

# FIRST PRACTICAL AUTO WAS USED IN MINNESOTA

### A Steam-Propelled Road Machine Was Used to Transport Government Supplies Between New Ulm and Mankato in the Early Fifties.

MINNESOTA can lay claim to being the birthplace of the commercial automobile in America. The first self-propelled wagon in actual service plied between New Ulm and Mankato in the early fifties. Brevet Major General Joseph R. Brown, who, when a lieutenant, assisted Captain Zachary Taylor, U. S. A., after ward president of the United States, to build Fort Snelling, was the author of this audacious enterprise, and the first man who ever operated a horseless vehicle in the west.

Upon leaving the army in the early fifties, General Brown was appointed Indian agent at New Ulm and was afterward elected a delegate from the territory to congress.

General Brown conceived the idea of building a self-propelling wagon with an oscillating machine to haul Indian supplies from the Mississippi river to the agency, and while in congress secured an appropriation for that purpose, which, to avoid ridicule and opposition, was skillfully concealed in a paragraph providing for schoolhouses, churches, agricultural implements, farm wagons and livestock for the Indians. This wagon was built by J. A. Reed, superintendent of the Novelty Iron Works in New York city, where Robert Fulton's first steamer and Ericsson's monitor were both built. Mr. Reed had charge of the construction of the latter.

The steam wagon was shipped west by train to Rock Island and up the Mississippi river to Red Wing by boat. It made several trips across the prairies to Mankato and New Ulm for supplies, and after General Brown's death it was abandoned and the engine was utilized at the New Ulm agency for a grist-mill.

In 1860 General Brown, who had retired from congress, conceived the idea of crossing the continent in a steam-propelled wagon. He went to New York and contracted with Mr. Reed to build an improved steam wagon to be called "The Prairie Motor," a cost of \$12,000. Reed was given eighteen months' time to perfect the machine, and on June 7, 1862, it started from New York in charge of O. L. Osborn, master mechanic of Reed's machine shop. Mr. Osborn is still living and recently prepared an account of his experience, which was published in the Nebraska Daily Tribune.

The wagon was such a huge affair and so unsightly in appearance that it frightened all the horses, and Fer-

# LURED BY FINE ROADS, AUTOISTS DEFLY WINDS

### Going Is Excellent on Frozen Turf—Dorr Makes Run to Anoka.

Roads better than they can hope to have later in the season are tempting Minneapolis automobilists out into the open in spite of the prevailing post-humous winter weather.

Muffled in furs or sheathed from the wind by leather cloaks, gauntlets and goggles, many of the more hardy enthusiasts have been bucking the boreal blasts and seem to get a fair return of pleasure. In all directions the roads, solid with frost and barren of snow, offer an ideal traction surface for pneumatic tires, and to those abundantly supplied with red blood, there is something exhilarating in the sting and chill of the March winds.

George Dorr of the Northwestern Motor Vehicle company has the first recorded out-of-town run to his credit, and will be able to make the class with the small boy who gets the first swimming of the season. Mr. Dorr was not looking for fame when he made his run to Anoka last Tuesday night, but, like other men who have secured a place in the gallery of heroes, was bent only upon performing a kind act.

Friend Missed Train. About 9 p.m., Mr. Dorr's friend, Mr. Woodard of Anoka, came to him with an appeal for assistance. He had missed his train and the folks at home would be worried if he did not show up. Mr. Dorr returned by the way he came when his act of mercy was accomplished. He reports that he never had easier running over that particular road, the wind was anything but balmy.

The Excelsior road is reported to be in condition and several are credited with having made the run to the village within the last month. Roads between here and St. Paul are reported good. So are the roads from St. Paul to Lake City. From Lake City to Wabasha, fourteen miles, the run is made on the ice and the going is said to be excellent.

# Artist of Nearly a Century Ago Had Motor Tricycle Figured Out



THE PROGRESS OF STEAM. Faugh! The Filthy Fellow, My Dear. The Wretch Feeds His Horse with Common Coal! —From a print published in London, January, 1828.

When the development of the locomotive was young, in the year 1827, H. Alken made an "Illustration of Modern Prophecy," which was engraved and printed in London in January, 1828. Aside from an interest which elderly persons may find in the female figures, this steam tricycle has indications of details worked out more than half a century later. The wheels are suggestive of pneumatic tires; the spokes are evidently designed for fancy motor costumes. The ball background represented the Herkomer trophy route, the entertainment being enhanced by chauffeur ballets, the clever gyrations of four motor cars, which "danced" most gracefully, comic motor-trapping policemen and Tyrolse village automobile scenes.

tensile strains only; the handlebar and headlight are quite modern; but the chauffeur's costume has not yet been realized. The engraving is made from a print—a rare one—owned by W. Laycock of Sheffield, Eng.

automobiles need no hay and little water they are increasing in popularity by leaps and bounds.



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# AUTO CLUB HAS FUNDS FOR INTER CITY ROAD

### No Special Assessment Necessary to Carry Thru the Big Project.

No assessment will be levied upon the members of the Minneapolis Automobile club to carry thru the "good roads to St. Paul" project endorsed by the board of directors at their meeting Thursday afternoon.

The estimated cost of the repairs necessary to give a good course down the west side of the river and back on the East Side is between \$3,000 and \$5,000. This money, derived from fees and dues, is already in the club treasury according to the report of Treasurer A. E. Paegel.

This statement promises to remove the objections made by some members of the club at the first announcement of the director's plans. The first impression when it was announced that the club proposed to macadamize the entire stretch out and back, was that an enormous outlay of money would be required, and, naturally, some adverse criticism arose.

As a matter of fact the greater portion of the proposed course already is in fine shape and will not call for the expenditure of a cent. The most extensive repairs will have to be on one mile of Hiawatha avenue between Forty-second and Fifty-fourth streets. This lies in the twelfth ward and the understanding is that the ward will bear part of the expense out of its street fund, the brunt of the burden probably will fall on the club.

Proposed federal improvements on the Fort Snelling reservation will give a good course to the Snelling bridge and from there up West Seventh street to St. Paul, and out Como avenue to Como park, the roads are already excellent. On Talmage avenue, which the course will follow, from the park into Minneapolis, one bad hill, two railway crossings and a half-mile stretch of sandy road need attention.

The proposed course of this auto circuit is as follows: Portland to Minnehaha avenue; Minnehaha to Hiawatha at Forty-second; Hiawatha to Fifty-fourth, where it enters to Fort Snelling reservation; Fort Snelling along West Seventh street into St. Paul, Como avenue to Como park; Como park along Talmage avenue into Southeast Minneapolis; home, on any street the driver may choose.

By leaving Minnehaha at Forty-second street, and following Hiawatha, the course will avoid two railroad crossings and the crowd of women and children on Minnehaha opposite Minnehaha park. When reduced to its proper terms the plan does not mean the construction of a new drive, but only a little retouching of one already in use.

Caplin Company Makes Wagon for Minneapolis Brewing Company. The Caplin Automobile company has just finished a gasoline delivery wagon for the Minneapolis Brewing company. The chassis is taken entire from a standard touring car and is equipped with a forty to forty-five-horsepower motor. The body was fitted in the Caplin shop and follows the general lines of a light express tray. The car was given a trial run on Thursday, and seemed to be satisfactory in every respect.

Pike Plan Revived. Again the subject of a continuous pike between Chicago and New York is being agitated by the New York and Chicago Road association, of which W. L. Dickerson of Springfield, Mass., is president. The general route proposed for the highway is as follows: From New York, up along the Hudson to Rhinebeck, thence across the river to Kingston, Delhi, Binghamton, Elmira, Hornellsville, Olean, Jamestown, Erie, Ashtabula, Cleveland, Toledo, Butlers, South Bend and Chicago.

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