We probably should have done something to celebrate its Centennial year but the opportunity escaped me.

It was donated to the Historical Society by the Kellogg family in the 1940s, but I don't think I ever knew who originally owned it. Today when I came in, the "automobile" file was on the table and I put it back, not taking the time to look in it. Ruth Harvie came in. "Did you put the automobile file back?" "Yep - didn't know you were looking through it." So Ruth went back and pulled the file and then said, "I think you need a copy of these notes.

It says that in 1908 Mrs. Cora Stanley Osborne bought a Cadillac Runabout for \$900.00. This is now in the possession of the LeRoy Historical Society the gift of Richard S. Kellogg." (Now Ruth didn't know I was interested in that information and that I was going to write an article about the Cadillac, so you can understand that we really believe in coincidence!") "Ruth, you solved my dilemma for the *Pennysaver* article this week!"

It's also coincidental that when I chose a figure to be standing

next to the Cadillac in the exhibit, that I picked a drawing of a woman dressed in her "duster". I didn't know at the time that Mrs. Osborne was the car's owner. Now we can tell people that that is what Mrs. Cora Osborne might have looked like when she took a drive in her runabout.

Women drivers were not an exception in the early years. The same notes that Ruth found also listed Mrs. Fred Seyffer and Mrs. Ernest Woodard as early female automobilists. Mrs. James Barrows drove with her husband Jim sitting beside her. Mrs. Stanley Pierson gave Mrs. Martha Tillou her first ride. We checked the files to see what we had on Mrs. Osborne.

Her maiden name was Cora Stanley and she was from Pavilion. According to the cemetery records, she was born in 1865 which means she was forty three when she bought the car. She married Charles H. Osborne on January 29, 1889. They lived



Cora to buy the Cadillac.

We're not sure when the Osborne's sold the car or how it came to the Kellogs, but at least now we know who bought it and it's great to know that it was a woman.

Ruth also made a copy of a short clipping from the 1940 *LeRoy Gazette* "The Dictionary for the Average Auto Driver" Amber Light: something the other fellow is supposed to wait for, while you drive through. Deluxe Model: a standard job with built-in vanity. Detour: the longest, roughest distance between two points. Old Model: any car on which the factory paint is dry. Parking Space: gap in the line of cars along the curb, occupied by a drive entrance or

at 88 West Main Street and were members of the Methodist Church. She died in 1946. He died in 1948 and they are buried in Machpelah Cemetery. His obituary mentioned that "for many years he was engaged in the bee business." It must have been a fairly profitable business to allow

fire hydrant. Scenery: the green patch you occasionally see between billboards (now that has changed). Trade-in Value: something the owner thinks should increase, like wine, with age. Soft Shoulders: a good thing to keep your wheels and your hand off while driving.



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